

Vol. 1, Issue 1 • November 2018

MONTANA PRESS

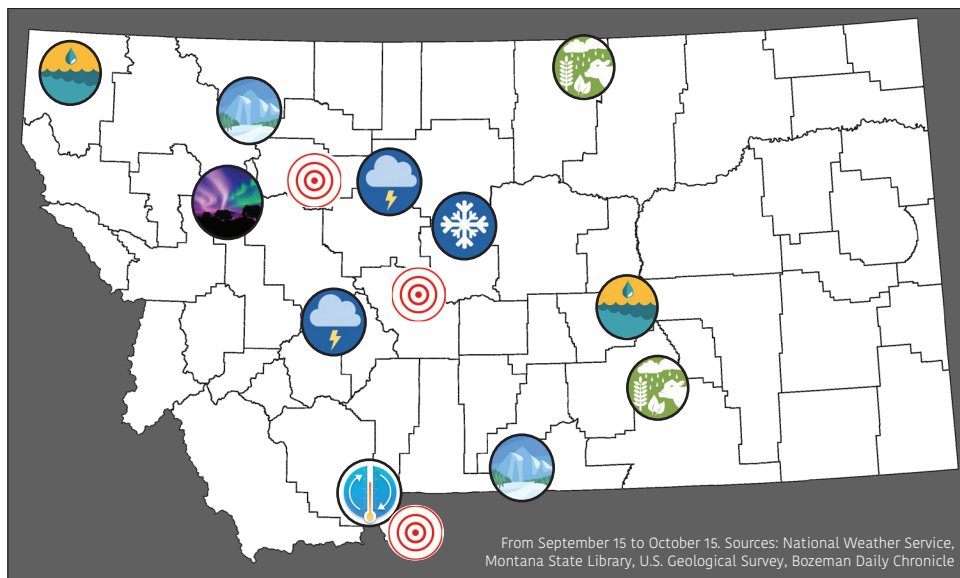
*Free Monthly News, Arts
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Chef's Recipes with Soul 🌿 from the Livingston Food Resource Center

Sharing Seasonal Bounty within a Community

STATEWIDE CALENDAR • INTERVIEWS WITH U.S. HOUSE CANDIDATES • LOGJAM EXPANDS

MONTANA ALMANAC



Rare Record for the Day

It does not happen often, but the same place in the state had the record high and low temperature on the the same day. On September 29, 2018, the day's official high temp in Montana was 64°F at West Yellowstone. The morning's low of 23°F was also recorded at West Yellowstone. State records for the period from September 15 to October 15 were: 86°F at Broadus (September 16) and 86°F at Hardin (September 23). The coldest temperature in the state during that time period was 5°F was recorded at Red Lodge on October 14, 2015.

First Significant Snowfall

Although snow started dusting the higher elevations as early as mid-September, the first significant snowfall of the season blanketed the Rocky Mountain Front in as much as one to nearly two feet of snow on October 2 through 3, 2018. Glacier National Park personnel were forced to close Going-to-the-Sun Road from Logan Pass to the foot of St. Mary Lake. In addition, Many Glacier Road was closed. Around a foot of snow fell in the Browning area, causing many cattle to become stranded.

Roads Close for the Season

Two scenic roads near National Parks in Montana closed for the season on the same day this year. On October 9 Tower Falls to Canyon (Dunraven Pass), and Beartooth Highway (US 212 to Red Lodge, Montana) closed for the season. In Glacier Park, officials closed the alpine sections of its main thoroughfare, Going-to-the-Sun Road over Logan Pass following continued winter weather.

Tracking Thunderstorms

On September 20, an afternoon thunderstorm in central Montana brought pea-size hail reports from Ulm, Choteau, and Deer Lodge. The record wind gust for the period between September 15 and October 15 was 53 MPH reported with a thunderstorm six miles north of Lakeview on September 15.

Aurora Borealis

During solar storms, the sun's high-energy particles smash into Earth's magnetosphere, which funnels them toward the two magnetic poles. The disruption produces the northern lights. The colors of auroras depend on which atmospheric gas is being disrupted. Excited oxygen atoms create green and light red hues, while nitrogen atoms produce blues and deep purples. Tinges of violet and yellow occasionally appear, depending on the proportions of oxygen and nitrogen. The waving curtain-like displays were visible to some in parts of Montana over the dates of October 7 and 8, 2018, especially in the Flathead lake region. While the geomagnetic storm fizzled as it got closer to Montana, many reported seeing a yellow ribbon-like aurora in the night and early morning skies.

Crop Reports

At the end of July, summer crop and range conditions were reported as "Poor" in a number of farms/ranches in Phillips county and "Fair" in drought-prone Lincoln County. Yellowstone, Musselshell and Rosebud county farms reported "Excellent" crop and range conditions by the end of the summer, with yield prospects above normal and pasture feed in excess of normal. Crop and range conditions reported across the rest of the state varied from fair to good.

Earthquakes

Earthquake Activity in Montana over the past month included a 2.7M, 16 km ESE of Lincoln on September 24; a 2.8M earth movement 2 km NNW of Manhattan on October 10; a 2.6M 10 km NNE of West Yellowstone on October 13; and a 2.6M 28 km NNE of Helena on October 15. Less significant earth movements were also felt in Whitehall on October 8.

Drought and Deluge

The State of Montana and the National Weather Service report "Severe Drought" in Lincoln County in northwest Montana including the communities of Eureka, Fortine, Heron, Libby, Troy, and Yaak. Areas of south central Montana from Sweetgrass to Rosebud and Big Horn Counties reported above-average precipitation and were listed as of August 31, 2018 as "Moderately Moist." The rest of the state was at average or "Slightly Dry" conditions by the end of the summer.

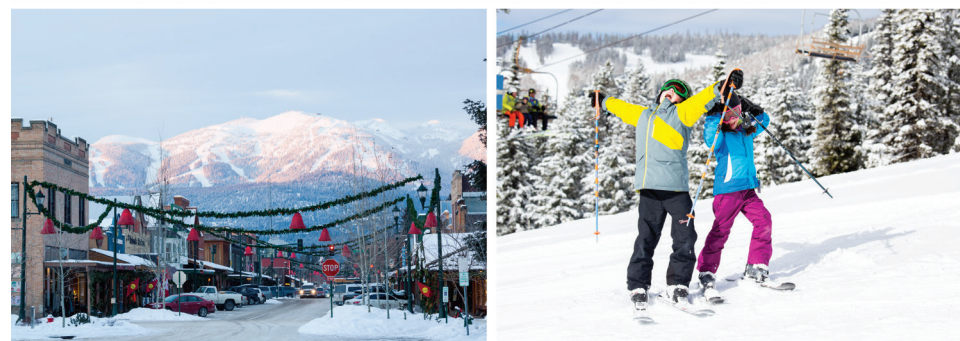
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November 8 - Missoula - The Roxy Theater

November 13 - Great Falls - Lewis & Clark Interpretive Center

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because a strong back, calloused hands, and good craftsmanship should not be a thing of the past

The Power of Music
because it brings people together and moves us in ways we need to be moved







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Tina Struble at the Livingston Food Resource Center shares nutritious recipes for seasonal Montana produce. **Page 12**



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LogJam Presents successfully launches entertainment empire from Missoula, Montana. **Page 14**



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ON THE COVER A healthy bounty of donated produce stocks the Livingston Food Resource Center shelves.
Photo by Lindsay Wells.

MONTANA **PRESS** MONTHLY

Montana Press
is printed at The Yellowstone
Newspaper Presses

by

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Livingston, Montana

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Montana
NEWSPAPER ASSOCIATION
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BYGONE DAYS

Bygone Days are compiled from archives of Montana Newspapers held at various locations online and around the state. Current years featured are 1898, 1933 and 1959.

Follow Montana's Bygone Days daily at @MontanaPress on Facebook.

Helena Independent **October 31, 1898**

"Railroad men who have had the privilege of examining the four new trains which the Burlington route placed in service... say they are as magnificently equipped as any in the country... Each is composed of a buffet-smoking-library car, a palace sleeping car, a dining car and two reclining chair cars. The buffet-smoking-library car is something new... It is a veritable club house on wheels, where one may read, write, smoke, talk or play cards, while traveling at the rate of 50 miles an hour. It is handsomely carpeted and furnished with settees, cushioned easy chairs, a lavatory, a writing desk, a compartment for card players and a well stocked buffet."

The Townsend Messenger **November 3, 1898**

"Billings, Oct. 31—News has been brought to town of a killing at Hailstone Basin, about 45 miles from Billings. Saturday morning a dispute arose between Daniel Martin, a herder of the Lake Basin Sheep Company and Jas. Westman, herder for B.G. Shorey, about range rights. Westman was watering his sheep at the Lake Basin company well and Martin threatened to shoot him. Westman said it was not his quarrel and he would drive his sheep away and turned to go, when he heard the click of Martin's revolver. He turned around just as Martin fired and the bullet struck him in the finger of his right hand, which he had raised in remonstrance, and then went into his breast over the heart... Westman, who carried a rifle, then fired four shots into Martin, killing him. The four bullets struck Martin in the abdomen. Westman, thinking himself mortally wounded, wrote on a scrap of paper to the effect that no one was concerned in the scrape but Martin and himself, writing it with a stick dipped in his own blood... Finding that he had some time to live, he drove Martin's herd home. Dr. Rinehart went out and examined Westman and reported that he will recover... The sheriff started after Westman to arrest him."

The River Press **Fort Benton, November 2, 1898**

"According to such eminent and reliable democratic authorities such as the Butte Miner and Anaconda Standard, the record of their party at former elections has been one of bribery, intimidation and other disgraceful acts. The Butte Miner alleges that Marcus Daly has been at the head of one gang of democratic corruptionists, while the Anaconda Standard charges that W.A. Clark has been the principal in other misdeeds of a like nature. With such a record of evidence, upon the testimony of organs of the Montana democracy itself, can any self-respecting citizen afford to vote for the candidates of such a confessedly corrupt political organization?"

"Mrs. Nat Collins is one of the wealthiest of Montana's stock raisers. She has become a millionaire by stocking the state's vast ranges with cattle and sheep, and is known as 'The Cattle Queen of Montana.' ...Probably no one person in Montana has larger cattle interests than she. Her success has been due to her own interest and exertions, for her husband is one of those quiet individuals who prefer to take life with as little trouble as possible."

The Livingston Post **November 3, 1898**

"Ernest Hockenbeamer yesterday returned from a hunting trip in the mountains near Gardiner. He claims that the party killed three elk...The gentlemen's friends around town agree that Ernie never saw an elk, only in the Zoological gardens, and that if he did ever run across one he wouldn't know what it was. Van Brocklin says that all Ernie killed was time."

The Dillon Tribune **November 4, 1898**

"The Tribute is not given to publishing lies during a campaign season or at any other time. The statement of the organ that the Tribune lies does not prove anything—but the mental caliber of he who utters it."

Helena Independent **November 7, 1898**

"Several of our local sportsmen have contributed toward the purchase of five pairs of Chinese pheasants, which are expected to arrive in Phillipsburg next Friday, says the Phillipsburg Call. They will be exhibited in the show windows of Gannon and Neu's store until the Saturday following, when they will be turned out to multiply and replenish the earth."

The Winston Prospector **November 10, 1898**

"I, hereby, offer a reward of one pint of whiskey to the two individuals at the East Pacific mine who voted for me for the office of treasurer of Broadwater county at the general election held last Tuesday, November 8, if they will make their identity known to me. -Chas. W. Dodge"

The Big Timber Pioneer **November 11, 1898**

"These war times have tried men's souls in many unexpected ways, but like a shaft of sunshine and good cheer out of the cloud of privation and endurance has been the work that The American Tobacco Co. has done among the U.S. Soldiers and Sailors ever since the war began—for when they discovered that the camps and hospitals were



not supplied with tobacco they decided to provide them, free of cost, with enough for every man and have already given outright... over one hundred thousand pounds of "Battle Ax Plug" and "Dukes's Mixture..." and have bought and distributed fifty thousand briar wood pipes... Perhaps it will be only fair to remember when we hear the remark again that 'corporations have no souls' that there is one American corporation whose soul has been tried and has not been found wanting in 'practical kindness.'"

The Park County News **November 16, 1933**

"Montana editors sounded a dirge to the death of prohibition this week. Typical comment follows: Billings Gazette: 'John Barleycorn, it now appears was only feigning death when he was consigned to the grave with the shouts of Billy Sunday and the prayers of the late Wayne B. Wheeler.' The Bozeman Courier hopes... 'that under the changed circumstances, there will be proper judgement shown, not only by the state administration but by every person who desires to enjoy the privilege of obtaining good liquor.' Discussing state control suggestions, ...The Butte Post believes: 'The question will be settled temporarily by the special session ...but no one can doubt that it will furnish a recurring topic of bitter controversy. Indeed, it may well be said that repeal has no more ended the liquor problem than prohibition ended drinking.'"

Butte Montana Standard **November 19, 1933**

"WASHING OF BEER GLASSES WITHOUT SOAP IS BANNED. Great Falls, Nov. 18—(AP)— The practice of washing beer glasses in cold water without any soap was ordered stopped today in Great Falls beer parlors by J.W. Forbes, chief of the food and drug division of the state board of health. Forbes also ordered the dealers to use an antiseptic solution washing the glasses. He said he found unsanitary conditions general in the city."

Park County News **Livingston, November 23, 1933**

"Ed Durgan Fires in Defense of Wife When Coop Raider Attacks...At midnight Mrs. Durgan was awakened by a disturbance in the barnyard...she returned to the house and called Mr. Durgan, who took up a rifle and returned with her to the yard... then they saw a man emerge from one of the buildings, with a sack in one hand and a club in the other, apparently after the turkeys. On the impulse of the moment Mrs Durgan started toward him, despite her husband's cautioning, and asked him who he was and what he was doing there. Mr. Durgan demanded that he throw up his hands and identify himself. 'What the devil is it to you?' was the reply and he struck Mrs. Durgan across the back with his club, knocking her down. At this Mr. Durgan fired. The man ran down the road...Arising Wednesday morning, Mr. Durgan found a

car in the ditch on the road near the house. There was a dead man in it whom he did not recognize. He had been shot through the right breast, the bullet lodging in the body....Both Mr. and Mrs. Durgan are very regretful that the circumstances of protecting themselves and their property resulted in taking a life."

The Winifred Times **November 24, 1933**

"But He Does that Well. Once in a while you meet a man whose only function apparently is to serve as a mooring mast for a nickel cigar."

Kalispell Daily Interlake **November 27, 1933**

"Governor Frank H. Cooney... convened the Montana legislature in extraordinary session today with the admonition that it work out a solution as expeditiously as possible. Ten proposals, nearly all of them relating to relief needs, were submitted to the legislature for action. 'We are here,' Governor Cooney asserted, 'to work out a solution for a situation for which none of us is responsible. The matter of politics is not involved and we should meet and confer and legislate with only one aim—the high and hold purpose of enacting laws that will be for the ultimate good of the whole people and that will make it impossible that any citizen within our borders shall suffer from cold or hunger so long as the depression continues.'"

Kalispell Daily Interlake **Friday, November 27, 1959**

"The tobacco industry said today that there is no scientific evidence to support Surgeon General Leroy E. Burney's new charge that cigaret smoking is the chief cause of lung cancer, even with filtered brands. The industry suggested the real villain might be polluted city air."

Kalispell Daily Interlake **November 29, 1959**

"LIBBY — The recent deer and elk contest conducted by Herb's sport shop has come to a close. Wallace Talsma of Libby brought in a mule deer that dressed at 266 pounds. He was awarded the grand prize, a 300 Magnum Winchester rifle... Ray Monroe of Libby brought in the elk with the largest horn spread of 42 1/2 inches... Much interest was displayed during the contest, responses coming from all adjacent counties and from hunters in many parts of the state."

The Dillon Tribune **November 30, 1959**

"There was a serious interruption of telephone service Friday afternoon in Dillon from 1:30 to 4 p.m. Luckily there was no need for turning in a fire alarm, a call for an ambulance or doctor... R.J. Pringles, district manager of the Mountain States Telephone and Telegraph Co. blamed the trouble on failure of equipment vital to dial tone, ringing of numbers and other audible signals... Housewives were annoyed by their inability to make phone calls, business calls were at a standstill and teenagers, accustomed to spending an hour or so gossiping with friends, were nervous wrecks. Using a telephone has become second nature. Here's hoping we don't have another failure." ★

MONTANA VOICE

A SMALL TOWN STATE

The free press is alive and well in America and blares from internet outposts night and day. Whether or not the news on the web is certified true or researched before being reported is now frequently in question.

The majority of what we see on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram is from sources all over the world. Ideas and opinion pieces are propelled to the top of the page by advertising dollars. Often, unpopular ideas become mainstream perspectives simply based on the investment in their promotion.

The political season jams news feeds with a never-ending stream of these paid reports and opinions. Fatigue sets in and many voters make up their minds and press the ignore button, whether by pitching a mailer in the bin or blocking a tweet.

If a voter is seeking information on a candidate, a simple internet search will turn up campaign pages, opinion pieces and posts full of praise or vitriol but only a smattering of news reports and very little objective information.

Internet posts and searches are monetized and web pages with a high level of design production employ semiotic theory to elicit a certain effect on the mind of the viewer. Certain colors make the reader feel “warmer” or “colder” through simple graphics. Copy is carefully crafted to have a planned effect. Even sounds are now manufactured to evoke a calming atmosphere so the viewer is more scientifically amenable to the message advertised.

Objectivity is often compromised by an entire workforce of artists, directors, designers and musicians working in tandem with highly skilled writers. Subliminal advertising may be illegal, but industrial psychology is now taught without conjoined ethics in most modern design institutions. The regular reader on the internet expects things to be as they appear but usually has no idea of the data, money and energy put into crafting what someone may want the reader to think and feel after seeing their content.

With the same advertising tools available to political campaigns, where can objective information about candidates be found?

Campaigns send out press releases regarding a candidate’s particular stance on issues. News interviews are brief, focused on policy and engaged with little else about a voter’s potential representative. Public-forum debates are limited but sometimes offer the best opportunity to gauge the perspectives of candidates, their temperament and their ability to connect with allies or politely spar with foes.

Once announced, candidates spread their message in every waking moment of their lives. Running a state-wide campaign is an endless job until election day and running a campaign while also serving in Washington must be even more difficult. In the case of the U.S. House of Representatives, the short two-year term of the position gives policymakers less than a year to work before they are out campaigning again.

With a wide variety of issues on the ballot for the midterms, the *Montana Press* wanted to help readers across the state connect with candidates vying for Montana’s lone U.S. House of Representatives seat. Republican Greg Gianforte and Democrat Kathleen Williams are the two leading candidates for the seat in Montana and the *Montana Press* attempted contact with both campaigns along with with Elinor Swanson, the Libertarian candidate for the office, in order to conduct in-person or

phone interviews. We indicated we would print candidate’s responses verbatim however they chose to respond.

For the better part of a week, the *Montana Press* received no response from either leading campaign. Libertarian candidate Swanson responded immediately but it took exploring every connection to the leading candidates and their campaign staffers to eventually get a reply from Kathleen Williams, and even longer to get a response from Congressman Greg Gianforte. Williams agreed to an in-person interview and Elinor Swanson quickly agreed to return a written response to all questions.

From the onset, the Gianforte campaign seemed focused on the editor of the *Montana Press*, me, and a considerable primary race contribution I made to Kathleen Williams in December 2017, nearly nine months before starting work as a journalist with the *Montana Press*. The Gianforte campaign also expressed concern that I served one term in the Legislature as a Democrat with candidate Williams. The campaign sent me a list of nine questions to be answered in order to elicit a response from the candidate and accused me of bias. In nearly a decade of publishing and editing the *Livingston Current* newspaper, I had never encountered such suspicion.

I know I’m not alone across the state in being a politician and a newspaper owner. Montana State House Representative Jonathan McNiven (R) who own the Yellowstone County News comes immediately to mind.

The *Montana Press* provided extensive information to the Gianforte campaign in regards to personal and background information on the editor and interviewer and even offered to have a third party, a contributor with a conservative bent, conduct the interview or question the candidate. This was refused and the hapless contributor was even brought into an email battle with me by the campaign office.

The *Montana Press* sent numerous, detailed, point-by-point responses to the questions posed by the Gianforte campaign to clarify any issues or questions of journalistic ethics.

Each person on the *Montana Press* staff is a citizen, a potential voter and welcome to their own political viewpoints, but as a newspaper, we are focused on the “Best of Montana” and that crosses all party lines. With such an interesting House race, we hoped only to share the perspective of each candidate with the reader, with no political agenda other than to inform.

The *Montana Press* Monthly set out to interview the three candidates in what we thought was the most interesting state-wide race. We wanted to present the differing viewpoints from the candidates for the readers of *Montana* to judge for themselves, without the advertising dollars or the industrial psychology employed by modern media on the internet. We also planned an inaugural issue full of interesting entertainment, history and arts and culture information for our readers. We had no desire to face a political battle but this is the state of the country in election season and people are evidently taking sides and digging in their heels.

We need not fear or suspect one another so much. Montana is a small town. We may disagree or sit on different sides of the fence sometimes but we are in essence a close-knit community that looks after one another and tries our best to share important information among our neighbors. ★

—REILLY NEILL

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MONTANA ONLINE

STATE BUDGET CUTS AFFECT MONTANA'S RURAL COUNTY SERVICES

When Bill Kaye says the staff and volunteers of the Livingston Food Resource Center saved his life, he isn't speaking metaphorically. Last year, Kaye, a 61-year-old Livingston resident of 13 years, lost consciousness in the center's food pantry.

"He went down — he was out cold," Executive Director Michael McCormick recalled.

Someone among the organization's four employees and three dozen volunteers called 9-1-1. An ambulance rushed Kaye to the hospital. His gratitude to the local nonprofit, which works to feed the hungry, promote health and foster economic development, shines through as he recounts what happened that day.

The past three years have been tough for Kaye. He used to run a company he started with a longtime friend that had him traveling around the world chasing marlin in sport-fishing tournaments. He got to be quite good at it, too, but his heart started failing and he had to rethink his priorities.

"I knew I couldn't captain a boat [any more]," Kaye said.

Kaye said he needs surgery on his shoulder, neck and heart, the latter having been weakened by atrial fibrillation and ventricular hypertrophy. Now Kaye is waiting for the state to decide if his disability claim has merit.

"I've paid into [disability] since 1975... and now it takes me two years to get it? And it's not just me — it's millions of people that are suffering from the same stuff," Kaye said.

Kaye is frustrated by his situation, but he said he feels lucky to have some assistance. A friend helps him out with rent for his apartment, his family chips in with support while he waits on his disability claim, the Livingston Food Resource Center keeps him from going hungry, and one of its volunteers supplies him with food for Cowboy, his 14-year-old blue heeler.

Other Livingston residents living on the economic and social margins don't have similar safety nets. In the past year and a half, Livingston has lost four public aid offices. As the effects of funding cuts to the Department of Public Health and Human Services continue to reverberate in rural areas across the state, some Montanans say they worry about what will become of the state's "forgotten community."

On a hot July day, Livingston Food Resource Center volunteers help Kaye stock up on food to fill his cupboards. He selects from an assortment of vegetables harvested from local greenhouses and farms; meat sourced from nearby ranches; canned goods, pastas, cereals and dairy items donated by the local Albertson's; and healthy, ready-made meals prepared by volunteers in the center's own kitchen.

Once his bags are full, he puts them on the handlebars of his bike and pedals back to his apartment, Cowboy following closely behind.

Longtime Livingston Food Resource Center volunteer Miriam Squillace said most of the people who come into the center fall into one of four categories: those with jobs, those with a disability, those waiting on a disability hearing, and retirees living on a fixed income. Between 300 and 340 households use the center's monthly food box service, which equates to approximately 700 individuals served each month — nearly 10 percent of Livingston's population.

During the past year, the center's staffers have worked hard to adapt to the office closures that have all but eliminated the Department of Public Health and Human Services' physical presence in Park County, the Food Resource Center's McCormick said. The center has banded together with other area nonprofits to introduce stopgap measures — even participating in monthly meetings with other area service providers — to ensure that individuals and families are getting the help they need. But many people in this small community are worried the state's band-aid approach isn't sustainable, and that vulnerable populations will eventually fall through the cracks. Livingston, which is renowned for its blue-ribbon fly fishing and touted on highway billboards as a place "where bull riders and artists meet," was hit particularly hard when the Montana Legislature and Gov. Steve Bullock cut funding to state agencies by more than \$120 million during last November's special session. The cuts were in response to a \$227 million budget shortfall wrought by tax collections that lagged behind projections, coupled with one of Montana's most expensive wildfire seasons in recent memory.

Rural areas such as Park County have disproportionately shouldered the burden of those budget cuts. Other communities that lost their local Office of Public Assistance (OPA) on Jan. 31, 2018 are smaller than Livingston and even further isolated from the services those offices provide. Residents in towns such as Sidney, Dillon and Thompson Falls now face a minimum one-hour drive if they need to speak to someone at an OPA office in person.

Since the Department of Public Health and Human Services is the largest state agency in terms of its share of funding, it took the brunt of the cuts.

It's also set to receive about \$30 million in excess revenue in state coffers after the fiscal year ended June 30 with enough revenue to restore about \$45 million of the budget cuts, according to Gov. Bullock's Appropriation Restoration.

"As we've learned from other states, when services are cut to this level, it is difficult to rebuild them," wrote Montana Budget and Policy Center co-director Heather O'Loughlin in an email. "It is not as easy as simply restoring the funds and cutting a check, after many service providers have laid off caseworkers and staff, and other nonprofit providers have shut their doors. Regardless of what happens in the coming months, there is no question that we could

be feeling these devastating cuts for years.”

Squillace said she’s alarmed by the declining trajectory of funding for public aid and services at the national and state level.

“[Politicians] just don’t seem to care so much about people they don’t understand,” she said, adding that she’s undergone a perspective shift herself.

“I used to be a ‘why don’t they just go out and get a job’ person. Now I’m not,” Squillace said.

Squillace said she has volunteered with the Livingston Food Resource Center for 14 years, following it through one name change and two location changes, because she believes so much in the center’s work. Before her shift ended, Squillace sent a stay-at-home mom home with books for her three small children and gave two men some tips that might help them receive job retraining.

One is a 56-year-old former logger and truck driver who lost his commercial driver’s license after a blood clot in his leg led to a loss of feeling in his left foot. The other started working construction when he was 14 years old and made good money as a tradesman, but a worksite injury nixed his future in construction. He’s now in his 50s and reluctantly facing the prospect of working for minimum wage.

One key retraining resource, Livingston Job Service, closed indefinitely a year ago. In late January 2018, Livingston’s Office of Public Assistance closed as part of a cost-saving restructuring effort that included 18 other OPAs in rural counties. This past April, in yet another blow to Park County, the Livingston Mental Health Center disbanded.

Of those three offices, only job services still has some kind of presence in Park County. Two days a week, an employee of Bozeman Job Service drives to Livingston and sets up shop in a space loaned out for that purpose by Community Health Partners, a medical clinic and education resource center.

In many ways, the process of pooling resources and dividing workloads reflects how budget cuts and resulting closures have played out in this tight-knit community with no shortage of socioeconomic challenges. About a year ago, concerned community leaders formed a coalition called the Community Resource Collaboration composed of social workers, nonprofit directors, law enforcement officers and health-care workers. The group meets once a month to discuss the needs of specific families and individuals and develop plans to match them with appropriate resources.

Several nonprofits trained their employees and volunteers to assist with online applications for government programs like Medicaid and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). Prior to its closure, such services would have been routed through Livingston’s OPA.

Department of Public Health and Human Services spokesman Jon Ebelt said in an email that the agency is committed to working with community partners to ensure that clients are aware of resources available to them.

Options for pursuing aid include applying online, calling a helpline, mailing or faxing an application, and receiving in-person assistance at another OPA office in Montana.

Ebelt said public-aid applications and program enrollment numbers have continued along normal trend lines since the OPA closures eight months ago.

Spillover from Bozeman’s rapid growth,

and the accompanying region-wide spike in housing costs, are two issues that consistently come up in discussions about Park County’s overburdened and understaffed public assistance programs.

Just 26 miles west of Livingston, Bozeman is the fastest-growing area of its size in the nation for the second year running, according to the U.S. Census Bureau. Last May, the median sales price of a single-family home in Gallatin County rose to \$407,000, a 9.1-percent increase from the prior year. In June, USA Today reported that Gallatin is Montana’s most expensive county in which to buy a home.

That means many would-be Bozeman homebuyers and renters look to their neighbors to the east for cheaper housing and adjust to a 30- to 40-minute commute. That puts pressure on rental and real estate prices in Livingston, where wages are significantly lower than in Bozeman.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the median household income in Park County from 2012 to 2016 was \$43,385, which is 10 percent below the state average, and 24 percent lower than Gallatin County’s median income of \$57,021.

Local nonprofit leaders say the income and housing pressures exerted by Gallatin County are putting longtime Livingston tenants in a tough spot. Some have received notice that their rent is going to increase to an amount they can’t afford, or have learned their landlords intend to turn their long-term rental into a more profitable vacation property listed on Airbnb.com or VRBO.com. As a result, homelessness is on the rise, even if it goes undetected among residents with firm footing in the middle or upper-middle classes.

“There’s a gap in the knowledge base in regard to [Livingston’s] number of homeless,” said Marissa Hackett, the outreach coordinator and service navigator at the Human Resources Development Council.

In the course of a recent day, Hackett met with three HRDC clients currently living in their vehicles, and three more facing homelessness in the near future — and that’s typical for what the office has been seeing on a daily basis, she said.

“The numbers [of people presenting as homeless or facing homelessness] have increased over even the past six to nine months,” she said. “It feels like it’s rampant.”

HRDC is a nonprofit community action agency supported primarily by private donations, with additional operational funding supplied by federal grants and local governments. HRDC is looking into a shelter model in Livingston, Hackett said. Right now, the closest thing to it in the area is HRDC’s Warming Center in northeast Bozeman, which is open November through March.

“There’s a huge need [for transitional housing],” said Heidi Barrett, executive director of the Abuse Support Prevention Education Network (ASPEN), which provides shelter, support, referrals and advocacy for victims of domestic and sexual violence. “It would be great if there could be four cooperatively shared apartments [in Livingston].”

Such housing could help financially strapped individuals get back on their feet and set ASPEN clients up for a safe transition away from their abusers. Though ASPEN has served Park, Meagher and Sweet Grass counties for 20 years, much of the community is unaware of the pressing need it addresses.

“Our safe house has never been empty, not even for one night,” Barrett said, adding that ASPEN provided more than 3,000 nights of shelter in the past fiscal year. “Sometimes people are surprised to hear that, because they don’t want to hear that there’s that much need. But there is.”

Barrett said she is also troubled by the April closure of the Livingston Mental Health Center. She said the closure has been especially tough on people living at the margins, who struggle to get their basic needs met. She calls them Livingston’s “forgotten community.”

Livingston Mental Health Center’s closure is largely due to Medicaid cuts that financially gutted its parent company, Western Montana Mental Health Center. Specifically, the reimbursement rate for case management has been slashed by almost 48 percent, according to interim CEO Natalie McGillen. McGillen said she hasn’t heard a thorough explanation as to why the rate was reduced so drastically, but she suspects it was targeted as a quick and straightforward way to recover dwindling state revenue. As a result, the company has laid off approximately 118 employees. In addition to Livingston, rural areas including Dillon, Eureka, Libby and Hot Springs have lost their satellite offices as well.

Fortunately, former clients of Livingston Mental Health Center have been left with treatment options, even if they’re farther away or less comprehensive. McGillen said that before the office closed, case workers coordinated with other organizations to develop a plan for each of its clients, who suffer from a range of ailments including anxiety, depression, schizophrenia and bipolar disorder. Gallatin Mental Health Center in Bozeman took on treatment for some of those people. Livingston Healthcare and Community Health Partners, which serves individuals regardless of their ability to pay, split case management for about 60 clients who are continuing their treatment in Livingston.

Livingston Healthcare’s interim CEO, Deb Anczak, said her organization has gotten creative with funding solutions in order to meet increasing demand for mental-health treatment. Livingston Healthcare paid for two new social worker positions with support from a pair of two-year grants. Anczak said she’s hopeful the hospital will get enough reimbursement through Medicare and Medicaid to make the positions financially self-sustaining.

Despite many residents’ concerted efforts to shore-up Park County’s safety nets, ASPEN’s Barrett and others are worried that vulnerable individuals aren’t receiving the help they need.

“[We have an] intersection of drug addiction, and/or poverty, and/or mental illness,” Barrett said. “It’s really a humbling feeling to be like, ‘We don’t even have the resources to help you.’”

It would be hard to argue that there isn’t an urgent need for both immediate, crisis-style intervention and long-term, proactive case management, which addresses multiple aspects of client well-being. Park County has the third-highest suicide rate of any county in the state, according to the 2016 Suicide Mortality Review Team Report.

“[It’s] demographically inconsistent with the rest of the state, which is demographically inconsistent with the rest of the nation,” said Livingston Police Department Detective Joseph Harris, referring to the fact

In the past year and a half,

Livingston has lost four public aid offices. As the effects of funding cuts to the Department of Public Health and Human Services continue to reverberate in rural areas across the state, some Montanans say they worry about what will become of the state’s “forgotten community.”

that Montana regularly leads the nation in suicides per capita. “The way you die in this county — and I can speak with some authority on this — is: No. 1 [from] old age, thank goodness. No. 2 is [in] car crashes, and No. 3 is by your own hand.”

Harris said the Livingston Police Department’s workload has felt the impact of untreated mental illness that escalates into crisis. If police are called to respond to a situation in which a mentally ill person has been deemed a danger to himself or others, an officer has to stay with that person until another form of intervention — a crisis response team, for example — arrives. That can tie up law enforcement resources.

Detective Joseph Harris said the Livingston Police Department has felt the impact of cuts to Livingston’s public services. He said he’s concerned the situation is going to worsen. “You can deal with it today, or you can deal with it in 10 to 20 years in the Department of Corrections.”

CONTINUED ON PAGE 13

Senator Daines, Senator Tester, and Representative Gianforte:

— JOIN US IN THE FIGHT TO END HUNGER —

**BY SUPPORTING FOOD ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS IN THE FARM BILL,
ENSURING THAT ALL MONTANANS HAVE THE FOOD THEY NEED TO THRIVE**

We are counting on you

to pass a Farm Bill that protects and strengthens our most effective anti-hunger program, SNAP, as well as the Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP), which keeps food on the shelves at our local food pantries. These programs are vital tools in the fight against hunger in Montana, helping provide food and nutrition assistance for children, seniors, veterans, people with disabilities, and others who are struggling with food insecurity in our great state. We urge you to support a final Farm Bill that includes the Senate-passed SNAP provisions and maximizes investment in TEFAP, reflecting our shared commitment to ending hunger in Montana.

**MAKE OUR DIVERSE MONTANA
VOICES HEARD IN WASHINGTON
D.C. BY STANDING IN SUPPORT
OF THESE CRUCIAL PROGRAMS.**

Absarokee Area Food Bank
AERO
Alberton Food Pantry
American Heart Association - Montana
Anaconda Ministerial Project Care
Area II Agency on Aging
AWARE Inc.
BackPack Meals and Teen Pantries, Billings
Beaverhead Community Food Pantry
Big Sky Community Food Bank, HRDC
Big Timber Community Food Bank
Billings Clinic
Bishop Jessica Crist, Montana Synod,
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
Bishop Karen Oliveto, Mountain Sky
Conference of The United Methodist Church
Boys & Girls Club of Richland County
Bridgercare
Butte 4-C's
Butte Emergency Food Bank
Carter County Food Bank
Child Care Resources, Inc.
Community Food and Agriculture Coalition
Community Food Bank of Mineral County
Community Harvest Food Bank, Thompson Falls
Community Hope, Inc., Laurel
Culbertson Foodbank
Custer County Food Bank
Darby Bread Box
Dawson County Food Bank
Drummond Senior Citizens Center
Family Promise of Yellowstone Valley
Family Service, Billings
Farm Hands - Nourish the Flathead
Fergus County Council On Aging
Flathead Food Bank
Forward Montana
Friendship House of Christian Services
Gallatin Valley Food Bank, HRDC
Gallatin Valley Interfaith Association
Granite County Food Pantry
Harlem Area Senior Citizen's Center
Harlem Food Bank
HAVEN
Haven House Food Bank, Hamilton
Headwaters Area Food Bank, HRDC
Healthy By Design Coalition
Helena Food Share
Helping Hands in Hardin INC

Homestead Organics Farm
Hope Counseling & Consulting Services, PLLC
Hot Springs Food Bank
Laurie M. Franklin, Spiritual Leader and
Senior Rabbinic Intern, Har Shalom, Missoula
Libby Food Pantry
Living Independently for Today & Tomorrow
Livingston Food Resource Center
Marc Stewart, Conference Minister,
MT-NWY Conference UCC
Meagher County Food Bank
Meagher County Nutrition Coalition
Mission Mountain Enterprises, Inc.
Missoula Aging Services
Missoula Food Bank & Community Center
Missoula Works
Montana Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics
Montana Association of Christians
Montana Association of WIC Agencies
Montana Budget and Policy Center
Montana Catholic Conference
Montana Child Care Resource
and Referral Network
Montana Coalition Against Domestic
and Sexual Violence
Montana Food Bank Network
Montana Food Security Council

Montana Gathering of Friends
Montana Human Rights Network, Inc.
Montana Independent Living Project
Montana Interfaith Network
Montana Medical Association
Montana Partnership to End Childhood Hunger
Montana Primary Care Association
Montana Public Health Association
Montana School Boards Association
Montana Women Vote
Musselshell County Food Bank
Neighbors Helping Neighbors, Teton County
North Valley Food Bank, Whitefish
Pantry Partners Food Bank, Stevensville
Plains Community Food Bank
Poverello Center, Inc., Missoula
Rabbi Francine Roston, Flathead Valley
Recovery Center Missoula
Rev. Amy M. Carter,
United Church of Christ, Billings
Rev. Andrew Wendle,
Eidsvoll Lutheran, Somers
Rev. D. Gregory Smith,
St. James Episcopal Church
Rev. Dan Krebill,
First Presbyterian Church, Bozeman

Rev. Deborah Christine, Mountain Sky
Conference of the United Methodist Church
Rev. Duffy Peet,
Unitarian Universalist minister, Bozeman
Rev. Jody McDevitt,
First Presbyterian Church, Bozeman
Rev. John Daniels,
First United Methodist Church, Missoula
Rev. Marcia Lauzon, Deacon, Episcopal Church
of the Incarnation, Great Falls
Rev. Tyler Amundson,
Shiloh United Methodist Church, Billings
River of Hope Food Bank, East Missoula
RiverStone Health
Ronald Greene, Minister,
Disciples of Christ, Great Falls
Roundup Backpack Program
Sanders County Coalition For Families
SCL Health Montana
Seeley Swan Community Food Bank
Sincerely Paul Ministries
Food Pantry, Whitehall
Soft Landing Missoula
St. Vincent de Paul, Great Falls
Stephens House, Missoula
Superior School Pantry
Teton County Food Pantry
The Arc Montana
The Bread Basket, Ronan
The Bread for the World Committee,
Northridge Lutheran Church
The Nurturing Center, Inc., Kalispell
The Rev. Connie Campbell-Pearson,
St. James Episcopal Church, Bozeman
The Rev. Donna Gleaves,
St. Peter's Episcopal Cathedral, Helena
The Right Rev. C. Franklin Brookhart,
The Episcopal Diocese of Montana
Tobacco Valley Food Pantry, Eureka
Todd Scranton, Pastor, Grace United
Methodist Church, Missoula
Troy Community Baptist Church
Troy Food Pantry
Union Gospel Mission of Missoula
Vineyard Mercy Ministry
Watson Children's Shelter, Missoula
WEBS, Women's Ecumenical Bible Study
Western Montana Area VI Agency on Aging
YWCA Great Falls
YWCA Helena

MAKE YOUR VOICE HEARD. VISIT MFBN.ORG TO GET INVOLVED.

MONTANA POLITICS

INTERVIEWS WITH THE CANDIDATES IN A CONTENTIOUS STATEWIDE RACE

On Tuesday, November 6, Montanans will head to the polls to determine who will represent the state at a Federal level. Montana's Senior Senator Jon Tester faces off against Montana State Auditor Matt Rosendale for one of Montana's U.S. Senate seats. In the U.S. House race, Republican Greg Gianforte is running to retain the seat he won in a special election in May of 2017 to replace Ryan Zinke, who had resigned to become Secretary of the Interior. Gianforte's challenger, Democrat Kathleen Williams, is a former Montana State House Representative.

Along with races for Federal offices, the November ballot will feature local and regional elections for city and county officials, State House and Senate offices, State Supreme Court Clerk and Justices, and Public Service Commissioners.

In addition, a number of ballot initiatives will appear on the ballot. LR-128 would renew the six-mill levy for the State University System. LR-129 supports banning persons from collecting the election ballots of other people. I-185 supports raising taxes on tobacco and extending Medicaid eligibility. The final initiative, I-186, supports new requirements for mining permits based on water quality standards. With so much on the ballot, voters have a lot to digest.

One of the most compelling of the season's races on the ballot is that for Montana's seat in the U.S. House of Representatives. Montana is represented by one at-large congressional district, among the 435 in the U.S. House. The district is the largest U.S. congressional district by population, with just over 1 million constituents, and is also the second-largest by land area, after Alaska's at-large congressional district.

From statehood in 1889 until the creation of two geographic districts in 1919, Montana was represented in the U.S. House of Representatives by members elected at-large. From 1919 to 1993 there were two seats still elected at-large and two distinct congressional districts, a western one and an eastern one, each elected by its own respective constituents. In the reapportionment following the 1990 census, Montana lost one of its two seats and its remaining member was again elected at-large. In 1916, Montana Republican Jeannette Rankin became the first woman elected to Congress. She served one term and was elected again in 1940.

In 2018, Democrat Kathleen Williams is vying to be the next woman to serve in the U.S. House from Montana. She brings a history of State policy-making and consensus building to her campaign while incumbent Congressman Greg Gianforte has already marked a number of successes in Congress during his short time in office. The contest between these two Montana residents is one of the most politically interesting of the election season.

To get to know these unique candidates, *Montana Press* solicited in-person interviews about a month before the end of the campaign season. All participants were given a list of questions particular to their stated platforms and issues, along with follow-ups on information they had already shared with the public. Libertarian Elinor Swanson was also invited to participate.

KATHLEEN WILLIAMS

Democrat Kathleen Williams agreed to an in-person interview with Montana Press on October 7, 2018, the day after the second round of televised debates with her opponents.

Montana Press: When did you feel a calling to run for Congress?

Kathleen Williams: Well, my husband actually suggested it when I was serving in the Legislature. I said, "Well, would you come with me?" and he said, "No, I'm going to hunt and fish," and I'm like, "Well, then I'm not doing that." He was the first to suggest it, actually. When I knew that there was going to be a special election, I thought about it then, too but he passed away in January of 2016 and I just didn't feel like I was ready to start a new chapter. This time around, I was ready.

I just feel like we need honest, truthful, non-partisan representation. And we need to win. I felt like, of all the people with a D after their name, I probably have the breadth and the depth to actually win. I evaluated the other candidates who had entered the primary and I felt like I needed to step up. They're wonderful people and we had a great time on the primary campaign trail. Now we've got to replace Gianforte. He's just not serving us well.

MP: After a crowded primary race, how did you find the experience of being propelled to the national spotlight as a Dem to watch?

Williams: We certainly need national attention in these days of ridiculous campaign finance needs. It's helpful to have national attention but what I love is going door to door. What I love about this is talking to Montanans and traveling the state and hearing what their hopes, struggles, and dreams are. And getting my little brain going on, "Well, what could we do to solve that?" I love that.

MP: What is your background in policy-making and legislative work? And what would you consider some of the greatest successes in your career?

Williams: My first job in Montana, 24 years ago, was non-partisan legislative staff where I was the lead staff person for all the Legislature on anything related to mining, water and outdoor recreation. That was back in the 90s. I saw a Legislature that functioned. People could disagree, but not be disagreeable. They could roll up their sleeves and get to work on things that mattered to Montana.

I continued to participate in the Legislature after that. I went to a state agency and ended up getting called in front of the Legislature for a variety of reasons because we were trying to conserve Montana's rivers. After that, I went into the non-profit and private sectors and volunteered with the League of Women Voters. I served on their statewide steering committee for the legislative session where we were deciding what to participate in based on the League's positions. I was also running workshops and trainings for the League on how to



Photo by Corin Cates-Carney, www.mtpr.org

track legislation, build relationships with Legislators, and craft and deliver compelling testimony. Once again, I was in front of the Legislature as a testifier and as a concerned citizen working with the volunteer organization.

Back in 2007 when the Legislature couldn't even pass a budget, I started becoming more and more concerned that hyper-partisanship, divisiveness and inexperience was pervading that institution. When [my husband] Tom went to Iraq in 2009, I'd completed the policy aspects of my day job and I found myself watching too many Law and Order reruns. A friend of mine, [Montana Representative] J.P. Pomnichowski, she tapped me and said, "Have you ever thought of running for the Legislature?" I ran and served in '11, '13 and '15.

As far as accomplishments, I feel like my cancer bill that required insurance companies to cover routine cancer care for patients who were participating in clinical trials was a success. It took me four years to do that but now it's actually saving lives. It's an honor to be able to have done that.

I think my local food bill was also a success. We not only created the opportunity to make certain foods in a home kitchen and sell them, but that created over 200 new businesses and over 3,000 new Montana products in just three years from enactment. That bill took me four years as well. When I first started it, one of the things we discovered was that our food safety laws were an absolute mess. So not only did we pass the cottage food bill, but it was within a bill called the Montana Food Policy Modernization Act that removed a lot of duplicative requirements on food businesses and made it easier for them to expand across county lines, things like that. My style is problem solving and if I encounter something that makes things more complicated rather than shying away from it, I take it on. When you're in the minority, you have to keep working but it's my style to work with people of all political stripes. And that's really what we need to get back to and what I want to take to Congress.

MP: You noted in a recent interview that you wish to put "People over party and policy over politics," and noted a problem with hyper-partisanship in modern government. What are some of the worst examples of hyper-partisanship you've seen during your legislative career?

Williams: I think it's when people don't consider other people as colleagues, but only

consider them as to what the letter is after their name. In the debate last night, there was so much of it. Lumping people into a box or assuming and misrepresenting their positions because there's some kind of portion of a party that advocates for something. I think partisanship happens because there's parties; but hyper-partisan is when it just becomes destructive to our institutions and doesn't allow people to think independently or to vote independently.

MP: In the highly partisan environment of the U.S. House, how would you work to build discourse and consensus with your fellow representatives?

Williams: One way I did it in the Legislature was through knowing the process. I know the rules. You take things that Montanans have said they want to change and then there are a lot of people who have just been elected and have no idea how to craft a bill, how to do amendments. I helped people with things like the process to write bills or how to run a committee. So helping people is one thing. I hope I have the opportunity to do that. But also it's looking for common interests in unique places that don't consider party.

On my cancer bill, I knew I had to get that through Art Wittich's Health & Human Services Committee in the House, and he's a cancer survivor. So you find those commonalities, and you lead by example, and you hold people accountable. I made a freshman Republican Legislator apologize to a witness for calling him a liar. I didn't have any authority to do that. But he did it because I just called to his higher ethics. I thought I'd made an enemy by doing that, but he ended up being my seatmate the next session and brought me butterscotches every day. So you can do it. You just have to bite the bullet and do it and that's what our institutions need.

MP: If the Democrats took the majority in the House after the midterms and you were elected, how would your experience serving in the minority inform your policymaking?

Williams: Well, it's the same thing. I'm a consensus builder. You can't always do that in a legislative body, but the partisanship has gone too far and we need to work together. I think that's what Montanans want. I think right now one of the problems is that whichever party is in charge is trying to hang on to that power and ensure that the other party doesn't

MONTANA POLITICS

come into power. That's all they care about so they're not getting anything done. I believe we still have in this landscape, even if the majority shifts in the U.S. House, we'll still have the President and probably not the 60 votes in the Senate. So it'll be a little more of a check and a balance. In the House, we can raise issues, do oversight and bring back some balance to Washington.

MP: Can you talk about your work as Associate Director of the Western Land Owner's Alliance, an organization facilitating both working use of private lands and active conservation management?

Williams: Really, what that organization did is try and bring a voice to conservation-minded farmers and ranchers across the West in North America. So we were facilitating them, telling their story, being advocates for sustainable and regenerative agriculture. So many of them, when we talk about forestry, many of them had either BLM or Forest Service leases or permits to graze or cattle. They were working hard to improve the areas that they had permits and leases on and in some places because of their work and their management the lands were in better shape than the adjacent public lands. So we were advocating to ensure that people didn't misunderstand the good things that go on going on on the land. Often it's private land owners who are in the places that were settled, which are often the river valleys and those are critical to wildlife and clean water, clean air and open space and my job was telling that story.

I started a film program that was a partnership with MSU that told these stories. They were six to eight minute films and they each profiled a conservation-minded farmer or rancher in the west and talked about all the good things they were doing and how the good things they were doing contributed to their bottom line so we were able to show that conservation could help make private land management profitable.

There was a rancher down in New Mexico we profiled in a film. He wanted to reintroduce ferrets because he had a prairie dog colony and he noticed that the cattle really liked being where the prairie dogs were. But the prairie dogs weren't moving around and creating more benefit, they were just staying put. He wanted to introduce ferrets to move the prairie dogs around to benefit his cattle. So it's stories like that, how there can be really common interests between conservation and making a living.

MP: Do you support President Trump's tax cuts and, more specifically, would you be likely to take a stand against the President if you disagreed with him?

Williams: I look forward to working with the President where we have common interests. The tax bill was pretty painful to watch, having been Vice Chair of the House Taxation Committee in 2015, where we took a very measured approach and a fiscally-responsible approach and made sure that whatever we did we tried to be revenue neutral. I voted to lower the Business Equipment Tax to help business. We were trying to figure out how we could lower property taxes because there are people that are concerned about being taxed out of their homes.

I would stand up to the President. My style

is not typically confrontational but I sort of stand up to everybody. My style is to find common interests and unique arguments to bring people over to my position. People talk about compromise and I talk about communication.

MP: What is your perspective on restricting ownership of weapons?

Williams: I'm a proud gun owner and supporter of the 2nd Amendment. I'm proud to have the support of the Montana Sportsmen Alliance. This Congress has failed to take any action on keeping children safe in schools and protecting children from massacres. I don't believe the corporate gun lobby is more important than the life of a child.

MP: Do you think healthcare is a fundamental right for a taxpayer?

Williams: Everyone deserves access to affordable, quality healthcare. I believe this because it's personal to me. When I was 11, my mother was diagnosed with early-onset Alzheimer's and me and my father became her caregivers. I understand what a health crisis can do to a family. I will work to stabilize the individual market, reduce prescription drug prices, and to allow people 55 and older to buy in to Medicare if they want to.

MP: In recent interviews and debates, you've been sharply critical of your opponent, Congressman Gianforte. What would you point out as a key concern about his ability to represent Montanans?

Williams: Well, number number one, he's lying about me and he lied to law enforcement after he assaulted a reporter. So I think at a minimum we need people that are honest and have integrity. And I think, too, that he seems to be serving narrow special interests. He won't hold public meetings. He talks about traveling to all 56 counties but nobody seems to remember seeing him. He won't allow the public to speak at a congressional briefing paid for by tax dollars. He won't allow the public to speak. I don't think he's representing all of Montana, which is what I want to do. Whether people vote for me or not, I will be the Representative for all of Montana. We need to balance those interests and get Congress working again.

I was his Legislator, he was my Constituent, so I've known him for a long time and we can do so much better. He's just following the partisan line. He keeps talking about having the ear of the President and advancing the President's agenda. It's like: You're a Congressman. Congress is a separate branch. It's great if you want to work with the President, but let's solve some problems for Montana that the President doesn't have the authority to do.

MP: Minority Leader of the House Nancy Pelosi and President Obama are frequently mentioned in statements and interviews about this House race. How are these nationally known politicians relevant to Montana voters?

Williams: My opponent is using Pelosi to try and scare people or to paint me in a way that isn't correct. He knows. In July I came out and stated that with Paul Ryan stepping down we had an opportunity, America has an opportunity, to select leadership on both sides in the U.S. House that can actually work together and reduce this hyper-partisanship and he took the clip from that statement that said I wouldn't be voting for Nancy Pelosi and used it in a commercial saying that all I would do is side with Nancy Pelosi. I mean, that is the most blatant lie that I can think of.

He seems to think that that name means something to Montanans, but Montanans vote for the person. I know they do. So it's my hope that they won't be cowed or believe the misrepresentations that he's putting forward. There was a great recent Guardian article where the headline was, "She's got a truck camper, he's got a private jet."

MP: What has been a highlight or some highlights of your campaign tour, traveling in a camper around the state?

Williams: It was a blast. That's how you hear what matters to people. You go to them and you talk to them and you invite them to talk to you. We're going to do another tour but the first one we called it the 'Opportunity Tour.' We started in Opportunity, Montana, which is great. We went up the Rocky Mountain Front, across the High Line, up to Scobey and Plentywood and down eastern Montana. We tried to stay on public lands every night, which just recharges me. The first night on the road, we were so busy just sort of getting out and getting to the first event. Everett, my Finance Director, went with me the first time. When the two of us got to this little fishing access site that we could camp at outside of Choteau, we parked the camper, set it up and it was night one of the Opportunity Tour. We looked up at the Rocky Mountain front and my dog got in the little reservoir and it was just like, "Wow. This is Montana."

CONGRESSMAN GREG GIANFORTE

Republican Congressman Greg Gianforte was provided a full list of a dozen questions which he declined to answer. He also declined a request for an in person or phone interview. The candidate chose to answer the following questions only, in writing on October 12, 2018. To see the full list of questions presented to Congressman Gianforte and the subsequent communication with his campaign team, visit www.montanapress.net.

Montana Press: What is your background/experience in business/policy-making and legislative work?

Congressman Gianforte: I'm a small businessperson. My wife, Susan, and I started a small business out of our Bozeman home, the same home where we raised our four kids. That small business grew to become Boze-

man's largest commercial employer, creating over 500 high-paying Montana jobs.

That experience helped prepare me for the work I'm doing on behalf of Montanans in the U.S. House of Representatives. I've put Montana first and worked members of both parties to protect our Montana way of life – whether increasing public access to our public lands, promoting telework to increase opportunities for Montanans, or reducing burdensome regulations.

MP: Recently, a bi-partisan effort protected 30,000 acres near Yellowstone Park from extractive industry. What is your position on this legislation?

Gianforte: I am proud to have introduced the Yellowstone Gateway Protection Act and to be working to usher it through the House.

As the gateway to Yellowstone National Park, Paradise Valley is well known for its fishing, hunting, hiking, and recreation that are cornerstones of the area's growing tourism industry. Not every place is the right place for a mine, and we must protect our public lands and Yellowstone National Park. The consensus of the community has been clear which is why I introduced legislation to protect approximately 30,000 acres in Paradise Valley with a permanent withdrawal of mineral rights on public land.

I worked with Republicans and Democrats to guide this bill through the House Natural Resources Committee, overcoming objections of some of my colleagues. I appreciate my Democrat opponent's praise in our most recent debate that my leadership "could get it over the finish line." I'll continue working to enact a permanent legislative solution so the gateway to Yellowstone is protected for future generations of Montanans.

MP: Do you think healthcare is a fundamental right for a taxpayer?

Gianforte: I believe every American should have access to reliable, affordable, high-quality health care. Obamacare has been a disaster. Obamacare promised to reduce costs, but they increased. Obamacare promised to preserve choices of doctors, but Americans couldn't keep the doctor they wanted.

Obamacare must be repealed and replaced with a consumer-centered, market-based reform that lowers health care prices and provides high-quality care. I will only support health care reform that protects people with preexisting conditions, reduces premiums, and protects rural access to care. Medicare for All is Medicare for None.



Photo by Corin Cates-Carney, www.mtpr.org

Libertarian Elinor Swanson responded to all the proposed questions by email on October 12, 2018.

Montana Press: When did you feel a calling to run for Congress?

Elinor Swanson: When I realized that there would be no one on the ballot I could vote for unless I threw my hat into the ring. I am the only candidate who consistently respects individual rights and liberties, the only limited government candidate.

MP: What is your background in policy-making and legislative work? What would you consider some of your greatest successes in your career experience?

Swanson: I have no background in policy-making or legislative work, other than attending law school.

MP: Recently, a bi-partisan effort has produced a bill to protect 30,000 acres near Yellowstone Park from extractive industry. Do you support this legislation?

Swanson: Yes. I have a moderate stance towards public lands, it shouldn't be all or nothing when it comes to preservation versus development. Some areas are too beautiful, pristine, and useful for outdoor activities such as hiking, camping, and hunting to develop, and that area is one of them.

MP: If elected, what kind of legislation would be a priority on your agenda?

Swanson: Criminal justice reform, a balanced budget amendment, eliminating regulations that do not define or prohibit harm but instead merely serve as a barrier to economic success, eliminating intervention in foreign affairs unrelated to our own national interests, and eliminating some of the unconstitutional 430 federal agencies that Congress has created over the past several decades.

MP: In the highly partisan environment of the U.S. House, how would you work to represent a third party among fellow Representatives?

Swanson: Libertarian Laura Ebke has been very successful at brokering tripartisan deals in Nebraska. I would partner up with anyone to maximize individual rights and liberties and to decrease spending.

MP: Do you think healthcare is a fundamental right for a taxpayer?

Swanson: Healthcare is an economically valuable service that must be provided by other people, therefore it is not a right. If healthcare were a right, we could demand it without paying for it, and would be required to talk about healthcare on the global rather than national scale. Charity is a moral obligation; there is no legal right, however, to demand charity.

MP: What is your perspective on restricting ownership of weapons?

Swanson: For both moral and practical reasons, we should restrict weapon ownership only when someone has committed a violent crime or is mentally incompetent. Self defense and defense of others is a human right, recognized (not granted) by the 2nd Amendment, and that right to armament that shall not be infringed. There are more defensive than offensive gun uses. Gun restrictions do not decrease overall crime rates, but instead merely shift the modality from guns to car ramblings, stabbings, homemade bombs, blunt weapons, etc., and also decrease the ability of people to effectively defend themselves.

While my Democrat opponent supports a path to Medicare for All, I oppose anything that will break our promises to our seniors, rob them of the system they're paid into their whole lives, and gut Medicare. It's extreme, reckless, and irresponsible.

MP: Do you support President Trump's tax cuts?

Gianforte: I support and voted for the tax cuts that President Trump signed into law in December 2017. We cut tax rates for hardworking Montanans, nearly doubled the standard deduction, and preserved retirement savings accounts. We also doubled the child tax credit to make it easier to start a family and take care of our kids. Finally, we reformed the tax code to help Montana's Main Street businesses.

Our economy is booming as a result. Unemployment is at a 49-year low. Wages are growing at their fastest rate in about a decade, particularly for low- and middle-income workers. The economy has created more than 2.5 million jobs in the last year, including thousands in Montana. Optimism is on the rise, opportunities are growing, and the American dream is within greater reach to more Montanans.

We've really turned a corner from the failed policies of Barack Obama and Nancy Pelosi that led to nearly a decade of sluggish economic growth, stagnant wages, and fewer opportunities.

MP: Would you be likely to take a stand against the President over issues where you disagree?

Gianforte: I have built a good relationship with President Trump and have been working with him to deliver results for Montana – a booming economy, safer communities, and a more secure America. I have worked alongside him on term limits for members of Congress and on reducing prescription drug prices. When President Trump has visited Montana, I have flown with him on Air Force One and talked with him about issues important to Montana. For example, I have encouraged the president and members of his administration to quickly resolve trade disputes, and we're beginning to see new trade deals with the European Union, Canada, and Mexico that benefit America. Having a seat at the table with President Trump allows me to speak with the president frankly about issues important to Montana and to advocate for our interests.

MP: What would you point out as key concerns about either of your opponent's abilities to represent Montana?

Gianforte: My Democrat opponent has a liberal record and extreme agenda that doesn't fit into Montana's sensible mainstream. My Democrat opponent has voted for sanctuary cities and for higher taxes, and she has voted against the Second Amendment and against providing relief to Montanans from Obamacare. She supports a path to Medicare for All and would vote with Nancy Pelosi for open borders and amnesty. Montanans don't want someone who will stand with Nancy Pelosi and the resistance to push a radical, extreme agenda. They want a leader who will work with President Trump to put Montana first and deliver results for Montana. That's what I've been doing, and that's what I'll continue to do.

MP: What is your perspective on restricting ownership of weapons?

Gianforte: The Second Amendment is clear. I oppose restricting the rights of law-abiding gun owners in Montana. I'm proud that the National Rifle Association endorsed me and gave me an "A" rating. I will always protect our Montana way of life and fearlessly defend the Second Amendment rights of law-abiding Montanans against anti-gun extremists, liberal special interest groups, and progressive politicians who threaten them.

MP: What strategy would you employ to advance your policy priorities in Congress?

Gianforte: My policy priorities in Congress are to put Montana first. It's what guides every vote I take. It's what guides every piece of legislation I introduce or cosponsor. As a business owner, I brought people together to make deals and sell products. It didn't matter whether someone was a Republican, Democrat, or Independent. I've brought that same approach to Washington. I worked with Democrats and Republicans to pass and get my first bill signed into law – one that protects public access to our public lands. I worked with Democrats and Republicans to advance legislation protecting the gateway to Yellowstone National Park. I worked with Democrats and Republicans to pass a measure providing federal recognition to the Little Shell Tribe – the first time this bill ever made it through either the House or the Senate. I worked with Republicans and Democrats to permanently reauthorize the Land and Water Conservation Fund, a priority for Montana. I will always put Montana first and will continue working to advance those priorities in Congress.

MP: Minority Leader of the House, Nancy Pelosi (D) and President Obama are frequently mentioned in statements and interviews about this House race. Do you think these nationally-known politicians are relevant to Montana voters?

Gianforte: Montana voters are well aware of the failed, liberal policies that Barack Obama and Nancy Pelosi forced upon them – from Obamacare itself to slashing \$800 billion from Medicare to pay for Obamacare, from a war on coal to threatening our Second Amendment rights, from open borders to higher taxes. We've turned a corner from them, and we can't afford to go back to these failed policies. My Democrat opponent has tried to distract voters from her liberal record and extreme agenda that mirrors the Obama-Pelosi agenda. My Democrat opponent embraces Obamacare. My Democrat opponent supports a path to Medicare for All which would gut Medicare and hurt Montana seniors. My Democrat opponent opposes tax cuts for hardworking Montanans that have produced our booming economy. My Democrat opponent supports open borders and voted twice for sanctuary cities. My Democrat opponent earned an "F" rating from the NRA which warned a vote for her "is a vote to put Nancy Pelosi in control of Congress." Ultimately, this is a campaign of competing ideas. Do Montana voters want someone who will work with President Trump to deliver results for Montana or someone who will work against President Trump and stand with Nancy Pelosi and the resistance? It's a serious and important decision.

MP: Do you support President Trump's tax cuts? Would you be likely to take a stand against the President over issues where you disagree?

Swanson: The tax cuts are irrelevant compared to the scope of federal spending. For every \$20 America makes, the federal government takes \$3, borrows \$1, and spends \$4. Tax changes increase or decrease taxes by only 5-10 cents on that same scale. Even if we taxed the one percent at 100 percent, that would not even cover the money borrowed by the federal government, let alone the money spent. Increasing the corporate tax rate would just drive corporations overseas, and in addition double-taxes Americans who create and build businesses (once at the corporate level, and once when they are paid their salaries). Intruding into people's lives, both domestically and abroad, is both immoral and expensive: we absolutely must decrease federal spending, it is completely out of control. If we don't get a handle on it soon, we will be financially unable to honor our contractual commitments to Americans and others. With the extent of debt the federal government is accruing, we truly did not have a tax cut, but a tax deferral.

MP: Do you think the two-party system in America is working for voters? Do you anticipate your campaign to have a perceptible effect on either of the leading candidates?

Swanson: The two-party system in America is broken, because only ~5% of elected representatives actually present a meaningfully different option than the status quo. Neither of the two leading candidates respect the Constitution in its entirety: neither respect the entire Bill of Rights; neither respect the Constitutionally limited role of the federal government. Of course I will have a perceptible effect on both of the leading candidates - every single vote I obtain from a person who would otherwise have voted for one of them is a perceptible effect. We're not only gaining votes - Libertarians are increasingly being elected around the nation.

MP: What has been a highlight of your campaign tour?

Swanson: It has been incredibly rewarding to introduce people to the Libertarian party and libertarian ideals.

MP: What would you point out as key concerns about either of your opponent's abilities to represent Montana?

Swanson: Ms. Williams voting record indicates she does not uphold the 2nd Amendment, Mr. Gianforte's voting record indicates he does not uphold the 4th or 5th (FISA - Patriot Act), and both of their voting records - big spending, high level of intrusion into people's lives - indicate that neither respect the Constitutionally limited role of the federal government.

MP: Minority Leader of the House, Nancy Pelosi (D) and President Obama are frequently mentioned in statements and interviews about this House race. Do you think these nationally-known politicians are relevant to Montana voters?

Swanson: Yes, but only to the extent both other candidates do not have a principled understanding of the Constitution, and thus are both highly likely to simply vote as they are told, according to what sounds like a good idea - rather than first asking if they have the moral and Constitutional authority to do so. ★

ELECTION DAY IS NOVEMBER 6, 2018

CHEF'S RECIPES

CHEF TINA STRUBLE AT AND THE PANTRY SUPPER CLUB AT LFRC

The Livingston Food Resource Center provides a “Pantry Supper Club” to eligible seniors over 60 years old. Each week, five frozen dinners are delivered to the homes of eligible participants in the Livingston area.

Chef Tina Struble prepares all the dinners at the LFRC using mostly local and seasonal ingredients. The meals are formulated to meet the nutritional needs of seniors, many with diabetes and high blood pressure.

Struble, who has been a Montana resident since early 2000, is the meal planner and cook for all of the meals. She formerly owned a popular vegetarian restaurant in Livingston, The Night Spot Café, which held the distinction of being the only exclusively-vegetarian restaurant at in the state at the time.

“I will have people who remember the Café from 10 years ago who still bring it up to me. I had hopes that it would start a trend, that people would enjoy the alternative enough that they would strive to create something else, but it hasn’t really happened.”

Instead, Struble now works with the LFRC to bring healthy, nutritious meals to the members of the LFRC Pantry Supper Club. Over many years, she has traveled from Montana to work developing recipes for some of the most cutting-edge vegetarian restaurants in the country, from Brooklyn to Seattle. Now she is settled near her family back in Livingston and working to help keep seniors healthy.

“I love developing new food. I’m primarily an artist by nature and so the creative need drives me for sure,” she says. “From what I’ve witnessed, the attitude about feeding underserved populations that are impoverished



vegetarian cuisine, she says she enjoys creating dishes that include a variety of local game and proteins and, “If I convince people they could have a meal, one vegetarian meal in a week, that’s a big achievement.”

“I’m just sort of pushing the envelope a little bit, not to the point where you alienate people,” she says about her creative three-course Senior Supper Club meals. “You have to gain people’s trust. ...Like raising children when you’re trying to feed them and trying to get them to eat healthy, you don’t shove something down their throat or force it on them, they’ve got to be kind of cajoled into it a bit at a time with baby steps.”

Struble and the staff at the LFRC serve about 40 clients per week with the meals and currently have a waiting list to be on the program. She prepares about 200 three-course meals each week and is helped by volunteers to assemble the dishes to be frozen and stored until being delivered to participants.

LFRC does a variety of outreach programs to gauge the success of their programs.

“We get a lot of positive feedback,” Struble says. In a couple of a couple of instances we’ve had people tell us that their doctors have, after a year being in the program, their doctors want to know what they’re eating because they’re numbers are all great and their health is improving.”

Struble admits she is unafraid to expose the diners to old favorites with a new twist.

“I try to give them as many comfort things that they’re used to from their past as I can,” she says, “And then I’ll modify those things to, to be healthy. Like I just made a tuna casserole. The base, the white sauce is made with coconut milk. I do all kinds of things, like biscuits and gravy with a gravy made out of white beans”

So far, her recipes are proven winners with the supper club participants.

“When I started doing the program there were 15 people in it and it quickly kinda jumped up a month or so to 30,” she says. Struble has been cooking for the program for over a year and says she looks forward to continuing to create unique, healthy, nutritionally-balanced meals from the wide variety of local produce and meat the LFRC has available. ★



Roasted Butternut Squash

6-8 servings

2-3 lb butternut squash, peeled, seeded and cubed 1”
¼ cup olive oil
1 tsp rubbed sage or 1 t fresh, chopped sage
½ tsp salt
3 t maple syrup
½ tsp black pepper

Toss all ingredients together in large bowl. Spread evenly on parchment covered baking sheet. Roast in 375° oven till softened to touch and browning around edges, or approx. 15-20 min depending on oven, so watch!).



Chef Tina Struble

is they get given the bottom of the barrel. But at LFRC, we’re really for giving people organic, whole food as much as possible from local farms. They have very, very good quality meat.”

Struble says the commitment to providing top-quality ingredients makes it less challenging to create dishes which contain animal protein. In a shift from her earlier work in

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7

“That’s an officer who’s not responding to your house in the middle of the night to get the drunk guy off your couch. That’s an officer who’s not responding to your house to stop your spouse from beating you. That is also an officer who’s not responding to your house to see that your house is filthy and that your child has been beaten,” Harris said.

Harris, who’s approaching 17 years with the Livingston Police Department, estimated that one-third to one-quarter of his investigations involve children who’ve endured some form of physical abuse, sexual abuse or neglect. Harris said he’s seen drug injection needles hidden in a diaper bag, rats and their droppings in a baby’s crib, a 12-year-old child incapable of writing or speaking, and a victim of years-long sexual abuse. The list goes on.

In those cases, Harris said, he works closely with the Department of Child and Family Services, an agency he knows well because his wife, Jacqui Poe, is one of Livingston’s three child-protection specialists.

After 17 years with the agency, Poe learned that Livingston’s office, which also serves Sweet Grass County to the east, was slated to close Aug. 6, 2018 as part of a reorganization effort designed to meet growing demand for caseworkers in Yellowstone County. She was told that she and her two colleagues could take case manager positions in Billings, transfer to other open positions elsewhere in the state or leave the agency altogether.

The reorganization called to shift Park and Sweet Grass counties to the jurisdiction of Bozeman’s DCFS office, which also oversees Madison County. Harris expressed concern that coordinating forensic interviews with an already overburdened office 26 miles away would delay investigations and compromise the safety of vulnerable children.

For some Montana children, the consequence of delayed action can be fatal. Fourteen children died in Montana last year after having been the subject of child abuse or neglect complaints, according to a recent Department of Justice report.

None of the public officials, law enforcement officials or aid providers interviewed for this story disputed that the need for child protective services is great in Billings. According to DPHHS spokesman Ebelt, Yellowstone County had 880 children in foster care at last count, compared to Park and Sweet Grass counties, where approximately two dozen children are in foster care.

Social workers in Billings are overburdened with remarkably high caseloads — as many as 60 children per caseworker, according to Ebelt. By comparison, the average caseload for social workers in Gallatin, Sweet Grass and Park counties is 11 children, he said. Many officials point to an increase in drug use, methamphetamine in particular, to explain the grim situation in eastern Montana.

Still, many Livingston residents called the reorganization plan shortsighted and said it would leave a community that’s still reeling from a series of public-aid closures in even worse shape.

A July 4 statement from Court Appointed Special Advocates of Park and Sweet Grass counties (CASA) plainly stated the organi-

zation’s concern: If implemented, the plan would result in an increase in the number of abused and neglected children. The statement also criticized the state for its move to consolidate services in more populous areas.

“Over the years we have watched the state move toward ‘regional hubs’ for services during budget shortfalls. It is safe to say that rural Montana is being further isolated with these cuts, as social services fail to extend to communities that need it most,” the statement read, in part.

CASA’s statement was just one part of Livingston’s response.

In the weeks following the announcement by DPHHS, local stakeholders met to learn how they could urge the agency to reconsider. Park County Sheriff Scott Hamilton posted a Facebook statement in opposition to the plan that was shared 72 times, and Livingston Rep. Laurie Bishop, a Democrat, organized a meeting with top DPHHS policymakers.

The coordinated effort seems to have resonated with department officials, who released a revised plan on July 20. Under the new plan, Livingston’s office will close at a later date, and DPHHS will create two new case manager positions under the jurisdiction of Bozeman’s CFS office.

One of those case managers will be based in Bozeman but focus on Livingston cases, which will likely involve significant commuting time, and the other will work remotely from Livingston in a space that’s been offered by the Livingston Civic Center at no charge to DCFS. Ebelt said Billings will still get the additional employees called for by the original plan.

Bishop said timelines are still being ironed out, and there will be lag time while the city of Livingston remodels the space for its new use, but she’s heartened by the response. She said she’s been impressed by the cooperation that enables Livingston residents to overcome service reductions, but she wonders how other communities without Livingston’s cohesive nonprofit infrastructure have adapted.

“We have this incredible capacity to come together and weave that net as tightly as possible ... we have a lot of chemistry in place,” Bishop said. “I just don’t know that other communities have that same thing happening.”

Detective Harris expressed concern that it takes a threat so drastic to unite people around a service like protecting vulnerable children.

“I don’t know how [Livingston’s situation] is going to get addressed in the long run, but the global issue — and by that, I mean the statewide problem — is still there,” he said.

That issue is rooted in values, priorities and fiscal management at the state level, Harris said.

“Until you beat the apathetic response that most of us as Americans have, you’re not going to get [to a better solution],” Harris said. “If [DCFS’s mission] is important to Montanans, the money’s going to be there. If it’s not important to Montanans, the money won’t be there.” ★

—AMANDA EGGERT

This story was originally published by Montana Free Press and The Missoula Independent in August 2018. Reporting on this story was supported in part by a grant from the Montana Healthcare Foundation.



Chicken Chow Mein

6-8 servings

1 roasted chicken
2 cups cabbage, shredded
½ cup onion, julienned
½ cup green bell pepper, julienned
1 ½ cups carrots, thin sliced or julienned
½ cup celery, thin julienne
4 cloves garlic, thin sliced or julienned
2 cups white/shitake mushrooms, sliced
2 t fresh ginger, minced
2 cups snow or snap peas, stemmed and julienned
2 cups fresh mung bean sprouts
2 cups shredded fresh spinach
1/3 cup tst sesame oil
6 cups chicken stock
¼ cup cooking sherry or mirin wine
1 t rice vinegar
1/3 cup soy sauce or tamari(wheatfree)
1 cup green onions, including greens, julienned
1 tsp chinese 5-spice powder (or a pinch of cinnamon, white pepper, anise and cloves)
½ tsp chinese mustard powder or 1 tsp mustard
1 t oyster sauce (or fish sauce)
¼ cup corn starch
1/3 cup toasted sesame seeds or slivered almonds for garnish

Pull meat off chicken (or turkey), cut to desirable size and set aside (refrigerate).

Sauté in sesame oil, medium heat; in order, separated by 2-3 min, onion, ginger, celery, carrots, cabbage, garlic, mushrooms, bell peppers, snap peas.

Snap peas should still be crunchy, then toss in spinach and mung beans, stir quickly for one minute, add chicken, stir again one minute, add stock saving out ½ cup for starch.

Bring up to simmer. Mix sherry, vinegar, soy and oyster sauce and spices in ½ cup cold stock with corn starch till blended. Drizzle into simmering pot, stirring briskly until sauce thickens and clears. take off heat immediately.

Serve over crispy chow mein noodles or soft chow mein noodles (follow package directions)

Garnish with green onion and toasted sesame or almonds.

Green Lentil Curry

6-8 servings

1 qt cooked al dente’ green lentils
1 cup carrots, ¼” dice
1 cup eggplant (or zucchini), ½” dice
1 cup onion, ¼” dice
1 cup red bell pepper, ½’ dice
1 cup greens (such as arugula, spinach or chard), small julienne
½ cup cilantro greens
1 t minced fresh ginger
2 cloves garlic minced
1 tsp turmeric (or 1 t minced fresh)
1 t madras curry powder or 2-3 t curry paste
1 tsp cumin seeds (or ½ tsp powder)
1 tsp black mustard seed (or ½ tsp powder)
2 t sherry vinegar or ¼ cup lemon or lime juice
1/3 cup coconut oil (or olive oil)
1 qt coconut milk (more or less to achieve desired consistency)
½ cup toasted coconut flakes (can be oven toasted in 3 -5 min)
½ - 1 tsp salt to taste

Sauté vegetables and seeds (include garlic and minced ginger) in oil, on medium heat, in medium-sized pot (allow for 4-6 qts) till softened. Add powdered spices, sauté until fragrant, 3-5 min.

Add coconut milk to hot pan stirring gently. Add cooked lentils. Simmer gently for 20-25 min. Turn off heat and stir in chopped fresh cilantro. Garnish with toasted coconut flakes.

—RECIPES BY TINA STRUBLE



Photos by Lindsay Wells

LOGJAM PRESENTS EXPANDS ENTERTAINMENT EMPIRE IN MONTANA

On October 12, Montana Press spoke with Nick Checota of Logjam Presents, an entertainment and music promotion company featuring three distinct venues in Missoula: a restaurant and nightclub The Top Hat, the iconic Wilma Theater downtown and the 4,250-seat Kettlehouse Amphitheater in Bonner. Checota shared insights on the Montana music market, the need for giving back to the community, and future plans for expansion across the state.

Montana Press: In 2017, you reported over 100,000 tickets sold. What's 2018 look like so far?

Nick Checota: We're going to do about 180,000 this year, which is good. Pollstar, a main industry trade organization where everybody reports all their tickets, does these rankings based solely on tickets sold and obviously, organizations like Live Nation and AEG [Anschutz Entertainment Group] are always selling 25 million tickets or whatever they might do. For the first time, Logjam Presents broke into the top 100 promoters in the world based on ticket sales.

The Wilma and Top Hat are both in the top 100 clubs in the world in ticket sales and the amphitheater was ranked 43rd in the world in ticket sales. That's just ticket sales, tickets sold. All of those ticket sales occurred in the Missoula market, which is just staggering that Missoula is supporting that level of music.

We just find it absolutely mind-boggling we can support this many events. We're supporting as many events as you're seeing in cities five times our size.

MP: In an interview last year, you reported \$11 million in revenue. Was this for the entire production company?

NC: Last year that was the entire production and this year it's going to be more in the \$16 million range.

MP: Have you looked at other entertainment companies for ideas or models, or is Logjam Presents a unique entity?

NC: My background was consulting and before I became a real estate developer I worked for PricewaterhouseCoopers and was in Fortune 50 companies. I went into a lot of different environments so I have had that basis from which I look at companies.

I definitely look at Live Nation. They're a public company. They have public filings, so you can get a lot of information. I look at their revenue models and how they're structured. It doesn't mean we imitate them, but we definitely look at them. They do some things very differently than us, as do, I'd say, all the big promoters.

This is a super-interesting industry right now. What's happening is very aggressive. Very fast consolidation is occurring and you're seeing organizations like Live Nation and AEG, Live Nation being a public company, just gobble up everybody. They just did another major acquisition last week, Emporium. So they're buying companies very aggressively. You have these mega-promoters and then you have a small group of surviving independent promoters and we would be one of them.

MP: Do most of those smaller promoters have venues?

NC: No, and I think from that group, we vary a little bit in that we're one of the only ones that I'm aware of that does everything in-house. I don't contract a third-party vendor to come in and do bars. I don't contract with a third-party security company, like CMS, to come in and do my event staff. We put all the employees on our payroll. They're all Missoulians, so they know people in the community and it lets us control the overall experience.

I think that's what makes us so different than Live Nation, in that Live Nation's just buying tours and then they're trying to route these tours through venues, some of which they own, some of which they don't. The experience, by the way, for those shows is mediocre, in my opinion. Everything's outsourced, no one lives in that community or really knows the community.

What makes us different is that we've invested more in our venues than is typical. We invested more in our sound system than is typical. We place a huge priority on service. If you go to one of our venues, you'll see that very rarely is there a line at concession stands or at the bar. We really try to keep that to a minimum. Our event staff is more of a hospitality staff than a security staff.

It's just a different approach, and it's much more about the overall experience of the concertgoer than selling a ticket and getting fees. I think like so many things in this country, as they franchise and get bigger and take that model, you can see, I think, a deterioration in the level of quality of the experience.

MP: You said one of your biggest surprises has been the appetite for music in western Montana. Do you think this extends to the entire state?

NC: Yeah, I do, actually. We sell a lot of tickets on the eastern side of Montana.

MP: Now that you have a strong foothold in western Montana, what are the plans to expand to the rest of the state?

NC: I think Bozeman would be the first target. We have a venue under development and hope to have it under construction and open next fall. I think Bozeman's a market that has some pent-up demand and doesn't really have a venue that meets the needs of what we think the customers want there.

MP: How many people will the Bozeman venue seat?

NC: It'll be the same size as the Wilma, 1,500. And from there, I think we'll take a breath. We picked up the ballpark, so that's still a western Montana venue. But from there, we'll absorb that, get that launched and operating and then I think we'll reassess. I'm not sure which direction we'll go from there.

MP: The ballpark being the Osprey Park in Missoula? What are your plans for that facility?

NC: It's our hope that we'll do four to five shows a year there. The majority of the shows will be at the KettleHouse but four to five bigger shows there. So that's a 10,000 capacity venue versus a 4,250 capacity which is KettleHouse. That lets us go after a different size of artist and that's what our intent is.

MP: What is the process for booking music and what audience do you try to serve?

NC: The process is you work with agents. Some bring shows to me. I go chase some shows. I just got back from a week trip to New York and Nashville to meet with a lot of the agents I work with. The prior week to that, I was in LA doing the same. So that's the process. You work with agents that represent artists.

As far as the audience, I think historically if you look at the audience that was served in Missoula, the promoters in this community prior to us coming on the scene really focused on the college kids. What we quickly concluded was that's an important audience. We definitely bring shows for the young college audience. But the reality of that audience is that it's a very transient audience. It's a young audience and it has limited financial means.

What we have really gravitated a lot of our shows towards is that really 30-to-70 year old audience, which is a big range, and there's a lot of genres in that. We've found that they live and stay in western Montana. They have a little bit more disposable income.

There are a lot of different genres within those groups that we can diversify, so we don't burn out or exhaust one of the concert-going crowds. Things like Bob Weir and this summer, Blondie, and Béla Fleck. If you look at our lineup this summer, it ranges from very young-oriented audiences, like Greensky Bluegrass, to audiences that wanted to go see Blondie and Béla Fleck and Alice Cooper.

In the 19 shows we did there, we pretty much covered every genre. Maybe except for hip hop, which is something we want to definitely still bring more of to the community. But our objective is to be across almost every genre, and across a fairly big age demographic.

MP: At present how many people does Logjam Presents employ?

NC: We're a little bit of a seasonal company. In the summer at the height, we employed about 208 employees. A lot of those obviously are part-time. That's the whole conglomerate of the organization. So you have Logjam Presents, which is our promotional company and it promotes shows at all our venues, plus once in a while does shows at other venues. That organization has 13 full-time employees, and then about 150 part-time employees. That includes stagehands, event staff, extra bartenders at the KettleHouse, that kind of thing.

MP: Where do you get the majority of your employees?

NC: All Missoula, all Montana. Almost our entire full-time office staff that works for the promotion company Logjam Presents is out of the University [of Montana] entertainment management program.

MP: Are you a Montana resident?

NC: I am for sure. I live in Missoula, I have three kids in public schools and my wife's from Great Falls.

MP: Do you get to go and enjoy some shows and their fruit of your labors?

NC: I probably go to 95 percent of the shows we do. So I probably go to over 250 shows a year. It's still business at the shows if I go but I enjoy the music. Just, I'm working, so it's not a party for me. It's a job.

MP: How has Logjam Presents become integrated in the Missoula community since you bought The Top Hat back in 2011?

NC: I think it's an important part of what our mission is as a business and who we are as a business that we donate quite a bit of our net profits back into Missoula. So this year alone, we're donating, because of the KettleHouse Amphitheater, we're able to donate \$105,000 to Trout Unlimited in a restricted fund that can only be used for the preservation and conservation of the Blackfoot River.

We're donating a half a million dollars to the Zootown Arts Community Center for their new facility downtown. We've already made that donation and they've purchased the building that they're currently designing. We donated \$50,000 to Spark, which is a Kennedy Center initiative for bringing arts back into the public school system.

We'll end up donating almost \$750,000 this year back to Missoula with a focus on arts programs, particularly around arts and youth, which is the Spark and the ZACC donations, and then a smaller portion, but still an important portion, around the livability in the community and the environmental aspects of Missoula.

MP: Can you give me a sense of where you see Logjam in Montana's future cultural landscape?

NC: I'd like to think we're a key part of the cultural landscape. We're bringing a lot of music here, and we don't just do music. We've helped Mark Moss launch and grow "Tell Us Something" to an event. The last one he did at the Wilma sold 850 tickets. So we do those kinds of events. We're in a recently formed partnership with the University of Montana on their presidential lecture series and we brought David Brooks as the first speaker into the Wilma, which was a super cool event.

We sponsor the ballet every year. We sponsor the book festival, the Montana Book Festival, every year. So I think for us, we see ourselves as somebody that is, one, bringing a lot of arts but also trying to financially really just support the arts.

I've been coming to Missoula for 30 years because my wife's sisters all lived here and I've now lived here for almost 10 years. As Missoula changes, I think, and western Montana changes and grows and gets developed, I think one of the key things to keeping the character and the uniqueness of the community is making sure that local arts are supported and that you have a vibrant and strong and successful local arts scene. By doing that, I think you keep the character of the local people that live here and you don't have the fate that some of the resort towns, for instance, in Colorado, have had, where it's just become almost a non-residential hole.

Overall, I think the big message, the big takeaway, is just the support of music that western Montana gives. We wouldn't be here if people didn't support it. ★



WE RECOMMEND...

Send event info to info@montanapress.net

Billings Bozeman Helena Great Falls Missoula & More

We welcome additions and corrections to our monthly calendar. Please send updates to info@montanapress.net.

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 1

"Sweeney Todd," stage musical, running Nov. 1 to 10, *Montana Actor's Theatre*, Havre, 945-0272
Winnie Brave, American songstress, *Murray Bar*, Livingston, 222-9463

Yellowstone Art Museum Bridal Fair, *Billings*, 256-6804

Projectile Comedy, 8 p.m., *The Loft*, Nov. 1, 8 and 15, *Billings*, 259-9074

Straight No Chaser, a cappella group, *Alberta Bair Theater*, *Billings*, 256-6052

"Nana's Naughty Knickers," stage play, running through Nov. 10, *Billings Studio Theatre*, 248-1141
Sister Hazel, alternative rock, *Pub Station*, *Billings*, 894-2020

Backcountry Squatters Story Night, women's outdoor club five-minute format, *Townshend's Teahouse*, 7 p.m., *Bozeman*, 577-2740

Ryan Matzinger, award-winning jazz artist, *Rialto*, *Bozeman*, 877-412-2776

The Dirt Farmers, bluegrass, *Bozeman Hot Springs*, 586-6492

Lazy Suzy, jazz/rock and soul music, *Zebra Lounge*, *Bozeman*, 585-8851

Polyrhythmics with Left on Tenth, funk/soul music, *Filling Station*, *Bozeman*, 587-5009

John Floridis, folk music, *Ten Mile Creek Brewery*, *Helena*, 502-1382

Traditional Irish Seisun, round robin sing along, 5 p.m., *Celtic Cowboy*, *Great Falls*, 952-0393

The Thrillbillies, country/rock, *The Sting*, *Great Falls*, 727-7972

Roger Dunsmore, poet, reading and book signing, *Fact and Fiction*, *Missoula*, 721-2881

Homegrown Open Mic Comedy, *Union Club*, *Missoula*, 728-7980

"Sister Act," *Missoula Community Theatre*, stage musical runs from Oct. 25 to Nov. 4, *Missoula*, 728-7529

Martha Scanlan and Jon Neufeld record release show, *Americana*, *Top Hat Lounge*, *Missoula*, 728-9865

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 2

Tom Catmull, Americana, *Chico Saloon*, Livingston, 333-4933

Montana Manouche, gypsy jazz, *Uncorked*, Livingston, 222-5418

Solidarity Service, reggae/funk, *Murray Bar*, Livingston, 222-9463

Magic City Music Awards Show, best band winners, *Pub Station*, *Billings*, 894-2020

Bridger Ski Foundation Annual Ski Swap, drop off 10 a.m. to 7 p.m., *Gallatin Fairgrounds*, *Bozeman*, 582-3270

Claudia Williams, lead singer of Montana Rose, *Kountry Korner Cafe*, *Four Corners*, 586-2281

"More than Bruises: Stories of Abuse and Healing," running weekends Nov. 2 to 10, *Verge Theatre*, *Bozeman*, 587-0737

Them Coulee Boys and The Two Tracks, bluegrass/Americana, *Filling Station*, *Bozeman*, 603-969-3548

The Waiting, Tom Petty tribute band, *Rialto*, *Bozeman*, 817-412-2776

Fall Art Walk, *Helena* Chamber of Commerce, 442-4120

Fifth Annual Last Chance New Play Fest, ten-day festival featuring new work by Montana writers from November 2 to 11 with weekday performances and weekend matinees, *Free Ceramics*, *Helena*, 438-6212

Jeff Christiansen, acoustic guitar, *The Sting*, *Great Falls*, 727-7972

Harvest Howl with Sawyer Brown and Sister Hazel, country music and beer garden, *Montana ExpoPark*, *Great Falls*, 781-7343

"All In" and "Hoji", ski film screening double feature, *The Wilma*, *Missoula*, 728-2521

An Evening with Teddy Roosevelt Comes Alive, 6 p.m., *Hilton Garden Inn*, *Missoula*, 541-6374

Celebrate Piano Series, Peter Takios, *University of Montana Recital Hall*, *Missoula*

Josh Farmer Band, jazz/funk and rock/soul, *Top Hat Lounge*, *Missoula*, 728-9865

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 3

Tom Catmull, Americana, *Chico Saloon*, Livingston, 333-4933

Way Station, blues/rock, *Murray Bar*, Livingston, 222-9463

Big Timber Christmas Bazaar, 9 a.m., *Big Timber Civic Center*, 930-0320

"The Mikado (Sort of)," stage musical, running weekends Nov. 3 to Nov. 11, *NOVA Center*, *Billings*, 591-9535

Pinky and the Floyd, *Pub Station*, *Billings*, 894-2020

Bob Britten, pianist, *Kountry Korner Cafe*, *Four Corners*, 586-2281

Bozeman Winter Farmer's Market, 9 a.m., *Emerson Center Ballroom*, *Bozeman*, 587-9797

Bridger Ski Foundation Annual Ski Swap, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., *Gallatin Fairgrounds*, *Bozeman*, 582-3270

"Flora and Ulysses," Newberry-award winning play, 3 p.m., *Verge Theatre*, *Bozeman*, 587-0737

"Gone with the Wind" screening, 7 p.m., *Ellen Theater*, *Bozeman*, 585-5885

"Canzoni D'Amore," *Great Falls* Symphony, *Mansfield Theater*, 455-8510

Joel Corda, folk music, *Mighty Mo Brewing*, *Great Falls*, 952-0342

Word of Mouth spoken performance hosted by Deb Hicks, *Roxy Theater*, *Missoula*, 728-9380

Mount Jumbo Elk Ramble Trail Run, *Lincoln Hills Soccer Fields*, *Missoula*, 544-7073

Toil and Trouble, classical music concert, 7 p.m., *Dennison Theater*, *UM*, *Missoula*, 721-3194

Of Montreal, neo-psychedelia and 80s inspired dance music, *Top Hat Lounge*, *Missoula*, 728-9865

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 4

Northwest Accordion Jam Session, *Polson Elk's Lodge*, 883-1695

Rittz and King Lil G, *Top Shelf Tour*, hip-hop/rap, *Pub Station*, *Billings*, 894-2020

Bridger Ski Foundation Annual Ski Swap, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., *Gallatin Fairgrounds*, *Bozeman*, 582-3270

"Flora and Ulysses," Newberry-award winning play, 3 p.m., *Verge Theatre*, *Bozeman*, 587-0737

Scottish Folk Ensemble, live music, 5 p.m., *Townshend's Teahouse*, *Bozeman*, 577-2740

Bridger Mountain Big Band, 7 p.m., jazz orchestra, *Eagles Bar*, 587-9996

Swamp Dawg, New Orleans-style funk, *Bozeman Hot Springs*, 586-6492

Johnny Yuma, *Battlestations*, *Green Partridge*, rock music, *Filling Station*, *Bozeman*, 587-5009

Hofbrau Open Mic, 10 p.m., *Bozeman*, 587-4931

MSK Project, *Silver Star Steak Co.*, *Helena*, 495-0677

Traditional Irish Seisun, round robin sing along, 2 p.m., *Celtic Cowboy*, *Great Falls*, 952-0393

Toil and Trouble, classical music concert, 3 p.m., *Dennison Theater*, *UM*, *Missoula*, 721-3194

Night Blooming Jasmine, jazz/blues, *Rumour Restaurant*, *Missoula*, 549-7575

Todd Rundgren, iconic songwriter and performer, *The Wilma*, *Missoula*, 728-2521

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 5

Jarret Kostbra, singer/songwriter, *Murray Bar*, Livingston, 222-9463

Todd Rundgren, iconic performer, *Pub Station*, *Billings*, 894-2020

Improv on the Verge, *The Verge Theatre*, *Bozeman*, 587-0737

"Laura Ingalls Wilder: The making of an American Icon" lecture, and book signing with Caroline Fraser, 5:30 p.m., *Ellen Theater*, *Bozeman*, 994-4247

Hofbrau Open Mic, 10 p.m., *Bozeman*, 587-4931

Suicide Girls, pop-culture burlesque show, 5:30 and 9:30 p.m., *Rialto*, *Bozeman*, 877-412-2776

Open Mic hosted by Gary Kiggins, *Imagine Nation Brewing*, 6 p.m., *Missoula*, 926-1251

BZN Film Rodeo, free screenings from BZN International Film Rodeo and discussions with filmmakers, *Missoula* Public Library, 6:30 p.m., 721-2665

LEFT COAST COUNTRY PLAYS ON ELECTION DAY
NOV. 6 @THE MURRAY BAR IN LIVINGSTON



TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 6

ELECTION DAY

Left Coast County, bluegrass, *Murray Bar*, Livingston, 222-9463

Poetry Open Mic, *This House of Books*, *Billings*, 534-1133

Left for Dead, fiddle and banjo music, 5:30 p.m., *Bozeman Spirits Distillery*, 577-2155

Rich Mayo, Americana music, 6 p.m., *Kountry Korner Cafe*, *Four Corners*, 586-2281

Open Mic, 7 p.m., *Zocalo Coffee House*, *Bozeman*, 404-1036

Free Election Day Childcare, *Missoula Family YMCA*, 7 a.m. to 8 p.m., 721-9622

Charla Bauman and Lawrence Hammond, folk music, *Rumour Restaurant*, *Missoula*, 549-7575

Imagine Ireland, Irish traditional music, *Imagine Nation Brewing*, *Missoula*, 926-1251

Cherub, electronic music, *The Wilma*, *Missoula*, 728-2521

Tauk, progressive rock and hip-hop/jazz, *Top Hat Lounge*, *Missoula*, 728-9865

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 7

Community Potluck: Avalanche Awareness, *Swan Valley Community Hall*, Condon, 6 p.m., 754-3137

Sunny Sweeney, country vocalist, *Pub Station*, *Billings*, 894-2020

"Women, Wake Up!" women in Buddhism lecture, 12 p.m., *MSU Strand Union*, *Bozeman*, 994-4636

Rough Cut Science, "Human Dimension of River Restoration: Clark Fork River" lecture, 12 p.m., 126 Barnard Hall, *MSU*, *Bozeman*, 994-2374

"Hearth" anthology reading and discussion, 6 p.m., *Country Bookshelf*, *Bozeman*, 587-0166

"False Armistices: War's End and Disputed Aftermaths" lecture, 6 p.m., *Museum of the Rockies*, *Bozeman*, 994-2251

Pickin' in the Parks, acoustic string jam, 6:30 p.m., *Story Mansion*, *Bozeman*, 582-2290

Hofbrau Open Mic, 10 p.m., *Bozeman*, 587-4931

Tauk with Exmag, progressive rock and hip-hop/jazz, *Filling Station*, *Bozeman*, 577-2337

Interfaith Forum: Agriculture and Religion, *Montana State University*, *Bozeman*, 994-5801

Cottonwood Club, jazz, *On Broadway*, *Helena*, 443-1929

Open Mic, 9 p.m., *The Do Bar*, *Great Falls*, 727-0388

"Battle of the Bulge — A Montana Perspective," author talk and book reading with John Driscoll and Randall LeCocq, *Missoula Public Library*, 721-2665

Kimberlee Carlson, jazz and swing singer, *Top Hat Lounge*, *Missoula*, 728-9865

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 8

Okaidja Afroso, *Libby Memorial Arts Center*, *Libby*, 293-9643

"Transformations: Three Artists, Three Journeys" fiber and mixed media art exhibit, 5:30 p.m., *Zoot Art Gallery*, *Bozeman*, 586-5050

Lazy Suzy, rock/jazz and soul music, *Zebra Lounge*, *Bozeman*, 585-8851

Kenny Diamond, acoustic guitar, *Bozeman Hot Springs*, 586-6492

Bridger Creek Boys, bluegrass, *Red Tractor Pizza*, *Bozeman*, 599-1399

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 8 (CONT.)

The Jauntee with Something and the Anything, jam music, *Filling Station*, *Bozeman*, 603-969-3548

"Inherit the Wind," stage play by Capital and Helena High Schools, runs November 8 to 10 nightly, *CHS auditorium*, *Helena*, 324-2532

Red Stiletto, jazz, *On Broadway*, *Helena*, 443-1929

Black Market Trust, pop/vocal jazz band, *Mansfield Theater*, *Great Falls*, 455-8510

Traditional Irish Seisun, round robin sing along, 5 p.m., *Celtic Cowboy*, *Great Falls*, 952-0393

The Thrillbillies, country/rock, *The Sting*, *Great Falls*, 727-7972

Wild and Scenic Film Festival, *Roxy Theater*, *Missoula*, 728-9380

Rumpke Mountain Boys, bluegrass music, *Top Hat Lounge*, *Missoula*, 728-9865

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 9

Okaidja Afroso, *Lincoln High School*, *Eureka*, 297-0197

Rob Quist and Great Northern, *Mother Lode Theatre*, *Butte*, 723-3602

Groove Wax, rock/country and blues, *Chico Saloon*, Livingston, 333-4933

Letter B, roots/rock, *Murray Bar*, Livingston, 222-9463

The Waiting, Tom Petty tribute band, *Pub Station*, *Billings*, 894-2020

Agriculture and Political Uncertainty conference, 9:15 a.m., *Procrastinator Theater*, *MSU*, *Bozeman*, 994-3511

Bozeman Bluegrass Festival featuring Peter Rowan, 5 p.m., *Emerson Center*, *Bozeman*, 587-9797

Main Street Speakeasy Whiskey Tasting fundraiser for Thrive, 6 p.m., *classified location*, *Bozeman*, 587-3840

"More than Bruises: Stories of Abuse and Healing," running weekends Nov. 2 to 10, *Verge Theatre*, *Bozeman*, 587-0737

"Grease" the musical, running Nov. 9 to 11, presented by Bozeman High School, 7 p.m., *Willson Auditorium*, *Bozeman*

"Says You" public radio quiz show, 7:30 p.m., *Rialto*, *Bozeman*, 877-412-2776

Claudia Williams, lead singer of Montana Rose, *Kountry Korner Cafe*, *Four Corners*, 586-2281

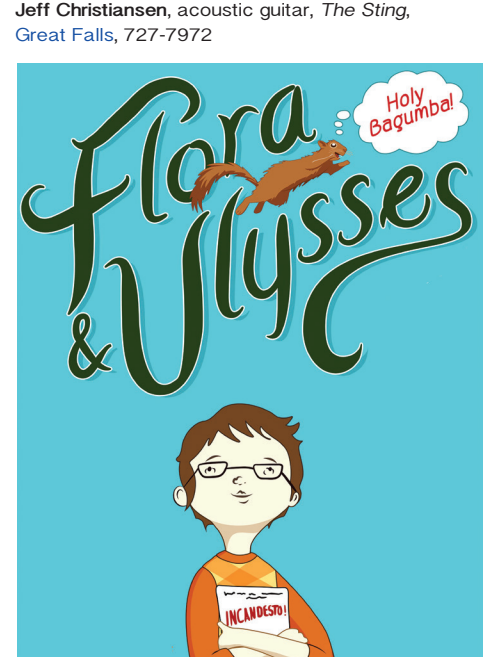
Pink Floyd Laser Spectacular, *Helena Civic Center*, 447-8481

Montana and the Great War Symposium, in observance of the 100th anniversary of Armistice Day, *Montana Historical Society*, 12 p.m., *Helena*, 444-2694

Banff Mountain Film Festival, *Mansfield Center*, *Great Falls*, 455-8510

Jeff Christiansen, acoustic guitar, *The Sting*, *Great Falls*, 727-7972

Jeff Christiansen, acoustic guitar, *The Sting*, *Great Falls*, 727-7972



AWARD-WINNING PLAY "FLORA AND ULYSSES" IS AT THE VERGE THEATRE IN BOZEMAN

WE RECOMMEND...

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 9 (CONT.)

African Children's Choir, *C.M. Russell High School, Great Falls*, 761-3903

6th Annual Mountain Running Film Festival, *The Wilma*, [Missoula](#), 728-2521 "Turn: Where Cirque Illuminates the Mundane," performing arts piece running Nov. 9 to 11, *Zootown Arts*, 7 p.m., [Missoula](#), 282-4005 Mountain Running Film Festival, *The Wilma*, 7:30 p.m., [Missoula](#), 728-2521 Virginia City Brewery Follies "Twistmas in November," *Monk's*, [Missoula](#), 8 p.m., 360-3675 The Mad Hat, Vol. VI, electronica nightclub, *Top Hat Lounge*, [Missoula](#), 728-9865

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 10

Groove Wax, rock/country and blues, *Chico Saloon*, Livingston, 333-4933 Denny and the Resonators, blues music, *Murray Bar*, Livingston, 222-9463

Monsters of Rock, 80s/90s rock and Def Leppard tribute, *Pub Station*, [Billings](#), 894-2020

Bozeman Bluegrass Festival featuring Peter Rowan, 2 p.m., *Emerson Center*, [Bozeman](#), 587-9797 "Flora and Ulysses," Newberry-award winning play, 3 p.m., *Verge Theatre*, [Bozeman](#), 587-0737 Bob Britten, pianist, *Kountry Korner Cafe*, [Four Corners](#), 586-2281

Desert Dwellers, uptempo Djs, *Rialto*, [Bozeman](#), 877-412-2776

Theresa Caputo: Long Island Medium, *Mansfield Center*, [Great Falls](#), 455-8510

Missoula Valley Winter Market, 705 South Higgins, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., [Missoula](#), 396-0593

Ultimate Craft Fair, *University Center Ballroom*, UM, [Missoula](#), 523-5218

"World War I Montana: The Treasure State," by Ken Robinson, book signing, *Fact and Fiction*, [Missoula](#), 721-2881

Cross Country, drag revue, *The Wilma*, [Missoula](#), 728-2521

Gladys Friday: The Farewell Show, *Union Club*, [Missoula](#), 728-7980

BLUEGRASS BAND HOT BUTTERED RUM PLAYS THE TOP HAT LOUNGE IN MISSOULA NOV. 11



SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 11

Okaidja Afroso, *Hobson School*, Hobson, 423-5483 Live and Let Live Vegan Potluck, 10th Annual Thanksgiving, 4:30 p.m., *Park County Senior Center*, Livingston, 222-0321

Josh Moore, acoustic bluegrass, [Bozeman Hot Springs](#), 586-6492 African Children's Choir, 8:30 and 10:30 a.m., *Bozeman United Methodist Church*, [Bozeman](#), 586-5413 "Flora and Ulysses," Newberry-award winning play, 3 p.m., *Verge Theatre*, [Bozeman](#), 587-0737 Bridger Mountain Big Band, 7 p.m., jazz orchestra, *Eagles Bar*, [Bozeman](#), 587-9996

Hofbrau Open Mic, 10 p.m., [Bozeman](#), 587-4931

Lowkey Savs, *Silver Star Steak Co.*, [Helena](#), 495-0677

New Frontiers featuring Chinook Winds, *Mansfield Center*, [Great Falls](#), 455-8510

Banff Centre Mountain Film Festival, *The Wilma*, [Missoula](#), 728-2521

Hot Buttered Rum, bluegrass/Americana, *Top Hat Lounge*, [Missoula](#), 728-9865

Beth Lo and David Horgan, jazz/blues, *Rumour Restaurant*, [Missoula](#), 549-7575

Cindy and the Jeffs, honky tonk music, *Imagine Nation Brewing*, [Missoula](#), 926-1251



BACK ALLEY PUB IN GREAT FALLS HOSTS A PING PONG TOURNEY ON NOV. 14

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 12

Christy Hays, Americana/country, *Murray Bar*, Livingston, 222-9463

William Clark Green, honky tonk/rock, *Pub Station*, [Billings](#), 894-2020

Hofbrau Open Mic, 10 p.m., [Bozeman](#), 587-4931

Open Mic hosted by Gary Kiggins, *Imagine Nation Brewing*, 6 p.m., [Missoula](#), 926-1251

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 13

Tom Susanj, Butte songwriter, *Murray Bar*, Livingston, 222-9463

Coco Montoya, contemporary blues/rock, *Pub Station*, [Billings](#), 894-2020

Rich Mayo, Americana music, 6 p.m., *Kountry Korner Cafe*, [Four Corners](#), 586-2281 Open Mic, 7 p.m., *Zocalo Coffee House*, [Bozeman](#), 404-1036

"String Beans, bluegrass music, *Staggering Ox*, [Helena](#), 6 p.m., 443-1729

Fire: Some Good, More Better" lecture, W. A. Franke College, *University of Montana*, [Missoula](#), 243-5521 Imagine Ireland, Irish traditional music, *Imagine Nation Brewing*, [Missoula](#), 926-1251 Lucero, rock and roll music, *The Wilma*, [Missoula](#), 728-2521

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 14

Stryper, Christian metal band, *Pub Station*, [Billings](#), 894-2020

Rough Cut Science, "Changing Water Resources and Increasing Drought in the Missouri River Basin" lecture, 12 p.m., 126 Barnard Hall, MSU, [Bozeman](#), 994-2374

Pickin' in the Parks, acoustic string jam, 6:30 p.m., *Story Mansion*, [Bozeman](#), 582-2290

Hofbrau Open Mic, 10 p.m., [Bozeman](#), 587-4931

Harlem Globetrotters, *Montana ExpoPark*, [Great Falls](#), 727-8900

Ping Pong Tournament, *Back Alley Pub*, 7 p.m., [Great Falls](#), 590-2633

Within Sight and Separating the Seas, rock/metal music, *Back Alley Pub*, [Great Falls](#), 590-2633

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 15

Chad Okrusch, Butte songwriter, *Murray Bar*, Livingston, 222-9463

"More than Bruises: Stories of Abuse and Healing," 8 p.m., *Shane Center*, Livingston, 587-0737

Devil Makes Three, ragtime/punkified blues, *Pub Station*, [Billings](#), 894-2020

Bridger Creek Boys, bluegrass, *Red Tractor Pizza*, [Bozeman](#), 599-1399

Christy Hays, country music, [Bozeman Hot Springs](#), 586-6492

Lazy Suzy, rock/jazz and soul music, *Zebra Lounge*, [Bozeman](#), 585-8851

"Ties, Rails and Telegraph Wires," book release/ signing, *Montana Historical Society*, [Helena](#), 444-2694 Aaron Williams, *Ten Mile Creek Brewery*, [Helena](#), 502-1382

MSK Project, *On Broadway*, [Helena](#), 443-1929

"Copper King: The Life and Times of W.A. Clark" lecture, 7 p.m., *Montana Museum of Art and Culture*, [Missoula](#), 243-2019

"Untold Story if the National Bison Range," film screening, *The Wilma*, [Missoula](#), 728-2521

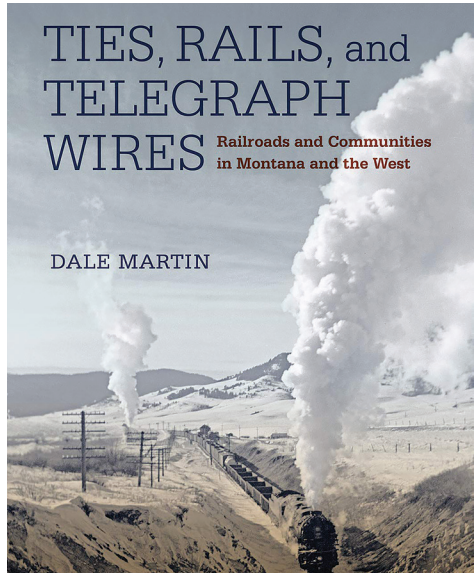
FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 16

Spencer Bohren, *Ronan Performing Arts Center*, Ronan, 676-2427 "More than Bruises: Stories of Abuse and Healing," 8 p.m., *Shane Center*, Livingston, 587-0737 The Max, classic rock, *Chico Saloon*, Livingston, 333-4933 Reckless Abandon, blues, *Murray Bar*, Livingston, 222-9463

Stabbing Westward, industrial rock, *Pub Station*, [Billings](#), 894-2020

"Emma: A Pop Musical," running Nov. 16 and 17, *Verge Theatre*, [Bozeman](#), 587-0737 Claudia Williams, lead singer of Montana Rose, *Kountry Korner Cafe*, [Four Corners](#), 586-2281

The Devil Makes Three, ragtime/punkified blues and bluegrass, *Wilma Theater*, [Missoula](#), 728-2521 Jeffrey Foucault, blues/country and rock/folk, *Top Hat Lounge*, [Missoula](#), 728-9865



DALE MARTIN SIGNS COPIES OF HIS NEW BOOK ABOUT THE RAILROAD AND THE WEST AT THE MONTANA HISTORICAL SOCIETY ON NOV. 15

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 17

24 Hour Play Fest, through Nov. 18, *Montana Actor's Theatre*, Havre, 945-0272

Holiday Christmas Bazaar, *Boulder*, 465-2106

Okaidja Afroso, *Rex Theater*, Thompson Falls, 827-4720

"More than Bruises: Stories of Abuse and Healing," 8 p.m., *Shane Center*, Livingston, 587-0737

The Jauntee, improv rock, *Murray Bar*, Livingston, 222-9463

The Max, classic rock, *Chico Saloon*, Livingston, 333-4933

Harlem Globetrotters, *Rimrock Arena*, MetraPark, [Billings](#), 800-366-8538

High Teas with Clara and many other characters from The Nutcracker, *Baxter Ballroom*, [Bozeman](#), 582-8702 Bozeman Winter Farmer's Market, 9 a.m., *Emerson Center Ballroom*, [Bozeman](#), 587-9797

Funksgiving 6, 70s costume/dance party, *Rialto*, [Bozeman](#), 817-412-2776

The Salamanders with The Arsenal and Mad Pattern, rock and country music, *Filling Station*, [Bozeman](#), 587-5009

Breaking Benjamin and Five Finger Death, *Brick Breeden Fieldhouse*, [Bozeman](#), 994-2287

"Mama Mia" sing-along, *Ellen Theater*, [Bozeman](#), 585-5885

Bob Britten, pianist, *Kountry Korner Cafe*, [Four Corners](#), 586-2281



MISSOULA AND BOZEMAN BOTH HAVE WINTER MARKETS ON SELECT SATURDAYS IN NOVEMBER



OKAIDJA AFROSO PERFORMS IN LIBBY, THOMPSON FALLS, AND SMALL VENUES ACROSS THE STATE

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 17 (CONT.)

The Nutcracker, *Queen City Ballet Company*, [Helena](#) Civic Center, 447-8481

The UpRoots, island music, *Loading Zone*, [Great Falls](#), 727-5777

Missoula Valley Winter Market, 705 South Higgins, [Missoula](#), 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., 396-0593

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 18

Mannheim Steamroller Christmas, *Rimrock Arena*, [Billings](#), 800-366-8538

Devil Makes Three, *Pub Station*, [Billings](#), 894-2020

Dan Henry, folk music, [Bozeman Hot Springs](#), 586-6492 Bridger Mountain Big Band, 7 p.m., jazz orchestra, *Eagles Bar*, [Bozeman](#), 587-9996

Hofbrau Open Mic, 10 p.m., [Bozeman](#), 587-4931

The Nutcracker, *Queen City Ballet Company*, [Helena](#) Civic Center, 447-8481

Justin Case Band, *Silver Star Steak Co.*, [Helena](#), 495-0677

Moscow Ballet Nutcracker, *Mansfield Center*, [Great Falls](#), 455-8510

Tom Catmull, folk music, *Rumour Restaurant*, [Missoula](#), 549-7575

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 19

Cashore Marionettes, "Life in Motion," *Fergus Center for Performing Arts*, Lewistown, 535-8278 Foxy Blues, soul music, *Murray Bar*, Livingston, 222-9463

Improv on the Verge, *Verge Theatre*, [Bozeman](#), 587-0737

Hofbrau Open Mic, 10 p.m., [Bozeman](#), 587-4931

Open Mic at the *Lewis and Clark Taproom*, 6 to 8 p.m., [Helena](#), 442-5960

Open Mic hosted by Gary Kiggins, *Imagine Nation Brewing*, 6 p.m., [Missoula](#), 926-1251

SoMo, rhythm and blues singer, *Top Hat Lounge*, [Missoula](#), 728-9865

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 20

Jessica Eve, singer/songwriter, *Murray Bar*, Livingston, 222-9463

Montana Science Olympiad, *Montana State University*, [Bozeman](#), 994-7476

Open Mic, 7 p.m., *Zocalo Coffee House*, [Bozeman](#), 404-1036

String Beans, bluegrass music, *Staggering Ox*, [Helena](#), 6 p.m., 443-1729

"Finding Neverland" Broadway in Great Falls, *Mansfield Theatre*, [Great Falls](#), 455-8510

Open Mic, *Union Club*, [Missoula](#), 728-7980 Imagine Ireland, Irish traditional music, *Imagine Nation Brewing*, [Missoula](#), 926-1251

John Floridis, folk music, *Rumour Restaurant*, [Missoula](#), 549-7575

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 21

Satsang Acoustic Duo, food drive for Billings Food Bank, *Pub Station*, [Billings](#), 894-2020

Pickin' in the Parks, acoustic string jam, 6:30 p.m., *Story Mansion*, [Bozeman](#), 582-2290

Ken Nelson and Friends, *On Broadway*, [Helena](#), 443-1929

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 22

THANKSGIVING DAY Projectile Comedy, 8 p.m., *The Loft*, [Billings](#), 259-9074

Huffing for Stuffing Run, *Museum of the Rockies*, [Bozeman](#), huffingforstuffing.com

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 22 (CONT.)

Burn the Bird 5k/10k, [Great Falls](#), info@racemt.com

Run Wild Missoula Turkey Day 8k and 3K,
McCormick Park, [Missoula](#), 9:30 a.m., 544-7073

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 23

Crazy Mountain Christmas, 10 a.m., *American Legion*, Big Timber, 932-6461
Under the Bleachers, rock and roll, *Chico Saloon*, Livingston, 333-4933

Autumn Weekender Craft Show, Nov. 23 to 25, *Al Bedoo Shrine*, [Billings](#), 545-9711
The Nutcracker, Billings Symphony Orchestra and San Diego Ballet, 2 p.m. and 7 p.m., *Alberta Bair Theater*, [Billings](#), 256-3610
Hubba Hubba, original funk/disco, *Pub Station*, [Billings](#), 894-2020

Claudia Williams, lead singer of Montana Rose, *Kountry Korner Cafe*, [Four Corners](#), 586-2281

"White Christmas," screening on selected dates in November, *University of Montana Theater*, [Missoula](#), 243-4581

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 24

Under the Bleachers, rock and roll, *Chico Saloon*, Livingston, 333-4933
Cimarron Band, country rock, *Murray Bar*, Livingston, 222-9463
Sixth Annual Cow Country Stampede, run/walk, Melville, 537-4422

The Nutcracker, Billings Symphony Orchestra and San Diego Ballet, 2 p.m., *Alberta Bair Theater*, [Billings](#), 256-3610
Cold Hard Cash, *Pub Station*, [Billings](#), 894-2020

Bob Britten, pianist, *Kountry Korner Cafe*, [Four Corners](#), 586-2281

Parade of Lights, [Great Falls](#), 453-6151
50 Watt Sun, grunge rock, *Loading Zone*, [Great Falls](#), 727-5777

Missoula Valley Winter Market, 705 South Higgins, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., [Missoula](#), 396-0593

Magpies, local indie rock music, *Top Hat Lounge*, [Missoula](#), 830-4640

BILLINGS, BOZEMAN, GREAT FALLS AND HELENA ALL OFFER PERFORMANCES OF THE HOLIDAY CLASSIC "THE NUTCRACKER" THIS NOVEMBER



SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 25

Autumn Weekender Festival, *Shrine Auditorium*, [Billings](#), 259-4384
Bridger Mountain Big Band, 7 p.m., jazz orchestra, *Eagles Bar*, [Bozeman](#), 587-9996
Yin and Tonic, jazz, [Bozeman Hot Springs](#), 586-6492
Hofbrau Open Mic, 10 p.m., [Bozeman](#), 587-4931
Dan Henry, folk music, *Silver Star Steak Co.*, [Helena](#), 495-0677
The Absent Wilson Conspiracy, jazz, *Rumour Restaurant*, [Missoula](#), 549-7575

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 26

Cirque Musica Holiday Wonderland, *Brick Breeden Fieldhouse*, Montana State University, [Bozeman](#), 994-2287
Hofbrau Open Mic, 10 p.m., [Bozeman](#), 587-4931
Open Mic, *Lewis and Clark Taproom*, [Helena](#), 442-5960
Open Mic hosted by Gary Kiggins, *Imagine Nation Brewing*, 6 p.m., [Missoula](#), 926-1251

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 27

"Finding Neverland" Broadway in Butte, *Mother Lode Theatre*, Butte, 723-3602
Cirque Musica Holiday Wonderland performance, *Rimrock Arena*, *MetraPark*, [Billings](#), 800-366-8538
Open Mic, 7 p.m., *Zocalo Coffee House*, [Bozeman](#), 404-1036

VOCAL LEGEND NEKO CASE PERFORMS AT THE WILMA IN MISSOULA ON NOV. 27



TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 27

Neko Case, pop-tinged rock and country-centric singer, *The Wilma*, [Missoula](#), 728-2521
"Social Resistance to Wildfire" Lecture, W.A. Franke College, *University of Montana*, [Missoula](#), 243-5521

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 28

Funky Bunch Improv, *NOVA Center*, [Billings](#), 591-9535
"Yellowstone Grizzly Bears: 45 Years of Scientific Discovery" lecture by Dr. Frank van Manen, 7 p.m., *Museum of the Rockies*, [Bozeman](#), 994-2251
Pickin' in the Parks, acoustic string jam, 6:30 p.m., *Story Mansion*, [Bozeman](#), 582-2290
Hofbrau Open Mic, 10 p.m., [Bozeman](#), 587-4931
Charlie Parr and Willie Watson, folk/blues music, *Top Hat Lounge*, [Missoula](#), 728-9865

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 29

Edis, folk/blues music, [Bozeman Hot Springs](#), 586-6492
Bridger Creek Boys, bluegrass, *Red Tractor Pizza*, [Bozeman](#), 599-1399
Lazy Suzy, rock/jazz and soul music, *Zebra Lounge*, [Bozeman](#), 585-8851
Aaron Williams, folk/funk guitar, *Snow Hop Brewery*, [Helena](#), 442-5026
Clint Reimann, *Ten Mile Creek Brewery*, [Helena](#), 502-1382

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 30

"It's a Wonderful Life" live theatre, *Cutler Brothers Theatre*, Deer Lodge, 846-4096
Ten Years Gone, Led Zeppelin tribute, *Chico Saloon*, Livingston, 333-4933
"Elf: The Musical," running Nov. 30 to Dec. 22, [Billings](#) Studio Theatre, 248-1141
DumpWeed (local tribute to Blink 182), *Pub Station*, [Billings](#), 894-2020
Montana Ballet Company 25th Anniversary Nutcracker, *Willson Hall*, [Bozeman](#), 582-8702
Demon Assassin, hip-hop/rap, *Back Alley Pub*, 7 p.m., [Great Falls](#), 590-2633
Kitchen Dwellers, bluegrass, *Top Hat Lounge*, [Missoula](#), 728-9865

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 1

Ten Years Gone, Led Zeppelin tribute, *Chico Saloon*, Livingston, 333-4933
Montana Ballet Company 25th Anniversary Nutcracker, *Willson Hall*, [Bozeman](#), 582-8702
Holiday Pops, classical music concert, *Dennison Theater*, UM, 7:30 p.m., [Missoula](#), 243-6880
Missoula Valley Winter Market, 705 South Higgins, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., 396-0593
Dirtwire, beats/blues and Americana, *Top Hat Lounge*, [Missoula](#), 728-9865

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 2

Bridger Mountain Big Band, 7 p.m., jazz orchestra, *Eagles Bar*, [Bozeman](#), 587-9996
Hofbrau Open Mic, 10 p.m., [Bozeman](#), 587-4931
Holiday Pops, classical music concert, *Dennison Theater*, UM, 2 p.m. and 6:30 p.m., [Missoula](#), 243-6880

MONDAY, DECEMBER 3

"Idaho's Silver Valley and the Promise and Perils of Industrial Modernity" lecture and book signing with Brad Snow, 5:30 p.m., *Museum of the Rockies*, [Bozeman](#), 994-4247 ★

END NOTES



MEMPHIS ROCKERS LUCERO HEADED TO MISSOULA

Montana Press spoke with Ben Nichols, lead songwriter and front man for the Memphis-based rock band Lucero on October 15. The band will descend on Missoula Tuesday, November 13 to play at the Top Hat. A quintessential rock and roll road band that's been touring for over 20 years, Lucero is making one of their many return trips to Montana.

Montana Press: How have you evolved to the point you are now in your music over the last 20 years?

Ben Nichols: Yeah, 20 years. It's been a long time. I think you can hear a maturity in the songwriting now that maybe wasn't there before. I definitely tried to focus on the craft, the songwriting more with this record instead of just being raw emotion on the page. I was more interested in telling short stories and maybe involving narrators that aren't myself. It was something I was definitely focused on for this album. I think the songwriting's grown a little bit over the years or at least I'm trying to go that direction.

Right now, with this record, *Among the Ghosts*, we've stripped it back down to a five piece [band]. We used to have a horn section for a long time and a pedal steel player and, at one point, there were nine people on stage. And now we're back down to a five piece, but it's a pretty tight five piece band. So it's a very streamlined kind of rock and roll sound to go with the hopefully more mature songwriting. It packs a punch.

MP: Tell me a little bit about your touring schedule right now. Where have you been and where are you headed?

Nichols: We just got home to Memphis. I literally just stepped off the bus. The guys are still unloading gear. It was a good first half of the run. We've been out for the last three and a half weeks or so. We've been up East, some Midwest and Northeast and Southeast. We leave the day after Halloween and head out West through Texas and California to Seattle. And then come back down through Montana and all that. So that's when we hit you all. We did about almost a month on the eastern half of the country and now in November up until Thanksgiving, we'll do the western half.

MP: Talk about the Memphis sound a little. Memphis has traditionally been an urban center surrounded by rural communities so rock and roll and country can be kind of the same there. Do you guys consider yourselves musical ambassadors for that sound?

Nichols: Well, yeah. I mean, I love being a rock and roll band from Memphis. It's really cool. There's no better place to be from. You kind of soak up the history, you know? You can't help but soak up all the history. A whole lot of my heroes, rock and roll heroes, are from here. Actually the building that we're unloading into is actually two doors down from Sam Phillips Studio and a couple blocks from Sun Studios. So we're just right in the middle of it. It's really just kind of an honor to be part of Memphis music history. We've been doing it long enough now to where at least being a footnote in that history is pretty cool. It feels good to have participated because, yeah, a whole lot of heavy hitters are from this area. Just being part of the game has been rewarding for us.

MP: What can fans expect in Missoula? What can they look forward to at the upcoming show?

Nichols: Well, we'll do nine out of the ten new songs off the *Among the Ghosts* record. We've been doing about 25 songs a night so that leaves plenty of room for old songs and classic songs that folks want to hear. We'll dig up a couple of deep cuts, maybe, that we haven't played in a number of years and polish those off and throw those into the mix as well. So, yeah, old and new. You'll hear stuff from the whole catalog. But you'll definitely hear almost all of the new album.

MP: Do you have any particular memories from shows in Montana in the past?

Nichols: I remember the Top Hat always being really fun. Everybody was really friendly to us. It's a very welcoming place. And they like the rock and roll so it makes for a good crowd. I might have drank too much last time I was there, but other than that, it all went perfectly.

MP: What's next from Lucero?

Nichols: Right now we're just on the road. Although my brother, Jeff Nichols, he's a filmmaker who made *Mud* and *Take Shelter* and *Loving* and *Midnight Special*. He was nice enough to come down with an actor named Michael Shannon and a few other great actors and they made this video for one of the new songs called *Long Way Back Home*. You can watch it on YouTube. If you type in Long Way Back Home video you can find it pretty easily. It's the quality of more of a short film. It's about eight minutes long, and he wrote the script for it and directed it. Just the quality of it is amazing. It doesn't look like most music videos. It's worth checking out. Otherwise, we'll see you in Montana. ★

MONTANA STORIES

NORTH FORK FIRESTORM

The big fire took off near the end of a hot summer when the woods were tinder dry. I was working as the editor of a weekly newspaper in northwest Montana, a small paper with a large footprint. We had a circulation larger than the local daily but the staff was tiny. We had a reporter, photographer, typesetter, two ad salesmen, a printer and his devil, and me.

I got a short salary based on a 40-hour week and never worked less than 60. So did everyone else. It was a source of pride to us that we consistently beat the daily to the good stories with a skeleton staff, week after week. My job was a very educational and humbling experience. In addition to normal writing, editing and layout functions, I learned how to run the printing press, how to put newspapers in the coin-operated machines chained to the front of grocery stores and how to sell ads if someone got sick, or got sick of his job and quit.

Earlier in the year I got lucky and managed to hire an excellent young photographer fresh from college graduation. Jeff had a towering natural talent along with unlimited energy and enthusiasm. He was also three-quarters crazy. He rode fast motorcycles and chased girls either too young or too old for him. Still, he was a good fit for the job.

By August, large fires were burning in this corner of Montana. fires too isolated to get much coverage on the six o'clock news which was dominated that year by the spectacular fires in Yellowstone. A thunderstorm moved south from Canada one night and lit up the isolated North Fork Valley. About five miles south of the Canadian line, lightning started a quick-burning fire on Federal land on a densely wooded plateau. Because it was tinder dry, the wind so strong and the area so remote, the fire got a two-day head start before anyone knew it was burning.

The North Fork of the Flathead river separates National Forest land to the west from Glacier National Park to the east. This area is completely wild, untamed, un-dammed and unpolluted. No motorized boats are allowed, no cabins or houses within a mile of the riverbank — either riverbank, and only limited fishing. The road that meanders through this country is the back door to Glacier park and serves as a remote border crossing to Canada used by smugglers of all kinds since before Prohibition. It's about 90 miles of bumpy, dusty or muddy, rutted washboard gravel, easily qualifying as one of the five worst roads in North America. County government has made periodic attempts to pave the road, but the paving plans are always stopped short by the opposition of residents who cherish the isolation.

Access to the park from the valley is controlled by a couple of seasonal employees who have a little log cabin on the park side of the river. At this spot, a single-lane bridge built of huge wooden poles spans the river. At the west end of the bridge is a small outpost consisting mostly of a general store, the Polebridge Mercantile, which the only sign of commercial civilization in the thousand square-mile valley.

By the time the Forest Service in the remote North Fork valley realized it had a problem on its hands, the isolated fire had burned over 5,000 acres, at least that was the estimate from the pilot of the scout plane. Considering its re-

mote location, the Forest Service decided to mount a minimal effort to stop the fire. There were only a few small ramshackle cabins without power or running water between the fire and the river.

As editor for the paper, I interviewed the forest supervisor before we chased the fire. Supervisors are like colonels in war zones. They wield godlike authority. Ed, the supervisor, puffed up with his own power, said the river would stop the fire. He stated it more as an order than a prediction. He was to pay for his arrogance in the face of fire and wind.

I left town with young Jeff the photographer in tow and drove the 60 miles to the end of the pavement before starting up the endless gravel nightmare of North Fork Road. By the time we got to Polebridge, it was nearing sunset. Sane men would have turned around and gone home but we knew if we went back now we would only have to drive up the god-awful road again the next day. We bought supplies at the Mercantile from the few remaining items on their shelves and then continued north.

We got five miles up the road when we were stopped by a Forest Service roadblock. Jeff and I showed our Press passes. The grizzled old-timer leaning on the green forest service truck was less than impressed. He told us this roadblock was as far north as we were going. Period.

He said the wind had come up and the fire was making a run southwest, directly toward the roadblock.

I stood around and talked to the guy, telling myself I was gathering background for the story I had to write but knowing I was actually postponing another drive on the crappy road. Jeff was going nuts from frustration at being stopped short of the fire. Young and talented, yes. Patient, no. He wanted pictures of burning trees and towering flames.

I'd been listening to the grizzled old-timer for a few minutes when his radio started crackling and squawking with voices. We listened to the verbal chaos punctuated with words about falling back and getting out of the way. After a few minutes of panic-stricken radio chatter, a truck came barreling down the road from the north, not slowing down at the roadblock. Another truck followed. Then a couple of pickups. Then came fire trucks, pumper trucks and more pickups, all beating it south with sirens wailing and driven by wide-eyed men hunched over their steering wheels. From their expressions, I expected the hounds of hell to appear only a step or two behind.

Between speeding trucks, I asked the grizzled old man what he intended to do. He thought for a moment, then said he was heading out. We should too, he said.

I asked him where he was going.

"Don't know for sure," he said as he started his truck, "South."

I made a multi-point turn on the narrow road and followed the dust of the Forest Service trucks.

Jeff was now approaching total insanity from frustration. He wanted me to turn around and drive farther north, toward the fire. Now that the guard was gone he saw an open road to his photographic immortality. Not me. I figured if the hardened firefighters and grizzled old timers were running for their lives, it might

be a good time to follow them.

I calmed Jeff down by lying to him. I told him we were going to find a high spot up on a ridge where we could watch the fire and get some night shots. A convenient lie when told that would prove to be true. Hearing my plan, Jeff calmed down, temporarily.

As we drove past Polebridge Mercantile we saw people giving over to their herd instincts and stampeding away from the threat of the flames. We followed the stampede a mile or so down the road where a second Forest Service truck was parked in a semi-serious roadblock position. Another grizzled old-timer stopped us. The Forest Service seems to have a large supply of grizzled old-timers. Perhaps they run ads, "Wanted — grizzled old-timers to stand around at roadblocks."

I pulled up next to him and leaned out the window.

Before I could say a word, he said, "You gotta get out of the valley, the fire's making a run this direction."

I knew that already.

I told him about our news mission. I told him about the crazed photographer in the passenger seat. I showed him our press passes. He gave me the grizzled old-timer sneer. "You gotta keep going down this road and get out of here. As quick as you can. Only Forest Service personnel are allowed to stay in the area."

I shrugged and then put the truck into gear and drove down the dusty road. Jeff picked this moment to come unhinged. He began ranting about the pictures he needed to stay and take. Then he began raving about the loss of his career and the student loans I was keeping him from paying off, the fame I was denying him. I slammed on the brakes just in time to keep him from jumping out the door he had already forced open.

I told him we weren't really leaving and to calm down. I started driving slowly again as I held onto his collar to keep him in the truck. I threatened to pull over and thrash him if he didn't calm down. I was looking for a side road as I steered with one hand, holding onto the maniac photographer's shirt with the other. We needed a road to take us up high and away from the path of the fire. I spotted a likely looking road a mile or so along. I pulled on the road then stopped and grabbed the map. I found the road on the map and it appeared to go west and up a steep ridge, stopping at timberline.

Perfect, I thought. Up and away from the fire, way up high into the rocks. My reasoning in choosing this strategy was simple, rocks don't burn, so fires don't burn above timberline. No trees. No fuel. As we drove up the road, it became a barely discernable double-track trail through the woods. The flaws in my plan became clear. If my idea did not work, or if the wind changed and if the fire came this way, we could never retreat back down to the main road. We would be cut off from any escape.

As I drove to what might be my doom, I formed a kind of idiotic, desperate plan to work the truck over the top of the ridge and

down the other side and bushwhack the truck over the rocks. I knew it was a stupid idea born of a terrible mixture of fatigue, fear and adrenalin. But it was the only plan I could muster on short notice. Instead of turning around as any sane man would have done, I kept driving up the deadly road with the lunatic photographer ranting at my side.

He was getting more excited by the minute. I thought I would have to grab him by the neck and shake him again but when we broke out of the trees at the top of a high ridge, the view of the fire to the north and the huge mountains of Glacier Park across the river in the dusk was breathtaking. The sunset was turning turn blood red and the snow on the mountaintops and everything else for miles around was crimson. I began to believe my idiotic plan might work. If we didn't burn to death, we would have a terrific view of the fire.

I got out and found a rock with a view while Jeff ran around from spot to spot talking to himself, laughing, looking for the perfect angle for his pictures of the fire. He said he was thinking about climbing farther up the ridge to an outcrop a couple of hundred feet above us, farther to the west. I told him if the fire turned and I had to make a run for

it, I would leave him to barbecue in the flames.

Finally, when he began to settle down, he asked how long we were going to stay. I told him we were probably stranded until morning, if we lived through the night. I ate some of the food we had gotten at the Merc and then settled down to wait.

Sometime after midnight Jeff woke me up by jumping into the bed of the pickup. My first thought was that I had awakened in hell. There was a huge column of fire to the north. It took me a few moments to figure out what I was seeing. Like a sun, a column of fire lit the entire valley and the mountain ranges. It towered above the mountains on both sides of the river. It looked like an enormous, slow motion tornado of fire weaving through the valley, moving southeast. Reports from experts a few weeks later said the firestorm at its peak was close to a mile wide. We watched as the winds sucked in what appeared to be small trees at their bases and spit them flaming upward. I would discover later what looked like small trees were actually mature trees over 100 feet tall and several feet in diameter. I heard popping and cracking sounds as the fire moved. The pops and cracks were the sounds of the huge trees exploding from the tremendous heat of the fire.

Occasionally I would hear Jeff's camera shutter snap. He wasn't talking. The wind was still blowing southeast, which theoretically would take the fire across the valley several miles north of us.

I asked Jeff which direction the fire appeared to be moving. He watched the fire for a while through a long lens, then moved it back and forth across the front of the fire, trying to judge its movement in the dark. It was tricky. There was the blast furnace of the firestorm and there was the contrast of the complete darkness in the rest of the forest. The moon and stars were hidden by the smoke.

He said the fire was moving east, almost

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"I can see the reflection of the flames on the river," Jeff said.

He said the forest on the far bank of the river, inside the park, was already in flames. Some of the trees thrown to the sky by the firestorm had sailed over the river. In spite of direct orders from the supervisor, the river did not stop the fire.

I felt sick. I knew what was coming next. There was no stopping the fire now. It would run through the park until it hit the rocks and ice at the top of the peaks clear up on the Continental Divide.

Staring at the roiling, towering column of flames I realized the fire was alive. It was breathing like an exhausted animal. Sometimes it exploded like a blast furnace burning off slag from steel. When the fire slowed for a few minutes, the roar would fade away. After a short time, another blast would make the fire roar again. The conflagration became a huge breathing beast set on devouring everything combustible it could reach. A fire-breathing monster, it would take a bite of timber, sit back for a minute, chew it up, spit huge burning trees into the air, and then reach out and bite off another chunk of forest.

The firestorm continued until dawn and we used the early daylight to sneak away with our skins intact. Our escape the next day was easy. The fire left only smoldering ruin in its wake on our side of the river. We looked up the valley towards Canada to see huge sections, square miles and whole drainages smoking like a devastated war zone. We could see nothing of the bridge or the ranger station, but the store was still standing.

As we drove we saw glades near springs the fire spared and places where it left green meadows and ponds untouched. Charred logs swept downstream by the river caught on the remaining bridge pilings like a charcoal beaver dam. Jeff shot photos of walking wounded residents and charred forest, a sober expression now straight on his face.

A forest fire does not burn absolutely everything in its path. It jumps around wildly, sometimes leaving trees standing on a hilltop or burning the ridges to bare rock and leaving the valley bottoms untouched. Sometimes the caprice of wind and fire burn the valley bottoms and leave the ridge tops untouched. It's impossible to completely understand anything as wild and unpredictable as fire. Scientists try. They will theorize and model fire behavior in their laboratories as long as there are research grants.

The drive down the long, dusty gravel road was surreal. There were truckloads of men heading north towards the fire to extinguish anything still burning. There were only a few of us heading out of the valley, out of harm's way. We drove back up to the fire a few days later, during the mop-up operation. Across the river, the fire was still working its way up the steep slopes in the park. Jeff got some good pictures of the skeletal remains of the bridge

and the ranger station. He took pictures of the burned-out hulks of trucks and bulldozers.

There was smoking devastation everywhere. It was the battlefield the day after the battle with only walking wounded on the blackened ground. The residents I tried to interview were incoherent or reduced to monosyllables. The grizzled old-timers had strict orders not to talk to the press. The almighty supervisor was on his way to being transferred to a think-tank rest home for broken down forest supervisors somewhere out in Pennsylvania. Turns out he had no authority over a fire.

Jeff won many awards with the photos he took on that long, explosive night and the days that followed. His talent and enthusiasm soon got him a job at a large metro daily newspaper out on the Coast. I heard he calmed down a bit and was never again so quick to jump out of a truck to get a photo. I wrote stories about the fire full of facts and figures with graphs of acres burned and frequency of fires in the Northern Rockies ecosystem. I had quotes from fire science ecologists, Park Service personnel, Forest Service personnel, community leaders and U.S. Senators but I wrote no descriptions of the living, breathing beast I saw that night. I was not even sure what I saw until someone I interviewed explained the phenomenon. He told me it was a firestorm.

"You know, like the firebombing of Dresden and London during World War II?" he said.

I drove up the terrible gravel road last summer. The wooden pole bridge was replaced with an elegantly engineered pre-fab steel structure. The mercantile company sported a fresh "For Sale" sign. Someone bought the land near the main road and has turned it into a subdivision of five-acre parcels. The fresh, dense undergrowth hid abandoned trailers and half-finished cabins, perfect for carrying a wildfire down the valley again.

The charred forest was growing back. It was green everywhere with little seedling trees and grasses. I saw more wildlife than ever before. I looked, but couldn't find the road we took for refuge in the middle of the firestorm. I thought I would never forget that dirt track. But it has disappeared. Gone. Grown back into the dense undergrowth of the rest of a wild land that looks sometimes like it never changes.

When conditions are just right next summer, or perhaps a summer in a century, another lightning strike will spark a little blaze, or a stray ember will escape to the forest floor. The fire will grow in the wind and radical change will begin again. ★

—WILLIAM SIMONSEN

William Simonsen lives out in the woods more than ten miles from the nearest town in north-west Montana. He has been writing in various formats, mainly newspapers, for decades.

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CONGRATULATIONS TO THE 2018 MONTANA BREWERS FALL RENDEZVOUS AWARD WINNERS

-Barrel-Aged Sour-
Sour Brett Saison
Bozeman Brewing Co.

-Belgian-
Dirty Ginger
Flathead Lake Brewing

-Festbier-
Stacktoberfest
Smelter City Brewing

-Festival Special Release-
5 Phantoms
Philipsburg Brewing

-Fruit/Specialty-
5 Phantoms
Philipsburg Brewing

-Imperial IPA-
Headwall
Tamarack Brewing

-IPA-
Shady Brady
KettleHouse Brewing

-Lager-
Party
MAP Brewing Co.

-Best of Show-
Party
MAP Brewing Co.

-Pale Ale-
Pine Creek Pale Ale
Neptune's Brewery

-Pilsner-
Two Ski Brewski
Kalispell Brewing

-Porter-
Plum Street Porter
Bozeman Brewing Co.

-Red Ale-
Irish Red Ale
Conflux Brewing Co.

-Scotch Ale-
Mountain Man
Jeremiah Johnson
Brewing Co.

-Stout-
80 Chain
MAP Brewing Co.

-Wheat-
Don't Hassle the Hef
Beehive Basin Brewery

-Wood-Aged Beer-
Speedy G
MAP Brewing Co.



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