

CROSS CUT

HELENA LIFESTYLES



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HELENA'S BEARD CULTURE

Page 3

A cross cut of Helena's lifestyle and culture

GREG LEMON
Editor

As a writer, I know the value of revision. Sometimes pulling something apart, reworking it and then putting it all together again can produce a new and fresh product.

In the spirit of the new and the fresh, I'm happy to present Independent Record readers with the inaugural edition of Cross Cut.

About a month ago, we published our last Sunday Lifestyles section and we heard from many of you that it was a section you were missing. But our promise then is fulfilled today. We wanted to bring readers a new section that has fresh content and a new vibe. We want to introduce to you features you'll see every

month, along with the engaging articles you've grown used to.

Cross Cut will be our in-depth look at some of the things that make life in Helena interesting and dynamic. As the name implies, Cross Cut will take a monthly look at a cross section of Helena's lifestyle and culture. Don't expect your normal news stories — that's not what this section is about. Instead, you'll find the curious or edgy stories about our town. Or maybe a closer look into some of the people and places that make Helena great.

Each month Cross Cut will be built around four things: a dynamic feature story, a Q&A with an interesting local personality, a question posed to a handful of residents, and a collection of photo outtakes from the past month at the IR.

In the coming months we may expand on this selection, but this will be our core offering.

Our core value as a newspaper is to keep our readers informed about the community around them.

Much of the time that means the most expansive and in-depth local news coverage. But it also means taking a deeper and more entertaining look at the community around us. Cross Cut will provide our readers that each month.

As always, if you have any questions or suggestions for our new publication, please don't hesitate to drop me a note or give me a call: greg.lemon@helena-tr.com or 447-4080.



PERSON ON THE STREET

What's your stance on yoga pants?

Compiled by Marga Lincoln, Independent Record



ANGEL BENEVENTI

If you're comfortable in your own skin, wear them. I wear them myself and do yoga. I was a yoga instructor. I've seen a lot of people come and go in yoga pants. Go yoga! (Attention, yoga pants fans: Angel has a Helena nephew, Zak James, who wrote a rap-style ode to yoga pants, which is on youtube.)



BEN WAHL

Oh gosh. I don't have a care in the world on that. I like them.



CARMEN BENEVENTI

Hey, if you're comfortable — fine, but underwear is a good thing. I take pride in my panty lines.



BARB BURKLAND

You know, I don't think they should be banned. But I don't think it's work attire — but that's different. Sweatpants aren't either. I don't think they should pass a law to ban them.



CRAIG HARRIS

Why not? But I don't look good in them. If you're going to ban yoga pants, why not bikinis? That's like no short shorts in summer. That's as bad a bill as one they tried about four Legislatures ago to ban bulges in males' pants.

‘There’s a current renaissance of the bearded lifestyle’



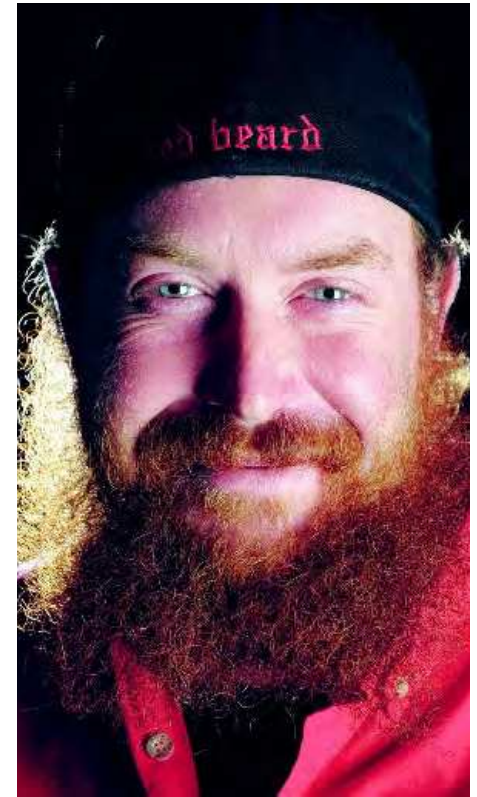
‘I started growing about 10 or 12 years ago, and I’ve definitely seen it become more accepted in social situations,’ says Steffen Rasile, president of the Bruigher Beard and Moustache Club of Montana. ‘I do keep it oiled and conditioned – that’s important to keep it manicured.’



‘I had no grand scheme. I just got three weeks into this, and I decided to say ‘screw it’ and see what happens,’ says Gordon Hoven, a computer programmer with the state. ‘I have noticed a big difference, and I’m convinced my face is warmer.’



‘I didn’t plan on growing it way out, but eventually I just wanted to see,’ says Devin Felix, who began growing this beard as a part of ‘No Shave November.’



‘It represents freedom just to let it go,’ says Alex Tyhurst, whose friends call him ‘Red Beard.’

FACIAL FOLLICLE FREEDOM

TOM KUGLIN | *Independent Record*

EVERY BEARD HAS A STORY. IT MAY BE FOR BEAUTY OR functionality, but facial follicle liberation has made a major charge in the fashion world with beard care products, dating sites, magazines and contests for men to showcase their best furry faces. In a place like Montana, beards have long maintained a barrier against arctic winds, but with catchwords like “beardsman” and “lumbersexual” finding their way into mainstream culture, the rest of the nation is starting to look a little scruffier.

Currie Corban, editor of Urban Beardsman Magazine, knows his publication tailors to a very specific audience. But that audience is growing like a five o’clock shadow. In the last two years, sales have

Thom Bridge, *Independent Record*

Some take bearding to a competitive level. Cody Apple demonstrates his beard during The Garage's 'Holiday Facial Hair Competition' in December.

risen from \$5,000 into the millions for Urban Beardsman's parent company, Beardbrand, he said.

"There's a current renaissance of the bearded lifestyle and the beardsman," Corban said. "And we've been extremely successful in creating the best beard care products for this amazing community."

Beards were largely stigmatized in the 1960s, associated with poor hygiene and rebellion,

he said. Starting in the 1980s, a gradual beard acceptance began creeping into corporate America, he added.

"In the recent world things have changed and you can be a stylish, well-kept man and have a beard in the workplace," Corban said. "People understand that beards are a symbol of confidence and authenticity."

The camaraderie between facial hair enthusiasts has grown as well, he said, but a caricature

of beards and flannel donned by some urbanites irked many serious beardsmen.

In many ways a response to the "metrosexual" fashion trend of a decade ago, "lumbersexuals" as they've come to be called tap into a rugged historic look to portray masculinity, although most have probably never picked up an axe in their lives.

"When the term 'lumbersexual' came into play, it was an eye roll for us and frustrating

for me," Corbin said. "Now it's a huge fashion style and trend and it's all in great humor."

Those who actually make their living in the woods see the humor in the lumbersexual fashion movement as well.

"We definitely roll our eyes and laugh it off, I mean most of those people have never run a chainsaw or put chains on a truck," said Josh Van Vlack, senior resource forester for the Wyoming Forestry Division.

"The history of woodsmen wearing beards was protection from the elements. Now with all this necessity of maintenance, it's more work growing a beard than actually shaving."

The irony of the lumbersexual fashion movement is that many of today's foresters wear synthetic clothing rather than flannel, and use machinery to cut logs, said Eric Neal, forester with the Helena National Forest. Although entertaining, the

‘When the term ‘lumbersexual’ came into play, it was an eye roll for us and frustrating for me. Now it’s a huge fashion style and trend and it’s all in great humor.’

psychology behind the movement makes sense, he added.

“The folks are usually well educated and probably lead fairly complicated lives,” Neal said. “So to some degree they probably appreciate the simplicity. They may be celebrating the antithesis of themselves.”

But the reasons why men choose to free their faces from the confines of a razor vary like the red, gray, brown and blond shades of the beards themselves.

Helena contractor Alex Tyhurst has such a heavy beard that while in the military, he had to shave twice a day to keep his commanders at bay. After getting out of the military, he “just got lazy,” he said.

“It represents freedom just to let it go,” Tyhurst said, noting that he does little maintenance other than an occasional trim.

The biggest hazards of letting his facial hair flourish have been “enemies of the beard,” namely barbeque sauce and icicles, he said.

Tyhurst counts himself as a fan of big illustrious facial hair, shaving in a Wyatt Earp-style mustache for his 1800s-themed wedding.

Gordon Hoven is a newcomer to the bearded lifestyle, only allowing his facial hair to begin sprouting in October. What began as a three-week experiment has turned into several months of growth, garnering its share of compliments.

“I had no grand scheme, I just got three weeks into this and I decided to say ‘screw it’ and see what happens,” said Hoven, a computer programmer with the state of Montana. “I have noticed a big difference and I’m convinced my face is warmer.”

To keep his beard looking top notch, Hoven gives it a frequent shampoo. He also has beard oil for those days when he really wants his whiskers to stand out.

“I do use jojoba oil to make it look shiny and pretty, but that’s only for special occasions,” he said.

Oils are not part of the beard care regiment for Devin Felix. What he started growing for “No Shave November,” a month dedicated to growing facial hair to promote men’s health, has continued throughout the winter.

“I didn’t plan on growing it way out, but eventually I just wanted to see,” Felix said, adding that he does trim to keep his beard from growing into his mouth and interfering with eating.

Felix agreed that his face has stayed warmer this winter, but he remains unsure about those who take their beards too seriously. He is also unimpressed with the lumbersexual fashion movement.

“It’s crazy what people in cities will pay for. People in Montana work for a living so flannel and Carharts are just part of that,” Felix said.

While most whiskers never exit the hobbyist realm, a few truly serious beardsmen graduate their facial hair to

More **FOLLICLE**, page 8L



Steve Hermanson shows his facial creation to the crowd during the Garage’s ‘Holiday Facial Hair Competition’ in December.

Thom Bridge, Independent Record

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THE FRAME

THOM BRIDGE, INDEPENDENT RECORD

For a photograph, its frame is its most imperative element. It acts not only to shepherd an observer into the photograph, it forces the observer out of reality and into the world of the photograph. For even a split second, the frame brings the viewer to a place not always pleasant but always worthwhile — if done right.

This section, The Frame, aims to give life to photos that didn't get the opportunity in any other section of the newspaper. Photos will be coupled with commentary and insight in various forms to

provide a holistic understanding of the images and their purpose — to provide clarity to a photograph or testify about the making of the image on behalf of the photographer. Every issue will have some cohesive thread; this month is a look at peripheral images taken while on assignment or on the way to and from an assignment. Other months may be photo essays on trends in our society, photographic techniques, similar subject matter or even a revisit of recent events.

Thom Bridge can be reached at Thom.bridge@helenair.com



ABOVE: Out of the whole flock. one sheep, rather than grazing along, became fixated on the strange black object clicking at them. I continued to click, framing the sheep lower so as to incorporate the grandeur of the Elkhorn Mountains and the sheep remained gazing in my direction.

LEFT: Kal Poole, managing director for Grandstreet Theatre, was showing off the bathroom remodel at the theater, and the contractor's light illuminated his face in such an unusual way. I say unusual because in the natural world, light sources mostly come from above us. So when the lighting is up from below, it casts uncommon shadows and provides a much different overall feeling to the image.



LEFT: These girls just could not contain their overwhelming joy as musher Clayton Perry's dog, Billy, was nuzzling and licking them during an all-school assembly just before this year's Race to the Sky.

RIGHT: During the wait for Gov. Bullock to give his State of the State address, the floodlights for the television broadcast were casting this rich hard light on the legislators milling around. This moment with Rep. Ellie Hill of Missoula and her son caught my eye. They each seem to share the same gaze, but at what I am unsure.



LEFT: While on assignment at a training facility on Fort Harrison, a Chinook helicopter landed and kicked up quite a flurry. I couldn't resist snapping this frame of the TV reporters huddling for cover.

BELOW: During this year's Night to Shine, this Celtic dancing group took to the stage accompanied by a live band. Not only did the music accompany the choreography nicely, but the complementary colored stage lighting made the dancer pop on stage.




Among the crowd at a recent buffalo rally at the Capitol was this father and son. I made the photograph and carried on covering the event. The significance of this image is realized once the layers are broken down and we see that what separates this child and father from the Capitol, a symbol of democracy, is a crowd of demonstrators.



This is Kale, a trail-eager Dalmatian. His contrasty fur color stands out so profoundly against the shadowed background, much like his personality after only moments of interaction.

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‘I do keep it oiled and conditioned — that’s important to keep it manicured.’



Thom Bridge, *Independent Record*

Neil Cuzner rocks a quasi-beard, winning the moustache category at the Facial Hair Competition.

Follicle

continued from Page 5L

professional levels.

Steffen Rasile, president of the Bruigher Beard and Moustache Club of Montana, takes his facial hair up against some of the best at national and world championships. In 2013, the web developer earned silver for his fiery red sideburns at the Just for Men National Beard and Moustache Championships.

Now sporting a full beard, Rasile’s enviable whiskers come to a perfect peak.

“I started growing about 10 or 12 years ago and I’ve definitely seen

it become more accepted in social situations,” he said. “I do keep it oiled and conditioned — that’s important to keep it manicured.”

Championships are split into several categories, often drawing hundreds of participants clad in ensembles to best showcase their extravagant facial hair.

As a consummate beardsman, Rasile does not take offense to the lumbersexual fashion movement, he said.

“It’s a funny word that made it into the mainstream, but that just means they’re following suit after us,” Rasile said.

Founded in 2006, the Bruigher Club began as a social group complete with membership cards.

But now, “We consider anyone with facial hair as a member,” Rasile said. The club encourages a brotherhood between beardsmen and organizes regional competitions.

Rasile was a judge for last December’s Holiday Facial Hair Competition held at the Garage in Helena.

He hopes the success and interest in beards will continue to abound, particularly with an annual competition.

“It’s something everyone has inside of them,” Rasile said. “It’s all about the individual, but if you’re committed, you’re beard will thrive.”

Reporter Tom Kuglin can be reached at 447-4076 or tom.kuglin@helenair.com

'Learning through adventures'

A Q&A with 14-year-old filmmaker Xander Baumeister

ALEXANDER DEEDY
Independent Record

Xander Baumeister is midway through his "year of learning through adventures." Now 14, he attended Central Elementary School through fifth grade before homeschooling during his middle school years. Instead of attending Helena High this year, he decided to spend the fall in the backcountry with his dad and their llamas, the winter learning how to film and the spring traveling Europe and possibly Egypt (he's petitioning his parents). He used \$3,745 he raised on Kickstarter last summer to purchase a camera and pursue his goal of filmmaking. He recently sat down with the Independent Record to talk about his progress.

IR: When you started on this year of adventure, what were your goals?

Xander: My goal, because I'm going back to high school next fall, was to really take advantage of this time. My parents don't give me 100 percent freedom, but they basically give me the ability to go on a lot of adventures. I'll be going to Europe this spring for a couple weeks by myself. This year is not as focused on intensive math and science work, but it's more focused on doing fun things and doing what I love to do.

IR: How's it been going so far? What have you learned?

Xander: It's gone really well so far. I spent basically all fall outside, and hunting. I went to Idaho and all over Montana. In December, I went down to Costa Rica for two weeks and filmed like four or five SD cards full of footage, so tons of hours of footage. I've

still been working on editing a few of those. I've made a few films, some for the owner of the lodge we were at as a bit of a deal for me to get a little cheaper price on the stay down there.

IR: How did you end up in Costa Rica?

Xander: My mom teaches a two-year long professional PhD program and they travel all around the world. We're going to South Africa in December and I'm also going to North Carolina at the end of April.

IR: Tell me a little bit more about your dreams to become a video producer.

Xander: Basically one day I saw a guy on YouTube, Devin-Supertramp and he makes these short, five-minute-long action films and he does just an incredible job filming. He has over 2 million subscribers, it's insane. But I saw his videos and literally that afternoon I went out and I made my sister jump in a puddle of ice in our back yard and filmed it. (Xander's sister, Anya, is now 11 years old.)

IR: I bet she didn't like that too much.

Xander: Oh, she didn't love it, but it has over 2,000 views now on YouTube and my channel has over 5,000 views. I spent, like, four weeks and I put up at least six videos in those four weeks of these crazy things I made my sister do, including riding a little garden cart down a steep hill and anything I could think of. But that kind of got me started on filming and I really do love it. I was using a little Canon point-and-shoot \$100

camera that was my dad's.

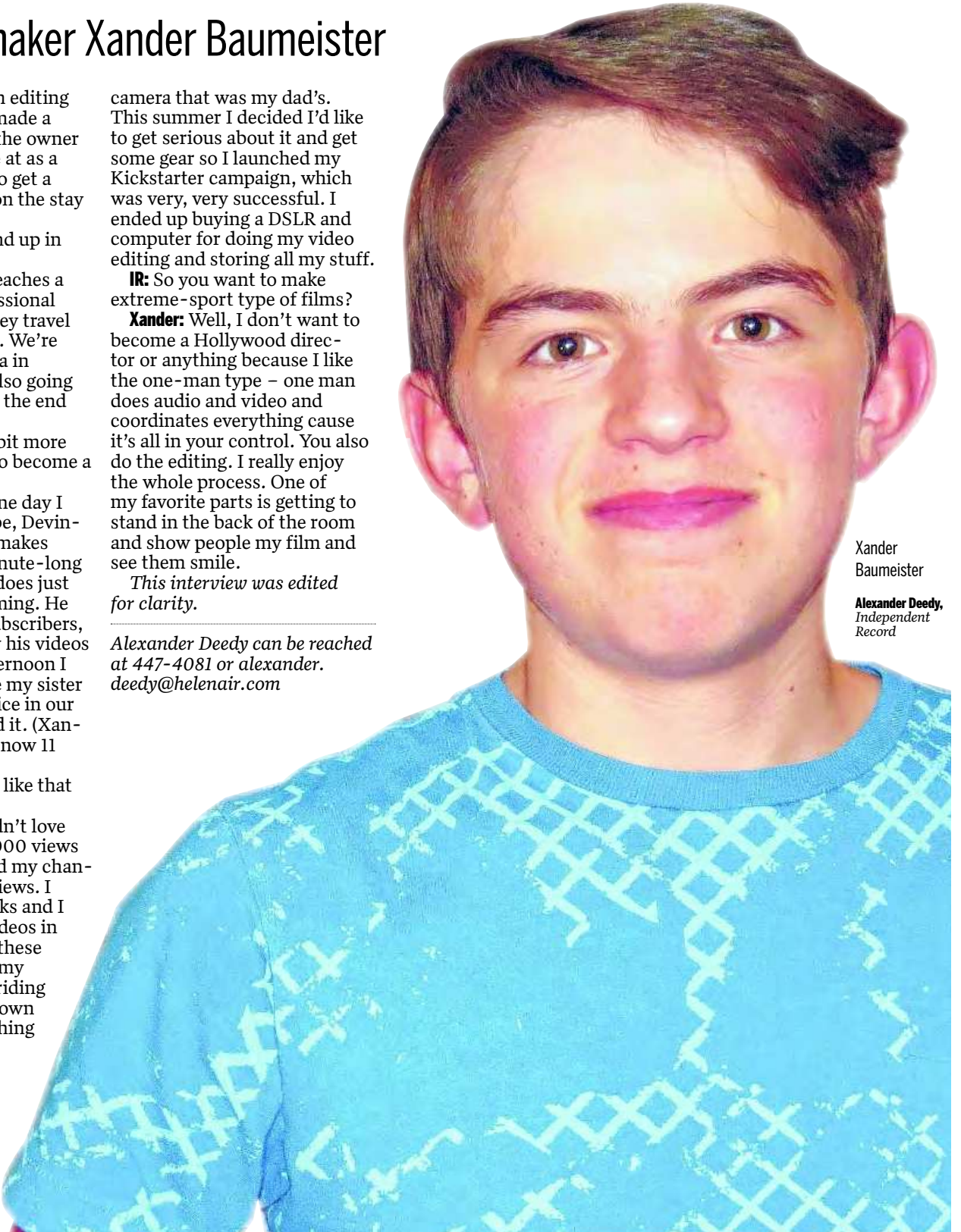
This summer I decided I'd like to get serious about it and get some gear so I launched my Kickstarter campaign, which was very, very successful. I ended up buying a DSLR and computer for doing my video editing and storing all my stuff.

IR: So you want to make extreme-sport type of films?

Xander: Well, I don't want to become a Hollywood director or anything because I like the one-man type - one man does audio and video and coordinates everything cause it's all in your control. You also do the editing. I really enjoy the whole process. One of my favorite parts is getting to stand in the back of the room and show people my film and see them smile.

This interview was edited for clarity.

Alexander Deedy can be reached at 447-4081 or alexander.deedy@helenair.com



Xander
Baumeister

Alexander Deedy,
*Independent
Record*

How are you? I am fine

Delphine A. Griswold was born in 1892. She was my grandmother and she received a lot of really boring letters from me. "Dear Grandma, hi, how are you? I am fine."

When I moved to the ranch, back in the 1970s, I tried to liven things up a bit, and made little stories out of my weekly letters.

Her adventures had been more exciting. One of my favorite stories was about the time she fell asleep while driving her team of Belgian draft horses. When she jerked awake, the horses were trotting for home, the long leather lines had slipped down between the horses and were dragging along the road. To retrieve them, she had to climb over the front of the wagon and walk down the bouncing tongue of the wagon. She succeeded, and concluded with a mischievous twinkle, "I never told your grandfather."

My runaway team half a century later was much less impressive. I turned the thundering pair up the slope on the west side of the river and was able to rein them in near the top. They stood there, breathing hard (though not as hard as their inept teamster) and I turned them around and headed back downslope. Alas, when we reached the flat, they ran again. I was not, apparently, cut out to be a teamster.

Still, I wrote that story to her and it became a habit to make a tiny tale out of each week's events. In 1982, those letters became "Back at the Ranch," with an inexorable weekly deadline. To date, more than 850,000 words have been printed about the small adventures which happen to anyone who is involved with animals, weather, history, forge work, livestock with an occasional digression into topics wholly unrelated to any of the above.

Take last week, for example. My favorite feed truck, Goldie,



Lyndel Meikle
Back at the Ranch

was in the shop. I've never named a vehicle before, or given one a gender. Somehow, however, Goldie has earned a bit more respect than our other trucks. Her temporary replacement did an adequate job. Allen loaded it up with 28 bales and it got through the crusted snow without disgracing itself. That's more than I can say for myself, since I always forget that you don't put the clutch in on an automatic. This is rarely a problem, since there is no clutch on an automatic, unless you happen to catch the edge of the brake pedal as you try to find the missing pedal and send people and bales tumbling.

Each winter, there are new bovine faces and some old friends are gone from the herd. It's interesting learning which ones will be the new herd bosses. Which ones will be friendly enough to let me warm frozen fingers on a warm side? There will always be a couple which are so picky they have to test every bale before settling on one which, frankly, looks very much like all the others. Genetics being what they are, the offspring of some of our former cows look so much like their mothers that it's easy to pretend they are the same ones — although a 40-year-old heifer is pretty unlikely.

Then there's the periodic cat invasion, as a feral cat or two, which has been seen darting back and forth from barn to haystack,

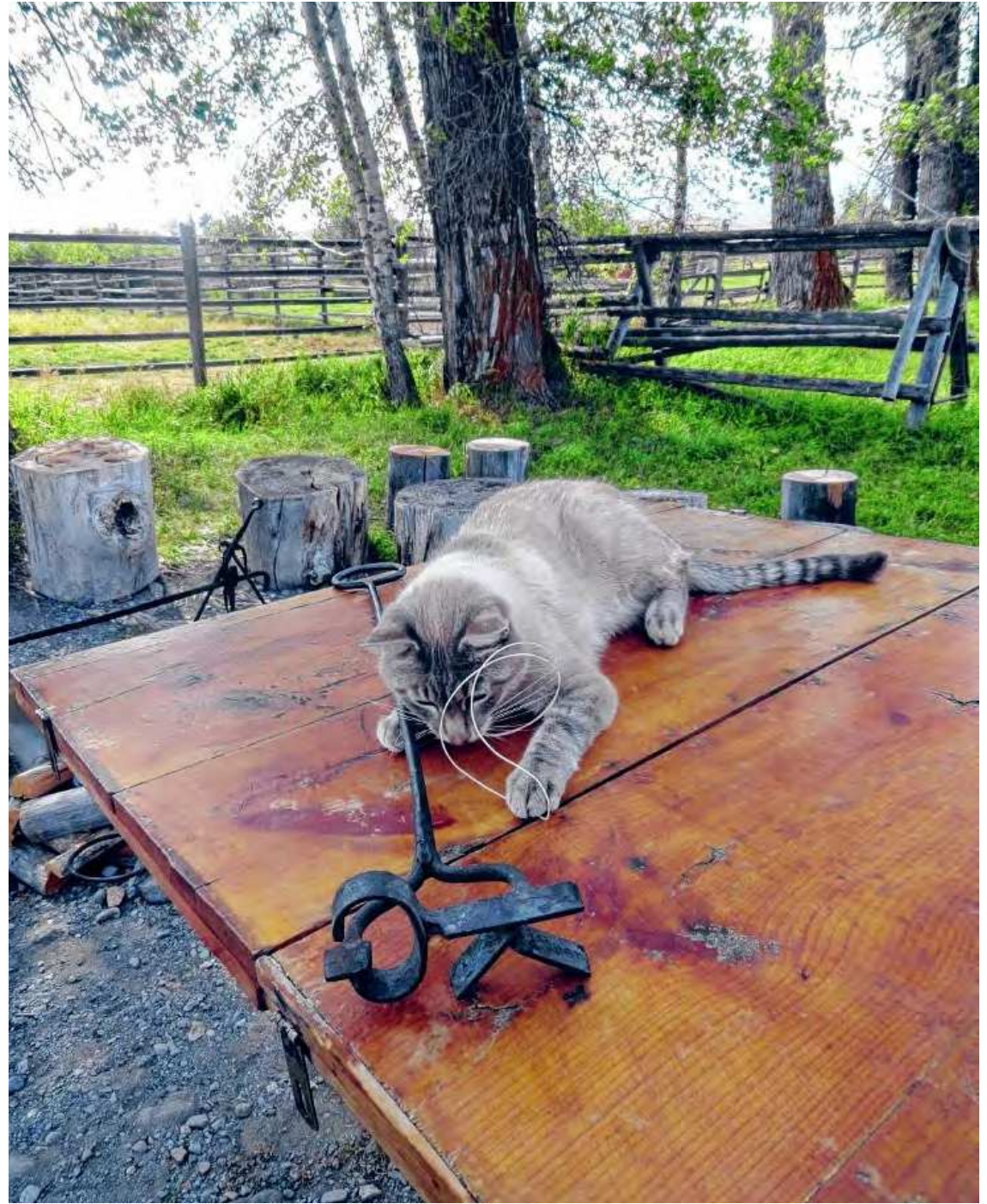


Photo provided

Twitter got confused and thought he was going to help with the branding.

suddenly decides to move in and become semi-domesticated. Twitter, faithful sidekick cat, lurked on the margins for a couple of years before noisily announcing his intent to take over. He has proven very useful in teaching me to hang up my jacket while I work at the forge. His insistence on marking my unattended jacket is a powerful

"in-scentive" to be tidy. He pays his dues, though. He is particularly reliable about bringing me a rodent snack to start each day. If I could only convince him to bring a cup of coffee instead, we'd have a perfect partnership.

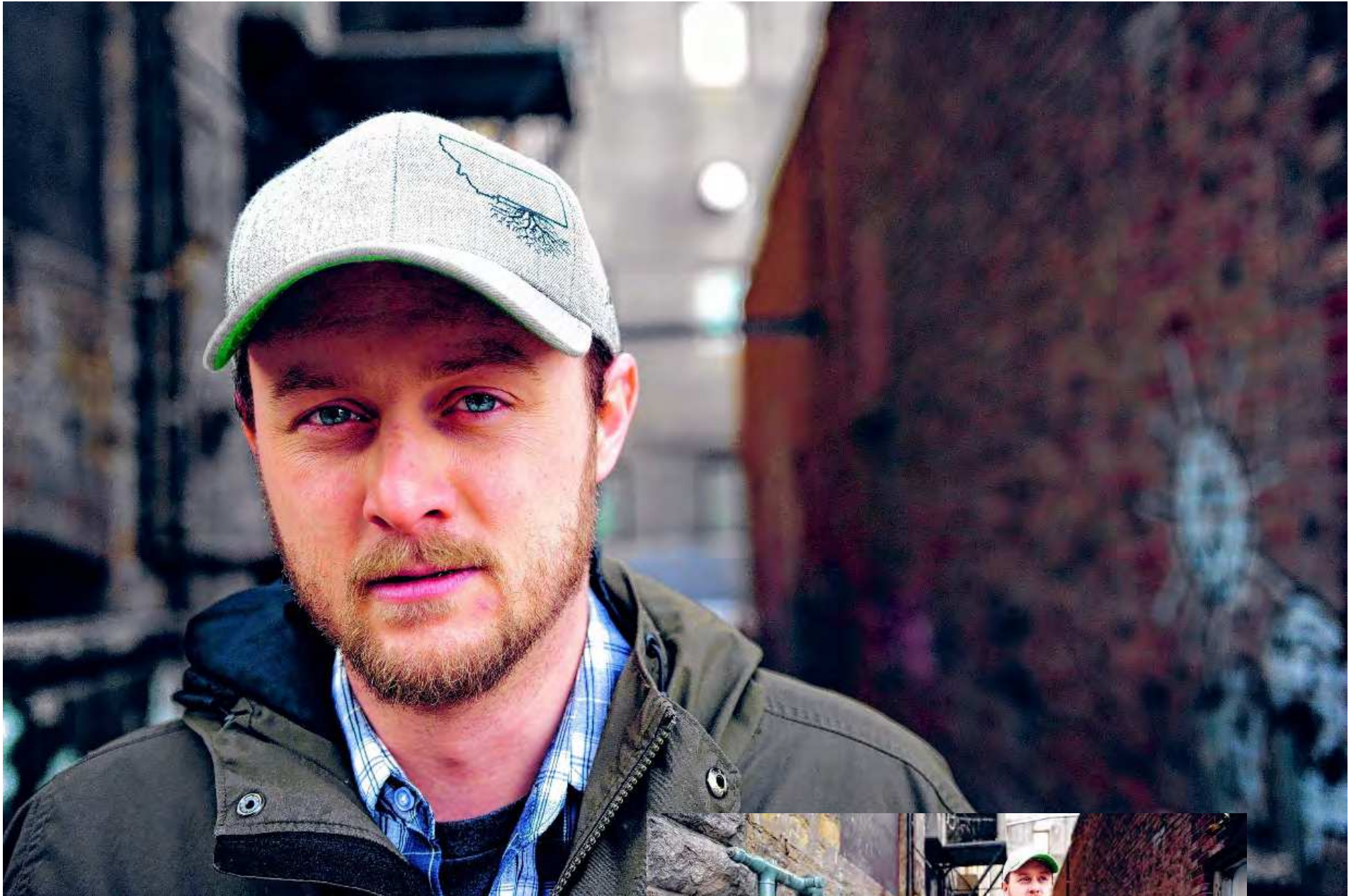
The history of the ranch dates back into the 1850s, so if nothing is happening in the present, I can always dig around in the past.

Right now, I'm trying to figure out how a ranch foreman who died in Santa Fe in 1884 could have also died in Montana in 1909. I'll let you know if I solve the mystery.

It's not high drama, but it beats "Dear Readers, hi, how are you? I am fine."

Lyndel Meikle works on a Deer Lodge area ranch.

Last Chance Gulch Sessions: Matt Strachan

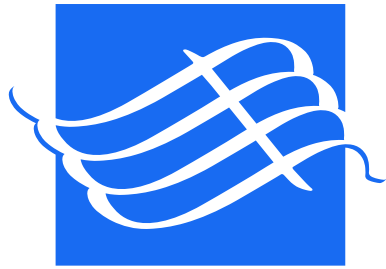


Thom Bridge photos, Independent Record

THOM BRIDGE, INDEPENDENT RECORD

Along with this new monthly lifestyles publication, we are starting a monthly video series showcasing local musical talent. It is called the Last Chance Gulch Sessions and as such will be filmed in various locations in the gulch, both outdoors and indoors. Our first sessions focuses on local singer-songwriter Matt Strachan and is filmed on location at Sweetgrass Bakery. Strachan packages his Montana-related lyrics with a raspy voice and a powerful command of the guitar. Catch his set Sunday, April 12, from 4-7 p.m. at Blackfoot River Brewing Company. In the meantime, hop onto helenair.com to watch the video and check out the other content from this month's Cross Cut.





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