

The Wagon Tongue

Volume 10 Issue 1

Madison Valley History Association, Inc.
website: www.madisonvalleyhistoryassociation.org

January 2012

From the Wagon Seat: The Board of Trustees of the Madison Valley History Association (MVHA) wishes to take this opportunity to wish each and every one of you a very happy and prosperous new year. This past year has been an exciting one for the MVHA. Our major accomplishment was the construction of the Coss-Angle Blacksmith Shop and the open house held on July 23 to dedicate this new building. We hope to use this facility this coming summer to host some local blacksmiths and have them demonstrate their talents. Another accomplishment, through the special efforts of Liz Applegate, was the publishing of our historical cookbook, "A Collection of Old and New Favorite Family Recipes." Interest in this publication has been great and we are now in the third printing of this book.

Our monthly programs are still popular with our membership. Don Black has been doing a wonderful job as the program chairman. Our October program featured many of our members relating stories about the early sports programs in Madison Valley with centurion Hal Pasley telling of many of the early exploits of the Ennis teams. In November, Steve Primm, field director of People and Carnivores Co., presented a talk about the history of the grizzly bear in the Madison Valley and some of the encounters people have had with this critter. In December, the MVHA held its annual Christmas potluck dinner at the Trinity Episcopal Church in Jeffers. For January, Don has persuaded yours truly to relate the history of the Thompson family, where they came from and how they happened to settle in the Madison Valley. In February, Don has planned a presentation on World War II veterans from the Madison Valley. On March 17, the MVHA will once again sponsor the William Ennis Irish Stew Dinner, in honor of Ennis' founding father, William Ennis. The April issue of *The Wagon Tongue* will describe the programs we are planning for the summer.

Speaking of programs, the MVHA has recorded most of the presentations over the past several years either on a CD (sound only) or a DVD (both sound and video). If there is a program of which you would like a copy, it can be purchased from the MVHA for \$5.00 (plus \$2.00 shipping and handling if we have to mail it to you.) MVHA is putting together a list of all the programs we have on disk (along with other items) for sale and this list will appear in a future issue of the *The Wagon Tongue*.

The MVHA has been contacted by the producer of "Mysteries at the Museum" who plans to film a story about the "Madison Monster," that wolf-like creature shot by I. A. Hutchins over a century ago. These people will be visiting the valley in January to research the story of the "Madison Monster" for their documentary film. And one other exciting news item regarding the "Madison Monster:" This mount has been permanently given to the MVHA.

Election of three board members will take place at the general membership meeting in May. If you are interested in serving on the board, contact one of the current board members.

This spring, work will continue on the "walk of names" from the Museum Building to the Blacksmith Shop. We plan a deck along the Museum Building and then a ramp from the south end of the Museum Building to the door of the Blacksmith Shop. So if you wish to honor a relative or friend, we still have boards for sale. If you are around this spring when construction begins, expect a call from one of us to come help with this project. It takes all of us to do our part and to keep the wagons rollin'.

Your Co-Wagon Master, Otis Thompson

History Tidbit For those who never saw any of the Burma Shave signs, here is a quick lesson in our history of the 1930's and '40's. Before there were interstates, when everyone drove the old 2 lane roads, Burma Shave signs would be posted all over the countryside in farmer's fields. They were small red signs with white letters. Five signs, about 100 feet apart, each containing 1 line of a 4 line couplet...and the obligatory 5th sign advertizing Burma Shave, a popular shaving cream. Here are some of the actual signs.

**DON'T STICK YOUR ELBOW
OUT SO FAR
IT MAY GO HOME
IN ANOTHER CAR
BURMA SHAVE**

**TRAINS DONT WANDER
ALL OVER THE MAP
'CAUSE NOBODY SITS
IN THE ENGINEER'S LAP
BURMA SHAVE**

**AROUND THE CURVE
LICKETY-SPLIT
BEAUTIFUL CAR
WASN'T IT?
BURMA SHAVE**

More Burma Shave signs in future Wagon Tongues

Welcome to Membership The following have joined since the October issue. Please add to any membership list you might be keeping.

Janice Cleverley (I) 682-4371

P.O. Box 455
Ennis, MT 59729

Kay Frisbie (I) 682-4686

McAllister, MT 59740

Gary Love (I) 683-6382

375 Clark's Lookout Rd
Dillon, MT 59725

Membership Update 2011 memberships are now past due and 2012 are now being accepted. Please check your address label on your issue of the Wagon Tongue and you can tell when your membership is due or if you have not purchased it yet. Some of you have taken care of business and your 2012 membership has been received. Thank you! Your membership is good for a full year from the date that you purchased it and you are not penalized for submitting early. If your membership is due during Dec., Jan., Feb., Mar., or April you will find a membership renewal in this issue. Memberships are \$5.00 for students, \$10.00 for individuals, \$15.00 for families, \$50.00 for Businesses, \$100.00 for Patrons and \$500 or more Benefactor.

If you are inviting a new person to join or want to purchase your membership before it is due, just write out name, mailing address and type of membership on a slip of paper and mail with membership fee to MVHA at P.O. Box 474, Ennis, MT. 59729.

The Board of Directors of your Madison Valley History Association appreciates all the memberships that are purchased as this allows them to have funds to continue the work of developing a museum in the Madison Valley:)

+++++

Member News

Lula Wing, mother of MVHA member, Dave Wing celebrated her 104th birthday on Nov. 23. Some interesting historical facts gleaned by Leslie Skillman of the Manor for 1907, the year that Lula was born, are average wage was 22 cents an hour, coffee was 15 cents a pound, and sugar was 4 cents per pound. Only 8% of all homes had telephones and 14% had bathtubs.

+++++

2011 Memorials Memorials given to the MVHA for 2011 were given in the names of Sheila Sullivan, John Robertson, Roy Estes, Chuck Armitage, JoAnn Marks, Josie Skibstad and Lehman Beardsley. A big thank you to all the folks who remembered the MVHA with memorials to loved ones, family and friends. The MVHA is a 501 c 3 non-profit organization so any donations are tax deductible.

Memories

The Wagon Tongue has been getting favorable feedback on the memories of our members and long time Madison Valley residents and natives who have passed on. Please help out by sending your stories and memories about deceased members or residents to the Wagon Tongue. Obituaries from the local newspapers

will not be reprinted. We are looking for stories that will expand on the deceased lives, genealogy, and contributions, etc. to the history of the Madison Valley. The Madison County Trails and Trials and Progressive Years have helped but not everyone's family history is included there and sometime there are good stories out there that have never been printed. So help out if you have information to share. The Wagon Tongue does not want anyone excluded because of lack of new stories. Please, I need your stories. I do not have much information on some of these folks.

Andrew Laszlo, Sr. passed away Oct. 7, 2011 in Bozeman, MT at the age of 85. He was born in Papo, Hungary on Jan. 12, 1926. Andrew was the sole survivor of his family in various concentration camps and he made his way to live with an uncle in New Jersey. He met Ann Granger in 1950 and they were married in 1952. *Madisonian* obituary

John J. Deleckla passed away on Oct. 28, 2011. He was born on Nov. 18, 1922 in Bristol Conn. After his retirement John became a permanent fixture at the Beartooth Fly fishing on the Madison River near Cameron. *Madisonian* obituary Nov. 17, 2011

Dorothy Swendig Hammond passed away Oct. 28, 2011 at Ridge Wind Assisted Living in Pocatello, Id. After a first marriage ended in divorce, Dorothy married Harley Hammond in 1973 and they moved to Ennis where they enjoyed big sky views until Harley passed away in 2007. *Madisonian* obituary

MVHA member, **John J. Womack** passed away on Nov. 11, 2011 at the age of 91 in Dillon, MT. John's father was James Emmett Womack who was born at Timber Ridge, Missouri on August 17, 1894. He arrived in the Madison Valley in the spring of 1913. He followed a group of relatives and Missourians who settled on the Missouri Flats, land between the Madison River and Henry's Lake, Idaho. As a young man, he was employed on various ranches in the valley. His first employer was Bert Mitchell of Jeffers, MT. Upon reaching his 21 st birthday, he filed on a homestead at the southern end of Wade Lake, where he built a cabin was still in use in 1976.

At the outbreak of World War I in April 1917, he enlisted in the U.S. Navy. While in New York, he met Frances Florina Cerutti, age 15. An elopement followed and they were married in St. Paul, Minn. on Sept 19, 1919. From there, they proceeded to Wade Lake. After a long, hard winter, they moved to Ennis, where he purchased five town lots from Mrs. William Ennis.

John James Womack was born in a room over the Ennis Cafe on Sept. 26, 1920. Dr. McNallen was in attendance. In 1922, his father constructed their house on Hugel Street. John was a 1938 graduate of Ennis High School and earned a degree for Montana State Normal College in 1947 and a Master's Degree in 1955. John married Vivian Marie Love, daughter of Isam Love in Nov. 1942. They lived in Dillon, then Helena and then back to Dillon.

Madisonian obituary Nov. 17, 2011 and Pioneer Trails and Trials

(cont pg 3)

But prior to the census of 1870, a reliable number cannot be authoritatively documented.

Sterling had become sufficiently large as a population center by 1866 to merit a justice of the peace, Lucius S. Peck, and a constable, Samuel J. Sanguin. A year later Hot Spring's voters elected a deputy sheriff --James M. Fish, while Peck and Sanguine were replaced by James S. Piper and Holland Laffie Sevier. **9** Each of these public officials had offices in Sterling. That the camp had really come of age was certified when the United States government authorized the location of a post office in Sterling on October 22, 1867, with the forementioned Andrew Hall, a Unionist and ardent Republican, receiving the appointment as postmaster. **10**

As Sterling grew in size and its importance as the district's population and commercial hub developed, so too did its delivery services. Consequently, within six months of its founding Sterling was connected to Virginia City by several stagecoach and delivery companies: A.J. Oliver & Company's daily morning express for Helena via Sterling and the Hot Spring area; the Hot Spring Express, an every-other-day service between Virginia City and Sterling; and Smith's, and then Roper's Gallatin Express, a weekly service between Bozeman and Virginia City, with stops in the Hot Spring District, including Sterling. **11**

In all likelihood, these services employed the facilities of Sterling's stables, including feed and fresh horses. Human activity around these stables would have been impressive. **12** Mail contracts, such as the three-year contract granted James F. Forman by the U.S. Postal Service in April 1867, followed these routes, much as telegraph lines would follow rails, and the arrival of mail in a town like Sterling would have guaranteed the occasion of a social gathering. **13** During 1866 prospects for Sterling's growth were such that there was even talk that John Creighton would extend the Western Union Telegraph Company's lines from Virginia City to Sterling; but Creighton's primary target was the burgeoning community of Helena, and the Hot Spring link did not materialize.

End notes: **1.** Corbett's Territorial Survey Field Notes, Oct. 10, 1868, Bureau of Land Management, Billings, Montana.
2. This waiver was common throughout the mining west. See Duane Smith, *Rocky Mountain Mining Camps: The Urban Frontier* (Bloomington and London, 1967), 128.
3. *Report of J. Ross Browne on the Mineral Resources of the States and Territories West of the Rocky Mountains* (Washington, D.C., 1868), 487. Population figures for the territory in the 1860s, or prior to the Federal Census of 1870, fluctuate wildly, generally on the side of excess, and are often quite unreliable.

4. *Montana Post*, Sep. 14, 1867.

5. Henry A. Ward to George Mumford, Sep. 6, 1867, Henry Augustus Ward Papers, Rush Rhees Library, University of Rochester, Rochester, New York.

6. Hot Spring's population break-down follows observations advanced by Randall Rohe, who applies these ratios to all of Montana Territory. Idaho and Nevada, in contrast, were populated by large number of Californians.

See Rohe, "Hydraulicling in the American West: The Development and Diffusion of a Mining Technique," *Montana: The Magazine of Western History* 35 (Spring 1985), 18-35.

7. Montana Census for 1870, District 5, Montana Historical Society Archives, Helena, Montana.

8. *Ibid.*

9. Record Books N/381, 382; Q/66, Clerk and Recorder's Office, Madison County Courthouse, Virginia City, Montana.

10. Microfilm publication M841, Record of Appointment of Postmasters, 1832-September 30, 1971, Roll No. 76, Madison County, Montana Territory, Record Group 28, Records of the Post Office Department, National Archives, Washington, D.C.

11. *Montana Post*, June 16, 1866.

12. Clark C. Spence, "The Livery Stable in the American West," *Montana: The Magazine of Western History* 36 (Spring 1986), 36-49.

13. *Montana Post*, Apr. 13, 1867

Territorial Assembly meeting in the fall of 1866.

Sterling City The Hot Spring Mining District's HubPart II to be continued in April 2012 with stage coach companies complaining about the roads and the Virginia City Hill.

++++
MVHA member Robert Hughes has provided the WT with an electronic copy of his father's (Thomas Hughes) diary written from Oct. 31, 1904 to early 1906. This diary has been reprinted in past, this, and future issues of the WT. First part was in Oct. 2010, second in Jan. 2011, third in April 2011, fourth in August 2011 and fifth in October 2011. If you have missed the first five installments check the web site or request a copy of the previous 5 issues. **DAD'S Diary** submitted by R R (Bob) Hughes. The October 2011 issue left them on **Thurs. March 23, 1905** in Siligman with nothing to do. Got into William's last night. Rode awhile and walked a while. Put up at the Grand Canyon Hotel. Was walking down the street and a fellow politely informed me that if I didn't stop my noise I would get knocked down. Was glad to get the information, will know how to act in the future.

Fri. Mar. 24 Slept 'til noon, good bed. Met another stray puncher from Texas, hunting a job. Bumming around with him today. Nothing doing yet, too early. Spent a little money trying to open up some of these fellows.

she served her community as a midwife. When Janet McAtee interviewed her about her life on the Missouri Flats before 1914, her replies implied that she considered the ordeal of walking to a neighbor's home on skis as much of a hazard as the major problems that might be involved in delivering the new baby--she was a large woman. She took only the most necessary trips during the part of the winter when the snow was deep on the Missouri Flats.

Organized recreational skiing was known to the old timers, but the pictures of Thomas Brook prove that before W.W.I, young men came to his cabin to enjoy winter sports bringing modern looking skis, snowshoes, and toboggans. He had a homestead near the present Jack Kirby ranch on the West Fork.

In 1938 a formal club was organized by the recreational skiers and they decided to build their second tow in Jack Creek Canyon near the Diamond J Dude Ranch, Additional skiers who became active members of the ski club were the Jack Rouses, the Dallas Haydens, the Ralph Brownells (he was manager of the power house at Ennis Lake), the Hoags, the Saiers, the Huttons, Jeff Jeffers, Buster Saunders, Janice Watkins, Ray Kohls, Jr., Ray Olson, Ann Wilsey, Merlin Stock and Duke Gustafson. Dorothy Thompson who later married Ed Maynard gave the project financial assistance while she was a guest at the Diamond J. Members of the club remember the informal parties in the member's homes after the skiing was over.

The Ennis Ski Club had a great deal of talent among its members. Claude Angle and Ralph Brownell working together could get the best possible performance from mechanical equipment. They kept the tows operating and set up efficient timing devices for ski meets. The Jack Creek Ski Center was the first in the state to have a broadcasting system. This was invaluable to the efficient operation of a tournament and the emergencies handled by the ski patrol. It also provided the luxury of alpine music with which to ski.. They took moving pictures of the 1957 tournament on the Jack Creek Ski Run.

Jule "Duke" Gustafson was an expert skier when he joined the club, and talented beginners could copy his wonderful skiing form as well as profit from his instructions. He knew skiers from the ski circuit who were willing to visit the Jack Creek Center when it was starting.

Several families who joined the club were so dedicated that their children became fine competitive skiers. The most outstanding were Volker and Alarich Saier, Billy and Tommy Bry, Dean Matzick, the younger brother of Ruth and Maxine, Claude and Bud Angle, Ralph Northway and George Shabarker. The cousins, Virginia, Janet and Shirley Jeffers were good competitive skiers and popular at any ski tournament. They added sparkle both

to their team and to the center where they skied.

From 1945 until 1960 the club was a part of the Northern Rocky Mountain Ski Association which is a regional branch of the National Ski Association of America. Ralph Brownell was first vice president of the association from 1945 to 1946 and Eugene Saier from 1950 to 1951. In 1960 Mr. Saier was on the Constitution and By-Laws Committee for Junior Skiing of the National Ski Association.

The Ennis Ski Team attended the 1945 NRMSA tournament at Elkhorn Hot Springs near Dillon where Ennis skiers walked off with the lions's share of tournament ribbons. Duke Gustafson was first in the class A downhill and slalom and Claude Angle was second in the downhill. Virginia Jeffers won the women's slalom and was second in the downhill. Volker Saier won first in the men's class B downhill and Billy Bry tied for second. (from American Ski Annual 1945-1946, pg. 223-225)

The Club hosted the 1946 NRMSA tournament and the experts reported the Jack Creek Ski Center was the best run yet used for a Montana meet. The run was a mile and a quarter long with a 1000 foot drop which was the best available before the Big Mountain Center was developed at Whitefish. Audrey Roth set the runs and foreran the women's course. Betty Woolsey, who was a member of the Olympic Team foreran the men's course. Eugene Saier, chairman of the race committee and was assisted by Bill Bry and Ralph Brownell. The succeeded in setting up a timing system so that race results could be reported back to the officials immediately. The banquet was served at the Masonic Hall in Jeffers and was followed by a public dance. (from American Ski Annual, 1946 -1947 page 303-4.

Montana trained skiers did not show too well in this meet competing against Dr. Amos R. Little of the Search and Rescue Section of the Continental Air Force. Duke Gustafson placed third in the men's class A Division, and his wife, Shirley Jeffers Gustafson placed in downhill and slalom. Alarich Saier and Tommy Bry were winners in the junior slalom.

In 1947 Dr. Amos R. Little and his wife competed again at the Mount Belmont Highballer Trail near Marysville. Volker Saier was first in B class and Alarich Saier in C class. The first annual NRMSA Junior Ski Meet was on Butte's Beef Trail where the Ennis team was successfully represented by Billy and Tommy Bry and Alarich Saier.

The Ennis Public Schools had accepted skiing as a major athletic sport by 1947 and students could take the ski bus to the Jack Creek Ski Center on Wednesdays and receive free ski instruction. Ennis was the first school in the state to do this and when it was successful, the Bozeman schools adopted the plan.

The Club ran a bus for about five years. Students from the Ennis Schools were hauled for 25 cents and could have free lessons on Wed,

cont on pg 7

Skiing in the Madison Valley cont from pg 6

Members of the club collected second hand ski equipment with which to start beginners. Equipment became a problem because the young people did not take care of it unless they were carefully supervised. In 1954 the club authorized Claude Angle to salvage usable parts and sell anything he could find a market for. The bus became a problem in a different way. Bus drivers were the only people paid by the ski club. Insurance was also expensive because of the amount of liability such function required. The old bus was sold in 1960 and the newer one was rented on request.

Duke Gustafson, Eugene Saier and later Volker Saier were the resident ski instructors who did much to develop the ability of the young skiers. Ski instruction was open with the club members charged with the responsibility to instruct beginners who needed help. In practice a few members seemed to do all the work. In 1954 the club authorized Eugene Saier to start an organized ski school which would meet on Saturdays. After a few meetings the formal school stopped and the beginners received their help on an informal basis.

The 1948 NRMSA tournament was at the new Big Mountain Ski Run at Whitefish. Dr. Amos R. Little was again competing in the men's class A division. At the age of 17, Volker Saier who was trained by Duke Gustafson, was able to win both the downhill and the slalom in the class A to the delight of Montana skiers. Eugene Saier was ecstatic when his 13 year old son, Alarich, won the same awards in the class C division. The Saiers had won six gold trophies at one meet: the downhill, slalom and combined trophies for both class A and class C divisions. Volker Saier was offered a full athletic scholarship at Dartmouth and Alarich headed the ski school at Big Sky of Montana.

The NRMSA congratulated the Ennis Ski team on its fine program for high school skiers in 1948, and during the winter Roger Langley, who was the editor of the American Ski Annual, visited the Jack Creek Ski Center and was hosted by Bill Bry and Ralph Brownell at the Sportsmen's Lodge in Ennis.

The team continued to compete successfully, but in 1951 the snow was very poor on all the runs except at Whitefish and West Yellowstone. The Ennis Ski team was forced to move their NRMSA tournament to Lionhead Ski Area at West Yellowstone.

The club minutes show they had tournaments on the Jack Creek Ski Run in 1954, 1955 and 1957. In 1955 the meet was the NRMSA combined downhill and slalom. Toni Matt of Whitefish set the course. The club was congratulated on the efficiency of its arrangements with Eugene Saier chairman of the race committee, assisted by Claude Angle and Vern Sylvester.

The Ennis Ski Team gave the NRMSA an additional event for their tournaments.

The ski club had many expenses. The constant one is keeping up the tow. The books of the club show no labor costs but after 1957 members were given \$5.00 credit on tow charges for each session they worked on the run. Claude Angle remembered building a credit of over \$500 which he had no means of using because the run always needed work. Other club members such as Eugene Saier and later Dean Matzick contributed like amounts of labor. It may have been this situation which caused the club to stop meeting after 1956. The members with the ability and generosity to keep up the tow and instruct the young skiers did all the work for the club.

Other ski expenses were the major purchases of the tow itself and of a packer for the snow on the run. In 1956 the club had the towers on the run rebuilt and the cable replaced with a used cable given by the Lionhead Ski Club of West Yellowstone. They needed a stronger cable and a heavier motor. By 1963 a new cable cost \$1,300 but a temporary splice was made for \$170. In 1964, Dean Matzick started construction on a snow roller, but a packer had to be purchased in 1964 for \$1,300. When the club stopped collecting dues in 1965, they still owed \$540 on the note for the packer.

It was necessary to have a ski patrol to take care of accidents on the run. Nels Troedsson built a rescue toboggan and other club members supplied medical equipment and blankets. Some of the skiers sneaked the toboggan out for recreational use and scattered the equipment. The ski Patrol had to store the toboggan at the Diamond J for safe keeping.

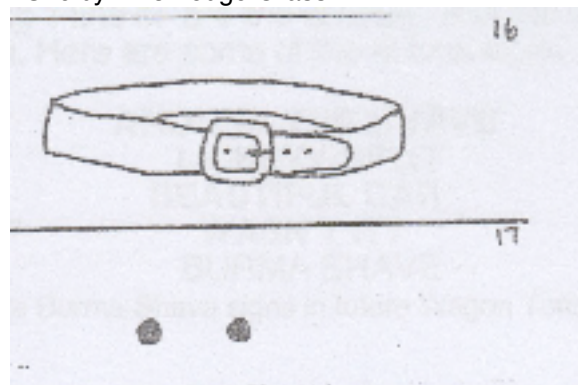
The Ennis Ski Club was most successful between 1945 and 1955. Before this date the community was not educated enough to appreciate skiing as a team sport. After 1955 the young members who had been most successful on the ski team left the community. Without sufficient youthful support involved too much labor for a few older members to continue. The run was open sporadically until 1968. The club has not met since 1968, but it still had a bank account in 1974.

The Jack Creek ski run area is now private property. Pictures of what is remaining of equipment and area can be see at the MVHA museum.

+++++

Montana Trivia Answers to October 2011

#14 Shelby #15 Lodge Grass



For Your Reading Pleasure

Your editor needs names and authors of good Madison Valley or Montana books that you have read and recommend to our members. Send any ideas you have to: Editor Wagon Tongue P. O. Box 474 Ennis, MT 59729 or give them to her at a future meeting. Thanks!

Looking Ahead

Feb.16, 2012 4:00pm First Madison Valley Bank World War II Veterans of the Madison Valley

Mar. 17,2012 William Ennis Birthday Celebration Irish Stew Dinner at Rural Fire Hall. 5:00 to 7:00pm Community will have various events around town to honor our founder. Plan to help make this a great celebration. This is a Saturday in order to celebrate his birthday on the actual date.

April 19 to be announced

MVHA Cookbook

It ia not to late to get a copy of the MVHA historical cookbook. It is available at the MVHA Meetings and at the Ennis Pharmacy. You may still order copies for \$15 plus \$3.00 shipping and handling to MVHA, P. O. Box 474, Ennis, MT 59729.

Walk of Names Orders are still being taken for the boards for the museum walkways. You may order one for \$50 at the above address or by calling 682-5780 or 682-7415.

Madison Valley History Association, Inc.

Board of Directors

- Co-President: Otis Thompson
- Co-President: Larry Love
- Treasurer: Neil Kent
- Secretary: Duane Thexton
- Director: John White
- Director: Kevin Brenneke
- Director: Don Black

Meetings held monthly on the **third** Thursday of each month. Watch Madisonian for details of time and place and program.

Board Meetings are held the **1st** Wednesday of each month 10:00am. First Madison Bank conference room Oct. to Apri—Museum MVHA Office May to Oct.

The Wagon Tongue will be published quarterly. Next issue will be April 2012.

Editor: Shirley Love

Contributing editors: R.R. Robert Hughes *Diary of Thomas S. Hughes Dec. 25, 1904-Mar. 23, 1905*

Madisonian Obituaries

James Womack Pioneer Trails and Trials pg. 205-206

Dr Jeff Safford *Sterling Part II*

Minnie Paugh *“Skiing in the Madison Valley”*

Madison Valley History Association, Inc.
P.O. Box 474
Ennis, MT 59729

Printing of this Newsletter was generously provided by the First Madison Valley Bank