

MONTANA KAIMIN

GUIDE TO THE 2026



Photos by Jackson Mailey
Stories by Community News Service

MIDTERM ELECTION

Cover graphic by Dane Clements

6 High schoolers in health care

12 Bar fashion going stale

14 Tennis is back

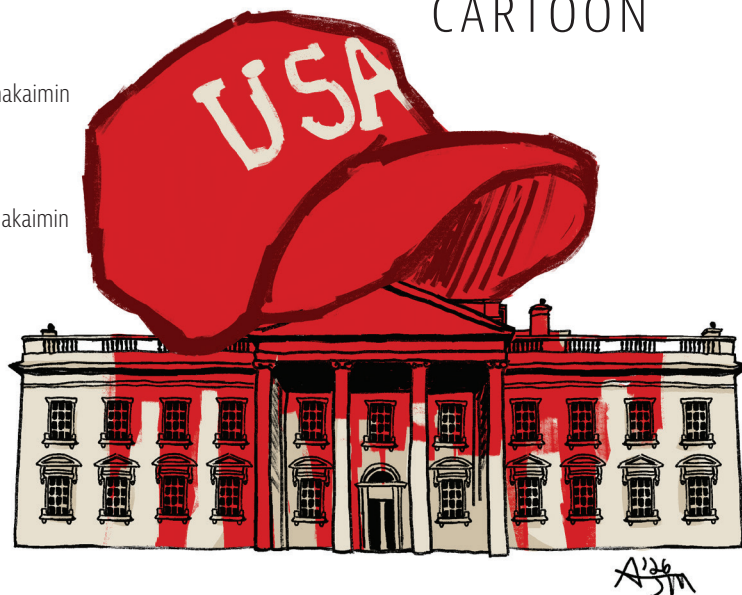
OCTOBER 22, 2026 | VOLUME 129 | ISSUE NO. 8



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



POLITICAL CARTOON



KAIMIN KOMICS: #8 DEAD SERIOUS



AJM

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It's OK to struggle

Artificial intelligence is good at simplifying our lives and improving our productivity, but now people are forgetting how to struggle.

Platforms like Claude and ChatGPT are able to make practice plans for a hobby you want to improve. They're able to give you an outline for a paper you're working on. It can even help you dress "better" after you answer a few questions. Though most argue that AI should not be used as a crutch, I would say AI is inherently a crutch.

AI is instant gratification, it's an answer to a problem that you don't want to figure out yourself. Don't get me wrong, it's not your fault. It's encouraged, actually.

When I sat down for my first class in management information systems, my professor was high-fiving people who use AI sites to help with schoolwork. At first, I was weirded out, but I believed I could just sweep that situation under the rug since I needed to complete the class for my business minor. Then I looked at the syllabus and one of the weekly assignments was "Build your own AI chatbot." I decided to drop the class.

This situation is not unique. According to a Gallup study posted in April, more than half of U.S. college students are using AI in their coursework weekly. The study also found that four out of 10 students say their school encourages using AI for coursework.

This had me thinking, why am I so against all of this? If it's being normalized in the business school, shouldn't I just go along with it to get my degree? I then realized that doing these little tasks is what makes us human.

Life today is filled with answers. Googling something is second nature now. But when I put effort into something, even if I don't want to do it, I feel a much better sense of gratification without using AI.

Even if I write a shitty paper for school, it's still my shitty paper. I created that. If I make a half-decent home cooked meal for myself, I still made that.

If you ask AI how to do something, it's going to give you a step-by-step guide on how to be the best at something. That's perfectionism. That's the artificial intelligence's idea of being the best or doing something right.

If there's anything that life has taught me so far, it's that there is no right or

wrong way to do something. I don't need a higher intelligence to tell me how to live my life.

While some may call that naive, I'd rather be naive and find gratification in the little wins than not have those little wins at all.

Go try things and suck at them. It's OK to be bad at something, because at least you are doing it. Try new things, create something, build your own habits and don't let the perfectionism of AI cloud your ability to suck at something.

- Jackson Mailey, photo editor
Like it? Hate it? Let us know.
Email us your opinions at
henry.doellinger@umontana.edu

Feature photo & Editorial

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:

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

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

Kicks and flips



Skater Damion Donnelly attempts a kickflip down a set of stairs outside the Health Sciences Building at the University of Montana on Oct. 18.

EMBRY ERICSON | MONTANA KAIMIN

In local news...

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NO KINGS RETURNS IN MISSOULA

An estimated 1,000 Missoulians attended a No Kings rally on Oct. 17, protesting against the Trump administration and steep costs of living.

The demonstration came just days after President Donald Trump spoke in support of Montana Republican candidates in Kalispell.

Protestors carried signs with messages such as "Dump Trump," "Hope 4 a Blue Wave" and "The World's a Trump-ster Fire."

The protest garnered smaller numbers than Missoula's previous No Kings rallies in March, which drew more than 10,000 participants. Danica Nelson, who works with the activism group Indivisible Montana, attributed the lower turnout to the University of Montana football game, and fall break for Missoula's public schools.

Rally organizers urged attendees to vote early.

"We are defending democracy. We are standing guard," former Helena legislator Kim Abbott, who helped host the event, told the Daily Montanan. "We are standing guard against an administration that has said that they don't want to count our votes."

Affordability was one of the driving forces for the rally as well, with some protestors citing cost of living as their motivation.

Others, such as Audrey Schubring, came to speak out against immigration enforcement policies and the treatment of immigrants.

"They don't give them a chance. They treat them brutally, and that isn't what they were supposed to do," Schubring said.

Attendee Janice Stroud said one thing motivated her alone: "Hate for Trump."

NEW US ATTORNEY FOR DISTRICT OF MONTANA

A Yellowstone County attorney of 15 years is stepping down to lead the U.S. Attorney's Office for the District of Montana, starting Oct. 26.

Scott Twito is set to serve as an interim U.S. District Attorney for up to 120 days before being nominated for permanent service by the president and confirmed by the Senate, according to Montana Free Press.

"My office is full of capable, dedicated public servants ready to continue serving the people of Yellowstone County," Twito said in his resignation letter. "While the

timing of this is difficult, I know that the office is in good hands when I depart."

Twito's name was on all Yellowstone County ballots for the Nov. 3 election, though he is no longer running. Whoever the Board of County Commissioners appoints to take his place will stay on through the election and run to keep their spot in the 2028 general election, instead of serving a four-year term, as per state law.

Twito gave recommendations of potential successors to the Board of County Commissioners, but didn't give any names to Montana Free Press.

He said he looks forward to his new position and the opportunity to serve the public.

"I know there's a lot of skilled people over there [at the U.S. Attorney's Office] and I hope they extend a lot of grace to me as I sit and learn," Twito told Montana Free Press.

MILLIONS FOR RURAL EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES

The Department of Public Health and Human Services and Gov. Greg Gianforte announced a \$3.63 million investment across 17 rural Montana emergency medical services agencies on Oct. 16.

The Rural Health Transformation Program plans to "support new or expanded community integrated health services in rural and frontier communities," the Department of Public Health and Human Services stated in a release.

Community integrated health services bring care to patients at their home, rather than a hospital, so lack of transportation and limited patient mobility aren't barriers.

"This pilot is a critical link between underserved Montanans and health care services," department director Charlie Brereton said. "Front-line providers such as [emergency medical technicians] and paramedics, many of them volunteers, will be able to do more for people with chronic conditions such as asthma and diabetes by meeting patients where they are."

Emergency medical services professionals with community integrated health endorsements can carry out patient care plans that include in-home clinical services under medical director oversight.

Agencies must be able to operate a community integrated health program and be located in or serve rural Montana to be eligible for funding.



An unnamed grave outside the state psychiatric hospital in Warm Springs, Montana.

LOTUS PORTE-MOYEL | CONTRIBUTED

This week on the Kaimin Cast...

For the next episode in the Good Bones Series, we hear from Lotus Porte-Moyel about the thousands of unclaimed remains in the cemeteries at the Montana State Hospital.

Since 1877, it has run as a psychiatric hospital and many bodies remain forgotten in the surrounding land. Porte-Moyel visited the area and talked with genealogists that seek to document the life and death of each patient buried, so they can be remembered, and, if desired, family can easily find them.

"We ignored them. We ignored them. And so consequently, I think there's a lot we can learn as a result of what we did, how we warehouse these people," said Jim Sessions, a genealogist working to document patients.

This episode discusses the history of the hospital, the stories of patients and the work being done to bring back the lost souls.

Check out this week's episode of the Good Bones series, "Forgotten souls: Remembering the past of Montana's psychiatric hospital and the patients buried there" by heading to our website at montanakaimin.com, or wherever you find your podcasts.

- Grace Golbach,
audio editor



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



NATIONAL GUARD MEMBER INJURED IN DC SHOOTING

A member of the National Guard was shot in the leg after trying to break up a fight in Washington, D.C., on Monday and returned fire on the suspected shooter.

Metropolitan Police Department Chief Jeff Carroll said in a statement to the press that seven or eight National Guard members were in a parked van together when they saw a fight break out on the sidewalk. When they exited the van to break up the fight, they heard gunshots.

"The individual that had been involved in the fight had pulled out a firearm and began shooting," Carroll said.

He said the suspect was ordered to put down the gun before they aimed it at the National Guard members, one of whom was shot in the leg. Three National Guard members returned fire at the suspect, and at least one of them shot the suspect in the abdomen.

Both of them were transported to local hospitals for treatment and are expected to survive.

"At this point there is no further threat to the community," Carroll said.

USDA RECALLS 1.5 MILLION POUNDS OF MEAT

A meat company based in Massachusetts is recalling over 1.5 million pounds of ready-to-eat meat and poultry products because they may have been stored at improper temperatures.

The products were produced by Kayem Foods Inc. from March 31 to Oct. 7. They were shipped to retail and foodservice locations nationwide and in Hong Kong, according to the Food Safety and Inspection Service.

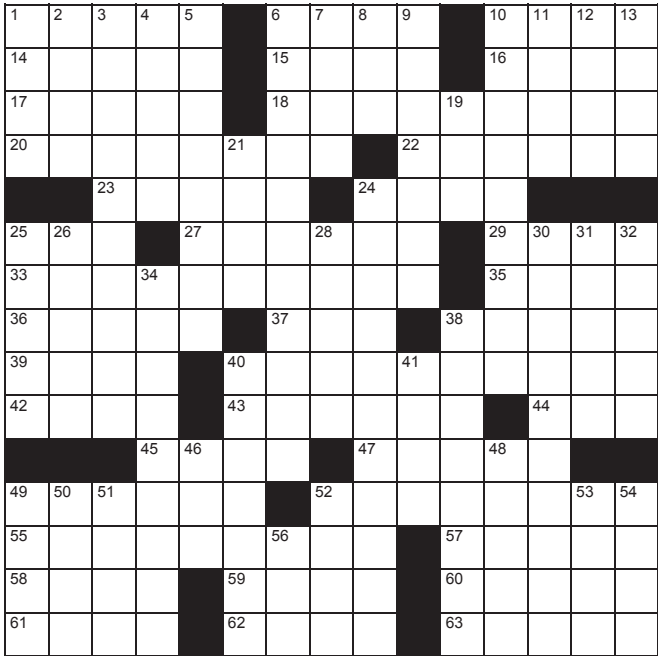
The recalled foods include sausages, bacon, hot dogs, bratwursts, brisket and other meats under nine different brand names.

The issue was discovered after a customer complained about receiving warm products they ordered that were delivered on Oct. 1.

"The establishment investigated and determined that they stored various [ready-to-eat] meat and poultry products in a warehouse cooler that experienced temperature deviations," the Food Safety and Inspection Service stated.

There are currently no confirmed reports of illness due to consumption of the recalled foods, but the Food Safety and Inspection Service said there was concern that the products are in people's refrigerators.

"Consumers who have purchased these products are urged not to consume them," the Food Safety and Inspection Service stated. "These products should be thrown away or returned to the place of purchase."



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- 1 Roll call listings
6 Sea eagle
10 End of a Hemingway title
14 Praise highly
15 Gas light
16 U.S. weather agcy.
17 Hitching post
18 Books with stiff covers
20 Push-up target
22 John ___ Booth
23 Hunt in Hollywood
24 Blew the whistle
25 URL ender
27 Sycophant
29 "Tide" anagram
33 Humiliations
35 "Swordfish" director Dominic
36 Pastry specialist
37 NY opera house, with "the"
38 Like some lawsuits
39 Black cat, maybe
40 Distribute differently
42 Pucker-inducing
43 Win the favor of
44 Leaky tire sound
45 "Law & Order: SVU" star
47 Eagles tight end Johnny
49 Suck-up
52 Form a league
55 Up in the air
57 Gave a PG to, e.g.
- 58 Stable color
59 Vane direction
60 Correct, as text
61 Say it ___ so
62 Tenement pests
63 Warbucks, to Annie
- 25 Explorer John or Sebastian
26 "The Look" author Michelle
28 Massage
30 Completely shattered
31 FDR or JFK
32 Hawthorne's "Twice-Told ___"
34 Opinion
38 Unable to escape
40 Verify, as a password
41 Give praise
46 Vacation rental
48 Movie genre
49 Cosmonaut Gagarin
50 "Hanna" actress Mireille
51 Glance over
52 Solidarity symbol
53 Care for
54 Singer Arnold
56 Motorists' org.
- DOWN
1 Certain tide
2 Wheel shaft
3 Fixer-upper?
4 Put on cloud nine
5 Baby transport
6 Improvement
7 "Get ___!"
8 Scand. land
9 Lengthwise
10 Tylenol, e.g.
11 It beats scissors
12 Put together
13 Back talk
19 Storage box
21 Paper quantity
24 Negotiated payouts

Answers to Previous Crossword:

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

Cryptid-o-scope

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AIDAN GRAHAM | ARTS & CULTURE EDITOR
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As we reach the middle of October and approach the climax of the spooky season, it's time to divert our minds from human horrors to cryptozoology, the pseudoscience of folkloric creatures whose existence has not been confirmed. Cryptids are said to haunt our world and unstable minds. Although they may not exist, we can find reflections of our own traits within theirs.

LIBRA (SEP. 23 - OCT. 22): Libra, your head is always in the clouds. Your cryptid can only be the Mothman from West Virginia. The all black creature with its glowing red eyes and giant wings stalks or chases its victims, perhaps connecting with its social nature in an eerie way, just like Libra.

SCORPIO (OCT. 23 - NOV. 21): Scorpio, your terrifying yet guiding presence is reminiscent of none other than the Hellhound. Existing in folklore for centuries, modern sightings of Hellhounds or "black dogs" are seen as silent omens of death, not unlike your fearsome aura. We'll certainly try to keep you off our trail.

SAGITTARIUS (NOV. 22 - DEC. 21): Sagittarius, your love of cultural exploration is reminiscent of the illusive Gray Alien. Brought to sensational attention by the Roswell, New Mexico, UFO crash of 1947, across the United States people have reported seeing, being abducted or even falling in love with you. You just want to know everything and they want to dissect everything about you ... literally.

CAPRICORN (DEC. 22 - JAN. 19): Capricorn, you are good old Bigfoot. With your serious and independent disposition you mirror the legendary, giant ape-like creature said to roam the Pacific Northwest. Bigfoot are often observant creatures. But let's just hope you don't brutally break the neck of a mountain trapper's partner, as rumored in the 1990s.

AQUARIUS (JAN. 20 - FEB. 18): Aquarius, your emotional distance associates you with the Squonk. Originating from North American Lumberjack tales, you are an ill-fitted creature covered in warts. You're described as a "pitiful figure" as you constantly weep, and if cornered you dissolve into tears.

PISCES (FEB. 19 - MAR. 20): Pisces, your cryptid reflects your sign's ocean symbolism in a darker way. You're the Kelpie, a shape-shifting water spirit, also known as the deadly water horse. You emerged as a mythical warning of the danger of Scotland's lochs, rivers and bogs in the 17th century.

You may appear empathetic and affectionate on the outside, but underneath the surface lies a much more dangerous truth with an appetite for human flesh and a side of slow death.

ARIES (MAR. 21 - APR. 19): Aries, you're the hunter's delirium, the Jackalope! You're eager, dynamic and quick, just like this fearsome critter, a jackrabbit with antelope horns and a pheasant's tail. Some tales joke that Jackalopes have an incredible taste for human camp food, especially beer and whiskey.

TAURUS (APR. 20 - MAY 20): Taurus, you're the spirit of the forest. The Leshy is a creature originating in pagan Slavic folklore that can grow as tall as the trees around it or shrink to the minute size of a blade of grass. You mimic voices to lure travelers into forests in which they will never see the light again. The Leshy reflects Taurus' deep connection to the earth, as it is rooted, powerful and guards its territory with unsettling patience.



ALYSSA JO MURNION | CARTOONIST

GEMINI (MAY 21 - JUN. 20): Gemini, you are the classic Jersey Devil. Your origin correlates to Gemini's duality, as you were born as a child and later transformed into a feared supernatural creature. As Mercury, a planet associated with communication and tricks, rules Gemini, so the Jersey Devil remains elusive and surrounded by conflicted stories.

CANCER (JUN. 21 - JUL. 22): Cancer, you have a mysterious side, much like the illusive Chupacabra of Central American legend. Descriptions of the Chupacabra vary across stories, but this elusive being is often described as a dog-like, fur or quill covered figure with reptilian features. Meaning "goat-sucker," the Chupacabra has haunted ranchers and livestock across the southwest and is highly protective of its territorial space, just like Cancer.

LEO (JUL. 23 - AUG. 22): Leo, as the most radiant and fierce sign it's no question you'd be none other than Nessie. A giant dinosaur-like monster haunting Scotland's Loch Ness, you're one of oldest and most famous cryptids. The hunt for your existence has put you on the cultural map, it's just a shame we'll never get close enough to know the real you.

VIRGO (AUG. 23 - SEP. 22): Virgo, your loyal and gentle disposition can only relate with the Domovoi, originating from Slavic folklore. You're a protective spirit of the household, but you grow very displeased when rule and order is overthrown. Then you may just torture the inhabitants of your home by climbing on their chests in their sleep, causing nightmares of breathless panic as your weight crushes them.

UM career program for high schoolers aims to improve rural health care

JOCELYN HOOD | NEWS REPORTER

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Five students graduated from Corvallis High School in the spring with pre-health science certificates from the University of Montana thanks to UM's Rural Healthcare Career Pathways Program.

Lily Apedaile is the director of UM's Office of Health Research and Partnership, the office that oversees the program. The program's purpose, according to Apedaile, is to help high school students decide if they want to pursue a health care career, save them time and money and train health professionals who will stay in rural Montana.

It is funded by a \$1.8 million grant from the Department of Education and offered at 10 high schools across Missoula, the Bitterroot Valley and the Montana Hi-Line. Apedaile said about 300 students have participated in the program each year over the past two years. Some schools also offer additional Certified Nursing Assistant, medical assisting, Emergency Medical Technician and phlebotomy certificates, but most students choose the pre-health sciences certificate.

The Corvallis group was the first to graduate with certificates.

"It's a good way to just kind of test the waters, see if health care is something for them," Apedaile said.

Kristina Berger, UM's Bitterroot College director, worked with Apedaile on the project.

"This is a wonderful foundation for any high school student that's looking to get into the health sciences profession," Berger said.

Kaycee Eubanks, a freshman pre-nursing major at Missoula College, was one of the students to graduate from Corvallis High School with a pre-health science certificate.

Eubanks said that when she was living in Hamilton, she experienced the negative impacts of not having enough qualified medical professionals when she needed brain surgery for a Chiari malformation, a condition in which the lower part of the brain puts pressure on the spinal cord.

"When I was at my hospital in Hamilton, they didn't know what it was, so they diagnosed it wrong, and then I had to come [to Missoula] and get it re-diagnosed, and then I had to go to Kalispell for the surgery," Eubanks said.

She said she took several dual-enrollment courses at her high school, including anatomy, chemistry and pre-calculus, and two online UM courses, Medical Terminology and Intro to Psychology, as part of the program. She graduated high school with 40 college credits.

"Otherwise, I would have to take all those courses right now, so I'd be starting off at zero," Eubanks said.

Apedaile, the director of UM's Office of Health Research and Partnership, said the program was designed to be flexible, with courses that count toward general education requirements at most colleges and universities. She explained that most of the credits would still give students a head start and save them money, even if they changed their minds about pursuing health care professions.

Eubanks said that she saved a significant amount of money by participating in the program, because each course she took for college credit cost about \$200. According to the UM Bitterroot College website, the online Medical Terminology course costs nearly \$900, over four times what Eubanks said she paid.

Eubanks will also graduate a year earlier than she would have if she hadn't earned her pre-health sciences certificate, completing only one year of pre-nursing before starting an Associate of Science in Nursing program.

Long-term, Eubanks says she wants to be a travel nurse in pediatrics, IV or neonatal intensive care.

Apedaile said expanding access to health care in rural Montana is one of the program's goals.

"A big piece of [that] is the workforce. It's really hard to get health care workers of all different levels," Apedaile said. "The pathway is one way to get students aware of the health care careers that are in their community."

Eubanks said the program did that for her.

"When I was a sophomore, I thought about doing health care, and then I went back and forth from nursing and lawyer," Eubanks said. "Taking all these courses helped me decide that I wanted to do it."

Berger, UM's Bitterroot College director, said she thinks most program graduates will stay in Montana and strengthen the rural workforce.

"If you are in a rural area to start with, you're more likely to then return to a rural area to practice and work," Berger said.



Missoula College student Kaycee Eubanks sits at a table with a classmate before her chemistry lab in the University of Montana Chemistry Building on Oct. 19. Eubanks was a part of UM's Rural Healthcare Career Pathways Program that helps high schoolers with medical career plans get a head start.

EMBRY ERICSON | MONTANA KAIMIN

The logo for Sunrise Saloon features the word "SUNRISE" in a bold, yellow, distressed font with a black outline, and "Saloon" in a red, cursive script below it. To the right is a silhouette of a cowboy on a rearing horse, holding a lasso, set against a background of concentric circles and cacti.

Missoula's only Country
Western Saloon!

Karaoke - Sunday, Tuesday, Thursday @ 9PM

Country Dance Lessons - Tuesday, Thursday @ 7 PM

with Misfit Country

Trivia/Bingo - Wednesdays @ 7PM

Nashville 406 - Oct 23 @ 9:30PM

Hoedown Showdown & DJ Takeover - Oct 23 @ 7PM

1101 Strand Ave, Missoula, MT 59801

Debate heats up Flint-Forstag race

COLBY SUKO-CLARK | NEWS REPORTER

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Montana U.S. House candidates Aaron Flint and Sam Forstag debated in Helena on Oct. 13, clashing over policy and ideology amid their closely contested race.

A poll by NonStop Local News, conducted Sept. 19-24 by American Pulse Research and Polling, found 49.5% of people plan to vote Republican for Flint and 45.4% plan to vote Democrat for Forstag for the 1st District seat. Those figures make it Montana's closest race.

"I haven't been paying attention to the other races, but I am completely locked into this race," said Justin Hoffstead, a 27-year-old Missoula Democrat. "It is just too close to not pay attention to."

In early September, the Cook Political Report considered the race a strong Republican race, but recent polling suggests the campaigns are tighter. Since the debate, the Cook Political Report and multiple stations, including Fox News, have labeled the district as a "toss-up."

The Silver Bulletin, a Substack newsletter and statistical analysis platform run by election forecaster Nate Silver, gave Forstag a 0.5% higher chance of winning the election than Flint on Oct. 19.

The debate included multiple instances of the candidates cutting each other off over issues like political ties and data center regulations. Flint used the name "Phony Forstag," and one major argument flared over Forstag's connection to Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez. Flint said Forstag brought her to campaign and is now acting like he never knew her. The candidates then began to talk over each other until they were cut off.

"While I may be supporting Forstag, candidates fighting like that isn't good for anyone. I want fair and clean debates, not name-calling," Hoffstead said.

Both candidates agreed that housing in Montana has reached a point where something needs to change, but they have different approaches. Forstag argued that the government needs to step in, while Flint said too much regulation would increase prices and



Montana's 1st District Republican House of Representatives candidate Aaron Flint speaks while on the campaign trail in Hamilton on Sept. 4. JACKSON MAILEY | MONTANA KAIMIN

offered to focus on getting more people into trades to help build more houses. They agreed that it is necessary to stop the Iran War quickly and ban congressional stock trading. Flint and Forstag also acknowledged both their parties' shortcomings.

"My national party, the Democrats, they've failed on so many levels," Forstag said.

"I am disgusted by what the Democratic Party did to this country," Flint said. "I'm frustrated that Republicans aren't doing enough, either." Both pledged to stop political corruption.

The rest of the debate was heavily contentious, especially surrounding each candidate's background.

Forstag was a smokejumper for several years, and Flint is an Army veteran. Both also served in the Associated Students of the University of Montana. Forstag criticized Flint for working as a radio host while claiming working-class ties and Flint criticized Forstag's time as a lobbyist for the same reason.

The issue of transgender rights was another one of the debate topics, as Flint argued against policies that allow for transgender athletes to compete

in their preferred gender's sports and the ability for transgender people to be in certain locker rooms and prisons. Flint also pushed against minors being able to go through gender-affirming surgeries. Forstag argued for parental and individual decision-making when it comes to surgeries and argued in favor of policies that support transgender people.

The pair also clashed on data center policies. Flint supported leaders in artificial intelligence development and said the government shouldn't have the power to decide whether a data center gets built. However, he said Montanans should oppose data centers if they negatively affect the environment or citizens' way of life.

Forstag cited environmental concerns and argued that AI and data centers need more regulation. He said the government should step in to regulate data centers and keep them in line.

Although the debate had many contentious moments, it ended respectfully. Flint walked across the stage to shake hands with Forstag, and the two candidates shared a hug after the event. The Libertarian candidate Nick Sheedy declined the invitation to



U.S. congressional candidate Sam Forstag squats down as he talks with voters outside his Missoula office on Regent Street on Oct. 16. EMBRY ERICSON | MONTANA KAIMIN

attend. However, after the debate, some in the audience still weren't sure how to cast their votes.

"I have never felt more in the air about a ballot in all my years of voting," said Tristain Daniels, a 56-year-old Republican. To Daniels, both parties have failed to keep their promises.

"Even though I vote red, you have to criticize both sides for the garbage they are making. And while I support Flint, I just don't quite know who I am going to vote for in this election," Daniels said.

Flint hosted an event in the Flathead Valley last week where multiple Republican speakers, including Rep. Ryan Zinke and President Donald Trump, showed up to voice their support.

Mail-in ballots have already been sent to some voters, but people can also vote in person at the polls. Montana has same-day registration, so residents can register and vote on the same day. Election day is Nov. 3, which is the last day for ballots to be submitted.

"With the race so tight, I am going to have to wait and make sure I have all the facts before I make a hasty decision," Daniels said.

GUIDE TO THE 2026 MIDTERM ELECTION

Photos Jackson Mailey | Stories by the Community News Service

Editor's note: The Community News Service is a production of the University of Montana School of Journalism. For more election stories not in print, please visit montanakaimin.com.

From last-minute withdrawals and filings to a prominent third-party run, it's been a chaotic election year in Montana. The Montana Kaimin presents the 2026 midterm election guide to help wade through the confusion.

Republican Kurt Alme, Democrat Alani Bankhead and Independent candidate and former University of Montana President Seth Bodnar are in a three-way race to fill a Senate seat left open by Sen. Steve Daines, who is retiring.

The Cook Political Report recently rated the House District 1 race

between Republican Aaron Flint and Democrat Sam Forstag a true toss-up. With Republicans holding a razor-thin two-seat majority in the U.S. House of Representatives, a flip to blue in Montana's western district could have national implications.

Judges Amy Eddy and Dan Wilson are competing for a seat on Montana's Supreme Court, which Republicans have recently criticized as being "too liberal."

Lastly, three initiatives are on the ballot this year. Constitutional Initiatives 132 and 133 would amend the Montana Constitution to keep judicial

elections nonpartisan and secure the citizen initiative process without government interference, respectively. Initiative 194 would ban corporate or "dark" money in elections.

As the saying goes, all politics are local, so don't overlook hyperlocal races, like the school board, justice of the peace or county commissioner. These people may affect your day-to-day life more than a Senator or a Supreme Court justice.

If you're not registered yet, it's not too late. Montana allows same-day voter registration, so as long as you're in line

before polls close at 8 p.m., you're good to go. But don't forget a photo ID, which Montana now requires to vote.

If you're voting absentee, Missoula County mailed its ballots on Oct. 9. You can mail your ballot back before Oct. 27 or drop it off any time between now and Nov. 3 at the county elections office at 140 N. Russell St. On Election Day, any polling place in the county will accept ballots from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m.

- Mariah Henry, Montana Kaimin

Bankhead perseveres despite splintered support, lack of funds

By Abby Williams

In the three-way Senate battle, one candidate has stood out to many. Former Lt. Col. and self-described "military brat," Democrat Alani Bankhead has been one of the 2026 campaign's most unexpected stories.

"I am the only U.S. Senate candidate that is for universal health care," Bankhead said. "I am the only U.S. Senate candidate that's against AI data centers. I am the only U.S. Senate candidate who has trusted relationships over the past 25 years in Washington, D.C. And I am the only U.S. Senate candidate not beholden to special interests, power and money."

Making her case has been central for Bankhead, who faced a pressure campaign this summer from former Democratic officials urging her to drop out, as they saw Seth Bodnar's better-funded Independent campaign as their best chance to defeat Republican candidate Kurt Alme.

Bankhead has raised \$60,000 while Bodnar and Alme have raised millions.

According to ad spending records, Bankhead has no political ads running, while Bodnar and Alme have scores of different ad buys.

But Bankhead resisted calls to drop out. "What can money do that I can't?" Bankhead asked in an interview.

Bankhead said she serves the community and is focused on more "relevant" issues, such as reservations in Montana losing food assistance, adding that she would rather serve people directly than raise money and send out mailers.

Her long-shot campaign is the latest chapter in an unlikely career.

"Let's talk about that dark money," Bankhead said during a debate at a library. "That money was fueled by a [political action committee] whose treasurer was on the staff of Jon Tester. Since that PAC dropped me, they directly funded [Bodnar's] campaign. So, all that dark money was pushed to me without my permission. So that he could try to push me out of this election. And folks, I'm still standing."

This Senate election has also been filled with other surprises. The state's senior senator, Republican Steve Daines, withdrew two minutes before the filing deadline closed in March, essentially handing the nomination to Alme, who registered six minutes before Daines dropped out.

Former Democratic Sens. Jon Tester and Max Baucus backed Bodnar, leaving Bankhead without key supporters from her own party. Bankhead and the Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee in Washington are not communicating, leaving her with minimal support from the national party.

"I am not playing games [with a committee] that is not listening to the people," Bankhead said.

Despite receiving little from national politicians, Bankhead decided to run as a Democrat because her values align most with that party.

"Democrats support working people, workplace safety and unions," Bankhead said.



CONTRIBUTED | ALANI FOR MONTANA

GOP Senate candidate leans into Montana roots, experience

By Sophia Ward

Kurt Alme's announcement video is a lot like his campaign for the U.S. Senate — a textbook example of biography and issues: shots of Great Falls and Miles City, a focus on supporting law enforcement and backing President Donald Trump. He hopes this conservative playbook will keep the U.S. Senate seat in Republican hands.

The one surprising element of the Alme campaign is that it exists at all. The former U.S. Attorney was not on many radars until the March filing deadline to declare candidacy. Eight minutes before the deadline, Alme registered to run, and six minutes later, senior U.S. Sen. Steve Daines withdrew his name, leaving Alme as the only Republican candidate.

The quick switch drew criticism, with many calling it a backroom deal and saying Republican voters did not select Alme to represent the party this year. Sen. Daines said he ultimately decided not to continue his Senate run because he wants to spend more time with family. When asked if this was planned, Sen. Daines did not answer directly.

"We consulted carefully with Gov. Gianforte, with Sen. Sheehy, and I know Montanans have seen some crazy races in the past that became \$200 million to \$300 million races [for] Senator," Sen. Daines said. "But ... Montanans will get to decide who the next Senator is in November."

Sen. Daines said he and Alme worked together on law-and-order issues tied to Montana's methamphetamine epidemic. Daines recommended Alme to President Trump for U.S. Attorney during Trump's first term, and Jon Tester, Montana's Democratic Senator at the time, also backed Alme's confirmation once the nomination reached the Senate.

"They had a plan for the Senate seat ... so this was all planned ahead of time," said Jessi Bennion, a political scientist at Montana State University.

Alme was born in Great Falls and graduated from high school in Miles City. He left Montana to attend college in Colorado and then went to Harvard Law School. He has served as Montana's U.S. Attorney, worked as a prosecutor and clerked for a federal judge appointed by Ronald Reagan.

Alme points to his state and federal government career as part of his qualifications for the seat.

"I have a proven record of cutting taxes, balancing budgets, paying off debt and locking up violent criminals," Alme said.

As Montana's revenue director, Alme was involved in state tax changes that in 2003 lowered the top individual income-tax rate from 11% to 6.9% under then-Gov. Judy Martz. Later, as U.S. Attorney, he said he oversaw a federal office that prosecuted more than 400 defendants each year. In 2019, his Project Safe Neighborhoods initiative reported prosecuting over 200 violent offenders in Yellowstone County.

Sen. Daines believes Alme will be very strong on securing the southern border, supporting law enforcement and keeping taxes in check.

"I have worked with him on some of these issues in the past, and he's going to do a really great job here in Washington," Sen. Daines said.

He said this history of serving Republican administrations has prepared him to serve in the U.S. Senate and represent the whole state.

"I had the opportunity to live all over the state, meet with people in a lot of different walks of life," Alme said. "So, it's that experience of being a Montanan

and listening to Montanans and hearing what issues are important to Montanans that I'll bring to Washington, and I'll be sure people's voices get heard."



CONTRIBUTED | ALME FOR SENATE

Bodnar tries to carve a third way to the U.S. Senate

By Gillian Honzel

He sat on the tailgate of a truck in jeans and a black T-shirt with a clear message about privacy.

"Flock off, man," Independent candidate Seth Bodnar said. He then removed a shotgun from his



Seth Bodnar, Independent candidate for the Senate race in Montana, speaks to voters in the Union Club in Missoula on Sept. 14.

truck, set up a replica camera and shot it.

"They're getting rich," Bodnar said to the camera. "And we're getting screwed."

The stunt has been viewed about half a million times on X. For Bodnar, the central idea of his Independent campaign for the U.S. Senate is simple: Montanans should not have to choose between two parties that are more interested in national politics than in the people they represent.

"I wanted to run a campaign that brought Montanans together, not a campaign that was focused on splitting Montanans into opposing partisan camps," Bodnar said.

No Independent candidate has ever won statewide office in Montana, but Jesse Bennion, political science professor at Montana State University, said frustration with the current political climate could create an opening.

"He is speaking to that group of people that don't love the parties right now, and it's a big group of people," she said. "They just don't love what political parties are doing ... It's kind of a more hopeful sort of candidacy, or, like, maybe things could be different."

Beyond a message of independence, Bodnar leans on his resume as a major qualifier for the Montana Senate seat.

Bodnar graduated from West Point and served in the United States Army as a Green Beret before entering the private sector and working for General Electric's train division. He left the division to become president of the University of Montana in 2018 and served until January this year, when he announced his run for Senate.

"Chelsea and I decided that our kids deserve better, that you deserve better, that we all deserve better, and that's the main reason that we decided to jump into this race," Bodnar said. "We need to place Montana above party and the United States of America above the party," Bodnar said.

His campaign has tried to expand beyond party affiliation into issues of affordability and protecting one of Montana's most valued resources, public lands.

"We are at risk of losing our way of life itself. You know, I have said repeatedly that the top priority of this campaign is to renew that basic promise at the heart of the American dream itself," Bodnar said.

Both his resume and message have attracted support from several establishment politicians and groups.

From the Democratic side of the aisle, Bodnar has been endorsed by former U.S. Sens. Max Baucus and Jon Tester and groups like Forward Montana and Montana Conservation Voters. He has attracted less support from the Republican side, but does have the backing of former GOP national chair and former Montana Gov. Marc Racicot and former state GOP chair Susan Geise.

Recent polls have indicated Bodnar has closed the gap with front-runner Alme. On Oct. 8, Concord Public Opinion Strategies published a poll that placed Bodnar two percentage points ahead of Alme at 37% in a projection of who would win the election that day.

Those numbers don't determine how the race will end in November.

Bodnar is asking voters to look beyond the letter next to the candidate's name. If he wins or loses the race for Senate, he wants to be remembered as a man who fought for Montana.

"You know, at the end of the day, I'm a husband and a dad who, together with my wife, are just trying to shape a brighter future for this state," Bodnar said.

Candidates differ over meaning of a ‘nonpartisan’ Montana Supreme Court

By Elle Daniel

A long-running debate over the role of politics in Montana’s courts has become the central issue in this year’s Supreme Court race between two Flathead County judges.

In the nonpartisan race to replace retiring Justice Beth Baker, candidates Amy Eddy and Dan Wilson have both stressed the need to keep politics out of the courtroom, though they’ve approached that goal differently.

Political expert and University of Montana professor Rob Saldin said partisan backing in nonpartisan elections has intensified over the past several years, matching Montana’s increasingly Republican voting record.

“For a long time, it was less clear that making a judicial race line up along partisan lines would be a significant advantage to one candidate or the other,” Saldin said. “But as Montana has become more and more clearly Republican, I think Republicans probably rightly so see an advantage to making it clear to voters which candidate the party is supporting.”

Both candidates running for the state Supreme Court registered as nonpartisan, but Wilson has received endorsements and donations from Republican officials.

Eddy, 50, said she gained a deeper understanding of the Montana Supreme Court while working as a private practice lawyer. Former Gov. Steve Bullock appointed Eddy in 2015 and she has been reelected twice since. As a district court judge in Flathead County, she has heard hundreds of cases, including many asbestos-related cases from Libby.

“We’re in a time where Montanans really deserve to maintain a fair and independent court as an independent branch, not as an extension of one of the political parties,” she said.

If elected, Eddy will serve with two justices who recently endorsed her, Justices Katherine Bidegary and Ingrid Gustafson. Bidegary defeated Wilson, Eddy’s current opponent, in 2024.

The endorsements from the two current and six retired state justices left Eddy “almost overwhelmed” by the support. But she said she appreciates the support of other groups, such as the Democratic and Republican parties in Montana, while ultimately rejecting it.

Eddy has drawn a hard line on politics in the courtroom. To back up that position, Eddy said she has refused all endorsements, donations and support from both parties. Eddy has also made it a point not to appear at party-sponsored forums or speak at party-affiliated events.

“That’s really the definition of nonpartisan,” she said. “You do not



The Montana state Supreme Court chamber sits empty on Sept. 30.

associate yourself with the political parties, you don’t run under a political party label. It’s not a very high bar. We have not wanted our judges to be held captive by political parties.”

Still, political scientist Jessi Bennion noted that some politically aligned groups have backed Eddy’s candidacy.

“If you look at Amy Eddy, she’s supported by Forward Montana, the Montana ACLU, Wild Montana — organizations that typically support Democratic candidates. And then on the other side, Wilson, who is being supported by more Republican-leaning organizations in the state, like the Montana Chamber of Commerce,” Bennion said.

Wilson maintains he is a nonpartisan candidate and will serve as a nonpartisan justice, despite receiving \$20,000 from the state Republican Party and another \$11,000 donation from the Park County Republican Central Committee.

Wilson, 60, isn’t a stranger to running for the Montana Supreme Court. He ran for a seat in 2024, ultimately losing to Bidegary by eight points. Despite that loss, Saldin said name recognition from

the 2024 run may actually give Wilson an advantage, drawing in votes from familiarity.

A fourth-generation Montanan, Wilson calls himself a constitutional conservative. To him, that judicial philosophy means making decisions and rulings that don’t rely on modern-day political leanings.

Wilson has his own endorsements from groups like the nonprofit organization Montana Stockgrowers Association, the Montana Chamber of Commerce, the Montana Association of Realtors and the Montana Mining Association.

He described serving on the Montana Supreme Court as the most meaningful way to serve both the public and the law. He said part of running for state supreme court means letting a judge’s rulings “speak for themselves.”

Wilson said his rulings reflect a steady, deliberate approach aimed at getting each decision right.

“The litigants deserve the judge’s full care and attention without any desire on the judge’s part to see a particular outcome,” Wilson said. “Except that it be right, follow the law and be obedient to

the Constitution.”

Partisan backing may not actually draw in more votes or secure a victory on either side, but Saldin said it has pros and cons.

“The partisan cue can really make a huge difference,” Saldin said. “This is one of the reasons why you traditionally see a lot lower turnout for nonpartisan elections ... because people feel like they don’t know and aren’t in a position to cast an informed vote, so they just skip it.”

But Saldin said partisan pressure can also undercut the race’s nonpartisan intent. “The extent that you have forces trying to place that partisan label on it does kind of cut against the whole idea behind having these races be nonpartisan,” Saldin said. “You lose the idea that these races should be thought about in a nonpartisan manner and that it should be the character of the candidates.”

Whether party support will have a larger impact on the judicial campaign will be clear only on Election Day, Nov. 3.

Initiative I-194 seeks to rein in ‘dark money’ in Montana

By Mariah Henry

Dark money — political spending that’s unlimited and often untraceable to its true source — has become a fixture of Montana politics, and Initiative 194 seeks to end it.

In 2020, a secretive Washington, D.C.-based organization bankrolled nearly 70% of the campaign to legalize marijuana in Montana. The group, known as the North Fund, never disclosed its donors or why it backed only Montana’s effort that year, even though marijuana was on the ballot in three other states.

In 2024, the U.S. Senate race between then-Sen. Jon Tester, a Democrat, and Republican Sen. Tim Sheehy became the most expensive in Montana history, with nearly \$300 million spent, most of it from groups outside the state with no formal ties to either candidate.

Initiative 194, on the ballot this fall, directly targets that kind of spending. Also known as the Montana Plan, it would change the state’s corporate rules to ban “dark money” spending in Montana politics altogether.

Dark money spending soared after the U.S. Supreme Court issued its 2010 Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission decision.

Citizens United said the federal government could not restrict corporate spending on political issues, but it left in place a much older set of state laws that set the rules for how corporations can operate. I-194 seeks to change Montana’s rules for corporations to prevent them from spending money on political issues.

The Montana Plan is spearheaded by the Transparent Election Initiative, a nonprofit based in Helena that is also working with other states like Hawaii, Oregon and Colorado to pass similar legislation.

Jeff Mangan, the founder and president of the Transparent Election Initiative and former Commissioner of Political Practices in Montana, said the goal is not to repeal Citizens United, but to make the decision moot for Montana corporations.

“Moving forward, Citizens United will just be a footnote in Montana’s history,” Mangan said.

“Corporate law is one of our oldest standing laws,” said Russell Cleveland, the Transparent Election Initiative’s director of partnerships. “Think of it as terms and conditions, and Montana would be creating new terms and conditions for corporations to operate here.”

Cleveland said there’s little chance to “game the system” unless the spending was done outside Montana. “By violating [the



Photo illustration



A “Vote yes on I-194” sign sits near the University of Montana on Sept. 30.

initiative], they violate their corporate bail, which would unravel the protective fabric around the corporation itself,” he said.

Jessi Bennion, a political science professor at Montana State University, said she thinks the initiative will pass in November.

“If you look at any polling, absolutely everyone hates dark money,” Bennion said. “I haven’t seen any strong ‘No’ campaign yet.”

That said, not everyone is on board with the Montana Plan.

The Montana Chamber of Commerce is

leading a campaign against the initiative and unsuccessfully filed a lawsuit in March to block it from the ballot.

In an op-ed on the chamber’s website, the Montana, Kalispell and Billings chambers of commerce argued that I-194 would silence Montana businesses.

“Under I-194, a single well-funded outsider could bankroll a campaign to devastate a Montana agricultural practice, a logging operation or a ranching family, while the Montana businesses under attack would be legally silenced,” it said.

However, Mangan said businesses would not lose their voices, as they could still lobby the Legislature, endorse candidates or spend money elsewhere to educate voters on candidates or issues.

Bennion acknowledged I-194 is “the most precarious” of the three initiatives on the ballot this fall, because it is statutory, not constitutional. That means that if passed, I-194 will take effect like any other law passed by the Legislature, not a constitutional amendment.

The Transparent Election Initiative is working on a constitutional initiative for 2028. The constitutional initiative wasn’t approved in time this year, so the Montana Plan had to move forward as a statutory initiative, which means the Legislature can “tinker” with it, Mangan said.

Mangan was Commissioner of Political Practices when the North Fund backed the marijuana initiative in 2020. Under I-194, an organization like the North Fund would have to create a separate political action committee with individual, disclosed donors to contribute to a campaign in Montana, he said.

Montana has a strong history of citizen initiatives and of limiting campaign spending. In 1912, a citizen ballot initiative passed the Corrupt Practices Act, which banned direct corporate spending in political campaigns. In 1996, voters banned corporate contributions to ballot initiatives. Both were invalidated by Citizens United. In 2012, Montanans overwhelmingly passed Initiative 166, which clarified that corporations aren’t legal persons. However, according to Mangan, the initiative was just a statement and has no legal weight.

Despite that history, I-194 must first pass in November and then face challenges ahead in the legislature and in the courts. But if it succeeds, Montana could pave the way to limit corporate spending in the wake of the Citizens United ruling.

For more stories from the Election Reporting capstone class, visit the Montana Kaimin website.

Bar fashion is losing its edge

NIAMH O'FARRELL | ARTS REPORTER
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Picture this: Friday's last assignment has been turned in, the laptops are shut and the tedious process of getting ready for a night out with the girls begins.

Everyone spends 30 minutes trying on every piece of going-out clothing they've ever purchased. After the hair has been curled, the makeup is finished and the right outfit has been selected, the Uber is called, and the bars await.

Upon entering the bar, something becomes abundantly clear: Most women are wearing some variation of the same outfit. You are adrift in a sea of light-wash jeans paired with black tops. Lace black tops, solid black tops and black tube tops reach as far as the eye can see.

Women's fashion is more expensive than ever. However, nightlife fashion among college-aged women feels more like a uniform.

"I feel like I mostly order off Shein," 18-year-old Delaney Allgeier, a biochemistry major, said. Her friends agree, saying they've purchased items from similar sites like TikTok Shop.

Shein and TikTok Shop are both fast-fashion websites that sell cheap, trendy clothes. Other popular stores, such as Garage and Edikted, sell to the same demographic of young women, but at much higher prices. Based on each website's prices, the average Edikted top ranges from \$19-35. In contrast, the average Shein top ranges from \$5-\$10, making it a more appealing price point for college students.

Most college students balance expenses such as loans, tuition and gas, which leaves little wiggle room to spend on clothes. This makes websites like Shein and TikTok Shop more appealing to young shoppers.

Color palettes are another piece of nightlife uniformity. According to TikTok Shop sales data, the two best-selling going-out tops are black. Both have sold around 25,500 units in the last year and are under \$25. In

comparison, the closest-selling going-out top in red has sold only 4,500 units in the last year.

A peer-reviewed study on ScienceDirect examined how colors affect how women are perceived socially. Black received the highest attractiveness rating among participants. "I feel like I wear a lot of black," said 18-year-old Jamie Hazel, a public health major. "You can match it with any outfit and save some money."

Other young women are choosing options that help them fit in. "We refer to peer pressure often in high school, but the question is whether that peer pressure ends as you become an adult," said Daniel Denis, professor of quantitative psychology at the University of Montana.

Social media has made people more aware of how they're perceived than ever before. With instant access to social media platforms, people can take photos at any time, from any angle. This effect has made many, especially Gen Z, hyperaware of their appearance.

Another effect of social media is advertising. Platforms like TikTok use algorithms to push content toward viewers based on age range and gender. So if girls aged 18 to 24 like similar videos, they'll be shown similar content. It uses the same algorithm to advertise items in its online shop. If someone in your age range and gender buys a shirt, you're more likely to be shown that same shirt, which can lead more people to buy the same clothes.

It's part of human nature to want to feel like you belong to a group, whether keeping yourself from starving in the wild by sticking with the people who have the food or to blend in and be accepted by the group you go downtown with. "I want to fit in," said Allgeier. "I don't want attention drawn to me if I'm wearing some weird ass clothes."

Let's get ready!
What are you wearing?



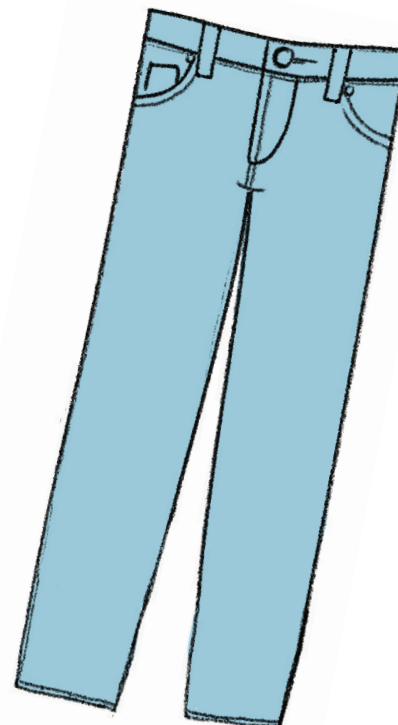
TIKTOK SHOP'S SECOND MOST POPULAR GOING-OUT TOP



TIKTOK SHOP'S BEST-SELLING GOING-OUT TOP



A BLACK TUBE TOP. CUTE AND CLASSIC!



LIGHT WASH JEANS, OF COURSE!



OR MAYBE ... SOMETHING A LITTLE DIFFERENT? SHINE ON!

LILY PETERSON | MONTANA KAIMIN

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Having worked with the late Don Kerr to help establish the High Desert Museum, I have always taken great pride in the fact that there is a world-class museum in Bend, Oregon!

In discussions with Dana Whitelaw, Executive Director of the High Desert Museum, I suggested that we create a prize focused on the thirteen Western states and the shared challenges they face, including water rights, wildfires, best ranching practices, tribal and fishing issues.

We were honored that 12 extraordinary individuals agreed to serve on our Advisory Committee and they chose this year's Jordan Schnitzer Prize of the West winner Brad Parry, Vice Chairman of the Northwestern Band of the Shoshone Nation and a former employee of the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, where he served for nearly 20 years.

Mr. Parry has been instrumental in helping reclaim his tribe's ancestral lands in Southeastern Idaho. Through collaboration and thoughtful stewardship, his work has helped restore the watershed, allowing much-needed fresh water to flow toward the Great Salt Lake, which is in desperate need of additional water.

We look forward to this award continuing for many years to come, recognizing individuals who work tirelessly and collaboratively to find solutions that benefit everyone while preserving and enhancing the remarkable Western United States!

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highdesertmuseum.org/schnitzer-prize



Griz tennis reaches new heights

DILLON RICHARDSON | SPORTS REPORTER

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The University of Montana men's tennis team has two players on the brink of qualifying for the National Collegiate Athletic Association championship for the first time in program history.

The duo of Matt Upton and Duncan McCall finished as runners-up at the Intercollegiate Tennis Association Mountain Regional event in doubles. Matt Upton also reached the semifinals in the singles tournament.

The winners of the doubles and the two finalists in the singles tournament qualified for the NCAA championships. Both results were the highest of any UM player in this event.

Montana was the only team to have representation both in the doubles and singles tournament in an event that hosted 15 schools. Head coach Jason Brown said the results show how much Griz tennis has grown.

"We had a really talented team last year that won exactly zero matches in this exact same tournament," Brown said. "I don't know if we were expecting this, but it was really, really fun to be a part of."

Even though they failed to qualify in the regional event, there is still the West Sectional event, which gathers the top finishers from the West, Northwest and Southwest regions that still need to qualify for the NCAA tournament. Six singles and three doubles slots will be up for grabs.

Brown added that a big part of the surprise was because it was McCall and Upton's first tournament playing together and McCall was coming off a foot injury that caused him to miss five months. Regardless, Brown said they gelled really well.

"The energy was contagious, and they kind of dominated all the way to the final," Brown said. "Usually in these tournaments, especially as you get deeper, I get more and more gray hairs, but this one they took it easy on me."

Brown said that this result is a big deal for the program as well as the University as a whole.

"It's sort of our job with athletics in general to make the University look really good," Brown said. "These guys are doing that in such a phenomenal way."

McCall, a junior from Christchurch, New Zealand, said where he grew up affects his mentality in tennis, especially in big events.



Matt Upton practices tennis at PEAK Raquet Club on Oct. 16. Upton made it to the singles semifinal at the Intercollegiate Tennis Association Mountain Regional Championship and to the doubles final with his teammate Duncan McCall. **MARS JOHNSON | MONTANA KAIMIN**

"[New Zealand] is a small place, small population, but we always punch above our weight in sports," McCall said. "I kind of feel the same way about Montana, especially with tennis. It's not huge here, but I definitely have a chip on my shoulder. I go there and if there's big schools with a lot of funding, I definitely make it known that we're here to fight."

He said that failing to qualify was disappointing, but he and Upton are ready.

Upton, who was All-Big Sky Conference Second Team in both doubles and singles last year as a freshman, said he knows that past results have no effect on the outcome.

"It's easy to view it differently and expect the results, but everyone you go out on the court against is trying to do the same thing," Upton said. "You don't have any right to the win over them just

because you've done well in a tournament before."

He said that losing was tough, especially because he lost twice in one day, but he appreciates the growth he has had recently.

"After a while, you look at the bigger picture, and where I was a few months ago, and even a couple weeks ago, it gives a good perspective on it," Upton said.

He added that the growth is because of the work he's put in.

"I've always been really good at getting extra reps, and you've just got to trust that that's gonna come through eventually," Upton said. "There's no timeline. Everyone's gonna have ups and downs, but you've just got to ride the waves."

Brown said the hard work is what makes Upton great.

"He hasn't rested on his laurels once," Brown said. "[He] came back from the first tournament of the fall disappointed, we got back to work. Came back doing pretty well in the second tournament, got back to work. Came back this week after doing phenomenally well, we got back to work."

Brown said the future is really bright for not only Upton and McCall, but also the rest of the team.

"We'll be one of the top teams in the Big Sky," he said. "I'm really looking forward to being a part of it. I feel like it's a real privilege."

The Intercollegiate Tennis Association West Sectional is Nov. 5-8 in Tempe, Arizona. If Upton or McCall punch their ticket to the NCAA championship, they will be playing in Athens, Georgia on Nov. 17.

Explaining the Protect College Sports Act

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After the U.S. Senate passed the Protect College Sports Act in September, major changes could be coming to college athletics nationwide.

The bill addresses a wide range of issues colleges and lawmakers want to tackle, including Name, Image, and Likeness, transfer portal rules, student guarantees and eligibility regulations. “We are 100% supportive of the bill,” said Kent Haslam, the University of Montana athletic director. “[We] hope it becomes law and certainly are encouraging our representatives from the state of Montana to vote for it.”

GET THE FACTS ABOUT CI-132

Montana voters will decide whether judicial elections should remain nonpartisan. Here is a summary of the key arguments surrounding the initiative.

VOTING YES	VOTING NO
• Voting yes ensures judges are elected based on their record and qualifications.	• Voting no hurts everyday Montanans who want a fair and impartial hearing.
• Voting yes keeps money-driven politics out of our courts.	• Voting no motivates judges to participate in partisan politics.
• Voting yes ensures judges are accountable to the law and the Constitution, not politics.	• Voting no makes judges accountable to political parties and their money, not the Constitution.

LEARN MORE AT
ci132facts.com



VOTE YES ON CI-132
KEEP OUR COURTS IMPARTIAL

PAID FOR BY MONTANANS FOR NONPARTISAN COURTS. KELLEN ALGER, TREASURER. PO BOX 87, HELENA, MT 59624

While the U.S. House of Representatives has yet to vote on the legislation, Montana Sens. Tim Sheehy and Steve Daines voted in favor of the bill.

Many of the regulations and laws created in the bill are designed to standardize and streamline intercollegiate athletics. Some include more athlete-agent regulations, comparable facilities for men’s and women’s traveling teams, compliance with health and safety standards and requirements that governing bodies of intercollegiate athletic associations have a third of their voting members be student-athletes or recent former student-athletes.

A few of the regulations will have a wide impact. Much of the bill focuses on regulating the share of revenue that can be diverted to paying college athletes.

Previously, a lawsuit against the National Collegiate Athletic Association limited revenue sharing with student-athletes, but the new bill seeks to strengthen and expand those limits to just below \$22 million.

This rule will have more of a presence on universities with larger athletic revenues compared to schools with lower revenues.

“Never is a strong word, but [UM] will never hit the cap that the Protect College Sports Act hits,” Haslam said. “I think that’s what’s important is that there is a cap in place for all schools.”

While this rule sets a hard line on revenue sharing, the bill does not cap the amount of money that can be made through deals with advertisers and other third parties related to an athlete’s NIL deals.

Beyond monetary policies for student-athletes, the bill also includes rules on eligibility.

It now allows students to be eligible for five years, starting from their 19th birthday or their first full year at an academic institution. “That’s a huge plus,” Haslam said. This runs without pause once eligibility begins, but exceptions include pregnancy and service on a religious mission trip.

The program has also introduced transfer limits: student-athletes can now

transfer only once without penalties.

“That will bring a lot more stability to our rosters,” Haslam said. “We’ll have to change slightly where our coaches recruit, but we really don’t get multiple transfer student-athletes.”

While student-athletes can technically still transfer more than once, another move after the initial school change will require the player to sit out the following season.

“I think it will only have a good way of working,” said Stuart Gore, head coach of the UM women’s soccer team.

As of the current season, the women’s soccer program has around 17 new transfer athletes.

“If you pick up a really good power transfer and she comes and kills it, she can’t just go, ‘OK, I’ve used you, and now I’m going to bounce back and use my stats and go back.’” Gore said.

The bill would also require universities to provide medical coverage to student-athletes for five years after their athletic eligibility ends. Along with health insurance, universities would have to maintain athletic scholarships for student-athletes after their eligibility ends so they can finish their degrees.

“In a good way, it will affect people where you’re halfway through your master’s degree and you’re stuck footing the bill,” Gore said. “I think there won’t be the stress of, ‘How am I going to afford my second year of my master’s degree?’”

The rules in the bill apply not only to students, but to coaches as well.

Football coaches will no longer be allowed to move to another program in the middle of a season. “I don’t see that being a major issue for us, it’s not happened in the time I’ve been here,” Haslam said. “I don’t recall it happening at any school in the [Football Championship Subdivision]”

The bill passed 77-22 with broad bipartisan support in the U.S. Senate. Republican Ted Cruz and Democrat Maria Cantwell co-sponsored it. Before it becomes law, it must pass the House of Representatives, which will not reconvene until after the midterm elections in November.

SPORTS BRIEFS

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GRIZ FOOTBALL FACES ANOTHER LOSS

The University of Montana Grizzlies fell to the University of Idaho Vandals 35-42 on Oct. 17, dropping the team to fourth in Big Sky conference rankings and 14th in the Football Championship Subdivision Coaches’ Poll.

Through the first quarter, the Grizzlies went scoreless as the Vandals scored two touchdowns, one on a failed interception return.

In the second and third quarters, the Grizzlies gained momentum and scored 14 points in each by completed passes from quarterback Keali’i Ah Yat.

The second half started with the Grizzlies down, but they evened the score to 21-21 by the early third quarter. The Vandals offense came back and scored off of a successful pass from Idaho quarterback Joshua Wood.

The two teams battled back and forth until the fourth quarter, where a rushing touchdown gave the Vandals the lead, and the Griz offense was unable to even the score.

“We knew coming in that their quarterback was a really good player,” Griz head coach Bobby Kennedy said. “But I still believe in my guys and have confidence that we can play better and do better.”

Despite the loss, many Grizzly players logged highlights in the game. Wide receiver Brooks Davis completed eight catches and three touchdown plays, tying his career best. Eli Gillman also set a new school record for all-purpose yards.

The Grizzlies dropped to 5-3 in season play while the Vandals improved to 2-5 in season play.

UM XC SHINES AT INVITATIONAL

The UM cross country team put together an impressive showing at the Lewis-Clark State College Invitational.

The men’s team placed second overall at the meet, narrowly trailing the Gonzaga men’s team by two points.

Junior Luke Mest delivered an outstanding performance, coming in first overall and logging a time of 24:06, the first Grizzly in over a decade to win a title. The other men in the race performed well with two other Grizzlies placing in the top 10: Lane Krautschun in fifth place and Henry Sund in ninth. Both Krautschun and Sund recorded personal bests in the race.

The women’s cross country team came in sixth overall, just ahead of the University of Idaho, with redshirt junior Malia Bradford coming in 16th. This race was Bradford’s personal best. Olivia Coll, 22nd place, and Lucy Thompson, 50th place, also reached personal bests at this event.

Families get a glimpse of campus life during UM Family Weekend

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Many families gathered for the University of Montana's Family Weekend, taking part in traditions, athletic events and campus activities while reconnecting with students and gaining a better understanding of their college experience.

UM organized 28 events for parents around the weekend of Sept. 17 and 18. These events ranged from tours of Missoula's Butterfly House to the football game.

One of the families in attendance was the McMackins. The McMackins are from Fullerton, California, and are parents of freshman Michael McMackin. Michael is a criminology student and hopes to be a law enforcement officer in Montana.

Theresa McMackin, Michael's mother, and her husband Cameron have twin sons and an older son. Michael, one of the twins, had had to split from his brother when he came to UM, which he had never done before.

The McMackins made the flight up from California this weekend and were excited to see their son's life at UM firsthand. Their other sons, who both attend college at the University of Utah, arrived unsure of what the weekend would offer.

"I've been to other college parent weekends that did not have as many

activities," Theresa said. "I think the U of M did a good job listing tons of different activities and tours. There was something for everybody."

The McMackins got to see much of their son's environment at UM, including his dorm, the Lodge and the Saturday gameday traditions.

"Saturday's activities were the most exciting," Theresa said. "The parent brunch, seeing the band and cheerleaders perform, the players walk to the stadium, the family tailgate and of course the football game."

While the scheduled events gave families plenty to do, much of the weekend was spent simply catching up. Between walks across campus, meals together and conversations about class, the McMackins were able to see the routines and relationships Michael has built during his first semester at UM.

Both Theresa and Cameron, Michael's father, praised the campus and the opportunities to experience things that are very different to their hometown of Fullerton.

"We love the campus and how beautiful it is," the McMackins said. "We love that he gets to live somewhere so beautiful and different from where he grew up. We don't really get seasons where we live, so seeing the beautiful trees and leaves turning colors was a treat."



The McMackin family poses for a picture together on family weekend on Oct. 16.
CONTRIBUTED | MCMACKIN FAMILY



UM hosts a brunch for Family Weekend in the Davidson Honors College on Oct. 16.



Families walking along Memorial Row on their way to the tailgates for Family Weekend on Oct. 17.