

electriccity

C R E A T I V E



BRANCHES
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BRANCHES

The world, as massive and overwhelming as it sometimes seems, really is quite small. The creative world often feels even smaller. Before moving back to Great Falls, we spent seven years in Spokane, WA, and edited fourteen issues of the arts and culture publication *SPOKE(a)N(e) Magazine*. My husband, Tyson, also produced some photography for the short-lived *Spokane Metro*. That magazine's photo editor, Jen Moore, is now part of the team for *Signature Montana* here in Great Falls. This issue's featured photographer, Phil Procopio, has worked for *Signature Montana*, and he and I graduated high school together. His extended family includes author Jamie Ford, who we profiled in our first issue. Connections are everywhere; one doesn't have to look too hard to find them. As easy as it is to make jokes about the inbred nature of any "scene," I find it promising in a way, knowing that we're all islands connected by the Earth's crust.

What we need to remember, as we pursue these creative fields of ours, is that no person can do it on their own. Individuality should be celebrated, but our willingness to assist and promote each other is paramount. I don't necessarily subscribe to the thought that 'a rising tide raises all ships,' but I do believe in making a concerted effort. An arts scene does not grow unless entire groups of people make it a priority. Islands must become archipelagos. Trunks become branches, branches sprout leaves. We know this, but sometimes we pretend to forget.

I know I make different versions of this same argument every issue, but it still holds true: Get busy and make stuff. Tell people about it. Rinse and repeat.

Enjoy this issue. Tell your friends. If there is someone (even yourself) you think we should feature, email us: electriccitycreative@gmail.com. Let's make it happen.

Thanks for reading.

Sara Habein
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This issue brought to you by: Lady Gaga on shuffle, Vitamin Water Zero, chocolate peanut butter soy ice cream, and an ice pack wrapped around a hurt knee. Dance party sadly not an option.




Photo by Tyson Habein

“TAKING THAT CHANCE.”

221 Industries highlight Montana extreme sports with clothing line





Police officer and clothing designer may not seem like fields with overlapping practitioners, but Great Falls native Cory Smith manages to do both. After a stint on the Fort Benton force and work with the Las Vegas recreation department, Smith now is now employed by the Glasgow, MT police. Then in 2010, he founded the clothing design and sports sponsorship company 221 Industries. Along with business partner Jared Jones, the company represents athletes like mixed martial arts fighter Leo Bercier and BMXer Reuel Erickson.

On January 21, 221 Industries hosted the charity event Fight Against Youth Cancer. Held at the Heritage Inn, the event featured music by the Hired Guns, comedy, and photo opportunities with the sponsored athletes. Childhood cancer is a subject particularly close to Smith's heart — In 1996, his older brother, Tyson, lost his fight with a rare form of the disease at age 13. With Tyson's favorite number being 22, and Cory's 21, the name for the company came easily, and having a charitable foundation within that company became a priority.

Along with sister Brittney Smith, Cory and Tyson grew up one house away from my brother Luke and me. We shared the same common last name and a love of running around the neighborhood — yes, quite often participating in our own form of pre-X Games extreme sports. Cory showed the same fearless determination then, riding his bike down a metal playground slide, as he does with 221 Industries. In the interest of full disclosure, I am unashamedly biased when I say he does our city proud.

I spoke with Cory Smith (*pictured left with the yellow logo*) recently via email:

(continued)



Tell us a bit about how you started 221 Industries. Did the idea of clothing design or athlete sponsorship come first?

The clothing design came first. I had it drawn up in my head around two years ago. I started the company by just taking that chance, and then contacting my connections from Las Vegas to get it rolling in the extreme sports world.

What was your creative process going into the designs?

The S logo is my initials, if you look at it. Our other designs are just trying to be different, mixing that surfer-cool look with that mixed martial arts-tough look.

Do you have any plans to expand the types of clothing you offer?

Yes! We have notebooks full of ideas for the clothing and the promotional side.

Regarding the Fight Against Youth Cancer event at the Heritage Inn — How did the night come to fruition?

Jared and I wanted to be able to come back to our hometown and give back. Seeing that my brother passed away from cancer, and he was always helped by foundations, it just felt right.



Do you have plans for similar events? What else does 221 have on the roster?

We have at least three more fundraising events scheduled for 2011. We are also headed out to the Dew Tour, the X Games, and a lot of MMA fights in Montana and around the country.

Since you grew up in Great Falls and have a painter for a father [S. Carlyle Smith], how do you view the creative community here? What do you like about it and what more would you like to see?


My dad is an awesome artist, but I have none of his talents. The community of Great Falls is great, but it needs something new — something that hasn't come along before, and that's where extreme sports should fit in. 🤝

Event photos by Jeanelle Dascher

“BRING SOMETHING NEW AND MODERN.”

Photographer and hair stylist Phil Procopio brings his vision downtown





Phil Procopio has sought out artistic outlets since his school days. The 2001 Great Falls High graduate pursued theatre and choir before moving to Los Angeles after school. Now back in Great Falls, he's immersed himself in two other creative fields: hair and photography. Partnering with his employer, Studio Montage, Procopio began work renovating a studio space, located at 200 Central Avenue. Specializing in event and portrait photography, he is part of a newer, younger generation hoping to expand Great Falls' creative culture.

When did you first become interested in photography? What about it appeals to you?

I don't know if there is a specific point in my life that I can pinpoint as to when I became interested in photography. Early last year I found myself behind that camera quite a bit. Without realizing it, I was shooting every weekend — families, couples, you name it. Then I realized that I had always felt really comfortable behind the camera, so I decided to take the big plunge and go into business and make a career out of it. It sounds super cliché, but I really love finding that perfect moment to capture for life. When I get that one photo that gets the little moment (or a big moment) of joy, happiness, and togetherness, that is when I am most satisfied.

From where do you get your inspiration?

I get inspiration from all around me and all sorts of mediums — nature, media, other great photographers, and fashion. I try and take all these and put my own spin on photos. Some of my clients have told me that my photos feel like an ad or out of a fashion magazine. I take that as a huge compliment. My personality is pretty strong, so that spills over into my photography. I like strong, bright colors, and dramatic photos.

(continued)



Having lived in both Los Angeles and Great Falls, what keeps you here in Montana?

I originally moved back to Great Falls to be closer to my family after my father passed away. At first, it was a very hard transition. I loved going out to big clubs, eating at fancy restaurants, and I didn't mind traffic. Now I can't imagine going back to that after living in such a beautiful place. I love the slower-paced life, nature, and people. I absolutely love working at Studio Montage. My boss and now my business partner, DeAnna Corn, is one of the most inspiring, amazing human beings I have ever had the pleasure of working with. She keeps me on my toes and has so much wisdom that I wouldn't be the person I am today without her.

In addition to being a photographer, styling hair is another art form in itself. How has one job informed the other?

Each has a very different approach and each satisfies a different side to me. At this point in my life, I don't know if I can choose between the two and I hope I never have to.

Tell us a bit about the studio renovation process and your plans for the space.





This process has been very crazy. I have never been through a renovation or remodel of any sort, so I went in blindly, thinking we'd have a few weeks of hard work and be done. With scheduling, unexpected issues, and tough decisions, it's taking a little longer. I am hoping to be open by the First Friday Art Walk in March. It's a great space in the Murphy-McClay Building. We did find some great things during the remodel, like original tin ceiling, brick walls and original hard wood floors. I am going for a good mix of old and new — modern colors and decor mixed with brick walls and the old tin ceiling. I am really excited to bring something new and modern to downtown.

What do you like about the Great Falls creative community? What more would you like to see?

We have quite a large creative community here in Great Falls, but I feel like it is hidden. I would really like to see more support and events to nurture the more creative. I don't think Great Falls is known for its artsy community like other cities in Montana like Missoula or Bozeman, but we have it. Recently Marshall McLean — a Great Falls native now living in Spokane — played at Machinery Row, and it was so much fun and right up my alley. I know Hastings has some acoustic performances once in a while, but I would love to hear more all around the city. 🍷🎸

Photos by Phil Procopio

ALLEYWAYS + SKY

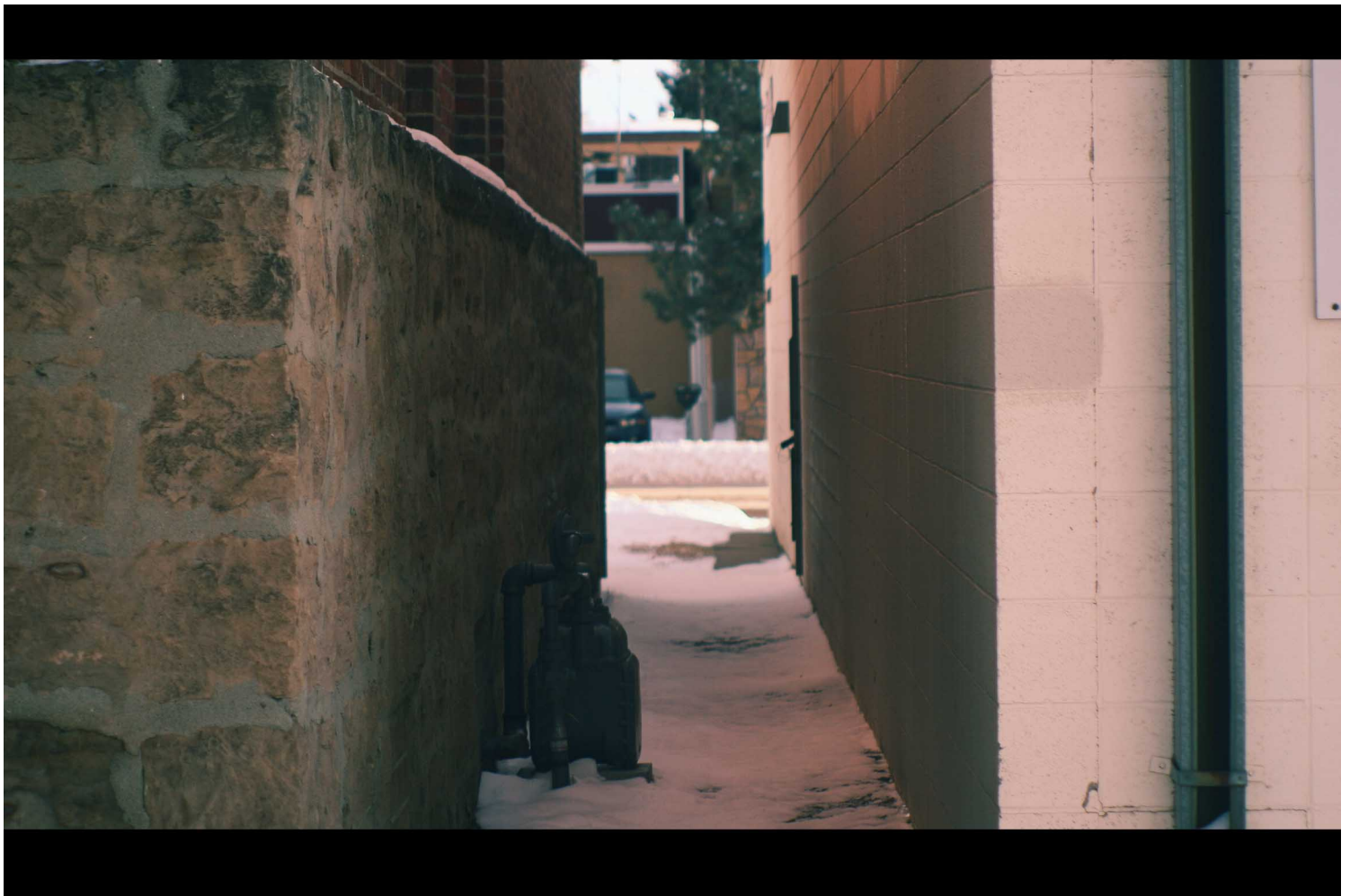
Photo editorial by Tyson Habein









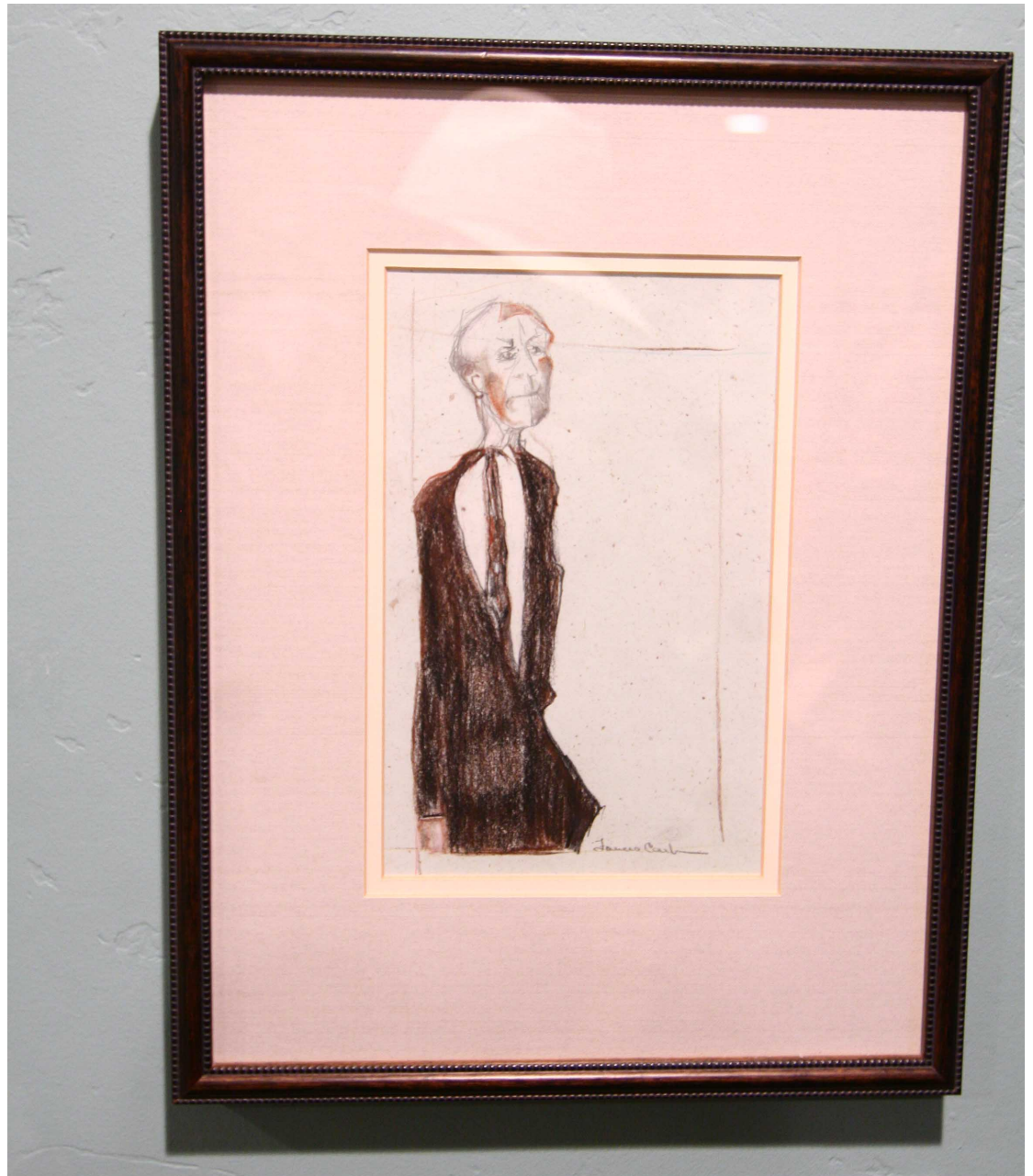




To view more of Tyson Habein's work, visit www.habeinstudio.com

ART CELEBRATION







Lodestone Gallery drew crowds in both January and February. January featured painter Michael Patterson, while February hosted another **Spirit of Women** event, complete with wine and appetizers. In addition, artists participating in the Paris Gibson Sqaure benefit art auction previewed some of their pieces to be featured at the February 5 event.



Halley Gallagher displayed art at both Lodestone Gallery and Taco Del Sol during the February First Friday. Though we did not have a chance to make it to Taco Del Sol, her pieces at Lodestone were some of my favorite of the evening. She presents a striking, welcome change from some of the more traditional art at the auction.





Uptown Gallery (423 Central Avenue) might be my favorite place to stop during First Friday. It's a relatively new addition to the downtown core, and they focus on more modern styles, separate from the Western aesthetic. The content changed over significantly from January to February, and I'd like to hope that is because the work is selling. January primarily featured artists Jasmine Krotkov and Tina Nelson, while February focused on Frances Carlson and Vickie Meguire.

Frances Carlson had one drawing that made us wish we had the money for purchase. Her "Prime Minister" (*pictured on p. 19*) proves that an artist does not have to occupy an entire wall or use big, saturated colors to receive attention. Subtle, intriguing and lonely, it's a beautiful piece.

Also exceptionally talented is **Vickie Meguire**, who had several pieces hanging during both January and February. A former Great Falls Public Schools arts teacher, she gladly took questions from our children and demonstrated how one uses different tools for wood carving and etching. Her Japanese and technology-inspired work, including a selection of handmade paper kimonos, is both varied and striking.

With artists and gallery owners on hand, along with good snacks (let's not lie - part of the First Friday fun is the snacks), Uptown is a place that I hope sticks around Great Falls for a long, long time.

Vickie Meguire at Uptown Gallery



During February's Art Walk, **Kari Lane-Johnson** demonstrated Japanese floral design at **My Viola Floral Studio**. The business also featured collage art from **Jill Kanewischer** and photography from **Phil Procopio**, profiled in this issue. In January, Procopio also displayed his work next door at **Winston Publishing**. Both businesses seem to appreciate the coexistent nature of the arts, and as I've said before, more places should use their wall space to feature local artists. Not every arts venue has to be a museum or a gallery, and in the end, variety will benefit everyone.



If the Great Falls High and CMR art students are any indication of this city's creative future, then we have so much in which to look forward. Hosted in the lobby between **Blue Rose** and **Motifs** in the **Johnson Building**, advanced art students from the public high schools displayed their work during February's Art Walk. Using everything from prints to painting to photography, the students rebuffed the notion that our city's creativity veers towards the homogenous. Portraying love, conflict and inner turmoil, their work was some of the most impressive of the evening, inviting viewers to linger over each piece.

"Affe1948ction" by Scott Mathson at the Johnson Building



Untitled
Jeremy Franks
Acrylics, spray on panel
Advanced Placement Studio Art
Cotton Falls High School
1996, Edition

"Untitled," Jeremy Franks at the Johnson Building



Even more promising than the talent itself was the crowd that the students drew. Not confined to parents alone, we saw other students, friends, and twenty-somethings with children all pausing to absorb the different displays. To be honest, the lobby almost felt too crowded to properly enjoy the work, but that is a good complaint to have. These classes made their work an *event*.

And on a more personal note, I can't tell you how happy I am to know that the dark rooms are still in use at both high schools. Not only are they still in use, but there are photography-specific classes offered outside of the newspaper and yearbook classes. While there is of course nothing wrong with digital photography and digital printing, knowing that students learn how to make silver gelatin prints makes me (and my film and digital photographer husband) unspeakably pleased. To think that only ten years ago, the yearbook staff was thrilled to get a miniscule-megapixel digital camera alongside the film, it's fantastic that the schools are still embracing the old forms.

To these young artists, I say: I want to hear from you. 📷

"Vanish" by Brooke Hansen at the Johnson Building

FINEST WORKSONG

Often the conversation between writers turns to music, and more specifically, “Do you listen to it while writing?” Though I understand the argument that music distracts, or that instrumentals-only is the way to go, I find that I work better with music playing. Granted, there are different rules for different types of writing. The first draft of this column, as well as my editor’s letter and profile introductions, were written at work. The music there is piped in, with preset songs rotating throughout the day. The songs have miraculously and inexplicably improved lately, and the slow, spare minutes at work I can best compare to the writing I used to do while in history classes. Though I do not lack things to do, at times, my mind cannot help but go elsewhere.

While laying out the magazine, I find it beneficial to hear something to which I can sing along — past issues have Doves, The Stone Roses, and Rilo Kiley to thank. However, while editing the text itself, I prefer silence. Searching for errors, I need to be able to read the text aloud (or at least mouth, in a sort of whisper/murmur) without distraction.

Fiction? Ah, now fiction is another animal. Music influences so much of my fiction writing that I can easily list a soundtrack to my major projects. The music that feels right isn’t predetermined — often it starts with hitting shuffle on thousands of songs, then getting to work. More often than not, one of those songs filters into my headspace, something so complementary that one might accuse me of using it as the work’s genesis. On a subconscious level, I do not dispute this. My book, *Show Me How to Shine Now*, would not exist without British rock in the 80s and 90s. We are all inspired by something, and to pretend those inspirations have no influence is dishonest. At worst, it is pretentious.

Still, if I love a certain song or band too much, I can’t write fiction to it. Ryan Adams and his various incarnations used to make for fantastic writing music, that is, until *Cold Roses* took over my life and CD player for a good six months. Oasis, particularly Noel Gallagher, is my musical opiate, as we well know. So immersed am I that I’m damn near useless for anything else, brain-wise. Oh, I can tell you all about the circumstances surrounding a song — for both them and me — and I’ll theorize about Liam’s chronic little brother syndrome and what it means for his new band, Beady Eye. But crafting compelling dialogue and plot? Hilariously difficult.

Strangely, since I've never been a huge fan, Sarah McLachlan is a great productivity booster. She's a fine enough musician, and I own three of her albums, but she does not crack my Top 40. And yet, sometimes her songs and a pair of headphones are all I need to get going. Maybe it is because she specializes in love, lust and longing, as I do, and maybe it's because her music is not obtrusive (nor dance party-inspiring), and if she comes on in a coffee shop? My, where did these easy paragraphs come from? Building a mystery, indeed.

It is entirely predictable, given how I am about everything else, that my writing-with-music preferences are categorized, yet equal opportunity. I don't like to force it, and I like to be surprised. The two will always find their way. 🍵



To see and hear some of my finest worksongs, as well as read my book reviews and other commentary, please visit glorifiedloveletters.blogspot.com

See you in May for Issue #5.

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