

DECEMBER 2020

BLAT MAGAZINE



The final stretch

Trump and Biden give one last campaign push

By JONATHAN LEMIRE, ZEKE MILLER, WILL WEISSERT and ALEXANDRA JAFFE OF THE ASSOCIATED PRESS



LEFT: President Donald Trump and Vice President Mike Pence arrive for a campaign rally at Cherry Capital Airport on Monday in Traverse City, Mich. RIGHT: Democratic presidential candidate former Vice President Joe Biden speaks during a drive-in campaign rally at Lexington Technology Park on Monday in Pittsburgh.

PITTSBURGH — In the closing hours of a campaign shadowed by a once-in-a-century pandemic, President Donald Trump charged across the nation Monday delivering an incendiary but unsupported allegation that the election is rigged, while Democratic chal-

lenger Joe Biden pushed to claim states once seen as safely Republican. America stood at a crossroads. Never before in modern history have voters faced a choice between candidates offering such opposite visions as the nation confronts

breath
Citizens question if their votes will count, worry over outcome

By CLAIRE GALOFARO OF THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

WARREN, Mich. — She could have dropped her ballot at the post office, but she wasn't sure if she should trust the mail. She considered slipping it into the secured box outside City Hall, but what if something happened? A fire maybe. This year has delivered so many shocks that anything seemed possible. So 58-year-old Diane Spiteri trudged up three flights of

> See VOTERS, Page 5A

STAYING PUT



Big hike in COVID-19 cases in no central Id

Health district reported 165 new virus cases including 77 in County; Lewis and Clark add 38 new p

BY KATHY OF THE



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EDITOR'S NOTE

Readers,

I share with you all the mixed feelings that this semester, this year, has brought.

I too have missed the big and small moments that campus life used to bring — smiling at strangers as you pass them on busy campus sidewalks, grabbing a seat next to a friend in a crowded lecture hall, even small talks shared with classmates on upcoming due dates. These small moments, visions of a pre-pandemic campus life.

It's easy to look back at these lost moments and feel doomed, to feel like this might, quite possibly, be the worst year ever — I know I have. But not all has been lost. There remain ways that we have made it through the year, made it through a time unlike any other.

Some students have sought out online platforms to make connections. Some, who graduated in the darkest of times, have managed to find jobs — even if they weren't the jobs they originally had hoped for. And some have found new passions such as sustainable shopping.

In our centerpiece, we look at the ways this year itself has been particularly tough, and whether it has really been "the worst year ever," as it has been so commonly dubbed.

In this issue, we highlight the ways students have coped with the year, continued with positive attitudes through the darkest of times and the places and spaces in Moscow which have been missed (even the haunted ones).

This issue focuses on the creative and innovative ways we have made it through one of the darkest years — highlighting the bright spots along the way.

For my second and last issue of Blot, highlighting these ways that we carry on through tough times makes even my outlook on the future a little more positive.

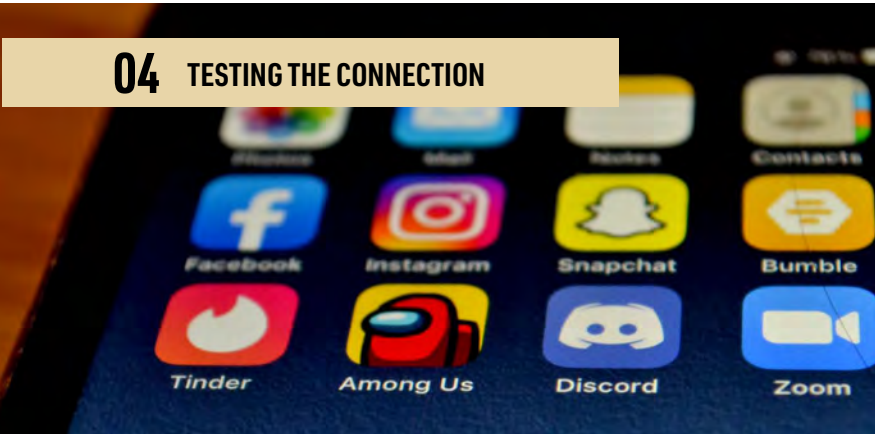
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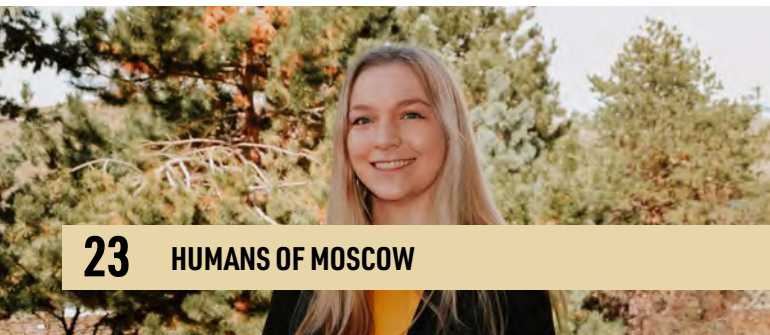
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TESTING THE CONNECTION

WITH LIMITED OPTIONS, STUDENTS TURN TO VIRTUAL CHATROOMS AND TECHNOLOGIES TO MAKE CONNECTIONS

Story By
Photos By
Design By

*Brianna Finnegan
Brianna Finnegan & Courtesy
Danielle Hawkins*

I sit on my bed, my laptop laying in front of me while I sip a cup of tea. I'm wearing my pajamas, watching as my family members try to stack cups as quickly as they can. My uncle in Idaho competes with my cousins in Utah. My cousins in California show off their skills as my aunt in Texas watches on her living room couch.

My family is spread out across the country, and while Finnegan family game night is a very important tradition we hold close to our hearts, we typically only get to do it when we're all together for the holidays. Now, using Zoom, we meet every month.

COVID-19 has caused a lot of big changes in 2020, but in ways it has also brought people together. With technology more available and commonplace, many individuals are using it to connect with the people in their lives as well as meet new ones. Whether it's connecting family and friends through games or starting new relationships through dating apps, technology has had a lasting impact on the world we live in today.

GAMING CONNECTIONS

Lauren Jackson, a student at the University of Idaho, sits at the desk in her dorm room. The cold, white brick walls surround her as she argues into the microphone of her headset.





LAUREN JACKSON TAKES PHOTOS TO CREATE A 3D MODEL THROUGH A PROCESS CALLED PHOTOGRAMMETRY DURING AN EVENT. | LAUREN JACKSON

On the screen in front of her, a collection of colorful jellybean-looking characters are listed out by name, with a clock counting down the time they have to vote. Despite her argument, the group votes for her character Peach as the impostor and she is thrown off the ship.

Using apps such as Discord, Jackson is able to use video games as a way of connecting with other people. Two to three times a week she plays a variety of games, including "Among Us," with her brother and a group of his high school friends.

"We'll hop on Discord, we'll hop on the voice chat and just kind of hang out for a few hours," Jackson said. "(We) just try to get together so that way we don't feel so alone when we're so far apart."

Video games do not just give Jackson the ability to connect with her friends, but to make new friends. Over Discord, Jackson is added to groups comprised of her friends and her friends' friends. When someone wants to play a game, they ping everyone on the channel, and those who want to join enter the game server.

"It's quite nice to actually play with some new people," Jackson said. "It's quite refreshing because it's always people that I have certain things in common with."

The interactions she has through video games have given Jackson a chance to connect with other people in ways that are difficult to find during the pandemic. Outside of Discord, Jackson doesn't have a lot of opportunities to meet people or

TOP LEFT: LAUREN JACKSON SITS PERCHED AT HER DORM ROOM DESK WHERE SHE EXPERIENCES MOST OF HER CONNECTIONS DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC.

| LAUREN JACKSON

TOP RIGHT: SAVANNAH CALL AND HER BOYFRIEND MCKENZY BOGDEN MET THROUGH TINDER DUE TO LIMITED IN-PERSON EVENTS. | SAVANNAH CALL

interact with them.

"It's a little lonely living in a room by myself with like five plants," Jackson said. "(Playing together) makes those connections just slightly easier in just being a little bit better to be able to talk to anybody."

CRUSHES, COVID AND COMFORT ZONES

Nicole Moon also uses technology to meet new people. After starting college, Moon downloaded Tinder and Bumble as a way to put herself out there.

"I guess the way I started out was just to see if there's any way I can make friends," Moon said.

Before college, she had never heard of the apps. At first, she was wary of using them. She was concerned the conversations she started online might not be the same in person.

"After meeting someone... I felt more comfortable on the app," Moon said. "So, I would start swiping right more often."



NICOLE MOON USES DATING APPS TO PUT HERSELF OUT IN THE DATING WORLD AMID THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC. | NICOLE MOON

Savannah Call has used Tinder to arrange dates as well, but found herself often deleting the app. She downloaded the app again earlier this year after a break-up. For months, Call messaged people on the app but never really met anyone.

"I always deleted it because I just felt like everyone just wanted sex, or it was just hooking up and it was not a real connection," Call said. "It's just not really worth it."

Call said last year she didn't really want to use dating apps because there were other options. She used to meet people at social events or classes, but this year there was no way to do that. So, she turned to apps like Tinder.

"It definitely is possible to make connections," Call said. "I actually found my boyfriend two weeks ago on Tinder. So, it is possible."

The use of dating apps during a pandemic comes with its own set of unique challenges. While it's nice to connect with people and meet new people, meeting someone for a date can come with risks.

Both Call and her boyfriend McKenzie Bogden said it's important to do what you can to stay safe when meeting someone from dating apps, this includes making sure to consider COVID-19 when meeting someone.

"That's how I initially got COVID," Bogden said. "I got COVID from some girl at WSU and we just hung out."

Some people make sure their dates get tested for COVID-19 before meeting them or decide to meet over Zoom or FaceTime instead. Bogden said you don't always know how cautious someone has been about social distancing before meeting them.

Several dating apps have options for safer dating practices during the pandemic. Tinder has provided a new video chat option when messaging people, and Bumble has provided a section for users to share what kind of dates they are comfortable going on. Options range from socially distanced dates to masked dates and Zoom dates.

As the pandemic continues, Bogden said he has noticed more people using social media and dating apps to connect to others in positive ways.

"It's nice to be able to gravitate toward somebody and have a connection with somebody that's new, especially in a pandemic," Bogden said. "There's still happiness and people can still be happy during this time even though it can seem like the world is coming to an end."





MISSING MOSCOW

MANY STUDENTS WILL HEAD HOME FOR MONTHS BEFORE RETURNING — HERE'S WHAT THEY'LL MISS

Story By
Photos By
Design By

Angela Palermo
Angela Palermo
Danielle Hawkins

As the University of Idaho transitions entirely to remote instruction after fall break, officials recommend students stay home until spring 2021.

While the campus will remain open, many will be traveling to visit family and friends, far away from their beloved campus.

We spoke with students, faculty and staff at UI about what'll they'll miss when they head home for online learning. From the Arboretum to the classrooms, here's what they told us.

Sara Timberlake walks along the path where a few weeks earlier she saw a moose. The University of Idaho Arboretum & Botanical Garden is no stranger to various forms of wildlife, which is what Timberlake says she loves about it.

A frequent visitor of the Arboretum, Timberlake says it's one of the things she'll miss the most when heading home at fall break for the remainder of the semester. With only a few credits to complete before graduation, she'll take her remaining classes online and live at home for the spring semester.

"I love the stillness and consistency the Arboretum offers," Timberlake said. "No matter what season, it really takes me out of the crazy world we live in. Whenever I need a break, I head here."





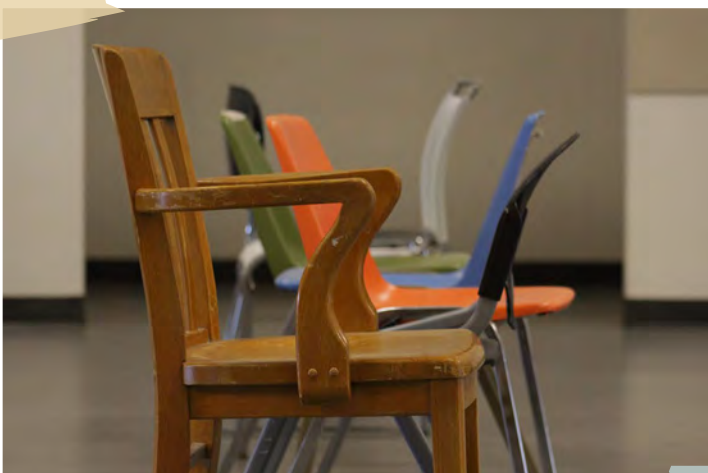
Hala Barakat, an assistant professor in the College of Art & Architecture, says the rows of empty desks in the once-bustling studios are a consequence of hybrid learning.

As the university prepares to transition to remote learning, it's unclear how the move will affect students' hands-on learning experience. The younger students who hadn't experienced the studio before the pandemic have been struggling, Barakat said. She's also noticed a lack of motivation.

"It's hard to keep them engaged," Barakat said. "When the students are in the studio, they can touch and feel things and they normally feed off each other. There's been unique challenges this semester in getting the new students comfortable."

As Barakat walks through the nearly empty studio space, she brushes her fingers over a series of empty lockers. Lamenting the quietness of what was once a lively room, she moves throughout the space. In a typical year, free of a fast-spreading respiratory illness, Barakat said there are at least 60 students in the space at any given time. On this day, however, there were two.

"It's really depressing," Barakat said.



ASUI Senate Pro-Tempore Aaron Bharucha* gets much of his work done in the Department of Student Involvement, a spacious room located on the third floor of the Idaho Student Union Building.

Lined with expansive south-facing windows, the space is well-lit and a popular study spot.

"What I like about this space is the people here," Bharucha said. "They're all here to do work."

Bharucha said the unique balance between people who use the area to work and those who use it to socialize is just right.

"It motivates me to conform to the environment and work hard, but it's also laid-back, which I appreciate," Bharucha said. "I respond to it well."

This semester, of course, things are different. Bharucha said what once was a room bustling with ASUI senators is now somewhat deserted.

"It's just those stupidly fun moments and their spontaneity," Bharucha said. "That doesn't happen now, which is really sad. Those are always the moments that stick out to me."

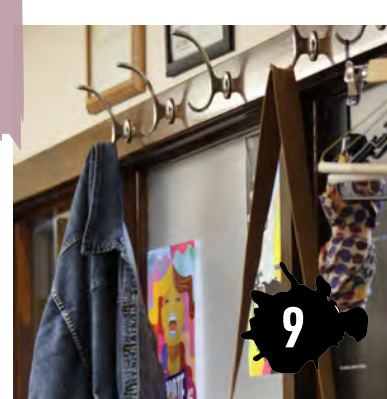


**One of the sources in this story is employed by UII Student Media. Aaron Bharucha is a columnist for The Argonaut.*



Office Assistant Pepe Maciel sits in an empty lounge at the University of Idaho Women's Center. The center, located on the ground floor of Memorial Gymnasium, has long been a sanctuary to students from various walks of life. It's seen fewer visitors due to the pandemic and is guaranteed to see less foot traffic once students head home for the holidays. However, many like Maciel still take advantage of its safe and inclusive environment.

"When it comes to spaces on campus that are welcoming, few come close to the Women's Center's spirit of inclusivity and equity," Maciel said. "This office is so special because of the dedicated staff that are equally passionate and empathetic. The staff are always willing to take the time to talk to students who need someone to talk to."



LOOKING TO THE PAST FOR FUTURE SUCCESS

RECENT 2020 GRADUATES REFLECT ON SEARCHING FOR JOBS DURING THE PANDEMIC

Story By
Photos By
Design By

*Hanna Jackovich
Dani Moore & Courtesy
Danielle Hawkins*

Children around the world grow up dreaming of flying to Neverland or meeting Flounder “under the sea.” As adults, the next best thing became the chance to work at a company surrounded by magic carpet rides and Wonderland. While vacationing at Walt Disney World can be the highlight of a year, employees are able to enjoy the magic year-round.

Katie Nolan, a UI advertising graduate, received news in February that she was accepted into the prestigious Disney College Program for fall 2020 in Orlando, Florida. Nolan had endured a rigorous application process with many interviews and assessments. She had been up against 50,000 applicants, knowing only one-fifth would make it.

Nolan had elected to spend the summer after graduating at home in Northern California to prepare for the 60-hour work weeks ahead. Her unemployment was intended to be a resting period following an exhausting four years of college.

When COVID-19 hit the United States, Nolan watched her future plans slip away.

“All summer long they had been updating us, saying ‘you will have a job, you will have a job,’ and then when it came down to it, they had to close the program two and a half weeks before my fly-out date to Florida,” Nolan said.

**BAILEY CARPENTER WORKS AT A COFFEE SHOP PART-TIME,
ENJOYING THE WORK OF BEING A BARISTA AND GREETING
CUSTOMERS EVERYDAY. | BAILEY CARPENTER**



JACOB LOCKHART (LEFT) SERVED AS ASUI PRESIDENT BEFORE GRADUATING. | THE ARGONAUT

As the pandemic led to a global hiring freeze in March 2020, post-graduate opportunities dried up for upcoming UI graduates. This market would only begin to reopen months later with an unfamiliar electronic face, requiring new job-seeking techniques and expectations for students hoping to enter the workforce.

In Nolan's case, employment that had been guaranteed before the pandemic was revoked as Disney cut jobs nationwide.

"I was really upset because I had always dreamed of working for Disney in some capacity for forever," Nolan said.

The Disney College Program closure left Nolan with a loss of direction.

"I felt like everything that I had worked to was stumbling out of reach," Nolan said.

Today, she has regained a positive outlook.

"I have a choice in what I want to do and that's how I take the power back," Nolan said.

Though she didn't have a choice in putting her Disney dreams on hold, she chose to pause her job search to process career priorities, taking a part-time social media internship and reaching out to connections for advice. Her steps made incremental progress towards her larger career goals.

Nolan's fellow recent graduates faced an

additional slew of complications ranging from bouts of unemployment to starting at a new company remotely.

Applying for jobs or internships can be exhausting and unrewarding. Yet Carol Hoffman, a UI graduate in operations management and marketing, refused to end up in a position she didn't enjoy in exchange for a stable job.

Hoffman learned this lesson during the summer of 2019 when she worked as a sales intern in Seattle.

"Being unsatisfied in that experience, I don't want to have that same application process where I'm being constantly disappointed then clinging to the first thing that shows any potential," Hoffman said.

Hoffman elected to be picky when it came to accepting a long-term position within her field. Yet she recognized the need to adopt a "take anything" attitude when offered a summer position at a local gift store in early June.

She knew she was overqualified for the position, but later realized the value of that customer service experience when she applied it to her business degree.

KATIE NOLAN ENJOYS THE BEAUTIFUL SCENERY CALIFORNIA HAS TO OFFER, ONE OF THE MANY PERKS OF LIVING WHERE SHE DOES. | KATIE NOLAN





ABOVE: JEN SMITH SITS INSIDE HER OFFICE ANSWERING EMAILS FROM STUDENTS. BELOW: CAROL HOFFMAN STANDS IN FRONT OF THE J.A. ALBERTSON BUILDING, FRESHLY GRADUATED AND READY FOR THE FUTURE. | CAROL HOFFMAN

The reality for many recent graduates became taking a position they are overqualified for.

Bailey Carpenter, a UI graduate in international studies and criminology, had been unemployed since March when she had to quit a job in Moscow to move home after campus shut down. She took a barista position at a Boise coffeehouse in June.

Carpenter enjoyed the lively and welcoming atmosphere behind an espresso machine in downtown Boise for half of the summer. She spent the remaining month relaxing on a beach in San Diego when a close friend offered an opportunity for free housing with an ocean breeze.

Following four years of working alongside classes, Carpenter felt a break was required. On top of that, the pandemic lowered the spirits of recent graduates that had lost the typical senior year experience.

Former ASUI President and fellow graduate Jacob Lockhart spent his summer by the water as well. On Lake Coeur d'Alene, Lockhart spent time with friends and family while his job search went on in the background.

Eventually, vacation came to an end. Recent graduates began prioritizing their professional goals. Returning to Nampa, Idaho, at the end of August, Carpenter faced another period of unemployment. Then, on Oct. 14, a friend's referral landed her a job — not her dream job, but at a company she was thrilled to be a part of.

Her new position as customer experience representative at a children's toy company was the perfect end to her job search. Carpenter had enjoyed a relaxing summer that culminated into a position at a company that aligned with her values.

Despite finding a combination of personal and professional success following the pandemic, uncertainty loomed.

In August, Lockhart moved to Boise for a receptionist position at a law firm. If asked one year ago, he would have been surprised that he hadn't gone directly to law school. But he needed a break from college for a while, something he'd decided even before the pandemic hit.

The process of working his way up the ladder slowly was a shock to the mindset of instant achievement our generation has grown up with, Lockhart said.

"This is something I find myself thinking about fairly often, we put a lot of pressure on ourselves at this age," Lockhart said.

At the law firm, Lockhart said he is on the path to becoming a lawyer while allowing himself to enjoy a work-life balance. For upcoming graduates, he recommends a similar approach. By taking your time, Lockhart assures that doing so will grant future insight, without missing out on soaking up life's experiences.

In a situation as unique as a global pandemic, traditional mentors such as parents or professors may not have the most relevant advice for upcoming graduates seeking guidance on their future. Thus, 2020 graduates themselves are an important resource as people with hands-on experience searching for a job during a pandemic.

Jen Smith, a career advising liaison for the UI College of Business and Economics and the College of Art and Architecture, highlights the tips and tricks that she has found among recent graduates that find themselves in situations like Nolan, Hoffman, Carpenter and Lockhart.

Greater flexibility is paramount when your

first choice is no longer an option, according to Smith.

"I'm seeing a few more grads taking internships than you normally would," Smith said.

Managing your expectations upon graduating can be valuable in an environment with fewer post-graduate opportunities. Smaller steps towards a dream job can become a realistic compromise.

While recent graduates were shocked by the pandemic, current students still have time to prepare, Smith said.

Many organizations are also more prepared now than they were at the start of the pandemic, offering a variety of remote job options for students. Smith said these remote options are incredibly important to Idaho students, widening the scope of jobs available.

However, beginning a position remotely brings on obstacles of its own and Smith suggested students and alumni in this situation attempt to retain the same mindset that would be upheld in an office setting. Smith suggested setting up weekly calls with supervisors, planning virtual coworker events and asking plenty of questions.

For upcoming graduates, there is a daunting task ahead.

"It only takes one yes," Smith said.

Thus far, 2020 graduates have found small and large professional victories following graduation, providing a hopeful outlook. Additionally, Smith has found that most alumni who graduated in 2008 endured a similar downturn but are working in their desired field today.

By looking to the past for answers, UI students will find road maps to achievement in their futures.



'HISTORY DOESN'T REPEAT ITSELF, BUT IT DOES RHYME'

FROM HISTORIANS, PSYCHOLOGISTS AND PROFESSORS, WE EXPLORE THE QUESTION 'IS THIS YEAR THE WORST YEAR?'

It's mid-afternoon on Halloween and somebody in a Yoshi costume is running down Paradise Creek Street. They hurry through a line of tents spread all the way down the road until they find the one they're stationed at. A car pulls up just as they do. Yoshi and other University of Idaho students in costume toss handfuls of candy through the rolled-down backseat window into a kid's candy basket until the car slowly makes its way to the next tent where they receive the same treatment.

This was the 42nd annual Tower Trick-or-Treat, an opportunity for Moscow children usually held in the halls of Theophilus Tower. Due to COVID-19, this year's event had to take on a different form.

"We're trying to make it fun and COVID-friendly," volunteer Riel Rognon said, dressed as what she called "a spooky Harley Quinn."

"We're wearing gloves, wearing masks, being safe and still trying to celebrate Halloween," Rognon said.

Much like this year's Tower Trick-or-Treat, the year 2020 feels like a drastic change to years preceding it. While some of the changes this year may have been unwelcome, it's hard to say it was completely unanticipated. It almost feels like the climax of a movie — where all the issues that have been slowly picking up speed finally catch up.

This year has seen the emergence of a global pandemic, a heated presidential election, political and social unrest, natural disasters and other all-too-familiar headlines.

Story By | *Abby Fackler*
Photos By | *Nataly Davies*
Design By | *Taylor Lund*

Because of this, there seems to be a universal feeling of dread — or at least uneasiness — that comes with 2020, like a cloud looming over everyone's heads. This year can sometimes feel like the worst year ever. But just because this year has been strange, scary and overwhelming, does that make it the worst?

Some students, like Rognon, don't think so.

"This year is a challenge," Rognon said. "We always persevere through things, so it's just kind of a test of what we're good at and what we're made of. This is just a time to make things a little more creative."

Another UI student, AJ Fahey, agrees. He's on his way out of the gym — something he's thankful for when everything else seems to be closed.

"It's definitely difficult, but I don't think it's the absolute worst," Fahey said. "You're still able to go out to the gym and go out and do shopping. Classes can get somewhat difficult with Zoom, but overall, it's not too bad."

Other students, however, lack Rognon and Fahey's optimism.

"For me, at least, this is the worst year in my lifetime," UI freshman Kylee Gahley said, reflecting on experiences she missed out on during her senior year of high school.

Offering a perspective with a bit more experience, UI Writing Center tutor Esther David* disagrees.

"I don't think it's the worst year, but I can see right now it's probably one of the worst years for a lot of people during their lifetimes," David said.

Many people can agree that 2020 is bad, or at least challenging, but it seems that the struggle lies with gauging how bad it actually is in the grand scheme of things.

VOLUNTEERS KEEP THE HALLOWEEN SPIRIT ALIVE AT THE DRIVE-THRU TRICK-OR-TREAT EVENT.



We've witnessed hundreds of thousands of deaths caused by COVID-19, but is that the most we've ever seen in a year?

We're so polarized that some of us lose friends and disown family members over their beliefs, but is this the most divided we've ever been?

Even if the answers to these questions were yes, how heavily would they dictate 2020's proverbial "badness?" In order to judge this year fairly, we must look at history, society and psychology to better understand 2020 in context.

HISTORY AND 2020

Retired UI history professor Katherine Aiken grew up in the 1950s when polio, a paralytic virus that disproportionately impacted children, was a big threat in the United States.

"People were just really afraid about their children and what would happen," Aiken said. "Lots of parents around the United States allowed their children to be part of polio vaccine trials. Now we worry about adults being part of trials, but this was mostly a lot of schoolchildren."

Looking back in modern American history, it isn't too difficult to find years and instances — like the mid-1950s and the fear of polio — that square up to 2020. Among those, Aiken points out the years 1919 and 1968.

"Both 1919 and 1968 are certainly equally as bad, and I would say probably worse," Aiken said. "Those were horrible years, and there were a lot more horrible things in those years, I think, than in this year."

From 1918 to 1919, as we've been reminded of this year, the United States and the rest of the world were at the mercy of another global pandemic: the H1N1 flu, also known as the Spanish flu. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, an estimated 500 million people were infected worldwide while 50 million were killed. The United States accounted for 675,000 of these deaths.

For comparison, COVID-19 has caused over 1.2 million deaths worldwide, over 235,000 of those being Americans, according to The New York Times.

Just as worldwide pandemics can be found in history, so can divisions and political tensions. In 1919, there were plenty of both.

World War I led some Americans in 1919 to embrace strong nationalistic and anti-immigrant sympathies, and the Russian Revolution just heightened the animosity. Americans during this time feared Russian and Eastern European immigrants because they thought they were going to try and overthrow the United States government.

"So, there's a horrible pandemic, there's this huge Red Scare where there are raids on people and people are worried about Bolsheviks," Aiken said. "There's huge race riots a lot more serious than Black Lives Matter in terms of numbers and deaths, and there's a big economic downturn in 1919."

In 1968, following the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr., a series of riots and protests took place in cities across the country, according to Aiken. Some protests remained peaceful while others escalated to violence, resulting in looting, fires and death. The Vietnam War also sparked massive protests nationally, some of which also resulted in violence and death.

"1968 is when the Tet Offensive — which is kind of the dividing point in the Vietnam War — and that war was raging, and of course people were objecting to that," Aiken said. "Martin Luther King was assassinated, and Bobby Kennedy was assassinated, and there were race riots in 100 or more cities."

It's easy to spot similarities between this year and these other challenging years in history. We too have endured a pandemic, political protests that have resulted in bloodshed, along with overwhelming experiences with distrust and death. Despite this, Aiken is hesitant to say that history is repeating itself.

THE STUDENT RECREATION CENTER LOOKS MUCH DIFFERENT THIS YEAR WITH MASK REQUIREMENTS.



“THERE WERE A LOT MORE HORRIBLE THINGS IN THOSE YEARS, I THINK, THAN IN THIS YEAR.”



FAITH WARGO WALKS THROUGH THE THERMAL SCANNER AT THE IDAHO STUDENT UNION BUILDING.

It's our awareness of the global situation, Aiken believes, that most sets us apart from the past. Other than WWI veterans, most people in that time didn't have the opportunity to travel and be so aware of what was happening in the world. In 2020, this isn't the case. Through modern technology and social media, we can connect with anybody anywhere and know what's happening in just about every country across the globe.

"Certainly, there are themes you can see across time, but 2020 is very different from 1968 and 1919 in terms of the different kind of environment we find ourselves in," Aiken said. "I think it was Mark Twain that said, 'history doesn't repeat itself, but it does rhyme.'"

**"THIS NEW
DIRECTION,
WE DON'T
KNOW
WHERE THAT
LEADS YET."**

SOCIETY AND 2020

Steven Smith, a retired UI journalism professor, was a college freshman in 1968 and lived through some of the experiences Aiken described.

"By the end of 1968 I was refusing to stand for the national anthem, as many Vietnam protesters were," Smith said. "Looking back on it, it was a really grim year, and we weren't sure how it was all going to come out — which is the kind of uncertainty that we all feel with 2020."

Smith, a self-proclaimed optimist, finds himself feeling a little less so about these times.

"I'm almost as pessimistic for 2021 as I am for 2020," Smith said. "I don't think things suddenly, magically change in November; I think things are going to be rough for a long time."

Along with being a professor at UI, Smith has an extensive history as a journalist and editor. According to him, his pessimism for the future is in part due to our society's newfound distrust of the media, a far cry from what Smith experienced as journalist.

"I think the heart of the distinction between what's happening now and what's happened in 1968 — 2001 even, with the terrorist attack in New York and Washington, D.C. — is we had a very compressed media ecology," Smith said.

In 2001, there were three television networks and one cable network, as well as newspapers that were widely circulated and generally respected, Smith said.

"The language of news and information was shared across all of these platforms in a way that no matter what you believed in, you at least had the same basic understanding of what was happening in the world," Smith said. "That's all gone."

Now, there are countless TV and cable networks, many of which are trusted by some and not others or biased toward one political party or viewpoint over others. He said this makes it difficult for people to determine what is true. Social media also plays a large role in this, Smith said.

"Social media has created a system in the information universe, and the division between truth and fiction is no longer clear-cut," Smith said. "There's no longer a common vocabulary — we live in our own opinion and informational bubbles."

Social media allows us to follow the accounts we want to follow and, therefore, see the content we want to see. Many of us don't go out of our way to follow pages that post content that we disagree with. This makes it a lot easier to be caught in these "informational bubbles" where we aren't exposed to many counterpoints, Smith said.

Smith said this limits our ability to discuss opposing points of view intelligently.

"The inability to converse intelligently about what's happening in our world — whether it's a discrete event or these larger issues that divide our country — means that recovery from a bad year is less plausible, certainly in the short term," Smith said.

In the long run, however, Smith does think we will eventually recover from this year — but that recovery may look different than what we imagine.

When we think about "recovering" from this year, a lot of us think about things going back to the way they were last year. For Smith, that isn't what recovery looks like.

The concept of returning to normal after this year and the pandemic specifically is unlikely, Smith said. He believes this generation will still have happy and prosperous lives, this is just a minor obstacle.

"This is one of those right turns," Smith said. "9/11 was a right turn, '68 was a right turn — history is moving on a particular course and something happens and all of the sudden it turns right. And this new direction, we don't know where that leads yet."

**"WE WANT TO
FIGURE OUT
HOW TO FIX
THINGS AND
IMPLEMENT A
SOLUTION."**

PSYCHOLOGY AND 2020

This year has been difficult, and it's been a lot to process. Despite this, Jamie Derrick, a UI psychology professor, doesn't see it as bad.

"I have personally experienced this year as being a mixed year," Derrick said. "It's been unnerving, and it's been frightening, so those things are really bad. And simultaneously to that, it feels like the year has offered us some opportunity for some reassessment, which has been potentially good."

Along with being a professor at UI, Derrick is a practicing meditator and a mindfulness teacher. These practices have been helpful for her emotional and mental health, especially dealing with the bad aspects over the course of the last year.

"It's so easy to fall into despair or thinking about the worst-case scenario, losing hope about things ever getting better and not knowing how to handle all those difficult feelings, and I think mindfulness offers some practices that help with that," Derrick said.

Derrick said these are the types of feelings we're all feeling right now — nationally and globally — are some of the most difficult emotional experiences to handle.

Having to watch people die around the world with no clear knowledge of when there's going to be any resolution, along with the political and social tension that we've experienced in the United States, create a lot of uncertainty. Derrick said this is something the human mind can't stand.

"We want to figure out how to fix things and implement a solution," Derrick said. "And with this, the situation doesn't allow that because there's just really not a good solution available."

Along with the uncertainty of this year, another challenging aspect is how long these feelings have been able to latch themselves to the mind.

"How do you handle fear or loneliness or sadness for weeks?" Derrick said. "Most of us, when that happens in our 'normal lives,' we get some therapy or something, we get help."

The difference with this year that makes dealing with these emotions harder is in these circumstances, it's not as much trying to resolve these feelings as much as it is learning how to hold them, Derrick said.

Derrick said one way many people cope is by getting together with people, whether that be sharing a meal or just having a good time. In the midst of a pandemic, this type of coping has been limited.

THEOPHILUS TOWER RESIDENTS ALEXIA BAYER AND KIMBERLY NERI HAND OUT CANDY TO RESIDENTS DRIVING THROUGH THE ANNUAL TRICK-OR-TREAT EVENT.





WRITING CENTER TUTOR ESTHER DAVID HELPS STUDENTS THROUGH ONLINE MEETINGS.

People around the world are struggling with all of this — the uncertainty, difficult feelings and limited coping mechanisms — but Derrick said it's even more difficult for many Americans to work through this time.

Derrick said the cultural philosophies of some Eastern and African countries are community centered. Because of this, individual actions tend to be seen in terms of the consequences they could have on the community.

This isn't the case in the United States, where, Derrick said, we have a highly individualistic outlook on how we live our lives. We tend to act first in our own self-interest, which often plays a big role in our decision making.

Derrick thinks we're seeing this mentality come to fruition with the mask debate in the U.S., where some choose to wear masks for the potential benefits it could have on the community, while others choose not to wear them despite the impact not doing so could have.

"That just creates a rift in the culture, which is part of why, I think, it's contributed to people feeling ungrounded and uneasy," Derrick said.

Despite all of these feelings and experiences that are challenging and frustrating, Derrick has hope.

"None of this is permanent, it will change," Derrick said. "Eventually, I think it's going to change things positively."

She addressed the upheaval brought about by questions of racial and social justice this year, which she sees as an agent for eventual positive changes.

"Even though that's been frightening, it feels better than sweeping it underground," Derrick said. "I think that there's the potential for some really important healing and change in our culture."

In the meantime, she suggested we take it easy on ourselves, because being sad is normal.

"Human beings who have hearts that are alive and see the world the way it is right now can't help but feel sad," Derrick said. "If you didn't, you would be shut off from your own heart."

One of the best ways to find comfort right now, Derrick urged, is to stay grounded.

"Accept reality, don't spend so much time trying to change it," Derrick said. "Accept it and let it be. Then take care of yourself given that reality."

It's Halloween and the 42nd Tower Trick-or-Treat is still going strong. Riel Rognon tosses handfuls of candy to a smiling kid in the backseat of an idling car. For her, still being able to make these little connections is especially important this year.

"We're limited in the way that we can branch out to other people, but we have to find other ways to do that," Rognon said.

While she says she's hopeful for the future, she doesn't believe 2020's challenges are limited to 2020.

"I don't say the second the clock hits midnight on New Year's it's going to be better, because it's not," Rognon said. "But I think this is a period of time where we have to face all the bad stuff so we can figure out a way to make it through it anyway."

**One of the sources in this story is employed by UI Student Media. Esther David is a reporter for The Argonaut.*

FROM USED TO USEFUL

A LOOK INTO WHY MANY MOSCOW RESIDENTS HAVE TURNED TO SUSTAINABLE SHOPPING

Story By | *Monica Casas-Carrillo*
Photos By | *Ryan Abajero*
Design By | *Taylor Lund*



THE STORM CELLAR IS JUST ONE SHOP WHICH OFFERS THE MOSCOW COMMUNITY A PLACE TO SHOP SUSTAINABLY.

Bold prints displayed in the Main Street shop's windows draw in customers as they walk through downtown Moscow. Inside the store, racks of vintage clothing line the wood floors. Groovy music plays in the background as the shop's patrons thumb through the large collection of vinyl records resting on the black shelves against the wall.

Courtney Siebken, co-owner of downtown Moscow's newest vintage and record store, Revolver, welcomes all consumers with a relaxing atmosphere and unique clothing selection that seems to fit exactly what this store is.

With a colorful skirt made from ties, ripped-up denim jackets and snazzy-looking jeans, Revolver has become the place to shop if you are looking for ways to reinvent your look. Using an '80s-inspired style, Siebken buys clothing items from friends and family she feels fits the look of Revolver and her customer base.

Although she's now invested in researching and discovering new information about sustainable clothing and building Revolver's selection, Siebken said she didn't always have an interest in sustainable fashion. Rather, she started out on a very different career path.

Before beginning work on Revolver, Siebken was working in the tax department at a stock brokerage, a far cry from her current occupation. Siebken was initially drawn to environmentalism following her volunteer work planting trees, which in time jumpstarted her interest in sustainable clothing practices back in 2016.

Sustainable fashion brands, like Revolver, are representative in a growing trend in the fashion industry. Many are turning away from traditional clothing brands and moving toward buying fashion made of used and recycled materials to support and create ecological integrity. This decision is mostly fueled by a movement away from the harmful practices of fast fashion.

"Fast fashion can create many negative impacts in our environment, such as gas emissions and water pollution from all the toxic chemicals put into these clothing items," Siebken said. "I only go to places like Ross if I want to get a pair of socks or something general. I try to shop in places like Storm Cellar and places in Seattle where I used to live."

Fast fashion can lure consumers such as college students to purchase inexpensive clothing that replicates trends faster than the original brand itself.

The cost of this breakneck speed is often labor exploitations, gas emissions, water pollution and toxic chemicals, making fast fashion a big contributor to environmental problems around the world.

Caitlin Suire, a University of Idaho student majoring in electrical engineering, said after she became aware of the negative impacts of fast fashion on the environment, she decided to start shopping sustainably at places like Goodwill and the Storm Cellar.

Suire said buying clothes sustainably and going thrifting not only reduces waste, supports the community and helps you avoid fast fashion, but it also can act as a DIY project.

Suire said by altering the clothing she buys sustainably, she can be creative, pass the time and make the items she buys more personalized.

"I remember I wanted a pair of shorts, so I bought some jeans at Goodwill and tried to make them my own," Suire said. "I ended up liking them and (they) were worth more than what I would have spent on a new pair."

While many like Suire and Siebken shop sustainably to combat environmental issues raised by fast fashion, Skyler Howell, a graduate student at UI, shops at antique stores and Goodwill to breathe life into used items.

"Most recently I bought a vintage strainer and took it apart for an art project," Howell said. "My favorite part about that is being able to see something for what it's not."

Howell said he finds more value in repurposing items than buying them new.

"I find it more valuable to buy a particular item that is used and has meaningful memory than buying something brand new or online without a backstory to it," Howell said. "Whether it's worth buying or not, it gives you something to do and enjoy."

He said while he does go to places like Storm Cellar and Revolver to shop for clothing, he likes to explore places like Goodwill instead to see what items are available for him to experiment with.

Sustainable buying comes in many forms, helping to stimulate growth, creativity and sparking interests of consumers. As fast fashion continues to grow, Siebken said its more important than ever for young adults to buy sustainably as much as possible.

"It's important that you look into your favorite brands values," Siebken said. "Make sure their values line up with yours and if they don't, shop at places that do."

SPOOKY STORIES TO TELL IN YOUR DORMS

Story By
Illustrations By
Photos By
Design By

Bailey Brocket
Joel Bartlow
Dani Moore
Joel Bartlow

THOUGH HALLOWEEN HAS PASSED, MOSCOW'S PARANORMAL SCENE REMAINS AS SPOOKY AS EVER, OR DOES IT?

Imagine yourself walking through Ridenbaugh Hall late one evening. The hallways of the former dorm, once home to the University of Idaho's female students, are typically filled with practicing music majors but are now eerily silent. You may feel something watching you intently across the echoing corridors. You might hear footsteps, maybe a giggle or a faint scream, that make your neck hairs tingle.

You turn to the hallway to find it desolate, but you know you simply cannot be alone. Maybe you're taking a late stroll through the Arboretum, and you once again feel that someone may be much too close for comfort. You hear crunches of twigs behind you, but it is again desolate, leaving you scared and equally confused.

Back in 1887, Moscow made its debut. Not soon after, in 1889, the university came along with it. Since then, many people have had experiences around this town that are unexplainable. While some may provide you with rational explanations, others have had experiences of their own to prove that maybe Moscow is just as haunted as you might dare to think.

Of course, there are notorious rumors, such as those that drew infamous ghost hunters Ed and Lorraine Warren to the UI campus back in 1992. The Warrens claimed that a woman hung herself in room 225 of Ridenbaugh Hall, and though there is no documented record of this occurrence, a UI professor admits there is something off about Ridenbaugh.

Dr. L. Gustavo Castro-Ramirez, a professor of vocal coaching and a collaborative pianist at UI, has an office in Ridenbaugh and shared a rather unnerving experience involving his Bluetooth speaker.

"A couple of years ago, I was working late in my office and I had left my Bluetooth speaker on, but I was not playing any music," Castro-Ramirez said. "Suddenly, it started playing some super loud rap music and it scared me quite a bit."



DR. L. GUSTAVO CASTRO-RAMIREZ ▲

Castro-Ramirez stated it was the "most random and unexpected thing" that happened to him. He had no explanation for it other than that the cleaning crew works in the building late at night and one of their devices may have been connected to the speaker.

"Who knows?" Castro-Ramirez said. "Since then, I do not leave my Bluetooth speaker on anymore."

Venturing off the UI campus and into the streets of Moscow, a local nursing home, Aspen Park, has given Amber Strain quite a fright. Strain started working at the nursing home in 2012, when incidents began occurring that just couldn't be explained.

"I was told there was a playful ghost, and that things would move," Strain said. "When I was in the kitchen alone, I would hear someone whisper my name on many occasions, and I also saw a garbage bag that we kept over the mixer move, but there was no breeze. I also saw a cart move by itself."

Strain recalled one particular incident during her time there when someone, or something, got especially violent with her.

"I was talking to a co-worker, and I stopped at a doorway to look to where my co-worker was," Strain said. "As I turned around, binders and papers were thrown out at me."

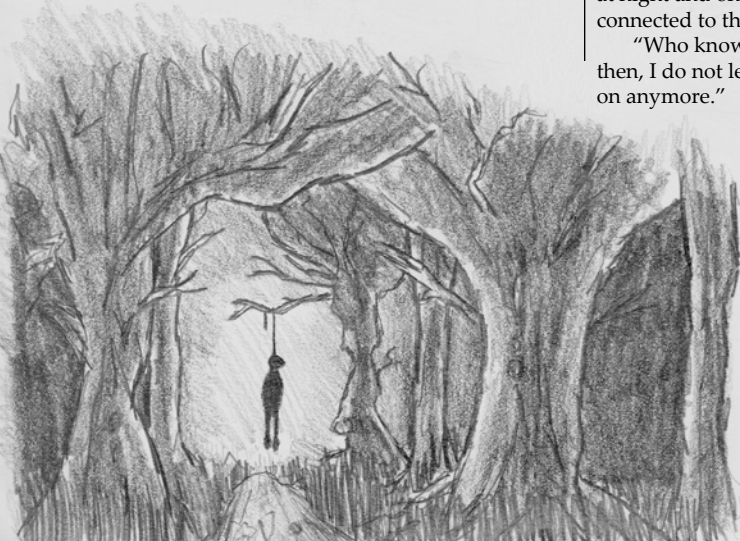
Soon after, the very same co-worker and Strain were setting tables in the dining room, when her co-worker had a startling experience of her own.

"(She) was freaking out and said, 'Did you see or hear that?'" Strain said. "She said the grandfather clock had slammed shut."

Strain said she never felt like she, or her co-worker, was in danger, but they wouldn't be spending alone time in the kitchen moving forward.



RIDENBAUGH HALL, UNIVERSITY OF IDAHO



RIDENBAUGH HALL INTERIOR, UNIVERSITY OF IDAHO ▶

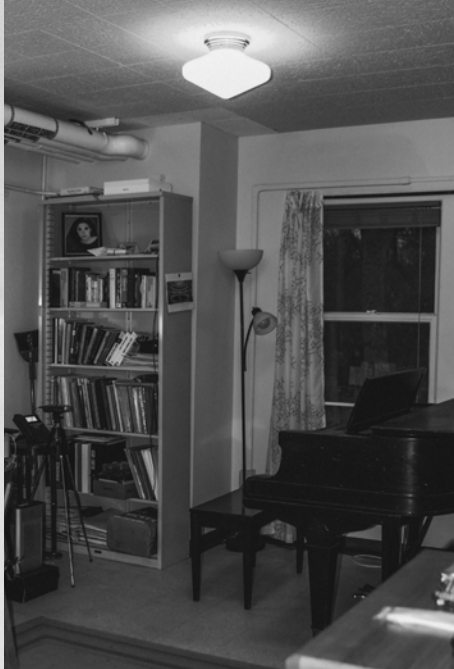
Migrating down to the corner of Jackson and First Street, a pale yellow house stands out due to its odd adornment of refurbished bicycles and its church-like roof and architecture. Lydia Byers, the co-founder of ghost-hunting group Palouse Area Paranormal, believes this building to truly be a place of intense hauntings.

The building, now residential, used to be Carithers Hospital, which according to Byers, was essentially just a doctor's office. Built in 1908, it served a variety of purposes, including containing an autopsy suite and a morgue.

Byers interviewed an anonymous source who lived in one of the two basement apartments in the old Carithers building while he was a physics student at UI in the 1980s. The source claimed that strange happenings started when he heard heavy footsteps upstairs. A lady who had lived there for years told him that no one lived upstairs, that it was a storage unit that was blocked off.

Additionally, he said lights would flicker on and off, the toilet would flush by itself and the faucets would randomly turn on.

One incident occurred when his landlord installed a new furnace. It was late May, but it was so cold in the apartment that his breath was visible, even with the furnace running. That evening while working on homework, the source claimed to have seen a shadowy figure.



"He said he knew it could not have been his own because he saw his own," Byers said. "It was dark gray, and this other shadow was dark black."

Then, as quickly as it appeared, it vanished.

That same night, in his still-freezing room, he had a dream about a beautiful woman. The woman began engaging in sexual activities with him, but as she did so, her features began to distort. Her eyes were pitch black, her skin was sloughing off and turning gray and her mouth opened four times as wide as it should have to reveal one big tooth all the way across.

"I believe he might have encountered a succubus," said Byers, referring to a type of demon claimed to seduce men and drain their life force in the night. "It is the only story I have ever heard (about a succubus) that I am inclined to believe because of what happened when he woke up."

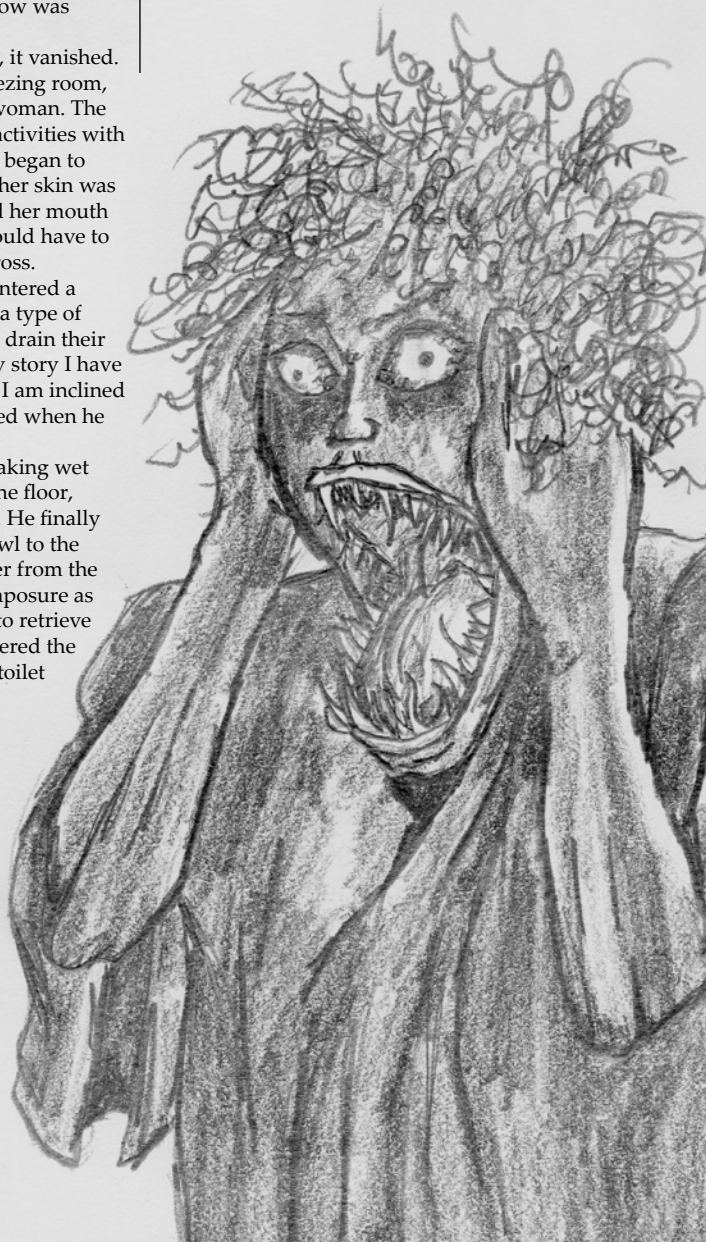
The source said he woke up soaking wet and was so dehydrated he fell on the floor, unaware of how long he was there. He finally mustered up enough energy to crawl to the bathroom where he drank the water from the toilet. After regaining as much composure as possible, he walked to the kitchen to retrieve a glass of water. The minute he entered the kitchen, the faucets turned on, the toilet flushed and the cabinets opened by themselves.

He left immediately the next day, leaving many belongings behind. It was revealed to Byers that he had been living in what was formerly the autopsy suite.

People may or may not be inclined to believe these experiences were those of paranormal encounters, of which Byers offers some advice.

"I always tell everybody not to believe everything you see, smell or taste," Byers said. "Our brains want to believe as much information as it can, and so it likes to fill in the holes. People will see an orb and say, 'Oh, it's a ghost!' Always go into an investigation skeptical and questioning. Never go in 100% a believer."

▼ ASPEN PARK, MOSCOW



DEAD-END JOB

Story By *Austin Emler*
Illustration By *Maxen Stone*
Design By *Emma Boobar*

I should start with this. I'm Michael and I died about a year and a half ago. I was walking back to work after my lunch break when a moving company dropped a piano on me. The company thought it was a good idea to use a crane to move the piano from the fifth floor of an apartment complex. Thought it only happened in cartoons? Yeah, me too.

I should also mention that I didn't have life insurance. My company, T.S. Auto Insurance, offers it only after 10 years of service, and I had only been there for eight. If you can't afford to die, you're turned into a zombie. So, two days later, I was back to work at the 9-to-5 grind.

It hasn't been easy being a zombie. The first eight or nine months went well. It wasn't until the decomposition started that I got worried. The first time I realized this was happening was a few weeks back. I was at home having my morning cup of joe before work, when I felt that two of my teeth were missing.

Sure enough, lying at the bottom of the mug was my left central incisor and my right canine. So, I did what any rational zombie would do. I grabbed the super glue and glued them back in, marked the calendar for my nine-and-half-year mark and went to work.

Just a little advice for you, super glue is not a good way to hold a decaying corpse together. I found that out later that morning when I went to the break room at work for a doughnut. I bit into the doughnut and felt a slight pop. Stuck to the frosting like oversized white sprinkles were the teeth I glued in. Of course, Kyle was in the break room as well. So, I had my first trip to HR. The good news is I got the last five doughnuts to myself.

The problems really started after that. Just in the last month alone I have been in the HR office four times. Janice found a pinky in the break room, Stacy claims the copier was jammed with my flesh, Henry found a couple fingernails in the bathroom sink and Tony dislikes the "haunting moan" I make occasionally.



I admit, bits of me fall off here or there, and I moan sometimes. But hey, I punch the timecard, file insurance claims, start new policies and make celebrities feel like their material wealth is protected, just like the rest of them. In six months, I will be out of here and resting in peace anyway.



LETTER TO A LOST LOVE

Story By

Dakota Brown

Illustration By

Ashley Isenberger

Design By

Ashley Isenberger

Mr. Patel looks at Treyce, it has been a month since the accident. He can see the boy's body shuddering. They had been calling him in for weekly check-ins, along with the other students. Among those in the car accident who hadn't survived had been Bradley Biggs, Shaun Casey and Lila Wells.

"Perhaps writing about it will make you feel better. Say all the things you wish you could've said while she was here." Mr. Patel said.

Treyce Stavinsky exited the vice principal's office. He made it out to his car and started crying. From his backpack, he pulled out a piece of paper and a black ballpoint pen. He wrote:

Dear Lila,

You have caused three cataclysmic events in my life. The first was when we met, the second is when I fell in love with you and the third is when I lost you.



I drove to your parents' house the day I found out you had died. Mr. Patel had told me they had a birthday present for me to pick up.

I knocked on the door and your little brother answered. Matthew, he's only seven. Only seven, and the only person in your house that isn't crying.

He looked at me and said that your parents had mentioned I would be dropping by. Then he ran upstairs to your room. When he came back down do you know what he handed me? Of course, you know what he handed me. You were going to hand it to me yourself. He handed me the football you threw at me when we first met. A neon blue ball with a note written in bold white ink across the width of it:

"Thank you for always being there for me Trey, even when I've made your stomach ache. Just wanted to let you know that Coach is going to let me join you guys for a game this Friday for your birthday! We will finally get to play together, at least for a little bit. I bet you that we can win it. Love, Lila."

Coach cancelled that game. We retired Brad and Shaun's jerseys. The whole town has been mourning the loss of you. The youth center has a picture of you up on their wall now. Rachel McNery and your other friends decorated your locker in flowers and photographs.

I don't know how I'm going to do this without you. You've been at the center of everything good in my life and I feel thrown out of orbit. The rest of the town feels it too.

The world should have stopped spinning. The world should have frozen over in darkness after the accident, but it didn't. We lost our light source, but the sky keeps cycling new days even after your passing.

Please come back Lila, we need you.

Love, Treyce

CONTINUED AT BLOTMAGAZINE.COM

Humans of Moscow

Story By
Photos By
Design By

Elizabeth Holdridge
Courtesy
Taylor Lund

Dylanie Frazier has idiopathic juvenile rheumatoid arthritis. The medication she is prescribed causes a compromised immune system, especially for respiratory diseases. This has led Frazier to make the cautious decision to stay at home in Boise during the pandemic rather than return to in-person classes at the University of Idaho. Yet even in this online environment, she remains active in her sorority, ASUI, classes and manages to maintain a positive outlook.

Q: What made you decide to stay home?

A: "My decision factor is that I have very big plans. I am looking at attending the law school at U of I. I'm also a senator at ASUI and I have a lot of responsibilities. I know that if I were to get sick I would have to put a lot of these things on hold, along with my academics as well. That is something I don't want to do, so I just decided to stay at home and focus on my academics and being an ASUI senator from a distance. This way I can still fulfill the responsibilities I would like to."



ASUI SENATOR DYLANIE FRAZIER SHARES HER EXPERIENCE AS A STUDENT AWAY FROM CAMPUS.
| DYLANIE FRAZIER

Q: What do you miss most about Moscow?

A: "There's so many things. I really wish I could just be up there, but I guess the thing I miss most is my friends and being able to sit in-person in lecture and have that connection with my professors. All my professors have been amazing and have been working with me super well. I just wish I had the opportunity to be able to go into their office hours and have that personal communication."

Q: What do you miss most about campus or your sorority?

A: "The atmosphere and being able to be alongside other people who have similar ambitions and goals as what I have. People who are going through a similar situation on going through school during a pandemic and having that support system that makes it feel like we're all kind of in this together. I still do have that sense of community, but it's definitely different being so far away from everyone."

Q: If COVID-19 miraculously disappeared and you came back to Moscow, what's the first thing you would do?

A: "I would go to an in-person Senate meeting, this is something I really, really want to do. I want to be able to introduce myself not only to the Senate but to the committees as well, and understand that I want to make a difference and be able to have that kind of connection that I'm lacking at the moment. I just really miss not being in-person for the Senate, it's one of my big things."

BECAUSE STORIES ARE WORTH TELLING.



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