



**Welcome to Membership** The following have joined since the January issue. If you know any of these new members or if they live near you, please invite them to attend the next MVHA meeting and welcome them aboard.

**Bendele, Paul**

4120 Westbrooke Dr.  
Fort Collins, Co. 80526

**Ellingsen, John D.** 843-5522

P.O. Box 323  
Virginia City, Mt. 59755

**King, Eugenia** 214-366-1901

4322 Lively Lane  
Dallas , TX 75220

**Lemaire, Denyse** 682-5329

17 Hale Loop Trail  
Ennis, MT 59729  
Liss, Ted & Dorothy 682-3614  
75 Horn Creel Rd.  
Cameron, Mt. 59720

**Mainwaring, Earl & Billeta** 406-632-4266

P.O. Box 635  
Harlotown, MT 59036

**Ypma, Ginny** 685-3494

P.O. Box 161  
Harrison, MT 59735

**Membership update** Any outstanding 2014 memberships are now over due. Almost all of you have taken care of business and the MVHA has received your membership. Just check your address label on the envelop and you can easily tell if your membership is paid or which month you are due. Your membership is good for a full year from the month you purchase it and you are not penalized for submitting early. If your 2015 membership is due during April, May or June, or if you are past due, you will find a membership renewal form included with this issue. Memberships are \$5.00 for students, \$10.00 for individual, \$15.00 for Families, \$50.00 for Businesses, \$100.00 for Patrons and \$500 or more for Benefactor. If you are inviting someone to join or if you want to purchase your membership before it is due, just write name, mailing address and type of membership on a slip of paper and mail with membership fee to MVHA at P. O Box 474, Ennis, MT 59729.

The MVHA Board of Directors appreciates all memberships that are purchased and your support as this allows them to have funds to continue the work of developing a museum in the Madison Valley.

If anyone needs a ride to a meeting and program, call 682-5780 and a ride will be arranged for you.

**Member News**

**Jane Rybus** has moved to be closer to family and her new address is:

Red Oak Assisted Living  
650 East North Bend Way #207

North Bend, WA 98245

Jane will welcome letters so keep in touch. Jane is a founder of the MVHA, early board member and secretary for many years.

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**Memories**

**Ruth Dawn Theriault** Davis was born on March 3, 1937 and passed away on Jan 7, 2015 at her home in Ennis. She is mother of long time MVHA member, Monte Davis and Energy Alliance Propane delivery driver for Madison Valley, Colette Davis.

**Hal Joseph Dale** passed away January 17, 2015. He was born on April 19, 1923 in Abe, MT, a town named by his father to be the first Montana town in the alphabet. It was a town of five ranch families on Ruby Creek of the Madison River. His father became under sheriff in Virginia City and Hal spent his early years roaming the streets of Virginia City.

**Elizabeth Margaret Baker McCallum Hokanson** passed away January 29, 2015 in Butte. She was born October 14, 1919 in Butte to Adolph Arlio Baker and Hazel Mae Argall Baker. She spent her early years at the family ranch near Elk Park, MT. On August 15, 1937, she married Kenneth Edwin McCallum, lived in Butte for two years and moved to the McAllister area. They moved to Ennis in 1969 and Kenny passed away there. Beth married Fred Wilhelm Hokanson and moved to Norris.

**Cathleen Skank Cline** passed away in Gilbert, Arizona on Feb. 9, 2015. She was born in Ennis on June 28, 1961 to David and Jynean (Peterson) Skank. Cathy grew up in the McAllister area with a ranch life raising and milking Saanen goats and showing them in 4-H.. She graduated from Ennis High School in 1980. She received an Associate degree from Ricks College and served her mission in San Diego, CA. She married Christopher Cline in the SLC Utah temple. Her mother, Jynean, is a long time MVHA member.

**Neal C. LaFever** passed away February 22, 2015. He was born on June 16, 1944 to Clarence and Helen (Mehlos) LaFever. He grew up in Wisconsin and ventured West to Montana working in Billings. In 1975 he wound up in Virginia City searching for gold. While he did not strike it rich in Alder Gulch, he bought the Pioneer Bar on May 26, the same day that gold was discovered many years before in 1863. After Virginia City, he moved back to Billings.

**John "Jack" Carl Held** passed away March 5th, 2015. He was born on Dec. 2nd, 1926 to Frank and Annie Mae (Wing) at their ranch in Waterloo. He married Joyce Atkinson on Sept. 25, 1949. He is father to Linda Schott and grandfather to Dulcie Clark.



*Continued from Jumping Horse pg 3*

After leaving the valley, my parents purchased a smaller ranch near Big Horn, Wyoming where horses and steers were raised, They did not own any home in Arizona until a number of years after the Becks purchased the Jumping Horse Ranch. Jane and Phil's year round home was in Wyoming for several years until they did purchase a winter house in Arizona. There they would stay for about three months then back to Wyoming before full snow-melt.

My sister's nickname was "Toady" not "Toby" (pg 4, column 1) The two mules mentioned (pg 4 column 2) were indeed named in honor of Ed and Olive, but not "Ollie" Beardsley. "Auntie Olive" would bring her namesake carrots and apples. Not so for "Uncle Ed!"

At no time did Phil Yeckel ever consider cutting the large show barn in half. There were serious discussions about enlarging the center arena area to accommodate the use for cutting horse training and of steer roping practice. All new corrals and cutting pens were constructed. A number of the barn's larger stalls became an OB/GYN and nursery for the mother cows!

The swimming pool had several cracks that would not, nor could not, hold water from the irrigation ditch. The first summer we lived there the young boys in the bunk house made several stabs at repairing with tar in hopes of keeping water in the pool. The most water we could measure in the pool was 3 inches. Sorry, no pool parties. Swimming was done in the lake. Phil did consider taking a jack hammer to the bottom of the pool, filling it with dirt and turning the pool into "Jane's Vegetable Garden!" Never happened while we were there.

Carl is a proud graduate of Ennis High school. He was christened at the Trinity Church in Jeffers with Elsie and Bob Cunningham as Godparents. The years the Yeckel family lived in the Madison Valley were full and happy ones. They are ever grateful to and for the many faithful friends we made there as they are forever in our hearts and memories of Montana.

Editor's note:"And now you have heard the rest of the story." Thank you, Carl, for getting the history of the Madison Valley and the famous Jumping Horse Ranch up to date. Carl and Suzie Yeckel are long time MVHA members and frequently contribute artifacts and interesting stories to the MVHA. They live in Dallas, Texas.

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**History of the Jumping Horse Ranch** (continued)  
by Robert Beck and Nancy Lein Griffin with research  
by Helene Beck. In the January issue, 4

we left off with Beck's ranch history up to the preservation of the McKee house.

The McKee house, built in 1880, was saved from destruction by Mrs. Beck and moved to lower Jordan Creek on that portion of the ranch which was originally the Edgar Michener ranch. The house has been restored to the condition of a late 1800's homestead. The contents of the entire house, down to the window sashes and the hardware, were collected to create a house as it was when occupied by the early families of the valley. The McKee family purchased the house and the ranch property from Olive Smith. It was ideally suited for the McKee's eleven children and the upstairs rooms, small by current standards, is divided into two open rooms which probably served as boys' and girls' dormitories. Mrs. Beck has furnished the house with beds, bed coverings, curtains, dishes and kitchen equipment that are typically those used by a pioneer family.

In 1987 the Becks granted the Montana Land Reliance a conservation easement on the Jumping Horse Ranch. This easement, a title attachment which will follow the property into the future, restricts the number of buildings which can be constructed on the ranch property and protects native wildlife and vegetation. The Montana Land Reliance, a private, non-profit organization, has as it's goal the protection of large tracts of Montana land in an agricultural trust. The Becks, among the first in the Madison Valley to grant the Montana Land Reliance a conservation easement, were instrumental in the addition of other Madison Valley ranches to the Montana Land Reliance land trust. The Jumping Horse Ranch, near to the Beaverhead National Forest and the Lee Metcalf Wilderness area, has proved to be valuable property to acquire as a conservation easement. The Beck's worked in conjunction with Montana Land Reliance land planners and government wildlife management officials to further mutual conservation goals. The conservation easement has little effect on the operation of the ranch.

The operations of a cattle ranch are planned around the seasons. In the spring, during May and June, when a young bull's fancy turns to thoughts of love, the cows are bred. The cows are still nursing a three to four month old calf. Each bull works only three years to avoid inbreeding. Replacement bulls are purchased each spring. This purchase is the major source of good new genes for the herd and is crucial to the maintenance of a healthy herd. the ranch retains the services of some Hereford bulls to breed replacement heifers.

Often non Hereford bulls, such as *cont. pg 5*

*Jumping Horse Ranch cont from pg 4*

Angus or Shorthorn breeds, are used to produce crossbred calves. These crossbreeds can often fetch a higher price on the beef market. Heifers who are bearing their first calves will sometimes be bred to a Black Angus bull to assure that their first deliveries will not be difficult ones. In July the bulls are removed to their special bachelor's pastures and the cows and their calves to their own pastures.

Haying is a time consuming job on a ranch. The dry climate of the Madison Valley makes reliance upon the spring rains a less than sure bet. The hay crop requires irrigation, and the water from Jack and Jordan Creeks to irrigate the hay lands.

Access to water is crucial to the mountain stockman, even in pioneer days great effort was directed towards diverting the mountain streams to the thirsty hay meadows. One of the most impressive early irrigation structures in the valley is the Jack Creek flume built in 1915 by Lawrence Jeffers and W. A. Duffield. Parts of the three quarter mile flume can still be seen on the left side of Jack Creek Road leading up to the Diamond J Ranch.(Editor's note: Since Becks wrote this history more of the flume has been weathered or been taken away so you have to really look hard to see any remains.) One can only wonder how this timber flume, located on incredibly steep slopes through almost impenetrable timber, was even constructed. In the early 1900's the materials, packed by horse and mule, could only have been arranged and secured by simple pulleys and brute force.

The Jumping Horse Ranch uses modern pivot systems as well as the old fashioned flood irrigation methods of the early pioneers. During the summer months of July, August and September, the ranch produces two hay crops. About 2000 tons of hay is harvested and stored in bales for cattle feed during the winter months. After harvest, some of the hay fields are plowed and reseeded for the next year.

Around the middle of October the cows and calves are rounded up and the calves are weaned from their mothers and are sold. The cows are pregnancy tested to determine those carrying next year's calf crop. A portion of the female calves are retained to replace older cows and open cows...those who did not get pregnant—a big mistake for a stock cow! During the winter months the herd is delivered, on a daily basis, a tasty meal of last summer's hay crop. In February, often during nasty mountain weather, the cows begin delivering their calves. The show barn serves as maternity ward with special services provided for troublesome births. The calving season can be especially 5arduous for the cowboy working 24 hour days.

A lost calf can mean a big financial loss. Some cows may just not prove to be the motherly type and the little critter's life may depend on bottle feeding at the hand of a kindly ranch hand or other family member. Some cows, just like humans. are prone to breech births, twisted cords, and can need the occasional cesarean section operation.

Six to eight weeks after calving, the calves are gathered for branding, rugged ritual which involves marking their hide with a hot branding iron to show ranch ownership. The Jumping Horse Ranch brand, the "Seventy Six", is written with the seven and the six sharing the vertical line. Such a single line brand is very desirable because it avoids overheating the calf's hide at an intersection of lines in a brand.



As in pioneer times, there is never enough time in a day to complete the work on a ranch. Dragging fields, fertilizing, repairing corrals and fences, breaking and training horses and checking on the cow/calf pairs in the summer pasture. The ranchers lament is that there is always more to do.

There is, however more to ranching than livestock production. In these times of rapid transit, electronic communication and high technology lifestyles, the cultural phenomenon of ranching is becoming increasingly unique. Grasslands across America are being sacrificed to man's development. The future of the Jumping Horse Ranch, as in the past, will be dedicated to the preservation of our country's rural traditions.

Credits: Jess Armitage, Donna Bausch, Helene Beck, Robert Beck, Kelly Carkeek, Richard Clark, Wilson Clark, Elsie Cunningham, William Hodges, Ralph Paugh, Tom Williams.

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First edition of Jumping Horse history: October 1989

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Editor's note: The Jumping Horse Ranch was sold by the Becks to the Braxton Ranch Corp(Terry Braxton)and Braxtons are long time MVHA members. The Jumping Horse Ranch continues as a working cattle ranch in the Madison Valley and the history goes on. I am sure there will be more stories to tell.

