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Lifestyles

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Klipsun.... is the Lummi word for beautiful sunset. Klipsun is a student-produced magazine, published twice a quarter in the fall, winter and spring. Special thanks go to Shona Fahland and the staff of Western Washington University’s Publishing Services.

Dear Readers,

Yes, this issue is a little different. A little backwards, a little weird at first. When we looked at the stories we selected for this issue, we thought, “Hey, we almost have a whole food issue!” And the idea surfaced to do half of the magazine as the “Food Issue” and the other half as “Bellingham Lifestyles” issue.

We hope you enjoy the variety and breadth of stories in this April issue. From the profile of a semi-pro basketball player to the look at how a record label came to existence in Bellingham, the “Lifestyles” side has something to entertain and inspire. Turn and flip for a glance at the part in life everyone should enjoy: food. We are not just looking at restaurants; we will show you how to eat properly to impress your parents, your date or your future boss. Or look at this interesting beverage made from a bacteria culture called Kombucha. Hungry, yet?

I would like to personally thank all the reporters and editors who worked on these last two issues of Klipsun. I am continually impressed with their dedication and hard work. Also a big thanks to our adviser, Steve Howie, who has stuck through it all. Thank you as well, to the readers who serve as our true inspiration and purpose.

Sincerely,

Nicole Lanphear
Editor in Chief

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Cover Photo by Roberta Drayer
Photo Illustration by Justin Steyer
White and brown wooden shelves line the walls in the upstairs corner of the historic downtown Bellingham Morse Hardware building. Outside the office space that was donated by Daylight Properties more than a year ago, there are only a few reminders of the past. Several black and white photos hang near the stairs that proudly display the 106 years of Morse Hardware. But inside this office, relics from the past are abundant. Close to 10,000 used books are crammed into the room, waiting for prisoners to read.

Bellingham resident Carolyn Rice, 63, grabs a two-inch thick stack of opened envelopes, rubber-banded together. She knows exactly which one she wants.

“There it is,” Rice says after leafing through the contents. She pulls out a handwritten note addressed from a prison in Texas. The date is January 14, 2008.

Dear Books to Prisoners,

I am writing today to express my gratitude for the books you have sent me. They have made a tremendous difference in the quality of my time here in the Texas department of criminal justice. Especially during periods of limited access to the library or educational programs.
As I serve out my last few months on this pre-release unit, I begin to realize the impact your organization has on my life. Of course, this does not stop with just me since these books are passed along to other inmates.

Thanks so much to everyone whom has had a hand in this important movement toward improving our lives.

In the struggle,
Charles

“I can go a long time on that,” Rice says.

Rice is a volunteer with Bellingham Books to Prisoners, a two-year-old volunteer group that works alongside Seattle Books to Prisoners, a group with more than 35 years of history. Together they send packages filled with books to prisoners all throughout America.

Because many prisons only allow books to be sent from bookstores and not private addresses, Seattle Books to Prisoners works through Left Bank Books as the official headquarters. From there, Seattle Books to Prisoners sends out hundreds of requests to the branches located in Olympia, Portland and Bellingham.

The books are gathered at the Bellingham office and sent to prisoners, whose requests are given to them from the Seattle branch.

In the past year, Bellingham resident and Books to Prisoners volunteer Nancy Duncan, 64, says Seattle Books to Prisoners shipped more than 9,200 packages, with Bellingham being responsible for approximately 800

(top left) Volunteer Carolyn Rice helps wrap a bundle of books to sent to a prisoner.
(left and right) Shelves of books at the Books for Prisoners office.
packages. And with the price of media mail at $2.17 per pound, Duncan says the process can get costly, especially considering all the funds for Books to Prisoners are provided by fundraisers and donations.

Because they are currently low on funds, Rice and Duncan describe a potential stalemate. A typical meeting consists of more re-organization than sending because it has been hard for them to raise money recently.

“The letters we’re answering now are the last of a batch of letters from October. That’s almost going to be six months,” Rice says. “So we don’t have any money to mail out these packages that we’re wrapping right now. And probably the earliest we’re willing to get any money is if I go to the post office with a table and stand there all day and literally ask people ‘Will you consider mailing a package of academic books or literacy materials to someone in prison somewhere in the country?’”

Rice is joined by three others this Monday. Because of their rotating schedules, Rice says she can never predict how many people will be at the meetings. Sometimes there are 10; sometimes there are four. It is in this building that the members pack books, answer letters and share each other’s company.

“If this is our reality right now, we need to look at whether it’s realistic to try and continue on knowing that we’re getting further behind,” Rice says.

Although they are facing what Duncan describes as a financial burden, 22-year-old Bellingham resident and member of Books to Prisoners Natasha Sukolski has high hopes.

“I don’t get discouraged with the money because it always seems to come in, little by little what we need, enough to keep us going,” she says.

Sukolski says members have gone past the traditional route of asking for donations by holding benefit events such as house shows with local bands performing.

Bellingham Books to Prisoners keeps requests from prisoners all throughout the United States. Hand-written and kept in a binder, these requests give Duncan a visual of the reason to volunteer each week.

“Before, it’s all kind of water-color world, ‘Oh it’d be nice to help the prisoners’ and then you read these specific letters,” Duncan says. “These are self selected from people who are trying to better themselves.”

The most requested book is the dictionary, says Duncan. A close second is a GED preparation book.

“Some of them are very articulate and some are barely literate, and it just breaks your heart,” Duncan says.

Due to their current financial trouble, Duncan says the Bellingham chapter will have to weigh the options of continuing on with housing books and filling requests. With the help of just a few more volunteers and a little more funding, Duncan says the chapter may be able to continue its goal of helping the prisoners, one book at a time.

<table>
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<th>Letters Answered</th>
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Moving Forward

One player’s dedication to the game and family
As a child growing up in Lynnwood, Brian Dennis, 27, was a handful for his mother.

“I was growing and the house wasn’t getting any bigger,” Dennis says.

Luckily for him, his mother had a solution.

“My mom marched me down to the local park and made me play [basketball] because she wanted me out of the house,” he says.

Nineteen years and numerous shoe sizes later, Dennis is a 6-foot, 6-inch, 295-pound center for the Bellingham Slam, a minor league basketball team that formed as part of the American Basketball Association in 2005.

Playing in the minor leagues means whole teams come and go as often as players, which is quite frequently.

Dennis, who once dreamed of playing in the NBA like many minor-league players, is not only a professional basketball player, but also a returning college student on the cusp of graduation and the father of a 17-month-old child. Now, he says it is his life that can sometimes be a handful.

Dennis says it is sometimes hard for him to balance school, basketball and his daughter Layla, but he and Layla make adjustments to get it done.

“We make it work,” he says. “She comes to a lot of practices with me. She hangs out and plays basketball on the side on the little hoop.”

Some minor-league basketball players are paid enough to support themselves during the season, but those who do not get much playing time may need to have a second job, Dennis says. Dennis, who started all 34 games last season, says he tries to focus solely on basketball during the season instead of taking a second job.

“I’ve been fortunate enough and the Slam has treated me well enough that I can, over the course of a season, make enough to sustain myself,” he says.

However Dennis says he and his fiancée, Layla’s mother, still do not have enough money to get married.

Dennis will not get into specifics about how much he earns with the Slam, but according to the International Basketball League, which the Slam will join this coming season after leaving the ABA, players earn between $40 and $500 per game depending on the team’s ownership. The Slam will play a 20-game season this year, down from 36 games in the ABA days.

Kip Leonetti, vice president of operations for the Slam, says players on the team average about $1,500 per month during the season.

Dennis says he re-enrolled at Western in the fall of 2007 because returning to school to earn his degree had been in the back of his mind for a while. He left school in 2002 after four years playing basketball for the Vikings but he left Western because he saw an opportunity for himself to play some high-level basketball and decided to take it.

“Right when I got out of college I had that dream everybody has that they’re going to make the [NBA],” he says.
Nate McMillan, then coach of the Seattle Sonics, came to watch the all-star game of a Bellevue summer league Dennis was involved in, Dennis says. After the game, McMillan asked Dennis to attend a Sonics practice for a workout.

“They ran me through some drills, said thank you and sent me on my way,” Dennis says.

He says he was not nervous during the session with the Sonics organization because he realized he was probably not up to the skill-level necessary to make the team, and he was, after all, just there to play basketball.

“It was a complete long shot and an impossible dream,” Dennis says. “But, it was fun to do anyway.”

After taking his shot at the major leagues, Dennis played basketball in Argentina, Tijuana and Bellevue, where he played for the ABA championship in 2005.

He says despite the language barrier while playing in foreign countries, especially in Argentina where he lived in a small farming town, he did not feel too out of place.

“Basketball is basketball everywhere in the world,” Dennis says. “It’s like the universal language. It’s a round ball and a 10-foot hoop.”

After playing abroad, Dennis returned to the States to play for the Bellevue Blackhawks. He says playing in the ABA championship with Bellevue was a big deal for him as well as the rest of the team.

“We felt like it was us against the world because we were from little, old Bellevue, Wash., playing against the Arkansas RimRockers – a well-funded team,” he says. “They play in a 10,000-seat arena.”

While the team enjoyed its underdog status, Bellevue lost to Arkansas 118-103.

Dennis says he returned to Bellingham when he heard an ABA team was forming there. He says he decided to join the team because he loved the city and the people from his time spent at Western. He says people in Bellingham tend to support athletics of all levels.

The fan-base is usually low at the start of a Slam season, with only 100 to 200 attendees at a game because the team is competing for attention with the high schools and Western, Dennis says. But, by the time the season ends, attendance rises to anywhere between 700 and 800, he says.

Dennis, one of three Slam players who have been with the team since its inception, says as long as the team plays solid basketball, the fans will come.

Dennis is doing his part, says Slam head coach Rob Ridnour, father of Sonics point guard Luke Ridnour. Ridnour says Dennis is the ideal big man who would rather set a screen and get a rebound than force himself to score a lot of points.

In his third year with the Slam, Dennis says his life is not all that unusual. He takes classes at Western to earn a general studies degree. He spends the time he is not in class with his daughter and practices for the Slam at night.

“I don’t think it’s anything too different from anybody else working a normal nine-to-five except that I practice in the evenings and I travel a lot,” Dennis says.

In his time with the Slam, Dennis has traveled to Vermont, New York, Florida, Arkansas, Texas and Mexico.

Dennis says leaving his Layla behind on road trips can be difficult, especially now that she is walking and talking.

“We have a really expensive phone bill,” he says.

Dennis says he plans to graduate in the spring or summer and still looks back on his playing days at Western, where he holds the school record for career field goal percentage with 62.2 percent. He says he sees this as the high point of his basketball career.

“Every game I played, every practice, every moment I was at Western will always be my greatest basketball memory,” Dennis says.

Dennis says that despite not realizing his original dream of playing in the NBA, he has enjoyed where his career has taken him and the experiences he has had.

“I can’t knock it,” he says. “It pays the bills.”

Every player coming out of high school thinks they have the talent to go to a Division I college and then move on the NBA, Dennis says. He says he was no different, but is grateful for the role he found for himself in the minor leagues and the great games he has been a part of.

“I have a feeling the end of the road is coming, but I just wanted to do it while I could do it,” Dennis says.

Dennis says he wants to coach basketball when his minor-league career is over and sees it happening in the foreseeable future. He says he hopes to teach at the high school level where he would be better able to teach the players about the game instead of just managing it.

The Bellingham Slam posted a 20-15 record during their inaugural season and a 23-11 record the following year. The team made the playoffs in both seasons. The Slam began its third season on March 8.

It’s been nearly two decades since Dennis’ mother first forced him onto a basketball court, and in the midst of an unplanned-on minor-league career and with a possible future in coaching, he is showing no intention to leave.

“I have a feeling the end of the road is coming, but I just wanted to do it while I could do it.”
Dennis makes a run for a play during practice at Carver Gym

<table>
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<th>Bellingham Slam 2006-2007</th>
<th>Season Statistics for Brian Dennis</th>
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Maya’s Story

Story by Michael Harthorne
Photos courtesy of Laura Norton

It is a cold, windy January night in Fairhaven. The streets outside the library are empty, but inside more than 50 children, adults and students are crammed inside the Fireplace Reading Room. There are fussy children on the floor up front and a table of cookies in the back. Everyone is here to see a pint-sized storyteller with a growing reputation.

By the time the skinny 12-year-old girl in a light blue shirt and khaki pants stands up before the crowd to tell the story of Fiona, a clever girl who outsmarts the king of the leprechauns, it is standing room only. As she moves through the story, she explodes with energy while ricocheting between different voices and conjuring up images through gestures and facial expressions. When the story comes to a close, the room rips into applause.

The small girl with the long, brown hair, big smile and knack for public performances is Maya Norton. In her 12 short years, Norton has done an extraordinary number of things. She traveled around the country with her parents in an RV for two years, placing second in her division at the 2007 Bellingham gingerbread house contest and won acclaim for her portrayal of the title character in the Bellingham Arts Academy for Youth’s spring 2007 production of “Peter Pan.” Norton raised $5,000 for charity through her public speaking. She is also working on a number of novels.

Norton’s most recent accomplishment was earning a spot at the National Youth Storytelling Showcase, part of the 2008 Smokey Mountain Storytelling Festival in Tennessee. The showcase invited only four middle-school-aged students in the entire country to show off their storytelling skills.

On another cold January day before her trip to Tennessee, Maya Norton and her mother Laura are sitting in a cozy coffee shop overlooking Bellingham Bay and reflecting on Maya’s accomplishments and her newfound success at storytelling. Maya picks at a large chocolate chip cookie in between sips of hot chocolate.

“There’s just so many great stories out there,” Maya says, gesturing with her hands as if she were back on stage performing. “It’s so fun to just share them with other people. It’s no fun if you just know them, but it’s fun to tell them to other people so they can have them.”

Maya says she first got interested in storytelling in the fall when she took a class from Western professor Rosemary Vohs. She says she thought the class sounded like fun and some of her friends were taking it. Maya had shown a predilection for acting and performing since she was young and storytelling flows from that, Laura Norton says. Being in front of a crowd comes naturally to Maya, Laura says.

“The first time she got on stage when she was 5 in a little church talent show, she wasn’t nervous at all,” Laura says.

“She was actually really excited when she finished. That’s not something her dad or I or anybody else in the family feels. We all have butterflies.”

Maya’s big break in storytelling came during Bellingham’s Tellebration storytelling festival, which took place at the end of Vohs’ class, Laura says. Maya was the only student in the class chosen to read at the festival and her performance prompted Vohs to send a tape of it to Tennessee in November. Maya says she was surprised and nervous she was chosen to be part of the Smokey Mountain Festival because she has only told stories in public a few times, but she was excited to go nonetheless.

At the festival, Maya participated in the youth showcase and attended workshops and concerts with professional storytellers. Even though she did not win any awards during the competition, Maya says she had fun and, importantly, learned some new stories.

Despite her myriad of accomplishments and accolades, Maya says what she is most proud of is here work for the Heifer International Project, a charity that gives livestock to people in third-world countries.

Laura says she told Maya she could

“There’s just so many great stories out there. It’s so fun to just share them with other people.”

-Maya Norton
donate $100 to a charity of her choice and to research one she liked.

“When she was thinking about what she wanted to do, she said she wanted to buy this Heifer Gift Ark, which is two Heifers, and two goats and all these two-by-twos and it costs $5,000,” Laura says. “We said, ‘Oh no, that’s not really what we’re thinking.’ She just said, ‘OK, we’re just going to go to our church and we’re going to raise the money there,’ and she did it. She just started speaking in front of the congregation. Some of the adults were just really inspired that there was a kid saying we should really do this.”

Maya also talked at Sunday schools and organized a babysitting day to raise money, Laura says. In the end, with the help of other inspired children and adults, Maya was able to raise $5,700.

Vohs, like Laura, is quick to put Maya’s accomplishments, especially in storytelling, squarely on Maya’s shoulders.

“She’s a real natural performer,” Vohs says. “I can’t take credit for her really because she comes from a very talkative and engaging family.”

Maya says she will continue to tell stories and perform in public as long as she has an interest in it.

“I think that she will always be a storyteller, whether it’s on stage or whether it’s interpersonally,” Vohs says. “She is an exceptional communicator. It think she’ll always do stage work of some nature, whether its musicals or plays or acting.”

Maya says she would also like to teach in the future, specifically in elementary school, which ties in with her love of telling stories.

“I like transmitting knowledge,” she says, “and sharing what you know to other people.”

As Maya is getting set to leave the coffee shop, she notices two of her friends entering. Her mother says she may stay and talk with them for a bit. On this afternoon, further achievements and experiences for this 12-year-old can wait a while.
Jeremy Brown stands tall with a strong face and inviting sky blue eyes. His messy white-and-gold goatee hides his smile, while his black puffy Jansport jacket, waterproof pants, hiking boots and beanie keep his stocky frame warm. Twenty-seven years of commercial fishing have left sun spots on Brown's cream-colored face and crow's feet near his eyes. His proper English accent seems incredibly out of place on the docks of the Bellingham harbor.

Brown's 4-year-old boat stretches 55 feet long and glistens in the sunshine with a new coat of white and forest green paint. Brown named his boat "The Barcarole" because of his love for the Italian aria, which literally translated means "fisherman's song."

"I love opera music," Brown said. "I sing when no one's around because if anyone ever heard me they would realize I really can't sing worth a damn."

Brown is one of the 332 registered commercial fishermen in Whatcom County preparing for the upcoming season of fishing in the gulf of southeast Alaska. According to a recently published article in the Alaska Journal of Commerce, the salmon harvest of 2007 produced 212 million fish, making it the fourth largest catch on record.

"Commercial fishing in Alaska brings hundreds of thousands of dollars to the county every year," Brown says. "Alaska has the best managed fisheries in the world; it's no surprise why so many people fish there."

The commercial fisherman occupation is not one's typical day in the office, Brown says. He says he has begun preparing for his upcoming 2008 season of salmon fishing starting in May and ending in late September.

"To prepare for the fishing season and to prevent crises during the season, I have a lot of different tasks to complete," Brown says. "Whether it's physically painting over the boat, fixing the engine or replacing the gear, or the business aspect; looking at the various fish quotas, how the fisheries will be run and boat routes."

Brown says the commercial industry is highly regulated in Alaska. Regulations include obtaining the appropriate permits, life jackets, flares and the type of gear.

Although there are many different species of fish and techniques for catching them, Brown primarily commercial fishes for king salmon by a procedure called trolling.

"In trolling you put your gear in the water and you drive around slowly looking for hot spots," Brown says. "If you get a bite, you haul the fish in, stun the fish in the water, clean them and ice them right away."

Trolling resembles sport fishing with a thick fishing line, bright colored bait and hooks. Brown says the hooks he uses vary depending on the time of year and type of species a fisherman is trying to catch. Most trolling boats have six fishing lines running at the same time to strengthen the odds of a catch.

Brown fishes mostly by himself, but sometimes takes a shipmate or his dog to keep him company. He says his days typically begin at 3 a.m. with coffee cup in hand.

"I couldn't fish without coffee and chocolate," Brown says. "The two go together well, but I won't tap into the chocolate 'til 10 a.m."

Brown says he spends the entire day driving around looking for fish. He says if the boat is in the wrong area, he will pull up the gear and move somewhere else, but when it's busy, he will camp out on deck until all the fish are caught which can last several hours without a break.

After a long day of trolling, Brown either drifts or anchors for the night. Every five days Brown heads to town to unload fish and then returns to the water.

The trolling fishing technique is used to keep fish better preserved, by catching each fish by hook rather than in a large net. As a result, fish caught by trolling are sold at a higher market price for consumers.
HOOKED:
A Fisherman’s Lifestyle

Story by Brynne Berriman
Photos by Damon Call

Jeremy Brown’s fishing boat sits in the Squalicum Marina.
Brown sells his fish primarily to exclusive restaurants in Bellingham. Brown sells his fish primarily to exclusive restaurants in Bellingham including Nimbus, Fool's Onion, Anthony's Homeport and Hearthfire Grill.

Brown says he has seen a drastic increase of demand for salmon from private and public customers due to the use of salmon in television cooking shows.

“Salmon and Omega-3 are hot right now,” Brown says. “People are finally realizing that salmon is incredibly good for you.”

Pascal LeGuilly went fishing in Alaska for the first time with Brown in 2005. He says the experience was unforgettable.

“There is no one more fun and friendly to go fishing with than Brown,” LeGuilly says. “He's the best. He likes an adventure, a place he has not yet explored.”

In addition to salmon fishing, Brown also fishes for black cod and halibut on a different boat during the year.

Brown says this boat uses a different strategy to catch fish called long line. Long line fishing is a complex process that involves floating buoys with light anchors attached to them. The anchors stretch baited hooks across the ocean floor for up to five miles, and after an allotted amount of time, a boat will return to pick up its catch.

Brown says people often underestimate the physical and mental strength required as a commercial fisherman.

“You have to be in really good shape,” Brown says. “You have to be able to keep up with the fast pace atmosphere and be able to sustain the demanding hours.”

Brown says the only thing he truly dislikes about fishing besides the days with bad weather is the political nature of the resource industry.

“We’re constantly being attacked by small fishing interest groups and preservation interest groups,” Brown says. “It’s extremely frustrating to hear lies distributed to the public about negative implications of eating fish and the fishing industry.”

Because of the constant scrutiny from various interest groups, Brown has become actively involved with many different fishing organizations at a government and public level. He hopes to find a national voice for commercial fishing by promoting the positive benefits of fishing and the ideal of connecting communities through the “slow food” movement.

“What we’re doing is providing the only authentic food left on the planet,” Brown says. “Fishing is the only industry left that’s not genetically modified, or grown. It’s important that through the ‘slow food’ movement we keep the industry for the future by presenting the case of real food to the public.”

When Brown isn’t fishing or traveling to fishing conferences around the country, Brown enjoys the many outdoor activities he can participate in while living in Bellingham.

Brown says he will never grow old of the adventures, voyages and quests to Southeast Alaska. He says he will continue to fish until he retires because fishing is his life, and if he didn’t have fishing he would have to find a real job.
The sound of Bellingham singer/songwriter Thea Rosenburg’s ethereal voice fill the top floor of a two-story garage as 22-year-old Fairhaven student turned record producer Evan Williamson, known to the local music community as Bug Jerome sits at his computer, browsing through dozens of mp3’s stored on his Apple laptop.

“This is Murder Mountain headquarters,” Williamson says.

It is in this suburban garage tucked behind an unassuming family-style home off Meridian Street, that Williamson has made his teenage dreams come true. This is where he owns and operates his own independent record label: Murder Mountain Records.

Knowing that he couldn’t do everything himself, Williamson says he teamed with then promoter Ian Imhof in 2005 to form Murder Mountain Records.

“He had a lot more physical equipment he was very into the D.I.Y. [do it yourself] approach and I had more marketing skills,” says Imhof. “I had good press connections and connections with people. He took over the business and PR perspective.”

But how, in a span of a mere three years, did Williamson and Imhof transform a simple idea into a budding local record label?

The first step for Williamson was finding a location. With the help of his parents, Williamson says he was able to move into Murder Mountain headquarters, where he was able to build a recording studio.

“If you already have a place to record, that totally takes the huge overhead of being able to record it for free,” Williamson says.

But Williamson says the most important thing Murder Mountain did was network.

It was outside Fantasia Espresso after a fall 2006 show featuring Mount Vernon band The Mission Orange that Williamson received his first taste of success.

“I saw them and I was like, ‘This is awesome,’ and I went up to them and I was like, ‘Hey guys, I don’t know what you think about indie labels, but I work for Murder Mountain,’ and the guy was excited and before he answered he grabbed his friend and he’s like ‘Dude, this guys from Murder Mountain.’” Williamson says. “I was like, ‘This is the coolest I’ve ever felt.’ They knew what it was.”

Eighteen-year-old Mission Orange drummer Sam Hutchens says he had found the Murder Mountain Web site a couple days before the show and when Williamson left a note with the band saying “Cool stuff” with his number attached, the band was surprised.

Flash forward two years and The Mission Orange are touring in support of their new Murder Mountain Release, “Seasick.” But unlike the typical record label with binding contracts, Hutchens says Williamson took a different approach with the Mission Orange.

“It’s sort of a verbal agreement. We’re all good friends. It’s more of a friends helping out friends kind of thing,” Hutchens says. “What we have is better than signing papers. There definitely were papers before, but they went through some changes and then we just sort of got rid of that.”

Between recording bands, labeling albums, finishing artwork and various other steps needed to run a record label, Williamson says it is not uncommon for him to go without sleep for a few days.

“If I go and hang out at a friend’s house all day I definitely feel guilty because I should be working on something,” Williamson says. “The to-do list is endless.”

But Williamson wouldn’t have it any other way. He has transformed this average, run-of-the-mill garage into a scientist’s lab as he concocts his newest plan for Murder Mountain.