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THE BIG PICTURE

Students go abroad to report on Canada’s oil sands p.6
DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

ON A COLD January morning, two University of Montana School of Journalism students began their day in a basement workroom of the Capitol building in Helena. They looked at legislators’ plans for the day and grabbed their notebooks, audio recorders and phones. They went their separate ways to attend hearings, chat with lawmakers in the hallways, grab interviews and photographs, and read through bills.

When they met back in room 538 in mid-afternoon, they shared their piles of material with each other and their editor, ready to be reviewed, sorted, analyzed and processed into stories. Then they got busy with the work at hand, reporting the day’s news from the Legislature to more than 170 media outlets in Montana.

The J-School’s Legislative News Service has been around for nearly 30 years, but it looks much different than when it started.

In 2019, Shaylee Ragar and Tim Pierce wrote feature articles and briefs for daily and weekly newspapers, just as in earlier days. But then they filed radio reports. And they created text and audio stories and shot photographs for websites. They jumped on social media to cover breaking news and to direct people to their coverage.

Welcome to journalism in the 21st century. And meet the recent graduates of our alma mater who are adeptly traveling from one medium to the next, never missing a beat and never sacrificing the integrity or quality of their watchdog reporting.

I’m so proud of Shaylee and Tim and all our students. I’m proud of our faculty and staff who taught them to be scrappy and versatile. I’m gratified to see that we are successfully raising a generation of journalists who still seek the truth, ask the tough questions and now move seamlessly from platform to platform, knowing the demands and appropriate use of each.

When I look back on this year, I realize just how much we’ve accomplished. We’ve updated our curriculum to respond to changes in the profession. We’ve launched the Montana Media Lab at the School of Journalism so we can keep up with changes in technology and better connect with our community and the youth of Montana. We’ve won the top awards bestowed on college and professional journalists, and we’ve weathered a budget storm.

Now we turn to our next task, our merger into the newly named College of the Arts and Media. Most of you are aware that we’ve made an administrative change that puts us with the Schools of Theater and Dance, Music, and Visual and Media Arts. The move was official on July 1. Making this change saved our faculty and staff from the budget ax and has little impact on our students. We keep Don Anderson Hall, our name and—most important—our accredited curriculum. We continue to manage our own budget, our scholarships and our funding that comes from alums and friends like you.

We have ramped up our recruiting efforts in Montana and around the country, but we see troubling trends. High schools, especially in Montana, are dropping journalism curriculum and student newspapers. Students who are not exposed to journalism at school fail to see it as a career option. Parents fear there are few jobs in journalism and that those that are available will offer poor pay and unstable career paths.

Yet you tell us your journalism education built a foundation for success in whatever profession you’ve chosen. Our graduates hold top-notch journalism jobs, but they’re also successful in business, policy, nonprofits, marketing, public relations and corporate communications. You are human resource managers, novelists, law enforcement officials, attorneys, filmmakers and graphic designers.

You’ve learned to gather information, ask great questions, think critically, write quickly and well, embrace technology and think on your feet. One alumna told me this year she learned to be “scrappy” by attending the J-School and that scrappiness has served her well as the leader of Global Human Resources for Apple.

Please share your success story and help us share the good news about our 94% placement rate in a wide variety of jobs. Guest lecture on a journalism topic at a local high school and plug the UM School of Journalism. Write a guest editorial for your newspaper, tape a guest editorial for your local radio station or find a way to promote the value of a journalism education to young people in your sphere. And make sure you’re consuming the work of and financially supporting news organizations that matter to you.

This fall we will introduce our Alumni Ambassadors program, so be on the lookout for information on how you can get involved. Come see us at homecoming when we’ll have a formal launch of the Montana Media Lab. Follow us on social media and share the news you see there. Drop me a note with your ideas and suggestions.

As you read through these pages, you’ll find your J-School is as busy and productive as ever. We value your support and want you to help us move into the future as seamlessly as our students navigate this new world of journalism.

Denise Dowling
Director of the School of Journalism
COMMUNIQUÉ

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Ex-NatGeo editor, ‘Bundyville’ podcaster named as 2019-2020 Pollner Professors

A FORMER EDITOR of National Geographic and a freelance journalist who has earned accolades for her work covering armed militia protests will be the T. Anthony Pollner Distinguished Professors for the 2019-20 academic year at the University of Montana School of Journalism.

Leah Sottile will be the Pollner professor this fall, teaching a course in narrative writing and the business of freelance journalism. Her Pollner lecture will be on Oct. 7. Sottile began her career at The Pacific Northwest Inlander, an alternative weekly in Spokane, and for the past several years has written primarily about people on the fringes of society.

She has reported extensively on the group led by Ammon Bundy, who in 2016 took over the Malheur Wildlife Refuge in Oregon, and his father, Cliven Bundy, who directed a 2014 standoff in Nevada after a confrontation with federal agents over his refusal to pay grazing fees on federal land. Sottile’s work on the podcast “Bundyville” earned her and Oregon Public Radio a finalist award from the American Society of Magazine Editors. Her clients include The Washington Post, The Atlantic, Rolling Stone, Outside and Al Jazeera America.

In the spring, the Pollner Professor will be Chris Johns, who was editor-in-chief of National Geographic from 2005-2014. He began his career with National Geographic in 1995 as a photographer and had a variety of positions at the magazine before he became its editor. While Johns was serving as editor, the magazine won 23 National Magazine Awards, and in 2008 he was named magazine editor of the year.

Subsequent to that job, he was chief content officer and director of the Centers of Excellence for National Geographic Media. He now serves as program leader for National Geographic Society’s “Beyond Yellowstone” program, an assignment that will conclude at the end of this year. Johns will teach a course in conservation journalism, examining the powerful impact visual storytelling has had upon the conservation movement.

The two will follow 2018-19 Pollner Professors Ben Montgomery, an author and award-winning investigative reporter, and Preston Gannaway, a Pulitzer Prize-winning photojournalist.

Montgomery taught a fall seminar in investigative reporting, which featured in-person and virtual visits from some of the nation’s top reporters. But the moment he remembers best was when a student rushed into his office with a stack of papers under her arm.

“I got the search warrant,” Montgomery recalled her saying as she tried to catch her breath. “I can’t believe they gave it to me, but I got it.”

For Montgomery, the student’s exhilaration at catching a break on a story was “one beautiful payoff moment.” Of all the things he enjoyed about being at the J-School, that scene of “students getting it” best exemplified the value of the Pollner experience.

Before coming to UM to teach her spring seminar on long-form documentary photography, Gannaway had given lectures and taught workshops, but she had never taught a course before. She felt unsure and uneasy in the first few weeks, but then she had her own Pollner moment.

“At some point in the semester I realized the irony in teaching a class on intimacy and long-form documentary photography,” she wrote. “My effectiveness as a teacher was dependent on how well I could get to know the students individually. Building relationships with them was paramount. This wasn’t a three-day sprint, but a 15-week marathon.”

In the end, Gannaway said it’s the Pollner Professors who learn the most from their semester in the mountains. “I grew from every part of the experience,” she wrote, “from the earliest research and construction of the syllabus, to our lively classroom discussions, to getting an insider’s view of academia. I would have stayed if they’d let me!”

The Pollner professorship was created in 2001 by the family and friends of T. Anthony Pollner, a 1999 School of Journalism alumnus who died in a motorcycle accident. Dozens of renowned journalists have served as distinguished professors at the school since the program’s inception. In addition to teaching a course, the Pollner Professors also advise staff of the Montana Kaimin.
THE MONTANA MEDIA LAB at the UM School of Journalism is up and running and drawing big-time attention. It’s reaching beyond Missoula, too.

This spring, current and former J-school students teamed up with the Media Lab to teach audio storytelling and media literacy to students at Seeley-Swan High School in Seeley Lake, and Box Elder High School on the Rocky Boy’s Reservation. In the process, students at Seeley-Swan produced audio profiles about people in their community for potential broadcast on Montana Public Radio. And Box Elder students created a podcast episode on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women to submit to NPR’s nationwide Student Podcast Challenge.

Back in Missoula, the Lab co-sponsored several February DocShop panels with the Big Sky Documentary Film Festival. They featured video producers and curators from The New York Times Op-Docs, Atlantic Studios, PBS American Experience and AJ+ (Al Jazeera’s online news channel). Panelists talked with students and festival attendees about how to create online content that rises above the din of the 24/7 news cycle.

In April, journalists from across the state came to the J-School to learn how to use Facebook more effectively in their reporting. Offered by the Society of Professional Journalists and Facebook, this free training taught attendees how to track users and followers and best practices for videos and photos on social media.

Then this summer, the Media Lab offered a full lineup of workshops covering everything from podcasting and documentary filmmaking to smartphone storytelling and script writing. Workshop instructors boasted credentials from NPR, PBS, FRONTLINE, the Poynter Institute, The New York Times, Al Jazeera English, Transmitter Media and our own UM School of Journalism.

“When I started this job, I had two goals for my first year,” says Montana Media Lab director Anne Bailey. “To build a space where we could offer top notch digital media workshops to students and people in our community. And to create opportunities for our journalism students to get off campus and work with youth in rural parts of the state on digital storytelling and media literacy projects. We’ve done both of those things, and I’m really excited to see what next year brings.”
Students travel to report on oil sands

Nine students, three weeks and thousands of miles: exploring Canada’s oil sands and their environmental, cultural and energy impacts

BY VICTOR YVELLEZ

AFTER MONTHS OF preparation and over a thousand miles of driving through British Columbia and Alberta this spring, nine University of Montana journalism students finally arrived in Fort McMurray, home of the Alberta oil sands.

Northern Alberta holds the third largest oil reserve in the world. UM journalism students were there to report on energy- and environment-related stories, focusing heavily on the impacts of oil production throughout western Canada. Most of this nation’s oil ends up in the United States each year, making the oil sands story important to an American audience. In fact, around 40% of all U.S. oil imports are directly from the oil sands. But this extraction method is among the most destructive and polluting for capturing petroleum.

The students spent three weeks in western Canada as part of the school’s annual Montana Journalism Abroad trip. Previous international reporting groups have gone to South Korea, Germany, Japan and India. This year’s bunch visited Radium Hot Springs, Revelstoke, Fort St. John, Calgary, Edmonton, Fort McMurray, Grand Prairie, Kamloops and Vancouver.

“The trip provided an opportunity to report on an issue relevant to climate change, indigenous rights, wildlife conservation and other high-interest fields,” said Kevin Trevelyan, a first-year student in the J-School’s graduate program in Environmental Science and Natural Resource Journalism. “That gave us license to follow our journalistic instincts toward stories we’re passionate about.”

The oil sands project is an important part of the region’s economy, but it also results in a host of social, economic and environmental challenges, which allowed the students to find compelling stories to cover. They scattered throughout Alberta and British Columbia to report on Canada’s industrial hemp industry, efforts to recover declining woodland caribou populations, the increase in wildfires, First Nations and more.

The course was taught by adjunct Jeff Gailus, an environmental journalist originally from Alberta. Gailus, who now lives in Missoula, has reported on many of these issues over the last two decades. He knew this was a great opportunity for students to learn about Canadian environmental and energy policy while they reported on major stories.

“For enterprising journalists, this was the perfect time to make a reporting trip,” Gailus
said. “Alberta had just elected a controversial new government, and the future of western Canada’s oil and gas industry is on everyone’s minds. In my experience, most Americans don’t know much about the costs and benefits associated with America’s biggest supplier of oil.”

One of the more interesting stories is what America can learn from Canada’s hemp industry. Hemp-processing facilities throughout North America are increasing in number as individuals and communities look for more climate-friendly businesses. Students traveled to Just Bio Fiber, a hemp-processing facility located north of Calgary. They interviewed employees about a project that mixes industrial hemp with lime to make blocks for construction. The process also pulls carbon from the atmosphere, rather than emitting it.

“We need to balance local and global efforts to meet basic human needs without destroying the natural environment,” said Suzanne Downing, a recent graduate of the master’s program. “That’s why I found Just Bio Fiber’s hempcrete block innovation so impressive. The blocks are carbon negative, which is pretty amazing.”

Canada’s First Nations are integral to the social and political discussion surrounding environmental protection and energy development. Students met with tribal communities throughout both provinces. For them, the oil sands have encouraged economic growth, but they’ve also impacted traditional ways of life. Students met with people from the Cold Lake, Chipewyan Prairie, Mikisew Cree, Fort McKay and West Moberly First Nations.

Stephanie Maltarich, a graduate student in Environmental Studies at UM, joined the team because she was eager to learn a more structured form of storytelling that requires interviews and varied perspectives. Over the course of the trip, she interviewed First Nation members from three different communities about their perspectives on the oil sands.

“Interviewing First Nations was valuable because I feel like their perspectives and experiences are at the heart of many of the environmental issues we are facing today,” Maltarich said. “They hold different insight into these issues, which can provide groundwork for a way forward.”

Next summer students will join professors Lee and Jule Banville on a trip to Northern Ireland to cover Brexit’s potential effects on that nation’s economy and culture.
A DOZEN STUDENTS dove headfirst into Montana election-year politics last fall. By semester’s end, they had covered historic presidential visits, profiled candidates and ballot issues, fact-checked debaters, and quizzed voters and election judges. They photographed winners celebrating and losers contemplating their futures.

Students learned about voting trends, campaign spending and polls. They anticipated the issues and personalities that would dominate Montana’s 66th Legislature, which began in January 2019.

Their work ran in newspapers and on websites statewide, thanks to an ongoing collaboration among the J-School, Montana’s commercial newspapers, broadcast-ers and Montana Public Radio. Professors Lee Banville and Dennis Swibold served as editors and cheerleaders, and adjunct professor Courtney Cowgill edited the student legislative reporters during the 90-day session.

Junior Marti Liechty said the class gave her confidence and taught her how to report on the political process, from fact-checking and interacting with constituents to understanding arguments.

“This class helped me break out of my comfort zone as a journalist, and also allowed me to produce the kind of reporting I’m most interested in.”
— Marti Liechty, student

Student election reporting picked up across state
The J-School tried something new this year. Starting from scratch, this course that had traditionally created Montana Journalism Review instead rewrote the magazine, both literally and figuratively.

Since 1958, a dedicated group of University of Montana students has worked with professional journalists to learn the ins and outs of magazine production, collaborating to produce the Montana Journalism Review, a magazine that examined the state of the local and national media. Last year, the School of Journalism decided to put the creation of the magazine into the hands of its students, with oversight from Professor Keith Graham and Adjunct Professor Jeff Gailus.

The product, Byline magazine, rolled off the press and popped up online this spring. Choosing a new name was much harder than we anticipated. We wanted something to encapsulate everything we stand for: thoroughly reported stories, intrepid storytelling and thoughtful coverage of Montana and the West. But the name also needed to be timeless and work with future themes.

Byline is loaded with a meaningful history. The term didn’t appear until the American Civil War. Because articles were written anonymously, some partisan journalists were spreading the “fake news” of the day by reporting inaccurate battlefield casualty numbers. Bylines allowed the public to hold reporters accountable.

The theme of our inaugural issue reflects the title’s history. We decided to report stories that hold those in power and society at large accountable. Everything that appears in this first edition of the new magazine concerns social and environmental justice issues in Montana and the West. At its core, journalism is about shedding light on truths that need to be told.

The issue includes an array of stories, such as:

• American veterans of the Iraq war helping their comrades combat suicide.
• Missoula’s affordable housing crisis.
• An immigrant’s struggle to remain in the nation she serves as an EMT.
• Violence behind the bars of Montana’s only private prison.
• An organic farmer’s struggle with damage done by drifting herbicides sprayed by crop dusters.
• The Blackfeet Nation’s efforts to return bison to their reservation.
• Wildland firefighters learning to survive in an era of megafires.

You can read these articles and more at bylinemagazine.com.

The J-School’s first Byline magazine covered stories ranging from prison violence to veterans helping veterans.
Native News ‘Traces’ project focuses on missing and murdered tribal women

THE MONTANA NATIVE News Honors Project published its 28th edition in May, focusing on the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women crisis. The publication “Traces” featured five stories from throughout the state. They included a look at what happened to six siblings on the Blackfeet reservation after they lost their mother; a look inside man camps, the occupational housing developments that serve oil field employees, and the perception that these facilities are one of the main causes of the crisis; and a profile of a woman who was kidnapped as a child and grew up to become a Montana lawmaker who sponsored a high-profile bill to help protect women.

“The students were really passionate about the topic and took great care to approach every aspect with sensitivity,” said professor Jason Begay, who co-taught the project course with professor Jeremy Lurgio. “They definitely challenged themselves to tell new angles of this crisis that helped move the conversation forward.”

The print version appeared in the Missoulian and the Billings Gazette in May. For the project’s website and videos, go to nativenews.jour.umt.edu/2019.

Student Doc examines lagging recycling efforts

THE RULES AND MARKETS for effectively recycling our trash are changing. According to the Montana Department of Environmental Quality, Montanans produce, on average, 9.7 pounds of trash daily, but only two of those pounds are recycled. Glass still cannot be recycled in Missoula, and much of the state has very limited options for recycling.

In this year’s Student Documentary, students featured three Montanans who give their different perspectives on the recycling challenges. Belgrade business owner Dave Leverett studies the recycling commodity markets and runs a successful recycling business. Alice Elrod, an enthusiastic recycler from Eureka, inspired her community to recycle more and reduce the waste they produce. And Dusti Johnson, a rancher, scientist and DEQ employee, travels Montana to set up recycling programs to ensure clean, efficient and community-driven recycling programs across the state.

Students under the direction of longtime adjunct professor John Twiggs followed these stories from Eureka to Red Lodge, highlighting a problem that won’t go away without creative and thoughtful community action.

The show debuted on MontanaPBS this spring and can be viewed at montanapbs.org/programs/trash-talk.
Kaimin picks up where deceased Indy left off

BY CASSIDY ALEXANDER
Kaimin Editor for 2019-2020

THE KAIMIN HAS become bigger, thicker and brighter than ever before. Last year, squirrel horror stories, campus asbestos and plenty of articles about "Mary Jane" found their way onto 32-page issues in full color.

After Lee Enterprises closed the Missoula Independent, the city’s free weekly, the Kaimin refocused its content to fill some of the holes that newspaper left behind. It now includes recipes, reviews, a calendar, style tips and even a meme column.

This fall, when incoming freshmen come to campus for orientation, we will distribute a “freshmen issue” in hopes of attracting and keeping new students in our audience. Our editorial board will be putting together the guide we never had at that point in college about how to enjoy being a student at UM.

Filled with how-to and need-to-know articles, as well as the occasional poke at UM’s administration, we’re hoping the Kaimin will develop a reputation as the place to go for news and be a paper our students look forward to reading.

We will also have a dedicated team working on our website. By using creative layouts, emphasizing visuals and experimenting with interactive graphics, we hope the Kaimin’s website will become more dynamic and user-friendly. Our 32-page paper hit its stride on the racks, and now it is time to make sure we find the same success online.

This coming year, the Kaimin will continue to keep a watchful eye on our administration and paint a clear picture of the state of the University for our students. But, perhaps more importantly, we will also take risks and think critically about how best to represent, include and appeal to our students.

The best is yet to come for the Kaimin, if we didn’t peak last December by getting a mention on the Late Show with Stephen Colbert. That was for our story about how former White House adviser Steve Bannon canceled a UM speech following an announcement that he also planned to speak later that month at a joint conference on gaming and sex robots.
Students wait for their cue to start lip-synching in the School of Journalism broadcast studio. During the broadcast workshop, groups of students were able to practice broadcasting from an on-camera and production perspective at the sixth annual High School Journalism Day.

Bill Dedman, a Pulitzer Prize-winning reporter and author, spoke to a campus audience last spring about the legacy of Montana Copper King William Andrews Clark. Dedman wrote “Empty Mansions,” which focuses on Clark’s reclusive daughter, Huguette, who inherited her father’s fortune and died in 2011 at age 104. Dedman, in the back row, also spoke to Jule Banville’s feature writing class, shown here.
Celeste Headlee, an author and public radio journalist, delivered the 2019 Dean Stone Lecture on “How to Have Better Conversations.” She also met with faculty and students to discuss the subject.

Author and PBS reporter Jeanne Guerrero, who grew up on both sides of the U.S.-Mexico border, spoke to a UM audience last fall about the challenges journalists face covering the region. She is also the author of “Crux: A Cross-Border Memoir,” which focuses on her father.

At his retirement party, former Dean Larry Abramson holds a photo of himself and students who went on the 2016 study-abroad trip to Berlin to report on Syrian refugees.
Grad students raise crucial questions

UM's Crown Reporting Project marks fifth year

BY NADIA WHITE
Associate Professor

M A S T E R ' S W O R K B Y students in the graduate program in Environmental Science and Natural Resource Journalism focused this year on ideas about people and places, and students largely stuck close to home for their stories.

Amelia Hagen-Dillon captured the tension between rugged people and wild places when the profile she was writing turned into the story of an unsuccessful missing-person search. Hagen-Dillon is a cartographer by trade, and the story raised the question: Are wild places better protected if more people know and love them, or if they are tightly kept secrets, uninviting to outsiders?

Heather Fraley’s community piece detailed the efforts of ranchers to live safely with grizzly bears along the Rocky Mountain Front as the bruins expand their range out of the mountains and onto the prairie. The piece appeared in Western Ag Reporter.

For her portfolio, Samantha Weber pursued stories related to tribal sovereignty over natural resources. Her story about the use of free bison meat from the Blackfeet tribal herd to fight hunger and diabetes ran on National Native News. Another story, about the possibility of a tribal park abutting Glacier National Park, ran in High Country News.

Mikensi Romersa produced a documentary film about managing tourism on the Absaroka-Beartooth Wilderness Area near Red Lodge. And Suzanne Downing completed three “Faces of Conservation” profiles, examining the careers of a forest ranger, a range scientist and a tribal biologist.

The new graduate class entering this fall comprises 13 students coming from Ap-
palachia and Connecticut, Jackson Hole and Seattle, with homegrown talent arriving from Bozeman and Missoula.

The Crown Reporting Project entered its fifth year pairing top graduate students with mentors to pursue ambitious stories about community, climate and conservation in the greater Crown of the Continent region.

The Crown winners and mentors for 2019 are Maxine Speier, who will work with author and journalist Ben Goldfarb, and Kevin Trevelyan, who will work with New York Times journalist Jim Robbins.

Samantha Weber, a 2018 Crown Reporting Project winner, saw her piece on a national park being proposed east of Glacier Park by the Blackfeet Nation published online in High Country News in April. Weber worked with Graham Lee Brewere, a radio reporter and associate editor for tribal news at HCN, to examine the potential of tourism to benefit tribal communities at the gateways of national parks.

Ed DesRosier, a Blackfeet tribal member and indigenous ways tour guide, told Weber a tribal park would reassert the Blackfeet’s sovereignty over their historical lands in a way that has been diminished as tourists race through Blackfeet territory on their way to Glacier.

“The invisibility of the Blackfeet has a way of eliminating our connection,” DesRosier told Weber.

In a first for the Crown, Breanna (Roy) McCabe teamed with mentor and future Pollner Professor Chris Johns to produce a documentary film. The work explores questions of assisted adaptation and genetic variability among a keystone tree species in the Crown. Then the project expands in scope from tiny genes to the majestic mountains, with interviews ranging from tree-climbing seed harvesters to researchers in their labs.

Johns, the former editor-in-chief of National Geographic Magazine, has been named the visiting Pollner Professor for spring 2020. He continues to assist McCabe on completion of her film.

The Crown Reporting Project was created in the memory of Ted Smith. A Missoula native, smokejumper, conservationist and leader of philanthropy, Smith conceived of environmental challenges at the level of entire ecosystems. He saw journalism and storytelling as a way to overcome the complexity of those challenges and engage more people in important conversations about conservation. Smith died in a hiking accident in the Mission Mountains in 2012, and his family created the Crown Reporting Project to continue his legacy.

The project begins each February with a dinner that brings students, journalists, scientists and conservationists together to discuss contemporary issues in the Crown of the Continent region. Students then offer story ideas in a pitch competition that determines two winners. Mentors are chosen based on the students and the stories they have pitched.
J-School students hit high marks in national, regional competitions

HEARST FOUNDATION AWARDS
“THE PULITZER PRIZES OF COLLEGIATE JOURNALISM”

The J-School finished in seventh place overall in Hearst’s Intercollegiate Multimedia competition this year. That puts it among an elite group of schools, many of them much larger. The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill accumulated the most points in the category. UM finished ahead of Temple University, the University of Missouri and the University of South Carolina.

In Hearst’s overall intercollegiate competition for 2018-19, the University of Montana finished in tenth place.

UM’s individual standouts in Hearst:
• Matt Neuman, Third Place Enterprise Reporting
• Rikki Devlin, Fifth Place Multimedia News
• Eli Imdali, Sixth Place Radio News and Features
• Jiakai Lou, Eighth Place Multimedia Enterprise

NATIONAL ACADEMY OF TELEVISION ARTS AND SCIENCES (NORTHWEST CHAPTER STUDENT EMMYS)

Winner, Long Form Non-Fiction
“Montana Jails: Slammed for Solutions,”

Students Maria Anderson (producer), Tiffany Folkes (director), Posie Buffington, Meri DeMarois, Julie Magnuson, Joe Perea, Matt Skillman, Sophie Trouw, Natasha Woodworth and advisers Denise Dowling and John Twiggs

Nominated Productions
• UM News
• Business Made in Montana’s “Zombie Tools” episode

ONLINE NEWS ASSOCIATION

Finalist, The David Teeuwen Student Journalism Award, Large Newsroom
Native News Honors Project
BROADCAST EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

- Halisia Hubbard, Third Place
  Radio Feature Reporting
- Rikki Devlin, Third Place
  Radio Hard News Reporting

SOCIETY OF PROFESSIONAL JOURNALISTS’ MARK OF EXCELLENCE AWARDS

NATIONAL WINNERS

First Place, Best In-Depth Documentary
“Montana Jails: Slammed for Solutions”
2018 Student Documentary Unit

SPJ’S REGION 10 MARK OF EXCELLENCE AWARDS

Winners

- Ryan O’Connell, Feature Writing
- Sara Diggins, Breaking News Photography
- Eli Imadali, Feature Photography
- Autumn Fraser, Radio Feature
- Kevin Trevelyan, Radio News
- Student Doc, TV In-Depth
- UM News, TV Newscast
- Native News, Affiliated Website
- “Willard,” Podcast

Finalists

- Sara Diggins, General News Photography
- Eli Imadali, Breaking News Photography
- John Hooks, Breaking News Photography
- Rikki Devlin, Radio News
- Jon Allen, TV General News & TV Sports Reporting
- Andrea Dobbins, TV Feature Reporting
- UM News, Television News Cast

AT RIGHT: Eli Imadali (with Pollner Professor Preston Gannaway) won a Society of Professional Journalists’ Mark of Excellence Award and took sixth in the Hearst 2018-19 intercollegiate competition in the Radio News and Features category, while Jakai Lou (top) took eighth place in Hearst’s Multimedia Enterprise category.
IN FOCUS

THE J-SCHOOL HAS produced some wonderful photojournalists over the years, and the tradition lives on, as you’ll see in this selection of images submitted by alums.

Under the tutelage of professors Keith Graham and Jeremy Lurgio in recent years, and going back to the tenure of former professor Patty Reksten and beyond, our photojournalists are true reporters, many of whom work at the top of their profession. We’ve also benefited from wonderful adjuncts, many of them former students themselves.

The technology changes constantly and we’ve changed with it, but in the end, it’s the individual photographer’s eye and news judgment that matter most. The best have a sense of the moment and where it might go. They have hearts open to the human experience.

We hope you enjoy this sample of their work. We’re proud of them and those who will follow.
King Bass, 6, left, sits and watches the Holy Fire burn from on top of his parents’ car as his sister Princess, 5, rests her head on his shoulder on Aug. 9, 2018, in Lake Elsinore, Calif. Wildfires are getting bigger and burning longer—bringing more choking smoke, deadly mudslides and habitat loss.

Photo: Patrick Record, for the AP
Lady Griz guard and J-School student Gabi Harrington skirts an Idaho State player before a 60-50 win. Photo: Parker Siebold, for the Missoulian
President Donald Trump addresses a crowd of about 8,000 at the Minuteman Aviation hangar in Missoula in October 2018. He was stumping for Matt Rosendale who, despite four visits from the president, lost a bid to unseat Democratic incumbent U.S. Sen. Jon Tester. Photo: Tommy Martino, for the Missoulian

Flint resident Brayden Benado, 5, looks out the window of his parents’ car on Robert T. Longway Boulevard at North Center Road on Feb. 20, 2018, in Flint, Michigan. Earlier that day, Benado was in a vehicle that became stuck after it was driven into high flood waters. “I was scared,” Benado said. “When I grow up, I’m going to get a truck.” Photo: Bronte Wittpenn, for the Flint Journal
DOWLING’S RADIO DOC WINS SPJ’S TOP NATIONAL AWARD

SCHOOL OF JOURNALISM Director DENISE DOWLING, longtime interim dean of the University of Montana School of Journalism, won a national first place award from the Society of Professional Journalists for her radio documentary “Alex, Not Amy: Growing Up Transgender in the Rural West.”

The Society of Professional Journalists’ Sigma Delta Chi Awards recognize the best in professional journalism in categories covering print, radio, television, newsletters, art/graphics, online and research.

Dowling’s radio documentary follows the story of 10-year-old Alex O’Neill, who knew he was a boy when he was a toddler, as he changes his gender legally and socially. Listeners follow Alex and his family as they navigate issues like which swim team Alex competes on and which bathroom he uses while he’s at school.

The story looks at the policy, history, mental health concerns and trends around transgender youth. But it’s also a story about family, identity, community and belonging.

Dowling’s piece, which originally aired on Montana Public Radio, also was named a Regional Edward R. Murrow Award winner recently by the Radio Television Digital News Association. In addition, the documentary is a finalist for an E.B. Craney Award from the Montana Broadcasters Association and the Greater Montana Foundation in the Radio Non-Commercial Program of the Year category.


Dowling said she first became interested in the challenges of being young and transgender when one of her students shared the roadblocks he met when transitioning.

“When I began reporting, I found it remarkable just how many young people and their families were facing similar paths,” she said. “Alex, his parents and siblings were incredibly gracious to allow me into their lives to document his transition. They welcomed me into some of their most private moments as I followed Alex and his journey over three years. I learned so much from them and saw firsthand how family support makes all the difference in a transgender child’s mental health.”

Dowling wanted to document Alex’s story while sharing valuable information about the issue with the public.

“There’s a dearth of empirical research that parents, educators and others can turn to for guidance,” she said. “I spoke to researchers, doctors, educators and attorneys to learn about the particular challenges these kids face in society. The documentary shares that information in hopes that other families and all of us can help transgender youth find a successful future.”

The piece was made possible through funding from the J-School and the UM Faculty Research Fund, with special thanks to Montana Public Radio. Listen at mtpr.org/post/alex-not-amy-growing-transgender-rural-west.

Associate Professor JULE BANVILLE earned a merit award from the University for her creative work, which also won a national award from the Broadcast Education Association for an audio story, and for excellence in teaching. Last academic year, she taught fundamentals of news writing, opinion writing, feature writing and advanced audio. She continues to supervise the J-School’s internship program and is the faculty adviser for the Montana Kaimin, which doubled its page-count following the closure of the Missoula Independent, where Jule worked as the copy editor. She served as a panelist at the Big Sky Documentary Film Festival and published an essay about writing obituaries for the website Modern Loss. In the fall, Jule will take on a new course, Intro to Radio and Audio Storytelling, which she plans to make weird and fun.

Professor LEE BANVILLE has mainly been a pain in the University’s and the state’s butt about open records and open meeting laws. He wrote an editorial for Sunshine Week that ran in papers throughout the state and pushed the campus to open up its process for selecting a private company to run Montana’s online course offerings. When he wasn’t trying to get into meetings or get UM documents unredacted, he taught two capstones this year. With Dennis Swibold in the fall, he helped guide the elections reporting class that live fact-checked the U.S. Senate and House debates as well as appearances by President Trump. In the spring, he partnered with four more news organizations to overhaul and research their social media, including Montana Public Radio, the Bozeman Daily Chronicle, High Country News and a planned alt-weekly to replace the Missoula Independent. He also continues to curl. A lot.

Associate Professor JASON BEGAY helped create the University of Montana President’s Native American Advisory Council, a group of about a dozen campus representatives who work directly with UM President Seth Bodnar to help strategize the best methods to recruit and retain Native American students. The council created the new tribal outreach specialist position, which will work with tribal colleges across the state and create a stronger
path for communication and cooperation with the university. Begay was also selected to sit on the search committee, which was scheduled to work through the summer to fill the position.

Associate Professor JOE EATON traveled to Yekaterinburg, Russia, in May to teach Russian journalism students at the U.S. consulate. Joe was invited by J-School alum Matt Thompson, who serves as a diplomat in Yekaterinburg. Joe’s other highlights for the year were earning tenure and learning that his 2017 magazine story “King of Boise” will be included in a compilation of writing on the opioid epidemic, to be published in October by The New Press.

Associate Professor RAY FANNING completed a second year as Director of Faculty for the School of Journalism in 2018-19. And he served on UM’s General Education Committee, which is working to revise the university’s core curriculum. After completing a radio documentary on race in Montana, Fanning has begun work on a television project for MontanaPBS about architect A. J. Gibson. Gibson’s designs include University Hall on campus and the Missoula County Courthouse, among many other buildings and homes throughout the city and western Montana.

Professor KEITH GRAHAM and adjunct professor JEFF GAILUS oversaw production of the inaugural issue of the school’s new Byline student magazine. Keith also taught three different photojournalism classes and changed his spring design class so students could do more work with Adobe Illustrator and InDesign to produce logos and covers for UM projects. He’s also building his first online class, which he will teach in the fall. He reports he’s also doing research for his next documentary project: a retrospective on Montana’s cattle brands, which are about to celebrate their 150th
anniversary. If you have any leads on that, send them Keith’s way.

Associate Professor **Jeremy Lurgio** returned from his sabbatical in New Zealand and got back into the swing of things at the J-School. This year he taught courses in beginning visual journalism and intermediate photojournalism, and co-taught the Native News Honors Project. In addition, Lurgio has pitched and produced two multimedia and video projects he researched while on sabbatical. He also has assisted filmmaker and photographer Erik Petersen on “Paradise,” a 30-minute documentary that tracks a group of business owners who banded together to fight a proposed mine in the Paradise Valley. He has also served as a story editor on two of Petersen’s films: one about skijoring and one about ultra running.

Professor **Dennis Swibold** traveled to China this spring with a delegation representing the Montana University System. He met university leaders and was invited to lecture at Beijing’s University of Chinese Academy of Social Sciences. Back at UM, he and Professor Lee Banville led student coverage of Montana’s 2018 elections. He continues to write about journalism ethics and history and gave presentations across the state last year on journalism as part of Humanities Montana’s “Montana Conversations” project. He and his wife, Julie, also worked in a vacation to Oaxaca, Mexico.

Assistant Professor **Kevin Tompkins** finished his second year at the UM School of Journalism. The highlight, he says, was recruiting his production students to be the crew on several election shows for MontanaPBS, which Kevin also directed. The year had its challenges, but he says he’s grown to love teaching all the more. “The opportunity to continue sharing the knowledge I’ve gathered over my 30-plus years of broadcast TV experience in an academic setting is both challenging and fulfilling,” he wrote. “The School of Journalism has given me a chance to grow as an instructor and connect with students. Being here continues to challenge me like never before. I’m re-invigorated professionally. This is just what I wanted and needed.”

Associate Professor **Nadia White** continues to serve as director of the graduate program in Environmental Science and Natural Resource Journalism. She teaches Global Current Events, an honors course, and was excited to walk through Tahrir Square during a visit to Egypt this year. White also teaches graduate courses on environmental journalism and basic reporting.

Former Dean **Larry Abramson** stepped down as dean in early September 2018, having served the school in that job since the summer of 2014. He then became special adviser to UM’s Executive Vice President and Provost Jon Harbor on issues including global and international opportunities, serving for the remainder of the academic year. He retired from UM at the end of the spring 2019 semester. Before becoming dean, he worked as a correspondent for National Public Radio, focusing largely on international reporting.
OBITUARIES

GEORGE DAVID REMINGTON ’50, former publisher of the Billings Gazette and Helena Independent Record, died peacefully on June 11, 2019. He was 93.

George was born in Anaconda on Dec. 27, 1925, to George and Alma Remington. He graduated from Anaconda High School and joined the Army Air Corps near the end of World War II as a flight officer, training to be a navigator. After the war ended, George attended UM, graduating with a degree in journalism in 1950.

In 1951, George married LORRAINE KURFISS, also a J-School grad (’50), and they moved to Honolulu for six years, where George worked as a reporter for United Press International and the Honolulu Advertiser. Their son David was born in Honolulu in 1954.

After living briefly in California, they moved to Helena in 1959, where George became state manager for UPI. He then went to work at the Helena Independent Record as an investigative reporter for the Lee Newspapers State Bureau. He rose through the ranks at the newspaper to become editor and later publisher. In that role he oversaw modernization of the newspaper’s printing system and adoption of one of the first newsroom computer systems. Daughters Leslie and Larisa were born in Helena in 1959 and 1968, respectively.

In 1976, George became publisher of the Billings Gazette, a post he held until his retirement in 1986. Through his career as a journalist, George became well acquainted with Montana political leaders of both parties, who often sought his perspective and—less successfully—his support. In 1992, George received a Distinguished Alumni award from UM, honoring his extensive contributions to Montana journalism.

After retiring, George and Lorraine moved to the log home they built at the Yellowstone River breaks near Columbus. George enjoyed maintaining the ponderosa woodland surrounding their cabin, long walks with his beloved dog Charlie, singing in the choir and leading discussion groups at the Columbus Community Congregational Church, and visiting his children and grandchildren. George and Lorraine moved back to Billings in 1997 but spent long weekends at their cabin for the next 15 years. An accomplished skier, George hit the slopes at Red Lodge Mountain most every winter week until 2010.

George approached life with a wry sense of humor, and aroused lively conversations among family and friends. In his children and grandchildren he cultivated an interest in public and world affairs and the importance of treating all people fairly regardless of background or status.

Lorraine preceded George in death in 2017 after 66 years of marriage. Survivors include his son and two daughters and their children.

THOMAS ROBERT NEEDHAM ’55, who began his career doing public relations for the Anaconda Company and spent 25 years in communications, marketing and sales with Xerox, died Nov. 12, 2018, in Polson. He was 85.

After 25 years at his home in Somers, he moved to St. Joseph Assisted Living in Polson, just down the street from his fiancée, Barbara Legoo. He enjoyed singing in a church choir and kept busy with photography and projects close to his heart.

He was born Aug. 10, 1933, in Missoula, to Thomas Alton Needham and Helen Clara (Haegg). The youngest of four children, he lived in Ronan until enrolling at UM, where he served as class president, sang with the Jubileers, and graduated with a degree in journalism.

Tom and Arlene Ruth (Steele) were married in 1954. They met at the Christian Science church where Arlene was the Sunday School pianist and Tom was the church soloist.

Together they raised five daughters: Kimberlie, Jamie, Laurel, Linda and their precious Kathy Jo (who died at age 3). His work took the family to Montana, New Mexico, Texas, upstate New York and Southern California.

In 1983, he married Clara Louise (Barnes) in San Diego. They eventually moved to Somers. After Clara’s death, Tom reconnected with his childhood sweetheart, Barbara Legoo.

After retiring from Xerox and moving to Montana, he worked as marketing manager for Blake Office Supplies in Kalispell before officially retiring in 1994.

One of the most pivotal events in Tom’s life was the loss of his older brother, Robert, over the English Channel in 1944, soon after D-Day. Tom was just 11 years old. Robert was classified as missing in action, and Tom devoted much time and energy to ensure that his brother at long last received full military honors on Memorial Day 2016.

CHARLES ANSON THOMPSON ’55, who served in the U.S. Army during the Cold War and became a Dallas-area attorney, died March 13, 2019, surrounded by friends and family. He was 84.

He was born Aug. 8, 1934, in Dallas to J.C. and Frances Thompson. He attended Grand Prairie High School, where he was the editor of the school newspaper, “The Prairie Dog.”

He graduated high school in 1951 and enrolled at Arlington State College. He joined the ROTC and later continued his education at UM, graduating in 1955 with a degree in journalism. It was during this time he married Judith Anne McNeff, and they began their 64-year journey.

In 1955, Chuck was commissioned as a 2nd Lieutenant in the U.S. Army. He served in the Strategic Air Command at Ellsworth Air Force Base in South Dakota and as an officer in the
Robert D. Robinson

Ganged grandson, Austin Strand Hayes.

daughter Linda Marie Hayes; and a

squadron, from 1957 to 1976.

Reserve, attached to a carrier attack
duty with the United States Naval

1979 to 1992. He also served on active

papers in Montana, Idaho, Illinois,

social fraternities.

of the Sigma Delta Chi journalism

B.A. in journalism. He was a member

ated from Billings Senior High School

on July 3, 1934, to Francis and Bonita

Martha (Josenhanis) Hayes. He gradu

an instrumental character in the

Mountain Gazette

magazine in the 1970s

and later wrote the

“Letter From Woody

Creek” column for

The Aspen Times.

He also was a bar-
tender and manager

of the Woody Creek Tavern when it

was the frequent haunt of Hunter S.

Thompson.

“There was really nobody like him,”
said longtime friend Frank Peters. “He

was utterly irascible and quintessential-

ly sweet.”

Guenin co-authored “Aspen: The

Quiet Years” with Kathleen Daily. The

1994 book chronicled the heritage of

Aspen life after the silver boom but

before its rebirth post-World War II as

a ski resort.

“That was a timeless piece of work,”
said Guenin’s longtime friend, George

Stranahan, who founded the Mountain

Gazette in Aspen with Guenin at the

helm in the 1970s. “He was a really
good writer-editor.”

Guenin was born in Buffalo, Wy-

oming, to G. M. “Shorty” and Evelyn

Gallus Guenin. They soon moved to

Billings, where Gaylord grew up. After

graduating from high school, he enlist-
ed in the U.S. Marines rather than be

drafted. The military then had a policy

of not sending only-sons into battle,

so Guenin served stateside largely with

the duty of processing the personal

belongings of Marines killed in Korea,

some of whom were his friends.

After his honorable discharge, he

worked as a fireman in Oceanside, Cal-

ifornia. He then moved to Missoula,

where he graduated from the J-School

in 1962, and never stopped writing.

He worked on papers in Kalispell,

Missoula and Butte, and was a man-

agement trainee for Lee Enterprises in

the Midwest.

He moved to Aspen in 1969 to edit

the Aspen Illustrated news. Former

Aspen Times editor and publisher

Loren Jenkins recruited Guenin to

write a column for the paper. Guenin
told it like he saw it and didn’t care

about ruffling the establishment’s

feathers—be it Aspen Skiing Co., the

county commissioners or his neighbors

in Woody Creek. His columns had a
decidedly liberal bent. One from 2004
was titled, “Global warming: A hoax
that is happening.”

Wayne Austin Baldwin ’64, who began his professional career as a news-

and sportscaster in Reno, died Feb. 1, 2019, in Sparks, Nevada. He

was 80.

Born on Jan. 6, 1939, in Bottineau,

North Dakota, to Sylvia and Don

Baldwin, Wayne was raised in Mis-

soula with his twin brother Doug and

their younger sister, Kay. He grad-

uated from Missoula County High

School and enlisted in the Army. After

completing his service, Wayne enrolled

at UM, where he joined the Sigma

Alpha Epsilon fraternity and graduat-

ed in 1964 with a degree in radio and
television.

He then moved to Eugene, Oregon,

where his first daughter was born. In

1967, Wayne relocated his family to

Reno, Nevada, where he accepted a

position with the NBC affiliate KCRL
Author and longtime Montana newspaper man GARY SVEE ’67 died July 14, surrounded by his wife and family. He was 75.

Gary, son of Sig and Bea Svee, was born in Billings on Nov. 11, 1943. He attended Columbus schools, where he played football, basketball and track. He graduated in 1961 and entered UM that fall on a football scholarship. Gary was a lifelong Grizzly fan. He met Diane Schmidt at a fraternity-sorority pancake breakfast, and they married in June 1966 in Fort Benton. They enjoyed hiking, camping and fishing.

Gary graduated from UM in 1967 with a journalism degree, and began working for the Billings Gazette as a reporter assigned to various beats. He also traveled eastern Montana and northern Wyoming seeking local interest stories.

In 1974, Roger Clawson and he wrote a special section on the impact of coal in communities. They received an award from the University of Missouri for their work. Roger and Gary owned the newspaper in Bridger for a brief time.

Gary and Diane moved to Missoula so he could work as a reporter and feature writer for the Missoulian. The arrival of his two sons gave Gary new partners in outdoor adventures and inspiration for a column.

He returned to the Gazette in 1982 as the opinion editor and retired in 2000.

In the late 1980s he wrote his first novel about the homestead era, “Spirit Wolf.” His work earned various accolades from the Western Writers of America, including two Spur awards for the novel “Sanctuary” and a short fiction piece “All or Nothing.” Two other short fiction pieces appeared in the Saturday Evening Post. He published four additional novels.

Gary was active in community organizations. Following a rock heaved through the bedroom window of a young boy, he became a founding member of the Festival of Cultures, an effort to address anti-Semitism and bigotry. His editorial encouraged Billings to speak out about what happened. The Gazette printed a full-page menorah for readers to place in a window.

Survivors include his wife, his son Nathan, and Nathan’s son, Parker, and his daughter, Briley.

JOSEPH ROMAN NOWAKOWSKI ’08 died Aug. 1, 2018, in Missoula. He was 37. According to family and friends, life had a “disproportionate propensity to chuck extra lemons his way.”

According to his Missoulian obituary, he was agile, enough so that he would take extra shots to protect his friends and loved ones. Joe presented a tough appearance—tattooed, bearded and muscled, which belied an oversized heart and gentle soul.

“Unfortunately for Joe, he didn’t unconditionally love himself as he did others,” his family wrote. “His lifelong battle with depression took him on dark journeys, but he surrounded himself with good people who stood vigilant on the periphery. His struggle was real, but he kept it deep and hidden.”

Joe’s armor against life’s demons was “a wicked sense of humor—dry, biting, and honed from years of battle.”

Born in the Reagan era, Joe spent his formative years in Livingston, where he wended his way through elementary, middle and high school, picking up some lifelong friends.

After that, he bounced around a few colleges before finding a home at UM’s J-School. Following in the footsteps of John ’05, his twin, and his older brother, Peter ’03, he initially set out to inform the world. The realities of corporate journalism, unfortunately, did not hold to the ideals that set the cornerstone of his education.

The most significant part of Joe’s life came in 2010, with the birth of his son, Bridger. Six years later, and two years before his own death, Joe lost his twin, John, who died of a congenital heart disorder.
1950s

WILLIAM THOMPSON ’56 reported that he’s surprised to have reached the ripe age of 87. “Maybe it’s because I’ve lived a good life: never gambled, smoked or drank and didn’t chase the ladies.” He and his wife of 62 years share their retirement in Vancouver, British Columbia, after a career in public relations for western Canadian resource companies and raising a family. “I’ll write again in a few years to let you know what the 90s look like,” he said.

GARY A. SORENSEN ’57 wrote that after graduation he fully intended to work for a newspaper and “live happily ever after,” but the U.S. Army made him and his family a better offer. That began a 30-year career, much of it spent doing journalistic work, from which he retired in 1987 as a colonel. He then worked for a Washington, D.C., nonprofit for six years before returning to Montana. “You can go home,” he added. “Retired and still in good shape, I have spent the last 26 years having a wonderful life.”

1960s

LYLE HARRIS ’62, MA ’67, wrote to say students of the 1960s were treated individually and encouraged well. “I remember getting red marks on my copy and meeting with faculty, worried, and then being relieved that they called me in to help me, not chew me out. After working as a reporter for some years, I went into higher education and passed along the professor-student approach that I learned at UM. The faculty of my years in the Journalism School of 1962 and 1967 are long gone, but I hold them in high admiration.”

SUZANNE LINTZ IVES ’63 has joined the staff of News & Views, a monthly magazine for residents of Sun City Palm Desert, California. She continues freelance writing, too.

1970s

KEN DUNHAM ’70 received the Lifetime Achievement Award from the West Coast Lumber and Materials Association, a 102-year-old regional trade association based in Folsom, California. It’s the eighth time the honor has been awarded. Ken has been the association’s executive director since 2006.

LOUISE FENNER ’70 retired in 2012 from the U.S. State Department, where she worked as a writer. She has been volunteering at a community and arts center located in a 150-year-old former naval hospital on Capitol Hill in Washington, D.C., and ushering at the Folger Shakespeare Theater, and two other theaters, for several years.

ROBIN (CONNIE) GRAHAM BAILEY ’71 and MARY PAT MURPHY ’69 proudly wore their Griz colors at Machu Picchu in the mountains of Peru, their latest retirement adventure. Bailey was the longtime executive director of the Glacier Symphony and Chorale, and Murphy had a varied
journalism career that included The Associated Press, Anchorage Times and the Alaska Governor’s Office. Life-long friends, Bailey now lives in West Glacier, and Murphy lives on the west shore of Flathead Lake.

DR. KELLY WEBB ‘72 celebrated a decade as a science interpreter at the Aquarium of the Pacific in Long Beach, California. She also marked 44 years as a health care provider, including 17 years as a lecturer in sports injury prevention and management in the former Soviet Union, Soviet-bloc countries and The People’s Republic of China. She witnessed the fall of the Berlin Wall and the 2006 World Cup.

Since retiring from UM three years ago, former J-School Dean and UM Vice President PEGGY KUHR ‘73 has kept busy. She serves on the board of City Club Missoula (this year as chair), on the board of Friends of MontanaPBS (this year as secretary) and on the Program Committee for MOLLI, a UM program offering classes for people 50 and older. She has taught two courses for MOLLI on Media Ethics. Last year, she attended the PBS Annual Meeting and this year the national conference for America’s Public Television Stations as part of the MontanaPBS contingent.

STEVE HELMBRECHT ‘75 runs the family’s photographic studio, Helmbrecht Photography, which has served Havre and north central Montana since 1946. He was elected twice as the president of the Montana Professional Photographers Association, once in 2008 and again in 2015. He received the National Award for Service to Professional Photography in 2011. A former state legislator, he also teaches ceramics at Montana State University Northern.

MICHAEL RONEY ‘75 publishes business and lifestyle books through Highpoint Executive Publishing, which he founded in 2006. He’s also an occasional writer for Nokia and Forbes, and has been enjoying life right across the river from lower Manhattan.

MARY DENEVI ’76 is living in Missoula, using her J-School degree to do legal research and writing for Montana lawyers, primarily.

ROB DEAN ’77 is executive director of Searchlight New Mexico, a nonprofit news organization that does investigatory and innovative data journalism. In April 2019, ASNE and APME honored Searchlight’s investigation of failures in New Mexico’s foster-care system with the Frank A. Bletthen Award for Local Accountability Reporting. Rob was editor of the Santa Fe New Mexican from 1992 to 2013. Before that he worked as metro editor at The News Tribune in Tacoma, Washington. He’s also taught journalism at Pacific Lutheran University.

LARRY ELKIN ’78 and his colleagues at Palisades Hudson Financial Group published a second edition of their book, “Looking Ahead: Life, Family, Wealth and Business After 55” to reflect changes in personal finance following the 2018 federal tax overhaul. Elkin continues to serve as president of the financial advisory firm he founded in 1992, which this year opened an office—its sixth—in Miami, Florida.

SUSAN MCDANIEL ’78 sends her best from Vero Beach, Florida.

JEFF SMITH ’79 is still working for Oasis Films, which he started in 1989. The company specializes in commercials, music videos and documentaries. He lives in Lake Wylie, South Carolina.

1980s

JAMES BRUGGERS ’81 left Louisville’s Courier Journal in April 2018 after more than 18 years of covering environmental stories in Kentucky and Indiana. In May, he joined the staff of
InsideClimate News, a Pulitzer Prize-winning national nonprofit and nonpartisan news organization focused on climate, energy and the environment. He works from his Louisville home as part of ICN’s National Environmental News Network.

MIKE DENNISON ’81, chief political reporter for the Montana Television Network, just published “Inside Montana: A Reporter’s View from the Trenches” (History Press). The book looks back at some of the major stories he’s covered over three decades. It features Dennison’s coverage of the fall of the Montana Power Co., Montana’s deadliest prison riot and politicians ranging from former Governors Marc Racicot, Judy Martz and Brian Schweitzer to U.S. Senator Jon Tester and former U.S. Senators Max Baucus and Conrad Burns.

KELLY BUECHLER ’84 lives in Happy Valley, Oregon. He’s been executive director of the Providence Medical Foundation since 2003. An annual highlight, he wrote, is running the Hood to Coast Relay, which raises money for cancer research.


MICHAEL TROPILA ’87 writes: “After 30 awe-inspiring years of being in education and using my fabulous UM degree, I am retiring to enjoy life with my wife and our Griz season football tickets. Forever, thank you, Joe Durso.”

JIM KNUTSEN ’91 is working on an executive master’s degree in organizational change at the University of Oxford’s Saïd Business School and HEC Paris. He launched his strategic consulting practice in 1999, working with senior leaders of large institutions. “I’m not a practicing journalist, but I feel like I’m using the tools of journalism every day,” he wrote. “I can’t imagine any education that could have better prepared me to do the work of sense-making and truth-telling in organizations than my J-School degree from UM. Durso, Knowles and McGiffert are in my head every day of the week.”

NETTIE POWERS TRAXLER ’91 is working as a fiscal assistant for

Luella Brien ’06 was named general manager of the Bighorn County News in Hardin.
the Montana Medical Association in Helena. She and her husband, Mark ’91, have three sons: Tanner ’17, who recently received the President’s Recognition Award in Wildlife Biology; Austyn, who graduated this spring from Montana State University with a degree in environmental design/architecture; and Brett, who is a UM freshman in wildlife biology.

JOEL REESE MA ’94 lives in Chicago with his wife and 12-year-old daughter. He recently started a new job as director of editorial and content services for a local PR firm. “It’s the best fit I’ve had since I reluctantly left journalism more than 10 years ago,” he wrote.

CHRIS GOODE ’96 is CEO of Enterprise Electronics Corp., a manufacturer of weather radar and remote sensing technology. Working in more than 90 countries, the company recently won a national Emmy Award for pioneering the development of a mobile weather radar truck used for television reporting and forecasting. “I can’t say enough about the education I received from UM and the School of Journalism,” he writes. “I use the skills I acquired at UM in every facet of my business.”

PATRICIA SNYDER ’96 is a training and development specialist for the Oregon Employment Department. She writes that she uses the skills she learned to understand challenges and create information-based solutions.

TRAVIS MCDAM ’99 is serving his second stint with the Montana Human Rights Network, a nonprofit based in Helena. As the group’s research director, he monitors right-wing extremists, including the alt-right, white nationalists and anti-government militias. He also works as a community organizer and policy advocate. Travis is a nationally recognized expert on anti-democratic movements, and his analyses and writings have been featured in local, national and international news publications.

2000s

BENJAMIN SHORS MA ’00 recently premiered a half-hour documentary he co-produced on the 1964 flood that struck Montana’s Blackfeet Reservation, killing 30 and leaving hundreds homeless. “The Blackfeet Flood” was first exhibited in February at the Big Sky Documentary Film Festival in Missoula. An award-winning reporter with an international résumé, Ben is a clinical associate professor at the Edward R. Murrow College of Communication at Washington State University.

ANTHONY ZUCCARINI ’01 and his family recently moved to Kansas City, Missouri, where he is head of communications and marketing for Eitas, a company that provides funding and services for Jackson County residents with developmental disabilities.

PAUL QUENEAU ’02 is conservation editor of Bugle magazine at the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, where he’s worked for 16 years. He is also wrapping up his term as president of the Outdoor Writers Association of America, the nation’s largest and oldest organization of outdoor writers, and continues to proudly serve as editor for this very magazine at the J-School.

AARON FLINT ’04 launched a new Montana Talks radio show in 2018, which has grown to 17 radio signals statewide, ranging from Kalispell to Billings. He also recently returned from a fourth deployment overseas with the Army Reserve. His wife, Jessica, did fundraising for Congressman Ryan Zinke’s re-election and has her own real estate business in Billings.

ALYSSA WOLFE ’04 has been accepted into a doctoral program in Second Language Studies at Michigan State University for fall 2019. She plans to leave her current position as an English language instructor at Yachay Tech University in Ecuador this summer and start her studies at the other MSU in August.

MOLLIE BOND ’05 earned her doctorate in nonprofit leadership and social entrepreneurship from Gonzaga University in 2017. Her dissertation, “Mentoring Women of Generation X: Program Elements to Increase Success for Principals or Nonprofit Leaders,” led to a business coaching nonprofit leaders. She also consults mentoring program administrators and nonprofit executive directors during fundraising campaigns. In addition, she works as director of foundation and corporate relations at Moody Bible Institute. She lives in the Seattle area.
KATHERINE SATHER ’05, of Seattle, works as a writer at Microsoft’s Artificial Intelligence and Research division, producing in-product and external marketing content for Bing and other AI products.

LUella BriEn ’06 returned to journalism after a decade-long absence to become editor and then general manager of the Big Horn County News. The Hardin, Montana, weekly has a circulation of 1,600 and covers Big Horn County, the Crow Indian Reservation and parts of the Northern Cheyenne Indian Reservation—an area of 5,015 square miles.

JASON COLE ’06 of Yakima, Washington, writes that after working in video game marketing for 11 years, he’s become a video producer, photographer and designer for adventure aircraft manufacturer CubCrafters.

ERIN MADISON ’06 takes photos, writes content for brochures, manages social media and does website updates for NorthWestern Energy. She started the job in November after working for Great Falls College MSU and nine years at the Great Falls Tribune. She sometimes gets to wear a hard hat.

KRISTIN PACE ’06 launched her memoir, “This Much Country,” published in March by Grand Central Publishing. Kirkus Reviews describes it as a “buoyant evocation of a thrilling, hardscrabble life.” Booklist says, “‘This Much Country’ is an honest, heartfelt and exciting memoir and a must-read for all nature lovers seeking a glimpse into a truly Alaskan adventure.”

STANLEY PILLMAN ’06 is the CMO of Hypoxico Inc. and works alongside fellow Griz Brian Oestrike ’02. He writes that he is “still wearing sandals on cold days and still the biggest Chicago sports fan on the planet.”

CAITLIN COPPLE MASSINGILL MA ’07 founded Full Swing Public Relations, which offers strategic communications for women-owned businesses focused on travel, health and wellness, and social change.

SARAH WINDMUELLER ’07 and husband Jeff ’05 moved to upstate New York in August 2018. Jeff was promoted to captain in the United States Army and is currently stationed at Fort Drum, where he works as a logistician. Sarah teaches fifth and sixth grade religion and social studies at a private school. They have two boys, Caderyn, 10, and Gabriel, 6.

APRIL GREGORY ’08 writes that after five years as executive director of a nonprofit supporting fisheries work of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, she has been hired as curator for the service’s National Fish and Aquatic Conservation Archives in Spearfish, South Dakota. She spends much of her time off at her family’s Montana cattle ranch.

After five years as U.S. Sen. Jon Tester’s communications director and helping with his re-election, Marnee Banks ’09 accepted a job as chief communications and operations officer for the Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership, a D.C.-based national conservation nonprofit. She manages a team of communications experts, including digital and marketing professionals. She also works with the group’s corporation council, which includes national brands like REI, Patagonia and Orvis, to “guarantee all Americans have quality places to hunt and fish.”

WHITNEY BERMES ’09 recently became the first-ever communications coordinator for Gallatin County. She helps with communications for all of Gallatin County’s departments, with duties ranging from writing press releases and answering media questions to attending numerous county meetings and writing...
employee newsletters. Whitney spent the prior seven years as a reporter and city editor for the Bozeman Daily Chronicle.

**2010s**

**KATRINA HESER FELLER ’10**
graduated from Penn State Law in May 2019 and is excited to begin work as a litigation associate at Moore, Cockrell, Goicoechea and Johnson in Kalispell.

**EMERALD GAGNON ’11** of Seaside, California, has begun a new venture as an illustrator. She recently illustrated a book titled “Planted,” which is scheduled to come out this summer.

**CODY PROCTOR ’13** became morning co-anchor/weather anchor in January for KIMA/KEPR Action News in Washington. She is forecasting weather for an area reaching from the Yakima and Kittitas valleys to the Columbia Basin and into northeastern Oregon. Previously she was a weekend anchor/reporter for KIMA/KEPR in Pasco, Wash. and for KRTV in Great Falls.

**ASHLEY WISE ’15** reports that she’s now married and still working at the Miles City Star as a reporter.

**RIC SANCHEZ ’15,** a social media producer for The Washington Post, was featured in Washingtonian Magazine for his work transforming the tone of the Post’s Twitter account. He also oversees special projects for the social media team.

**NICKY OUELLET MA ’16** was recently hired as news director for Yellowstone Public Radio in Billings. She worked previously as Montana Public Radio’s Flathead regional reporter.

**MADISON DAPCEVICH MA ’17** is a full-time science writer for IFLScience, based in San Francisco. Her work has taken her from the Oregon coast to the mountains of Snowdonia in Wales in search of the most pressing environmental stories. She was recently selected as a 2019 Science Communication Fellow with the Ocean Exploration Trust. She spent three weeks in July exploring the pristine waters near American Samoa while living aboard a research vessel.

**NORA SAKS MA ’18** has a hit podcast, “The Richest Hill.” So said The New Yorker Magazine this spring. Nora works as the Butte area’s regional reporter for Montana Public Radio (MTPR.org). She’s also president of the Butte Press Club.

**BREE ZENDER ’18** is having fun as the Morning Edition host, news anchor and reporter for KUNR, Reno, Nevada’s NPR affiliate. Her work has been featured on NPR’s “All Things Considered,” “Here and Now” and KQED’s “The California Report.” She is working toward a master’s degree focused on media innovation at the University of Nevada, Reno.

**HEATHER FRALEY MA ’19** writes that she has her “dream job in her dream town.” As assistant editor of the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation’s Bugle magazine, she’s using skills she learned from the J-School’s Environmental Science and Natural Resource Journalism program. “Learn by doing is more than just a tagline for the journalism school,” she said. “I came into this job already having done most of what I’m now expected to do.”

**DAYLEN TURK ’19** is the lead producer for Entercom Communications’ talk news station in Austin, Texas. Talk1370 also broadcasts Texas A&M Aggies’ basketball.

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