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# Montana

# FREEMASON

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July 2026

Vol. 102 No. 2

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A significant section of this issue focuses on the important work of the Montana Masonic Foundation and the communities that benefit from it. From reading programs to public school grants, various youth initiatives, community programs, and historical preservation efforts.



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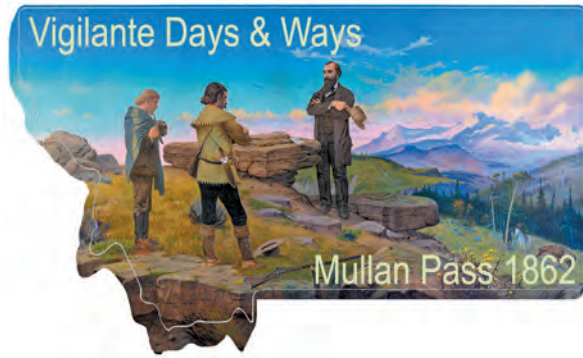
**Cover:** The cover features an undated photograph of Virginia City Commandery No. 1.

Virginia City Commandery No. 1 was chartered on September 23, 1868. The Grand Commandery of Montana was formally constituted on May 14, 1888. Its constituent commanderies included Virginia City No. 1, Helena No. 2, Montana No. 3 in Butte, and Damascus No. 4 in Miles City.

## EDITOR NOTES



Reid Gardiner  
Editor



# Articles & Correspondence

The Montana Freemason Magazine is produced by the Montana Masonic Foundation, Inc. Articles in this publication reflect the personal opinions of the writers and do not necessarily represent the official stance of the Montana Masonic Foundation or the Grand Lodge A.F.&A.M. of Montana, unless otherwise stated.

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The Editorial Staff invites contributions, including informative articles, reports, news, and other current information that generally relate to Masonry.

**Article Submission.** Adhering to the following guidelines is crucial when submitting articles for publication.

**Photographs & Artwork.** Original pictures or those taken with digital cameras work best. Use the highest resolution, with 300 dpi being the ideal setting. Please do not send newspaper pictures or inkjet prints, as they will not reproduce satisfactorily. Preferred file types: JPEG, JPG, TIFF, PNG, or PSD. All photographs should include the name of the photographer and the name of the event or individuals who might have been in the photo. Printed photographs will not be returned.

**Text & Copy.** The articles must be either typewritten or computer-generated. Submissions can be sent to the editor via email, fax, regular mail, or delivered in person to the Grand Lodge office. It's important to spell-check all articles, which will undergo peer review and evaluation. Unfortunately, we cannot offer compensation for items, photos, or other materials submitted for publication. Please email all photos and articles to the address provided below.

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# **Donald Matthew Powell**

## **Grand Master 2026–2027**

### **Grand Lodge of Montana, A.F. & A.M.**

Born on June 18, 1986, in Kalispell, Montana, Donald Matthew Powell is a fifth-generation Montanan on his father's side and a first-generation descendant on his mother's side, where she is an enrolled member of the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes (CSKT). This dual heritage has given him profound ties to the Treasure State's communities, landscapes, and traditions, reinforced by frequent visits—often three or four times a year—even as he pursued opportunities elsewhere. He graduated from A. C. Davis High School in Yakima, Washington, earning an International Baccalaureate diploma with full honors. During his high school years, he competed in CAD engineering competitions, winning the state championship three years in a row, and enjoyed baseball and golfing with friends and family—pursuits that instilled teamwork, precision, and enjoyment of the outdoors.



Don pursued higher education at Montana State University in Bozeman, where he earned a Bachelor of Science in Psychology with a minor in Entrepreneurship and Management. During college, he was an active member of Pi Kappa Alpha fraternity, serving as Treasurer (managing chapter finances), Philanthropy Chair (coordinating community service and fundraising events), and Sorority Relations Chair (fostering positive inter-Greek interactions). These roles provided valuable brotherhood and leadership experience but ultimately left him seeking a deeper, more enduring fraternal bond. After exploring other organizations, he discovered Freemasonry through Worshipful Brother Mark St. John of Bozeman Lodge No. 18, who introduced him to the Craft as a lifelong path to self-improvement.

Unaware at the time of his family's Masonic legacy—his maternal great-grandfather Virgil Pitts (Past Master of Hot Springs Lodge), and paternal grandparents Ken Powell (member of Harmony Lodge No. 49, Electa Chapter #7 Eastern Star, and Algeria Shrine) and Edris Powell (active in Eastern Star as Past Matron of Electa Chapter #7 in Missoula)—Don petitioned and was initiated an Entered Apprentice on February 3, 2011; passed to Fellowcraft on May 11, 2011; and raised to the sublime degree of Master Mason on June 1, 2011, in Gallatin Lodge No. 6 (courtesy work for Bozeman Lodge No. 18). He progressed steadily through the line at Bozeman Lodge No. 18, serving as: 2011–2012 Junior Deacon, 2012–2013 Senior Deacon, 2013–2014 Junior Warden, 2014–2015 Senior Warden and 2015–2016 as Worshipful Master.

During his year in the East, the lodge earned the Master Builder Award. Don is also affiliated with Livingston Valley Scottish Rite (serving two years as Venerable Master), Western Montana Valley Scottish Rite, and Algeria Shrine.

Don's Grand Lodge service began in 2016–2017 as Grand Pursuivant, appointed by Grand Master Lewis K. Smith. He advanced steadily, serving as: 2017–2018 Grand Standard Bearer, 2018–2019 Junior Grand Steward, 2020–2021 Grand Marshal (reappointed), 2021–2022 Junior Grand Deacon, 2022–2023 Senior Grand Deacon, 2023–2024 Junior Grand Warden, 2024–2025 Senior Grand Warden, and in 2025–2026 as Deputy Grand Master.

He has served as District Officer for both the Livingston and Missoula Districts, taken the Masonic code test three times, and contributed to numerous committees, including Bulletins and Publications, Executive, Investments, Masonic Hall of Fame, Masonic Honors and Recognition, Finance, Youth Groups, Jurisprudence, Education and Research, and Work. He currently serves as President of the Montana Masonic Foundation.

Professionally, Don has built a diverse career focused on service and leadership. For six years, he worked at Reach Incorporated in Bozeman, managing a caseload of adults with developmental disabilities and supervising a team of three. Seeking new challenges, he relocated to Missoula and joined the Residence Inn by Marriott Downtown, where he served as Assistant General Manager for four years before advancing in his role, ultimately overseeing a staff of 107 during his tenure. Today, he is a Branch Office Administrator at Edward Jones, with aspirations to advance to Financial Advisor—likely after his term as Grand Master.

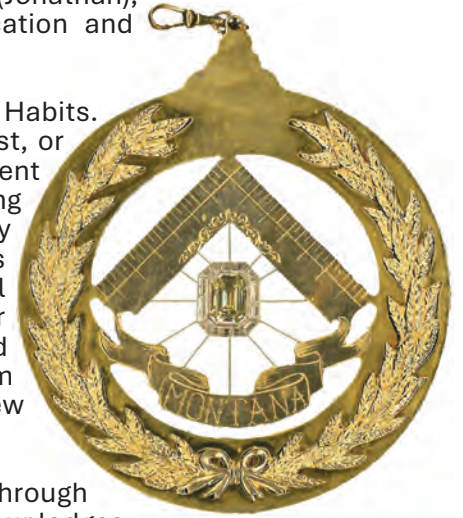
Outside of Masonry, Don enjoys self-directed learning and is currently teaching himself piano and Spanish. He crafts homemade hot sauce (with plans to sell at farmers markets post-term) and loves exploring new restaurants in new towns. A devoted Bobcat fan, he attends Grizzly games for the live camaraderie and shared collective effervescence of Montana fans uniting—east side or west—reminding us that rivalries fade when the state is represented on a larger stage. Much like Masonry, he believes in coming together beyond divisions to support shared goals. He has held board positions in his community, including service on the boards of Intermountain Opera and the Symphony in Bozeman.

Brother Powell is building on the multi-year master plan initiated five years ago by Montana's Grand Lodge officers. This collaborative effort—open discussions and focused themes: “You Can Do Better” (Jonathan), “Deliver on Your Promise” (David), “Prevent Attrition” (Sam), and “Communication and Participation” (Jason).

Don's theme for 2026–2027 is “Improve by 1%”—inspired by James Clear's Atomic Habits. The idea is simple yet profound: at every lodge meeting, social gathering, breakfast, or function, brethren commit to improving the Craft by just one percent. Small, consistent actions compound—whether inviting a prospect, enhancing degree work, adding music to a ceremony, sending a handwritten note to a distant brother, hosting a Rusty Trowel event, or simply reaching out to someone who hasn't attended in years. This builds directly on the preceding Grand Masters' goals: higher standards in ritual and investigations, better retention through dedicated membership chairs, stronger communication (including personal touches like birthday cards from the Grand Secretary and Grand Master), consistent Masonic information and education from the Montana Freemason Magazine, and increased online visibility through our new Webpage.

Don's message is one of optimism and action: Montana Freemasonry is evolving through collective effort. By stacking 1% improvements, we honor our heritage, strengthen our lodges, and ensure the Craft thrives for generations.

Brethren, let us commit together: Improve by 1%—every day, every meeting, every interaction. Small steps lead to Masonic strength.



# FAREWELL

*Your Work Has Been True*

## THANK YOU M. W. PAST GRAND MASTER SMITH

The heavy lift is finished, the final bow is cast,  
A masterclass of effort, and a job well done at last!  
You took the mountain ahead and climbed it to the crest,  
Leaving a sparkling legacy of doing your absolute best.

The desks may be quieter, the project files are closed,  
But the warmth of your impact is deeply, clearly known.  
You didn't just meet the mark, you raised the bar sky-high,  
And gave us a thousand bright reasons to cheer you and to fly.

So pack up your triumphs and carry them with immense pride,  
As you step with joyful confidence to the open world outside.  
Cheers to the victory, to the finish line you crossed,  
May your next grand adventure be a total, roaring blast!

-Unknown



Jason Smith  
Grand Master 2025-2026



## Billings No. 113 Welcomes new Entered Apprentice



On March 23rd Billings Lodge initiated Cody Stotts into the craft.

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## HELENA LODGE NO. 3 FESTIVE BOARD 2026



# SUPPORTING PUBLIC SCHOOLS IN MONTANA FOR OVER 150 YEARS



BANNACK SCHOOL/MASONIC LODGE | Children attended classes at Bannack, Montana Territory in this combination lodge hall and schoolhouse. It was built in 1874 by Bannack Lodge No. 16. A Bannack housewife gave up her hickory breadboard to mount the carved masonic emblem at the gable's peak.

## MONTANA MASONIC FOUNDATION



## Montana Masonic Foundation Awards Grant to Young Parent Education Center



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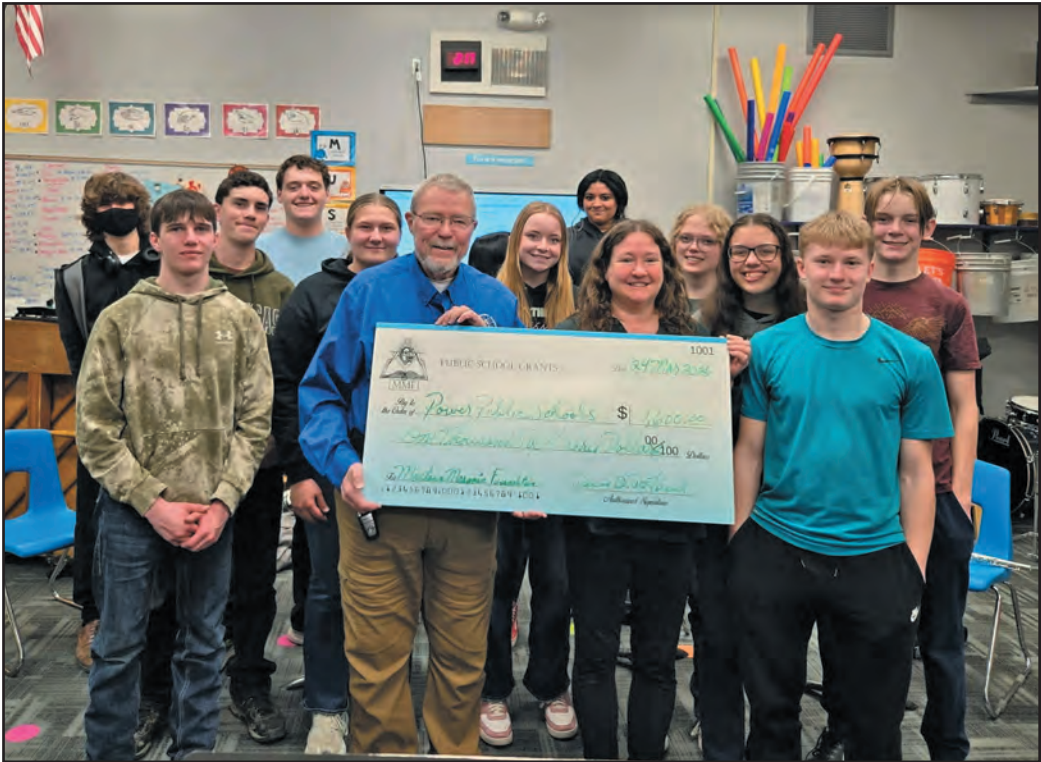
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## Montana Masonic Foundation Awards Grant to Montana Empowerment Center



Brothers Brad, Dennis, Marty, and Dave, representing the Montana Masonic Foundation, presented a grant check to support the MEC in expanding its services to additional families. The MEC serves as Montana's Parent Training and Information Center (PTI) for special education, providing assistance to children and young adults from birth through age 26.

# Montana Masonic Foundation Awards Educational Grant Power Public Schools



## BILLINGS NO. 113 SUPPORTING STUDENT READING PROGRAM

Brothers Ron Boyd and Ken Peck, representing Billings Lodge No. 113, donated a \$500 check to the administrators of Elder Grove School to support their Elementary Student Reading Program.

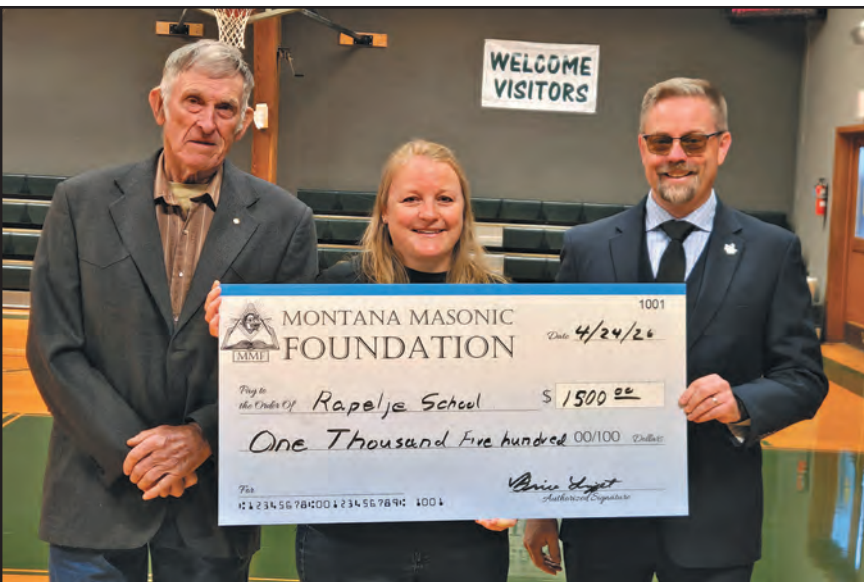
## Montana Masonic Foundation Awards Public School Educational Grant To Canyon Creek School - Billings



Brother Brice Ligget, on behalf of the Montana Masonic Foundation, presented a grant check Canyon Creek, the needed more microscopes. If you've ever had to wait or take notes for someone else using a microscope, you know how much better actually using the microscope is. Sorry about the pictures. I'm afraid the principal didn't take a class on camera use. I don't think these pictures will be useful.

## Montana Masonic Foundation Awards Public School Educational Grant To Stillwater -Sweetgrass School Columbus

Brother Brice Ligget, on behalf of the Montana Masonic Foundation and WB Bill Thompson from Stillwater No. 62, presented a grant check to the school. The School has a small team servicing students that need additional help in the counties. The team will be purchasing books for the student's use.



## Montana Masonic Foundation Awards Public School Educational Grant To Rapelje School

Brother Brice Ligget, on behalf of the Montana Masonic Foundation and WB Bill Thompson from Stillwater No. 62, presented a grant check to the Rapelje Band for a Tuba! I do love visiting small schools. The principal called an all student/staff assembly for this presentation. The band kids were very noticeable when we announced a Tuba. It's always fun to talk to the kids about the things their teachers do behind the scenes to make their school successful.

## Montana Masonic Foundation Awards Public School Educational Grant To Carter County High School



L to R: Marty Reiersen, Sagebrush District Officer, James Kapptie, Superintendent, Students, and from Ekalaka No. 120. Pat Strickland, Worshipful Master, Doug Bonsell, Junior Deacon.

On April 29, 2026, Marty Reiersen, representing the Montana Masonic Foundation, joined members of Ekalaka Lodge No. 120—Pat Stricklan and Doug Bonsell—to present the Carter County public education system with a \$2,639.00 scholarship. In December 2025, FFA advisor and agriculture teacher Mr. Seth Witney applied for the grant to purchase a lifelike, one-sixth-scale cow model to help students learn bovine anatomy through hands-on instruction. The model will support both the FFA program and science classroom. Because most large-animal veterinarians come from small rural schools, we hope this contributes—however modestly—to agricultural education.

Statewide, the Montana Masonic Foundation contributed nearly \$100,000 to support youth education. Thank you for your generous donation to Ekalaka Public Schools.

- by Doug Bonsell & Pat Strickland

## Montana Masonic Foundation Awards Public School Educational Grant To Richey Public Schools



On behalf of the Montana Masonic Foundation, Sandy Stinnett from Glendive Lodge No. 31, presented a grant check to Richey Public Schools to go towards a Promethean interactive display for our school!

A Promethean interactive display, also known as an ActivPanel, is a high-definition, touch-enabled flat panel display designed for classrooms. It functions as a central hub, combining whiteboard functionality, computer connectivity, and Android-based apps to enhance engagement through interactive lessons or meetings.

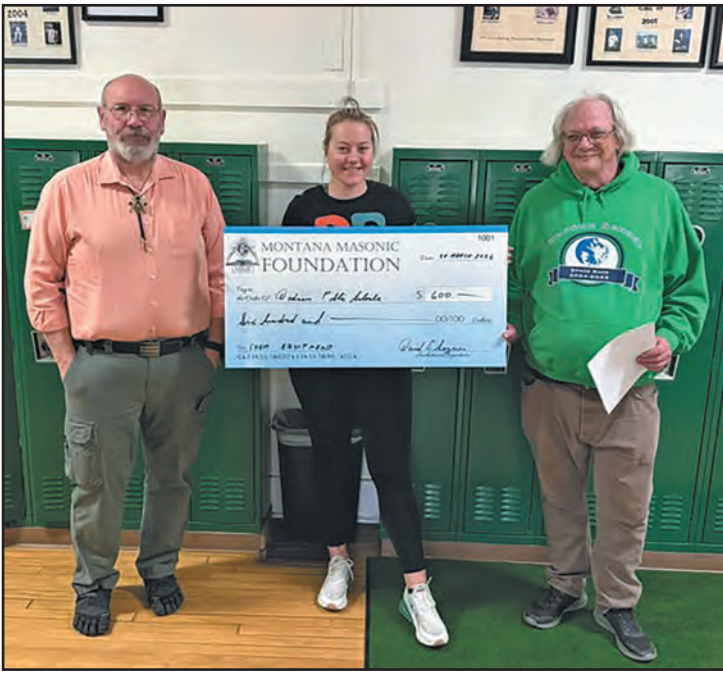
## Montana Masonic Foundation Awards Public School Educational Grant To Dawson County High School



On May 7, Sandy Stinnett, representing the Montana Masonic Foundation, presented a \$2,500 grant check to Mr. JC Pagawisan of the Science Department. The grant funded new microscopes for our science area—an important upgrade from our older equipment. Students can now view slides with clear magnification, and the included camera attachment lets them capture photos and videos directly on their devices.



## Montana Masonic Foundation Awards Public School Educational Grant To Dobson Public Schools



The Montana Masonic Foundation awarded Mr. Porter a \$600 grant to support chemistry supplies in the classroom at Dodson Public Schools. This generous funding will help provide hands-on learning opportunities for students, allowing them to explore scientific concepts in meaningful and engaging ways. Experiences like these make a lasting impact and inspire curiosity in the next generation of scientists.

The Montana Masonic Foundation is dedicated to strengthening public education, supporting community improvement, and advancing charitable initiatives across the state. By investing in Montana's public schools, the Foundation helps build stronger communities and create brighter futures for students.

## Montana Masonic Foundation Awards Public School Educational Grant To Bear Paw Elementary School

David Sageser, representing the Montana Masonic Foundation, presented a grant check to Sheena Wortman and students from Bear Paw Elementary.



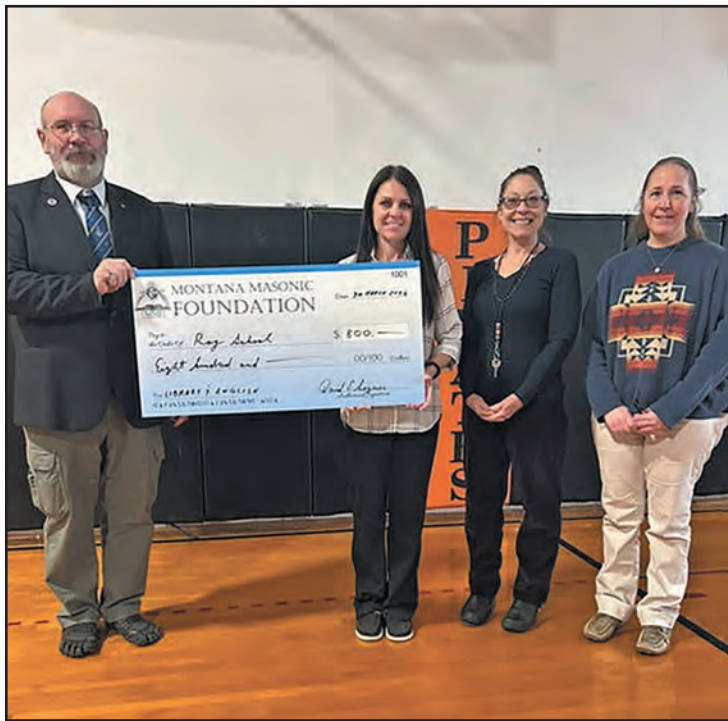
## Montana Masonic Foundation & Three Forks No. 73 Reading Achievement Program - Bikes for Books Harrison Public School

Harrison School is proud to celebrate the success of our Battle of the Bookworms reading program. In partnership with the Montana Masonic Foundation and Three Forks Lodge #73, Harrison students participated in the Bikes for Books and Kindles for Kids programs.





## Montana Masonic Foundation Awards Public School Educational Grant To Chinook Public Schools



## Montana Masonic Foundation Awards Public School Educational Grant To Roy Public School

David Sageger, representing the Montana Masonic Foundation, presented a grant check to Lindsay Siroky, Superintendent; Carolyn James, Elementary Teacher; and Chrystal Murphy, Librarian.



## Montana Masonic Foundation Awards Public School Educational Grant To Havre Public Schools

David Sageger (L), representing the Montana Masonic Foundation, presented a grant check to Michael Rappold, Hayley Criner, and Joe Ross of Havre Public Schools.



**Montana Masonic Foundation  
& Helena No. 3  
Are Proud to Present  
Public School Educational Grants To  
Helena Area Public Schools**

At Helena No. 3's Public Schools Night, Ken Bates the District Officer, acted on behalf of the Montana Masonic Foundation to award checks to schools in the Helena area.

**Montana Masonic Foundation Awards  
Public School Educational Grant To  
Hellgate Elementary School**



Thank you for your incredibly generous support of our One Book, One Read project. Because of your grant, we were able to provide every student and family in our school community with a copy of *A Wolf Called Wander* by Rosanne Parry. Your contribution helped offset the cost of these books and made it possible for this experience to be truly inclusive by ensuring that every child and family could participate together. This project brought our entire community together in a meaningful and lasting way. Classrooms, families, and staff all engaged in shared conversations, activities, and reflections centered around the story. The excitement and connection we saw throughout the month were truly special. One of the highlights of this experience was welcoming Rosanne Parry to visit with our students. Her time with us was an incredible success! Students were inspired by her storytelling, gained insight into the writing process, and felt a genuine connection to the book they had been reading together. It was a powerful moment that deepened their appreciation for literature and storytelling.

Your generosity made all of this possible. I have attached a few photos from our month-long event so you can see the joy and engagement your support helped create.

Thank you again for your investment in our students and our community. We are deeply grateful.

Molly Blakely, Ed.D., Superintendent, Hellgate Elementary





**Montana Masonic Foundation  
& Eureka No. 93  
Are Proud to Present  
Public School Educational  
Grants To  
Eureka Robotics Team**

Wayne Renfro, Worshipful Master of Eureka Lodge 93, presented a \$1,500 check to Ron Van Leishout, the Advisor for the Eureka Robotics Team, following a team demonstration. The robotics team recently earned a spot in the International competition, which will take place in Austin, Texas. Since robotics is not a school-sponsored activity, the team relies on donations for their supplies and to cover travel costs. In the photo, Past Master Bruce Todd is seated at the far left, with Jack Nelson as the photographer.



**Montana Masonic Foundation  
& Ennis No. 2 Present  
Ennis Elementary School  
Public School Educational Grant**

Bro. Mark Bassett, representing the Montana Masonic Foundation, was joined by WB "Bill" Bennett, Secretary of Ennis No. 2, as they presented a grant check to Ennis Elementary School..

**Montana Masonic Foundation Awards  
Public School Educational Grant To  
Shepherd Public Schools**



Brother Brice Ligget, on behalf of the Montana Masonic Foundation, presented a grant check to Ms. Walker to purchase tech equipment. This grant award is a well-deserved recognition of the Performing Arts Club students and Ms. Walker.



## Montana Masonic Foundation Awards Public School Educational Grant To Absarokee Public Schools

Brice Ligget, on behalf of the Montana Masonic Foundation, presented a \$1,500 grant check to Mrs. Sarah Kornick, Librarian. With these funds, Mrs. Kornick plans to purchase new books for the school library—an investment that will inspire and benefit all the students.

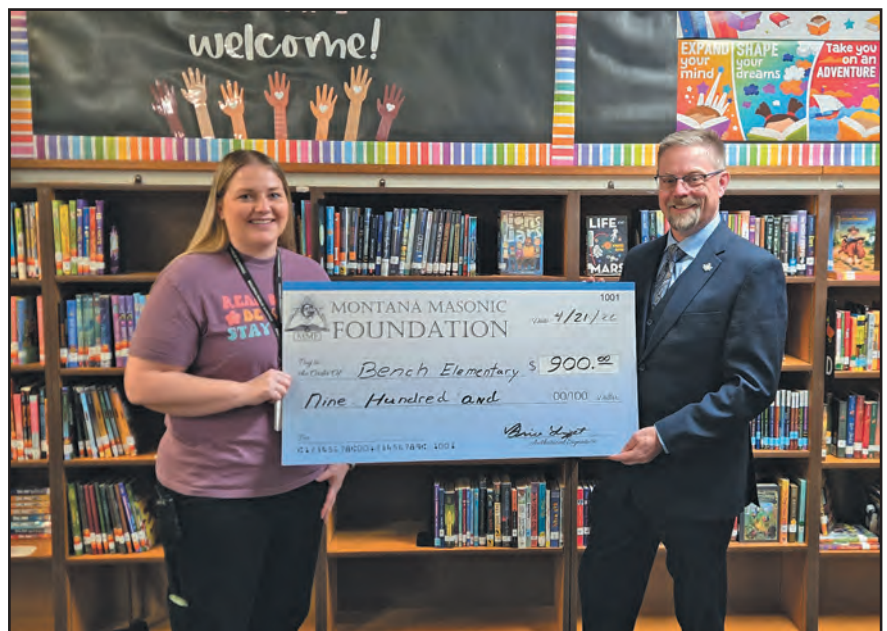


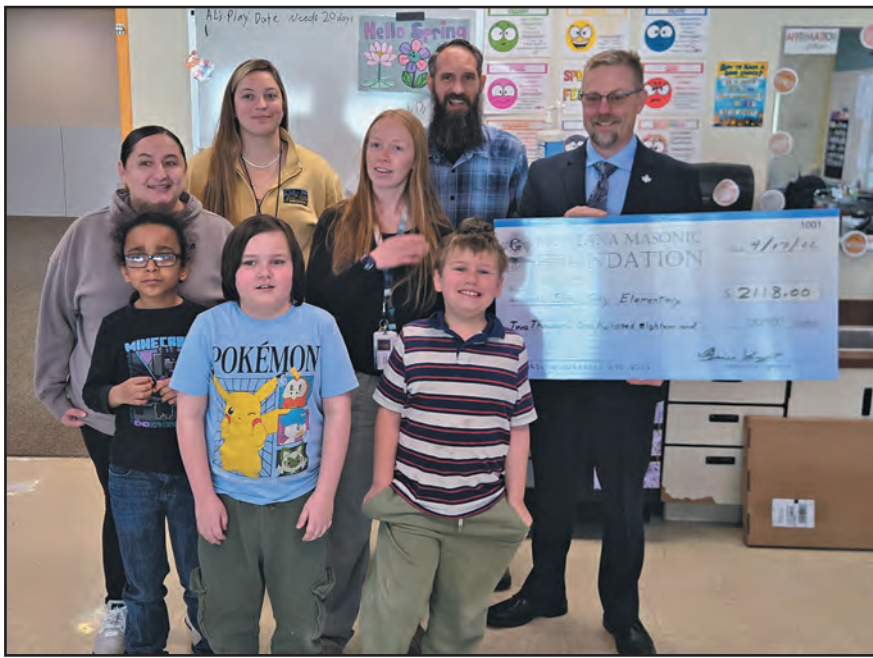
## Montana Masonic Foundation Awards Public School Educational Grant To West Elementary, Laurel

Brice Ligget, on behalf of the Montana Masonic Foundation, presented a grant to second grade teacher, Mrs. Lavold. She plans to use this next year for science supplies and tadpoles.

## Montana Masonic Foundation Awards Public School Educational Grant To Bench Elementary School - Billings

Brice Ligget, on behalf of the Montana Masonic Foundation, presented a grant check to Ms. Litter has created a very well curated list of books about Native American culture concentrating on Native authors.





## Montana Masonic Foundation Awards Public School Educational Grant To Big Sky Elementary Schools Billings

Brice Ligget, on behalf of the Montana Masonic Foundation, presented a grant check to Big Sky Elementary. Big Sky has a robust team serving students with special needs. They have a room where kids dealing with big feelings can go to get control of their emotions (background). That room is too large and not an inviting quiet space. A member of Ashlar lodge (pictured) encouraged the team to write a grant to remodel this space creating a smaller space with extra sound insulation. In addition, it will allow other students to use the rest of the space for other activities.

## Montana Masonic Foundation Awards Public School Educational Grant To Billings Public School

Brice Ligget, on behalf of the Montana Masonic Foundation, presented a grant check to Billings Public School. The original request for a native American drum and dance group to perform for students in the Billings Public Schools. Unfortunately, that plan fell through. BPS pivoted to bringing in a local mixed media artist to teach a class concentrating on native American techniques.



## Montana Masonic Foundation Awards Public School Educational Grant To Broadview School

Brice Ligget, on behalf of the Montana Masonic Foundation, presented a grant check to Broadview Schools. Broadview needed a sound system for school concerts and plays. Ms. Baker stepped up and wrote the grant. The entire class is very excited about the new sound system.



## Montana Masonic Foundation Awards Public School Educational Grant To Garfield Elementary School



Representing the Montana Masonic Foundation, Marty Reiersen presented Garfield Elementary School in Miles City, Montana, with a \$1,500 grant for library materials and \$1,000 for musical instruments.

Pictured left to right: Marty Reierson (Sagebrush District Officer), Jonette Doeden (Librarian), students, Sigurd Hellickson (Master of Hiram No. 52), and Wendy Demming (Principal).

## Montana Masonic Foundation Awards Public School Educational Grant To Lincoln School

On behalf of the Montana Masonic Foundation, Marty Reierson presented Lincoln Elementary School in Miles City with a \$1,500 grant for robotics and music equipment.

Pictured (left to right): Back row—Sigurd Hellickson (Master, Hiram #52), Anna Mills (Librarian), Brittany Keil (Principal), Marty Reierson (Sagebrush District Officer). Front row—Lincoln Elementary students.



## Montana Masonic Foundation and Ekalaka Lodge No. 120 Reading Achievement Program -Bikes for Book & Kindles for Kids Ekalaka Public Schools



The Montana Masonic Foundation awarded three bikes and three Kindles to six lucky elementary students. The elementary teachers and Mrs. Whitney, the school librarian, selected students. They were selected based on varying reading criteria (e.g., AR points, improvement in reading, number of books read, etc.). The winners were Chaz Gardner, Claire Brence, Cienna Hieb, Thomas McCabe, Zeus Milan, and Violet Strub. The Masonic Foundation is a charitable organization focused on supporting educational, scientific, and community initiatives.



## Montana Masonic Foundation Awards Public School Educational Grant To Custer Public School

On behalf of the Montana Masonic Foundation, Marty Reierson presented Custer Public School with a Grant check of \$1500 for the Drama/ Music Department. Refinishing the stage floor, microphones, and lighting.

L to R: Jasmine Torralba, Music & Drama Teacher, and Marty Reierson, Sagebrush District Officer.

## Montana Masonic Foundation Awards Public School Educational Grant To Hardin Middle School

On behalf of the Montana Masonic Foundation, Marty Reierson presented Hardin Middle School, Hardin, MT, a Grant of \$ 1,500 for Science Olympiad Materials and STEM for ROADS Challenge.

Pictured L to R: Heidi Schuster, Science Teacher, Marty Reierson, Sagebrush District Officer, Steve Hopes, Brother of Saints John No. 92.



## Montana Masonic Foundation Awards Public School Educational Grant To Frazer Schools

On behalf of the Montana Masonic Foundation, Max Knodel, Grand Organist, presented a grant check to Frazer Schools. Superintendent Sarah Ruff received grant funding to strengthen STEM opportunities through 3D-printing materials, STEM kits, and additional hands-on learning resources that will inspire creativity, innovation, and problem-solving among our students. Alexandra Hinchcliff also received grant funding to support literacy initiatives for students in grades Pre-K–12. These funds will allow every student to select and take home a book during our school Book Fair, helping foster a love of reading, build personal home libraries, and create meaningful connections with books and literacy. Additional funds will also be used to expand the 7–12 English classroom libraries with new, engaging, and culturally relevant titles that students will be excited to read.





## MONTANA VETERAN'S ART WINS FIRST PLACE, EARNS NATIONAL INVITE

By Jesus Flores, VISN 19 writer & editor  
February 27, 2026

Fred found woodworking at a local craft show around 2005. He stopped to talk with a man building intarsia motorcycles from wood. The man invited him to his shop, walked him through the process and gave him a couple of patterns to try." That was the start of a rewarding and glorious hobby," says Fred.

Earl Fred entered Montana VA Health Care System's creative arts competition for the first time and won first place. His intarsia woodwork piece, "Grey Owl," is made from 525 hand-cut and hand-sanded pieces of 4 types of wood. "This is the first time I've entered this level of competition," says Fred. "But it definitely will not be my last."

The win earned the 92-year-old Air Force Veteran from Helena, Montana, an invitation to the National Veterans Creative Arts Festival in Columbia, South Carolina. Before he ever touched a scroll saw, Fred was teaching other airmen how to stay alive.

He served in the U.S. Air Force from 1954 to 1957 as a survival instructor, stationed in Reno, Nevada and Caribou, Maine. He ran a 15-day course that trained airmen to survive off the land, sea and desert if they were ever cut off from support. The final 2 days were escape-and-evasion exercises. "The crews were given enough food for 5 days," says Fred. "Beyond that, it was a real survival problem." What he's most proud of came in the mail long after his service was over. "It was receiving correspondence from crew members who were actually faced with, and found themselves in a real survival situation and thanked God for the training they had received," says Fred.

During his service, Fred played in a baseball tournament in Wichita, Kansas, where he batted twice against a young pitcher named Sandy Koufax, years before Koufax became a Hall of Famer.

When Mike Bassett, an outpatient recreational therapist at Fort Harrison VA Medical Center, saw Fred's artwork, he encouraged Fred to enter Montana VA's creative arts competition. Fred entered "Grey Owl," won first place and received an invitation to the National Veterans Creative Arts Festival, running June 9 through June 14, 2026, in Columbia, South Carolina. Being invited to the National Veterans Creative Arts Festival at 92 means more to him than he expected. "To reach the award level I have is one of the greatest achievements I've had in my life," says Fred.

Fred says the hardest part of any design is the time it demands. Some pieces have to be recut because they don't fit right. Every piece has to be sanded by hand. When he finishes, his first thought is always whether he could have done it better. His second thought is something different. "Wow. I did it," says Fred.



His woodshop gives him a place to settle his mind and something to look forward to every day. "I'm in my own little world for a period of time," says Fred. "The relaxation I receive while working on a project keeps me coming back." Fred doesn't go to the shop alone.

## MORE TO THE STORY

# THE ELEGANCE OF EARL

Reid Gardiner, Editor

His daughter Karen is there with him nearly every day. She learned the craft from him, and now they present together in shows, including 2 each year at Fort Harrison, where VA staff and other Veterans can see their work. Karen says creative arts changed something in her dad. "First and foremost, it gives him something to get out of the house for every day," says Karen. "He takes pride in each piece and enjoys the creative talents it takes to complete a piece."

For her, the time in the shop became something she didn't expect either. "I absolutely love spending half a day, every day, with my dad in the shop," says Karen. "Having him teach me his hobby was just an added bonus." Fred says Karen's decision to join him in the shop was one of the best things to come out of the whole hobby. "It was great happiness for me when Karen said she wanted to take up this art form," says Fred. "The big plus is the time we get to spend together."

The VA's creative arts therapies use art, music, dance and drama to help Veterans work toward their rehabilitation goals. The program supports physical, mental and social well-being through creative expression and gives Veterans a way to manage pain, build focus and connect with others. "I urge Veterans to find a hobby they enjoy, to keep their interest and to look forward to the next day and the joy received personally," says Fred.

To learn more about the VA's Recreational Therapy program or the creative arts competition, contact Mike Bassett, Montana VA Recreational Therapist at 406-447-7070 or visit Creative Arts Therapies or National Veterans Creative Arts Festival.

<https://www.va.gov/montana-health-care/stories/montana-veterans-art-wins-first-place-earns-national-invite/>

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Jesus R. Flores  
Writer and editor  
VA Rocky Mountain Network (VISN 19)  
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs



Brother Earl Fred received his Masonic degrees in Morning Star Lodge No. 5, Helena, Montana. He was Initiated as an Entered Apprentice on September 27, 1961; Passed to the degree of Fellowcraft on October 19, 1961; and Raised to the Sublime Degree of a Master Mason on December 02, 1961. He affiliated with Ottawa Lodge No. 51 in Marysville, Montana, on April 15, 1983. He received his 50-Year Member Award on February 12, 2012.

He was awarded the Montana Meritorious Service Medal on June 22, 2007. Brother Earl served as Worshipful Master of Morning Star Lodge in 1970-1971 and served as Lodge Secretary from 1972 through 2013. He served as Worshipful Master of Ottawa Lodge in 1998-1999.

Prior to his retirement, Earl ran the state of Montana's purchasing department for 34 years. He is also the author of the book "Marysville, Montana: Its History and Its People," a historical book detailing the community of Marysville, Montana.

Earl became interested in intarsia woodworking at a local craft show in 2005. "That was the start of a rewarding and glorious hobby." He finds satisfaction in seeing a finished piece and the customer's reaction. "This started as a challenge, to take something and make something out of it." He has also done pen-and-ink sketching".

The VA's Creative Arts Competition is open to enrolled veterans at VA Health care facilities. It highlights the artists' creativity and their use of creative arts to impact their health and wellness. The competition has three divisions: visual arts, creative writing, and performing arts.

Earl's entry, a "Grey Owl" won first place for the regional competition and advanced to the national competition.

Recently, he received his first-place certificate from the regional competition at a ceremony at Fort Harrison VA Medical Center.



Earl's daughter, Karen, has also taken up the hobby; they work a few hours a day on their projects. The two produce artwork for sale ranging from \$20 to \$400. Examples include dog heads memorializing a pet, a veteran or a wildlife theme. They do two shows a year. His woodshop gives him a place to settle his mind and something to look forward to every day.

Karen expressed how proud she is of her father for his artistic skill and for placing so high in a national competition.

Earl shared his pride in Karen's skill and artistic ability: "Karen does better than I do."



One of Earl's favorite pieces is a blue heron and egret, which hang in his shop. He likes the detail involved in the pieces.



Earl encourages others to take up intarsia woodworking and offers to share his knowledge and provide patterns for them to work with. It can be therapeutic, and there is satisfaction in seeing a happy customer's response.



For more information on the artwork of Brother Earl and his daughter, Karen, contact: [kran13@yahoo.com](mailto:kran13@yahoo.com) or on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/mtcustomwoodcraft>.

Special thanks: The majority of the information in the articles about Earl Fred was provided by Earl and his daughter Karen.

## Earl Fred Receives First Place At The Nationwide Competition

Earl was among 50 first-place winners in the nationwide Veterans Affairs Creative Arts Competition, making him the first Montanan to garner such an award in the event's nearly 40-year history. In all, there were 7,000 entries from 4,000 veterans at 124 VA Hospitals and Clinics across various categories. The event, was held June 9-14 in Columbia, South Carolina. Unfortunately, Fred, who has difficulty walking, was unable to attend the event.

He won First Place for his "Grey Owl" art piece in the scroll saw/fretwork category. The owl was created through intarsia woodworking, a mosaic-type pattern-making technique in which Fred hand-cut and hand-sanded 525 individual pieces from six kinds of wood in the workshop, which features much of his artwork and is located next to the home his parents built in 1951.

Earl received his First-Place medal at a presentation at the Fort Harrison VA Medical Center.

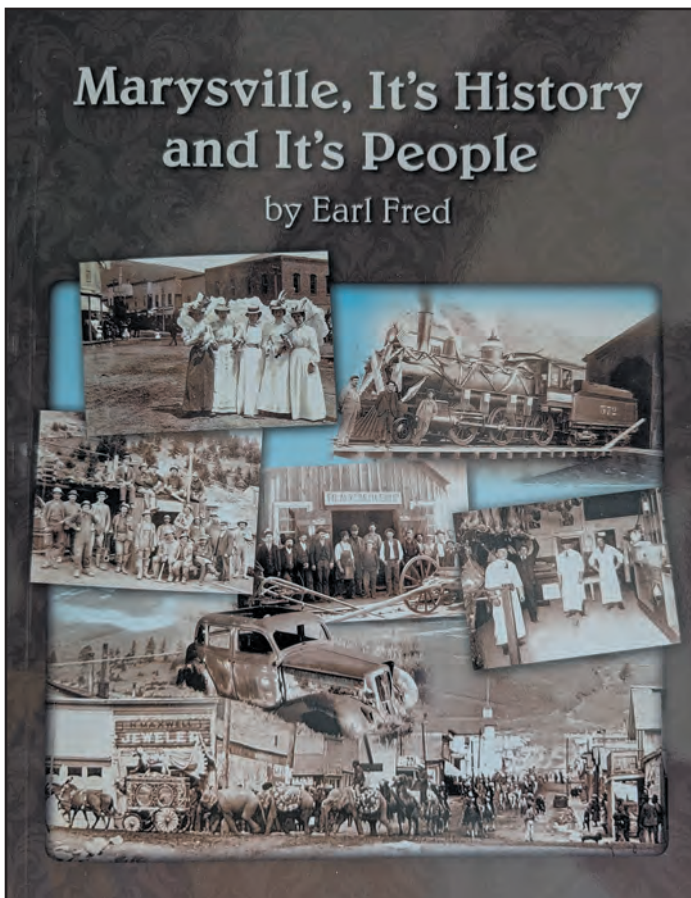


## Marysville, It's History and It's People by Earl Fred

The book also contains the Masonic history of Marysville.

*Editor's Choice*

contact: [kran13@yahoo.com](mailto:kran13@yahoo.com)



Earl Fred was born in Helena, Montana, attended Helena High School, graduating in 1951. He served his country in the U.S. Air Force during the Korean Conflict. He retired from the State of Montana after 34 years of service. Since his retirement he has spent most of his time in the hills surrounding his beloved Marysville, where he has resided most of his life.



**A** stylish, historical, eye opening tale of one of the most successful gold mining adventures on the western frontier.

Although the mining aspect was the beginning of the Marysville town site, the real story however, is of the people, who individually or in groups, formed the backbone of the mining camp. Their lives and stories is what is interesting and kept the community "on their toes" and in many instances, in the public eye. An outline of the hard life these early inhabitants had to endure to survive and make an adequate living for their families is incorporated herein.

# ONE STEP AWAY

CHUCK CLAMPITT - MT ETNA 333

Often the most interesting historical events or people are overlooked. History books are filled with the names and stories of presidents, generals, and politicians while those with lesser-known names are relegated to mere footnotes at the bottom of the page. Such was the case of Robert Todd Lincoln, the oldest son of Abraham and Mary Todd Lincoln. While Robert has never been treated as a noteworthy historical figure, it must be said that during his charmed life that he was often just - one step away.

Abraham and Mary Lincoln were the parents of four sons. Robert, the oldest, was born in 1843 and died in 1926 at age 82. Eddie died just short of his fourth birthday in 1850; Willie died at age 11 in 1862; and Thomas died at 18 in 1871. History portrays Abraham Lincoln as a poor country lawyer at the time he was elected President in 1860, but nothing could have been farther from the truth. By the 1850's Lincoln had become a noted lawyer in Illinois, provided legal service to railroads and corporations, and purchased a very nice middle-class home in Springfield, IL. Lincoln's financial situation had improved to the point that in 1859 he was able to send Robert to a private school in New Hampshire for a year to prepare him for entrance into Harvard University.

When the Civil War broke out in April, 1861, Robert, like every other young man, wanted to enlist in the army and go off to war. To keep him from doing that President Lincoln encouraged him to follow through with his plan to attend and graduate from college. In 1864 Robert graduated from Harvard and in February of 1865 enlisted in the army and was commissioned as a Captain. To keep him out of harm's way, his father had him appointed as an aide to the staff of General Ulysses S. Grant. Two months later on April 9, 1865 when Robert E. Lee surrendered to Grant at Appomattox

Courthouse, VA, young Lincoln was one of the few Union officers present. Five days later, Abraham Lincoln was assassinated.

With the death of his father, Robert assumed the responsibility of his family, resigned from the Army, and moved his mother and younger brother Thomas to Chicago. It was there where he earned a degree in law at the University of Chicago. Because of his mother's eccentric behavior and uncontrolled spending habits, Robert had his mother committed to a psychiatric hospital in 1875. Three months later she escaped from the hospital and a trial ensued regarding her sanity, which resulted in her release.



Robert Todd Lincoln

In the years that followed Robert became a successful lawyer representing major corporations and railroads. With the distinguished name Lincoln conjuring up memories of his martyred father, Robert was sought after by the Republican Party to fill highly visible political office. He served as Secretary of War from 1881 to 1885 in the Garfield and Arthur presidential administrations. He then served as the U.S. Minister (ambassador) to England from 1889 to 1893 during the Benjamin Harrison administration. Following his return to the U.S., he became general counsel for the Pullman Car Company in Chicago. In 1897 he was named company president. Lincoln was bright, handsome, well connected and frequently mentioned as a U.S. Presidential candidate by the Republican Party, but he never pursued that position.

As luck would have it, three different events made Robert Lincoln more than simply a footnote in history and very likely kept him from ever running for elected office. In July 1881 Lincoln was Secretary of War and was to accompany President James Garfield on a train trip from Washington D.C. While standing

with Garfield at the railroad station in Washington, D.C., the President was shot by a disgruntled office seeker and died two months later. Two decades later in 1901 Lincoln was standing in a receiving line at the Pan-American Exposition in Buffalo, NY, with President William McKinley when an anarchist walked up and shot the president. McKinley died eight days later. Following this occurrence, Lincoln never made another public appearance for the rest of his life and supposedly never attended another presidential function. He dryly noted that there was "a certain fatality about the presidential function when I am present."

If those two events weren't noteworthy enough to place him in history books, perhaps one other one should. During Robert's time at Harvard in the 1860's he visited his parents in the White House and traveled by train. During these trips he had to change trains multiple times. It was during one of these trips in 1864 that Robert was standing on a train platform in Jersey City, NJ. As he was about to board the train the crowd surged forward and he fell between the station platform and the now moving train. It was at that moment that a hand reached down grabbed him by the back of the coat and pulled him to safety. As fate would have it, Lincoln recognized his rescuer

as the famous actor Edwin Booth, the older brother of John Wilkes Booth, the man who assassinated President Abraham Lincoln in April, 1865.



Robert Todd Lincoln

Neither Abraham Lincoln nor his son Robert were ever Masons even though they had friends and acquaintances who were. What may seem ironic is that Edwin Booth, the man who rescued Robert Lincoln, was a Mason having joined New York Lodge 330 in 1857. By some accounts it is said that 'he performed a Masonic observance when laying the cornerstone' of his own Booth Theatre in New York City in 1868. (Booth was a very successful actor in addition to owning and managing theaters in New York City.)

Even though Robert Todd Lincoln has never been considered a person of great historical note, his personal accomplishments and near misses from catastrophe make his life story unique. It is easy to say that during his lifetime he was often just "one step away". (Robert Lincoln was present at the dedication of the Lincoln Memorial in 1922. He died at his home in Manchester, VT, in 1926 a few days short of his 83rd birthday. Lincoln had three children. The last surviving family member, a grandson, Robert Todd Lincoln Beckwith died in 1985.)

## Helena No. 3 Welcomes New Entered Apprentice - Steven D. Huff



# Montana Past Master Aprons



This past year, The Craftsman's Apron, owned by Bro. Patrick Craddock, produced custom aprons for the Grand Lodge officers. Grand Master Jason M. Smith has been wearing one throughout his travels.

The colors purple and gold represent the Grand Lodge. The fringe on the borders was retained for the sitting Grand Master and Past Grand Masters, and left off for all other officers. The top of the flap presents a bison skull, made iconic by western artist Charlie Russell. The border features the official state flower, the bitterroot, and wheat. Bitterroots are primarily found in the western part of the state, and wheat is abundant in the eastern part of our state. The officer's emblems are surrounded by a wreath of leaves. For many years, MONTANA has appeared on the bottom of the aprons, and it is retained here.

A matching apron with blue and silver representing the lodges was also created. Like the Grand Lodge aprons, the fringe was reserved for the sitting Worshipful Master or Past Masters; all other aprons have a border without them. There is no wreath encircling the emblems in the center – the only difference besides color, between the constituent lodge and Grand Lodge aprons. MONTANA is also on the bottom.

We are accepting reservations for Past Master's aprons, at \$400 each. In order to secure a batch and pricing, we would like to have a number already secured. Our goal is to have them ready by the Annual Communication in Helena, on June 26, 2026 (date subject to change).

Past Master apron on left. Assistant Grand Secretary apron on right. Past Grand master apron below.

Send your reservation to: Grand Lodge of Montana, PO Box 1158, Helena, MT 59624-1158

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Lodge Name and No.: \_\_\_\_\_



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# Hands of the Workman

## George Gilbert Hoole Grand Master 1952-1953

Brother Hoole was born on December 30, 1883, in Chico, California. In 1901, Brother George Hoole earned his High School diploma from Pacific Grove, California, and then went on to attend college in San Jose in 1904. In 1908, he graduated from Zanerian Art College in Columbus, Ohio. He relocated to Bozeman, Montana, in 1909 to teach at the Phelps Commercial School. In 1911, he acquired an interest in the Montana Business Institute. Brother Hoole moved to Miles City and then to Glendive in 1912. From 1912 to 1924, he taught at Dawson County High School. He also served as Principal for the last four years. He enlisted in the US Army in 1917 and served with the 7th Field Artillery Regiment from 1918 to 1919 during World War I.



At 41 years of age, he purchased the Dawson County Review in 1924 and began his career in journalism. Hoole was also the owner of the Glendive Independent and published the Glendive Daily News, which he edited and published every week until 1949, at which time he sold his interest and retired. He had also served as President of the Montana Press Association. From 1909 to 1955, he resided in Montana before moving to Arizona for the winter months. George Hoole was recognized as an outstanding journalistic achievement by being elected to the Montana Newspaper Hall of Fame at the Montana Press Association's annual convention in 1958, he was the 18th person selected for the honor. The Dawson County Review was consistently recognized by the Montana Press Association for its excellence during the 1930s and 1940s.

Brother Hoole was active in civic organizations in the community, having served as president of the Kiwanis and Chamber of Commerce, and Commander of Dawson Post No. 29 of the American Legion, vice-president and director of the Glendive Building and Loan Association, and a Charter member of the Glendive Lodge No. 1224 of the Order of Elks. He served on the World War II draft board for seven years and was secretary of the Glendive Public Library for twenty-six years. He served on the Dawson County High School Board for four years and later served on the District I school board for 15 years, during which he was the Chairman for the last nine years. While he was in the Episcopal Church, he found himself at home in the Methodist Church as well.

He had a passion for tennis and held the Montana Veterans' championship for nine years. Hoole spent 25 years without pay teaching Glendive youths to play tennis, and while doing so, he also provided the Glendive High School Tennis competition with many trophies and awards. He was also recognized for being an official at all high school football games in Glendive between 1914 and 1955.

While attending college in Columbus, Ohio, George Gilbert Hoole was raised to the sublime degree of Master Mason in York Lodge No. 563 on August 10, 1908. He was elected

to membership in Glendive Lodge No. 31 in Glendive, Montana, on December 13, 1913. Brother Hoole's 50-Year membership from the Grand Lodge of Montana was given to him on August 10, 1958.

In August 1944, Brother Hoole was appointed as Grand Tyler of the Grand Lodge of Montana and was elevated to the office of Most Worshipful Grand Master in August 1952. He traveled over 37,000 miles while serving as Grand Master. Special communications were handled by MW Brother Hoole for the funeral of MWPG William J. Marshall; and to constitute Big Fork Lodge No. 150; and to lay the cornerstone for the YMCA building in Billings. In 1953, there was a total of 153 Lodges and 25,432 members. In 2026, there are 71 Lodges and 2,910 members.

In 1908, he was awarded the fourth through 32nd degrees of the Scottish Rite in Columbus, Ohio. Later, he transferred his membership to the Valley of Billings. He was a member of the York Rite and was a Royal and Select Master in Glendive Council No. 5, and served as Thrice Illustrious Master in 1920, and served as Grand Master of the Grand Council of Royal and Select Masters of Montana in 1931-1932. In 1915, he was Knighted in Damascus Commandery No. 4, Knights Templar, and served as Eminent Commander in 1910. In 1920, he became a member of Algeira Temple, AAONMS, and later transferred his membership to Bagdad Temple. He became a Charter member of Bagdad Temple in 1915. He became a member of Yellowstone Chapter No. 5 of the Order of the Eastern Star in 1917. In addition, he was a member of the Red Cross of Constantine, Knights York Cross of Honor, Thrice Illustrious Master, and the Order of the Silver Trowel. Brother Hoole was active in the DeMolay and Rainbow Advisory Boards, serving several times and being a passionate supporter of these youth groups.

Brothers Hoole's personal habits were focused on respecting both physical and mental culture, and on the day he passed away at the age of 77, he was still playing tennis. Truly, his was a record which few can equal for a full life, well lived, with great personal satisfaction of having given his all for a job extremely well done indeed!

The Supreme Architect of the Universe saw fit to complete the plans for Most Worshipful Past Grand Master George Gilbert Hoole in Mesa, Arizona, on October 13, 1960, and he was laid to rest in the Dawson County cemetery in Glendive, with the Grand Lodge of Montana conducting graveside rites. When the final record is read and the final accounting is made before the Great White Throne, Past Grand Master Hoole shall hear the welcome words: "Well done, thou good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

# CASCADE LODGE NO. 34 WELCOMES NEW 50 YEAR MEMBERS



Cascade Lodge No. 34  
50 year presentations to  
Mike Peet and Brad Clark.  
Presented by Bruce Lahti, WM.

W. Brother Mike Peet received his degrees in Cascade Lodge No. 34. Initiated on March 23, 1976; Passed May 11, 1976, and Raised to the Sublime Degree of a Master Mason on May 25, 1976. He served as Worshipful Master in 1981.

W. Brother Brad Clark received his degrees in Cascade Lodge No.34. Initiated on January 27, 1976; Passed on April 25, 1976, and Raised to the Degree of a Master Mason on May 25, 1976. He has served three times as Worshipful Master.

## FREE AND ACCEPTED

Some people were born free, others have died for it  
Taking it for granted is such a big mistake  
And when we have Freedom, it is not infinite  
In order to keep it we must stay wide awake

Before we can join in we must be accepted  
It is not that easy to keep searching alone  
Sometimes we have to be very well connected  
But here and now we don't have to wait and postpone

It's easy to ask one the good old-fashioned way  
Or look for a Grand Lodge that has its own website  
And when we're accepted it is a brand new day  
Since we are free to join to get to see the light



Rhyming Story written by Francis Dumaurier © 2026 and illustrated by the author with assistance from AI

R. W. Francis G Dumaurier, L'Union Française No. 17, Grand Lodge of New York

**Victor Lodge No. 43 and the  
Montana Masonic Foundation  
Reading Achievement Program - Bikes for Books  
Corvallis Middle School**



Victor Lodge No. 43 and the Montana Masonic Foundation awarded bikes to deserving middle schoolers. They also received home delivery, thanks to librarian Vic Motimer and Corvallis Middle School principal Rich Durgin. The winners are Abby Venema and Marissa Jessop.

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**Carbon Lodge No. 65  
Montana Masonic Foundation Reading Achievement Program  
Kindles for Kids and Bikes for Books  
Joliet Grade School**



Carbon Lodge No. 65 awarding Bikes & Kindles at Joliet Grade School. Kevin Krook in the vest, Bob Hull in the checked shirt.

Kyle Lodge No. 96 and the Montana Masonic Foundation  
 Kindles for Kids and Bikes for Books  
 Glasgow and Nashua Schools



As part of the Montana Masonic Foundations Reading Enhancement Program for Public Schools, presentations were made by Max Knodel, the Worshipful Master, and Kevin Taylor the Senior Steward, both of Kyle Lodge No. 6, to Glasgow's Irle Elementary and Nashua School on May 12 and 13 to award prizes and visit with students.

The winners from Glasgow are as follows: 5th grade, Luke Abrahamson and Buddy Jackson; 4th grade, Jack Kirkland and Wyatt Tanasee; 3rd grade, Amelia Clarke and McKinley Creamer; 2nd grade, Larry Baumgartner and Allyanna Hocryan; 1st grade, Lucas Beer and Jace Wilson; and kindergarten, Caleb Morehouse and Noah Barras. Nashua's winners were: from kindergarten through 2nd grade, Ari Thievin; from 3rd through 5th grade, Analeigh Knaff. Also winning kindles in Nashua were Addison and Eden.



## Grand Master Smith Visits Glendive No. 31



On May 19th, MWGM Jason Smith paid a visit to Glendive No. 31. A group of dedicated men, dwelling together in unity, made a couple important decisions for the future of their lodge. Keep up the great work, dear Brothers!

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## Powder River Lodge No. 135 Welcomes New Entered Apprentice



On Feb 10th 2026, Powder River Lodge No. 135, Initiated Dennis Gene Gatlin as an Entered Apprentice. Front Row: Gene Smith, Jesse Barnhart, Gene Gatlin, Elliot Barnhart WM, Pat Strickland, John Rusting. Back Row: Robert Engle, Mike Capra, Doug Bonsell.

# CARBON LODGE No. 65 WELCOMES NEW 50 YEAR MEMBER WILLIAM JENSEN

At the regularly scheduled meeting on June 4th, Carbon Lodge 65 honored Brother William Jensen with his 50-year pin and certificate. Coincidentally, our newest member, Chris Kyler, completed his 1st-degree proficiency on the same evening.



W. Brother William Jensen received his degrees in Carbon Lodge No. 65. He was Initiated on October 3, 1975; Passed on November 6, 1975, and Raised to the Sublime Degree of a Master Mason on February 19, 1976.

Worshipful Master Pro Tem Cody Krook presenting the 50-year award to Brother William Jensen.



Left to right:  
Front Row: Raymond Guthrie, Chris Kyler, William Jensen, Bob Hull, Gary Lay.  
Back Row: Kevin Krook, Corb Strommen, Cody Krook, William Alexander.

# Historic Bannack School and Masonic Lodge Update



## Bannack Historic Lodge No. 3-7-77

The wonderful new stairs and siding on the Historic Lodge / Schoolhouse in Bannack. They are safe and very strong now. We thank the Park and all the individuals that had an important part in getting this project nearly completed. These pictures do not do it justice as it is very special when you walk up those steps and truly feel the difference. We hope to see you in Bannack to see the other work that has been recently completed and more is yet to come.

# THE IMPACT OF MASONIC EDUCATION IN THE LODGE

Kenneth W. Peck, Ashlar No. 29/Billings No. 113

Brethren, we reflect on one of the most vital—yet sometimes overlooked—responsibilities of the lodge: Masonic education. While the degrees initiate a man into the Craft, education deepens his understanding, strengthens his commitment, and enriches his experience. It is not an accessory to Freemasonry; it is what keeps the lodge living, relevant, and meaningful.

## What Is Masonic Education?

Masonic education extends beyond facts, dates, or ritual proficiency—though these have their place. It encompasses everything that helps a Mason grow intellectually, morally, and spiritually within the framework of the Craft. This includes lectures, discussions, historical study, symbolic interpretation, and mentorship.

It serves three essential purposes: to deepen understanding of the Craft, to support personal development, and to strengthen fraternal connection. In this sense, Masonic education is not merely academic—it is transformational.

## Why Masonic Education Matters

Freemasonry is a system of moral instruction veiled in allegory. Without education, that allegory remains obscure. A Mason may participate in the ritual, yet never fully grasp its meaning. Education completes the work begun in the degrees.

A lodge that neglects education risks becoming hollow—performing ceremonies without conveying their significance. A lodge that embraces it becomes a place of growth, fellowship, and purpose. Education gives the Craft its depth and ensures it remains more than form or tradition.

## A Tradition Rooted in the Craft

Education has always been central to Freemasonry. Operative masons were not only builders but students of geometry, architecture, and moral order. As the Craft evolved, this emphasis deepened. The ritual itself became a structured system of instruction, and early texts—from the Old Charges to catechisms—reflect an expectation that Masons study and improve themselves.

The lodge, therefore, is not merely a place of ceremony; it is a school of virtue.

## Education and Self-Improvement

Self-improvement lies at the heart of Freemasonry. The virtues we are taught—temperance, fortitude, prudence, and justice—require reflection and application. Education guides this process by encouraging the Mason to study the symbols, reflect on their meaning, and apply their lessons in daily life.

In doing so, the Mason becomes an active seeker of wisdom rather than a passive recipient of instruction. Education sharpens his moral judgment, deepens his character, and strengthens his sense of duty.

## Strengthening the Lodge

A lodge that values education is a lodge that thrives. It engages its members, improves the quality of its ritual, prepares future leaders, and fosters unity. Shared learning builds respect and strengthens fraternal bonds.

Without education, stagnation follows—attendance declines and enthusiasm fades. With it, the lodge becomes a place where brethren gather with purpose, knowing each meeting offers substance and meaning.

## Connecting Ritual to Life

One of the greatest strengths of Masonic education is its ability to connect ritual to real life. The lessons of the working tools, the symbolism of the pillars, and the guidance of the square and compasses all point toward practical moral living.

Education helps the Mason see that the ritual is not confined to the lodge room. Its teachings are meant to guide his conduct—as a citizen, a father, a husband, and a friend. In this way, the ritual becomes a living guide rather than a distant form.

## Fostering Brotherhood Through Learning

The most meaningful Masonic education often arises through discussion. When brethren share insights, ask questions, and reflect together, they build deeper connections. Such exchanges foster humility, respect, and brotherly love.

In a divided world, the lodge can become a rare place of thoughtful and civil dialogue—grounded in shared values and mutual regard.

## A Shared Responsibility

Masonic education is not the duty of one officer alone. It belongs to every Mason. Each brother contributes by studying, mentoring, sharing insights, and encouraging others in their growth.

When a Mason takes his own development seriously, he strengthens the entire lodge.

## Practical Application

Education need not be elaborate to be effective. It may take the form of brief presentations, discussions, mentorship, or reflections following degree work. The key is consistency. Even small, regular efforts enrich the lodge and inspire continued study.

## Conclusion

Brethren, Masonic education lies at the heart of the Craft. It gives meaning to our ritual, depth to our symbols, and purpose to our obligations. It strengthens the lodge, enriches our fellowship, and guides our journey toward self-improvement.

Let us remain students of the Craft, committed to learning, reflection, and growth. In doing so, we not only understand Freemasonry—we live it.

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## Grand Officers Come To Help



More help at the Grand Lodge Office from Junior Grand Deacon David Sageser, MW Grand Master Jason Smith., and Past Grand Master Lewis Smith.



by Terry Osborn

### Virginia City No. 1 Hosts Third Degree for Two New Master Masons



Bigfork Lodge welcomes Brother Brian Walsh.

# Public Schools Night - Billings



Billings Masonic Lodge No. 113 hosted its annual Public Schools Night on April 27, 2026, drawing more than 60 attendees to honor standout students, award scholarships, and support local education, including a donation to the Elder Grove Elementary Reading Program. The keynote speaker was Robert Anderson, Past Master of Ottawa Lodge No. 51.



## Kalispell Lodge No. 42 Glacier High School Scholarship 2026

On May 6th at Glacier High School, Kalispell No. 42 awarded a high school scholarship to Brady Smith. Photo (left to right): RWJGW John Heston, Brady Smith, and Kalispell Lodge WM Charlie Hanson.

## Kalispell Lodge No. 42 Flathead High School Scholarship 2026

Trinity lodge #152 presented a scholarship to Monique Geyer-Poncin at the Flathead scholarship awards ceremony. (Left to right): Monique Geyer-Poncin, RWJGW John Heston.



## Ekalaka Lodge No. 120 Welcomes New Master Mason Brother Jacob Eshelman



## Brother Jack Mattingly Recognized

Bro. Jack Mattingly, a member of Chinook Lodge No. 50 and Northern Star OES Chapter No. 23 in Chinook, volunteered to clean the Masonic building after it was vandalized on Christmas morning. He completed about 98 percent of the scrubbing and painting in the damaged area. In recognition of his dedication, the members named him a Special Star and presented him with a token of appreciation.

---Ben Hall



## Livingston Scottish Rite Valley Grew by Two

The Livingston Scottish Rite Valley welcomed two new members. From left to right are the new 32° Masons, Bro. Grant Kahle and Bro. David Celli, with 32° KCCH, WB David Westover, and Lady Driscoll Celli. WB Westover and Lady Driscoll performed the capping following the Feast of Remembrance on May 1 at the Livingston Masonic Temple.

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