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 MONTANA FARM BUREAU FEDERATION

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A photograph of a farmer from the chest up, wearing a dark cowboy hat and a blue and white plaid shirt. He is looking down with a somber expression, his hand resting on his chin. The background is bright and out of focus.

THE PAIN OF FARMER SUICIDE

PAGE 16

MFB FOUNDATION ANNUAL REPORT

PAGE 12

REAL MONTANA IN INDIA

PAGE 22

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WE CARE FOR THE COUNTRY

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ON THE COVER:

Depression and suicide in farming and ranching is multi-layered.

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Hans McPherson

President, Montana Farm
Bureau Federation

“Now is the greatest time ever to belong; your membership does more for you today than ever before. I truly appreciate your membership in this organization and ask you to share the benefits of being a member with your neighbors.”

Unbridled Enthusiasm: A Bright Future for Ag

A few months ago, I was at the local Cenex. It had been a wet, sloppy winter day and the floor had taken quite a beating from people tracking in their dirty boots and shoes. I watched as a young man who obviously had never mopped the floor and felt that he was allergic to the handle of the mop, attempted to clean the floor. I watched for a few moments as he toiled and I thought (sarcastically) to myself, I wonder if that is a picture of unbridled enthusiasm.

As spring was getting closer and we entered what is commonly referred to as “I’ll buy you lunch today which means let’s go over to the neighbors and attend their bull sale” I watched a young couple at a bull sale, going through the bull catalog, walking through the pens and making lots of notes selecting what they hoped would be the new foundation for their beef herd.

During the bull sale you couldn’t help but watch as they turned every catalog page as each bull came in. You could tell by the enthusiasm on their faces which bull they had marked in the catalog that ended up being out of their price range; but they eagerly turned to the next page and said, “Okay, well this next bull we marked will be even better.” Soon they were realizing they had good taste in bulls but so did everyone else. Finally, one bull they had marked was in their budget and they were finally able to buy a bull. The excitement they displayed during the whole process made me think, “Wow, that is what unbridled enthusiasm looks like.”

Recently, Montana Farm Bureau staff and volunteer leaders traveled to Milwaukee, Wisconsin for the American Farm Bureau FUSION Conference. They joined 1,370 other Collegiate and Young Farmers & Ranchers, Women’s Leadership Committee and Promotion & Education Committee members in participating in the Discussion Meet, attending seminars to further their education and going on tours to see how agriculture is done differently in other parts of agriculture in the United States. When I see the future so bright before them and their energy and willingness to learn, I think, “Wow, that’s really a picture of

unbridled enthusiasm.”

When I attend our Montana Farm Bureau Foundation board meeting and see our senior members and former leaders witnessing the fruits of their lifetime of labor coming to fruition by realizing that Montana Farm Bureau is exactly where they wanted it to be; respected in the political community, respected in the agricultural community and respected by other agriculture organizations and business leaders around the state, I see the satisfaction in their faces and I think, “That’s unbridled enthusiasm.”

As I see the current leaders of the Montana Farm Bureau and our Board of Directors, see our great staff, and great opportunities to move this organization forward as we enter our second century of serving Montana farmers and ranchers, I feel unbridled enthusiasm. As I look at our great leaders from the past, great leaders today and the great leaders to come that we have developed through the Young Farmer & Rancher and Collegiate Farm Bureau programs, I see the future is bright for Montana Farm Bureau. Now is the greatest time ever to belong; your membership does more for you today than ever before. I truly appreciate your membership in this organization and ask you to share the benefits of being a member with your neighbors. Ask them to join at this time when we have just expanded our membership benefits program with Ford Motor Company so members receive \$500 Farm Bureau member discount on select Ford vehicles.

While I am not sure the young man at Cenex has a bright future in the janitorial business, I’m certain that the young couple with the new bull will go on to build a great herd and have a great future in agriculture, just as the young people who attended the FUSION conference will return to rule Montana and become great leaders the future for Montana agriculture and Montana Farm Bureau could not be brighter.

CSKT Water Compact Remains Crucial

The success of Montana's agriculture industry is dependent upon water and water right certainty. It is easily the single most important resource for people across Montana, which is why ratification of the negotiated Montana Confederated Salish Kootenai Tribal (CSKT) Water Compact is critical.

Contrary to what compact opponents are saying, the negotiated CSKT Compact provides water right certainty, protects Montana's water users, and ensures a reliable source of water. When the Flathead Reservation was established water rights were reserved through a federal treaty. These rights have been ratified and further defined through several court cases. Federally reserved water rights of the Tribe must, by law, be defined and quantified either through a negotiated agreement or through litigation in the Montana Water Court. The negotiated CSKT Water Compact defines the water rights and settles the legal claims of the CSKT, preventing long term costly litigation and uncertainty.

Recently, compact opponents have proposed to replace CSKT Water Compact that was developed through extensive public participation over a 30-year period with a quickly crafted proposal that was developed without general public participation. They are calling it the "Peoples' Compact" which is odd because they have not included the

people that were parties to the original compact. Their proposal ignores the fact that a negotiated settlement requires acceptance and approval by all parties.

The CSKT Water Compact, which was passed with bi-partisan support in the Montana State Legislature, after many years of negotiation, is currently awaiting Congressional ratification. The compact provides protection for all existing water rights, prevents decades of expensive litigation, and provides certainty to water users across our state. Comparatively, the proposal recently developed by those who oppose the CSKT Compact was constructed without Tribal, State, and Federal parties at the table and without general public comment. If this proposal were to upend the existing negotiated agreement it would most certainly open the flood gates to possibly decades of expensive litigation—putting the water rights of farmers, ranchers, and water users across our state, at risk.

It's important to let our Montana Congressional delegation know that you wish them to support the CSKT Water Compact. Contact: Senator Jon Tester – tester.senate.gov/contact; Senator Steve Daines – daines.senate.gov/contact and Representative Greg Gianforte, Gianforte.house.gov/contact.



John Youngberg
Executive Vice President, MFBF

“ The compact provides protection for all existing water rights, prevents decades of expensive litigation, and provides certainty to water users across our state. ”



The Middle Fork of the Flathead River.

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“ In agriculture we will need to continue driving innovation to improve sustainability, reduce environmental impacts and continue feeding the world. ”

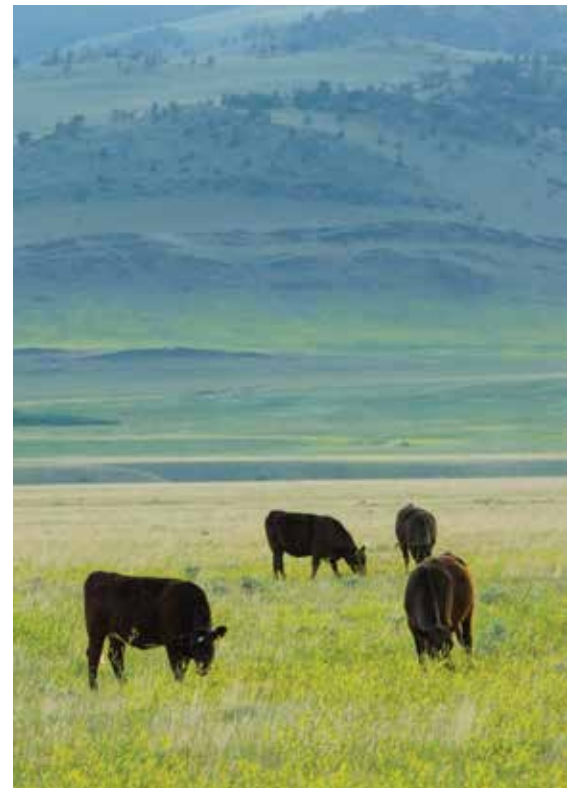
Driving Innovation to Improve Sustainability

Sustainability is a word we hear a lot today. For a cattle rancher it has a lot of meanings. Just like any business, our ranch must be financially stable. We must make enough to support our families and then hope to have a little left over to reinvest in our business. In agriculture, financial sustainability and environmental sustainability are not mutually exclusive as they are often portrayed by people outside of agriculture. In fact, for a rancher they are essentially one in the same. Our living is based off of the environment so if the environment is not sustainable then the business is not sustainable. Any rancher who has remained in business for any amount of time has recognized this relationship.

On our ranch in Southwestern Montana we mostly manage native grasslands. Our primary management tools are cows, fences and a cowboy. The cows harvest the grass, the fences segregate pastures and the cowboy manages where and how much grass is harvested. Sustainability for these grasslands is a balancing act to harvest the appropriate amount of grass. Harvest too much and cause long term damage but harvest too little and the quality of the grass is degraded and the risk of fire increases. When grazing is done properly our cows and calves are happy and healthy, the eco-system is improved for plant life and wildlife and our environment is sustainable. When our happy and healthy calves come home in the fall then our livelihood is sustainable.

Recently ungulates, mainly bovines, have been a topic of discussion by politicians and billionaire activists in regards to our macro environment and climate change. I think cattle are an easy target for these people, as many have no exposure to agriculture in their daily lives. It's much easier to blame the problems of the world on something you don't interact with daily. I am by no means a climate change denier, in fact in the fourth grade I did a science fair project on climate change and the greenhouse gas effect (and this was before The Inconvenient Truth). Climate scientists and climate reports acknowledge that agriculture is a contributor to greenhouse gas emissions; however, many recognize that agriculture is

difficult to analyze and fully understand due to many agricultural practices being closely intertwined with natural carbon cycles. In addition, ruminants, like cattle, emit methane not CO₂, which has different impacts. These details are often omitted when these topics are discussed by politicians, billionaires or in mainstream media. While it is true that ruminant herbivores emit some methane during their digestive process, they play a key role in maintaining healthy grasslands and are an integral part of the natural carbon cycle. Healthy grasslands contribute to a healthy environment and sequester carbon.



In a world where the global population will soon be over 8 billion, humanity's impact will become more evident. The conversations should not be about what we can't do or don't want to do but about moving forward and finding ways to make our impacts more sustainable. In agriculture we will need to continue driving innovation to improve sustainability, reduce environmental impacts and continue feeding the world.



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I Work Out! (Kind Of)

BY MARIAH SHAMMEL

Staying in shape (I use that term loosely) is getting way harder than it used to be and I'm blaming my age. And my kids. Everything but myself and my eating habits. Before I married Favorite Farmer, it was easy. I would just run to the YMCA for my daily cardio/strengthening workout and take whatever time I needed to get my sweat on, whether it was to give myself a pick-me-up, fit into that dress for my bestie's wedding or just try to maintain a healthy lifestyle. Don't get me wrong, I'm not one of those people who obsess over working out (running is pretty much my version of the Bad Place) but I've always played sports and enjoy being somewhat physical. After I got married, I burned enough calories chasing cows around on foot and walking miles along the fence lines, that I didn't worry about my waistline too much.

Then we had a kid and while I still did the above, it was at a much slower pace because I had a littler person who had to keep up with me but at the end of the day I could just strap him in the stroller and head out for my miles-long speed walk to make up for whatever pace I had lost. Then we had three kids which made it virtually impossible...and now there are four.

Anything that remotely resembles a speed walk has gone so far out the window there's no sign of it anywhere. I can only walk as fast as the slowest kid is biking or walking, which is not fast when you find things to stop and look at every six feet, and you can only get a quarter-mile from the house without some kind of dramatic meltdown (usually my own). I try to use the Elliptical we have stashed in the guest room but that usually lasts about ten minutes before some three-alarm-catastrophe needs my attention. Between a nursing infant who has absolutely no feeding schedule (except the one where she eats when she wants, however much she wants, and not a moment too late), three other kids who seem to have bottomless stomachs, and a husband who only has 30 minutes to slam the food down before heading back out to check cows or avert some other calving fiasco (thank goodness he really likes

sandwiches), I usually just eat whatever is left over; then dig into whatever brownies, cookies or other treat I somehow find the time to bake, feeling even better about stuffing my face with them if they include oatmeal or peanut butter.

Times have changed but I still do whatever I can to find ways to work up a sweat, both intentionally and just by design of my current life station. When I give the heifers their five-gallon buckets full of grain and treats, I use them as weights and do bicep curls and shoulder raises. When I pitch the hay in along the bunk line, I do it left-handed until I get half way down, then turn around so I can use all the muscles on my right side. Then there's the 20-pound five-month-old that

“ I'll just keep finding the balance that works for me and try not to be so hard on myself. Most days I'm able to do that but some days, like the one when the rooster attacked me and ripped the only pair of "normal" jeans I could still fit into, it's a little harder to have patience with myself. ”

is strapped to my chest every time I step out of the house. I doubt I could beat anyone in a mile race right now but I'm really good at doing one-legged squats with a child in one arm and the laundry basket in the other, in order to pick up a dropped sock. Actually, if that mile-race involved running across thigh-high drifts of snow to extricate a three-year-old from a face-plant situation, I just might win.

When I go to town and walk past the 24-hour fitness place and see everyone



Mariah with two of her kids.

running on Treadmills in their cute little cutout leggings, I can't help but let a little part of me wish I was one of those people. This "workout schedule" that is currently my life isn't pretty or glamorous and the exercise clothes that go with it are even less-so (whether the unknown substances staining everything is poop or vomit and comes from an animal or child is up for debate) but this is what I have to work with at the moment.

Maybe when our youngest is in preschool and I find myself in town with nothing to do (that's funny) I'll join the gym but for now, I'll just keep finding the balance that works for me and try not to be so hard on myself. Most days I'm able to do that but some days, like the one when the rooster attacked me and ripped the only pair of "normal" jeans I could still fit into, it's a little harder to have patience with myself. After four kids, my physique isn't exactly what it used to be. My abs are pretty much nonexistent and my "batwings" are getting more prevalent by the day but this body has spent three and a half years housing our babies and four more feeding them, is able to flip calves and throw bales of hay and has enough strength to hold everything that's important to me in my arms. That's nothing to be ashamed of.

61st Annual Agents' Meeting Held in Sheridan, Wyoming

Mountain West Farm Bureau Mutual Insurance Company recently held its 61st Annual Agents' Meeting in Sheridan, Wyoming. The annual conference includes recognition of those agents who achieved superior production and overall service during 2018. Jerad Grove was



Jerad Grove,
Top Montana Agent

honored as Mountain West's "Top Montana Agent" for his outstanding sales production.

An elite group of Montana agents qualified for Mountain West's President's Club. This award is presented to those agents who were on goal in three lines of insurance: life, auto, and fire/liability. Those who earned this prestigious award are Will Johnson, Jerad

Grove, Trevor Motichka, Shane Gibson, Jared Vielleux, CJ Mayer, and Randy Moore.

Mountain West Farm Bureau agents have been serving customers across Montana and Wyoming for over 70 years and specialize in building personal relationships within their communities. The local, face-to-face communication and dedication to quality service are what set Mountain West agents apart from the rest.



Will Johnson



Jerad Grove



Randy Moore



CJ Mayer



Trevor Motichka



Shane Gibson



Jared Vielleux

Mountain West's President's Club



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Montana 66th Legislative Session Roundup

BY LIV STAVICK, DIRECTOR OF STATE AFFAIRS, MONTANA FARM BUREAU FEDERATION

At press time, the 66th Montana Legislature is officially on its downhill stretch with less than 30 days until legislators pack their bags and head to their respective corners of the state. March 2 marked the general bill transmittal deadline, so any non-revenue legislation that didn't get transmitted to the opposite chamber by that date is no longer in play. Though the general bill transmittal deadline has passed, bills with associated revenue appropriations have a fast-approaching deadline of April 1.

Thankfully, agriculture has fared well during this first portion of the Legislative Session. Eight pieces of legislation that Montana Farm Bureau supported have already received the Governor's signature and become law, while three other good bills are expected to make an appearance on the second floor in late March. Likewise, the increased budget proposals



for both Montana's Ag Experiment Station (MAES) and MSU-Extension have remained intact.

HB 50, which allows the Department to seek civil penalties for violations of agricultural commodity laws, was set to receive the Governor's signature at press time. Montana Farm Bureau member policy supported this provision as it offers accountability that the system currently lacks. By giving the Department enforcement authority, we are optimistic

that our farmers and their contracts will be better protected under this law.

Halting the movement of bills detrimental to agriculture is equally as important, if not more important, than ensuring ag-friendly legislation makes it past the finish line. We're pleased to report that all fourteen of the bills Montana Farm Bureau opposed were tabled in their respective committees and declared dead after missing the transmittal deadline on March 2. The two bills (SB 97 & HB 271) aimed at stopping the construction of the TransCanada/XL Pipeline both died in committee, and HB 452, which would have expanded state agency oversight of heritage properties onto private lands, lived a very short life. Sen. Mike Phillips' attempt to ban coyote derbies across the state proved unsuccessful, as did his bill to end hunting and trapping wolves near Yellowstone National Park.



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Farm Bureau added HB 31 to the list of bills tabled in committee. HB 31 would have placed a base fee per parcel on all land in Montana, excluding cities and towns, while an additional fee would be placed if the parcel contains forested land or a dwelling. If passed, these fees would amass to one-third of the wildland fire protection preparedness appropriation. It's important to note that this is currently funded through a voluntary assessment western landowners placed on themselves. While the intent of this bill may be to make the current fire funding system more equitable, it fails to accomplish that goal. The fact a landowner who has acquired 40 acres comprised of four 10-acre parcels will pay four times as much in wildfire preparedness fees as an adjoining landowner who owns one 40-acre parcel is a very clear example of this. Even so, assessing a fee by acreage disproportionately discriminates against Eastern Montana landowners who have a lower likelihood of fire on their land. HB 31 was heard in the House Natural Resources Committee March 20. We're pleased it didn't leave the committee.

On the other hand are bills we're persistently trying to push out of committees and onto the Governor's desk. One is HB 286, introduced by Rep. Alan Redfield. This bill clarifies that the state of Montana can only assert an ownership interest in a water right if the well or developed spring is located on trust land, put to use on trust land, and the state has exclusive rights in the groundwater development works. This is a much needed clarification in light of DNRC's newest practice of claiming partial ownership of state land lessee's private water rights if the water is diverted onto state land. The bill was heard in the Senate Natural Resources Committee on March 18, and we hope to see it fly out with the same bipartisan support it received in the House.

While we hear whispers that the work here in Helena may adjourn early, Montana Farm Bureau will believe it when we see it. Our job of tracking new bills as they are scheduled and monitoring bills farther along in the process to ensure no unfavorable amendments are made isn't done until the final hour of the Legislative Session.



➤ Calling On The Capitol Events

Montana Farm Bureau held two successful Calling on the Capitol events: one for young farmers and ranchers and one for all members. The YF&R COTC took place in late January with the all-member event in mid-February. The groups heard from dignitaries including Attorney General Tim Fox, Department of Livestock Executive Officer Mike Honeycutt and Office of Public Instruction Superintendent Elsie Arntzen. The groups were able to sit in on floor sessions and committee hearings and had the opportunity to testify on bills. A highlight was the Montana Farm Bureau 100th birthday breakfast February 13 at the Capitol. The event was attended by Farm Bureau members, legislators and legislative staff. During the breakfast Governor Steve Bullock read a proclamation making February 13, 2019 Farm Bureau Day at the Capitol. Senator Ryan Osmundson R, SD 15 and Representative Alan Redfield R, HD 59 read proclamations recognizing 100 years of Montana Farm Bureau on the Senate and House Floors, respectively.



Young Farmers and Ranchers stop for a photo in the Old Supreme Court Chambers.



Montana Farm Bureau members celebrate 100 years of Farm Bureau.



MONTANA FARM BUREAU FOUNDATION

2018 Annual Report

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

"The Farm Bureau differs from many organizations in that it is not created for personal gain, but rather to render service. It aims to seek out and enlist the talents and time of those who have the ability, time and inclination for work in rural betterment." This quote is an excerpt from the Forward to our 1919 Montana Farm Bureau Program of Work, by F.S. Cooley. This year marks the Centennial Anniversary for our parent organization, Montana Farm Bureau Federation. Our Foundation's mission, vision and program of work makes me proud to say that we exemplify the same commitment to rural betterment that F.S. Cooley spoke of 100 years ago.



In this annual report you will read about numerous examples of our work towards rural betterment, **most notably a re-commitment to rural Montana in the form of \$100,000 of economic development grants.** Our efforts include the dedication of time and financial resources towards leadership development, fulfilling the role of enlisting and enhancing the talent of leaders who work for rural betterment. You will also see projects that supported agricultural education and instructed students throughout Montana about the vital role farmers and ranchers play to the sustainability of our rural communities.

Please also take note of our long list of generous donors that provide the means for our program of work. With their support and the collective experience of our dedicated Board, I am certain that Montana Farm Bureau Foundation has the means to render service to the betterment of rural Montana for the next 100 years.

Hans McPherson, President

MISSION

Support Montana agriculture through education, research, and community support, with a special emphasis for the development of our youth.

CENTENNIAL COMMUNITY INITIATIVE

Rural areas are being left out of Montana's rapid job growth. Newspaper headlines warn that as many as 10,000 jobs are at risk of disappearing in rural Montana over the next five years as small business owners are nearing retirement and there's nobody willing to buy their companies and keep workers employed. Although rural development is a focus for the state of Montana and many organizations, more must be done.

2019 will mark the 100th birthday for our parent organization, Montana Farm Bureau Federation. Our Foundation Board of Directors has established the MFBFo Centennial Community initiative to celebrate our first 100 years and renew our commitment to the betterment of rural Montana. This centennial initiative will result in a \$100,000 investment towards economic development in rural Montana during 2019.

Projects that could be funded through the Centennial Community Initiative:

- Creating a business plan to attract start-up capital.
- Providing matching grant money for large economic development projects.
- Purchasing equipment needed for a rural business.

It is our goal that our economic development grants will enhance and improve economic growth where it is needed most, within our rural communities.

For more information or a grant application go to mfbf.org/foundation or contact Scott Kulbeck at scottk@mfbf.org or 406.587.3153.

PROGRAM OF WORK

Supporting Ag Education & Awarding Scholarships

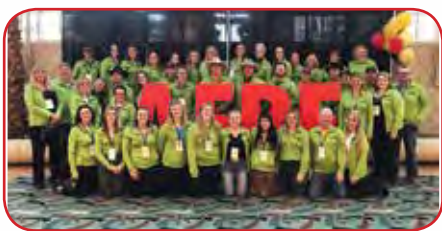
MFBFo supports youth education and leadership development by working with organizations such as Montana FFA Foundation, Montana 4-H Foundation and the MFBF and Collegiate Young Farmers & Ranchers programs. Our Foundation provided over \$11,000 in scholarships and another \$9,500 in program funding during 2018 so that Montana youth can receive the training and education they need. Montana Farm Bureau Foundation provided more than \$5,000 worth of agricultural education materials to classrooms and organizations throughout Montana.

Youth Speech Contest

Our annual MFB Foundation Youth Speech Contest allows 7th, 8th and 9th grade students to develop valuable public speaking skills and compete for cash prizes. We annually invite the contest's top 20 speakers to compete at the state FFA Convention and award \$1,000 to the top five orators.

Leadership Development

Our Foundation is in our 6th year of providing tuition scholarships for members of the REAL Montana program (Resource Education and Agriculture Leadership). Participants analyze complex issues associated with agriculture and natural resources while receiving intensive leadership training. MFBFo is a major sponsor of the Young Ag Leadership Conference, which annually attracts over 150 of Montana's future leaders and allows them to network and hone their leadership skills. Our financial support included funding to help youth attend the 2019 AFBF FUSION Conference in Milwaukee, WI this March. Overall, forty-five Montanans attended the conference which featured workshops and training designed to develop skills necessary to become leaders for agriculture.



"One of my students, who has participated in your Youth Speech Contest for three years, has advanced to the National FFA level in Prepared Speaking. I firmly believe that your contest, along with her participation in FFA Creed Speaking, is what allowed her to achieve this honor." *Cassy Tintzman, Victor High School Agriculture Educator*

MINI-GRANTS

Montana Farm Bureau Foundation awarded ten \$1,000 mini grants during our 2018 fiscal year. Here are a few examples of the Mini-Grants awarded and projects supported:

Power and Lights for the New 4-H Building

Meagher County 4-H Council - The Foundation had previously helped to fund Meagher County's new 4-H building through a mini-grant. During 2018 we awarded another mini-grant that will help in completion of power and lights for the new structure.

Gallatin Valley Farm Fair

Gallatin Valley Agriculture Committee - This three-day event is held for over 1,200 fourth-graders. Students attend 16 workshops on agriculture production, agricultural science, plant and animal science, and environmental opportunities affiliated with each agriculturally related area.

Fort Benton High School Greenhouse

Fort Benton FFA Alumni Association - Our mini-grant helped to fund the installation of a greenhouse that broadened the students'

knowledge of plants and crops and gave them an introduction to plant based sciences.

Montana Mini Lamb Jam

Montana Wool Growers Association/Lewis & Clark County Farm Bureau - This event promoted the consumption of American lamb and featured several chefs who prepared lamb dishes for attendees to sample. Information regarding American lamb, how to cook it, where to find it, and other resources were distributed to over 200 people at the event.

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MFB Foundation envisions a future where agriculture is thriving in Montana, younger people are attracted to our farms and ranches, urban and rural residents understand and support agriculture, and the communities where Montana's ranch and farming families reside are healthy and vibrant.



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Despair in Montana:

The sad story of farmer suicides

BY REBECCA COLNAR

If you are part of the farm or ranch community, you probably know someone who has chosen to end his or her life. Suicide tends to be a taboo issue in society and especially more so in small communities. Although farmers and ranchers live and work in the beautiful places of Montana, financial despair, isolation, the inability to control Mother Nature and markets, as well as the cultural stigma of asking for help, can lead to depression and in the saddest cases, suicide. This feature story offers a combination of people sharing their personal tales about suicide of a loved one, dealing with depression and how to find help and hope.

In memory of David Graft, wheat farmer, Floweree October 13, 2014

Voice of Linda Graft, Dave Graft's wife of 39 years.

David Graft's grandparents homesteaded in Floweree and over the years the farm became a large wheat farm. From the time he was 12-years-old, Dave worked on the farm. He graduated from the University of California and returned home to continue his career based on his love of farming. At one point, one of his uncles married into a family who had cattle; the cattle ranch was based about 50-miles away, but the cows were shipped to the farm for the winter. There were 65 miles of fence to keep repaired and in working order at the farm and numerous pieces of machinery for four separate places.

We have one son and two daughters. While the children were growing up, our family lived in Great Falls while Dave commuted to the farm in Floweree. Once the children were out of high school, David and I moved to the farm; our son worked there for about 10 years before deciding to get a job at the Calumet Refinery about six weeks before Dave's death.

The corporation supported eight families and three hired men. Dave ran all the farming and machinery for both places and from the fall through April 1 he took care of the cows. There was always work to do; my husband labored 90-120 hours each week. He lived and breathed it. People around town who knew the situation said Dave was the glue that held everything together. He was diligent and responsible.

I never thought there was a problem; we had a good marriage and we were close, but he kept his struggles away from me. We had no problem with money or the books. He ran a good ship as a farmer. He had a knack for planting things on time. Many farmers would wait until they saw Dave in the field either planting or harvesting, and only then would go into their fields.

He was a big supporter of his son in football and wrestling and daughter in target shooting. He had very kind eyes, but he was built like a Grizzly bear and looked like a Scotsman. He made you feel safe to be around him.

The day Dave died, it was an Indian Summer, probably 65

degrees. A nice day. I always served breakfast to him and the hired help. That day after breakfast when he was heading out to work, I asked him if he'd be home for lunch. He replied, "I might or might not." I knew he might have to make a parts run, so I said, "Will you stop by Burger King for something?" He replied, "I might."

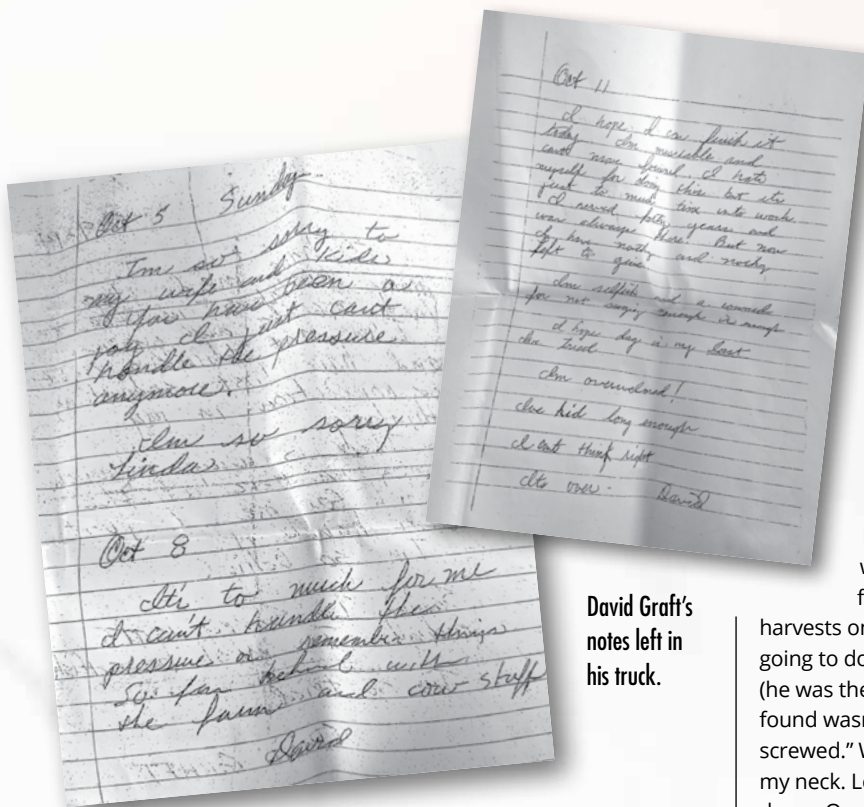
After he left, I went upstairs to do some sewing. Our daughter, Arin, had friends coming to town; I wasn't sure when they were coming as they were bird hunting elsewhere. About 8:30 a.m. or so I heard a shot. I didn't hear anything else, but didn't think much about it because it was hunting season. Lunch came and went and Dave hadn't come in but I wasn't alarmed since we had discussed he might grab lunch in town. I put food in the crockpot and I went back to a mini-quilt I was sewing. Our friends, Dennis and Joannie, showed up and we had coffee and cookies, then they wanted to visit with Dave. I told them he might have gone into town but he might be out in the field and told them where to look.

After they left, they drove about a mile to the highway and saw Dave's pickup as well as another man who turned out to be someone putting in fiber optic cable. Dave had had an appointment with the man at 2 p.m. and that was the man who found Dave and had called the Chouteau County sheriff. Apparently at that point, Dennis and Joanie showed up. Dennis had guns and dogs and the sheriff was giving him the grill. The sheriff's department first treats everything as a potential murder.

At this time, I didn't know this was going on. About 4 p.m. one of Dave's cousin's sons walked in the house. I'm not used to seeing this young man come in and I said, "Do you need something?" He said no, and seemed to be stalling. He stayed and visited for a while, then he said, "You're not going to town, are you? I said no,



The Grafts share their favorite photo of David.



David Graft's notes left in his truck.

it's close to dinner time."

He kept stalling and then said he had to go. It was about 5:30 p.m. and I heard the door open. I was about to say to Dave, "We live in the time of cell phones, why didn't you tell me you were going to be late? I didn't want dinner to go bad."

But it was our son. He grabbed my arm and told me to sit down. He said he had to tell me something that wasn't pleasant.

He said, "Dad died." I said, "My dad died?" At this time my dad was having some minor heart surgery that day so when he said Dad died, I thought he meant my dad, Arnie. I said that was sad, but he had had a lot of good years. Then he said, "No. My dad. Dad passed away."

I answered, did you just say, "David died? Oh my God, how do you know this?"

He responded, "The sheriff is here. They ascertained everything."

Dave was a big guy and although he was healthy, I said, "He had a heart attack?"

Bryce confirmed it was a heart issue and then said, "He shot himself. In the heart."

Notes and thoughts

We weren't aware Dave left notes for us in his truck until the next day. The sheriff had found the suicide notes in the truck at the scene and took them as well as the rifle and his wallet to be evidenced in. They were released the next day.

David had just been talking about how much he was looking forward to retiring, but it seemed he worked for 50 years and found out he couldn't retire. There was nobody to take his place on the farm, nor were there any plans to find someone. I know he had his ups and downs, but I'm not convinced he had severe depression.

Arin had gotten married four weeks before and everything seemed to be really lovely. The last two weeks I had with him, I told the kids, "I don't know what it is about Dad, but he's not

stressed. He's very peaceful." I realize now he had made his final decision.

It's sad when someone gets to the point where they feel they have no options. The way the corporate structure was in the family, things were done with a handshake and not listed on paper. It had been incorporated as an S corporation in the 60s.

Write it down and have your own lawyer. Just because it's your dad, uncle or grandpa, don't presume there won't be issues after they die. That's when people get greedy. He lived through 50 harvests and he worked three men's normal work time during those years. It's enough to wear anybody out.

Sometimes you realize you can't change the outcome. I remember David was talking to his best friend, Jeff. Jeff was saying he was going to retire and was talking about future plans. David, who had completed more than 50

harvests on the farm, said to Jeff he thought he knew what he was going to do, but one day when he went into to the main farm office, (he was the vice president of the corporation) and whatever he found wasn't good. He looked at Jeff, looked at me and said, "We're screwed." When he said that, I had the hair stand up on the back of my neck. Looking back on it, what he was promised wasn't written down. Our corporate lawyer had told me he was there for me, but when Dave died, he suddenly told me he couldn't help me due to a "conflict of interest."

I was told I had 10 days to vacate a seven-room house. I was naïve, I was alone and I was in shock.

Advice for families of suicide

In Great Falls, Benefis Health System has an amazing Suicide Program three times each year lasting six to eight weeks and is limited to 12 people. It's led by a licensed therapist; however, she doesn't instruct you. You share your experiences with others who have lost loved ones to suicide and you voice what you're feeling.

Suicide is a choice. I know he was hurting, sad and felt he had no options. The domino effect hurt a lot of us. It's important to get professional help, but I know two things: Men in Montana don't ask for help and those who are serious about ending their life don't tell you. If you have no warning, you can't stop what you don't know. In this case, it's hard to comprehend when you feel there is no way out; what you were promised is not there.

If you are part of a farm or ranch family business, make sure you have what you are owed down in black and white for your husband or wife. Check on how Social Security is set up. In this case, Dave did not have to pay full Social Security the way the corporation was organized. Since he was a "corporate executive" they can elect to not pay Social Security. Keep in mind that will kick your surviving spouse in the guts. David had carried life insurance which saved me for a couple of years. Make sure you have life insurance, and make sure it will pay the benefit even for a suicide. Have a good lawyer.

When Dave committed suicide, it was hard to tell people what happened. We said it was a heart issue, which it was technically because he had rigged up a rifle and shot himself in the heart. The day after he died, they let us see him. He had the most peaceful look on his face. All the tension was finally gone.

In memory of David Graft, wheat farmer, Floweree

Voice of Arin Graft, Daughter

For my siblings and me, our dad was our hero. We always felt safe and protected with him and he had such a gentle heart. He was a phenomenal artist and creative person. He sold his artwork to make some extra money to buy us things like the tennis shoes that we “just had to have” as children. He always wanted what was best for his family. He was a wonderful husband, father and grandfather. He had many friends and people thought highly of him. Later in life, my siblings and I called him “Big Wave Dave,” as we’d see him on the farm working in Hawaiian print shirts. When people find out I’m Dave’s daughter, they still tear up when they talk about him. He was loved by so many people. Words can’t describe the person that he was.

When Dad committed suicide, I was living in Kalispell. I had talked to him the night before and he was in good spirits. There was nothing to make me think he was preparing to end his life. I knew he was looking forward to retiring and spending time with his family.

The day dad died, Mom had called me that day (I had friends heading over to the farm) to say she couldn’t reach him. Later that day, I was taking a dance class and wasn’t answering my phone, but I saw Mom had called about 10 times and my brother-in-law had called me four. When I had a break, I called mom. I was with a good friend at the time. Mom told me to get my friend and sit down as she had some bad news. My grandpa was going to have some heart surgery, so I figured the bad news was about him.

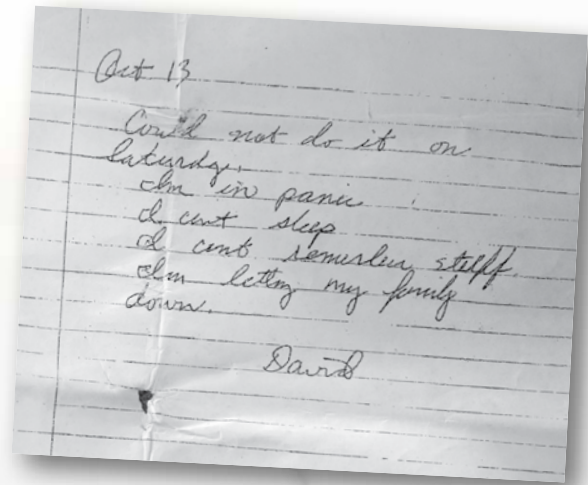
She said, “Your dad died.” I remember I just collapsed. I asked what happened. Because she and my brother didn’t want to tell my sister and me that it was suicide over the phone, she simply said he had a heart issue. I went back to my house, packed my things and drove to Great Falls.

They told me he had been shot through the heart so my first question was, “Did someone shoot him?” Then they told me it was self-inflicted.

It was a rough time in my life and I hope I never have to go through anything like that again. The company I worked for was sold to a larger company the same week that my dad died, so I was unsure about the future of that job. I had only been married five weeks and after my dad’s death and I found out my husband, who hadn’t been around at all, was having an affair. Shortly thereafter I divorced him.

I had so many things that were so traumatic, I realized I needed to talk to someone. I found a grief class in Kalispell but nobody else had signed up and it didn’t work for me. I needed to be around people who could share the experience. The sad part about suicide is you lose a lot of friends. People act like it’s contagious. I had no family in Kalispell and none of my friends checked up on me. It’s like I fell off the face of the earth.

There was so much in my life I couldn’t get past and I kept asking myself, “Why would my dad go to that extreme?” Dad didn’t have a history of depression. It was agonizing to learn he had been attempting suicide for two weeks prior to ending his life; during that time, I never thought anything was wrong. When we received his notes from the sheriff, I realized that a few of the times I had talked to him were on days that he had attempted suicide, but he seemed absolutely fine when I talked to him on those nights.



It was so traumatic I felt I was in a medically-induced coma and was in a hospital bed watching myself live this life but I couldn’t get up. I couldn’t get the vision of my dad in the wheat field with a gun out of my mind. I decided I had to move back home and be closer to my mom and my brother.

My mom and I joined a group at Benefis called Life After Suicide. It’s an 8-week class for those impacted by suicide only. It really helped us. We were with people who were experiencing the same thoughts and feeling as we were. I went to a counselor who, after I told her everything I went through, said, “I can’t believe you’re still mentally sane.” It’s a testament to how strong my parents raised me to be.

We still struggle with Dad’s suicide. I don’t think that grief will ever go away. There are periods where it’s not as much on my mind, but then there are reminders that bring it back.

It seemed he was fine at home, talking to people. His home was his safe place but when he was outside on the farm all of the feelings came back. I think he did have depression but not to the extent that would make him kill himself. He worried about a lot of things, that was his personality. I think everyone has depression issues at some point but this was so dramatic. For us, it came down that he wanted to retire but the way the farm and ranch corporation was set up, the money was based on what the corporation decided. If they didn’t want to pay him, he couldn’t do anything.

When farms and ranches have multiple families involved, each family needs to have their own lawyer to review the documents to see how everything is set up with how you can retire. There is nothing we can do to get dad’s retirement. His whole life he was told he would have a certain amount but it wasn’t documented. My dad was told one thing but never saw it in detail. What do you do? That was the position—he had nothing; “I’ve worked for 40 some years and I have nothing.”

My dad farmed his whole life and my brother puts it in perspective. “He was a farmer, but he was considered the ‘hired man.’ Hired men don’t have corporation stock.” It came down to him wanting to retire and he wanted to enjoy the rest of his life and he figured that wasn’t going to happen. That realization drove him to that final point; he felt he had nothing to fall back on.

What’s ironic is my dad talked other people out of suicide multiple times. I don’t think we ever imagined the person committing suicide would be our dad.



A look at depression

Voice of Karl Christians, Lewis & Clark County Farm Bureau President

"While we have not had an immediate family member commit suicide, we have had members suffer from depression. We have had friends take their lives, but they were younger (less than 26 years old at the time). I grew up in a family that didn't believe depression was real and always heard the comments, "They just need a kick in the butt" or "Depression? That's crap!"

My wife Rae Lynn, who is a nurse, has family members who have struggled with depression and treated it clinically—getting professional help and controlling it with medication. Rae Lynn understood what depression looked like, while I was clueless, and even carried on some of my family thoughts. It wasn't until our son was diagnosed with depression that I realized it was a serious thing.

With my son, who was in middle school at the time, I can almost pinpoint through pictures when it took hold. He had always been photogenic with a happy smile and bright-eyes. When the depression took hold, he had a forced smile and his eyes weren't bright and shiny. He looked as if he didn't even want to be in the photo. If you looked at those pictures over a couple of years, you could tell something was going on. It took us a while to figure it out, but once Rae Lynn recognized it as depression, we got him to a youth counselor and got him the medication he needed.

He denied it for a time. He would take the medication for a while and feel better, then take himself off of it. It took a couple of years

➤ "Man Therapy"

Lewis & Clark Farm Bureau was approached by Jessica Hegstrom (who is now the Lewis & Clark Suicide Prevention Officer) about supporting "Man Therapy." This is a suicide prevention effort that takes a lighter approach to influence people. It lets you know it's okay to be down and provides humor to deal with it. The L&C Farm Bureau board agreed to whole heartedly support it and are doing what they can to promote it by putting up posters, supporting the website, Facebooking it and mentioning it whenever they can. It's a program that was developed in another state, but has invited counties Farm Bureaus to partake in the program.

Learn more at www.mantherapy.org.

for him to accept that he had depression. He'd sometimes call me from school and say he couldn't make it through the day. I'd pick him up and we'd drive around and talk. We really couldn't figure out what triggered it, although winters were and still are hard. It's important that parents make a kid talk if they suspect he/she has depression. Don't let them sit in the bedroom alone. If you think there is a problem, seek help. Ten years later our son is doing well and has taken himself off the medication, but he's especially careful in the gloomy months to talk to people and keep busy.

If you're diagnosed with depression, get help. Guys say, "I don't need a shrink to tell me what's wrong." But that's just not true. I still fully don't understand depression, but it is a type of chemical imbalance. I've seen it and it's real.



MONTANA AG SAFETY PROGRAM

- Keep your family and friends safe and reduce your liability.
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- Learn how to reduce 4x4 and side-by-side accidents and deaths on the farm and ranch.
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- Work with livestock safely and efficiently with the use of low stress cattle handling procedures.
- Accidents cost money, change business plans, disrupt lives, and could cost you your business – Learn how to protect your way of life through good safety procedures and policies.
- Safety is an attitude! Attitudes are contagious! Is yours worth catching?
- Plan Your Safety! Work Our Plan!



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In memory of Dick Tyler, wheat farmer, Big Sandy Committed suicide: September 2016 Voice of Darla Tyler-McSherry, daughter

My 82-year-old father committed suicide in September 2016. We believe it was due to health issues which created the perfect storm of circumstances.

Dad had an eye disease that he had dealt with pretty well for a while, but it got to the point that he was not able to be outside farming. My brother, who worked on the farm with him, kept dad updated on the planting, harvesting and other farm-related activities. We speculate that the message running through my dad's head for the year he was unable to farm was, "I can't be out there. What good am I?"

We were so close to that situation that we didn't see it. We didn't have the luxury of a 30,000-foot view. We ran out of time and we didn't even know the clock was ticking.

“Losing your identity is a huge area of stress for many farmers and ranchers. There are many ways to lose your identity in farming and ranching including financial failure, poor health and strained relationships.”

Depression and suicide in farming and ranching is multi-layered. First, there are the economic challenges of making ends meet. Ag is so dependent on things you can't control like the weather or markets. Secondly, it's a cultural challenge to ask for help. If you ask for help, it means you're weak. "Grandma eked out a living during the Depression, why can't I?" people think. There is a lot of pressure to continue a farm or ranch and a lot of expectations.

In addition, there is social isolation. A lot of counties have lost population. You see many old farmsteads disintegrating and there is less than one person per square mile in 10 Montana counties. There are not many folks to connect to, especially when you need help. Another factor is farming and ranching is a thankless job. Nobody thanks you for what you do, yet as a farmer or rancher you keep everyone alive with good food and materials.

Losing your identity is a huge area of stress for many farmers and ranchers. There are many ways to lose your identity in farming and ranching including financial failure, poor health and strained relationships. I want to tell people that you are so much more than what you do. If you don't seed another acre, you are still a special, important person.

One evening following my father's suicide, I was talking on the phone with one of Dad's friends. In this call, he said, "When your dad would see someone in town walking down the street, he would stop and ask in earnest how they were doing. He wasn't asking to be nosy or gossipy, he genuinely cared how they and their family were doing."

It is one of the most beautiful things anyone has said to me about my dad since his death. The single most important concept

I want to share with others is just that: ask in earnest and listen to help prevent suicide in farming. That's what encouraged me to start my non-profit organization, Ask In Earnest, which is geared to suicide prevention especially in farm and ranch families.

I want to teach others how to prevent suicide and provide strategies for people to deal with someone who is depressed and potentially suicidal. Two-thirds of suicides are by guns. I am not advocating gun control here, but if you are worried about someone committing suicide, have an honest conversation about putting the guns away for a little while. It helps if you can have a mental health professional involved with this conversation.

There are more and more telehealth options online which could be helpful in rural areas. Going to town to see a therapist could take at least a half day. Telehealth programs can potentially help people who need it. I have to admit, I can't ever imagine my dad saying he needed to talk to a mental health professional.

Two years after my dad committed suicide, I lost my husband. I wished my dad had been there to help me deal with that death. Ask In Earnest gave me the impetus to get out of bed and channel my grief to try to save another farm family from tragedy.

I'm hoping that after someone looks at Ask In Earnest it might spark a conversation, it might have someone say, "I need help."

Visit www.askinearnest.org to learn more about suicide prevention.

Editor's Note: Darla Tyler-McSherry was scheduled as a lunch speaker during the 2018 Montana Farm Bureau Convention. Sadly, she had to cancel due to her personal tragedy.



The Montana Department of Health and Human Services has a website dedicated to suicide prevention and helpful resources. It offers everything from "Taking Care of Your Family Member After Treatment in the ER" to "Preventing Suicide Among Men in the Middle Years." Got questions? Call Karl Rosston, LCSW, Suicide Prevention Coordinator, 406-444-3349 or email krosston@mt.gov. Visit <https://dphhs.mt.gov/suicideprevention/suicideresources> for more information.

Suicide Warning Signs

The American Foundation for Suicide Prevention has identified the following as **possible warning** signs that a person is at risk for suicide:

Listen to What a Person Says:

If a person talks about:

- Killing themselves
- Feeling hopeless
- Having no reason to live
- Being a burden to others
- Feeling trapped
- Unbearable pain



What are Their Actions?

The following are some behaviors that may indicate risk, especially if related to a painful event, loss or change:

- Increased use of alcohol or drugs
- Looking for a way to end their lives, such as searching online for methods
- Withdrawing from activities
- Isolating from family and friends
- Sleeping too much or too little
- Visiting or calling people to say goodbye
- Giving away prized possessions



- Displaying Aggression
- Displaying Fatigue

What is Their Mood?

A person at risk for suicide may display one or more of the following moods:

- Depression
- Anxiety
- Loss of interest
- Irritability
- Humiliation/Shame
- Agitation/Anger
- Relief/Sudden Improvement



MentalHealth.gov provides a list of possible risk factors for suicide.

The Suicide Prevention Resource Center has identified three risk factors that should prompt IMMEDIATE action such as calling the **National Suicide Prevention Hotline (1-800-273 TALK)** or going to the nearest emergency department:

- Talking about wanting to die or to kill oneself
- Looking for a way to kill oneself, such as searching online or obtaining a gun
- Talking about feeling hopeless or having no reason to live

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REAL Montana Class experiences people, culture and farms of India

A once in a lifetime adventure

STORY BY REBECCA COLNAR

India is the antithesis of Montana in terms of population. Montana has 1 million people spread over 147,000 square miles. India has 1.35 billion people spread over 1.2 million square miles. In November 2018, Class III of the REAL Montana program spent 12 days in India exploring the country's natural resources, culture, and history. (Resource Education and Agriculture Leadership (REAL) Montana is a comprehensive two-year program offering in-depth education and training in the agriculture and natural resource industries.)

Bonita Cremer, a rancher from Melville and chair of the Montana Farm Bureau Health & Safety Committee and Promotion and Education Committee, remembers when the REAL Montana group first arrived in the country.

"Due to some flight delays, we had about an hour of sleep before we started touring Mumbai," Cremer said. "Our first experience was a fish market located on a large covered dock where fisherman haul in their catch. It was overwhelming with the sounds and smells as our first introduction to India. There was an auction taking place with bidders from local markets and smaller hotels and restaurants. This is a very old, historic port city. People here looked very elegant all of the time. The women were dressed in the traditional saris or in punjamas, which are everyday wear."

During their short time in Mumbai they met with the American Consulate and visited the residence of Mahatma Gandhi.

After Mumbai, they flew to Delhi, a more modern city that has been rebuilt about seven times. "It has wider streets,

sidewalks and more green space than Mumbai. There are mosques and Hindu temples," Cremer explained.

In Delhi the group met with the Federation of Indian Mineral Industries, Indian Agricultural Research Institute, and Corteva Agri-Science, a division of DowDuPont.

"We visited with Indian Mineral Industries about their coal mining industry. They have some of the same challenges we face with a lot of environmental pushback. The next generation wants more to be done to address climate change; however, the staff noted the next generation must understand why coal mining is necessary."

India has a goal of generating enough electricity to supply their country with energy 24/7 by 2025 which they don't currently have. (One of the farmers told them that there are only certain hours they can run their irrigation pumps.)

While in Delhi the group had the opportunity to celebrate the Diwali Festival with a local family. "We were invited to the home of our tour company owner to celebrate Diwali. Diwali is the Festival of Light, it is all about bringing in good fortune, good health and celebrating a good life," Cremer said. "Imagine Christmas, New Year's Eve and July 4th rolled into one with special holiday foods, music and gifts. We shared Hindu prayers, enjoyed delicious traditional Indian foods and danced to street drummers. Keep in mind there were twenty-one of us in this group, truly strangers in a strange land, yet the family insisted we celebrate with them. We were treated to generous hospitality."

The next day, the group traveled to Agra where they visited a sugar cane factory; it wasn't running while the group was there, but they met with the growers from the co-op.



The REAL Montana Class at the Taj Mahal.



Visiting the Beauscape Farm that exports marigold seeds to German organic farmers.
PHOTO COURTESY OF REAL MONTANA.



Farm equipment is small and antiquated.

PHOTO COURTESY OF JILLIEN STREIT.

"In addition to sugar cane, they grow a lot of cotton, rice and sorghum alfalfa along with other crops to feed livestock. There was a lot of rice being grown," Cremer noted. "We learned that the Indian government doesn't allow private land ownership of more than 20 acres, with the average size being four acres, although there are farmers who have found ways to be larger. There is a lot of work done by hand. Apparently, there is a huge range of soils; it's very fertile land."

Leaving Agra where they toured the Taj Mahal, Agra Fort, and a small diversified farm, a train transported the group to Ludhiana where they visited the Punjab Agricultural University, a cooperative bank, the Beauscape vegetable and flower seed farm, and Gill farm, a family operation that grows seasonal vegetables, marigolds, and other cash crops. The last day in India included a tour of the National Dairy Research Institute at Karnal and a rice mill.

Cremer enjoyed interacting with farmers. "The first farm we visited was the most primitive; they grew vegetables and fruit. Those foods stay local and although rice is a huge export, India is very protectionist. They don't do much importing except some pulse crops. However, India's middle class is expanding and there is potential for huge market growth. There is a lot of governmental control over agriculture, and growers know they will only make so much money on their crops. For instance, the

government decides how much sugar cane can be planted; that's how their system is designed."

The endless crowds proved slightly challenging for Montanans who are accustomed to so much open space. "We traveled into the "country" but it never seemed like a rural area. It is so populated. If you go 100 meters and don't see another person, something is wrong," Cremer said.

“ The farmers were surprised that Montana grows what they call dal (lentils) and chana (chickpeas). ”

Jillien Streit of Chester grows pulse crops—a mainstay of India—so she was interested in seeing agriculture in this foreign land. "The farmers were surprised that Montana grows what they call dal (lentils) and chana (chickpeas). There is an isolationist mentality, so the farmers were amazed to discover that Montana ships peas and lentil here. A lot of that stems from the fact the government doesn't tell them about it."

The Hill-Liberty-Blaine County Farm Bureau secretary explained that as a

pulse crop producer, she was intrigued to see the sheer number of people and experience the way they eat, many with a vegetarian diet with pulse crops as their main protein source. "They eat them morning, noon and night. The way they eat them, though, is different. In the U.S. we mainly turn them into ingredients (like hummus), but in India, they eat them in their whole form turning them into curries and dishes like that."

In Ludhiana, the group visited several farms including a large-scale farm that grew only marigolds. Although the average farm size is less than an acre, the Beauscape Farm grew flowers on 500 acres and the farming was done by hand. The farm has a niche market selling marigold seed to Germany for a pesticide.

"Apparently, German farmers with organic crops plant the marigolds seed, then once the plant blooms they plow it under; the marigolds work as a natural pesticide," Streit said. "I was intrigued how a third-world country found this German market, especially when you see places in India that don't have electricity."

A visit to a basmati rice facility was eye-opening for Streit, as it was a manufacturing plant with dim lights and multiple layers of production; very different than processing plants in the U.S. "There weren't many safety precautions and the massive amount of labor was amazing to see. They don't want to mechanize because they want to keep



people employed."

The group repeatedly learned a huge difference exists about what farmers said versus what government officials said. "The farmers said their government was very disconnected and they mistrust their government. We heard undertones that farmers want to export more but the government tells them they don't need to export anything."

A visit to a co-op with 1700 farmers sharing equipment and fertilizer, reminded Streit of home. "When we first started growing pulses all of the farmers purchased rollers together and figured out how to move product together. We live a world away but the spirit these farmers had at this co-op was the same spirit we felt with ours."

That kindred feeling among farm families was apparent during a visit to the home of the Gil Farm owner in the Punjab region. "He talked about how much it meant for him to have a multi-generational farm and how much it meant to have his grandson go out with him. We were all sitting around and none of us wanted to leave. We had found home there sitting with a farm family, just talking."

One of the unfortunate aspects of the trip was the air pollution. "Even though it can be frustrating to have the Environmental Protection Agency and its regulations, going to India made me appreciate that we have environmental oversight," Streit acknowledged. "To me, the pollution in the country was hardest and saddest to see as the air quality was terrible. We take for granted our beautiful



Bonita Cremer at the National Dairy Research Institute at Karnal.

blue skies in Montana. You think the air quality during our fire season is awful, but they live with that every day. Even though EPA can be cumbersome, we are blessed to have clear skies and clean water, trash management and sewer service."

The farmer reflected on the experience. "It was a test in open mindedness. It's a colorful, vibrant culture. The environmental challenges are overwhelming, but they make up for it with their hospitality."

Jeff Welborn who serves as a state senator from Dillon, noted that because of the legislative session, he had to leave before the end of the trip, primarily missing the segment touring Indian farms.

"India is hard to put into words, especially its agriculture. They don't have much mechanization, just a few small tractors. A lot of their technology dates back to the 1800s," noted the Southwest

Counties Farm Bureau member. "They do a lot of hand planting and harvesting. Most of what they grow is sold within a few miles of open-air-markets. There are cars, but a lot of times you'd see a whole family riding on the tractor into town," Welborn said. "The first emotion is to feel sorry for them because of their lack of technology, but they don't really know the difference. What they get by with and function as a country is fascinating. For instance, if you look at the way electricity is run into buildings it's very antiquated, yet they are running world-class call centers."

"It was explained that the reason they are purposefully slow to catch up with mechanization is they are afraid to put people out of work," said Welborn. "They're afraid what would happen if suddenly their jobs were replaced with machines. The country is deliberately slow to catch up with the rest of the world in so many areas."

Welborn added that everything they learned came back to the people. "I was impressed by the people. They are hardworking, unpretentious, honest and straightforward. They don't seem to sweat the small stuff. It's interesting to see the largest capitalist country in terms of population is so different than the United States, but we are similar in many ways."



At the American Consulate in Mumbai.

PHOTO COURTESY OF REAL MONTANA.



Telemedicine and MDLIVE

An affordable Farm Bureau benefit

Montana Farm Bureau's newest member benefit provides an easy and inexpensive way for people to be receive a doctor's care from afar without making a visit to their office. This service allows any of MFBF's 21,000 member families to be seen by a physician any time, any place, using telemedicine, which allows health care professionals to diagnose and treat patients from a distance using telecommunications technology.

When necessary, the physician can electronically order a prescription for the patient.

MFBF has now partnered with MDLIVE, the nation's largest provider of telemedicine services. The service costs Montana Farm Bureau members \$4.95 per month, which covers the member, their spouse and all children under the age of 26.

That monthly fee allows for unlimited calls and there is no other cost or fee associated with the service.

"We have seen a need for rural Montanans to have the opportunity to receive a doctor's consultation without large fees or a large amount of travel," said Scott Kulbeck, who manages MFBF's member benefits program. "Montana is a huge state and many times a medical opinion necessitates a long drive for a rural resident. MDLIVE can negate that."

He said a lot of farm and ranch families pay out of pocket for their medical expenses and the MDLIVE member benefit could help those people save a significant amount of money in some cases.

"We realize a phone call may not be able to accomplish everything, but we think it will fill a niche and be appreciated by our members," Kulbeck.

“ We recognize many of your members are busy on the farm and not necessarily nearby a health care provider. This provides them the opportunity to consult a doctor when needed - wherever they may be and whenever they have time to peel themselves away from work. ”

The service is available to all Farm Bureau members, both rural and urban and both farmers and non-farmers.

It could be particularly useful for rural residents because many of them live far from a health care provider, said SarahAnn Whitbeck, MDLIVE's agency and sales training director.

"We recognize many of your members are busy on the farm and not necessarily nearby a health care provider," she said. "This provides them the opportunity to consult a doctor when needed



MDLIVE®

- wherever they may be and whenever they have time to peel themselves away from work."

There is a lack of health care access in many rural areas across the nation, Whitbeck said.

"It can be extremely challenging for many people in rural areas to get to health care providers," she said. "We feel our telemedicine service can help these people get back to their normal lives and get back to restoring their health a lot faster."

Whitbeck said most people have a telemedicine service available through their traditional health care plan but it requires them to pay a fee each time they call in.

"The model we have partnered with on the Montana Farm Bureau plan allows for unlimited calls and then just that small \$4.95 charge per month instead," she said.

The health care professionals who visit with patients are all board-certified physicians with an average of 15 years' experience, according to MDLIVE.

Whitbeck said MDLIVE's research shows that 70 percent of typical office visits to a doctor can be handled through a virtual visit.

"In that type of situation, it makes sense for us to utilize our health care dollars and our time more efficiently," she said. The average wait time for a person who uses the service is under 10 minutes and a typical visit takes 6-8 minutes, Whitbeck said.

The ultimate goal is to provide people with a more convenient and inexpensive way to get the medical treatment they need, when they need it.

For more information about the service, visit mdlivebrokers.com/mfbf or call (801) 288-1400.



COUNTY NEWS



The Issues Advisory Committee members from Montana visit with Dan Gerig, Senator Steve Daines' Ag Legislative Assistant. (Left to Right): Chuck Rein, Dan Gerig, Don Steinbeisser, Jr., Megan Hedges and Tonya Liles.

Four county Farm Bureau members who serve on the American Farm Bureau Issues Advisory Committees traveled to Washington, D.C. February 20-22 to participate in the national committee meetings. These included **Tonya Rolf Liles, Prairie County, Animal Care**; **Chuck Rein, Sweet Grass County, Federal Lands**; **Don Steinbeisser, Jr., Richland County, Environmental Regulations**, and **Megan Mattson Hedges, Hill-Liberty-Blaine, Farm Policy**. While in D.C. the Farm Bureau members not only talked ag policy with other farmers and ranchers but met with staff from Senator Steve Daines' and Senator Jon Tester's office.



Rhonda Boyd, SW Counties Farm Bureau, reads "What's In My Lunchbox?" to students.

To celebrate Ag Week March 10-16, **Rhonda Boyd, Southwest Counties Farm Bureau** member and MFBF District 2 Director, read "What's In My Lunchbox?" to students at Alder School. Kids also learned about the My American Farm educational computer game.

Miles Community College Collegiate Young Farmers and Ranchers read to local pre-school students during Ag Week and hosted an etiquette dinner for MCC students.



MCC YF&R read ag books to students during Ag Week.



Miles Community College YF&R Etiquette Dinner.

Phillips County Farm Bureau had a booth at the 40th Annual Ag Day in Malta. They recognized kids who competed in the MFBF MY Ag Literacy Drawing Contest. The county has scheduled an ATV Safety Program in Saco in April.

Northwest Counties Farm Bureau held a Ranch Day at Josh and Sarah Senecal's ranch. The kids saw two calves being born, watched a calf receive its birth vaccinations and participated in a typical ranch day complete with a hay ride. NWCFB provided pizza and Beef Ag Mags for the class. NWCFB was a sponsor of the Mid-term Legislative Update with the Republican Women's Club, Democrat Women's Club and Boys and Girls Club in Ronan.

Upcoming County Events

On April 16 at the Lewistown Fairgrounds, **Fergus County Farm Bureau** will participate in the Fergus County 4-H Ambassador-sponsored Farm Safety Day for first grade students with a grain safety station for Lewistown and surrounding areas. In addition, there will be ATV, electrical, PTO, EMS and livestock and many other stations focusing on farm and ranch safety.

Lewis & Clark County Farm Bureau is hosting its 3rd Annual Ag Day May 14. The East Helena fourth- grade class will attend the

full day event which will be held at Prickly Pear Simmental Ranch in the Helena Valley. Co-Chairs Jim Dusenbery and Jeff Patten currently have 18 stations that consist of topics such as soils, crops, cattle, wool and sheep products, weeds forestry, ice cream, bees, and ATV safety. Another station will be "Farm to Table" which our local legislator, Terry Gauthier who owns the McDonalds in Helena, will be presenting to the students. For lunch, the kids will take a wagon ride to view and learn about various irrigation systems. Ag days has been a huge success the past two years and the kids, parents and teachers have learned a great deal.



Kids learn about livestock at a visit to the Senecal Ranch.

With their ag education momentum going, the **Lewis & Clark County Farm Bureau** and the **Lewis & Clark Conservation District** are working together with the East Helena school superintendent to get an ag program started in the high school. An available teacher's position has been announced (they're currently looking for someone!) and 24 kids are signed up for ag class already. There was a groundbreaking ceremony for a facility March 18 which will include barns and corrals.

Plan, Prepare and Pass It On

The Montana Soil and Water Conservation Society held the workshop "Plan, Prepare & Pass It on: Ag Business Strategies for Today and the Future" early last month. The Sweet Grass, Carbon/Stillwater and Yellowstone County Farm Bureaus sponsored the two-day event. Following are excerpts from Jolene Brown's seminar.

"Are you a Family-First Business First Family?" That's the question Jolene Brown, CSP, CPAE asked at the start her presentation during the "Plan, Prepare & Pass It On" Conference held in Billings. Brown is a farmer in Iowa as well as spokesperson for agriculture, especially regarding families in agriculture. "Ninety-five percent of every conversation I have with farm and ranch families is family first. People tell me they don't want to rock the boat. Everybody wants say they will all get along. That means their ag operation is heading into a future based on habit, tradition and hope. If you want a Family-First Business and it's a hobby, that is fine. But if you want to run your ranch or farm as a legitimate business, you need to be a Business-First Family."

Brown said you need to set the same standards for family members as you would for your employees. "Remember that acceptance in a family is unconditional; however, acceptance in a business is conditional and it's not a birthright," Brown said.

Ask if the senior generation is secure in their future, and what is estimated cost of living for each family unit on the ranch. Does the cash flow match the estimate? Brown stressed that your books must be accurate, timely and transparent.

In addition, think about what each family member can bring to the business, and ask if the business really needs them. "I always recommend that anyone who wants to come back to the family business work in a non-family business for two or three years. Not only will they learn how another business operates, but they will also learn to be an employee."

She listed three false assumptions which fail materialize and cause considerable grief in the family. These include: "Work hard, someday this will all be yours"; "I'm going to retire"; and "Don't worry about your brothers and sisters, they have other jobs; they're not interested in the business."

Brown provided direction for the Business-First Family which is to make sure there is a business plan; have long-term goals for the business; have a structure that includes job descriptions and cash flow; and above all, have an exit strategy.

She said ag family business needs three outside professionals to be a part of the business team: a qualified accountant who can act as a business partner; a good attorney who understand family business set up and who can serve as a family business coach; and a personal financial planner.

She advised having a written code of conduct, plan conflict resolution (go to arbitration if necessary), a plan for regular business meetings (if you have an LLC you must have an annual meeting---take notes). Her suggestion for a meeting is have a



Farm Overview that lists everything from leadership to land use to farm sites to livestock that can be used to make meetings more productive as each team member selects a few topics they wish to discuss during the business meetings.

"It's important to recognize a family member in the business who has done a good job," Brown says. "Show appreciation and remember to compliment them. We often treat strangers with more courtesy than family members."

One of Brown's mantras is that it's essential to know the difference between fair and equal. Dividing up your farm or ranch equally between siblings when one person has done the majority of the work is not fair.

"It's important to realize that doing things like transferring ownership too soon, too late or not at all will doom a ranch family," said Brown. "In addition, you never should believe that more salary and gifting assets are a solution to a relationship problem. You must recognize that agriculture can only be a way of life for those who treat it as a business."

More than anything, the planning guru says to celebrate. Applaud those who have done well and appreciate what you have. Look for humor everyday "Funny stuff happens all the time. Write it down. When the going gets tough, you need humor."

For more information on Jolene Brown visit www.JoleneBrown.com or call 319-643-2429.

**SAVE
THE DATE**

**Montana Farm Bureau Summer Conference
June 11-13, GranTree Inn, Bozeman**

The Centennial Celebration Continues!

Look for more information and registration details in the MFBF May News Brief and on the Montana Farm Bureau Federation Facebook page.

Alphabet Soup: YF&R, WLC and P&E learn advocacy skills at FUSION Conference

It certainly was fusion as the members of the Montana Farm Bureau's Young Farmers & Ranchers, Women's Leadership and Promotion & Education—45 of them—traveled to Milwaukee, WI March 15-18 for the American Farm Bureau FUSION Conference. The conference provided opportunities for networking and workshops that presented insight into how to be more impactful and make a difference in advocacy at the local, state and national levels.

Cody Boyce, president of the Montana State University Collegiate Farm Bureau, competed in the Collegiate YF&R Discussion Meet. "I had a lot of fun competing against young ag leaders from across the country," Boyce said. "I was amazed by their skill and knowledge. It was a great networking opportunity, and I know that I will keep in touch with many of the individuals I met. It can be difficult to state your opinions in such a competitive environment, but it is also a lot of fun to get a good conversation going."

Bonnie Jones, a rancher from East Helena, was one of the WLC members



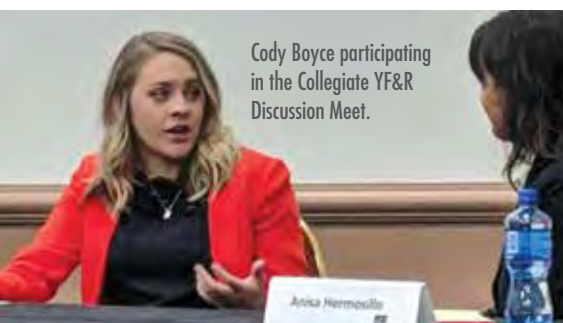
The Montana delegation to FUSION.

at the conference. She thought the conference was amazing. "I highly recommend that anyone who is given the chance should attend. I was able to connect and spend time with many WLC and YF&R members from Montana and many other states. I especially enjoyed the dairy genetics tour which included ABS Global and Blue Star Dairy Farms. Last spring, I attended an A.I. school and subsequently helped my husband A.I. some of our herd. The DeForest, WI ABS site we visited dealt mainly with Holstein genetics. I'm a beef girl, but still found the tour to be very enlightening. I had never seen a dairy prior to this tour and was very intrigued by it."

Jim Sargent, Cascade County Farm Bureau member and ag broadcaster, attended with the P&E Committee. "With my background in ag production and reporting about concerns that our ag folks deal with on a regular basis, I found the message from keynote speaker Redmond

Ramos inspiring," said Sargent. "Redmond presented an amazing outlook on his life. As a corpsman in the United States Marines, Redmond lost his leg while defending and protecting you and me. He brought a message of hope that we all should hear loud and clear in ag production. He said to stop whining, stop feeling sorry for yourself; go out and get it done. Through his story, he encouraged those in agriculture to seek help, accept what you can control and what you cannot, and always continue to recognize your worth. We can all take away a valuable lesson learned and his inspirational message to share."

Lillian Ostendorf, who serves as the western region representative on the American Farm Bureau Women's Leadership Committee, helped with the organization and implementation of FUSION. "I had to go early to the conference, organize and introduce workshops, give the welcome address and network with all ages at the conference to encourage others to learn ways to advocate for agriculture," said Ostendorf. "We talked about ways to manage the opioid crisis; how to inform and interact with the public including reading and providing Accurate Ag Books; and talking about the FFA, 4H and Farm Bureau working together to develop agriculture leaders. I helped set up and serve as a leader for packing food for a community service project, serving as a judge and leading a bus tour. It was an amazing experience."



Cody Boyce participating in the Collegiate YF&R Discussion Meet.



Some of the group on a dairy tour.

Winners of “Montana Ag in Color” drawing contest

The Montana Farm Bureau Federation has announced the winners of the Montana Youth Agriculture Literacy program drawing contest. “Montana Ag in Color” was developed in recognition of National Ag Week, March 17-23, as a creative competition for elementary school children. Each grade was given a different agricultural theme: Farm animals in Montana, Grown in Montana, Cattle of Montana, Noxious Weeds in Montana, Grains of Montana and Agricultural-Related Careers in Montana.

Winners

Kindergarten – Dawson Keller, Richey Elementary
2nd Grade – Lily Schallenberger, Ekalaka Elementary
3rd Grade – Samantha Kosse, Choteau Elementary
4th Grade – Jake Brown, Saco School
5th Grade – Gracy Sieler, Greenfield School
6th Grade – Ana Kanagy, Sy School
Overall: 6th Grade – Kamree Pearson, Greenfield School

“It was fun to be on the selection committee for the Montana Ag in Color contest, which welcomed kindergarten and elementary school students,” said MFB Women’s Leadership Committee’s Carla Lawrence. “It was a difficult task to select winners with all the talented artists who entered the contest. We hope the students who participated in this contest increased their knowledge about agriculture.”

As guests of Montana Farm Bureau, the winners were honored



Governor Steve Bullock with the Montana Ag in Color contest winners and their siblings.



The winning overall entry was drawn by sixth-grade student Kamree Pearson, Greenfield School.

at an award luncheon with First Lady Bullock March 22 in Helena. In addition to being recognized for their drawings, had the opportunity to tour the Capitol and meet with dignitaries.

Montana Farm Bureau announces Washington, D.C. Fly-In

The Montana Farm Bureau Federation is taking applications for the MFBF Fly-In to Washington, D.C. July 10-13. The Fly-In provides an excellent opportunity for its farmer and rancher members to take their voices to Washington, D.C. It's also MFBF's way of rewarding its members for their participation in the policy development process, allowing them to sharpen their skills and take their advocacy to the next level. Attendees will meet with Montana's Congressional Delegation, agency officials, and participate in other meetings as applicable.

The Fly-In applicant must be a voting Century Club member and must be able to demonstrate ways they have engaged in the political process over the past year including attending county Farm Bureau meetings, responding to Action Alerts, contacting elected officials on important issues, testifying on a bill during the Montana Legislative Session and much more. In addition, applicants will be asked to write a persuasive statement about a Federal Level Priority Issue. Trip expenses are covered by MFBF.

“Making the voices of Montana’s farmers and ranchers heard on Capitol Hill is one of Montana Farm Bureau’s main missions. What better way to do it than take our members there for direct contact with our elected officials and agency staff people?” asked MFBF’s Director of National Affairs Nicole Rolf. “I am very excited about

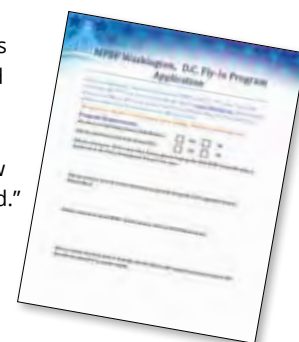
this Fly-In to Washington, D.C. I hope all of our voting members will consider applying for this excellent opportunity.”

Wes Jensen, who serves as District 6 Director, was on the Fly-In in 2018 and said it was very educational. “You learn how the process works and you understand your elected officials need encouragement to keep fighting on those issues that affect you. It’s important, as well, that they see new faces from Farm Bureau, so get involved.”

MFBF Vice President Cyndi Johnson, who participated in last year’s event, praised the opportunity to apply for the Fly-In. “It’s fun to advocate for agriculture, but to be rewarded for that effort with this trip that allows producers to experience this firsthand makes even better advocates. You’ll find that the average person in D.C. wants to hear about agriculture. Remember, the world is run by the people who show up.”

The deadline for applications is May 3; those who have been selected will be notified by May 10.

For an application and more information visit <http://mfbf.org/fly-in>.



By Unlawful Means: The Tragic Saga of Outlaw William "Bill" Gay — By Samuel Phillips

REVIEW BY REBECCA COLNAR

Here is a vignette written about a violent time in Montana's past written by Fergus County Farm Bureau member Samuel Phillips. Phillips, who was raised in central Montana, has written several books focusing on central Montana history. His book Lone Wolf in a Promised Land was reviewed in a previous Spokesman.

This tale covers the life of William Gay who was born in October 1844 in Virginia (later West Virginia) and who ended his life by a hangman's noose in Helena in June 1896. Phillips says in the introduction "The paths William Gay's life would follow were what might best be found in the exaggerations of a dime story novel." He served in the Civil War in Missouri, the Indians Wars of Kansas, married into the Sioux Nation in the Dakotas, was a scout for George Armstrong Custer, participated in the Battle of Washita River in Oklahoma, discovered gold in the black hills and ultimately made his way to central Wyoming and Montana where turned to a life of crime.

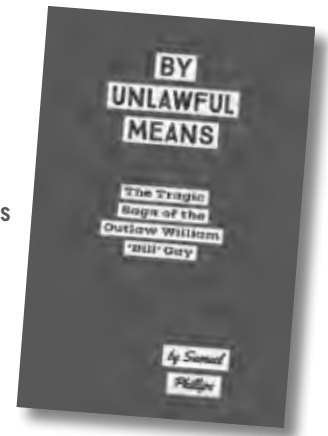
He and his family moved to Sundance, Wyoming around 1887. Little is known what Gay and his extended family did for

a living, but when they were in Wyoming, they stole items from clothing and hardware stores. They were suspected of thefts, so Gay and his daughter, Ella, had a scouting trip to find a place where Gay was more anonymous. They settled on Castle, Montana, a mining town in the Castle Mountains of Meagher County.

Gay found what to be an apparent abandoned mining claim which apparently wasn't abandoned, so the fight was on. As Castle started more on the "bust than boom" thefts and robberies grew more common. As theft escalated, so did hostilities including vigilantes to find Gay and his relative, Harry Gross. As Phillips states in his book, "On April 4, 1893, the arrest of Harry Gross in Castle would set off a chain of events that no one could have imagined would occur in the days, months and years to follow."

The 106-page book closely follows the search for Gay, the killing of a deputy, the posse's search, his time in jail and his final days. Gay maintained that he had been unfairly prosecuted.

People who enjoy Montana outlaw history will find this tale intriguing. It's well-researched and Phillips keeps



the story moving. The softcover book contains several photos of places, letters, newspaper stories and a photo of Gay on his last day. The book is heavy on text so if someone prefers photos to prose, this might not be the book to read. However, once someone starts reading the tale, there's a good chance they will be drawn in to learning more about this outlaw.

Phillips said, "Bill Gay looked like a clerk but had an evil heart. He lived a most amazing life but left a trail of death and destruction. I don't think we will ever know all the bad things he did. His daughter amazingly emerged as a great mother and wife and lived a long life in Oregon. His son Willie lived a long life and raised a large family in South Dakota. Tragically, the other daughter paid a high price with abuse and disease for being his Indian daughter. The people of Meagher County are still traumatized by the actions of Bill Gay."



Purchase for \$20 from Samuel Phillips, 1000 Fountain Terrace Dr., #404, Lewistown, MT 59457. He can be reached at cskp@midrivers.com.



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Be a part of the celebration! Show everyone you are *Farm Bureau Proud* by purchasing these Centennial Celebration items.

Available for a limited time only!

Windmill White & Branding Iron Red Centennial Wine

Wine complements any dinner as well as makes a great gift. Enjoy Yellowstone Cellars exclusive Montana Farm Bureau Windmill White (\$20) and Branding Iron Red (\$25). To purchase the wine, stop by Yellowstone Cellars in Billings or visit www.yellowstonecellars.com then click "Order Online" and go to the Marketplace site. Look for the MFBF wine bottles. Cheers!



Personalized MFBF "Proud Member" Sign

These signs are 12"x18" in size and made of durable Dibond aluminum composite and laminated for a longer life. Display it prominently and show everyone you are a "Proud Member" of the Montana Farm Bureau. Personalized signs are \$50 each. Contact sueanns@mfbf.org to order yours today!



Commemorative Rifle Raffle

This .44 Henry lever action rifle is engraved with the MFBF Centennial logo and Montana Farm Bureau logo. Proceeds from the raffle go to the Montana Farm Bureau Foundation. The winner will be drawn at the 2019 MFBF Convention. Tickets are \$5 each or 6 for \$25. Contact scottk@mfbf.org to purchase Centennial Rifle raffle tickets.



Centennial Belt Buckle

You've got to have this beautiful Centennial logoed belt buckle. Contact alenas@mfbf.org to order one. Buckles are \$100 each and take 6 weeks for production.



Centennial Logo Apparel

Contact sueanns@mfbf.org to order exactly what you want and we'll get the Centennial logo on it for you. Wear your Farm Bureau membership with pride!

Go to www.mfbf.org to visit our Centennial Celebration page for more details and to learn more about our history and upcoming Centennial Celebration events and offerings!