How to submit a book to State of the Arts

To submit a book by a Montana author for inclusion in State of the Arts’ “About Books” section:

Please send a copy of the book to Kristi Niemeyer, 207 6th Ave. E, Polson, MT 59860; or submit the following information electronically to kristi@livetimess.com or mac@mt.gov:

• Title, author, publisher, and month/year published;
• A brief description of the book (no more than 200 words), and a short bio of the author;
• A cover image: minimum 200 dpi in pdf, jpg or tiff file; if other publications or authors have reviewed the book, send a brief sampling of those remarks.

If you would like us to return the book, include a note with it saying so. (We will pay for shipping.)

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The Gathering Place, Swan Valley’s Gordon Ranch

By the Upper Swan Valley Historical Society Publication Committee and The Salish-Pend’D’Oreille Culture Committee

The Gordon Ranch has served as a “gathering place” for generations, from the time Pend’D’Oreille people gathered to dig camas on the native prairie, through the homestead era of the Holland and Gordon families, and even now, as the Koessler family and others seek the perfect venue to come together.

Like all good history books, The Gathering Place is well researched and written, and extensively indexed. I read through the pages that spoke about my grandmother, Gretchen (Hilda Marie) Stadler, cook for the Koessers from the dude ranch days to the early 50’s, and her family. She was the cook for the ranch and the upper Swan Valley over the years.

The Gordon Ranch is the “Saltie Old Lady” who Lena Wolf describes, and she was the reason that I spent summers in the early 50’s riding horses all over the ranch and beyond with those Koessler boys, Tony and Jim, and me, a place, a time and people – especially cloning my grandmother and my grandmother – who helped shape who I became. As I read the book, I realized that this special place and its inhabitants impacted many others and the valley itself.

The book is divided into 21 chapters and includes a bibliography, index and timeline, making it both a highly interesting read from start to finish and a valuable reference book. Each chapter is a notebook unto itself, richly filled with narrative, including excerpts from interviews, letters, documents, maps, and photos.

With a receptive audience and a love for the Gathering Place ensures that everyone connected with the ranch and the upper Swan Valley over the years will find much to enjoy here. How fitting to dedicate the book “to all who have gathered at the Gordon Ranch throughout the ages.”

—Theodora Lambson

Sharks, A 400 Million Year Journey

By Rod Rechlin

No matter how you cut it, sharks have an image problem. Ever since “Jaws” terrified audiences, these ancient creatures have been relegated to berserker villains obsessively hunting their favorite meal – us. Unfortunately, these finned fish (representing an incredibly diverse group of over 500 species) have paid a toll for our terror.

“As a society, we humans are really good at demonizing certain animals,” said author and illustrator Ted Rechlin. Best known for natural-history-themed dinosaur graphic novels (Tyranosaurus Rex, Jurassic), Rechlin built on this tradition for his newest release.

The result is an epoch-spanning epic that combines visually stunning comic-story panels with strange and often obscure shark species. Packed with insights into the history of the Earth, Sharks describes how these legendary ocean dwellers got their start over 200 million years (even before dinosaurs) and developed into the complicated creatures we know today.

Due to Rechlin’s dedication to scientifically accurate visual storytelling, stories of all ages can feast upon bizarre helicoprion, the evil-like Xenacanthus, and the massive C. megalodon (among countless other fierce and strange creatures).

Co-written and co-illustrated, Rechlin reads of all ages come away with a kinder view of the predators of the deep. “Sharks aren’t monsters,” he notes. “They have value, both as predators that keep ocean ecosystems healthy; they’re a look into the long, long history of life on Earth.”

The Montana-based illustrator and author has been drawing pictures and telling stories since he was 3 years old. He has contributed his work to many magazines, newspapers, and books, including DC Comics and Dover Publications, and has four of his own educational children’s books under his belt.

Undergraduate Research in Music, A Guide for Students

By Gregory Young and Jenny Olin Shanahan

Gregory Young, a music professor at Montana State University, has published a new book on undergraduate research in music. Jenny Olin Shanahan, assistant provost for high-impact educational practices at Bridgewater State University in Massachusetts, is the co-author.

In his book, he said he wrote the book because in recent years, opportunities for undergraduate research have grown dramatically in the United States. The practice grew out of a need for assistance in science labs, and slowly gained traction in other disciplines.

“After reviewing the literature, however, I realized there were still no books published on undergraduate research in music that I could use as a text for my senior capstone course,” Young said. “So, I had students in my Music 499R class help me create one. Each student helped write a chapter on a different music research project.”

All the students said that it was an extremely valuable experience for them.

Young said the book will fill a void in the literature of undergraduate research. “The entire process was an opportunity for students to participate in a research project, with first-hand experience contributing to a publication,” he said.

Young joined the faculty of MSU in 1988 and has served as Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education, founding director of Undergraduate Scholars, Assistant Dean of Arts and Architecture and director of Music. He’s a clarinetist with Intermontana Opera Orchestra and Bozeman Symphony.

—Excerpted from a story by Eliese Besemer, MSU News Service

In Search of the Mount Cleveland Five

By Terry G. Kennedy

Terry Kennedy, the son of one of the five climbers who perished on Mount Cleveland, was just 15 years old when he learned of the tragedy. Over the coming decades, the group ascended some of Montana and Wyoming’s most notorious elevations.

Kennedy’s memoir recounts four decades of climbing, guiding, and rescues while paying tribute to those who have conquered and lost on some of Montana’s greatest heights.

As a high schooler, the author and several others took to the mountains of Montana and Wyoming’s legendary “Dirty Sox Club.” Over the coming decades, the group ascended some of Montana and Wyoming’s most notorious elevations.

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