

MONTANA KAIMIN

AN ELECTION LIKE NO OTHER:

HERE'S A GUIDE FOR VOTING FOR YOUR POST-PANDEMIC LEADERS, UM



NEWS
VACATING UM
VILLAGES
PAGE 5

NEWS
COVID-19 DORM
LIVING
PAGE 10

ARTS
THEATER ADAPTS TO
ONLINE
PAGE 12



Volume 122 Issue No. 25, April 8, 2020

Cover illustration
Daylin Scott



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It’s a pandemic, cut us some slack

Since social distancing started in March, we’ve all had to make some major changes in our day-to-day lives. The University of Montana has done its best to accommodate these changes with online coursework and lectures, and as students, we can appreciate that. However, many of the details of how to manage the in-person classes that have moved online have been left up to each individual professor, and we are definitely more appreciative of some methods than others.

To the professors who have been flexible and understanding to the individual students’ circumstances: thank you. We appreciate you more than you know. While there are plenty of us who are doing just fine, holed up at our parents’ house, scrolling through quarantine memes on Instagram and participating in the occasional Zoom meeting, there are just as many of us

who don’t have it that easy.

There are plenty of us who, now, in addition to our educational responsibilities, have to worry about how to pay rent in the coming months without our previous income, having been laid off due to the closing of campus and so many local businesses in town that provided us college students with employment. Even for those of us who are unconcerned with our finances for the time being, there is still a global pandemic going on and that can inevitably take a toll on our mental health as well.

It’s no secret that in 2020 depression and anxiety disorders are fairly common among college students, and not being able to leave our houses or participate in any form of “normalcy” does not help to combat either of these. It’s no wonder that education, as important as it may be, is not

at the forefront of everyone’s mind.

Unfortunately, compassion has not been a blanket requirement by the University at this time and not all of our professors have decided to follow suit. There are plenty of classes that are demanding the same quality and quantity of work from students as they were a month ago and at this point, that’s just not fair or realistic to ask of us.

The decision that some professors have made to shorten the duration of classes by two weeks is a relief in theory, but it becomes much less of a relief when the realization is made that it is not that two weeks of the curriculum have been cut, it’s six weeks of coursework that has been condensed into four weeks.

Having a professor who is empathetic to each of us and our unique situations right now is the most important thing that

we could ask for. And for every extended deadline, every email check-in, every optional final paper, a weight is lifted off of our shoulders.

And It’s not that we are lazy and it’s not that we don’t care, it’s that we have a great deal more on our minds than Moodle and Zoom. With very little good news on the horizon regarding the pandemic, we should at the bare minimum be met with understanding and flexibility. If there is ever a time to give students the benefit of the doubt, that time is now.

SUDOKU

Edited by Margie E. Burke

Difficulty: Easy

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

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:

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

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Un-quarantined thieves prosper on vacated UM campus

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MARCH 27: LOT H, WHERE BREAK-INS HAPPEN: EPISODE 2

In our next episode of “Lot H: Where Break-Ins Happen,” one bandit tried to pry open the driver door of a vehicle. Fortunately for the vehicle owner, the crook left empty handed. Unfortunately for the vehicle owner, the crook left behind scrapes and dents on the vehicle.

MARCH 27: LOT H, WHERE BREAK-INS HAPPEN: EPISODE 3

A thief swiped \$30 to \$40 cash from the center console of a locked vehicle after breaking in. The unlawful act was caught on video, but the footage was too grainy to identify the thief. Unlike police in NCIS, UMPD was unable to “enhance” the lack of pixels on the screen. Vehicles left on campus are targets for thieves during quarantine, according to Giffin.

APRIL 1: THE COWARDLY CROOK

UMPD officers spotted a triumphant thief strutting away from McGill Hall, a bike frame in hand. Upon recognizing he had been seen by the officers, the cowardly crook dropped the bike frame and fled. Officers were not able to catch the man but are now in possession of a lone bike frame for the owner to claim when they inevitably find their bike frameless.

APRIL 1: PROHIBITED PARAPHERNALIA

One student stoner at the now-deserted Miller Hall decided not to bring their bong home to mom and instead left the residence hall due to COVID-19. During a Health and Safety check, RAs discovered the smoking apparatus in plain sight, on top of a dresser. The student was referred for conduct.

APRIL 6: BIKE CLEAN UP

University of Montana police officer Brad Giffin said he has seen a rise in bike thefts and motor vehicle thefts on campus since Governor Bullock implemented a statewide shelter place order. In addition to thefts, Giffin suspects home disturbance calls to increase. UMPD officers are aware and working to combat the increase. “Theft is our most common crime anyway, but when there are no people around, it’s easier,” Giffin said.

MUS CANCELS GRADUATIONS

Commissioner of Higher Education Clayton Christian announced April 1 that all in-person spring 2020 commencement ceremonies at MUS campuses are canceled. UM administrators are developing plans to send the Provost and faculty across the state to conduct smaller in-person graduation ceremonies at a later date, UM President Seth Bodnar stated in a campus wide email. University officials also plan to release a video on May 9 showcasing “some of the people, places and programs that make this institution unique,” Bodnar said. (HELENA DORE)

STUDENT LOANS TEMPORARILY FORGIVEN

The U.S. government suspended student loan payments and interest for the next six months. The move will offer relief to the nearly 20 million Americans paying off school debt. It was part of the \$2 trillion economic stimulus package the federal government passed known as the Cares Act, an effort to relieve some of the economic burden caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. The Department of Education also announced payments made after March 13 are eligible for a refund. The action covers most, but not all people. It applies to federally held loans, which make up about 85% of federal student loans. (SAVANNAH STANHOPE)

COVID-19 IMPACTS MISSOULA FOOD BANK

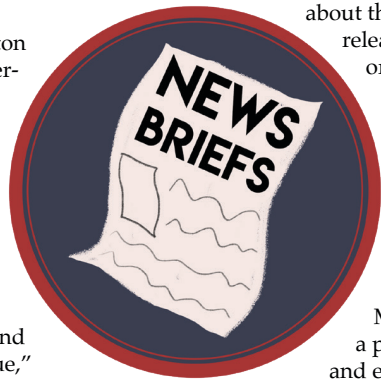
The Missoula Food Bank suspended its acceptance of food donations due to COVID-19 health precautions, according to the Missoula Current. The non-profit implemented several other adjustments, including a halt on accepting help from volunteers. The Food Bank is now only being operated by employees. The organization asked the public to contribute monetary donations in place of food. “While we are endlessly grateful for the number of people who are willing to help in this time of unprecedented need, we are also committed to doing our part in preventing community spread, and therefore are making hard choices on how to proceed,” the organization stated in a Facebook post. (SS)

UM CONSIDERS BRINGING BACK WINTER SESSION

Provost Jon Harbor released a campus-wide survey to gauge whether UM should reinstate a winter session. The new session would last three weeks, starting in late December and ending in mid-January. It would be billed separately from fall and spring sessions. The University last offered a two-week winter session during the 2017-2018 academic year. However, low enrollment and financial strains prompted it to cut the term in spring 2018 and extend summer session two weeks. “The time between fall and spring semesters can be used for high-impact and focused learning experiences that complement and advance your regular course of study,” Harbor said in a press release. (HD)

FIRST MISSOULA COVID-19 DEATH REPORTED

A Missoula County resident passed away due to coronavirus-related complications, according to the Missoula City-County Health Department. Identifying information



about the resident such as age or gender was not released, but the individual was “middle aged or above,” the Missoulian reported. Gov. Steve Bullock and the Health Department both released statements expressing their condolences to the victim’s family. This is the sixth death caused by COVID-19 complications in Montana as of April 6. (MEGHAN JONAS)

NO EVICTIONS FOR RENTERS

Montana Gov. Steve Bullock announced in a press release March 31 that utility shut-offs and evictions relating to non-payment of rent would be suspended through April 10, 2020. Bullock issued these directives after Montana saw its fifth confirmed COVID-19 death last week. Residents whose homes receive federal funding assistance can benefit from the Cares Act, approved March 27. The bill delays evictions of qualified renters for 120 days, provided the resident doesn’t violate their lease in ways unrelated to not paying rent. (DANIEL DUENSING)

GLOBAL ENGAGEMENT OFFICE MOVES TO VIRTUAL OPERATION

The Global Engagement Office announced it will continue regular operations online. Current international students, English Language Institute students and education abroad students can still reach out to their respective services through email and by phone during regular business hours. (CLAIRE SHINNER)

LADY GRIZ HEAD COACH NOT RETURNING

After four years serving as head coach of the Lady Griz basketball team, Shannon Schweyen told 406mtsports.com her contract will not be renewed for another season. After the Big Sky Conference tournament in March, Schweyen was offered a two-year contract to stay with the team, but was told on Wednesday, April 1, that her contract would not be renewed. (CS)

PRIMARY ELECTIONS TO OCCUR THROUGH MAIL

The Montana state government announced the state’s June 2 primary election will be conducted through mail as part of an effort to limit the spread of COVID-19, the Associated Press reported. The move eliminates the need to staff hundreds of polling stations. According to officials, this could result in earlier election results than usual. Same-day registration and voting will still be allowed. The ballots will be mailed on May 8 and will include return postage. (SS)

EARTHQUAKE SHAKES MISSOULA

Missoula felt a 6.5-magnitude earthquake Tuesday, March 31 that originated near Boise, Idaho, and reached much of Western Montana. This is the largest earthquake Missoula has felt since July 2017, when a 5.8 quake struck near Lincoln, just 80 miles away. No damage was reported in Missoula from the tremor. However, internet service lagged for many residents after the event. (SS)

UM shortens Lewis and Clark Village vacate notice

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Students moving out of the Lewis and Clark Village apartments are now required to pay less rent because of shortened vacate notices, but current expenses still may be a strain for some tenants.

Amid the COVID-19 pandemic, UM Housing temporarily shortened the Lewis and Clark vacate notice to 30 days. UM Housing normally requires tenants to submit vacate notices 60 days prior to moving out of Lewis and Clark Village and 30 days prior to moving out of the University Villages, according to UM’s website.

Ava Sweet, a sophomore studying communications with a minor in climate change studies, moved out of her Lewis and Clark apartment Sunday, March 29-- three days after Montana Gov. Steve Bullock issued a statewide shelter in place order. Before the COVID-19 pandemic, she had been planning on staying at her apartment over the summer.

Sweet said she sent in her vacate notice four days before she moved out so she could be with her family during the global health crisis.

“I moved out because my mom wanted me to come back home so our family could be together in the face of COVID-19, and because she was scared that I wouldn’t be able to get back home if I didn’t come soon,” Sweet stated in an email.

Sweet initially thought she was going to be charged for two months of rent, but learned Lewis and Clark had changed their policy. Her bill currently states she is being charged for more than one month of rent, but less than two months, she stated.

Emma Kiefer, a senior, said she moved out of University Villages and back home on March 28, but was charged rent until April 23. She said she can afford the payment, but other students may not be able to.

Kiefer said she lost two of her jobs at UM and faced reduced pay at her third job before spring break. She said she

moved out of the University Villages more because of the lost income than to practice social distancing.

UM Housing decided Tuesday, March 31, that a shortened vacate notice at Lewis and Clark would be better for students, according to Sandy Curtis, executive director of housing and community standards. She said the change would remain in effect until April 30 and would also apply to students who had already moved out, reducing their remaining rent.

UM’s website states students can also request a release from their housing contract. Requests must include the form, a letter explaining why the student should be released and any documentation supporting the request.

The usual Lewis and Clark Village vacate notice is longer than the notice for the University Villages because of more tenant turnover. It can therefore take longer to fill vacancies, Curtis said. She said vacate notices help UM Housing know ahead of time when there will be vacancies to fill.

UM Housing did not discuss adding other changes to vacate notices, Curtis said.

The shortened vacate notice followed Montana Gov. Steve Bullock’s March 30 order to prevent evictions and foreclosures during the COVID-19 pandemic. The order, effective through April 10, banned most evictions in residential rentals, and prohibited landlords from charging late fees on rent while the order is in effect. It also banned cancellations and late fees on utilities like electricity, water and internet service.

A 2018 Federal Reserve report found over 60% of adults nationwide would have difficulty paying an unexpected expense of \$400. Kiefer said her balance from rent at the University Villages is over \$400.

“To stay at home, Montanans must continue to have a home,” Bullock stated in the March 30 order. “Many Montanans are faced with the loss of their income and with it, the ability to pay their rent or mortgage.”



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ASUM Voting Guide: All about the candidates and referenda

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The Associated Students of the University of Montana’s election will determine its next senators and executives, but it could also change how it operates. Students will be able to vote on 10 referendums on the ballot this spring, impacting everything from student fees to the senate’s order of succession.

Candidates running for president, vice president, business manager and senator positions started campaigning Monday, March 30. Because of the coronavirus outbreak, campaigning is only occurring online.

The candidates usually campaign face-to-face using methods like lobbying in classrooms, hanging up posters and drawing on sidewalks with chalk. But according to the Head of Elections Committee Shane Stonge, this year candidates will transition to campaigning through social media and online meeting formats like Zoom.

Instead of the typical in-person election forum, candidates join in on a Zoom meeting on April 8, 2020. According to the elections website, candidates for president and vice president will be debating from noon to 12:50 p.m., and candidates for business manager will debate from 1 to 1:50 p.m. Candidates for senator positions will debate from 2 to 2:50 p.m. During this time, candidates can interact with students and explain their platforms. Students also have the opportunity to ask questions via the Zoom chat.

The ASUM elections will be open for student vote April 22 and 23. Students can vote via the UMontana app, which can be downloaded on smart phones.

The composition of ASUM’s senate and constitution have not changed since 2012, according to ASUM Senator Zoe Nelson, who chairs the constitutional revision ad hoc committee. She said the committee initially formed to adjust the senate’s representation in response to declining enrollment, but it soon saw the need for other changes to the constitution.

The ASUM constitution requires a majority in favor and at least 12% turnout for a referendum to pass. The referenda are listed below under the fee or constitutional article they would change.

SUSTAINABILITY FEE
The ASUM sustainability fee would become mandatory for students. Currently, students can opt out of paying. Fall 2019 had an opt-out rate of nearly 30%, according to the resolution. The \$6-per-semester fee has paid for projects like covered bike parking and water bottle filling stations on campus.

ACTIVITY FEE
The ASUM activity fee would increase by \$3, from \$67 to \$70 per semester, effective fall 2020. The fee is the primary funding source for more than 150 student groups and all ASUM agencies, excluding ASUM Transportation.
ASUM has experienced shrinking fee revenue with decreased enrollment. It has also dealt with increasing costs, particularly in ASUM Childcare, due to increases in student demand and the minimum wage, the Kaimin reported this March.

ACTIVITY FEE
Part-time students, who take six credits or less, would be able to pay ASUM’s activity fee at a lower rate and access ASUM services starting in the fall 2020. At \$35 per semester, the part-time rate would be about half the regular fee.
Currently, part-time students can opt-in to the full fee. Otherwise, they do not have access to ASUM services. The resolution states “ASUM believes that every single UM student should have access to its services and student groups.”

ARTICLE 4
If passed, the number of ASUM senators would be proportional to UM’s enrollment, rather than the current set of 26. ASUM would have one senator for every 500 students, with a minimum of 20 senators total, beginning with next year’s election.
A 2012 referendum previously increased the number of senators from 20 to 26, shortly after UM’s enrollment peak in 2011. Enrollment has since declined by around a third, the Kaimin reported.

The referendum would also allow the senate to remove a senator by majority vote for violating the senate’s new confidentiality agreement.
The agreement, a byproduct of changes to the UM code of conduct, covers information about alleged conduct violations by recognized student groups ASUM reviews. The student senate reviews these groups through closed ASUM sessions or writ-



University of Montana junior Ethan Hanley. Hanley, current vice president of the ASUM senate, is the sole candidate running for Business Manager for the 2020-2021 school year. **CONTRIBUTED PHOTO**

ten materials ASUM labels confidential. Senators would not be allowed to share the information unless it otherwise became public or ASUM gave permission.

ARTICLE 7
This referendum would create a dedicated ASUM senate seat for an incoming freshman. The ASUM president would appoint the senator in the fall with confirmation by two-thirds of the senate, starting fall 2020.

If passed, this seat would join two others set aside in 2012 for graduate students and for Missoula College students. According to the resolution, the seat would “provide direct representation and ASUM engagement for the University’s freshman populace.”

ARTICLE 6
If passed, the Board of Member Organizations, which oversees student groups, would grow from five to seven members. The limit of senators on it would also increase to three, rather than the current limit of two. This would address what ASUM Senator Zoe Nelson called a lack of senate representation on the board.
The referendum would also explicitly mandate that the board ensure student groups comply with the conduct code.
The ASUM Business Manager would become chair of the board, and ASUM’s office manager and student group coordinator would join as non-voting members.

ARTICLE 3
The order of succession would change slightly with this referendum. If the president, vice president and business manager could not serve, the longest continuously serving senator would be next in line if confirmed by two-thirds of the senate.
Currently, any senator who won two-thirds in a vote would be next in line. The resolution stated having an order for which a senator would take over would be “more practical and functional than having none.”
This referendum would also add the ASUM vice president as a non-voting member of all committees when needed, except the Constitutional Review Board.

ARTICLE 8
The constitution would no longer list proceeds from entertainment activities as a source of income for ASUM, since UM Productions went under in 2018. Other changes would be grammatical.

ARTICLE 9
The Publications Board, which oversees the Kaimin, would see two changes if this referendum passes. The Constitutional Review Board would become the final body to review certain decisions made by the Publication Board, after ASUM’s president and senate.
The Provost’s office would also formally lose the ability to appoint the board’s faculty member. In practice, appointing this position has varied depending on the board’s composition, according to Nelson.

ARTICLES 1, 2, 5, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14
These articles would be changed to improve grammar and readability. The

committee consolidated them into one referendum because the changes would be minimal.

Ethan Hanley is the only Business Manager candidate running for the 2020-2021 school year.
Hanley, originally from Bozeman, is a junior at the University of Montana majoring in accounting and has been involved with ASUM for three years. He started as a student at large for the Board on Budget and Finance and the Publications Board. He also served as a senator and, most recently, as vice president of the ASUM senate during this school year. Hanley said the position of Business Manager is a goal he has been working toward for three years.
“Business manager is a position I’ve really wanted to do, and I’m excited to run for it,” Hanley said.

If elected, Hanley said his main focus will be to place more emphasis on accessibility to student group funding. According to Hanley, the current guidelines to obtain funds are somewhat complicated to follow, and it can be difficult to find the correct forms. Hanley is planning to make a guide for students that describes the funding process.
He would also like to establish an account set aside specifically to fund student groups’ fundraising events. Currently, student groups have to go through the entire ASUM senate. The senate sometimes chooses to fund groups’ events through the final budgeting process, which is held once a year. The senate also sometimes funds groups’ events through a separate allocations process. Hanley said that he hopes having an independent account with money set aside for event funding will help student groups raise money for themselves. He also would change the process so that the requests would only need the business manager’s approval, which Hanley said would speed up the process.
Another one of Hanley’s initiatives would be to purchase and rent out equipment student groups regularly request funds for, such as microphones and speakers. This would decrease the amount of money ASUM has to set aside for equipment. It would also decrease the time student groups would have to wait for the requested equipment. Students currently request funds to buy the equipment needed through the STIP account (the State Term Investment Pool). It is an ASUM account used to purchase student group equipment that will last at least two years. Hanley said from the time the students submit the request to the time the group receives the equipment, the process takes approximately three weeks.



TOP: University of Montana junior and vice president candidate Emma Kiefer. Kiefer is a current senator and serves on the Zero Waste Advisory Board and the Sustainability Board for ASUM. BOTTOM: University of Montana sophomore Morgan Hahn. Hahn, a current ASUM senator, is running for president with running mate Emma Kiefer. **CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS**

Hanley said he is utilizing social media to advertise his campaign. He hopes to have a strong online presence and is also planning on holding virtual events via Zoom, including virtual coffee meetings.

Hanley said that even though he is running unopposed, he still is going to run his campaign the way he originally planned to raise awareness about the upcoming elections. He said even though the voting

turnout does not affect him personally, it is important to get as many students to vote as possible so their voices are heard.

Hanley said that if elected, he hopes to create something that will last by implementing the ideas on his platform.

“I want to create the groundwork and framework for future business managers to work on,” Hanley said.

Morgan Hanh and Emma Kiefer are running for president and vice president, respectively. Both students are current ASUM senators.

ASUM presidential candidate Hanh is a second year student studying communications with a minor in business administration. He works with the UM Food Pantry and volunteers at elementary and middle schools around Montana, participating in anti-bullying campaigns.

“I really, truly believe that when we engage in our civic process and build those muscles of civic engagement, we have the ability to invoke change,” Hanh said. “This position as ASUM president gives you the vehicle to try and do that.”

Kiefer serves on the Zero Waste Advisory Board and the Sustainability Board for ASUM. Kiefer also has volunteered with ESL and study abroad classes and was a teaching assistant at UM for three years. She is also lead proctor for UM’s Disabilities Services for Students. She is running for ASUM vice president to further the University’s sustainability efforts.

“I really, really am going to be pushing for sustainability... It’s not a sideline issue to me. It’s not just something to add on for support. It’s really what I based my identity around and what I want to advocate for on a higher level,” Kiefer said.

Hanh and Kiefer’s platform includes implementing a Green Campus Initiative. Kiefer said the Initiative is divided into six categories — setting and infrastructure, energy and climate change, waste, water, transportation, education and research. The Green Campus Initiative is aimed at consolidating currently disjointed sustainability efforts on campus, Kiefer said. Hanh and Kiefer also want to make the ASUM Sustainability Fee non-optional for students.

The group also emphasized diversity in their platform. They plan to host student dialogue sessions where students can comment on areas where ASUM needs to improve campus inclusivity. Hanh and Kiefer would also like to make each ASUM senator go through an implicit bias training, which identifies people’s unintentional biases.

“As a member of the LGTBQ community, I know how much diversity makes our



University of Montana sophomore James Flanagan, left, and junior Taylor Gregory. Gregory is running for ASUM president with Flanagan as his running mate.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

campus a stronger place. As far as our philosophy goes, we want to create a culture of respect based on empathy,” Hanh said.

Hanh and Kiefer said they would like to increase financial opportunities for students by working with the UM administration and financial aid office to “create simple, transparent, and predictable strategies” to help students, according to their platform. They also want to make students more aware of scholarships and jobs available to them. They would like to improve the scholarship portal to be more user-friendly.

One of the last points on their platform is to offer more campus services to disabled individuals. Kiefer said that she and Hanh would like to work with professors to make services such as assisted note taking and private test-taking rooms more accessible to students. The team is also looking for ways to gather extended feedback on how ASUM can improve campus accessibility.

If classes continue to be taught online during the next school year, Hanh and Kiefer said they will develop plans to address student retention, unemployment

and the eventual transition to in-person classes.

To reach out to their peers, Hanh and Kiefer are utilizing social media, as well as Zoom. They plan to conduct virtual meetings with student groups.

Taylor Gregory and James Flanagan are another pair of candidates running for the ASUM president and vice president positions.

Gregory, a junior at the University of

Montana studying political science, has been a part of the Associated Students of the University of Montana for three years. Gregory was the president of Model UN for two years and is active in Greek Life. He said he is running for the position of ASUM President in an attempt to make students’ opinions heard more by ASUM and UM’s administration.

“I really want to elevate student voices on campus and to make it so that the changes that happen on campus are student driven,” Gregory said.

Flanagan is running beside Greogry to be ASUM’s vice president. He said he found his niche taking part in public service. Flanagan has been part of ASUM for almost two years and is an active member of UM’s Collegiate Debate Club.

“I decided to run because I felt like I was in a position where I could use my knowledge and my passion for public service to serve the student body,” Flanagan said.

Their first goal is to push sustainability on campus by banning plastic bags at UM Dining. Gregory and Flanagan would like students to use the reusable bags handed out at orientation.

They also want ASUM to go paperless. According to Flanagan, If ASUM went paperless, particularly during their weekly meetings, it would save ASUM’s resources and further campus sustainability.

Gregory and Flanagan’s second idea is to improve communication between student groups and ASUM. Gregory and Flanagan would accomplish this by gathering feedback from student groups about how to improve ASUM’s accessibility. They would also answer student groups’ questions about ASUM’s policies and expectations.

The third focus of Gregory and Flanagan’s platform addresses student retention. The candidates said they will improve retention by advocating for more fee and tuition waivers for low income students. They also think working with Curry Health Center to provide students with subscriptions to the meditation application Headspace, if possible, would improve students’ mental health.

Gregory and Flanagan’s last goal involves ASUM reform. According to Gregory, senators oversee the high number of student groups and committees. The team said they would like to consolidate responsibilities among committees, like merging the marketing and outreach committee with the website committee. This would make ASUM senators’ duties for ASUM more manageable, they said. Gregory and Flanagan would also like to address the high turnover rate among ASUM senators. They said they will reduce the turnover rate by advertising the benefits of joining, like earning internship credits.

“It’s really hard to have an effective student government when over half of the body in a single calendar year resigns,” Gregory said.

If classes continue to be taught remotely during the fall semester, Gregory and Flanagan said they will strive to improve communication between students and UM’s administration. They said they would also promote an emergency grant program that the current ASUM President Abbigail Belcher is overseeing. The program offers funding to students dealing with strenuous life situations.

Gregory and Flanagan are also reaching out to their peers and student groups over social media and Zoom. Their website details their platform and past experiences.

Cierra Anderson and Christian Pfeifer are the last group running for ASUM president and vice president.

Anderson is a second year law student pursuing a master’s degree in economics. She was president of the Economics Club and is currently a senator for ASUM. Anderson is also involved in efforts to stop domestic violence. She said she was inspired to run for ASUM president after talking to a student whose problems were not addressed by the senate. She said he shared his concerns to the senate about a professor discriminating against him twice. By running for ASUM president, Anderson hopes to give students more of a voice.

“We are here to advocate for students, and I don’t think [ASUM] has been effectively doing that ... and that change has to come from the top,” Anderson said.

Anderson’s running mate, Pfeifer, is a junior studying political science with a minor in English. He is an ASUM senator and the president of the fraternity Sigma Phi Epsilon. Pfeifer also participated in and held leadership positions in Boy Scouts of America. Pfeifer said he chose to run for ASUM vice president to make ASUM less daunting for students who know little about how the senate operates.

“Working from a vice presidential position allows me access to administrative resources and other networking possibilities to help me do large scale projects,” Pfeifer said.

To address sustainability, Anderson and Pfeifer plan to help the ASUM Senate go paperless by purchasing tablets that would be used during weekly meetings. They also want ASUM to hire an intern for its sustainability office.

But the main objective on their platform is to create an Advisory Council made up of students that represent everyone on campus, including veterans, graduate students, Native American students, and others. This council is meant to address students’ problems on campus.

“This way we can try to get as many



University of Montana graduate student Cierra Anderson with her husband. Anderson is in her second year of grad school, and is running for ASUM president with her running mate Christian Pfeifer.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

voices heard as possible and get as many issues resolved as possible,” Anderson said.

Another initiative Anderson and Pfeifer would like to implement is to create a polling project called Student Canvas. This project, which would be accessible online, would let students access information about ASUM. It would also give students a way to provide feedback about ASUM,

according to Pfeifer.

Anderson and Pfeifer are relying mostly on Zoom meetings to discuss their campaign. They have also created a website that details their platform. The two are using social media accounts, which they are promoting.

UM Housing moves remaining Jesse Hall residents to Knowles

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Students living in Jesse Hall were asked to move to neighboring Knowles Hall March 27 as UM Housing navigates residence hall operations during the COVID-19 pandemic.

“The decision to move students from Jesse was to solely consolidate students, while still maintaining the CDC social distancing requirements, to be able to serve them better,” said UM director of communications Paula Short in an email.

Short said after the first weekend of April, roughly 80 UM students live in dorms on campus.

Jesse Hall, one of two 11-story residence halls at UM, only housed three floors of students before UM opted for remote learning. Six students and two resident assistants continued living in the dorm after coronavirus concerns prompted mass move outs across campus.

There are no plans or requests for the use of Jesse Hall, Short said. But she added that UM administrators have planned to use the building for the coronavirus pandemic.

Alisha Johnson, the public information officer for the Missoula City-County Health Department’s COVID-19 response, said the county health department has no plans to use UM dorms for quarantine purposes. Missoula City Communications Director Ginny Merriam also said the city does not intend to designate UM dorms for COVID-19 quarantine.

“The City-County emergency response is working on securing some motel rooms for quarantine. We have particular concerns about people who are experiencing homelessness and don’t have any place to be quarantined,” Merriam said.

All residents from Jesse moved to Knowles Hall. Male students were placed on the West second floor, while female students moved into the East first floor. The Jesse office, where Jesse, Turner and Knowles residents normally pick up packages and check out items, moved to Knowles hall on the last weekend of March.

Knowles residents already lived on the three open floors of the building. None of these residents or RAs moved to the fourth floor, which was closed for the year due to low enrollment.

When University classes moved online, more than half of UM’s RAs continued living on campus. UM Housing needs RAs

to perform resident lockouts and after hours on-call rotations.

“We encouraged them [RAs] to discuss their options with their family and assured them whatever choice they made would have no impact on future roles with our department,” Curtis said. “We really wanted them to do what was best for them.”

While RAs who remain on campus still need to do parts of their job in person, they are implementing changes to limit social interaction in the dorms and comply with CDC social distancing guidelines. Dorm community discussions and weekly traditions are now operating over Zoom and email.

“RAs are engaging with residents and hosting events online regardless of whether they are on campus or not,” said UM Housing director Sandra Curtis.

UM Housing also adjusted RAs’ compensation to incentivize continuing their duties as RAs. Room and board was no longer a proper incentive for RAs to complete their duties because RAs did not still have to be on campus, according to Curtis.

UM Housing now compensates RAs living on campus \$1,200, in addition to room and board. RAs that live off campus, but continue to engage with residents, are being rewarded \$300 for the rest of the semester. Curtis said the stipends recognize the additional service RAs living on and off campus are providing.

Second-year RA Olivia Adams, a senior arts and music major, decided to stay in Miller Hall. She said her workload is different, but it doesn’t feel like more of a burden. If anything, it’s a little less work.


As for the stipend, it was a nice bonus after being laid off from her other jobs, but did not provide an incentive for her to stay, she said. UM’s policy and procedure changes made her feel safer about staying on campus.

“The biggest reason that I stayed, personally, is that I really like this job,” Adams said. RA compensation was funded with revenue saved from RAs who moved out and no longer needed room and board. However, student residents who moved out are receiving refunds that UM Housing estimated could total \$1.1 million.

As of March 30, \$900,000 in refunds to residents had been processed. As students continue to move out, that number will increase, according to Curtis.

Unlike the RA stipends, UM is losing revenue due to the refunds and will have to make budget adjustments in the future. No decisions have been made about how UM housing will rebudget, Curtis said.

As of Monday, March 30, \$900,000 in refunds have been processed.



As students continue to move out, that number will increase.

LINDSEY SEWELL | MONTANA KAIMIN



ASUM
LEGAL SERVICES

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Room 116
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M-F
9am-4:30pm
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provides
reduced-cost
legal services
to UM
Students



@asumlegal

Zoom is an art, and every sign is an artist

Our astrologists have had two full weeks to decipher the art of Zooming. And trust us — it is an art.

ARIES (MARCH 21-APRIL 19):
Your virtual backgrounds are on POINT, Aries! Thank God, too — nobody needs to see what your room looks like two weeks into this shit-show.

TAURUS (APRIL 20-MAY 20):
You’re just so mysterious, Taurus. That big, dark, alluring rectangle... what goes on behind that always-off camera? Are you listening attentively? Shutting your eyes and lying in a prone state? Oh wait, that’s just sleeping. You’re sleeping, aren’t you?

GEMINI (MAY 21-JUNE 20):
Look, if you’re gonna be misting your succulents, reorganizing your closet or fluffing the mountain of 26 pillows on your bed with a Gemini-shaped imprint in the middle of the mattress, does your camera really need to stay on?

CANCER (JUNE 21-JULY 22):
Your focus and drive have only improved since quarantine started, Cancer. For instance, your ability to contribute to in-class discussion while lying in bed with the lights out and a blanket pulled up to your chin is just damn impressive. For your next trick? Brushing your hair?

LEO (JULY 23-AUG. 22):
Oh Leo, master of the “Touch Up My Appearance” button, teach us your ways! Perhaps with your tutelage, we all may one day reach the heights of your digitally smoothed glamour.

VIRGO (AUG 23-SEP. 22):
No pants? No problem! They only see your upper half, anyway. If you even turn your camera on, that is.

LIBRA (SEP. 23-OCT. 22):
Remember, your mic is hot, hot, HOT when you enter the room. Pro tip: smash that mute button before you let out your primal roar of stress. On mute, no one can hear you scream.

SCORPIO (OCT. 23-NOV. 21):
You’re awfully quiet in the chat, Scorpio. That’s funny ... you always had so much to say under your breath in the lecture hall. Zoom’s private messages are just perfect for you, aren’t they?

SAGITTARIUS (NOV. 22-DEC. 22):
Honestly, thanks for taking one for the team and “raising your hand” every time the professor asks a question. Half of us probably haven’t been listening, but if we have to hear our profs say “I’ll wait...” one more time, we’re all gonna lose it.

CAPRICORN (DEC. 23-JAN. 19):
You’re trying hard, Cap, and we appreciate that. But for the sake of everyone in your breakout room, have you tried unplugging your router and plugging it back in? Holding a convo “en español” is easier when we can hear more than every other syllable.

AQUARIUS (JAN. 20-FEB. 18):
Zoom is a whole new platform for romance, Aquarius, and it’s time to tune in. Every time your crush sneezes or their chair squeaks, their beautiful face fills your screen — pure magic. Make sure you’re on mute, though. We can hear your heart thumping.

PISCES (FEB. 19-MARCH 20):
Times are tough — nobody’s going to complain if your dog sits in on class, too. In fact, we can personally guarantee you can stop any productive conversation in its tracks if your classmates catch just one glimpse of — ooh your puppy is soooooo cute!



The Weekly Crossword													by Margie E. Burke			
1	2	3	4		5	6	7	8	9		10	11	12	13		
14					15						16					
17					18						19					
20				21					22	23						
24						25	26	27								
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44					45		46				47					
48					49	50				51						
				52	53				54		55		56	57	58	
59	60								61	62						
63						64	65	66				67				
68						69						70				
71						72						73				

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- ACROSS**

1 Priceless?
5 Head monk
10 Long in the tooth
14 Enlarge, as a hole
15 System of beliefs
16 Whimper
17 Jason's ship
18 Surfer's need
19 "___ and shine!"
20 Empty group, in math
22 Tolerated
24 Sound a bell
25 Like some witnesses
28 Sequel's sequel
30 Familiar with
31 Barnyard bleat
34 Office door adornment
38 "SNL" specialty
40 Divisible by two
41 Fine thread
43 Macbeth's burial place
44 "Semper fidelis", for one
46 Exxon Valdez, e.g.
48 Be in arrears
49 Typeface option
51 "Right you ___!"
52 He played Henry V and Richard III
55 Kind of lily
59 7-Up alternative
61 Ideal, as a society
63 Butcher's cut
64 Torah teacher
67 Something to pull
68 Get the pot going
69 Dentist's tool
- 70 Falls behind
71 Look intently
72 Santa's reindeer, e.g.
73 It's genuine, in Germany

DOWN

1 He played Danny in the original "Ocean's 11"
2 Air again
3 Bird of prey
4 Skin softener
5 Top of the heap
6 Clear soup
7 River bottom
8 Laudatory lines
9 Salad ingredient
10 Time for showers
11 Traveler's aid
12 End of a threat
13 Legal title
21 Docking spot
23 Storage containers
26 Place to go play
- 27 Witch's work
29 Wis. neighbor
32 Top-notch
33 Many miles off
34 Clownfish of film
35 Swear
36 Rock from outer space
37 Garlicky mayonnaise
39 Luau fruit
42 Pilot's announcement, for short
45 Newspaper bio
47 Shell competitor
50 Exaggerate
53 Eyelid cosmetic
54 Moscow money
56 Lavender flower
57 Bust a gut
58 Feeling of anxiety
59 Give a hand?
60 Cornmeal cake
62 Pinball error
65 Missile's path
66 Mare's mouth-piece

Answers to Last Week's Crossword:

L	A	M	P	A	B	E	A	M	T	H	I	S
A	R	I	A	L	E	D	G	E	H	A	T	E
R	I	L	L	P	A	G	E	T	U	R	N	E
V	E	L	O	C	I	T	Y	E	N	I	G	M
A	L	I	M	O	N	Y	C	O	I	L		
L	I	M	E	C	A	R	T	L	O	A	D	
M	A	I	N	E	M	O	V	I	E	B	R	O
O	N	T	O	T	O	N	I	C	S	L	U	M
O	N	E	G	R	U	E	L	S	L	I	M	E
T	E	R	T	I	A	R	Y	F	L	O	G	
	R	A	I	N	B	R	A	V	A	D	O	
A	B	S	E	N	T	D	R	A	M	A	T	I
S	A	N	A	T	O	R	I	U	M	K	I	T
T	R	O	T	R	A	M	I	E	I	O	T	A
A	B	B	Y	S	P	E	N	D	A	N	O	N

As classes move online, UM Theatre and Dance adapts

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The coronavirus pandemic altered life for everyone at the University of Montana, and online classes for arts students have come with a lengthy set of challenges, according to musical theater majors.

“When you’re meeting in a two-hour acting class twice a week, losing that feels significant,” freshman Luke Cusomato said.

Since the University shifted to remote learning after spring break, Cusomato and others have seen classes cut short, performances canceled and experienced anxiety over their continuing education in a field that Cusomato calls “very interpersonal.”

Cusomato starred in six performances of UM Theatre and Dance’s production of “Spring Awakening” before the rest were canceled in light of the COVID-19 pandemic.

“It was really difficult,” Cusomato said. “You have this feeling of working on something for so long, you get a taste of it, and we knew what was still to come. Losing that was the hardest part.”

Cusomato’s acting class, normally an in-person course involving scene work, in pairs and small groups, is now learning how to perform and submit remote auditions. He said professional castings often require them before in-person auditions are considered.

But that still left voice lessons, violin and more to adapt to the internet. Cusomato said he’s only had one voice lesson so far, and the lack of clear scheduling has left him in limbo.

“I’m maximizing my time in my days and trying to set up structure to keep myself within my practices,” Cusomato said. “Otherwise, I’m screwed.”

The transition hasn’t been easy for theater professors, either. Pamyla Stiehl is an associate professor in the School of Theatre and Dance, where she teaches musical theater auditioning, theater history and musical theater dance.

She said going online was difficult, but the cancellation of spring productions hit the hardest.

“There were a lot of tears,” Stiehl said. “It was sort of a breakdown — an emotional support group happened in class that day.”

Stiehl said her history class was the easiest to adapt, but noted her dance class would’ve been nearly impossible to recreate online. Instead, since she had already covered most of the standards, her students will write two papers to finish the course.

Among fellow arts professors, she said despite production cancellations and no box



KAITLIN CLIFFORD | MONTANA KAIMIN

office revenue, the mood has been positive.

“It’s surprising we haven’t been all doom and gloom,” she said.

Nicole Cukale is a junior musical theater major who described a similarly difficult time adjusting to the change. Since she completed all her generals, even more of her theater classes have hit roadblocks following the switch.

“Most of my classes are performance-based,” she said. “Doing that at a distance just isn’t possible.”

Cukale said her keyboard classes have already listed final grades, since not many people have a keyboard at home. Her dance class, taught by Stiehl, no longer has any choreography to learn or perform — just those two papers left to write.

But her greatest concern is over the canceled “Pride and Prejudice” performances she and others had been working on to debut in April. Cukale said she’s not sure she’ll get her practicum credit now that the show has been canceled.

“It’s given me a lot of anxiety,” Cukale said.

“It feels like I’m just having a whole semester wasted and I’m not going to be able to make it up.”

John DeBoer, interim dean of the College of Arts and Media, said the college has been working to transition courses online, but acknowledged there have been difficulties.

“We’ve all been working hard, and we’re going to show what’s possible when this sort of challenge is put to us,” he said. “A lot of great art is made under constrained circumstances.”

DeBoer said professors were told to assess course work up to the end of in-person classes and assign practicum credit from there.

Additionally, Stiehl said the dean had charged professors with the task of brainstorming curriculum tweaks in the event classes remain online for the upcoming fall semester.

One possibility she said they’ve discussed is grouping more “academic” classes in the fall and pushing production classes to the spring with the hope things will have returned to normal.

For now, Cukale remains in Missoula — she said she feared going home and bringing COVID-19 back to her parents. Facing the possibility of indefinite online classes, she expressed frustration.

“I can’t afford to go to school for another year, so I hope they figure this out,” Cukal said.

TO THE JOURNALISTS AND STAFF
OF THE MONTANA KAIMIN,

Thank you for your
commitment to the students of UM,
continuing your outstanding
reporting and publishing
under the most extraordinary
circumstances.

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Column: Online musical theater makes for bootleg classes

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I rolled out of bed this morning at 11:26 and asked myself, “what’s on the bracket today?” The answer: not much.

On a normal weekday, I’d have anywhere from one to three or five classes, but today I choose to binge-watch season 12 of RuPaul’s Drag Race. My laziness is inspired by my online theater, dance and music classes, which sounds like just as much of a contradiction as it is.

I would hate to put any blame on the School of Theater and Dance, or the School of Music, for how little I enjoy online classes. I have always avoided online classes whenever necessary because I don’t do well with instructions given over email, nor with extended, far off due dates.

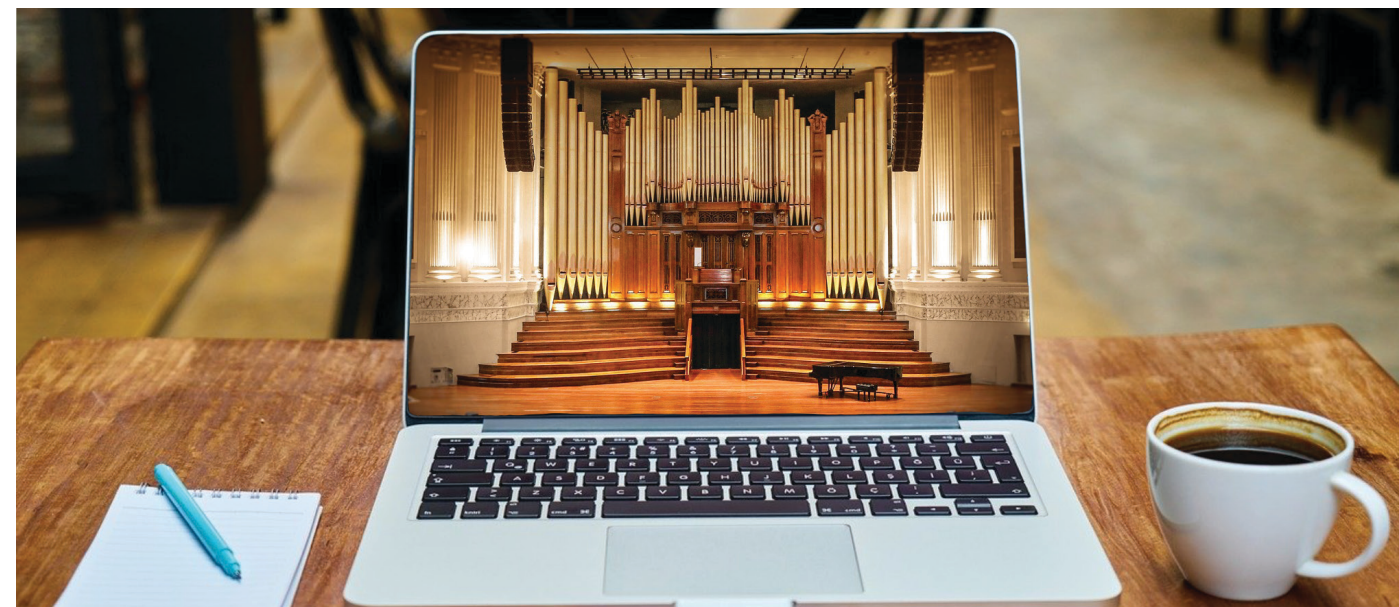
And it isn’t my teachers’ or the dean’s fault that this happened. They were just as blindsided as we were, and as the heads of the departments who rely on physical interaction as a teaching tool just as much as the actual course load, I commend them on having us receive any information at all.

I’m just not suited for an entirely online schedule. I specifically chose the pre-BFA Musical Theatre track because I love the work I do with other people. I love the feeling of battling wits with a scene partner, figuring out a line in solfege with my group or finding a common flow with the other dancers in a particularly exciting combination. I’m not getting the same education online without that human element.

It’s a first-world problem, even just a personal problem at this point. I am, just like everyone else, worried about getting COVID-19, because I don’t want to die and I don’t want my elderly parents or immunocompromised friends to die either. I understand why it’s important to stay inside, and I’ve been hunkered down as much as possible to ensure the spread of this disease is slowed even just a little.

Being stuck inside, though, it makes my frustrations come to the surface. They’re the only things I can think about. It does frustrate me to pay for in-person classes while taking online classes.

And what kills me is I know it frustrates my teachers, too. Everyone’s doing the best they can to deliver the same quality of classes as before, but it’s just not possible. My teachers all



COURTESY OF PIXABAY

have very creative solutions that I really appreciate. My music theory class is now a filmed, Hogwarts-themed lecture with an accompanying Spotify playlist full of examples. My dance class has us learning choreography from famous pop music videos such as “Hit Me Baby One More Time” by Britney Spears and “Countdown” by Beyoncé. My acting class lets us exercise our online video auditions, an increasingly popular real-world audition style.

I truly appreciate the effort, but it’s not the same. When my due date for my class is a month from now, who’s gonna stop me from bingeing all eight Harry Potter movies in a day? I tried at first to make my life the same as possible. I got up every morning at eight, showered by nine and was working on online classes at ten. But as soon as the luxuries provided by home started to kick in, I knew I was too far gone.

I miss the exercise and sunlight provided by walking to class. I miss the conversations with friends as we waited for our lecture to begin. But most of all, I miss the feeling of doing something worthwhile. I am proud and understanding of how the University of Montana and our arts departments responded to this crisis, but when the days start to go by in a blur, I find it difficult not to miss the way things used to be.



Building Youth Capacity through Basketball

Extended application deadline: April 28

Travel on a **fully-funded** two-way exchange, sponsored by the U.S. Department of State to **Honduras, August 6-19, 2020**. High school, university students, and adults.

Apply at: umt.edu/mansfield

This exchange will only be held when the global health situation is deemed to be safe. The Mansfield Center and the U.S. Department of State will continue to assess these August dates and will postpone to a later date if needed. If you are interested in this exchange, please apply now with the knowledge that the exchange may occur later than August 2020.



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MANSFIELD CENTER



Missoula band shines on “Last Rain of the Summer”



MEGHAN JONAS
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We might not be able to go kick our heels up in groups right now, but Jackson Holte and the Highway Patrol are making sure we'll have our practice for when we can.

The Missoula band's second album "Last Rain of the Summer" is a folksy paradise. It makes you want to sing and to dance and to fall in love against the backdrop of Aspen groves. This could be a hiking record or a dancing record or a sitting at home record.

It starts off sounding harder than typical folk or country. Deep bass and drums compete with lead singer Jackson Holte's deep, gravelly voice. Despite the heaviness of the instrumentals and vocals, it transitions into a surprisingly light album, complete with love songs and harmonicas (our favorites).

Holte's voice is close to breaking on "Death Knell Blues," and he conveys a certain type of frantic urgency when he sings, "If you get to heaven before I do, don't forget to tell them who sent you." It's eerie without feeling threatening.

Holte's voice is rapid on "Fast Lane West," reminiscent of Johnny Cash's "Boy Named Sue" and other fast-talking country singers from the near past. It's rapid-fire, making listeners wonder how Holte can sing so damn fast. On "John Henry's Hammer," his voice

is grinding. Listeners can hear the rawness of Holte's vocals that come straight from his chest.

This kind of hubbub matches up with the dive bar grunge style of the music. "Last Rain of the Summer" is something you would hear in your local brewery, but it's also something you could swing dance to at a barn party.

It's hard to stick a label on Jackson Holte and the Highway Patrol. It's folk, but it's also blues. And country. And rock. Influences from those genres bleed into each other until you've got a record that's something else entirely.

Tyson Gerhardt, Marko Capoferri and Brian Tremper on guitar, bass and vocals, respectively, give a fullness to the record that couldn't come with just Holte's vocals, no matter how good they are. The tracks don't sound like four musicians fighting for a moment in the spotlight; they sound like they just want to make good music. Together.

"Gethsemane" rounds out the album as a beautiful love song listeners don't expect. Suddenly the harshness of the previous tracks is gone and replaced with a raw sweetness. It feels like coming home from that dive bar and going straight into the arms of someone you love. We would have whiplash if this song wasn't so tender.

Listening to this record makes us feel tough.

‘Coffee & Kareem’ offers no laughs in a time where we need laughs the most



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"It's not hard to make people cry. Kill a dog."

"The 40-Year-Old Virgin" director Judd Apatow's statement in an interview for Vulture may have been extreme, but it demonstrated an important point: comedy is one of the most difficult film genres to pull off successfully.

Indeed, it's much easier to forgive a drama that doesn't make you cry than a comedy that doesn't make you laugh. Joke telling is a convoluted art form, one that's not given the respect it deserves, especially in our current climate. But more on that later.

Perhaps the challenge is why most movies trying to get a laugh these past few years have been awful. As other genres, like superhero and horror, continue to evolve, comedy continues to regress.

Enter "Coffee & Kareem." Released exclusively on Netflix on April 3, it crosses off every box on the bad comedy checklist: lackluster attempts at humor, boring action scenes and an attitude that says, "this is just mindless entertainment. We don't have to try."

Police officer James Coffee (Ed Helms) is having trouble connecting with his girlfriend's son, Kareem Manning (Terrence Little Gardenhigh). When Kareem tries to get rid of his potential stepdad, they end up in the middle of a drug cartel's latest sale.

With targets on their backs, the two are forced to team up and stop the crime.

And they're going to need a lot of repetitive slapstick and sex jokes that would make a seventh-grader roll his eyes to do that.

The mean spirited tone of "Coffee & Kareem" does this "humor" no favors. Both of the protagonists treat each other horribly throughout the film, to the point where I didn't want them to become friends by the inevitable happy ending.

Not that they're any more tolerable on their own. Kareem's smack talk and James' dad jokes get old the minute they start.

It's only during the manic climax, when Betty Gilpin gets to shine as the deranged Detective Watts, that director Michael Dowse ("Stuber") decides the movie should at least be kind of funny.

Why has laziness become the norm with comedies? When will the genre I love prove its worth to a movie viewing population that doesn't hold it to the same level of respect as tear-jerkers?

We can't underestimate the power of laughter. It's especially important in a COVID-19 world, where all we need to do to see grief and suffering is check our phones. We can't expect to grin and bear it when we can't even grin.

So, if you're looking for a picker-upper this month, go watch "Superbad" or "Tropic Thunder." Or any of the other great comedies of yore. If "Coffee & Kareem" is any indication, there won't be more "greats" anytime soon.

Bass master Thundercat doesn't question what life has to offer in "It Is What It Is"

ALEX MILLER
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Thundercat wants you to know that somebody hurt him, but he has not given up on love. Stephen Bruner, aka Thundercat, offers so much more than a broken heart on his fourth studio album, "It Is What It Is."

The virtuoso bassist, a member of the new school of jazz musicians alongside Kamasi Washington and Flying Lotus, has a storied career. His major break came while playing with legendary thrash punk band Suicidal Tendencies in the early 2000s, but his most recent successes have come from his collaboration with Kendrick Lamar on Lamar's 2015 rap-jazz fusion epic "To Pimp a Butterfly."

The production of the album was handled by both Bruner and Flying Lotus, with much of the musical focus being on Bruner's extraordinary bass playing. Sonically, there is not much on the album that looks like a risk. Instead, it is a doubling down of Bruner's funky jazz. But that does not mean that this album lacks any forward motion.

"It Is What It Is" is an album full of lyrical growth. Bruner's past albums have had a more stream of consciousness approach to lyrics, especially 2017's "Drunk." "I'm gonna eat so much fish I think I'm gonna be sick, gonna blow all my cash on anime," he sings in "Tokyo."

That can still be found on this album, especially in "Dragonball Durag." Perhaps the best line of the 15-track effort is uttered over Bruner's bouncy and sultry bassline and the simple boom-bap drum beat that thumps throughout the song. "I may be covered in cat hair, but I still smell good. Baby let me know, how do I look in my durag?" You look great, Thundercat.

Moments of silliness aside, Bruner shows a capability to address real pain and loss. "Fair Chance," featuring Ty Dolla \$ign and living meme Lil B, is a reflection on the loss of longtime friend and collaborator Mac Miller.

Bruner and Miller worked together on Miller's 2014 mixtape "Faces," with the bassist providing production on the track "55." Miller then provided vocals on "Hi," from "Drunk." Bruner returned the favor and played bass on "What's the Use?" from Miller's "Swimming." Miller's Tiny Desk performance, one of his last before his untimely death in

September 2018, featured Bruner on bass. "Fair Chance," is held together by a simple drum loop and arpeggiated bass lines from Bruner, using the highest ranges of his custom six-string bass. "I keep holdin' you down, even though you're not around," Bruner sings with a lush and spacey vocal effect.

Ty Dolla \$ign borrows lyrics straight from Miller's "Hurt Feelings," singing in autotune, "Keep my head above water, my eyes gettin' bigger, the world gettin' smaller, I been gettin' richer, only made me crazy, mama said I'm different, since I was a baby."

The love for Miller continues on the title track for "It Is What It Is." The song, which again focuses on Bruner's bass wizardry, is a slow-paced dirge. "When I sit back and reflect, from a broken heart, sometimes there's regret, it is what it is," Bruner sings.

But this is a two-parter. The second half is kicked off by Bruner calling "Hey Mac," into the musical ether. Miller responds with "Whoa," a sample of one of his famous ad-libs. What this song manages to do with its tone and lyrical content really encapsulates what the album is about.

Bruner delivers a cohesive effort that looks at life with all of its ups and downs. From love lost to death, to buying a new fancy grill on top of the California hills, Bruner shows that his view of life is not one-dimensional. It is fun, it is sad and it is whole. He understands that sometimes you can't change things, and that "It Is What It Is," is the best salve for the hardest moments in life.



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Solo Ride series gets Missoulians outside amid home order

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Members of the club Thursday Night Ride are dedicated to biking, skiing and hiking together every Thursday in Missoula. But they can't meet due to social distancing rules, so members created a new weekly series to keep people active.

Montana Gov. Steve Bullock enacted a stay at home order March 26 that affected over 1 million state residents. While the order encouraged people to stay home as much as possible, it permitted Montanans to recreate on public lands.

Before the stay at home order, the group originally sent out weekly meeting spots for rides. But as cases started to mount in Montana, organizer Aaron Baldwin changed the program.

"Sending out group ride announcements would be irresponsible and undermine the extraordinary measures our schools and small business are taking," Baldwin said. "Instead of just shutting the group down, I decided to put out a route each week that people could ride solo."

Baldwin implemented three new rules for the ride. He asked that all riders follow CDC social distancing guidelines, he requested that riders complete one bike ride per week and he asked that riders interested in being on the group's leaderboard send him a message over TNR's Facebook page or email.

"The leaderboard is just to help motivate people to get outside and exercise during this stressful time and give people a sense of being part of the group even if they have to ride alone," Baldwin said.

The group's first ride featured 21 riders who tracked and reported their times. Baldwin sends a weekly email to over 200 people.

Alden H. Wright, a retired professor of computer science at the University of Montana, said the move to biking alone has been easier for him.

"I am two weeks away from my 78th birthday, and I was about to quit riding with the group because I can't keep up," said Wright. "Since there is no pressure to keep up with a group, I can walk when I need to."

Wright has biked for 73 years of his life, and mountain biked with TNR since 2004. He also does research and teaches about the evolution of technology at UM. While the trail is isolated, and Wright says he is not at his peak fitness, he enjoys his time biking.

"These virtual rides have been a great way to continue participating," said Wright.

In addition to implementing the new online leaderboard, Baldwin considered adding optional trail segments and requesting that riders take pictures at particular locations.

TNR explores mountain biking in the Missoula area. The group tried to select less-traveled trails to avoid large crowds that have been spotted around the city's outdoor spaces.

Club members have biked the Sound of Music and Sidewinder trails, which are located in the seasonal North Jumbo zone. During the first couple of weeks after the city opens them, Baldwin said Missoulians flock to these trails to look at wildflowers.

"I intend to be even more mindful of crowds and busy areas with the Solo Ride Series," said Baldwin. "The whole point is to avoid having a big group gathering together."

Trails chosen are often long and involve some technical terrain. Solo ride organizers often pre-check trails to make sure they are dry and nothing is blocking a path.

The week's trail, with a trail map and participant photos, is sent out Wednesdays.



An information post sits alongside the Crazy Canyon trail. The trail system is part of the Pattee Canyon Recreation area Southeast of the Missoula city limits. **GRIFFIN SMITH | MONTANA KAIMIN**



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