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Quote of the week:

“The man who reads nothing at all is better educated than the man who reads nothing but newspapers”
~Thomas Jefferson

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MANDAN'S PHOTOGRAPHER: THE ICONIC RICK SCHARF

Dustin White
Editor

For nearly four decades, one photographer has helped capture the history of Mandan. In many regards, he has become a local icon, one that many cherish for his dedication and talent. That man is Rick Scharf.

Over the years, Scharf has touched many individuals. Being a mainstay at many area events, his presence, along with his camera, are a welcomed facet of the community. And through his lens, many of those events have been captured.

A large portion of Scharf's work over the years has been in regards to sports. However, that was not his area of expertise when he first started. But he learned quickly, as he had to.

“I remember the first time they had me take photos of a sports event,” Scharf said. “I didn't have a single shot turn out.”

At that time, Scharf was still working with a film camera, and thus did not have the opportunity to instantly check his work.

But Scharf, always the fighter, didn't give up, and soon began to excel in the field. After that first failure, he was quickly back on the sidelines, working as if he had always photographed the game.

It wouldn't be long until he was a welcomed site at the games. While his photos spoke for themselves, it was his personality that really shined through. Connecting with many of the players, he'd form a real bond with them, with many seeing him as a positive role model. One that they would protect



FOR AROUND FOUR DECADES, RICK SCHARF HAS CAPTURED MOMENTS IN TIME FOR THE MANDAN COMMUNITY. IN THIS PHOTO FROM THE 90S, SCHARF SPORTS TWO FILM CAMERAS WHILE DOCUMENTING THE FOURTH OF JULY PARADE.

if needed.

“There was one game where a (football) player from the other team had missed our guys, and I could see him make the decision to just continue, and he plowed right into me,” Scharf said. “Our boys and the coaches took him right out.”

Scharf said that the Mandan boys were ready to rough up the guy who had tackled him, but he was taken out instead. Speaking with Scharf, it was clear that he was proud of the Mandan teams; his teams.

That pride in his teams shined in other manners as well. From seeing one of his photos on the

desk of a former Mandan athlete, to watching a new group graduate each year, Scharf became intertwined into the mix.

New Generations

Having photographed Mandan for such a considerable time, Scharf has made himself known to many different generations of athletes and individuals in the area. It has placed him in a unique position.

“Its amazing seeing some of the kids graduate,” Scharf said. “I photographed many of their parents while they were playing for Mandan, and now their kids.”

It is something that isn't lost

on the multiple generations Scharf has photographed, with many former athletes still coming up to Scharf to thank him or just catch up with their favorite photographer. It is a connection that is striking, and one few have the ability to create.

Having lasted as a community photographer for so long has also meant that Scharf has had to change a bit over the years though. With advancements in cameras, Scharf has had to adjust how he photographs events.

“I never really shot gymnastics,” Scharf said. “With my old

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REVIVING THE PHYSICAL FORMAT: RHYTHM RECORDS

Dustin White
Editor

Walking into the Laughing Sun Brewhouse and Pub on any given Monday night, one is welcomed in by local musicians displaying the great talent that is present in the community. Among those who grace the stage is Richard Loewen, the owner of Rhythm Records.

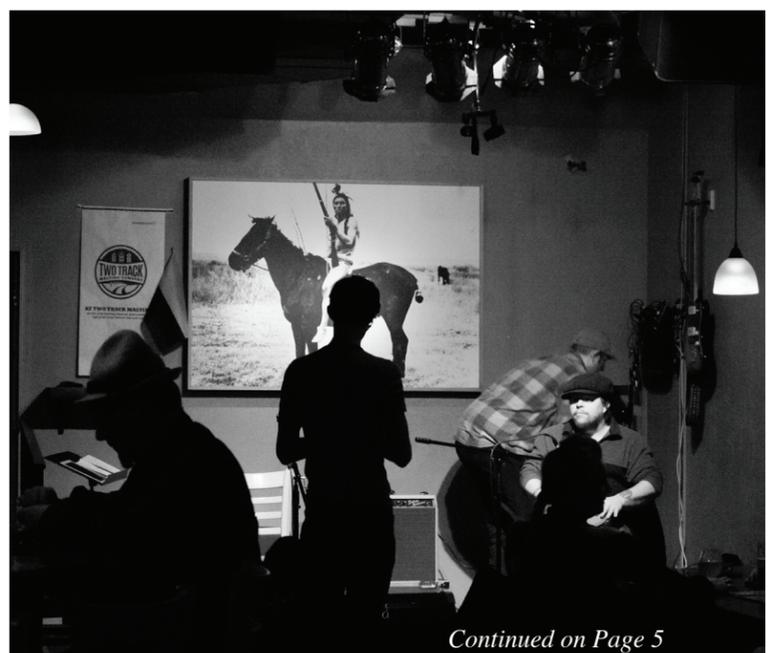
Seeing Loewen on stage, it becomes obvious that music is more than just a passing hobby, but truly a passion. Following that passion, and seizing an opportunity to make it his life, Loewen stepped into an industry that has had a long history in the area.

Long History

The Bismarck area has had a long history when it comes to music. Peck's Music Store, having opened by 1911, was one of the first such establishments in the area. Situated in the Grand Pacific Hotel, where the current Well's Fargo building sits, Peck's largely supplied musical instruments.

As Bismarck grew, additional stores sprouted. In 1921, the city was abuzz with news that a new live music store was opening in Bismarck. The Maynard Music Store would open to great enthusiasm, promising to serve the area as an “up-to-the-minute” music store.

From Maynard's, one could purchase not only musical instruments, but also phonographs, sheet music, records and player piano rolls.



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THE RISE AND FALL OF RAWHIDE CITY

Dustin White
Editor

Throughout the history of North Dakota, there have been a number of attractions that stick out. While some have had the chance to last the tests of time, others struggle until they finally go under. Rawhide City was of the latter nature.

It was forty years ago when the doors of Rawhide City, an old west attraction, opened. Initially located seven miles south of Dickinson, it was the creation of artist and entrepreneur Bob Watts.

Watts was born in Miles City, Mont., and had grown up in the area, eventually attending the University of Montana. Being consumed by his love for painting, Watts decided to devote

himself to the art. For a decade before opening up Rawhide City, Watts traveled, along with his wife Charlotte, in order to give demonstration and lessons, as well as sell his work.

During that time period, having become dissatisfied with the manner in which colleges were instructing art courses, Watts developed his own technique for teaching oil painting. Leading his courses, Watts would begin to paint a certain subject, and have his students paint along with him, in order to practice the techniques being demonstrated.

Watt believed that a beginning art student would achieve more by first working with oil paints before learning to draw.

“The eye will not follow a completed outline as well as a solid form, and when working with oil paints and brush, one paints solid,” Watts said in a 1971 Tribune interview.

In 1974, those years of travel, and Watts love of painting, led to the creation of an old west city. Unlike other restored frontier towns though, Rawhide City existed within a 50-by-120 foot steel building, located on an old farmstead south of Dickinson. Having been built in such an environment, Rawhide city was able to operate without being effected by the troubles caused by North Dakota's diverse



weather.

Besides being a unique attraction, Rawhide City served partially as a way to exhibit the many antiques Watts had collected over the years, as well as a place to display that more than 1,500 paintings he had created during the last decade. Naturally, this led to this particular frontier

town not necessarily resembling any particular area, but instead form what Watts labeled as a panoramic historical museum, which took “a little of the best of all of ‘em.”

Watts also drew upon the history of the immediate area, using material from several of North Da-

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Rick Scharf

Nikon, when the focusing motor kicked in, it'd make such a loud sound. I remember trying to shot one gymnast on the beam, and I liked getting them when they looked up. She was really concentrating and that motor kicked in and threw her off a bit.”

Today, the noise isn't such a bother though. Nor is having to switch rolls of film in the middle of a shot.

“Everything is digital now,” Scharf said.

But even with the new gear, Scharf has stayed true to an older sort of photographer. For him, it only takes one or two shots to really capture a moment in time; to tell a story and show the emotion of what is going on.

Its a characteristic of Scharf's photos that many see, and that has been appreciated by the community, and his industry. It sets him apart from other photographers, just as much as his personality does.

He's the type of photographer who has put up a long fight, and we hope to see him keeping up that fight for many years to come.

(Editor's Note: This story has been a couple years in the making. I had the pleasure to meet Rick when I started at the Mandan News. At the time, I wasn't a photographer. I'd never shot sports, or many of the events that I would come to document later on.

I have to give a lot of credit to Rick for my progress of photographing those sorts of events. Having had the chance to sit down and talk with him on many occasions, I began to learn, from his tips, and just seeing his photos, how to be a better photojournalist.

I also got to know Rick a little bit, and after many of our conversations, I would take note of different stories he told me, or of the advice he would give. Some of those notes can be seen here, and hopefully, at some point, Rick and I will sit down some more and get more of his story on paper.)

REMEMBERING HISTORY: STREETS OF SNOW

A Past Restored
Dustin White

Sorting through hundreds of photos from the past, I find myself seemingly transported in time. With many of the photos coming from possibly the 1950's and 60's, much of what is being depicted is beyond my own personal time frame.

Part of what makes this adventure a bit more interesting is getting a glimpse into that history. It is beyond my own experience; yet, through studying these photos, details begin to come to life.

Searching through these photos, one stood out this week. As our community continues to battle the snow, with snow banks often towering over head, it was interesting to see the same sort of depictions from decades past.

The background of the photo was one that is easily recognizable: the Lewis and Clark building. It's a landmark that has stood the test of time, and continues to add to our community.

However, the photo also hardened to a different time. With snow piling high, reaching nearly the awnings of the store fronts,



FOLLOWING A SNOW STORM, THE STREETS OF MANDAN WERE FILLED WITH SNOW, CREATING PILES THAT TOWERED OVER MAN AND CAR.

creating a virtual tunnel along the sidewalks, it was a sight that is no longer a regular occurrence during the winter, even when we

have exceptional snow falls.

Today, with more efficient manners of clearing the streets of snow, such a sight is quite rare.

For more photos from this series, and to learn about this on going project, go to www.MidwesternScout.com/saving-film

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THE RISE AND FALL OF RAWHIDE CITY AND MIGHTY OG

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kota own towns. In many ways, Rawhide City became entwined with the area's history.

"All of the lumber used to build Rawhide City came from a dismantled public school of Hebron," Watts said in a 1974 interview with the Tribune. "It took a solid week of just nailing for that boardwalk."

When Rawhide City first opened, it consisted of a main street which included a boardwalk, jail, and 13 businesses. By 1977, the city had expanded by including a series of eight-foot murals depicting events in the life of Jesus, an amphitheater which included a train that moved across the front of the stage, and probably the most famous addition; Og, a massive gorilla figure that stood 55 feet in the air.

"People couldn't see Rawhide City from the highway," Watts said in a 1977 interview with the Tribune. "So now they'll see Og."

In just the first four years, Rawhide City had expanded from a family operated business to employing 18 individuals, and attracting 30,000 visitors a year. The growth caused Watts to seek to relocate his city to an area with better access. Mandan offered just that.

Move to Mandan

For those Mandan citizens who were looking to the skies in 1978, many would have been surprised by seeing the two ton Og towering above as he moved through their city. While Watts had entertained the idea of flying his 55-foot high gorilla to Mandan by helicopter, he settled on moving it by a house mover.

Og was only a part of the new Rawhide City that Watts was bringing to Mandan though. Sticking with the model of an enclosed building, the new city was considerably larger than the Dickinson version. Sitting inside a 50-by-250 foot building were 18 stores furnished in a style from a century ago.

Along with the main building, which was designed to look like a stockade, a blockhouse located nearby housed a gallery of Watts paintings.

With the new city, Watts had the opportunity to hold one of the largest one-man art shows in the country, at the time. Featuring 1,500 original paintings, Rawhide City attracted great attention. But it wasn't enough.

Selling

A unique opportunity presented itself to individuals in the area in 1980. After operating for just two seasons in Mandan, Watts was auctioning off his city. Spiraling gas prices would result in tourist traffic slowing to a crawl, and what would seem to be the demise of Rawhide City.

"The first year was really a terrific summer," Watts said in a 1980 interview with the Tribune. "Then in 1979, traffic dropped because so many local and area

gas stations closed on Sundays and the high price of gas really hurt tourist traffic. But people won't remain stationary and I look for things to open up soon."

Watts words would sound much like a prophecy; however, it was one that wouldn't last for too long.

The auction was billed as the "world's most unusual auction." The featured item was Og, which Bob Penfield, an auctioneer from Bowman, had expected to sell for several thousand. At the time, a number of serious inquiries had been made on the sculpture, including two commercial businesses from Fargo and Grand Forks.

The auction would also be called the "world's largest one-man art show auction," which included 1,200 paintings by Watts.

For two days, the auction had been scheduled. Much like the mood of Watts and his family, the weather was gloomy on the first night of bidding. The artwork, which spanned a decade of painting by Watts, was the first to be auctioned off. Bidding was slow, with the first painting going for only \$35. One particular buyer would end up leaving with 29 paintings, each one costing just \$22 apiece.

It was the second day that the auction really took off. By the end of the day, Rawhide City was gone; or at least a portion of it was. Still sitting high among its perch rested Og.

Hating to see Og leave Mandan, two residents purchased Og, the three acres of land Rawhide City occupied and Og's building. Dean Olson and Jack Hopfauf were able to keep Og at home for \$2,250.

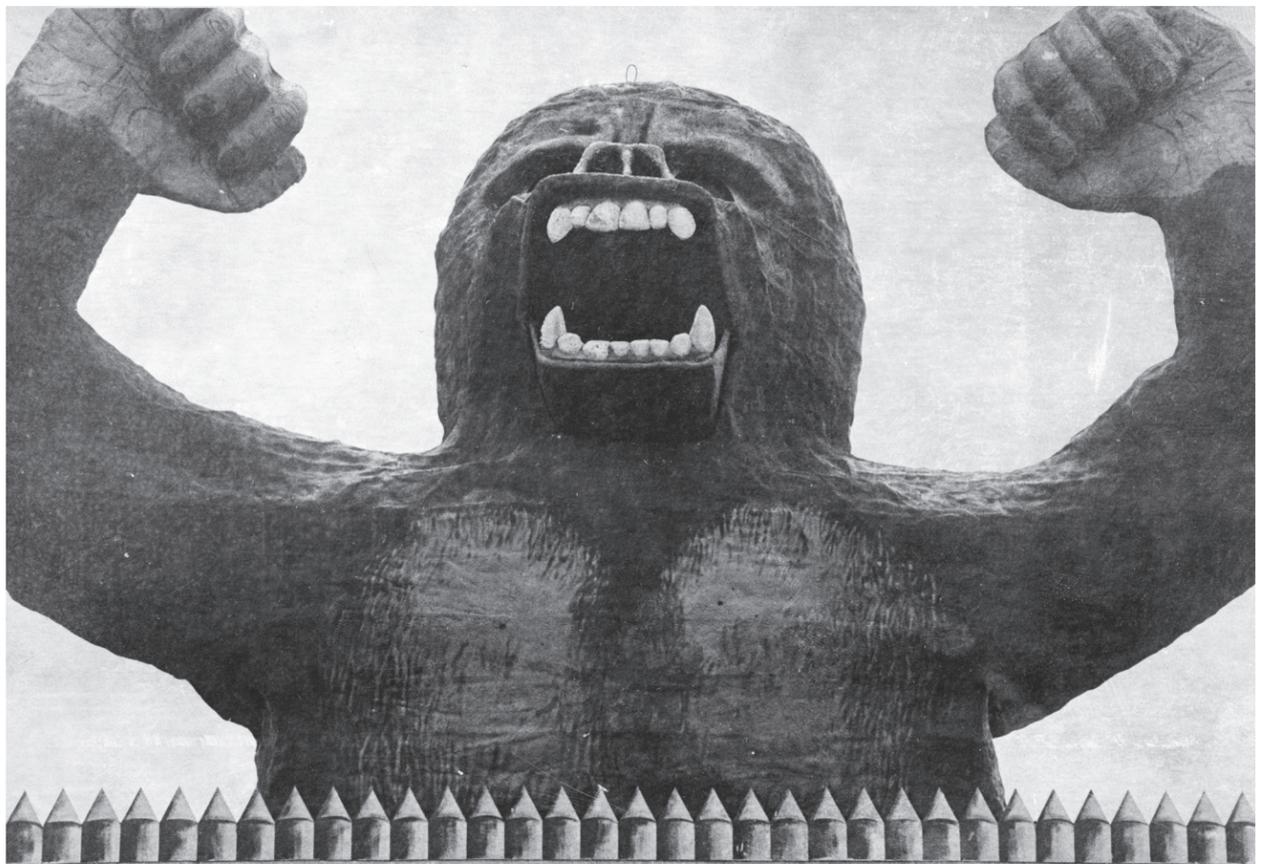
"It was a good deal," Hopfauf said in a 1980 interview with the Tribune. "We hate to see it (Og) leave Mandan."

Reopening

Rawhide City wouldn't stay abandoned for long. By 1981, Olson and Hopfauf, both of whom were retired, were planning on reopening the frontier town, which had been restocked with new items. However, no longer was Og's future certain.

Hopfauf had acknowledged that some individuals were commenting that a giant gorilla seemed at odds with an old western town. There were suggestions that Og could be transformed into a cowboy or a Native American.

But Og's home would stay secure, at least for a short while. The grand opening of the new Rawhide City wasn't met with much enthusiasm. While admis-



RAWHIDE CITY OFFERED A UNIQUE TOURIST ATTRACTION TO THE AREA. BUT WITH FALLING SALES, IT WAS AN ATTRACTION THAT HAD TO CLOSE. TOP: THE MIGHTY OG WHICH HELPED GUIDE VISITORS TO RAWHIDE CITY. BOTTOM: A POSTCARD FROM RAWHIDE CITY.

sion prices had been significantly reduced and a larger concession stand was added, there just were not many who were attracted to the site.

Most of those who did visit the city were those who had already gone through it before. Part of the problem was that there was little in advertising regarding the reopening. Hopfauf, at the time, chalked up the poor reception with the idea that most people were not aware that they were still there.

The next year, Rawhide City would be closed forever. It was much more than just failing attendance though. Structural problems also placed a hardship on the new owners.

Og for auction

In the fall of 1982, some Mandan residents were beginning to get fed up with Og. Having a 55-foot angry-looking gorilla was deemed unpleasing by a number of individuals. However, the major concern was that the structure in which Og was perched on was deteriorating. If it wasn't shored up, there was a possibility that Og would

tumble over.

Instead of fixing the problem, Hopfauf and Olson decided it was time to let it go. The city was closed, Og was in danger of toppling over, and there was no longer reason to keep it. Once again, Og was up for auction.

No longer in pristine condition, Og was in need of repair. With his teeth deteriorating, his fingernails in need of grooming and requiring a facelift, whoever bought the gorilla was going to need to give it some tender care.

Jim Lelm, of Harvey, was the man who thought he could handle the job. The intention was to place Og on top of the roof of his implement dealership. However, it wasn't without a bit of a motivator that pushed Lelm to make the purchase.

"I went to the auction with a little of the venom (tequila) of the night before, and bid against two cities that wanted him as a mascot," Lelm said in an online interview. "In my state of mind I would not allow that, as I didn't want to see Og leave the great state of North Dakota."

Lelm's initial idea would hit a road block though. While

he wanted to place it on top of his building, the company that constructed the building warned that they would not honor their roof warranty if Og was placed on top of it.

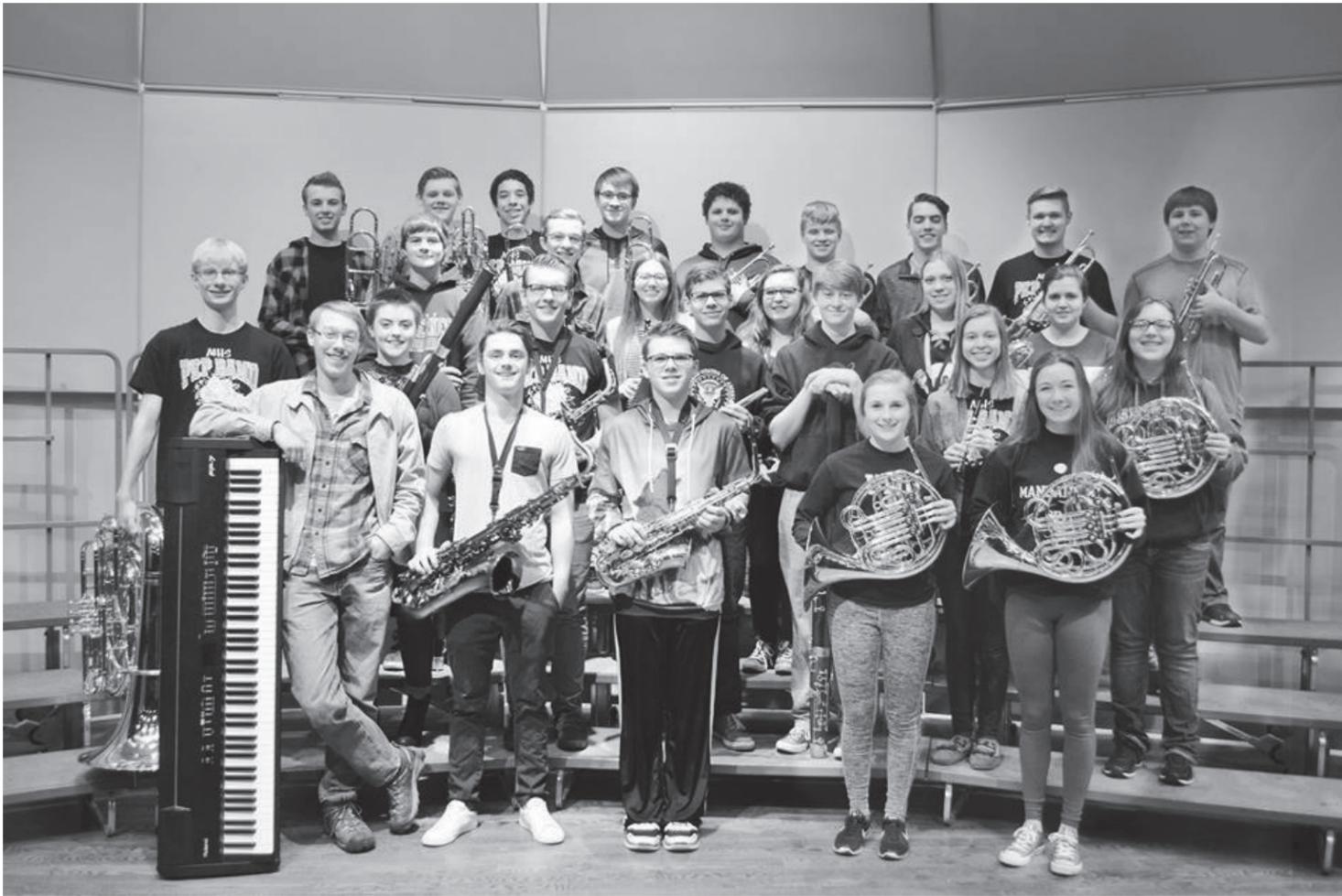
Demise of Og

For the next decade, Og would end up sitting behind Lelm's business. Yet, that wasn't the end of this mighty gorilla.

In 1993, Og finally found what would be his last resting place. Bert Miller, a retired resident of Harvey, offered Lelm a spot to set Og back up. Sparking a bit of life back into Harvey, Og greeted visitors coming along Highway 52. It was a humble setting, compared to his initial perch alongside Rawhide city, but it was suiting.

Og would remain in that field along Highway 52 for over a decade. Finally, in 2005, the mighty primate would be damaged beyond repair in a storm. After traveling hundreds of miles, and touching people throughout the country, Og was laid to rest. While there was a bit of hope he would be replaced, it was simply the end.

ALL-STATE MUSIC FROM MANDAN



CONGRATULATIONS TO THE MANDAN HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS WHO WERE SELECTED FOR THE 2017 NORTH DAKOTA ALL-STATE BAND, JAZZ BAND, AND ORCHESTRA.

THE EVENT TAKES PLACE MARCH 23-25 AT THE BISMARCK EVENT CENTER.

ROW 1: JOHAN STENSLIE, JACOB FRIESZ, BEAU HICKMAN, MCKENNA QUINTUS, SOPHIE LIND

ROW 2: NATHAN SCHWINDT, SARA JONES, TREVOR MURPHY, NORTH SKAGER, GRANT MYERS, KATELYN CERMAK, ASHLIN SCHAEFBAUER

ROW 3: BRANDON MARTIN, CONNOR WIELAND, EMILY SCHMIDT, MAGGIE BEACH, CIERRA GEIGER, JASMINE DURAN

ROW 4: CLAYTON FRIED, JACKSON NAGEL, JACOB CASTILLO, BRIAN MEISSNER, JADEN YEAGER, ISAIAH LEINGANG, ORIN OSSE, GAVIN MILLER, NATHAN MATTOON

NOT PICTURED: HANNAH HEINZE, JARED FITTERER, MORGAN KRAFT



CONGRATULATIONS TO THE MANDAN MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS WHO WERE CHOSEN FOR THE NORTH DAKOTA JR. HIGH ALL-STATE HONOR CHOIR. THE EVENT TOOK PLACE FEB. 3 AND 4 ON THE NDSU CAMPUS.

ROW 1: ARIA HENDRICKS

ROW 2: ETHAN UNRATH, CAROLYN MAPLE

ROW 3: ISAIAH JASMANN, KARLEY CERMAK, MADISON TAIT



CONGRATULATIONS TO MANDAN HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS WHO WERE CHOSEN FOR THE 2017 NORTH DAKOTA HIGH SCHOOL ALL-STATE MIXED CHORUS AND TREBLE CHOIR. THE EVENT TAKES PLACE MARCH 23-25 AT THE BISMARCK EVENT CENTER.

ROW 1: EMILY CICHA, KAYLIN TOMAC, AMBER AARDAHL

ROW 2: ALEC BARTLETT, DEVAN ROHRICH, HAYLEY SCHAEFBAUER

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE MANDAN MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS WHO WERE CHOSEN FOR THE NORTH DAKOTA JR. HIGH ALL-STATE BAND. THE EVENT TAKES PLACE MARCH 10 AND 11 AT MANDAN HIGH SCHOOL AUDITORIUM. THE FINAL CONCERT IS AT 3 P.M. ON MARCH 11.

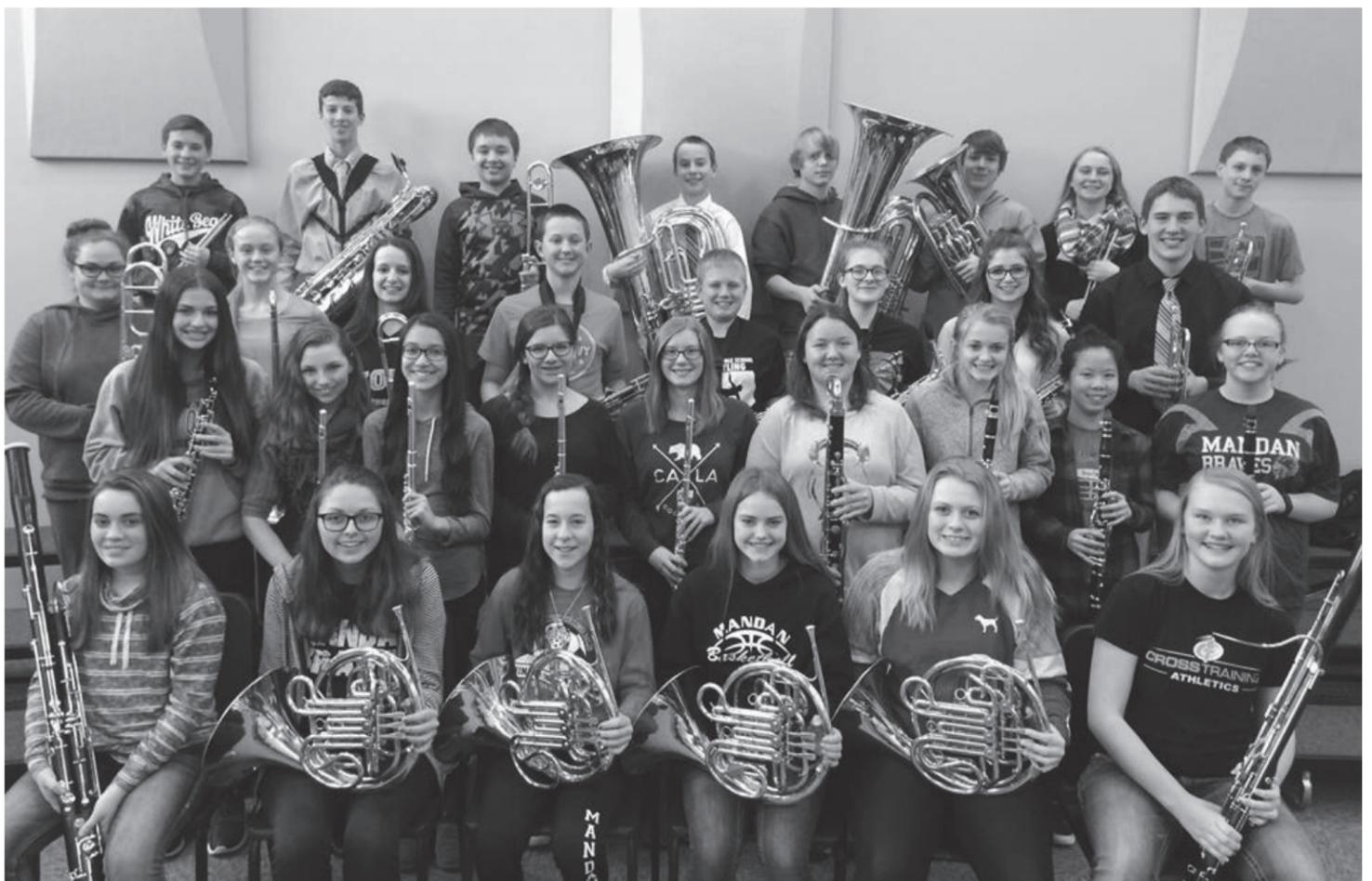
ROW 1: CIERRA DELZER, ANNABELLE MATTHEWS, SARAH BURGUM, MALLORY SHELDON, AVIANNA MOEN, ASHTON BOEHM

ROW 2: KYLIE WIELAND, JULIANA SMESTAD, ANGELEE RATH, ELLA EMTER, AVERY BOEHM, CAITLIN WALD, KATE KESLER, NICOLE WU, MEGAN HELVIG

ROW 3: MADISON MILDENBERGER, LAREENA MOSBRUCKER, SHAYLA NEWGARD, RILEY WETSCH, HUNTER ANDERSON, ALEXIS GRIFFIN, KAYLENA FRIED, JAXON DUTTENHEFER

ROW 4: IAN EILERS, JONATHAN LAFLEUR, DAMIEN MCCORMICK, LUCAS BURGUM, JOSIAH HOLZER, GARRET SCHAEFBAUER, OLIVIA LEINGANG, TREVIN YEOMAN

NOT PICTURED: CAILEY MEIDINGER



REVIVING THE PHYSICAL FORMAT: LOEWEN'S RHYTHM RECORDS

Continued from page 1

For nearly a century, additional music stores would come and go, evolving with the times. Often, that meant adapting to new media, as the music industry adopted new formats. For many, that would become a crushing blow.

However, while others tried to keep up with the changing music industry, a growing trend has started towards moving back to older formats. Along with that trend from buyers, contemporary artists have also taken notice.

Rhythm Records

As the music industry began to be dominated by digital media, a local music store took a different path. Instead, they have focused on media that you can hold in your hands; something physical.

The store, Rhythm Records, originally opened under Robbie Montgomery. Among the frequent visitors to the store was Loewen.

"I hung out there a lot," Loewen said. "If I got down to

the store, it was a good day."

Soon, Loewen hanging out at the store transformed into a friendship with the owner, as well as a job.

However, as Loewen began taking over many of the day to day tasks, becoming the only employee and the manager, he would be given an opportunity he couldn't pass. The former owner was looking to sell the shop.

"It got to a point that I was the only one working there," Loewen said. "Then the previous owner gave me the option to buy the store, and I did."

Loewen's passion turned into a career, and it has been growing ever since. Eventually, this growth has led to a number of changes, including to the store. While Rhythm Records would come under new ownership, so did the building in which it was located.

With the new ownership to the building, improvements have also come. While it has been exciting, it has also been expensive.

"It's been hard with the transition, and currently being in a temporary location," Loewen said.

On Feb. 3, that transition got a large boost, with Rhythm Records celebrating a grand re-opening.

"Some local musicians contacted me and wanted to throw a fundraiser to help," Loewen said.

With support from the community, the grand re-opening was a resounding success. But it also came with a bit of bad news. While the event went off without a hitch, Loewen also had to announce that the official move in date had to be pushed back to March.

However, even with the success, and set back, Loewen is set to continue with the hard work. Having learned the business as



Dustin White photo

PERFORMING AT LAUGHING SUN, RICHARD LOEWEN LIT UP THE STAGE, SHOWING HIS PASSION FOR THE MUSIC.

he goes, Loewen is looking to grow to a point where he isn't doing it all.

"When you make something you love your life, you can get burned out," Loewen said. "You can get burned out. Energy is

finite, and running the shop is a lot of work. I enjoy it though."

To check out Rhythm Records, stop by the store at 212 E. Main Ave., or look them up on Facebook at www.facebook.com/rhythmrecordscafe.

CONNECTING THE TWIN CITIES: MEMORIAL HIGHWAY AND THE STRIP

Dustin White
Editor

The Strip has been an important part of the Bismarck-Mandan community for over nine decades. It allowed businesses, wanting to serve both sides of the river, to find a nice central location. However, there were many factors that nearly kept The Strip from taking off.

It was the Liberty Memorial Bridge that became key to development of The Strip. Before the bridge, the only crossing over the river, for 500 miles in either direction, was the Northern Pacific Railroad.

During the winter, the river did provide an icy path between the two cities, but once the ice thawed, the only method to transport a car across the river was by ferry. Through the early years, the North Dakota Department of Transportation reported that 10,000 cars a year crossed the river between Bismarck and Mandan.

By 1917, the use of a ferry was no longer a viable option. Already in 1914, North Dakota had ranked fifth in the nation per capita in automobile ownership, and cars just continued to become more commonplace.

The 1922 completion of the Liberty Memorial Bridge made the cross-country Red Trail an interstate highway, finally connecting North Dakota east to west. Along with this completion came economic growth west of the Missouri River, which is what state leaders had been looking for.

There were still problems for The Strip though. Before the completion of the Garrison Dam, spring floods made the erection of buildings almost pointless. Those who did dare to open busi-

nesses were greeted by flooding most years.

For those who took the venture began a development that continues to this day. In those early days though, The Strip was neither a part of Mandan nor Bismarck. It was just the middle ground, an area connecting the two communities.

After the completion of the bridge in 1922, those who had homes or businesses on The Strip paid taxes only to Morton County. Each maintained their own wells and sewage facilities.

That quickly began changing in the late 1960s and early 1970s. The North Dakota State Highway Commissioner at the time, Walter Hjelle, made the decision that The Strip needed to become a four-lane highway. Included in the proposed improvement was an underpass that would connect the Strip to Main Street in Mandan. He was met with quite a bit of backlash.

Alice Young, who was the owner of The Ranch House and Young's Tavern on The Strip, led the opposition to the proposal. Instead, she favored keeping the two-lane road, and having it blacktopped.

"If a new super-duper highway and a new underpass area would be built it would be easy for Mandan to take us in for tax purposes. We don't want to pay all those high taxes. It would be years before Mandan could give us anything (such as a sewer and water service) for our money,

Young said in a Dec. 2, 1969 Bismarck Tribune story.

On the other side was Robert Clifford from the Gourmet House and Roger Hardy of the PRS Tarp Manufacturing Co.

"We felt we would not get anything (from the Highway Department) if we didn't get the four-lane," Hardy had said.

Hardy was also looking towards the future of the Strip, predicting much more growth.

"I've been here since 1962 and I've seen the number of businesses on The Strip more than double," he was quoted by the news.

As we know today, the underpass and four-lane highway were constructed. But that wasn't the end to protests. On Feb. 18,

1975, the city of Mandan began the process of annexing The Strip.

The proposal began with a petition of 33 property owners who presented it to the Mandan City Commission. William Bartels, who was co-owner of the Midway Bowling Lanes made the request on behalf of the landowners. The motivation had been sewage problems in the area.

Less than three months later, the process was completed. There were protests though, largely fueled by the \$1 million in special assessments that were spread to the owners of the property.

During the first public hearing, five landowners voiced their views. Nine more landown-

ers would send their protests in, according the Bismarck Tribune, but they were late. In the end, these residents did not own the required 25 percent of combined property to stop the process of annexation.

On May 6, 1975, The Strip officially became part of Mandan, and in turn gave the city the distinction of having the longest Main Street in the state at the time.

Today, The Strip remains an important part of the Bismarck-Mandan community. Still connecting the two cities, the stretch of road has experience new life, while still nurturing some of the business that helped make it what it is today.



Dustin White photo

LOOKING OUT TOWARDS MANDAN, THE MEMORIAL BRIDGE IS THE FINAL CONNECTION BETWEEN THE TWIN CITIES. ALONG WITH THE STRIP, IT HAS SERVED AS A WAY TO BRING THE COMMUNITY TOGETHER.

VISITING SITES OF EARLY DAKOTA TERRITORY

Exploring Dakota
Dustin White

During the early years of Dakota Territory, the land was scattered with forts. Serving to protect railroad interests, as well as the growing settlements in the area, the forts helped establish what would become the state of North Dakota.

Fort Union

Established in 1828 or 1829, Fort Union was built by the Upper Missouri Outfit, and capitalized by John Jacob Astor's American Fur Company. Unlike other forts in the area, Fort Union was neither a government nor military post, but was instead a business.

The fort would go on to become the most important fur trading post on the upper Missouri. Instrumental in developing the Montana fur trade, the post would welcome a host of tribes, who exchanged buffalo robes, as well as small furs, for goods such as guns, blankets and beads.

Warfare was seldom felt at the post, as various tribes, and Europeans, coexisted peacefully. Specifically built for the Assiniboine tribe, at their request, the land the fort sat on was part of the tribe's territory, and they maintained a watchful eye of the area.

The trade business continued until 1867, when the fort shut its doors. Serving the area for nearly four decades though, Fort Union gained the distinction of being the longest lasting, American fur trading post.

Fort Union's closing was brought on by the United States Army having bought the post. Razing it, the materials were used to construct Fort Buford. In ruins, the site would lay abandoned for a century.

Today, the fort now is the home to a partial reconstruction of the post. Transporting visitors

back to the mid-19th century, guests are welcomed into a unique era of local history. Fort Union stands as a testament to a brief period of time, when multiple civilizations, European and American Indian, were able to find common ground, and cultural acceptance.

Fort Buford

As Fort Union was nearing its end, another fort, Fort Buford, was being established.

Construction at Fort Buford began in 1866. After the U.S. Army bought Fort Union in 1867, much of the building material was transferred to the new fort, as the wood from Fort Union was of superior quality.

The fort was constructed to protect the increasing overland and river routes used by immigrants moving west. It would serve an essential role on the northern plains for nearly three decades.

However, Fort Buford may best be remembered for it being the place where Sitting Bull surrendered in 1881. It would also be the fort that Joseph Whistler not only started his military career in Dakota Territory, in 1866, but where it ended in 1883.

Fort Buford would receive nationwide attention on April 1, 1867, when the Philadelphia Inquirer ran a story, alleging that the fort had been wiped out by the Lakota, that Captain Rankin was captured and tortured to death and his wife had also been captured and abused. It was deemed the Fort Buford Massacre.

The story was picked up, nationwide, the next day. While other newspapers began questioning the validity of the report, already by April 4, the story was nonetheless fed by rumors, and continued to grow over the next month.

Eventually, the hoax was exposed by Rankin, himself, as



Dustin White photo

A RECONSTRUCTION OF FORT UNION.

he corresponded with the war department.

By 1895, Fort Buford was beginning to deteriorate. On Oct. 1, it was decommissioned, and the next year, the remaining structures were sold at auction.

Today, the United States owns 40 acres of the once one square mile fort. Three restored buildings, which had remained on site, as well as several that have been reconstructed, now occupy the grounds.

Cartwright Tunnel and Fairview Bridge

The impact of both the steamboats and the railroad, is felt throughout the state. With much of the states development being intimately tied to these two forms of transportation, the area's history is filled with interesting stories.

For the western portion of North Dakota, two unique structures, to the state, would be built to help facilitate transportation: the Cartwright Tunnel and the Fairview Bridge.

The Cartwright Tunnel was built in 1912 and 1913, with most of the digging having been done by hand. The Fairview Bridge would be completed the same year.

The purpose of the bridge, the only lift bridge in North Dakota, was to allow steamboats to pass under it. At the time of its completion, the steamboat industry was dying, and the bridge would only be raised once.

Ironically, while the tunnel and bridge would allow railway traffic to continue, it was the railroad industry that helped provide a death blow to steamboats.

Designed to allow both vehicle traffic, as well as trains to cross the Yellowstone River, the bridge and tunnel helped allow for settlers to continue to move west.

Problems would eventually arise. With the tunnel and bridge being quite narrow, vehicle traffic was limited. Attempting to use the structures, travelers would have to pick up a phone at one end, and call to ensure that there was no traffic coming from the other side.

In 1955, the last car would travel over the bridge, and by the 1980's, trains had also stopped using the route.

Seeing a historical significance in the Fairview Bridge, partially because of its unique engineering, the site was added to the National Register for Historic Places, in 1991.

Not wanting this history to vanish, the Fairview Chamber of Commerce developed a walking trail along the Cartwright Tunnel and Fairview Bridge. It was shortly after that work had been completed that a test was conducted, to see if the apparatus used to raise the 1.14 million pound lift section of the bridge. Working perfectly, it would be the only time the marvel was used.

Today, the area offers a unique view of history. At this location, two major modes of transportation were meant to merge. While one would prosper, the other eventually passed away.

The walking path continues to be operational today. While it is a bit of a hike, it certainly pays off.

CHOOSING HOPELESS DESPAIR OR LACK OF DEPTH: KITE RUNNER

Is the Book Better
Dustin White

It's an age old question, is the book better than the movie? Often, the claim is that the book is better, as it gives more information. Yet, is that necessarily true? That is the question we will explore in this column.

The Kite Runner

In 2003, Khaled Hosseini wrote the book, "The Kite Runner," and while 70,000 hardback copies would be sold, it wasn't until the next year, when the paperback copy was released, selling more than one and a quarter million copies, that the book found its popularity.

By the time the movie was filmed, in 2007, millions of additional copies of the book had been sold. For many, it seemed that almost everywhere they looked, someone was reading "The Kite Runner."

With the book having received so much attention, the

movie had quite a bit to live up to, which can often be a risky endeavor.

Quite possibly even more risky though was the content of the work. With the attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, still fresh in many minds, "The Kite Runner" exposed the reader to a view of Afghanistan, and citizens of Afghanistan that were easy to relate to, and while there was evil, it was also clear that the country, which had provided the individuals who attacked the United States, had much more to offer as well.

For those unfamiliar with "The Kite Runner," the story is of a privileged Pashtun boy, named Amir, who lives in Kabul, Afghanistan, and his friend/servant, a Hazara, named Hassan. While the two children form a bond, that will stay with each throughout their lives, it is strained by cultural traditions, history and their own actions.

Living in a society that places Hassan, being a Hazara, below

the Pashtun Amir, the friendship is complicated, and those complexities eventually unravel, as Amir chooses to betray his friend. A choice that will haunt him, and in the end, will drive Amir to try to right that wrong.

Comparison

While the book and the movie tell the same basic story, there are differences, as one would suspect.

With the time constraints of the movie, the filmmakers needed to fit as much of the narrative into the final film as possible, while working in a limited medium. Thus, it was necessary to make important choices, as to portray the overall story accurately, while not cutting out pieces that were too important.

For the most part, the filmmakers were able to do that. The final film stays true to the overall story, and stands alone quite well.

However, since portions of the story had to be cut, the film does lack the depth that the book

can give. With much more space available, the book is able to develop the characters better, as well as form the bond between Amir and Hassan to a deeper level.

For a movie though, lacking the bit of depth may not be a negative aspect. "The Kite Runner" is a tough work. As one reviewer called it, "it's hell." It is a tragic story, in which the tragedy never seems to lighten.

In the film, that tragic nature isn't quite so consuming. There are instances of relief, and in the end, the outcome seems much more clear. There is a bit of hope, which I believe is needed.

On the other hand, the book displays what feels like an endless tragedy. The brief moments of hope are overshadowed by nearly complete despair, which only worsen over time. Worse yet, Amir never seems to really grow. While there are moments of strength, he seems to ultimately fail; a situation that the film remedies.

Winner

In the case of "The Kite Flyer," it may not be prudent to say that either one is better. Instead, the book and movie are different.

Either version of the story is excellent, and has a lot to offer, especially since they delve into a culture and society that is often so misunderstood, and detail the history of how Afghanistan got to the place it was, the place from with the terrorist attacks of 9/11 were orchestrated.

On a personal level, I found myself enjoying the book much more, because the depth that it was able to give was greater.

However, the book also offers a story that is blanketed in despair, and offers little hope. It can be an incredibly difficult read, simply because the tragedy never seems to cease, but only deepens.

The movie, on the other hand, offers that same basic story, but can be easier to stomach. The depth may not fully be there, but neither is the hopeless despair.

BIG POWER IN A SMALL DEVICE

Dustin White
Editor

When looking for devices to help stabilize video, hundreds of options become available. The products range from expensive complicated rigs to items that serve, at best, paper weights. Appearing in the middle of that is the Stayblcam, a unique device designed for cell phones and light weight cameras.

Unboxing the Stayblcam, it is a bit underwhelming. From first glance, it appears similar to a selfie stick. But appearances can be deceiving.

The design of the Stayblcam is relatively simple. There are few moving parts, which provides little chance of failure. The primary weakness appears to be the telescoping arm, which if put under enough stress would bend. But under normal and even heavy use, there is little worry of that.

As a whole, the Stayblcam is quite durable. Even more though, it works well in many weather conditions because of the simple design. There are no electronics to worry about, so water isn't a threat. In that regard, the Stayblcam should hold up even in the most extreme conditions.

Performance

Part of the beauty of the Stayblcam is its simplicity. It works directly out of the box, and needs little explanation as how to use it. Slide your phone into the phone adapter on one side, and you're nearly ready to go.

The most difficult aspect comes with trying to balance the Stayblcam. Once the phone (or camera) is attached to the Stayblcam, in order to have it work properly, it is necessary to hold the device horizontally, and by adjusting the telescoping arm, balance it.

At first, trying to balance the Stayblcam is a bit annoying,



and it requires a knack. However, after a few uses, one gets a hang of it. It would have been nice if there were basic suggestions marked out on the telescoping arm, to give starting points, but with use, balancing it almost becomes natural.

Once balanced, it is just a matter of grabbing the grip, and going. A bit of support will be needed to keep the Stayblcam upright, but it all can be done with just one hand.

There is a slight learning curve to using the Stayblcam. While the device works easily enough, I found that it was necessary to adjust my hold so that it felt stable in my hand. It took a little while to find out what worked best, but with just a little playing around, it was easy to get a hang of.

With the basics worked out, the rest falls into place. While the Stayblcam won't eliminate all extra movement from a video, it does greatly smooth it out. What

may be a better benefit though is that the Stayblcam allows fluid motion both up and down, as well as sideways.

Overall

The design of the Stayblcam makes it nearly a universal tool. The rubber camera attachment easily allows for virtually any phone to be used. But the Stayblcam can also be used with smaller cameras, including mirrorless cameras. However, it is definitely aimed at those shooting videos with a smart phone.

As a whole, the Stayblcam is a wonderful tool. While it may not eliminate all extra movement in every condition, it does greatly smooth out the video. For most users, that is more than enough.

It is a device I would highly recommend.

(In a future review, we will be seeing how far we can push the Stayblcam, and to what extremes it endure).

BUZZ BUILDS FOR FIRST COFFEE CRAWL

This is a coffee lovers dream come true. 15 businesses are participating in the first ever "Bismarck-Mandan Coffee Crawl" on Saturday, Feb. 11, between 8 a.m. and 2 p.m. They will each be serving a special coffee or coffee drink and competing in the "Best Barista Contest" based on the votes of coffee crawl participants.

The Coffee Crawl will be like the notorious bar crawls, but with coffee. One of the event organizers, Stacy Sturm, says there's a lot of "buzz" about this event because it is alcohol-free, "I've heard so many people ask, how come every fun event in the area centers around alcohol?" Sturm said. "There's a lot of people that don't drink. There's also a lot of people that want more family friendly events and with the popularity of coffee, we thought ... hmm. Let's have some fun with coffee and expose people to some great new coffee places they've probably never been too!"

Sturm says people would be surprised how many local coffee places are really "kicking up" their game.

"They're doing pour-overs, pulling coffees with coconut oils or essential oils, bringing in different foreign coffees, doing unique cold brew processes, the Bismarck-Mandan coffee game is strong!," Sturm said.

"Literally! You're not going to find many mixes or gas station kind of cappuccinos. We have some really exciting entries in the coffee crawl for true coffee lovers!"

Participants must purchase a passport they'll bring around to participating businesses and get it stamped for their coffee/coffee drink and a chance to win prizes. Passports will be sold in advance at URL Radio (305 E. Broadway Ave.) for \$20, or they can be purchased online through www.eventbrite.com and picked up at URL Radio anytime before the event. At the end, coffee crawlers can turn in their ballot on the back of the passport to vote for "Bismarck-Mandan's Best Barista" a.k.a their favorite coffee of the day. Event organizers will tally the votes and award the prestigious "Golden Coffee Mug" trophy to the winning business.

Participating businesses: Caffe Aroma, Fireflour Neapolitan Pizzeria & Craft Coffee Bar, The Cyclist's Cove, Cappuccino On Collins, Mocha Momma's, Rocket Coffee, Bismarck Community Food Co-op, Mighty Missouri Coffee Company, The Gifted Bean, Coffee Zone inside Sky Zone, Main Street Drive Thru Liquor, Perks inside Bismarck Honda, Classic Rock Coffee, City Brew Coffee, and Boneshaker Coffee Company.

NEW VIDEOS FOCUS ON MANDAN WORKFORCE



ALONG THE INTERSTATE 94 CORRIDOR, NEW BUSINESS CONTINUE TO SPROUT.

"A Great Life" is the theme for Mandan's newest promotional video. Showcasing business and career opportunities, excellence in public education, fun things to do, and a strong sense of community, the video is intended for potential new residents.

"The target audience includes people who may be living in the area and contemplating a home purchase as well as those thinking about moving here for job openings and business opportunities," Laurie Leingang, chair of the Mandan Tomorrow - Leadership, Pride and Image Committee, which provides guidance on a community marketing program, said.

Participants in the video include area business owners, managers and employees, an outdoor enthusiast, an educator and families.

Other videos released this month by the City of Mandan business development and communications department focus on Mandan's three business districts: the Interstate 94 corridor, the Main Street and downtown area, and Memorial Highway/east Mandan.

Check out the videos on YouTube via a "Great Things: Made in Mandan" channel. They are also linked on the city website, www.cityofmandan.com, plus on Facebook pages for the City of Mandan and "Made in Mandan," a source of news about community progress, events, local achievements and sources of fun.

A series of videos released in 2016 aimed at strengthening Mandan's image as a fun place and enticing tourism visits received about 200,000 online views last year.

Bismarck-Mandan area Photographers

Upcoming Events

- | | |
|--------------------------|--|
| February 11 — @ 10:30 am | ND Heritage Center (Pending Approval)
Photo walk at Heritage Center Museum |
| February 25 — @ 11:00 am | Cameras & Coffee – Classic Rock Coffee- Mandan, ND
Meet @ Classic Rock Coffee for some conversation about cameras |
| March 11 — @ 10:00 am | Camp Hancock- W. Main, Bismarck
Photo walk at Camp Hancock and Bread of Life Church |
| March 25 — @ 4:30 pm | Composition Basics Discussion- Former Governors Mansion, Bismarck
Discussion on the basics of composition and improving photography. (Pending Date Approval) |
| April 8 — @ 3 pm | Cameras & Coffee – Classic Rock Coffee- Mandan, ND
Meet @ Classic Rock Coffee for some conversation about cameras |
| April 22 — @ 3 pm | Sleepy Hollow Park – Bismarck
Photo walk at Sleepy Hollow Park in Bismarck |

To Learn more about the Bismarck-Mandan area Photographers group, go to www.Facebook.com/groups/MandanPhotographers/

MANDAN SUCCEEDS WITH JUNIE B. JONES



Dustin White
Editor

Over the years, the Mandan High School has had great success with a number of different musicals. Part of their success has been the willingness to explore a wide array of topics, as well as push themselves with potentially difficult material. This year was no different.

Without talent though, the risk wouldn't pay off. And talent is a department that Mandan isn't lacking. Coupled with an experienced technical crew, assisted by Austin Geltel, the 2017 musical, *Junie B. Jones*, added one more worthy production by Mandan High School.

Final Performance

Attending the last performance of the season, the musical would be showing to a near full house. Unlike many in the audience, I was a bit hesitant about the material. Never having read the *Junie B. Jones* books as a child, and not thrilled about them as a father, who has read them to his son, I was unsure how the material could be elevated.

The books themselves are geared to younger readers, which poses a problem when trying to adapt them to an older audience. It was a challenge that director Anne Jorgenson Green and Music Director Keri Hess-Bolte would have realized when they selected the material.

For Green and Bolte, the selection of the show had to pass certain criteria, such as, does it contain themes that will touch or inspire high school students. On a more realistic level, it also has to be feasible in order to produce, as the school is working within certain limitations. *Junie B. Jones* fit that criteria.

Possibly the hardest sell though was taking the lives of first graders, and having it connect with high school students or

adults. Being the father of a first grader, I know just how difficult that can be.

Yet, somehow they were able to pull it off. They were able to take themes that effect most everyone, such as change, and make it relevant, even though the material itself, and the situations portrayed, were not.

Part of the effectiveness rests on the actors truly getting into character, and bringing the material to life. They appeared to really believe what they were selling, and even though many of the situations and problems were exaggerated, as first graders often do, the message behind the material was really able to shine through.

Stand Out Performance

While all in this year's musical really nailed their performances, the stand out was Mandan Junior, Sabrina Matthews, who played *Junie B. Jones*.

As the lead character, and the character in which the musical revolves around, it was critical that Matthews sold herself as *Junie B.* She needed to truly connect with the audience, or risk losing them. It was a challenge that she stepped up to, and succeeded at.

Matthews took the audience through a wide range of emotions, from being seemingly depressed, to being ecstatic. She became *Junie B.*, and took everyone with her on a rollercoaster.

Really dedicating herself to the role, she also nailed two other aspects of her character. The first was being able to successfully break the fourth wall, and address the audience without it being awkward. It was a way that she could connect with the audience better, and bring them into the musical.

The second aspect that was impressive was learning how to juggle for the performance. For



Dustin White photos

TOP: THE CAST OF JUNIE B. JONES. MIDDLE: SABRINA MATTHEWS ATTEMPTS TO LEARN TO JUGGLE ON STAGE, WHILE MADDIE VEGA AND ALEC BARTLETT, PLAYING THE MOTHER AND FATHER, WATCH. BOTTOM: MATTHEWS AND CO-STAR, NICOLAS ROHRICH, PLAYING HERBERT. FOR MORE PHOTOS, GO TO WWW.MIDWESTERNSCOUT.COM

me, those little touches really help to sell a character. And Matthews' attempt at juggling, which was successful enough for the musical, wasn't overly showy. It was just enough.

Hiccups

While the musical started out strong, there were still a few hiccups with the overall performance, which is to be expected.

For the most part, the timing



was exceptional, and those on stage appeared to be comfortable with their parts. If there were any major problems with the performance, by the final night, they were all worked out.

However, there were moments that could have been more polished. There were a couple of breaks which suggest that a line was momentarily forgotten; yet, they were able to cover quickly, and seamlessly.

What really could have used some polishing though was the actors movements. This is an aspect that I'm a bit torn on though.

While one expects smoother movement during a musical, at least during the musical numbers, that was often lacking in this performance. The movements were often a bit more choppy, and slightly rushed. It added to the overall feeling of the musical, but it was a bit distracting as well.

As a whole, the performance was a great success, which I have come to expect from the Mandan High School. They take risks with their choices, but the risks pay off because of the great talent they showcase, both on stage and behind the scenes.