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### KUFM launches literature call-in program

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**NEWS RELEASE**

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Sept. 25, 1997

Contact: K.D. Wilson, KUFM-radio, 243-4214

**KUFM LAUNCHES LITERATURE CALL-IN PROGRAM**

**MISSOULA--**

Sunday, Oct. 5, a new radio show produced live at KUFM will hit the airways offering listeners the opportunity to share their thoughts about selections of fiction, poetry and essays from this region.

"Storylines Northwest," based on the successful "Big Sky Radio" series of 1993-95, will ask listeners to read selected writings, listen to authors and others talk about the works and then share their thoughts about the literature on a special toll-free telephone line at Montana Public Radio.

The 13-week series will feature works such as A.B. Guthrie Jr.'s "The Way West," H.L. Davis' "Honey in the Horn," Norman Maclean's "A River Runs Through It" and Ivan Doig's "This House of Sky." Co-hosting the program will be author and journalist Paul Zalis, director of the journalism department at Flathead Valley Community College; and Lowell Jaeger, poet, author, editor and English instructor at the college.

Zalis and Jaeger will open each program with information about a book's historical background, its literary significance and its connection with the Northwest. Conversations with special guests will follow, and then the phone lines will open. Zalis, who also is "Storylines" producer, describes the series as "sort of swapping stories around the campfire, only we use radio instead."

-more-

StoryNW.rl--2

“Big Sky Radio,” the prototype of “Storylines,” was the brainchild of Kalispell librarian Georgia Lomax, who was trying to create a sense of community among her patrons, many of whom lived miles apart and miles from the nearest library or bookstore.

“Storylines” will be broadcast to stations in Oregon, Washington, Idaho and Montana. The series will air from 7 to 9 p.m. Sundays on KUFM, 89.1.

###

KDW/tb  
Missoulian  
StoryNW.rl

## StoryLines America--Northwest Series

### The Books

**Program 1. *The Way West*, A.B. Guthrie, Jr.**

A Pulitzer-Prize winner in 1949, *The Way West* evaluates and explores the historical West from the 1830s to the 1950s. In this novel, Guthrie tests the frontier hypothesis of Frederick Jackson Turner--that as Americans moved west and encountered the wilderness, they were purified by their ordeals and became a new and better people. Further, the book examines and questions the heroic code of the American pioneer--self-respect, stoicism, courage, and endurance.

**Program 2. *Coyote Stories*, Mourning Dove**

Mourning Dove was born into the Okanogan tribe in northeast Washington in 1888. Her first novel, *Cogewea*, was probably the first written by an American Indian woman. *Coyote Stories* is the first published collection of Native American oral stories told by a Native American woman. This book displays the imaginative complexity of Plateau cultures, raises questions about simplistic stereotypes of Native Americans, and offers an insider's view of the legendary trickster, Coyote.

**Program 3. *Honey in the Horn*, H.L. Davis**

With this, his first novel, H.L. Davis won the Pulitzer Prize in 1935. The book satirizes the settling of Oregon and presents realistic portraits of colonial characters--the golden pioneer, helpless girl, innocent community, noble savage, and lost orphan boy. *Honey in the Horn* raises questions about the mythology of American innocence, and through his main character's quest, Davis rejects and revises the frontier myth of escape.

**Program 4. *The Surrounded*, D'Arcy McNickle**

*The Surrounded* is heralded as the prototype Native American novel in which the protagonist returns home after having experienced the world beyond the reservation and must eventually rediscover the ways of his tribe in order to define himself and his place in the world. By dramatizing the cultural and personal conflicts of forced assimilation, McNickle raises important questions about white supremacy, cultural imperialism, and the integrity of indigenous cultures.

**Program 5. *A River Runs Through It*, Norman Maclean**

Norman Maclean's classic novel examines the glories of fly fishing, the purifying effects of nature on the human soul, and the mysteries of one man's responsibility for another. The story of two brothers, one who pleases his Presbyterian minister-father, and the other, who falls into a life of drinking and personal failure, this book begs the reader to consider again the age-old question, "Are we our brother's keeper?"

**Program 6. *No-No Boy*, John Okada**

This book dramatizes the quest for identity of a young Pacific Northwest Nisei (second-generation Japanese American) man who rejects both military service in World War II and U.S. government relocation camps for Japanese Americans. After spending the war in prison, Ichiro returns to Seattle, parents, friends, veterans, institutions--all of which generate conflicts that he must resolve. *No-No Boy* raises significant questions about what it means to be an American, an immigrant, and an artist on the Pacific coast.

**Program 7. *This House of Sky*, Ivan Doig**

*This House of Sky* is a memoir of itinerant ranch life in Montana, and explores with haunting candor the complexities of family relationships between the author, his father Charlie, and his grandmother, Bessie Ringer. Beautifully written, the book portrays the author's love of his homeland and the ranching life-style of his father, but details the painful necessity for him to leave his boyhood, Montana, and ranching behind.

**Program 8. *Runaway*, Mary Clearman Blew**

In this collection of short stories, Mary Clearman Blew focuses on rural, northwestern women who have departed from the stereotypical norms of western frontier myths. She asks, "What happens to women seeking validation for their new life?" Juley, a recurring character who escapes into university life, provides one kind of answer. This is an important book in that it broadens the reader's understanding of the American West as it is experienced by women.

**Program 9. *Owning It All*, William Kittredge**

William Kittredge grew up on and then managed his family's large cattle ranch in eastern Oregon. There, he encountered first-hand the myths of land, manhood, and "manifest destiny" on which American culture is founded. *Owning It All* is a book of autobiographical essays that delve into those myths and their effects on our lives today.

**Program 10. *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*, Ken Kesey**

'Sixties counterculture guru Kesey writes of the heroic, tragic defiance of a fictional logger named R.P. McMurphy, who has been incarcerated in a mental hospital. Both hilarious and sad, this is the age-old story of the struggle for individual freedom and self-worth amid the dehumanizing forces of society's impersonal laws and institutions. The novel's narrator, Chief Bromden, who is also institutionalized, finally escapes, inspired by the spirit of his hero, McMurphy.

**Program 11. *Housekeeping*, Marilynne Robinson**

Most small towns in America have at least one household that just doesn't fit in. The yard may be overgrown with shrubbery and thistles, the shades drawn day and night, cats and dogs wandering everywhere. We worry that the residents of these houses signal too loudly the unraveling of our social fabric; they cause us to examine our towns, schools, jobs, plans. Ruthie, narrator of *Housekeeping*, is a quirky, eccentric, endearing character who lives in such a house. The book causes the reader to wonder if--in today's world of people moving around so often--it's possible for us to claim a particular address as "home."

**Program 12. *Of Wolves and Men*, Barry Lopez**

*Of Wolves and Men* is a book about wolves, but it is also about men, human nature, and the human struggle to understand our position on this planet in relation to other species. "The truth is that we know little about the wolf," Lopez asserts. In learning more about the wolf, as in learning about any other species, we might gain information critical to our own survival. We might also learn the skill of co-existence.

**Program 13. *The Business of Fancydancing*, Sherman Alexie**

Sherman Alexie's first book received highest praise as an authentic voice of contemporary Native American reservation life. Alexie's poems are in turn comic and tragic, but collectively they expose for the reader the emotional life of their characters. They examine Native American values and conflicts and remind us again of the vast spectrum of cultural differences within the borders of our nation.

## About the Producers & On-Air Hosts of "Storylines America"

### *Lowell Jaeger, Bigfork, Montana (co-host, Northwest Series)*

Lowell Jaeger, a poet, author, and editor, served as co-host of the "Big Sky Radio" series. He is an English instructor and former chair of the Humanities Division at the Flathead Valley Community College in Kalispell, Montana.

He has been involved in a number of humanities projects including serving as a lecturer for the Montana Committee for the Humanities, a resident writer for the Montana Arts Council Artists in the Schools programs; and a scholar/discussion leader for several National Endowment for the Humanities and Montana Committee for the Humanities programs. He was also the scholar/discussion leader for the "Living in the Last Best Place: Exploring the Myths and Realities of Life in Montana" (Big Sky Radio) project, funded by the NEH.

Jaeger's books include *Nothing Lasts Forever* (Wright Impressions, 1991) and a chapbook, *Law of the Fish* (Wright Impressions, 1990). He has been the recipient of a number of awards including the Mary Brennan Clapp Memorial Poetry Prize from the Montana Institute of the Arts (1990) and an Outstanding Scholarly Services Award from the Montana Committee for the Humanities (1991).

### *Paul Zalis, Bigfork, Montana (executive producer, "StoryLines America," co-host, Northwest Series)*

Paul Zalis, an author and journalist, served as co-host and producer/director for the "Big Sky Radio" series as well as wrote and co-produced the "Big Sky" documentary film. Zalis was project director for "Living in the Last Best Place" library archives radio project, funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities. He also has been director of the journalism department and English instructor at Flathead Community College, Kalispell, Montana.

He served as correspondent for United Press International, covering Berkeley and east San Francisco Bay cities, the *Palm Springs Desert Sun* and *Palm Springs Life* magazine. Zalis also was a reporter/special projects writer for the *Indio (CA) Daily News*, a reporter for the *Berkeley Gazette*, and reporter/bureau chief of the *Merced (CA) Sun-Star*.

Zalis is the author of *Who Is the River* (Atheneum, 1986) and 1991-92 recipient of the Montana Arts Council Fellowship for Fiction.

*What listeners in 1993-95 said  
about Montana's "Big Sky Radio" series*

"I was able to listen to all but two of your programs. One evening, my husband and I even brought the radio out into the garden, as we needed to transplant some flowers."

"I'm disabled and these programs have made all the difference in the world to me. You brought the library into my home."

"I am a young Montanan looking for an identity myself. There is Chippewa blood in me, I grew up on a ranch, and am pursuing a professional career in engineering. My priorities, responsibilities and instincts are pulled in half a dozen directions. To hear interpretations of Western literature and the responses of listeners gives me clues to this tangled puzzle."

"My understanding of Montana history and Indian perspectives have both increased 500 percent during this series. One of the best parts was having older people call in with their personal observations--'Wisdom of the Ages' on the radio--how rare!"


"I am writing to let you know how much my family and I enjoyed your program. My wife, her mother, and I gathered each Tuesday evening to have dinner and listen to the show. At first I was a bit put off that you didn't spend the whole two hours discussing the book for that program, but later I came to appreciate the breadth of the information you covered by not talking just about the books. I particularly enjoyed the discussions of Native American culture and view of the world."

"You have been company to me as I drive home from Great Falls each Tuesday after a full day of teaching piano and Kindermusik. It is a long drive and I have enjoyed your discussions immensely. Survival in Montana, especially for farmers and ranchers, depends on the capacity to stay busy with work, otherwise, as was said by one of your callers, 'A person has to get to know their own self.' A person can spend a lot of time here alone!"

"We listened as you exposed myths--some we knew and some were new. History acquired a richness, prejudices were laid bare, light penetrated into some dark corners. A threshold has been swept clean and a toehold established from which Montanans can step into the future."

"I have thoroughly enjoyed Big Sky Radio--my wife gets irritated because I refuse to chat during 7:30-9:30 on Tuesdays. I have not read one of the books yet, but plan to."

"I am especially happy about the unifying effect the program had in the state in getting callers statewide to share genuine information and a positive discussion in this format."



# StoryLines America

A Radio/Library  
Partnership Exploring Our  
Regional Literature

August 14, 1997

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human experience and

cultural heritage

Dear Reviewer/Producer:

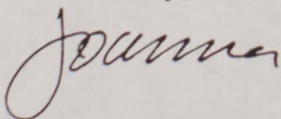
In a time when our public funding for the arts is increasingly threatened, here is a story that offers hope and a happy ending, and a project that I am truly honored to be a part of: "StoryLines America," an exciting new radio series that will premiere in October on National Public Radio affiliates throughout the Northwest and Southwest, USA. "StoryLines America" is a unique and ambitious partnership between libraries, public radio, and the National Endowment for the Humanities, which explores our regional literature and how it both reflects and shapes the diverse cultures of our nation.

"StoryLines America" is based on a highly successful series, "Big Sky Radio," which ran in Montana from 1993-1995 and which was in turn the brainchild of a rural librarian there who wanted to figure out a way to create a sense of community among her patrons--many of whom lived miles from each other as well from the nearest library or bookstore.

The original series, also funded by the NEH, proved to be so popular that the American Library Association asked this librarian, Georgia Lomax, and her colleagues, original producer and host Paul Zalis, co-host and scholar Lowell Jaeger to create a proposal for a series that would eventually cover each region of the country. The result is "StoryLines America," and these initial two series on the literature of the Northwest and the Southwest.

The kit enclosed provides more detail on the series and program schedule, the hosts, and lists the books and authors that will be discussed in each. I encourage you to write about "StoryLines America" and to consider interviewing those involved. It's a success story that no one can ignore or disdain and may indeed help resuscitate support for public funding for worthy arts programs in America. As one of the NEH panelists remarked during the review of the "StoryLines" proposal, "To conduct reading and discussion programs on talk radio is a stroke of genius!"

Sincerely,



Joanna T. Hurley

for "StoryLines America"

505/982-4006