

Free Monthly News, Arts & Entertainment

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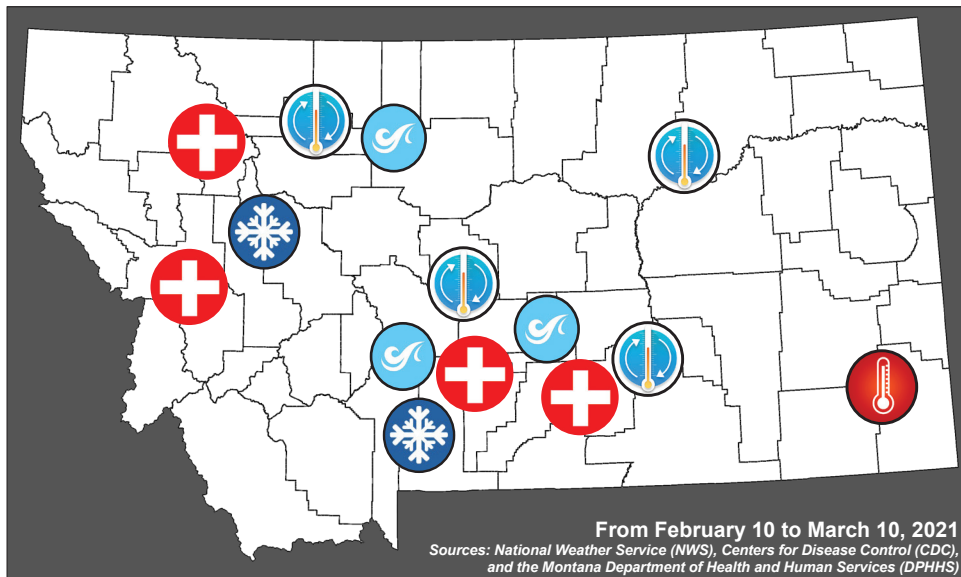
MONTANA PRESS



ANSEL ADAMS
GLACIER
NATIONAL PARK



MONTANA ALMANAC



Highs and Lows Across the State

A wind chill warning was in effect in most of Montana on Feb. 10, with wind chill temperatures in the -40s. A wind chill of -70 degrees was recorded on Feb. 11 at the Snowslip station near Glacier National Park. The low temperature for the recording period was -44 degrees near White Sulphur Springs on Feb. 12, also the lowest national temperature of that day. Fort Benton schools were closed on Feb. 12 due to anticipated -60 windchill. Glasgow reported a high temperature on Feb. 14 of -1 degree, making nine consecutive days where the mercury didn't get above zero, the longest streak since 1996 and records for low temperatures were broken at Billings at -3 degrees (-1 degree in 1939) and Livingston at -1 degree (4 degrees in 1981). The seven-day cold streak in Livingston broke a 1972 record of six days below zero. During the course of meteorological winter, Miles City experienced a temperature range of 101 degrees (low of -34 degrees, high of 67 degrees). This has only been done one other time, in 1953-54 (low of -36° degrees, high of 65 degrees). The highest temperature reported during the recording period was 69 at Powderville on March 6.

Windy Weather

A peak gust of 79 mph was recorded in Big Timber on Feb. 21 and a peak gust of 85 mph was recorded at Cut Bank on Feb. 21. Between Fort Benton and Havre, winds gusted to 77 mph on the same day. A gust of 82 mph was reported on US 191 near Zortman on Feb. 22 and, for the first time ever, Billings airport recorded 63 mph peak wind gusts for two days in a row on Feb. 22. The peak gust in Livingston of 82 mph on Feb. 22 set a new record (79 mph in 2016) for February. On Feb. 25, Cut Bank saw sustained winds of 59 mph and East Glacier saw a peak gust of 89 mph.

Continuing COVID-19 Health Emergency

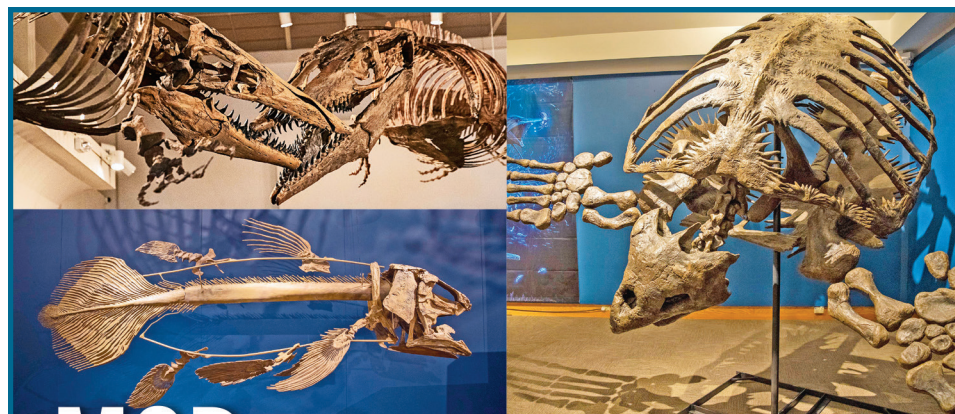
Many individual county health departments across the state, in accordance with the Centers for Disease Control, require all residents to wear masks when visiting any public establishment. The CDC provided recent guidance to Americans that double masking with multi-layer cloth or surgical masks can be up to 92% effective at stopping community spread of the virus and recommends use of masks to continue as the population is vaccinated. 323,135 doses of vaccines have been administered and 121,288 Montanans are fully immunized in the state. A number of different vaccines now being administered are shown by scientific and medical data and evidence to provide significant protection for individuals from developing COVID-19. As the virus continues to spread, the U.S. reported 29.6 million cases and 536,000 deaths, up from 27.7 million cases and 478,000 deaths in the last reporting period. Over 40,000 are currently hospitalized, down from 136,000. The total cumulative number of reported cases in Montana is 101,243 (up from 96,595 cases last reporting period). During the reporting period, Montana recorded 67 additional deaths for a total of 1,387 COVID fatalities with a significant number of infected/active cases in Yellowstone County/Billings (with 553 cases active at press time), Flathead (151 active), Missoula (133 active), Gallatin (127 active), and Park County (43 active) in the top five counties for active cases statewide. Hospitalizations (52) and active case rates (1,459) were stable at press time. Approximately 1,116,082 tests have been administered for the virus. Visit dphhs.mt.gov for up-to-date information.

Precipitation Totals

In the western part of the state, a snowstorm brought upwards of 12" to West Fork Bitterroot and over 10" to Swan Lake in mid-February. The meteorological winter of Dec. through Feb. 2020-2021 was the second-driest in Glasgow history and Glendive recorded their driest winter on record (since 1992) with only .22" of precipitation (normal is 1"). A Red Flag warning of high fire danger went in effect March 6 in Northeastern Montana with high winds and temperatures in the area 10 to 20 degrees above normal. By Feb. 19, Bozeman-Yellowstone Airport recorded 16 days with a trace of snowfall, the second longest streak of all time. Missoula recorded its sixth snowiest February. Four of the sixth snowiest Februaries in Missoula have come in the last 10 years.

Be Avalanche Aware

Flathead Avalanche Center reported numerous close calls and one rider was caught and buried in mid-February. A snowboarder was critically injured in Big Sky and a fatality was reported in Gallatin National forest due to avalanches in the reporting period. By March 6, Montana saw the first day of low avalanche danger but recreationalists are cautioned to be aware of the risks of avalanches when recreating in Montana's winter backcountry. Know the conditions before heading out, take a course from one of the avalanche centers in the



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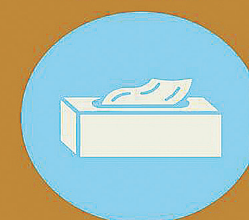
Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.



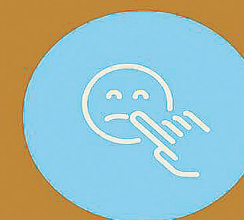
Stay home when sick.



Avoid close contact with those that are sick.



When you cough or sneeze, cover your mouth and nose with a tissue.



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Ansel Adams' rise to prominence in the 20th Century and his visions of Glacier National Park.

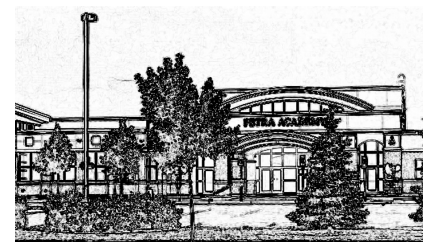
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SPOTLIGHT

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ON THE COVER A vision of Mount Fusilade and Mount Jackson "In Glacier National Park" (credit National Archives photo no. 519875) and images of leaves and fern (photos no. 519877 and 519878), taken and developed by Ansel Adams in June 1942 for a Department of Interior mural project.

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THIS ISSUE IS DEDICATED TO THE MEMORY OF DINK BRUCE.

BYGONE DAYS

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

The Columbia Falls Columbian
March 4, 1897

“Missoula, Mont., Feb 21. The most shocking tragedy in the history of Missoula occurred last night at 12 o'clock, which came near being a double murder and a suicide.... The murderer is William Worley, a gambler about 36 years of age... He came here from Butte two months ago with Blanche Renaud, who took quarters in ‘Hell’s Half Acre.’ Worley lived on proceeds of her life of shame. He lived secluded the greater part of the time. A few days ago the woman grew tired of him and began paying attentions to ‘Texas,’ a bartender, making Worley exceedingly jealous, having no effect whatever upon the woman, who gave him money to leave town. He gambled the money away, and Worley again returned. She refused to have anything to do with him. Last night Bess McCune, colored, called to see Blanche, and the two were drinking beer when Worley entered and asked Blanche to have a drink with him. She answered: ‘No, thanks.’ Then came the reply: ‘Is that so?’ At the same time he pulled a revolver and fired, the ball striking Blanche in the left neck. She reeled, stumbled and ran behind the colored woman. A second shot struck the colored woman in the back, causing little injury on account of the ball striking a whalebone in her corset. Both women made a rush into the next room, the murderer following and discharging four shots, one striking Blanche above the right breast, killing her instantly. She fell head first into a corner covered with blood...he colored woman first emerged from the den of carnage, followed by the murderer, who aimed the revolver at his own head without effect, the ball puncturing his hat, which he left behind on his mad course to the Missoula river, less than a block away. An officer came upon the scene and removed the murdered woman to the undertaker’s. A search was made and tracks were found leading to the water’s edge. Nothing more was found until this afternoon at 2 o’clock, when the murderer was found in the river 300 yards below the track, with his throat cut from ear to ear, evidently having done it after jumping into the river. He was found lodged against the ice frozen stiff.”

The Fergus County Argus
March 10, 1897

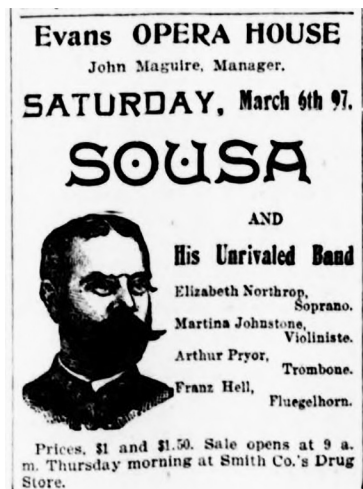
“Legislative Session Ended... Helena, March 6th. The last hours of the Fifth legislative assembly were marked as usual, by exciting scenes, passage of bills with little or no consideration, failure of meritorious measures which were supposed to have gone to the governor and the expelling of one member for having received a bribe. For some weeks past it had been known that money was being used to influence votes on certain measures and, on motion of senator Chandler, a committee was appointed to investigate. This report



was submitted the last day of the session and while it was unable to fasten the charge upon but one member, facts were revealed which pointed strongly to other members having been bribed. The name of representative Ramsey was unpleasantly associated with certain transactions, it being shown that certified checks from his bank had been tendered certain members. The member expelled was Martin Buckley, of Jefferson County, who admitted he had received money for support of the Rosebud County bill. to oppose the anti-gambling bill and for other services, he considering it ‘a mere business proposition.’”

The Anaconda Standard
March 17, 1897

“St. Patrick’s Day. This City Will Be Turned Over to the Irish Societies. Parade and an Oration... St. Patrick’s day in the morning and all day will be a grand holiday in this city. The Irish societies of this city have planned an elaborate programme and they will be assisted in it by the Butte societies, making the demonstration the largest ever seen in Anaconda on this day, dear to the hearts of every Irishman and popular with the masses. The visitors from Butte will come via the B., A., & P. railroad, at 10 o’clock a.m. and 11 o’clock a.m. The parade will form at 10 o’clock from the B., A., & P. depot... The line of march will be east on Commercial avenue to Chestnut street, thence to Park avenue, thence west to St. Paul’s church, where Rev. Pather Gallagher of Butte will say mass and preach an appropriate sermon. The parade will then be continued, counter marching to Chestnut street, south on Chestnut to Sixth, thence west to St. Ann’s hospital, where another



halt will be made. Speaker J.M. Kennedy will address the assemblage from the balcony of the hospital, and St. Patrick’s parochial school children of Butte will sing several selections. From the hospital the parade will march to Main street... The celebration will be concluded by a ball at Turn Halle in the evening, for which Professor Kennicott’s orchestra will furnish the music. The guests from Butte will be returned to their homes by trains leaving Anaconda at 3 o’clock p.m. and at 3 o’clock Thursday morning at the close of the ball.”

The Havre Daily News
March 21, 1937

“Exhibit at Great Falls Might Be Shown Elsewhere. The Montana press has devoted considerable space to editorial discussion of the horrible accident which claimed three lives near Great Falls a few days ago. It is unanimously agreed that excessive speed for which there was not the slightest reason was the cause of what is described as the ghastliest smashup on record in this vicinity. In a somewhat novel verdict the coroner’s jury which investigated the incident recommended that the wreckage of the automobile be placed on display for an interval, in order that the general public might absorb form the grisly tangle of crushed metal a lesson in the perils of fast driving. Our only supplemental thought in the matter is a wish that the wrecked machine might be shown all over Montana as well as in Great Falls. It might have an effect more potent than all the editorial warnings all of Montana’s editors can write. It might be a deterrent more powerful than any law Montana’s legislature could devise to correct a critical situation.”

The Big Timber Pioneer
March 25, 1937

“Range Provided Feed for Western Buffalo During Past Winter. Not a forkful of hay was fed the 400 bison ranging on the national bison range northwest of Missoula this winter, Dr. R. Norton, warden said while in Missoula recently. The range provided sufficient grass to keep the herd fit and healthy for the entire winter period, Without any assistance from man. The herd of the range near here is now rated the best in the world by zoological organizations, said Dr. Norton. It is kept such by careful rotation of grazing an annual elimination so as to prevent overcrowding of range. While there was a calf crop of 86 last spring, an elimination of 110 was made during the past few months. Of these 108 were slaughtered, and the beef sent to the Indians of the Flathead and the Blackfeet reservations for consumption. Two were shipped alive for other purposes.”

The Butte Montana Standard
March 26, 1962

“China Appreciates Aid—Taiwan Legislator Says in Butte. ‘If you give a Chinese a peach, he will want to honor you in return by giving you an orange twice as large.’ That is the manner in which Chen Chi-ying, member of the Legislative Yuan (council) of the Republic of China, describes the feeling of Nationalist China toward the United States. Chen, first elected to the Yuan in 1948, visited Butte Sunday. He will meet with Gov. Tim Babcock in Helena Monday, and will address a meeting of students at Carroll College in the Capital City. He is making a tour of the

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United States, meeting writers and literary critics and visiting universities and colleges to observe programs in literature and fine arts. He is also conferring with legislators at different levels of government to become more familiar with U.S. political, economic and cultural life. ‘The people of the Republic of China,’ Chen said, unlike many nations to which the United States has extended military, economic and cultural aid are deeply appreciative of the help offered. ‘We feel that your government, your people, have given us a lease on life, a hope of realizing our dream of one day returning to the mainland of China.’ Chen said it is the dream of the millions of people of Chung-Hua-Min-Kuo (Republic of China) that someday they will be able to eradicate the blight of communism from the soil of their native land... He said there is no wish by the Nationalist government to bring the United States or any other country into such a fight, but added, ‘we do need more military equipment. Given that equipment we could establish a front that would eventually drive the Soviet puppets out of China.’ He visited Butte Sunday for the first time, but felt at home here. Two of his daughters, Nancy and Miriam, studied at the St. James Hospital School of Nursing here and at Carroll College.”

The Helena Independent
March 30, 1962

“In Missoula Talk—U.S. Is Crucial Country—Dr. Mead. Missoula. Americans must quit viewing the world as a giant football game matching two teams against each other because an H-bomb doesn’t make a very good ball. That was anthropologist Margaret Mead’s message to a standing-room-only audience in the Montana State University Theater Thursday. In terms of the safety of the world, the United States is one of the crucial countries, Dr. Mead said. ‘As a nuclear power, we can destroy the world by ourselves but we can’t save it single-handedly. We need new inventions to cope with our problems.’ The biggest problem, she said, is to see our place in a mosaic of the whole planet—to get the kind of view Col. John Glenn got in orbit. From this vantage we would see no east or west but a steadily turning planet upon lives one human race—divided into many subgroups and many countries, but all interdependent.’ Dr. Mead is associate curator of ethnology, American Museum of Natural History, New York. She is also adjunct professor of anthropology, Columbia University.”★

—COMPILED BY JEN EAMES

MONTANA VOICES

Springtime in America: Unwinding the National “Curse of Trump”

Giving credit where credit is due, what President Joe Biden and the Democratic congressional majorities are accomplishing right now deserves applause. Biden is moving aggressively through executive orders and new agency leadership to overturn the mass of failures left by a reality-TV president – and oh the wailing and gnashing of teeth from those who took such joy in “making the libs cry again.” Unfortunately we are still subject to a pack of Trump-style culture warrior Republicans in the Montana legislature who, like their hero, have little experience in actual governance – and expect Montanans not to notice how out-of-step they are with the actual needs of our state and nation.

DEMOCRATS LEARNED THEIR LESSON

After so many years of “reaching across the aisle” and seeking the false panacea of “bipartisan support” with Republicans, Biden and his Congressional Democrats seem to have learned their lesson. Namely, that it’s a waste of time trying to mollify people who are much more cult-like than caring in their approach to public policy.

Biden learned this hard lesson as Obama’s vice-president where he witnessed the utter waste of Obama’s first two years in office with Democratic majorities in both chambers of Congress. Rather than move the “hope and change” agenda for which the Democratic base elected him, they kept trying to get the Republican minority to support a much-needed national health care program – and wound up with Obamacare that put the insurance industry firmly between patients and their health providers. They also wound up losing their Congressional majorities, in no small part due to the onerous Obamacare provision that citizens must purchase health insurance or be fined by the federal government. And that, as they say, was that for the Obama agenda.

But those mistakes appear to be in the past. Biden seems to understand that what is important is not whether you kow-tow to opposition demands, but that you move forward to produce, fund, and implement what the nation needs. Fortunately, after four long years of having Republicans and Trump ride roughshod over process and precedent, Speaker Pelosi and Senate Majority Leader Schumer have had it with trying to “work with Republicans” – who still refuse to believe voters booted their grifter boy out of the White House.

And so we suddenly have a new and wildly popular \$1.9 trillion Covid relief bill that not only garners 70% approval, but will, among many other things, get our children back in school while helping hundreds of millions of citizens and businesses recover after a very long year of pandemic hardships. That not a single Senate Republican voted for it makes

one wonder if they think their constituents somehow don’t have the same problems facing the rest of the nation.

It’s tempting to ponder, “what if Biden was like the former guy?” Would he say “no money goes to the states whose Republicans voted against the bill?” Or maybe point to Texas’ deregulated utilities debacle and say “no federal emergency relief for those Republican governors who can’t run their states.” That’s exactly what Trump did when California was wrestling with unprecedented wildfires and Minnesota was struggling with protests against police brutality to Blacks.

But fortunately for all of us, the curse of Trump is being lifted every day, as we return to a civilized society instead of barbarically turning citizens against each other through lies and deceptions.

Closer to home, in Montana’s Capitol the inexperienced, right-wing Republican majorities garnered little applause for their non-accomplishments in the first half of the legislative session. They are unlikely to garner much in the second half. And while the nation’s infectious disease experts say wearing masks and distancing remain necessary, Governor Gianforte ignores their expertise and lifts the “masks in public” requirement.

Moreover, the terrible legislation that has been passed hangs over Montanans like the Sword of Damocles. It will not be long before the idiocy of allowing anyone to carry concealed firearms anywhere will reap its grim price. Meanwhile, expect a tidal wave of court challenges to measures passed in apparent disregard for constitutionality or legality. Luckily, we still have a three-tiered system of checks and balances and this session will keep the Judiciary busy for years to come.

But here’s the upside: Montana’s legislative session will end in just over a month, and we’ll live with it. We’ve been through single-party Republican rule before – and the disastrous utility deregulation debacle for which it is infamous.

On the federal level, however, the benefits of reversing Trumpism will continue to accrue to the public from policymakers actually concerned about citizens’ well-being, rights, and a sustainable environment.

In the meantime, it’s Springtime in the Rockies – and since Montana has a lion’s share of federal lands, most Montanans will still be able to enjoy our natural legacy intact without finding a fracking rig in their favorite meadow or an oil slick on their favorite stream. The national political pendulum has already swung away from Trump’s violent extremism – and given what’s going on at the state level, it’s not unrealistic to believe the pendulum will swing here, too. ★

—GEORGE OCHENSKI

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MONTANA SPOTLIGHT

Capitol Watch: Governor Greg Gianforte's Connections to Petra Academy

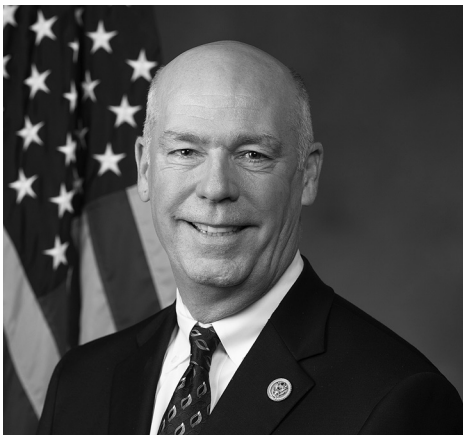
In this ongoing series, Montana Press will continue to present a biographical profile of Montana's new governor, exploring his history and following his leadership of state government. For the first two installments of the series, please visit montanapress.net.

For the Petra Academy community in Bozeman, the Gianforte family has been an integral part of its 25 years of operation. 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 Montana's longest-running private classical Christian school.

The sales of his New Jersey tech company, Brightwork Development, and his Montana company, RightNow Technologies, netted Gianforte approximately \$135.7 million. One recipient of the Gianforte family's wealth has been Petra Academy, a K-12 classical Christian school in Bozeman, one of few hundred classical Christian schools across the country, according to the Classical Christian website.

The Gianforte Family Foundation has donated millions to Petra Academy and also helped build the school's newest building. The four Gianforte children—Richard, David, Adam and Rachel—all are Petra graduates.

Petra Academy was started in 1995 by Louise Turner and grew from a few dozen to around 180 students. Inspired by a conference in Idaho, Turner decided to open her own school that taught a classical Christian curriculum. In its history Petra has employed four headmasters: Louise Turner, Todd Hicks, Craig Dunham and Justice Kerr.



THE GIANFORTE IMPACT ON PETRA

Petra held its classes in a private house during its early years before relocating to Genesis Business Park. According to a Billings Gazette article, Gianforte partnered with the construction company owned by Steve Daines' family to build the park, also home at the time to RightNow Technologies. (Daines, a Republican, is a former RightNow executive who since 2015 has served as the junior U.S. Senator from Montana). Genesis Business Park sat next to Grace Bible Church, the Gianforte's family church. Greg Gianforte also donated money to help build the church. In 2011, Petra students received a new school built on another plot of land in Bozeman

owned by Gianforte. Expansions to the current school continued up to 2015.

According to tax records, 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 year of the most recent available tax record).

According to Craig Dunham, Petra Academy Headmaster from 2015 to 2019, he received a call from Gianforte about an interview for the position of Petra headmaster while taking his daughter to her driver's license test.

"He was really the first person who I spoke to about Petra, about Bozeman, about Montana," Dunham says. "And you know, Greg is a big advocate for Montana and he loves the state. He loves Bozeman. I get tired of the rhetoric that says he's just an outsider pretending to be a Montanan and his family's been here for decades."

The Gianforte family moved to Montana in 1995 from New Jersey after selling Brightwork to McAfee for \$10 million in 1994. According to Dunham, Gianforte supported Petra because of the school's classical Christian approach to education.

Dunham says that despite his position as chairman of the board and his large donations to the school, Gianforte did not have extraordinary authority in decision-making at the school.

"Greg is an influential person, but he had no more influence in the process of things than any other board member," Dunham says. "Even though he was the chair of the board, they were all equals."

Dunham also says the idea he as headmaster had unlimited access to Gianforte's money is false. Gianforte was "fierce" on setting budgets, according to Dunham.

"People would think that I had a safe in my office and anytime I needed a couple \$10,000, or something like that I would just reach in because Greg put that there," Dunham says. "That wasn't the case."

Over the past twenty years, Petra's curriculum and staff have fostered a quality of education commensurate with the way education "used to be," Dunham says. By this the former headmaster means to say that young students are reading the "greatest works of Western civilization" in a way that doesn't simply inform, but shapes, them as people.

"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, our presidents, our first presidents... you know, that classical education."

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

"For us, we were just looking for students who were willing to work, and to embrace the challenge that our curriculum offered, and that families would be supportive of seeing that happen," says Dunham.

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 are represented at the school, and that some families identify as agnostic and simply see the value of the education Petra has to offer.

"I always used to tell parents that we don't, we don't provide an education, we're looking for students who want to earn an education, and that they are making it their own," Dunham says.

While students have to be accepted into Petra, the idea that Petra is overly competitive in terms of admission isn't true, Dunham says.

"I think it's important [to know] that it wasn't just the smartest students or the best students," Dunham says. "These were by and large, a lot of average kids."

THE STUDENT ACADEMIC EXPERIENCE

The Petra community is tightly knit and produces fewer than a dozen graduates each year. Sadee Drunkenmiller started her education at Petra in middle school after being homeschooled for her early education. A 2014 graduate in a class of five, she and Rachel Gianforte filled two class seats.

Drunkenmiller enjoyed Petra because her teachers invested in her and other students. She says this was made possible through small class sizes, something she grew to miss in college. While she notes that the curriculum was challenging, Drunkenmiller believes that if students put in the work they could succeed at Petra.

She credits Petra with her ability to be a critical thinker. Even though at times at Petra Drunkenmiller felt confused or disagreed with questions or arguments, she says she now feels more grounded in the way she views herself and others because of the environment the school provided.

"I would say it [Petra's curriculum] is oriented towards wanting to give you really rich material to work with and think about," Drunkenmiller recalls.

Drunkenmiller understands that Petra is not for everyone. Her family had four students in Petra, and not all of them continued their education at the school. One of her sisters spoke English as her second language and struggled reading and analyzing philosophers' texts.

"She's just trying to comprehend basic English, you know; she can't even get her pronouns straight," Drunkenmiller said. "And so that was a language barrier."

Hazel Laird says Petra was a place where she made many friends and participated in sports. She started at the school in first grade and says her teachers were always accommodating and that she grew very close to her graduating class of eight.

Laird appreciated the humanities portion of her education because it prepared her for college courses. Her father also sat on the board with Gianforte. She describes Gianforte as being passionate about Petra.

"He just helped bring about Petra; he wanted

it to be the best that it could be," Laird said. "And a lot of parents and teachers are very passionate about Petra and that education."

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 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 (not her real name), who asked to remain anonymous, 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 she began to feel different than her classmates. This was hard since they were her only friends and 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 was able to read a lot of books. She enjoyed that but she didn't get to read a lot of modern and post-modern literature. Smith also learned about European, Early American History and religious history but notes that she 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."

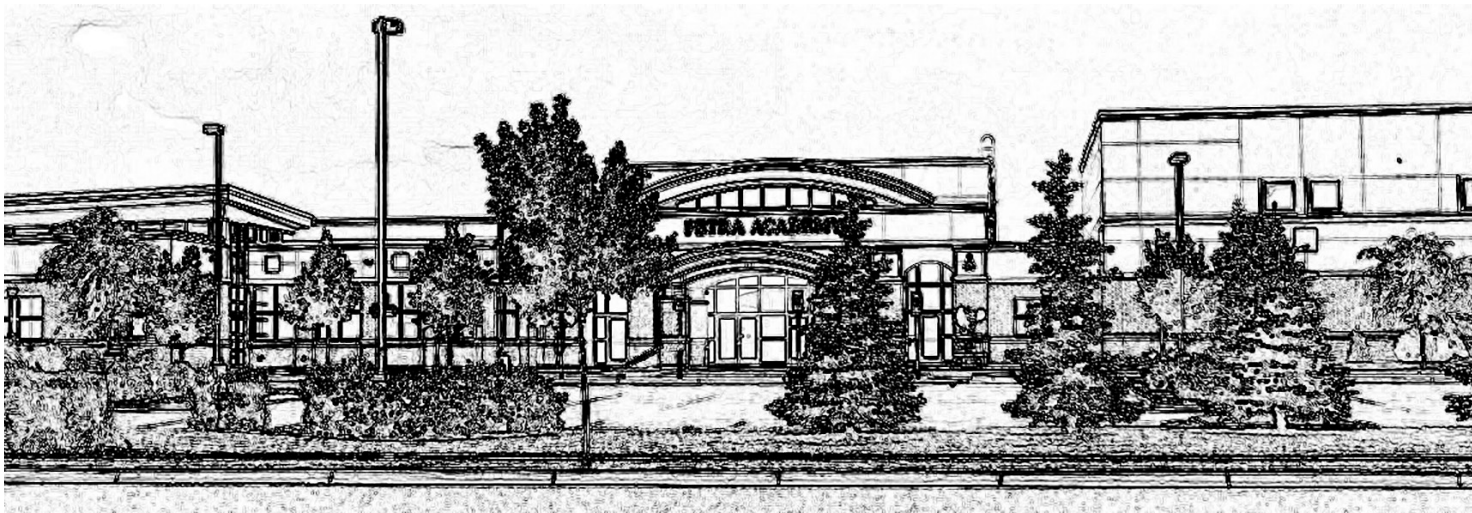
She wanted to leave Petra for public school after being drawn to the different electives at Bozeman High School and because many of her own interests were "taboo" or "alternative" and she didn't feel like she fit in with her classmates. But she ended up graduating from Petra.

"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 throughout that 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."

Knowledge of Greg Gianforte's significance and position at the school was not usually talked about among students at Petra. Looking back on their time at the school, however, some began to realize the influence he had on their education.



LEARNING BLOCKS AND PETRA

A 2015 Petra Academy admission application stated, “Petra Academy is not staffed to handle students with severe learning disabilities or those who have trouble behaviorally. For your child’s best interest, please be candid when you answer the following questions.” Questions on the application included the following:

Has your student ever been referred for testing or placed in a special program?”

Has your student received any other special help or tutoring?”

Has your student ever been diagnosed by a counselor/doctor/psychiatrist as having hyperactivity or attention deficit disorder?”

Has the student ever seen a counselor/doctor/psychiatrist for any type of social, behavioral, or mental problems?”

According to a 2017 HuffPost article, “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.”

Regarding Petra’s policies for students with disabilities, former headmaster Craig Dunham says, “No one school can meet every need. And that’s why you would often see public school kids coming to Petra is because the public school couldn’t meet their needs of what they were, what their families wanted for them.”

Dunham adds that during his time at Petra the school would try to find solutions with families to help students who needed extra assistance. Whether due to lack of staff, resources, or money, however, Petra often lacked what it needed to help students with severe disabilities during Durham’s four years at the school.

INCLUSIVITY AT PETRA

According to graduates like Druckenmiller and Smith, while Petra tried to accommodate students, providing a tutor or extra help for the student in need usually fell to the parents.

Smith believes this was due to the school’s lack of resources and the fact that teachers were unable to identify student disabilities, including mental health issues. According to Smith, unaddressed mental health issues were “rampant” throughout Petra during her time there.

“Telling students that, ‘You’re wrong for thinking something like this,’ and ‘It’s a sin,’” was disturbing for her, Smith says. “I would use the word religious trauma associated with the school. Lots of mental health issues just completely went unaddressed.”

Smith shared the story of class debate where the topic was gender identity. After the

arguments were laid out by her classmates, including an argument that gender was a social construct, the teacher told students that women have a certain role displayed in the Bible.

“And it’s also an inherent thing. It’s a spiritual thing. It’s a godly thing,” she recalls of the instruction she received to follow the Bible.

Smith says that, as with many schools, girls often were blamed for the way they dressed and were treated.

“It’s your fault if a man looks at you and is distracted,” Smith recalls being told. “‘Don’t be a stumbling block for your brothers in Christ’ was a huge, often-repeated phrase.”

Smith recalls another class discussion over whether “practicing gay people” should go to Hell. In a Humanities class she participated in a two-hour discussion about whether Christians should bake a gay couple a cake, or if they should refuse to do so on the grounds of their beliefs.

Aware of peers who were part of the LGBTQ+ community in her school, Smith says having these conversations had a heavy impact on the school community.

“It’s devastating to think that something you can’t control is a sin and will send you to hell,” she explains.

Smith says she does not think parents were aware of these sorts of classroom discussions, but she also believes many Petra parents may see sexual identity as a choice.

“I don’t necessarily want to place the blame on unaware parents because they just don’t know,” Smith says. “And their kids feel like they can’t talk to them about it because it’s so taboo.”

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

The parent admitted to not being surprised that the school was unequipped to address such issues given that Gianforte, who sat on the school’s board at the time, also assaulted reporter Ben Jacobs.

“Other board members were open to communication, but the headmaster [not the current 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 in a direct message to this reporter.

SCHOOL IMPACT ON STUDENTS AND FAMILIES

Knowledge of Greg Gianforte’s significance and position at the school was not usually talked about among students at Petra. Looking back on their time at the school, however, some began to realize the influence he had on their education.

“I think he was pretty influential, just in the sense that he took it upon himself to read through the curriculum,” Sadee Drunkenmiller recalls. “And I think that that was just important, because that meant that he could kind of understand the vision behind it.”

Drunkenmiller remembers Gianforte spoke to her class once about the economy and marketing when they were reading “The Wealth of Nations” by Adam Smith.

“But I always kind of thought of it as like, he was just a supporter,” Drunkenmiller says. “Petra was very much its own entity, and it’s still its own entity without him.”

Former student Sarah Smith met Gianforte, but never came to know him well. She did feel, though, like he and his family had an influence on the school.

“I know that Petra is often associated with Gianforte,” she says. Smith recalls Gianforte stepping down from the chair of the board once he started campaigning for governor.

Former student Mark Bond describes Gianforte as a “pillar” in the Bozeman community and “highly influential.” Bond and other members of his family attended Petra and, while Gianforte no longer serves on the board, Bond says, as far as he knows, Gianforte is still very much connected to the school.

“He still has strong relationships with many of the parents, students and alumni,” Bond says.

Hazel Laird shares that while her dad sat on the board with Gianforte, he was an employee at Gianforte’s RightNow Technologies.

“I think he did bring a lot of leadership and a lot of guidance to Petra,” Laird says. He had a vision of what he wanted it to be, and I think he helped bring that about to the large extent until he stepped down.”

Former headmaster Craig Dunham recalls Gianforte coming to the school to tell him that he was stepping down from his role as board chairman.

“I really didn’t want to hear that. I was hoping that he’d be able to continue or would want to continue,” Dunham says. Dunham, however, thinks Gianforte made a good call in stepping away from the school.

“It would have just been that much more of a headache, and it would have just gotten in the way of what we’re trying to do as a school,” Dunham says.

According to the parent who asked to remain anonymous, they were contacted by Gianforte and asked to support his political campaign. The parent did not agree with how “hostile” and “unloving” towards the LGBTQ+ community that Gianforte appeared to be, however, and declined to contribute.

“As Petra parents, we evaluated that the school under his authority did not align with our family’s belief systems and love toward marginalized communities,” they said in a direct message. They decided to remove their child from Petra.

The Gianforte Family Foundation has donated to anti-LGBTQ+ organizations, such as Focus on the Family and Alliance Defending Freedom. Greg Gianforte’s wife Susan also spoke out against an anti-discrimination ordinance that would protect LGBTQ+ community members from discrimination in their hometown of Bozeman.

PETRA CONNECTIONS

Connections between the Gianfortes and Petra have persisted during Greg Gianforte’s tenure as Montana’s lone U.S. House Representative (2017-2021) and, since January, as Montana’s Governor.

For instance, 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 for the ACE Scholarships board that gives scholarships for students to attend private schools, and is currently listed as a Montana Board of Advisors on the ACE scholarship website.

Petra offers a number of yearly attendance scholarships for students, per the Petra website. According to tax records, the Gianforte Family Foundation donated over \$7 million to ACE Scholarships between 2012 to 2018 (most recent record) and over \$13 million to Petra Academy from 2006 to 2018. Gianforte also was listed as a trustee for Petra from 2013 to 2018 (most recent record.)

WHY PETRA?

In a 2013 *Helena Independent-Record* article, Jeff Laszloffy, president of the Montana Family Foundation, former Montana House of Representatives member, and school choice advocate, said, “He [Gianforte] was having trouble getting qualified, educated employees from Montana to work at RightNow, and asked if the Foundation [Montana Family Foundation] could work to make Montana more friendly to alternative school choices.”

Gianforte’s wife Susan has served as the chair of the board for the Montana Family Foundation. The Gianforte Family Foundation donated nearly \$2 million to the Montana Family Foundation between 2005-2018 (most recent tax record.) Sarah Laszloffy, former Montana House of Representatives member, and daughter of Jeff Laszloffy, worked as the state director of ACE Scholarships before running for office, according to an article by the Missoula Independent.

Montana’s new Governor, Greg Gianforte, has devoted substantial amounts of his energy and money in Montana to teach young people to be classically educated Christians. Much of his effort has been directed toward a small private school in Bozeman, Petra Academy, an institution that considerably bears his stamp. ★

—MACKENZIE DEXTER
dexter.mackenzie20@gmail.com

Over 200 people connected with Greg Gianforte now have been contacted in producing this series. Montana Press reached out to Richard, David, Adam and Rachel Gianforte for comment. Rachel declined an interview request while Gianforte’s other children did not respond. Petra Academy was contacted for comment multiple times and did not respond. Current Headmaster Justice Kerr and former Headmaster Todd Hicks also declined to comment for this story. Montana Press also has reached out to Governor Gianforte multiple times for comment on this series.

MONTANA BOOKS

Journalist-Turned-Novelist C.J. Box

Having written 28 novels over the past 20 years, Wyoming's #1 *New York Times* bestselling author C. J. Box launches his third creative decade with two TV premieres.

The multiple book-award winner lightened the pandemic claustrophobia for some in November with "Big Sky," a tough-skinned new ABC-TV mystery series set in Montana, based on his Cody Holt/Cassie Dewell quintet ("The Highway," "The Bitterroots" etc.) and directed by David E. Kelley ("L.A. Law," "Ally McBeal," "Big Little Lies").

Later this year, Box's charismatic Wyoming game warden Joe Puckett will make his television debut in Paramount's yet-to-be-named production of a new series. Box is an executive producer on both.

This month, Box releases his twenty-first Joe Puckett mystery, "Dark Sky." In it, our ever-game game warden is ordered by the Wyoming governor to take a high-profile high-tech titan on an elk hunt, little knowing that the guest himself is someone else's prey.

All of which is a welcome overload of overdue exposure for C.J. "Chuck" Box, who with his wife Laurie has three daughters and two grandchildren. They live in Saratoga near the North Platte River.

MONTANA PRESS MONTHLY: Were you from a farm family?

C.J. BOX: No. My dad was a teacher, so I grew up an in-town kid. We now have a little ranch in southern Wyoming. We love it.

MP: Were you a reader as a kid?

BOX: Yes, I was. And kind of a secret reader

in a way. All my buddies, we certainly were not any kind of literary society, that's for sure. I was a wrestler and hunter and fisherman, and I always sought out books that were written about or by people in the region. I'm a big fan of Montana writers, and they kind of invite me to the book festival every year in Missoula; we don't even have one, we're too dinky. So I read a lot but I did it on my own.

Luckily, there were librarians who recognized that it was kind of unusual for a kid like me to be that interested in books, so I would ride my bike down to the Casper library and they would recommend things. So I was kind of self-taught in a way.

MP: Did you enroll at the University of Denver with a writing career in mind?

BOX: I wanted to be a journalist at that time. I went to DU on a journalism scholarship. That's the reason I went there, because I could go there cheaper than I could go to the University of Wyoming at the time, because the scholarship was a good one. That was a whole different experience; I think I was the only kid in my dorm who didn't have a trust fund, but it was good in other ways. That's how I ended up there.

MP: And did you dive into newspaper work upon graduation?

BOX: Well, my first job out of college was actually working for the Saratoga Sun weekly newspaper; that's where I live now. And I moved there from Denver and kind of fell in love with the area and the place and hoped to someday come back, and I did.

But I always say that's the best training you could ever possibly get for writing a novel is working as a small-town journalist, because you can't be in a silo; you meet people from all walks of life. I covered everything and I just got so much information. And I still use a lot of those experiences these days when I'm writing. And I usually find that when I discover an author who I really like, generally there's a journalism background, even though I didn't seek that out.

MP: A journalism background seems to help novelists acquire a truer voice for their characters, which is certainly a hallmark of your work.

BOX: Right. I agree with that. And I think too many of them, if they live in this kind of siloed world; they never write about people's jobs or how much they make, simple things that everybody wants to know but that for some reason are never mentioned.

MP: Case in point, a very believable game warden named Joe Pickett.

Box: Yep. I hear that from quite a few new readers. Especially women. They'll say, "That's the last thing I ever thought I've been interested in, a book about a game warden," but once they get into the family aspect and a couple other things... Actually, my readership, when I'd go on book tours, the events and book signings would be about 50-50 men and women, and a lot of husbands and wives, fathers and daughters. That's really unusual for the kind of books I write. I don't think my publicists believed me until they finally did some focus groups and found out that my readership is 51% women. It wasn't designed that way but that's how it turned out.

MP: Did you jump from journalism directly into fiction?

BOX: No. I did write a freelance column for several newspapers after I left the little weekly, but I went into other things. I

managed AAA Wyoming for a while, then went to the state and worked for the tourism department, and then my wife and I started a company where we coordinated international tourism promotion for five states, including Montana, for 24 years. I had a great job, and part of it was escorting groups of tour operators and journalists from Europe and Scandinavia and Australia around the region for years and years and years, and going to every little corner of at least the Rocky Mountain states. And that again, not intentionally, turned out to be one of the best kinds of training grounds I could have ever had. My company still exists; it's called Rocky Mountain International.

MP: Which certainly answers how you can write about our states with such accuracy.

BOX: Yeah, I used to take groups across Montana with no assistance or other personnel from the Montana Tourism office 'cos I got to know it so well. Not every corner but hey, I've been to Ekalaka! (laughs) And I can spell it!

MP: Did being a tourism escort conjure up plot ideas for your fiction?

BOX: You know, I didn't get like plot ideas, but what I really got was exposure to kind of the quirky parts of the Rocky Mountain West through the eyes of foreign journalists and tour operators who would point out things that you or I might just drive right by and not think twice about how unusual something is, and try to include those things in the books, realizing that not everybody is going to know what a snow fence is or has never seen elk hanging from the tree during the hunting season, that kind of thing. It was extremely valuable.

MP: And now, 20 years and 28 books later, your Rocky Mountain reality has entered a new medium with the premiere season of director David E. Kelley's TV series, "Big Sky." Did you hit it off immediately with the creator of "LA Law" and "Ally McBeal?"

BOX: Well, we talked on the phone the first few times. He contacted me and wanted to buy "The Highway" and develop it into a TV project, and at that time the second or third Cassy Dewell book was coming out and he just kept snapping each one as it came out. He's a great guy to work with as a writer. You have all these horror stories, but he really likes and appreciates writers.

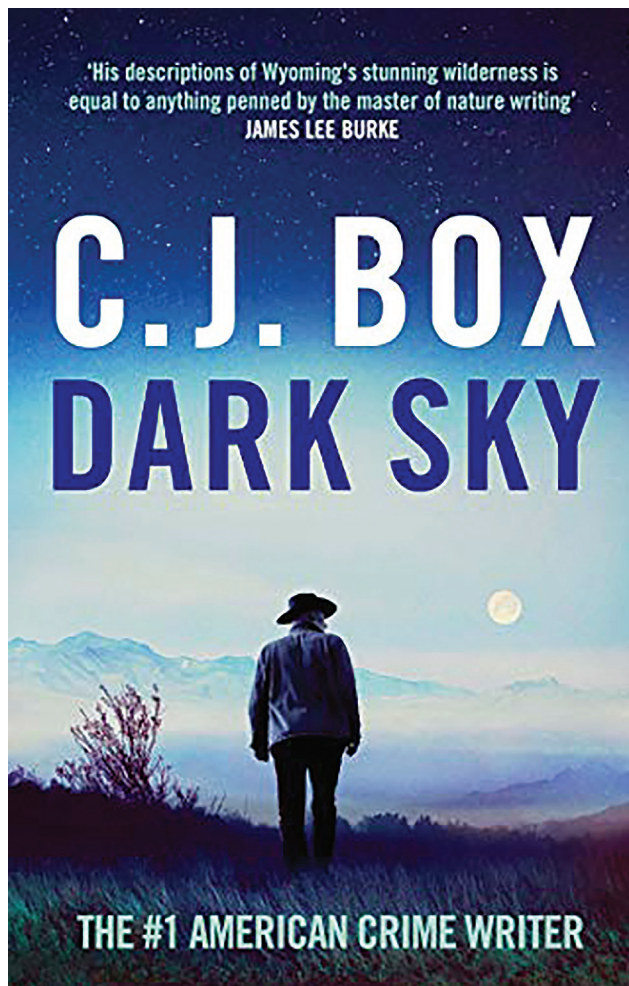
His new thing, almost everything he's doing, he's developing a series of novels, or a novel like "Big Little Lies," and he had an idea for "The Highway" because he thought it scared him to death. And he had a place for it with the Epix Network. But just like these things happen in Hollywood all the time, they got a new CEO who didn't like that idea, then all of a sudden it was homeless, and then a year ago he contacted me and said, "OK, ABC wants it, they did a straight-to-series order so here we go!" And given the pandemic, it's been kind of amazing that it even got off the ground.

MP: And not only out of state but out of country, right?

BOX: Well, they created a bubble in Canada. Originally, he was going to film starting last fall in Montana and New Mexico, but because the Canadian Film Commission went to all these producers and said, "We can build you a bubble in Canada if you do it here," they went for that. That's why it's not filmed in Montana.



Photo by Dave Neligh



MP: Were you invited to attend the filming in Vancouver?

BOX: No, and that's another part of this thing. My plan always was to go to the set, but with the (COVID) travel restrictions, I couldn't do it unless I was willing to quarantine for two weeks. So not only have I never been to the set, but neither has David Kelley. If they're still filming when things ease up, I'm planning to go, but who knows?

MP: It's interesting to note that he didn't quite produce "The Highway" the way you wrote it.

BOX: No. I was well aware that was going to be likely. I trust his judgment, because he's been doing this a long time. Everybody knows that the books are usually better than the TV shows or movies (laughs), and at the same time, we still watch TV shows and movies. My hope has always been that if there ever was one, that it would drive people to be interested in the books. Which is exactly what has happened; the sales of "The Highway" and all of those books have gone up over 10 times in the last couple of months, so it's been tremendous for book sales.

MP: Did he send you any production clips?

BOX: He sent me the pilot, his original pilot, and I had a couple of notes, suggestions. And they mainly had to do with, "You don't know what you're doing, David E. Kelley" but "I think that people in Montana are like this or appreciate this and here's why." And he took all those suggestions. But the thing about TV stuff is, it doesn't just change from season to season, it changes from episode to episode. I mean, they're writing new stuff in while they're filming. So you really can't have that kind of control. I've talked to a lot of authors who've had successful and unsuccessful TV and movies, and most of them just say it's two totally different things. If it creates interest in the books, then it's a win.

MP: One of the biggest surprises is that Cassie made it to the screen before Joe. I would have thought we'd have had a Joe TV series or movie at least 10 years ago.

BOX: Well, the books have been optioned by different people since the very first one. It's not like there was no interest; it's just that things would always happen – new producers, all sorts of things. In one case, we saw the direction that a Joe Pickett series seemed to be going, and it was so unlike the books that we were able to get out of it, which I'm really glad now that we were. We had a little loophole in the contract that after so many months we could opt out, and we opted out and shocked them a lot when we did.

MP: Do you know what Paramount plans to do with their upcoming Joe Pickett TV series?

BOX: Yes. The plan is to go book by book, starting with the first, second and third, in the first season, and then move on from there. After that, they may mix them a little bit, take a more current book in addition to an older one or whatever. But having met the people who are doing it, I have a lot of confidence that it's going to be very exciting.

The thing is, right now, because there are so many channels and so many streaming services and so much entertainment, it's not as lucrative as people might imagine. Maybe at one time it was, that if you got a show based on your books on TV that that was the ultimate for an author, but now publishing is the lion's share of our income as this continues to grow. Luckily, one kind feeds the other, which is great.

MP: And similarly, as books have increasingly gone digital, more people seem to be not only reading but purchasing new titles.

BOX: I know that my sales have gone way up. This is not TV-show related, but the pandemic. In a weird way, an awful lot of people maybe had the thought in mind to read this series but then finally had the chance to do it, so that made a difference. In my experience, publishers are like farmers and ranchers; no matter what, they're complaining; there's not enough people reading, it's not raining, it will never rain, duh, duh, duh. (laughs) They're always kind of down on things but if you look at the numbers, they've published more books every year for the last 10 years.

I think it really benefits those of us out in the sticks because you can instantly access a book, where not many years ago, you would have to order it locally. Nothing wrong with that but you couldn't just get it and have it. You couldn't hear about it that morning and have it immediately. ★

—JAY MACDONALD



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MONTANA BOOKS

Michael Mann's Latest Salvo on the Subject of Human Survival

Since 2019, contributor Breeana Laughlin has chronicled an ongoing series in the Montana Press about climate change in Montana. In this installment, Laughlin reviews a preeminent climate scientist's newest book and questions the author about how ongoing climate change impacts Montana and what would be potential solutions going forward.

Michael E. Mann's experience as a climate scientist has given him a unique perspective on today's ecological situation. His recently-released book, "The New Climate War," is an in-depth and surprisingly personal account of what we have done to this planet called Earth. Throughout his career, Mann has battled against powerful corporate campaigns aimed to deflect responsibility from polluting industrialists onto individuals. He's been privy to the words of "doomsayers" who cause people to feel helpless by making them believe "it's too late." He's also been the victim of internet trolls and social-media bots designed to form wedges between scientists and activists and the general public.

"But all is not lost," Mann assures readers. "The New Climate War" aims to debunk false narratives that have derailed attempts to curb climate change and strives to arm readers with a genuine path forward to preserve our planet. "Our civilization can be saved, but only if we learn to recognize the current tactics of the enemy—that is, the forces of inaction—and how to combat them."

Mann is a Distinguished Professor of Atmospheric Science at Penn State, with joint appointments in the Department of Geosciences and the Earth and Environmental Systems Institute. He's authored numerous books and won several awards, including a selection by Scientific American as one of the fifty leading visionaries in science and technology.

Mann's latest book will appeal to everyone who has ever been worried about climate change but suffers through feelings of guilt over not doing enough. And also to those who want solid information about climate change but feel overloaded by the vast variety of sources and lack of apparent answers on the subject.

After reading "The New Climate War," it's no wonder people feel helpless, confused and polarized when it comes to the climate. Mann explains that the "inactivists," those who don't want to see change, actually designed the current situation to make people feel that their attempts are useless.

"The forces of denial and delay—the fossil fuel companies, right-wing plutocrats, and oil-funded governments that continue to profit from our dependence on fossil fuels—can no longer insist, with a straight face, that nothing is happening," Mann says. "Outright denial of the physical evidence of climate change simply isn't credible anymore. So they have shifted to a softer form of denialism, while keeping the oil flowing and fossil fuels burning, engaging in a multi-pronged offensive based on deception, distraction and delay. This is the new climate war, and the planet is losing."

Early in the book, Mann explains the history of climate-change denial, fraught with

deceit, "scientists for hire," blame games and deflection schemes. Many have been tricked by the tactics of the inactivists.

Mann says the climate fight isn't just between the left-wing and right-wing, and it isn't necessarily a fight between Republicans and Democrats. Mann, in fact, gives Republicans credit for making progress on climate in the 1980s and 1990s. He also gives today's younger generation of Republicans credit for acknowledging climate-change as an important issue that needs to be addressed.

Over the years, people on all sides of the political spectrum have fallen into the traps of inactivists. This has created wedges between those who want to make positive change for the planet. Some have participated in the "blame game," telling scientists and other individuals that if they aren't taking extreme actions, like totally cutting out meat or refusing to fly on airplanes, they are hypocrites. Others then take away messages such as, "They want to take away our burgers."

Messages that solely focus on the individual take attention away from the bigger problem, Mann says.

"There are plenty of lifestyle changes that should be encouraged, many of which make us happier and healthier, save us money, and decrease our environmental footprint," Mann tells readers. "But consumer choice doesn't build high-speed railways, fund research and development in renewable energy, or place a price on carbon emissions. Any real solution must involve both individual action and systemic change."

Even Bill Gates and Michael Moore aren't immune from Mann's criticisms. He blasts Moore for releasing "Planet of the Humans," calling it a poorly-produced film that ended up being removed from YouTube for copyright infringement. Mann says billionaire Bill Gates isn't helping much either. Gates, he says, has adopted doomsayer ways by investing in risky and potentially unethical geoengineering schemes, instead of advocating for proven scientific tactics to reduce emissions and greenhouse gases.

Throughout "The New Climate War," Mann equips his readers to call out false solutions, recognize deflection schemes and concentrate on positive, effective change.

The scientist calls for active participation from citizens everywhere in this collective push forward. His four-point battle plan includes disregarding the doomsayers, recognizing that the younger generation has to become the game-changers, educating those who can still be reached, and realizing that changing the system will require systemic change.

The book leaves readers with an arsenal of information and tools to move forward. It also offers cautious optimism for our planet and the future.

Michael Mann's conclusion is hopeful. "We do not face a scenario of near-term societal collapse or human extinction. The only assurance of such scenarios would be our abject failure to act. If there were not still a chance of prevailing in the climate battle, I would not be devoting my life to communicating the science and its implications to the public and policymakers."

The New Climate War

the fight
to take back
our planet

'Shows us how we can take the bold steps we must all take together to win the battle to save this planet.'

GRETA THUNBERG

Michael E. Mann

MONTANA PRESS: In "The New Climate War" you emphasize the need for individuals to hold government officials and corporations accountable. How do you think President Biden's sweeping executive orders will impact the war on climate change? How do you see polluting industries and wealthy stakeholders fighting back against these orders?

MICHAEL MANN: Joe Biden ushers in a new era of global cooperation, allowing us to repair much of the damage that was done to our reputation on the world stage by Trump over the past four years on the international front, while once again advancing policy action on the domestic front. But make no mistake; we still have a monumental challenge ahead.

The sobering reality is that even if every country meets their commitments under Paris (and many, including the U.S. and EU are currently falling at least a bit short), that gets us less than halfway to where we need to be, i.e. on a path to limiting warming below 2C (let alone the more stringent 1.5C many are now calling for). So Paris is a good starting point, but we need to go well beyond Paris now to achieve the reductions that are necessary.

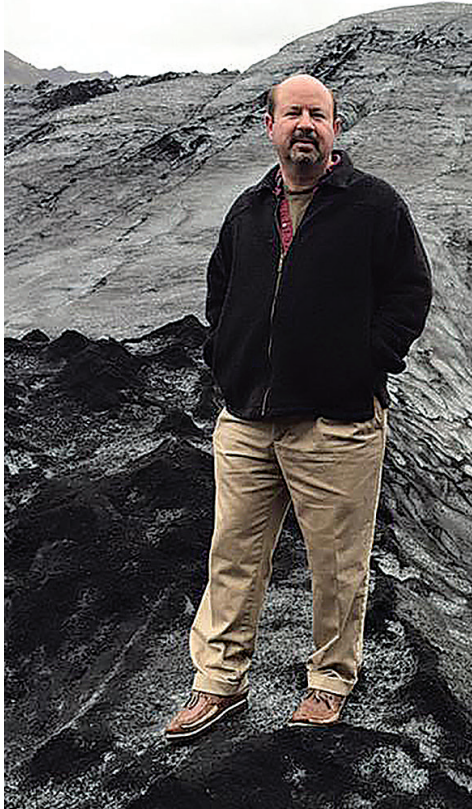
We do indeed still face challenges and pushback from the fossil-fuel industry,

including the insidious tactics I describe in my book wherein fossil-fuel lobbyists, advocates and allies in the conservative media, while moving away from outright denial—because it just isn't credible anymore—have tried to distract, deflect, divide, and sow "doomism" in their effort to suppress support for climate action. We must recognize those tactics and fight back, because we're so close now to meaningful climate action we can taste it. Only these obstacles lie in our path. That's the main overall point of my book.

Biden has put forward a bold climate plan with ambitious targets for reducing carbon emissions and support for both regulatory and market-driven policy measures. But executive actions alone won't be adequate. We need climate legislation. With a 50/50 split Senate, there is an opportunity for meaningful climate legislation but it will require some degree of compromise. We probably won't see an expansive Green New Deal pass the Senate. But we might see meaningful action, including market incentives to accelerate the clean energy transition, that will complement the climate efforts by the administration.

Though my new book ("The New Climate War") went to press this summer, it anticipates precisely where we would likely be at this point:





“Given an even modestly favorable shift in political winds, one could envision [a bold climate bill] passing the House and moving on to the Senate with a half-dozen or more moderate conservatives crossing the aisle, joining with Senate Democrats to pass the bill within the next year or two.”

In short, I’m cautiously optimistic that we’ll see meaningful action here in the U.S. and a reassertion of global leadership on climate.

MP: The majority of Montana’s state government is run by Republicans who have refused to acknowledge climate change. Do you see this dynamic creating a stalemate with the Federal Government or do you think Montanans can still make progress on climate issues?

MANN: I had the pleasure of participating in a climate forum at Montana State University a few years ago in Bozeman. The two keynote speakers were myself and by Bob Inglis, a conservative former Congressman from South Carolina who promotes conservative climate solutions. I was encouraged by the conversations that we had. Montanans indeed tend to be conservative, perhaps an expression of the enduring rugged individualism of the old intermountain west. But I think that streak also brings with it a deep appreciation of the outdoors, of our mountains and our lakes. And support for preserving our environment.

There is also a generational shift underway. Young Republicans (under the age of 40) overwhelmingly support action on climate. My sense is that, despite their political conservatism and a streak of libertarianism, Montanans want to be on the right side of this battle. And I’m confident they will be.

MP: How can Montana communities that depend on fossil fuels adapt to the changing regulations and energy needs? What opportunities do you see for clean energy jobs? How could those currently working in the fossil fuel industry make the transition to clean energy jobs?

MANN: It’s a great question, and one I think about quite a bit living in the state of Pennsylvania, a state that has a true fossil

fuel legacy. It’s where oil was discovered in the U.S. and it was built on coal. We must make sure that those who risk being left behind in the inevitable transition from fossil fuels toward renewable energy are taken care of. Through job training programs, programs to revitalize communities impacted and provide new jobs.

There are far fewer jobs in the fossil fuel industry, which is largely automatized now, than are available in renewable energy where there is significant labor needed for new installation etc. And coal underwent a death spiral under Trump who promised to reinvigorate the industry, but couldn’t possibly fight the structural economic forces in our economy as the age of fossil fuels comes to an end and the age of green energy commences. But that’s no consolation to someone who has lost a job. One of the things I really like about the recently announced Biden plan is that it provides resources for these sorts of programs, including support for a civilian climate corps that would hire many thousands to work on green energy infrastructure, green ag/forestry/land management and funds for restoration of relic fossil fuel sites turning brownfields, for example, into hubs for new economic activity.

MP: Why is it important to include environmental justice in the fight against climate change? What opportunities do indigenous and other underrepresented groups have to make a difference in the way the United States conducts climate priorities and how can others support them?

MANN: I comment on this toward the end of the book: “Social justice is intrinsic to climate action. Environmental crises, including climate change, disproportionately impact those with the least wealth, the fewest resources, and the least resilience. So simply acting on the climate crisis is acting to alleviate social injustice. It’s another compelling reason to institute the systemic changes necessary to avert the further warming of our planet.”

In short, my view is that these things are inextricable, and by acting on climate, we are creating a more just world. At a time when we are going through a tipping point like societal reckoning on matters of cultural and racial injustice, It’s important to recognize that these are synergistic efforts to create a better world.

MP: Will increasing the amount of public lands help in the fight against climate change? How can states like Montana, with a large percentage of public land, benefit from Biden’s commitment to increase and preserve the amount of public land in the United States? What challenges do you foresee when it comes to enacting these measures?

MANN: I must confess it’s somewhat outside my wheelhouse, but I can offer some impressions as someone who has spent some time there and has ties to the state. My experiences in Montana have taught me that there’s a real love for the land, a respect for the land. My best man grew up on a ranch in Montana—he and his family currently live in Kalispell—in fact, I wrote an article a number of years ago after returning from a visit: (“Fire and Ice: What I Did on My Summer Vacation” at ecowatch.com). We should make sure to honor that respect by insuring there are opportunities in the form of stimulus for wind farms, regenerative agriculture, and all of the other ways that we help Montanans live off the land while helping address the climate crisis. It’s a win-win scenario. ★

—BREEANA LAUGHLIN

From Chekhov

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ANSEL ADAMS GLACIER NATIONAL PARK

The newspapers of the 1940s across America featured regular articles on the new art of creative photography with photographer Ansel Adams often the star in discussions of modern technique, form and finished product.

During the time immediately before and after World War II, Adams traveled the country extensively giving lectures, judging photography competitions, publishing books and participating in promotions, building the photography collection at New York's Museum of Modern Art and other museums around the country, and shooting and developing iconic images of subjects across the United States.

Always on the move, Adams would often fly from coast to coast, from California where he hosted "forums," or lengthy workshops at his Yosemite studio, to New York where he would give lectures on the art of photography at the Museum of Modern Art where he was helping build their department of photography.

Adams' technique became the standard for artistic photography at the time and his expertise was in high demand. His lectures and appearances in late 1940 and 1941 alone included bus and rail stops in Dayton, Ohio; Bangor, Maine; Lexington, Kentucky; Detroit, Michigan; and Sante Fe, New Mexico, where Adams maintained a devoted community of friends and fellow artists.

Rather than working in the style of "pictorialism," an aesthetic movement still popular at the time where the photographer would manipulate an otherwise straightforward photograph, Adams' photography is known for a realist style in which the clarity of the lens is emphasized.

An assignment from the Department of the Interior in 1941 and a 1946 Guggenheim Fellowship enabled Adams to both capture and chronicle the wonders of America's wild lands exactly as they appeared in this era.

Eager to emulate Adams' work, students of all sorts flocked to the new style and looked for ways to learn about his technique and process.

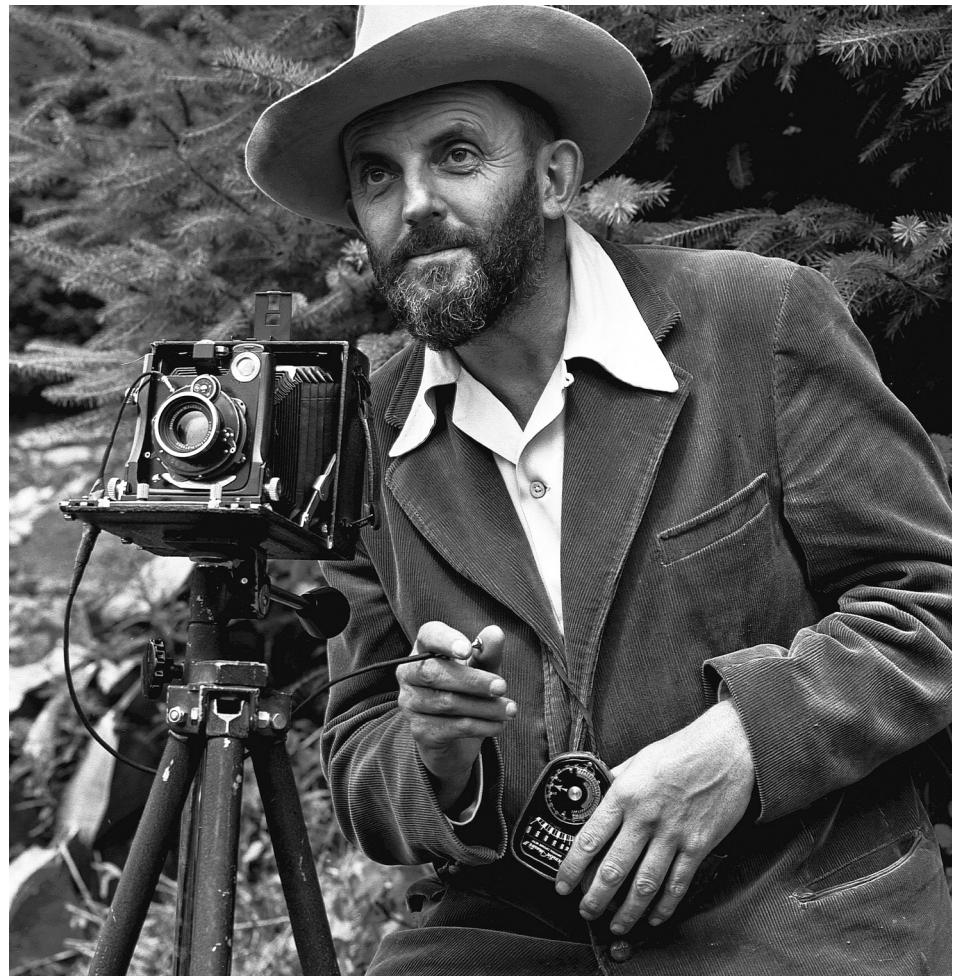
In the many lectures and classes he presented during the 1940s, Adams discussed the basic elements of photography and inspected audience and participant prints, offered criticism, and "strewed pearls of photographic wisdom," as was noted in contemporary accounts.

"A basic principle of Adams' forthright new approach to photography is startlingly direct and obvious," a reporter writes in the *Daily News* in Los Angeles in 1948, "'Know what you're after before you begin,' he says."

"Ansel Adams is one of a few important contemporary photographers," the article continues. In the *Daily News*, the review of one of Adams' recently published instructional books is part of a special photography section typical of the time, flanked by ads for the House of Rothschild "Portable Strobo-Lite" and want ads for darkroom space for rent along with advertisements to help readers, "Know your shutter - And get 30 to 300% more and better pictures than ever before."

Ansel Adams was a lifelong advocate for environmental conservation and his photographic practice was deeply entwined with his advocacy. Between 1929 and 1942, Adams's work matured and he became more established. The 1930s were a particularly experimental and productive time for him and paved the way for the work he would do in the 1940s, including photographing Glacier National Park for FDR's Department of Interior.

(Photo from National Park Service, by J. Malcolm Greany, c. 1950)



While nearly everyone now can produce extraordinary shots from real life on their handheld phones and then use camera app filters to perfect the image before simply uploading pictures to a website for high-quality prints of any size to be delivered directly to their door overnight, in the 1940s the art of photography was an intensive hobby or profession where photographers did everything from maintaining their camera and equipment to selecting shots and developing and printing their work.

According to the 1948 *Daily News* article, "Ninety-nine times out of 100 we casually come across a subject that promises interest, shoot it and then spend hours trying to 'make a picture' from our negative. Ansel Adams visualizes a final print, decides the picture proportions and degree of enlargement; selects a paper contrast, and the procedure of handling the negative; determines the lighting conditions, then chooses the film, lens stop and exposure and as the last step in creating a picture, he trips the shutter..." At this point in the process, the film had still to be developed by hand.

The Shreveport Journal in 1941 adds: "Ansel Adams delights in the extreme brilliance of a carefully-made photograph. His Western scenes are so lucid and detailed that, viewing them, one's vision is extended and clarified."

GENESIS OF A GENIUS

Born on Feb. 20 1902 in San Francisco, California, Ansel Adams suffered a broken nose in a violent fall during an aftershock of the 1906 earthquake and witnessed the financial collapse of his wealthy family in the financial panic of 1907—all before he was six years old.

As an only child growing up in a house situated among the sand dunes of the Golden Gate, with older parents and elderly live-in family, Adams was drawn to the natural world of the Pacific Coast for company.

According to biographer William Turnage, "Natural shyness and a certain intensity of genius, coupled with the dramatically 'earthquaked' nose, caused Adams to have problems fitting in at school... The most important result of Adams' somewhat solitary and unmistakably different childhood was the joy that he found in nature, as evidenced by his taking long walks in the still-wild reaches of the Golden Gate. Nearly every day found him hiking the dunes or meandering along Lobos Creek, down to Baker Beach, or out to the very edge of the American continent."

Adams taught himself to play the piano and read music and the professional study of music became a substitute for formal schooling.

By 1920, concert pianist was his chosen profession.



"Evening, McDonald Lake, Glacier National Park," Montana
(Credit National Archives, photo no. 519861)



"In Glacier National Park," Montana
(Credit National Archives photo no. 519857)

"The careful training and exacting craft required of a musician profoundly informed his visual artistry, as well as his influential writings and teachings on photography," writes Turnage, who goes on to emphasize that Adams' life was also, in Adams' own words, "colored and modulated by the great earth gesture" of the Yosemite Sierra where the photographer spent time every year from 1916 until his death in 1984.

"From his first visit, Adams was transfixed and transformed," explains his biographer. "He began using the Kodak No. 1 Box Brownie his parents had given him. He hiked, climbed, and explored, gaining self-esteem and self-confidence. In 1919 he joined the Sierra Club and spent the first of four summers in Yosemite Valley, as 'keeper' of the club's LeConte Memorial Lodge. He became friends with many of the club's leaders, who were founders of America's nascent conservation movement." Adams also met his wife Virginia in Yosemite. Her

family had the first land claim there and her father ran a photographic studio in the park. The pair would eventually live, work and raise their two children in the Park.

Adams' photographic work overtook his musical career in the late 1920s when he obtained the support of a wealthy patron, Albert M. Bender, a San Francisco insurance magnate. This shift would transform Adams' life in the coming decade as he built a body of work, connected with like-minded artists and other photographers and started to break away from the pictorial style of the era to forge ahead with realism and capture the majesty of the wild places he loved.

Turnage notes the pivotal moment in Adams' career: "Bender's benign patronage triggered the transformation of a journeyman concert pianist into the artist whose photographs, as critic Abigail Foerstner wrote in the *Chicago Tribune* 'did for the national parks something comparable to what Homer's epics did for Odysseus.'"

ART, NATURE AND SUSTENANCE

The photographs of Carleton Watkins (for whom Yosemite's Mt. Watkins is named) had influenced the unprecedented decision to set aside Yosemite Valley as a state park in 1864, and the photographs of William Henry Jackson figured in decision of Congress to create the first national park, Yellowstone, in 1872. Growing up with this legacy, Ansel Adams was determined to be a part of the continuing use of photography to elevate the importance of wild places.

In 1927, an Adams photograph of Yosemite titled, "Monolith, the Face of Half Dome," propelled his career as a commercial photographer and artist. From this time forward, his work only grew in popularity and esteem.

The combination of his love of nature and work in capturing vistas within the Sierras and other protected lands was a pioneering effort to bring nature photography to the American art world. Combined with exhaustive efforts to effectively to preserve wilderness and to articulate the "wilderness idea," Adams' work

also became an important part of the American conservation movement, providing a constant reminder of landscapes in need of protection. The artist imbued this ethos into his work and attempted to capture the sentiments that so moved him when he was outdoors in wild places.

"I was climbing the long ridge west of Mt. Clark," Adams wrote of a high-country experience in Yosemite where he found himself, "suddenly arrested in the long crunching push up the ridge by an exceedingly pointed awareness of the light... I saw more clearly than I have ever seen before or since the minute detail of the grasses, the clusters of sand shifting in the wind, the small flotsam of the forest, the motion of the high clouds streaming above the peaks. There are no words to convey the moods of those moments."

As biographer Robert Turnage notes, "Many of his friends insisted that photography, unlike music, was not capable of expressing the finer emotions of art. But there was persuasive counter-evidence. (*Continued on next page.*)

“On one of his visits to Taos [New Mexico] he met the noted photographer Paul Strand. Chancing to see some of Strand’s negatives of the New Mexico landscape, Ansel was mesmerized. On the strength of the negatives alone... Ansel became convinced of the expressive power of photography and resolved to devote himself entirely to its challenge.”

In one of his most notable works, Adams made historic photographs of the Taos pueblo to illustrate nature writer Mary Austin’s text and received equal billing with the author, a writer who had already produced the nature classic “The Land of Little Rain” in 1903.

A copy of the “Taos Pueblo,” book produced by master bookbinder Hazel Dreis in 1930, is still passed along to each successive governor of the pueblo along with the ebony cane given to the Taos governor by Abraham Lincoln in 1863.

In the early 1930s, Adams joined West Coast photographers Edward Weston, Imogene Cunningham, and Willard Van Dyke in forming Group f/64. The term was derived from a number designating a very small lens aperture capable of producing an image with maximum definition; it defined a new modernist aesthetic that was based on precisely exposed images of natural forms and found objects. The f/64 group advocated “straight”

photography rather than the pictorial method of softening realism in their work. f/64 was to have a revolutionary influence on attitudes in the world of photography. Their first show at the M.H. DeYoung Memorial Museum in San Francisco, in 1932, further elevated Adams’ work and paved the way for one-man shows at the museum and at Alfred Steiglitz’s gallery in New York.

Adams produced his first widely distributed book, “Making a Photograph” in 1935 but he continued to face financial pressures. The photographer worked with commercial clients such as Kodak, IBM, *Life* and *Fortune* magazines and the National Park Service to make ends meet and was limited in his creative endeavors during the late 1930s.

“Adams’s energy and capacity for work were simply colossal,” writes Turnage. “He often labored for eighteen or more hours per day, for days and weeks on end. There were no vacations, no holidays, no Sundays in Ansel Adams’s life. Frequently, after an intense period of work, he would return to San Francisco or Yosemite, promptly contract the ‘flu,’ and spend several days in bed. His hyper-kinetic existence was also fueled by alcohol, for which he had a particular fondness, and a constant whirl of social activity, friends, and colleagues.”

A FATED ASSIGNMENT

Completed in 1936, the Interior Department Headquarters in Washington, D.C. was the first building to be authorized, designed, and built by the Franklin Delano Roosevelt Administration. According to the Department of the Interior, the finished building reflects the dedication and commitment to government service of President Roosevelt and Secretary of the Interior Harold Ickes, who believed that a “new day” had arrived in which the government would provide for its citizens.

Plans for the new Interior building combined elements of both modern and classical architecture and were to illustrate the principles of utility and economy characteristic of the “New Deal” style. A stripped classical motif rejected the lavish design, ornate decoration, and exorbitant construction costs of earlier federal buildings. Most of the structure’s exterior would feature smooth Indiana limestone with accents of pink granite and the building was to have more than three miles of corridors, with the main corridor on each floor stretching a full two blocks.

White House archives attest that Secretary Ickes believed that the Interior building should be symbolic of the Department’s mission to manage and conserve the nation’s vast

resources. When Ickes secured \$110,000 for the decoration of the building, he considered first the possibility of using painted murals to decorate its interior space, but in 1936 Ickes met Ansel Adams while attending a conference on the future of national and state parks where Adams was presenting photographs of the King’s River area in California for National Park consideration. Ickes and Adams immediately discovered a common bond in a deep love for the beauty of America and Ickes learned that besides the small, lovely prints the photographer had recently brought him, Adams could also make large photographic murals.

According to Mary S. Alinder, Adams’ biographer, co-editor of his book of letters and last chief assistant: “In late August 1941, the appointment came through and Ickes hired Ansel as a ‘photographic Muralist, Grade FCS-19,’ for daily compensation of \$22.22 (the highest rate then paid to a consultant), plus four cents a mile and five dollars per diem to cover room and board. The contract, specifying that he was to work no more than 180 days, was in effect from October 14, 1941 to July 2, 1942. Offering the possibility of nearly four thousand dollars’ pay for half a year’s work (not including the money he would earn when he actually made the murals),



“From Logan Pass, Glacier National Park,” Montana
(Credit National Archives photo no. 519864)



the Mural Project looked to be an enormous financial windfall for the hardworking Ansel.”

The appointment was no less advantageous for Secretary Ickes, who reportedly believed Adams’ work could most aptly reflect the Department’s mission to preserve “the beautiful land, the proper stewardship of our resources, and the people we serve.” The theme of the assignment was “nature as exemplified and protected in the national parks and national monuments of the United States.”

By 1941, Adams was busy assisting in the organization of the new Department of Photography at the Museum of Modern Art in New York and serving as vice-chair for the Museum’s nationwide “Image of Freedom” contest for amateur photographers. He had also recently published a children’s book, “Michael and Anne in the Yosemite Valley” and traveled across the country holding lectures and arranging “forums” or photography workshops featuring himself and his artistic colleagues as instructors.

As of October 14, 1941, Adams began working earnestly on the Department of Interior commission. Mary Alinder notes it was customary for Adams to reserve days for his own personal work during the commercial assignment and he was scrupulous in his accounting.

Alinder recounts, “The bill he submitted to the Department of the Interior for his autumn

1941 trip totaled \$232.97; he traveled for forty-seven days, yet charged the government for only eight and a half days for work and per diem, and for only forty miles of travel.”

During the fall of that year, he shot one of his most famous photographs, “Moonrise, Hernandez, New Mexico” late in the afternoon on October 31, 1941, from a shoulder of highway near the unincorporated community of Hernandez, New Mexico just north of Santa Fe.

A *Santa Fe New Mexican* article from just a few days later on November 4 reports that the photographer was in high spirits there in late 1941, perhaps due to his steady work and the ability to put time and energy in his own artistic projects. The article notes that, although primarily known as a photographer, “To his friends, he is also known for an exceptional musical talent, finer indeed than that of many performing concert artists... Sunday night he was in rare form as his fingers rippled through Bach and Mozart, or sonorously proclaimed Wagner... and there were the brilliant improvisations of Mr. Adams... Santa Fe heard Mr. Adams striking the correct musical notes of difficult trills and runs with a lemon in one hand and an orange in the other the fruit taking the place of fingers in his execution. With amazing accuracy there was further musical clowning in which the pianist used his feet and even sat down on the keyboard for final chords.”

Only five weeks later on December 7, 1941 the focus of the entire nation altered with the bombing of Pearl Harbor. Adams lobbied for military work but as a nearly forty-year-old husband and father, he was ineligible for the draft. Eventually he would make prints of classified negatives and surveillance shots of Japanese forces in the Aleutian Islands and teach photography to troops at Fort Ord. Adams was also to find war work close to home, shooting Yosemite Valley and its famed Ahwahnee Hotel in anticipation of its conversion to a Naval Convalescent Hospital.

But, as the *Oakland Tribune* reported in December 1941, Adams’ immediate contribution to raise spirits was continuing a tradition started in Yosemite the year before when Adams scripted and directed the “Bracebridge Dinner at the Ahwahnee,” a Christmas play in Yosemite “which recreated the customs and costumes of a 13th Century celebration in old England as described by Washington Irving in his sketch book.”

Adams composed the music and traditionally played the jester. The tradition continued through the war years when servicemen were hospitalized at the hotel. For the rest of his life, Adams never missed a performance, returning home every year to Yosemite at Christmas to produce the pageant.

PHOTOGRAPHING GLACIER NATIONAL PARK

The holdings of the National Archives Still Picture Branch include 226 photographs taken for the National Parks project assigned by Secretary Ickes, most of them signed and captioned by Adams. Photographs were taken at the Grand Canyon, Grand Teton, Kings Canyon (contributed by Adams from his work in the 1930s), Mesa Verde, Rocky Mountain, Yellowstone, Yosemite, Carlsbad Caverns, Glacier, and Zion National Parks. The stills in the collection also include Death Valley, Saguaro, and Canyon de Chelly National Monuments, pictures taken at Boulder Dam, and at pueblos in New Mexico and indigenous sites in Arizona. Many of the latter locations show Navajo and Pueblo Indians, their homes and activities.

“Ansel recorded all the technical data for every negative and print he made,” recounts biographer Mary S. Alinder. “But he did not make notes of the date a negative was made. For much of his life as a photographer, he didn’t think that was important. Because of that it is really hard to say how many times he was in Montana and for how long. We do know that for his Mural Project he arrived by train in Billings on the evening of June 11, 1942.” (*Continued on next page.*)

"The great wilderness areas, designated for the perpetuation of the intangible qualities of Nature, must be given appropriate use and interpretation, and complete protection. Perhaps one of the most positive ways of achieving this objective is to encourage writers, artists, and photographers to utilize these profoundly beautiful areas as sources of inspiration and interpretation to the fullest possible extent. It is necessary to penetrate the illusion of mere "scenery" to achieve a more profound understanding of the world about us."

— Ansel Adams in his essay for his 1950 book,
"My Camera in the National Parks"



"In Glacier National Park," Montana (Credit National Archives photo no. 519877)

In his autobiography, Adams relates a story of traveling by rail to the parks outside California. Alinder says that he was scrupulous about accounting for his time.

"This demanded careful routing simply to be sure I was moving about with minimum mileage and expense to the government," Adams writes. "As it was, every one of my travel vouchers was routinely inspected and compared to railroad timetables. All were cleared but one. When I left Rocky Mountain National Park for Glacier National Park, I discovered the shortest bus trip to the next railroad station had been discontinued and I had to take a longer route. A few months later a man with a bulky briefcase visited me in my San Francisco studio with a claim against me for three dollars and eighty cents that represented an over-minimum cost for the bus trip. I explained the situation. It was apparent that his office worked from an out-of-date timetable and did not know of the cancellation. He looked most disconsolate and, pointing to his inch-thick file, said, 'Look what we went through for three dollars and eighty cents!' In the spirit of patriotic generosity I wrote him a check for the full amount. He said, 'Washington thanks you,' and departed."

Throughout the month of June 1942, Adams made a number of photographs in Glacier National Park, 23 of which are now accessible to the public through the National Archives. He also returned to Glacier on subsequent assignments and eventually made photographs of subjects which included "Josephine Lake," "Evening," and "Lake McDonald," (both in "My Camera" in "The National Parks"), and "Noon Clouds," "Mount Jackson" and "Mount Fusilade" ("The Portfolios of Ansel Adams").

The images of Lake McDonald were photographed at least twice from the same spot, the same tripod holes, in the daytime and in the evening. Alinder says Adams preferred the evening exposure, "the lake luminous and reflecting a strand of white clouds while a dark shadow crosses the lake at the image's bottom and an ominous dark amorphous cloud hovers over everything."

Adams recorded that the image was made late in the evening under "extreme smoke haze." He also made photographs at Saint Mary's Lake, of Heaven's Peak, Going to the Sun, and a few more landscapes.

The Mural Project was canceled on June 30, 1942 after Adams' visit to Glacier, due to the escalating social constrictions of World War II. According to Alinder, Adams delivered 225 small work prints to Secretary Ickes but was never hired to make the actual murals. The more than 200 photographs that Adams took were stored in the National Archives but never printed or hung as murals until the next century when the images, part of "Ansel Adams: The Mural Project 1941-1942," were installed on the first and second floors of the Department of

the Interior in 2010 as originally envisioned by the artist and Secretary Ickes.

Adams returned to Glacier National Park in 1946 on assignment with *Fortune* magazine, "making a pack trip through the park" on October 5 of that year according to the *Great Falls Tribune* and the park Superintendent's reports.

The images Adams captured of Glacier in the 1940s were widely circulated by himself and others. Standard Oil featured one of Adams' pictures of Glacier in 25 promotional "See the

West" prints distributed from 1946 to 1948 at stations across the country. The campaign was the first big post war travel promotion and was intended to boost car and airline travel across the nation.

Later in the decade, Adams was awarded two fellowships from the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation to photograph America's national parks. Throughout the rest of his long, productive career, Adams published numerous books and portfolios that included Glacier images.



"Mountain Partially Covered with Clouds, Glacier National Park," Montana (Credit National Archives photo no. 519860)

“McDonald Lake, Glacier National Park,” Montana
(Credit National Archives photo no. 519868)



THE LEGACY

During the years of World War II, Adams continued to travel, teach, lecture, publish books, and shoot and print photographs. He maintained his spirited personality throughout the long years of World War II by working with sailors at the Naval hospital in Yosemite and on various national projects, traveling around the country when he could and investing time at the Museum of Modern Art and other arts organizations.

A blurb from the “Visitors” section of the *Los Angeles Times* from March 5, 1944 provides a peek into the public personality of the photographer as he, like many others, sought distraction during the war years: “Ansel Adams, ne plus ultra photographer from Yosemite, playing Bach on the Russell Havenstrites’ piano. And he can play! He’s also most amusing and tells funny stories—quite the delight of the local hostesses, except that he hates crowds!” The clipping was in jest as Adams was well-known for his boisterous and gregarious personality.

Biographer Beaumont Newhall writes of Adams in “FOCUS: Memoirs of a Life in Photography” that along with having a penchant for imbibing in alcohol, “Ansel was

a great party man and loved to entertain. He had a very dominating personality, and would always be the center of attention.”

While the photographs Ansel Adams made of America’s wild places remain his iconic legacy, he can also be credited with helping elevate the conservation movement across the nation and bringing the art of nature to Americans from all walks of life. In the years following his assignment for Ickes in the National Parks, Adams continued to grow his legacy beyond his photography.

His work during the decade included visiting and photographing the internment camp in Manzanar, California (now known as Manzanar National Historic Site) in 1943 and 1944. The experience reportedly opened Adams’ eyes to the injustices being inflicted upon Japanese Americans, which was an unpopular sentiment in a nation at war with Japan. Adams’ goal in the project was to stress the American citizenship of the internees and was conveyed in the subtitle of the book he compiled about the camp, “Born Free and Equal: The Story of Loyal Japanese-Americans.”

“The purpose of my work was to show how these people, suffering under a great injustice, and loss of property, businesses and

professions, had overcome the sense of defeat and despair [sic] by building for themselves a vital community in an arid (but magnificent) environment,” Adams said when he donated his collection of Manzanar photos to the Library of Congress in 1965 (these pictures are available to view at [loc.gov](#)). “All in all, I think this Manzanar Collection is an important historical document, and I trust it can be put to good use.”

Toward the end of his life, Adams looked back on his trips to Manzanar and noted, “from a social point of view that’s the most important thing I’ve done or can do, as far as I know.”

Art and social scholars, conservationists and many others might also consider Adams’ lifetime of accomplishment in elevating the medium of photography as a tool for conserving wild places and capturing the spirit of the 20th Century era in America.

David Brower, the first executive director of the Sierra Club remarked: “That Ansel Adams came to be recognized as one of the great photographers of this century is a tribute to the places that informed him... It is hard to tell which has shaped the other more—Ansel Adams or the Sierra Club. What does matter is that the mutuality was important.”

Adams himself defined his legacy as sharply as his photographic contrasts, noting, “I was trained to assume that art related to the elusive quality of beauty and that the purpose of art was concerned with the elevation of the spirit.”

For following his work for the Interior Department, Adams continued a vast career spanning much of the 20th Century and remained influential not only as a photographer but as a teacher, lecturer, and conservationist. In 1980 he was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the country’s highest civilian honor. He passed away on April 22, 1984 in Monterey, California.

The contribution of his photography, his spirit, his perspective and his lifetime commitment to teaching others and sharing his talent will forever elevate Adams as an American icon.

Beyond his photography, conservation work and the legacy of his family, the *Santa Fe New Mexican* on March 5, 1941 aptly remarked of him in the cheeky spirit of the time, “Mr. Adams will be remembered for his laughing black eyes, long beard and his ability to make a piano talk.” ★

—REILLY NEILL

See all the images from the Mural Project at

WE RECOMMEND...

STATEWIDE ENTERTAINMENT LISTINGS

Music, Performances and Events Outside and Online

CONCERTGOERS, PERFORMERS AND VENUES:

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

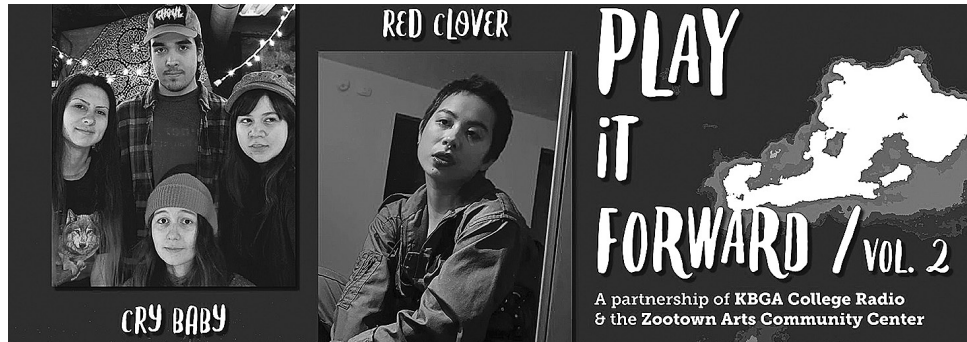
All events listed are subject to change.
Send updates to: info@montanapress.net.

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



"FROM CHECHOV WITH LOVE AND LAUGHTER"

The NOVA Center in Billings presents two one-act comedies from Chekhov: a marriage offer gone wrong in "The Proposal" and "The Bear," a farce about a newly widowed woman finding love in an unlikely place. Live, distanced performances as well as available links to recordings of performances. Running March 12-21, Fri. and Sat. at 7:30 p.m. and Sun. at 2 p.m. Visit NovaBillings.org for tickets.



PLAY IT FORWARD: CRY BABY AND RED CLOVER

Fri., March 26 - 7:30 p.m.

Folk pop magic and whimsical indie rock streamed live from Missoula on Facebook at [@theZACC](https://www.facebook.com/theZACC) or at MCAT.org. "Play It Forward" is a livestream music series and podcast program curated to "unite and uplift community artists and organizations in Missoula."



COMEDY SHOWCASE

Fri., March 19 at 7:30/9:30 p.m.

The Giggle Box in Missoula presents a Comedy Showcase featuring James Johnson, Patrick Yoder, Alex Kaufman, Rena Thiel, and Aaron Juhl and hosted by Cody Trogon. At Southgate Mall in Missoula. For info" [@TheGiggleBx](https://www.facebook.com/TheGiggleBx) on Facebook or TheGiggleBox.net, or call 880-6774.



MISSOULA VALLEY WINTER MARKET

Every Saturday through April 17 at the Southgate Mall in Missoula from 9 a.m. until 2 p.m. Featuring local growers, bakers, artisans, crafters and more.



"MAGIC TREE HOUSE: PIRATES PAST NOON"

Sat. And Sun., April 10-11

Presented in a live, stream-from-home format from Missoula Children's Theatre, this time around, Jack and Annie's tree house takes them to an exotic island with pirates, where the two discover the power of friendship and the simple pleasures in everyday life. Online at MCTinc.org.



SAM PLATTS SHOWCASE

Sundays at 6 p.m.

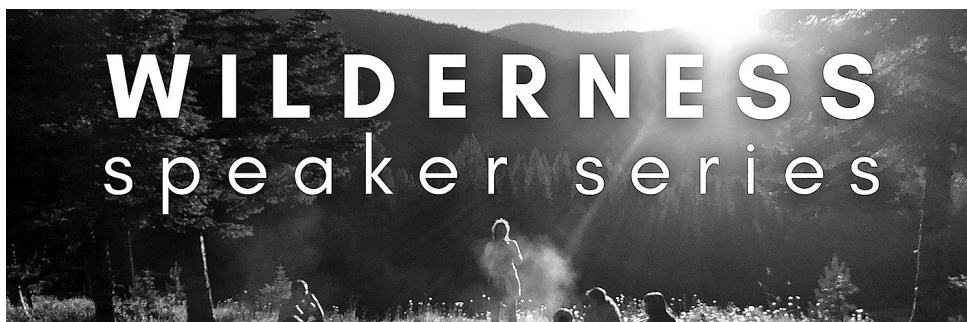
Platts focuses on creating engaging roots and country music to keep the spirit of the authentic honky-tonk sound alive. He hosts a weekly jam session online with special guests such as Tris Munsick, Luke Williams, Quenby, Tom Catmull, Travis Yost and more. Watch online at [@SamPlattsMusic](https://www.facebook.com/SamPlattsMusic) on Facebook.



IRISH FOLK BAND DERVISH

Wed., March 17 - 5 p.m.

The Myrna Loy in Helena presents a special streaming concert by legendary Irish folk band, Dervish, in a never-before-released event featuring a lineup of special guests including Abigail Washburn and Bela Fleck, Irish Singer-Songwriter Brian Kennedy, Scottish Songstress Heidi Talbot and American folk music royalty Peggy Seeger. Dervish was on their way to The Myrna Loy when the pandemic hit a year ago and have been rescheduled for March 2022. In the meantime, join this special online event at TheMyrnaLoy.com.



DENVER HOLT AND THE OWL RESEARCH INSTITUTE

When it comes to documenting change in the natural world, Denver Holt has studied owls in the wild for over 30 years and is one of the world's leading experts. Join the founder and lead researcher of the Owl Research Institute of Charlo, MT as he discusses owls of Montana with an insight into current research and habitat concerns. Save the date: free live-streamed event through the Bob Marshall Wilderness Foundation at BMWf.org on Wed., April 7 - 7 p.m.

JONESIN'?

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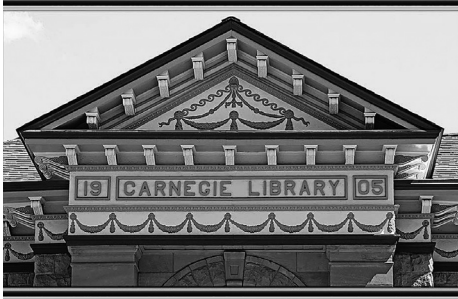
MONTANA BOOK EVENTS

KATE HAMPTON

Thurs., March 18 - 12 p.m.

"The Best Gift: Montana's Carnegie Libraries" profiles each of Montana's 17 Carnegie libraries. Join author Hampton for an online lecture featuring more of Andrew Carnegie's background, how the library program came to be, and with additional stories on those who played an instrumental role in making some of Montana's libraries a reality. View event at MtHistory.org

THE BEST GIFT MONTANA'S CARNEGIE LIBRARIES



SUSAN CONLEY
& RICK BASS

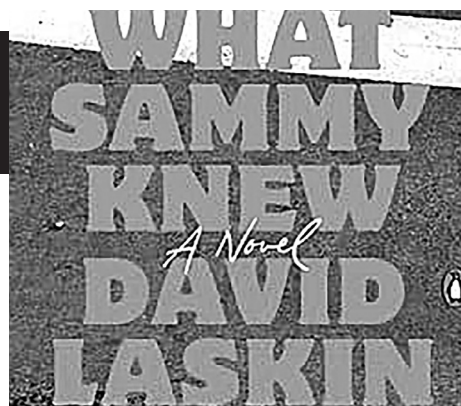
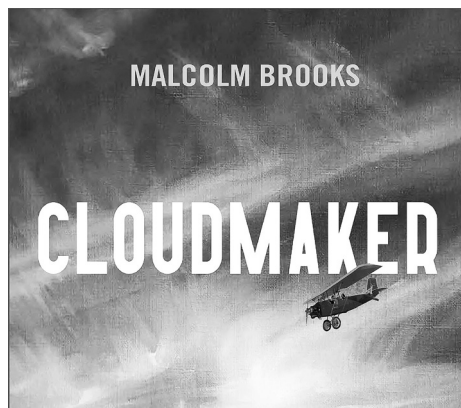
Tues., March 23 - 7:30 p.m.

Criss-cross the US in a literary evening with Conley and Bass as they share their respective new books **"Landslide"** and **"Fortunate Son: Selected Essays from the Lone Star State."** Conley's "Landslide" is a look at one woman's reckoning with the disintegration of her family, her marriage and her community. Bass's "Fortunate Son" is a literary tour of the Lone Star State by a native Texan. Register online at CountryBookshelf.com/events.

MALCOLM BROOKS

Wed., March 24 - 6 p.m.

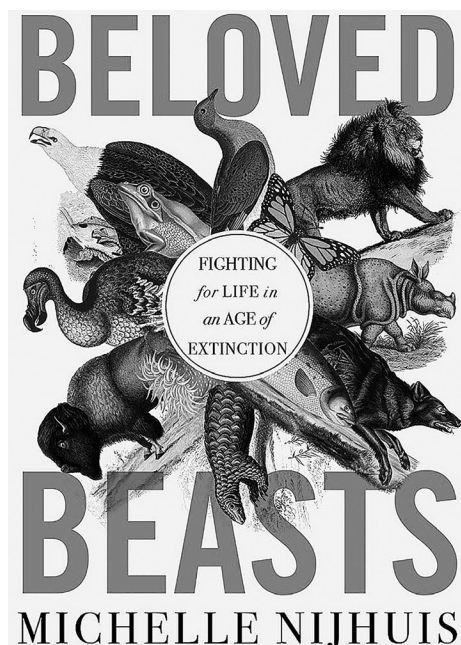
The author of the national bestseller "Painted Horses" returns with **"Cloudmaker"** a novel set during the Age of Aviation and the summer of Amelia Earhart's final flight against the backdrop of a deepening Great Depression. Register online at CountryBookshelf.com/events.



DAVID LASKIN

Thurs., March 25 - 6 p.m.

Award-winning author of "The Children's Blizzard," Laskin will share his evocative new book **"What Sammy Knew,"** a coming-of-age novel about a young man who loses his innocence and finds his soul in the ferment of New York City in 1970's. Register online at CountryBookshelf.com/events.



MICHELLE NIJHUIS
& ROSALYN R. LAPIER

Thurs., March 25 - 6 p.m.

A conversation with Michelle Nijhuis, author of **"Beloved Beasts: Fighting for Life in the Age of Extinction."** Nijhuis is a project editor at the Atlantic and a contributing editor at High Country News. Rosalyn R. LaPier is author of **"Invisible Reality: Storytellers, Storytakers, and the Supernatural World of the Blackfeet."** LaPier is an associate professor in the environmental studies program at the University of Montana and winner of the 2016 Robert G. Athearn Award from the Western History Association. Live online at the MontanaBookFestival.com.

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

IN & AROUND

MONTANA TABLE: THE IRREPRESIBLE PASTY

In Montana there's a glory to behold that, more often than not, is adorned with cascading tendrils of gravy. That glory is the humble pasty, which seems to be just about as Montana as huckleberry jam. From The Stone of Accord in Missoula to Boomerang Bakery in Deer Lodge, eateries across the state feature pasties as a mainstay on their menus. Meanwhile, shops devoted to the savory pie can be found everywhere from Hamilton and Great Falls, to Butte, Deer Lodge, Missoula, and Anaconda.

If you want to know the origins of the Montana pasty, look no further than Butte, Anaconda, and other regions, where Cornish miners brought the tradition of making pasties from their native lands.

According to the Cornish Pasty Association, a body charged with protecting the sanctity of the Cornish pasty, an authentic pasty must contain beef, potato, rutabaga, and onion and be made up of at least 12.5 percent beef and 25 percent vegetables, though Montana cooks typically leave out the rutabaga. It also has to be made in Cornwall to be an official Cornish Pasty.

The most distinctive feature of the pasty is arguably its ample crust, which features a seam of dough crimped off to one side.

"If it's not crimped, it's not Cornish," according to the pasty association. "The pastry can be short crust, rough puff or puff, but it has to be savory and able to withstand baking and handling without breaking. Pasties went down the mines, across the fields and out to sea, so they had to be up to the job."

Pasty lore says that the crust, aside from functioning as a seal, made for a convenient handle, allowing miners to hold the pasty without getting their meal dirty. After consuming the pasty, miners would drop the crusts into the mines. Some say the crusts were offerings to the Tommyknockers, mythical trickster figures said to live in the shadows of the mines.

As the story goes, pasties were known as "letters from 'ome" among Butte's miners.

The exact meaning behind the phrase is unclear, but the easiest explanation is that pasties earned the nickname because of their envelope-like shape. Perhaps they also reminded miners



of their families. Mining was a dangerous, difficult job, so it must have been comforting to have a morsel of home, which one could wear in their shirt pocket, close to the heart.

Today both Butte and Anaconda are home to several pasty shops, including Joe's Pasty Shop in Butte, and Wind's Pasties and June's Pasty Shop in Anaconda.

"It's really about the crust," says Paulette Wright, describing the perfect pasty.

Wright, a native of Butte, grew up eating pasties. Today she uses her mother's recipe at her Great Falls eatery, Mrs. Wright's Pastys, which she opened in 2019 with her husband Greg and the help of her children.

Wright specializes in fresh and frozen pasties, breakfast pasties, and "pasties in a cup." The latter features cocktail pasties topped with gravy that, as the name suggests, are served in a cup.

Wright's mother Lorraine didn't leave behind a recipe, so it took Wright nearly 30 years to recreate the formula her mother perfected all those years ago. Sadly, Lorraine passed away when the pasty shop owner was just 21 years old. Wright says she thinks of her mom every time she sets to the task of making pasties.

When asked about the secret behind making a great pasty, Wright replies simply, "putting in the love."

Nancy McLaughlin is practically famous in Butte. Everywhere her mother goes, says daughter Julie Thomas, people seem to know her mom. Perhaps that's because McLaughlin has been serving up pasties since 1982 from Nancy McLaughlin's Pasty Shop.

An unpretentious eatery on Pine Street, the shop is a true embodiment of mom and pop, featuring a lunch counter and just a few bar stools. However, don't let the shop's small size fool you. The shop has turned out thousands of pasties over the years.

McLaughlin, 80, learned the art of making pasties from Mary Roberts, her English grandmother. According to The Montana Standard, Roberts served the delicacy to miners lodging at her boarding house in the 1920s.

Thomas says her mother "hung up her apron" in December, closing the pasty shop after nearly 40 years of operation. Up until the end, Thomas said, McLaughlin used the same rolling pin she started with in 1982. Her mom liked to do things the old-fashioned way.

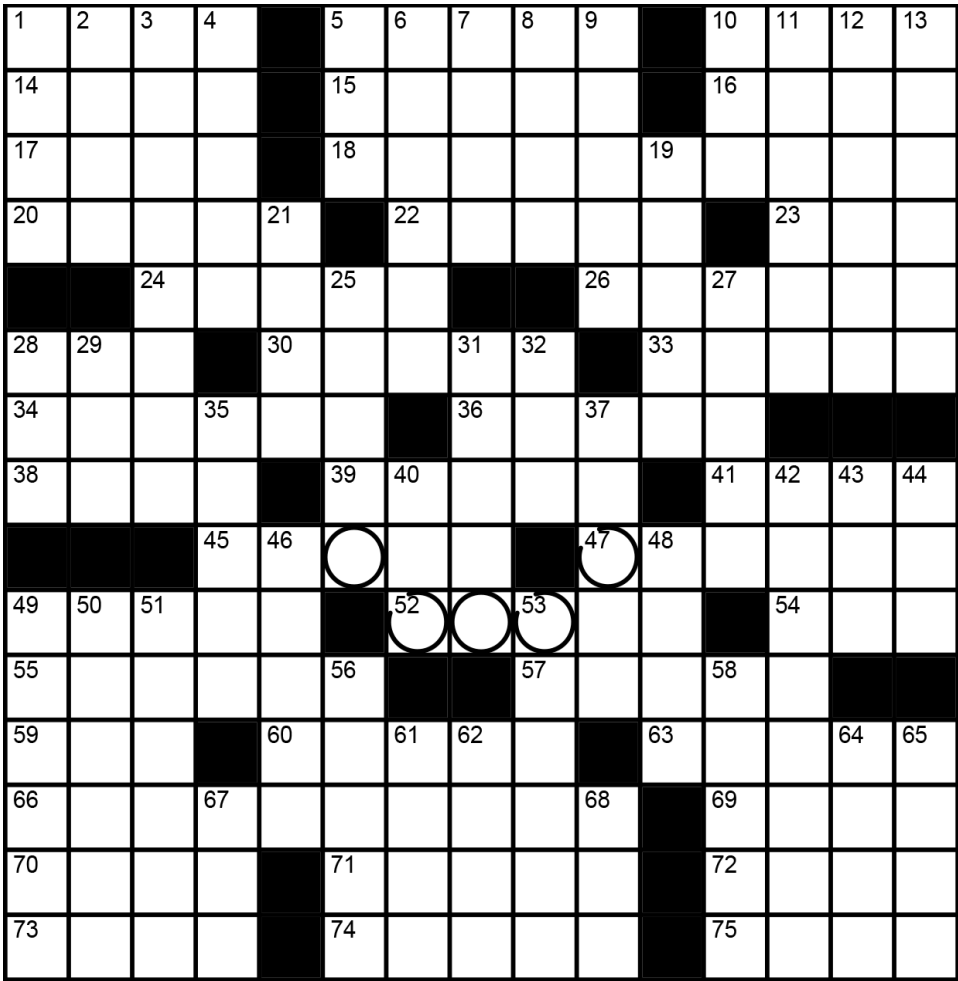
"I think that's what makes (the pasties) so good," Thomas said, adding that her mom's secret ingredient was her personal touch.

As for McLaughlin, she says she's proud of what she created at Nancy McLaughlin's Pasty Shop, where she supplied generations of local families with Butte's ultimate comfort food. ★



Time to make pastys at Mrs. Wright's Pastys in Great Falls with owner Paulette Wright (at left).

—ANNIE PENTILLA



JONESIN' CROSSWORDS

“Hi, Turnover”
When You can Look
at it Both Ways...

ACROSS

- 1 Havana’s home
- 5 Herb with leaves used in Japanese cooking
- 10 Classic Ford models
- 14 Like some arguments
- 15 Complete
- 16 On vacation
- 17 Meyer of the “Saw” movies
- 18 How to view the alternate answers crossing the circled squares
- 20 Expert’s offer
- 22 Artist’s stand
- 23 Army creature?
- 24 Dinner table basketful
- 26 Troubled outburst from Scooby-Doo
- 28 Charlie of the 1960s Orioles
- 30 Indigenous New Zealanders
- 33 Denounces
- 34 Performance style at UCB and Second City
- 36 ‘50s Ford failure
- 38 Baked Italian dish
- 39 “___ Up” (Violent Femmes song)
- 41 “Here’s ___ from me to you ...”
- 45 “”Rudolph the Red-___ Reindeer” (or the other way, Japanese audio company)
- 47 “”Barber Shop Chronicles” playwright Inua ___ (or the other way, letter used to abbreviate “forte”)

- 49 Encouraging words
- 52 *Athlete running 5,280 feet (or the other way, second run of crew practice)
- 54 “Call Me ___” (Mayim Bialik sitcom)
- 55 Inter, as a pharaoh
- 57 Marry in haste
- 59 “Nightswimming” band
- 60 “Blue Ribbon” beer maker
- 63 Cool, once
- 66 It helps clean the word in the circled squares (as well as the alternate version)
- 69 100 centesimi, pre-euro
- 70 Like jungle foliage
- 71 Cheap instrument
- 72 Done
- 73 Suffix for kitchen
- 74 FBI operative
- 75 Freshman, usually

DOWN

- 1 Classical conclusion
- 2 “Armageddon” author Leon
- 3 Wheel of Fortune wedge to be avoided
- 4 Texas shrine to “remember”
- 5 “Rugrats” father
- 6 “Fingers crossed”
- 7 “___ Sin” (HBO Max miniseries)
- 8 “Je ne ___ quoi”
- 9 Farther along
- 10 Edinburgh boy
- 11 Like some biceps exercises, e.g.
- 12 Suddenly occur to
- 13 Electronic keyboards, casually
- 19 Outwit, in a way

- 21 Red Muppet
- 25 *Aa and pahoehoe, for two (or the other way, like military fleets)
- 27 Designation at an Arabic meat market
- 28 “30 Rock” character Lemon
- 29 “Where ___?”
- 31 * ___-wip topping (or the other way, more unusual)
- 32 “The Last King of Scotland” name
- 35 “Octopus’s Garden” singer
- 37 * ___-toed boots (or the other way, half of those pairs of boots)
- 40 *DNC member (or the other way, married)
- 42 Dave Brubeck standard
- 43 “___ complete mess”
- 44 Eugene clock setting, for short
- 46 Vitality
- 48 “Battlefield Earth” author ___ Hubbard
- 49 Dr. Seuss title turtle
- 50 Early inning statistic
- 51 Fullest extent
- 53 *Reveals one’s true feelings (or the other way, pater ___)
- 56 Russian rum cake
- 58 Cockpit figure
- 61 Be immodest
- 62 Financial advisor Orman
- 64 Maple, for instance
- 65 Intricate story
- 67 Chance ___ Rapper
- 68 Super-spicy

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NEED A HINT? SEE PAGE 18

WE RECOMMEND...

STATEWIDE ENTERTAINMENT LISTINGS

Music, Performances and Events Outside and Online



LIVE ST. PAT’S DAY CONCERT

Wed., March 17 - 12 p.m.

Friends of Irish Studies in Missoula present a FREE online concert at 12 p.m. on St. Patrick’s Day. More information on Facebook at @FriendsOfIrishStudies, FriendsOfIrishStudies.com or 529-2457.



THE MYRNA SOUNDSTAGE

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

“Misty hot jams” from Hard Hugs, a synth-heavy punk/disco collaboration with a focus on layered songwriting and electronic textures. A groove to move to and a completely different glimpse of the Montana soundtrack. Also featuring artists interview with John Dendy. Live streaming from Helena at: TheMyrnaLoy.com.

SOCIAL DISTANCE SESSIONS AT ZACC - MISSOULA

Sat., March 13 at 7:30 p.m. - Pandemic Birthday Special - Because they’ve grown pretty tired of coronavirus and the upheaval it brought upon the world, Revival Comedy has decided to celebrate its birthday!



Sat., March 20 - 7:30 p.m. - “SOLD OUT! The Staged Reading”

The latest comedy from local playwright Jay Buchanan (author of “Hand-Drawn: A New Musical” and “Whine Drunk: My Life in Peaces”). featues sweet twenty-somethings Jack and Dianne on a particularly awkward first date.

VISIT ZOOTOWNARTS.ORG OR MCAT.ORG FOR DETAILS.



Sat., March 27 - 7:30 p.m. - Red Onion Purple

A musical duo featuring Sean Burrese (guitar) and Bethany Joyce (cello) playing upbeat and whimsical, melancholy and mysterious mixture of original songs, jazz standards, and covers.



CONSTANT CREATIVITY: A VISIT WITH MISSOULA'S JOHN BROWNELL

Whenever we work, we learn. We learn more by doing. Missoula musician John Brownell has taken these two plain yet consequential thoughts away from the experience of writing and recording music virtually nonstop for the past two years.

"I came up with this idea of a song a week project a couple of years ago," says Brownell, a founding member of the former indie rock-punk cult favorite Oblio Joes. "I committed to writing and recording a song a week, to put it on Bandcamp, and to make a video, and to share it. I was forcing myself to learn new techniques of the creative process. Instead of spending so much time on something I didn't think was done, it forced me to make decisions and stick with them. I was self-isolating, learning new technical aspects and new tools, then the pandemic hit and I went right back into self-isolation. Now I can't stop making and self-editing stuff."

Brownell has learned the more that he works,



the more his art leaves a profound residue in his personality. Being so prolific these previous few years has also made Brownell realize that the modern music world is overflowing with content, some of it worthy and inspiring, some of it far less profound. He includes his own output in this assessment, which he deems as either promising and focused or just plain puzzling and all over the place.

"We live in a world where anybody can make stuff," says Brownell. "A couple years ago, there was 500 hours of new stuff uploaded to YouTube every minute, and at Spotify, people are uploading 40,000 tracks a day, over a million new tracks per month. That's impossible to comprehend. We live in a world where anybody with a phone and a computer now has a studio and could make high-quality stuff, and it's terrifying the glut of content out there. It's also completely liberating..."

Brownell says he thinks there has been an artistic upside to the craziness and solitariness of our times.

"People are watching and enjoying music more than ever. Livestreaming became a huge part of my life in 2020, and a weird new way of consuming music. Sometimes between 30 or 40 could be paying attention. That's unlike at a bar, where you could have the same amount of people there. It creates this weird, silent, and even delayed, because of the technology, distance, but also an additional intimacy, where there are not a lot of distractions, or where people are interacting with you differently."

Testing himself against the limitations of material, time, and skill is now critical to Brownell's self-development. He is busily

composing experimental indie-rock fusions – a number of them quirky with a tinge of sadness, more than a few bouncy, grin-inspiring, and full of sheer fun – from his home recording studio.

"Part of what the past few years has done for me is to get me to stop worrying about how someone else sees my music, to stop worrying so much about the song that I'm making. If I am worried about it, then I'd put it off indefinitely."

Recording copious amounts of solo material has led Brownell not simply to production, but to perception.

"I've come to terms with the fact that I'm not a great musician or singer," says Brownell. "But I have a certain voice, a certain way with words, and, especially through the song-a-week process, I have a mastery of my studio and my equipment. A big part of the process has been recognizing what it is that I'm good at. The experimentation has been so much fun; trying anything and seeing where it takes me... You don't know where you are going to end up, so you try something, and if it sounds cool, you stay with it. If it doesn't, you move on and then try something different."

Solo acoustic experimentation provides a spirit of its own for Brownell, who first arrived in Missoula in the early 1990s from Michigan. It was around that time that he fulfilled his dream of creating a band after he and a few others formed the Oblio Joes. The alternative concept rockers played heavily in the Missoula area for about 15 years, where they built a strong local following of people at bars such as The Ritz and Jay's Upstairs, who were attracted to their punk vibes and indie spirit.

The Oblio Joes released five full-length albums but disbanded in 2007. Brownell later joined a band called Secret Powers and released two records with them. He has since completed a record with another entity called the Protest Kids, but that group is on pause.

Following the split of the Oblio Joes,



Brownell cofounded Submittable, a cloud-based submissions manager software based in Missoula where he worked virtually around the clock for several years as the company's main programmer and developer.

"From 2009 to about 2015, music almost completely disappeared in my life and in those years, I realized more and more that music was something that I had desperately needed. I reached the point that I had decided, that, from now on, creativity was not going to be a side project or a hobby but a major part of my life."

Proficiency has produced an accumulation of working wisdom perhaps impossible to obtain any other way.

"I'm pushing through things like writer's block and figuring out what is my voice. When you need to do it quickly, it's not always totally clear – but out comes a certain tone or use of vocabulary, some skill that's not always totally conscious... You force yourself to find a technique or a trick like writing from a random line out of a book or from the random prompt of a card. I've learned how to work quickly,

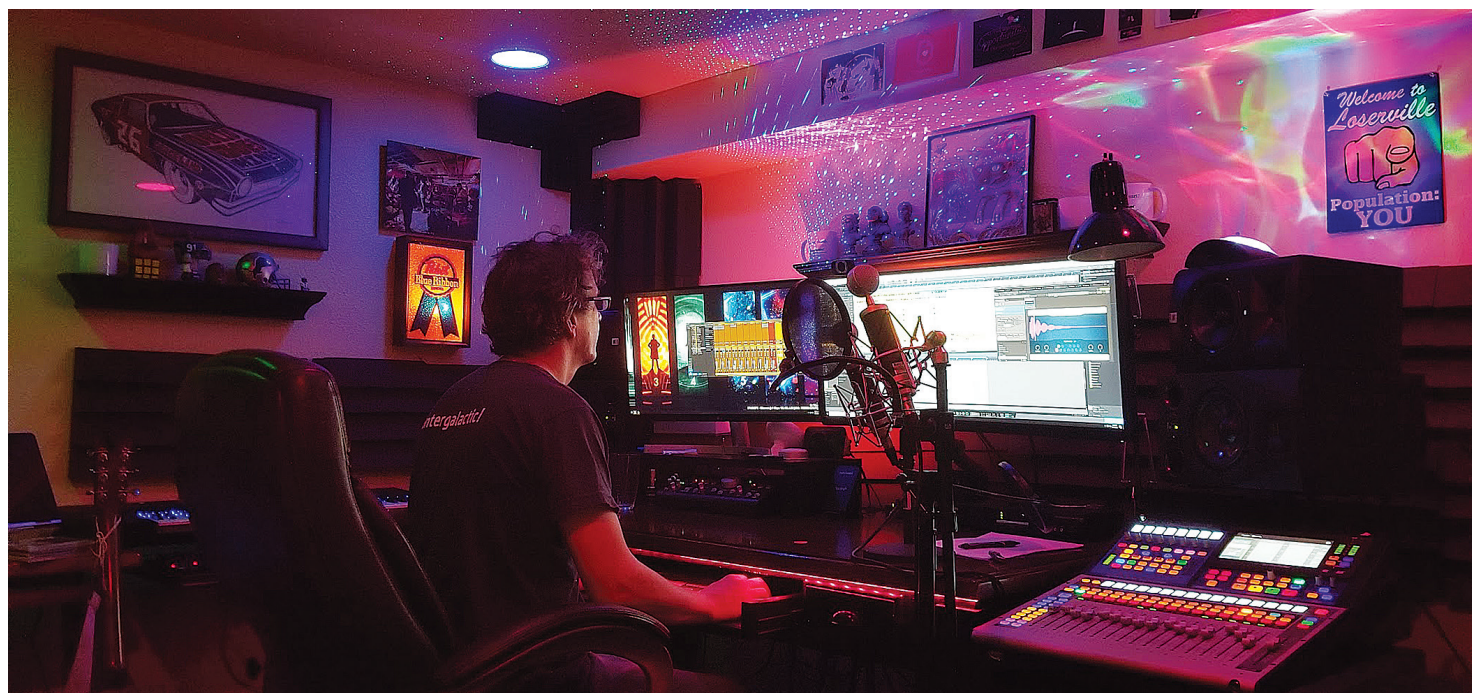
and some of them are fully formed songs and some of them will be revised in the future and then finished. Either way, the past few years I have forced myself as an artist to approach making music in a new way."

Indeed, the artist in Brownell has decided, that from this point forward, that when he does something, he will not hold back, and that he will not wait for a "better time," because the better times will only be built on what he does today.

"It's satisfying to look back on all of this material," concludes Brownell. "After being in bands in a loud and raucous rock environment, I do like the idea of slowing it down a little, playing for people who are paying a little more attention to the lyrics and stories. I've got a really big set list of solo acoustic songs to choose from now." ★

—BRIAN D'AMBROSIO

Learn more about John Brownell online at JohnBrownell.bandcamp.com.



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The experimentation has been so much fun; trying anything and seeing where it takes me... You don't know where you are going to end up, so you try something, and if it sounds cool, you stay with it. If it doesn't, you move on and then try something different."

FAMOUS AND NOT FORGOTTEN: AVIATOR ESTHER COMBES VANCE



One day in 1929, Esther Vance, a 26-year-old Montana pilot, received an invitation from another aviator – the greatly adored Amelia Earhart.

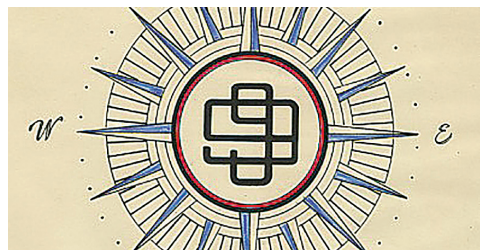
Earhart was already a celebrity of epic stature, a successful adventuress and author, a flashy brand with an on-the-ball business mind, and a name and face as recognizable as any in the country. A passionate advocate for the betterment of female pilots, Earhart had a new project circling in her mind – the formation of a nationwide club.

Vance, a Sidney High School graduate, was busily compiling her own set of credentials, performing aerial stunts with her husband while cutting her teeth as an independent pilot. Indeed, she had distinguished herself a year earlier as the state of Montana's first licensed commercial woman pilot, becoming the twenty-second woman in the United States to receive a limited commercial pilot's license.

Eligibility for membership in soon-to-be "Ninety-Nines," wrote Earhart – who herself just one year earlier became the first woman passenger on a trans-Atlantic flight – would be extended to any woman holding a pilot's license issued by the Department of Commerce. Would Vance be interested in joining the first organization of women aviators?

Perhaps answering yes was a no-brainer of sorts for Vance; when the group later issued its 99 charter memberships, would be allotted to Vance. The goal of the club was to promote fellowship among licensed pilots and encourage more women to learn to fly. Earhart was elected its first president.

The Ninety-Nines would even have their own official song. Today the presence of women pilots is no longer anomalous, and the group currently has thousands of members worldwide. While she might not be a common name, Esther Vance in retrospect was one of the earliest prototypes of the starry-eyed aviator.



BARNSTORMING IN THE BLOOD

Esther Combes was born August 19, 1903, in Clinton, Indiana, the daughter of William and Dicy Pastre Combes. In 1906, the Combes family moved to Sidney, Montana, where William was a man of many occupations. He built furniture, served as a mortician, owned a movie theatre, and fixed up apartment houses that he operated as rental properties. After viewing a young barnstormer's sideshow spectacle at a fair in Sidney, William added aviation to his expanding list of interests. After William experienced his first ride, he was so transfixed by the thrill of rising above the country and clouds that as soon as he touched down, he paid the same pilot to take up his two daughters, Esther and her older sister Geneva.

In the mid-1920s, William bought his first airplane, receiving flying lessons from a man named Earl Vance, a native of Indiana and a graduate of the Aberdeen Business School. Earl had arrived in Montana after completing flight training school in the army. Discharged in 1919 with the rank of second lieutenant, Earl steered himself west.

In 1921 Esther graduated from Sidney High School and from the University of Washington in 1925, majoring in physical education and teaching. Returning to Sidney, she received a jam-packed introduction from her father to the art of flying. More than a hobby, William used his plane to transfer passengers at fairs and for his own businesses. Esther also was charmed by his acquaintance and flight instructor Earl Vance, who was about seven years her senior, and who "sold her on the bright and glittering future of being an aviator's wife."

Esther and Earl were married in August 1925 and celebrated their honeymoon with a barnstorming tour to locations between Montana and Florida.

THE LURE OF FLIGHT

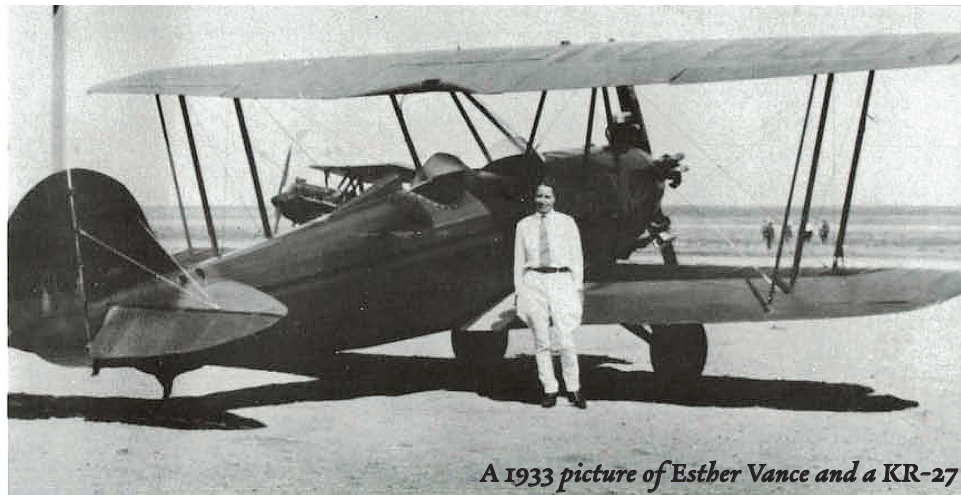
At first Esther served as business manager and treasurer of the commercial flying business that Earl started in Sidney, called the Vance Air Service. "Time Flies - Why Don't You?" was the company pitch. Before long, however, Esther excelled in a new, exciting role at Vance Air Service; she would navigate the sky.

Esther enrolled in her first flight lesson in Florida when she and Earl were wintering there in 1926. Her 10 hours of instruction were spread over a period of two years. Though it sounds remarkably slim, she was able to make her solo flight after a mere 10 hours of instruction had been received. 10 hours of flight instruction was, according to one contemporary aviation magazine, "considered good for a woman student, although some women students have soloed with five or six hours' instruction, but the majority require 15 hours."

Esther later conceded that it would "have been better" had she received her instruction "regularly each day."

Esther and Earl relocated the base of the Vance Air Service's flight operations to Great Falls in 1927, where Esther oversaw the day-to-day requirements of the office, now on the airport north of the city. Still, she continued to challenge herself and to progress as a pilot.

Esther's first solo flight was made on March 3, 1928, from the Great Falls airport, during which she looped the field at an altitude of approximately 500 feet and then executed



A 1933 picture of Esther Vance and a KR-27

a successful landing. Her second flight was conducted that evening promptly after she had soloed.

On September 16, 1928 Esther became licensed as a private pilot to fly all government licensed planes and subsequently as a limited commercial pilot to escort people on paid sight-seeing trips and make deliveries around the state. In the timeline of aviation, only one year earlier Charles Lindbergh achieved world stature after he completed the first solo non-stop transatlantic flight in his plane, The Spirit of St. Louis.

By 1930, in Montana, there were several female pilots who had received flight instruction and learned to fly, including Esther, Maurine Allen of Lewistown, and Anna Lou Schaeffer of Helena.

According to one contemporary newspaper account, "increasing interest is being shown in this field by women (in Montana) in the last several months, according to Mrs. Vance and it is her belief that within the next few years women pilots will no longer be unusual."

At five feet tall and weighing between 90 and 95 pounds, Esther wasn't the strongest or sturdiest of pilots, but her size was by no means an impediment to her flying.

According to one story about Esther published in 1930, "She has flown the Waco 9, three different Waco 10's, the Monocoupe and had taken up the big four-passenger cabin Stinson Detroit and flown it for some distance, although she has not yet attempted to land this plane."

Although Esther described all of the planes as being very simple to maneuver in the sky, she articulated a first-choice fondness for the Monocoupe, a small light aircraft that, she said, was the most natural match for her because of its compactness: "Well, you see it's just my size. I crank it up and take it out all by myself."

The article went on to emphasize the important role of Esther's self-confidence in her aviation.

"Any fear or nervousness while in the air alone was denied by Mrs. Vance, who stated that she particularly enjoyed piloting her own plane and gained much pleasure in flying in the Waco open cockpit."

For a number of years, the Vances barnstormed their way through the Midwest with Earl doing most of the flying and Esther on the ground promoting, the couple dropping in at rodeos or community events or other places that almost assuredly guaranteed a crowd. While this unusual type of business was unpredictable, Esther revealed herself to be a

shrewd advertiser and spur-of-the-moment marketing whiz, informing a small town with little notice that the Vance airplane "was surveying an air route and to immediately wire back the location of their airport."

"This usually caused considerable confusion because most towns did not have an airport," said Esther. "We would then arrange for the community experts to pick an open field and meet with their (at that time non-existent) airport and aviation committee. The result was a red-carpet treatment with free meals, speeches and lots of publicity. We took time to haul all paying passengers available, with speeches by (Earl) in between."

Esther continued to serve as salesperson, business manager, and treasurer for the Vance Air Service until the business was destroyed by fire in 1931. Despite the unfortunate loss, Earl stayed active in aviation by working as a pilot for National Park Airways (a short-lived airline that operated in Montana in the 1920s and 1930s); later he worked as an aerial map maker for the United States Government. Esther's plane was destroyed in the fire and she quit flying for a short period until her father came "to the aid of the Lady without a Plane." William gave his daughter one of his own planes.

REALM OF HIGH ADVENTURE

In 1940 Earl Vance returned to active service as a captain and training officer. During World War II he became a base commander and then ascended the ranks of major and colonel. He died prematurely at age 48 of a heart attack in 1944.

Esther appears to have abandoned flying altogether after her husband's death. Eventually she moved to Missoula where she worked in the registrar's office at the University of Montana until her retirement. She died May 25, 1983, at the age of 79.

While Esther Combes Vance was not as well known and perhaps was not even as skilled as some of her counterparts, she was undoubtedly an astute, daring pilot who remained optimistic about the future arc and opportunity of women in aviation. She once explained her attitude, declaring: "Women will no longer be able to resist the lure of flying. The air has ceased to be merely a substance in which we live and work and which we breathe. It has become a realm of high adventure; the air is ours to explore." ★

—BRIAN D'AMBROSIO

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ARIES (March 21-April 19): In late April of 1969, Cambridgeshire, UK hosted the first-ever Thriplow Daffodil Weekend: a flower show highlighting 80 varieties of narcissus. In the intervening years, climate change has raised the average temperature 3.24 degrees Fahrenheit. So the flowers have been blooming progressively earlier each year, which has necessitated moving the festival back. The last pre-Covid show in 2019 was on March 23-24, a month earlier than the original. Let's use this as a metaphor for shifting conditions in your world. I invite you to take an inventory of how your environment has been changing, and what you could do to ensure you're adapting to new conditions.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20): Author Leo Buscaglia told us that among ancient Egyptians, two specific questions were key in evaluating whether a human life was well-lived. They were "Did you bring joy?" and "Did you find joy?" In accordance with your current astrological potentials, I'm inviting you to meditate on those queries. And if you discover there's anything lacking in the joy you bring and the joy you find, now is a very favorable time to make corrections.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20): At age 11, the future first President of the United States George Washington became the "owner" of ten slaves. A few years later he "bought" 15 more. By the time he was president, 123 men, women, and children were struggling in miserable bondage under his control. Finally, in his will, he authorized them to be freed after he and his wife died. Magnanimous? Hell, no. He should have freed those people decades earlier—or better yet, never "owned" them in the first place. Another Founding Father, Benjamin Franklin not only freed his slaves but became an abolitionist. By my count, at least 11 of the other Founding Fathers never owned slaves. Now here's the lesson I'd like us to apply to your life right now: Don't procrastinate in doing the right thing. Do it now.

CANCER (June 21-July 22): During World War II, the Japanese island of Okunoshima housed a factory that manufactured poison gas for use in chemical warfare against China. These days it is a tourist attraction famous for its thousands of feral but friendly bunnies. I'd love to see you initiate a comparable transmutation in the coming months, dear Cancerian: changing bad news into good news, twisted darkness into interesting light, soullessness into soulfulness. Now is a good time to ramp up your efforts.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): "Scars speak for you," writes author Gena Showalter. "They say you're strong, and you've survived something that might have killed others." In that spirit, dear Leo, and in accordance with astrological omens, I invite you to authorize your scars to express interesting truths about you in the coming weeks. Allow them to demonstrate how resilient you've been, and how well you've mastered the lessons that your past suffering has made available. Give your scars permission to be wildly eloquent about the transformations you've been so courageous in achieving.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): According to novelist Doris Lessing, "Everybody in the world is thinking: I wish there was just one other person I could really talk to, who could really understand me, who'd be kind to me." She implied that hardly anyone ever gets such an experience—or that it's so rare as to be always tugging on our minds, forever a source of unquenched longing. But I'm more optimistic than Lessing. In my view, the treasured exchange she describes is not so impossible. And I think it will especially possible for you in the coming weeks. I suspect you're entering a grace period of being listened to, understood, and treated kindly. Here's the catch: For best results, you should be forthright in seeking it out.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): "How much has to be explored and discarded before reaching the naked flesh of feeling," wrote composer Claude Debussy. In the coming weeks, I hope you'll regard his words as an incitement to do everything you can to reach the naked flesh of your feelings. Your ideas are fine. Your rational mind is a blessing. But for the foreseeable future, what you need most is to deepen your relationship with your

emotions. Study them, please. Encourage them to express themselves. Respect their messages as gifts, even if you don't necessarily act upon them.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): You may never wander out alone into a dark forest or camp all night on a remote beach or encounter a mountain lion as you climb to a glacier near the peak of a rugged mountain. But there will always be a primeval wilderness within you—uncivilized lands and untamed creatures and elemental forces that are beyond your rational understanding. That's mostly a good thing! To be healthy and wise, you need to be in regular contact with raw nature, even if it's just the kind that's inside you. The only time it may be a hindrance is if you try to deny its existence, whereupon it may turn unruly and inimical. So don't deny it! Especially now. (PS: To help carry out this assignment, try to remember the dreams you have at night. Keep a recorder or notebook and pen near your bed.)

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): "What damages a person most," wrote philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche, "is to work, think, and feel without inner necessity, without any deep personal desire, without pleasure—as a mere automaton of duty." Once a year, I think every one of us, including me, should meditate on that quote. Once a year, we should evaluate whether we are living according to our soul's code; whether we're following the path with heart; whether we're doing what we came to earth to accomplish. In my astrological opinion, the next two weeks will be your special time to engage in this exploration.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): What are your edges, Capricorn? What aspects of your identity straddle two different categories? Which of your beliefs embrace seemingly opposed positions? In your relations with other people, what are the taboo subjects? Where are the boundaries that you can sometimes cross and other times can't cross? I hope you'll meditate on these questions in the coming weeks. In my astrological opinion, you're primed to explore edges, deepen your relationship with your edges, and use your edges for healing and education and cultivating intimacy with your allies. As author Ali Smith says, "Edges are magic; there's a kind of forbidden magic on the borders of things, always a ceremony of crossing over, even if we ignore it or are unaware of it."

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): According to intermedia artist Sidney Pink, "The idea of divine inspiration and an aha moment is largely a fantasy." What the hell is he talking about?! That's fake news, in my view. In the course of my creative career, I've been blessed with thousands of divine inspirations and aha moments. But I do acknowledge that my breakthroughs have been made possible by "hard work and unwavering dedication," which Sidney Pink extols. Now here's the climax of your oracle: You Aquarians are in a phase when you should be doing the hard work and unwavering dedication that will pave the way for divine inspirations and aha moments later this year.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): For you Pisceans, March is Love Yourself Bigger and Better and Bolder Month. To prepare you for this festival, I'm providing two inspirational quotes. 1. "If you aren't good at loving yourself, you will have a difficult time loving anyone, since you'll resent the time and energy you give another person that you aren't even giving to yourself." —Barbara De Angelis 2. "Loving yourself does not mean being self-absorbed or narcissistic, or disregarding others. Rather it means welcoming yourself as the most honored guest in your own heart, a guest worthy of respect, a lovable companion." —Margo Anand

THIS WEEK'S HOMEWORK:

What's your theme song for 2021 so far?

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