

# THE STRAIGHT SHOOTER

## NEWS of ENNIS and the MADISON VALLEY, MONTANA for FEBRUARY 2016



*Trout live in nice neighborhoods*



➤ **MADISON VALLEY “HAPPENINGS”** → February was short and sweet, with lots of activities packed into fewer days. → There was **Winterfest** in Virginia City (including ice hockey tournaments), Valentine’s Day dinners, gardening workshops, a **writers’ workshop** in V.C., and **calving season** is in full swing! It is fun to see all the baby cows out exploring their new world – especially when the weather has been so nice for them! → **Braggin’ Rights Guns** offered a class in **Avoiding Violence**. → The **Alley Bistro** offered their monthly



winter **Wine Club** with great food and wine pairings. → **Banditos** at the Gravel Bar had a full house at their special theme dinner, serving up a fabulous Italian 5 course meal. If nothing else, we do eat well in Ennis! → And the **Madison Theatre** featured top rated movies such as 13 Hours and The Revenant! → The new rest area at **Lyons Bridge** is a first-class facility, is now open and ready for visitors.

➤ **COMING MARCH HAPPENINGS** → West Yellowstone will be holding Sled Dog Races and Kids’N’Snow Events. Check it out at: [www.kidsnsnow.org](http://www.kidsnsnow.org) and [www.wysleddoggraces.com](http://www.wysleddoggraces.com). → You can attend classes on **Bee Keeping**, more gardening workshops, a program on **Hand-Raised Historic Barns of Montana**, **Constitution Classes**, and enjoy more fun times at **Willie’s Distillery**. If the weather stays like this, we could even see some golfers on the course! → On March 20<sup>th</sup>, you can celebrate the birthday of **William Ennis**, the town’s founder, at an **Irish Stew Dinner** sponsored by the Madison Valley History Association. → There are many more exciting events coming up in the coming months and you can follow them at: <http://www.ennischamber.com/calendar.asp>.



➤ **MONTANA NEWS** → The Montana Supreme Court has upheld most limits on **medical marijuana**. Read more at: <http://mtp.org/post/montana-supreme-court-upholds-most-limits-medical-marijuana>. This should keep Montana free from the problems facing Colorado due to their liberal marijuana laws. → The **Virginia City Masonic Lodge #1** celebrated the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Montana Masons Grand Lodge. The room where the Grand Lodge officers met in 1866 and in 2016, has long been said to be the oldest Masonic Lodge room in the U.S, in which a grand lodge was formed and is still in Masonic use! The building also houses the Virginia City Post Office. <http://freemasoninformation.com/2009/04/montana-3-7-77-how-freemasonry-tamed-a-territory/>.



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➤ **FISHING REPORT** → *as of March 1, 2016 from The Tackle Shop in Ennis.* Even if the calendar still says it is winter, the El Nino-fueled weather we have been having has really made us think of spring. The fish have the same view as we do. In fact in the last few weeks the fish have gone into full-time spring mode on the Madison River. Will this weather last the entire month of March? Who knows! and I really hope it does not for our snow pack's sake but while we have good weather in March we might just as well go fishing. Most have been doing best with the sub surface nymph game. Those throwing such fare as worms, eggs, crystal meth, stonefly nymphs and zebra midges are having the most luck. Keep in mind that the weather might feel like spring but the fish are still in the winter places. Concentrate on the slowest deepest water on the river. The big deep pools that are considered frog water during the summer



have fish stacked in them this time of year. Our recent and best set up has been a **crystal meth** in pink with a zebra midge trailer. This will change as the month rolls along and look for the stone fly nymphs to take over. For you dry fly guys on non-windy days you can find rising fish to midges right now. As the month rolls along you will see the first blue winged olive emergences and the fish start to key on them. Currently a para midge in a size 16 with a dropper of a midge larva does the job. When the BWO's start keep the para adams and purple haze handy. Streamer guys are reporting slower fishing right now.

Those that stay with it are only catching a few fish a day but they are the grandpa's of the river. If you are dedicated to catch a huge fish, stay with the streamers and think slow and deep. As we get into March we will see more and more fish in the river up from Ennis Lake. These larger than average fish are in the river to spawn and this makes them aggressive. The fishing is only going to get better and better. The entire Madison River is open to fishing this spring. For the past almost 20 years the area above McAtee Bridge and below the Ennis Bridge were closed to fishing until the middle of May. Because of a change in FWP regulations, these areas are now open. By the end of the month there will be a significant amount of rainbows in the river to spawn. If you see spawning activity such as redds or cleaned gravel, please do not step on them and do not fish to actively spawning fish. New merchandise is arriving daily in the shop and the coffee pot is always full and hot. Stop in and let's talk fishing! **John Way**

#### Check out other fishing reports at:

- ✚ Madison River Fishing Company at <http://www.mrfc.com/MadisonRiverMontanaFishing/MadisonRiverReport.aspx>.
- ✚ Dan Delekta at <http://beartoothflyfishing.com/flyfishingreports/uppermadisonriver.htm>.
- ✚ The Madison Valley Ranch at <http://www.madisonvalleyranch.com/blog/>
- ✚ Joe Dilschneider's Montana Trout Stalkers at <http://www.montanatrout.com/>
- ✚ Yellowstone Fly Fishing at <http://www.yellowstoneflyfishing.com/madisonreport.htm>.

➤ **WEATHER** → February continued with mild weather and no snow in the valley. It feels like spring, which is pleasant but worrisome. We need to feed the snowpack. The monthly precipitation was only .03" and the average is .24". Some folks think this is shirt-sleeve weather, but I know how fickle it can be so my long johns are still handy. The recorded **February** high in Ennis was 56° and the low was -1°.



#### Golf in February!

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➤ **REAL ESTATE TIPS → IS PRICE per SQUARE FOOT ACCURATE FOR HOME VALUES?** According to the Hank Miller Team, this method is completely unreliable, with the possible exception of new tract home projects. They warn that there are multiple obvious reasons why and a number of variables that will be unique to each situation. In sort, do not place any reliance on this method. Many homeowners and others often use a price per SF as a gauge when trying to compare home values. In rural Montana, our market is totally unique. There are a number of variables involved in determining values.

1. **Materials costs at the time of construction.** Prices fluctuate dramatically and by locations.
2. **Design and architecture.** Are homes of similar detail being compared? Costs associated with labor intensive designs will naturally be more due to time, material and waste.
3. **Living area.** It sounds pretty basic, but there is no such thing as a definite figure for square footage. How it's measured and what you measure can be totally different from house to house. Most Realtors rely on county records for residential square footage but those measurements are rarely accurate.
4. **Price for the lot is a HUGE variable.** No two are alike in size, site prep, terrain, views, external influences and improvements. Yet the lots are calculated into the SF price with an algorithm applied by websites like Trulia and Zillow and even on the local Multiple Listing Services.
5. **Condition.** When that home sold, what kind of shape was it in? Was it enhanced just before sale to attract a higher price? Was it a total fixer-upper? What is the effective age of the home and depreciation level. It's a matter of opinion.
6. **Incentives.** Did the sellers give a decorating allowance? Were there any concessions given that would affect price?
7. **Buyer-Seller motivations.** Was that buyer in just for a weekend and had to find a place? Was that seller transferred, divorced, in financial trouble or something else that would affect the price?
8. **Area desirability.** Location, location, location. Different market areas have different values and different sections of the same market area have different values. Two similar homes in different areas could have a wide price disparity.

These are a few variables to take into consideration. Value is determined by the market; your home is worth what a well-informed buyer is willing to pay at any given point in time. The best indicator of value remains analysis of comparable sales, pendings and listings from the same competing market area. This remains the method of choice for the appraisal industry and the one on which to place most reliability. **Your Realtor is the best source for this information.**

➤ **FIND A HOME FOR YOUR SOUL ... Featured Property of the Month →** A great in-town house with nice, private deer-proof fenced yard, views, large deck, large living area, separate dining room, extra-large master suite, low maintenance, remodeled and updated. Mature trees and landscaping. Close to schools and downtown, but near the edge of town. 2,117 SF with 4 BR, 2 BA on a quarter-acre lot. 439 Beaverhead Street, Ennis MT 59729. **\$292,000.** MLS #211324.



➤ **CURRENT REAL ESTATE NEWS → WASHINGTON (February 29, 2016) → PENDING HOME SALES COOL DOWN IN JANUARY.** Following the highest average year for the index in nearly a decade<sup>1</sup>, pending home sales declined to begin 2016 but remained slightly higher than a year ago,

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according to the [National Association of Realtors®](#). Only the South saw an uptick in contract activity in January. The [Pending Home Sales Index](#), (PHSI) a forward-looking indicator based on contract signings, declined 2.5 % to 106.0 in January from an upwardly revised 108.7 in December but is still 1.4 % above January 2015 (104.5). Although the index has increased year-over-year for 17 consecutive months, last month's annual gain was the second smallest (September 2014 at 1.2%) during the timeframe.

[Lawrence Yun](#), NAR chief economist, says a myriad of reasons likely contributed to January contract signings subsiding in most of the country. "While January's blizzard possibly caused some of the pullback in the Northeast, the recent acceleration in home prices and minimal inventory throughout the country appears to be the primary obstacle holding back would-be buyers," he said. "Additionally, some buyers could be waiting for a hike in listings come springtime."

Existing-home sales increased last month and were considerably higher than the start of 2015, but price growth quickened to 8.2 % – the largest annual gain since April 2015 (8.5 %). While the hope is that appreciating home values will start to entice more homeowners to sell, Yun says supply and affordability conditions won't meaningfully improve until homebuilders start ramping up production – especially of homes at lower price points. "First-time buyers in high demand areas continue to encounter instances where their offer is trumped by cash buyers and investors," adds Yun. "Without a much-needed boost in new and existing-homes for sale in their price range, their path to homeownership will remain an uphill climb."

Existing-homes sales this year are forecast to be around 5.38 million, an increase of 2.5 % from 2015. The national median existing-home price for all of this year is expected to increase between 4 and 5 %. In 2015, existing-home sales increased 6.3 % and prices rose 6.8 %. The PHSI in the Northeast declined 3.2 % to 94.5 in January, but is still 10.9 % above a year ago. In the Midwest the index fell 4.9 % to 101.1 in January, but is still 1.4 % above January 2015. Pending home sales in the South inched up 0.3 % to an index of 121.1 in January but remain 1.3 % lower than last January. The index in the West decreased 4.5 % in January to 96.5, but is still 0.4% above a year ago.

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*The National Association of Realtors®*, "The Voice for Real Estate," is America's largest trade association, representing 1 million members involved in all aspects of the residential and commercial real estate industries. For additional commentary and consumer information, visit [www.houselogic.com](http://www.houselogic.com) and <http://retradio.com>.

➤ **LOCAL REAL ESTATE MARKET STATISTICS** → February has been crazy busy and even the title company is bustling. Maybe the nice weather is bringing more people out to look at property. We are seeing more buyers coming from the Bozeman area looking for better values and less traffic! **The Southwest Montana Multiple Listing statistics** for the Madison Valley area (including Ennis, Cameron, McAllister, Norris, Virginia City, Harrison, Pony, Whitehall, and Cardwell), for the month of **February 2016** are as follows:

- **HOMES:** 101 homes are listed (\$65,000 to \$2,950,000); 12 pending sales (\$22,500 to \$999,900); and 4 homes sold in 2016 (\$349,000 to \$534,500), totaling \$1,591,000, which was 95% of asking prices.
- **LAND:** 312 vacant lots are listed (\$1,500 to \$925,000); 8 pending sales (\$6,500 to \$299,000); and 6 lots sold in 2016 (\$22,000 to \$111,000), totaling \$325,000, which was 88% of asking prices.

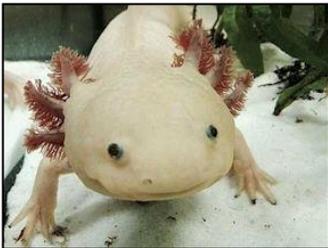
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- **RANCHES:** 5 listed (\$485,000 to \$9,950,000); 0 pending sales, and 0 ranches sold in 2016.
- **COMMERCIAL:** 23 listed (\$56,000 - \$2,950,000); 0 pending sales; and 1 commercial property sold in 2016 (\$585,000), which was 98% of asking price.

*“The best investment on Earth is earth.”* Louis J. Glickman, real estate mogul/philanthropist

➤ **YOU KNOW YOU’RE FROM MONTANA....when you know to pack your grub in bear-proof containers!** You know better than to leave your backpack on the river bank with your picnic lunch in it! And you know to hang your food cooler 10 to 15 foot off the ground when camping. In testing coolers and food storage containers, only 3 out of 5 tested can withstand a determined bear for more than an hour. You can read more about this at [http://missoulian.com/news/local/experts-grizzlies-declare-defeat-in-some-food-container-tests-storage/article\\_8b29c428-88c9-558a-a4bf-cbd35e971ef4.html](http://missoulian.com/news/local/experts-grizzlies-declare-defeat-in-some-food-container-tests-storage/article_8b29c428-88c9-558a-a4bf-cbd35e971ef4.html). And if you want a great **bear-proof** cooler, check out a Yeti, <http://yeticoolers.com/grizzly-proof/>.

➤ **MONTANA TRIVIA** → *Did you know... that you can rent cabins on B.L.M. land?* The Bureau of Land Management has several remote cabins available across Montana. Locally, you can reserve up to 7 nights at the **Axolotl Cabin** perched above Axolotl Lake in the Gravelly Range, 14 miles SW of Ennis, for \$75 a night –and it sleeps 7! It is available from May 26<sup>th</sup> to



October 10<sup>th</sup>. Amaze your kids! Go down to the lake and search for a real, live **Axolotl!** (Google it!) Call (877) 444-6777 to make reservations or go to: [http://www.blm.gov/mt/st/en/fo/dillon\\_field\\_office/recreation/axolotlcabin.html](http://www.blm.gov/mt/st/en/fo/dillon_field_office/recreation/axolotlcabin.html).

## SEE YOU IN MONTANA!



**Don & Toni Bowen**, Broker Associates and Accredited Buyer Representatives, with over 75 years of real estate experience, between them - covering residential, commercial, vacant land & ranch properties in the Madison Valley. *We are in the business of "match making."*



Office manager,



**Debbie Reilly-Richardson**



**Ron Gay**, Sales Associate with ERA Landmark Arrow Real Estate

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

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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://www.madisonvalleyexpeditions.com/> - a source for experiencing *authentic* Montana in our area  
<http://www.backroadtoyellowstone.com> – information for travelers about the route through our valley

### 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/](http://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://mdt.mt.gov/travinfo/weather/rwis\\_list.shtml](http://mdt.mt.gov/travinfo/weather/rwis_list.shtml) - State Highway Web Cams  
<http://montanakids.com/> - State website for all things KIDS in Montana  
<https://www.facebook.com/Ennisrealestate?ref=hl> – Facebook page for ERA Landmark Arrow R. E.

### SKIING:

<http://bigskyresort.com/> – Check out latest snow conditions & things to do 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](http://www.westyellowstonenet.com/skiing/cross_country_skiing.php) - Skiing Yellowstone Park Trails

### HORSEBACK RIDING:

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

### RANCHING:

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

### FISHING:

<http://www.madisonriverfoundation.org> - The Madison River Foundation  
<http://www.montanatu.org/> - Montana Trout Unlimited

### GOLFING:

<http://www.madisonmeadowsgolfcourse.com> – Madison Meadows Golf Course in Ennis

### REAL ESTATE:

[www.arrowreal.com](http://www.arrowreal.com) – A wealth of resource information, local listings and a portal to the SW MT MLS  
<http://www.realtor.com/> - The world's #1 Real Estate website. The source for all properties on MLS  
[www.houselogic.com](http://www.houselogic.com) – Helpful information from the National Association of Realtors  
[www.trulia.com](http://www.trulia.com) – Search for homes for sale and sold, local information, and research  
[www.zillow.com](http://www.zillow.com) – Search for homes for sale and rent, home values and mortgage rates  
[www.homesandland.com](http://www.homesandland.com) – Search for homes for sale and rent, home values and mortgage rates

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