

ABOUT BOOKS



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How to submit a book for 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@livelytimes.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.)

Books submitted to *State of the Arts* appear in this publication at the Montana Arts Council's discretion and as space permits. They will not necessarily be reprinted at livelytimes.com.

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.

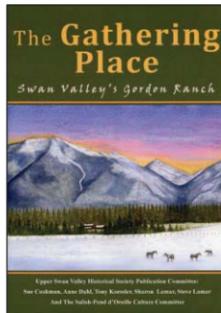
Like all good history books, *The Gathering Place* is well researched and has an extensive index. Here I sought the pages that spoke about my grandmother, Gretchen (Hilda Marie) Stadler, cook for the Koesslers from the dude ranch days to the early 1950s.

Yes, my grandmother was the "Salty Old Lady" who Lena Wolff describes, and she was the reason that I spent summers in the early '50s riding horses all over the ranch and beyond with those Koessler boys, Tony and Jimmy. It was a place, a time and people – especially Sheila Koessler 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 chronicle unto itself, richly filled with narrative, including excerpts from interviews, letters, documents, maps, and photos.

The collective authorship of *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 Ted Reclin

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.

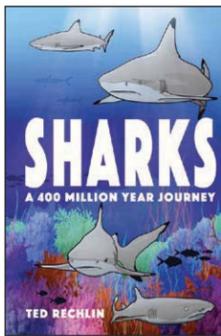
"As a society, we humans are really good at demonizing certain animals," says author and illustrator Ted Reclin. Best known for natural history-themed dinosaur graphic novels (*Tyrannosaurus Rex*, *Jurassic*), Reclin built on this tradition for his newest release.

The result is an epoch-spanning epic that combines visually stunning comic-style 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 the dinosaurs) and developed into the complicated creatures we know today.

Due to Reclin's dedication to scientifically accurate visual storytelling, readers of all ages can feast their eyes upon bizarre *Helicoprion*, the eel-like *Xenacanthus*, and the massive *C. megaladon* (among countless other fierce and strange creatures).

Through his effort, Reclin hopes readers 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 and as 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 museums, zoos, and publishing companies, 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.

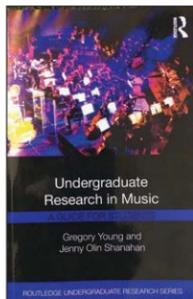
Young said he wrote the book because in recent years, opportunities for undergraduate research have grown dramatically in the United States. The practice grew out of a need for assistance in science labs, and slowly gained traction in other disciplines.

"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 sub-discipline."

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 Intermountain 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

The Mount Cleveland Five went missing on the north face of Waterton-Glacier's famed peak on Dec. 29, 1969. Terry Kennedy, a distant friend of one of the climbers, was just 15 years old. In the days surrounding the tragedy, a passion was ignited – and a 40-year-long mountaineering career was born.

Kennedy's memoir recounts four decades of climbing, guiding, and rescues while paying tribute to those fearless "forward thinkers" 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 northwest Montana and the illustrious "Dirty Sox Club" was born. Over the coming decades, the group ascended some of Montana and Wyoming's most notorious elevations.

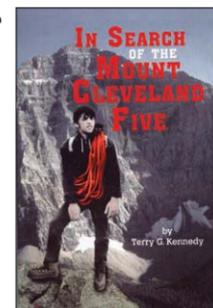
Summitting the face where the Mount Cleveland Five met their end is the thrust of this book. But aside from this goal, the memoir revolves around the motif of brotherhood, specifically the bond between the author and Jim Kanzler, the brother of one of the five climbers who perished on Mount Cleveland.

Peaks reached by the duo include Glacier's Mount Siyeh, a triumph marred by conflict between the men, which fractured their friendship and left an indelible mark upon Kennedy and his climbing career.

A sense of resolution comes at the book's climax, when Kennedy and Jamie Kanzler (Jim's son) nearly befall the same fate as the Mount Cleveland Five atop Denali National Park's East Kahiltna Peak. Kennedy's rescue of Kanzler and a friend is a stark reminder of the perils surrounding their high-risk sport, and further cements them to ancestral climbers, the Mount Cleveland Five, and the annals of mountaineering.

For those who love adventure and the power of human connection, *In Search of the Mount Cleveland Five* is a worthy read.

– Brynn Cadigan



Montana Noir

Edited by James Grady and Keir Graff

"Editing this anthology has been a wonderful way to return to our home state, with everything that's good and bad about it," say James Grady and Keir Graff (who each contributed stories to this darkly stellar collection).

Not only does *Montana Noir* offer snippets by an illustrious crew – David Abrams, Jamie Ford, Gwen Florio, Walter Kirn, and Thomas McGuane among them – it also takes readers on a rocky, reeling road trip through our big state.

Speed across the Hi Line with a boozy crew of strippers in Grady's "The Road You Take"; keep company with a thieving Doberman and an ex-trapeze artist at an abandoned military installation near Glasgow in "All the Damn Stars in the Sky"; and head to Glendive, where a boxer gets revenge on her diabolical stepfather in Jamie Ford's "The Dive."

In "Red, White, And Butte" by David Abrams, a cynical Iraq veteran returns to his hometown in hopes of snagging a fallen hero's wife: "My job, if I could get it, was Widow Comforter." A mediocre writing student executes a perfect murder in Gwen Florio's "Trailer Trash." In Tom McGuane's story, "Motherlode," a young man with a promising career in artificial insemination gets drawn into a murky drug-running scheme on the edge of the Bakken oil fields.

And in two stories, Indians finally find some justice: The grandfather of Nina Three Dresses takes care of a bad cop who's harassing her in Debra Magpie Earling's "Custer's Last Stand." And the great-grandson of an Indian scout uses legal maneuvers to curb a modern-day stalker in Sidner Larson's "Dark Monument."

Along the way, these well-told tales offer an engrossing snapshot of Montana's fabled literary landscape. Every one, a worthy read.

– Kristi Niemeyer



West of Love, A Story Cycle

By Francis Davis

From seedy dives in the city of Brotherly Love to an apartment on Rattlesnake Creek in Missoula, Stewart Simmons pursues, and is pursued by, lovers and muses, regrets and passion in this collection of entwined stories.

The narrator contemplates youth, love and lust from the far shore of middle age. It's a raucous ride from "a skinny, roach-infested apartment" in Philly to Montana, "where it felt like anything could happen, and usually did."

Most of the stories lead back to Rita, "My first love, how our life together had somehow slid down a rabbit hole known only to the young and tender-hearted."

The voices in these taut, compact stories become a noisy unrepentant chorus, reaching for reconciliation with a past that won't behave. The narrator possesses a "pungent and obsessive voice that aches with yearning for the mysterious just-beyond," writes Deirdre McNamer of what she calls a "memorable debut."

Davis was born and raised in Philadelphia, and spent most of his adult life in the West; he's currently an assistant professor of English at the University of Montana Western in Dillon. This collection was a finalist for the 2016 Katherine Anne Porter Prize in Short Fiction.

– Kristi Niemeyer

