

The Short Eclipse and a Longer Period of Darkness.

Bill Crane, Executive Director

I started this article on Solar Eclipse Day 2024. That eclipse lasted up to seven and a half minutes. We are entering another period of darkness that will last about six months.

The election season is upon us. It's hard to ignore the noise. Negative ads flood our screens, debates turn heated, and social media becomes a battleground of opinions. Lies are presented as truths. Yards will be cluttered with signs that will soon add to a landfill. But fear not! We can rise above the negativity and find solace in brighter moments. Here's how:

Start by acknowledging the storm. It's okay to feel overwhelmed. The election cycle can be draining, especially when it feels like the world is divided into factions, friends and families divided by candidates. Recognize the storm, but don't let it consume you. Take breaks from news updates, step away from heated discussions, and breathe. Remember that you're not alone, most everyone is experiencing this.

Amidst this chaos, Montana's summer beckons. Picture yourself hiking along beautiful trails, the scent of pine in the air, and the sun on your skin. Nature doesn't care about political affiliations; it simply exists. Let's follow suit. Whether it's a lazy afternoon by the river or a starlit campfire, let Montana's beauty remind us of life beyond the ballot box.

While politicians spar, nonprofits quietly work miracles. These unsung heroes tackle issues that transcend party lines. Consider supporting local nonprofits—whether it's a food bank, an environmental group, animal shelter, art group, cancer support, or cultural nonprofit. Their impact is tangible, and volunteering your time can be a beacon of hope. Imagine people's faces when they receive a much needed food or the joy of planting trees to protect our planet.

Go a little further with Random Acts of Kindness. In a world where negativity thrives,

kindness is revolutionary. Hold the door for a stranger, smile at the grocery cashier, or leave an uplifting note on someone's windshield. These small acts ripple outward, creating pockets of positivity. Let's be the change we wish to see. Even small gestures matter—a genuine compliment, a shared laugh, or a heartfelt thank-you. Wait, wait, wait. **DO THIS ALL THE YEAR!**

Practice community over division. Remember, we're all in this together. Our neighbors, regardless of their political leanings, share the same sunsets and breathe the same air. Instead of dwelling on differences, let's celebrate our common ground. Attend a community event, join a local club, or organize a neighborhood cleanup. When we come together, we're stronger, more resilient, and better equipped to weather any storm.

VOTE. In no way am I recommending checking out. Yes, elections can be messy, but they're also our chance to shape the future. Exercise your right to vote. Research candidates, understand their policies, and cast your ballot. It's a privilege denied to many in our past and in the world today, and it's how we steer the ship toward calmer waters. Remember that every vote counts, and collectively, we create the course of history.

As the election drama unfolds, hold onto hope. Hope that leaders will emerge who prioritize unity over discord. Hope that, despite the noise, we can build a better tomorrow. Hope is our compass, guiding us through uncertainty. It's the light that pierces through the darkest clouds.

So, tear off that election anxiety like a calendar page. Let the sun warm your face, lend a hand to those in need, and remember that positivity is a superpower. Together, we'll weather yet another political storm and emerge stronger. Let's be the rays of sunshine that pierce through the political fog.

Stay hopeful, Montana!

Enter to win one of the 18 fabulous prize packages!

► GRAND PRIZE PACKAGE #1

An elegant overnight stay at and donated by The Sanders – Helena's Bed and Breakfast.
 The Holter Museum of Art's \$100 Gift Certificate can be used in our wonderful gift shop. You can find art, jewelry, books, art supplies and Holter swag. (HMA)
 A \$50 gift card for The Parrot Confectionery and a \$50 gift card to the Vanilla Bean Café in Helena. (LCHS)
 A \$100 gift card to The Windbag in Helena. (FMB)

► PRIZE PACKAGE #3

Artisan bread loaf baking bowl with mixing spatula and linen rising cloth. European butter bell, prep bowl and ring holder. Donated by Mountain Mud Frog Pottery, Polson, MT. (MTCASA)
 Coffee Comfort Basket containing two coffee mugs, candle, tea, Brew For Hope Coffee and a hat! (CSCMT)
 \$100 gift card for Safeway. (CMAD)



► PRIZE PACKAGE #5

A \$100 gift card to Borries restaurant in Great Falls. (GFCFB)
 \$100 Lowes gift card. (LCCPW)
 Patagonia 8L Atom Sling, Patagonia LoPro trucker hat, Wild Montana photo note cards, silicone cup, NoSo patch, stickers and pen. (WM)

► PRIZE PACKAGE #7

A large beautiful hand-woven African basket from their Fair-Trade Store in Missoula. It is filled with a plush black meditation poof, a sandalwood incense kit, and a copper spice rack from. (JRPC)
 A \$100 gift card to Cabelas. (K9CM)

► PRIZE PACKAGE #9

A gift basket of Montana Made and/or Grown Food/Drink items. (MFBN)
 Neversweat Whiskey, Ginger Ale, Headframe Spirits tumblers, Orphan Girl Irish Crème Coffee, and a \$25 gift card to The Wine Cellar. (BSC)

► PRIZE PACKAGE #11

Spoil your pup with this goodie bag from HOV! Toys galore, treats, and harness all for your four-legged friend. (HOV)
 A \$100 gift card to Town Pump. (MAB)

► PRIZE PACKAGE #13

A Lucie and Pompette Beauty collection includes their most popular formulations and colors featuring Multi-Use Blush, Nourishing Foundations, Skin Fix, Illuminator Trick Stick, and Lip Batter Luminous lip gloss. (MMP)
 \$100 gift card to On Broadway in Helena. (MCAN)

► PRIZE PACKAGE #15

A Patagonia basket of a trucker hat, t-shirt, and insulated tumbler. (MWCC)
 \$100 certificate to Big Sky Cycling in Helena. (BWMT)

► PRIZE PACKAGE #2

Items for a fun day at the park: backpack cooler, Snackle Box, picnic blanket, table/bench covers, card games, Toss & Catch, and Bananagrams. (NWMT)
 \$100 gift card from Costco. (MCIV)
 Handmade patriotic quilt. (MSM)

► PRIZE PACKAGE #4

A night out in Bozeman, with gift cards to Cello, a local boutique, and downtown mainstay Dave's Sushi. (BC)
 A Lucie and Pompette Beauty collection includes their most popular formulations and colors featuring Multi-Use Blush, Nourishing Foundations, Skin Fix, Illuminator Trick Stick, and SPF On the Go Foundation. (MPM)
 A necklace and earrings from Montana Silversmith. (MCIV)

► PRIZE PACKAGE #6

Gift basket with curated selection of delicious, unusual, and sustainably produced Montana-made food items. (AERO)
 A \$100 gift card to the Montana Book Company in downtown Helena. (NAMI)
 Two \$50 Mastercard Gift Cards. (THRV)

► PRIZE PACKAGE #8

\$50 gift cards to Murdoch's, Montana Coffee Traders, and to Rib and Chop. (BBBSMT)
 A MT Audubon tote bag filled with their Bird & Wildlife Guides and various books relating to bird habitat and health. (MA)

► PRIZE PACKAGE #10

A \$100 gift card to Lucca's in Helena. (DRM)
 \$50 to McKenzie River Pizza, a Sterling "singing ball" pendant on an 18" chain and a Vintage Pewter Pin Brooch Bm Norway Brodrene Mylius Signed Modernist. (MSNTF)



► PRIZE PACKAGE #12

\$50 gift cards to Mackenzie River and to Headframe Spirits. (BBBSMT)
 Candle Basket – handmade soy candles in unique ceramic or wooden vessels and accessories. (REO)

► PRIZE PACKAGE #14

\$100 Cinemark gift card (MWF)
 4 premium tickets to the November 2024 performance of Queen City Ballet Company's The Nutcracker, and a souvenir Nutcracker Doll. Enjoy an outing with friends or family to this professional ballet performance (QCBC)

► PRIZE PACKAGE #16

A \$100 gift certificate to the Montana Book Company, located in downtown Helena. (MLSA)
 The newest formulations from Vapour Organic Beauty including Mesmerize eye highlighter, Stratus skin protector, Atmosphere soft focus foundation, Aura multi-use blush, and Elixir pumping lip gloss. (MMP)

►PRIZE PACKAGE #17

Wine Package from the Hawthorn in Helena including a Hawthorn Wine Key, Amedei Tuscan chocolate, House made SNACKS – Crackers, Wacky Jack Corn, Thai Peanuts, Curry Cashews. (MTFP) “Rejuvenation” 16 X 20 Giclee’ canvas print stretched and ready to hang featuring a Rocky Mountain Bluebird by renowned nature photographer and author Tim Irwin.(TM)



You can buy your Raffle tickets online with your DEBIT Card!

www.montanashares.org/raffle

►PRIZE PACKAGE #18

It’s a cats meow...cat lap quilt, 3 pillows, cat wall hanging and stuffed kitties in a basket. (SM)
\$100 Visa gift card (MTU)

Drawing will be held on Wednesday, Sep 11, 2024 This is a charitable raffle benefiting Montana Shares.

If you need more tickets go to our website and print them at www.montanashares.org

Thanks to all the businesses and friends who donated prizes to the Montana Shares 2024 raffle.

Donations help promote the work of these nonprofits:

(The member group that coordinated their prize is noted in parenthesis after each description.)

Alternative Energy Resources Organization (AERO)

Big Brothers Big Sisters of Montana (BBBSMT)

Bike Walk Montana (BWMT)

Bridgercare (BC)

Butte Spirit Center (BSC)

Camp Mak-A-Dream (CMAD)

Cancer Support Community Montana (CSCMT)

Disability Rights Montana (DRM)

Friends of the Missouri Breaks Monument (FMB)

Great Falls Community Food Bank (GFCFB)

Heart of the Valley Animal Shelter (HOV)

Holter Museum of Art (HMA)

Jeannette Rankin Peace Center (JRPC)

K9 Care Montana (K9CM)

Last Chance Community Pow Wow (LCCPW)

Lewis & Clark Humane Society (LCHS)

Montana Association for the Blind (MAB)

Montana Audubon (MA)

Montana CASA/GAL Association (MTCASA)

Montana College Access Network (MCAN)

Montana Food Bank Network (MFBN)

Montana Free Press (MFP)

Montana Legal Services Association (MLSA)

Montana Meth Project (MMP)

Montana Spay/Neuter Task Force (MSNTF)

Montana Supporting Military (MSM)

Montana Trout Unlimited (MTU)

Montana Watershed Coordination Council (MWCC)

Montana Wildlife Federation (MWF)

NAMI Montana (NAMI)

NeighborWorks Montana (NWMT)

Queen City Ballet Company (QCBC)

Rural Employment Opportunities (REO)

Spay Montana (SM)

Thrive (THRIV)

Trust Montana (TM)

Wild Montana (WM)

WorldMontana (MCIV)

Ticket Prices \$10 per ticket, 3 tickets for \$25, 6 tickets for \$40 or 18 for \$100!

Need not be present to win. To enter the Montana Shares raffle, fill out your information, and return tickets and your check to: **Montana Shares, PO Box 883, Helena, MT 59624**

PLEASE PRINT YOUR NAME AND ADDRESS!



Major Change for your Convenience!

We now enter your name, number of tickets and member group tickets credits into our database. At drawing time, we add all of your tickets to wheelofnames.com for the drawing.

You only have to fill in your name once.

Name _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Phone # _____

Number of tickets _____

Credit my tickets to these member groups

\$10	\$40	\$100	
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We can only accept checks, cash, or online at our web site with a debit card. Per Montana state law, credit cards are not permitted to purchase raffle tickets, therefore only debit cards may be used to purchase our raffle tickets at www.montanashares.org/raffle



Please open! Your Montana Shares Raffle Ticket sheet is enclosed. Prize packages are valued between \$200-\$300 each!

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US POSTAGE
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Great Falls, MT

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

PO Box 883
Helena, Montana 59624

T. 406.442.2218
shares@montanashares.org

sharesreport

A newsletter from Montana Shares, a partnership of Montana-based nonprofit groups devoted to improving the quality of life in communities throughout Montana

www.montanashares.org

30th Annual Raffle

Inside are multiple option for tickets to our 30 annual raffle. We have 18 prize packages. You have a chance to win gift cards, hotel stays, restaurant certificates, or great artwork. Support Montana Shares, have fun and hopefully win!

Thanks to our funders 😊



This newsletter is made possible in part thanks to a **Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Montana** grant for our communication plan. Thank you BCBSMT for helping us reach donors across the state. **The Real Food Store** gives customers the choice of getting ten cents for reusing a bag or donating it to Montana Shares. Since its inception this program has generated \$46,519.90 in donations to Shares. Thanks to Laughing Water, all the staff and all the customers who re-use their bags and donate the savings to Montana Shares.

Montana Shares is a partnership of Montana-based nonprofit groups devoted to improving the quality of life in communities throughout the state. Our members promote, protect and preserve our state's human, animal, cultural and natural resources. They work on issues concerning women, children, families and seniors, health and hunger, the environment, arts and culture, education, domestic and wild animals, social justice and human rights. The purpose of Shares is to work with and on behalf of our members to promote and support their programs, provide training, technical assistance, consultation and financial support on a year-round basis and, thereby, to help them expand and diversify their programs that serve Montanans. Contributions received at Montana Shares further serve to accomplish these purposes.

Council Officers - 2024-2026
President- Dr. Roch Turner
Vice President- Kelley Willett
Secretary- Michelle Rogers
Treasurer-Dave Cooper
Past President- Shaun Tatarka

Council members Individual (representation) (term ends)
Nikki Andersen (WorldMontana) (5/24)
Becky Franks (Cancer Support Comm. MT) (5/25)
Dave Cooper (At-Large) (5/25)
Callie Houck(Heart of the Valley) (5/25)
Bill Mathews (MT Food Bank Network) (5/24)
Michelle Rogers (NeighborWorks MT) (5/24)
Dr. Roch Turner (MT College Attainment Network) (5/25)
Kelley Willett (MT Trout Unlimited) (5/25)



Montana Shares Staff
Bill Crane, Executive Director
Kristi Paulsen, Office Manager
Jami Welch, Accountant

Member of:
Community Shares USA
communitysharesusa.org



Montana Nonprofit Association
mtnonprofit.org