

MONTANA KAIMIN

The Haunting of Jeannette Rankin Hall

Fresh-faced reporters. A paranormal professional. The hunt is on.

Story by Addie Slanger

Photos by Kennedy Delap



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The Montana Kaimin is a weekly independent student newspaper at the University of Montana. The Kaimin office and the University of Montana are located on land originally inhabited by the Salish People. Kaimin is a derivative of a Salish language word, "Qe'ymin," that is pronounced kay-MEEN and means "book," "message" or "paper that brings news."

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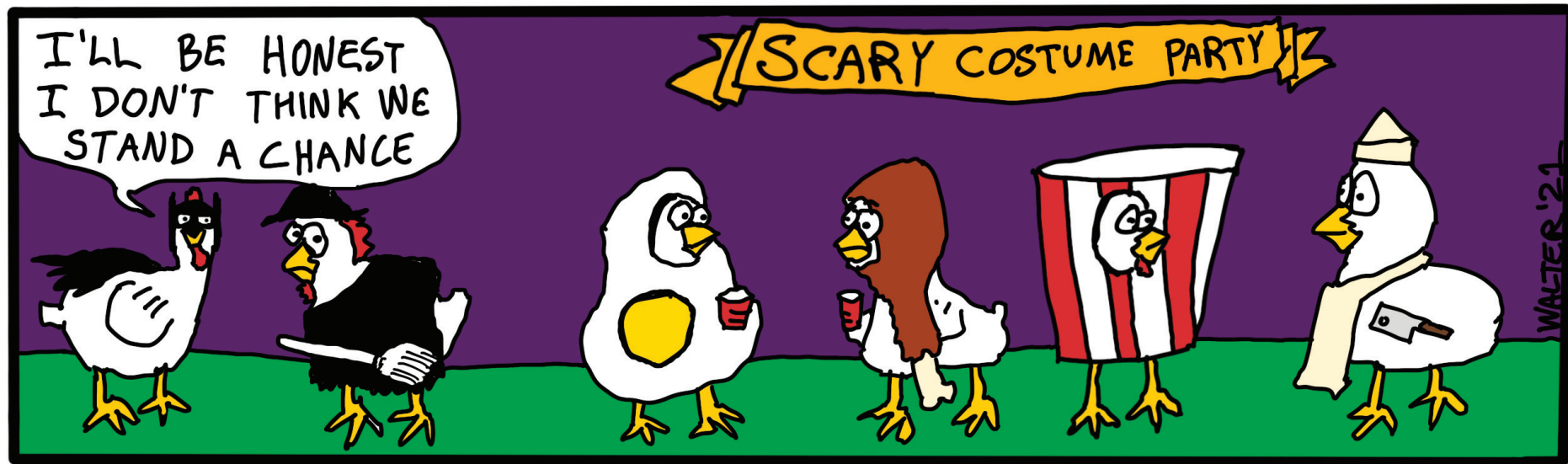


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WALTER MEDCRAFT | MONTANA KAIMIN

Nothing's scarier than apathy

With all the spookiness surrounding Halloween, there's something possibly even more frightening coming up: Election Day. It's right around the corner... Missoula's municipal general election is happening on Nov. 2 this year.

Politics can be scary and intimidating, and it can be hard to know the issues and candidates you're voting for — especially as college students, when some of us have only been living in Missoula for a short two months' time.

But we here at the Kaimin want all of you to make sure your voices are heard on this year's ballot. Voting in a college town as college students is so important, because nobody else is voting with college students — and the issues we care about — in mind.

Last year, Montana broke state records with our civic participation. The state had 81% voter turnout, and Missoula County saw 80% voter turnout in the 2020 election, according to the Secretary of State's website.

We understand this year's Missoula city election might not have the high-profile status of last year's chaotic presidential, senatorial and gubernatorial races. But that doesn't mean the issues on the ballot don't have important consequences. In fact, the local election has even more impact on our day-to-day lives than what's going on nationally, or even statewide.

On the ballot this year, we get to select Missoula's next mayor, the city council representative for our respective wards and municipal judges. Basically, these are all the people who make the big decisions about how our city is going to run.

For students living in the dorms, the University and University district are located in Ward 3, where Daniel Carlino and Dori Gilels are running for city council. Carlino is an alumnus of UM.

ROAM Student Living, another common spot where students reside, is in Ward 1, which also spans into East Missoula. Those of you in this area are voting between Jane M. Vanfossen and Jennifer Savage for your city council member.

And the University Villages and Lewis and Clark apartments are both located in Ward 4. Students in these spots are looking at either Alan C. Ault or Mike Nugent as choices for city council.

Not to mention we have something bigger to worry about — whether or not we're going to be taxed for our weed. If you don't want to pay extra for your devil's lettuce (or if you want to pay extra so our city can

have more funding), you better make sure your voice is heard.

Seriously though, as college students, we have to watch out for our own best interests. The Kaimin's editorial board thinks the best way to do that is to be certain we're registered to vote and we're participating in our democracy.

If you want to see the status of your voter registration, you can check out the state's My Voter Page at <https://app.mt.gov/voterinfo/>.

And if we didn't mention the spot where you live and you want to see what ward you're in, Missoula has an interactive elections map too, available here: <https://gis.missoulacounty.us/elections/findmyward/>

Even though politics might feel spooky to you, we at the Kaimin hope you take the time to make your voice heard by voting in this year's city-wide elections on Nov. 2. There's nothing scarier than apathy, after all.

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



UNIVERSITY OF MONTANA SCHOOL OF JOURNALISM

www.jour.umt.edu

Feature Photo: Sweat, tears and glory



Cross-country runner Odessa Zentz, left, from Helena High collapses and has a moment to herself next to other top high school runners after completing the AA girls individual state cross country competition on Oct. 23 at the University of Montana Golf Course. After an intense and grueling race filled with sweat and tears, 12th grader Zentz pushed herself to the limit on the track and finished the race in eight place with a time of 19:52.64. Last Saturday, more than 300 high school students from as far as Miles City came to Missoula to compete at the 58th MHS State Cross-Country Meet where records were set and trophies were won. ANTONIO IBARRA | MONTANA KAIMIN

SUDOKU

Difficulty: Medium

Edited by Margie E. Burke

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

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

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Briefs: Blood battles, new law deans and a chilly forecast

Cat-Griz Blood Battle

The annual Cat-Griz Blood Battle will commence next week amid a national blood shortage emergency, according to an American Red Cross of Montana news release. Blood is in high demand as COVID-19 cases surge and supply is at its lowest fall levels since 2015.

The University of Montana and Montana State University face off each year to see which fans will donate more blood in the month leading up to the long-awaited Brawl of the Wild football game.

There are five drives scheduled in Missoula: Nov. 5, 9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. at UM's school of pharmacy, Nov. 10, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the Missoula Country fairsgrounds, Nov. 11, 10 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. at 2401 N. Reserve St and Nov. 16, 11 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. and Nov. 17, 10 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. at the UC Ballroom. Griz fans can schedule an appointment for one of the drives by going to RedCrossBlood.org and searching the code "GRIZCATCHALLENGE."

"If you've never donated before, we urge you to raise your hand, roll up your sleeve and be someone's lifeline," Montana's Red Cross account manager and organizer of Missoula's blood drives Alexandria Harris said in the news release. "There's no better feeling than knowing you're helping save a life." (Mazana Boerboom)

COVID-19 Update

The Missoula City-County Health Department reported eight new UM-affiliated COVID-19 cases over the weekend, contributing to 123 total active cases as of Monday. The University has consistently had more than 100 cases for the month of October.

Countywide, there were 2,770 cases Monday, the tip of a three-week spike plaguing the region. More than 30 county residents have died from COVID-19 in October, the deadliest month of the pandemic to date.

"Things have been consistently hard for hospitals as resources are strained," Missoula County Information Officer Hayley Devlin said. "Overall, the hospitalization rate has been too high for too long."

Young people have continued to lead age groups in caseload, with 22.6% of all positive cases between those 20-29. That age group is also the least fully vaccinated among adults, at just 49%.

With the high case rate, the health department adjusted its services for contact tracing to inform positive cases and their close contacts via text. The department said in a re-

lease the move should streamline the system to reach all close contacts within 24 hours of someone testing positive for COVID-19. The Curry Health Center said this change will not effect how it reaches students who get a test. (Griffen Smith)

Experts forecast cold and snowy winter

Weather forecasters with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration released a long-term weather outlook last week, highlighting Montana and the Pacific Northwest with cooler temperatures and increased chance for rain and snow.

"Consistent with typical La Niña conditions during winter months, we anticipate below-normal temperatures along portions of the northern tier of the U.S. while much of the South experiences above-normal temperatures," said Jon Gottschalk, chief of operational prediction at NOAA's Climate Prediction Center.

La Niña, an oceanic and atmospheric phenomenon that forms in the Pacific Ocean, also developed in Fall 2020, but experts say this fall's "double dip" formation will likely

be more established. The report is formed on trends and is not a detailed weather forecast.

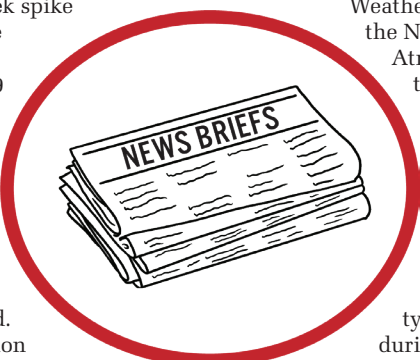
The Missoula area will cool down over the next week with a new front replacing rain with partially cloudy weather. Highs will be in the upper 40s to mid 50s, and lows in the mid 20s. (GS)

New law school leadership

Just weeks after the dean and associate dean of students at the Alexander Blewett III School of Law stepped down, three professors replaced the duo to run the only law school in the state, according to an email sent to faculty, staff, administration and students in the law school.

Former leadership Paul Kirgis and Sally Weaver resigned after students rallied for their resignation in the wake of a Daily Montanan article saying the two discouraged students from reporting sexual assault and harassment to UM's Title IX office.

The new acting deans, who started on Monday Oct. 25, are Monte Mills, Sara Rinfret and Cathay Y. N. Smith. Mills is a professor at the law school and the co-director of the Margery Hunter Brown Indian Law Clinic. Rinfret is the director of the Master of Public Administration program and teaches a variety of courses on policy. Smith is on the board of directors for the Missoula Art Museum and teaches law courses on intellectual property. (MB)



Blotter: Kushed crash, Grizzly graffiti and a stolen guitar

GRACE CARR

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Between Oct. 14 and 20, the University of Montana Police Department reported 12 crimes on and around campus. The most common crime of the week was disorderly conduct — a nice change from the usual theft. And we have a surprise for our regular readers: no bike thefts reported this week! Maybe thieves are feeling that seasonal depression too.

FRIDAY 10/15: FAILED HIT-AND-RUN

What's worse than leaving the scene of a hit-and-run accident? Committing the crime in front of a campus police officer. The officer stopped a vehicle that left the scene of a crash on Arthur Avenue in front of Jesse Hall. The driver had recently smoked marijuana, triggering a drug recognition evaluator from the Missoula Police Department to take over

the scene. According to UM's crime log, city police officers arrested the dazed driver. Looks like someone picked up the tails side of an unlucky penny.

SATURDAY 10/16: GAME-DAY GRAFFITI

As Missoulians packed into Washington-Grizzly Stadium decked out in Griz gear, others "celebrated" the football team with a little spray paint. The outline of a schlong was painted on the stadium's east side retaining wall, with various words and symbols UMPD said were unreadable. The graffiti was painted over just in time for the tailgating crowds. My sincerest apologies to those who missed seeing such an interesting piece of artwork.



SATURDAY 10/16: GAME-DAY GLADIATORS

Things are always getting heated between viewers in Montana football games, but tensions snapped when a younger kid slapped an older gentleman in the fourth quarter of the Sacramento State game. A brawl in the stands between six or seven people broke out before security stopped them. No charges were pressed by either party, and there were no significant injuries. Once again, for those who follow @UMBarStool, you might have gotten a glimpse of the action if you missed the dramatic event in person.

TUESDAY 10/19: SHOW-STOPPING THEFT

While there may not be any bike thefts for you this week, there was one theft from a motor vehicle. Though many valuable items in the car were not taken, the culprits swiped a guitar and amp out of Parking Lot H. Talk about a party stopper...

WEDNESDAY 10/20: CONCESSION MISHAP

On Oct. 20, a private vendor at the football game reported to UMPD they could not account for a little over \$1,000. The vendors believe the money was stolen, as the amount was too large to be justified as an accounting error. There is no investigation at this time because the vendors reported the incident for documentation purposes. I'm not sure who these vendors are, but they seem pretty calm about missing a grand in cash. I wish I had that attitude during midterms.

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		28	29			30	31	32	
33			34					35				
36				37				38				
39				40				41				
42				43				44				
		45				46		47				
48	49	50			51	52				53	54	
55					56			57				
58					59			60				
61					62			63				

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ACROSS

- 1 Spelunking site
- 5 Fine things?
- 9 One getting hailed

- 14 "Family Ties" role
- 15 Was clad in
- 16 Accustom (to)
- 17 Fruity pastry
- 18 Site of a famed library
- 20 Intestines
- 22 Wild child
- 23 Vane direction
- 24 Dog command
- 25 Poetic sphere
- 27 Diacritical mark
- 30 Track transaction
- 33 Newsstand purchase
- 35 Bequeath
- 36 Put into law
- 37 ___ and vigor
- 38 Kind of candle
- 39 Part of APR
- 40 Bird watcher's accessory
- 42 Brewed drink
- 43 Extended period of time
- 44 Sandwich bread
- 45 DeSoto's partner on "Emergency"
- 46 Staff symbol
- 48 Remove by cutting
- 51 "The Silence of the Lambs" surname
- 55 Facial mark
- 57 Ruse anagram
- 58 Flat-bottom boat
- 59 Male protagonist
- 60 Newborn's need
- 61 Venomous snake

- 62 Pitcher
- 63 More than suspect

DOWN

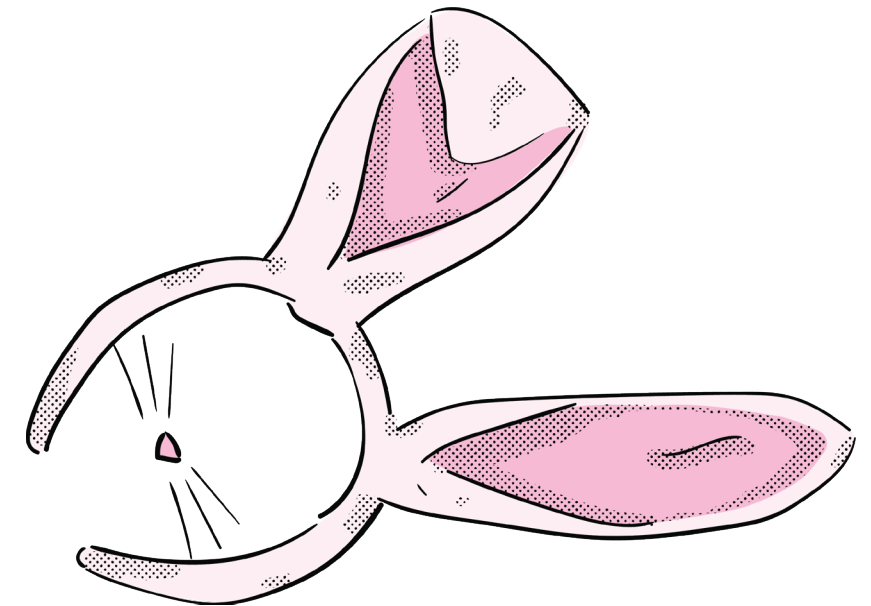
- 1 Leo's co-star in "The Aviator"
- 2 Country crooner Jackson
- 3 Having a backbone
- 4 Background actor
- 5 Sat up for
- 6 Winning streak
- 7 Uno, dos, ___
- 8 Reason for an "R" rating
- 9 Hollywood industry
- 10 Agassi of tennis
- 11 1804 duel winner
- 12 Vivacity
- 13 Four quarters
- 19 Midway, for one
- 21 Fancy tie
- 24 Noisy ruckus
- 25 "Madame Butterfly", for one

- 26 Kidney-related
- 28 Heavenly
- 29 Cake covering
- 30 Supported by both sides, in politics
- 31 Day or thing starter
- 32 Short-winded
- 34 Curling surface
- 35 1942 film, "For Me and My ___"
- 38 Piano technician
- 40 Par plus one
- 41 Museum official
- 43 Not the former
- 45 Measuring instrument
- 47 Made a red-faced exit
- 48 Palindromic pop group
- 49 Abacus piece
- 50 Frying medium
- 51 Spit out
- 52 Ripped
- 53 Verne's captain
- 54 Sprang up
- 56 Seashell seller

Answers to Last Week's Crossword:

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

Happy Horo-ween: What will you be this spooky season?



OLIVIA SWANT-JOHNSON | MONTANA KAIMIN

CLARISE LARSON

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To slut or not to slut? That is the question because IT'S SPOOKY SEASON! A time to dress to impress, to pretend, to have fun, but most of all to be a sexy bitch. !ATTENTION! to all the hoes out there: It's time to get your slut on, or off — whatever your vibe is. But what will you be? Let's find out.

SCORPIO (OCT. 23-NOV. 21): You're in a morph suit, but nobody knows it's you so you're just awkwardly standing there and everyone can see the wine stain on your mouth and sweat mark on your ass.

SAGITTARIUS (NOV. 22-DEC. 22): You're not like other girls. You ditched the typical sexy costume every bitch wears and went for something classy: Mike Wazowski. The boy of your dream has no chance when you give him the "eye."

CAPRICORN (DEC. 23-JAN. 19): You might be cool, but you're not very smart, no cap. That is why halfway through the night your blow-up sumo suits' fan died and now you're just standing around in its deflated carcass looking like a buffoon.

AQUARIUS (JAN. 20-FEB. 18): You're so... deep. Nobody understands your costume's reference to America's toxic political climate and lack of resources for minorities and people with disabilities... WE LIVE IN A SOCIETY. Go drink your homemade cider in the corner.

PISCES (FEB. 19-MARCH 20): You dressed up as Chewbacca and Han Solo with that person you like, but when you go to the party they're actually dressed as pepper to Paisleigh's salt. #cryingintheclub. Fuck you Paisleigh and your mom.

ARIES (MARCH 21-APRIL 19): You might have a halo above your head tonight, but everyone knows after three shots, you're the devil incarnate. UMPD

stands NO CHANCE against you and your half empty bottle of blue raspberry Svedka.

TAURUS (APRIL 20-MAY 20): Shit, your seashell bra might break if you're out on the streets trick-or-treating, and the mermaid tail keeps you stuck on the couch of this lame house party, fending off the dude who coincidentally dressed up as Poseidon.

GEMINI (MAY 21-JUNE 20): You and Brittney dressed up as sexy beat-up boxers, and shit, it was a wild night. The next morning when you go to wipe off those fake bruises, it turns out you ACTUALLY have black eyes and are now featured on Barstool as one of the "Top 10 knockouts of all time." WWE who?

CANCER (JUNE 21-JULY 22): You might be too broke to buy a costume, but your baby nephew's XS red crayon fit matched with some fishnet tights is enough to get Chad's attention and that's all that matters. You OWN that crayon, YES SIR.

LEO (JULY 23-AUG. 22): We're catching the vibe that you tried every "slutty" costume in the costume store and that still wasn't sexy enough for you... Fantasy for Adults it is! Yes, in your obsession to be the Sexiest Of Them All™, you decided on a full leather catsuit so small you have to cut it off the next day. Have fun with that crotch rash in the morning. <3

VIRGO (AUG. 23-SEP. 22): You don't have a costume, you're at home with your cats and a full bucket of candy because what child would go trick or treating in a multistory school apartment complex? Someone's gotta eat that candy though.

LIBRA (SEP. 23-OCT. 22): Guyyys I spilled beer on my bunny onesie :(UGH! Someone come with me to the bathroom, I have to change or my yeast infection might get worse. :(

A tale of two Missoulas: Previewing the race for mayor

JACOB OWENS
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With less than a week until the Nov. 2 local election, Missoula's two mayoral candidates are making their final pitches to voters, which pit the experience of incumbency against calls for more fiscal responsibility.

The stage is set between current Mayor John Engen, a fourth-term incumbent, and Jacob Elder, a former Marine and student at UM's School of Law, after the two received the most votes during a four-candidate primary in September. Ballots for the mail-only election were sent out Oct. 13 for a race featuring candidates who differ in their levels of political experience and perspective on the quality of life in Missoula.

Elder, who has never held public office before, said it's hard for young people and families to afford rent and buy homes in Missoula. He said one way he'd improve housing would be speeding up building-permit approval.

"So in two to three months, we'll say, 'Look, we have three months to give out 'X' amount of permits, let's make it happen,'" Elder said. "Now, if the planning department can't make it happen, then we'll have to call and talk about how we can improve our services."

Elder said homelessness, crime and rising

housing costs are problems the city needs to address. He added Missoula's quality of life has not improved as the city's budget and number of employees increased.

Engen, Missoula's longest-serving mayor, said in candidate forums that Elder has portrayed Missoula as a city businesses avoid and where people do not live because of high taxes and rising crime.

"We are still an attractive place to live, still a place that has a bright future," Engen said. "I'm not hearing that from my opponent."

Engen said Missoula's thriving, but acknowledged some in the community are struggling.

The current mayor said Missoula will have the most affordable housing units in the state in two years because of existing policies like the affordable housing trust fund and land banking, which is when the city acquires land and then works with developers to create housing.

He said the city is also working on reforming its building codes, a process he estimated will take two years. Meanwhile, Engen said his administration's efforts include bringing proposals to the city council to make development easier.

"We're not just plodding away and not making change as necessary, when we see the opportunity," he said.

Engen said he's proud of efforts like the city acquiring ownership of the municipal water system in 2017, the progress the city made on issues like homelessness and the city's response to sexual assault investigations into the city and the University of Montana.

The University of Montana's Alexander Blewett III School of Law recently came under public scrutiny for allegations brought forth in a Daily Montanan article in September. The piece included allegations from students that Dean Paul Kirgis and Sally Weaver, the associate dean of students at the law school, discouraged students from reporting sexual harassment and assault to the University of Montana's Title IX office. Kirgis and Weaver resigned from their leadership roles at the school in October.

The sexual assault allegations in the Daily Montanan included multiple against Elder.

Elder said he doesn't know the motivations of the accusations, but said "the timing of all this is fascinating."

"None of these things that have been said about me [have] an inkling of truth to [them]," he said. "So the question I have is, 'Where do I go to get back my character?'"

Elder said he'd be nonpartisan as mayor. He described himself as "fiscally responsible and conservative" and "socially inclusive." Elder said his positions have not changed on issues like Black Lives Matter. He said he supports the movement, but not the organization.

Engen, who's endorsed by the Missoula County Democratic Party, said he has a record

of supporting minority groups and criminal justice reform.

On the issue of climate change, both candidates cited plans to address carbon emissions.

Elder said climate change is important to him as a soon-to-be dad. He said his administration will work with experts to create a plan to address climate change in Missoula. He said he'll encourage a switch from fossil fuels to renewable energy like solar panels on homes.

Engen said he's prioritized climate change with efforts like planting 92,000 poplar trees to absorb carbon at the city's wastewater treatment facility and the city's "Energy Conservation and Climate Action Plan." One of the plan's goals is a carbon neutral Missoula by 2025.

Elder said politics should not be a career. He said if elected he'd hope to address the city's issues in two terms and move on to practice law.

Engen said he has no intention to serve for life, but his priority right now is the current race.

"I don't care whether you serve for four years or 50 years, if you're effective, if you are thoughtful, if you are not cynical and you continue to have fire in your belly to serve, you're doing the right thing," Engen said. "It's when any of those parts go missing that I think you need to take a long look at whether your service is still viable."

Ballots must be returned to the Missoula County Elections Office by 8 p.m. on Nov. 2.



Mayor John Engen, a fourth-term incumbent and Missoula native, is currently the longest-serving mayor of the Garden City. Engen was first elected to the position in 2006. JOHN ENGEN MAYORAL CAMPAIGN | CONTRIBUTED



Jacob Elder, a former Marine and law school student at the University of Montana, is running for Missoula mayor in the upcoming local elections. ANTONIO IBARRA | MONTANA KAIMIN

UM admissions prioritizes digital outreach in new recruitment strategy

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As the University of Montana saw its first enrollment increase in 10 years, campus-wide efforts by the Office of Admissions and the vice president of enrollment management are looking to continue the growth trend through a remodeled recruitment system.

By the end of next year, the University plans to implement paid campus tour guide jobs, increase online searches for students and boost UM's public image among potential students. The changes are the first steps in a four-phase plan, set to be complete in the next four years.

"The recent history of UM is that the search efforts for potential students were almost minimal," John Massena, director of admissions, said. "We are trying to find students as soon as possible in their college search and establish a good relationship with them."

UM struggled to reach students online because of glitches on the recruitment website and outreach emails landing in spam folders, according to previous reporting by the Kaimin. But after website improvements in 2020 and new hires by UM, enrollment workers said increased campus engagement and a deeper focus on reaching students online is making the process more efficient.

Mary Kreta, the associate vice president for enrollment management, started last fall after the departure of Cathy Cole, who

managed enrollment and communications at UM. Cole has since filed a sex-based discrimination lawsuit against UM.

Kreta, whose focus is solely on the University's recruitment, admissions and enrollment, said the process has become digitally streamlined. She also holds monthly meetings with faculty and staff to share the department's progress and answer questions.

Since her start last year, and Massena's start two months ago, the University saw its largest freshman class in three years, powered by a strong increase of Western Undergraduate Exchange program students and increased retention.

"We are seeing a lot of dramatic changes in the last year," Kreta said. "Traditionally the office hosted some days to come to UM, tour and go home. But there is so much more we can do."

She pointed to a more aggressive name-buying strategy, which is when a university purchases potential student data through a vendor, like The College Board. UM began purchasing every available prospective Montana-based student's name last fall.

Massena said UM also purchases student information in targeted areas around the country, many of which center around pockets of schools in western states. The tactic is known as "Geofencing," which Massena said is an ethical way to reach students online.

Once a student is contacted, the University sends information based on how the stu-



Using her skills from four years of advocate experience and tour guiding, Roni Hecker, UM Advocates coordinator, leads a tour of about 20 people around the University grounds. Hecker said she usually does an average of three tours a week during the semester. RIDLEY HUDSON | MONTANA KAIMIN

dent responds. Kreta said UM also improved its levels of communication with interested students using videos, text messages and phone calls.

UM moved away from handwritten notes on a large scale, a former strategy used by Cole. Kreta said the University encourages handwritten notes from faculty members and admissions counselors after fairs and student visits.

Large spreadsheets of email progressions lie on Kreta's office desk, alongside newly made booklets and acceptance packets that will be mailed to students in the winter. One way the office hopes to encourage more students to attend is by combining recruitment with financial aid information.

"Sending a student information on how to file a FAFSA seems much more effective than emailing them the same details on why they should come to UM, especially how important financial aid is to Montanans," Kreta said.

Another change to the recruitment strategy is a new campus tour system that pays current students to walk potential students around campus, rather than volunteers from the UM Advocates program. Kreta said the new paid positions would give guides compensation for their time, as the tour program will likely expand to visit specific departments and professors.

Roni Hecker, Advocates coordinator and four-year tour guide, said she does an average of three tours a week during the semester. On Oct. 20, Hecker led four families — all from out of state — from the recently remodeled Gilkey building to explore campus.

"Nothing is better than seeing someone's reaction to a place here for the first time," Hecker said.

While UM is beefing up its strategy, the office is still struggling to compete monetarily with Montana State University.

Dave Kuntz, director of communications at UM, said MSU has more resources through its long-term enrollment boost. In fall 2021, the Bozeman school brought in its largest freshman class ever at 3,900 new students, giving MSU a total underclassmen count of 14,668.

Kuntz said the admissions department did see an increase in funding in the last year, allowing for more spending on Kreta's and Massena's new tactics. Massena said he was not at liberty to release the department's overall budget.

"Supporting students is at the center of our recruitment strategies," Kreta said. "We examined what students need, best practices and data to develop tactics that supported them through the college selection process while highlighting why UM is a great choice."

The Haunting of Jeannette Rankin Hall

When the spirits call, the Kaimin answers

Story by Addie Slinger

Photos by Kennedy Delap



Kaimin Editor-in-Chief Addie Slinger sets a cat toy, which lights up at the slightest disturbance from its surroundings, in the middle of a doorway previously showing signs of paranormal activity.

JENN Keintz wore two bracelets. One looped around her wrist multiple times, stacks and stacks of black obsidian. The beads were meant to calm and soothe. On top of it was a charm bracelet that any “Supernatural” fan would recognize as merchandise from the TV show. A pentagram pendant, otherwise known as a demon trap, hung loosely off her wrist.

The bracelets clicked together softly as she sat criss-cross on the floor of the Montana Kaimin office, unloading her equipment. There were dowsing rods, electromagnetic field (EMF) detectors, a Radiating Electro-Magnetism (EMF) Pod, a music box motion detector, and other tools like light-up cat toys, pendants and crystals.

As she unpacked the two bulky bags, the teacher-by-day, paranormal-investigator-by-night explained each gadget, patiently detailing their functions. It was clear to see how her day job informed her paranormal work.

We — the Kaimin Paranormal Investigative Team (KPIT) — were getting ready to go ghost hunting in one of the most haunted buildings on campus: Jeannette Rankin Hall. Built in 1908, the hall clocks in as the fifth oldest at the University of Montana. It has served as the University library, the law school and the psychology school. Now, environmental studies shares the building with the social work program. But one thing that hasn’t changed is the building’s reputation as one of the spookiest at UM.

Jenn, 47, knows a thing or two about spooky places. The Big Sky High School teacher has been a paranormal investigator for the better part of this century. What started as a hobby morphed into a money-making career as she began leading haunted tours at the Montana State Prison in Deer Lodge and working with national experts at Ghost Hunts USA. But her paranormal roots trace back to far less lucrative origins, when she taught at Sentinel High School and would take her students on ghost hunts. Though her career has progressed since then, she’s never one to turn down the opportunity for discovery. That’s why when the Kaimin asked, Jenn jumped at the chance to join us on an investigation of Rankin Hall.

“I’ve always been interested in the paranormal,” Jenn said. “I was the kid who read all the Stephen King books when I was little and [watched] all the horror movies. And my husband thinks I’m crazy, but I just love it. Love it.”

Two years ago, before COVID-19 was even a twinkle in that bat’s eye, the KPIT spent a night in University Hall and Jeannette Rankin Hall, determined to find evidence that could prove the many campus ghost stories we’d been told.

Jenn mentioned the KPIT’s 2019 hunt during our first meeting.

“I wish you would’ve invited us for that

investigation,” she said of the Main Hall hunt.

Now, Jenn was officially leading another KPIT hunt.

Our investigation team’s membership had almost completely changed. Of course we had Jenn, the professional of the group. She provided all the know-how, wisdom and equipment as we faced Rankin Hall’s spirits. The rest of the KPIT’s new iteration consisted of audio editor Austin Amestoy, photographer Kennedy Delap and sports editor/TikTok mastermind Jack Marshall. Jenn’s daughter Hollin, a senior at Big Sky High School researching her senior thesis on haunted Montana locations, also joined us.

I, Addie Slinger, was the only carryover member from 2019.



The Preliminary Sweep

We walked up the stone steps and through the door of JRH, past the picture of the hall’s namesake, Jeannette Rankin. She’s posted up in one of those big Victorian frames, like the portraits in Scooby Doo movies whose eyes follow movement.

We began with an inspection of the building first checking out the basement with its twisting hallways and red walls glowing with the light of EXIT signs.

The basement has one bathroom immediately to the right of the steep flight of stairs. Two years ago when the KPIT investigated Rankin Hall, we experienced a lot of activity here. Each of us swore we could hear ghostly breathing in response to our questioning.

Then, it was up the stairs past Victorian

Jeannette and on to the second floor.

This level of Rankin Hall is just classrooms. Four of them splay out at the top of the stairs. The rooms are spooky at night, illuminated only by the glow of the main floor’s entrance.

It was here the KPIT discovered its most definitive evidence of ghost activity in 2019. In an effort to reach any spirits who may have been present, we set up a salt pentagram and lit a candle. We sat in silence for a bit before trying to communicate with the ghosts.

All of a sudden, one of our members — Hunter Wiggins, for you Kaimin readers with institutional knowledge — started to complain of a sensation on his back. He turned around and lifted up his shirt to show us. There, about a third of the way up his back, were two horizontal scratches, almost like claw marks. It was safe to say all of us left Rankin Hall more serious believers than we entered.

As we moved to the second floor to show Jenn where that happened, all I could remember was the fear we felt the last time.

There were at least three spirits in Rankin Hall based on her research, Jenn said: Congresswoman Jeannette Rankin (Montana’s delegate to the U.S. House of Representatives from 1917-1919 and 1941-1943) a teacher and something more sinister. That’s probably what we ran into back then — a terrifying assumption.

This year we set up camp in that first classroom, one that face the stairs with windows looking back toward the journalism building, Don Anderson Hall. Light from DAH cast strange shapes on the classroom’s walls — all harsh angles perfect for reflecting shadows.

Each of us took a seat at a desk and Jenn stood, laying out her gear and introducing us to the spirits, prepping us for the night ahead.



Professional paranormal investigator Jenn Keintz showcases and explains the various ghost detecting equipment the Kaimin Paranormal Investigative Team (KPIT) would use during its ghost-hunting tour of Jeannette Rankin Hall as the KPIT huddles around her. The pictured gadget is a type of crystal that allows ghosts to answer questions in the form of energy.



A portrait of Jeannette Rankin hangs in the entry of the hall where her ghost supposedly resides, roaming the hallways at night.

A Paranormal Calling

Jenn was born in the flyover town of Castle Rock, Washington, situated at the base of Mount St. Helens. She worked hard at her academics, and the former high school valedictorian described herself as the trifecta of “smart, athletic and poor.” She attended Pacific Lutheran University in Tacoma, Washington, on a full ride. There she studied journalism, English and secondary education.

She moved to Missoula in the ‘90s with her now-husband, Karl. When teaching jobs were hard to come by without a Master’s degree, she enrolled at the University of Montana to pursue her secondary degree in English. Afterward, she decided to get a Master’s in journalism from Kent State.

She was hired to teach at Sentinel High School, where she worked for 20 years before transitioning to Big Sky High School four years ago. She currently teaches newspaper, yearbook and TV production, and coaches tennis for the Eagles.

But long before she was a teacher, Jenn had an interest in the unknown.

As a child, Jenn said she was particularly sensitive to the spirit world. She doesn’t remember much of it now, but her mother described to her how she used to commune with the otherworldly.

“I think I was always pretty sensitive in terms of being able to sense and feel and know that things were around,” Jenn said. “And my mom said that I used to get up a lot in the middle of the night and have conversations outside my bedroom window with things that weren’t there.”

In college, she described a time when a friend who had killed himself in high school visited her one night in the darkness of her dorm room. He told her he was okay, and that she didn’t need to worry about him. That was the first encounter of that nature she remembers in her adult life.

And, even more difficult for Jenn, her dad

came to visit her after he died.

“Which actually, weirdly enough, scared me,” Jenn said. “Which you think wouldn’t, because it’s your dad, but it scared me to where, I mean, that was six or seven years ago now. And I sleep with the TV on every night ever since.”

As she progressed through her education and the beginning of her professional life, she always had a connection with the other side. Still, it would take curious students and an intrepid high school newspaper staff before she truly launched her paranormal career.

The Second Floor

After introductions and set up, the six of us waited quietly in the first classroom for any ghostly disruption. We logged a few random EMF spikes on the meters, which detect the presence of electromagnetic frequency through electric currents.

The correlation between the spirit world and EMF technology is a simple assumption that when we die, the electromagnetic field that exists in the mind does not disappear. So, spikes on the EMF could indicate remnants of that electromagnetic field, or ghost activity. But at the infrequency we encountered in the classroom, the spikes were likely caused by the radiators or electric wiring behind the classroom walls.

It was a bit disappointing after the experience we’d had two years ago.

Spirits still high, we decided to move to the adjacent classroom, where both Jenn and Hollin had been getting strange feelings. Jenn set up the phasmabox and we dispersed throughout the room.

The device began doing its job, cycling through radio frequencies in an attempt to land on a frequency through which a spirit could best communicate. In the darkness of the empty, echoing classroom, the sound of the cycling channels and frequencies, which appear as static or aborted words from existing radio channels, is disconcerting at best and terrifying at worst.

We asked the spirits if anyone was in the room with us, and how many entities were present. When we received no answer, I asked the room: “Can you tell us your name?”

Then, clear as day: “Jeannette.”

Holy shit. That was the sentiment reflected by the four KPIT members. Not so much Jenn or Hollin, who seemed excited and grateful for the response.

“That’s awesome,” Jenn said, proceeding to thank the spirit of the congresswoman and continue asking questions.

I’m not going to lie, I still don’t really understand why Jeannette Rankin would be haunting this building. The congresswoman did graduate from UM in 1902, so she has

a connection to campus, but Rankin Hall wasn’t built until 1908. And I couldn’t find anything to prove she had a tie to the actual building, aside from sharing its name.

The building wasn’t even dedicated as “Jeannette Rankin Hall” until 1983, 10 years after she had died.

Still, many agree the ghost of Rankin is present. She apparently resides there along with a ghost class, a teacher who loved his job and perhaps one evil spirit. It’s alleged by janitors, ghost hunters and clairvoyants alike. Anyway, back to the action.

We didn’t get much else from the phasma-box, and Jenn decided to try a different approach. She moved the music box — a motion detector that plays a wound-up children’s song when it detects movement in front of it — into the doorway of the classroom.

“If there are any spirits here, please come stand in front of the doorway and let us know you’re here,” she said to the room.

The music box sounded, and kept sounding for five or six seconds. I jumped up onto a desk and tried to adjust my eyes to the darkness of the outside foyer area. I could see nothing but black. We all held our breath.

The music box sounded again, and again, and again. The intervals weren’t spaced out evenly enough to be some kind of a program, and none lasted the same duration. The entire KPIT was on edge.

Curious, Jenn pulled out her phone and opened up a thermal camera app, which detects changes in temperature through her phone’s camera lens. She pointed it through the doorway and toward the two opposite classrooms.

Kennedy and I peered over Jenn’s shoulder. A human figure stood outlined in a deep blue, appearing to peek through the adjacent class-

room’s doorway. Jack, who was sitting right next to the door, appeared in a hot, vivacious red. He didn’t see anything standing next to him.

The blue silhouette stayed stock-still. So did we. My breath caught so far up in my throat I couldn’t make a sound. Eventually, we walked toward the doorway where the figure had stood. Closer inspection with the thermal imaging showed it was no longer anywhere to be found.

Leading Two Lives

Jenn began teaching at Sentinel in the early 2000s. One of her classes was advising the school’s newspaper, and it was that team of students she credits as launching her true paranormal investigative ambitions.

The newspaper staff wanted to do something special for the Halloween edition. One of the custodians suggested they stay the night in Sentinel to see what secrets they might unearth after hours.

That investigation launched a tradition for Jenn that continues today. Little by little, Jenn began collecting more ghost-hunting tools and taking her students out on more ambitious hunts, expanding from Sentinel to Hellgate High School to the Deer Lodge prison. Each Halloween, she arranges some type of hunt for those enrolled in her classes.

Students loved it. “I mean, people wanted to do it, they wanted to join in,” Jenn said.

After establishing the annual Halloween hunt, Jenn came in contact with former pupil Kris Bratlien, who had started his own



Hollin Keintz, the daughter of ghost-hunter Jenn Keintz, sits in Jeannette Rankin Hall with a ghost hunting device in hand.

I am someone who is highly educated, and still believes in all of this stuff. I come at it with that skeptical eye of wanting the story. And that’s how we started originally, ‘What’s the story? Why are they here?’”

-Jenn Keintz

ghost-hunting group, Tortured Souls Investigations. She began going on hunts with them, expanding her paranormal investigation portfolio to include more serious work.

The Montana State Prison in Deer Lodge offered her a permanent position as the haunted tour guide. The old tour guides had worked with Jenn and saw her skills — after all, leading big groups and explaining tough concepts is second nature to the teacher. Suddenly, she began profiting off her nighttime hobby.

She never forgot her origins, though. As often as possible, she centers her hunts on her students, keeping them included.

“Her hunts are) different from us because she typically has a lot of students with her,” Bratlien, said. “It’s always awesome. She always seems to be super enthusiastic about it, she’s always curious. She doesn’t get spooked very easily. She adds value to the team.”

Jenn’s daughter Hollin, who came on the investigation with us, is in three of her mom’s classes this year. She began hunting with Jenn her freshman year of high school.

Hollin said the paranormal has never been something strange or sensationalized for her. It’s just been her life.

“(Ghost hunting has) been the thing that mom does, and it’s been weird and cool,” she said. “I prefer that (Jenn) likes this, over... I don’t know what normal moms like. I prefer that it’s this.”

The First Floor and the Basement

After experiencing something a bit more para than normal, with the thermal camera showing us what might well have been the ghost of Jeannette Rankin herself, the KPIT members were all sufficiently spooked. We decided to head downward, onto the main level and away from the classrooms.

The first floor breakroom of JRH is split into two levels with wooden beams supporting a lofted area for offices and conference rooms. Underneath is a cafeteria-esque setup

of chairs and tables organized next to a breakroom. The many wooden beams that support Rankin Hall’s lofted floor split the lamp light streaming into the room from the Oval in strange patterns.

We set up our equipment in the breakroom and Jenn decided to bring out the big guns. “So we know you like the music box; do you want us to play some music for you?” Jenn asked the room.

The motion detector immediately sounded. Luckily for the KPIT, this new team iteration included Austin Amestoy, Kaimin Cast host and All-Northwest honor choir alum.

“Austin can sing,” I said, unprompted. That’s how we found ourselves standing around a music box motion detector while Austin sang a Scottish folk song to the ghost of former Congresswoman Jeannette Rankin.

And the music box played in time with Austin. Every time he paused, the music box stopped. When he started singing again, so did the music. We were all frozen, so any motion detected wasn’t coming from us.

There’s something eerie about the dulcet tones of a Scottish ballad accompanied by the metallic plinking of the motion-sensor music box, especially when no one is moving to trigger the sounds in the first place.

Satisfied with the performance, we decided to make our way down to the basement.

The janitorial staff had arrived and our carefully cultivated spiritual environment was in danger of being destroyed. Quickly, we headed down toward the heat of the boiler room. We felt like we were so close to a breakthrough and were disappointed we had to cut our investigation short.

“I feel like they’re just one step away,” Jenn said of the spirits.

We shut ourselves in the bathroom and turned on the REM pod, a small piece of equipment that flashes different colored lights and emits a loud beeping sound when it senses motion above it.

“Do you like the students in this building?” Jenn asked the stuffy bathroom walls.

The REM pod immediately went off, flashing bright red and beeping loudly.

So, at the very least, it seemed like the KPIT team had found itself in the ghosts’ good graces.

The Road So Far

The night was uneventful for Jenn, whose paranormal investigating career has blossomed into a professional — and thus generally much more haunted — endeavor.

Over the years, she’s cultivated a name for herself in Montana’s spirit-hunting world.

KC Kloppel, production director of Townsquare Media Missoula and ghost hunter, is a familiar face Jenn’s paranormal investigating party. Each year in October, his radio station,



Montana Kaimin sports editor Jack Marshall, a member of the Kaimin Paranormal Investigative Team (KPIT), stands with an electromagnet field detector inside a furnace room in the depths of Jeannette Rankin Hall. The KPIT spent the night of Oct. 14 in Jeannette Rankin Hall, determined to find evidence that could prove UM’s many campus ghost stories.

The Blaze, hosts a competition where participants can submit a radio clip to win a chance to ghost hunt with Jenn and her team.

Kloppel praised Jenn for her level-headedness and the approach she brings to ghost hunting.

“She’s definitely not Shaggy from ‘Scooby Doo.’ I’ll tell you that,” he said. “When something does happen, she’s always calm, cool and collected.

“Jenn’s very professional,” he continued. “And when we do have an interesting situation, Jenn’s always the one I want to stand by. It’s always good to have the person who is the rock next to you.”

Jenn herself credits her education as informing her paranormal investigation. She told me her time spent in journalism and English studies helped fuel her curiosity — she’s always looking for the underlying story on ghost hunts.

“I am someone who is highly educated, and still believes in all of this stuff. I come at it with that skeptical eye of wanting the story,” she said. “And that’s how we started originally. ‘What’s the story? Why are they here?’”

Jenn certainly has a full plate between her day job and nighttime occupation, especially during October, her favorite month of the year. While all her work can add up, it’s never been a hindrance to her. For a curious teacher always looking for opportunities to connect with her students and learn more about the world, there’s nothing better.

“I’m exhausted all the time. But I’m exhausted all the time because I teach. I have three kids. I have a dog. I have a husband,”

she said. “And so yeah, I’m exhausted. But it’s okay. It’s fun. I mean, who gets to say they get to do this? Right?”

Truly Haunted or Just a Little Spooky?

So, final consensus — is Jeannette Rankin Hall haunted?

The KPIT team was divided. “If it is, the spirits aren’t consistent enough to make themselves known,” Austin said. “I need a little bit more consistency from them. They’re some flaky spirits.”

“I don’t think it’s haunted. I think it’s a place you can go at night that can feel really creepy,” Jack said.

“I definitely think it is,” Kennedy said. “I really don’t know how else you would explain what we saw.”

Jenn wasn’t dissuaded from our low-activity night. She believed we truly were right on the precipice of more spirit communication.

“Spirits don’t clock in and clock out,” she said. “I would say, if we went back over there in two hours, you would have a lot of activity.”

Personally, this experience itself didn’t make me more of a believer. But I won’t be ruling out the spirit world any time soon. There’s too much out there — too many unknowns.

I guess we’ll just have to keep hunting.

‘Dune’ is Star Wars for cinephiles and Chala-maniacs

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Star Wars has a lot going for it: lightsabers, blasters, incompetent Nazi-esque enforcers, an evil goth dude with asthma, incestuous love triangles and — of course — wars among the stars.

But you know what Star Wars doesn't have? Timothée Chalamet looking like a stony-faced snack in knee-high boots and a black overcoat, barking orders in a Voice you just can't resist.

“Dune” (2021) has our beautiful boy and so much more packed into its two-and-a-half-hour runtime. Not a single second is wasted on a journey to an ending that will likely leave some frustrated and craving more — and that's exactly where its creators want you.

If sci-fi had a granddaddy, it's “Dune.” The 1965 novel by Frank Herbert follows Paul Atreides, a brooding prince in a medieval galaxy who finds himself at the center of a battle for the future of Arrakis, a desert planet that serves as the only source of the galaxy's most valuable substance, the mind-enhancing drug known as “spice.”

While Star Wars was doing gangbusters

at the box office with its relatable story of a boy with magic powers embracing his destiny as the galaxy's savior, the franchise's original inspiration “Dune” was sitting on the sidelines, gathering a legion of devoted fans who patiently waited for a faithful film adaptation. Lucky for them, “Dune” finally delivers, even if it only covers the first half of the story.

“Dune” is a whole lot of movie, and director Denis Villeneuve (“Arrival,” “Blade Runner 2049”) called up a who's who of Hollywood's greatest to share the load. Rebecca Ferguson, Oscar Isaac, Josh Brolin, Jason Momoa and, yes, our queen Zendaya join Chalamet in performances that are sure to turn heads this awards season. The real spice in this film (pun intended) comes from Ferguson's arresting take on Lady Jessica, Paul's devoted mother and a member of a powerful order of witches with their own reasons for keeping Paul close.

The technical aspects of the film are surefire Oscar bait. Cinematographer Greig Fraser (“Rogue One”) wields the camera like a paintbrush, except each shot is a three-story canvas. “Dune” is enormous — spherical spaceships look like snowballs drifting

through space, then touch down and dwarf mountains. Explosions tear apart cities in a ferocious sound mix that feels as if it might shatter the theater too. It's all accompanied by the ever-reliable Hans Zimmer (“Interstellar”), who delivers a violent, furious score that many will find unforgettable — if only because it gets a bit repetitive.

“Dune” is a love letter to fans of its often dense and unforgiving source material, sticking closely to the source material in a way those same fans will likely cheer. The bigger test will be for moviegoers who decide to weather the stunning, slow-paced vistas of Arrakis because they know they'll see Chalamet and Zendaya smooch. Hold on tight, though. Villeneuve leaves viewers with an unsatisfying ending and a warning in the title card that “Dune” is only the first part of a two-part tale.

The real question is if “Dune” can reclaim its throne as the godfather of modern sci-fi after decades of Star Wars raking in the dough. With a stroke of luck, we can all return to Arrakis in a couple years for the surely epic conclusion — and more of Chalamet whispering sweet nothings through his spice-fueled fever dreams.



CONTRIBUTED

What do you get when you put the Muppets in a Halloween special? You get out! Ohohoho

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It's time to play the boo-sic. It's time to fright the frights. It's time to watch “Muppets Haunted Mansion” on Disney+ tonight.

That's right, folks. America's favorite weirdo puppets have come together once again to create something truly spook-tacular. There's nothing like a Halloween special to get the blood pumping, and this is definitely ... uh ... one of them.

“Muppets Haunted Mansion” tells the story of Gonzo the Great performing his most daring stunt yet, spending the night in the world's most haunted house. Don't worry, he's not alone. He brought a body — excuse me, SOMEbody — along. Pepe the King Prawn joins the blue-beaked daredevil on his mission, and the two tumble their way through quite a bit of expected mayhem.

The special is heavily inspired by the renowned Disneyland attraction “The Haunted Mansion.” Almost every scene is pulled straight from the ride, with Muppets inserted wherever possible (just like my future wedding). If you haven't been on the ride before, don't worry, you'll be able to

follow along. It's puppets and ghosts, not rocket science.

As always, our felt friends are joined by a ghost — ahem, host — of celebrity guests. Will Arnett and Taraji P. Henson take starring roles, while stars like Danny Trejo, Yvette Nicole Brown, Craig Robinson, Skai Jackson and even John Stamos cameo here and there. The scariest part of the entire special is without a doubt the appearance of a former “Glee” cast member, Darren Criss. A reminder of that period in your life always sends a chill straight to the spine.

Of course — sorry, of course — the Muppets are the real stars of the show. Fan favorites like Kermit the Frog, Miss Piggy and Fozzie Bear take a step back to let others have a turn in the spotlight, limiting themselves to fun-filled bit parts (much to Piggy's disdain). Gonzo and Pepe have a distinct chemistry that has gone unexplored in previous Muppet endeavors. Pepe is especially funny as he tries to score a date for the big party. Just download Tinder, bro. You're literally a celebrity.

And what would the Muppets be without music? “Muppet Haunted Mansion”

features a handful of original songs, none of them good, but certainly less annoying than others. On the bright side, the special opens and closes with a cover of “Dancing in the Moonlight,” performed by none other than Dr. Teeth and the Electric Mayhem. This inclusion is enough to breathe some much-needed life into a soundtrack that's otherwise dead on arrival.

Still it's not all pun and maims — erm, fun and games. At its core, the special harbors a genuinely heartfelt message as Gonzo learns it's okay to be scared sometimes (and Pepe learns to get some ass, but I digress). While it isn't a particularly memorable special, it's certainly good enough to keep you entertained for its merciful 52 minute runtime. We're talking about haunted Muppets. How could you not have fun?

Though Halloween is just around the corner, it's not too late to start planning. Don we now our skintight green bodysuits, pig-tail miniskirts and ridiculously small bowler hats. Halloween 2021 is the year of the sexy Muppet costume.



CONTRIBUTED

Nothing screams Halloween like songs about serial killers at upcoming ‘Autumn Choral Spooktacular’

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More than 30 University of Montana choir students stood in front of a mostly vacant recital hall as they rehearsed “The Ballad of Sweeney Todd,” a tale of the demon barber from Fleet Street who turns his unlucky patrons into meat pies. After COVID-19 turned almost everything virtual, the sight of an empty theater is even more haunting than the song.

But this year kids, students, teachers and ghosts vaguely similar to white-cotton bed sheets are set to fill the seats of Dennison Theatre for UM School of Music's Autumn Choral Spooktacular this Halloween.

“It's good to be back,” said Chauncey Allison, a junior music education student at UM. “And it's very fun that it's this out-of-the-box choir concert.”

The performance, which starts at 3 p.m. on Sunday, Oct. 31, will include Disneyland's Haunted Mansion Theme, songs from Sweeney Todd, shipwreck ballads and two premieres from the Missoula Community Chorus. To save you the suspense, UM choir plans to hand out candy, instead of pie, for a meet-and-treat after the performance (sorry Food Zoo, the mystery meat will have to wait until Thanksgiving).

Coreen Duffy, the director of UM choral activities, said the performance will be a mixed bag of songs, all tying back to Halloween themes like death, ghosts and barbershop serial killers.

“We're doing some autumn favorites and music that in some way commemorates death as a tangential meeting point for Halloween,” Duffy said.

Duffy said the performance will include a Disneyland Haunted Mansion song arranged by Mena Carrara-Ackerman, a junior majoring in musical theater at UM. Carrara-Ackerman said she got the inspiration to arrange “Grim Grinning Ghosts” after visiting Disneyland over the summer and frequenting her favorite ride, the Haunted Mansion. She also said she drew part of her inspiration from her love for Halloween.

“I just like embracing the supernatural side of life,” Carrara-Ackerman said.

But not every song featured in the performance will be based on Halloween. The event will also include three sailor songs,

focused on themes of death at sea. Duffy said a TikTok trend of people singing sea shanties inspired the song choices, but none take on the traditional feel of a chorus of drunken sailors.

“I Love My Love,” one of three sailor songs in the show, is a Cornish folk song about a dramatic love story between a sailor and his wife. Duffy said there are many different versions of the story. Sometimes the man dies and haunts his wife as a ghost. Other times he returns and they live happily ever after. Duffy said the UM choir chose the latter to lighten the mood of the music, but there are many saucy alternative stories out there.

Duffy said the choir plans to diversify their performance by drawing from culturally and religiously divergent songs about death. “Hew 'round The Tree” by R. Nathaniel Dett, a Black Canadian composer, is a song Duffy said is poignant because it ties to the abolishment of racial segregation. The tree, which is called the “wicked man,” is associated with the systemic oppression of people of color.

“To see the tree come down is like bringing down racism,” Duffy said.

The choral will also be UM's debut with the Missoula Community Chorus to open evening choral classes at UM. Duffy said the MCC will be performing two world premiere pieces at the event with a visit from Scott Rieker, a winning composer of MCC's 2020 composition contest.

Singing aside, students are encouraged to attend the choral in costume. Carrara-Ackerman said she plans to dress up as Zelda from the popular Nintendo game “The Legend of Zelda.” Allison said he's going to keep it “easy, quick and powerful” with a simple cape. Duffy said whether you're a kid or an adult, you're welcome to attend the choir in costume or just haunt as you are.

Tickets are \$8 for UM students/seniors and \$12 for adults. The performance will be at 3 p.m. on Sunday, Oct. 31 for livestream or in-person attendance.



MARIAH KARIS | MONTANA KAIMIN



David Mattson auditions for a solo part while fellow vocalists follow along on Oct. 19 as the choir group rehearses “Autumn Choral Spooktacular.” The teal chairs of the Dennison theater will be open for concert goers and a livestream will be available for concert stayers. OLIVIA SWANT-JOHNSON | MONTANA KAIMIN



Coreen Duffy conducts a rehearsal for UM School of Music's “Autumn Choral Spooktacular.” The show, which goes live at 3 p.m. on Oct. 31, will feature “autumn favorites” as well as some spookier tunes that “in some way commemorates death as a tangential meeting point for Halloween,” Duffy said.

OLIVIA SWANT-JOHNSON | MONTANA KAIMIN

Clear bags or bulletproof ones: How will UM Athletics adapt if gun bill remains intact?

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The University of Montana, UM Athletics and the Montana University System's Board of Regents have no contingency plans to keep firearms out of certain sporting events if the contentious House Bill 102 makes it through court intact.

HB 102, which usurps existing Board of Regents policy prohibiting the open or concealed carry of firearms on Montana University System campuses, was halted in May by a district court judge. While litigation is pending, the current board policy remains in effect.

If HB 102 goes into effect as written, exceptions are granted to either the board or a unit of the university system to prohibit firearms at events where campus authorities have authorized alcohol to be served and consumed, as well as events with armed security and controlled access.

"These are exceptions that either the board or the university system can come up with," said Anthony Johnstone, a professor at UM's Blewett School of Law. "If the board decides to adopt a uniform strategy, that may be one option. But either one of them can adopt a policy interpreting this law."

Currently the University has no concrete plans to enforce the exceptions outlined in the bill.

"The University has had a working group that has been meeting and sort of discussing the implementation of House Bill 102, but I don't know that we finalized our approach," said Paula Short, associate vice president of Campus Preparedness and Response.

Helen Thigpen, executive director of government relations and public affairs for the Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education, said she believes the decision to implement the exceptions will be left to the Board of Regents, but did not comment on whether they would do so.

"We just have to wait and see what the district court does," Thigpen said. "It hasn't been addressed substantively in the district court yet, and we don't expect that until early next year."

But if either the board or the University move to take advantage of the exceptions as currently written, many decisions that would limit the open and concealed carry of firearms at campus sporting events are still up to the University of Montana Department of Athletics.

"Board policy also governs the pos-

session and consumption of alcoholic beverages on campus," Thigpen said in an emailed statement.

Chuck Maes, senior associate athletic director, spoke about the alcohol exception. Currently the board has only approved alcohol sales at football and conference soccer games, but Maes hopes a decision will be made in November to allow alcohol sales for next basketball season.

"We're exploring the option, as is MSU, with doing it for basketball," Maes said. "But right now I'm not sure if we'll do it or not."

Maes said UM athletics is considering where to set up a beer garden, and what parameters must be met before the board allows it.

"If the Commissioner (of Higher Education) approves it, he'll tell us what the conditions are to do it, and then we'll see if we can meet those conditions," Maes said.

This would still leave non-conference soccer matches, volleyball, cross country, track and field, tennis and softball ineligible for HB 102's alcohol exception.

Otherwise, HB 102 states that exceptions for prohibiting firearms may be made at events that are "open to the public with controlled access and armed security on site." This would apply to basketball games and other public events in the Adams Center, as well as football, but none of the other aforementioned sports.

Kent Haslam, director of athletics at the University of Montana, said UM Athletics is responsible for setting up controlled access points and armed security for campus sporting events by contracting with the university police department.

"Right now, our plan is to continue to restrict firearms at football games through metal detectors and clear bags," Haslam said.

When speaking about providing armed security for other events, Haslam said, "We haven't talked through that. I'd rely on UMPD, the people who provide security, to give us that advice."

UMPD Lt. Chris Croft said UMPD employs 13 officers and football games are "all hands on deck." Men's basketball, the next highest-attended sport, averaged just over 4,000 people a game during the 2019-2020 season, according to NCAA attendance records. Croft said only one or two officers are present for those games.

"Athletics could definitely make the decision that they want to now have con-



MCKENNA JOHNSON | MONTANA KAIMIN

trolled access and armed security at all these venues. If that was something they wanted to pursue, then we'd be more than happy to work with them," Croft said. "Whether they feel the financial cost warrants us — there's a cost associated with each officer, so it would boil down to what they felt the security footprint needed to be."

While HB 102 remains enjoined, if it leaves litigation intact and neither the Board of Regents or the University of Montana take advantage of these exceptions for concealed and open carry, firearms will legally be allowed in every stadium and event that doesn't have controlled access and armed security.

Yes, they can skate: Meet UM hockey's cheerleaders

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This fall, UM hockey came back from a seven-year hiatus and with a pretty unique addition: a two-person cheerleading squad.

During game breaks, the players leave the ice, fans go for more beers and the Zamboni makes its rounds. But in place of the regular '80s anthem rock songs is a brief, beautiful figure skating exposition.

"I don't think they really expect too much other than just to stand on the side with pom poms," said Carly Dahms, one half of the squad.

Dahms and her teammate, Sydney Kosiak, are independently accomplished figure skaters. They both teach private lessons at the Missoula Figure Skating Club and both have competed in figure skating.

Dahms grew up in Minnesota, where she started skating at the age of 2. Kosiak, originally from Massachusetts, was a touring performer with Disney on Ice for six months and had signed onto live productions in Florida, as well as projects with Apple TV, before COVID-19 put the shows on hold.

Dahms came to Missoula to run for the UM track team. Neither of them expected to start a hockey cheerleading squad, but when the opportunity presented itself, Dahms just couldn't say no.

"It was kind of a joke at first," Dahms said. Dahms had never been a cheerleader. In her 21 years, she has been a figure skater, cross-country runner, concrete layer, business owner and seamstress. She jokes that her next goal is to be a bouncer for a downtown bar.

"The whole hockey team was like, 'But can you guys actually skate? Can you stand on skates?' I think the first time I called the manager, he was like, 'Are you confident on skates?' We're like, 'yeah, we're good, like we got this,'" Dahms said.

"I think the coolest thing was when they all found out. We showed up to their little promotional thing, we're like, 'Hi, we're your cheerleaders' and they were genuinely shocked. It was so funny," Kosiak said.

Hockey does have cheer teams, but they're officially called "Ice Girls" and while they perform mostly the same function as cheerleaders, they don't tend to receive as much attention. They also don't commonly accompany college teams, especially upstart first-season college teams in Montana.

Kosiak and Dahms dress in more traditional figure skating regalia than an Ice Girl

would. They still bring out pom-poms, but the pair isn't really a spirit squad.

Awash in the dazzle of glitter and pageantry, they take the ice. Their graceful control of the arena is evidenced in jumps and punctuated by kicks. They don't go for hat tricks, just triple axels.

Their first official performance was during the season opener at Glacier Rink in Missoula on Oct. 2, and they were very well received. Even their most basic figure skating moves were foreign to crowds who are more used to watching players fall down. The crowd was delighted to watch some skaters jump up.

"We did this trick called a hitch-kick, and I thought someone was getting proposed to, or something, they were screaming so loud," Kosiak said.

Despite some initial confusion about what these cheerleaders would be doing, the team adopted them.

"Their support honestly means a lot, because if we weren't supported by the hockey team.... Yeah, that'd be awkward," Dahms said.

Not only is the team happy for one more thing to help them stand out in their first season, the team's manager has incorporated Dahms into a training regimen. The team is now mandated to go on runs with Dahms, who doesn't plan to slow down for them or cut them any slack.

"I feel like because it's a hockey crowd, we can be kind of goofy or sassy and have more fun," Kosiak said. "If we slip on something or mess up the choreography, we're not going to get points taken off because no one cares."

On Oct. 2, Dahms and Kosiak performed an on-ice version of Hannah Montana's 'Hoedown Throwdown' in front of the 1,100 hockey fans who came to watch the rebirth of UM hockey. The crowd size was a shock for the figure skaters.

"I thought there was going to be 50 people in the crowd," Dahms said. "Sydney comes back, she's like, 'Oh my god Carly you need to go see the crowd.' I walked outside and I was like, 'I am going to die.' I was in tears because I didn't expect that many people."

Dahms, who hadn't performed for a crowd since high school, had stage fright. But in the slightly inebriated atmosphere of hockey fans and with all the confidence displayed by the duo, the nervousness was unnoticeable.

"It's nerve-wracking. I do cross-country — no one comes to cross-country races. There's like one person clapping by the side," Dahms said. "But Sydney loves it. Sydney absolutely



Carly Dahms, left, and Sydney Kosiak of the UM hockey cheerleading squad perform at Glacier Ice Rink as Montana faced off against University of Providence on Oct. 22. Kosiak performed with Disney on Ice for six months, among other accomplishments in the figure skating world. In Dahms' 21 years, she has been a figure skater, cross-country runner, concrete layer, business owner and seamstress, but never a cheerleader until now. ANTONIO IBARRA | MONTANA KAIMIN

loves the attention, loves performing."

Although Kosiak is much more accustomed to public performance, she was still taken aback by the size of the crowd.

"I know Carly said she doesn't like performing, but I hadn't performed in front of a crowd that big in over two years and we ended in the splits. And I literally cried," Kosiak said.

"She cried, and I think I was having a panic attack," Dahms said.

The hockey cheerleaders will be performing at every home game. Due to its newfound popularity, the UM team had to add extra bleachers in its pavilion.

"It's not a joke now," Dahms said.



Halloween bash, a graveyard smash at UC

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Students in costumes got their spooky groove on at this year's Halloween bash on Oct. 22.

The event was organized by Student Life Activities and UM Housing in the UC ballroom. Doors opened for students to walk in around 8 p.m., where they were greeted with Halloween decorations and cobwebs lining the interior walls.

Partygoers chose from activities like pumpkin painting, cookie decorating or dancing to music curated by DJ Coach Shane. Students boogied to Halloween remixes and hits like "Cha-Cha slide" and "Harlem Shake."

Morgan Starnes, a member of Student Life Activities, said more students are wanting to get out and meet people this year.

"I think people are craving a lot of that social interaction," Starnes said. "We've been wanting to do a Halloween event for years."

Halfway through the event, those who had dressed up got in line for a costume contest. People watched pop culture figures and ghouls take to the stage for a quick pose. The winners earned a Griz blanket and UMoney.

The night ended around 10 p.m. as the last pumpkins were painted and students took pictures with one another at the photo booth.



Jaiden Moren poses in his Ghostbusters costume during the Halloween Bash contest.



Tori Girard, left, and Hannah Rustvold, were ghosts to be hunted. The event was put on by Student Life Activities and UM Housing at the University Center.



Lisa Kiefer works away with her brushes painting and decorating her pumpkin according to her planned theme.



DJ Coach Shane bumps Halloween remixes and other thematically influenced classics as partygoers hit the dance floor.