

THIS

WEEK

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to perform at
Rockin' TJ Ranch

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Take part in
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walk downtown

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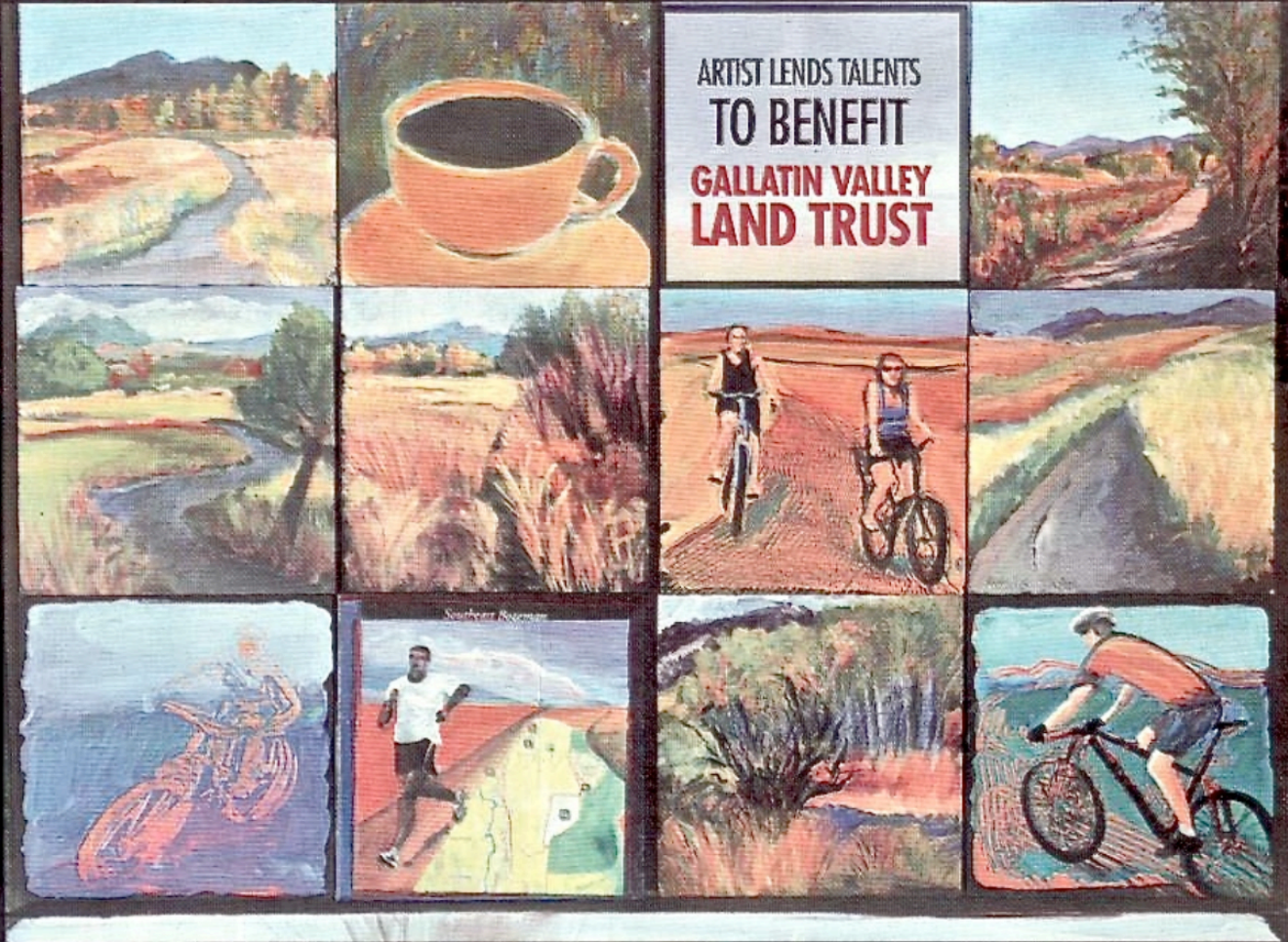
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SOUTHWEST MONTANA'S ARTS AND ENTERTAINMENT MAGAZINE

APRIL 3-9



NATURAL CONNECTION

Artist lends talents to helping GVLТ secure open spaces, community trails

Loretta Domaszewski followed her path to Bozeman. Now Bozeman's paths are leading the artist to a greater understanding of her community and her work. In honor of the trails, pathways and open spaces built and maintained by Gallatin Valley Land Trust, the artist has volunteered her talents to help the organization raise membership and donations.

Domaszewski hosts an art event tonight at the Sola Café with art and music and everyone is invited.

Moving to a new place can be tough, but when Domaszewski moved to the Bozeman area from Nantucket in 1990, she reasoned, "If I lived near the water for half my life, I could live near the mountains" for the rest of it.

The transition proved more difficult than she thought it would be.

All of a sudden, the ocean, beaches and marshes that had she had grown up next to and taken solace from when in need, were thousands of miles away.

One memorable day, it seemed like it was all too much.

"I've got to find water," Domaszewski said, thinking back, "I remember driving up South Church and seeing some willow trees."

She searched for way to get to those trees knowing there was a good chance of finding water. She found a small trail and made her way toward the marshy area and suddenly, the strangeness of the town was a little less strange. Nature was all around, and hiking Bozeman's trails were to become part of her

lifestyle, part of her art – a source of inspiration.

"I think that we don't even realized how our environment affects us," said Domaszewski. "I think maybe through my art, through my landscapes I can inspire people to see what's around us."

Kept busy by teaching and as an artist-in-residence at Bozeman High School for seven years, and raising a family, Domaszewski found few precious moments to work solely on her art. Now, however, she works full-time in a small studio space in the Emerson Center for the Arts & Culture.

Wanting to give back to the community for the inspiration hiking Bozeman's trails have given her, the artist approached the GVLТ with an idea for helping the organization.

Many volunteers turn out for different events, said Stephen Johnson, executive director of GVLТ, and they receive donations from about 1,000 individuals on a yearly basis.

"We have many supportive friends who are artists. But her take is unique," said Johnson.

GVLТ's mission is to conserve the area's landscape and connect people to that land through trails.

"I think Loretta has been inspired by both aspects, and by the community trails that bring us all together," said Johnson.

This show features the trails and places administered by the group.

From Peets Hill in Bozeman to the Tyler-Weed easement in the Springhill area, Domaszewski continues work on dozens of canvases.

She works in acrylic and oils. Many of her current projects are 6- by 6-inch acrylic on board paintings.

"They're little gems, not just sketches," said Domaszewski.

Lined up and set on a black back board, the colorful artworks create a mural of mini-scenes from the greater Gallatin Valley. Each small painting is priced for under \$100, which includes a membership to GVLT and will be available at the show.

"I think art should be for everybody and art should be affordable for everyone," said Domaszewski.

She's also an artist who has created murals at Hawthorne and Sacajawea schools and likes working "big," she said. Her larger pieces will be sold with 40 percent of the

price going to GVLT.

Domaszewski's work encompasses a range of styles. Her landscapes are a combination of recognizable features, sometimes abstracted, but always full of color and light. She calls this series of paintings "Hike Bike Feast Art," and her scenes focus on the many trail activities available to area residents – hikers follow trails through broad expanses, dogs romp on Peets Hill, bikers bump along winding roads.

"When I'm painting, I want to have the earthiness, the feeling of the elements, things moving, the air, the earth being really rooted. I want the life in there," said Domaszewski.

The show at the Sola Café is a preview for a larger fund-raising gala event being planned for August by GVLT, which will

feature art by Domaszewski.

"The purpose (of this show) is to start to get people involved and a heads-up for what is happening in August," she said. Between now and then, the artist has many canvases to fill and trails to walk.

"This whole project has been wonderful," she said. "It's given me the focus to pursue my work." Her work will continue to be on display at the Sola Café through June 1.

As for art lovers, Domaszewski hopes through this art show that those who value the trails and open land will choose to purchase a little bit of art to remind them of the nature outside their doors and help GVLT.

"Small contributions can actually add up."

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STORY BY LUANN ROD | PHOTOGRAPHY BY ERIK PETERSEN OF THE CHRONICLE



▲ Domaszewski adds detail to one of the landscape paintings which will be featured in her show at the Sola Cafe to benefit the Gallatin Valley Land Trust.

◀ Domaszewski paints a landscape of the view from Peets Hill at her studio recently.

IT'S SHOWTIME

WHAT: Hike Bike Feast by Loretta Domaszewski

WHY: Art benefit art show for Gallatin Valley Land Trust, food and refreshments by Sola Café; live music with guitarist M.E. Spogis and old-time swing and Cajun music by Steve and Sally O'Neill

WHEN: 5-9 p.m., Friday, April 3 **WHO:** Public invited