Montana Poet Laureate
Nominations due April 10 for 2019-2021 honoree

The Montana Poet Laureate nominations are now open! The Poet Laureate recognizes and honors a citizen poet of exceptional talent and accomplishment and encourages appreciation of poetry and literary life in Montana.

The Poet Laureate is chosen on the basis of three criteria:
1. Artistic excellence and achievement;
2. Ongoing contributions to the cultural community; and

To be eligible, the poet must reside in Montana and have been a resident for at least one year.

Do you know a poet that you think should be the next Poet Laureate for Montana? The nomination process is easy: identify the poet you are nominating, share your favorite poem by the poet, and tell us why you enjoy it, and why you feel they should be the Poet Laureate.

Nominated poets will have the opportunity to accept or decline consideration. If the poet accepts, their nomination will be reviewed and presented to the Governor to make the final selection. The deadline to submit a nomination is 5 p.m. April 10, 2019. Nominations can be made through a web-based survey at art.mt.gov. To request a hard copy nomination form call 406-444-6430.

Fort Peck Theatre celebrates 50 years of summer theatre with a reunion and celebration June 27-30.

Jewel of the Prairie celebrates 50 seasons

By Kristi Niemeyer
When the Fort Peck Theatre opened in 1934, silent movies ran 24 hours a day, seven days a week, to accommodate the flood of workers who were constructing mighty Fort Peck Dam. Even though it was built as a temporary structure, the elegant chalet-style building survived the test of time. In 1970, an enthusiastic group of community members launched its first season of summer theater.

Fifty years later, the “Jewel of the Prairie” continues to bring live theatre “to the middle of nowhere,” attracting audiences from across Montana, North Dakota, Canada and beyond.

The theatre’s many friends and fans gather June 27-30 for the 50th anniversary celebration, which kicks off Thursday with an alumni rehearsal for Saturday’s revue. At 7:30 p.m. Friday, enjoy the frisky musical, “Mamma Mia!” A “Black(ish)-tie Gala” follows for the cast, board and professional theatre alumni.

Headwaters: Helena students premiere choral work

More than 130 singers from Helena and Capital High in Helena performed the world premiere of a complex, one-of-a-kind choral piece called “Headwaters” this February in a project commissioned by The Myrna Loy with support from the National Endowment for the Arts.

At the premiere at St. Paul’s United Methodist Church, the singers flowed throughout the sanctuary, emulating rivers, mountain ranges, wind in the forests. Expanding on the main lyric, “I am headwaters, new above ground,” they became the map of the land they were singing about.

The project is one of several programs at The Myrna Loy to support artists, commission new works, and provide stellar arts education opportunities to people of all ages. “Headwaters” resounded in all three ways: It brought a new piece into the world by acclaimed singer/composer Moira Smiley; she based the lyrics on reflections by young Helena writers on their sense of place; it required the choir students to master 11-note chords and complex dissonances (while in motion); and the project may lead to more and bigger opportunities in the future.

The choirs did such a beautiful job, it brings tears to my eyes,” composer Smiley said the day after the premiere. “As a composer, you can only work with how you hope it will sound. A piece doesn’t come to life until the singers perform it.”

Festivities wrap up with a Theatre for Young Audiences production of “Alice in Wonderland” at 10 a.m. Sunday and a 4 p.m. performance of “Mamma Mia!”

Bringing theatre to the hinterlands

When the theatre first opened, 50,000 people lived nearby; now, the town of Fort Peck is home to about 200 year-around residents.
The most consistent season

We are in the most consistent of any Montana’s seasons: the legislative session. For 90 days in odd-numbered years, 150 elected officials gather in the capital and make decisions that guide the state for the next two years. Biennial legislatures have become increasingly rare, and Montana is one of just a handful of states to maintain the practice. The pace is quick and the work is focused and productive. The Montana Arts Council (MAC) is moving through the process with good support from the committees reviewing our funding bills.

Supporters of the arts frequently ask me what they can do to help increase support for MAC. While I understand the ultimate goal is an increase in funding, I feel that MAC is in a positive environment. Protecting that goodwill, while establishing the worthiness of additional resources, is the best way on demonstrating the benefits of the present investment.

I have yet to meet a legislator – knock on wood – who is against the arts. Often the stumbling block is uncertainty if public support of the arts is the best use of taxpayer dollars. Legislators understand that all government services, MAC provides resources aimed at equalizing opportunities. We strive to strike a balance between secure investments, encouraging innovation, and ensuring there’s a wide variety of artistic experiences in all parts of the state, so that anyone can be engaged in the arts.

Experience fosters enthusiasm

MAC’s most enthusiastic legislative supporters are those with first-hand experiences. For some, their children have had a visit from the Art Mobile or Montana Shakespeare in the Schools, both grantees of MAC. High school students from their districts have represented Montana at Poetry Out Loud National Finals. Others have witnessed the economic value that culture brings. Economists can be found on the NGA website, nga.org, research from the National Endowment for the Arts and its rural prosperity guide.

Joe Smiley

Smiley spent two full days rehearsing with the combined choirs, practicing choreography and gestures, and making last-minute adjustments to the music. And on the second evening, the students were invited to hear Smiley perform with the one of many ensembles that keeps the singer on the road.

“You couldnae do a project like this with just any choir director,” said Keys Holmen of The Mya’l Lo, who welded the NEA funds to support the commission. "It takes a skilled and fearless director like Molly to take on wood – who is against the arts. Often the stumbling block is uncertainty if public support of the arts is the best use of taxpayer dollars. Legislators understand that all government services, MAC provides resources aimed at equalizing opportunities. We strive to strike a balance between secure investments, encouraging innovation, and ensuring there’s a wide variety of artistic experiences in all parts of the state, so that anyone can be engaged in the arts.

**State of the Arts**

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

State of the Arts welcomes submissions of photographs, press releases and newsworthy information from individual artists and arts organizations. Please check with the Montana Arts Council for reprint permission.

Next Deadline: The deadline for submissions is June 3 for the Summer issue (July-September).

Send items to: Montana Arts Council, PO Box 202201, Helena, MT 59620-2201; phone 406-444-6430, fax 406-444-6548 or email mac@mt.gov.

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

**Headwaters**

(from page 1)

Rural Prosperity Through the Arts and Creative Sector

**Rural Prosperity Through the Arts and Creative Sector**

A Rural Action Guide for Governors and States synthesizes a growing body of research showing how arts-based economic development – already responsible for more than $600,000 jobs in rural states – can help communities to thrive. The guide grew out of a collaborative initiative between the NGA Center for Best Practices, the National Endowment for the Arts and the National Assembly of State Arts Agencies.

The NGA undertook this project to help states address the urgent challenges facing rural communities, many of which are struggling with unemployment rates, manufacturing declines and outmigration.

“Governors need fresh, results-oriented approaches that boost economic opportunities, create jobs, retain young people and preserve a great quality of life for our small towns and undeveloped areas,” said Scott D. Pattison, NGA CEO and executive director. “Our analysis indicates that leadership from governors and smart public policies can help the creative sector realize its potential as a catalyst of growth and pride in rural communities.”

According to the guide, when rural regions lose their traditional industries, they can capitalize on their creative assets to re-imagine and realize – a new future. Drawing on quantitative data, an extensive review of existing research and practices and insights from a national panel of rural development experts, the guide offers a five-point policy framework and 27 policy action steps, illustrated by 100 examples of how arts-based strategies have worked in diverse geographic settings.

From Appalachian coal communities to our agricultural heartland to the mountain west, the examples in this action guide reveal how the arts and culture can contribute to rural vitality,” said Mary Anne Carter, acting chairman of the National Endowment for the Arts. “We藝works to create a statewide professional development program that is forming a powerful cohort of kindergarten through grade 12 art and music teacher-leaders for Montana classrooms. These teacher-leaders then support other teachers around the state through a close-knit social support network that is positively addressing mental health among the state’s teen population.

A NEA ArtsWork grants called “Montana Teacher Leaders in the Arts” supports this effort. A section devoted to “Enhancing art-based entrepreneurial ecosystems by supporting artist entrepreneurs” discusses MAP, which expanded the Montana MAP certification program for rural visual artists by providing personal coaching and other business and marketing training over 10 months. Artists who received MAP certification between 2009 and 2014 experienced, on average, a 650 percent net sales increase and an 87 percent out-of-state sales increase.

Rural residents love their communities and hold deep attachments to the places they call home. The arts and culture mobilize that pride and harness the optimism of rural America.

Rural Prosperity Through the Arts and Creative Sector was produced by the NGA through a cooperative agreement with the National Endowment for the Arts in collaboration with the National Assembly of State Arts Agencies (NASSA). Related resources can be found on the NGA website, nga.org, research from the National Endowment for the Arts and its rural prosperity guide.

The Montana story

The report highlights two innovative Montanans: Arts Council programs. Montana Teacher Leaders in the Arts (MTLA) and the Montana Aprendent Program.

In a section devoted to “Enhancing art-based entrepreneurial ecosystems by supporting artist entrepreneurs” discusses MAP, which expanded the Montana MAP certification program for rural visual artists by providing personal coaching and other business and marketing training over 10 months. Artists who received MAP certification between 2009 and 2014 experienced, on average, a 650 percent net sales increase and an 87 percent out-of-state sales increase.

Rural residents love their communities and hold deep attachments to the places they call home. The arts and culture mobilize that pride and harness the optimism of rural America.
Montana artist Theodore Waddell, whose paintings grace the colors of the winter issue of Luxury Magazine while an article titled “Waddell’s West” by Jason Edward Kaufman, begins on page 180, and includes several images of his work. The article begins: “In his majestically abstract paintings of animals grazing Western landscapes, Theodore Waddell marries passions for ranching and modern art.” Read the story online at www.luxurymagazine.com/issue/Winter2018/art.

Shawna Moore of Whitefish and Catherine Courtway of Bozeman, whose paintings were on display Feb. 6-3 March at Telluride Gallery of Art in Telluride, CO, as part of the “Winter Highlights” exhibit. Paintings by Courtway were also featured at Art Miami, a modern and contemporary art fair market, held Dec. 4-9 in Miami.

Teresa Garland Warner of Missoula and Kadin Goldberg of Red Lodge, who each had paintings included in the National Oil and Acrylic Painters’ Society online International Fall 2018 Exhibition, on display at noaps.org. Their pieces were among 150 paintings selected from over 900 international entries.

Billings artist Jane Waggoner Deschner, who was selected to join award-winning artist Marilyn Arts on “Her Flag,” a collaboration with 36 artists who live in each of the 36 states that ratified the 19th amendment granting women the right to vote. Each of these 36 artists will design one stripe of the 18-by-36-foot flag that Arts will sew in the capital city of each state, beginning June 8 in Madison, WI. Her 14-month journey across the United States celebrates the 100th anniversary of women gaining the right to vote. “Her Flag” is a not a political piece of work, but rather a powerful positive symbol used to educate and celebrate this truly momentous American anniversary,” says the Oklahoma artist.

Dillon artist Tom Foolery, whose “Victory Parade” was featured in “Winter in America,” on display Jan. 3-Feb. 2 at Gallery 114 in Portland, OR. The sculpture is from his ongoing Dark Horse Series.

Three Montana authors whose works were among 28 titles shortlisted for the Reading the West Book Awards, given annually by the Mountains & Plains Independent Bookellers Association (MPIBA). Finalists include The Weight of an Infinite Sky by Carrie La Seur (fiction); Volcano Dreams by Janet Fox (picture books); and The Swan Keeper by Milana Marsenich (young adult fiction). Readers and book lovers are encouraged to vote for their favorite shortlist titles online at mountainsplains.org/vote. The winning titles will be announced on April 15 via email and social media.

The Missoula Writing Collaborative (MWC), a nonprofit started in 1994 to bring professional writers into school classrooms to teach students to write poems, which received a 2019 Library of Congress State Literacy Award, will be announced on April 15 via email and social media.

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ImagineIF Libraries’ Senior Librarian Megan Glidden, who has been selected as an American Library Association Emerging Leader for the Class of 2019. The American Library Association (ALA) Emerging Leaders (EL) program is a leadership development program which enables newer library workers from across the country to participate in problem-solving work groups, network with peers, and have an opportunity to serve the profession in a leadership capacity. As head of the Community Engagement Team at ImagineIF,

Gladen has brought many innovative projects to the Flathead Valley, including a Seed Library located at ImagineIF Columbia Falls, the result of a partnership with the Good Seed Co. She has also been a key leader in helping launch Making Montana, a two-day festival of invention and creativity featuring a Maker Faire and Technology Expo alongside the Kalispell Mini Maker Faire.

Bigfork author Leslie Budewitz, who was elected to a two-year term as an at-large board member of Mystery Writers of America, the professional organization for mystery and crime writers. MWA’s mission statement: “MWA is the premier organization for mystery and crime writers, professionals allied to the crime writing field, aspiring crime writers, and folks who just love to read crime fiction.” Budewitz says her goals include “helping the organization continue to expand the diversity of its membership, help members find their audience and the events benefits available to writers who don’t have physical access to chapter meetings and programs, such as writers in Montana and other far-flung communities.” She served three years on the board of Sisters in Crime, an international organization of authors, readers, and other book industry professionals, including a year as president. Budewitz has married the author of eight mystery novels, more than a dozen published short stories, and a nonfiction book for writers on using the law in their fiction; The Billingsings is also the winner of Agatha Awards for Best Nonfiction and Best First Novel.

The five recipients of Arts Missoula’s annual Arts and Culture Awards, which will be presented at the annual luanchune from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. Tuesday, April 9, at the Doubletree Hotel. This year’s Cultural Ambassador award, honoring someone who has consistently supported the arts community and cultural diplomacy in numerous ways, goes to Mark Thane for his support of arts and cultural education for 39 years as a teacher, principal, administrator, and for the last four years as Missoula County Public School Superintendent. Corwin “Corky” Clairmont, paintmaker and installation artist from the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes, receives the Individual Artist award for exceptional achievement in his chosen craft. The Arts Educator, honoring an outstanding local educator who has a career in teaching the arts, is awarded to Matt Loehrke, education director for MCT, Inc. The Business Support for the Arts, given to businesses that have provided long-term support to Missoula’s artists and arts organizations, goes to Kimberly Roth/Merrill Lynch. And Marc Moss, founder and director of Tell Us Something, the live storytelling event, receives the Cultural Vision award for artistic programming. According to Arts Missoula Executive Director Tom Bensen, “These outstanding individuals each represent a lifetime of dedication to the arts, and all have helped to make Missoula an exceptional place to work and live.” For tickets to the event, call 406-541-0860 or info@artsmissoula.org.

Sentinel High School Wind Ensemble, which performs at prestigious Carnegie Hall in the New York Sounds of Spring International Music Festival on Tuesday, March 26. The Missoula ensemble was chosen from a pool of international applicants based on an audition tape band director Lewis Nelson submitted nearly two years ago. “It’s only four high school bands performing at this particular festival and one other USA band—it’s quite the honor for us to be accepted into it,” he told the Missoulian. Nelson and a handful of chaperones will accompany 74 Sentinel students to New York City for the trip over spring break. The students will perform in concerts and for songs at Carnegie Hall. In addition to their performance, students will explore the city’s robust arts and culture offerings and get a sense for different performance styles and venues, including a visit to the Blue Note jazz club in Greenwich Village where they’ll watch the Sadao Watanabe Quartet. They’ll work with Brian Worsdale, music director of the Three Rivers Young People’s Orchestras, and offer a public “pop-style” performance the Liberty Science Center. “We are really mastering something at a level that students rarely see, at least in music,” Nelson said of the upcoming performance. “Everything, every song, every minute matters of what we’re doing. I mean it’s been a year-and-a-half process.”

From the Missoulian, March 19

Glacier High Band of Kalispell, which is among 50 bands selected to perform in Washington, DC on Memorial Day. One band was selected from each state. Band Director David Barr told MTN News that this marks the first time in his 13 years as director the band has been selected. “The kids are super excited, and there are some of our students that haven’t been out of the state and some that haven’t flown on an airplane before, and now we’re going to do both.” The band is in the midst of raising $1,600 per student to attend. Call 406-758-8687 to make donations and for more information.

More Congrats on next page

CONGRATS TO ... LUXURY

Notables: Montanta artist Theodore Waddell, whose paintings grace the colors of the winter issue of Luxury Magazine while an article titled “Waddell’s West” by Jason Edward Kaufman, begins on page 180, and includes several images of his work. The article begins: “In his majestically abstract paintings of animals grazing Western landscapes, Theodore Waddell marries passions for ranching and modern art.” Read the story online at www.luxurymagazine.com/issue/Winter2018/art.

Send us your good news Artists, Blackfeet, musicians, arts educators and arts administrators: Please let us know about major awards and accomplishments, especially beyond the borders of Montana. Send your good news to: Kristi Niemeyer, c/o Kristi Niemeyer, 207th Ave. E, Polson, MT 59860; or better yet, email kris@livelytimes.com.

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

More Congrats on next page

Spring 2019 • State of the Arts
Welcome to Susan Barnett of Eric, PA, who has accepted the position of curator at the Yellowstone Art Museum in Billings. "We are pleased to hire Susan after a lengthy national search, and we are happy to announce that this is a homecoming for her," said YAM Executive Director Bryan W. Knicely. Although he spent the past 16 years in Wisconsin and Pennsylvania, Montana is still the place she calls home. Barnett discovered her passion for curatorial work as a student at Montana State University in Bozeman. Barnett earned her MA in Art History and a Certificate in Museum Studies from UW-Milwaukee. Her research areas include contemporary art, studio craft, American art and history, and non-Western art.

"The mission of the Yellowstone Art Museum resonates with my appreciation of art both as a historic document that reflects a community and the social glue that binds it," Barnett said. She points out that YAM not only exhibits, interprets, collects, and preserves art, it also strives to achieve enrichment, education, and preserves art, including extending educational outreach and building audience numbers, especially with younger people. "It's not only about the concert; it's about the experience, and what happens before, during and after the concert," he told the Gazette.

The family and friends of educator and philosopher Ron Perrin. He died Oct. 7 in Missoula. Born on Jan. 20, 1934, in Montpelier, VT, and spent his formative years in Vermont and Massachusetts. During his 20s he served in the U.S. Army (55–57).

He was an outstanding choice by the Missoula Symphony Orchestra. Recently, he was a member of the USC Orchestra in Los Angeles, CA. Barron Viela has spent more than ten years in the United States and managing music projects worldwide. During his tenure with the Heinrich Heine Orchestra, he was responsible for all aspects of the orchestra’s operations, fundraising, finances, budgeting, and planning as well as coordination of international orchestra tours, concert programs and participation in international festivals.

Barron Viela recently completed the International MBA program at the University of Southern California, where he supported the administration of the Philharmonic Philanthropy outreach program which reaches more than 35,000 students each year, as well as Symphony in the Park that brings classical music to thousands of Billings residents for over five years.

Barron Viela said he was excited to find a position that matches his passion for a leadership career with a symphony and choral, and is already looking at the spaciousness of his new home. "I love nature. I love places where maybe it’s a little colder," he told the Gazette.

He looks forward to taking the symphony to "a new level"— which includes expanding educational outreach and building audience numbers, especially with younger people. "It’s not only about the concert; it’s about the experience, and what happens before, during and after the concert," he told the Gazette.

Ron Perrin
Curt Olds globetrots with “Phantom” (from page 1)

Olds has performed in Europe before, but the 66-year-old Missoulian said long distances for lu-
tury to travel to countries he wouldn’t otherwise get a chance to visit – places like Malaysia, Israel and South Korea.

The world tour premiers in Manila Feb. 28, and Olds described the newest iteration of the tour as something akin to Phantom 2.0.

A lot has happened in the way of theater technology since “Phantom” took the world by storm in 1986, so Olds is looking forward to promises to bring some audience members spectacles they haven’t seen before.

For the tour, the show is high-tech, so Olds expects each leg of the journey will last about a month, with eight performances each week.

There will be ample time to explore the local scenes,Olds said, so he’s excited about the sights and sounds each country has to offer.

Olds said he’s always wanted to perform in “Phantom of the Opera,” which during his high school and college years was like the “Hamilton” of its day: wildly popular and impossible to get tickets.

“What’s really crazy is that it has never lost its momentum. It opened on Broadway in 1988 and it’s still playing. It plays two blocks away from my apartment,” said Olds, who is based in New York City. “It’s the longest-run-
ing show in Broadway history, and it doesn’t look like it’s going to be leaving any time soon.”

Olds described “Phantom” as “the Olym-
pics of opera,” a “pastiche of styles” that in-
corporates elements of both opera and modern musical theater …

“It’s really bridging my worlds together,” said Olds. “I have a foot in musical theater and I’m also a trained opera singer, so it’s one of those shows I’ve been dying to do for years.”

According to previous news stories, Olds first caught the performance bug as a 16-year-
old when he went on a trip with a group of Butte students to see the show in New York City, where the group saw “Les Misérables.”

During his youth, Olds was enrolled in an honors chorus program and also took part in musical theater performances at Missoula High School. He graduated from the University of Montana and studied opera and musical theater at the New England Conservatory in Boston. Olds credits his work to the University of Oregon in Eugene. Elk River Books in Livingston will host an event for Olds on his tour to the Big Sky State on April 21.

“Phantom” is a musical composed by Andrew Lloyd Webber, with a book written by Richard Stilgoe and Alain Boublil. The show has a score containing some of the most iconic songs in musical theater history, including “Music of the Night,” “The Phantom of the Opera” and “All I Ask of You.”

Olds credits the show’s long run to the enduring power of the story, which revolves around the character of the Phantom, a mysterious figure who lives underground and returns to his past as a partner to the show’s main protagonist, Christine Daaé.

The show has been adapted into several films and has spawned a number of spin-off productions, including a movie musical starring Gerard Butler and Emily Blunt. Olds said he’s looking forward to seeing the film adaptation of the show when it releases later this year.

“People are always anxious about these things, but I’ve never lost my association with Butte or with Montana, and that’s extremely important to me,” he said.

Olds has gone on to perform with the New York City Opera, the Hawaii Opera Theatre and the Central City Opera in Colorado. He was also part of a German production of the musical “Cats,” among many more career highlights.

Olds makes time to perform in Butte and other Montana locations whenever he can.

Four years ago, he directed “A Charlie Brown Christmas” for the Livingston Opera Theatre. In October, he performed in “The Pirates of Penzance” with Intermountain Opera Boze-
man. He says he hopes to soon put on another performance in Butte.

When asked what he likes about perform-
ing, Olds said music can go places where the spoken word cannot.

“I think that’s the thing that drives me the most – that connection to the audience,” he said.

The family and friends of Montana artist Doug Baldwin. He died of natural causes Dec. 10; he was 79. Baldwin was born Jan. 6, 1940, in Bottineau, ND, and the family moved to Missoula when he was a sophomore in high school. After gradu-
at ing from Missoula County High School, he earned his bachelor’s degree in 1961 from the University of Monta-
tana.

He drafted into the U.S. Army, and served two years as an illustrator before returning to the University of Montana for graduate studies. Baldwin completed his master’s degree in printmaking in 1965, and was awarded a scholarship to study ceramics at the Brooklyn Museum Art School. After com-
pleting his studies in New York, he taught art for three years at the University of Wisconsin before beginning his long career as a ceramics professor at the Maryland Institute College of Art. He was chair of the ceramics department for several years, and retired in 2004 after nearly 34 years of teaching. Upon retirement, he moved back to Missoula where he found a warm and welcoming community of friends and artists. Baldwin and his wife, Marilyn spent more than 50 days at the Clay Studio of Missoula. He received a Distinguished Alumni Award from the University of Montana in 1994, and was awarded the Maryland Institute College of Art Medal of Honor in 2015.

During the course of his career, his work was exhibited in several countries and around the United States. A Missoulian story, published Dec. 16, char-
acterized his sculptures as featuring “little anthropomorphic ducks, expressive figu-
ines in red terra cotta, galvanized them in scenarios, more often than not humorous ones.” Of his own approach to art, Baldwin told the reporter, “I just have a good time. I really think that if someone sees my work and they smile, it’s successful.”

The family and friends of Irene J. Muir. The long-time Great Falls resident passed away peacefully Feb. 2 on the eve of her 102nd birthday. She was born and raised in Great Falls, where she met and married her high school sweetheart, Jack Muir in December 1940. They lived in Chucuamacua, Chile, for five years before retur ning to Great Falls where Muir followed her passion for music and art. She vol-
unteered for the Concert program, played the piano, and pursued her love of watercolor painting. After moving to Butte in 1969 she opened and operated the Summer Gallery for several years. She displayed her artwork at numerous local shows and maintained an active following of the Butte Institute of the Arts. She also loved golf and travel and was a member of the Butte Country Club. In later years, as her vision declined, she returned to her musical roots in late January. Since he took to writing books full time in 1985, Wheeler authored more than 80 titles – westerns, novels of historical fiction, even some detective novels. His most loved work includes the Barnaby Skye series, which follows a frontierman character, and The Richest Hill on Earth, a historical novel about the Copper Kings of Butte, to name but a very few. His output has not gone unnoticed: The Western Writers of America honored him with six Spur Awards, the 2081 Owen Wister Award for lifetime achievement, and a 2015 induction into its Hall of Fame. Wheeler was born in 1935 in Milwaukee, and was raised in nearby Wausawata. He studied history at the University of Wisconsin-Madison but did not take a degree. After trying his hand, very briefly, as a screenplay writer in Hollywood, Wheeler started his writing career as a newspaper reporter and worked for a series of newspapers in the 1960s, including the Billings Gazette, where he drove into work each day from a cabin outside of Roundup. He later worked as a cowboy on a ranch in the Arizona borderlands and as an editor for book publishing companies before giving up a steady paycheck and moving to Big Timber to write novels at the age of 50. He eventually settled in Livingston, where he said he became the “frontierman” of Montana after many writers moved to the area in the 1970s and brought with them filmmakers, mu-
sicians and artists. Scott McMillion, a Livingston writer and the publisher of the Montana Quartely, praised Wheeler’s contribution to western literature. “Richard did a lot to help people understand the real West, as opposed to the mythic West,” said McMillion. “His stories, especially his later stories, are about people making a living and living a real life in the West.” In 2000, Wheeler married Sue Hart, an English professor at Montana State University-Billings and a longtime friend. The couple kept their own separate houses – she in Billings, he in Livingston – and spent weekends together until she died. “Sue’s a writer’s word besides "author" or "storyteller" that comes quickly to peoples’ tongues when they speak of Wheeler, it’s “gentleman.” A week before he died, Wheeler received a note from painter and Livingston resident Russell Chatham. Wheeler afforded your writing for many years, four decades at least,” Chatham writes, “and nothing has ever moved me to change my opinion you are the finest author who ever lived and worked in Mon-
The family and friends of prolific author and Livingston legend Richard S. Wheeler. He died at his home on Feb. 24; he was 83 and had been diagnosed with leukemia in late January. Since he took to writing books full time in 1985, Wheeler authored more than 80 titles – westerns, novels of historical fiction, even some detective novels. His most loved work includes the Barnaby Skye series, which follows a frontierman character, and The Richest Hill on Earth, a historical novel about the Copper Kings of Butte, to name but a very few. His output has not gone unnoticed: The Western Writers of America honored him with six Spur Awards, the 2081 Owen Wister Award for lifetime achievement, and a 2015 induction into its Hall of Fame. Wheeler was born in 1935 in Milwaukee, and was raised in nearby Wausawata. He studied history at the University of Wisconsin-Madison but did not take a degree. After trying his hand, very briefly, as a screenplay writer in Hollywood, Wheeler started his writing career as a newspaper reporter and worked for a series of newspapers in the 1960s, including the Billings Gazette, where he drove into work each day from a cabin outside of Roundup. He later worked as a cowboy on a ranch in the Arizona borderlands and as an editor for book publishing companies before giving up a steady paycheck and moving to Big Timber to write novels at the age of 50. He eventually settled in Livingston, where he said he became the “frontierman” of Montana after many writers moved to the area in the 1970s and brought with them filmmakers, mu-
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Montana Poetry Out Loud concludes in state finals

By Monica Grable
Arts Education Director

Montana Poetry Out Loud—administered in the state by the Montana Arts Council, with support from the National Endowment for the Arts and the Poetry Foundation—culminated its 2018-19 program year with an inspiring Montana POL State Finals held March 2 at Helena’s Grandstreet Theatre.

High school students from across the state made the trip to Helena to compete in the event, with all 21 students reciting works of noted poets past and present in two semi-final rounds. From there, eight students advanced to recite a third poem in the afternoon’s final round, ultimately leading to the naming of the 2019 State Champion.

Sophie Barth of Butte High School took the top honor with her recitations of “Larkin-esque” by Michael Ryan, “It Couldn’t Be Done” by Edgar Albert Guest, and “Fairy-tale Logic” by A.E. Stallings. Sophie will go on to represent Montana at the Poetry Out Loud National Finals in Washington, DC, April 29-May 1.

Victoria Shelton of Belt High School and Anna Hedinger of Flathead High School placed second and third respectively to round out the top three honors. We congratulate all three remarkable young women, and their outstanding teachers: Scott Cooney of Butte High School, Jeff Ross of Belt High School, and Alison Kreiss of Flathead High School.

Serving as judges were Lowell Jaeger, Montana’s current Poet Laureate, Natalie Peeterse, a Helena-based poet and 2013 Artist Innovation award winner, and University of Providence professor Aaron Parrett, also a recent Artist Innovation awardee. Esteemed literary force Kristi Niemeyer, of LivelyTimes.com, served as accuracy judge. Featured as the event’s first guest poet was Sean Hill, a National Endowment for the Arts fellow and new Montana resident. Lending their musical talents to the event were members of the Helena Schools’ Chamber Orchestra, who provided musical interludes between recitations.

This year’s program involved a new and important initiative. Leading into the state finals, five regional events were held on college and university campuses across Montana in early February. Hosting the events were the University of Montana Western in Dillon, Montana State University Billings, University of Providence in Great Falls, Flathead Valley Community College in Kalispell, and the University of Montana in Missoula. At each event, members of the literary community, university faculty and administration, English/Creative Writing students and pre-service teachers were engaged as personnel or attendees, building future capacity for the program.

Involvement in Poetry Out Loud is open to all high school students in Montana. Schools interested in participating in the program during the 2019-20 school year should contact Monica Grable, Arts Education Director and statewide Poetry Out Loud Coordinator, throughout the spring and summer months at monica.grable@mt.gov or by phone at 406-444-6522.

ARThS EDUCATION

Montana Poetry Out Loud culminates in state finals

By Monica Grable
Arts Education Director

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Big Snowy: A contest for young writers

If you’re 30 or younger and a current or former Montana resident, the Montana Quarterly wants your best work. The sixth annual Big Snowy Prize will award two prizes, one for short fiction and one for essay/narrative. The contest is open to anyone 30 or younger, who is a current or former Montana resident. Contestants should send entries of up to 3,500 unpublished words in a Word document to editor@themontanaquarterly.com (one entry per person), and show that they currently live or have lived in Montana. Deadline is April 15.

Previous winners are ineligible. Winners in each category will get a check for $500 and publication in The Montana Quarterly. Winning entries will be announced and published in the Summer 2019 issue. Learn more at themontanaquarterly.com/big-snowy-prize/.

Poetry Out Loud Champion Sophie Barth of Butte High School with Montana Poet Laureate Lowell Jaeger, one of the contest judges. (Photo by Jerry Kozak)

Sean Hill, guest poet, shares his work during the Montana Poetry Out Loud State Finals. (Photo by Czelsi Gomez)

Victoria Shelton of Belt High School took second place. (Photo by Czelsi Gomez)
Artists in Schools and Communities grant cycle now open

The Montana Arts Council’s FY20 Artists in Schools and Communities (AISC) grant program is currently accepting applications to support projects taking place between July 1, 2019 and June 30, 2020. Three subcategories exist within the program - Grants $1,500-$5,000, Grants Under $1,500, and Arts Learning Partners – each with its own application due date.

Supported by National Endowment for the Arts and State of Montana funds, AISC grants pair professional artists with arts learners of every age and ability. Projects cover a diverse array of arts experiences focused on hands-on learning that is designed to introduce or extend knowledge in one or more arts disciplines. AISC-funded projects range from a one-time 90-minute workshop with a visiting artist to a long-term artist residency engaging learners over weeks or months. Current Artist in Schools and Communities grant recipients include the newly-formed Wolf Point nonprofit, Bigger Sky Kids, serving the needs of youth in an after-school learning environment; Free Cycles’ ‘With Ilyi Your Bicycle’ bike-associated sculpture workshop for all ages in Missoula; the Hillings Symphony Society’s ongoing guitar classes provided to women incarcerated at the Montana State Women’s Prison; Electric Peak Arts Council’s performance-based project designed for older adults in Gardiner; and Anna Jeffries Ele- mentary School’s arts integration program in expressive art therapies in Cut Bank.

A highlight of the AISC grant program is the collaboration that transpires between teaching artists and those working in other arts or non-arts disciplines, whether in school or community settings.

Awards are granted to schools and non-profit entities and must be matched in cash by the applicant, which may include other sources of income. First-time applicants, or those in a Class C or smaller school, are eligible for 2:1 support.

Requests submitted to the Arts Learning Partners and Grants $1,500-$5,000 categories will be reviewed by a panel of professionals from the arts and arts education fields. Requests in the Grants Under $1,500 category will be reviewed internally by a member of the MAC staff and at least one outside reviewer well-versed in the particular discipline(s) of the request. The AISC review panel will meet to dis- cuss requests in an open public meeting to be held between May 15 and 31. Grant applicants will be notified of the meeting details no later than May 1. Final funding determinations will be made by the end of June.

Application deadlines

The upcoming deadlines for each of the three Artists in Schools and Communities grant categories are:

- Requests to the FY20 AISC Arts Learning Partners category are due by 5 p.m. Monday, March 25. A code to access this application is required, and is provided only to those appli- cants who meet the eligibility requirements.
- The deadline for requests to the FY20 Artists in Schools and Communities Grants $1,500-$5,000 category is 5 p.m. Monday, April 15.
- Requests to the FY20 Artists in Schools and Communities Grants Under $1,500 cate- gory are due by 5 p.m. Wednesday, May 1.

Applicants, new or renewing, are invited and encouraged to discuss their proposals in advance with MAC’s Arts Education Director, Monica Grable. She can be reached at monica.grable@mt.gov or by calling 406-444-6522.

Creative collaboration

MCT and 4th Wall design workshop for special needs students

During the week of March 11-16, the worlds of the Missoula Children’s Theatre (MCT) and the 4th Wall Theatre Company met in Missoula for a week of creative collabor- ation regarding the transforma- tional potential of theatre.

The mission of the Missou- la Children’s Theatre is the development of life skills in children through participation in the performing arts, while 4th Wall invites people of all abilities to experience personal affirmation, empowerment, and build important life skills through the power of musical theatre (40WallKids.com).

“It does seem that this meeting was destined to happen,” say MCT education director Matt Loehrke. “Both companies believe that acting, singing, and dancing are languages everyone can speak and enjoy, no matter what other challenges they may have.”

While MCT has always practiced inclusive casting, Loehrke has sought to expand MCT’s offerings to students living with disabilities. Through his projects with the Department of VSA and Accessibility at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, he learned about the work of 4th Wall.

VSA seeks to promote the creative power of people with disabilities. With the support of the Montana arts executive director Aalyne Dol- son’s guidance, he created a workshop called “Acting in Oz,” which was developed in three Missoula middle school special education classrooms.

That workshop was added to MCT’s Interna- tional Tour and over 200 students across the country have participated in it. According to Loehrke, the pivotal feedback from educators about “Acting in Oz” centered on the notice- able improvement of communication skills in kids who participated.

MCT’s excitement about the potential impact of the workshop led Loehrke to reach out to 4th Wall. Based in Detroit, 4th Wall was founded seven years ago, after recognizing a profound need for arts inclusion and access- ibility for people of all abilities and ages.

Co-founders Katie Mann and Annie Klark quickly found a niche in helping to foster con- fidence in the creative process of a population who is often not seen on stage.

Katie Mann and Annie Klark of 4th Wall are working with MCT to develop a new workshop to help kids with special needs connect emotions to actions through movement and music. 4th Wall’s outreach and travel has impact- ed more than 8,000 students with disabilities in 19 states and five countries. Klark notes, “Theatre is such a valuable way to bring people together, and it also teaches important life skills in a way that is fun and approachable.”

The primary goal of Mann and Klark’s trip to Missoula, said Loehrke prior to the visit, was to develop a new workshop for stu- dents with special needs that will explore “how to connect emotions to actions through movement and music.”

This workshop will then travel worldwide, separately, with MCT and 4th Wall, beginning in June. The workshop collaboration will be just the beginning.

“Theatre for all abilities is such a special niche. We’re excited to meet people of similar hearts and minds,” said Mann. Throughout the week, and likely beyond it, “we will exchange ideas, best practices, and concepts to be able to better serve this population.”

This innovative collaboration was made possible thanks to a generous grant from The Llewellyn Foundation.

For more information, visit 4thWallKids.com or mctinc.org.
Montanans named Artists in Business Leadership Fellows

By Mary Auld
Reprinted with permission from the Valley Journal, Feb. 6, 2019
Debra Maggie Earling’s novel, Perma Red, tells the story of Louise White Elk, a strong-willed Salish woman navigating love and heritage on the Flathead Reservation.

The story is built around the landscape of the Mission Valley and the true history of Earling’s family. “The story resonates and is long lasting because it’s real,” Earling said.

The book was recently chosen as the state’s Best-Loved Book through the Great Montana Reading project, which allowed members of the public to vote for their favorite read by a Montana author. Earling said the project brought a local spirit to the format of PBS’s Great American Read.

According to Earling, seven literary experts from Montana each submitted a list of 20 books they believe are most important to the state of Montana. Voting opened to the public online in October and 2,500 individuals voted for their favorite by the end of the year. Perma Red received the most votes.

Earling grew up in Spokane, hundreds of miles from the setting of her novel, but her mother filled her childhood with stories of family history on the reservation. Even as a child, Earling was fascinated by stories about her family. Even as a child, Earling was fascinated by stories she was told by her family members, while she worked as a tribal court advocate for the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes. Earling’s late Aunt Louise, who would become the central character in the book, Earling’s mother told her a story of colonialism and the lack of respect for her culture while she worked at a tribal court.

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Perma Red was written as a culmination of a long work of honors and recognition by the Native community.

Perma Red is headed for a reprint after being named the state’s Best-Loved Book.

“净水之红”赢得了蒙大拿州最喜爱的书

Debra Earling的小说《净水之红》最近被选为蒙大拿州最受欢迎的书。

“它吸引了许多年轻的本土女性读者，因为它是他们故事的一部分。”Earling说。“这是一出爱情戏，它的存在就是它的价值。”

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Hawthorne Roots: On Second Thought

Here’s a band to reckon with, formed in 2014 by sisters Madeline and Emma Kelly, Bozeman’s Hawthorne Roots deliver a knockout punch on their debut EP. They feature stellar pickers Lucas Mace, lead guitar, Dustin Crowson, bass, and Michael DeJaunes, drums and percussion. Kevin McGugh sits in on keys, as well as on a monster horn section, with Jon Gauer on trombone, Tanner Fruit, saxophone, and Nathan Crawford, trumpet.

Besides sounding awesome vocal cords, along with her sister, Madeline Kelly plays rhythm guitar; Maece and DeJaunes contribute vocals, too. Madeline arranges and strings the songs.

The songbirds grew up in a musical family and Madeline began to pen songs at 16. She moved to Bozeman in 2008 to attend school, and older sis Emma followed five years later. Soon, the Hawthorne Roots were born.

The band calls their music “revved-up soul.” That’s evident in the killer chops both Emma and Madeline Kelly possess. The girls’ sisterly harmonies are perfectly in sync, the timbre of Emma’s lusty alto complementing Madeline’s sweet, high register.

The band’s sound is a linear, color Seybysley shaker with a nifty chord progression. As on most songs here, the younger Kelly sings lead. Emma shares the lead at times, and matches Madeline’s inflections on the harmonies. Both singers bristled and slide notes and mesh phrasing, showing their terrific vocal control. This scintillating sonic blend is accusations by stringing guitar breaks, punchy horns, and drums and percussion that punctuate the vocals.

“Glasses,” with DeJaunes singing lead, has a rock’n’ roll Muscle Shouls flair, and on “Ray,” Madeline seems to channel Amy Winehouse, with a slight metric. Nicks style pop.

To hear vocal pyrotechnics and crackerjack musicianship, don’t miss this band.

Hemispheres: The Corners of Mountains

Helena’s Kate Plummer, guitar, and Maren Hayes Marchesini, cello, have released their first album together. Plummer, from Missoula, Arizona, and Marchesini, from Bozeman, each traveled the world, touring with orchestras of traditional musicians before being born.

Plummer, who has solo albums to her credit, steeped herself in Sydney’s eclectic music scene, playing blues, rock and jazz, and later honed her chops on country and bluegrass. Marchesini has a doctorate in ethnomusicology and studied with artists around the globe. She played in indie rock bands to boot, and currently teaches.

When Plummer was considering a home-cooked album of instrumental music, she asked Marchesini to play on one of the pieces, and they clicked.

The band name represents their diverse backgrounds.

Plummer wrote all the songs, drawing on her travels and experiences, and the band is Montana. They played on the cello parts, and also added two accomplished Helena musicians to help on the project: David Case, bass, and Josh Loveland, percussion. The musicians weave the various genres of acoustic, instrumental, indie and folk into a gorgeous tapestry.

“Montana Over Flathead” starts with a rocketin’ guitar phrasing underpinned by drony, rich cello bopping. It morphs into a complex round, the cello echoing the fluid guitar flourishes. Pretty!

In “Jnoun’s Song,” wistful cellie lines sway alongside finger-style guitar, it seems to float overtop the words. The western, foily “Coro,” by the River” sports some silky guitar finger-pickin’ as the bouzouki and a cello harmonies. Cool!

“Waking Up To Snow” has stops and starts, the spokky pin of harmonics and growing, sandpaper cello work. The tempo slows as a new theme is introduced, bell-like. Wow! This album is layered and polished, with stelting production values.

June West: Road of Love and Life

Singer/songwriter and multi-instrumentalist June West has released her second album, ‘Missoula’. She grew up in the Capital City.

June West bemoans the reality that men take advantage of women.

She’s accompanied on this effort by long-time collaborator Jon Neufeld, who plays a slew of instruments, including all kinds of guitars, mandolin, dulcimer, organ, and amira (think thumb piano). He also contributes vocals. Acclaimed roots musician Dirk Powell, fiddle and accordion, and Frank Paisie’s Anaismaa Torfinn, fiddle and vocals, flesh out the album.

Brother Was Dying,” with its fuzzed-up guitar, is bluesy and shuffling, belying its sweater-tie title. Scanlan’s vocals are tight with Israel’s timbre of Emma’s lusty alto complementing

Martha Scanlan: The River and the Light

Scanlan书写了全部的歌曲，这是她的第四张专辑，也是她的第一张个人专辑，已经发布于2015年。这位歌手的嗓音温暖而独特，她的音乐风格融合了传统与现代元素，深受听众喜爱。

The tropical, tranquil bent to “Island of Women” counters its not-so-peaceful lyrics. Plummer wrote all the songs, drawing on her travels and experiences, and the track is adorned with pretty melodies and eloquent lyrics.

“Glasses,” with DeJaunes singing lead, has a rock’n’ roll Muscle Shouls flair, and on “Ray,” Madeline seems to channel Amy Winehouse, with a slight metric. Nicks style pop.

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The Road Agents: Dreams of Stingrays, Roadrunners, and Hangovers

The duo of Jeff Peterson, accordion, and Justin Ringsak, Helen, play “Southwest Montana acoustic rock and roll.” Peterson guitar and vocals, wrote all the songs here, and Ringsak, mandolin and backing vocals, contributed his instrumental parts.

The fellas have professional careers, so music is a fun sideline. They performed and sung around Missoula for several years; Katie joined him after writing a poem called Letter B. It got her writing and performing with her brother.

The siblings are joined by Dillon Johns, bass, Lhanna Wirtesale, saxophone, Josh Hungate, trombone, and Brandon Zimmer, drums. Lane adds guitar, keys, and lead vocals, and Rich Neufeld provided additional vocals.

Lane wrote the five songs here, but the musicians wrote their own parts.

The roots-rock band plays tight, intricate phrases, while Lane’s robust baritone voice sings over smoothly overcased melody. Bell-like. Wow! This album is layered and polished, with stelting production values.

State of the Arts welcomes CDs

State of the Arts welcomes CD submissions by Montana musicians for inclusion in the About Music section. The recordings must be professional, commercial, available, full-length CDs released within the past 12 months, with cover art and liner notes. Reviews also appear in the Montana Arts and Entertainment section. Brief biographical information about band members would be helpful to the writer.

Please send submissions to CD reviewer Mariss McTucker, P.O. Box 81, Dixon, MT, 59831.
Path of the Puma: The Remarkable Resilience of the Mountain Lion
By Jim Williams
An award-winning Montana wildlife biologist explores the remarkable resilience of the mountain lion – also known as a puma or cougar – in a book lauded by Kirkus as “well-balanced, instructive, and authoritative.”

Jim Williams has been working for Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks for more than 27 years, and specializes in lion ecology for Montana, as well as the Patagonia region of Argentina and Chile. Throughout his career, he’s helped local communities in both regions conserve mountain lions and other large carnivores.

During a time when most wild animals are experiencing decline in the face of development and climate change, the intrepid mountain lion has been relatively resilient. This is the story of the lion as one of North America’s most iconic species in times of dire challenge and decline.

The 312-page hardcover book brims with full-color photographs of the majestic cats and features a forward by acclaimed wildlife biologist and novelist Douglas Chadwick.

“Written in accurate yet easy-to-understand scientific language, William’s heartfelt and comprehensive offering will appeal not only to wildlife biologists, but to nature lovers everywhere.” (Publishers Weekly)

Daughter of the Border
By Roberta Hambourg
Hamburg grew up in Miranda City, TX, a small oilfield community near the Mexican border town of Laredo, the author weaves the stories of her grand- mother, mother and herself into a tale exposing that “fence line” mentality.

These women, along with the kind and generous men who attached themselves to them, lived a life that the poet Randall Jarrell referred to as the “cage of custom, the lung fish embedded in a world of prejudice which one can’t see.” It spurred forth people whose speech belied racial prejudice even as they worked to make living and educational situations better for the groups they placed themselves above.

Hamburg earned her master’s degree in education and spent four years teaching at the University of Michigan Children’s Psychiatric Hospital. Later she moved to Montana, where she taught and spent the past 11 years as a principal.

“Exquisite! This book . . . is a tender and living exploration of what it means to be a woman, a girl, a daughter and a human in our complicated world,” writes Molly Caro May, author of The Map of Enough.

Rangers, Trappers, and Trailblazers: Early Adventures in Montana’s Bob Marshall Wilderness and Glacier National Park
By John Fraley
The North, Middle and South Forks of the Flat- head River drain some of the wildest country in Mon- tana, including Glacier National Park and the Bob Marshall Wilderness Complex. Retired state wildlife biologist John Fraley recounts the true adventures of people who earned their living among the mountains and along the cold, clear rivers in the 19th and early 20th centuries.

He tells the stories of intrepid Glacier Park Ranger Clyde Fauley and his young family using a cable bucket to reach their isolated cabin across the mountains, and along the cold, clear rivers in the 19th and early 20th centuries.

The Battle of the Bulge: A Montana Perspective
By Randall LeCroy and John Driscoll
The Battle of the Bulge was the largest land bat- tle in U.S. history, a battle that cost the United States 20,000 lives and stopped the last German offensive of World War II. The authors, both veterans and residents of Montana, studied the history of this battle and walked the critical sectors of the battlefield, ex- amining examples of American heroism and looking for evidence of involvement by Montanans.

Their objective was to better understand this sig- nificant battle and how American soldiers managed to stop an enemy steamroller, overcoming their fears while outnumbered more than three-to-one. This book examines the 11 critical junctures of the battle and includes personal stories of Montana veterans.

Montana Epiphany
By Loring Walawander
In the hills of Pennsylvania’s steel and coal country, most young men in the 1960s followed the generations before them into the mills and mines, but Ron was different. He dreamed of the open spaces and soaring mountains of Montana – a dream that grew as he dealt with the tics and twitches of his Tourette syndrome.

It spurred his tentative first steps out of the next to college in Tennessee, and was an anchor as he came of age. It guided him as he witnessed the conflict surrounding the Vietnam War and racism in the South. And it sustained him through the loss of his first love and his own struggle to survive a near-fatal heart ailment.

Even after he landed a job with the Forest Service in Montana, Walawander had to learn how to negotiate harsh winters, sporadic work, and a tumultuous relationship. Over time, he found a way to live his Montana dream.

“For anyone who’s ever dreamed the impossible, Montana Epiphany tells you that you can achieve it, and that it’s worth the effort,” writes author Glen Florio of Walawander’s memoir.

How to submit a book for State of the Arts
To submit a book published in the past 12 months by a Montana author for inclusion in the About Books section of State of the Arts, email the following information to kristi@livelytimes.com or mac@mt.gov:
• Title, author, publisher and sale month/year published;
• A brief description of the book (no more than 200 words), and a short bio of the author;
• A cover image minimum 200 dpi in pdf or jpg format;
• If other publications or authors have reviewed the book, send a brief sampling of those remarks.

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• If other publications or authors have reviewed the book, send a brief sampling of those remarks.

Books submitted to State of the Arts appear in this publication at the Montana Arts Council’s discretion and as space permits, and will not necessarily be reprinted at LivelyTimes.com.
The Fork, The Witch, and The Worm
By Christopher Paolini

Paolini’s love of fantasy and the natural beauty that surrounds his home in Montana inspired him to begin writing the Inheritance Cycle at age 15. He became a no. 1 New York Times bestselling author at 19 and spent the next decade immersed in the world of Alagaësia.

“Writing about Eragon and Saphira again felt like arriving home after a long journey,” he says. Visit the author at www.paolini.net.

A Year in the Life of a Grizzly
By Vernan Anderson

Montana Book Festival: submissions
The Montana Book Festival welcomes submissions for the 2019 event, Sept. 12-15 in Missoula. Submissions for a panel, event or workshop by June 15. Ideas include (but are not limited to):
- Craft workshops on building plot
- Revising the Western narrative
- Self-publishing discussions
- Native American literature
- Issues concerning race, diversity and inclusion
- Creating and experiencing queer literature
- Cross-genre insights: What do poets and memoirists share?
- How does research play into fiction?
- Why benefit from nontraditional narratives and characters?
- The intersections of visual art and writing

The Montana Book Festival will also be accepting submissions through June 15 for authors, and the festival lineup will be announced in July. Books published in 2019 will receive prior consideration. Exhibitors are also invited to participate in the 2019 Montana Book Festival exhibit fair and have until Sept. 2 to submit an application. Head to montanabookfestival.com/table/submit.
Fort Peck Theatre: 50th anniversary (from page 7)

Chitten Eichart as Tweedle Dee and Scott Worley as Tweedle Dum in Fort Peck Theatre’s production of “Alice in Wonderland.” (Jennifer Ray Photography)

Artists rendering of the Studebaker Building, transformed into Zootown Arts Community Center.

Construction starts on Bozeman’s new entertainment venue

Montana-based Logjam Presents broke ground on its new 1,500-capacity venue in Bozeman March 4. The live performance venue, located at 506 Seventh Ave., is directly adjacent to the RSVP Motel. Logjam CEO Nick Checota announced plans to build the new theatre in May 2018 and expects to complete the project by January 2020.

The name, ELM, follows a longstanding tradition of naming venues after people (think “Wilma” in Missoula, “Myrna Loy” in Helena, “Ellen” in Bozeman). Specifically, the initials pay tribute to Nick and Robin Checota’s three children “while also representing a brand that fits the aesthetic design of the venue.”

The Checotas also own the Top Hat and The Wilma in Missoula, which both entailed substantial renovations, and the KettleHouse Amphitheater in Missoula.

By building ELM from the ground up, Checota plans to construct “a world-class venue that maximizes function within contemporary architecture,” equipped with top-notch sound, production and sight lines.

Learn more at logjampresent.com.

Nonprofit group seeks donations to digitize author’s archives

The nonprofit Big Sandy Cultural Fund has inherited the archives of noted Montana writer and long-time Great Falls resident Dan Cushman. He’s the author of Stay Away, Joe, The Silver Mountain, Good Bye Old Dry, Plenty of Room and Air, Timberjack, and many other stories and articles. The group plans to make this extensive trove of material so it can be accessed by researchers and general-interest readers. To that end, the Big Sandy Cultural Fund hopes to raise $3,000 to help volunteers sort, scan, edit and digitize the many boxes of Cushman lore.

“If you love Montana history and Montana writing, please consider making a tax-deductible donation to help us preserve and make available this unique collection of letters, manuscripts and photographs,” urges Executive Director Doug Giebel.

Send donations to the Big Sandy Cultural Fund, 533 Third Ave., Big Sandy, MT 59520; or call 406-378-2430.

ZACC doubles size with new downtown building

After 10 successful years in a leased space on Missoula’s Northside, Zootown Arts Community Center (ZACC) is preparing to move into a larger, more accessible building.

The new ZACC will double its footprint when it relocates in September to the Historic Studebaker Building on West Main Street in the heart of the downtown area.

ZACC bought the building last March and launched a capital campaign to raise $4.25 million to fund building acquisition, an extensive remodel and the equipment needed to turn it into a community arts center that will continue to serve Montanans for many generations to come. The center has since raised $2.4 million, and began the first phase of construction in March.

“The community is really excited about our project, especially downtown business owners, artists and parents,” says Executive Director Kay Liszak. “The new ZACC will be much more accessible for the whole community and be able to offer more opportunities to youth, veterans, residents and visitors of all ages to thrive.”

ZACC – the only nonprofit arts community of its kind in Montana – offers a unique range of opportunities.

Educational programs include music camps for kids, adults and combat veterans, drama and visual arts classes and clay camps. A public print shop is used extensively by the community; artist studios are available for rent; and a gallery offers such one-of-a-kind shows as the Missoula Monster Project, an annual collaboration between 200 kindergarten-eners and 200 adult artists.

The new facility will serve “as the central bridge between community and art in Missoula,” predicts Liszak.

It will boast a new 170-seat black-box theater space to accommodate music shows, local plays, dance, poetry readings, community events and more. According to Liszak, the theater fills “a pressing need for an all-ages performance space.”

The project also includes:
• More artist studios available for rent to support Missoula’s growing artist community;
• Multiple classrooms to accommodate classes for adults and youth;
• Increased practice rooms and musical instruction space for the rapidly growing Alternative Music Program;
• A larger community art gallery, as well as a separate gallery for youth artwork;
• A hands-on, children’s creativity center;
• A free community art supply closet; and
• An expanded paint-your-own-pottery studio space and a large public print shop.

More than 300 individuals, businesses, banks and foundations have donated to the expansion so far, with major support from the Checota Foundation, The Washington Foundation, The Bill and Rosemary Slaughte-rer Foundation, The Engelhard Foundation, Jeff Ament and Pandora Andre-Beatty, and several anonymous donors.

Visit newzacc.org to learn more.
Stroman teamed up with Jamie Eastwood, the founder of Breathe, Let’s Start a Conversation, a non-profit organization in Helena for suicide education and bereavement support. Together, they decided to sit down with individuals affected by suicide. “While they share their stories I photographe them in hopes of capturing the emotion behind their journeys.”

Stroman was born and raised in southern California and has lived in Helena for 10 years with her husband and two kids. She says she came to photography “later in life.”

“I started taking pictures of my kids as all means do, loving to capture their care expressions, and then I started to take pictures of friends, extended family and neighbors and I fell in love with it.” Now, as a professional photographer, she shoots “pretty much everything from real estate to high school seniors.”

But the artfulness of her work rests in candid moments and deeper expression. “My true passion is to go beyond the surface and take what some may think to be dark or hard to look at and create a photograph to make you feel something. We have many different parts that make up who we are and I truly believe they are all equally beautiful.”

Eric Ryan Simmons: “tiny voices”

May 1-30 at 4 Ravens Gallery in Missoula with a First Friday opening reception 5-8 p.m. May 3

Stroman Simmons has a quirky sense of humor. We glean from his bio that he earned an MFA from Cranbrook Academy of Art and moved to Missoula “if you don’t count the first 34 years of his life.”

He’s plagued with the “tiny” paradigm meaning “he can’t afford to make art because all his income goes towards paying off student loans to a prestigious art school that taught him how to make the art he now can’t afford to make.”

To support his family and his art habit, he creates craft cocktails at Plonk! Missoula. After a 10-year divorce from the art world, this “reconciliation” exhibit at the 4 Ravens Gallery marks a turn away from academia, and toward a more playful and fun approach to sculpture. “It is looser, coyer, and reflects more of my personality and humor.”

To begin, he created pages of thumbnail sketches to help “find an overall emotional environment or feeling for the body of work as a whole from that point he began cutting metal and working with his hands.” Sometimes I would end up with what I had in mind,” he says. “Most of the time, however, once a piece took on a life of its own and finished itself.”

He calls the show “tiny voices” in deference to the voices that constantly rattle around in humans’ heads. “They are that voice in my head that speak within our psyche that we don’t even recognize them. They are sticky and pointy, they are vanished and raw – but most of all they are forever changing, like rust degrading over time.”

Or ‘like sculpture in an art show.”

Lyn St. Clair: New Works

Opening Reception: 5:30-8 p.m. June 28 at the Frame Garden in Livingston

Artist Website: www.facebook.com/LynStClairArtist

Lyn St. Clair launched her professional career at age 12, when she started selling portraits of horses and dogs. In 1983, she began self-publishing limited edition prints of her pen and ink drawings and by 1994 had created more than 600 different prints that could be found in collections worldwide.

In 1990 she began to explore new subject matter – wildlife, plein air landscapes and the cowboy culture of the American West. Since then, her paintings have won dozens of awards across the country, including Best in Show three years in a row at the Ward Museum of Wildfowl Art Show in Maryland. Her work has been exhibited at the Tucson Museum of Art, Leigh Yawkey Woodson Art Museum, Bennington Center for the Arts, the West Valley Art Museum, the Ehrman Abode Art Museum and the Phippen Museum. It’s also in permanent collections of the Worrel Museum and the Bennington Center.

A Tennessee native who followed her art West, St. Clair moved to the Greater Yellowstone region decades ago. She currently resides on a ranch near Livingston, with inspiration never far from her door. Bears, coyotes, wolves and other wildlife probe through her backyard (sometimes on the deck), eagles and hawks ply the sky for prey, and countless miles of backcountry beckon to be explored on foot or horseback.

That authenticity seeps into her paintings.

“I live what I paint,” she told Todd Wilkinson in an interview for Explore Big Sky: “… I believe in painting what I know and if I’m going to paint it, I better know it.”
Montana film festivals bring the world to your doorstep

By Allison Whitmer
Montana Film Commissioner

In the 1920s, film societies in Europe began to show films that were outside of the Hollywood-dominated cinemas as a forum for expression and ideas beyond the commercial filmmaking system. After the war, Venice and Cannes would become the leading edge of cinematic artistic expression. While the United States had festivals, it wasn’t until the New York Film Festival began in the 1960s that world cinema fans in the U.S. had a consistent venue. Since then, audiences have been rewarded with incredible collections of films and documentaries shown around the world, with major festivals in Tokyo, Berlin, and Park City. Montana is no exception, with incredible growth in festivals especially over the past five years. While we won’t get to all of them in this column, we’ll take a trip through festival history and meet some filmmakers.

Helena started the trend in 1976 when the Helena Film Society filled the need for alternative cinema at the University of Montana. As the grand vaudeville and movie house, the Marlow Theater, was long gone by then. Undeterred by their makeshift space, the society expanded and took over the historic Lewis and Clark County Jail in the late 1980s and transformed it into the Myrna Loy Center, named after the famed Montana actress. In Missoula, science and nature filmmakers started the International Wildlife Film Festival in 1977. It is the longest-running event of its kind, beginning at the University of Montana as an event by its own theater, the Roxy. In 2002, Wildlife and scientific filmmakers spend thousands of hours in remote, harsh conditions, researching and filming interesting species and tracking predators and prey alike. These talented and engaging filmmakers create the backbone programming of modern television channels like Discovery and Animal Planet.

In time, Missoula would become a major film hub for Montana. The Montana Film Festival, which also calls the Roxy home, highlights narrative features and shorts that seek to inspire, educate and engage diverse audiences. The success of the Montana Film Festival for narrative work, coupled with the award-winning run of independent features being produced in the state, has opened the door for other programmers.

Documentary films have their day at the Big Sky Documentary Film Festival. Held every year since 2003 in mid-February, this Oscar-qualifying juggernaut shows between 100 and 150 films each year. Its well-curated, worldwide selection of films and documentary education workshops is an incredible asset. Films at this festival have included “Dark Money,” which examines campaign finance, and “Ski Bum: The Warren Miller Story.”

Bozeman, another hub of film activity in Montana, created the Bozeman Film Society in 1978 and started screening a wide assortment of foreign and domestic titles unlike-ly to hit the local multiplexes. Today they screen in the historic Ellen Theater downtown. Having a film school at Montana State University provides a ready supply of eager audiences to augment the community cinephiles.

More recently, the Bozeman Film Celebration fills a niche to explore independent filmmaking and creative expression, focusing its first festival on women’s voices and films encouraging action to preserve our planet. Ted Turner and Jeff Bridges stopped by in 2018, so you never know who you may sit next to!

Down the road in Butte, the Covellite International Film Festival draws filmmakers from across the globe to a converted church theater in Butte, astonishing audiences with its community-driven approach. It has even been featured on Al Jazeera as the unlikely yet hip place to go for indie directors. Amid the sandstone rims of Billings, the MINT (Montana International Film Festival) dusted off the marquee of the historic Babcock Theater for a smartly run set of films and panels, treating the filmmakers and audiences alike to a ready supply of eager audiences to augment the community cinephiles.

The Bigfork Film Festival populates its program with entirely made-in-Montana projects, and they range from award-winning features to student projects from the universi-jubes. Special guests have included Hollywood legend Jerry Molen, whose films include “Rain Man” and “Jurassic Park.”

We’ll cover additional festivals in future columns. To learn more in the meantime, please visit the Film Festival section of our website at montanafilm.com.

**Film clips news about Montana’s film scene**

IWWF: Celebrating wildlife and environmental filmmaking

Every spring, the International Wildlife Film Festival draws industry, filmmakers, scientists, conservationists, and audiences to the heart of the Rockies for this long-standing Missoula tradition. Festival no. 42, April 13-19 and headquartered at the Roxy Theater, is no exception.

Through diverse programming and community events, IWWF celebrates ethical wildlife and environmental filmmaking as well as emerging filmmakers. This year, 70 films, originating from 36 countries, were selected. Filmmakers and audiences can expect lively QA’s after every screening, and engaging day-time programming including panels, dialogues and networking opportunities with top-notch filmmakers, fresh media makers and scientists working on the brink of discovery. The festival also hosts IWWF Labs, a highly competitive science-driven filmmaking intensive.

As usual, the festival kicks off on noon Saturday, April 13, with the the WildWalk Parade down Higgins Ave., followed by the WildFest in Cars Park, featuring live music, food vendors, and fun activities hosted by local organizations.

Learn more at wildlifefilms.org.

Bigfork film festival focuses on Montana films

The third annual Bigfork Independent Film Festival, April 5-7 at the Bigfork Center for the Performing Arts, offers a variety of short, feature, documentary and student films that were either made by Montana filmmakers, or were made in Montana. Just as last year, the selected films will be divided into film blocks, each between two and three hours long; available filmmakers offer a Q&A at the end of each block.

This year’s festival offers three free filmmaker workshops at 10 a.m. daily:

- “Make Your Feature Film,” led by Flathead Valley filmmakers Ridge Mallory and Mitty Underhill on Friday morning;
- “The Saturday morning workshop, “Drones: From Simple to Cinema,” is led by Birds Eye of Big Sky;
- Emmy-winning and Grammy-nominated composer Lance Benedict presents the Sunday morning workshop, “The Creative and Business Side of Film Composing.”

For details, visit bigforkfilmfestival.com.

BZN showcases 60 independent films

The second annual BZN International Film Festival brings more than 60 films from around the world to Bozeman June 6-9. This four-day event celebrates independent filmmaking, creative expression, and emerging as well as established voices. The screenings at various theaters across the city will be complemented by a rich slate of Q&A sessions, panel discussions, community-wide events, and other activities. Additional events include the Opening Film and Reception on Thursday, a free Family Night on Saturday, and an Awards Ceremony and Filmmakers’ Brunch on Sunday.

The festival opens with the Montana premiere of “The Divide,” presented by actor/director Perry King Thursday, June 6, in the Emerson Center’s Crawford Theater. Set in drought-plagued Northern California in 1976, “The Divide” chronicles the story of an aging rancher with a failing memory, his estranged and independent-minded daughter, and a young ranch hand, who finds himself in the midst of a family in crisis.

Other selected features include “The Etruscan Smile,” starring acclaimed British actor Brian Cox; “Be Natural,” Pamela B. Green’s energetic film about pioneer filmmaker Alice Guy-Blaché; and “Words from a Bear,” which examines the enigmatic life of Pulitzer Prize-winner writer Navarro Scott Moma. Also featured is “Not Enough Time,” a tribute to musician Dave Grusin, who will facilitate a Q&A after the screening.

We are delighted that Ted Turner will present the inaugural Ted Turner Award to the film which most inspires environmental stewardship,” says Artistic Managing Director Adam Bennett. The event features a ready supply of eager audiences to augment the community cinephiles.

Visit bozemanfilmcelebration.com for details.

Meet up with MAC on Facebook

“Like” us for up-dates on Montana Arts Council activities and opportunities, as well as information for and about artists, arts events and organizations across the state: www.facebook.com/pages/Montana-Arts-Council/347466251951287.
OpenAIR Residencies: Time and space to work

Western Montana Creative Initiatives launches its pilot year of OpenAIR residencies this spring in western Montana. The residencies aim to give artists in all media — visual, literary and performance — time and space to focus on their work. The organization’s founders are two University of Montana alumni: Missoula painter and muralist Hadley Ferguson and artist Stoney Sasser.

Residencies provide artists with “a sustained period of time to focus on their practice, separate from the busyness of everyday life, and additionally lets them connect to a new community of people and bring in fresh ideas,” Sasser told the Missoulian.

In 2019, at least 10 selected artists will be invited to connect with residency sites chosen from remote wilderness areas and to historically significant venues in Missoula. Applications closed March 10, and artists will be notified March 26.

The program is open to emerging, mid-career and established artists, and students 18 years older are welcome to apply.

Those selected are expected to contribute one piece of work to the OpenAIR collection, provide feedback, and help work out kinks in the pilot program. Spring artists are responsible for room and board while summer and fall artists receive lodging.

Spring Residencies, open only to Montana artists, are at Home Resource, the Historical Museum at Fort Missoula, and Moon-Randolph Historic Homestead. All in Missoula, from April 20-28, and to Flathead Lake Biological Station, on the east shore of the lake, April 19-27.

The mostly six-week Summer Artist in Residence, open to local, national and international artists, also bring participants to Home Resource, the Historical Museum and Moon-Randolph Historic Homestead June 23-Aug. 4; and to a remote cabin in the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness July 8-22.

Two artists will be selected for a full residency at the Flathead Lake Biological Station. Sept. 21-Oct. 12 or Oct. 20-Nov. 9.

The program is the first venture of Western Montana Creative Initiatives, a nonprofit started by Ferguson and Sasser, with Missoula Community Foundation acting as their fiscal sponsor.

“The event serves as a launch for cultural communities Montana’s new enterprises. Montana Poet Laureate Lowell Sasser told the Missoulian. “Many of the places have resource libraries and huge historical archives, and so it just seems like a really dreamy opportunity for somebody, an artist to come in and explore the history of place and site,” she said.

Ferguson found that residencies contributed to her growth as an artist. “It gives you space to focus on what you want to do, and it gave me to home and incorporate into my professional practices,” she told the Missoulian. For information, head to openairmt.org.

Hearth: A Conversation launches Gather Round program

Internationally renowned authors Debra Magpie Earling, Chi-gozi Obioma and Carl Safina will headline an evening at Chico Hot Springs on Saturday, April 20, with a discussion about community, identity and place.

The event serves as a launch party for Humanities Montana’s new program, Gather Round, an initiative to provide free DIY toolkits to people who are interested in host community conversations based on the themes raised in Hearth: A Global Conversation on Community, Identity and Place, an anthology edited by Missoula authors Amick Smith and Susan O’Connor.

“A hearth is many things: a place for solitude, community and contrived times — set in flux by climate change, mass immigration, the refugee crisis, and the dislocating effects of technology,” Earling is the former director of the University of Montana’s creative writing program, and a Bitterroot-Salish tribal member. Her novel, Possum Red, won Spur, American Book, and Willa awards, among other honors, and is being made into a television series. Possum Red recently was voted the state’s favorite book by participants in the Great Montana Read.

Nigerian writer Obioma’s novel, The Fisherman, was a finalist for the Man Booker Prize. The New York Times called him “the heir to Chinua Achebe,” and he was named “one of 100 Global Thinkers” by Foreign Policy magazine in 2015. He is a professor of English and creative writing at the University of Nebraska.

Conservationist Carl Safina holds the endowed chair for nature and humanity at Stony Brook University. His work has been honored with many awards and fellowships, including from the MacArthur, Pew, Lannan and Guggenheim foundations. He was the host of the 10-part PBS series, “Saving the Ocean with Carl Safina.”

The event will begin with a social gathering at Chico’s convention center at 5 p.m. Following the featured authors’ presentation, participants will break into smaller groups for dinner and a discussion using the Gather Round toolkits designed by Humanities Montana.

The evening’s program also will include a short reading by two Livingston public school students. Those will be chosen from among participants in a poetry workshop, in which local poets — over the course of several days — will work with students to write poetry about the role of community and place in their lives.

Tickets are $50, and include dinner with a cash bar, and may be purchased at Elk River Books, 120 N. Main St. in Livingston, or at elkirbooks.com/hearth.

Blacktail Deer Road

Never mind my knees burned, bone against bone, after the first hard-earned hundred miles, pedaling from early hint of sunrise till nearly dark, parched and exhausted. Never mind the grit in my teeth when dust-devils rose and tore through rolling bills of sage, blasting me sideways. Never mind the late summer sun blistering my shoulders and thighs, rivulets of sweat pooling in my ears, my neck sticky with brine.

Middle of that first night, I woke with a full moon, my tent aglow, hips stiff against the rubble. Struggled to unzip my bedroll and step outside to pee. Stood marveling at the stars. Felt strangely at home … a gypsy, maybe, glamping the road continuously unfolding. Couldn’t have guessed the strain and ecstasy next morning cresting Red Rock Pass … how aspen groves fluttered goosenecked up my spine. How, gleefully, ragged cinders spit beneath my tread, Half way to Yellowstone, how I’d finally ditch my head’s constant jabber. How I’d muscle the crank as if the bike were pedaling me. Never mind, never mind, a breeze hushed across fractured canyon walls, as in a distant meadow, a scatter of antelope lifted their heads to look at me and wonder.

— Previously printed in Earth-blood & Star-shine (Shabda Press, 2018)
By Keila Szpaller
Reprinted with permission from the Missoulian, Jan. 27

Trey Hill is painting the largest sculpture he’s built in the United States.

In the studio, he’s using unusual tools to transform the nude ceramic tree standing 8 feet tall. Disposable cups, one in each hand, are used to mop up the juice. He’s “very particular” about the unique surface of the clay. The colors of the glaze are basic, white, jet black and medium blue. The process is mesmerizing.

The ceramic sculpture marks a milestone not only for Hill, but for the ceramics program at UM. It’s the first firing that’s filled the new kiln on campus, a kiln that may be one of the largest at any university in the region.

Hill works mostly in silence, the only sound the trickle of water and paint draining into the cut bottom of a plastic garbage can underfoot of the sculpture.

As the lines begin to give the piece dimension, Hill pauses to show the way the glazes split and flow. He turns to the other observers. “It’s pretty exciting, isn’t it?”

Once Hill finishes glazing the tree, the sculpture will return to the monster kiln, where he hopes it won’t crack from heat that will reach 2,250 degrees.

The scene underway is emblematic of the ceramics program at the School of Art and perhaps of Montana’s place in the field. The kiln allows work at an ambitious scale. The faculty are collegial and work alongside their students, in the tradition of the program’s founder, Rudy Autio.

Dean Leeper, in his third year studying ceramics in Missoula, said students at UM learn to consider their work within a larger context of the art scene, past and present. The directive isn’t overt, he said, but students are led to think about how their art will add to the context of the art scene, past and present. The giant kiln removes scale as a limitation.

“It doesn’t mean if you make an 8-foot-tall piece, it’s going to be good,” Hill said. “It might be terrible and huge.”

But he said it opens new possibilities for students. “They don’t have to get their tape measures out anymore. They can just build.”

**Building an extra-large kiln**

Hill started building the kiln about five years ago. He drove to Wyoming to buy bricks from a potter at one-fifth the normal cost. They brought him back to Missoula in a U-Haul. The kiln cost roughly $3,000 in brick, $1,000 in steel, and $6,000 in burners, a fraction of the cost of purchasing a new one.

The floor of the “car kiln” sits on a track that rolls out and allows access on all sides. The “stacking space,” or the interior, measures 4 feet wide by 6 feet deep by just under 9 feet tall.

“Everybody always asks me, ‘Is this the biggest kiln in the block?’” Hill said. “I don’t know. It’s a very big kiln, and there are very few kilns like this in the country at universities.”

The kiln is made out of soft brick 9 inches thick, and the material is so insulating, the brick remains cool to the touch on the outside even as the four gas burners push the inside temperature to 2,200 degrees.

At first, Hill planned to house kiln at his home, but he later decided to move it to campus. For the sculpture to be glazed, Hill and the form of the sculpture largely dictates the path of the glaze.

Paris Summers, Dean Leeper, Ryan Caldwell and ceramics professor Trey Hill, from left, move one of Hill’s ceramic sculptures onto a lift after the piece was bisque-fired in a new kiln last month at the University of Montana School of Art Ceramics Studio.

*By Keila Szpaller, The Missoulian*

Hill first landed in Montana for an Archie Bray residency after working for a couple of years following his master’s degree from San Jose State University. A decade ago, a faculty post at UM opened, and Hill applied for the job; he was working at the University of Virginia at the time, but he and his partner, Olivia Kiutta, both wanted to return to the Treasure State.

He’s been building tree sculptures for the last five or six years. Hill had been looking at the way the human form had been portrayed historically, looking at Greek and Roman stone figures that were seductive, beautiful and sexual.

The trees and branches supporting the body captured his attention. Many forms had trees with cut limbs that came halfway up the thigh. Those features, secondary to the human form but critical to its stability, reflected his interest in the unseen elements of life.

“It became a perfect way for me to talk about those things that we miss in life, but those things that are holding so much of what we do,” Hill said.
Survey shows arts attendance on the upsing

New survey findings from the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) show gains in arts attendance totals, rates and demographic groups, plus sizeable growth in poetry reading. Published in September, U.S. Trends in Arts Attendance and Literary Reading: 2002-2017 is a first look at results from the 2017 Survey of Public Participation in the Arts (SPPA). A partnership of the NEA and the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, which shows growth in consumer spending at the box office for performing arts events. The performing arts together with other arts and cultural industries contributed more than $760 billion to the nation’s economy in 2015.

The new U.S. Trends report covers shifting patterns of arts attendance and literary reading as measured by the share of Americans aged 18 years and older who reported doing any of these activities at least once in a year. The report covers the years 2002, 2008, 2012 and 2017.

“The growth in arts attendance indicates the increasing value of the arts in the everyday lives of Americans,” said NEA Acting Chairman Mary Anne Carter. “From poetry reading to visiting a museum or attending a jazz festival, the arts are an integral part of our lives, but also assets in our communities and fuel for our nation’s economy.”

The 2017 SPPA findings for arts attendance are positive in comparison to the 2012 data.

Between 2012 and 2017, the share of adults who attended visual or performing arts activities grew by 3.6 percentage points to 132.3 million people, representing nearly 54 percent of the U.S. adult population. Performing arts attendance also increased from 8.1 percent in 2012 to 12.4 percent in 2017. Other significant findings include:

- The share of 18-24-year-olds who read poetry more than doubled.
- Women showed notable gains, increasing from 8 percent in 2012 to 14.5 percent in 2017.
- Hispanic poetry readers increased from 4.9 percent in 2012 to 9.7 percent in 2017.
- Other racial and ethnic subgroups saw gains such as African Americans (+8.4 percentage points) and Asian Americans (+7.8 percentage points) between 2012 and 2017.
- In addition, reading plays has increased, but reading novels and short stories continued on a pattern of decline.
- Further on the performing arts, 106.8 million people attended in 2017, up 3.2 percentage points from 2012.

For most art forms on the survey, including musicals and non-musical plays, classical music, jazz, ballet and other dance performances, opera, and Latin/Spanglish/a music, attendance rates held steady despite a five percent growth in the adult population over the five-year period. Therefore, the number of adults attending those events increased over the time period studied.

The three forms of arts attendance in the performing arts are:

- Outdoor performing arts festivals: 58.5 million people
- Musicals: 40.2 million people
- Other performing arts events referenced above: 36.4 million people

In 2017, 102.5 million adults attended visual arts events, an increase of 3.3 percentage points from 2012.

The share of adults who visited art museums or galleries grew by nearly 3 percent from 2012 to 2017, totaling 75.7 million people in 2017. The most significant increases occurred for African Americans, 18-24-year-olds, and 35-54-year-olds.

The NEA has developed additional resources to promote access and understanding of the survey findings. The data profile page offers an interactive data tool that lets users search quickly for findings related to specific art forms and demographic tables and tables about adults with disabilities.

A fact sheet discusses the arts attendance rates alongside NEA funding and information on the economic impact of arts and culture.

Raw data for the full 2017 Survey of Public Participation in the Arts is available at the NEA’s National Archive of Data on Arts and Culture.

The full 2017 SPPA (including engaging with the arts through electronic media and personally creating art) will be reported this year. Join the Twitter conversation at #NEA_sppa, visit arts.gov to learn more about the NEA.

The award-winning cappella quartet Women of the World performed March 22 at the O’Shaughnessy Center in Whitefish, and offered a free outreach concert to students and seniors, with funding support from the NEA.

Anne Carter, acting chairman of the NEA.

The eight grants, totaling $101,000, include:

- Alberta Bair Theater in Billings: $10,000 to support a series of concert performances and related educational activities
- Billings Cultural Partners (aka The Writer’s Voice): $10,000 to support the High Plains BookFest, a literary festival held each October.
- Billings Symphony Orchestra & Chorale: $10,000 for symphony performances and educational outreach in honor of Black History Month and the 60th anniversary of the founding of Motown Records.
- Bozeman Opera Association of Bozeman: $10,000 to support a production of Eugene Onegin by Tchaikovsky with associated community engagement activities.
- Archie Bray Foundation in Helena: $25,000 to support a visiting artist program in ceramics.
- Myrna Loy Center: $20,000 to support creative writing residencies for students.
- Missoula Writing Collaborative: $15,000 to support creative writing residencies for students.
- Whitefish Theatre Co.: $10,000 to support music performances by guest artists WOW (Women of the World).
Public Value Partnerships grants between Montana nonprofit arts organizations and the Montana Arts Council champion the fact that the arts are of benefit to all the citizens of Montana and are worthy of state and federal investment.

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

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

MAC believes that using “The Three Rs” strengthens participation, understanding and support from audiences, donors and funders. We’d like to share some of the best examples of these stories from 2018 responses.

Building Relationships
Missoula Art Museum: Last year MAM created an exhibition and a myriad of community events titled “From Flower Cloth to Story Cloth: Hmong Textiles in the MAM Collection,” as a timely reminder of the value of art and creativity to the human experience. The exhibition coincided with the arrival of Eritrean, Congolese, and Syrian refugee families to Missoula through the help of the International Rescue Committee and the local non-profit organization Soft Landing. Questions about refugee resettlement are relevant in light of rising nationalism and a recent proliferation of hate speech nationwide. “From Flower Cloth to Story Cloth” celebrated the diversity of the city and stood as an example of the significant Hmong contributions to the Missoula community.

The Hmong were resettled in Missoula after being persecuted in Laos because of their loyalty to the anti-communist U.S. government and CIA operations. Over the years, Missoula, MAM and the Hmong community have grown and evolved together. Hmong are skilled farmers and business owners who have established successful businesses and are very visible at our farmers’ markets and contribute generously to our local food bank. In addition, Hmong culture in Missoula has been profiled nationally through press and in award-winning publications. Missoula Art Museum: Family-friendly celebration of “From Flower Cloth to Story Cloth,” an exhibit of Hmong textiles.

Alpine Artisans: Author William Kittredge speaks at the 2017 Maclean Festival

The 3 Rs at work in Montana

Public Value Partnerships applications are available now at art.mt.gov/pvp. The deadline is 5 p.m., April 5. Montana Public Value Partnerships provide operating support for the artistic and educational mission of Montana arts organizations. The program recognizes strong operations, stable management, ongoing engagement, and high-quality programming for the arts and arts education. Public Value Partners provide an investment that brings meaning, adds vitality, and becomes a catalyst for new ways of thinking, seeing and solving problems.

Eligible applicants are non-profit arts organizations with an IRS 501(c)(3) ruling incorporated in Montana and registered in and good standing with the Montana Secretary of State, or may be a tribal or university arts program with ongoing outreach programs that significantly extend services beyond the campus. Applications are reviewed based on the following criteria:

1. The organization has appropriate and sufficient governance, management and staffing.
2. Activities must engage and be responsive to the people and communities for whom they are intended.
3. Artistic programs and services are aligned with the mission.

Grants will range from $2,000 to $10,000 and will be awarded annually between July 1, 2019 and June 30, 2023. For more information, visit art.mt.gov/pvp or contact Kristin Han Burgoyne (khburgoyne@mt.gov or 406-444-6449).

Return on Investment
Montana Ballet Company, Bozeman: Montana Ballet spends significantly in the community. These investments include:

• Willson Auditorium – one of our biggest items is the theater rental for our annual “NUTcracker” and “Cinderella” performances. The Willson is also part of the Bozeman Public School District, so fees support local schools. The fee paid to the Willson Auditorium also supports our local stage crew and lighting technicians.
• Rent – another significant annual expense is studio rental. Our space is on North 7th and is owned by a local Bozeman family.
• Bozeman Symphony and local musicians – MBC is committed to performing to live music.

 Continued on next page
MAP workshops well underway; registration open for fall

TourWest grant deadline is April 1

The 3 Rs at work in Montana (from previous page)

MAP programs well underway; registration open for fall

Upcoming Montana Artreprenuer Program (MAP) Deadlines

The 3 Rs at work in Montana (from previous page)

The Helena Cohort, at a recent gathering, includes (L-R): Marcia Miller, Suzy Combi, Madeline Keller-King, Suzy Lake-Lejeune, Cladie Schlosser, Dre Castillo, Brandy Rasmussen, Rebecca Wells and Bobbi de Montgoy (Amber Biebly was absent).

Our programs work to create and refine the story of their art in a way that speaks to their target customers. We provide feedback and offer training for artists to write and write their articles. We “Start with Art” every day of instruction. Each artist stands and speaks briefly about their art - as they are speaking to customers. With this practice, we’ve seen marked improvement in artists’ ability to talk to others about their art. We have recently completed Workshop 2, and the artists are reaching out to mentors to advance their proficiency in their field and consider internships to learn more about their business of art. They are using the skills they learned in Workshop 2 to design and create booths that professionally display their artwork at shows and other venues. In the workshops, we also cover best practices in creating logos, business cards and brochures, and general business practices such as record-keeping, among a range of practices necessary for creating a sustainable business of their own.

The proposed program must involve a paid professional performing artist/company that can include up to 2,500 in the arts fee, whichever is less. The grants are only available to organizations that sponsor performance within the 13-state WESTAF region and can be located outside the United States. Some discretionary projects are also acceptable provided they have a performance aspect to them. TourWest funds can be used to support performances in festivals. The festival organization itself, not individual presenters participating in the festival, may apply for up to two grants to support artists performing in the festival.

The 3 Rs at work in Montana (from previous page)

These collaborations create more meaningful experiences with performing arts for our patrons. The Bozeman Symphony accompanies MBC annually in the “Nutcracker,” and a variety of accomplished local musicians perform with MBC during the season. MBC expends significant resources to support these collaborations as well as other arts organizations.

- Sets and costumes – MBC provides subsidies to presenters for the presentation of out-of-state touring performing and literary artists. The grant application is currently available and the deadline of April 1 is fast approaching.
- TourWest standard performance grants are available in amounts of up to $2,500 or 50% of the artsic fee, whichever is less.

The 3 Rs at work in Montana (from previous page)

- Dancers – MBC has a small number of company dancers. We are committed to paying them for their work in our performances.
- MBC hires local wardrobe professionals to handle all costume using local materials.
- Ad sales – MBC works hard to create and maintain a strong presence in the Bozeman community. We purchase ads to publicize our performances and our dance academy to accomplish this goal.
- Printing – MBC expends significant funds annually with two local Bozeman print shops to create programs for performances, advertisement posters, and other written materials used in informational packets and donor letters.

TourWest grant deadline is April 1

TourWest, a competitive grant program funded by the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), provides subsidies to presenters for the presentation of out-of-state touring performing and literary artists. The grant application is currently available and the deadline of April 1 is fast approaching.

TourWest standard performance grants are available in amounts of up to $2,500 or 50% of the artistic fee, whichever is less. The grants are only available to organizations that sponsor performances within the 13-state WESTAF region, which includes Montana. For the 2019-2020 cycle, projects must take place between Sept. 1, 2019, and Aug. 31, 2020, and must feature one public performance and one educational outreach activity. Applicants may apply for up to two standard performance grants, each of which is for a distinct project.

The proposed program must involve a paid professional performing artist/company that is based outside of the presenter’s home state. The performers do not need to be based in the Montana Ballet Company: “Cinderella” takes center stage at Willson Auditorium.

Spring 2019 • State of the Arts

Strategic Investment Grant funds available

Strategic Investment Grant (SIG) funds are still available for spring, summer and fall projects and professional development.

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

- Professional development grants help build individual art skills and knowledge, art careers and/or art businesses.
- Market expansion grants help increase exposure and improve marketing or promotion, opportunities for exhibition, performance and/or sales to a wider or new audience.
- Grants for public outreach and arts activities fund ongoing or one-time activities that are designed to reach a new or expanded audience.
- Challenges and emergencies grants provide resources for artists or arts organizations experiencing challenges or emergencies that impede the ability to continue work.

The application deadline is the 15th of the month. For guidelines and more information visit art.mt.gov/sig; contact Kristin Han Burgoyne (kburgoyne@mt.gov or 406-444-6458) for more information.

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Fort Peck Theatre Celebrates 50 Seasons

Aaron Parrett’s Territorial Press in Helena – which he describes as “a largely philosophical enterprise” – churns out pages the old-fashioned way – via a 1920s Chandler and Price platen printing press. He has since published an award-winning book of 10 short stories, Maple & Lead, with illustrations by Seth Roby. (Photo by Czeski Gomez)