

Summer 2020



Explore RED LODGE

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Explore Red Lodge is a special advertising section of The Billings Gazette

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Red Lodge Songwriter Festival celebrates fifth year

BY CHARITY DEWING
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Songwriters from across the country and Montana will come together Aug. 27-29, for the 5th Annual Red Lodge Songwriter Festival.

"When it all began five years ago, there was no way to tell how fans, sponsors and songwriters would react to Red Lodge," said event co-founder and director, Mike Booth. "After the first year everyone came to me and said, 'you're going to do it again, aren't you?'"

It seemed the answer was an obvious, yes.

"We managed to pay our bills that first year and the support from the community made it an easy decision to move forward with a second festival. That first festival was 10 songwriters and a handful of shows. This year we will host 24 songwriters and produce 22 shows," said Booth.

In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, the hope of many Red Lodge residents is to see a light at the end of the tunnel for festivals and summer events to still take place.

"The bars, shops, cafes and restaurants reopened around Memorial Day, however people



GAZETTE STAFF

Kostas Lazarides of Belgrade, known simply as Kostas, has long been part of the annual Red Lodge Songwriter Festival.

may be reluctant to gather in larger groups for some time. Hopefully that hangover period will ease by August. It will also take some time for the airlines to resume normal flight schedules, which will affect many of our fans and songwriters," said Booth.

With half of the songwriters

from Montana and the other half coming from all over the U.S. and Canada, the event is attracting more talent than hoped for.

"This year we have Nashville songwriters Pat Alger, Kostas, Stephanie Davis, James Dean Hicks, Will Robinson, Wynn Varble and Billy Montana, as well as 18 Rising Stars from Montana,

Wyoming, Colorado, Alabama, Kentucky, Tennessee, Indiana and Texas," said Booth. "We also have our first international Rising Star from Canada, which we are really excited about."

Booth and festival committee members want to keep the concerts within walking distance to accommodate concert-goers. So all of the venues are in downtown Red Lodge.

"Guests can park their car in one place all day and night and walk from venue to venue - we wanted it to be easy to have a relaxing day full of great music, and a great experience," said Booth.

The festival features live performances at Honey's Café, Lion's Park, the Carbon Fork, Snag Bar, Bull and Bear, Bone Daddy's Custom Cycle, Snow Creek Saloon, and the historic Roman Theater. The intimate settings provide a unique and individual experiences for audience members.

"These close-up settings make it very personal. The audience feels like they are part of the show - not just watching it," said Booth.

Please see **SONGWRITERS**, Page 12

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Ginny, left, and Dakota, two wolves new to the Yellowstone Wildlife Sanctuary in Red Lodge, walk around in their quarantine area.

Red Lodge sanctuary will care for 2 wolves

Captives rescued from closing California shelter

BY BRETT FRENCH french@billingsgazette.com

Getting a gray wolf to relax isn't easy. For an hour and a half, Katherine Blackford recently sat on the cold concrete floor at the Yellowstone Wildlife Sanctuary talking to Ginny and Dakota, two wolves recently transferred to the Red Lodge facility.

"That first week they wouldn't lay down or eat while we were around," Blackford said.

The female wolf, nicknamed for writer Virginia Woolf, was slower to "chill out," Blackford added.

"It's really important for the animals' well-being to be comfortable with the animal trainer," said Gary Robson, executive director of the sanctuary. That makes it easier and less traumatic for the trainer and the animal to do tasks like blood draws, he noted.

The two wolves are being held in quarantine at the facility until they are deemed parasite free and suitable for release onto the grounds which also is home to bears, coyotes, a mountain lion and red fox, to name a few of the 35 wild animals housed there. The wolves will occupy an expanded area that now covers 24,000 square feet compared to the 4,500 that was available to the sanctuary's previous wolf, Apache, who died in 2017.

If you go

Visitors will be able to see gray wolves Ginny and Dakota three days a week – Friday, Saturday, Sunday and Monday from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. The sanctuary has reduced hours in the winter.

The cost is \$10 for adults, \$7 for seniors and military personnel and \$4 for children ages 4 to 12. For more information log on to www.yellowstonewildlifesanctuary.org.

The 30-year-old sanctuary is a nonprofit business sustained on donations, memberships and entry fees.

Cali wolves

Ginny and Dakota were driven to Red Lodge earlier this month from Southern California where they had lived most of their lives at the Wildlife Waystation. That 43-year-old facility is shutting down after damage caused by a wildland fire in 2017 and floods in 2019. The Wildlife Waystation was home to about 400 animals including chimpanzees that had been used in laboratory experiments, lions from New Zealand and tigers from Ireland, according to its website.

"Unfortunately for the wolves, if they couldn't find them a home they would be put down," Robson said.

The Red Lodge sanctuary had the space available to house Ginny and Dakota. Then the work began to have them cleared for transfer, which includes permits from state agencies. Dakota, the big male, will also be neutered.

Iconic species

Having the wolves on display to educate the public is a big draw for the Red Lodge sanctuary.

"If you look at the iconic species of the Yellowstone

ecosystem and the American West, the first species that come to mind are bison and wolves," Robson said. "We have Yellowstone in our name because of the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem, not because we are affiliated with (Yellowstone National Park)."

Wild wolves are known to roam the Red Lodge area, trotting along the Beartooth Front in search of prey. Two of the first wolves released in Yellowstone National Park in 1995 migrated to the region. They dened, and the female gave birth to cubs before the male wolf was illegally shot by a local man. At the time the wolves were still under federal protection.

Interestingly, Dakota rode to Montana in a crate built by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to transfer those first wolves to Yellowstone from Canada. The crate had been stored at the Yellowstone Wildlife Sanctuary since it was used to haul that early female wolf from the area after her mate was shot, Robson said.

Captive

Ginny and Dakota were born on a fur farm in Minnesota. With their mother

they were moved to the California facility while still pups. Consequently, they have lived their entire lives in captivity. Blackford described the big male as "pretty outgoing" and with a desire to be "the center of attention." If Ginny claims too much of that spotlight, Dakota will remind his sister of her subordinate role, she added.

"He's definitely the boss," Blackford said. "She won't do anything until he checks it out and gives the OK."

To keep the wolves entertained, Blackford and the other animal keepers will do things like add boxes and boards to their cage, sprinkle cinnamon on their hay bedding and spray elk estrus or red fox urine on boxes.

"She loves boxes," Blackford said.

"They need things to do. They're not like a regular couch potato dog. We want to keep them intrigued and amused."

Early in December the wolves will likely roam the hillside next to the Yellowstone Wildlife Sanctuary discovering new smells and sights to keep them intrigued for a while.

After that, it won't be unusual to hear their mournful howls echoing across the mountain town.

"They are very vocal most of the time," Blackford said. "When we turn off the lights they will howl, talking to the coyotes. When the wind was blowing last week they were howling the whole time."



GAZETTE STAFF

The annual Red Lodge Songwriter Festival brings families together for a weekend of inspiring music heard from local and Nashville songwriters.

Songwriters

From 11

Songwriters will perform their hit songs recorded by country artists like Garth Brooks, Brad Paisley, The Dixie Chicks, Conway Twitty, and Blake Shelton while incorporating story-telling of the music behind-the-scene.

Tickets range from VIP packages from \$1,750-\$1,050, which include lodging and passes. Passes range from \$5-\$150, and even a free show in Lions Park.

And where does Booth

see the festival five years from now?

"It is our dream to grow into one of the largest songwriter festivals in the west and become an annual tourist destination for music fans and songwriters from around the country. In 2025, I see us hosting 50 songwriters, 40 shows at each festival. Remind me of this quote in 2025 and we'll see how we did," said Booth.

For more information on event times, locations and workshop registration, call (406) 690-5988, email mike@beartoothbiz.com or check out redlodesongwriterfest.org.

Red Lodge Songwriter's Festival events calendar

THURSDAY, AUG. 27	7 p.m., at Bull & Bear
RISING STAR SONGWRITERS SHOW #1	RISING STAR SONGWRITERS #10
5 p.m., at Tito's Stage at the Carbon Fork	7 p.m., at Bull & Bear
RISING STAR SONGWRITERS #2	RISING STAR SONGWRITERS #11
7 p.m., at Bull & Bear	8:30 p.m., at Bull & Bear
RISING STAR SONGWRITERS #3	LATE NIGHT JAM - RISING STAR SONGWRITERS
8:30 p.m., at Bull & Bear	9 p.m., at the Snow Creek Saloon
NASHVILLE HIT SONGWRITERS IN THE ROUND - VIP/SPONSOR SHOW	SATURDAY, AUG. 29
7 p.m., at Bone Daddy's	LIVE AT HONEY'S CAFE, SONGWRITER INTERVIEWS & PICKING
LATE NIGHT JAM - OPEN MIC	10:30 a.m., at Honey's Cafe
9 p.m., at the Snag Bar	LIVE AT HONEY'S CAFE, SONGWRITER INTERVIEWS & PICKING
FRIDAY, AUG. 28	Noon, at Honey's Cafe
LIVE AT HONEY'S CAFE, SONGWRITER INTERVIEWS & PICKING	SONGWRITERS IN THE ROUND AT LIONS PARK
10:30 a.m., at Honey's Cafe	1 p.m., at Lions Park
LIVE AT HONEY'S CAFE, SONGWRITER INTERVIEWS & PICKING	RISING STAR SONGWRITERS #12
Noon, at Honey's Cafe	2:15 p.m., at the Snag Bar
RISING STAR SONGWRITERS #4	RISING STAR SONGWRITERS #13
1:30 p.m., at Tito's Stage at the Carbon Fork	3:30 p.m., at Snow Creek Saloon
RISING STAR SONGWRITERS #5	RISING STAR SONGWRITERS #14
1:30 p.m., at the Snag Bar	3:30 p.m., at Tito's Stage at the Carbon Fork
RISING STAR SONGWRITERS #6	RISING STAR SONGWRITERS #15
3:15 p.m., at Tito's Stage at the Carbon Fork	1:30 p.m., at Snow Creek Saloon
RISING STAR SONGWRITERS #7	RISING STAR SONGWRITERS #16
3:15 p.m., at Snow Creek Saloon	4:45 p.m., at Tito's Stage at the Carbon Fork
RISING STAR SONGWRITERS #8	NASHVILLE HIT SONGWRITERS AT BONE DADDY'S
5 p.m., at Snow Creek Saloon	7 p.m., at Bone Daddy's
RISING STAR SONGWRITERS #9	
5 p.m., at the Snag Bar	

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Carbon County Arts Guild & Depot Gallery feature artist

CONTRIBUTION BY THE CARBON COUNTY ARTS GUILD & DEPOT GALLERY

Wild Montana Skies, Paintings by Connie Herberg

The Carbon County Arts Guild Satellite Gallery at the Roosevelt Center in Red Lodge is featuring Wild Montana Skies, a solo exhibition of work by artist Connie Herberg. The CCAG Satellite Gallery at the Roosevelt Center is located at 519 Broadway Avenue, in Red Lodge. Originally these stunning large scale oil paintings were to be on view through June 28, 2020. The coronavirus situation has caused us to extend the date of the show through the end of the year. Hopefully, this will allow people plenty of time to see how Herberg has masterfully evoked a feeling in these works that depict a dynamic moment in the sky.

Connie Herberg attended both North Dakota State University in Fargo, North Dakota and Eastern Montana College (now Montana State University) in Billings, graduating with a Bachelor of Arts degree in fine art. Her experience includes an amalgamation of workshops, peer influences, self-study, practice, and passion. Herberg maintains a studio in her home in Shepherd, where she paints and occasionally teaches.

Nature is the classroom and Herberg's inspiration for gathering subject matter while hunting, fishing, and camping. She places a strong emphasis on drafting skills and observation from life. It is Herberg's belief that developing an understanding of the subject and mastering the translation from observation to an art form is the key to great art. The landscape is an integral part of Herberg's life and remains an overarching theme in her work. Growing



Haymaker by Connie Herberg



The Height of Power by Connie Herberg

up as the oldest of four in a farming family in northwest North Dakota, Herberg was strongly influenced by her mother and maternal grandmother in creative pursuits.

Herberg has work at Latigo and Lace in Augusta, and the Carbon County Arts Guild & Depot Gallery in Red Lodge. Her work has been included in many local, regional, and national shows and competitions. A North Light Books, Strokes of Genius 2: The Best of Drawing Light and Shadow also includes Herberg's work. Her work has been purchased by the Department of the Interior,

Stockman Bank, Richland County Museum, as well as businesses, corporations, and personal collectors around the country.

The mission of the Carbon County Arts Guild & Depot Gallery is to support, inspire, and encourage all artists. Reaching out, the Carbon County Arts Guild & Depot Gallery provides art education and exposure to the visual, performing and literary arts for the benefit of the broadest possible audience.

For further information visit www.carboncountydepotgallery.org or call the Guild at (406) 446-1370.



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We are extending the Rocky Mountain Regional Juried Exhibition through July 26, 2020. The top winners are:

- 1st place 2D, *Winter Lodging*, watercolor, by Lance Johnson of Billings



- People's Choice Award *Watering the Horses*, oil, by Tom Wolfe of Nye



- 1st place 3D, *Lichen*, by Marcia Selsor of Red Lodge



What is Carbon County Arts Guild & Depot Gallery?

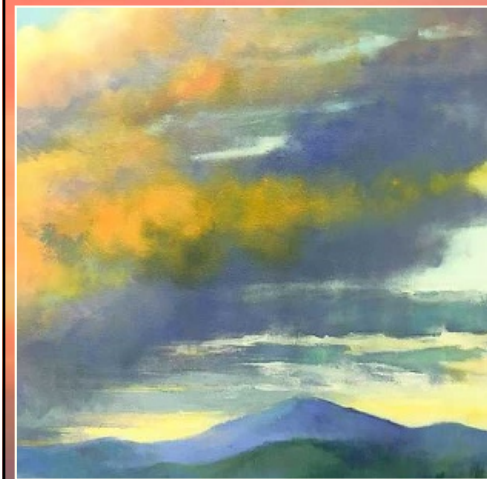
For over forty years, the mission of the Carbon County Arts Guild & Depot Gallery is to support, inspire, and encourage all artists. The Guild provides education and exposure to visual, performing, and literary arts for the benefit of the broadest possible audience.

The Depot Gallery is:

- Venue for artists to display and sell art
- Host traveling art shows
- Provides art education outreach
- Offer workshops, art camps, and lectures

The Carbon County Arts Guild Satellite Gallery

at the Roosevelt Center, located at 519 Broadway Avenue, in Red Lodge and features *Wild Montana Skies*, a solo exhibition by artist Connie Herberg. Originally these stunning large scale oil paintings were to be on view through June 28, 2020. The COVID-19 situation has caused us to extend the show through the end of the year. Hopefully this will allow people plenty of time to see how Herberg has masterfully evoked a feeling in these works that depict a dynamic moment in the sky.



SAVE THE DATE:

Stay Tuned for Future Events!

11 W. 8th Street, Red Lodge, MT
www.carboncountydepotgallery.org
www.facebook.com/ccag.dg



The 52nd Annual Beartooth Run takes low-key events to high elevations

BY CHARITY DEWING
cdewing@billingsgazette.com

The 52nd Annual Beartooth Run embodies Red Lodge Events’ goal of providing “low-key and high-elevation” experiences for beginner to advanced athletes.

“The atmosphere of our races is very laid back and unimposing – everyone is there for a good time,” said Kristen Hollum, race director at Red Lodge Events.

Beginning at 8 a.m., July 11, the Beartooth Run is the highest 5k and 10k race in the United States at 10,000 feet elevation.

“The race starts and finishes in the saddle between the East and West summit of the Beartooth Pass. Specifically, the Gardiner Lake/Beartooth Loop parking lot,” said Hollum.

“Going into our 52nd year we have a handful of runners who have participated every year. While the course has changed a few times in it’s tenure one thing has remained constant: showcasing the beauty of the Beartooths. You run by the iconic Bear’s Tooth, through tunnels of snow, see fields of



COURTESY OF RED LODGE EVENTS

The Beartooth Run takes runners to new heights.

wildflowers and alpine lakes – the views almost make you forget you’re running uphill,” said Hollum.

There is even a photographer onsite taking photos of racers with the scenic Beartooth in the backdrop.

The race creates a new experience for racers, placing them directly into a natural setting they do not get to take in on their average running day.

“The views are breathtaking,” said Hollum. “You don’t get to experience something like this every day.”

With open blue sky, snow-

capped peaks covered in low-hanging clouds, wildflowers and sunshine, the race attracts all ages and stages of race ability from all over the U.S.

“We also have the best snacks, seriously. We pride ourselves on great post-race snacks from sweet to savory, you’ll be blown away,” said Hollum.

There are also prizes for the first male and female age group winners in each race and overall male/female winners. For children under the age of 12, a special participation award is

presented. There is even a “mid-pack” award given to the person in each race that is smack in the middle of finishes. Even if you don’t place, there is still a chance to win something through random drawings throughout the day.

The pass is undeniably stunning from car view. For participants, walking or running the switchbacks at what feels like the top of the world is more than a race – it’s an experience.

For more information on the Beartooth Run go to redlodgeevents.com.



COURTESY PHOTO

Owner Kerri Wolfson (right) and Chef Melissa Kreuzer (left).

Letter to the community

BY KERRI WOLFSON OF HONEY’S CAFÉ

As the owner of a downtown store front in Red Lodge, I have more than seven years of experiences interacting with community members – and visitors who come to feel like community members.

Having lived in Red Lodge for longer than 12 years, I can attest to the specialness of this place. The connectedness of this community is reflected in the abundance of non-profits, the way neighbors look out for each other, and the plethora of local Facebook pages to help us find owners of lost pets, share wildlife sightings, and swap our belongings, among other things.

And we know how to crisis.

The recent pandemic has reinforced my sense that there is nowhere I’d rather be in a crisis than Red Lodge. From the first day that Honey’s limited business in response to COVID-19 concerns, locals phoned in take-out orders, purchased gift cards for themselves, and more often, to give to others. Customers from out-of-state sent money to buy meals for locals experiencing economic loss,

or to put in the tip jar for our staff. The effort being made to support local businesses has buoyed my spirits throughout.

As our phased re-opening begins, I have concerns. Like so many, I am concerned for my personal safety and the safety of my community, as well as our economic well-being. And the truth is, I miss you. I miss the customers who come in so often that we start their order when we see their car pull up. I miss the folks from Billings and surrounding towns, eager on their way to the woods. I miss the lit-up faces of tourists discovering Red Lodge for the first time.

While I maintain a safe distance, I cannot help but feel like the residents and business owners of Red Lodge have our arms linked together in solidarity. Our handwash stations are out, sanitizers and bleach bottles are lined up, and our doors are re-opening.

Despite my uncertainty about the future, I’m certain that there’s no place I’d rather be in difficult, unpredictable times like these – and no group of people I’d rather be with – than this beautiful, mostly predictable, feels-like-family town of Red Lodge.

Virtual Race keeps athletes on their toes

BY CHARITY DEWING
cdewing@billingsgazette.com

Red Lodge Events is offering a new take on competition with a summer-long virtual race May 1–Aug. 23.

Titled “Low Key Pursuits,” the race takes participants through 10 scenic trails near Red Lodge. Contestants can complete the trails on their own and in any order. Once the trails are completed, racers can submit their time to see where they placed in the race – and you can redo a trail as many times as you want before submitting the



final time.

“It’s the same goals as all of our other races with a different platform. We just want to get people outside,” said Kristen Hollum, race di-

rector at Red Lodge Events.

With only three or four months of outdoor racing available a year, many competitors train during the colder months to compete in various triathlon and racing events in Red Lodge and surrounding areas. While the organization plans on the continuation of the Beartooth Run, the decision was made to cancel this year’s Turn, Pedal, and Burn event. Hollum thought this was the perfect time to try something new.

“We had been kicking the

idea around of doing something virtual like this so people can get out and explore the trails and then the whole COVID thing happened and it seemed like a good time to give it a try,” said Hollum.

Low Key Pursuits appeals to both the devoted con-

tender and first-time racer. “People are completing the trails on their own timeline. You can be as competitive as you want,” said Hollum.

Registration is \$20. For more information go to redlodgeevents.com.



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TO DO

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- Ski Beartooth Basin
- Yellowstone Wildlife Sanctuary
- Red Lodge Rodeo July 2,3,4
- Red Lodge 4th of July Parade
- Beartooth Run July 11th
- Beartooth Rally - July 16-19
- Cruise Red Lodge July 24-26
- redlodge.com/calendar

It’s time to get out and get away.

Spring and summer in Red Lodge are always a time of rebirth and renewal.

As the snow melts, re-opening trails, mountain lakes and fields of wildflowers, we’re re-opening our outside dining and entertainment spots, creating the perfect place to reflect on your day’s adventures. Breathe in that fresh, pure mountain air...now exhale.

Check redlodge.com/stay for lodging options

redlodge.com

