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Montana Kaimin, February 17, 2021

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MONTANA KAIMIN

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Montana directors' films find life online with Big Sky Film Festival

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Surprise! Enrollment is down

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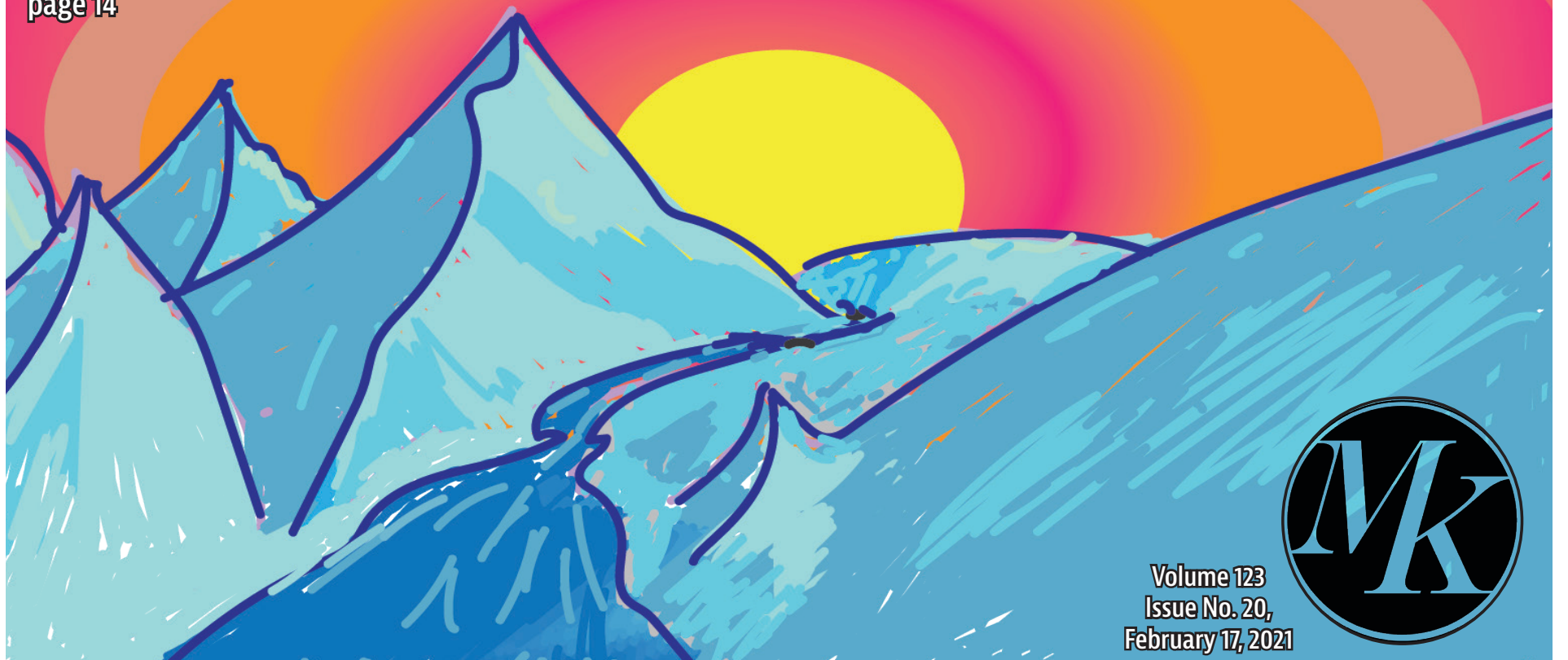
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Volume 123
Issue No. 20,
February 17, 2021



Kiosk

Cover Design by
Griffen Smith



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KAIMIN COMIC



COOPER MALIN | MONTANA KAIMIN

Feature photo: Valentine's Day market



John Turner, the owner of Turner farms, watches Liberty the Suffolk sheep as she stands beside her "miracle" lamb on Saturday, Feb. 13 at the Valentine's Day Farm Market. The lamb, named Queen Mary, is a miracle because her father, Zeke, is a Black Welsh Mountain Sheep; a much smaller sheep than Liberty, Turner said. **KENNEDY DELAP | MONTANA KAIMIN**

What happened to testing close contacts, Curry?

Last semester, it seemed like Curry Health Center would test every COVID-19-symptomatic student as well as students who are close contacts. If you called the health center and reported symptoms, more likely than not, you would find yourself in the alley behind the health center waiting for a nasal swab within the week. At the beginning of this semester, UM doubled down and instituted a free voluntary testing program open to all students for two weeks.

But we are now in week six of spring semester, approaching the one-year marker of our University's response to the pandemic, and Curry's resources seem to be spread thin. Tests are only being given to those who are visibly symptomatic—and less time is being given to contact tracing. Students who have come into contact with a positive person might simply be told to wait it out over the 10-14 days they might be contagious, or until symptoms appear. But if we want to keep battling this virus, we should not back down from the higher level of vigilance invested in contact tracing and surveillance—for all close contacts.

A test is not everything. Curry's pharmacy is doing the important work of vaccinating people in the Missoula community. And wearing a mask or two is the most effective way to stop the spread of the virus.

But a coronavirus test is still an important tool. It gives us a picture, if limited, as to how COVID-19 travels through a community. It also helps identify infection clusters and warn of potential outbreaks.

A student in a residence hall who becomes

a close contact should get tested. A student who has many roommates should get tested. That is how the virus can be identified and stopped. And in a community full of people who live in communal spaces, it's more than necessary.

COVID-19 testing is something the University and Missoula County can regulate and control. We watched UM significantly beef up testing infrastructure, too. They can test 80 people a day, and could do even more with the help of the UM Genomics Core.

Yet Curry is likely doing fewer tests than in recent months. To be fair, there have been fewer UM-related cases over the past two weeks than there were on Oct. 4, 2020. Curry also said it stockpiled tests over winter break, according to previous Kaimin reporting, and no spike has been reported through the first five weeks of school. So the testing capacity should be there to do more.

Some universities, like the University of Michigan, test asymptomatic students every week. UM has not surveillance-tested for over a month. At a time when everyone feels a little off from the cold, and people congregate indoors, Curry should offer more testing opportunities to us, the students.

So why can't we get a close-contact test?

- Griffen Smith | Design Editor

Like it? Hate it? Wish we were dead? Email us your opinions at editor@montanakaimin.com

SUDOKU

Edited by Margie E. Burke

Difficulty: Easy

				9			7	
				5			2	
		1		6				
				8	7			
	4					6		1
2				9	1			
		9	3		2			8
7							1	
	5	4						6

HOW TO SOLVE:

Each row must contain the numbers 1 to 9; each column must contain the numbers 1 to 9; and each set of 3 by 3 boxes must contain the numbers 1 to 9.

Answers to Last Week's Sudoku:

4	7	1	8	2	9	5	3	6
9	5	2	6	7	3	8	4	1
6	3	8	4	1	5	9	2	7
2	9	6	3	4	1	7	5	8
7	8	3	5	6	2	1	9	4
5	1	4	9	8	7	3	6	2
3	2	7	1	9	4	6	8	5
1	6	5	2	3	8	4	7	9
8	4	9	7	5	6	2	1	3

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Briefs: Masks, vaccines and online learning

Gianforte drops statewide mask mandate

On Friday Feb. 12, Gov. Greg Gianforte withdrew Montana's mask mandate, put into effect by former Gov. Steve Bullock last year. An executive order signed by Gianforte states: "Individual responsibility remains Montana's best tool to combat the spread of COVID-19. Montanans are encouraged to wear masks and should follow the best industry practices adopted by any business they visit to slow the spread of the virus."

This executive order does not change the right of businesses or local governments to require masks, and Missoula County plans to uphold its own mask mandate for now. **(Mazana Boerboom)**

Missoula vaccination updates

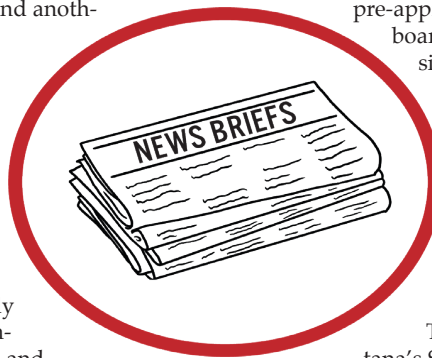
Missoula County remained in the first tier of Phase 1B as of Monday, Feb. 15. This includes all people over the age of 70 and people of color. As of the county's weekly Monday update, more than 20,000 doses of the vaccine had been administered

to Missoulians, with around 6,000 fully immunized. At the statewide level, more than 50,000 people have had both doses of the vaccine and nearly 130,000 have had the first dose.

The county also held another vaccine clinic on Monday out of the former Lucky's Market in the Southgate Mall, where they administered around another 200 doses. **(MB)**

'Psychology of the Pandemic' online course

The University of Montana has released a no-credit online course, "Psychology of the Pandemic" on Moodle, which is mainly led by UM faculty members Dr. Bryan Cochran and Dr. Rachel Severson. Course registration is now open to anyone interested and can be taken at the learner's own pace. It costs \$100 and includes access to videos, links and interviews discussing six topics.



Those are: "Children, Youth and the Pandemic," "Mental Health and COVID-19," "Disproportionate Impacts on Specific Populations," "Fallout: Politics, Remote Work and Loneliness," "Coping Resilience and Health" and "Vaccines, Variants, and Understanding Pandemic."

For an added cost, and depending on pre-approval by the licensing board, it can count toward six hours of the Montana's Board of Behavioral Health and Board of Psychologists' Continuing Education requirements. **(MB)**

New online Master of Social Work program

The University of Montana's School of Social Work plans to begin a fully online master's program next fall, in partnership with Wiley Education Services. The program will expand the current master's program, opening opportunities for students who

previously might have gone out of state to finish their degrees.

Jim Caringi, professor and chair at the School of Social Work, said UM is one of the last schools in the country to create an online MSW program, and he has been getting questions about it since he started teaching here. He said he has high hopes for the program, as well as confidence in Wiley, which will provide technical and course development support.

"I have the best colleagues, I have support from the administration, our dean, the provost. The president is behind this," he said. "So I think we can do it."

Caringi said that curriculum development and hiring are ongoing, and the school will start accepting applications soon. He said the program will accept students in the summer, spring and fall semesters and will eventually provide the option to complete a master's degree online in one summer.

"I don't want us to just produce an online MSW program," he said. "I want us to be the best, period, in the country. That's my goal." **(Alicia McAlpine)**

Blotter: Disorderly juveniles, alarmed grannies and gunshots

GRACE CARR

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Between Feb. 4 and 10, UMPD reported three crimes on and around campus. Disorderly conduct took the cake as the only crime reported this week.

FRIDAY 02/05: UNGOVERNABLE YOUTH

Officers responded to Bannack Court Friday afternoon when a verbal argument involving a juvenile was reported. The teen was warned and released, but problems continued Tuesday, Feb. 9 in the Craighead Apartments. The teen's mom was "having trouble with him being a little ungovernable and disorderly," Lt. Brad Giffin said. He was warned and released again, and his mom said she "has him in some programs that she thinks are going to help," Giffin said.

MONDAY 02/08: AVOID THE FROSTBITE

UMPD released a public safety notice Monday evening warning University staff and students of a Winter Weather Advisory in effect for the Missoula and Bitterroot Valleys. The email was sent just before frigid temperatures and intense wind chill hit the area. To any out-of-staters posting on social media about the below-zero temperatures, get used to it. Invest in a heated blanket, some wool socks and lots of hot chocolate to warm the body and soul.

TUESDAY 02/09: CALL YOUR GRANDMA

Officers made a student welfare check around 4 p.m. when a grandmother was unable to reach her grandson for two days. They made contact and the student said he would call his grandmother back.

We appreciate our grandmas for their baking skills, warm hugs and sometimes, their brutal honesty. So, we should answer the phone when they call to check in on us. Otherwise they might call the police.

THURSDAY 02/11: GREEK ROW GUNSHOT

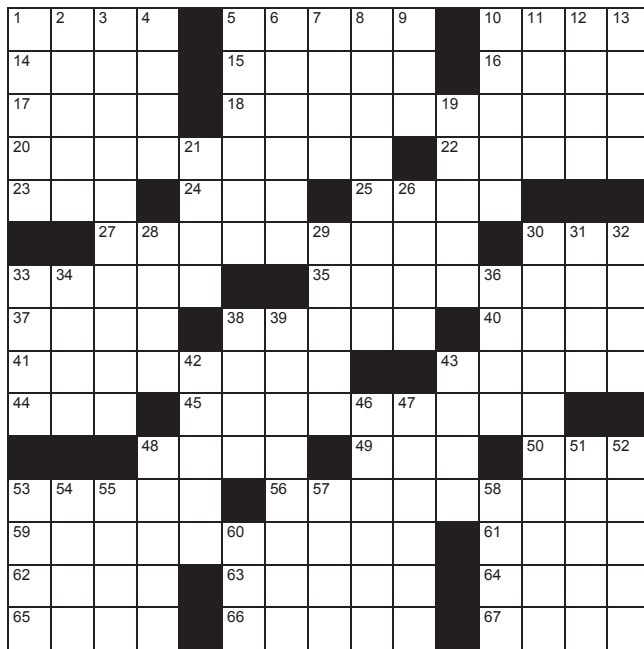
UMPD officers responded to the Greek Row area just past midnight on Thursday when a caller reported a single gunshot and screaming. Officers checked the neighborhood, but found nothing notable. No crime was reported.



OLIVIA SWANT- JOHNSON | MONTANA KAIMIN

The Weekly Crossword

by Margie E. Burke



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ACROSS

- 1 In this way
- 5 Bailey of "Hello, Dolly!"
- 10 Bubbly drink
- 14 Second to none
- 15 Sharpshooter Oakley
- 16 German automaker
- 17 Fountain fare
- 18 Plum or apricot, e.g.
- 20 TV show opener, often
- 22 Cattle catcher
- 23 Something to lend
- 24 Vigor's partner
- 25 Lament loudly
- 27 Descend
- 30 1942 flick "My ___ Sal"
- 33 Go bad
- 35 Handel specialty
- 37 Kilaua flow
- 38 Small variety (var.)
- 40 Seductress
- 41 Roof projection
- 43 Not too bright
- 44 Pricing word
- 45 Uncontrollable
- 48 Cry softly
- 49 Very long time
- 50 Suds source
- 53 Met highlights
- 56 Roy Rogers ingredient
- 59 Shrewd bargain
- 61 Flat floater
- 62 Cut, maybe
- 63 Hardens, as clay
- 64 Troop group
- 65 Flat-topped hill
- 66 On one's toes

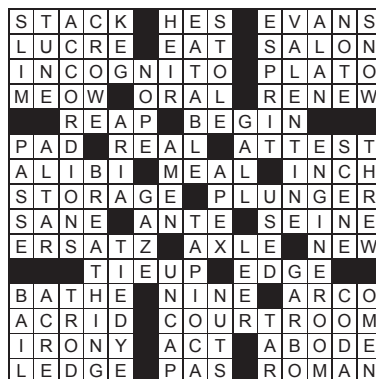
DOWN

- 1 Small sample
- 2 Big to-do
- 3 1977 Alan O'Day hit, "___ Angel"
- 4 Clothing line?
- 5 Footnote word
- 6 Place in a crypt
- 7 Soon, to a poet
- 8 Skin infection
- 9 "School Daze" director
- 10 Word before reef or snake
- 11 Composer's creation
- 12 Kauai keepsakes
- 13 Type of sax
- 19 GM's birthplace
- 21 Like some grins or twins
- 26 On a trip, maybe
- 28 Make-up artist?
- 29 Furry one, in internet slang
- 67 Small particle

ACROSS

- 30 Concert keyboard
- 31 Intentions
- 32 Easy run
- 33 Sow's chow
- 34 Finish a drive?
- 36 Chef's need
- 38 Left-handed Beatle
- 39 Essential
- 42 Hugh Laurie series
- 43 Comedian Carvey
- 46 Birdwatcher's lure
- 47 "I swear!"
- 48 Rigatoni, et. al.
- 51 Ill-suited
- 52 Midler of music
- 53 "Excuse me ..."
- 54 Went on horseback
- 55 Van Gogh flower
- 57 Garden tool
- 58 Part of Ringo's kit
- 60 Schedule abbr.

Answers to Last Week's Crossword:



Horoscope

Yer a blockbuster film, Harry



ALEX MILLER

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OLIVIA SWANT-JOHNSON | MONTANA KAIMIN

Oh, movie theaters. We miss your stale buttered popcorn and soda scent. Yes, theaters are open again, but they're just kind of weird now, like seeing an old lover hanging out with a less attractive version of yourself. So what if we stroll down money-makin'-movies-lane and compare ourselves to beloved movies, you know, for science.

AQUARIUS (JAN. 20-FEB. 18): Ever the unique friend of the group, ya just stand out so much Aquarius. And what stands out more than R-rated blockbuster "Deadpool?" Let's just hope you don't suffer the same fate as Wade Wilson. You know—getting burned alive, gaining incredible regenerative abilities and having to wear a red suit 24/7, with the occasional crocs exception.

PISCES (FEB. 19-MARCH 20): Pisces, you're so intuitive and intelligent. But sometimes you're too smart and go over people's heads, just like "Inception." We know it's high-brow and cool, but maybe tone it back with the dream-within-a-dream that's having a dream.

ARIES (MARCH 21-APRIL 19): Competition and commitment—that's what you do, Aries. So does Nicolas Cage, especially in "National Treasure." He's a trailblazer who committed so hard he stole the gosh darn Declaration of Independence! Definitely don't do that.

TAURUS (APRIL 20-MAY 20): You have a certain affinity for blue people, Taurus. And no, not those tiny Smurfs, we're talking about the Na'vi, the big blue stars of James Cameron's "Avatar." They are reliable, trustworthy and ambitious, like you, Taury. So go ahead and paint yourself blue from head to toe and find a Home Tree to protect.

GEMINI (MAY 21-JUNE 20): You've got some real "glass half-full" energy, Gem. And so did M. Night Shyamalan when he made "The Last Airbender." But it made a lot of money, so it was good. Right? Right!

CANCER (JUNE 21-JULY 22): How do you feel about water, Cancer? And pirates? And Johnny Depp? Because you've got "Pirates of the Caribbean: Curse of the Black

Pearl!" written all over you. We know you hate small talk, and so does Captain Jack Sparrow. Who wouldn't want to drink rum and fight zombie pirates instead of chatting about the weather?

LEO (JULY 23-AUG. 22): You're loud and obnoxious—in the best way—Leo. You know what blockbuster franchise is also loud and obnoxious? "The Fast and the Furious." That's right, you're the equivalent of 40 reels worth of Vin Diesel grunting at the camera.

VIRGO (AUG. 23-SEP. 22): A sophisticated person can only fit with a sophisticated blockbuster, Virgo. And that simple math points in one direction: "Casino Royale." That's right, you get to be the suave, debonair Agent 007. But instead of a license to kill, you have a license to overwork yourself.

LIBRA (SEP. 23-OCT. 22): Libra, you have this uncanny ability to see all sides of an argument, but reserve judgement. That's what we like to call fence-sitting. That's exactly what Donny in "The Big Lebowski" did. Don't be a Donny.

SCORPIO (OCT. 23-NOV. 21): We're hard on you Scorpio, it's true. But sometimes you deserve it. But you know who didn't deserve their fate? Jack, when Rose just let the motherfucker freeze when she clearly had enough space on her floating door in "Titanic." You're Rose.

SAGITTARIUS (NOV. 22-DEC. 22): If there's a path, you sure as hell go off it, Sag. "Mad Max: Fury Road" is certainly an unconventional blockbuster, and most certainly your spirit film. But do be warned: Huffing silver spray paint and screaming about going to Valhalla is not considered niche or cool.

CAPRICORN (DEC. 23-JAN. 19): Capricorn, why are you always so pessimistic? It's very Thanos of you. But if you do get a magical gauntlet with the ability to alter the very fabric of the universe, don't start snapping those fingers.

Senate bill aims to ditch Columbus Day

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The deeds of a long-dead Italian explorer have been celebrated in the U.S. for over 80 years.

But in Montana, Senate Bill 146 aims to remove Columbus Day from the docket of state holidays and replace it with Indigenous Peoples' Day.

Seven other states — Alaska, Hawaii, Maine, New Mexico, South Dakota, Vermont and Oregon — have already replaced Columbus Day with Indigenous Peoples' Day, while Alabama and Oklahoma celebrate both holidays.

Montana Sen. Shane Morigeau wrote and sponsored the bill. This is not the first time he has brought this issue up in the legislature. Morigeau brought forth a similar bill in 2019, but it was killed in the Senate's State Administration Committee. As of Monday, Feb. 15, SB 146 was in that very same committee.

"I thought we had a lot of great support last time and recognition of doing the right

thing," Morigeau said. "But I have pause for concern because this was the committee that killed it last time, and some of the same people are still there."

The committee held a hearing on the bill last Wednesday, and over two dozen people spoke in support of the bill.

Republican Chair Doug Kary was a vice chair of the committee in 2019. Kary said he has not decided how he will vote on the bill, but he has spoken with some Native Americans, other than those who testified at the hearing, to inform his decision.

"I do want to get a feel from across the state and across the different tribes as to what's what because I know we see a very jaded spectrum when we see it at committee," he said.

Kary said he does not expect the bill to make it through the committee, but that doesn't mean he won't vote for it.

Aislyn Baker, the president of the Kyiyo Native American Student Association at The University of Montana, said her group organizes an annual powwow and helped with UM's Indigenous Peoples' Day activities last year.

Baker said an Indigenous Peoples' Day would help bring unity to Indigenous people across Montana. It would create a



ELLA MUSGROVE | MONTANA KAIMIN

reason for celebration on a day that has historically caused pain.

"When you think about it, it's kind of disheartening to still know that that day is still happening," Baker said. "I know it's not a big thing, but it's the meaning behind it that kind of hurts."

Baker said she will be angry if the bill doesn't pass, but she won't be devastated.

"We all know what that day represents and how it all goes," she said, regarding Columbus Day. "I'm not too twisted up about it just because you kind have to

stand in your own truth and be confident in who you are, and I think a lot of Native people are like that."

Morigeau hopes the bill will make it through committee, but the loss in 2019 still remains fresh.

"I'm not holding my breath," Morigeau said. "I'm hoping that they keep an open ear and mind to learning about the horrific tragedies that came along with him [Columbus], and how that sends a message to people of color that 'you're inferior.'"

UM enrollment continues to drop for spring semester

ERIN SARGENT

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The University of Montana reported a 7.3% drop in enrollment between spring semester 2020 and spring semester 2021 in census numbers released last week, continuing UM's decade-long downward trend.

Across all programs, UM is now reporting a total of 9,500 students, the first time the University has dropped below 10,000 students since 1989.

David Kuntz, UM's director of strategic communications, attributed the continued drop in enrollment numbers to the nationwide drop in college admissions due to the COVID-19 pandemic. He said UM's transition to virtual recruitment could potentially help find solutions moving into

the next semester.

"The Office of Enrollment Management has been spending a lot more time talking with high school students virtually," Kuntz said.

He said UM is trying to communicate to incoming students that they can come to the University and feel safe while they study in whatever way they're most comfortable with, whether it's in person, remote, hybrid or a combo, as they continue their education in the pandemic.

At the end of fall semester 2020, UM reported a freshman class of 1,833 students, down nearly 300 from the year prior. In-state freshman numbers this semester are down, but out-of-state first-time freshman enrollment is on the rise, with UM reporting a 36% increase.

Missoula College also reported a drop in enrollment, a steep 21% decrease. Kuntz

said UM hopes to see a rise in enrollment following the recession caused by COVID-19, similar to the one Missoula College saw during the Great Recession in the late 2000s, though the expected rise hasn't happened yet.

"We just haven't seen that same bump at our two-year career offerings," Kuntz said. "That's a trend, it's true across the country, and I don't think anybody has a strong answer to why that is yet. It's something we are continuing to look into."

UM's silver linings? Enrollment is up in graduate programs by 1.5%, and at the Alexander Blewett School of Law by 4%. Retention rates, which count the number of students who stay enrolled from semester to semester, are at 88% across the board. And Native American student enrollment has risen dramatically, with a 20.3% rise between spring 2020 and spring 2021.

Brad Hall, UM's tribal outreach specialist, said the increase in Native student enrollment can be attributed to programming at UM tailored to recruiting from Native communities and partnering with tribal colleges. He added that each UM department can promote their programs to Native American students who might be interested.

"That's a huge opportunity to get more students in there, because the interest is there," Hall said. "It's a matter of us providing the access and support that those students need once they enter these programs."

Kuntz said the retention numbers and UM's renewed interest in improving on-campus lifestyle as students slowly return to in-person instruction is leaving him "cautiously optimistic" about UM's fall 2021 student head count.

UM-based podcast finds success behind a unique trio

JACK MARSHALL

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Mountaineers, musicians, artists, scientists and many other interesting people have been interviewed by University of Montana professor Justin Angle as a part of his podcast, "A New Angle."

"This is 'A New Angle' and I'm your host, Justin Angle," he says at the beginning of every podcast while an electric guitar plays an upbeat riff in the background.

Angle has been doing the podcast remotely since the start of the pandemic, but before that he recorded in a state-of-the-art studio in the Gallagher Business Building. A picture of two grizzly bears snarling at each other hangs in the studio Angle used in non-pandemic times. By interviewing his guests through a computer, Angle has been able to keep the podcast moving forward.

"He's such a great interviewer," said Jeff Meese, who serves as the podcast's auditory experience manager.

In each episode's credits, Meese is referred to as the "master of all things sound," as he is in charge of sound quality and editing the podcast's audio. Graduate student and producer A.J. Williams also helps make up the trio that puts on the podcast.

"We've been trying to maintain having a guest on every week," Williams said. "We're still trying to expand our audience."

Angle started the podcast in 2018 for one of his business classes. He realized students were more likely to listen to a podcast than read something he assigned.

The idea of "A New Angle," he says, was to talk to "cool people doing awesome things in and around the great state of Montana."

Along with running the podcast, Angle works as an associate professor of marketing in the College of Business.

Angle got a degree in finance at the University of Pennsylvania, where he participated in collegiate rowing.

He then moved to San Francisco where he worked as a bond trader, at one point pulling off a \$100 million trade. He also spent time coaching high school and collegiate rowing in California and Pennsylvania.

Angle completed a master's degree and a doctorate in business administration at the University of Washington before landing a job as a professor at UM in 2012.

Around half a year into the podcast's life, Meese began helping out. Meese has worked in the business building since it opened in 1996



University of Montana associate professor of marketing and host of "A New Angle" podcast Justin Angle in Studio 49 on the third floor of the College of Business, Tuesday afternoon, Feb. 25, 2020. Angle said the podcast originally started as a project for an online class and blossomed with the more people he interviewed. Angle said, "Podcasts present conversations that people can learn from. There is no shortage of interesting people we can learn from in a college community."

DANIEL DUENSING | MONTANA KAIMIN

as a media technician. He has also done sound for National Geographic, the BBC, PBS, A&E and other high-level production companies.

"What's been most satisfying for me is to hear the feedback from our listener base," Meese said.

Williams was a student in the environmental journalism graduate program when she saw a call for producers. She wanted experience with podcasting and already had a radio and documentary production background, so she signed up.

She helps promote the podcast on social media and gathers information on the guests for Angle, all from home. Since she started her graduate program, she has been fully remote and has not set foot on campus.

"Normally I would work from the Rattlesnake and get to look at [Mount] Jumbo

every day," Williams said.

Thanks to the efforts of the trio, the podcast gets hundreds of downloads per episode, and its Instagram page has over a thousand followers. Montana Sen. Jon Tester, Montana Gov. Greg Gianforte, Pearl Jam bassist Jeff Ament and New York Times columnist Maureen Dowd have all made appearances on the podcast.

Inspired by the success of the podcast, Angle has decided to launch a new six-part series called "Backfire." It will investigate what wildfires mean for Montana and the rest of the West.

The new podcast will be released by Montana Public Radio on Feb. 23. New episodes of "A New Angle" release every Tuesday and can be found on most streaming platforms.



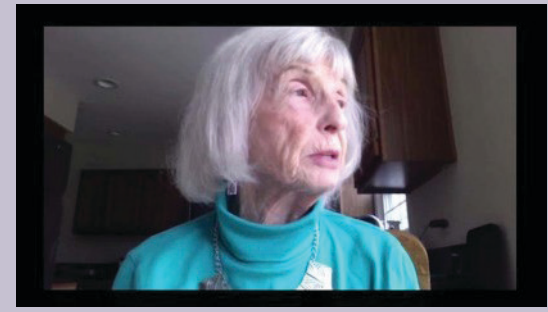
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A VIRTUAL BIG SKY



18th Annual **BIG SKY** DOCUMENTARY FILM FESTIVAL FEBRUARY 19-28, 2021

ALEX MILLER

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When Texas' massive music and arts festival, South by Southwest, was canceled last March—for the first time in more than three decades—festival organizers around the country could see that 2020 was going to be difficult.

At that time, Missoula's Big Sky Film Festival had just finished its best year. The relief that came from the conclusion of months of organizing such an event was supposed to be enjoyed with relaxation, finally taking a breath. But then COVID-19 happened. What was supposed to be a spring of enjoying the success of 2020 turned into a question of whether or not the festival would return for 2021.

"Every week and month after that it was like: 'Okay it's really bad now, but we're starting to understand more, and maybe by February [2021] it'll be better, and we'll be back to normal,'" said Rachel Gregg, executive director of the Big Sky Film Festival.

The festival set a submission record for itself in 2020, with nearly 2,000 films submitted and audiences jammed tightly into venues like the Wilma. But this year's version is set to have a new look. The Big Sky Film Festival will be held entirely online from Feb. 19-28. Its website is the new movie theater, and with a simple click ticket holders gain entrance into the virtual cinema.

Gregg held out hope that by now things would be back to "normal" in time for the annual festival's return. But she was also prepared for the worst-case scenario: Canceling the event altogether.

But as 2021 crept into view, it became clear

to Gregg and her team that the festival would endure.

"As a producer, it's just not my way to back away and not do anything," Gregg said.

The life cycle of the festival would normally have begun in May. When the month came and went, Gregg and her team briefly toyed with the idea of shutting down. In June, though, they opened up submissions for films.

"Opening the call was a commitment to doing something," Gregg said. "We had to have the festival in some form."

A party needs money to keep going, and funding was a concern. The live version of the festival costs around \$200,000 to operate. Running the festival virtually will be cheaper, tallying at nearly \$150,000. But the cheaper cost comes with a tradeoff; Gregg expects the festival will make half the revenue than what it would in a normal year.

And the normal revenue stream—donations and philanthropy—was hard to come by with an economy ravaged by the pandemic.

Month after month passed, and the virus did not slow down. Gregg watched as other festivals canceled or pivoted. The Big Sky Film Festival won't be the first online cinema event in Missoula, with the Roxy's Montana Film Festival having gone totally virtual in October 2020. The Sundance Film Festival offered a hybrid event, but remained mostly online.

From those festivals that stayed alive, she learned how to change from an in-person event to going totally online.

The decision to go fully virtual was not an easy one. First, the team thought it could pull off a hybrid live-and-online event, but as health and safety concerns grew, the pivot to on-

line-only looked to be the best choice.

CARES Act money, distributed by the National Endowment for the Arts, helped keep the lights on. The \$50,000 grant was used purely for operating costs. Other grants the festival received helped to equip them with servers powerful enough to host a virtual event.

As the summer progressed, the festival received nearly 1,800 film submissions. The amount was just under the record set for the festival last year, which had nearly 2,000.

Out of all those submissions, organizers and programmers could select only 75.

Doug Hawes-Davis, the short film programming director, chose 50 from that batch for the short film section. Hawes-Davis said he basically binge-watched films, and choose the ones that were best suited for a Missoula audience.

"People think you're finding the best," Hawes-Davis said. "But really, you're finding the best for the audience."

Hawes-Davis was uncertain what would happen with the festival. Would directors hold their films back? Would the audience adapt to an online event? Would film festivals survive?

Gregg was worried about how many films they would receive, but Hawes-Davis was more optimistic. In many cases, filming had already ended as the pandemic struck, leaving time to finish post-production work before submissions opened up.

"I figured that a lot of stuff would come because it's either already done, or was later in the process and had already been shot," Hawes-Davis said. "Post-production is something you can do in a crisis."

The virtual element of the 2021 festival provided a surprising turn of events for

Hawes-Davis. Live festivals are in one place, so the question of geolocking—or putting regional access locks on a film—never really came up prior to going virtual. Hawes-Davis said that filmmakers want to show their work to an audience that will understand it, and not just throw it around to any festival they can.

But most filmmakers requested their films not be geolocked, giving their work a chance to be seen by a much larger audience.

Ten of the 50 short films feature work by Montana State University students, part of a program MSU and the festival have been collaborating on for a few years.

Dennis Aig, professor and director of the Master of Fine Arts filmmaking program at MSU, said that the films were made over the course of three years.

"It's good exposure for beginning filmmakers to get their films shown to general audiences, to get feedback, to get used to explaining their films to a broader public than just their professors," Aig said.

With the outpouring of films and support, Gregg said she feels optimistic about both the present and the future of the Big Sky Film Festival.

"Let's do the things that we can do really well, and only commit to those things," Gregg said. "Not try to change the world by doing the best virtual event you've ever participated in."

The Montana Kaimin reviewed the "Made in Montana" short film section of the Big Sky Film Festival. Along with the reviews are brief interviews with directors, discussing topics like their introduction into film, participating in a virtual premiere and more.



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A CHESTER- FLAVORED TWIST

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It would be more than okay to assume director Ryan Weibush's short film, "The Orange Candidate" (2020), is about former President Donald Trump.

But thankfully, in a world that is slowly weaning from nonstop Trump coverage, that particular orange candidate is nowhere to be found. The film does, however, delve into a quieter aspect of the 2016 election cycle.

Weibush's near eight minute short follows the small Montana town of Chester's tumultuous 2015 mayoral campaign, which featured incumbent Noel Walston facing a challenge from an outside candidate with money to burn.

The actual filming took place in the summer of 2019, but the small town of Chester, which sits at nearly the top of the Hi-Line, remembered the events of five years ago like they were yesterday.

The mayoral race was not all it seemed, and neither is this film. But, to find out what's really going on, you'll just have to watch "The Orange Candidate."

THE MAN BEHIND THE ORANGE

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It can take nearly two years for eight minutes of film to see the light of day.

Director Ryan Weibush takes his time to make his films, but when you're a one-man show, time is your best friend.

"I'm a slow filmmaker," Weibush said.

Weibush has directed five films, with his most recent documentary short, "The Orange Candidate," making its premiere at the 2021 Big Sky Film Festival. His newest work explores the high-profile mayoral campaign that took place in Chester, Montana in 2015. The idea first came to him in 2017.

The director, originally from Ohio, came to Montana in 2015. He said his wife — who attended UM — and a job brought him to Missoula. He had previously worked for PBS in Cleveland assisting in documentary production. Weibush began teaching a documentary film course at UM.

During his time at UM, which lasted from 2016 to the spring of 2020, Weibush worked sporadically on music videos and some freelance editing projects, but his primary job was to focus on his role as a professor and adviser.

His passion for film is something he's tried to instill in his students. Weibush's influences come from the MTV era, where directors

like Spike Jonze and Michel Gondry reigned supreme. But a film by Frederick Wiseman, "Titicut Follies," captivated him.

"It was a film that I had to track down a VHS copy of in college," Weibush said. "I found a dusty old copy in the library because the film had been banned in the '60s, and was difficult to find ever since then."

Wiseman's film examined the lives of the patients of the Bridgewater State Hospital for the criminally insane, a corrections facility in Bridgewater, Massachusetts. The state ordered the film to be censored, arguing that Wiseman had not received permission to put the lives of the patients on display. The film had such an impact on Weibush, he had his students watch it for his History of Documentaries class.

Weibush's first film was shot for a contest when he was a teenager. He described the process as "just some kids with a video camera." However, he didn't win.

"No we didn't [win]. It was rigged," Weibush said, chuckling.

Flashes of the filmmaker's influences can be seen in his newest offering, "The Orange Candidate." The short revolves around one dry joke of a twist—which you'll just have to watch to find out. Weibush paid for the film's production himself.

"The good thing [about] when you're super low-budget, you're just asking friends for help," Weibush said.

One of those friends was fellow filmmaker Kier Atherton, who helped Weibush during the summer of 2019, acting as the director of photography for the filmmaker.

The pair met at the Big Sky Film Festival a few years ago and hit it off right away. The duo spent nearly a week in Chester. Atherton handled the filming while Weibush did interviews and wove himself into the small town. Research had been done prior to hitting the road to Chester, but Atherton said that when they arrived everything became an organic process.

"When you work with a new director, they always have a new style that you don't have experience with," Atherton said. "I really enjoyed Ryan's style."

Weibush returned in the summer of 2020 to a changed Chester. There was a new mayor and the pandemic was in full effect. On this trip, instead of staying at the town's lone AirBnB, Weibush camped out. Documentary film, Weibush said, is another casualty of the pandemic in its approach and style.

"It's tough for a documentary filmmaker now. With fictional stuff, people are just pretending that the pandemic doesn't exist," Weibush said. "You can't really do that with a documentary, because you're not being very truthful if you're not doing that."

'POWDER AROUSAL'

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For most subjects in this film, staring down the face of a snowy mountain is the best thing since sex. At least, that's what the experts say.

In "Powder Arousal" (2019), director Emily Lea looks at the parallels between great skiing and other rewarding activities, like sex. But that reward for finding the best snow comes with the risk of misjudging a run and being caught in an avalanche.

The 10-minute short documentary features experts from both MSU's snow and avalanche lab and around the world. They give valuable information on backcountry skiing, and warn potential adventurers to be cautious when choosing where to carve down a mountain.

Lea utilizes scenic shots of skiers, both in safe and dangerous conditions, as well as some more creative shots of models, lasers and Montana ski resorts. This film demonstrates the dangers of backcountry skiing.

Q&A - Emily Lea

How long have you been working on films?

I started filmmaking at MSU three years ago when I joined their graduate program in Science and Natural History Filmmaking. My background was in geology, so through MSU's unique program, I now have the opportunity to make educational earth science films.

Why do you like storytelling?

I was raised by a southern family of storytellers, so I've always enjoyed listening to the stories of others and sharing my own. I think it is our most ancient and sacred form of generational communication, and it saddens me to hear that less people are telling stories nowadays. I get so much joy from sharing funny or fascinating anecdotes, but I've always enjoyed translating dry scientific principles into fun storytelling. When I raft-guided in Colorado, I loved telling visitors about the geological story happening around us, and I received a lot of great feedback from it. This was a big reason why I applied for MSU's science filmmaking program.

'WEEP'

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Dramatic, orchestral music booms in as we watch people cry. Some of them seem devastated, others cry silent tears. Some look as if they are about to start wailing and tearing at their clothes, overwhelmed by grief and loss.

But then the music stops and the tears are gone, as emotions turn off quicker than we expect.

Harrison Bach examines the reasons we cry and what that outward show of emotion means to us in "WEEP" (2019). Bach interviews two medical professionals, a psychologist and a physician on why people cry, and how societal pressures impact the way we view outward shows of emotion. "If you cry in public," one subject says, "you're asking for attention."

And some of these tears, the subjects and doctors say, are fake.

The people we saw wail earlier now show viewers how to fake cry, manipulating others to get what they want. The same booming orchestra from the beginning plays, and by the end, we aren't sure if they were ever genuinely crying at all.

Q&A - Harrison Bach

What's it like having a premiere during a pandemic?

Though having a premiere during COVID is super humbling, it's odd and a bummer to not go to the festival. But it's exciting to know that the films have never been more accessible. So in a way it's a shame to not meet new filmmakers, but on the flip side, as [a] scientific communicator, I'm stoked about the potential that someone might stumble upon my video and learn something new!

What drew you to this subject matter? What difficulties did you face?

For the film "WEEP," I was drawn in by the idea of exploring the human body, how it works and the spectacle that is the action of crying. Biggest difficulty, not gonna lie, is being able to equally represent the communities of the world from Bozeman, Montana. For this film about crying, I wanted diverse perspectives, diverse viewers and diverse participants.



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'PROPAGATION'

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Skiing for work is a dream for some, but for Gallatin National Forest avalanche forecaster Alex Morientha, the job is far from easy, especially when he carries the weight of people's lives on his shoulders.

"Propagation" (2019), a short film directed by Montana State University graduate student Nate Kenney, is another reminder to do your homework before going into the backcountry. Luckily, Morientha does most of that work for you. A brief profile of Morientha gives a glimpse into the daily tasks of avalanche forecasting, a job too often overlooked.

With some stunning visuals of the Gallatin National Forests, it's easy to fantasize about the wild backcountry. But this film grounds you in reality.

"The most difficult part of this job is when folks don't come back alive," Morientha said.

Even though "Propagation" was made pre-COVID-19, it's more relevant now than ever. With the pandemic not only driving people outdoors, but inexperienced out-of-staters into rugged Montana territory, avalanche safety is even more of a priority.

For those getting cabin fever from COVID-19, eager to go wild in the backcountry during this winter season safely, "Propagation" is a must watch.

Q&A - Nate Kenney

What inspired you to do a profile on an avalanche forecaster?

It's a really interesting job. These guys—they're out here skiing in avalanche terrain. It's one of the most difficult things to predict. No matter how good you are, no matter how much experience you have, you can only predict, like, a range where the danger level is. In the stats of a normal curve, it's a bell curve of where they think danger level might be, but somebody can always fall into one of these outliers of skiing on a safe day. I just thought it was interesting. I have a background in psychology—that was my undergrad—

and I actually did my undergrad thesis on decision-making heuristics in avalanche terrain. Also, snow is very cool science.

What is it like to have your film premiere digitally instead of in-person?

Everyone wants their film to get seen. I'm just happy it's getting out there somehow. I'd much rather have it be an in-person kind of thing. There's something really great about being able to see a film with other people. I'm just happy people are seeing it. It's just the reality of this year.

'LIFE IN THE SLOW LANE'

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Before the pandemic, 84-year-old Lois Chinadle found herself striking out — in bowling that is.

Chinadle used to be quite the bowler in her youth. At 84, she still pulls strikes like it's her job.

Her laugh is raspy after years of smoking, and the skin on her cheeks crinkle when she smiles. She doesn't want to be old, but it's not too bad when she's got good company of fellow elderly friends and a bowling ball in hand.

And then, the pandemic hit.

"Life in the Slow Lane" (2020), directed by Kelly Bouma, follows Chinadle's journey through the pandemic—from once having a beaming social life to now being socially isolated in rural Montana. Chinadle must learn to cope with isolation after 84 years of a healthy social life.

The film shows isolation at its most ruthless level. Lois was once one of the most happy-go-lucky people of her age, ready to start truly living again.

Now, life seems to have come to a halt, though the aging continues despite her not wanting it to. It's hard to live life well when life seems to have stopped existing in rural Montana during the pandemic.

Q&A - Kelly Bouma

How has COVID-19 impacted this film?

COVID-19 changed absolutely everything about the film, beside the main character that is. I didn't intend to make a COVID-film, but we started filming three days before the lockdown occurred. We were able to capture footage right when the pandemic happened, which was very interesting. And we were able to see how Lois decided to react to what was going on which was very special.

What inspired you to share this story?

Lois. She is quite the character. The film was actually supposed to be about her reuniting with her old bowling buddies, but COVID has changed everything. The film we created is unique in that it has a beginning and middle, but no end, similar to the pandemic. It's special because although the film was a different idea than we originally had in mind, it still carried the same themes.



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'THE RIVERS THAT SHAPE US'

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Rivers are abundant in Montana, where there are 700,000 miles worth of waterways. Many of these rivers are wild and untouched by humans, though few are protected.

In "The Rivers that Shape Us" (2020), director Erin Hermsen discusses the economic, social and environmental importance rivers have in a six-minute miniature documenta-

ry. The documentary focuses on Montanan Chris Ennis, a sales representative for the outdoor brand ArcTeryx, and his support for the Montana Headwaters Legacy Act, a bill that would protect an additional 300 miles of wild riverspace.

After the release of the film, Sen. John Tester sponsored the bill into the U.S Senate, but it is yet to pass.

'BITTERROOT'

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Adam Meeks asked his mother, "Can you tell us how you and dad met?"

Through his film "Bitterroot" (2020), Meeks and his parents—Maryellen and Raymond—process their lives in the Bitterroot Valley, mixing beautiful shots of an idyllic life with heart wrenching and bittersweet stories of a life gone by.

Meeks ties together the past and the present as audiences view black-and-white family photos on an empty black background, seemingly through an old-fashioned slide projector. The edges blur as the story of Maryellen and Raymond's love fractures, and their idyllic life is left in the realm of memories.

Meeks' parents speak with familiarity, nostalgia and love about their lives together, even as their paths diverge. The memories of their past remain blissfully untainted by the hardships the years brought them.

"Bitterroot" is gentle and nostalgic, softly lulling us into dreams of yesteryear and the ones we keep in our hearts forever.

Q&A - Adam Meeks

What's your history as a director? How did you get your start?

I studied filmmaking at NYU, which provided a remarkable foundation and an irreplaceable set of collaborative relationships. I wrote a script my senior year and was awarded a production grant to make it, and I think the experience of directing that film (which is also set in the Bitterroot Valley) gave me just enough confidence and momentum to keep going.

How does it feel to be having a premiere during a pandemic?

I'll definitely be missing the community festival experience, and I know we were holding out hope for a chance to return to Missoula with this film. But, above all, I'm tremendously grateful to be able to premiere such a personal, Montana-set film at this festival and within this community (virtual or not). I have the utmost admiration for the Big Sky Documentary Film Festival finding ways to adapt and carry on.

'SWEETWATER'

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In "Sweetwater" (2019), Richard "Rhett" Barker takes audiences on a journey through the wetlands of Sweetwater Creek, from Gainesville, Florida, through the coexisting nature and city.

There's a stark contrast between nature and the surrounding urban environment here, demonstrating the complexities of the landscape, while simultaneously emphasizing humanity's impact on nature.

While showing one of Sweetwater Creek's many crevices, Barker finds a soda can that he said hasn't been produced since the 1980s.

"Trash sticks around here for a long time," he said, showing the audience glass, plastic and metal embedded in the creek's habitat. Here, nature's tranquility is fully intertwined with the danger humanity continues to present, as Sweetwater flows on.

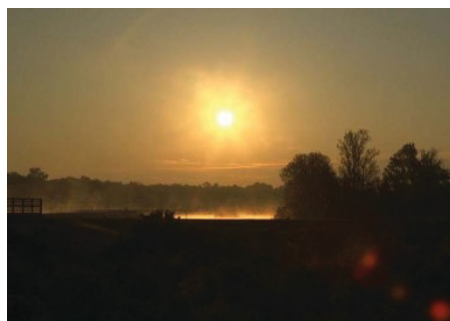
Q&A - Richard Barker

Tell me about your film, "Sweetwater" and what inspired you to make it?

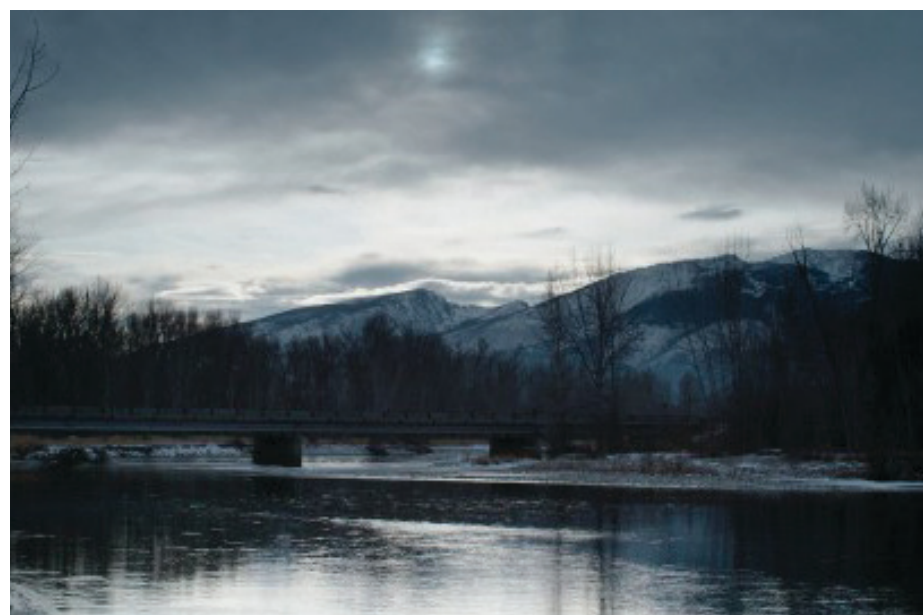
The film is about walking from the outflow of a creek that starts in the middle of Gainesville, Florida, and ends in a nature preserve. I went to undergrad at UF [the University of Florida], and I've been going to this creek for a long time because it was near my house. I realised two things: I didn't know where [the creek] started, and that it had to start within the city limits. So [the film] was kind of a very mild, but fun, version of the Explorer documentaries — where you started in one place and tried to find the headwaters of some river. I decided to make a film like that, but about this creek that connects the natural area.

What got you into filmmaking in the first place?

Watching croc-hunter documentaries when I was a kid. There was a block of Jeff Corwin, Steve Irwin and then The Most Extreme on Discovery Channel every weeknight when I was in elementary school, and I religiously watched that. And knew from when I was about 9 years old that filmmaking was part of what I wanted to do.



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'BREATHE'

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Breathing. It is the first thing people do when they enter the world, and the last thing they do when they leave it. But what about the breathing in between?

Director Chrissie Bodznick explores the ways in which breathing can heal and create self awareness when done consciously, in her film "Breathe" (2020).

Bodznick—the main character of the documentary—and experts bring the audience on a journey of self discovery, taking a look at the science behind breathing.

Breathing is subconscious and easy. But what

if it was also the answer to physical and meta-physical issues like stress and pain?

Bodznick lies with her eyes covered and a teddy bear cradled in her arms. She breathes in and out just like she has done so many times before. At first her hands clamp. Fear is trying to escape her body, according to the breathing facilitator watching over her.

Slowly, her hand grabs the teddy bear tighter, and tears stream down her face, turning into deep sobs, then into a soft smile.

Bodznick's exploration of a mundane necessity shows that while breathing is the most simple thing to do, when practiced intentionally, its waves crash hard and wide.



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'YEARS GONE BY'

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Along the shores of Vermont lie the sleepy beach towns of Greenbackville and Franklin City. With fewer than 500 residents—most of whom are seasonal visitors or retirees—it's hard to imagine that these were once bustling hubs for harvesting the esteemed Chincoteague Oyster.

"Years Gone By" (2020), a film directed by Montana State University graduate student Grace Weikert, explores how over-exploitation, poor land management, rising sea levels and increasingly severe storms turned these cities into ghost towns.

Black and white photos of a community thriving off a booming industry commemorate these towns' shared histories. But this film is much more than a commemoration—it's a warning.

Aerial footage of the shoreline, dotted with the remnants of infrastructure "washed away with the tide," encapsulates the dangers of many contemporary environmental issues.

"Their stories are critical to where we see ourselves in a hundred years," says Sean Cornell, professor at Shippensburg University, in the film.

While "Years Gone By" revolves around these small coastal towns, it's a micro example of a macro problem. One that warns what many communities may look like in the future.

Q&A - Grace Weikert

Why did you get into filmmaking?

I got into filmmaking mainly as a means to explain scientific stories. A lot of my friends weren't in bio and biochemistry, so in order to explain to them what I was doing, I would take photos or videos. And that was a visual means of explaining things better to them.

What inspired you to make "Years Gone By?"

I went to school for my undergraduate degree at the University of Pennsylvania, and there's a field station there called the Shrinkage Teak Bay Field Station. Throughout the summers of my undergrad experience, I had two classes down there and eventually became their photo/video intern for the summer. Greenbackville and Franklin City, which are featured in the film, were areas of interest that we've studied for years. It's just a fascinating story I took advantage of when I was an undergraduate, and then I started explaining it to people out here. So kind of just this story that I grew up around, but didn't really fully appreciate it until I stepped away from it.

'THE GROVE'

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Aspen trees play a fundamental role in the health of Montana ecosystems. But with conifer trees encroaching across Montana land, these groves are suffocating.

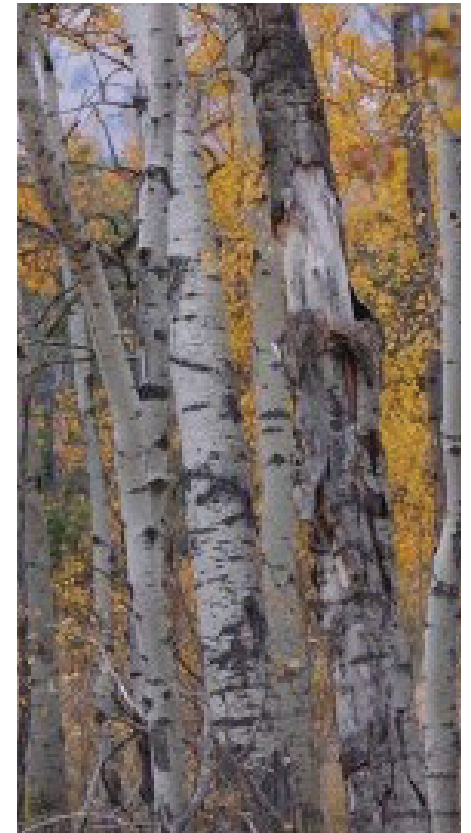
Montana State University graduate student Marit Ehmke's "The Grove" (2020) explores Cross Cut Mountain volunteers' efforts to let these aspens breathe.

At only three-and-a-half minutes, this film is short, but that's all it needs to convey the importance of this work. After a summer of cataclysmic fires, aspens may be the key to maintaining healthy wildlife habitat, wild-fire control and accessible recreation trails.

"Wildfire behavior changes when you have a diverse forest," said Peter Brown, the stewardship director of Gallatin Valley Land Trust.

Thinning out conifers is one way that these volunteers are working to reduce wild-fires and provide accessible trails for people hiking through Gallatin Valley land. It's also essential for maintaining farmland during wildfire season.

While the scenes of swaying aspens feels peaceful, this film presents pressing issues that are far less idyllic. But "The Grove" offers hope that, with volunteer efforts, aspens will thrive in the generations to come.



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Grand slams and new trophies: The weekly UM sports recap

Volleyball

The first of two back-to-back matches against Montana State was hard fought for the UM Volleyball team, but it ended in a competitive 3-2 loss on Jan. 14 in Missoula.

The teams were playing for the new "Main Line Trophy," a volleyball-only trophy that features a bronze bell with UM and MSU's logos engraved on it.

The first set was a balanced effort between the two teams. Montana maintained control throughout most of the set, but only by a few points at a time. UM's largest lead came when it jumped out to a five-point advantage, 21-16.

With five kills, Peyton Boutwell helped the Griz win the first set 25-21.

The next set proved more difficult for Montana, but the Griz kept it competitive even after falling behind 14-11. UM brought the score to 23-24 before a bad serve handed the win to MSU. The third set proved to be the most difficult, as Montana was blown out 25-9.

Montana dominated the fourth set, jumping ahead 19-12 and eventually winning 25-20. In the fifth set, a 2-0 run put Montana up 15-14, but since a team must win by 2 points, the Griz had to keep playing. MSU went on a 3-0 run and took the set 17-15, and the game 3-2. (John Orzechowski)

Women's Basketball

The Lady Griz traveled to Ogden, Utah, to take on the 0-15 Weber State Wildcats on Feb. 11 and Feb. 13, winning both games.

The first game started close, with UM leading 24-23. Thankfully for UM, the bench players came up big at crunch time.

Junior forward Kylie Frohlich scored 14 points off the bench, while three other UM reserves combined for another 14 points. The Griz went on an 11-0 run in the third quarter to take a 37-27 lead.

This third quarter outburst led to a 61-46 UM win. "Defensively, we did some good things," UM head coach Mike Petrino said to UM sports information after the game.

The second game wasn't as easy for the Griz. UM built up a 39-22 lead at halftime that nearly ensured a victory. At the time, ESPN's win probability meter slated the Griz to have a 97.9% chance of winning.

But winless Weber State came alive in the second half, outscoring UM 23-10 in the third quarter. Just a minute into the



University of Montana infielder Lexi Knauss heads onto the field to continue her warmup between innings during a game against the University of Utah on March 16, 2019. LIAM MCCOLLUM | MONTANA KAIMIN

final quarter, Weber State took a 1-point lead over the Griz.

UM was able to score with 1:48 left in the game to regain the lead and win 58-57. Junior guard Sophia Stiles led UM with 13 points. The Lady Griz now have a 10-7 record and are 7-5 in conference play. UM will take on Eastern Washington at home on Feb. 18. (Jack Marshall)

Softball

With the bases loaded against Grand Canyon University in a game on Feb. 12, University of Montana senior Jessica McAlister stepped up to the plate and

drilled a home run over the center field wall. This grand slam helped UM pick up its lone 9-4 win in the Grand Canyon Kickoff Classic tournament in Phoenix, Arizona.

UM went 1-4 over the weekend in five games against three different teams. In Montana's first game against Oregon, a top 10 team in the nation, the Griz lost 0-8.

Following the Oregon loss, the Griz also played on Feb. 12 against Grand Canyon. McAlister's big home run helped UM win that game 9-4.

The next day, UM took on fellow Big Sky Conference school Weber State. Despite three hits from senior infielder Cami

Sellers, the Griz lost 9-5. The loss will not count against Montana's conference record because it was an exhibition game.

On the third and final day of competition, Montana lost to Grand Canyon 16-5. Sellers once again led UM with three hits but also helped three UM players score with her three RBIs.

Following the Grand Canyon loss, UM took on Oregon and lost again, this time 9-1. McGrath batted in Montana's lone run of the game.

UM's record is now 1-4. The team will travel to St. George, Utah, for the Dixie State Classic on Feb. 19. (JM)

Opinion: Sports fans need the FCS in the new NCAA football video game

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Without a doubt, the best sports video games ever are the NCAA football games. There are still people posting gameplay videos to YouTube even though the last version was released in 2013.

But that last game, NCAA Football 14, had a huge flaw: it didn't include Division I FCS (or Division I-A) teams like Montana and Montana State. And with FBS teams like Michigan and Alabama being featured in previous NCAA games, the next games had better include them.

The first reason this should happen is for the devoted fanbase found in FCS football. Over 23,000 fans on average attending Montana games alone, and 10 more schools in the FCS average over 15,000 fans in a given game.

The 2020 FCS championship game reeled in 2.7 million viewers and was broadcasted on ABC.

According to ESPN, 1.5 million copies of the game were sold. The newest sports video game produced by Electronic Arts, Madden NFL 21, sells for \$29.99 on Gamestop.com. NCAA Football 14 sells for \$69.99 on the same website.

The fanbase is there.

There is nothing quite like taking your virtual team to the national championship and winning it. Montana fans who haven't seen a championship since 2001 are desperate to do this. They are also probably desperate to beat the Cats virtually. Montana State fans would love to win the first MSU FCS championship since 1984, even if it is virtual.

Bringing NCAA football back would also benefit college athletes. New NCAA rules have paved the way for athletes to earn money off of their name, image and likeness. The reason that NCAA sports video games were shut down in the first

place was because of a lawsuit regarding this.

The players who sued Electronic Arts—the producers of NCAA Football—got around \$15,000 each according to Bleacher Report. During this lawsuit, it was revealed that Electronic Arts makes \$80 million a year off of the NCAA football game.

The opportunity for UM players to make money is there as long as the FCS is added to NCAA Football. If there are no FCS teams, it will still be possible to add teams like Montana to the game, but no money will go toward the university or its athletes, because the team would technically be fictional.

Adding FCS to the game could also help the dreams of many athletes come true. There are 157 players per team in FCS football, which has 76 different schools—so up to 11,932 FCS athletes could be represented in the game.

Most all athletes dream of one day playing as themselves in a sports video game. Every year professional athletes go to social media to share their thoughts on their video game character.

Just recently, a Sacramento Kings rookie guard took to Twitter to protest how his character looked in the NBA video game.

"Appreciate it, but can y'all get this random man out of my jersey?" Tyrese Haliburton tweeted with a photo of his not-so-lookalike video game character.

Even if players don't like the video game versions of themselves, they're still featured in the game. It will create conversation among video game and sports lovers.

We need to see the Montana Grizzlies and every other FCS school in the new NCAA football video games. Do it for the culture, Electronic Arts.



JACK MARSHALL | MONTANA KAIMIN

Griz fall to Weber State in a high-scoring game, split series

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Despite putting up 80 points for the second game in a row and making seven 3-pointers, Montana lost to Weber State on Feb. 13, 91-82.

"[Weber State is] a good basketball team, and they responded very well and made some good adjustments," UM head coach Travis DeCuire said after the game.

The Griz allowed Weber State to score 91 points on 62% shooting. In the teams' first matchup on Feb. 11, Weber State only scored 67 points.

In a game that featured 41 foul calls and four technical fouls, UM sophomore guard Josh Vazquez said that the refs called a lot of "touchy fouls."

Vazquez led Montana in scoring with 17 points after only scoring 5 points in UM's first matchup against WSU.

"I definitely got a little bit more open tonight," said Vazquez. "I was just a little more confident in myself."

The Griz were able to take a 7-3 early lead after freshman forward Josh Bannan made a jumper in the first half. Bannan had 10 points and four rebounds in the contest.

Vazquez found junior guard Cameron Parker for a 3-pointer later in the first half to keep UM up, 21-17. Parker had 15 points and seven assists in the game, while Montana made 43.7% of its 3-point shot attempts.

Later in the first half, a Weber State player received a technical foul and Vazquez made two free throws to expand the Griz lead to 30-25.

By halftime, though, Weber State was able to pull ahead, 36-34.

In the second part of the game, Weber State couldn't miss. WSU made 66.7% of its shots, adding on 21 successful free throws.

Just when it seemed like Weber would pull away when the Wildcats went up 57-51, one of its players received a technical foul for flexing his muscles in celebration of a shot.

Vazquez then made a 3-pointer to narrow the lead to 54-57.

Later in the second half, UM made it a two-point game at 62-60 when, a technical foul was called on Montana's bench.

Weber State used the momentum from



University of Montana guard Josh Vazquez keeps the ball away from a Weber State player at the game on Feb. 13 in Dahlberg Arena. UM lost the game 91-82. LUKAS PRINOS | MONTANA KAIMIN

Montana's flub and took a 7-point lead.

Junior forward Mack Anderson was able to tip in a missed Montana shot late in the game to narrow Weber State's lead to 86-82. Anderson, coming off the bench, managed 6 points and three rebounds.

"I think the guys that aren't starting are doing a good job of seeing what's going on

and be ready for their turn," DeCuire said regarding his team's play off the bench.

The Griz failed to score after Anderson's tip, allowing Weber State to win 91-82. The Griz have now split five conference series in a row.

UM is now 9-10 with a 5-7 conference record. In Saturday conference games, UM

fell to 0-6 for the season.

UM's next two games will be against Eastern Washington on Feb. 18 and Feb. 20. Eastern Washington is first in the Big Sky Conference.

"We need to be angry, we need to work hard this week," DeCuire said.