

# MONTANA KAIMIN

## PUTTING DRAG BACK IN THE CLOSET

Montana's  
potential  
ban on  
drag  
shows for  
minors



Story by Andy Tallman

**6** Return to Aber

**12** Ukraine connection

**15** Treadmill challenge

Cover photo by Nate Sanchez

March 9, 2023 | Volume 125 | Issue No. 22



# 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."

## EDITORIAL STAFF

**EDITOR-IN-CHIEF**  
Griffen Smith

**BUSINESS MANAGER**  
Caden Fox

**ARTS & CULTURE EDITOR**  
Haley Yarrowborough

**NEWS EDITOR**  
Emily Tschetter

**SPORTS EDITOR**  
Jack Marshall

**AUDIO EDITOR**  
Alyssa Tompkins

**COPY CHIEF**  
Mariah Thomas

**DESIGN EDITOR**  
McKenna Johnson

**DIGITAL EDITOR**  
Nance Beston

**FEATURES EDITOR**  
Christine Compton

**MULTIMEDIA EDITOR**  
Lukas Prinos

## NEWSROOM STAFF

**NEWS REPORTERS**  
Claire Bernard  
Najifa Farhat  
Andy Tallman  
Aislin Tweedy

**SPORTS REPORTERS**  
Max Dupras  
Holly Malkowski  
Sam Phillips

**ARTS & CULTURE REPORTERS**  
Anna Henning  
Bridget Pack  
Kayla Ingraham  
Chris Shields

**AUDIO REPORTER**  
Clayton Murphy

**PHOTOGRAPHERS**  
Maddie Crandall  
Chris Lodman  
Andy Mephram  
Nate Sanchez

**VIDEOGRAPHERS**  
Henry Pree  
Griffin Ziegert

**COPY EDITORS**  
Max Dupras  
Chloe Olsgaard  
Leah Welch

**DESIGNERS**  
Barrett Clement  
Mackenna Gleave  
Bridget Pack  
Madeline Staples

**CARTOONIST**  
Walter Medcraft

**OFFICE ASSISTANT**  
Chloe Brown  
Drew Craig  
Braeden Olheiser  
Brandon Smith

**ADVISERS**  
Jule Banville  
Heath Druzin

## FIND US ON SOCIAL MEDIA



@Montanakaimin



@Montanakaimin

@Montanakaiminsports



@Montanakaimin

@Kaiminsports



@Montanakaimin



@ Montana Kaimin

For comments, corrections or letters to the editor, contact  
[griffen.smith@umontana.edu](mailto:griffen.smith@umontana.edu)  
or call (406) 243-4310.

For advertising opportunities, contact  
[caden.fox@umontana.edu](mailto:caden.fox@umontana.edu)  
or call (406) 243-6541.



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

Have burning questions? Submit your questions to **THE KAIMIN COLUMN**, the Kaimin's new advice column video series, where your questions turn to answers in our capable hands. New videos out every Wednesday. Check out our Instagram for more information.

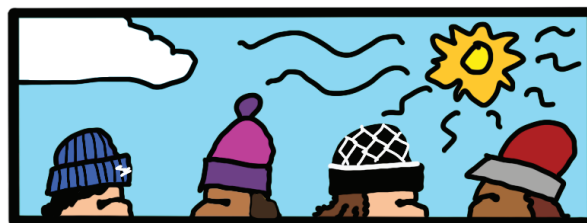
Stop by the ASUM  
Office of Transportation  
for a **free bike light.**

**Be safe.**

**Be seen.**

[umt.edu/bike](http://umt.edu/bike)

## ZORG & BEBOP: SE 1 EP 6



WALTER MEDCRAFT | MONTANA KAIMIN



# HB 359 is a discrimination measure

Last July, a local bookstore hosted a drag story hour during Pride Week in Helena, Montana. The family-friendly event featured drag queens reading to children, but news of it reached a far-right website called Gab, according to reporting from Mara Silvers for the Guardian.

At least one member of the Oath Keepers, a far-right anti-government militia, called the event “demonic” and threatened to shut it down.

In the end though, the threats didn’t come to fruition and children enjoyed the event. In fact, each year Montana’s Pride Week in Helena is capped off by an all-ages drag show on Helena’s historic Last Chance Gulch.

But it comes as no surprise that a state with people touting hateful beliefs would see discriminatory bills against drag queens and the LGBTQIA+ community in the legislature. That’s exactly what Braxton Mitchell’s House Bill 359 is.

The bill would punish private businesses and public spaces for allowing minors to see drag performances on their properties. This encompasses nightclubs, bars, state-funded libraries and schools – including the University of Montana.

It also would fine an owner or manager of a business breaking this law a fee of \$1,000 to \$5,000 on first offense, increasing to more than \$10,000 in fines on and after a third offense. This is more than the fine for indecent

exposure, which is up to \$500 on a first offense and up to \$1,000 for a second.

HB 359 defines “drag performance” as “any performance with exotic dancers, strippers, male or female impersonators who provide entertainment that has a tendency to excite lustful thoughts.”

Mitchell, a Republican representative from Columbia Falls, said at a House Judiciary Committee hearing for the bill on Feb. 9 that, “The reason I’m bringing this bill is because drag shows in recent years have specifically been aimed at children, and my question is: Why do adults want to dress in drag and perform for children?”

But sources who spoke with the Kaimin for this week’s feature talked about the importance of drag for LGBTQIA+ people, arguing it promotes acceptance and that these shows are often family-friendly events.

“Drag is art. Drag is beautiful. Drag is important to my community,” said Rep. Zooney Zephyr at a vote for the bill on Feb. 23. Zephyr is a Democrat from Missoula and Montana’s first-ever transgender legislator.

Let’s call the bill what it is: a clear attack on queer expression, no matter the context, that serves to alienate LGBTQIA+ Montanans.

HB 359 is bigger than just Mitchell and Montana. Other states have seen bills in their respective legislatures that would have similar impacts.

In fact, the ACLU is tracking 384 an-

ti-LGBTQIA+ bills across the country as of March 7. A number of these bills limit free expression through drag performance. This is a problem because it’s an attack on how queer communities nationwide celebrate themselves.

The bills banning drag – which all have similar language and similar consequences – are a national attempt to ostracize drag performers, trans people and the LGBTQIA+ community.

There is a slippery slope between HB 359 and other bills that will harm the LGBTQIA+ community nationwide. Across the country, bills aim to widely limit access to gender-affirming healthcare, prevent listing preferred names and pronouns on government documents and even erase LGBTQIA+ history from school curriculums.

In Montana, we’ve seen Senate Bill 99, which would prevent Montana minors from receiving gender-affirming care, pass into the House. Senate Bill 458 defines sex, and excludes intersex people from its definitions, which hold bearing on other areas of state law.

All of these bills going through Montana’s state Legislature don’t just target specific facets of LGBTQIA+ people’s lives – they attack their very existence. The state is regulating people’s healthcare, artistry and education in ways that clearly violate queer people’s civil rights simply because they don’t fall into rigid heteronormative lines our state legislators wish to prescribe to all Montanans.

It’s also a clear violation of freedom of speech and expression, as outlined in the First Amendment.

The Kaimin asks state legislators to let people have freedom over their own decisions. Individual freedom is a fundamental Montana value and one that many of the Republican legislators ran on to win their elections for this session.

Attacking it is a surefire way to not only discriminate against Montanans, but to make our state a less vibrant and welcoming place.

We at the Kaimin stand as allies to the LGBTQIA+ community in Montana. We know that people who perform in drag deserve to be here, deserve to celebrate their identities and deserve a state that wants them.

Rep. Zephyr said it best in her Feb. 23 speech on the House floor: “There’s questions as to why are children coming to [drag shows] now. Well, I’ll tell you what happened: We lived. We lived through the AIDS epidemic. We lived through people trying to disallow our marriage. We adopted children. We grew up. And now, we’re taking some of our children and sharing an art form that’s valuable to our community in a way that is age appropriate to them.”

*Like it? Hate it? Let us know.*

Email us your opinions at [griffen.smith@umontana.edu](mailto:griffen.smith@umontana.edu)



## Rockin’ with the Roxy

Randall Caudle flips over a vinyl LP of “Tooth and Nail” by the metal band Dokken at The Annual Roxy Record Sale, a fundraiser event to benefit The Roxy held at Missoula’s Senior Center on March 5. Caudle started collecting vinyl about three years ago as a hobby and a way to remember bands from his youth.

CHRIS LODMAN | MONTANA KAIMIN

### SUDOKU

Difficulty: Easy

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

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

Copyright 2023 by The Puzzle Syndicate

## Briefs & Blotter

# UMPD finds suspects in gas tank vandalism; state Legislature passes abortion restrictions, tenant protections

### GAS TANK VANDALS IN MIDDLE SCHOOL UMPD REPORTS

The University of Montana Police Department identified two suspects that may have been responsible for pouring ice-melting salt in multiple cars parked by the University Villages late last month.

A female student called UMPD around 8 a.m. on Feb. 20 when she found ice-melting salt scattered in and around her car's gas tank parked at Rimini Court. Upon arrival, officers located the salt by not only her car, but seven others in the parking lot as well.

Police chief Brad Giffin said UMPD has two male suspects who are juveniles around middle school age. The damage per vehicle, which Giffin described to be "extensive," is so far estimated to be around \$800 each.

He said the eight students whose vehicles were tampered with are filing comprehensive claims with their respective insurance companies. He added that some of the vehicles didn't have hazard insurance, and the owners would need to go to court to receive compensation.

UMPD classified these acts as a felony and a "common scheme," since the damage was done at the same time, by the same people and in the same area. The case, currently open with UMPD, will eventually move to juvenile court. The case will stay open until UMPD works with all the insurance companies to figure out the total amount of damage. Until UMPD's investigation concludes, officers will not share the suspects' names. (CHLOE OLSGAARD)

### THREE BILLS CHANGING ABORTION ACCESS, INCREASING INFANT MEDICAL INTERVENTION PASS STATE HOUSE ON DEADLINE

The Montana House passed three bills that change regulations around abortions and post-birth non-viable infant care on Friday. All three bills moved onto the Senate on the final deadline to transfer bills between the House and Senate, and would have effectively been killed if they didn't pass.

House Bill 721, sponsored by Kalispell Republican House Speaker Matt Regier, would ban most abortions after 12 weeks of pregnancy, at which point most providers turn to surgical abortions rather than medication abortions. The bill text has exceptions for removing ectopic pregnancy and procedures for "medical emergencies" before the fetus can survive outside the womb.

Regier described any surgical abortion procedure outside of the exceptions on the House floor as "barbaric," and health care providers could face a \$50,000 fine and 10

years in prison for violating the bill.

The Legislature passed House Bill 625, sponsored by Billings Republican Rep. Kerri Seekins-Crowe, which is a smaller version of Legislative Referendum 131, which Montana voters rejected in the 2022 election. The bill would require all care providers to "preserve the life and health" of any infant who is born alive, even if they are not considered medically viable.

The House also passed Republican Great Falls Rep. Lola Sheldon-Galloway's House Bill 786, which would require abortion providers to share information with their patients about risks associated with medication abortions. Under the bill, providers would also have to report each time they shared that information with patients to the state health department. (EMILY TSCHETTER)

### TENANT PROTECTION BILL PASSES STATE HOUSE

A bill that would protect tenants from late-notice changes to their leases passed the House and is moving onto the Senate, despite multiple bills moving through the state Legislature that could enhance landlords' rights this year.

Rep. Zooey Zephyr, a Democrat from Missoula, sponsored House Bill 785. Under the bill, if a landlord plans to change the terms of their renter's agreements or to decline offering their renter a new lease, they have to give tenants 60-day advance notice. This only applies to contracts that are longer than month-to-month.

"Thirty days can often not be enough for a tenant to plan, save and find new housing," Zephyr said on the house floor.

Opponents argued it could incentivize more landlords to start using month-to-month contracts. Some suggested that the law should

be adjusted to make all tenants give 60-day notice, rather than 30-day notice, before they end their lease agreements if this bill passes.

The bill does not impact landlords' rights to evict tenants or raise their rents if that's already part of their lease agreements. If the bill passes the Senate, it would affect all rental agreements signed after Oct. 1. (ET)

### STATEWIDE TIKTOK BAN PASSES STATE SENATE

Sen. Shelley Vance, a Republican from Belgrade, sponsored a bill to ban TikTok statewide that passed the Senate last week because the platform "endangers the safety of Montanans."

Senate Bill 419 now just needs to pass the House and Gov. Greg Gianforte's desk to become a reality. Gianforte already issued a directive banning the social media site's use on state devices, which led to the Montana University System blocking it on campus networks in January.

The bill's text cites the platform's collection of user data, along with the possibility of its parent company ByteDance sharing data with the Chinese government, as reasons to ban TikTok. It also brought up how the app threatens public safety by hosting viral challenges, like the NyQuil Chicken Challenge, that picked up popularity last year.

The bill would prevent companies from letting users download the TikTok app from their app stores. The Senate voted to remove part of the bill that would make Montana internet service providers responsible for blocking the platform directly.

Under the law, any "operation of TikTok by the company or users" in the "territorial jurisdiction" of Montana would be subject to a \$10,000 fine. (ET)

## POLICE BLOTTER

CHLOE OLSGAARD

chloe.olsgaard@umontana.edu

It seems like the approaching midterms might have campus outlaws a little preoccupied. Between Feb. 24 to March 3 the University of Montana Police Department only responded to five crimes. While the criminals laid low in textbooks this week, UMPD studied up on a lot of other stuff, including pumpkin and light vandalism, chalkless resident assistants and a hair sniffer.

### FRIDAY 2/24: SMASHING PUMPKINS

Around 3 a.m., UMPD received a call about a pumpkin that had been smashed inside of Jesse Hall. Upon arrival, officers located the pumpkin in one of the hallways, but found no suspect. UMPD said it was "scattered and thrown everywhere," and added that the suspect had to have brought the pumpkin, as no one on that floor presumably had one. Seems like the Smashing Pumpkins has a crazy ass fan on UM's campus. Sure is one hell of an advertising strategy, albeit 30 years too late.

### SUNDAY 2/26: COUGH UP THE CHALK

At midnight, officers arrived at Craig Hall after a chalkboard was reported stolen. Upon arrival, officers could not find the board. Five days earlier, another chalkboard was also reportedly stolen from Craig Hall. Officers believe they were taken off of resident assistants' doors. Who knows, maybe when room checks come around again the RAs might find more than poorly hidden weed and alcohol.

### WEDNESDAY 3/1: U.F.O.

Around 11 p.m., UMPD began receiving numerous reports of a loud noise near Craig Hall. Upon arrival, officers could not find where the sound was coming from. Witnesses thought the sound could have been a variety of things, including gunshots, fireworks, crashing, yelling and banging. The sound was never identified. Someone call Mulder and Scully cause we have an Unidentified Frequency Object on our hands.

### THURSDAY 3/2: SUSPICIOUS SNIFFER

At 7 p.m., UMPD was informed of a "suspicious" male in the University Center who had been allegedly directing uncomfortable comments toward a female student. She told officers he approached her and complimented her on the smell of her hair. When UMPD arrived, the suspect was gone. It's unclear whether he's affiliated with UM, but he sure is loud, proud and way too forward with his fetishes.

### FRIDAY 3/3: LIGHTS OUT

UMPD received a call around 4 a.m. about a light fixture that had been ripped out of the ceiling in one of the bathrooms in Jesse Hall. No suspects were found when officers arrived and saw the light dangling from a wire. The damage was minimal, but the amount of alcohol it would take to do that amount of destruction definitely wasn't.

## Can't get enough? Start listening.

This week on **THE KAIMIN CAST**, Alyssa dives into the world of the Grizzly Pool.

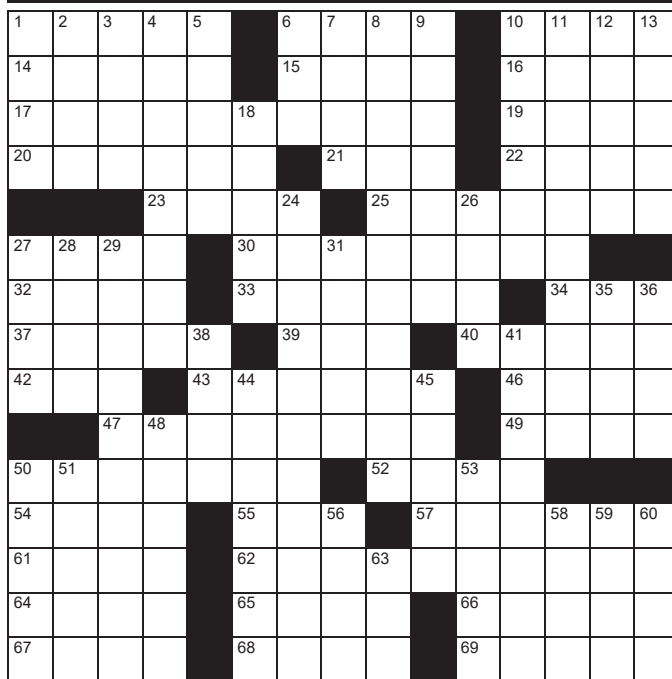
Next week, Clayton explores the double life of an ROTC student.

# THE KAIMIN CAST



New episodes out Monday. Scan for the latest.





ACROSS

- 1 Baseball blunder
- 6 Contributes
- 10 Dull color
- 14 Relinquish
- 15 Icy precipitation
- 16 "Field of Dreams" setting
- 17 It's taken in class
- 19 Guys-only party
- 20 More within reach
- 21 Devoured
- 22 Filly's mom
- 23 Pair of draft horses
- 25 Wearable wares
- 27 "L.A.'s Finest" actress
- 30 Very skillful
- 32 Mild-mannered
- 33 Back from boating
- 34 Drugstore chain
- 37 Long tresses
- 39 Whip severely
- 40 Crippling virus
- 42 Poetic tribute
- 43 Lacking iron
- 46 Bring down
- 47 Gloomy
- 49 Egyptian bird
- 50 "Cheers!"
- 52 Place to wait
- 54 Santa Anita event
- 55 "\_\_\_ the season ..."
- 57 Kind of block
- 61 Start of a plan
- 62 Houses on the market
- 64 Snorkeling gear
- 65 Realtor's unit
- 66 Eagle's claw

- 67 Beach bag
- 68 Sales prospect
- 69 Caught some Z's

DOWN

- 1 He played Obi-Wan
- 2 Fixed charge
- 3 Novelist \_\_\_
- 4 Pull ahead of
- 5 "Judy" portrayer
- 6 "Bingo!"
- 7 CNN reporter
- 8 Bash
- 9 Despotic
- 9 Certain sofa
- 10 Hardly cheery
- 11 "Service Above Self" group
- 12 In the know
- 13 Deli item
- 18 Many a TV series
- 24 Great painting
- 26 Get ready for the O.R.
- 27 BB's and bullets
- 28 Main movie part
- 29 Charitable
- 31 Embarrassment
- 35 Henry \_\_\_
- 36 Some heirs
- 38 Went under
- 41 Monopoly avenue
- 44 Not taking sides
- 45 Meteorological conditions, briefly
- 48 Discomfort
- 50 "Catch my \_\_\_?"
- 51 Dashboard item
- 53 Cozy retreats
- 56 Actress Gilbert
- 58 Fairy follower
- 59 Looking down from
- 60 Advanced
- 63 Played the first card

Answers to Previous Crossword:

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

Copyright 2023 by The Puzzle Syndicate

# Shit-o-scope

HALEY YARBOROUGH  
haleyyarborough@umontana.edu

There's only one thing scarier than death: shitting in the bathroom at school. This may not be high school anymore, but the fear of taking the Browns to the Superbowl in any public place is sure to be an anxiety-inducing experience. You may be one of those hard asses who hold back the crap for eight hours, but most people on the University of Montana's campus find refuge in one bathroom or another. The question is, which porcelain throne do you claim? Pull out the Poop Maps app and look to the stars. This is where you'll find your answers.

**PISCES (FEB. 19-MARCH 20):** You're an old soul at heart, so nothing suits your daily shit trip better than the small bathroom on the first floor of the Forestry Building. It's rustic, has those cute hand-crank paper towels and is secluded enough that no one will walk in on you taking the most earth-shattering shit of your life.

**ARIES (MARCH 21-APRIL 19):** In this game of porcelain thrones, you shit or you die. You could care less where you're going on campus as long as you're racking up the tallies on Poop Maps. They may laugh now, but they won't be laughing when you claim your crown. Shit where you please, queen.

**TAURUS (APRIL 20-MAY 20):** Every day you slip into the Eck Hall bathrooms, strategically timing your shit before the in-between class rush. Most of the time, you refuse to crap when someone is in the room, but you're adamant your daily routine will not be messed with. Those pure souls who wander in your path will just have to endure your farts.

**GEMINI (MAY 21-JUNE 20):** As the wild card, you naturally decide the middle of the Oval is your best bet for the bathroom. Your routine is so fucked up, you only crap under the cover of darkness (thankfully). You've now commandeered the title Crap-Man on Poop Maps.

**CANCER (JUNE 21-JULY 22):** You're a homebody, so it comes as no surprise you adamantly refuse to shit at school. You're

not self-conscious or anything, you just prefer the smell of Yankee Candles when you let loose. It's all fun and games until you're crapping in the middle of a midterm exam.

**LEO (JULY 23-AUG. 22):** Nothing gets your stomach churning more than an intense glute workout at the gym. Most of the time you don't have a choice where to go, so you settle for the first-floor Recreation Center bathrooms. The moment you shut the stall, the real workout begins.

**VIRGO (AUG. 23-SEP. 22):** You'll only settle for the cleanest bathroom on campus. You did your research and discovered your shit safe haven: Don Anderson Hall. The first and second floors may be mediocre shit-stops, but the basement is quiet AND clean.

**LIBRA (SEP. 23-OCT. 22):** You're loud and proud, so it comes as no surprise you let the torrents flow in the bathroom on the first floor of the University Center. Students buying coffee have the pleasure of listening to you fight for your life after eating some sus meat at the Food Zoo.

**SCORPIO (OCT. 23-NOV. 21):** If you're gonna shit in public, you're gonna shit with a view. Every time you have the urge to let loose, you brave the arduous ascent up the M-trail. There's nothing more Montanan or more peaceful than shitting with the bears while tourists point and laugh.

**SAGITTARIUS (NOV. 22-DEC. 21):** You're power-hungry. Any chance you get to shit in Daddy

Bod's office, you take it. Not only is the toilet paper softer than a pillow, but the toilet is made of pure, 24-karat gold (so rumor says). You may not shit gold, but with this kind of power, the possibilities are endless.

**CAPRICORN (DEC. 22-JAN. 19):** People say you're down to earth, and you take their words literally. Whenever you have to go, you slip into UM's greenhouse. You've convinced yourself that your shit is the best fertilizer for the plants. In reality, your little experiment is really just a recipe for noxious gas.

**AQUARIUS (JAN 20-FEB 18):** You may be slightly constipated, but it's nothing a trip to Jeannette Rankin Hall can't cure. Rumor says the building is haunted, but you see this as a positive. You prefer the thrill of shitting with ghosts.



BARRETT CLEMENT | MONTANA KAIMIN

# Students move back into Aber, some choose not to return

CLAIRE BERNARD

claire.bernard@umontana.edu

Brenna Bushman's dorm on the 10th floor of Aber Hall was completely flooded. Water dripped down from the walls and the ceilings, destroying her laundry, posters and rugs.

"Everything smells," she said. "No matter if it didn't touch the water, it smells."

And, as far as the 19-year-old parks and recreation major knows, none of her neighbors are returning to her floor. She is also making a permanent relocation to Duniway Hall, even though she loved living in Aber and didn't want to move.

Students milled about on the first floors of Aber on March 3 with bins full of items like move-in day again. But only a couple floors up, the building is nearly unrecognizable. Cardboard covered where the carpet once was, and loud fans blew into hallways as a damp odor filled the air.

After the flooding in Aber Hall left its 115 residents displaced in other dorms or hotels for a week, some students began moving back in on March 3. Other students chose to stay in their temporary dorms for the rest of the semester because of the damage to their floors.

But with damage to personal items and continued inconveniences, student frustrations with the University are mounting.

JD Dressler, a junior who transferred from North Idaho College this year, went to a Duniway hall dorm for the week and is now moving back into Aber. The 21-year-old political science major lives on the ninth floor and said his sheets and blankets were damaged.

"I paid \$9,500 for the year and a lot of stuff got destroyed and they said no, they won't replace anything," Dressler said. "It makes me feel angry and frustrated, especially because they want first-year students to live in this building."

The University of Montana sent an email to all of the Aber residents saying they could ask for a work order if there was damage to the rooms or any University-owned furniture. However, the University will only help students with their damaged personal items if they enrolled in the college renter's insurance program when they applied for UM housing.

Otherwise, students are left to see if they're covered by their parents' renter's or homeowner's insurance, or they're left to replace their soaked belongings on their own.



Brenna Bushman sits in her old dorm on floor 10 of Aber hall. After her floor flooded, she was moved to Duniway Hall, where she'll be staying for the rest of the semester. **NATE SANCHEZ | MONTANA KAIMIN**

Dressler is not the only one frustrated with the situation. Freshman Samuel Chavez spent the week at the Holiday Inn, where he had to walk 15 minutes to campus every day. Although he found the hotel comfier than his own dorm, he is still upset with the lack of response from UM administration.

"I haven't heard about any kind of reparations for the students whose stuff got damaged except, 'Hey you should've used your insurance,'" Chavez said, "They should probably give a lot more than that."

While some students are moving back into Aber, others are moving out permanently.

Freshman Shelby Stordahl, who lived on the seventh floor, is choosing to stay in her temporary dorm in Craig for the rest of the semester.

The 19-year-old elementary education

major decided to make the move because, "Everything is shut down here, our hall is pretty empty. Pretty much everyone moved out," she said.

If it weren't for the flooding disaster, Stordahl said she would have remained in Aber because, as a student athlete, she enjoyed the closeness to the Adams Center. But with water damage to her walls, she'll stay out of Aber for the semester.

On the night of the flooding, Bushman, the parks and rec major, recalled how confused she was and the feeling of being left in the dark. She said her roommate and others on the floor figured it was a fire drill until they received a text from their resident assistant, not the University.

"When it first happened, they didn't tell us where we were going to sleep that night until like 7 or 8 p.m.," Bushman said.

While the maintenance workers started

firing up fans and tearing out baseboards and carpet on the day of the flooding, Bushman ran back into Aber to grab her fish, Cowboy, and carried him down the 10 flights of stairs to safety.

Bushman and other students said they felt the UM response was lacking both at the time, and now. With students moving back in, or out, for good, they are looking to the University to provide clarity on damage reparations and protocols for the rest of the semester — especially with the chaos of moving making schoolwork this week difficult.

"They haven't said anything, so, at this point, I don't think they are going to do anything," Bushman said. "It makes me upset because they haven't helped as much as you'd think."



# First generation student enrollment drops at UM

CLAIRE BERNARD

claire.bernard@umontana.edu

Navigating college applications, financial aid and other college bureaucracy can be confusing and intimidating to many students. But for first-generation college students, a lack of previous college experience in their families can create even more difficulties.

“What 18-year-old actually knows what a subsidized loan and an unsubsidized loan mean?” said Mary Kreta, vice president of enrollment management and strategic initiative at the University of Montana.

Enrollment of first-generation students, meaning those who are the first of their immediate family to attend college, is down by 9.4% at UM since fall of last year, dropping from 2,159 students in 2021 to 1,956 students in 2022.

According to Kreta, this is caused by many of factors, including rising college tuition rates, the high cost of living in Missoula and the appeal of making money right out of high school.

Some students feel an obligation to stay home and make money for their families, Kreta said. They also may be burdened by other responsibilities, like children or elder care, she added.

Thirty-four percent of Montana residents have a bachelor's degree or higher, according to towncharts.com. This is 3.9% lower than the national percentage of people over 25 with a college degree, according to the U.S. Census Bureau.

Still, some students who want to attend UM refuse to let these barriers stop them.

“I walked onto campus when I was moving in and saw a UM student giving tours with a megaphone and I turned to my parents and said, ‘I am going to be Mr. Tour Guide one day,’” said Kyle Wonders, a junior and first-generation student. He decided to attend UM before his sophomore year of high school.

The 21-year-old, who is pursuing a

degree in wildlife biology along with three minors, has indeed become “Mr. Tour Guide.” By joining the UM Advocates, becoming a Davidson Honors College student ambassador and working as a peer educator in a freshman seminar class, Wonders achieved his goal of helping other students find their place on campus.

Connecting with different groups on campus became his own way of creating roots 1,000 miles away from his hometown of Newbury Park, California.

“I didn’t have a community here when I first started,” he said.

Likewise, 20-year-old senior Tanner Ecker found his place away from Townsend, Montana through the Spikeball club. The journalism and communications major decided to attend UM to spread his wings and avoid being, “a line cook at the only restaurant in Townsend.”

But barriers to first-generation students attending college are plentiful.

It is generally a bigger burden for first-gen college students to attend college. The average household income for parents without a college degree is around \$62,000, while households with at least

one parent with a college degree averages around \$101,000, according to the Pew Research Center.

At UM, in-state tuition increased by 9.7% since last year and out-of-state tuition increased by 7.4%, making first-generation students rely on scholarships more than ever before, according to [collegetuitioncompare.com](http://collegetuitioncompare.com).

Ecker explained that first-gen students lack the support other students might have from parents’ previous experience with the schools they’re applying to. Without the benefit of knowing others in the academic environment, according to Ecker, scholarships are crucial.

“Without scholarships I would’ve probably had to take out loans,” Ecker said.

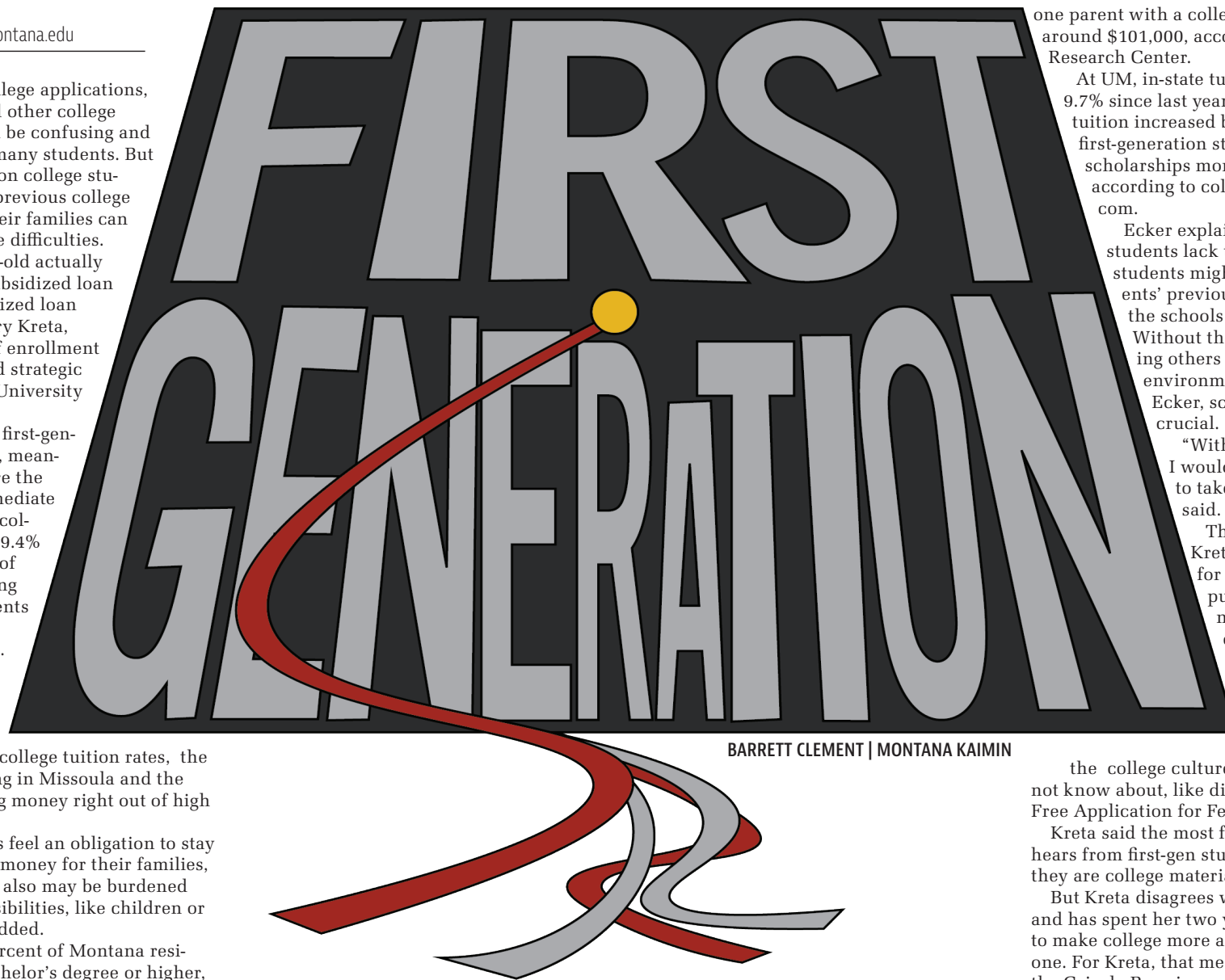
That’s why jobs like Kreta’s are important for students on campus. Learning how to navigate the “hidden curriculum” as Kreta called it, is crucial to students feeling like they belong. That includes aspects in

the college culture that others might not know about, like digital portals or the Free Application for Federal Student Aid.

Kreta said the most frequent doubt she hears from first-gen students is whether they are college material.

But Kreta disagrees with this concept and has spent her two years at UM trying to make college more accessible to everyone. For Kreta, that means working with the Grizzly Promise, a scholarship that covers tuition and fees for students whose parents in Montana make \$50,000 or lower a year. Additionally, she said those working on enrollment at UM are going to continue collaborating with TRIO Student Support Services, a program funded by the U.S. Department of Education. TRIO works with students who are eligible for the program based on household income, a parent’s education or student disability.

“I don’t say that every single student should go to college, but every single student should be able to go to college,” Kreta said.



BARRETT CLEMENT | MONTANA KAIMIN

# PUTTING DRAG BA

## STATE HOUSE AIMS TO BAN DRAG SHOWS FOR MINORS — AND IT COULD IMPACT QUEER SPACES EVERYWHERE

STORY BY ANDY TALLMAN

**A** **SHRILL VOICE** cried from the darkness behind a seated crowd. “Stop the show!” The audience of the House of Mysteries show turned their heads to see Chastity Wilkes storming onto the stage and into the spotlight. She wore a denim skirt, exaggerated blue eyeshadow and an aura of righteous fury.

“I’m here to tell you that God hates you,” she told those assembled to watch an adult-oriented drag show on Feb. 17 at the Westside Theatre.

She was met with a chorus of boos.

“You people are corrupting our youth!”

Wilkes yelled.

Chastity Wilkes isn’t a real person. She’s a drag persona created by Charley “Charlotte” Macorn, a drag performer and University of Montana employee at the Writing Center, where she advises students on how to improve their writing.

The Chastity Wilkes persona pulls from a time-honored pro wrestling tradition: the heel, “the bad guy.” Wilkes as the hateable villain helps the audience packed around the stage root harder for the purple-haired Millennial of Mayhem Margaret Murder in an experimental drag wrestling bout.

The persona represents a lot more than a goofy villain. It’s a protest against lawmakers threatening her craft, identity and safety, she said.

Macorn’s character is built from testimony she heard in the Montana House Judiciary Committee on Feb. 9 in support of a bill that would ban drag shows in public spaces.

House Bill 359 would punish private business owners and public entities that allow minors to view drag performances on their property — including UM.

Proponents have said the purpose of this bill is to protect minors from sexual content. But opponents worry that the bill’s definition of drag casts a wide net that would criminalize many members of the LGBTQIA+ community, a group that’s already vulnerable.

Forty-five percent of LGBTQIA+ youth seriously considered suicide in the past year, according to the Trevor Project, a nonprofit suicide prevention program for LGBTQIA+ youth.

Christina Aivadyan, Melissa N. Slavin



**ABOVE:** Anatheia Smith testifies against HB 359 in front of the House Judiciary Committee on Thursday, Feb. 9, 2023 in the state capitol. Also pictured on right is Rep. Braxton Mitchell, R-Columbia Falls, the bill’s sponsor.

**THOM BRIDGE | INDEPENDENT RECORD**

**RIGHT:** Millennial of Mayhem Margaret Murder performs at a drag show put on by House of Mysteries on Feb. 17.

**NATE SANCHEZ | MONTANA KAIMIN**

and Elwin Wu found in a study published in the Archives of Suicide Research that LGBTQIA+-inclusive state legislation, as measured by the State Equality Index, was associated with reduced risk of suicide in LGBTQIA+ youth.

According to GLAAD, the world’s largest LGBTQIA+ media advocacy organization, drag performances faced 141 protests or threats in 2022, some of which were violent.

HB 359 has drawn opposition from many civil rights and queer activists, and it’s one of at least nine Montana bills this session that target the LGBTQIA+ community.

### WHAT IS DRAG?

HB 359 defines drag as a performance that features “topless dancers, exotic dancers, strippers, or male or female impersonators

who provide entertainment that appeals to a prurient interest.”

Under this bill, “drag” could be legally defined and designated as inherently sexual under Montana law. The law would aim to prohibit minors from drag shows, and supporters say it would protect children from any sexual content that might appear in a drag show.

But drag performers say this characterization of drag isn’t correct.

The Cambridge Dictionary defines drag queen as “a person, often a gay man, who dresses in highly decorated women’s clothes, wigs, jewelry, makeup and more as a costume and performs as a woman for entertainment.”

Drag can be far more diverse than that. For example, some drag queens are women out of costume, too. “Drag kings” perform using exaggerated indicators of masculinity. Some



# CK IN THE CLOSET



personas are neither men nor women.

"We take in consideration of our audience," said Diana Bourgeois, president of the Imperial Sovereign Court of the State of Montana, Montana's largest nonprofit drag organization. "We're not trying to expose youth to things that would be age inappropriate."

Bourgeois said in an interview with the Kaimin that ISCSM performers are very careful with how they present themselves for all-ages shows. According to her, performers wear a lot of gowns and bright, shiny accessories.

Songs are profanity-free and contain an uplifting message. Bourgeois said that kids loved the all-ages performances. She often spends 45 minutes taking pictures with kids after her shows.

It's far different than an adult show would be, much like any other brand of performance, Bourgeois said.

"It is a performance based around creating a new character," Macorn, the UM Writing Center employee, said. The shows Macorn helps organize at the House of Mysteries involve everything from spoken word to aerial silk dance. "It's more than cross-dressing. It's the joy of queer expression. It is the art form of our people."

Drag can also serve as a form of self-expression for transgender performers.

"Drag, for me, is trans empowerment," said Elani Borhegyi, a UM environmental science and sustainability major and genderqueer "god-dex," a term Borhegyi uses as a non-binary person who doesn't feel comfortable being

called a drag king or queen.

Borhegyi lip-synced to the song "Radio Friendly Pop Song" at an all-ages show in Helena in February. They wore a makeup look modeled after tarot depictions of the sun and stars — something they paid careful attention and love to. At the drag story hour at Montana Pride in 2022, they read the book "We Are Water Protectors." Borhegyi said they make sure to wear nothing remotely "raunchy" at all ages shows.

"Drag is a really great medium for teaching kids important values such as love, community and acceptance," Borhegyi said.

## THOSE AGAINST DRAG

Vocal opponents of drag claim it is inherently sexual and therefore inappropriate for the public eye.

In June 2022, backlash erupted when the Billings zoo, ZooMontana, hosted an event where people in drag read books about Christmas kittens and frogs to children. Around 60 protesters lined the entrance of the zoo, holding signs that said, "Stop sexualizing our kids!" and "You can be queer, but not here!"

"I'm appalled by ZooMontana's decision to promote child abuse and expose children to inappropriate, sexual content," Montana's U.S. Rep. Matt Rosendale tweeted when the zoo refused to cancel the event. "There is no place

for this at public family venues, and ZooMontana should be ashamed."

Proponents of the bill repeatedly singled out family-friendly drag events as examples of the types of performances that would be banned by HB 359.

"In my opinion, there's no such thing as a family-friendly drag show," said bill sponsor Braxton Mitchell, a Republican from Columbia Falls, at the Feb. 9 committee hearing. At the bill's Feb. 23 debate, Mitchell expanded this opinion, claiming it was held by the majority of the Legislature.

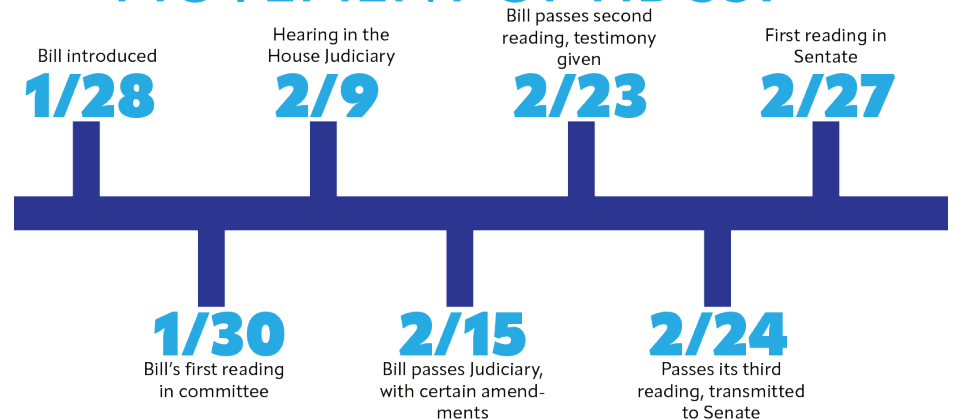
"Our Republican caucus believes strongly there is no such thing as a family friendly drag show," Mitchell said. He did not respond to multiple requests for comment from the Kaimin.

"I don't believe the Republican caucus has specifically taken a position on that exact quote," said Rep. Sue Vinton, the House majority leader. Vinton said it was the position of the Republican caucus that children shouldn't be exposed to adult-oriented performances.

"Drag is art. Drag is beautiful. Drag is important to my community," Democratic Rep. Zooey Zephyr said at the Feb. 23 debate when the bill saw its second reading on the House floor.

Zephyr represents House District 100, which is in Missoula. She is Montana's first openly transgender representative, and has

## MOVEMENT OF HB 359



A timeline shows the progression of HB 359 through the Legislature. The bill made it through the House and transferred to the Senate, where it had its first reading.

MACKENNA GLEAVE | MONTANA KAIMIN



been a vocal opponent of the bill since it was introduced in the Judiciary Committee.

Zephyr spoke on the House floor on Feb. 23 about her personal experiences with drag and the harm this bill will have on LGBTQIA+ youth. She worried that the term “male or female impersonator” could be construed to apply to transgender people.

On her Twitter page, Zephyr said it was clear who this language was meant to target, since Republicans have brought forward many bills this session attempting to define transgender people out of existence.

“I also worry for the rest of my community who have to see bills like this brought forward and I had to take a call from a 14-year-old child who tried to take her life,” Zephyr said.

As of March 7, the ACLU was tracking 384 anti-LGBTQIA+ bills introduced across the country. Of these, 33 in 16 states are anti-drag bills. Many have similar language as HB 359.

“This bill is not a Montana bill,” said Valan Anthos, a UM law student and drag performer. “I just really want to know: Who actually wrote this bill?”

## OUT OF THE PUBLIC EYE

Anything defined as drag under the bill would be banned in any public location with state funding where minors are present.

This would apply to the University of Montana, which would undermine UM’s LGBTQIA+ organization, according to Beckett Redinger, president of the Lambda Alliance, UM’s LGBTQIA+ student group.

“It would be a complete overhaul of how Lambda functions,” Redinger said. “Drag is honestly sort of holding the club together.”

Redinger said that drag events are the only Lambda events that draw significant numbers of attendees. The last few have seen attendance in the hundreds, he said. Lambda held both shows in the University Center ballroom, so the group would be breaking the law under HB 359 if minors were present.

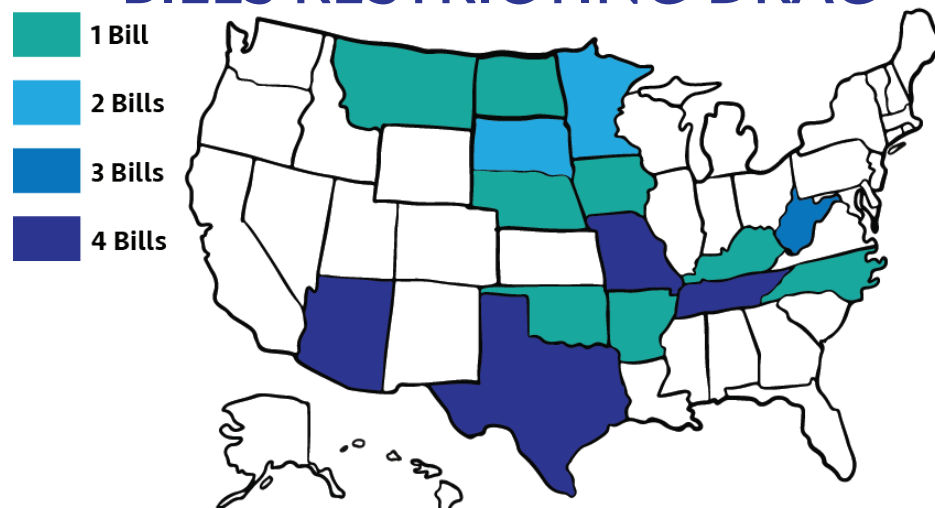
An upcoming Lambda drag show in April is planned at the Zootown Arts Community Center.

“In its current form, it would prevent us



Charley “Charlotte” Macorn stands in her apartment holding a luchador mask she wears for her shows. Macorn is a wrestling fan and incorporates it into her stand-up comedy, magic and drag performances. **CHRIS LODMAN | MONTANA KAIMIN**

# BILLS RESTRICTING DRAG



Across the U.S., bills advocating a drag ban are shown above in order of how many bills are proposed or in effect per state. All data taken from ACLU. **MACKENNA GLEAVE | MONTANA KAIMIN**

from holding any all-ages drag performances, or performances with minors,” Mikyla Veis, the ZACC’s marketing and events director, said in an email. “It could have disastrous effects on Missoula Pride Week, which the ZACC is just a small part of.”

Borhegyi’s first performance was with Lambda last February, which kickstarted their drag career. Anthos, the law student, also started doing drag at UM, and said that without UM drag shows, he probably wouldn’t be a performer.

Anthos helps organize annual drag fundraisers with the UM law school in private businesses. Anthos said this bill would exclude law students with families from these performances because they couldn’t bring their children or other guests.

“I’m really worried about restricting a lot of the venues where we can perform,” Anthos said.

Redinger said he worries that family-friendly drag shows would be banned by this bill. This bill would legally define the term “drag” as appealing to the prurient interest.

But Redinger said that the definition of “prurient” in the bill — “having a tendency to incite lustful thoughts” — is too vague. After all, Redinger said, plenty of people have lustful thoughts about traditionally non-sexual things.

## THE CONSTITUTIONAL QUESTION

The bill’s definition of “prurient” was taken from Roth v. United States, a 1957 case which found that obscenity wasn’t protected under the First Amendment. This case still stands, but its application to law was clarified by Miller v. California, which raised the bar for legal obscenity.

This bill would apply to expression in public spaces. The government can only restrict speech in public spaces by time, place and manner, and any restriction on public speech

must stand up to strict legal scrutiny.

“Law which bans use of public facilities for one group but not others is impermissible, particularly when the criteria for determining which activities are covered and which are not are vague and ambiguous,” Mike Meloy said of the bill.

Meloy is a veteran Montana attorney who specializes in First Amendment issues and helped draft the “Right to Know” provision of the Montana constitution.

The current three-prong obscenity test that Montana law uses was established in Miller v. California in 1973 and remains the standard for the United States obscenity law. HB 359 would be incorporated into the obscenity section of the Montana Code Annotated.

It has been affirmed in multiple court cases that any definition of obscene material must meet all three qualifications — depict of sexual acts or excretion, appeal to a prurient interest and lack any artistic or political value — for its restriction to be constitutionally acceptable.

“The bill does not satisfy the Miller test and cannot withstand a constitutional challenge,” Meloy said.

The bill restricts material simply based on whether it appeals to a prurient interest, which would hold drag performances to a different standard than other obscene materials.

Currently, an obscenity charge in Montana carries a fine of \$500-\$1,000 and a jail sentence of up to six months. However, the fine for hosting a drag show that minors could attend would be far steeper under HB 359, and would vary depending on who was being charged.

Business owners violating HB 359 would face a minimum fine of \$1,000 for their first offense, which would escalate to \$10,000 for third and subsequent offenses, and their business license would be revoked.

Anyone with an educational certificate, like a public school teacher or administrator,



# ANTI-TRANS BILLS INTRODUCED THIS SESSION

## Passed in House, Pending in Senate

HB 303 Allow medical providers to withhold care on moral and religious grounds

HB 234 Criminalize teachers who provide "obscene" materials to minors

HB 361 Legally protect misgendering of transgender students

HB 359 Ban drag where minors are present

## Pending in Senate

SB 337 Expand parental rights to object to curriculum on moral or religious grounds

SB 458 Legally define sex, sideline intersex and transgender Montanans

## Passed in Senate, Pending in House

SB 99 Ban on medical transition for transgender youth



Elani Borhegyi speaks in opposition to House Bill 359 while dressed in drag. The bill's sponsor, Braxton Mitchell, sits to the right. Borhegyi, a senior at UM, is a frequent drag performer.

CONTRIBUTED | MONTANA PUBLIC AFFAIRS NETWORK

who violates this statute would have their certificate revoked for one year on first offense and permanently on a subsequent violation in addition to the \$5,000 fine for any public employee or entity that violates the bill.

It is already illegal to perform in an obscene manner to children in the state of Montana or to present such a performance.

"It seems to me that they weren't very careful with drafting this," Meloy said. "They either weren't careful about it or didn't care."

### A BLANKET BAN

Meloy argued that this bill would "absolutely" have a chilling effect on drag shows that the bill technically doesn't restrict.

"It is likely that all drag shows, whether family friendly or not, will be denied access to

the facility out of an excess of caution," Meloy said in an email.

Proponents of the bill have repeatedly argued that this bill is not about transgender people.

"Nothing in this bill specifically mentions transgenders," Mitchell said in the committee hearing on Feb. 9.

At the beginning of Mitchell's testimony at that hearing, he proposed an amendment to the language of the bill, which would later pass. The bill originally defined drag performers as performers who exhibit "a gender identity that is different than the performer's gender assigned at birth."

That language was changed. Now, the bill's definition of drag includes "male and female impersonators" — a term which is not defined.

"I believe that it is worth the body's time

to think about who might be included in that description," Zephyr said at the Feb. 23 debate.

Proponents of the bill have associated the LGBTQIA+ community with erotic venues like strip clubs in testimony.

"If minors are not allowed into strip clubs and other erotic social institutions, why should they be allowed into drag shows or storytimes that flaunt a gender or sexuality?" asked Cathy Carlson, a proponent of the bill, on Feb. 9.

State Rep. Laurie Bishop, the committee vice chair, objected to the association of gender or sexuality with sexual behavior. Committee Chair Rep. Amy Regier said she did not find that testimony to be out of line.

Opponents brought up parental rights, arguing that this bill would take the decision whether or not to take a child to a drag show out of the hands of parents.

"We must respect that it is a parent's right to decide whether or not their children see a drag show," Democratic Rep. Mark Thane said on Feb. 23. "This is government overreach in its most dogmatic and ideological form."

"The problem with this bill is that it really puts the state in between a parent and their kids," Meloy said. "You would think that Republicans, of all people, would not want their government to tell them what they can experience with their kids."

HB 359 isn't the only bill introduced this legislative session that targets the LGBTQIA+ community.

Senate Bill 99 forbids healthcare professionals from offering transition medical care to minors or even suggest social transition such as wearing a binder or going by a different name. House Bill 303 would allow health-

care professionals to object to giving care.

Senate Bill 458 gives a definition of gender that excludes intersex people and applies that definition to many other parts of Montana law.

Some worry that this could be a slippery slope, and that restricting LGBTQIA+ events in public places won't stop at HB 359.

"After drag, it's queer prom. After queer prom, it's lavender graduation," Redinger said.

Macorn worries that this legislative trend could represent a serious backslide for LGBTQIA+ rights in Montana.

"They're going to take away every single one of our rights if we don't stand up for them now," Macorn said.

Macorn said this bill won't actually protect children, and thinks it aims to rile up the Republican base.

### THE FUTURE OF MONTANA DRAG

The bill saw its first reading in the Republican-dominated Montana Senate on Feb. 27.

"The major impact of the bill is really gonna be the social impact," Borhegyi said.

Corrina Wrobel testified in support of the bill on Feb. 9, and added "I hope [drag shows] go away completely soon, and this is a short note in history."

But performers and members of the queer community say this bill would not be the end of all drag in Montana.

"We lived," Zephyr said on Feb. 23. "We lived through the AIDS epidemic. We lived through people trying to disallow our marriage. We adopted children. We grew up, and now we're taking some of our children and sharing an art form that's valuable to our community in a way that is age-appropriate to them."

"We'd persevere," Anthos said. "We won't just roll over... we'll find a way."

Back at the House of Mysteries show, the

final confrontation between Chastity Wilkes and Margaret Murder was vicious and action-packed. Murder whacked Wilkes with a metal panel. Wilkes' masked goons restrained Murder. Wilkes snatched Murder's wig — drag shorthand for a devastating blow.

Yells and whoops, cheers and boos echoed from the audience.

Margaret Murder did not triumph over Chastity Wilkes alone. Wilkes had her goons, but they were challenged by emcees Rico Spanxx, Gwen Nicholson and Aiden Bedding, giving Murder the chance to at last vanquish her caricature of an opponent.

And at the climax of the show, Murder threw Wilkes through a table.

Wilkes fled in shame after her resounding defeat, at the woman who plays her doesn't plan to do any such thing if this bill passes.

"I'm not going anywhere," Macorn said. "I'm not stopping what I am doing. I am not going to cower to the face of fascism."

# UM student confronts war through art

BRIDGET PACK

bridget.pack@umontana.edu

When the war in Ukraine started in early 2022, University of Montana student Sasha Barrett started creating ceramic missiles to raise awareness and relief for Ukraine.

Barrett, 30, is from Sumy, Ukraine, and is studying for a Master of Fine Arts in ceramics at UM. Inspired by folk Ukrainian pottery, Barrett made several ceramic sculptures titled “War Aesthetic” of real-size missiles used in the war.

“Creating these missiles was a way for me to process the war and raise awareness,” Barrett said. “I was experimenting with sculpture because it is more narrative than pottery.”

The colors used for the missiles are based on the Ukrainian flag. The blue drips running down from the top of the missile signify Western Ukraine’s sorrow, loss and turmoil. The ceramic missiles are displayed in an authentic war crate that stored actual missiles Barrett had shipped to Missoula. Due to shipping regulations, it was shipped from Ukraine to the United States in pieces, and Barrett reconstructed it using the original hardware.

“This box was probably sitting for years after Ukraine stopped making weapons for Russia,” Barrett said. “My friend found it discarded and shipped it to me. I am happy to have it.”

The same week Russia invaded Ukraine in February 2022, Barrett reached out to more than 400 artists worldwide to sell works of art, with the proceeds going to relief efforts in Ukraine.

“I just put an Instagram post up, and it went viral,” Barrett said. “We had to figure out how to process the money and organize this.”

The artists did sweepstakes using a nonprofit platform, where people would buy tickets for their donated art pieces, and the artist would ship them to whomever won. The proceeds went to UNICEF. The fundraiser went from March 1 to 8 in 2022 and raised \$80,000. Since then, Barrett led eight other fundraisers that donate to people, family and friends living in Ukraine.

Barrett and his mother moved to the U.S. when Barrett was in the sixth grade after his mother married a U.S. citizen. They moved to Boise, Idaho, where his mother and stepdad still live.

“When people asked where I was from and I told them Ukraine, they would not know where that was,” Barrett said. “So I



University of Montana student Sasha Barrett measures the mug handles in his MFA studio within the Art Annex. Barrett is molding mugs using traditional earthenware clay. Behind Barrett is his recent ceramic sculptures, titled “War Aesthetic.” The Russian invasion of Ukraine inspired his recent art as a way to process and bring awareness. **BRIDGET PACK | MONTANA KAIMIN**

eventually just started saying I was from Russia, it was just easier. Nobody knew where Ukraine was, but now they do.”

“I’ve always identified as Ukrainian, but it was just easier for me to say Russia,” Barrett said. “It was my teen years, I became more independent and started to think more of my homeland.”

Barrett, who speaks Ukrainian, Russian and English, started doing ceramics when he was 14. He did not begin integrating Ukraine into his art until he went to college at Boise State University, right after Russia invaded the Crimea in 2014.

While there, Barrett came to UM for one year for the National Student Exchange program. After earning a Bachelor of Fine Arts in ceramics at Boise State, he spent some time in Philadelphia before returning to Boise to teach ceramics. He then decided

to apply for graduate school.

“I only applied to this school,” Barrett said. “Missoula is a clay hot spot and I wanted to go to school somewhere I could live.”

Barrett is currently freelancing for the Montana Museum of Art and Culture. The MMAC recently commissioned Barrett to make benches for its new building across from UM’s Adams Center.

The bench has a traditional pottery base with natural wood across for seating. Barrett said the interior designer for the MMAC saw his bench when it was displayed in the UM Fine Arts building. The commission work is still under discussion and no official details have been made public.

For now, Barrett is focusing on his academic studies for his MFA and fitting in new art projects when he can. Barrett hopes to return to Ukraine this summer with the sup-

port of the School of Visual and Media Arts.

Barrett and a professor of art history at UM, Valerie Hedquist, are working on fundraising for Barrett to acquire photos of art, war and relief, interview artists still working in a warzone, and document people’s experiences in Ukraine. Barrett then hopes to present a lecture series at UM about his trip.

“I’m grateful for humankind, community and for all the support towards Ukraine over the past year,” Barrett said. “I hope my work inspires and informs those who come across it and starts a conversation between art and the resistance to war.”

**For more information:**  
Visit Sasha Barrett’s website at  
[Sashabarrettceramics.com](http://Sashabarrettceramics.com).



# Philosophy professor wins environmental ethics award, releases book

ANNA HENNING

anna.henning@umontana.edu

During a time when wildlife biodiversity is in rapid decline, award-winning University of Montana philosophy professor Christopher Preston is writing about hopeful situations where people have prevented extinction.

On Feb. 21, Preston published “Tenacious Beasts: Wildlife Recoveries That Change How We Think about Animals.” The book features more than a dozen species from a variety of ecosystems that are recovering from near extinction. The UM Humanities Institute hosted a talk on March 1, where Preston shared stories from his experiences writing the book.

Preston said he hopes learning about the recovering species in his new book will inspire others to make changes for other wildlife.

“Things are not going right yet,” Preston said. “But hopefully you’ll get a little bit of a taste of what might happen if things change. Hope and that is my business.”

Preston defined a “tenacious beast” as a species that has “stared extinction in the face and come back.”

Wildlife populations have decreased by about 70% in the last 50 years, according to the World Wildlife Fund’s 2022 Living Planet Report. The report cited the destruction of natural habitats, climate change and overusing resources as some of the reasons why.

“I think a planet without a lot of species sounds incredibly lonely,” said UM sustainability director Eva Rocke. “Hearing [Preston’s] message of resilience is really energizing.”

A friend of Preston’s, Rocke was one of the co-sponsors of the event because she wanted to support his new book.

Preston was also recently named the winner of the 2022 Andrew Light Award for Public Philosophy by the International Society for Environmental Ethics. The award is given to environmental philosophers who show promising insights into public engagement or published work, according to the International Society for Environmental Epidemiology’s website. This annual award

was created in 2017 and named after its first recipient, Andrew Light.

Originally from England, Preston moved to the United States when he was 22 to study wildlife. The 55-year-old has spent time living in many states, including Colorado and Alaska, before coming to teach at UM in 2005. Many of his philosophy classes focus specifically on environmental issues.

Outside of teaching, Preston has written four books about environmentalism and ethics, including “The Synthetic Age.” The book won a silver medal in the Nautilus Book Awards in 2018. It focused on the Anthropocene, which is the current time period where humans have had a major influence on the climate and environment. In Preston’s new book “Tenacious Beasts,” he shifts to focus more on the recovery of wildlife during these times.

For some of the species Preston wrote about, he said the strategy for recovery was simple: stop killing them. However, every species is different, and many require human intervention for recovery. During his talk, Preston told stories about the species he

observed while writing his book. He talked about the coexistence of sperm whales and fishermen and searching for spotted owls at night.

Bella Wengappuly is a sophomore double majoring in wildlife biology and computer science at UM. The 20-year-old from Charlotte, North Carolina, attended Preston’s talk after seeing the event on GrizHub. She was interested in the positive perspective Preston brought. She said her studies are “really doom and gloom” given the current environmental crises.

“Most students don’t have perspectives on success stories,” Wengappuly said. “They don’t know where they’re trying to go, they just know they’re trying to escape. I think seeing these goals will help us get there faster.”

*“Tenacious Beasts: Wildlife Recoveries That Change How We Think about Animals” can be purchased online for about \$30. To read more of Preston’s writing, visit [christopherjpreston.com](http://christopherjpreston.com).*





# Versatile fifth-year track star looks forward to final season with the Griz

HOLLY MALKOWSKI  
holly.malkowski@umontana.edu

Morgan Radtke was originally recruited to the University of Montana to compete in high jump. As she developed her skills, she has worked her way into becoming a consistent performer in the heptathlon and pentathlon.

"The really cool thing about [Radtke] is she is a very subtle leader on our team," said head coach Doug Fraley. "She's not a big 'rah-rah' person, but she does a really great job of leading by example."

The heptathlon and pentathlon are considered multi-events in track and field, and competitors compete in various events for a total ending score. A pentathlon, typically an indoor event, consists of hurdling, high jump, shot put, long jump and an 800-meter race.

The heptathlon has all of those, but adds a 200-meter race and the javelin throw. These events take place on the same day during competitions.

Radtke, 22, started her career at the University only competing in high jump. But after she had an off-season training session she decided to move into multi-events. She said that high jump was always "her baby," but she did many different events over her high school career.

"I just felt like I had more to offer the team in terms of overall athletic ability," Radtke said. "I thought that maybe I could score some points for us in the multi and it worked out."

Fraley said Radtke is a great example for younger athletes who want to compete in multis because she is an efficient and positive worker.

Radtke competes in multis, but also does individual events. This indoor season, she placed third in the Big Sky Conference tournament for women's high jump. She has placed in the top 10 for every multi event she has done in the conference. Along with competing in high jump and triple jump, she runs the 4x400 relay.

Radtke knew she wanted to take a fifth year in college to prolong her track career, but also said her childhood coach, Lindsey Hall, coming to coach at UM had a big impact on her decision to stay. She competed

in Mountain West Youth Track when she was younger, when Hall was her coach. Hall now coaches multis and hurdles for the Griz.

"I know track is a super short time of my life and I wanted to make the most of it while I'm here," Radtke said.

Radtke is originally from Drummond, a Class B school east of Missoula. Both of her parents went to Montana State University, so growing up she did not expect to become a Griz. Now, both Radtke and her sister attend UM.

Radtke has been accepted into multiple veterinary schools to continue her education, but she chose to take her fifth season at UM. She has a degree in exercise science and is finishing her last year in UM's medical assistant program. Radtke is deciding between Washington State and Colorado State to continue her education next year for veterinary school.

Through long days or weekends of events, Radtke said her teammates keep her relaxed and having fun. Her teammates help her perform better and have a good time.

"When I have to do multis alone, I don't have as much fun, definitely," Radtke said.

Coach Fraley said the team placed lower than they would have liked for this indoor season, but is looking to turn that around for outdoor competitions.

"I think because the outdoor season adds events that indoors doesn't have, we have a chance to do better as a team outdoors because we have very good athletes that are gonna be able to contribute to our team that weren't available for us indoors," Fraley said.

Radtke will compete in her final season and finish her degree in the spring before moving on to vet school.

The Griz outdoor track season opens on March 25 at the Al Manuel Invitational in Missoula.



Morgan Radtke smiles on a practice track set up in the West Auxiliary Gym on March 1. Radtke specializes in jumping events for the Griz track team. **MADDIE CRANDALL | MONTANA KAIMIN**

# SUMMER

GET AHEAD | CATCH UP | STAY ON TRACK





**2023 Sessions:**  
10w: 5/22 - 7/28  
5wI: 5/22 - 6/23  
5wII: 6/26 - 7/28  
[umt.edu/summer](http://umt.edu/summer)

**Register now**



# Tedious Treadmilling: Hear about Missoula's peculiar indoor race

JACK MARSHALL

jack.marshall@umontana.edu

Jennifer Lichter raced in place against two other women on treadmills inside a tightly-packed Runners Edge store in downtown Missoula on March 1. Lichter, a 26-year-old Missoula resident, was in the finals of the competition, and her body started to hurt.

"I just told myself, 'You're feeling bad, you might as well feel worse,'" said Lichter, who is a pro-trail runner for the North Face and a certified running coach. "Pain is temporary."

The Treadmill Challenge is an invite-only competition where three runners at a time race for 10 minutes on treadmills that have a 12% grade, making it feel like the runners are running uphill. Competitors try to get as far as they can while referees hold up their distances throughout the race so the crowd can stay engaged.

Six competitors in each division raced in two flights. The top runners from each flight, along with the third best overall runner, advance to the "final heat."

Lichter took home gold in the women's division, and 33-year-old Kris Brown won the men's division. Brown, who has a sponsorship with running brand Hoka, was a finalist in last year's challenge.

This year, Brown and Hellgate High School phenom Finneas Colescott raced in a close battle for the crown.

"Everything just went quiet and dark," Brown said. "I looked at how much time was left and looked inside of myself and thought 'There's no fucking way that I'm going to make it.'"

Despite being in what he described as "the dark place," Brown just edged out the young Colescott, who will be running at Columbia University this fall.

Fellow Hellgate student Rose Wiltse competed in the women's division alongside Sentinel High School's Malia Bradford. Bradford is going to run at Montana State next year.

The third finalist for the men's division was University of Montana runner Maxwell Scott, who placed in the top 10 of the Big Sky Conference Championship's 5,000 meter race less than a week before the challenge.

"It was harder than I thought it would be," Scott, a computer science major, said. "Track fitness didn't translate super well to the 12% (grade), but I tried my best."



Treadmill Challenge newcomer, Jennifer Lichter, pushes herself to the limit as she takes the lead in the women's final. Lichter finished in first place with 1.22 miles ran in the final heat. **ANDY MEPHAM | MONTANA KAIMIN**

Scott, a 22-year-old senior from Portland, Oregon, competed in the NCAA cross country regionals as a junior last year and will run outdoor track for UM this spring.

A big part of the Treadmill Challenge is the fanfare. Runners entered through the crowd to walkout songs as if they were boxers. Some wore cowboy hats while others donned full-body pink tracksuits.

Liaising all the runners was 27-year-old trail running legend Adam Peterman, who was wearing American flag pants and a "Top Gun" shirt. Peterman, who has competed in the Olympic Trials, first ran in the challenge in 2019

"It's so much fun, the energy's huge,"

Peterman said. "Most of the people in the store cheering for you are your friends and family."

Less than a week before he was slated to run in the Treadmill Challenge, Peterman won the Snow Joke Half Marathon in Seeley Lake and broke its course record, which stood for 42 years. In the record-breaking performance, Peterman tweaked his hamstring and eventually decided to sit out the treadmill race.

"I decided this morning not to do it," Peterman said. "Fortunately, my buddy Peanut came through."

Peterman was replaced in the race by Alejandro "Peanut" Rosales, who famously

was launched off of his treadmill in the 2019 event after refusing to slow it down. Rosales, a PhD candidate in integrative physiology and athletic training at UM, did not fall off the treadmill in this year's competition.

Peterman's old record of going 1.43 miles in the race was broken this year by Brown, who went 1.50 miles.

"We're gonna have to have a rematch," Peterman joked. "There's new treadmills (this year)."

*See more photos in our gallery, page 16.*



# Treadmilling triumphs

ANDY MEPHAM

andrew.mepham@umontana.edu



**ABOVE:** 2022 Treadmill Challenge finalist Kris Brown runs through a tunnel of eventgoers to compete in the men's first heat of the 2023 Treadmill Challenge. Brown later took first place for the men with 1.42 miles in 10 minutes.



**ABOVE:** A crowd of more than 50 gathered at the Runner's Edge on March 1 to watch the 2023 Treadmill Challenge.

**TOP:** In the women's first heat, Nicole Murray (left), Erin Clark (center), and Rose Wiltse (right) fight to outlast each other with less than a minute to go.

**BOTTOM LEFT:** With a smile on his face, Maxwell Scott prepares to speed up his treadmill at the Runner's Edge store in downtown Missoula. Scott took third place overall for the men with 1.30 miles in 10 minutes. Scott, 22, is a fourth-year student at UM who studies computer science and runs on the men's cross country team.



**ABOVE:** Referees at the 2023 Treadmill Challenge mark down the distance the runners have covered in two minute intervals. Doing this allows the runners the opportunity to strategize their pace as they continue further into the 10-minute race.