

# MONTANA KAIMIN

## COUNTING THE ✓ VOTE

The workers  
behind  
Missoula's  
election

STORY BY GRIFFEN SMITH  
PHOTOS BY MATTHEW TRYAN



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Cover Photo  
Matthew Tryan



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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EDITORIAL

Positive case numbers are not the only numbers we should be paying attention to

We write our editorials on Mondays, two days before we print. On Monday, when the Missoula City-County Health Department updated its UM COVID-19 dashboard, there were 33 new cases added from over the weekend. We don't know what the number of active campus cases is going to be when this editorial runs in print, but on Monday, it stood at 108.

More discomforting, however, is the number of students, staff and faculty members considered close contacts. The UM dashboard averages six close contacts per positive case. Roughly 600 people, officially. This means 600 campus members who have had to quarantine, and 600 campus members who have had to call Curry Health Center or the health department to schedule a test to see if they are, in fact, positive. If every one of the 33 cases added over the weekend had six contacts, that would mean 198 close contacts in a matter

of days. At UM alone. That number will only have risen by the time this editorial runs in print.

If you're a student living with roommates and need to quarantine, that means closing yourself off in your room and wearing a mask in any shared living spaces. Hopefully, you have your own bathroom separate from your roommates. Because that's super common and affordable, isn't it? Good thing you probably have your own kitchen, too. Oh wait. You could always DoorDash every meal? Because that won't break the bank.

The reality is there are multitudes more campus members affected every day than just the 100+ active cases we see on our dashboard. We can't base UM's handling of COVID-19 on only the number of active cases. Every close contact is a potential positive.

And the mental load of being a close

contact isn't something we should be glossing over. Not only do close contacts have to schedule a test in an overwhelmed system, they have to make a list of any close contacts they might have, should they test positive. They will have to wait for their results from two separate tests over the course of multiple days. It's the waiting game, but in this case, you're waiting to see whether or not you've contracted the disease that's been causing a global pandemic. And at this point, it doesn't really matter how safe you've been.

Every close contact has to upend their life, email professors, Zoom into an "in-person" discussion class and figure out how to handle a quarantine while doing everything else, too.

There are levels of magnitude in every aspect of this pandemic's effect on campus. We shouldn't just be focusing on the number of positive cases. We should be

focusing on all of it. Looking for Missoula City-County Health Department's UM COVID-19 Dashboard? You can find it here:



LIKE IT? HATE IT? WISH WE WERE DEAD?

Email us your opinions at [editor@montanakaimin.com](mailto:editor@montanakaimin.com)

FEATURE PHOTO



Rylie Wilcox and her horse, Slidin By a Star, compete in the final race of the Marsh Performance Horses 2020 Barrel Racing Series on Oct. 3, 2020. Wilcox placed second in the 1D race, clocking in at 18.319 seconds. Saturday marked the end of the 2020 series, which was made up of five races. Riders had to compete in three out of the five races in the series to qualify for the final. About 80 riders participated. LIAM MCCOLLUM | MONTANA KAIMIN

### SUDOKU

Difficulty: Easy

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

Edited by Margie E. Burke

**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:

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



# Briefs: Big money, COVID-19 clinic and RBG’s legacy

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## ‘CAMPAIGN MONTANA’ EXCEEDS FUNDRAISING GOALS

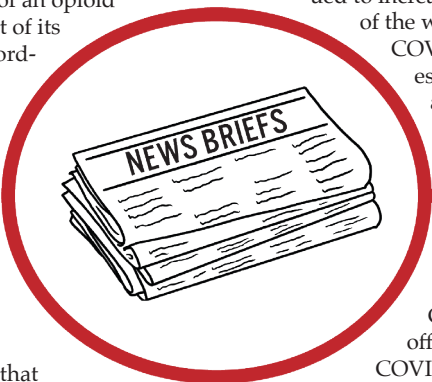
The University of Montana concluded its seven-year “Campaign Montana - Think Big. Be Bold” fundraising campaign after raising over \$450 million from nearly 35,000 donors. The campaign exceeded all goals set by the University and reached a record number for higher education giving, according to a UM News release. The campaign began in 2013, with a quiet period of five years, before being publicly launched in 2018. The goal set in the campaign’s final year amounted to \$440 million, which was already 10% higher than the goal set in 2018, according to the release. The money will be used for a variety of purposes from student scholarships and emergency support funds to constructing new buildings on campus to creating endowed faculty positions. More information on how the money will be used can be found on the campaign’s website.

## UM RECEIVES LARGEST RESEARCH AWARD IN ITS HISTORY

The National Institute of Health awarded UM a \$33.4 million award for a five-year development and clinical trials of an opioid vaccine. The award is the largest of its kind UM has ever received, according to a UM News release. The award was funded by the NIH HEAL Initiative, which aims to support scientific solutions to the national opioid health crisis. UM’s Center for Translational Medicine team will be able to start phase one clinical trials with the money. UM Vice President for Research and Creative Scholarship Scott Whittenburg said in the release that drug addiction is an issue in Montana and roughly half of all drug overdose deaths in the state are from opioids. “The development of an adjuvant vaccine for treatment of opioid addiction is key to overcoming a major health issue for the state,” Whittenburg said in the release.

## CURRY STARTS COVID-19 SATURDAY CLINIC

Curry Health Center started a Saturday COVID-19 testing clinic on Oct. 3, according to a UM email, as demand for testing continued to increase. Coming out of the weekend, UM’s COVID-19 active cases were at 108 with an average of six close contacts per positive case, according to the health department dashboard. Curry Health Center is still offering free COVID-19 tests to students and encourages anybody with symptoms to come and get tested, even if the student believes they just have a cold or allergies. Symptoms include dry cough, a fever, congested or runny nose and even nausea and vomiting.



For a full list of symptoms and information about Curry’s COVID-19 response, go to the health center’s website. To set up a testing appointment call (406) 243-2122.

## MANSFIELD CENTER STARTS LECTURE SERIES WITH RBG DISCUSSION

UM Blewett School of Law and the Mansfield Center are co-hosting the first of the center’s Fall Virtual Lecture Series with a discussion about the legacy of Ruth Bader Ginsburg on Thursday Oct. 8. University of Washington Law Professor Elizabeth Porter, who was Ginsburg’s office aide from 2002-2003, will speak with UM Law Professor Anthony Johnstone on the Zoom event, according to the Mansfield Center’s website. A new virtual lecture will be hosted nearly every Wednesday for the rest of the semester, with the next one on Wednesday, Oct. 14 with the author of “Never Trump: The Revolt of Conservative Elites” and UM Political Science Professor Rob Saldin. Each lecture is at 7 p.m. and free registration can be found on the website.

# Blotter: Wine, cigarettes and stolen bikes

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Since last week’s blotter, UMPD reported 10 crimes on and around campus. Disorderly conduct was the most common crime, second to criminal mischief, though the pair usually appeared on the crime log together.

## 9/23: WINE NIGHT?

RAs doing rounds in Craig Hall saw an underage student walking across the hall with a bottle of wine in their hands. UMPD was not called to the scene, and nobody from UM Housing reportedly found any wine, but the student was referred for a UM conduct violation anyway.

## 9/27 NO SMOKES FOR YOU

UMPD responded to a caller from Helena Court on Sunday evening after a suspicious person came into the neighborhood. A man

repeatedly asked the resident there for a cigarette and the resident refused. The suspect then started to threaten him and said he would “kick his ass.” The suspect left after the altercation, and UMPD couldn’t locate him.

## 9/27 SMASHED GLASS

Multiple late-night 911 calls reported a man attacking a car in Bannack Court. He reportedly smashed three of four windows on the car belonging to a person he knew. UMPD responded and reported over \$1,500 worth of damage, making the offense a felony. The police also identified the suspect and have issued a citation.

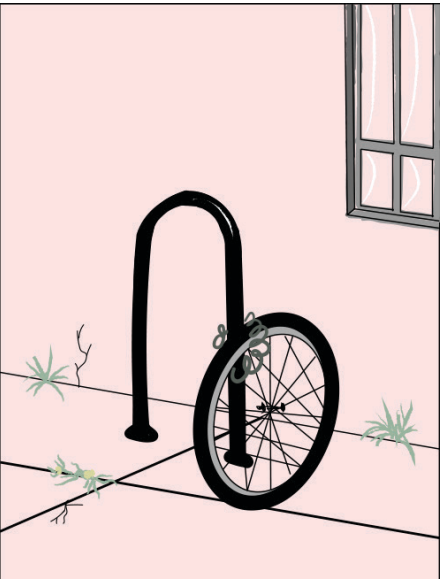
## 9/30: COVID-19 CRUISING

UMPD started a program for COVID-19 positive students to borrow a car they can take to a quarantine and isolation space. The

several cars are delivered contactlessly, and after a patient leaves the car, it sits for 24 hours. Then the car is sanitized using a fog-like disinfectant spraying device. These cars are only for people who feel comfortable driving, and have a driver’s license. Students who test positive for COVID-19 can still request a ride from a UMPD officer.

## 10/1: THAT’S A FAMILIAR BIKE

A student walking near the Oval noticed a passing cyclist with a bike very similar to his own, which was parked at the front of the University Center. He went to check on his bike and found that someone busted through his chain lock and took off with it. Later in the day, the student saw the bike thief still cruising around campus, and chased him all the way to the parking garage, but could not catch up to his bike. UMPD recommends using a “U-Lock” when securing a bike, and to register bikes with the department.



COLTON ROTHWELL | MONTANA KAIMIN

### The Weekly Crossword

by Margie E. Burke

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				26		27					28	29	30	31
32	33	34				35				36				
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53	54	55	56							57				
58						59		60		61				
62						63				64				
65						66				67				

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**ACROSS**

1 Give and take?

5 Drilling grp.

9 Express gratitude to

14 Hit the road

15 Tennis whiz

16 Spine-tingling

17 Mythical ship

18 Ration

19 Wrinkled plum

20 Cranky complainer

22 Don Juan, e.g.

24 Eagle's nest, alt.

25 Chilling, say

26 \_\_\_\_\_ of limitations

28 "On the double!"

32 Treated badly

35 Cry loudly

36 Pool member

37 Kerr of "The King and I"

39 "Eat Pray Love" star

41 Forest forager

42 Personal take, for short

44 Even though

45 Agile

46 Glass raiser

48 Cotillion honoree

49 Type of pitch

53 Shakespeare specialties

57 Candle feature

58 Pertaining to the ear

59 Chew (on)

61 She played Sabrina in the '70s

62 Up to

63 Top spot

64 Who follower

65 Short-tempered

66 Can't do without

67 Cousin of a gull

**DOWN**

1 Old West transport

2 Fret

3 Prophecy

4 Kind of note

5 Ewe's mate

6 Spotted wildcat

7 Bacterial infection

8 One who's owed

9 Plains dwelling

10 The lady's

11 Lily variety

12 One of three in 1492

13 Razor-sharp

21 One of the Fondas

23 Arctic vessel

27 Made into a movie, say

28 18-34, for example

29 Withered

30 "Nay" sayer

31 Annoyance

32 Combines

33 Car alarm?

34 Lyft rival

38 Rowdy youth

40 Sanction

43 Chemical bonding number

47 Kind of oil

48 Snake's underside

50 Shove off

51 "Door's open!"

52 Hard-nosed

53 Lacking slack

54 Ancient letter

55 Star anagram

56 Horse's walk

60 Tie the knot

Horoscope

# Escape with the help of the stars

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NAT BRANCACCIO | MONTANA KAIMIN

It really is week *eight* of the semester. Montana’s COVID-19 cases are breaking daily records, the last presidential debate was a shit show and midterm grades are starting to trickle in. You know where we’d rather be? Anywhere but here. Let’s combat this mounting sense of dread with a little escape fantasy, as a treat.

**LIBRA (SEP. 23-OCT. 22):** It’s 10 a.m. and you’re at a business brunch filled with all the execs you’re going to floor with your presentation. You’re in a freshly pressed pantsuit with pointed heels that perfectly complement the color scheme of the entire outfit. You’ve prepared the exact right amount for this.

**SCORPIO (OCT. 23-NOV. 21):** We know you, Scorpio. We know that you dream of driving to the edge of a Norwegian fjord and looking off into the distance with melancholy. You stand there and let the salty ocean wind sting your face and hands. The cigarette in your fingers is getting damp. But you’ve never felt more alive.

**SAGITTARIUS (NOV. 22-DEC. 22):** You’re sitting in your chic apartment decorated with tapestries and world maps. You’ve just gotten off the phone with a sponsor for your next European travel tour, who’s offered to pay for a trip extension. Now, you’ll have time to visit that exclusive German nightclub you’ve always wanted to try. But first, you need to update your itinerary.

**CAPRICORN (DEC. 23-JAN. 19):** It’s Thanksgiving, and you’re bringing home your partner to meet your family for the first time. You play Pictionary after stuffing yourself with turkey, and snow falls softly outside. There’s Baileys in your eggnog.

**AQUARIUS (JAN. 20-FEB. 18):** A log cabin, a stimulating novel, a crackling fireplace. Maybe some strong Irish whiskey and a dark leather chair as well.

**PISCES (FEB. 19-MARCH 20):** We know you’re on cottagecore TikTok, Pisces. And we’re gonna be sure to reflect that here. Just picture the “bling” effect over this whole picture: A quiet, misty morning in your Seattle cabin. You’re exploring

a national forest with your golden retriever Spot. There’s lots of flannel and Patagonia. Maybe a child named after an object found in nature, like Stone or Acorn.

**ARIES (MARCH 21-APRIL 19):** Dropping out and forming a band. That’s it. That’s the fantasy.

**TAURUS (APRIL 20-MAY 20):** For all your practicality and pragmatism, Taurus, we know you’ve always secretly wondered what it would be like to sell all your belongings, use the proceeds to buy a guitar and move into a hippie van. Straight up “Into the Wild”-style. Denouncing material possession could be the solution to all your problems. Just make sure you stay in touch with your family, okay?

**GEMINI (MAY 21-JUNE 20):** Gemini, you have a whole-ass portfolio of escape fantasies to pair with whatever mood you’re in on a given day. In the rotation now is the one where you walk into a coffee shop and have a love-at-first-sight moment with Tom Holland, who’s there because he’s filming something in your city (This isn’t gender-specific, either; Tom Holland transcends sexuality).

**CANCER (JUNE 21-JULY 22):** You know that Robert Frost poem? The woods are lovely, dark and deep? That’s where you are, Cancer. You’re in those woods. The snow is absorbing and silent and peaceful, and your horse is a bit more content than Frost’s was.

**LEO (JULY 23-AUG. 22):** You’re walking across campus one day when the casting director for a new “Harry Potter” reboot spots you in a sea of socially-distant students. Oh, my god. It’s you, Leo. Exactly the fit for that star role they’ve been searching for. Hopefully you won’t mind being swept up then and there into a life of fame and fortune.

**VIRGO (AUG. 23-SEP. 22):** You’re a fashion editor in New York City. You have a young intern with whom you’re tough but fair, so she may one day fill your shoes. Perhaps you seem like the villain, but really, aren’t you the hero? Come to think of it, this is “The Devil Wears Prada.” You are Meryl Streep in “The Devil Wears Prada.”

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# Students placed in quarantine housing face poor WiFi, unsafe conditions

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As University of Montana COVID-19 numbers continue to rise, students placed in University quarantine and isolation apartments have struggled with insufficient WiFi, broken door locks, inconsistencies with food and unclean rooms.

The University’s housing has reached 75% capacity, according to a UM official, the result of steady increase of campus case reports in recent weeks.

Talia Price, a UM freshman, was placed in quarantine on Sept. 15 after she was identified as a close contact. Price stayed in the Sisson Apartments at the University Villages, where she ran into several issues with WiFi, cleanliness and security of the apartment.

Price was provided with a Verizon Jetpack for WiFi, but it wasn’t sufficient. She received another Verizon Jetpack, but she said the connection was never great. She had to sit in her car next to Break Espresso so she could use its WiFi to take a test.

Jaden Derosa, a sophomore, tested positive and was placed in Elliot Village in the University Villages on Sept. 15. Students who test positive for the virus can be placed in isolation with other students who have tested positive, but those in quarantine are alone. Derosa did not have a roommate, though.

Derosa also struggled with the WiFi, which connected well enough for websites like Moodle, but not for Zoom. During the last few days in isolation the WiFi was too poor for him to attend his Zoom classes.

Ryan Martin, the quarantine and isolation (Q/I) manager at , acknowledged the Verizon Jetpacks did not work as expected. He attributed some of the WiFi issues to the location of the apartments near Mt. Sentinel and to some of the older apartments with concrete walls.

Martin said the University has been working with Charter to install a modem in each of the apartments to provide reliable WiFi. He said the installation could be finished by this week.

He said students experiencing issues in quarantine or isolation have been troubleshooting with staff like himself and can be moved if necessary.

Martin said that between his cell phone, the housing staff on call and the call desk of the apartments, students in quarantine and isolation have 24-hour assistance.

Price said there was also dirt on the floor and the sink, toilet and shower were all dirty when she arrived.

“It just seemed like nothing was really cleaned prior to me coming,” Price said.

Martin said all apartments were cleaned when they were initially set aside this summer. He said the lack of cleanliness in some of them is likely because they sat untouched for a few months.

Martin also said the University hired an outside cleaning company to clean the spaces before additional cleaning and restocking is completed.

Derosa said his experience was alright, but his apartment was not completely clean either, with a dirty floor, dirty sheets and dirty plates. Derosa brought his own bedding, and he did not think to notify the University about the plates or sheets.

“I mean there’s no way,” Martin said. “We wouldn’t let somebody in there with used sheets and used plates.”

Derosa said he had more than enough food with the 7-day meal kit from Campus Dining. But Price said if her boyfriend hadn’t brought her groceries she would not have had enough food.

Martin said Campus Dining added fresh foods to the 7-day meal kit after feedback from students, along with a daily hot lunch. If a student is running low on food they just need to resubmit the online form for the meal kit. There is no added cost for the food provided, Martin said.

Price said she only had curtains in one of the bedrooms and that one of the outside doors had a broken lock.

“There’s huge windows, in the living room,



University of Montana Elliot Villages apartments on Oct. 5, 2020. Apartments in the Elliot Villages and the Sisson complex are being used to house students in quartantine and isolation. SARA DIGGINS| MONTANA KAIMIN

in the bedroom, in the kitchen and there’s just windows pretty much everywhere, and so like at night I really couldn’t have my lights on because I’m a girl living in an apartment by myself,” Price said. “So I was a little scared.”

Price reached out to Martin about the lack of curtains, and she said she received some “makeshift” curtains. The lock was also repaired within a few days.

Martin acknowledged that some students did not have a good experience, especially those at the beginning of the semester, but he said the University has worked to fix any issues as quickly as possible.

“As the process started we definitely found some issues, students let us know and we definitely appreciate the feedback,” Martin said. “If we don’t hear what the issues are, we can’t fix them.”

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Find ballot and voting information at [MissoulaVotes.com](http://MissoulaVotes.com).

**Mountain Line**

(406) 721-3333 [www.mountainline.com/mill-levy](http://www.mountainline.com/mill-levy)

# Wrongful conviction walkout highlights Montana justice system failures

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Chants echoed around downtown Missoula as people marched with the Montana Innocence Project in a walkout against wrongful convictions Friday evening.

The group paired with the non-profit Welcome Home and traveled between the University of Montana Law School and the Missoula County Courthouse, talking about the failures in the justice system.

“When somebody is wrongfully convicted and incarcerated, they don’t just go missing from their everyday lives, they go missing from their families, and their communities suffer for their loss as well,” Amy Sings In The Timber, director of the project, said. “The thing that’s really incredibly important is the tremendous toll that it takes not only on wrongfully convicted individuals and their families and on their communities.”

Oct. 2 was the annual International Wrongful Conviction Day, and the walkers addressed a need for more accountability in the justice system. Sings In The Timber said a lot of people are not aware of the issue.

The Montana Innocence Project appeals cases in Montana that it investigated and found to be invalid and they work to exonerate wrongfully convicted people. Sings In The Timber said many cases are processed without the correct evidence, or victims are forced into a confession for something they did not do.

“I think for the most part when somebody sees someone in jail, everybody just sort of assumes that that’s where they belong,” Sings In The Timber said. “I think there’s a lot more to that.”

The Montana Innocence Project is a member of the 68 innocence network organizations worldwide.

The group works in the courtroom with a dozen cases a year, arguing in many cases that the prosecution incorrectly charged the people in prison. It also lobbies in the Montana State Legislature with a goal of creating better justice policy that keeps local attorneys accountable.

Usually the group handles a dozen cases a year, but Sings In The Timber hopes the group can get some more funds this year to hire a full-time investigator to expand the amount of work they can do.



Marchers in the Walkout For Justice arrive at the Missoula County Courthouse on the evening of Oct. 2, 2020. The walkout, hosted by the Montana Innocence Project and Welcome Back, began at the Alexander Blewett III School of Law at the University of Montana and took marchers down Sixth Street, Higgins Avenue, and through downtown as they chanted and held signs to raise awareness for wrongful convictions. October 2 is International Wrongful Conviction Day. SARA DIGGINS | MONTANA KAIMIN

Welcome Home, The Montana Innocence Project’s partner, provides formerly incarcerated people a support system to help them stabilize in society.

“We feel like we’re the voice for those that are incarcerated and don’t have a voice,” organizer Benny Lacayo said. “We believe the justice system needs to change. The way it’s set up is for failure instead of for you to go back into society.”

Lacayo worked previously in Welcome Home helping men who had just left the prison system to reenter society. He said having a prison record is a major setback for people, and it restricts them from getting jobs as well as housing.

The event on Friday was a part of a nationwide walkout initiated by the Northern California Innocence Project. Originally, the groups planned for more in-person events throughout the day, but decided to just have the walk and move the other activities online.

One virtual event featured a fireside chat with Barry Beach, a wrongfully convicted man whose story helped launch the Innocence Project. Beach was convicted of first degree murder in 1979, even though there was missing evidence and he said his confession was coerced.

“The belief is that every crime gets this very meticulous, and well-thought out,

scientific investigation, and that’s not the case at all,” Beach said. “There has to be laws changed within our judicial system and by our legislators to restore the accountability to our prosecutors and law enforcement.”

Beach was charged in 1979 and served almost 30 years in prison. In 2008, a Dateline episode brought his case to the nationwide stage, and in 2011 a judge cleared him of the charges.

The Montana Supreme Court attempted to re-incarcerate Beach for years after that, before Gov. Steve Bullock lowered Beach’s sentence to time served.



# COUNTING THE VOTE

## The workers behind Missoula's election

STORY BY GRIFFEN SMITH  
PHOTOS BY MATTHEW TRYAN



Nathan Coyan lifted his right hand as he began the swearing in ceremony. In the quiet basement of the Missoula County Elections Office, a dozen other socially distanced clerks repeated his oath, took their seats and began counting.

It was 5 p.m. Tuesday, Sept. 22, and the office had just started counting a mail-in measure in the Lolo school district, asking voters to approve a \$22 million bond for a new elementary school.

The task was a relatively light one for the office, with just over 1,500 ballots to be counted. They moved quickly.

The room rumbled with the constant sounds of tearing paper as employees removed and verified ballots from the return envelopes. They moved like clockwork looking through packs of 25 ballots, sealing them in manila envelopes, and then receiving a new batch to be checked.

“The demand for the results are real,” Coyan said. “People want to know, even if the votes have already been placed.”

Coyan is an election worker for Missoula County. His job that night was to supervise a room of about 15 workers at Missoula's election office when counting votes. He knew tonight was a walk in the park, but anticipated a different scenario for Nov. 3, the presidential election.

“We will be working for days on this in November, but we probably will not have everyone counted by the end of election day,” Coyan said. “I was up till 3 a.m. on the night of the primary, and I had to come back at 8 a.m. the next morning.”

As November looms, the presence of the 2020 election sits like an itch just out of reach. It's constant, unavoidable and omnipresent. And perhaps for good reason, too: It will decide who wins Montana's House, Senate, and Governor's seat. The race for the Senate, in particular, has drawn national attention, as current Gov. Steve Bullock challenges incumbent Steve Daines. The winner would likely solidify which party controls the Senate in D.C.

In Missoula, the heart of it all is the Missoula County Elections Office. During June's primary, it responded to the pandemic with a new election system and a fraction of its usual employees.

Now, as Election Day approaches, the office is preparing to do it all again. Though President Donald Trump has publicly attacked the validity of mail-in elections, poll workers in Missoula County are confident in their election plan, and are bracing to process more ballots than ever before.



The November election may see the highest voter turnout in the history of Montana. According to the Montana Secretary of State, almost 100,000 more Montanans voted in the June 2020 primary than the 2018 primary, and registered voter turnout increased by 13%.

The election will be conducted primarily by mail-in voting, the first time for a Montana statewide election. In August, Gov. Bullock directed counties to choose whether to hold in-person voting or vote by mail, like the state did in June. Forty-six out of Montana's 56 counties, including major cities in the state, from Missoula to Bozeman and Billings, will distribute mail-in ballots.



Brad Seaman swears in an election judge for the Lolo school bond election on Sept. 22, 2020. Election judges issue ballots and help people fill out last-minute voter registration forms at polling places.

This initiative provoked a lawsuit from the Trump administration and several Republican groups that argued mail in-ballots are unconstitutional because they increase voter fraud. But on Sept. 30, a Missoula judge ruled in favor of Gov. Bullock's mail-in option, confirming the framework for the election.

“This case requires the Court to separate fact from fiction,” U.S. District Court Judge Dana L. Christensen stated in her ruling. “Some of the [Donald Trump For President's] claims is the contention that the upcoming election, both nationally and in Montana, will fall prey to widespread voter fraud. The evidence suggests, however, that this allegation, specifically in Montana, is a fiction.”

The court stated that not only is mail-in voting a safe election format, but said Montana has not seen a report of voter fraud in the last 20 years. Ballots in Montana are due by 8 p.m. Tuesday, Nov. 3, meaning that they must be in the election office's possession, not postmarked, by that time.

Bradley Seaman works as the head elections administrator for Missoula County. He started the position in March, but has been involved in organizing elections in Missoula since 2016.

Seaman, 36, said the election office primarily focuses on vote collection and counting, but also verifies petitions and directly registers voters. He explained how the pandemic interrupted the usual cycle of poll worker training.

“We were in the middle of election judge training in March, when we canceled it due to COVID-19,” Seaman said. “We had recruited about 650 election judges at the time, and were able to train almost 300 election judges, about half of our goal, then had to cancel.”

Election judges are responsible for issuing ballots and helping people fill out last-minute voter registration forms at polling places. They also ensure that all votes cast are authentic.

Most election judges are elderly. According to Seaman, the average age of a Missoula County poll worker during the 2018 midterms was 76. He said

some poll workers did not return for 2020 due to the risk of contracting COVID-19.

Workers' age also made training more difficult. While the office canceled in-person training in March, they moved online to supplement the already 300 poll workers who are planning to work this November.

“It's hard to train people online, especially because our demographic is normally not the best at online training,” Seaman said. “And it is critical that you know that job well.”

The Missoula poll worker age matched both state and national trends of elderly people continuing to come back and work elections, despite growing in age. According to a report from the Pew Research Center in April, 58% of the nation's poll workers are 61 or older.

Due to COVID-19, many poll workers in Missoula and around the country did not return to their job. Spring 2020 in-person voting primaries in Wisconsin, Texas, Georgia, and Kentucky closed hundreds of polling places due to a lack of workers, causing hours of delays.

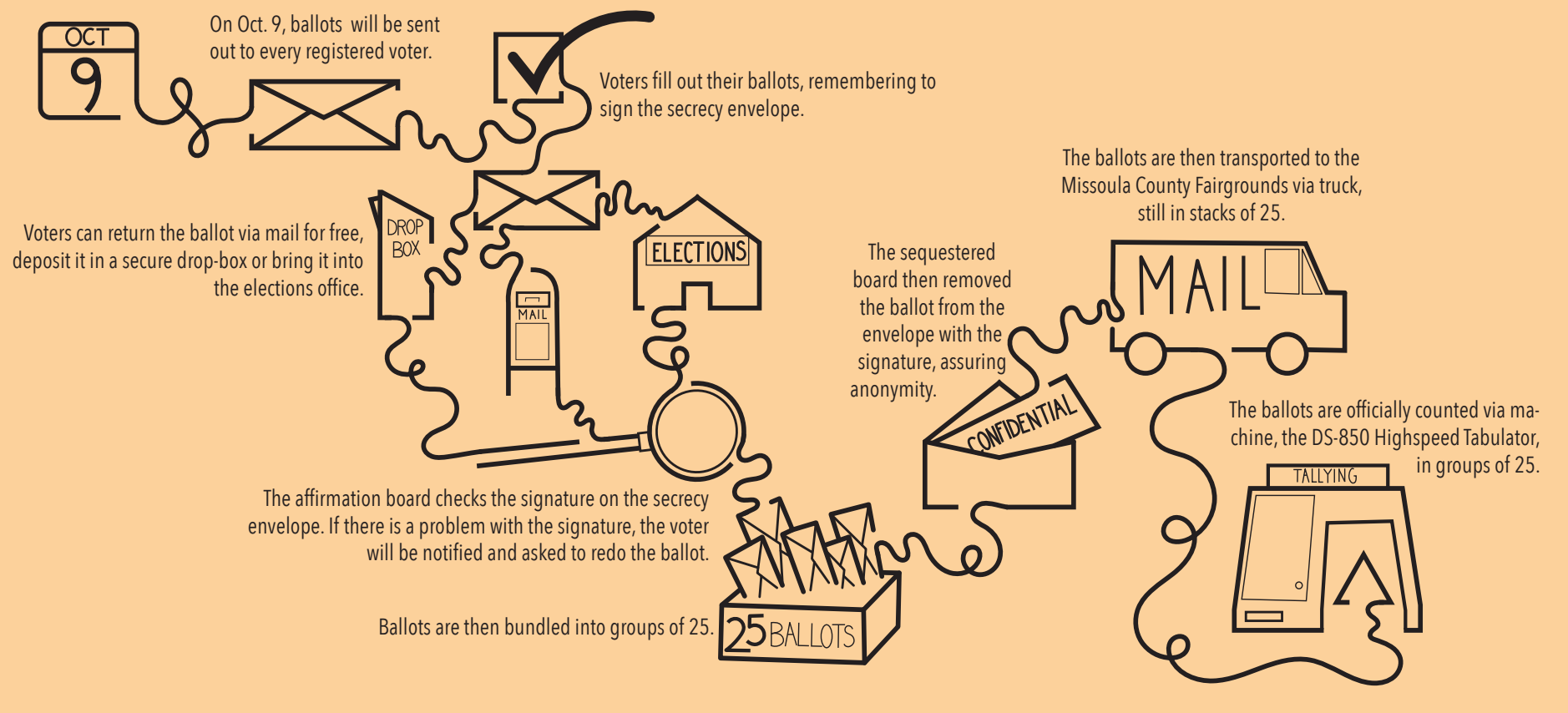
Poll workers are needed across the county, but Seaman said the optional mail-in ballot gives Montana a solution: Only a quarter of election workers are needed for a mail-in election, and they know how to run it.

It helps that Missoula County is no stranger to absentee voting. According to the Federal General Election statistics from 2016, 72% of Missoula County voted by mail for the last presidential election.

Now, the traditional dozen or so polling stations, each staffed with seven or eight people, will be replaced with about 200 election workers separated into two groups, those who count the votes and those who collect the ballots.

A normal election shift lasts roughly 14 hours, with the exception of senior citizens, who can opt into a seven-hour shift. Despite the long hours, most workers in Missoula continue to come back and serve as election judges.





SARA DIGGINS| MONTANA KAIMIN

Geoff Badenoch, now retired, will monitor a ballot drop-off station at the Clearwater Credit Union on Reserve Street. Since his start as an election judge in 2006, Badenoch, 66, has managed several polling places across Missoula.

For 2020, all ballots in Missoula County can be mailed back to the election office with no charge, but Badenoch added that there are three other ways a person can submit a ballot.

“You could go and cast your ballot [in person] at the election office, you can deliver that envelope to the election center, and lastly you can go to one of the many drop boxes that are going to be around the community and staffed by poll workers,” Badenoch said. “We’re committed to making sure that the voters know that our elections are fair, and their votes are safe and secure.”

Drop-off location workers will guard the ballot box and will return all the votes to the office on election day. If a person tampers with the box, or if the ballots are damaged, the county would have to contact the voters and make them fill out a new form.

Badenoch said he first voted in the 1972 election, when he was a freshman at UM. He said he loved being able to express himself by voting, and never missed an election since. He realized almost two decades ago that he could share his passion for voting by helping others.

“The whole reason for voting has been important to me my whole life, but helping people vote became really important to me too,” Badenoch said.

In 2008, he decided to help manage the polling

place at UM’s University Center. He saw voters field all sorts of complications. Many students had forgotten to change their addresses, some had already requested an absentee ballot, and some had not registered at all.

While Badenoch and the other poll workers refused these students a normal vote, they asked them to fill out provisional ballots, which would be confirmed later. The effort, Badenoch said, allowed more people to cast a vote, even if it required extra work.

“If there was something wrong with someone’s vot-

ing, we’re not going to just tell them, ‘No.’ We’re going to tell them, ‘If things check out, we’ll count your vote,’” Badenoch said. “The goal is to get every registered, eligible voter who wants to vote.”

Voters can drop off ballots at locations across Missoula County (see page 11 graphic) on election day Nov. 3 between 7 a.m. and 8 p.m., and voters can submit ballots on behalf of others.

A state law passed in 2018 originally restricted the amount of ballots a single person could drop off, but in

September the Montana Supreme Court ruled against the law, stating it discriminated against rural and tribal communities.

“While the majority of Montanans can easily access the vote by mail process by either mailing in their ballots or dropping their ballots off at election offices, Native Americans living on reservations rely heavily on ballot collection efforts in order to vote in elections,” Yellowstone District Court Judge Jessica Fehr wrote.

Fehr added that lack of traditional mailing addresses, regular mail service, geographic isolation, and a difficulty to travel restrict the options many Montanans have to submitting a vote. The document also stated the state’s methods to process ballots makes it almost impossible to forge votes.

While Badenoch will be greeting voters at the polls, most of this year’s election workers will be behind the scenes counting off incoming votes. The verification process sends ballots through at least a dozen different hands on the way to being recorded.

This group counts ballots and rejects forms that contain missing or incorrect information like a signature, which has to match an on-file record. Seaman explained that other workers at the office track down the people who entered rejected ballots.

“We’re going to reach out to that voter to let them know that we could not accept that ballot, and we’re going to send them a letter, an email, and a phone call,” Seaman said. “That’s important, because we do that every single day to help make sure that there’s enough time for voters to get notified of an error and get it corrected.”

After verifying the ballot, the affirmation board groups the forms into stacks of 25 and sends them to

“I don’t think people understand how much work goes into putting on an election, it’s very time consuming, and it’s very labor intensive. I also don’t think people realize how many checks on the system,” - Sarah Polumsky



Lillin Wenger and Blanche Tate verify ballots for the Lolo school bond election on Sept. 22, 2020. The duo worked on the sequester board, which focuses on verifying and removing personal identification information, such as a signature.

the second group, known as the sequestered board. They remove the signature on the vote, making it anonymous.

During the Lolo school election, Coyan directed the sequestered board in the election office basement. They wore gloves to keep ink off their hands as they handled the ballots.

Coyan organized the event, but many of the workers already knew what to do. It was business as usual, and when they finished removing any identifying information, they packed the ballots into large cardboard boxes.

Election officials then pick up and drive the ballots to their final stage — the fairgrounds, where the official count is done on machines. The machine, a DS-850 high speed tabulator, whips ballots through an entry tray and rapidly scans in groups of 25.

Sarah Polumsky will work in the counting center for the 2020 election. She first discovered the job on a Facebook ad in 2016, and fell in love with it.

“I love politics, I love the voting process and I’m a stay-at-home mom,” Polumsky, 27, said. “This was a perfect way for me to be involved in something that I’m passionate about and still only work a couple days a year.”

Polumsky worked in a Missoula polling place during the 2016 election. She worked the shift from

7 a.m. to 8 p.m., but the counting process was not over, and a relief team was needed to finish the job. Polumsky jumped on board, and counted through the night.

“I worked 30 hours straight,” Polumski said. “After my 12-hour shift as a polling judge, I came home for six hours, then found out they needed a relief crew.”

“We can pull some really long shifts,” she added. “The energy in there was really great.”

Since then, Polumsky has worked as a runner in the counting center. She continually delivered stacks of ballots to election judges operating the counting machines. While she loves the job, she wished more people had faith in the election system.

“I don’t think people understand how much work goes into putting on an election, it’s very time consuming, and it’s very labor-intensive,” Polumski said. “I also don’t think people realize how many checks are on the system.”

Each counting machine is operated by two judges and supported by a several-person team. Their jobs are to transport ballots, finalize the results, and settle disagreements on the ballot paper.

“To get rid of bias, our decision teams are made up of three people, all from other parties,” Seaman said. “Two of them have to agree on something in order to finalize the ballot, which is a very democratic process.”

If there is no logical conclusion, the board would reject the ballot.

The machine connects to Missoula County’s USB sticks and finalizes the tally on an offline computer. The paper ballots are not needed anymore, but are sealed in boxes in case of the need for a state audit or recount.

## BALLOT DROP-OFF LOCATIONS: OPEN 7 A.M. TO 8 P.M. ON ELECTION DAY ONLY

○ Clearwater Credit Union (Reserve Street)	○ McCormick Park	○ Seeley Lake Elementary School
○ Clinton Community Center	○ Missoula Early Learning Center	○ Spring Meadows Fire Station
○ Frenchtown Fire Station	○ Missoula Fairgrounds	○ University of Montana - Adams Center
○ Lolo Elementary School	○ Potomac-Greenough Communication Center	○ Missoula Elections office on Russell Street (Open weekdays 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. starting Oct. 5.)

During the Lolo school bond vote in September, Seaman worked directly with the counting machine laying down ballots on the paper insert tray. The group only used one machine, which tabulated hundreds of ballots in less than 30 minutes.

The nearly empty room stood quiet with the occasional rattle of the counter in the corner, a juxtaposition to the anticipated buzz of the maximum-capacity general election night.

“In November, we will fill this room with six machines,” Seaman said. “It will be bustling.”

The office hired additional people in the last month to work in the counting process, but even then the counting process will take time. In the primary, Missoula County counted ballots until at least 3 a.m., and still had more to do the next morning.

The general election will likely be an even longer process, but as a part of Montana state law, the election office can start counting ballots the week before election day, which Seaman said would start on Thursday, Oct. 29.

Poll workers will count ballots that week every day from 8 a.m. until midnight, and then start over the next morning. This process will be repeated until every vote is counted, no matter how many days it takes. Then, the election office will announce the winner.

Seaman said that there have been plenty of times the results of an election were not known immediately after, but every time, each of the votes have been counted. He is confident for November.

“We have had the fortunate experience of having just run in the election in a similar capacity like in the primary,” Seaman said. “I know that this is going to be a lot larger than will work in the staff up for that, but it’s not exactly a brand new territory for us.”

To register to vote, visit the Missoula County registration website here. Montana is one of a few states that allow residents to register to vote all the way until election day. People must have a valid form of ID and a Montana address. Please vote.



# From theater to couch: Montana Film Festival goes virtual

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The Montana Film Festival, hosted by the Roxy, is making a triumphant, digital return. As COVID-19 kneecaps independent and corporate movie theaters around the country, this year’s film festival is meant to be enjoyed from the comfort of home.

For the first time in its six-year history, the festival is all online. A \$20 pass includes unlimited access to 28 movies, some that are making their world or Montana premieres, chosen by Roxy staff and festival director Alana Waksman. Four of the feature films, “Cowboys,” “Two Eyes,” “Sophie Jones” and “Shiva Baby,” are regionally locked for Montana viewers and have a limited number of tickets.

“It’s as similar as you can get to showing the film in person at our theater,” Waksman said. The Montana Film Festival is the Roxy’s latest effort to keep business going without breaching safety by showing movies indoors. In April, just after the state’s lockdown order, the theater had to quickly shift its annual Wildlife Film Festival from in-person to online.

Roxy staff initially considered canceling the Montana Film Festival, but soon collected the best practices and platforms for local screenings from other festivals around the country and world. Waksman believed that making the festival happen in some form was better than not doing it at all.

“We have a lot of great films we can share,” Waksman said. “Even though so much of the sparkle of the Montana Film Festival is the in-person connection.”

Waksman acknowledged that not all audience members will find a virtual premiere as easy to access, but Roxy staff are doing their best to give everyone who appreciates movies quick, easy and fun access to the festival’s showcase. Online, the festival will see the benefit of reaching a larger audience well beyond Missoula.

“We’re trying to really emphasize curating a wide variety of voices and perspectives that might not otherwise come to Montana,” Waksman said. “We work really hard to provide content that feels meaningful to us that we hope will enrich or open your mind.”



## ‘Two Eyes,’ directed by Travis Fine

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Three states, three groups of people and three moments in time make up “Two Eyes.”

Dihlon (Benjamin Rigby) is an artist seeking his muse in the “untouched” Montana wilderness of the 1800s. Gabryal (Uly Schlesinger) and Alasen (Jessica Allain) are teenagers grappling with life in 1970s Barstow, California. And Jalin (Ryan Cassata) is a transgender teenager and musician recovering from a suicide attempt in Wyoming, 2020.

All the characters deal with gender and sexual norms as they make an intergenerational journey through art, loss and love. Director Travis Fine skillfully uses the talents of Montana-based actors Lily Gladstone and Sam Enemy Hunter. “Two Eyes” made its world premiere at Outfest and is screening for the first time in Montana, where it was partially filmed.



## ‘Freeland,’ directed by Mario Furloni and Kate McLean

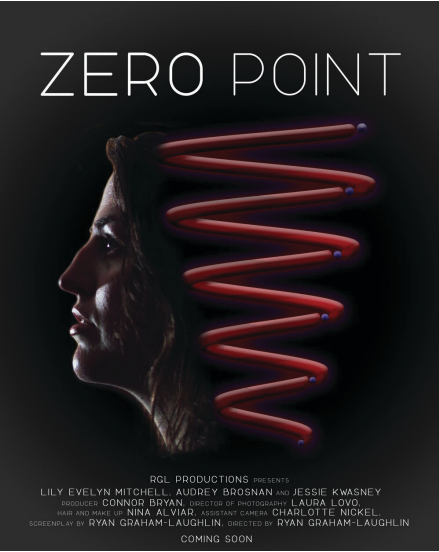
JAMES BRADLEY  
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“Freeland” is a weed-hazed feature-length film with beautiful and dramatic flair. It stars Krisha Fairchild as Devi Adler, an old-school Northern California pot farmer whose life has stretched from a time of free love and cheap grass to legalization.

The story begins when the county fines her tens of thousands of dollars for growing illegal weed. Her distribution network collapses as news of the fine leaks to the press, and her employees turn on her when she can no longer pay them. Lost and alone, Adler spirals into madness and paranoia.

Directors Mario Furloni and Kate McLean are known for making documentaries, a style on display in “Freeland.” The camera cuts to serene Ponderosa pine forests and moves through haphazardly placed marijuana plants.

The actors put on a stellar performance — especially Fairchild, who plays up Adler’s emotions. “Freeland,” a slow, smoldering burn not unlike that of a joint, is a fun and engaging film.



## ‘Zero Point,’ directed by Ryan Graham-Laughlin

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In the thriller “Zero Point,” Griffyn, played by Lily Evelyn Mitchell, is a veteran, just back from the battlefield, who dabbles in psychedelics (“dabble” here means drinking an entire cup of mushroom tea and eating another mushroom whole).

As she protects herself and those around her, she is haunted by past memories and visions of the future. The audience is drawn in to her battles with PTSD and tensions with her family members.

The colors of the film change from muted grays to vibrant hues as Griffyn moves through a dream-like world. An ambient soundscape fills the film with tension, as do themes of drug addiction, violence and grief.

This film was made in Montana, and Missoulians will recognize many locations around town and on the University of Montana campus. “Zero Point” brings viewers into its subtle mystery, inviting them to figure out what’s real and what isn’t.



## ‘Cold Pizza,’ directed by Clayton McDougall

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“Cold Pizza” feels like the side quest of a dorky minor character — the one we wondered about but quickly forgot after they left the screen.

Our loveable protagonist is just trying to deliver some pizzas to a weird location when everything goes wrong. It’s not funny, but it’s not sad, either. It just makes you just sit and say, “Huh,” when it’s over.

This Montana-made film is set against a beautiful snowy landscape of treacherous icy roads. The dialogue is fairly minimal, which makes the punchy one-liners even better.

Our sidekick-turned-main character has a great crew, including a grouchy but endearing old man who doesn’t understand technology, a fake friend with too much going on and sweet animal helpers in the form of geese. “Cold Pizza” is full of the archetypal characters we love and expect, but puts a boring twist on them that made us wonder, ‘Who’s really the main character, and who should be?’



## ‘RUINED IT,’ directed by Michael Patrick Kane

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“RUINED IT,” directed by Michael Patrick Kane and written by John Budge, is a tongue-in-cheek short film rooted in contradiction.

The black-and-white comedy focuses on two old-timers clad in flannel shirts and suspenders who sip beers and reminisce



## ‘Rubber and Glue,’ directed by Cat Dale

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“Rubber and Glue” packs the perfect amount of dystopia into a short film. The pandemic-era face shields feel a little too close to home, but otherwise, the movie serves as a reminder that things can always get more Orwellian. We know, hard to believe.

In the near future, a young woman undergoes experimental procedures to get rid of her empathy. The action unfolds in a prison-like hospital, with brief respite scenes in nature, providing sharp contrasts between fiction and reality.

Flashing images, like blurs from half-remembered flashbacks, try to reveal what part of the film is set in reality and what is set in the mind. Beautiful and detailed cinematography never stops giving us variety.

“Rubber and Glue,” which is having its world premiere, looks like it was made with an HBO-calibre budget. There are twists around every corner, plus a surprise ending that made us want to watch it a dozen more times.



## ‘Shiva Baby,’ directed by Emma Seligman

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“Shiva Baby,” which screened at the Toronto International Film Festival earlier this year, is one of the festival’s “region-locked” selections, only available to local viewers.

Based on a short film directed by Emma Seligman made in college, this feature-length coming-of-age comedy-drama (the elusive “dramedy”) takes place almost entirely in one location. The film follows Danielle (Rachel Sennott), a struggling college student forced to sit shiva, the extended Jewish mourning ritual, for a family friend. The get-together turns awkward quickly when Danielle runs into her sugar daddy, Max (Danny Defari), and finds out he’s a married father.

Thus begins her mission to assess Danielle’s relationship with Max while keeping it all a secret from other mourners. Meanwhile, she contemplates her post-graduation future.

Supporting actors include Molly Gordon (“Good Boys”) as Danielle’s ex-girlfriend, Dianna Agron (“Glee”) as Max’s wife, and Polly Draper (“Thirtysomething”) and Woody Allen regular Fred Melamed as Danielle’s obsessive mother and dim-witted dad. The film is co-produced by Lizzie Shapiro, who worked on last year’s Montana-based selection, “Mickey and the Bear.”



# Missoula fitness centers see increase in public land use

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As the COVID-19 pandemic continues to impact the Missoula fitness industry, the fitness director at the University of Montana has observed an increase of people utilizing public lands for fitness.

“We have noticed many people recreating outdoors in the community,” director Kelsey Whittaker said. “There has also been quite a decrease in program participation at Campus Recreation as well as general memberships. We firmly believe that folks simply aren’t comfortable working out indoors.”

Whittaker has allowed her instructors the choice to offer classes outdoors. Currently, yoga classes are being held on a grass field near the Kim Williams Trail, which is owned by the city.

Off campus, too, Missoula gyms and clubs are moving their workouts to public parks, streets and trails to help keep business open.

At the beginning of marathon season, on March 15, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention issued a directive preventing gathering in groups of more than 50 people. This affected all of the 1,600 members of Run Wild Missoula, a local running group that organizes races, group runs and seminars.

“This year was looking really good,” Tony Banovich, executive director of Run Wild Missoula, said. “Good numbers, marathon registration was up. Then the running industry world basically collapsed on March 15.”

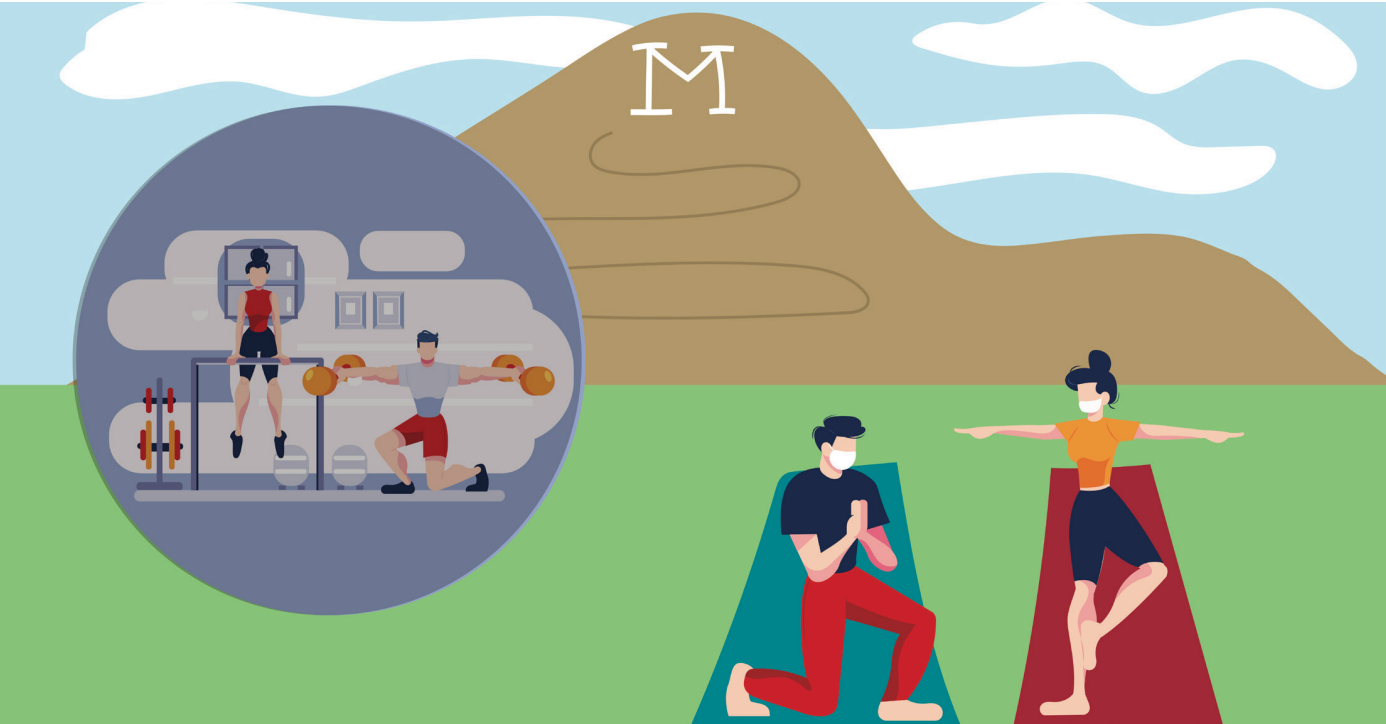
Banovich said Run Wild Missoula is fortunate enough to keep membership consistent by providing virtual classes and races. Run Wild Missoula held its first in-person race Saturday, Sept. 12 — keeping it small — located at Silver Park and Oregon Park at Allegiance Field.

Banovich hopes that the race acted as a good test.

“If COVID restrictions continue, we’ve got to figure out what opportunities work for us to do these events,” he said.

Pre-COVID-19, Fit to Fight, a non-profit cancer support organization in Missoula, held an eight-week mental and physical exercise program three times a year. The organization faces challenges because its clients are often at a high risk for infection.

Maddie Small, Fit to Fight’s clinical director, helped organize one of the group’s first sessions since the outbreak



NAT BRANCACCIO | MONTANA KAIMIN

of COVID-19. Instead of having clients indoors, Fit to Fight worked with the City of Missoula to host outdoor sessions at Fort Missoula Regional Park.

“We are adapting in being resilient to our current situation,” Small said.

For some gym owners in town, who didn’t have space or funds to clean properly, parks have felt like the only option.

“We were getting exhausted with virtual classes,” said Heather McMilin, co-owner of Monkey Bar Fitness, which, since May, has offered all its fitness classes outdoors.

As fall weather approaches, the question remains: What will gyms do when temperatures drop?

“We are under the positive assumption that our membership and participation will increase as the weather starts to turn colder,” Whittaker said. “We want to ensure that there are a safe number of people in our spaces to ensure social distancing and cleaning procedures.”

McMilin said that Monkey Bar Fitness hopes to hold outdoor fitness classes, even in the winter, or indoor classes with filtered air. The gym recently surveyed members to ask how many would be comfortable with limited workouts inside.

## MANSFIELD DIALOGUES

### Mansfield Center Fall Virtual Lecture Series

October 8 - December 16

7:00 PM via Zoom

Register at [umt.edu/mansfield](http://umt.edu/mansfield)



- 10/8 - The Legacy of Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg
- 10/14 - The Never Trump Revolt & the Future of American Democracy
- 10/21 - Jim Messina: An Insider Assessment of the 2020 Election
- 10/28 - Japan-U.S.-China: Japan's Indo-Pacific Diplomacy
- 11/4 - Election Post-Mortem
- 11/18 - The Myth of Chinese Capitalism
- 12/2 - Montana Legislative Session Preview
- 12/16 - Cold War Imperialism: U.S.-Backed Anticommunism Movements and The Jakarta Method



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# While UM sports are canceled, intramurals live on

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In a typical year, there are approximately 15 teams for each of the fall intramurals — soccer, football and volleyball. This year, though, there are only enough people for six soccer and football teams and five volleyball teams.

Natalie Hiller-Claridge, the senior assistant director of intramural sports and youth camps at the University of Montana campus recreation center, said that she could only speculate as to why fewer students have signed up this semester.

“I think that people will make a choice not to participate in activities with a risk of COVID, and with sports, the risk is there,” Hiller-Claridge said. “Coming to campus for sports is not a priority, and there are also less people on campus in general.”

The Big Sky Conference canceled all fall sports due to COVID-19 concerns, yet several of the coronavirus clusters on campus have been traced to UM athletics, as athletes in several sports continue to work out and practice together.

Intramurals, though, are run separately by the campus recreation center, and have been allowed to continue, even though a single game of soccer can put 22 or more players on the field.

Julian Emond, a second-year MBA student, said that he feels safe playing intramural sports this year despite the risks of COVID-19 risks because of the safety measures put in place by campus recreation.

According to Hiller-Claridge, these precautions include practicing and competing outdoors, wearing masks (both players and spectators), cleaning balls and equipment, and pulling teams who have been exposed to COVID-19. Two teams, one volleyball team and one football team, were pulled out last week for potential exposure, she said.

Emond is an intramural soccer captain, and this is his ninth season participating

in sports organized by the campus recreation center. Emond has participated in intramural sports as an undergrad and now while in graduate school at UM, in both fall and spring sports. In addition to saying that he felt the season has been safe, Emond also said that changes haven’t been that noticeable.

“The atmosphere is so fun, and it’s a great way to meet up with friends and remain active right now,” Emond said. “It’s really the highlight of my week.”

Jennifer Kieffer, a senior sand-volleyball captain who has participated in intramural sports for the past three years, noticed a few general changes to the usual season. Normally, she said, the volleyball season goes longer, teams play inside and there are a lot more teams participating. Kieffer wondered if the outdoor setting might act as a deterrent.

“We’re playing through October, in the outdoors and at night, so I could see where that would be unappealing to some people,” Kieffer said.

However, she agreed with Emond that, overall, changes feel minimal.

“Once you’re there it doesn’t feel very different,” Kieffer said. “Everyone’s there playing and having fun. It really feels normal once you start playing.”

Emond said that he has appreciated that sense of normalcy this year, and that he hadn’t heard of any students who chose not to participate in intramurals due to coronavirus risks.

“All of my teammates have come back really enthusiastic to be playing again,” he said.

He commended Hiller-Claridge for her work in making this season of intramural sports possible. “She’s done a great job of allowing for us to still play this year while making it feel responsible and safe.”

The remainder of the fall intramural schedule can be found on the campus recreation page of UM’s website.



Free Agents Soccer defender Connor Thompson takes the ball from Ball is Life on Sept. 30, 2019, during a game between the two intramural teams. Intramural teams are run through the campus recreation center, so despite COVID-19 restrictions in other sports, they can continue playing.

LIAM MCCOLLUM | MONTANA KAIMIN





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