

FISHTRAP FIRESIDE

Put a log on the fire and log on

ENTERPRISE — Put a log on the fire and log on for the next virtual Fishtrap Fireside on Friday, Dec. 4, at 7 p.m. This month's featured readers are Al Bell, Christina deVillier and Kellee Sheehy.

Fishtrap Fireside is a monthly reading series featuring diverse voices from residents and friends of Wallowa County. Fireside is held the first Friday of the month from October through April. Each gathering features three writers — from published authors and newspaper columnists to MFA poets, essayists and student writers.

This year, due to COVID-19, Fishtrap is bringing the program to the public online at www.fishtrap.org and on Fishtrap's YouTube channel, which means you can enjoy it wherever you are, whenever you want.

Following each program, a recording of the two-hour virtual event will join recordings of previous gatherings, available for viewers to enjoy online at any time. Subscribe to Fishtrap's YouTube channel and receive notifications whenever a Fishtrap video is posted.

Since the Fireside series launched in 2013, more than 80 Wallowa County writers have stepped up to share their work.

"We work hard to showcase a variety of people, perspectives, and life experiences," says Fishtrap's program director, Mike Midlo. "Everyone has a story to tell and Fireside is a place where we welcome people to do that."

Audiences have enjoyed a variety of genres including cowboy poetry, fiction, nonfiction, journalism, memoir, sci-fi fantasy,

humor, essay, travelogue, food stories and more. Each month offers a fresh look at what people of the West are thinking about and writing down.

December's Fireside is sponsored by the Enterprise Liquor Store. Fishtrap is headquartered at Fishtrap House, 400 E. Grant St., Enterprise. For more information, contact Midlo at 541-426-3623 or go to www.fishtrap.org.

Al Bell

Al Bell was discharged from the U.S. Navy in 1962. He went home to Marin County, California, and moved in with his parents. His mother told him he had a week to find another place to live, so he got a job at the nearby San Quentin Prison, which would hire virtually anyone that was breathing. The job came with a steady paycheck and he ended up staying in various law enforcement jobs for more than 30 years. His beautiful and patient wife has put up with him for more than 50 years. A musician and singer-songwriter, he recently has added author to his list of accomplishments.



Christina deVillier

Christina deVillier lives in Lostine where she gardens, roots, writes and tries to keep her priorities straight. She is a graduate of the Iowa Writers' Workshop and has earned fellowships from Fishtrap, Tin House and the McIntyre Foundation. Her work can be found in About Place, Cold Mountain Review, basalt and elsewhere. Her first book of poems, "Long Coordinates," is forthcoming in 2021 from Lynx House Press.



Kellee Sheehy

Kellee Sheehy likens her career path to an all-you-can-eat buffet — "It's a little bit of everything you want to try, but wouldn't normally put together on one plate" — from selling for a Fortune 500 company to writing and teaching dance and yoga.



She grew up in Louisiana, which contributed to her appreciation of traditions, culture, hospitality and celebrating with good food. After college she followed her curiosity in both work and personal endeavors, among them traveling, motherhood and co-founding a personal growth organization for women. Her hobbies include turning daydreams into dabbles and dabbles into doing. She currently works as the development director at the Joseph Center for Arts and Culture in Joseph.

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Fishtrap
Writing & The West

Celebrate art at **The Big** livestream

LA GRANDE — Art Center East's open exhibit, "The Big," showcases Northeast Oregon's wealth of talent. Opening the first week of December and on display through January, this annual art event serves multiple purposes: it invites local and regional artists to celebrate the arts, creates awareness of the value of arts in our communities, and raises funds for community arts programming at ACE.

The Big will go on this year, adapting to restrictions necessitated by the COVID-19 pandemic. A virtual opening reception Saturday, Dec. 5, will be streamed live from Art Center East. Host and musician Ashley O'Toole will perform with friends in the ACE Main Gallery, giving viewers at home a sneak peek at the exhibit between songs.



As promotional materials for the event point out, "Though we'll be celebrating apart, we can still come together to appreciate the talent in our backyard."

Join the online event via the Exhibit Page on Art Center East's website (www.artcentereast.org/calendar/the-big-aces-annual-open-exhibit/) on Saturday at 6 p.m.

The Big is a non-juried exhibit open to anyone who would like to participate. "We love this show because of the artists it brings out of the woodwork," said Art Center East's executive director, Darcy Dolge, in a press release.

The exhibit typically fills both of Art Center East's galleries with works in a wide range of artistic mediums — from ceramics, painting, mixed media, fiber arts and photography to bronze and stained glass. Much of the work on display will be available for purchase.

When pandemic protocols allow in-person viewing at Art Center East, 1006 Penn Ave., La Grande, The Big exhibit and all other shows at the art center will be, as always, free and open to the public.

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