

# MONTANA KAIMIN

## seeking the stage



AS THE MISSOULA MUSIC SCENE  
OPENS THE DOOR TO LARGER  
SHOWS, SMALLER ARTISTS ARE  
SEARCHING FOR WAYS TO MAKE  
THEIR MUSIC HEARD.

STORY BY KATE WIDMER  
PHOTOS BY RACHEL YEAGER



**6** College voting restrictions

**13** Scar stories

**15** B-ball seniors say goodbye



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."

## EDITORIAL STAFF NEWSROOM STAFF

**EDITOR-IN-CHIEF**  
Claire Bernard

**BUSINESS MANAGER**  
Drew Craig

**ARTS & CULTURE EDITOR**  
Kairi Lising

**NEWS EDITOR**  
Maxwell Johnson  
Corbin Vanderby

**SPORTS EDITOR**  
Holly Malkowski

**AUDIO EDITOR**  
Bayliss Flynn

**COPY CHIEF**  
Mariah Henry

**DESIGN EDITOR**  
Mackenna Gleave

**DIGITAL EDITOR**  
Caydence Martin

**FEATURES EDITOR**  
Elle Daniel

**MULTIMEDIA EDITOR**  
Marley Barboeisel

**NEWS REPORTERS**  
Sav Chavez  
Emily Messer  
Sabrina Philip  
Abigail Williams  
Logan Yantes

**SPORTS REPORTERS**  
Hannah Benitez  
Riley Comstock  
Dillon Richardson

**ARTS & CULTURE REPORTERS**  
Eliza Carey  
Keely Proebstel  
Kate Widmer

**AUDIO REPORTER**  
Maddie Pandis

**MULTIMEDIA**  
Brooke Bickers  
James Celano  
Henry Doellinger  
Noah Epps  
Diego Hernandez  
Brooke Strickler  
Rachel Yeager

**COPY EDITORS**  
Tessa Macklin  
Marc Anthony Martinez  
Sydney Moate  
Bee Reiswig

**DESIGNERS**  
Julia Branen  
Dane Clements  
Fiona Davia

**CARTOONIST**  
Barrett Clement

**SOCIAL MEDIA ASSISTANT**  
Grace Simonich

**OFFICE ASSISTANTS**  
Fiona Grace  
Madeline Grebb  
Leah Goodwin

**ADVISERS**  
Jason Begay  
Chris Johns

## FIND US ON SOCIAL MEDIA



@Montanakaimin



@Montanakaimin  
@Montanakaiminsports



@Montanakaimin  
@Kaiminsports



@montanakaimin203

For comments, corrections or letters to the editor, contact  
**claire.bernard@umontana.edu**  
or call (406) 243-4310.

For advertising opportunities, contact  
**kaiminads@outlook.com**  
or call (304) 596-7873.



Can't get enough? *Start listening.*  
Scan the QR code to the left for  
**THE KAIMIN CAST.** New podcast  
episodes out every other Monday.

## Classifieds



**Nika Services - Cleaning Company Missoula:**  
move-out, deep, carpet, floor, windows & more  
w: nika-services.com p: (406) 595-6209 Free  
Quotes Online

## KAIMIN COMICS: SE 2 EP 11



BARRETT CLEMENT | MONTANA KAIMIN

BARRETT

# Don't let plane paranoia ruin spring break

As spring break nears, many students are anxiously awaiting the opportunity to get out of town and travel to the vacations of their dreams. But for many, a recent and seemingly never-ending series of plane crashes, air disasters and manufacturing mishaps have eroded their trust in air travel and put those dreams in jeopardy.

The recent headlines of upside-down crash landings and deadly air-to-air collisions are disturbing, sobering and at times, outright terrifying, but take it from a person who owes his existence to the safety of air travel: You shouldn't let fear stop you from exploring the world and living your life to the fullest.

Both my parents have spent much of their lives in aviation, with my dad logging 11,000 total flight hours over 30 years as a pilot and my mom working as a flight attendant for over a decade. Both of them went their entire careers without experiencing a crash in an aviation era more statistically dangerous than today's.

According to the Bureau of Transporta-

tion, there were 1.2 fatalities per 100,000 U.S. Air Carrier flight hours in 1995. In 2024, that number was 0.06 fatalities. According to the International Air Transportation Association, this means, on average, a person would have to fly for approximately 50,000 years to experience one fatal accident — yes, that math does check out. Trust me, I'm a nerd.

Even with a slight rise in fatalities in 2025, air travel remains safe. If it wasn't, one of my parents presumably would have died and much to the delight of my enemies, I would never have been born.

If you're wondering how they met, it wasn't in aviation, but rather in a traffic accident — which killed 29,135 people in America during the first nine months of 2024, according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. Meanwhile, out of all of the aircraft crashes in 2024, only 306 people died, according to the National Transportation Security Board.

I have flown on well over a hundred flights across North America, Asia, Oce-

ania and Europe. I've slept in Dallas Fort Worth International Airport more nights than I care to admit, flown on Europe's infamous Ryanair and circled Paris' Charles de Gaulle Airport for half an hour because a dog was loose on the runway. Through it all, I have never experienced anything even remotely close to a crash landing or been on an aircraft with any kind of technical or human failure. I am not lucky. In fact, I don't believe in luck. I believe in making my own luck through hard work, and I like to think most pilots do too.

In the U.S., it takes a minimum of 1,500 hours of flight time to acquire your commercial pilot's license with hundreds more hours spent in simulators, classes and other training. Once a pilot has their license, they generally have to work for an airline for a minimum of five years and receive multiple promotions to become a captain in charge of an aircraft, at which point, they will have amassed thousands of flying hours.

In short, despite what your ego says, you

cannot land a Boeing 747. But the people actually working in the cockpit sure as hell can anytime, anywhere, in any conditions.

That doesn't mean you aren't still human and that it's not OK to be nervous. I get claustrophobic on planes sometimes, and when I do, I just try to take a few deep breaths and immerse myself in one of my favorite books or pieces of media until touchdown. Perhaps a free student-run newspaper?

So overpack your suitcase to your heart's content, hold up the TSA line when you forget to take your shoes off and above all, be at peace as an aluminum cylinder hurdles you through the sky at 30,000 feet toward Margaritaville.

*-Maxwell Johnson, news editor*

*Like it? Hate it? Let us know.*  
Email us your opinions at [claire.bernard@umontana.edu](mailto:claire.bernard@umontana.edu)

# Moonlit day



The moon shines as the sunlight bathes University Hall during a day of nice weather on March 7.  
DIEGO HERNANDEZ | MONTANA KAIMIN

## SUDOKU

Difficulty: Medium

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

Copyright 2025 by The Puzzle Syndicate

Edited by Margie E. Burke

### 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:

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

# In this week's briefs...

### MISSOULA TO CLOSE HOMELESS SHELTER

The city of Missoula is closing the Johnson Street temporary homeless shelter in August, after losing federal funding from the COVID-19 pandemic that paid for it.

According to Mayor Andrea Davis, the city is working on raising \$400,000 to get as many shelter residents in permanent housing as possible.

"As we face growing pressures on the city's general fund, we must shift our focus to housing-first solutions that provide stability and a pathway out of homelessness, rather than short-term sheltering," Davis said in a statement.

The shelter costs \$1.8 million to run, but the Poverello Center, another homeless shelter in Missoula, splits the bill with the county. However, that funding will run out in August. Jill Bonny, executive director of the Poverello Center, said to the Montana Free Press that the shelter staff knew the closure would happen at some point.

"Every year, we don't know if we're going to get another," Bonny said to the Montana Free Press. "We have been appreciative of the past several years and the ability to provide shelter, and we're committed to helping and hopeful that we can help get people to better solutions."

On April 1, the shelter will begin to reduce its nightly capacity by about 30 people per month, Davis said at a press conference. The shelter has 165 beds, but more can stay if needed. Bonny told to the Montana Free Press that recently 150 to 165 people have stayed each night.

The temporary shelter was created by the Poverello Center after the pandemic reduced its capacity in November 2021. The shelter began as a 24-hour winter shelter paid for by both Missoula city and county for three seasons. It reopened in September 2023 for another year after a spike in the homeless population over spring and summer.

In 2024, the shelter was approved to run another two years, but was only given a year's worth of funds. According to Davis, the shelter's warehouse will be deconstructed by August.

To help those displaced by the reduction, the city and other organizations will run a housing sprint where residents will be connected with housing and other support, rental applications, medical referrals and transportation.

The United Way of Missoula County, a nonprofit that raises money and improves Missoula's education, financial stability and health, will manage the fund for the housing sprint. It hopes to raise \$400,000. Davis also said to the Montana Free Press that the city will likely donate to the fund, but didn't say

how much.

"We don't expect 180 people to get into permanent housing by August," Davis said to the Montana Free Press. "We will be doing the best we can, however, to make the most impact we can for those folks."

(Corbin Vanderby)

### DELAYED FONDLING AND PARTNER ASSAULT REPORTED TO UMPD

The University of Montana Police Department received a delayed report on March 5 of a student being fondled in a UM residence facility Oct. 1, 2024.

The incident is separate from the previous fondling case reported in the Kaimin and the report came from a third party Campus Security Authority. The victim is not known and no police report has been filed with the information being forwarded to the Student Advocacy Research Center and Title IX.

On March 6 around 10 p.m., UMPD received a report of a disturbance at the Craighead apartments. Upon investigation, the disturbance was a partner assault case, likely between a student and non-student living in the same complex. The non-student was arrested and taken to jail. They will not be released until they see a judge and will likely have restrictions placed on them around contacting the student, such as not being able to go back home without a police officer present. Charges do not appear to be pressed.

If you or someone you know is experiencing or has experienced domestic violence or sexual assault, you can contact the Student Advocacy Resource Center for a confidential conversation and assistance 24 hours a day at (406) 329-6559.

(Maxwell Johnson)



APPLY NOW **EXPERIENTIAL  
LEARNING  
SCHOLARSHIP**

### The gun divide: College handgun culture



UM senior Lily Surber's 9mm pistol and safety glasses sit on a table at Deep Creek Shooting Range on Feb. 28. Surber occasionally visits a gun range to practice using her concealed carry weapon.

MARLEY BARBOEISEL | MONTANA KAIMIN

Listen to Madelynn Pandis on the Kaimin Cast as she talks with students about college handgun culture. Only law enforcement at the University of Montana are allowed to carry a handgun, concealed or not. But not all students are responsive to this rule.

Cyrus Gertz is a junior studying psychology with minors in wilderness studies, wildlife biology and neuroscience. She said she is glad that students aren't allowed to carry handguns on campus, but she believes that not all students actually listen to the rules.

"I actually had a close friend of mine have to change apartment rooms and then another close friend of mine changed entire houses in the University District," Gertz said. "Both of those were because of roommates putting loaded weapons on the couch or in common areas, not locking them up properly, not handling them properly, jokingly, drunkenly shooting at cans or shooting at things in their front yard or several other places around Missoula."

 New episodes out every other Monday. Scan for the latest.

## POLICE BLOTTER

MAXWELL JOHNSON

maxwell3.johnson@umontana.edu

On the lighter side of crime, University police had to deal with one rambunctious child and three adults acting like one this week. If you must act like an animal, could you at least wait until spring break in Florida? Do whatever you want then: I used to live in that shithole, so trust me, you can't make that state worse than it already is.

### FEB. 28 – CONCERT COMMOTION

A tipsy individual going crazy style was removed from an Adams Center concert at 10 p.m. The man was of legal drinking age, but that's no excuse for being too loud and pushing strangers. Campus police asked him to leave, at which point he started hitting the walls. Presumably he was screaming, "Let me in, let me in!" He was removed from campus and issued a warning. What happened to just vibing and enjoying the music?

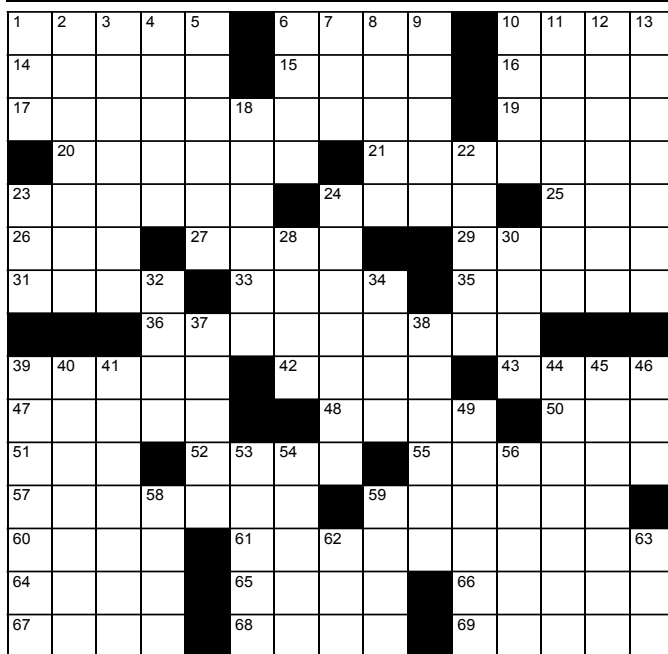
### MARCH 3 – TEENAGERS SCARE ME

A wild youth was reported in the Sisson apartments around 9:15 p.m. The child was not abiding by the rules of the house, throwing things around and, much like our previous culprit, just generally being a little shit. Campus officers cited him into youth court. Good lord, I didn't like bedtime any more than the next kid, but in the South we were raised to respect our mamas. Bless that kid's heart.

### MARCH 6 – PARKING SPOT STANDOFF

Bright and early at 10:30 a.m., two people decided to start their day off in hell by getting into a screaming match over a lot M parking space. I know that parking lot is next to the bubble and the Adams center, but can we train to do something other than winning a hoedown throwdown? Pro tip: if you own an old pickup, you can slap a UM decal on that bitch and masquerade as UM groundskeeping to park wherever the hell you want (please don't). In the meantime, see you after spring break. Try not to subtract or add to the population while you're away.

Maxwell Johnson is the news editor for the Montana Kaimin and can be contacted at maxwell3.johnson@umontana.edu. For more stories from Johnson and other reporters, visit online at montanakaimin.com.



Copyright 2025 by The Puzzle Syndicate

ACROSS

- 1 Cut's partner
- 6 Pricing word
- 10 "\_\_\_ the Roof" (Drifters hit)
- 14 Part of UHF
- 15 Greeting at sea
- 16 What a collar covers
- 17 Pre-moving event
- 19 Grove growth
- 20 Lose
- 21 Cool with the plan
- 23 "Caddyshack" menace
- 24 Kind of surgeon
- 25 Gadot of "Wonder Woman"
- 26 Praiseful poem
- 27 Kind of meet
- 29 Overdo it on stage
- 31 Trial run
- 33 Speck
- 35 Low cards in pinochle
- 36 Size, as of an earthquake
- 39 Nickels and dimes
- 42 MBA course
- 43 Near, poetically
- 47 Ketchup brand
- 48 Nave neighbor
- 50 Baltic or Bering
- 51 Part of T.G.I.F.
- 52 Veil anagram
- 55 Wrap around
- 57 Insatiable sort
- 59 Activist Yousafzai
- 60 Early whirly
- 61 Nullify
- 64 Type of keel

- 65 Gravitate (toward)
- 66 \_\_\_ motion (start)
- 67 Johnny Bench's team
- 68 Fine things?
- 69 Current fashion

DOWN

- 1 Flat-faced dog
- 2 Pie preference
- 3 Bill Murray army flick
- 4 Kind of talk
- 5 Philly team
- 6 "Piece of cake!"
- 7 Triumphant cry
- 8 Palette selection
- 9 Laughing beast
- 10 Biblical preposition
- 11 Shining example
- 12 Be at the controls
- 13 Sewing kit items
- 18 Insect with pincers
- 22 Button on a mixer
- 23 Sonny and Cher's "I \_\_\_ You Babe"
- 24 Type of illusion
- 28 Top-of-the-line
- 30 Demeanor
- 32 Turtle foursome, briefly
- 34 Riding
- 37 Good point
- 38 Open, as records
- 39 Tiny biter
- 40 Last longer than
- 41 Policy signer
- 44 Cut off
- 45 Food that jiggles
- 46 Scammed
- 49 Join the navy, e.g.
- 53 Word at an unveiling
- 54 Kind of tube
- 56 Mixing board slider
- 58 Heaps
- 59 Supplies workers
- 62 Wine holder
- 63 Tackle's team-mate

Answers to Previous Crossword:

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

# What's recurring in your dreams?

KATE WIDMER

kate.widmer@umontana.edu

Dreams have long been a mysterious fascination. Some even claim that dreams can tell you the secrets of your inner psyche. If that's true, then what the fuck does your weirdly specific recurring dream say about you?

**PISCES (FEB. 19-MARCH 20):** So many people read fanfiction nowadays that you don't feel embarrassed to bring it up in casual conversation among friends, but you're definitely keeping your recurring sex dream with a certain favorite fictional character a secret. There's just no good way to justify freaking it with your favorite Marvel superhero or morally grey romantasy love interest. The good news is that it only lasts as long as your current obsession, then it's onto the next character, and then another ... shit dude, you should consider publishing this stuff. You already have an A03 account anyway.

**ARIES (MARCH 21-APRIL 19):** You *so* could've won that fight, you just know it, but you didn't think of something smart to say in the moment, so now there's no chance for you to really get your feelings out. As a result, your brain is forcing you to relive it over and over. But now, for some reason, they're wearing a pink tutu? Whatever, you'll take what you can get, even if it still feels like a simulation.

**TAURUS (APRIL 20-MAY 20):** Everyone's got an embarrassing memory that keeps them up at night. Luckily for you, you get to revisit it every night in your dreams! Your week is just a little more stressful than you anticipated, and suddenly your brain is reminding you that it could be worse, in the worst way possible. Our best advice? Watch a bunch of brain rot or play Tetris.

**GEMINI (MAY 21-JUNE 20):** This is less of a dream and more of a living nightmare, but either way, that text you sent to your situation is haunting you. Too forward? How well did you communicate your feelings while also not communicating them at all? Who knows what the etiquette around this stuff is now anyway? Regardless, when you do fall asleep, whatever clarity you reached about your feelings will be long gone. New day, new opportunity to give them just one more chance!

**CANCER (JUNE 21-JULY 22):** You woke up in sheer terror, there was someone in your room. Now your bedding feels weird against your skin, and it's not like you can do anything about it, given that a few seconds ago, your vision wasn't really within your control. At least at this point, it's happened enough times that you know how to deal with it — a good 3 a.m. TikTok binge will clear your mind enough to fall asleep again.

**LEO (JULY 23-AUG. 22):** You have your life planned out, and that's really cool, even if it sounds dorky to say out loud. You're working to get there, but lately, college is making you

feel like Sisyphus. Cue your recurring dream of your ideal future: a house, phone calls with your partner, showing up to work, the whole bit. It might make waking up feel like adding insult to injury, but think of it as your brain manifesting for you. Thanks, brain!

**VIRGO (AUG. 23-SEP. 22):** You saw a TikTok about someone who uses dentures, and all of a sudden, your brain is so hooked on the idea of all your teeth falling out, just like that scene in "The Substance," or the shapeshifter from "Skin," in season one of "Supernatural." Too graphic? Hey, at least you'll look hot with veneers.

**LIBRA (SEP. 23-OCT. 22):** You're so meticulous with your appearance that it's become an extension of your control issues, which means you're accidentally turning up to school naked rather than dreaming of monsters. Lack of agency, nooo! We listen and we don't judge, but this might be one for your therapist.

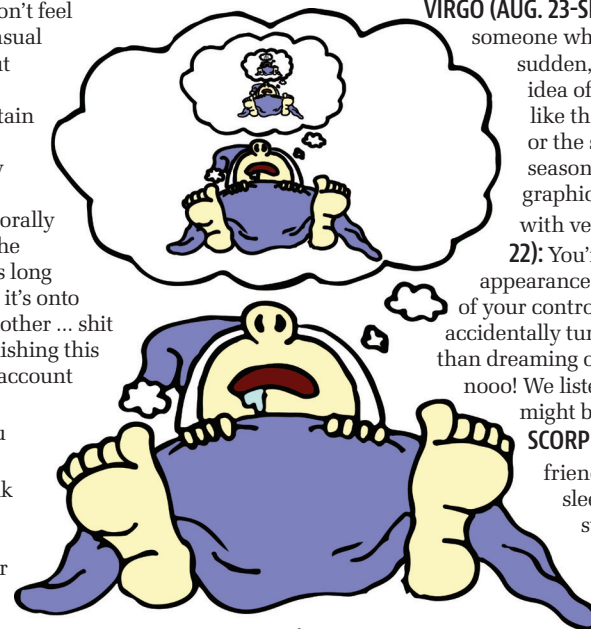
**SCORPIO (OCT. 23-NOV. 21):** Your friends don't hate you, you're just sleepy. Except sometimes your subconscious says they hate you? Your dream-self dealing with emotional fallout is definitely a sign that you need some more words of affirmation in your life.

Maybe put some of those motivational post-its on your mirror.

**SAGITTARIUS (NOV. 22-DEC. 21):** That feeling of your family members chasing you around at family reunions somehow lodged itself so deep in your mind that when you're a little too stressed, your sleep-self likes to stay vigilant by forcing you to run for your life in the dream world. Whether it's a niche childhood movie trauma (mine is the spider dude from "Treasure Island"), a killer zombie coming to get you or even just a big, scary man, at least this dream is doing wonders for your "I would survive a horror movie" confirmation bias.

**CAPRICORN (DEC. 22-JAN. 19):** Caffeine may keep dreams from happening, but you're living proof of the opposite. Somehow, your medically-dangerous caffeine consumption levels seem to be causing all your worst anxieties to manifest themselves at bedtime. That dream about bombing a test inspired enough sheer terror in you to get through the final push of studying, so maybe it's not the worst thing ever.

**AQUARIUS (JAN. 20-FEB. 18):** You are so damn sure you submitted your assignment well before the deadline. So then why does your brain keep waking you up with horror-movie level visuals of forgetting to turn it in and flunking out of class? Opening your laptop and double-checking might give you some peace of mind, but the blue light fucked with your sleepiness, so most nights involve staring at the ceiling for a while. Why are you like this? We do not know, and that's above our pay grade. Ask your psych-major friend. They usually love this shit.



BARRETT CLEMENT | MONTANA KAIMIN

# Montana bill threatens voting rights for out-of-state students

EMILY MESSER

emily.messer@umontana.edu

More than a third of students' voting rights in Missoula may soon be lost because of a new bill in the Montana Senate.

Rep. Jane Gillette, R-Three Forks, introduced a House bill that will amend the current election laws around residency to remove voting rights if voters temporarily reside in a county for "work, training or an educational program." This would remove students, temporary workers and military members from voting in Missoula County if they are not from the county or do not intend to stay permanently.

This would halt all out-of-county or out-of-state individuals from voting in the "temporary purpose" location, therefore affecting all Montana University System students along with many others across the state. At the University of Montana, this would affect out-of-state students, which, according to 2024 fall enrollment, was 34% of the undergrad student population, in addition to students who were not initially from Missoula County.

### LOBBYING EFFORTS AND RESIDENCY

The bill passed in the House of Representatives by 14 votes on Feb. 27. Hope Morrison, the lobbyist for the University of Montana Student Senate, testified to the House State Administration Committee hearing a week before the bill was passed.

"Under this bill, students are treated differently, presumed to be temporary residents simply because they're pursuing an education, which is a clear violation of Montana's Equal Protection Clause," Morrison said at the committee hearing.

This argument was brought up due to a section in the clause that states "no person shall be denied the equal protection of the laws," meaning that voting is a fundamental right under the law.

Morrison said she feels like the legislators in support of the bill see every college student as a "blue" voter.

"Me and the [Montana State University] lobbyists did our best. We were grabbing legislators in the hallway trying to convince them not to pass this bill," she said. "It did unfortunately pass, because how they're viewing it as they don't want non-Montanans voting in Montana."

Morrison met with Rep. Marc Lee about an amendment to exclude education, as she said living in Montana for four years isn't a short visit. "He proposed an amend-

ment for us in committee, but his efforts were unfortunately shot down," Morrison said.

Students looking for in-state tuition, such as Wyatt Benson, a sophomore from Iowa, are still fighting Montana University System residency requirements, which require students to show "evidence of intent to stay," such as obtaining a Montana ID, registering to vote or registering their vehicle in Montana. Full-time out-of-state tuition is \$33,664 but drops to \$8,546 for in-state students.

To qualify as an in-state student, a person would have to either live in the state for 12 months and gain residency before applying to the University. Or, if they already attend as an out-of-state student, they would have to attend part-time for an entire year and apply for the University to recognize them as an in-state student. During this process, a student also has to prove that they provide more than 50% of their income and financial support and do not pay income tax in another state. After all the above steps, a student may still be denied residency by the University. However, full-time students cannot qualify for residency.

Currently, to vote in Montana, a person must be at least 18 years old, be a resident for at least 30 days and a citizen of the United States. The person has to provide a Montana driver's license, military ID, tribal ID, Montana concealed carry permit or their passport. If they cannot provide any of those items, they can use a school ID along with a utility bill, bank statement, paycheck or other government-issued paperwork that shows the individual's address.

**"I should be voting in the community I'm living in."**

— Hope Morrison, lobbyist for ASUM

Morrison further distributed over a hundred letters to legislators to urge them not to pass the bill. In the letter, she argues that students should have the right to vote in Missoula County considering the time they spend here.

"We're mainly arguing students are in their college town 9-12 months out of the year," she said. "I'm living here."

Morrison is from Lake County, which includes Polson and Arlee, among others, and argued she should not be voting in a county where she knows about none of the issues. "I should be voting in the community I'm living in," she said.



Hope Morrison, a sophomore and ASUM lobbyist, updates the UM Student Senate about happenings at the legislature that could effect students. Normally, Morrison speaks to the delegates via Zoom, but she had the opportunity to visit in person on March 5, as the state legislative session is on break.

NOAH EPPS | MONTANA KAIMIN

### TAXATION WITHOUT REPRESENTATION?

Another large point Morrison said she is advocating for is the rights of students to be represented in the county they are paying income taxes to.

"What happened to 'no taxation without representation?'" she wrote in the letter to legislators.

Benson, a wildlife biology major, agreed this is a major issue, considering he is an employee at Bob Ward's Sports & Outdoors in Missoula and is paying income tax.

"If you were to tell anyone that if they pay income tax in the state that they're in and then they aren't allowed to vote in that state, almost everyone would agree that that's absolutely insane," Benson said. "But I think as a student, it just gets overlooked"

Both Morrison and Benson agree this is also an attack on students.

"I just feel like it's already difficult enough, and I think it's gonna be affecting constitutional rights of students and just people in general," Benson said. "The freedom to vote should be a little more available than it is in the state, and this is going to make it a lot harder."

Morrison further cited sections of the Montana Constitution in her letter, stating all elections should be free and no power should interfere. She also cited another article from the constitution that establish-

es that all citizens 18 years or older who qualify under the registration and residence requirements are qualified to vote. But this bill would change those residence requirements, deeming students as temporary residents instead of using the current terminology, which broadly states individuals may not gain residence if they are in the state for temporary purposes.

### BILL ENFORCEMENT

Courtney Smith, the director of voter engagement for Forward Montana — a nonprofit that helps young generations engage in politics — said the bill disenfranchises students simply because they are unsure if they are staying in the county of their college town. Smith also said part of college is trying to figure out what is next, and students could be impacted for not knowing their "intent."

"Our concern and fear is that students will be afraid to register to vote and to participate in elections," Smith said. "That could impact their rights and their ability to impact the communities in which they live in."

Another point Smith said was brought up in the initial hearing was the lack of an enforcement mechanism.

"You can't read people's minds or know what their intention is, which is another reason why this is not a very good bill,"

**"Our non-resident students join ROTC and serve in the military, contribute to our local economy as both consumers and employees and positively contribute as members of our local communities. They certainly should be able to vote, an activity that is core to what it means to be a civically engaged adult in our country."**

— Seth Bodnar, UM president

Smith said.

University of Montana President Seth Bodnar also expressed his concern about this bill in an email to the Kaimin.

"Our non-resident students join ROTC and serve in the military, contribute to

our local economy as both consumers and employees and positively contribute as members of our local communities," he stated in the email. "They certainly should be able to vote, an activity that is core to what it means to be a civically engaged adult in our country."

However, Gillette, who introduced the bill, said to the committee that this bill is aimed at individuals coming to Montana for oil field work or as traveling nurses. "It's not aimed at students," she said.

Montana laws currently vary in the requirements about the definition of "residency" and there is no clear definition in the bill either. To gain a Montana driver's license an individual only has to reside in the state for more than 30 days. However, to obtain a hunting and fishing license, they must live in the state for 180 consecutive days. Armed service members or job corps employees also only have to live in the state for 30 days to become residents.

## SENDING IN BALLOTS

For an out-of-state student such as Benson, to vote in his home state, he would

have to request an absentee ballot from Iowa and provide a written application to the county auditor 15 days before the election. Benson would also have to provide his Iowa address, voter verification number, Iowa driver's license, the voter pin or voter card and the date of the election. The ballot would further have to be mailed in time to arrive on Election Day, according to the Iowa Secretary of State website.

"I would take every measure I could to be able to vote in [Montana], simply because I've been here for two years now and understand what's going on," Benson said.

For any student who did not initially live in Missoula County before college, they would have to request an absentee ballot or drive home, whether they are from Montana or not. But Benson, who works for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in Montana, said he takes care of this state in his position.

"Even though I didn't grow up here, I've developed a care or a love for this state, and I'd like to live here for the rest of my life," he said. "If that was taken away from me, that would just be disheartening as a citizen and as a voter."

## REQUIEM

Currently, Morrison is waiting for the bill to be scheduled in the Senate State Administration Committee hearing, but until then, she will be using hallway discussions and face-to-face conversations in Helena with lawmakers to advocate for students' right to vote in Missoula. So far, she has put about 15 hours into this bill. Others usually require two to three hours.

The UM Student Senate will also engage with the student body by tabling in the University Center, canvassing on the Oval and teaching students how to testify alongside scheduling their testimony for them. Forward Montana and the Student Senate will also be posting calls to action on its social media.

"It doesn't only hurt residency, it hurts the right to vote, period," Morrison said.

*Emily Messer is a news reporter for the Montana Kaimin and can be contacted at [emily.messer@umontana.edu](mailto:emily.messer@umontana.edu). For more stories from Messer and other reporters, visit online at [montanakaimin.com](http://montanakaimin.com).*

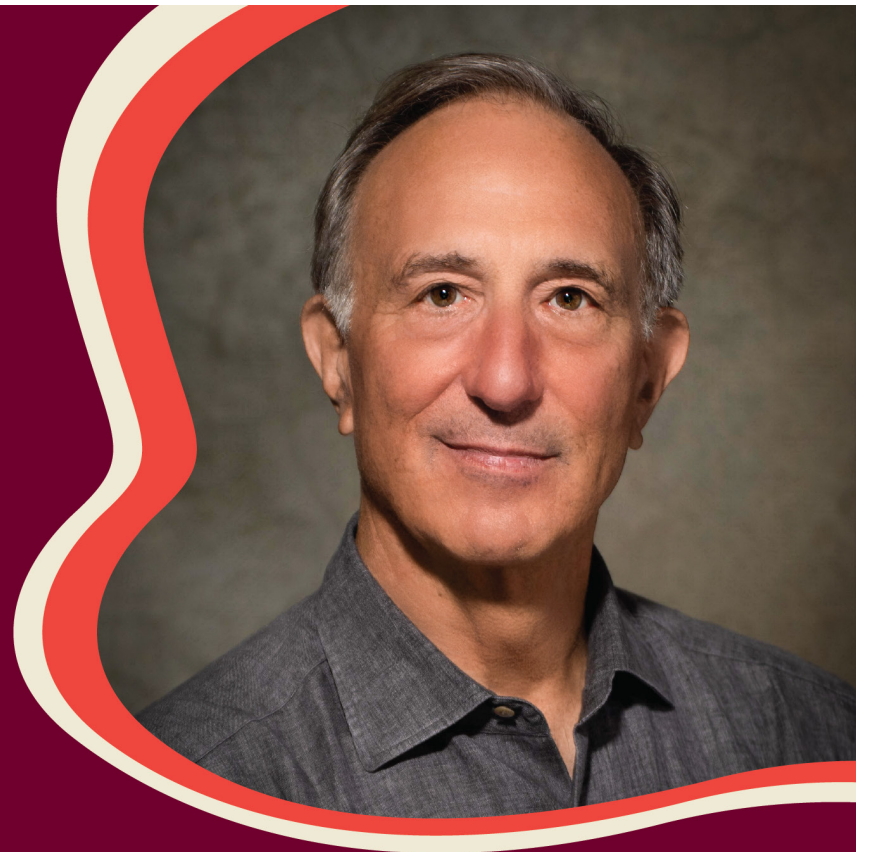
**PRESIDENT'S LECTURE SERIES PRESENTS**

# PETER SELIGMANN

**7:30 P.M. WEDNESDAY, MARCH 26**  
**UNIVERSITY CENTER BALLROOM**  
**& LIVESTREAM**



**THIS EVENT IS FREE AND OPEN TO THE COMMUNITY.**  
ASL interpretation will be provided for this event.





# SEEKING THE S

*Story by Kate Widmer*



FOR LESSER-KNOWN ARTISTS  
HOPING TO EXPRESS THEMSELVES,  
MISSOULA'S SMALLER VENUES  
ARE THE PERFECT OPPORTUNITY TO  
BE SEEN AND HEARD. BUT THOSE  
VENUES ARE VANISHING AND  
MUSICIANS ARE FORCED TO TAKE  
WHAT THEY CAN GET.

**ABOVE:** Desmond Smith leans over and gives Pecos the alpaca a kiss before they head into the shed to practice.

**LEFT:** Sophie Bell leans back with the music as the band plays its song "Swimming" to get ready for its next show at the ZACC.

**FAR LEFT:** Inside a small shed behind a farmhouse, Duncan Honea, Desmond Smith and Sophie Bell practice as a band. On the other side of the wall are pigs and other animals.



**O**N A MARCH evening, the frantic pounding of drums, wail of a guitar and cheers of concert attendees pierced the calm, peaceful atmosphere of a typically quiet Missoula neighborhood. But the noise wasn't coming from a show at the Washington-Grizzly Stadium, the Kettle-House Amphitheater or even The Wilma. This show was bursting from a two-car garage. Most attendees wore dark colors, some had on heavy makeup or patches on their clothes and others sported uneven haircuts. The night ended with two smoking electrical outlets, mosh pit-inflicted bruises and the occasional exposed ceiling nail, a reminder of how the space — aptly titled Tetanus Shed — got its name.

The Saturday's lineup included local bands such as Man Leash, a punk group who described their music as "bondage thrash," a garage rock favorite, Senterline, and Folding Chair, a new band playing self-described "backyard wrestle punk."

Each performance took place in the corner of the garage while concertgoers crammed into every inch of space. Uni-

versity of Montana student Sophie Bell attends as many of these local do-it-yourself, or DIY, shows and plays in them whenever she can with her own band, Sardines.

"Music was just kind of an excuse to hang out, at first. And then it became actual music," Bell said.

Like most non-professional Missoula bands, Sardines typically plays at the VFW #209, a small veteran's bar with a backroom often used for shows, or at the Zootown Arts Community Center. The two venues are across the street from each other on Main Street in downtown Missoula.

The band mainly secures gigs through word of mouth. People looking to book musicians for smaller, one-time shows often reach out to them on Instagram. If they're hired professionally, it's usually for a weeknight show at the ZACC. Those typically get booked through Daina Grand, the ZACC's staff showroom manager. Shows at the VFW are usually booked through Daisy Chain Presents, an event production company founded in 2023.

However, as Missoula grows its regional reputation through a host of stadium tours, including the 2024 summer concert series at the Washington-Grizzly Stadium, which

**TAGE**  
*Photos by Rachel Yeager*



Duncan Honea, Sophie Bell and Desmond Smith hangout outside for a bit before they head into practice.

brought in an estimated \$1 million for the University, smaller artists are struggling to consistently find and book shows at low-key performance spaces.

Until more spaces become available, or the ones already around offer more opportunities, bands, such as Sardines, can only hope to take what they can get. For locals hoping to create community, whether they get paid for their concerts or not, it isn't enough.

### MEET THE SARDINES

Sardines formed in October 2023 after singer-songwriter Bell asked Desmond Smith, a fellow student, to play drums for her band at the UM Art Collective's Punk-In Fest on the Oval.

They got their name from a summer day eating spicy sardines from Winco. The band's music is raggedy and heartfelt, inspired by music from artists like Kimya Dawson, Neutral Milk Hotel and Alex G. Smith's drumming style is reminiscent of choppy, classic punk, like that of Minutemen. Lyrically, their songs are often about small moments, big emotions and nature.

Bell transferred to UM after a year of attending Montana State University, Billings in her hometown. She had never talked to Smith before. She didn't know if he played drums, but she wanted an excuse to get his number. Smith had only played drums in marching band at Big Sky High School and didn't have experience with a traditional drum set, but he wanted to know her better too, so he said yes. Bell and Smith, both 21, have been dating ever since.

In the following year and a half, the pair, along with the band's bassist, Duncan Ho-

nea, 20, have become close friends. Playing in Sardines serves as a musical outlet while the trio work toward their degrees — Bell and Smith are pursuing environmental studies and Honea is working toward a fine arts degree with a focus in ceramics.

Bell and Honea met at age 3 while attending preschool.

Bell picked up her dad's old guitar and Honea learned bass after being inspired by the popular Cartoon Network show, "Adventure Time."

While in middle and high school, Bell and Honea posted their songs on SoundCloud and played the occasional show together. Bell released a solo album in 2022, a collection of lo-fi songs titled "Sweet Chlorine." Sardines often includes songs off the album during its live sets, but otherwise plays new music they wrote together.

Smith grew up in Austin, Texas, and moved to Missoula around age 12. He was familiar with venue settings after growing up watching his father, a bassist, play shows in bluegrass bands.

When Bell asked Smith if he played drums, he agreed, partially because it was true — just not in the way she was thinking. After realizing what he'd gotten himself into, he resolved to finally learn to play on a drum set. "I think I just wanted to impress [Bell and Honea]," he said.

Smith bought a children's drum set on a trip to Goodwill. He attached an empty detergent bottle to the side to make up for the lack of a snare. Smith's height, of over six feet, made it difficult to play. But the kit gave him enough of an idea of the mechanics. "It was awesome," he said.

Forming a band, writing songs and practicing them was one thing, but gaining



Duncan Honea strums away on his bass during a practice session.

experience as live performers would prove to be another feat entirely.

### BOOKED AND BUSY

Daisy Chain Events, an event production group, was founded by Donal Lakatua, Colin Merrick and Julia Battisti in 2023 as a response to the lack of spaces for local artists to play, along with the increased commercialization of the remaining venues.

"The schism between the ethics for stuff like this was made more apparent by the continual shifts in the culture," Lakatua said. "Even just things like the pandemic, where we've had to step away and reapproach the same set of spaces and what-not."

Merrick and Lakatua met at GILD, a local Missoula bar, after Lakatua finished a meeting he hoped would help jump-start a DIY event production company. The meeting didn't end with a partnership, but Merrick overheard them talking at the bar and wanted to know more. "It was kind of a meet-cute," Lakatua said.

Lakatua wanted to start a festival, citing Missoula's Camp Daze, Billings' Julia Louis Dreyfest and Boise's Treefort Music Festival as inspiration. The inaugural Daisy Chain Festival in August 2023 was called Power Strip. It featured bands from all over Montana and the greater western region of the U.S., as well as an art market run by Battisti.

Lakatua became known locally for his photography: his Instagram account documents nearly eight years of Missoula DIY shows. His photos are easily recognized for their trademark vibrancy. He was intro-

duced to the Missoula music scene through the pre-pandemic house-show circuit.

Merrick, born and raised in Nashville, thrived on the local DIY garage rock and punk scenes growing up. They said the inclusive punk scene in Philadelphia gave them the experience and confidence to put on DIY shows.

Merrick is able to help bridge the gap between their former home cities and Missoula. Bleary Eyed, a Philly-based band, played at the VFW in September 2024.

Daisy Chain books mostly alternative rock. Musicians that play hardcore, a frantic mix of punk and metal, can turn to Dead Eye Productions. Cameron Spooner-Smith took over Dead Eye just before the pandemic, after the original founder Shane Stange moved away.

Daisy Chain Presents and Dead Eye Productions both book most of their shows at the VFW or ZACC, which has limited their ability to create new experiences. Even though they try to prioritize access to the shows, the amount of money needed to sustain operations often makes concerts cost around \$10 per ticket.

"[Daisy Chain Presents] will never turn anyone away for a lack of funds," Merrick said. "I want people to show up and be there. That said, your \$10, 90% of that is going to the bands. The rest of that is going to the person running sound [or] running door."

Both production groups said the money goes back into their community efforts, and as of late, that means toward potential venue spaces.

"There's a want, not necessarily ... just for the quantity aspect, but to me, it's more for a qualitative aspect. Which is part of

our goal, to an extent, is trying to find a regular spot where that can be possible,” Lakatua said.

## A CHANGING LANDSCAPE

In addition to the closing of venues throughout the 2010s, such as Elk’s Lodge and an upstairs space in the Union, the COVID-19 pandemic threw a wrench into the local music scene.

“It made a problem that was already existing worse, because I feel like [now] there’s a greater disparity and disconnect between the professional big stages like the Top Hat and The Wilma and DIY, local music,” Lakatua said.

The Missoula bar scene, along with venues like Top Hat, The Wilma and KettleHouse Amphitheatre often prioritize touring acts. Venues operated by Logjam Presents, a subsidiary of Live Nation, recently hosted large-name acts like the Pixies, boygenius and Pearl Jam, among others. However, Daisy Chain co-founder Lakatua doesn’t think commercial venues accomplish the point of a show.

“Making [music] about bar culture and drink sales is counterintuitive to me, [and] to the core of why live music is so beautiful,” Lakatua said. “It’s a community-generating event, and I think that everybody should have access to that.”

The entertainment trade publication, Pollstar, listed Logjam as #26 of the top 100 promoters worldwide. The Kaimin reached out to Logjam for comment but did not hear back.

The advent of the upcoming Zootown Festival also reflects the rise in Missoula’s professional music scene. Started under the vision of co-founder and director Scott Osburn, a 2010 graduate of UM’s entertainment management program, the festival

will take place from July 4-5 at the Missoula County Fairgrounds.

The festival will feature popular acts, including headliners Hozier and Kasey Musgraves, who have 48 million and 17 million monthly listeners on Spotify, respectively. Additionally, the festival lineup boasts musicians from Los Angeles, Boston and London.

“[The festival wants to] use this opportunity as a launchpad to bring in national touring artists,” Osburn said. “But at the same time, we also want [Zootown Festival] to be a platform for local, regional and statewide artists to be able to perform and grow on the festival as well.”

It previously included Give It To ‘Em Florabelle, a blues-influenced local band, but it was removed from the lineup around the time it received community backlash for frontwoman Cara Schulz’s appropriation of Indigenous art and regalia in her performances.

Representatives for Zootown Festival declined to comment on the decision to remove the band from the lineup. Without Give It To ‘Em Florabelle, the festival now includes performances from only two Montana-based groups, The Dead & Down and Cole & the Thorns, and only one Missoula-based group, Why We Went West, out of a lineup featuring 23 acts.

Without large spaces to play, local artists have turned to smaller and smaller spots. But even when artists find smaller venues, these spaces aren’t always available for long.

## SPATIAL AWARENESS

The Tetanus Shed show received a noise complaint from the cops. After they arrived, the tenants were told to either shut down the concert or they would get

a citation. Too many citations could mean eviction from the property.

While this isn’t unusual, risk of eviction is harder to justify during Missoula’s housing crisis. The Organization of Realtors reported the median rental cost for a studio apartment in Missoula at around \$1,000 a month, while four bedrooms or more surpassed \$2,000 a month in 2024. However, people willing to put their finances on the line to create a DIY space have helped keep the Missoula music scene alive for decades.

Squish was one such space. Located in a warehouse on Johnson Street, Squish was an art space rented by Tricia Opstad from the summer of 2022 until February 2023.

A dancer and visual artist originally from Grand Forks, North Dakota, Opstad moved to Missoula just over 20 years ago to be closer to nature. She began hosting art events as a way to find like-minded performers. “It was really difficult to find other dancers with the kind of mindset [I have], an improvisational, experimental performance based [approach],” she said.

Her introduction to the music community came from attending Free Sessions, a recurring gathering of musicians that played experimental music together at Imagination Brewing Company. “That was groundbreaking for me, because I met my people. I [found] a place where I belong, even if it was [in] music,” she said.

But just as Opstad was experiencing this progression in her artistry, the pandemic hit. Feeling claustrophobic from months spent inside, Opstad searched for a bigger, more secluded space than her office in the Higgins Building and found the warehouse.

“An artist has a vision of what a space should feel like. There’s a feeling [of] grit and character and [an] experimenting feeling, and that permission to sort of be messy too,” she said. “Not to feel too uptight and for all ages.”

Squish shows were kinetic. Colorful lighting and Opstad’s commitment to booking acts she felt were interesting made the venue a hot spot overnight. While the venue has now been closed for almost two years, its impact on the music scene remains significant. Its closure was one of the major inspirations for the formation of Daisy Chain Presents.

Opstad said going over curfew was mainly why the venue was shut down. But paying for the space by herself would have likely caused its end anyway.

“It does take somebody who has an income, other means to pay the rent. And [rent now], it’s double,” Opstad said. “[Squish] was 1,000 square feet for \$1,000, now it’s \$2,000. So it’s important, the money part of it.”

The loss of space doesn’t only happen because of city involvement or financial

issues. The most recent venue that was shut down was Flavortown. Its final show was July 27, 2024. The house venue, located next to Kiwanis Park, was taken back by the landlord after six years of shows featuring bands from all over the country and internationally.

Sebastian Cardozo, the longest tenant of Flavortown and the main contact for booking the space, said the Missoula community was the reason the venue was able to be around for so long. Cardozo made a point to inform neighbors and soundproof as much as possible. The floors were reinforced by Stu Bar, a fan of the venue and its frequent sound guy. He also installed support beams in the crawlspace under the house to accommodate the weight of a mosh pit.

While the loss of venues like Squish and Flavortown limited opportunities, there’s still a lot to look forward to as the Missoula music community continually adapts to the city’s changes.

## THE SHOWS GO ON

As artists search for their own venues in Missoula, the ZACC and VFW #209 still provide invaluable space for artists and audiences to experience live music made with the Missoula community in mind.

For University of Montana students, the new stage located outside of the Gallagher Business Building is going to be used by the UM Entertainment Management program, to help students gain experience in booking and promoting live events, as well as contributing to the school’s music culture.

The stage was funded by an anonymous donor. The program’s director, Margaret Keiper, stated in an email that the stage “is meant to include everyone/align with our overall mission as an institution, which is inclusive prosperity.”

Logistics regarding scheduling and equipment usage are still being figured out, but having a performance space on campus will allow business students and student-musicians alike to gain experience.

With summer coming up, Daisy Chain is currently in the process of making selections for the third Daisy Chain Festival, scheduled for Aug. 15 and 16.

As for Sardines, the band hopes to release a full-length album by the end of the year. In the meantime, they’re likely to be found riding their bikes around Missoula, picking up new ideas to put in their songs.

*Kate Widmer is an arts reporter for the Montana Kaimin and can be contacted at [kate.widmer@umontana.edu](mailto:kate.widmer@umontana.edu). For more stories from Widmer and other reporters, visit online at [montanakaimin.com](http://montanakaimin.com).*



Tricia Opstad sits inside her office, gallery and dance space that used to be a venue for local bands.

# Senior turns love of music into rock opera

KEELY PROEBSTEL

keely.proebstel@umontana.edu

University of Montana student Ben Medina-Caplis' musical journey has come a long way since his parents first showed him The Beatles as a little kid.

His senior project, "Olivia's Autumn," a nine-song rock opera and the culmination of his education in music composition, premiered March 10 at the School of Music's recital hall.

In the hall of the music building, the set design for the performance included fairy lights, leafy potted plants, bird calls from overhead speakers and fake leaves in autumn colors scattered across the floor, complimenting the emerald seats as the audience settled into their spots.

The rock opera, a collection of rock music songs with lyrics that relate to a storyline, tells the story of Olivia and Ezra, childhood friends who connect over their shared love of music.

"I wanted to write a story kind of parallel to my own life, my own musical journey," Medina-Caplis said. "Eventually, it turned into a tale of friendship between two characters who are kind of both me, but also like some of my best friends."

The decision to study music composition came naturally to Medina-Caplis. Now 22, he began playing piano in kindergarten before moving to drums, guitar and vocals.

"Since I was 14, I realized I want to write my own songs, and I want to make a career out of it," he said. The decision to write his own rock opera was inspired by albums like Pink Floyd's "The Wall" and The Who's "Tommy."

Medina-Caplis plays the role of Ezra and also plays guitar, but he isn't alone on stage. Vocalist Clara Hahn plays Olivia. The duo is accompanied by a bassist, an alto saxophonist, a drummer, a keyboard player and a string quartet of three violinists and a cello player. Backstage, the performers are supported by students from a set design class, which gives students the hands-on experience of setting up a recital. There are departments for lighting, sound, costuming and even marketing.

For Medina-Caplis, the most challenging part of the project was putting together a solid storyline. "I can come up with melodies, lyrics, all that stuff, but the hard part is making them connected to each other," he said.

Fortunately, he had the help of his composition professor Bryan Kostors. "He worked with me to really help me connect it and be very specific about the choices I



Garon Jones and Sam Haveron jam off each other's energy as they play through a song as part of a rehearsal run of "Olivia's Autumn." **DIEGO HERNANDEZ | MONTANA KAIMIN**

made," Medina-Caplis said.

The process of writing is unique for every song. Often, Medina-Caplis begins with a guitar riff and builds a melody from it. The soundtrack moves between sweeping Beatles-esque duets and emotionally charged chamber rock, some numbers even including strobe lights.

The first song he wrote for the show, however, started with the lyrics. "I was just sitting out on the Oval, and I wrote the whole thing out," he said.

Rehearsals for the performance began in January and have been a labor of love for all involved. Senior recitals, according to Medina-Caplis, tend to be very traditional: "It's kind of dark, the stage is lit up, the person goes on, performs, walks off and it's just clapping."

"Olivia's Autumn," though, seeks to push the envelope with lights, costuming and a full band. Medina-Caplis' goal is to make it an innovative performance for the School of Music, "unique and raw, but also new and cool," he said.

There's more uniqueness to "Olivia's Autumn" than just the composition and set design. It also has the distinction of being filmed as a concert movie by local filmmaker and UM alum Julien Dousset. Dousset and Medina-Caplis are long-time collaborators.

"I knew about it early in the process, and I really wanted to make a concert film for it,"

Dousset said. The film does not yet have a release date.

Weaving together folk and rock music, "Olivia's Autumn" is a testament to Medina-Caplis' love for music and the dedication of everyone involved and the audience seemed to really respond to it. Freshman concert attendee Elli Page, a 19-year-old creative writing major originally from Bozeman, said her favorite part was the last song. "I got so many chills during that, and I want it on Spotify right now," Page said.

*Additional reporting by Kate Widmer*



Ben Medina-Caplis performs at his senior project, "Olivia's Autumn" at the School of Music on March 10. **MARLEY BARBOEISEL | MONTANA KAIMIN**

*Keely Proebstel is an arts & culture reporter for the Montana Kaimin and can be contacted at [keely.proebstel@umontana.edu](mailto:keely.proebstel@umontana.edu). For more stories from Proebstel and other reporters, visit online at [montanakaimin.com](http://montanakaimin.com).*

## JOIN UM'S WOMEN'S RUGBY CLUB



**INSTAGRAM: UMGRIZWRC**

**EMAIL: WOMENSRUGBY.UMT@GMAIL.COM**

made by sawyer

# Scars: Stories behind their permanence

**KAIRI LISING**

kairi.lising@umontana.edu

The searing pain, the eventual scab and the ever-permanent scar. Scars can happen for a variety of reasons, but more often, are mistakes. Despite that, they're proof of a life lived without inhibitions. Scars become evidence of being unafraid to take risks and living to tell the tale. I asked students across campus about their scar stories to find a common thread between our healed-over memories.

## SLIPS HAPPEN

Elizabeth Armstrong heard her teacher call out for homework in her fifth grade class, and she knew one thing — she definitely didn't do it.

Armstrong excused herself to the bathroom, hiding her vocabulary paper in her back pocket. In the bathroom, she went into the handicapped stall and sat on the top part of the toilet so her feet wouldn't be seen. As she finished her homework, the lack of sleep from the night before caught up to her. She dozed forward, falling face flat on the ground.

Her glasses embedded themselves in her face right inside her eyebrow. Armstrong was taken to the nurse, where she had to be separated from her glasses with a pair of pliers.

"My dad picked me up that day, and blood was streaming down my face, of course. He takes a photo of me and posts it on Facebook," Armstrong said. "He was laughing a lot after we left the hospital." She had to get four stitches in her eyebrow. Now in her junior year of her environmental science and sustainability degree, her hair doesn't grow on a small slit in her left eyebrow.

## BAILING OUT

Andrew Eldridge had just turned 21 and was visiting his grandmother with his family in California. He cruised around her neighborhood on his longboard while slightly tipsy.

With the wind in his hair, Eldridge turned onto a street named El Fuerte, a Spanish word for strong. He wasn't prepared for how steep it was, and as the board picked up speed, he realized he needed to bail. Eldridge rolled off, his arm catching his fall while his longboard shot down the street without him.

In the aftermath, Eldridge went to retrieve his long board at the base of the

hill and limped home, his knees bleeding. Surprisingly, the arm that he landed on didn't bleed because gravel plugged up the road burn.

Now 30-years-old and a sophomore in international business, Eldridge likes his arm scar. "It's a fun story to tell. It doesn't bother me. I like to rub it and remember that I basically could have died," Eldridge said.

## KICKBACK

Andrew Derlink was 14 years old, searching through his family's garden for ground-hogs.

They were the natural enemy of any foliage, so Derlink was taught to shoot them with the gun his father gave him. He scanned through the gun's sight when he found his furry brown target. He pulled the trigger, killing it, but it also kicked back right into his face.

The butt of the gun hit right above his eyebrow, splitting it open.

"I didn't even feel it or realize it happened until I felt the blood rushing down my face," Derlink said. Derlink's dad, who is a dentist and relatively accustomed to blood, reacted lukewarmly.

Now a fourth year cognitive neuroscience major, Derlink remembers his dad lovingly saying, "You dumbass, why did you do that?"

## SISTERLY LOVE

Amorese Rios was around 8 years old at her babysitter's house when she got her scar.

She was chasing her sister around the house, playing and laughing. Her babysitter had just finished making a chicken coop and brought a roll of chicken wire in and placed it by the base of the stairs.

Rios and her sister were chasing each other upstairs when Rios' sister shoved her, right where the stairs were.

In a flash, Rios fell down the stairs, face-first into the metal prongs of the chicken wire. Her sister immediately yelled from the top of the stairs. "Don't tell mom!"

Thankfully, the scars have faded to small pinpricks on Rios's face. "I don't notice it as much anymore. It's just always been there, so it's cool," Rios said.

*Kairi Lising is the arts & culture editor for the Montana Kaimin and can be contacted at kairi.lising@umontana.edu. For more stories from Lising and other reporters, visit online at montanakaimin.com.*



Amorese Rios has a fading scar on her right cheek from a chicken wire accident. She said because it's been there for so long, she barely notices it anymore. **DIEGO HERNANDEZ | MONTANA KAIMIN**

# Griz softball to return home after long hiatus

DILLON RICHARDSON

dillon.richardson@umontana.edu

By the time the University of Montana softball team plays its first home opener this year, it will have been 332 days since the last time it played in Missoula. This year, the home opener is scheduled for March 19 against Montana State University, Billings.

The Montana snow and cold typically dictates that regular-season games cannot be played in Missoula until mid-March, but the NCAA softball season started on Feb. 7, so Griz softball starts its season on the road.

This year, it will play 26 consecutive games away, and 37 in total by the end of the season, with only 11 games at home.

This is nothing new for Presley Jantzi, though. The senior outfielder has spent her entire collegiate career at UM, and she said even though her first couple of years were tough, after a while she got used to the extended time away.

"It definitely takes some getting used to in the first two years. It's a little bit of a struggle, just adjusting with school and class," Jantzi said.

Jantzi, a sociology major, said the key to staying on track with her studies was time management, but it still remained difficult. She estimated the team has spent around 30 days on the road.

"I think it's a struggle for everybody and if they say it's not, they're lying," Jantzi said. "But having good professors and a coach that's willing to work with you in the classroom is really helpful."

Jantzi described the road trips as a bonding experience.

"When we're on the road, you're not at home, so you have to make the vibe of at home, but somewhere else," she said.

Head coach Stef Ewing, in her first year at UM, agreed with Jantzi about the time away being good for the team, not only socially, but on the field as well.

"This last road trip was the best road trip we've had," Ewing said. "We played our most complete softball and we're constantly building toward being the best version of ourselves."

Ewing said the Griz schedule is the norm for any team in the north, and because of that, her team has no excuse.

"It's something that we definitely have to be prepared for," Ewing said. "Getting good sleep and taking care of our bodies and doing the things that we need to do so that you don't feel the fatigue of it."

She said the coaching staff does their best to help the players with recovery after a road trip.

"We get back really early Monday morning every single time," Ewing said. "And they have Monday off and we just listen to them. What do you need? What can we do for them to help them be successful to put them in the best position possible?"

Ewing described some of the successes the team has had over the past couple of weeks.

"This past week we were in every game," Ewing said. "Our pitchers did really well and we were able to move runners and manufacture runs, and that's just what we have to do as a team to take some pressure off."

This success was in contrast to the start of the season where Ewing said they were sloppy, giving up a lot of unearned runs.

The team's record reflects its struggles this season. Going into spring break, the Griz are 5-18, but looking forward to returning home.

"It's great," Ewing said. "You get to spend more than two nights in your own bed and get a full week of practice."

Jantzi is also ready to play in Missoula again.

"Everyone craves a home game," Jantzi said. "There's nothing like coming to the Grizzly softball field."

She described the feeling of returning home as almost the start of a new season.

"Stepping on your home field gives you different vibes," Jantzi said. "You're a little more comfortable, you have your home crowd."

She also described the connection that she built with the home fans over the past four years.

"It's not just fans that come, all of our parents love to come and watch too," Jantzi said. "It just shows their dedication. We have people along the fence line and I've just met so many fans that have religiously come since my freshman year, so it's heart-warming to know that people care about us."

While the team looks forward to returning home, Ewing reminds them there is still work to be done.

"We're continuing to build, continuing to take steps forward," Ewing said. "That's what we're trying to do."

The Griz will conclude its time away with three games against the University of California, San Diego this weekend before its long-awaited home opener.

*Dillon Richardson is a sports reporter for the Montana Kaimin and can be contacted at dillon.richardson@umontana.edu. For more stories from Richardson and other reporters, visit online at montanakaimin.com.*



The University of Montana softball team practices in the Grizzly Softball Stadium on March 5.

MARLEY BARBOEISEL | MONTANA KAIMIN

**SUNRISE**  
*Saloon*

Missoula's only  
Country  
Western Saloon!



**3/14 Jaden Decker - Elliot Crowe 9:30PM!**

**3/15 Tanner Laws @9:30PM!**

**3/18 Country Dance Lessons @7PM Followed by Karaoke!**

**3/19 BINGO followed by DJ Trini @7PM!**

**3/20 Country Dance Lessons @7PM Followed by Karaoke!**

 **A GREAT TIME EVERY NIGHT!**  
**Sunrise Saloon 1101 Strand Ave.**

# UM basketball says goodbye to its seniors

HANNAH BENITEZ

[hannah.benitez@umontana.edu](mailto:hannah.benitez@umontana.edu)

The regular season ended for Griz basketball on March 3 and the team honored its seniors as they took home the win and secured the Big Sky Conference title.

Two seniors who made their mark on the court were Kai Johnson and Te'Jon Sawyer.

"The seniors have helped us tremendously, the maturity that they bring to the game and the fact that they've had more experience on this court helps us in big moments," head coach Travis DeCuire said.

Kai Johnson, a senior guard from Olympia, Washington, came to the University of Montana after transferring from Western Washington University, where he played for four years.

Johnson was dominant during his time at Western Washington. He led the team in points in the 2023-24 season with 627 points, over 200 more points than his teammates. He also led in assists with 102.

Though his stat sheet was thriving in Washington, Johnson felt he hadn't met his full potential. There was still one thing he wanted to complete before his college career came to an end: He needed to win a championship.

"I just wanted to go somewhere where I could win a title. I felt as though it was the one thing I was missing," Johnson said.

He was able to check that box off his record as the Griz won the title of conference champions on March 3.

"That was huge, it was my first championship ever. It was just completely surreal to do it in front of the home crowd," Johnson said.

Johnson's counterpart, Te'Jon Sawyer, also received recognition for his impressive season. Sawyer is a senior forward from San Francisco.

Sawyer decided to come to UM for his junior year and spend the rest of his college basketball career.

"I liked the culture of the program and the fact that they are big on being pipeline to pipeline," Sawyer said. "I knew some of the coaching staff were from San Francisco and some alums that I knew helped me make the push to come to UM."

Johnson and Sawyer have made their mark this season for the Griz. Both sit in the top five among the team for points and free throws. Johnson led the team in steals with 44, and Sawyer finished the regular season for blocks with 20.

Both players took time to praise each other and express how important they are for this team as they push for the championship title.

"[Johnson is] very important to this team,



Senior forward Te'Jon Sawyer cuts off a piece of the net used during the conference winning game against Eastern Washington University on March 3.

MARLEY BARBOEISEL | MONTANA KAIMIN

**"One thing that UM has taught me is what it takes to be a champion and having urgency not just on the court, but also in life."**

— Kai Johnson, senior guard

both his offense and defense is incredible. He helps this team to get going," Sawyer said.

Johnson expressed praise for Sawyer in few, but important, words. "I'm just glad I don't have to play against him," he said.

The team has made its agenda clear: focus on these next couple of days and prepare as much as possible to play against tough teams.

"We're just trying to not get complacent and not let this conference win get to our heads," Johnson said.

But while they try to focus on the future it's hard to not look back at all the big moments that the Griz had this year, like sweeping the Montana State University Bobcats.

Johnson, who is new to the rivalry, had more on the line than winning the Brawl of the Wild. "I have good friends who go to MSU, so it felt good to get two wins over them. I made sure to rub it in their faces a bit," he said.

Sawyer, however, was just focused on getting payback from last season. "We were dialed in. We swept them last year but they got us in the playoff. It felt as though we were getting revenge," he said.

While they've expressed their love for the program they also knew it was important to remember everything must eventually end.

"One thing that UM has taught me is what it takes to be a champion and having urgency not just on the court but also in life," Johnson said.

Along with finishing up the season, Sawyer and Johnson are both looking forward to getting their degrees in communications.

"I'm extremely excited to walk across the stage and get my degree," Sawyer said.

Johnson is currently planning on returning for another year at UM, but it will be up to the NCAA if he's eligible to stay. Sawyer has already used all his eligibility years and expressed a sense of sadness when asked about leaving UM behind.

As their careers at UM come to a close, they both hold dreams of moving overseas and playing professionally in Europe.

*Hannah Benitez is a sports reporter for the Montana Kaimin and can be contacted at [hannah.benitez@umontana.edu](mailto:hannah.benitez@umontana.edu). For more stories from Benitez is and other reporters, visit online at [montanakaimin.com](http://montanakaimin.com).*

# Rocking the Rec

WORDS AND PHOTOS BY HENRY DOELLINGER  
henry.doellinger@umontana.edu

Grunts and cheers filled a corner of the University of Montana's Fitness and Recreation Center as Missoula's climbers faced off in Sunday's annual Rock the Rec climbing competition.

The vertical challenge brought two big groups of Missoula climbers together, regulars from Freestone Climbing Center and UM's own gym. The event attracted youth as young as 10, in addition to many adult climbers.

Lolo Hardware owner Nate Barton enjoys Rock the Rec each year.

"There's two days I look forward to every year. The first is my mom's birthday because I want to get her some nice flowers," Barton said. "The second, and almost as important, is Rock the Rec."

While supported by large climbing brands like Black Diamond, Rock the Rec stands out from other climbing competitions in its friendly, community-focused environment. In between attempting new competition routes, each with a different difficult level, athletes could enjoy pastries and other snacks provided. Large groups relaxed on the cushioned floor to watch their friends' attempts.

The chalk dust-infused bouldering cave stayed crowded throughout the three-hour climbing session, with climbers watching others attempt dynamic boulder problems as they waited in line and devised a plan for their send.

Family members and friends leaned over the railing on the building's second story balcony that offered a climber-level view of the wall's most dramatic feature, a full arch that left climbers hanging in space, silhouetted against large windows for the crux of several routes.

When the clock struck 2 p.m., the staff calculated the final scores. After much anticipation for the table of



prizes, ranging from T-shirts to a new Black Diamond rope, the winners were announced. First place went to Missoula community member Kenley Crisp, who triumphantly grabbed the rope.

Colin Brust, who said he underperformed in the event, summarized the competition's atmosphere: "Good setting, good vibes, a lot of fun."

*Henry Doellinger is a photographer for the Montana Kaimin and can be contacted at [henry.doellinger@umontana.umt.edu](mailto:henry.doellinger@umontana.umt.edu). For more galleries from Doellinger and other photographers, visit online at [montanakaimin.com](http://montanakaimin.com).*

**TOP LEFT:** Competitors climbed both boulder problems and top-rope routes to earn a combined score at the University of Montana's Rock the Rec climbing competition on March 9.

**BOTTOM LEFT:** Finn Goss, left, climbs at the beginning of Rock the Rec. The routes were set this weekend and not seen by climbers until the competition.

**RIGHT:** First-year forestry student Weslie Thien attempts an overhanging route.