

VOLUME 20 ISSUE 11

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Art and Culture
in Our Communities



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Treasure State **Lifestyles** is a monthly magazine by Montanans for Montanans. We are bringing communities together by highlighting local artists, writers, town history and local events. Share your stories and events with us!

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Todd Connor, Steve Seltzer

The arts enrich our communities by fostering economic growth, improving health and well-being, strengthening social connections, boosting education, and creating vibrant public spaces that reflect local identity and culture, bringing diverse people together through shared experiences and self-expression.

In this issue of Treasure State **Lifestyles** we explore the boundless possibilities that the arts offer in our communities and how they enrich and enhance them. Art transforms neighborhoods, ultimately building more resilient, inclusive, and connected communities. ■

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Honoring the Spirit: The Art and Legacy of Montana's Kevin Red Star

By Billie Olson and Hope Good

As we gathered recently to listen to the vibrant life story of artist Kevin Red Star in his new gallery in Red Lodge, Montana, a casual, comfortable atmosphere settled over the space. We began by sitting around a coffee table, but Kevin soon changed his mind from just talking. He immediately connected with us as he realized we were genuinely captivated by his story and he wanted to give us a personal art tour. His spirit instantly wanted to share his journey, walking us through decades of creativity that spanned art schools, worldly travels, the pages of his new pop-up book, and the quiet pride he holds for his heritage and family.

He spoke of politicians, his lovely parents, and paintings designated for family members or those holding a special spot within his tribe. Yet his narrative frequently circled back to the heart of his world: his daughters, grandchildren, and great-grandchild. You could see the immense pride he holds for the talent thriving in his family. His eyes would twinkle, his voice would lift with enthusiasm, and he would chuckle when sharing anecdotes about how they all remain actively involved in his life.

A Legacy Rooted in Culture and Art

Kevin Red Star, a proud member of the Apsáalooke (Crow) Nation was born and raised on the Crow Reservation in Lodge Grass, Montana. He has transcended the art world to become known world-wide as a revered historian, recorder, and ambassador for his people. His art is a vibrant testament to the rich culture and enduring spirit of the Plains Indians – a profound source of creative expression that bridges the past and the present with a unique, contemporary voice.

Raised in a family that valued both music and visual arts, Red Star's path was set early on. His mother, Amy Bright Wings Red Star, was a skilled creator of powwow regalia, beadwork, and ceremonial clothing. His father, Wallace Red Star Sr., was a musician of the saxophone and Hawaiian steel guitar and a collector of Western art prints. This nurturing environment fostered a deep connection to his heritage and a desire to communicate it visually.

His formal training began at the groundbreaking Institute of American Indian Arts (IAIA) in Santa Fe, New Mexico, where he was a member of the school's inaugural class in 1962. Further studies at the San Francisco Art Institute exposed him to avant-garde movements, which he masterfully integrated with traditional Crow imagery to develop his signature style.



A Unique Artistic Vision

Red Star's paintings are instantly recognizable, characterized by a bold palette, compelling design elements, and stylized depictions of Native American people and life. He expertly combines historical accuracy with contemporary flair, often using striking color choices or exaggerating anatomical features for dramatic effect.

His work explores various themes, including depictions of warriors, dancers in intricate regalia, tipis, and horses, drawing inspiration from late 19th-century Crow life and ceremonies. Within this art, symbolism is key, with every element, from the cut of a garment to the symbols on a shield or tipi, holding specific cultural significance and meaning.

Regarding technique, Red Star is proficient in multiple mediums, including oil, acrylic, and various printmaking techniques, and he uses collages and mixed media to push artistic boundaries. Although he acquired proficiency in oils during his formal schooling, he eventually transitioned primarily to acrylics in 1999 when his daughter Merida was pregnant with his first and only grandson, Mason Red Star-Miller. The strong odor and chemical nature of turpentine became a health concern, leading him to embrace water-based mediums.

A Gift of Connection and Understanding

Beyond the technical mastery, Red Star's art possesses a warmth and generosity of spirit that deeply resonates with people. He sees himself as a storyteller, sharing his culture with the world and ensuring its rich history is never forgotten. His



Jovi Rosselot (Mason's wife), Mason Miller (Kevin's grandson), Mason is holding their son (Kevin's great grandson)

works are held in permanent collections of major institutions worldwide, including the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of the American Indian and the Whitney Museum of Western Art.

Red Star has also consistently given back to the communities he has lived in, painting stylized horses and buffalo to help fundraise for children and aspiring artists. Children hold a very special spot in his heart. When his great-grandson walked in during our visit, we immediately engaged in a spirited game of catch—the first time I have ever thrown a ball in a gallery! Soon after the game of catch, the youngster went to retrieve more toys to share with us.


Several family members have been actively involved in managing his artistic business. His oldest daughter, Merida Red Star (Miller), was his business partner and managed his works in galleries until her passing in 2008. She is survived by her son, Mason Miller, who grew up in the art world and was instrumental in encouraging his grandfather to open a new gallery in Red Lodge after the previous one closed. Today, Mason's wife, Jovi Rosselott, serves as the gallery director for the Kevin Red Star Gallery, carrying on the family legacy.

His daughter Sunny Sky Red Star is also an artist and has served as her father's assistant, exhibiting their work together in joint shows. She has currently retired the brushes for now, as she walks through her healing of her sisters' passing. Kevin also has a son, Coyote.

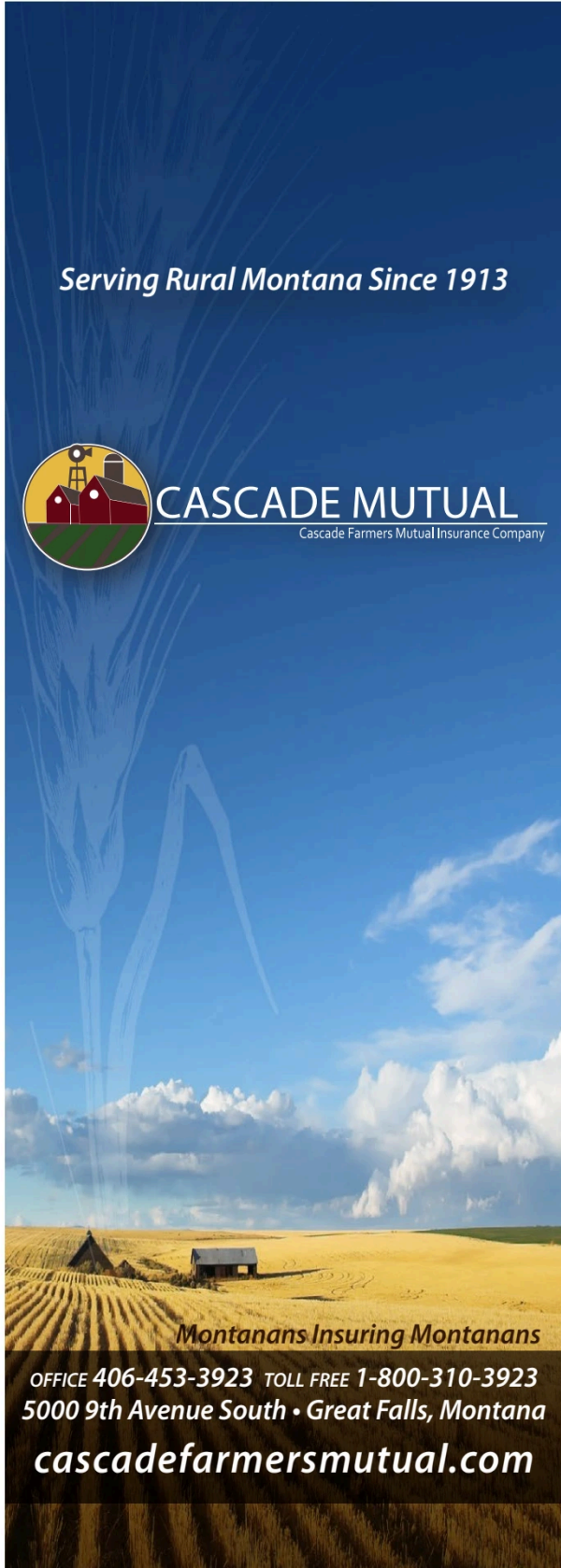
In addition to his gallery in Red Lodge, Red Star's works can be seen in Montana at the Cawdrey Gallery in Whitefish, and the Courtney Collins Fine Art Gallery in Big Sky. Now living and working in Roberts, Montana, he continues to create, driven by the belief that his next piece will be his best. His enduring optimism and tireless work ethic serve as an inspiration to young artists everywhere. Kevin Red Star's legacy is one of pride, cultural affirmation, and the power of art to preserve and celebrate a people's spirit. His paintings are not just images; they are a heartfelt invitation into the world of the Apsáalooke, a world brought to life through the eyes and hands of a true Montana treasure.

Kevin Red Star Gallery - 11 N. Broadway Ave, Red Lodge, Montana - website is kevinredstar.com. ■

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Yellowstone Art Museum


Gayle M. Irwin

For more than fifty years, the Yellowstone Art Museum (YAM) in Billings has brought art to the community. Staff and volunteers also take art beyond the facility's walls. Traveling exhibits, changing collections in the galleries, and special events allow visitors to experience a variety of artwork, from paintings and pottery to textiles and traveling shows. For those who cannot visit the contemporary art museum, outreach programs help them understand art and create their own.

"We pioneered a program where our adult educator goes into the women's prison, and that's something we're very proud of," said Molly Schiltz, YAM's special events coordinator. "Different instructors throughout the year go and teach. The program has changed a lot of people's lives."

Additional outreach includes students on the nearby Crow Reservation.

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“Art is usually one of the first programs cut from schools when budgets are tight,” Schiltz said. “Thanks to a grant we receive, we travel to Crow Agency. We are the only source of art education on that reservation and we’re really happy to work with those kids, bringing art instruction to the students.”

Summer camps and programming for youngsters, school visits to the museum, and classes for youth and adults are also part of YAM’s educational offerings. “We have a very accomplished education team,” Schiltz said.

Onsite exhibits change about every three or four months. In early 2026, the museum will host a Native American artist and an artist from Helena. The museum’s annual art auction takes place in February. This is the largest fundraiser for the organization.

“We have a really great selection of artwork that folks can bid for online,” Schiltz said. “The artists donate the proceeds from their work to support us, which is so generous! We have an opening celebration and cocktail parties, and we have lots of artist talks. Then on March 7, we have a gala night with a live auction. That’s the big, closing event.” She added that the 2026 fundraiser will be the 58th year for this event.

In addition to the changing and traveling exhibitions, YAM also houses a permanent, public art collection that people can view. “Even if its pieces that we have in storage, we are happy to pull them out and let people see and enjoy them,”

Schiltz said. “We really think this artwork belongs to the community. We have a very large collection that we’re proud of.” That includes work by Western artist Will James, which was donated.

“We feel that because we can preserve these pieces and we have this facility to house them, it’s our responsibility to make sure that’s available to the public, too,” Schiltz said. “We have a lot of people in this area who are very interested in Western art.”

YAM visitors come from across the country and internationally. “In the summer we see a ton of different zip codes,” she said. “We’ve had people from other countries that are going to Yellowstone and all over.”

The museum recently began a partnership with the Billings airport, drawing more people to the facility. “We’re using a concourse at the airport as a secondary display,” Schiltz said. “I’ve seen a lot of people who are coming in from goodness knows where, and they were just going to go to their hotel, but they see that display and then it sparks their interest, and they visit the museum.”

She added, “Our whole mission is that art is for everybody. It’s kind of a shared history. Even the works that folks are making today – they engage us, and we find them compelling for various reasons.”

Located at 401 N. 27th Street A, Billings, Montana - website is artmuseum.org. ■

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Fitzgerald & the Donahoe Family: Montana Influences The Great Gatsby

By Tiffany Sweeney

In the summer of 1915, two college friends would spend a summer in the little town of White Sulphur Springs and an imprint in American literature would be cemented in our culture for decades to come. The two young men were Charles

Donahoe and F. Scott Fitzgerald, and they would spend their days working at the present-day Castle Mountain Ranch and spend their nights in the Donahoe summer home, which now stands as the Castle Museum & Carriage House.

Thanks to two Montana residents, by way of Minnesota and the Fitzgerald Society, Stu Wilson and Mel Barker have brought their own personal research on the beloved author back to Montana where it all began. On what would have been Fitzgerald's 129th birthday, Wilson and Barker partnered with the Meagher County Historical Association to bring their latest findings back to the original land of Fitzgerald's inspiration. As they spoke, members of the community learned that the Donahoes were a gracious, modest family that had their hands in a wide range of businesses from breweries to mining and connections to the Rockefeller's and the Copper Kings. And, all those experiences would lead Fitzgerald to begin exploring the social issues of wealth through his own writing, starting with the short story, *The Diamond as Big as the Ritz* and eventually evolving into *The Great Gatsby*.

In preparation for the event, the Meagher County Historical Association held book club discussions on these two stories, discovering that the short story was mirroring the life and times of the hidden gem of White Sulphur Springs, including major landmarks in the area. In addition, the Association also partnered with the local movie theater to show two different versions of the film, *The Great Gatsby*.

More is left to discover, not only in the impact our own small-town Montana left on Fitzgerald, but also of the Donahoe family. The Meagher County Historical Association is already planning future collaborations with Wilson and Barker, and cannot wait to share more in 2026. 🍷



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Billings Indie Bookstore Celebrates 10th Anniversary: Offers Ownership Opportunities

Gayle M. Irwin

This House of Books in Billings will celebrate its tenth anniversary as a brick-and-mortar establishment in 2026. After Thomas Books closed in 2012, some residents came together to brainstorm opening another independent bookstore in town. According to This House of Books board treasurer, Julie Schultz, the idea of a cooperative model sprouted.

“Bookstores are a natural community gathering space, so it makes sense for people to have an opportunity to feel like they’re truly part of it, not just as a customer but also as an owner,” she said. To become a member-owner, a person pays a \$100 lifetime fee. Other options are available. Members receive a 5% discount on all purchases.

“Most of our partners are not authors, but if you are an author, we have a special shelf for members of the co-op, and

their books are highlighted there,” Schultz said. In addition to highlighting author-members, This House of Books carries national and international bestsellers.

As the store enters its tenth year as a downtown asset, Schultz envisions continual growth for the cooperative. “We’ve definitely noticed an uptick in interest.” she said. Writing events and gatherings are held at the store, including open mic poetry night, book clubs, play and poetry readings, and author signings.

Plans are also underway for tenth anniversary celebration events. On February 13, 2026, the store will host a Gal-entine’s Day event, “Blind Date with a Book.” On May 2, Kentucky Derby Day, the store will host central Montana author, Cathy Moser, with her non-fiction book, *When Montana Outraced the East: The Reign of Western Thoroughbreds, 1886 – 1900*. She will be joined by a Wyoming author and former Montana resident who writes sweet romance books that weave pet rescue and adoption into the love story.

Members of This House of Books helped craft an Independent Bookstore Passport program, highlighting the many such bookstores across Montana. “The Montana bookstore trail has been really fun,” Schultz said.

The store, located at 116 North 29th Street in downtown Billings, takes its name from the famous memoir *This House of Sky* by Montana author Ivan Doig. He passed away in 2015. However, according to the bookstore’s website, his widow gave permission for the cooperative to use a similar name for the store.

To learn more about This House of Books and about becoming a member-owner, visit <https://thishouseofbooks.com/about-us>.

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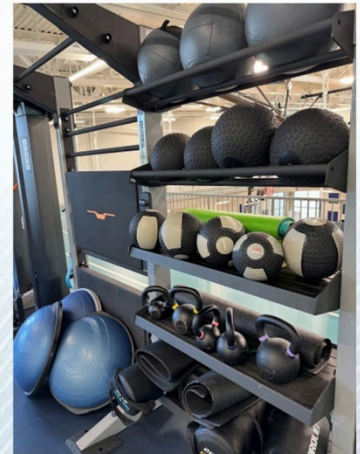
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Photo Great Falls Youth Orchestra
Jackson Bautista trumpet solo.

Great Falls Youth Orchestra

By Amy Grisak

Great Falls has a rich musical history. We are blessed with the Great Falls Symphony, and appreciate the hard work and exceptional talent of our community members as they bring us deeply moving musical experiences, and for many, this passion starts at an early age. To encourage this tradition of excellence, the Diane and Roy Volk Youth Orchestra Programs offer instruction and inspiration for our young musicians.

“Gordon Johnson started it when he was with the Symphony. It was his baby,” says Kyara Nelsen, who has been at the helm of the youth orchestra for four years and serves as the Youth Programs Manager and Youth Orchestra Director.

Growing up in Helena, Nelsen played the violin from a young age, and understands how performing within this immersive

experience requires musicians to know their part while remaining aware of everyone around them. As an educator and professional musician, she focuses on bringing out the best in her students.

For many string players, the first opportunity to play with the group in the Youth Orchestra Program is Sinfonia, which is open for intermediate musicians from sixth grade on up. Nelsen says, “We treat it as a feeder program for our youth orchestra.” A fixture of the Great Falls students’ musical education, Lisa Shull, is conducting Sinfonia this season, after the equally gifted and beloved Sarah Schaeffer stepped down after leading the group for six years.

“Youth orchestra offers the full orchestra experience,” explains Nelsen. She guides this polished group to pull together strings, winds, brass, and percussion, to play more advanced compositions that challenge the musicians to hone their gifts and reach new skill levels. She says, “The orchestra connects you to a rich tradition of music. It’s a pretty cool feeling.”

Within the program, there is also an opportunity to be part of the chamber assembly, where 3-7 musicians are grouped together and coached by knowledgeable instructors, including some members of the Symphony.

The culmination of their efforts is a concert series in November and March. Chamber performances are held on the Friday before the Sunday afternoon concerts at the Mansfield Center, featuring Sinfonia, Youth Orchestra, and select chamber ensembles. Tickets are available to the public.

For students interested in joining either group, audition dates and materials are available on their website, gfsymphony.org, along with their current calendar of practices and performances. ■

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Detail of "Charles M. Russell and His Friends" Oil, Montana Historical Society MacKay Collection, Helena, MT.

Western Art Week-Great Falls

Great Falls has a rich artistic culture that has earned it the title of "Montana's Art Capital." With a deep connection to Western and Native American art, Great Falls has an artistic community that celebrates both its heritage and modern creativity.

Great Falls' reputation is deeply intertwined with its history. One of the most notable figures is Charles M. Russell, more commonly known as the "Cowboy Artist." Russell's work captured the spirit of the American West and was both inspired by and created in Great Falls. His detailed depictions of cowboy life, Native American culture, and Montana's landscapes established the city as a base for Western art.

Beyond Russell, the beauty of the region, the Missouri River, and proximity to Native American culture, provides endless inspiration for artists. Many painters, sculptors, and photographers have found the landscapes of Great Falls to be the lung that breathes life into their work.

One of Great Falls most notable events is Western Art Week, a week-long series of events that brings in artists from across the nation. Anchored by The Russell Exhibition and Auction, this event is a must for collectors and art lovers alike, showcasing the best of Western and Native American art. 2026 honors the 100-year anniversary of Charlie Russell's death. It will be a special Western Art Week with venues around town celebrating Charlie's legacy, with blended Western works in various media around town at different shows. Great Falls offers a rich experience for anyone seeking to explore the artistic heart of Montana.

Enjoy the sights and sounds of Western Art Week – art, quick finishes, auctions, music, artist interactions. There will be something for everyone.

It will be an exceptional week for artists, buyers, and spectators alike! ■



Christy Daniels

LEGENDS WEST
BEST *in* **WEST**
Art Shows

Bronze artist Christy Daniels, begins with a concept which emerges into a story. She began showing her bronzes in 2002 and by 2005 was awarded her first of many "Best in Show" awards. Over the years, she has collected numerous accolades, with the feather in her cap being a "People's Choice" award in 2008 at the prestigious C.M. Russell Auction.

Christy will be showing at Legends West Art Show at the new Shonkin Event Center during Western Art Week at 901 9th St N, Great Falls, Montana.

To learn more, visit christydaniels.com.



Legends West and Best of the West Team Coordinators; Hope Good, Mimi Moser, Mary Michael

LEGENDS WEST
BEST of the WEST
Art Shows

At the SHONKIN EVENT CENTER

**901 9th St N
Great Falls, Montana**

March 19, 20, 21, 22
during Western Art Week

The vibrant spirit of independence and renewal comes alive at Western Art Week 2026! Legends West and Best of the West Art Shows have embarked on a bold new journey—honoring the 100 year anniversary of Charles M. Russell’s ascent to cowboy heaven. Immerse yourself in the breathtaking grandeur and essence of the American frontier, where evocative landscapes, dynamic wildlife, and rich Native cultures intertwine. Experience the untamed spirit of cowboy life and the quest for freedom!

Thursday 10am-10pm

Friday and Saturday 10am-8pm

Sunday 9am-Noon

Thursday Patrons’ Preview Gala

Enjoy exquisite appetizers, a cash bar, and a taste of the Wild West with Willie’s Distillery tasting - a true celebration of Western Art hospitality.

Live music by Rob Quist & Halladay Quist

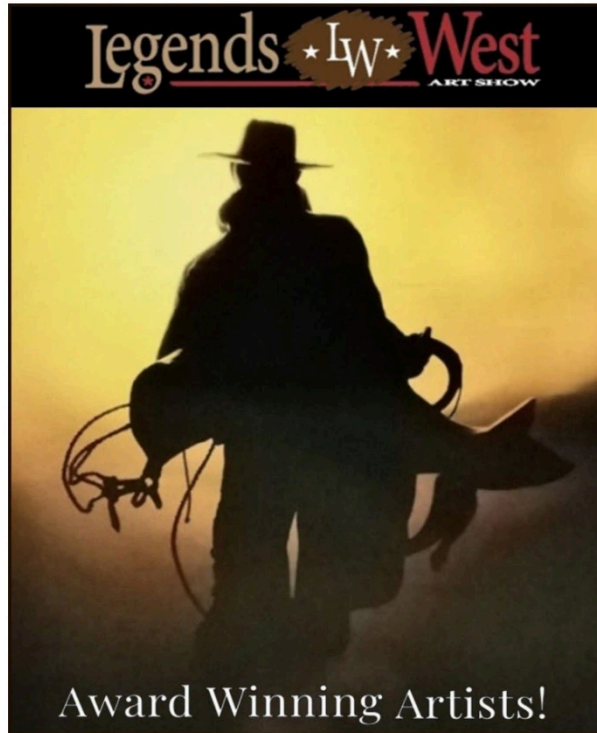


<https://legendswestartshow.com>

<https://www.thebestofthewestshow.com>

Legends West Art Show - Facebook

Best Of The West Art Show - Facebook



A New Frontier for Fine Art

As Western Art Week 2026 approaches in Great Falls, Montana, a spirit of independence and renewal continues to define the local art community. At the heart of this movement is the Legends West Art Show, a pioneering exhibition that has transitioned into a premier standalone destination for high end Western and wildlife art. From the get go, this show has been strong, driven by a clear vision and a resilient team of trailblazers who have ensured its place as a mainstay of the regional art calendar.

The show is steered by a powerhouse collective including Mary Michael, Hope Good, and Sandra Haynes. This team provides a unique balance of artistic mastery and operational vision, proving that the strength of the show lies in its synergy. Mary Michael, a renowned sculptor and owner of Bronze Montana, provides the calm, analytical force that ensures a professional environment for both artists and collectors. Hope Good serves as the director, managing the sprawling logistics, marketing, and the strategic decisions necessary for survival in a competitive field. Sandra Haynes, a scratchboard artist and painter herself, provides an award winning painter's eye for the meticulous jury process, ensuring the highest caliber of work is presented to the public.

A significant milestone in the show's evolution is the strategic teaming up of Legends West with the Best of the West art show. This collaboration brings together a formidable concentration of talent and resources, further solidifying the event's reputation as a must visit destination during Western Art Week. The partnership reflects a shared commitment to excellence and a unified vision for promoting the very best in Western art

showcasing a diverse range of artist talent; Acrylic, Bronze, Charcoal, Colored Pencil, Earth, Graphite, Leather, Mixed Media, Oil, Oil on Copper, Pastel, Pencil, Photography, Pyrography, Scratch Board, Sculpture, Watercolor, and Wood Carving.

The story of Legends West began with careful, intentional planning. For over a year, the founders hand-picked artists one by one, building a roster based on quality and mutual respect. Hope credits the deep trust between the leadership team and the early support of Joanne Sanford, as crucial during turbulent transitions. When the group faced professional hurdles at a previous venue, the loyalty of their artists remained unshakable. Dozens chose to follow this leadership team to new frontiers, valuing the high-end vision and professional marketing provided over the status quo of established hotel shows.

Following a pivotal shift in 2025, the Legends West Art Show has established its home at the Shonkin Event Center. After years of partnering with other exhibitions, the move to a dedicated venue allows the show to flourish independently with Best of the West. Mary explains that it was time to stand on their own two feet, noting that the venue is light, bright, and happy, feeling more like an art gallery than a warehouse.

The core strength of Legends West is the caliber and diversity of its artists. The leadership team curates a group that lifts each other up, rejecting competitive negativity to foster a positive environment. The artists' work offers an exploration of breathtaking landscapes, majestic wildlife, and rich Native cultures. They document the enduring spirit of cowboy life and the human spirit's drive for freedom through innovative techniques and rich historical storytelling.

Visitors to the show will witness this mastery in action as the show continues to honor the heritage of the West while forging a modern path with these legendary women.

See Legends West Art Show at the Shonkin Event Center – 901 9th Street N, Great Falls, MT during Western Art Week in March 2026. 🍷



Mary Michael and Sandra Haynes



Mimi Mosher (left) Hope Good (right) art by Tobias Sauer

The Architect of Energy: How Mimi Moser Raised the Bar for Western Art

In the world of Western art, there are those who create the work and those who create the world in which that work lives. Mimi Moser, the visionary founder of the Best of the West show, belongs firmly in the latter category. While she is quick to deflect the spotlight toward her collaborators, Mimi's pioneering spirit was the catalyst for one of Great Falls' most successful artistic transitions in recent history.

A Vision Born of Necessity

The origin of Best of the West was a natural response to the uncertainty of 2021. As the initial waves of COVID-19 disrupted traditional venues, many members of the prestigious Russell Skull Society of Artists, including Mimi's husband, Todd Connor, found themselves without a platform to showcase their work.

What started as a simple idea to rent a small booth for her and Todd quickly snowballed. Encouraged by Chuck Fulcher of the Great Western Show, Mimi took on the monumental task of organizing a dedicated space at the fairgrounds, curating a show featuring eighty top Western artists.

Foundation in the "Ropes" of the West

Mimi's mastery of the art show world didn't happen by accident. She spent years learning from the best at the Pegasus Frame Studio & Gallery located in Corvallis, with William Shumway during the 90s and Dick Idol Signature Gallery in Whitefish, MT. It was in these studios she learned everything from the technical precision of framing to the delicate psychology of the sale. Mimi says, "They taught me the principles of designing a wall, selecting a location, marketing, and the art of working the room during a reception. It was invaluable." This education showed Mimi that a successful show isn't just about hanging paintings; it's about designing an experience.

A Lifetime of "Putting on a Show"

This instinct for curation started early. Mimi laughs as she recalls a third-grade memory of convincing her classmates to form a 50s-style musical revue. "We practiced at each other's houses, made outfits, and planned to perform for our class," she says. "The next thing you know, we were on stage in the auditorium in front of the whole school."

Creativity as a Roadmap

For Mimi, the "Best of the West" isn't just a brand; it's a commitment to innovation. She rejects the idea of doing the same thing year after year. "Consistency is important, but the same thing over and over again violates what art is all about," Mimi says. "Art is about creativity and doing something new."

Mimi views the show's evolution as a blossom. When Todd's career as a member of the Cowboy Artists of America took them elsewhere and the time came to pass the torch, she sold the show to Hope Good knowing the "template" was in good hands. "It doesn't matter where the show is; it's going to have the same elevated artists and an inspiring environment."

Still Creating: The Spirit in the Details

Though she has handed over the reins, Mimi remains deeply involved with the future of the Best of the West. She continues to bring her unique "fun" and energy to the show's atmosphere. Whether she is imagining how to up-cycle vintage chandeliers into Western wrought-iron masterpieces or helping a client find the perfect piece, Mimi's focus remains on the "inspiring environment." While Mimi modestly describes herself as "the past" of the show, her influence and continued presence remain the foundation of its future.

Visit the Best of the West Show at Shonkin Event Center – 901 9th Street N. Great Falls, MT. ■



Art of AD Maddox

In the intersection of high-speed adventure and serene riverbanks lies the work of AD Maddox, an artist who has spent decades redefining the aesthetic of contemporary sporting art. While traditional wildlife painting often leans toward muted, documentary realism, Maddox’s oil paintings explode with a chromatic intensity that mirrors the kinetic adrenaline of the strike.

Operating from her studio in Livingston, Montana, Maddox captures what she calls the “underwater fireworks” of trout with a technique described by critics as “photorealism on steroids.” Her primary medium, oil on Belgian linen, allows for a depth of color that mimics the iridescent scales of Rainbow, Brown, and Cutthroat trout. What sets her work apart is a unique duality: the fish are rendered with striking anatomical precision, while the surrounding water dissolves into a kaleidoscope of abstract light and movement.

Maddox’s lifestyle, often spent scouting locations on her Ducati or wading into remote streams, infuses her work with an authenticity that resonates with modern anglers. Her art has transcended the gallery wall to become a visual language for the community, appearing on the covers of over forty magazines and on high-end technical gear for Patagonia.

This spring, collectors and enthusiasts will have the opportunity to experience her work firsthand during Western Art Week. This city-wide celebration of the American West features premier events like The Russell Auction, where Maddox’s bold, kinetic style continues to push the boundaries of the genre. Catch her at the Great Western Show.

Maddox’s artwork proves that sporting art can be as modern and vibrant as the natural world it honors. Explore her portfolio and limited edition giclées at AD Maddox Studios 114 N B Street, Livingston, MT or online at admaddox.com. 🇺🇸



From Corporate Waste to Western Art: Olive Parker

In Corvallis, Montana, Olive Parker has turned a “leap of faith” into Montana Leather Designs, a thriving wholesale business. Her journey began far from the studio; she previously held a high-level corporate career in hazardous waste consulting for hospitals. After a decade of raising children and a life-altering divorce, Olive moved to Montana’s Bitterroot Valley, where she realized that surviving as a rural artist required more than just talent—it required a business strategy.

By participating in the Montana Artrepreneurship Program (MAP) offered by the Montana Arts Council, Olive transitioned from local art shows to a massive wholesale model. Today, she and her studio assistants produce 15,000 to 20,000 pieces of leather jewelry annually, sold in National Parks and major Western boutiques across the U.S. She is a regular at premier trade shows in Dallas and Las Vegas, competing alongside industry giants.

Her craftsmanship is deeply technical. Trained by masters like Robert Beard, Olive specializes in intricate leather feathers and large-scale murals, including a 60-foot installation in Jackson Hole that took months to burn and paint by hand.

Outside the studio, Olive’s life remains rooted in her love for horses. From her childhood Shetland pony to the Tennessee Walkers she rides today, horses provide the creative release that fuels her work. Her story is a master class in resilience, proving that a corporate background and artistic passion can combine to build a lasting Western legacy.

Visit her website before the show at montanaleatherdesigns.com to help plan your shopping when you visit her booth at Great Western Art Show. 🇺🇸



March 19-22, 2026

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Rooted in Faith, Forged in Felt

In the heart of Choteau County, Montana, the Guderjahn family is masterfully weaving together the threads of community service, deep faith, and entrepreneurial spirit with their custom hat business, Lone Feather Hats.

The venture began unexpectedly when a store-bought Christmas hat refused to fit Matt Guderjahn. Frustrated, he decided to craft his own. A simple Facebook post led to eight instant orders, prompting Matt and his wife Katee to take a leap of faith. With a hat block turned on a lathe by Matt's father-in-law, Rich Charlson, they started a business that quickly moved from their kitchen to a dedicated shop.

Central to their mission is Psalms 91:4: "He will cover you with his feathers, and under his wings you will find refuge; his faithfulness will be your shield and rampart." This scripture serves as the family's moral compass, tying directly into Matt's dual roles as a milliner and district livestock investigator for Chouteau County (the last one in the state to work for a Livestock Protective Association). The hats, crafted from premium beaver felt, are physical symbols of this divine protection, which he often makes for fellow law enforcement officers.

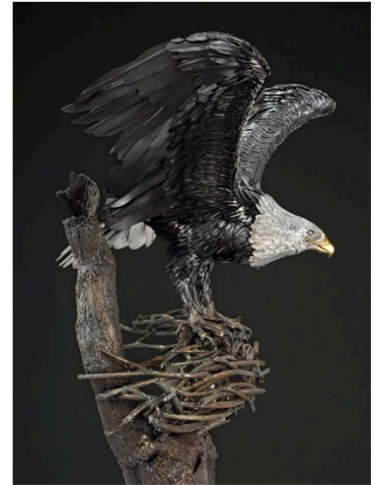
The Guderjahn children are integral to this legacy. Their 10-year-old son creates unique leather work, and their 13-year-old daughter crafts leather feathers and hair accessories.

Balancing multiple careers and family life, the Guderjahns embody the resilience and values of the West. Their story is a testament to serving God by serving their community, one perfectly crafted, protective hat at a time. They love continuing the almost lost tradition of hat making the way it has been done since 1865.

They are located at 213 2nd Street in Carter, Montana. Visit us at lonefeatherhats.com or call (406) 390-6391. 📍

All-In Approach, Jesse Purdom

In the contemporary Western art world, sculptor Jesse Purdom stands out with his "total immersion" philosophy, where the process of creation is as vital as the finished piece. His detailed metal sculptures blend technical expertise with an appreciation for natural flow, earning rapid recognition in the Western art scene.



Purdom's "all-in" approach is evident in his method. Rather than using large material chunks, he builds complex artwork from numerous smaller, independent components. This technique allows him precise control over "flow" and texture. He employs a wide spectrum of tools, from chisels to fine Dremels, seamlessly incorporating steel, stainless steel, and warm copper tones.

For Purdom, art shows are lively "show and tell" experiences where he engages actively with attendees. He embraces varied challenges, from custom fireplace doors to planning ambitious collaborations, including organizing a "quad" of high-stature artists for a unique group presentation at the "The Great Western Show" event. This year marks his first time participating in the main events of the prestigious Russell Art Auction.

Be sure to see his powerful statement pieces, a large elk sculpture and a wooden sculpture featuring a carved river of fish. Keep an eye out for a remarkable "brown trout sculpture" a true labor of love that highlights his mastery of detail and form. It will go up for auction at the Russell Art Auction.

Don't Miss Out: Stop by Jesse Purdom's exhibit at the "The Great Western Show" to meet the artist, see his stunning work up close, and discover the intricate process behind these unique sculptures resonating with the spirit of the West. His booth is a must-see. Visit jessepurdomart.com or call (406) 558-9960. 📍



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March 19-22, 2026
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Great Falls, Montana

Participating Designers, Artists & Artisans*

- | | | |
|---------------------------|----------------------|----------------------------|
| Edmond & Sonja Albert | Terrance Guardipee | Linda Pease |
| Angela Babby | Alissa Herodes | Lindy Racine |
| Carlin Bear Don't Walk | Rebekah Jarvey | Louis & Gina Still Smoking |
| Della Big Hair Stump | Veronica Kempfert | Melisa Trombley |
| Sammy Bird | Willow Kipp | Jim Trueax |
| Brocade Stops Black Eagle | Robert Martinez | Jennifer White |
| Catherine Blackhorse | Carrie Moran McLeary | Jay Young Running Crane |
| Joanne Brings Thunder | Lyle Omeasoo | Doug & Priscilla Zander |
| Andrew "AJ" Butler | | <i>*as of January</i> |

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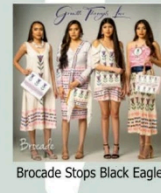
Della Big Hair Stump



Willow Kipp



Angela Howe



Brocade Stops Black Eagle



Carrie McCleary



Sammy Bird



Rebekah Jarvey





Big Sky Soul: A Tale of Two Sisters Weaving Faith and Intention in Montana

In the quiet glow of a Montana campfire years ago, two sisters shared a vision that would weave faith, art, and intention into the fabric of Havre. Brooke James, a graphic designer with an eye for “glimmers” of hope, and her sister, Reverend Stacey Heggem, a pastor with a heart for ministry, imagined something new. Together, they conceived Story Stoles: high-quality, handmade clergy stoles featuring intricate, computer-designed graphics that serve as visual teaching aids from the pulpit.

Through Story Stoles, the sisters developed a deep appreciation for small-business ownership. They witnessed firsthand how small businesses bring vitality to their towns, through generosity, investment, and wholehearted community support. That understanding eventually led Brooke and Stacey to launch Big Sky Soul Gift Shop.

From its beginning, the gift shop carried a strong sense of purpose. Over time, however, their journey together began to beautifully diverge. Stacey felt a renewed calling to return fully to the pulpit, stepping back into ministry with Brooke’s complete blessing. Brooke, meanwhile, became the steward of their shared legacy, assuming sole ownership, alongside her husband, of both Story Stoles and Big Sky Soul Gift Shop.

Under Brooke’s leadership, the shop has become an “intentional gifting” sanctuary. While customers can find baptismal gifts and Bibles, Brooke prioritizes faith-filled warmth over rigid dogma. Her mission is to honor life’s sacred moments, baby showers, graduations, retirements, and everything in between.

Brooke’s commitment to authenticity runs deep. She chooses not to sell on Amazon, instead filling her shelves with thoughtfully curated goods from women- and minority-owned small businesses. From the vibrant, uplifting designs of Natural Life to handcrafted global nativities, every item carries a story. Upstairs, in her expanded sewing studio, Brooke continues the meticulous work of Story Stoles.

Today, Brooke is taking the leap. With her first employee by her side, she is stepping into a future that includes wholesale items, a growing nationwide online presence, and dreams of bringing Big Sky Soul Gift Shop’s joyful aesthetic to places like Whitefish and Great Falls. For Brooke, every customer who walks through the door is a privilege, not a transaction. As Stacey serves her congregation, Brooke serves her community, one intentionally wrapped glimmer of hope at a time.

Visit Big Sky Soul Gift Shop online at bigskysoul.com or explore in person 124 4th Ave, Downtown Havre, Montana, or call (406) 399-6621. ■

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Jackie Van Heel



My work “Moonlight on the Butte” was chosen for the C M Russell Art Show and Auction in March.



Jackie Van Heel’s intense colors and sharp metallic lines give the appearance of metalwork. Her portrayures of people and pets has become increasingly popular due to her signature style.



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The Out West Art Show - Passion is Life

Rick Kennington, High Desert Wranglers, 24\"/>

In the crisp prairie air of Great Falls, Montana, the American frontier comes alive once again as the town becomes the “Western capitol of the world” during Western Art Week. It breathes through the oil paint, bronze and graphite of the artists that walk the halls, as the Heritage Inn transforms into a living gallery. The common thread binding every artist is the unyielding passion of the spirit of the West. It is a shared passion that bridges the century between the historic West and the modern canvas. The Out West Art Show is a cornerstone of the March 19-21, 2026 celebration, where sixty mini-galleries and over seventy nationally recognized artists gather once a year. The show allows visitors to step directly into the artists’ mini-galleries within their hotel room. This intimate setting fosters a direct connection, where artists speak of their work with an energy that matches Russell’s own “insatiable desire to document the vanishing frontier.”

Strolling through the French Quarter and rooms, one doesn’t just see art; one feels the obsessive drive of the creators. For these artists, the West is not a static subject but a demanding muse. You might meet a painter who spent three weeks on horseback travelling the Bob Marshall Wildness just to

capture the specific way October light hits the Chinese Wall. Their passion is found in the “research,” the dusty, cold, and often lonely pursuit of authenticity that precedes the first brushstroke.

Passion manifests in the diverse techniques on display. In one room, a sculptor might explain how the anatomy of a pack horse carrying its burden over a log must look to ensure a bronze casting feels alive. In another, a contemporary indigenous artist uses vibrant, neon hues to reinterpret traditional stories, driven by a passion to prove that Western art is a forward-looking, evolving movement rather than a relic of the 19th century. With Artists like Tobias Sauer and Rick Kennington continuing Russell’s tradition of capturing a single high-stakes moment or sculptures by Greg Kelsey and Brenna Kimbro that continue the tradition that Russell helped define, the future of Western art is in talented, passionate hands.

This shared fervor creates a unique camaraderie. While the art world is often seen as competitive, the Out West Art Show functions more like a family reunion. Artists who spend much of the year in isolated studios finally find their “tribe.” They swap stories of failed glazes and perfect sunsets, united by



Chip Jones and Larry Winborg with his painting and award for Best of Show 2025

the understanding that their work is a calling rather than a career.

For the collectors and enthusiasts wandering the halls, this passion is infectious. It is one thing to buy a painting from a catalog; it is another to stand before a canvas and hear the artist describe the exact moment of inspiration – the smell of the rain on sagebrush or the sound of an elk’s bugle drifting up from a dark northfacing slope.

Ultimately, the Out West Art Show is a testament to the endurance of the Western spirit. It proves that if there are wide-open spaces and stories to tell, there will be artists driven by the relentless passion to capture them. They are the modern day scouts mapping the soul of the frontier for all to see.

As the 2026 show approaches, it is clear that while the open range may be fenced, the passion for the Western lifestyle - the grit, the wildlife, and the sweeping Montana sky - remains as wild as ever. In the tradition of “ol’ man Russell,” the artists of the Out West Art Show continue to capture the soul of the American West, one passionate stroke at a time. ■

Schedule of Events

March 19 - March 21, 2026

Showrooms open from 11am - 9pm
Free and open to the public!

Come watch the quick finish events and chat with twelve of our best and most courageous artists while they finish a work of art right before your eyes. Live Auction directly follows! Bring a Friend or the Family, it’s all free!

Thursday, March 19

Quick Finish Event – 7 pm – 8 pm
Live Auction - 8:15 pm

Participating Artists

1. Jason Tako
2. Cory James McLaughlin
3. Brian Aistle
4. Kyle Paliotto
5. Daniel Rick
6. Liz Park
7. Trish Stevenson
8. David Marty
9. Summer Spitzbergen
10. Scott Hayes
11. Rick Kennington
12. Sarah Boston

Friday, March 20

Quick Finish Event - 2 pm - 3 pm
Live Auction - 3:15 pm

Participating Artists

1. Alan Snell
2. James Reid
3. Karen Boylan
4. Bruce Pierce
5. Nick Ladas
6. Karen Young
7. Cliff Rossberg
8. Lee Rue
9. Molly Sims
10. Rob Akey
11. Greg Kelsey
12. Jennifer Wendt

Saturday, March 21

Quick Finish Event - 2 pm - 3 pm
Live Auction - 3:15 pm

Participating Artists

1. Paul Dykman
2. Brenna Kimbro
3. Mark McKenna
4. Jan Fontecchio
5. Terry Lee
6. Tobias Sauer
7. Dave Dorsey
8. Tim Blueflint
9. Whitney Weidow
10. Colt Idol
11. Ron Ukrainetz
12. Josh LaBenne



Our Artists:

- Nadine Pickthorn - MT
- Jeff Renner - MN
- Jeff Hoff - ND
- Pamela Harr - MT
- Matt Doyle - PA
- Jim Buti & Janet Móczár-Buti - MT
- Larry and LeAnn Ochsner - MT
- Lois Huntzicker - MT
- Michelle Ellen - MT
- Ken Acton - MT
- Matt Guenthner - WY
- Amanda Krolczyk - MT

March 19 - 21

Thursday, Friday, Saturday

10:00 am to 8:00 pm

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The Art and Legacy of Joyce Ranum

For Joyce Ranum, moving from Syracuse, New York, to Great Falls, Montana, nearly forty years ago was the catalyst for a lifelong artistic journey. Though she first picked up a brush in high school, Joyce stepped away from the canvas for decades, until the 1990s. Today, she creates works that serve as a visual diary of her travels and the deep historical roots she shared with her late husband, John Andrew Ranum.

Joyce's signature style involves a sophisticated layering process, often beginning with a pastel, moving into acrylic underpainting before finishing the piece in oils. This technique brings a luminous depth to her diverse subjects.

Much of Joyce's most poignant work is inextricably linked to her husband's military legacy. John was a distinguished Sentinel at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier and a founding member of the Society of the Honor Guard, Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. In 2021, Joyce painted the Chief Plenty Coups Honor Guard during the Tomb's centennial anniversary. These historic pieces were later donated to Chief Plenty Coups State Park in Pryor, Montana.

Following John's passing in 2023 and his subsequent inurnment at Arlington National Cemetery in 2024, Joyce has continued to find solace and joy in her Great Falls studio. Though she has exhibited at prestigious venues like the C.M. Russell Museum, she remains a humble storyteller. No matter where she sketches from, Joyce Ranum's work proves that art is not just about the final image, but the memories captured in every stroke. Joyce currently resides at the Iris Senior Living Center. 📍



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Kiana Fecteau
Victor, MT

Susan Penfield
Hamilton, MT

Keri Keefe
Columbia Falls, MT

Sue Antonich
Helena, MT

Cynthia Dearing
Columbia Falls, MT

Roberta J. Burruss
Corvallis, MT

MTWS Members Show
Montana ExpoPark Arena, Great Falls
March 19-22, 2026

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Photo courtesy Paris Gibson Square Museum of Art

Selections from the Permanent Collection is on view in The Square's Wylder Gallery through January 31, 2026.

Exploring the Living Canvas: Winter 2026 at The Square

In the heart of Great Falls, Paris Gibson Square Museum of Art stands as a sentinel of culture, bridging the gap between its 1896 origins as Central High School and its modern identity as a hub for contemporary art exploration. As we move through January and February 2026, "The Square" invites visitors to step out of the Montana winter and into a series of exhibitions that challenge scale, memory, and the very definition of regional identity.

Curated by Nicole Maria Evans, Chief Curator/Director of Curatorial Affairs, The Square's winter lineup includes the last few weeks of several exhibitions, including Large Format: On Canvas, an immersive exhibition running through February 17, 2026. This show acts as a physical dialogue with the architecture of the building itself, featuring massive works from The Square's permanent collection that embody the spirit of Montana Modernism. Artists like Gennie DeWeese and Jerome Rankin utilize these vast canvases to mirror the expansive horizons of the West.

Complementing this grand perspective is Legacy: The Morton Levin Collection. This thoughtfully curated showcase highlights a remarkable selection of works gifted to the

museum's permanent collection. Alongside the Selections from the Permanent Collection (on view through January 31, 2026), these galleries showcase the evolution of Northwest regional contemporary art. Together, they prove that The Square is a living archive—one that continues to breathe and grow while honoring the artists who shaped the region's aesthetic legacy.

Looking ahead, new exhibitions this winter include Spotlight on The Square — featuring artwork by the museum's art instructors, students, and staff; an exhibition featuring the work of Great Falls' own Nona Jane Kendall; and Western artist and rodeo hall-of-famer Walter Piehl — just in time for Western Art Week in March.

However, maintaining this historic 1896 landmark and providing world-class programming requires more than just artistic vision; it requires community investment. To keep the building thriving for local children discovering their first paintbrush, adults seeking inspiration, military veterans seeking a creative outlet, and national travelers discovering Montana's creative depth, the museum relies on the generosity of its patrons.

Whether you are a lifelong Montanan or a traveler passing through, your support and donations ensure that admission remains free for all and that the doors of this historic institution stay open for generations to come.

The Square is located at 1400 1st Ave N in Great Falls, Montana. Call (406) 727-8255, or visit the-square.org.



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Photo by Hope Good

Montana Heritage Center Opens in Helena

By Billie J Olson and Karen Ogden

The Montana Heritage Center in Helena, MT, officially opened its doors after nearly two decades of planning and five years of construction. The Center, which is home to the Montana Historical Society, features three expansive museum galleries, a library and archives research center, a café, a gift shop, an events center, and more.

The center’s main exhibit hall, the Homeland Gallery, offers a sensory-rich experience with audio and video displays that

tell the story of Montana’s Indigenous peoples and the state’s history, spanning more than 10,000 years, from ancient ice fields to the vibrant communities of today.

The Charles M. Russell Gallery features 219 originals by America’s beloved cowboy artist, including a collection donated to the Montana Historical Society by the Mackay family. Museum Education Officer Darby Bramble is on a mission to introduce “Charlie” to a new generation of Montanans. “You can see his movement even from the beginning,” Bramble notes, pointing to sketches from Russell’s boyhood in St. Louis, Missouri. The exhibit tracks Russell’s evolution from a teenage dreamer to a “Nighthawk” on the range, capturing the kinetic energy of the Montana landscape. The collection reveals a man of humor and deep sentiment. Be sure to reserve at least an hour to explore Russell’s works. At 4,500 square feet, the space is more than double the size of the previous Russell exhibit.

A different world awaits next door in the museum’s Changing Gallery, which will host rotating exhibits. Currently on display is the renowned Poindexter Collection featuring works by modern masters including Jackson Pollock and Willem de Kooning. Originally from Dillon, Montana (Beaverhead County), the Poindexter family sent their son to New York, where he began collecting abstract modern art. Everton Poindexter and his wife, Elinor, later donated their large collection to the Montana Historical Society.

Whether you’re inspired by the horsehair tassels on Russell’s cowboy hat or the subconscious splatters of a Pollock, the museum invites us all to embark on the journey of “absorbing” art. Entrance is free when you visit the museum at 225 North Roberts in Helena, MT. Explore current exhibits at the Montana Historical Society’s official website. 📍

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Samantha Houston's Journey to Western Art Week 2026

In the world of Western art, where technical precision often reigns supreme, Great Falls artist Samantha Houston offers something far more visceral: an authentic connection to the modern frontier. As the city prepares for the prestigious Western Art Week in March 2026, Houston stands out as a creator who refuses to be confined to a single medium.

Houston's story is one of grit and versatility. A second-generation artist who began her professional ascent while balancing motherhood in a dining-room studio, she has evolved into one of Montana's most dynamic creative forces. Today, she is the co-owner of Sparrows and Arrows Tattoo, a shop she stepped up to lead following the tragic passing of her mentor. For Houston, taking the helm was about more than business; it was about preserving a legacy while carving out a space where art serves as a vehicle for healing and bodily autonomy.

At this year's Great Western Show, visitors will experience the breadth of Houston's "limitless" talent. While she is a master of the "hustle," painting massive 32-foot restaurant murals and seasonal storefront windows, her fine art pieces are deeply personal. Rejecting the "box" of traditional Western replication, Houston's work leans into high-contrast Americana, nostalgic classic cars, and wildlife rendered with an emotional vibrancy that feels alive.

Houston's philosophy is reflected in her art, businesses, and art booth, where she offers something for every collector. From soul-stirring canvases to one-of-a-kind wearable art, specifically her hand-painted Western hats, Houston ensures that everyone can take a piece of original Montana creativity home.

When she isn't at the show, find her at the heart of the downtown art revival. Visit her at Sparrows and Arrows Tattoo, located at 524 Central Ave, Great Falls, MT, to see her murals in person. Whether on skin, canvas, or wood, Samantha Houston proves that the most powerful art is the kind that refuses to stay in its lane.

Connect with the Artist on Instagram @SamanthaHouston_art, or see her at the Great Western Show during Western Art Week. 📌





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Great Falls Theatre Company

By Amy Grisak

Broadway, eat your heart out. With a deep well of talent — actors with flawless delivery and vibrant, moving musical numbers — along with set builders who create a world that makes it all believable, the Great Falls community has reason to boast.

“Great Falls has such a rich history in the arts and culture,” says Amber Henning Griffith, co-founder and current president of the Great Falls Theatre Company. Prior to forming the nonprofit group, she delved into the history of local performance groups. She discovered that throughout the decades, local acting enthusiasts did whatever it took to bring productions to the stage, going so far as to take out second mortgages to pay performance fees.

With a mission to provide quality arts to the community, the Great Falls Theatre Company was officially formed in 2021. Amber says it took two years to pull together the necessary resources, including fundraising, recruiting, and organizing cast and production staff. In 2023, their first show *Oklahoma!* was received with much acclaim. With this resounding success, the organization gained momentum and now performs multiple productions each year, ranging from full-length plays to shorter pieces. Much to the delight of audiences, musical performances such as *The Music Man* and *Fiddler on the Roof* come to life with a live orchestra.

The Theatre Company’s strength lies in the people involved. “The Great Falls community members are truly talented and love the arts and theater. Everyone, even those who have never stepped foot on the stage, is welcome to audition or to assist in a supportive role. It’s cliché to say it takes a village, but the reality is every member, from those creating costumes to set builders, to the performers themselves, is critical to creating these top-notch performances. Theater members work for up to eight weeks to perfect their lines, master the dance moves, and bring everything together before the lights shine upon their first performance.

The Great Falls Theatre Company is truly an effort by the community, for the community. Amber says, “Our donors and community support are vital to our success.”

Upcoming performances include Tennessee Williams’ *The Glass Menagerie* and *The Wizard of Oz*.

To learn more visit greatfallstheatre.com. ■



Miss Linda's School of Dance

By Amy Grisak

Dance is a life lesson in every step, and Linda Fuller of Miss Linda's School of Dance has guided her students in this expressive education for fifty-two years. "The arts lead to a better life," explains Miss Linda, who began her path as a young girl in Minot, ND, studying with Virginia Maupin, a well-known dance teacher. "We want to give everybody a chance."

She first opened her studio in Cascade with fourteen students. Now Miss Linda and her faculty of fourteen average 200 students. "We teach people from 3-103, but if you're 104, I'm sure we'll still take you," she notes with a smile.

From ballet to break dancing, with tap, swing, flamenco, hip-hop, jazz, modern, acrobatics, and numerous social

dances in between, students find their creative niche at Miss Linda's. Adults who want to dust off their dance shoes or wish to learn new steps can also take private lessons or group classes. Gathering friends for dance classes are exceptional date night activities.

With a passion for promoting the performing arts, Miss Linda's has two youth companies, the Act I Theatre Company and the Young Dancers Company (YDC). These focus on a stage experience and exploring personal creative expression as they would find in a professional industry setting. During their classes, they learn acting, singing, stage presence, movement, and the technical skills needed to bring a show to life.


Miss Linda shares, "Act I will be presenting 'Frozen Jr' the musical in March with ASL interpretation and YDC will be traveling to Paris, France, in July to perform with dancers from around the world."

While the classic recital remains central, they also think outside the box. By invitation, they recently performed with the Great Falls Symphony.

Community outreach is important to Miss Linda with students performing at various senior living facilities. "It's about giving young artists a chance to share their hard work, creativity and talent with their community."

Students Miss Linda taught as children are returning with their own children, and even a few grandchildren make it three generations of dancers coming through the Studio doors. Miss Linda and her faculty share their joy as they nurture the next generation of performing artists to find their heart and express their story to the world.

Visit misslindasdance.com for their learning opportunities and class schedules. 📌



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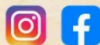
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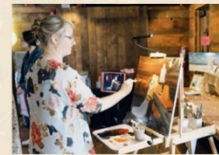
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Jim Sens's Hall of Fame Legacy

By Billie J Olson

For over four decades, Jim Sens has been a cornerstone of Montana's airwaves, but for those who know him in Great Falls, he is far more than a broadcaster—he is a community builder. In 2025, his storied career reached a new pinnacle with his induction into the Montana Broadcasters Association (MBA) Hall of Fame, a fitting tribute to a man who describes his life's work as "a riot."

Sens's journey began in the late 1970s at K99 in Great Falls, where he balanced the grit of an account executive with the solitude of an overnight announcer. While he admits he was only an "OK" DJ, his true talent lay in connecting people with local business. Under the mentorship of legend Dan Snyder, Sens rose through the ranks in Helena before returning home in 1988 to lead KMON AM/FM.

As Vice President and shareholder of STARadio, Sens spent twenty-six years expanding the company's reach across Montana and North Dakota. His "team approach" to growth was simple: hire exceptional people and give them the space to be passionate. For Sens, the biggest thrill wasn't just hitting sales targets; it was watching his team get excited about serving their audience.


Even after retiring in June 2022, Sens's commitment to "localism" remains unshakable. Currently serving as President of Eagle Mount Great Falls, he champions therapeutic recreation for individuals with disabilities, ensuring every neighbor has a chance to soar.

His influence also extends to the Greater Montana Foundation, where he helps manage resources that strengthen the state's communication landscape. From lobbying in Washington, D.C. for broadcast issues to serving as a Division Chair for United Way, Sens's resume reads like a love letter to Great Falls.

Despite his numerous accolades, including the American Advertising Federation's Silver Medal, Jim remains grounded in family. He and his wife, Jean, are often found exploring the rugged beauty of Montana. For Jim Sens, the business of communications was never just about signals and towers; it was about the "really neat people" that make the Big Sky Country home. 📌

Janice G. Bogy

Contemporary Wildlife



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There are many fabulous wildlife artists. Montana artist Janice Bogy's goal is to portray the personality of the animal – the uniqueness of that particular animal. Almost all of the work she does is from animals she has personally observed and photographed. Janice wants the viewer to get to know that particular animal and to bring these marvelous creatures to those who do not have the opportunity to otherwise see them.

Honing artistic skills is a lifetime process. As a wildlife artist, it means hours out in the field observing behaviors, understanding the animal in its environment and collecting photos for reference. Hours spent combining reference photos and working out composition. All of that before any work on the actual piece takes place.

Website: www.JaniceGBogy.com - Instagram: [janicebogy](#) - Facebook: [Janice Bogy](#)



The Nighthawk of the Judith

By Billie J Olson

In the high desert of Nevada, 100 miles north of Elko, the morning air is often thick with the dust of a hundred saddle horses being run into a rope corral. For Philip Page, this wasn't a scene from a movie; it was a Tuesday morning on the YP Ranch. Now 68, Page is taking those fifty years of "horseback life" and turning them into a historically accurate, musical bridge to Montana's vanishing frontier.

A singer-songwriter and storyteller, Page has been a fixture of the Montana landscape since 1980. Over the decades, he has worked several cow camps and for many different outfits across the state, gaining the firsthand experience necessary to promote and preserve Montana's authentic history. These days, he is traveling across Montana to perform a multimedia experience that blends original music with the iconic art of Charlie M. Russell and the photography of L.A. Huffman.

Page's own story mirrors that of the man who inspires much of his music. Like Russell, Page came west as a teenager looking for adventure. Born on a dairy farm in Vermont where his father raised Morgan horses, Page landed in the Frank Church Wilderness in 1976. He spent months at a time with only horses and mules for company, emerging only when the December snows forced him out.

Reflecting on his early years, Page says, "I see kids today hung up on their phones with no direction. I tell them you need to be passionate about something. For me, it was the horse."

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That passion led him to the big cow outfits: the YP, the Wine Cup, and the MC Ranch. It was there, living in range teepees and trailing cattle, that he taught himself guitar and began to find his voice. It was Cowboy music, a tradition of storytelling where the lyrics are as rugged and precise as a well-thrown loop. His expertise isn't limited to the trail; for years, Philip and his wife, Debbie, trained horses in Dillon, Montana, honing the skills that define a true horseman.

What sets Page apart is his devotion to historical accuracy. During his performances, Debbie runs a slideshow of Russell's paintings, illustrating the world Philip sings about.

In his song "Before Broncs Went to Town," Page explores Russell's painting The Roundup, specifically focusing on the grit and skill involved in riding broncs. He describes the 60-70 cowboys from different outfits gathering in the Judith Basin, the origins of rodeo in the "show-off" culture of branding, and the technical difference between "driving" and "trailing" cattle.

His song "1800s" traces the lineage of the Montana cattle industry back to Nelson Story, who brought the first herds up from Texas in 1866. Page's lyrics are often drawn from the masters: titles of Russell paintings or lines from Teddy Blue Abbott's classic, We Pointed Them North.

One of Page's most poignant works is "Nighthawk," a song dedicated to Russell's early job watching the horse herd at night. Page lived that life in the 70s, wrangling horses in the pitch black of the wilderness without so much as a flashlight.

"When a fire was your light," the lyrics go. It's a reminder to a mechanized world of how recently, and how harshly, this land was tamed. Page notes with a sense of urgency that even the cowboy life is changing; insurance liabilities have removed "rough horses" from many outfits, and the four-wheeler is replacing the cow horses.

"I realized I'm never going to be famous, and I don't want to be," Page says. "But I want to have a part in holding the legacy of the American cowboy together."

Page is now a regular fixture at venues that value history over background noise. From the C.M. Russell Museum to Bannack State Park, he finds his most engaged audiences in the places where the past still feels present.

As he prepares for the upcoming poetry gathering in Augusta this April 2026, Page remains a man of the old school. He carries no sheet music on stage, only a list of titles, keys, and first lines. The rest lives in a memory as sharp as the one Russell used to paint 4,000 pieces of art.

Page can be reached for bookings via text at (406) 660-1598 or email at philippage954@gmail.com.

For more information and music, visit his Facebook page: Philip Page @philip.page.545. In a world of digital distractions, Philip Page stands as a "Nighthawk" for the 21st century, watching over the stories of the old West to make sure they don't drift away in the dark. ■



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Greg Eiselein Legacy

By Billie J Olson

In the undulating landscapes of Big Sky Country, few artists captured the “Cowboy Way” with as much authenticity as Gregory Eiselein. Born in 1945 in Roundup, Montana, and raised in the Little Snowy Mountains, Eiselein was a true son of the soil. His life was not merely a study of the West; it was a lived experience that translated into a profound artistic legacy.

Growing up on and eventually running a family ranch in Central Montana nurtured Greg Eiselein’s appreciation for the land. While he was

a capable horseman who spent decades working cattle for his own outfit and his neighbors, he never defined himself primarily as a cowboy.

As much a craftsman as a painter, Greg Eiselein possesses a technical mastery bolstered by years of operating his own foundry. This hands-on experience with the entire “lost wax” process gives him a unique perspective on bronze sculpture, though he now collaborates with external foundries for production. Despite his expertise, Eiselein remains deeply humble, viewing himself as a lifelong student of his craft. Rather than comparing himself to Western masters, he focuses on his internal “urgency to create” and a fascination with how light transforms color.

Greg Eiselein’s late wife, Colene Sue Eiselein, was more than a devoted partner; she was a cornerstone of his professional success. Beyond her roles as a wife and mother, she enthusiastically championed his artistic career, utilizing her marketing savvy to establish the enduring presence of Greg Eiselein Fine Art within the Western art community.

Greg Eiselein’s artwork has earned a place in prestigious juried exhibitions and auctions at the Yellowstone Art Museum (YAM) and the C.M. Russell Museum. While he continues to receive annual invitations to these competitive venues, his characteristic humility keeps him from viewing his work as a “staple” of these events, and he has chosen not to participate for several years. Instead, he remains focused on creating new work for his own Greg Eiselein Fine Art galleries and private collectors. ■



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Lewistown Art Center... A New Chapter

More than just a building, the Lewistown Art Center has over fifty years of rich history, built by the experiences and community of Central Montana. 2025 brought many changes to the Lewistown Art Center, including a new location and a new vision for the center as they move forward.

The building that has housed the LAC for the past fifteen years was sold in July of 2025 to the Fergus County Council on Aging. The Art Center's new location –

actually two neighboring storefronts – is located at 119 and 121 W Main Street.

Though it is not open yet, the LAC has moved and is settling in. The new location will allow for improvements in flow and access for its patrons. It will also allow for the growth and expansion of their mission in continuing to provide art education, promoting local artist and focusing on the area's art history.

Plans for a dedicated lobby area, an art education classroom and an art

gallery are underway, with a goal of creating spaces that are easily managed by staff and easily accessed by visitors in a single level facility. A newly designed classroom and updates to the building facade are the priorities right now. This will allow more hands-on youth education classes, as well as the addition of some adult education classes as the re-opening progresses. Currently, the youth education is being taught in the schools as after-school classes, with art center staff teaching students in schools throughout the region.

The opening of the lobby and classroom facility is planned for summer 2026, given the planning and remodel continue on schedule. The gallery is tentatively scheduled to open in late 2026 or early 2027. Until then, they will be open on limited days and times.

Looking forward, the board and staff are excited for the new opportunities that lay ahead. Being open and accessible to the public has been a major goal for the board this last year, and they are well on their way to seeing all their efforts come to fruition. To follow their progress, check out their Facebook page or visit their website at LewistownArtCenter.net.

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