

MONTANA KAIMIN



STORY BY GRACE GOLBACH

PHOTOS BY TORI KUEHL

APRIL 23, 2026 VOLUME 128 | ISSUE NO. 26

CAUGHT IN THE CROSSFIRE

HOW FORMER AND INCOMING U.S. MILITARY SERVICE MEMBERS HOLD ON TO PURPOSE IN POLITICAL UNREST

06 ESON GIB CLOSING

12 THE REC IS RIGHT

14 KYIYO CELEBRATION



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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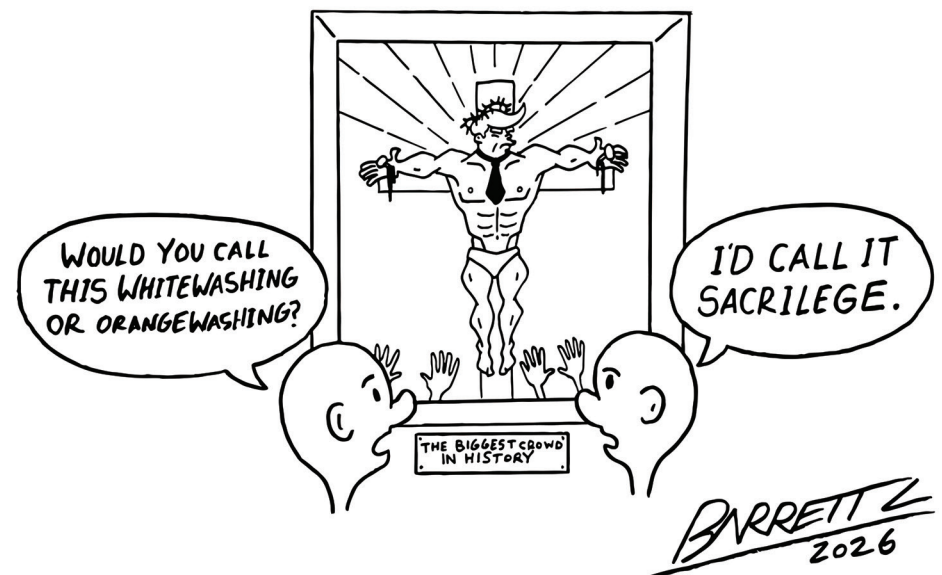
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POLITICAL CARTOON



DETECTIVE SQUIRREL: THE FINALE



Why is University maintenance students' responsibility?

SUDOKU

Edited by Margie E. Burke

Difficulty: Medium

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

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:

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

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Book break



Veronica Yellowhair, an English graduate from Boise State, finds a quiet corner to read "Pet Sematary" by Stephen King before she competes in the women's fancy dance competition at the Kyiyo celebration on April 18. For more Kyiyo coverage, see this issue's gallery. WESTON FUDGE | MONTANA KAIMIN

When I saw the ballot initiatives for this year's Associated Students of the University of Montana elections, my first thought was, "Why?" If the initiative for the University Center passes, I have to pay an extra \$57, even though I won't be here to see the updates.

The increase is said to "address critical failures rather than responding to emergencies," but why is it the financial responsibility of the students, who pay thousands of dollars a year to attend the University, to fix the buildings that reside on campus as well?

Currently, students pay \$168 a semester for a University Center fee – which will increase to \$172 regardless if the additional fee increase passes. If the initiative passes, the UC fee would be over \$200.

As an independent student, \$57 on top of the \$1,558 I pay in fees every

semester is the difference between being able to make rent or buy groceries. As a full-time student paying out-of-state tuition, my bill reaches up to \$19,000 for an academic year.

Seeing the addition of another fee in order to keep up with maintenance that should be the responsibility of the University was nothing less than angering. Students pay to go to school, not to be used as a maintenance fund.

When asking for grants to create a Starbucks in an existing building or construct a new dorm, updates to aging buildings on campus should be kept in mind and not thrown onto ASUM to ask their fellow classmates to pay more.

In my third year at the University of Montana, I was faced with the harsh reality of what happens when you are almost out of options. I had \$9,000 left on my bill and no way to pay it. I had four days before I would be homeless. After taking out a \$6,000 loan through the University and shelling out \$3,000, I was able to stay at UM, but I was drained of everything I had in my account.

This is the reality that many students face just to pursue their education. The standard fees that students pay for the Curry Health Center, ASUM, transportation and not being a Montana resident makes going to school nearly impossible for many. Throwing in fees to maintain buildings could be the make-or-break in a student's access to education.

It should not be the students' job to pay for maintenance on aging buildings, especially when only about 12% of the student body votes in ASUM elections.

The University needs to adjust its budget in order to account for necessary maintenance and updates to buildings yearly, rather than letting them slowly decay only to put the bill on the shoulders of students.

- Sav Chavez, features editor
Like it? Hate it? Let us know.

Email us your opinions at
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In local news...

JACK SNOW | NEWS EDITOR

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FRENCHTOWN TRAIN COLLISION LEAVES TWO INJURED

A train collided with a vehicle in Frenchtown on Sunday morning, hospitalizing two people.

Personnel from the Frenchtown Rural Fire District responded to the crash at 4:51 a.m. on Beckwith Street, north of Mullan Road. Crews found two individuals trapped in a heavily damaged vehicle upon arrival, according to KPAX.

First responders freed the most seriously injured person, who was brought to St. Patrick Hospital. Crews then extracted the second person, and Missoula Emergency Services brought them to the same hospital.

There were no injuries reported from among the train's crew, and it remained on the tracks with its freight intact.

FIRST SENATE CAMPAIGN FUNDING PERIOD ENDS, BODNAR LEADS, DEMOCRATS STRUGGLE

Both Independent Senate candidate Seth Bodnar and Republican candidate Kurt Alme have earned about \$1 million in funding through the first federal fundraising period, outcompeting Democrats in the race for campaign money.

Alme is up against candidates Charles Walking Child Sr. and Lee Calhoun in the Republican primary, but neither Walking Child nor Calhoun have reported raising a single dollar. Bodnar does not have a primary, but is in the process of gathering signatures for the November election, according to the Montana Free Press.

April 15 was the deadline for the campaign finance reports of all congressional candidates. The reports showed that the Democrats running for the Senate have garnered a combined \$131,759, with \$104,000 belonging to Reilly Neil, a former state legislator who has been campaigning since late 2024.

Bodnar, the former president of the University of Montana, leads all candidates in funding with \$1.14 million. He will need 13,327 signatures from qualified voters to make the November ballot and has until May 26 to get them to local election offices.

Bodnar's report shows receipts from six political action committees for a total of \$26,050, with four of the six backing Montana Democrats in previous elections. Way Back PAC, League of Conservation

Voters Action Fund and The American Association for Justice PAC were all supporters of former Sen. Jon Tester and Western District House candidate Monica Tranel. Bodnar's ledger also shows backing from ActBlue, the small-donation conduit for Democratic campaigns.

Alme, the former U.S. attorney for the district of Montana, reported a total of \$908,956. He was appointed to his attorney position twice by President Donald Trump with backing from Sen. Steve Daines. Daines also endorsed Alme's campaign to succeed him.

"Democrats still believe in democratic choice — that's why we have a slate of working-class candidates running to improve the lives of everyday Montanans," Emily Marburger, Montana Democratic Party executive director, said in a statement last Thursday. "As big corporate money pours in for wealthy elites like a fence-sitting independent and a MAGA hand-picked successor, we are proud that our candidates for U.S. Senate are traveling the state, meeting with Montanans, and earning every vote and dollar."

This period marks the first time since 1988 that Montana Democrats have raised less than \$150,000 in the first quarter of an election year.

SOUTH AVENUE UPGRADES MOVE FORWARD

The City of Missoula approved an agreement with a local contractor last week to improve South Avenue.

The plan is to turn South Avenue into a "complete street" with shared paths, turn lanes and safer intersections.

The agreement is for \$485,000 with WGM Group, and includes final design, right-of-way acquisition and bidding services, according to the Missoula Current.

"We're getting ready to construct the project, which we have scheduled out in 2027," Ryan Guelff, the city's transportation engineer, said. "About 80% of the funding is primarily coming from the grant. The remaining 20% is a local match being shared by the city and county."

The city of Missoula submitted a grant application to the Federal Highway Administration in 2022, and was given about \$9.3 million in 2024. The city matched \$1.5 million while the county pledged \$842,000.



This week on the Kaimin Cast ...

Every Friday for 25 years, Missoula's Women in Black chapter has stood at the south end of Higgins Avenue in promotion for a just, peaceful world.

Women in Black is an international network of women committed to peace and nonviolence. 82-year-old Carel Schneider has been an inspiration in Missoula's peace movement since she got involved with the Jeannette Rankin Peace Center. She started the city's Women in Black chapter in 2001 in response to military actions after 9/11. Under President Donald Trump's administration and with the recent conflict in Iran, Schneider said peace is getting harder to find.

"We've lost our way somehow. I don't think I'm in the minority, but it's really hard to walk with kindness and compassion and awareness of the other in our environment where there's so much distraction and people are frightened," Schneider said.

Listen in on this week's podcast, Why war: 25 years of promoting peace. Learn more about Schneider and Missoula's movement for peace by heading to our website at montanakaimin.com.

- Grace Golbach,
audio editor



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



TRUMP ADMINISTRATION TO REFUND TARIFF EXPENSES

The Trump Administration has started taking applications from businesses seeking over \$166 billion in tariff refunds.

This decision comes months after the Supreme Court ruled that the president had no legal authority to impose such tariffs, according to The Guardian. The administration launched a digital claims system on Monday, which they claimed will be able to process 63% of affected import filings.

Over 3,000 companies have reportedly sued the administration in an attempt to get refunds, with some filing cases before the Supreme Court made their decision. Notable plaintiffs include Skechers, Revlon, Toyota, Nintendo of America, FedEx and Costco, according to The Guardian.

Only companies that have already paid the tariffs are eligible to claim, which means most are importers and large corporations.

It's uncertain what effect these claims will have on the general populace, but FedEx has stated it will pass refunds back to customers and Costco suggested that it could lower prices if it gets its money back.

KASH PATEL FILES DEFAMATION LAWSUIT OVER ATLANTIC ARTICLE

FBI director Kash Patel has filed a defamation lawsuit against The Atlantic and its reporter Sarah Fitzpatrick for an article which alleged that he has a drinking problem.

The lawsuit was filed on Monday, and referred to an article from April 17 that claimed Patel has a habit of "excessive drinking and unexplained absences," according to Politico.

The suit makes the claim that Fitzpatrick's reporting is part of an attempt to "damage Director Patel's reputation and force him from office."

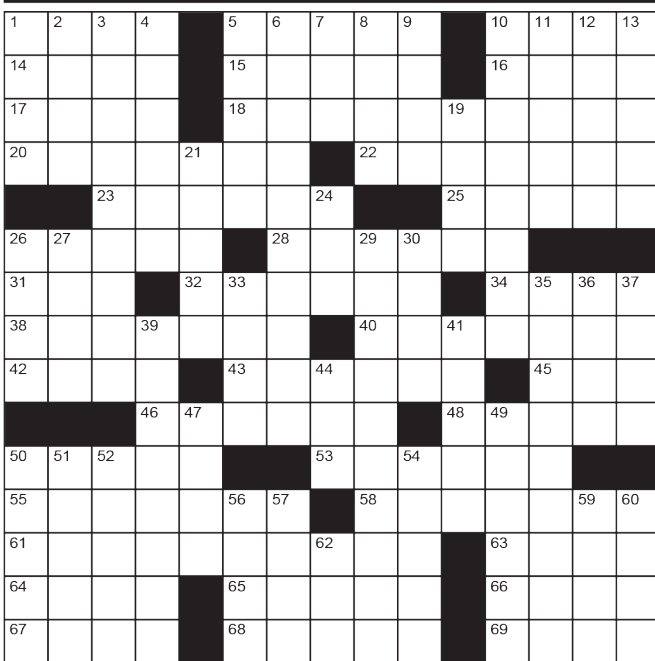
The Atlantic released a statement on Monday refuting that claim.

"We stand by our reporting on Kash Patel, and we will vigorously defend The Atlantic and our journalists against this meritless lawsuit," The Atlantic said.

For Patel's part, he expressed frustration at the things that the media has focused on.

"The Atlantic's story is a lie. They were given the truth before they published, and they chose to print falsehoods anyway," he said.

Patel is seeking \$250 million in damages, as well as the disgorgement of any profits from the article.



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ACROSS

- 1 Auto parts giant
- 5 ___ out (declined)
- 10 Puts away
- 14 Oil acronym
- 15 Mania
- 16 Put on a long face
- 17 Lively
- 18 Solid ground
- 20 No longer good
- 22 Former Kudrow co-star
- 23 Made off with
- 25 Nature calls?
- 26 Balances
- 28 Fed the fire
- 31 Cowboy nickname
- 32 Fit to eat
- 34 Deep black
- 38 Bobby Brady, to Carol
- 40 One fleeing a flood, maybe
- 42 Jedi guru
- 43 Sketcher's tool
- 45 Funnyman Brooks
- 46 Type of union or bureau
- 48 NFL's ___ Beckham Jr.
- 50 Old photo tint
- 53 Opt for first
- 55 Chocolate treat
- 58 Scottish flatbread
- 61 Venom neutralizers, e.g.
- 63 News bit
- 64 Chart toppers
- 65 Hollywood Holmes

- 66 2021 film, "___ Look Up"
- 67 "___ we forget ..."
- 68 Apple desktops
- 69 Aphrodite's son

DOWN

- 1 Yep's opposite
- 2 High point
- 3 Bewildered
- 4 Film genre
- 5 Musical eight-some
- 6 Set in advance
- 7 Road-paving stuff
- 8 Pound of verse
- 9 Campus VIP
- 10 Like most sitcoms
- 11 Main blood line
- 12 Chemo target
- 13 Musial and Laurel
- 19 Captain's command
- 21 Romantic dozen
- 24 Do a voice-over
- 26 Crafty site
- 27 Bill killer in D.C.
- 29 Like some music
- 30 Zachary of "Shazam!"
- 33 Inside info
- 35 Part of a fraction
- 36 Ship's backbone
- 37 Shout out
- 39 One opposed to war
- 41 High up
- 44 Quick drink
- 47 Rapids ride
- 49 Get off the fence
- 50 Lesley of "60 Minutes"
- 51 Tennessee ___ Ford
- 52 Golf strokes
- 54 Lessens
- 56 Villain in "The Avengers"
- 57 SAT or GMAT
- 59 Bingo's cousin
- 60 911 responders, briefly
- 62 Give ___ go (2 wds.)

Answers to Previous Crossword:



Explosion-o-scope

KAIRI LISING | ARTS & CULTURE EDITOR

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The semester is almost over, but what happens when the burnout is actually way worse than you thought? Spontaneous combustion cases among college students are on the rise. Well, in this totally realistic scenario, how are you exploding?

TAURUS (APRIL 20-MAY 20): You finally landed a first date with the baddie in your biology class. Safe to say you hit it off. Ending the night at their door, just after your first kiss, let's just say there were fireworks?

GEMINI (MAY 21-JUNE 20): You've prepared for this job interview your entire life. It's make or break on this one. Or maybe it's actually make or combust? Either way, when you were shaking your interviewer's hand, your fate was sealed.

CANCER (JUNE 21-JULY 22): All the smoking has finally caught up to you, Cancer. Thankfully, you haven't gotten actual cancer yet, but turns out your fate is more ... explosive? As soon as you light up your last cigarette, you also light up.

LEO (JULY 23-AUG. 22): Some say all you do is study. I say you're investing in the future! Bad news, no future for you. While you were pulling an all-nighter for finals week you started to feel a little strange. You pushed it down, chalking it up to everyday indigestion. Let's just say things definitely bubbled to the surface.

VIRGO (AUG. 23-SEP. 22): You've had a long day full of classes and work, a well-deserved rest is on your horizon. Just as your eyelids fall closed you feel a stirring sensation. Almost like a rumbling. Your eyes shoot open just in time to witness your imminent explosion.

LIBRA (SEP. 23-OCT. 22): You were caught exploding on the rare occasion of you stepping out of your home. One step out into the sunlight and ... kaboom? At least you got to touch grass one last time.

SCORPIO (OCT. 23-NOV. 21): Mid-hook up is really the worst time to explode, but sorry to say, Scorpio, it happened to you. Here's the good news, though, at least you didn't leave any unfinished business behind. If you know what I mean.

SAGITTARIUS (NOV. 22-DEC. 21): You're hiking the M on a beautiful spring day. The sun is shining. The birds are chirping. The smell of flowers is in the air. Just as you reach the top of the last switchback and you turn your head to the city, there goes the dynamite!

CAPRICORN (DEC. 22-JAN. 19):

Doomscrolling is hard to escape from, I get it. Nothing sounds better sometimes than rotting in bed on your phone swiping. You were laughing at some dumb AI video when it happened. Call that kaboomscrolling.

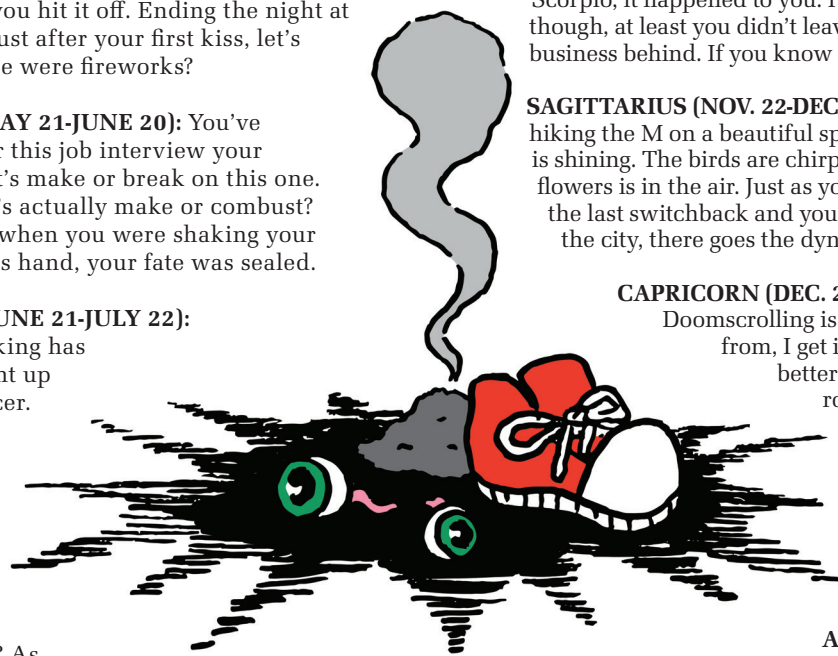
AQUARIUS (JAN.

20-FEB. 18): You're getting ready for a fun night on the town. You get dressed up in your hottest fit and pregame at your

besties' house. Right before you get into the Uber, nature had other plans. Call that starting the night with a bang.

PISCES (FEB. 19-MARCH 20): Like Scorpio, you were in the middle of some ... self-care? Safe to say right before you were over the edge, you exploded. In more ways than one. Really, it's just bad timing at the end of the day.

ARIES (MARCH 21-APRIL 19): You're always one to back up your friends in a fight. Long story short, the bar fight gets taken outside. Right after you throw the first punch, you're out in a blaze of glory. At least it'll be a crazy story for everyone else to tell.



BARRETT CLEMENT | MONTANA KAIMIN

Eson Gib to close its doors

AIDAN GRAHAM | NEWS REPORTER
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Campus sushi restaurant Eson Gib announced in a letter to the Montana Kaimin that the University of Montana did not renew its vending contract.

The business, which has run in the University Center food court for 17 years, will have its last day of operation on May 15.

The closure follows a pattern of recent business and community space shutdowns across campus. Ray Lei, the 51-year-old owner and operator of the business, said he was not given a reason for the non-renewal, but respects UM's decision to "move in a different direction with their dining model."

"I would like to express our deepest gratitude for the immense support we have received from the campus community over nearly two decades," Lei said. "We truly feel like part of the Griz family and will miss serving the students, faculty and staff."

Lei, a Chinese immigrant who received his Master of Business Administration at Gonzaga University, founded his business in Spokane, Washington, contracting through both Rosauers and Super 1 Foods

grocery stores. In 2009, the University of Montana contracted Lei for his portable "box sushi" design, allowing the University to outsource all sushi on campus from the business.

Lei explained that Eson Gib filled a gap in campus fare. "The dining service was making sushi by itself," he said. "It wasn't very successful."

From there, Lei sold his remaining contracts, dedicating his entire business to the University. While many locations have come and gone within the foodcourt, Eson Gib would stand the test of time, becoming a popular staple among the student body.

"After that first bite, it became my Thursday lunch every week through all four years," UM graduate Dwayne Francis said. Francis, who originally received his bachelor's in economics in 2005, would return to UM to receive his degree in business from 2011 to 2015.

The family-run business has not only remained a campus mainstay, but has remained Lei's sole source of income, supporting his wife and 15-year-old daughter Vanessa. Since learning of the lapse, Lei has stated his hopes to continue the business on campus outside of Campus Dining's jurisdiction.

"We're still hopeful we can find somewhere else on campus," Lei said.

"The boba place downstairs, they are not dealing with the University. They are dealing with the University Center, you know. So that way, it's like just a random spot from this building."

Lei further stated that if he cannot continue his work in the University, he will most likely have to shut down the business, claiming the stability of campus dining to be highly preferable to the uncertainty of a brick and mortar location.

"The place meant so much to me, I'm sad if it's closing," Tyler Hunter, a 25-year-old UM graduate, said. Hunter, who graduated with his bachelor's in communications in 2022, expressed disappointment in the University for its decision. "The University needs local business and with one closing and a chain coffee shop opening [it] just isn't Montana."

Several other campus dining facilities

have also faced similar closures in recent years, such as the Rise & Rooted cafe in 2024 and Think Tank, the single coffee shop on the eastern half of campus, in 2025.


While Lei hopes to continue his work, he remains optimistic in the face of a negative outcome. "We have some savings that will get us through for [the] next couple years," Lei said. "I think we want to see, you know, maybe find a job or move throughout the state."

Lei stated he hopes the closure will allow him to spend more time with his family while his daughter continues her education. While he is saddened to leave, he expressed his wishes to show the student body how grateful he remains for the support they've received in their time at the University.

"We hope to see many familiar faces before our final day on May 15 so we can say goodbye properly," Lei said.




Alston Zhao, who graduated from UM with a degree in computer science in 2014, cuts a sushi roll at Eson Gib in the UC on April 16. WESTON FUDGE | MONTANA KAIMIN



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ASUM president reflects on his time in office

JOCelyn HOOD | NEWS REPORTER

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After four years with the Associated Students of the University of Montana, the current ASUM president is graduating and passing his role on in this year's election.

Buddy Wilson, a 22-year-old environmental science major from Hillsborough, North Carolina, served as an ASUM Senator for three years. This past year, he served as the organization's president.

"I think ASUM is going to be on really solid ground next year for someone to come in and really make sure that students are well informed, even more well informed, about what's going on," Wilson said.

During his time as president, he said that ASUM members put together the first ever annual comprehensive public financial report online in efforts to improve financial transparency with the student body.

Wilson also said he spent a lot of time working on the search for a new university president, which the University announced as Jeremiah Shinn on April 14.

However, there have been some parts of the job that Wilson has struggled with, he said.

"I would have liked to spend more time out talking to students," Wilson said. "The ASUM president should be someone out in the community who people get to know. I could have been better about that."

He also said he wished that he had been able to spend more money on student clubs and organizations.

"I think that's some of the best work we do, but we are not able to provide as much funding support for those types of things as I would like," Wilson said.

Chase O'Brien, a 21-year-old ASUM Senator and triple major in political science, history and women's, gender and sexuality studies is the only candidate running for the presidential position.

"I think she would do a fantastic job," Wilson said. "She has a great eye for marketing, communicating with students and building relationships across campus."

Wilson said he wants to make sure his successor has a smooth transition into the role and that they can pick up where he left off.

"I hope my successor is someone who acknowledges that this is an organization that has to be run with continuity from year to year," Wilson said. "When you become ASUM president, you're just the next in a long line of people who are tasked with keeping the train going forward."



Current ASUM president Buddy Wilson speaks in the UC Commons to introduce the new ASUM presidential candidate on April 16. WESTON FUDGE | MONTANA KAIMIN

Another positive accomplishment during his presidency, Wilson said, is that ASUM members passed two different balanced budgets for the upcoming fiscal year. This means that they plan not to spend any more than they bring in. Wilson said it's the first time in four years that ASUM hasn't over-budgeted. According to the financial report for the fiscal year of 2025, ASUM's agencies and operations spent \$706,207 above revenue in 2025.

There is a proposed \$10 addition to the ASUM fee on the ballot that would make the fee \$89 total per semester for each student taking seven or more credits. Wilson said that one of the two budgets is a version for if that fee passes, and the other is for if the fee doesn't pass. The latter involves cuts to things like the food pantry, Bear Necessities and a 50% reduction of legal capacity.

Wilson explained how the \$10 would be divided if the fee passed. He said \$5 would

go to costs in ASUM services and student groups, \$4 would go to club sports and \$1 would go to the Student Music Union, which is made up of 20 music-related clubs.

He said a transportation fee increase of \$18, making the total fee \$67 for students with seven or more credits, is also proposed on the ballot to support buses going to Lewis and Clark Villages and Missoula College.

On May 9, 2025, two bus lines were cut from the UDASH bus system and late-night service was shut down, according to the UM website.

A proposed \$57 increase for the University Center fee to pay for repair costs of features like the HVAC system, food court floor and glass skylight, making the total fee \$229 for students with seven or more credits, will be on the ballot as well.

The election and vote for all three fees will be open until 8 p.m. Thursday. Wilson said it's important for the student body to share their opinions. Students can

vote online on the ASUM website, on the UMontana app, in-person in the ASUM office, or in-person during the Spring into Summer event on campus.

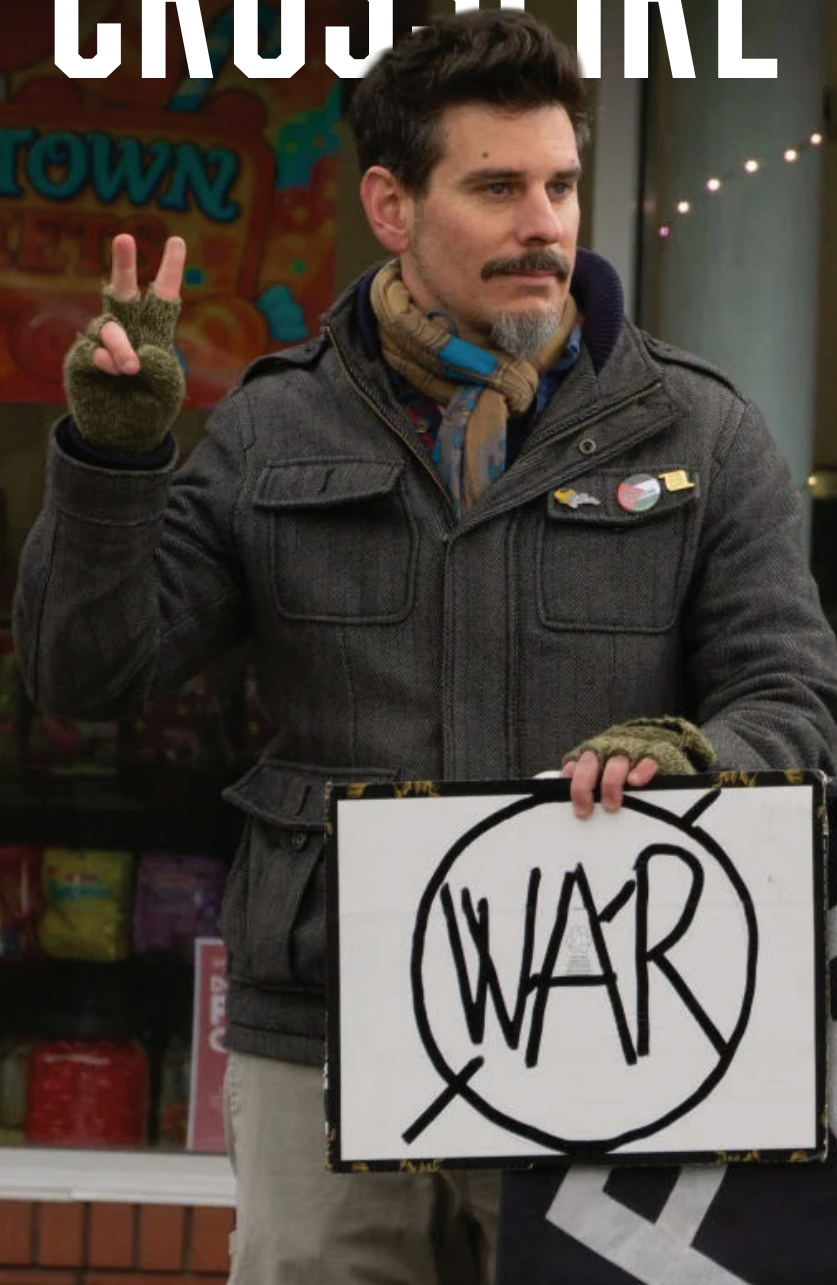
"The students we elect, both in the president role and also as Senators are like the most local form of government for students, the decisions they make really do matter," Wilson said. "Also, whether you vote yes or no on the fee increases, you are voting on whether to pay more money, and I think that's important too."

Wilson is planning to go to law school for the next three years and then spend four years as a Judge Advocate General Officer providing legal services for the U.S. Army. After that, he intends to pursue a career in criminal defense or environmental law.

"I could not be more excited," Wilson said. "But man, I've loved UM, and being ASUM president has been, so far, I feel, the opportunity of a lifetime."

CAUGHT IN THE CROSSEIRE

HOW
FORMER
AND
INCOMING
U.S.
MILITARY
SERVICE
MEMBERS
HOLD
ON TO
PURPOSE
IN
POLITICAL
UNREST



Brian Myers holds up a peace sign to a passing car during a Veterans for Peace protest, which took place on April 3 in Missoula.

STORY BY GRACE GOLBACH PHOTOS BY TORI KUEHL

While much of the country experiences a deepening political divide, many service members in the U.S. military work to set their beliefs aside to bond, grow and protect one another.



Working alongside fellow soldiers from various backgrounds, personal politics often fade to the background. Instead, their character, ability to adapt and their execution of missions in ways that align with the constitution and the military's

duty to the people are what define them.

"I struggled with the Iraq War when I was 18 and what was our purpose there," said Lt. Col. Frederick Brown, 39, a professor of military science at the University of Montana's Reserve Officers' Training Corps, or ROTC.

Despite grappling with the purpose of his deployment, Brown said, "I never did that at the cost of the team I was on."

With military actions decided by President Donald Trump's administration and a politically divided public vocal about their support or opposition, some service members feel misunderstood about their role in military actions and struggle to find their purpose.

In the past year, the Trump Administration deployed the National Guard to civilian protests. A federal judge in San Francisco later ruled the deployment as an illegal overstep of authority, according to the Los Angeles Times.

The administration also carried out military operations involving Venezuela and Iran.

The operations in Venezuela included boat strikes resulting in 105 deaths, and an operation in the capital city of Caracas where U.S. forces captured the sitting Venezuelan president, Nicolás Maduro, who faces charges of narco-terrorism and drug trafficking.

In Iran, the U.S. and Israel launched strikes where they hit Iranian military and nuclear sites, as well as civilian sites, and assassinated Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei. The attacks led to a five-week conflict, killing 13 American service members.

According to the 2025 Reagan National Defense Survey, the percentage of Americans who said they have a "great deal" of confidence in the military dropped from 70% in 2018 to 49% today.

"It's okay to hold us accountable," Brown said. "As long as it's not coming from just a purely partisan point of view, I can have that conversation about critiquing the decisions we make and our role in society."

Brown began his military career as an infantryman where he served through ground combat. He later became an officer through the ROTC. He deployed multiple times in Iraq and Afghanistan, and served many roles over his 22 years of service. During that time, he said he's seen confusion from the public over the military's role.

The military operates under the authority of the executive branch of the federal government. Service members commit to a contract that binds them to serve the executive branch and the American people. Some freedoms, such as free speech, are restricted. Regardless of personal agreement, they must follow lawful orders.

"The military is not partisan, but its

officers, especially its decision makers, must be politically minded in that we recognize the environment we exist in and that we serve," Brown said. "We serve and work at the discretion of political bodies, not just the executive branch, but the legislative branch and occasionally the Supreme Court."

Being in the cross section of society and the military is complicated. The divided country further complicates this amid political actions and misinformed perceptions.

MISSIONS, MORALE AND MORALS

Patrick Beckwith, 41, has a long career in service. A graduate of West Point, he served 10 years active duty with the Army and deployed multiple times as an officer to Iraq and Afghanistan.

"JUST BECAUSE I HAVE PRIDE FOR SERVING MY COUNTRY DOES NOT MEAN I AGREE WITH WHAT OUR CURRENT ADMINISTRATION IS DOING"

-JENAVIEVE BORUFF

Beckwith came to the University 11 years ago as a ROTC instructor and joined the Montana National Guard eight years ago. He currently works as the Director of Military and Veteran Services at the University of Montana and as a Montana Army National Guard commander.

"With many of the units that I serve, the morale is always very strong," Beckwith said. "A large part of that is morale is closely aligned with a sense of purpose. And I was fortunate to serve with units that had a very clear sense of purpose."

Morale is a cognitive, emotional and motivational attitude toward goals and tasks. In the military, a strong sense of purpose and strong leadership are factors in maintaining high morale.

"You have to understand, respond and respect the fact that there are really hard days," Beckwith said. "Say 'Dang, this is hard on me,' but at the same time be able to say 'I know things are going to be okay.'"

According to "Leadership in Dangerous Situations: A Handbook for the Armed Forces, Emergency Services and First Responders," a strong culture, commitment to excellence, positive leadership and trust contribute to

creating morale that is harder to break when faced with challenges.

"You get people to do things that potentially risk their lives by showing them and providing them with the understanding that you're going to be there shoulder-to-shoulder," Beckwith said.

With strong morale, teams are more likely to be devoted to the mission at hand and believe in themselves and their peers, regardless of any personal opinion on matters at hand, according to the book.

"You recognize that person could be a father just like me, and that person at their core, just wants to survive and live a comfortable life, and we're both put here because of something way

above us," Beckwith said. "When service members come back and reflect on it, their actions were unquestionably right, but they're brought to a sense of 'Wow. I can't believe I did that.'"

Under Article 92 of the Uniform Code of Military Justice, service members must obey legal orders and disobey illegal ones.

A poll done by the nonprofit news organization The Conversation showed only 9% of the 818 active duty troops interviewed would obey any order. One soldier in the poll said "An order would be obviously unlawful if it involved harming civilians, using torture, targeting people based on identity or punishing others without legal process."

The "Manual of Courts-Martial" states an order is unlawful if it violates the Constitution, federal law or superior lawful order, such as the Geneva Convention.

Some orders issued by the current administration are under scrutiny of being illegal. The Conversation reported some soldiers worry things illegal to international law might become legal in the United States, but political scientists said that soldiers' understanding of international laws can impact their decision making.

“We had to do things that conflicted with some of my most foundational moral values, and it’s hard because war is brutal,” Beckwith said. “War is the last thing you want to do.”

When faced with complicated situations, Beckwith looked at the bigger picture and if the action they are pursuing has a goal that aligns with ethical codes, rules of war and overall safety of the American people.

The public’s support for the military’s effort also plays a role in servicemember morale. Beckwith said there is a correlation between public perception and general morale.

“We would be naive not to believe that based on what we saw in the post Vietnam era and just during Vietnam itself,” Beckwith said. “Many service members didn’t believe in themselves because they knew the general public didn’t support their cause.”

Vietnam displayed how the public’s perception of war can trickle down to an individual, which Brown said was a “dangerous example” of public influence.

The controversy around current military actions are seeing similar perceptions trickling down from parts of the public.

MIRRORING THE PAST

Every Friday at the south end of Beartracks Bridge, members of Veterans for Peace stand to increase awareness of the cost of war and to promote the abolition of war in national policy. These veterans served in Vietnam, and most of them were drafted.

Dexter Aspevig grew up in Rudyard, Montana. In 1968, he enlisted in the Navy to avoid the draft and served until 1972. During those years, he spent a year and a half deployed in Vietnam.

For 10 years, Aspevig, now 76, participated in Veterans for Peace because of what he saw in the Vietnam War.

“There were zones where anybody in it was declared a free-fire zone, so they were considered animals,” Aspevig said. “They’d call offshore bombardment from the ships, call it air strikes or anything on just innocent people.”

Military leaders counted each death to prove they had purpose in the country and were doing something, Aspevig said. He believes this agenda to keep track of the bodies in and of itself was immoral.

“[Military leaders] had a big deal on body counts. They always wanted body counts,” Aspevig said.

However, if an order was disobeyed, the military would court-martial them.

“There’s consequences to questioning things. Man, they’ll bust you and lock you up and your career’s done,” he said.

Aspevig said moral dilemmas were common for drafted soldiers.

“At the time you may not even have time to think about it. You’re just trying to stay alive and keep your buddies alive,” Aspevig said.

An infamous event in the Vietnam War occurred in the town of My Lai on March 16, 1968. First Lt. William L. Calley and his unit killed at least 300 Vietnamese civilians.

They expected to engage in combat with the 48th Viet Cong Battalion. Upon entering My Lai, they found a village of unarmed civilians. They rounded the civilians up, and Lt. Calley ordered his unit to “take care of them.”

Hugh Thompson, a warrant officer piloting a helicopter, saw the massacre overhead and landed between the fleeing Vietnamese and the advancing soldiers. He ordered his door gunner to kill any Americans that refused to stop firing on civilians, putting a stop to the massacre.

Brown has a history of military service in his family and said he is “a student of history.” He has studied military history and is familiar with the My Lai Massacre and the morals involved.

“There you have two tremendous

extreme acts of a moral compass,” Brown said. “One was wrong and one was incredibly right, and he was willing to die for it.”

At the same time, back home, anti-war protests erupted as the public voiced disapproval of the American military in Vietnam. At the start of the war, 59% of people supported the war. By the summer of 1968, the majority of people disapproved.

When Vietnam soldiers returned home, they struggled to find jobs and many suffered from post traumatic stress disorder.

“In World War II, people came home, man, it was a wonderful time. We came home and it was kind of a bad deal. You weren’t very highly thought of,” Aspevig said.

Now, he uses his voice against war.

“We’re blowing up people. Well, what’s that going to solve? Just more and more people [are] against us,” Aspevig said.

The recent attacks on Iran gave them further reason to hold their signs, which read, “Stop the murder” and “War? Not in our name.”

“Just do your best to try to do what’s right and if it’s morally wrong, maybe it’s time to bail,” Aspevig said.

Much of the American fighting force in Vietnam was drafted and did not want to be there, and the officers that were in charge moved quickly through training.

“We created this kind of shake and bake officer corps,” Brown said. “They would come to college for a year or two and then would be 20 or 21 years old without any real professionalized military education and training. It was really about getting bodies to the front line.”

The military took notes after Vietnam to better officers.

The ROTC program and military academies advanced their programs after Vietnam. Before commissioned officers are sent to lead a unit, graduating cadets must go through Basic Officer Leaders’ Course to ensure they meet the standards and expectations, and if not, they are out.

COMBATING PERCEPTIONS

Three days a week, 61 ROTC cadets arrive at the University of Montana Schreiber Gym for physical training to run, lift weights or ruck, a hike with their loaded rucksacks.

Third year cadets lead a line of black shirts with “ARMY” in big yellow text through exercises. After brief warm ups, they file out to complete that day’s physical training.

At UM, the ROTC program is ranked in the top 20% in the nation by the U.S Army Cadet Commands.

Cadets must balance their ROTC duties like weekly labs, where they simulate missions, their physical training and the program’s specific classes with their academics and social life, facing



Patrick Beckwith, director of UM’s Military and Veteran Services Office, sits for a portrait on April 15.

mental and physical challenges meant to strengthen and discipline them.

Jenavieve Boruff is a MS II, or second-year, cadet in the University of Montana's ROTC program studying criminology and minoring in Russian. Boruff values the discipline, structure and close bonds she said she's gained through the program.

Boruff calls it "Cadet Land." They are college students that for now just "roleplay Army" until they become officers. It's a hard balance, but she said getting along with her peers is important and having great leadership keeps morale high.

"The squad you get put in, that's your family. It doesn't matter what their opinions are, what yours are, because you can't afford any sort of bias or tension," Boruff said.

Upon graduation, the Army commissions cadets as officers and assigns them into leadership roles. The ROTC program teaches them the moral and ethical codes they must follow, how to properly lead and what their role in missions are.

Lt. Col. Brown, having been through ROTC and now guiding the University of Montana program, said the one of the most important lessons he wants the cadets to learn is character above all.

"I had a boss who always said 'Grow or die,'" Brown said. "What he meant was you always have to be self improving. Recognize that you'll make mistakes, you'll live with regret, but if you can grow and learn from those and become a better person, a better professional soldier, you got a chance."

Brown expects the cadets to have self-discipline and ambition, but also to be introspective and able to question their own values and beliefs at any moment.

"I don't need you to agree with the conflict, I need you to exhaust every effort you can to accomplish the military and political objectives and do so in an ethical and moral way," Brown said.

Boruff recognizes her duty as a leader to decipher orders and follow them unless believed to be illegal, and when following that order to complete it with the least amount of damage.

"The goal is for everyone to come home alive on both sides," Boruff said.

Boruff said she is proud of the program and proud to serve, but can find it hard to always display her pride.

"People will judge your character by what our current administration is doing just because you are affiliated with the military," Boruff said. "Just because I have pride for serving my country does not mean I agree with what our current administration is doing."

Boruff said she is not very opinionated and falls toward the middle, but if something does differ she looks at the bigger picture.

"I have to remember it's not about me," Boruff said. "Being in the military, you're



ROTC members stretch in the Schreiber Gym after rucking at the University of Montana on April 16.

kind of just another number and the lower you are on the totem pole, it kind of just doesn't matter what you think."

For some people, service members have become a sort of scapegoat for the recent deployments of Immigration and Customs Enforcement.

"I don't always tell people I'm in ROTC because, depending on who you are, talking [about] it can completely change the tone of the conversation or how you're treated," Boruff said.

Brown said while wearing his uniform in public, he's experienced mixed reactions from passersby.

"I've been called a fascist. I've been called ICE even though I'm not involved with Immigration or Customs Enforcement," Brown said. "But I've also been invited to Christian nationalist militia training and I want no part in that either."

The younger generations tend to have less support and trust for the military. According to the 2025 Reagan National Defense Survey, only 36% of Americans under 30 have high confidence in the military.

"It's our college age and up until the Millennials, not hardly at all with our parents' generation or older," Boruff said. "The younger generation just have a very different opinion of people who serve."

Boruff said she has experienced peers judging her because of lack of knowledge and lumping her in with the current administration's views.

A Support Our Troops report estimated only 14% of Americans have a close relative that has served since Sept. 11, 2001.

"I would argue that people in the U.S. military have a much better idea of American society at large than people outside the military because we've been on both," Brown said.

NATIONAL DIALOGUE

Between both political parties, 59% of Americans believe the initial military action in Iran on Feb. 28 was wrong. This can put service members honoring their duty in a hard position, as the public support is not in their favor as they complete orders.

"When it comes to popular support and [action] being unpopular, I do recognize that it reduces a lot of the American people's trust in the United States military," Brown said. "While it affects us on an individual level, we're not greatly involved in those discussions and decisions. All we want is to perform our duty which has been asked and ordered and do it in accordance with our national values, integrity, honor, duty, preservation of peace."

The sitting president appoints the Secretary of Defense and Principal Staff Assistants that the Senate then confirms. They then lead military conversations and advise policies.

"It is integral that we have this discourse and dialogue because if policies need to

change on how we handle and take care of our soldiers, how we perform and execute missions across the world — if the American people don't believe it's within our national values and interests, then that's got to be a conversation between citizens and our political leaders," Brown said.

Since the country's founding, no war has had full support, but that hasn't stopped military action from being carried out.

"The popular opinion of what's right or wrong, that's up to the American people," Brown said. "We are subordinate to the state."

The job of officers and soldiers is to exhaust the mission and do it to the best of their ability while staying in line with the moral and ethical codes, but who orders it is the public's decision.

"If you're not partaking in that conversation through vote or through discourse and dialogue then shame on you," Brown said. "No matter what side of the aisle you're on, no matter your perspective, it has to be part of the national dialogue and the trust in the military has to remain at least high."

The military does not always share clear information about operations and missions with the public, which can cause ill perceptions or judgement. However, officers like Brown, Beckwith and soon Boruff trust themselves to complete the orders with humanity.

Rock the Rec brings climbing competition to UM

DILLON RICHARDSON | SPORTS REPORTER

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Chalk dust and climbing jargon filled the air at the Fitness and Recreation Center's rock wall this past weekend for the annual Rock the Rec climbing competition at the University of Montana.

Rock the Rec has been a staple of UM's spring semester for almost two decades, bringing together climbers from around Missoula for some friendly competition regardless of age or skill level.

The preparation for the event starts during the week, as the rock wall staff takes every hold down starting on Thursday, then puts up all new routes specifically designed for the competition on Sunday.

Henry Blackmore, the student manager of the wall, said it's a lot of work, but it's exciting to see people trying all of the new routes, adding that the team makes sure to keep a wide variety of difficulty.



Freshman Lily Madison competes in the Rock the Rec competition on April 19.

JACKSON MAILEY | MONTANA KAIMIN

"We still have the same distribution of grades in both boulders and routes," Blackmore said. "Maybe on that top end, we might see a few more hard routes, but it's still accessible."

Unlike many competitions, Rock the Rec challenges climbers in both bouldering and top-rope disciplines, while most competitions choose only one.

Bouldering is much shorter, with the UM facility topping out around 10 feet, and relies on much more powerful and condensed movement.

Top-rope requires climbers to be tied onto a rope while they scale a much longer climb: sometimes over 50 feet.

The climbers are scored based on the combined difficulty of two boulder problems and two top-rope routes that they complete.

Blackmore said that he also really likes the environment that Rock the Rec brings.

"It's a really laid back, chill event," Blackmore said. "I would never really be too psyched to do comps, but Rock the Rec is like a great one to do."

One of the climbers that has competed at this event for a long time is 57-year-old Claudine Tobalske, whose first Rock the Rec was more than 15 years ago.

"I think it's really fun," Tobalske said. "I think it brings the community together for a fun event, and I like to support the campus climbing community."

Tobalske, originally from France, got her Ph.D. in wildlife biology from UM in 1998, and currently works as a geographic information systems analyst in UM's Spatial Analysis Lab.

She said that the mix of disciplines gets her out of her comfort zone.

"I'm not a boulderer," she said. "It forces me to do something I don't do very often."

Over the years, she said that Rock the Rec has changed in an interesting way.

"The competitors have become younger and younger," Tobalske said. "There were a lot more adults or even a lot more college students before."



Gabe Melton climbs up the rock wall as his dad, Chris Melton, takes a video of his climb at the Rock the Rec competition on April 19. JACKSON MAILEY | MONTANA KAIMIN

Today I don't see that many college students."

Tobalske said that one thing she likes about climbing is that it doesn't matter what age you are.

"I climb with people who are 15 and I climb with people who are 85, and I love that," she said.

One of the dozens of kids competing was Riley Eggert, a 14-year-old attending C.S. Porter Middle School, who said he likes rock climbing because it requires a mix of skills.

"It feels different from a lot of other sports," Eggert said. "It requires both a mix of strength and a lot of skill and technique."

Eggert has done a few other climbing competitions, and said that Rock the Rec is a lot less competitive, and more of a community event.

"I've started to like the other comps because they're just a little more head on to climbing," he said.

While the laid back feel may not suit some, it invites plenty of novice climbers to try out competition for the

first time.

UM sophomore Charlie D'Anna said that she has only been climbing for a year, but really enjoyed the event.

"[My friends] kind of had to peer pressure me to get here, but it's just fun to be here and get a T-shirt and see so many people climbing," D'Anna said.

D'Anna, 21, is a parks, tourism and recreation management major who had never done any competition before, but was excited to be around her friends who helped organize the event.

"It's so fun to see them in their element and how excited they are about the routes they set," she said. "Also it's nice to get all new routes in the gym, because sometimes they sit here for months."

D'Anna said that the event was challenging, but it was made fun because of the people she was doing it with.

"It's like a tricky puzzle, like 'Can I do this?'" she said. "But it's just fun to do together."

'Euphoria' is back and not great

NIAMH O'FARRELL | ARTS REPORTER
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After a four year hiatus, "Euphoria" released the first episode of its third season on April 12. So much controversy has surrounded the show and with that, the question stands: Will Euphoria be ruined by this last season?

Since the first time I watched "Euphoria" my freshman year of high school, I was hooked. Watching Rue's drug addiction being depicted as a spinning room that she couldn't find her balance in while others watch, unable to help her, was such a unique way to symbolize the helpless feelings involved in addiction. I couldn't look away either.

The first episode of this new season starts off with a time jump, five years after the characters graduate from high school, and they have all found themselves on different paths. The previous season ended with two characters, Maddy and Cassie, on non-speaking terms after Cassie took off with Maddy's boyfriend, Nate. Season three picked up with Cassie and Nate engaged, and Cassie started pursuing a career as an OnlyFans model.

This storyline for Cassie and Nate felt like they had abandoned some of the already established morals of the characters. In season one, when Nate and Maddy were dating, it was established that one of the things Nate valued the most about Maddy was her "purity," so much so that he got physical with her for wearing a revealing outfit, and Maddie went as far as to claim a person she had slept with had been nonconsensual so that Nate wouldn't think she had slept with another person.

Because of these well-established character traits about Nate, it makes it unrealistic that he would be OK with his fiancée being a sex worker.

A theme that is prominent in the show is that almost every female character is somehow involved in the

sex work industry, and the degrading things they do on screen are reflected by how involved they are in the industry.

For example, Cassie is a creator herself, so she is shown doing stuff such as licking water out of a dog bowl, playing with dog toys, and being led by a dog leash.

Maddy and Rue are both working jobs that don't yet lead to sex work, but Rue expressed to the manager of strip clubs that working in a club would be her dream job. Maddy is shown in the trailer to be a manager of OnlyFans models, but in the first episode is shown struggling financially in her office job, which, in past seasons, she had explicitly said she would never do.

Rue works as a drug mule, regularly swallowing balloons full of drugs to transport across the border. The scene where she has to swallow the balloons is disturbing to watch because she is repeatedly gagging, having to stick her fingers down her throat, and is covered in her own spit before having to dispose of the drugs by going to the bathroom.

The only main female character who isn't involved in sex work is Lexi, a character who has often been depicted as prudish and judgmental of other people who are more promiscuous than her.

The writing of this season so far makes it seem like the writers believe that the only jobs women have available to them are those with degradingly low salaries or something in the sex work industry.

It felt like I was watching the Madonna-whore complex being played out. These female characters can either express their sexuality or be taken seriously as professionals, but this show does not create space for both realities to exist.

Since the release of the final season, the show and its actors have been shrouded in controversy and tragedy.

Actor Barbie Ferreira left the show, citing creative differences with the show's creator Sam Levinson. Labrinth, the artist who wrote the score for the show, ranted online after being fired.

Sydney Sweeney, one of the main actresses of the show, found herself in the spotlight over a controversial American Eagle ad, prompting further speculation over her political views.

The show also lost two of its actors. Angus Cloud, known for his role as Fezco, died of an accidental fentanyl overdose in July 2023 at the age of 25. Then, this February, "Grey's Anatomy" star Eric Dane died from complications from ALS, making "Euphoria" his last on-screen role.

One of the initial draws of the show

was colorful and glittery makeup and how well the creators cultivated the aesthetic of the show. But with the new season, that old aesthetic has been abandoned, and instead of the usual color of the past season, they have resorted to a more earthy and beige color palette.

Overall, the whole episode felt like Sam Levinson has a very specific fetish he wanted to see played out on scene and wrote according to that. Past shows he has written, such as "The Idol," have received similar severe criticism that they don't feel like they are trying to be raw or artsy, but that the shows feel much more like fetish content and an avenue to humiliate the female actresses involved with the project.



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57th Annual Kyiyo celebration: Regalia explored

SABRINA PHILIP | ARTS REPORTER

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On April 18, the Adams Center overflowed with life, music and culture. The jingle of beads and bells filled the halls, and in the background the chants, singing and drums marked the 57th annual Kyiyo Pow Wow Celebration.

The event, defined on the University's website as "the oldest traditions of Kyiyo," UM's Native American Student Association, brings Native Americans from across the region to share their culture and traditions. The uniqueness and pride of each individual and their tribe is emphasized in their regalia, the traditional clothing worn during the celebration.

Designed with intention, regalia includes elements of family significance, tribal affiliation and for the purpose of dancing. This is true for Saellah Nomee, a citizen of the Crow Nation from Ronan.

Nomee wore a jingle dress to the celebration, which was accompanied by a cape, a plume, a side drop and beaded leggings. The dress included gold metal cones, as well as red sparkles, beads and feathers.



RJ Tveter spins in full regalia during the men's fancy dance competition at the 57th annual Kyiyo celebration on April 18. **WESTON FUDGE | MONTANA KAIMIN**



Dancers enter the Adams Center arena during a grand entry of the Kyiyo celebration on the evening of April 18. **HENRY DOELLINGER | MONTANA KAIMIN**

"This is a healing dress," Nomee said. "When I dance, I think of people and pray for people. One of my friends right now, she's gonna have a baby, so I've been praying for her. All of these are medicine,

so our beadwork is just our own designs added on to the outfit."

Nomee made the dress herself. The different elements varied in the time they took to make. The beadwork on the front of the dress took a week for each of the panels, she explained, adding that she incorporated elements of her tribe and her own life into the regalia.

"Crow people, they mostly work with horses and stuff, there's a lot of relays and rodeos, so I have a horse on the back, and I kind of grew up breaking horses and riding horses," Nomee said. "The rainbows, they kind of represent a part of my life. My life isn't all good. Sometimes you have dreams about what you want to make."

Nomee shared that the significance of the celebration for her is the ability to represent her people and dance for those who aren't able to attend. She said her tribe's population is "low and undereducated," which motivates her effort to highlight them in her attendance at the celebration.

"When I celebrate today, it's for my people," Nomee said. "I dance for the people who can't and who don't have all this stuff, and I bead and work for all this, because my ancestors weren't here. They weren't here to experience this. They won't be able to live this lifetime. So I kind of dance for them, I heal them, I cry for

them and I pray for them. So it's all for my ancestors."

Lark Real Bird, another citizen of the Crow Nation, described her own outfit, as well as her family member's, which she said was a Crow-style elk tooth dress. She said that while a lot of other tribes decorate with elk teeth as well, the Crow wears the dress in her style, with a yoke that is a different color.

The elements of the dress, including the elk teeth, signified the hunting habits of a family. If the women in a hunter's family wore her particular style of dress, she said, the hunter in the family was considered a good hunter.

Real Bird described the importance of what she calls "cultural inheritance," which is seen in how her family passes down items like dresses and belts.

Beadwork was a significant element of Idella "Dolly" Rattler-King's regalia, a dancer from Spokane and a citizen of the Northern Arapaho Tribe and Blackfoot Nation. She said her regalia represents her tribal name, which is "Morning Star Woman."



Lyrix Sapiel, a citizen of the Bitterroot Salish Tribe and Crow Nation, stands in his regalia at the Kyiyo celebration on April 18. The dragonfly on his headpiece represents his grandmother who has passed away.

TORI KUEHL | MONTANA KAIMIN



Lyrix Sapiel, a member of the Bitterroot Salish Tribe and Crow Nation, stands in his regalia at the Kyiyo celebration on April 18.

TORI KUEHL | MONTANA KAIMIN

“A lot of my beadwork is the morning colors,” Rattler-King said. “So we would say the light blue, and then the red, yellow, orange, white. Those are all like a sunrise. I’m also a member of the Women’s War Bonnet Society of the Blackfeet Nation. So I’m wearing a war bonnet.”

Rattler-King said the war bonnet, filled with long feathers and colors of blue, white, red and yellow, is something one of her great-great-grandfathers carried, and for her people, if you’re a warrior or a veteran, you had the right to wear the feathers and the war bonnet.

“I became a member of that society, and it’s from the Blackfeet Nation,” Rattler-King said. “So they have a women’s war bonnet society. So the women, when our men were at war, we would still be able to do our ceremonies with the role that our men took. So we would have to step into those roles.”

The dress Rattler-King chose for the celebration was a “northern cloth-style dress,” which is a casual type of dress that is often dressed up with wool or buckskin outfits, she explained. She carried a beaded purse hand made by her grandmother, which, after being stolen twice, was returned to her.

Rattler-King explained the significance of the event for her in terms of growing up at celebrations, and said that through

wearing particular styles of dresses and watching various types of dances, she is able to reflect on the legacy of her people.

“At one time when I first started wearing this particular style, I was 15, and today I’m 50,” Rattler-King said. “What I realized is that because of going through colonization and genocide, we’ve lost a lot of people. I was just reminiscing about when I was a child, being here and there were so many war bonnet dancers, more men than women. Today, we only had two war bonnet dancers. So for me, it’s an opportunity always to come out and show how proud we are that we’re still here. Our existence is the resistance, right?”

Another dancer, Lyrix Big Medicine Sapiel, a citizen of the Bitterroot Salish Tribe and Crow Nation, was accompanied by his dad, Lexx Sapiel. Lexx explained Lyrix’s middle name, Big Medicine, is emphasized through the shield he carries.

Lyrix’s regalia included a shield to emulate the big medicine from St. Ignatius on the Flathead Reservation. He also carried a staff of an eagle claw talon passed down from the ‘60s, and a kerchief to signify blessings.

Lyrix’s regalia, according to Lexx, is correlated with his position as a warrior in the traditional category. His regalia included a wooden gunstock, a breastplate of filed down and smoothed out buffalo bones, a medicine to signify him in battle, arm bands for bounce when dancing, wings to help him glide, tail feathers to “clean his tracks” and a feather cap.



Dahyitihi White does her makeup during the first day of the Kyiyo celebration on April 17.

HENRY DOELLINGER | MONTANA KAIMIN



Idella “Dolly” Rattler-King stands in her war bonnet at the Kyiyo celebration in the University of Montana’s Adams Center on April 18. **TORI KUEHL | MONTANA KAIMIN**

All this, Lexx continued, was for the purpose of camouflage due to Lyrix’s role as a warrior.

“These here are just as much camouflage as anything else,” Lexx said, pointing to Lyrix’s feather cap. “It can mimic many animals, but see when it goes down, these come down, and it’s to mimic a four-legged. If he was from a distance, it would give the appearance of a four-legged. He’s got his bells and all that stuff

that’s just more power, and he’s got the reflective buffalo on his vest to emulate that big medicine, the shining.”

Lyrix’s regalia included another headpiece — a roach with porcupine hair and eagle feathers — which he changed into for another dance. This one, Lexx said, represented his grandmother and Lyrix’s age.

Lexx said elements of Lyrix’s second headpiece include immature eagle feathers, which represent his status as a young man, as well as a dragonfly to represent his grandmother, who has since passed away.

“She’s always around, just like dragonflies, you know?” Lexx said.

For Lexx, seeing his son dance is reminiscent of his own past as a dancer. Reflecting on the meaning of young children dancing at celebrations, he said it extends beyond a simplistic action and means something more.

“I did dance as a little boy myself, so this is everything,” Lexx said. “We just continue our traditions, and you just put everything into it. Every little thing, every color, everything in there is everything from us. It’s a lot of gifts, it’s a lot of recognition, it’s a lot of legacy. That thing goes a long way, and these kids have a really good in-depth mind about this stuff, and that other kids don’t, and it brings just a distinctiveness to their soul. It’s completely unique.”

*For more photos from Kyiyo,
please visit montanakaimin.com*

Ignoring the 'shoulds': Local therapists talk about safe sex

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Desire and arousal seem like synonyms — certainly in any good romance novel, they can be used interchangeably.

It turns out that desire can actually be equated to hunger cravings. It's the wanting process, the mental idea of sexual hunger. Arousal refers to the physical sensation itself, as explained by local experts.

A pair of sex therapists spoke about the importance of communication, consent and care when it comes to relationships on April 17 as a part of the University of Montana's Sexual Assault Action Month programming.

"Things a sex therapist wants you to know," the title of the duo's presentation, focused on a few things relating to sex.

Though the room is sparsely populated, Faith Ellis and Gavriella Montoya y Tierney seem at ease. The two chat at the front of the room, discussing the fact that they expect the presentation to run long. Though it doesn't end up being such, one can understand why they'd worry.

The therapists are so passionate about their work that a single slide can expand into a five-minute discussion, though it doesn't feel like it. Ellis talks about theoreticals in silly voices and invites "play" with the subject often — meaning it doesn't have to be so serious.

"It is something that feels so vulnerable. There is so much shame," Ellis said. "To be able to go and educate in a way that's like, 'We're going to get weird together. I'm gonna be weird about it. You don't have to be if you don't want to, but you're welcome to.' It makes people feel a lot more comfortable."

The biggest takeaway, though, was that nothing is more important than clear communication and consent.

"If your goal is to have good sex, if your goal is to have a good relationship," Montoya y Tierney said in the presentation, "[Communication] is the hard part."

They explained that studies show that there are three main barriers to clear communication. One, threats to the self, or how someone feels about themselves. Two, threats to one's partner. Three, threats to the relationship. And the most healthy, successful relationships reach past that discomfort to say exactly what one means.

This is especially important when breaking through typical understandings of sex. As Ellis explained, sex can often be seen as goal-oriented: A one-way ticket to orgasm-town, no stops or detours. An approach that is pleasure-driven focuses on a shared responsibility for satisfaction, in-the-moment feelings, and ignores the "shoulds."

"Don't worry about the 'shoulds,'" Ellis said. "Because those aren't yours. Those are other people's. What do you want?"

Some shoulds can be discovered by figuring out what your sexual "taste buds" are. Test what feels good and what doesn't. See if that aligns with possible partners or not. And keep talking about it. Otherwise, it'd be tricky to give full consent.

Montoya y Tierney has such an earnestly excited and funny approach to discussing sex, it engages the listener as well. With their bright green hair and a wide smile, it's hard not to feel comfortable in Montoya y Tierney's presence.

They realized that they wanted to be a therapist from a young age, after experiencing great care from court-mandated therapists. Though originally educated as an addiction therapist, they are working their way to be a sex therapist certified by the American Association of Sexuality Educators, Counselors and Therapists. Ellis possesses this certification.

It's something that requires a lot of education and clinical hours to attain. The amount of time required by most states to become a sex therapist?

Two hours.

Recommended Reading

From Faith Ellis and Gavriella Montoya y Tierney



- The Art of Consent
- Why Does He Do That
- This Is Supposed to Be Fun
- Come As You Are
- Tell me What You Want
- Good Sex

"This is an area that is so, so filled with misinformation," Ellis said in the presentation.

So, those at Oh Hi Collective, Ellis and Montoya y Tierney's place of employment, work to get the right information out there. Though the "one stop shop for all things sex education," per its website, originated in Bozeman, it now has branches in Missoula and Livingston as well.

An acronym that may help is FRIES: Consent is freely given, reversible, informed, enthusiastic and specific. Keep talking about sex, which Montoya y Tierney emphasized can be sexy, and it'll

be more fun for everyone in the long run.

"Continuing to help people have good sex is kind of punk rock and revolutionary in a lot of ways," Montoya y Tierney said. "That's why I teach about all this stuff, because I think that people need each other, and what a beautiful way to continue to gain the skills of understanding and care."

Further events for Sexual Assault Action Month include a rom-com trivia night on April 23 at 7 p.m. in the Student Life Lounge and Denim Day, which is part of Share Kindness on the Oval on April 29, where students who show off their denim can get fun prizes.