

THE STRAIGHT SHOOTER



NEWS of ENNIS and the MADISON VALLEY, MONTANA for the month of MARCH 2011

Trout live in nice neighborhoods.

➤ **ENNIS AND MADISON VALLEY “HAPPENINGS”** → Lots of excitement around the valley during March. The big news early in the month was the defeat of the proposed **Resort Tax** in Ennis, by a landslide vote of 300 to 75. The tax would have been a 3% tax on luxuries sold within the town limits, from July 1 to Sept. 30 each year. So Ennis visitors and locals alike will continue enjoying the freedom from taxation – at least in one area of their lives. → The old Claim Jumper Bar is now a thing of the past. Scott and Amy Kelley are the proud new owners and have changed the name to **The Gravel Bar**. The Kelleys will continue to operate Banditos in Virginia City seasonally while the grill at the Gravel Bar will be open year-around. The new sign is up and the establishment is a welcomed change. → A new stream gauge is up and running at the Varney Bridge, thanks to the USGS, PPL MT, the Madison River Foundation, Madison Conservation District, the MT Bureau of Mines and Geology – and the Granger Ranch. The **Varney stream gauge** was first set up in 1952 but has not run since 1970. This gauge will be better able to track how flows out of Hebgen Dam affect the Madison River. Stream gauge information provides an historic record of stream flows and temperatures, which can provide important data about floods, droughts and the relationship between water levels and river health. Access to the information generated by the gauge will be posted online at www.mt.water.usgs.gov. → On March 17th, The Madison Valley History Association celebrated William Ennis, the founder of Ennis, who was born in County Down, Ireland on March 17, 1828. Mr. Ennis arrived in the U.S. in 1863 and chose the current location as headquarters for his freighting business. Mr. Ennis was shot by a neighbor and died in 1889. You can read his fascinating story in *The Progressive Men of the State of Montana*.



➤ **MONTANA REPORT** → Not surprising, Montana is the first state to consider backing a portion of its money by gold and silver coin. Our own state representative, Bob Wagner, proposed HB 513 which would require the Tobacco Tax money collected be converted to an alternative currency backed by **gold and silver**. The bill was passed out of the House committee. There is also a movement afoot to return to the gold standard at a federal level, but to get there backers say it's going to take states making the first step. We shall see.



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✚ **FISHING REPORT**→ Some of you may be anxiously awaiting the Mother's Day Hatch before you head for the Madison River. But a few local diehards have been very successful even in this "iffy" weather. Kim Montag of McAllister is very proud of this monster fish she landed recently and claims it is the biggest fish she has ever caught on the Madison. And she says she wasn't even cold while catching this fish! (She didn't say what she was using.) But the Madison River Fishing Company says that "most folks have still been throwing the more usual winter-time fare like San Juans, eggs, Princes, copper Johns and such."



GREAT CATCH, KIM!

They say the rainbows are still hanging out in the holes and haven't gotten themselves up into the riffles quite yet. Fisherpeople have to be very flexible this time of year, as you can experience a blizzard, rain, sun, 50 degrees and wind – all in one day on the Madison. You can check out the full report at <http://www.mrfc.com/MadisonRiverMontanaFishing/MadisonRiverReport.aspx>.

Check out additional fishing reports at:

- ✚ Kelly Galloup's Slide Inn, <http://www.slideinn.com/blog/category/fishing-report/>.
- ✚ Dan Delekta's report at <http://beartoothflyfishing.com/flyfishingreports/uppermadisonriver.htm>.
- ✚ The Tackle Shop's Orvis report at http://www.orvis.com/fishing_report.aspx?locationid=5974
- ✚ The Madison Valley Ranch at <http://www.madisonvalleyranch.com/blog/>
- ✚ Madison River Fishing Company at: <http://www.mrfc.com/MadisonRiverMontanaFishing/MadisonRiverReport.aspx>.

➤ **WEATHER**→ **March** was relatively calm, with lambs and lions all mixed up. You must dress in layers during spring in Montana. No records for March temperatures but the low reached down to **15°** and the high up to **51°**, with an average of **46°**. The average wind speed was **7.4** and the recorded precipitation was **.88"**. So no serious complaints about March weather and in fact the Madison Meadows Golf Course even opened for play! Check it out at <http://www.facebook.com/madisonmeadows> or www.madisonmeadowsgolfcourse.com. Now you can **fish, ski or golf**, all in the same day – what great choices you have, this time of year!

➤ **REAL ESTATE TIPS** → **6 Tips for Choosing the Best Offer for Your Home**
From HouseLogic.com, by: G. M. Filisko, Published 2010-02-10



Have a plan for reviewing purchase offers so you don't let the best slip through your fingers.

You've worked hard to get your home ready for sale and to price it properly. With any luck, offers will come quickly. You'll need to review each carefully to determine its strengths and drawbacks and pick one to accept. Here's a plan for evaluating offers.

1. Understand the process

All offers are negotiable, as your agent will tell you. When you receive an offer, you can accept it, reject it, or respond by asking that terms be modified, which is called making a counteroffer.

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2. Set baselines

Decide in advance what terms are most important to you. For instance, if price is most important, you may need to be flexible on your closing date. Or if you want certainty that the transaction won't fall apart because the buyer can't get a mortgage, require a prequalified or cash buyer.

3. Create an offer review process

If you think your home will receive multiple offers, work with your agent to establish a time frame during which buyers must submit offers. That gives your agent time to market your home to as many potential buyers as possible, and you time to review all the offers you receive.

4. Don't take offers personally

Selling your home can be emotional. But it's simply a business transaction, and you should treat it that way. If your agent tells you a buyer complained that your kitchen is horribly outdated, justifying a lowball offer, don't be offended. Consider it a sign the buyer is interested and understand that those comments are a negotiating tactic. Negotiate in kind.

5. Review every term

Carefully evaluate all the terms of each offer. Price is important, but so are other terms. Is the buyer asking for property or fixtures—such as appliances, furniture, or window treatments—to be included in the sale that you plan to take with you?

- a. Is the amount of earnest money the buyer proposes to deposit toward the downpayment sufficient? The lower the earnest money, the less painful it will be for the buyer to forfeit those funds by walking away from the purchase if problems arise.
- b. Have the buyers attached a prequalification or pre-approval letter, which means they've already been approved for financing? Or does the offer include a financing or other contingency? If so, the buyers can walk away from the deal if they can't get a mortgage, and they'll take their earnest money back, too. Are you comfortable with that uncertainty?
- c. Is the buyer asking you to make concessions, like covering some closing costs? Are you willing, and can you afford to do that? Does the buyer's proposed closing date mesh with your timeline?
- d. With each factor, ask yourself: Is this a deal breaker, or can I compromise to achieve my ultimate goal of closing the sale?
- e. With each factor, ask yourself: Is this a deal breaker, or can I compromise to achieve my ultimate goal of closing the sale?

6. Be creative

If you've received an unacceptable offer through your agent, ask questions to determine what's most important to the buyer and see if you can meet that need. You may learn the buyer has to move quickly. That may allow you to stand firm on price but offer to close quickly. The key to successfully negotiating the sale is to remain flexible.

G.M. Filisko is an attorney and award-winning writer who has survived several closings. A frequent contributor to many national publications including Bankrate.com, REALTOR® Magazine, and the American Bar Association Journal, she specializes in real estate, business, personal finance, and legal topics. Read more: <http://buyandsell.houselogic.com/articles/6-tips-choosing-best-offer-your-home/#ixzz1IJPfVDkM>.

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➤ **CURRENT REAL ESTATE MARKET**→ ‘**FEBRUARY EXISTING HOME SALES DECLINE**’ According to the National Association of REALTORS®, the number of completed transactions dropped 9.6 % to a seasonally-adjusted annual rate of 4.88 million in February, which is 2.8% below February 2010. Lawrence Yun, NAR chief economist, expects an uneven recovery. “Housing affordability conditions have been at record levels and the economy has been improving, but home sales are being constrained by the twin problems of unnecessarily tight credit, and a measurable level of contract cancellations from some appraisals not supporting prices negotiated between buyers and sellers,” he said. “This tug and pull is causing a gradual but uneven recovery.”

➤ **LOCAL REAL ESTATE MARKET STATISTICS** → There are a few more MLS listings and closings for March but this is the lull before the summer season kicks in. We are still seeing twice as many residential sales as vacant land sales. Congratulations to our broker, Jay Willett who successfully closed 3 sales in Jan/Feb, showing the properties by snowmobile! The log home pictured here was one of the outstanding properties he sold – 60 acres, bordering Nat. Forest,



with a beautiful log home. Who says we can’t sell property in the winter?! The **Southwest Montana Multiple Listing** statistics for the Madison Valley (including Ennis, Cameron, McAllister, Virginia City, Harrison, Pony, Whitehall and Cardwell), as of **March 31, 2011**, are as follows:

- **LAND: 337 vacant parcels listed, 1 pending sale, 8 parcels sold year-to-date.**
- **HOMES: 126 homes listed, 5 pending sales, 15 homes sold year-to-date.**
- **FARMS AND RANCHES: 3 listed, 0 pending sales, 0 ranches sold year-to-date.**

➤ **YOU KNOW YOU’RE FROM MONTANA WHEN...**you’re driving down a gravel road doing 60, and you get passed by a truck pulling a 6-horse trailer!



➤ **MONTANA TRIVIA**→ Did you know that ... no other state has as many different species of mammals as Montana? (Check out <http://fwp.mt.gov/wildthings/> to see them all.)



*Thank you in advance for your personal referrals.
They are the lifeblood of our business and the
greatest compliment
you can give us.*



**Toni and Don Bowen
Brokers/Owners, Arrow Real Estate**



**Jay Willett and Karen Swedman
Brokers, Arrow Real Estate
also Property Managers and Owners of Apex Management**

APEX MANAGEMENT offers full service property management in the Madison Valley. Whether you are interested in using your home as a vacation rental or a long-term rental, or looking for assistance in finding a rental - See our website at: www.apexmontana.com or call us at (406) 682-7112. Apex Management is **not** a part of Arrow Real Estate.

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➤ **USEFUL WEBSITES TO REMEMBER**→

ENNIS AND THE MADISON VALLEY:

<http://www.ennismontana.org/> - for community and local government information
<http://www.ennischamber.com/> - The Ennis Chamber of Commerce website
<http://www.madisonvalleyhistoryassociation.org> – The Madison Valley History Association website
<http://www.mvmedcenter.org> – for information about the Madison Valley Medical Center
<http://www.mvmcf.org> – the Madison Valley Medical Center Foundation website
<http://www.mvvetsmemorial.org> – The Madison Valley Veterans Memorial website
<http://ennis.communityblogs.us/2008/11/17/ennis-community-blog/> - comments and events in Ennis
<http://adayinthelifeofalemon.blogspot.com/> - famous local sculptor, David Lemon's site
<http://my-montana-moments.blogspot.com/> - Artist Penny Hall's photo journal of her MT experience
<http://ennismontanahomesandland.blogspot.com> – Ennis, Montana Happenings, from **Arrow Real Estate**

MADISON COUNTY:

<http://madison.homestead.com/index.html> - for Madison County emergency news
<http://www.madison.mt.gov/> - Madison County Government website
<http://virginiacity.com> – Virginia City Chamber of Commerce

NEWS:

<http://www.madisoniannews.com/> - the latest news from the Madisonian newspaper for Madison Co.
<http://bozemandailychronicle.com/> - news from the big city of Bozeman, an hour northeast of Ennis
<http://www.mtstandard.com/> - news from historic Butte, an hour & ½ northwest of Ennis

MONTANA:

www.fwp.mt.gov/ - Montana Fish Wildlife and Parks website – for hunting and fishing regulations
<http://fwp.mt.gov/education/bow/> - “Becoming an Outdoors Woman” – a must for female newcomers!
<http://www.visitmt.com/> - Official website Montana Vacations, Recreation, Accommodations and Travel
<http://www.montanapictures.net> – for people homesick for Montana – a great visual connection
http://www.mdt.mt.gov/travinfo/weather/rwis_list.shtml - State Highway Web Cams

SKIING:

www.moonlightbasin.com – Check out latest snow conditions on the hill at Big Sky
<http://www.lmranch.com/winter/> - Lone Mountain Ranch in Big Sky for cross country trails
http://www.westyellowstonenet.com/skiing/cross_country_skiing.php - Skiing Yellowstone Park Trails

HORSEBACK RIDING:

www.wolfpackoutfitters.com – trail riding guides for the Madison Valley
<http://www.sphinxmountainoutfitting.com> – trail riding and outfitting guides in the Madison Valley

REAL ESTATE:

www.arrowreal.com – A wealth of resource information, local listings and a portal to the SW MT MLS
www.houselogic.com – Helpful information from the National Association of Realtors

RANCHING:

<http://www.madisonvalleyranchlands.org/> - working to keep the ranching way of life alive

FISHING:

www.madisonriverfoundation.org – The Madison River Foundation
<http://www.slideinn.com/blog/category/fishing-report/>, Kelly Galloup's Slide Inn
<http://beartoothflyfishing.com/flyfishingreports/uppermadisonriver.htm>, Dan Delecta's site
http://www.orvis.com/fishing_report.aspx?locationid=5974, The Tackle Shop's Orvis report
<http://www.madisonvalleyranch.com/blog/>, The Madison Valley Ranch
<http://www.mrfc.com/MadisonRiverMontanaFishing/MadisonRiverReport.aspx>, Madison River Fishing Company.

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