Montana Kaimin, September 20, 2017

Students of the University of Montana, Missoula

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Montana Kaimin

Who Tames the Flames:
INSIDE THE TACTICAL WORLD OF MONTANA’S FIREFIGHTERS

EDITORIAL We’re killing our site’s comment section
NEWS Save money, brew your own beer!
SPORTS How to fix the terrible gameday playlist

Issue No. 3 September 20, 2017
Preventing crime is everyone’s duty — even victims, apparently

Editor’s note: Last week, Missoula defense attorney Lisa Kauffman referred to a 13-year-old victim of sexual assault as a “temptress” during her attacker’s sentencing. We’re taking the opportunity to examine how that line of thinking might extend to other crimes, changing the words of Montana lawyers and judges for comedic effect.

Crimes are committed every day. Some of them, like illegally downloading a J. Cole album, have real victims whose lives are devastated by the criminal’s actions. But some of society’s most egregious crimes are surprisingly preventable — much more than you might think. As responsible citizens, we must be vigilant about policing behaviors that encourage crimes for the betterment of society.

Robbery, for one, is actually an extremely preventable crime. First, we have to consider the location. Is it downtown? Or is it a sultry credit union, way out off Reserve Street, its doors open and its ATMs inviting? If so, it shouldn’t have been built in an area without any other banks around. A bank all alone in a parking lot is practically inviting someone to take its money.

And besides, who could possibly resist robbing a bank? In a recent sexual assault aggravated theft trial here in Missoula, attorney Lisa Kauffman suggested that her client had been seduced into robbing the bank.

“You should have seen that safe when it was full of money, banks can be temptresses you know.”

Robbery is one thing, but what about other violent crimes, like arson? Well, the destruction of buildings and national parks can be prevented 9 times out of 10 by simply changing the composition of those structures and areas. Most buildings are probably set on fire by a well-meaning person who spent 20 minutes making a simple mistake — normal people, just like you and me. At the time, they probably thought that the building, by choosing to be made out of wood and other conventionally flammable materials was implying it wanted to be burned down. Did it try to say “stop” or push the criminal away?

In 2007, Judge G. Todd Baugh argues when sentencing a rapist arsonist that the building was just as much in control of the situation as he was, and gave the arsonist a punishment more lenient than even the minimum sentence.

And finally, the most preventable crime of them all: drunk driving. Every day, 28 people in the United States die in motor vehicle crashes that involve an alcohol-impaired driver. But rather than teaching drunk people to not drive, we should consider teaching drivers how to avoid drunk people. After all, drunks will be drunks.

Maybe the person actually did want to be hit by a car, but later changed their mind about it and are now taking the driver to court. All of these situations involve people pretending to be victims who simply don’t want to deal with the consequences. The next time a bank gets robbed, a building burns down or a drunk kills someone with their vehicle, don’t waste your time feeling sorry for them. Think of all the real victims, like all of the underage girls this story is really about, who were told by judges or attorneys in Montana that their sexual assault by an older man was their fault.

Montana Kaimin destroys First Amendment, removes comments from website

Michaelsiebert
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Let’s cut right to the chase — effective today, there will no longer be space for comments on the Montana Kaimin website. For most of you, as most of our readers do not offer remarks through the site-specific comment form, this should not matter in the slightest. But we also recognize that there is a small but devoted group of folks who regularly respond to many of the articles we publish this way. To those readers, let’s talk it out. Everyone else, watch Netflix or something. I heard “Terrace House” is pretty good.

We recognize that critiquing and responding to written work is a valuable exercise, one that the Kaimin takes very seriously. This semester in particular, we are encouraging more responses from readers, whether through letters to the editor, guest editorials or simply leaving comments on any of our social media platforms.

Comments on the website are an entirely different beast. Most readers connect with the Kaimin through their already-existing accounts on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. In order to leave comments on our website, however, one must set up yet another account, a barrier to entry that makes it a less-than-optimal means of responding to our work.

On social media, accounts are generally linked to real names. We’re certainly aware identities can be obscured, but in general, it’s much easier to deal with offensive or spammy comments because of those sites’ built-in filters. On the Kaimin website, it’s much easier to hide behind a fake identity. We’ve seen this somewhat regularly, with some commenters harassing both writers and other posters obscured by a username that conceals their identities.

Comments tend to fall into three categories: inflammatory concern-trolling, spam advertisements for dudes who will write a research paper for you and genuinely thoughtful remarks. At the end of the day, we do not have enough staff to deal with the first two. Fostering an environment that basically encourages hostility among readers isn’t exactly the Kaimin’s M.O.

We understand that some of you will be upset by this decision, and we would encourage you to share your thoughts on social media or through a letter to the editor. We want to hear from you, and we care deeply about how readers feel about our work. There are simply more productive ways of engaging in dialogue than through an archaic discussion system.

GOT SOMETHING TO SAY? EMAIL US YOUR LETTERS TO THE EDITOR AT

Email us your opinions at editor@montanakaimin.com
OPINION

KAIMIN COLUMN

Queeries: Thank God sex isn’t real

I get that gender is a social construct, but aren’t there only two sexes? You’re either male or female.

We as a society focus on assigned sex to a gross degree. But women are not their vaginas. Men are not their penises. Not only is the concept exclusive to trans people, but it’s frankly a terrible thing to say. No one wants to be reduced to their genitals. If you’ve seen a walking, talking penis or vagina hanging around, please email me. Seriously. Save my contact info in your phone just in case.

Sex is a complex combination of chromosomes, hormones, secondary sex characteristics, gonads and genitals. Most of this can be changed. Trans people can get gender confirmation surgery and take hormones to alter the appearance of their genitals and other characteristics. Cis people have their gonads, their ovaries and testes, removed all the time — and their sex and gender don’t disappear afterward! Clearly sex isn’t tied to those organs.

Chromosomes are not changeable, but can you really tell what a person’s chromosomes are by looking at them? Would you ever need that information outside of a medical setting? Are you testing your partner’s blood for chromosomal abnormalities in the middle of the night while they sleep?

Sex isn’t a binary either. Intersex people, those whose sex characteristics don’t fit the typical definitions of male or female bodies, are often ignored or treated like some kind of bizarre minority. They don’t exist for your entertainment or curiosity. Intersex athletes, for example, are forced to go through elaborate sex verification processes. These athletes are often completely unaware that they’re intersex and face ridicule after finding out in such a public way. Many intersex infants have non-consensual cosmetic surgery to “correct” the appearance of their genitals, often with disastrous results. A sex binary harms intersex people by trying to force their bodies into our socially constructed view of what they should look like. If you have to perform unnecessary surgery on babies to uphold a system, it’s probably a shitty system.

In case you’re not intersex but need to make the issue about you anyway, I’d like to point out that a sex binary also harms people of every sex and/or gender. The rise of genital plastic surgery is partially a result of social pressure because we attach value to things as arbitrary as labia or penis size and shape. When people’s bodies don’t measure up, they feel pressure to change to look more “normal,” but what is considered normal is heavily censored and constructed.

The great thing about all of this is that we can stop equating the appearance of our genitals with desirability, manliness, femininity or sexual prowess. Practically any social concept that has been linked to the junk in our trunks is simply irrelevant. Your genitals look the way they look, and most of the time that just doesn’t matter.

Got a queery? Send any questions you have to calreynolds.queeries@gmail.com. Ask me what you’ve been afraid to ask or what you’ve always wanted to know. Your name and any other personal information will not be published.

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KAIMIN COLUMN

Where will romance be when all that’s left is swiping right?

Years from now I’ll be 40 with two kids who are curious about how I met their mother. What was she like? Which sappy romantic comedy did our first meeting most resemble? What was her favorite candy? Did I ever need that information outside of a medical setting? In case you’re not intersex but need to make the issue about you anyway, I’d like to point out that a sex binary also harms people of every sex and/or gender. The rise of genital plastic surgery is partially a result of social pressure because we meet in person. Or that she has 18 cats and lives under a bridge. In the same vein, she probably will not appreciate the fact that I’m 6 inches shorter than my profile states. I’d need a stepping stool to look her in that third eye. Dating apps make it easier to project a false image of who we are. A good relationship is never built on lies.

Let’s just say this is our new reality, and dating apps are going to rule our lives for the foreseeable future. We need to decide what this means for face-to-face interactions and first time meet-and-greets. Are they weird? Are they more valuable now because they are so rare? Perhaps it’s time we just give up on them entirely and devote all our emotional resources to the app world. Maybe I’m reaching and need to slow my roll, but these are questions we need to ask ourselves. For now I’ll just keep my height at 6 feet and be a somewhat smaller disappointment if and when I meet my future wife in person.

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Is high-end housing what UM needs?

COURTNEY BROCKMAN
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Students at the University of Montana have a new option when choosing where to live next year, a luxury student housing complex on East Front Street.

The ROAM student housing project, unaffiliated with the University, is set to open in summer 2018, said project developer Jim McLeod, director of Farran Realty Partners.

McLeod, who went to school at UM, had the student housing idea when he stepped into a dorm room at Aber Hall for the first time in 30 years and noticed not much had changed.

“But what has changed are students and their wants and needs and what they expect,” McLeod said.

McLeod worked with Campus Advantage to model ROAM after Bozeman’s Stadium View apartments — the first private student housing in the state.

Once open, ROAM will boast eight study rooms, a 24-hour gym, a bike shop and even a courtyard atop a parking garage.

Altogether, the housing will accommodate up to 500 students in 164 apartments. Each room comes furnished, including 47-inch TVs.

All but 12 bedrooms will contain its own private bathroom. Every kitchen countertop will be granite. The floors will have vinyl plank paneling for a higher-end feel, according to McLeod.

But living in luxury comes at a price.

Rent will vary from $350 to $900 a month, with utilities included, depending on whether a student wants their own apartment or a roommate, McLeod said.

That puts ROAM housing at an average of more than $600 per month - nearly $100 more than the cost of a room in UM’s Lewis and Clark apartments.

In a city lacking affordable housing, the largest age bracket seeking housing is 20 to 24-year-olds — many of whom are college students, according to a 2016 Missoula Organization of Realtors report.

Henry Curtis, a 21-year-old junior at UM, falls into that category.

Unable to find affordable housing off-campus, he moved back into Knowles Hall. Curtis said that although ROAM’s location is awesome, he is opposed to the concept of high-end student living.

“More higher-end housing is not what we need,” Curtis said. “It is the antithesis of what we need.”

Curtis said paying for rent is a major problem for students. And because ROAM does not require a tenant to be enrolled, students will compete with non-students.

The location is attractive, but the price would prevent him from considering a lease, Curtis said.

“It sounds like something that would benefit very few who already do not have a problem finding rent.”

A guide to campus critters

BY ROSIE COSTAIN, GRAPHIC RENE SANCHEZ

As portions of Glacier National Park are blocked off and looking through binoculars provides merely a closeup view of the surrounding smoke, wildlife viewing opportunities are meager. But with a keen eye and a widened definition of “wildlife,” it’s clear that UM’s campus has plenty to offer. Here’s a closer look at the animals on campus with input from UM’s Mike Mitchell, the unit leader at the Montana Cooperative Wildlife Research Unit.

Squirrels

Nonnative eastern fox squirrels dominate campus. They prefer riparian cottonwood forests, making campus a perfect spot for these large rodents to settle down in leafy nests after long days of burying acorns. With no competition, the squirrel population may soon outnumber students if the enrollment crisis continues.

Deer

Both white-tailed and mule deer reside on campus (as well as everywhere else in town). Mule deer have large ears and white tails with black tips. White-tailed deer have a brown tail with a completely white underside, which they wave as they run away. If you don’t want to be kicked out of the state by a native Montanan, it’s best you learn this critical difference.

Raccoons

Raccoons are highly intelligent, nocturnal mammals that make dens in hollow parts of trees and abandoned burrows. With their human-like hands, raccoons are able to open doors, bottles, and latches. Their black masks and nimble fingers suggest they may be the ones always stealing bike tires.

Skunks

These nocturnal, cat-sized omnivores are easy to identify by their distinguishing white stripe and strong odor. According to Mitchell, he has never seen nor smelled a skunk on campus. Then what’s that stench by the residence halls?

Flickers

These red-faced, grayish-brown birds with black spots are part of the woodpecker family. They nest in tree holes, like those in the tree on the northeast corner of the math building. While many birds sing, woodpeckers drum as a way to communicate and claim territory.

Bears

Despite rumors of bear sightings, Mitchell said there is no reason for them to be on campus. “They’re looking for bear chow and there isn’t much of that on a college campus,” he said. At MSU, there is a rampant bear problem, as Cats make a perfect meal for Grizzlies.

Dogs

Dogs are the pride of UM. They are commonly seen prancing across the Oval. If you’re lucky, you’ll actually get to pet one of these angels. Remember, if it has a vest on, leave it be. It has an important job to do.

Slackliners

Slackliners can be found on many college campuses, but seem to thrive at UM. They travel in bare-foot groups and congregate outside of Knowles Hall where they compete with the squirrels for tree space.
If there are any stereotypes about geologists, it’s that they love beer.

Sean Nevins took his geoscience degree straight to the brewery, working his way up to brewing ambassador at Imagine Nation Brewing.

Nevins and his beer-loving roommates learned the basics of home brewing while in college, mostly using pre-packaged kits. Now, he has his own brewing equipment and starts the two- to four-week process from scratch.

The first step is to make a tea-like concoction with malted grains and hot water. Nevins uses predominately barley, with a bit of corn, oats and wheat thrown in the mix as well. The all-grain mixture is put into a camping-style cooler with boiling water.

Before the water is added, the grains are chock-full of complex sugars, or starches, which are long chains of simple sugars bound together. When hot water is added at a sweet spot of about 150 degrees Fahrenheit, enzymes begin to convert the starches into simple sugars, which are the same kinds of sugar found in cakes, white bread and corn syrup. Simple sugars are quicker to digest and will nourish the yeast added later in the brewing process.

When the beer-tea is ready, Nevins uses a three-tier brewing system to drain the mixture, leaving the grains behind. As the liquid drains into a bucket, he rinses the grains in the cooler with another dose of hot water to maximize the sugar content. The resulting liquid, called wort, tastes like sweet beer.

For first-timers, these beginning steps can be skipped by purchasing a brewing kit, which will provide a wort syrup. According to Nevins, aspiring brewers can purchase all of the necessary ingredients and equipment for under $200. A nicer small-scale setup could run as much as $500.

Once you have the equipment, the ingredients are relatively cheap. Grains don’t run for much, and hops can be grown in the garden. Not to mention, there are no legal barriers for minors trying to buy supplies.

At the end of the brew, Nevins will have roughly five gallons of beer — about nine six-packs.

If a craft six-pack costs about $8, that is $72 worth of beer. The cost of ingredients per brew ranges from $20 to $60.

When the wort is finished, it’s moved to the kettle for a 90-minute boil. For flavor, Nevins adds hops during the boiling period. For this particular brew, nearly two pounds of hops will go in by the end of the process. Some are added post-boil to produce that familiar beer aroma. The boiling process also sanitizes the beer, getting rid of any volatile, organic material that could cause off flavors in the final product.

Before the fermentation process can begin, the liquid must be cooled to room temperature. Nevins uses a copper coil that runs cold water through the liquid, but many home brewers submerge their kettles in a bathtub filled with icy water. Getting the liquid to the right temperature is crucial. If it’s too hot, it will kill the yeast needed for fermentation. If it’s too cold, the yeast will hibernate.

The next step is fermentation, the process by which microorganisms break down sugars into ethyl alcohol, the kind you want to drink. The microorganism of choice for beer brewers is yeast.

“Yeast poop out alcohol and fart CO2,” Nevins said. From the cooled kettle, Nevins drains a murky liquid into a fermenter, a large glass jar with a science-fiction-esque top that lets carbon dioxide out while keeping dirty air from getting in. The cloudiness of the beer is a testament to the considerable amount of hops in the brew.

Although the beer is left to ferment for two to four weeks, Nevins said most of the alcohol present in the final product is produced in the first four days. The rest of the time, the yeast is helping to balance flavors.

To finish, Nevins will cold crash the beer, a natural filtration process to get rid of excess yeast and sediment.

“They all hug each other and fall out of suspension,” Nevins said.

If all goes well, Nevins will be enjoying a fruity, hoppy 6.5 percent IPA in the course of a few weeks.

Although the process is the same for the 214-gallon batches Nevins works on at Imagine Nation, he still enjoys the experimental freedom that comes with home brewing.

“You’re always kind of shooting from the hip,” Nevins said. “Every ingredient has, like, five dials you can adjust.”
Who Tames the Flames:
INSIDE THE TACTICAL WORLD OF MONTANA’S FIREFIGHTERS

Packing only 10 pairs of underwear, 10 pairs of socks, five t-shirts and his toiletries, Canyon Hohenstein, a 20-year-old economics major and student senator at the University of Montana, left his comfortable world behind for life in fire camp.

When he arrived, he was greeted by an open field scattered with tents. Unsure if he would be gone for days or weeks, Hohenstein put on his best attitude to greet old friends — fellow firefighters, long missed during the off-season.

Out of range for cell service and often without access to a shower, the long, exhausting days eventually started to feel normal, but waking up at 5 still felt just as early. When he returned to camp after midnight with his fellow firefighters, they sat down to eat another stomach-churning dinner.

Despite the late hour, Hohenstein and his crew played their favorite game. He pulled the most essential item from his bag — an axe handle. It’s covered in duct tape and missing the blade. Hohenstein and his buddies passed the time by throwing it to each other. It flew through the air left to right, as the crew carefully perfected the way each of them snatches the handle’s tape.

When firefighters like Hohenstein are living at camp, this is what they’re left to do. They pass time playing with an axe handle because, as Hohenstein said, “You gotta make the best out of every situation you’re in.”

More than a dozen fires burned within 100 miles of Missoula this summer. Spanning more than 450,000 acres all together, the wildfires burned over twice the area of New York City, according to the National Wildfire Coordinating Group.

Almost all of these fires, including the Lolo Peak, Rice Ridge and Liberty fires, started in mid-July as a result of lightning strikes. As of Monday, September 18, they are still active.

Fighting fire requires thousands of crew members, huge amounts of funding and months of dedication. Such extreme burning also caused Missoula and surrounding areas to struggle with hazardous air quality due to smoke.

But there’s more to the story than just the impacts of fires on Montanans. Each year, thousands of people excitedly and optimistically come together to stave off the fires as best they can, to protect both the people and land of Montana.

Mike Goicoechea left the line of scrimmage in Washington-Grizzly Stadium in the mid-’90s for the front lines of wildfires raging through the U.S.

Goicoechea didn’t expect to become the deputy incident
commander for the Rice Ridge fire near Seeley Lake. In fact, he thought his Health and Human Performance degree would lead to a career as a teacher and coach.

“The first fire you go on, you get what we call ‘the fire bug,’” Goicoechea said. “There’s adrenaline in the hazards and the danger and the excitement.”

However, it wasn’t just the rush that made him fall in love with fire, Goicoechea said. What made his time as a firefighter meaningful was the strategic components that reminded him of his passion for football.

Goicoechea played for the Griz from 1990-1994 as strong safety. Goicoechea was followed by his younger brother, Sean Goicoechea, whose strength in the same football position was critical to helping UM win its first Division 1-AA national title in 1995.

When we sat down for an interview, Goicoechea took me to the office of his colleague without telling her. Goicoechea has bright blue eyes, and is one of the few wildland firefighters I’ve met with closely trimmed facial hair. He has robust shoulders and dark grime on his clothing. He speaks slowly and draws diagrams in my notebook as he explains how to fight a fire.

As the deputy incident commander, Goicoechea’s responsibility is the overall management of a fire through determining objectives and strategy, setting priorities, authorizing incident action plans and other key duties, according to the National Park Service.

Goicoechea said firefighting goals have shifted significantly from prevention and suppression. Wildfire interventionists now work to make landscapes resilient, foster fire-adapted communities and institute safe and efficient wildfire responses, according to the National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy.

“When we started intervening, the Forest Service declared war on the fires,” Goicoechea said. “People started to realize that fire plays an important ecological role on the landscape and once fires get past a certain point, we don’t have the resources to put it out.”

There are three primary fire starters, Goicoechea said: fuel, such as living vegetation and trees, heat and oxygen. These three things must exist in the right proportions to start a fire. Goicoechea said that once a fire is started, there are three factors that can influence and control fire behavior: fuel, how much there is of it, topography and weather. All firefighting tactics are based on the fire starters and behavior influencers.

“We dissect it into segments and try to keep it simple,” Goicoechea said. “We say ‘you gotta eat the elephant one bite at a time.’”

Goicoechea said the best way to approach fighting a fire is by examining what factors contributing to the fire can be managed. An example of this would be removing dead trees or using resources that are most efficient for the conditions, he said.

Evaluating priorities is another critical component of deciding how to approach a fire, Goicoechea said. The primary mission of crew members at the Rice Ridge fire has been to “save Seeley Lake,” he said.

Goicoechea said he and his crews carefully decide how to distribute their resources to protect “values at risk.” Though he wishes he could protect people, property and critical lands from the harsh flames, he said firefighters do everything they can to knock down the intensity of a fire when it does come into contact with something important.

Though planning for wildfire season goes year-round, fire analysts were not predicting such an extreme fire season during winter and spring of the past year, Goicoechea said.

Goicoechea said there was good snow pack that led to good growth of various vegetation in the spring. However, the optimistic winter wasn’t complemented with rain in June, July or August, which firefighters rely on to give them some relief during peak fire season. When the rain never came, all the plants that had grown healthy and strong were baked under the sun’s rays and dried out, becoming the perfect fuel for burning.

Ideal strategies weren’t going to be enough on fires like Rice Ridge, Goicoechea said. According to NWGC’s incident information system for wildfires, the Rice Ridge fire has exceeded burning 160,100 acres as of Sept. 17. In comparison, the entire city of Chicago is only 149,760 acres.

The Rice Ridge fire and other fires exceeding 40,000 acres on the Lolo National Forest have not only covered huge expanses of land, but also have tremendous height and heat, Goicoechea said.

Many fires can be attacked using basic guidelines for what tools to use. Digging lines is an effective strategy for flames under 4 feet tall, while using machinery, such as bulldozers, works well for flames up to 8 feet. Dropping retardant or water from helicopters is successful for flames up to 12 feet tall, Goicoechea said.

These methods were often useless for fires near Missoula, where flames exceeded 300 feet in height. The best tactic for such an intense fire is to “anchor and flank” by finding a point where the fire has already burned and work to slow the fire from the back and sides, Goicoechea said.

Goicoechea said “there’s a human element” to fighting wildfires. Working as a team is critical, especially with what’s
at stake to lose.

Charlie Showers spends his spring searching Google Maps for possible fire base camp sites.

When fire season begins, hundreds of firefighters move to a mini-city of tents, where they will live for weeks at a time. As logistics section chief, Showers carefully plans how he will build a home for these crews from nothing but an empty field.

Hundreds of tents were scattered around an open field at the base camp of the Lolo Peak fire. At the heart of the camp were about a dozen portable, rectangular office spaces for communications, logistics, supplies and more. Buses and trucks were driving around the camp spraying water to keep the dust down and moving supplies. In the middle of camp sat a wooden stage with large informational signs that are updated daily for the 6 a.m. briefing. A large white canopy draped over the dining area, where the smell of food being cooked lingered in the air. Next to it were two large trailers holding about a dozen shower stalls, each adorned with horse shoes to use as hooks.

Showers had medium-length dark brown facial hair and cropped hair on his head. He wore the same olive-green pants as everyone else in sight at fire camp. He held one arm over his chest while the other rests on it so he could stroke the end of his beard while he spoke to me. He had a radio strapped to his belt and squinted through the smoke despite it being overcast. His voice is gritty and he laughed each of the three times he told me “you can’t build a fire camp without port-a-potties.”

Engine Crew firefighter Canyon Hohenstein said that camp life can be “odd” due to the small amount of time actually spent there and the lack of services.

“You wake up at 5 a.m., you go have breakfast, then you get briefed and get to work,” Hohenstein said. “You might get back around midnight and have some dinner and hang out for a while, maybe play some cards and get ready for the next day.”

According to Showers, most services brought to fire camps are brought in by contracted private suppliers. These include catering, showering and port-a-potty companies. Many businesses will devote their services to fire camps to create what resembles a fire supply industry, Showers said.

Hohenstein has been fighting fires for three seasons, a choice he said is easy to make each year. He credits his positive experiences on a crew to his fellow firefighters.

“You live with them, you eat with them, you sleep with them – 24/7 you’re with these people,” Hohenstein said. “When the season’s over, you go your separate ways and you start to miss them. It’s always exciting to go back the next year to see those people and see how they’ve changed.”

Hohenstein has been fighting fires for three seasons, a choice he said is easy to make each year. He credits his positive experiences on a crew to his fellow firefighters.

Hohenstein is tall and lean with platinum blonde hair and blue eyes. The hair above his lip curls up and the sleeves to his jean button-down shirt are rolled up to his elbows. He wore a baseball cap and spoke with his hands. When he got excited to answer a question, he leaned on the table and nodded his head looking for agreement. Hohenstein had nothing negative to say about fighting fire, even when I probed him about his frustrations and fears. He smiled every time he has something to say about his crewmates and repeatedly said his best memories were made while on fire.

Hohenstein said transitioning between fire camp life and college life can be extremely difficult.

“You have to be able to go from studying for an exam for four hours a day to all of the sudden the next week being on a 20,000 acre fire working 16 hours a day,” Hohenstein said. “Going from fire to school is different. You’re doing all these exciting things where you’re fighting fires and getting paid to do it but then you’re back in school where you’re paying to be there and the lifestyle is a lot slower.”

Hohenstein and many other firefighters often work 10 to 16 hours a day, six days a week during peak fire season. When he was working in eastern Montana, Hohenstein said he worked 17 days straight and at one point was on the front lines for over 26 hours continuously fighting fire.

Members of an engine crew will typically have long and demanding work that includes the use of specialized firefighting equipment when on a fire, according to the U.S. Forest Service description.

The use of such tools and the environment of fighting a fire can be extremely dangerous, Hohenstein said. Despite this, Hohenstein said he has never felt unsafe in a situation he
encountered while fighting fire due to extensive training and good relationships with his commanders.

“One thing they really stress in training is that if you don’t feel comfortable doing something, tell somebody and it’ll be okay,” Hohenstein said.

Two firefighters lost their lives this summer near Missoula while responding to an incident. Trenton Johnson, 19, and Brent M. Witham, 29, both were killed separately by falling trees.

Hohenstein said that LCES, which stands for “lookouts, communications, escape routes and safety zones,” is “the staple of safety in firefighting.” LCES and the 18 watchout situations complement each other to minimize the risk of fighting fires, he said.

Fire is “a dynamic situation that’s always changing,” according to Hohenstein. Because of this, staying on the same page with his crewmates is critical to the success of the team. By communicating with his peers, Hohenstein said he can stay safe and sound of mind going into any situation.

Hohenstein said that fighting fire is also a strenuous, exhausting job that isn’t right for everyone. However, the experiences he’s had and the bonds he’s made with his fellow crew members make the suffering well worth it.

Hohenstein said he is most fond of an incident that happened this summer when his team was assigned to manage a 500-acre fire on Kelly Island near Missoula.

“In order to get to the fire, we had to wade across the river,” Hohenstein said. “We had to strip down to our underwear, throw all of our stuff on our backs and wade across the river. I’d never experienced anything like that in my life.”

Hohenstein said that despite the sadness he feels when a structure or life is lost to fire, he is optimistic because he knows fire is critical to the long-term success of the landscape. According to the National Park Service, many species depend on fire to reproduce. In addition, it says “fire can create a puzzle-like mosaic of diverse habitats for plants and animals.”

“If I see a house destroyed by fire or if I see a life destroyed by fire, it’s terrible, but fire is just a natural cycle, it’s just part of nature,” Hohenstein said. “Though in our lifetimes, we won’t be able to see the new forest come back to all it was at before the fire, I still know that one day this burned-up fire I’m looking at will be as beautiful as it was before the fire.”

Hohenstein said that the pressure of being a firefighter fuels him to work his hardest. Hohenstein said that the sacrifice of being a firefighter is made bearable despite the frustrations.

“It is my, along with everybody I work with’s responsibility to protect people’s property, homes and our beautiful outdoors,” Hohenstein said. “It’s a challenge, but it’s a challenge that we’ve all accepted.”

Although it will not be a long-term pursuit of Hohenstein’s, the memories and perspectives he’s gained from fighting fires will stay with him through the rest of his life, he said.

“I remember sitting there on the Lodgepole Complex fires and watching as these hundred-foot trees would just burst into flames,” Hohenstein said. “And the feeling is just so exhilarating and so exciting as you’re witnessing this amazing spectacle of mother nature … I’ve always told myself that nothing will ever be as exciting as firefighting was.”
A weekend in photos for music and sports fans

PHOTOS TATE SAMATA  TOP LEFT: Mac DeMarco performs during the beginning of his band’s sold out show at The Wilma on Friday, Sept. 15. BOTTOM LEFT: Griz starting quarterback Reese Phillips is carted off the field after a game-ending injury during Montana’s 56-3 victory over Savannah State at Washington-Grizzly Stadium on Saturday, Sept. 17. TOP RIGHT: Savannah State running back Uriah Oliver trips and falls during the Griz vs. Savannah State game at Washington-Grizzly Stadium on Saturday. PHOTO LIAM KESHISHIAN Montana forward Dani Morris, 4, slides to knock the ball away from Washington State defender Grace Hancock, 16, at South Campus Stadium on Sunday, Sept. 17. UM tied WSU 0-0.
FILMS

Tampons and a Trump piñata: A sneak peek at the Roxy’s Montana Film Festival

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The Roxy will be hosting the third Montana Film Festival Oct. 5-8, exposing the Missoula community to a variety of films from primarily female directors.

The films have different styles and points of origin, but most involve the common theme of the trials and tribulations involved with womanhood. They include stories about people of different sexualities, religions and ethnic backgrounds.

“The Roxy should act as a lighthouse,” said Aaron Roos, one of the Montana Film Festival’s programmers. Roos said he tried to encapsulate a range of voices and perspectives in this year’s selections.

There are several Q&A forums scheduled throughout the weekend, and community members will have a chance to speak with filmmakers face-to-face. The Roxy previewed a handful of the films being screened for the festival Oct. 5-8, exposing the Missoula community to a variety of films from primarily female directors.

“BAR BAHAR (IN BETWEEN)”: MAYSALOUN HAMOUD

Most people in their 20s are caught between childhood and life as an adult. “Bar Bahar” explores the lives of three young women who live in Tel Aviv as they navigate their lives during this turbulent age.

Maysaloun Hamoud wrote, directed and starred in this experimental short filmed it as a response to his grandfather’s death. The extreme, stark images that he manipulates give off the impression of a ghost, a memory and a loss the domestic evening of a gay couple. Donato explores the subtle emotional complexities of their lives, filling this short with details that give its resolution painful impact. Her short is socially relevant and well-written.

“THE NEWS TODAY”: LISA DONATO

Inspired by the Orlando tragedy at Pulse Nightclub, this short follows the domestic evening of a gay couple. Donato explores the subtle emotional complexities of their lives, filling this short with details that give its resolution painful impact. Her short is socially relevant and well-written.

The full festival schedule is available at montanafilmfestival.org.

MUSIC

Mac DeMarco wows Wilma with a Poop Wizard and performance art

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Standing in the pit at the Wilma on Friday, waiting for Mac DeMarco at a sold-out show, felt like what I imagine a Trump rally to be moments before the big guy hits the podium. Granted the demographics are almost diametrically opposed, but the same factors are in place: An oversize character stepping in front of a crowd so eager that you feel the performer could do practically anything and receive raucous applause.

DeMarco is a wily and charismatic performer, gleefully bucking the conventions of more traditional musicians in favor of stunts and one-liners reflecting an absurdist sense of humor. Any fears of letting down fans of that offbeat sensibility were immediately laid to rest as he walked out on stage with a “Poop Wizard” hoisted on his shoulders. For those who are surely curious, a Poop Wizard is a small denim-clad man with a pointed poop emoji hat who appeared to be a tour photographer, but who DeMarco later claimed was his long lost son, Yuki.

From that moment forward, he could do no wrong. From the first theater-wide chorus of “la-la-la-lala” on the opening “Salad Days,” it was clear this was as game a crowd as one could hope for. They dutifully cheered him on as he hopped around, making a performance out of everything from drinking water to kissing all his band members on the mouth while playing the intro to “Stairway.”

The set list was strong, if predictable, alternating with surprisingly clinical precision between older cuts and songs from the new album, “This Old Dog.” The show did have its highlights, including a frankly devastating rendition of “My Kind of Woman.” A rather lengthy series of covers started with Herman’s Hermits’ “Mrs. Brown You’ve Got a Lovely Daughter” before morphing into “Don’t Fear the Reaper,” stopping by at Pearl Jam’s “Even Flow,” and finishing as Crazy Town’s “Butterfly.” DeMarco ended the set with “Watching Him Fade Away,” somehow succeeding in getting everyone in the rowdy pit to sit down.

After the show, DeMarco and his bandmates made their way to the Rhino, where he politely took photos and hugged fans gathered outside. When asked if he enjoyed playing Missoula, DeMarco, ever in character, simply replied, “It was cool. It was good. It was cool… Mommy. Make sure you get that quote right. It was good. Mommy.”
Holocaust survivor finds humor in tragedy in ‘The Last Laugh’

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The Holocaust isn’t exactly the first thing that comes to mind when searching for comedy. But maybe it could be. Ferne Pearlstein’s film, “The Last Laugh,” screened this Thursday at the University Center Theater, delving into the realm of black comedy—in other words, humor about subjects considered taboo or offensive. Also available on Amazon Prime, the film features Holocaust survivor Renee Firestone, who investigates the importance of humor when addressing tragic events. As it turns out, finding the humor in these events for many Holocaust survivors is both freeing and humanizing.

“I thought it [the film] was a great idea because the Holocaust was always presented so inhuman, and this gave it sort of a human touch,” said Firestone. “She [Pearlstein] was the first person I knew that really thought we were still human beings while we were in the camp because, you know, only if you were not human would you not laugh at something that’s funny.”

Pearlstein is an accomplished cinematographer, film editor, writer and director. But all that experience had little impact on her confidence approaching “The Last Laugh,” and such a sensitive subject matter made her nervous.

“I’d been trying to make it [the film] since 1993. However, I was just finishing film school and I knew that this was too important of a project to do without experience, so I didn’t start it right away.”

“The Last Laugh” has been screened all over the world and has scored a whopping 100 percent rating on the film review aggregate site Rotten Tomatoes. It stars Holocaust survivors like Firestone, but also comedians, writers and producers like Mel Brooks, Carl Reiner, Sarah Silverman, Gilbert Gottfried, Harry Shearer, Jeff Ross, Judy Gold, Susie Essman and Larry Charles. It is Firestone, however, who takes the spotlight.

“Renee goes around the world speaking about the Holocaust and she has an amazing sense of humor,” Pearlstein said.

“Well, either you do or you don’t [have a sense of humor],” said Firestone. “I know people who are always gloomy, always sad, always talking about horrible things. I always wonder: Why? Can’t you smile? What keeps you so down all the time? … You have to enjoy smiling. When I laugh at something, when I smile at something, I feel good.”

Firestone, 93, was a teenager when the Nazis took her and her family to Auschwitz. She outlived all of her family members in the camp. Her sister Klara, whom she named her daughter after, happened to look “more Jewish” than blonde-haired, blue-eyed Firestone did, and became the subject of horrific scientific experimentation. After the war, Firestone confronted the Nazi doctor responsible and discovered Klara was eventually shot and killed.

“Most people think you have to say something really funny to laugh. It doesn’t have to be something you hear or say or talk about, though. I could see a Nazi soldier trip and I would laugh about it. We [other concentration camp members] would get together and have a good time.”

Firestone’s outlook has in many ways also shaped Pearlstein’s perspective in a way that’s closer to home.

“I’ve learned so much about humanity but also about myself personally. Some people have said that if you were funny before the camps, you were funny in the camps because that’s the person you were. And what I realized about myself is that I’m the person who gravitates toward those funny people,” Pearlstein said.

Using an inner sense of levity, Firestone was able to live through countless atrocities at Auschwitz. Her concern later was whether she would be able to present her story in a unique way, a way that made people listen and care. How could her story stand out in a sea of tragedy? This is where she felt Pearlstein’s film succeeded.

“Who wants to know about the Holocaust?” Firestone said. “But when they started to ask me if I’d tell my story, I thought it was the most wonderful thing. The world must know. And she [Pearlstein] came along with the humor. I said, ‘Oh, people will think I’m crazy to do this.’ But now this is one of the most wonderful Holocaust films I know.”
FOOTBALL

The gameday playlist sucks so we fixed it

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Before the Grizzlies’ home opener against Valparaiso Sept. 2, something was off. The announcer introduced Monte, Montana’s beloved, bandana-ed bear, as usual, but to an unfamiliar tune.

For more than a decade, Monte rolled up in his signature motorcycle to “American Badass,” by Kid Rock, and, ineffectively, tried to pump up the crowd. “This is Our House,” by Bon Jovi replaced it this season. Fans, either confused or bored, still reacted indifferently.

“That one we heard overwhelmingly, it’s time for Monte to have a new entrance song,” said Brynn Molloy, an assistant athletic director in charge of fan experience. “We’ll see how it goes. That’s not Monte’s forever entrance song, but it’s fitting for our stadium.”

For the first time ever, Griz Athletics and the Griz Fan Advisory Board posted a survey on GoGriz.com asking for fan input on game-day events. Suggestions for Monte’s new entrance are explicitly requested.

The need for feedback makes sense. Attendance on opening day was down 5,000 fans since last year. To draw a bigger crowd, especially with a team not predicted to play as well as in the past, Griz Athletics needed to get creative.

Monte’s new walk-up song was the only music-related question on the survey. To students, however, the music has been the most dull part of game day.

“I think if you play things that students will love, you’ll have more students in the student section,” said Brennan DeBoer, a student and the music director at KBGA, UM’s college radio station. “It’s bad incentive as far as I’m concerned.”

Making major changes to the stadium music can be tricky. The board has to account for thousands of different tastes, most of which come from middle-aged, rural Montanans. “Cotton-Eyed Joe,” “Thank God I’m a Country Boy,” and “Friends in Low Places” remain classics.

Students’ music tastes are usually trumped by the majority. “If we can pack that student section, students need to show up, and we’re going to start playing more music for them,” Molloy said. “If students are in it, it’s easier for us to play songs to cater to students.”

DeBoer begged to differ.

“If people are like ‘It’s Saturday morning, I don’t want to go listen to ‘Cotton-Eyed Joe’ for three hours,’ rather if it’s stuff they would’ve been listening to on their own, I don’t see why that wouldn’t incentivize people,” DeBoer said.

The pre-game playlist was a bit more liberal at the opener, playing edited versions of Travis Scott’s “goosebumps” and DRAM’s “Broccoli,” but even players expressed a need for change to the in-game sound.

“Not to say ‘Cotton-Eyed Joe,’ doesn’t do it, but we’d like a little more diversity up there to get pumped up and a little bit more modern music than what we’re used to,” receiver Keenan Curran said.

The music controllers at Washington-Grizzly Stadium bring out the team with T.I.’s “Bring ‘Em Out,” as if introducing a middle school basketball team from 2008.

“That’s one we’ve addressed every single year -- ‘Do we get rid of it?’ And the overwhelming majority of people say do not get rid of that song. So, it fits perfectly there,” Molloy said.

To draw out rhythmic clapping, they bust out “Cotton-Eyed Joe,” “HandClap” and “The Cha-Cha Slide.” Loud, off-key attempts at singing “Sweet Caroline” and “Friends in Low Places,” drown the fans at long breaks. “Sandstorm,” by Darude fills in the rest of the downtime.

“For the most part, I’d say it’s pretty stale,” DeBoer said. “I want stadium music to be borderline strip club music. I want it to be Future, I want it to be Migos, I want it to be Young Thug. Then you can have your ‘Seven Nation Army’ and radio rock stuff, but you’ve got to sprinkle it in there.”

Molloy and the board have certain parameters they must meet. Regardless if fans find certain songs repetitive, it’s undeniable that some can evoke hypnotic clapping and head-nodding that keep fans engaged.

“You have some songs that are great stadium songs,” Molloy said. “‘Cotton-Eyed Joe’ is one that has become a tradition here...there’s always, hopefully, a key moment in the game where you can rock it because no matter what you do, it gets fans on their feet.”

DeBoer said he thinks a happy medium can be achieved.

“You can do your one ‘Cotton-Eyed Joe,’ Tim McGraw song, but keep it, like, one an hour at most,” he said. “When they play hip-hop, they play hip-hop from like the 80s.”

Montana may have to stay out of style for a while. Most students will be old and nostalgic in the bleachers by the time Chance the Rapper or Kendrick become regulars. By then, the student section will probably just complain about how shitty and outdated the music is anyway.

“To have music just blaring like that, the only other time you’d be able to listen to music that loud is at a club or something, so why not, if you’re listening to good stuff?” DeBoer said. “Go get drunk at 11 a.m. and listen to music you want to hear. I think people will go.”
In early August, the Montana men's basketball team played a pair of basketball games in Costa Rica as part of a summer international tour. But it was what teammates experienced off the court that defined the trip. While many students were enjoying their last moments of summer, the team went to a local orphanage to play with the kids.

Despite having to face Laurentian University in a scrimmage later that night, the team continued to play games with the kids and spend time at the orphanage.

“We were only supposed to be at the shelter for two hours, but we ended up staying for an hour and a half longer. That was one of the days we even played a game,” assistant coach Jay Flores said. “(Head coach) Travis (DeCuire) just said this was way more important than the game.”

Costa Rica brought the young team, with six freshmen and seven newcomers in total, together and let basketball take a back seat while they focused instead on team bonding and doing humanitarian work.

When head coach Travis DeCuire heard that a visit to an orphanage was an option from the travel company they were accompanied by, he immediately added it to the itinerary. Flores said seeing the joy of the kids in the orphanage reacting to the guys while they played soccer and basketball was a highlight of the trip.

“It is really cool when you’re able to put a smile on those kids faces, but then you look at our guys and they have the same faces as the kids,” Flores said. “Ninety-nine percent of the kids didn’t speak English, and our guys didn’t really speak Spanish-and to still have those moments was unforgettable.”

Flores said the team did get a lot of basketball in as well, having the opportunity to practice 10 times in the middle of the summer before leaving for Costa Rica. The majority of NCAA Division-I basketball programs don’t meet until September, but once every four years, programs are eligible to make an international tour and get some early practice in.

The Griz came out on top against Coopenae Arba on their first night in Costa Rica but lost the next night to Laurentian University. During the game against Laurentian, the orphanage brought some of the kids to watch behind Montana’s bench.

Lone senior Fabijan Krslovic enjoyed getting back into the flow of competitive games, but emphasized his time at the orphanage. He said one of the most memorable parts of the journey was lifting the kids into the air.

“At first, we were with the younger kids in this play room. I think it was strange for them how tall we were. They kept asking and asking for us to pick them up and throw them and then they would smile. It was a lot of fun,” Krslovic said.

The orphanage had two different sections, one where they could go see animals and also a yard to go play with the kids. Krslovic highlighted the moment when Coach Flores attempted to start a game of Simon Says.

“Coach Flores speaks a little bit of Spanish and tried to get a game of Simon Says, but he called it Shaq Says,” Krslovic said.

Krslovic led the team in rebounding, blocked shots, steals and earned NABC Court honors for a 4.0 GPA in his junior campaign last season. The 2017-18 schedule includes tough matchups with Pitt, Penn State, Stanford, UCLA and Washington.

Krslovic said that DeCuire wants tough competition to figure out the team’s weaknesses early. Flores added that the collection of talent they have this year is as good as it’s been in recent years.

And with that tough non-conference schedule ahead for the upcoming season, Krslovic has one last goal for his final season.

“I’ll do whatever I can to help the team win, my only goal this season is making the NCAA tournament,” Krslovic said.

The men’s team will host Saskatchewan in an exhibition game on Nov. 6th and play Whitworth on the 10th.