



JULY 2018

20 UNDER 40

Recognizing
20 outstanding
community
members
under age **40**



Independent Record | helena.ir.com

Join Us In Honoring Helena's 20 Under 40 Recipients

The Independent Record &
The Helena Chamber of Commerce
will be hosting a ceremony to
recognize 20 outstanding community
members up to age 40 on
Thursday, August 23rd, 2018
At the Radisson Colonial Hotel | 12-1 pm
This event is open to the public

Cost is \$25 per person | RSVP online at
members.helenachamber.com/events/details/20-under-40-luncheon-11234
or call (406) 442-4120



Independent
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Luncheon Sponsored By



A message from the Independent Record

**TYLER MILLER, INDEPENDENT
RECORD PUBLISHER**



**TYLER
MILLER**

Each year the Independent Record is honored to spotlight the accomplishments of 20 outstanding young community leaders in our annual 20 Under 40 publication.

We are blown away with the number of nominations made this year — nearly double what we received

last year — and the quality of all the nominees didn't disappoint. It is incredible the level of talent that Helena has and the great work these young people are doing to

make where we live a better place.

New this year, we've partnered with the Helena Chamber to do a special luncheon to honor recipients. We are excited to gather and celebrate these young leaders on August 23 (see ad this page for details), so we hope you can join us.

A message from the Helena Chamber

**CATHY BURWELL, PRESIDENT/
CEO HELENA AREA CHAMBER OF
COMMERCE**



**CATHY
BURWELL**

The Helena Area Chamber of Commerce is delighted to partner with the Independent Record this year for the first time for their 20 Under 40 program.

Recognizing excellence in our fresh leaders of Helena is an amazing and important role to play as we watch them work to make Helena an even better place to work,

play and live. The nominations this year were phenomenal which made the selection very difficult but meaningful. The accomplishments of this group of 20 area achievers are very impressive. They deserve this recognition!

In an effort to further

honor these 20 outstanding Helenans, the IR and the Helena Chamber have created a new event, a luncheon, to let them be recognized in front of their family members, friends, co-workers, colleagues and community members. (See ad this page for details). We hope you will attend and congratulate these 20 accomplished and successful people. They are the future of our community!

COURTNEY BUYS | PUBLIC HEALTH PROJECT MANAGER, MONTANA PRIMARY CARE ASSOCIATION

LEANNE MOYER
Independent Record

A personal diagnosis of a heart condition was the flame that ignited 25-year-old Courtney Buys' passion

for working in the health-care industry.

"I had an undiagnosed heart condition and really trying to find out what was happening at a young age

and how much stress it put my whole family through, it made me really empathetic unto what patients go through, and what patients go through on a daily basis

for people that are dealing with chronic health disorders. So, I think that's really what keeps me going every day — thinking about that."

Along with her personal testimony came Buys' desire to ensure that Montana's healthcare system is accessible to all people, especially those who utilize Community Health Centers. To directly impact her field, Buys launched and managed the Quality Data Initiative in 2017, within the Montana Primary Care Association.

Currently, QDI focuses on collecting monthly data from Community Health Centers on colorectal cancer screening rates and



THOM BRIDGE, THOM.BRIDGE@HELENAIR.COM

Courtney Buys

diabetes management. The implementation of the initiative is groundbreaking because these centers have only reported data to the Primary Care Association annually. The real-time,

quality data reported will help ensure that patients are being cared for in a comprehensive, timely manner. So far, QDI has seen

Please See **BUYS**, page H3



Congratulations Courtney!

Thank you for working to support and increase Montanans' access to excellent, patient-centered health care. Montana appreciates your hard work, humor, and dedication to improving preventable disease screening and management.



Montana Primary Care Association

DR. NICOLE CLARK NEUROLOGIST, ST. PETER'S HEALTH

MARGA LINCOLN
For the Independent Record

"I guess I always wanted to be a doctor," says Dr. Nicole Clark in an email interview from the Galapagos.

Employed at St. Peter's Health for the past nine years, she's the sole neurologist serving a five-county area of 97,000 people.

"I told my mom in kindergarten that I was going to be a doctor and never looked back.

"One of the best things about my job is also one of the most difficult," she says.

"Some of my patients are facing horrible, incurable and sometimes untreatable neurodegenerative diseases. I truly see people at their worst, but their strength in facing their disease

is amazing. It is awe-inspiring to watch their resiliency and depth of character, and it humbles me every day when they look to me to help guide them. I admire my patients so much, and it is an honor that they let me share the journey with them."

A native of Missouri, she grew up outside Kansas City and went to undergrad and medical school at the University of Missouri in Columbia.

But she knew she wanted to move West, continuing her training at the University of Utah and then looking for the perfect place.



Clark

"When I visited Helena I fell in love with it. So Helena is where I landed and where I set down my roots."

When Dr. John Cassani, president of St. Peter's Health Medical Group, nominated Clark for the 20 Under 40 Award, he noted her many contributions that go well beyond her care of patients.

She's earned recognition from her medical peers in numerous ways, including being named president of the Montana Medical Association.

"I am very proud," she says of that honor.

"This group fights for patients and physicians in Montana, combating the regulations that interfere with the physician-patient relationship and supporting physicians across the state."

Buys

From H2

100 percent Community Health Center participation — significantly improving management and prevention of these chronic diseases.

The successful implementation of QDI has culminated into Buys' desire to launch a patient navigation program. This program would assign a health professional to a patient, helping him or her to overcome obstacles that often get in the way of comprehensive care.

In addition to Buys' work at the Montana Primary Care Association, she donates her personal time to the Montana Cancer Coalition, which focuses on cancer care and prevention across the state. Also on a statewide level, Courtney is a member of the Colorectal Cancer Roundtable leadership team.

Stacey Anderson, the communication and public affairs manager at the Montana Primary Care Association and co-worker of Buys, nominated her because of her dedication, intellect and the impact she's had on public health thus far in her career. Anderson explained that she had worked with many young people in the past, but Buys' quiet nature paired with her critical thinking skills makes her stand out.

"You have to know her and have to work with her to understand, sort of the depth of her engagement and the depth of her intellect and how smart and strategic she is in her thinking ... and how good she is working with other people in trying to help them participate in any of the projects she works in."

Anderson emphasized that Buys' overall personality will help her go far in her public health career.

DRIVING POSITIVE CHANGE IN HEALTH CARE FOR OUR COMMUNITY AND THE STATE OF MONTANA.

Neurologist Nicole Clark, MD

Congratulations on being named to Helena's 20 Under 40.



St. Peter's Health
MEDICAL GROUP

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MELISSA MOORE | DIRECTOR OF HUMAN RESOURCES, SHODAIR CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL

MARGA LINCOLN

For the Independent Record

Melissa Moore is one of those people who works behind the scenes to make good things happen.

She's the director of human resources at Shodair Children's Hospital, a psychiatric facility for children and adolescents with a staff of 325.

"Our philosophy is we take care of the people who take care of the kids and try to make their lives easier," she says of her department.

In addition to its psychiatry program, Shodair operates a year-round school and offers a comprehensive medical genetics program for all ages.

The 37-year-old Helena native says her vision of her job is providing "impeccable public service" to Shodair's employees.

Shodair's mission, she says, is "to heal, help and inspire hope."

"The whole entire staff are

the reason why we're here," says Moore.

Some of the jobs can be particularly hard. Mental health techs work directly with patients for three, 12-hour shifts per week.

A few years ago mental health techs had a 70 percent employee turnover rate, which has now been cut to 40 percent, she says.

Shodair's also increased worker safety, decreasing its worker compensation numbers.

In nominating Moore for the 20 Under 40 Award, Shodair CEO Craig Aasved lauded Moore for inspiring employees "to take risks and to drive positive change."

One way she does that is by asking them, "What can we do to make your life better? How can we grow you as an employee. How do we hone your specialized skills?"

Another important step is giving them recognition for what they do well.

When Aasved was hired 2 1/2 years ago, he knew in his first handshake-meeting with Moore "that she was going to be a special person."

"She's just so dang approachable," he says, "she makes you feel comfortable when you approach her whatever the question. ...She lifts you up to feel like a real person, a real human being."

He also credits Moore for her own risk-taking, such as initiating a completely revised salary program that's been successfully implemented.

Moore, a graduate of Helena High School and Carroll College, comes from a long line of health professionals, particularly nurses.

Nursing wasn't her calling, she says, but she's passionate about working in the mental health and behavioral health services field.

Shodair's work, she says, touches families all across Montana.



THOM BRIDGE, THOM.BRIDGE@HELENIAIR.COM

Melissa Moore

All of us at Shodair Children's Hospital Congratulate Melissa

For this well-deserved recognition of her achievements and her commitment to her colleagues, our patients and families, and our community.



To heal, help and inspire hope
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Director of Human Resources

Melissa Moore

FRANK KOLAR | KOLAR TIRE AND AUTO OWNER

JESSE CHANEY

jesse.chaney@helenair.com

Kolar Tire and Auto owner Frank Kolar typically tries to stay out of the lime-light, which might explain why his dog is featured prominently in many of his TV commercials. So when his parents Bob and Carol said they were nominating him for the Independent Record's 20 Under 40 award, he wasn't particularly fond of the idea.

But after serving on the Baxendale Volunteer Fire Department for about a decade and building a successful Helena business from the ground up, the 31-year-old entrepreneur could only avoid public recognition for so long.

Frank first became excited about the auto business as a grade schooler while overhauling Toyota engines and trucks in his parents' garage. He excelled in mechanics at Capital High School and furthered his education at Helena College of Technology, earning a degree in automotive mechanics.

He learned the ins and outs of working with both tires and customers while working at Tim's Exxon while in high school and college. And he started his business at age 23 in 2009 "quite by accident," his father said.



THOM BRIDGE, THOM.BRIDGE@HELENAIR.COM

Frank Kolar

Frank had another job at the time but was laid off during the winter months, so he started working on tires in the garage of his home to fill the time. He got so busy that he moved into a building he rented on Euclid Avenue, and he has since purchased the location and expanded it three times.

Frank opened a second location on Helena's east side in the spring of 2017 and now has more than 20 employees, many of whom he has known since grade school.

He said he got into the tire and auto business because it's something he does well.

"Frank prides himself on his excellent customer

service," his nomination form says, adding that he credits his past mentors and current employees for his business success. "He has always had the energy and determination to be a self-starter."

As a volunteer firefighter, Frank spends anywhere from 10 to 20 hours a month in training and even more time responding to emergency calls. At a time when Lewis and Clark County's rural fire departments are struggling to find younger volunteers, Kolar is a stalwart member who doesn't seem to mind the time commitment.

"He's always stopping things in the middle of the day to go and rescue someone," his father said.

CORY CHENOWETH | COORDINATOR, HELENA TRIO

MARGA LINCOLN

For the Independent Record

For the past six years Helena native Cory Chenoweth has worked with disadvantaged students in Helena to help them go to college.

They are either the first generation in their family to be earning a bachelor's degree or are low-income.

Lia Ariizumi, a 19-year-old Helenan attending the University of California, San Diego, is one of them.

She worked with Chenoweth from 8th grade on, setting academic and personal goals and meeting with him weekly.

Chenoweth helped her with everything from finding the college she wanted, to applying for scholarships, filling out financial aid forms, taking entrance tests and completing college applications.



THOM BRIDGE, THOM.BRIDGE@HELENAIR.COM

Cory Chenoweth

"It was very, very helpful," she says. "I'm so appreciative I had Cory with me. I would not have gotten as far in my academic career without Cory. He's been my rock."

Catching up with Chenoweth these days, isn't easy.

Although some educators are off from school right now, summer is his busiest

time of the year.

He's been commuting back and forth to Butte, where he has a group of 15 Upward Bound high school students doing an intensive, six-week summer academy at the Montana Tech campus.

The students are living on campus and taking science, computer, math, foreign language and technical writing classes and also doing community service projects.

In the next few days, they finish their classes, and he'll take them on a trip to Salt Lake City to visit college campuses.

Touring campuses is a key component of the TRIO Upward Bound program he works for.

TRIO is the federally funded education umbrella

Please see **CHENOWETH**, Page H6

Thanks, Cory!
For helping Helena's students
get a **jump on college!**



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Services are provided at no cost to Montana families.
Reach Higher Montana is a nonprofit that guides, prepares, and supports Montana students with inspiration, information, and resources for college.

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Congratulations
FRANK!

**FROM
MOM & DAD**

DR. COOPER MITCHELL | OWNER, PARK VIEW DENTAL

TOM KUGLIN
tom.kuglin@helenair.com

Owner of Park View Dental, Dr. Cooper Mitchell is a third generation dentist and a Helena native.

The 2001 graduate of Capital High School was thinking about dentistry when he attended the University of Idaho and earned a degree in biological systems engineering. He shadowed his father, who like Mitchell's grandfather was also a dentist, and decided it was the profession for him. Following dental school at the University of Minnesota and a year of residency at Idaho State University, he purchased a practice in Helena.

"I had a couple of other offers but I love Helena and my family is still here," he said. "When you get the opportunity to go wherever you want, that says something when you move to your hometown."



THOM BRIDGE, THOM.BRIDGE@HELENAIR.COM

Dr. K. Cooper Mitchell

The 36-year-old describes himself as a jack-of-all-trades when it comes to outdoor activities, including rafting, mountain biking, fishing and hunting. He and his wife are expecting their first child.

His solo practice, which recently moved to a more spacious location at 16 Fuller Ave. #2, focuses on complex restorative dentistry, serving patients with teeth that may be chronically breaking down, or who have put off seeing a dentist for years.

"I think it's just helping people reach their goals – I have some people that drive two or three hours to see me because there are only a handful of dentists in our area that use heavy sedation – and taking them from a point where they're embarrassed to something they're proud of and proud to smile," Mitchell said.

The field continues to challenge him, and he has completed more than 800 hours of continuing education.

"It gets more and more complex the more you learn," he said. "It's a constant academic challenge and it's hands-on, so you're constantly learning and I just never get bored with it."

Mitchell is also challenged in owning his own business. He initially thought he would join an existing practice, but operating on his own has allowed flexibility to make business decisions.

"It's great because I like to get stuff done and when we're successful I know it's me and my team behind it," he said. "I like that autonomy and ability to do whatever is best for the patient and not get stuck in a rut."

In 2011 Mitchell was looking for a way to give back to the community. He recalled his favorite class at Capital High School was science seminar that brought in experts as guest speakers along with field trips. He decided to start a \$1,200 scholarship to be awarded annually to a Capital High senior.

"It was a way for me to honor my instructor and it was a way for me to give back to where I was 10 years ago," he said.

Chenoweth

From H5

program, founded in 1965, that identifies and provides services for individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds.

TRIO has grown to include eight different programs to assist disadvantaged students. Chenoweth also works with its Talent Search program that provides academic, career, and financial counseling.

The Upward Bound campus visits give students a feel for what it would be like to be a student there, says Chenoweth.

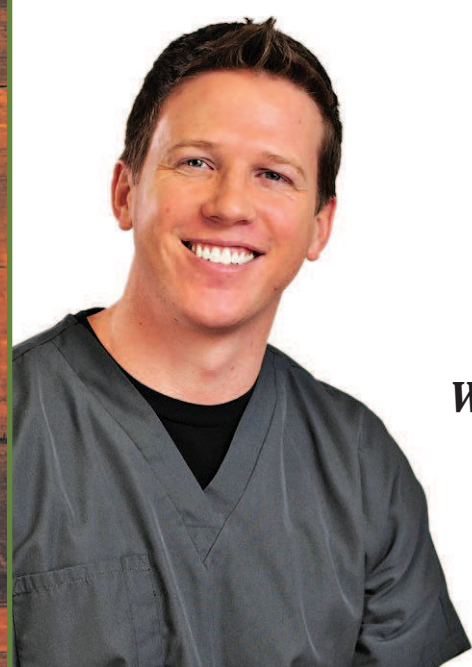
There are a lot of things Chenoweth loves about his job, particularly "the instant gratification I get of seeing the fruits of my labor."

"Everyday is totally different than the day before. It's not monotonous."

The Helena Education Foundation honored him as a Distinguished Educator the past two years.

Chenoweth, 39, is also a founder of a scholarship program, a husband and father of two small children, a Helena Youth Soccer and Little League coach and vice-president of Helena Gold Rush Lions.

"I love the idea of giving back to the community that did such a great job of raising me," he says.



K. Cooper Mitchell, DDS, FAGD
Helena native, 3rd Generation Dentist

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CORY KESLER | SENIOR AIRPORT ENGINEER, MORRISON-MAIERLE

LACEY MIDDLESTEAD
For the Independent Record

From working on his family's ranch to designing airport fire rescue centers in Hawaii, 39-year-old Cory Kesler has never been afraid of hard work or a challenge.

A Montana State University graduate in civil engineering, Kesler started working for Morrison-Maierle in its Helena airport group shortly after graduation. Now some 16 years later, Kesler is proving himself a leader as a senior airport engineer for the company.

"I've always liked figuring things out," said Kesler on why he pursued a career in engineering. "My dad also steered me in the direction of a more technical degree and things just fell into place from there."

"Cory is known as the 'go-to person' at Morrison-Maierle for many aspects of design, project



THOM BRIDGE, THOM.BRIDGE@HELENAIR.COM

Cory Kesler

management, and many other facets of airport engineering," said Sheila Habeck, senior communications specialist for Morrison-Maierle.

In his current role, Kesler serves as project manager and designer for many of Morrison-Maierle's airport projects.

I'm wearing both hats all the

time," said Kesler. "I help move projects from inception to completion."

Kesler admitted that seeing a project he's helped design come to fruition is one of the most rewarding aspects of his work.

"From going through the details and putting a design on paper to watching a project get built in the field is very satisfying," said Kesler.

During his tenure with Morrison-Maierle, Kesler has worked on a variety of airports. From improvements at Helena's own airport to projects at Bert Mooney Airport in Butte, Blaine County Airports in northern Montana, and Redmond Municipal Airport in Oregon, he is a well-traveled and experienced airport engineer.

One of Kesler's more memorable projects has been designing an airport fire rescue center in Hawaii.

"Hawaii is certainly a different area from what we're used to working in and presents its own

challenges," said Kesler. "Everything is lava out there."

"I am challenged to keep him challenged," said Tim Orthmeyer, senior aviation engineer at Morrison-Maierle. "He loves the design aspect of engineering, and even as a project manager, he still does a lot of the design himself, which is not common with many project managers."

Aside from his engineering skills, Kesler is known for his natural leadership qualities. A graduate of Leadership Helena, Kesler is considered one of Morrison-Maierle's mentors to others in his work group.

"He listens and learns while leading," said Habeck.

"Having grown up on a ranch near Choteau, he brings the drive and determination style work ethic of ranch life to the engineering world with the confidence required to execute a project plan with ease," said Habeck.

We create solutions that build better communities

THANK YOU CORY!

Morrison-Maierle's Cory Kesler, Senior Airport Engineer, has been named to the IR's 2018

20 under 40 list!

Congratulations from your fellow employee-owners who wish to thank you for your hard work and dedication to making Helena a great place to live.



JEREK WOLCOTT | SPORTS INFORMATION DIRECTOR, CARROLL COLLEGE

JORDAN ERB
jerb@helenair.com

When Jerek Wolcott was in middle and high school, he was required to take Title One reading classes to help supplement his learning. Now 33 years old and the sports information director at Carroll College, Wolcott spends much of his time writing, a feat that has surprised himself and his former teachers.

According to Wolcott, he is slightly dyslexic and used to struggle with English and writing, so to have a job centered on these skills is remarkable. From his press releases to his articles, much of Wolcott's work involves working with words, and has garnered attention from around the commu-



THOM BRIDGE, THOM.BRIDGE@HELENAIR.COM

Jerek Wolcott

nity.

"He's a gifted writer," said Jason Walker, sports director at ESPN Radio in Helena and Great Falls, and the Voice of the Saints. "He

knows how to tell a story. What he does, I couldn't do."

Beyond his writing talent, Wolcott's dedication gets him noticed. Walker commended Wolcott on his ability to get things done, despite being a "one-man band." Wolcott alone is responsible for coordinating media relations for Carroll's 15 sports, managing the Carroll Athletics website and writing press releases and articles.

Wolcott works with upwards of 300 Carroll College student athletes, and puts in long hours during the school year to get all his work done. According to Wolcott, time spent with

Please see **WOLCOTT**, Page H14

PATRICK FOX | TRIAL LAWYER, DOUBEK, PYFER, FOX & STORRAR

ERIN LORANGER
erin.loranger@helenair.com

When Patrick Fox worked at law firms in college and his first job after graduation, his superiors kept telling him he was in the wrong type of law.

"The feedback I kept getting was that you don't strike us as somebody who is going to do this kind of work," he said.

Instead, they all kept suggesting he try trial law.

"I thought that the right fit for me would be something else but my mentors and people that I worked with that had more experience kind of recognized something different," he said. "I trusted them, and the rest I guess is history."

Fox was born in Har-

din and went to boarding school at St. Paul's in New Hampshire on a scholarship. The scholarship is paid for with an estate from Frank Hervey Cook, a Montanan who graduated from St. Paul's in 1919 and wanted to help other kids from Montana do the same. After high school graduation, he attended college at the University of North Carolina to study economics and creative writing.

He got married after college to his wife, Holly Fox, and had an interest in law. He wanted to go through the University of Montana's dual program in which students pursue a Master's in Business Administration and law degree simultaneously. Fox said his wife,



THOM BRIDGE, THOM.BRIDGE@HELENAIR.COM

Patrick Fox

who isn't from Montana, was up for an adventure and they've stayed in Montana since.

Fox moved to Helena af-

Please see **FOX**, Page H14

THANK YOU HELENA

FOR SUBMITTING YOUR NOMINATIONS
FOR THIS YEAR'S 20 UNDER 40

**WE ARE FORTUNATE
TO HAVE SO MANY TALENTED
& HIGHLY REGARDED
YOUNG PROFESSIONALS
IN OUR COMMUNITY.**

Independent Record

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DOUBEK, PYFER, FOX & STORRAR

HELPING INJURED PEOPLE

The partners and staff of Doubek, Pyfer, Fox & Storrar are proud of you Pat.

Congratulations on being selected as a 20 under 40 recipient. Your skill, professionalism, dedication to clients, our firm and your family make you most deserving of this recognition.

Your successful representation of clients over the years and your recent recognition by the Montana Trial Lawyers as Appellate Lawyer of the Year are singular achievements.

CONGRATULATIONS

Natascha Robinson

one of
Helena Independent Records'
20 under 40
for 2018.



THANK YOU FOR YOUR CONTINUED
COMMITMENT TO MONTANA'S
YOUTH AND THE COMMUNITY



Shodair
CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL

Office of Public Instruction
& East Helena Public Schools

NATASCHA ROBINSON | DIRECTOR, SOUTH CENTRAL AREA HEALTH EDUCATION CENTER

LEANNE MOYER
Independent Record

Natascha Robinson, 34, saw an evident need in the state and decided to act. As the South Central Area Health Education Center Director with a background of marketing and public relations, Robinson developed a camp to positively impact mental health. It's called Heads Up and is offered to high school juniors and seniors interested in learning more about careers in mental health.

The camp is the first of its kind in Montana and was developed out of a passion of Robinson's. Her goal for establishing it was to diminish the stigma surrounding mental illness among teens as well as to promote behav-

ioral health careers that are greatly needed in the state.

Not only does the camp encourage students to consider the health field, the lessons they are taught can be used in real-time, improving their lives as well as others.

"It gives students resiliency training and self-care and learning how to be a peer mentor ... giving students empowerment and making sure they have the tools to be able to help their friends and family."

Camp participants can be certified in Youth Mental Health First Aid at the end of the program, preparing them for emergency situations. One of the most exciting aspects of the program, according to Robinson, is that it's unique to the community it serves.



THOM BRIDGE, THOM.BRIDGE@HELENIAIR.COM

Natascha Robinson

"It's community based, so wherever we do the program, we try to bring in professionals in the community to: A, show students that you can work in your community and B: that there are professionals, there's people who will

Please see **ROBINSON**, Page H12

Congratulations

Natascha Robinson

*from your friends & colleagues at
Montana Hospital Association*



MONTANA
HOSPITAL
ASSOCIATION

JASON DAVIS | PRINCIPAL AND PRESIDENT, SMA ARCHITECTS

ERIN LORANGER
erin.loranger@helenair.com

After growing up surrounded by historic architecture in Butte and mentoring from a dedicated drafting teacher, Jason Davis decided to go to school for architecture.

Davis got a master's de-

gree in architecture at Montana State University, where he met his wife Noelle. She was studying architecture and wanted to return to her hometown of Helena after graduation.

When Davis was going through interviews, he came across SMA Architects and

they were looking for someone who would potentially take over the firm one day. He was also drawn to the firm's experience with historic preservation work. Davis accepted the job and has been at the firm for 14 years. He's now a principal and president of the firm.

A good part of Davis' career has been in competition with his wife.

"Noelle and I have never worked for the same firm," he said. "If we worked together there was the idea that we would take work home too often."

Now the two often get to work on projects together since his wife took a position doing marketing for David Anderson Construction.

Several past projects stand out to Davis, including the completion of the building for Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Montana.

Davis said the building has improved work life for employees, and he's heard good feedback about the project.

"It gave our firm a really fantastic opportunity to think outside the box and design something much different than they were used to operating in," he said.

He also worked on several projects for his alma mater, including Yellowstone Hall. The residence hall holds 400 freshmen, and Davis was able to be creative with the design.

"To create a building that cultivated their love for MSU, their love for Bozeman and to help them succeed in their school work is



THOM BRIDGE, THOM.BRIDGE@HELENAIR.COM

Jason Davis

incredibly cool," he said.

Professionally, Davis said his success comes from a priority of building strong relationships with clients. Davis said he and his partner Tim Meldrum take the time to understand what is important to a client and let them take the lead. SMA Architects is there to provide the expertise and some new ideas, but likes when clients stay involved.

Davis credits part of his personal success to his interest in the community and networking.

"The community has been so incredibly giving to SMA Architects as well

as my family," he said. "I've always had an interest and have always felt it to be very important that as a business person I give back as much as I get in the community."

Davis is the Chair of the Helena Area Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors. He also serves on numerous boards and is the former chairman of the City of Helena Board of Adjustments, former commissioner of the Montana Heritage Commission, a member of the Original Governor's Mansion Restoration Board and a member of the Tri-County Area Special Olympics.

Congratulations Jason

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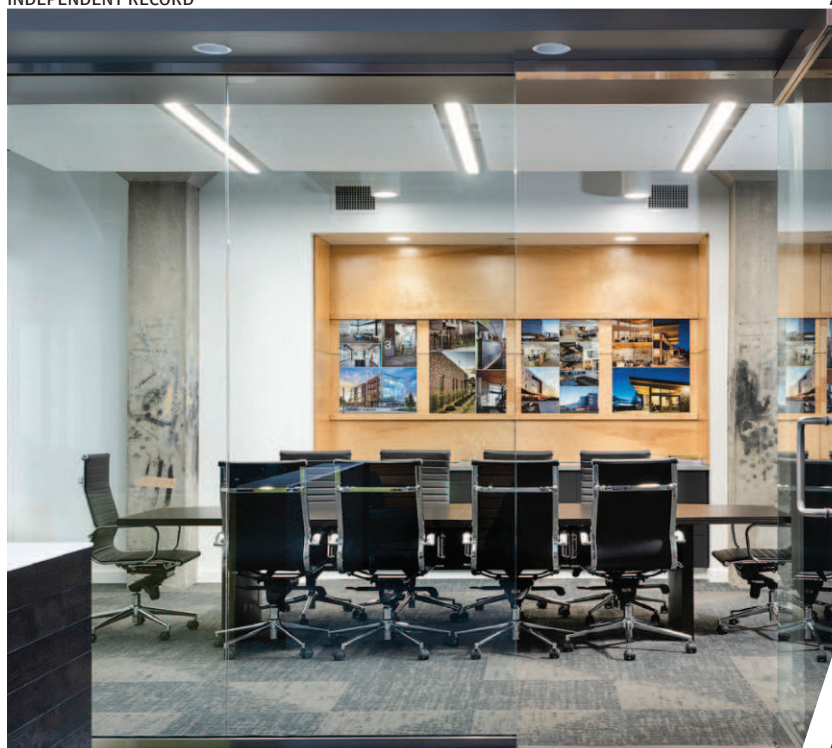
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Congratulates **Jason Davis** 2018 "20 Under 40" winner

Thank you for your inspired leadership in helping make the greater Helena area & the State of Montana a better place to live.



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Congratulations, Jason!

We're proud of what you do for SMA,
our community and our profession!



AREA CHAMBER of COMMERCE

THE HELENA AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

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20 UNDER 40 BUSINESS PROFESSIONALS!

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RECIPIENTS AT THE LUNCHEON ON

AUGUST 23RD!

Helena Leaders Network

(formerly Helena Chamber Young Professionals)

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE

2018 20 UNDER 40 RECIPIENTS!

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Interested in learning more about the HLN?

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KELLY FLEINER | PUBLIC RELATIONS DIRECTOR, ROCKY MOUNTAIN CREDIT UNION

LEANNE MOYER
Independent Record

From starting as a member service representative at Rocky Mountain Credit Union to working her way up in five years to her current public relations director role, to volunteering for countless local projects, Kelly Fleiner defines hard work and selflessness.

At 32-years-old, Fleiner's communication strengths paired with her engaging personality and enthusiasm make her well known throughout the Helena community.

When asked why she does what she does, Fleiner em-



THOM BRIDGE, THOM.BRIDGE@HELENAIR.COM

Kelly Fleiner

phatically said, "I do what I do because I love it."

Through Fleiner's position at Rocky Mountain Credit Union, she's able to serve

others on a daily basis.

"We're all about people helping people, and I didn't realize that that was something I needed in my life until I started working for the credit union. So, giving back to people is really important to me and it's great that I can work for an employer like that," she said.

Throughout the years, Fleiner has volunteered countless hours for the Helena Area Chamber of Commerce, has started the Helena Chamber Young Professionals group (holding a leadership role), and has raised more than \$31,000 for Montana Firefighters during

the tumultuous fire season of 2017. She's been involved with Helena Food Share, Spirit of Service, and Festival of Trees to name a few. She also spearheads many of the programs that Rocky Mountain Credit Union is a part of.

Fleiner explained that recently she's slightly scaled back her volunteering, but hopes to become more involved with Big Brothers Big Sisters of Helena, an organization that was near and dear to her late husband.

When asked if she considers herself as a leader in the community, she said that she doesn't like the term 'leader,' but added that she leads by

example.

"I can't expect anybody else to get involved if I'm not involved. If I want someone to participate in something I obviously have to be willing to participate in it as well."

Fleiner's drive to participate in countless events paired with her passion for them helps others to get involved as well. One of her co-workers, Kelsey Fandry, explained that Fleiner encourages others to give back.

"She's always giving to others and always thinking of others first and getting everybody excited and motivated and she's just an inspiration to everybody," Fandry said.

Robinson

From H9

help you, if you do ever run into challenges ... there's people in your own community to go to."

So far, the Heads Up program has been launched in Billings, Anaconda, Dillon and East Helena. In East Helena, Superintendent Ron Whitmoyer is going to implement growth opportunities within the school system that were brought forth by Heads Up students.

Managing the Heads Up program is a motivator for Robinson.

"Working with students is my 'why,' getting to see them excel in what they do and bring meaning to their lives. A lot of what we do has helped them discover what they want to do with their lives. So, I think that has been a huge impact on me."

Robinson loves to working in Helena — an environment where she can really make a difference.

"I lived in big cities before ... I was looking for that work/life balance and being a part of a community where I could actually do some good."

BRIE OLIVER | EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, HEALTHY MOTHERS, HEALTHY BABIES COALITION



LACEY MIDDLESTEAD
For the Independent Record

Research professor Brené Brown said, "We don't have to do all of it alone. We were never meant to."

Brie Oliver, executive director for Montana's Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies Coalition (HMHB), reiterates the same message daily to mothers in the Helena community.

A Helena native, 37-year-old Oliver pursued a nursing degree from Montana State University. During her clinicals, Oliver observed the epidemic of chronic health care needs. She decided then

and there that she wanted her future work to focus on preventative health care. More specifically, she sought to apply a "multi-generational approach" by focusing on achieving healthy pregnancies for moms and healthy early childhoods for babies.

Since stepping up as director, Oliver admits learning a lot and broadening her scope into the larger statewide system.

"I became aware of the system problems in the community that kept families from being successful," said Oliver.

While she has only been in

the director role for about a year, Oliver has been hard at work. From advocating for the health and wellbeing of children and mothers, facilitating statewide conversations to improve resources and support systems and securing funds to make those resources a reality, she's left her mark on the community.

"She is adept at bringing people to the table to facilitate how we can uplift the most vulnerable in our community," said Sarah Crowley, home visiting program supervisor for Lewis and Clark County.

"She is a fierce advocate for family wellness and is a shining light of hope for families in need," said Katie Bevan, a home visiting nurse for Lewis and Clark County.

For Oliver, the reality of her accomplishments thus far comes down simply to building relationships — among experts in the field, and between mothers bringing new life into the world.

"We all come into motherhood at different places of support and resources," shared Oliver. "There's always room to learn from each other."

THOM BRIDGE, THOM.BRIDGE@HELENAIR.COM

Brie Oliver

Congratulations
Brie Oliver!



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all you do for
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as well as the
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JENNIFER PREBLE | SOCIAL WORKER, CENTER FOR MENTAL HEALTH

LACEY MIDDLESTEAD
For the Independent Record

Working with a youth residential program during her undergraduate studies “painted a picture” for Jennifer Preble of the high need and burnout rate surrounding the field of mental health. That experience inspired Preble to immerse herself in the field and extend compassion to those most underserved and in need within her community.

As a licensed clinical social worker at the Center for Mental Health and a long-time suicide prevention advocate, 36-year-old Preble devotes her life to advocating for children and families in the Helena community.

“Mental health services are so essential to the community infrastructure,” shared Preble.

According to the National Institute of Mental Health, nearly one in five U.S. adults lives with a mental illness. And yet, Preble admits that mental illness continues to be stigmatized.

In her role at the Center for Mental Health, Preble is “recovery oriented.” She finds joy and hope in observing her clients stabilize as they continue “learning and gaining insight into their mental health condi-



THOM BRIDGE, THOM.BRIDGE@HELENNAIR.COM

Jennifer Preble

tions.”

“She is a true asset for this community and a gifted mental health professional,” said Colleen Kochivar-Baker, who works with Preble at the Center for Mental Health.

Preble is also a passionate advocate for suicide prevention in Montana. After volunteering with an Out of the Darkness Walk in Miles City, she became involved with suicide prevention, education, research, and advocacy at the local, state and national levels.

Locally, Preble serves on the Helena Mayor Challenge to prevent suicide among service members, veterans and their families. She serves as the Advocacy and Public Policy Chair for

the Montana Chapter of the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (AFSP). Preble was also appointed to the AFSP National Public Policy Council.

These roles have led to Preble’s annual participation in the Advocacy Forum in Washington, D.C. and Montana’s State Capitol Day, where she advocates directly to senators and representatives about suicide prevention priorities and legislation.

“So much change is needed at the policy level, and that’s where I’ve found my niche,” said Preble.

“With persistence, knowledge, willingness and drive, anything is possible with suicide advocacy,” said Preble.

KATIE LAWLER | ASSISTANT VICE PRESIDENT, STOCKMAN BANK

TOM KUGLIN
tom.kuglin@helenair.com

At the age of 33, Katie Lawler is already a veteran of Helena’s real estate lending community.

The Helena native grew up on a ranch near town and took her first job in banking as a teller in 2003. Now the assistant vice president and real estate loan officer with Stockman Bank still counts seeing the keys for a new home handed over as the highlight of her job.

“I love helping people with buying a house,” she said. “I mean, it’s the American dream and I love being a part of that, and a business that makes those relationships.”

Following her job as a teller as a senior in high school, Lawler began working her way up through several positions. She spent 10 years at Mountain West Bank and then came to Stockman Bank in 2015.

“I think I knew early on that college wouldn’t be my thing,” she said. “Growing up on a ranch, I was taught that if you work really hard you can get where you want to go.”

Stockman Bank President John McLaugh-



THOM BRIDGE, THOM.BRIDGE@HELENNAIR.COM

Katie Lawler

lin said he was excited to nominate Lawler for this year’s 20 Under 40 awards.

“Katie is an employee that started from the ground and worked her way all the way up to vice president, and that was all through hard work, and she’s been a dedicated volunteer in our community,” he said.

Outside of banking, Lawler is involved with youth sports with her kids and serves as president of the board for the YWCA.

“I think that when I was looking for volunteer opportunities it was something that resonated with me because the population they serve have been underserved, and they do really great work,” she said.

Lawler has also been a volunteer with CASA and in 2016 received the Friend of CASA Award.

For her work at Stockman and volunteering, she earned the 2017 Affiliate Community Involvement Award.

“I love working at Stockman Bank and I love working in a great community like Helena,” she said. “The people in this community are so close knit.”

Congratulations to Katie Lawler for receiving a much deserved spot in the 20 under 40.

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Helena, MT 59601
(406) 457-0797



Katie Lawler
447-9006
3094 N Sanders St.
NMLS ID# 786534

Congratulations Katie!

As one of the premier real estate lenders in Helena, we are proud to have you on our team, and we thank you for your hard work, dedication, and the volunteer work you do for the Helena community!

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MICHAEL CLONINGER | OWNER, CLONINGER AND SON ELECTRIC/HELENA HARDWOODS

LACEY MIDDLESTEAD
For the Independent Record

The air in the room was fragrant with the seasoned, earthy scent of fresh wood. Along the walls hung dozens of wood samples in every shade of brown and variety of grain. Michael Cloninger, 34, sat nearby preparing for the busy day ahead.

Cloninger, a Helena native, is a master electrician who owns Cloninger and Son Electric and Helena Hardwoods. Most days, he works side by side with his father, Leonard Cloninger, who helps him run both businesses.

"I always wanted to do what dad did," said Cloninger. "I remember as a kid going to storage units and picking wood out with my dad. Woodworking was always something we did together."

Cloninger admitted that



THOM BRIDGE, THOM.BRIDGE@HELENAIR.COM

Michael Cloninger

both he and his dad have long shared a craftsman mentality. His father is also an electrician and inspired him to pursue an electrical apprenticeship at age 16 before he was even out of high school.

"When most kids his age were off goofing around, Mike was busy studying for his apprenticeship," said Leonard Cloninger.

According to his father, Cloninger was one of the youngest journeymen electricians in Montana at the time he was certified.

From residential and commercial to industrial and service, he has spent the past two decades honing his skills as an electrician.

Two years ago, Cloninger had the opportunity to further embrace his passion for woodworking by purchasing Helena Hardwoods with his father. The business stocks a wide selection of hardwood lumber, plywood, flooring, floor finishes and live edge slabs.

Cloninger shared that getting up to speed on the knowledge necessary to assist customers has been like completing another electrical apprenticeship. But his efforts have proved worth it. From assisting with home flooring projects to making wood recommendations for a custom-made lacrosse stick or cheese press, Cloninger has seen and done it all.

Fox

From H8

ter he was hired at Doubek & Pyfer in 2007 and became a partner in 2012. The firm is now called Doubek, Pyfer, Fox & Storrar.

Most of Fox's cases involve people who are going through workers' compensation claims, or have been involved in car accidents or incidents between patients and doctors.

"Our firm's motto is helping injured people,"

he said. "I think the most important thing is just care about people, care about human beings and their lives."

Fox said he thinks the characteristics that make him successful include his discipline, consistency and persistence.

**Congratulations
Eric Potuzak
on your
20 under 40 win!**

Your family and the crew at Benny's Bistro are so proud of you for all that you do within the Helena Community!



ERIC POTUZAK | OWNER, BENNY'S BISTRO

LACEY MIDDLESTEAD
For the Independent Record

What do you want to be when you grow up? Ever since he was old enough to comprehend that question, Eric Potuzak has wanted to be a chef.

"Being a chef was the only thing I ever talked about ... ever dreamt about," shared Potuzak.

He started out working as a dishwasher at 13 and slowly worked his way up to working in prep kitchens and hotlines. He fully realized his dream, however, after attending culinary school at Le Cordon Bleu in Las Vegas.

After working as a chef in various restaurants, an opportunity presented itself for Potuzak to achieve an even bigger dream.

A mutual acquaintance introduced Potuzak to Margaret Corcoran, who owned



THOM BRIDGE, THOM.BRIDGE@HELENAIR.COM

Eric Potuzak

Benny's Bistro in downtown Helena at the time. After 21 years of building her brand and serving up locally sourced food at Benny's, Corcoran was looking for someone new to hand the reins to. Potuzak's extensive kitchen experience and passion for food made him the ideal candidate.

In January 2017, Potuzak took over ownership of Benny's Bistro.

"It was fate," said Potuzak of becoming Benny's new

owner. "It worked out when and how it was supposed to."

"At 31, Eric knows how to dream big and meet his goals," said Corcoran.

Potuzak admitted that running his own business has presented a new set of challenges for him. Despite the challenges, Potuzak has embraced the freedom to now cook whatever he wants.

"I have my own style and ideas about what food should be," said Potuzak. "Cooking is my creative outlet and way to express myself."

Potuzak admitted that while his cooking style, palate, and food philosophy are slightly different from Corcoran's, he has worked to maintain Benny's reputation and its "farm to table" style.

"I believe in buying as much as we can locally," said Potuzak.

JESSIE LUTHER | LAWYER, TAYLOR LUTHER LAW GROUP

THOMAS PLANK
thomas.plank@helenair.com

Jessie Luther, 35, is not a Helena native. She's from Cut Bank, a cold outpost on the Hi-Line near the Blackfeet reservation east of the Rocky Mountain Front.

In high school she worked at the Glacier County Attorney's Office, a job that set her on the course to be where she is now, a full partner in a governmental affairs and



THOM BRIDGE, THOM.BRIDGE@HELENAIR.COM

Jessie Luther

campaign finance law firm set right above the Capitol

building on Montana Avenue.

Luther is "not a litigator," she said with a laugh. She focuses mostly on keeping her clients within the boundaries of campaign finance law, working on ballot initiatives and working with political action committees in the state.

Luther graduated from

Please see **LUTHER**, Page H15

Wolcott

From H8

the students is the best part of his job.

"We've got tremendous student athletes that do a lot of really great things," Wolcott said. "To see them grow from freshmen to seniors and

to improve, get better and learn to communicate better — that's a big part of my job is helping them to communicate and deal with the media — and to see them grow and become better people and then become better athletes is a big part of what I do. That's my favorite part."

When he's not writing

game notes or working with student athletes, Wolcott is with his wife and kids. According to Walker, the dedicated SID will write late at night, after he has had dinner and put his two boys to bed. When they take road trips together, he's on the phone once or twice a night to talk with his family.

MICAH ELLER | CULINARY TRAINING COORDINATOR, EAST HELENA FOOD/CULTURE HUB

MARGA LINCOLN
For the Independent Record

Micah Eller grew up working in her parents' restaurant, the No Sweat Cafe. When she left, she vowed that she was through working in restaurants.

Well, that's not how things turned out.

She has a gift for cooking.

And also teaching others to love doing it.

She went off to hone her skills at the Oregon Culinary Institute in Portland.

One recent morning she was showing a dozen East Helena students, ages 9 to 15, how to make spaetzle and chicken paprikash, dishes from Slavic countries.

Eller is the culinary training coordinator for the East Helena Food/Culture Hub, a

new group that has funding to help celebrate East Helena's food and culture and provide work skills training.

Eller will also be teaching culinary skills to a group of adults. She has hopes that the training classes will eventually grow into a full-fledged apprenticeship program.

The students have learned how to cook corn tortillas and fish tacos; caprese salad; and also whole grain pizza.

They've also learned about using foods from the garden, why it's important to buy local foods, how to avoid food waste and basic cooking and kitchen safety skills.

"I just think this is going to be such an incredible



THOM BRIDGE, THOM.BRIDGE@HELENAIR.COM

Micah Eller-Corcoran

program," she says. "I think it's going to be really instrumental in growing the culinary community in Helena and East Helena."

"It's been really fun," says one of the young chefs, Walker Young, 11, as he sauteed vegetables. "We've made foods from places around the world."

Luther

From H14

the University of Montana in 2005 as a political science major.

Her undergraduate experience propelled her to law school so she could end up working on policy. After she passed the Bar, she ended up at Browning, Kaleczyc,

Berry, & Hoven, a Helena law firm located on Last Chance Gulch.

Luther made her way to partner at BKBH before striking out on her own in June of 2015 to form the Taylor Luther Law Group to focus on campaign finance, policy and governmental affairs.

Because campaign finance is such a thorny topic, Luther's job for much of her work is to keep her

clients apprised of what is or isn't allowed under the law.

Luther, who has served on boards for the Holter Museum of Art, the Montana Recycling System, Big Brothers Big Sisters and is also a volunteer and organizer for the State Special Olympics basketball tournament in Helena, has no intention to leave Helena any time soon.

Congratulations, Micah Eller!

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KADEE KNAPP | OWNER OF BISON INSURANCE

JORDAN ERB,
JERB@HELENAIR.COM

Kadee Knapp, owner of Bison Insurance, grew up doing community service around Helena, her hometown. Through middle and high school, she volunteered in the community, propelling her desire to serve in her adult life.

Now, she volunteers and encourages her staff to do the same. Together, they work at the fair each year judging art submissions. This year, they'll be working with the quilts and kids' art. Knapp's history of service and enthusiasm helps encourage her staff to join in as well.

"It's just always been a part of my life," Knapp said. "I've really been working on getting the office as a group to do more. It just really shows that we care about our community."

Lorrie Biltoft, client ser-



THOM BRIDGE, THOM.BRIDGE@HELENAIR.COM

Kadee Knapp

vices coordinator for the Lewis and Clark County Office of Public Assistance, met Knapp through last year's fair. Biltoft, whose daughter, Kathy, is one of Knapp's employees, was struck by her community involvement and ability to get her employees engaged.

"When she donates her time, they're volunteering along with her, and I think that says a lot about her," Biltoft said.

On top of her work with the fair, Knapp volunteers with a Girl Scout troop for

her daughter. Her time and dedication to the troop is a reflection of her time spent empowering other women. According to Biltoft, the women of Bison Insurance are uplifted by Knapp's presence and the atmosphere she creates in the workplace.

Knapp said that she works hard to create a supportive and healthy environment in the Bison Insurance office. One of her goals is making the office a comfortable place for all of her coworkers.

Knapp grew up in Helena, and went to the University of Montana for elementary education. She worked at Bison Insurance for 11 years before taking over as owner in 2015. She works hard in both her business and home life, and enjoys spending time with her husband and daughter.

"She's such a sweet-heart, she's a great business woman and she cares about the community."

CONGRATULATIONS

Natascha Robinson

one of
Helena Independent Records'

20 under 40
for 2018.

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"Kelly has a spark and an energy that brings everyone she is around to a higher place."

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