

MONTANA KAIMIN

LEARNING OURSELVES



**HOW OUR LITTLE MOUNTAIN TOWN HAS
BEEN A BATTLEGROUND FOR SELF-DISCOVERY**



7 Domestic violence vigil

12 Suffering on stage

14 New basketball transfers

Cover photo by Marley Barboeisel

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

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DETECTIVE SQUIRREL: SE 2 EP 5



Don't despair, instead prepare

For many students on the University of Montana campus, Tuesday was the first time they voted in a presidential election. For some, it was the most important one. And for all of us, it seemed steeped in dread and existentialism.

It's easy to see why anyone would feel an unshakeable feeling of terror. Some politicians have declared a Trump victory would end democracy as we know it. Others have pronounced that a vote for Kamala will guarantee World War III. But amid all the rhetoric exists reality: There are aspects of this presidential election out of our control, and giving into the feeling of helplessness is only going to increase our anxieties.

Despite what politicians try to tell you, we don't need to rely on them to make the changes we want to see. Instead, we need to rely on each other. Ranked choice and other popular voting initiatives can help tame partisanship by forcing candidates into a general voting pool. Instead of appeasing only their political party, candidates will have to appease the public, including the wide spectrum of political views.

Opening up primaries to anyone, regardless of party registration, can also mitigate partisanship. Instead of what Democrat is the furthest left or what Republican is the furthest right, people will vote for the candidate's individual policies and values, not how best they represent their party. This is especially crucial for ticket-splitting states like Montana. Voting in the primaries will also help you see the candidates you really want make the final ballot, not the ones the parties want to see.

Montana had two citizen initiatives, CI-126 and CI-127, on the ballot this Tuesday that aimed to open up the primaries and increase popular voting. A vote yes for these initiatives was a vote against polarization.

More than any of these things, though, the best way to mitigate fear is to educate oneself.

Despite the hype around the president, their power is surprisingly limited when

it comes down to enacting policy. Sure, they're the face of America, but the real people making the decisions are in the House of Representatives, the Senate and the Supreme Court.

Despite this, people tend to turn out to vote far less often for Senate races than presidential elections. According to the Pew Research Center, the 2018 midterms saw a voter turnout of 49% while 66% turned out for the 2020 presidential election. So show up to vote in every election, not just every four years.

But we shouldn't just educate ourselves on how our government's checks and balances work — we should be diligently sifting through the shit clogging our social media feeds, TV shows and traditional news. Politicians are professional fearmongers: It's their job. If we didn't feel like the entire fate of America is in their hands, then we wouldn't feel the need to vote out of fear.

It's crucial to remember Americans have much more in common than what divides us, and if we let ourselves hate one another based on politics, then we are letting the millionaires in office win. Some people have political beliefs that will not waiver because they are intrinsically tied to their own identity, and that's OK. But we need to remember this brutal truth: To the president in office, you are nothing but a statistic, and to those in your community, you are a real human being.

It's understandable to feel afraid. For most of us in college, this is the most dire state America has been in during our lifetime. But we've been through far worse as a country: two world wars, a civil war, several presidential assassinations and 9/11. America is more resilient than those in office want us to think, and it'll keep moving regardless of who is president, for better or worse.

— Claire Bernard, Editor-in-Chief

Like it? Hate it? Let us know.
Email us your opinions at
claire.bernard@umontana.edu

SUDOKU

Difficulty: Easy

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:

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

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

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Bearing the stripes



Monte waves from a Missoula Fire Department ladder truck after raising the U.S. flag on Oct. 30. The event was hosted to promote this weekend's First Responders football game against the University of California, Davis. **MARC ANTHONY MARTINEZ | MONTANA KAIMIN**

UM awarded for being bike friendly; 11 campus programs get crowdfunded

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UM NAMED GOLD-LEVEL BICYCLE FRIENDLY

The University of Montana received a gold-level Bicycle Friendly University distinction this year from the League of American Bicyclists, a nonprofit organization advocating for bike riding.

The award goes to campuses that promote safety and accessibility to cyclists. Universities that apply are evaluated and ranked either bronze, silver, gold or platinum and must reapply every four years to keep their status. UM first received gold status in 2013 and was just renewed this year. Montana State University received a silver-level award in 2018, which has yet to be renewed.

"It is central to ASUM Transportation's mission to promote and provide sustainable and accessible transportation options to the campus community, and this designation aligns with that mission," said Vickie Rectenwald, Associated Students of the University of Montana Transportation Director. "We look forward to the continuous growth and betterment of the program in the future."

A UM News press release said the University encourages biking by providing services like bike tune-up stations and student bike mechanics under the ASUM Bike Program.

"By prioritizing better biking, bicycle friendly universities like the University of Montana are empowering students and staff to make choices that benefit their health, their environment and their communities," Bill Nesper, executive director of the League of American Bicyclists, told UM News.

UM FOUNDATION STARTS FUNDRAISING FOR 11 CAMPUS PROGRAMS

The University of Montana Foundation has started crowdfunding for 11 programs on campus with Nov. 15 as the final date to receive donations.

"The UM Foundation is so proud to host this year's fall crowdfunding campaign for such an amazing and diverse collection of groups," said Mandy Brooks, the UM Foundation's senior director of annual giving. "These organizations truly enrich the lives of students, staff and faculty, as well as the lives of individuals in the communities we serve."

The UM Foundation is independent but partnered with the University to manage its fundraisers and donations with the mission to inspire philanthropic support, according to its website.

Some of the programs being fundraised for are the Associated Students of the University of Montana Child Care Preschool, the Military and Veterans Service Office, the International Development Studies program, Montana Model United Nations, UM's Wildlife Society and the Montana Kaimin.

For the Child Care Preschool, the fundraiser is needed to replace books, games and toys often damaged by the 70 or more kids the program looks after each week, according to Vicki Olson, director of the preschool.

"We try and buy quality things, but the kids are hard on them, so we're constantly replacing books," Olson told UM News. "Even the babies — if you've got 12 babies in there, and they're all playing and chewing on the books, you know, we go through things a lot."

As of publication, the campaign has raised over \$16,000 in donations from 205 gifts received, according to the crowdfunding website, and the Child Care Preschool has received 68% of its goal of \$2,000.

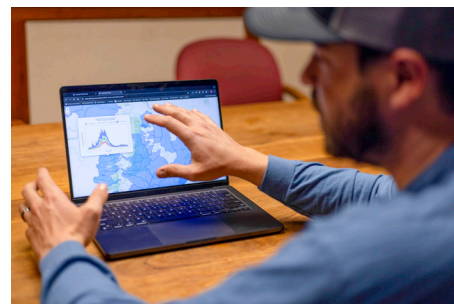
This crowdfunding campaign kicks off annual efforts by the UM Foundation. Another effort is the Big Give, which is a fundraising

event in the spring that gathers donations for various campus causes in just 24 hours. Last year the Big Give raised over \$650,000 with 871 donations.

With the money received from the fundraiser, Olson said the preschool hopes to buy better educational material to better support the children's learning.

"The early education years are crucial for the development and growth of children," Olson said. "Studies have shown that kids who have been exposed to a high-quality learning environment during those years are more likely to graduate from high school, go off to college and get higher paying jobs."

The fish: An uncertain fate of Arctic grayling in Montana



Zachary Hoylman, a climate researcher at UM, explains how scientists currently measure stream flow and how his new predictive stream flow modeling tool can be used for future research.

MARLEY BARBOEISEL | MONTANA KAIMIN

Remnants of the last Ice Age are barely holding out in Montana's lakes and rivers. Arctic grayling fish are now confined to only Montana in the continental United States after going extinct in Michigan. Conservationists are trying to compromise on the best way to protect the fish, land and ranchers of the Big Hole before none of it is recoverable.

"In the Big Hole, it's a complicated problem because it's this intersection of climate change and climate change impact on stream flow, landowner and land use dynamics," said Zach Hoylman, assistant state climatologist for the Montana Climate Office. "We need water for our agriculture at the same time as when the fish need water for their survival."



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

POLICE BLOTTER

ABBY WILLIAMS
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I'm not mad, just ... disappointed. Nobody had any Halloween shenanigans? Jesse didn't have any minors in possession? No frat parties got out of control? Monte didn't get dressed up? I'm pretty sure that I fell asleep when going over the crime log, it was that boring. Not that I can talk, I ordered Chick-fil-a and was asleep by 10 p.m. on Oct. 31. But anyway, you guys have one more week. Don't let me down.

FRIDAY, OCT. 25 - "VISCIOUS RED SUBSTANCE"

This has to be the only interesting crime this week. At 10:30 a.m., a call came to the University of Montana Police Department about a dorm door being vandalized. Police Chief Brad Giffin described the door as being covered in a "viscous red substances." Ew. Let's just hope the vandal was getting into the Halloween spirit and gooped the door with some fake blood.

FRIDAY, OCT. 25 - CALM DOWN

UMPD received a call at 10:30 p.m. reporting that a person had thrown a large rock at a car's windshield, causing damage to the car and injury to the driver. Two suspects were found and charged with negligent endangerment and a criminal charge. The two suspects were not students, but were above 18. My guess is that the suspects were drunk or high out of their minds. Thanks for not driving, but we don't need to take out misguided anger on drivers, especially when it's dark and cold. Go jack off and see if you calm down.

SATURDAY, OCT. 26 - JUST GO VOTE

At 8:30 p.m., Trump's campaign team had struck again when UMPD got a call about a report of criminal mischief in Eck Hall. Someone had glued a Trump sticker to an office door, along with other stickers. There were no suspects, and no video cameras. Nov. 5 is over. How about you go study instead of vandalizing buildings on campus?

WEDNESDAY, OCT. 30 - SMILE, YOU'RE ON CAMERA!

At 6:30 p.m., UMPD received reports of a hit and run. The driver left the scene with no note and no contact information. The accident was recorded on a Ring doorbell camera, and the driver was given a citation for leaving the scene. This may be the first time there has been actual video footage of an accident. Some muscle memory kicked in there and I wrote "no video footage" a few times before I corrected myself. I guess some stories can have a happy ending.

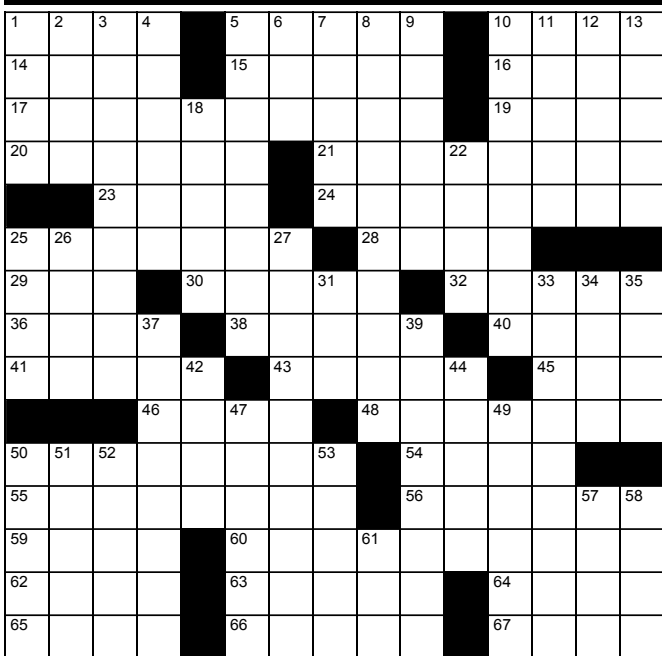


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scan here to learn more:





- ACROSS**
- 1 Coop residents
 - 5 Hawthorne's "___-Told Tales"
 - 10 Harsh review
 - 14 Beat anagram
 - 15 It's a shore thing
 - 16 Cornmeal cake
 - 17 Like most citizens
 - 19 Miner's quest
 - 20 Tasty mollusk
 - 21 Broadway backdrop
 - 23 Shampoo brand
 - 24 Royal title
 - 25 Credit cards, slangily
 - 28 Grant basis
 - 29 Race unit
 - 30 Fling with force
 - 32 Downy duck
 - 36 Territory
 - 38 Quick rides
 - 40 Cut up
 - 41 Bakery treats
 - 43 Falk or Fonda
 - 45 Junior, to Senior
 - 46 Vegan's staple
 - 48 Campus figure
 - 50 Cancel a choice
 - 54 Very, in Avignon
 - 55 Cardinal address
 - 56 Hung in there
 - 59 "Shane" star
 - 60 Reject as false
 - 62 Scrabble piece
 - 63 Bruce Lee film, "___ the Dragon"
 - 64 Astin or Bean
 - 65 Nautical direction
 - 66 Thorny bunch
 - 67 Animated crime-fighting quartet, briefly
- DOWN**
- 1 Ring of light
 - 2 Big name in online bidding
 - 3 It's breaking, at times
 - 4 Union members?
 - 5 Dust Bowl's decade
 - 6 Get hitched
 - 7 Football's Fighting ___
 - 8 Geological seven
 - 9 Mesh, as gears
 - 10 "Delightful!"
 - 11 Off the leash
 - 12 Llama's land
 - 13 Track events
 - 18 Bed on board
 - 22 Calcutta butter
 - 25 Surveyor's map
 - 26 Actress ___ Flynn Boyle
 - 27 Frothy coffee drink
 - 31 Contend (for)
 - 33 Hold in low regard
 - 34 Univ. course
 - 35 Monopoly payment
 - 37 One who shows up
 - 39 Oregon Trail folks
 - 42 One and only
 - 44 Like Mayberry
 - 47 Stratocaster maker
 - 49 Partner of cease
 - 50 Tucker's tune, "___ Dawn"
 - 51 Send, in a way
 - 52 Move stealthily
 - 53 Doctor's orders
 - 57 John, in Wales
 - 58 Job for a body shop
 - 61 Worker in a garden

Answers to Previous Crossword:

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

Supertherapy-o-scope

KATE WIDMER
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With great power might come great responsibility, but that doesn't mean the heroes we know and love are necessarily equipped with the emotional tools to handle said responsibility. Honestly, "superhero" is just a code word for "person that needs extensive therapy." Whether it's super-sized people pleasing, control issues so severe they've forgone the need for words or refusing to process the trauma of having radioactive cum, we've organized which psychoanalyzed superhero you are based on your sign.

SCORPIO (OCT. 23-NOV. 21): Rac Shade, "master" of madness and conqueror of the weirdest overlooked shit, we need to have a sit-down talk. It's not an intervention, per se, but your social skills are in the tank. You act as if you don't even know how to act human! Even if you genuinely don't care what other people think, you still have a social obligation to act like it. It may suck, but it's true. I know you think you're an alien, but as long as you're on Earth it's just something you've got to deal with. Also, the pimp jacket's got to go. Where'd you find something like that anyway?

SAGITTARIUS (NOV. 22-DEC. 21): You might be used to feeling like the odd one out, Hellboy, but being different doesn't mean that people get to stomp on your sense of independence. Here's an idea: Before beginning the mental gymnastics of figuring out how to do someone else's bidding, stop to consider why they want you to do that. Even if there's no reason not to do what they asked, what could you do with your time instead? Telling people "no" is one of the world's greatest pleasures, and it's high time that you gave it a go.

CAPRICORN (DEC. 22-JAN. 19): Wait, who the fuck put me in this shit? Take it from someone who's fucked up more than most people, (enough to earn the name "Deadpool") you've got to stop reading this crap. There's no answer to your dipshit emotional intimacy issues to be found in a, what the fuck is this, a student newspaper? Fuuuck me dude. I pinky-promise that opening your mouth at people is going to be much more effective than staring at pseudoscience. How else do you think I worked things out with Peter?

AQUARIUS (JAN 20-FEB 18): There's no superhero more personable than you, Hellcat. Take some time to let yourself decompress, remember that humans are allowed to be bitchy sometimes and practice it on someone who's been pissing you off.

PISCES (FEB. 19-MARCH 20): Hey Scarlet Witch, remember that time you basically ended the world because you emoted too hard? I know that in the back of your brain you enjoy the melodrama, but that doesn't mean it's healthy. For the sake of yourself and others, it might be time to address the reasons why there's so many of them. Take some time to think through the things in your life that are hurting you, get rid of them to the best of your ability and ask for help when you need it, lest the world feel your wrath.

ARIES (MARCH 21-APRIL 19): X-23, you might be a daddy's girl,

but you've got to step out from his shadow! You're a badass, and comparing yourself to your contemporaries isn't going to do anything other than make you feel like shit. You're the newer, cooler kid in the game anyway, so start acting like it! We dare you!

TAURUS (APRIL 20-MAY 20): No superhero better embodies the "let's get this shit over with" attitude than you, She-Hulk, the voice of reason in an extremely unreasonable world. Unlike most around you, you are actually capable of seeing shit through, and your peers are very grateful to you for that. However, you may want to see someone about that burnout you've been nursing. As you may have learned from "Avengers Disassembled," it's not worth the mental damage.

GEMINI (MAY 21-JUNE 20): Oh Robin, we may not know which iteration of you we're speaking to, but we love to have you around anyway. Your commitment to high-energy good times may be lots of fun and make for some epic stories, but staying out all night and dyeing your hair black again isn't going to solve your daddy issues. Take a breath, put down the elaborate outfit, and talk to someone who loves you about your feelings. Even if it's the butler.

CANCER (JUNE 21-JULY 22): Oracle, Batgirl, Babs, whatever the fuck you're going by lately: The people in your life love that you love them, but you've got to learn to address the underlying issues in your relationships before you freak out on them. It's not healthy for anyone! We understand that you've got more on your mind than the average person could handle, but that doesn't mean it has to stay in there until you start scream-sobbing. Choose kindness and start yapping.

LEO (JULY 23-AUG. 22): Listen, Dr. Manhattan, omniscience might have given you all-seeing knowledge, but there's this thing about "seeing the forest and not the trees" that might be worth considering. I know you're busy handling everything in your life, but reminding yourself that you're human, or at least that you started as one, might be helpful in understanding the full scope of what you're capable of.

VIRGO (AUG. 23-SEP. 22): We know you're used to getting your way, Supergirl, but we're here to tell you to tell your Uncle Clark to use his freeze breath on you or some shit because you have GOT to chill. Just because you have the physical prowess to run the world doesn't mean that you have to act like it. Take a second to consider the ramifications of your actions from others' perspectives, and you might find that people are more willing to do what you say anyway. Win-win!

LIBRA (SEP. 23-OCT. 22): It's in the name for you, Jubilee.

You're the life of the party, and you literally bring the fireworks. Your penchant for getting the little things right may have made it so that you can coast through life, but your problem is not understanding how much of those little things you have the time for. Take a step back, analyze your calendar and make commitments intentionally. You might find life to be a little easier.



UM to market campus with new signs

EMILY MESSER

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For the last three years, the University of Montana has been pushing a construction project to create a new “gateway” to campus and it’s all coming together with two new \$500,000 signs that will be completed by spring graduation.

Sandwiched between Maurice Avenue, Fifth Street and the Madison Street Bridge, which leads to Arthur Avenue, is a less than one acre triangle of green space called Jeannette Rankin Park. Previously owned by the Montana Department of Transportation and managed by Missoula Parks and Recreation, the University bought it for \$34,000 to establish it as an entrance to UM.

“We often get people that are coming to campus for the first time and they come over the Madison Street Bridge and they drive right past campus,” said Paula Short, head of the project and associate vice president of campus operations. “And it isn’t until they get to the stoplight at Beckwith and Arthur that then they look, and they’re like, ‘Oh, we just drove past the University.’”

The sign will stand just over 10 feet tall and 13 feet wide. It will feature an interlocking maroon “UM” with a concrete base surrounded by ground lights and plants.

“I think it’s in keeping with the overall sort of brand refresh we’ve done on campus,” Short said.

Since UM lacked a direct gateway or entrance, Short said, it started a discussion over the possibility of building a landmark or monument sign to announce, “Hey, you’re entering UM.” The planning for this new campus landmark started three years ago, according to Jameel Chaudhry, the interim director of facilities.

When UM started moving forward with this project, the plan was to work with the Department of Transportation, which owned it at the time. However, Chaudhry said it ran into a lot of issues because it is such a bureaucratic department. The department’s legal team also said it couldn’t be completed even though UM wanted to work with it.

This ultimately led to the University purchasing the 0.87 acre lot, but due to the department declaring it as a byway, it still owns the 15 feet along Madison and Maurice for future lane improvements or

safety concerns, according to Chaudhry.

“So after we bought it, they still had a few restrictions, which were that there’s this big, huge power pole and they wanted us to stay a certain distance away from it, so we had to slide [the sign] a little further over,” Chaudhry said.

Chaudhry said this sign should have been completed last year and he’s frustrated with how long it’s been extended due to the processes of working with the Department of Transportation, buying the land and waiting for the construction of the UM logo.

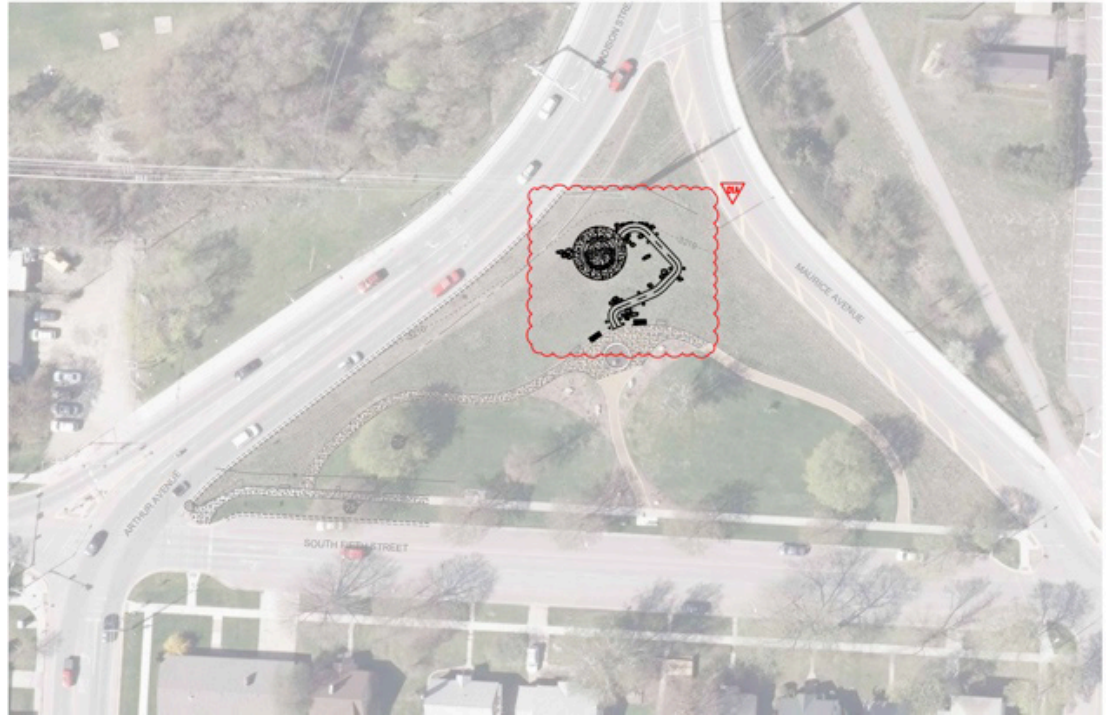
On top of the delays, UM had to hire a different company to build the sign after holdouts from the original hire stretched the project even longer.

In the 2020 Student Life Master Plan, the University determined a way to help students navigate to campus and the overall UM brand by adding signs throughout campus. The first phase of this project starts with the most northern part of campus.

Chaudhry said the planning was discussed between facility services, the president’s office and the office of Marketing and Communications to determine the design, logo and proper branding it wanted to display. Initially, Chaudhry said they planned to use the mountain logo, but ultimately decided to switch to the interlocking UM for a more appealing and less visually blocking appearance.

“There will also be some really nice landscaping, and there’ll be a grade appropriate [Americans with Disabilities Act] accessible path,” Short said. “And the benefit of that is several things. It’s the gateway to campus, but also I imagine that’ll be a place where students and visitors might do a photo op.”

Reagan Turner, a UM freshman double majoring in political science and economics, said while she had never been to campus before moving, she was well aware of its location because she’s from



The future location of the UM sign to welcome students to campus. **CONTRIBUTED | JAMEE CHAUDHRY**

Great Falls.

“I think a large sign would be useful especially for those that aren’t from Montana and aren’t super familiar with the University,” Turner said. “It would be a good visual addition and I think it would look nice.”

Turner said her only grievance with campus construction is the level of noise outside her dorm as the University builds a new dorm building in the parking lot of Pantzer Hall, but by now she’s become used to it.

The large sign currently under construction and another smaller one, which will be added on the corner of Connell and Arthur avenues next to the admissions building, will be funded from University bond funding.

The University issues bond funding every three to four years, which people can purchase to allow UM to gain larger amounts of funds that it then repays over time. This allows it to work on larger projects like the dining hall and dorm renovations, according to Dave Kuntz, UM spokesperson. These bonds do not use student dollars.

In 2019, the University received a \$142 million bond issue, according to the

Missoulian. In July 2022, it received another \$60 million bond, according to Kuntz.

According to previous Kaimin reporting, another part of the master plan includes rebuilding student apartments to replace the current ones that have reports of mold, fires and asbestos. However, the University said it didn’t have the funds for the rebuild at this time in a Kaimin article from October.

“This sign has always been a priority, but every new construction has its own priority. Everything’s a top priority, there’s nothing that’s second priority. I’ve never been told ‘Oh you can hold off on that,’” Chaudhry said.

The smaller sign next to admissions will help prospective and incoming students navigate campus, with the goal to have it finished once the UM box logo is made. Chaudhry said the University will be spending additional funds on other building signage when UM has more money, including putting one near the new indoor practice facility and replacing the sign at the corner of Arthur and Beckwith, where the new dorm is being built.

Lessons from Lauren: How a student's death turned into a widespread call for change

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Lauren McCluskey knew firsthand the cost of domestic violence. So does Cheryl Krudop, the custodian of University Hall, which is why she walked the Oval sidewalk to make Lauren's Promise for the third year in a row this past Tuesday.

Lauren's Promise is a vigil walk put on by the Lauren McCluskey Foundation, an organization dedicated to ending domestic violence on college campuses. The foundation was started by McCluskey's parents after their daughter in college was killed by a man she dated. McCluskey reached out to campus authorities multiple times to report her situation as it unfolded, but authorities failed to adequately address the situation.

"Lauren's family took this tragedy and wanted to turn it into meaningful action," said Aislinn Addington, the director of the Student Advocacy Resource Center, who ran

Tuesday's event, "so that something like this wouldn't happen again."

Krudop watched the procession of students and staff making their way through the signs that lined the Oval sidewalk. After they made a lap, absorbing Lauren's story through the signs as they went, they made a pledge to "listen, believe and support survivors," and received a pin. Inevitably, Krudop's thoughts trickled back to her own story.

Krudop was working in California when she met her boss. An episodic rageaholic, his business was in moving military families across the country. They were on the job together, driving a moving truck through a remote location when he attacked her.

"We're all the way up top of, oh God, way up in Washington," Krudop said. "Yeah, so nobody would have known."

She said her life was saved by her black lab named Saki, who put herself between the two of them.

"She fought for me," Krudop said, "and he

knew not to come, and that's the only reason I'm still alive. And for some reason, yeah, this gets to me."

Krudop made it out of the mountains, but her troubles were far from over.

"I moved from Sacramento down to Santa Clara and I had these weird things happening, and he busted my window," Krudop said, "left pictures of me ripped up and started to leave horrible messages."

Krudop made the move to be closer to her mother, who had just had a heart attack. She realized her boss was following her car home one night and managed to get inside her house to call the police. As luck would have it, she said, the police were nearby and they managed to apprehend him.

The stress on Krudop's body was intense. She had major depression and a breakdown before she was able to bring herself to reach out about what she'd been through. She also experienced a slew of physical responses due to the intense stress she'd been living in.

"Thing was," Krudop said, "I got down to a

size zero and had no idea the internal effect it had."

Stories like Krudop's are far from uncommon. In the U.S., one in three women and one in four men have experienced physical violence, rape or stalking from an intimate partner in their lifetimes, according to the National Domestic Violence Hotline. These numbers are higher in the transgender community, according to a study done by the National Library of Medicine. The study showed that transgender individuals were on average 1.7 times more likely to experience intimate partner violence than their cisgender peers.

Lauren's Promise is threefold, according to the Lauren McCluskey Foundation's website. The first step is to "listen to and believe survivors" when they ask for assistance. The second, to provide support and access to resources for the survivor when they need it. The third step is a call to action for change within the larger community so the pattern of violence can come to an end.

Students from Sigma Nu took their pledges for the second year in a row on Tuesday. Erik Wolfrum, the president of the fraternity, said he found the event to be a productive way for the brothers to learn about these issues in a place where they felt comfortable, as opposed to a lecture setting.

"I think last year was very productive for us," Wolfrum, a junior studying accounting, said. "We had some really good conversations going back later I think, and we wanted to do that again and show our support."

Dylan Van Rossum, a 19-year-old sophomore studying social work, was also one of the students to participate in the vigil walk and make her pledge.

"I think just knowing, like, how common it is," Rossum said, "especially for women and women in college to be victims of domestic violence, or, you know, all different types of like sexual assault, it's just close to my heart knowing, like, stories of loved ones and friends."

At UM in 2023, there were seven reported cases of domestic abuse, and 20 reported cases of stalking. UM is one of 339 universities to make Lauren's Promise and take part in the widespread campaign for change, according to the Lauren McCluskey Foundation's website.

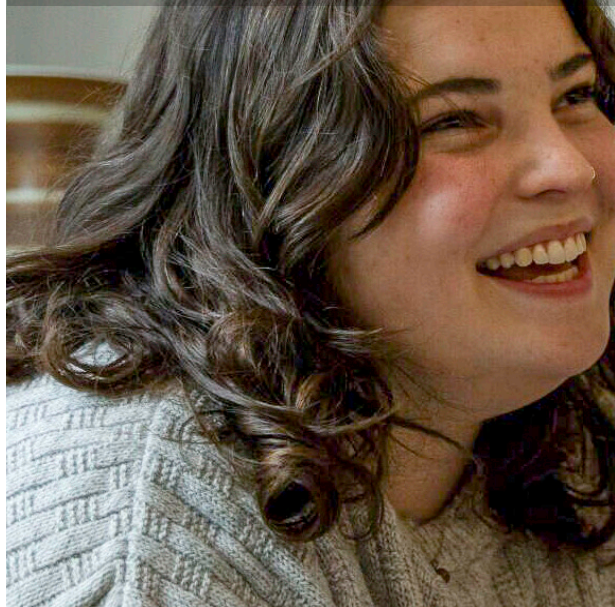
Krudop echoed Van Rossum's thought, saying her heart goes out to Lauren, and she's kept the date saved on her calendar since the first time she attended.

"My best friend right now has a daughter who just finished court," Krudop said, "and she's lucky to be okay and with two kids. So, yeah, I started this when I found out about it."



Erica Ritsema and Greta Faehlan hand a business card to Xander Tohee at the booth for "Make your move," a Missoula coalition working to end domestic violence, during the Lauren's Promise vigil on Oct. 28. **RACHEL YEAGER | MONTANA KAIMIN**

LEARNING OURSELVES



HOW STUDENTS HAVE FOUND THEMSELVES IN THE OVERWHELMING FREEDOM OF COLLEGE

BY KEELY PROEBSTEL

IF YOU WATCHED ANY MOVIES AS A TEENAGER, you probably had a pretty specific vision of what college is supposed to be like: wild ragers, spooky frat basements and tough classes. And alongside the chaos, every character seems to be going through so many changes.

Missoula has a unique mix of that — a vibrant music scene, supportive LGBTQIA+ community and a general laid back outdoorsy vibe sets the scene for development and discovery.

For most of us, going to college represents a severance from our nuclear family units. We're on our own for the first time, and granted more freedom and more control



TOP LEFT: University of Montana student Cana Odegaard is a senior majoring in sociology. **MARC ANTHONY MARTINEZ | MONTANA KAIMIN**
RIGHT: Emilia Cerro, senior at the University of Montana, holds the long Rapunzel wig she made for the "Into the Woods" production. The theatre design and tech major said it took about two and a half hours to make. **MARC ANTHONY MARTINEZ | MONTANA KAIMIN**
BOTTOM LEFT: Maria Hanson is captured in a white shirt and pinstripe vest, exuding confidence and professionalism in a posed portrait. **RACHEL YEAGER | MONTANA KAIMIN**



over our lives than we've ever had before. Which is not necessarily a bad thing, it's essential to growing up.

College is also typically the time when people hit the stage of development between 18 to 24 where they really have to reconcile with adulthood and reality.

The increase in control and the crushing realization of what life is really like are only two pieces of the puzzle. At around 18, the brain is still a couple of years out from reaching full maturity. To put it simply, your brain is trying to figure itself — you — out.

Whatever age you are now, think about yourself four years ago. Think about the way you dressed, the music you listened to, the things you liked to do for fun, the

people you surrounded yourself with. Are you living the life you thought you'd have four years ago? Did you imagine yourself in Blundstones and jean jackets listening to bluegrass and the Grateful Dead? Your answer is likely to be some form of "no."

Those movies may have given us all an impression of what college should be like, but in reality, we are just a bunch of young people figuring ourselves out, not characters following storylines. College is a time of exploration and transformation, as cliché as it sounds. You will be a different person with new knowledge and experience by the time you're done. Here are a few students at the University of Montana who are doing just that.

"BUMMERTOWN" AND A DISCOVERY OF SEXUALITY

BY KAIRI LISING

Emilia Cerro grew up in the picturesque town of Port Orchard, Washington. Its sparkling waterfront and many shops looked like the perfect scene for a coming-of-age masterpiece. But less comforting was the blatant hate toward the queer community.

During a regular visit to the local movie theater, Cerro and her younger brother were walking in to watch "Spiderman" when people threw popcorn at her while calling her a slur for lesbians.

"Like you don't even know me, but ... true," Cerro said, laughing at the absurd memory. "I just wanted to spend time with my brother."

Port Orchard is much more Republican than its older sister Seattle. Cerro lived near Bremerton, which she colloquially called "Bummertown," a naval base just a ferry ride away, where Cerro's father worked.

Originally, Cerro thought about majoring in theater, but eventually shifted toward her interest in art. After looking around, she heard the University of Montana had a good program, so she packed her bags and got out of Bummertown.

On Cerro's first day of college, professors led introductions with names and pronouns. In orientation, UM Lambda, a student-run LGBTQIA+ advocacy group, handed out flyers about local resources. Driving down campus' main road, Cerro could see rainbow flags hanging in a few of the windows of dorms.

After stepping out of her conservative hometown and into the University of Montana's open arms, the campus gave her an opportunity to define herself on her own terms. Not on the terms of her ex-boyfriend or her hometown or even the slurs that were hurled at her, but for who she truly is and who she wanted to be.

In middle school, Cerro started dating

her now ex-boyfriend. Looking back, Cerro realized she dated him because it was safe. She knew she had a romantic attraction to women, but didn't feel safe enough to explore. Dating a man meant Cerro wouldn't have to face any judgment for who she truly was. So she stayed in that relationship for five years.

During her sophomore year of high school, Cerro came out as bisexual to her close friends and mom. Thankfully, Cerro's parents were extremely supportive. When she came out to her dad, all he said was, "OK, but can we finish this episode of 'Bob's Burgers' then unpack this?"

But Cerro still knew she couldn't fully be herself in Port Orchard. She only came out to a select number of people for fear of safety.

Cerro and her boyfriend were both extremely involved in their high school theater department, so they decided to go to the University of Montana together. Cerro originally majored in art, but now she studies theater design and technology.

The University of Montana has several resources and programs to support queer students, faculty and staff. UM's Lambda provides resources and inclusive events for LGBTQIA+ students and allies alike. The University also offers gender-inclusive housing in Miller Hall, allowing students to live with roommates regardless of gender identity. The Curry Health Center offers counseling services tailored to queer students' needs as well, including support with sexual orientation and gender identity issues.

With these resources, Cerro felt safe and comfortable enough to begin discovering herself and opening up. She realized her relationship wasn't a healthy one. Cerro said the relationship served as a connection to her hometown that she didn't need anymore. She didn't need the safety the



Emilia Cerro shows the wigs she made for the production of "Into the Woods." The wig she holds in her hand had to be cut again once the actress had it on to fit better. **MARC ANTHONY MARTINEZ | MONTANA KAIMIN**

relationship provided because she knew she could be safe in Missoula alone. So she broke up with him.

A few weeks later, Cerro downloaded Tinder, her first time using a dating app. Cerro had gone on a couple of dates, but nothing had really panned out. "I was very new to dating, despite having been in a five-year relationship. I didn't have any of those skills," Cerro said.

A few left and right swipes later, she found Fia Kelly. Kelly's profile said she liked space facts, so Cerro slid into her DMs asking what her favorite one was. According to Cerro, Kelly's initial response was "Oh, this bitch is gay."

The connection between the two was immediate. Cerro and Kelly would riff off each others' jokes. They could talk for hours about YouTube videos and "The Legend of Zelda." Cerro felt like she'd known her forever.

"We matched each other's freak," Cerro said.

Cerro finally realized what a partner could be: kind, interested in the same things, caring, always wanting to make each other feel better. These realizations felt unexpected and unfamiliar. In her former five-year relationship, she had never truly experienced the kind of safety she was desperately trying to achieve.

When Cerro came to UM, she found something much more important than courses fulfilling a degree path. She found a sense of belonging, a safe space to be

herself and a partner who taught her what love really feels like.

"I've never felt unsafe [in Missoula] because of my sexuality. Especially the theater community here. I feel like I can be so open and I'm not worried about being judged in the way that I was back at home." Cerro said.

Cerro and Kelly have been together for almost seven months. Cerro loves to spend every spare moment with her, even if it means info-dumping on "The Legend of Zelda" for hours in her apartment. Most recently, Cerro and her girlfriend dressed up as "Teen Titans" characters Starfire and Raven for Halloween.

"I love her a lot," Cerro said, smiling.

In the costume shop of the Performing Arts Center, Cerro primped the wigs she made for the UM School of Theatre and Dance's most recent production of "Into the Woods." One more semester and she graduates, leaving the University a changed person. She's learned a lot over the years, who she is and what she wants, and also how to make wigs out of yarn. Through the breakup and the healing, she wouldn't change a single thing. If she could go back in time, she would move to Missoula again and again.

"I don't want to ignore it or forget what happened, because I don't ever want to be treated that way again," Cerro said. "I'll just remember that that was a time in my life and if I recognize those signs again, then I know how to better advocate for myself."

MAJOR CHANGES

BY KATE WIDMER

Born and raised in Missoula, Cana Odegaard was a student of Sentinel High School's Arabic program. Through those classes, she discovered a passion for the language and decided to continue studying Arabic as part of her college degree after going on a trip to Egypt.

Taking comfort in the fact that she had a grasp on her desired degree path, she prioritized applying to schools with strong Arabic programs. But soon, the pandemic forced her to reconsider leaving home, putting her dreams on hold.

"I got into almost all the schools I wanted. But then it was just like the pandemic, finances, health reasons, so I stayed, which I'm happy about now," Odegaard said. "But all those other schools really had the programs I wanted."

Even though she was forced to downgrade on her desired program, there were other learning opportunities that still worked with her circumstances. For example, her adviser recommended that she do a remote study abroad program, but she didn't feel it was worth the effort. It wouldn't have been the same anyway.

"Language is really important to learn in person and all the classes offered had to be online," she said. So Odegaard decided to stick to Missoula.

Choosing to pursue her studies at the University of Montana meant Odegaard had to take what she could get in regards to language study. She entered college majoring in world languages and cultures with a minor in Arabic rather than her intended Arabic major, even after receiving the critical language scholarship from the U.S. State Department. But due to the Arabic program only offering a minor, she had finished her studies by the end of her freshman year.

The situation was disappointing. She said she considered herself lucky to have the opportunity to study Arabic in high school, "but it just wasn't reciprocated at a university level."

Putting countless hours and effort into a degree path just to find out it's not what you wanted or expected is not unique to Odegaard. Not every college student finds what they want when they come to campus, despite the major life changes.

According to a 2018 study conducted by the National Center for Education Statistics, one-third of college students will change their major and about 10% will switch majors at least two times. Pope Ashworth, director of Institutional Research at UM, said there is no readily available data on how many University of Montana students change majors.

Sometimes it's a completely personal decision, often based on students figuring out what actually makes them happy. But external factors can influence the decision to change degree paths too. According to U.S. News, students change majors due to a variety of reasons, including internship and job opportunities and projected salary. In 2021, the Cornell Diplomat reported humanities and social sciences programs in particular are gradually losing funding due to lower enrollment.

For Odegaard, the feeling of being restricted in her degree started to catch up, ultimately leading her to consider other paths. But the change wasn't easy to reconcile.

Like most things in life, her interests are ever-changing, fluctuating with what is going on with her inside and out. When her college degree path didn't reflect that fluidity, the decision to change was a natural one. But the feeling of giving up on her dream was uniquely overwhelming.

"Switching [majors] is super common, but it's just not easy and it's not normalized, which is really strange," Odegaard said. Following a stressful freshman year, she made the decision to switch her major to sociology with a concentration in inequality and social justice, which she will graduate with in the spring.

Even though she's now six credits away



Cana Odegaard, a senior at the University of Montana, sits smiling in the Branch Center on Oct. 29.

MARC ANTHONY MARTINEZ | MONTANA KAIMIN

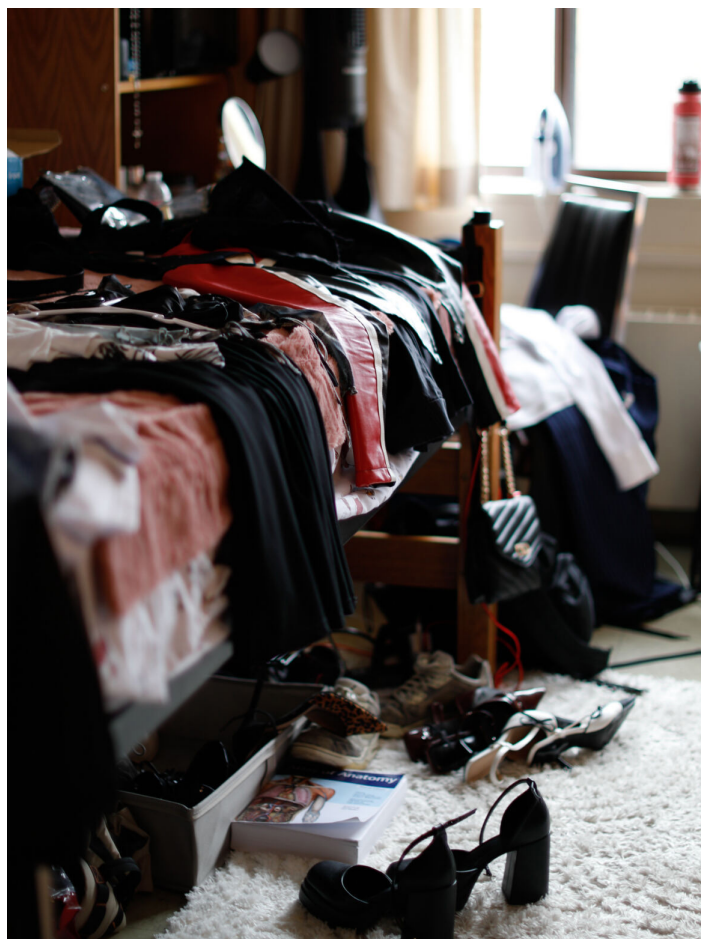
from completing her degree, Odegaard mentioned she now wishes she had majored in social work. She's considering a graduate degree, but the lesson might be that college majors are more of a representation of a strong interest than a definitive

statement about the individual.

"I'm really happy I changed my major," Odegaard said. "I feel like I've been able to reach a part of my interests and passions I didn't know about. So, overall, it worked out."



Maria Hanson, a sophomore at the University, poses showing off her personal style and how she expresses herself through clothing. **RACHEL YEAGER | MONTANA KAIMIN**



Scattered clothing and accessories cover the bed inside Maria Hanson's dorm after multiple outfit changes. **RACHEL YEAGER | MONTANA KAIMIN**

STYLE OF SELF

BY GRACE SIMONICH

A lineup of bright shirts and carefully tailored pants lined the edges of Maria Hanson's bed while she cycled through outfits in front of her mirror. Eventually, she found something that stuck, something that felt true to her.

Five years ago, her mornings were simpler, relying on just the basics: a fast-fashion T-shirt and jeans. But now, as a sophomore studying radiology, Hanson's fashion isn't just about what she wears. It's about how each outfit resonates with her inner self, projecting confidence and energy.

Hanson's evolving style is about more than fabric and trends: It's about transformation. Arriving at college, she shed old layers, experimenting with outfits that reflected her newfound independence and self-discovery. In a way, Hanson's changing look mirrors the journey every student undergoes — a rite of passage marked by exploration and redefinition. Fashion, in this sense, is more than clothing to Hanson. It became a tool for

expressing identity, freedom and aspirations.

Missoula's fashion scene is more varied than it might seem at first glance. While many embrace the laid-back practicality of hiking shoes, Carhartts and sandals, a significant part of the student body also leans into a more expressive, personal approach to fashion. Hanson's bold choices — low-waisted jeans, a flowy white blouse, metallic boots and layered silver jewelry — don't stand out as outliers, but rather fit right in to a campus culture that values self-expression.

Her look blends individuality with Montana's unique, adventurous spirit. Hanson's fashion journey is a reminder that, in college, self-expression through clothing is often a reflection of deeper emotional and personal transformations.

But Hanson's journey into the world of fashion was slow and sometimes conflicted. "In high school, I felt this tension between wanting to express myself and wanting to fit in," she said. She had always been quiet and

observant, aware of small details, like how a favorite pair of shoes or a unique jacket gave glimpses into people's personalities. Yet, she also felt a huge pressure to follow trends and to look like everyone else.

Her wardrobe reflected this struggle, built around fast fashion, social media influencers and her friends' styles. Hanson wasn't even sure who she was dressing for: her friends, the trends or herself. By her junior year, she decided to push the boundaries a little, beginning to experiment and find confidence in looks that set her apart.

"I was discovering that fashion had the power to transform me," she said. Wearing outfits that felt right for her gave her a sense of boldness that she hadn't felt before, making her feel more seen, more real and more alive.

One of her defining fashion moments came during this time with an outfit that will forever stay in her mind: a black Russian hat, a lime-green skirt, a green blazer and a black bodysuit. "It was something totally out of the ordinary, like the 'Once-ler' from 'The Lorax,'" Hanson said. The statement look, paired with her summer tan and green undertones, gave her an incredible sense of empowerment she hadn't felt before.

"I felt like, 'OMG, I did that,'" she said. From that moment forward, Hanson knew

styling had a kind of magic that could boost her confidence, help her stand out and let her show up in a way that felt true to her.

But this newfound confidence didn't come without its own battles. Insecurity hovered close by.

Walking through school in a daring look, she could feel people's stares. She often questioned whether she should tone down her style to blend in with everyone else. At one point, she recalled feeling "too seen." The attention made her want to hide and revert to her old style. But something about the style she had started to create felt more real to her than the basic, trendy outfits she saw around her.

"I've always grappled with this idea of empowerment in fashion," Hanson said. "Some outfits make me feel unstoppable, but then there's also this pressure society puts on women to look a certain way."

Soon each outfit became an exercise in self-reflection. "Every time I wore something that truly felt like me, I was defying those doubts, claiming who I was," she said.

Throughout her journey, she's found ways to make her style her own, even using her sewing skills she's had since she was 7. Competing in 4-H, Hanson learned how to alter and reshape clothes to match her unique ideas. Now, when she finds a piece that doesn't quite fit her aesthetic, she makes quick alterations, sewing in new details or reworking the structure entirely. This creative touch lets her build pieces that feel authentic to her.

"Sewing really lets me take control of my style," she said. "If something doesn't match my vision, I just change it."

On a college budget, Hanson knows she has to be creative to sustain her evolving style. She's honest about occasionally shopping at affordable spots like Shein, but also finds joy in thrifting. "Mixing basics from H&M with thrifted finds or statement pieces makes for a balanced, affordable look," she said.

Hanson documents her outfits on Snapchat, where she's created a fun, fashion-forward space for herself. While she enjoys sharing her style, she has no intention of turning her love for fashion into a business or a career. "I'm just here to look good and feel good," she said.

Looking back, Hanson realized her style journey has always been about finding her voice through clothing. In a world teeming with new fashion rules, especially for women, her journey serves as a reminder that style isn't about fitting into a box — it's about breaking out of one.

As students immerse themselves in college life, they often try to redefine who they are and who they want to be. The clothes they choose become a means of articulating their evolving identities. For Hanson and others like her, fashion is not merely an external display, but an internal journey — each outfit an expression of newfound confidence, independence and self-awareness.

In the ever-changing landscape of fashion, students like Hanson are learning to embrace their authentic selves, crafting a narrative that is uniquely their own, one outfit at a time.

'Kid Lightning': A game show with a cynical twist

SARA FLINDT

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In the Boise-based dance company's production of "Kid Lightning," viewers are taken on a journey as a fun, light-hearted game show in the '70s turns darker and more disturbing by the minute.

Started in 2022 by the professional dance company LED, "Kid Lightning" just wrapped this year's tour, which included a stop at Missoula's Westside Theater. LED was co-founded in 2015 by artistic duo Lauren Edson and Andrew Stensaas.

Attracted to fame, fear and self-obsession, game show host Kid Lightning, played by Brett Perry, hosted the production in an ultramarine velvety pantsuit.

The performance began with a video projected of Kid Lightning watching a TV program about global warming. This was the first time the audience heard the word "Bënëka." Immediately, a pit formed in my stomach as the announcers described all the horrible catastrophes portrayed on screen, but they assured the audience not to worry, because Bënëka would save us and solve all our problems!

The show's creators formed their own gibberish language that was used as a backing track for any speaking parts between the host and contestants. "Bënëka" was the only repeating word that audience members could distinguish.

After the video projection, contestants came on stage clapping and cackling with one another, exhilarated to have a chance to win the title of "Kid Lightning." Everything was fine and dandy as each contestant performed their athletic and dramatic solo performance in a bid to win the hearts of the audience.

After each solo, game show host Kid Lightning would interview the contestants, manipulating them into saying "Bënëka." One contestant, played by

Colleen Loverde, would not say the word, which angered Kid Lightning. He began pulling at her clothes and manipulating her body like a puppeteer.

At the end of act one, Kid Lightning said, "to hell with everyone else" and awarded himself the title of Kid Lightning once again.

The second act began with another video projection, but this time, a bottle of antidepressants was shown with "Bënëka" written in bold on it. I could hear "oohs" and "aahs" from audience members as if they had just solved a portion of the mystery.

Now, all but one contestant wore a pantsuit similar to Kid Lightning's. Loverde was the only contestant still in her outfit from act one, symbolizing how every other contestant had fallen victim to his intoxicating manipulation.

Together, the contests formed a circle around Loverde. They shouted at, hit and pushed her until she fell to the ground, but still, she did not let the now-infamous word escape her mouth.

At one point, Kid Lightning began slowly, menacingly eating an orange as the contestants swarmed around him, pleading and reaching for a piece of it. He glared at the audience, a grin quietly forming on his face. He knew how much power he held over everyone in that room, actors and audience alike.

Power-hungry people will do anything to get what they want. That philosophy is the beating heart of "Kid Lightning," a warning to the audience about the perils of authority. While the performance might appear upbeat at first, things get much darker as the titular game show host begins to feel his grip on the players

fading. Backed into a proverbial corner, Kid Lightning forced Loverde's character to watch another participant die as punishment for her insolence. The microphone was shoved into her face and she eventually succumbed with her head held low. Audience members gasped. The room went silent as everyone sat in shock.

There's few metaphors for power and control more captivating than reality TV, and "Kid Lightning" uses that to its advantage. The protagonists feel alien and still entirely relatable. The language they speak may be foreign to us, but the actions they take and decisions they make aren't. We've definitely all known our own Kid Lightning, someone who exploits any means available to reach the outcome they desire. It's an old story, a cautionary tale of fame, power and control, told in a flashy new way.



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Death becomes her: Halsey's 'The Great Impersonator'

KEELY PROEBSTEL
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If you were writing a final message or making a final piece of art, what would it be like? What would you possibly say?

That's the question self-proclaimed "anti-pop star" Halsey asked themselves in the making of "The Great Impersonator." This wasn't some creative exercise. As the singer revealed earlier this year, they were diagnosed with an immune disorder called systemic lupus erythematosus and T-cell lymph-proliferative disorder, a type of cancer, in 2022. So when creating this album, they were genuinely unsure if they would survive to see it released.

The resulting album is achingly vulnerable and shockingly honest, in a way that almost feels like diary entries put to music. At the same time, though, it's a weirdly fun project born of a "die with no artistic regrets" attitude.

Halsey, who uses she/they pronouns,

began teasing the album Oct. 8, releasing photoshoots for the next 18 days, each an homage to a different artist. It was a fun little gimmick that alluded to the album's central concept: Every song is sonically unique and gives tribute to various musicians that have inspired Halsey throughout her career.

To be honest with you, I'd never really listened to Halsey that much. They'd been an ex's favorite musician, so maybe that's why. I enjoyed their singles when I heard them on the radio, but that was the extent of my knowledge. I'd seen a couple photos on Instagram, but "The Great Impersonator" really landed on my radar when reactions to online music critic The Needle Drop's review flooded my feed.

The inciting offense? A scathingly bad 1/10 review in which he accused Halsey of having "main character syndrome" and describing them as sounding like "some troubled girl character" in an early 2000s teen drama.

It's a shockingly mean-spirited review

that reeked of misogyny, and I honestly wouldn't have listened to that album if I hadn't read it. Believe me, I completely understand how the medical imagery and all the death stuff comes off to someone who hasn't had much experience with medical trauma. But as someone with chronic, serious health problems, that review really pissed me off.

The happy news is that it's a pretty good album. The "impersonation" gimmick works pretty well. It's more like "lightly influenced," but that feels a lot more honest than straight-up artist homages. Do you want a Halsey song inspired by Dolly Parton, or do you want an AI-generated Dolly Parton song sung by Halsey? Because that's kind of the difference we're dealing with here.

While some tributes are more heavy-handed than others — the melody from "Letters to God (1983)" is literally just Bruce Springsteen's "I'm On Fire" — most of them are so subtle that you might have to look it up. That lends the album a liminal quality, vaguely familiar but still abstract, as if you're listening to the inside of Halsey's head.

Songs generally fall into a couple thematic categories: medical trauma, childhood trauma, trauma otherwise unspecified, motherhood and fame. That's not to say these themes don't bleed into each other constantly. One of the biggest consistencies on the album is the use of medical terminology and experiences as a metaphor. It's a recurring thread that stitches together a bunch of songs that might otherwise feel kind of loosely connected.

The medical themes are the most prominent and the most compelling to me personally. In the PJ Harvey tribute "Dog Years," Halsey uses her blood type — O negative, the universal donor — as a metaphor for shortchanged empathy as she begs to be let into heaven with her beloved pet dog. It's fucking chilling, in the best way.

"Panic Attack" uses both mental and physical health issues to convey the panic of falling in love again, complete with winking nods to chronic health problems: "I tripped when we went walking, and I felt it in my spleen/Now I think I need a blood test or an antihistamine."

The weakest song on the album is by far the Kate Bush tribute "I Never Loved You," a swooning, tragic ballad about a woman dying in a car crash after a fight with her lover and his subsequent reaction. It's ... fine? Call it "damned by faint praise,"

because it might be a stronger song on a different album, but it causes a definite lurch in pacing. At least, it really nails the "Kate Bush floating through the halls of a hospital" sound?

"The Great Impersonator" is an alright album on its own, but it's much better in context. It's a concept album, albeit an abstract one, and it's understandable how someone could get the "whiny teenage main character syndrome girl" thing if they didn't have the necessary background information. With context, though, it becomes a much more thoughtful rumination on life and death.

A big part of "celebrity culture" is a dismissal of the fragility of human life. We're an incredible species that's accomplished a lot and it's easy to forget the fact that we're all just sentient, electrified meat. We look up to celebrities and we don't want to think about how unfortunate and unfair life can be for them, because damn, if they can't make it work, what's going to happen to the rest of us?

Halsey's openness and vulnerability about their health is refreshing, in part due to its rarity. Selena Gomez has had a very public battle with lupus, even having a kidney transplant. But she didn't really talk about it, and she didn't incorporate it into her art. The only perspective we were afforded was an external one and the only version of the story we got came from the tabloids.

Which is fine, by the way. Health issues can be very personal and no celebrity owes the public that kind of information. But with that said, I'm very grateful when famous people do speak up about disabilities, chronic illnesses and other health challenges. It might come off as "main character syndrome" for some, but talking about these issues creates more representation for millions of people who feel unseen and unheard.

I'm definitely biased in my reception to the album, but there's also not a lot of other stuff out there in popular media that talks about health problems in such a sincere context. "I'm making jokes about the blood tests," Halsey sings, and, frankly, I'm just like, "Damn, dude. Me too." The phrase "Can you pick me up at 8? 'Cause my treatment starts today" in a love song? Vibe. Sign me up.

That kind of representation is worth a lot more than one star.

7.5/10



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Griz basketball program looks to build on 2023-24 success

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Coming off a solid season, Griz men's basketball lost two-thirds of both its point scorers and position players this off season.

However, the number of transfers has exploded since the transfer portal, which uses technology to streamline the process for student athletes, opened.

Transferring was made even easier in the summer of 2024 thanks to an antitrust settlement reached by the NCAA that stopped it from limiting transfer eligibility. This notably repealed a rule that required athletes to "sit out" of play for a full year if they transferred more than once.

Griz head coach Travis DeCuire said the hardest part of the transfer portal is not knowing the players beyond their talent and not knowing "when they're not playing well, how to snap them out of it."

But since the 2018 creation of the transfer portal, DeCuire has brought in eight new faces to match this season, including the largest transfer class in program history.

"I like this group and I think there's a lot of potential with this group. We've got work to do, but there's a lot of time for us to get to it," DeCuire said. "One thing about our conference is that the [Big Sky Tournament Championship] is all that matters. So we just have to try and take care of as much business as possible in a short period of time and grow every week."

DeCuire has coached two teams to a March Madness appearance and in his previous ten years has never coached a Griz team with a losing record.

He'll look to keep it that way as he takes charge of a roster projected to land first in the Big Sky by a preseason coaching poll, back boned by preseason All-Big Sky guard Brandon Whitney.

Whitney, the Griz's sole returning starter, ranked first on the team and fifth in the Big Sky in assists last year while playing the second most minutes on the team, behind only now-graduated Aanen Moody. He enters his fifth year at the University of Montana and has been a starter since his freshman year. Whitney is currently ranked 12th all-time in UM career assists with 350, putting him only 85 away from the school's all-time record, held by DeCuire himself.

"I'm just playing. If I happen to beat his record, that'd be great, maybe rub it in his face," Whitney said with a chuckle. He said he plans to lead the team by "being more vocal, trying to meet these guys, tell them where to be, whether that's offensively or defensively, just do the best I can."

He is joined by other key returners, including senior forward Tejon Sawyer and sophomore guard Chase Henderson. Sawyer,



Kai Johnson maneuvers around Saint Martins defenders as they attempt to block him from the basket during the preseason game on Oct. 22. **RACHEL YEAGER | MONTANA KAIMIN**

the Griz's best player off the bench last season and a likely starter this year, garnered 12% of the team field goals despite only playing 8% of the team's minutes. Henderson proved to be an effective player as a true freshman off of the bench, averaging nine minutes and 2.6 points a game.

UM's best rookie from last year, Money Williams, will be out indefinitely to care for his family after the recent loss of his mother came less than a year after his father's passing. Williams has started a GoFundMe to cover funeral expenses and help provide for his younger siblings. DeCuire said he is giving Williams the time he needs and not telling him how to handle his grief.

In the off season the team lost four starters to graduation: Moody, Dischon Thomas, Josh Vazquez and Laolu Oke. Collectively, the four made up 55% of the team's minutes last year and 57% of the team's points while also being effective two-way players. Other notable exits include six-game starter Giordan Williams, who graduated, and bench player Jaxon Napp, who went to the transfer portal.

On the receiving end, UM added seven transfers and a high school recruit.

When it comes to the new faces arriving via transfers, the Griz added stars from other levels of college in the form of Jalen Foy and Kai Johnson.

Jalen Foy transferred from Northeastern Junior College of the NJCAA, the NCAA equivalent for community and junior colleges. The forward was the best player on Northeastern on both sides of the court and averaged 14 points and eight rebounds a game.

Senior guard Kai Johnson comes from Division II Western Washington where he led a high-powered offense to garner the most points in the conference and 12th most in the entire division. Johnson could be seen as a more offensively-minded version of Oke, who also transferred from Division II.

"In my recruitment process, they showed that they've been able to take guys at DII and then also just other DI programs and been able to implement them and help them get to their strengths," Johnson said. "My biggest thing coming in was finding a program that

I truly believed knew how to win, had won in the past and [had] coaches I really trusted to help me get to the point where I can affect winning."

The team also brings on wildcards with limited resumes but flashes of brilliance in Amari Jedkins, Jensen Bradntke and high school recruit Tyler Thompson.

Jedkins is a redshirt sophomore who played in only 11 total games with the University of Wisconsin — Green Bay, where he averaged four points and two rebounds.

Bradntke is a 6-foot-10-inch forward and redshirt freshman who transferred from Saint Mary's College. He was well regarded coming out of high school and still has plenty of time left to grow.

The Griz also gained Tyler Thompson, a freshman guard and four-star recruit out of high school, noted for his toughness and complete level of competitiveness.

More experienced talent comes with Austin Patterson, Malik Moore and Joe Pridgen.

Patterson is a senior guard who may be familiar to Griz fans, having played for Sacramento State of the Big Sky Conference.

"When I came and played here the last two years, I loved the culture and the huge support from the fans," Patterson said.

Starting 55 games and averaging 30 minutes over the last two seasons with Sacramento State, Patterson provided consistency down to the final stretch last year.

Pridgen, a graduate student and guard, comes from Northeastern University. He started half the games for the team over the last two years and averaged eight points and five rebounds while also being a good physical presence.

Moore, a junior guard, transferred from Pepperdine University, where he averaged 25 minutes and seven points per game during his first two seasons.

DeCuire looks to follow up a 24-12 season where the Griz fell 16 points away from winning a Big Sky Conference Championship in its loss to Montana State. The coach is attempting to develop far more in his athletes than a winning mentality as his players have a 100% graduation rate, and in 2020, 100% were registered to vote.

DeCuire said he wants to help his players grow, but that can be difficult with a large roster turnover. "When they get to us, they think they're supposed to leave as better people, but if you only have them for one year, how much change can you help create?" DeCuire said.

UM plays a gauntlet of hard competition all season when it goes on the road to face the University of Oregon on Nov. 8, then returns home for a contest against Northwest Indian College on Nov. 10. Then UM will go on the road again to face #12-ranked University of Tennessee on Nov. 13 and Utah State on Nov. 18.

Griz Soccer seeks redemption in this year's championship

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Griz Soccer is looking and feeling confident going into the Big Sky Conference Soccer Championship this weekend at the South Campus Stadium.

Coach Chris Citowicki is excited about the tournament, but still serious about keeping up training and not letting the team get ahead of itself.

"The job's not done," Citowicki said.

Coming off what Citowicki described as a "flat" 2022 season, the Griz shattered expectations in the 2023 season, where it won the conference title. Citowicki said the flat mentality is what cost the team the semifinals in the 2023 championship.

"We got a little lazy and got kicked in the butt, and woke up from it," Citowicki said. "You can talk about it as much as you want, but losses are the greatest motivator."

The team feels the same way.

"We know that our job's not done, I think last season we might have gone into it thinking that the conference win was it, but this time we are focusing on the next one, which is the tournament," Maddie Ditta said.

Ditta is a junior midfielder from Riverside, California, who is playing her third year on the team and is an asset in the centerfield. She has four goals and the second most playing time this season.

Heading into this year's championship, the team's mindset is serious, but still confident in its capabilities.

"The talent we have across the board and across the bench, we are so deep as a team," Chloe Seelhoff said. A junior and transfer from the University of Washington, Seelhoff is part of the talent she talks about. Proving to be a midfield weapon with six goals and one assist over the season, she helped propel the team to 29 goals this year.

Her season started tough, as she felt that as a transfer she needed to prove herself, and it became a barrier. But she quickly snapped out of it and went hard for the team.

"Goals continued to come once I stopped putting pressure on myself to do so," Seelhoff said. She is excited to get to play in a championship, which she didn't get to do at University of Washington, and to play with her sister, Maddie Seelhoff.

Shaking off the pressure and the excitement is something she and the rest of the team are focusing on for this tournament.

"Nobody was overhyping anything," Citowicki said, describing the team's mentality after its 3-0 win over Weber State that clinched this year's conference title for Montana.



Maddie Ditta knees the soccer ball in a drill during practice on Nov. 1. Ditta is junior from Riverside, California. The University of Montana soccer team will host the Big Sky Soccer Conference Championship Nov. 6 to 10 after winning the Big Sky Conference last season. **MARC ANTHONY MARTINEZ | MONTANA KAIMIN**

Now with back-to-back regular season conference titles, the ladies of Griz Soccer are looking to secure the Big Sky Championship, which it couldn't complete last year with a tough 1-0 loss against Northern Arizona University in the semifinals.

"Over time, we learn lessons through losses, and we get motivated to do better," Citowicki said.

Citowicki pointed to the high number of goals as the factor that pushed the team over the edge the last two years, taking them from a 7-1-1 team in 2021 to a 6-0-2 team in 2024.

"The more you're scoring, the more you're winning," Citowicki said.

With a 6-0-2 record in conference games and 12-2-4 record overall in the 2024 season, the Griz are looking strong going into the championships. It hasn't lost a regular season conference game the past two seasons.

Citowicki credits the success of the last two seasons to the players. While he prides the sort of dynasty he has built, he is humble in acknowledging that the success is reliant on

the women on the field.

"We have an amazing locker room with great people who fight for each other nonstop and are also crazy competitive maniacs at the same time," Citowicki said.

The team may be hyper-competitive, but it is also deeply bonded in its success.

The familial aspect is part of what brought Jen Estes to the program. With a year left in eligibility after a successful run at Princeton, the business analytics graduate student is looking to add her postseason experience to the Griz.

"In the beginning it felt like I was a freshman, you know, just being new to the team and getting used to the program, but it's been such an easy and awesome transition," Estes said.

During her time at Princeton, she helped the Tigers into the NCAA tournament in both 2021 and 2023. She is ranked in the top 25 in her class. Her experience in high stakes games proves invaluable to the Griz in this championship, especially when Estes leads the team with seven goals and four assists over the season.

"I think the excitement around it is something that is super important to have, but it can be hard in a game to sort of channel that into a calming presence," Estes said.

This year, #1-ranked Montana will compete against Portland State (ranked #6), Sacramento State (ranked #5), Northern Arizona (ranked #4), Eastern Washington (ranked #3) and Idaho (ranked #2) in the tournament.

The Griz's first match will be on Friday at 2 p.m. against the winner of Wednesday's game between Sacramento State and Northern Arizona. The Griz beat Northern Arizona at home and tied Sacramento away during this year's regular season.

The tournament is hosted by the winner of the previous season's conference title, which means the tournament will also be hosted at the University of Montana next year.

"Having the home-field advantage is something I'm probably the most excited about just because it's been super fun here in Missoula, and having the crowd with us, we've had a lot of success here at home," Estes said.

Sweating, cycling and no stopping

Photos and words by **DIEGO HERNANDEZ**
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Missoula hosted the Pan American Cyclocross Championships last weekend, an event full of mud, food trucks and exhausting climbs.

The Pan American series, presented by Montana Cyclocross, is one of many races that take place across the Americas and the globe. These events are overseen by the Union Cycliste Internationale, the de facto administration for all professional cycling.

Cyclocross is a form of cycling that has competitors race around a dirt track for as many laps as possible over a period of time. The track is littered with obstacles that require racers to get off their bikes and run.

The championships were held at Lindborg-Cregg Memorial Field and the surrounding park spaces on Tower Road. The course weaved its way through an archery range and two baseball fields. This was the second year it was held at this location, with only slight revisions to the track.

"You don't need a fancy cross bike and spandex, you just show up," said Peter Leclair, head of the trail building at Montana Cyclocross and a coordinator with UCI. Leclair said it's a way of bringing cycling to the community. "It's something we look forward to every year," he said.

While events like the Pan American Championships are held for professional racers, Montana Cyclocross holds a Wednesday night series with community engagement in mind. Leading up to and following the higher level categories, locals and youth were also offered an opportunity to race on the

same course.

The community is visible in Missoula, with kids running around with breakfast sandwiches from a food truck parked near the team race tents and screams of encouragement for exhausted riders coming from every direction.

The event on Saturday and Sunday had races that ranged from kids competing with local race teams to UCI-backed professionals and even a seniors race. If you looked hard enough, you would even see familiar faces from the University of Montana, including environmental science professor Andrew Wilcox, who raced in the Master Men race for ages 50 to 59.

While cycling is not something everybody considers a fun weekend activity, events like the Pan American Championships illustrate the true spirit of Montana with community at its heart.



Andrew Wilcox, a UM environmental science professor, battles his way up a hill on the Pan American Cyclocross course on Nov. 2.



Bob Presta dashes over obstacles on the Montana Cyclocross Pan American course in the Master Men race.

