

# THE OREDIGGER

VOLUME 101

GOLDEN, COLORADO, TUESDAY, OCTOBER 13th, 2020

No. 3

## On The Record with PCJ

### October Horoscopes

Zachary Barry

Arts and Culture Editor

Typically I like to preface my horoscopes with a bit of an introduction, but since, like every Mines student, I have a lot of things that I have procrastinated getting done till the weekend before they are due and it already took me a long time to come up with these jokes... er contact all twelve signs this month, let's get straight to what they had to say.

**Libra:** I need your help to settle a long-standing argument that I have been having with Libra. I think that if I expand my divination into reading bones, I would be able to write weekly trips to KFC off as a business expense, but Libra disagrees. What do you think? Oh yeah, this month Libra advises, ironically enough, go with your gut.

**Scorpio:** For the first time since 2015, Halloween falls on a weekend this year. Unfortunately, because of COVID, there won't be regular trick-or-treating or costume parties \*disappointed in inflatable T. rex costume\*.

**Sagittarius:** WAIT, IT'S ALREADY OCTOBER!?

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### Our president on a medley of topics from lunch routines to tuition and more.



Graphic courtesy of Ashley Potter.

Caleb Pan

Staff Writer

With commentary by: Sophia Becker

Here at The Oredigger, we strive to stay on top of issues that matter to students. We accomplish this in a variety of ways, from conducting campus polls to featuring student

opinion articles. In lieu of this goal, we decided to bring back an Oredigger tradition: interviewing the Mines President. As you all know, the person currently serving in this role is President Paul C. Johnson (affectionately known on campus as "PCJ"). We took the

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### News @ A Glance

The movie industry has taken a large hit over the past few weeks as Marvel Studios announced that it will be delaying its Phase Four movies until 2021, with its newest film, Black Widow, now premiering on May 7, 2021.

There has been a recent uptick in the number of confirmed COVID cases on campus. Much of this rise is attributed to individuals letting their guard down. Remember to stay vigilant and protect others as you want to be protected.

The campaign for Mines @ 150 has officially launched! Visit <https://campaign.mines.edu/> to see the school's plan for positioning Mines to successfully compete in increasingly contentious and multi-disciplinary learning environment.

Mines Philanthropy Council hosted its annual Philanthropy Tank on Tuesday, October 6th. Students pitched their project ideas in the hopes of receiving a portion of the \$10,000 prize fund. Visit [shorturl.at/iswyO](https://shorturl.at/iswyO) to check out the 2020-21 project! They included an on-campus art gallery, oSTEM's new literary art journal The Spectrum Spark, zen gardens, and the Mines Tiny Greenhouse among others!





# In This Issue

## Letter from the Editor

The last issue celebrated the Autumn Equinox, the astronomical start of the fall season, but we have yet to sustain fall's crisp refreshing air. At least the smoke has relented somewhat. Here's to hoping the coming weeks are filled with that distinct, but somewhat indescribable scent of autumn, a mix of decaying leaves, the suppression of scents by cool air, and pumpkin spice of course. Even if you can't go into your favorite shops and restaurants that are pumping out the pumpkin spice, you can always buy an orange clove or cinnamon apple air freshener or two.

Another time of year (my favorite) is quickly approaching... Halloween. Even in this weird state of 2020, we can surround ourselves with bats and witches, pumpkins and cobwebs, ghouls and goblins. Make sure to carve some pumpkins, hang some paper bats, and play your favorite horror and thriller movies. Definitely from my childhood, I still have a certain affinity for *Halloweentown* and *Halloweentown II* (*Halloweentown High* is iffy and *Return to Halloweentown* is missing Kimberly Brown as Marnie). Other, arguably more prescient, films are featured in Louis Cogan's article, "Surprisingly Prophetic Horror Films," such as

*Contagion* and *Invasion of the Body Snatchers*. There are also classics such as *Halloween*, *A Nightmare On Elm Street*, *Night of the Living Dead*, *The Shining*, Henry Selick's *Coraline* and *The Nightmare Before Christmas*, Tim Burton's *Corpse Bride* and *Edward Scissorhands*, *House on Haunted Hill* and less tied to October but along the same line nonetheless *Silence of the Lambs*. If your streaming service does not offer a plethora of Halloween movies, you can always explore the Golden Public Library's extensive film collections (check online first for availability; they will even pull from other libraries and deliver to the Golden location).

As we finish up midterms and head into fall break, good luck and stay safe out there.

A quick correction and formatting note is in order. First, the *Photo of the Week* for Issue 2 was captured by Ashley Potter, and second, the missing headers were an InDesign fluke on our end which has been corrected and even updated with new fonts for Issue 3. 🍂



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### Photo of the Week

Downtown Denver enhanced by a smokey sunset.

Image courtesy of Shane Cranor.

## Life on... Venus?

**J. Wilder**

*Staff Writer*

In some astronomical news, new evidence may suggest the presence of extraterrestrial life in our solar system. Incredibly, it's not thought to be on Mars or one of Jupiter's many moons, but among the harsh and extreme conditions on the surface of Venus. For a millennia, human eyes have been fixed on the nighttime sky, wondering if we are truly alone in the universe. Now, we may have an answer. While experts debate the validity of the evidence, many more are excited for its potential impact on the future of space research.

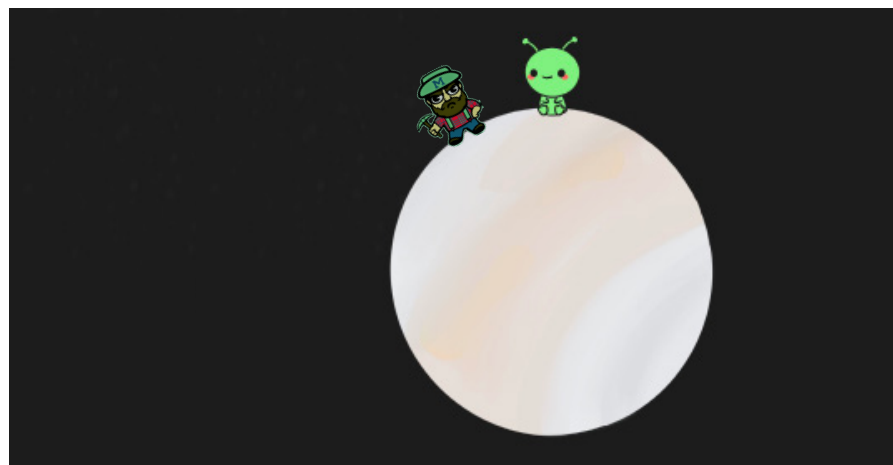
An article published in *Nature Astronomy* on September 14th rocked the scientific community and briefly wrenched our attention away from Mars in the search for extraterrestrial life in our solar system. In the article, Dr. Jane Greaves announced that phosphine (PH<sub>3</sub>) had been detected in the atmosphere of our sister planet, Venus. The phosphine was said to be in concentration of approximately 20 parts per billion, which is thousands of times more than what could have been predicted.

Phosphine is a colorless toxic gas, only naturally produced by some

species of bacteria that survive in the absence of oxygen. Dr. Greaves states that there are no known natural processes on Venus that might explain the volume of gas found. With this new evidence, it's unsurprising that many believe the phosphine indicates microbial life.

Although the suggestion of life on Venus is an exciting one, there are still plenty of skeptics who warn against jumping to conclusions. It's been long thought that Venus may have housed life millions of years ago, but is incapable of it now—and for good reason! Thick clouds of carbon dioxide make up its atmosphere, sometimes raining sulfuric acid and exerting almost 92 times the pressure that we experience here on Earth. Venus's surface is desolate, long stretches of rocky plains interspersed with canyons, lava flows, and waterless oceans. The proximity of the planet to the sun combined with the incredibly thick atmosphere makes the average temperature at the surface a scorching 847 °F, hot enough to melt lead. It's hard to see how any life could hope to survive.

Proponents of the existence of life on Venus acknowledge these conditions. They suggest that the bacterial life could remain airborne, high enough in the atmosphere to escape the worst of these conditions. No



*Image courtesy of Molly Adams.*

other theory has yet been suggested to explain the presence of phosphine.

Yet, many researchers have warned against jumping to conclusions. "I definitely would not say there's life on Venus with certainty," said Dr. Sara Seager of MIT, who was involved with the initial discovery. She went on to say that if life were to exist on Venus, it's unlikely to be the DNA based organisms that we are. This is, perhaps, an even more exciting premise. If it were discovered that nature has an alternative way to produce life, that would be the proverbial smoking gun of 21st-century science.

The race for more data is on. NASA has announced that they are considering sending new probes to our long-overlooked twin planet. Yuri Milner's Breakthrough Foundation has already said that it will finance

research into Venusian life. Regardless of if there truly is life on Venus, the discovery has renewed interest in what's outside our atmosphere. If even single cell organisms can be proven to exist on another planet, that opens the floodgates for a (quite literal) universe of possibilities for extraterrestrial life.

As Stephen Hawking tells us, "Remember to look up at the stars and not down at your feet. Try to make sense of what you see and wonder about what makes the universe exist. Be curious." We have caught a glimpse of yet another mystery of the universe, and our imaginations run wild. There are endless facets to explore, infinite possibilities to ignite our curiosity. Nestled among them is the possibility of life on Venus. ✨

## To Nominate or Not to Nominate? Debate Over the SCOTUS Vacancy

**Sarah F. Zaccarine**

*Staff Writer*

The death of Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg on September 18 has led to an intense partisan battle on whether or not the next justice should be confirmed by the current administration or the nomination delayed until the November election has been decided. While Supreme Court vacancies have opened 29 times during past election years, such an event has never taken place after July, making this an unprecedented decision in American politics that could have ripple effects well beyond the upcoming election. President Donald Trump's political advisors believe a SCOTUS confir-

mation could provide a needed boost to his campaign. The president also hopes to win a strong conservative majority in SCOTUS prior to the election on November 4th, in case an issue with the vote count results in the Supreme Court being called upon to adjudicate the winner of the election. This is a scenario he has repeatedly predicted as a result of increased voting by mail.

Democrats have voiced staunch disapproval of a nomination before the November election, pointing to how a similar situation was handled in February 2016 after the death of Justice Antonin Scalia. Senate Republicans declined a hearing even before President Barack Obama put forth

his nomination of Judge Merrick Garland, saying that it was too close to the election and the nomination should be the jurisdiction of the next president. Senators cited the "Biden rule," referring to a 1992 speech by Vice President Joe Biden in which he stated that a Supreme Court nomination must be put on hold "once the political season is underway." As a result, Democrats contend that pushing to confirm the next justice within two months of the 2020 election is rushed and is a hypocritical stance by the Republicans. President Trump argued in the first presidential debate that he was elected for a 4-year term and that he is entitled and obligated to carry out his duties for that full period.

Senators Lisa Murkowski (R-Alaska) and Susan Collins (R-Maine) have stated that they will not support

a nomination this close to the election, but with Senator Mitt Romney (R-Utah) expressing approval, it is unlikely that the Senate will block a nomination. The only plausible strategy being considered as a countermeasure by Democratic Senators is Rule XIV, which allows any senator to add a bill to the calendar up to two legislative days before the bill is introduced for Senate discussion. Theoretically, every Democratic Senator could bring a bill forward and two legislative days later, Minority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-New York) would bring up each bill individually, file cloture, and withdraw the motion to proceed with that bill. Senator Schumer could repeatedly follow this procedure until Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Kentucky) was forced to shut down the Senate. The

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## How Has Mines Survived This Long?

**Kayl Peck**  
Staff Writer

Colleges have done everything they can to avoid it: a major COVID-19 outbreak on campus. Reducing dorm density, hosting mostly online classes, enforcing distancing protocols, putting cleaning supplies in every classroom, and making dining almost entirely takeout. All these measures have had a cost: equipping microphones, cameras, and cleaning supplies in classrooms, and consistent COVID-19 testing for thousands. But despite all these measures in place, colleges across the country have halted or suspended in-person instruction because of an outbreak only a few weeks in.

So how is Mines still going strong, almost 2 months later?

There are some horror stories out there; during the first week of the semester more than 100 students tested positive at University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, filling up their entire on-campus quarantine housing. A week after class started, students were told to pack up and go home. In a more local case, after a large outbreak of COVID-19 among students of CU Boulder, Boulder County Public Health issued a stay-at-home order for anyone living near or on campus and banned gatherings of any kind for people aged 18-22.

But at Mines, there have only been 54 confirmed positive cases since August. There were 2 weeks in September when there were no new cases reported. Mines has had a positivity rate of .43%, while Colorado has had a 3.7% 7-day positivity rate. This may change, with the 20 new cases reported in the last week, and the Mines community may need to start being more cautious, hopefully this increase in cases doesn't continue. But overall, the Mines campus has been a relatively COVID-free bubble. How is this possible? Is there something special about Mines, or are there other factors at play?

Let's look at some of the things that could make a difference. Larger colleges seem to be having more of an issue with COVID-19 outbreaks perhaps because of the sheer size of the college and student body. It's a lot easier to keep track of and test 5,000 students as opposed to 50,000.

While there's no way to really check if Mines students are attending parties or not, it may be one of the reasons Mines hasn't been forced entirely online. At some colleges, like University of North Carolina, and Notre Dame, a multitude of cases appeared in the first few weeks and were linked to large parties. Those schools switched to online-only classes within a few weeks.

Being partially online at Mines is



*Masked Orediggers on campus. Image courtesy of Kayl Peck.*

certainly also helping. Although if distancing, masking, and cleaning procedures are being followed correctly, the classroom shouldn't pose an exorbitant amount of risk. This partially online, partially in-person is great for lab classes that need to be taught in person and to better utilize the limited space on campus. Universities trying for entirely face-to-face classes saw a lot more struggles with finding space for their students.

One argument may be that because Mines is almost entirely STEM majors that believe the science behind preventative steps and understand how viruses can spread. Mines students could be more likely to listen to the warnings and take steps to keep ourselves safe.

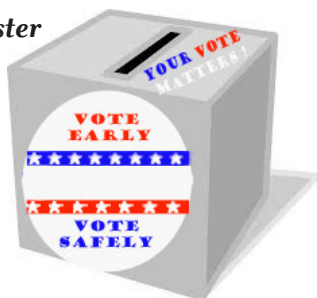
Not every college is able to offer mandatory testing for all on-campus residents every 2 weeks. However, the ability to do so may be aided by

the fact that less than 15% of Mines students live in on-campus housing. Dorms, which are infamously close living quarters, could easily propagate the virus causing a massive outbreak. By reducing population density in the dorms and having a small percent of the student body living on-campus, Mines likely has a lower chance of an outbreak.

To keep Mines safe and mostly COVID-free, we need to continue being proactive as a college. PCJ asked people to not travel over fall break, to stay in rather than go out and risk bringing infection back to campus. This may be a recommendation that extends to Thanksgiving as well, providing we continue to be on campus until that point. It looks like Mines may have a good handle on things, with students to thank for keeping themselves and their peers accountable. 🍀

## Important Voting Details

**Jade Glaister**  
Staff Writer



*Image courtesy of Sadie Jonson.*

Election season is upon us! So, you should vote and make sure that your vote counts! While a few states' voter registration deadlines have passed, there are many states with later cutoffs. So, it is important to find your state's deadline and register to vote if possible. Unfortun-

nately, there are many obstacles that stand in the way of simply exercising this right. As a result, you should take certain precautions to avoid tiny mistakes that could invalidate your ballot.

### Know your deadlines!

Election day is November 3rd! If you are voting by mail, the Post Office recommends that you mail your ballot at least a week before this date.

### Ensure that your ballot is correctly filled out!

This is a great opportunity to utilize your fantastic scantron-filling abilities in order to properly fill out your ballot! Similar to tests, avoid

having stray marks and more than one choice filled in. Although you may be tempted to use your pencil, please don't. A nice pen with either black or blue ink is definitely the best choice.

### Don't forget to sign your envelope!

It's time to show off your beautiful signature! This is the most common reason for the invalidation of a ballot, so make sure that you don't fall for this trick. To affirm your identity, don't forget to sign the outside of your envelope before it is mailed. In addition to this, *ensure that the signature placed on your ballot matches the one that your state has on file.*

**Include required additional documentation if needed!**

Although this aspect is not required for all states, many require additional information on their voters' ballots. So, learn the voting requirements of your state. This may include a witness signature or a copy of their photo ID.

### Don't mail your ballot in the same envelope as someone else's!

Ballots like to be single, so put your ballot in its own envelope!

### Include the right amount of stamps!

The number of stamps needed to mail your ballot varies depending on your location. Ask your local election officials to find how many stamps are required. 🍀

## Hot Mess, Dumpster Fire, Train Wreck

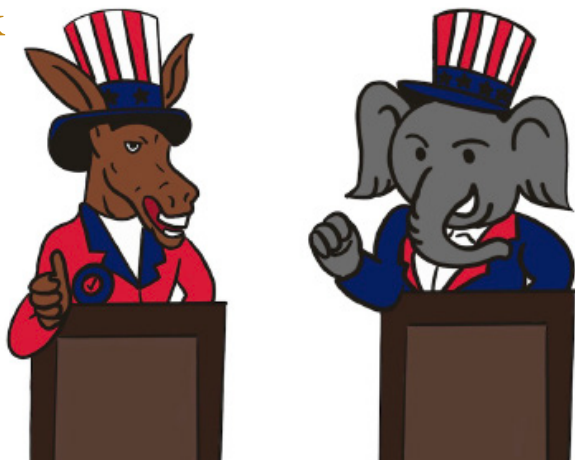


Image courtesy of Molly Adams.

**Emma Braun**  
Opinion Editor

While the presidential debate occurred over a week ago, the searing image of the current state of America's politics has been permanently scarred into the minds of not only the viewers of that night's events, but to anyone who has had any in-

clination of opening a news article recently. While it's likely more people than ever are tuning into the presidential debates due to the upcoming election, it's fair to claim that when they turned on the live debate between President Donald Trump and Vice President Joe Biden, they could not have foreseen the clash of ideas, personalities and American politics

that occurred at the Case Western Reserve University campus last week.

The purpose of the presidential debates is to spark the sharing of ideas that will convince the nation why a particular candidate will turn the country around or improve the condition it is already in. Many voters tune in to watch these to help decide who they will be choosing to support in the upcoming weeks. The debates are critical to allow voters to decide which issues matter to them. For an election in which one candidate is the current president, this notion shifts slightly. While the incumbent candidate fights to prove that another four years of their leadership will be beneficial for the nation, they also must defend the past four years they have served the highest office in America. Their choices, actions and political acts all fall under scrutiny in these debates while the opposition can primarily focus on looking ahead and reacting to the current administration. For a candidate who has had

a strong term as president, this task would seem easy, however President Trump has faced criticism for a significant number of events in the past four years. Vice President Biden, formerly holding office in the Obama administration, had to prove himself as a worthy candidate for the presidency by explaining his approach to leading the nation into better times.

As soon as the debate began, it took approximately 10 minutes for chaos to begin on both sides, with moderator Chris Wallace attempting to reign in both men with limited success. Often, all three voices could be heard speaking over the next loudest in order to prove why they were right. However, even when asked specific topics where both candidates could have displayed leadership towards some of America's largest issues (The Trump and Biden Records, The Supreme Court, COVID-19, The Economy, Race and Violence in our Cities, and The Integrity of the Election),

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## Mines Political Poll

**Aidan Lewis**  
Staff Writer

On September 29, I stood at the corner of 16th and Illinois streets and over the course of about 3 hours polled 48 Mines students regarding their political opinions. I asked students about voting, candidates, and ballot initiatives as well as two demographic questions. In an effort to maintain a random sample I asked to poll every student who passed me until someone agreed, then repeated the process. I would have liked to have had a larger sample size in order to more precisely show the opinions of our community. Also, the poll is unfortunately biased towards the people more likely to respond. The poll respondents tended towards being men and first year students. This may be a product of who was on the street at the time of the poll and that women declined to take the poll more often than men. The poll has no margin of error and it is not exactly scientific. Still, I feel it is valuable information from which conclusions can be reached.

I will discuss the results of the data in the order of the questions I asked. First off, a vast majority, 87.5%, of respondents said they were registered to vote. A slightly smaller share, 83.3%, said they planned to vote in the election ending November 3. According to 'Democracy Counts: A Report On U.S. College and University Student Voting', a report by Tufts University, in 2016 while 70.6% of US college students were registered to vote, only 48.3% ended up doing so. It is worth noting that of registered students, 68.5% cast their ballots. This poll finds numbers of registration far above those national numbers in 2016 which could be a result of higher registration at Mines or in 2020 in general. The report also notes that at 52.0%, the Rocky Mountain region had the highest rate of voting among college students nationally in 2016. It is well known that among all age groups, young people tend to vote at lower rates. This trend manifests in the report as an increase in voter turnout as students grow older and progress into graduate studies. Finally, college age women were 7.2% more likely to vote than college age men and those in STEM studies



Image courtesy of Sadie Jonson

were the least likely to vote among all fields of study. For further reading, I recommend the report. It is short and filled with informative graphics.

Regarding candidates, I asked respondents to indicate preference for a US Presidential and Colorado Senate candidate. 25% and 62.5% of respondents were undecided, respectfully. This disparity could be attributed to relative prominence of the Presidential election or the unfamiliarity of out of state students with the Colorado Senate race or other factors. A majority of respondents being undecided in the Senate race I think could indicate a lack of familiarity with the candidates among Mines students or a lack of preference between them. While in both races more respondents indicated preference for the Democratic candidate over the Republican candidate, the margin was much wider for the presidential race.

In a national poll conducted by The Morning Consult, likely voters born after 1996 preferred Joe Biden to Donald Trump 65% to 27%. If undecided responses to this poll split evenly it would indicate that more respondents hold preference for Mr. Trump than is average among our age group. The website Niche ranks the Colorado School of Mines 360th most conservative college in the US.

Regarding ballot initiatives, respondents expressed strong support for Proposition EE creating taxes on nicotine vaping products and increasing taxes on tobacco products as well as Proposition 114 reintroducing wolves to the state of Colorado. More students than not supported Proposition 113 adopting an interstate agreement to elect the US President by national popular vote while respondents were evenly split

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Cont'd "SCOTUS" &gt;&gt;

main drawback with this strategy is that a legislative day only happens when the Senate adjourns from one day to the next; if the Senate recesses, the legislative day will not pass. Therefore, if Senator McConnell prevents the Senate from adjourning, the Rule XIV bills would not see the floor in time. This leaves Democrats no other strategy to counteract the nomination, thus many Democrats have shifted the focus back to winning the election in November, emphasizing that a win could counteract a strong Supreme Court conservative majority.

President Trump has chosen Judge Amy Coney Barrett as his SCOTUS nominee. If confirmed, Barrett would be the third justice placed on the court during his administration. This would be the second highest total justices confirmed by a first term president, second only to President Richard Nixon, who named four during his first term. Judge Barrett's addition to the Supreme Court would guarantee a conservative court for decades, with 6 out of 9 seats held by conservative justices. She would be the fifth female SCOTUS justice and would offer a different perspective than the sitting female justices, Justices Sonia Sotomayor and Elena Kagan.

At 48 and with only 3 years of experience as a judge, Judge Barrett would be the youngest justice and have the least courtroom experience



Image courtesy of Sadie Jonson.

in the current court, yet her prestigious credentials already point to her scholarly prowess. Barrett graduated from Notre Dame Law School with summa cum laude distinction and has worked as a faculty member there since 2002. She also clerked for Justice Antonin Scalia and was noted by colleagues as a favorite of the justice. Since being appointed by President Trump in 2017, Barrett has served on the 7th US Circuit Court of Appeals, which oversees cases from Illinois, Indiana, and Wisconsin. Judge Barrett is considered a textualist and originalist for her interpretation of the law through its plain words and of the Constitution based on how its authors understood and intended it. Barrett's firm anti-abortion views are in direct contrast to Justice Ginsburg, a fierce supporter of abortion rights, setting the stage for a harsh debate on this topic during confirmation hearings. Another topic that would likely see hostile partisan debate is the Affordable Care Act. Judge Barrett has

criticized both the ACA as well as Chief Justice John Roberts' decision to uphold it. Her religious convictions present the strongest appeal to her conservative supporters and the largest concern to liberal opponents, who have questioned her ability to separate her personal dogma from her interpretation of the law. In her own words, Barrett has denounced these claims and presented herself as an objective public servant seeking to serve the American people rather than her own ideals.

Although the SCOTUS vacancy has the potential to rouse bipartisan action, a recent survey by the Washington Post and ABC News indicates that it may lead to higher poll turnout for Democrats compared to Republicans. The survey found that 64 percent of Biden's supporters felt the vacancy made a Democratic election win more important, while only 37 percent of Trump's supporters felt the same. In response, Biden has galvanized his Democratic base, emphasizing the importance of voters showing up to the polls in November.

Cont'd "Presidential Debates" &gt;&gt;

conversations and debate monologues were reduced to name calling and finger pointing. While Trump attempted to highlight his economic success, Biden attempted to connect with the viewers at home as he recognized a critical window for relating to the everyday American by ignoring Trump's commentary. Trump faltered several times when pressed about his stance on climate change, white supremacy, and his response to COVID with answers that did not sway from the realities the country is facing, and yet Biden was unable at times to use these openings to his advantage to prove his own legitimacy.

Walking away from the debate, there were no winners. Everyone lost

– Trump, Biden, and America. With even the events of the past week, there might not be hope for a saving grace in the Presidential debates. With the Vice Presidential debates being lauded as more professional and decisive than the discourse between the two presidential candidates and President Trump's refusal for a virtual debate due to COVID concerns, there might not be another chance for Trump or Biden to prove themselves to the undecided voters. The news is changing every day and we can only hope that in the coming weeks, we can be provided with an opportunity for these men to prove themselves as worthy to hold the highest office in the USA.



Cont'd "Mines Political Poll" &gt;&gt;

on Proposition 115 banning abortion after 22 weeks of pregnancy. A taboo issue, Proposition 115 has the most undecided responses at 29.2% followed by 114, 113, then EE at 10.4%. Many respondents were unfamiliar with ballot initiatives but were presented with the official Colorado Blue Book for information. I would like to mention that I observed qualitatively that support for voter initiatives was only very loosely tied to presidential preference. This was especially true for Proposition 114, where as far as I could tell who a respondent preferred for president was uncorrelated with their support of

A roadblock developed recently with the COVID-19 diagnosis of many Senators, including two members of the Judiciary Committee, Senators Mike Lee (R-Utah) and Thom Tillis (R-North Carolina), making time the biggest factor affecting the outcome at this point. McConnell has suspended Senate floor action for two weeks pending more diagnoses, but the committee is still scheduled to meet for Judge Barrett's confirmation hearings, another move that has been met with Democratic backlash.

The Post-ABC poll shows that the majority of Americans want the next justice to be chosen by the winner of the upcoming election. Additionally, a Hill-HarrisX poll shows that 74 percent of Americans (containing 55 percent of Republicans) prefer the Senate to prioritize an additional coronavirus stimulus bill first. However, McConnell plans to proceed with the nomination as the top priority when the Senate reconvenes. After announcing on October 6th a halt to COVID-19 stimulus discussions with Democrats until after the election, President Trump has reopened negotiations with Congress, but a compromise remains elusive.

Given the current COVID-19 diagnoses in the Senate, this debate may be naturally resolved if the Senators remain ill until October 19, the date that a quorum is needed to move Barrett's nomination out of the committee. 🌸

Sources: NY Times, CNN, Independent, Washington Post, The Hill, CBS News.

the initiative. Colorado voters will be asked to vote on several other ballot initiatives this election. As I wanted to keep the scope of this poll limited and I felt these initiatives would take longer to understand due to their more technical nature, I did not poll on them. You can consult the Blue Book for more information about all ballot initiatives.

With many respondents undecided on many issues and voter turnout among college students typically far below registration rates it remains to be seen how Mines students cast their votes and how many cast them at all. Are you ready to vote? 🌸

## Helluva Hot Take: Thanksgiving Break

Emma Braun

Opinion Editor

Even as Fall Break is just about to be upon us, many students (including myself) are looking even further ahead to our next break – Thanksgiving. It's not that we're slackers, it's healthy self-care to plan breaks, long or short. Even in my fifth year at Mines with perhaps the most unique logistics, the Fall semester is always tough. Additionally, when Fall Break always seems to be surrounded with midterms and projects, Thanksgiving break truly feels like an opportunity to take a breath, eat something other than ramen cooked in a microwave, and see family. Except – this year is undeniably different because 'family' now has two distinctions. We have our family we've had our entire lives, but we also have our COVID families – the people we live with while at school, the people on our sports teams, or the ones we are able to meet up with while practicing proper social distancing per CDC guidelines. Both matter significantly but the challenge becomes sharing time between the two.

And now, as I think towards the coming Thanksgiving break, I am left to wonder, after spending weeks following strict guidelines being on campus, sanitizing my classroom desk space or even living on campus for some students, how good of an idea is it to have us come back after this break. About a week ago, we all received an email advising us to stay in Golden or our respective locations over the long weekend to ensure we don't bring anything back to campus. While not required, it is easy for students to stay put for the long weekend, because hey, at least we don't have to log onto any Zoom lectures for two days. When we look at Thanksgiving, however, that is a time for family and coming together with a collective 5-day span of not having to attend classes. It's much

more tempting to use this time as we have done in the past and god home. Yet, anyone who chooses to go home, whether it be via plane, train or automobile, is potentially putting their families at risk or their COVID families upon their return.

If I go home, I will be potentially exposed to both of my sisters' college campuses and exposing my mom to something I could have picked up in Golden. If I come back, I'm bringing those two colleges back to Mines and our community. Neglecting the small perspective of individual contact, we have students who if they want to get home, they must fly and cross state borders. Due to different state regulations, this could mean a 14-day quarantine that would encompass more of the break than we have days allotted. Even though Colorado does not have a 14-day quarantine requirement upon returning, with the transitive nature today's global situation, this could change, and non-essential travel is currently discouraged.

Mines cannot (and should not) dictate the actions of their students over a break, but it is within their power to use preventative means to protect the Mines community. People will be going home regardless of what Mines recommends for us to do. A number of current students are in-state, so they are even more likely to travel home. Students who choose to stay on campus over the break would then be exposed to anything their roommate or classmate brings back after they travel.

While I love being able to come on campus and attend one of my classes in person, I think in order to not be blindsided and potentially expose more students to COVID, it would be beneficial to prepare for a total virtual conversion of classes after Thanksgiving break. Done correctly and with enough notice, on-campus student research and administrative duties could continue, and campus residents would be able to prepare

for a longer stay at home rather than for just the break. Mines has done a phenomenal job maintaining communication with us as the semester has gone on and as a community, we have been successful in protecting our community from a potentially life-threatening illness. We cannot get complacent and thinking ahead is what we do best. With a month and a half until Thanksgiving Break, I'll be keeping an eye on my email and maybe planning to see my actual family for a little more time than I had planned. ✨

## Student Perspectives

If you are interest in sharing your perspective, please reach out to Marisa Macias, *The Oredigger's* DI&A Representative at [macias@mines.edu](mailto:macias@mines.edu).

## "We hear what Mines has to say"

Anonymous Oredigger

Contributing Writer from AISES

Indigenous people make up around 1% of the US population, and at Mines and other STEM schools that percentage is even smaller. It can feel extremely lonely not seeing people that look like you in your classes or living spaces. This disparity feels even worse in class discussions when you realize that your peers don't all share the same values as you. Several classes at Mines focusing on environmental and social responsibility teach that Native Americans are often important stakeholders in projects and initiatives, which is great! We are glad to be recognized by professors and students as people whose opinions are valid and should be respected and considered in large-scale projects that Mines alum often are involved in. But it is clear that many students in these classes view the rights and opinions of Native

Americans and other indigenous communities as an obligation rather than seeing us as individual people that have different cultural values than them.

We want the Mines population to know that although we cannot participate in every conversation about indigenous issues, we hear what Mines has to say. We hear how the school teaches about making reparations to native populations, we hear how students consider those reparations, and we hear if their concern is genuine or feigned. We hear snide remarks and stereotypes, but we also hear some love, support, and effort being made by our peers, professors, faculty, staff, and friends. We want Mines students as scientists and engineers not only to consider us as potential stakeholders, but also simply as human beings. It is great that Mines is incorporating the potential opinions of indigenous peoples into its curriculum, but we would love to be physically included in these conversations, whether that is by bringing in outside advice from Native Americans in STEM, Native American alumni of Mines, or through engagement with current Native American students. We know Mines is a great institution, that's why we're all here. But we hope that by bringing more first-hand expertise on indigenous issues, we can make Mines even better. ✨



Logo courtesy of AISES.

*The opinions expressed in the Opinion section strictly reflect the author's beliefs. They do not necessarily reflect the opinions held by our staff or the campus at-large. Contact us at [orediggerstories@gmail.com](mailto:orediggerstories@gmail.com) for any comments or questions.*



## Coping with COVID: The Importance of Maintaining a Routine - Part 2

Sarah F. Zaccarine

Staff Writer

*(Last week, we published a list of self-care tips and ideas on maintaining a routine. We are continuing that theme with more tips on how to best take care of yourself in these strange times.)*

**Get up and move:** Within the first few days of WFH I realized I had taken for granted the movement that came with my typical work schedule. Between meetings, seminars, classes, instrument time, and lab work, I rarely remained stationary for more than an hour at a time. This movement is crucial for my focus. At home, I get up every hour, stretch briefly, and go into another room to pet my cats or look out the window for a few minutes.

**Develop alternatives to screen time:** Working at home means working on a computer all day every day. Needless to say, this can lead to a headache that builds up and eventually doesn't

go away. I try to spend at least one day per weekend with limited screen time. I have also turned phone notifications off outside of extended business hours. My advisor knows it's still okay to contact me at any time, and we often communicate at odd times anyway. But having the ability to choose when I look at my phone in the evenings has had a hugely positive impact and lowered my stress and headaches.

**Make time for a creative outlet:** I perform and feel my best if I have both a physical and mental outlet for creativity. I don't force myself to focus on any one particular hobby; instead, I like to go with the flow when inspiration strikes. I make sure I am fostering my activities outside of work on a consistent basis to fire up the neurons in all parts of my brain. A challenging, intense workout is good for so many aspects of our physical and mental health, but nothing centers me as much as a simple walk or hike.

**Reach out:** Stay in touch with friends

and family. The "Zoom-boom" has reached everyone by now; at one point I ended up spending 15 hours on virtual socialization during one weekend! That defined my limit and since then I have pared back Zoom meetings significantly, while I make a concerted effort to text family and friends on a more consistent basis. This is a habit that quarantine has forced me to improve that I will benefit from for the rest of my life. Staying socially connected is more vital now than ever, and although it looks different, it is important to spend time connecting with your circles. Odds are, if you are stressed or lonely, they are, too.

**Be kind to yourself:** There are always going to be days or minutes when you just can't seem to be productive, and that is okay. I have been fortunate to stay motivated the past few months but staying happy and healthy is the highest priority. Sometimes ending work an hour early one day can keep you sharp for the rest of the week.

This list is by no means exhaustive

or mandatory, but if you are like me, you quickly discovered that working at home can eat up any sense of security or relief that can come from being at home. Now that I no longer arrive at home after a long day of work, I make sure to exit my workspace, get dressed into lounge clothes, and then go about my normal evening routine. Sticking with a routine has allowed me to harness the benefits while limiting its problematic aspects. It has also had the side effect of directing mental energy towards being grateful for the things good in my life. And I have had no choice but to develop a higher level of comfort with not being in control. Anxiety or panic may still come without warning, but I am much more adept at addressing it and sending it on its merry way. Functioning during a global pandemic is not easy, but there are still areas that are within our control. Once I realized that things were not going back to normal, it empowered me to create a new normal for myself. And lo and behold, things got better. 🌸

## Get Some Sleep

Leo Mungekar

Staff Writer

You've heard it before. The doctors, the media, the government, your parents- they all seem to parrot it: "Get more sleep". It says a lot that they spend so much time and energy emphasizing sleep. But it probably says more that none of us ever listen to them.

But why don't we ever follow their advice? Whenever I'm with my friends, we're always talking about our sleep. Namely, the lack of it. How someone pulled an all-nighter studying, or doing homework, or hanging out with friends. Your eyes will dart over the can of Red Bull placed on their desk. Some researchers did a study showing that the average college student gets less than 6 hours of

sleep a night. I can certainly believe it.

There's study after study showing how important it is to sleep, but nobody ever seems to listen. If you lose sleep, you won't be able to function the next day. You'll increase your chances of an early death, your brain will atrophy, and so on. There is so much research showing the negative effects of sleep deprivation, but nobody seems to care.

So, does anybody care? I'll ask my friend why they didn't just go to sleep, and they'll respond with the usual "I had stuff to do", "I was so busy", "I was working". Throughout the conversation, you get the notion their schoolwork was more important to them than their health. To me, this seems crazy. How can you value something as more important than your health if you're too tired to enjoy it?

During these discussions, there's always the sense that sleep is an admission of weakness. 'Sleep is something that only weak people do, didn't you know? Yeah, you seem surprised, but I'm one of those few people who can thrive on four or five hours a night. What's that, you slept eight hours? Well, that's just a shame, guess you aren't one of us.' The whole thing feels masochistic. It's like these people turn their lack of sleep into a merit, one that shows how busy and hard-working they are. In a sense, they lost sleep not because it was necessary, but to display their sense of "productivity" and "hard work".

When, as a culture, did we decide that a basic necessity such as sleep was disposable? Even though every doctor and health professional touts the fact that you need to sleep, they rarely seem to follow their own advice. It's like everybody knows the

correct option, but nobody is willing to choose it.

Maybe the whole thing is a result of workaholic culture. People seem to take a lot of pride in how much they work. Somebody will say they worked four hours, then another person will try to up the figure into six or seven or eight hours. In result, the whole thing feels like a pissing contest, and not one in which you'd want to win. After a while, you get a sense that people who claim to love work are really being dishonest with themselves. As if they lack a vision in their lives, so they direct all their energy towards their work. And, try as they might, they're unable to fill the hole within themselves, no matter how hard they try.

Go ahead, turn the lights off. Close the blinds and get some sleep. Or stay up working all night. It's your decision. 🌸

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## McNeil Hall: Mines' First Parking Garage & a New Academic Building

**Kayl Peck**

*Staff Writer*

In the last few years, it was often hard to find a place to park on campus. Not only is the student body increasing in number but starting this year freshmen were also able to purchase parking passes, and Mines has projects planned that will reduce their number of parking spaces elsewhere. In response to this, Mines has constructed a new parking garage. This new parking garage adds 600 new spaces, addressing the lack of available parking.

Along with it, on the side of the garage facing the Mines campus, a new academic building has also been added. McNeil Hall, named in honor of alumnus and trustee Charles "Charlie" McNeil '71 and his wife, Judy McNeil, is planned to mainly be used by the Engineering, Design & Society department. It will be the new home for Cornerstone and Capstone design, a newer space for collaboration

than the engineering annex.

As with other construction projects on campus, it wasn't quite finished on time, likely due to COVID-19 and other complications. Classes first started being held there mid-September, with professors holding class in other classrooms on campus or online until then.

The classrooms are designed to be effective collaboration spaces, with 6 display screens per room, walls you can write on, and a modern aesthetic, flexible in both furniture height and location. One of the professors using this new space, Carrie McClelland with the EDNS department, is excited about its possibilities: "McNeil is a fantastic space for learning in and collaborating. I see it being a lively hub of student activity in the future, where teams of students meet for classes, innovation challenges, and creative pursuits." The classrooms have a bit more space than the ones in the annex, which is appreciated especially in times like these. Although

it only appears to have a few classrooms per floor, they have large windows that overlook downtown Golden & the rest of the Mines campus. And, that is more classrooms than the engineering annex has, which is more suited to be an office space.

There are a few drawbacks, construction is still being finished up

so finding the proper building entrance can be confusing. And for now, you're subject to potential interruptions- like in the middle of class, some very loud drilling will start on the outside wall of your classroom. But in the future, it has the potential to be a new place for collaboration, and a nice new set of classrooms. 🌸



*Classroom side of McNeil Hall. Image courtesy of Kayl Peck.*

## Staff Spotlight: Meet One of Our New Graphic Artists



*Meet Molly Adams. Image courtesy of Lauren D'Ambra.*

**Lauren D'Ambra**

*Staff Writer*

*The Oredigger* has an impressive array of talented writers, editors, graphic designers, and photographers that help bring each issue to life. Each of our team members brings a unique perspective to the paper and help make each issue special. This week we met up with one of our graphic designers to share a little bit about the work that goes into each issue of *The Oredigger*. Molly Adams is one of our spectacularly talented graphic designers. She is a sophomore studying Chemical Engineering and double minoring in Space and Planetary Science and Explosive Engineering. We met up with Molly last week to talk about her work with *The Oredigger* and what's coming next!

**Q:** What made you want to be a part of *The Oredigger's* staff?

"I wanted to get involved with some-

thing on campus and I wanted to continue doing art somewhere,"

**Q:** How long have you been involved in graphic design?

"I took a graphic design class my sophomore year of high school and after that, I worked for my aunt and her marketing company. I made a lot of graphics for her and her clients. When I came to Mines I was like, 'Okay, this is science, not art, so I haven't done it in a while but I want to get back into it.'"

**Q:** Are there certain pieces you like to create more than others?

"It depends on what software I'm using. If I'm using Illustrator I can do pretty much anything since that's what I'm used to, but if I'm using Procreate I prefer to draw free hand,"

**Q:** What is your favorite graphic that you've done for *The Oredigger* so far?

"In this next issue (the one in your hand right now!) I drew a graphic of a donkey and an elephant to go with the article about the debate. I really like that one and I'm looking forward to drawing some more!" 🌸



## The Mandalorian Returns

**Lauren D'Ambra**

Staff Writer

Last October, fans of the *Star Wars* franchise waited patiently for the debut of a new *Star Wars* spin-off series: *The Mandalorian*. Little was known about the eight episode series, except for the general idea that the show would follow the adventures of a member of a well known race of galaxy bounty hunters. Needless to say, fans were hooked after the first episode and completely enthralled by the stoic Mandalorian and adorable Baby Yoda duo. *The Mandalorian* has since become a huge success and has gained quite a large following of old and new *Star Wars* fans alike.

Why has *The Mandalorian* enjoyed such a high degree of success? To start, the show focuses on a previously unconsidered portion of the *Star Wars* universe. Mandalorians have made appearances in other *Star Wars* movies and TV shows, but *The Mandalorian* is the first to focus exclusively on the adventures of a

Cont'd "Horoscopes" >>

**Capricorn:** Fun facts about other types of Corns; Candy corn is a sweet sugary Autumn themed treat. Candy Corns are hard granules of sugar that are used to preserve foodstuff, and giving them out at Halloween is more likely to get your house TP-ed than giving out just candy corn.

**Aquarius:** I asked Aquarius if they had any advice based on how they were coping with social distancing. It turns out if you are already 158 light-years from most of the people you communicate with not a lot has changed.

**Pisces:** By our powers combined, you will never see in a lab again; glasses, safety goggles, and face masks assemble!

**Aries:** Aries wants me to remind all of those reading who are eligible to vote to read up on the issues and candidates. Don't let election day be the exam that you didn't study for, after all, you'll never have to explain

bounty hunter. A new story located in a fictional world fans love seems to be a key component in the show's success. *The Mandalorian* also features the best aspects of the *Star Wars* universe: western inspired shootouts, daring prison escapes, X-Wings flying in to save the day, and an intense battle with an Imperial AT-ST. These components, broken into what is essentially eight mini-movies, keep fans excited and ready for more adventures.

Most notably, *The Mandalorian* has introduced a new *Star Wars* character, The Child, nicknamed "Baby Yoda" by fans. So far, *The Mandalorian* has followed Mando's relentless flight across the galaxy to protect Baby Yoda from the slew of other bounty hunters and ex-Imperial Stormtroopers following in their wake. Baby Yoda, while being the most adorable character any *Star Wars* fan has ever seen, is also a Force-sensitive being, leading fans to speculate about his mysterious origins and why the remaining dregs of the Empire are so interested in him

to your grandchildren why you said the point of a titration was to bore undergraduates, but you might have to explain to them how the way you voted in 2020 contributed to shaping their world.

**Taurus:** If you are looking for some quality ideas for virtual Halloween costumes this year, you can try buying a green sheet to cut a hole in and stick your face through. For about twenty dollars using the power of green screen technology, you can have a nearly infinite number of perfect costumes for virtual parties, plus if all else fails, you'll always have the backup of a standard sheet ghost.

**Gemini:** Remember when the scariest thing was a creepy man with an ax wearing a mask? Now the scariest thing would be a creepy man with an ax NOT wearing a mask.

**Cancer:** Further proof that 2020 doesn't make any sense what so ever; Steve from Minecraft made it into Smash ultimate before Waluigi did.

and his powers.

Baby Yoda aside, one of the most fascinating aspects of the show is not the epic space battles or visits to new planets as one might guess, but rather that most *Star Wars* fans agree that the show is amazing. The *Star Wars* fandom is known for its clashing discord over opinions of different movies and character adaptations and yet, very little in the way of disagreements has emerged regarding *The Mandalorian*. Most fans will even go

so far as to agree that it's one of the best *Star Wars* spin-offs produced over the years!

*The Mandalorian* will return for its second season on October 30, 2020. Until then, fans are left to guess what the new season has in store. Will Mando succeed in finding a safe place for himself and Baby Yoda? Will we finally learn about Baby Yoda's origins? Will other *Star Wars* characters be introduced? We'll have to wait and see!



Graphic courtesy of Lauren D'Ambra.

**Leo:** I'll admit that I thought it was kind of strange that at the beginning of the semester along with my face-masks I was given a painted rock. I took it home and set it on my desk not thinking too much about it. I realize now that I've probably spent more time around this rock in the last month than I spent around any other human being. I've also realized

I have a strong urge to call it Wilson for some reason. Does that mean I'm marooned at my desk?

**Virgo:** As we move into quarter four of 2020 remain sharp, you never know what tricks it has left up its sleeve. Virgo and I are starting a pool on what the last catastrophe of 2020 will be, my money is on a malevolent race of space chickens. 🐔



Graphic courtesy of Isabelle Goetz.



## Surprisingly Prophetic Horror Films

**Louis Cogan**

Staff Writer

Every year, during the month of Halloween's Eve, media consumers of all ages gather to watch horror movies as a celebration of the thrill and excitement stemming from various cultural, personal, and even instinctual fears. While the modern culture surrounding horror concentrates on enjoying classic films or discovering ones that will surprise/terrify with previously unseen visuals, an element of horror films sometimes forgotten is the thematic message utilizing horror to seize the viewer's attention and assert itself. Said themes do not always have to associate themselves with despondent issues or modern circumstances, but they do, sometimes, work so intelligently in their analysis of a given topic that their cautionary musings mutate into historic warnings. In the following list, we will examine four examples of horror films that eventually became too correct for comfort.

**Contagion:** Released almost ten years ago, *Contagion*, the story of multiple responses to a world-wide pandemic, almost seems ironic given the current circumstances. At first glance, one could argue the film to have been the basic hollywood blockbuster that desired for nothing more than to scare the audience and gather profit. In hindsight, one actually sees director Stephen Soderbergh and writer Scott Z. Burns were hypothesizing a realistic reaction to a subtle yet entirely possible international emergency. The CDC, proffering no hope or fear to the public as a method of influencing said public to combat the virus in pragmatic ways, Mitch Emhoff (played by Matt Damon), dealing with the day-to-day troubles of a limited society, both illuminate the issues of any given emergency that may seem calamitous in the moment but almost always subside with the power of human perseverance.

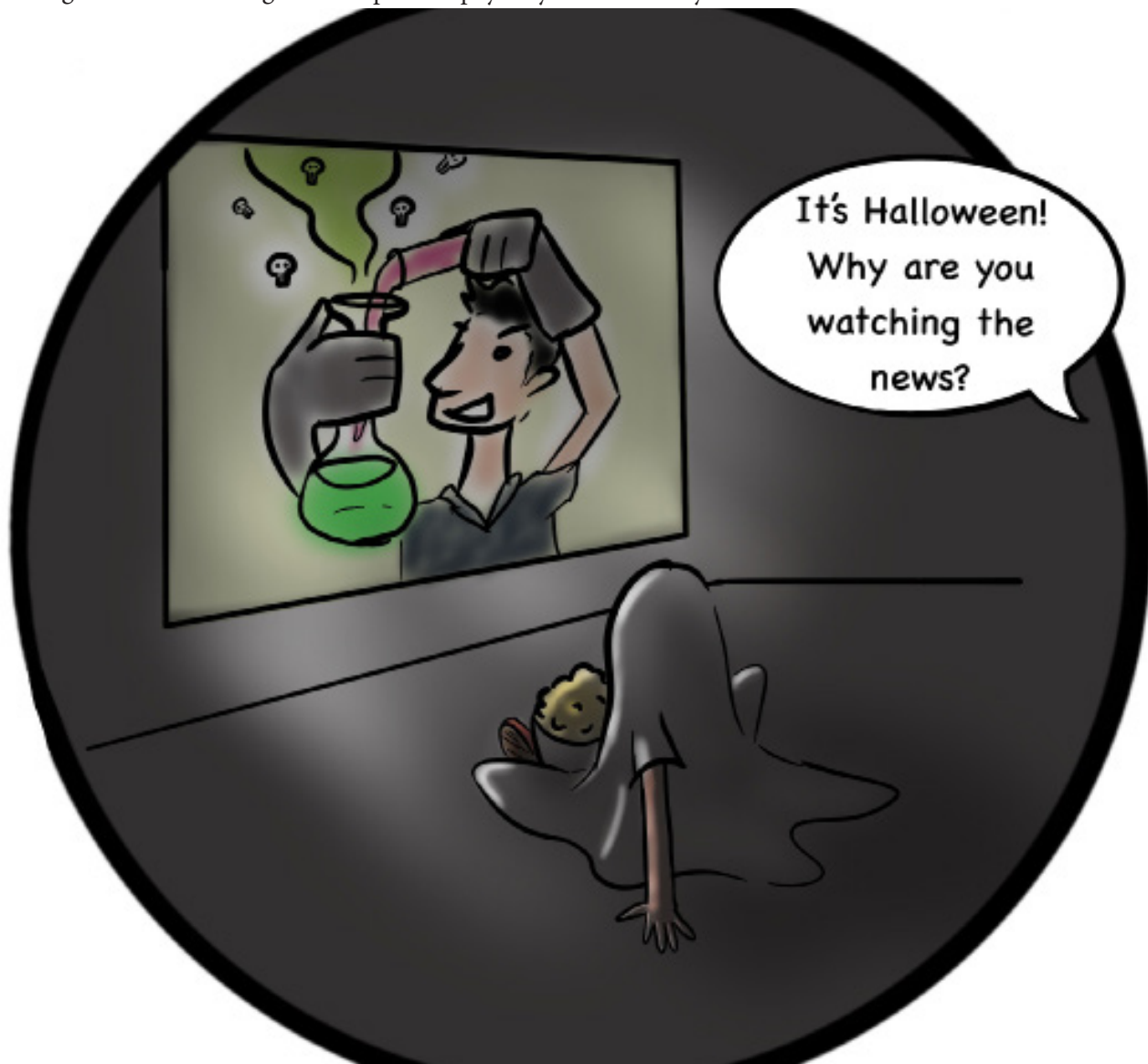
**Invasion of the Body Snatchers** (1978): The superior remake of *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* (1956), Lloyd Kaufman's sci-fi thriller stands

on nearly the same level as *The Exorcist* in terms of existential dread, though this is not its strongest attribute. In a time of shifting political, cultural, and societal norms, *Body Snatchers* hyperbolically demonstrated the mob mentality that will always try to maintain a given norm, regardless of its affiliation. Amid the progressive themes for women and independent lifestyles that were brought to the forefront of social protests by the late 1960's, the alien villains of the plot, known as "Pod People", refuse to allow any of this change for the sake of unified progress as a species. Individuals fighting cultural mobs does not even need Pod People to work in the present, since anyone could glance at Twitter and see more than enough evidence from all sides.

**The Blair Witch Project:** Aside from being the found-footage hor-

ror movie that changed the world by bringing its genre to the mainstream, 1999's *The Blair Witch Project* somewhat predicted the internet's obsession with fame, otherwise known as "clout chasing". Throughout the running time, several obvious, minacious incidents warning the main characters to escape and cut their losses are never actually heeded, for they only regard the potential success of their documentary. Once the real adversity begins (whether it be an actual witch or their insanity stemming from ill preparation to explore a forest), the characters have crossed a threshold where returning is not possible. Comparable instances have occurred all across various social media platforms, such as videos on train tracks that have killed participants, or the famous "choking challenge" that began as early as 2007. Sometimes, one must consider their fifteen minutes of fame when the price to pay may be their safety.

**Battle Royale:** If any Mines student has never seen this Japanese action-thriller, they should see it as soon as they can. Not only does *Battle Royale* offer superbly cheesy conflicts, but it also explains and defends the struggles of teenage students attempting to make successful lives for themselves despite the ridiculous amounts of competition that comes with it. When the classic free-for-all fight begins, the audience witnesses students' individual battles as a clear allegory for the overly competitive nature institutions instill in students to find the "best" candidates possible. Given the modern climate surrounding college acceptance, internships, and even somewhat higher level employment, anyone here at Mines--or just outside of it trying to navigate the expansive world of engineering--will witness *Battle Royale* as more of a student drama than a taut thriller. ✂



Graphic courtesy of Isabelle Goetz.

# Arts & Culture

Cont'd "PCJ" >>

opportunity to ask PCJ, who has not had an interview published in *The Oredigger* for several semesters, a variety of questions. In part one of this article, we will be covering questions that fall into two contrasting categories: fun and COVID-19.

## Fun:

**A question many students wondered but few have asked, "What does the 'C' stand for in PCJ?"**

"So usually I don't tell people until they're at least a sophomore. It's funny, freshmen will ask me and I say 'you gotta wait till next year to ask that.' [author's note: if you're a freshman, you are to skip to the next question or you will be quarantined without internet until next school year to ensure your silence].

But it stands for Carr. My grandfather on my father's side was born Paul Carr. He changed his name, I think in part to hide from his family for some reason or another, to George Johnson. And so my parents named me Paul Carr Johnson which is a sort of a blend of the two."

**We then asked PCJ what he eats for lunch every day. His answer was all too relatable.**

"I usually don't have a whole lot of time for lunch. It's typically two pieces of bread with a couple slices of provolone in between them, or a bagel with peanut butter on it."

**He then shared his thoughts on changing Mines Market to Miner Diner:**

"I did get an email from the student who was proposing that, and I said if you get the other students behind it, it's fine with me. The history of the Periodic Table is very similar. It's only been the Periodic Table for five years now and that was student-named. If

everybody liked Miner Diner and that made them happy when they go eat, that's good as far as I'm concerned."

**Shannon, our Editor-in-Chief, wanted to know if PCJ has a winogradsky column:**

"I don't have one of those, but our current microbiology experiment is a sourdough starter in the refrigerator. Not quite the same thing, but it's still microorganisms at work."

**We asked about everyone's favorite member of President Johnson's family (his dog, Ember).**

"[S]he really misses all the events on campus where she can get spoiled by students. Molly, our cat, is doing fine as well."

**Finally, what with the never-ending campus construction, we asked about PCJ's favorite building on campus (based on architectural style).**

"Ah, that's a good question. Let's see. I tend to be attracted more to the CoorsTek and Marquez Hall style. Something with a lot of glass, that you can look into it and look out of it at the same time. There are some older things on campus I like. I like the architecture of the president's house, the sort of castle-look is cool, you know?"

*Now that we've gotten that out of the way, we can get into the fun stuff! Wait--I might have that backwards. Anyway, despite how often he must discuss COVID-19, PCJ was happy to answer our coronavirus questions. Who knows--maybe his answers will go viral!*

**Re: Our Old Pal COVID**

**You've stated that you think Mines is doing well handling the pandemic. How have the students directly influenced how**

**the situation is handled here at the school (through things like virtual town halls, etc.)?**

"We have been learning from students along the way on a lot of things that we're doing. This summer, we experimented with some things and we got feedback from students who took the second summer session courses [in person]. . . We pilot tested all the things that we were going to do in the fall with those classes, so students got to provide input on that. In the town halls, I think you sometimes learn a lot just through the questions people ask and give you some insight into things.

For the students who have had to quarantine and isolate we're holding virtual Pizzas with the President with them. This week I've had two of those already with different groups of students and we ask them "How are you? How are the support and services and everything you're getting while you're under quarantine?" We're always listening because at the end of the day, we want to create an environment in which everybody just wants to do what's right. We're hanging in there so far, so we'll see."

**There is general student agreement that the Mines experience has been adversely affected by the hybrid environment (esp. upperclassmen), how do you justify not lowering tuition?**

"This is a kind of a complex one, but I'll try to break it down into a few steps. Our goal going into this semester, much like the last semester is, let's set up something so everybody can make progress towards graduation. [This was] number one: offering all the things we would normally offer in a way that you could participate in your education in any way you felt comfortable.

Some of our students did not feel comfortable coming back to

school, but they don't want to take a semester off. So we said okay, we'll make sure you can be in the classes you need to be in. We also have students who periodically had to quarantine and isolate. Some classes are fully remote as well. Then we have to work within county health restrictions, the constraints of campus (classroom capacities had to reduce 50% or more from what they were before, faculty who some cannot come into the classroom and teach).

And so we put all that together and then, as you've discovered, we also said we can't offer everything in-person. But we also said let's see if we can get to 70% of some in-person component of all classes. So that was another target in all of this. And then we had decided since they're not all going to be in-person, are we going to just randomly do it or is there going to be some systematic approach? We made this strategic decision this fall that – actually, every student I've ever talked to tends to agree with it – we're going to bias it towards the first-year students because they need to build community. Community is so important to all of you so let's bias it towards the first-year students this semester so they do build community.

We're looking at the spring to get about 80% of courses to have at least some in-person component, and there'll be a bias towards juniors and seniors. I totally understand the frustration of some people's parts. Clearly, not all of us are wired to be remote learners, not all teachers are wired to be remote teachers, and not all course material fits a remote format. But I do think we're delivering what we told people we were going to deliver. So that's part of the story. The other part of the story is the state significantly reduced its investment in higher education. This year, state funding was re-

Cont'd on Page 13>>



Other years we haven't had fall sports

## BERTA TO MADDEN PASS BEATS FARMERS IN LAST 2 MINUTES

BIG SEVEN TEAM LOSES 19 TO 14 SATURDAY

Madden, Moe, and Katzenstein Are Standouts Of Colorado Mines Team

*A recap of a Mines victory over Colorado State in 1959 on the eve of WWII.*

*Image courtesy of Mines Athletics.*

**Jeremiah Vaile**

*Staff Writer*

We are all accustomed to hearing about sports regularly. In public, students and others may make small talk about the weekend's sports games including football at both professional and college levels. In March though, most sports came to a halt with the rise of the coronavirus pandemic. Before restrictions on sports and gatherings, many students planned to attend their college's football games this fall. With these new restrictions, the Rocky Mountain Athletic Conference decided it would not be safe

or feasible to host all the regular fall sports for colleges in the conference. While RMAC cross country and golf teams may participate in competition during the fall season, football, soccer, and volleyball have all been postponed to the spring.

It is hard to imagine a time where an NCAA Division II college is not participating in sports, but at Mines, and many other colleges across the nation and world, this is the reality. Since Colorado School of Mines canceled in-person classes and events in March, Mines students have attended only three NCAA competitions: Golf has competed in two tournaments

in Colorado, and the cross country team hosted a scrimmage against Colorado Christian University at the Stermole Track.

This summer, we frequently heard the word, "unprecedented," associated with the coronavirus pandemic, but a look into the history of Mine's athletics show that although rare, cancellation or postponement of sports seasons has happened before. This year, Colorado School of Mines' football team plans to play in the spring. Mines has only had football games in the spring once before. The Orediggers played one game in January and one game in February of their first season in the 1888-1889 academic year.

The football team has also faced the challenges of having regular seasons during the 1918 flu pandemic and World War Two. The 1918 season began after the football team's coach was drafted for World War I, and pandemic threats started looming around Golden. The team was able to find a new coach, but much like now, public health officials in Golden and other locations decided the fate of football gatherings. Although there was no strict guidance over lengthy periods, several games

were canceled, and one home game was even played without fans. The Orediggers finished the altered 1918 football season of 4 games with a 4-0 record.

The Orediggers also had a reduced season in 1943 followed by two seasons without football due to World War II. The 1943 season began with one game against the Denver Pioneers before the number of players in the military and wartime restrictions on travel and more forced the team to not play. In 1944 and 1945, the Orediggers did not return to football with too many students and athletes still in the military. By fall 1946 the Orediggers returned to football once more. Colorado School of Mines has continued to play every fall without missing a game up until this year's entire fall season was canceled. Oredigger football plans to return this spring as the defending RMAC champions with a perfect regular season of 11 wins and 0. This will be the first time in nearly 80 years the team will not play in the fall and the first time in over 100 years the team plays a game in spring. ❀

Cont'd "PCJ" >>

duced by about half a billion dollars. All the universities got a cut to their state budgets. So that went down pretty significantly.

The cost to the university actually went up pretty significantly. All of the technology that we had to install over the summer so that everybody could participate in their classes in some way or another had to all be put in rapidly. We have free testing on campus. I could point to a whole lot of other things. Plus, staff are doing jobs they have had to pick up just to make this all work. Faculty who are teaching in-person classes are working two-three times harder than they've ever had to. In some ways, the real questions would be "why didn't tuition go up" as opposed to "why it didn't go down" because if you look at all of the

factors they would all point to significant tuition increases. So we made a decision to keep tuition flat. To do that we had to do some other things: faculty and staff did not get raises this year. The senior administration is taking a 10% pay cut through a furlough program. So the way I kind of look at it is that the campus has done everything they could in the situation that we're in to just hold tuition where it is."

**How have you been personally throughout this year? How are you staying connected with students?**

"I think, like all of you, I'm just tired of this. It's a strange period because a lot of us on campus feed off the energy of the students. I would normally spend at least an hour to have my meetings every

day sitting in the Periodic Table. I just love that energy. I get a little bit of it from still being in the classroom, get some from these kinds of interactions. I still have coffee with students.

I think you had an article last edition that was suggestions for students staying well in the COVID era. Set up a schedule, have a plan, make sure there's a structure to your life and I think that applies to all of us. It's challenging. The one thing that I think keeps me going is just how everybody's doing as a campus and just being so proud of what we've been able to do at Mines.

It's a never-ending constant decision-making process and you can kind of get tired from making decisions all the time. Especially when just about everybody on campus and all their relatives have

pretty strong opinions on what should be going on. It's an interesting time but... at the end of the day, I still get up every morning excited to be here and feeling very fortunate to be part of Mines."

*So there you have it--our President's thoughts on everything from winogradsky columns to tuition during COVID-19. We enjoyed the chance to sit down and have a candid discussion with PCJ and are glad that we have the opportunity to share the result with you. Make sure to come back for part two, though; the second half of the interview covered President Johnson's perceptions of and goals for the Mines community in addition to his thoughts on the preservation of Mines's historic President's house. ❀*

# Health+Wellness

## What The Counseling Center Is Doing To Help Mines Students This Semester



*The Counseling Center is now trying to help Mines students virtually. Image courtesy of Colorado School of Mines.*

**Sarah Zaccarine**

*Staff Writer*

By this point, keeping our immune systems healthy has become routine: washing our hands for a full 20 seconds, wearing a mask, and staying 6 feet apart is second nature. But there is another part of us in need of extra care: our minds! Fortunately, the Mines Counseling Center has created a diverse variety of virtual programming and counseling options to keep our mental health in good condition.

The Counseling Center was considering ways to expand its services to reach more students, and the pandemic accelerated this transition. To accommodate a large uptick in need observed last fall, staffing increases have helped the center adapt resources for the surge expected from COVID-19. The biggest change of the semester has been the switch to virtual mode.

To prepare for new demands, the Counseling Center developed a teletherapy capability over the summer. This service allows students to meet 1-on-1 with a Mines counselor on Zoom. Teletherapy is research-based and has been used in many practices since the 1930s when psychiatrists would meet with military person-

nel over the phone. It's still best to be in the room together so the behavior scientists can assess mood, affect, and body language, says Sterling Fabinski, LCSW, LAC, Assistant Director of Training at the Mines Counseling Center; however, virtual counseling is convenient and can remove barriers for some people to get services they need. It may take some time for students to test out this new form of accessing care, but as Fabinski states, "Even if it only reaches one person that would have been reticent to come in for in-person communication, if it meets one person's needs, that's enough." All Mines students also have access to AHP Live Care, which provides online counseling with any counselor in the database.

Beyond individual counseling appointments, the Counseling Center offers many options and resources depending on a student's needs. A full list of programs, events, and services can be found on the Mines Counseling Center website.

If you aren't sure what you're looking for, the 15-minute phone consult is the perfect way to get your foot in the door. Students can speak with one of the clinicians about any topic or question, including getting resources, planning an appointment, expressing concern about a friend, or

just talking to someone about a bad day. There are no expectations or required next steps after the call, notes Fabinski, since that can quickly feel like more work.

"It's meant to ask, what are you really looking for? What are your goals, and how do we help you make a plan to meet them? Instead of us assuming it's a one-size-fits-all, because I think that's a huge obstacle," says Lauren Jensen, LCSW, the Outreach Coordinator at the Counseling Center. "Some people feel like they don't know what they need, so finding time for a whole hour-long session is daunting, especially when that might not necessarily be what they need."

The short phone consult has been especially helpful this semester when many students need help but aren't sure what options are available. Drop-in hours have expanded and are held by Mines counselors on Mondays, Tuesdays, and Thursdays from 11:30 am-12:30 pm and allow students to obtain brief, personalized 1-on-1 virtual support.

Peer-to-peer listening groups are an option for those seeking a small group setting rather than an individual appointment and are run by a Mines Peer Educator and a Counseling Center Graduate Social Work Intern. Fabinski supervises the interns,

who get clinical experience at Mines by running programs and providing resources. Peer Educators are Mines students who have been certified by NASPA and specialize in either mental health, healthy relationships, or personal wellness. This is a new program that was introduced during the 2019-2020 school year for students to get support from their peers, which can be more approachable for someone new to counseling services. "It serves as a safe, welcoming space for students to come in and talk to other student leaders about things they're struggling with, even if they're just feeling lonely and want to chat" says Marisa Macias, a Peer Educator at Mines. "We know that there's stigma, we know that going to the counselor for the first time and having to talk about your feelings to a stranger can be scary. So that's why we created these peer listening groups. We hope it helps to attract different people that maybe wouldn't necessarily go to the counseling center on their own." The support groups meet via Zoom Wednesdays at 4 pm and Fridays at noon.

The Counseling Center also offers a wide variety of additional programs that aim to equip students with resources, skills, and knowledge to care for their mental health during good times and bad. Jensen, who develops many of the programs, says, "It's well known that anxiety and depression are very common mental health concerns across the nation on college campuses, so we really work hard to address those specific topics. We try to have specific things that can be proactive or prevention-focused as well as, when things are just falling apart, how do we still get you the help you need?" The programs include:

The virtual self-care kit that was developed this summer for students to incorporate into their schedule and a fall version will come out soon.

Monthly skills seminars, which cover a range of topics including self-care, test anxiety, and managing screen time. The seminars have been shortened from 60 to 30 minutes to avoid Zoom fatigue, and a short intro

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Cont'd "What Mines Counseling" >>

video is provided for students to view before registering or as a replacement if they can't attend the full seminar.

Mindful Mondays, a popular guided meditation, has now expanded and takes place on Mondays from 3-3:30 pm as well as Thursdays, Fridays, and Sundays from 8-8:30 pm. Student organizations and departments can also request workshops, which can be held either via Zoom or in person, depending on the size of the group.

In addition to scheduled workshops and counseling sessions, the Counseling Center emphasizes the importance of practicing self-care in our daily lives. "Mines attracts high-achieving, driven, creative, highly-motivated individuals. And there is so much happening in our world right now and our personal

lives. What would it be like to expect a tiny bit less from ourselves? Not to slack off, not to say 'I don't care' or lose all motivation, but to give ourselves a tiny bit of a break, to realize, you know what, I'm doing the best I can," asks Jensen. Part of this, she explains, is understanding that self-care may look different right now, and that's okay. It's also important to take care of our physical and cognitive selves as well as comforting ourselves because sometimes that's what we need the most.

"I think it's important to remind yourself and others that productivity isn't a measure of your self-worth. Sometimes you need to let yourself rest, and that looks different for everyone," says Macias. "For some people, that could be taking a nap, reading a book, playing with an animal, going for a walk. If arts and crafts or painting is restful for you, if that's re-

laxing, then do that. But don't stress yourself out and pressure yourself to be a productive human when the world is on fire."

It's easy to feel overwhelmed by adding anything to our schedules, even self-care. As a simple and quick exercise, Jensen recommends trying the S.T.O.P. technique. First, stop and stand up to get your body into a different space. Next, tune in and take a breath; feel your feet on the ground, turn inward, and feel yourself breathing. Then, observe how you are feeling. Are you tense or tired? What thoughts are in your head? Finally, ask yourself what you need today, and then proceed. Taking a few minutes to center yourself can extend positivity throughout the rest of your day. Although there are days when it feels like the world is ending, it is okay and important to still find moments of gratitude and optimism.

"I think it's actually quite powerful to think, my life right now is so extremely hard, and I hate it, but I am choosing to keep going anyway. That is resilience," says Jensen.

This semester is allowing the Counseling Center to explore how virtual options can supplement in-person care that they have offered in the past. Jensen is looking forward to analyzing the data from this semester to make the Spring semester even better for students and to develop a hybrid model going forward to keep virtual options even once normal life is restored. As Fabinski explains, "The cool thing is trying to look at some of these changes as an opportunity. It's an opportunity to offer more than we used to, to be more cutting edge, and to be more available in different ways to meet different needs, and maybe remove some barriers that were there before." ❀

## What It's Like Being Quarantined On Campus



*Sticky notes on windows are being seen a lot more than usual due to quarantine. Image courtesy of Kayl Peck.*

**Jade Glaister**  
Staff Writer

Although many thought that Mines' campus would be closed by now, it's still open! The techniques being used by Mines are doing a fantastic job of conquering the spread of COVID-19. One method that many of us are all too familiar with is the infamous quarantine. While we experienced a taste of this in March, the

conditions were likely different from the quarantine method that Mines is utilizing for on-campus dorms. This two-week quarantine takes place when a positive COVID-19 test arises. While the student that tested positive is moved into isolation, those that shared a bathroom with them are sent into quarantine. The terms of this quarantine dictate that all quarantined individuals cannot leave their dorm room except for going to

the bathroom and a restricted time frame to go outside in unpopulated areas, which some individuals have called "recess." Fortunately, not every residence hall has experienced quarantine; however, one has gone through it twice.

Overall, those that have been quarantined rate their experience quite poorly. For some, the worst part was the food. While Mines Market has been generous in providing food to those in quarantined dorm rooms, the food combinations are not to everyone's taste. One such example includes a cheeseburger pizza. While some may find that appetizing, it does not have the same effect on all palates. Luckily, many food options are offered to accommodate various diets; but, losing the freedom to choose one's meals is not ideal. Another notable negative of quarantine is the struggle of maintaining one's sanity. While many take it for granted, simply taking a walk outside as a nice break or just to clear one's mind is very comforting. This was stated as one of the hardest aspects of quarantine because staring at a wall is incomparable to the magic of outside.

Fortunately, we are Mines students. Due to this, homework does a lovely job of keeping those in quar-

antine entertained and busy. Less painful forms of entertainment involve watching a plethora of movies and tv shows, painting, inventing fun new snacks, and even practicing the french horn, much to the enjoyment of that particular individual's roommate. The most interesting component of quarantine is how these students continue to communicate with others. While many noted that they were able to utilize the lifesaving tool of video calls, I found that some had decided to use more unconventional modes of communication. This included waving outside the window at strangers with the hope of them waving back in addition to decorating their windows with sticky notes. While some consisted of incredible art skills and Spongebobs, others were writing messages to neighboring halls in quarantine.

Although none of these students would recommend going into quarantine for fun, I am glad that they were still able to find creative ways to stay entertained, communicate with others, and not lose their minds. Despite the downs of stale cookies with an unfortunate resemblance to hammers, there were still the ups of discovering frozen orange juice and sticky note art. ❀

## Marvin The Miner is Missing!

Find him hidden somewhere in Issue 3 for the chance to winner an *Anthony's Pizza* giftcard! Send entries to [oredig@gmail.com](mailto:oredig@gmail.com) to be entered into the raffle.

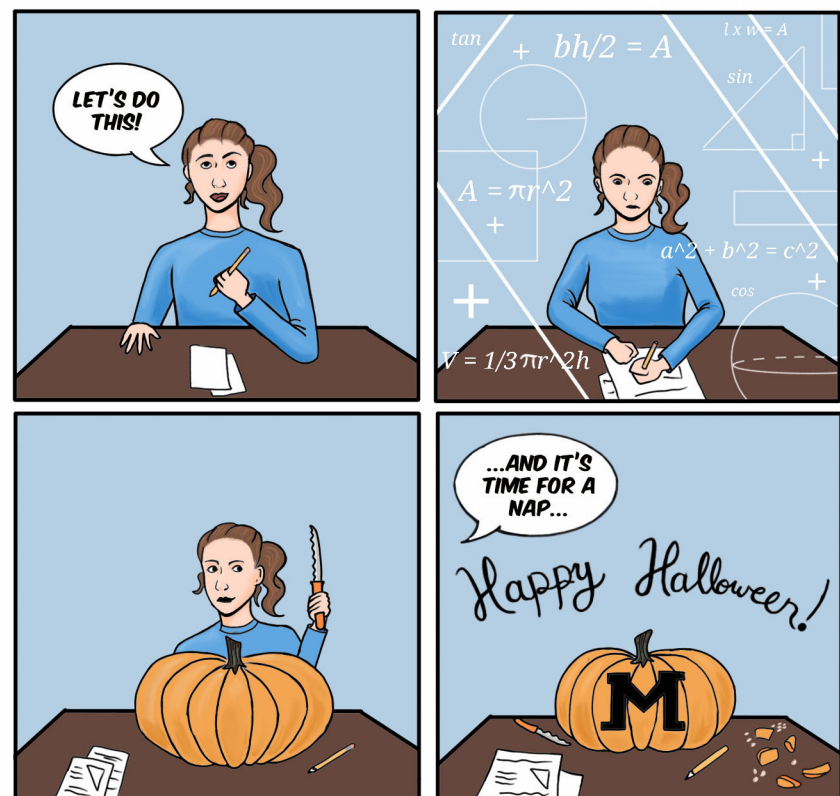
Note: He will be a smaller version of the following graphic.

*Image courtesy of tokyodachi.*



Complete the wordsearch or make your own Origami Hummingbird and email a picture to [oredig@gmail.com](mailto:oredig@gmail.com) to be entered into the raffle for a *Cafe 13* giftcard!

*The autumn wordsearch (below) and comic strip (to the right) are courtesy of Lauren D'Ambra.*



## AUTUMN WORDSEARCH

R W C J Y W K N D H R L O J V L  
F E T A W S M J O X E E F X N L  
E R B T R U Z M M J D A R G S P  
Q E J M T A E I D T X V Y Y M K  
U W K U E C M W O R C E R A C S  
I O A C O T H E L X O S Y U C D  
N L C M O A P L L R Y W G O R F  
O F I H R R A E A O H P G U L C  
X N J V I B N N S R E B O T C O  
G U E S T L G N W K J G F C C Q  
T S W O Z E L M I O A C O M S G  
T C O A A B K Y A K L E G G E L  
O F H A Y S T A C K P L O C L Y  
H S A U Q S P I C E Z M E N P U  
N U X O O T D S Q E D D U Y P K  
B A S K E T F G G R L P M P A W

APPLES	FOOTBALL	PUMPKIN
AUTUMN	GOURD	RED
BASKET	HARVEST	SCARECROW
CARAMEL	HAYSTACK	SEPTEMBER
CHILLY	HOMECOMING	SPICE
CORN	LEAVES	SQUASH
EQUINOX	OCTOBER	SUNFLOWER
FOGGY	ORANGE	YELLOW

### Origami Hummingbird

Paper and folding design by  
Jacque Lynn Davis  
[flickr.com/photos/jacquedavis/](https://www.flickr.com/photos/jacquedavis/)

### Color your Own

