

# Gaynor Ranch, Indian and Western ranching

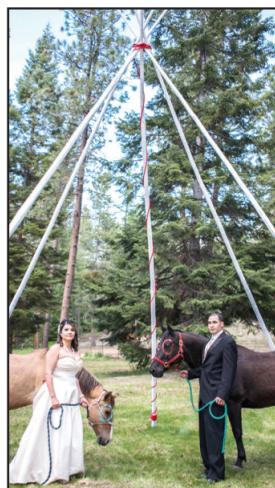
By Meredith C. McGee  
Jackson Advocate Contributing Writer

“Nancy do you have any more fried bread and huckleberry jam?” a guest at Gaynor’s Ranch Bed & Breakfast recently inquired. After pausing the guest said, “It was delicious!”

Many Americans associate fried bread with those sugary funnel cakes sold at State Fairs and at traveling carnivals. But, Nancy Gaynor equates fried bread to her Indian traditions.

When they were growing up on the Flathead Indian Reservation in northwestern Montana, fried bread was customarily a part of their regular diet like mashed potatoes, gravy, vegetables, and grilled venison steak.

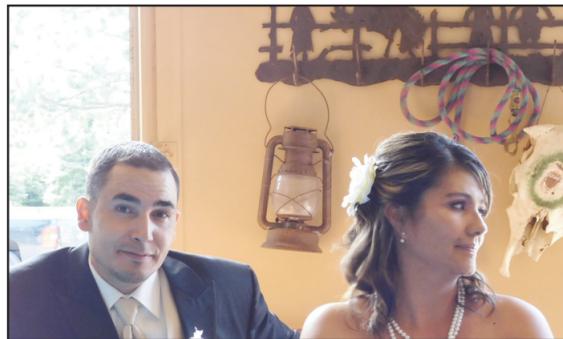
Guest at Gaynor’s Ranch learn Indian traditions such as the tale of how the business owner’s ancestors lived off the land before relocating on the reservation. “We roamed



this land on horseback for centuries eating Buffalo meat like Americans eat beef; we ate berries, potatoes, carrots, corn, wild game, and many things off the land,” Nancy proclaimed.

Nancy complained a lot of the new ways are not good. “When we were growing up on

the reservation the government gave our tribal people a lot of unhealthy commodities such as white flour, canned meats, blocks of processed cheese, sacks of sugar, and all the things that plagued our people with unwanted weight gain and



Louis and Keya

diabetes,” Nancy said. “The story of our history is a sad story,” she declared. “But, it is our story; so we must tell it all.” She continued, “Our people were hunters and gatherers of the bountiful berries, wild carrots, wild potatoes, and onions.”

Nancy is the product of two worlds which joined each other merging Western cultures with Kootenai Indian traditions.

One of her ancestor’s Eneas Paul Big Knife was from the Iroquois Indian Tribe near present day White Plain, NY. He converted to the Catholic faith in the late 1800s, and migrated to Montana as a missionary converting Kootenai Indians to Christianity. Today, many tribal members are Catholics.

The Kootenai Indians are natives of the present state of Montana. Artifacts prove they have been in the area for over 14,000 years.

The tribal people are matriarchal, and believe they are stewards of the land and its resources; the following statement summarizes their philosophies:

The earth is our historian; it is made of our ancestor’s

bones. It provides us with nourishment, medicine, and comfort. It is our source of our independence; it is our Mother. We do not dominate Her, but harmonize with Her.

The Homestead Act which was passed May 20, 1862

opened up land settlement to whites and Nancy’s grandfather Andres Jackson, whose ancestors were Swedish, obtained some of the former Indian land. He was a successful businessman, who established the Jackson Ranch in 1918. “My father was born on the ranch and lived there until his death,” Nancy stated.

When Nancy’s father, Walter, was a young man, he attended a dance at Big Arm, a small Indian settlement on the reservation, and met Nancy’s mother, Effie. “It was always a balancing act between the two worlds, but they stayed married for 50 years and raised 7 children,” Nancy declared.

Nancy’s brother, Douglas Jackson, operates the Jackson Ranch today herding a mix of Hereford and Angus cows, and maintaining a nice herd of cattle and horses. The Jackson’s had a successful business succession plan in place which is key to business longevity.

Don and Nancy established the Gaynor Ranch in 1991 near Whitefish. They sold the Whitefish ranch in 2014 and bought a ranch in the

majestic Mission Mountains. Their Bed and Breakfast can accommodate 20 guests. Nancy’s son and daughter-in-law, Joel and Saran Warneke, are business partners too.

The owners bring to life as much of their native culture as they possible can. The ranch is also used for special events by local residents. The bride, Keya Birdsville, and groom, Louis Camel, of a wedding on the ranch during the Memorial Day weekend road in the gate on horses painted with traditional Indian colors.

There are seven teepees at the resort for adventurous guests. The traditional make shift beds have been replaced with cots, and guests can enjoy steak and eggs for breakfast. A horse riding trail, the Mission Mountains, the Flathead Indian Reservations, the Glacier National Park are just some of

the sites nearby. A casino, resort, and restaurant which serves traditional Indian food is located on the Flathead Reservation which is home to three tribes, the Bitterroot Salish, Upper Pend d’Oreille, and the Kootenai. Tourists are likely to see elk, bighorn sheep, antelope and deer on self-guided auto tours, year-round.

The reservation hosts an annual Pow Wow July 1st-5<sup>th</sup>. The children begin the Pow Wow dance season wearing handmade moccasins and dance regalia moving to the beat of the drum. Traditional Indian celebrations are important because they were once illegal under Bureau of Indian Affairs rules.

Camp fires, storytelling, and outdoor fun are everyday activities at the Gaynor Ranch.

Nancy makes the stories so vivid. The listener can envision the Indian singing, praying, and the tales of ranchers riding the land. Occasionally, she is known to throw in a few stories of Big Foot sightings!

Nancy was formerly the director of the Tribal Business Information Center at Salish Kootenai College; she is an award-winning entrepreneur. She credits her father, Walter Jackson, with having passed down his business knowledge to her generation. “They were good ranchers and shrewd businessmen,” she determined. She is also proud she and her family can share a taste of Indian traditions with guests of the Gaynor’s Ranch year-round.

For more information visit [www.gaynorranhch.net](http://www.gaynorranhch.net). Gaynor’s Ranch, 32318 Bisson Lane, Polson, MT 59860; 406.883.3807.

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# THE TOUGALOO ART COLONY

## 18th YEAR

# HOT ART

# 2015

SCHEDULE

HOT ART EXHIBIT, Ongoing Africa Oceania Exhibit, Art Scholar Lecture, Band Performance and ART TALKS located in Bennie G Thompson Building

JUNE 1-JULY 16 HOT ART EXHIBITION

SUNDAY, JULY 12

- 4:00 PM – 6:00 PM REGISTRATION  
Holmes Hall Auditorium
- 6:00 PM PARTICIPANTS MEET WITH INSTRUCTORS IN ASSIGNED STUDIOS  
(Class located in Holmes Hall Auditorium will meet in alternate location)

MONDAY, JULY 13 – THURSDAY, JULY 16

- 7:30 AM – 8:30 AM BREAKFAST - Warren Hall (Instructors & Dormitory residents)
- 8:30 AM – 11:45 AM MORNING STUDIO SESSIONS
- 12:00 NOON – 12:45 PM LUNCH - Warren Hall Dining (Dormitory residents, TAs and pre-paid tickets)
- 1:00 PM – 2:15 PM ART TALKS - Benny G Thompson Bldg  
Monday – Rabe’s Ballin and InKyoung Choi Chun  
Tuesday – Delita Martin and Ruth Miller  
Wednesday – Lovie Oliver and Charlotte Webb  
Thursday – Ann Johnson and Colony Participants
- 2:30 PM – 5:15 PM AFTERNOON STUDIO SESSIONS
- 5:30 PM DINNER (on your own)
- 7:00 PM – UNTIL\* OPEN STUDIO WORK SESSIONS

THURSDAY, JULY 16 FREE PUBLIC EVENT

Bennie G Thompson Building

- 6:00 PM – 7:00 PM RECEPTION
- 7:00 PM – 8:30 PM BARBER Lecture & BORSIA performance

FRIDAY, JULY 17

- 7:30 AM – 8:30 AM BREAKFAST
- 9:00 AM – 12:00 NOON PUBLIC VIEWING OF STUDIOS  
STUDIO CLEAN-UP  
EVALUATIONS  
CEU PAPERWORK SUBMISSIONS
- 12:00 NOON – 1:30 PM Lunch and Wrap-up session

\*CEU Applicants must complete a minimum of 40 hours (includes extended studio hours)









Hot Art Exhibit: June 1-July 16 • Instructors’ works

JULY 16, 6pm Closing Reception • Open to Public

Tiffany Barber: Art Scholar/Speaker • 7pm

Getting the Black Art History We Require: A dialogue between Modern & Post Modern

Vocal performance by charismatic musician, K.D. Brosia

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