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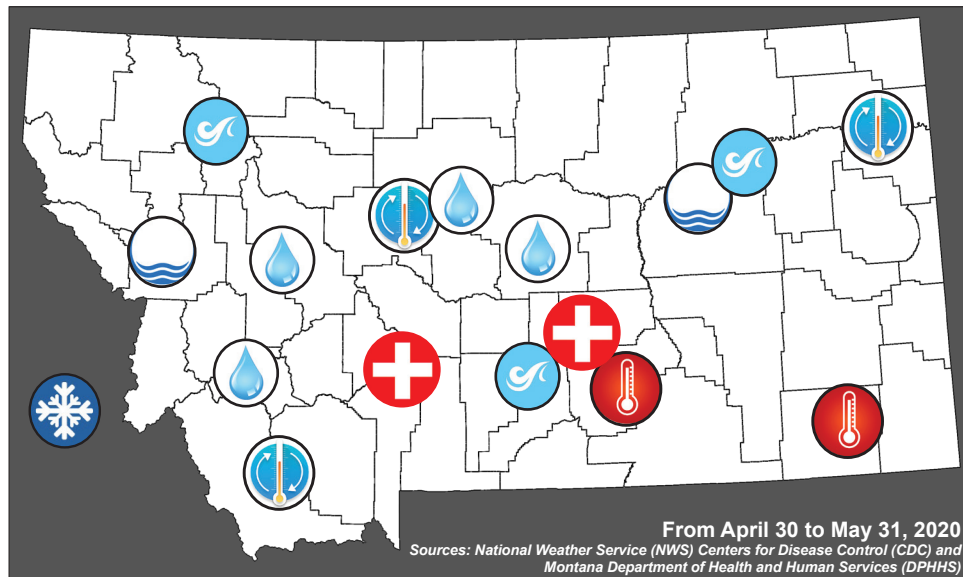
MONTANA PRESS

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LAST BEST PLACES
PHOTO CONTEST

MONTANA ALMANAC



Temperatures Across the State



Some of the highest temperatures recorded during the reporting period were 83 degrees at Sidney Airport on May 1. The next time broke the thermometer broke 81 degrees was May 18 at Fort Benton Airport and the recorded high for the period was recorded both at Broadus on May 21 and in Billings on May 31 (tying a daily record there set in 1940). The record low for May 5 (1996) of 26 degrees was tied at Great Falls Airport on May 5. The record low temperature for the recording period was reported at 14 degrees at Culbertson on May 11. By mid-May, temperatures across the state were in the low 20s and 30s but within a week, the same areas were seeing near-record high temperatures. The Dillon Airport reached 88 degrees on May 30, breaking the record of 87 degrees recorded in 1986.

Heavy Precipitation



Great Falls reached 100" of snowfall for the snow season for the seventh time since 1886 - but for the second such occurrence in only the past three years. On April 30, an observer called in 0.5" or marble-sized hail in downtown Butte. The 24-hour rainfall report on May 1 indicated 1.3" at Carrot Basin in Gallatin County, and .9" in Madison County. A spring snowstorm blanketed much of the state starting May 7 and up to 5" of snow was reported in Lewistown. The storm also brought pea-sized hail to much of north-central and western Montana. The next week, high winds in excess of 50 mph accompanied severe thunderstorms that moved through central Montana from May 18 through May 21, bringing lightning and dime-to-penny-sized hail and precipitation accumulation of up to 2.6" at Wood Creek in Lewis and Clark County, 2.5" at Darkhorse Lake in Beaverhead County, 2.2" 10 miles southeast of Clancy in Jefferson County, and 2" recorded near Bozeman. Steady rain continued over north-central Montana with some areas seeing .2" per hour. NWS Glasgow recorded 1.94" of rain between 9 p.m. and 11:30 p.m. on May 20 and 9" of new snow was reported at Carrot Basin in Gallatin County. Some areas of western Montana also saw significant snowfall with this storm, including 18" reported at Georgetown Lake.

Severe Storms Bring Hail, High Winds



A line of severe thunderstorms occurred overnight on May 20 in northern Stillwater and Golden Valley counties. Hail the size of tennis balls was recorded in Lavina; golf-ball-sized hail was reported in Rygate and half-dollar-sized hail was reported in Rapelje. As the line of storms moved across southern Garfield County, wind gusts of 75 mph were recorded in the area and a tornado warning was issued for Valley County. An EF-0 tornado with estimated winds of 80 mph touched down at 9:17 p.m. on May 20 in Whately and lasted for no more than five minutes. On May 30, severe thunderstorms caused downed trees and widespread damage in West Glacier and the Flathead Valley.

Spring Flooding



On May 1, a flood advisory was issued for the Clark Fork river above Missoula. By May 19, the river was predicted to exceed minor flood stage and by May 30 was at flood stage. Minor flooding was recorded along the Dearborn in Cascade and Lewis and Clark counties on May 20 and a flood advisory was issued for Garfield and Valley counties due to heavy rainfall. On May 31, The Clarks Fork of the Yellowstone river was right at flood stage at Belfry, forecast to stay close to flood stage for the next day or two. Minor impacts to low-lying areas along the river in Carbon county were expected.

Continuing COVID-19 Health Emergency



The Governor's stay-at-home order was somewhat relaxed on June 1 when businesses and establishments were able to further reopen under "Phase II" of the Governor's plan with continued restrictions. The governor's office, in accordance with the Centers for Disease Control, urges all residents to wear non-medical masks when visiting any establishment where six feet or more of personal distancing is not possible. Yellowstone and Glacier National Parks are slowly reopening with restrictions. The National Guard continues to work to minimize spread by checking temperatures at ports of entry at airports and trains. As the virus continues to spread, The U.S. topped 1.9 million infected cases and 109,000 related deaths. Montana reported 17 deaths by the end of the month, with the highest number of infected cases in Gallatin County/Bozeman (155) and Yellowstone County/Billings (102), Missoula (40), Flathead (37) and Big Horn (31) and a total number of 525 cases in the state reported on May 31. Approximately 43,438 individuals in the state have been tested for the virus as of this date. Visit dphhs.mt.gov for up-to-date information.



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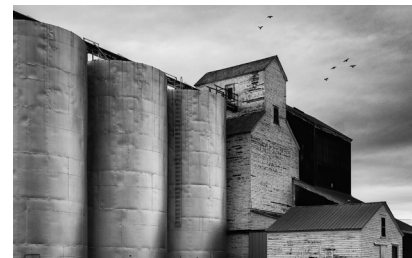


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ON THE COVER A mountain goat leaps across a gap in a rocky
ledge at the Jewel Basin Hiking Area near Kalispell on a Sunday in
June. Casey Kreider submitted this winning photograph for the 2020
Montana Press Last Best Places Photo Contest.

MONTANA PRESS MONTHLY

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Contributors

Rob Brezny, Brian D’Ambrosio,
Mazana Boerboom, Jen Eames,
Jessica Flammang, Chad Harder,
Marc Johnson, Breeana Laughlin,
Jason McNeil, Jay MacDonald,
Nikoleta Morales, George Ochenski,
Claire Shinner and Geneva Zoltek.

Associate Editors

Kenneth Neill, Brad Snow

Staff Photographer

Lindsay Wells
photo@montanapress.net

Distribution

Courtney Lehman, Tim Wevers

Publisher/Editor

Reilly Neill
info@montanapress.net



@MontanaPress

PHONE

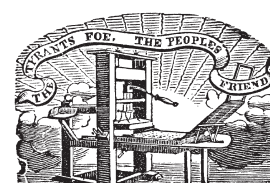
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WEBSITE

www.montanapress.net

email address:

info@montanapress.net



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Protests for George Floyd Continue

Demonstrations are maintaining momentum across Montana after protests erupted nationwide in response to the killing of George Floyd, a man who was in police custody in Minneapolis, Minn.

On May 25, Floyd, a 46-year-old black man, was arrested after being accused of using a counterfeit \$20 bill. Floyd died after being pinned to the ground by police officers, which left him unable to breathe. A viral video shows former officer Derek Chauvin's knee on Floyd's neck for over eight minutes. The circulated video is leading to worldwide marches and uproar throughout the United States and around the world. Some American cities such as Minneapolis, Seattle, and Washington, D.C. have since seen riots and looting along with conflict escalation between protestors and police.

"We are definitely trying to make sure that Missoula doesn't end up like other cities. Missoula is such a peaceful place – the most peaceful place I've ever lived," 19-year-old protest leader Mahogany Howard says.

In Missoula, a crowd of protestors has taken up daily residence in front of the County Courthouse since Friday, May 29. The demonstrations mimic those taking place coast-to-coast with people chanting and brandishing signs that read "Black Lives Matter" and "Resist."

Howard has never led a protest before but says she chose to take to the streets in response to Floyd's death. She says there is no formal organization within the group. "Right now, it's just people coming together."

Howard says the group's first priority is maintaining safety, though a few tense altercations with counter-protesters were stressful and intimidating.

"We are not here to cause issues. We are not here to act as terrorists. None of that. We are here to make sure that minorities are treated equally," Howard says. "We have to start somewhere, and we are starting with George Floyd and Black Lives Matter [BLM]"

Several counter-protesters have been shadowing the activists. A woman between the age of 25 and 35 who asked to remain anonymous, mingled among the protesters on Wednesday, June 3 brandishing a shotgun. She says she agrees that Chauvin should be prosecuted but disagrees with the protesters' "BLM" message and plans to continue counter-protesting.

"In my opinion they shouldn't just be protesting against him [Floyd], they should be protesting against all lives that have been affected by police. That's how you bring unity together," the counter-protester says. "I wish everyone would respect each other's opinion more – see their side, let them see your side too, and find some common ground."



Missoula protest leader Mahogany Howard addresses fellow demonstrators while marching at the Hip Strip.

The protesters periodically march through downtown Missoula as passersby cheer them on with upheld fists and honk their car horns. While marching on Tuesday, June 2, the group stopped at a wall on South Higgins Avenue where a printed photo of Eric Garner was posted. Garner died in a confrontation with a New York City police officer on July 17, 2014 after he was put in a chokehold. Video of the arrest showed Garner saying, "I can't breathe," – words George Floyd also spoke before he too lost his life.

Jay Mattson, a 21-year-old Missoulian who works as a wildland firefighter, addressed the group, stating, "You are marching so a mother doesn't have to lose a child."

Mattson says to him the issue is personal. "I'm here because I don't want to have to talk to my kids and warn them against something that's because of the color of their skin. I had to have those talks with my parents," Mattson says. "Change takes time, but this movement is boding well if we can keep the pressure going."

Chauvin is being charged by Minnesota Attorney General Keith Ellison with the second-degree murder of George Floyd, while three other now-former Minneapolis police officers who were part of Floyd's arrest are being charged with aiding and abetting a murder. Unrest nationwide in the wake of George Floyd's killing so far has resulted in more than 9,000 arrests and at least 12 deaths. More demonstrations are planned statewide. These include: Bozeman on Friday, June 5 at 4 p.m. at Bogert Park; Missoula on Friday, June 5 at 5 p.m. at 200 West Broadway; Billings on Sunday, June 7 at 1 p.m. at 217 North 27th Street; and Helena on Sunday, June 14 at noon at the Montana State Capitol. ★

—GENEVA ZOLTEK

MONTANA VOICE

Leadership Vacuum is Perilous for Montana's Future

By the time this column hits print the primary elections for Montana will be over. But until they are, prognosticating about the outcomes will have to wait 'til the votes are counted, the dust settles, and the winners dance while the losers weep. In the meantime, no one could blame Montanans and most Americans for finding themselves in a confusing whirlwind of contradictory information on very serious matters and shape-shifting political parties that seem to be having a very tough time telling us what our futures are going to look like if we vote for them – or don't. This leadership vacuum is nothing if not perilous to Montana's future.

REPUBLICANS UNMOORED AND DRIFTING

One of the primary ideologies of Republicans has been their claim to fiscal conservatism. What this is supposed to mean is that they believe in living within your means as opposed to their tarring of the Democrats as the party of "tax and spend."

It's almost laughable now, when under Trump and the Republican Senate the nation's debt has skyrocketed with no end in sight. A trillion here, a trillion there, and pretty soon you're talking real money, son!

Unlike the "tax and spend" Democrats, however, the Republicans have no plan for how to recoup the money to pay for the very deep hole into which they have spent the nation. First it was the great "tax cuts" that went mostly to the already wealthy. Of the trillions in the coronavirus relief measures, \$1.4 trillion (\$1,400,000,000.00) went to Wall St.

In the months of March and April the nation's billionaires saw their wealth grow by a whopping \$434 billion while the rest of the citizenry got a whopping \$1,200 — which won't even pay one month's rent in, say, Bozeman.

In the meantime, the booming economy Trump inherited from his nemesis Obama has been reduced to ashes. It's well known that was the horse the Republicans and their self-proclaimed "King of Debt" president planned to ride to their glorious election victories -- but no matter how much they beat it, that horse remains dead.

Dumbfounded at their predicament, Republicans have no idea how to bail out the savage losses experienced throughout the economy that are now putting state and local government budgets in a stranglehold.

While the Treasury can simply print more money at the federal level, in Montana our constitution mandates a balanced budget — and we don't have any money-printing presses. So looking into the crystal ball, what should we expect as a new fiscal year begins on July 1?

Perhaps in this instance history is instructive. The last time the state was really in dire straits was in the 80s. Montana used to have an Education Trust Fund — but that

disappeared into on-going expenditures. Moreover, not a legislative session went by that the Republicans didn't try to bust the Permanent Coal Tax Trust Fund — and spend it.

Luckily, our constitution also requires a three-fourth vote of both chambers of the legislature to appropriate the corpus of the trust, and they never got that vote thanks to at least 25 Democrats in the House who vowed not to "bust the trust."

Thanks to their courage, the Coal Tax Trust Fund remains intact and the interest it generates continues to fund on-going projects for local and state governments, environmental cleanup, education, water and sewer infrastructure, the arts, humanities and more. It would all be gone had the Republicans been successful 35 years ago. And now that Montana's unemployment rate has gone from 3.5% to 11.3% in the last two months, can there be any doubt where the Republicans will turn to "balance" the budget? (Hint: it won't be their wealthy campaign contributors)

DEMOCRATS HOLD THE LINE

It will be incredibly hard for a handful of Democrats to resist the pressure to join Republicans in attempting to bust the trust in the 2021 legislative session. But they must hold the line and preserve the trust for future generations, which are already unduly burdened by the fiscal excesses of Trump's disastrous presidency.

Already the hue and cry for funding has started to rise from the ashes of the revenue projections from only a few short months ago. Those cries will only increase as the enormity of the budgetary shortfalls sinks in and the needs of everyday Montanans continue to grow.

Unfortunately, the Democrats are not forthcoming with many suggestions as to how they intend to meet the crisis. While that might be understandable in the primary campaigns, those campaigns are now over and the harsh reality that awaits lawmakers is growing exponentially.

THE SECOND WAVE

If it seems like there's a leadership vacuum right now, that's because there is. Given that predictions for a second wave of the coronavirus pandemic continue to grow — and that Europe is currently in the grip of just such a recurring nightmare -- we have no time to lose. We desperately need real, visionary, practical, and fiscally-responsible leaders to step forward, tell Montanans how we're going to get out of this dilemma, and put forth the measures to do so. Granted, in these times, facing these challenges, that's a tall challenge — but after all, isn't that what political leaders are supposed to do? ★

—GEORGE OCHENSKI

BYGONE DAYS

Bygone Days are compiled from archives of Montana newspapers. Current years featured are 1896, 1936 and 1961. For daily Bygone Days, follow online at: @MontanaPress on Facebook.

Anaconda Standard June 5, 1896

“A.E. Forgett, commissioner of Indian affairs of the Northwest Territory, arrived to-day from Regina. He had a long interview with the governor to-night regarding the proposed deportation of the Crees. Commissioner Forgett expected to receive the Indians at Coutts on June 2, and had transportation arranged. When he arrived at Medicine Head he found that no Indians were on the way and he came on to Helena to learn the situation. While on the way there he heard the Indians were afraid to return, fearing they would be punished for the part they took in the Riel rebellion. To allay their fears as much as possible he forwarded to the governor a copy of the proclamation issued in 1896, granting amnesty to those who participated in the rebellion. At Great Falls Captain Dean, chief of Indian police, and an interpreter, who accompanied the commissioner, stopped to inform the Crees gathered at that point that there was no intention of punishing any of them. Commissioner Forgett advised the governor to send the Indians in small detachments. They could better be received and cared for then, and if the state waited until all were massed together it would be months before the deportation could take place. He says the Canadian government has always been willing to cooperate in the matter and is anxious to receive and keep its Indians at home. Commissioner Forgett will leave to-morrow for Butte on a sight-seeing trip.”

Weekly Montanian, Thompson Falls June 6, 1896

“Killed By Arrant Cowards. Peaceful Chinaman Shot Down by Montana Thugs. Missoula, Mont. . . Between 12 and 1 o’clock this morning at Quigly some unknown parties murdered a Chinaman named Wong Ying, more commonly known in western Montana as ‘Yank,’ on account of his Americanized language. The indications are that the murderers tried to burn his house, and when he came out shot and killed him. The murdered Chinaman is the same one which a mob of men tried to run out of camp a few weeks ago. It was frustrated by Ed Moore at the point of a Winchester. Labor men have threatened him since the American Federation of Labor tried to purchase all his effects, provided he would leave camp. He would not sell. Later he was threatened again by individuals. A week ago he was served with the last notice to go. His death is believed to be at the hands of men who wanted to rid the camp of him and other Chinamen coming in later. ‘Yank’ had lived in German and Henderson in early days, and later in Philipsburg, conducting a laundry and restaurant. He moved to Quigly two months ago. Sheriff Johnson of Granite county was in the camp at the time of the murder. The coroner’s inquest, before Acting Coroner E. L. Probsting developed nothing toward detection of the guilty parties. Missoula Chinamen are not surprised at the murder,

claiming repeated threats were made against ‘Yank’ by Quigly white men because he stayed there. They wanted ‘Yank’ to sell out. He claimed if they could make money he could. He was a resident of Montana for 26 years.”

Helena Independent June 8, 1896

“Henry F. Edgar, the old pioneer and member of the party that made the original discovery of gold in Alder Gulch, remembers an exciting incident that happened in the 80s, when he was engaged in the butcher business on a small scale. The trails through the country were necessarily rough and travel was restricted then, and the butcher carried his wares around in a couple of boxes strapped on the back of a packhorse. Each box was big enough to hold a quarter of beef. One fine day Edgar came upon a cub bear in the middle of the road. He was returning home with half a load and thought it would be a good idea to carry the cub along. Promptly he readjusted his cargo to make room for the little one in the box on the off side and captured his prey, after which he fastened the box securely. He was in the act of getting on his own horse when the she-bear appeared. Pack horse and saddle animal put out in opposite directions. Mr Edgar rode a particularly skittish animal. It was half a day after that before he returned to the place where he had left the packhorse to see what had become of things. There were signs but that was all. Presently, as he followed along the trail, he found where the packhorse had left its load, the boxes that once had held on one side the bear and the other the remains of a quarter of dressed beef. The strangest part of it all, though, was that the fastenings of the box were just as Mr. Edgar remembered having left them, while there were no indications of violence on the boxes. But the cub was gone, and so were the contents of the other pannier. That was nearly 20 years ago, and to this day no one has ever been able to answer the question. How did the cub escape and where did the old she-bear learn the cabinet trick? That the incident really happened that way will be attested by every old-timer who knows Mr. Edgar.”



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Big Timber Pioneer June 11, 1896

“The waters of the Yellowstone and Boulder are rapidly rising. The bridge at Springdale; a handsome combination structure built by Herzog, Gillette, and Co., for Park county three years ago at an expense of more than ten thousand dollars is almost a wreck and it seems at this writing as if it would be a total loss, as the south pier has entirely disappeared dropping the south span into the river, the center pier is rapidly settling with no hopes of saving it. This gone and the entire structure will be in the river, cutting the Hunters Hot Springs people off from the railroad communication at Springdale. This loss will be temporarily felt not only by Hunters Hot Springs and Park county, but by the people of our town and vicinity whose pleasure it has been to make the drive to that famous pleasure and health resort. At the springs the ranchers upon the north side of the river will also be greatly put out, especially to those whose cream was daily shipped from Springdale to the creameries at this point, and Livingston. Extending our sympathy to those suffering by this loss, we may turn our eyes upon our own old fashioned homely bridge that has met the floods these many years and congratulate ourselves upon its faithful services while its more fashionable neighbors go down.”

Big Timber Pioneer June 18, 1896

“Plans Ready For Custer Program. 60th Anniversary of Famous Indian Battle Reason For Observance. Celebration Will Be Held on Historic Battlefield June 25; Cheyenne, Crow and Sioux Indians in Full Regalia to Mingle with Well Groomed Cavalry. With the 60th anniversary celebration of Custer’s last fight drawing near, every effort is being extended by the committee in charge to make the historic commemoration one of the most colorful and inspiring events of its kind ever staged west of the Mississippi. Months of planning by a committee composed of residents of Hardin, Billings, and Sheridan, Wyo., resulted in the formation of a program that will fittingly pay tribute to Gen. George A. Custer and his gallant band of 264 soldiers, who were annihilated in a battle with the Sioux Indians on the Little Big Horn river June 25, 1876. The celebration, to be held at the battlefield June 25, will be one of pageantry in which hundreds of Cheyenne, Sioux and Crow Indians in full regalia will mingle with the well-groomed cavalry troop from Fort Meade, S.D. Gov. Elmer Holt of Montana will make the principal address at the battlefield program. Although he has been selected as a delegate to the democratic national convention, which will be in session on that date, the state’s chief executive is shunning politics on that day in order to be present at the services. Through generosity of the Burlington railroad, the Fort Meade detachment with horses and other equipment will be given transportation without charge to and from the Hardin celebration. . . Col. R.M. Beck, commanding officer at Fort Meade, agreed to permit troop B of the post to leave Deadwood, S.D. at noon June 23. . . The troop will consist of between 80 and 90 bay horses and a like number of officers and other men. The unit will be reinforced with a section of heavy machine guns under command of Capt. G. W. Buesby. Colonel Beck also has given permission to send a detachment of military police to keep order on the battlefield during the celebration. This will consist of one sergeant and eight privates.



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Among those participating in the ceremonies will be a number of Indian war veterans, both whites and Indians. Like the ranks of the blue and gray of the Civil war, their ranks have greatly diminished as the years have rolled past. Only a few survive.”

Butte Montana Standard June 21, 1936

“Officers Scent It’s No Time To Be a Hero. They struck no medals for bravery at the Butte police station Tuesday. ‘There’s a skunk in my yard,’ a woman telephoned from the West Side. Ascertaining it was striped and four-legged, Asst. Chief Bob Russell volunteered to send an officer to dispose of (shoot!) the transient. ‘Oh, no! Think of the smell! Don’t you have some nice, brave officer with a net?’ the woman inquired. ‘No ma’am, afraid not. Maybe he’ll just wander away,’ Russell said hopefully.”

Helena Independent June 26, 1961

“Nutter Rapped For Inaction on Grasshoppers. Glendive. The Dawson County commissioners Monday took Gov. Donald G. Nutter to task for not getting quick help in the fight against grasshoppers. The commissioners sent this telegram to Sens. Mike Manfield and Lee Metcalf and to Secretary of Agriculture Freeman. . . ‘We are unable to get the governor to act fast enough to fight grasshoppers. Estimated three million acres in eastern Montana infested. Extreme damage will take place within three days. Can you help us without action by governor?’ The telegram was signed by Commissioners John J. Ming, Don Ginson and Franck Schultz. The state commissioner of agriculture, Ed Wren, recently told a Glendive meeting, including the commissioners and ranchers that if grasshoppers were infesting a foreign county such as is occurring in eastern Montana, the government would not hesitate to get help and kill them.”

Flathead Courier June 29, 1961

“Polson is Elected as Headquarters for Television Company. Company Members Filming Route 66 Ranch Story. Polson has been selected by the producers of the Route 66 television show as headquarters for the film personnel who will be shooting a ranch story on location between St. Ignatius and Ronan. Arrangements for housing between 40 and 50 TV crew members and 10 to 15 actors and their families were made Tuesday afternoon by Roger Leonard of Herbert B. Leonard Productions, Inc. of Hollywood. . . Route 66 co-star Marty Millner is bringing his wife, children and their governess to Polson. . .” ★

Bygone Days are compiled by Jen Eames.

MONTANA BOOKS

The Ultimate Romance: A Bestseller Business

True to their mutual passion for crafting high-stakes historical-suspense and contemporary-romantic thrillers, the real-life story of Kat and L.J. Martin’s pursuit of wedded writing bliss is equally worthy, given their *New York Times* bestseller status.

Kat Martin has 16 million copies of her 65 historical and contemporary-romantic suspense novels in print, with series titles like “Maximum Security,” “The Sinclair Sisters” and “Against.” Her latest Maximum Security romantic suspense title, “The Deception” just dropped last month.

Larry Martin, Kat’s husband and fellow author for 35 years, boasts an equal number of thrillers, historical fiction, nonfiction and Western suspense to his name, including such Montana-set titles as “West of the War,” “McKeag’s Mountain,” “Wolf Mountain” and “Revenge of the Damned.”

All things considered, it may have been inevitable that the Martins would relocate in 1996 from California to Montana, settling into a majestic mountain retreat that Larry designed in Rock Creek near Clinton. But how they got there is truly stranger than fiction.

MONTANA PRESS: Where did you grow up?

KAT: I was raised in Bakersfield. That’s where Larry was also raised. We didn’t know each other until we were way older, but we were both from Bakersfield.

MP: Did you read as a kid?

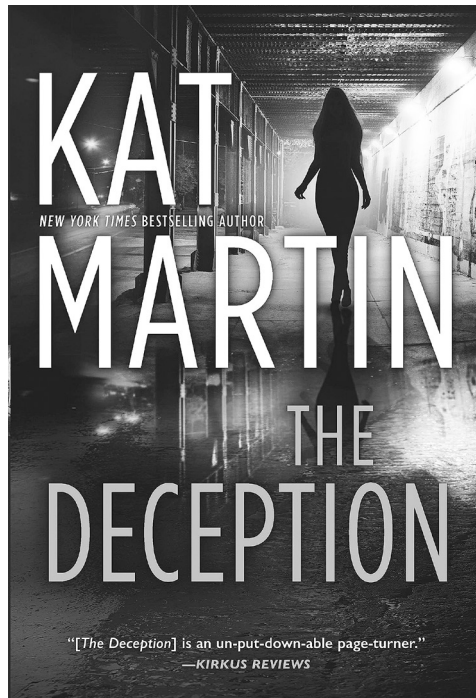
KAT: You know, I didn’t. I was raised poor, so I knew that my only chance of getting out of the life I was in was to go to college. My mother beat that into my head. I studied all the time, so I never read for pleasure. But when I got out of college, I thought well, now I have time to do that, but I could never find books that I liked. So I made this decision that I would go to the grocery store and pick the top 10 bestsellers off the rack, and I thought, oh my God, this is so great. That’s how I learned to read, and I’m sure that influenced my writing, because that’s the kind of books I like to read, fast-paced bestsellers.

LARRY: I read everything I could get my hands on. Later on in high school, I read (Tom) McGuane and Louis L’Amour and everything (John) Steinbeck wrote. I read a lot. I wasn’t exactly a reclusive kid, but I read a lot before I went to bed. Unlike Kat, who read as a good student, I was a lousy student but a good reader.

MP: Where did you graduate from college?

KAT: I went to Bakersfield College for a while, but I actually graduated from the University of California – Santa Barbara. I was in anthropology, and I kind of minored in history, because I loved history. When I first started writing, I wrote historicals because that’s what I knew best, Western historical romance.

LARRY: I did not graduate but I went to Cal-Poly. I was working as a draftsman, I was married and had a kid in the oven and got offered a job for more than the



graduate architects were making because I was working and drawing for a developer. Strangely, I got offered a job managing a water company and left college to take \$700 a month and a house and a car, which was all the money in the world in 1962. I had worked in between high school and college for three architects, and I had worked for an architect and a developer in San Louis Obispo while I was going to school, and then drawing all night for school, so it was easy for me to leave when I got offered the money.

MP: When did you start writing?

LARRY: When I was 25 or 26, I wrote five or six chapters of an action adventure book and realized I didn’t know what I was talking about, so I set it aside. And by that time, I had kids coming and trying to make a living. It was a different time.

MP: That’s when you got into real estate, yes?

LARRY: Yeah, I started studying real estate early on and saw that it was an opportunity. My mother told me I was a natural-born salesman, which I learned later on. I liked the real-estate business, and I ended up as a contractor and appraiser also. I was all over the West.

MP: How did you two meet?

KAT: Oh brother! I think we met at this bar. I had gone through college and had lived in Santa Barbara after I got out of college for about eight years, and then I went back to Bakersfield, but all the realtors went to this one particular bar, Wool Growers, in the Basque section of town. By 11:30, you could get in there, and then drank until about 12:30, when all the realtors sat down on these long tables. So we sat across from each other and that’s how we met. And he liked history; we were both Western people, my family was cowboys and stuff. We were drawn to each other because of our interest in history.

LARRY: And the fact that she was a very sexy broad at the time. I didn’t admit that right away.

KAT: We definitely had the hots for each other! (laughs) We were both previously married, we saw each other once a week at the Wool Growers for about two years. He had a boat.

LARRY: I got divorced, then made a little money, then bought a boat, and I wrote my first book, “Shadow of the Mast,” on the boat...

KAT: A 50-foot boat. It was a beautiful thing, a yacht down on Dana Point, Newport Beach.

LARRY: ...and Kat had read it and corrected it for me.

KAT: I loved that story. That’s how I got started writing. I was messing around with his book, I thought it might take me two weeks to check the spelling and stuff because they didn’t have spell check then, but after two months, I thought hey, I think I could do this.

LARRY: So I couldn’t keep the (boat) payments up anymore...

KAT: So he came up once a week, and pretty soon, he started to come up on Fridays to see me, so we were long-distance dating at Wool Growers for a couple of years.

LARRY: After we got married, I started writing my second book and she looked over my shoulder and said, ‘Well, I could do better than that.’ (laughs)

KAT: No, I did it while we were working. He bought an art gallery, he was about a year into it, and I started writing my own book.

MP: Was it awkward becoming authors together?



LARRY: You know, we both came out of

the real-estate business, we were both self-starters. Nobody has a check for you at the end of the month unless you’re doing something.

KAT: We were writing separately for a while, because I was writing in this art gallery that he bought, he still had his real-estate office, so we were in two locations for a year or so probably, and then he announced one day – and I must admit, it freaked me out – he said, ‘Oh, I’ve decided to close my office and move into the house and write fulltime.’ And I was like, oh my God, we’d never been together that many hours of the day! But it really was OK; we adjusted pretty quickly.

LARRY: And we soon learned you gotta be independent, just like you’re working someplace else. If I had need to go out to lunch or something, I said, ‘Bye, I’m goin’ to lunch.’

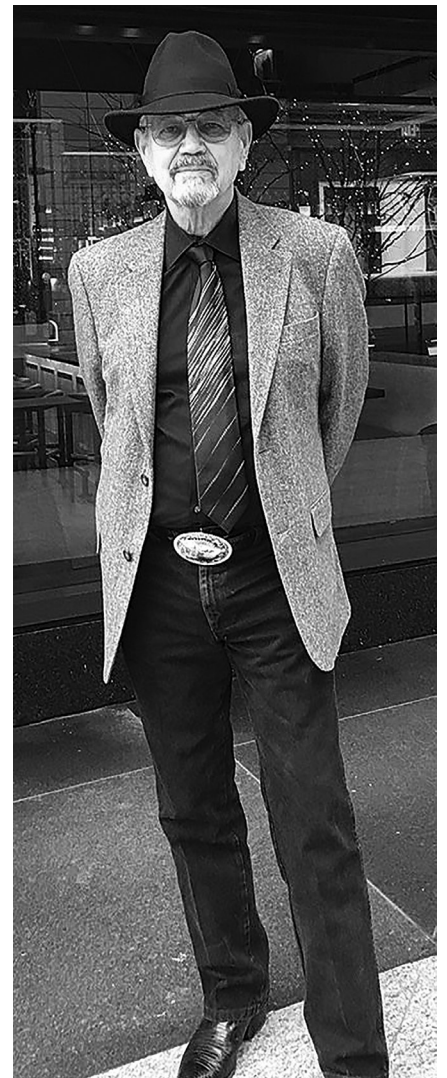
KAT: We didn’t cook each other’s lunch and stuff like that. Dinner, we got together, but breakfast and lunch, you’re on your own; otherwise, you’d never get your work done. And we were working a lot, really hard.

MP: Plus, once you both became bestsellers, you had the added interruption of book signings and tours.

LARRY: (laughs) I’m a hustler. I dragged poor old Kat all over the country. We probably did 500 book signings if we did one.

KAT: We would do six in a weekend, and travel to do it. We’re drive up the valley and go to three different supermarkets on one day.

LARRY: And army bases. Half the people that shop in those BXs and PXs are retired with disposable income.





KAT: And for romances, at first (the base exchanges) said they didn't know how this was going to work. Well, the funny part was, there's a lot of women because they're married; they've got wives.

LARRY: And they shop through the BX; it's a cheap place to shop.

KAT: So we sold about the same number of books, frankly. He always beat me by a little. We used to have contests to see who could sell the most and he would always beat me by some.

MP: Larry, you eventually moved into publishing, co-founding Wolfpack Publishing. How'd that work out?

LARRY: Well, you know, Amazon came along and it was an opportunity that I just couldn't pass up. I saw such a great opportunity because when somebody goes on Amazon, they see all of your backlist, and that just doesn't happen when you walk into a book store. When I went into that business, I knew what I didn't know and I found a guy who did know what I didn't know, and I was smart enough, if I might say that, to say, 'Hey, you take half, I'll take half,' and it was such an encouragement for him that he jumped on it.

MP: Rarer still, you developed a side business designing book covers. How'd that come about?

LARRY: Yeah, when I was involved in the publishing company, I saw that covers are so important, and having an architectural art background, it was fun for me. I haven't done a lot of it of late but Wolfpack Publishing is just running off the scale, selling so many books. Their book sales were up 32 percent over the year before. It's just crazy. I love doing them, but I also love to write.

MP: The two of you also raised two kids in your spare time, right?

LARRY: No, I raised four before Kat and I got married.

KAT: Yeah, they're his kids. We've been together 35 years but they were already out there.

MP: Any writers among them?

LARRY: Yeah, I have one son who has an artistic bent. Strangely enough, he's an ex-Marine who's now working for Lyft, doing

their maps, running a bunch of people who do all the maps for them all over the world.

MP: You moved to Montana in 1996, designed and built your Big Sky dream home. What brought you here?

LARRY: Kat and I were sitting in a Mexican restaurant drinking margaritas and she, who was in her cups, said, 'I want to move to the mountains of Tehachapi,' which is 40 minutes from Bakersfield, and I said, 'If you're going to be a bear, be a grizzly. Let's go to Montana.'

KAT: (laughs) I love adventures. I like to go on adventures, and Montana was a great adventure. It's not like a normal place. It's pretty hard living. You've got to load your garbage into the back of your pickup truck and set it out where the garbage guys are; they don't come to your door. It's not the easiest place to live. It's a challenge. And it was a neat adventure.

MP: As we speak, you're nestled in your latest adventure, a winter home in Prescott, Arizona. How's the going?

KAT: Yeah, we're living in an adventure. We came for the winter to Prescott, but we're trying to get back to Montana, we're doing everything in our power to get back to Montana. We sold our home in California. You know why? We wanted a new adventure. And it is an adventure here. It's really an interesting town, Western, a cowboy town. I saw this house online and had to see it.

LARRY: We bought a house in three days. (laughs)

MP: What would you be doing if you weren't doing what you're doing?

KAT: I get asked this a lot, and I always say I would have been an astrophysicist. Unfortunately, I'm not smart enough to be an astrophysicist, but I like NASA and planetariums and stuff like that.

LARRY: And I'd make films. I probably would be as far as I could get from Hollywood, but I'd make films. I've done 120 videos that I've got online, all kinds of different subjects, and to promote our books.

KAT: You should do some more of them because they really help sales! ★

—JAY MACDONALD

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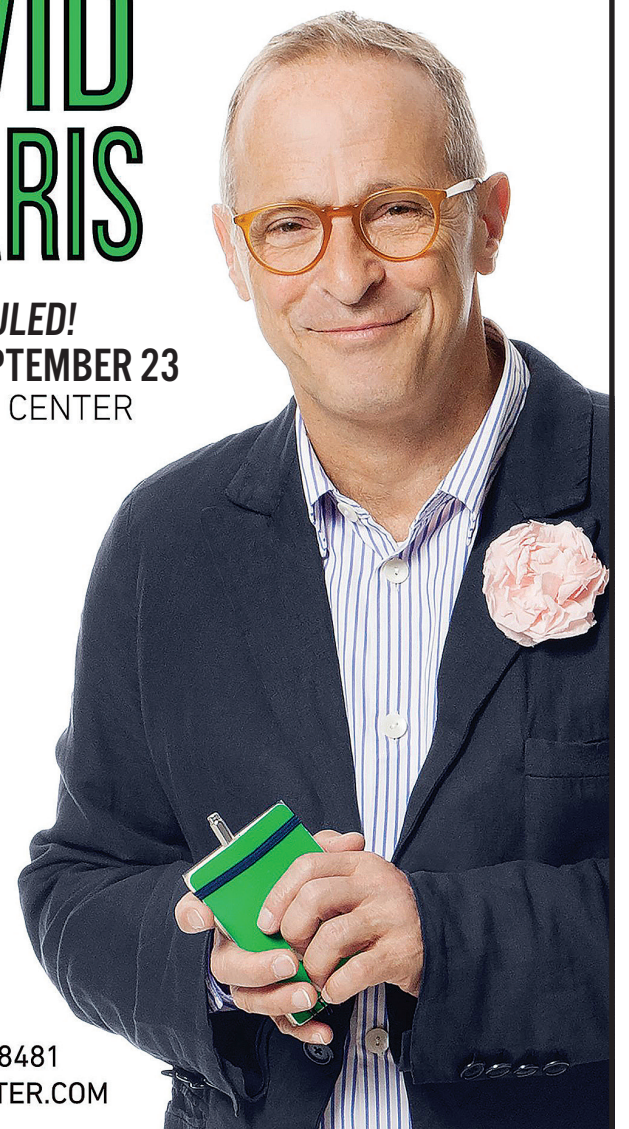


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MONTANA PROFILE

Rolling with the Eye: Chris McGowan

Photographer Chris McGowan's viewpoint is simple: step out there with a camera and capture the moment.

From the splendidly detailed feathers of redwinged blackbirds, immortalized in the softest light, to a unique arch cloud coil of a Chinook formed over the skies of the cityscape, to the mottled-gray, mystifying countenance of a great horned owl – these are some of the things that catch McGowan's eye.

His range of subject matter includes long-ago cast off churches in the exposed meadows and tiny pygmy-owls in the spring thaw, the thousands of snow geese and tundra swans and waterfowl hovering at Freezeout Lake, and the fall colors of the bright yellow tamaracks at Morrell Falls. In one striking picture there is a faint, black silhouette of a car on a dirt road, its headlights pouring out light through the gaps of a deteriorating homestead.

McGowan's work is as much verbal as it is visual; a polished and vivid narrative alongside familiar-yet-complex subjects makes the images appear fresh and unexpected.

"I'm trying to add my own element and my own artistic spin," says McGowan, who was born in Poplar and raised in Helena, where he now resides with his wife and two daughters. "I like to make the image from start to finish, and even though image manipulation can get a bad rap, it makes for some interesting photos."

While his talent at capturing such scenes has boosted McGowan's status as a photographer, he is instead careful not to get too attached to results, reveling in the joy of the full experience, the camping, the camaraderie with his buddies, and the family trips that coincide with his adventures.



GOING DIGITAL

McGowan explains that he has been experimenting with various cameras since about 2005, but that his interest was raised to a new level in 2009, the year his wife, Zoe, bought him a digital camera. He invested numerous hours in figuring out all of its settings. Intrigued, he kept teaching himself the most recent techniques of photography and digital-photo software, absorbing all of the up-to-the-minute upgrades.

For the past several years, McGowan's curiosity has expanded to the point that he now organizes his own field workshops where he guides students to a number of Montana's most dazzling state parks, national parks and wilderness areas.

"I am honored to see my photography in publications that promote adventure, and to be able to promote both nature and wildlife conservation through photography. Those are the best feelings."

Indeed, photography has made McGowan a much more graceful naturalist and



A shot of the thick ice on Abraham Lake in western Alberta, Canada.

also a greater student of subjects such as ornithology, geology and natural and social history. For example, his attention is often pulled toward photographing "lost" churches. In the process, he researches the written and photographic records of the communities that gave rise to the structures.

Another instance of photography's benevolence recently taught McGowan exactly how shrewd and even vain a raven could be after one posed for a series of photos, with the bird expecting a reward from his provisions.

McGowan recently trekked to Abraham Lake in western Alberta, Canada, in the wintertime, to document the release of methane bubbles, a quirky act of nature galvanized by the decomposition of below-the-surface organic matter. The thick ice on that day was anything but translucent and blowing snow further obscured the desired reflection. Yet McGowan says he came away with a plethora of striking images, and considers the trip a success.

He has many photos of the Canadian Rockies, where Lake Louise's iconic ice-

castle sculpture resides and from the strange, scenic separation of ice at Nilan Reservoir in central Montana (a misstep there plunged the photographer knee-deep in the frozen water). Virtually all of McGowan's photos are immersed in the widest capacity of the environment.

THE FUTURE THROUGH THE LENS

Looking to the future, McGowan says he has "a bucket list of owls to photo," adding that he is often goaded by his feelings to re-examine and even reconfigure some of his previous photography.

Indeed, Chris says he sees the act of photography as being all about revision, something he equates to an ingredient of inspiration. One of the pleasures that Chris discovers while teaching photography classes and workshops is that he often deals with a group of learners who have no shortage of enthusiasm and look at him as a font of inspiration.

Besides developing a technical glossary, McGowan's students soon learn that to their





An encounter with a savvy raven recently taught McGowan just how shrewd and even vain the species could be after one posed for a series of photos and then expected compensation in the form of a reward from the photographer's provisions.

SOCIAL DISTANCING

Observe wildlife rules...
but with people!

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.

Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.

Still don't use slower friends as bear bait.

From NPS.GOV

teacher, photography gives artists a noble pretext to amble.

“There is a church along the Hi-Line that I found out about,” says McGowan, discussing a recent endeavor. “It ended up that I camped nearby it, and I waited for the sunset, miles from the closest town. The conditions there are always different – the weather, time of year, the time of day, the amount of light – every time you go back. To me, that’s part of the artistic side of photography. I don’t photograph people. To me, photography is landscape and adventure, and, of course, seeing new things.”

Slowly but surely, click by click, crop tool by crop tool, McGowan is creating a veritable photography database, whittling a handful of favorites out of the approximately 20,000 images that he amasses yearly.

“Another goal for me is to build a name as a photographer, and one day to retire from my full-time job [as the head of Montana’s National Joint Apprenticeship and Training Committee electrical apprentice program], and then transition to photography full-time.

“More specifically, I’d like to re-focus on simple images, and try to focus more on keeping things simpler, as far as elements in photography, and working on detail. I’m not in such a rush anymore, and I don’t mind letting the photos cook for a while, or adding hours to the process. I’m more patient now, tweaking smaller elements for emphasis. I’ve learned to slow down and become more precise, and more targeted, and to roll with it.”

No matter how successful Chris turns out to be in the future production of his art, his *raison d’être* will surely be piloted by the same minimal objectives that have made his photography singular.

“Do what you love, enjoy what’s around you, and hopefully someone notices it.” ★

—BRIAN D’AMBROSIO

To see more of Chris McGowan’s work, visit www.chrismcgowanphotography.com



McGowan’s subjects range from the Montana Capitol to Montana churches.

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A MOUNTAIN GOAT LEAPS ACROSS A GAP IN A ROCKY LEDGE AT THE
JEWEL BASIN HIKING AREA NEAR KALISPELL ON A SUNDAY IN JUNE.

GRAND PRIZE: CASEY KREIDER,
KALISPELL, MONTANA

"I'm 37-years-old and a professional photographer. I've been taking photos for about 13 years now. I was on an early spring hike/snowshoe to Mount Aeneas in the Jewel Basin in early June of last year. I reached the saddle before the ridge walk to the summit and was taking a break. There were a few mountain goats around picking at shrubs and I was observing and photographing them with a telephoto lens while trying to keep a safe, respectful distance. I heard the sound of hooves walking on rock behind me so I turned and noticed a goat walking along the edge of the ridge. I instinctively raised my camera to photograph it. The goat startled and took a few measured steps before it leapt into the air over a little gap in the ridge top that drops straight down. It landed on the other side of the ridge top, rejoined the other goats and quickly went back to looking for shrubs and plants to feed on."

The *Montana Press* asked professional and amateur photographers from across the state and beyond to participate in a digital photography contest celebrating the far reaches of Montana. The theme of the contest was "Last Best Places," a term often associated with Montana's untouched wild lands but not limited to wilderness or the wild. We received hundreds of entries and a team of four initial judges winnowed the entries down to 40 finalists. The finalists will be featured online on the *Montana Press* website and social media pages such as Facebook, Instagram and Twitter over the coming month in order to share the broad base of talent on display by Montana photographers who entered the competition. The entries were narrowed to nine winners and a grand prize. Thanks to all the Montana photographers who entered. Though others eyes we can sometimes see our place and other places in a new light. We look forward to seeing more of the "Last Best Places" of Montana in years to come. ★



**AN EVENING AT HORSE PRAIRIE GUARD STATION IN THE BEAVERHEAD-DEERLODGE NATIONAL FOREST,
A VERY DARK CORNER OF THE STATE. PHOTO BY ERIC HENDERSON**



**MAGICAL LODGEPOLE PINE FOREST REFLECTION OF A SMALL POND NEAR MUSSIGBROD LAKE,
IN THE BEAVERHEAD-DEERLODGE NATIONAL FOREST. PHOTO BY ROBERT PAL**



**HORSES RETURNING FROM
WINTER PASTURE IN GARDINER.
PHOTO BY JAMES BUONAMICI**

LAST BEST PLACES PHOTOGRAPHY COMPETITION 2020



**SOAKING UP THE LAST FEW MINUTES OF DAYLIGHT WITH
SOME SOCIAL DISTANCING FAMILY BONDING AT THE CLARK
FORK RIVER IN PLAINS MONTANA. PHOTO BY KATIE ANDERSON**

**EVEN OLD BROKEN DOWN VEHICLES LOOK PICTURESQUE IN
VIRGINIA CITY, MONTANA. PHOTO BY DENISE ARD**





A BLUSTERY DAY ALONG HIGHWAY 141 IN THE AVON VALLEY. MEMORABLE FOR ITS WORKING RANCHES AND HERDS OF CATTLE, HAYSTACKS AND BEAVER SLIDES, THIS BROAD VALLEY HAS A TIMELESS FEEL. PHOTO BY JOHN KILGOUR



LONE SKIER BENEATH THE CRAZY MOUNTAINS. PHOTO BY JORDAN SKATTUM



MONTANA SILOS AND GRAIN ELEVATOR. PHOTO BY PETER HERZOG



THE LAST BEST PLACE TO BE STILL: FLATHEAD LAKE AT SOMERS. PHOTO BY STACEY SKINNER

WE RECOMMEND...

STATEWIDE PERFORMANCE LISTINGS

Online Music and Events on Facebook, YouTube & More

The monthly calendar is a sampling of events and activities online across the state. Please send updates to: info@montanapress.net.



JOEL CORDA

Great Falls resident Corda is a singer/songwriter, writer/director, actor, and teacher with a background in opera, theatre and education. He shares some of his talents live on Facebook every Saturday at 6:30 p.m. throughout June, playing originals, covers, possibly some requests and will cover every period of his career, from old to brand new. Visit **"Joel Corda Musician"** on Facebook.



TEXAS MUSICIAN AND SINGER/SONGWRITER BO DEPEN A UPLOADS HIS OWN AMERICANA/COUNTRY AND SHARES WORK BY OTHER MUSICIANS ON HIS FACEBOOK HANDLE @BODEPEN A AND HIS WEBSITE WWW.BODEPENAMUSIC.COM.



GRACE POTTER

Every Monday, Grace Potter hosts a "Monday Night Twilight Hour" on her Facebook handle @GracePotter. Get more info/music at GracePotter.com.



ERICA VON KLEIST

Multi-instrumentalist, teacher and entrepreneur Erica von Kleist began her career as a saxophonist and flautist in the New York jazz scene. She studied at the renowned Juilliard School and in 2004 earned the first bachelor's degree in jazz in the school's history. After graduation, her next ten years were met with performances, tours and several Grammy-Nominated recordings with various artists. Now a Whitefish resident, one of Erica's most recent endeavors is "BOOBS and other stories," a one-woman comedy show with Erica at the helm on piano and voice. Over the past few months, Erica has been releasing online compilations at her facebook page @EricavonKleistMusic. Her music can also be found at EricaVonKleist.com.



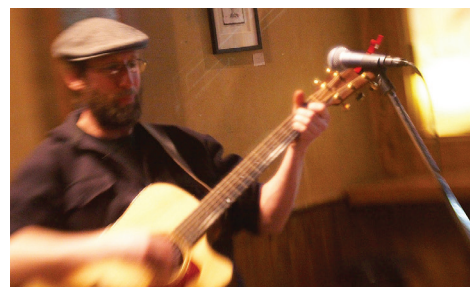
JESSICA EVE

Voted best Female Vocalist in the Magic City Music Awards in Billings two years in a row, Jessica Eve has featured videos uploaded on her Facebook site at the handle @JessicaEveMTmusic. Check out her live performance on "Montana Happy Hour" at @MontanaPress on FB.



ARTERIAL DRIVE

Indie Rock band Arterial Drive includes sax and violin blending with sweet vocal harmonies and a conventional rock rhythm section. Despite different influences and backgrounds, the musicians master the ability to groove. The band performs at Amplify Studios on June 13 at 7 p.m. with audio/video feed of the show live-streamed on the HOT 101.9 FM Billings music station as well as their Facebook page @ArterialDrive. The band's albums and singles can also be found at ArterialDrive.com.



CHECK OUT THE FACEBOOK HANDLE @WORDSMUSICGUITARPLAYING OR SOUNDCLOUD.COM TO SEE WHAT MONTANA SINGER/SONGWRITER LARRY HIRSHBERG HAS BEEN BUSY WRITING/RECORDING/PERFORMING.



THE KITCHEN DWELLERS

Find uploaded concerts and live streams of bluegrass music with lightning-fast finger-picking and funky bass-line jams including a live concert recorded in Livingston in May - at the Facebook handle @KitchenDwellers and website KitchenDwellers.com.



STRINGS AND STORIES FOR THE BLUEBIRD MUSIC FESTIVAL

An all-star collection of musicians, including Wesley Schultz (The Lumineers), Jade Bird, Langhorne Slim, Adam Aijala & Ben Kaufmann (Yonder Mountain String Band), Josiah Johnson (formerly of The Head & The Heart), Adia Victoria, Andy Thorn (Leftover Salmon) all performing in "Strings and Stories." Proceeds from the nonprofit event help public schools buy instruments and provide free art workshops to the children of teachers and first responders. Each musician contributes an intimate performance, most with an accompanying personal story or stories. These performances are pieced together by Ian Glass of Ian Glass Media (National Geographic, Red Bull, etc). The film will be released Sunday, June 28 via a private email link. For info: BluebirdMusicFestival.org.



THE LIL SMOKIES

This popular Montana bluegrass band is offering experiences like private online concerts with "your favorite Smokie" as well as music, cooking and fly tying lessons. Also on offer at their website: pieces of Smokie history including a famed banjo and dobro. Check out their FB handle for uploaded shows, merch and more music at @thelilsmokies or thelilsmokies.com.

ONE-MAN-BAND DAN HENRY: SOLID MUSIC FOR UNSOLID TIMES

One-man band Dan Henry begins his night with a few bare accoutrements. Existing equipment enticing the listener is minimal: he holds a guitar, his voice, and his accompanying stomp box, cymbals, and harmonica.

The music, mostly covers, is catchy, what might be called “household.” Calling upon an understanding of how solitariness and creativity often intersect, Henry introduces variations on these familiars, as the music builds in its own texture and beauty.

A road warrior of over-noisy bars and chattering brewpubs, Henry figures that his night is not always going to end in exuberant applause, and that there might not even be a single soul pressed there in front of him to cheer bravo. But that’s not dispiriting for Henry, since he’s playing these chords out of passion. Indeed, he has done the near impossible: he’s avoided the nine to five grind, while squeezing out a living as a professional working musician.

The decisive factors in Henry’s set-list may well be age and wistfulness, as the 31-year-old brines his material with the reminiscent sounds of Sam Cooke, The Drifters, The Platters, The Kingston Trio, and Cat Stevens. Many of these recordings he first heard courtesy of his father’s record collection, a mishmash of early Motown, topical folk music, and the output of rock n’ roll icons such as Led Zeppelin and The Eagles.

“I listened to anything that my dad was into, a cocktail of the 1950s through the 1970s,” says Dan Henry. “I’ve got a set list of 170, 180 to draw from. At some point in the show I’ll toss in Sublime or one-hit wonders from the

The decisive factors in Henry’s set-list may well be age and wistfulness, as the 31-year-old brines his material with the reminiscent sounds of Sam Cooke, The Drifters, The Platters, The Kingston Trio, and Cat Stevens.

90s, songs that people know, as well as the ones you won’t hear every day. I have to update the list, which includes 20 originals.”

Ultimately, Henry is fighting a campaign against external sound. While the musician in him would love rapt attention, he’s aware that oftentimes he and his music aren’t at the center stage of the evening. Yet his face never shows tension or concern or boredom or annoyance; he’s immersed in the sounds. He strums. He picks. He performs. Backside on stool, he deposits his purest self in openness.

“At places like Miller’s Crossing or Lewis & Clark (Brewing Company), there’s more chatter than there are people listening, so I stick to the covers as entertainment. It can be trying at times when no one cares about the guy in the corner playing music. Sometimes you can play busy places, and no one pays attention. Whereas the Rathskeller is a more personal experience, with low to the ground chairs, and with people who are there to listen.

“You can sing originals and people listen to the words, and the music is not the filler or background. One of the best places is the (Ruby Valley) brewery in Sheridan, MT; it’s a good crowd and they get into it, and I can get into the storytelling.”

Henry performs between approximately 15 to 20 solo gigs per month around the state of Montana, and he recently has added even more shows to his schedule with the eponymously named Dan Henry Band.

“As a solo guy, I can jam for three hours or play until midnight or one a.m.,” says Henry, a native of Helena who earned a music-business degree from Montana State University Billings.



In the past he worked at a concrete plant in Bozeman and researching desert tortoises in Nevada before returning to the state.

Several years ago, Henry overcame his initial pangs of stage fright while performing at the Helena Farmers’ Market. It was then that he realized that in times of uncertainty, everything is happening for the first time, so why not embrace the newness as its own learning construct?

“Whatever came along, I took,” says Henry. “Every beach bum, hippie and guy under a tree plays the guitar, and I figured that I could do something different, so I added in the harmonica and learned new songs and when I was invited to play at a pottery studio, I showed up.”

Henry’s curiosity and his talent are alive and now at age thirty-one, he’s still learning what he is after, though it’s clear that music is the source of his adventurousness and his explorer mentality.

“Sometimes I think that I should go to a big metropolis, like Austin or Nashville, and get seen for a little while, but I really like Montana. It’s hard not to overplay the venues in town, and that means that only a few people are coming to each show. It’s a struggle to convince venues that I’m not an acoustic act, but I’m a one-man band, and that a one-man band generates more sound than just an acoustic

guitar. I’m not a solo act; I’m a band.”

Performing and being heard takes motivation, drive, and represents no average striving. The artist in Dan Henry has learned how to examine his audience, an analysis that at once can be exciting and wrenching and full of revelation.

“Some nights I’ll play ‘All Along The Watchtower’ more like Jimi Hendrix or more like Bob Dylan, depending on the audience. I can critique and sharpen the set list and no two (set lists are) the same. It’s all about what the crowd likes.

“I like to switch it up with songs I haven’t played before. I can fine-tune it fast or slow. The energy is make or break. The more the crowd has it, it hypes me up and I try to feed

that energy back to them. I can do a free-range solo and stretch a song, or do a medley out of the blue, or fit the set list to how I’m feeling. I can do some foot stomping, hit the cymbal and harmonica, and get the guitar to start mimicking the bass.”

No matter the extent of the crowd, Dan Henry’s energy insures that he will never latch on to complacency as a solution. When the music touches him – and he can feel that it is touching others – Henry will disappear into it.

“Sometimes I forget that I’m playing music and I’m just people watching,” Henry explains. “(One show) at Great Burn Brewing in Missoula, they were digging it, clapping, singing along, and grabbing (business) cards. Every fourth gig people are listening and having fun. For me, I always say that one person and one clap is all I need to keep going.” ★

—BRIAN D’AMBROSIO

During the month of June, Henry will be performing live streams sessions on FB called “Home with Henry.” Tune in June 17 at 4 p.m. for a mix of original pieces and covers with facts and history about each song. Henry will also be performing live June 25 at 5 p.m. at the Ten Mile Creek Brewery in Helena. (Live events subject to change.)



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BEAUTY OF MONTANA INSPIRES NEW FEATURE FILM "COWBOYS"

The natural beauty of Montana has long been a source of inspiration for artists. One of the state's latest converts is Los Angeles-based filmmaker Anna Kerrigan, whose new film "Cowboys" was inspired by the beauty and mystery she has experienced in Big Sky Country.

Kerrigan has a background in independent film, digital storytelling and theater. Her credits include "Hot Seat," which she wrote and directed, along with "The Chances," a digital series, written by and starring two deaf actors, that premiered at the 2017 Sundance Film Festival. Her Gotham-nominated digital series "The Impossibilities" (2015), a comedy that she wrote and directed, follows the interwoven storylines of a magician and a daffy lesbian yogi. Kerrigan has also written and directed shorts for Funny Or Die, Amazon, and Refinery29. She develops theater projects with productions and development at Second Stage, the Williamstown Theatre Festival, Ensemble Studio Theater, Naked Angels and SPACE at Ryder Farm. A graduate of Stanford University with a BA in Drama, Kerrigan has lived and worked in New York City for ten years.

Her new film was shot in northwestern Montana, in the Flathead Valley and the Flathead National Forest near Glacier Park.

"The Montana Film Office gave us a Big Sky Grant to film in Montana," Kerrigan explains, "but the majority of our budget was financed by Limelight [Dylan Sellers and Chris Parker]. I want to thank the people of Montana for being so supportive of the film. The Montana Film Office is doing a great job."

"Cowboys" stars Steve Zahn, Jillian Bell and Anna Dowd in an emotional rollercoaster exploring parenting, relationships and LGBTQ rights. The film, which was slated to have its world premiere at the 2020 Tribeca Film Festival, before the event was postponed, is a story of being on the run in rural Montana.

In the film, a mentally-ill father and his transgender son attempt to escape bigotry, making it all the way to the Canadian border. The heart and soul of the film may be the story of this pair, but it can also be felt in the cinematic beauty of Montana's wilderness.

When asked why she chose Montana as a filming location, Kerrigan explains that she specifically wrote the film with the valley around Glacier Park in mind. She fell in love with the state when she visited Montana as a

FIILMAKER ANNA KERRIGAN



child with her best friend's family who had a home on Flathead Lake.

"I formed a deep bond with the place," Kerrigan says. "I always found a lot of adventure in Montana as a kid. It attracts people who want to be close to extreme nature. It has this sort of pioneer spirit. I was hungry for adventure."

"I remember various sunrises, breathtaking moments of natural beauty. I wrote this movie for the part of the world where we were making it. I love Glacier Park so much."

She started writing the film in California in the spring of 2014. "I wrote the film during a kind of dark time, and I think returning to Montana as a backdrop was comforting for me," Kerrigan admits. "I didn't actually know what the script was about when I started, I just knew it was about a son and a father on a trip on a horse and it organically revealed itself to me."

The film, she says, also expresses a kind of internalized conflict she has with Montana. "It's not monolithic in its socio-cultural beliefs, but it's predominantly white and feels pretty dominantly heterosexual," she explains. "I encountered more pioneer types in the part of Montana where we shot... There's a general distrust of 'the government' in some places but there is also an 'Alt Right' presence there; I mean, Richard Spencer lived there."

"But at the same time, there is a liberal community. There was a whole drag show in a local motorcycle bar that was a huge success. So it's as complicated there as it is in most places. Though I didn't set about with a clear agenda, the film presents this part of Montana in a more complicated way through the viewpoints of the central characters."

"On an even more universal level, I think that 'Cowboys' examines how difficult parenting can be, especially when you have a kid who is different, and I think that that's something a lot of people can relate to."

SHOOTING IN THE TREASURE STATE

In addition to discovering a great filming location, Kerrigan says Montana's welcoming and friendly people helped to make the whole process easier by working to go beyond the concept of a setting or backdrop for a film.

"The Montana Film Office was amazing to work with. They set up a location scout for dinner my first night in Missoula with a handful of adults in the transgender community, one of whom is a therapist for transgender kids in the state. The state is so big that most of her calls are over the phone. She was great to talk to about the experience of being a trans kid in Montana and also looked at the script for me."

Some of the challenges Kerrigan and her crew had to experience while filming in Montana were in the wilderness. She says they had to make sure it was safe to film for the crew and cast by crafting shots close to parking lots. Even though they found some amazing locations to shoot, some of the hikes were just too far from the lots. During a river scene, the help of a local rafting company became invaluable. Kerrigan says they created a safe space for the actors and were able to preserve the expensive camera equipment when filming.

Interestingly, some challenges came from local shooting locations, businesses in the area that were reluctant to allow filming once they learned about the theme of the movie.

"Because of the content of the film -- that it centers on a transgender kid -- we were initially cagey about what the film was about. Before we shot I'm pretty sure all the location owners were aware of the content of the film. We did lose one location due to subject matter [a diner] and it was kind of a bummer because I thought it was the type of place I'd want to support," she recalls.

The film also features local background actors from Montana, adding to the authentic look and feel of the film. "We had an amazing local casting director, Casey Pobran from the Rocky Mountain Agency. She did a great job finding people who were unique-looking and who gave the film a specific vibe that I wanted to show," Kerrigan says. "Shooting in Montana lent so much production value for our budget level for our non-union film. Beyond the obvious gorgeous scenery, people were really friendly and accommodating to what we could afford," she adds.

RETURN TO MONTANA

Throughout her youth visiting Montana, the filmmaker says she had friends on both sides of the political spectrum. While some people might have been liberal, some of the people she became friends with were homophobic and racist in the predominantly-white state.

"I think that in general we live in such divisive times. The reality is that people are complicated," says Kerrigan. "Just because you are in Montana it doesn't mean you are not accepting of transgender. If you've never met a transgender person it is easier to have a preconception about those people and judge them."

"I believe everyone is too complicated to write off and neatly categorize. I've been good friends with a woman in Montana for the last 22 years who used to be the caretaker of my best friend's house and yes, she did vote for Trump, but her two best friends are lesbians and she used to be pro-life and now she's changed her mind... She was really into the idea of my movie even though she voted for a president that has turned his back on rights for transgender people and the rest of the LGBTQ community."

"See?" Kerrigan remarks, "It's complicated."

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

In regards to being back in Montana, Anna Kerrigan is determined to continue working here. "I want to film in Montana again, absolutely. The film commissioner of Montana is actively working on promoting the people within Montana. I think you will see more and more people shooting in here. I love Montana and I will be back. I've started envisioning my next Montana movie."

Since we are currently in COVID-19 times and under social distancing, the film has not been shown in front of a live audience here. People are able to see it only at home, on their private screens. As the Tribeca Film Festival, where the film was going to be debuted, was postponed, Kerrigan says it's been disappointing for her not to have a live audience see the film and gauge viewers' reactions.

"It is weird to have that physical experience taken away. I want to see them live, and nothing replaces that. People are having an intimate personal experience and reality is this is how people film view these days. People are having private experiences."

The future remains uncertain for many films and for filmmakers like Kerrigan. "It is all very unclear. This period of time will make artists come back to the market. They will reconnect more with the subjects, and we will see more authentic storytelling. This is giving people the chance to reconnect with what is important to them."

Kerrigan also says they were lucky that the coronavirus did not affect the actual filming but only the post-production of the film. "Even the distribution plans are difficult to make now, when we don't understand how long the world will be afraid."

"I don't want to go to a theater, and I am a filmmaker," she concludes. "It is stressful." ★

—NIKOLETA MORALES.



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LITTLE JANE AND THE PISTOL WHIPS

This Montana country/swing band has taken many forms since it's 2008 inception, from acoustic to electric, and now, back to acoustic. The one constant throughout all this change is Ashly Jane Holland (Aka Little Jane). Front woman, founder, and songwriter for Little Jane & the Pistol Whips, Holland possesses a vocal quality that can be smoky, sweet, warm, and inviting. Holland plays live sets on her Facebook page at the handle [@LittleJaneandthePistolwhips](#) as well as a live "Montana Happy Hour" at [@MontanaPress](#). Merch and albums are also available at [LittleJaneandthePistolwhips.com](#).

The monthly calendar is a sampling of events and activities online across the state. Please send updates to: info@montanapress.net.



THE DUSTY POCKETS

This Montana band's self-invented genre, "recreational Americana," is indicative of the band's mission to make good music and have fun at the same time. Their debut release, *Hard Line*, is a ten-song album that cherry-picks from the band's wide and growing catalog of original songs. Listen to the album/join the mailing list at [TheDustyPockets.com](#) or go to their Facebook [@TheDustyPockets](#).



BOZEMAN While adhering to Reopening Guidelines set by the governor and support by the Gallatin City-County Health Department, Art Walks on June 12 and July 10 will be canceled as well as the Music on Main concerts. Any additional cancellations to summer events will be announced no less than 30 days prior to each event. Other community events cancelled include the Sweet Pea Festival 2020 and Big Sky Country State Fair 2020. Many of the art galleries are reopening while adhering to guidelines and/or have delivery and pickup options. In order to encourage locals to shop downtown safely, **My Downtown Bozeman** will feature one challenge per week throughout June and will give challengers the chance to share photos on social media and win prizes including Downtown Dollars and gift cards. My Downtown Bozeman is creating a comprehensive list of art galleries and other business' reopening plans and hours at [DowntownBozeman.org](#).

HELENA Downtown Helena (DH) announced it will be postponing the Alive-at-Five free summer concert series that showcases local food and craft vendors, kids corner, and musicians during an evening of live music in downtown Helena. Other events with the capacity of 50 or more will take place later this summer following re-opening guidelines. More information is available at [DowntownHelena.com](#).

DH has partnered with Janelle DeBray and other local artists to spruce up Helena business fronts with window art showcasing local artists and the connectivity between small business, the arts world and their neighbors. Patrons can stroll downtown beginning June 5 and all month long to view business windows illustrated by local artists. Visitors can vote for their favorite piece of art on FB at [@DowntownHelena](#) from June 10 to 30. The winning window artist and business will receive \$100 each.

MONTANA ARTS UPDATE

BUTTE The Uptown Butte Artwalk, a group of enthusiastic artists promoting all types of art in Butte and the rest of Montana, are postponing their first Friday events until further notice. The group of artists is continuing to update their Facebook page with new works during this time. They are encouraging local artists in a diverse range of mediums to share their work on their page, and would like visitors to check out the artists' work on Facebook [@UptownButteArtwalk](#).

MISSOULA Some art galleries downtown are starting to open up, but First Friday will not be taking place this month. Instead, the Missoula Community Access Television is offering virtual art to experience for those who are not ready to head downtown. MCAT streamed the first Virtual First Friday on June 5. The event was hosted by ARTS Missoula and Radius Gallery. Radius Gallery, Gallery 709, Dana Gallery, ZACC (a "Pandemic Postcard" by Christa Carlton from the ZACC virtual exhibit is pictured above left), Missoula Art Museum and others participated in the online event. For more information visit [@ArtsMissoula](#) on Facebook.

FrontierSpace is a unique alternative gallery space in Missoula dedicated to exhibiting emerging and established contemporary artists in Missoula. Although closed through at least August 2020, the gallery is still committed to giving emerging artists opportunities during this difficult time. Pop-up exhibitions are now online starting with Missoula artist Tammy Ravas. To view the Covid Relief exhibits and more, visit [frontierspace.org](#).

BILLINGS Downtown Billings ArtWalk was cancelled in June. Sponsors will resume ArtWalk events when health and safety considerations permit. They encourage visitors to go to their web page for updates including gallery listings and to view artists work. Many galleries who participate in the artwalk have on-line shopping options via Facebook or individual websites. For updates and to view local gallery listings, visit [ArtwalkBillings.com](#) or on Facebook [@BillingsArtWalk](#).

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FAMOUS AND NOT FORGOTTEN: JAMES "SPIDER" MCCALLUM



James F. "Spider" McCallum was born on November 23, 1912, at Dobson, Montana, and moved with his family to Bozeman when he was 14 years old, where he attended local schools. James and his two siblings were all adopted from an orphanage at an unknown point in time, according to Anita Spooner, McCallum's daughter and only living descendant.

An amateur boxer at age 12, "Spider" won his first trophy from the Intermountain Amateur Athletic Association in his weight class. The McCallum family moved again in 1935, this time to Missoula. He had his eighth professional bout in 1935 in Missoula; at the time he was with the Civilian Conservation Corps Company (CCC) 1998 at the Thompson River Camp.

McCallum's boxing ability kept him traveling to camps and cities in Montana and the Northwest. In 1938-39 he was a boxing instructor for the CCC in the Fort Missoula district. Spider kept at professional boxing while trying a number of other jobs, including security guard, Northern Pacific Railroad switchman, sugar beet processor, and boxing promoter.

The welterweight was reported to have appeared in more than 100 amateur and professional boxing matches, although he never contended for a major boxing title. One of his final fights in Montana, on November 9, 1955, was an 8-round decision over Ron Milne, from Spokane, at Missoula, in which McCallum reportedly "showed marvelous physical conditioning."

Ten days later the Montana State Athletic Commission banned McCallum from participating in any professional boxing in Montana. Commission chairman Sonny O'Day quoted Montana codes to the newspapers stating, "that a boxer cannot box in a Montana professional ring after

reaching the age of 38." O'Day said the decision was made in the interest of the sport and the protection of McCallum, who had fought and won four bouts since coming out of retirement in the summer of 1955. It appears that McCallum kept fighting in Montana – he had one more fight in Great Falls in 1956 – before wrapping up his career with fights in Washington, Oregon and even Edmonton, Alberta.

THE MAVERICK BAR

McCallum started operating The Maverick Bar in the 1940s. Located at 633 Woody Street in Missoula, it was formerly known as the Helena Hotel. Spider stayed active with boxing and in his spare time he liked to cook and bake and even enjoyed writing poetry; his handwriting was said to be impeccable. But the bar seemed to occupy most of his attention.

Spider was known to give "graduation" parties for University of Montana students who had made his place their hangout during their academic tenure. The Maverick was a notoriously rough bar, especially in its earliest days. In fact, McCallum was seriously wounded in October 1947 while attempting to break up a fight between two patrons early one morning. McCallum was slashed in the stomach as he wrested a knife from a man fighting in the bar.

According to *The Missoulian*, "McCallum was reported in a satisfactory condition by the physician who operated upon him to repair tissues of the stomach, penetrated by the long, dagger-like knife wielded, police said they were informed by (Sammy J. Mercer)." Sammy J. Mercer and Henry (Squeaky) Wahl later renewed their fight – minus the knife – in the same location where their first battle was staged. Both were booked for drunkenness and disturbing the peace but McCallum refused to sign a criminal complaint against Mercer.

Spider opened the Maverick Bar in tandem with his wife Edna and the bar outlasted the marriage. (Spider was once arrested for assaulting Edna.) He later married a waitress from the Main Spot Café and they started a home at 1901 South 13th Street West. When that marriage too faltered, Spider, his brother Oren and his brother's wife Dorothy shared a house at 817 N. Ryman.

MCCALLUM'S MURDER

On a wintry February day in 1969, Missoula police found Spider McCallum's body at his residence at 817 Ryman Avenue, following an anonymous phone call. Police said he had been dead about a week when his body was discovered. The autopsy report for Spider disclosed "3 lacerations on left side of head, one being an extensive crush with a blunt instrument (probably an ax)."

Three men were initially charged with first-degree murder in the bludgeon-slaying of the 56-year-old McCallum: James Roark, 33; Gene Maddio, 25, and David Tamietti, 26. Roark was arrested in a Helena rooming house and Tamietti and Maddio were apprehended in Idaho Falls, Idaho.

Spider James F. McCallum, of Fort Missoula CCC, training enrollees to box at Elk Park Camp on the South Fork of Flathead River.



From Archives & Special Collections, Mansfield Library, The University of Montana-Missoula

James F. 'Spider' McCallum (right) at his 'Maverick Bar' at 634 Woody Street in Missoula, Montana.

(Below) McCallum in custody of Military Police. He is in the center and is wearing a military uniform.

"Spider's electronic razor, electric toothbrush, and hair clippers were found in the tan suitcase that Tamietti was carrying at Idaho Falls," according to contemporary press accounts. Tamietti reportedly told Idaho officers, "My fingerprints are all over the place," and waived his rights to an attorney.

On March 28, 1969, charges of murder against Roark and Maddio were dismissed after the men were able to prove that they were not in Missoula at the time of the McCallum murder (determined to be the night of February 21, 1969). County Attorney Jack Pinsoneault, however, filed a first-degree murder charge against Tamietti.

David E. Tamietti, the son of Mineral County Sheriff Francis Tamietti, had been raised in Superior. His 1961 Superior High School yearbook photo shows a handsome, otherwise ordinary kid wearing a suit and tie and below his name the quote: "All the world may not love a lover, but all the world watches him." He attended the University of Montana for five years and was employed by Castles Empire Foods in Superior for six.

Tamietti's connection to McCallum is nebulous, though he could have first come in contact with the former boxer at the Maverick Bar. In the 1962-63 Grizzly Guide at Montana State University, Tamietti was registered in Pre-Forestry as a resident of Elrod Hall and the following year he was registered in Business Administration and living at Eddy Avenue.

"I was 19-years-old when my dad was killed," says Anita Spooner, in 2020. "I just called him the day before to let him know I had had a baby girl, and he didn't answer. Two hours later my husband came out and told me he was gone."

Spooner once lived at the Ryman Avenue house with her father and she remembered visiting him a few months before he was killed. She recalls seeing Tamietti there.

"Dave Tamietti was at my dad's house and I didn't know who he was at the time," says Spooner. "Dad was big on bringing in people who were bad to help them. He had a big heart. I was sitting on the couch, and Dave Tamietti kept walking around the living room in circles, and he never said a word. Of course, I didn't stay very long. I didn't feel comfortable with him [Tamietti] there. My dad seemed okay. He had David living with him."

James Roark testified that theft was Tamietti's motive for murder. About one week before Spider was killed, Roark testified, Tamietti "ran out



of money" and robbed "a camera and transistor radio" from the home of a woman who the men had done work for while employed by Spic and Span Cleaners. Tamietti, he said, had suggested a place on Ryman for more goods.

THE AFTERMATH

The trial lasted 12 days and ended in a mistrial after a jury failed to reach a verdict. A second trial had been scheduled for November 30, 1970, but was vacated after Tamietti pleaded guilty to a reduced second-degree murder charge in connection with McCallum's death two days before it was to start.

Tamietti was sentenced to 20 years in prison. While Tamietti did not admit to killing McCallum, he admitted that he "knew of his death" and failed to contact authorities, and that he had robbed McCallum's house and forged checks in McCallum's name. He admitted removing "many articles" from McCallum's house including his checkbook with the purpose of forging checks.

In addition to approximately 638 days in the Missoula County jail, Tamietti served about four years of his sentence at the state prison in Deer Lodge.

"My brother Patrick ended up in prison at the same time as Tamietti," recalls Anita Spooner. "He thought that Patrick was over there to kill him, and he had the guards lock him in his cell all of the time. Patrick was in trouble for getting a bunch of tickets, and they sent him to Deer Lodge to shape him up. He wasn't there to kill David."

Tamietti died of a self-inflicted gunshot wound on June 5, 1981 at Fish Creek State Park Campground, in Alberton, at age 37. ★

—BRIAN D'AMBROSIO

"Spider" McCallum is buried in the Missoula Cemetery.

Jonesin' Crosswords

by Matt Jones

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“Special Effects”
...with a little extra thrown in.

- ACROSS**
1 Leaning typeface: abbr.
5 ___ Wonderful (juice brand)
8 Low point on a director's resume
14 'Julie & Julia' director Ephron
15 Bus. alternative to a partnership
16 Klutzy
17 Healthy bread ingredient that produces oil
19 You may want to get in them if they're good
20 One may check you out with a hammer
22 Singers Anita and Molly
23 Paper that reports on the DJIA
24 Genetic messenger material: abbr.
27 Bon ___ (witticism)
28 Auntie on Broadway
31 WWII craft
33 Composer with a brass instrument named after him
35 Soprano henchman ___ Walnuts
36 Mail-in movie, perhaps
39 Really broad toast
40 Tiny amounts
41 Father of the casa
42 High-end German cars
43 Mil. subordinate
46 "Dexter" channel, for short
47 Abbr. for people lacking parts of names
49 "If You Stub Your ___ the Moon" (Bing Crosby song)
51 He led a band of Merry Men
56 Entreaty to get some cojones
58 Futuristic MTV cartoon turned into a live-action Charlize Theron movie
59 Accuse of a crime in court
60 It's game
61 Frigid ending?
62 Like some grins
63 Shaker ___, OH
64 Total disaster

- DOWN**
1 Come ___ the cold
2 Holy U.S. city?
3 1994 Nobel Peace Prize co-winner
4 In a careless way
5 "Yo Gabba Gabba!" character who's a "magic robot"
6 Spread on the table
7 1450, in Rome
8 Baseball Hall-of-Famer Wade
9 High demand?
10 Thought ___ (considered)
11 Old phonograph brand
12 Real ending for a Brit?
13 Sounds of indifference
18 His, to Henri
21 Come up short
25 Complete, with "down"

- 26 Took in a snack
28 Stubborn beast
29 "___ Lay Dying"
30 Magazine that debuted with Christa Miller on the cover
32 "No ifs, ands or ___"
33 Slammer
34 "Orpheus in the Underworld" composer Jacques
35 Loyal companions
36 Lexicographer Webster
37 Legendary Cadillac?
38 Sudoku component
39 Does some minor vandalism, briefly
42 Recycling receptacle
43 Singer-songwriter McKay
44 Hearts of Paris
45 Banded gems
48 Like many toothpastes
49 Boatload
50 UK-based confederation that deals with human rights
52 Leave off
53 Inaugural reading
54 Achievement
55 Captains' books
56 Took the worm
57 Ambient musician Brian

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Leo

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Libra

Scorpio

Sagittarius

Capricorn

Aquarius

Pisces

ARIES (March 21-April 19): “The best of my nature reveals itself in play, and play is sacred,” wrote the feisty Aries author Karen Blixen, who sometimes used the pen name Isak Dinesen. The attitude described in that statement helps illuminate the meaning of another one of her famous quotations: “I do not think that I could ever really love a woman who had not, at one time or another, been up on a broomstick.” In my interpretation of this humorous remark, Blixen referred to the fact that she had a strong preference for witchy women with rascally magical ways. I bring this to your attention, Aries, because I’m inviting you to cultivate a Blixen-like streak of sacred play and sly magic in the coming days.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20): Taurus music legend Willie Nelson has played the same guitar since 1969. He calls it “my horse,” and named it after Trigger, a famous horse in Hollywood films. Although Nelson still loves the tones that come from his instrument, it’s neither sleek nor elegant. It’s bruised with multiple stains and has a jagged gash near its sound hole. Some Tauruses want their useful things to be fine and beautiful, but not Willie. Having said that, I wonder if maybe he will finally change guitars sometime soon. For you Bulls, the coming months will be time to consider trading in an old horse for a new one.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20): I’ve got a message for you, courtesy of poet Lisel Mueller. I think her wisdom can help you thrive in the coming weeks. She writes, “The past pushed away, the future left unimagined, for the sake of the glorious, difficult, passionate present.” Of course, it’s always helpful for us to liberate ourselves from the oppressive thoughts of what once was in the past and what might be in the future. But it’ll be especially valuable for you to claim that superpower in the coming weeks. To the degree that you do, the present will be more glorious and passionate and not so difficult.

CANCER (June 21-July 22): When Lewis Carroll’s fictional heroine Alice visits an exotic underground realm in the book “Through the Looking Glass,” she encounters two odd men named Tweedledee and Tweedledum. The latter tells her, “You know very well you’re not real.” He’s implying that Alice is merely a character in the dream of a man who’s sleeping nearby. This upsets her. “I am real!” she protests, and breaks into tears. Tweedledum presses on, insisting she’s just a phantom. Alice summons her courageous wisdom and thinks to herself, “I know they’re talking nonsense, and it’s foolish to cry about it.” I suspect you Cancerians may have to deal with people and influences that give you messages akin to those of Tweedledum. If that happens, be like Alice.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): “The less you fear, the more power you will have,” says the rapper known as 50 Cent. I agree with him. If you can dissolve even, say, 25 percent of your fear, your ability to do what you want will rise significantly, as will your influence and clout. But here’s the major riddle: How exactly can you dissolve your fear? My answers to that question would require far more room than I have in this horoscope. But here’s the really good news, Leo: In the coming weeks, you will naturally have an abundance of good insights about to dissolve your own fear. Trust what your intuition tells you. And be receptive to clues that serendipity brings you.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): For his film “Parasite,” Virgo filmmaker Bong Joon-ho received Academy Awards for Best Picture, Best Director, and Best Original Screenplay. In his natal horoscope, Joon-ho has Pluto conjunct his sun in Virgo, and during the time “Parasite” began to score major success, Saturn and Pluto were making a favorable transit to that powerful point in his chart. I’m expecting the next six months to be a time when you can make significant progress toward your own version of a Joon-ho style achievement. In what part of your life is that most likely to happen? Focus on it. Feed it. Love it.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): According to my analysis of the astrological omens, the coming weeks will be a favorable time for you to seek out, seduce, and attract luck. To inspire you in this holy task, I’ll provide a prayer written by Hoodoo conjurer Stephanie Rose

Bird: “O sweet luck, I call your name. Luck with force and power to make change, walk with me and talk through me. With your help, all that can and should be will be!” If there are further invocations you’d like to add to hers, Libra, please do. The best way to ensure that good fortune will stream into your life is to have fun as you draw it to you.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): Scorpio comedian John Cleese does solo work, but many of his successful films, albums, stage shows, and TV programs have arisen from joining forces with other comedians. “When you collaborate with someone else on something creative,” he testifies, “you get to places that you would never get to on your own.” I propose you make this your temporary motto, Scorpio. Whatever line of work or play you’re in, the coming weeks will offer opportunities to start getting involved in sterling synergies and symbioses. To overcome the potential limitations of social distancing, make creative use of Zoom and other online video conferencing.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): “Wherever I am, let me never forget to distinguish want from need,” vows author Barbara Kingsolver. “Let me be a good animal,” she adds. That would be a stirring prayer to keep simmering at the forefront of your awareness in the next six weeks. According to my understanding of the astrological omens, you’ll be getting clear signals about the differences between your wants and needs. You will also discover effective strategies about how to satisfy them both in the post-pandemic world, and fine intuitions about which one to prioritize at any particular time.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): Writing some Chinese characters can be quite demanding. To make “biáng,” for example, which is used in the name for a certain kind of noodle, you must draw 58 separate strokes. This is a good metaphor for exactly what you should avoid in the coming weeks: spending too much time and devoting too much thought and getting wrapped up in too much complexity about trivial matters. Your focus should instead be on simple, bold approaches that encourage you to be crisp and decisive.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): Singer-songwriter Jill Scott is strongly committed to her creative process. She tells us, “I was once making a burger for myself at my boyfriend’s house and a lyric started pouring out and I had to catch it, so I ran to another room to write it down, but then the kitchen caught fire. His cabinets were charred, and he was furious. But it was worth it for a song.” My perspective: Scott’s level of devotion to the muse is too intense for my tastes. Personally, I would have taken the burger off the stove before fleeing the scene to record my good idea. What about you, Aquarius? According to my analysis, you’re in a phase when creative ideas should flow even better than usual. Pay close attention. Be prepared to capture as much of that potentially life-altering stuff as possible.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): To protect ourselves and others from the pandemic, most of us have been spending more time than usual at home—often engaged in what amounts to enforced relaxation. For some of us, that has been a problem. But I’m going to propose that it will be the opposite of a problem for you in the next three weeks. In my astrological opinion, your words to live by will be this counsel from author and philosopher Mike Dooley: “What if it was your downtime, your lounging-in-bed-too-long time, that made possible your greatest achievements? Would they still make you feel guilty? Or would you allow yourself to enjoy them?”

THIS WEEK’S HOMEWORK:

What’s the story or song that provides you with your greatest consolation?

TESTIFY AT FREEWILLASTROLOGY.COM

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Hand diagram with zodiac signs

Libra

Scorpio

Sagittarius

Capricorn

Aquarius

Pisces

Aries

Taurus

Gemini

Cancer

Leo

Virgo

Libra

Scorpio

Sagittarius

Capricorn

Aquarius

Pisces

