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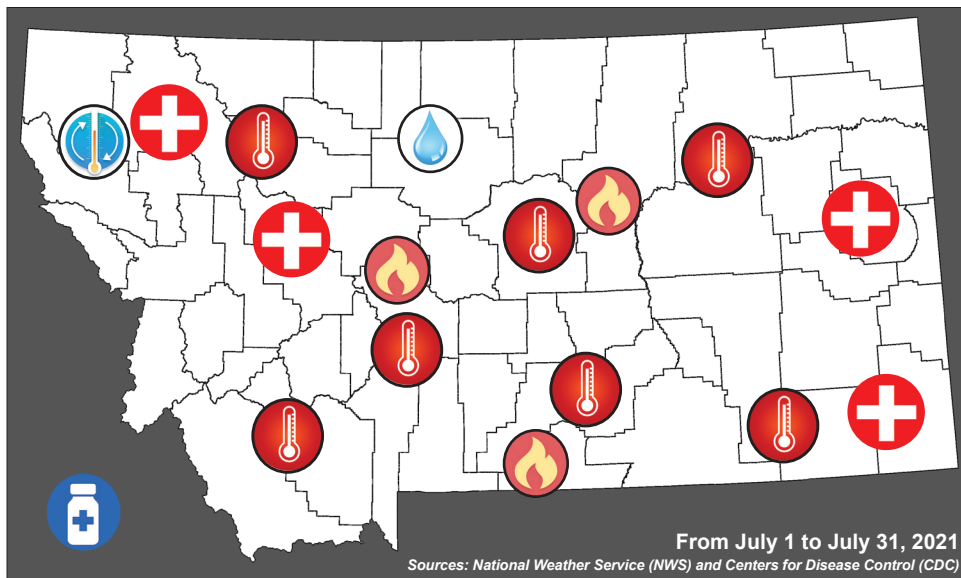
Vol. 4, Issue 8 • August 2021

MONTANA PRESS

The Montana
**DINO
TRAIL**

*A Prehistoric
Adventure*

MONTANA ALMANAC



(Mostly) Highs and Lows Across the State

June 2021 was the hottest June on record in the U.S. On July 4, Chinook set a new record high temperature of 99 degrees (98 in 1952). On July 17, Missoula International Airport again hit 90 degrees, making 21 consecutive days of 90° or higher and breaking the previous all-time record set in August 1904 (records date back to 1893). Extreme high temperatures included 103 degrees at Wolf Point on July 16, 104 degrees on July 17 at Mizpah, 105 degrees at Powderville on July 18, 106 degrees at Plains Airport on July 31 and in Billings on July 27, 107 degrees at the Billings Airport on July 20 and 110 degrees on July 19 at Wokal Field in Glasgow. On July 27, Biddle also recorded a high temperature of 110 degrees. 98 degrees in Billings tied records of 98 set in 2011, 1945 and 1936. 100 degrees in Helena on July 26 broke a record high for the day (98 in 1988). Dozens of high temperature records were tied or broken during the reporting period in locations including Stanford, Lewistown, Livingston, Miles City, Billings Chinook, West Yellowstone, Bozeman and Ennis. The lowest temperature during the period was 27 degrees at Choteau on July 23 and a record low was set at the Havre airport of 43 degrees (44 in 1918) on the same day.

Severe Storms

On July 4, thunderstorms in the Bozeman area produced wind gusts of up to 60 mph. On July 6, the Havre airport reported 0.40" of rain in 20 minutes and some local street flooding occurred; hail associated with this storm also caused some crop damage. Storms hit the areas of Cut Bank, Blaine County, and Hays on July 6, bringing golf ball-sized hail. A tornado warning was issued July 6 for Savoy and Coberg when radar indicated a funnel cloud. On July 7, severe storms continued across the state, bringing hail to areas in central Montana, including Bozeman. A trend of severe thunderstorms with lightning and hail continued mid-month across nearly all of Montana, often bringing deluge (2.45" in 48 hours in Sun River), flash flooding, or trace amounts of precipitation.

Fire Season 2021 Continues

100 percent of the state is now abnormally dry or worse, with 84 percent of the state in moderate to extreme drought. Most of Montana dried out rapidly in early July and experienced high winds and record hot temperatures, precipitating Red Flag Warnings across the state that persisted through most of the reporting period. By July 6, humidity had fallen into the single digits across southwest Montana and haze from fires burning in nearby states settled across Montana, creating poor air quality. By July 8, the latest drought monitor depicted worsening and expanding drought conditions. On July 10, smoke plumes from new fires north of Wolf Creek and in the Little Belts could be seen from a distance. Some of these fires grew to include multiple complexes as high winds and dry conditions caused these complexes to spread. Significant fires were reported near Townsend, Red Lodge, near Polebridge, Clyde Park, Flathead Lake and in other areas across the state where evaluations were or are in place and many structures have burned. Drought restrictions went into effect across many places of the state, limiting watering and other activities. Across Montana fire activity remains high and fire restrictions are in place. Please check MTFireInfo.org for more information on Stage 1 & Stage 2 Fire Restrictions.

Continuing COVID-19 Health Emergency

In accordance with the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) doctors and scientists again recommend individuals wear masks in public indoor spaces and outdoor spaces when social distancing is not possible. Federal government facilities such as post offices and airports have mask mandates in place as do many individual businesses across the state. Although COVID-19 cases and deaths in the United States dropped to their lowest levels in nearly a year in June, a new, more transmissible variant, Delta, is causing record spikes of hospitalizations across the country as the number of people vaccinated has slowed. Four times the daily number of cases as was seen in the previous month are now being seen in some Montana counties. During the reporting period, over 10,000 people lost their lives to COVID in America, many were unvaccinated youths and young to middle-aged individuals in good health. Many counties in Montana are under 30% vaccinated, included Choteau, Broadwater and Richland counties. Within a month, community transmission in Montana went from moderate to low in general to nearly all of the state reporting high levels of community transmission. Counties provide data directly to the CDC regarding COVID cases, transmission, vaccinations and deaths and this data can be found aggregated weekly at covid.cdc.gov/covid-data-tracker. To date, the U.S. reports 622,120 total deaths and a total of 35,539,943 cases, an increase of more than one million cases in the last month. At press time, hospital admissions across the country were experiencing a severe spike not seen before, especially in the hospitalizations of children. Over 344,071,595 individuals in the U.S. have been fully vaccinated and about 44% of Montana. Vaccines are now available for free across Montana for anyone over 12 years old through local health departments and national pharmacy chains such as Wal-Mart, CVS, Walgreens and Albertsons/Safeway.

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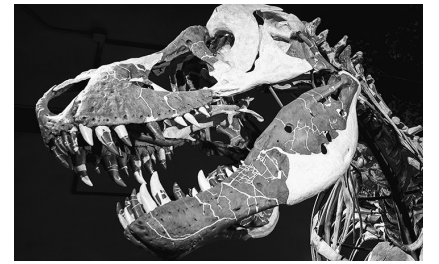
MUSEUM OF THE ROCKIES
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ON THE COVER

A guide to the Montana Dino Trail, a tour of 12 facilities housing the fossil remnants of the giants that ruled the earth for 100 million years.

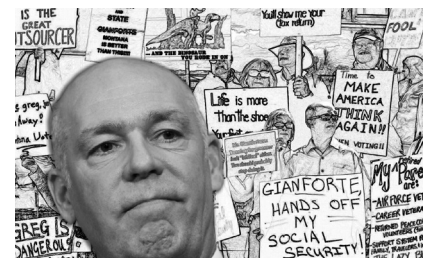
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MONTANA SPOTLIGHT

The final installment of a political biography of Montana's first Republican governor in over a decade: Greg Gianforte.

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ON THE COVER The skull of an Achelousaurus horneri holotype, a genus of centrosaurine ceratopsid dinosaur that lived during the Late Cretaceous Period in Montana about 74.2 million years ago. The Achelousaurus was about 20 feet long with a weight of about 3.3 short tons. The first fossils of Achelousaurus were collected by a team led by Jack Horner, paleontology consultant for the "Jurassic Park" series. This skull, found only in Montana, was discovered in the Two Medicine Formation in Glacier County by Sid Hofstader in 1987. The specimen is displayed at the Museum of the Rockies in Bozeman. Photo from VisitMontana.com

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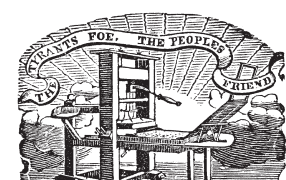
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MONTANA VOICES

Into August's Cauldron We Go

You really have to wonder what the climate change deniers are doing as we enter an August following two months of record-breaking temperatures. Perhaps they have their heads in the sand so, you know, they don't have to try and breathe the smoke from the out-of-control wildfires raging across the West as it bakes in historic drought. Or perhaps they're in their survivalist bunkers, praying for The Rapture, oiling their guns and re-counting their ammo while tuned to Fox News blathering about the hordes spilling over the border or the communist takeover by Pelosi. But for the rest of us, August in Montana right now is red-hot, crispy dry, and on fire – and no matter what brain-washed Trumpicans say, this truth undeniable.

No need to spend much time talking about what Montana's Governor Greg "body-slam" Gianforte is doing about any of the crises facing the state he's pretending to govern. Other than declaring emergencies so he can ask for millions of taxpayer dollars in bail-outs from the federal government he condemns for its "over-reach," he's mostly bunkered up and invisible after cancelling Montana's membership in a multi-state climate pact.

Of course perhaps he's out looking for more collared Yellowstone wolves to shoot while they're helpless in his traps. Or maybe slipping into the secret location near Big Fork where the whack-job Arizona ballot "auditors" have stashed the definitive proof that the election was stolen and Joe Biden isn't really the president.

He certainly wasn't too busy floating and fishing since all the rivers are nearly dry and the trout are baking on hot rocks. So it was odd not to see him at the "Montana Red Pill Festival" in St. Regis, where about 200 right-wing conspiracy fanatics hawked cheap Trump 2020 gear while waddling around with guns on their hips last week. 200 people? Jeez, the Farmer's Markets draw more people than that everywhere across our state. Then again, given the choice between fresh vegetables, sweet wild huckleberries and vine-ripened tomatoes or stale conspiracies and Trump's sore loser whiners, maybe that's a testament to most Montanans' good judgment.

Speaking of whiners, Fox News head bloviator, Tucker Carlson, decided to come to Montana last week and now it's national news

that Dan Bailey, a native Montanan and scion of one of the state's flyfishing icons, decided to tell him to his face what he thought of him while he was in the Livingston fly shop his famous grandfather of the same name once owned. Apparently Bailey telling Carlson the lies he spreads to millions of viewers have killed hundreds of thousands of Americans is an intolerable abuse for those who worship a former president known for bellowing to his security people to "rough up" those who protested at his rallies.

Snowflakes in July? Could be.

In the meantime, the anti-vaccine cultists in a number of southern states, (sometimes known as DumbTrumpistan,) are now responsible for the vast majority of COVID hospitalizations nationally as the highly contagious and lethal Delta variant runs rampant. At some point one must wonder how much risk the rest of us must be exposed to for the dangerous delusions spawned by the former president and still recklessly repeated by clueless Republican politicians. Seems like a few of those GOP politicians – even Mitch McConnell -- are finally connecting the dots and realizing their anti-mask, anti-vaccine, anti-science stance is, in fact, killing off their own voters.

Moreover, since commerce is supposed to be the Holy Grail and highest priority of the Republican Party, the thought that their Covid idiocy might just lead to new masking requirements and close down businesses that thought we had weathered the worst of the pandemic might get their attention. By then, of course, kids will be back in school and the problems get exponentially more difficult – and expensive – to deal with, to say nothing of the human tragedy a predicted 200,000 new cases a day will bring.

Time, as they say, "waits for no man" and a scorching August is now upon us. So hang in there fellow Montanans. We'll make it through this as we've made it through so many things in the past. And we'll do it best by paying attention to each other's needs and lending a hand when we can to those who need it. That'll serve us much better than spewing hatred and violence for "the others" – and likewise, it should remind us who is doing just that and, come next election cycle, hold them responsible for their actions, words, and total inability to govern in our time of great need. ★

—GEORGE OCHENSKI

BYGONE DAYS

Bygone Days are compiled from archives of Montana newspapers. Years featured: 1897, 1937 and 1962.

***The Helena Independent*
August 1, 1897**

“William J. Bryan left here at nine o’clock this morning for the interior of the park with the Lake hotel as his objective point. He spent several hours in the upper geyser basin among the geysers. He remained there so long that he abandoned all idea of making the Lake hotel to-night, and decided to camp where night found him. Since arriving here he has changed his plans somewhat and will not camp entirely, stopping at hotels should he reach them towards evening. He is traveling slowly and will spend several days at the lake fishing... There were a number of tourists here last night and after much urging Bryan consented to make a brief address before he retired. He mounted the stairs in the rotunda and surrounded by guests, hotel attaches and soldiers, spoke for several minutes. His speech was of a humorous turn, not touching political matters at all. He said he did not intend to make speeches while in the park, as he said he lost almost every state he spoke in before the election last fall, and carried those he did not speak in, and that he was anxious to carry the park at the next election and would refuse all future overtures to make addresses while in the park. After finishing his speech he cordially shook hands with all present.”

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

“John H. Price of Granite has shed his epidermis on the 24th of every July in his life. His case has been called to the attention of many physicians, but none can account for it. This year Price came to Butte for his annual moulting. Sunday morning’s Standard says: John H. Price was promptly on time with the preliminaries to his annual skin shedding yesterday, and late last night the cuticle of his entire body was becoming loose. Price lives at 35 West Copper Street, and, in anticipation of the remarkable annual event, which has never in 41 years failed to come between 1 and 5 o’clock in the afternoon of July 24, he quit work a few days ago. About 1 o’clock yesterday afternoon he began feeling badly and went to bed. In a few hours he became very dizzy and suffered from nausea and became very sick. For a time he was unconscious and his temperature ran high. Doctor Bernheim was summoned and attended Price, but he had very little to say about the case. Price was also attended by his wife, who, knowing his needs, rubbed his body violently, while the congestion of the blood in the skin was taking place and, when he was seen about 8 o’clock last evening by a Standard reporter, Price had passed what he called the danger line and was beginning to recover from his sickness. The skin on the body was dry and was beginning to loosen on the soles of his feet, and he said it was separating from the new skin which was forming all over his body and that by this morning he would be ready to throw off the whole shell. In describing his sickness which precedes the shedding Mr. Price said his first feelings were general depressing pains, followed

by dizziness, nausea, and unconsciousness, then a forced, straining effort, succeeded by a ticking sensation like a shock of electricity, and then the illness is over and he can feel the old skin loosening from the new all over his body. After a few days he is ready to go to work again in his new coat, but sometimes his feet remain so tender that he is compelled to wear the old skin for moc-casins for several days. The peculiar freak of nature has puzzled doctors from all parts of the country and no one has been able to give a reasonable theory to account for it.”

***The Anaconda Standard*
August 9, 1897**

“We have already heard of the ‘cycle fever,’ which is to be dreaded by the too assiduous rider, and now it is mooted that the practice may have bad effect on the brain. Why? Because it exercises the legs, but not the arms, and the arms have a much more intimate relation to the brain than the legs. ‘a person who uses his hands and arms is much higher in the intellectual scale than a person who uses his legs only.’ The cyclist must therefore be careful to take a turn at the dumbbells in alternation with the turn at the wheel. His ‘brain cells’ are in danger.”

***The Fergus County Argus*
August 11, 1897**

“The *Bozeman Chronicle* thinks the McKinley administration should prevent hailstorms from destroying crops. The administration can and is doing a great deal for the farmers of the United States but there is a limit to its powers.”

***The Helena Independent*
August 16, 1897**

“They Planned Well. Robbers of the Yellowstone National Park Likely to Escape With Their Booty... Additional particulars of the robbery of the coaches containing tourists in the Yellowstone National park Saturday forenoon reached the city yesterday with the arrival of some of the passengers... There were about 60 persons in the coaches that were held up and they contributed between \$500 and \$600 in cash... the robbers refused to accept diamonds, watches or trinkets of any sort. They did not get anything like all the money in the crowd, ei-

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ther. They took what they could get without too much trouble and seemed to be willing to let it go at that... Two men contributed \$100 each. One was E.L. Bonner, president of the Missoula Mercantile company, of Missoula, who was riding in one coach with his family. Mr. Bonner saw what was coming and hurriedly threw his money under the seat. He was not quick enough, though, for one of the robbers saw the motion. ‘Here, that will never do,’ he said, as he reached under the seat and secured the purse... A man named Massey, from New York, had a \$100 bill. After the holdup had completed, some one asked: ‘Why did you give up all you had?’ ‘Well, you couldn’t expect me to ask for change, could you?’ he replied testily. remember of the party said he wasn’t feeling badly about giving up the money, but he would like to have them return the pocket-book. ‘What you got in it, valentines?’ asked the highway man, with a seeming grin under his disguise...”

***The Anaconda Standard*
August 19, 1897**

“Mayor P.S. Harrington was assaulted by City Treasurer Jerry McCarthy in a sudden burst of temper on the part of the treasurer, which was deeply regretted the instant the blow had been struck. The assault was committed in the city treasurer’s office. Only one blow was struck and the mayor issued from the treasurer’s office with blood streaming from his nose... The mayor then had Assistant City Attorney Dierks swear out a warrant for McCarthy’s arrest on a charge of assault and battery. The trouble which resulted in the disgraceful assault started Tuesday afternoon. At that time the mayor called on the city treasurer and stated that the licenses were not being collected as they should be. ‘I told him,’ said the mayor, in giving his story of the affair, ‘that our administration has thus far run about \$8,000 behind the corresponding period of a year ago... I could tell that Mr. McCarthy was not pleased with my criticism. He said that we were getting no gambling licenses now where we were getting some revenue from gambling a year ago...”

***The Butte Eye Opener*
August 20, 1937**

“Powder puffs will be mixed with monkey wrenches in the mechanics pit at the Rodeo grounds when midget auto races are staged here Aug. 21, 22, and 23. If your eyes should wander off the speeding midgets, catching the sight of a mechanic busily engaged with a powder puff, don’t think you are seeing the equivalent of pink elephants. The mechanic will be Miss Portland, Oregon of 1930. Vita Warrens, a super-attractive brunette with a figure that detracts attention from midget cars, will be among the persons here to keep the midget cars in running order... She has been caring for automobile ailments for the past three years, receiving a mechanic’s card from the Western Automobile Racing association in 1934. The card entitles her to serve as a mechanic at any race track under the jurisdiction of the Western association. Proof of her ability is car No. 23, piloted by lanky, slow-talking Jimmy Miller of Los Angeles. The red gas buggy was leading car in the midget races at Portland, having grabbed off first place more than half the time since the races started last May. Miss Warrens frankly admits that she would rather grind the valves on an automobile than participate in a tea with a group of her sex. However, she does enjoy dancing and many other feminine pastime favorites. She is tiny, standing only a little over five feet and weighing about



115 pounds. Her quick laugh reflects in her brown eyes, and her dark brown hair always shows the touch of a few expertly applied curling irons.”

***The Butte Montana Standard*
August 22, 1937**

“Montana Rancher Has Lots of Luck But It’s All Sour. Hysham, Aug. 21. (U.P)—Arcie Buyse, rancher, today claims some sort of a record for bad luck. Following is his record for one day: 1. Mired down in a slough near his ranch, one of his prize mares broke a leg as he tried to dislodge the critter with a tractor. He had to shoot her. 2. Disposing of the animal, he discovered that the tractor had sunk deeply into the quicksand, making it necessary that he drive to Hysham for assistance. 3. En route, a tire of his car blew out. The machine was overturned. The windshield was shattered and the fenders and body were badly dented. During the evening he lost a sum of money playing a friendly game of pitch with neighbors.”

***The Helena Independent*
August 27, 1962**

“Attorney General Says Governor is Aspiring to State Dictatorship... Republican Gov. Tim Babcock today was accused of aspiring to ‘dictatorship’ by Democratic Attorney Gen. Forrest H. Anderson. In a blast of the governor, Anderson also coined a new word, ‘Babcockism.’ The attorney general’s attack, made in a news release, apparently was inspired by a talk which Babcock made Saturday at the Montana State Press Association convention in Billings. Babcock told the state’s daily and weekly newspaper publishers and editors that he favors abolishing the constitutional elective office of attorney general and would endorse a constitutional amendment to provide Montana with an appointed attorney general...”

***The Billings Gazette*
August 31, 1962**

“A fifteen year-old boy who admitted the fatal shooting Monday of Lawrence Motari will be paroled to the child’s mother and grandmother, district judge Paul Hatfield said Thursday. The decision was reached during a juvenile conference with the boy’s mother Mrs. Jacqueline LaBella, Mrs. LaBella’s mother and stepfather... Under the arrangement, Mrs. LaBella and her children are to return to Denver where she will reside with her mother and stepfather. Judge Hatfield said the boy had an absolutely clean record with no difficulties either traffic or other type. ‘We cannot condone this action, but each case must be judged on its merits,’ Judge Hatfield said. He said the boy had been very remorseful and sad since the event. The youth shot Motari Monday because he was beating the youth’s mother and the youth believed he had begun to beat his 10-year-old sister. Dr. C.E. Magner, Cascade County coroner, Tuesday announced a decision not to hold an inquest, leaving the case entirely up to the discretion of the juvenile department.” ★

Bygone Days are compiled by Jen Eames.

MONTANA BOOKS

Bozemanite Connor Sullivan Pens Debut



In “Sleeping Bear,” Montana Army veteran Cassie decides to seek a few days of solitude in the Alaskan wilderness to overcome her young husband’s untimely death, only to disappear herself. As her father Jim mounts a desperate search for his grief-stricken daughter, Cassie’s ordeal is just beginning as she wakes up to find herself imprisoned in a Russian cell from which no one can escape alive.

Like the heroine Cassie Gale in his hot new heart-pounding debut thriller “Sleeping Bear,” Bozeman wiz kid Connor Sullivan has learned that fate has a funny way of correcting our course in life.

From the time he could strap on boards, Connor was a ski freak whose passion for powder had him racing rather than writing. When fate threw an untimely wet towel on his downhill drive, he pivoted to parallel his father, Mark Sullivan, whose own career pivot from investigative newspaper reporter to *New York Times* #1 bestselling author of 18 thrillers (“The Last Green Valley,” et. al.) now includes a writing partnership with thrill master James Patterson. Father and son both now live with their wives in the Gallatin Valley

In “Sleeping Bear,” Montana Army veteran Cassie decides to seek a few days of solitude in the Alaskan wilderness to overcome her young husband’s untimely death, only to disappear herself. As her father Jim mounts a desperate search for his grief-stricken daughter, Cassie’s ordeal is just beginning as she wakes up to find herself imprisoned in a Russian cell from which no one can escape alive.

In his debut, Connor’s education (he attended the University of Southern California, where he was the recipient of the Edward W. Moses Award for Creative Writing), college work experience reading screenplays for Warner Brothers and his aforementioned literary heredity combine for one wild ride. Fans of Brad Thor, Vince Flynn and Jack Carr will thrill to this Alaskan chiller.

MONTANA PRESS MONTHLY: Not many authors have the benefit of heredity on their side. What’s it like being the son of an author?

CONNOR SULLIVAN: It is... well, I’ll say this: when I became a writer, I definitely understand him more. You spend a lot of time in solitude and isolation writing, and for me, my dad never helped me on writing, on the craft; he helped me on being kind of a role model. I saw his work ethic and that’s how I applied it to my career. I’m very fortunate to have him because I grew up living with

someone who essentially made a career out of this, and that was just a huge inspiration for me. He was an investigative reporter before that.

MP: Were you a reader as a kid?

SULLIVAN: Oh, a huge reader, huge reader. For me, it was Harry Potter from the time I was five until I was a preteen, and if it wasn’t for those books, I don’t think I would have fallen in love with reading. Then it became “Lord of the Rings” and then I just started reading everything I could. I was just a voracious reader.

MP: And a voracious skier as well, I understand.

SULLIVAN: (Laughs) Yeah, my ski career ended pretty early; it never really made it to the professional level. I got into an accident when I was 19 skiing in a race, and it was after that that I decided I wanted to become a writer. I skied in high school at a ski academy called Rowland Hall-St. Mark’s in Salt Lake City, and then after that, I took some post-grad years and was on tour going around the world, and that’s kind of where my accident happened.

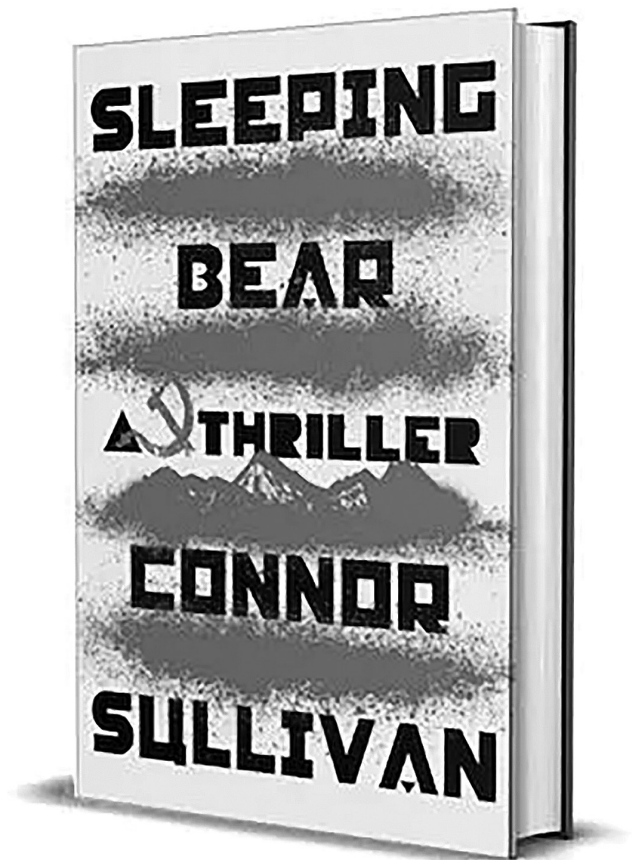
I decided to completely shift and go somewhere warm; I wanted to go to a film school and a writing school, and that’s how I ended up at University of Southern California in L.A.

MP: How bad was your skiing accident?

SULLIVAN: I fell going 70-something miles an hour and my left ski didn’t come off, so my leg twisted around. It just completely shattered it and blew out almost every ligament in my left knee. I still ski for fun, but I just couldn’t do it at that high level anymore.

MP: Did the quiet solitude of skiing contribute to your writing Zen?

SULLIVAN: Yeah, it’s a focus that you have to have, for sure. It definitely taught me the discipline of it and kind of being in almost this meditative state.



MP: Were you toying with writing when you chose USC?

SULLIVAN: Yeah. I went to USC to be a writer. I majored in creative writing and I was also in the film school, learning screenplays and studying how movies are made and things like that. I went there with the goal of trying to come out as a better storyteller; I didn’t necessarily pick one path. And after that, I worked a couple years at Warner Brothers, and that’s when I decided that I wanted to move back home and just write novels strictly.

MP: How weird was Warner Brothers?

SULLIVAN: I had a lot of fun at Warner Brothers; I met some great people. It just really wasn’t what I wanted to do. Being on a (film) lot all day in a really hot environment just wasn’t me. I grew up in Montana, so that was like...

MP: ...the opposite of skiing?

SULLIVAN: Yeah, for sure. But I have nothing but great things to say about Warner Brothers and my experiences there. I learned so much.

MP: Screenplays can be a wonderful way to learn plot, character and movement.

SULLIVAN: I was mostly reading scripts. I was working at various production companies, and you get a huge pile of scripts all day, every day, that you just go through and you’re trying to find that needle in a haystack, that gem. But for someone who was studying story, I had to read thousands of these things over the course of a couple years, and you start to figure out how rhythm and pace and character and setting, how all of these things work. And in a screenplay as opposed to a novel, it has to be very, very tight and organized. It’s a different beast, but it’s like the raw bones of a story. Those years were incredibly beneficial for me, at least as a storyteller and writer.

MP: If a reader didn’t know your background, they would still have noticed some screenplay engineering to “Sleeping Bear,” it’s so visual.

SULLIVAN: Yeah, I hear that a lot from people that it feels like a movie, and that’s probably from my screenwriting background.

MP: How did “Sleeping Bear” come awake in your mind?

SULLIVAN: I was actually at Warner Brothers eating lunch in the commissary one day when I came upon this article that I can’t for the life of me find anymore, and it was about how many people go missing in Alaska every year, because they’ve been keeping track since 1988, and something like over 2,000 missing persons reports got filed and people never got found. So immediately, I was like wow, there’s a thriller in there, that’s really cool.

I started doing a bunch of research and went on Google Maps and zoomed in and out of this area, and as my brain started to think of things, I was like OK, let’s try for something like high concept. And I’m looking at the maps and Russia is right there, right across the Bering Sea, and I go, well, what if I do something a little different and high concept? And slowly that’s how the story manifested itself.

MP: How did the plot develop with Montanan Jim Gale’s hunt for his missing Army veteran daughter Cassie?

SULLIVAN: I didn’t like go out and say, “Oh, I want this to be a female protagonist;” that just kind of came to me. Cassie and Jim Gale, the two protagonists, are just based off of people that I grew up around in the part of Montana that I’m from; I just kind of put them all together and they’re my characters.

MP: And as big as Montana and Alaska may be geographically, Alaska’s semipolar proximity to Russia really blasts “Sleeping Bear” wide awake.



SULLIVAN: I think that when I decided that I wanted to write about Russia, I started to do a lot of research, and one thing that struck me is that with Vladimir Putin, if you look at Russia today, it's like the Cold War never ended; it's just the new Cold War, and that really struck me. So I wanted to kind of explore those themes, like why the Soviet Union might have fallen, Putin has done everything to keep it alive with this new face of Russia. I wanted to explore those ideas in sort of a modern-day setting. I knew I wanted to do something different and make this woman-goes-missing-in-the-woods novel that turns into this political thriller; I'd just never seen that before.

To be honest, when I was writing it, I was scared, because I was like, "Oh no, what have I done? I've never seen this before! How is this going to work?" And it turns out that sometimes just doing something different, it sells.

MP: It took you five years to write "Sleeping Bear." Were there any fumbles or missteps to correct?

SULLIVAN: Oh, yes. I wrote something like 20 drafts. And that five years was also me learning how to write. I'd say that the final manuscript that went in probably only took me six months, but that was after who-knows-how many times I wrote it. Those five years were just learning the craft mostly, learning how to do it, failing and getting back up.

MP: Did it change how you live?

SULLIVAN: Oh yeah. You know, I was very serious coming out of school, and again, going back to my dad and seeing his work ethic, I knew what it took. And I was very fortunate growing up around a lot of successful writers as well, and it's all the common denominator: time with your butt in the seat and writing. I was very, very regimented on that from the beginning.

MP: At what point in the writing did you move back to Gallatin Valley?

"Cassie and Jim Gale, the two protagonists, are just based off of people that I grew up around in the part of Montana that I'm from; I just kind of put them all together and they're my characters."

—Connor Sullivan

SULLIVAN: I would say... I don't remember what draft I was on when we moved back, 15 or something. I was well into it but it didn't really take off until I moved back. I wrote pretty much what "Sleeping Bear" is when I moved back.

MP: Did you seek your dad's help along the way?

SULLIVAN: Um, yeah. What he's so good at is kind of picking me up when I'm struggling with a plot point, and he just says, "Just keep going forward." But in terms of the writing stuff, no; he just let me do my own thing. But in terms of coaching me along and the mental aspects of it, that's where he gave me the most help.

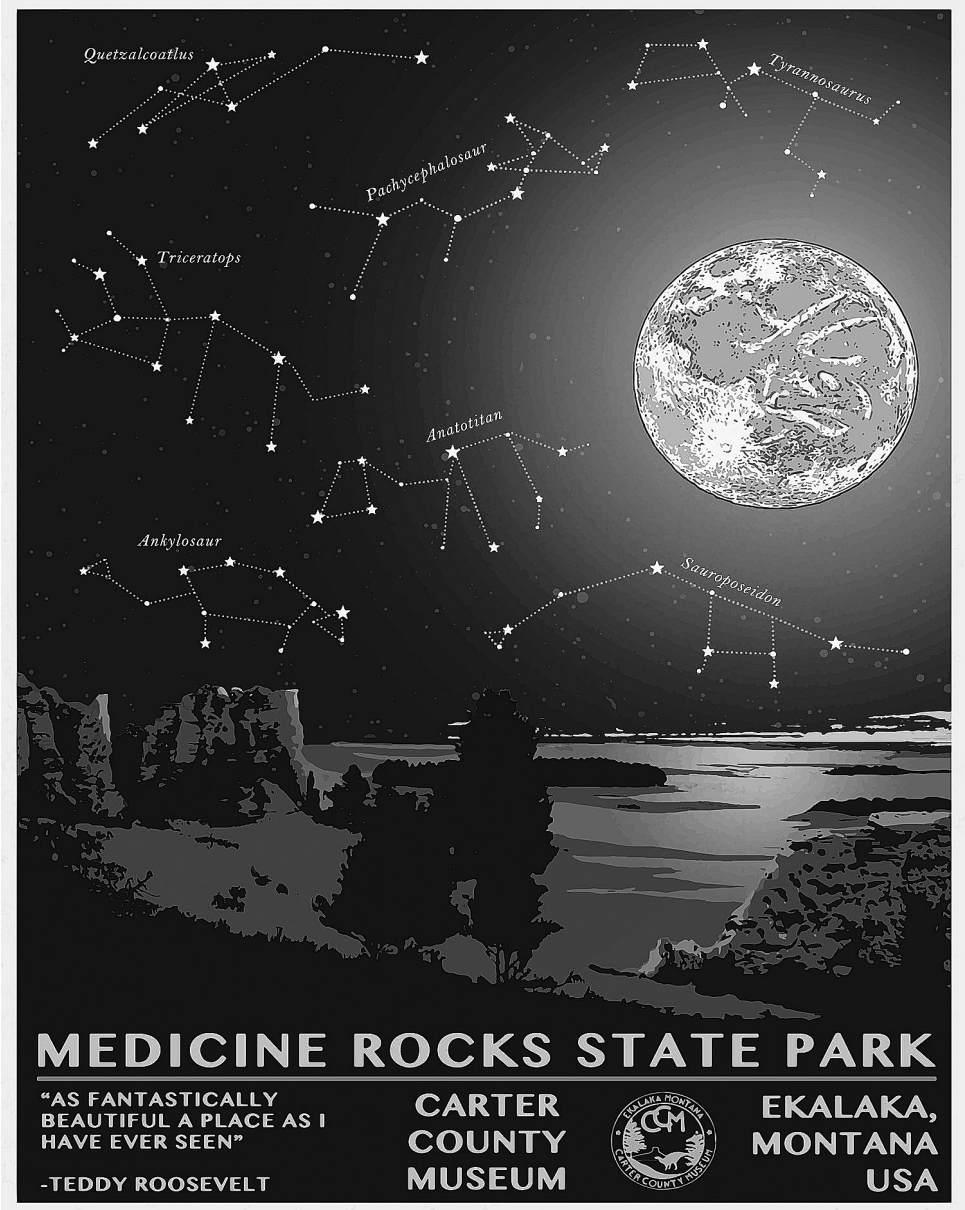
MP: Are you off on your second thriller?

SULLIVAN: Yep, yep; I'm deep into the second one right now.

MP: Is it a sequel?

SULLIVAN: It is not; it is hopefully the beginning of a long new series. But it's funny; when I was writing "Sleeping Bear," I wrote it as a stand-alone and never intended to go back, but now I kind of miss the characters. I think one day it would be fun to write a sequel. ★

—JAY MACDONALD



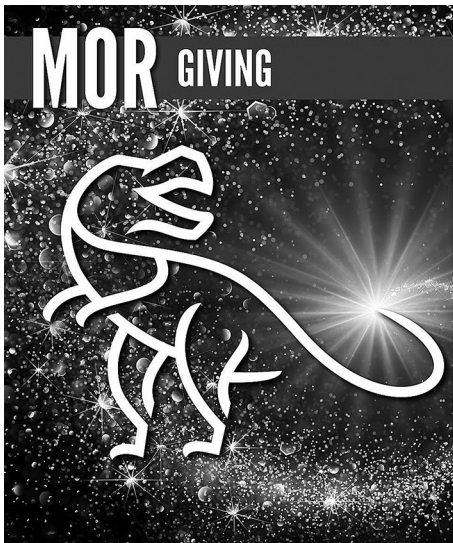
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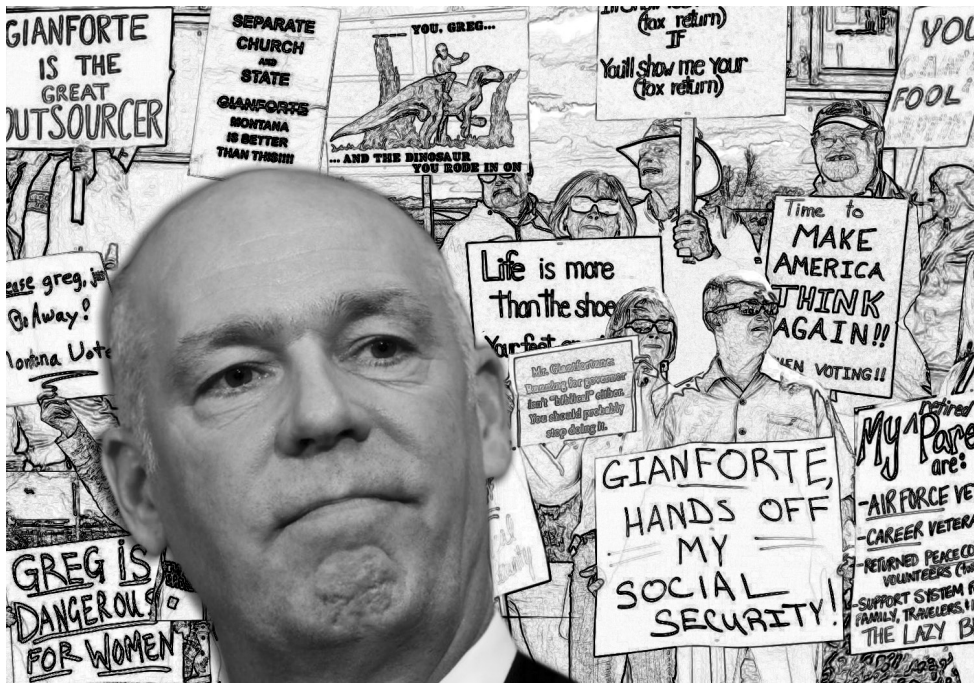
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MONTANA SPOTLIGHT

A Path Paved with Gold: Greg Gianforte's Rise in Montana Politics



In the fifth and final installment of this biographical series, *Montana Press* looks at the new Governor's rise to prominence in Montana politics.

As we pass the midpoint of 2021, the state of Montana continues to struggle with low wages and fast-rising housing costs while a persistent drought over much of the state threatens to deliver a highly destructive fire season. The Republican-controlled 67th Montana Legislature adjourned sine die in late April, having worked closely with new Republican Governor Greg Gianforte to enact a mutually agreeable agenda.

In his decades of private philanthropy, Greg Gianforte, Montana's governor of six months, has given millions of dollars to organizations lobbying for adherence to a very specific conservative vision that combines elements of free-market libertarianism with social dogmas drawn from strains of evangelical Christianity. In 2020, Gianforte spent \$7.5 million of his own money to run for and ultimately win the office of Montana Governor.

Gianforte campaigned on a jobs creation platform and the promise of fixing Montana's economy with a "Montana Comeback Plan."

Gianforte is the first Montana governor to boast a digital-tech background – it garnered him hundreds of millions of dollars through the sale of two companies he built, Brightwork Development (\$10 million) and RightNow Technologies (\$1.8 billion). He has used these funds to donate to charitable organizations through the Gianforte Family Foundation, support private schools across the state and run for political office. Gianforte is, by a wide margin, the richest man to occupy the Governor's Residence in Helena since it was built in 1959, not to mention the wealthiest Governor in the state's 132-year history.

After a failed bid for the governorship in 2016, Gianforte won a special election the next year to become Montana's lone Congressman, touting the creation of high-paying jobs if elected. Between his 2016 gubernatorial bid and his 2018 re-election to the U.S. House, Gianforte put about \$10 million of his own money into his Montana campaigns. The tech

A controversial figure in Montana politics,

Greg Gianforte is likely the richest man to

ever hold the office of Montana Governor.

He injects his wealth into his campaigns

to the tune of many millions per race. From

early in their Montana residency, Gianforte

and his wife, Susan, put their wealth to

philanthropy and now have deep financial

ties to groups that have been defined as

"ministries" or religious organizations that

openly discriminate against LGBTQ+ and

other groups. Today, Greg Gianforte stands

as one of the few prominent Republicans

who can significantly fund Religious Right

organizations while at the same time

advancing their conservative social agenda

in the halls of power – in Gianforte's case,

a first in Congress and now by leading

the state government in Helena.

entrepreneur-turned-politician also donated many millions more into statewide scholarship and philanthropic ventures, including a variety of ministries and political organizations.

From early in their Montana residency, Gianforte and his wife Susan, who moved to the state in 1995, have had ties to groups often defined as "ministries" or religious organizations that discriminate against LGBTQ+ and other groups and whose activities sometimes cross the line into politics.

Through the Gianforte Family Foundation, the couple donated \$725,000 between 2007 to 2018 to Focus on the Family and \$119,000 to the Family Research Council. The Gianforte Family Foundation also donated \$283,500 to the Alliance Defending Freedom between 2008 to 2018.

The Gianforte Family Foundation has given nearly \$900,000 to the Montana Family Foundation (MFF), in some years making up half of that organization's total revenue. MFF is a Montana-based organization partnered with Focus on the Family, Alliance Defending Freedom and Family Research Council.

Scott McCoy, Interim Deputy Legal Director at the Southern Poverty and Law Center (SPLC), says the Family Research Council and the Alliance Defending Freedom are both designated by the SPLC as hate groups.

Like other religious-right organizations, the Montana Family Foundation has taken stances against same-sex marriage and transgender rights while pushing for religious freedom. As president of the MFF, former Montana State House Representative Jeff Laszloffy supported extreme conspiracy theories, such as the debunked "birther" conspiracy that maintains former president Barack Obama is not a U.S. citizen.

Gianforte also has been a major benefactor of the Glendive Dinosaur and Fossil Museum, a museum that presents exhibits explaining the age of the dinosaurs in "Biblical terms" and patently rejects Darwinian evolution. According to former students at the private school where he long was deeply involved in financing and leadership, Petra Academy in Bozeman, Gianforte apparently supports teaching creationism and questioning Darwinian evolution at the school. Gianforte won't speak directly on the subject of evolution and only notes he thinks young people "should be taught how to think, not what to think, and a diversity of views are what should be presented."

In an interview with the Associated Press in May 2016, one of the world's best-known dinosaur researchers, Montana-based paleontologist Jack Horner, responded to Gianforte's statement by dismissing creationism as "pseudo-science."

"A lot of times people say creation science is a science and of course we know it isn't because science is a process, not a product," Horner said. "We find physical evidence for something and we test it, we test to see whether we can demonstrate that it's wrong. And creation science, or pseudo-science, does exactly the opposite," said Horner.

In addition to business, politics and philanthropy, Gianforte's history in Montana includes suing a state agency over a land easement in 2009 and illegally killing an elk in 2000 (he claimed it was a mistake). In another hunting-trapping incident, in February of this year, Governor Gianforte trapped and killed a wolf native to Yellowstone National Park while he was a guest at a ranch owned by Robert E. Smith, one of his major donors and a director of the conservative Sinclair Broadcasting Group.

Though it was legal to kill the animal, Gianforte failed to complete required training to teach hunters how to ethically harvest

wolves before setting traps. Violating the state regulation comes with a fine of \$50 to \$500, the suspension of active hunting licenses and/or a ban from hunting but Gianforte was issued only a written warning from Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks, an agency he oversees as Governor. Since becoming governor, Gianforte has signed bills lengthening the wolf trapping season, allowing snares to be used to trap and kill wolves, and enabling private payment for expenses to hunters and trappers who successfully kill a wolf.

Notwithstanding repeated promises to deliver high-paying jobs and economic renewal to the state, in recent months Governor Gianforte and the Republican-dominated State Legislature focused predominantly on a high-profile agenda that included removing firearms restrictions; giving the governor more control over judicial appointments; restricting voting access; limiting women's rights, limiting local government control over public health, housing and other matters, and legalizing discrimination against Montanans based on sexual orientation.

MAINSTREAM ROOTS

Before building a number of successful technology companies and becoming a political leader, Greg Gianforte was an all-American boy in the liberal-leaning outer suburbs of Philadelphia.

Born in San Diego, California to Frank and Dale Douglass Gianforte on April 17, 1961, Greg Gianforte spent most of his childhood in King of Prussia, Pennsylvania, one of many strands of suburbs laced around Philadelphia. His father owned and managed properties on New Jersey's coast after retiring from numerous engineering jobs. His mother primarily took care of the three children.

In the 1960s and 1970s, Greg was a congregant at Valley Forge Presbyterian Church. At the time Valley Forge was led by civil-rights advocate Reverend Joseph Jesen, Jr. Congregants who attended church with Gianforte recall anti-nuclear rallies and stories about Rev. Jesen attending the famous 1963 March on Washington, protesting the Vietnam War and registering Black voters in Selma, Alabama. In the 1960s, Jesen worked to fight discrimination in the local community by acting as a "straw-buyer" for Black community members who were given faulty information regarding whether a house they wanted to purchase was on or off the market.



Gianforte played football as an offensive

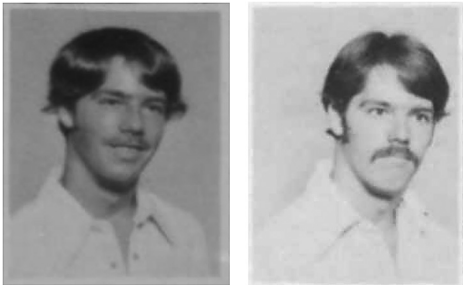
lineman throughout high school. Pictured

above at top center as a cheerleader

for the Upper Merion Area High School

"powderpuff" football team in

his junior yearbook from 1978.



Before building a number of successful technology companies and becoming a political leader, Greg Gianforte was an all-American boy in the liberal-leaning outer suburbs of Philadelphia. Greg Gianforte in his sophomore (above, left) and junior year class photos from Upper Merion Area High School in King of Prussia, Pennsylvania. A career in government began in his sophomore year as a student council representative (pictured at right, top right). Greg was a congregant at Valley Forge Presbyterian Church, at the time led by civil-rights advocate Reverend Joseph Jesen, Jr.

Joe Havlick, a classmate and friend from King of Prussia, grew up with Gianforte in the Valley Forge Church. Both were active in youth groups and Sunday School from an early age.

Havlick says that when he learned of some of Gianforte's current religious views, including the Governor's denial of Darwinian evolution and discrimination towards LGBTQ+ and disabled persons, he was puzzled. He never expected Gianforte would grow to hold such beliefs as no such leanings were visible when Gianforte was a teenager.

"He's gone very far-right, and he's very religious," Havlick says. "When I first heard that that was the case, that never would have occurred to me."

In Gianforte's young adulthood, he was the pride of Upper Merion Area High School (UMAHS), leading his peers in school government, academic achievement and on the football field.

"He was the type of person who had a path," John McCormick, a classmate and sports teammate says. "He was already on it."

McCormick and Gianforte became friends at UMAHS through football, lacrosse and classes. They both took the first computer-science class available at UMAHS, when they were sophomores, in the process receiving an introduction to what would become Gianforte's initial career. Students were taught basic software on TRS 80s, desktop computers born in the late 1970s. The class came easy to both young men. The summer after their sophomore year, Gianforte developed a computer payment program for his father's business.

McCormick says he likes to tell his children that while he was mowing lawns for his summer job, Greg Gianforte was getting ahead of the curve. "He already saw the future and had already jumped on it," McCormick recalls.



START-UP SUCCESS

The summer after his high school graduation, Gianforte followed in his father's footsteps and attended Stevens Institute of Technology in Hoboken, New Jersey. He graduated in 1983 with a B.E. in Electrical Engineering and an M.S. in Computer Science.

When he completed both his B.A. and M.S. in four years, the new graduate's ability and ambition made him a top candidate for AT&T's Bell Labs. Founded in 1925, Bell Labs was known for its technological excellence in the communications field.

Stevens professor Bruce McNair recruited Gianforte to work in the lab's headquarters in New Jersey after Gianforte graduated from college.

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

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

While at Bell Labs in the mid-1980s, Gianforte met his wife, Susan, who already 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.

Gianforte stayed in New Jersey for nearly a decade after his exit from Bell Labs and in 1986 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 antivirus product was geared to enhance Novell NetWare, a dominant product for networking computers in the 1980s.

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

Gianforte preaches the virtues and practice of "bootstrapping," and co-wrote a book titled "Bootstrapping Your Business" in 2005. His businesses, however, often took advantage of the reputation of more successful companies on the path to greater fortune.

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 wanted 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."

In the early days of Brightwork, Gianforte also faced at least one formal complaint of 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 according to the article, was told his position was being eliminated but another employee was hired in his place. The lawsuit was eventually settled out of court.

In 1994, McAfee, a security-software company, purchased Brightwork for \$10 million. Gianforte stayed on as North American VP for the company until 1995, when 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.

MOVING TO 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.

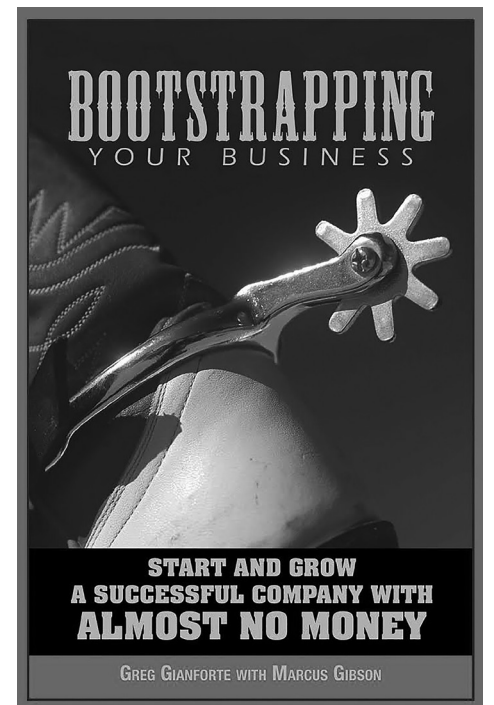
Gianforte's touting of his "bootstrapping" philosophy as relates to RightNow has been critiqued by some of the company's employees who note that Gianforte, who had just sold Brightwork for a cool \$10 million, was hardly starting from nothing in Montana.

"Greg likes to tout it as bootstrapping, but he was bootstrapping with millions of [his own] dollars," says Doug Warner, a former RightNow software developer and product manager who worked at RightNow from 1999 to 2012.

Warner explains that RightNow started as an email stock-ticker service that kept people up-to-the-minute with stock prices. The company then shifted 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." The service essentially enabled businesses to function without a customer support team.

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 provide customer service in new ways. The Bozeman company pitched its products to show how businesses, government agencies, universities, and even political campaigns could benefit from its customer support products and



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. Gianforte preaches the virtues and practice of "bootstrapping," and co-wrote a book titled "Bootstrapping Your Business" in 2005. His businesses, however, often took advantage of the reputation of more successful companies on the path to greater fortune.

garnered a diverse array of high-profile clients including Ben & Jerry's, the Social Security Administration, Nikon, John Deere and British Airways.

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," that exploit consumer sentiment.



A software developer himself, Doug Warner says that one of the many innovations he helped develop 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 its patent application for the product was initially rejected, Gianforte came up with the idea not to focus exclusively on customer emotion capture but instead on how to make use of that emotion.

EPIC BUYOUT IN BOZEMAN

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 \$1.8 billion.

“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, which meant the products would need regular maintenance. Cloud computing simplified things by enabling services to be accessed via 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 [home to Bozeman] 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*.

After Oracle acquired the company in

After tech giant Oracle acquired the company in 2012, RightNow produced not only former Congressman and now Governor Gianforte, but also U.S. 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. “Greg is scary because he’s effective at his politics,” opines former RightNow employee Doug Warner.

“Daines is scary because he’s an empty vessel waiting for somebody to direct him.”

2012, RightNow produced not only former Congressman and now Governor Gianforte, but also U.S. 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 first elected to the Senate in 2014 and was reelected in 2020.

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 their evangelical beliefs.

Warner says the only time he saw religion seep into the workplace was when company leadership would sometimes pray before meetings, which Warner thought was out of place.

When asked about Steve 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 completely barren -- without work, supplies or pictures -- in a workplace that had such high expectations.

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



A SPIRITUAL JOURNEY

As detailed in a 2014 *Great Falls Tribune* article, Gianforte had no immediate plans to run for office when he launched BetterMontanaJobs.com, an online data-gathering site to promote the scholarships he would be giving out to manufacturing and industrial students across the state.

“Really, I’ve settled on spending the next 10 or 20 years working on trying to improve the economy of the state of Montana,” Gianforte is quoted as saying when asked about his aspirations for political office in the future.

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, ample resources with which to help better the state’s economy.

For nearly two decades, Greg and Susan Gianforte have utilized the Gianforte Family Foundation (GFF) to donate to a wide variety of non-profit organizations, many of which advance the couple’s conservative Christian beliefs. While Christians make up 70% of the U.S. population and a majority of the country’s governors, senators and congressmen are practicing Christians, Greg Gianforte is among only a handful of current governors who hail from the Fundamentalist tradition, with deep convictions about the place Christian values play in everyday life.

According to tax records, the Gianforte Family Foundation started donating to Gianforte’s family church, the Grace Bible Church in Bozeman, Montana in 2006; to date, the GFF has donated over \$4 million to the church. Grace Bible Church has been the Gianforte family’s congregation for over a decade and church Pastor Bryan Hughes spoke at the governor’s inauguration on January 4, 2021.

Grace Bible Church was founded in 1945 and, according to its website, the church identifies itself as non-denominational and also as a “bible,” “historical,” “instructional” and an “evangelistic” church.

“Non-denominational does not mean not fundamentalist or not evangelical because technically, fundamentalism and evangelicalism are not denominations,” says Dr. Kristin Kobes Du Mez, professor of history at Calvin University in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

Dr. Du Mez has authored two books, “Jesus and John Wayne: How White Evangelicals Corrupted a Faith and Fractured a Nation” and “A New Gospel for Women: Katharine Bushnell and the Challenge of Christian Feminism.” She has been featured in *The Washington Post*, and on NPR and NBC News, exploring how evangelicalism in America is defined by cultural and political movements, not simply by theology.

After examining Grace Bible Church’s constitution, Dr. Du Mez says that she would describe the church as Evangelical with “fundamentalist flavors.”

Fundamentalism follows faith strictly and Scripture literally. According to the Grace Bible Church constitution, “The Bible, in part

Each byline of the Grace Bible Church constitution is backed with a Bible verse to support the text. According to the church’s constitution, only men are allowed to hold elder and deacon positions. The constitution also explains that marriage is meant to be between one man and one woman. Same-sex marriage is a sin, and any attempt to change one’s gender is also labeled as a sin. Many of the religious non-profits Gianforte supports have similar political agendas. Focus on the Family, the Alliance Defending Freedom, the Family Research Council and the Montana Family Foundation all hold political stances based on evangelical ideology. Scott McCoy of the Southern Poverty and Law Center says the Family Research Council and the Alliance Defending Freedom both work to enact a societal shift to a strictly theocratic, and specifically Christian, authoritarian form of government that would mimic right wing, Christian right hierarchies.

and in whole, is authoritative for the believer. The authority of the Bible is both inherent in the Bible and rightfully bestowed on it as a believer comes to understand it. (Matthew 28:18-20; Titus 2:15)”

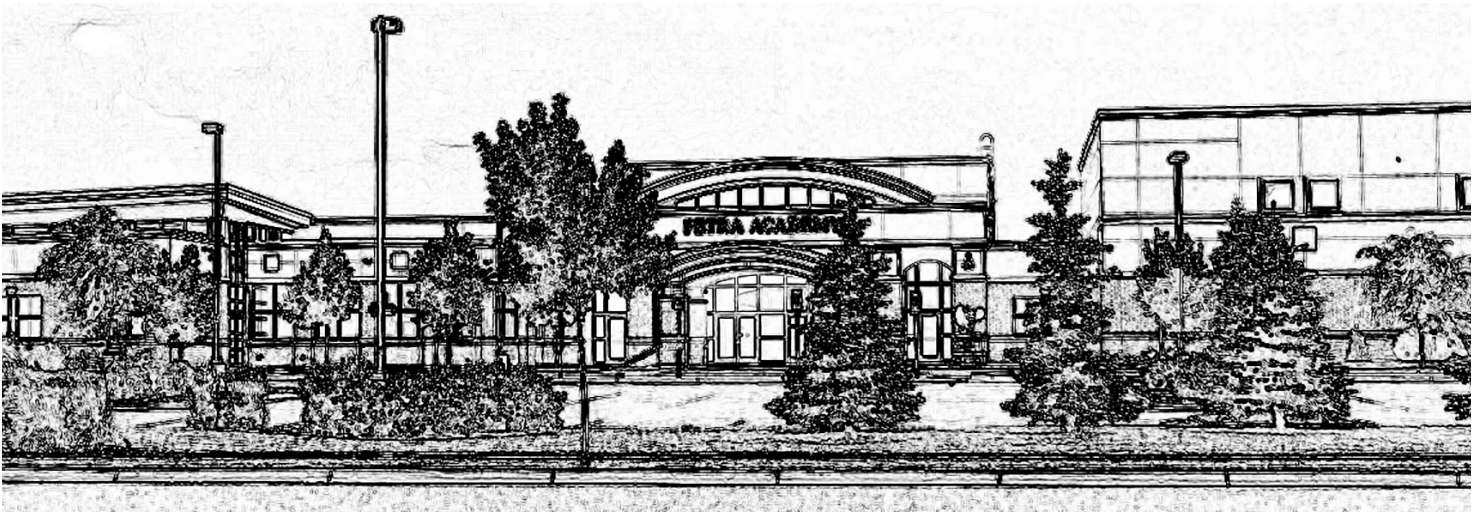
Each byline of the Grace Bible constitution is backed with a Bible verse to support the text. The constitution also explains marriage, sexuality and gender -- marriage is meant to be between one man and one woman. Same-sex marriage is a sin, and any attempt to change one’s gender is also labeled as a sin.

According to the church’s constitution, only men are allowed to hold elder and deacon positions. Women’s Ministries at the church include cooking meals for those in need, helping with certain services and receptions, and cleaning and helping with seminars and retreats.

Grace Bible’s constitution also states that members can be removed from the Church due to a member passing away, moving, not attending services or not living in “accord to faith and order of the church.”

Du Mez says the church’s constitution provides a means to ensure members cannot diverge from the Church’s theological doctrines. “So anybody [is] out if they cross any of those lines, and there’s a lot of lines that you could cross,” notes the scholar.

Participating in the evangelical subculture often means immersion in products like evangelical radio shows, books, and ministries.



Greg Gianforte’s significance and position at the Petra Academy in Bozeman was not usually talked about among students at Montana’s oldest Christian academy. Looking back on their time at the school, however, some began to realize the influence he had on their education.

Du Mez says that, for many evangelicals, the culture is “more at the heart” of what it means to be evangelical than articulating the theological. Articulating theology would make sense for a pastor or elder to do but not so much for followers.

Evangelical leaders who have beoame prominent in American consumer culture include the late Rev. Jerry Falwell, the founder of Liberty University who became wealthy from his radio and television show and books, and James Dobson, founder of Focus on the Family. Now 84, Dobson has written dozens of books, and his radio program still plays nationally.

As ‘rights movements’ like feminism and the push for Civil Rights began to change American culture in the 1960s and 1970s, and later the LGBTQ+ movement, many conservatives worked to reverse or stop what appeared to be sweeping social changes. By inspiring mostly white evangelicals to vote and latching on to social issues instead of theology, organizations like Focus on the Family, Alliance Defending Freedom and Family Research Council could present themselves as ministries working for all Christians.

“And that really allowed this movement to mobilize,” explains Travis McAdam, program director for Combating White Nationalism at the Montana Human Rights Network. “Conservative people of faith sometimes would argue over theology; these new groups were able to kind of bridge the gap that existed between conservative Catholics and some Protestant denominations, because they were focusing on social issues.”

Today, Greg Gianforte stands as one of the few prominent Republican figures who can significantly fund Religious Right organizations while at the same time advancing the conservative social agenda in the halls of power—first in Congress and now by leading the state government in Helena. While Gianforte also donates to secular organizations, his priority here clearly has been for evangelical causes.

The Gianforte Family Foundation donated \$725,000 between 2007 to 2018 to Focus on the Family and \$119,000 to the Family Research Council, co-founded by James Dobson in 1983.

Many of the religious non-profits Gianforte supports have transparent political agendas. Focus on the Family, the Alliance Defending Freedom, the Family Research Council and the Montana Family Foundation, all hold similar, if not identical, political stances based on evangelical ideology.

Scott McCoy of the Southern Poverty and Law Center (SPLC), says the Family Research Council and the Alliance Defending Freedom both work to enact a societal shift to a strictly theocratic, and specifically Christian,

authoritarian form of government that would mimic right wing, Christian right hierarchies.

According to the SPLC, Alliance Defending Freedom has supported recriminalization of sexual acts between consenting LGBTQ+ adults nationally and abroad and claims a “homosexual agenda” is ruining Christianity and America. The group also lobbies for “religious liberty” legislation that would enable LGBTQ+ individuals to be denied services by those who claim doing so is against their religion.

The Religious Right has gained considerable power in the Republican Party and in American life more generally over the past several decades through effective fundraising and messaging, and by investing in virtually every aspect of American life, including colleges and K-12 schools.

CONNECTIONS TO PETRA ACADEMY

The Gianforte family has been an integral part of 25 years of operation of Petra Academy in Bozeman, Montana’s longest-running private classical Christian school. With four children graduating from the school, millions of dollars in donations and scholarships and Greg Gianforte’s service on the school’s board, the family has played a significant part in the history of the school.

Available tax records indicate Gianforte became vice-chairman of Petra Academy in 2004 and chairman in 2005. He held that role until resigning to campaign for the Montana governorship in 2016. The Gianforte Family Foundation donated over \$13 million to Petra between 2006 to 2018. The four Gianforte children—Richard, David, Adam and Rachel—all are Petra graduates.

Petra held classes in a private house during its early years before relocating to Genesis Business Park. According to the *Billings Gazette*, Gianforte partnered with the construction company owned by Steve Daines’ family to build the park that also was home at the time to RightNow Technologies and the Grace Bible Church.

Over the past twenty years, Petra’s curriculum and staff have fostered a quality of education commensurate with the way education “used to be,” says Craig Dunham, Petra Academy Headmaster from 2015 to 2019.

“It’s not about just teaching subjects and books and concepts, it’s real human formation,” Dunham says. “And that used to be what American education was built on, that used to be the bedrock [for] our presidents, our first presidents... that classical education.”

Part of classical Christian education includes teaching students about Christian moral formation with “Jesus as the ultimate example.”

With open enrollment, Petra does not require a family to be Christian to enroll their child, Dunham says, nor is Petra one-denominational. The former headmaster says that 30 different churches were represented at the school and that some families identify as agnostic and simply see the value of the education Petra has to offer. The Petra community is tightly knit and produces fewer than a dozen graduates each year.

Mark Bond, who graduated with Richard Gianforte in 2008, joined a four-person high school class. His family decided to move him from school in Ennis to Petra where his sister taught.

While Bond liked having access to classical literature and the deep discussions at Petra, he says he had mixed feelings about his high school experience. He describes his education as a “paradox” since he was taught to be a critical thinker, but became critical himself of what he learned at Petra.

“I mean, it was fascinating to learn all the fundamentals of critical thought,” Bond says. “And then at the same time, you’re thinking about the fact that you’re at a school where you’re being told the world is 2,000 years old. You’re being told that climate change isn’t real or you’re debating creation theory whether the world was created 6,000 years or 60 million years [ago].”

Sarah Smith, who asked that her real name to be withheld, said that while students learned about evolution, they were taught it was merely a theory.

“And it always came to the conclusion that evolution was wrong,” Smith says of her instruction at Petra. “You know, creationism is the correct way to think about it.”

Smith went to Petra for the majority of her education and graduated with fewer than a dozen classmates. She says up until the sixth grade she enjoyed Petra, but then began to feel different than her classmates which was difficult since they were her only friends. She began to drift away from them.

“I was more of an independent thinker,” Smith says, “Which Petra says that they promote independent thinking, but it was more of an independent thinker in a ‘Christian way’.”

With the curriculum centered around a classical education, Smith says she learned about European, Early American History and religious history but didn’t learn much about the Civil Rights Movement or Indigenous People until college.

“I didn’t know who Malcolm X was until I was in college,” she says. “I had never heard the name before.”

Smith wanted to leave Petra for public school after being drawn to the different electives at Bozeman High School and because many of her own interests were “taboo” or “alternative”

and she didn’t feel like she fit in with her classmates, but she ended up graduating from Petra.

“There was a general sense of ‘We’re better than public schools’,” Smith says. “‘You as students are smarter; you’re more educated because of the curriculum that we have; you read better books than people in public schools.’”

She said that she and other students “took that to heart” since they were told their Petra education was superior. When she arrived at college, Smith made friends who had different perspectives.

“I realized that I’m not always going to be right,” she says. “My views are not always going to be right. I’m not better than anybody else for having the education I had [or] for having the views that I had.”

In 2016, Petra made the news when an admission provision was released that stated, “Petra Academy is not staffed to handle students with severe learning disabilities or those who have trouble behaviorally.”

A 2017 *HuffPost* article stated, “In a tense exchange about the topic in February 2016, Gianforte told the *Billings Gazette* editorial board that the school, which is not subject to the law requiring public schools to accommodate students with special needs, does not admit students who need an extra staff person devoted to them.

According to a former Petra parent who asked to remain anonymous, the decision to pull their child out of Petra involved an incident where the child was bullied and assaulted by another student. They felt the school was not equipped to handle bullying issues.

“Other board members were open to communication, but the [then] headmaster accused me of being “unchristian for demanding action to protect my child and for rejecting the premise that the victim of violence has equal responsibility in repairing the relationship,” the parent said.

Connections between the Gianfortes and Petra have continued during Greg Gianforte’s tenure as Montana’s U.S. Congressman (2017-2021) and as Montana Governor. The Gianforte Family Foundation’s executive director, Catherine Koenen, and Petra’s academic dean, Sam Koenen, are married. Gianforte sat as chairman of the ACE (Alliance for Choice for Education) Montana Scholarship Board that gives scholarships for students to attend private schools and is currently listed as a member of the Montana Board of Advisors on the ACE scholarship website. Petra offers a number of yearly attendance scholarships for students, and, according to tax records, the Gianforte Family Foundation donated over \$7 million to ACE Scholarships between 2012 to 2018 and over \$13 million to Petra Academy from 2006 to 2018.

THE MONTANA FAMILY FOUNDATION

The Christian Coalition of Montana formed in 1992 and became the Montana Family Coalition in 2001. Several board members stepped away from the Montana Family Coalition to form Montana Family Foundation (MFF) in 2004, with Jeff Laszloffy, a former Montana State House Representative, becoming the group’s president.

According to a 2013 *Helena Independent Record* article, Greg Gianforte first met Laszloffy when Gianforte arrived in Montana in the mid-1990s and launched RightNow Technologies. Laszloffy says Gianforte approached him about alternative education opportunities in Montana since he was struggling to find qualified individuals to work for RightNow. Since then the two men have been connected through their mutual association with MFF, a research and education organization promoting “pro-family values in Montana.”

A 501(c)4 social welfare organization, MFF can participate in political activities such as lobbying and endorsing candidates, while its partnering group, the Montana Family Institute (MFI), is a 501(c)3, a public charity with strict limits on its political activities.

The Gianforte Family Foundation donated nearly \$2 million to MFF and MFI between 2005 and 2018. GFF started donating to the Montana Family Institute in 2013, before Gianforte’s first run for public office. Susan Gianforte also sat on MFF’s board, starting in 2005, served as treasurer from 2006-’07, a director in 2008 and chairman from 2009 to 2015.

Before becoming Montana’s First Lady in January, 2021, Susan Gianforte spoke against an anti-discrimination ordinance to protect LGBTQ+ people from discrimination in the Bozeman community.

“The fact that the [Montana] Family Foundation is organized as a political entity makes a lot of sense,” says the Montana Human Rights Network’s Travis McAdam. That’s why the Religious Right was created... to gain and then try to sustain and keep political power.”

McAdam adds that having Susan Gianforte sitting on the Foundation board has helped solidify the MFF in a political alliance with the Gianfortes.

“It’s not necessarily that these lawmakers and Governor Gianforte are representing the true wishes of community members around Montana,” McAdam opines. “But what they are representing are those core ideologies of the Religious Right that, again, has secured and continues to maintain a lot of power and influence in the Republican Party, both here in Montana, and of course nationally as well.”

On the MFF website, people are encouraged to become members of the organization to “enhance MFF’s ability to impact public policy and influence the culture in Montana.”

Like other Religious Right organizations, the Montana Family Foundation has taken stances against same-sex marriage and transgender rights and civil rights for members of LGBTQ+ communities.

A NEW MONTANA

Greg Gianforte campaigned for Governor in 2015 with promises of high-paying jobs for Montanans. In multiple statewide campaigns since, creating high-paying jobs, cutting taxes, avoiding “federal government overreach” and supporting fossil fuel industries have been consistent themes in his campaigns.

Democrat Mike Cooney, former Montana Secretary of State and Lieutenant Governor (2017-2021) and Governor Steve Bullock’s running mate in 2016, notes that as an incumbent it’s often easier to win. But the 2016 campaign was expected to be challenging due to Gianforte’s wealth.

Montana Press Monthly • **Page 12** • August 2021



Before becoming Montana’s First Lady,

Susan Gianforte spoke against an

ordinance to protect LGBTQ+ civil rights

in Bozeman. A prominent board member

at the Montana Family Foundation, she

is pictured above at top left at a Trump

fundraiser during summer 2020 at Lone

Mountain Ranch in Montana with Lt. Gov

candidate Kristen Juras, Donald Trump, Jr.

and Kim Guilfoyle. Guilfoyle tested positive

for COVID-19 after the event, which was

held in violation of Gallatin County health

department guidance at the time.

Gianforte loaned \$6 million to his campaign in 2016 and it gave him “a real distinct advantage, which it gives anybody who can self-fund in a campaign,” says Cooney. But Gianforte still lost to Bullock by nearly four percentage points.

After Gianforte’s 2016 defeat, Montana’s lone seat in the U.S. House of Representatives became vacant when Representative Ryan Zinke (R-MT) was named Secretary of the Interior by President Trump. With only a couple of months to campaign before the May 2017 special election, Gianforte and Democratic candidate Rob Quist fought to represent Montana in Washington, D.C.

Quist recalls the first time he met Gianforte at a PowWow in Bozeman during the campaign. After agreeing to be part of the honor parade, Quist learned Gianforte was his dance partner and they toured around the gymnasium together before being introduced.

“I leaned over to Greg and I said, ‘Well, at least we got our first dance together out of the way,’” Quist says with a chuckle. “To his credit, he smiled.”

Raised by a Republican family in Glacier County, Quist, well-known to many Montanans as a longtime touring musician, says he was inspired to run for Congress as a Democrat after seeing how “disheartened” people were after the 2016 election.

Gianforte campaigned against Quist with his already-well-worn platform of creating high paying jobs in Montana, reminding voters that through RightNow, he had brought 500 engineering, sales and marketing jobs to Montana (though the larger portion of RightNow’s 1,100 employees had been scattered around the globe).

As with Gianforte’s previous campaign, money became an issue in the special election. According to the Federal Election Commission, Gianforte spent \$9.8 million and Quist \$6.7 million in the brief campaign.



Open Secrets found that the vast majority of Quist’s individual donations were under \$200, while Gianforte’s campaign mostly saw donations of over \$2,000. Gianforte also donated \$2.5 million to his campaign.

According to Open Secrets, outside groups like the Congressional Leadership Fund, the National Republican Congressional Committee and the Republican National Committee spent \$5.6 million backing Gianforte, while outside groups supporting Quist spent less than \$1 million.

Another prominent aspect of Gianforte’s 2017 campaign was standing with President Donald Trump. During his 2016 run for governor, Gianforte had hesitated to support Trump’s bid for the presidency.

According to Mike Cooney, during the 2016 campaign Gianforte “wouldn’t say his name,” but after his loss and Trump’s win, Gianforte began supporting the administration.

“I think the minute Trump won the election, he saw the handwriting on the wall,” Cooney says.

In 2016, Trump won 55.6% of Montana votes while Gianforte received 46.4% of the vote for governor. In 2017, Gianforte won 50.2% of the vote and Quist received 44.1%.

NATIONAL EXPOSURE

The night before Gianforte’s 2017 win in the race for Montana’s lone congressional seat, the would-be Congressman physically assaulted reporter Ben Jacobs after the journalist asked a healthcare-related question.

After the assault, Gianforte misled police about the incident, saying Jacobs was the instigator. Gianforte pleaded guilty to misdemeanor assault in June, 2017. Some believe that Gianforte received more lenient treatment than would an average individual from Brian Gootkin, Gallatin County Sheriff at the time of the assault. Gootkin now serves as Director of the Department of Corrections under Governor Gianforte.

For Rob Quist, it was a shock to hear his opponent had assaulted a reporter, but he didn’t want to make a comment at the time. He said he wanted Montanans as well as law enforcement to decide best how to proceed on election night.

“There’s this whole narrative amongst our current Republican Party about how the media is the enemy,” Quist says. “And so I think that they were trying to kind of play that card.”

Following the assault, President Trump praised Gianforte and described him as “a great guy, tough cookie” and “my kind of guy.”

As part of the legal settlement with Jacobs, Gianforte had to give \$50,000 to the Committee to Protect Journalists [CPJ]. According to Michael DeDora, CPJ Washington Advocacy Manager, the \$50,000 was used to create the U.S. Press Freedom Tracker, which tracks how many journalists are assaulted, arrested and subpoenaed every year.

Gianforte agreed to a 30-minute meeting with CPJ to talk about the incident in October, 2017 but the meeting was cut to seven minutes when Representative Gianforte was called away to vote, says DeDora. The remainder of the meeting, which DeDora says was difficult to schedule, was between Gianforte staff and CPJ. Representatives for CPJ reported that they didn’t get ample time to talk to Gianforte about how he could help protect the First Amendment and protect journalists.

“In the United States, people need to respect the role of the press,” DeDora says. “And we thought this was particularly important given that he was involved in a physical attack against a journalist, but also that he came into office at a time when the Trump administration had just come into office as well. And President Trump was using his Twitter account on a nearly daily basis to attack the press and [elevate] those attacks on the press.”

In a CPJ letter to Gianforte, the organization asked Gianforte to join the Congressional Caucus for Freedom of the Press, which was originally co-chaired by then-Rep. Mike Pence, and join the Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission. CPJ also asked Gianforte to speak about the importance of the press and to advocate for imprisoned journalists. According to DeDora, none of these requests were addressed by Gianforte, nor was CPJ able to schedule a follow-up meeting.

“We were asking him to raise cases of imprisoned journalists around the world, journalists who are very much like Ben Jacobs, who are working to try to bring information and truth to their communities,” DeDora says.

Since 2017, there have been 618 physical attacks on journalists, according to the U.S. Press Freedom Tracker, the system set up by the legal settlement. In 2017 there were 50 attacks recorded; in 2020, the number jumped to 441.

GIANFORTE IN CONGRESS

Gianforte remained Montana’s congressman after winning the 2018 election against former Bozeman State House Representative Kathleen Williams. In Congress, Gianforte’s top three policy areas were health, environmental protection and public lands and natural resources. Gianforte was involved with 114 bills in these areas versus ten bills involving economic and public finance and labor and employment.

While a member of Congress, and either the richest or the second-richest member with an estimated net worth of at least \$135 million, Gianforte paid his staff the lowest wages of any member of Congress. USA Today reported the median salary for a Gianforte staffer was \$35,925. By comparison, the highest median staff pay, for Rep. Mike Capuano (D-MA), was \$81,491.

As a congressman, Gianforte voted for Trump’s tax cut plan and supported congressional term limits, the Great American Outdoors Act and the Families First Coronavirus Response Act.

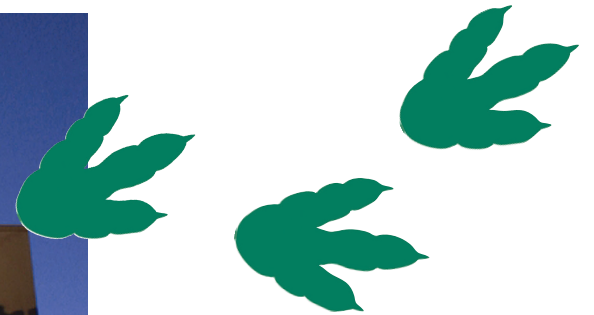
Two of Gianforte’s lone-sponsored bills were signed into law. HR 1972, which designated a Missoula post office as the “Jeannette Rankin Post Office Building” and HR 4645, the East Rosebud Wild and Scenic Rivers Act. He introduced 34 bills; 12 bills co-sponsored by Gianforte became law, including HR 4779, “To Extend the Undertaking Spam, Spyware, and Fraud Enforcement With Enforcers beyond Borders Act of 2006” and the CARES Act for Coronavirus Aid.

Gianforte opposed legislation for background checks for firearms, impeaching President Trump in 2019, and lowering the price of prescription drugs. A strong “Trumper,” Gianforte voted in line with Trump 93.3% of the time.

Continued on page 15.

MONTANA'S DINO TRAIL

TRACKING FOSSILS ACROSS THE STATE



THE OLD TRAIL MUSEUM

823 N. Main Ave.
Choteau, MT 59422
(406) 466-5332
oldtrailmuseum.org



The statewide Montana Dino Trail runs across Montana and consists of 14 locations from the Two Medicine Dinosaur Center in Bynum to the Carter County Museum in Ekalaka. Each location offers a glimpse at the historic discoveries in the state and provides visitors with a better understanding of the giants that once inhabited and ruled our planet for over 100 million years.

We know so little about dinosaurs and cannot simply drive down to the local zoo to study these massive creatures. Rather, we have to take a trip back in time and – piece by piece – put together their stories.

In Montana, we are privileged to host some of the richest dinosaur fossil finds in the world. Many renowned paleontologists work with new discoveries here in Montana every day. **Learn more by visiting all the stops on the Dino Trail!** The virtual Montana Dino Trail is always open and ready to explore online:

MTDINOTRAIL.ORG

MUSEUM OF THE ROCKIES

600 W. Kagy Blvd.
Bozeman, MT 59715
(406) 994-2251
museumoftherockies.org

Museum of the Rockies is a Smithsonian Affiliate and recognized as one of the world's finest research and history museums. **The museum houses the most T. rex specimens anywhere in the world.**

Notable exhibits include the growth series of Triceratops and Tyrannosaurus rex, the Montana's T. rex skeleton, the "Big Al" Allosaurus specimen, and many other one-of-a-kind dinosaur finds. MOR also offers rotating and traveling exhibits from around the world, permanent indoor and outdoor regional history exhibits, planetarium shows, and a museum store.

"Big Mike" or MOR 555, (pictured above) a Tyrannosaurus rex, was discovered in 1988 by Kathy Wonkle of Angela, Montana and greets visitors upon arrival.

In 1990, the specimen was excavated by the Museum of the Rockies paleontology crew under the leadership of Curator Jack Horner (retired). It was accessioned into the paleontology collections as MOR 555. Using a mold created directly from the bones, the skeleton was cast in bronze by Research Casting International of Ontario Canada in 2001, becoming the first life-size bronze T. rex in the world.

The cast measures 38 feet in length, stands 15 feet tall, and weighs 10,000 pounds. On October 3, 2001, the skeleton was dedicated to the memory of Dr. Michael P. Malone, 10th President of Montana State University from 1991 to 1999. Big Mike was a gift to Museum of the Rockies from its National Advisory Board and friends.



In 2013, the fossil bones used to make the cast were sent to the Smithsonian's National Museum of Natural History thanks to a 50-year loan from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. After the mount was completed, it was installed in the renovated dinosaur hall and a grand opening was held at the Smithsonian in 2019.

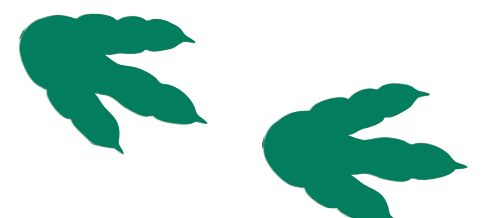
The Old Trail Museum is a non-profit organization that reflects the rich natural and cultural history of Montana's pristine Rocky Mountain Front region. Explore fossils, dinosaurs, Native American artifacts, grizzly bears, and the diverse and colorful local history within the Museum complex.

The museum's dinosaur antechamber showcases discoveries from the Two Medicine Formation. **The primary building displays a life-size Maiasaura alongside a mural of the natural environment from local artist Jim Utsler.** The museum's exhibits include Maiasaura and Einosaurus skulls, nestling, hatchling and adult Maiasaura skeletons and bones, and a Sauronitholestes skeleton cast.

A prep lab display and geologic information about the Rocky Mountain Front and Willow Creek Anticline provide additional information about the area and its rich paleontology heritage.

The museum provides visitors with hands-on education, and provides a "touch" bone for children and adults to gain a deeper understanding of these giants. The bone is a real fossilized dinosaur thigh bone from a duck-billed dinosaur.

The museum is open from Memorial Day weekend through Labor Day, Tuesday through Sunday 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. and closed on Mondays Admission is only \$2.00 each and children 3 and under are free.





*Life-size exhibit
of “Peck’s Rex” at
the Fork Peck
Interpretive Center*



DID YOU KNOW?

During the Cretaceous Period, a huge inland sea split the North American continent in two (pictured at right). This sea happened to run directly through what is now eastern Montana. The underwater sea life fossils displayed alongside the dinosaurs are not brought in from a distant location, but remnants of Montana's pre-historic history.

FORT PECK INTERPRETIVE CENTER

Lower Yellowstone Road
Fort Peck, MT 59223
(406) 526-3493
fws.gov/refuge/Charles_M_Russell/visit/visitor_activities/FPIC.html

The Fort Peck Interpretive Center's signature attraction is “Peck’s Rex,” one of the most complete Tyrannosaurus rex skeletons ever found.

In the main lobby visitors are greeted by a life size, fleshed-out model of Peck’s Rex, the Tyrannosaurus Rex discovered 20 miles southeast of Fort Peck. A skeleton cast of Peck’s Rex is on display in the exhibit hall.

A Cretaceous Sea display and several other dinosaur exhibits are also highlighted. Other dinosaur exhibits include a Cretaceous Sea display and a Struthiomimus display featuring one of the fastest dinosaurs discovered to date.



FRONTIER GATEWAY MUSEUM

201 State St.
Glendive, MT 59330
(406) 377-8168
frontiergatewaymuseum.org

Frontier Gateway Museum is the official Dawson County museum, located in the heart of the Hell Creek Formation which is rich in Cretaceous fossil remains.

The museum displays a full-size skeleton cast of “Margie,” the Struthiomimus, a dinosaur with long legs built for sprinting, a long curved neck, a small head which had a toothless birdlike beak, strong arms with curved claws on its fingertips and a long stiff tail that acted as a counter-weight to keep its balance and prevent it from falling over. The skeleton was found in the Glendive area in the early 1990s. Like many of the dinosaurs found in Montana, the Struthiomimus lived about 75 million years ago during the Cretaceous period. This dinosaur was capable of reaching speeds of up to 50 miles per hour. With long legs and ostrich-like features, this species was aptly named ‘struthion’ meaning ostrich and ‘mimus’ meaning mimic.

Other fossils are from Stegoceras, meaning “roof lizard,” a small plant-eating dinosaur with a large, thick-skulled head. Triceratops, Thescelosaurus and hadrosaurs as well as aquatic and plant fossils are also on display.

A Baenid Turtle display features an extinct river turtle native to North America which has been found in rock formations known as the Hell Creek area. A group of turtles on display survived the 65 million year old meteorite impact that wiped out the dinosaurs. New to the collection is the jaw of a young mammoth that includes two teeth.



THE FORT PECK AREA

DAM AND POWERPLANT MUSEUM

This museum walks visitors through the history of building the Fort Peck Dam, which is one of the world's largest earth-filled dams, and provides tours of the Fort Peck Dam powerplant.

HISTORIC THEATRE

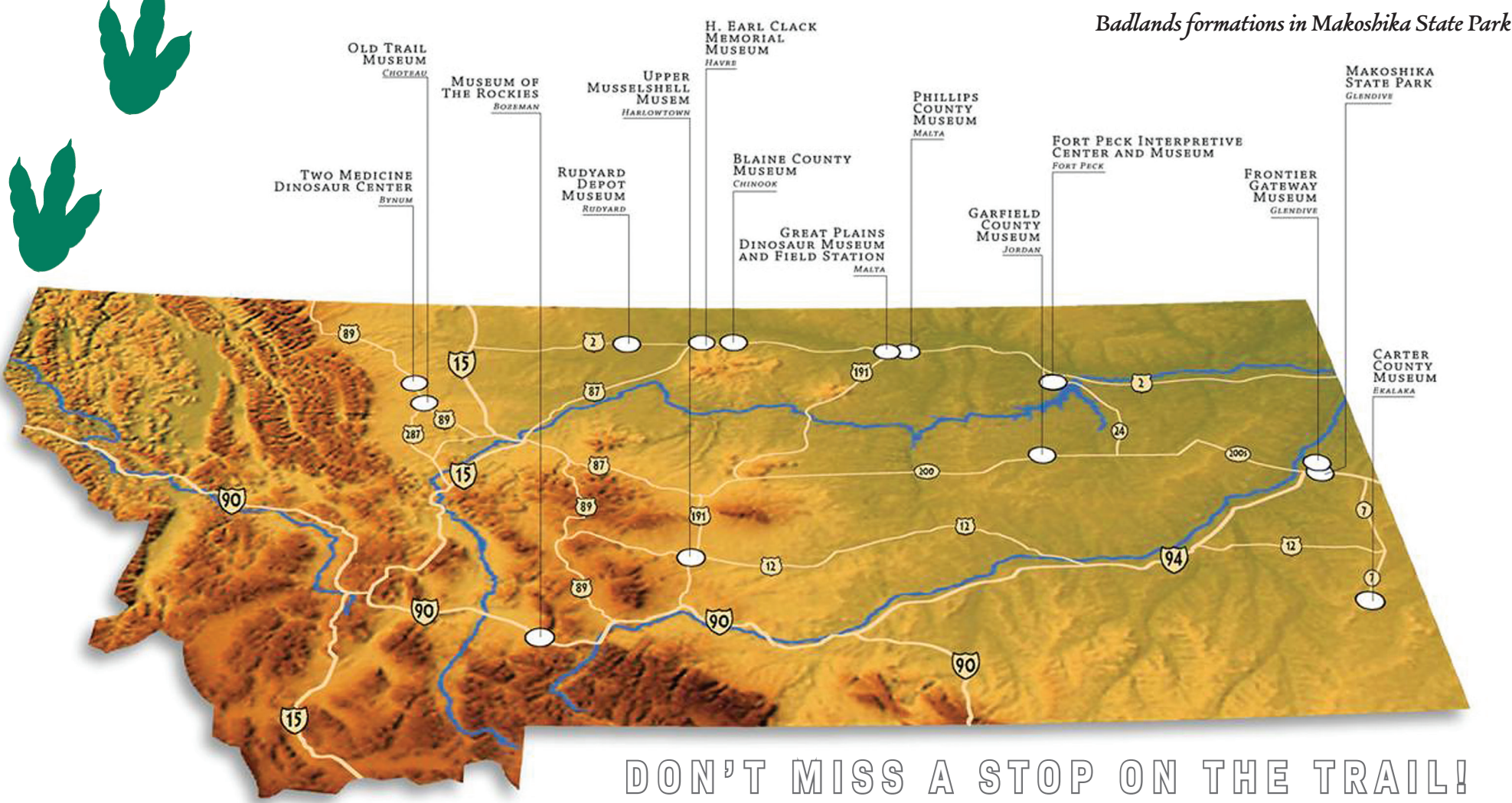
The Fort Peck Theatre was built as a temporary structure in 1934 to serve as a movie theatre, an amenity for the 50,000 U.S. Army Corps of Engineers workers and their families at the Fort Peck Dam project. The space now houses a summer theatre troupe performing multiple shows on a rotating schedule.

For a calendar of performance dates, visit **FortPeckTheatre.org**.

FORT PECK LAKE

Fort Peck Lake stretches 134 miles and offers “big water” recreation opportunities, including fishing, boating, camping, and exploration.





DON'T MISS A STOP ON THE TRAIL!

In the Area

The Glendive Dinosaur and Fossil Museum is NOT a member of the Montana Dinosaur Trail. The facility, which sits beside the Frontier Gateway Museum in Glendive, bases its exhibits on a biblical rather than scientific context.

MAKOSHIKA STATE PARK

1301 Snyder Avenue
Glendive, MT 59330
406-377-6256
stateparks.mt.gov/makoshika/

Makoshika State Park is located just south-east of Glendive. Makoshika means “bad land” in Lakota, and the park’s landscape is part of the late Cretaceous Hell Creek Formation. **Over ten different dinosaur species have been discovered in Makoshika. Significant discoveries include a complete Triceratops horridus skull, the fossil remains of Edmontosaurus and Tyrannosaurus rex, and a nearly complete skeleton of the rare Thescelosaurus.**

Makoshika is Montana’s largest state park; the land has been set aside for visitors to enjoy, offering camping, hiking, and a vast collection of history. The recently refurbished visitor center houses the Triceratops skull, and provides additional interpretive displays significant to the badlands.



DID YOU KNOW?

The Hell Creek Formation is rich in dinosaur fossils, and has led to many of the world’s most important discoveries in the field. In Makoshika alone in eastern Montana, nine species of dinosaurs have been discovered, and there are more remains to be found. As the wind, rain, snowfall, etc. continue to disrupt the landscape and erode the sandstone, more fossils will show themselves.

CARTER COUNTY MUSEUM

306 N. Main St.
Ekalaka, MT 59324
(406) 775-6886
cartercountymuseum.org/

The Carter County Museum was Montana’s first county museum and the first to display dinosaurs found in the state of Montana.

Ekalaka has been at the epicenter of dinosaur discoveries for the past 100 years, and is continuing to be a source of scientific discovery.

The Lambert Room, dedicated to paleontology displays, includes exhibits of a mounted Anatotitan copei skeleton (one of only a few nearly complete skeletons of this species), as well as a complete Triceratops skull. In addition, the badlands in the area have produced pachycephalosaurs, plesiosaurs, ankylosaurs, pterosaurs (this is the only known specimen from the Hell Creek Formation), mosasaurs, and the most complete juvenile T. rex.

The museum has mounts and casts of each of these species, along with other authentic dinosaur bones.

DID YOU KNOW?

The giant hadrosaur on display in the Carter County Museum is one of about five specimen found in the United States. This display, along with the two hadrosaurs housed at the American Museum of Natural History in New York City, were found approximately 30 miles west of Ekalaka.





A mummy, though most often referred to in the Egyptian context, simply means that the soft parts of a dead animal have been preserved. “Leonardo,” the “mummy dinosaur,” is one of only a handful of mummified specimen. “Leonardo’s” fossilized remains are covered in soft tissue allowing paleontologists to study its skin, scales, muscles, and even its final meal. This find has helped paleontologists “flesh out” and better understand what Brachylophosaurus actually looked like when it was alive.

GREAT PLAINS DINOSAUR MUSEUM AND FIELD STATION

405 North 1st St. East
Malta, MT 59538
(406) 654-5300
greatplainsdinosaurs.org

Located in the heart of dinosaur country, the museum features many fossils, including those of plants, invertebrates, fish, turtles, crocodiles, and a variety of Jurassic and Cretaceous dinosaur species.

Among the dinosaur fossils are Triceratops, Stegosaurus, Camarasaurus, a horned dinosaur called Maltaceratops, a new and as yet unnamed species of raptor dinosaur, and several remarkably preserved hadrosaurs (the duck-billed dinosaurs) – including juvenile and adult specimen.

The most recognized exhibit is that of “Leonardo,” a mummified duck-bill Brachylophosaurus canadensis.

Field digs and education programs are offered for both adults and children throughout the summer where adherence to the Society of Vertebrate Paleontology Code of Ethics is required.

DEPOT MUSEUM

25 4th Ave. NW
Rudyard, MT 59540
(406) 355-4356
mtdinotrail.org/depot-museum

For years, the Rudyard area has been providing dinosaur specimens for the Museum of the Rockies and other premier institutions.

The Depot’s signature display is the “Oldest Sorehead,” which is a fully articulated Gryposaurus found in the area. The facility’s lifelike duck-billed dinosaur (Maiasaura specimen) and egg nest display places visitors right next to these ancient creatures. The museum also offers other permanent and changing dinosaur exhibits. Paleontologists are continuing work in the area, adding to the museum’s fossil collection.

Along with several local artifacts, arrowheads, dino vertebrae and teeth, there are displays of Maiasaura, Troodon, Tarasaurus, and the noted Gryposaurus.

H. EARL CLACK MEMORIAL MUSEUM

1753 US Highway 2 NW, Spc 1
Havre, MT 59501
(406) 265-4000
hearlclackmuseum.org

The museum displays 75- million-year-old dinosaur eggs and embryos found in local exposures of the Judith River Formation. Research suggests these eggs were laid by a kind of lambeosaur (a “duck-bill” dinosaur) along the banks of an ancient river and estuary of the Bearpaw Sea that once covered this area.

“Stygi,” a skull cast of the rare Stygomoloch (a species of pachycephalosaur) and an Albertosaurus head mask are also displayed. **The famed archeological treasure, the Wahnka Chu’gn Buffalo Jump Site, is adjacent to the museum.**

BLAINE COUNTY MUSEUM

501 Indiana St.
Chinook, MT 59523
(406) 357-2590
blainecountymuseum.com

The museum’s Paleontology Department has numerous exhibits with findings from the Judith River Formation. These exhibits feature hadrosaur, Gorgosaurus, and ankylosaur fossils discovered in the area.

In addition, the museum displays gigantic marine reptiles, mosasaur and plesiosaur, as well as invertebrates that lived in the ancient ocean that covered this landscape 75-500 million years ago.

The “Look, Touch, and Wonder” room offers visitors the opportunity to handle fossils of sea creatures, plants, and dinosaurs that roamed the earth millions of years ago.



DID YOU KNOW?

Scientists are continuing to make groundbreaking discoveries in the field, like the discovery of embryos. In 1991, Mary Schweitzer, a Helena native and Doctor of Paleontology, discovered the existence of not only blood vessel-like structures, but of actual blood cells in a T. rex specimen that lived 66 million years ago. Each discovery that is made brings us one step closer to understanding these prehistoric creatures and the former inhabitants of the place we call home.

OLD SOREHEAD LIVES!

Rudyard: population 596 nice people and one old sorehead. This designation is a tradition of the town, which now elects an “Old Sorehead,” supposedly the grumpiest man in town. On election day, the town rallies together for a community celebration raising funds for the old folk’s home and casting their votes for the town’s Oldest Sorehead.



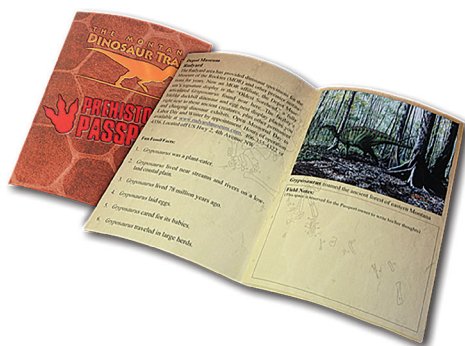
PHILLIPS COUNTY MUSEUM

431 US Highway 2 East
Malta, MT 59538
(406) 654-1037
phillipscountymuseum.org

The Phillips County Museum provides visitors with discoveries from the nearby Judith River Formation.

Seventy-seven million years ago, this formation stood as the bank of a shallow, warm inland sea, which created the perfect habitat for dinosaurs and resulted in a rich deposit of fossils.

While visiting the museum, meet “Elvis” (above) the 33-foot-long Brachylophosaurus fossil which is one of the best articulated skeletons ever found. An Albertosaurus poses to greet visitors upon arrival. Other interesting fossils on display include a 700-pound Apatosaurus femur for visitors to take pictures with and a variety of activities for children. The underwater sea area contains a 4x4-foot crinoid plate, along with various other fossils and a gift shop.



Visit all the stops on the Dino Trail with a “Prehistoric Passport” and get the passport stamped at each location. Montana Dinosaur Trail Finishers earn a t-shirt and recognition from the Montana Dino Trail on social media.

Find more information about Montana’s Dinosaur trail online at:

MTDINOTRAIL.ORG

All photo credits are to the Montana Department of Tourism and all information is courtesy of the Montana Dinosaur Trail.

MONTANA PALEONTOLOGY TOP TEN +

10. Wyrex, discovered in 2004 in Fallon County, Montana, was the first T. rex to have a complete third metatarsal. A cast of the specimen is on display at the Carter County Museum.

9. The most complete juvenile T. rex was found in Carter County, Montana, in 2001. A cast of the specimen is on display at the Carter County Museum in Ekalaka, Montana.

8. “Elvis”, a nearly complete and articulated hadrosaur was found near Malta, Montana in 1994. It was named for the Rock-n-Roll Legend because its hip was found first. The 33-foot long Brachylophosaurus fossil is on display at Malta’s Phillips County Museum and Museum of the Rockies in Bozeman.

7. The Museum of the Rockies in Bozeman, Montana has the world’s largest collection of T. rex and Triceratops specimen.

6. Montana’s first county museum was created in 1936 to display dinosaur remains found in Carter County by amateur paleontologists. The Carter County Museum is in Ekalaka, Montana.

5. “Montana’s T. rex,” found near Fort Peck Lake in 1997, is one of the most complete T. rex specimen ever discovered. A cast of the specimen is on display at the Fort Peck Interpretive Center in Fort Peck, Montana, and the real skeleton is displayed at the Museum of the Rockies in Bozeman, Montana.

4. “Leonardo,” the “mummy” Brachylophosaurus, found in 2001 near Malta, Montana, with the majority of its body covered in fossilized skin, is recognized by the Guinness Book of World Records as the best preserved dinosaur ever found. A cast of the specimen is on display at the Great Plains Dinosaur Museum in Malta.

3. North America’s first baby dinosaur bones were found in 1978 near Choteau, Montana at Egg Mountain. They are now displayed at the nearby Two Medicine Dinosaur Center in Bynum, Montana.

2. The world’s first identified T. rex was found in the Hell Creek area near Jordan, MT, in 1902 by paleontologist Barnum Brown.

1. North America’s first identified dinosaur remains were found in Montana in 1854, near Judith Landing in the Missouri River Breaks National Monument. Naturalist Ferdinand Hayden found the remains of what paleontologist Joseph Leidy attributed to a duck-billed dinosaur called “Trachodon.” ★

MONTANA SPOTLIGHT

Gianforte's Rise in Montana Politics

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 10)

2020 CAMPAIGN

With two statewide victories under his belt, Gianforte decided to try for the governorship again in 2020. In June of 2019, he announced the “Montana Comeback Plan,” which focused on the economy, bringing business to Montana, healthcare, and protecting the “Montana way of life.”

As with his past electoral contests, Gianforte was willing and able to massively self-finance his campaign for governor. For the 2020 election, Gianforte donated more than \$7.5 million to his own campaign, his largest amount to date.

Democratic gubernatorial nominee Mike Cooney says he knew he’d be up against Gianforte before the primary votes were counted. With a history in Montana politics that dates to the 1970s, Cooney, a Butte native, says he ran for governor because he believes the government’s job is to help its citizens during the good and bad times.

Cooney says he and Gianforte’s opposing views included Gianforte’s statements about government being an “impediment.”

“I really believe that people want to work; they want to do good things; they want to support their family,” Cooney says. “Government can’t do everything and government doesn’t have all the answers, but the government can play a role that can be very productive.”

Cooney notes that the 2020 campaign was unlike any other modern campaign as the country was in the thick of the Covid pandemic and he, like many candidates, had to adjust their ideas of campaigning and find creative ways to reach voters while protecting the health of his staff and other Montanans.

Public health and safety actions, such as wearing masks, also became politicized.

“People were getting tired of it,” Cooney says. “And our administration [under Governor Bullock] had to be the ones in charge and make some tough decisions, which some people very much supported, other people didn’t.”

While Cooney and fellow Democrats hosted more virtual and “drive-in” events to ensure social distancing, many Republican candidates continued to hold traditional face-to-face events and campaigning that did not follow CDC safety guidelines. Cooney says that this gave Republicans and some voters a more familiar campaign setting, but not without a risk.

For example, in July, 2020, Kimberly Guilfoyle, girlfriend of Donald Trump, Jr., tested positive for Covid after attending an event in Montana and multiple Republican candidates had to quarantine due to exposure.

When the pandemic became political, Cooney says the safety of voters became a priority for him.

“Every time I talked to one of my colleagues I’d say, ‘So what do you guys do?’ Because everybody was scrambling to try to figure out how to do this during the middle of a pandemic when we’re asking people not to be out and not to be around other people and to be very careful,” Cooney says. “And if you believed in the science, you performed, you did things differently.”

Cooney also had to prepare to go up against Gianforte’s vast personal wealth in the campaign. While Cooney said that he and other Democrats were expecting Gianforte’s large contributions, they were surprised that Montanans were not more fazed by the Congressman’s millions of dollars of personal campaign spending.

“We just figured that it would be something

we could account for later in the campaign,” Cooney says. “And I don’t know that we were ever able to do that.”

With the pandemic and an all-mail-in election, Cooney says voting became easier for Montanans. In 2020, voter turnout in Montana was 81%, compared to 74% in 2016 and 72% in 2012.

Even though Cooney lost, and by a wide margin (about 13 percentage points), he made it clear that Montanans made their choice for governor and that he will respect that choice.

“I’m not going to be one of those people who say, ‘I’m just going to ignore the will of the people and that it was just fake news,’” Cooney says. “The election was a fair election.”

At Gianforte’s Grace Bible Church, a blog titled, “What to do when an election doesn’t go your way?” was published after the 2020 election. The blog posed the question, “But what if I believe that an election was indeed fraudulent even if the legal system says differently?”

A Grace Bible Church blog from earlier in 2020 addressed Governor Bullock’s COVID-19 mask mandate. The church’s leaders decided to follow the mandate, but also made their political preferences clear, stating:

“Many of us also could find agreement in that by submitting to Governor Bullock’s mandate that attendees of places of worship wear masks, we [GBC] are lending some support to the Governor, his liberal agenda, and the agenda of the increasingly radicalized democratic [sic.] party.”

VOTER FRAUD CLAIMS

Despite there being no evidence of significant voter fraud in the 2020 elections, Congressman Gianforte was one of 126 House Republicans to challenge the presidential election results in a State of Texas legal action in December of 2020. This was one of Gianforte’s final official acts in national office. The U.S. Supreme Court unanimously rejected the suit, essentially ending Trump’s effort to overturn the election through the courts.

“Trump explicitly promised to protect Christianity, to protect evangelicals and their interests,” says history professor Kristin Du Mez. “Conservative evangelicals say that’s exactly what he did, and they’re not wrong.”

When asked if it’s possible for evangelicals to separate church and state, Dr. Du Mez concludes that, while such separation is technically possible, it “goes against their belief system.”

“He’s in pretty deep,” Du Mez concludes of Governor Gianforte. “He is using his vast resources to promote... his religious values as he understands them.”

According to recent research from Dartmouth, Princeton, and the University of Utah, unfounded claims of election fraud from Trump and his allies significantly undermine faith in the American elections system, especially among voters who support Trump.

“Unsubstantiated voter fraud claims undermine confidence in elections, particularly when the claims are politically congenial, and... their effects cannot easily be mitigated by fact-checking,” say the authors of a recent study, suggesting that a scorched earth, ends-justifies-the-means approach to winning elections could severely damage American democracy.

Mike Cooney says he believes that for a guy who likes animal trophies scattered throughout his office, the governor’s chair is likely a trophy for Greg Gianforte.

“I think but he’s got to be pretty happy that this is, you know, one that he can put on the wall,” says Cooney. “I never viewed winning the governor’s office as something that I had to do in order to complete my resume. I always

viewed it as something I wanted to do in order to continue to work with the people of Montana, make Montana a better state, make it a better state for future generations. And, you know, I just didn’t have the chance. And that’s okay.”

THE COMEBACK PLAN

For the first time in 16 years, Montana has a Republican governor and a Republican majority in the legislature. Although he lost the election to Joe Biden, Donald Trump and his politics have had a deep impact in Montana, even after the long battle culminating with the Capitol Insurrection on January 6th of this year.

According to Gallup, 81% of white evangelical Protestants voted for Trump in 2020 and “about one-fourth of all voters were White evangelical Christians.”

The most recent polling data indicates that despite the lack of evidence, at least 30% of Republicans continue to believe more votes were cast for Trump than for Biden. And among Republicans Trump remains by far the most popular candidate for President in 2024.

“Within this ‘us versus them’ worldview, it is assumed that God is on your side, and you are on God’s side,” says Du Mez. “And so anything you do is really justified because you are on the side of what is right and, and on the other side are people who are out to get you, who are out to get God’s truth, who are out to destroy America.”

“The reality is that this [conservative evangelical attitude] is not even representative of most Christians,” says Travis McAdam of the Montana Human Rights Network. “I think there are a lot of folks out there at the community level that are really upset that their values and what they care about doesn’t seem to be accepted and valued at the legislature, during committee hearings, in those policy arenas, because the [Montana] Family Foundation and those types of groups have sort of staked out that territory as being theirs.”

The “Montana Comeback Plan” that Gianforte promoted during his 2020 campaign included various plans to bring high-paying jobs to Montana, including plans to support scholarships for mechanical jobs and an investment in marketing to bring new business to the state. In June of 2021, Governor Gianforte controversially acted to end the federal, covid-prompted expansion of unemployment benefits and replaced them with a \$1,200 return-to-work bonus.

Gianforte’s Comeback Plan also pledged to protect indigenous women and as governor he has signed two bills to address the problem of Montana’s missing and murdered indigenous people. The new governor also signed three bills restricting abortion access as part of his plan to “protect and promote the family.” One of the new laws requires individuals seeking levonorgestrel, which helps to prevent pregnancy, to receive it in person rather through telehealth, despite Gianforte’s advocacy of expanding telehealth for rural Montanans.

The new governor also signed a bill banning transgender students from playing sports outside their birth-assigned gender. Anti-transgender actions were not discussed in Gianforte’s Comeback Plan. The Gianforte Family Foundation, however, continues to donate to political organizations that lobby the state legislature and the public with anti-transgender messaging.

With a track record of over 20 years in the spotlight in Montana, businessman-turned-politician Greg Gianforte will likely continue to use his vast fortune to fund his political ventures and his ideology in the state for years to come. With his financial resources, and the support of well-heeled backers and the state GOP, Gianforte can afford to purchase significant levels of personal data and marketing and branding that

At Gianforte’s Grace Bible Church,

a blog titled, “What to do when an

election doesn’t go your way?” was

published after the 2020 election. The

blog posed the question, “But what if

I believe that an election was indeed

fraudulent even if the legal system

says differently?”

may often masquerade as objective content, further muddying public perceptions). He also can afford to ignore “unfriendly” media, dismiss unwanted questions from journalists, and perhaps even live above the law.

Michael DeDora, Washington Advocacy Manager for CPJ, says in the era of Trump branding the media as “fake” and attacking reporters through social media, similar types of behavior are trickling into state and local government. Gianforte’s 2017 victory in a statewide election following his physical assault on a journalist shows that people are willing to overlook violence, and, in a real sense, deem violence toward journalists acceptable. This puts every journalist at risk.

“It’s important to also realize that the attack against Ben Jacobs was happening in the context of an administration and a president who, on a daily basis, were attacking the media and delegitimizing their role in American democratic society, such that they were reducing the amount of trust that people had in news sources and in journalists,” DeDora says. “And this leads to a situation where people start to dismiss serious, accurate news reporting because of the fact that the politician that they like, or the political party that they belong to, has said something critical or nasty about that news source.”

Looking back four years after Gianforte’s assault of Ben Jacobs, DeDora wonders how different the relationship between the press and politicians would be if Gianforte had given more than seven minutes of his time (to his meeting with CPJ) and could “use his platform to take accountability and articulate why we need the press in order to defend democracy and human rights.”

“It’s really difficult to look back now and think ‘how different would the landscape be?’ But there were very few Republicans during the Trump administration who were willing to speak out in defense of the press,” DeDora says.

Rob Quist says it’s crucial for Montanans to study issues prior to the next elections and find reliable news sources.

“My mother was a very wise woman; she made a statement to me very early in my life that I kept thinking about during the campaign,” Quist says. “And that phrase was very simple, ‘Consider the source.’” ★

—MACKENZIE DEXTER
info@montanapress.net

In the course of nearly six months, MacKenzie Dexter reached out to over 250 individuals who are or have been connected to Gianforte, including grade school friends, former coaches, teachers, co-workers, employees and employers - even young people who attended the school he helped create and bankroll, Petra Academy. Greg Gianforte never returned requests for comments. To view the full series in five parts including this summary, visit MontanaPress.net.

WE RECOMMEND...

STATEWIDE ENTERTAINMENT LISTINGS

Music, Performances and Events Across Montana

The monthly calendar is a sampling of events and activities across the state. All events listed are subject to change. Send event updates to: info@montanapress.net for consideration. Contact (406) 370-1492 for details.



IMAGINE IRELAND - MISSOULA

Traditional Irish music circle
Thursdays at 5 p.m. at
Imagine Nation Brewing in
Missoula. For info:
ImagineNationBrewing.com.



SHAKESPEARE IN THE PARKS

Across Montana, Wyoming, Idaho and other points west, a professional traveling theatre troupe still performs Shakespeare's classics. Performances of "A Midsummer Night's Dream" and "Cymbeline" are staged in venues from town centers to parks, county courthouse lawns and university campuses. All performances are free. "A Midsummer Night's Dream" is scheduled for such venues as Arch Park in Gardiner on Aug. 14, Main Street Green in Whitehall on Aug. 15 and Stodden Park in Butte on Sept. 2. Performances of "Cymbeline" are scheduled for venues such as Silver Gate Park in Silver Gate on Aug. 13, the Double Arrow in Seeley Lake on August 16, Cut Bank City Park on Aug. 17 and the Castle Museum in White Sulphur Springs on Aug. 31.

Full tour listings for the summer can be found at ShakespeareInTheParks.org.



LANEY LOU AND THE BIRD DOGS

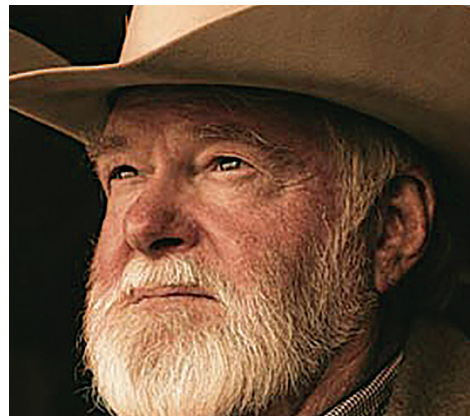
Montana's homegrown stomp-grass folk band, Laney Lou and the Bird Dogs play traditional folk, blues, and country tunes. Touring the state in late summer:

Thurs., Aug. 19 at Music in the Mountains in Big Sky, Sat., Aug. 21 at Lewis and Clark Brewing in Helena, Fri., Sept. 3 at the Great Northern in Whitefish and Fri., Sept. 10 at Love Field in Bozeman with the Ryan Acker Trio. For info: LaneyLouandtheBirdDogs.com.



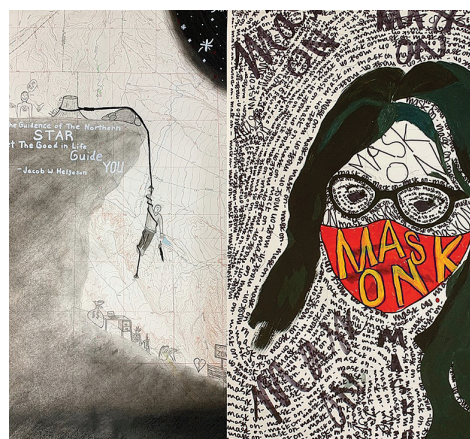
THE PARTICULARLY RENICULOUS VARIETY SHOW

Nicholas Rogers, Eric Anton, and a slew of other local Billings comics come take on all bystanders and onlookers for heavy laughs and deep groans. On Fridays Aug. 20 and Sept. 17 at Kirk's Grocery in Billings. For info: KirksGrocery.com.



COWBOY POETRY GATHERING - LEWISTOWN -

The 36th Annual Montana Cowboy Poetry Gathering and Western Music Rendezvous, the second-oldest cowboy poetry gathering in the country just one year behind the National Cowboy Poetry Gathering in Elko, Nevada returns to Lewistown on Aug. 12 and features Red Steagall in a Grand Stage Show on Aug. 14. For more info: MontanaCowboyPoetryGathering.com.



"RESILIENCE THROUGH REPRESENTATION" - MISSOULA

How did young people experience COVID-19? With this question in mind, the Historical Museum at Fort Missoula worked with local Indigenous artists to hold workshops for youth at the Zootown Arts in the spring of 2021. As the products of these workshops, these pieces of art in this exhibit highlight the experience of young community members during the pandemic. For info: ZootownArts.org.



HARLO MUSIC PROJECT STREET FESTIVAL

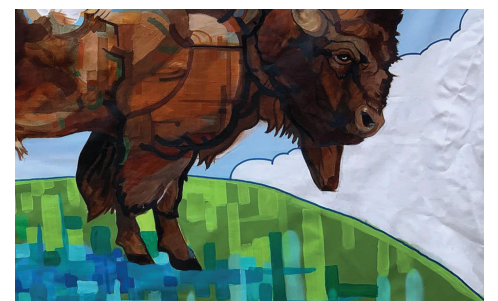
The second installment of this twice-annual festival is on tap for Main Street in Harlowton on Sat., Aug. 14 featuring music from American Aquarium and The Band of Heathens, The Vegabonds, El Wencho, Milton Menasco & the Big Fiasco, 100 Proofalong with food vendors, activities and more. Gates open at 2:30 p.m. For info: HarloMusicProject.com



"EXTRACTION MT" - HELENA

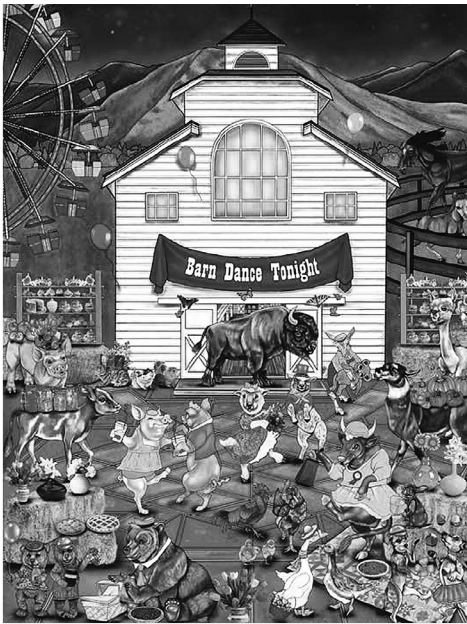
A multimedia, multi-venue, cross-border art "intervention" which seeks "to provoke societal change by exposing and interrogating the negative social and environmental consequences of industrialized natural resource extraction."

Now on exhibit the Holter Museum of Art and including nearly fifty overlapping performances, installations, site-specific work, land art, street art, publications, poetry readings, and cross-media events throughout 2021 and beyond. For info: HolterMuseum.org.



"CONFLUENCE" - HELENA

Gina and Louis Still Smoking of Browning are exhibiting together at the Jailhouse Gallery in The Myrna Loy from Aug. 16 to Oct. 4. The show is titled "Confluence: Indigenous couple devoted to carrying on the tradition of art together." For info: TheMyrnaLoy.com



WESTERN MONTANA FAIR - MISSOULA -

Featuring exhibits, rides, and live music with Dan Dubuque, Wailing Aaron Jennings, MarchFourth Marching Band, Hardwood Heart, Flash Panda, Sho-Down, The Rage, Vigilante Code, Milltown Damn and Reverend Slanky. Events at the Missoula County Fairgrounds run from Aug. 11 through Aug. 15. For info: MissoulaFairgrounds.com.



MUSIC IN THE PARK GREAT FALLS LIBRARY

Live music on summer evenings in the Great Falls Library Park at 7 p.m. including Hodges and Hodges on Tues., Aug. 10 and John Floridis on Tues., Aug. 17. For info: GreatFallsLibrary.org.



SUMMER JAM - GREAT FALLS

The Downtown Summer Jam concert series returns to Great Falls for Summer 2021. Festivities are held downtown on the corner of Central Avenue and 5th Street with music, dancing, food and brews. Country rocker Chris Bandi takes the outdoor stage on Wed., Aug. 11 and singer/songwriter Jackson Dean performs on Wed., Aug. 25. For info: ExploreDowntownGF.com.



CYPRESS HILL - MISSOULA

Hip hop mainstays Atmosphere and Cypress Hill will co-headline the KettleHouse Amphitheater in Missoula with DJ Z-Trip on Wed., Aug. 25. For info: KettlehouseAmpitheater.com.

THE SPRINGS AT PHILIPSBURG BREWERY

Live music on an outside stage throughout the spring and summer in Philipsburg including:
Fri., Aug. 13 - Mudslide Charleys - blues
Fri., Aug. 20 - Leia Sky - vocalist
Sat., Aug. 21 - Joel Corda - rock
Fri., Aug. 27 - Chad Ball - folk
Sat., Aug. 28 - Christy Hays - country/rock
Also featuring live music every Sunday afternoon.
PhilipsburgBrewingCompany.com.

OUT & ABOUT

ASLEEP AT THE WHEEL BACK IN MONTANA



Longtime Texas swing band Asleep At The Wheel has a new *Better Times* EP (Bismieux Records), a 50th anniversary double vinyl album on the horizon in addition. They're also currently touring and have another album slated for 2023. The band will swing through Montana this August, making stops in Livingston at Pine Creek Lodge on August 21 and in Billings at the Pub Station on August 22.

For singer and founding member Ray Benson, a burst of productivity arrived after surviving coronavirus. Benson spoke with *Montana Press* recently about his experiences during the pandemic and about looking to the future.

MONTANA PRESS: You were diagnosed with Covid-19 in March, 2020. How bad did it get?

RAY BENSON: I was never in danger of dying. I was never in the hospital. It was a mild case; it was not as bad as a bad flu but certainly nothing that you'd want to go through again. I was bed ridden for about a week and then sick for about two weeks. Then the recovery was long-term, it was a few months before you felt you were getting back to normal. I got vaccinated and everything seems fine. But I was very fortunate.

MP: Did you do much songwriting after recovering?

BENSON: I did a ton of it. That was good because there were no shows. The other good news is the studio is at my house. For the band members who didn't want to be close to other people we had separate entrances to rooms. So we were able to record.

Then we did this reunion record of the original members and alumni. We sent tracks to everywhere from Australia to Vermont to California to Nashville to Canada to Rome, Italy and had our folks overdub their parts. So we wrote a bunch of stuff and recorded a bunch of stuff.

MP: Did the pandemic give you a greater appreciation for music and life in general?

BENSON: Well, yeah! Mostly it showed the world there are other ways to skin a cat. I think that was the big thing. I have been living my life the same way literally for 48 years. And I was dedicated to it. And to suddenly have almost nine months to a year where you have none of that responsibility—the responsibility of leaving home, leaving family, leaving everything—it was wonderful to sit in one place.

MP: How have you evolved as an artist from when you first started to where you are now?

BENSON: Well I got a lot better. As a guitarist, as a singer, as a songwriter I've learned a whole lot. I'm very proud of the stuff I did in 1971 and 1972. I don't need to diminish that at all but I'm very fortunate my voice gets better as I get older.

MP: Did the *Better Times* EP come together fairly quickly?



BENSON: Yeah. I wrote a song and got the guys and gals together to record it. Thankfully the pandemic is winding down to a reasonable level at this point. And this says it all, this is what it is all about. We're going to get together in better times and here come the better times. It was so appropriate for the time. It would've been a shame to wait for the fall to put it out.

MP: What can fans expect at the upcoming Montana shows?

BENSON: We'll just be out there doing 50 years of Asleep At The Wheel music and it's a great, great group and there are different people joining the group all over the summer from various tenures in the band. It'll be fun. It will be great to get back.

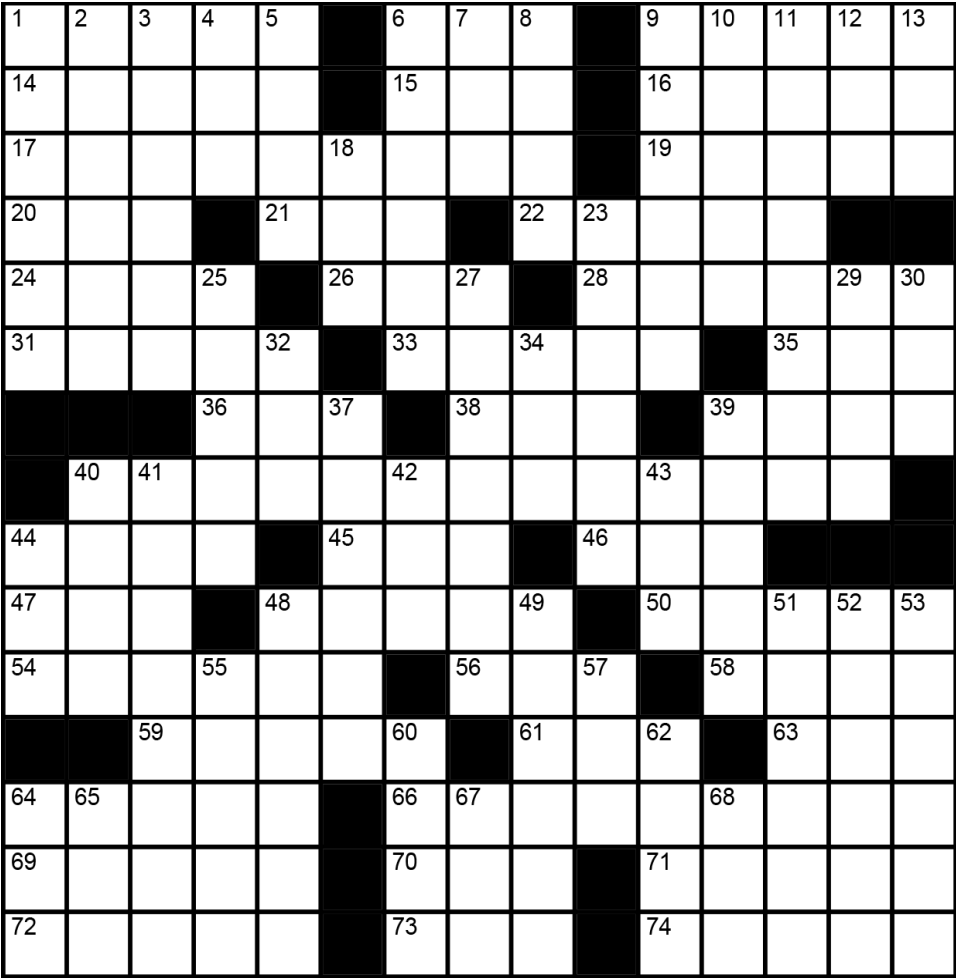
MP: Do you have any fond memories about performing in Montana?

BENSON: We've played every big town and every little town in Montana. Going back we played Billings with [Bob] Dylan 15 years ago. We played in Gardiner at the park [Yellowstone National Park]. When the park employees got paid we'd play big parties there. And with some good friends of mine, The Mission Mountain Wood Band, Terry [Robinson] and those guys. I remember playing a concert of theirs before the plane crash. Those are some of my early memories of playing up by Flat-head Lake.

MP: You have your own exhibition at the Texas Music Gallery at Texas State University. How do you feel about that?

BENSON: I donated our archives to their museum and they said, 'We're going to do an exhibit.' I said, 'Really, oh wow!' So I sent them my motorcycle, a bunch of guitars and the clothes I wore in movies and on stage. The most interesting thing was I sent them all the calendars I had from 1972 until we got computers. They're really informative for a baby band because it showed how much we made, what the clubs were, who we played with, the insane routing you did back then to make it. They digitized all that. They did an incredible job. ★

—JASON MACNEIL



JONESIN' CROSSWORDS

“Free Game!”

It's themeless time again.

ACROSS

- 1 Deceptive maneuver
- 6 Wine bar choice
- 9 Bolivia's constitutional capital
- 14 Singer Lennox
- 15 Zamboni surface
- 16 Thees and ____
- 17 *Oldest of the five original MTV VJs, and host of the KISS “unmasking” special
- 19 Gridiron kicks
- 20 “Next one’s on me”
- 21 “Bali ____” (“South Pacific” song)
- 22 A long time
- 24 “Pericles, Prince of ____”
- 26 Angry Birds box that goes boom
- 28 *American Samoa village which is home to the territory’s only movie theater
- 31 Until this moment
- 33 “Monty Python and the Holy ____”
- 35 “Robin Hood: ____ in Tights”
- 36 Elephant-snatching bird of myth
- 38 Amazed acronym in chats
- 39 News station
- 40 Track and field athletes during the Tokyo Olympics (and a hint to the starred theme answers)
- 44 T as in testing?
- 45 “Hazy” beer variety
- 46 Installation in a bar, maybe

- 47 Line up a cornhole bag
- 48 Goes around
- 50 Game with numbered balls
- 54 *1997 Hanson chart-topper
- 56 Word before cow or horse
- 58 Prison film weapon
- 59 “We Have the Meats” advertiser
- 61 Big flightless bird
- 63 Carbon compound suffix
- 64 Harmon of “Rizzoli & Isles”
- 66 *Program you might use in a smartphone emulator (otherwise, they’d run on their own)
- 69 “____ say more?”
- 70 Get the picture
- 71 Missile monitoring gp.
- 72 Air Force student
- 73 Possessed
- 74 Final Oldsmobile model

DOWN

- 1 Tex-Mex offering
- 2 Takes pleasure in
- 3 Harm
- 4 “Boyz N the Hood” actress Long
- 5 Silicon Valley industry, briefly
- 6 Ascendant
- 7 “Foucault’s Pendulum” author Umberto
- 8 Prohibit
- 9 Twin city to Minneapolis
- 10 ____ Peak, Kilimanjaro’s highest point (and Swahili for “freedom”)
- 11 Buyer and user
- 12 Wagon wheel groove

- 13 Curvy letter
- 18 “Call Me ____” (Mayim Bialik sitcom)
- 23 Puzzling riddle
- 25 Chilling
- 27 USC athletes
- 29 Not so much
- 30 Printer fluid
- 32 Over the ____
- 34 ____ Darya (central Asian river)
- 37 “It looks like you’re writing a letter” Microsoft helper
- 39 How-to presentations
- 40 Quick haircut
- 41 Rooted (through)
- 42 Dermal opening
- 43 ‘70s-’80s “Club” mentioned in “The Eyes of Tammy Faye”
- 44 Tim ____ (Australian cookie)
- 48 “Whatever happens, happens”
- 49 Leaked slowly
- 51 “____ here!” (“Poltergeist” catchphrase)
- 52 Musical ineptitude
- 53 Be extra, with “it”
- 55 Wedding cake figurine, maybe
- 57 Fuse box unit
- 60 Broad band?
- 62 Arm bone
- 64 Mandela’s former org.
- 65 Org. for teachers
- 67 Shepherd’s pie bit
- 68 ISP your grandparents might still use

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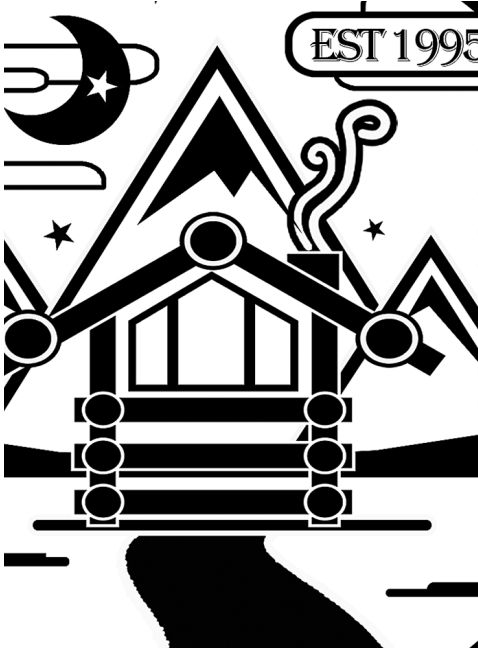
WE RECOMMEND... STATEWIDE ENTERTAINMENT LISTINGS

Music, Performances and Events Across Montana



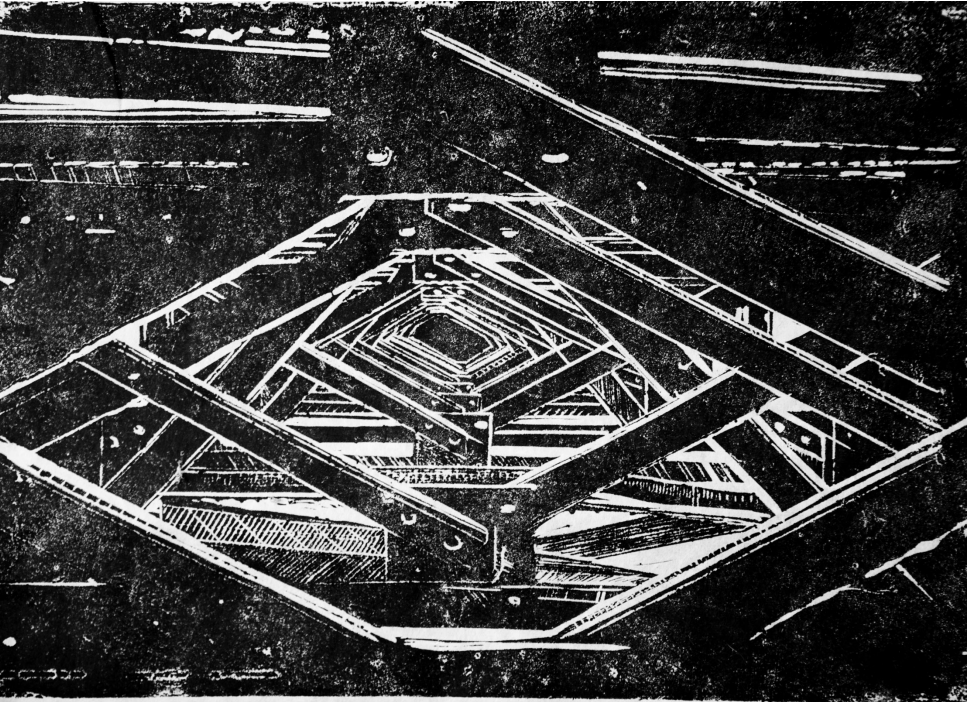
BREWERY COMEDY TOUR DILLON & HELENA

A nationwide tour that’s already hit 1,500 breweries across the U.S. with more than a dozen rotating New York and L.A. stand-up comedians. Laughs are on tap at Beaverhead Brewing in Dillon on Thurs., Aug. 19 and Lewis and Clark Brewing in Helena on Sun., Aug. 29. For info: HerronEntertainment.com.



JUDITH MOUNTAIN LODGE - LEWISTOWN -

Live music on the weekends at Judith Mountain Lodge includes Americana with the the Band of Drifters on Fri., Aug. 20, country/rock with The Sightliners on Fri., Aug. 27 and acoustic folk with Bo DePena on Sun., Aug. 29. For info: JudithMountainLodge.com.



WHERE IN MONTANA?

BEAR WITNESS: Identify the location of this illustration correctly and win a limited edition screen-printed t-shirt or original print of this design by Livingston artist Brian White (brianwarrenwhite.com).

Email answer to info@montanapress.net or follow us on Instagram/Twitter/Facebook at @MontanaPress to log your answer.

LAST MONTH: A scene from within Castletown, an old mining camp located just south of White Sulphur Springs.

NEED A HINT? SEE PAGE 14



BILLINGS AREA MARKETS

GARDENER'S MARKET

Open through October 7, 2021
South Park - Billings
Thursdays - 4:30 p.m. - 6:30 p.m.
HealthyByDesignYellowstone.org

RED LODGE FARMERS MARKET

Open through September 10, 2021
Lions Park - Red Lodge
Friday: 3:30 p.m. - 6 p.m.
RedLodgeFarmersMarket.org

COLUMBUS FARMERS MARKET

Open through September 2, 2021
Railroad Park - Columbus
Thursdays 3:30 p.m. - 6:30 p.m.
StillwaterCountyChamber.com

MILES CITY COMMUNITY FARMERS MARKET

Open through October 30, 2021
Riverside Park - Miles City
Saturdays: 8 a.m. - 12 p.m.
Info: verber57@midrivers.com

BOZEMAN AREA MARKETS

BELGRADE COMMUNITY MARKET

Open through September 2, 2021
205 E Main St - Belgrade
Thursdays - 4 p.m. - 7 p.m.
BelgradeCommunityMarket.com

BIG TIMBER/SWEET GRASS COUNTY FARMERS MARKET

Open through September 2021
Lions Club Park - Big Timber
Fridays 4:30 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.
Info: BTFarmersMarket@gmail.com

GALLATIN VALLEY FARMERS MARKET

Open through September 11, 2021
901 N. Black - Bozeman
Saturdays - 9 a.m. - 12 p.m.
GallatinValleyFarmersMarket.com

BOGERT FARMERS MARKET

Open through September 2021
Bogert Park - Bozeman
Tuesdays - 5 p.m. - 8 p.m.
BogertFarmersMarket.org

MANHATTAN FARMERS MARKET

Open through September 15, 2021
Railroad Park - Manhattan
Wednesdays: 4 p.m. - 7 p.m.
ManhattanFarmersMarket@yahoo.com

THREE FORKS FARMERS MARKET

John Q. Adams Park - Three Forks
Open through September 30, 2021
Thursdays: 4 p.m. - 7 p.m.
ThreeForksMontana.com/farmersmarket

LIVINGSTON FARMERS MARKET

Open through September 15, 2021
229 River Dr. - Livingston
Wednesdays 4:30 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.
WesternSustainabilityExchange.org

SHIELDS VALLEY FARMERS MARKET

Open through August 2021
Holliday Park - Clyde Park
Mondays 4:30 p.m. - 7 p.m.
Info: shieldsmarket@yahoo.com

BUTTE AREA MARKETS

BUTTE FARMERS MARKET

Open through October 2, 2021
West Park St. - Butte
Saturdays - 8 a.m. - 1 p.m.
MainStreetButte.org

ANACONDA COMMUNITY MARKET

Kennedy Commons - Anaconda
Tuesdays - 4 pm. To 7 p.m.
AnacondaCommunityFoundation.org



DILLON AREA MARKETS

DILLON FARMER'S MARKET

Open through September 18, 2021
20 N. Montana St.
Saturdays 9 a.m. - 1 p.m.
DillonFarmersMarket.blogspot.com

TWIN BRIDGES FARMERS MARKET

Open through September 25, 2021
Main Street City Park - Twin Bridges
Saturdays: 9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.
Info: twinbridgesfarmersmarket@gmail.com

SHERIDAN FARMERS MARKET

Open through September 19, 2021
Sheridan Town Park
Thursdays: 4:30 p.m. - 6:30 p.m.
kindredspiritsgiftgallery@gmail.com

WHITEHALL FARMER'S MARKET

Open through September 2021
Legion St. - Whitehall
Saturdays: 9 a.m. - 1 p.m.
WhitehallFarmersMarket@gmail.com

HELENA AREA MARKETS

EAST HELENA FARMERS MARKETS

Open through October 30, 2021
City Hall - East Helena
Tuesdays - 4 p.m. - 7 p.m.

FULLER AVENUE MARKET - HELENA

Open through September 30, 2021
Saturdays - 9 a.m. - 1 p.m.
HelenaFarmersMarket.com

CAPITOL SQUARE FARMERS MARKET

Open through September 28, 2021
State Capitol - Helena
Tuesdays 2:30 p.m. - 6 p.m.
CapitolSquareFarmersMarket@gmail.com

BOULDER FARMERS MARKET

Open through August 2021
Next to City Hall - Boulder
Thursdays - 9 a.m. - 2 p.m.
BoulderMtChamber.org
Or Connie at (406) 225-3288

TOWNSEND FARMERS MARKET

Open through September 23, 2021
Front St. - Townsend
Thursdays: 3 p.m. - 6:30 p.m.
Info: donandchrisinmt@yahoo.com

MONTANA FARMER'S MARKETS

GREAT FALLS AREA MARKETS

GREAT FALLS FARMERS MARKET

Open through September.
2 Park Drive - Great Falls
Saturdays: 7:30 a.m. - 12 p.m.
FarmersMarketGF.com

ROCKY MOUNTAIN FRONT FARMERS MARKET

Open through September
North Main Ave. and 8th St. NW - Choteau
Saturdays - 8:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.
Info: mabelbabe@yahoo.com

MISSOULA AREA MARKETS

MISSOULA FARMERS' MARKET

Open through October 30, 2021
Downtown Missoula
Saturdays 8 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.
MissoulaFarmersMarket.com

CLARK FORK RIVER MARKET

Open through October 30, 2021
225 S Pattee St. - Missoula
Saturdays 8 a.m. - 1 p.m.
ClarkForkFiverMarket.com

TARGET RANGE FARMERS MARKET

Open through September 26, 2021
4095 South Ave. West - Missoula
Sundays 10 a.m. - 6 p.m.
Info: ak_pegm@yahoo.com

ORCHARD HOMES FARMERS MARKET

Open through September 30, 2021
2537 S 3rd St West - Missoula
Thursdays 4:30 p.m. - 7 p.m.
Info: OHFmarket@gmail.com

WEDNESDAY AFTERNOON FARMER'S MARKET AT O'HARA COMMONS

Open through September 29, 2021
111 S 4th St - Hamilton
Wednesdays: 4 p.m. - 6 p.m.
TheOHaraCommons.org

HAMILTON FARMERS MARKET CO-OP

Open through October 2021
Bedford St. and South 3rd St. - Hamilton
Saturdays: 9 a.m. - 12 p.m.
HamiltonFarmersMarket.org

LINCOLN FARMER'S MARKET

Open through September 2, 2021
Hooper Park - Lincoln
Fridays: 4 p.m. - 8 p.m.
farmersmarketlincoln@gmail.com



MORE MONTANA MARKETS

STEVENSVILLE HARVEST VALLEY FARMERS MARKET

Open through October 2, 2021
West 3rd & Main Streets - Stevensville
Saturdays 10 a.m. - 2 p.m.
Info: stevihvfm@gmail.com

POLSON FARMERS MARKET

Open through October 8, 2021
35654 Northwood Dr. - Polson
Fridays: 9 a.m. - 1 p.m.
PolsonFarmersMarket.com

MISSION FALLS MARKET

Open through September 24, 2021
339 Mountain View Dr. - Saint Ignatius
Fridays 5 p.m. - 7 p.m.
Info: missionfallsmarket@gmail.com

SEELEY LAKE MARKET

Open through September 5, 2021
3150 Hwy 83 North - Seeley Lake
Sunday, 10 a.m. - 2 p.m.
Info: seeleylakemarket@gmail.com

DARBY FARMERS MARKET

Open through September 14, 2021
101 E Tanner Ave - Darby
Tuesdays 10 a.m. - 2 p.m.
DarbyMt.net

LEWISTOWN FARMERS MARKET

Open through September 15, 2021
Symmes Park - Lewistown
Saturdays 8 a.m. - 12 p.m.
Info: negaard@midrivers.com

MISSOURI RIVER LANDING FARMERS MARKET

Open through September 2021
1400 Block Front St. - Fort Benton
Thursdays: 5 p.m. - 6 p.m.
Info: cjenkins59442@gmail.com

RED ROCK PLAZA FARMERS MARKET

Open through September 2021
213 1st Ave South - Glasgow
Saturdays: 8 a.m. - 3 p.m.
Info: dahltammi@yahoo.com

HAVRE SATURDAY MARKET

Open through September 18, 2021
Town Square - Havre
Saturdays: 8 a.m. - 12 p.m.
Havrechamber.com

GLENDIVA FARMERS MARKET

Opening Saturday, July 10, 2021
313 S. Merrill - Glendive
Saturdays: 9 a.m. - 12 p.m.
FarmToTableCoop.com

SHELBY MARKET AND MUSIC

Open through September 30, 2021
121 East Main St. - Shelby
Thursdays: 4 p.m. - 7 p.m.
Info: kimberly.suta@montana.edu

This listing represents only a sampling of farmer's markets across Montana. To find more markets in your area, visit: <https://agr.mt.gov/Farmers-Markets>

MICHELLE RIVERS ADDS MUSICAL MAGIC TO MONTANA AMERICANA



On Monday nights, singer-songwriter Michelle Rivers can be found at Jerry's Saloon, a few miles south of her hometown of Eureka, sharing a set of humble, earthy ballads. Indeed, the scenarios and story lines of northwest Montana have helped her to create an environment for her work to emerge.

"Some people are confused as to why I live here in Eureka," says Michelle Rivers. "At local hangs, I get the chance to meet the people who make up Eureka and the little tiny communities around it, like Trego, Rexford, or Stryker. As a songwriter, and as a person, I'm always curious about people and their stories and lives, and I could people watch for hours. If I'm people watching, I'm going to be inspired by all of the wonderful and interesting characters."

To be sure, in coming to know the people of Eureka, Michelle says she has come to know herself much better, her inspiration derived from observation and being intimate with her everyday surroundings. This attachment began once she moved to the Tobacco Valley in June 2010.

EUREKA, MONTANA

Connected to Grasmere, British Columbia, on the Canada-US border, Eureka, approximate population 1,000, exudes the magnetic amiability of a tourist town. A gorgeous place with magical mountains to magnify its allure, the town is usually hopping in the summer months but dependably dormant and almost inaccessible in the winter.

Born and raised in Tennessee, Michelle attended college in Texas, and arrived in the rural mountains of Montana at her mother's encouragement.

"She was the nanny of a young lady who ended up enrolled at Chrysalis therapeutic

boarding school (in Eureka). I was thinking about studying educational psychology, not planning to make music a career. I came here for a job at the school and I never really left, and I've never really thought about leaving."

In terms of its populace and politics, Eureka is geographically and socially akin to the rural middle Tennessee town of Michelle's upbringing, Leipers Fork. Bluegrass is one of the popular forms of musical expression in both places.

Indeed, Michelle's father, David Piland, played just about every stringed instrument, (pictured at right) from the fiddle and banjo to the guitar and mandolin. One of her earliest memories is performing with him at church at about age 5, decked in cowgirl boots, a denim skirt, and her favorite red checkered button down shirt. She and her sister joined their dad on the podium to sing one of his own songs.

David Piland treated bluegrass as cultural icon, a form that engages in elements of wonder, joy, and even community-building. Pickers and players were always only a porch stoop away, passing down bluegrass and dance tunes from generation to generation; Michelle's home emanated beautiful music, from country to Christian.



"I was surrounded by such great music and things like the Leipers Fork hoedowns shaped my musical tastes and helped me develop that sound that I'm going for today. When I was a young girl, bluegrass, though I remember that it was fun to dance to, sounded like a bunch of old guys playing strange music. As an adult, however, it is one of my favorite genres to listen to and to play."

A staple of the sound at weekend backyard barbecues, nighttime street soirees, and muggy summertime jamborees, Michelle was imparted early with the impression that bluegrass denoted friendship among people, a togetherness of community and a kinship of place, which would explain why today she sees the music as a natural extension of the character of Eureka.

"Bluegrass is a form of gathering together, and Eureka is place that has fewer people, but the connections are stronger and deeper here. It's the music of a small town, of a handful of people living life together."

Over the years, Michelle's professional career shifted from teaching music at the private therapeutic boarding school that drew her mother to Montana to full-time employment as a music teacher at the Eureka public school. Her career as a musician has always been a free-floating, light-sailing vessel of her own creation, a place to nourish and challenge her imagination.

MONTANA AMERICANA SOUND

Michelle felt confident enough to play her first live public performance of original songs at an open mic night at the Bluebird Café in Nashville at age 19. Her first live show with billing occurred a couple years later at Common Grounds in Waco, Texas while she was attending Baylor University.

"It was terrifying and exhilarating," says Michelle. "I played mostly original music and was surrounded by friends who supported and encouraged me."

She released an album in 2016 called *Breathing on Embers* at a studio in Columbia Falls, which features a cohesion and clarity of aesthetic that is memorable for its uniquely Montana Americana tunes such as "Big Sky" and "Montana Winter."

"After the album I started to get serious about getting songs out there. I did the Nashville thing for a year. I'm in my 30s now, and my goal is to be able to play and come back to my special creative space in Montana, and I couldn't imagine making music anywhere else. Recording in Eureka is not super challenging, because my dad has been so gracious to offer his talents. It has all grown organically, slowly."

Michelle says the creative benefits of Eureka go beyond just the time and space to write. She has come to trust it as a reciprocal space that nourishes her and gives her strength, a place to reclaim a bit of psychic quiet to take back into the music. Living in a sparsely populated town hemmed in by peaks (and many months snow) has somehow protected her permeability to wonder, the nucleus around which much invigorating art orbits.

"It is beautiful and small in Eureka and I can thrive in this kind of environment. I wasn't born and raised here but it is my home through and through."

MUSICAL MAGIC

When Michelle released "Breathing on Embers" five years ago she thought that she knew who she was an artist and what direction she wanted to steer the vessel. She realized the great benefits of listening to herself, her hand, her gut, her pen, her mind. The unbound bluegrass-steeped work had its own nascent logic and guiding imprimaturs and she honored them. Now, she is narrowing the focus once again and re-appraising what it is that she would like to achieve with her skills, working at how to craft a story and a melody as much through its quiet parts as its words and sounds, conjuring moments into a single gesture, a turn of phrase, the minutest of details.

"I'm definitely influenced by my roots and the raw, rugged, authentic style of music that is Montana. It's a beautiful and real place.



When I release a video of us playing on the river, it encapsulates where I want to take my music. It is not perfect or polished. It is about what happens organically, and embracing it."

Right now, Michelle is going through a seismic shift from viewing her music solely as a liner of self-expression, to seeing it as an opportunity to light the passions and feelings of others.

"It is hard to explain the magic of live music that happens when people get what you are doing, when you are giving them a song to sing...I am trying to give words and music to the things that we struggle to talk about as people. Music has a powerful way of helping us access the spiritual and emotional parts that we can't access otherwise. Songwriting is an extension of who I am. I love people and their stories and the sharing of stories, and that human connection that happens in music."

Michelle says that she intends to continue writing toward what has the most urgency and energy around it she plans to be gigging all summer long and, in addition to teaching, performing shows on the weekends come fall.

Indeed, at saloons and songwriting festivals and wineries, Michelle and her songs will be tilling both the saddest and happiest elements of human emotions. Though she tends to honor writing from a site of sadness, she really can't resist returning time and time again to the most infectious free-spirited and jaunty of her bluegrass tunes; freeing, uptempo numbers that celebrate living in the mountains, small town life or hunkering down in the West.

"I love a good sad song," says Michelle. "But so many of the songs come from a place of joy or they revel in enjoying life. There is nothing better than playing a fun, upbeat, bluegrass tune that's about enjoying all that life has to offer." ★

—BRIAN D'AMBROSIO



WE RECOMMEND...

STATEWIDE ENTERTAINMENT LISTINGS

Music, Performances and Events Across Montana



COMEDIAN TONE BELL - MISSOULA -

An accomplished stand-up who tours regularly nationwide, Tone's one hour comedy special debuted on Showtime in 2019. His half hour comedy special can currently be seen on Comedy Central at cc.com. UM Missoula hosts a two-hour live event at the SUB Ballroom on Fri., Sept. 3 at 7 p.m. For info: Montana.edu.

JONESIN'?



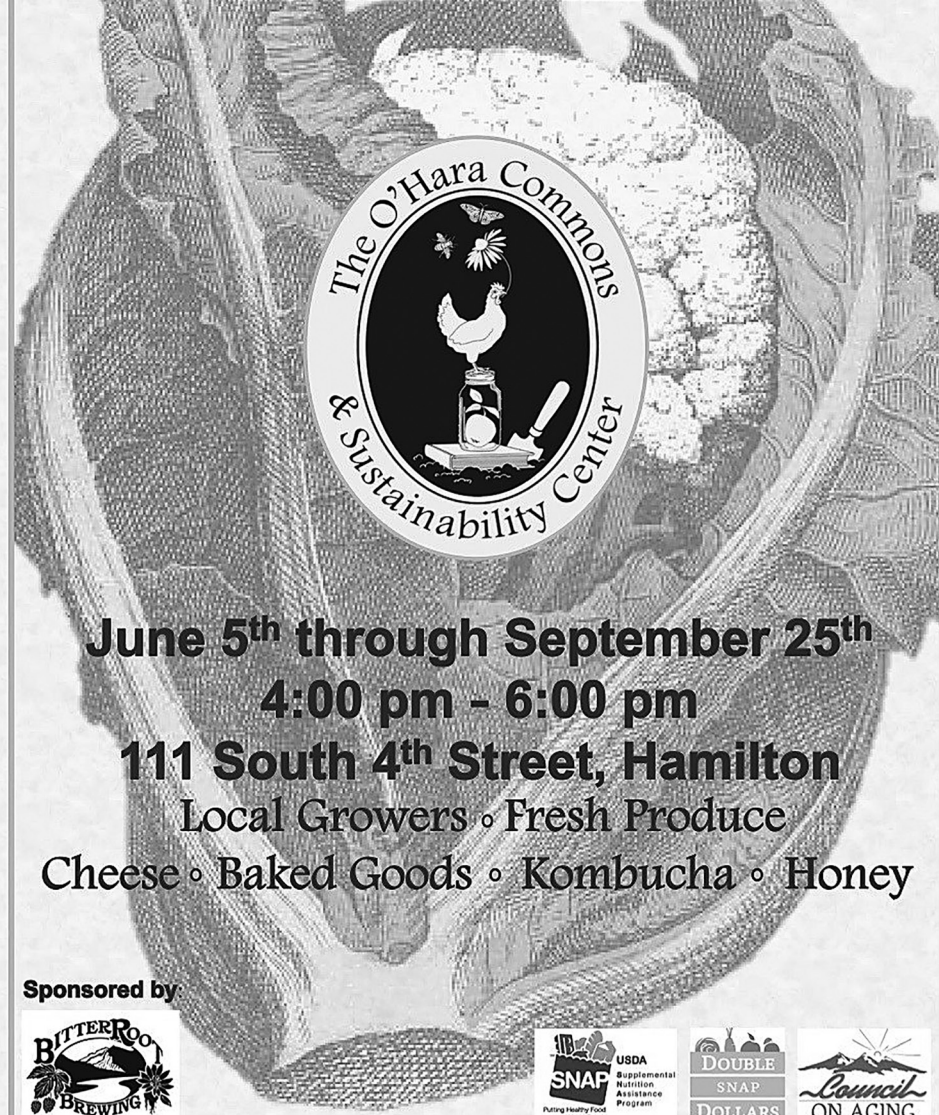
NED LEDOUX - HELENA -

From a legacy of country music including Bud Rhoades and Chris LeDoux, this country star routinely headlines his own shows as well as earning coveted opening slots for Toby Keith, Aaron Watson and Garth Brooks. Live at the Helena Civic Center on Sat., Sept. 11. For info: HelenaCivicCenter.com.

MISSOULA COMEDYCALENDAR

August 4 | Homegrown Comedy Night | Roxy | 7 PM
August 5 | Homegrown Open Mic | Union Club | 9 PM
August 9 | Flippers Open Mic | Flippers | 7 PM
August 10 | Stave & Hoop Comedy Showcase | 7:30 PM
August 11 | Club Soda Longform Improv | Roxy | 7 PM
August 12 | Ten Spoon Comedy Night | 7 PM
August 13 | Western Cider Open Mic | 8 PM
August 19 | Free Cycles Open Mic | 8 PM
August 20 | Gigggle Box Comedy Show | 8:30
August 24 | Revival Comedy Workshop | 6 PM
August 24 | Stave & Hoop Open Mic | 7:30 PM
August 26 | Ten Spoon Comedy Night | 7 PM
August 27 | Homegrown Comedy Night | Roxy | 7 PM
August 28 | ZACC Comedy Night | 7:30 PM
AUGUST 2021

WEDNESDAY AFTERNOON FARMERS MARKET



**June 5th through September 25th
4:00 pm - 6:00 pm**

111 South 4th Street, Hamilton

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info@theoharacommons.org • "Empowering a Resilient Community"



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U.S. SUMMER TOUR 2021

**SEPTEMBER 20
KETTLEHOUSE AMPHITHEATER
BONNER, MT**

HERBIEHANCOCK.COM/TOUR



PHOTO CREDIT: NICK LETELLIER

WE RECOMMEND...

STATEWIDE ENTERTAINMENT LISTINGS

Music, Performances and Events Across Montana

MONTANA BOOK EVENTS

MELISSA KWANSY LETTERS TO YOUNG POETS

Teens in Montana can become pen pals with one of Montana's poets laureate. Each Monday, Melissa Kwasny will send a new poem and prompt to the Billings Public Library's Teen Page. Participants write their own poetry as a response and mail it to Melissa and she responds to every letter sent to her. For info: BillingsLibrary.org.



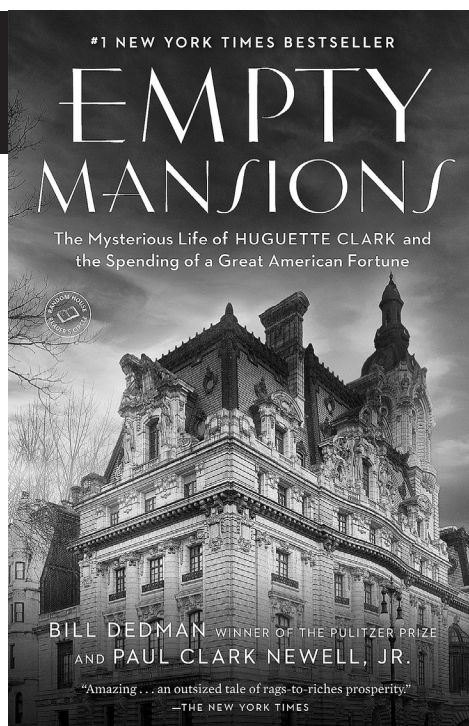
Melissa Kwasny

BILL DEDMAN

Fri., Aug. 13 - 6 p.m.

Copper King Mansion - Butte

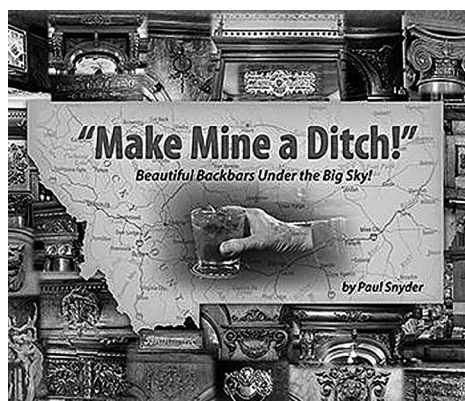
Presentation and reception with Bill Dedman, Pulitzer Prize-winning Journalist and Author of "Empty Mansions: The Mysterious Life of Huguette Clark and the Spending of a Great American Fortune." Dedman stumbled onto the mystery of the reclusive heiress Huguette Clark and her father, the Gilded Age industrialist William Clark. What began as a slideshow and feature story developed into an investigative series, a running daily competitive story, a full-length biography, and now is being developed as a Hollywood film or TV series. Dedman will host an additional book discussion in Butte at the **Clark Chateau** on **Aug. 12 at 4 p.m.** For info: ButteArchives.org.



PAUL SNYDER

Sat., Aug. 14 - 1 p.m.

The History Museum - Great Falls
"Make Mine a Ditch" takes a close look at the often overlooked, silent witnesses to Montana's history: hundreds of bars, backbars, and their Montana settings. Snyder will discuss his book and the research behind its inception. For info: GreatFallsHistory.org.



ONE BOOK BILLINGS

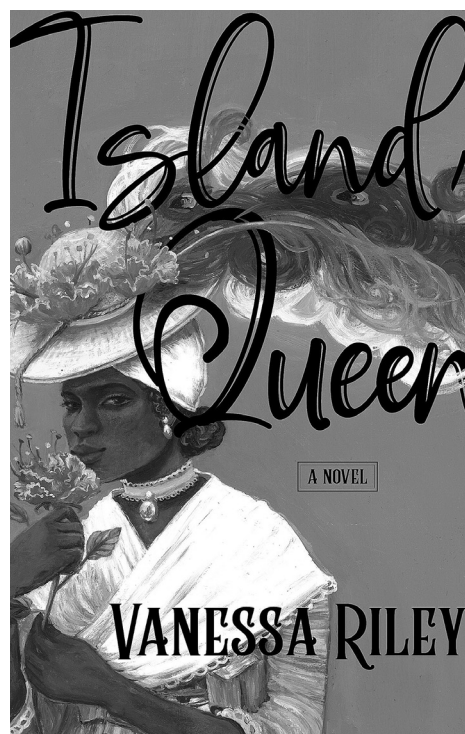
This program sponsored by the Billings Public Library provides a forum for patrons to read and discuss in small groups regional authors and/or literary works which examine and reflect life on the High Plains, especially Montana. The selection for August and September is "Down from the Mountain: The Life and Death of a Grizzly Bear" by Bryce Andrews. Award-winning writer, Montana rancher and conservationist Andrews tells the story of one grizzly, Millie whose story intersects his own. Registration and pick up begins August 16. Call (406) 657-8290 for info.



CRIME NOVELS OF MONTANA WITH JAMES L. THANE

Tues. Aug. 17 - 6:30 p.m.

Copper Room, Missoula Library
Author James L. Thane explores Treasure State crime novels ranging from Dashiell Hammet to James Lee Burke, Christine Carbo, James Crumley, Leslie Budewitz and others who have used both real and fictional Montana locations as the settings for stories. Fans of the genre will find plenty of suggestions for reading lists in this presentation. For info: MissoulaPublicLibrary.org.



VANESSA RILEY

Wed., Aug. 18 - 5:30 p.m.

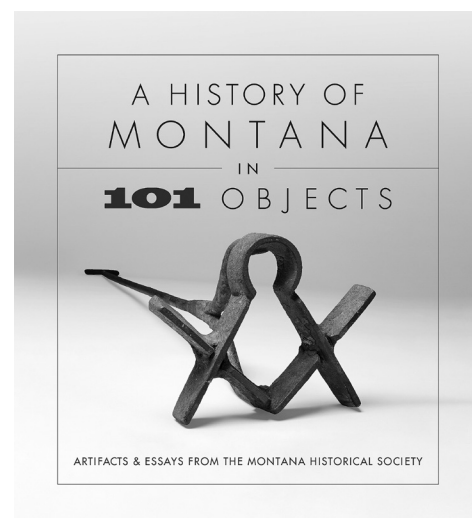
From bustling port cities of the West Indies to the drawing rooms of London's elite, "Island Queen" by Vanessa Riley is a sweeping epic of an adventurer and a survivor who rises to power and autonomy against all odds, defying rigid eighteenth-century morality and the oppression of women as well as people of color. Part of the online #BlackVoices series seeking to amplify books, authors and stories that are centered around under-represented voices in publishing. For info: CountryBookshelf.com.



GAIL LANGSTROTH

Thurs., Aug. 19 - 5:30 p.m.

Winner of the Patricia Doblar Poetry Prize, 2011, and poetry editor for the European art journal Cyte Magazin, poet, eurythmist, visual artist Gail Langstroth will present her bilingual poetry book *firegarden / jardin-de-fuego* at This House of Books in Billings. For info: WordMoves.com.



MONTANA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Thurs. August 26 - 5:30 p.m.

A Helena book release party for "A History of Montana in 101 Objects: Artifacts and Essays from the Montana Historical Society." Featuring twenty-one authors and professional photography, treasures from the collection of the Montana Historical Society are featured along with descriptive essays to tell the story of Montana through objects from the past. Farcountry Press joins in the launch with a companion publication, "Montana History for Kids in 50 Objects, With 50 Fun Activities" written by Steph Lehman. For info: mhs.mt.gov

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DINE AT 7 SUSHI
AUGUST 22, 2021, 4 - 8 P.M.
- BOZEMAN -
MAP BREWING PINT NIGHT
AUGUST 23, 2021, 4 - 8 P.M.



A PORTION OF SALES WILL BE DONATED TO FRIENDS OF MSU LIBRARY



FRIENDS OF MSU LIBRARY



MONTANA BOOK EVENTS

PROPAGANDA

Tues., Aug. 24 - 5:30 p.m.

Using the metaphor of terraforming in "Terraform: Building A Better World," the musician, speaker, and activist Propaganda explains how readers can reshape homes, friendships, communities and politics in a debut collection of essays and poetry. Part of the online #BlackVoices series. For info: CountryBookshelf.com.

RAY MCPADDEN AND DAVID ABRAMS

Wed., Sept. 8 - 7:30 pm

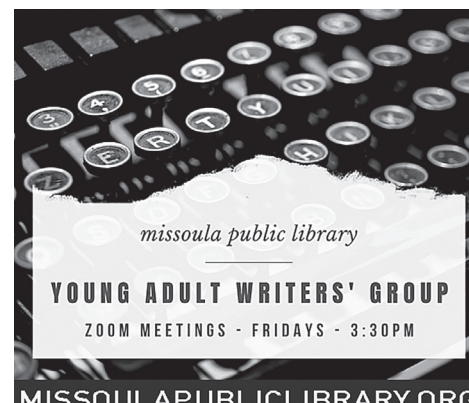
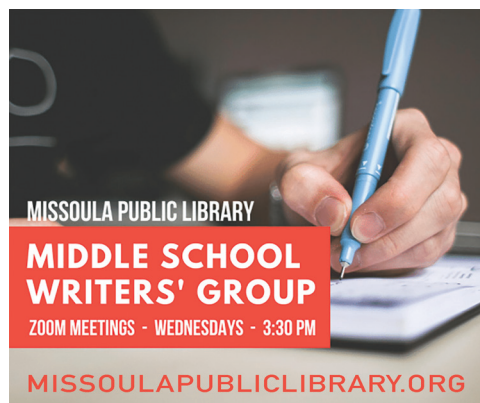
Two military veterans turned writers discuss online "We March at Midnight: A War Memoir," a fast-paced account of former Army Ranger Ray McPadden's experiences in the Iraq and Afghan Wars. For info: CountryBookshelf.com.



KING ARTHUR REMIXED

Thurs., Sept. 16 - 7:30 p.m.

Adventure into the murky mythology of King Arthur and the Knights of Camelot with actors of Arthuriana re-imaginings released this year. EK Johnston takes the story of the Fisher King to space in "Aetherbound." Kiersten White reinvents Guinevere in the "Camelot Rising" trilogy. Preeti Chhibber contributes to an anthology of gender-bent, race-bent, LGBTQIA+ inclusive retellings in "Sword Stone Table." And The Lady of Shalott reclaims her story in a bold feminist reimagining from Laura Sebastian with "Half Sick of Shadows." Register online at CountryBookshelf.com.



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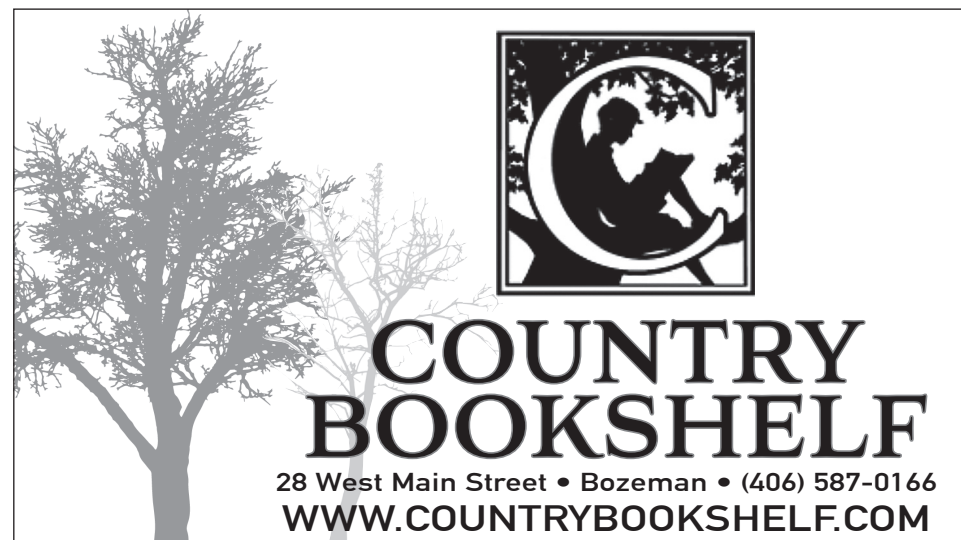
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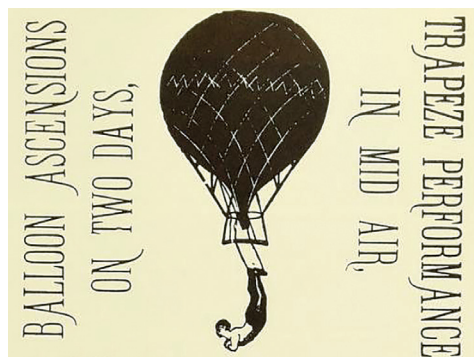
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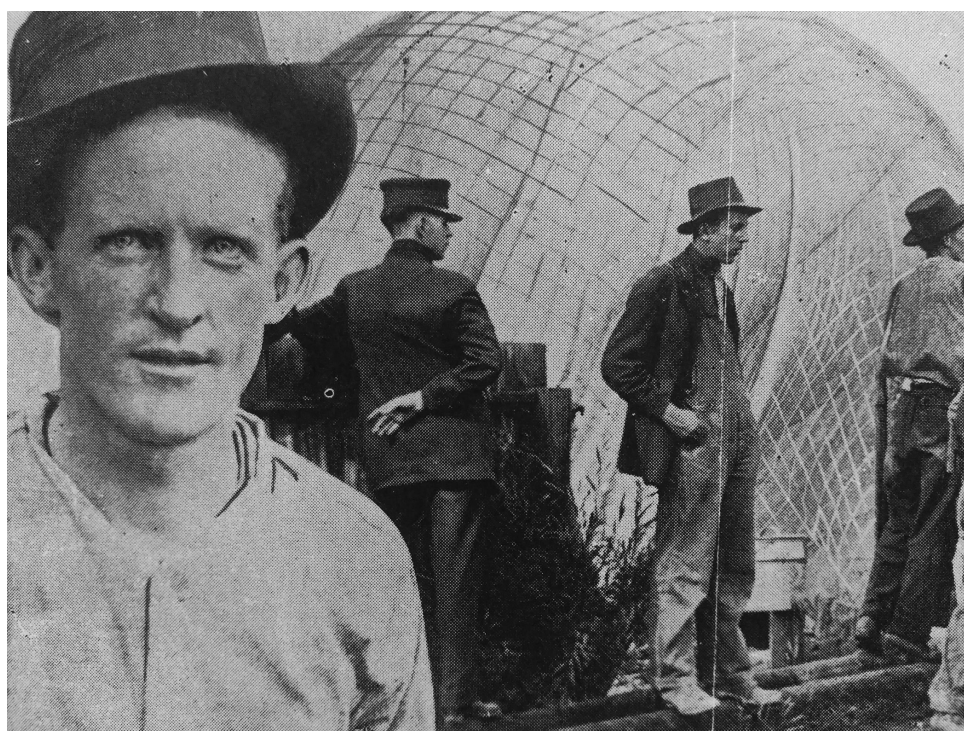
FAMOUS AND NOT FORGOTTEN: BALLOONIST GEORGE LOWRY



From the exhibition jumps at the Helena Fair and at the Spokane Fair in 1911, to the inflatable dirigible balloon he sailed over Butte in 1914, George Lowry was no doubt a spectacular showman and theatrical spirit.

While the average person gazed at the sky with their feet firmly and safely planted on the ground—and was content to keep it that way—Lowry wondrously pointed to the clouds convincing himself that that was where he needed to be. Indeed, he crossed two of Montana’s high passes before the days of powered flight, descending the Continental Divide by parachute several miles east of Butte and carried by the wind across the Bozeman pass, landing east.

In an act that would have even made legendary showman P.T. Barnum chuckle, he once parachuted with a team of monkeys, and another time he released white leghorn chickens from high in the air of a dirigible



balloon, with prize tags attached. Lowry said that enjoyed both the balloon ride and the general excitement of his trips with the animals; he noted that the chickens and the monkeys seemed to enjoy their ascents and plunges, too.

TRANSFIXED BY AERONAUTICS

George Lowry was born on January 11, 1886 at Homestake, Montana and spent his first years spent in a log boarding house. His parents later shifted to Butte, where, according to Lowry’s own account, he became transfixed with a Chinese paper balloon he was given as a kid. This object sparked a lifelong interest in aeronautics.

In 1908 Lowry purchased his first balloon and parachute from a Chicago balloon company that at full inflation swelled to 85

feet in height and measured 65 feet through the bulge. The muslin-structured balloon was part of a full package – instructions, parachute and trapeze – at a cost of \$175. A reference to an unsuccessful flight attempt by Lowry during the celebration on the Fourth of July in Basin in 1908 appeared in the Basin Progress and Mining Review. Heavy wind disrupted the afternoon balloon ascension and Lowry narrowly missed a serious accident, falling 20 feet, and injuring his wrist. The balloon caught fire and floated over the city, before landing onto the roof of a bake oven and being put out. Alas, the badly burned balloon prompted Lowry to cancel the evening performance.

Lowry owned at least three balloons during the time between 1908 and 1917 when he toured the country making exhibition flights. He made repeat engagements in a number of Montana cities and annually followed a fair circuit in the Midwest, which included stops at Minot, North Dakota; Davenport, Iowa; Rock Island; and Chicago, Illinois. In one interview, Lowry claimed that he had inherent fear of water because he never learned how to swim, and it was only after considerable persuasion that he agreed to make an exhibition jump in Chicago, near the shores of Lake Michigan, for Carl McGuire in 1912. Lowry received for this jump \$150 plus all expenses (\$100 in 1912 is worth \$2,711.48 today), and he was presented with a fine gold watch engraved by a well-known Chicago jeweler named C.D. Peacock, reading: “Northwest Balloon Association; Chicago, Illinois; 1912; George Lowry.”



PHOTO BY NORMAN A. FORSYTH, MONTANA HISTORICAL SOCIETY PHOTOGRAPH ARCHIVES



QUESTS AND CRASHES

George Lowry continued exhibition balloon exploits for a number of years. The 1914 Butte City Directory lists him as “a carman for the Butte-street-railway company,” but an article in the Butte Miner, June 15, 1914, detailed another successful ascension by Lowry, who attained a height of 5,000 feet or more in flight from Lake Avoca. (A man-made lake located on the Flats, Lake Avoca is no longer extant.) The Butte Miners’ Union Hall was blown up on the night of June 13-14, 1914, and there was a labor riot at the Miner’s Union Day Parades, and that tumult halted many gatherings – but not Lowry’s.

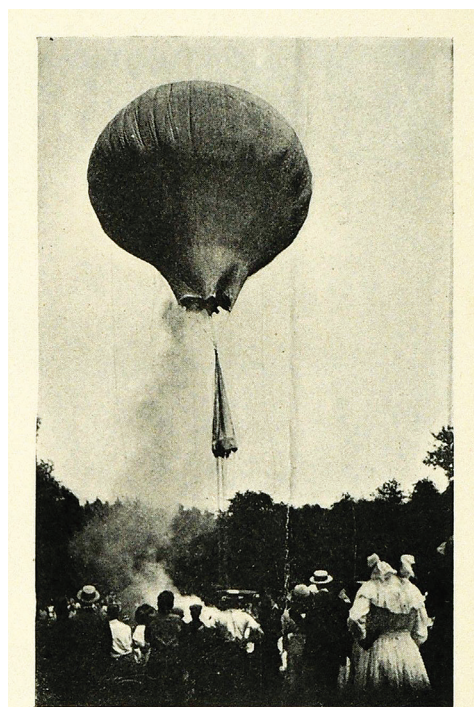
While the weather was reported to be “threatening,” he was not taken off course by wind and remained in the air approximately 20 minutes, “long enough to give the big crowd of spectators a most interesting exhibition.” The Butte Miner noted that Lowry was “making quite a success as an aeronaut” and that he “intended to devote his entire time to this somewhat dangerous but thrilling occupation.”

In 1915 he purchased a dirigible balloon in Columbus, Montana, which had been manufactured in Frankfort, New York, by inventor and meteorologist Carl E. Myers. On his first attempt to inflate the dirigible in Butte the generator exploded, injuring several spectators and landing Lowry in the hospital for several months, partially blinded by fragments of steel and shrapnel in both eyes.

With his vision diminished and body ragged, Lowry once again returned to the thrill of the skies, making his final balloon ascension in Deer Lodge in 1926. The perennial showman, he didn’t want to give up aeronautics, but he did so at the urging of his wife.

After many years of balloon voyaging, at age 40 he mundanely started another career as an electrician at the Montana Power Company. Lowry died in Butte in January of 1965 at the age of 79. ★

—BRIAN D’AMBROSIO



HEATED SMOKE FLOATS BALLOON. This big canvas bag is filled by burning under it kerosene soaked wood. When it has ascended about one thousand feet, the aeronaut, sitting in a trapeze attached to a parachute, cuts loose from the balloon. The parachute opening up lets the aeronaut down easily. Released from his weight the balloon soon topples over, letting out its cloud of hot smoke, and drops to the ground.



Lowry gave exhibitions of his ballooning skill at fairs across the region, including one in Spokane where his performance inspired a young Carl E. Schirmer, one of Montana’s best known general aviation pilots. According to “Montana and the Sky” by Frank Wiley, when Schirmer was a boy living in Spokane, he chased a balloon launched at the fair by Lowry for blocks in order to collect a reward from the balloonist.

(At right) One of Lowry’s balloons floats over Columbia Gardens in Butte.

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Horse and animal shows, exhibits and rides, and live music with The Junebugs, Thistle and Lace, Aaron Crawford, Eli Young Band, Kesha, and Cody Johnson. From Aug. 12 through Aug. 21 in Billings at MetraPark. For Info: MontanaFair.com.



RED LODGE OKTOBERFEST

Save the date Sat., Sept. 11, and get your dirndls and lederhosen ready, Red Lodge Oktoberfest has returned! Join Red Lodge Ales for this 23rd annual celebration—German food and beer, vendors and games at Red Lodge Ales Brewing Company. For info: RedLodgeAles.com.



COVELLITE THEATRE - BUTTE

Starting as a Russian group and playing what they dubbed “Siberian Surf Rock,” this band included musicians from all over the world including the U.S., Israel, Kazakhstan, Puerto Rico and Bulgaria. At the newly-reopened Covellite Theatre on Fri., Sept. 10 at 7 p.m. For info: CovelliteTheatre.com.

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ARIES (March 21-April 19): What does it mean to feel real? Some people have a hard time doing that. They have such false ideas about who they are that they rarely feel real. Others are so distracted by trivial longings that they never have the luxury of settling into the exquisite at-home-ness of feeling real. For those fortunate enough to regularly experience this treasured blessing, feeling real isn't a vague concept. It's a vivid sensation of being conscious in one's body. When we feel real, we respond spontaneously, enjoy playing, and exult in the privilege of being alive. After studying your astrological potentials, Aries, I suspect that you now have an enhanced capacity to feel real.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20): When she was a child, author Valerie Andrews visited her secret sanctuary at sunset every day for seven years. She lay on the ground among birch trees and aromatic privet plants, feeling “the steady rhythmic heartbeat of the earth” as she basked in the fading light. I'd love for you to enjoy the revitalizing power of such a shrine. The decisions you have to make will become clear as you commune with what Andrews calls “a rootlike umbilicus to the dark core of the land.” Do you know of such a place? If not, I suggest you find or create one.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20): I suspect that your immediate future will be a patchwork of evocative fragments. You may be both annoyed and entertained by a series of flashing attractions, or an array of pretty baubles, or a hubbub of tasks that all seem at least mildly worth doing. Chances are good that they will ultimately knit together into a crazy-quilt unity; they will weave into a pattern that makes unexpected sense. In the spirit of the spicy variety, I offer three quotes that may not seem useful to you yet, but will soon. 1. “Isn't it possible that to desire a thing, to truly desire it, is a form of having it?” — Galway Kinnell 2. “It is not half so important to know as to feel.” — Rachel Carson 3. “Like all explorers, we are drawn to discover what's out there without knowing yet if we have the courage to face it.” — Pema Chödrön

CANCER (June 21-July 22): A Tumblr blogger named Cece writes, “The fact that you can soak bread in sugar, eggs, cinnamon, and vanilla, then butter a pan and fry said bread to make a meal is really liberating.” I agree. And I share this with you in the hope of encouraging you to indulge in other commonplace actions that will make you feel spacious and uninhibited. You're in a phase of your astrological cycle when you'll thrive on doing day-to-day details that excite your lust for life. Enjoying the little things to the utmost will be an excellent strategy for success.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): Leo poet Renée Ashley articulates a perspective I recommend you adopt. She writes, “I'm drawn to what flutters nebulously at the edges, at the corner of my eye—just outside my certain sight. I want to share in what I am routinely denied, or only suspect exists. I long for a glimpse of what is beginning to occur.” With her thoughts as inspiration, I advise you to be hungry for what you don't know and haven't perceived. Expand your curiosity so that it becomes wildly insatiable in its quest to uncover budding questions and raw truths at the peripheries of your awareness.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): “There are many things in your heart you can never tell to another person,” declared Virgo actor Greta Garbo (1905–1990). “It is not right that you should tell them,” she concluded. “You cheapen yourself, the inside of yourself, when you tell them.” I presume Greta was being melodramatic. My attitude is the opposite of hers. If you find allies who listen well and who respect your vulnerability, you should relish telling them the secrets of your heart. To do so enriches you, deepens you, and adds soulful new meanings to your primary mysteries. The coming weeks will be a favorable time to seek this wise pleasure in abundance.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): Now is a fantastic time to seek out effervescent socializing and convivial gatherings and festive celebrations. If you surround yourself with lively people, you'll absorb the exact

influences you need. May I suggest you host a fun event? If you do, you could send out invitations that include the following allures: “At my get-together, the featured flavors will be strawberry chocolate and impossibly delicious. There'll be magic vibrations and mysterious mood-enhancers. Liberating conversations will be strongly encouraged. Unpredictable revelations will be honored. If possible, please unload your fears and anxieties in a random parking lot before arriving.”

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): Scorpio author Andrew Sean Greer writes, “As the Japanese will tell you, one can train a rose to grow through anything, to grow through a nautilus even, but it must be done with tenderness.” I think that's a vivid metaphor for one of your chief tasks in the coming weeks, Scorpio: how to carefully nurture delicate, beautiful things as you coax them to ripen in ways that will bring out their sturdiness and resilience. I believe you now have an extra capacity for wielding love to help things bloom.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): Suggested experiments to try soon: 1. Remember a past moment when you were touched with the sudden realization that you and a person you'd recently met were destined to fall in love. 2. Remember a past moment when you kissed someone for the first time. 3. Remember a past moment when someone told you they loved you for the first time or when you told someone you loved them for the first time. 4. Allow the feelings from the first three experiments to permeate your life for five days. See through the eyes of the person you were during those previous breakthroughs. Treat the whole world as expansively and expectantly as you did during those times.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): Capricorn poet Kenneth Rexroth was shirtless as he strolled along a rural road. To his delightful amazement, a fritillary butterfly landed on his shoulder, fluttered away, landed again, fluttered away—performed this dance numerous times. Nothing like this had ever happened to him. Later he wrote, “I feel my flesh / Has suddenly become sweet / With a metamorphosis / Kept secret even from myself.” In the coming days, I'm expecting at least one comparable experience for you. Here's your homework: What sweet metamorphoses may be underway within you—perhaps not yet having reached your conscious awareness?

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): Capricorn poet Kenneth Rexroth was shirtless as he strolled along a rural road. To his delightful amazement, a fritillary butterfly landed on his shoulder, fluttered away, landed again, fluttered away—performed this dance numerous times. Nothing like this had ever happened to him. Later he wrote, “I feel my flesh / Has suddenly become sweet / With a metamorphosis / Kept secret even from myself.” In the coming days, I'm expecting at least one comparable experience for you. Here's your homework: What sweet metamorphoses may be underway within you—perhaps not yet having reached your conscious awareness?

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): In 1829, Piscean author Victor Hugo began work on his novel, *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*. He had other projects, though, and by September 1830, he had made scant progress on *Hunchback*. Growing impatient, his publisher demanded that he finish the manuscript by February 1831. In response, Hugo virtually barricaded himself in his room to compel himself to meet the deadline. He even locked his clothes in a closet to prevent himself from going out. For the next five months, he wore only a gray shawl as he toiled nonstop. His stratagem worked! I recommend you consider trying a somewhat less rigorous trick to enforce your self-discipline in the coming weeks. There's no need to barricade yourself in your fortress. But I hope you will have fun taking stringent measures.

THIS WEEK'S HOMEWORK:

Send descriptions of your wildly hopeful dreams for the future to newsletter@freewillastrology.com.

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