

# YELLOWSTONE COUNTY INSIDER

APRIL 2024

ISSUE 424

MONTANA



Bitterroot  
Montana State Flower

## Board of County Commissioners

John Ostlund  
Chair

Mark Morse  
Member

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Member

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## Commissioner Corner

April is here and I hope everyone had a great Easter weekend. This month we say goodbye to two very significant employees as they begin retirement. Undersheriff Sam Bofto has announced his retirement after 29 years, and Randy Pardis with MetraPark has announced his retirement after 47 years with Yellowstone County. Thank you both for your dedicated service to Yellowstone County. We are sad to see them go but we wish them the very best, and hope they enjoy every moment of this next chapter.

### Employee Spotlight:



Detention Facility Commander, Robert Lester, has been chosen to fill the role of undersheriff. Thank you, Captain Lester, for all of your work at the Detention Facility and congratulations on your new role. Below is a biography from Captain Lester outlining his experience in law enforcement.

I was born in Miles City, MT and attended Billings Schools from K-12. I graduated from Billings West high School and attended Montana State University, and chose Fish and Wildlife Management as a major. While attending Montana State University I played offensive line for the MSU Bobcats. Under Coach Cliff Hysell, all freshmen were required to do a ride along with the Bozeman Police Department. After that ride along I decided to go into law enforcement and changed schools and majors. I then attended the Santa Rosa Junior College in Petaluma, CA to attend the seasonal park ranger academy. I was hired as a law enforcement park ranger in Yellowstone National Park where I worked at the South and East district. I spent a summer as a ranger at Glen Canyon National Recreation area where I met my wife, Julie. I married her and stole her to Montana where I graduated from MSU-Billings with a degree in Liberal Studies with an emphasis in Justice Studies.

I was hired by YCSO in 2008 and became a field training officer, a member of the Tactical Response Team (TRT), a Drug Recognition Expert (DRE), SFST instructor, then advanced to a DRE Instructor. Expert Witness for the state. Taught SFST classes at the Montana Law Enforcement Academy and also DRE School in Helena, MT and Phoenix, AZ for many years. Served as chairman of the Yellowstone County DUI Task Force and was a board member of Mountain States Tactical Officers Association (MSTOA). I served on Judge Knisley's CAMO/STEER Court. Patrol Sergeant, Detective Sergeant, Training Sergeant, Professional Standards Lieutenant, Detention Facility Lieutenant, then Captain.

I received the Yellowstone County DUI Task Force Award of merit 2009,2010,2011,2012,2013, 2022. Officer of the Year- Respect for Law award 2017/ Commander of the year 2021. Most important to me are my wife Julie of 22 years and kids Clara (16), John (14), Marcus (12) and Alex (9) and coaching youth football.



Article continued on page 3

New Employees



Alayna Kissler  
Detention Facility

Cole Catlin  
County Attorney

Alec Moore  
Ryan Conley  
Jillian Carrithers  
Amanda Jaramillo  
Sheriff Office

Amanda Rodabaugh  
Hannah Hayden  
Justice Court

Tyler Gilstrap  
Road & Bridge

\*\*\*\*\*  
Recognition of Service



30 Years of Service

Chuck Pietz  
Road & Bridge  
4/25/1994

25 Years of Service

Jamie DeBree  
Information Technology  
4/26/1999

20 Years of Service

Yvonne Mueller  
Detention Facility  
4/12/2004

Shawn Munter  
Detention Facility  
4/19/2004

\*\*\*\*\*

# April Recipe

## Turkey Tacos

- |                               |                                 |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1 tbsp extra-virgin olive oil | ¼ tsp salt                      |
| 1 lb lean ground turkey       | 8 small tortilla shells         |
| 2 tsp cumin                   | 4 cups romaine lettuce          |
| 2 tsp chili powder            | 1 tomato, diced                 |
| ½ tsp oregano flakes          | 1 red pepper, seeded and sliced |
| ½ tsp garlic powder           | 2 tbsp sour cream               |
| 4 tbsp salsa, <i>divided</i>  |                                 |



**EASY** recipe

Heat olive oil in a skillet over medium heat. Add turkey and cook until browned, breaking it up with a spatula and stirring for 5-7 minutes. Add cumin, chili powder, oregano, garlic, 2 tbsp salsa and salt. Stir to combine. Thin with 2-3 tablespoons of water and cook 3-5 minutes. Divide turkey mixture onto tortillas and serve topped with lettuce, tomato, red pepper, sour cream and remaining salsa.

Makes 4 servings. Per serving: 519 calories | 32 protein | 20 total fat | 5g saturated fat | 8g mono fat | 6g poly fat | 55g carbohydrate | 5g sugar (0g added sugar) | 4g fiber | 516mg sodium

### SUNSHINE NEWS



Time to gear up for planting, bar-b-que and pampering!



The week of April 29<sup>th</sup> we will have baskets to raffle off with the above themes.

A great way to maybe win a Mother's Day or Father's Day gift. More details to follow this month.



Congratulations to Shawn French on his retirement after 27 years with Yellowstone County!



The Empower 457 Plan Representative, Corrine Moncada, will be here on April 9 & 10, 2024  
From: 9:30 am to 3:30 pm - Room 212  
April 11, 2024 - 9 am-12 pm

Want to talk about your financial future? Schedule a consultation today.  
[Book Appointment \(empowermytime.com\)](http://empowermytime.com)

YOUR MIND IS A GARDEN. YOUR THOUGHTS ARE THE SEEDS. YOU CAN GROW FLOWERS OR YOU CAN GROW WEEDS.



[www.mycupofcocoa.com](http://www.mycupofcocoa.com)

# Commissioner Corner - continued from page 1

MetraPark has another busy month of concerts and events happening, I hope everyone has a chance to make it to an event this month;

Billings RV & Boat Show & Sale

Gun Show

PBR

Billings Outlaws

2024 Wine & Food Festival

Breaking Benjamin with Daughtry and Catch Your Breath

406 Consignary

Wiz Khalifa

Billings Chamber Annual Breakfast

The Jordan World Circus

Billings Outlaws

Dethklok

Thank you all for everything you do for Yellowstone County and enjoy these spring months as the weather begins to warm up.

Thank you all for the hard work you do for Yellowstone County.

Sincerely, John Ostlund, Chairman; Board of County Commissioners

April 10th-14th

April 12th-14th

April 12th-14th

April 18th

April 19th-20th

April 19th

April 20th-21st

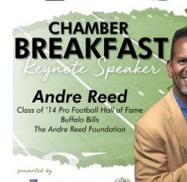
April 21st

April 25th

April 26th-28th

April 27th

April 30th



## Trauma Dumping

By Eric Endlich, PhD

Trauma dumping occurs when someone shares details of a distressing story with others who haven't asked about it or are not emotionally prepared for the conversation. It can also happen through sharing disturbing images or information via social media or other online means. While this may happen unintentionally, it can be harmful to the recipient.

Those who have trauma dumped on them often feel drained or overwhelmed. Trauma dumping is a one-way street, with one person sharing and the other person listening. Listeners often feel helpless and unsure how to respond.



### Here are some ways to avoid trauma dumping:

- Consider your audience. Is the person you are talking to ready to hear about your situation?
- Start by sharing a brief overview. If the person wants to hear more, they will ask.
- Avoid sharing graphic or disturbing details.
- Monitor your tone and body language, especially around intense emotions.
- If the other person seems overwhelmed or uncomfortable, change the topic.

### If someone is trauma dumping on you, there are a few things you can do to help:

- If it is too much for you, respectfully ask them to stop.
- Listen without judgment.
- Let them know you support them.
- Encourage them to seek professional help if needed.

## Work Comp Claim FREE - Congratulations!

Congratulations to the following departments for **March**: Clerk & Recorder/Auditor, Commissioners, County Attorney, District Court, Disaster & Emergency Services, Elections, Extension, Finance, Human Resources, Information Technology/GIS, Junk Vehicle, Justice Court, MetraPark, Motor Vehicle, Public Works, Road & Bridge, Sheriff Office, Treasurer, Weed, and Youth Services.

**In March there were 2 claims filed: 1-YCDF and 1-Facilities**





# ADVANCE DIRECTIVES



## ARE YOU PREPARED?

- What happens when you're not prepared?
- Hear firsthand a retired ER doctor's perspective, from Kris Spanjian, MD, and the legal aspects from retired Judge Gregory Todd.
- This informational session will begin with a performance of "Lily," a short play written by Bryan Harnetiaux, presented by arrangement with the Hospice Foundation of America.
- Advance directives are legal documents that provide instructions for medical care and only go into effect if you cannot communicate your own wishes.
- Advance directives can be short, simple statements expressing someone's values and choices.
- Who do you want to make health care decisions for you when you can't make them.
- The kind of medical treatment you want or don't want.
- What do you want your loved ones to know?
- Do you want to have a "DNR" on file?  
(Do Not Resuscitate-DNR)

**Start the discussion now,  
tomorrow may be too late.**

**April 23, 2024 - 10:00 to 11:30 am**

201 N. Broadway, Builder Event Room  
Rock31 Building by SkyPoint



**Sponsored by Yellowstone County  
Limited seating. Sign up today!**

To register contact HR at 406-256-2705 or email:  
[lschmidt@yellowstonecountymt.gov](mailto:lschmidt@yellowstonecountymt.gov)

# It's Playtime!

**Play isn't just for kids. It's good for grown-ups, too.** Sports, bike riding, hide-and-seek and a host of other games and activities in childhood were fun and let your imagination soar. You could enjoy time alone, too, with crayons, puzzles or building blocks.

**But in adulthood, work and family commitments** can make playtime for adults seem impossible and silly. However, research shows grown-up playtime can boost mental and physical health.



## Benefits of adult play:

- Play triggers the release of endorphins. These natural, feel-good chemicals boost your mood.
- The social interaction of playing games with family and friends can relieve stress and depression.
- Play stimulates imagination and that can improve problem-solving abilities.
- Playing any type of sports as an adult can benefit physical and mental health.
- Research shows taking time for adult play can promote a sense of humor and a positive outlook on life.
- Play can boost social skills, improving relationships.

**Ready to play?** Stuart Brown, MD, psychiatrist, researcher and founder of the non-profit National Institute for Play, defines play as a “state of mind that one has when absorbed in an activity that provides enjoyment and a suspension of sense of time.”

**Be open to exploring different ways to play.** Ask neighbors if they'd like to shoot some baskets at a local park, or play an impromptu ball game just for the fun of it. Enjoy painting or playing with clay as a kid? Devote time to making art just for the fun of it; join a local art group. Loved playing make-believe once upon a time? Visit local theatre productions and act out make-believe scenes with your children or grandchildren.



## BEST bits

**Should you wear a mask in your health care provider's office?** Although no longer required, masks still make sense in medical settings. COVID-19 is not an urgent threat in the U.S., thanks to widespread vaccination, and masks are not required in stores and other public places. But it's still a good idea to wear a surgical or N95 mask when you visit your health care provider's office or other health care settings. According to a study by George Washington University researchers, while viruses, including COVID-19, can be transmitted from staff to patients and vice versa when everyone is masked, it's rare. What's more, wearing a mask in medical settings can help prevent the spread of many other common viruses, including flu and colds.

**If you're allergic to pollen, you know you can't completely avoid it, but these strategies can reduce exposure and symptoms:**

- **Keep home and car windows closed.** Use air conditioning, if available.
- **Stay inside** in the morning when pollen levels are higher.
- **Wear a face mask outside** on high-pollen days; shower and put on clean clothes when you go back inside.
- **Use a saline nasal wash** to help clear pollen from your nose.
- **Still sneezing?** Talk to your health care provider or pharmacist about treatment options.
- **Change your furnace's air filter** as recommended by the manufacturer to avoid buildup of dust, dirt and debris.
- **Wipe pets** with a damp paper towel when they come inside to remove pollen.

**If you believe you have pollen allergies but haven't been diagnosed,** contact your provider about getting tested. You may be referred to an allergist/immunologist.



## Your emotional spring-cleaning checklist for your mental health



Spring will arrive in just a few weeks. That means it's almost time to deep clean your home. In addition to shampooing your rugs and washing your windows, you may want to consider decluttering your mental health. Samantha Koehn, a licensed clinical social worker at St. Mary's Regional Hospital, shares a spring-cleaning checklist to give your wellbeing a total refresh.

"We were not created to receive information 24/7, but because of technology, we are constantly getting bombarded with information," says Samantha. "However, it is within your control to turn off your television or set your phone to do not disturb. Make it difficult to access work emails outside of work hours and remove apps or news feeds that you may mind-numbingly scroll through."

### Acknowledge the 'hard' you've been through

As humans, we tend to minimize or ignore the difficulty we experience. Reflect on what you've experienced over the winter and allow yourself acceptance and grace.

### Prioritize self-compassion

Acknowledge that you are human, you need rest, and you make mistakes. Give yourself the same level of compassion and understanding that you extend to other people.

### Celebrate the little wins

Create a culture of gratitude for yourself. Let's face it, some days really stink. It's the little moments and successes that pull us through.

### Focus on your locus of control

There are so many things in our lives that cause distress that are out of our control. What we can control are our thoughts, emotions, and our responses.

### Learn your window of tolerance

Your window of tolerance is your ability to juggle demands and stress. Be realistic about what you can say yes to - and when you need to say no - to ensure you aren't taking on too much.

### Invest in your support network

Connect with and prioritize people in your life who rejuvenate you. Take a few minutes to scroll through your phone and call that person you've been thinking about, send a text message of appreciation, or schedule a date with your friends or spouse.



[www.intermountainhealth.org/GoodHealth](http://www.intermountainhealth.org/GoodHealth)



# Dog Walking Hazards



Walking your dog daily can provide health benefits for canine and human, a routine that is increasing in popularity. But take some practical safety steps on your walks. A study reported online in April 2023 by *Medicine & Science in Sports & Exercise* ties walking to a sharp rise in injuries among people holding the leash of a frisky, fun-loving pup.

Researchers analyzed input from a national health database from 2001 to 2020 that suggests nearly 423,000 people, average age 53, who visited emergency units after being pulled or tripped by their dogs' leashes.

As dog walking for exercise has continued to grow in popularity, the annual number of injuries has increased by more than four times during the study period from about 7,200 in 2001 to about 32,000 in 2020. Common injuries included broken fingers, shoulder sprains and traumatic brain injuries.

### Take Precautions:

**Talk to your pet's vet.** Not all dogs are up for long walks. Ask your vet when it's time to start walking your puppy; whether your senior dog can still keep up with a workout; or if there are health conditions that might make regular walking risky for your pooch or you.

**Consider a dog harness.** It may be a smart option for walking dogs that tend to pull as it can help reduce pressure on their throats. Find the right fit for your dog.

**Consider weather.** Winter safeguards can include booties for pet paws. On warm summer days dogs can overheat and feel heat exhaustion or heat stroke, so be watchful.

**Be aware of nearby surroundings,** especially in busy areas that might inspire your leashed pooch to take off running. Stay in control. And enjoy.

## April Fun Facts

On April 14, 1912, the famous Titanic ship hit an iceberg and sank on her first and only voyage.

George Washington was inaugurated as the First President of the United States on April 30, 1789.

On April 11, 1970, Apollo 13 was launched and ran into difficulties about two days later.

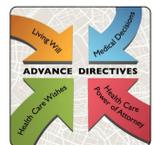
In the Southern Hemisphere, April is the seasonal equivalent of October.

There are quite a few notable historical people born in April, such as Shakespeare, Queen Elizabeth II, and Leonardo da Vinci.

## Upcoming Training Opportunities

**Advance Directives**  
Contact HR to Register  
Before April 17

April 23, 2024  
10:00 - 11:30 am  
Rock 31-SkyPoint



**QPR Suicide Prevention**  
Contact HR to Register  
Two Sessions

May 15, 2024  
9:30 - 11:00 am  
OR  
2:00 - 3:30 pm  
BOCC Boardroom



### Public Employee Retirement



May 29, 2024  
12:00 pm - Rm 212  
Getting Ready to Retire?  
Available for walk-ins 9am-4pm  
AND

May 30, 2024 - Rm 212  
12:00 pm - Rm 212  
New Employee PERS Election  
Available for walk-ins 9am-1pm



County t-shirt registration deadline is April 12th - Sign up today!

**Sign up today for the  
Yellowstone County Women's Run Team!**  
*The Yellowstone County Stepinators*



*Run it! Walk it! Live it! Do it on Your Own!*  
*The Montana Women's Run - May 11, 2024*  
*Join the "Yellowstone County Stepinators" Team today!*

It simple to join...just register on line at [www.womensrun.org](http://www.womensrun.org) and follow these simple steps:

- 1) Click on "Team Up" tab
- 2) Type in the team name "Yellowstone County Stepinators"
- 3) Select "Join"
- 4) Code to join is "YC-106"
- 5) Fill in your personal information and select 2 mile or 5 mile

Be sure to print up a copy of your registration and bring to HR.

It's that easy to join!

Female employees, employee's wives, mothers, daughters, sisters, friends, and grandmothers are welcome to participate.

It doesn't matter if you want to do the 2 mile or 5 mile course, you can run or walk - Do it at your own pace... Join Today!

The Yellowstone County Commissioners will provide a specially designed Yellowstone County Women's Run Team shirt!

*Deadline for registering with the Yellowstone County Team to receive a team T-shirt is April 12, 2024*



**May 11, 2024**

2 mile & 5 mile Courses  
Downtown Billings

**Run It, Walk It, Live it, Bring a friend!**

[www.womensrun.org](http://www.womensrun.org) • *register today!*



**Pint Night**

Thirsty Street  
at the Garage  
4/4/2024  
5 to 9 pm

**Getting Started Clinics**

Pioneer Park  
Monday Nights  
4/15/24 - 5/6/24  
5:30 pm



**Scan to register!**

**“Once you replace  
negative thoughts  
with positive  
ones, you’ll start  
having positive  
results.”**

**WILLIE NELSON**



**MONTANA PUBLIC  
EMPLOYEE RETIREMENT  
ADMINISTRATION**

**Want to learn more about planning**

Market Volatility	Monday, April 15	2 p.m.	Empower
Leaving, but not Retiring?	Tuesday, April 16	12 p.m.	MPERA
Ready to Retire for Defined Benefit Members	Wednesday, April 17	10:30 a.m.	MPERA
HPORS Ready to Retire (Highway Patrol)	Thursday, April 18	3 p.m.	MPERA
Distribution Options	Tuesday, April 23	11 a.m.	Empower
PERS Defined Contribution Ready to Retire	Tuesday, April 23	3 p.m.	MPERA
Create a Spending Plan	Monday, April 29	2 p.m.	Empower
PERS New Member Plan Choice	Tuesday, April 30	12 p.m.	MPERA

Register at: <https://mpera.mt.gov>

# April is National Alcohol Awareness Month

## ALCOHOL: What You Need to Know

By Cara Rosenbloom, RD

From the occasional sip to binge drinking, recognizing the risks and understanding when alcohol may be interfering with your life is pivotal for maintaining optimal health.

There are no essential nutrients in drinking alcohol, meaning it's not a required component in the diet. If you don't drink alcohol, don't start. If you do drink, the CDC says that **moderate drinking** is defined as:

- ➔ One standard drink or less in a day for women.
- ➔ Two standard drinks or fewer in a day for men.
- ➔ A standard drink is 14 grams of pure alcohol, roughly equivalent to 5 ounces of wine, 12 ounces of beer or 1.5 ounces of distilled spirits.

**Heavy drinking** means you regularly exceed moderate alcohol consumption. Heavy drinking is:

- ➔ Consuming 8 or more drinks per week for women.
- ➔ Consuming 15 or more drinks per week for men.

**The most common form of excessive drinking is binge drinking.** It involves drinking large amounts of alcohol in a short period, typically bringing blood alcohol concentration to 0.08 grams percent or higher (above the legal limit). Binge drinking is defined as:

- ➔ For women, consuming 4 or more drinks during a single occasion.
- ➔ For men, consuming 5 or more drinks during a single occasion.

Both short- and long-term risks can result from heavy or binge drinking. Short-term risks include car accidents, violence, risky sexual behavior, alcohol poisoning or hangovers.

### Long-term health risks:

**Drinking too much alcohol** can raise triglycerides (a type of fat in the blood), which is associated with fatty buildup in the artery walls and an increased risk of a heart attack or stroke. Alcohol abuse can also contribute to high blood pressure levels.

**Alcohol intake raises the risk of several types of cancer**, including breast, esophageal, liver and colon cancer. The risk starts increasing with less than one drink per day, and the more you drink, the greater the cancer risk.

**Excessive alcohol consumption is a leading cause of liver diseases**, including fatty liver, alcoholic hepatitis and cirrhosis. The liver's ability to metabolize alcohol can be overwhelmed, resulting in inflammation and scarring.

**Depression and anxiety can be both a reason to drink alcohol, and a symptom of overuse.** Alcohol is a natural depressant that affects the central nervous system, and it can exacerbate anxiety and depression.

**Alcohol interferes with nutrient absorption** and can lead to malnutrition. Chronic alcohol abuse can result in deficiencies in essential vitamins and minerals, affecting overall health.



### Are You at Risk?

More than 14 million American adults have alcohol use disorder. Knowing whether alcohol is interfering with your life requires self-reflection and awareness. Signs of a potential problem include:

- An increasing tolerance to alcohol.
- Cravings to drink.
- Inability to cut down or quit.
- Neglecting responsibilities at home or work due to drinking.
- Continued alcohol use despite knowing its negative effects.
- Using alcohol to manage stress.
- Continuing to drink even though it causes depression or anxiety.
- Health problems caused by alcohol.

**Therapy, behavioral treatment, support groups and medications** can help treat alcohol use disorder. Learn more at [alcoholtreatment.niaaa.nih.gov](http://alcoholtreatment.niaaa.nih.gov).