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COMMUNIQUE

UNCOVERING COVID

J-SCHOOL STUDENTS & ALUMS
GRAPPLE WITH REPORTING
IN UNPRECEDENTED TIMES



DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

I CAN'T TELL YOU how many times I've sat down to write this note to you over the last few months. And each time, something comes along that makes me chuck that draft and start over. It's been that year.

We had so many firsts for the School of Journalism. First all-remote classes, first distance job and internship fair, first virtual Dean Stone event and first Zoom graduation ceremony. Despite the changes we've endured, your J-School is as strong as ever and turning out smart, engaged, ethical journalists. Journalists who are, as I write this, witnessing history, holding the powerful accountable, elevating unheard voices and searching for truth in unprecedented times.

It's hard to remember back to the beginning of the academic year, but we made some important strides in the fall semester. We took our High School Journalism Day on the road to Billings, drawing around 300 students and teachers from high schools in eastern Montana and Wyoming. That was one event in a ramped-up recruitment plan intended to bring more future journalists to UM. Our efforts have paid off and we admitted 65% more students this fall over last.

The Montana Media Lab at the School of Journalism worked with middle and high schools to teach a news literacy curriculum and bring storytelling skills to young people in Indian Country and rural Montana. And when the MML couldn't get to students, we offered projects like the pandemic storytelling effort that aired on Montana Public Radio.

We welcomed two outstanding Pollner Professors. We introduced new courses, a certificate in documentary film, a 4+1 master's program and planned for a study abroad to Northern Ireland. We scheduled our job and internship fair, high school journalism day and a summer journalism camp. Then the pandemic hit.

I'll never forget racing back to the office during spring break, telling professors to call students home from their reporting trips and pointedly avoiding anyone who happened to be in Ander-

son Hall. Two students who had just returned from a Native News reporting trip to Chicago stopped by, but got no welcome-back hugs as we worried about their and our risk of exposure.

And we pivoted. Native News students covered the pandemic's effect on Montana's Native American population remotely. The planned print edition became an electronic publication. Students in advanced television reporting continued to produce content, but interviews were conducted using Zoom or other platforms. Advanced Audio students, in a remarkable gift of timing, had gathered most of the sound they needed to produce a podcast on the Little Shell Tribe's long-awaited federal recognition. The Ireland trip was scrapped and rescheduled for next year.

We had more than 100 people tune in to our Dean Stone Facebook Live event. Graduate defenses saw bigger audiences in the virtual space. Our graduation ceremony included friends and families from around the globe gathered on Zoom. And our students continued to thrive.

They won top national awards from the Society of Professional Journalists and the National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences. We had a strong showing in the William R. Hearst Journalism Awards competition. Senior Jiakai Lou embraced the virtual format and took home the championship in the multimedia competition.

We raised thousands of dollars for student support thanks to you. We awarded stipends to interns working for low or no pay. We are listening to alums grappling with reporting on the pandemic and civil unrest, and working to be better educators and anti-racists. This summer we're working on a plan for a safe fall and reaching out to each of our students to craft a plan for successful completion of their degrees.

In the pages that follow, you'll read more detailed stories of how the year unfolded. I'm incredibly proud of our students, staff and faculty for managing the ups and downs of the spring semester and for working diligently this summer to be ready for excellent teaching and



learning this fall. By the time you receive *Communiqué* in your mailbox, plans may have changed again, but that's the way it must be as we navigate the pandemic.

I think you'll find remarkable the reflections of some students, recently graduated, who are reporting from the front lines during a news cycle no one could anticipate. They are the newest members of our alumni family and a strong reminder that the lives we influence will change the world.

I hope you are safe and well.

Denise Dowling
Director of the School of Journalism

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(photos: clockwise from left: Jeremy Lurgio, Victor Yvellez, Madeline Broom)

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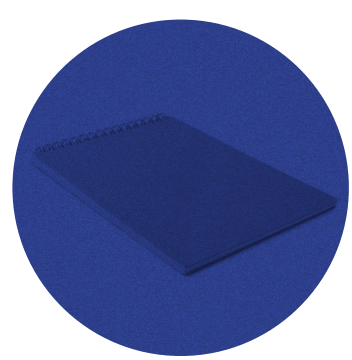
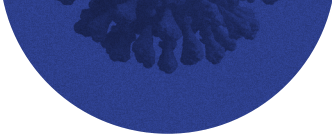
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COVER PHOTO: Greta Rybus '10 took this shot of Danielle Walczak, a food harvester at Six River Farm in Bowdoinham, Maine, as part of a photo package for BuzzFeed News about how small-scale farmers have responded to COVID-19, pivoting and adjusting their business models to feed their communities. See more of her work at gretarybus.com.



COVERING & CONFRONTING

THE MONUMENTAL CHALLENGES OF THE PANDEMIC

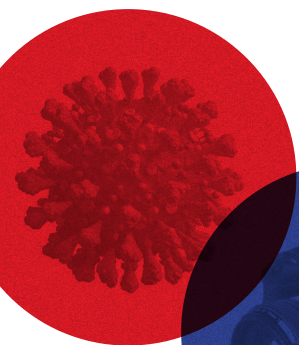
BY JED GOTTLIEB

UNIVERSITY OF MONTANA journalism graduate student Kylie Mohr opened her story about rock climbing nomads surviving the pandemic in picturesque Bishop, California. High Country News picked up Mohr's feature, which begins in this rugged climber's mecca and recreational wonderland between the Sierra Nevada and the White Mountains. But Mohr, observing social-distancing guidelines, could only visit Bishop remotely.

"I had to be more creative with how I asked my sources questions," she said. "I had to remind myself to ask them, 'What does it look like where you are? Can you describe to me where you were before this hit?'"

Mohr found a demographic whose lives had been quickly, radically impacted by the coronavirus, and dove into her reporting. She did what journalists have always done: adapt quickly to cover rapidly evolving situations from all sides.

As a general rule, French language majors don't make 180-degree turns. Math professors and philosophy scholars don't often rework entire courses mid-semester in response to breaking news. But journalism programs are uniquely suited to reconcile profound changes.



The reality of the J-School moving to remote learning, which the University did after spring break, came with headaches, revised expectations and letdowns (including a canceled student trip to Northern Ireland to report on Brexit). But also more than a few success stories.

Teams of students this spring in the J-School's Native News Honors Project spent weeks pre-reporting and planning spring break trips to Montana's seven Indian reservations. The Native News project is a decades-old J-School capstone where students produce in-depth reporting on Montana's Native Americans. This year's teams were exploring science in Indigenous communities—until COVID-19 closed millions of business and government offices.

Professors Jason Begay and Jeremy Lurgio needed to rewrite the project's mission in just a few days.

"It made sense, as a capstone project, as a project that has dedicated itself to covering issues in Indian country, that we should cover how this pandemic is affecting reservations in the state," Begay said.

But that meant the weeks of pre-reporting went out the window, which was tough for students to handle. Photojournalism students felt especially let down as Zoom images became the portraits of the moment. Begay and Lurgio took time to connect with students outside of class time. Strategy sessions and pep talks reminding students that hard turns come with every journalism beat helped them rally to respond to the challenge.

Sophomore Hunter Wiggins found a nursery that sold the traditional medicinal plants he was covering in Native News. Riffing off photos of wild grasses by Jim Richardson that Wiggins had seen in National Geographic, he pulled the plants from their soil, washed them clean and took them to his home photo studio.

"I suspended them with fishing line in front of a blank, white background, lit the plants with two strobes and took full portraits of the plants including the entire root systems," he said. "It was cool to see at University of Montana we are doing stuff that is meaningful, that matters, that is brand new."

Senior Helena Dore said, "Having this happen right at the end of my college career prepared me to respond to these pivotal

moments, and I think that was rewarding in a way." As a news and sports editor at the Montana Kaimin, she received a crash course in how to work through a crisis and tailor coverage accordingly.

The Kaimin staff found ways to report online and produce and distribute print editions during the shutdown.

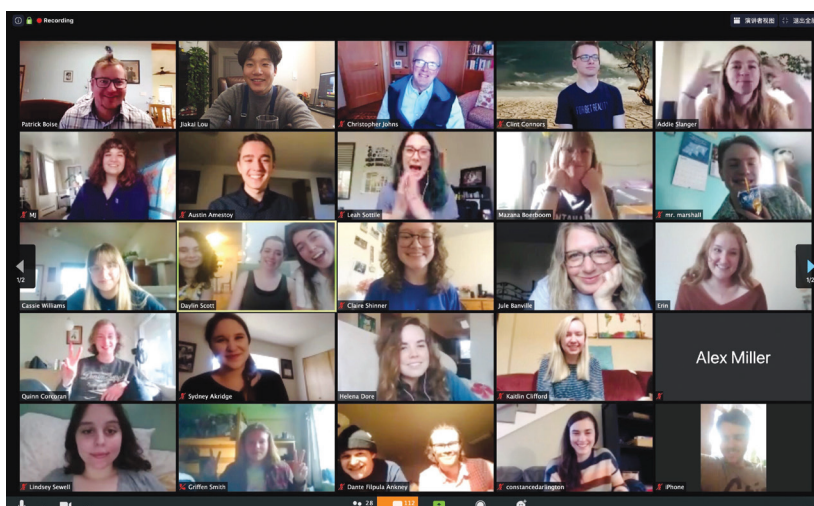
"We had to reduce sports [coverage] to almost nothing for a couple of issues," Dore said. "I emphasized that we could pivot sports more towards outdoor recreation. But we had to take a lot of sports reporters off stories they were working on to focus on breaking news."

As an editor for a primary source of campus news for nearly 11,000 undergraduate and graduate students, Dore felt reporting through the pandemic was of vital importance. She pointed to the April ASUM elections as one of the topics that would have gone uncovered if not for the Kaimin's work. She also tipped her cap to freshman Griffen Smith, a Kaimin reporter who single-handedly distributed the paper's print run following the shuttering of most of campus.

"With businesses like coffeshops shut down, we adjusted to hit grocery stores," said Smith. "When I realized how dangerous the virus was even for someone my age, that's when it hit me that I was going to a lot of public places."

But Smith decided delivering the news mattered as much as ever with many students scattered across the city.

Students, staff and faculty at the J-School pivoted in ways large and small to teach and learn from the challenges brought by the



FROM TOP: Kaimin staff found new ways to report online and distribute papers off campus. Native News, meanwhile, couldn't visit reservations, so students hit the studio to illustrate stories.

coronavirus. That flexibility will continue in the weeks and months to come. Director Denise Dowling put it this way. "The pandemic is putting us to the test in our roles as educators, students and journalists. We are up to the challenge."

Jed Gottlieb spent a decade as the music and theater critic at the Boston Herald after earning his master's from the J-School in 2005. He returned this past spring to his favorite place and alma mater to teach a class on arts writing to a mix of journalism, fine art and art history students.



Big Sky High School students produced stories on everything from teen pregnancy to climate change through an MML partnership with PBS NewsHour.

Montana Media Lab launches pandemic oral history project for high school students

WHEN THE CORONAVIRUS reached Montana this spring, Aspen Nord, a junior at Sentinel High School in Missoula, struggled. She's an extrovert, and she missed seeing friends. Social distancing felt quiet and sad. But she knew she was living through a historic moment.

So, when the Montana Media Lab (MML) launched its Coronavirus Oral History Project in April, Nord signed up. The project aims to tell the story of COVID-19 in Montana through the voices of middle and high school students.

"We're pretty much living through a history book lesson. When new textbooks get printed for history class, the pandemic of 2020 will be a chapter in them, and... it's kind of cool that we're getting to be a part of the recording."

MML Director Anne Bailey got the idea for the oral history project in mid-March when Governor Steve Bullock announced school closures and social distancing guidelines. She knew students would be hit especially hard, and thought a chance to record their thoughts and feelings about those changes—and to inter-

view friends and family members about the pandemic—might help them process what they were experiencing while also creating an oral documentation of this time in our collective history.

Bailey reached out to teachers across the state asking them to spread the word. Within days, middle and high school students from Libby to Heart Butte to Missoula signed up. They took an MML Zoom training to learn interviewing techniques and tips for recording conversations via computer and smartphone.

Freddy Jiminez, a sixth-grader at Heart Butte School on the Blackfeet Reservation, interviewed his grandparents about how the current pandemic compares to other challenging times in their lives. Ivan Shadow, a freshman at Sentinel High School, interviewed his uncle in Utah about his work developing diagnostic tests for COVID-19. And Jaycee Thornock, a senior at Libby Middle High School, shared her disappointment at having been robbed of her last months of high school. More than 40 students have signed up to participate in the project so far.



LEARN MORE

Follow the lab's progress
at montanamedialab.com

All recordings will be archived on montanamedialab.com, and selected interviews aired on Montana Public Radio this summer.

But MML tackled more than just the coronavirus in the past year. The Lab trained UM students, government officials, scientists, business owners and community members in everything from social media engagement to writing for the media.

"Although COVID-19 forced us to cancel our in-person workshops this summer, it's allowed us to explore new ways to continue our work online. We're growing and gaining recognition, and online workshops and news literacy trainings are helping us to connect with a much larger audience," Bailey says. ³⁰

A look back at a challenging, rewarding year for the J-School's Pollner Professors

NYT opinion writer
next up in prestigious
line of visiting professors

BY CHRIS JOHNS

In the 2019-2020 academic year, the School of Journalism welcomed two outstanding T. Anthony Pollner Distinguished Professors, Leah Sottile and Chris Johns. Chris was advising the Kaimin and teaching a senior-level photojournalism seminar when the coronavirus shuttered campus in mid-March. He wrote us this report.

THE SPRING OF 2020 will be remembered by many as the tragic coronavirus semester. I, however, prefer to view it as the resiliency semester. No doubt, the arrival of COVID-19 was challenging, but what lifted me was the resiliency of the J-School students, faculty, staff and the many families who coped with the pandemic.

Zoom went from being a noun to a verb as we Zoomed in and out of class lectures, presentations and remote coaching. It was not perfect, but we adapted, remained flexible, listened to one another and made the best of it. Those were qualities I saw daily in the 16 students who I had the pleasure of teaching in my Pollner class, Conservation Photojournalism. Many went home after campus shut down, and despite inconvenience and hardship, they embraced their course work while scattered from Missoula to Redding and from Milwaukee to Portland.

Despite all the upheaval, the Montana Kaimin rose to the occasion by becoming stronger with each issue. It was an impressive performance by Editor-in-Chief Cassidy Alexander and her team. They were relentless in their coverage of COVID-19 and how it was impacting the lives of students, faculty and staff. Their online "Coronavirus Timeline" was world-class. They were innovative while covering sports, with delightful features such as what tunes star UM athletes listen to as they get pumped-up for game time. The Kaimin editorials and columns



E. TAMMY KIM

were insightful, thoughtful, honest and critical when necessary. Advising the Kaimin was one of the most rewarding experiences of being a Pollner professor.

Leah Sottile, the Fall 2019 Pollner Professor (and acclaimed freelance writer, host and reporter of the National Magazine Award-nominated and Apple Top 10 podcast "Bundyville"), had this to say about the J-School students:

"These are the people who will carry us through. I'm sure of it now. When you have been surrounded for months by the constant, caffeinated buzz of twentysomething journalists, you find hope. They smile big. They laugh hard. They fight mercilessly. They work hard. They tell each other—all the time—how much they love each other."

Thankfully, one of Montana's best ideas, the T. Anthony Pollner Distinguished

Professorship, resolutely continues into the 2020 fall semester with the selection of E. Tammy Kim, a New York Times contributing opinion writer who covers labor, business and the Koreans. Prior to the Times, she was on the editorial staff of The New Yorker and was a features staff writer for Al Jazeera America. Following high school graduation in Tacoma, Washington, she attended Yale University, graduated cum laude, earning a B.A. in Philosophy, and then acquired her J.D. at New York University School of Law. She said, "Lawyering was fascinating and meaningful, but felt narrow; I longed to write, report and mentor young people." Kim will be teaching a course on covering the American worker.

"Students will gain an overview of key labor issues, history and institutions, while simultaneously developing skills in research, interviewing, pitching, writing, fact-checking and advising," she said.

Tammy will be a wonderful addition to the roster of Pollner Professors, and the J-School will soon be making an announcement on the selection for Spring 2021. Our heartfelt gratitude to Anthony Pollner's family for this gift that keeps on giving. 🍷

Chris Johns served as the Spring 2020 T. Anthony Pollner Distinguished Professor of Journalism. He is the former Editor-in-Chief of National Geographic Magazine.

"These are the people who will carry us through. I'm sure of it now. When you have been surrounded for months by the constant, caffeinated buzz of twentysomething journalists, you find hope. They smile big. They laugh hard. They fight mercilessly. They work hard. They tell each other—all the time—how much they love each other."

— Leah Sottile, Fall 2019 Pollner Professor

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Now 10 years old, environmental science grad program finds growth, opportunity

IT'S NOW BEEN a decade since the J-School's graduate program narrowed its focus to concentrate on environmental journalism. The first students enrolled in 2010, and their master's work has taken them from Japan to Brazil and from Poplar, Montana, to the Paradise Valley.

The two-year program features an elective-rich curriculum that allows students to focus on their individual areas of interest while working together as a cohort to develop strong journalism skills.

The J-School's master's in Environmental Science and Natural Resource Journalism is highly interdisciplinary. Students take non-Journalism electives in law, public policy, business, forestry, and in arts and humanities. Story Lab, the program's unique science reporting class, pairs each student with a research lab on campus for an insider's experience of how scientific inquiry really works.

The program has graduated 62 students since 2012 and experienced steady growth, with 28 students currently drawn from applicants coast to coast. And this degree is proving itself to be marketable.

Alumni are now working from Brooklyn, New York, to Bethel, Alaska, and Mexico City to Honolulu. They are in newsrooms and at university science communications jobs, building freelance careers or exploring new roles with new media.

Sam Lungren '13 arrived at UM eager to sharpen his skills reporting on conservation from a hunting and fishing perspective. His master's work focused on salmon and steelhead, and he's kept fishing that stream. Immediately after graduation, Lungren landed a job as editor of *Backcountry Journal*, the quarterly magazine of the fast-growing conservation nonprofit *Backcountry Hunters & Anglers*. His success there helped him make the jump to the hunting and fishing media empire, *MeatEater*, where he is now the fishing editor.

"The Journalism master's program taught me two very important things: how to explain science in an engaging way and



Students had super fun viewing Superfund sites from Butte to Milltown on the Environmental Science and Natural Resource Journalism graduate program's epic annual orientation trip.

how to be a professional journalist," Lungren said. "The conservation movement, at its essence, is a loosely organized effort to make voters care about scientific findings and wildlife. Compelling writers have always led it. But the ability to write well is not enough in the modern media industry; you have to be able to manage your business, market yourself, shoot photos and video, design and network. The school faculty provided me the skills in a way that found me more success and faster than I ever thought possible."

Madison Dapceвич '17 recently shifted jobs from the popular science website *IFLScience* to the possibly even more popular fact-checking site, *Snopes*.

She says her course work let her learn science reporting and journalism skills from researchers, policy makers and established journalists. "The program's individualized curriculum and hands-on approach to breaking down complex scientific information is unique, and has shaped my career as a science journalist," Dapceвич said.

Its graduates are also having an outsized impact on news coverage across Montana. Tom Kuglin '14 is the natural resource reporter at the *Independent Record* in Helena; Nicky Ouellet '16 is the news director at *Yellowstone Public Radio*; Nora Saks '18 is *Montana Public Radio's* reporter and the creative force behind "Richest Hill," MTPR's award-winning podcast about Butte, America. The voices of Beau Baker '18, Maxine Speier '19, Kevin Trevellyan '20 and Jenny McConnaha '21 are also familiar to public radio listeners across the state.

As the graduate program continues to develop, its focus will likely sharpen on environmental justice and issues related to public health and equity.

"Journalists with a heart for humanity and a mind able to center stories on science are especially essential these days," said Nadia White, associate professor and director of the graduate program. "Our current students are reporting on the impact of COVID-19 on diverse communities with empathy and compassion that makes news matter to its audience." 📢



IN FOCUS

ADVANCED AUDIO CLASS GARNERS NATIONAL AUDIENCE WITH LITTLE SHELL COVERAGE

JUST BEFORE spring semester began, the Little Shell Tribe of Chippewa Indians received the federal recognition that generations of its members had fought to secure.

That led Jule Banville's advanced audio class to pivot. The recognition was national news, but after The New York Times and Washington Post moved on, students dug in. Nine of them produced 18 stories—a mix of multi-sourced features and audio portraits (stories told by individual tribal members) that explored what recognition means and what's next for Montana's "landless tribe."

Their stories are posted to the Public Radio Exchange (exchange.prx.org/series/39210-project-little-shell), where they are licensed for broadcast to public and community stations all over the country.

Montana Public Radio and Yellowstone Public Radio aired many of the pieces this summer.

In addition, the Missoulian newspaper is interested in turning the scripts into news features so their readers can benefit from the students' deep reporting on Little Shell.

1) Victor Yvellez told the story of Ekoo Beck, a young woman considering disenrolling as a Blackfeet to join the Little Shell. 2) Beck looks at family photos with her grandmother. 3) Reporter Allison Berrian photographed the tribal recognition celebration in Great Falls, where Sen. Steve Daines addressed the happy crowd. 4) Little Shell author Chris LaTray (left) embraces a friend at the celebration. (photos: Victor Yvellez and Allison Berrian)

Outdoor adventure is focus of new documentary course

FOR THE LAST few years, Professor Jeremy Lurgio dreamed about creating an outdoor adventure documentary course, and this spring he finally put that curriculum into motion.

The power of nature and the outdoor world has shaped adventurers, writers, photographers and filmmakers for generations. Jeremy's course challenged students to learn the creative, practical, technical and strategic skills to produce media centered on the concept of outdoor adventure—and what better place to do it than western Montana. This hands-on, workshop-style class introduced students to the tools, techniques and craft of shooting, editing and producing short outdoor stories in words, photographs and film.

Students in the course met a series of talented guests, including Aaron Teasdale, a freelance writer and photographer who was in the final stages of reporting for National Geographic on a controversial exposé about Colin O'Brady's Antarctic "crossing." Freelance photographer and filmmaker Erik Petersen '16 talked to students about funding, researching, shooting and producing short outdoor films. Filmmaker Jayme Dittmar '18 talked about her acclaimed film "Deer 139," and Sophie Danison '14 answered questions about her reporting and filming of "The Quiet Force." Seth Dahl '11 shared tips and techniques and answered questions about his film "The Long Road Home."

The class put its skills to work covering the Colds smoke Freeride Competition. Students followed two Missoula competitors to Lost Trail Powder Mountain for the ski and snowboard competition. Students worked together to plan, storyboard, shoot, edit and produce a six-minute short film with an accompanying short story and photo gallery. For many students it was the first time they'd worked on a short video project. The project can be seen on montanakaimin.com by searching "Colds smoke Freeride Competition." ●

'UM News' goes statewide, brings home awards

THE J-SCHOOL'S long-running student television newscast, "UM News," expanded its footprint in 2019. For the first time, MontanaPBS broadcast the weekly program to the entire state of Montana. At the same time, the class of student photographers, directors, reporters, writers, producers and anchors also created separate versions of the newscast for Missoula television stations including KPAX, the CBS affiliate; and KTMF, the ABC-Fox affiliate.

The program brings viewers a sampling of the wide range of news and activities that originate at UM. Reporters and photographers covered everything from how UM is working to become carbon-neutral to combat climate change, to a profile of a ground-breaking transgender runner on UM's cross-country team, to why some students are reluctant to get flu shots.

The students' hard work paid off in contest wins at both the regional and national levels of the Society of Professional Journalist's "Mark of Excellence" competition. And, the "UM News" program and two individual stories reported by senior Tessa Nadeau were nominated for Student Production Awards sponsored by the Northwest Chapter of The National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences. Nadeau won the General News-Light category, and "UM News" won the Newscast category. ●

◀ Student Caden Reid films ski jumpers at the Colds smoke Freeride Competition at Lost Trail Powder Mountain. (photo: Jeremy Lurgio)



Native News forges new path during pandemic


THE MONTANA Native News Honors Project students displayed tremendous resiliency in the face of the pandemic and social distancing policies. The semester began with the project focusing on sciences, specifically traditional Indigenous knowledge.

However, most reporting trips were canceled and more than half of the teams were forced to abandon weeks of pre-reporting and pivot to reporting on the effects of quarantine on Montana's Indian Country.

In the end, three teams managed to complete their originally slated stories, including one that traveled to Chicago right before social distancing took hold in Montana, and five teams banded together to cover the quarantine.

But when it came time for publication, for the first time in its history, the Montana Native News Honors Project was forced to eliminate the print product in light of the coronavirus pandemic.

Instead, associate professors Jason Begay and Jeremy Lurgio developed new partnerships with national news outlets to publish this year's content. Native News stories ran in *Indian Country Today*, with *Lee* newspapers, and one was picked up by the *Kaiser Health News* service and ran in more than a dozen newspapers across the country.

Begay hopes these partnerships are only the first seeds of associations that will eventually germinate into full-fledged working relationships with editors across the country. 



TOP: Student Paul Hamby (left) leads an interview for Native News. He and his partner, Jiakai Lou, went to Fort Peck, one of the only teams to complete a formal reporting trip. BELOW: Curator Nina Sanders carries a money tree, a traditional gift to honor someone, in a parade to celebrate the opening of the "Apsáalooke Women and Warriors" exhibition at the Field Museum in Chicago. (photos, from top: Jiakai Lou, Trevor Reid)

New course to study media's grasp of climate science

MEDIA COVERAGE OF climate change was bigger and arguably better than ever in 2019-20. A concerted media effort to #CoverClimateNow featured an unlikely teenage superhero named Greta Thunberg. Millions of children skipped school for global climate crisis marches. CNN aired 10 presidential candidates talking about nothing but their climate change plans for hours.

Journalists have covered climate change as a major global concern since the 1950s, but a tactical shift by key industries in the mid-'80s challenged the ability of the press to inform a coherent cultural conversation about what to do about greenhouse gas emissions.

Associate Professor Nadia White focused on these dynamics, along with the fundamentals of covering climate science, for a new 200-level elective, *Climate Change and the Media*. The class satisfies the "climate

change and society" requirement for students minoring in *Climate Change Studies*.

Many of the students in the first offering of the class were Journalism majors pursuing a *Climate Change Studies* minor. "I think that's a powerful one-two punch for anyone with a passion for telling high-impact stories about the future of the planet," White said.


Press coverage of civil rights protests in the South in the 1960s served as a foil for climate coverage in the 21st century. Images from the influential anti-segregation Children's March in Birmingham in 1963, juxtaposed with photos from the global children's marches of 2019, made for rich discussion of the changing powers of the press in the age of social media and weaponized doubt in news sources.

A video vox-pop assignment allowed the students to gauge first-hand the depth

of knowledge and concern about climate change on the UM campus. The final results were sobering: Even on a campus with top-flight climate change research and classes, student awareness of local climate action was low.

"We were all stunned at the disconnect between people's concern about climate change and their sense of personal or political agency to change the greenhouse gas impacts of our actions," White said.

Wrapping up the semester during the coronavirus pandemic gave the class a real-time look at how science journalism can affect public policy.

"It felt like a time-lapse of climate action coverage," White said. "We watched the response to a global threat unfold in weeks instead of decades." 

As campus shuttered, Kaimin met the challenge

ERIN SARGENT

Kaimin editor-in-chief

THIS YEAR, AS COVID-19 spread across the United States and beyond, countless newsrooms across the country faced the inevitability of remote work and social distancing. The Montana Kaimin was no exception to these difficult conversations.

On March 12, UM announced all spring semester classes would move to remote delivery, and the staff of the Kaimin met in-person for the last time.

We discussed the many unknowns: How would we shift to Zoom meetings every week? How would we make sure we covered all the news that continued to break every day? How would we make sure our reporters, photographers, videographers, designers, business managers and editors could continue to do our jobs, despite everything? When would we

be back in the newsroom? Would we be back at all?

The second half of the spring 2020 semester was unprecedented, and it called for the Kaimin to produce unprecedented journalism, despite the challenges. We made the choice to continue working and to continue printing, every week. For the campus. For the rest of Missoula, too.

When the UM men's basketball team's NCAA final in Boise was canceled, we covered it. When UM students studying abroad were called home early, we covered it. When UM furloughed 63 of its employees, we covered it. When UM canceled its in-person graduation, forcing seniors to redefine what it meant to earn their degrees, we covered it. When university labs announced they'd be part of the effort to develop a vaccine, we covered it.

Every week, we logged on to Zoom. We held our meetings, our adviser critiques and our pitch meetings virtually. We designed the Kaimin from home to meet our Monday deadline, and shipped it off to press on time every Wednesday. And we focused our distribution on off-campus locations.

And when the end of the semester eventually came and we produced our last print issue, our Missoula-based photographers ventured out to capture the new way of life we are all experiencing for our final cover story, "Keeping their distance."

And we are gearing up to do it all over again. Our new team of editors continues to meet. And when students came to the University of Montana campus this fall, some returning for the first time since March, and some coming for the very first time, they had another Montana Kaimin issue waiting for them. ●



Student DJs created in-home studios to keep UM's college radio shows on the air. (photo: Madeline Broom)

KBGA keeps music, news flowing during COVID

NOELLE HUSER

KBGA General Manager

KBGA HAS BEEN working to adapt to the crisis of the pandemic by being present and engaged in the community. Staffers quickly rolled out remote DJing technology and trained their volunteer DJs virtually, allowing them to stay on air from the safety of their homes throughout the shelter-in-place order. They have managed to stay on air remotely ever since, keeping their listeners entertained and informed with unique music programming, podcasting and news such as "Local Exposure," "Democracy Now," "Quarantine Companion" and "Clam Bake."

KBGA student staff and volunteers also have been working with local businesses and organizations to continue to provide a platform for them to connect with the community, adjusting to meet their individual needs.

Despite the silence of our usually buzzing offices, KBGA has stuck together as a team of student employees, community DJs and dedicated listeners to stay agile and adaptive. We will continue to serve as a cultural hub for people to connect and feel connected—a most vital thing to our world right now. ●



IN FOCUS

VISITORS AND SPECIAL EVENTS AT THE J-SCHOOL

THE SCHOOL OF Journalism and the University of Montana continue to attract some of the profession's brightest minds to its classrooms. Here are some highlights.

1) Pulitzer-winning author and New York Times columnist **Nicholas Kristof** visited just as coronavirus was sweeping the nation in early March to discuss his new book, "Tightrope: Americans Reaching for Hope." It dives into devastated parts of working-class America, places like Yamhill, Oregon, where he grew up. But Kristof remains optimistic, and points to early childhood education and better access to health care as rays of hope. "We can make a lot of progress and make this a better and more competitive country," he said.

2) **Ted Kim**, who directs internships at The New York Times, visited in September because he'd heard good things about the J-School and wanted to see it for himself. He'd selected Lucy Tompkins '17 for a fellowship out of 2,300 applicants and was impressed by the solid foundation our students receive. He met with students and faculty for two days, and left noting that he'll be keeping a close eye out now for UM grads.

3) The J-School hosted **Elizabeth Jensen**, NPR's former public editor, in November to speak about how political bias coming from both ends of the spectrum is dominating the news environment. She said NPR gets wide-ranging complaints about its political stories. The comments are often light on specifics about perceived liberal or conservative bias, but she said they generally balance out. "I think NPR works very hard to get a wide range of views on the air," she told MTPR's Sally Mauk.



Jiakai Lou won Hearst's multimedia category after he and other finalists produced videos sharing their experience of the pandemic. (photo: Sara Diggins)

Students garner top accolades in national, regional competitions

FIRST IN HEARST

ONCE AGAIN, UM'S J-School students showed the country what they can do, winning top prizes in regional and national competitions, including the "college Pulitzers," the national Hearst Journalism Awards Program.

Jiakai Lou took first place in Hearst's multimedia competition after winning the preliminary round for his documentary, "32 Below," chronicling the hard work and passion of one ranching family as they tended cows and calves during last year's frigid winter in Helmville, Montana. The film was also chosen to show at the Big Sky Documentary Film Festival.

Lou's win at Hearst earned him an invite to compete against four other finalists for Hearst's grand championship. For several days in June, Lou and the other competitors were asked to compete from home, producing a video sharing their experience during the pandemic. The competition was

scheduled to take place in Houston, but COVID-19 forced a different format. Jiakai took top honors and won \$10,000 for his efforts. View it at vimeo.com/426057750.

This year UM J-School students placed in the top 10 in four Hearst categories, and in the top 20 in four more. That earned UM tenth place in the Hearst overall competition for 2020, due to the strong sixth place showing in multimedia and ninth place in photojournalism.

UM's other individual student standouts in Hearst:

- Mollie Lemm, 8th in Multimedia II: Innovative Storytelling and Audience Engagement
- Quinn Corcoran, 16th in Multimedia III: Enterprise Reporting
- Sara Diggins, 2nd overall, Photojournalism (she also won the Bronze Medal in the College Photographer of the Year contest for Sports Feature Photography)

- Trevor Reid, 20th in the Photo Picture Story competition
- Aidan Morton, 10th in Radio News and Features
- Paul Hamby placed in the top 20 in both Enterprise Reporting and Personality Profile Writing
- Becca Olson placed in the top 20 in Radio News and Features

NATIONAL ACADEMY OF TELEVISION ARTS AND SCIENCES-NORTHWEST CHAPTER

UM J-School students earned top honors at the NATAS-NW's student competition, which recognizes outstanding achievement in video reporting and production, including:

- **Newscast:** "UM News"
David Atkinson, reporter/photographer/

studio crew; Griffin Rerucha, producer/reporter/anchor; Graham Gardner, director; Tessa Nadeau, producer/reporter/anchor; Tina Brennan, reporter/photographer/studio crew; Sydney Hanson, director; Briane White, reporter/photographer/studio crew

- **Long Form Non-Fiction:** “Trash Talk: Montana’s Recycling Challenge” Quinn Corcoran, graphics/reporter/photographer; Dominik Stallings, producer; Galen Koon, producer/director; Kiana Hohman, reporter/photographer; Jenny Gessaman, narrator; Justin Jackson, reporter/photographer; Keith Szudarski, reporter/photographer

- **News, General Assignment-Light:** “ROTC Community Service” Tessa Nadeau, reporter/writer; Briane White, shooter/editor

SOCIETY OF PROFESSIONAL JOURNALISTS’ MARK OF EXCELLENCE AWARDS

UM cleaned house with 26 regional winners and 11 regional champions, which advanced to the national competition.

NATIONAL WINNERS

- Sara Diggins won the Photo Illustration competition for her Montana Kaimin story “Vapergate,” documenting the climate strike protest in Missoula
- 2019 student documentary unit won the Television In-Depth Reporting category for “Trash talk: Montana’s Recycling Challenge”
- Tessa Nadeau was a finalist in Television Sports Reporting for “Transgender Runner, June Eastwood,” which first appeared on “UM News”

REGION 10 MARK OF EXCELLENCE AWARDS

Winners

- Hunter Wiggins, General News Photography, for a Veteran’s Day project
- Paul Hamby, Feature Writing, for his piece in the Missoulian, “Lance Cpl. Thomas Parker: Inmate No. 3023132, Bib No. 4109”



Sara Diggins’ photos, like this one of a Missoula pilot adjusting a World War II era plane’s propeller before a test flight, led her to win multiple SPJ categories.

- Marnie Craig and Luke Nicholson, Online News Reporting, for their Native News piece, “Missing”
- Sara Diggins, Online Feature Reporting, for “Darkitecture and Disorientation” in the Montana Kaimin; General News Photography, for “Vapergate”; Photo Illustration, for her coverage of the climate strike protest in Missoula
- Eli Imadali and Jordynn Paz, Online In-Depth Reporting, for their piece in Native News, “Left Behind”
- Quinn Corcoran, Online/Digital News Videography, for “Missoula Strikes for the Climate”
- Regina Fitzsimmons, Radio Features, for “Falling in Love for Three Minutes: A Woman in Transition Finds Her Place on the Dance Floor”
- Maxine Speier, Radio In-Depth Reporting, for “To Catch a Predator Fish”
- Tessa Nadeau, Television Sports Reporting, for “Transgender Runner, June Eastwood”
- UM Student Documentary Unit, Television In-Depth Reporting, for “Trash talk: Montana’s Recycling Challenge”
- Jazzlyn Johnson and Dan Ennis, Online News Reporting, “Struggle for Justice”
- Quinn Corcoran, Online/Digital News Videography, “Missoula Strikes for Climate”
- Paul Hamby, In-Depth Reporting, “Minding the Gap: UM Center Spearheads Brain Injury Research for Vets”
- Mandy Godwin, Feature Writing, “Missoulians Open Homes to Strangers to Foster Community Connection”
- BYLINE, Best Student Magazine, staff of BYLINE Magazine
- Griffin Rerucha, Television General News Reporting, “Think Twice Breathalyzer”
- Tessa Nadeau, Television General News Reporting, “Plastic Bags for Football Security”; Television Feature Reporting, “ROTC Community Service”
- “UM News,” Best All-Around Television Newscast
- Jiakai Lou, Online Sports Reporting, “Shredding Winter”; Online/Digital Feature Videography, “Cooking with Kaimin, Episode 1: Korea”; Online/Digital Sports Videography, “On the Water: Winter Kayaking”

Finalists

- Sara Diggins, Breaking News Photography, “MMIW Vigil”; Online Feature Reporting, “Feet Like Bullets”; Feature Photography, “Preparing for Takeoff”
- Dan Ennis, Online/Digital News Videography, “Struggle for Justice”

FRESH FACES ON JOURNALISM'S FRONT LINES

RECENT J-SCHOOL GRADUATES found themselves covering two unprecedented moments in U.S. history, the coronavirus pandemic and the Black Lives Matter movement. Here, alumni share some of their recent imagery and the ways their J-School education strengthened their work.



Darlene Carchedi, known as Mama D, puts on makeup in her tent on the outskirts of downtown Phoenix in January. Carchedi said when officials clean up homeless encampments and throw people's things out, the trauma of being homeless repeats itself. "You feel that total loss, trauma, every single time."



ELI IMADALI CLASS OF 2019

As a visual intern at the Arizona Republic this year, I had begun to cover the worsening housing and homelessness crisis in Phoenix. I spent a lot of

time at an encampment of about 400 people, where I met Darlene Carchedi. My first day there, I came upon her putting on makeup in the shade of her tent in the late morning. We talked for a while, and it was clear to me she was a special, kind person who was a leader for many at the encampment. I decided she'd be a great person for the centerpiece of our coverage.

I remembered the importance that was impressed upon me

in several journalism classes of building relationships to tell intimate stories, so that became my focus. If I built a strong relationship, I'd be able to have more trust, better access and witness the more genuine, complex moments of homelessness in Phoenix.

Every time I went out to the encampment, it was as a person first, and then a photojournalist. I became close with Darlene quickly because I showed my humanity, though she made it easy to connect since she was so kind and personable. I gained her trust, and along with that, the trust of many others in the encampment. This strengthened my photographs, allowing me to make more intimate, nuanced and genuine work about people who were left in the dust by the city of Phoenix.

(headshot photo: Elizabeth Herman)



Victor Yvellez covered protests in California's Silicon Valley for his podcast "Sounds of Our Lives," interviewing police and demonstrators as curfews took effect. Some police took a knee with protesters to express support. In July, Victor was named a New Voices Scholar for AIR, a global community of independent audio producers. The scholars receive financial and professional support with the goal of building media change-makers and mission-driven storytellers.



VICTOR YVELLEZ CLASS OF 2020

The past three months have confused, dejected, but also inspired and motivated me. In March, the onset of COVID-19 ended the semester as we knew it. In April, I started my own podcast, "Sounds of Our Lives," to fulfill an independent study credit and as a means to continue storytelling in self-isolation. In May, I graduated from the J-School into a world where journalism jobs continued to shrink. In June, civil unrest following police brutality shook the nation. The world we knew going into 2020 seems like it is gone forever, yet my desire to be involved in journalism is stronger than ever.

Since March, every bit of narration I have recorded has been under a blanket in a closet. Every interview during the height of the pandemic was over Zoom or a phone call. Telling the stories of nurses, musicians, older people in assisted living homes, and how the toll of the virus affected everyday people was important to me as a journalist and person. Adjusting to

the new reality of reporting was difficult, and became even more difficult when new protests engulfed the nation.

It was a bit scary (and still is) to report face-to-face again, especially because there is still a pandemic very much in progress. I became even more confused and dejected by the state of our world, but still inspired and motivated to report on the human experience around me. Being on the ground during the protests was emotional and nerve-racking for me as a new reporter. Americans young and old were more engaged in something than I had ever seen in my lifetime. Documenting that is exactly why I wanted to become a journalist.

Some of my most memorable classes at the J-School forced me to get uncomfortable. I have been in a continuous state of discomfort since the onset of the coronavirus in America. Reporting for a podcast that I started was extremely uncomfortable and still is. Reporting on protests in close proximity to large groups of people adds a cherry of discomfort to the situation. However, I feel equipped with the skills and lessons from the J-School to push my boundaries in storytelling and journalism.

(headshot photo: Collin Kuehn)



FREDDY MONARES
CLASS OF 2017



Demonstrators sat in silence in downtown Bozeman for 8 minutes and 46 seconds as part of a Black Lives Matter march in June. Thousands of people showed up for the day of action, demanding equality and social justice for Black and Indigenous people of color.



(headshot photo: Rachel Leathe)



Jazzlyn Johnson is reporting on issues of interest to Kansas City's African-American community for The Community Voice newspaper based in Wichita.

JAZZLYN JOHNSON CLASS OF 2019

As a black journalist just now starting my career in this time of unrest and uprising, it has been challenging to ignore the complex feelings I have. After graduating from the J-School at the end of 2019, I applied to Report for America. Through that program, I began working for The Community Voice, a newspaper based in Wichita, Kansas, focused on topics of interest to the African-American community. My beat covering Kansas City's African-American community started the first week of June.

So far, I have reported on Kansas City's activist groups and protests demanding changes in the police department. I have dug into stories of Kansas City's black men who were wrongfully killed by police officers, but few people outside the city will ever know their names. George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Sandra Bland, Trayvon Martin—we've become so familiar with their names, but their cases are not new. There are many more names missing who have also lost their lives unjustly at the hands of police officers. Covering these topics can be emotionally difficult for me and many other journalists of color. These names could easily be my brother, my father or other family members who have been in situations with law enforcement that could have turned out badly.

But one important skill I learned from the J-School was how to take care of myself during these times. I took Native News last year, and we covered the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women crisis. It was difficult subject matter, and knowing my own community faces some of the same injustices, it put me in a difficult place emotionally. My passion is to bring these issues to light, but it does have emotional costs. I learned to keep my friends and family of color close during these times and unplug when needed. I came out of that class with the mindset that I do have a duty to report on my community and bring light to the injustices happening. And that is exactly what has helped me through these tough times.

UPDATES FROM FACULTY AND STAFF

ANNE BAILEY had a whirlwind of a year as the director of the Montana Media Lab. The first summer of intensive workshops in 2019 brought instructors from NPR, PBS's Frontline, Transmitter Media and our very own School of Journalism to teach everything from podcasting to documentary film to writing. Anne's news literacy and digital storytelling curriculum work in rural Montana schools enlightened students from Box Elder to Missoula, and received financial support from the Hearst Foundations, the Greater Montana Foundation and others to expand this work in coming years. And Anne's daughter, Noor, figured out how to use the potty, which may be the biggest accomplishment of all.

Associate Professor **JULE BANVILLE** kept busy doling out advice, boasts and "scathing" critiques as the faculty adviser to the Montana Kaimin. She continued to teach both writing and audio courses and supervise the school's internship program. An essay she wrote about writing and teaching obituaries was published by the site Modern Loss, featured on "CBS Sunday Morning." She was awarded a sabbatical for the 2020-21 academic year. She's pursuing a major investigative podcast and longform writing project that deals with childhood rape, wrongful convictions and statutes of limitations.

Professor **LEE BANVILLE** spent a fairly quiet year planning and then un-planning the faculty-led student reporting trip to Northern Ireland. He will use that work to hopefully make next year's trip to the region even better. When not neck-deep in logistics, he was on the phone with reporters talking politics, having been interviewed by national, regional and statewide news organizations about Gov. Steve Bullock's presidential campaign as well as politics and media law issues in Montana.

Associate Professor **JASON BEGAY** was awarded both a merit increase and



Montana Media Lab Director **Anne Bailey** and daughter Noor enjoy Montana's outdoors.

a sabbatical for the 2020-21 school year. The merit increase was based on his publication work, having written stories for The Nation magazine, The Guardian and local publications. Begay was awarded a sabbatical but will defer to 2021-22. His proposal will look at the intricacies of Native American languages by profiling the final generation of Navajo tribal members who never learned to speak English. However, the coronavirus pandemic has made conditions unsafe to work with the elderly right now, who would be the primary subjects for the project.

Associate Professor **JOE EATON** led a project in August that brought a group of Russian college students to the J-School to study journalism and American government. The project was funded by the U.S. State Department and was a collaboration with J-School alum Matt Thompson, who serves as a diplomat in Yekaterinburg. In October, Joe's magazine story "King of Boise" was published in "American Epidemic: Reporting from the Front

Lines of the Opioid Crisis" by The New Press. Work on the 1966 Lotus sports car he is restoring has progressed not at all.

Associate Professor **RAY FANNING** serves as the associate director for the School of Journalism under its move to the newly-named College of the Arts and Media. He also works on UM's General Education Committee, which reviews and oversees the core curriculum that all students must complete before graduation. Fanning teaches a wide variety of classes within the lower-division journalism core, and works with television reporters and producers in the upper-division electives and capstone courses. He is also working on a television project for MontanaPBS about architect A. J. Gibson, who designed University Hall and other iconic buildings on campus and throughout western Montana.

Professor **KEITH GRAHAM** brought new energy and ideas to his photo courses this year. Keith taught our

Beginning Visual Journalism class online for the first time. His freelance photography students shot concerts, adventure sports, food, fashion and travel. Keith's design students produced posters, social media graphics, resumés, logos, infographics, websites and magazines. He says his most rewarding experience this year was working with Louise Johns on her master's project, "Buffalo Renaissance."

Associate Professor **JEREMY LURGIO** finished work on three long-term creative projects. The Guardian published his immersive reporting project about water quality and the Whanganui River in New Zealand, the first river in the world to be granted personhood. Lurgio's short film, "River Queens," was an official selection at the Big Sky Documentary Film Festival, the New Zealand Mountain Film Festival and the prestigious Doc Edge Festival in New Zealand. Lastly, he was an assistant director, story editor and cinematographer on master's program graduate

Erik Petersen's film "Paradise," about a group of business owners who banded together to fight a proposed mine in the Paradise Valley. The film was an official selection at large festivals around the world including the Banff Mountain Film Festival, the Wild & Scenic Film Festival and the Big Sky Documentary Film Festival.

Professor **DENNIS SWIBOLD** taught early news writing and reporting courses this year, plus the senior Ethics and Trends sections. "The pivot to distance learning during the pandemic's early days was challenging, but most students rose to it in amazing ways," he said. "They're as nimble as always." Highlights of the year included the school's virtual Dean Stone Night and graduation ceremonies. Meanwhile, he's looking forward to this fall's Covering Elections capstone class, which he's slated to co-teach with Professor Lee Banville. "We've got a great group of students, and the stakes couldn't be higher," he said. The course provides

student-produced election coverage to scores of Montana private and public news organizations. Beyond campus, he continues to speak about the need for media literacy.

Assistant Professor **KEVIN TOMPKINS** partnered with faculty in the School of Visual and Media Arts to co-convene a documentary film course. Art students learned the journalistic approach to video storytelling while journalism students expanded their artistry. Once the pandemic hit and campus was closed, students were forced to abandon their documentary plans and produced personal profiles on the impact of coronavirus on their lives. Look for those mini-documentaries on MontanaPBS this fall.

Associate Professor **NADIA WHITE** continued her efforts to offer undergraduate students opportunities to study environmental journalism. Her new Climate Change and the Media course satisfies a requirement



Professors **Courtney Cowgill** and **Nadia White** conduct a media literacy and journalism workshop with high school students from Choteau, Fairfield and Augusta last September. (photo: Rick Graetz)

for students pursuing a minor in Climate Change Studies. A new 4+1 program offers qualified UM Journalism undergrads a chance to earn a graduate degree from UM's master's program in Environmental Science & Natural Resource Journalism in just one additional year. White also enjoyed introducing journalism fundamentals to high school students from the Rocky Mountain Front in a community days event with Courtney Cowgill in Choteau in Fall 2019.

Adjunct professor and the J-School's media and engagement director **COURTNEY LOWERY COWGILL** spent the year teaching the basics of journalism and reporting to J-School students online, but she also led workshops on media literacy, reporting basics, social media and news diets to high school students in Billings, library patrons in Red Lodge (thanks to Humanities Montana), middle school students in Great Falls and juniors and seniors from high schools along the Rocky Mountain Front. She also continued to lead marketing and recruitment efforts for the J-School and is preparing to edit and oversee the Legislative News Service for what promises to be a historic Montana legislative session in January 2021. At home, she helped grow the farm-to-loaf bakery she runs with her baker husband Jacob, and kept her two kids Willa and Eli outside as much as possible. Courtney had the honor and privilege of taking care of her brave, funny and fierce Mom, who died in April after fighting cancer for more than a year.

After more than 20 years working in documentary film as a producer, editor and film festival director, Director of Development **GITA SAEDI KIELY** joined the School of Journalism in 2017. Prior to being our director of development, she also taught documentary film at the School of Journalism. Gita continues to mentor and support documentary filmmakers. She serves on the national public television board for



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: Professor **Jeremy Lurgio** leads incoming students through UM's Orientation in 2019 where journalism majors and other freshmen created mini-documentaries. Director of Development **Gita Saedi Kiely** chats with a donor at UM's 2019 reception on Flathead Lake. Office manager **Cameron Bucheit** shows off the skills she brings to her Hellgate Roller Derby team.

ITVS, funded in part by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting.

Assistant to the Dean **KATHLEEN WHETZEL** has been with the J-School since 2003. She continues to provide the School with personnel and financial guidance. This year she also took on personnel and finance duties for the College of the Arts and Media. Kathleen had planned to travel to Scotland, Ireland and Germany this July. However, with the COVID-19 outbreak, the trip has been rebooked for July 2021. Kathleen is looking forward to the trip and reconnecting with former professor Henriette Löwisch in Berlin. She is occupying her time with visiting

grandchildren (and kids) in Spokane, and riding her bike.

Office Manager **CAMERON BUCHEIT** had a big year. She continued to pursue her master's degree in Clinical Mental Health Counseling. She took on her first clients during the Fall 2019 semester as part of her practicum. In October, Cameron broke her leg playing in a roller derby bout. She is still healing, but remains active with her league, Hellgate Roller Derby. She has already made it back on skates. Cameron hopes to play another bout before the end of 2020. She sends her love to all of our alumni, whom she considers part of her extended family. 🍷

OBITUARIES

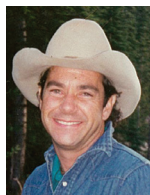
ALICE DRUM BLAIR '46 died at age 93 in St. George, Utah, on February 19, 2019. Alice and her husband Bob are both graduates of the School of Journalism and were college sweethearts.



Alice was born in Miles City and raised during the depression. After graduation from UM the couple moved to Salt Lake City. She and Bob raised 13 children on Bob's salary as a reporter and editor for The Salt Lake Tribune. Alice told her children that she and Bob kept their romance alive by "laughing a lot and going out on a date once a week." They were together 72 years at the time of her passing.

Alice is survived by husband Bob, 96, as well as 13 children, 27 grandchildren and seven great-grandchildren.

DAVID LITTLE '78 died of congestive heart failure January 12, 2020, on his 67th birthday. Little lived a full and adventurous life despite battling numerous serious health issues over the years. David was one of the first kidney transplant patients in the world, receiving his first kidney in 1971 at age 17. He endured more than 60 surgeries in his life due to complications from the transplants, but embraced travel, skiing, hunting, fishing and outdoor adventuring of all kinds.



After high school in Littleton, Colorado, he attended Arapahoe Community College, and spent a semester at sea, traveling to more than 15 countries. He later enrolled at the University of Montana, and earned a bachelor's degree in journalism in 1978. Little went on to eventually become the director of communications for the Montana Power Company, and later, he held the same position at the University of Montana, where he oversaw the development and naming of Washington Grizzly Stadium.

He then became director of public relations at the Buffalo Bill Historical Center in Cody, and later a special assistant to Denver Mayor Federico Peña.

With a deep passion for vintage collectibles, David wrote the book "Vintage Denim," with photos by his good friend Larry Bond. The book itself became a classic collectible, especially in Los Angeles and Japan. In later years, David used his knowledge of antiques and collectibles to provide estate sale services. David is survived by his wife, Lisa; his sister, Cat; and a large circle of friends who will remember his sense of humor and easy-going spirit.

EILEEN LOMMASSON '49 died at age 93 on July 6, 2019. She was born in Anaconda in 1926 to Walter and Violet Verdand Roy and was the first in her family to go to college. She earned a degree from the School of Journalism in 1949. She married Tom Lommasson of Missoula in 1948 and raised four children before Tom's passing in 1972. Lommasson worked as a legal secretary in the Rodney Law Firm for 37 years. Her mother-in-law, Emma Lommasson, who has a building named in her honor at the University of Montana, died in December 2019 at age 107.



Eileen is survived by her four children, five grandchildren and six great-grandchildren.

JEFF GIBSON '64 died February 20, 2020, in Missoula at the age of 77. He was born in Livingston but spent much of his life in Butte where he had a long career with The Montana Standard. Jeff is survived by two children, four grandchildren, his three siblings and their families.

KATHLEEN (KOEFOD) VAN LUCHENE '48 spotted her future husband at the J-School on the University of Montana campus and proudly

declared to friends that she would marry him. She and Robert Van Luchene '49 were married for 50 years, raising five children in Mesa, Arizona. Kathie grew up in Rudyard and Havre in the 1920s and '30s along with two siblings. She was known as a charmer who loved marathon shopping sprees and card games. Kathleen died at age 93 on August 14, 2019.



When **KATHLEEN "KAY" MARIE**

COPPS BALMER '74 was a little girl growing up in Miles City, her father told her to quit asking so many questions. Turns out she didn't, and a career in journalism was a perfect fit for her. She worked at the Missoulian, the Corvallis (Oregon) Gazette, The San Jose Mercury News and The Register-Guard in Eugene where she served as that newspaper's first female city editor. The capstone of her career came at The Oregonian where she found mentoring young journalists to be especially rewarding. Kay died in April 2020 at age 68.



KEITH "ROBBIE" ROBINSON '58 died July 19, 2019, at his Kalispell home. He was 83. After graduating with a journalism degree from UM, he enlisted in the U.S. Air Force, where he proudly served for 22 years. He navigated KC-135 refueling tankers on many tours of duty, and he and his family were stationed at Air Force bases around the world. He specialized in air traffic control, air operations, maintenance and civil engineering, achieving the rank of lieutenant colonel.

He retired from the military to his hometown of Kalispell that he loved to call "Shangri-La," where he served on the Airport Advisory Board, Rails-to-Trails, the Flathead Youth Home Board



Rob Dean '77 served two decades as managing editor of the Santa Fe New Mexican. He died at age 65 in January at his Santa Fe home. (photo: Jane Phillips. Copyright © 2012 The New Mexican, Inc. Reprinted with permission. All rights reserved.)

and with his fraternity, Sigma Nu.

Keith is survived by three children and their families.

MOLLY HERRIN '48 died September 29, 2019, in Missoula at the age of 93.

Molly dropped out of high school during WWII and went to work at the Seattle Boeing plant as a riveter on B-29 bombers.

After the war she earned her GED, and in 1945 came to UM to study journalism. She was inducted into Theta Sigma Phi, the journalism honor society, and Kappa Tau, an exclusive scholastic honor society.

Upon graduation, Molly was hired by United Press, an unusual achievement for the times given her gender. She later reported on the infamous Mann Gulch fire, and an interview she conducted with survivors went global on the UP wire service.

Molly raised six children on the Herrin Ranch outside Helena, serving as a school board clerk, county election official and competing in state and national O-Mok-See events. She continued competing in barrel races until she was 82, and was inducted into the Helena Sports Hall of Fame in 2017. Molly worked as the head of book processing at the Lewis and Clark County Public Library until her retirement at age 77.

MURDO CAMPBELL '55 of Helena died March 17, 2020, at the age of 86.

Murdo grew up in Great Falls and came to UM on a football scholarship, following in the footsteps of his older brothers.

He started for the team all four years at quarterback and running back, and was proud to report the Grizzlies defeated the Bobcats every one of those years. Murdo received the prestigious Grizzly Cup in 1955, which honors a UM student who best exemplifies excellence in athletics and academics. After graduating with his bachelor's in journalism, Murdo became UM's sports information director and went on to hold communications positions with the Montana Coal Board, FEMA and the Research Triangular Institute. His love of sports and the Grizzlies continued throughout his life, and Murdo could be seen each fall in Washington-Grizzly Stadium, where his family says he fit right in with the "North End Zone Crazies."

RAJENDRA DEV ACHARYA M.A. '06 died in Kathmandu, Nepal, on Oct. 6, 2019, after a battle with liver disease. He was 61.



A gentle, courageous soul, Rajendra counseled and hosted UM students and faculty at his home in Kathmandu even as he battled to bring uncensored news as news director of Nepal Television for 20 years. With his phone constantly ringing with calls from the president on down, he knew the country's pulse yet never lost his optimism. He personified the words of Albert Camus: "I should be able to love my country and still love justice."



Threatened with death by Maoists, he arrived in Missoula in 2004, and completed his coursework and master's thesis, "Political Censorship and its Impact in Nepal," in 2006. His Missoula apartment was the scene of many Scotch-fueled philosophical sessions and home-cooked Nepalese meals with vegetables he'd attempted to bargain for at the grocer.

After earning his master's from UM, Rajendra taught mass communication to grad students at Ratna Rajya Laxmi College in Kathmandu. In 2016, after nearly three decades working for Nepal Television, he retired, but in February 2019, he joined a private news channel, News24, as news chief.

He is survived by his mother, his wife Salina and daughter Sanskriti.

ROBERT K. DEAN '77, who served two decades as managing editor of the Santa Fe New Mexican, died Jan. 5, 2020, of natural causes at his Santa Fe home in the company of his wife, Toni. He was 65.

A Montana native born and raised in Harlowton, Rob was the second of Dale and Betty Dean's four children. He came to UM to study journalism, government and pre-law. He studied law for a year before deciding journalism was his calling.

He was on assignment at a local hospital when he met a nurse named Antonia Rapkoch of Lewistown. They married in the winter of 1978.

By the early 1980s, Rob was managing editor of the Bozeman Daily Chronicle, which he transformed from a sleepy small-town paper to one that

strove to make an impact on its community and state.

Rob left Bozeman in 1987 to become the head of the Tacoma News Tribune's copy desk, where he assembled a crack staff that included one of Rob's J-School mentors, former Professor Jerry Holloron.

Rob moved to Santa Fe in 1992, where he won over a skeptical newsroom and community. He valued others' opinions and felt a deep responsibility to his readers. He became a friend and mentor to a legion of journalists whose careers and lives he closely followed.

Rob retired from the New Mexican in 2013 to follow other interests, most notably history—a passion he pursued by earning a master's degree during his days as editor. But he also followed genealogy, politics, travel, Grizzly athletics and the Seattle Mariners.

Retirement didn't last long. In May of 2018, Rob became executive director of Searchlight New Mexico, a nonprofit dedicated to investigative journalism in the public interest.

One week after he took the job, the organization lost major funding. But Rob

helped right the ship, and in 2019 it won a Frank A. Blethen Award for exposing the state's flawed foster care system. More importantly, it led to the shutdown of one of New Mexico's largest foster care agencies.

"Rob was a big bear of a man who radiated instant warmth, putting people at ease and making them feel recognized," says Sara Solovitch, Rob's successor at Searchlight. "To use an old-fashioned Yiddish phrase, he was haimish: unpretentious, homey, welcoming. He genuinely cared about other people and they knew it; he was the guy you actually hoped to run into at the water cooler. Me, I was the lucky one who got to work at his side.

"Rob was...a father figure, someone whose judgment was routinely solicited and whose praise was dearly treasured. We unconsciously sought his approval, hoping to elicit one of his 'well done' notes. Those notes were keepers. They could be flowery in an old-fashioned way, but one never doubted their sincerity."

He is survived by his mother, Betty; his older brother, Dennis; his younger

sister, Christine Baeth; younger brother, Mark; his wife of more than 41 years, Toni; and sons Ryan and Peter.

Longtime sports journalist **THOMAS JAMES FLAHERTY '62** succumbed to a traumatic brain injury and died September 4, 2019, in Billings.

Tom earned his journalism degree in 1962 and went on to a long career in journalism, focused on sports and baseball in particular. He was president of the Baseball Writers of America in 1982, and served as Master of Ceremony for the Baseball Hall of Fame induction that same year. Over his career, Tom worked for the Montana Standard, the Billings Gazette, Wisconsin State Journal, the Milwaukee Journal and the Journal Sentinel. He was a freelance writer and reporter for The Sporting News and Baseball Digest, among other publications. Flaherty co-authored "Jocks and Socks: Inside Stories from a Major-League Locker Room," published by McGraw Hill.

Tom is survived by his wife Carolyn and two children. ☹️

IN MEMORIAM

Editor's Note: Though John Kuglin didn't attend the J-School, he had an enormous impact on Montana journalism and in fostering generation after generation of young reporters. We thought it fitting to pay tribute by including him in this section.

LONGTIME MONTANA REPORTER, bureau chief and First Amendment champion **JOHN KUGLIN** died at his Helena home on February 29, 2020. Kuglin was born in Chicago in 1941 and earned a history degree from Colorado College in 1963.

In Colorado he also pursued one of his other great passions in life: the outdoors. Kuglin became a proficient rock climber and mountaineer, establishing several new routes for 14,000-foot peaks and making first ascents on pinnacles in Colorado and the Southwest.

After college he began his journalism career as a reporter with the Colorado Springs Free Press. That eventually let him to the Missoulian, the Helena Independent Record and the Great Falls Tribune, where he covered Montana's 1972 Constitutional Convention.

He went on to work for the Associated Press in Spokane and Cheyenne, then landed back in Helena in 1979 and later became AP bureau chief for Montana and Wyoming. That same year he married Gale Bogle. Their son Tom was born in 1982, who followed his father into the woods and also into journalism. Tom is a 2014 J-School grad, and like his father before him now works for the Helena IR as a reporter and editor.

John Kuglin was a driving force behind Montana's Freedom of Information Hotline and always fought for the public's right to know. He also often



spearheaded coalitions of newspapers and broadcasters to push for open government, including several landmark lawsuits that protected and expanded those rights.

In 2000 Kuglin received the Jeanette Rankin Civil Liberties Award from the Montana ACLU, and in 2005 he was inducted into the State Open Government Hall of Fame by the Society of Professional Journalists and the National Freedom of Information Coalition.

DEAR JOHN YOUNGBEAR

A Letter to a Fallen Comrade

BY THOMAS NYBO '95

Editor's Note: Alum John Youngbear died this past February. After attending the J-School in the early 1990s, he worked as picture desk editor at the Associated Press, and a photographer at the Rockford IL Register-Star, Detroit Free Press, Wichita Eagle, Philadelphia Inquirer, and he freelanced for multiple other news outlets. He also worked as a media specialist at the Northern Cheyenne Tribal Housing Authority and the Northern Cheyenne Tribal Board of Health. He was beloved to many who knew and attended school with him. We asked Thomas Nybo to write this remembrance.

I ALWAYS CALLED you Youngbear. You were quietly confident, with an aura of mischief, not afraid of flying close to the sun in search of beauty and truth, and we loved you for it.

You died this year on Valentine's Day. When I received the news, my heart cracked. I hadn't seen you in years, but we exchanged occasional messages. After I landed a five-country photo assignment in Africa with *The New York Times*, you sent me a simple, beautiful message: "Love your images." When I reached out to our classmates after your death, this is what I heard: John Youngbear was a mentor who showed others the way. Tom Lutey, now a reporter with the *Billings Gazette*, produced a photo essay back in J-School about an exotic dancer in Missoula. Even when you didn't take the photograph, you saw what others missed.

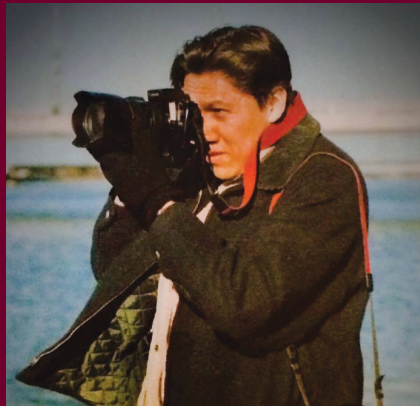
"She was kind of a rough character," Lutey told me. "And she had this way of carrying her cigarette at her side when being confronted by creepy dudes, who always made eye contact with the ember."

You spotted the detail the instant you looked at Lutey's prints.

"John pointed out how the relationship between the man and the cigarette drew the observer's eye across the photo," Lutey said. "I never would have seen that relationship, which John spotted immediately. And I knew as soon as he showed me that, he would have seen it through the camera lens as well."

Greg Rec, now chief photographer with the *Portland Press Herald*, met you during his freshman year.

"I had just started working at the Montana Kaimin as photo editor and I quickly



became completely overwhelmed trying to balance the job and my classes," Rec said to me recently. "After a few days, John, who was the photo editor the previous semester, walked into the Kaimin office and I unloaded all of my stress on him. In his signature calm manner, he told me: 'Don't worry, I'll help you out, I know how stressful the job can be.' And then he showed me that small smile that I came to recognize and appreciate through the years."

The day the FBI captured the Unabomber in Lincoln on April 3, 1996, Rec stood with three other J-School photography students (Bruce Ely, Derek Pruitt and Steve Adams) on the road outside Ted Kaczynski's cabin. I was there, too, alone. The best photo I took that day was of the Unabomber's mailbox. That's as close as I got. Rec and company, however, went all in and followed a mysterious white Ford Bronco that appeared and tailed it all the way to Helena, 60 miles away. There were only two possible endings to their story that day: the scoop of their lives; or nothing.

No other journalists gave chase. An hour later, when the Bronco parked and Kaczynski emerged—filthy in torn clothes—those J-School students took the only photos in existence of federal agents taking Kaczynski into custody. They received fat checks and front-page photo credits around the world.

Yet for many people, the defining image of Kaczynski was taken the next day as he was walked to his arraignment amidst a throng of photographers. Of course, you took that photograph, Youngbear. Who else could eliminate the noise and focus on details other professionals miss? For a split second, Kaczynski looked smug, confident, devilish—like he got away with murder: *Look how clever I am.* And you got the shot that nobody else saw (until they saw your photograph).

Our classmate Seanna O'Sullivan was by your side. She is an accomplished photographer in her own right, and stands about five feet tall. She turned to you for protection and guidance.

"He stood tall in a raging sea of worldwide photographers who swelled up out of nowhere," she told me. "Youngbear was steady as a rock towering over the crowd. And I, standing just under his elbow, took shelter in his shadow as I tried to steady myself under the crush of the crowd."

As you stepped behind her and gazed ahead, serene and focused, you spoke just two words: "Stand firm."

Stand firm. Those two words capture your resolve. When I learned your father was a tribal chief, I was not surprised. You were always a sage to us. When I was assigned to work with you on the Native

News project, you opened my eyes to the inequity and cruelty of how this country has treated its first inhabitants. We took two trips to Lame Deer, where you grew up on the Northern Cheyenne reservation. You never lectured me. Instead, you gave me entry into a geographically and economically isolated world where people struggle and are given little chance to succeed. Along the way, I became the witness, watching you among your people. There was love and commiseration and laughter. The Native sense of humor must be experienced firsthand to be appreciated. Jerry Redfern described it best as it applied to you: “a sense of humor that used as few moving parts as possible.”

“We had an editing language that consisted of variations of ‘hmm,’” Redfern said. “No words spoken, just rising, falling, and wavering tones of ‘hmm.’”

I can picture it now. Vintage Youngbear.

More than any class, those journeys to the reservation with you inspired me to travel the world and document the struggles of others in difficult, often unjust, situations. I’m writing these words from eastern Congo, where I’ve been on assignment for three months. I’ve worked in more than 100 countries since leaving Missoula, and the best guidance I’ve received has been from you.

I’ll go ahead and say what we all thought: you had more talent than any of us. Hard stop. William Heisel, another editor at the Kaimin, put it this way: “I always felt that I was a little bit of a pretender around John. I was still learning while he was already doing.” Many of us shared that sentiment. When I think about it now, I think even you felt that way, but you never said it.

“He had this way of agreeing to whatever you suggested but also letting you

know that your ideas were crap at the same time,” Heisel said.

Your talent was undeniable. Heisel told me about how you could find things both beautiful and tragic, and capture them in a way that brought real empathy.

I remember seeing for the first time a photograph you took of a man on the Northern Cheyenne reservation who was part of the “Lysol Gang,” a group of Indians who drank Lysol because when cut with water, it’s cheaper than buying booze bootlegged from outside the dry reservation. The man holds a plastic jug of Lysol water to his mouth. The brilliance of the photo, to me, is how otherworldly it feels, a stark contrast between this man in the shadows and the bright plastic jug. His hand, fingers gripping the plastic, gives it a punch of humanity, a haunting familiarity. This guy, with his potentially toxic cocktail, looks like he’s on another planet, which, of course, he is.

You were a bit of an oddity, in the best sense.

“We wouldn’t see John all day, but then at night as we were putting out the Kaimin, here would come John up the front stairs of the mostly empty Journalism building, make a sharp left turn and walk straight to the men’s room, where he would open up the bathroom window and climb out onto the ledge. From there it was just a few cautious side steps to the office window of photography instructor Patty Reksten. Patty had Photoshop. John would edit photos at her computer until we put the Kaimin to bed.”

You would often work through the night, perfecting your craft. On a few mornings, when Reksten would unlock her office door, she would find you asleep. A young bear. And like a good mother, she nurtured you and she gave you the space and support you needed. When she talks about you today,

she uses these words: “Talented. Driven. Patient when waiting for the right documentary photographic moment.”

That’s how you approached life—getting close and waiting for the moment. Nobody knew that better than your dear friend Terri Long Fox.

“John and I first met in a photography class at Billings Senior High School,” she told me. “Our love of photography and friendship grew from there. I think our teacher thought it was so interesting, these two Indian kids into photography.”

You both wound up in Missoula at the J-School. You were her spiritual brother, her mentor, her protector.

“The things I have learned from John cannot be counted,” she said. “Everything from being a better photographer to wiring up a muffler to being a better human. John’s greatest quality was his ability to step into any situation without judgment, with an earnest interest to gain understanding, and leave the situation untouched, if not better.”

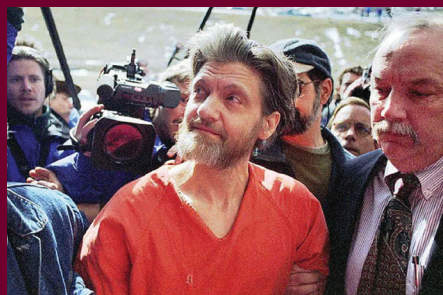
You gave all. In photography, in life.

“His eyes and cameras recorded life’s cruelties and triumphs,” Long Fox said. “I believe some of those cruelties cut into his soul so deeply they became permanent.”

We see the world differently because of you, my friend, my brother. Your path was always your path. When the world offered you a road to prestige and glory, you turned and directed your gaze back to the reservation, back home. You became a teacher, a leader among your people.

Thank you, Youngbear, for opening our eyes and our hearts. I want to share some words from Seanna O’Sullivan, who speaks for all of us.

“He was a mentor, a teacher and a friend, and my heart is heavy at the thought of him really being gone.” ●



THE LATEST FROM ALUMS

1950s

GLENN CHAFFIN '55 checked in from Corvallis, Oregon, with this observation: “Time flies! I figured this out the last time I read the Class Notes in the *Communiqué*. When I turned to the notes and looked for the year 1955 there was not a word. So, I thought, well, ‘I’m not the only one over the hill.’ I wish everyone well. Stay healthy.”

GARY A. SORENSEN '57 spent his career in the U.S. Army and has now been retired for 33 years. Gary stays in close touch with the J-School to compare the journalism of today with his late-night stints at the *Kaimin* 63 years ago. Gary says the pandemic has kept him and wife Hazel from traveling but that they’ve been content staying in Missoula and Montana.

1960s

SUZANNE IVES '63, of Palm Desert, California, has published a fully illustrated Christmas book called “Bob, the Tree who Became a Star,” now available on Amazon. Suzanne is now completing a second book, a memoir.

JERRY HOLLORON '64, MA '65, a longtime J-School prof and retired copy editor for *The Seattle Times*, met current professor Dennis Swibold MA '91 in Santa Fe this winter to attend a memorial service for longtime editor and Montana native Rob Dean '77 (see obituary on pg. 24). “The circumstances were hard, but the company was special,” Dennis said.

1970s

KEN DUNHAM '70 retired this June as Executive Director of the West Coast Lumber & Building Material Association,



JF Purcell '72 (right) volunteers for the Nassau Photo Archives where he archives historical photos and documents, and creates exhibits like this one.

a position he held since 2006. Dunham's career includes leadership in trade association management, advertising, public relations, political consulting, television news and book authorship. Ken is a native of Troy, Montana.

JF PURCELL '72 checked in from Oceanside, New York, where he's been retired since 2015. Purcell volunteers for the Nassau Photo Archives on Long Island, where he has archived historical post cards, photos and documents, and created an exhibit called “The Guggenheims: Long Island Visionaries of Aviation.”

JACK TANNER '72 is in his fourth year of retirement (thanks a lot, Gannett) and living the good life in southwest Florida. After working more than 45 years in various newsrooms, it was time. “Sad to see what's happening to newspapers around the country since I left,” Tanner writes.

RONNENE ANDERSON '73 retired from the *Edmonton Journal* in 2009 and now teaches English to immigrant

women and edits for charitable groups. She says during the pandemic she's been baking bread, sewing face masks and “deciphering the handwritten diaries of a cousin who documented her tumultuous love life from 1915 to 1929 in a small town in Washington State.”

PEGGY KUHR '73 has been elected chair for 2020-21 of the Friends of MontanaPBS Board of Directors. She is past chair for the board of City Club Missoula, which is dedicated to fostering civil conversation on topics of civic interest. She also has been named to the MOLLI Council at UM. MOLLI (Montana Osher Lifelong Learning Institute) is dedicated to offering academic courses and special events for folks 50 and older. A former dean of the J-School, Kuhr has taught MOLLI courses about media ethics, and about pioneering U.S. women in journalism.

KEVIN S. GILES '74 now writes books and a blog after retiring from a 45-year reporting and editing career at six newspapers. He plans to publish his first mystery novel, set in Butte,

in mid-2020. He lives and writes in Stillwater, Minnesota.

JOHN KAFENTZIS '75 is a senior lecturer teaching journalism at Gonzaga University and an adviser for The Gonzaga Bulletin student newspaper. He also periodically works on the copy desk at The Spokesman-Review because “newsrooms are cool.”

PETER JOHNSON '76 is enjoying retirement from the Great Falls Tribune. He is combining volunteer work, including reading to students, with skiing, hiking, golf and pickleball.

1980s

THOMAS ALTON '83 published a new book last September, “Alaska in the Progressive Age: A Political History, 1896 to 1916,” through University of Alaska Press. Thomas is retired from the University of Alaska Fairbanks after a career as editor at the Alaska Native Language Center. His book is a history of the growth of modern-day Alaska within the context of a national political movement.

GUS CHAMBERS '83 retired from the University of Montana Broadcast Media Center in 2019. Gus began on Montana Public Radio in 1980 and hosted “Thursday Morning Freeforms” for many years. He produced and directed award-winning MontanaPBS documentaries including “C.M. Russell and the American West,” “Glacier Park’s Night of the Grizzlies,” “The Bicycle Corp: America’s Black Army on Wheels,” “For This And Future Generations: Montana’s 1972 Constitutional Convention” as well as the popular “Backroads of Montana” series.

MELODY PERKINS MARTINSEN '87 has been the editor and co-owner of the Choteau Acantha since July 1, 1990. She and her husband are still putting out a weekly newspaper with a lively website and Facebook presence. She is board president of the Montana Freedom of

Information Hotline Inc., a member of the Montana Newspaper Association Legal Affairs Committee and chairwoman of the nonprofit Opportunities For All Scholarship Inc. She’s also a mid-distance runner and still enjoys playing her clarinet in community bands in Choteau and Great Falls. This past winter she taught a community education class called “How to Get the Last Word: The Art of Writing Obituaries.”

MARLEE MILLER '85 is in her tenth year as Chief Operating Officer at M+R, a public affairs consulting firm with offices across the country, including Washington, D.C., and Missoula. Most recently she is leading the company’s response to the pandemic and working with its board of directors to ensure the firm is anti-racist. She and husband Jim Asendio split their time between homes in St. Croix in the U.S. Virgin Islands and Maryland.

FORD STUART '86, aka Stu Stuart, has become an Honorary Knight of the Brewers Mash Staff by the Belgian Brewers Federation in Brussels, Belgium, for his exceptional contribution to the promotion of Belgian beer. He is the founder of Belgian Beer Me! Beer Tours, offering more than 15 tours annually.

CHERYL BUCHTA '89 retired to Boise in 2010 after stints at The Standard Examiner in Utah and an oil and gas publication in Washington, D.C. She now volunteers for a refugee center, the Agency for New Americans, and manages the Okini List, an online forum that matches donors with Lakota people on the Pine Ridge Reservation. Cheryl says she’s proud to work “with the oldest and newest Americans.”

1990s

CHRISTIAN MURDOCK '90 is the director of photography at The Gazette in Colorado Springs, Colorado, where he’s worked since 1998. Christian writes, “COVID-19 and the recent

BLM protests have made 2020 an interesting year to be in journalism.”

AMY RADONICH JOYNER '91 is living north of Kalispell and working as a freelance reporter. Her clients mostly include newspapers with whom she was previously on staff, including the Billings Gazette and the Statesman Journal in Salem, Oregon. Amy was named the summer 2019 Volunteer of the Quarter for the communications team of the Idaho-Montana Region of the American Red Cross.

Harlowton native **JOE KOLMAN '92**, a former reporter in Idaho and Montana and now an environmental policy analyst for the Montana Legislature, earned a master’s degree in public administration this spring from UM. When he’s not running meetings at Montana’s Capitol, Joe is probably running on a mountain trail.

GINA BOYSUN PINNOCK '92 coordinates communications and social media for Gonzaga Prep, a private Catholic high school in Spokane. She reports her nest is empty-ish, so she’s playing more golf.

TOM WALSH '92 is an editor at Marsh, Inc. where he’s been working for the past 17 years. Previously he edited newspapers in Pocatello, Idaho; Columbia, Missouri; San Antonio, Texas; Quincy, Massachusetts; and Boston. He lives in Sausalito, California, with wife Katia and his two kids—a “fantastic, blue-haired 16-year-old son and a wonderful daughter who is headed for Bates College this fall, virus willing.”

MEG OLIVER BASINGER '93 checked in from CBS News in New York City in April before she switched from covering the pandemic to the police killing of George Floyd and the demonstrations that followed. She says, “This is definitely the most challenging assignment of my career. I want to thank every single J-School professor from Bill Knowles, the late Joe Durso, Ray Ekness, Gus Chambers, Dennis

Swibold and Carol Van Valkenburg for making sure I was prepared.”

PAUL BERGEN-HENENGOUWEN '93 was recently promoted to president/general manager of KBMT, the ABC/NBC affiliate in Beaumont, Texas. He worked there for 10 years as news director prior to being promoted. He resides in the area with his wife, Jennifer Walsh, and their six kids. His second daughter, Natalie, will be attending law school at the University of Montana this fall after graduating from the University of Texas in May.

THOMAS NYBO '95 is currently living in eastern Congo, where he's been doing work for UNICEF and CNN documenting the fight against Ebola and COVID-19. Thomas is married with two children, Micah and Maya, ages 7 and 5.

LINN PARISH '95 is the editor of the Journal of Business in Spokane, a position he's held for three years. He previously spent seven years as deputy editor and eight years as a reporter. Linn has now lived in Spokane for 24 years, which he points out is longer than he lived in Montana.

JOSHA LEANDRO SANZ '95 is the director of photography for the National Geographic television program, “Wicked Tuna.” He also leads photography efforts for a series of Microsoft ad campaigns, and has worked for “Live PD” on the A&E channel. Josha reports he recently hired fellow J-School grad Kevin Farmer '06 to work with him for Nat Geo TV.

PATRICIA SNYDER '95 is a training and development specialist for the state of Oregon.

2000s

MATT GOURAS '00 earned a Chartered Financial Analyst designation in 2019 and works as a financial advisor for RBC Wealth Management. In 2016 he married Emily Heffter '00, who is the director of corporate communications for Zillow Group. Gouras and Heffter married 18 years after meeting in Dennis Swibold's reporting class.

KEVIN VAN VALKENBURG '00 is a senior writer at ESPN, assigned to the investigative unit. He lives in Baltimore with his daughters, Molly and Keegan,

whom he is training for a life of frustration playing golf.

RYAN DIVISH '01 is currently the Mariners beat writer for The Seattle Times. He joined the Times in 2014 to cover baseball after spending the previous eight years with The News Tribune in Tacoma covering the Mariners and University of Washington sports. He lives the baseball beat-writer lifestyle, which means no wife, no kids and frequent trips back to Montana in the offseason to go fly fishing or attend Griz games.

ERIK OLSON '01 is a digital content producer at KTVQ-TV in Billings. He's been there three years after a 16-year career in newspapers. He and his wife are raising a daughter, whose hijinks are beloved by the Q2 crew.

KRISTEN INBODY '03 and **TIFFANY ALDINGER '03**, known during J-School days as TiffanyKristen, work together again at Benefis Health System in Great Falls. Kristen is the communication and stewardship specialist while Tiffany is the senior copy editor. Both graduated from the J-School in 2003 and are pleased to be working together again after both previously being at the Great Falls Tribune.

KRISTEN CATES CALDWELL '04 serves as the communications manager for the Oregon-Idaho Conference of The United Methodist Church. She lives in the Portland area with her husband and son.

AARON FLINT '04 hosts a statewide radio talk show, “Montana Talks,” which has now expanded to air on 24 different outlets around the Big Sky. Flint anchors and produces the call-in/talk show from Billings, which simulcasts in Bozeman, Livingston and Kalispell.

BRYAN HAINES '04 works as a communications consultant with Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Montana in Helena. Haines handles internal communications for BCBS and also serves as the company's Governor's Cup



Meg Oliver Basinger '93 works from home for CBS News during the pandemic.

Race Director. His wife Tricia is also a UM grad, and the couple has two sons, Connor and Spencer.

ERIKA KIRSCH '04 reported in from Hong Kong where she's lived for the past six years. Kirsch has worked in public relations, as a communications and marketing manager, a freelance writer and now serves as an editor for the Hong Kong Tourism Board.

CHELSEA ANNE DEWEESE '05 manages a Yellowstone Gateway motel.

CHRISTINE TUTTY JOHNSON '05 is the owner of Clover Creative, a business strategy and corporate event planning company in the Pacific Northwest. She is also the majority owner of Nine Mile Venture, the only woman-owned logging and forestry company in Montana. She lives in Huson with her husband Justin, son Eamonn (8), daughters Annalise (3) and Eirnin (1 month).

JEFF '05 and **SARAH '07 WIND-MUELLER** are currently stationed at Fort Drum in upstate New York. Jeff is a logistician and a captain serving his command time with the U.S. Army. Sarah is teaching Kindergarten at a private school. They have two boys, Caderyn (11) and Gabriel (8).

DIANNE (BENTZ) DOTTER '06 opened her business, Dolli Photography, in 2009 and now specializes in newborn and family photography in Kalispell. She has also been the contracted photographer for Kalispell Regional Healthcare since May of 2017, teaches art at a local Montessori school, and just celebrated a year in her downtown studio space.

KRISTIN KNIGHT PACE '06 is the wilderness coordinator for Denali National Park and Preserve, and Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve. She lives in Missoula and is based out of the Arthur Carhart National Wilderness Training Center. Pace is the author of a memoir, "This Much Country," that came out in paperback in March from Grand Central Publishing.

JACOB BAYNHAM LANDS NATIONAL MAGAZINE AWARD

IN 2016, **JACOB BAYNHAM '07** lost his father-in-law, Jerry McGahan, to prostate cancer. McGahan, 73, died surrounded by family in a cabin near Arlee, Montana, where he and his wife Janet lived for more than three decades.

"He's one of those rare people you can spend years around and never hear the same story," Baynham says. "Then when he got sick, that whole process was quite moving. He had lived very intentionally, and he was also dying very intentionally. And I wanted to write about it."

Baynham has freelanced for The Christian Science Monitor, Outside magazine, Newsweek, The San Francisco Chronicle, Slate and many other publications. He took careful notes in the waning weeks of McGahan's life, and after he died in early October, the words began to flow.

Though McGahan earned bachelor's and master's degrees in zoology at the University of Montana, like Baynham, he had ties to the J-School.

"When Jerry was at UM, he took a senior seminar class from [then J-School Dean] Nathaniel Blumberg," Baynham says. "It was one of his favorite classes, so much that he took it again just for fun."

Baynham can relate. He says the training he got at the J-School helped prepare him to meet the challenge of writing such a large, personal and multifaceted story.

"I think Dennis Swibold's red pen may have been visible in the pages," Baynham says. "His J270 course really honed my writing. I'm also grateful to Carol Van Valkenburg. Her Native News class in particular taught me how to turn long-term reporting into a clear, compelling narrative."

Baynham submitted his 12,000-word essay on his father-in-law to the same editor at The Georgia Review who had published seven

pieces of fiction by McGahan over the decades. But all he initially got was silence.

"I didn't hear back for a long time," Baynham says.

"The editor was trying to decide if it was too personal a story, if readers needed to know Jerry and his writing to really appreciate it." But Baynham eventually did hear back, and after several rounds of edits, "Jerry's Dirt" went to print in the Fall 2019 issue alongside two reprints of McGahan's fiction.

"It's without a doubt the most satisfying piece I've ever written."

In February, Baynham got a text from a friend that he'd been nominated for a National Magazine Award. These prestigious honors given since 1966 are sponsored by the American Society of Magazine Editors and the Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism.

"It was completely out of the blue, and a really nice surprise," Baynham says. He was invited to attend a ceremony in New York City in March. He bought a plane ticket, but just before he was due to depart, the event organizers canceled it due to the coronavirus.

"For a while I wasn't sure if it was going to happen," Baynham says. "But then they decided to do the ceremony virtually, which turned out to be a really great way to experience it. I was at home with my whole family, with my three-year-old in his high chair eating dinner as we watched the virtual ceremony on our computer. Then they announced the winner, which was not only really special for me, but since it focused on my wife's father, it was really meaningful for her as well."



PATRICK DUGANZ '07 is the father engagement specialist (aka “dad liaison”) for the Gallatin County Health Department. He works with men on improving their parenting skills, and has spoken about masculinity and parenting all over Montana. He has a dog and a six-year-old son who’s obsessed with “Old Town Road.”

NBC Montana news anchor **MARITSA GEORGIU '07** was honored as Television Broadcaster of the Year in the 2019 E.B. Craney Awards. She was reporting and working from home during the stay-at-home order in Montana this spring and writes, “My husband (Gunnar Hamilton) never thought he would suddenly become a TV intern, essential to putting on newscasts from our living room.” Maritsa sends a shout out to her J-School professors, crediting them with preparing her to manage during this tumultuous time in our profession.

IAN GRAHAM '07 is an email deliverability consultant based in Baltimore. He also does some volunteer fundraising and organizing work with the Skatepark of Baltimore, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit dedicated to building safe public skate facilities throughout the city.

LOUIS MONTCLAIR '07 moved back to the Fort Peck Indian Reservation after graduation and has spent the years since reporting on tribal government and major news in this region. He worked for Bonnie Red Elk at the Fort Peck Journal until her death, then started his own media news website. He says about journalism, “It’s my life.”

Director of football technology at the University of Washington, **JEREMY POOL '07** was recently named the Pac-12 Video Coordinator of the Year. Jeremy has been with Washington Husky Football for four seasons, managing all aspects of the football video program. Pool says he loves working with the Huskies, but he’s a Griz to the core and we know it.

CHRISTOPHER RODKEY '07 is the safety communications manager for Alas-



Joshua Leandro Sanz '95 is the director of photography for the National Geographic television program “Wicked Tuna.”

ka Airlines and Horizon Air, where he has worked for 11 years. When not traveling, he and his husband live in Seattle.

RACHEL COOK '08 is the marketing and public relations manager of the Alachua County Library District in Gainesville, Florida. “You’re more likely to hear me cheer for the Gators these days,” she confesses. “Living in The Swamp will do that to you.”

KATIE REILLY '08 received a master’s in Curriculum and Instruction

and a B.A. in political science from UM in 2014. She currently teaches ELA/Creative Writing to high school sophomores and seniors in Graham, Washington.

MURPHY WOODHOUSE '08 is a reporter at Phoenix NPR affiliate KJZZ’s bureau in Mexico’s Sonoran capital of Hermosillo.

ALLYSON (WELLER) DAVIS '09 currently works as the marketing director for five physical therapy clinics

in and around Lander, Wyoming. She has been making promotional videos for the clinics and is happy to be using the broadcast skills she gained at the J-School. Ally and her husband Tom have two-year-old twin boys who keep them very busy.

K'LYNN SLOAN HARRIS '09 covered the COVID-19 crisis by producing Gov. Steve Bullock's press conference updates live on the Montana Public Affairs Network (MPAN), which saw record viewership this spring. C-SPAN also broadcast some of MPAN's coverage on the air and added the footage to its video library.

BREANNA (ROY) MCCABE '09, MA '20, recently joined MontanaPBS as a program producer, where her film "Ghost Forests" will broadcast in the coming months. She completed her master's degree with us this year.

Former White House staffer and campaign strategist **JIM MESSINA '09** is turning up regularly in interviews and news stories about the presidential race. The New York Times reported this spring that he's advising the progressive group American Bridge on fundraising for Democratic nominee Joe Biden.

2010s

JAIME BERG CADY '10 left her position as a television news producer in Denver after nearly a decade. She is now pursuing a career in healthcare at Children's Hospital Colorado, where she works on the media relations team.

JULIA CUMMINGS '10 was recently promoted to senior content lead at Evanta, where she heads a team of content managers creating community engagements for top CIOs and CISOs across North America. In 2019, Cummings launched the Evanta brand in Australia, and was able to travel there to meet more than 100 executives. Julia lives in Vancouver, Washington, with her husband and two young children.

Ronan's own **SHANE THOMAS McMILLAN '10**, a Berlin-based photographer and cinematographer, is doing some amazing journalism on environmental protection and social issues. Check out his work on Facebook.

GRETA RYBUS '10 is a freelance photojournalist based in Portland, Maine, specializing in assignment work, with recent projects for The New York Times, The Guardian and Smithsonian. One of her photos also graces the cover of this magazine. As soon as it's safe to travel, she says she will begin work on her second book project.

KHUSHNUDA SHUKAROVA '10 directed the short film "Detained," which was accepted to 11 film festivals and is being considered for seven more. The film premiered at the MINT film festival in Billings where Shukarova was awarded best female director. She was also named best female director at the Anatolia International Film Festival. The film showed at the Woodstock Film Festival, the Julien Dubuque International Film Festival, and Oscar-qualifying festivals.

EMILY ADAMSON '11 serves as the news director at ABC FOX Montana in Missoula. Despite the pandemic, she got married this summer to UM Media Arts alumnus Blake Koemans.

ALISIA DUGANZ '11 is president of the Montana Association of Legal Assistants, and a certified paralegal. She lives in Bozeman.

ALEX SCHWIER '12 is the joint information center director for the Department of Emergency Services COVID-19 response in Montana.

JESSICA MURRI '13 is going into her fourth year as the training consultant for Sit Means Sit Dog Training in Portland, Oregon, where she won Top Salesperson two years in a row for the nationwide company with 130 locations.


CORIN CATES-CARNEY '14 moved to Missoula to become news director

for Montana Public Radio in early 2020 after covering the Montana statehouse for MTPR for four years. Out of college, he interned with NPR's Morning Edition before joining Montana Public Radio as the Flathead Valley reporter.

STACY THACKER '14 lives on the Navajo Nation and works at Eastern Arizona College in their GEAR UP Program. There she helps Navajo students in the Window Rock School District in college and career readiness. Stacy also works as a freelance journalist and is applying for master's programs.

DENVER PRATT '16 covers justice issues for Washington's Bellingham Herald. She won a first-place breaking news award from the SPJ's Northwest chapter for her "outstanding and sensitive work covering the murder of a popular Sunnyland, Washington, principal."

BENJAMIN ALVA POLLEY '17 is recently engaged and temporarily living in Revelstoke, B.C. He has written profiles, adventure narratives and scientific feature articles for publications including Esquire, Sierra, Bugle, Appalachia Journal, Mountain Outlaw, Flathead Living and many others. He is the senior editor of the Whitefish Review and is currently writing a book.

JUSTIN JACKSON '19 is the morning newscast director at KECI-NBC Montana in Missoula. Justin says his work is challenging but he feels well-qualified to handle it thanks to his J-School training. 



NEWS UPDATES

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Thank you to our donors!

THE J-SCHOOL is deeply grateful to our donors for the incredible impact you've had on our programs and students. We want to let you know about a new fund we've just launched. Long-time Helena resident and former Executive Director of the Montana Legislative Council, Diana Dowling, created a fund to honor J-School alumnus Chuck Johnson '70, one of Montana's top Capitol reporters for decades before his retirement in 2015. Chuck has been instrumental in the success of our student legislative reporters for more than 20 years.

"When I was a rookie political reporter wandering the halls of the Capitol, Chuck took me under his wing, explained the budget process, showed me the legislative archives, introduced me to the right staff, and brought me into the Capitol Press Corps," recalls fund supporter Marnee Banks '09. "Chuck is a legend not just because he mentors young reporters, but because he believes in truth, in fairness, and in holding power accountable."

This new fund will support legislative reporting students who live and work in Helena with tuition, rent and other expenses.

We invite you to contribute to the **Chuck Johnson Student Capitol Reporting Fund** this election season and help us create an endowment to provide vital support in perpetuity. Pay it forward by using the envelope in this magazine, or reach out to gita@supportUM.org.



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