

blot

LAST ISSUE
EVER!!!!
MORE INSIDE
APOCALYPSE!
END TIMES!
WORLD OVER!
KAPUT!

PREPARE!
END
IS
NEAR

...*MAYBE*



PLEASE STAND BY

Barring an actual apocalypse, we'll be on stands again in February.

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In this ISSUE



Sophomore music major Ted Clements poses outside the Idaho Commons. He's not a believer, but plays one in this photo.

It's the end... maybe.

Monday morning and you wake up late — typical. Then somebody cuts in line at Sisters' and as you leave the Admin it starts raining. Later, you lose your phone in the Commons, fall asleep during geography and walk in on a class that's in session. Your backpack rips and your lunch falls out and some jerk's browsing Facebook at a print station. Take a deep breath — it's not the end of the world.

But, what if you wake up late on a cold December morning and storm clouds move in, then a twister-hurricane-hailstorm hits? You watch from your bunker as a flaming comet crashes to Earth and ash blots out the sun. The clouds part and rays of light swallow half the population — the Second Coming or first round of alien abductions? Stockpile supplies and spend precious moments with loved ones. Finally, the horizon goes dark and you realize it's the end of the world... maybe.

—VH

On the cover

Tim Daulton, a model for UI art classes, looks skyward outside the Idaho Commons. Wearing his cloak and our sandwich board, he channels his inner believer.

Cover photo by Philip Vukelich

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MADE TO LAST

Eating good underground

Story by Chloe Rambo,
Photo by Jesse Hart

■ Don't worry about eating that chicken noodle soup anytime soon — it's in a can, it will last forever, right? Wrong.

Marissa Lucas, University of Idaho campus dietician, said the length of time a can of food is shelf-stable often correlates with the number and strength of preservatives inside.

Canned vegetables, soup, chili, beans, and dried pasta are made and sealed to have a long shelf life, Lucas said, yet some foods last even longer.

"There are some canned foods that are considered 'super' canned foods because they're so chock full of preservatives," Lucas said.

Spam, a canned, pre-cooked pork product, gained popularity during World War II. Meat products were difficult to deliver to soldiers, so Spam became a major protein source throughout the war.

Lucas said Spam may not be conventionally nutritious, but would be one of the best foods to have in large supply during an apocalypse because it contains strong preservatives.

Lucas also recommended Hormel's classic chili as one of those "super" canned foods that can last more than two years on the shelf.

Dried oatmeal and Top Ramen are also go-to bunker foods because they're low in natural fats. These fats have a direct correlation with how long the food is considered "shelf stable," or safe to store.

After a while, Lucas said, the natural fats in any food product go rancid.

"There will always be some hype of some apocalypse or Y2K or end of the world," Lucas said. "You may have 100 pounds of food stocked up — but think — you have to eventually eat all of that. Do you really want 10 cans of SPAM?" ■



Aug. 20, 1967

The southeastern U.S. would be demolished by a Soviet nuclear attack on this date, according to the alien that spoke to George Van Tassel. (*Herald News*)



April 29, 1987

Leland Jensen predicted Halley's Comet would enter the Earth's orbit, leading to giant earthquakes and mass extinction. (*Discovery News*)



Oct. 23, 1997

James Ussher, a 17th-Century Irish archbishop, applied the widely held belief that the world would endure for 6,000 years. He calculated the date of Creation and added 6,000 to one, since Western mathematicians had yet to conceptualize zero. (*New York Times*)

DÉJÀ VU

It feels like we've been here before

Story by Erin Roetker,
Illustration by Avery Worrell



CAN IT

Cooked carrots, green beans, peaches, pears, tender meats and fish can all be stored, neatly canned and jarred, for use in a delectable meal — or an apocalypse.

Sandy McCurdy, University of Idaho Extension food safety specialist, said canning may not be a necessary practice anymore, but the popularity of home food preservation is on the rise.

"The reason people (preserve food) these days is not so much because of the need to feed their families through the winter," McCurdy said. "It's because they want to know where their food comes from."

Whether someone is canning specialty organic green beans from the farmers market or plain peaches from the local grocery store, adherence to specific guidelines ensures the preservation is safe and successful.

As part of the team reassessing an emergency preparedness plan in Idaho's Nez Perce county, McCurdy has begun thinking through the necessary steps to feed a local population in the case of an apocalyptic or hazardous situation. McCurdy said a food dehydrator might be more effective than attempting to preserve food for storage.

"The (team of) emergency planners have to think through what would happen if something absolutely devastating were to happen," McCurdy said. "If it were catastrophic, we'd be better off drying our food — it would be easier to do, lighter weight if we had to travel and it might just be easier to manage than lots of glass jars."



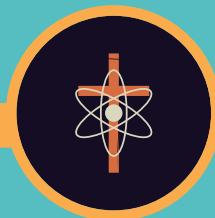
May 5, 2000

Southern cult Nuwaubian Nation distributed fliers claiming the planets would align, pulling toward the sun and creating a "star holocaust." Followers believed they would be taken into the sky while others suffered the apocalypse. (Southern Poverty Law Center)



Nov. 29, 2003

The Japanese Aum Shinrikyo cult predicted a nuclear war would destroy the world. The war was predicted to happen from Oct. 30 to Nov. 29. (Unsolved Mysteries)



Sept. 29, 2011

Ronald Weinland predicted Jesus Christ would return to take believers with him to heaven. He said nuclear explosions in U.S. port cities by July 2008 would represent the blowing of the Second Trumpet of Revelation. (Examiner)



May 21, 2012

Harold Camping thought the rapture would occur on this date, along with earthquakes. God would take 3 percent of the world's population to heaven for people who believed in him and the rest would die on Oct. 21, 2012. (ABC News)



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COUNTDOWN TO CALAMITY

The best apocalypse movies, books and songs

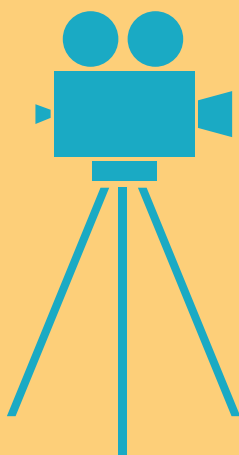
Column by Madison McCord

Illustration by Rebecca Derry

■ The "end of the world" theme has gotten a lot of love from Hollywood during recent years — Mayans influencing the producers and all — and with those films, books and songs are a pretty solid mix of great, good and bad.

Apocalyptic media has evolved from basically horror, to huge special effects, to a more dramatic approach. It's an evolution of the way consumers think about the end. At first it's scary, then imaginations run wild, and finally reality kicks in.

The flicks, reads and hits that made our list are apocalypse staples — for better or worse — and most importantly none of them are the movie "2012." ■



1 "I AM LEGEND"

The toughest part of making a list is picking the best — and "I Am Legend" is pretty good. The film's setting — abandoned Manhattan — is perfect for portraying the empty feeling of survivors. Will Smith plays the protagonist in this man-against-the-world film. At its root, it's a movie about procedure and what happens when one element is added or taken away.

2 "SEEKING A FRIEND FOR THE END OF THE WORLD"

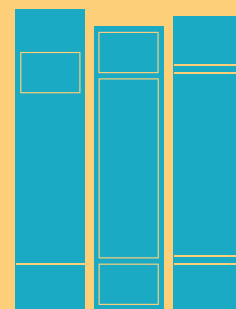
3 "ARMAGEDDON"

1 "THE ROAD"

Cormac McCarthy's novel follows a father and son who trudge through the wastelands of a lost world. There is no search, no conquest, no goal for the two — they're just trying to survive in a new world. It's pretty bleak, but tops the list for plausibility. Both characters are unnamed throughout the novel, which was also made into a decent film starring Viggo Mortensen.

2 "LEFT BEHIND" SERIES

3 "THE HUNGER GAMES"



1 "THE END" BY THE DOORS

As the Earth is scorching in the film "Apocalypse Now," this 1967 hit from Jim Morrison and company tells the most basic and powerful of stories with its lyrics — this is the end. "Beautiful friend. This is the end. My only friend, the end." The music only adds to the lyrics.

2 "IT'S THE END OF THE WORLD (AS WE KNOW IT)" BY R.E.M.

3 "SOUND OF SILENCE" BY SIMON AND GARFUNKEL

KEEPING THE VOICES OUT

How to build a tin foil hat

Story and photography by Amrah Canul

During the apocalypse, protect your precious brain cells from remote extraterrestrial probing in just a few simple steps.



1

Grab your apocalypse buddy and a couple of pieces of aluminum foil. In an emergency, foil found in the trash will work just fine.



2

Have your buddy tear two 3-foot pieces of foil. Place one piece on your head from front to back.



3

Mash the foil down so it conforms snugly to the head.



4

Place the second piece across the top of the head from ear to ear and repeat step two.



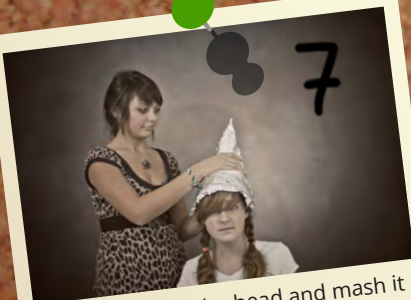
5

Mash the top layer of foil over the first piece making a quick tin foil hat.



6

Using your hand as a support, fold over the extra foil so it stands up.



7

Form a cone on the head and mash it all together to seal out dangerous rays and deflect mind control waves.

8

Repeat steps one to seven, if time is available, for your buddy.



WHAT ARE THE ODDS

Story by Victoria Hart
Illustrations by Rebecca Derry

Could a naturally occurring event really end humanity — Idaho's experts weigh in

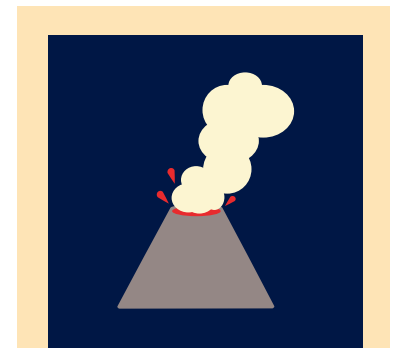
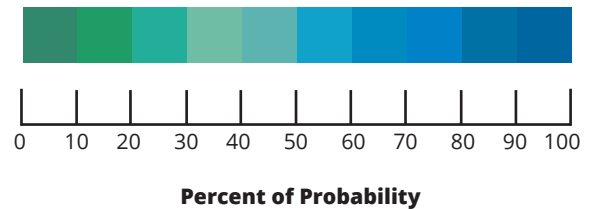
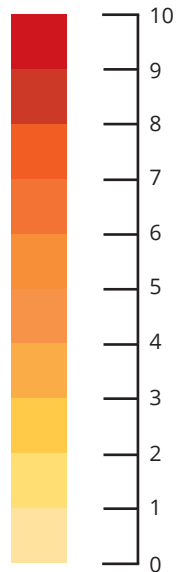
Despite media representations of apocalypse-sized natural events, experts at the University of Idaho said such storylines are mostly fiction.

"No hurricane, earthquake, tsunami (or) tornado could end the world," said Tim Frazier, of UI's geography department. "Hollywood makes these movies to sell tickets, but that's not reality."

Dennis Geist, UI geology professor, agreed humanity — not nature — is the most likely source of global extinction.

"The lesson from the natural world is that humans cause extinction," Geist said.

The range of apocalyptic scenarios includes familiar, extraterrestrial and biological hazards, but scientists develop and discover new insights every day that might hold the secret of a real-life Armageddon.* ■



VOLCANO

A super volcano such as Yellowstone would have dire effects on the eastern two-thirds of North America, Geist said, and could cause global cooling for three to five years.

"A catastrophe but not an apocalypse," Geist said.

Frazier called a super volcano such as Yellowstone a potential game-changer, and predicted most people would die from the blast itself or starvation due to suspended agriculture.

Geist said the planet experiences one super volcano every 50 million years, as far as scientists can tell, but he estimated there's a one in a million chance during any given year.

Probability: 5 percent

Devastation: 7

EXTREME WEATHER

Huge hurricanes and terrifying tornadoes are the stuff of movies, but Frazier said the chance of a traditional hazard reaching apocalyptic proportions is very low.

Frazier said even the perfect combination of three or four traditional hazards wouldn't devastate more than a regional population. While physical impacts would be isolated, he said economic impacts can cascade and have a far-reaching, even global, effect.

"I can't dream up a scenario where you stitch together every natural hazard known to man to where you would reach an apocalyptic level," Frazier said.

Probability: basically 0

Devastation: 2

EARTHQUAKES

Geist said giant earthquakes and eruptions wouldn't kill every human, but could disrupt society.

The largest possible earthquake could cause up to 30 meters of slip and lead to flooding. Geist said such an event could affect a 200-mile radius.

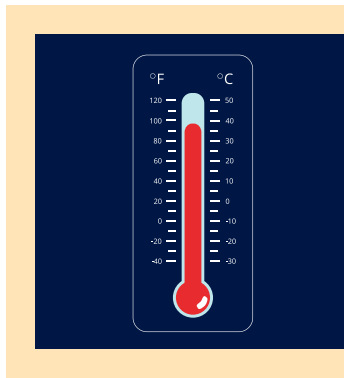
"Basically, it would shake and flood small areas," Geist said.

Earthquakes are unlikely to set off a chain reaction of volcanoes because warm rocks (like lava) are softer — and therefore less likely to shift or break suddenly.

Geist said the public would have very little warning of earthquakes, but volcanoes are "no problem" to predict.

Probability: 10 percent

Devastation: 5



CLIMATE CHANGE

Von Walden, UI geography professor, said scientists and scientific organizations agree climate change is a human-driven reality that could have significant impact on society.

Geist said climate change could lead to increased instances of diseases such as malaria and cholera, while stresses on resources and agriculture could cause fighting among individuals and nations.

"There is zero doubt that it's happening and getting worse," Geist said. "The warning is right now ... but people ignore it because it's happening so slowly."

Probability: 100 percent

Devastation: 5

TEMP INCREASE

It took 20,000 years for the planet to naturally warm as much as seven degrees Celsius after the last ice age and now Earth may warm that much by 2100 due to human causes.

Walden said temperature increases could be a game-changer for plants and animals.

"A degree of warming is a really significant change for the planet," Walden said.

The predicted increase could leave Moscow looking more like Boise or even Nevada.

Probability: 99 percent

Devastation: 3

✱ HOW'D YOU COME UP WITH THAT?

Probabilities are based on information from sources and published estimations.

Frazier said "frequency-magnitude" scales are not uncommon in his field.

"Usually, low impact events occur more frequently and therefore when people talk about preparing for natural hazards they talk about 'do you prepare for a big event that happens less frequently or for a larger one that has a big impact but happens less often,'" Frazier said.

VIRUS

A perfect virus is one of the highest potential threats to decimate the human population. Leslie Tengelsen, Idaho deputy state epidemiologist, said a virus with a high mortality rate and little or no immunity could evolve naturally or be produced in a lab.

"A virus, as opposed to a bacteria or something else, has the most potential," Tengelsen said.

Tengelsen said flu viruses transmit readily from person-to-person and could spread across the globe in 24 hours, affecting people on every continent.

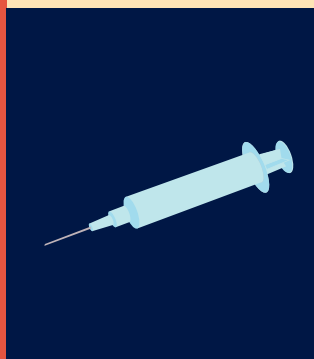
She said such a virus would probably not cause extinction because some individuals are isolated from the contagion or naturally immune, but it would make a huge dent in the population.

"We are technologically savvy enough to detect it early and take steps toward public health intervention," Tengelsen said.

Efforts to curb such a virus include quarantine of infected individuals, new scientific research and developing treatment techniques.

Probability: 50 percent

Devastation: 8



OUTER SPACE

Geist said meteor impact presents the best chance of human extinction because it happened that way 66 million years ago. That one was 10 km across and caused global cooling.

The after effects would be more devastating than the original impact, and scientists are just starting to develop early detection.

He said impact from a bolloid, any asteroid, meteor, comet, or other object that may be pulled in by the Earth's gravitational pull, pairs low probability with severe consequence.

"I think one could hit in the next 50 million years and that's how we'll go," Geist said.

But he said the Earth is expected to experience less than one such event every million years.

Probability: 10 percent

Devastation: 8.5

THE LAST DAY

World religions ponder the end times

Story by Kaitlin Moroney, Photo by Hayden Crosby

The End of the World

Death and famine, war and nuclear holocausts, resurrections and monsters ... it's the end of the world. Humans have conjured seemingly endless depictions of the end. Apocalyptic speculation, myths and beliefs are not all doom and gloom. Christian, Buddhist and Bahá'í beliefs do not include zombies, but their followers have definite ideas about what "the end of the world" means.

Buddhism



For Jay Feldman, a UI professor who teaches a class on Buddhism, questions about the "end of the world" within Buddhism are simple — don't worry about it.

"The Buddha would say 'Why would you waste your time?' There are more important things to worry about because if you are concerning yourself with the end of the world, then you aren't busy attending to the suffering, the dukkha, that's going on in your life right now," Feldman said.

"Dukkha" can best be understood through the "Parable of the Two Arrows." In this story, the Buddha says we cannot escape life's pain, these are the first arrows. But we can avoid shooting ourselves with second arrows — unneeded suffering or dukkha, which could also be described as "unsatisfactoriness," Feldman said.

"You might get an itch in your butt that's unsatisfactory and there might be that someone you love gets run over by a tractor trailer truck," Feldman said. "Those are both unsatisfactory to extremes."

The goal of a Buddhist is to eliminate unnecessary dukkha from life and achieve nirvana, the total cessation of unneeded unsatisfactoriness.

"Buddhism deals with what's happening right here, right now, in this instance and how can we understand that so we can bring an end to dukkha for ourselves and others," Feldman said.

People enjoy speculation about the end of the world, Feldman said. But the issue isn't important to the underpinnings of Buddhism.

"If you're worried about the end of the world and making sense of that, that's a very flamboyant question," Feldman said. "It's very exciting and we get caught up in that ... but do yourself a favor and don't worry about it. What's gonna happen is gonna happen."

Instead, Feldman said, focus on working toward goals that will bring about true happiness.

Bahá'í

"The end of the world? I think we were asleep and missed it," Jason Flynn said. "Bahá'u'lláh says that this old world, this humanity as a juvenile, is crumbling apart."

Flynn, who works for Information Technology Services at UI, serves as the adviser for the Bahá'í club on campus.

Bahá'u'lláh (pronounced "ba-haw-ol-lah") is the central religious figure within the Bahá'í faith, a monotheistic religion founded in 19th-century Persia, emphasizing the spiritual unity of all humankind.

Bahá'ís believe an apocalypse isn't like what Hollywood puts on the big screen. Instead, the "end of days" is more like one major stage in human history ending and a new one beginning. This transition is happening right now, Flynn said. We are working toward world peace through unity among mankind.

"(Building up this new world) is something that's unfolding over time," Flynn said. "And as we're seeing the acceleration of this overall coming apart, we're all feeling the pains of that — it's not an easy process."

Flynn likened the transition to birth. The process is painful for everyone involved, but in the end we have something new and beautiful.

"We are seeing the first stages of a new world and sometimes those first signs can be hard to uncover," Flynn said. "You can see glimmerings of it in things like the human rights movement — these things are the first glimmerings of the sunrise, if you will. According to Bahá'í teachings, it will take at least 1000 years to achieve this peace. After that time, we really don't know what will happen."





Christianity

Of all the major world religions, Christianity may have some of the more specific ideas of how the world will end.

Dan Bailey is the senior pastor at Trinity Baptist Church in Moscow, serving a congregation of around 400 members. His end-time belief is categorized as “premillennialist” and is one of many interpretations of the biblical texts dealing with the end-times.

Bailey’s belief follows a fairly simple timeline. The world today is in the “Church Age,” which began during the time of Christ. This era will end with the appearance of the Antichrist and the rapture, when believers are taken to heaven with Jesus. Bailey said according to scripture, nobody knows when the rapture will take place.

“There are no dates, although a lot of kooky people think they have it figured out,” Bailey said.

A 7-year period of tribulation follows the rapture. During the last three and a half years, Satan will be loosed upon the Earth.

“Things get really bad, the Earth is just ... terrible,” Bailey said. “Satan is totally unleashed. Armageddon and all those apocalyptic events will take place.”

At the end of the tribulation, Jesus Christ returns to Earth and reigns for a millennium. Satan is “bound” and life is good. After 1,000 years of Jesus’ reign, judgment day occurs. Unbelievers are cast into the lake of fire along with Satan. Believers go through judgment too, Bailey said. But it’s for rewards, not eternal judgment.

“I believe that the evidence of Christ is everywhere,” Bailey said. “And everyone has a chance to look at that evidence.” ■

Learn what might happen after the apocalypse at blot.uidaho.edu.

BUT WHAT IF IT REALLY HAPPENED...

Story by Vicky Hart, Illustration by Avery Worrell

■ The world is full of legends, claims and predictions of how it will all end. Sifting through the myths and facts is tricky, but University of Idaho students stepped up to the challenge.

More than 100 Vandals offered their opinions regarding the potentially impending apocalypse and the resulting information presents a range of preparedness, conviction and perception of the end.

Who was surveyed?

16% Freshmen
10% Sophomores
31% Juniors
27% Seniors
16% Other



"I would be a non-threatening, vegetarian zombie. Graaaains..."

— S. Elizabeth Harman

Who's your exit buddy? What's the most realistic piece of apocalyptic fiction? There's more info at blot.uidaho.edu.

"I'm not cut out for survival."

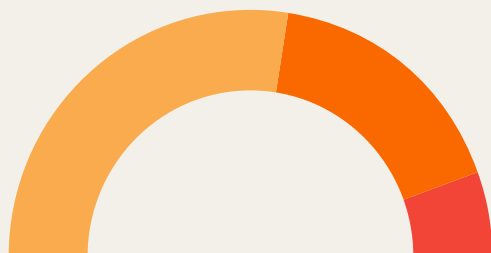
— Katelynn Inman

"Someone will spill water on an important computer system."

— Jesse Zylstra

"In most realistic apocalyptic scenarios, statistically, you are already dead."

— Andrew Rowe



In the apocalypse, I would be...

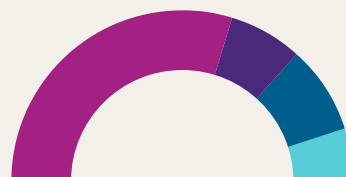
55% The hero
34% The victim
11% Other

"Dead."

— Gg Templeman

"Alive!"

— Shelby Owens



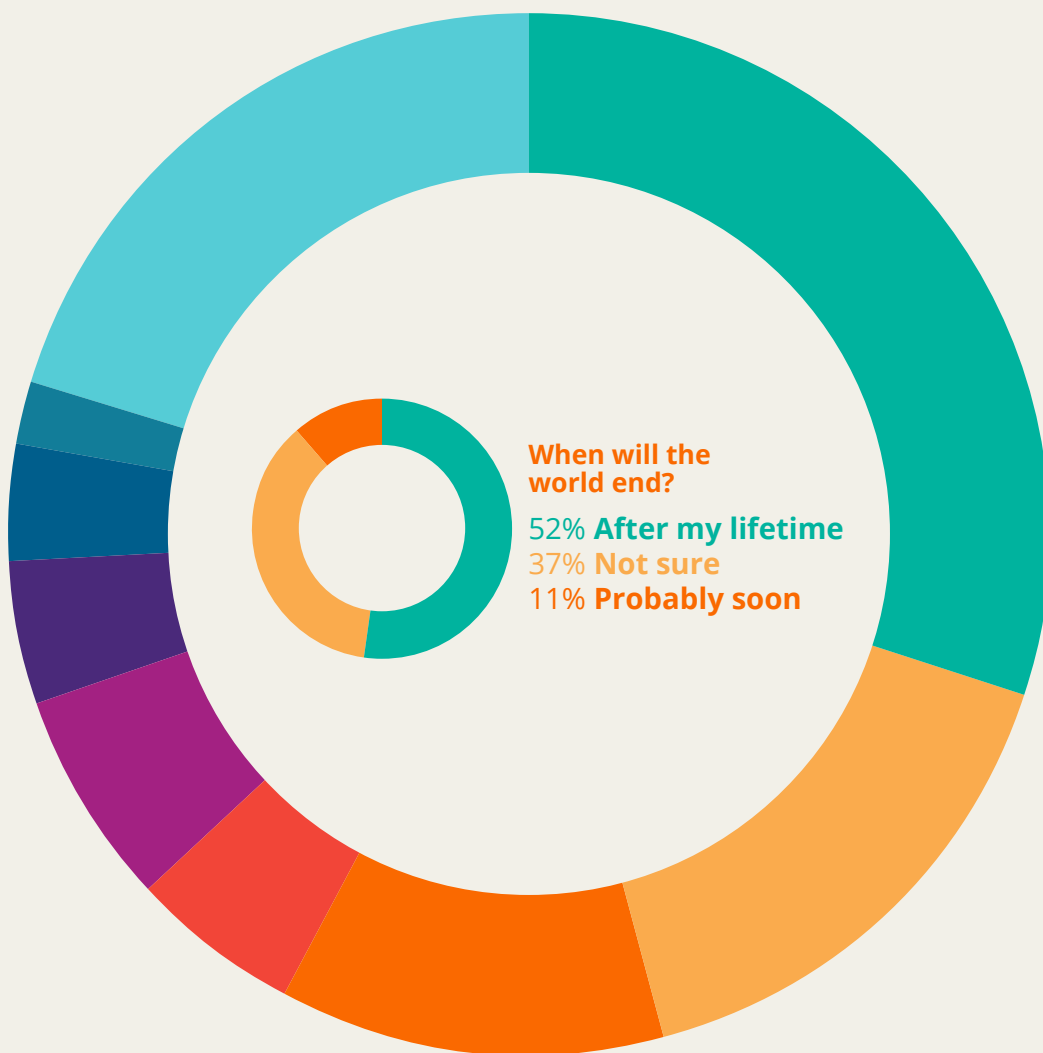
Where would you hide?

59% A rural area
17% The ocean
15% Shopping mall
9% Basement



Were the Mayans right?

71% No
14% Not sure
6% Yes
9% We'll find out



How would you spend your last day?



**"Sing,
pray, drink
wine with
friends."**
— Daniel Ryan

What's the most important item in your safety bunker?



"My fists."
— Keelan O'Leary

SURVIVING DEATH

*Story by Lindsey Treffry
Photo by Amrah Canul*

■ Everybody dies.

"Death sucks no matter what," University of Idaho student Britnee Packwood said. "Death is the worst thing that is on this planet."

Packwood knows death up close. She has since May 16, 2011.

"My dad was 61 when he passed away," she said. "We knew we were gonna lose him earlier than a lot of other kids."

Packwood was in eighth grade the first time her dad went to the hospital for a heart attack. Doctors estimated he had two years to live. The attack was followed by years of heart complications, more heart attacks and congestive heart failure. Her dad even had an attack in the left anterior descending artery, known as the Widow Maker.

Sharon Fritz, a licensed psychologist and professor, works at the UI Counseling Center and helps students deal with grief.

"At my age, you're expecting to see friends sick and grandparents dying," Fritz said. "You don't expect it in the 18 to 25 group range, but I see it a lot. In my caseload, at least half a dozen a semester."

Nationally, personal experience facing death is not uncommon among young people. According to National College Health Assessment surveys gathered in Fall 2011, 15.5 percent of students had experienced the death of a family member or friend. At UI, 15.8 percent of students have experienced the same.

In spring 2011, Packwood's parents took a trip to Houston. One day, her dad wasn't feeling well and called her from the hotel.

"I had probably had the weirdest conversation I had ever had with my father," Packwood said.

Out of nowhere, he asked what she was going to do if they weren't on the same "time zone clock" anymore.

"Who are we going to call all the time? ... No matter who you are, where you are or what you're doing, I'm always going to be with you," he told her.

She didn't think much of it.

"I thought he was doing his whole Dad thing," Packwood said. "When they got back from Lewiston the next day, I called my mom to ask if their flight went OK. I heard him in the background. He said, 'No I talked to her yesterday. Just make sure she knows I love her.'"

It was only a couple of hours later that her parents were in an ambulance to the hospital — for the last time. Packwood and her sister later followed.

"We said goodbye, kissed our dad and left," she said.

Soon after, he passed.

The sisters had last heard that their dad was feeling better. Packwood's mom returned home to bring them the news.

"We all come in the living room. And all she can say is 'He's gone,'" Packwood said. "She is blubbering. My sister starts screaming and bawling her eyes out. And I'm standing there holding a grown woman and a junior in high school in my arms and having them cry on my shoulder. I'm emotionless. I don't know what to do. I'm more concerned with them instead of myself at the time."

Fritz said the grieving process is complicated when a person knows they are dying and the end comes suddenly.

"People deal with it different ways when it comes," Fritz said. "When it is sudden, they either didn't have a chance to prepare for it or understand it. (It's a sense of) lack of preparedness."

In cases like Packwood's, Fritz said the stages of grief are dragged out more.

"There is a sense of shock," Fritz said. "It may take a longer time (to grieve). The peaks and valleys are more intense ... more ebbs and flows."

Packwood said knowing he would die soon was worse.

G



UI student Britnee Packwood holds a photo cut from her father's obituary. He died May 16, 2011.

The weirdest thing
for me was he was
near his chair. I
thought, 'So this is
what's left — a tiny
little box of ashes.'

— *Britnee Packwood*

"To lose someone suddenly is awful. It's terrible," Packwood said. "But to have to see somebody in a prolonged state of deterioration and just losing it, I think it's worse. A little piece of your soul gets eaten away, knowing there is nothing you can do."

She helped her mom make phone calls to family members, and the next morning departed for a UI Conservation Social Sciences field studies trip.

In the Mammoth area of Yellowstone National Park, Packwood spotted a moose.

"I just sat on a rock next to it," she said. "... I looked up and I was like, 'OK, I'm gonna be OK. Things are gonna be fine.' Maybe that was my moment of acceptance."

The trip ended, she returned home and helped her mom with funeral home planning, transferring the body and figuring out funeral expenses.

"The weirdest thing for me was he was near his chair," she said. "But he was in a really tiny box next to his chair. I thought, 'So this is what's left — a tiny little box of ashes.'"

Those ashes, later sealed in a vault, were surrounded by heirlooms that Packwood and her sister placed inside.

"There was a little wooden box in a bag and the bag wasn't closed all the way," she said. "I'm like putting stuff in there. I move the bag, and it's closed but it wasn't closed (all the way). I was like, 'I have my father on my hands.' I laughed. It was the first time I had truly laughed in such a long time ... My sister and I were gut rolling."

Packwood said returning to UI solidified her belief that her dad wanted the family to keep living.

"That was really when I accepted what it was for what it was," she said.

They buried him in a family plot in Montana, where Packwood was raised and where her parents met.

"And if there is a cool part to this, I'm pretty certain about this — at the exact time (of my dad's death), the chime went off that a baby was born," Packwood said. "My mom said 'I didn't have the heart to go down there, but if it's a boy — oofh, those parents are going to need some help.'"

Packwood said the death of her father has opened her eyes and pushed her to live more.

"Don't forget that there is always someone who has a shoulder," she said. "Don't forget that you need to do what you need to do for yourself and don't forget to live. If you have to take a month to just let it all out, go for it. But go back to work. Go back to school. Go back to having girls' night. Whatever it is. Normalcy, at first, (will) feel weird but it'll get better."

Fritz agreed.

"We tell our students to solicit support," she said. "Death makes you depressed and you want to pull away. But you have to tell your friends, 'I need you to call me, I need you to take me out.'"

Packwood said there isn't an easy way to deal with death.

"It's death. It happens," she said. "You can't revel in it and you can't live in it ... you can't stay there forever. You gotta move on." ■

TIPPING THE SCALES

The University of Idaho after people

*Column and Illustration by Ethan Kimberling
Photography by Philip Vukelich*

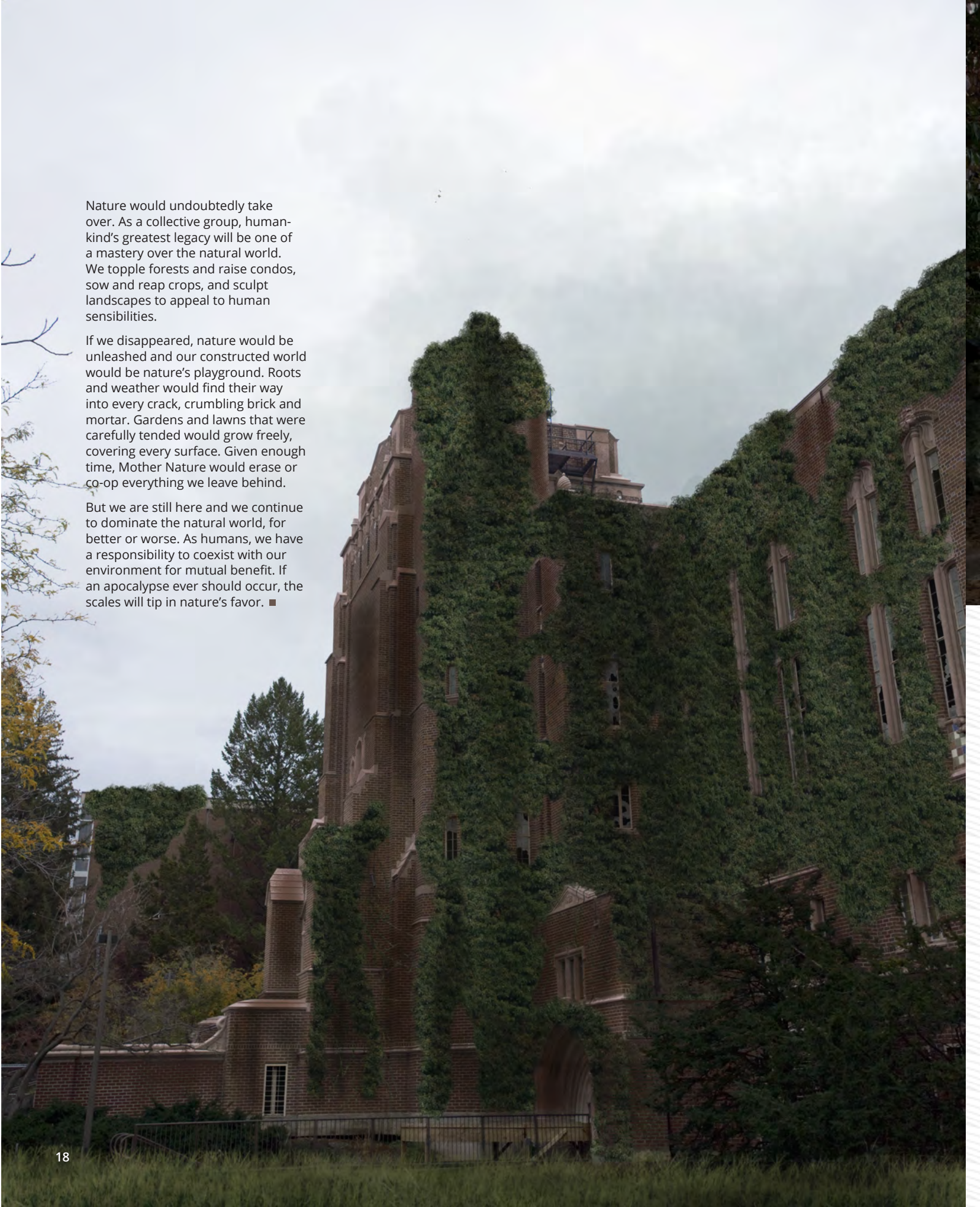
■ It isn't difficult to notice how much we shape our environments. You would be hard pressed to find a part of the world completely unspoiled by human hands. As the creators of our environments we also have the responsibility to take care of our world. Nature relentlessly wears away at the structures that we attempt to keep out of a state of disrepair.

So what would happen to humanity's creations if we just disappeared?

Nature would undoubtedly take over. As a collective group, human-kind's greatest legacy will be one of a mastery over the natural world. We topple forests and raise condos, sow and reap crops, and sculpt landscapes to appeal to human sensibilities.

If we disappeared, nature would be unleashed and our constructed world would be nature's playground. Roots and weather would find their way into every crack, crumbling brick and mortar. Gardens and lawns that were carefully tended would grow freely, covering every surface. Given enough time, Mother Nature would erase or co-op everything we leave behind.

But we are still here and we continue to dominate the natural world, for better or worse. As humans, we have a responsibility to coexist with our environment for mutual benefit. If an apocalypse ever should occur, the scales will tip in nature's favor. ■





Check out before-and-after shots as well as a time-lapse video of the Administration Building decaying at blot.uidaho.edu

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Read student opinions about the apocalypse... and what they'll be doing until then.



A culture swarmed by the undead

Story by Elisa Eiguren,
Illustration by Ethan Kimberling

■ Maybe it's a virus, or nuclear radiation. Whatever it is has infected everyone you know — strangers, friends, loved ones.

As you flee from the lifeless beings who mercilessly hunt human prey, you seek refuge in an abandoned building, slamming the door just in time. Sliding to the floor, chest heaving and heart pounding, you realize all hope is lost and eventually you will succumb to the hoard.

But the pounding and moaning of the monsters outside may exist solely in your imagination and the collective conscious of modern culture.

Societies create monsters as psychological symbols of personal or cultural fears. Frankenstein warned against the dangers of contradicting nature, while vampires embody the romance of immortality and our fear of death. But the monster that has become culturally prevalent today is the zombie, Matthew Wappett said.

Wappett, University of Idaho assistant professor with the Center on Disabilities and Human Development, said he views zombies as metaphorical representations of fear rather than tangible monsters.

"We have this need to confront and to question our fears and so we put it in the body of monsters," he said.

Wappett, who taught the CORE Discovery course "The Monsters We Make," said he initially ignored zombies in the course because he thought they were "too lame and too popular." Eventually he realized werewolves and vampires are no longer scary because they don't capture the anxiety of our time.

"Zombies really are our unique 20th Century cultural monsters," Wappett said.

If zombies have an origin, Wappett said it lies in the Caribbean, where witch doctors and voodoo priests in Haiti created "mindless slaves" through practices such as concocting potions. But the image and idea of the modern zombie first emerged in George Romero's "Night of the Living Dead" in 1968.

"It was a ground-breaking horror movie that showed the first pop culture rendition of zombies," he said.

Although zombies vary in their grotesque appearances, they are all mindless — a characteristic Wappett said can be attributed to the Cold War era and Americans' fear of Soviet control.

"We became afraid of mind control," he said. "The creation of zombies is a critique of Soviet propaganda. Americans consider themselves these independent cowboys and we were afraid that if we stopped thinking critically we would become mindless too."

Soviet control is no longer an overriding cultural fear, but since 2000 the threat of a global plague has haunted Americans, Wappett said. Zombies represent the evolution of societal fears as several horror or doomsday films center on the spread of a "super bug." Wappett said zombie movies filmed at shopping malls offer commentary on consumerism and how people mindlessly conform to materialistic culture.

"We have these fears — this deeply-rooted boogeyman — in our culture and the question is, how do we contain it? So we put it in the body of monsters," Wappett said.

Wappett said he encouraged "The Monsters We Make" students to analyze the concept of evil and understand why cultures create monsters. Another UI instructor uses monsters as a learning tool.

Bill Smith, director of the Martin Institute and Programs in International Studies, said his experience with zombies started at the Spokane International Airport. Smith said he had been searching for a way to attract students from various majors to his global politics classes, and as he sat in the airport reading "World War Z" by Max Brooks he found the answer — the zombie apocalypse.

"The zombie apocalypse is a hook that draws people in," Smith said. "We had a wide range of folks ... textile and design majors, engineering majors."

Smith's Zombie Apocalypse and International Issues course covered potential local, societal and global impacts of a devastating event, such as a zombie apocalypse. Through examining the effect of an international disaster, Smith said students

"We became afraid of mind control. The creation of zombies is a critique of Soviet propaganda."

— Matthew Wappett



"As a culture, we hide our dead ... we fear death. But zombies are an in-your-face reminder of our mortality."

— *Matthew Wappett*

learned about the United Nations, international policy relations and how the globe would cooperate in the midst of catastrophe.

Smith said students evaluated the zombie apocalypse through the lens of their majors. A geography student created a project about the most defensible locations around the world, while a forensic science student determined how long someone would have to survive before the zombies deteriorated because their cells no longer regenerate, Smith said.

"It connected people in disparate fields," he said. "They looked at real world examples of how we overcome global issues."

Throughout his childhood, Smith said the end of the world was a reality as the threat

of a nuclear attack was part of the culture. Just as techniques and training such as "duck and cover" were supposed to ensure survival in the nuclear era, various strategies

exist to survive a zombie apocalypse. The appeal of the zombie apocalypse in our culture is the chance of survival, Smith said.

"The zombie apocalypse is interesting, but it's predictable,"

— *Bill Smith*

Smith said. "It's a challenge, but the idea behind it is you can survive ... If you are clever and creative enough, you can survive."

Wappett said surviving the zombie apocalypse appeals to our Darwinian instincts. It's one thing to kill the monster, but another entirely to kill the fear that inspired its creation.

"As a culture, we hide our dead ... we fear death," he said. "But zombies are an in-your-face reminder of our mortality."

In spite of the metaphorical representations of monsters, Wappett said the zombie apocalypse is horrifying partially because it's plausible.

Illnesses such as Mad Cow disease and various forms of dementia have zombie-like effects, Wappett said. A rise in antibiotic-resistant bacteria could lead to a pandemic of a disease that mimics the zombie apocalypse. But the reality, Wappett said, is monsters and zombies don't exist.

"It becomes subject to our rationality," he said. "They are real fears, real questions — but not real monsters."

Human fascination with monsters requires suspension of reality. Society needs these creatures to contain its fears. So the zombie apocalypse lives on within the realm of possibility. ■

WHAT'S YOUR #YOLO?

Story by Victoria Hart, Photos by Hayden Crosby

■ Yes, it's out of date. Roll your eyes. Even middle schoolers mock the once-popular hashtag popularized by rappers Drake and Rick Ross during spring 2012.

YOLO, an acronym for "you only live once," is the most recent face of "seize the day" diatribes. The hashtag has been used to justify questionable decisions, spontaneous action and self-indulgent (or harmful) habits.

If the end of the world really is around the corner, though, YOLO might be more relevant than ever. And even if it isn't, each of us only has a handful of decades left to seize the day or live it up or do whatever it is you do to make the most of the moment.

So sing loudly or go on a roadtrip or wear an unusual hat. Or take a suggestion from one of the University of Idaho students who told us about their #YOLO. ■



Andrew Rinehart

"Crazy costumes all the time #YOLO"

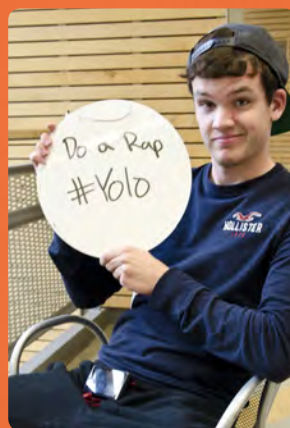
— Alyssa Petersen



David Barker

"I reheat spaghetti #YOLO"

— Nicholas Muller



Kyle Clark

"Dance like a weirdo #YOLO"

— Kaylen Meredith

"Teach swing dance #YOLO"

— David Duarte



Eliza Campbell

"I (heart) raves! #YOLO"

— Katelyn Taylor

"Sleep for six hours a night #YOLO"

— Delfino Osorio Garcia



Allison Hill

"Always cooking and eating interesting foods #YOLO"

— Emeth Thompson

For more photos and interviews, check out uiblot.com or facebook.com/uiblot.



Silvia Estrada

"Don't shave my armpits #YOLO"

— Courtney Miller



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