What’s New in Montana Film?

From movies to television series to commercials, learn how filmmakers have navigated these uncertain times and captured the stunning backdrops of the prairies and mountains in Montana.

Read more, page 8

Home, Made

Frances Senska came of age learning to make whatever she needed: furniture, tools, cups and plates. Building an art program at Montana State was a similar process of matching purpose to need. Frances gathered and molded and fired up her students in the same way she shaped her utilitarian, earth-tone pots. No fan of shiny finishes or porcelain daintiness, her work and her approach to the school were the same: functional, honest, straightforward.

Read more, page 18

MAP Moves Forward

As we move into a new calendar year, let’s reflect on two recent MAP cohorts who have completed their program—Hazer Novich of Corvallis and Amber Scally of Martinsdale. They’ve shared a bit of their journeys here.

Read more, page 23

2021 Artist Innovation Awards Announced

Seven Montana artists received the 2021 Artist Innovation Award. Learn how these exceptional artists balanced risk-taking, exploration and professionalism in their practice.

Read more, page 3

Governor’s Arts Award Nominations Open

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

To see previous winners and submit a nomination go to https://art.mt.gov/gaa or contact Kristin Han Burgoyne at kburgoyne@mt.gov or 406-444-6449. The deadline to submit nominations is February 3.
“Whether we’re making art of our own or exploring the work of others, the act of making keeps the darkness of the season at bay.”

Winter in Montana often has us looking inward. The cold creeps in, the snow piles up and the urge to hibernate is strong. Fortunately, winter is also a time of creation.

As gatherings approach, we’re busy making things—meals in the kitchen, gifts for friends and family, plans for travel.

Through December’s string of holidays, our homes and studios take on the air of Santa’s workshop, and we tinker with our work while frost coats the windowpanes outside.

Maintaining this effort into the new year, we look to the arts to ward off the short days. Whether we’re making art of our own or exploring the work of others, the act of making keeps the darkness of the season at bay. Taking in a local symphony performance, a drive through a downtown gallery, or a walk in the park, can help us take in the beauty and optimism that art provides.

Despite the cold, there’s a lot of craft on display. We see the loom, in the ear or in the kiln, these innovators are looking to make new art in new ways.

Winter is also a time of creation. Whether we’re making art of our own or exploring the work of others, the act of making keeps the darkness of the season at bay. While frost coats the windowpanes outside.

Creation is also innovation, and we’ll start this winter issue with seven artists breaking new ground in a variety of disciplines—through new processes, new forms, new ways of looking at the world. No matter where their art happens, whether on the page, at the loom, in the ear or in the kiln, these innovators are looking to make new art in new ways.

Filling a warm mug, pull up a favorite chair, and settle in for the season. It has all the makings of a great one.

Chip Clawson, Visual Artist, Helena

After a long hiatus, Chip Clawson returned to making ceramic art in the late 90s. As for his creative process, Clawson says, “I am an inquisitive problem solver by nature and nurture, using innovation to solve challenges and create art.” His father was a teacher of problem-solving, and he learned that skill from him. That ability has carried him forward through a decades-long career as a visual artist, when Clawson encounters a problem, he uses it as a springboard for creativity.

If you’ve spent much time in Helena, you’ve almost certainly encountered one of Chip Clawson’s architectural-scale pieces of public art. Clawson’s work is inspired by the natural world, forming us, like beetles, budding plants, shells, seed pods or lava flows in a universal way. His work is about “engaging the viewer’s imagination, prompting curiosity as the mind grasps for what is familiar yet somehow peculiar.”

To realize his artistic vision, Clawson has often developed his own techniques and methods, and incorporated cutting-edge technology along the way. For example, for his first architectural-scale sculpture he developed a press mold for making micro-arch bricks. Today, Clawson is using modeling software and 3D printing technology to once again move his art forward.

Clawson’s work appears most prominently in public spaces throughout Montana. He has also participated in gallery showings, collaborations and workshops for decades in far-flung places like Hawaii, Ohio and Pennsylvania.

From the panel: “There is ample evidence of consistent forward progress and drawing on resources and opportunities to steadily expand practice, studio, innovations and completed works. His work samples span 20+ years, but there are many recent examples showing that his innovation will continue.”

Alayna Rasile, Visual Artist, Bozeman

Alayna Rasile is a textile artist focusing on handweaving techniques and the use of natural dyes and fabrics. Rasile says, “Through slow and careful labor using plant-based materials and ancient textile techniques, I honor my responsibility as an artist to be a critic, an innovator and a visionary.”

Rasile applies a critical eye to her artistic practice that extends from the sourcing of materials to the production of the work. Her most recent work orbits around a public installation called Chromatic Botanica Garden, a living sculpture of dye plants on Bozeman’s N. Seventh Ave. that grows along with its surroundings. About the installation Rasile says, “By cultivating, caring for and processing natural sources of color in a public setting, my work aims to illuminate the more common alternative through a critical lens: The synthetic dye industry is environmentally disastrous, racist and harmful to our health.”

Rasile has shown her work at galleries and events throughout the U.S. and in the UK. She is a committed advocate for environmental sustainability, gave a TEDx talk about textiles and pollinators in 2019 and has several related publications to her name. She is an entrepreneur and teacher as well, having started several businesses and serving as an instructor at MSU Bozeman in both business and art.

From the panel: “Alayna Rasile has hit on a comprehensive approach to a sustainable practice, from growing her materials to creating the finished product to having public and multi-sensory elements. Rather than being dazzled by new technology, this artist’s boldness is in recognizing and reviving traditional, sustainable techniques with a conscious incorporation of the industrial landscape, she uses what was once considered innovative to critique the outcomes of innovation and to...”

State of the Arts welcomes submissions

State of the Arts • Winter 2022

Call for Cultural and Aesthetic Projects Advisory Committee

MAC is seeking members for the Cultural Trust’s Cultural and Aesthetic Projects Advisory Committee. Applications will be accepted through April 22, 2022. In the fall of even-numbered years, the committee members review up to 100 grant applications and participate in a two-day panel meeting to make funding recommendations to the Legislature. Grant applications for projects, operating support and capital expenditures come from across Montana from arts, history and other cultural organizations. Committee members serve four-year terms with review years in the fall of 2022 and 2024.

If you or someone you know are interested in being considered, send a letter of interest and a resume highlighting pertinent information to Kristin Han Burgoyne at kburgoyne@mt.gov.

For more information and work samples for each artist visit art.mt.gov/aia.

State of the Arts Awards Announced

The Montana Arts Council is honored to announce the seven Montana artists to receive the 2021 Artist Innovation Award. The $5,000 award is given out every two years to exceptional artists who balance risk-taking, exploration and professionalism in their practice. Through their application submissions, awardees have demonstrated an ongoing commitment to the exploration of new methods, materials, technology, audience engagement or ideas, among other innovations.

A panel of artists experts from around Montana convened via Zoom to review 59 applications and choose seven artists to recommend for full Council approval. Given the exceptional quality of the applicant pool overall, the process of winnowing down to the awardees was especially arduous. Applications are judged according to criteria, and the deliberation process led to a rigorous, insightful and passionate discussion.

Tracy Linder, chair of the review panel, says the following about the award:

“Every two years MAC recognizes some of Montana’s most outstanding artists through our Artist Innovation Awards. In recognizing these seven artists, we hope that we are further uplifting their vision and their careers. Congratulations to this year’s awardees, all well-deserved.”

Over the next year, each awardee will make a public presentation on their art and the role of innovation in their creative process. As the details of these events is available, MAC will share information via social media. For more information and work samples for each artist visit art.mt.gov/aia.

Tracy Linder, chair of the review panel

State of the Arts • Winter 2022

Submissions

State of the Arts • Winter 2022

A panel of arts experts from around Montana convened via Zoom to review 59 applications and choose seven artists to recommend for full Council approval. Given the exceptional quality of the applicant pool overall, the process of winnowing down to the awardees was especially arduous. Applications are judged according to criteria, and the deliberation process led to a rigorous, insightful and passionate discussion.

Tracy Linder, chair of the review panel, says the following about the award:

“Every two years MAC recognizes some of Montana’s most outstanding artists through our Artist Innovation Awards. In recognizing these seven artists, we hope that we are further uplifting their vision and their careers. Congratulations to this year’s awardees, all well-deserved.”

Over the next year, each awardee will make a public presentation on their art and the role of innovation in their creative process. As the details of these events is available, MAC will share information via social media. For more information and work samples for each artist visit art.mt.gov/aia.
Megan Karls, Performance Artist, Great Falls

Violinist Megan Karls is an artist with a passion for community building through creative experience. As a performer, she is committed to bringing new music to new ears and creating a fresh space for classical music in our local dialogue. For the majority of her career, Karls has defined herself as collaborative performer, as part of bigger organisms like string quartets and symphony orchestras. As experienced by so many performing artists during the COVID-19 pandemic, that identity was upended by the cancellation and postponement of live events.

From the panel:

“I’m wildly excited about both her aesthetics, use of textile and the innovative materials approach.”

Jodi Lightner, Visual Artist, Billings

Jodi Lightner is a visual artist who incorporates drawing, painting and sculptural elements into large-scale installations, while serving as an associate professor of art at MSU Billings. According to Lightner, “My creative practice is focused on making art that bends the line of drawing and imagining the impossible. I find that the drawing can unfold over time if the substrate is too large to take in with one quick glance.” Lightner’s work invites the viewer to walk along the length of the drawing to see the entire composition, mirroring the experience of how we look at the structures we inhabit.

Megan Karls currently performs as co-concertmaster of the Great Falls Symphony and associate concertmaster of the Billings Symphony. As a chamber musician, Megan has been a guest artist across the nation, including Oberlin Conservatory, Lawrence University, Northern Illinois University, Roundtop, the Society for Electro-Acoustic Music in the United States and at the International Double Reed Society. She has traveled internationally as a chamber musician but loves bringing the violin to small audiences around Montana.

From the panel:

“Successfully seeking challenges and producing new work in COVID. Project resulting in bold, innovative, beautiful, haunting work in nontraditional, even hostile, settings, intimately tied to Montana’s landscape—political, historical, architectural.”

Maxim Loskutoff, Literary Artist, Missoula

Writer Maxim Loskutoff has an MFA from New York University and has participated in writing residencies throughout the country. His novels, essays and short stories have received national recognition and awards, including a recent High Plains Book Award for his novel *Atheist Fear*. He has published works in several national publications including *The New York Times*, *QQ* and *Fiction*.

From the panel: “Ten years of consistent and remarkably creative activity recognized by many significant outlets. Imressive residency activity, clear, direct and compelling language.”

Sheryl Noethe, Literary Artist, Missoula

Sheryl Noethe is a writer, performer and spoken word artist. With over 20 years of experimentation with poetry as an art form, Noethe’s commitment to innovation is unceasing. As for where her poetry is headed, she says, “I am learning to release my need for structure and narrative.” Rather than offering resolution or completeness in her poems, Noethe strives to startle the observer and elicit an emotional response with strong imagery.

A committed teacher and spoken word artist, Noethe has a keen understanding of the role the reader or audience member plays in poetry. About the relationship with the reader she hopes to create through her work Noethe says, “This relies upon the reader to pull their own partnership in the process of reading a poem and the images they have in the minds eye. This relies upon the poet trusting the reader to respond to sensation, to emotions, to the visuals and to metaphor.”

Maxim Loskutoff has long been drawn to untold stories, particularly women’s stories. She says, “I write to bear witness,” and describes her fiction work as “part-storytelling, part-social justice, part-music.” She is fascinated by the experience of women in Montana, grappling with both isolation, family dynamics and the ways women navigate and challenge the social order.

A student of Montana greats such as Richard Hugo and William Kittredge, Patterson received an MFA in creative writing from the University of Montana.

“I want to be careful that my writing and my performances have some sort of public purpose. For instance, the things I write about are things that I feel strongly about. I’ve been interested in the bounds of our experience of the landscape, which I think is something that hasn’t been written about as much as it should have.”

Megan Karls responded to her initial deflation at the circumstances by digging into the study of unaccompanied solo works of Bach and other composers. This study sparked an innovative project to record solo violin performances at remote Air Force installations that dot northern Montana. About her motivations Karls says, “The wind, heat, sun, driving, all served as adversity training for me to learn how to perform my best, under the most challenging circumstances. I wanted to grow as a violinist, even during COVID, and this project was a great mountain to climb.”


“Shes focuses on marginalized voices; women’s stories dismissed or ignored by history. She’s seeking to combine experience in different genres into a more unified, unique voice. I was immediately engrossed in the work samples she submitted. Her writing holds up a mirror and shows the reader difficult and challenging behaviors, situations, cultural habits, and prompts a process of reflection and critique that I appreciate very much.”

From the panel: “This artist will continue to write, publish and teach. The stories and perspectives she brings to light—women in the Western landscape—will continue to be a big contribution to Montana letters.”

Caroline Patterson, Literary Artist, Missoula

Caroline Patterson is a fiction writer, teacher and nonprofit director. Patterson has written poetry, essays, journalism and children’s books at certain points in her career but now finds herself strongly to bring these practices together. About this melding Patterson says, “Lately, I am more interested in discovering the richness that lies in the intersection between them: how fiction reveals the truth, how fiction is contained in nonfiction, how lyricism unmasks the heart.”

From the panel: “She is always pushing her poetry forward. She and her work are treasures for our state. I love her commitment to poetry and education and all the work she continues to do in the community.”

From the panel: “Powerful, evocative, haunting writing. Really excellent work.”

From the panel: “Congratulations!”
Congratulations to...

Steve Helmbrecht
Today our community lost one of its great artists, Havre native Steve Helmbrecht. Steve was a second-generation photographer and is well known for capturing hundreds of weddings, graduations, sports and other significant life moments on the Hi-Line and throughout Montana. He was a gifted artist, producing beautiful photography as well as pottery and other art. He served as an adjunct professor at MSU-Northern where he patiently taught students ceramics for the past 18 years. Steve always had a smile and a great eye for humor in his photography. His influence in the art community will live on in his beautiful work. Thank you, Steve, you will be missed.

Read the full obituary: https://www.havredailynews.com/story/2021/11/01/obituaries/obituary-steve-helmbrecht/5360167.html

North Valley Music School Expands Instrument Lending Library

North Valley Music School started their 2021-2022 music year with an expansion of their Instrument Lending Library to benefit participating musicians. Thanks to a grant from the Kramer Family Foundation, NVMS expanded their inventory by purchasing four Yamaha P45 keyboards. With this instrument program, NVMS is able to help students who face an often-overlooked barrier to music education: the lack of an instrument.

Currently, the nonprofit music school matches high-quality instruction with students of all ages, backgrounds and skill levels. Scholarships are available to ensure that no student who seeks music education is turned away. However, “another important element of one’s musical journey is access to an instrument,” says Director of Opportunity Jessica Shaw.

Instruments are often expensive and without one, a promising musician is powerless to develop his or her individual and unique musical expression. Access to music education is often a significant financial decision,” says Sarah Mayal. “I craved music and was passionate enough to put any budget or work to the test, but it still didn’t seem possible because I couldn’t afford a violin. Thankfully, NVMS had their lending library and was able to bridge the gap.”

The instrument lending program serves between 20-35 students a year. Scholarship recipients are offered instrument “rental” on a first come, first serve basis. Current inventory includes violins, keyboards, a drum set, cellos and some band instruments. This is possible through private donors and grants. “Music is not only a part of education, it is something that can be taken anywhere and used in anything (even algebra!). Music is something that will be with me for the rest of my life and will always be, for me, a source of pride, enjoyment, relaxation and many happy memories,” says M.D., NVMS scholarship recipient.

NVMS’s next investment goal is 16 new violins, and financial support is needed. Additionally, many other instruments are aging and need to be replaced. To learn more about music education at NVMS and to donate to the Instrument Lending Library, please visit www.northvalleymusicschool.org or call 406-862-8074.

Kirby Lambert Retires


Arriving from his home state of Texas almost four decades ago, Kirby immediately fell in love with Montana. He has quoted John Steinbeck saying, “Montana seems to me what a small boy would think Texas is like from hearing Texas.”

Kirby embraced the history and culture of Montana and has put his zest and wisdom to work. Among his many talents is an ability to take scholarly material, distill it and make it accessible to the general public. He has accomplished this throughout his career, in the countless curated exhibits interpreting such diverse topics as the history of medicine in Montana, the art of Blackfeet sculptor John L. Clarke, and the impact of horses on the state’s cultural material, as well as in his numerous publications.

He was awarded the 2015 Governor’s Humanities Award which honors excellence in the humanities in Montana. In the words of Dr. Larry Len Peterson, “Kirby will be remembered as the co-founder and long-term curator behind a legacy of scholarship unsurpassed in the history of the Montana Historical Society. He will be greatly missed but never forgotten.”

To read more about Kirby Lambert, including his full introductory tribute by Dr. Larry Len Peterson, please visit https://cmusosl.org/ remembering-russells-west-montanas-last-best-chance/.

In Memory of...

Sally McIntosh

McIntosh took a teaching position in the late 60’s, where she assisted a Syracuse University professor in what she described as a “life changing” experience visiting many major art museums in Western Europe. Her graduate work in medieval studies led her to San Francisco State but when her father died, she returned to Montana during summers to be with her mother, moving back in 1972.

The Billings community has always been an integral part of McIntosh’s life. Allison O’Donnell, Tuscany Art Gallery owner said McIntosh has a teaching spirit. “Sally is just so giving. She’s generally so interested in what’s going on with people. She was always such a nurturing ArtWalk leader.” McIntosh served as the coordinator of ArtWalk Downtown. Billings for several years, helping it grow and welcoming new businesses.

McIntosh is known for taking young people under her wing, guiding and connecting them to art and community. As busy as she has been, she’s always taken the time to mentor Jim Baken, professor emeritus at Rocky Mountain College, remembers visiting Sally when she was living in Boston and even with her newborn baby at home, she showed him around. Years later, when he started teaching at RMC, they reconvened, “She gave my students and me exhibitions in her store...and Sally employed several of my ambitious art students,” Baken said.

McIntosh returned home again to run her brother Bill’s McIntosh Art Company when he passed away. She owned and operated the store from 1989 to 2007. It was a special gathering place for area artists. During her time at the Art Company, she also established the Summer Art Academy at RMC, where she was the director of the Rocky-Morrisson Gallery and an adjunct professor.

Baken said, “With her passion for every art form imaginable, she exhibited work that was regional as well as national. Sally co-taught seminar classes, stepped in to teach art methods, and she taught her gallery assistants and interns everything there is to know about the business of operating a fine arts gallery.”

Baken especially enjoyed teaming up with McIntosh to teach at the Montana Women’s Prison. “We announced to the inmates ‘We are here to set you free!’ Then, quickly backpedaling, to set you free artistically.” It was clear that the inmates appreciated the classes and McIntosh’s supportive, warm nature. “In those prison classes, we offered Expressionism via contemporary art history, drawing and painting. The results were mind blowing. The students were wonderful!” Baken said.

McIntosh loves art and artists and displays her favorites in her home. She enjoys gardening, bird watching and reading, and is always happy to spend time with her two children.

Kirby Lambert Retires

Michael McGill

Sally with Bill Stockton

Missoula Community/ Children’s Theatre Executive Director to Retire

After a span of 40 years performing nearly every role, on and off stage, Executive Director Michael McGill will make his final curtain call with MCT in the spring. In 2006, after decades of experience as a community volunteer, set builder, tour director, production manager, music director and more, Michael took the helm from co-founder, and then executive director, Jim Carson, and has guided MCT through both calm and choppy waters of financial and organizational issues known to most nonprofit companies and most recently, the vertiginous tsunami of challenges brought by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The company has adapted and remained creative while managing a leaner budget. McGill is proud of the staff, board and the patrons who support MCT.

McGill had intended to announce his retirement earlier, but as “captain of the ship,” he deferred the decision by a couple of years. There are plans in place to focus on the future health of the company, so while this decision was extremely difficult to reach, he believes that MCT will be in good hands and continue to play a positive, significant and forward-thinking role in the arts community and far beyond, through its various local and international programs.

Today our community lost one of its great artists, Havre native Steve Helmbrecht. Steve was a second-generation photographer and is well known for capturing hundreds of weddings, graduations, sports and other significant life moments on the Hi-Line and throughout Montana. He was a gifted artist, producing beautiful photography as well as pottery and other art. He served as an adjunct professor at MSU-Northern where he patiently taught students ceramics for the past 18 years. Steve always had a smile and a great eye for humor in his photography. His influence in the art community will live on in his beautiful work. Thank you, Steve, you will be missed.
As of late, there seems to be an air of uncertainty and thought. Some are incredibly productive, and others have taken a full break, or even returned to television with season 4 of Yellowstone. Filmed entirely in the state, this Western drama premiered to over 14 million viewers, catapulting it to the top of the ratings chart. Turns out, we've got a lot of trips to the "train station" left for this immensely popular series. Led by Kevin Costner, the twists and turns of the family ranch make for compelling viewing. This season, look for Montana locations in Darby, Hamilton and Missoula. Chief Joseph Ranch in Darby is the real star of the show, its pristine white barns and incredible historic lodge giving a strong backdrop for all the high drama. Combining stories of water and land rights, a Native American tribe positioning for power and an ever-present revolving door of "developer" villains, the show has had over 900 local extras so far and filmed in the stately Montana Capitol building during its run. Catch it on Paramount channel on cable or check listings for streaming options.

Montana hard-hatting and take-no-prisoners fictional Dutton family returned to television with season 4 of Yellowstone. Filmed entirely in the state, this Western drama premiered to over 14 million viewers, catapulting it to the top of the ratings chart. Turns out, we've got a lot of trips to the "train station" left for this immensely popular series. Led by Kevin Costner, the twists and turns of the family ranch make for compelling viewing. This season, look for Montana locations in Darby, Hamilton and Missoula. Chief Joseph Ranch in Darby is the real star of the show, its pristine white barns and incredible historic lodge giving a strong backdrop for all the high drama. Combining stories of water and land rights, a Native American tribe positioning for power and an ever-present revolving door of "developer" villains, the show has had over 900 local extras so far and filmed in the stately Montana Capitol building during its run. Catch it on Paramount channel on cable or check listings for streaming options.

Montana Film Office team was recently in Missoula for the Montana Film Festival, where a giving and enthusiastic audience clapped and cheered to the heartfelt welcome from organizers: "We are so thrilled to see you in this theater!" There’s nothing like that dark room, where the television and commercials that take these themes of uncertainty, and thought.

What’s New in Montana Film?

By Montana Film Commissioner Allison Whitmer

The Montana Film Office team was recently in Missoula for the Montana Film Festival, where a giving and enthusiastic audience clapped and cheered to the heartfelt welcome from organizers: "We are so thrilled to see you in this theater!" There’s nothing like that dark room, where the television and commercials that take these themes of uncertainty, and thought.

There’s nothing like that dark room, where the television and commercials that take these themes of uncertainty, and thought.

Film:

With the massive success of Yellowstone, Montana has been a hotbed for new talent and projects. Many have found this year to be incredibly productive, and others have taken a full break, or even returned to television with season 4 of Yellowstone. Filmed entirely in the state, this Western drama premiered to over 14 million viewers, catapulting it to the top of the ratings chart. Turns out, we've got a lot of trips to the "train station" left for this immensely popular series. Led by Kevin Costner, the twists and turns of the family ranch make for compelling viewing. This season, look for Montana locations in Darby, Hamilton and Missoula. Chief Joseph Ranch in Darby is the real star of the show, its pristine white barns and incredible historic lodge giving a strong backdrop for all the high drama. Combining stories of water and land rights, a Native American tribe positioning for power and an ever-present revolving door of "developer" villains, the show has had over 900 local extras so far and filmed in the stately Montana Capitol building during its run. Catch it on Paramount channel on cable or check listings for streaming options.

Montana hard-hatting and take-no-prisoners fictional Dutton family returned to television with season 4 of Yellowstone. Filmed entirely in the state, this Western drama premiered to over 14 million viewers, catapulting it to the top of the ratings chart. Turns out, we've got a lot of trips to the "train station" left for this immensely popular series. Led by Kevin Costner, the twists and turns of the family ranch make for compelling viewing. This season, look for Montana locations in Darby, Hamilton and Missoula. Chief Joseph Ranch in Darby is the real star of the show, its pristine white barns and incredible historic lodge giving a strong backdrop for all the high drama. Combining stories of water and land rights, a Native American tribe positioning for power and an ever-present revolving door of "developer" villains, the show has had over 900 local extras so far and filmed in the stately Montana Capitol building during its run. Catch it on Paramount channel on cable or check listings for streaming options.

Montana hard-hatting and take-no-prisoners fictional Dutton family returned to television with season 4 of Yellowstone. Filmed entirely in the state, this Western drama premiered to over 14 million viewers, catapulting it to the top of the ratings chart. Turns out, we've got a lot of trips to the "train station" left for this immensely popular series. Led by Kevin Costner, the twists and turns of the family ranch make for compelling viewing. This season, look for Montana locations in Darby, Hamilton and Missoula. Chief Joseph Ranch in Darby is the real star of the show, its pristine white barns and incredible historic lodge giving a strong backdrop for all the high drama. Combining stories of water and land rights, a Native American tribe positioning for power and an ever-present revolving door of "developer" villains, the show has had over 900 local extras so far and filmed in the stately Montana Capitol building during its run. Catch it on Paramount channel on cable or check listings for streaming options.

Montana hard-hatting and take-no-prisoners fictional Dutton family returned to television with season 4 of Yellowstone. Filmed entirely in the state, this Western drama premiered to over 14 million viewers, catapulting it to the top of the ratings chart. Turns out, we've got a lot of trips to the "train station" left for this immensely popular series. Led by Kevin Costner, the twists and turns of the family ranch make for compelling viewing. This season, look for Montana locations in Darby, Hamilton and Missoula. Chief Joseph Ranch in Darby is the real star of the show, its pristine white barns and incredible historic lodge giving a strong backdrop for all the high drama. Combining stories of water and land rights, a Native American tribe positioning for power and an ever-present revolving door of "developer" villains, the show has had over 900 local extras so far and filmed in the stately Montana Capitol building during its run. Catch it on Paramount channel on cable or check listings for streaming options.

Montana hard-hatting and take-no-prisoners fictional Dutton family returned to television with season 4 of Yellowstone. Filmed entirely in the state, this Western drama premiered to over 14 million viewers, catapulting it to the top of the ratings chart. Turns out, we've got a lot of trips to the "train station" left for this immensely popular series. Led by Kevin Costner, the twists and turns of the family ranch make for compelling viewing. This season, look for Montana locations in Darby, Hamilton and Missoula. Chief Joseph Ranch in Darby is the real star of the show, its pristine white barns and incredible historic lodge giving a strong backdrop for all the high drama. Combining stories of water and land rights, a Native American tribe positioning for power and an ever-present revolving door of "developer" villains, the show has had over 900 local extras so far and filmed in the stately Montana Capitol building during its run. Catch it on Paramount channel on cable or check listings for streaming options.
Making Music

Story and photos by Eric Heidie

First Movement

Imagine for a moment you’re on horseback, stopped atop a bluff overlooking the White Cliffs of the Missouri River, sometime in 1880. The spectacle of the muddy brown channel snaking its way through chalky cliffs and spires would have been quite a sight, in fact it’s one you can see largely unchanged to this day.

What you could only have seen then, though, is the long, low shape of a riverboat chuffing its way upstream, twin stacks belching woodsmoke as the stern wheel threshed the water in its wake. And if your eyesight and hearing were especially keen, you might—just might—have been able to make out a lovely sound emanating from a small wooden construction on the boat’s upper deck. A melody you’d eventually be able to pick out: “Red River Valley.” Because parked on the deck of that ship, the Far West, was a Chickering & Sons factory today.

Ida’s family had an artistic streak—her uncle Thomas was the grandfather of poet Ezra Pound—and in addition to the piano, Ida played violin and pursued other interests. One of 10 children to Albert, she attended Berkeley and maintained a lifelong interest in botany; she is said to have made the first recorded instances of several plant species in what’s now Montana. Ida soon married Charles T. Busha, a local businessman who opened a mercantile in Big Timber, and the piano picked up stakes once more. It resided in Big Timber until Ida died in 1949, when it passed to her daughter.

That such an unwieldy, delicate instrument could come so far under such conditions is mildly remarkable. But what’s truly remarkable is that the piano still sounds as good as it ever did, and looks as though it might have rolled out of the Chickering & Sons factory today.

So says an article published in a 1971 issue of the Billings Gazette, describing the journey of Ida and her piano as they immigrated to Montana Territory to join her father, Albert. Albert Pound had run a lumber concern in Chippewa Falls, Wisconsin before coming west for new opportunities.

The piano, meanwhile, had already journeyed thousands of miles by rail after being built sometime in the first half of 1876 by Chickering & Sons of Boston. It may already have been heading west toward Chippewa Falls when the Battle of the Little Bighorn was fought in the Montana territory that June.

At Fort Benton only a decade before the coming of the Great Northern Railroad made riverboats obsolete. From there, the piano went overland in a covered wagon to the Pounds’ new homestead in the Little Elk country southwest of Harlowlton.

First Movement (continued)

Ida’s family had an artistic streak—her uncle Thomas was the grandfather of poet Ezra Pound—and in addition to the piano, Ida played violin and pursued other interests. One of 10 children to Albert, she attended Berkeley and maintained a lifelong interest in botany; she is said to have made the first recorded instances of several plant species in what’s now Montana. Ida soon married Charles T. Busha, a local businessman who opened a mercantile in Big Timber, and the piano picked up stakes once more. It resided in Big Timber until Ida died in 1949, when it passed to her daughter.

That such an unwieldy, delicate instrument could come so far under such conditions is mildly remarkable. But what’s truly remarkable is that the piano still sounds as good as it ever did, and looks as though it might have rolled out of the Chickering & Sons factory today.

So says an article published in a 1971 issue of the Billings Gazette, describing the journey of Ida and her piano as they immigrated to Montana Territory to join her father, Albert. Albert Pound had run a lumber concern in Chippewa Falls, Wisconsin before coming west for new opportunities.

The piano, meanwhile, had already journeyed thousands of miles by rail after being built sometime in the first half of 1876 by Chickering & Sons of Boston; it may already have been heading west toward Chippewa Falls when the Battle of the Little Bighorn was fought in the Montana territory that June.

The Far West had a connection to the battle as well; contracted with the U.S. Army as a supply ship, she carried wounded cavalry soldiers and made the first recorded instances of several plant species in what’s now Montana. Ida soon married Charles T. Busha, a local businessman who opened a mercantile in Big Timber, and the piano picked up stakes once more. It resided in Big Timber until Ida died in 1949, when it passed to her daughter.

That such an unwieldy, delicate instrument could come so far under such conditions is mildly remarkable. But what’s truly remarkable is that the piano still sounds as good as it ever did, and looks as though it might have rolled out of the Chickering & Sons factory today.

Second Movement

A little bit north of the Chickering’s home, you’ll pass through a series of orchards, the source of Montana’s famous Flathead cherries. Tucked alongside one of these orchards you’ll find a weathered red barn, midway through a restoration not unlike the one the piano and its home have received. The repair work has reversed the barn’s considerable tilt toward the lake, averting eventual collapse. Standing upright once more, the barn is now undergoing a face lift, with new planks replacing weak spots in its siding. There’s a lot of life left in the old thing.

Second Movement (continued)

A little bit north of the Chickering’s home, you’ll pass through a series of orchards, the source of Montana’s famous Flathead cherries. Tucked alongside one of these orchards you’ll find a weathered red barn, midway through a restoration not unlike the one the piano and its home have received. The repair work has reversed the barn’s considerable tilt toward the lake, averting eventual collapse. Standing upright once more, the barn is now undergoing a face lift, with new planks replacing weak spots in its siding. There’s a lot of life left in the old thing.

Something else in the barn is a cozy workspace brimming with racks of exotic woods, battered instrument cases and tools of all sizes, where Bruce Weber is painstakingly sawing another well-worn construction of stained, weathered wood. It’s a mandolin, made by the Flatiron company down in Belgrade back in 1995.

The piano has since made the return journey, traveling east for the first time, having nearly crossed a continent in its lifetime. The home was built in the 1950s.

Second Movement (continued)

A little bit north of the Chickering’s home, you’ll pass through a series of orchards, the source of Montana’s famous Flathead cherries. Tucked alongside one of these orchards you’ll find a weathered red barn, midway through a restoration not unlike the one the piano and its home have received. The repair work has reversed the barn’s considerable tilt toward the lake, averting eventual collapse. Standing upright once more, the barn is now undergoing a face lift, with new planks replacing weak spots in its siding. There’s a lot of life left in the old thing.

Something else in the barn is a cozy workspace brimming with racks of exotic woods, battered instrument cases and tools of all sizes, where Bruce Weber is painstakingly sawing another well-worn construction of stained, weathered wood. It’s a mandolin, made by the Flatiron company down in Belgrade back in 1995.

That such an unwieldy, delicate instrument could come so far under such conditions is mildly remarkable. But what’s truly remarkable is that the piano still sounds as good as it ever did, and looks as though it might have rolled out of the Chickering & Sons factory today.
Bruce Weber has been a distinguished luthier specializing in mandolins for longer than the instrument on his bench has been around. In 1987, he wandered into the Flatiron facility looking for a set of strings; fascinated by what he saw inside, he wound up with a job.

Bruce began building mandolins and related instruments at Flatiron, and learned the craft from every angle. The sickly mandolin on his bench would’ve passed through his hands at Flatiron when it was new in 1995; he retained there until the company was relocated to Nashville, Tennessee the following year. Not inclined to leave Montana, Bruce founded Weber Fine Acoustic Instruments with his wife, Mary, in 1997, just up the road in the tiny town of Logan. Over time, the firm became a fair-sized operation in its own right, and Bruce and Mary kept things humming there until selling in 2012 to become, of all things, a stringed-choir accompanist. The barn needs additional work before things humming there until selling in 2012 to become, of all things, a stringed-choir accompanist.

Bruce Weber talks about mandolins old and new in his shop overlooking Flathead Lake.

Interestingly, since the move, Bruce has spent more time repairing mandolins than creating them. The barn needs additional work before Bruce can finish setting up his shop, and the brims with enthusiasm about making old instruments feel new. Noting that players of all abilities struggle when their instruments aren’t set up well, he says, “I’ve been getting a pretty good endorphin hit just by helping these players get their instruments playing well, sounding good, and it helps them play more.”

Bruce’s passion about hand-crafting quality mandolins custom made to suit his clients’ needs, he muses, “Is sort of torn... does the world need a lot of high-end instruments, or helping people play what they already have?” He also notes that he works on instruments of every level of quality and price range and that “if they don’t play well, they’re all the same.”

Once he begins building a new mandolin, though, Bruce brings his own preferences and approach to bear on each aspect of their manufacture. The workbench is lined with every hand tool imaginable, down to tiny files for fine inlay work, while the far corner of the room is dominated by a huge CNC machine used to rough out tops, frets, and frets in everything in between. Bruce points to a wall of shelves lined with wood blanks of various shapes and sizes to show what it can do. A stack of scrap pans, destined to become one-piece arched tops for mandolins, has already been put through the milling machine. While this might seem like the opposite of hand-building, it’s at this point that a kind of alchemy starts coming into play.

Over the coming days, Bruce will nurse this ailng patient back to life. Here in the Arlee home, Matthew has been working on Bruce’s workbench in its current state, he’ll coax it back to health for years of continued play. Like the barn, there’s a lot of life in it still.

Bruce admits he sometimes eases players’ fears by emailing pictures of the progress he’s made while restoring their babies to life; he hasn’t had to resort to any FaceTime sessions yet.

“It seems to be all a part of the spirit in which the new operation is conducted. Bruce says, “Our whole focus is to support players; we’re not in it for the money.” He speculates that nearly all mandolins will eventually be made overseas in mass-production environments, with the exception of very high-end, very expensive examples. Though he loves the solitude and focus of making drums, Bruce concudes that it would be good to take a look at what other people can do so he can pass the craft on to—perhaps forestalling that outcome. “Bring in somebody who wants to learn;” he says, laughing softly at the notion. “Everyone wants to be a luthier—until they actually start!”

But while the barn is being finished and the shop gets sorted out, there’s always the orchard to keep Bruce and Mary occupied. Which prompts a final question: Will any of the trees grown here make their way into a mandolin? Bruce nods, saying that he’s already harvested wood from a few trees that have come down, and that wood is currently waiting for the right time and instrument to be born again. And choosing a name for this place, Bruce and Mary Weber have certainly captured that circle of growth and creation. A wooden sign, delicately miled on the CNC machine, leans against a bench in the shop, awaiting finishing and installation. On it, below the words “Montana Lutherie” that reads just right-name “Sound to Earth Orchard.”

Bruce Weber checks a spruce blank for its natural sound quality and pitch, which in turn will determine what sort of mandolin it will become.

Holding a blank vertically between thumb and forefinger, Bruce taps its back. He then does the same with another and together. They all sound different. Finding one with a high, clear tone that he particularly likes, Bruce says that one will make a good bluegrass mandolin.

Bruce’s workbench in its current state, he’ll coax it back to health for years of continued play. Like the barn, there’s a lot of life in it still.

If you travel back south along the lake and hang a hard left at Olson, you’ll find yourself under the tall, red water towers marking the tiny town of Arlee. A snug home and detached garage on the edge of town are home to Drum Brothers, a small family operation which has been hand-crafting drums and teaching people how to play them since the late 1980s. Founded almost by accident, it began when brothers Matthew and Patrick Marsolek were working at the Feathered Pipe Ranch, an educational center near Helena. Looking for a way to engage guests at the ranch, they began making drums they could play in the evenings. But they immediately ran into a problem: The guests quickly bought out their entire supply of drums. Soon, their brother Michael and father David arrived from Portland and Wisconsin respectively, and Drum Brothers quickly become a growing concern.

Along the way, Matthew, Patrick and Michael transformed the Marsolek Brothers, a musical trio which eventually renamed itself to match its instrument-making parent company. At one point, the business had 35 employees and storefronts in Arlee and Missoula, and David also joined the band. Business, it could be said, was booming.

Bruce’s workbench in its current state, he’ll coax it back to health for years of continued play. Like the barn, there’s a lot of life in it still.

Things are a touch more quiet today, if that can truly be said about a company that makes drums. David retired in 2015, and the band has seen several lineup changes over the years. Unsurprisingly, both the business and the band have acquired new members from within family ranks. Matthew’s wife, Tracy Topp, and their son, Ravi, both play in the Drum Brothers, and Tracy runs the manufacturing side of things from the small garage on the family’s property.

Inside that garage, a wood stove keeps the cold at bay while Tracy hand-builds several styles of drums, which draw inspiration from traditional Native American and West African instruments. Of the Drum Brothers’ hoop-style style drums, Tracy says, “We try to really respect and honor their traditions without copying,” going on to describe that the drums made here use differing frame materials, construction and lacing, and are made with power tools in addition to hand shaping. Matthew notes that frame-style drums can be found worldwide, including the Irish bodhran and Laplander shamanic drums; hand drums have even been recorded being used on thousand-year-old Egyptian tomb carvings. Each drum, though similar in function, has characteristics unique to its culture’s traditions, maker, materials, and even the landscape in which it’s made.

Tracy demonstrates this by showing a piece of deer hide she’s currently processing for a frame drum.

Right now, the hide resembles bread dough and will be stretched over the circular frame before it dries to help achieve the proper tension for the drum.

Knowing how much the hide will shrink and tighten in the dry Montana climate is a key bit of wisdom she’s acquired over time. Stretch the hide too much, and it becomes too tight. Stretch it too little, and the hide will tear. Tracy says that every drum has its own voice, just as every drummer has his or her own style. It’s a simple but philosophical point of view that’s easily taken to heart. In fact, these drums are different than most musical instruments in one key respect.

“Generally speaking,” Tracy concludes, “a drum is tuned to itself.”

The materials themselves are important, too. When asked where she sources her hide, Tracy says, “Probably the best way I can find it is that small operation is no stranger to supply-chain issues, and being creative with materials is part of the process. Though cedar is a favored wood for frame drums, Tracy’s been working with redwood and hemlock as well, with exciting results. One redwood frame awaiting its hide looks strikingly different from the cedar-framed drums, and will likely impact a subtly different sound. Tracy also comments that it’s especially rewarding when local materials can find their way into the work. ‘It’s really satisfying to be able to say this is a hide that I processed, that it was an animal that was here in Montana, and now it’s part of an instrument.”

Matthew Marsolek describes the features of a West African style ashiko in the Drum Brothers workshop.

Bruce talks about the mandolins old and new in his shop overlooking Flathead Lake.
By Mark Gibbons

As the new poet laureate of Montana, I thought I’d introduce myself with a few thoughts and a brief story about where and who I come from.

For starters, my father was a perfectionist, insisting that I was going to do a job, take on a task, that I should do it half-assed but do it as well as possible as completely as I could. It probably still wouldn’t pass muster, but over time if I stuck to that philosophy and kept practicing, eventually I should do a decent job. Not that I should ever be proud of it because maybe that’s something like, “Not bad.” I’ve seen worse. Maybe that was his generation, his Irish alcoholic upbringing (he modeled for me) or maybe it was just me. I’m not sure what the questions, but I can point to him, his culture, his instruction to me, as the reason I go about performing my tasks the way I do, plus why I fear failing, not measuring up. It’s lodged in my psyche if not my DNA.

My obsessive-compulsive behavior (or disorder) is also most likely another gift from my dad.

That work ethic, the drive to perfect a perception I know cannot actually be achieved, is what I love about writing poetry.

I like discovering and doing different things on the page, trying to create something that wasn’t there before, and my father (the editor in my head) is constantly looking at those spots that aren’t quite right and demanding me better. Fortunately, my mother is in my head, too, reassuring me that it’s okay to drop the ball and laugh about it, that the best I can do is enjoy the day and those around me. For better or worse my parents are still with me. That’s the reality of this trip we are on out way to the cemetery.

Death reminds me of the first poem I remember hearing and the first one I memorized “The Cremation of Sam McGee” by Robert Service. Yes, it was gifted to me by my father. If you aren’t familiar with it, do yourself a favor. The rhythm and rhyme of the ballad form coupled with the images of the harsh Arctic winter and those gritty southerns who lived in that place 100 years ago make it a mesmerizing and memorable experience. If poetry can be defined as a struggle between sound and image, where in the best poems neither side dominates, then “Sam McGee” is a penultimate poem.

Here is a short poem that came to mind after reading Susan Meyers’ Mother, Washing Dishess.

Doing the Dishes

Maybe the reason I do them is because I really like a task I can do well and efficiently, complete and tidy up in a short period of time, kind of like loading a truck of household goods, knowing the best placement and protection of each item in a tier so it can travel cross-country in a moving van without a problem, to yield a smile from the shipper at delivery as she rubs her mother’s rocker, hand on her heart—it’s a lot like writing a poem.

—Mark Gibbons

Montana Poet Laureate Mark Gibbons

I encourage everyone to write their reactions to what they experience. It helps us consider multiple viewpoints and understand we really don’t know everything or even much of anything, and that should always be the first thing to consider. Still, I will continue going through the motions day after day enjoying living my life and reacting to what I encounter.

Often times my first responses remind me of my mom and dad like this day after day enjoying living my life and reacting to what I encounter. For better or worse my parents are still with me. That’s the reality of this trip we are on.

State of the Arts • Winter 2022

State of the Arts • Winter 2022

Montana Pioneers: Creating a Community by Suzanne M. Waring

Each vignette in Montana Pioneers portrays the adventuresome life of one of 31 different men and women who moved to Montana in the late 1800s, took up many types of occupations and had varied and admirable adventures. Most of those whose lives are shared in this book settled in a northcentral region of the state that would become Great Falls. Their combined efforts and skills impacted the establishment and established a permanent community that will forever be influenced by their preferences and decisions.

Author Suzanne M. Waring retired from a college position to write for regional publications, in addition to her books. Pioneer Lady, Searching for a Special Place and Montana Pioneers.

The resilient people who kept their farms or ranches in the same family for 100 years or more are featured in a new Montana Historical Society book with namesake histories and black-and-white photos of those tied to the Centennial Farm and Ranch register between 2010 and 2020. According to Brown “Their stories give a snapshot of Montana’s immigrant heritage, changing economy, labor and transportation, and community development. While each family’s centennial story is similar on the surface, each offers a different view that spotlights a singular aspect of Montana’s agricultural history.”

The book brings together fascinating tales that paint varied pictures of the Treasure State’s agricultural growth and development, representing every area of our state’s agricultural history. The stories reveal family sagas of adventure, success, failure, tragedy and stalwart determination.

Brown adds, “Keeping a farm or ranch in the same family for 100 years or more is no easy feat by any account.” According to Kevin Spafford, author of Legacy by Design: Succession Planning for Agriculture Owners. About 70% of farms fail to pass from the first to the second generation, 90% fail to pass to the third, and 96% fail to pass to the fourth. Montana’s Centennial Farms and Ranches recognize the 4% whose abiding dedication to family-run agriculture has sustained generations, shaped Montana’s rural communities and helped define the state’s economy.

A Young Man of Montana by Daniel T. Miller

Experience the depths of a Montana man surviving his youth and the lead-up to World War II in Hawaii as a mule skinner. Irvin Atkinson lived a hardisol-crested life, a boy growing up around Sidney, Montana. He had no idea that his skill with horses would one day take him to the mountains of Hawaii to train mules in preparation for the coming War.

The early loss of his father, a childhood spent bouncing from homestead to homestead, and the economic hardships of life in a drought-stricken and grasshopper-plagued region in the years of the Great Depression didn’t break him. He would eventually make his way to San Francisco, join the army, and ship out to Hawaii, where his experience with horses translated to a job working mules as part of erroneous preparations by the military in the 1930s. The largely untold account of strategic maneuvers in the lead-up to war makes this story a fascinating addition to the literature of World War II. Atkinson’s determination to rise above circumstances is inspirational.

A Young Man of Montana is available at local, online and from Farcountry Press.

Books

The Red Lodge Festival of Nations: A Memoir by Betsy Scandinavian

For over six decades, a summer highlight of Red Lodge, Montana, was the Festival of Nations. Attendees and participants will remember all the dazzling colors, the highly-embellished regalia, and the Indian beaded parades float and the national flags lining Broadway, as well literally hundreds of them strung high in the ceiling of the Veterans Memorial Civic Center. The 1950 dedication of the center was the inspiration for the next 67 years of Red Lodge’s annual hometown reunion, celebrating the mix of cultures that made it a unique place to grow up in, to visit and to remember.

This book is a memoir capturing just a portion of those later years, while ethnic exhibits still filled the rooms of Mountain View School, performances were still in the civic center and some of the original founders still participating, along with their children, grandchildren and even great-grandchildren.

This collection is not meant to be comprehensive, 67 years hold a lot of memories, a lot of pictures. Enjoy the memories!

The author was raised in Red Lodge, Montana, and her family participated in the festival for over 50 years. Festival of Nations is available locally, online and from Farcountry Press.

The Secret Life of Burt the Bear by Kate Rcocci

Learn and Practice Blended Words with Burt the Bear in his wild adventures!

The very goofy Burt the Bear is a wild dude who loves his secret adventures and helping children learn the skills they need for a strong language foundation. Going along with Burt as he swims in neighbors’ pools, snacks on strawberries from garden patches and even takes a remote-controlled airplane for a spin, children will have the opportunity to engage in his fantasy world while cultivating the skill of enunciating blends in reading aloud.

Articulation practice is crucial for early speech and language development for preschoolers, elementary students and children with speech delays. Burt the Bear

I Am Montana: Student Reflections on Identity and Place, Vol. 3

Edited by Nicole Gomez and David C. Gifford

Who are you? Is it a question we ask strangers when we first meet and of ourselves, whom we’ve known the longest. Some of the voices represented in this significant and compelling anthology are incarcerated; some are high school students working one two jobs. Some are cherished in their families’ legends, some are in danger. Many have had an unimaginably tough life. Yet this does not define them. Their words, instead, speak to the power of the human spirit, a spirit that resists in sunlight, friendship and home-cooked meals, that is vulnerable to loss and betrayal, that is alternately afraid and more hopeful.


The Festival of Nations’ annual hometown reunion, the mix of cultures that made it a unique place to grow up in, to visit and to remember. This book is a memoir capturing just a portion of those later years, while ethnic exhibits still filled the rooms of Mountain View School, performances were still in the civic center and some of the original founders still participating, along with their children, grandchildren and even great-grandchildren. This collection is not meant to be comprehensive, 67 years hold a lot of memories, a lot of pictures. Enjoy the memories!

The author was raised in Red Lodge, Montana, and her family participated in the festival for over 50 years. Festival of Nations is available locally, online and from Farcountry Press.

The Secret Life of Burt the Bear by Kate Rcocci

Learn and Practice Blended Words with Burt the Bear in his wild adventures!

The very goofy Burt the Bear is a wild dude who loves his secret adventures and helping children learn the skills they need for a strong language foundation. Going along with Burt as he swims in neighbors’ pools, snacks on strawberries from garden patches and even takes a remote-controlled airplane for a spin, children will have the opportunity to engage in his fantasy world while cultivating the skill of enunciating blends in reading aloud.

Articulation practice is crucial for early speech and language development for preschoolers, elementary students and children with speech delays. Burt the Bear
expands rounds into functional words and creates meaning. It addresses the prevalent need for speech development in a fun experience and helps grow children's passions for reading. Charming illustrations that feature the setting of Missoula and its surrounding area draw the reader in.

Author Kate Racicot holds degrees in education as well as speech pathology and audiology, and illustrator Kim Brown in psychology, art, and education. The book is available through Farcountry Press.

The Remarkable Cause: A Novel of James Lovell and the Crucible of the Revolution

by Jean C. O’Connor

Beginning with a few sentences in her grandmother’s journal, retired Helena teacher Jean C. O’Connor uncovered the story of the Lovells: Master John Lovell, headmaster at the Boston Latin School, and his son James, the under-teacher or “usher.”

At the time James became a teacher, protests against the Stamp Act were ongoing. Mob violence, burning figures in effigy, destruction of the governor’s house and desecration of shops of any who supported the stamps were common. One can imagine the arguments that must have occurred between James and his father, as both taught in the same large square room. James agreed with the Patriots and the same large square room. James

Beyond the Rio Gila

by Scott G. Hibbard

In 1844, 17-year-old Moses Cole leaves home when his pa lays him out with a number two shovel, walks from the Shenandoah farmstead to Pennsylvania and stumbles into the First Dragoons as an underage recruit. So begins the story’s geographical arc which carries the reader from Virginia to San Diego and back through the journey of Private Moses Cole. Its emotional arc includes loss, gain and hard lessons as Moses Cole comes-of-age before returning to his soul mate back home.

The Front

by Journey Herbeck

For one family living on the very western edge of the Great Plains, life runs parallel to the forces that always endangered its existence. There was a price to obtain this parallel life, of course, but the family had paid it and for once found a way to survive. They had a little water. They had a little food. They had a little work. They were fine—until they weren’t. Taking place in the span of 24 hours, The Front follows a man and his 9-year-old niece as they try to cross the Northern Line. The 1,900-mile march of the Mormon Battalion is the longest in U.S. military history, and included four laundresses, two of whom were pregnant. The people who made the march and the qualities they summoned to do so, including courage, stamina, determination, faith and self-reliance in service to community and its larger purpose, are inspirational and should be remembered.

Similar to and entwined with these events, is the saga of the First Dragoons—forerunner to the U.S. Cavalry—who marched beside that of the Mormon Battalion but followed a shorter, though not easier, route from Fort Leavenworth to San Diego. The Battle of San Pasqual with its deadly engagement with Californios lancers, which in large measure featured sword against sword, should also be remembered.

“The book isn’t rooted in the land. In reading his work, you will quickly find yourself falling into the rhythm of a horse, you will smell the particular scent of melting snow, feel the pain of sun-split skin. His language is direct, colloquial at times, occasionally poetic—but never forced. His writing does what every good writer wishes: It lifts you off the page.” —Yvonne L. Seng, author, Men in Black Dresses

Beaver and Otter Get Along...

Sort of: A Story of Griot and Patience Between Neighbors

by Sneed B. Collard III

Beaver and Otter couldn’t be more different! For many years, the landscape was shabby and rundown, with few plants or animals. Along came Beaver. He built a dam, a pond formed and new animal friends arrived. Things were looking good.

But then the otters show up. The beavers find their new neighbors irritating. The otters goof around and do whatever they want. They even break the beavers’ stuff.

Will Beaver and Otter ever get along? Sort of...

This is a story of getting along with your neighbors, even when it’s really hard. The book includes educational backmatter with further information about these animals and their habitats. Illustrator Meg Sodano provides gorgeous art to complement the scientific accuracy of this tale set in the natural world.

Cold War Montana

by Ken Robison

Less than a year after the end of WWII, the lowering of the Iron Curtain by former ally Joseph Stalin announced the beginning of the Cold War. This is one of the most powerful nuclear missile systems in the world, Montana was involved for carrying both. Great Falls was the aerial gateway for military aircraft, trained crews for the Berlin airlift and mobilized the Ground Observer Corps. During the war, Gore Field became the operating base for the 7th Ferrying Group, working with the USSR to provide significant Red Air Force strength, but Soviet spies also ferried stolen nuclear and industrial secrets, loaded diplomatic pouches, back to the Soviet Union.

By the end of WWII, about one million displaced persons (DPs) of Eastern and Central Europe were in German refugee camps; Montanans sponsored them to live in their communities. Army Lt. Diane Carlson served as “an angel of mercy” at the Pleiku Evacuation Hospital in Vietnam. Young smokejumper “Hog” Daniels joined the CIA’s secret war in Southeast Asia. In 1962, the Cuban Missile Crisis highlighted the importance of the ICBMs located near Great Falls. When President Kennedy visited a year later, he paid tribute to this “ace in the hole.” Malmstrom AFB still is an important player in Montana and the defense of the United States.

Ken Robison, retired Navy captain and renowned local author, brings these and many more stories to life and gives his own eye-witness reports in sidebars, using both archival and his own photos to enhance the riveting text. Robison is the historian at the Overholser Historical Research Center and for the Great Falls/Cascade County Historic Preservation Commission.
Hidden Treasure in Montana

Story and photos by Jeffrey Conger

The Paris Gibson Square Museum of Art

This is more than an art museum. It’s a makerspace, community center, event venue and gift store. Through growing membership and dynamic staff, the beloved Paris Gibson Square Museum of Art is now stronger than ever. With a belief that art is truly for everyone, The Square (as it’s known to locals) offers countless exhibitions with ongoing gallery tours, after-school art classes and a full range of adult courses throughout the year.

Engaging the community with special offerings for seniors, veterans, adults and youths, many popular programs include classes in ceramics, sculpture, drawing, jewelry making and fiber arts. They even offer signature events like “Date Nights” and “Textile Tuesdays” that often have a waitlist.

Created in 1977 by the efforts of several local artists in collaboration with the Junior League and the school district, together they transformed the historic former school into an art museum and educational resource for the community. Now led by Executive Director Sarah Justice, Curator of Exhibitions and Collections Nicole Maria Evans and Director of Education Ellie Weber, this massive sandstone building serves as the epicenter of the contemporary creative culture in the region.

Be sure to visit the Paris Gibson Square Museum of Art in downtown Great Falls or find them online at www.the-square.org to learn more about one of their many upcoming events.
Imagine you’re an art major. Call it the early 1970s, and you and fellow students have spent a lively evening at the home of two of your favorite teachers, one of many informal gatherings where good conversation and laughter have been shared. The home is on the outskirts of town, and if the evening has run late, cubbyholes behind the snug living room built-in couches hold blankets and pillows for guests. One or two shaggy-haired undergrads clad in Levi’s and flannel shirts, snoozing within the airy midcentury space, would have been quite a sight—especially since nearly every horizontal surface in the place contained wonderful ceramic art, much of it made by the students themselves.

Sitting on one of those handy living room couches, I spend a Saturday afternoon with Shelburn, West Yellowstone poet Noelle Sullivan, ceramicist Stephanie Alexander and MSU School of Art Interim Director Josh DeWeese for a tour and discussion of Frances’ home and work. The inapramability of the house and its contents, in fact, is the result of its owner’s life and upbringing. Born to missionary parents in Cameroon, Africa in 1914, Frances Senska came of age learning to make whatever she needed: furniture, tools, cups and plates. Shelburn relates that Frances stitched almost all her own clothing along with the jewelry to go with the outfits, some of which she referred to as costumes. Preparing for the Senska family’s return to the States when Frances was still young, her father carefully selected the wood for the crates he had nailed together to ship their possessions home, on their arrival in America, she disassembled those crates to build furniture still found in the home today.

The Senska clan’s do-it-yourself ethos quickly found its way into Frances’ work. She completed a B.A. and M.A. at the University of Iowa and began teaching painting and drawing at the state’s Grinnell College. But when World War II erupted, her job ended; the school decided the war effort was needed: furniture, tools, cups and plates. Shelburn relates that Frances gathered and molded and fired up her students in the same way she shaped her utilitarian, earth-tone pots. No fan of shiny finishes or practical, decorative craft. Frances didn’t necessarily disagree, but she also knew that it was as valid an art as any.

By way of example, Shelburn holds up a distinctive lidded jar, the size of a gallon milk jug, black with incised figurative designs, and cradles it to her chest. It’s what Frances called “Ya Ba Bo,” an African influenced vessel whose name translates as “it will be nine.” In Cameroon, the number nine was associated with luck and each Ya Ba Bo would be personalized with details of an individual’s life to reflect good fortune. Damaged, it had been conscripted for service as a cookie jar, a use Frances found as noble as anything else. And when Frances passed away on Christmas Day in 2009, the vessel took on one more useful role—holding her ashes before they were scattered on the property.

Building an art program at Montana State University in Bozeman that funky, unassuming house still stands. Built in 1953, it was created as a home and studio for a pair of remarkable artists. But in the years following its completion, the house became much more than a cozy midcentury space, would have been quite a sight—especially since scores of this “Kootenai clay” careering down the hillside; they’d bag it up in an unrolled flume made of canvas, her students would heartily send it to the large gas-fired kiln at the center of the room; your eyes widen with wonder as you realize their buttons are hand-made, too: tiny seeds and buttons of seeds suspended in half round domes of resin.

Today the Senska Wilber house remains a vital force in the arts due to its ongoing use as a home and studio by Shelburn Murray, Senska’s friend, caretaker and fellow ceramic artist. Shelburn inhabits the home with a light touch, leaving much in place just as Frances and Jessie left it. Indeed, watch Art All the Time, a KUSM documentary filmed there in the ’90s, and you’ll see the home as it was then—with much of the art and furnishings in the same spots they are today.

Shelburn turns on a tape deck and African rhythms fill the small, cinderblock-walled space. Frances preferred music with energy while she was throwing and kept a steady stream of new African and Asiatic music flowing to Montana courtesy of her own cassette deck and the Bee Gees’ “Night Fever” thumps into the space, mixing with Frances’ rhythms. These mingled measures fill the vibe: multiple artistic visions and generations, melding through a common excitement for making great things.

The home she and Jessie made reflected this as well. Jessie’s shoe screens above the built-in couches are a simple and eloquent contribution to the whole, much as her prints draw on the spare sensibilities of Japanese woodcuts. Shelburn remarks that even the house’s location was a bold statement when it was built, saying people thought it was out “in the sticks” in those days. Bozeman’s spectacular growth has changed that; the house is surrounded by town, and the growing MSU campus is easily within view. Indeed, our chat is briefly interrupted by the dull boom of the stadium’s touchdown cannon when the Cats score against Idaho State.

By way of example, Shelburn holds up a distinctive lidded jar, the size of a gallon milk jug, black with incised figurative designs, and cradles it to her chest. It’s what Frances called “Ya Ba Bo,” an African influenced vessel whose name translates as “it will be nine.” In Cameroon, the number nine was associated with luck and each Ya Ba Bo would be personalized with details of an individual’s life to reflect good fortune. Damaged, it had been conscripted for service as a cookie jar, a use Frances found as noble as anything else. And when Frances passed away on Christmas Day in 2009, the vessel took on one more useful role—holding her ashes before they were scattered on the property.

Building an art program at Montana State University in Bozeman that funky, unassuming house still stands. Built in 1953, it was created as a home and studio for a pair of remarkable artists. But in the years following its completion, the house became much more than a cozy midcentury space, would have been quite a sight—especially since scores of this “Kootenai clay” careering down the hillside; they’d bag it up in an unrolled flume made of canvas, her students would heartily send it to the large gas-fired kiln at the center of the room; your eyes widen with wonder as you realize their buttons are hand-made, too: tiny seeds and buttons of seeds suspended in half round domes of resin.

Today the Senska Wilber house remains a vital force in the arts due to its ongoing use as a home and studio by Shelburn Murray, Senska’s friend, caretaker and fellow ceramic artist. Shelburn inhabits the home with a light touch, leaving much in place just as Frances and Jessie left it. Indeed, watch Art All the Time, a KUSM documentary filmed there in the ’90s, and you’ll see the home as it was then—with much of the art and furnishings in the same spots they are today.

What’s perhaps most remarkable is that Senska didn’t attempt to build the entire structure singlehandedly; her work ethic around craft and utility meant figuring things out on your own, making things by hand as they were needed, and letting form be shaped by function as well as fashion.

Today the Senska Wilber house remains a vital force in the arts due to its ongoing use as a home and studio by Shelburn Murray, Senska’s friend, caretaker and fellow ceramic artist. Shelburn inhabits the home with a light touch, leaving much in place just as Frances and Jessie left it. Indeed, watch Art All the Time, a KUSM documentary filmed there in the ’90s, and you’ll see the home as it was then—with much of the art and furnishings in the same spots they are today.
Beyond Intention At Paris Gibson Square

Paris Gibson Square Museum of Art presents Beyond Intention, an exhibition that showcases the work of three contemporary fiber and mixed-media artists: Maggy Rozyczki Hiltner, Ashley V. Blalock and Jennifer Reifsneider. The exhibition is comprised of work that features vintage archetypical characters woven into dystopian scenes, an installation of brightly colored looming crocheted environments and beautifully complex grid-like patterns that tempt chance through order. Curator of Exhibitions and Collections Nicole Maria Evans explained that via the presentation of the artists’ work, Beyond Intention aims to address the concept of intention as it relates to the practice of contemporary fiber art making in women’s lives, and the multivalent qualities of the materials in the face of their utilitarian origins.

Works shown in four of the principal galleries of the museum utilize established craft techniques such as crochet, needlepoint, quilting, knot tying and pattern making, but re-imagine their purpose and use by transforming those traditions into contemporary artwork that also moves beyond the practicality of product. The very act of making is an example of the complexity of intention, because often the repetitious or intense focus provides a sense of control, relief or even serves as catharsis. Thus, the intention of the work made becomes layered with complex meaning that is tactile, emotional, conceptual and fluid. These traditional methods and materials like thread, yarn and cloth become a conduit for discussion as it pertains to identity, social roles and community constructs.

Three distinct bodies of work are presented separately in the galleries. Each artist uses personal topics of inquiry to further the discussion of intention:

Maggy Rozyczki Hiltner presents Cast of Characters. Hiltner searches antique shops, thrift stores and yard sales for embroidered linens, collecting the brightly colored flowers, foliage and animals that appear in her work. What she cannot find, she hand-stitches and mixes in with the collected embroidery. She uses the familiarity of the stitch along with seemingly lighthearted and cheerful designs to convey more serious subject matter. She often uses humor and Dicky and Jane-style characters to tell her stories, and very rarely is everything quite what it seems.

Ashley V. Blalock creates two installation environments with Keeping Up Appearances and The Yellow Wallpaper. She uses craft-based process to create objects and site-responsive installations inspired by everyday artifacts from the domestic sphere. These larger-than-life vibrant crocheted doilies tied to gallery walls overtake the viewer. They confront compulsion to control or influence a perceived outward appearance in the domestic life and hint at the unease that exists below the surface of the woman’s perceived position in the domestic environment.

Beyond Intention can be seen Oct. 1, 2021, through Feb. 11, 2022. Paris Gibson Square Museum of Art is located at 1400 1st Avenue North, Great Falls. Admission is FREE to the public; ask about membership. Visit www.the-square.org, or call 406.727.8255 for further information.

Photos courtesy of Paris Gibson Square Museum of Art
MAM Recognizes 15 Years of the Frost Gallery for Contemporary American Indian Art

By Carey Powers

This year, the Missoula Art Museum marks 15 years of the Lynda M. Frost Gallery for Contemporary American Indian Art. The Frost Gallery was dedicated during the museum’s expansion and re-opening in 2006 as a space to perpetually exhibit work by contemporary American Indian artists. This gallery serves to honor the creative and cultural contributions of Indigenous people to contemporary art and to ensure that Indigenous artists will always have a place to celebrate those contributions.

The Frost Gallery has featured 41 exhibitions since its dedication, 28 of which have been solo, the remaining mix of group shows featuring both works from the museum’s collection and loans. Together with the museum’s promise of free admission, MAM is breaking down barriers of access and increasing the representation of Indigenous artists.

Over 80 artists have exhibited in the Frost Gallery since 2006. Together, they represent a myriad of over 60 distinct Tribal affiliations and enrollments. This list of artists ranges from nationally known, like Wendy Red Star and Nicholas Galanin, to regional favorites like Sean Chandler, Molly Murphy-Adams, and Corwin Clairmont.

While MAM has dedicated this gallery to contemporary American Indian art, artists with Tribal affiliations or heritage are not confined to that space. At least a dozen additional exhibitions mounted in other galleries have featured Indigenous art since the Frost opened in 2006. Selections from the Contemporary American Indian Art Collection (CAIAC) feature prominently in many collection shows.

The CAIAC was created in 1997, following the gift of two prints by Jaune Quick-to-See Smith from the artist. Today, the CAIAC contains over 250 objects by the nation’s most recognizable and powerful Native artists, and is the most sought after part of the collection, with frequent requests for loans. Currently, MAM holds the largest collection of contemporary Indigenous art in the state and the largest collection of Quick-to-See Smith’s work in any museum.

The dedication of the Frost Gallery allowed the Museum to focus programming specifically related to Indigenous art. “The gallery catalyzed our commitment to showcasing and supporting Indigenous artists,” said Brandon Rients, senior curator at MAM.

In 2017, MAM began hosting Indian Country Conversations, a series of public discussions which provide a platform for public engagement with Indigenous artists, scholars and advocates. In spring 2021, curatorial and educational staff at the museum trialled the Art Host program, where representatives in Tribal communities across the state served as a conduit between Native peoples and the museum’s exhibitions. With help from the Art Bridges Foundation, all eight hosts were compensated for their time and energy given to this nascent project. Additionally, an exhibition featuring Indigenous art is often featured in the annual fifth Grade Art Experience, the Museum’s free field trip program for elementary school children.

Neal Ambrose-Smith:


UM Receives $850,000 Google.org Grant to Support Indigenous Women Entrepreneurs

The University of Montana’s startup incubator MontEC has received an $850,000 grant from the Google.org Impact Challenge for Women and Girls to support Indigenous women looking to start or grow a business in Montana.

MontEC will use the funds in collaboration with Salish Kootenai College and Blackfeet Community College to develop online programming in a variety of subjects to support new and existing female-owned businesses.

“Women of color, in particular, are incredibly underrepresented in business and leadership roles,” said Morgan Stemberger, director of women’s entrepreneurship and leadership at UM.

“We will use this generous grant from Google to support and supplement the existing strength of Indigenous women by providing them with culturally empowering online courses.”

The Montana Artrepreneur Program (MAP) has been supporting artists for well over a decade through its robust arts-centered business program taught by working, professional artists. Together with a coach, participants learn about and develop 35 attainable tools designed to build a sustainable arts business and affirm the role of artist as a profession. Through completion of this process, artists are invited to submit their toolkits to become MAP Certified, a designation of professional achievement and entwined into a statewide network of working artists.

As we move into a new calendar year, two recent MAP cohorts—led by veteran coaches Lisa Chappin Zoller and Nickie van Berkum—have completed their program under hybrid and fully remote models, respectively. Two of those artists, Hazer Novich of Corvallis and Amber Scally of Martinsdale, represent the high caliber and range of artists who choose to participate in MAP. They’ve shared a bit of their journeys here.

When Hazer Novich first learned about MAP from another artist who had recommended it to him and through further conversation with MAC staff, he thought he might not be qualified to participate. Following nearly a decade of work as a professional photographer capturing Montana’s emblematic scenery, he was at a point of transition in his artistic career. Having come to the realization that his work had become more about documentation than creative exploration, he began thinking about another path. By his own description, it was a very long four- to five-year road of experimentation and contemplation.

A lifelong creative and builder of things, Hazer began an entirely new path of exploration from an unusual point of departure: the acquisition of 5 tons of plexiglass.

Having been primarily involved with capturing light through his photography, working with a translucent material wasn’t such a stretch. Capable of capturing light and allowing for light-containing composition, plexi, Hazer found, is a medium with endless opportunity. Honing new skills such as welding naturally combined with Hazer’s maker tendencies, leading to sculpture creation which he has working with tangible rather than intangible light. The added beauty of his new discipline is the opportunity to engage with viewers and initiate conversations around the concept of use of this transparent and translucent material.

For Hazer, MAP came at a pivotal time that allowed him to shed the “self-taught chip on my shoulder” and delve more deeply into his purpose. Through the act of having to write an artist statement and personal mission during his MAP experience, Hazer had reason to converse with fellow artists in the program, longtime artist friends and mentors, and to hone his purpose: sharing this progression in his work and being encouraged to articulate the results have deepened his experience as an artist and given way to new possibility.

Amber Scally, a working mom and former speech therapist, had a sticky note on her refrigerator “for about five years” reminding her to APPLY TO MAP. Just before the pandemic shifted everything, Amber had come to realize she needed more time at home with her family—and more time for her art—and had begun to make a change. Having missed a previous MAP deadline proved to be a blessing in disguise, allowing her the time and space to focus on her art practice and her goals. Thrilled for the opportunity to participate in MAP upon her application in the next round, and having already familialized herself with MAP tools, she wanted no time in becoming more single-minded in her focus to pursue a primary studio medium of working in graphics. capable of capturing light and allowing for light-containing composition, plexi, Hazer found, is a medium with endless opportunity. Honing new skills such as welding naturally combined with Hazer’s maker tendencies, leading to sculpture creation which he has working with tangible rather than intangible light. The added beauty of his new discipline is the opportunity to engage with viewers and initiate conversations around the concept of use of this transparent and translucent material.

Midway through her MAP experience, an artist friend pressed her to articulate what she was gaining from the program. Beyond the opportunity to fully focus on developing her art business and sharing the experience with her fellow MAP artists, Amber struggled to offer a succinct answer. That prompted her to think more deliberately about an answer and to boil it down to what she saw as the essential impact for her.

“I have a terrible memory” she confessed, a truth that led her to create a mnemonic device for remembering and sharing her salient takeaways for others. “M.T.C.” For purpose, Amber explained, represents her experience of having to identify her purpose beyond a spurious one step at a time, and having already familiarized herself with MAP tools, she was able to apply to her emerging business, “C stands for connection—her connection with other artists in her cohort and the MAP community at large, as well as connections made through mentorship—a key element of the program, and finally, “T” stands for tangible tools—the checklist of MAP tools such as a resume and portfolio that, one step at a time, are already leading her to her new professional life as an artist under her business, AFA Art.

Upcoming 2022 MAP Deadlines:

Application Process Open

Applications for participation in MAP during the 2022-23 fiscal year will be accepted through 11:59 p.m. on May 2, 2022. To apply, visit https://art.mt.gov/map.

MAP Certification

For artists looking to certify this year, toolboxes are due to the Montana Arts Council office by May 2 by 5:00 p.m. and may be dropped off or shipped to: Montana Arts Council, 830 N. Warren Street, Helena, MT 59601.

For Hazer, MAP came at a pivotal time that allowed him to shed the “self-taught chip on my shoulder” and delve more deeply into his purpose. Through the act of having to write an artist statement and personal mission during his MAP experience, Hazer had reason to converse with fellow artists in the program, longtime artist friends and mentors, and to hone his purpose: sharing this progression in his work and being encouraged to articulate the results have deepened his experience as an artist and given way to new possibility.

Amber Scally, a working mom and former speech therapist, had a sticky note on her refrigerator “for about five years” reminding her to APPLY TO MAP. Just before the pandemic shifted everything, Amber had come to realize she needed more time at home with her family—and more time for her art—and had begun to make a change. Having missed a previous MAP deadline proved to be a blessing in disguise, allowing her the time and space to focus on her art practice and her goals. Thrilled for the opportunity to participate in MAP upon her application in the next round, and having already familialized herself with MAP tools, she wanted no time in becoming more single-minded in her focus to pursue a primary studio medium of working in graphics.
Over the past six months, the Montana Arts Council has been working to bring attention to the professional practice of serving older adult learners, a field within arts education known as creative aging. The primary focus of this field is to provide high-quality, robust, sequential arts learning experiences for the diverse needs of adults 65 and over. Built on two decades of research and evidence that demonstrate the cognitive, social, emotional and health benefits of lifelong learning in the arts, creative aging has been recognized as a critical national movement.

Thanks to a grant awarded to the Montana Arts Council by the National Assembly of State Arts Agencies (NASAA) in the winter of 2021, we are currently engaged in a planning year around creative aging program planning and partnerships. Centered on the needs of older adult learners in our state and on the professional development needs of those arts organizations who seek to serve this group, an advisory group has been formed to engage a broad spectrum of stakeholders in this work. Emphasis will be placed on creative aging as a component of diversity, equity, inclusion and access work, as well as on combating ageism.

Together with our staff and with support from national experts in the field, the advisory group will research the creative aging work already taking place in our state, the available resources and national resources to drive development and best practices, and prepare an opportunity to support our older adult population. These findings will be compiled in a Montana-based guidebook that will be presented to arts organizations and artists in their development of creative aging programs for older adult learners in our state. To help inform the work of the Creative Aging Advisory Group, we will conduct focus groups and interviews with Arts in Schools and Communities grants, visit https://art.mt.gov/aisc_registry or call 406-837-4886 or bigforksummerplayhouse.org or learn more about the Poetry Out Loud contest that will accommodate independently submitted oral recitations of poems from throughout history, including those of currently and recently deceased poets. These are the poems students are drawn to personally. Once poems are chosen, students take time off from school and community centers. Two longstanding national organizations supporting the teaching artist field, the Teaching Artists Guild and the Association for Teaching Artists, have recently merged to better serve the national community and to strengthen their arts learning advocacy efforts.

In Montana, teaching artists commonly work with schools to fill https://art.mt.gov/aisc_registry the gaps created when certified arts teachers are not present in the school, or to enhance learning experiences within the arts through the teaching artists’ professional skills. Of great interest and current need by many schools in the state, Indigenous artists in Montana are called upon to provide learning experiences that are culturally relevant to these students. At this time, MAC’s teaching artists registry is undergoing a refresh. All teaching artists working in Montana are encouraged to apply for inclusion as a teaching artist, and to subsequently renew their current registry listing by visiting https://art.mt.gov/aisc_registry for support contact Arts Education Director Monica Grable at Monica.Grable@mt.gov or by phone at 406-444-6522.
Bozeman Symphony: Scheherazade
logjampresents.com
The Wood Brothers
- 7:30 p.m. March 20,
Fergus County Performing Arts, 406-855-7829 or www.westernartcenter.com/arts/community/concerts

Central Montana Community Concert: Kassia Ensemble
- 2 p.m. Jan. 30, Fergus County Performing Arts, 406-855-7829 or www.westernartcenter.com/arts/community/concerts

LIVINGSTON
Sara Levy’s Salons: Quartets from the Bach Family
- 7:30 p.m. Jan. 30, St. Edith’s House, Montana, baroquemusicmontana.org

MISSOULA
Mussorgsky Symphony: Family to Mendelssohn
- 7 p.m. Jan. 11, Carbon County Arts Guild & Depot Gallery, 406-682-6965 or carbonartsmuseum.com

Missoula Symphony: Symphony Kids 3
- 7 p.m. Feb. 14, Malta High School, 406-728-9125 or www.mtactors.com

The Fab Four – The Ultimate Beatles Tribute - 8 p.m. March 5, The Ruby, 406-728-9125 or www.mtactors.com

Sara Levy’s Salons: Quartets from the Bach Family
- 7:30 p.m. Jan. 30, St. Edith’s House, Montana, baroquemusicmontana.org

State of the Arts • Winter 2022

The State of the Arts is curated by LiveTimes.com. To submit arts-related events for the next issue, head to events.livetimess.com or email details to write@livetimes.com (no classes, please). Deadline for the Spring Edition (April-June) is Friday, March 4.
Music Making Page 10

A frame drum’s lacing helps determine its pitch and tone while contributing to its aesthetic appeal.