

Humanities Montana
Schwartz Prize Nomination (COVID response category)
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Program Name: Humanities Montana Weekly Digital and DIY Humanities Email

Brief Description: Since Monday, March 30, 2020 Humanities Montana has created and distributed 27 weekly, interactive emails that allow Montanans to engage with original humanities content while they shelter in place. Under the leadership of the Humanities Montana program officer, Digital and DIY Humanities is collaboratively produced by the full staff and distributed to over 5,000 Montanans each week via e-mail.

Program Overview and Aims: In the days following statewide closedown and shelter-in-place directives due to COVID, Humanities Montana cancelled in-person programming such as Think and Drink community panels, Hometown Humanities site visits, and Montana Conversations and Speakers in the Schools presentations. Humanities Montana partnering organizations and regrantees all over the state similarly ceased humanities programming scheduled to take place at libraries, museums, schools, and through civic organizations.

Montana is a geographically large state with a primarily rural populace. In the early weeks of the pandemic, a nation-wide survey found that 61.5% of Americans said they felt “socially isolated” most of the time.¹ Because 77.4% of Montana’s population lives in rural communities, that isolation was even more compounded by the temporary closures of communities’ cultural infrastructure such as schools, libraries, and museums—where many Montanans receive access to Humanities Montana programming.

In the spirit of Gather Round, our successful DIY humanities tool kit, our staff began producing, writing, and creating a weekly “do it yourself” humanities e-digest in late March. Each edition contains original writing from Humanities Montana staff, discussion prompts about humanities-based “big questions,” and videos featuring humanities scholars, writers, and community leaders. The strength of this project is its original, staff-produced content; its regular, weekly distribution; and its ability to meet Montanans where they are at—in their homes in geographically removed communities, in their offices in urban centers, or in their classrooms in Tribal communities.

Although the Digital and DIY Humanities format has changed from the first weeks of distribution, the substance and spirit of each edition has remained consistent with four discrete components.

1. A **Dear Reader** letter written by a Humanities Montana staff member opens each edition. This “Dear Reader” section includes reflection on current events such as COVID isolation, racial protests and calls for justice, or, simply, the changing of the seasons. Each staff member includes links to books, educational resources, music, documentaries, and podcasts that have cultivated their knowledge or sustained their spirits during the pandemic.
2. **Our Humanities Perspective This Week** is a section based on concepts from philosophy or other humanities discipline along with a related discussion prompt. The staff take turns writing this

¹ Source: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7255345/>

section with the aim of communicating complex theories from the humanities into every day realities and Montana life. Recent topics have included the political history of Labor Day, the role of adversity in living a full life, the limitations of language in imagining a better world, and the social history of the novel.

3. Each issue contains a prompt from our in-house produced **Gather Round** DIY humanities tool kit. These prompts contain a quote or discussion question around the topic of home, identity, and community from the anthology *Hearth*.
4. **Video content** on a humanities topic, usually originally produced by Humanities Montana staff, is also included in each Digital and DIY Humanities. Recent video topics have included brief presentations on “Latinx in Montana” or the forgotten stories of Chinese immigrants in Montana. Other video components have included “Shelter In Poetry” videos from the Montana poets laureate, as well as content from our Montana Conversations experts. DIY and Digital Humanities videos are archived on our website for home and classroom reference:
<https://www.humanitiesmontana.org/virtual-humanities/>

Representative examples of the Digital and DIY emails can be viewed on the web with live links at these urls:

Week 7: <https://humanitiesmontana.salsalabs.org/digitalanddiyhumanities7>

Week 10: <https://humanitiesmontana.salsalabs.org/digital-and-diy-humanities-10>

Week 17: <https://humanitiesmontana.salsalabs.org/digital-and-diy-humanities-17>

Week 21: <https://humanitiesmontana.salsalabs.org/digital-and-diy-humanities-21>

Week 22: <https://humanitiesmontana.salsalabs.org/digital-and-diy-humanities-22>

Week 24: <https://humanitiesmontana.salsalabs.org/digital-and-diy-humanities-24>

Week 25: <https://humanitiesmontana.salsalabs.org/digital-and-diy-humanities-25>

Examples are also saved as pdfs at the end of this document, but links in the email text are not live and add a significant amount of content each week.

Public Impact: Digital and DIY Humanities is distributed to 5,060 Montanans in 172 different communities through our already existing database of those signed up for our monthly newsletters. The response to Digital and DIY Humanities has been very enthusiastic, and each week we receive several comments on its original content and thought-provoking discussion prompts:

"In March, two weeks into the lock-down, I was astounded to see Humanities Montana's Digital and DIY Humanities newsletter. A rapid and effective response indeed! A brief check of other councils indicated nothing similar going on elsewhere. Not only were this and subsequent weekly Humanities Montana newsletters humanities-laden, and relevant to the times, but they also provided the Montana public an opportunity to see a staff, rising to the occasion in the only medium available, that was fully engaged in addressing the issues. Bravo, brava, Humanities Montana!"

--Mark Sherouse, former Humanities Montana executive director

“Every time I see the Humanities Montana's Digital and DIY Humanities newsletter in my in-box, I look forward to reading it--it is the only newsletter I never delete! I so appreciate the accessible and very well considered content, and I often find myself thinking about the topics, readings, and videos for days. The newsletter helps us find time for critical thinking and creativity while we live our everyday lives, which in the past six months has meant no going out for readings, theater, meetings or drinks. I am grateful I can find that richness in my in-box.”

--Natalie Peeterse, Helena, Montana, poet and director of Open Country Press

“I just wanted to tell you how much I enjoy these newsletters and the thought-provoking content that you create. Parenting teenagers right now is very hard... [t]heir online life seems so different from my summer gathering with friends, sneaking cigarettes, and talking about BIG ISSUES. I sometimes use your posts to start big issue conversations with my boys and am reassured that they are still engaged with the real world, even when they spend so much time in virtual relationships. So, thanks, for your work to keep us all engaged in the humanities, when humanity is having so much trouble engaging with one another.”

--Molly Stockdale, Lolo, Montana

From comments such as these, we know that teachers and homeschooling parents use the content and links to enhance remote learning, and that families use the discussion prompts around the kitchen table. The weekly consistency of the Digital and DIY Humanities emails also helped us raise our statewide profile as we promoted CARES Act grant applications in April and May and a Virtual Town Hall in the summer.

Financial Structure and Sustainability: Humanities Montana was able to develop this creative and impactful COVID innovation without significant additional expense to the council. Program staff who otherwise would have been consumed with organizing and attending in-person programs shifted to creating and developing Digital and DIY Humanities. There were some minor start-up costs with our web design consultant, but now the program format has become standardized with minimal weekly expenses other than staff time. Indeed, with some staff restructuring due to changes in personnel and leadership in the spring and summer, staff time will be available to continue this popular and effective program into the foreseeable future.

Conclusion: Adaptations to COVID gave Humanities Montana the opportunity to strategically consider how to bring the humanities to Montana communities in a time of crisis, and to illustrate the value of the humanities as an “essential service.” COVID allowed us to imagine and carry out the possibility of an ambitious and collaborative project that puts the humanities in the hands of our constituents.

Humanities MONTANA

Digital and DIY Humanities Week #7

Humanities Montana acknowledges that we are in the homelands of Indigenous people. We offer our respect for their history and culture, and for the path they have always shown us in caring for this place for generations to come.

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Dear Reader,

I'm sure we all worry these days about what lies ahead for us—as Montanans, as North Americans, as global citizens—in the wake of this pandemic. While some voices clamor for a resumption of business as usual, I'm certain we can do much better than to embrace the old status quo.



We are on the cusp of an epoch, an historical moment where the global community is threatened with cataclysmic transformation. Our institutions are shaken to their foundations, and we have a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to embrace change. Because our job is to help expand people's horizons, we present you this week with more ideas for your consideration.

I hope you will not only read the philosophy piece, another gem from Sierra Cornelius, our work study employee, but that you will also explore the links she provided. She offers plenty of food for thought. And allow me to share [this little inspiring gem](#) forwarded by a longtime friend of Humanities Montana and former chair of our board, Jamie Doggett of White Sulphur Springs.

Let's dust off our instincts and come together to address today's challenges.

*Yours,
Scott*

Our Philosophy This Week

At the beginning of this year, the United Nations [warned](#) that inequality is growing for more than 70 percent of the global population, exacerbating social divisions and impeding economic and social development. But nobody could predict the way that COVID-19 would accentuate “the harsh realities of a deeply unequal global landscape.” While the virus does not discriminate against class, race, religion, gender, or sexual orientation, our institutions do. The pandemic is unmasking a global society driven by structural, social, and economic [inequalities](#) present in our healthcare systems, prisons, nursing homes, tribal reservations, social services, individual residential, educational, and employment opportunities, and so much more. We must confront what the virus has proved: inequality is not inevitable; the social order is what people make it to be.

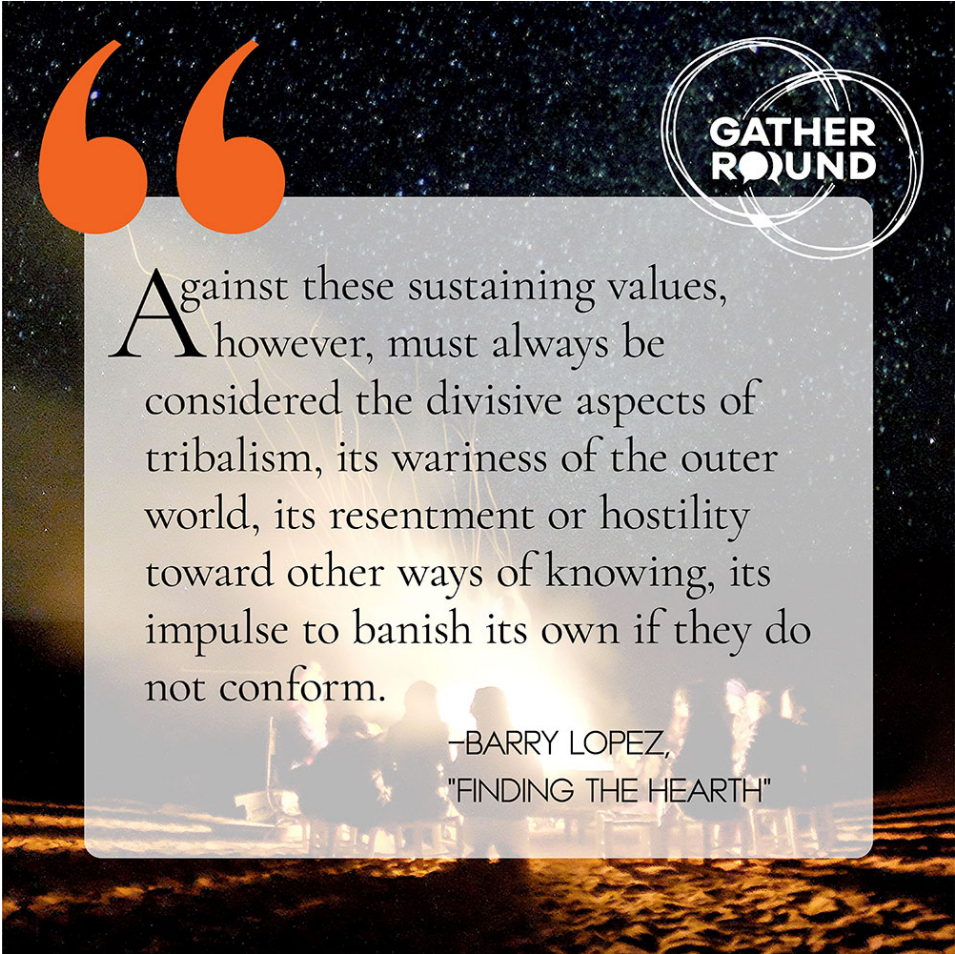
The January [report](#) from the UN declared that “concerted, coordinated and multilateral action” on a national and international level is needed to confront inequality within and among countries. Over the past few weeks [changes](#) thought to be impossible or unaffordable have happened globally overnight. This unfolding crisis continues to invite us to confront the deep weaknesses in our systems and incorporate change into the “new normal” for a [greener](#), [kinder](#), and [fairer](#) future for people and the planet. Find out how [here](#).

What ethical
issues have you
noticed during
this pandemic?



Gather Round

Use this Gather Round quote at home—have a conversation with the people you are closest to or [reply to this email](#) to send your thoughts to us.



Montana Conversations



At our Humanities Happy Hour this week, professional storyteller and former librarian Mo Reynolds tells fables and teaches listeners how to tell exciting stories to the kids in their lives, or anyone! [Register on Zoom.](#)

#ShelterInPoetry



Former Montana Poet Laureate Lowell Jaeger reflects on hope and despair, privilege and inequality in two new poems.

Support the Humanities

As we embark on the first phase of a statewide reopening, we remain unwavering in our dedication to our mission; we pride ourselves on our ability to provide meaningful discussions and connection in Montana's communities. To curb cultural loss and help fill the void of human connection, we have shifted our approach, bringing digital humanities programming to your living rooms. As we wait out our return to normalcy, please consider helping us facilitate human interaction and original, digital programming in our communities.

SUPPORT

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EMAIL**



If you like our Digital and DIY Humanities content, share [the link to subscribe](#) on social media or forward it to a friend.

Certitude and belief, hearthward, news from the source

Humanities MONTANA

Digital and DIY Humanities Week #10

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Dear Reader,

This week we send you the tenth edition of our DIY humanities email. When we began creating these in March, we'd just entered a new and uncertain world and were reacting as best we could when bringing people together was no longer a safe option. We began experimenting with digital content and virtual programs and



you've responded generously and with enthusiasm. I look forward to seeing fresh faces each Friday afternoon in our happy hour. It's a lovely way to end the weeks, which sometimes feel undefined as the days at home blend together.

While many of our decisions around programming in a pandemic have been made with "an abundance of caution," this has also been a time for taking risks on new ways of doing things. I'm often inspired by [Austin Kleon's newsletter](#) and a modern poem each day from [Pome by Matthew Ogle](#) like [this one](#). As we begin to gather in public spaces again we hope to take what we have learned to improve our organization, just as we hope our society improves from the lessons of these trials.

*Sincerely,
Sam*

Our Philosophy This Week

Too often we go through life seeing reality not as it really is but as we want, fear, or expect it to be, and we confuse the confidence and certainty of our beliefs with the truth. And yet how are we to be sure that what we see and understand is real? Plato, undoubtedly one of history's greatest thinkers, explored this same question nearly 2,400 years ago with his famous [Allegory of the Cave](#)—a masterful figurative inquiry into the nature of reality — found in Book VII of his *Republic*. Plato's allegory demonstrates how, "Most people are not just comfortable in their ignorance, but hostile to anyone who points it out."

Distinctions between truth and certitude are vital, especially today, as political propaganda preys upon the public's desire for certitude and shapes our reality. Austrian-British philosopher, [Karl Popper](#), asserts that "science is our greatest hope" on our quest for truth because "its method is the correction of error." The great American astronomer and champion of reason, [Carl Sagan](#), believed that the greatest promise science offers is "a way to call the bluff of those who only pretend to knowledge. It is a bulwark against mysticism, against superstition, against religion misapplied to where it has no business being. If we're true to its values, it can tell us when we're being lied to."

How do you
know what
sources are
reliable? How do
we grapple with
uncomfortable
truths?



Gather Round

Gather Round encourages Do-It-Yourself humanities at home—have a conversation with the people you are closest to or [reply to this email](#).

Hearthward was the adverb
that
should have modified
everything I said

and did from the first days of
our marriage.

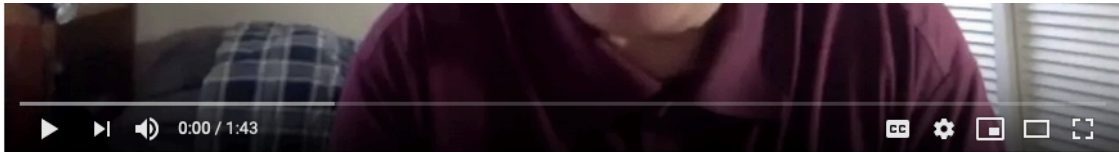
Toward, or in the direction of,
the hearth, as in: What can I
do to help?

—CHRISTOPHER MERRILL,
"HEARTH"



Montana Conversations





At our Humanities Happy Hour this week, journalism professor Dennis Swibold will talk about navigating the “infodemic,” going to the source, and Stanford’s media literacy curriculum that can help us all figure out what’s going on. Register at <https://tinyurl.com/news-zoom> to join in this Montana Conversation, Friday, June 5 at 4 p.m. MDT.

Race and Change



Last week, we attempted to premier a video from Dr. Kitty Oliver for her program Race and Change Across Cultures and Generations on Facebook. If you were unable to see it then you can now view it on our [YouTube channel](#) or access over a dozen [virtual humanities](#) programs on our website.

Support the Humanities

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Digital and DIY Humanities Week #17

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Dear Reader,

Last week Sam fantasized that we have all been shunted onto the wrong timeline. This week I keep wondering if [my watch has stopped](#). Has time been [behaving strangely](#) for you as well? In March, April, and May we were shut down and in crisis. Even though many of us were working from home and staying indoors, there were logistics to handle, concrete problems to solve, and, while every day was essentially the same, every day was also very full and it seemed like time flew.



Now, things are...different. Many of us are worn down by the anxiety of working day after day in less-than-safe conditions. Many of us have lost loved ones without being able to say goodbye, and many of us wonder when we will

ever see loved ones again. So, along with what seems like an ocean of time, we're dealing with [isolation](#) and grief.

And our challenges have multiplied and are much, much thornier than figuring out how to work remotely or get groceries. How can we reimagine our schools, our libraries, our communities—the spaces where we share our stories and dreams?

I can't solve the problem of missing the people I love and can't be with, but I do know what makes my clock tick faster. Engagement. How could it have taken me this long to discover the writing of [Octavia Butler](#)!? And definitely the best way to move through time is with music—[try cooking to this](#). Let's keep talking with each other. Let's keep [writing and reading](#). Let's stay engaged.

Sincerely,

Kim

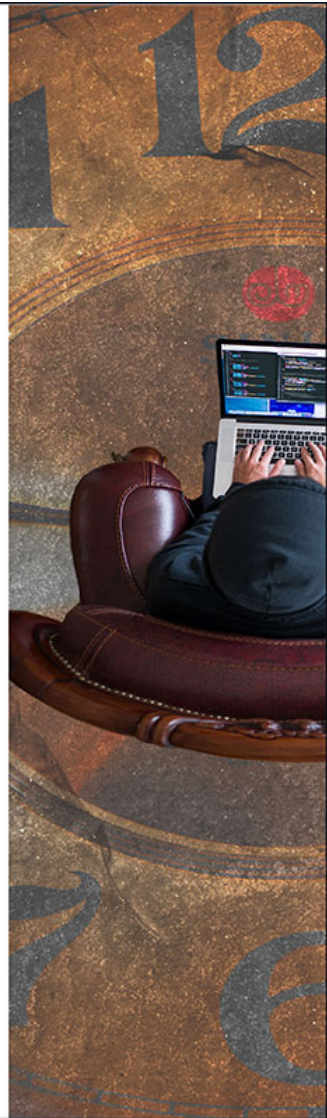
Director of Programs and Grants

Our Philosophy This Week

On the first ever socially distanced [Saturday Night Live At Home](#) episode, host Tom Hanks joked about the irony of the show's name, noting "Also, there's no such thing as Saturdays anymore. Just every day is 'today.'" As the virus makes a mockery of our schedules and the film [Groundhog Day](#) becomes eerily relatable, we are noticing a collective shift in our [perception of time](#). However, the elasticity of time is a concept that has fascinated writers, psychologists, and philosophers for ages.

Time, the philosopher [Aristotle](#) once mused, is the measure of change. He argues that time cannot contain or define itself because it is a subjective measurement of the speed by which something moves. The "non-realization of the existence of time happens to us when we do not distinguish any change," but when we do perceive movement and change, we become aware of elapsed time. In 2020, the coronavirus is the new fulcrum for change. Time is no longer measured by days of the week but in confirmed cases of COVID-19 and phases of reopening – the virus has created its own clock. Now more than ever time feels fleeting and slippery as the days, weeks, and months expand and blend together. Yet, we still have time and the stoic philosopher [Seneca](#) advises us to "hold every hour in your grasp. Lay hold of to-day's task, and you will not need to depend so much upon to-morrow's. While we are postponing, life speeds by. Nothing... is ours, except time."

What would you
do if you were
stuck in one
place, every day
was exactly the
same, and
nothing you did
mattered?



Gather Round

Gather Round encourages Do-It-Yourself humanities at home—have a conversation with the people you are closest to and [reply to this email](#) to share your thoughts.



Hearth is time as much as place. The time it takes for three pine logs to burn. It is historical context times birth hour. We are each nonspecific and utterly unique, scurrying for a slot in a city or for a patch of meadow in some untrodden place in an overcrowded world. Yet sometimes we long for home.

—GRETEL EHRLICH,
"TO LIVE"

Race in America: Jason Reynolds & Jacqueline Woodson

Race in America: Jason Reynolds & Jacqueline Woodson



To commemorate Juneteenth, the holiday marking the end of slavery, Librarian of Congress Carla Hayden chatted with current National Ambassador for Young People's Literature Jason Reynolds and former National Ambassador

Jacqueline Woodson about ways to hear and support kids during a period of nationwide protest against injustice.

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Digital and DIY Humanities Week #21

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Dear Reader,

The past few weekends have been consumed by what my husband considers a relaxing home improvement project—clearing out decades of family memorabilia from our old home's basement. I had suggested reorganizing the spice cabinet, but he won.



Digging through box after box of mildewed toys, crumpled school papers, half-filled diaries, and thousands of photos, brings up lots of [memories](#). Sometimes the memories don't exactly match the unearthed evidence, which leads me to wonder about [how we construct our past](#), and that leads to another, very current question—what happens when versions of the past are in conflict?

The versions of history we learn—whether through family stories or through our educational system—are always partial, and often designed to maintain or justify existing power structures. One example is the [stories of Scandinavian settlement of the Midwest](#) I learned from relatives and school teachers. Who are our ancestors? How do their actions and our stories about them affect us today? This [amazing piece](#) by UM graduate, [Tailyr Irvin](#), brings home how, for many Indigenous people, the past and their ancestry, has not only cultural meaning, but legal ramifications touching nearly all aspects of everyday life.

We all carry our family stories but it can be good to occasionally reexamine them. Maybe it's time to reorganize our basements.

Best,

Kim

Director of Programs and Grants

Our Philosophy This Week

Philosopher Margaret Gilbert at the University of California – Irvine asks, “What is the relationship between human social groups and the individual humans who are their members? Are groups simply aggregates of individuals, or what?” She argues that social groups are formed when people form a [plural subject](#) (we) with shared goals or beliefs. How many times have you read or heard someone say, “We’re all in this together” in recent months? Teachers returning to classrooms or teaching online are using the hashtag #allinthistogether to support each other through a difficult experience. But we also say it to remind ourselves of the collective obligations we have to others in our groups and sometimes to coerce behaviors.

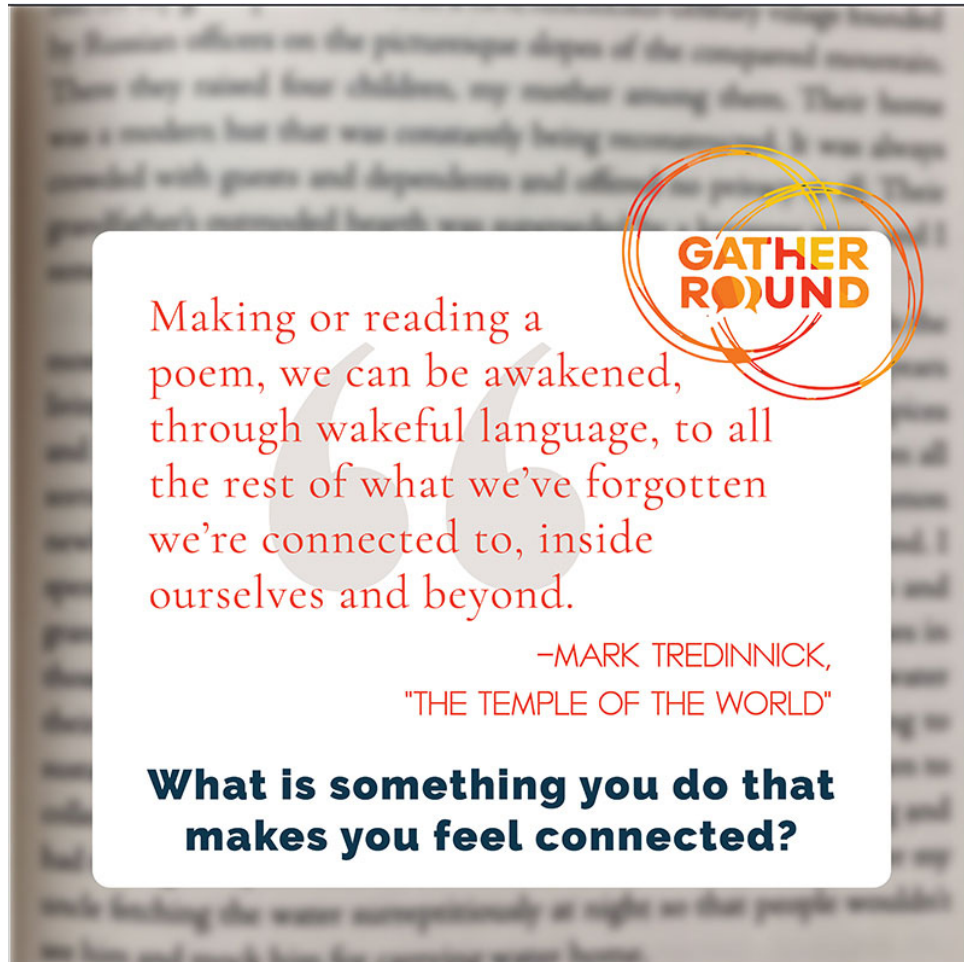
Humans are social creatures. We each belong to multiple identity groups and networks, which is part of why this pandemic is hitting us so hard. An article on complexity in the [science magazine Nautilus](#) notes, “The social habits we tend to see as either the fabric of society or unintended corollaries of social life—gathering at high-density, shaking hands as a greeting, traveling, and interacting when infectious—have become established as social norms.” It would take far more energy to eliminate these deeply ingrained habits than it takes to keep doing what we’ve always done. It is not the single threat of a disease to individual people, but the related social, economic, and environmental interconnections across the world that make our situation so complex, with [competing priorities](#).

How do the
social groups
you belong
to—family,
tribe, nation—
help you and
what obligations
do you have to
them?



Gather Round

Gather Round encourages Do-It-Yourself humanities at home—have a conversation with the people you are closest to and [reply to this email](#) to share your thoughts.



Walden: A Game



“What if we could all go to the woods to live deliberately?” The National Endowment for the Humanities helped fund [Walden, a game](#), a “first-person exploratory game about the life of American philosopher Henry David Thoreau during his experiment in self-reliant living at Walden Pond.” The game is available free to educators and comes with a curriculum guide.

Support the Humanities

Over the last six months you have helped us navigate what it means to learn, share, and grow from a distance. Please consider a gift to support us further in bringing relevant humanities content to isolated communities and responding to our state’s evolving school needs. It’s going to take many hands this fall. We hope that you will join us in our efforts to connect Montanans.

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Dear Reader,

We are still seeing ninety-degree weather in the Bitterroot, but fall is slowly encroaching. I have been waking to progressively darker mornings—goodbye sunglasses on my morning drive to daycare. Even the young buck that lives in my yard is rolling with the new season, shifting from cleaning the cherries off our tree to eating the unripe apples in the backyard.



Fall also marks the third season we will experience in the COVID-19 pandemic. I am exhausted by restrictions, stressed about the uncertainty, and slowly losing my optimism. I find myself romanticizing February, when I didn't need extra masks in the car, stroller, wagon, diaper bag etc. When I could go to the store and not feel overwhelming panic when my son blew raspberries at strangers. Overall, I am feeling the [COVID fatigue](#).

I am reading this week's edition as a personal challenge to find meaning in the feelings I'm experiencing. I won't leave you with a long list of links to read but instead invite you to take a walk, feel the gratitude, be compassionate to yourself, and eat the cake.

Best wishes,

Sara

Development Director

Our Philosophy This Week

"Grief, when it comes, is nothing like we expect it to be."

—[Joan Didion](#), American novelist and writer

The global COVID-19 pandemic has created a [new reality](#) marked by grief and loss. Vacations, concerts, meetings, school programs, reunions, sports events, and more have been cancelled in the wake of the virus. How we celebrate weddings, new babies, holidays, and birthdays has dramatically changed. The virus has forced us to process both [individual and collective grief](#) in the face of an uncertain future which we are powerless to control. Not only are we all grieving the loss of tens of thousands of lives, but we are also mourning the world we once knew.

According to mental health experts, the first step is ["naming and claiming"](#) our grief. Once we name what we have lost, both individually and collectively, we can then begin to process our experience. Many of us are familiar with the original [five stages of grief](#)—denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance—but in 2019 [David Kessler](#), one of the world's foremost experts on grief, introduced the critical sixth stage: making meaning. Now, during this new era of loss, accepting and naming our grief allows it to [move through us](#) and helps us discover meaning even in our darkest moments.

How do we
grieve as a
nation and as
individuals in a
culture in which
death and
vulnerability are
often taboo?



Gather Round

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Building Bridges Part 3



In this final part of her series, Montana State University-Billings professor Ambrin Masood continues her presentation about Muslim concepts and culture, including the definition of jihad (not holy war), and hijab as a concept of modesty, not specific clothing. This is a Montana Conversation.

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Digital and DIY Humanities Week #24

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Dear Reader,

I find myself—this week more than usual—thinking about the transformative potential athletes have in our country. Given the recent [NBA strike](#)—largely guided by the trail-blazing [activism in the WNBA](#), I have been grappling with the [impact of a strike that does not center on collective bargaining](#). What [role](#) do sports occupy in the social-political landscape? Further, the tension of power and protest is exacerbated for unpaid [collegiate athletes](#), some of whom are gearing up for a modified football schedule. The [history](#) of protest in sports is robust and [intensifying](#) each year and the potential for social change is expanding.



I am writing this to you just before my wife and I hit the road for a 600-mile Labor-Day retreat to the Hi-Line—a fitting holiday for the circumstances. I have a few episodes of [The Right Time with Bomani Jones](#) queued up for the road trip to gain perspective on the recent political activity of athletes, where it fits into the narrative of protest and sports, and where we might expect it to go from here. This week's email contains a brief history of Labor Day and highlights some of the people behind the origin of the holiday. I hope we all take a few minutes this weekend to reflect on the transformative power of labor and its connections to other social issues.

All the best,

Ryan

Development and Communications Intern

Our Humanities Perspective This Week

Labor Day signifies many things for Americans: a long holiday weekend, a barbeque, the unofficial end of summer and start of a new school year. However, Labor Day was meant to honor what workers accomplish together through activism and organizing. As [Samuel Gompers](#), the founder of the American Federation of Labor, wrote in *the New York Times* in 1910, "Of all the days celebrated for one cause or another, there is not one which stands so conspicuously for social advancement of the common people as the first Monday in September."

Gompers was not speaking about social advancement for all Americans. Socially, many labor unions were actively racist and [prohibited minority inclusion](#) and historically, non-union members tended to be African-Americans and Irish and Italian immigrants. It wasn't until the late 1960s that unions began to integrate with the encouragement from race leaders like [Fredrick Douglass](#), [W.E.B. Dubois](#), [A. Philip Randolph](#) and [Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.](#) who saw unions as essential to the ability of Black workers to rise and achieve equality.

Labor Day began on September 5, 1882, when 10,000 workers took unpaid time off to march from City Hall to Union Square in New York City, holding the first Labor Day parade. The movement fought for fair wages and better working conditions. Its political efforts transformed American society. Organized labor was critical in the fight against [child labor](#), the fight for the [eight-hour workday](#) and telling the [story of race, labor, and human rights](#).

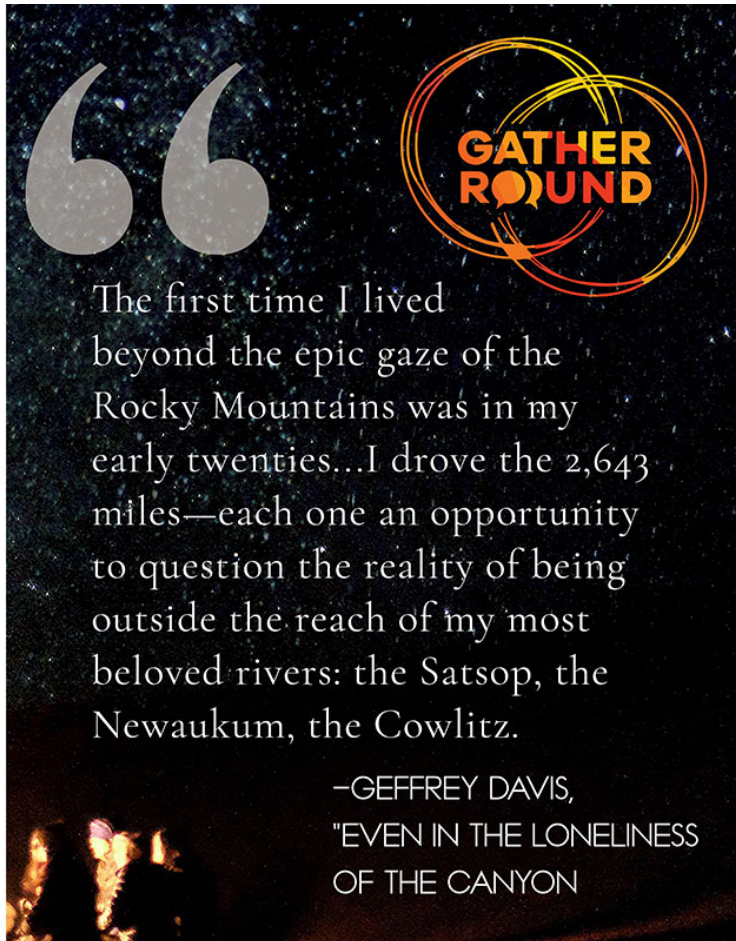
What changes to
work and labor
would you like
to see in
America?



Gather Round

Gather Round encourages Do-It-Yourself humanities at home—have a conversation with the people you are closest to and [reply to this email](#) to share your thoughts.

What is the farthest
from home you've been?



Children's Author of *Cinderyeti*



Precious McKenzie writes children's books and has published over 50 books for young readers. Her latest picture book, *Cinderyeti*, is the Montana selection for the Library of Congress' Roadmap to the States at the [National Book Festival](#). We ask Precious if she's ever met a yeti, what books made her feel like she belonged as a kid, and what advice she has for young writers.

Explore

[A Read Aloud of *Cinderyeti*](#)

[How to Make a Yeti](#)

[Making Snacks for a Yeti](#)

Support the Humanities

Over the last six months you have helped us navigate what it means to learn, share, and grow from a distance. Please consider a gift to support us further in bringing relevant humanities content to isolated communities and responding to our state’s evolving school needs. It’s going to take many hands this fall. We hope that you will join us in our efforts to connect Montanans.

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Digital and DIY Humanities Week #25

Humanities Montana acknowledges that we are in the homelands of Indigenous people. We offer our respect for their history and culture, and for the path they have always shown us in caring for this place for generations to come.

Humanities Montana serves communities by bringing people together to share stories and have conversations. With HM, you are part of a group of learners and thinkers who want to nurture imagination and ideas by discovering more about Montana's diverse history, literature, and philosophy.

Dear Reader,

When the cold snap hit last week, I cuddled up with a mug of tea and watched [Lovecraft Country](#) while pursuing my favorite hobby: historical needlepoint. Embroidering replicas of samplers created by early American girls speaks to my interests in crafting and U.S. women's cultural history. The original samplers were a [form of literacy education](#) for white women in colonial America and were often displayed as evidence of a young woman's virtue and marriageability. I'm not sure why I am drawn to these examples of domesticity, but feminist art historian Rozsika Parker in [The Subversive Stitch](#) claims women have long used handiwork



and embroidery to simultaneously conform to and critique patriarchal standards for art and expected female behavior.

Because of my interest in crafting and its subversive potential, I appreciate contemporary artists who reveal traditional women's work such as quilting, beading, and textile production as fine art and cultural commentary. Last winter I met Dallas-based artist Jas Mardis who uses [quilt making traditions and family linens](#) to narrate the African American experience in Texas. The Missoula Art Museum's current exhibition, "[Love Letters to the Collection](#)" includes the art of [Molly Murphy Adams](#) (Oglala, Lakota) who integrates beadwork, mapping, and ribbon work into exquisite textile collages.

Crafting is [scientifically proven to reduce anxiety](#), which may explain why I started my most recent sampler in the midst of COVID. I hope you can find time this week to relax with a hobby and consider the role of crafting in art, culture, and telling our stories.

Warmly,

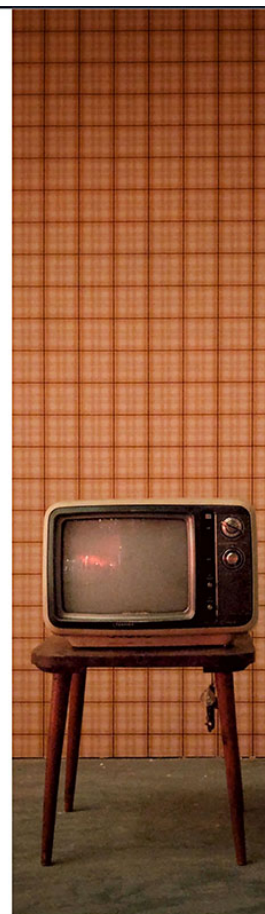
Randi

Our Humanities Perspective This Week

In the early 1970s, author, poet, and musician Gil Scott-Heron proclaimed that “[the revolution will not be televised](#).” He encouraged social action and participation, stating, “you will not be able to plug in, turn on, and cop out.” With national media outlets [scrambling](#) to provide adequate coverage of the nationwide [protests](#), it begs the questions: will the revolution be televised and, if so, what role does journalism—written and visual—play in galvanizing social change? Does mass coverage push a movement forward or hinder its concrete participation?

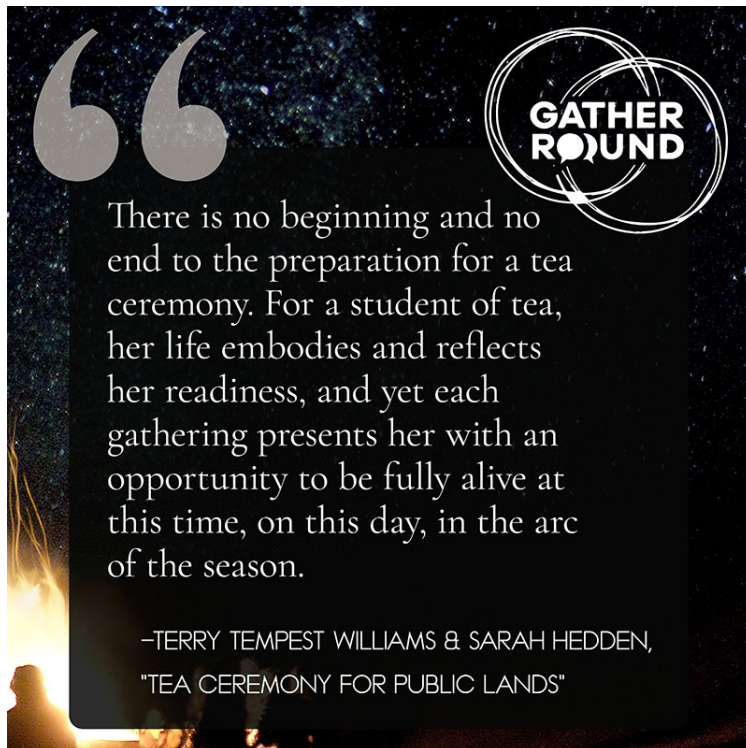
There is a spectrum of theories and answers to this question, ranging from [emphatic support](#) for mass media coverage to [hesitancy](#) surrounding the use of systemic tools in dismantling systemic racism. The same line of questioning can be applied to [social media](#). Widespread, instant communication is crucial to a movement, but are there any drawbacks of nationwide—global in some cases—mass mobilization? These are not questions with easy answers, but understanding the link between rebellion and media coverage is clearly a pressing issue of our time.

How do you
rebel against or
conform to
mainstream
culture?



Gather Round

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Montana Book Festival



If you missed last week's Montana Book Festival, don't worry! You can watch many of the virtual events on the Festival's YouTube channel. Tracing more than two centuries of history, Gretchen E. Minton's *Shakespeare in Montana* uncovers a vast array of different voices that capture the state's love affair with the world's most famous writer. The interview above with Gretchen

E. Minton explores what Shakespeare has meant to the people of Montana. Humanities Montana has been a sponsor of the Festival since its debut in 2000.

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