

MONTANA KAIMIN

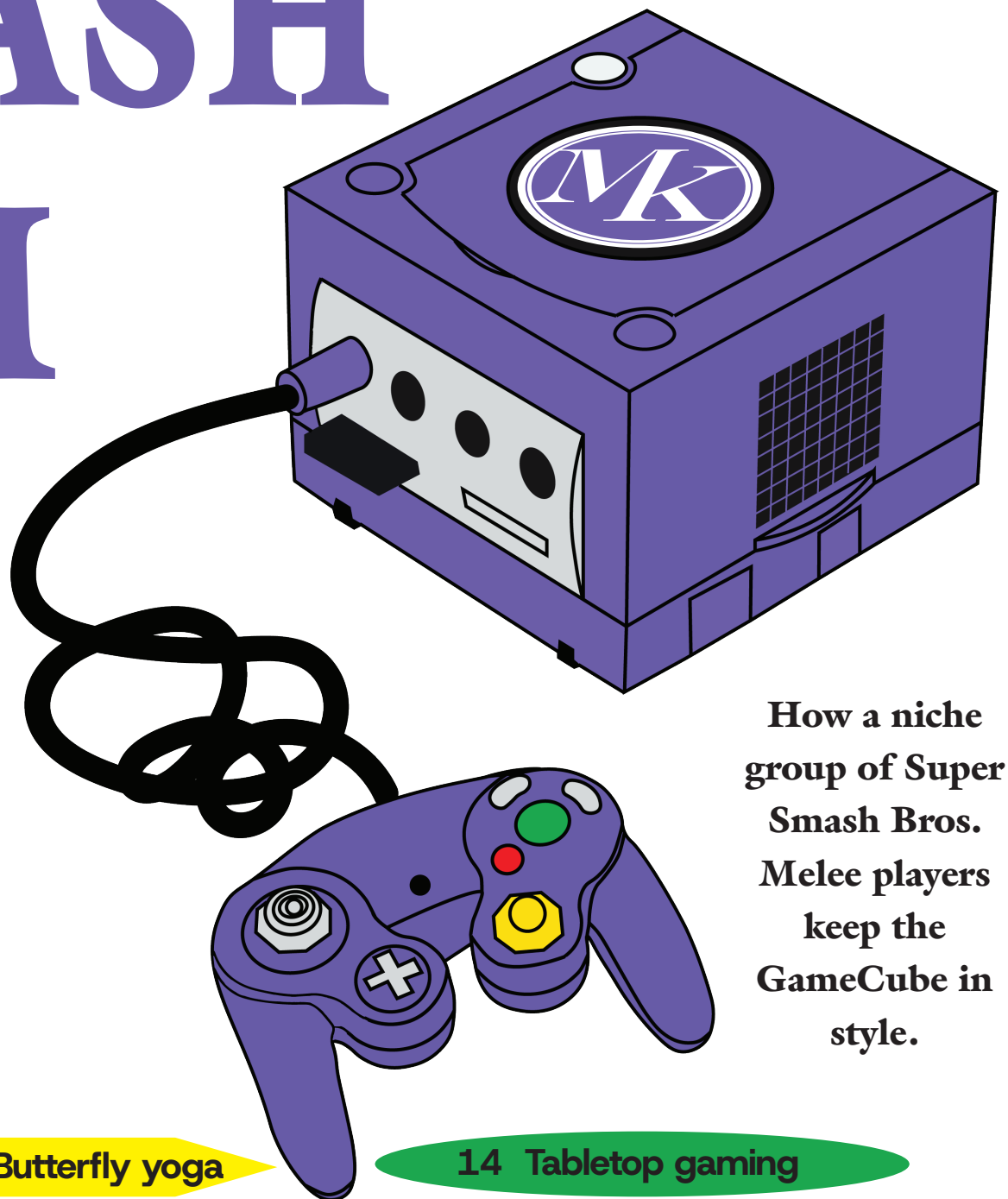
A SMASH

FROM

THE

PAST

Story by Marin Anderson
Photos by Mars Johnson
Cover graphic by Diego Rey



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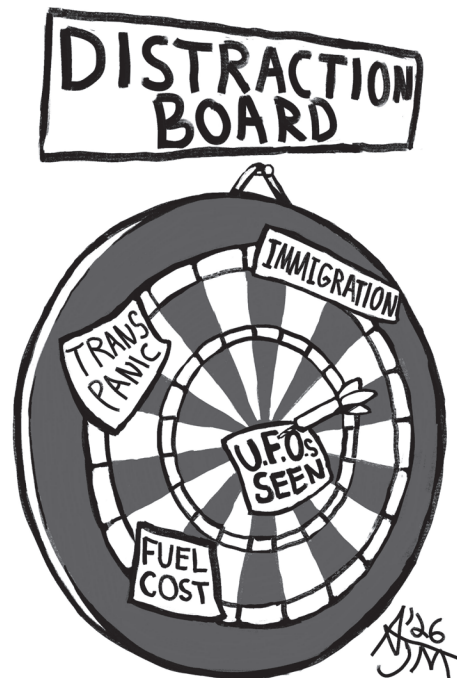
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Kiosk

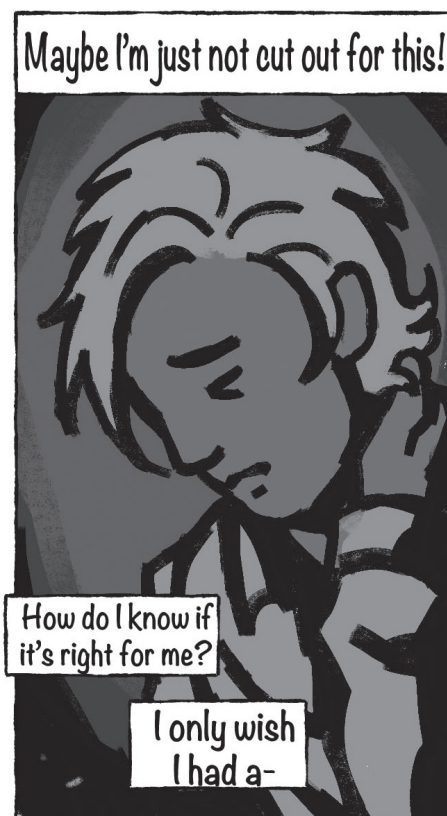
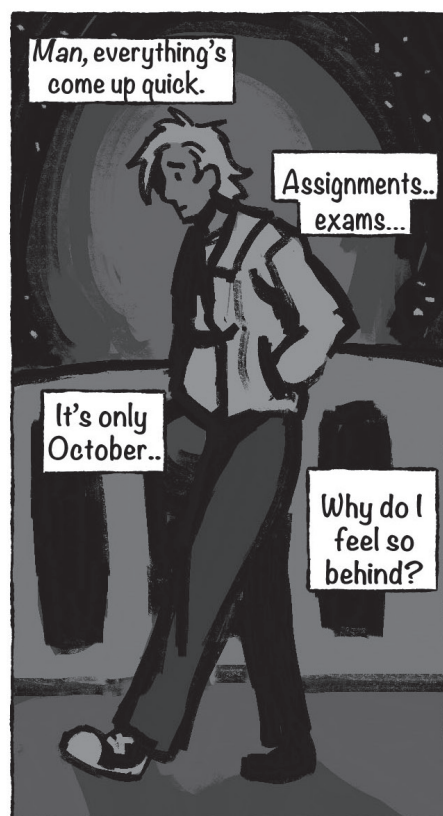


The Montana Kaimin is a weekly independent student newspaper at the University of Montana. The Kaimin office and the University of Montana are located on land originally inhabited by the Salish People. Kaimin is a derivative of a Salish language word, "Qe'ymin," that is pronounced kay-MEEN and means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

POLITICAL CARTOON



KAIMIN KOMICS: #6 YOU'RE ALRIGHT



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Cornell and the need for male accountability

If there's one thing the discussions surrounding the Cornell rape lawsuit have highlighted for me, it's the importance of men speaking up and holding each other accountable.

Jane Doe's lawsuit includes an image of messages sent to a Snapchat group chat in which members of the Chi Phi fraternity openly discussed and encouraged the alleged rape. There were 57 men in the group chat, and none of them did anything to intervene, according to Jane Doe's attorney, Thomas Giuffra.

Cases like this are why we all need to hold each other responsible. Because if men fear being ostracized more than we fear a woman being raped, then nothing is ever going to change.

Growing up in locker rooms and hunting camps, I have heard boys and men say some vile things about women when they think they're in like-minded company. As a child, I never spoke up. I had a "go along to get along" mentality, and, frankly, I was afraid of being alienated by my friends. But as time goes on, it has become more apparent to me that every man is responsible for speaking up to his peers when they make such comments.

Almost every man I know likes to think that he would stop a rape. He likes to think that he would swoop in like Superman and save the day for a helpless woman being attacked by a villainous man. He likes to think that reaction, rather than prevention, will solve the problem.

But rapists aren't just evil men in dark alleys. They're your coworkers who flirt with underage girls. They're your friends who go upstairs with drunk women at house parties. They're your cousins who pressure their partners into sex before they're ready.

It's easy to puff out your chest and stand in the way of creepy men hitting on your female friends at a bar. It's a lot harder, but arguably more important, to call out your buddy for making a joke about sexual assault.

Joking about rape is not only unfunny, but it's also dangerous. Connections between misogynistic jokes and proclivity for rape are widely researched, and a 2017 study by researchers from Western Carolina University and the University of Granada indicate a correlation the two. Many people just go along with those remarks for fear of being labeled a buzzkill or gaining a reputation as someone who "can't take a joke." There are hundreds

of excuses used by the people who make light of sexual violence: "It's not that deep, man," "I would never ACTUALLY do something like that," and "It's just a joke, I didn't know it was wrong."

But ignorance can only be an excuse for so long, because at some point ignorant boys turn into dangerous men, and women pay the price. Ultimately, this is the issue with framing rape as a problem for women to fix rather than one for men to solve. Prevention needs to come from men because it's both ridiculous and ineffective to expect women to take responsibility for stopping their own assaults.

So speak up when your friend says something misogynistic. Ruin the vibe. Make your brothers uncomfortable. Because everything is "just a joke" until it's not.

- Jack Snow, news editor

Like it? Hate it? Let us know.

Email us your opinions at
henry.doellinger@umontana.edu

SUDOKU

Difficulty: Easy

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

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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:

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

Homecoming flare



University of Montana freshman Cade Pittman watches the firework show during the Yell Night Pep Rally on the Oval on Oct. 2. EMBRY ERICSON | MONTANA KAIMIN

In local news...

JACK SNOW | NEWS EDITOR

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TWO MEN SENTENCED FOR METH TRAFFICKING

Two men were sentenced to prison on Sept. 30 for transporting and selling meth in the greater Missoula area, according to a release from the U.S. Attorney's Office.

Both Michael James Storey of Hamilton and Jade Taylor Budd of Frenchtown pleaded guilty in May to possession with intent to distribute methamphetamine.

U.S. District Judge Dana L. Christensen presided over the case and Storey was sentenced to seven years in prison with five years of supervised release, while Budd was sentenced to 10 years in prison with five years of supervised release.

Court documents alleged that the two men had worked independently of each other to bring methamphetamine to the Missoula area and sell it. Both men had ties to a larger drug trafficking operation, which Missoula authorities started investigating in 2024.

Storey was pulled over by officers in February 2025, and authorities found 13 grams of methamphetamine in his car, as well as messages on his phone about buying more meth from a drug trafficker in Spokane.

Budd was stopped by police at a Missoula Burger King in July 2024, and officers searched his car, finding pre-packaged bags of meth and phone messages that indicated he was trafficking meth and looking for customers.

GROUPS PUSH BACK AGAINST BLM HORSE MANAGEMENT

Two advocacy groups filed a Sept. 30 complaint which aims to stop the Bureau of Land Management from gathering and removing wild horses from the Pryor Mountain range in south-central Montana.

The complaint was filed by The Cloud Foundation and Central Oregon Wild Horse Coalition, and requests a temporary restraining order and a preliminary injunction to stop the bureau from gathering the horses, according to the Missoulian.

An August announcement from the bureau explained that it planned to gather 40 horses from the range and administer birth control drugs to 39 mares to help with the health of the ecosystem. Horses

removed from the range are put up for adoption.

"The gather will help ensure the herd remains healthy and genetically diverse while allowing vegetation and soils to recover," Nate Arave, Bureau of Land Management Billings field manager, stated in an announcement.

The group's complaint alleged that the herd's population has been decreasing without bureau interference, going from 205 horses in 2023 to 187 this year.

Phyllis Wray, who spoke as part of the complaint, said she found "significant inconsistencies, contradictions and overt misrepresentations in the data and determinations made by the BLM" in its 2023 environmental assessment.

The groups also mentioned that the birth control drugs used on mares have a chance to permanently sterilize them.

MONTANA DIESEL PRICES RISE

Montana diesel prices are near record heights, causing strain for farms and other businesses that rely on the fuel.

Montana's average diesel price clocked in at \$6.23 per gallon on Sept. 30, \$2.58 more than it cost a year ago and just eight cents shy of the state record set six days prior, according to GasBuddy, a site that tracks fuel prices.

Eric Belasco, an agricultural economics professor at Montana State University, told Montana Free Press that these costs make profit margins tighter for agricultural producers.

"A lot of farmers are going to see high input prices, and there's not a whole lot you can do with that," Belasco said. "So a lot of them are eating the cost at the farm level."

Patrick De Haan, who serves as head of petroleum analysis at GasBuddy, told Montana Free Press that output disruptions at overseas refineries have limited the global diesel supply. He pointed to Russia, which usually produces one out of every nine diesel barrels, but has recently struggled with production because of its war with Ukraine.

De Haan also said that he's unsure about where prices will go next.

"I have no expectations. The markets are telling me I can't, really," De Haan said. "We could go a dollar a gallon higher, we could go a dollar a gallon lower. I have no idea which of those it's going to be."



CONTRIBUTED | CARLISLE INDIAN SCHOOL DIGITAL RESOURCE CENTER

This week on the Kaimin Cast...

After growing up on the Fort Belknap Indian Reservation in the late 1800s, four young members of the Gros Ventre Tribe were sent 2,000 miles away to Carlisle Indian School in Pennsylvania and never returned home. They died while attending the school and their bones were moved from one cemetery to another, never receiving the proper ceremony. In 2023, the Army identified three of the children, and members of the tribe took a journey to Pennsylvania to recover their remains. The location of the fourth individual remains unknown.

"It's gonna be almost two years since we brought them home. Thinking about it, the emotions still are very raw. But again, extremely, extremely proud to know that I was a part of the group of individuals that set in motion this thing for our people and for the Gros Ventre Tribe specifically," said Michael Black Wolf, Fort Belknap's Tribal Historic Preservation Officer.

University of Montana journalism student Vivi Ostheimer brings us the story and dives deeper into the history of Indian boarding schools, the journey of the children's repatriation and the work still to be done.

This episode is part of last spring's advanced audio capstone class, The Good Bones Project, where students reported on found bones across Montana.

Check out this week's episode of the Good Bones series, "From the Carlisle Indian School to Montana: Bringing them home," by heading to our website at montanakaimin.com, or wherever you find your podcasts.

- Grace Golbach,
audio editor



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



NEW YORK GOVERNOR DECLARES MEASLES EMERGENCY

New York Governor Kathy Hochul declared a state of emergency on Monday due to a measles outbreak.

This year, there have been 108 reported measles cases in New York through Oct. 3, according to CNN. The state has seen 92 of those cases since July 15 in rural communities across 18 counties.

These cases have also caused the state to increase the number of health care providers allowed to administer the measles-mumps-rubella vaccine.

Since July 15, local health departments have given more than 1,000 doses of the vaccine in rural areas.

Previously, measles was declared eliminated in the United States in 2000, with an average of just 180 national cases in the following 25 years.

Now, the U.S. as a whole is having its worst measles year since 1991, with almost 3,900 reported cases nationwide, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

KAROLINE LEAVITT GOES TO FOX NEWS

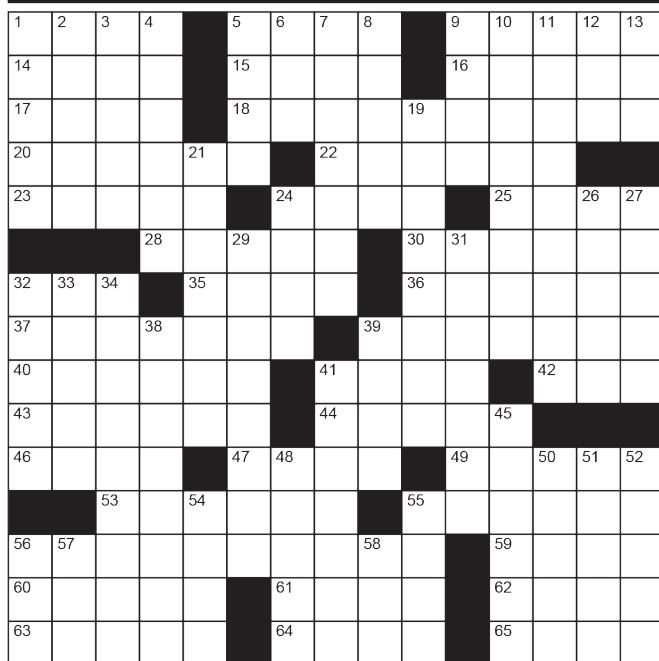
Former White House press secretary Karoline Leavitt has taken a position at Fox News, and will serve as an on-air contributor beginning Nov. 1, according to the network.

"Karoline's firsthand experience in the White House and on the presidential campaign trail gives her a distinct understanding of today's political landscape," Fox News CEO Suzanne Scott stated in an announcement.

"I am grateful for the opportunity to continue appearing on Fox News Channel as an official member of the extraordinary team at Fox News Media," Leavitt said. "I look forward to bringing my unique perspective from my experience as White House press secretary, along with the same energy and candor that defined my tenure, to Fox's millions of viewers across their many platforms."

According to PBS, Leavitt joins Kayleigh McEnany as another former White House press secretary working for Fox. McEnany joined the network in 2021 and has worked there ever since.

The Trump administration has other ties with Fox News as well, such as Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth, who worked for the network before assuming his current role.



ACROSS

- 1 European auto, once
- 5 Untidy one
- 9 Gave meds to
- 14 Netflix rival
- 15 Come clean
- 16 Opening words
- 17 Door anagram
- 18 Tried hard
- 20 Narrow down
- 22 Tomorrow, in Tulum
- 23 Dutch painter Jan
- 24 Wrapped garment
- 25 Pickling herb
- 28 City of India
- 30 Not a nice guy
- 32 Distant
- 35 Plant starter
- 36 Pain in the chest
- 37 Helped in a heist
- 39 Pieces of hair
- 40 Reverses
- 41 "Get outta here!"
- 42 Old gun, slangily
- 43 Angelic figure
- 44 Like some fries
- 46 "___ bien!"
- 47 Aunt Bee's charge
- 49 Skier's quarters
- 53 Gawks
- 55 Tel Aviv's land
- 56 Chamber of Commerce members
- 59 German seaport
- 60 With regard to
- 61 Collette of film
- 62 Coastal flier
- 63 Evade a question
- 64 Mining finds

- 65 He played Ken

DOWN

- 1 Exhibits
- 2 Check the books
- 3 By oneself
- 4 Overdone, to a cook
- 5 Dinner in a pot
- 6 Late DWTS judge Goodman
- 7 Card game for kids
- 8 Make cloudy
- 9 Pop star, sometimes
- 10 Five Nations tribe
- 11 Stretching tight
- 12 Before, in poems
- 13 Pentagon org., previously
- 19 Walt Disney, e.g.
- 21 Ragtime dance
- 24 Cast off
- 26 Lavin or Blair
- 27 Part of LCD, in math
- 29 Potential shipwreck spot
- 31 Signs up for
- 32 Soul-seller of legend
- 33 "Li'l" comic strip character
- 34 Set right
- 38 Honoring, as at a wedding
- 39 Actress Elisabeth
- 41 Type of swimmer's kick
- 45 The New ___ (weekly)
- 48 Alfredo alternative
- 50 Vegan no-no
- 51 Thelma portrayed
- 52 Pompeo of "Grey's Anatomy"
- 54 Initial stake
- 55 Goddess of fertility
- 56 Album after "Thriller"
- 57 Dos preceder
- 58 OH to MA direction

Answers to Previous Crossword:

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

Spooky lake-o-scope

MARIAH HENRY | COPY CHIEF

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Um, yes hello! It's finally October, and you know what that means — it's Spooky Lake Month! Inspired by Geo Rutherford's TikTok series, read on to find out which feature of haunted hydrology you are.

LIBRA (SEP. 23-OCT. 22): You're the Salton Sea in extreme southern California. In the mid 20th century, the lake was a tourist destination, but the water became too toxic and salty to maintain nearby resorts and communities. The agricultural runoff-contaminated waters killed off fish populations and now the beaches are littered with bones and a horrific smell. Combined with abandoned advertisements, it's 7/10 spookies.

SCORPIO (OCT. 23-NOV. 21): You win. You're Lake Superior, arguably the spookiest lake of all. Lake Superior is the largest Great Lake, it has over 500 shipwrecks and has claimed the lives of over 10,000 people. One of Superior's harsh November storms, also called "witches," wrecked the Edmund Fitzgerald, which disappeared on Nov. 10, 1975. The last message received from the ship was "we are holding our own." But ask me about the wreck of the SS Kamloops, which I find even creepier. 10/10 spookies.

SAGITTARIUS (NOV. 22-DEC. 21): You're the Black Sea, where some of the oldest shipwrecks ever discovered (up to 2,000 years old) are still preserved. The Black Sea is stratified, with salt water on top, and oxygen-free fresh water beneath. Without oxygen, organisms can't live at the bottom of the sea, keeping even wooden ships safe from decomposition. 9/10 spookies.

CAPRICORN (DEC. 22-JAN. 19): Like the electrical storms around Lake Maracaibo, you're a hard worker. The lake, located in Venezuela and the largest in South America, is considered the lightning capital of the world. Almost every night, lightning strikes constantly for nine hours straight, and has been doing so for roughly 500 years. 5/10 spookies.

AQUARIUS (JAN. 20-FEB. 18): You're Lake Baikal, the oldest and deepest lake in the world. Located in southern Siberia, local Russian legend says the mafia would dump bodies in the lake, letting its strange ecosystem of carnivorous invertebrates destroy the evidence. In 48 hours, the flesh would be gone. Legend also says missing gold from the last czar is at the bottom of the lake, but is it worth the risk? 9/10 spookies.

PISCES (FEB. 19-MARCH 20): You're the Aral Sea, the Silent Chernobyl. Located between Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan, the Aral Sea was used for fishing, irrigation and as a dumping ground for pesticides and fertilizers. In the last 50 years, the lake has dried up, leaving the toxic, salty soil exposed and liable to blowing away, increasing cancer and infant mortality rates nearby. 8/10 spookies.

ARIES (MARCH 21-APRIL 19): You're Qiandao Lake in China, a reservoir that hides a 1,000-year-old city, Shicheng. Under the water lie ancient buildings, including intricate stone carvings. The lake also flooded 2,000 nearby villages, displacing 300,000 people who had to leave their lives behind. 6/10 spookies.

TAURUS (APRIL 20-MAY 20): You're Lake Mead. Since 2022, shrinking shorelines have been revealing more bodies each year. At least 300 people have drowned in the reservoir since it was created by the Hoover Dam in the 1930s. Add the once-submerged towns beginning to reappear, and you get 8/10 spookies.

GEMINI (MAY 21-JUNE 20): You haunt the narrative, so you're Glacial Lake Missoula. What's spookier than imagining the city of Missoula and the University of Montana completely submerged under an ancient lake? The lake existed around 13,000 years ago, but evidence of its massive floods can still be seen across the Pacific Northwest. 4/10 spookies.

CANCER (JUNE 21-JULY 22): Did I give Cancer the Berkeley Pit because its insanely toxic water might cause cancer? Yes, yes I did. I know, you're probably thinking "that's not spooky at all," but considering it has killed thousands of migrating snow geese, displaced working class minority communities in Butte and is the largest Superfund site in the U.S., I think it deserves a place on the list. 8/10 spookies.

LEO (JULY 23-AUG. 22): You're Earthquake Lake, located along the Madison River near West Yellowstone. Quake Lake is itself a Leo, formed by an earthquake on Aug. 17, 1959, which killed 28 people camping along the river. Some trees still stand half submerged in the lake, giving it an eerie feeling of days gone by. 6/10 spookies.

VIRGO (AUG. 23-SEP. 22): You're Crater Lake, which isn't that creepy, except for one thing: the old man of the lake. The "old man" is a perpetually floating, vertical hemlock stump that could be up to 450 years old. There's four feet of the stump above water, but over 30 feet hidden underneath. 4/10 spookies.



ALYSSA JO MURNION | CARTOONIST

UM files insurance claim following federal aid scam

JOCelyn HOOD | NEWS REPORTER

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The University of Montana filed an insurance claim in July 2025 for a net loss of over \$370,000 from a scam in which fraudsters stole over \$670,000 of federal aid from Missoula College, which UM had to return to the federal government.

According to Drew Riley, UM's chief enrollment officer, international scammers submitted roughly 200 applications which were accepted by the University using stolen identities and generative AI. When those "ghost students" were accepted, they took out federal loans, kept the money and then didn't attend classes.

For example, if a scammer took out a \$20,000 loan but owed the University only \$10,000, UM would receive the full loan amount and return the other \$10,000 to the student by check. That is why the net loss is less than the amount of federal aid that was stolen, Riley said.

"The part that went out to those ghost students, that is out the door," Riley said. "It went to bank accounts and was probably laundered and who knows what. It's a pretty significant criminal ring that they figured out this whole operation."

UM spokesperson Dave Kuntz said that it's too soon to know how successful the insurance claim will be, but even if UM didn't regain the money, students wouldn't see much change.

"[It's] a lot of money, but in the scheme of the annual operations of the University, it's pretty small, so no services would be pulled back," Kuntz said. "The University tries to carry a small amount of reserve funds and legal funds for instances like this."

This scam is a national operation, Kuntz said, and other colleges have been hit much harder.

According to ABC7, 31.4% of all applications to California's 116 community colleges were fraudulent in 2024.

"It was just a really small drop in the bucket compared to what was happening across the country," Kuntz said.

Riley said that community colleges and two-year colleges with online programs are the most targeted institutions. Missoula College fit this profile and made UM a target, he said.

"Typically, the actual cost of tuition is lower," Riley said. "That means that when you take out a loan, less goes to the college, more goes in your pocket, essentially, so

those are really ripe for it."

Riley said that the numbers of applications weren't alarming because 200 extra applications aren't atypical. However, there were discrepancies in the applications themselves that evaluators noticed, such as suspicious birth dates that didn't seem to reflect an applicant's educational experience.

Eventually, he said, they got calls from people across the United States whose identities were stolen, saying that their credit agency told them they took out loans from the University of Montana even though they never applied.

"That was when we were like, 'Oh, there's something really fishy here,'" Riley said.

He said that UM uses two different application platforms: the Common Application and Apply Montana. Apply Montana was less protected against fraud, he said, and was where most of the fake applications were submitted.

Riley said since the fraud happened, they have improved the security of Apply Montana by requiring identity verification.

"It's an incredibly simple process for real people," Riley said. "But it is a choke point where we're able to just prevent a lot of those fraudulent applications from going through."

He said that when students apply for financial aid, they have to go through the federal verification process of providing tax documents.

There are also checks along the way looking to see if patterns they identified in the fraudulent applications pop up again, he said, but disclosing those checks would defeat their purpose.

Kuntz said that these features didn't exist before, because UM had no reason to suspect fraudulent activity would happen.

"We often find ourselves just a half step behind those perpetrators who are trying to do us harm," Kuntz said. "Unfortunately, sometimes it does take an instance of this degree to identify where any of those shortfalls may be."

Riley said there have only been a handful of fake applications since 2025 and they were cut off before ever receiving financial aid, due to the efforts of UM employees working on the issue.

"People stepped up, worked a lot more than they had to, because I think everybody was heartbroken that we unwittingly became a vehicle for this crime ring to steal people's identities," Riley said.

Kuntz said it is unlikely that the University will be involved in supporting the individuals whose identities were stolen because UM was not involved in or responsible for the data breach of their information.

Ryan Aikin, the director of the Associated Students of the University of Montana's legal services, said that in the case of identity theft, victims should first go to the Federal Trade Commission's website and submit a complaint. Then they should contact the lender of the loan, tell them it was fraudulent and ask that it be closed. Lastly, they should contact one of the three credit reporting agencies, TransUnion, Equifax and Experian, and put a credit alert on their account so that if anyone tries to use their identity to open a loan in the future, it will trigger an alert.

"That's pretty much all you can do," Aikin said.

Riley said that after his experience dealing with the scam, he froze his credit to prevent a loan being taken out in his name.

"Data breaches happen all the time, and it's just scary to think that your data could be caught up in them," Riley said. "I took that step because it kind of freaked me out."

Layla Turman, an attorney for ASUM legal services, said that if someone is found guilty of the fraud, they could be ordered to pay restitution to the victims or there could be civil lawsuits.

"It's a crazy time for identity theft," Turman said.

Riley said that despite the changes to the application process, scammers could still find a way to steal from the University.

"We're definitely more ready to respond," Riley said. "It's a situation where we can't rest on our laurels because they're getting better. They get better every single year. They try new tactics. We've got to stay pretty vigilant."



SUNRISE Saloon

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Country Dance Lessons with Misfit Country - Tuesday, Thursday  7 PM

Trivia/Bingo - Wednesdays  7PM

Joe Martinez Band - Oct 16th and 17th  9:30PM

 1101 Strand Ave, Missoula, MT 59801

Chloe Cole brings Turning Point's 'Pick Up the Mic' tour to UM

NICO KITOS | NEWS REPORTER
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Turning Point USA brought its "Pick Up the Mic" tour to the University of Montana on Sept. 30, setting up outside of Mansfield Library for an open Q&A.

The event featured Chloe Cole, a 20-year-old detransitioner, or a person who at one point began a gender transition before reverting to their initial gender identity. She is an activist who has become a national face of the movement against gender-affirming medical care for minors.

Cole set up beneath a tent alongside a sign which read: "Prove me wrong: Transgender kids don't exist." By the end of the three-hour event, the discussion had drawn supporters, hecklers, a cluster of protestors dressed as clowns and university administration removing at least one person.

Cole said UM's mixed reactions didn't surprise her.

"I've heard that a lot of the students here feel very strongly about transgender issues in particular," she said.

The tour is part of Turning Point's effort to continue founder Charlie Kirk's "Prove Me Wrong"-style campus events. Kirk was assassinated during a similar event at Utah Valley University in September 2025.

Cole has taken up the same format, inviting students up to the mic one at a time to challenge her directly on issues like gender identity and reassignment. She began a medical transition from female to male between the ages of 12 and 16, using puberty blockers and testosterone at 13 and getting a double mastectomy at 15, before detransitioning around 17.

She has since testified before state legislatures, spoken at colleges across the nation and advocated for her cause outside the U.S. In 2025, Cole joined UN Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women & Girls Reem Alsalem at the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva.

Several students in the audience said they came specifically to hear Cole's story. Lucas Luengo, a first-year student majoring in environmental science, labeled Cole as "smart and well-spoken" and said she "dealt with the troubled audience fairly well."

Natalee Gange, a UM student studying parks, tourism and recreation management, asked Cole for parenting advice during the Q&A. She said Cole told her to build a strong relationship with her future children.

Matthew Camp is a junior game design major who said he attended mainly to discourage classmates from engaging at all.

"I believe that the goal is to get students angry, and eventually get them to ask



Chloe Cole speaks on the topic of transgender children during a Turning Point USA event near the Mansfield Library on Sept. 30. EMBRY ERICSON | MONTANA KAIMIN

a dumb question that they can film themselves answering. They then post those clips to gain publicity and make themselves look more intelligent and students less."

Other students, like second-year management information systems major Mateo Yedinak, took issue with the format itself.

"I think the manner in which Chloe Cole and Turning Point run the forum don't allow for adequate debate," Yedinak said. "Both my friend and I, along with almost everyone who disagreed with Ms. Cole, were kicked off the mic rather quickly."

Two students dressed as clowns, who asked to be identified as Punk Clown, a wildlife biology major, and Rodeo Clown, a dual history and physics major, said the costumes aimed to visibly oppose the event while showing support for trans students on campus.

"By showing up as a clown and making the event as circus-like as possible, I hoped to highlight just how ridiculous, performative and deceptive TPUSA events are," Punk Clown said.

Cole mentioned that she's faced attempts to shut down her talks before, including protestors who try to drown out

the sound system by making noise.

"It usually ends up backfiring," Cole said. "It just brings more attention to our table and gets more sign-ups for the chapters."

Still, she said, "There are times when I genuinely do fear for my safety just for the fact that I'm speaking about a subject like detransitioning."

Luke Johnson, a first-year graduate student studying environmental philosophy who attended the event, said he stopped by the event mostly by chance. He was more curious than committed to a side. He said Cole clearly spoke from personal experience, but seemed to lack deeper grounding in the subject beyond the statistics that she cited. He argued that most exchanges at the event aimed to provoke reactions rather than build understanding.

Still, Johnson said his own exchange with Cole felt different. He felt the conversation was civil and substantive, even when they disagreed on topics like abortion, religion and transgender rights. He said the event's format has "real potential for productive and unifying discussion," but doubted campus culture, on either side, was ready to use it that way.

"She was opposed to gender-affirming hormone therapy and surgery for minors. However, the speaker clearly lacked a deep theoretical knowledge of the subject matter beyond offhand statistics cited during discussion," Johnson said. "It was clear that the speaker held the event to elicit an emotional reaction from students."

Dallas Tenbrink, a third-year applied mathematics major, argued that Turning Point's stated Christian values, like following the example of Jesus, don't match its tactics.

Tenbrink said a university Dean of Students repeatedly intervened, telling them not to interrupt the speaker and to keep remarks under 30 seconds. He said they followed these rules, facing away from the stage while Cole continued speaking into a microphone throughout.

After a complaint from a man Tenbrink identified as a Turning Point employee, Tenbrink said they were warned that continuing would mean removal by campus police. They left shortly after.

"The 'champions of free speech' are only okay with it on their own terms," Tenbrink said. "That doesn't feel free to me."

A SMASH FROM THE PAST



Griffin Ashley's TV shows the Super Smash Bros. game in the "Ready to Fight" screen on Sept. 26.

How a niche group of Super Smash Bros. Melee players keep the GameCube in style

Story by Marin Anderson | Photos by Mars Johnson

Graphics by Alyssa Jo Murnion

People gather around to watch two players battle. Many of them are cheering, drinking Coors Banquets, eating Doritos and yelling. When tensions get high, players get heated.

An hour before the pixelated carnage

begins, roughly 20 Montanans drag the furniture from the living room of a Sussex Avenue house to the front yard to create an outdoor battleground. Inside, the living room, the dining room and one of the upstairs bedrooms transform into individual battlegrounds for a night filled with

Smash Bros. Melee tournaments they call "Fart Saturday."

Every other Saturday at 6 p.m., they gather to play the game on GameCube, a 25-year-old gaming console.

As the buttons are mashed hard enough to break, the spectators cheer noisily and talk amongst themselves while Melee divides the two temporary rivals.

"That lead that you had is gone now, and you're shitting your pants," Griffin Ashley, 26, said about what has become tradition at his house.

Inside, away from the action, people in the kitchen catch up on everyday life and drink beer. Ashley and his roommates' four cats, Atom Bomb, Hydrie, Chewbacca and Budman roam the house.

For two months, Ashley and his roommates Bram Cunningham, 21, Eryn Odell, 25, and Roxanne Bunde, 19, have hosted regular Super Smash Bros. Melee tournaments, though the

group has played together on and off for the past eight years, according to Ashley.

Gamers hailing from Butte and Bozeman come to the tournament, which features head-to-head duels in one of 29 colorful battle arenas. The object of the game is to be the first one to take four lives from your opponent before they take yours to emerge victorious.

"The fight in the living room is for everyone to watch, and it's serious," he said. "These people want to deal with the energy of the crowd," he said.

From the vibrancy of the pixels to the retro nostalgia the GameCube feeds, Melee's exhilarating experiences keep players coming back for more.

Of the about 22 million Nintendo GameCube consoles sold globally, Ashley owns five. Of all the rare consoles he collects, the GameCubes are special to him because his dad gifted him one in 2001.

Kicking it old school

The Nintendo GameCube was released in Japan in September 2001, but didn't arrive in the United States until a few months later. Shortly after the console's release, Super Smash Bros. Melee became available exclusively for the GameCube.

The GameCube is a small home video game console designed to play games only made by Nintendo, such as Mario, Donkey Kong and Zelda. It features purple, black and other special edition colors, along with a unique, compact cube shape.

Melee consists of 26 characters including loveable, iconic Nintendo figures such as Link, Mario and Peach. Melee also includes 14 characters who debuted on the GameCube. One character above all else, Fox, is picked the most in competition due to his unique speed and abilities. Fox is the main pilot character from Nintendo's Star Fox video game.

The 29 different battle arenas include three flat platforms above the main area and colorful backgrounds that could consist of trees one match and UFOs in the next. The platforms are placed in a strategic triangle in order to alter movement options and land safely. There is only one battle arena, Final Destination, that doesn't feature them.

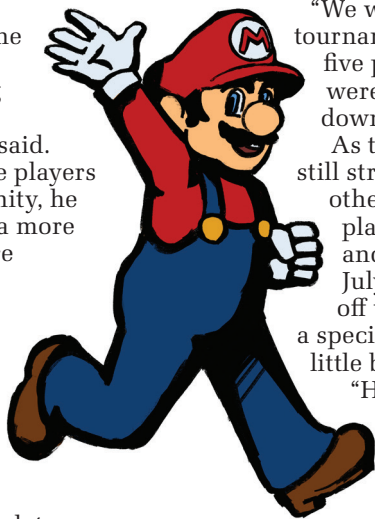
The controller features a yellow C-stick, used to combo (rapidly attack in a chained-together sequence to deal maximum damage) your opponents, a sizable green (B), smaller red (A), two outer gray buttons for attacks and jumping and the left stick for movement.

Ashley was introduced to Super Smash Bros. Melee on the GameCube when he was 14.

"I tried playing alone as a kid with nobody to learn from or hang out with, and it just didn't work," Ashley said. In order to meet more players in the Melee community, he took off to Missoula, a more populated town where he spent a part of his childhood.

Missoula is where Ashley honed his Super Smash Bros. Melee skills, but more importantly, he found opponents to play against.

He went on Facebook to see if there were any Melee groups in Missoula, with no faith in there being a community of players here. He found



out that wasn't the case.

"There's been a very long history of people who've been playing this," Ashley said. "It turns out there's all sorts of lore to stupid, fun niches like this."

Here, he developed the community and tournaments he runs today. But like any business' first opening, it was hard to find people to attend the competitions.

"We would have these weekly tournaments and only get around five people," Ashley said. "We were looking pretty dour and down."

As time went on, Ashley was still struggling to engage with other Super Smash Bros. Melee players besides close friends and roommates. But back in July, Ashley was able to kick off the tournaments because of a special visit from his partner's little brother.

"He asked, 'Can I come hang out with you guys?'" Ashley said. "This is my first time meeting him, and I responded, 'I guess you can come to our house. I don't know what you would want to do, though.'"

After overhearing Ashley's



Griffin Ashley, 26, updates the bracket at the "Fart Saturday" Super Smash Bros. Melee tournament on Oct. 3.



Harry Blair, 27, left, and Tristan Pittendorfer, 28, react to the end of the heated semi-final match between Ashley and Bolivar Rubiano, 31, in Missoula.

conversation with the little brother, one thing was on Cunningham's mind: hosting a small house tournament between the friends.

When Ashley first heard the suggestion, they thought it was nothing more than a "stupid and dumb" idea. But the more Cunningham rallied for it, the more Ashley thought it through.

In the end, Ashley was convinced. "Eryn popped in for the very first one. Bram's girlfriend popped in. My partner was there. So it was seven of

us in this house," he said. "It's cramped and a little stinky. Half the people were very drunk, but everyone had a lot of fun."

Afterward, Ashley knew he wanted it to grow into more than a couple of buddies on their couch.

Inside the GameCube

In order to play Super Smash Bros. Melee, Ashley presses a button labeled "open," and inserts a three-inch disc into the top of the GameCube. It takes

about five to 10 seconds to connect to the main home screen and begin.

Once the GameCube boots up Melee, there's no lag. As soon as the GameCube makes an image, it replicates it on the television immediately.

"There's a lot of responsiveness to the game," said John Kelly, 28, a close friend of Ashley's.

The graphics are pixelated and retro, the type that appeals to Cunningham's sense of nostalgia. This is something that drew Cunningham in.

"Something in your brain activates because this is one of the fastest fighting games, and there's a lot of fun noises that kind of make your brain tingle a little bit in a good way, and

when you do something good, it's very satisfying in your head," Cunningham said.

As for the controller, its buttons are important in their own way.

With its unique, blocky design, executing a combo is less about smashing buttons, rather the pattern in which you press them. The colored buttons are each used for specific moves: attacking, recovery, shielding and jumping. Aside from memorizing what each button does, there is the shape. Its various toggles each play a role in completing the necessary combos to win in Melee.

Although there are 26 distinct characters, each with their own unique abilities, there are infinite combinations of abilities and outcomes based on buttons and timing.

When first starting out, many players get overwhelmed by the amount of action. Remembering the combos comes with time and practice.

"It's like a car that you drive or a park that you walk through. After a while, it becomes muscle memory," Kelly said. For Ashley, memorizing the

controller did not come without pain and permanent hand damage after 12 years of smashing.

"Having to push on shit like this all the time gets your fingers really bad," he said.

Though Nintendo has released several other consoles in the past 25 years, many where the controllers do not cause pain or damage, the group is dedicated to using the GameCube.

His dad was into Melee and Mario Kart at the time, which prompted the purchase of the GameCube in 2001.

On the other hand, Kelly's choice of Melee on the GameCube boils down to the release date and technical faultiness.

"It's this highly competitive game that, because of its rushed development, led to a lot of unpolished mechanics that then just became [technical] skill and raised the skill ceiling for the entire game," Kelly said. "There's just such a mountain to climb. When it comes to getting better at this game, there's so many levels."

A common exploit used by Melee players is something they call "wavedashing," which involves jumping and inputting an angled aerial defense move into the ground. This move forces the wavedashing character to slide down, pop up and immediately punish their opponent's missed attack.

This is just one of many unpolished mechanics in Melee.

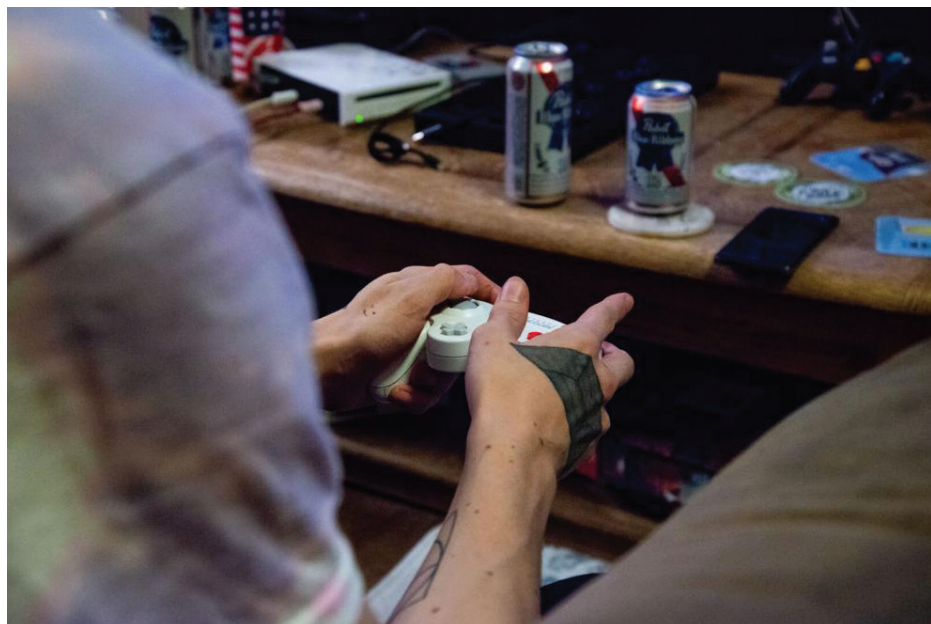
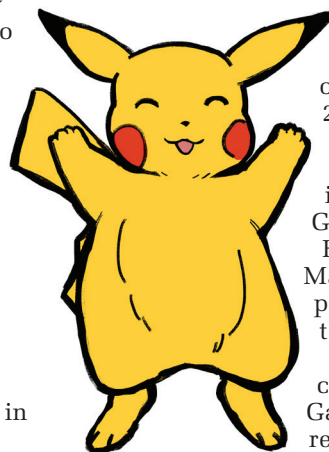
A group worth smashing for

Through the triumphs of victory and the trials of defeat, the one thing that has remained constant is the friendly and welcoming Melee community Ashley and his friends have for everyone.

Cunningham, who is a transgender woman, has felt nothing but love and support ever since her introduction to Melee. She never felt nervous about how she would be received in the community.

"Everyone gendered me correctly or corrected my pronouns," Cunningham said. "It wasn't an issue for them. [It's] a really weird thing, and I think we play a really weird game. Those two lines go parallel to each other."

According to Cunningham, it doesn't matter what you do or what your appearance is while you play, it's all surrounded by the question, "Are you good or not?"



Ashley plays Super Smash Bros. Melee in the "Fart Saturday" tournament at his home in Missoula on Oct. 3.



Kevin Couch, left, 22, battles Elias Ayers, 19, in a match of Super Smash Bros. Melee on Oct. 3 at the "Fart Saturday" tournament.



DIEGO REY | DESIGNER

Super Smash Bros. Melee, no matter the Nintendo system, is a game that can bring the competitive side out of anyone.

Ashley and Cunningham have competed against each other for years, but instead of making them rivals, it has brought them closer together.

Bram often travelled from Butte to Missoula because it hosted the bigger Melee tournaments. During tournaments in Missoula, Ashley would offer up his couch for her to sleep on so she could participate.

"We met through this game. She is now my roommate and best buddy," Ashley said.

Along with Cunningham, Melee has connected Ashley to his other current roommates and his various everlasting gaming buddies.

Without the GameCube, Ashley doesn't know what friends he would have today, or who he'd be living with.

Tournament Time

The white vinyl house is met with a few people smoking cigarettes on the front porch. There's a backless couch, hammock and other various forms of seating surrounding the outside Mario Kart-dedicated television in the front yard.

Once inside the house, a large crowd surrounding the screen in the living room signals to everyone that the tournament is on and active, with two players fighting it out. It's the main point of entry, and where the higher seeds and important duels happen.

Kelly, who collects and owns over 50 old tube televisions, lugs over five screens from his collection for the proper nostalgic visual. Ashley and Kelly use the tube televisions to stay true to the style of the game.

"It's what the game's meant to be played on," Kelly said.

The dining room has two old tube televisions set up on either side, while the pantry has one at the entrance.

In the tournament, everyone is seeded based on how well Ashley thinks the player is going to do.

Participants play a one-on-one duel versus whoever Ashley puts them up against at first. Each player must be careful, as they have four lives in one match.

There is a winner, second chance, and final placements bracket, meaning participants play a minimum of three matches.

"You give somebody the opportunity to lose early and then make a crazy comeback through all these different people," Ashley said. "However, once you lose, that is technically when you're out of the tournament. But we do tiebreakers."

The tiebreaker matches are more for increasing personal statistics that are nonbeneficial, or what Melee players such as Kage Lewis, 24, call "stat padding." Lewis' fifth-place tiebreaker ended up being what Melee players call a "Reverse Mains" match, where he swapped characters with his opponent.

Ashley wants to make sure everyone has a fair chance of winning. He understands that everyone is at a different skill level, and would not like to exploit that to anyone's advantage.

"Normally, you just do a double elimination bracket, and that's it. But it sucks because if you're a new player

and you enter, and you lose twice, you're just done," Ashley said. "You should be playing people who are around your skill level, because that's how you get better."

According to Lewis, he is on his fourth controller this year, soon to be fifth, because of how intense the matches get and how hard he presses the spring-loaded buttons.

His left stick is worn down to half its original size, to the point that it hurts while using it sometimes.

"I had to take a break for a few months. It was hurting my hands so bad," Lewis said.

"The environment is very communal and uplifting," Ashley said. "The crowd is always very supportive. There's not a lot of trash talk or booing, just cheering for your homies."

Roaring cheers and claps emerged all throughout the night until two people were left standing.

It was Ashley versus his friend, 30-year-old Tristan Pittendorfer.

The crowd was silent. The only sounds came from the two opponents and the occasional meow from Chewbacca.

In the end, Pittendorfer was the last player standing. The crowd clapped and hollered, and the group assembled on the staircase to take a photo. "We have never had this many people, ever," Ashley said.

This bizarre, retro video game was able to connect these people and help them build fun memories. Without it, Ashley, Cunningham and many others would not have found the welcoming community Melee opens its arms to.

"No matter how niche you think a dumb little video game is, there's always going to be a lot of other people who want to play it with you," Ashley said.



Competitors in the "Fart Saturday" tournament grin as Tristan Pittendorfer, center right, takes first place on Oct. 3.

Yoga enthusiasts take flight at Missoula Butterfly House

SABRINA PHILIP | ARTS REPORTER
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Under natural light and silence, Karen Oberg, an occupational and yoga therapist, lead her students in practice. As she moved to stand, as if out of a Disney movie, a butterfly landed on the tips of her fingers, posed in a praying motion.

On Sept. 29, the yogis settled in the heat among the plants and flowers at the Missoula Butterfly House and Insectarium. The butterflies grew familiar with their new visitors as they flew through the room, while quail ran around the floor, circling visitors' feet.

As Oberg began the hour of practice, she warned participants to watch their feet and movements to keep the animals and insects safe. As the class began their breathing exercises and meditation, Karen encouraged guests to "be present in this time and space as we share the space with trees, plants, butterflies and birds."

Movements in the hour included classic poses such as cat-cow, the butterfly pose, child's pose and sphinx pose. Oberg made connections to the Earth and encouraged relaxation, telling guests, "This is your time to let go." As the light dimmed, the butterflies grew more active, playing amongst each other and swirling across the room.

When the idea to start the program at the Butterfly House came about, a friend of Oberg who works at the Insectarium approached her. According to Oberg, it was an easy decision. She answered, "Definitely, I mean, how could you not?"

Oberg said the environment itself allows for a peaceful experience given the opportunity guests have to spread out into their own space. She noted that, for those who are more self-conscious while practicing yoga, the Butterfly House offers the chance to go into a place "a little more hidden."

"Just being in such a natural-feeling environment, even though it's been set up, is so healing for people," Oberg said. "The air feels different. The energy feels different. People come in, and they're really calm. Other times people come in, and they're really giggling. It's really fun because I get to meet a lot of new

people, some who have never done yoga."

Classes, Oberg explained, usually take place in the evening, and in the year she's participated in the program, she's offered a variety of classes, such as a Valentine's Day couples class. She explained that the classes give yoga participants a chance to connect to "bigger things," especially with the addition of the butterflies.

"There are these butterflies or birds interacting with you, which is a nice connection," Oberg said. "I think that can be really healing for people just to have that connection to nature. I think yoga in general can be really helpful for anxiety."

The butterflies, Oberg explained, add to the yoga experience in a whole new way that sometimes requires adjustment, even for her. She said that while most people already feel relaxed during class, the insects add an element of lightness.

"People can also feel like 'Oh, there's a butterfly on my head,' and let go because it's so silly," Oberg said. "A couple of times I had a butterfly on my nose or my mic, and then they flew into my face. There might be people who don't like that, but I feel, in general, people are like, 'Oh! There's things on me, and it's okay!'"

This experience mirrored that of Miranda Wiler, a 23-year-old from Washington visiting Missoula for the first time for a work trip. Wiler joined the program after seeing it online and said she "felt like a Disney princess" during the experience.

"I was being extra careful, so I think I was more aware of my own body, which was kind of fun," Wiler said. "I couldn't seem to let them land on me because I would feel it and be like 'Huh!' I was trying to be all chill, but I think I'd have to go more [often] to do that."

Wiler explained that a little white bird accompanied her during class, tapping its beak on her mat and running away. While she enjoyed having the new companion with her during the experience, she also recommends taking in your surroundings during the class.

"If you do it, you should look up as much as you can," Wiler said. "There's a view of the sky, and you can see the



Yoga instructor Karen Oberg leads the class while a butterfly rests on her head in the Butterfly House on Sept. 29.
PARKER HOWERY | MONTANA KAIMIN

silhouette of the birds and the butterflies the whole time. It just looks really beautiful."

Savannah Thompson is a naturalist at the Missoula Butterfly House and Insectarium who works both on the museum floor and supports events such as Butterfly Yoga. She was introduced to Oberg three years ago outside the program, and stated she helped her "calm into her body and have a lot more faith and trust in myself."

Having participated in the yoga program herself, she described it as a "place of grounding" she can always rely on. As a repeat participant, she said the weekly class is a constant she can rely on.

"Karen mentions in class to bring that feeling with you into the world. When you're a busy college student trying to survive, you can also bring that with you too, because you need it," Thompson said.

Butterfly Yoga has recently changed to run weekly, every Tuesday night at 6. It is priced per class at \$15 for members and \$18 for non-members. Thompson said the class takes a gentle approach that accommodates everyone, and advises those who have yet to try it to "show up as you are. We have space for you."

PRESIDENT'S LECTURE SERIES PRESENTS...

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A CONVERSATION WITH
TRISH O'KANE

OCT. 14, 7:30 P.M.
UNIVERSITY CENTER BALLROOM
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UNIVERSITY OF MONTANA
DAVIDSON HONORS COLLEGE

Dig Day!

BRAYDEN VALLOW | PHOTOGRAPHER

brayden.vallow@umontana.edu

Volunteers got their hands dirty leveling transitions and shaping lips for a beginner-friendly jump line at the base of Marshall Mountain's mountain bike trails.

The Missoula Mountain Bike Coalition hosted its weekly Dig Day at Marshall Mountain on Sept. 29. Leading the charge on Tuesday was field program manager Nic Hertzler, a key player in the current development of the mountain's vast trail system. Hertzler moved to Missoula in 2021 and has worked as a mechanic at Missoula Bike Source for a little over two years. Hertzler is digging the groundwork for Marshall Mountain's conceptual "master plan," as he calls it. The plan is designed to improve public access, boost trail length and create a community space people can be proud of.

In 2015, Five Valleys Land Trust obtained 160 acres of land from The Nature Conservancy, a nonprofit aimed at preserving wild lands, intending to turn it into public trails for mountain bikers. The area they received was located at the mid-range of the mountain, which has made access difficult for the past decade. In 2024, Five Valleys, in collaboration with Missoula County, obtained the remaining land around Marshall, totaling 480 acres of new public land.

Hertzler says the coalition doesn't have a real trail crew, so hosting Dig Days gets them closer to their goal of making trails for all levels.

"On one hand, we are proud of what we build, but on the other we need to be vouching for more funding. We can't take care of every trail in Missoula," Hertzler said.

In the last two years, Hertzler and several groups of volunteers have created five full-length trails of all levels, while also maintaining preexisting ones like the famous Hello Kitty flow trail, which is set to become Marshall's first full top-to-bottom trail.

"From building trails, clearing old trails, teaching kids to ride a bike, volunteers make a lot of magic happen for the community in Missoula," coalition board member Jason Newcomer said.

Newcomer moved to Missoula with his family in 2018 and began working with the University of Montana as senior director of corporate and foundations relations. He brought a passion for biking and over 15 years of nonprofit experience to the coalition's board of directors.

The coalition also hosts clearing days, which invite sawyers and other trade skillsmen to clear trails covered by fallen trees and other natural debris. The most recent clearing day was June 15, up Mill Creek and Carlton Ridge. Newcomer said over 82 miles of trail around Missoula were cleared this year, and 2,500 trees were removed.

After years of waiting, the Missoula Mountain Bike Coalition is finally bringing its plan to life. Moving one day at a time, Dig Day after Dig Day, a community of passionate riders sets its sights on creating something everyone can be proud of.

"The coalition is by the people," Newcomer said. "It's for the communities."



Field program manager Nic Hertzler grooms the new transition on Sept. 29.



Trail closure signs posted for the new jump line at the base of Marshall Mountain on Sept. 29.



Hertzler, left, and a volunteer, right, level a new transition for a beginner jump line.

Tabletop fight night

JULIAN CLEMMER | SPORTS REPORTER

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A Saturday night in Ruby's Cafe is packed and loud with the sounds of people playing tabletop roleplay games.

The clatter of six-sided dice being thrown and lore discussions abound, players surround tables pushed together while a pint-sized battle rages on top. Members bring their hand-crafted armies to face off against each other in a pitched battle.

Warhammer 40,000 is a hobby that involves procuring your own models, assembling and painting them and finally using them as pieces in a large tabletop game where each model has different rules and power scale. Rules are released by the company Games Workshop, the parent company and owner of Warhammer.

As the battle goes on, players position their miniatures strategically, attacking their opponent until both armies are slowly whittled away and one is victorious.

Henry Absher, 21, is a junior history major at the University of Montana who has recently gotten into the hobby. "40K at its basics is just another tabletop game," he said. "Instead of roleplaying as you might expect for [Dungeons & Dragons] and other popular formats, this is tabletop wargaming."

The niche of wargaming has been around for a long time with varying genres of play and levels of detail. Popular board games like Battleship and Risk are famous examples of wargaming with wide appeal and a broad fanbase.

Warhammer 40K contains far more in-depth gameplay than many of its contemporaries, with rulebooks in the game, called Codices, being over a hundred pages long with instructions about the game and the rules on playable units.

Matches usually last hours and the balance of power constantly tips between players. Through ample lore and complex rule of play, a dedicated and passionate fanbase has been formed worldwide.

Absher did not find the hobby himself. "One of my closest coworkers at the time wouldn't stop talking about it," he said. "They got me into it through the books."

To flesh out the game and to further immerse the players, Warhammer has an immense amount of lore behind it.

Games Workshop has published thousands of written, video and audio works about lore. Through over 500 published novels and articles in White Dwarf, Games Workshop's monthly magazine, the lore of the setting is unique in



Jack Smart, center, works with other players to set up their match for the day's competition at Ruby's Cafe on Sept. 19 **PARKER HOWERY | MONTANA KAIMIN**

its sheer depth and complexity.

The universe in Warhammer 40K is set as a hypothetical future of our own reality, with real historical events also being considered canon.

This future however, is a dark one.

The galactic empire that humanity was founded on is crumbling and the dying light of hope is surrounded by forces of demons and hostile aliens waiting to snuff it out.

The leader of mankind, The Emperor of Man, is a living corpse that lies on a throne, needing constant sacrifices and maintenance to stay alive. The Emperor's survival is paramount as in his undeath he powers the Astronomicon, a device that acts as the only way for humans to achieve interstellar travel, a necessity in a galaxy-spanning empire.

Unlike other fantasy settings, there is no guarantee the good guys win at the end of the story, and even the notion that there is a good guy is put into question.



A Warhammer figurine posed ready for gameplay in Ruby's Cafe on Sept. 19.

PARKER HOWERY | MONTANA KAIMIN

Through this lore and gameplay, a community has grown from the many outlets the setting offers. Through painting miniatures or lore discussions to the actual gameplay and even more recent Warhammer video game titles, there is something for everyone to enjoy.

Playing Warhammer requires a degree of outside organization and a community of passionate players to assemble playable armies. In Missoula, new players can join the Warhammer league that meets for matches every other Saturday evening at Ruby's Cafe.

Jack Smart, 22, is a history major and is a more recent addition to the league in Missoula. "My very first opponent was playing an army with a bunch of big monsters in it," he said.

At first he did well, killing a few of his opponent's characters. After a few turns, Smart had failed to eliminate one important enemy commander after his opponent played a sharp defensive game. The next turn, Smart's opponent counter-attacked and annihilated Smart's army.

"I was basically gutted of the main units in my army capable of dealing real damage to my opponent," he said.

Smart's army of choice are a faction known as the Night Lords, a legion of renegade super humans called space marines who use their intimidating presence and guerilla tactics to win their battles.

"They are evil space terrorists who take it upon themselves to inflict as much terror on their opponent as possible," he said. "They are cowardly and criminal, like the worst people you can imagine. You do not want them to win and they often don't, at least in lore."

Smart has an aggressive playstyle, preferring lightning strikes on his enemies to devastate the opposing force before they can strike back in a fair fight. "My army is incredibly hit-and-run, if I get caught in the open I am dead," he said.

Nicholas Kolberg, the owner of Orcbox LLC, is one of the founders of the league company which began this year in January. "We didn't start with a competitive league, we did a smattering of video games, different board games and card games," Kolberg said. "Quickly, we realized that Warhammer needed a home and that there's a lot of people who want to play it competitively [or] casually and to get into it."

This is not the first league Kolberg has run. His first league earlier in the year ran for three months and contained eight players. The current league contains 14 players.

Both Absher and Smart appreciate the lore, but also the community that has been built from a niche tabletop game.

"They want you to join, we want you to become part of the community," Absher said. "I love the community for getting people in and being very supportive around the model building and the model painting and also being willing to slow down and teach you the game as you play."



Warhammer players work on setting up their match for the day's competition at Ruby's Cafe on Sept. 19

PARKER HOWERY | MONTANA KAIMIN

RULES EXPLANATION:

Warhammer 40K is a complicated game, but breaking it down will help it make more sense.

- To start off with the basics, a player first needs models. Each model is different and comes with different abilities based on the weapons it carries. Each of these models is worth different amounts of points. Players collect and shuffle their army until they have 2,000 points worth of minis, the standard point amount for a classic match.
- After the army is ready to go, players look at data sheets. Every single unit in the game has a data sheet which lists all the specific abilities and in-game stats each of the models have, like weapon damage and movement range. When both armies are laid out on a table, the game can begin.
- The game is turn-based, meaning each player gets a turn to do actions and then yields their turn to their opponent, who does the same. Turns are divided into five phases.
- The command phase is when players can give abilities to their models along with deploying units at the beginning of the game or from strategic reserves in later turns.
- The movement phase is where the player can move their models to capture objectives on the map or to get in range of the enemy models.
- The shooting phase allows players to damage targets from range before charging into close quarters.
- The charge phase is where players roll two six-sided dice to determine their charge range, hoping to get high enough to be in engagement range.
- The fight phase happens if models are in engagement range of an enemy model, players can roll a select amount of six-sided dice to deal damage to opponents in melee.
- To deal damage in game, players must be in range with either firearms or melee weapons during the shooting or fight phase.
- Players then roll a six-sided dice to determine if the model hit the enemy, typically a three or up means a hit while below means a miss. If the weapon hits, players then compare the attacker's weapon strength to the defender's toughness on the models' data sheets. The two amounts are then compared to determine what the attacker must roll on the dice to be successful.
- The final step is armor penetration, where the defender rolls the dice to determine the effectiveness of the defending model's armor. The dice amount is also determined by statistics on the model data sheet. Different attributes like magical or armor-piercing weapons can change the entire dynamic, meaning players must pay close attention to the rule book.
- Finally, if the attacker succeeds in their attacks, having lucky rolls and thwarting the model's defense, it causes a wound. Each model has a different amount of wounds it can take. If a player successfully wounds an enemy model enough times, the model is killed and removed from the tabletop.



HANNAH BENITEZ | SPORTS EDITOR

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A PAIR OF HOCO WINS

During a weekend packed with Homecoming fun, fans of the University of Montana Grizzlies saw both the football and volleyball team take home dominating wins against their opponents.

First, the Grizzlies football team took the field against the University of Northern Colorado Bears, where it quickly gained a touchdown from Ian Finch after the opening kickoff.

But the scoring didn't stop there. Montana continued to almost quadruple the score before the Bears even managed to get their first point, bringing the ratio to 29-6.

Eventually, with the help of Brooks Davis, who gained his fifth straight 100-plus yard day and Keali'i Ah Yat, who tied his career high for five touchdown passes, UM won the game with a score of 36-14.

While the game ended in the Grizzlies' favor, Bobby Kennedy, the head coach of UM football, understood that there was still more the team could work on, including a high snap that caused Ah Yat to fumble the ball.

"I thought our guys did a good job. Now we had a couple times in the first quarter where I think we should have converted on the fourth down when we went for it, and then we had the high snap fumble," Kennedy said in a press conference. "But overall, I thought the offense was really working, and the defense was playing really well again and had some key stops."

UM is now 5-1 on the season and first in the Big Sky Conference standings.

But the celebrations didn't stop there. Following the football game, fans moved into Dahlberg Arena to watch UM volleyball play against the University of Idaho Vandals.

Montana broke down the defense of the Vandal volleyball team after winning the first set 25-17 with help from middle blocker Sydney Pierce, who scored six kills.

The second set wasn't so easy for the Grizzlies. The Vandals broke the gates open with a score of 5-2, but Montana didn't let that hold them back and scored 12 consecutive points.

UM was able to get its first win of Big Sky Conference play and broke its previous three game losing streak after it beat Idaho 28-26 in the last set of the night. Hitting 32.3% with 44 kills compared to just 12 errors, the Griz put on its highest offensive night of the season.

"I'm proud of how we battled back," head coach Allison Lawrence said. "We're just trying to break that pattern and I'm really proud of our team for fighting out of that. I think we're learning some big strides in that."

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