

# 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 *Lively Times*, 33651 Eagle Pass Trl., Charlo, MT 59824; or submit the following information electronically to [writus@livelytimes.com](mailto:writus@livelytimes.com) or [mac@mt.gov](mailto:mac@mt.gov):

- Title, author, publisher, publisher's address and month/year published;
- Price and whether it's hard- or softcover;
- 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.)

E-books: We'll also mention books that are only electronically published: send title, author, a cover image, website for downloads, and a brief paragraph about the book.

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

## Bald Eagle Nest: A Story of Survival in Photos

By Kate Davis  
Published 2013 by Stackpole Books,  
Mechanicsburg, PA  
\$16.95 softcover

In 2011, Kate Davis had the rare opportunity to focus her camera, for the better part of four months, on a bald eagle nest containing four chicks that eventually matured and fledged.

"In bald eagles' entire range, about a dozen nests have been documented to fledge four," she notes. "Montana holds the record for a single state, with this nest bringing the total to six."

The book contains 100 color photographs that illustrate the progress of the chicks' growth and the close relationship of the diligent parents to their precious, and fast growing family. Each photo is accompanied by interesting facts about these incredible birds, whose population has been recovering since the mid-1970s, when they teetered on the edge of extinction due to pesticide use.

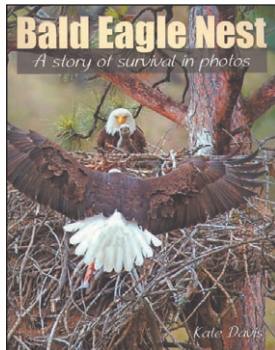
Eagle nests can weigh a thousand pounds, and measure eight feet across and three feet deep. Just after the chicks were about seven weeks old, Davis reports, a huge black bear climbed up the tree to investigate the nest. The mother bird stood her ground on a protective limb, while the father flew at the bear repeatedly for over an hour to discourage it. Thankfully the bear left, and order was restored.

It takes around 75 days for eagle chicks to mature enough to test their fragile wings and leave the nest for periods of time. The family remains together for four to ten weeks before the young strike out on their own. Unfortunately the mortality rate for youngsters is high, with roughly only half of the birds reaching full maturity.

*Bald Eagle Nest* is a fascinating and scenic look into the lives of these magnificent birds and Davis has done an incredible job of photographing and narrating her observations.

Davis resides in the Bitterroot Valley, where she is the founder and force behind Raptors of the Rockies, and currently conference chairperson for the education committee of the Raptor Research Foundation. She is also the author of the award-winning book *Raptors of the West*, *Falcons of North America* and *Raptors of the Rockies*.

— Judy Shafter



## The Friction of Desire

By Sandy Compton  
Published 2012 by Blue Creek Press, Heron, MT  
\$12.95 softcover

"I have begun to suspect more and more that I am not really the therapist in this relationship; he is," writes psychiatrist Mary Miller of wayward patient Larry Longquist, who paid for 30 sessions in cash, after cashing in his 401K.

Sandy Compton's fifth book (which the Montana author admits is "somewhat autobiographical") is draped around Dr. Miller's notes about these weekly sessions, and her own revealing responses to her unorthodox client.

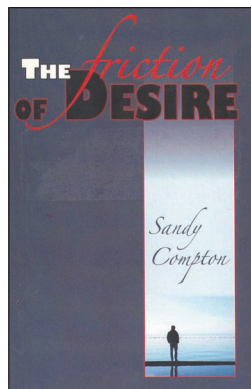
Longquist, who struggles to make ends meet, lives in a house that's "a botched hodgepodge of bargains, gifts, salvaged supplies and misplaced labor," suffers from depression, is a recovering addict, and has a history of relationships that fall apart. He's also a writer and world traveler, who just turned 60.

"The more you want something, the harder it is to get." That's Longquist's definition of "the friction of desire," and the title of the autobiography he may or may not be writing.

As his life spills out on each page, the psychiatrist becomes more and more intrigued with her patient until, when the 30 sessions are over, she's in Larry's shoes: worried about what's going to happen next.

Compton lives in Heron, and is the proprietor of Blue Creek Press. He is also the principal writer and storyteller of The Storytelling Company, which produces live shows in Sandpoint, ID.

— Kristi Niemeyer



## She Matters: A Life in Friendships

By Susanna Sonnenberg  
Published 2013 by Scribner, New York, NY  
\$24 hardcover

Missoula writer Susanna Sonnenberg has written an eloquent, poetic, frank and unsparring account of her relationships with the many women in her life who "mattered."

Some friendships run very deep and have influenced her in subtle ways that she deftly describes. Others are simpler, not as influential, but still add something notable to the fabric of her existence, shaping her in curious or unexpected ways into the person she is today.

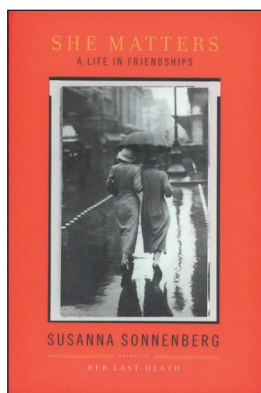
Readers are introduced to boarding school chums, her best friend from summer camp, college pals and the women with whom she formed bonds as a new mother. The rose-colored glasses are off, the warts are out, the good and the bad come spilling forth, revealing a woman who loves deeply and cares a lot.

Understanding female friendships is daunting at best. With unflinching wit, wisdom and clarity, Sonnenberg demonstrates why the women in her book remain connected to her, through their shared experiences and unspoken bonds.

*The New York Times* praises the book's "imaginative narrative structure, its arresting prose, its raw honesty," and suggests that it might inspire readers "to construct a patchwork quilt of your own life and salute the many women who helped you along the way."

Sonnenberg is also the author of the bestselling book *Her Last Death*.

— Judy Shafter



## The River Swimmer

By Jim Harrison  
Published 2013 by Grove Press, New York, NY  
\$25 hardcover

Part-time Montanan Jim Harrison veers from coming of age to aging in two fluid, oddly tranquil novellas.

In *The Land of Unlikeness*, Clive, a cynical art history professor who gave up painting decades ago, finds a reprieve from his relentless intellectualism at the family farm in Michigan, where he's taking care of his cranky, aging mother for a month. The fecund landscape and the proximity of his first love stir his painterly passions. Soon, he orders a big box of Crayolas and some oils, and paints his childhood room like the inside of a whale skeleton.

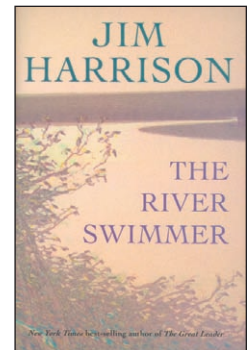
"Clive woke at dawn having lost his self-importance. He didn't know where it had gone but it wasn't in him anymore ... He didn't want to be a painter, he only wanted to paint, two utterly different impulses."

Passion also pervades the second novella, *The River Swimmer*, as young Thad finds adventure and solace in swimming rivers. He grew up on an island in the middle of a large river, and taught himself to swim at age three. He returns to the river again and again to escape the strange currents of his own life – Friendly Frank, who cracks Thad's cheekbone with a barrel stave; young women, who want to claim him for themselves ("If you are not jealous of your freedom who will be for you?" he wonders); and the constant questions from adults about his future.

In consummate Harrison fashion, he strings this story like a yarn drawing that emerges from meandering strand into a textured, complex whole.

*Newsweek* describes Harrison, who has written more than 30 books of poetry, non-fiction and fiction, as "our greatest nonwriterly writer," and *Publishers Weekly* praises the new novellas as "each striking in their own ways, rich and satisfying."

— Kristi Niemeyer



## Notes from the Journey Westward

By Joe Wilkins  
Published December 2012 by White Pine Press,  
Buffalo, NY  
\$16 softcover

Montana native Joe Wilkins won the 17th annual White Pine Poetry Prize with his new collection, which judge Sam Green describes as a "ruthless, entirely un sentimental effort to imagine and understand the world he inhabits – and the world that inhabits him."

His poems pluck scraps from the spare prairie where he grew up, the memories of his grandmother, his father's too-young death, and the meager, muscled history of the Plains. He twists these story fragments into surprising, supple narratives.

In the final poem, "The Old Ways Fade and Do Not Come Back," he writes, "Lift it all up, say, *I am here. And/ I am not here. I am of you. And not of you. Sometimes I love. Sometimes I do not./ Listen: I am going to tell you about it all ...*"

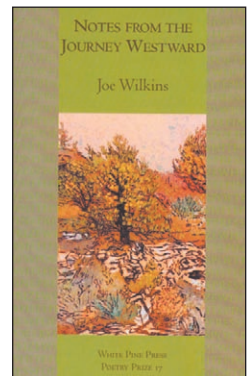
He does, unflinchingly, tell us about it all – the rough, unseemly edges, and the glistening white bones, "how we forget/ or get wrong what God did or didn't say —/ but remember rain, grass, an hour's rest."

The devil puts in an appearance here too, "Listen Mister Lightning Catcher,/ you old stone buzzard/ with your red head of rocks/ & rocks for feathers,/ I'm damn tired of remembering/ you."

Maybe, but memory is insistent in these poems, and each offers a musical reckoning that makes me thankful for the poet's God and his devil.

Wilkins, who was born and raised in eastern Montana, now teaches writing at Waldorf College in northern Iowa. He's written two previous books; a memoir, *The Mountain and the Fathers*, and a collection of poems, *Killing the Murnion Dogs*.

— Kristi Niemeyer



## Reckon

By Melissa Mylchreest  
Merriam-Frontier Award winner; published by  
the author in 2012  
\$24 hardcover

Poet Melissa Mylchreest's manuscript won the Merriam-Frontier Award because "it springs from the terrain" the award celebrates, write judges Bridget Carson, Ginny Merriam and Lois Welch. "Mylchreest travels the sensory universe and uses it all to take the reader to the place where the poem is happening."

The author, who is completing her MFA in The University of Montana's Creative Writing Program, is no stranger to awards. Two poems in the collection won consecutive Obsidian Prizes for Poetry from *High Desert Journal* – "The Gap-Tooth Girl" (2011) and "For Jolene" (2012) – and her poem, "Across the Street, the Midwife Arrives" received the 2008 Dorothy Sargent Rosenberg Prize.

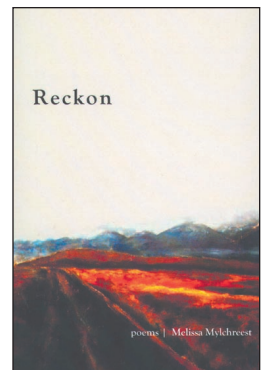
Her voice is both knowing and precise as she describes what most Montanans know by heart: "Cows outside Corvallis, bridges of hipbone/ and skin spanning dust to dust, the late afternoon/ wind pours from the mountains and runs/ around their legs like a sweet-clear river ..."

Or, in "The Gap-Tooth Girl," with the cadence of a cowboy song, "... the man/ in Wranglers holds his arms around her like/ a loose hoop of rope, a snare for her tight/ two-step."

Although many of the poems are distinctly western in content and feel, she also evokes her Connecticut home, where "... I lived/ with salty hair and foghorns through the night." And how the sea still calls her – "not a day untouched by restlessness/ for light, its sharp and shifting moods there at/ that edge, the pull that brought us first to land."

It's a good thing for Montanans that Mylchreest has landed here, and is adding her clear, authentic voice to the state's poetic legacy.

— Kristi Niemeyer



# ABOUT BOOKS

## The Gray Ghost Murders

By Keith McCafferty  
Published 2013 by Viking, New York, NY  
\$26.95 hardcover

Sean Stranahan is trying to mind his own business, which includes escorting anglers down the Gallatin Valley's prized trout streams and painting fishing-inspired watercolors. But when two buried bodies are unearthed on Sphinx Mountain, and members of the Madison River Liars and Fly Tiers Club ask him to solve the mystery of two missing – and very valuable – hand-tied flies, he puts his PI skills back to work.

The autopsy reveals that both victims were shot, and each suffered a terminal illness. As Stranahan begins to unravel the connection between the dead bodies, an obscure bullet and a short story by Robert Connell, "The Most Dangerous Game," the occasional sleuth finds himself stalked, instead of stalking.

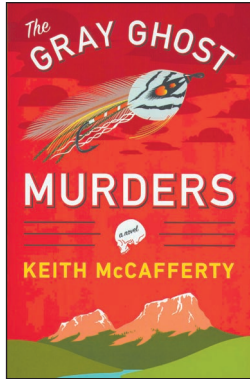
Many of the characters who were introduced in Bozeman author Keith McCafferty's first novel, *The Royal Wulff Murders*, return for the second installment, including the attractive and irascible sheriff, Martha Ettinger; her part-time boyfriend, tracker Harold Little Feather; and Stranahan's pal, the foul-mouthed river rat Sam Meslik. One newcomer is the hero's new squeeze, Martinique, a pre-vet student at Montana State University who pays for her education by working as a sparsely clad barista at Lookers and Lattes.

McCafferty has crafted another fun, fast-paced read that dips into deeper water with its exploration of how a terminal illness can affect a person's psyche. "When a doctor tells you you have a few months and how it's going to end, you walk out of the room a changed man. I lost my nerve, I lost my hope, I lost grip of my soul," says a character, who was on the verge of completing a "terminal arrangement."

"Think big-city CSI teams have it tough?" writes *Kirkus Reviews* of the new novel. "Their examinations of crime scenes are hardly ever interrupted by a grizzly bear like the one that sends Deputy Harold Little Feather to the hospital ... irresistible."

McCafferty, who lives in Bozeman, is the Survival and Outdoor Skills Editor of *Field and Stream* – a vocation that clearly informs his fiction.

– Kristi Niemeyer



## Isabella's Odyssey

Written and Illustrated by Sue Spinelli  
Published 2012 by Peacock Publishing, Manhattan, MT  
\$5.95 softcover

The feline heroine in Sue Spinelli's book for children is a sassy Maine Coon cat who gradually adopts the family of a veterinarian who has moved into her neighborhood to open an animal hospital. Wary at first, the homeless Isabella eventually becomes a loving member of the family and a trusted part of the hospital staff.

The story is narrated by Isabella, who "sees all and tells all from her cattitude point of view," while introducing young readers to the many critters who visit the hospital for treatment.

The cat's spunky nature gets her, and her accomplices, into the occasional scrape. Along the way, young readers gain insights into animal behavior and care, and learn what veterinarians do and why, through the experiences and observations of this precocious feline.

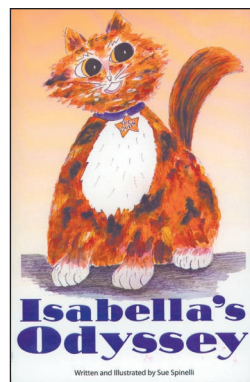
Spinelli incorporates incidents of real-life drama in her story, based on her 25 years of experience working alongside her husband at a veterinary hospital in Belgrade. She highlights her tale with original illustrations.

The result is a pleasant, engaging read, designed to entertain and educate young pet owners, or anyone who likes animal stories.

Spinelli holds university degrees in medical technology and microbiology; one of her short stories placed fourth in the National Writer's Association contest.

Isabella's character is based on the author's cat, also a Maine Coon.

– Judy Shafter



## Fish Do What in the Water?

*The Secret Lives of Marine Animals*  
Written by Caroline Patterson and illustrated by Robert Rath, with photography by Tom Stack and Associates  
Published 2012 by Farcountry Press, Helena, MT  
\$14.95 softcover

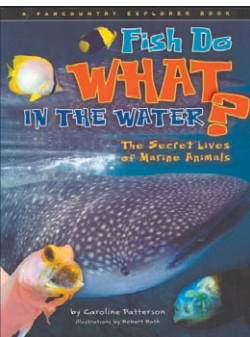
This colorful and entertaining book for young readers offers a fine introduction into the secret lives of a vast variety of sea-dwelling creatures. Its extraordinary photographs, bold illustrations and concise text describe fish, their habits and habitats. Patterson also includes information about mammals that live in the sea, like the blue whale and the familiar dolphin.

The book answers the kinds of questions kids (and curious adults) might ask, including: Why do fish have scales? What is the function of gills? Do fish have tongues? Mysteries such as fish mating, egg laying, child rearing, feeding, social behavior and more are revealed in accessible, easy-to-read language.

Readers will get an introduction to fish with migrating eyes, four-eyes and two eyes on one side of their heads. The book is a wonderful reference to have on the shelf, and will likely spark the interest of many a future marine scientist.

Patterson lives in Missoula with her family. In addition to penning books for children, she has published fiction in numerous literary anthologies and teaches poetry in schools. Rath is a Bozeman illustrator, whose previous collaborations with Patterson include *Who Pooped in the Zoo?*

– Judy Shafter



## More Montana Moments

By Ellen Bauml  
Published 2012 by Montana Historical Society Press, Helena, MT  
\$14.95 softcover

In this follow-up to 2010's *Montana Moments: History on the Go*, historian Ellen Bauml serves readers another helping of historical facts, interesting stories, humorous anecdotes and bizarre characters to demonstrate that history is more than just dull lists of dates and place names.

*More Montana Moments* is an accumulation of scripts from her popular radio show, "History on the Go" broadcast by Cherry Creek Radio in Helena. The material comes from many sources, including Bauml's research for the Montana Historical Society's National Register sign program. Part of her job is to write the wording on the signs that are posted in front of historic homes all over the state.

Chapters include information about people, places, buildings, children and animals. Each entry, she notes, takes about two minutes to read.

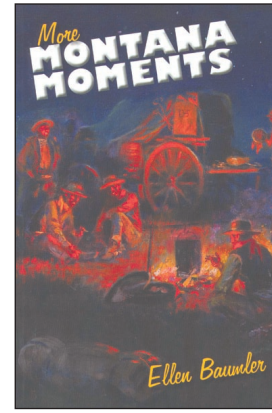
Some of the tales will be familiar, and others are a pleasant surprise that will likely leave readers wanting to know more. The money and personalities behind the building of many of the state's famous mansions (most now are museums), and the somber details of Charlie Russell's 1926 funeral are among the tantalizing tidbits.

Did you know that at least nine naval ships have been christened with names related to the Treasure State? How about the fact that Montana has 112 hillside letters composed of whitewashed rock, more than any other state, and it was Missoula's "M" that initiated the trend?

The book offers an entertaining exploration of Montana history, with no time to get lost or bored in two-minute doses!

Bauml is the interpretive historian for the Montana Historical Society. Previous works include *Spirit Tailings: Ghost Tales from Virginia City, Butte, and Helena*; *Beyond Spirit Tailings: Montana's Mysteries, Ghosts and Haunted Places*; and *Girl from the Gulches: The Story of Mary Ronan*.

– Judy Shafter



## From Football to Fig Newtons:

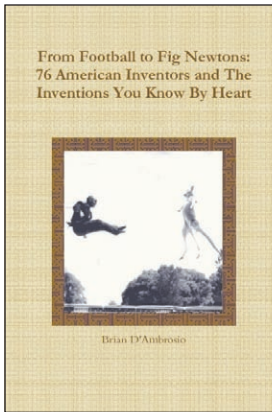
*76 American Inventors and The Inventions You Know By Heart*  
By Brian D'Ambrosio  
Published 2013 by Jabberwocky Press, an imprint of Schiff Books, Pittsburgh, PA  
\$15.99 softcover

Missoula author Brian D'Ambrosio is on a mission to get forgotten American inventors recognized. Who invented football, bluegrass music, Mr. Potato Head, the Kentucky Derby, Sesame Street and the telephone? If you said Walter Camp, Bill Monroe, George Lerner, Meriwether Lewis Clark Jr., Joan Ganz Cooney, and Antonio Meucci, respectively, then no need to read *From Football to Fig Newtons: 76 American Inventors and The Inventions You Know by Heart*.

Otherwise, you can track down the answers and stories, along with 70 others, in D'Ambrosio's latest book. American ingenuity reveals itself in the simplest and most forgotten places. From familiar brand names such as Wheaties (George Cormack) to the most mundane stop at the traffic light (Garrett Augustus Morgan Sr.), everyday experiences provide abundant opportunities to respect and recall the intellect of the men and women who helped shape the culture and landscape of our environment.

Every trip to the grocery store to buy a box of Band-Aids® (Earle Dickson) offers a chance to ask where and how a certain product came about. With every click of the computer mouse (Douglas Engelbart), our curiosity should deepen.

D'Ambrosio, who also wrote *Menacing Face Worth Millions: A Life of Charles Bronson*, has crafted an instructive read about those who created the spaces, items and comforts we take for granted.



## Who's Faster? Animals on the Move

Written by Eileen R. Meyer; illustrated by Constance R. Bergum  
Published 2012 by Mountain Press Publishing Company, Missoula, MT  
\$12 hardcover

You can almost feel the wind brush the grass as the fleet-footed cheetah sprints across the pages in *Who's Faster?* At 70 miles per hour, the sleek cat almost wins the race. But instead, the peregrine falcon stoops in for the victory at over 200 mph.

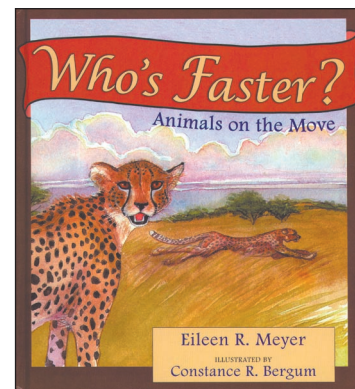
Award-winning Helena illustrator Constance Bergum created the vibrant, intricate watercolor paintings that bring Eileen Meyer's text to life. Who knew that pronghorn antelopes are even faster than the famed Thomson's gazelle (by 11 mph), or that a sailfish is the ocean's speed demon, able to "slice through turquoise waters" at 68 mph?

Learn more about the 14 creatures that crawl, slither, lumber and dash across these pages in an appendix, which also discusses how to measure and compare speed, and lists handy online resources for young animal lovers.

Bergum has been a designer and illustrator of children's books for more than 25 years, and received the Washington Writers Award and the Bock Book Award for her efforts. This is her 14th book for children.

Poems by Illinois author Meyer have appeared in several children's magazines and are part of the new anthology, *And the Crowd Goes Wild: A Global Gathering of Sports Poems*.

– Kristi Niemeyer



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## Send us book ideas

Two Helena publishing companies welcome book ideas.

**Farcountry Press** invites writers, photographers and illustrators to submit their book ideas for consideration.

Farcountry publishes award-winning books on regional popular history, natural history and national parks for a general audience and for children.

The company also publishes color photography books on regions, states, cities and national parks, but generally does not publish poetry or fiction.

Please send book proposals to: Acquisitions, PO Box 5630, Helena, MT 59604. Include a self-addressed, stamped envelope or your materials will not be returned, and do not send original art or photographs. For more information, visit [www.farcountrypress.com](http://www.farcountrypress.com).

**Riverbend Publishing** also welcomes book proposals about Montana and the West. The company publishes award-winning books on regional history, natural history, photography and Glacier and Yellowstone national parks, plus cookbooks and fiction.

Send proposals to Editor, Riverbend Publishing, PO Box 5833, Helena, MT 59604. Visit [www.riverbendpublishing.com](http://www.riverbendpublishing.com) for more information about the company.