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THE BITTERROOT COMPASS

Winter 2004

Winter Fun



Lee Metcalf, the first Montana native to serve in the Senate, was born in Stevensville in 1911 and graduated from the University of Montana in Missoula. His legacy as a conservationist was honored by the National Wildlife Refuge bearing his name. The refuge is a great place to walk and view migrating geese, ducks and eagles. Whitetail deer, otters and songbirds also enjoy the land protected and cared for just a mile north of Stevensville off the Eastside Highway.

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Snowflakes, E.E. Cummings referred to them as sky diamonds, signal for many the arrival of winter fun in the Bitterroot mountains. Montana has the perfect combination of snow and sun for winter lovers.

Lost Trail Powder Mountain can boast about its fabulous snow conditions December through April for downhill skiers. Open Thursday through Sunday and holidays, Lost Trail is a bit of a locals spot because there are no destination features, i.e. condos, night clubs, etc. They have a great Day Lodge complete with cafeteria services, local beer and wines and occasional special events. There are 40 runs, 4 double chairs and 3 surface lifts with short lines. The hill is family friendly with 20% beginner runs, 60% intermediate and 20% advanced runs.

Base elevation at the lodge is 7,000 ft and the summit is 8,200 ft, with a vertical drop of 1,800 ft. The average snowfall is 300 inches per year. At \$24.00 for a full day or \$19.00 for a half day, Lost Trail is a bargain. Kids, 6-12 years old, ski for \$14.00. Ski rentals, including snowboard packages are also reasonable at \$15-\$25 per day with lessons available. See www.losttrail.com for more details. Also, check out www.wintermt.com for information regarding winter activities all over Montana.

The Bitterroot X-C Ski Club maintains approximately 25 kilometers of groomed cross country trails known as the Chief Joseph Pass Cross Country Ski Trails. Trails are usually groomed on Fridays for classic cross country skiing. At this time, the club does not groom for skate skiing. There is ample parking for no fee but a donation or membership in the club is requested. Club dues are nominal, \$10.00 for individuals or \$20.00 for families. The club has a membership of around 100 and meets monthly for special programs. Contact the club at PO Box 431 Corvallis, Montana



Laura Merrill, Broker GRI, new Sales Associate at KRE. Laura is an avid cross country skier and a welcome addition to King Real Estate, Inc. Welcome Laura!

59828 or online at www.bitterrootxcskiclub.net.

Dogs and snowmobiles are not allowed on the groomed trails, but are allowed nearby. Please contact the club for more information. An exciting addition to the trail system is the Gordon Reese warming cabin (a.k.a. "The Hut"). Stop in to use the facilities, including warming by the fire and making a cup of hot chocolate before heading back out on the trails. Overnight stays are allowed in the cabin but reservations must be made through the Beaverhead National Forest at the Wisdom Ranger Station 406-689-3371. Check out www.missoulanordic.org for regional conditions.

Snowmobilers delight in the 2,000 miles of designated groomed trails in and around the Bitterroot Valley. The Skalkaho area is one of the least traveled and most scenic areas in the state. Closed to automobile traffic in the winter, this area offers stunning views of Skalkaho Falls, tall peaks and deep canyons. See www.ridgerunners.org for more information on snowmobiling in the Bitterroot Valley.

Mix all this winter fun with guest ranches and a hot springs resort or two and the result is a winter season full of riches—sky diamonds. ☀

Making Friends with Winter

by Kathie Butts

Making friends with winter sounds virtually impossible to some. I transplanted from sunny California 12 years ago during the month of February. Thanks to new friends and the local merchants I am now qualified as an expert in winterology and can assure you that not only is it easy to get out and about...it is fun!

Driving was my most feared aspect of winter until I learned that I could go almost anywhere with just a bit of preparation. 4 wheel drive vehicles are great but are not required to get around. You will find all makes of trucks, SUV's, front wheel drives and yes, we even have a few Hummers in Montana. You will also see plenty of town cars, economy models and even sports cars. Studded and siped tires, anti-lock braking systems and extra weight in the trunk or truck bed allow for easy winter travel in just about any type of vehicle. Drive only as fast as you can while still maintaining control of your vehicle and don't tailgate! One should keep blankets, energy food and water on hand for longer trips. Frozen door locks can be thawed with a simple spray can available at any auto parts store and window scrapers can be purchased anywhere, even the super market. The most difficult part of winter driving is remembering to leave the parking brake off so that it doesn't freeze.

Winter dressing is an adventure in style and function. Look for fleece, wool and flannel, in sweaters, vests and turtlenecks. Accessorize with boots, gloves and hats. With proper layering and good boots it is possible to enjoy the outdoors in just about any weather condition or temperature and look great at the same time. Woodsy winter chic offers multiple styles from Aspen style specialty shops to Woolrich and Eddie Bauer. Mix and match layers for color and functionality. The local sporting goods and department stores are very helpful and don't forget to look in your catalogs or online. It is possible to purchase good winter coats, boots, gloves and a hat at a reasonable price and in one location.

Our dry powdery snow is easily shoveled. Snow shovels offer a surprising variety of sizes and styles (something for everyone) and can be purchased in hardware, grocery or discount stores. Teenage neighbors or local snow removal companies can be hired by either contract arrangements or an on-call basis. The hale and hearty can

Mountain Eats

Rosemary Pheasant

"In memory of the first bird of the season and a generation of great hunting dogs"

Contributed by: Jan King, President Broker/Owner of King Real Estate, Inc.

- 3 pheasants—cut up
- 3/4 tsp rosemary
- 1 tsp parsley
- 1 can chicken broth or low salt bullion
- 2 cups mushrooms -sliced
- Flour to dredge
- 1/2 tsp garlic powder
- 3 tsp Marsala wine
- 1/4 cup onion— finely diced
- 1 tsp olive oil

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Fry mushrooms and onions in olive oil until brown and place in a 9x13 inch casserole dish. Dredge pheasant pieces in flour and fry in remaining oil until brown on each side. Do not over-fry. Remove and place on top of the mushroom and onion mixture. Add broth to pan drippings and make 1 cup to 1 1/2 cups of thin gravy. Add rubbed rosemary, garlic powder and parsley. Cook 1 to 2 additional minutes. Add Marsala and pour over pheasant pieces. Bake covered for 40 minutes in a 350 degree oven or until cooked through. Uncover for the last 10 minutes of baking.

Yield: 6 servings ☀



Bitterroot Flora

Christmas Trees

The Bitterroot National Forest offers a permit to cut your own Christmas tree. For a newcomer to the Valley, this is a great way to familiarize one's self with the National Forest, as well as enjoy the outdoors. There are certain rules and regulations one must abide by in order to cut their own tree. Permits cost between \$5 and \$10 limited to two permits allowed per family. There are certain areas that trees can be cut, see the Forest Service for a map of cuttable areas when obtaining permit(s). Topping, or removing the tops of trees, is strictly forbidden. Also, do not leave a stump higher than eight inches. Try cutting a tree in an overcrowded area; that allows



the other trees more space, moisture and light. Lastly, be aware of the surroundings, watch for snowmobilers, and other recreationists, hiking, skiing or sledding on back roads. Get out and have fun in our National Forests! ☀

outfit ATV's with plows or use the tractor to clear long driveways and private roads. The good news is most of the storms in the Valley areas of the Bitterroot leave behind snow that measures in inches, leaving the great piles of snow in the mountains for skiers, sledders and snow-shoers to enjoy.

There is nothing better on a winter evening than a hot toddy by a warm winter fire with the laughter and cheer of good

friends. Families get together for sledding and chili or stew around a bon fire. It's a pleasant surprise to discover that Bitterroot winters include lots of social time, from the annual Winter Ball to intimate dinner parties, from pot lucks to catered events, there is always something fun and exciting to be involved in. No one should ever feel left out. Winter in the Bitterroot Valley is truly special. ☀

BITTERROOT 101

The History of Roads in Ravalli County

An animal trail became a footpath, then became a wagon way and finally a road. Much could be written here about the people that made the pathways, those who traveled by horse and wagon, Model T and SUV's. The names have changed through the years and the width has too. Roads are a big part of a place—each with its own origin and ownership, each leading somewhere to the end.

Marcus Daly created the roads in Hamilton, the County seat. Daly built the town in 1890. The town was named after James Hamilton, one of the two surveyors hired by Daly to plat and establish the layout of the roads and streets. Almost everyone in the town worked for Marcus Daly—at the bank, mercantile, lumber mill, the Ravalli Hotel, etc. Downtown Hamilton is undergoing a facelift with a new road and new sidewalks in 2004.

Highway 93 connects the towns of Sula, Darby, Hamilton, Corvallis, Victor, Stevensville and Florence from south to north. There is really only one way into or out of the 96 mile long Bitterroot Valley unless you consider Skalkaho Pass or Lolo Pass going east or west. The long highway is paralleled by the Bitterroot River and what is known as the Eastside Highway. There are ten major river bridges in the Valley across the magnificent river. What results is the question about whether one lives on the eastside or the westside. Visitors often wonder: eastside or what?

The 2,400 square miles of land is served by a myriad of roads. Main service roads are mostly paved or chip sealed. But many of the roads in the Bitterroot are gravel or dirt. Some are designated as County roads, some Forest Service roads and many are privately owned with deeded easements.

Many roads have Native American names, as with Skalkaho which translated means “place of the beaver”. Indian Prairie Loop refers to a meadow where women and children camped while the hunters journeyed to the Big Hole Valley. Many roads also bear the names of the creeks that flow from the mountains—Sweathouse, Camas, and Kootenai.

Traffic on the roads has increased with time—Ravalli County now has 9 stop lights. Roads on the eastside generally travel between level fields of hay and open spaces dotted with homes. Westside roads move from the Valley floor quickly into the forest, and tend to wind into the mountains as the elevation changes occur.

Waving at others sharing the road is as important as signaling to turn left. A simple nod of the head will do. And, be sure to leave any gates just like you found them. Buckle up, keep a look out for deer and moose. Enjoy the Montana scenery. ☀

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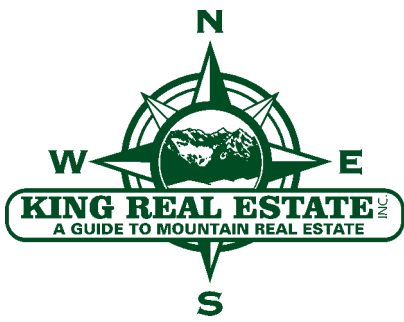
accelerated real estate

Ravalli County has some of the best roads in Montana thanks to the efforts of the road crews and the local road gurus. If you want to know who to thank, just look at the color of the road sign. If the road sign is green then it's a County maintained road. If the road sign is black, the road is a private road and therefore the county has no responsibility for its maintenance. The common practice for the maintenance of a private road is for those using the road to “chip in” for annual grading and periodic plowing. Assessment of cost is usually a private matter between neighbors and not collected in the tax bill in any way. Some areas have road maintenance agreements and some have Home Owner's Associations. It varies in as many ways as there are turns in a road. Ask about the maintenance of the roadways serving any area before buying property. We all appreciate the efforts of those who get up in the dark to make miles of roads safe for everyone.



“New Bitterrooters” John, Christen and Addy MacGillivray

“We arrived in the Bitterroot from Santa Rosa Island, California. We heard about the area from a friend and love the gorgeous views, atmosphere and the disgustingly nice people! We found ourselves living a quiet, laid back lifestyle, exactly what we were looking for to raise our new family. We ended up buying a new home on the northwest side of the Valley and we love it! The perfect day in the Valley to us is walking the many trails and viewing the wildlife in the Bitterroot Mountains regardless of the time of year.” ☀



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CONSERVATION EASEMENTS

Montana Statistics

Things to Know and Forget

Montana's state fossil is the Duck-billed dinosaur, *Maiasaura peeblesorum*, meaning "good mother lizard".

In the 1952 Western *The Big Sky*, loosely based on the novel by A.B. Guthrie, starred Kirk Douglas as a mountaineer who must deliver a Blackfeet princess to her father.

Meriwether Lewis earned forty dollars per month for his efforts during the Corps of Discovery.

Monte Dolak is known as the "Andy Warhol of Montana", due in part to his creative posters, postcards, refrigerator magnets and painted buses in Japan.

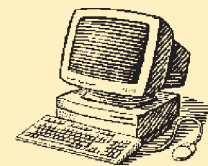
If you competed in the Iron Horse Rodeo in Red Lodge each July, you'd be riding a Harley.

The largest animal in Montana, as well as the rest of the country, is the bison which can weigh up to two thousand pounds.

*The top awarded agent in
the Bitterroot Valley for the
past 6 years.*



Jan King, Kathie and Carole Anne



The New Self-Service Computer Station

Browse through the Multiple Listing Service from our new self-service computer station. Select and print color data sheets and we will help you create a custom driving map. Focus oriented real estate shopping with a Free Buyer's bag full of helpful items!

Be empowered and have the tools you need to identify the best properties for you!

Stop by our office today—it only takes a little time and might save you a bundle!

The coffee's always on...

A GUIDE TO MOUNTAIN REAL ESTATE