

January 2017

- Spotlight: La Bella Vita.
- Meet the new Downtown Officer
- BID Winter Snow Removal Offered



**President's Column
by Aimee McQuilkin**
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Looking for a New Year's resolution? An additional component to your mood/vision board for the upcoming year? I've got an idea for us: for 2017, let's stop comparing Missoula to Bozeman.

Don't get me wrong, I've got a competitive spirit too. Us vs. them comes naturally to most of us. East vs. West. Biggie Smalls vs. Tupac and so on and so forth.

I'm also very aware that Bozeman is a super cool town. The sun shines a lot on that side of the continental divide. MSU has a lot to offer students. The ski resorts are fancy. The Lark is a super rad hotel. I'd like to stay there someday.

Seriously though, let's stop torturing ourselves. The two coolest towns in Montana just can't be compared! Bozeman has roughly half the population that Missoula has. They're still a town while we are a city. This of course results in a more quaint atmosphere for them, with less of the problems that a larger population brings. I've had a number of friends ask me why Missoula's Downtown doesn't have benches along Higgins Avenue like Bozeman does. It's not that we're trying to deny passersby a nice place to sit and people-watch or enjoy the streetscape we've worked so hard to create and maintain, it's that most of us who have had benches in front of our businesses usually end up with a person sleeping on it. Or pooping next to it. Essentially, activities that are not so welcoming to our customers and that leads to tough conversations and/or cleaning duties to shopkeepers and their staff. Homelessness and transients are an issues that plague bigger cit-

ies. They are issues that our society is facing as a whole and here that Missoula is working hard to address.

If I hear about the parking in Downtown Bozeman being free one more time, I'm going to throw my shoe at the wall. We all secretly long for that, I know. But have you ever tried to park there? Sometimes, *maybe* you can find something about five to six blocks from the taco truck you're trying to get grub from. If you ask me, paying for the convenience isn't so bad. Bozeman's lack of a structured parking system means employees and residents park on the main street for 8 hours a day and tourists and shoppers have to hoof it. Again, Bozeman is a town. We live in a city.

Word on the street is Downtown Bozeman is becoming gentrified. I know individuals and organizations have suggested that the same thing is happening to our Downtown. We are aware. I have faith that Missoula will work hard to maintain a balance when it comes to housing availability and affordability, to growth and development. It is vital that we stay loyal to our mill town-railroad roots all while transitioning to an entertainment and outdoor enthusiast destination. But let's face it, Missoula is grittier than Bozeman in more ways than one. In my book, that really isn't so bad.

Alright, alright...I know I started out saying Missoula and Bozeman just can't be compared and then I went and did just that. I'll stop here. No more. At least for this year...■



MissoulaDowntown.com

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Welcome New Members!

NAMI Missoula

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My Montana Roots Store

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Kinetic Body Missoula

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Shades Unlimited

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The Missoula Winter Market Moves to the Elks Lodge!



Downtown Gets a New Dedicated Police Officer

Downtown Missoula has a new face patrolling the street. Officer Shelagh More has been named the new Downtown Dedicated Police officer to patrol the area within the Business Improvement District (BID). In 1997, More started her police career in the patrol division. 2003 found her on assignment as the first School Resource Officer at Hellgate High School. In 2006, More transferred to the Detective Division where she conducted felony criminal investigations and prepared cases for prosecution. After a decade in the Detective Division, More decided it was time to return to the "street" for the unique opportunity of serving the Downtown community.

Over the last two weeks, More has stopped in several Downtown businesses to say hello and introduce herself. More has provided many in the Downtown area a business card with her e-mail address (smore@ci.missoula.mt.us). More wants to emphasize the importance of calling 911 if anyone Downtown should need police assistance of any kind. If on duty, she will be dispatched to the caller's location and if More is unavailable, another Missoula Police Officer will respond. More added, "If you call my cell phone for assistance and I'm off duty, in training or handling another call, I cannot respond. It is also important to the Missoula Police Department that any calls for assistance be made through 911 in order to allow the department to track my activities as well as types and number of calls the department responds to in the Business Improvement District."

(continues right)

Over the coming months, More will meet more business owners, residents and visitors. As Officer More continues to familiarize herself with her patrol, don't hesitate to introduce yourself and remember to call 911 first if you should require police assistance of any kind. ■

VIBE Missoula Brings Dancing Talent and More to Community



The Vienna International Ballet Experience (VIBE) brings together some of the most outstanding young dancers from around the world and serves as an introduction to an international career. It is an auspicious occasion on which to promote cultural exchange and mutual understanding among its participating candidates and the audience, right here in Missoula. VIBE is open to professional and amateur dancers and students from all around the world and offers workshops, stage experience and a cultural program beside the competition itself. Various events will take place January 10-14. ■



BID Offering Winter Snow Removal Services

The BID maintenance vehicles have been outfitted for winter! With both the Downtown truck and Kubota equipped with plows, the BID maintenance team can plow almost any sidewalk, alley, or parking lot.

Contact Daniel Tulk, BID Maintenance Manager, at 406.370.7540 for a preliminary assessment of your plowing needs and a quote. Pricing starts at \$45 per hour.

La Bella Vita Offers Customers a Unique Shopping Experience

New Member Spotlight By Anne Guest

(Ret.) Missoula Parking Commission

Kim Chacon, owner of La Bella Vita, is a new Missoula Downtown Association member, but she is no stranger to Downtown Missoula. In 2006, Kim opened La Bella Vita at 132 N. Higgins Ave. featuring home furnishings and décor items. After four successful years, she added women's clothing. Last year, an opportunity presented itself to her and she sold the home furnishings and décor portion of the business and moved the clothing across the street to 135 N. Higgins Ave. where the Dark Room was located for decades.

Kim's retail philosophy is focused on creating a unique boutique shopping experience for her customers. This philosophy is embraced by her sales staff who are well-known Downtown personalities. They are friendly, professional and offer personal shopping advice to ensure their customers feel welcome. This is refreshing when compared to the lack of the hands-on approach of internet shopping.



The clothes are designed for women of all ages with current styles at a price point that is affordable to all. Offerings range from stylish jeans to elegant dresses. There are also beautiful accessories including scarfs and jewelry to compliment any outfit. The store hours are Monday to Friday 10:00am to 6:00pm and on Saturday 10:00am to 5:00pm.

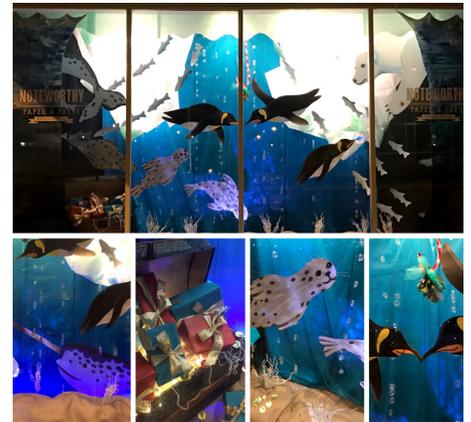
In addition to the clothes, La Bella Vita is the only store in Montana to carry Sid Dickens memory block tiles that are unframed works of art. Each one is hand painted and carries a special message. They also offer other great gift items such as candles and diffusers – perfect ideas for Valentine's Day!

Be sure to stop in and treat yourself to a wonderfully unique shopping experience that is certain to bring you back for more! ■

Holiday Window Decorating Contest Winners Are In!

Congratulations to the winners of the 2016 Downtown Holiday Window Decorating Contest! After tallying the votes from the online voting and collecting ballots from 21 participating businesses, the winners for each category are as follows:

- **Most Festive:** The Green Light
- **Best Use of Small Space:** La Stella Blu
- **Kid's Choice:** Fact & Fiction
- **Most Elegant:** A&E Architects
- **Best Overall:** Noteworthy (pictured below)



Save The Date!

The Missoula Downtown Foundation's Annual Texas Hold'em Poker Tournament is Sunday, March 5, 2017.

Watch for early bird registration deals and details!

RSVP for the MDA Annual Awards Banquet Wednesday, January 25 5-8pm Holiday Inn Downtown!

Join us at the Holiday Inn Downtown to kick off another year of MDA Membership! With the presentation of the Downtown Awards, dinner and drinks, and special guest entertainment by the Home Shopping Girls, you won't want to miss out on the fun.

RSVP by Monday, January 16 at MissoulaDowntown.com/RSVP

Sponsor a Missoula Downtown Association Event in 2017!

It is hard to believe another year has come and gone. Last year flew by, and the time has already come for the Missoula Downtown Association to plan for another exciting 2017 Downtown event season!

The Missoula Downtown Association produces over 30 public events every year, connecting more than 250,000 people to the heart of Downtown Missoula each year. Showcase your business to the Missoula community by supporting these quality events.

To learn more about connecting to your community through sponsorship of one or more of our events, please call the Downtown Missoula Partnership at 406-543-4238.



Track the upcoming year with beautiful images of Missoula! Downtown Missoula Calendars are available for purchase now!

Calendars are \$15 and can be purchased at the Downtown Missoula Partnership office (218 E. Main).

Makes a great gift!

Please submit member shout outs by the 18th of each month to info@missouladowntown.com

Shout Outs

Starting a business is a high-risk endeavor that should be undertaken with the express purpose of providing a return on your investment: profits while owned, then capital gains when the business is sold. Most owners have yet to realize the potential that awaits them, accepting a modest salary as their current reward. The Perpetual Business Academy Ownership Essentials is designed to change that. The three day workshop is being held **Thursday, January 26 through Saturday, January 28 from 7:30am to 5:00pm at the Holiday Inn Downtown. Save 15% as a MDA member when you register at www.warden.com/#/events. Your Discount Code is: MDA**

The Roxy Theater is Missoula's non-profit community cinema. A volunteer orientation will be held on **January 12 at 12pm at the Roxy**. Volunteers help fulfill our mission and support community cinema at The Roxy including films, festivals, educational programs, and events with local nonprofit groups. This orientation will prepare interested persons for any volunteer position and is the first step in joining the talented and dedicated volunteers that are critical to the success of the theater and Missoula's artistic community.

State of Missoula: The Entrepreneur Economy January 17 & 18 at 11:00am DoubleTree Hotel Downtown. Workshops will be offered Wednesday, January 18, 2017. Go to web.missoulachamber.com/events/2017-State-of-Missoula--4614/details for more information about workshops and to register.