

Journal~News~Opinion

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Environmental Safety of Museum Basement Confirmed But Concerns Still Remain



Courtesy Photo

Although not aesthetically appealing, with evidence of water damage apparent, the Blaine County Museum has been found “not toxic” and deemed safe by A.L.M. Consulting’s Industrial Hygienist Ryan McGee who stated, “The potential mold hazards in these areas have been abated, making it environmentally safer for accessing the basement than it was prior to the work’s being completed by Overcast Restoration.”

By Donna Miller
BCJ News

Blaine County Commissioner Shane Fox, Overcast Restoration Owner Donovan Overcast, and A.L.M. Consulting’s Industrial Hygienist Ryan McGee met briefly with Blaine County Museum (BCM) Director Samantha French on July 16 to conduct a walk thru and informal facility inspection. The primary purpose of the visit was to review the status of previous assessments and recommendations and to reaffirm that the basement is neither toxic nor contaminated by mold or hydrocarbons.

“Our main concern,” said McGee, “is health and safety. We definitely don’t want people getting sick, but the real truth is that the basement is not toxic. Our site visit on March 7, 2025 confirmed that some remediation work since the November 2020 review by NewFields [Mining and Engineering Services] had been completed. During that site visit, there were no musty odors due to potential mold growth, and there were no visible signs of recent water intrusion. Our focus has been on the report provided by environmental consultants tasked with evaluating the basement’s safety.”

French explained that several rain events in 2021-2022 caused the BCM to again

take on water, threatening the north wall and several east end exhibits. This water intrusion produced extensive damage to interior concrete walls and floors, interior sheetrock walls, and structural members behind the sheetrock. At that time, because of humidity, mold, concerns about asbestos contamination, and lead-containing paint sloughing off the walls, use of the basement was discontinued.

“Water intrusion has continued to occur on an annual basis since Ryan’s assessment in 2020, so the building often smells musty, even on the ground floor, particularly towards the back stairs,” French stated. “Furthermore, no formal mold assessment has been undertaken since 2020. We quit allowing visitor access to the basement altogether after the worst of the flooding events during the summer of 2022.”

Since then, efforts have been ongoing to rehabilitate that space. “We completed the cleanup and remediation of the east end of the museum by removing water damaged carpet, removing water damaged sheetrock and other wall materials with flood cuts, and by treating exposed wood wall members,” Overcast stated.

“Long range plans indicate the possibility
Continued on Page 5:
Museum Basement

Brewfest 2025 Reported as a Success



Courtesy Photo

Lu Ann Brabson, Ivey Lenz, Julie Neely, Pepper Harwood, Ashtyn DePriest, and Jana Snedigar work the food table, providing snacks to Brewfest patrons.

By Donna Miller
BCJ News

The Sweet Park Brewfest 2025 is in the books, and representatives from the Friends of the Pool and Park Foundation filed a positive follow-up report.

Although no official tally on profits has yet been finalized, Heather DePriest, President of the Foundation, estimates that the event generated approximately \$14,000. “With our generous sponsors, and others who donated items for the silent auction, and because of people who purchased those items, not to mention the beer sales, we raised a good amount of money for the pool and park rehabilitation project,” DePriest stated. “It was a little windy, but overall it was a fantastic evening. I don’t have an official count, but we had a nice crowd and lots of fun.”

Another supporter, Jean Kukkeler donated kick scooters, skateboards, and even a radio controlled car this year for a kids’ giveaway.

The Brewfest also offered a few wines, hard ciders and seltzers, domestic and craft beers, as well as non-alcoholic beverages such as water and root beer. Some of the breweries represented were Kettle House, Mighty Mo, Triple Dog, Lewis and Clark, Phillipsburg, Red Lodge, Bayern, Draught Works, Flathead Lake, Jeremiah Johnson, Last Chance, and Lockhorn.

In addition to snack items, the food

menu included hot dogs, chili dogs, and acai bowls prepared by Lu Ann Brabson. One hundred percent of the profit on food sales went towards the project, too.

Finally, composed of Mickey Haney, Gabe Harry, Tim Whitney, and Kelsie Harwood, the Stonebroke String Band played music throughout the evening, with the Brewfest winding down around 9:30 p.m.

Up next for the Friends of the Pool and Park Foundation (FPPF) is a plan for a groundbreaking photo of the pool construction which is starting this fall. This is scheduled for the last day of swim practice for the season, August 1. The Project Contractor, several Chinook City Officials, FPPF Board members, and many of the Swim Team youth will be on hand for a breaking ground ceremony on Friday at 11:00 a.m.



Courtesy Photo

Purple ducks swimming in water decorated tables at the Brewfest. Youth were invited to take the centerpieces home as mementos.

Scofield and Maybel Place in Nampa



Lamberson Photography

After winning the Reserve Championship, Maybel models her ribbon with her trainer Emily Scofield and with the Director of Training and Adoptions, Matt Zimmerman

By Donna Miller
BCJ News

Wild horses and burros that had been previously gathered from overpopulated rangelands were showcased in a variety of classes in the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) co-sponsored Branded Bonanza held at the Ford Idaho Horse Park in Nampa, Idaho, on July 4-6, 2025. Local resident Emily Scofield and her burro Maybel captured Reserve Champion overall in burro, and Scofield herself earned Reserve Champion status as a Rookie Trainer.

Beginning at seven a.m. each day, the Bonanza showcased both in-hand and under saddle competitions featuring nearly 70 youth and adult trainers, who had adopted and worked with a BLM wild horse or burro since February. These animals were gathered from overpopulated public rangelands managed by BLM in Idaho, Nevada, California, Oregon, and other western

states. The trainers demonstrated their progress in a series of classes, including Handling and Condition, Trail Pattern, and Freestyle.

To earn their awards in this field of competition, Scofield reported: “Maybel performed excellently. I was thrilled to finish fifth in the condition and handling category, fourth in the in-hand trail course, and third in the freestyle event. I was both elated and shocked that, due to our consistency, we secured the title of Reserve Champion Overall in the burro class. Additionally, I received the Reserve Champion award as a Rookie Trainer; this competition included mustang and burro trainers, and I placed fourth overall at the event as a trainer among my age group—32-49, which included mustang and burro trainers as well. One might say we kicked some @&&!”

Continued on Page 2:
Maybel & Scofield

PLAY BY LOCAL PLAYWRIGHT WILL OPEN IN NEW YORK THIS NOVEMBER

By Donna Miller
BCJ News

The Harvest, a play written and directed by Montana Actor Theatre’s (MAT) Executive Director Jason Pyette, will be featured November 3-23 in New York. Because the script was accepted for production by the Manhattan Repertory Theatre, a troupe of MAT actors/actresses will take the stage at the Chain Theatre located at 312 W. 36th Street in New York for a professional run of sixteen performances.

Written over a period of a couple of years, the script explores the struggles of a farming family in Montana. Because the patriarch of the family is in poor health, the children return home to help bring in the crop. In the process, they are forced to confront the changes in their relationships and some conflicts from the past.

“The inspiration for this story really came simply from living in this area,” Pyette explained. He admits that the story contains certain elements of his own family life, but it also reflects the lives of so many others who call North Central Montana their home.

Since its premiere in Havre on March 4, 2022, the play has logged a production history in Montana. *The Harvest* was picked up by two other theatre companies—Anaconda Ensemble Theatre and Missoula’s Rooted Theatre Company—each producing their own successful runs.

“At every performance, audience members from farming and rural backgrounds have told us how deeply

the story resonated. They saw their own lives reflected honestly and with dignity. And it matters. *The Harvest* is a raw, honest portrayal of a Montana wheat-farming family, far removed from the exaggerated depictions of rural life often seen in movies and television today. It doesn’t lean on clichés or stereotypes. It reflects the quiet strength, generational responsibility, and personal sacrifice we see in our own communities. It’s a story with universal themes—family, identity, resilience—but it’s also deeply grounded in rural experience,” Pyette reports.

Pyette described his creative process in writing the script: “You know how it goes; you write some and then step away for a while.”

Whether a writer attributes that stepping away to procrastination or to a temporary loss of inspiration, the creative process ebbs and flows. After Pyette felt his script had reached a point of readiness, MAT workshopped it as a company. “I’d gather a group of actors and we’d read and discuss, and then I went into rewrites. After the Havre premiere, I rewrote more and then even more after both performances by acting companies in Anaconda and Missoula. I’m still tweaking things at this point. If possible, I’d like to cut about 15 minutes out of the show,” Pyette shared.

As many writers and artists have suggested, those who work in such craft know that a creative person absorbed with generating an artwork hesitates to declare completion. Reworking

Continued on Page 2:
Local Playwright

Cont. From Page 1: Local Playwright

and improving a piece is always a temptation and a possibility. Prominent poets Paul Valéry and W. H. Auden have both received credit for the adage: “a work of art is never finished, merely abandoned;” filmmaker George Lucas and author Oscar Wilde have also used the phrase.

According to Pyette, MAT will present the show in Havre on October 23-25 before packing it up and heading to New York. “We arrive there on November 1 and open to the press on November 6. From there, we will run until November 22. A gala event connected to the Havre show will honor all those who helped us make this thing possible,” Pyette stated.

Several in the cast: Pam Veis, Grant Olson, Tylyn Turner, and Aylan Pratt performed in the original Havre production. However, Pratt will play a different role in New York. Brian Gregoire starred in the Rooted Theatre Company production in Missoula. T.C. Knutson, Chad Zuelke, and Sam Pollington are all new additions to the cast, but, in the words of Pyette, they “have immense talent and experience. All in all, a stellar cast!”

According to Pyette, fundraising for the New York trip has been ongoing for several months now. Instead of focusing on revenue generating events, MAT has reached out to agriculture-based corporations and individuals for support.

“Such an undertaking requires significant funding,” Pyette said. “We need to raise nearly \$90,000 to make this opportunity a reality. We’re well over halfway there, but it has been much harder than we expected. MAT has enjoyed immense support for decades, but we realize these are unprecedented times with many uncertainties, and we understand the real concerns people have about the state of our economy. But this is truly a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity—not just for MAT but for the agricultural and arts communities of Montana.”

Given those circumstances, in order to raise the remaining funds needed, MAT

is hoping to secure 40 sponsors at \$1,000 each. “Every dollar will help us cover travel, lodging, and production costs for our eight actors and two crew members. If you can help us in this way—fantastic! In truth, any donation helps, so we encourage anyone who wants to support this Montana story in New York to please do so!”

In Pyette’s words, “*The Harvest* reflects the life we all experienced growing up in Chinook or in small farming communities just like it—where family, the land, and hard work shaped everything we are. You’ll see yourself, your neighbors, and reflections of our hometown on that stage. That’s why your support matters—not just to help us get this production to New York but to make sure the real story of the families of rural Montana is shared with honesty on a national stage.”

Simply being accepted by Manhattan Repertory Theatre (MRT) represents an honor. “MRT receives hundreds of submissions annually and rejects roughly 98% of them. That they chose *The Harvest* speaks volumes about the power of this script and the story it tells. At first, MRT intended to cast and produce the show with New York actors. But after several in-depth conversations with their director and team, they came to see what we’ve known all along: The story needs to be told by the people who live it. MRT ultimately decided that MAT should bring our full production to New York—our cast, our crew, our creative leadership—because only we can offer the level of authenticity this story demands. It’s a rare move for a New York company, and it means they’re putting their reputation on the line. They’re producing the show, they’re promoting it, and they’re vouching for us. Even our publicist, who has worked on major New York productions for decades, is excited about this unique angle. He believes that in a cultural moment where people are eager to hear real stories from rural America, *The Harvest* is arriving at exactly the right time,” Pyette reports.

Cont. From Page 1: Maybel & Scofield

According to Event Coordinator, Heather Tiel-Nelson of the BLM, “Although back in February the trainers adopted the wild horses and burros that were shown at Branded Bonanza, many opted to make their animals available for re-assignment following the event, giving qualified adopters the opportunity to take home a wild horse or burro, which has received basic training.”

At the event, the animals available for adoption were marked with an X, allowing spectators to identify which ones to consider as prospective “pets.”

BLM staff, who were on hand to assist with the re-assignment paperwork, had to pre-approve homes to ensure the property meets specific requirements, including a three-sided shelter, access to water, and sturdy fencing, since a basic three-wire fence might not initially contain these wild animals.

“Actually, once the animals are gentled down, they are capable of respecting three-wire fencing. They just have to start out in more secure fencing,” Scofield clarified.

As for Scofield, she kept Maybel, whom she claimed had found her “forever home.” She explained: “Some trainers, including myself, will provide a permanent home for their mustangs or burros, while others send them to pre-approved homes arranged by the Bureau of Land Management after the event. Many individuals choose to train these animals for the competition and then adopt them afterward.”

On July 6, an open mustang show took place with a full slate of classes including Halter, Ranch, Trail, and Games. Buckles were awarded to the overall youth and adult champions, and a host of prizes went to the high point winners of both shows.



Lamberson Photography

Emily Scofield and her BLM adopted burro Maybel captured two Reserve Champion awards from the Branded Bonanza event held at the Ford Idaho Horse Park in Nampa, Idaho, on July 4-6, 2025.

While many training competitions exist across the United States, Branded Bonanza builds upon the success of Mustang Mania, created and hosted by Matt and Stacie Zimmerman since 2016. “The goal of this competition is not to ‘win,’ but rather to offer an opportunity for trainers to improve their horsemanship and for the wild horse or burro to gain the skills they need to be successful in their new, domestic life,” said Branded Bonanza Outreach and Education Coordinator Ann Souders. “Our sincere hope is for the trainers to have fun as part of this competition and to come out of it with a sense of accomplishment and renewed love of America’s wild horses and burros.”

About the event, BLM Boise District Wild Horse and Burro Specialist Raul Trevino added: “We appreciate all the trainers who took on a wild horse or burro this past spring and enjoyed seeing how the animals have progressed in their training. This event provides a good opportunity for those who are interested in adopting a mustang or burro available for re-assignment to begin with an animal that has a few months of training, essentially easing the transition for the new adopter.”

Assessing her participation, Scofield concluded, “We had a wonderful time at the event. All the trainers

(aka competitors) were so supportive of each other; it was truly like an instant family. This event helped adopt out over 90 wild burros/ mustangs, so I would call it a success! Animals that did not get adopted from the event will go back to the trainer’s house until BLM finds the perfect fit.”

BLM personnel report that there were 98 wild horses and burros adopted for this event, representing over \$1.4 million in savings for the American taxpayer for caring costs over the lifetime of those animals.



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Blaine County Library
Monday Beat the Heat
Movies at 1:30 p.m.,
Teen Scene (grade 7-12)
at 5:30-6:30. Tuesday
Story Time at 10:30.
Wednesday Summer
Reading Program at
1:30. LEGO Club
Thursday at 1:30

Harlem Library
The Friends of the
Harlem Public Library
invite the public to join
us at the library this
evening, Wednesday,
July 23rd, from 4:00-
6:00. Traveling tacos,

Rice Krispies, and water
will be served for free,
in appreciation of the
community. The Harlem
Public Library Board
of Trustees will have
their monthly meeting
on July 30th at 4:30,
pm. We will be taking
a break from children’s
programming until
September..

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BLAINE COUNTY COMMISSIONERS CALENDAR	
FRIDAY July 25, 2025 10:00 a.m. Road/Bridge Supervisor Mitchell Sheriff Colby County Attorney Harwood DES Velk ARPA Funds/LATC Funds County Health Dept. Internal Business Employment Review Budget Transfers Tax Abatements	Internal Business Employment Review Budget Transfers Tax Abatements 10:00 - 4:00 pm - Department Budgets 8:30 am - DNRC Weekly Fire Call
MONDAY July 28, 2025 10:00 a.m. Road/Bridge Supervisor Mitchell Sheriff Colby County Attorney Harwood DES Velk ARPA Funds/LATC Funds County Health Dept. Internal Business Employment Review Budget Transfers Tax Abatements	WEDNESDAY July 23, 2025 10:00 a.m. Road/Bridge Supervisor Mitchell Sheriff Colby County Attorney Harwood DES Velk ARPA Funds/LATC Funds County Health Dept. Internal Business Employment Review Budget Transfers Tax Abatements 10:00 am - 4:00 pm - Department Budget
TUESDAY July 29, 2025 10:00 a.m. Road/Bridge Supervisor Mitchell Sheriff Colby County Attorney Harwood DES Velk ARPA Funds/LATC Funds County Health Dept.	THURSDAY July 30, 2025 10:00 a.m. Road/Bridge Supervisor Mitchell Sheriff Colby County Attorney Harwood DES Velk ARPA Funds/LATC Funds County Health Dept. Internal Business Employment Review Budget Transfers Tax Abatements Payroll Approval 10:00 am - 4:00 pm - Department Budget. <i>The Board reserves the right to adjust daily agenda schedules. Any public comment on matters within the jurisdiction of the commissioners will be heard.</i>

CITY OF CHINOOK COUNCIL MEMBER VACANCY

The City of Chinook is seeking applications for a vacant city council position. Chinook City Council positions are elected and/or appointed by Council, when a vacancy occurs, until the next general election. This vacancy’s term expires December 2025.

Qualifications for Office:

Every resident of the City of Chinook who is 18 years of age or older, a resident of the Ward with the vacancy, a citizen of Montana and a qualified elector pursuant to Article IV, Section 2 of the Montana Constitution is eligible to hold the office of council member.

The vacancy is located in Ward I, which is west of Indiana Street.

Interested candidates shall submit a letter stating their interest to the City Clerk at clerk@chinookmt.gov or via mail or hand delivery to City Hall (300 Ohio Street / PO Box 1177, Chinook, MT 59523).

Per §7-4-4112 MCA, the City Council shall appoint, by a majority vote, a person possessing the qualifications for office within 30 days of the vacancy.

(The person filling the vacancy is subject to nomination and election at the next general municipal election, except the term shall be limited to the unexpired term.)

If you have any questions, please feel free to call us at 357-3160.

Lady In The Glass



This weeks picture is presented in partnership between the Blaine County Journal and Jamieson Motors. A donation from each weeks sponsorship will be donated to the Lady in the Glass Maintenance Fund providing upkeep to the historic sign. If you have any details about the photo we would love to hear them. bcjnews@itstriangle.com or 406-357-3573

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HARLEMPUBLICLIBRARY

The Friends of the Harlem Public Library want to celebrate our local supporters by holding a free community appreciation meal. Traveling tacos, Rice Krispies, & water will be served this evening from 4:00-6:00. Everyone is welcome!

The Library Board of Trustees will meet next week on July 30th at 4:30. Agenda can be found on our Facebook page, website, and/or bulletin boards in the community.

We have wrapped up summer reading, including our programs. Keep an eye out for our fall programming schedule in the upcoming months. Winners for the \$50 Visa gift cards will be announced next week in the teen and adult categories. Thank you to all who participated!

Featured titles this week include: Reese Witherspoon's Book Club pick Great Big Beautiful Life by Emily Henry; Parents Weekend by Alex



Finlay; 25 Alive by James Patterson; Cold Burn by A.J. Landau; Marble Hall Murders by Anthony Horowitz; & Fever Beach by Carl Hiaasen.

CHINOOKSENIORCENTER

Hello From the Chinook Senior Center

Our annual meeting was well attended by many community members, who stayed and enjoyed lunch with us all. If you were unable to attend, and haven't renewed your annual membership, please stop in, so that we can take care of it for you.

We recently named our "Senior of the Year" as Terry Townsend, who gives, gives and gives, of his time and talents, delivering meals and helping in countless other arenas. He is a huge blessing to us all. Congratulations Terry, and thank you for all that you do for us, here in our small, wonderful community!

We had the most fun out at the golf course, last Friday! Our "Senior Swing, Golf Thing" was a huge success! All of the participants had a wonderful time, so, it appears that this will become an annual event! I can't thank the participants enough for their kindness and generosity. The donors were very generous. We had perfect weather and no mosquitos, thanks to the Blaine County Mosquito district boys who fogged for us!! Yes, we are blessed! Thank you for helping me to make this a tremendous success!

The beautiful plaques for Virginia Olson's memorial bench are here and will be installed soon, thanks to the talents and generosity of Kenny Schubert. That guy is the best! He is always helping us out.

There will be an Anniversary celebration for Don & Marlyne Berger, here on Saturday, Aug. 2nd. We currently believe that this will be from 2:00-4:00, so mark your calendars for this one.

We are all lifting Trapper Skoyen up in prayer, as he battles a tremendous

health issue.

Our community has been hit very hard lately, with the unexpected death of our dear friend, Lois Butcher, as well. She will be missed by the countless people who enjoyed this woman's wisdom and joy.

We are sending love to Sheri Miller and family in the recent, unexpected death, of her son, Lawny (Moe). What a tragic loss and a shock. Embrace this fine lady with prayers of peace and comfort, please.

Today, we enjoyed the fine music of Gene Allen, Sheri Neuens and Lynn Heggen. We always enjoy their donation to our Center.

I have been notified that Sam French, Blaine County Museum Director, will once again be sharing our wonderful Center for a "Speaker Series" this fall. These are always exciting, informational and enjoyed by all who attend. We will get the schedule out soon.

LUNCH FOR THE WEEK:

Wed. July 23rd - Sausage Biscuits & Gravy (10:00 Limber Up, 1:00 All Crafts)

Thurs. July 24th - Shrimp Stir Fry (1:00 - 3:00 Bingo)

Fri. July 25th - Roast Beef Dinner (Birthday Dinner) (10:00 Music, 2:00 Pinochle Party)

Mon. July 28th - Egg Salad Sandwich (10:00 Limber Up, Cornhole)

We will continue to lift Texas up as they endure one of the greatest disasters in their history.

WE HAVE HOT COFFEE, COLD ICE TEA, COOKIES, CRIBBAGE, CORNHOLE, CARDS, LIMBER UP, BINGO, MUSIC, GAME DAYS, CRAFT DAYS.....THE ONLY PART THAT IS MISSING IS YOU! GET IN HERE! BLESS ALL WHO CROSS YOUR PATH.

HARWOOD SETS A SWIMMING RECORD



Sylvi Harwood from the Chinook Lions Swim Team set the federation record in the girls 8 and under 50 meter free style. The record was previously held by Hadley Edwards, daughter of Chinook Alumni Tyler Edwards, and granddaughter of Cherie Edwards.

Swimming at the Scobey Swim Meet on July 12, Sylvi swam a 36.81 to beat the previous record of 37.18, which was set in 2022.

The Montana Federation of Swimmers is a swim league made up of several Montana towns spanning from Plentywood to Hamilton.

CONGRATS, SILVI!



CHARLENE LOWEN DONATES TO THE CHINOOK POOL AND PARK PROJECT



Press Release

Friends of the Pool & Park

The Friends of the Pool and Park Foundation would like to recognize CHS Alumni Charlene Blevins Lowen for her generous \$1000 donation to the Chinook Pool and Park Rehabilitation Project. Charlene sent in her favorite memories of the Pool and Park. "As a young girl growing up in Chinook the Pool and Park was very accessible to me due to where I lived. My

friends and I took advantage of the Pool almost every afternoon during the summer months. As I was having fun, I would glance over to my house and there standing outside of the fence looking in was my beloved mother. She was just checking in on me and making sure I was safe. She didn't care for water events and was always making sure I didn't drown. She would stand in the hot sun, clasping the wires on the fence, till I told her

I was being careful and having fun, she was the best. As the years went by, my two children enjoyed the wading pool with their Papa Jim as he would sit on the bench and watch them as they visited, laughed, and had fun. As my children got older, they graduated to the big pool, enjoying the clear water, sunshine and friends! The pool and park hold special memories of my parents for me and my children."

Thank you so much Charlene for supporting the Pool and Park Foundation's cause, it's memories like these that are so incredible. We truly appreciate the support. Donations can be made on the Pool and Park Website or by mailing them to PO Box 785 - Chinook, MT 59523.



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HARLEM PUBLIC LIBRARY

TRUSTEES MEETING

WEDNESDAY, JULY 30, 2025 • 4:30 P.M.

AGENDA

CALL MEETING TO ORDER:
CHAIR OWENS

Consent agenda:

- APPROVE MINUTES OF MARCH MEETING
- CLAIMS
- FINANCIAL REPORT & ANALYTICS
- BOARD CORRESPONDENCE

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

- Preliminary budget submitted to the Clerk & Recorder, met with Commissioners July 21st.
- Stepping On Workshop series completed on July 7th
- Community Appreciation Event put on by Friends, July 23rd, 4:00-6:00
- Summer Reading wrap-up, stats
- Lighting grant pending
- Handicap Door
- Gift from Bank of Harlem

NEW BUSINESS

- McNaughton Lease - 381 books to return by December. Decide to return or purchase items.
- Fall workshop 9/15-16 Great Falls. Director/trustee training. Travel & hotel
- Christ LaTray - Speaker searies collaboration with Blaine County Museum. Apx. \$350 Auction Item.
- Front steps-no-skid flooring? Carpet? Who to take out/install?
- Trustee Orientation CE 15 min

OTHER BUSINESS

Next meeting: August 27, 4:30 P.M.
Meeting adjourned.

FYI: Trustees manual available online at https://msl.mt.gov/libraries/library_development/Trustees

Any public comment on matters within the jurisdiction of the board will be heard.

LEGALS

Lewis N. Stoddard, Bar No. 60723896
Halliday, Watkins & Mann, P.C.
300 W. Main Street, Suite 150
Boise, ID 83702
Phone: 801-355-2886
Facsimile: 801-328-9714
Email: lewis@hwmlawfirm.com
Attorney for Plaintiff | HWM File No. MT22481

MONTANA SEVENTEENTH JUDICIAL DISTRICT
BLAINE COUNTY

Finance of America Reverse LLC,
Plaintiff
vs
Unknown Heirs and Devisees of the Estate of James S. Gallus; United Stes of America, by and through the Commissioner of Housing and Urban Deveopment; and Unknown Parties in possession of or with an interest in the real property commonly known as: 824 Indiana St, Chinook, MT 59523,

Defendant

SUMMONS BY PUBLICATION
Case No.: DV-3-2024-0000038-FO
To: Unknown Heirs and Devisees of the Estate of James S. Gallus and Unknown Parties in possession of or with an interest in the real property commonly known as: 824 Indiana St, Chinook, MT 59523
A lawsuit has been filed against you for amongst other things, foreclosure of real property located in the County of Blaine, State of Montana. The real property has an address of 824 Indiana St, Chinook, MT 59523 and is more particularly described as follows:

Lots 14 and 16 in Block 54 of the Townsite of Chinook, according to the official map or plat on file in the office of the Clerk and Recorder in and for Blaine County, Montana, being more particularly described as follows:
APN: 24-4554-27-4-18-05-0000
Being the same property conveyed to James S. Gallus by Deed from Michael Gallus recorded 12/30/2008 in Deed Book 83 Page 600, in the office of the County Clerk and Recorder of Blaine County, Montana.
Within 21 days after service of this summons on you or (42 days if you are the State of Montana, a state agency, or a state officer or employee, or 60 days if you are the United States of America, or federal agency), you must serve on the plaintiff an answer to the attached complaint or a motion under Rule 12 of the Montana Rules of Civil Procedure. Do not include the day you were served in your calculation of time. The answer or motion must be served on the plaintiff or plaintiff's attorney, if plaintiff is represented by an attorney, whose name and address are listed above.
If you fail to respond, judgment by default will be entered against you for the relief demanded in the complaint.
You also must file your answer or motion with the court.
Date: July 2, 2025

/s/ **CLERK OF THE DISTRICT COURT**
7/23, 30, 8/6
MNAXLP

CELEBRATION OF LIFE—

DOUG & DARLA PLOUFFE - A Celebration of Life will be held for Doug and Darla Plouffe on August 2, 2025 at 1:00 pm at the Eagles in Chinook. Lunch will be served along with good conversation and sharing of memories.

CLASSIFIEDS • CLASSIFIEDS

EMPLOYMENT

ROAD DEPARTMENT HEAVY EQUIPMENT OPERATOR: Blaine County has an opening in the Road Department for a Heavy Equipment Operator. Applicants may pick up a job description and an Application from the Blaine County Human Resource Office on the 3rd floor of the Blaine County Courthouse or Job Service, in Havre, MT. The job description and application are also available online at www.blainecounty-mt.gov. All applicants must use a Blaine County Application. All applicants must use a Blaine County Application. Applications must be submitted to the Blaine County Human Resource Office. POSITION OPEN UNTIL FILLED. Blaine County is an Equal Opportunity Employer

REAL ESTATE

FOR RENT: Two bedroom size units available at Grande Villa for persons 62 years or older capable of independent living and qualifying for assistance. Call 357-2809, TTY 711, between 9 a.m. and 4 p.m. Equal Opportunity Housing.

SCHOOL

SCHOOL: Zurich Elementary School is currently accepting out of district students for the 2025-2026 school year. If you are out-of-district and are interested, you need to be enrolled by August 11. Please call the school at 406-357-4164 for an application. **NOTE:** The school district has the right not to accept any out-of-district students if they are a student who is not in good standing in a previous school.

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Stop in and see us or call today: 357-3573
Keith & Kerl
Hansen - Owners

BOARD POSITION AVAILABLE

Two Positions to serve on the Blaine County Board of Health are available.

Please submit a short statement as to why you are interested in serving on the board to the Blaine County Commissioners, P.O. Box 278, Chinook, MT, 59523.

Letters are due by 5:00 p.m. on September 9th, 2025.

Blaine County Commissioners



Chinook

PUBLIC SCHOOLS

PRIDE. DESIRE. EXCELLENCE.

The Chinook Board of Trustees will meet on TUESDAY, AUGUST 12 AT 7:00 PM

or their regular monthly board meeting. The board will consider, among other things, the adoption of their final district budget, although the meeting may be continued day-to-day until the final adoption takes place. Any taxpayer in the district may appear at the meeting and be heard for or against any part of the budget.

Please contact: Fred Hofman at the district office (357-2236) for more information.

MILK RIVER PLUMBING

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Owner/Operator

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Business #: 406.879.8022
Fax #: 406.879.8033
telsterner@hotmail.com

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Chinook

PUBLIC SCHOOLS

PRIDE. DESIRE. EXCELLENCE.

Chinook Public School is seeking an ASSISTANT BUSINESS MANAGER/CLERK

to work in the high school office. The position is scheduled to be 30-36 hours per week and comes with health insurance and retirement benefits. The school operates on a 4-day week and the wage is based upon prior experience. Any interested persons should contact Mr. Hofman or Amanda Miller at the school: (406) 357-2236, Monday through Thursday between 8:30 - 3:30.

Please contact: Fred Hofman at the district office (357-2236) for more information.

LEGALS

NOTICE OF WATER RATE INCREASE AND PUBLIC HEARING

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that on July 14, 2025, the City Council of the City of Harlem, Montana (the "City"), adopted a Resolution of Intention of the City of Harlem, Montana to Increase Rates for the Users of the Water System.

The City has determined that it is necessary for the City to increase its water rates in order to provide for adequate operation and maintenance on the City's water system (the "System"), to pay debt service on water system revenue bonds and to establish or maintain necessary reserves.

The City currently charges a monthly "Base Rate" to users of the System, which includes the use of 1,000 gallons of water per month and is based on the size of the meter serving each connection, as follows:

Diameter of Service Line	Base Rate
¾" or less	\$45.90
1"	\$73.80
1 ½"	\$151.83
2"	\$262.71
3"	\$575.57
4"	\$1,019.43

In addition to the Base Rate, the City charges users of the System a monthly "Usage Rate" of \$2.27 per 1,000 gallons of water or portion thereof used in excess of the 1,000 gallons per month included in the Base Rate. The current "Monthly Charge" is equal to the Base Rate plus the Usage Rate.

The City charges inactive connections to the System a rate of \$30.00 per month and Nissen connections (connections negotiated in exchange for a water main easement) a rate of \$13.21 per month.

Effective as of the September 2025 billing, the City proposes to increase the Base Rate as follows:

Diameter of Service Line	Proposed Base Rate
¾" or less	\$50.40
1"	\$81.03
1 ½"	\$166.71
2"	\$288.46
3"	\$632.00
4"	\$1,119.37

The City does not currently propose to increase the Usage Rate. The proposed Monthly Charge is equal to the proposed Base Rate plus the Usage Rate.

In addition, the City proposes to increase the inactive connection rate to \$34.50 per month and to maintain the Nissen connections at a rate of \$13.21 per month.

For a customer of the System with a ¾-inch line using 3,000 gallons of water per month, the proposed Monthly Charge represents an increase of approximately 8.9% over the current Monthly Charge. For inactive connections, the proposed rate represents an increase of 15% over the current inactive connection rate.

A public hearing on the rate increase will be held on August 11, 2025, commencing at 5:00 p.m. at the City Hall, 10 1st Avenue SW, in Harlem, Montana.

Further information about the proposed rate increase may be obtained by contacting Becky Schroeder, City Clerk-Treasurer, City of Harlem, P.O. Box 579, Harlem, Montana 59526, or by telephone at (406) 353-2361.

Done by Order of the City Council of the City of Harlem, Montana, this 14th day of July, 2025.

7/23, 30, 8/6
MNAXLP

MONTANA WATER COURT

LOWER MISSOURI DIVISION

PEOPLES CREEK BASIN 401

INTERLOCUTORY DECREE

The Montana Water Court has entered its Interlocutory Decree for Basin 401 and the Decree is now available for your review.

The Decree and the forms are available at these locations:

- * Montana Water Court website: <https://courts.mt.gov/Courts/Water/Notices-Info/>
- * Montana DNRC website: <http://dnrc.mt.gov/divisions/water/adjudication>
- * Montana Water Court: 1123 Research Drive Bozeman, MT 59718; 406-586-4364.
- * Montana DNRC, Water Rights Adjudication Office: 1424 Ninth Avenue, Helena, MT 59620; 406-444-0699
- * Montana DNRC, Water Resources Regional Office: 210 6th Avenue, Havre, MT 59457; 406265-5516

OBJECTIONS

All objections must be filed on the forms provided by the Water Court and must be received at the Water Court by January 5, 2026. Objections can be filed electronically at watercourt@mt.gov or sent to Montana Water Court, PO Box 1389, Bozeman, MT 59771.

EXTENSIONS

The Water Court may grant a request for an extension of the time for filing objections. A request for an extension must be received by the Water Court on or before January 5, 2026. If an extension is granted, it will apply to everyone. Any extension will be posted at the offices listed above and will be advertised once in this newspaper.

RIGHT TO APPEAL

If you do not participate in Water Court proceedings, your right to appeal an adverse decision is limited by Section 85-2-235, MCA. If changes were made to your abstract, you may challenge those changes by filing an objection. You may also address DNRC issue remarks by an objection. If there are changes and/or issue remarks on your abstract which are not resolved by an objection, these will be addressed and resolved by the Water Court.

MEETINGS

The Water Court will be offering an informal public meeting to explain the objection process on Wednesday, August 6, 2025, at 12:00 pm via Zoom. To take part in the telephone conference, dial (646) 558-8656, enter the Meeting ID 822 2011 3327#, then press # to skip participant ID, then enter the meeting password 533038#

7/16, 23, 30
MNAXLP

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Thank You

We would like to express our sincere thanks for all the support, prayers and encouragement our friends, relatives, and church family have given us during this time of loss. I don't know how people make it that don't have that. May our Lord bless you all in a mighty way!

SHERI & ALAN MILLER FAMILY

LOOKING BACK: SHARING STORIES THAT PERTAIN TO THE HISTORY OF OUR COUNTY.

By Steve Edwards
BCJ News

I got interested in this story when I met Jim and Martha at the Coal Banks Landing, on the Missouri River, where they were campground hosts. We visited and I learned they were doing a project about one room schools in Blaine County. It was a story that appealed to me and they agreed to share information for the story that follows.

Blaine County's historic one room schools part of Big Sky Schoolhouse Survey 8-27-2015

This summer the Montana Preservation Alliance (MPA) launched an ambitious program to “digitally document and map our state’s endangered schoolhouses.” Through the project one and two room schools, that are still standing and more than 40 years old, will be located, their condition documented and later, their histories will be collected and archived. All this information, hopefully, will eventually be accessible on the internet.

Likely most readers are aware of one, or maybe more, old one room schools around Blaine County. Turns out there were nearly 150 schools that met the criteria for inclusion in the current preservation project. An information piece explaining the project notes that schools “trace the patterns of history from the territorial period through the homestead era and well into the mid-20th century.” Blaine County currently has four one room schools still in operation as functioning schools.

The faces of the survey in Blaine County
Jim Greene, and his wife Martha Vogt, are the first volunteers to tackle documenting schoolhouses in the Montana-wide project. Greene, a retired school teacher, participated in a previous project to document old barns in Montana. He said, “When I read about the schoolhouse survey I immediately called to learn about volunteering. Martha and I are the campground hosts at Coal Banks Landing and I wondered if we could do some of the survey work while in the area for the summer.” Greene and Vogt live in Helena when not

hosting at the campground.
Greene and Vogt did their first survey of schoolhouses in Choteau County—since that’s where they were also doing hosting duties. Greene said, “Choteau County, land-wise, is a very large county and was a favored settling area for homesteaders. We were faced with collecting information on 191 schools there.”
After completing the first survey in Choteau, they set their sights on Blaine County. Greene added, “We knew the south part of the county from a volunteer project we participated in to monitor sage grouse, so searching Blaine County already had a lot of appeal since we had some familiarity with part of the county.”
In Blaine County there were, potentially, 149 schools that met the criteria. Asked how the process of finding and documenting the old schools worked, Greene said he began by contacting the county superintendents of schools in the area. He added, “Of the three I contacted, County Superintendent Terry Brockie, and his assistant, Mari Ann Skoyen, showed the most interest in the project. They immediately sent back a map showing the locations of all the old schools and a list with schools that might qualify.”

Armed with the map from the county superintendent and a county road map, they began searching. Greene and Vogt both agreed, “The main process is networking. We ask someone about a school and they tell us about another school and give us a contact for more information. Over the period we were in Blaine County we met dozens of people who gave us data and sent us to others who could help as well.” They started their ‘school search’ in the Cleveland area since they knew that part of the county already.
Once a school is located the couple takes and records a GPS location. They then complete a four page form detailing information about the overall condition of the building, the type of construction and its potential for preservation. They also take measurements of the building and record that information.

Several schools, that are still standing, are in their original locations. Other schools are still standing but were moved at some point. And quite a few have been ‘repurposed’—moved to a farmstead or ranch and used for storage or some other purpose. Some simply no longer exist.
While their time in Blaine County was volunteer, they were paid some amount for travel. Greene said, “In this county we spent about 100 hours collecting the survey data. A typical day would be 10 hours of travel, visiting with people for more information and documenting a school when we found it. Then calls at night for the next day’s travel.” They logged about 700 miles in Blaine County finding locations of schools.
By the end of August the couple was still trying to locate about five or six schools they had not located or verified in Blaine County. They hope to complete their survey by the first of September and have already volunteered to do additional counties when they come back to Coal Banks Landing next summer—possibly Hill and Phillips or other counties along the Hi-Line.
Asked about the most challenging schoolhouse to find in Blaine County, Greene and Vogt thought a minute and agreed it was the Maddux School—in the middle of the Bear Paws. Greene said of the trip to find the old school, “We started on a road, went to a two track and then had to go cross country. The landowner was gracious enough to lead us to the school.”
The work of the Montana Preservation Alliance
Christine Brown is the Director of Outreach and Education for the Alliance, which has offices in Helena. The group has several regional offices that focus on preservation projects of a local nature. She explained the schoolhouse survey is only one part of a multi-faceted approach the Alliance uses to preserve historically significant sites—both buildings and natural areas of historical importance.
Brown said the data from the schoolhouse

survey, including data provided by Greene and Vogt, is already being entered into a database. She explained the data is often used when highway projects or other developments are being planned to assure important locations are considered. She added, “Having a site in the database doesn’t limit how an owner uses it, it’s simply a way to document areas that are important to the history of the state.”
Jim Greene had mentioned that some funds were available to preserve certain old schoolhouses. Brown explained there were grants available if certain conditions were met. “The grant application process,” she explained, “is fairly straight forward. Someone interested in preserving a historically significant site can go to a website, mthistory.org, and find the online grant application.” She did say most grants are limited to \$5000 and require some matching funds or in-kind support.”
The status of the schoolhouse survey
At the end of this summer the survey of schoolhouses in Choteau and Blaine counties should be completed. An intern, working as a part of her graduate degree at Middle Tennessee State University, completed a similar survey in Beaverhead County. That leaves 53 more counties to be surveyed. Brown, with the Alliance, said she would welcome inquiries from volunteers wishing to participate in the schoolhouse survey (406-457-2822 or email at christinebrown@preservemontana.org).
Greene and Vogt said their experience in Blaine County was very pleasant and enjoyable. Greene said, “People didn’t just tell us how to find an old school, they took the time to show us the way and give us lots of valuable information.” Vogt, who retired as an accountant with the Montana Department of Transportation, originally was only doing the data entry portion of the process. Greene said, “After finding her first school, she was hooked on finding and documenting as well. The process pulls you in. It’s addictive and you get a great sense of accomplishment when you complete the information for a school.”

Continued From Page 1: Museum Basement Update

of installing a moisture barrier, constructing a drain system, or engaging in other restoration and remediation measures to address previous hazards and to remodel and seal the basement,” Fox said.
In correspondence with French this past April, McGee wrote: “Although these areas are not currently aesthetically pleasing to the eye, the potential mold hazards in these areas have been abated, making it environmentally safer for accessing the basement than it was prior to the work’s being completed by Overcast Restoration.”
Overcast Restoration employees have relocated fifteen loads of artifacts from the museum to the J.F. Williams Building, which many Blaine County residents remember as the former Pizza Pro location across from Centennial Park on Chinook’s main street. This space was leased for artifact storage until such time as the museum basement can be completely restored and/or remediated.
French said that she and her staff have plans before the end of summer to pack up smaller items for relocation and to prevent deterioration.
“With water intrusion anticipated in the basement again, there remains a potential for diffused mold in air and in laden dust on artifacts, boxes, and other items. Employees are concerned about a potential exposure to mold, which may cause allergic reactions and illnesses if they are required to work in the basement,” McGee reported.
To address these concerns, A.L.M. Consulting recommended the use of personal protective equipment (PPE) while working in this area. Recommended PPE includes respiratory protection, such as N95 masks, and protective hand coverings, such as nitrile gloves. Furthermore, as artifacts get moved, McGee advised using a vacuum with a high efficiency particulate air (HEPA) filtration system and using wet-wiping methods to remove laden dust.
“As we know, indoor air quality and other conditions within the basement will continue to fluctuate until the water intrusion is corrected. Humidity may increase and/or decrease over time, which may change conditions, causing a recurrence of musty

odors. Employees using the safe work practices to prepare and remove artifacts, boxes, and other items will remain safe from exposures to laden dust and mold spores.”
He went on to add: “The Basement Safe Work Practices were designed to provide BCM staff with recommendations for working safely in the basement, similar to working with stored boxes or items in a garage or a crawl space where laden dust may be present. We addressed the potential for mold spores in laden dust because there always remains a potential for mold spores in dust, whether from water intrusion or not. Mold spores are ubiquitous.”
French confirmed that these practices have been followed but added: “We have not worked extended periods in the basement in about a year and a half due to petroleum vapor concerns. Because of gasoline odors at the bottom of the stairs and a directive from the Department of Environmental Quality, we will not use the basement until further contamination testing can take place. This recommendation was made at the start of 2024. Since water intrusion has been ongoing since 2020, staff have decided to avoid the basement out of mold concerns because some of the south and southeast areas have not yet been remediated.”
Regarding hydrocarbon fumes, West Central Environmental Consultants performed an investigation regarding petroleum vapor intrusion from the former Andy’s Exxon at 428 Indiana Street. In their findings report dated February 28, 2025, consultants state: “Despite the ubiquitous sources of vapors surrounding the museum and the various preferential pathways for entry into the building, including cracked floors/walls and multiple sumps, indoor air sampling has largely returned results that are at acceptable levels for commercial exposures.”
The data they provide further indicates that vapor impact “is not occurring to an extent that would cause health problems based on long term exposure.”
In response, French suggested that they could not evaluate this hazard unless there is an active odor—which seems to occur

seasonally—and there was none when they conducted their testing.
The Blaine County Commissioners, who contracted the consulting firm and funded much of the environmental review and cleanup work, are encouraging the museum board and staff to engage directly with the professionals who conducted the assessments to better understand the data and findings.
“We do not want misinformation to confuse residents, visitors, or potential donors,” Fox said. “A.L.M. has made it clear that the museum basement may be safely used for storage and limited access, while the main floor remains fully open to the public.”
McGee added, “This is about using common sense safety measures in a space that is being professionally remediated. We’re confident that with proper implementation, the basement poses no significant health risk to trained staff and volunteers.”
French responded: “I think staff and the museum board have every right to be concerned about the basement’s environment, especially since no formal mold analysis has been conducted since 2020, which was prior to ongoing, annual water intrusion in unabated sections of the basement. The basement and back section of the building often smell musty, sometimes extremely so, as a result. As someone who works in this building daily and who is responsible for others who work in and visit this building, I

would be remiss if I did not press this issue. Concerns about this building’s safety—for staff and museum collections—have been the impetus for collections relocation projects that the museum board and I began prior to 2022. From the perspective of a museum professional, the basement is certainly not safe for historical collections and is, in large part, the basis for the relocation of artifacts.”
While Blaine County looks to the future of its museum, the Commissioners hope that “clarity and trust in scientific evaluations will be essential in guiding responsible decisions about renovations and use of public space.”
Anyone interested in reviewing or discussing any of the reports and their findings is encouraged to stop by the office of the Blaine County Commissioners.
As the Museum Director and her board continue in their work, they invited the public to attend their regular monthly meeting on July 21. “We want the public’s comment,” Board Member Caryl Luckett said.
French added, “There is a lot of information about the museum that has been circulating in the community and a lot of interest in the museum relocating, and I’m hearing many things that are possibly being misconstrued and causing confusion. As we move forward to resolve those issues and bolster community support for the museum, I’d like to clarify some of the museums ongoing challenges and needs.”

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Chinook, MT

MEET THE PAWS DOGS

Paws Spotlight of the Month:

Hank

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We know that this is a tall order. Hank has specific needs that require a specific adopter. Until that person is found, Hank has a safe place at PAWS. We are praying Hank finds his forever home soon.

BENEFIT FOR

Trapper Skoyen

JULY 25, 2025 • 5:00 PM

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FOOD BAR

TOUGH LIKE TRAPPER

Early March, Trap made a visit to the hospital for what they thought was gallstones and came out with the unexpected diagnosis of pancreatic cancer.

On June 16 he went in for surgery, unfortunately the tumor remains. They found that the cancer had metastasized.

PLEASE JOIN US

JULY 25, 2025

SO WE KEEP FIGHTING THE FIGHT.

An account has been set up at First Bank for those looking to send money for the benefit or are unable to attend, but would like to help.

Checks can be made out to: **TRAPPER SKOYEN BENEFIT**
They can either be dropped off at the bank, or sent to:

First Bank of Montana
P.O. Box 4
Chinook, MT 59523

First Bank of Montana
P.O. Box 248
Big Sandy, MT 59520

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Big Sandy



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NORTHERN MONTANA
Health Care



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REQUIREMENTS AND SKILLS

- Ability to gather, write and edit news
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The Blaine County Journal~News & Opinion

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Health Care

Blaine County FAIR

AUGUST 7-9, 2025

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Start Time 10 AM

THURSDAY & FRIDAY • AUGUST 7 & 8

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MUSIC AFTER BY BLIND LUCK

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MUSIC AFTER THE DERBY BY BLIND LUCK

AUGUST 7-9, 2025

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