

MONTANA KAIMIN



HOW UM'S INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS AND MISSOULA IMMIGRANTS WEIGH CITIZENSHIP AND SAFETY THOUSANDS OF MILES FROM HOME

Story by Aidan Graham
Photos by Weston Fudge

April 16, 2026

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Kiosk



The Montana Kaimin is a weekly independent student newspaper at the University of Montana. The Kaimin office and the University of Montana are located on land originally inhabited by the Salish People. Kaimin is a derivative of a Salish language word, "Qe'ymin," that is pronounced kay-MEEN and means "book," "message" or "paper that brings news."

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POLITICAL CARTOON



"DON'T WORRY, WE'RE JUST MOVING
THE FOREST SERVICE CLOSER TO
THE FORESTS WE MANAGE..."

BARRETT
2026

KAIMIN KOMICS: SE 3 EP 14



BARRETT

Thirty days until the rest of our lives

SUDOKU

Difficulty: Easy

Edited by Margie E. Burke

		9	7	8				
		4	1					5
8								
						6	9	
7			2					
		3			6		8	
	3				2			
9			3	5				7
		7			8	1	4	

HOW TO SOLVE:

Each row must contain the numbers 1 to 9; each column must contain the numbers 1 to 9; and each set of 3 by 3 boxes must contain the numbers 1 to 9.

Answer to Previous Sudoku:

9	1	8	5	3	4	6	7	2
4	5	3	7	6	2	8	1	9
7	6	2	1	8	9	3	4	5
1	8	5	4	9	3	2	6	7
2	4	7	6	5	1	9	3	8
6	3	9	2	7	8	4	5	1
5	2	1	8	4	6	7	9	3
8	9	6	3	1	7	5	2	4
3	7	4	9	2	5	1	8	6

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I'm in my final semester as a double major in acting and journalism at the University of Montana, and to be honest with you, I'm terrified. The fact that I'm less than 30 days from the rest of my life feels so strange.

Like many students, all I've ever known is the routine of school, waking up early for class, pulling all-nighters studying, deadline after deadline.

After May 9, it all goes away. It's up to me. Literally whatever I want? I'm free to use my degree – or not. I can go anywhere, do anything, do nothing. The unknown is exciting and really, really terrifying. Questions run through my head. Will I succeed? What if I fail? What am I supposed to do?

If those questions ring true to you, here's my advice: Chill the fuck out.

In a final meeting, I spoke with my adviser to ask for help. Crying in her office, I told her how I felt like everything was piling up. I was overwhelmed. Life, just as it was about to start, felt like it was exploding, and I didn't think I could make it to the finish line.

She said something that felt like a cold splash of water to the face.

"Kairi, it's just school."

It really is just school. This is just one small chapter in part of my novel.

I think back to freshman year when one of my acting professors explained the attendance policy: missing class is fine, as long as you communicate with him.

At the time, I just took it for kindness. He wanted us to know he understood that life happens, so come to class when you can.

"This class is one drop in the infinitely large universe of your life," he said.

Even though what's next is scary, it can also be exciting. You can spend these next thirty days worried about things you haven't known yet.

Or ... you can spend these next 30 days prepping for the next exciting adventure. The future is yours to make. You can use your degree or not. Follow your dreams, or find new ones. How exciting is that?

So, when things feel like the end of the world, remember: This is just a moment.

- *Kairi Lising, arts editor*
Like it? Hate it? Let us know.
 Email us your opinions at
 elle.daniel@umontana.edu

Hanging around



Taking a break from homework, Zeezee Baughman, Brooks Whitman and Erik Thynes shop online for new climbing equipment on the Oval on April 13. **WILL LADYMAN | MONTANA KAIMIN**

In local news...

JACK SNOW | NEWS EDITOR
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NEW MONTANA KNIFE COMPANY FACILITY DRAWS CROWD

The Montana Knife Company opened a new facility in Missoula on Saturday, drawing crowds of people to check out the new manufacturing building and coffee shop.

“It truly is the American dream,” said Josh Smith, Montana Knife Company’s chief operating officer. “To be able to let them into the building, to give them tours, to show them what they helped us build. And you don’t see that in manufacturing. Most people close their doors and you don’t get to see behind the walls, but for us, it’s built in public and we want to give people a chance to see it for themselves.”

The opening was attended by people from all across the country, with some coming from as far as Georgia and Maine, according to KPAX. The event itself began at 6 a.m. on Saturday, and the first 50 attendees received free gift bags. Many gathered early, however, and a line was already formed before 3 a.m. that morning.

“I think there were 60 people in line at 2 a.m. and then, when I got here, there was just shy of 500 people in line before 6 a.m. It was absolutely crazy,” Smith said. “We have more people than I could have ever imagined would be here for it, so it’s pretty cool.”

Those who showed up got an inside look at the new headquarters, which includes the manufacturing facility, the factory store and a Black Rifle Coffee Company shop.

Cory Rhoads, who came from Eureka to attend the opening, has been a customer since he participated in a 2021 company veterans event. He’s maintained contact with the owners ever since.

“You just kind of feel like you really are a part of the company,” he said. “It feels like one big family.”

OFFICIALS ASSESS REACH OF EMERGENCY SERVICES

Missoula County officials are looking to ensure the Wye is properly served by

emergency services as it transitions to a new urban center.

The Wye is an unincorporated area near Missoula which has a rapidly increasing population and thousands of new homes. As a result of this expansion authorities are trying to make sure the area has the service needed for its new layout, according to the Missoula Current.

Commissions approved \$150,000 in funding from two Targeted Economic Development Districts in the Wye to take a closer look at the needs of the growing area, and how to fund them.

“This will involve looking ahead at predicting what’s necessary to meet future demands effectively in these areas,” said Lauren Ryan, a county development specialist. “Our objective is to ensure that as the community grows in this area, that fire protection services can keep pace and provide adequate services.”

Earlier this year, the county implemented the Wye Infrastructure Plan to stay on top of growth. The area is expected to continue developing into a small city, with all the new jobs, houses and commercial spaces that come along with the title.

“The plan is a key step toward ensuring the infrastructure and services can meet the demand now and in the future,” said Ryan. “The assessment will set the stage in understanding the current capabilities of fire and emergency services, and identify the gaps and needs for fire and emergency services.”

Currently, the Wye lies mostly under the jurisdiction of the Frenchtown Rural Fire District and the Missoula Rural Fire District, with the departments accounting for 55% and 36% of the area respectively.

At present, Missoula Rural has 59 full time employees, five 24 hour stations and a \$14 million annual budget.

Comparatively, Frenchtown Rural has nine full time employees, one 24 hour station and a budget of \$2.2 million.

Both departments are expecting an increase in calls with the growth of the Wye, and Frenchtown Rural Fire District Chief Damian Frisby expressed approval for the assessment.

“Hopefully, it can help us in our future endeavors in taking care of our districts,” he said.



This week on the Kaimin Cast ...

Each year, an average of 200 students put their literary skills to the test and submit to The Oval publication, hoping to gain early experience and publication in the creative field.

Sharing the name with the center of campus, The Oval is a literary magazine founded by a creative community of undergraduates in 2006. Submissions open every spring, and students from any major can submit their work for student editors to review and judge for publication.

“There have been a lot of students that The Oval was their first publication that they’ve gone on to publish books. They’ve gone on to be pretty successful in writing,” said Robert Stubblefield, the faculty adviser for The Oval.

To learn more about UM’s literary magazine, check out our latest podcast, “The Oval: A stepping stone,” by heading to our website at montanakaimin.com.

- Chaytan Reid,
audio reporter



New Kaimin Cast episode out this week. Stay tuned. Scan for the latest



JUDGE DISMISSES \$10 BILLION TRUMP LAWSUIT AGAINST THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

A federal judge dismissed President Donald Trump’s \$10 billion defamation lawsuit against the publisher of The Wall Street Journal on Monday.

Trump previously filed the suit due to The Journal’s reporting about his lewd birthday greeting to sex offender Jeffrey Epstein, according to The New York Times.

Judge Darrin Gayles of the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Florida said in his decision that Trump’s suit did not plausibly allege that The Journal published its article with “actual malice.”

Gayles dismissed the suit without prejudice, meaning that Trump can bring up the same complaint again.

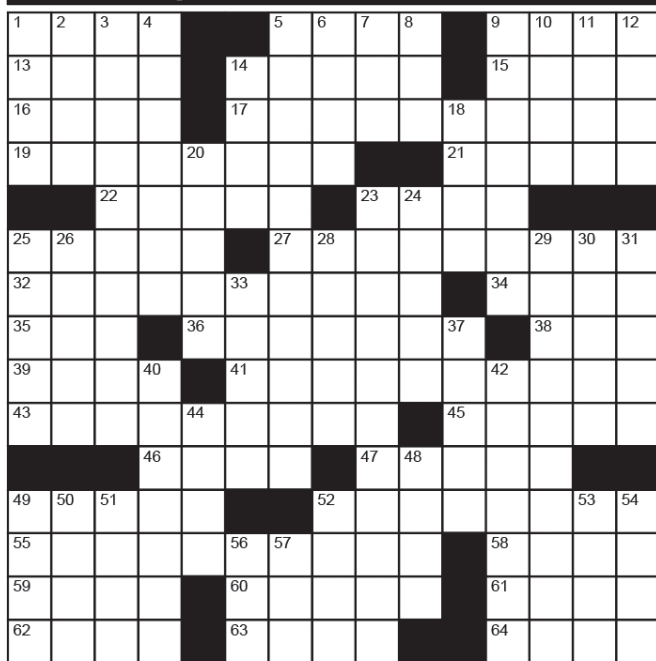
A spokesperson for Trump’s legal team said in a Monday statement that the president would refile “this powerhouse lawsuit.”

A spokesperson for Dow Jones, the publisher of The Journal, released a statement expressing approval for the decision. “We are pleased with the judge’s decision to dismiss this complaint,” he said. “We stand behind the reliability, rigor and accuracy of The Wall Street Journal’s reporting.”

The lawsuit itself was based on an article published by The Journal on July 17, 2025. The article described a letter that appeared to be sent from Trump to Epstein in 2003 portraying a drawing of a naked woman with Trump’s signature and a message that read: “Happy Birthday — and may every day be another wonderful secret.”

Trump took issue with the article, telling The Journal that the letter was “a fake thing” and that he “never wrote a picture in my life. I don’t draw pictures of women.” He sued numerous parties associated with The Journal, asking for \$10 billion in damages.

Gayles ruled that Trump had failed to demonstrate that The Journal had not investigated the truth of its claims before publishing the article. Gayles also noted that The Journal reached out to Trump prior to publication and clarified that Trump denied writing the letter to its readers.



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ACROSS

- 1 Pendulum paths
- 5 Gulf War missile
- 9 Chipping choice
- 13 European auto
- 14 Scorn, with "at"
- 15 Junction point
- 16 Top spot
- 17 Projectile points of old
- 19 Stepped in for
- 21 German surrealist Max
- 22 How great minds think?
- 23 Bull's-eye hitter
- 25 Aquatic nymph
- 27 Really close game, say
- 32 Combative
- 34 Mythical ship
- 35 Word on a door
- 36 Generous ones
- 38 Altar constellation
- 39 Chemical endings
- 41 Reversed on appeal
- 43 Colander cousins
- 45 Takes a breather
- 46 Salacious look
- 47 "Love ___ you need" (Beatles lyric)
- 49 Love, in Lyon
- 52 Colts and Cowboys
- 55 Revels in the moment
- 58 Resting on
- 59 Actor Morales
- 60 This puzzle has 72
- 61 Fountain fare
- 62 Tax form IDs
- 63 Sent back: Abbr.
- 64 Prefix with "while"
- 25 April, May and June, e.g.
- 26 Insurance broker
- 28 ABC or NBC, e.g.
- 29 Certain worker at the UN
- 30 Everglades wader
- 31 Map lines
- 33 Excelled
- 37 Port city of India
- 40 Greyhound lookalikes
- 42 Press statement
- 44 Cloth and cash endings
- 48 Some cameras, for short
- 49 Amazes
- 50 Sunday service
- 51 "The Good Earth" wife
- 52 Marine: Abbr.
- 53 Online admins
- 54 Petty quarrel
- 56 Text-scanning tech
- 57 Phillies' div.

DOWN

- 1 Not nigh
- 2 Chinese food staple
- 3 Office seeker
- 4 Out of this world
- 5 Flying Toasters, e.g.
- 6 Firewood quantity
- 7 Area 51 craft
- 8 Airport in TX
- 9 Lack of activity
- 10 Speckled steed
- 11 Racetrack ratio
- 12 Place to brood
- 14 Quarterback's woe
- 18 Rosemary, e.g.
- 20 Staffers
- 23 Like some portfolios
- 24 Red flag

Answers to Previous Crossword:

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

Apoc-o-scope

NIAMH O'FARRELL | ARTS & CULTURE REPORTER

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THE END IS HERE. It finally happened: The world collapsed into apocalypse and everybody is taking their own measures to survive. So, what are you doing to stay afloat in these trying times?

ARIES (MARCH 21-APRIL 19): Your Hunger Games phase from middle school made you a little too excited for this. You tried to get everyone to wear side braids and only use bow and arrows, but it didn't catch on. Nevertheless, you still made the Katniss Everdeen look work.

TAURUS (APRIL 20-MAY 20):

You're a lone wolf. You retreated to the mountains, gathering scrap metal for your house and eating what things you can find. It's simple, but you've made your own little homestead.

GEMINI (MAY 21-JUNE 20):

The whole world-ending thing has been horrible for your skincare routine. Of course, you took over a Sephora and kept all the self-care products to yourself. Now you never have to worry about those big corporations charging you \$45 for a face wash ever again.

CANCER (JUNE 21-JULY 22):

Like the true water sign you are, this whole experience has been very emotional. Finding out that the moon is made of cheese was a lot for you. So you've been spending your time meditating on what used to be a CVS parking lot. The world might not be grounded, but you sure are.

LEO (JULY 23-AUG. 22): Oh Leo, you got a little carried away and started your own cult. It wasn't on purpose, you were just the only one whose house still had a working phone charger, so everyone thought you were the chosen one. It was weird at first, but you've been liking the praise.

VIRGO (AUG. 23-SEP. 22): Sagittarius might think they're the leader, but we all know it's you who's been making all the plans, schedules and itineraries for this new world. You might not be the loudest voice in this post-apocalyptic world, but that Taco Bell Cantina is only up and running because of your impeccable organization. Way to go, Virgo!

LIBRA (SEP. 23-OCT. 22): Everyone is just losing their damn minds – but of course not you, Libra. You've set up your own therapy practice to keep everyone's heads on while they rebuild the world. No one has any money, so you're getting paid in screws and scrap metal. But the payment isn't what matters, you're just in it for the love of the game.

SCORPIO (OCT. 23-NOV. 21):

Chaos is everywhere, and let's be real, you're a part of it. You've moved yourself into what used to be the White House and turned it into your own space to master post-apocalyptic EDM music. Just 'cause the world ended doesn't mean the party has to!

SAGITTARIUS (NOV. 22-DEC. 21):

Girl, you already know you're the leader. Society has to rebuild in some way, and you're the one who's gonna get everyone together. You stand on your soapbox and yell motivations at people while they try to build back the most important thing every decent society must have: A Taco Bell Cantina.

CAPRICORN (DEC. 22-JAN. 19):

When the world ended in destruction, you saw an opportunity. You went out to find the best new strain of weed that the new world order had to offer.

The dispensary has been a hit among all your peers.

You're keeping the stress down and the good vibes up.

AQUARIUS (JAN. 20-FEB. 18): You got so curious once the political officials all left and went to space, so you grabbed every file in the Department of Justice to give the people the truth! Turns out the moon really is made of cheese.

PISCES (FEB. 19-MARCH 20): It took you a little too long to realize the world ended because you were doomscrolling on Instagram Reels when it happened. But you chose to live your own life as you always knew it should be: In the tunnels underground. It's been perfect here, you can scroll to your heart's content and never have to worry about being stuck in an awkward conversation again.



BARRETT CLEMENT | MONTANA KAIMIN

Critical repair costs for University Center on upcoming ASUM ballot

JOCELYN HOOD | NEWS REPORTER

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A proposed \$57 addition to the University Center student fee to help fund critical building repairs will be on the ASUM ballot on April 22 and 23.

According to Shannon Brilz, the interim UC director, the most essential maintenance requirements for the building, which opened in 1969, are fixing the leaking roof, repairing the floor in the food court, replacing the skylight glass and making heating, ventilation and air conditioning upgrades. These changes are estimated to cost over \$26 million in total.

Currently, full-time students pay \$168, and will pay \$172 even without the proposed fee increase. If passed, the fee would increase to \$229.

“It’s time to really think about what the next 50 years are going to look like in here, and how we can preserve what we have and then enhance it as well,” Brilz said.

The roof has been leaking above the ballroom and the grand foyer for about two years, but Brilz said that with the atmospheric river events this fall, the amount of rain has seriously damaged the lining of the roof.

The roof is still structurally sound, but the leaks have caused other damages to the building.

“Until I can get the roof fixed, there’s just going to be more damage, which costs more money and it just keeps adding up,” Brilz said. “We spend about \$100,000 a year just on work orders.”

There are buckets and trash cans placed throughout the third floor collecting water, Brilz said, and they can’t be removed during events because they are preventing damage. The wooden flooring that was purchased for \$311,000 four years ago in the ballroom is warping and the sheetrock of interior walls is cracking and deteriorating, she said.

“I’ve worked here over 20 years,” Brilz said. “I’ve never seen this type of damage until this year.”

The roof repair costs of about \$3 million have been saved through cost cutting strategies like closing the building on Sundays for the first time this year, but the potential addition to the student fee would pay for other critical fixes.

The floor of the food court is cracking, which is another issue the fee increase

would hope to fix. It was built with compressed sand, and all the sand has now settled, causing the floor to shift. If the floor becomes compromised, the food court can’t stay open.

“We just have tape on all the tiles, and it just keeps cracking and cracking, and we can’t get ahead of it,” Brilz said.

Madi Reeser, a 23-year-old first-year psychology graduate student from Staunton, Virginia, said she is in the UC all the time,

eating at the food court and studying.

“I think I would be okay with paying an extra fee, but maybe not that much,” Reeser said, studying on the second floor of the UC. “If it was like half of that amount I think I would be okay with it, since we already pay for a lot of fees for other areas of campus.”

Paul Ronzone, an 18-year-old freshman and forestry major from California, said that he thinks another fee would be unnecessary.

“Realistically, though, if it was put on there, I wouldn’t notice it that much,” Ronzone said. “Like, I kind of want to say no, because, you know, it’s somewhat hard to pay for school.”

Students pay for registration, facilities, equipment, technology, ASUM, campus recreation, the health service, athletics, transportation, student support and sustainability fees in addition to the UC fee, totaling \$1,427 per semester for students



Mike Eglin, architect at the University of Montana, shows Jake Kobza, representing Versico Roofing Systems, sections of the UC roof that need work on April 7 during a contractor bid. Western Montana Roofing, Taylor Bradley Roofing and Ace Roofing were also present. **WESTON FUDGE | MONTANA KAIMIN**

taking 12 or more credits.

Lindsay Torres, a 19-year-old sophomore fine arts major from Atlanta on the UC Advisory Board, said that the UC fee is different from other mandatory fees.

"I think what [...] makes it unique, is that the UC is something that can be used by everyone," said Torres, the student lead in the Makerspace and an art assistant for the Campus Activities Board. "For the gym, it's like you have to want to go to the gym, and you have to be athletic, but for the UC, you can be any sort of person and you're accepted there."

The fee would also help pay for HVAC upgrades, because currently, the heat comes from the glycol loop underneath the atrium floor. A glycol loop is a closed-loop piping system underground that circulates glycol and water to regulate temperatures. Cracks on the atrium floor demonstrate that the natural shifting of the earth is causing damage, and those cracks could indicate damage to the loop as well.

"If anything compromised our heating system, we wouldn't have any sort of climate control in here," Brilz said. "That's really a high priority for me, because if, in the winter, we lost this heating, the plants would be compromised, and the services would be compromised."

The glass skylight is also messing with the climate in the atrium. The glass is original from 1972 and doesn't have the same climate control abilities as new glass, Brilz

said, so it needs to be replaced. She pointed out black residue dripping from some of the glass because of its age.

Making the south entrance ADA accessible and the west entrance less cramped are other goals of Brilz's, but not as urgent.

"I think it's important for everyone to understand too, that this is a very big issue," Torres said about the repairs. "It's almost like an iceberg with Titanic. Like, you can just see the surface of it, but there's a lot beneath it."

Brilz said that if the fees passed, the funds would be dedicated to capital improvements, not operations.

The vote takes place on April 22 and 23. Chase O'Brien, a 21-year-old ASUM Senator who serves as the chair of the UC Advisory Board, said the ballot will also include a general ASUM fee increase and a transportation fee increase.

"All three of these fee increases are desperately needed to maintain operations and continue to strengthen the student experience here on campus," O'Brien, a triple major in political science, history and women's, gender and sexuality studies, stated in an email.

To pass a fee, at least 12% of the student body has to vote, and the majority of the votes must be in favor of the fee.

"Students should vote so that we can have a better understanding of what students want," Torres said.



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A student walks over the cracked floor of the University Center on April 3. The damage indicates that the ground beneath the UC is shifting, which could impact the glycol heating system, the only source of climate control in the UC atrium. **WESTON FUDGE | MONTANA KAIMIN**



MAKING HOME HERE

STORY BY AIDAN GRAHAM
PHOTOS BY WESTON FUDGE

**HOW UM'S INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS AND MISSOULA IMMIGRANTS
WEIGH CITIZENSHIP AND SAFETY THOUSANDS OF MILES FROM HOME**



Muslims pray at the Missoula Islamic Society's Friday prayer on April 10.

Every Friday at 2 p.m. at the Missoula Islamic Society mosque, local Muslims gather for Jumu'ah, a prayer designed to unite, strengthen bonds and promote the forgiveness of sin among the many.

The mosque sits in a small commercial space in an old strip mall off Brooks Street and serves as a pillar for Missoula's Islamic and Middle Eastern migrant circles,

including those from Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iran and Syria.

Kamal Lakisic, a third-year law student at the University of Montana, founded the Missoula Islamic Society three years ago. The society established a full time mosque in December 2024. Lakisic said he founded the mosque as both a center for his own prayer and to strengthen Missoula's Islamic ties as a whole.



Mehrdad Kia poses in Stone Hall room 308 on April 7 after teaching his History of Iran: From Ancient Persia to the Iranian Revolution class. Kia is the director of the University of Montana's Central and Southwest Asian Studies Center.

"They've established themselves, and they're doing well for themselves," Lakisic said. "It's not easy. You come here from another country [where] you know the language, you know the people, you know the food, you know the culture, and suddenly you're just dropped here."

Missoula's Islamic Society is made of a diverse number of Missoula's immigrant population. However, they stand as one circle of many facing the struggle both abroad and in their own backyards.

Since 2025, the United States has experienced a historical change in net international migration, the combined total of gained and lost citizens. Statistics from the Brookings Institution documented more citizens emigrating, or leaving, from the U.S. than entering for the first time in modern history.

While conflict continues to rise across the globe, civil unrest and shifting policy within the U.S. has changed its reputation on the world stage. These changes have instilled fear into migrant groups across the nation, forcing many to weigh their safety against their citizenship. Despite this, Missoula immigrants have found solace and safety together.

LIVING THROUGH HISTORY

The Iranian-American conflict, which began in February of 2026, is one symptom of the continuing political divide facing citizens in the United States. Polls from the Pew Research Center show 59% of U.S. adults, with an 88% Democrat majority, disapprove of any U.S. military action in Iran.

According to United States census data, as of 2020, over 2.8 million Middle Eastern-born citizens currently live within the United States, with 1,868 living in Montana. Coinciding with the 1979 Iranian revolution, the U.S. saw an influx of refugees from Iran in the late 70s and early 80s.

Mehrdad Kia, a professor of history and director of the Central and Southwest Asian Studies Center at the University of Montana, is one of the Iranians who came to the United States in 1979, narrowly escaping the revolution at its beginning.

"They were not allowed to speak, to write. Journalists were one of the biggest targets. A lot of folks went to jail, and lots of friends that I never saw again," Kia said. "That was the warning that before it was too late, I had to leave."

According to Kia, his outspokenness against the regime led to his exile from the country in the 1980s, where he was tried in absentia, or given a trial without presence.

"I sent my passport and they sent it back to me with a hole in it and a note that you have been condemned in absentia. I've written quite a bit, I've talked a lot and they know where I'm coming from," Kia said.

Kia graduated from the University of Wisconsin-Madison in 1986 with his Ph.D in North African and Middle Eastern history. From there he transferred to the University of Montana, where he has taught for over 30 years, earning distinctions including the Carnegie Foundation Professor of the Year award in 2000.

Living in the U.S. for over 40 years, Kia experienced the long standing civil and military conflict between the U.S. and the



Donna Anderson, executive director of the Global Engagement Office, works at her computer on April 10. According to Anderson, new Department of Homeland Security proposals would require all student visas to be a maximum of four years, making it harder and less appealing for international students to complete their degrees in the U.S.

Middle East, including the Iranian Hostage Crisis of 1979-1982, the Gulf Wars of 1991 and the 9/11 terrorist attacks.

This, alongside his professional experience in the field of history, has led Kia to look at the country's direction with a more optimistic but complex view. Kia claims the current conflict in Iran is another multifaceted piece of the ongoing tensions and land disputes between the U.S., the Middle East and Israel.

"I felt that every time we have a conflict, every time we have tension, we have this kind of situation," Kia said. "To just reduce everything to, this is Islam or this is Islamophobia. People are this and that, but the reality is history is a very messy thing and it's multidimensional, and there are all these dimensions that we have to look at in order to understand the whole picture."

While political tension continues to increase in the U.S., Kia feels that despite its issues, the U.S. remains a beacon of hope and opportunity for those living under the current Iranian regime.

"Not that we have transcended bias and discrimination. There's quite a bit of it. But overall, this remains a free, open society," Kia said.

During his time as a professor, Kia has not only taught but also served in administrative roles, including as the associate vice provost of UM's International Programs, the former name for Global

Leadership Initiative, in the early 2000s. As the post 9/11 era was an incredibly tense time in the United States for Arab and Persian immigrants, citizens and students, Kia feels that the support found from tight-knit groups can often be underrepresented.

While supporting Saudi international students, Kia claimed many of them were astonished by the support they received during their time at UM.

"Before we came here, we thought we were coming to an enemy country," Kia said. "We have been invited to Christmas gatherings, to Thanksgiving dinners. No American classmate ever did anything to us but lent a hand, supported us and we have been received so well."

Local support, however, does not necessarily outweigh international policy.

U.S. intervention continues to shift worldwide fears and opinion globally, impacting rates of permanent migration nationally and within the educational world.

THE GLOBAL REFLECTION

The war in Iran, according to the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, has jeopardized American peace in both the short and long term, but global opinion on American safety and policy has

been on a downturn since the beginning of the Trump administration's second term.

Since the 2024 election, according to the Institut Public de Sondage d'Opinion Secteur marketing and research group, global opinion of the United States has dropped 13%, with 46% of countries across the globe considering the United States a positive influence.

This has not only contributed to immigration downturns, according to polling from the Kaiser Family Foundation, but has had impacts on international students at both the University of Montana and universities in the U.S. as a whole.

"There's lots happening right now, and all of that is kind of on top of things that were already happening with just more global competition for international students," said Donna Anderson, executive director of UM's Global Engagement Office.

In 2025, the University of Montana international office saw a 6% decrease in fall intake for international students, which was lower than the national enrollment decrease of 30%.

According to Anderson, the pausing of issued F-1 student visas last June by President Donald Trump and the current administration was a major cause of the international enrollment drop, leaving prospective students unsure if they could

even enter the U.S. after registering.

"In May 2025 [the International Student Exchange Program] told me that three of my listed universities are not going to accept new students. They didn't specify it was because I'm a foreigner, but I'm pretty sure that was the reason," Katharina Volk, a UM international student from Germany, said.

Volk, currently pursuing her masters in the European studies program, came to UM as a part of the International Student Exchange Program in 2025. "Naturally I got worried if I would even be able to study here and what would happen if the U.S. is not possible," she said.

Additionally, the Trump administration's deletion of Student and Exchange Visitor Information System Records, systems that monitor student visas and legality, left thousands of students in an illegal status. This, combined with the overall turn in immigration policy has made the United States a less ideal place for study, despite high education rates.

"U.S. education is still highly sought after," Anderson said. "There's just so much uncertainty. They don't feel that it's necessarily a safe destination because you throw gun violence, those sorts of things, on top of all that, you can see why students may not find this an appealing place to come right now."

According to Anderson, countries such as China, New Zealand and Australia have primarily begun to take a hold of the market for international students.

"There's a reputation that's been damaged, and it'll take at least a generation to build it back," Anderson said.

While actions of the current administration have damaged the views of potential immigrants, those in places like Missoula have attempted to establish support networks in the face of a changing landscape.

PILLARS OF HOPE

Over 30 people kneel within the Missoula Islamic Society mosque. The flickering fluorescent lights illuminate the blue and gold prayer mats that nearly cover the central rooms entirely. Before them, Kamal Likisic stands, leading the congregation in Khutbah, the sermon given prior to the Jumu'ah prayer.

"Rohingya, Syria, Gaza," Lakisic said. "Don't forget about these people in your daily life. This is the power of faith, and we must remember these people's stories and never forget the past."

The sermon, in preparation for the Jumu'ah Friday prayer service, places emphasis on supporting one another, and doing what one can, when they can, to remind themselves of their "brothers and sisters" both near and far.

"I always mention to remind people that, you know, we're safe here, but our brothers and sisters are not safe in the world," Lakisic said. "That's the whole point of this place, to bring people together."

The mosque, which relies purely on donations, has been a great success as a pillar for Missoula's Islamic Jamaat, or congregation. According to Lakisic, the mosque, open 24/7, is not only intended to be used as a place of prayer, but a place for gathering and safety for both locals and travelers.

"If there's anyone that needs a place to stay, this place is always open. People sleep here. They can't afford rent for a little, they sleep here for a little bit, and then they move on," Lakisic said.

After Jumu'ah is completed, the mosque bursts with life. Members of a variety of different ages and backgrounds greet one another like old friends, in no hurry to leave. According to Lakisic, while creating the society as a way to bring together Missoula's Islamic community, he has found Missoula to be supportive.

"For the most part, people have helped people. And the people here — the Muslims here, the Muslim community, Afghan, Syria — have been okay," Lakisic said. "People don't really, let's just put it bluntly, don't buy the bullshit. At the end of the day, people are people, and for the most part, people treat people pretty well."

This support expanded beyond the Islamic Society, with Missoula's first halal market opening up just around the mosque's corner.

The market, named Dama Rose, opened in 2024. It specializes in a number of Middle Eastern imports and halal ingredients, meaning prepared in accordance with Islamic law.

"It's nice to see that, like, you know,

there's stuff going on," Lakisic said. "However slow, however small, it's still there."

A number of local nonprofits have also shown support for Missoula's immigrant communities. Soft Landing, for instance, a nonprofit stating its commitment to working with refugee and immigrant families as they build new lives in Missoula. The organization serves over 372 immigrants currently and has had over 214 volunteers.

Missoula Resists, an activism based nonprofit, has shown overwhelming support for immigrant communities, as well as immigrant rights and safety.

The organization has been a primary organizer in several "No Kings" protests, anti-Immigrations Customs and Enforcement protests, as well as supplying both information and resources on their website.

"I was a bit worried about how daily life in the U.S. would be, if foreigners would be treated differently by officials, but actually you don't feel the government here," Volk said. "Montana is like a safe space, I would say."

While an ever changing landscape faces national immigrant communities, what solace, grace and kindness is given is little forgotten.

"In the end, conflicts come, conflicts go. We have to live as a humanity, as human beings from different cultures," Kia said. "The best we can do to get rid of these stereotypes is to treat each and every person from any other culture as if they're one of us, right?"



Kamal Lakisic, imam at the Missoula Islamic Society and law student at the University of Montana, gives the sermon for the Friday prayer, called Jumu'ah. Friday prayer is a required congregational prayer for adult men, and includes a sermon by an imam in addition to the prayer.

Forest Service reorganization brings uncertainty

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The U.S. Department of Agriculture announced a nationwide restructuring of the U.S. Forest Service via a press release on March 31 that would fundamentally change how the Forest Service operates in Missoula and Montana.

Under the reorganization, the Forest Service would move its headquarters from Washington, D.C., to Utah. It would also shift its traditional regional management structure to a state-based one and would consolidate its research efforts, closing 57 of 77 research stations across the country.

The press release announced the trio of changes as part of a move to prioritize what it called “common sense forest management.”

Secretary of Agriculture Brooke L. Rollins stated in the press release, “Moving the Forest Service closer to the forests we manage is an essential action that will improve our core mission of managing our forests while saving taxpayer dollars and boosting employee recruitment.”

This will be accomplished in three ways, according to the release.

The Forest Service headquarters will move to Salt Lake City, Utah. Utah Gov. Spencer Cox called it a “big win” for the state, while Andrew Larson, professor at the University of Montana and director of the Wilderness Institute, struggled to explain the why behind the win.

The argument for the move, Larson said, is that leadership will be brought closer to the forests. However, according to Larson, the work done in Washington, D.C.’s office often involves coordination with national leadership of partner organizations and cooperation with the legislative branch.

“Leadership spends an awful lot of time in places like on Capitol Hill testifying to Congress, for example,” Larson said. “I struggle a little bit with trying to explain ‘why Salt Lake City.’”

The Forest Service is also transitioning from a regional management model to a state-based one. This means that the nine regional offices, one of which is housed in Missoula, will close and be replaced by 15 appointed state directors. Montana’s will be based in Helena.

The move didn’t make much sense, according to Max McComsey, a senior forestry major who’s spent the last two years working with the Forest Service as a wildland firefighter and also as the president of the University of Montana Student Association for Fire Ecology and Management.

McComsey, a 22-year-old from Elkton,

Maryland, said that the Northern Region that contains Montana, North Dakota and parts of South Dakota, Idaho and Washington worked under the regional system because the states had similar fuels, a term that refers to any vegetation, stick, log, needle or soil that may burn in a given fire.

“The geography of this country doesn’t stop at the state borders,” McComsey said.

Forest Service Chief Tom Schultz, an alum of UM’s forestry program and the first forest service chief to be appointed without previous experience in the service, attributed the change to improving the on-the-ground presence of Forest Service staff and leadership.

“This is about building a Forest Service that is nimble, efficient, effective and closer to the forests and communities it serves,” Schultz stated in the release. In a letter to Forest Service staff, he wrote, “There is a position for each of you in the new structure, and your skills and experience are essential to the work ahead. At the same time, we know that not all positions will look the same or be located in the same places they are today.”

Conversely, Larson said not only does this change lead to a net increase in the amount of offices meant to serve as middle-management, but it also leads to confusion regarding the future of the necessary staff at these regional offices.

“They’re hugely important,” Larson said. “And I don’t know if they have a plan.”

The importance of the regional office staff lies in their high level of experience and knowledge of subject matter, according to Larson. This expertise serves as a regional resource, whether it’s from a botanist, wilderness specialist or otherwise. According to Larson, this rearrangement leaves the future of those resources uncertain.

The third major announcement is the consolidation of research stations into a unified Research and Development Headquarters based in Colorado. This will result in research station closures across the country and in Montana, including in Bozeman and Hungry Horse.

“As the new model is implemented, the agency will consolidate and, where appropriate, co-locate research facilities to create a more integrated and efficient national research footprint,” a factsheet published by the USDA stated.

Missoula is one of 20 cities said to still retain its federal research programs, which include the Aldo Leopold Wilderness Research Institute and Missoula Forestry Sciences Laboratory on campus.

These research programs near campus are incredibly important, according to Larson.

“It is so powerful having federal research

scientists right next door here to the University. It opens up collaboration,” Larson said. “We’re more productive, we make more discoveries.”

Though Missoula is slated to retain its federal research programs, it was not specified if it would retain all of its research facilities through the consolidation. However, according to a USDA spokesperson, the transition will occur in phases over the coming year.

“These reorganization changes do not eliminate scientists, end research programs or reduce our broader geographic presence; research will continue across the country,” a USDA spokesperson stated in an email. “In many cities, the ‘closures’ refer only to individual buildings where small groups of scientists sit today, and those staff and programs are simply moving into fewer facilities.”

McComsey said that small stations, like the one in Hungry Horse, studied important and timely subjects such as wildfire risk, grizzly bear migrations and the correlation between insects and forest disease.

“Now all these people have to move or lose their job, and that’s a pretty purposeful vacuum,” McComsey said. “There’s all these positions that are empty now and then they

can kind of shove in whoever they want.”

The potential impacts of this reshuffling on UM’s forestry program is uncertain. The reshuffling will not affect program resources such as the Lubrecht Experimental Forest, which is state-owned.

McComsey said the consensus among forestry students is frustration.

“It kind of just shows that our government doesn’t put a lot of stock in science,” McComsey said.

It is not yet clear if the restructuring will impact career advising for students in the forestry program.

“There continues to be a lot of uncertainty around these changes and we pay close attention to the ongoing dynamics in the field,” said Andrea Vernon, executive director of Experiential Learning and Career success, in an email. “Through it all, we continue to provide career coaching and advising for federal jobs for our forestry students, and any others interested in this career path.”

Ultimately, the full effects of the changes have yet to be seen.

“I’m curious to see if stuff will become more efficient, you know, as is the intent of this reshuffling,” McComsey said. “That will only come with time.”



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Tuning out the racket

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Kelsey Phillips stands out as an accomplished women's tennis player at the University of Montana.

Most recently, she has become the Big Sky Conference Player of the Week, announced on Wednesday, April 8.

Phillips is from Excelsior, Minnesota, and didn't start playing tennis competitively until she was 12 years old.

"It started to pick up from there," Phillips said. "I started playing national tournaments at 15, and then found out I could get my degree and play tennis as well. I just couldn't pass it up."

Part of the reason that she chose the University of Montana is because of the competitive environment the women's tennis team provides.

"I give a lot of credit in my experience to Steve Ascher, my coach. I knew that it was gonna be competitive from the jump, and that was something I was looking for," Phillips said. "It was not personally competitive. It was like, we are all here to win, competing alongside each other."

Phillips was named Big Sky Freshman of the Year during the 2024 season.

"I had no idea freshman of the year was an award," Phillips said. "When I got it, it was a surprise, and the award definitely confirmed all the hard work I have put into this sport."

From her past two years playing in the program, she took a different approach to this season and has been tremendously successful.

"This year I've let go of any expectation that anyone had on me or that I had on myself," Phillips said. "I kinda just let that all go and just had fun. This is the most fun I have had playing."

She is currently undefeated in the Big Sky conference as of April 12, which is an impressive feat as the team is 2-15 this season, with only two more opportunities to compete.

She said her game against Sacramento State was the turning point in her mentality shift this season. Leading up to the game, she knew that it was going to be played tough and fast.

"I was thinking like I always do, just, 'Oh, she's better than me on paper,'" Phillips said. "This makes sense, so I lost the first set."

After losing that first set, she realized that she needed to lean on her ulterior strategies that she may not have otherwise used in the past.

"All of a sudden it kind of clicked for me that I can hang with these people, and I think that winning that was a huge confirmation that all the things I've been doing has really helped," Phillips said.

Phillips always does an additional workout on top of the school program requirements, whether it is hot yoga, pilates or a long run. This helps keep herself feeling good and healthy between practices.

Women's tennis head coach Steve Ascher appreciated Phillips' approach.

"I'm excited for Kelsey to continue her high level of competing to earn the win today. She is playing with great composure and understanding what needs to be done strategically to give herself the edge," Ascher said about Phillips' game April 11 vs. Montana State University.

When preparing for a match, she is typically connected to the speaker during warm-ups and loves to play house music to get her and her teammates hyped up for their games.

She said that her parents play a major role in how she views competing from every level, starting when she just began her time in college.

"My dad has just really motivated me to continue to stay feeling healthy, and I'm feeling great about myself," Phillips said. "My mom, she's a natural competitor like me. We both have just a competitive bone in our bodies, and so she gets the intensity out of me."

These attributes have to work in tandem in order for her to be at the top of her game.

"I think that the balance between those two has been super helpful, for you know, just my performance and the way I view tennis now," Phillips said.

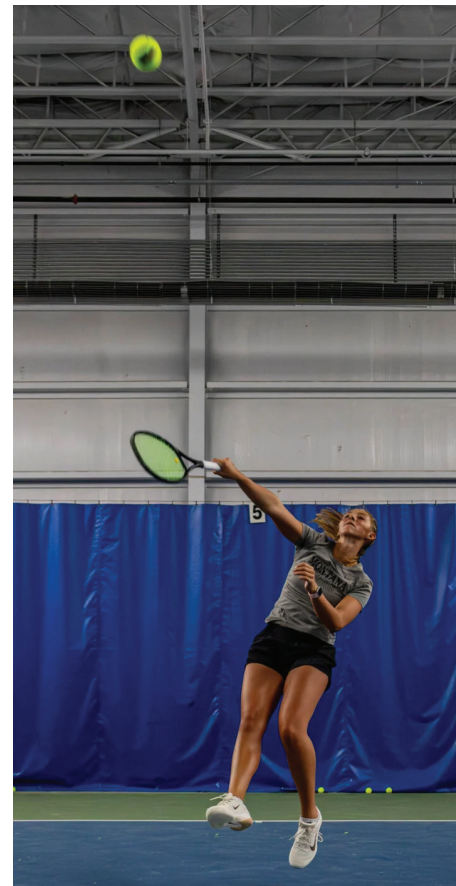
Her parents are a good support system for her and often travel to see her play.

The one piece of advice that she has for athletes and students alike is, "Don't look at extra work as extra," Phillips

said. "Look at it as your fuel in your body, you're priming your body, investing in yourself and you want to reap those benefits at the end of the day."

In December 2025, she signed to Gonzaga University in Spokane, Washington, where she will pursue a master's degree in analytics and will be playing tennis there in the fall of 2026.

"We are thrilled to welcome Kelsey to our program," Gonzaga women's tennis head coach Natalie Pluskota-Hamberg said. "Her work ethic, competitive spirit, and passion for the game align perfectly with the core values of our team. I'm confident she will make an immediate impact both on and off the court."



Junior women's tennis player Kelsey Phillips practices her returns at the PEAK training facility with her head coach Steve Ascher on April 9.

JACKSON MAILEY | MONTANA KAIMIN

SPORTS BRIEFS

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UPCOMING SCHEDULE

The University of Montana football team announced its schedule for the upcoming 2026 season.

The season begins on August 29 with a home game against Southern Utah, who the Griz have beaten in the past eight of their 10 matchups.

UM will have four out-of-conference games before the Big Sky Conference play starts against University of California, Davis on September 26, including the team's second matchup with Drake University.

The season may seem to swing in the favor of Montana, as it have more home games and have a higher win percentage.

However, the Griz will be testing a new coaching lineup this season, including head coach Bobby Kennedy.

As of Tuesday, the Griz have yet to announce its ESPN main channel games.

LAST HOME SWEEP

The University of Montana's men's tennis team swept Sacramento State 7-0 on Sunday, April 12. The win brought the Griz to second in the Big Sky Conference and improved its record to 5-1 in the conference.

On Senior Night, all three of Montana's seniors, Tom Bittner, Baltazar Wiger-Nordas and Eivind Tandberg, were able to secure a win in both the singles and the double rounds.

The win also brought Jason Brown, head coach of the men's tennis team, his 50th win.

"That felt really good to have those guys leave the PEAK behind with a lot of wins over their careers. All of them had outstanding records here and have done a lot for this program, so that part was cool," Brown said.

One of the highlights of the game was when Wiger-Nordas and Duncan McCall swept Adryan Ballesterero and Sebastian Vlahos in the doubles round.

If the Griz win its final game against the Montana State Bobcats, then the team will clinch the second seed in the Big Sky Conference and gain a first round bye in the playoffs.

Behind the scenes of 'Murder on the Orient Express'

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With each murder suspect dressed to the nines and illuminated on stage, it's easy to be drawn into the University of Montana's latest production, "Murder on the Orient Express."

More flirty, more fashionable and certainly more French, Agatha Christie's detective Hercule Poirot centers the audience in a classic murder mystery, a man murdered on a train with only a few first class travelers who could be the killer. The production, adapted by Ken Ludwig, runs through April 19.

As part of their Master of Fine Arts program, theater students must work on at least one production per semester. So, for costume designer Sara Wheeler, "Murder on the Orient Express" was part of her degree.

"It was assigned to me, but it is one of my favorite stories of all time," Wheeler said. "I was extremely excited about it."

Wheeler is working toward a master's in costume design. For each of the eclectic characters, she dressed them to reflect their unique personalities. Poirot, the famous detective, dons an appropriately classy suit throughout the show. His pajamas are quietly refined, blue and as cozy as a 1930s man can be.

Poirot stumbles out of his room on the train to Mrs. Helen Hubbard, who sings and dances late into the night, disturbing the sleep of all in a small first-class carriage. Her silky, peach pajamas feel like a modern self-care dream. With her hair done up for a nighttime routine reminiscent of the era, her overly talkative nature bursts from every pore.

The pajamas were handmade by students in the theater department, alongside Poirot's suit and a few other pieces sprinkled throughout.

"It was a lot of fun watching it all come to life," Wheeler said.

Before deciding on individual outfits, the MFA student from Asheville, North Carolina, came up with an overall concept for the show. One of her bases was the color palette of Wes Anderson, a director known for the use of color and symmetry in his films.

"Not uncanny in a scary way, but uncanny in a kind of fantastical way," Wheeler said of Anderson's style. "I started with that take and then kind of linked it into the biological concept of aposematism."

Aposematism, which is when organ-



ABOVE: Nick Monsos performs as Michel during a dress rehearsal of "Murder on the Orient Express" in the PARTV center on April 7. **TORI KUEHL | MONTANA KAIMIN**

BELOW: The cast of "Murder on the Orient Express" during a dress rehearsal in the University of Montana PARTV center on April 7. The bright costumes were created by MFA costume designer Sara Wheeler.

TORI KUEHL | MONTANA KAIMIN



isms display bright colors to indicate poor flavor and toxicity, means that the striking costumes need to be seen in their full glory. So, it's important that the lighting doesn't dim or take away from the intentional brilliance of color.

"It was stressing me out because I was

like, 'I do not want to mute any of these colors,' but I don't want it to just be white on stage," said Courtney "Root" Phillips, a lighting design MFA student. "It took me a long time to pick colors for this show."

Phillips fell into lighting design, in a way. She originally wanted to do sound in

high school — but someone else already had the position. After getting her degree in general theater from Oglethorpe University in Georgia, she decided to make her way out to Montana and keep exploring her passions. Plus, it opened up the option to teach in the future.

For "Murder on the Orient Express," Phillips struggled with some of the more artistic aspects of the production.

"I don't feel like I'm an artist per se," Phillips said. "I have a very practical approach to it, instead of like an, 'artsy fartsy' kind of thing."

Once she moved past the convoluted creative language, Phillips felt like she was able to fall more into her rhythm. According to the 22-year-old, a lot of the work stays the same between shows. She researches the production and makes a cue sheet, which shows when to press the buttons throughout the runtime. Then she needs a plot, which is a blueprint of where each light fixture goes.

Though it's not a necessity for a light designer to do, Phillips also hangs the fixtures on stage. Creating the plot of where each light goes is her favorite part of the job — though she says many lighting technicians prefer the color aspect.

"If a character is wearing blue, and I put a color on stage that's only red and green," Phillips said, "It's gonna look like black."

A more subtle part of the lighting work for this show in particular was the difference between the detective's narration and the action. Toward the end of the show, a scene features several characters flashing back to the moment their crucial clue-delivering lines took place, with each actor being lit by a spotlight from above.

"[It's a] kind of subtle but not so subtle distinction of warm to cool, like we're not anywhere real right now," Phillips said.

In the dark theater, with each character illuminated for a line at a time, the world of the play felt different. The comedy that so easily wove throughout the dialogue vanished — the warmth faded, replaced with the cold, hard facts, seen through the eyes of Poirot. And as the final pieces fell into place, the conclusion felt inevitable.

"Murder on the Orient Express" is at the PARTV building Thursday through Saturday at 7:30 p.m. A matinee is scheduled for Sunday at 2 p.m., which will have open captioning available. Tickets can be purchased online, at the Adams Center Box Office and at the performance itself.

The history underneath Cranky Sam Public House

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Upon first glance, Cranky Sam appears as a normal brewery, with a variety of food and a selection of around 15 beers on tap. But, upon doing renovations, co-owners Jennifer Heggen and Timmy Evon discovered a wealth of history.

Among their findings were three separate elements: the history of Cranky Sam, various artifacts and a mural on a wall.

“2018 or 2019 we broke ground and very quickly realized we were sitting on a lot of artifacts,” Evon said. “At first it was just fun to be like, ‘Oh wow I found a whole bottle,’ and then we were like, there are pieces of things that we don’t know what these are.”

At the beginning, Heggen and her husband Jed had a simple goal: to find a place to open a brewery. Heggen’s husband was a home brewer, and saw the space for the restaurant when eating at Biga Pizza.

“He walked by, and he saw this was all empty, and he’s like, ‘Okay, you got to come look at this,’” Heggen said.

The space used to be the Reynolds Radiator Shop. Reynolds Radiator, in its original location, was a vehicle

repair icon in downtown Missoula. You could drive your car right through the building. According to Heggen and Evon, the place was “disgusting” at first, with oil all over the floors and rubble everywhere.

“So we came in, we looked at the building and out, and my husband was like, ‘You’re gonna just use your imagination,’” Heggen said. “The walls were covered with white paint and soot and grease, and like a toilet in here that you wouldn’t let your worst enemy use. I was like, it’s perfect, I could see what the bones were.”

The project to convert the building into a brewery involved removing concrete from the main floor and the brew-house floor. It was then that unknown history was discovered.

“The plumber was dredging through and cracking glass and jars and pottery and you name it,” Heggen said. “So we stopped what he was doing. We called the University, and it kind of fell into this really cool opportunity for the school of archaeology to turn it into a big dig site. They did a wonderful job excavating, and eventually they did write-ups on particular pieces that were found under the ground, and the history of the building just started

unfolding.”

Soon, a historical figure from Missoula’s past became an icon for their business.

“We had heard about this person named Cranky Sam, who was a real-life character that lived in downtown Missoula, where Brennan’s Wave currently is before they rerouted the river,” Heggen said. “Cranky Sam was Chinese, and was just arrested over and over and over again. Obviously, his name was not ‘Cranky,’ yeah, but that became his nickname.”

Evon said Cranky Sam was an “anti-hero” who ran an opium den and was “involved in all kinds of stuff.” Additionally, Evon added an article from the time that said he probably broke every law and ordinance in the city of Missoula.

Another element of the brewery and restaurant’s history is the parts of the building itself, and what was found below it. Because Evon had done research at the University, they knew the area surrounding the restaurant was part of the red light district in Missoula.

“You can kind of feel the history of the building,” Heggen said. “All the wood that’s used in the building, is all reclaimed out of the original roof. We tried to keep the brick in its true format. It’s really soft, old Missoula brick that just crumbles if you kind of touch it. So it was a very ginger process, a very delicate process, to restore it back to how it is today.”

The location of the brewery also plays a part in the discovery of artifacts inside the space. Heggen said in the space where the brewery is today, a garbage dump used to be, and instead of removing the garbage, they covered it with concrete.

“When we took the concrete out, everything was perfectly preserved, even to the point where there was like a little metal box that had been smashed down, but the paper cartouche that held the opium was intact,” Heggen said. “Things like oyster shells were discovered...bone structures from animals that showed what they were eating, remnants of opium pipes, con-

tainers that had Lysol and all kinds of interesting things to get rid of venereal disease.”

Other things found include currency, game pieces and other items that reflected the early Chinese community in Missoula, according to Evon. Heggen continued that these findings were such an important validation for the Chinese community that the Smithsonian picked it up and ran a huge article about Cranky Sam.

When remodeling the room left of the main entrance of the building, they discovered the mural of the “Hidden Lady” behind the wall.

“We call her the hidden lady because she’s been tucked away and hidden from the population for probably 100 years, 80 years,” Heggen said. “It’s anonymous. We don’t know who painted her, but that’s the original location on the original plaster, dating back to the 1920s or 1930s. We had her, her stabilization and history is documented there by the artist that touched her up and put her back into decent health, and we put her behind glass so that she couldn’t get messed with.”

Evon explained the art historian involved in the exploration of the mural helped to form their theory of the mural, which involves a map of Missoula which claimed the space was a storage. Evon said due to the size of the space, it is likely the room was a speakeasy.

When visiting Cranky Sam’s, you can see the elements of history on display on the wall. Cranky Sam is seen in their name and around the brewery, the mural is preserved under glass and the artifacts are displayed with images and information boards by the University.

Evon explained for Cranky Sam’s, while it was not cheap, preserving the history of the building was important from the beginning, and played a role in choosing to start the business in Missoula.

“Frankly, starting a new place without history is tough, so it really does make the space a lot more special to know that we’re not the only ones who were coming together in this place. We are just another in a long legacy of folks celebrating here, drinking and partying, but also like hosting community events.” Evon said.



The hidden lady mural found during the building’s renovation, sits in Cranky Sam’s “Stone Room” on April 3, in Missoula. TORI KUEHL | MONTANA KAIMIN

DRAUGHT WORKS HOSTS PUZZLE COMPETITION

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A line of over 50 people formed outside of Draught Works Brewery just before noon on Sunday, preparing to face off in a speed puzzle competition.

Once a month, Draught Works hosts a speed puzzle event, in which teams of all ages are given a 500-piece puzzle that changes every competition. The three teams who finish the quickest win gift cards, courtesy of Draught Works.

"It's never not fun," competitor Taylor Waldenberg said. "I get into a good flow, and time just kinda fades away."

As bartender, Riley Crews picked up the microphone and gave a countdown. The teams opened their boxes, dumped out the pieces, switched on their lights and rushed to flip over and divide all the pieces out by color and design.

"People get really excited about it," Crews said. "It's cool to see people come and wear headlamps, and there's teams that wear matching T-shirts."

Some teams had their own strategies for completing the puzzle in the most efficient way.

A team of five brought their own separate boxes to separate the pieces into quadrants for them to each solve and then put together. A lot of competitors also brought headlamps and desk lamps to see the pieces clearer.

Competitor Christine Littig's team focused on efficiently organizing their pieces at the start, a strategy Littig and her team have developed after competing in the events for at least a year.

"We part out the puzzle and we try to use the first two minutes as speedily as we can by flipping all the pieces in under one minute, and then we start the puzzle," Littig said.

Ultimately, the winning team completed their puzzle, a picture of Glacier National Park, in 34 minutes.

Littig's team placed third, finishing the puzzle in 42 minutes.

RIGHT: Susan Roberts works on her section of the puzzle with a baking tray on April 12.



Grace Perry, left, Aimee Vitateau, middle, and Megan Parks, right, work on finishing their puzzle at the Draught Works puzzle competition on April 12.



Hands of a team at the puzzle competition at Draught Works Brewing.