



The Eagle Mount *Spring 2005* **Special Edition** *on opportunities for special people in Southwest Montana*

Motorcycle accident leads to new Journey

“Eagle Mount was the ‘green light’ on our road to recovery. It was there for us at a time when we needed it to go ahead,” explains Mary Harris in relating the story of the tragic motorcycle accident that left her and her husband severely injured. “The therapeutic horse program and Eagle Mount’s caring people were the safety net that helped us get started on our long journey back.”



Mary and Richard exercising with Jackie Taylor and Edie Bishop.

Life changed dramatically in July 2000 for Richard and Mary Harris as they were returning from a reunion of cousins in Joseph, Oregon. They were traveling together on the same motorcycle, just about 10 minutes from home, when the accident happened. Both were severely injured and airlifted to a hospital in Billings, where they remained in intensive care and rehab for months. Because of their injuries the once active couple is not able to walk. Richard was left with incomplete paraplegia and Mary became an incomplete quadriplegic.

Once out of the hospital, they started on a new life journey, meeting many new professionals who were to assist them navigate life with a spinal cord injury: doctors, nurses, rehab specialists, physical and occupational therapists to name a few. Then a year after their accident, they became acquainted with the Eagle Mount equestrian program and became participants.

“We had ridden before and loved horses, but the terror and fear of falling was frightening,” explains Mary who now

credits her improved balance and progress to the equine therapy she received. “At first it was terribly frightening to be on the back of a horse while paralyzed and completely dependent on other people for keeping you safe,” explains Mary. “But over time, we moved from ‘fright to delight.’”

Mary went from riding in a totally adaptive saddle specially designed to provide maximum physical support to

*“Eagle Mount helps
people resume
their dignity”*

Mary Harris

riding once again in her own saddle. When she made that transition last summer she said, “It’s ME again.” The feeling of empowerment has been as therapeutic and healing as the actual physical benefit she has received.

Later in their journey they learned about the multiple benefits associated with aquatic therapy and in the fall of 2004 they extended their participation to include the swim program.

“During their third swim session, facilitated by staff, volunteers and the natural warm pool environment, this loving and devoted couple was able to share their first ‘standing’ face-to-face embrace and kiss since their accident four years prior,” explains Edie Bishop, assistant aquatics director. “There wasn’t a dry eye in the house!”

The Harrises are now in the pool twice a week, working with staff and volunteers, on specialized individual exercises that emphasize stretching, strengthening, and standing. “Of course, because the pool is the only place that allows it, every session includes a little time for face-to-face “romance” as well,” Bishop explains.

Mary and Richard credit their 37-year marriage commitment to one another, their Christian faith, and their loving family for easing the pain and struggle of coming back. “Our girls and their

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Griffith ends decade of service

Eagle Mount executive director will switch gears; work on capital campaign

By Ron Tschida Staff Writer
Bozeman Daily Chronicle

February 24, 2005

Life often takes unexpected turns. Nearly 20 years ago, Eagle Mount helped Linda Griffith and her family through some of the most trying times a family can endure. After that, Griffith spent much of her energy and passion helping Eagle Mount.

Now her life is taking another turn.

Griffith announced on Wednesday that she's resigning as executive director effective June 15. She plans to refocus her energy, concentrating on a capital campaign for an aquatics center and other projects on the organization's 10-acre Goldenstein Lane campus. Griffith said she dreams of creating facilities to "match the beauty and the magic of our programs."

Eagle Mount provides recreation opportunities -- such as swimming, horseback riding and skiing -- for disabled people of all ages. For many people, Eagle Mount is the only way they'd have such experiences.

Griffith, 54, first learned about Eagle Mount in 1987 when her daughter, Alanah, was diagnosed with Hodgkins Lymphoma. Alanah attended Eagle Mount's "Big Sky Kids" camps for children with cancer, and Griffith credits the program with giving her daughter the hope and courage to fight for her health. Alanah is now 30 and an attorney.

Griffith was so impressed with Eagle Mount she began volunteering there. In 1991, she was hired as development director and since 1995 she's been the executive director.

John Parkes, who has volunteered with Eagle Mount for about five years and is the immediate past-president of its board, said Griffith is a genuine and caring person who "treats everyone with respect and kindness." With her warmth, Griffith has been able to build great and lasting relationships with so many people, Parkes said. "Linda has truly been the person who put the rubber to the road and resulted in Eagle Mount becoming one of the most respected nonprofits not only in Bozeman, but in the state," Parkes said. "It's really just amazing the community she has built at Eagle Mount."

The program started in 1982. In the early years it struggled financially and there's still work to do as far as building an endowment. But it's grown to an organization that serves about 750 program participants a year through more than 26,000 volunteer hours.

Griffith and her husband, Gary, hope to retire in a few years. And with that short time frame in front of her, Griffith decided what she most wanted to accomplish was seeing the aquatics center built. Now, area motels allow Eagle Mount to use their pools for recreation programs, but those facilities don't have changing rooms and they're not designed for people with disabilities.

Building the center will require raising nearly \$2 million and Griffith didn't think she could do that while still managing day-to-day operations.



Linda at entrance.

Making the change was tough emotionally, Griffith admitted, but she's following her heart. And her heart will always be with the organization, she said. "You don't leave a place like this," Griffith said. "It stays with you and you stay with it."

Note from Linda Griffith - I am so grateful to have had the opportunity to be a part of shaping this tremendous organization over the past seventeen years. This new position, as Campaign Director, will give me the opportunity to focus all my time and energy on the projects that are so close to my heart. I'm looking forward to all the exciting changes that are in store as Eagle Mount heads into its third decade of enriching the lives of all who come through its doors.



Riding demonstration at Deadrock with Gina George La Roche 1997.



Tree planting ceremony with Erhardt Henlis 1995.



Linda with Elise Donohue at the 1993 Ride a Thon.



Erin, Alanah, Jeff, Linda, and Gary Alanah's wedding in September 2004.



Linda and Alanah at 1988 Big Sky Camp.

Skylehr explodes when NASCAR hero wins Daytona 500

It was AWESOME, a fun week doing Disney World, MGM, Sea World, Universal Studios, and the Kennedy Space Center. But the highlight was attending the Daytona 500 Race, according to Skylehr Stiles, who was in the stands when his favorite NASCAR car driver, Jeff Gordon, crossed the finish line to win his third Daytona title.

Along with his parents, Peggy and Terry Stiles, and sixteen-year-old brother, Chance, the Belgrade teenager flew to Florida in February for an adventure-of-a-lifetime arranged by the Montana Highway Patrol through its Montana Hope Project. While in Florida, the Stiles family stayed at the Give Kids the World Village, a special resort for children who are critically or terminally ill. "It was great, the second best part of the whole trip," explains Skylehr.

To top off the trip, the Stiles were driven to and from the airport in a Belgrade fire truck with a police escort provided by the Montana Highway Patrol and the Belgrade Police Department.

Excerpted below is the story that appeared in the Belgrade (MT) News just before Skylehr took his "dream-come-true" trip. Staff writer Ted Sullivan introduces you to this spirited young man who is living his life in an exceptional way despite numerous health issues.

From the Belgrade News:

Skylehr Stiles is popular around town.

The 13-year-old Middle School student teachers learn more from him in a day than they teach him in a year.

They admire his infectious smile and positive attitude, often wishing they had more students like him in class.

His classmates are inspired by his cheerfulness. They want to eat lunch and talk with him at noontime. The local cops have "adopted" him – and he them. They pose for pictures with him in front of their vehicles, then frame them as gifts. They also help him with fundraisers for the Special Olympics, competitions he medals in annually in golf and swimming.

Firefighters, who are on a first name basis with Skylehr, offer him the same perks as the police. His neighbors appreciate him for delivering the newspaper during the past year – he never missed a day of work or a house on his route. He also shovels their driveways.

"Skylehr is just as popular at Eagle Mount," says Pat Whitlock who first met him 10 years ago when he was enrolled in the swim program for tots as a three-year-old. Since then he has also participated in golf, fishing, skiing, and kayaking. For the past several seasons he has been skiing with his buddy, Dave Meldahl, who when not on the hill serves the Eagle Mount board as vice president.

Every Sunday, people recognize his ear-to-ear grin, spiked hair and eyeglasses at church.

So it's no wonder Skylehr, who was born with cognitive delays and cerebral palsy, is known in many social circles in Belgrade.

"He has really touched everybody's heart," said Peggy Stiles, his mother.

"I think he lives like we're supposed to."

That is why people are drawn to him.

Not because he has had three surgeries on his esophagus and one on his ankle in the past year, or because his ailments have taken him to Billings, Missoula and Spokane to visit specialists.

Not because everyone knows he'll likely never eat solid foods again, or because he now gets his nutrients through a feeding tube. And not because doctors recently diagnosed him with scoliosis, a disease that causes curvature of the spine, and Scheuermann's disease, a condition in which the upper spine increases in size, causing a humpback.

People are drawn to Skylehr because of his spirit, despite a year's worth of health problems that will change the rest of his life.

That is why the Montana Highway Patrol – through the Montana Hope Project – is sending Skylehr and his family to Disney World and the Daytona 500 in Florida. Skylehr loves (NASCAR racer) Jeff Gordon – he's his favorite person," Belgrade Police Lt. E. J. Clark said. "We thought sending him to Daytona would be perfect."



Gordon is first over finish line and Skylehr flashes a smile!

Participants drive possible cycling program

Eagle Mount is testing interest in piloting a new program! Driven by a group of fired-up participants and volunteers, Eagle Mount is considering piloting a Cycling program beginning in May 2005. The initial focus will likely be on participants with disabilities who are already involved in handcycling, adaptive cycling, and/or want to get involved in cycling

and have access to their own equipment. Once started, we anticipate this program growing and expanding rapidly, and as that happens, we will be targeting an ever-increasing range of participants.

If you are interested in participating or would like more information, call Edie at Eagle Mount 586-1781.

Carving out a niche on snowboards

Several years ago when Cheryl Christman was being interviewed for the position of director of the therapeutic riding program, CEO Linda Griffith asked her if she skied. Many thoughts raced through Cheryl's head. "Is she kidding? Next to horses, snowboarding is my biggest passion. But what has this to do with the horse job? Skiing can't be that hard." Cheryl calmly and coolly replied, "I can learn."

After bumbling (her description) through several ski clinics, she reached a level of skiing where she could attain level 1 ski instructor status and act as an assistant director for the Eagle Mount ski program. And although sharing her passion for snow with Eagle Mount



Snowboarders Timmy, Bryan Scharenberg, Spencer, Naisha McNulty, and Larry Lee, left to right

participants was a great pleasure, she confesses she still preferred snowboarding to skiing.

Thus, began the Eagle Mount snowboarding program in the winter of 2000 with one client and zero snowboard volunteers. "I just figured that if I would rather snowboard than ski, there were clients that would rather snowboard too," reasoned Cheryl. Today we have 14 clients and 20 volunteers with more on a waiting list to help.

Christman reflects, "Our volunteers are giving snowboarders a good name, helping to reverse the stereotypical image of boarders as 'young punks.'" When asked why she wanted to volunteer with Eagle Mount, Naisha McNulty replies, "I wanted to make a difference." Lynnise Stoltzfus says that she really enjoys the comraderie of the participants and the volunteers.

Volunteer clinician Aaron Montgomery has been volunteering two days a week with the snowboard program since 2001. When asked why he is so committed he responds, "First and foremost, it's super fun! One afternoon of snowboarding with a client can help put my life into perspective really fast. I love the appreciation I feel every time I am done for the day." These answers are representative of what any of the snowboard volunteers would say.



Timmy and his volunteer Aaron Montgomery.

Participants with traumatic brain injuries, learning disabilities, and cognitive delays are all excited to be doing the cool, "in" sport just like their peers. Boarder Timmy Cross expressed this when he said, "I like snowboarding better than skiing because my friend from school snowboards." Participant Nathan Dunn adds, "Snowboarding is cooler than skiing."

Participant Theresa, who started boarding four years ago with Eagle Mount, was the only snowboarder in the recent area Special Olympics. "She did incredibly well competing against skiers," explains Christman. "It is amazing how far she has come; she is no longer catching edges and falling. She is now linking turns down intermediate runs."

Reflecting on the growth of the program, Christman states "The Eagle Mount snowboard and ski programs are so successful because both stress having fun on whatever equipment or terrain you're on."

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husbands, Robert, Marty and Matt, were always there for us... either Nicole, Kristie, Debbie or Anna was always at our side in the hospital, relates Mary, who was once a school secretary. Quickly she adds, "We were also blessed to be able to partake of Greta and Bob Mathis' vision of a facility to help people in our circumstance. Eagle Mount helps people resume their dignity."

Richard and Mary exemplify the amazing transformations that are such a daily occurrence at Eagle Mount, according to Bishop. "They are active members of a dynamic team committed to exceeding expectations and ever-reaching for growth and excellence for each individual."

In addition to his Eagle Mount schedule, Richard, is an avid hand-cyclist both recreationally and competitively. Last fall he participated in the Mike Utley Foundation Thumbs Up! Bike Tour in Wenatchee, WA, racing 25 miles. (A former Detroit Lions football player, Utley received a spinal cord injury on the field and is now a quadriplegic.) Richard is currently collaborating with other hand-cyclists to hopefully pilot an Eagle Mount cycling program in 2005.

"Through the programs and the great people at Eagle Mount, and the special volunteers who give of their time there, many of the pieces of our lives have come together," says Richard, who formerly ran a construction business in New Mexico. "We try to always let all involved know how much they are appreciated but sometimes words don't say it all. So I say to all who work with others to improve their lives, look and see if they (your students) are saying 'thanks' the only way they know how...know that your work is good and honorable."



A tender moment!

A community celebrates the spirit of Leif



Leif Babcock

“He was the best prince a girl could ever ask for,” recalls Molly O’Brien of the youngster she learned to love and respect. Nearly seven hundred persons shared her feelings for Leif Babcock and attended his memorial celebration service at Bozeman’s Emerson Cultural Center. Along with the Bozeman High School Pep Band which played “When The Saints Go Marching In,” they came to share their experiences and memories of a young man who lived a fragile life with great courage and spirit. Leif died December 10, 2004 after a lifelong struggle with pulmonary

hypertension.

Long associated with Eagle Mount in various positions, Molly became acquainted with Leif in 1987 when she rented the lower level apartment in the Clark and Linda Babcock home. “He was three-years-old when I moved in and 8 when I moved out. I had wonderful times with Leif, such as watching him take his first steps in my apartment and practicing sign language with him. I knew he was special, and in the end he taught all of us a valuable lesson.”

Leif, who became known for his grin and hugs, was born March 8, 1984 with Down’s syndrome and a heart problem. He began his Eagle Mount journey at age 4, starting with day camp, then horseback riding with Molly sitting behind him to hold his oxygen tube, followed by swimming with that same tube snaking behind him in the water. Later he participated at Eagle Mount in skiing, ice skating, kayaking, and golf.

“Because of his amazing personality and participation in so many of our programs, every one of the directors has a Leif story,” says Linda Griffith, Eagle Mount CEO. “He thought he was Tiger Woods when he sank a putt,” recalls Pat Whitlock, golf

program director. In the words of ski director Jill Holder, “He was as charismatic as any great leader. He often took care of others and was ‘incredibly compassionate.’”

At Bozeman High, where he hauled his oxygen tank through the halls, he was voted the Most Inspirational Senior by his classmates who admired his courage, enthusiasm for life, and sense of humor. One classmate, Tim Cross, said he had seen a rainbow the day Leif died. “I sent it to Leif.”

He also was active in Special Olympics, participating in gymnastics, bowling, track and field, baseball, basketball and skiing. He was awarded the Bitterroot Winter Games Spirit Award in 2000 for the support he showed toward all his fellow athletes.

He was chosen to give the athletes’ oath during the Bozeman Special Olympics Summer games in 1998.



Molly O'Brien with Leif.

Leif was friends with everyone in the community and where he worked: The Garage (a local restaurant), the Valley Ice Garden, the Humane Society, the Museum of the Rockies, and the Children’s Museum. He also was involved in the art program at Beall Park Arts Center and Boy Scouts.

He is survived by his parents, his sister Erin, his grandparents Frances and Tom Fagrelus... and by the “community that helped raise him.” Good night, sweet prince.

Seven qualify for lifeguard certification

Unofficially, it’s called the 24-hour cold water endurance challenge. Actually, it is the lifeguard certification test sponsored by the American Red Cross. Seven members of Eagle Mount’s aquatic crew recently took the challenge and passed.

Now fully certified are volunteers Barb Asper, Pat Green, Cynthia Japhet, Jackie Taylor, and Gina Wycoff. Pat Whitlock, aquatic program director and Edie Bishop, assistant program director, also qualified.

The two-day challenge combines a written exam in water safety and practical water rescues with additional tests in first aid and CPR. “It is a tremendous accomplishment,” explains Whitlock. “The women were not required by Eagle Mount to take the rigorous tests. They volunteered so that they could better serve the swim program and its participants.”

Long time volunteer Barb Asper never missed a stroke and saved all the “drowning victims,” according to Whitlock. Besides earning the certification, Pat Green and Jackie Taylor were interested in acquiring different skills to share with their post-stroke and spinal cord-injured students. Gina Wycoff and Cynthia Japhet will use their added knowledge when teaching younger students.

“Worrying about the lifeguard test was more stressful than actually taking it,” Whitlock commented. “We were all glad when the last physical challenge was over. I knew I was going to have to save the male instructor from the bottom of the deep end. I did! And the other gals passed their individual rescue challenges as well.”

“It felt great to test myself and pass, but mainly I wanted to help Eagle Mount provide a safe fun experience for our

participants. The aquatic program means so much to so many,” explained Asper, an 18-year volunteer.

“Observing water safety while helping each student have an enjoyable time in the pool is our primary goal,” states Whitlock. “A very safe pool is the best atmosphere for learning and teaching, because students can relax and have faith in the instructors. Safety is always our number one concern. We also must keep current with the latest safety standards.”

“Eagle Mount is fortunate to have such dedicated volunteers,” exclaims Bishop. “They didn’t have to take the test; they chose to give up a whole weekend because they care. Now each class is covered by one, two, or sometimes three certified lifeguards. You can never have enough safety.”

Kevin heads to Vail to compete for another title

Kevin Connolly, 19, former National Disabled Junior Alpine Champion for three consecutive years, was first introduced in this newsletter when he was just 10-years-old. Since then he has acquired numerous regional and national ski competition medals and is about to compete for a spot on the national disabled team at the Disabled Alpine National Championships March 21 to 23rd in Vail.



Photo courtesy of Bob Allen

every run in the gates, I do a couple of jumps at the terrain park." The day before he was to leave for Aspen, Kevin was doing a 45-foot table-top at Big Sky most of the afternoon and, on the last run of the day, decided to "hit it" one more time. "I overshot my landing a bit, but stuck everything fine; however, my ski couldn't take another hit and snapped when I touched ground." Things abruptly took a turn for the worse.

Although he was born without legs, Kevin explains that skiing came naturally to him. He recalls that he took his first tour of the mountain on a bi-ski that was tethered to Kim Bankert and Bob Nessel, Eagle Mount instructors. "It only took a few hours on the hill to get me hooked," says Kevin adding, "I was back the next year as a full season participant."

For the next four years he was part of the Eagle Mount ski program at Bridger Bowl, advancing rapidly from a bi-skier to a mono-skier. He began competing by the time he was in the seventh grade. His mono-ski consists of a bucket and suspension system that snaps onto a racing ski; for balance he uses a pair of outriggers, poles that are equipped with mini-skis on the ends.

Kevin maintains his physical conditioning in the off-season by training six days per week with his racing wheelchair alternating time and distance between 15 miles in 1 hour to 7.5 miles in ½ hour. He also makes a point of never driving anywhere in town, instead opting to propel himself on a longboard (similar to a skateboard) to ride from one place to another.

A freshman at Montana State University in Bozeman where he is majoring in the film program, he has his sights set

on becoming a director. When he was twelve-years-old, he appeared in a movie produced in Montana and starring Dennis Quaid. He was a stunt double for a young man who was paralyzed in an accident. At sixteen, he was the subject of a documentary filmed by the MSU film department and the next year he was the cameraman for a film project in his high school in Helena, Montana.

You've done us proud, Kevin!

This season he was invited by the head coach of the US Disabled Alpine Ski Team to compete in a Skier Cross event in the X-Games 9 held in Aspen in January. When asked how he prepared for a competition like the X-Games, Kevin admitted, "I honestly had no idea what a skier-cross was aside from a vague combination of big jumps and gated turns."

So, he continued training just as he had been earlier in the year with the Big Sky Race Team, except that "now between

Kevin's coach Ben Langgath and the crew at Digidio Sheetmetal helped rebuild Kevin's entire ski that night. Eight hours later, with the frame and ski rebuilt, Kevin was on his way to Aspen.

When asked about the actual moments leading up to a race, Kevin talked about being his most nervous. When he approaches the starting gate he experiences cold sweats, stomach cramps, and a blurry focus or in Kevin's words "the usual (jitters)." He goes on to say, "Once I get in the gate, things calm down a bit as I look down at the course. To be perfectly honest, I usually blank out at that point and think about something completely mundane – usually what homework I have to do after the race."

If he qualifies for the national team in March he will be training at the Olympic Camp for most of this summer. As part of the team, Kevin would travel to Italy in January 2006. He would also be on the International World Cup circuit, which would require traversing Europe for a good portion of the ski season. Kevin said, "If I make the team, I would need to take a year off from my studies at MSU, but I guess I'll cross that road when I come to it."

Wishing For

Hoof oil	Miniature horse
Fly spray	cat harness
Laundry detergent	Beach towels
Heavy duty pickup	Swim goggles
Truck	Aqua shoes
Muck bucket	New flooring for ski hut
Garden shed	Deep wheelbarrow
Snowboards / binding / bds	



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Chief Executive Officer, Bozeman Linda Griffith
Newsletter Editor Kate Evans (Volunteer)

Thank You

We would like to thank Bozeman's Stenzel Photography for donating its sitting fees for portraits to Eagle Mount during the month of March. For more information you may call 406-522-9700.

Introducing ~ ~ Volunteer Velma McMeekin

It is impossible to put one face to Eagle Mount. Because of our many participants, volunteers and staff members, we are a collection of "faces," ages, and backgrounds. Each of us has a story to tell. In the story below we introduce you to one individual in this large family that we call Eagle Mount. We will be telling you about others in subsequent issues.

Velma McMeekin

Velma McMeekin, a long time Eagle Mount volunteer, is going to Norway. She has been chosen to guide for "Ski for Light" in the 42nd Ridderen where 500 skiers with visual impairment, plus 500 guides, will gather April 3 to 10.

Velma has been guiding visually impaired cross-country skiers for "Ski for Light" since 1989 when she was encouraged in this direction by Lee Barkmann Stevenson, who was the ski director for Eagle Mount at the time.

Guiding the visually impaired was organized in Norway in the 1950's and "Ski for Light," a non-profit organization, was started in the United States in 1975 based on Norway's model. "Ski for Light" holds a weeklong event in a different location each year. As usual, Velma volunteered this past winter at the event held in Granby, Colorado.

"I am thrilled to be going to Norway," explains Velma, who joins 10 racers and 10 guides in traveling from the United States. "After 17 years, I have developed many friends in the cross country community and I certainly will enjoy skiing in such a beautiful country."

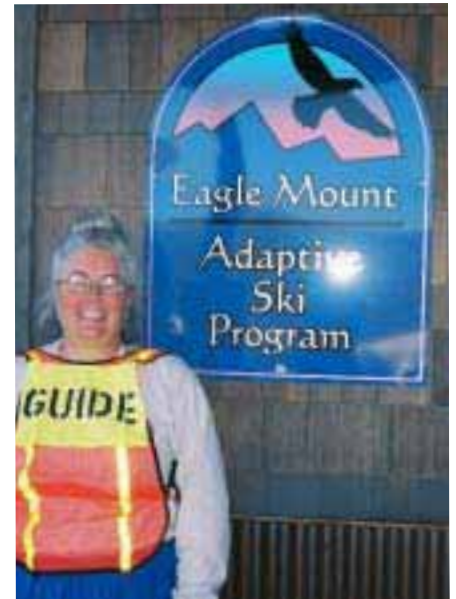
Besides guiding for the blind, Velma has volunteered in other Eagle Mount programs since 1991. She has been a "boater" for the Big Sky Kids program for children with cancer and has assisted in kayaking activities. She has helped the ski program since 2002 in both cross country and downhill.

"Velma is a super volunteer," comments Jill Holder, the current Eagle Mount ski director, "She has amazing personal warmth so that she is able to instill confidence with her voice and her experience. Students immediately sense her kindness."

A side light to Velma's story is that Larry Showater, the international contact for "Ski for Light," visited Eagle Mount in March to explore the possibility of holding a future annual event in the Bozeman area. And as expected, Velma says she will be volunteering through Eagle Mount as a guide when and if that happens.

Thank you, Velma for your commitment to Eagle Mount --- and congratulations for the honor of being chosen to represent our country in Norway.

For more information on "Ski For Light" see web site www.sfl.org.



Velma McMeekin outside the ski hut.

VOLUNTEERS are our year-long asset

Volunteers across the country are generally honored and thanked in April during National Volunteer Week. "One week of recognition and thanks is just not enough for our volunteers," explains Vicki Luquette, Chief Operations Office. "Our unpaid helpers are so special, so vital to our very existence, it would be a travesty to acknowledge them only one week a year." So hats off to them now and every week this year.

Vicki points out that about 750 clients are served annually in Eagle Mount's various programs (skiing, swimming, horseback riding have the largest enrollments) because a large group of area residents and students are willing to volunteer more than 26,000 hours each year.

"These people of all ages bring their talents and enthusiasm, along with their caring spirit, to enrich the Eagle Mount experience for those not able to recreate on their own," she goes on to explain. "While some volunteer roles demand physical strength (like handling a bi-ski as it rumbles down the hill), others require special skills or knowledge (like the lead walker in the equine program). There are lots of opportunities to help. We can almost always match someone up with one of our needs."

Consider the group of high school students who are assisting in several programs. They represent the public high schools in Bozeman and Belgrade and the private institutions, Mt. Ellis and Manhattan Christian. While their peers are having

fun doing activities so typical of this age group, these atypical students are helping a disabled person to swim, ski, ice skate or ride a horse.

Some are even spending a weekend night at Eagle Mount's Saturday Night Out, a program started last fall which brings clients to the center for a fun night of entertainment and socialization. "It is a great program. While we are interacting with the participants in games or projects, their parents (or caregivers), are having some free time for themselves," explains volunteer, Grant McWilliams, a freshman at Bozeman High School, who has an older sister who is blind and cognitively delayed. Grant also volunteers in the equine program.

These kids are also active in such service organizations as the Leo Club and Young Life and are busy in many organizations in their schools. "These are our future community leaders and we wish to salute them," smiles Vicki as she looks over their names.

Representing Bozeman High School are Katie Potter, Dana Hill, Mikaela Caraciolla, David Lambers, Kathleen de Onis, Grant Mc Williams, Will Brewster, Shelly Winward, Heather Grieco, Ryan Greydanus, Anthony Hart, Tate Cranston, Robert Dunn, Kelly Scherfig. Belgrade students include Britney Dorrell, Katie Holland, Sadie Locken, Fiona Albini, Jethro Albini, Emily Linn, AJ Kreikemeier, Aimee Ping, Lauren Hager. Mt. Ellis is represented by Marcia Barrick, Beth Jutzy, Jaime Riddle, Wesley Marin, James Clark, and Hannah Stiff, Laura Van Dyke and Jennifer Asher attend Manhattan Christian.

10th Annual Western Rendezvous

Come June, the cowpokes in and around Bozeman will be saddling up to attend Eagle Mount's 2005 Western Rendezvous. Over the years this annual event has become a true western tradition, which for the first time is being extended into a two day event on the June 10th and 11th. It will start off Friday at the Willson Auditorium with an "Evening with Baxter Black," nationally known cowboy poet and humorist, and music by the Ringling Five.

Hoe-down activities will continue Saturday morning with a flapjack breakfast from 7-11 a.m. at the Eagle Mount Center and the Trading Post where trinkets and items from area garages, attics and barns will be on sale.

The kids will be whooping it up at games at the Lil' Cowpokes Carnival starting at 4 p.m. This will be followed by the annual wild-west style Whole Hog Barbecue, which will start at about sundown to music by the Junior Fiddlers. The evening will combine a silent and live auction with dancing to the smooth country sounds of Montana Rose, with lead singer Claudia Williams. All this fun and music will be under the sponsorship of Murdoch's Ranch and Home Supply.

"Over the years, the rendezvous has become one of our most popular events," explains CEO Linda Griffith, Eagle Mount's head wrangler. "Because it is geared to the family, we are expanding on our western heritage and inviting Mom, Dad and the entire clan to come and enjoy the breakfast, games and familiar country music. It give us a chance to chat with our many friends and supporters and to show them around our facility."

This year we're asking for everyone's involvement in making this the most successful rendezvous ever. Please consider volunteering at the pancake breakfast, garage sale or carnival, baking items for our bake sale, donating items to the Trading Post, or contributing items to the silent or live auction.

General seating tickets for Saturday night are \$15 for adults, \$7.50 for children, age 5 and under are free. Reserved preferred seating at tables for 8 is \$200.



Schedule of Events

Friday, June 10, 7:30 p.m.

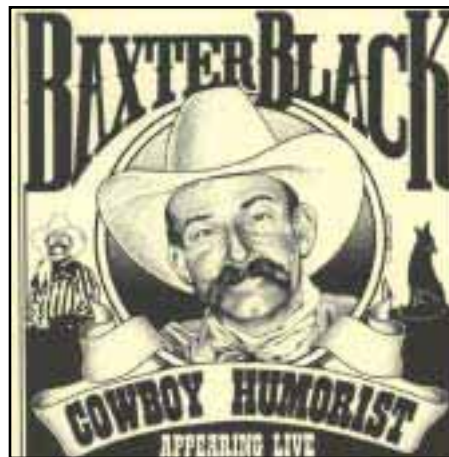
An Evening with Baxter Black at Willson Auditorium
(6:00 pm reception at Pioneer Museum)

Saturday, June 11, 7-11 a.m.

Flapjack Breakfast & Trading Post

Saturday, June 11, 4 p.m.-12:00 a.m.

10th Annual Barbecue, Kid's Carnival
Barn Dance & Auction
Harley Davidson Raffle Drawing



The nation's most successful living poet (according to those in the bunkhouse and the New York Times) will start off the 2005 Western Rendezvous Saturday night at the Emerson with his brand of essays, commentaries and campfire verse. Everything about Baxter is cowboy: his "cartoonish" mustache, his personality, and his former position as a large animal veterinarian. He now makes his living shining a spotlight on the flaws and foibles of everyday cowboy life. Down East, The Washington Post writes, "He could make a dead man sit up and laugh."

Adding their spin to the night, will be the Ringling Five of Wilsall, who are known for their hijinks and slightly skewed vision of the world. This group of five ranchers, a lone music teacher and one mineral salesman will perform music that points out the humor found in rural community life.

The Friday night program is sponsored by American Bank. Tickets are \$50.00 (which includes a reception with Baxter Black at Pioneer Museum at 6:00 p.m.) and \$25.00 or \$15.00.



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