

# DAVY'S COLUMN

*Davy Sheets, MLA President*



*As the article on page 3 informs*, the MLA's 2017 "**Spring Meeting**" will be held the weekend of March 9/10 at *Fairmont Hot Springs Resort*. Our traditional program includes a *Welcoming Reception* Friday night, followed by our *Meeting and Luncheon* of Saturday.

Whereas, our *Spring Meeting* usually coincides with the beginning of the Spring Breakup, we dedicate a portion of Saturday morning's *Educational Forum* to representatives of Montana's log purchasing facilities. Specifically, we ask them to update us on any changes in their operation and to discuss their needs and expectations for the impending logging season.

For those so inclined, this year's program will also include an afternoon *Tour of Historic Downtown Butte*. Butte America has been celebrated in fact and fiction since the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century... and this tour will bring much of that to life. Plus it includes a final stop at the Headframe Distillery for some lies and libation. Many thanks to MLA SW Regional Rep Bryan Lorengo for organizing this event ... and we hope you can join us.

Lastly, we remind you that March is a popular time of year at Fairmont Hot Springs Resort... thus, you should make your reservations as early as possible.

**And while I am focused on meeting dates...** I encourage you to review the MLA Calendar posted on page 6 in order to "save the dates" of this year's MLA conferences.

**Montana's two U.S. Senators** have announced their priorities for the coming year.

Senator Jon Tester has a laundry list of items that he believes to be important... including a reference to passage of a new Farm Bill "that helps agricultural producers and programs that put food on the table for low-income families." [Read: *food stamps?*]. I, too, would like to see a new Farm Bill—especially one with a strong and forward looking Forestry Title... so I'll have to press the good Senator for support on that front.

Senator Steve Daines also has a list of items he deems to be important... and he is vocal about his commitment to passing national forest management reforms. I'm with you Senator Daines. Good luck.

**Senator Tester is also leading** an effort to have the Capitol Christmas Tree—which was harvested on the Kootenai National Forest and transported to Washington DC—returned to Montana where it can be milled and utilized in the rebuilding of the Sperry Chalet in Glacier National Park which was destroyed in a catastrophic wildfire last summer.

My first reaction to this story was... Huh? As someone who has hauled logs into Montana sawmills from surrounding states, I know first-hand the enormous hauling expense associated with such a venture. So, to haul a single tree round trip from Montana to DC... well, that outta be a record for log hauling costs.

Now, I'm not taking issue with the merits of this proposal... after all, I've been part of more than a few jobs that haven't paid their freight. I'm just hoping that when the next logging and hauling rates are posted for Montana, the cost of this escapade is included in the calculation.

Be careful out there... and have a great winter logging season... **Davy**