

Montana Mining Association

2024 ANNUAL MEETING AUCTION ITEMS



1. ONE-OF-A-KIND, HAND-CRAFTED “INFINITY MINE SHAFT TABLE,” imagined and constructed by renowned artist, Mike Hamblin

(see feature story in this issue of Montana Mining magazine and <https://www.facebook.com/hamblinart/>).

This truly original creation can be described but must be experienced to fully appreciate its ingenuity and craftsmanship. Standing at approximately 42 inches high with a top that measures 31½-inches square, this table would be a perfect and memorable centerpiece for a private home, bar or corporate office.

Utilizing the art of illusion, it will appear as if you’re looking down into a mine shaft of unknown depth. The

echoing sounds of dripping water add to the experience. (Note: when not playing the water sounds, the table can play your favorite music or podcast and has charging ports for your portable electronics.)

Own this uniquely conceived and constructed work of functional art by The Mining City’s living artistic legend. This is only the fourth one of these table types ever built by Hamblin, and the last one donated at a Montana Tech function sold to the highest bidder for over \$10,000!

Commissioned by the Montana Mining Association.

2. TWO-DAY PRIVATE BIRD HUNT AND LODGE STAY for four individuals at the Snowy Mountain Pheasant Company ranch, Judith River Basin.

Snowy Mountain Pheasant Company is located in the heart of Montana’s Judith Basin. It is aptly named for the majestic mountain range found just to the south which provides the headwaters to the Ross Fork River where the ranch property is situated. Snowy Mountain is the perfect recreational getaway with plenty of action for upland bird hunting enthusiasts seeking the classic Montana outdoor experience.

Further details:

- 2 days, 2 nights during a workweek coordinated with ranch owners.
- Up to four self-guided hunters.
- Dog handlers available if participants do not have own.
- Depending on time of year, waterfowl hunting available (migratory bird license and stamp required).
- Good food/beverage options located in Lewistown, located ~15 miles east of the ranch.
- Lodging: use of new 4-suite lodge on the ranch.

Value: \$10,000. Graciously donated by Mark Taylor, Taylor Luther Group and Hecla Mining. Proceeds for this auction item go to the MMA Mining Scholarship Fund.

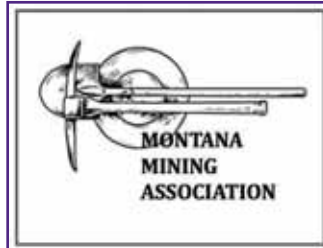




3. ONE DAY OF GOPHER HUNTING AND A BBQ STEAK DINNER for up to six guests on The Higgins Brothers Ranch, Ringling, Montana.

Enjoy a day of gopher hunting followed by a steak dinner for up to six guests at the sprawling Higgins Brothers Ranch near Ringling. An authentic Montana experience; bring lots of ammunition, as this is some of the most prime varmint-hunting habitat under the Big Sky!

Access and dinner graciously donated by MMA Board member Nancy Schlepp, Sandfire Resources America, Black Butte Copper and family.



4. HAND-CRAFTED CUSTOM-MADE MMA LOGO HUNTING KNIFE with leather sheath by Brad Watkins Knives.

A Montana Tech engineering alumni, fifth-generation Montanan and currently a manager at Barretts Minerals, Brad started making knives in 2010 and has mentored under accomplished bladesmiths.

The design and construction of each knife combines his years of experience in the outdoors with his background in mechanical engineering. His knives have been developed through extensive field testing, blending the hardcore outdoorsman's requirements with heirloom-quality craftsmanship. He takes pride in building each knife by hand with all materials procured from fellow small businesses.

Knife details: 8-3/4" length x 0.125" thickness MagnaCut stainless steel at 63 HRC. Flat ground blade with tapered tang, 416 stainless bolsters and pins. Double dyed and stabilized box elder handle, green handle liners with stainless accent spacers; hand-carved leather sheath.

Commissioned by the Montana Mining Association.



➤ see Auction, page 30

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5. FULL-DAY HOSTED SIGHT-FISHING FOR CARP AND/OR NORTHERN PIKE ON THE MISSOURI RIVER.

Sight fishing for Montana’s hardest fighting and most difficult target on the fly! Mark Mariano, our own local carp nut, will pole you across the shallow flats of the Missouri River in a small skiff in search of hard fighting fish that can top 20 pounds! Get ready to see your backing when these smart, hard fighting fish take you for the ride of your life. This trip also allows for the opportunity to target pike on fly or gear.

Start practicing your salt-water casting now, because *this is as close to redfishing/ bonefishing as you’ll get in fresh water!*

When: Any warm, sunny, low-wind day in July or early August 2024 that works for both host and donor. These specific conditions are extremely important for success, because we will need to see these bruisers from afar, before they see us!

Where: Missouri River above Toston Dam (no pike), Missouri River above

Canyon Ferry (no pike), Missouri River below Cascade (ample opportunity for both carp and pike).

Guided by host with lunch, NA drinks, and fishing gear supplied.

Donated by Rampart Solutions’ Mark Mariano, one of Montana’s premier carp fishing experts.



6. R.L. WINSTON AIR 2 9-FOOT, 4 PC 5-WEIGHT FLY ROD PLUS TWO NIGHTS STAY for up to five guests at The Stony Creek Cabin on Rock Creek near Philipsburg, Montana.

A top-quality fly rod by a world-renowned rod maker and two nights of high-class riverside accommodations at a top-rated Airbnb facility for five with a hot tub overlooking the banks of a blue-ribbon trout stream – this auction item is a combination you can’t beat!

The Air 2 is one of the best rated trout fishing rods on the market today, backed by R.L. Winston’s lifetime warrantee. The Stony Creek Cabin



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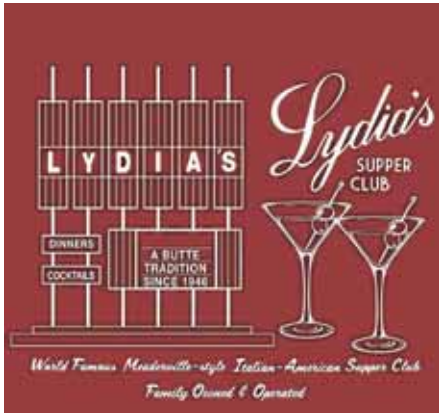
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is a beautiful log cabin facility overlooking world-famous trout stream Rock Creek, approximately 30 minutes from Philipsburg. There's no better way to break in your new rod than on one of Rock Creek's browns, rainbows or native westslope cutthroat trout.

Rod donated by MMA Past President, Mark Thompson, Montana Resources, and Lodging donated by Eric and Christi Jacobsen (cleaning fees covered by MMA).



7. DINNER AND DRINKS WITH THE MONTANA MINING ASSOCIATION'S EXECUTIVE BOARD MEMBERS AND MANAGEMENT TEAM at Lydia's Supper Club in Butte, Montana for up to six guests.

Enjoy a Mining City-style dinner at Butte's famous Lydia's Supper Club with the Montana Mining Association's Executive Board members and Management Team as your hosts! Lydia's is a well-known Butte eating establishment specializing in its Italian, steaks and seafood for over 75 years.

Members of the MMA Executive Board (Ben Raffety, Barretts Minerals; Mark Thompson, Montana Resources; Paul Liner,

Graymont; Tina Nolevanko, Pacific Steel & Recycling; Chuck Buus, Barrick-Golden Sunlight Mine) and Management Team (Matt Vincent, Executive Director; and Jon Sonju, Chief Lobbyist) will be your group's (up to six) hosts, so look forward to a fun evening of industry-related conversation and getting to know our association up close and personal!

Hosted by the Montana Mining Association. **M**



Salt Lake City
2975 West 2100 South
Salt Lake City, UT 84119
801.972.4000

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Mining City Artist

From portraits to infinity tables, Mike Hamblin works his magic to create the illusion of reality

MATT VINCENT

BUTTE, Montana – In the morning, when Mike Hamblin looks to the east out from his home in Walkerville, the most prominent thing on the immediate horizon above the steam rising from his cup of coffee is the towering, steel headframe of the Lexington Mine. In the evening, maybe over a glass of whiskey, the sun’s rays bask the same angular industrial hulk, only from a different angle, in a different light.

As a native of The Mining City, who is undeniably one of its best known and talented artists – ever – it’s no surprise “Lexington Light” would end up being one of his works on canvas. “I remember it was New Year’s Eve and it was just beautiful, glowing in that golden light. I took a picture because I knew right then I had to paint it.”

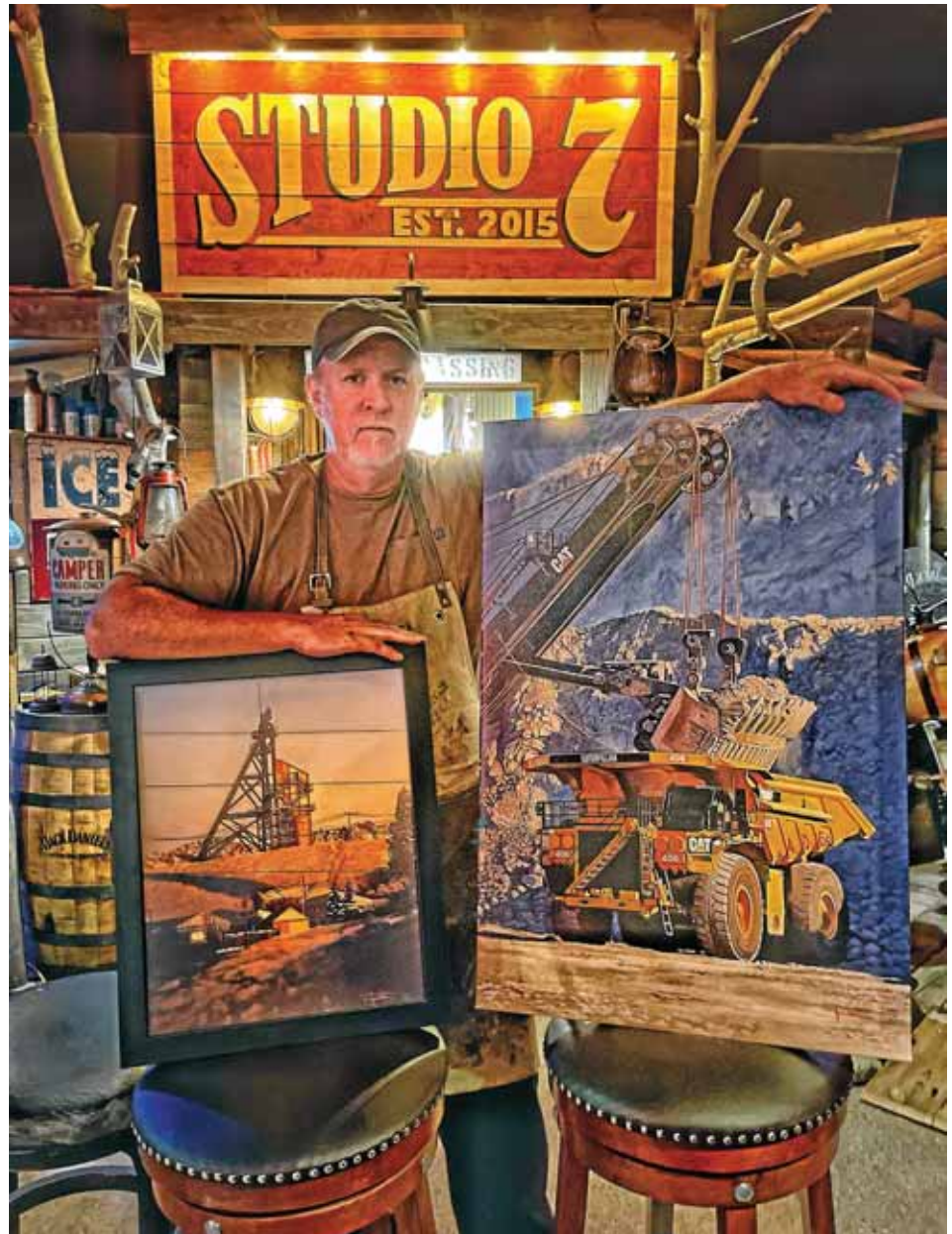
An artistic painter for going on 50 years now, Hamblin is clearly a master of the brush and palette when it comes to his portraits. Copper King William Clark. Legendary Montana Tech former head football coach Bob Green. U.S. Senator and Ambassador to Japan Mike Mansfield. Athletes, firefighters, police officers. He’s painted nearly every famous, semi famous – even some infamous or unfamous characters from his home of Butte and far beyond. Portraits are his thing.

“I’ve always liked the sense of accomplishment,” he explains. “To do a face and have someone recognize it.”

In honing his skills over the decades, Hamblin has grown to be able to do much more and much better than that, and he still proclaims it’s a work in progress.

Likening painting to a video game, as the levels of difficulty increase, “the more I learn about painting the harder it gets,” he explains. “When people get to that level, most of them are satisfied with the results. For me, you strive to be better today than you were yesterday. Otherwise, what’s the point?”

“If I live to be 100, when I die there will be an unfinished painting on my easel, and I’ll have learned something new that day.”



MATT VINCENT

Artist Mike Hamblin stands in his studio in Walkerville holding up two of his mining-themed paintings that he donated to the Montana Mining Association in 2023.

It is this belief and spirit that has solidified Hamblin as a sought-after painter for portraits – and not just people. His abilities that have allowed him to master bringing people to life

with his paintbrush have expanded his horizons limitlessly, with his eye for observation always keener.

“It just branches out to everything,” he

said of his skills he uses to paint people to life. “An old truck, a motorcycle, a pair of shoes ... a gallows frame. It’s creating an illusion that something is real. Magicians do it all the time.”

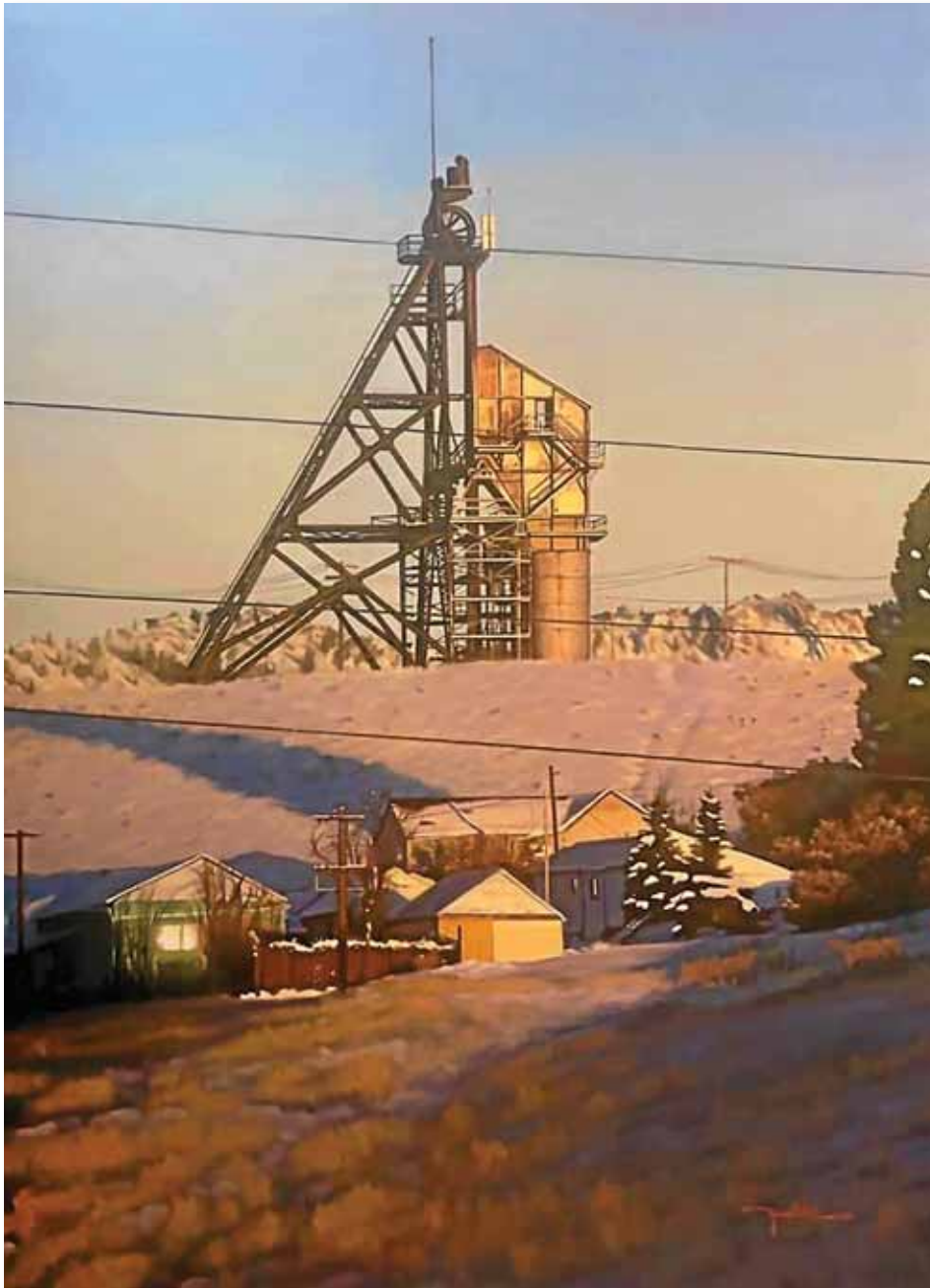
Hamblin started drawing when he was three years old, recalling the first time he became obsessed with capturing the perfection of a simple five-point star, filling pages of a yellow legal pad until he’d gotten it right.

He continued his training under great teachers in the Butte school system, Mike Kujawa and Brad Loewen, who helped stoke his passion. He then went to the University of Montana-Western in Dillon, where he credits professor Jim Corr for teaching him how to master fundamentals and then the confidence to use them in his own way.

“That was very pivotal for me,” Hamblin said. “‘These are the tools, now go figure them out,’ was his philosophy, and that gave me everything I ever needed.”

He finished his formal training at the Art Institute in Seattle and lived in Missoula for a time before moving back to Butte in 2015 and buying his century-plus old home in Walkerville, about which he said, “he had a good feeling.”

In the decade since he’s moved home, Hamblin has built a studio that is truly awe inspiring. In addition to displaying many of his works and providing him a workspace,



“Lexington Light” is a painting of the historic Lexington underground mine’s iron headframe basked in the waning light of New Year’s Eve. The headframe is the dominant feature capturing the view to the east from Hamblin’s home studio.

the entire place is a throwback to Butte’s and the Frontier West’s heyday, sort of a saloon room, dance hall, art studio, mining and western memorabilia museum all wrapped into one location. And Hamblin has created all of it—“functional wood sculpture,” he calls it.

“It’s nice not having to just paint and draw all the time,” he chuckles. “If you pull back far enough, artists – no matter what kind: musicians, painters, writers – we are all creators.”

It was during his immersion on his studio that he built his first mine infinity table, which has since been added to a private collection. He’s built three others, one of which

was donated to the Montana Tech annual foundation live auction. He knew they were a special hit with people when that one fetched over \$10,000.

Describing his paintings as having the illusion of great depth, it’s the illusion of depth in his tables that draws people in. Built in the style of a high top or buddy bar table, the tables feature a glass top into which one can look down into what appears to be a shaft with no bottom. The illusion of infinite depth is created by two-way mirrors and is made all the more convincing by the sound of dripping water.

Each of the previous four have been unique to themselves, and Hamblin promises that the one he’s currently building for the Montana Mining Association’s annual meeting auction “is going to be a show-stopper.”

When asked about past clients for whom he’s done commission work, or awards or accolades he’s achieved in his career to give a reader an idea of his notoriety, Hamblin shows his modest, matter-of-fact side, which no doubt comes from being born and bred in the reality of a town like Butte.

“I don’t speak for the work,” he says. “The work speaks for me. I’m not a salesman and I’m not here to tell anybody how good I am.”

One can figure that out for him or herself – although they’ll likely be wondering, “how’d he do it?” **M**

8. Bull Moose Grill

A completely original creation by the artisans at Pacific Steel & Recycling, this unique, handcrafted charcoal grill will be the talk of your town! Standing at approximately five (5) feet tall, this original design is a full-bodied bull moose with a charcoal grilling station that includes grates and special slots for cooking your skewers as well. The entire grill is made of steel and finished with fireproof paint. Truly a one-of-a-kind work of art!

