



**Lewis & Clark Trail News**  
*Bringing the Trail to Life*  
December 13, 2025



### **Missouri River, Hardy Bridge, Montana**

Cathy Milne's photograph offers a beautiful representation of the natural wonders seen in many areas of Montana by members of the Lewis and Clark Expedition. The photo was taken near the small community of Hardy.

Her photo was one of 14 selected for the 2026 LCTA calendar. The calendar photos were submitted during our annual photo contest.

While passing through this region in July 1805, the explorers were impressed by the geological features. Cathy's photo shows an excellent example of the region's geology created by a 75-million-year-old volcanic field. As the millennia passed, the landscape tilted, warped, and dipped, creating features such as Tower Rock and a passageway for the Missouri River.

Our supply of calendars is dwindling. These make wonderful gifts for the holidays and are for sale for \$20 as a fundraiser for LCTA programs. Order yours now.

## Trail Stewardship Grants Awarded

The Lewis & Clark Alliance's [Trail Stewardship Fund](#) annually provides grants to organizations that need assistance to carry out projects telling the story of the Lewis and Clark Expedition. Recipients are nonprofit organizations, as well as LCTA chapters and regions, whose work preserves, protects, or provides public access to the Lewis and Clark story.

The Trail Stewardship Fund was created thanks to the [Lewis & Clark Expedition Bicentennial Legacy Project](#). The project provided the Lewis & Clark Trail Alliance with an endowment fund generated from the sale of commemorative coins during the 2003-06 Lewis and Clark Expedition Bicentennial Celebration.

For 2026, the Trail Stewardship Committee—comprised of LCTA members Lou Ritten, Karen Goering, Mel Berger, Shannon Kelly, and Dan Murray—awarded a total of \$94,415 to 17 organizations. “The Committee was thrilled to receive so many applications for worthy projects this year,” says Lou, committee chair. “The competition was stiff, but all submissions received grants of at least half of their requested amount. We look forward to the successful completion of each and every project.”

During the next two months, LCTA's e-newsletter will publish summaries of the grant recipients' projects. Here is the first:

[Historic Fort Steuben Park](#) in Steubenville, Ohio, will receive \$3,103 to create two interpretive signs related to the expedition.

The signs will help visitors gain a better understanding of the Lewis and Clark Expedition National Historic Trail and how the Steubenville area played an important role in the expedition's journey. The signage will overlook the Ohio River and complement other Lewis and Clark displays around the recreated fort.



One sign will feature art from the National Park Service that shows the historic trail's [Eastern Legacy](#). The other sign will focus on the [expedition's time in the Steubenville area](#) in September 1803. It will include journal entries by expedition member Patrick Gass who lived in nearby Wellsburg, W.V.

[Discover more about the expedition and Fort Steuben.](#)

## Christmas Tree

The Lewis & Clark Trail Alliance's headquarters in Great Falls, Montana, is always a fun place to visit, especially during the holidays.

Our Office Manager, Georgia Kline, is merry and happy to help people learn about the Lewis and Clark Expedition. On some days, a visitor might be lucky enough to meet "another" staff member, Coda, Georgia's good-natured dog that often comes to the office with her. The center where the LCTA office is located is dog-friendly. One Forest Service volunteer brings in his Newfoundland, Butler, a friendly critter loved by visitors and staff. Newfoundland was the breed of Seaman, Meriwether Lewis' dog.



Just like other business offices around the nation, Christmas is a special time in the LCTA office, which is located within the U.S. Forest Service's Lewis and Clark Interpretive Center. Georgia wanted to enhance the holiday festiveness, so she approached a local Home Depot for a donation of an artificial Christmas tree. The store donated a \$400 tree to LCTA.

Next, to decorate the tree, Georgia gathered up a treasure she discovered stored in the office's Sherman Library and Archives: Christmas ornaments dating back to the national 2003-06 Lewis and Clark Expedition Bicentennial.

The ornaments originated from the *Circle of State Advisors*, representing all states involved in the Bicentennial festivities. Each state's ornament was displayed on a commemorative Christmas tree at the U.S. Capitol during the Bicentennial. Following the event, the National Council of the Lewis and Clark Bicentennial transferred the ornaments to the LCTA Sherman Library and Archives, the official repository for the Lewis & Clark Expedition Bicentennial.

"The ornaments are so beautiful," Georgia said, "and they make for a special Lewis and Clark Christmas."





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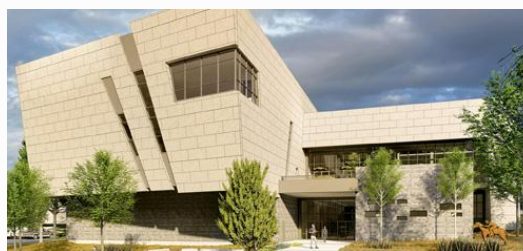
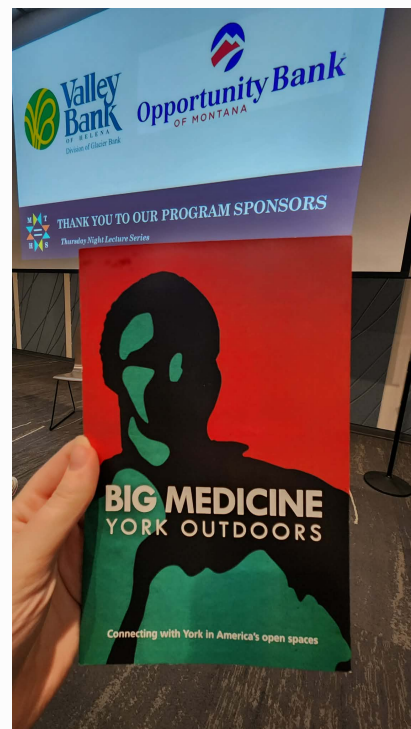
## MT Historical Society Grand Opening

The LCTA distributed documentary film *Big Medicine: York Outdoors* had the honor December 4 of being the first Thursday Night Lecture at the new Montana Heritage Center in Helena.

The center, which opened on December 2 with a ribbon-cutting ceremony, will be the home of the [Montana Historical Society](#). The ceremony was “a momentous” event, [reported the Montana Public Radio](#).

The center was 20 years in planning and funded by \$100 million from lodging tax revenue and private donations. One opening ceremony visitor was reported as saying, “Many of us old timers that have worked on this project tried to sum it up today, and the only thing I could think of was, this day, today, I’m 76 years old, but I’m giddy.”

LCTA board member Shannon Kelly said the 35-minute *Big Medicine* showing was “a full house,” with 97 people attending. The film follows eight Black educators and environmental stewards as they retrace the steps of the Lewis and Clark Expedition and reflect on York’s legacy during a four-day river trip through the Upper Missouri River Breaks National Monument. Following the film's screening at the new center, Zachary Stocks, one of the documentary participants, oversaw a question-and-answer session that, Shannon added, was “a big hit.”



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## Day by Day Radio Episodes



Knife River Village National Historic Site  
North Dakota  
Courtesy NPS

### December 13, 1804

The Thermotr. Stands this morning at 20° below 0, a fine day. find it imposible to make an Observation with an artifical Horsison [Joseph Field](#) kill a Cow and Calf to day one mile from the fort  
—[William Clark](#)

To listen to the Day by Day broadcasts for a certain day of the expedition, go to our educational website, [Discover Lewis & Clark](#)

Originally aired by [Yellowstone Public Radio](#) during the Lewis and Clark Bicentennial observance in 2004-2006, these 627 radio episodes parallel the expedition dates starting May 14, 1804, and ending September 25, 1806. They are narrated by Hal Hansen, scripted by Whit Hansen and Ed Jacobson, and produced by Leni Holliman.

## Lewis & Clark Trail Alliance

Step Into History with Lewis & Clark VR!



Experience the Legendary Expedition Like Never Before

Ready for adventure? Take a journey through time with *Lewis & Clark VR*—the immersive virtual reality experience that brings the expedition's epic people, places, and events to life! Explore historic sites, interact with virtual artifacts, and uncover fascinating stories narrated by experts—all from the comfort of your classroom or home.

Proudly sponsored by the Lewis & Clark Trail Alliance and created by the talented students at the [Shenandoah Center for Immersive Learning](#), *Lewis & Clark VR* is your ticket to a dynamic learning experience. Discover more at [SCIL](#) and download the app today at [Meta](#). Don't just learn history—live it!

## The Future is Here

The Lewis & Clark Trail Alliance Virtual Reality app is now available for download from the Meta Horizon store. Thanks to our partnership with [Shenandoah Center for Immersive Learning](#), you can experience the inside of an earth lodge, winter at Fort Mandan, and stand inside the cabin of a keelboat barge. Share the news widely!

[Meta Store](#)

### Of Interest

[Traveling Exhibits](#)

[Position Opening](#)

[Oregon: Beyond 250](#)

[Thursday Nights](#)

### Grants

[Native Youth Media](#)

[Storytelling](#)

[Sony](#)

[National Park Foundation](#)

### Alliance

[Trip Inspirations](#)

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## Play Lewis & Clark Trivia

We're in the holiday season, so, of course, this trivia question has to do with Christmas—specifically Dec. 25, 1805.

The expedition was at Fort Clatsop. The food situation was dire. In his journal entry for that day, Clark wrote: “...*we would have Spent this day the nativity of Christ in feasting, had we any thing either to raise our Sperits or even gratify our appetites, our Diner concisted of pore [Elk](#). So much Spoiled that we eate it thro' mear necessity, Some Spoiled pounded fish and a fiew roots.*”



But, despite the day marked by hunger, as well as rain, thunder and lightning, there was joviality and the exchanging of gifts.

Our trivia question: What gift did Sacagawea give to Clark?

[Submit your answer](#)

The question for the last newsletter was tough: “On about the date of November 29, 1803, Meriwether Lewis and William Clark learn at [Fort Kaskaskia](#) that the Spanish governor of Upper Louisiana intended to \_ \_ \_ \_ the expedition.” The answer: “*block*.”

Ten readers provided the correct answer. When more than one person gives the



right answer, a drawing is done to determine the winner. Gabrielle Senentza won the drawing, so she will receive a copy of *Lewis and Clark Through Indian Eyes*, an intriguing book written by nine descendants of Native Americans whose lands the expedition traversed.

[Learn about Christmas at Fort Clatsop](#)

## Words of the Expedition

The *Journals of Lewis and Clark* contain a language that feels raw, immediate, and strangely poetic. The spelling is eccentric, the phrasing inventive, and the tone often somewhere between military dispatch and wonder-filled diary.



[Batteaux](#)

In the context of the Lewis and Clark Expedition, a batteaux (spelled nine different ways in the journals - *bateau*, *batteau*, *battoe*, *batoe*, *bato*, *bateaux*, *batteaux*, *battoes*, *batoes*) referred to a flat-bottomed, shallow-draft riverboat commonly used in North America during the 18th and early 19th centuries.

[May 14, 1804](#)

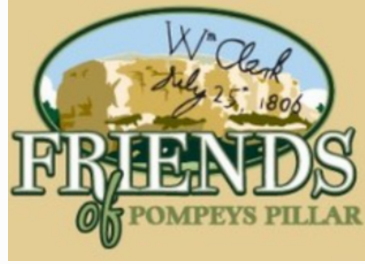
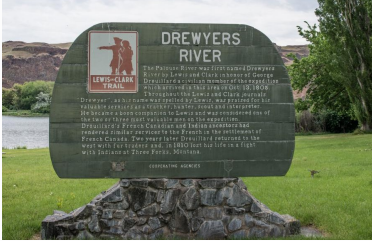
*Monday May the 14th 1804. Showery day. Capt Clark Set out at 3 oClock P. M. for the western expedition. one Gun fired. a number of Citizens see us Start. the party consisted of 3 Sergeants & 38 Good hands, which maned the **Batteaux** and two pearogues. we Sailed up the Missouri 6 miles & encamped on the N. Side of the River. (Ordway)*

## Share the Adventure!



Help us expand the community by sharing the newsletter with your network. Simply provide this [sign-up link](#) to friends, family, and fellow Trail enthusiasts.

See all the events on the [LCTE Events Calendar](#)



[Lyons Ferry Hike](#)  
Washtucna, WA  
January 1

[L&C Trivia Night](#)  
Billings MT  
January 15

[Big Medicine](#)  
Provo, UT  
January 22

## Where on the Trail?

Our newest fun feature invites you to guess the location along the Trail.

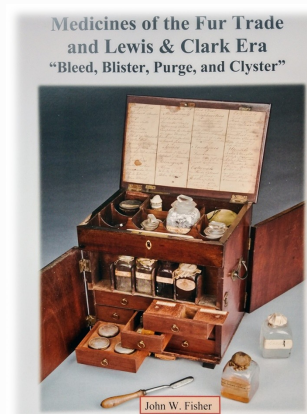
[Answer](#)



This aerial photo was taken by aviator and photographer Jim Wark, who began retracing the Lewis and Clark Trail by air in 1999. Many of his photos are featured in articles on our educational website, Discover Lewis & Clark.

[More about Jim and his photos](#)

## Colters Creek Research Station & Apothecary Shoppe From Curator John Fisher and Assistant Laurie Rudd







A variety of amazing [interpretive collections](#) are free to selected qualifying Lewis & Clark sites or historical interpreters through the graciousness of John Fisher in Lewiston, Idaho. If you are interested in acquiring some of these materials for your interpretive center or to use in historical interpretation, contact John via [email](#)

## The Last Word - Our Wishes for You as 2026 Arrives

The [Lewis & Clark Trail Alliance](#) recently received a \$10,000 donation in memory of Scout and Marty Flannes of Hailey, Idaho.

The donation was bequeathed to LCTA following Marty's death. As a person with many interests and accomplishments, Marty led an adventurous life that helped people and good causes. He also enjoyed, as Merriwether Lewis did, too, time with a furry buddy. As Marty's obituary states, "it's comforting to envision him and his furry first-mate, Scout, sailing together as the best of buddies, seeking adventure and new waters." [Marty's obituary](#).

We deeply appreciate Marty's support of LCTA. As with all of the gracious support that we receive, the donation will be used to continue our mission to "preserve, promote and teach the diverse heritage of Lewis and Clark for the benefit of all people." If you are interested to learn more and make your contribution please see - [How to donate to LCTA](#)

The story of the Lewis and Clark Expedition is important for reminding us who we are as a nation and particularly as individuals. The Lewis and Clark adventure is the story of discovery, taking calculated risks, overcoming

challenges, camaraderie, commitment, caring for others, making new friends, and celebrating victories.

As the year ends and 2026 begins, we sincerely hope your life reflects the good qualities of the Lewis and Clark story. We also hope you follow the spirit of adventure and dedication represented by Lewis, William Clark, York, Sacagawea, and the other brave and resolute members of the Lewis and Clark Expedition, as well as the Native Americans they encountered.

*Richard Hunt*

## Our Generous Sponsors



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[lewisandclark.org](http://lewisandclark.org)



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