

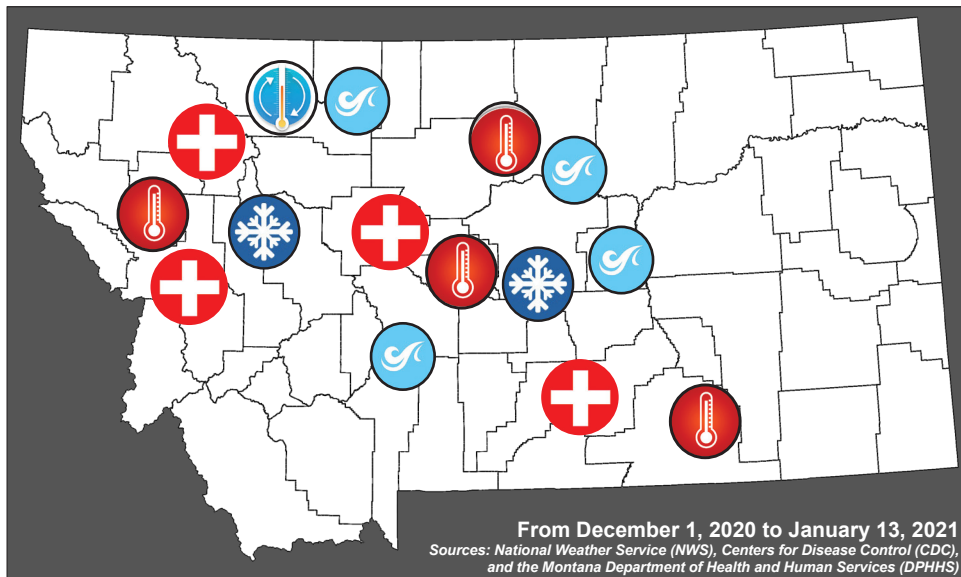
# MONTANA PRESS



BOOKS IN THE BIG SKY STATE



# MONTANA ALMANAC



## Highs and Lows Across the State

January 2021 was warm at Helena, with below normal precipitation and snowfall. The 30.5 degree average temp was 7.4 degrees above the normal. In Great Falls, the January 31.3 degree average temp was 6.1 degrees above normal. In Havre, the 28.2 degree average temp was 10.2 degrees above the normal of 18.0 deg. Overall, the year-to-date temperatures are above normal. The average area's composite temperature was 26.6 degrees, the warmest since 2006. Both Kalispell and Missoula had Januarys in the top ten warmest on record. The highest temperature reported during the recording period was 65 at Hardin on Feb. 2, followed by 64 at Laurel Airport on Jan. 13. The low temperature for the recording period was -31 at Cut Bank Airport on Feb. 9. Arctic temperatures descended on the state in early February with lows below zero recorded in Chinook, Havre and Great Falls and wind chills in the -20s to -40s across parts of Montana.

## Windy Weather

Extreme high winds blew across the state on Jan. 13 in a widespread and impactful high wind event and poor lines came down in Bozeman and near Livingston and elsewhere in the state. Peak gusts were recorded at Judith Peak in Fergus County at 95 mph. Gusts of 81 were recorded at Helena airport and Chester, and 78 mph at White Sulphur Springs and Havre, 77 mph at Lewistown and Great Falls and 75 mph at Browning and Denton. Great Falls, Helena and Havre all broke January wind speeds on record. All but two (Pondera and Beaverhead) of the 18 counties covered by the NWS Great Falls saw wind gusts of 70+ mph with 10 of the counties observing a wind gust of 80+ mph. Jan. 17 saw another wind event with peak gusts of 82 mph at East Glacier. High winds returned on Jan. 20 when Deep Creek in Glacier County recorded 97 mph peak gusts.

## Continuing COVID-19 Health Emergency

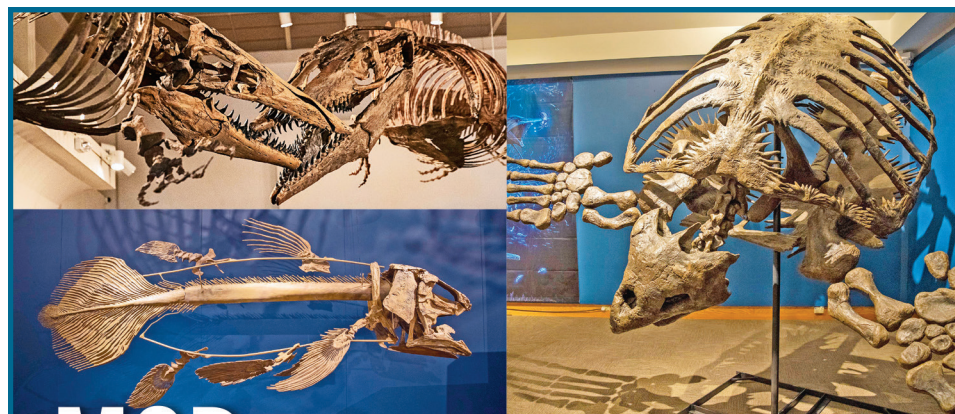
Many individual county health departments across the state, in accordance with the Centers for Disease Control, require all residents to wear masks when visiting any public establishment. The CDC provided recent guidance to Americans that double masking with multi-layer cloth or surgical masks can be up to 92% effective at stopping community spread of the virus. As the virus continues to spread, the U.S. reported 27.7 million cases and 478,000 deaths, up from 24.3 million cases and 390,000 related deaths in the last reporting period. Over 136,000 are currently hospitalized. A number of vaccines thought to provide significant protection for individuals from developing COVID-19 if infected with the novel coronavirus are now be administered across the United States at an average of 1.5 million doses per day. During the reporting period, Montana recorded 251 additional deaths for a total of 1,320 COVID fatalities with a significant number of infected cases in Yellowstone County/Billings (up from 14,582 to 15,832 with 820 cases active at press time), Flathead (up from 9,366 to 10,500 with 606 active), Missoula (up from 6,996 to 7,895 with 186 active), Gallatin (up from 10,381 to 11,728 total and 277 active), Cascade (up from 7,044 to 7,475 total and 250 active) and Lewis and Clark (from 5,372 to 6,131 cases with 198 active). A total cumulative number of reported cases is 96,595 (up from 87,653 cases last reporting period) in the state. Hospitalizations (108) and active case rates (3,027) were stable at press time. Approximately 1,001,000 individuals in the state have been tested for the virus and approximately 41,000 residents have been fully vaccinated. Visit [dphhs.mt.gov](https://dphhs.mt.gov) for up-to-date information.

## Precipitation Totals

On Jan. 18, snowfall rates up to four inches an hour were reported in the Kings Hill area and a winter storm warning was issued for the region. Snowfall amounts for the storm included 24" at Neihart and 14" at Crystal Lake in Fergus County. Overall, at the Great Falls NWS station, only 0.18" of precipitation was recorded (0.33" below normal) in January, and only 0.9" of snow was measured. The entire Dec. 1 to Jan. 31 winter snowfall so far was a grand total of 2.0 inches. Water-year precipitation was considered close to normal by the end of January, however, large areas had seen little precipitation since November and Dillon recorded their driest water year of record. An arctic outbreak started Feb. 4, bringing cold temperatures and precipitation to the state. 16" was recorded at Brackett Creek in Gallatin County on Feb. 5. Over 14" of snow was recorded by Feb. 5 in Seeley Lake and 15" at Elk City. By Feb. 7, 24" was recorded at Mule Creek in Beaverhead County, 22" at Bracket Creek, 21" at Rocker Peak in Jefferson County, and 17" at Lone Mountain in Madison County. A three-day total of 39" of snow was reported by an observer east of Seeley Lake and over 30" of snow was recorded southeast of Condon.

## Be Avalanche Aware

Be aware of the risks of avalanches as when recreating in Montana's winter wonderlands. Know the conditions before heading out, take a course from one of the avalanche centers in the state, and maintain awareness of surroundings. Learn more online at [Avalanche.org](https://Avalanche.org).



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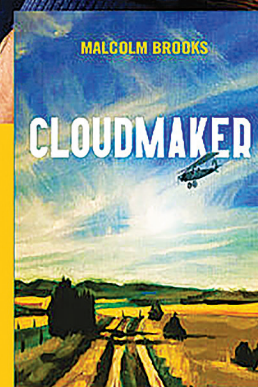
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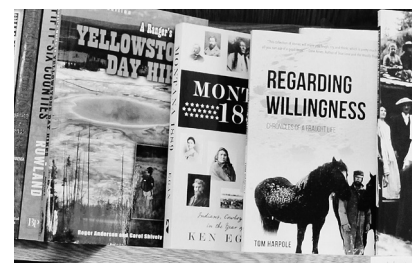
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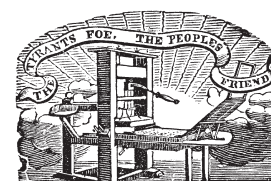
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# BYGONE DAYS

*Bygone Days are compiled from archives of Montana newspapers. Current years featured are 1897, 1937 and 1962. For daily Bygone Days, follow @MontanaPress on Facebook.*

**The Helena Independent**  
February 1, 1897

"The house passed a resolution in defense of one of its members Tuesday. A northern Montana paper published the statement that Mr. Lewis, of Valley county, was intoxicated in the house on the first day of the session. The house in the resolution referred to denounced the statement as a falsehood, and denied the privileges of the floor of the house to the editor who published the slander."

**The Fergus County Argus**  
February 4, 1897

"Mrs. M.L. Poland is circulating a petition to be presented to the state legislature praying for woman suffrage. Mrs. Poland is an ardent worker for 'women's rights' and says it is not 'sex' that she would like to see making our laws, but 'brains.'"

**The Dillon Tribune**  
February 5, 1897

"Horse Prairie... Last Tuesday as the east-bound coach neared Alice postoffice one of the spindles suddenly broke off, throwing the vehicle upon its side. The front wheels became detached from the body and the driver having lost the reins, no doubt the horses would have run away had not Mr. Balletti, who was on the driver's seat, managed to seize the lines, and though jerked from his feet succeeded in sawing them down after they had dragged him in a circle some distance. The other passengers, two ladies, were unhurt. Tuesday was a bitterly cold day and if the accident had happened at a distance from any dwelling, would have been much more disagreeable if not more dangerous. The spindle was a faulty one, which frees the driver from all condemnation."

**The Anaconda Standard**  
February 9, 1897

"An account of the attack of drunken cowboys and shearers on the Columbia Opera company at Shelby Junction was printed in the Standard. The following is given in detail by Miss Balch, a member of the company, to a Spokane-Review reporter:

"We had left Butte early in the morning... and had been traveling all the day and were exceedingly tired by the tedious journey. The train pulled into Shelby Junction at 10 o'clock last night. Our arrival what is heralded by a deafening war whoop that seemed to emanate from a thousand somethings that beggars description. We didn't understand what it all meant, but were informed, when the train had stopped, that a number of cowboys had gathered from around about during the day to attend a rodeo, or round-up of cattle, and were winding up the day's sport, imbibing all the bad whiskey they could take aboard. Well, the men of the company went up town and we ladies were left alone. Suddenly two men, who seemed to be laboring under about as much as would prove fatal to

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six ordinary individuals, appeared. They extended us a cordial invitation to come over to the hall across the street and join in 'tripping the light fantastic' and have some of the best whiskey the town could afford. We respectfully declined, urging our fatigue, but that did not satisfy them, and finally they resorted to the use of some bad language. When our boys heard that trouble was brewing in the car they hurried to our assistance, and one of the cowboys was treated to a reception that he had not counted upon. Finally the boys got the cowboys together at the end of the station platform and tried to distract their attention from us by singing and playing for them. But pretty soon the two who had been in the car previously returned and expressively announced that they were in search of the fellow who had assaulted them. One of these had a pretty bad eye, and between disgusting expletives made known a desire to have the heart of the man who had occasioned it. Then with another volume of oaths they each drew two ugly-appearing revolvers and preceded to recite their desire for gore all over again, much to the terror of all the ladies. But I was awfully mad at them for the nasty language they had used, and I don't think I was badly scared. So I walked up to the cowboys and politely requested them to go outside and settle their quarrels, and cease trying to frighten defenseless women to death. By this time 12 more cowboys had entered the car, and they were most respectful to the ladies and took the others out. But the boys thought all were responsible for the insults directed toward us, and they got into a general scrimmage, but fortunately no shots were fired and no one killed... For my part, I should prefer to allow the cowboy to continue on the even tenor of his way. I don't care to become more closely acquainted with him. He may be all right, but his gun is too handy, and he hasn't any scruples as to when or where he draws it."

**The Big Timber Pioneer**  
February 11, 1897

"Gnawed His Way to Liberty. It isn't often that a man owes his life to a good set of teeth, and yet to Tom Robbins of Cooke City, belongs that distinction... Robbins is a prospector and like all the men of that section, is a hardy mountaineer. He left Cooke City for his prospect, which is located about six miles from the camp. The snow in the mountains about Cooke City is unusually deep, and that means more of it than most mining camps of considerable elevation in

Montana have. Robbins, however, was not to be deterred by the snow. Strapping on his skis—long Norwegian snowshoes—he set out and reached the Daisy mine, where he stopped and ate dinner with Ex-sheriff Jurgens... After dinner he started on to his property. About a mile from the Daisy, west of there, on the divide sloping to the Stillwater side near Crown Point, he was caught in a snowslide on the Mountain and carried down a considerable distance. He was alone and covered with snow for several feet. He had a heavy pack on his back, which, because of the weight of the snow upon him, interfered with his movements and try as he would he was unable to make any progress. His arms were pinioned, but at last a brilliant idea came to him. He would gnaw through the rope that held the pack. His teeth were good and in time he broke the rope and freed himself from the pack. Then he was able to take off his skis and finally, after much effort, forced his way out of the slide. It was a narrow escape, indeed for Robbins."

**The Butte Montana Standard**  
February 21, 1937

"Views of the News. As Montana Editors See it: Train and Wildlife. The Livingston Enterprise. It is doubtful if anyone knows the annual toll of deer and elk taken by the railroad locomotive. Of course it isn't the fault of the engineer nor can the game animal be charged with willful suicide by placing himself in front of the locomotive. It is a fact that 10 deer have lost their lives in the vicinity of Missoula and Paradise alone. Whether the remainder of the mountain country has contributed to a still higher total is not of record. Most persons would assume that the animals after straying to the railroad right of way, have become blinded by lights of the oncoming locomotive and thus killed. The assumption it now appears is wrong. The deer and elk are attracted to the railroad tracks because of the presence of something they like and a substance which in cold winter months they have difficulty in obtaining elsewhere. Railroad track workers have as a part of their regular tasks the cleaning of switches to make the switches free from ice and snow. To insure against the ice replacing itself after subsequent thaws, the track laborers deposit salt in generous quantities. It is this salt the elk and deer want and they go onto the tracks to get it. Scientists associated with the forest service are now occupied in the effort to obtain some substance that will do the work of the salt and a substance that will not lure the wildlife to their destruction."

**The Helena Independent**  
February 22, 1962

"Tungsten Report Branded False By Arnold Olsen. Reports that a Dillon mine was forced to close because the Army bought tungsten from a Communist country were branded 'absolutely false' Thursday by Rep. Arnold Olsen, D-Mont. The western district congressman said the widespread misunderstanding in Montana was encouraged by some reckless critics, whom he did not name. 'The Kennedy administration, contrary to popular belief in Montana, has not bought, bartered for or borrowed a single ounce of Communist tungsten,' Olsen said in a prepared statement. 'What is more, the U.S. government has not bought tungsten from any foreign country for at least nine years.' He gave this explanation of the misunderstanding which developed when a tungsten mine was forced to close at Dillon last July: 'In November, about \$3.5 million



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worth of tungsten was needed for the making of armor-piercing shells for the Army. Half of this amount... was obtained from U.S. stockpiles, though this was not known in Montana. The other half... was obtained from outside the U.S. Some people in Montana, when they heard of this, immediately cried that Army purchases of Communist tungsten were putting and keeping Montana mines out of business. The truth is, however, that the Army got this tungsten from South Korea in payment for surplus American wheat. South Korea is, of course, a Free World country and U.S. ally... But it should be understood that even had the Army obtained all, instead of half, of the needed tungsten for shells from our stockpiles, the Dillon mine would still have remained closed."

**The Butte Montana Standard**  
February 24, 1962

"Agency Records Study Providing New Insight of Blackfeet Tribe. Browning (UPI). The Bureau of Indian Affairs said Friday new insights into the history of Montana and the Blackfeet Indians are being revealed in processing of Blackfeet Agency records at the Museum of the Plains Indian here... Mrs. Helena B. West, archives assistant, has been cataloging the agency correspondence... Mrs. West's efforts have thrown new light upon some of the most important events in Western history. These include: —A report from the Blackfeet agent in early 1876 of an attempt by the Sioux Indians to enlist the Blackfeet in their uprising against white settlers. The effort was unsuccessful. —A letter from territorial Gov. Benjamin F. Potts commenting on the Custer massacre of 1876. —An exchange of letters concerning those responsible for the Cypress Hills massacre of 1873. The museum archives also contain correspondence from early trading posts, records of troubles encountered in transporting supplies between Helena and Fort Benton and a day-by-day chronicle of the tragic winter of 1883-84 when the extermination of the buffalo led to the starvation of one-fourth of the Montana Blackfeet. Schaeffer said the value of the museum collection 'is enhanced by the fact that it is the only complete record of the difficult period marking the forced abandonment by the Blackfeet of the old, nomadic hunting life for a new existence based upon sedentary ranching or farming.' Much of the material is preserved only at the Browning museum, and is not available even at the National Archives." ★



# MONTANA VOICES

## Trump on Trial and Montana's Ghost Legislature

History is being made as the first issue of this year's Montana Press Monthly hits the stands. The U.S. House of Representatives is, for the first time in the nation's 230-year history, impeaching a president, the odious Donald J. Trump, for the second time and this time for "incitement of insurrection" against the United States government. In the meantime the Montana Legislature is meeting under the fatal cloud of a raging pandemic and still clinging to the myth that "personal responsibility" is preferable to requiring masks and social distancing while they crank out disastrous right-wing legislation. Buckle up, fellow Montanans, and hang in there for what promises to be a ride like none we've experienced before.

As we go to press the nation is once again gripped by the spectacle of yet another impeachment trial of Donald J. Trump – the first president to hold the dubious honor of being impeached twice. This time around, it's not for trying to use federal funds to blackmail a foreign leader into digging up dirt on a political opponent. Nope, it's for inciting the seditious storming of the United States Capitol to prevent the counting of electoral votes in a failed attempt to illegitimately remain in office after the American people soundly sent him packing. Far from foreign shores, the members of the U.S. Senate witnessed firsthand the destruction and terror of Trump mob as they hunted Vice-President Pence as a "traitor" and sent Senators and Representatives fleeing for their lives.

Although the votes will have already been cast by the time this issue goes to print, it's worth wondering if those who vote to acquit would do so were the "shoe on the other foot."

What if the Capitol had been sacked by a mob enraged by a Democratic president? Would the Trump loyalists continue their unfounded arguments that a president can't be impeached for seditious actions against the United States because he or she is no longer in office? No, they wouldn't. They'd more likely suggest conviction and a firing squad for attempting to overthrow the legitimate government of the United States.

In the meantime, we have another Capitol, this one in Helena, Montana. But this Capitol is more like a ghost town than a building filled with hundreds of citizens, staff, reporters and legislators common to Montana's biennial legislative sessions. Now, however, with echoes of Trump bouncing off the walls, ideologically-driven Republican majorities struggle to send bills to Greg Gianforte, the first Republican governor in 16 years.

Of course it would have been prudent to postpone the session until more Montanans had received their vaccines, so everyone who wanted to participate in the lawmaking that will affect the future of themselves, their families, environment and quality of life could do so.

But no, Governor Gianforte and his legislative cronies stormed ahead, masklessly and mindlessly mimicking their no-longer-leader in denying the reality of the pandemic's contagion and lethality.

What has come of that bad decision is now evident. In less than two weeks the legislative session will reach its half-way point when all bills that don't appropriate money or affect taxes must be transferred from the chamber of origin to the second chamber. Those that don't make the "transmittal" deadline are automatically dead unless the legislature suspends its own rules, which rarely happens except in the instance of extremely important bills.

To put the record of this sorry excuse for a legislative session in perspective, consider that more than 3,000 bills have been requested but less than 600 have received committee hearings, which is only the first step in the process. It's not tough to do the math – 600 bills in six weeks leaves more than 2,000 bills to be acted upon through hearings, floor debate, and votes

in the remaining two weeks to the transmittal.

Besides being a statistical impossibility, stuffing bills through committees is a sure fire way to produce terrible law. Already legislators, knowing their bills are full of unanswered questions about cost, constitutionality, and practicality, are claiming "they can be amended later" – thus passing on their faulty legislation to members of the other chamber to "fix."

Even worse, the measures they have managed to pass in the first six weeks of the session have almost nothing to do with benefitting Montanans. Nope, what we're getting instead of needed and necessary legislation is more theatrical chest-pounding about killing wolves, hauling guns around

(they must be some paranoid individuals to have to carry a gun everywhere), and dealing out tax breaks under the long disproved theory that cutting taxes for the already wealthy and corporations has any significant positive effect on either the economy or the well-being of the populace.

In the meantime, Gianforte has decided that he should emulate Trump and pack the courts with un-vetted judges that he alone will pick – despite the fact that Montana already has a judicial nominating process that does vet the candidates' qualifications and sends recommendations to the governor.

Of course the unintended consequences of these bad, ideologically-based decisions will continue to rain down on Montanans for years to come, will continue to feed the divisive political polarity of the last four years, and ultimately will leave Montanans and our environment worse off thanks to these "leaders" confusing campaign politics and rhetoric with conscientious governance that serves all our citizens. ★

—GEORGE OCHENSKI

Although the votes will have already been cast by the time this issue goes to print, it's worth wondering if those who vote to acquit would do so were the "shoe on the other foot." What if the Capitol had been sacked by a mob enraged by a Democratic president?

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# MONTANA SPOTLIGHT

## Capitol Watch: Behind the Tech Empire that Launched Montana's Governor

Last month, Greg Gianforte became Montana's 25th governor. Born in 1961 in California, he grew up in a suburb outside of Philadelphia and was active in high school as class president, a football player and a young computer entrepreneur.

He attended college at Stevens Institute of Technology in New Jersey, where in 1983 he received a B.E. in Electrical Engineering and an M.S. in computer science. He spent his early adult years in New Jersey learning the ropes of the emerging tech world before moving to Montana in 1995, where he continued to grow his professional career and perfected ideas that helped reimagine the digital landscape of America and transform the traditional workplace in Montana.

While the Governor is now the face of conservative and Republican Montana politics, he is also very much a self-described businessman.

Stevens professor Bruce McNair recruited Gianforte to work in the AT&T Bell Labs headquarters in New Jersey after Gianforte graduated from college. As a professor and also a Stevens graduate, McNair knew well the university's rigorous programs and expectations. When Gianforte completed both his bachelors and masters in four years, the new graduate's ambition made him a top-choice candidate for Bell Labs.

McNair explains that he always asked a candidate for AT&T Bell Labs to describe where they wanted to be in five years.

"We don't want people who are going to muddle through their career, but Greg had a pretty clear view of, you know, where he wanted to go," McNair recalls.

Founded in 1925, AT&T Bell Labs (now owned by Nokia) was known for its technological excellence in the communications field. The many inventions to come out of Bell Labs include the transistor, the laser, and the photo-voltaic cell.

When Gianforte arrived at Bell Labs, he worked as part of an engineering team for a project called StarLAN. He helped create what became known as the first of the world's Ethernet cables, essential for providing wired connections for the internet.

While at Bell Labs in the mid-1980s, the future governor met his wife, Susan. She had earned her undergraduate degree in Mechanical Engineering from Cornell University, a masters in Mechanical Engineering from Cal-Berkeley and an MBA from New York University.

According to Bruce McNair, after spending a few years at the labs Gianforte, grew restless with the slow-paced work environment and decided to move on.

"You know, they [AT&T Bell Labs] try to do things meticulously and sometimes it takes a long time to do it," he says. "I think he just got impatient, wanting to make things happen faster."

Gianforte stayed in New Jersey for nearly a decade after his exit from Bell Labs. In 1986, he created Brightwork Development Inc., a software company that created network management applications, including anti-virus software.

Michael Randazza, a former sales manager at Brightwork, explains that along with anti-virus applications, the company also made network management tools. Brightwork's

anti-virus product was geared to enhance Novell NetWare, a dominant product for networking computers in the 1980s.

In a past interview, Gianforte shared a story from his early work with Brightwork when sales were struggling. He purchased a large billboard outside of Novell's headquarters as a way to advertise the company to Brightwork with a simple message: "Don't just network - Brightwork." The stunt worked and shortly thereafter Gianforte secured a master distribution agreement with Novell.

Randazza describes Gianforte as a hands-on boss who worked long hours and lived close to the office. "You know, he and I were both young, and I think that we just overworked; we overworked it together. We were always the first ones in, and the last ones to leave."

Gianforte was someone always wanting to make something better, Randazza remembers. While he was ambitious and had expectations, his company didn't have the stereotypical "hard-driven sales" environment Randazza had previously worked in. Gianforte was ambitious, he says, but he had "classy ambition."

"At that point, you know, he didn't want to step on people's toes or anything. But he did want to drive and get ahead," Randazza recalls.

### BOOTSTRAPPING

Gianforte often pushes and promotes his practice of "bootstrapping" and even co-wrote a book titled "Bootstrapping Your Business" in 2005. In a Bloomberg column that same year, he listed his "five rules the Bootstapper lives by." Two of them are repeated:

1. *Sales is the top-priority job.*
2. *Don't spend beyond your means.*
3. *Don't be cheap.*
4. *Don't spend beyond your means.*
5. *"There is always another way."*

Gianforte's business practices often took advantage of the reputation of more successful companies. In a 2003 article in *The Guardian* titled "Faking It," about the "suits and enthusiasm" behind some start-up tech industries, Gianforte spoke about the success of his billboard in front of Novell's headquarters.

"It is wrong to assume you have to go out and develop a product before you can call yourself a business," he said in the article. "Selling the concept [first] was the best form of market research we could have done."

According to a 2008 interview with Gianforte, Novell sought to return \$100,000 worth of product, but, "fortunately our contract did not allow them to do so. From that point on we were able to use the fact that Novell was distributing our product as a point of credibility when calling banks and larger corporations around the country. It gave us the start we were hoping for." Former Novell employees did not respond to requests for comment.

In the early days of Brightwork, Gianforte also faced at least one issue with employment discrimination. A *Raw Story* article outlines a lawsuit filed against Brightwork by John Cardinale who claimed he was fired due to his multiple sclerosis in 1991. Cardinale, an

"effective and diligent" salesperson, was told his position was being eliminated but another employee was hired in his place. The lawsuit was eventually settled. Cardinale did not respond to requests for comment.

In 1994, McAfee, a security-software company, purchased Brightwork for \$10 million. Gianforte stayed on as North American VP for the company. In 1995, however, he decided to move on and take his family to Montana, a place he'd fallen in love with during trips to the state as a young man.

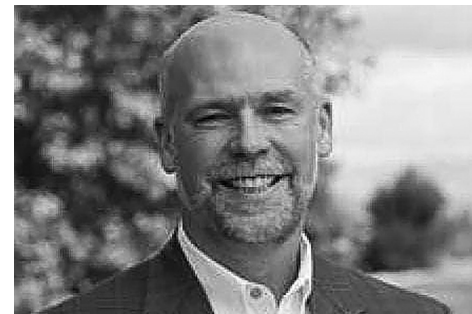
### RIGHTNOW IN MONTANA

After settling down in the Bozeman area, Gianforte started RightNow Technologies, a customer-relationship management (CRM) software company, with his wife, Susan. While tech companies were uncommon in 1997 in rural America, RightNow attracted significant customers, from local businesses to government agencies.

Doug Warner, a former RightNow software developer and product manager, worked at RightNow from 1999 to 2012. With undergraduate degrees in computer science and psychology and a masters in psychology, Warner pitched his ideas about artificial intelligence (AI) and search functionality when he interviewed for the company. He was more than halfway done with his PhD in computer science, but decided to take the job offer.

As one of the company's first employees, Warner grew close with the Gianfortes, even staying at the family's home when he went to interview for the job. While RightNow was a groundbreaking venture for the future of high tech in Montana, sometimes the company's biggest roadblocks were Montana itself.

Warner laughs today about driving to Billings to move a computer server because the internet service in Bozeman wasn't



*Greg Gianforte in a press photo from Bozeman-based RightNow Technologies, a tech company he founded in 1997 along with his wife, Susan.*

always reliable.

Warner explains that RightNow started as an email stock-ticker service, a service that kept people up-to-the-minute with stock prices. The company then morphed into doing customer-support emails and developed a "Frequently Asked Questions" (FAQ) system.

RightNow, says Warner, "reimagined how this FAQ system could go from being very static to very dynamic." Essentially, this allowed businesses to function without a physical support team. Eventually, RightNow's CRM model grew to encompass three tiers of products: automated support, automated sales and automated marketing.

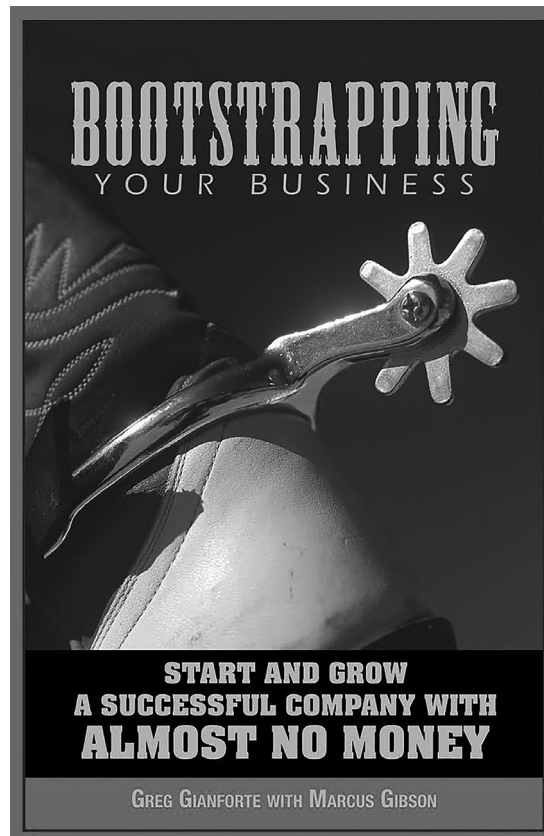
While RightNow initially installed their software on a customer's network computer system, the organization eventually morphed into one of the first CRM companies to embrace cloud computing, Warner explains. This was a breakthrough, since "cloud" computing uses a network of remote host servers (computers) to store, manage and process data on the internet instead of on local servers or personal computers.

As a software developer himself, Warner says that one of the many innovations he co-invented for RightNow was an "emotion detection" product.

"This technique would automatically classify a customer message on a scale from unhappy to happy based on the language they used," Warner says. "The very unhappy people could automatically be routed to a manager, the happy people could receive an automated 'thank you' and everyone else could go through normal channels."

Warner recalls that, after having the patent originally rejected by the patent office, Gianforte came up with the idea not to focus exclusively on the emotion capture in a customer but rather how to make use of that emotion. Warner explains that, generally, while tech is considered to be unemotional, when people interact with support departments there are always emotions expressed. For example, Warner says there's usually a level of unhappiness when someone has to reach out to a support department for help.

"That invention had pretty significant impacts," Warner recalls. "You know, hundreds of millions of user sessions that we were using to mine this data and present information to people. So it was really rewarding to be able to take some of these very theoretical concepts that were written up in obscure academic papers, and then convert them to production-level software that was used across 33





languages and dialects.”

Warner also became a product manager after spending seven months in Australia and New Zealand for RightNow, which developed offices around the globe. As a product manager, his role was to sit between the technical and business parts of the company. In his roles as a software developer and product manager, Warner focused on AI and search engines.

Evelyn Rusli of the *New York Times* noted in a 2011 *Business Insider* article that RightNow’s primary product was CX Suite, “a platform that allows companies to engage with their customers through the Web, social media and contact centers. [B]usinesses can track and manage conversations on Twitter, YouTube and Facebook related to their brand.”

RightNow offered companies the ability to streamline their branding and implement customer service in new ways. The company pitched its products to show how clients like businesses, government agencies and universities could benefit from customer support products and gained diverse, high-profile clients like Ben and Jerry’s, the Social Security Administration, Nikon, John Deere and British Airways.

## NUTS AND BOLTS OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

A major concern surrounding information technology companies having access to personal data is the resultant lack of consumer privacy; some scholars insist that surveillance capitalism is deeply detrimental to functioning democracy.

According to Shoshana Zuboff, professor emerita at Harvard Business School, “surveillance capitalism” is the unilateral claiming of private human experience as free raw material for translation into behavioral data. These data are then computed and packaged as prediction products and sold into behavioral futures markets, or “business customers with a commercial interest in knowing what we will do now, soon, and later” who also exploit consumer sentiment.

In order for AI to work, RightNow and other platforms do in fact rely on consumer data. However, Warner points out that, from the AI side, users of a client website would remain anonymous since they did not usually have to log in to websites and any personal identifiable information found was segregated into another server. Warner points out that from the AI standpoint, the goal was to get the right information to customers and clients without the demand of having a human present that information to them. He says that from the beginning, RightNow also had to convince customers and clients that data collected was safe in their system.

“If you’re on Social Security, looking at ‘How do I get my benefits?’” then you might also be interested in ‘How do I get a replacement card?’” Warner explains. “So we would notice those patterns of behavior and extract that out of those sessions.”

Warner relates this to someone buying a computer mouse on Amazon and Amazon then suggesting various items people also bought along with computer mice, such as mouse pads. At RightNow, FAQ’s worked in a similar way.

Historically, Warner explains, people stored their own data. Currently, due to data hacks and sheer volume, many worry about the safety of their own data in a world dependent on the cloud. The Pew Research Center found in 2019 that “81% of the public say that the potential risks they face because of data collection by companies outweigh the benefits.” 81% also feel they have a “lack of



control” over data collected by companies.

In an interview with CRM Buyer in 2004, Gianforte says of RightNow, “We treat the data that we store on behalf of our customers as if it were our own. And we recognize we have a critical responsibility to them to preserve the security of it.”

Warner says that least under Gianforte’s leadership at RightNow, the company assured clients that there was no way for a client such as Ben and Jerry’s to see sensitive information from, say, the Social Security Administration due to the fact that separate systems were being created for each company. At the time, RightNow contrasted with other cloud-computing companies that put clients on the same database.

## THE EVOLUTION OF RIGHTNOW

Andrea Smith, who worked in sales at RightNow from 1998 to 2005, also was one of the first people hired at the company. Her sense is that RightNow stood out because the software was simple, flexible, and usable for a wide assortment of customers. Smith says she was able to see the company and its customer-base grow along with the entire Bozeman community.

“Greg has truly changed the landscape for what it looks like to work in technology in Montana,” Smith says. She has taken what she learned from RightNow, “like bootstrapping” and implemented it in her own business she runs with her husband.

Doug Warner, however, notes that Gianforte’s “bootstrapping” was criticized by other RightNow employees since Gianforte sold Brightwork for \$10 million and started RightNow shortly thereafter.

“Greg likes to tout it as bootstrapping, but he was bootstrapping with millions of [Gianforte’s own] dollars,” Warner said.

Christine Kahane, who worked for ID Branding, took RightNow on as a client to rebrand and create a new website for them in 2007. Kahane, who was the account director, recalls the branding looking militaristic and campaign-like.

A part of her role was to see what kind of audience was attracted to RightNow and how branding impacted customers. Moving forward with the new design, she and her team wanted to capture the distinct personalities of RightNow users and embed who they wanted as customers in order to attract those people. It was nearly impossible to nail down a design or website, however, because RightNow had such a wide array of clients. Her company struggled to figure out what kind of customer they were creating the website for.

“We were trying to build all these values for RightNow but we couldn’t... there was nothing that they jumped on that said ‘Yes, this is it!’ because they couldn’t agree,” Kahane says.

Kahane says she intuited this could have been because leaders in the company couldn’t agree with one another. She says at one point she was asked to moderate a group of engineers who were at a stalemate. Eventually, she was asked to sit in twice a

*A still from an interview Gianforte did with ThinkEntrepreneurship.com in 2009 where he talks about bootstrapping and his personal journey in the tech industry.*

week on calls to mediate their progress.

“We can only be as successful in branding as they could be successful in aligning internally,” Kahane says. “Which I feel never happened.”

Kahane explains that for the website, it’s normal to have three to four persona audiences, or specific customers like banks or hospitals represented but with RightNow, it became nine to ten persona audiences. That made it hard to give RightNow the impactful and relevant statement of the brand.

Kahane emphasizes that the folks she worked with at RightNow were kind and hardworking people who she felt weren’t reinforced for their work often enough. During the project, she met Gianforte once at an annual meeting where he gave a speech. She describes him as a “mystical figure.”

## ORACLE TAKEOVER

By 2005, “on demand” or online-based software was gaining traction. Oracle Corporation, a massive computer software company known for database software, had a history of high-profile takeovers of former subordinates.

In a 2005 *Miami Herald* article, RightNow CEO Gianforte said, “I am the only guy in this (on-demand) space that’s not part of this dysfunctional family from Oracle.”

In 2012, however, Oracle bought RightNow for \$1.5 billion, according to a company press release.

“Oracle wanted RightNow because they had a history of denying the importance of cloud computing,” Doug Warner explains. “That company was entirely based on the premise, and in fact, had a huge history that most of its income was from shelfware, which is why we [RightNow] had that whole program that was so successful, to get people off the Oracle [shelfware] and start using cloud computing.”

“Shelfware” is a term for products customers had to install on their own, this meant the products could be installed incorrectly and would need regular maintenance. Cloud computing simplified the process by allowing services to be accessed in the online cloud, rather than installed on individual machines. RightNow had exactly the infrastructure of online cloud computing that Oracle wanted.

According to a *Bozeman Chronicle* article from 2014, at the time Oracle bought RightNow, “Economists saw a noticeable jump in earnings for Gallatin County and the state.”

“It was so large and it was a one-time event, that it showed up in the data for earnings, and has kind of a legacy effect,” Patrick Barkey, the director of the University of Montana’s Bureau of Business and Economic Research told the *Chronicle* at the time.

According to tax returns released in 2016 during his failed bid for Governor, Gianforte’s personal income had totaled more than \$243 million since 2005.

## FROM TECH TO POLITICS

After Oracle acquired the company in 2012, RightNow produced not only former House of Representatives member Gianforte and now Governor Gianforte, but also Senator Steve Daines (R-Montana). Daines had been vice president at RightNow and became involved with the company after

his family’s construction partnership built RightNow’s headquarters in Bozeman. Daines was firstelected to the United States Senate in 2014 and was reelected in 2020.

When asked about Daines’ role at the company, Doug Warner says that to this day, he does not know how Daines’ duties impacted RightNow. He says it was “creepy” to see Daines’s desktop empty without work, supplies or pictures, especially in a workplace that had such high expectations.

Warner said there were hints about politics at RightNow but he didn’t expect the company to produce two of the state’s most prominent politicians, both with very conservative views tied to religious beliefs.

According to Warner, the only time he saw religion seep into the workplace was when leadership would occasionally pray before meetings. Warner thought this was out of place. He says he does not think deeply held religious beliefs should not be in government since the separation of church and state ensures representation of a variety of religions.

“Greg is scary because he’s effective at his politics,” Warner says. “Daines is scary, because he’s an empty vessel waiting for somebody to direct him.”

Former RightNow employee Andrea Smith did not expect Gianforte to get into politics either but says she is looking forward to seeing what he does in his term as Governor.

“I truly believe that he went into politics because he believes he can make a difference,” Smith says.

Smith also brings up Gianforte’s conservative politics and religious beliefs and past donations to anti-LGBTQ+ organizations. When she knew and worked with Gianforte, she says his religion, politics and donations to controversial organizations were not apparent. When she worked there, says Smith, employees were given paid volunteer days where they could volunteer at a place of their choice in the community. Smith says she believes Gianforte’s history of donating to controversial organizations will not be part of his politics and that he will instead will focus on Montana’s economy.

“It just seems like he would never try to infringe on other people’s rights, you know, as a governor, so, if anything it’s the opposite. He’s trying to ensure everybody has rights,” Smith says.

Warner says Gianforte is a reasonable person one-on-one, but he does not think his belief systems belong in government.

“That’s the thing with Greg, he’s very intelligent and very effective,” Warner says. “He’s somebody who, when he puts his mind to something, he gets it done. No matter what. And as a politician, that’s one of the scariest things about him.” ★

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*In this ongoing series, Montana Press will continue to present a biographical profile of Montana’s new governor, exploring his history and following his leadership of state government. Over 150 people connected with Gianforte have now been contacted in producing this series. Montana Press has reached out to Gov. Gianforte for comment but he has not responded to date.*



# UNSOLVED MONTANA

## Two Decades Later: Jennifer Servo Case Still Unresolved

**T**he daughter of Norm Olson and Sherry Servo of Columbia Falls, Jennifer Lynn Olson was caring, artistic, loving, and studious.

*Jennifer Juniper, lilacs in her hair  
Is she dreaming? Yes, I think so  
Is she pretty? Yes, ever so*

Born September 23, 1979, Jennifer was named after a fanciful love song by Scottish singer Donovan, and she brought love into the lives of those around her.

She grew up in a quiet, even idyllic, neighborhood in Columbia Falls near Glacier Park. Like many other children, she adored Dr. Seuss and liked the rhyme and banter of Theodore Geisel's wordplay. While her childhood friends propped snowmen in their front yards, her father Norman Olson tells stories of Jennifer crafting snow mice or another non-traditional sculpture. In the summertime, she dressed up like a clown and went for a bike ride, or climbed a tree while singing "Yellow Submarine" with impish glee.

"We never let her cry herself to sleep," says Norman Olson. "I'd walk down the hallway, open the door, and those big blue eyes would be staring back at me."

There were several family vacations, including one trip to the Las Vegas Natural

History Museum, where Jennifer was fascinated by the T-Rex replica as long as a school bus. Norm Olson recalled how Jennifer could always bring a smile to his face, no matter how tense the situation. One example he likes to share is a from family vacation in Honolulu, when he and Jennifer had to ride a transit bus to a far-off terminal for a flight to another island.

"The bus driver, who barked orders like a drill sergeant, was obviously irritated from the unscheduled overtime due to our late-arriving flight. And Jennifer was not feeling well from airsickness of the long flight from Los Angeles. As we sat where the gruff driver directed us, I thought Jennifer was going to get sick as her mouth drew tight and her face tilted down. Then, in a low, rough voice, she mimicked the driver: 'Get to the back of the bus! Get to the back of the bus!'"

From an early age, Jennifer was singled out for her leadership qualities, her enthusiasm, and her motivation to learn and improve. She was nominated by Dan Fairbank, a teacher at Columbia Falls High School, to receive the United States Achievement Academy's national award in history and government.

It wasn't all serious business for Jennifer. She liked video games, especially Super Mario Brothers, pumping her fist when she had the chance to save the princess. Though it's hard to quantify, she might have been the biggest fan of "The Simpsons" in the whole Flathead Valley, and perhaps even laughed the hardest.

Identifying with brainy, adorable Lisa, she also snickered and laughed at the antics of Bart. At one point, this musically-inclined young lady juggled instruments before establishing comfort with the baritone sax, the same way that Lisa Simpson did. There was an episode in which Lisa realized her dream of becoming a news anchor. After excelling at writing in school, teenaged Jennifer wanted to be a broadcaster and a journalist.

Throughout high school, she worked at the Columbia Falls waterslides and Gary and Leo's Grocery Store. When she turned 17 and finished high school, Jennifer decided to join the Army Reserves, "against her mother's wishes," according to her family. She told her parents it would help pay for her college, and she would be able to travel to far-flung places she would not otherwise. Grudgingly, mother Sherry signed the enlistment papers, and, in the summer of 1997, Jennifer attended basic training.

Jennifer's monthly training sessions were in Missoula, where she was a specialist in the 347th Quartermaster unit for almost six years. During infantry training, Jennifer, 22, was made the squad leader in her barracks,

Servo started dating a 34-year-old former Army ranger, Ralph Sepulveda, "a bad-looking man, with tattoos all over his arms," recalls one of Jennifer's friends. Sepulveda represented something different from her recent long-term college boyfriend—and not in a good way. Many in her family hoped that Ralph was a passing fancy that would be over fast.

While military service instilled greater levels of discipline and self-respect, it was only a springboard to other things. Her life goal was to become a nationally esteemed TV news anchorwoman, to follow the path of Katie Couric.

Jennifer enrolled in communications classes at the University of Montana, working at Marina Cay in Bigfork during the summers. She became one of the "most well-liked and serious students," in UM's radio-television department, according to Sally Mauk, a UM professor and her boss at KUFM, and Jennifer also reported for both Montana Public Radio station KUFM and Missoula's KECI-TV.

Jennifer graduated from UM in 2002, and it didn't take the eye-ravishing, highly employable Montanan long to find work as a full-time reporter. There was a TV station in Abilene, Texas that would give Jennifer the experience she desired.

Sherry Servo helped her daughter settle into her new apartment in the Hunters Ridge Apartments in the 5500 block of Texas Avenue. To her mother's dismay, Jennifer wasn't living alone: even though she'd only known Ralph Sepulveda for a few weeks, he decided to leave his life in Montana to follow Servo to Texas.

Though ambitious, Jennifer expressed satisfaction, telling Sherry, according to her later account to the Associated Press, that "life is good; I have my own apartment with a swimming pool, a new job reporting, my cat and cable TV."

At 22, she now had her first full-time reporting job, at the local NBC affiliate in the mid-sized market of Abilene. She would adapt to the unending flatland, the oppressive summer heat and the buzz of the cityscape.

"She said, 'Don't worry,'" remembered her former professor at UM Bill Knowles. "I'll remember my Montana home. And I'll be fine."

### SLAIN IN HER APARTMENT

After work on September 15, 2002, Servo and Brian Travers, a weatherman at KRBC she had been starting to see romantically, picked up a coffee table from a friend's apartment and then stopped at Wal-Mart to shop. According to available published reports, Travers reported that Servo told him she thought he was being followed.

Perhaps it was Ralph Sepulveda, she feared. While in Abilene, Servo discovered that when she had first met the much older man in Missoula, he had a fiancée, a fact he failed to mention. Sepulveda told Jennifer he had discarded his fiancée after knowing Jennifer



only for a couple of days. He also had a child whom he never saw or even acknowledged. Disturbed, Jennifer Servo broke it off with Sepulveda.

In addition, Sepulveda had a violent fetish that Jennifer didn't like: he choked her during sex. She shared this intimate detail with close friends from work. Perhaps Jennifer even learned that, before he moved to Missoula, Sepulveda once had two criminal charges of child molestation filed against him in Phoenix, one of them alleged that he was having sex with his 15-year-old niece.

Travers said that he told Jennifer "she was just imagining things." In Travers' narrative, he asked Jennifer he could walk her to her car; she said no, but he insisted.

According to the Fort-Worth Tribune, Servo phoned ex-boyfriend Dave Warren, then a weatherman in Montana. Warren stated that they discussed possible plans to meet in Dallas in December, and that Jennifer did not reference any suspicions about anyone following her home.

It was Jennifer Servo's last phone conversation.

For several days, no one heard from Jennifer. Phone calls were not answered. Coworkers contacted the staff at the Hunters Ridge Apartments where, on September 18, less than a week before her 23rd birthday, she was found murdered.

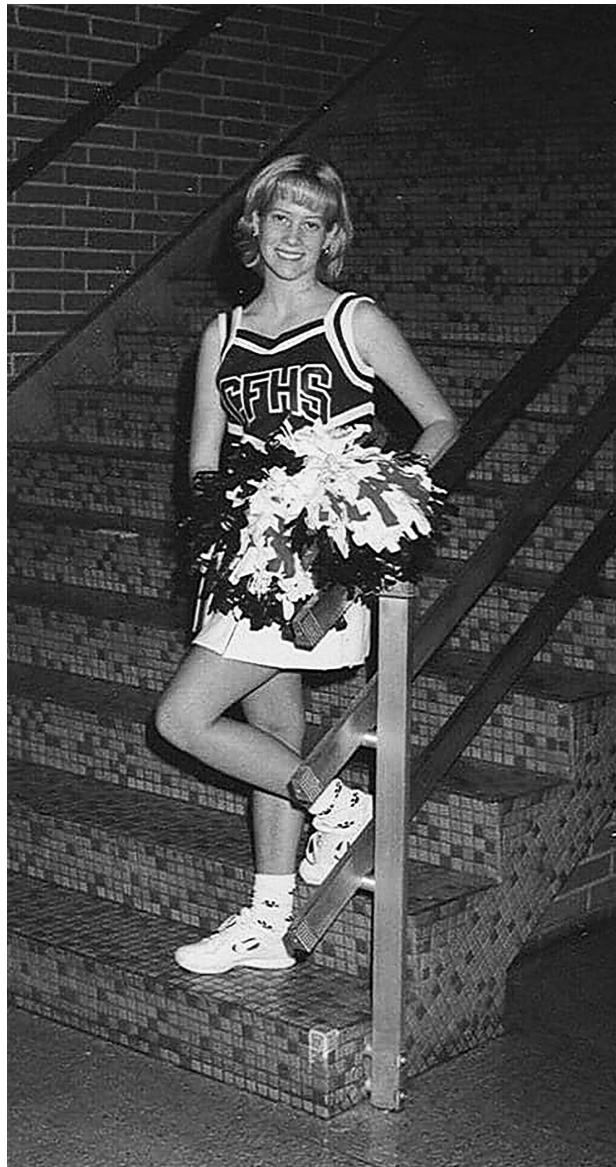
An autopsy report released to the Associated Press speculated that Servo had been dead for at least two days. According to that report, "She suffered various blows to the head, bruising around her neck consistent with strangulation and bruising consistent with sexual assault."



*Jennifer Servo became one of the "most well-liked and serious students," in UM's radio-television department, according to Sally*

*Mauk, a UM professor and her boss at KUFM.*

*Servo reported for both KUFM public radio and Missoula's KECI-TV (above).*







Detectives told the Fort-Worth Tribune, however, that they did not believe at the time that Servo had been raped because she was “found fully clothed” and there were “no signs of a struggle.” Her door was never forced ajar, one reason authorities believed someone she knew was responsible for the murder.

Routine procedures followed: evidence was collected, including DNA, blood, hair, and other trace evidence, a process made especially difficult because of Jennifer’s cat, Mr. Binx, whose hair was mixed in with any probable human hair in the apartment.

Several odd items were determined to be stolen from her apartment; one report notes that a Guess-brand purse, a cell phone, keys, and two DVDs (“Saving Private Ryan” and “Sex and the City”) were missing.

“Jennifer’s mother called that night her was body found on September 18,” says Norman Olson. “I screamed, and I couldn’t understand. I paced back and forth and around. How could you get a grip on it?”

Her body was returned to the Flathead Valley of Montana for funeral services. In a tribute to Jennifer, the Reverend Dan Heskett read a letter prepared by her father. The lobby of the church in Kalispell was adorned with photographs of Jennifer throughout her brief life—baby pictures, graduating senior shots, college, at work. Hanging on the rack in the vestibule were her blue high school letter jacket and her green Army Reserves jacket.

The mood was distinctly somber. “Jessica was murdered,” Rev. Heskett said. “That weighs heavy on us. A person filled with sickness or evil took her life... When someone this young dies a violent death, it’s just unspeakable.”

After Jennifer’s funeral, Norman took in Mr. Binx, Jennifer’s sage tabby; soon the animal and the father were in near constant contact.

“We shared the mournful days and nights, months and years together. I played the word games of decades ago with him that only Jennifer and I understood and laughed so hard at.”

### SUSPECTS

Despite a mountain of physical evidence, no arrests were ever made in connection with Jennifer’s murder. In a 2012 interview for the program “48 Hours: Deadline for Justice,” a pair of detectives in the case said they lacked probable cause.

Over the years, several people in law enforcement in Texas have publicly voiced their resentment that Ralph Sepulveda was not charged. “All the times that we interviewed him he really never said anything that made us think this wasn’t our guy,” Jeff Bell, a detective for the Abilene Police Department, said in 2013, although other suspects were also still being considered as of 2012.

Shortly after the homicide, Sepulveda enlisted in active duty with the Army. He decamped to Fort Drum, New York, and then spent a year in Kuwait. After returning to the states, he was stationed at Fort Lewis, Wash. (and lived in Lacey, Wash.) and eventually moved to Fort Carson, Colo. where he met a woman from California and lived there briefly with her before the couple removed to Joppa, Maryland.

According to property records, Sepulveda purchased a house in Joppa while he was working at Aberdeen Proving Ground, a nearby military installation. Sepulveda’s social media accounts currently identify him as living in Hawaii and as single.

Brian Travers was also considered a suspect in Jennifer’s murder, though it seems he remains so only because the police were unable to rule him out.

### PATH TO HEALING

After Jennifer’s death, her mother Sherry Servo started blogging about “the narcissistic” Ralph Sepulveda, including a possible link between him and her daughter’s missing purse from the crime scene and certain library books that had been checked out after Jennifer’s death using her college library card. Books were checked out from the Mansfield Library at the University of Montana on the account of Jennifer Servo on November 6, 2003, more than one year after she died.

Barry Brown, the access services coordinator at the Mansfield Library, told the Fort Worth Tribune that, plausible as it might be that the transaction could’ve have been a clue to a crime, it was just as likely a clerical error could be blamed.

“We might have accidentally brought up the wrong record and checked them out,” Brown said Monday, “but we don’t know for sure.” Detective Jeff Bell stated to the Associated Press that her account was used “to check out four books, which were mainly about philosophy, on November 6.” That was about the last new evidence or lead in the case.

For Norman Olsen and Sherry Servo, the daily reminders of their daughter’s life in their hometown are ubiquitous. To Norm, the Columbia Falls High School and its embedded memories of Jennifer inside its swimming pools, lapping, competing, strikes him hardest. And there are the tributaries of the Flathead River, places where he and his daughter would cross the river, walk up a bank, or hold hands on the shallow ice. “The best days of my whole life,” says Olson.

Justice is an odd concept to Olson, more like an abstraction, that, though tantalizing, offers little to alleviate the day-to-day reality of his everlasting survivor’s remorse. Servo had taken her mother’s last name and had a limited relationship with her father before her death.

“I’ve never had any interest in life since 2002,” says Norm Olson. “I laid in bed for five years. I’m just now starting to sleep again. I use audio books at night to control my mind, and to not let it get too dark. The negative emotions, the grief, the rage -- they are still like an electrical storm and lightning between by ears.” ★

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# MONTANA BOOKS

## *Jamie Harrison Builds upon a Family Legacy*

**L**ivingston author Jamie Harrison admits that literary heredity can be a handful, especially if Jim Harrison, a revered multi-award-winning, down-to-earth poet, novelist and national cultural literary superstar, is your father.

As one of Mr. Harrison's two daughters, Jamie did follow in her father's footsteps, crafting her four Montana-set Jules Clement/Blue Deer mysteries ("The Edge of the Crazies," "Going Local," "An Unfortunate Prairie Occurrence" and "Blue Deer Thaw"), years before he passed in 2016, at age 78. The following year, her stand-alone debut, the widely-praised "The Widow Nash," was a High Plains Book Award finalist, for its intriguing tale, set in 1904, of a troubled New York woman who relocates to a small Montana town and reinvents herself as a wealthy young widow.

In her new family saga, "The Center of Everything," Harrison introduces us to Polly, a Livingston girl whose life is at a crossroads due to a recent head injury that has scattered her perception of the present, just as her many relatives are arriving for a Fourth of July family reunion. When a beloved friend goes missing in the Yellowstone River, Polly's mental challenge leads to a deeper understanding of herself and her larger-than-life family.

Jamie Harrison grew up in Michigan and graduated from the University of Michigan, where at age 19 she met her husband, lawyer Stephen Potenberg. Post-grad, they moved to New York City for five years, where both pursued survival, Jamie as a writer/editor/caterer, Stephen as a question writer for Stanley Kaplan Test Prep. Their ultimate move to Montana involved a friend of the Harrison family whom you may have heard of, Big Sky landscape painter Russell Chatham, who passed in 2019 at age 80. The Potenbergs have raised two sons in their 32 years in Livingston.

**MONTANA PRESS:** What was it like to grow up as a daughter of a modern literary icon?

**JAMIE HARRISON:** Weird; we're all weird. Yeah, I miss him.

**MP:** Did you move to New York with writing in mind?

**HARRISON:** Uh no, I didn't really. I got an honors English degree, and I actually wanted to cook. I worked in a place called Dean & DeLuca for the first couple of years and then sort of burned out. It's not easy. I was catering and working at Dean & DeLuca and decided to try to get a magazine job and ultimately did that for a while, and then worked for a production company too, and then was offered a house on the Forest Service line out here owned by Russell Chatham, who wasn't using it, and just fled. I wasn't enjoying my job. I was working for Michael Douglas' production company, and he was nice, but I just was tired.

I think I'd sort of thought I would move back at some point, but I never did. New York can grind you down. I left it exactly at the point that I had enough money to enjoy it.

**MP:** Had you been to Montana before moving to Livingston?

**HARRISON:** Yes, I had been twice when I was in my teens and it made a huge impression on me, but I hadn't been out here since I was 17, and my husband had never been out here. So that was an adventure; we basically spent our savings, had to get jobs and off we went. It was pretty different back then than it is now in terms of actually finding employment. I mean, there really wasn't anything.

I remember trying to get a job at the Enterprise and I think they were paying \$3.50 an hour to basically write and edit everything. Yeah, that was brutal. I tried catering, but basically you were supposed to do chips and dip. So I ended up working for Russell Chatham. He was trying to start a small press called Clark City Press, so I ran that for four or five years before Russell ran out of money.

**MP:** He also had a restaurant, right?

**HARRISON:** Yes, after the first life of the Press, he put a tremendous amount of money into something called the Livingston Bar & Grill, which was very upscale. In fact, he sank so much money into it that there was never a chance that he was going to make a profit, but it was certainly fun to eat at while it lasted.

**MP:** Chatham and your dad were buds?

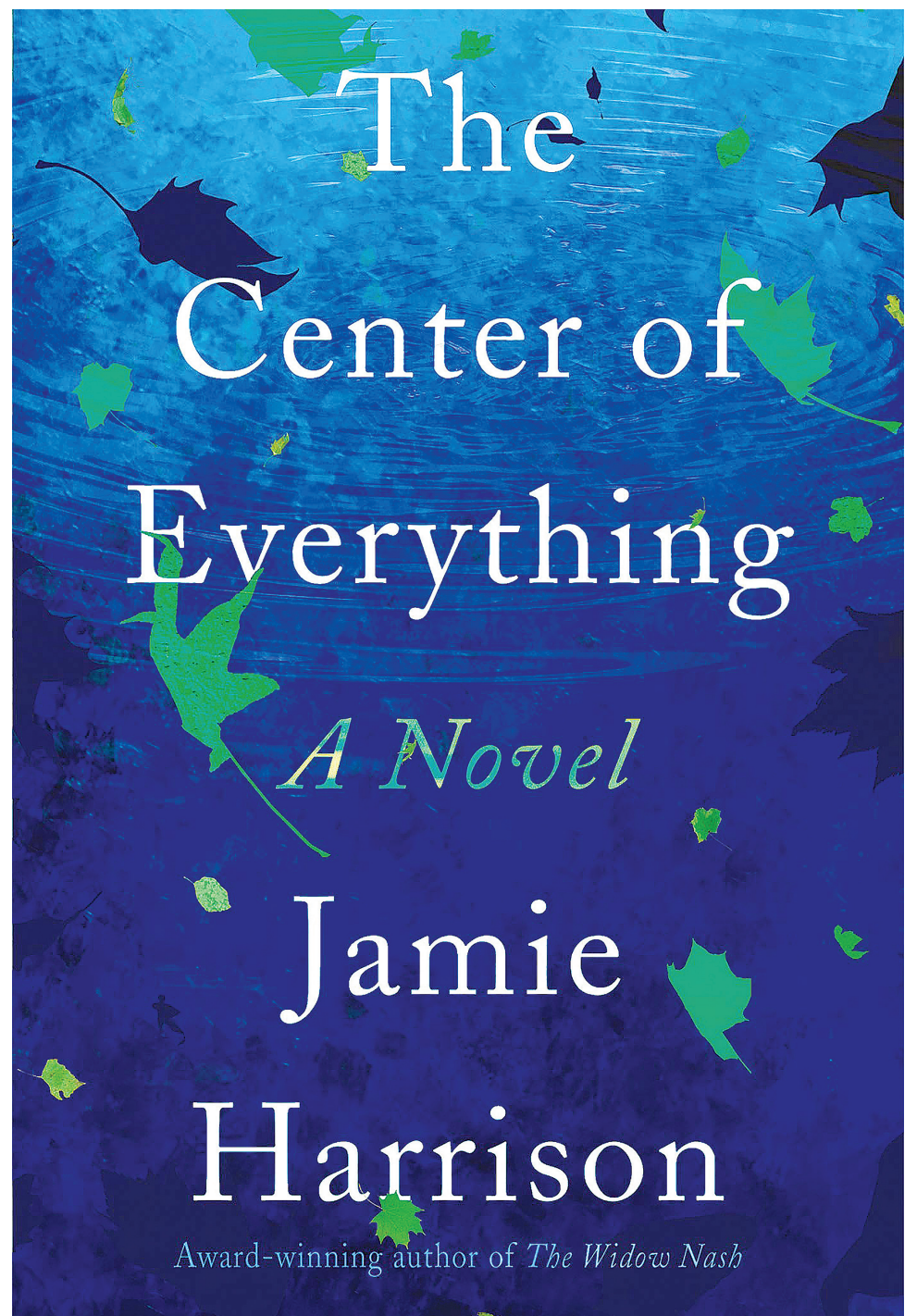
**HARRISON:** I'd known Russell growing up and he would come out (to Michigan) every fall with a couple of other friends. My first hardcore cooking experience – I mean, my mother was a very good cook – was cooking with Russell. I mean, really extreme attempts. The first time I made anything like tortellini or Szechuan food, stuff like that, was as a teenager with Russell and some of the other friends in the fall with long cooking binges. Everybody had a lot of fun doing that, so that's really how I started getting into food.

**MP:** Did you feast together during your New York cooking years?

**HARRISON:** Let's see, it's all hazy. Yeah, he would come out occasionally, and with the Press later, we went out together to do conventions and stuff like that. So yeah, Russell and I have shared many bottles of wine and MANY meals! (laughs) And the house that we rented was from Russell. We had to move into town when he needed it back after another divorce, so (deep breath) anyway...

**MP:** Let's step further back in time for a moment. As a kid, were you a reader?

**HARRISON:** Oh yeah, of course. I read everything. Books completely filled our life. I guess early on, I think the first real book I read was maybe "The Red Pony." I read Nancy Drew, a lot of mystery series, "The Black Stallion," a lot of little girl stuff. By



the time I was 11 or 12, I remember reading all of my grandfather's James Bond novels. I don't know; everything. I probably read more by the time I was 17 or 18, when I had sense. I went to a great little public high school, I think there were only 18 people in our graduating class, but we had a great, great teacher named Phillip Vance, and he at some point just put me in the high-school cafeteria and I read Russian novels. So I read a lot.

**MP:** And writing?

**HARRISON:** I never wanted to be a writer. It didn't seem like a good way to make a living. Obviously my father... (laughs) It was a long, long struggle for him and he always completely felt the calling. I mean, he was primarily a poet in a lot of ways, but he was also writing screenplays the whole time I was in high school, and it was a struggle. And so I didn't think of it as a good way to make a living; I just loved it. But I do think that you learn. Good writers read a lot. If I'm a good writer, it's because I've read so much and you just... it's a language you kind of take in by ear.

**MP:** You burst on the scene with the four-book Blue Deer mysteries, then suddenly disappeared for 20 years. What happened?

**HARRISON:** Then I stopped (deep sigh). I

should have kept going but I didn't. Dad and I worked on screenplays together; it was meant to be a way for him to do less work and me to make more money, but it did not really pan out. We came close to doing well with a few things, and I did a lot of screenplays based on the mysteries, and in the interim went through many versions of that, but basically, I didn't put out a book for 15 years, maybe more. So I can't say it was an ideal career at all. I did write a couple of things in between that I didn't publish, so it was a bit of a slog. I made a living on screenplays but nothing saw the light of day.

**MP:** And coincidentally, you were raising a young'un or two.

**HARRISON:** (Laughs) Where do the years go? I'm not sure. But yeah, I have two sons. At the time that I gave up the mysteries, the ideal thing if you're doing a series is to do one a year and I couldn't keep up with that. And my younger son had some health problems. You know, I don't know; I can't really pull apart why I stopped but I stopped, and it was hard to get back into it again.

I'm writing a mystery now and I thought for some reason it was going to be fun and easy after writing "The Widow Nash" and "The Center of Everything." In fact right now it's





neither fun nor easy. (laughs) It's hard to do mystery plots; they are not easy. It will be a Blue Deer, the fifth in that series. So I'm back to it now, and Counterpoint, my publisher, is going to reissue the mysteries, so that's good. I'm just covered with sticky notes and charts right now. I tend to overplot and then have to pull things out later.

**MP:** "The Center of Everything" shares with "The Widow Nash" an appreciation that we form our personal realities out of conscious and subconscious amalgamations that, depending on how aware we are, create their own mysteries in our everyday lives. How did you manage to explore that premise?

**HARRISON:** It started as probably three separate things. The big part of it is actually a childhood memory. The bit about Polly thinking that she could find her dead people, her grandfather and aunt, is really completely autobiographical. When I was three, I thought we were moving to Boston, and it was after this accident that had killed my grandfather (it was a car accident in real life) and my aunt, and I actually thought that they were going to be hiding in Boston, or else why would we be going there? And I thought that I could find them. And afterwards – and I did sort of argue with my own mother about that memory – the thing is, I could remember remembering. I remember looking for them. So there's that.

**MP:** How did you bring such clarity to Polly's brain damage?

**HARRISON:** Well, obviously there's all sorts of damage; people have all sorts of things. My brother-in-law had a closed-head injury and I've had other friends who have had injuries and I've had my own injury, and it's interesting what happens to people. The insecurity if you have a problem like that is part of what takes you down, the self-doubt. And I've kind of tried to explore that, too, with Polly.

**MP:** What was your brain injury, if you don't mind my asking?

**HARRISON:** I went without oxygen for some period of time, and you know, I'm fine. And while people come up with ways of compensating, it shakes you up. In the case of my brother-in-law, it was an accident and it was hard. He was very talented, he actually made artificial limbs and things like that and he was incredibly talented, the family had always done that and it was second nature, and it was just no longer second nature. Anyway, I ended up

combining a bunch of those things into one story, sort of smashing it all together and then pulling out a few other things. In fact, it's linked to the characters in "The Widow Nash," too. I combined many things.

**MP:** Your father lived life as if there were no tomorrow. What don't we know about Jim Harrison?

**HARRISON:** Well, jeez, I don't know. See, I don't know how other people... I can't adjust my point of view about him. A lot of what people assume he was is complete bullshit, the kind of Hemingway blah-blah-blah. I think people don't understand that a) he was primarily a poet and b) how well-read he was, how sophisticated of a reader he was, how much time he put in. He read virtually everything and he read widely until the end. He was incredibly supportive of other writers, too; other poets. He was pretty open-minded that way. I wish he'd gotten more recognition as a poet, I guess. He wore his reading very lightly but he certainly could have taught any literary-theory course in a university. He knew his stuff.

**MP:** Where do you plan to take your writing after the 20-year gap?

**HARRISON:** I probably will try to do two mysteries, and then I kind of want to go back to the world of Polly's family for a third book. I've always been kind of fascinated with the '30s and '40s out here and I might do something with that, but I don't really know. I just want enough time to keep writing. I'm 60. We don't know what we're going to get out of life. So I just would love to keep writing, I would love to get to travel, I would love to do a lot of things. I had a kind of long twenty years there financially, too, so who knows.

**MP:** Have either or both of your sons inherited the family writing gene?

**HARRISON:** My older one has, and I don't know about my younger one. My older son works in L.A.; he's working production on the TV show "Bosch," and I know that he would like to write and he does write. My younger son right now is considering graduate school, working in a wine store and spending the pandemic really reading a lot. They both read, and I'm glad.

**MP:** Think that may be in their DNA?

**HARRISON:** Probably, but it's still good to see. ★

—JAY MACDONALD

# LET'S KEEP FIGHTING COVID-19

*We've all got to do our part.*

## PROTECT PUBLIC HEALTH IN THE 406



Wash Hands  
Use Hand Sanitizer



Don't  
Touch Face



Cover Sneezes  
& Coughs



Keep Social  
Distancing



Wear a  
Mask

## IF YOU FEEL SICK



Stay Home from  
Work/School



Call Your  
Medical Provider



Quarantine as  
Instructed

*Montanans get it, and we've got this.*



[dphhs.mt.gov/publichealth/covid](https://dphhs.mt.gov/publichealth/covid)



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# MONTANA BOOKS

## *At Long Last: Laura Munson*

Laura Munson formed intense affectional bonds with writing early in her life, discovering something unfeigned and true she could depend on, an assurance of love not loved based on approval and an intermediary in which she could place her trust.

After Munson wrote an essay for the “Modern Love” column of the New York Times called “Those Aren’t Fighting Words, Dear.” Published on August 2, 2009, a short version of a full-length memoir addressing a rough patch in her marriage, this starkly-written personal essay became the number-one most read article on the Times’ website. Two days later, she had inked a book contract with Davey Literary & Media.

### THE PATH TO A CREATIVE LIFE

By the time her essay in the *New York Times* when viral, Laura had completed fourteen novels that stood unpublished and had endured innumerable rejections but her career soon exploded with an abridged version of a memoir that resonated with readers exponentially.

Shortly thereafter, “This Is Not The Story You Think It Is: A Season of Unlikely Happiness,” was released to exuberant applause and literary kudos, fulfilling Munson’s lifelong dream of sowing the seeds of a creative life.

“I’ve wanted to be a writer my whole life,” says Munson. “In college, I realized that I did not want to be an actress or a filmmaker, but I wanted to be a writer. I resisted it at first. But I’ve been processing art my whole life. Creative writing is what I refer to as sitting truly at that intersection of heart and mind and craft all of the time, with the third eye wide open...”

“In Boston, I was driving a delivery truck fresh out of college and I had

someone ask me if I could look at the future and still be a writer, yet never be published, would I do it? The answer was yes. I was 21 then, and today I’m 54. I’ve got three books that I’m writing right now. I’ve never stopped. Writing a book is a fascination and perhaps an obsession of mine.

“It’s not just that I love to tell stories. Writing is the air that I breathe.”

Indeed, Munson is obsessed, as all good artists are and must be. She needs her work. She couldn’t live without it. The outcast affinity of her work makes her life valuable.

“It’s an obsession, yes.. Writing is my practice, my prayer, my meditation, my way of life, and sometimes my way to life. It’s become more than just writing to simply understand. It’s my compulsion. It comes back to two words: obsession and empathy.”

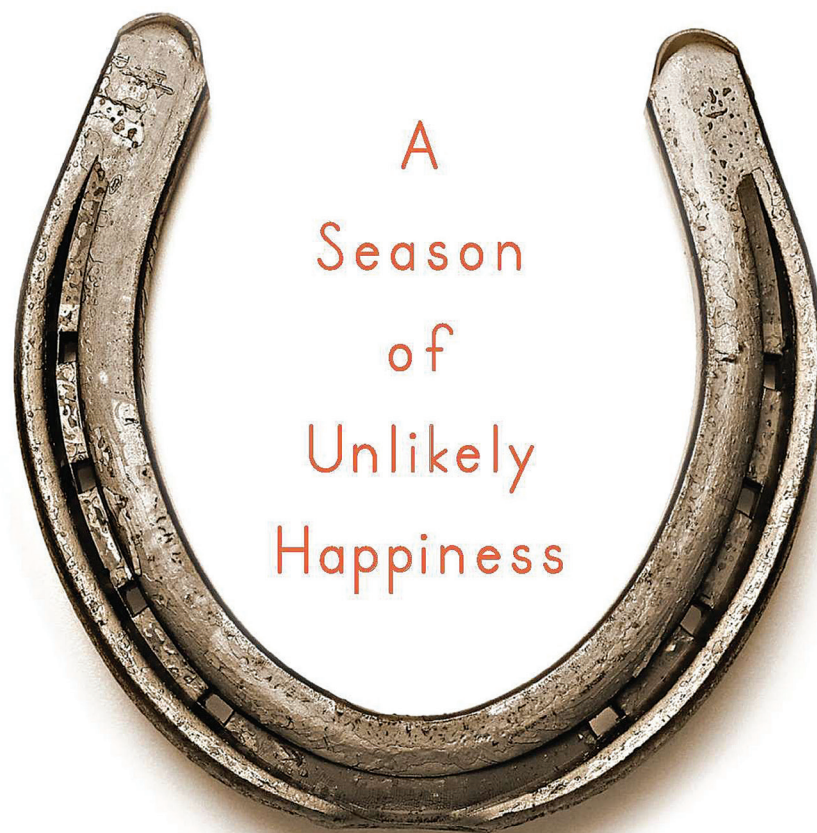
The Bloodletting of Writing

The use of the word bloodletting to describe the process of writing is not hyperbole. Indeed, sometimes words splatter like speckles of red on the page like a Pollock drip painting. As Ernest Hemingway once unpleasantly noted, his writing was anything but bloodless, for veins needed to be opened. Munson takes the same singular road. In the bloodsport of the craft, rarely is anything withheld in Munson’s work. No doubt her gift has something to do with openness, a tendency Munson depends upon.

“We’ve all got to go through this frustrating and heartbreaking thing called life. We all have to lean into the answers to the same central questions. We all come at those questions in different ways, though. As a writer, I am finding my own way of self-expression within it.”

Munson says that her advice to fledgling or struggling writers is straightforward: write what you know, write from your own perspective. Too many writers typically come across as aloof and isolative, stowed away,

## This Is Not The Story You Think It Is...



*a memoir*

internally preoccupied. To achieve success, they feel the need to sidestep others, to seclude themselves. While Munson enjoys occasional intervals of solitude, she understands that she needs to write not only for herself, but to provide relief for others. A self-declared extrovert, she is an antidote to the tortured artist paradigm. She can dive into the psychic depths; she doesn’t get yanked.

“Books and films seem to focus on the most tortured and miserable artists, and that’s the model that we have to study. I think that you could be full of empathy, compassion, and awareness and be sensitive, and also lead a healthy life.”

### THE ROLE OF MONTANA

Montana has played a large part in all of Munson’s process and product, too.

“I’ve spent 30 years in Montana, and there is still something to be said about putting yourself in a place where you are directly on the food chain. We’ve had a sturdy level of snowfall this winter. There was a grizzly bear running around in the backyard this summer. It humbles you to live in a place where you can’t be that self-indulgent. Weather, climate, open space holds us accountable. The quiet living is what keeps me in a place of balance when it comes to that empathy and sensitivity. And it’s better for my muse to live here.”

Montana, says Munson, is protective; it meets her emotional demands. She seeks the natural bounty to gather up experience, to feel alive, stimulated, vitalized, inspired in her home near Whitefish.

“When I take a walk in the woods, something always happens. Writing to me isn’t just writing. Writing is living in a way that helps us find what it is that we have to say, from walking, to taking a bath, to getting on your horse, to sitting on a stump in the woods... In Montana you can be that intention without a lot of distractions. Where I live it’s a huge, vast container to learn the lessons that I’m interested in learning in life, and a quiet place to receive those lessons.”

One of the key factors of life that Munson has learned from her craft is that writing opens up secrets. Even at times when her reality is less than rosy, the writing must remain front and center.

“Some people are afraid of authentic self-expression. We know authentic self-expression as kids. Then, at about age 12, our inner critic is born. When you are 30, 40, or 50, your inner critic knows exactly what to say to break your heart. The inner critic is the scared child who needs to take a nap or a rest. Part of what I do is not just teach people how to write, but teach how to get back to the child who knows how to express themselves in true form, even if it’s a bloody risk, or an inconvenient truth, or a dirty secret.”

Writing requires confrontations with things that we prefer overlooking, not to mention soundproof self-trust, or “bridge building,” within, as Munson explains it.

“It’s self-expression through self-awareness. That means that you are building a bridge to yourself and then building a bridge to your self-expression, either through a thought,

**The New York Times**

STYLE | Those Aren’t Fighting Words, Dear

By Laura A. Munson

July 31, 2009

LET’S say you have what you believe to be a healthy marriage. You’re still friends and lovers after spending more than half of your lives together. The dreams you set out to achieve in your 20s — gazing into each other’s eyes in candlelit city bistros when you were single and skinny — have for the most part come true.

Two decades later you have the 20 acres of land, the farmhouse, the children, the dogs and horses. You’re the parents you said you would be, full of love and guidance. You’ve done it all: Disneyland, camping, Hawaii, Mexico, city living, stargazing.

Sure, you have your marital issues, but on the whole you feel so self-satisfied about how things have worked out that you would never, in your wildest nightmares, think you would hear these words from your husband one fine summer day: “I don’t love you anymore. I’m not sure I ever did. I’m moving out. The kids will understand. They’ll want me to be happy.”

But wait. This isn’t the divorce story you think it is. Neither is it a begging-him-to-stay story. It’s a story about hearing your husband





or something that's written or spoken...The act of writing is how we build that bridge to ourselves. It's all about truth, self-awareness, and building that bridge to ourselves. Writing keeps me in that trajectory of truth-telling and bridge-building to myself, and then eventually to others."

Following the release of "This Is Not The Story You Think It Is: A Season of Unlikely Happiness," Munson toured book stores and literary events for about six years, signing copies with eager alacrity, and speaking about her themes of emotional liberation and self-responsibility. Her follow-up book, this time with Blackstone Publishing, "Willa's Grove," a novel about three middle-aged women who come together during a retreat to recognize and affirm their creativity, their fates, and their sense of belonging, took approximately eight years to reach its final printed form.

In March 2020, Munson was in the midst of a robust book tour, traveling to places such as New York and Boston; when COVID-19 shuttered cities and forced her to return to Montana.

"We canceled 38 events. It had been my dream since 1988 to publish a novel and it was fun to revel in that for a little while. But soon I was back to contemplating the writing life in Montana."

#### Embracing Incertitude

As Kafka once put it, "Nothing alive can be calculated." In the end some little bit of mystery, some mistiness, always hangs about. In writing, there are ambiguities, unfilled cells in the calculus, uncertainties to deal with. Still,

Munson embraces the lack of certitude in the world and deep in herself. She is felicitously juggling several writing projects, freezing those precious moments between reflection and self-projection.

"We all have something that needs to come out of us...Writing is putting the thought to form and becoming more aware of the thought, and then deciding what you want to do with it. Is it a thought that has been infiltrating a dream? Is the thought the reason that you can't go to sleep? Once the writing gets the thought out, then you could look at it. Is this something that's still bothering me? Writing will get it out of you and then you can make a conscious decision of what you want to do with it."

Writing as a means of calming fear and deriving reassurance are directly applicable to Munson's modus operandi. The world, she says, needs people who can authentically (and therefore fearlessly) present themselves, who aren't afraid to perceive, who are willing to access writing as a requirement of wholeness of self.

"I believe that writing should be up there with diet and exercise in the realm of preventative wellness. Writing adds to the collective consciousness and to the collective need." ★

—BRIAN D'AMBROSIO

# ADVENTURE ON.

*Just play it safe.*

## REMEMBER TO EXPLORE RESPONSIBLY.

As you enjoy our state, be Montana Aware and take these steps to be a responsible, respectful traveler.



Plan Ahead



Wear a Mask



Keep Space



Be Respectful



Protect the  
Outdoors



Explore Locally



**Yellowstone Country**  
**MONTANA**

[VISITYELLOWSTONECOUNTRY.COM/SAFETY](https://visityellowstonecountry.com/safety)





# Montana's Publishing Houses

## BOOKS IN THE BIG SKY STATE

When engaged in the solitary act of writing, it's easy for an author to feel like they live on an island. But for Montana's writers, poets, and editors, the publishing scene is a bit like the state itself: an extraordinarily large small town.

From memoirs and artfully crafted photography books to the poetry of wide-open spaces and inner landscapes, tales of cowboys and conservationists, deep-dives of historians, mantras of spiritual leaders and a font of endless imaginative stories from fiction writers—chapters written by Montana residents are printed around the world and right here in their home state.

Montana boasts a number of book presses, some in business for decades, that print a variety of work from local and nationally acclaimed writers. The following list of publishing houses includes a few based on self-publishing ventures that grew to include work from fellow authors.

Whether chasing a great book from a Montana author or looking for new ideas to pique a reader's interest, a quick perusal of the list of Montana's publishing houses will give bibliophiles new avenues to traverse in seeking literature, poetry and award-winning stories from the high plains to the ragged mountains of the state.

### BANGTAIL PRESS

BOZEMAN  
bangtailpress.com | info@bangtail.com

Founded in the late 1980s, Bangtail first published surfer Greg Noll's memoir "Da Bull" and continued on as the book-publishing arm of the magazine *Big Sky Journal*. Now independently owned and operated, Bangtail notes the print house is devoted to "publishing those books that expand our sense of who we are, that simultaneously shed light on us as individuals as well as offer insight into this place that we call home."

**WORKS**—Fiction, poetry, biography, memoir, and anthologies.

**NEW AND NOTABLE**—“Fired On: Targeting American Western Art” by Toby Thompson, “Fifty-Six Counties: A Montana Journey” by Russell Rowland, and “Tom Connor's Gift” by David Allen Cates.

### BLUE CREEK PRESS

HERON  
bluecreekpress.com  
books@bluecreekpress.com | (208) 290-1281

Sandy Compton's Blue Creek Press began life as Cabinet Crest Books in 1993 when Compton published her first book under the press' name. Since 1993, Compton has gone on to help many authors self-publish books through Blue Creek Press, publishing 32 titles in all.

**WORKS**—Self-help books, memoirs, philosophical musings, biographies, adventurous non-fiction, novels, and short story collections.

**NEW AND NOTABLE**—“The Dog with His Head on Sideways” by Sandy Compton and “Run, Naomi, Run” by Pauline Shook.

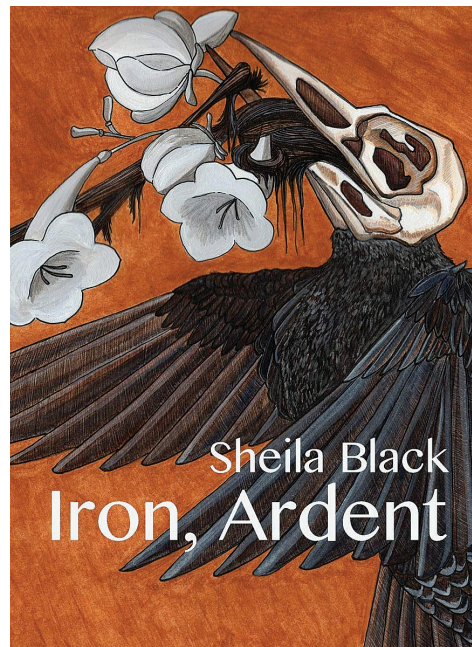
### DRUMLUMMON INSTITUTE

HELENA  
execdirector@drumlummoninstitute.org  
facebook.com/drumlummoninstitute

A board of directors consisting of like-minded poets and writers came together to start the Drumlummon Institute a few years ago. Its publications range from “studies of architect Frank Lloyd Wright's work in Montana to resurrected texts of poet and novelist Grace Stone Coates, novelist Thomas Savage, architect/designer Cass Gilbert, down to contemporary novelist/short story writer Matt Pavelich,” according to a 2016 article in the *Missoulian*. Drumlummon states its mission is to “promote and publish art and literatures created in Montana and the broader American West.”

**WORKS**—Poetry, non-fiction, fiction, short stories, and more.

**NOTABLE BOOKS**—“Moving On: The Last Poems of Ed Lahey” edited by Mark Gibbons and “Summer Lightening” by Marylor Wilson.



In “Iron, Ardent,” Sheila Black invites readers into the working mind of a “many-selved speaker—detailing the misfit, bushed rioter, resistor, lonelyheart, iron-willed, iron-boned woman who names the softest beauty and shame of an unquiet world.” Published by Educe Press.

### EDUCE PRESS

BUTTE  
educepress.com | editor@educepress.com

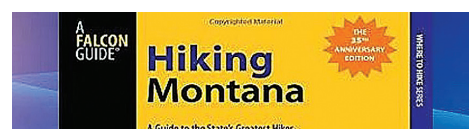
Founded in Boise, Idaho, in 2014 by Matthew R. K. Haynes, Educe Press now operates out of Butte. The press publishes “writing that combines the aesthetics of literary language with the pulse of genre movements.” Works include prose and poetry from award-winning writers based in Montana, the West and around the world. **WORKS**—Book-length literary fiction, non-fiction, and poetry. **NEW AND NOTABLE**—“Cold Blessings: Poems” by Maximilian Werner and “Dreadful: Luminosity” by Natalie Peeterse.



### FALCONGUIDES

falcon.com | customercare@nbnbooks.com  
(800) 462-6420

Falcon Publishing was founded in Helena, Montana in 1979 with one book, “Hiking Montana” by company co-founder and president Bill Schneider. From there, Falcon went on to become North America's leading publisher of outdoor recreation books, its list growing to more than 700 titles before becoming part of the Globe Pequot family in the fall of 2000. Although no longer directly based in Montana, the legacy and name of Falcon Publishing continues, as the company notes: “40 years and hundreds of books, tens of thousands of maps, and countless trips into the wilderness later, a FalconGuide continues to feel as much at home on a coffee table as it does dog-eared and beaten in a backpack.”



### FARCOUNTRY PRESS

HELENA  
farcountrypress.com | promo@farcountrypress.com | (406) 422-1263

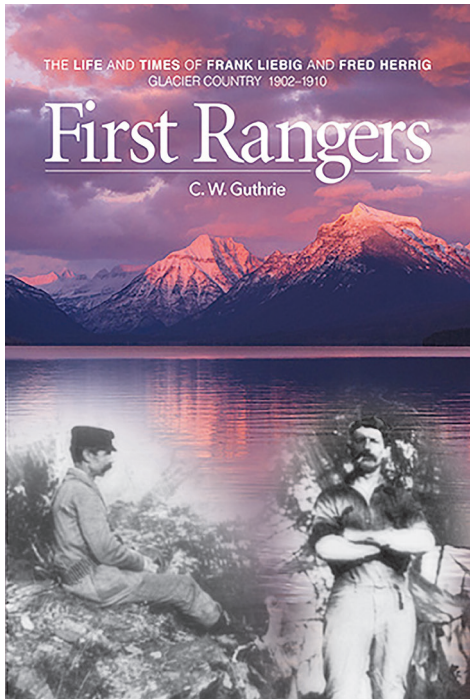
Farcountry Press began as an offshoot of *Montana Magazine*. Starting with just a few books per year, Farcountry eventually established itself as an independent press. Farcountry now publishes around 50 titles each year.

Linda Netschert first worked for Farcountry as a sales representative in 1996 and purchased the company in 2011. “Glacier National Park: The First 100 Years” was one of her first projects and she says the iconic book continues to be one of her favorites.

Sweetgrass Books, the custom publishing division of Farcountry Press, also offers self-publishing services, among many more such services in Montana.

**WORKS**—Guidebooks, cookbooks, regional history titles, biography, photography books, calendars, and children's titles.





*A special breed of adventurer, the first forest rangers were among the explorers, mountain men, lawmen, and pioneers who made America. Published by Farcountry Press, "First Rangers" details the exploits of two of these men, Frank Liebig and Fred Herrig, told mostly in their own words.*

**NEW AND NOTABLE**— “San Antonio: A Photographic Journey” by Al Rendon and Gary S. Whitford, “Cony the Pika’s Warming World,” and “First Rangers” by C.W. Guthrie.

## MONTANA HISTORICAL SOCIETY PRESS

HELENA  
mhs.mt.gov/pubs/press  
diana.distefano@mt.gov | (406) 444-2694

Montana Historical Society Press (MHSP) got its start in the 1950s with the goal of producing quality historical monographs, biographies, and memoirs relevant to the history of Montana and the U.S. West. MHSP publishes *Montana: The Magazine of Western History* and has around 60 books in print, many of them by Montana historians, including ebooks.

**WORKS**— Historical monographs and biographies that focus on the history of Montana and the Western U.S.

**NEW AND NOTABLE**— “Ties, Rails, and Telegraph Wires: Railroads and Communities in Montana and the West” by Dale Martin, “Montana Place Names from Alzada to Zortman” by the MHS staff, “A History of Montana in 101 Objects: Artifacts and Essays from the Montana Historical Society” by Tom Ferris, and “A Black Woman’s West: The Life of Rose B. Gordon” by Michael Johnson.



## MOUNTAIN PRESS PUBLISHING CO.

MISSOULA  
mountain-press.com | info@mtnpublishing.com  
(406) 728-1900

David P. Flaccus founded Mountain Press in 1948. A Quaker from Pennsylvania and conscientious objector to World War II, Flaccus started the press as an offset printing company in Missoula, where he was ordered to serve as a smoke jumper in lieu of military service.

After years of operating as a commercial printer, Flaccus published his first book in the 1960s. Since then, the press has blossomed into a prolific nonfiction publisher and is particularly known for its field guides, geology volumes, and natural history books.

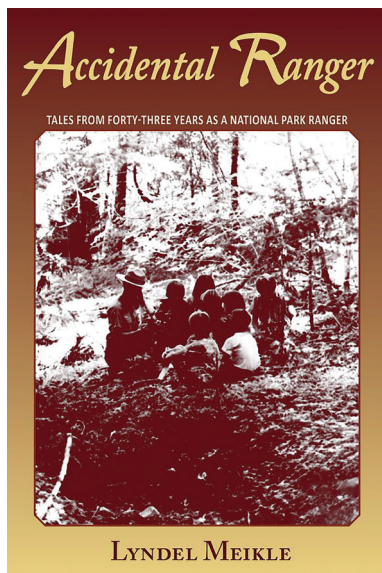
Shortly after his death in 1993, Flaccus received a Rittenhouse Award from the Rocky Mountain Book Publishers Association.

“We love authors who love what they do,” current Publisher John Rimel says. “Our most successful authors are practically evangelists for their work and, in turn, their books.”

**WORKS**— Nonfiction: geology, natural history, history, field guides, and western Americana.

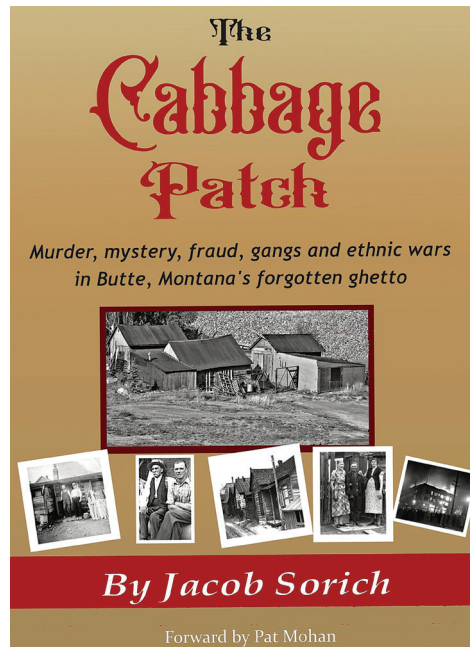
**NEW AND NOTABLE**— “Falcons of North America: Second Edition” by Kate Davis, “Oregon Rocks! A Guide to 60 Amazing Geologic Sites” by Marli B. Miller, and “Accidental Ranger: Tales from Forty-three Years as a National Park Ranger” by Lyndel Meikle.

*Lyndel Meikle, a Montana native, spent thirty-nine years at Grant-Kohrs Ranch National Historic Site in an ever-evolving job which included giving tours of the historic mansion, reaching into a cow to straighten out the leg of its emerging calf (hint: take your ring off first), and doing road patrol in Yellowstone National Park during the infamous Sturgis Motorcycle Rally.*  
*From Mountain Press Publishing in Missoula.*



*Montana Historical Press will be publishing, “A Black Woman’s West: The Life of Rose B. Gordon” by Michael Johnson in 2021. Rose Gordon was the daughter of a slave and a small-Town activist. Her father, John, came to Montana Territory by steamboat in 1881 to cook on the mining frontier; her mother, Mary, followed a year later.*

*The family purchased a home in White Sulphur Springs where John worked as a chef for the town’s primary hotel until his death left her mother with five children she then raised alone. Despite family responsibilities, Rose graduated from high school as valedictorian and aspired to be a doctor but lacking the funds, she began nurse’s training in Helena and from then, a lifetime of intermittent medical training. She was often called home to help family and eventually ran a restaurant/variety store in the area. In the 1930s, Rose began her memoir, “Gone Are the Days,” in which she juxtaposed descriptions of her parents’ lives and her own with lively biographical portrayals of early Montana characters.*



## OLD BUTTE PUBLISHING BUTTE

facebook.com/OldButte  
oldbuttepublishing@yahoo.com

**WORKS**— Old Butte Publishing specializes in historical and current events about Butte, including “Bad Boys of Butte” and “2,200 Butte Nicknames.”

**NEW AND NOTABLE**— “The Cabbage Patch: Murder, Mystery, Fraud, Gangs and Ethnic Wars in Butte, Montana’s Forgotten Ghetto” by Jake Sorich.

## OPEN COUNTRY PRESS

HELENA  
opencountrypress.org | (406) 546-4473  
opencountrypress@gmail.com

After a decade of studying poetry at the University of Montana, Natalie Peeterse founded Open Country Press in 2016. Since then, she’s been publishing poetry chapbooks with Autumn Toennis and a small army of supporters.

“I wanted to get the work of younger and unknown poets out there, since there are so many dynamic and talented young writers in the state,” said Peeterse, who publishes one to two chapbooks per year.

One notable book from Open Country is “Chosen Companions of the Goblin” by Katherine Smith.

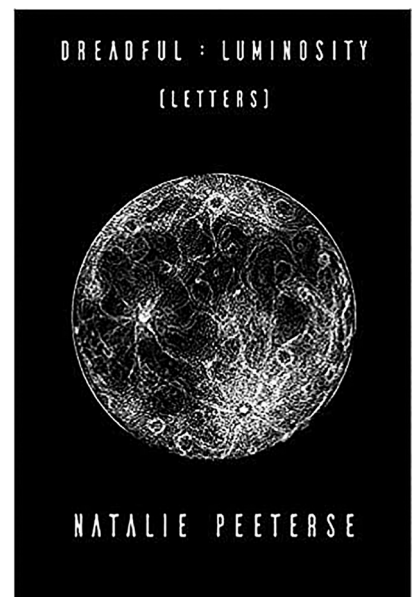
“This book is fun and heartbreaking and vivid, with a flair for the real. At every turn it shares a secret for those keen on knowing,” says Peeterse.

**WORKS**— Poetry chapbooks

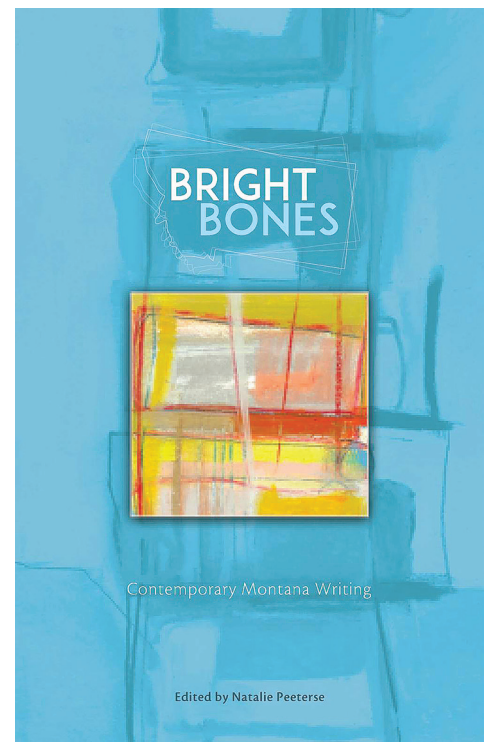
**NEW AND NOTABLE**— “Symptoms of the Forgotten” by Kay Lin, “Other Places” by Jacob Chapman, and “Bright Bones: Contemporary Montana Writing,” edited by Natalie Peeterse.

*The submission period for Open Country’s annual chapbook contest runs June 1 through Oct. 1. Details: OpenCountryPress.org.*

*Great Falls writer Jake Sorich explores the Butte Cabbage Patch in this new offering from Old Butte Publishing. In his debut book, Sorich digs through newspaper archives and interviews people who lived in the Patch or had direct relatives who lived and worked there. Some of the characters mentioned include Jimmy July, the only naturalized Chinese citizen in Montana in the late 1800s and Mexicali Rose, the so-called “Queen of the Cabbage Patch” whose house was known by authorities as a site of at least one shooting per week for a brief period in the 1920s. The book also details some of the Cabbage Patch’s heroes, such as standout football star Joe Tomich, who went on to have a stellar collegiate career at Oregon State University, famed boxer Dixie LaHood, and vaudeville Broadway star-turned-movie-actor Josip Elic.*



*Natalie Peeterse newest book of poems, “Dreadful: Luminosity” is published by Educe Press. She is also the editor of “Verde Que Te Quiero Verde: Poems after Federico Garcia Lorca” published by Open Country Press. Also from Open Country, “Bright Bones,” an anthology of innovative literature which features cover art by Butte artist Kelly Packer. “Bright Bones” includes poems, stories, and lyric essays as well as cross-genre and experimental works from emerging and established writers in Montana.*





PICTORIAL HISTORIES

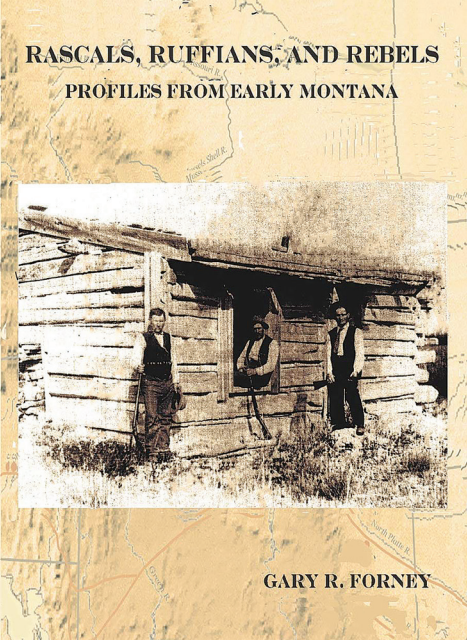
MISSOULA  
pictorialhistoriespublishing.com  
(406) 549-8488

Getting its start in 1976, Pictorial Histories began as a publisher of affordable pictorial history books. It now boasts over 150 titles, and has grown into an international publisher. WORKS— Pictorial history books covering World War II, Alaska, the Civil War, Montana, Virginia, and more. NOTABLE BOOKS— “Birthplace of Montana: A History of Fort Benton” by John G. Lepley, “Glacier’s Grandest: Pictorial History of the Hotels and Chalets of Glacier National Park” by Bridget Moylan, “Iron Riders: The Story of the 1890s Fort Missoula Buffalo Soldiers Bicycle Corps” by George Niels Sorensen, and “An Alien Place: The Fort Missoula, Montana, Detention Camp 1941–1944” by Carol Van Valkenburg.

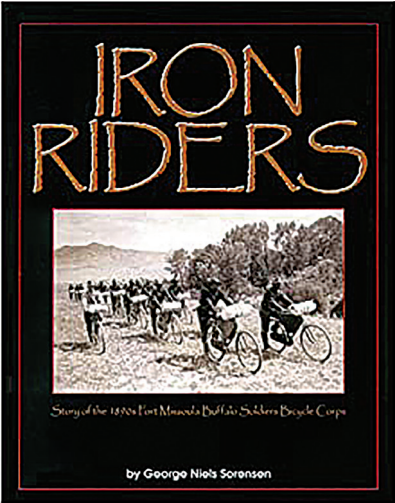
RAVEN PUBLISHING

NORRIS  
ravenpublishing.net | (406) 685-3545  
info@ravenpublishing.net

Janet Muirhead Hill founded Raven Publishing in 2002 with the release of the first two novels of her “Miranda and Starlight” series. After publishing the next four books of the series in 2004, Raven Publishing began accepting the work of other authors. The goal of the press is to “produce quality books worthy of a reader’s time and to help authors with compelling and important books see their words beautifully presented and available for the public to enjoy.” WORKS— Young-adult fiction, historical novels, literary novels, memoirs, legal mysteries, short stories, and essays. NEW AND NOTABLE— “Our Trail Ends at Pony” by Dixie Myhre, “Rascals, Ruffians, and Rebels: Profiles of Early Montana” by Gary R. Forney, “Absaroka” by Joan Bochmann, “PRISM” by Janet Muirhead Hill and Joan Bochmann, and “A Language without Words” by Michael Raattama Tripp.



Montana’s gold and untamed land became a magnet for people from all over the world and the early territory became a collision point of people with different political beliefs, different social and cultural customs, and different languages. Each of the lives of the 12 historical individuals from early Montana history included in this book is not necessarily worthy of emulation but does represent examples of the generation before the modern world of today. Printed by Raven Publishing.

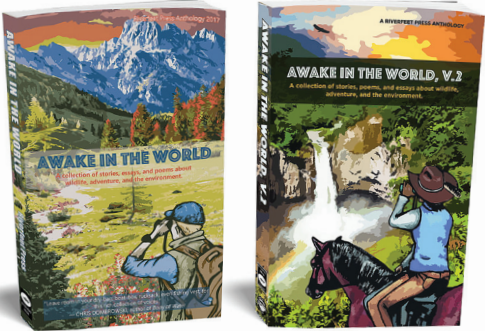
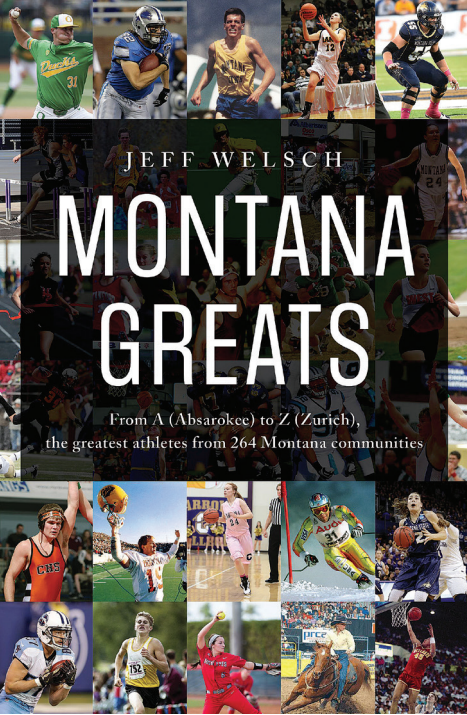


“Iron Riders” is the story of the only bicycle corps ever authorized by the U.S. Army. Using buffalo soldiers, this 1890s African-American unit conducted drills and exercises on wheels. They rode into Northern Montana on muddy trails and toured Yellowstone on their 100-pound iron bicycles. As proof of their capabilities, these Iron Riders pedaled 1,900 miles from Ft. Missoula, across the snow-dusted Rocky Mountains and steamy Great Plains, to St. Louis. As they approached the city over 1,000 civilian bicyclists rode out to escort them into town in a great parade. When the Spanish-American War broke out in 1898, and the Army sent the 25th Infantry to serve in Cuba—but not on bicycles—ending the era. Published by Pictorial Histories Publishing.

RIVERBEND PUBLISHING

HELENA  
riverbendpublishing.com | (406) 449-0200  
hello@riverbendpublishing.com

Previously with Falcon Press until it was acquired by Globe Pequot, Chris Cauble started Riverbend Publishing in 2000. Riverbend’s first book was “Silence & Solitude: Yellowstone’s Winter Wilderness” and the press has since gone on to publish numerous works and has reprinted several classic Montana titles, including “The War of the Copper Kings,” “Copper Camp,” and “The Story of Mary MacLane.” “We are enormously proud of the numerous Montana titles that we publish, from memoirs and histories to photo books and novels, including many award-winners,” says Cauble. WORKS— Nonfiction books centered on Montana, the Rocky Mountains, and national parks. Other genres include history, memoir, natural history, outdoor guidebooks, photo books, and regional novels and cookbooks. NEW AND NOTABLE— “Montana Greats: From A (Absarokee) to Z (Zurich), the greatest athletes from 264 Montana communities” by Jeff Welsch and “Montana Murders: Notorious and Unsolved” by Brian D’Ambrosio.



RIVERFEET PRESS

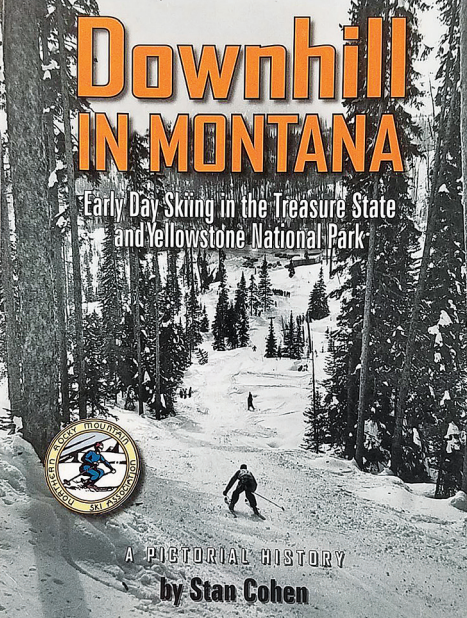
LIVINGSTON  
riverfeetpress.com | (218) 204-1409  
riverfeetpress@gmail.com

Livingston-based Riverfeet Press is the brainchild of author Daniel J. Rice, who founded the press in 2013. Releasing three to six books each year, Riverfeet publishes books in a variety of genres and works with authors who have “a close connection to the natural world, whether this be fly fishing, mountain climbing, sky diving, hiking, wildlife observation, or meditating in a meadow,” says Rice. Rice says the best part about his work is being able to place a finished work into the hands of an author. “So much of a book’s creation exists internally and alone that when we finally have a tactile representation of all the time and mental energy, it feels really good. We also really love hearing from readers because ultimately that is what we are attempting to do – share stories that connect people.” WORKS— Nonfiction, fiction, poetry, and other genres drawing on the themes of wildlife, wilderness, healing, adventure, and the environment. NEW AND NOTABLE— “Regarding Wilderness” by Tom Harpole, “The Unpeopled Season: Ten Year Anniversary Edition” by Daniel Rice, and a yet-untitled work depicting the life of Caroline McGill, Montana’s first female pathologist and co-founder of the Museum of the Rockies.

Submissions are now open for Riverfeet’s periodical anthology series “Awake in the World” at this Submittable link online: [bit.ly/2MroKmW](https://bit.ly/2MroKmW).

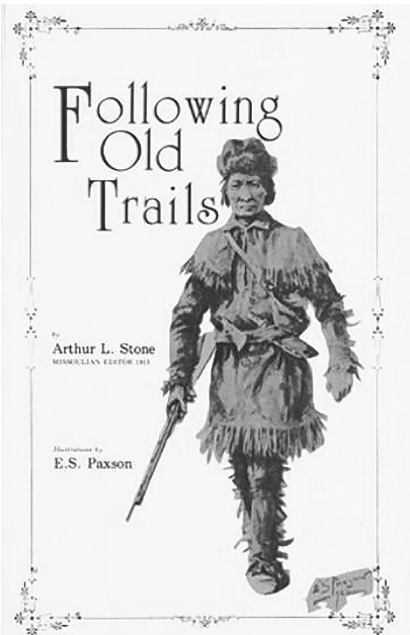


Carol Van Valkenburg, professor emerita at UM Journalism School, tells the story of the Fort Missoula, Montana, Detention Camp in 1941–1944: who they were, how their lives took such a peculiar turn, and how the small, tranquil college town of Missoula, Montana, became for some a shelter and for others, a painful interlude in lives turned upside down by the events of a world war. From Pictorial Histories Publishing.



From simple homemade rope tows to present high-speed quad chair lifts and trams, the history of over 60 ski areas is illustrated in this book in black and white and color photographs, newspaper articles, correspondence, ski patches and personal accounts. Available at Pictorial Histories Publishing along with an accompanying DVD.





*Jack Weidenfeller of Missoula, a descendant of a prominent Montana pioneer family, re-issued this century-old book of stories about the settling of what is now western Montana – stories researched and written by Arthur L. Stone, editor of The Missoulian in 1913 and first dean of the School of Journalism at the University of Montana. The 318-page book presents the unfolding saga of Montana's frontier history as presented by Dr. Stone from his meticulous research. Now available in its third printing from Stoneydale Press Publishing.*

## STONEYDALE PRESS PUBLISHING COMPANY

STEVENSVILLE  
Stoneydale.com | (406) 777-2729  
stoneydale@stoneydale.com

Since the inception of Stoneydale Publishing in 1978, founders Dale and Stoney Burk published thousands of books associated with the outdoors and the Northern Rockies Region, historically focused on outdoor recreation with an emphasis on big game hunting, particularly in regard to elk, mule deer, whitetail deer and other species found in the Northern Rockies.

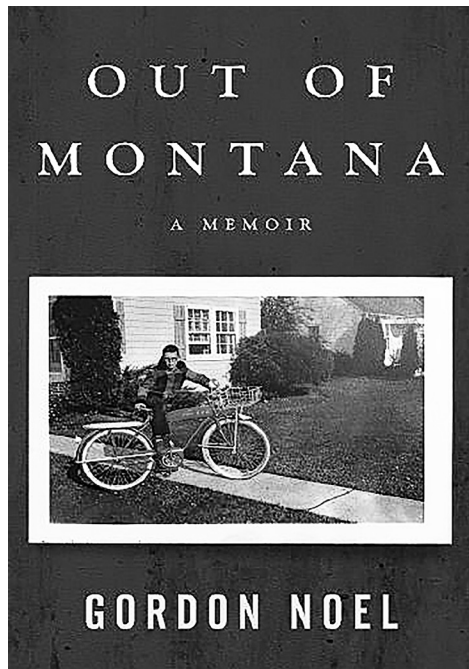
**WORK**— Primarily nonfiction about Montana and Western history, hunting, wildlife, and culture. Also producing children's books and DVDs.

**NEW AND NOTABLE**— “Life at Death at the Mouth of the Musselshell, 1868-1872” edited by H. Duane Hampton and the newly published compilation, “A Wild Land Ethic: The Story of Wilderness in Montana” by Dale Burk (*see sidebar*).

## A WILD LAND ETHIC

*The Story of Wilderness in Montana*

Co-Editors: Dale A. Burk and Wayne Chamberlin



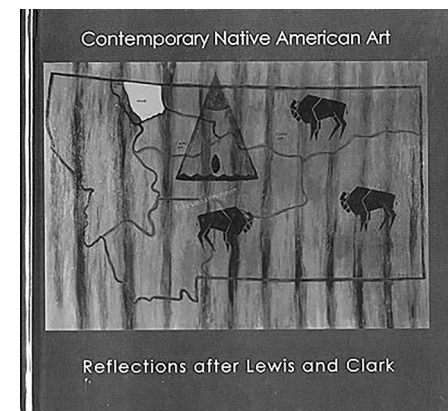
*In “Out of Montana,” Gordon Noel writes with humor and honesty about coming of age in a fractured family without a father. Published by University of Montana Press.*

## UNIVERSITY OF MONTANA PRESS

MISSOULA  
umt.edu/umpress | umpress@umontana.edu

The mission of the University of Montana Press is to “publish a small number of high quality books each year that represent important scholarly and creative work.”

The press concentrates primarily on areas of strong academic programs or special emphasis at the University and its faculty or areas that address the geography, interests, and concerns of Montana, the sovereign tribes, and the region. Additionally, under the “Mount Sentinel Books of the UM Press” imprint, they occasionally publish special books and other materials of interest to the University and the greater Montana and regional community of readers. **WORKS**— Scholarly works by UM faculty and students; books related to Montana, the Pacific and Rocky Mountain West; creative arts projects; books of interest to UM and the greater Montana and regional community. **NEW AND NOTABLE**— “Out of Montana: A Memoir” by Gordon Noel, “The Bunch Grass Motel: The Collected Poems of Randall Gloege” edited by Bernard Quetchenbach, and “Fond Recollections of Captivity: An Austrian POW in Wales” by Horst Jarka.



*Published by University of Montana Press, this full-color hardbound book showcases work exhibited in the Montana Museum of Art and Culture's traveling exhibit of contemporary Native American art.*



## STEVENSVILLE PUBLISHER DALE BURK

Dale Burk grew up in Northwest Montana and spent his childhood hunting and fishing. His father was a gyppo logger, and several of his family members worked as camp cooks, including his grandmother, who impressed upon Burk that nature should be left “untrammelled.”

Burk's daughter Rachel Burk says “untrammelled” would later embody a philosophy he would carry throughout the rest of his life.

Inspired by his journalism teacher Donald Boslaugh from Eureka, Burk set his sights on writing, becoming editor of his high school newspaper in Eureka. He would later work for the Daily Inter Lake in Kalispell, as a correspondent with the U.S. Navy, and at the *Missoulian*. In 1975, he became the first Montanan to receive a Nieman Fellowship from Harvard University.

What put Burk on the map was his 1969 reporting on the so-called “Bitterroot Controversy,” the U.S. Forest Service's mismanagement of the Bitterroot National Forest, which supported the timber industry at the peril of the surrounding wilderness.

Burk's reporting on the issue is often credited with helping to pave the way for the 1976 National Forest Management Act. It's also what sent him undercover on a backpacking trip to the Middle Fork of the Flathead River, where he met outfitter and conservationist Smoke Elser.

“Dale had a personality that you could not resist,” said Elser, adding that Burk's writing had the power to move hearts and minds. “That's because of the way he wrote and the way he interpreted the wilderness to the average man on the street.”

Burk was also active in Montana's conservation scene.

He was the fourth member of the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation and a member of the Ravalli County Fish and Wildlife Association. In 2018, he was inducted into the Montana Outdoor Hall of Fame and was also a member of the Montana Conservation Elders. In recent years, Burk and Elser spoke

# Montana LEGEND

*Stoneydale Press Publishing legend Dale Burk passed away Sept. 16, 2020 in his Stevensville home at age 83. With his passing, Montana lost a larger-than-life-figure whose passion for Montana's wilderness drove nearly everything he did – including his writing, which paved the way for the protection of wilderness areas in Montana and beyond.*



at the Bitterroot Youth Conservation and Education Expo.

Friend and fellow conservationist Wayne Chamberlin says Burk wasn't against logging – indeed, he came from a logging family. Instead, his work was driven by his deep connection to the outdoors.

After leaving the Missoulian, Burk continued to work as a writer and photographer. He partnered with his brother Stoney Burk in 1978 to launch Stoneydale Press. With the help of Burk's wife Patricia, the press produced around 300 works, ranging from hunting books and memoirs to children's books.

Rachel Burk, who started working at the press at age 11, says she hopes to keep Stoneydale going and to continue the kind of work her father loved.

Burk published his last book, “A Wild Land Ethic: The Story of Wilderness in Montana,” in 2020. Chamberlin co-edited the book, a 328-page conservation anthology featuring 30 photographers and over 40 authors, including former Gov. Steve Bullock, conservationist and author Jim Posewitz, and Smoke Elser.

Chamberlin says he learned a lot from his friend.

“Dale was an accomplished and skillful and talented writer and journalist,” he said, adding that Burk's humble origins enabled him to connect with people from all walks of life.

“He had respect for other people. He listened to what they had to say,” Chamberlain said. ★

—ANNIE PENTILLA



# WE RECOMMEND...

## STATEWIDE ENTERTAINMENT LISTINGS

Music, Performances and Events Outside and Online

### CONCERTGOERS, PERFORMERS AND VENUES:

Through many months of decreased capacity restrictions and local health department regulations, the Montana Press hesitates to promote in-person performances and events due to the variable nature of closures during the COVID-19 pandemic. We will continue to offer recommendations for events across the state and encourage venues and performers to contact us at 370-1492 or [info@montanapress.net](mailto:info@montanapress.net) in order to promote specific events.

All events listed are subject to change.  
Send updates to: [info@montanapress.net](mailto:info@montanapress.net).

PLEASE REACH OUT TO THE VENUE TO CONFIRM  
SHOW TIMES AND AND CURRENT REGULATIONS.



### HELENA LATIN BAND LOS MARVELITOS RELEASES ALBUM

*Frontera de Dub* reimagines Los Marvelitos 2019 album, *Frontera Norte*, in the style of dub, a genre of electronic music originating in Jamaican reggae studios in the late 1960s and '70s. *Frontera de Dub* was recently released on iTunes, Spotify, Bandcamp and other online platforms. Visit @LosMarvelitos on Facebook for details.



### MILK RIVER BAND

Sat., Feb. 20 - 5 p.m.

Live, web-stream concert from the MSU-Northern Campus headlined by Milk River Band playing traditional country music. Presented by Montana Actor's Theatre in Havre. Visit [www.MTActors.com](http://www.MTActors.com) for more info.



### WORLD RHYTHMS CONCERT

FRI., FEB. 19 - 7:30 P.M. (SEE BELOW)  
PRESENTED BY THE UM SCHOOL OF MUSIC, THE UNIVERSITY CHOIR AND THE UM ISLANDERS STEEL BAND.



### CHINESE NEW YEAR

Sat., Feb. 13 at 7:30 p.m.

Rocky Mountain Ballet Theatre presents a celebration of Chinese culture to formally send off 2020 and welcome the new year of the Ox. The free online event features music and dance from throughout China as well as other performances from across the world. Get the link at [ZootownArts.org](http://ZootownArts.org)



### THE MYRNA SOUNDSTAGE

Thurs., Feb. 18 - 7:30 p.m.

Highlighting Montana artists with interviews by Helena musician John Dendy. Each episode is screened before a small audience at The Myrna Loy in Helena and simultaneously streamed online, then streamed on-demand thereafter. Feb. 18 features JUNIOR, a trio of singer/songwriters packing a quiver of instrumental skills and Izaak Opatz, songwriter and pioneer of Dirtwave. Info at [www.TheMyrnaLoy.com](http://www.TheMyrnaLoy.com).



### SOCIAL DISTANCE SESSIONS AT ZACC - MISSOULA

Fri., Feb. 26 at 7:30 p.m. - Play It Forward: Ash Nataanii & Elijah Jalil, a livestream music series and podcast program curated to "unite and uplift" community artists and organizations in Missoula. February features Ash Nataanii, an indie rock singer songwriter and Elijah Jalil, who takes on a range of genres from folk to hip hop.



Saturdays - 7 p.m. - **Revival Comedy Night** - Join some of the best comedians from around Missoula and Montana for a monthly hour-long showcase, streamed straight to your living room or bedroom or conservatory, if you happen to be hanging out in your conservatory.



Sat., Feb. 27 - 7:30 p.m. - **Canta Brasil**

- A musical ensemble dedicated to exploring multi-faceted world of Brazilian music, from old to new bossa novas, sambas, choro, forro, xote and more. Led by vocalist Magda Chaney, Canta Brasil features Ed Stalling and Pedro Marques on a variety of percussion instruments.

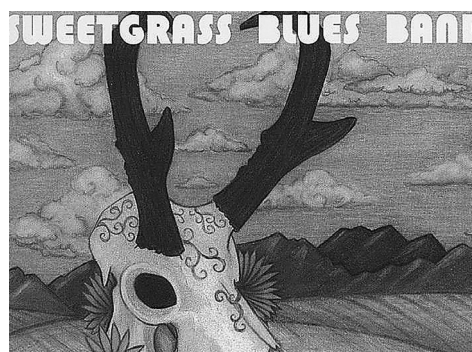


### ADVENTURE FILM SERIES

Fri., Feb. 19 - 7 p.m.

90+ minutes of films on the themes of endurance and outdoor adventure—from local Montana filmmakers and from the YETI sports collection.

Selections include "Last Tracks" by Erik Petersen and "The Last Best SKI" by Bryan Schaeffer, an animated short about Southwestern Montana ski culture. More info at [BozemanArts-Live.com](http://BozemanArts-Live.com)



### NEW ALBUM: GHOST DANCE

Helena's Sweetgrass Blues Band has released *Ghost Dance*. The album features 10 original blues tunes. Visit @SweetGrassBluesBand on Facebook to listen to tracks.





IN & AROUND

SAM PLATTS: A COUNTRY TRADITION

Sam Platts entertains in a style that echoes the familiar lines of traditional country music. As the leader of Sam Platts & the Great Plainsmen, however, he clings to a honky-tonking mode steeped in rustic elements. Lately, not only has he been singing the songs of the country crooner, but he’s been living the life of the rancher well.

“I accidentally fell into the ranching career about five years ago,” says Platts, a Wyoming native now resident near Silver Star, between White Hall and Twin Bridges.

“I was playing music full-time while living in Pony, in southwest Montana, a few years ago. But the locals couldn’t get their heads around a guy in his twenties who didn’t do anything all week but who hit the road on the weekends, making music. People thought that I should do something more productive with my days, and the Jackson Ranch, outside of Harrison, was looking for someone to feed cows for a winter and to help them calve. Ranching is not the most-financially fruitful gig, but it’s a satisfying job. I get plenty of material out of the ranching lifestyle.”

On this particular evening, Platts has just returned from his day job, feeding cows, carrying out pedestrian ranch chores, finishing whatever tasks need to be done. “Right now, it is calving season and all of the cows are having babies. Knock on wood, we haven’t had to pull calves so far this year.”

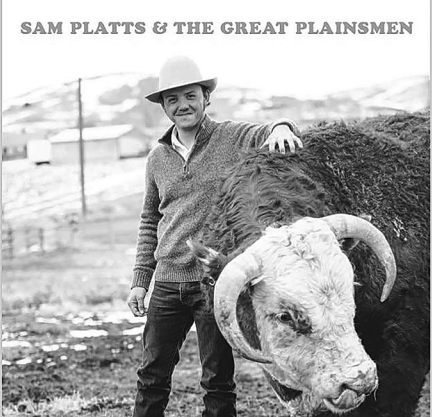
Considering the category of music that Sam chooses to play – a straightforward, non-showy 1950s style of traditional country, typified by the prime cuts of Waylon Jennings or Merle Haggard – perhaps it’s not too surprising that he’s ultimately found a second occupation as a rancher. Platts grew up in southern Wyoming, where he heard plenty of classic country (and scores of polka jams, too) while driving around on his great-grandmother’s ranch alongside his father, Scott Platts.

In addition to ranching, Scott was also a nimble-fingered luthier; Sam had worked at his father’s shop, in Saratoga, Wyoming, building stringed instruments. After school, the teenager would spend a few hours laboring at things such as filing frets or sanding guitar bodies. An experienced traveling musician, Scott himself had also gotten plenty of mentorship.

“It wasn’t as if I would just sit down and have lessons with him,” Sam recalls. “I would go off in my direction and I would get hung up, and he was always there to show me where to go. My dad was way into listening to polka on the way to do the haying, and my grandmother was into classic country. My dad was in bands for as long as I can remember – and he still is. He played in a band called Rimrock in Wyoming for twenty years and now he’s in one in Washington state that’s called Bottom Dollar.”

At age 21, Sam answered an advertisement on Craigslist, seeking the services of a steel and lead guitar player. Noted yodeler Wylie Gustafson, of Conrad, Montana, was the posting party in need of a supporting musician and within three weeks of Sam acing his audition, he was on tour with Wylie & The Wild West in, of all places, Russia.

It was from Wylie that Sam learned the models of showmanship and professionalism, as well as the rhythm, eloquence, pace, progress, timing, and minimalism of a style of music that he considered authentic.



“You’ve got to keep it simple,” explains Sam. “It’s the less is more sort of mindset. Like a conversation, there are people who are quiet and to the point, yet come through loud and clear, like a guitar player like Don Rich or Buck Owens. Being flashy is not always the right thing to do, especially if you want to have that good backbone of traditional country-western swing, with good shuffles, and something that’s danceable.

Sam recorded his first independent and wholly-original studio album “Sundown at Noon” under the name Sam Platts and the Kootenai Three, in 2013. He even added the accordion – his grandfather’s favorite instrument – to parts of the band’s music.

“We started in Idaho in Kootenai County and recorded the first album at Jereco Studios (in Bozeman) and that eventually led us to moving to Montana in 2014, full-time.”

Songs in Sam’s repertoire range from self-penned originals to the indispensables of time-honored ballads from icons such as Merle, Waylon, and Willie, sounds that perhaps might not mesh well with contemporary country radio. Despite this, Sam says that the music that he values has a beloved, even optimistic, place in his account and vision of the landscape.

“In the last ten years there has been this resurgence of the true honky-tonk sound. People my age, in their 20s through their late 30s. There are a lot of reformed rock and rollers who have been in punk bands and whatnot, and now who have started playing country.”

For the past few months, Sam Platts & the Great Plainsmen have been broadcasting a weekly live-stream variety show from a rehabbed barn outside Norris. A pivotal piece of the ensemble is Sam’s wife, Lilly; she’s a persuasive fiddler.

“We’ve got weekly guests and special guests and we put them together like the Sixties and Seventies variety shows, like Porter Wagoner’s or Johnny Cash’s. We are the house band, and we have gal singers to give it some variety. We take up about one-third of the show, and the guests (who’ve recently included Kostas and Tessy Lou Williams) take up the rest,” Sam says. “Right now, I really like the live stream. We are growing our internet following, and it’s great to play for people that are listening. What started as an idea as how not to slip into obscurity because there were no live songs to sing, has turned into something that we are really proud of.” ★

—BRIAN D’AMBROSIO

Learn more about Sam Platts online at [www.SamPlatts.com](http://www.SamPlatts.com).

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JONESIN’ CROSSWORDS

“Shell Game”

...Maybe that’s Why it’s Green

ACROSS

- 1 “Breaking Bad” sidekick
- 6 Written test format
- 11 Some mainframe computers
- 15 Follow, as an impulse
- 16 Pleas
- 18 QUESTION, PART 1
- 20 Cry bitterly
- 21 Blows away
- 22 \_\_\_\_ St. Soul (U.K. R&B/soul group)
- 23 Controversial ride-sharing app
- 25 Fall back, as a tide
- 26 ASPCA part
- 29 QUESTION, PART 2
- 34 “Forrest Gump” actor Gary
- 35 “The Man Who Mistook His Wife for \_\_\_\_” (1985 best-seller)
- 36 “Laugh-In” comedian Johnson
- 37 Like many indie films
- 38 “Buon giorno,” in Brisbane
- 39 Go over the limit
- 40 Green Day, e.g.
- 41 “Sorry if \_\_\_\_ you down”
- 42 NBA team formerly from Minneapolis
- 43 QUESTION, PART 3
- 46 Charlemagne’s realm, for short
- 47 Device program
- 48 Cranberry sources
- 49 Greek letter after zeta

- 50 “Battlefield Earth” author Hubbard
- 52 Director Van Sant
- 55 ANSWER TO THE QUESTION
- 61 Closest to the ground, stature-wise
- 62 Otherworldly
- 63 Mgr.’s helper
- 64 Creator of Yertle the Turtle
- 65 Laundry cycle

DOWN

- 1 Movie score with a famous two-note motif
- 2 Bounce back
- 3 Aimless attempt
- 4 Imbiber
- 5 Grind to a halt
- 6 Milne’s mopey donkey
- 7 Flaky precipitation
- 8 Comedians Gilliam and Goldsmith, for two
- 9 Rainbow shape
- 10 “While that might be true ...”
- 11 “\_\_\_\_ be here soon”
- 12 Took the bait
- 13 “I really don’t care”
- 14 157.5 degrees from N
- 17 It’s a likely story
- 19 “You \_\_\_\_ one”
- 23 Sleep aid brand
- 24 Like a shopping mall on Black Friday, ordinarily
- 25 Online selling site
- 26 Wall, for one
- 27 Playful aquatic animals

- 28 Dated term for college students
- 29 Site for reflection?
- 30 Prompt
- 31 Corvair investigator Ralph
- 32 “They went \_\_\_\_-way”
- 33 Actress Lauren of 2020’s “The Wrong Missy”
- 34 Louis Armstrong’s nickname
- 38 Unidentifiable cafeteria food
- 39 Did some karaoke
- 41 Repercussions
- 42 “Ghost Town” actress Tea
- 44 Irritate
- 45 Fastening bars shaped like letters
- 49 Louisiana, to Louis
- 50 In \_\_\_\_ of (replacing)
- 51 Monica Geller’s brother
- 52 Jack-o’-lantern look
- 53 College team from Salt Lake City
- 54 “Auld Lang \_\_\_\_”
- 55 “Don’t text and drive” ad, for short
- 56 Acuity measures that don’t really matter
- 57 Questionable, in “Among Us,” slangily
- 58 Hustle, quaintly
- 59 High-jump hurdle
- 60 Peyton’s sibling

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NEED A HINT? SEE PAGE 20



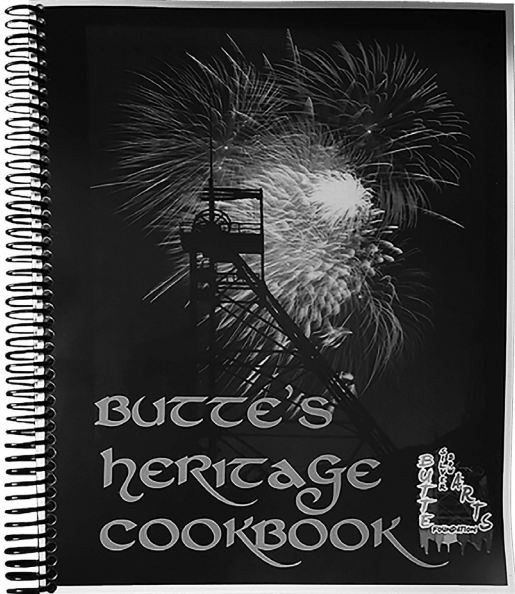
MONTANA TABLE: BUTTE CULINARY HISTORY

In “Remembrance of Things Past” author Marcel Proust famously wrote of one extraordinary madeleine cookie that, when dipped in tea, was capable of transporting the author to memories of his youth.

Neuroscientists have long contended that our sense of smell and taste are closely tied to emotion and memory. So perhaps there’s no better place to explore the connection between memory and food than in a place like Butte, where nostalgia seems to be part of the DNA.

Butte’s copper mines once drew immigrants from all over the world, creating a multicultural metropolis that at its height boasted a population of 100,000. Many of Butte’s immigrants brought their culinary traditions with them, and they would later transform their food into something new, resulting in the chop suey and pork chop sandwiches that can still be enjoyed in Butte today.

Butte’s food traditions are expansive, and to cover all of its eateries and delicacies would require the pages of an entire book. Nonetheless, what’s certain is that Butte’s food offers visitors a glimpse into the cultural backdrop that made Butte the so-called “Richest Hill on Earth.”



A COOKBOOK FOR THE AGES

A conversation about Butte’s culinary traditions wouldn’t be complete without a discussion of the “Butte Heritage Cookbook.”

Originally published in 1967 and conceived by the Silver Bow Bicentennial Commission to benefit the Butte Silver Bow Arts Foundation, the book contains around 290 pages of stories, drawings, photographs, cultural descriptions, and recipes, which range from baklava to sweet and sour chicken, all in honor of Butte’s many ethnic food traditions.

For the volunteers who collected the recipes, the cookbook was a labor of love, including for its editor Jean McGrath.

McGrath passed away in 2019 at age 98. According to her children Mike McGrath and Kathleen Vasquez, their mother loved Butte for its rich history. That’s why she and other volunteers didn’t just want to make a community cookbook – they wanted to make something that would endure, something that was part-recipe book, part-ethnography.

“I think she loved meeting all those people and getting to know their history, their families, and the richness of their culture,” said Vasquez.

As for Mike McGrath, who’s also the chief justice of the Montana Supreme Court, he says the idea to make the Butte Heritage Cookbook more than just a collection of community recipes partly arose from the home kitchens of Butte. There, Mining City residents demonstrated their recipes for the cookbook’s volunteers,

often telling family stories as they chopped, stirred, kneaded and rolled.

“(My mother) ended up spending long afternoons, whole days with people making povitica,” McGrath said.

A sweet bread of Eastern European origins, povitica is a thinly layered nut roll filled with chopped walnuts, honey, spices and other ingredients. Recipes for it in the Butte Heritage Cookbook call for around 10 cups of flour, which are used to create a yeasted dough that’s stretched out to about the size of a dinner table before being rolled into a coil.

Another favorite recipe in the McGrath family is the cookbook’s recipe for spaghetti gravy, a meaty tomato-based sauce that features traditional savory spices alongside nutmeg, allspice, cloves and cinnamon. The ingredients simmer uncovered for three hours to produce a reduced, flavorful sauce—hence, “gravy.”

The cookbook’s recipe for sweet potato salad, which calls for mashed sweet potatoes, celery, hardboiled eggs, green onions, Durkee’s, and mayonnaise, is another traditional Butte dish made in home kitchen and cafes alike.

Featured in the book’s “Eating Out in Butte” chapter, the sweet potato salad recipe hails from Sylvain’s Casino, a popular supper club that once operated on the south end of Harrison Avenue. Lydia Michelletti of Lydia’s Supper Club fame purchased the property in the 1940s, opening her own restaurant in its place. The restaurant eventually moved to its current location at 4915 Harrison Ave., where visitors can still dine on traditional Butte super-club fare, including the traditional sweet potato salad.

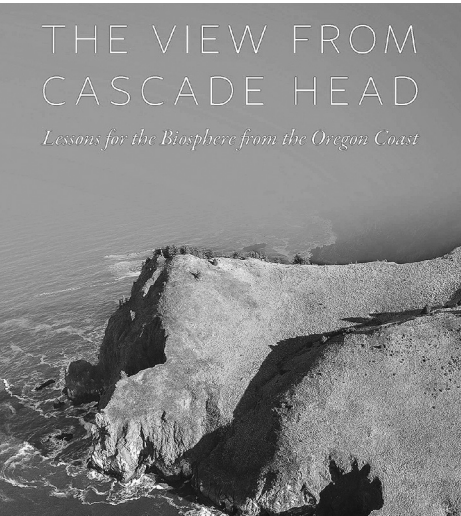
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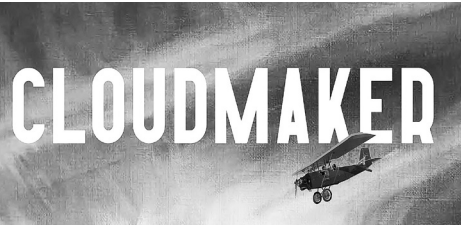
Many of the book’s recipes are vague, and some ingredients are either no longer available or have fallen out of favor. But Vasquez says that her mother resisted updating the cookbook. To her it was a historical document, and its vaguely written recipes represented how people cooked in their homes: by memory, intuition, experience and touch, all topped off with a dash and a pinch. ★

—ANNIE PENTILLA

*Sales of the Butte Heritage Cookbook have supported the Butte Silver Bow Arts Foundation since 1976. To obtain a copy, visit [BSBArts.org](http://BSBArts.org) or email [butte.mt.arts@gmail.com](mailto:butte.mt.arts@gmail.com).*



**BRUCE BYERS  
ROBERT MICHEAL PYLE**  
Thurs., Feb. 25 - 7:30 p.m.  
Books in Common NW explores the science of biospheres with ecologist Bruce Byers in his new book “**The View from Cascade Head.**” Joining Bruce for this conversation is biologist and nature writer Robert Michael Pyle.



**MALCOLM BROOKS  
RON FITZGERALD**  
Thurs., March 11 - 6 p.m.  
From the bestselling author of “Painted Horses,” Malcolm Brooks returns with a spirited novel set during the summer of Amelia Earhart’s final flight. “**Cloudmaker**” is a tale of American ingenuity and optimism set against the backdrop of a deepening Great Depression. Ron Fitzgerald is an American television writer best known for working on “Friday Night Lights” and the Showtime comedy “Weeds.”

NEW AND NOTABLE



**LESLIE BUDEWITZ**  
In “**The Solace of Bay Leaves,**” the newest offering from Montana cozy mystery writer Leslie Budewitz, heroine Pepper uses her local-girl contacts and her talent for asking questions to unearth startling links between the past and present that suggest her childhood friend may not have been the Golden Girl she appeared to be. Published in 2020 by Seventh Street Books.

MONTANA BOOK EVENTS



**JANET SKESLIEN CHARLES**  
“**The Paris Library**” is based on the true World War II story of the heroic librarians at the American Library in Paris. Charles, a writer who splits her time between Paris and Montana, presents a story of romance, friendship, family, and the power of literature to bring people together. Published in June 2020 by Simon and Schuster.

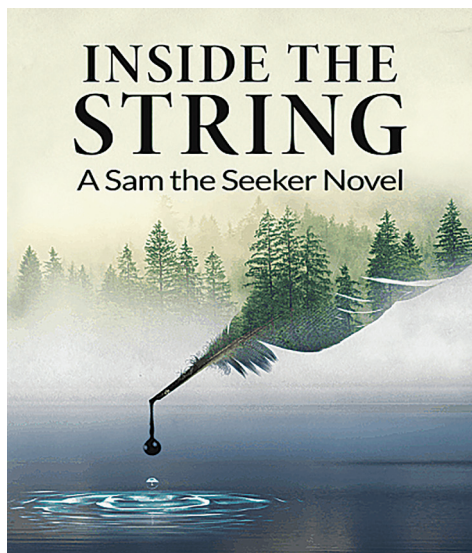


**MAXIM LOSKUTOFF**  
In his first novel, “**Ruthie Fear,**” Loskutoff captures the destruction and rebirth of the modern American West in “Technicolor bursts of action.” This debut novel examines America’s complicated legacy of manifest destiny, mass shootings, and environmental destruction. Anchored by an unforgettable heroine, “Ruthie Fear” presents the rural West as a place “balanced on a knife-edge, at war with itself, but still unbearably beautiful and full of love.” Published in September 2020 by W.W. Norton.

JONES IN'?







### J. LEIGH BROWN

To distract from the concealed land grab, a band of riders known as the Ink Prayer commit raids against poachers who terrorize endemic wildlife in Brown's recently self-published book **"Inside the String."**

### TOM HARPOLE

Writer Harpole was a horse logger working from remote mountain camps until an accident forced him to explore another avocation, writing. After decades of publishing in periodicals such as Sports Illustrated and Smithsonian Air, Whitefish Review and others, Harpole has recently produced a book of memories and musings in **"Regarding Willingness: Chronicles of a Fraught Life."** Printed in 2020 by Montana's Riverfeet Press.



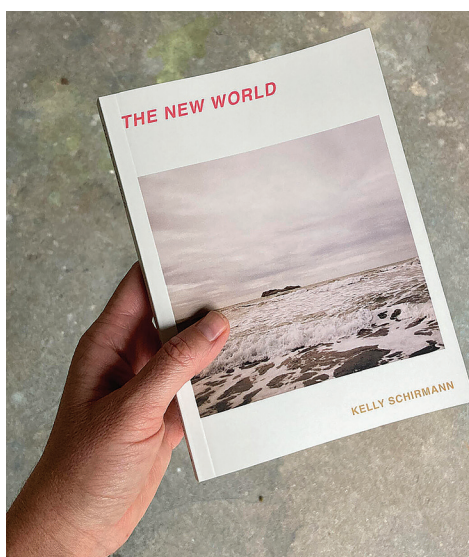
### GWEN FLORIO

**"Best Laid Plans"** is the first in a new mystery series featuring Nora Best as she flees her old life and cheating husband and takes to the road with an Airstream trailer, finding misery, murder and adventure along the way. Recently Florio left her day job as editor for the Missoulian newspaper. She has received several awards over her journalism career, including being nominated for a Pulitzer. Her debut novel, "Montana" won a High Plains Book Award. Florio's new novel was published in 2020 by Severn House.

## NEW & NOTABLE

### KELLY SCHIRMANN

A hybrid collection of poetry and prose, **"The New World"** follows the attempts, failures, and re-attempts at understanding and articulating an era of immense social upheaval, political corruption, and environmental consequence. In five distinct sections, the book refracts, explores and investigates these global themes through the realm of the personal and private. Published in 2020 by Black Ocean.



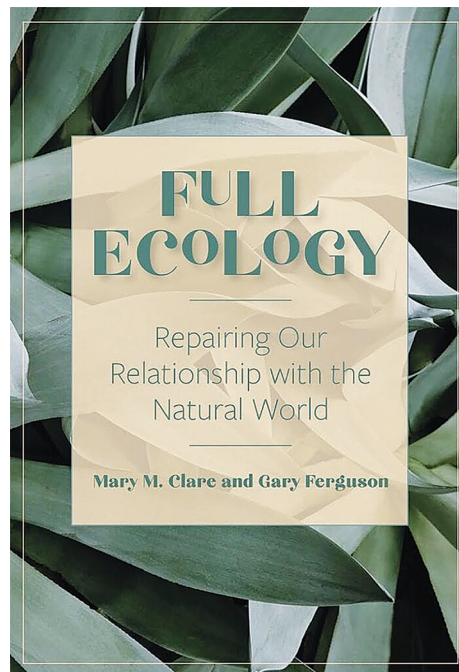
### ROB CHENEY

Mixing fast-paced storytelling with details about the hidden lives of grizzly bears, Montana journalist Chaney chronicles the resurgence of the charismatic species against the backdrop of the country's long history with the bear in **"The Grizzly in the Driveway: The Return of Bears to a Crowded American West."** Chaney captures the clash between groups with radically different visions: ranchers frustrated at losing livestock, environmental advocates, hunters, and conservation and historic preservation officers of tribal nations and the balance between demands on nature and tolerance for risk. Published by University of Washington Press in January 2021.

## THE GRIZZLY IN THE DRIVEWAY

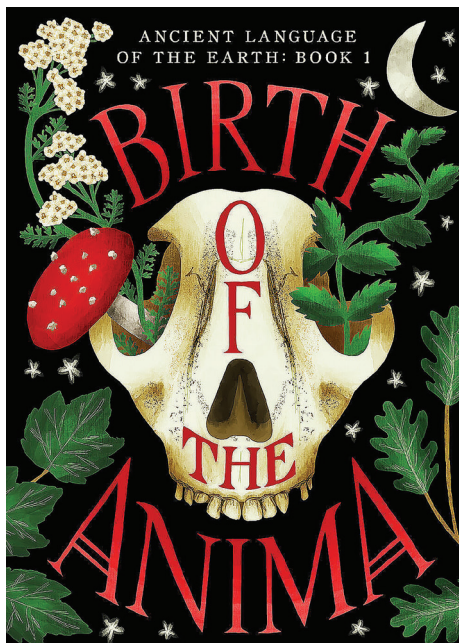


THE RETURN OF BEARS TO  
A CROWDED AMERICAN WEST



### GARY FERGUSON MARY M. CLARE

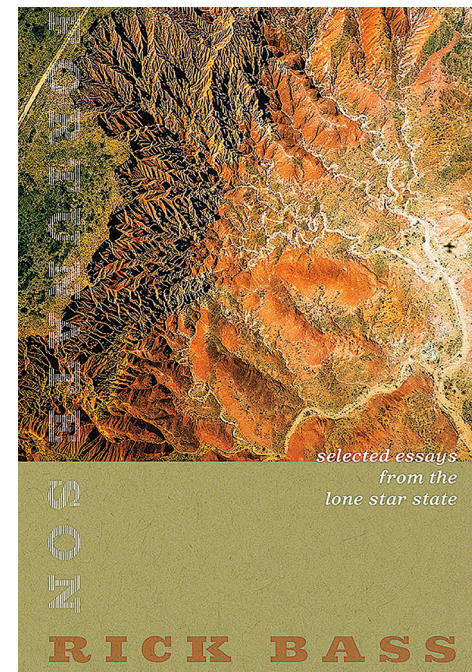
**"Full Ecology"** is the work of social, cultural psychologist Mary M. Clare and science writer Gary Ferguson. Joining the best thinking from their respective disciplines, the couple reveal a powerful antidote to modern-day disconnect – the "wild and simple act" of reclaiming human's relationship with nature. Forthcoming on Earth Day 2021 from Heyday Books.



### KELSEY K. SATHER

**"Birth of the Anima: Ancient Language of the Earth: Book One"** is an eco-fantasy novel featuring 12 women, the Anima, who develop powers akin to apex predators. Along with their bestial strength and speed, they inherit the task of restoring ecological order to the world. Forthcoming March 8, 2021 from Theia Press.

LOCAL BOOKSELLERS across Montana carry these and many other titles from Montana writers and can special order any title. Please contact [info@montanapress.net](mailto:info@montanapress.net) to share book news and events for upcoming issues.



### RICK BASS

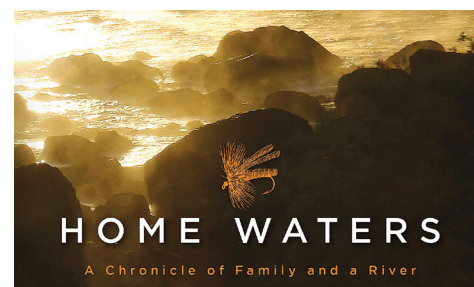
Montana State University's writer-in-residence Rick Bass adds to his prolific backlist with **"Fortunate Son: Essays from the Lone Star State."** The stories reach from Galveston Bay to the Hill Country outside Austin, and from Houston in the 1960s to today and are bound together by a deep love and a keen eye for the land and its people and by "an appreciation for what is given, a ruefulness for what is lost, and a commitment to save what can be saved." Coming March 15, 2021 from High Road Books.

### CRAIG LANCASTER

**"And it Will be a Beautiful Life"** is Lancaster's first standalone novel since 2017's "Julep Street." The book follows the story of Max Wendt, a man who has more than one problem flying at him with increasing velocity. An essayist and veteran journalist, Lancaster is a quadragenarian American man of letters who is renowned for his "Edward" series and a notable list of standalone novels. Coming May 2021 from The Story Plant.

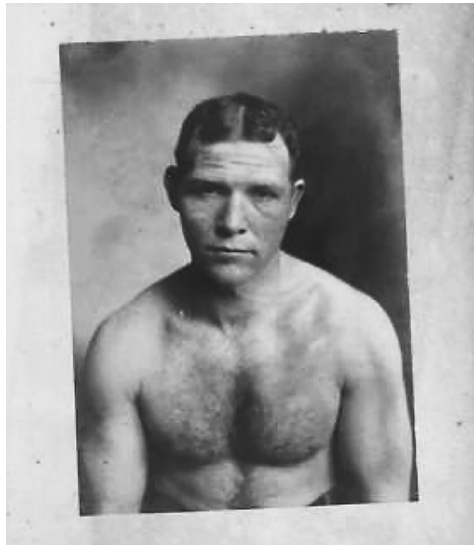
### JOHN MACLEAN

In the spirit of his father's classic *A River Runs Through It* comes a chronicle of a family and the land they call home: **"Home Waters: A chronicle of a Family and a River"** is John N. Maclean's meditation on fly fishing and life along Montana's Blackfoot River, where four generations of Macleans have fished, bonded, and drawn lessons from its waters. Forthcoming June 21, 2021 from Custom House.





## FAMOUS AND NOT FORGOTTEN: UNDERDOG PUGALIST JACK MUNROE



At the beginning of the twentieth century, Jack Munroe made a distinct mark on the smoky city of Butte, Montana. Like other men of similar destiny, he scraped out a living in the deep choking cramp of the copper mines. But in addition to his ability to withstand the toil of stoop labor, this brawny itinerant possessed an unusual amount of courage.

When the world heavyweight boxing champion was passing through the Mining City, Munroe had the gumption and random luck to challenge him to an exhibition – a confrontation that thrilled his hometown and cemented his status among the local populace as a genuine hero.

Born in 1877 in Nova Scotia, Canada, Munroe followed his older brother and their uncle slightly south, and decidedly west, to the United States, becoming “one of a dozen Cape Breton Island natives who decamped in the West to mine copper in Montana,” according to one account.

At age 18 he was said to be a member of the Butte city adult football team. Afterwards, he spent time in San Francisco, playing as a guard on that city’s Olympic Club football team. In 1900, he won the Olympic Club’s amateur heavyweight championship medal, defeating three local bruisers en route to a title. Some time thereafter Munroe started boxing professionally, all while continuing to play football and working odd, itinerant jobs.

### HEAVYWEIGHT GAUNTLET THROWN DOWN

The peripatetic miner-boxer returned to the Butte area sometime around 1903. Sweating out a precarious living six days a week, ten hours a day, in what most considered unrestrained misery on earth didn’t seem to impede the will of Jack Munroe. One night in December, 1903, he was purportedly “one of a bunch of the vagabond miners who were carousing in the bars and streets of Butte, itching for a little excitement,” according to one boxing historian’s account. The heavyweight boxing champion Jim Jeffries, born in Ohio in 1875, and the older ex-champion Bob Fitzsimmons, born in England in 1863, were in Butte, too.

According to an article about Munroe in *Maclean’s*: “In Munroe’s time (and about the time he challenged Jeffries), professional prizefighting was still illegal almost everywhere in North America and, over the whole ‘sport,’ there still hung the bloody, sweaty aroma of the bad, old, bareknuckle days of eye-gouging, armbreaking, neck-chopping,

ear-biting, groin-smashing and snappy tricks to dislocate elbows, cave in ribs and crunch faces.”

The gauntlet was thrown down (by whom and in what context is a matter of conjecture): any man who could withstand four rounds with Jeffries or Fitzsimmons would receive \$500. The amount of the bet varies in alternate accounts, but this figure seems to be the most oft-repeated.

According to the *Butte Miner*, no event of the year had attracted so much attention as Jeffries’ Butte experience with Munroe in December of 1903. “All the big newspapers east and west have been keeping the wires busy asking for extended accounts of the four-round bout, pictures and measurements of Munroe and his history. In addition to the Associated Press reports, many papers asked for specials.”

The sparring exhibition at the Broadway Theater took place on the Saturday night subsequent to the challenge, drawing “a fifteen-hundred-dollar house,” according to the *Butte Miner*. The fighters were operating under Marquis of Queensberry rules, with clean breaking and no hitting in the clinches.

### JACK MUNROE: “LION OF THE HOUR IN BUTTE”

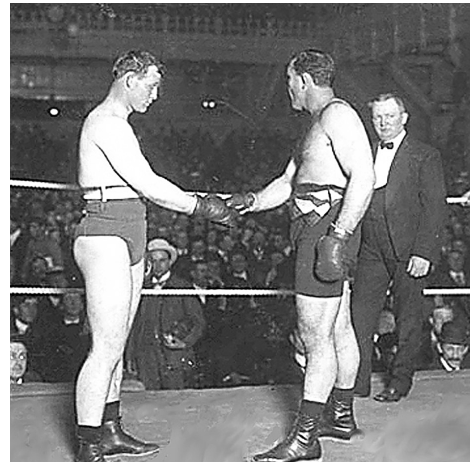
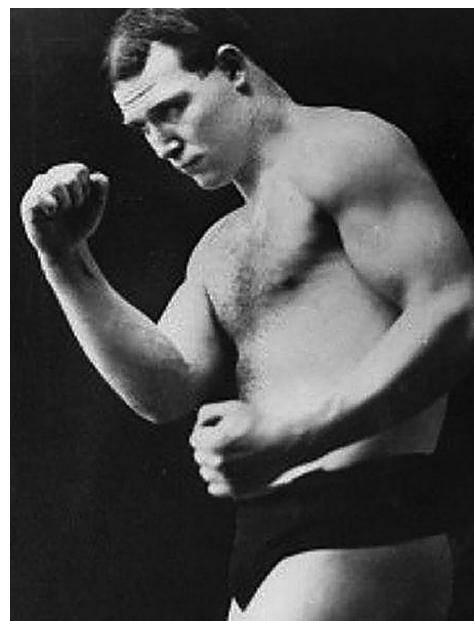
As it turned out, on December 19, 1903, both fighters fulfilled their stated missions.

There are two schools of thought concerning the famous four-round affair between the world champion and the miner-pugilist. One is that Jeffries tried his best, but simply couldn’t dispatch the clever, more hardy opponent; the other is that it was a pre-arranged affair and that it was “fixed” for Munroe to withstand the limit. It’s also possible that neither of these general beliefs were correct; Jeffries might have considered the fight more of a lark than a serious threat, at least at first.

According to one ringside newspaperman, “Both men went into the ring in good faith, Munroe to do his best to stay the limit and Jeff to give the crowd some excitement.”

At six feet and 195 pounds, the powerful miner fended off the champion – who was taller and outweighed him by at least 20 pounds – for four rounds. Jeffries seemed to have done his meanest to stop Munroe. But he failed.

According to one ringside report, “Jeffries several times ignored the (Marquis of Queensbury) rule, and freely punched Munroe while in the clinches, and went at him rough shod,



*Jack Monroe (above at left) and heavyweight champion James J. Jeffries shake hands before the fight at Mechanic’s Pavilion in San Francisco on August 26, 1904. Jeffries beat Munroe by TKO at 0:45 in round two of 20. After serving for Canada in World War One, Munroe decided to write a book in the third person through the eyes of his collie Bobbie Burns (pictured with an aged Munroe at right) who had survived the war with him.*

with the intention of stopping the affair as soon as possible. Several times he forced Munroe to his knees, but the Butte man took advantage of the count and rested up.”

Of course, Munroe, with only a few professional bouts to his credit (though he had gone the limit with heavyweight champion Jack Johnson), was considered no equal for the champion, and his victory was not expected. (One account identifies Munroe as “two years removed having laced boxing gloves and stepping into a ring to compete.”)

But Munroe, who according to one account, had trained exclusively for 10 straight days prior to the fight and was of “perfect wind, hard muscles, healthy pink flesh,” showed gumption and pluck. Not content to survive, he even exhibited some aggressiveness, “landing several hard stiff jabs on the champion’s nose.”

Jeffries was “not altogether pleased” with the decision given by Referee Dune McDonald. This decision was recorded in his fight record as a losing mark, the first blight in his pugilistic career. Jeffries later blamed his defeat on a number of reasons, admitting that he underestimated his opponent, claiming he was out of condition, and even stating that he was afraid of exerting himself too strenuously in the unaccustomed elevation.

Similarly, the *Butte InterMountain* accused Jeffries of loafing, of being “hog-fat and easily winded in the high altitude” while Munroe “trained faithfully” for his fight with the champion.

Nonetheless, going the distance with Jeffries, the heavyweight champion, turned Munroe into a genuine celebrity in the streets and taverns of Butte. “At present Munroe is the lion of the hour in Butte and through his unflinching grit has made many friends,” stated The *Butte InterMountain* on December 22, 1903.

According to Macleans, “Eleven days later the Terrible Miner appeared in a vaudeville melodrama called ‘Road To Ruin.’”



Munroe continued to box, and a year later, on August 26, 1904, he accepted a rematch with the revenge-seeking Jeffries, in San Francisco. Despite the support Munroe received from a notable team of trainers, “Jeffries wiped the floor with the suddenly terrible miner,” almost “decapitating” him with the first punch of the fight. Since the fight transpired in California, Munroe no longer had the hometown support of rowdy Butte folks, and the crowd of 21,000 maintained no allegiance to him whatsoever. He was reduced to a bruised, bloody heap of humanity within minutes, and the fight was called off, to save his hide.

Munroe fought six more bouts after his title tilt with Jeffries — including a knockout loss to Jack Johnson in 1905 — before retiring with a career mark of 9-2-4, with eight of those wins coming from KOs.

### PROSPECTOR AND SOLDIER OF FORTUNE

Munroe wasn’t quite finished, however. He later beat Peter Maner, the Irish heavyweight champion, after he had returned to his native Nova Scotia. Subsequently, he found work as a prospector and lumberjack in Northern Ontario, and he signed up in Princess Patricia’s Canadian Light Infantry at the onset of World War I.

During training, he carried his double-bitted axe (it’s reported that he later killed at least one German soldier with it) at his side. The regiment’s mascot was a large collie named Bobby Burns; Munroe had brought along his dog to Europe, it’s been said, to provide color and a few smiles to counterweight the grimness of battle. Still, the war’s harsh realities were undeniable, and an infected wound from a sniper’s bullet led to the amputation of Munroe’s right arm.

Following The Great War, Jack Munroe purportedly made gobs of wealth while returning to prospecting in his native Canada. He served as mayor of Elk Lake, Ontario, and even wrote a novel about his war experiences — recalling Bobby Burns, the bullet wound, and his subsequent Military Cross honors — before dying at the age of 64 in February of 1942. ★

—BRIAN D’AMBROSIO



# WE RECOMMEND...

## STATEWIDE ENTERTAINMENT LISTINGS

Music, Performances and Events Outside and Online



### RACE AND THE WILD WEST

Thurs., Feb. 25 - 6 p.m.

**Sarah Bickford** arrived in Montana Territory after the Civil War and after surviving an abusive marriage, a divorce, and the loss of three children in the space of just a decade, Sarah remarried and entered a new chapter in her life where she would make history as the first Black utility owner in the nation. Presentation by historian Laura J. Arata is sponsored in part by @VirginiaCityPreservationAlliance on Facebook.



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**ARIES** (March 21-April 19): Herman Hesse's novel Siddhartha is a story about a spiritual seeker who goes in search of illumination. Near the end of the quest, when Siddhartha is purified and enlightened, he tells his friend, "I greatly needed sin, lust, vanity, the striving for goods, and the most shameful despair, to learn how to love the world, to stop comparing the world with any world that I wish for, with any perfection that I think up; I learned to let the world be as it is, and to love it and to belong to it gladly." While I trust you won't overdo the sinful stuff in the coming months, Aries, I hope you will reach a conclusion like Siddhartha's. The astrological omens suggest that 2021 is the best year ever for you to learn how to love your life and the world just as they are.

**TAURUS** (April 20-May 20): Taurus physicist Richard Feynman said, "If we want to solve a problem we have never solved before, we must leave the door to the unknown ajar." That's always good advice, but it's especially apropos for you in the coming weeks. You are being given the interesting and fun opportunity to solve a problem you have never solved before! Be sure to leave the door to the unknown ajar. Clues and answers may come from unexpected sources.

**GEMINI** (May 21-June 20): When we want to get a distinct look at a faint star, we must avert our eyes away from it just a little. If we look at it directly, it fades into invisibility. (There's a scientific explanation for this phenomenon, which I won't go into.) I propose that we make this your metaphor of power for the coming weeks. Proceed on the hypothesis that if you want to get glimpses of what's in the distance or in the future, don't gaze at it directly. Use the psychological version of your peripheral vision. And yes, now is a favorable time to seek those glimpses.

**CANCER** (June 21-July 22): If the apocalypse happens and you're the last human left on earth, don't worry about getting enough to eat. Just find an intact grocery store and make your new home there. It's stocked with enough non-perishable food to feed you for 55 years—or 63 years if you're willing to dine on pet food. I'M JOKING! JUST KIDDING! In fact, the apocalypse won't happen for another 503 million years. My purpose in imagining such a loopy scenario is to nudge you to dissolve your scarcity thinking. Here's the ironic fact of the matter for us Cancerians: If we indulge in fearful fantasies about running out of stuff—money, resources, love, or time—we undermine our efforts to have enough of what we need. The time is now right for you to stop worrying and instead take robust action to ensure you're well-supplied for a long time.

**LEO** (July 23-Aug. 22): "Judge a moth by the beauty of its candle," writes Coleman Barks in his rendering of a poem by Rumi. In accordance with astrological omens, I am invoking that thought as a useful metaphor for your life right now. How lovely and noble are the goals you're pursuing? How exalted and bighearted are the dreams you're focused on? If you find there are any less-than-beautiful aspects to your motivating symbols and ideals, now is a good time to make adjustments.

**VIRGO** (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): I invite you to try the following experiment. Select two situations in your world that really need to be reinvented, and let every other glitch and annoyance just slide for now. Then meditate with tender ferocity on how best to get the transformations done. Summoning intense focus will generate what amounts to magic! PS: Maybe the desired reinventions would require other people to alter their behavior. But it's also possible that your own behavior may need altering.

**LIBRA** (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): Author Marguerite Duras wrote these words: "That she had so completely recovered her sanity was a source of sadness to her. One should never be cured of one's passion." I am spiritually allergic to that idea. It implies that our deepest passions are unavailable unless we're insane, or at least disturbed. But in the world I aspire to live in, the opposite is true: Our passions thrive if we're mentally healthy. We are best able to harness our most inspiring motivations if we're feeling poised and stable. So I'm here to urge you to reject Duras's perspective and embrace mine. The time has arrived for you to explore the mysteries of relaxing passion.

**SCORPIO** (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): Author Karen Barad writes, "The past is never finished. It cannot be wrapped up like a package, or a scrapbook; we never leave it and it never leaves us behind." I agree. That's why I can't understand New Age teachers who advise us to "live in the now." That's impossible! We are always embedded in our histories. Everything we do is conditioned by our life story. I acknowledge that there's value in trying to see the world afresh in each new moment. I'm a hearty advocate of adopting a "beginner's mind." But to pretend we can completely shut off or escape the past is delusional and foolish. Thank you for listening to my rant, Scorpio. Now please spend quality time upgrading your love and appreciation for your own past. It's time to celebrate where you have come from—and meditate on how your history affects who you are now.

**SAGITTARIUS** (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): Luisah Teish is a writer and priestess in the Yoruban Lucumi tradition. She wrote a book called Jump Up: Seasonal Celebrations from the World's Deep Traditions. "Jump up" is a Caribbean phrase that refers to festive rituals and parties that feature "joyous music, laughter, food, and dancing." According to my reading of the astrological omens, you're due for a phase infused with the "jump up" spirit. As Teish would say, it's a time for "jumping, jamming, swinging, hopping, and kicking it." I realize that in order to do this, you will have to work around the very necessary limitations imposed on us all by the pandemic. Do the best you can. Maybe make it a virtual or fantasy jump up. Maybe dance alone in the dark.

**CAPRICORN** (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): "Perhaps we should know better," wrote poet Tony Hoagland, "but we keep on looking, thinking, and listening, hunting that singular book, theory, perception, or tonality that will unlock and liberate us." It's my duty to report, Capricorn, that there will most likely be no such singular magnificence for you in 2021. However, I'm happy to tell you that an accumulation of smaller treasures could ultimately lead to a substantial unlocking and liberation. For that to happen, you must be alert for and appreciate the small treasures, and patiently gather them in. (PS: Author Rebecca Solnit says, "We devour heaven in bites too small to be measured." I say: The small bites of heaven you devour in the coming months will ultimately add up to being dramatically measurable.)

**AQUARIUS** (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): Aquarian author Alice Walker writes, "In nature, nothing is perfect and everything is perfect. Trees can be contorted, bent in weird ways, and they're still beautiful." In the coming weeks, I hope you'll adopt that way of thinking and apply it to every aspect of your perfectly imperfect body and mind and soul. I hope you'll give the same generous blessing to the rest of the world, as well. This attitude is always wise to cultivate, of course, but it will be especially transformative for you in the coming weeks. It's time to celebrate your gorgeous idiosyncrasies and eccentricities.

**PISCES** (Feb. 19-March 20): "Though the bamboo forest is dense, water flows through it freely," I offer that Zen saying just in time for you to adopt it as your metaphor of power. No matter how thick and complicated and impassable the terrain might appear to be in the coming weeks, I swear you'll have a flair for finding a graceful path through it. All you have to do is imitate the consistency and flow of water.

### THIS WEEK'S HOMEWORK:

*What's the important thing you forgot about that you really do need to remember sometime soon?*

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