

MONTANA KAIMIN



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Cover photo by Walker McDonald

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

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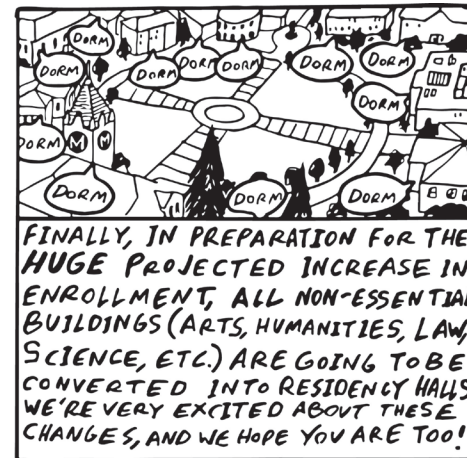
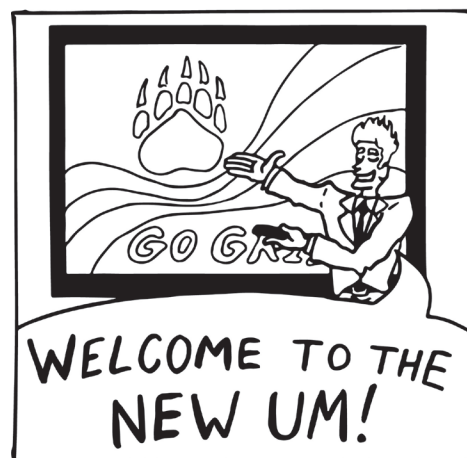
ASUM

YOUR STUDENT GOVERNMENT

IN THE UPCOMING ASUM ELECTION

Campaigning starts this year on April 8th, and elections are April 24-25 and debates are held the week before.

KAIMIN KOMICS: SE 1 EP 11



BARRETT CLEMENT | MONTANA KAIMIN *BARRETT*

Why the double contact rule change hurts the future of volleyball

The National Collegiate Athletics Association recently changed a critical college volleyball rule: Double contacts on the second hit are now legal. For Griz Volleyball fans not in the know, this could rewrite college volleyball strategies entirely.

If this rule trickles down from college to high school and younger, what it means to be a setter would completely change, and it wouldn't be as important.

The new rule means when a setter, or anyone else on the court, is setting up a hitter, they are allowed to double contact the ball.

When I was in sixth grade, I was told to become a setter and I hated it. I sat outside on cold cement, practicing setting against the wall again and again and again. I told myself I had to have very soft hands to be a setter and should never get called for double contact. I did this for weeks, then months, then years, and eventually, I was an All-State setter in Wisconsin.

I credit my high school success to my garage door, the shattered porch light next to it and hundreds of thousands of sets against that wall.

While the rule only affects college now and probably won't make a big difference in everyday gameplay for Division I athletes, most volleyball rules trickle down from

college and make their way into high school and club teams. If this double hit rule makes it down to club volleyball or even to lower division college volleyball, setting will become an entirely new game.

I coach 16-year-old players on a local club team and I am still constantly instructing them on the proper setting form, even if they are not setters. All kids that age and older have learned the setting form correctly, but are less conscious about it now that the rule has changed. They know if they want to play in college, they won't have to worry about it.

Typically, double hits are the most controversial calls in volleyball games. The rule was put into place so rallies could last longer and important calls could be decided by the players, not by referees making controversial double hit calls.

Not only will this new rule affect calls by referees, but it will also affect the hitters. The spin on a set ball makes it more difficult to hit. Double hit sets have been allowed for a while now on the first contact, like a serve or a hard driven ball, but the ball still had to be clean out of the setter's hands on the second contact.

Setters aren't the only ones who could double hit the ball, though. While most setters will probably still have clean hands and

good sets, the issue comes with middle and back row players. They don't have to focus as much on training their hands because it doesn't matter if they double the ball or not.

Middle players were the ones most often affected by double hits prior to the rule change. It has become common for fans to yell "DOUBLE!" at any ball that spins while watching college matches. This rule will eliminate that, which many coaches and referees will be happy about.

Some people are upset because they think this rule will completely eliminate the setter position. I don't think the position will be eliminated completely, but this rule will definitely change gameplay in some capacity. Doubles have already been called less and less in recent years, which increases the speed of gameplay and could contribute to spikes in viewership.

Regular-season Division I matches averaged 116,000 viewers on ESPN platforms, a 58% increase from 2022 to 2023, according to the NCAA website. This was the most watched season of college volleyball to date.

Volleyball has gained a large following recently with the development of a professional league that started in Nebraska. The Midwest is known for its volleyball schools, especially the Big Ten Conference, so the

National Championship and other college games are also popular. Nebraska held a volleyball game in its football stadium that became the most attended women's sports event to date with 92,003 fans.

The number of high school girls playing volleyball has grown by almost 12% in the last decade and, with 470,488 players last year, is the second-most popular sport, according to the National Federation of State High School Associations participation survey.

Especially with volleyball growing like it has and continues to, it is important that the proper form is taught for setters to learn how not to double hit, or it is possible the position could go away altogether. If anyone can set, there's no reason for setters to spend time working on having clean hands.

Continue teaching young setters how to set correctly or eventually this rule will fully impact gameplay by undermining the position as a whole.

- Holly Malkowski, Sports Editor

Like it? Hate it? Let us know
Email us your opinions at
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Chorus to Carnegie



The University of Montana Chamber Chorale performs "Apple Tree" by AURORA in the Dennison Theatre on March 6. Members of the group are set to travel to perform at Carnegie Hall in New York City with other UM choir groups for the National Festival Chorus. CHRIS LODMAN | MONTANA KAIMIN

SUDOKU

Difficulty: Medium

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

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

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Montana needs more snow to avoid dry summer; Judge orders poll for killed marijuana funding bill; Montana Supreme Court hears arguments in abortion parental consent case

ANDY TALLMAN

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MONTANA NEEDS MORE SNOW AND RAIN IN APRIL TO AVOID DROUGHT, FORECASTERS SAY

Though a wet February across the state shored up Montana's winter snowpack, forecasters said last week Montana will have a too-dry summer unless the state gets some more snowstorms and a wet spring.

"Snowpack percentages have increased in all basins, but overall, the snowpack remains below normal," the Natural Resources Conservation Service's water supply report on March 1 stated. "The recent improvements were timely, but there are only one to two months remaining in the normal snow accumulation season and more snow is needed."

According to the report, the yearly water precipitation across most of Montana's river basins is below normal levels. But that's better than where the levels sat in February — according to the Daily Montanan, most of Montana's river basins were 40-60% of their normal snowpack levels that month.

At a March 7 meeting with the governor's drought advisory committee, NRCS Hydrologist Eric Larson said some higher elevation sites would need several feet of snow to make up for their current deficit, according to the Daily Montanan.

Larson and other experts said the next six weeks could determine how the rest of the year's drought situation looks, according to the Daily Montanan.

A United States drought report released on March 7 stated nearly half of Montana is seeing moderate or worse drought. According to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, more than half of the Western U.S. is experiencing low winter snowpack levels.

JUDGE ORDERS OVERRIDE OF 2023 MARIJUANA BILL TO PROCEED DESPITE GOVERNOR'S EFFORTS

A judge ruled the Montana Legislature must be allowed to override Gov. Gian-

forte's veto of a 2023 marijuana fund redistribution bill on March 5.

Senate Bill 442, which would redistribute marijuana tax revenue to roads and a new habitat fund, received bipartisan support in 2023, with 131 out of 150 legislators voting in support of it. But Gianforte vetoed the bill on the final day of the legislative session. While the Senate was technically still in session when he vetoed the bill, he did not send out the veto memo until after it had adjourned, according to reporting by the Daily Montanan.

Lawmakers quickly objected to this, saying if this were allowed, the Governor could veto any bill he wanted or make line edits without the chance for an override by simply withholding the memo until after adjournment.

Lewis and Clark District Court Judge Mike Menahan sided with lawmakers on March 5, ordering Gianforte to send his veto to the Secretary of State for lawmakers to have a chance to override the veto via a poll.

"Staying the court's judgment would allow Gianforte to continue to exercise an unconstitutional level of control over the lawmaking process," Menahan's order said. "Regardless of Gianforte's motives in relation to SB442 specifically, he advocates for a troubling precedent."

PARENTAL CONSENT CASE FOR MINORS SEEKING ABORTION REACHES MONTANA SUPREME COURT

The Montana Supreme Court began hearing arguments on March 6 in a years-long case about restrictions requiring minors to receive parental consent to get an abortion.

Two restrictions, one requiring parents to be notified when anyone under 16 years old seeks an abortion, and another requiring parental consent for all abortions sought out by a minor, are being discussed.

On one side: Planned Parenthood

of Montana, that brought the initial challenge, and its attorney Tanis Holm. On the other: Montana Attorney General Austin Knudsen, who revived the litigation, and Montana Deputy Solicitor General Brent Mead, who's making the state's arguments before the Court.

Last year, a District Court judge in Helena ruled that requiring parental consent for an abortion violated the state constitution's right to privacy for all Montanans. That judge allowed the parental notification requirement to remain while litigation continued.

Mead, the Deputy Solicitor General, argued the Montana Constitution allows a minor's fundamental rights to be infringed on by laws designed to enhance their protections. In this case, he argued mandating parental involvement was necessary to make sure someone was around to observe and help a minor with any post-abortion physical or mental hardship.

Mead argued the state didn't have to prove a compelling interest to override privacy rights and interfere with abortion access for minors if it was attempting to protect youth.

"We prohibit minors from exercising entirely the fundamental right to privacy, as applied to the intimate choice to marry if they are under 16," Mead.

Holm, Planned Parenthood's attorney, urged the Court to focus on protecting the right to privacy, and said the state hadn't offered any evidence that parental involvement protects minors from psychological harm. She said minors are allowed to make other health decisions, like getting birth control or going through with a pregnancy, without parental notification or consent, and added other recent court decisions have found abortion procedures are safe.

Justice Beth Baker, who oversaw the proceedings, said the Court would take the case under advisement and issue a decision, but didn't give a specific timeframe for its ruling.

POLICE BLOTTER

ANDY TALLMAN

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Between March 1 and March 8, the University of Montana Police Department responded to 20 calls and made seven official reports, none of which resulted in any actual charges. That doesn't mean the school cops weren't busy, though. Between stolen plants, keyed cars and a damaged bus station, UM saw plenty of crime.

FRIDAY, MARCH 1 - SCUMMY SCHEMING

At about 9 a.m., UMPD got a report that someone had stolen a plant from the Miller Hall lobby. The missing plant was last seen the previous day...but someone had seemingly escaped with the leafy resident. UMPD has no current leads on location, but the theft seems to have happened around the same time a resident assistant's bulletin board was vandalized with a homophobic slur in the same hall.

TUESDAY, MARCH 5 - PARKING LOT WOES

There's a particular element of tragedy to parking lot crimes. Imagine paying all that money to park in a location, and, adding insult to injury, someone decides to mess up your car. That's what happened to a guy in Lot Z at around 1:30 p.m., whose Ford's driver-side door got keyed, adding up to a couple hundred bucks of damage. RIP.

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 6 - NEIGHBORLY SPAT

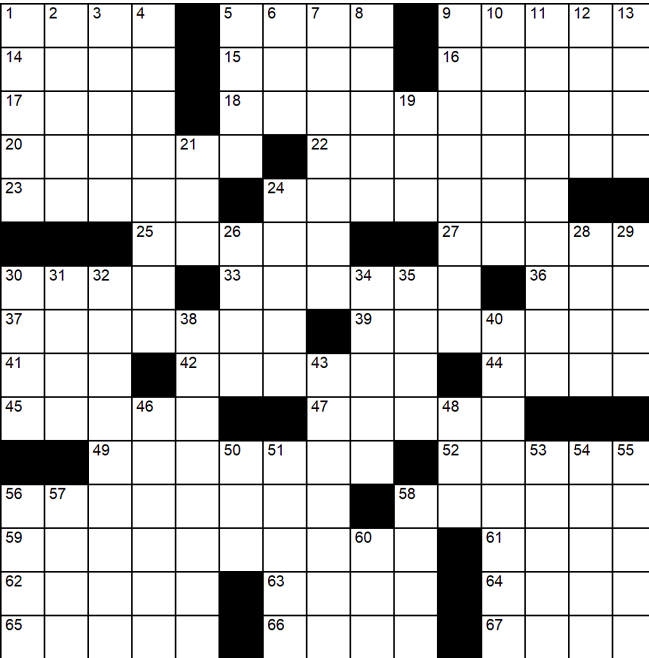
Two apartments, both alike in dignity, in fair Missoula where we lay our scene, from ongoing grudge break to new mutiny ... where two apartment residents in University owned apartments kept calling the cops on each other for noise complaints. Look, we write news here, not theater. Anyway, UMPD referred them to the people who deal with conduct violations in hopes the village assistants would deal with it by moving them around or something.

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 6 - PUNKING POLES

At around 1:30 p.m., UMPD got a call that a pole over by the bus charging station had been knocked down and sent facilities services over to fix it. It was recorded as a hit-and-run since UDASH didn't report it as an accident, but come on. The bus probably knocked it down, unless someone is doing donuts outside the music building in a VERY tall car.

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 6 - PARAGLIDER IN PERIL

The paragliders look so serene as they leap off Mount Sentinel and glide sedately to the ground, but sometimes things can go wrong. At 2 p.m., UMPD got a call about a paraglider spinning out of control around Mount Sentinel. We can only assume it was an onlooker who called because it would be WILD if the paraglider was actively spinning around in the air and decided to call the cops about it. When officers responded to the scene, the fire department had located the paraglider and everything was fine.



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- ACROSS**

1 "___ we forget"

5 Salon service, briefly

9 Water park feature

14 Initial chip

15 Fever with chills

16 Former Russian leader

17 Tech support caller

18 Not too bright

20 Palace figures

22 Intrepid

23 Macho dude

24 Luxury watchmaker

25 Of the Vatican

27 Storage medium

30 West African country

33 De Niro's "Good-fellas" co-star

36 Gardner of film

37 Payback seeker

39 Piece keeper?

41 Faddish disk of the '90s

42 Forest worker

44 Composes

45 Credit card motion

47 Washing machine cycle

49 Defame

52 Macaroni shape

56 Religious offering

58 Sandwich meat

59 Whip

61 Kind of tea

62 Baby-to-be

63 Landfill emanation

64 NASA scrub
- DOWN**

1 Bust a gut

2 Occur as a result

3 Pressing need?

4 Small turtle

5 Mountain route

6 Something that's bruisable

7 Mark who plays the Hulk

8 Taxi feature

9 Like some errors

10 Good as new

11 Review unfairly

12 No-win situations?

13 Stopping points

19 Stetson, e.g.

21 Paternity identifier

24 Terrier type

26 Court statement

28 Place to broil

29 Big name in candy

30 Navigator's aids

31 State confidently

32 Lay down the law?

34 "A League of ___ Own"

35 Conflicted

38 Part of G.O.A.T.

40 Grade school subject

43 1980s invasion site

46 Deadly epidemic

48 Deep blue

50 Zippo

51 Great sadness

53 Breakfast strip

54 Last Greek letter

55 Lehar operetta "The Merry ___"

56 Rubs out

57 "Black ___" (2021 Marvel movie)

58 Very dry

60 Day care candidate

Answers to Previous Crossword:

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

Don't push your luck

HALEY YARBOROUGH
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Are you feeling lucky? Neither am I, but we might as well try. With St. Patrick's Day right around the corner, there's no better way to celebrate than drowning your sorrows in whiskey and crying while listening to "Danny Boy" on repeat. But don't shite the bed. You can enjoy the company of strange Irish men without going to Butte. That's right bitches, it's time to trap some leprechauns. The question is, how do you trap a little lad? Legos? Glitter? Guerilla Warfare? Look to the stars and ask the Celtic gods. It's time to get this paddy started.

PISCES (FEB. 19-MARCH 20): You're so tired you forgot to make a trap. Thankfully, you left an unsuspecting box of Lucky Charms on the kitchen counter. Your breakfast is blessed with several men lost in the sauce of marshmallows and milk.

ARIES (MARCH 21-APRIL 19): It's time to go full Guerilla Warfare. In honor of St. Patty's, you decide to paint yourself green and construct deadly booby traps. All you need is a shovel, some small sharpened bamboo and human feces. Will the leprechauns die of infection? Guess that's the price they pay for trying to steal your Apple watch.

TAURUS (APRIL 20-MAY 20): There is no gold at the end of the rainbow, only the muzzle of your glock. Fuck wasting time, you like to keep things short and to the point. So instead of crafting some elaborate trap, you load up the rounds and take a shot. They say greed is one of the seven deadly sins, and you better bet that green goober is riding the rainbow to hell.

GEMINI (MAY 21-JUNE 20): All that glitters is not gold, but the leprechauns don't know that. Gem, you're a total diva, and almost always leave a trail of glitter in your wake. An army of Ed Sheeran look-alikes will follow your ass to the end of the Earth.

CANCER (JUNE 21-JULY 22): Finally, you can put your elite Lego-building abilities to use. Shacks, pit traps, a Lego coliseum where leprechauns fight New York street rats to the death, the possibilities are endless!

Just try not to step on any stray Legos ... or lost leprechauns.

LEO (JULY 23-AUG. 22): Why waste your time on a trap when you can train your rats to sniff at those pesky moth-erfuckers. If they can find bombs,

they can find those stinky green men easily. That is until the leprechauns tame the rats and build a cavalry big enough to overthrow the United States government.

VIRGO (AUG. 23-SEP. 22): They say gold is the key to a leprechaun's heart, but the real secret is food. You decide to lure our short green kings with a full St. Patrick's Day feast. Beef, potatoes, cabbage, carrots, all the delights an Irishman could dream of. Just don't forget to dye it green!

LIBRA (SEP. 23-OCT. 22): You're one smart cookie. As you know, some of the leprechauns have evolved with the times and now they swindle humans into giving them money by organizing elaborate pyramid schemes. Just backtrack through Facebook to find a certain short man selling piss as a boujee face wash and you're sure to strike gold.

SCORPIO (OCT. 23-NOV. 21): You seductive son-of-a-bitch. The only trap you have is the one between your legs. So what do you do? Open wide. Leprechauns may not be miners, but they'll certainly go digging for gold. Just try not to crush their tiny skulls with your thighs ... unless you're into that, idk.

SAGITTARIUS (NOV. 22-DEC. 21): You like to keep your trap simple. A little bit of gold, a little bit of glitter and copious amounts of whiskey are sure to lure a little man to your door. Next thing you know you and Clumsy McQuisky are drunk, smoking a small pipe and trauma-dumping about your last shitty relationship. Just don't fall asleep, or he might steal your wallet and leave like your last lover...

CAPRICORN (DEC. 22-JAN. 19): You've done it. You've eaten just enough Taco Bell to fart in a jar. Add a trail of glitter to your little chamber and you'll be sure to gas the leprechauns out. If they had a Geneva Convention you'd undoubtedly violate it. Your shit is quite literally deadly.

AQUARIUS (JAN 20-FEB 18): As the water bearer, it's only fitting your strategy to drop some gold nuggets in your toilet. Everyone knows short people can't swim, so make sure to check in every few hours to make sure our little lads don't drown. Remember: scoop, don't flush, unless you want your pipes clogged with shit and green men.



BARRETT CLEMENT | MONTANA KAIMIN

Student club bank account frozen by Senate, investigation pending

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The Student Senate froze the University of Montana's Pacific Islanders Club's bank account after an alleged policy violation at the club's bake sale on Feb. 14, making transactions on the account impossible and shutting the club out of around \$2,300. The funds in the account are a combination of money the club fundraised and Senate-allocated dollars.

UM's Office of Risk Management brought the violations to the Senate on Feb. 14. Before this, Senate President Maggie Bell said executives were unaware of the club's violations. In response to the sanction, the club refused to comply with an investigation into its finances, alleging racism was the motivating reason for the sanction.

Isaac La'a, treasurer for the club, claimed each step of the club's actions was approved for the Feb. 14 fundraising bake sale by UM Events and the student government. The club often holds bake sales to fundraise for events like its upcoming Hōke, a cultural celebration.

However, Bell said UM Events is separate from the Senate and claimed the Senate never gave approval for the Feb. 14 bake sale.

During the Feb. 28 Senate meeting, Business Manager Georgia Balius explained the violations, which included: alleged failure to submit forms to the University Center before catering a bake sale, failure to submit cash inventories of items sold in the required seven days after the event, failure to meet with office staff before the fundraiser and using payment methods like PayPal or Venmo, which are not allowed for club fundraisers.

After the Senate opened an investigation into the allegations, email exchanges between Balius and the club clarified the official reasons for the sanctions. That email listed: alleged failure to submit fundraised money for deposit into the student group account, failure to submit records of financial transactions and unauthorized use of an external bank account.

La'a sent emails between the club and Balius to the Kaimin.

Bell said Jason Sloat, the Director of the Office of Risk Management, reported the club for failing to file proper forms to the Student Senate. Sloat declined to comment when the Kaimin reached out, but UM Spokesperson Dave Kuntz provided a statement.

"It is the job of the Risk Management Office to protect UM and ASUM from risk — legal, financial and reputational," Kuntz said. "The actions of this student group exposed UM and ASUM to unnecessary risk as a result of not following the procedures that are required of any UM entity."

Before any event happens at the University Center, from fundraising to tabling, groups must get approval from UM Events. La'a claimed the bake sale was submitted as an event to Griz Hub, where it was approved by the Student Senate and UM Events. Bell said the Senate office manager Gwen Coon approves all Griz Hub events automatically if it's a recognized student group.

After a bake sale or other fundraising events, club treasurer La'a said he takes the money to the club's non-profit Pacific Islanders Community Association of Montana, an outside bank account. There, it is counted and then sent to the student government. The counting typically takes two weeks. La'a said he then turns in the money to the Senate's business office.

La'a said this is the way the club has been running since it first started and there have never been any issues with it. He added the club didn't think it needed to inform the Senate it was sponsoring the non-profit Pacific Islander's Community Association.

However, Bell said running funding through a third-party bank account is usually against Senate policy, and for clubs to use an outside bank they need prior approval, which she said the Pacific Islanders club did not have.

"You're the ones who enforce the rules, but you pick and choose who you enforce it to and what time," Shien Medrano, secretary of the club, said at the Feb. 28 Senate meeting. "We have been doing these bake sales since the club existed and you are very quick to decide to freeze our accounts. That very action will disable our ability to perpetuate our culture."

This follows a semester-long travel ban from September after a subject of the Pacific Islander's Club, which specifically supports queer and transgender Pacific Islanders, hit a moose in a University rental car. According to a Kaimin story from last semester, the group didn't fill out the proper paperwork before using the vehicle.

Around 20 people, including club executives and members, attended the Feb. 28 meeting to defend the club.

"The decision to table our requests due to alleged policy violations for our bake sale is not only unfair, but filled with systemic racism," said club member Signe Sandstrom during public comment.

Other executives relayed the cultural importance of their club. Shien Medrano, who is from the Philippines, said she found a family in the club.

"Coming all the way all across the opposite side of the globe, it is hard to find community here in Montana for someone like me," Medrano said. "I met this community and they welcomed where I came from and who I am."

While public comment was happening, some senators were passing notes, eating dinner and on their phones.

Senator Eli Caplan spoke up during public



University of Montana Pacific Islanders club members rehearse for an upcoming performance on March 6. The student government is investigating the club's finances after it was reported for improper organization of a bake sale in the University Center in February.

AVA ROSVOLD | MONTANA KAIMIN

comment, saying, "I can't speak on behalf of the Senate, but the severity of the situation has not been made clear to all Senators." He elaborated further, saying, "I'm really sorry to say that systemic racism has really kind of shown itself here. And I think that it's sad."

Senator Maya Haugen agreed, saying they did not anticipate the gravity of the response from the club due to a lack of communication about the situation. Haugen said they were left feeling "incredibly uninformed."

Bell said at the meeting the two-week sanction is meant to provide adequate time to gather the full picture of what happened through an investigation. She added the Senate will remain cautious while things are sorted out with respect to the club and its concerns.

"If we were overreacting, or underreacting, how would we be treating any other club should it affect a similar violation?" Bell said. "To clarify, I don't take it lightly that this decision has been labeled as allowing racism or having some set of racism policies in play

today."

She said no actions are being taken without consulting Senate attorneys and Senate policy.

In its most recent email to the club, Balius made a list of demands for it to comply with the investigation, including records, statements and any other information about the bake sale. The club has not complied with any requests.

"We question [the Senate's] purview to request such information as well as to make such demands of a student group," La'a said in an emailed response. "Please move forward with any decisions that you all find necessary as we anticipate the outcome will be the same regardless. We need to focus on our success in the classroom, our well-being and our community."

The club is still waiting for the Senate to decide on the fate of its bank account.

"When are they gonna make that decision just so we can move forward and we'll know what to do moving forward?" Medrano said.

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UM students voice concerns about possible program cuts

CORBIN VANDERBY

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Ever since she was 12, Fiona Doyle wanted to go to college to study French. Now, Doyle is chasing her dream as a sophomore with a double major in French and psychology at the University of Montana. But she's worried: A new restructuring effort to reevaluate, change and cut programs to prepare for UM's future threatens the existence of her French program without giving her much say in the discussion.

"I feel like my life is going to be impacted and the rest of the department," Doyle said.

Doyle, a 19-year-old student, said she heard a bit about UM's new restructuring effort, called the academic affairs playbook, from her French professor, Ione Crummy. But she didn't hear any official communication from the UM administration until reading a Kaimin story last Thursday that explained the process, two months after faculty outside of the Faculty Senate were first informed of the changes.

Doyle learned the quantitative analysis UM used to reevaluate programs, giving each program a final score from zero to 10, placed her French program at 0.3 and psychology at 10.

"Overall, there's just been a massive lack of communication and miscommunication," Doyle said. "They're making decisions so fast without student input."

Doyle said about seven of her friends in various major programs decided to join her at the meeting after she texted them about the opportunity for public comment on the restructuring.

UM's interim Provost Adrea Lawrence, and John DeBoer, Vice Provost for Academic Affairs, presented a full report of the quantitative analysis findings that measured enrollment rates and degrees awarded across every major, minor and certificate program offered at UM over the last seven years. Some new programs were omitted because they lacked long-term data.

"Through our conversations with members of our academic community, we've learned a bunch of things," Lawrence said.

Lawrence said the administration has been looking into things like gateway courses, which introduce students to a larger subject and can help attract them to programs. Programs with built-in internships retain students for longer, renaming courses can help them stay relevant, better course descriptions can increase enrollment

and excellent faculty makes a big difference, she said.

DeBoer addressed feedback from a faculty survey on the restructure plans as well as from two other Faculty Senate meetings held during this semester. He said the qualitative rubric, used to ask questions to programs and decide what to do with them, will no longer have a number scoring system due to the feedback.

"We agreed that creating another scoring mechanism as we review programs isn't productive, so we removed any scoring from that rubric," DeBoer said. "It is simply going to be a tool for information gathered from leadership to inform decision making."

DeBoer also said the plan to have all of the changes and decisions ready by May for the Board of Regents meeting to approve them before the next school year has changed.

"We'll have some firm recommendations by the end of May," DeBoer said. "But then we'll figure out how to operationalize the next academic year."

Lawrence and DeBoer both thanked faculty for the feedback to inform their decisions on the plan, but as questions opened up, Doyle criticized the lack of student feedback.

"A lot of people came in today not knowing what to do. Overall, there's a great amount of students I met today who were quite upset and unsure about their futures," Doyle said. "I wish that there was more communication between the students."

Karen Butler, a psychology major, asked why she, an out-of-state student, should continue to heavily invest in the University while there is such uncertainty about the life of programs at the meeting.

DeBoer said no changes have been decided yet, and no matter what, current students will be able to remain in programs until they graduate. But Butler was still worried about the possible changes and lack of opportunities to share her opinion until now.

"I'm just concerned about cutting programs out from under anybody. Whether it's mine or [Doyle's]," Butler said. "When we enrolled here we were made a promise that we would be able to be successful and



From the right, Vice Provost for Academic Affairs John DeBoer, interim Provost Adrea Lawrence and others listen to UM President Seth Bodnar share statistics from the last academic year during the Faculty Senate meeting on March 7.

AVA ROSVOLD | MONTANA KAIMIN

they wanted to help us be successful, and rearranging and cutting programs is not necessarily the best way to help us with that."

Doyle said even though smaller programs are being targeted, meaning fewer people will be impacted, it doesn't eliminate the harm done to current and incoming students by taking away important programs, like languages.

"A lot of people are not promoting languages and diversity within the United States," Doyle said. "For a country of 1,000 other countries, we don't really seem to take the time to represent the people who came before us and the people who came here for a better life."

Lawrence and DeBoer said there would be a Democracy Summit on March 27, which will, in part, act as a meeting for students to discuss the plan. However, they did say they are struggling to find good ways to communicate with students.

Doyle said the Democracy Summit is a good start toward effective student communication, but it could still be improved with more opportunities like emails or student surveys.

"I want to continue being here," Doyle said. "If I don't get the communication from people, how do I know if I can continue to be here?"

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CUTOFF

University of Montana music students grapple with anticipated Missoula public schools cuts

Story by Christine Compton
Photos by Walker McDonald

WHAT A DAY TO BE LATE. The meeting was at 6 p.m., but angry students, teachers and bystanders were already spilling down the front sidewalk of the Missoula County Public Schools administration building. They lined the waist-level wooden gate, some holding shiny musical instruments and signs.

"Save the arts!" someone shouted as University of Montana student Daniel Thackeray walked inside, and others clapped to the chant. "Save the arts!"

The holding room was packed tight. A few of his people got seats, but Thackeray and around 12 other music education students hung around the back. They squeezed together to see the TV.

Some 50 Missoulians sat in the provided seats in front of a flat-screen TV broadcasting the meeting. The rest, another 50, stood in the back or sat on the ground nearby.

This was it. This was where Thackeray's future sat.

On Feb. 13, Missoula County Public Schools Board of Trustees held a meeting to discuss what may be the most drastic position cuts it has faced in years.

MCPS is down \$8 million in funds: \$3 million lost in enrollment-related deficits and \$5 million lost from discontinued COVID-19 relief funds. Now, the Board needed to figure out where to get the money back, and the proposed solution was around 100 positions in the school system.

"These are very good people who have dedicated themselves to MCPS," Superinten-

dent Micah Hill allegedly said in a letter to parents. "There is nothing we want more than to take care of them. There is no getting around it, these decisions are brutal for all involved."

Librarians, behavioral health positions and untenured teachers were on the line. The art education director position – described by students, teachers and

parents as the backbone of the MCPS fine arts programs – is subject to the cuts, drawing a flood of music students to the meeting.

"This is the person who organizes the highlight events students look forward to," said James Smart, University of Montana's School of Music Director. The degree of planning behind staple events goes beyond what the average music or art teacher can accomplish on their own, he said.

That includes projects like the state-staple Buddy DeFranco Jazz Festival, the Red Wave fifth grade marching band that performs at the

UM Homecoming Parade, arts positions hiring and student teacher placements. More than 10,000 students fall under the art education director's jurisdiction.

For people like Thackeray, who saw the difference it made every day in his K-12 Lewistown classmates, and who wanted to bring that difference to the next generation, there was a curdling feeling of dread that came with the announcement.

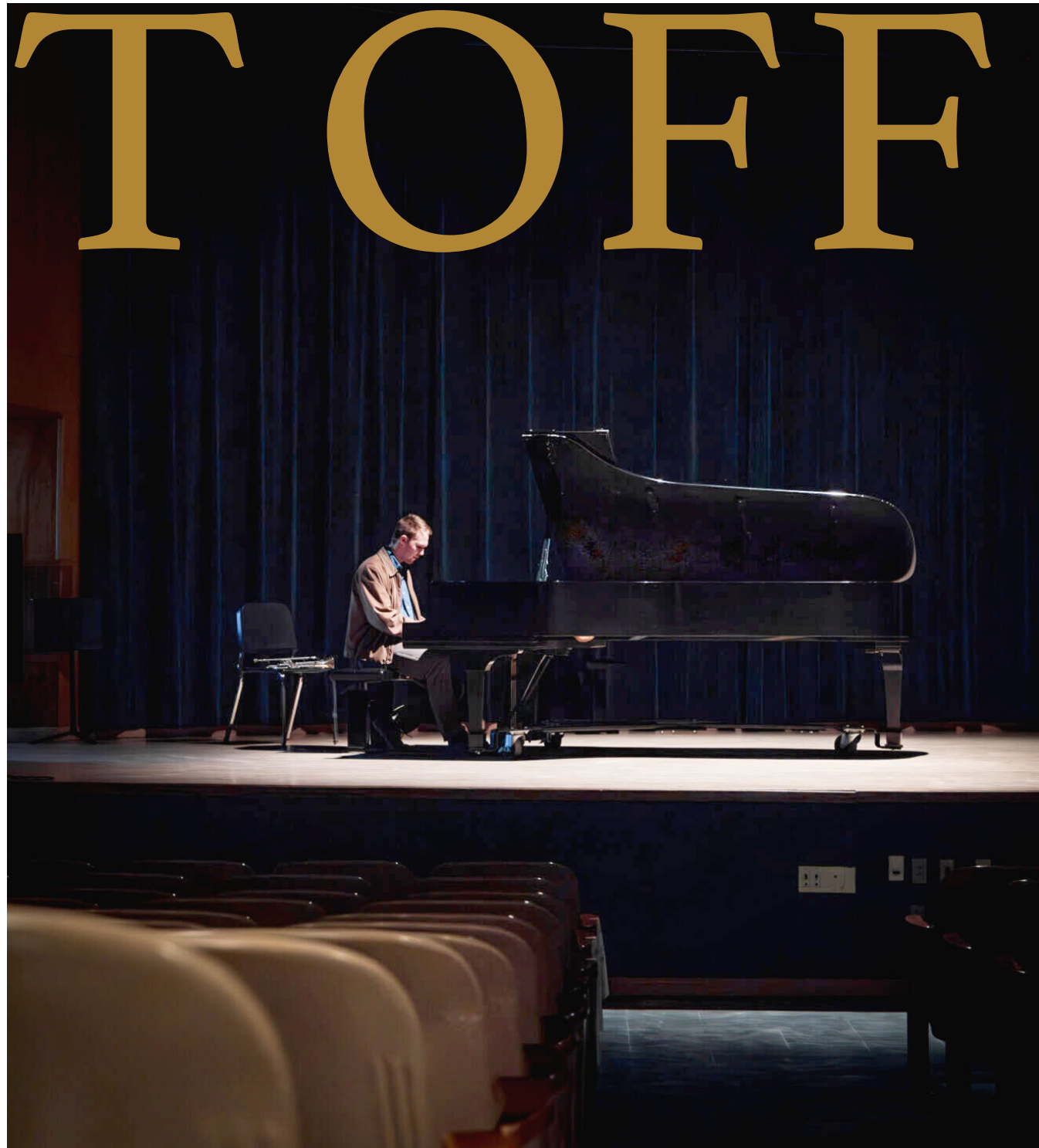
Students have run social media campaigns and reposted public comment, demanding the position and all the people dependent on it

remain untouched. There's a glimmer of hope if a May election passes \$2.5 million in levies, but the final decision technically isn't until June.

But in truth, he's not sure if anything will be saved; he just wants to know if there will be a job waiting for him when he's done with school.

The role of music

Thackeray is 20 years old and in his third year of college, but he started his music career





FAR LEFT: Daniel Thackeray practices in the UM Music Recital Hall on March 8. With the recent announcement of job cuts within Missoula County Public Schools' music programs, Thackeray is uncertain about what his future holds in his home state of Montana.

LEFT: Daniel Thackeray, a junior studying music education and pursuing two certificates in business at the University of Montana, sharpens his trumpet skills on March 8. This is Thackeray's first semester taking fewer than 20 credits.

chance to speak. Public comment stretched for three hours.

Michael Ruybalid, a music education coordinator at UM, thought of an elementary student he taught twenty years ago who came with a warning label. She acts out, he'd been told.

"She came to choir and suddenly the misbehavior went away," Ruybalid said. He said he's worried countless students like her won't succeed in a system without a director to lead programs.

Others criticized the logistics of cutting the art education director.

"It has never been a secret that pandemic funding would not last," one commenter said. "Cutting the fine arts director position is not akin to cutting one administrative position ... Cutting this position is akin to cutting an administrator in every single school."

Tyler Christensen, the MCPS spokesperson, said administrators knew the COVID-19 relief funds wouldn't last forever, but wanted to make the most of it while they could. Money was spent on behavioral and academic interventionists the school district previously didn't have.

A committee formed in November 2023 to decide how to recover the lost money, but it didn't get official enrollment numbers until February. The Feb. 13 meeting was, in Christensen's eyes, the earliest they could've informed the public.

"A narrative takes hold, and it's a scary one," Christensen said. "So I can understand why people are a passionate community, especially when it comes to art and culture."

Smart implored the Board to think about the process and message it was sending.

"Just think of what it was like to try to have a week to respond to the cuts," Smart said. He found out about the cuts around the same time Thackeray did.

Beyond the arts

Thackeray's classmates knelt with laptops in hand, filling out homework while their professors stood at the podium. Even as their future was debated, they had assignments to attend to.

Nearby, he heard a younger girl weeping. He didn't know her, so he tried not to look.

Maybe there was a chance he'd have a job in the future. As president-elect of UM's branch of the National Association for Music Education, Thackeray had to maintain a strong front.

The hours stretched on.

While music and art students weren't the only people to protest, they made up the majority of UM representation. River Watson, a behavioral health student at UM who works in the after-school program at Franklin Elementary School, was one of a few outliers.

They were shocked by several of the proposed cuts. Targeting behavioral health and counseling positions seems like self-sabotage after a pandemic, they said.

More than 80% of 2022 U.S. public schools reported students were behaving worse since the pandemic, the National Center for Education Statistics reported. Watson has already seen it on the playground. As children show greater signs of developmental delay, schools need the resources to act.

But when Watson shared the news of the MCPS cuts with their classmates at UM, they didn't get the outrage they were expecting.

"Outside of my ed classes, people just don't get it," Watson said.

Watson said the cuts threaten the very resources helping students feel seen. With less support, students could act out more.

For a rural state already struggling with recruitment, they argued, the Treasure State can't afford to make teaching jobs any less attractive.

Despite having over 1,000 teaching positions open in the 2023-24 school year, education students aren't staying in Montana, a report from Montana's Office of Public Instruction said. Only 383 students from the Montana University System graduated with education degrees in 2022, and in 2021, 86% of education graduates left the state or switched industries.

Add the dilemma of Senate Bill 99, passed in 2021, which requires advance notice for parents before discussing most LGBTQIA+ issues in the classroom, and Watson isn't sure if it's worth it to work in Montana anymore. As a nonbinary person, they have to choose whether or not to defend their pronouns or stay under the radar.

It's a strange time to be in teaching, Georgia Cobbs, an elementary mathematics education professor at UM, explained.

Cobbs oversees "level three" elementary education students, which involves 10 weeks of math teaching methods. Then, the students spend five weeks in classrooms.

Cobbs said her students were excited for post-spring break, when they would begin the five-week session. She wondered if they were so busy on final preparations they hadn't noticed the simmering MCPS drama.

Recent UM ed grads are typically eager to nab Missoula teaching gigs while MCPS has the privilege of choosing more experienced teachers. Plenty of Cobbs's former students

have gone to rural areas before moving to Missoula or other larger Montana cities.

If they put in extraordinary work early on and see fewer and fewer chances for it to pay off, they'll find a new field — one that pays better than, in Cobbs's words, the atrocious salaries Montana teachers are awarded.

"The teachers love working with us," Cobbs said. "But if people can't find jobs here..."

She said she wasn't an expert, but strongly assumed the deficit could've been avoided if Montana politicians awarded more money to the struggling education system.

Part of the deficit comes from a wider money problem at the Legislature. The education budget increases by 3% each year for inflation, but 2022's 8% and 2023's 4.1% average inflation rate means the actual spending can't keep pace.

There also are minimums and maximums for education budgets, but state dollars vary depending on enrollment. If school districts are operating above the bare minimum, it's often on local budgets to make up the difference.

That's why Cobbs wondered if Missoula's housing crisis is harming enrollment.

"If families are moving away, they take their kids with them," Cobbs said. "This is a big picture thing."

What to do but wait

Going into the meeting, some UM students were under the impression the positions, while not all likely to be saved, may survive another year if \$2.5 million in levies are passed in May.

"The arts education director is unlike the other positions [at risk of being cut] because it cannot be saved by any of the levies in May," Smart told the board.

Thackeray and his classmates stood in an emptying holding room as the Board discussed the last few decisions.

When they agreed to move forward with the cut proposal, the darkened TV felt damning. Thackeray hung his head.

The drive home was quiet. Thackeray dropped classmates off at their homes and crept quietly into his own.

On his way through, he passed the room he practices in and thought of next year's student teaching.

This is where he wanted to be. He wanted to help others find the relief, the freedom in music he felt. And now, there may not be a place for him. But he wasn't going to let that be the ending note.

After the meeting, he and several other music students kept with the fire. They want to stay moving, both for their future and the cause they've dedicated their college careers to.

"It is the goodwill and empathy and deep passion of music educators that is currently keeping these systems afloat," Thackeray said. "And they're being taken advantage of."

Additional reporting by Chloe Olsgaard

ASUM proposes slashing sustainability group funding

MELISSA DICKSON

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The Associated Students of the University of Montana announced its annual executive recommendations for final budgeting at a Feb. 21 meeting, outlining how much money the Senate can give clubs and groups on campus this year.

Funding requests totaled almost \$1.4 million for the 2025 fiscal year, while the estimated revenue for next year sits at around \$1.1 million, creating about a \$300,000 budget deficit. To adjust for the difference, Senate executives decided to propose cuts to some clubs' funding for the 2025 fiscal year, which encompasses the 2024-2025 academic year.

Almost a dozen people showed up to public comment for the Feb. 21 meeting to oppose the recommendation to remove the ASUM sustainability agency's funding from the Senate's budget.

"[The Student Senate] does not, and should not, provide budgets for positions or departments we have no oversight of, so we find it inappropriate to continue providing a budget," Senate executives wrote in a document they create every year outlining the reasoning behind their funding recommendations.

According to the document, the decision came as a result of "changed and extenuating circumstances and [a] budget deficit." Senate President Maggie Bell told the Kaimin the decision is intended to help transfer the agency over to Main Hall, where the Office of Sustainability is housed.

Senate executives were forced to cut the student government's operating budget down to its bare bones this year, Bell said. The decision to propose cuts to the ASUM sustainability group's operating budget was deemed necessary in the face of the deficit, saving the student government the \$20,000 requested by the program.

She also told the Kaimin the sustainability program requested double what it requested last year, allowing no room for extra funding.

Tayli Hillyard, UM's sustainability engagement coordinator, said the need for increased funds is to pay the sustainability program's intern more. If cuts are made, the program intern's pay will be funded from different pools of available money, the UM sustainability director's budget, the ASUM transportation budget and Hillyard's rollover Senate funds from last year.

Hillyard's rollover funds from fiscal year 2024 currently sit at around \$8,000.

"If there's anything big that comes up

that [Hillyard] and I are going to have to pay for and that \$8,000 doesn't cover it, I might have to help her out," said UM Sustainability Director Eva Rocke.

Hillyard's job will not be impacted by the decision since her salary is not funded by the Senate.

Whether the student government will fully cut ties with the sustainability program is still unknown, according to Rocke. She said she knows current government leadership wants to, but there isn't a motion completely separating sustainability from student government funding and resources in place yet.

The \$6 student sustainability fee students pay on registration bills runs through the student government, but it doesn't collect the funds directly, according to Bell. As of now, there is no plan to remove the sustainability fee.

Funds collected from the fee are handled by Hillyard as part of the Kless Sustainability Fund, an opportunity for students to suggest projects on campus to lower energy usage.

As of fall 2023, 10,327 students were enrolled at UM. If it's assumed every student paid the \$6 fee, then the fund brought in almost \$62,000 to the sustainability program last semester alone.

Rocke said she's hoping to increase this fee by including it as a ballot initiative during the upcoming Senate election. She said as of now there are no other student fees on the ballot this spring and the sustainability fee has not increased in a long time.

"We feel like this is an opportunity to jump on it and make the case for a small increase for sustainability projects on campus," Rocke said.

UM student Zoe Belinda, the current intern for the sustainability program, attended public comment and said sustainability will not be the same without the direct connection between students and the Sustainability Office.

Graduate student Sam Sullivan, president of the 1,000 New Gardens club, said although he's not affected by this decision, he felt compelled to voice a greater frustration for people who care about sustainability at UM.

Sullivan, in his fifth year of UM's environmental philosophy master's program, said while he recognizes budgets are very complicated and respects the justification given by the executives, he believes sustainability has a history of being undermined at UM.

Sullivan said there's an incongruence between the University's message as a school focused on sustainability while continually missing goals, like being carbon neutral by

2020, because of pushbacks like this.

"My hope is that students who are interested in sustainability in the future look to secure funds that can help keep the Office of Sustainability's programs going," Sullivan

said.

Senate meetings are held in room 225 in the University Center every Wednesday evening and are open to the public.



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UM Cheer: from sidelines to court side

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A staple of University of Montana gamedays, the 24-person UM Cheer team, always shows up with stunts prepared to get the crowd loud and rally support the Grizzlies.

The cheer squad has two main seasons: football and basketball. Both seasons involve multiple practices during the week, including conditioning, strength training and sometimes even community appearances.

UM Cheer starts its year off on Aug. 1. For a month straight, the team practices five days a week in preparation for the UM football season. This is where the team meets the new recruits and gets to know each other. It also does conditioning-based practices since cheering during football season is a lot different than during basketball season.

Football season cheer is more practice-heavy, as it only has one game on the weekend, and the team gets to prepare for it throughout the week. The squad will perform in rain, snow, shine or even all three in the same game. During the games, the team does more stunt-based cheering, like throwing baskets and pyramids. Football is Taylor Collinge and Kaden McDowell's favorite time to show off their skills.

Collinge, from Polson, Montana, is currently a junior in her third year on the team. She is majoring in diagnostic medical sonography.

The days for the squad during football season usually last nine-to-10 hours, making the three-hour basketball days a huge shift to adjust to.

On football game days, the team gets to the Adams Center three hours before the game to get ready. It then goes to Griz Walk to cheer on the team as they head to the locker room. Then, it goes down to the stadium and starts to warm up.

That's when the student section starts to fill. The squad then goes to the Grizzly Scholarship Association tailgate to perform. It does the fight song, a cheer and a pyramid or two. Then the squad goes to the north endzone to come out of the tunnel with the Grizzly Marching Band. That show includes the state song, the UM fight song and the national anthem. After that, it goes back into the tunnel to run out with the football team.

"Walking down the tunnel into the football stadium and seeing everyone is just

such a surreal moment that you just have to take it in for a second," Collinge said.

One of Collinge's favorite football cheer memories is from her freshman year. It was a playoff game against Eastern Washington University. She said it was one of the loudest games she has cheered for so far.

In November, all of the sports seasons the team cheers for football, volleyball and basketballs overlap. Once that overlap ends, the cheerleaders only have to focus on basketball. In exchange for shorter days, they are cheering at two to three games a week.

The adjustment going from one game a week to potentially three games a week isn't a major one for the squad. The practices get switched from more conditioning-based to more strength and performance-based because of the team's increased game load.

McDowell is a senior from Bremerton, Washington, and in his second year on the squad. He is majoring in forestry with a minor in fire sciences.

During basketball season, the team does not get to spend the entire week to prepare for a single game. The squad often has to put their time out performances together the day of the game. It also does not focus practices toward the basketball game itself, but rather toward the halftime routine.

"They are different in every way," McDowell said. "How we prepare for them and how we execute on the field."

The squad is limited on what skills it can perform during the basketball season. It can't throw any pyramids or higher level skills because it's on the hardwood court instead of turf.

The team only shows up about an hour before basketball games to get ready. It practices in the West Auxiliary Gym to figure out its time out performances, then it goes to the locker rooms to get ready and come out before the national anthem.

Though the seasons look completely different for the cheerleaders at UM, the love for the Grizzlies and energizing the community that supports it looks the same. The squad just wrapped up its season and looks to come back strong and ready for another year of cheering on the Griz.

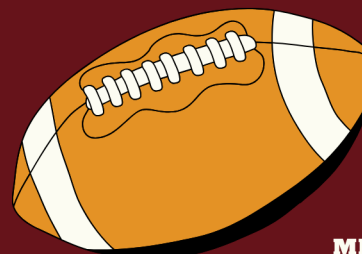
"We are all very close and I can't wait to see what next season has in store," Collinge said.

UM cheerleader Taylor Collinge stands with the Great Divide Trophy displayed in the Washington-Grizzly Champions Center. Collinge has cheered for three years at the University of Montana.

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Montana sprinter takes gold and sets school record despite injury

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At the Big Sky Indoor Championships on Feb. 23, Cooper Hewett crossed the finish line with a record time of 6.72 seconds in the 60-meter dash, crushing the 26-year-standing school record and setting a new personal record. The next day, he won the whole event, the first University of Montana athlete to do so since 1998, according to UM's indoor track and field records, running the exact same time as the previous day.

The whole moment was a blur, he said, full of emotion. The videos Hewett saw afterwards served as reminders of the mind-blanking moment.

"By the time I finished the race and was trying to look at my time," he said. "I couldn't even see what I ran and then I was just surrounded by all my teammates."

Hewett clobbered the previous record by Todd Hering, which stood at 6.84 seconds. It was only his second race of the season due to a series of injuries, one of which lingered on his triumphant day.

Hewett, 22, grew up in Kendrick, Idaho, playing hockey and football. He tried out baseball for a year and hated it, so he switched to track his freshman year of high school, he said. He started his track and field career competing in long jump and doing sprints on the side. He said that his speed came from hockey.

Hewett was looking to either play hockey or run track at the college level. After his dad called UM, he was recruited for long jump by former head coach of track and field Brian Schweyen. He competed in long jump for just one season.

"I was not very good," Hewett said.

During his sophomore year, Hewett's coaches started to notice his speed and encouraged him to start competing in sprints on the side. "And then it just kind of took off from there," he said.

Following his second year of track, Hewett considered quitting due to a coaching change, COVID-19 and all of his injuries.

"I called my parents to be like, 'This isn't for me, I don't want to do this anymore,'" he said. "But they somehow convinced me to keep going and I'm glad I did."

As a senior in the communications program, Hewett still has one more year of eligibility due to COVID canceling his first collegiate indoor season and his decision to take a freshman redshirt year for the following outdoor season, but he's unsure if he's going to use it.

"My original plan is just to be done," he said. "But if things go well in outdoor, I wouldn't mind if I came back for my final year, maybe."

Hewett's decision to come back will be centered around his list of injuries, he said. He has been struggling with injuries since his

senior year of high school when he pulled his hamstring playing football.

Hewett has a constant struggle with both of his hamstrings and has added calf, ankle and groin injuries to the list.

"I've had a lot of injuries and it kind of sucks," he said. "But I mean, if everything goes smoothly, I don't see a reason not to come back."

During his first race of the 2023 indoor season back in December, he set a new personal record with a 6.87-second 60-meter dash, only 0.03 of a second off the record. But it was not a good race, Hewett said.

He injured his groin, which kept him from racing for a few weeks. Just as his groin healed, he pulled his hamstring again, holding him back from competing until the Big Sky Indoor Championships.

"Coach decided to give me a chance and it paid off, I guess," Hewett said.

On Feb. 23, the day he broke the record, Hewett was warming up and he thought he might've strained his hamstring. He tried to wave down head coach Doug Fraley to talk with him about dropping out of the race.

"I was focused on the long jumpers, and I never saw him trying to flag me down to say he couldn't go," Fraley said.

Unable to get his coach's attention, Hewett decided he had to be ready to race.

"I just said 'alright, let's just do it anyways,' and ran the race, somehow broke the school record. Couldn't tell you how, but I did," he said.

Hewett won his heat, automatically qualifying him for the finals the next day, but appeared to be in pain walking off the track. He went to talk with Fraley afterward about dropping the 200-meter dash, which he was supposed to run later, due to a hamstring injury.

"It hurt so bad and I was like, 'I really want to compete in the final,'" he said.

Hewett was looking to avoid another situation like he had in the spring, where he had to drop out of the 100-meter finals at the Big Sky Outdoor Championships due to injury after pulling his hamstring.

Fraley took Hewett to the head medical official to get him waived for the other race.

"They thought it was best for him to skip the 200, and that would give him the best opportunity to get treatment and have time before the 60-meter," Fraley said.

After dropping the 200-meter, Hewett focused on resting up for the 60-meter finals the next day.

"He's definitely the reason I probably won that race," Hewett said.

His warm-up for the final was painful, he said. He thought to himself racing probably wasn't the best idea and he was going to hurt himself, but got his muscles as warm as he could. Aware of the injury, Fraley talked to

Hewett before the race and told him he looked good.

"Sometimes just that vote of confidence, saying, 'Hey, I know it hurts, but you look great. You're moving well,' is just what an athlete needs to give them enough confidence to go to the starting line," Fraley said.

His teammate, Jason Upton, was also in his heat, and while warming up, the pair kept each other motivated with high-fives and several shouts of 'you've got this.'

"As I was warming up ... I was like, 'I'm gonna win this race,'" he said. "I don't know why, but I just told myself that."

The race ended in a photo finish at the line between Hewett and a runner from Northern Colorado University with only a 0.01-second difference.

Crossing the finish line, Hewett was greeted by a large group of his teammates and the gold medal in the 60-meter dash, pushing through

his bothered hamstring.

"Anytime you win a conference championship in a sprint event, it is a huge deal," Fraley said.

Hewett knows it's big to break the record, he said, but has yet to process the moment. He's currently focused on the upcoming outdoor season.

"I feel like 200 is more of my race than the 60. I didn't really feel like I was ever really a good short-distance sprinter," he said. "So, for me to do that, I'm really excited about what I can do in the 200."

Fraley agreed. "I truly believe that his best race might be 200 meters," he said. "And if we can keep him healthy and get him to learn how to run that race correctly, I think he could be really, really good at it."

Hewett will compete next in the Hornet Invitational in Sacramento, California, on March 15.



Cooper Hewett sprints down the track in a record-setting 60-meter dash during the preliminary heats of the event on Feb. 23 at the Big Sky Indoor Championships. He went on to take gold at the event the next day, running the exact same time of 6.72 seconds. **EASTERN WASHINGTON ATHLETICS | CONTRIBUTED**

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Jason Upton becomes one of Big Sky's best in jumping and sprinting

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During the Big Sky Indoor Track & Field Championship from Feb. 22 to Feb. 24, Jason Upton earned points in all three events he competed in. This made him the University of Montana's leading point scorer and contributed to the team's better than expected fifth-place finish in one of the most competitive conferences in the country.

"He's an athlete that excels in the sprints and in the long jump, and we even put him in the triple jump at the [Big Sky] Conference meet," head track and field coach Doug Fraley said. "He's just an all-around great athlete who shows a lot of leadership by people following his example and in his verbal leadership."

That athleticism and leadership took time to cultivate, as Upton is in his fifth and final year at UM pursuing a master's degree in business administration. The Laramie, Wyoming-raised athlete has run track and field in all years but the COVID-canceled season, and he has been on the team longer than even coach Fraley, who was brought on in the summer of 2022.

"We've had a great group of guys with Upton and [Cooper] Hewett and [Xavier] Melice and all these different guys that, you know, are [now] grad school students and still competing," Fraley said. "They really lead the direction because when I first came in, they bought into the program and they said [to the younger athletes], 'Look, we're going to do this the way coach wants to.' That is a really important factor for any athletic team when a new coach comes in."

Upton particularly bought into Fraley's advice when it came to improving his long jump. Despite being initially recruited to UM as a multi-event athlete, Upton spent most of his time focusing on the long jump event, until Fraley approached him and stated that in order to further improve his long jump, he had to become a better sprinter.

"I've gotten to the point in my long jumping where I just need to be running faster down the runway to jump farther. So, he's really focused me on sprinting in the 60-meter and 200-meter indoors," Upton said. "I've had a lot more experiences of how prepared you have to be as you get into those [sprinting] blocks, and, you know, everyone does something different. For me, I just have to have a super clear head and just think about one thing, like pushing out of the blocks."

The training adjustment would prove its worth this February when Upton first competed in the Whitworth Invitational. He ran a qualifying 60-meter time of 6.84 seconds to tie the UM record while also setting a personal best of 22.06 seconds in the 200-meter. When it came to the long jump itself, Upton outright



Jason Upton flies through the air while competing in the long jump at the Whitworth Indoor Track & Field Invite in Spokane, Washington, on Feb. 9. Upton won the event with a jump of 720 meters. He went on to place second at the Big Sky Indoor Championships two weeks later. **EASTERN WASHINGTON ATHLETICS | CONTRIBUTED**

won it with a jump of 23 feet and 7.5 inches.

During the Big Sky Indoor championship, Upton ran a 6.80-second 60-meter dash in the preliminary qualifiers that would have broken the UM record he previously tied if his teammate Cooper Hewett, hadn't run a 6.72-second 60-meter just minutes earlier.

Upton couldn't be happier for Hewett, but to be sure he was doing his part, Upton earned a second-place finish in the long jump with a 24-foot and 3.5-inch jump. He also placed eighth in the 60-meter final and seventh in the triple jump. Earning points in all three events he competed in, Upton led the team in points with 11 and contributed to UM's fifth-place finish in a conference that includes the current number-one ranked team in the country, Northern Arizona University.

"We definitely exceeded expectations. It's always a daunting thing to have NAU in our conference, but I think it just lights the fire more for the rest of us," Upton said. "Obviously, I lost to Mitchell Effing from NAU, and I think it's kind of similar to how me and Hewett run and compete with each other on the same team. Like, they push us more at those conference and championship meets."

Upton has one outdoor track season left to

push himself further, and he still has a few things he wants to accomplish.

"I really want the school record in the long jump. Like, more than anything else... All of the guys that are left after this year, I want them to be able to learn from me as a leader and then they themselves become leaders for the next generation of Grizzly athletes,"

Upton said. "Just leaving the track team better than how it was when we came here would mean the most to me, I think."

UM Track and Field will travel to Sacramento, California, to participate in the Hornet Invitational on March 15 and 16 before returning home to Dornblaser Field during the Al Manuel Invitational on March 22 and 23.

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Mahn, Myth, Legend: Max Mahn's whimsical printmaking

LAUREN REINHART

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From gnomes riding three-headed ducks to otherworldly depictions of shrooms, giant deer wandering over a gas station and a dinosaur surrounded by levitating miniature pyramids, Max Mahn's designs put you in a stoned state of mind without smoking any devil's lettuce.

Mahn creates prints of band posters, stickers and designs for Dogfish Head, a brand of craft-brewed ales. Born and raised in Missoula and a University of Montana alumnus who designed t-shirts for KBGA, Mahn is a printmaker who now has his own company called Twin Home Prints, based in Missoula. He kick-started his career exclusively using a spray paint can.

"Starting in middle school and through high school, I focused all of my free time on graffiti," Mahn said. "This leant itself to creating stencils from time to time. This evolved into me wanting to create more complex stencils and stickers. Toward the end of high school,

some of my friends and I started screen printing shirts and stickers in my basement and the rest is history."

Mahn visited UM's School of Art from March 4 to March 6 to work with the students on two prints with MATRIX Press. MATRIX Press collaborates with renowned artists from across the globe, joining forces with students and the printmaking faculty to create exclusive prints. Through this partnership, students have the opportunity to actively participate in every stage of the creative process alongside the artist. The prints crafted during these intensive week-long workshops are distributed among the artist, students and MATRIX Press.

Mahn's ongoing interest in printmaking is based on dabbling in other mediums of art. You can often see his interest in painting, illustration and watercolor in the products he sells.

"Printmaking is a medium where you can combine a lot of other mediums, such as painting, illustration or watercolor, for example," Mahn said. "In addition to that, I've

always appreciated the process of printmaking and the precision you can get from screen printing. It naturally leant itself toward my bold and whimsical illustrations."

Mahn's bold and mind-bending illustrations help him create posters for various bands, which are available on his website. He started making band posters while he was in college. According to Mahn, there is a lot of reaching out to people and getting emails returned. Ten years later, the people who respond to his endless emails are still clients today.

"In college, I started making posters for my buddy's band Wrinkles here in Missoula by sneaking into the art department at night and printing until the early hours of the morning. From there I never stopped," Mahn said.

Mahn has suggestions for up-and-coming artists, particularly students, facing any form of struggle before they give up on their progress.

"You just have to put yourself out there and be willing to accept the rejection," Mahn said. "Ten years later I've made lots of contacts in the industry and am lucky enough to create

the weird things I make full-time for lots of cool clients. A key part to keeping those connections is to always meet your deadlines, provide quality work and don't be an asshole."

Mahn has no specific muse that he focuses on when he creates prints for his clients. Prints will be different based the aesthetic of the customer. According to Mahn, he serves a variety of customers. If someone goes to Mahn for a custom piece and does not vibe with him, that is alright too. Mahn will make suggestions on which artists one should go to that might fit their style.

"Each print is different. For client work, I am typically trying to create an image or aesthetic that is fitting to the band," Mahn said. "You wouldn't want a melting skull for a Norah Jones poster, and you wouldn't want a cute butterfly for an Osees poster. There's a bit of responsibility to create something that resonates with the band along with their fans."

To shop from the Twin Home Prints store or see Max Mahn's work, check out this link.
<https://www.twinhomeprints.com/shop>

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Netflix's 'Avatar: The Last Airbender' is a mid copy of the original

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The word "iconic" is overused, but "Avatar: The Last Airbender" is truly iconic. Though the original animated series ended more than 15 years ago, it's become a childhood staple ever since. Even a terrible 2010 Shyamalan-helmed live-action adaptation (5% on Rotten Tomatoes) couldn't bury the franchise. Netflix saw this nostalgia as a cash cow, and a new, somewhat better live-action adaptation was born.

The original series ran for three seasons, with an overarching plot spread over 62 half-hour episodes. A very distilled version of that plot is that there are four different nations, each centered around a different element. Some people can bend those elements, often weaponizing them. You can only bend one element, unless you're the Avatar, a perpetually reincarnating force. Around 100 years before the series, the Fire Nation launched an attack on the other nations, literally genociding the Air Nomads and taking the art of airbending out with them, except for that one kid in the show's title, who gets trapped in a glowing ice-

berg for a century and emerges to find himself in a new, deeply conflicted world. He's the Avatar, destined to save the world from the Fire Nation, by mastering all four forms of bending and growing up along the way. No pressure.

The new "Avatar: The Last Airbender" has one very big, very noticeable problem. Watching the series, especially in the rapid-succession binge format Netflix encourages, it quickly becomes clear that the show is trying to cater to multiple, conflicting audiences.

The original show has a loyal fanbase, but no matter how dedicated they are, that's not enough to greenlight an entire show. Many of those fans have now grown up and have kids of their own, so that adds more potential viewership.

Netflix also seems to assume that the show will appeal to people who are just scrolling through looking for something to watch. This demographic problem is where most of the show's issues seem to stem from. It wants to be a serious, more adult-oriented remake with heightened violence and stakes, but it also wants to be child-friendly, all while trying to remain engaging to people who have never heard of the original series.

In the first episode, we watch someone

graphically burn alive, then immediately jump to two Air Nomads explaining to each other what an Air Nomad is, and then jump once again to a sky filled with adorable animals as children clamor over how cute they are.

The biggest problem with the show is the writing. It's heavy-handed and clunky, with a tendency to overexplain itself until dialogue becomes redundant. For an adult audience, this comes off as annoying at best and condescending at worst.

The show tries to give its pre-existing fans what they want, complete with acknowledgment of fandom memes, while also explaining the world and lore to new viewers. The result is an experience that won't be satisfying for either group: The writing is too heavy and obvious for old fans, and too confusing for those just scrolling through.

The pacing also causes some problems, as the show attempts to distill 21 half-hour episodes into eight hour-long episodes. This leads to shot-by-shot remakes of some scenes, while other entire plot arcs are completely glossed over.

The special effects are another weakness of the show, but not necessarily where you'd expect. The bending effects look fantastic, main-

taining a mix of cartoony fluidity and realistic physics. It's clear that this is where most of the show's budget went. However, the fantasy setting requires at least some of the show to be filmed on a green screen, and it's very obvious and noticeable. At best, the characters are just a little sharper than their environment; at worst, they look layered over the background, Photoshop-style.

The show does have some redeeming qualities. The sets, when not on a green screen, look beautiful and really contribute to the fantasy element of the world. The costumes are almost identical to the cartoon, but it never feels cheesy. The acting is fine: The cast, many of whom are children, is doing the best it can with the script.

"Avatar: The Last Airbender" attempts to create a world for new audiences while paying heavy tribute to its old fans. The result is probably unsatisfying for both demographics while remaining begrudgingly watchable. Netflix knows you'll keep going, waiting for the "Cabbage Merchant" or the "Secret Tunnel" song. If you're looking to scratch that nostalgic itch, though, maybe just watch the original series. At least this is better than the Shyamalan one?

Rating: 6/10

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UM hosts AA state basketball

WORDS BY **MADDIE CRANDALL**
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High school basketball teams from across the state flocked to Missoula last week for the Class AA high school state basketball tournament, the first time Missoula has hosted it in 20 years. The three-day tournament ended on March 9 with two championship games to determine the 2024 AA state title holders.

The girls' game saw a battle between the Missoula Hellgate High School Knights and Billings Skyview High School Falcons, with the Falcons looking to defend a perfect record. After falling behind Hellgate in the first quarter, Skyview picked up the pace with senior Breanna Williams leading the team. It went into the half with the lead and Hellgate wasn't able to come back, losing to the Falcons 54-36. Williams put up 26 points and 14 rebounds to end the season undefeated and as a Class AA girls state champion.

As soon as the Skyview girls left the court, championship plaque in hand, it was time for the boys game between the Gallatin High School Raptors and Sentinel High School Spartans. Gallatin took the early lead and Sentinel just couldn't recover. The game stayed firmly in the Raptors' grasp until the end and the team took home Gallatin High School's first championship with the 62-45 win.



ABOVE: The Gallatin High School Raptors celebrate with head coach Michael Claxton after winning its first championship in its school's history, earning the Class AA boys basketball title over the Sentinel Spartans with a final score of 62-45 on March 9.

ELLA PALULIS | MONTANA KAIMIN

LEFT: Gallatin's Kale Fasting, number two, gets control of the ball during the state AA boys basketball game between Sentinel High School and Gallatin High School at Robin Selvig Court on March 7.

ELLA PALULIS | MONTANA KAIMIN

FAR LEFT: Breanna Williams, power forward for the Billings Skyview High School Falcons, lifts the state championship plaque after finishing with a 54-36 win over Hellgate High School.

MADDIE CRANDALL | MONTANA KAIMIN