

MONTANA KAMM

LET'S GET Physical

STORY BY
JACK SNOW
PHOTOS BY
JACKSON MAILEY

ONE MAN'S QUEST TO FIND UM'S BEST ACTIVITY CLASSES

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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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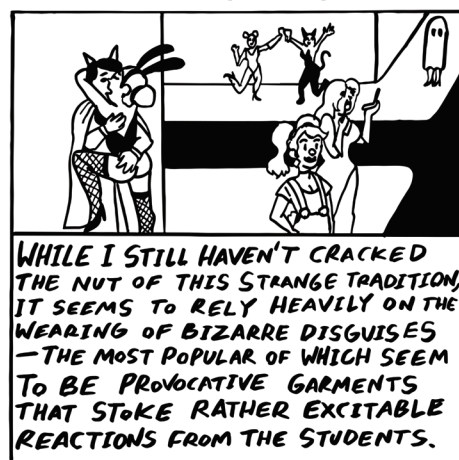
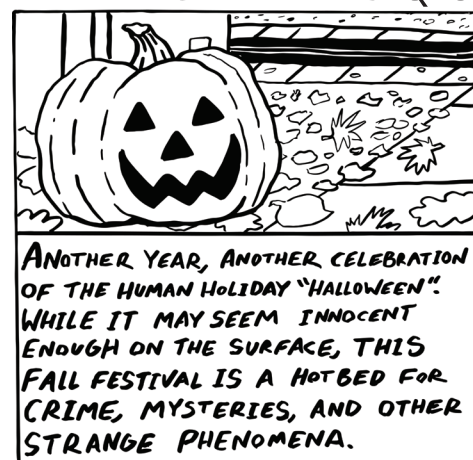
FOR MORE STORIES, VISIT THE KAIMIN'S WEBSITE



POLITICAL CARTOON



DETECTIVE SQUIRREL: SE 3 EP 5



Letter to the editor

I am writing as a non-traditional, single-parent student residing in University family housing to address the unsustainable increase in rental rates.

While living on campus with my children has been a tremendous opportunity, the rising costs are making it nearly impossible for single-income parents like myself to continue our education.

The financial strain is considerable. On-campus student employees earn an average of \$13.50 per hour. When balancing class time, working a job, caring for our children and studying, the hours available for work are limited. Earning roughly \$1,100 per month from a student job makes it increasingly difficult to keep pace with housing rates that are now over \$1,300 per month for a three bedroom unit.

This forces us to make a choice between time spent in class, caring for our children or studying. The core mission of pursuing a degree – to create a better future – is undermined when the cost of University housing makes that goal financially unsustainable.

I understand that market pressures impact housing costs, especially in Missoula. However, a significant disparity exists between our University’s rates and those at comparable institutions with non-traditional housing options, where rates for similar units can be considerably lower.

The current structure disproportionately affects single-parent households, and the option of student loans is not a viable long-term solution given the high interest rates.

I believe that many student parents contribute significantly to our University community, and our success is integral to the institution’s mission of fostering a diverse and inclusive student body. I am hopeful that we can find a solution to this issue. More parents need to come forward asking the University to discuss potential options, such as:

A tiered pricing model based on income and family size.

Increased housing fee waivers or grants for student parents.

A commitment to cap future annual rent increases for family housing residents.

I hope more parents can come forward and share their struggles allowing a call to action for a fix to this unsustainable housing problem.

- Kordell Bowyer

Have opinions you want to share? Submit a letter to the editor on our website at montanakaimin.com.

Snow-vember



Snow flurries dust the Oval on Nov. 3. Missoula is forecasted to have a cooler than usual winter with more precipitation, according to the National Weather Service.

HENRY DOELLINGER | MONTANA KAIMIN

SUDOKU

Edited by Margie E. Burke

Difficulty: Easy

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

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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:

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

In local news...

THE MOLD ISSUE: FOLLOW UP

On Oct. 23, the Montana Kaimin released "The Mold Issue," which detailed concerns of mold around the state of the University Villages. Originally, mold was believed to have been found in two apartments at Craighead-Sisson, which had been tenanted by UM student, Emma Leo.

Following the release of the article, the University of Montana's Environmental Health and Safety team produced negative black mold testing in a campus lab last Thursday from samples collected at the Craighead-Sisson villages.

University testing showed the material found behind the wall of Leo's apartment in August to be a wood adhesive which had collected dust and grime over the years.

"I'm glad they tested and determined it's not mold," Leo said. "Still, something in that apartment made me sick."

Leo said her focus now is to move on and work toward feeling better, but she still maintains that the University offered her no assistance in moving, which the University has denied.

The Kaimin reached out to UM Housing associate director of facilities Harley Lathrop for further comment on why the panel had not been tested for mold earlier, but did not hear back.

-Aidan Graham, news reporter

MISSOULA FEDERAL GRANT APPLICATIONS AFFECTED BY FEDERAL GOVERNMENT SHUTDOWN

Chris Lounsbury, chief administrative officer for Missoula County, said this time of year is important for application processes around federal grants as it helps set up the spring construction season. Currently, those applications are piling up due to the federal government shut down.

Lounsbury said to KPAX that the immediate impact of the shutdown are steps in the process of being reimbursed by the federal government.

Missoula Mayor Andrea Davis said the biggest impact on the city so far is the delay in various grants they have already received, including grants for improvements along South Street meant to install sidewalks and separated bike lanes, according to KPAX.

"The federal government is a large institution. There are many people working for it. There are many offices. And when you shut everything down and bring it right back up, it takes some time to get things moving again," Davis said to MTN. "So things naturally get delayed. And I fear that it will be compounded this time because there are also federal layoff and federal positions that have been eliminated."

-Sav Chavez, news editor

MISSOULA FIRE DEPARTMENT TO INSTALL BABY SAFE HAVEN BOX

The Missoula Fire Department recently received a Baby Safe Haven Box by donation at its main station downtown and are currently working to install it.

The box is a place where infants can be securely dropped off to the care of the state. When used, the box automatically locks and alerts 911 dispatch, Assistant Fire Chief Philip Keating said to the Missoulian.

"We're trying to ensure that if a child is dropped off, it's in a safe spot," Keating said. "This provides some protection."

Keating told the Missoulian the Missoula Fire Department has only been brought one unwanted newborn about 25 years ago, but this creates an option for the department to accept newborns at any time, not just when people are at the station.

Earlier this year, the first Baby Safe Haven Box was installed in the Lockwood Fire Department in Billings.

Fire departments and other government institutions have accepted unwanted newborns since 2001 under Montana's Safe Haven Newborn Protection Act, which provides alternatives for parents who cannot care for a newborn baby under the age of 30 days. The law protects parents from criminal charges if the baby does not show signs of abuse or neglect, according to the Montana official state website.

-SC

TRUMP'S PLAN TO IMPORT ARGENTINIAN BEEF COULD AFFECT MONTANA RANCHERS

President Donald Trump announced plans to import 80,000 metric tons of Argentine beef to bring down beef prices, breaking from his "America First" trade agenda and leaving Montana ranchers uneasy.

Dr. Eric Belasco, a professor at Montana State University's agricultural economics department, told NBC Montana that imports can modestly lower prices, but the U.S. beef market is driven mostly by domestic production, which supplies 80-90% of consumer demand.

"It's going to take a lot more imports to bring down the price of beef," Belasco said to Montana NBC. "The price of beef is up mainly because our production has slowed. Inventory numbers have been down kind of every year going back to 1975, but acutely in the last few years because of drought."

Belasco told NBC Montana that beef prices could come down if ranchers expand their herd, which he said is typically a two-year process.

"The easiest way for beef prices to come down is for inventory to go up in the United States. If ranchers start to expand their cattle herd, then we could expect those prices to eventually start to come down," he said.

-SC



Coming up on next week's Kaimin Cast, Misophonia: More than meets the ear.

Most people have sounds that annoy them. Loud chewing, scratching and pen clicking are just a few examples of a storm of noise that can turn a regular trip to the Lodge or a romantic date into a tense standoff. But what happens when someone's chewing causes an uncontrollable emotional outburst or uncharacteristic reactions from a timid friend?

It could be a syndrome known as misophonia, where repeated sounds can cause an unusually intense emotional response in a patient.

Alison Cobb, a psychotherapist at 121 Psychotherapy in Missoula, equates misophonia to synesthesia, a condition where one sensory experience can trigger an unrelated sensory experience, most famously, people who see colors when listening to music. Misophonia is thought to be similar because it's hearing a sound that can cause an unrelated sensory trigger in a person.

"Misophonia is caused by mirror neurons firing," Cobb said. "That's like somebody else's chewing is causing the mirror neurons to fire, so your brain is experiencing it as if you are chewing, which feels intrusive or invasive, because it's somebody else's mouth doing it, right? And so it's like your brain trying to grapple with that."

Find out more about Misophonia: More than meets the ear, next week, by heading to our website at montanakaimin.com

-Weston Fudge, audio reporter



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



SAV CHAVEZ | NEWS EDITOR

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TRUMP ADMINISTRATION BLOCKED FROM DEPLOYING TROOPS TO PORTLAND AGAIN

On Sunday, a federal judge in Oregon barred President Donald Trump's administration from deploying the National Guard to Portland until at least Friday, according to the Associated Press.

The judge stated she "found no credible evidence" that protests in the city grew out of control before the president federalized the troopers earlier this fall.

It is the latest development in weeks of legal back-and-forth in Portland, Chicago and other U.S. cities as the Trump Administration has moved to deploy the National Guard in city streets for protests.

NATIONWIDE LISTERIA OUTBREAK

Six people have died and 25 more have been hospitalized due to a listeria outbreak linked to precooked pasta meals, according to an update from the Food and Drug Administration last week.

Listeria is a bacteria that has symptoms of fever, muscle aches and gastrointestinal issues.

The outbreak was first announced in June and has led to several recalls of ready-to-eat pasta meals, including pasta from food supplier Nate's Fine Foods, according to the FDA.

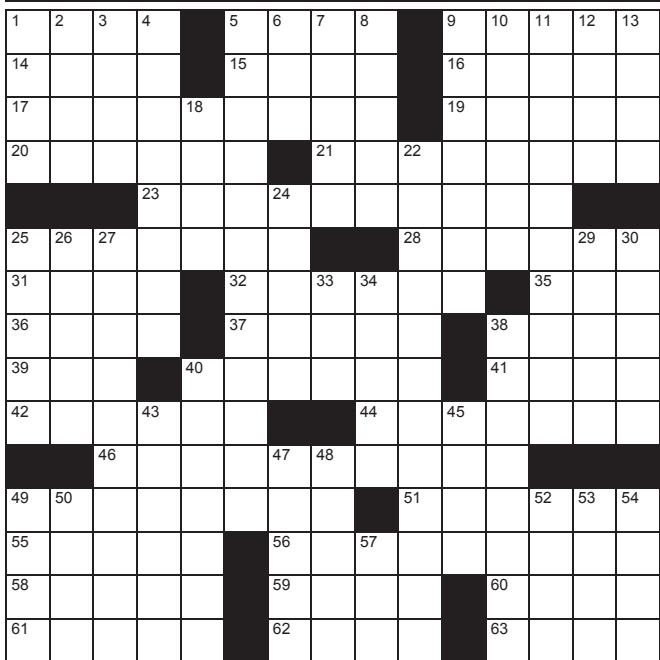
Cases have been reported in 18 states. There have been no recorded outbreaks in Montana.

MICHIGAN MEN CHARGED IN ALLEGED HALLOWEEN TERROR PLOT

Two suspects are facing federal charges Monday for planning a terror attack over Halloween weekend in Michigan after federal investigators said they found over 1,600 rounds of ammunition, multiple firearms and tactical vests in raids on their homes and a storage unit.

The two men are charged with receiving and transferring, attempting and conspiring, firearms and ammunition, knowing and having reasonable cause to believe that firearms and ammunition would be used to commit a federal crime of terrorism, according to NBC News.

The federal agents found AR-15-style rifles, two shotguns, four handguns and ammunition in addition to tactical vests and GoPro cameras at their home.



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ACROSS

- 1 Emerald City's creator
5 A bit cracked
9 Modern messages
14 In addition
15 Run the show
16 Nick of "Affliction"
17 Church instrument of old
19 Sci-fi author Verne
20 Mother of Calcutta
21 Replant timber
23 Like sunlit water
25 Kidnap victim
28 Bananas, so to speak
31 Elliptical
32 Brother's daughters
35 Brewer's vat
36 "Peanuts" girl
37 Honeydew, e.g.
38 Magpie or macaw
39 Utah airport code
40 Sentence ender
41 Pasadena's ____ Bowl
42 Mideast capital
44 More evident
46 Study of beauty
49 Affectionate one
51 Took home after taxes
55 Oil source
56 Theater break
58 Not so crazy
59 BBQ entree
60 Sea eagle
61 Lengthy lock

- 62 Adriatic and Aegean
63 Clothing closure
- DOWN
- 1 One of TV's Mavericks
2 On the calm side
3 Consumer
4 In a humble way
5 Some court proceedings
6 Milk container
7 Wake-up call?
8 Roxie in "Chicago"
9 Legally forbids
10 Weeps for
11 Claim not yet proven
12 Social suffix
13 "____ we forget"
18 Workplace safety org.
22 Affability
24 Getty Center architect Richard
25 "The Planets" composer

- 26 Plant seed
27 Excessively sweet
29 ICU worker
30 Rear-____ (road mishap)
33 Whitney or Wallach
34 Take as one's own
38 Shows obvious anger
40 Quarterbacks, often
43 "John Wick" star
45 Lenovo competitor
47 Whodunit suspects, often
48 Comic Kovacs
49 Purchase price
50 Winglike
52 ____ the tables
53 ____ St. Vincent Millay
54 Thought-provoking
57 Abbr. on a schedule

Answers to Previous Crossword:

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

Crack ship-o-scope

KAIRI LISING | ARTS EDITOR
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It's time for us to embrace what we have been put on earth to do: put two things that you wouldn't think would go well together but actually do. As an ex-fanfiction writer, we call this phenomenon the "crack ship." So, what odd pop culture pairing are you? Side note: Please don't send this horoscope to my future employer.

SCORPIO (OCT. 23-NOV. 21): You like a push and pull. Some complication. Some fun and some drama. Just like TikTok's latest crack ship obsession, Rodrick Heffley x Regina George. You love it when opposites attract. Sweet and sour. Hot and cold. I can't blame you for it, I'm here for the ride too.

SAGITTARIUS (NOV. 22-DEC. 21): You're a fan of the classics. Classic movies, classical music, classic cars and especially classic internet history. Specifically, Harry Styles x Barack Obama. The photoshopped pictures of the two public figures kissing is seared into your brain chemistry. No one can come for a classic. Thanks, Obama.

CAPRICORN (DEC. 22-JAN. 19): You're as cool as a cucumber, Cap. You may be cool, but also kinda basic. Just like Elsa X Jack Frost, it's been there done that. You would've loved Tumblr.

AQUARIUS (JAN. 20-FEB. 18): You are insane. Draco Malfoy x Simon the chipmunk? Sure, why not? Perhaps prone to bad decisions, you're just like this spontaneous pairing. You know when to lock in when it counts, though.

PISCES (FEB. 19-MARCH 20): Pisces, you might be standoffish and brooding, but everyone knows they can count on you. Like Count von Count x Edward Cullen, you're a vampy mix of mathematical wisdom and emo sparkly flair.

ARIES (MARCH 21-APRIL 19): You're a good mix of business and pleasure, Aries. You can have fun and get down to the nitty-gritty when you need to. Your crackship? SpongeBob x Bill Clinton. You soak up any and all knowledge, but you might be one to do things you're not supposed to. Tread lightly!

TAURUS (APRIL 20-MAY 20): There's nothing like a good self-insert, and you and Monte are meant to be. This is your sign. DM his Insta and shoot the shot you've been waiting for. Afraid? Don't be. You've got the aura of someone anyone can open up to. Mark my words, ring by spring.

GEMINI (MAY 21-JUNE 20): We all have our dark sides, Gemini. Just like Jason Voorhees x Samara, you've got some demons. However, like in this unlikely pairing, you're very goal-oriented. Even if that goal is haunting others.

CANCER (JUNE

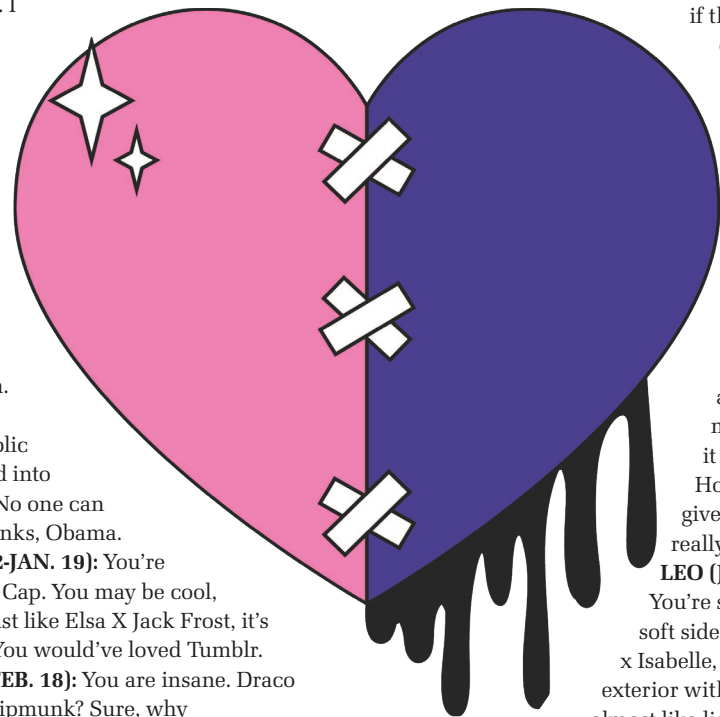
21-JULY 22): You're a very balanced person, someone with a perfect mix of yin and yang. Just like Superman x Batman, you're perfect in every way. No notes. Am I a Cancer? Yes. Do I want a Superman x Batman movie? Of course. Will it happen? No, because Hollywood is afraid to give the people what they really want.

LEO (JULY 23-AUG. 22):

You're strong, but with a soft side. Just like Doomslayer x Isabelle, you have a tough exterior with a heart of gold, almost like listening to death metal while knitting a sweater for a dog. Everybody can't help but fall for you.

VIRGO (AUG. 23-SEP. 22): Let's be real, you're a little self-centered. Always primping and checking to make sure you look good. Just like Steve Rogers x his shield. Nothing wrong with a little self-love, right?

LIBRA (SEP. 23-OCT. 22): Can we pretend that airplanes in the night sky are shooting stars? Well, I could really use a wish right now. A wish right now? A wish right now. Just like that Microsoft Paint photo of Mordecai x Twilight Sparkle, you're wishing on a shooting star for your lover to come back. Dry your tears, Libra, you don't need them.



BARRETT CLEMENT | MONTANA KAIMIN

Crowdfunding campaign helps department initiatives at UM

SABRINA PHILIP | NEWS REPORTER
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Fifteen programs on campus have partnered with the University of Montana Foundation to fundraise for different projects and initiatives.

The campaign is an annual fundraising effort that allows people to donate to either specific programs involved in the campaign or to several projects.

“UM Foundation Crowdfunding, as it currently operates, began in fall 2024,” said Heather Rue, the vice president of marketing and communications. “The annual fall program was designed to offer fundraising opportunities to areas of campus that may not have regular mechanisms by which to raise money for their project or program.”

According to the University website, the UM Foundation is a nonprofit organization led by the Board of Trustees that serves UM by managing private fundraising efforts, donations and investment of endowed gifts.

One of the programs hoping to gain from the crowdfunding is the “Curry Cares Fund” through the Curry Health Center. Prior to the fund being used for medical, dental and counseling services at the University, it was specific to the counseling department.

“The intent was to make it more of a hardship fund for students that maybe had an unexpected challenge come up that made it more difficult to pay for services they want and needed here,” said Liv Wilson, the marketing and communications manager at Curry Health Center. “That idea kind of transformed, especially since we’re transitioning to accept insurance in our medical clinic.”

According to Amy Capolupo, the dean of students and the associate vice president for well-being, the “Curry Cares Fund” is one they hope to grow. The program will be advertised on the website next spring, and it specifically aims to help students access medical, dental and counseling services. According to Capolupo, the initiative will be especially important as the center starts accepting insurance.

The “Curry Cares Fund” goal in the crowdfunding effort is to raise \$5,000. While Capolupo said they are short of their goal at the moment, having only raised \$300 as of Oct. 28, she acknowledged this is the first time the center is “really putting energy and effort” behind the fund.

“This fund will make it easier for them to access those services that they need, the things that they’re putting off, that could make their life better,” Capolupo said. “A student will know even if I can’t make the whole bill on, you know, a tooth extraction, I can at least go to Curry in between my classes, not miss my work and get what I need.”

Among the 15 programs involved in the UM Foundation Crowdfunding with Curry Health



Santee Sepulveda, left, and Gillian Glaes are the people responsible for the success of the Franke Global Leadership Initiative and crowdfunding program. **WILL LADYMAN | MONTANA KAIMIN**

is the Franke Global Leadership Initiative, also known as the GLI.

According to Santee Sepulveda, the program coordinator for GLI, and Gillian Glaes, the director of GLI, their funding effort aims to support experiential learning outside the classroom, including field trips, volunteer projects, internships and study abroad, among other things.

“The beyond-the-classroom stands out for a lot of students,” Sepulveda said. “In every component of the program, you have different experiential learning or outside-the-classroom experiences.”

The crowdfunding campaign is inspiring some people to get creative. For instance, Glaes has set up a challenge so that for every \$500 raised she will either take a pie to the face or do the ice bucket challenge.

“What’s special about GLI is [it] helps you take all that into the real world, and I genuinely believe that there’s no better education outside of getting into the world,” Sepulveda said. “To have all these students come together with all their disciplines and be able to get out and then come back and try to make a difference, that’s kind of what the whole program is about, that you’re trying to make an impact in the world one way or another.”

The Montana Museum of Art and Culture is also hoping to benefit from the crowdfunding, with a goal of \$3,000 to develop two computer workstations for interns. According to Tracy Hall, the program coordinator at the museum, the computers will help interns practice logging both digital and physical artwork into the museum’s data system.

“It’s a unique challenge to be able to work on these types of projects,” Hall said. “They have to learn both skills with their hands, working with physical archives and digital

archiving techniques. Not just having to do straightforward tasks, but making specialized judgment calls on how to handle work that might be undocumented or have things they need to correct.”

The museum, which has raised \$2,570, hopes to use the additional funding for compact storage in the museum itself. It will allow the museum’s artwork to be accessible in one place. According to Hall, the museum currently has over 11,000 art pieces that don’t all fit in the building.

Focused on raising funds for student learning, the School of Speech, Language, Hearing and Occupational Sciences is also participating in crowdfunding.

The program started in 2009 after shutting down in the 1980s. Catherine Off, the program’s chair, said fundraising is especially important for the program to gain recognition

and visibility at the University.

“We want to inspire more students to come to our programs. We want to be able to support the Montana and Mountain West communities more for health care, and these kinds of donations help us get those students out into our communities and to stay in our communities for health care,” Off said.

The department aims to raise \$5,000 through the crowdfunding initiative. According to Off, the money will be divided between two separate efforts: new technologies for students to use and additional innovative clinical and research training opportunities for students.

“I’m thinking the minimum would be \$2,000 of equipment, and then some experiential learning opportunities, which might include pulling in community partners to help train them. We work with some folks at Rocky Mountain Ear, Nose and Throat in town, and they do some hearing work,” Off said.

Currently standing at \$3,480, Off said if they are able to reach the \$5,000 goal, they hope to get some additional new technology that would cost more and give students “an experience of training they couldn’t get anywhere else.”

According to Mia Parkes, a junior studying communicative science and disorders and linguistics from Southport, Connecticut, crowdfunding is important for students in the program as it allows them to gain hands-on experience, but also collaborate with professionals and use the newest technologies and spaces.

“Through our crowdfunding campaign, we’re able to collect funds that will hopefully go toward better infrastructure, spaces and equipment for all of our students in our department,” Parkes said. “This access not only helps us, but it also helps the College of Health, our department as a whole. What’s so important in health sciences is the ability to collaborate and connect with other professions interdisciplinarily.”

PRESIDENT'S LECTURE SERIES PRESENTS

RICHARD REEVES

BOYS AND MEN: WHY THE MODERN MALE IS STRUGGLING, WHY IT MATTERS, AND WHAT TO DO ABOUT IT

7:30 P.M. THURSDAY, NOV. 6

UNIVERSITY CENTER BALLROOM

THIS EVENT IS FREE AND OPEN TO THE COMMUNITY.
ASL interpretation will be provided for this event.

2025-2026 Lucile Speer Memorial Lecture



University Center rooms open up to public use after mosque opens in Missoula

BLUE ROGALSKI | NEWS REPORTER
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Missoula Muslim community has found a new home for a mosque in Missoula, vacating former prayer spaces in the University Center that had been previously set aside for their worship services. Now, the previous prayer spaces in the University Center are open to gather in.

In December 2024, Missoula Muslims shifted to a full-time mosque, the Missoula Islamic Society. Kamal Lakisic, head of the University of Montana's International Muslim Student Association, said the space in the UC was always meant to be temporary.

The rooms in the UC were used by the Muslim Student Association after renovations began in residential housing that were used as an unofficial mosque by students, Shannon Brilz, director of conference and event services, said.

"I told the University from the start, once we find a space, we'll probably vacate this in about six months," Lakisic said.

He said not many students have used the space, especially after a mosque was designated off campus. He said Ramadan, a holy month of fasting for Muslims, was a good time to raise money and often saw an increased number of attendees at the mosque.

"On daily prayers, we will have three to four people, and in Ramadan, we'll have like 60 people," Lakisic said.

Lakisic believes this Ramadan, which will begin Feb. 18 next year, even more people are expected to attend. "We have a space now and we have a place for the women now. The other space didn't have one," he said.

The Muslim religion has a traditional practice of gender segregation. Because of this, there is a need for two separate rooms with different entrances to maintain this practice.

Lakisic said that the Muslim Student Association had enough money by itself to sign an 18-month lease for a space on Kensington Avenue and Brooks Street, after they came together to form a nonprofit organization. The rent cost, according to Kamal, is \$1,720 a month.

The space is roughly 1,500 square feet, which Lakisic said is "perfect" for the nearly 300 Muslims in attendance. While Lakisic felt the other rooms offered adequate space, Missoula Muslims wanted something more long-term.

With a goal of securing a permanent space to buy, the Muslim Student Association will go to larger Muslim enclaves throughout the United States and fundraise by going from mosque to mosque, canvassing for donations. This would fund a 20-30% down payment on a permanent building for the group to own. Kamal said they raised \$10,000.

The formerly used rooms in the University Center were officially open to groups meeting on Oct. 15, according to Brilz. Student groups and staff can reserve the rooms to host meetings or gatherings.

Brilz said the two rooms had previously given priority access to faith-based groups.

"Room 170 was used by the Muslim Student Association and tied to 170A, so there was an idea floated last year as using it as a multi-space kind of center," Brilz said. "What we kind of noticed after talking to our faith-based student groups is they loved the size of the space because they are some of our larger student groups, but it didn't really result in having students come in during the day and between group meetings."

She said that the Muslim Student Association let the University Center know about a month in advance of them vacating this space, saying that they had a more permanent space available to them.

Brilz compared the rooms in the first floor of the University Center to the small meeting rooms on the second floor and large conference center on the third floor. The rooms are a part of the University Center inventory that campus groups can reserve and use. This includes student groups, staff or invited guests.

She said the rooms, with a conjoining door, were each conducive to medium-sized groups of 30 to 40 people, comfortably. Room 225 in the University Center is of a similar size and is popularly requested, often with groups on a waitlist.

She said she hopes that these provide a similar kind of space.

Brilz said the rooms were much larger than the second floor reservable rooms, which had a capacity of 20 people.

"I think what's unique about having a reserved space in our inventory for this is that it's on the first floor," Brilz said. "As long as I've worked here, there's never been a space on the first floor. I'm really anxious and excited to see how the campus community wants to use this space."

Brilz said because it was on the first floor close to the Associated Students of the University of Montana office, the space would be more visible. Brilz said she was excited to see how student groups might "activate" that space with proximity to ASUM.

The space was being repainted in early October. "I was standing there last week, before we painted and it just looks really nice," she said. "I could just see someone in there giving a small talk or a lecture, maybe a brown-bag lunch kind of event where people can just pop in and learn about something."

Brilz said that because students are in class all day, the majority of student group meetings take place in the evening.

"I want to see, during the day, how the space is going to be utilized. Is it more departments or resources coming over to the UC to try to engage with students here in the student union, instead of students maybe having to go to different offices?" she said.



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The sun had not yet sent its first rays over Mount Sentinel as I went to attend a class I'm not enrolled in, taught by an instructor I don't know, and on a topic I understand almost nothing about.

The genesis of this idea occurred two weeks before. With class registration now open, the Kaimin developed a plan to embed

a reporter in various activities classes around campus. The goal was simple: I would sample some of the program's most popular offerings and report my findings, trying to figure out the value of registering for such a class.

At first glance, it might seem easy to pass off activity classes as filler credits, but the truth is more complicated than

that. The stress of college life can become overwhelming if students don't have coping mechanisms. Sometimes, an hour of pilates or the opportunity to play some table tennis can mean all the difference for burnt out coeds.

Chris Riley, who serves as director for the ACTIVITY program at the University of Montana, takes pride in the impact these classes have on students. "They give UM

students a chance to feel better, get stronger or fitter, reduce stress, learn a new sport, physical activity or skill and squeeze 30 hours of fun into their academic life," he said.

It's a cause I can get behind. I've often used the gym to decompress from a long day of classes. The idea of doing something similar in an academic environment sounds all the better.



Montana Kaimin sports reporter Jack Snow at a yoga class on Oct. 23. The class, led by Erin Anderson, is one of many activity classes offered at the University of Montana.

And so I found myself marching across campus in the pre-dawn darkness to a yoga class in the Fitness and Recreation Center's basement.

It was the first of the three classes I'd be trying, and I arrived way too early, because if I was going to be contorting my body in the name of journalism, I wasn't going to be late.



Snow follows the lead of yoga instructor Erin Anderson at UM's Fitness and Recreation Center.

JUST BREATHE

It wasn't long before the class instructor showed up, a woman with a soft voice and a firm handshake who introduced herself as Erin Anderson. She set up the room for the session, fetching a cart of multi-colored yoga mats, turning on dimmed lights and retrieving her own equipment.

Other students filtered in, taking mats and laying them in a row on the hardwood floor. I followed suit, accidentally selecting a mat that proved a bit too short for my height, but still served its purpose well.

My previous experience with yoga was limited to short YouTube instructional videos that I would sometimes use as Jiu-Jitsu warmups, so I was excited to experience the real deal.

I began the class by following Anderson's instructions, lying on my back and focusing on my breathing while listening to her explain the focus of the day's class. For this specific session, she had us ponder the concept of "Satya," a Sanskrit word that represents truth and honesty surrounding one's existence.

After a few minutes of breathwork and thinking, the class sat up cross-

legged. Anderson suggested the idea of crossing our legs the opposite of the way we usually do. I quickly flipped my legs around so my right rested on top of my left, instead of the way I've done it my entire life. It felt strange, like inverting your mouse settings on a computer. She asked the class to consider applying the same logic to other aspects of life, like brushing our teeth with our non-dominant hand.

Before long we made our way into downward dog, one of about three yoga positions I actually know the name of. This one felt familiar. Connecting to the ground with my hands and feet reminded me of my time spent on grappling mats. My lower back felt stiff and I'm sure my form was off, but it felt good to start the morning with movement and extension.

A position called three-legged dog came next, although I believe a canine amputee would look far more graceful than I did kicking my right leg back into the air. We repeated the motion on both sides before settling into chaturanga, yoga's term for a low plank position.

Through a series of transitional moves we eventually found ourselves in warrior pose, a lunge-like position that felt grounded and solid. At this point I was hooked. The dynamic movements that flowed seamlessly together, dim lights, the gentle sound of songbirds played on a small speaker and guided introspection led by Anderson felt like an amazing way for anyone to start their day.

Anderson spoke more about Satya. She talked about aligning one's thoughts, feelings and words, saying what you mean and meaning what you say. In a world mired by performance and disingenuous words, I think we could all benefit from some Satya.

After a few more words of wisdom and several more poses, the 50-minute class was finished. I was genuinely grateful for the experience. I thanked Anderson and left feeling calmer than I had all week.

I would need all the serenity I could muster for my next mission. Just a few days later I journeyed to the gaming den to revisit an old foe: the pool table.

THE OPPOSITE OF HUSTLING

My most memorable experience playing pool isn't a very good one. While meeting my girlfriend's parents for the first time, her father graciously invited me to play some eightball. As he racked the balls, he uttered those dreadful words, "You wanna break?"

I certainly did not want to break, but did so anyway and ended up with a pathetic attempt of a shot that sent the cue ball careening everywhere but the triangle of waiting balls. I made a hell of a first impression.

Safe to say, I came into the billiards class with humble expectations. The session began in the gaming den, where students stood in a circle and listened to instructor Carson Drews explain how to generate different movements with the cue ball after shooting. He demonstrated precise hits that sent the cue ball rolling forward, backward and stopping completely after striking its target, then encouraged the class to split into groups and try for themselves.

After a few minutes of practice, Drews announced that we'd split into groups of three for a game called "cutthroat."

This is what I had come for. The game of pool had made an enemy out of me and I fully intended on satisfying my thirst for revenge by striking any ball that dared to stand in my way.

Images of suave gentlemen in three-piece suits challenging each other to games of billiards while cigar smoke wafted across their speakeasy ran through my head. I snapped back to the real world, still wearing a T-shirt and remembering that the gaming den regrettably doesn't offer old fashioned.

My two partners were Nathaniel Hall and Ethan Honbo, two students who kindly showed me the ropes of cutthroat. Each player chooses a category of balls, either low numbers, middle numbers or high numbers. The goal of the game is to have your category survive the longest while pocketing your opponent's balls along the way.

The game started without me having to break. When it rolled around to my turn, I looked around the table, spotting a vulnerable low numbered ball next to a far pocket. I visualized my shot, lining up my strike and gripping my cue. I let it fly.

To my shock, the cue ball made solid contact, sending the low ball flying into the intended pocket. I declared that I would take the high balls and tried to act nonchalant, as though this was my expected outcome as I moved on to my next shot.

My beginner's luck had already run out as my next shot sent a ball flying wide of the pocket. The game continued and I ended up sinking more shots than I had anticipated, but I still couldn't compete with my partners. I was the first man out, and Hall went on to win the game shortly after.

We continued playing and I continued to be impressed by the skill of those around me. In the few weeks of head start that they had, my compatriots had already been shaped into notably better players than me.

I saw the allure. Pool is just plain fun, available to play at a lot of places in downtown Missoula and the opportunity to get credit for taking lessons is an obvious draw.

"I think there's a lot of learning opportunities for academics," said Cale Patenaude, who oversees many of the gaming den's activities. "But I think it's also important to have those ... we call them 'blow off steam classes.'"

Besides just improving at the game, the class also sports some other perks. "If you take the class, you get access to the gaming den for free," Patenaude said. For other students it costs \$3 an hour to participate or



Snow hits a ball in the pocket on Oct. 27 during the billiards class at the University Center.

\$100 flat for a full semester pass. He went on to explain that the majority of students who take gaming den classes spend plenty of time in the area outside of class as well.

That kind of bonding is exactly what the gaming den hopes to foster, a place where students can unwind together regardless of major or year.

Pool might have embarrassed

me before, but my last venture would take me to a place I never thought I'd find myself to begin with, a place far above my comfort zone.

The climbing wall.

NEW HEIGHTS

The Fitness and Recreation Center's rock wall was always a place of mystery for me. Every time I go to the gym I pass by it, looking over at the climbers between my sets of pull-ups to imagine a world where my fear of heights would abate enough to allow me to partake.

I remember standing at the edge of a ziplining platform as a child, paralyzed as my friends flew through the air in front of me. Those nerves never left completely, but in the name of good reporting I steel myself to venture into the lair of my fears and face them regardless.

It was the middle of the day when I went to the wall. Light poured in from the enormous windows. The ropes looked like vines from some primordial jungle hanging overhead.

I was mentally preparing for an uncomfortable hour, but what I quickly realized is that the "lair of my fears" was populated by incredibly kind and supportive

people. The three climbing instructors, Henry Blackmore, Ada Scott and Matthew Macchiarella, started off the class by asking what pasta noodle would be our preferred steed to ride into battle. I answered with rigatoni, citing the idea that a larger noodle, capable of carrying more sauce, would make an ideal war horse.

Blackmore and Macchiarella then began a satirical mock climb as an example of exactly what not to do. The performance covered the techniques of lead climbing, a technique where the climber clips their rope into various anchors as they go. It was fraught with obvious safety hazards, such as having too much slack in the rope, or standing too far from the wall.

The goal was to give the class many mistakes to make note of and it ended with a debrief of everything that was done wrong. I enjoyed the over the top theatrics of Macchiarella refusing to spot Blackmore and wondering out loud what he was doing



Beginning rock climbing teacher Matthew Macchiarella shows Snow how to belay at the Fitness and Recreation Center on Oct. 29.

wrong. Despite this being my first time in class, I was still able to glean some of the concepts.

The class then moved on to some tips on belaying with various kinds of equipment, explaining the differences between using a tubular belay device and an assisted braking one. The instructors spoke about their personal preferences in gear and how to use them best.

Then it was on to the climbing itself. I grabbed a harness, some climbing shoes and a helmet. I would be on one of the wall's easiest routes, a straightforward ascent with defined holds.

I looked up at the wall: my challenge, my adversary and my fears all in one. My right hand gripped its first hold and I pulled my feet off the ground. Not so bad. The first third of the route flew by. Find the hold, pull and repeat. Before long I found myself enjoying the process, a fun and engaging sport that encourages fitness, technique and problem-solving felt like just my kind of activity.

Words of encouragement floated up to me from Macchiarella, who was belaying me, tied to the other end of the rope as a counterweight in case I fell. At first it was nerve-racking to feel so utterly dependent on his vigilance, my safety literally in his hands, but as time wore on I learned to have trust and faith in his practiced skills.

When I first came to a section where I was unsure of how to proceed, I felt a slight panic build within me. A little voice in the back of my head whispered something primal, some idea, either inherited or learned, that being more than 15 feet above the ground is not where I belong.

Logic took over. I still had a solid hold on the wall and was securely fastened to my rope. I reached past the hold I had been stuck on to the one above it, my long arms coming in handy as I stretched out to grab it. The little voice shut its mouth as I curled my fingers over the top of the hold and began to pull myself higher.

I kept going and before long found myself at the top of the route. A pedestrian

accomplishment for any legitimate climber, but it felt significant to me, my childhood self rejoicing at the small victory. I leaned back onto the rope and walked down the wall as Macchiarella lowered me to the ground.

He congratulated me on the climb and I thanked him for the assistance. I was happy to have my feet on the floor again, but the wall now seemed like a fun challenge rather than a fearful obstacle.

I went back for another climb, this time spotted by Scott, who was similarly supportive. With my nerves almost totally gone, the way up felt much easier. All things considered, it ended up being a blast.

Macchiarella said that climbing courses are valuable to students. "I think it's a really good way to go out of their comfort zone or try new things," he said. "It's pretty awesome to be able to have that."

It certainly was for me. There's also the obvious perk of gaining an interesting skill. "There's a pretty big barrier to start climbing," Macchiarella said. "The classes lower that barrier."

At the end of the day, these classes are a privilege to take. Not every college has the breadth and depth that's offered at the University of Montana. "We have the largest and most diverse program in the Montana University System," Riley said.

The majority of ACTivity classes fulfill a single credit, which can be helpful for students missing a few, but most also carry an additional fee for the services provided. The program is self-supported and receives no general funding from UM, relying solely on student registration instead. The costs vary, so it's a good idea to check the fees if you plan on registering for one.

For my money, it's an easy decision to sign up for one of these classes if you can. The courses I participated in are just a few of those offered, with other options spanning from kayaking to pole dancing. Whether you're looking to bring more relaxation to your life, learn a new skill or overcome a lifelong fear, the program has you covered.



Snow climbs the rock wall at the Fitness and Recreation Center.

Art inspires art for student choreographers

NICOLETTE SEIBEL | MONTANA KAIMIN
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A rope binds two dancers as they launch each other into the air, pulling and pushing in a poetic, intimate and practiced game of tug-of-war.

In the maze of dance studios and theaters housed in University of Montana's PARTV building, rehearsals for UM's upcoming "Dance Up Close" production have been taking place every week since mid-September. When senior dance and psychology major Taylor Williams Guerrero had the opportunity to choreograph a piece of her own, she found inspiration from other performing artists to guide her two dancers. On Thursday, Oct. 30, the last rehearsal for the three came to a close, bringing with it new discoveries and lingering emotions.

Williams Guerrero's dance "Attached, Otherwise" is influenced by the work of artists Linda Montano and Tehching Hsieh and their piece titled "One Year Performance 1983-1984," otherwise known as "Rope Piece." In "Rope Piece," the two artists signed a contract to be permanently bound by an eight foot rope around each of their waists for one year. The two caveats were that they must never be separated and must never touch for the entirety of their performance.

After Williams Guerrero researched the story of Montano and Hsieh, their dynamic and the rumors of a romantic relationship before signing the contract, she became obsessed. To choreograph a piece with a rope presented some unique challenges, mainly, she couldn't choreograph it by herself. In early September, auditions for "Dance Up Close" offered an opportunity for her to create a duet that was unlike most.

"I've never seen a piece like this before, like with a rope," said one of the dancers, Grazia Novak. "That's just never been a thing I've seen or heard of, with dancers being tied together in this way."

Rehearsals became a space for Novak and her partner Catherine de Guzman to master balancing each other's weight in complex lifts, catchfalls that defy gravity and evoke the emotional personalities that Williams Guerrero was inspired by.

"I'm falling away from Catherine, and Catherine has to save me," Novak said. "So I'm relying on her to keep me up as I try to pull away."

Williams Guerrero worked with her dancers to create characters for themselves that truly expressed the interpretation of the dynamic in "Rope Piece." For de Guzman, her character is more grounded, stable with



Grazia Novak, left, and Catherine de Guzman rehearse their dance "Attached, Otherwise" in the University of Montana's PARTV Center on Oct. 30. **TORI KUEHL | MONTANA KAIMIN**

a desire to please, but with a fatal flaw to fix others. For her partner Novak, her character is avoidant, possibly to their own detriment, constantly pulling away emotionally and in the choreography.

Over the last eight weeks, there had been many falls working with the rope and developments in the dynamic of the characters to perfect the story. Practicing this piece has left an imprint on both the dancers. They call it the "phantom pull."

"I'll go to bed and I'll feel like I have a rope attached to me still," Novak said.

Even de Guzman notes that it's going to feel different when the performance is over. "I am so weirdly emotional about the connection we have made, just thinking about the phantom pull, that's become like a normal thing now," she said. "Like Grazia can just sorta lean and I'm already there, I already know."

After the last rehearsal, "Attached, Otherwise" is two weeks away from being displayed in UM Dance's production of "Dance Up Close." Williams Guerrero is hoping her piece sparks curiosity about what story is being told and the dynamic between Novak and de Guzman. "This piece will always be made by the dancers that are in it," she said.

Her piece will be one of the two student choreographies that are featured in "Dance Up Close" which will be presented to the public on Nov. 13 to 15 at 7:30 p.m. with an additional afternoon performance on Nov. 15 at 2 p.m. Each show is \$10, and each seat in

the Masquer Theater will provide a unique viewing.

The stage of the Masquer Theater is on the floor with seats rising up 270 degrees around its performers, which provides a multidimensional challenge and proposition for other choreographers and added pressures for dancers in this particular performance.

While Williams Guerrero will feature her piece on this stage, she is also dancing in a composition made by another student with her own artistic inspiration, the French painter Claude Monet.

In this choreography, the dancers are water lilies, which disperse from peaceful unison to calculated spontaneous movements of what the dancers deemed the "cataract section."

The design of the piece is a homage of the legacy of painter Claude Monet and his collection of over 250 water lily paintings. The choreography is also a reflection of one of Monet's greatest challenges as a painter over his lifetime, when he developed cataracts.

Williams Guerrero sways with the breaths of seven other dancers smushed together. The arms, legs and heads melt into each other, making a collective organism. Slowly and carefully the conglomeration moves to the center stage where dancers peacefully disperse to sweet notes of piano.

The dance becomes something new with moments of harsh energy shifts, dancers thrust themselves to the ceiling, spontaneous

hands pierce through stagnant air, until they slowly collapse to the floor. Softly and delicately they gather back to each other in the end.

"I begin with my little clump of water lily friends and we go on this journey of gentle waves drifting us apart," Williams Guerrero said. "The cataract section where it changes, I mainly think about how I am being perceived as someone whose vision is deteriorating, so I am still my water-lily self but I am being viewed from someone else, and that is my contention."

Monet's water lily collection began in his 50s, until he developed cataracts in his eyes, which distorted the vibrancy and the shape of his paintings in his 60s. According to the National Library of Medicine, Monet had been diagnosed with cataracts in 1915, but had decidedly refused to undergo surgery until a decade later in 1924 and 1925.

Monet worked with physicians and optometrists to repair his vision. While his vision was never restored to its original state, his paintings of his water lilies became calm and blue again. His history and impressionism is what inspired UM dance and business major Kerrigan Edwards to choreograph her piece.

Edwards learned of Monet's story as a sophomore in high school. "I just remember being called to these paintings and I didn't know why, but I always thought they were so beautiful," she said.

In 2024 she visited the Denver Art Museum and saw one of Monet's water lily paintings in person and recalls having a visceral reaction. "I don't know what else I would create art about other than this beautiful painting style," she said.

Edwards' inspiration to make a piece that encapsulated the impressionist paintings she adored included a lot of collaboration with her eight dancers. Her goal was to find balance in portraying seemingly sporadic brushstrokes through movements and she was challenged by grounding them in an understandable way. At first glance, her work attempts to be very overwhelming. "But if you look far away, it's just like this beautiful artwork that shows an image," Edwards said.

Edwards collaborated with her dancers, costume designers, the lighting team and her boyfriend, Caden Means, who composed the piano piece for the dance, "à Giverny." Her new work will be displayed unintentionally on Claude Monet's birthday, Nov 14, but anyone who finds inspiration in art is encouraged by UM Dance and Theater to come see the show.

Are we good or just lucky?

CAMERON CONTRERAS | MONTANA KAIMIN

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After a dominant performance against Weber State last Saturday, Griz football is 9-0 for the first time since 2009.

The team is ranked second in the Football Championship Subdivision, with a high-octane offense averaging 41.5 points per game led by sophomore quarterback Kaeli'i Ah Yat. With the team continuing its undefeated streak, the Kaimin took to the streets and asked Griz fans how they felt about this achievement.

"I feel like Ah Yat has played the quarterback position better in Missoula than maybe the last three or four quarterbacks combined this year," said Colby Peterson, who covers the Big Sky conference for FCS Nation, a leading radio show and website that covers the FCS. "Ah Yat taking that step forward I think has been one of the key missing pieces for this Griz team."

Ah Yat is just one piece to this very complete Griz offense. Wide receiver Michael Wortham transferred from Eastern Wash-

ington this season and has immediately become a star, leading all levels of college football in all-purpose yards with 1,430.

The Grizzly offense also features junior running back Eli Gillman, who passed 3,000 career yards against Weber State. This season he averaged 105.38 yards a game.

On the other side of the ball, the defense has held strong, allowing an average of 24.12 points per game and reeling in 13 takeaways. However, Peterson said one place where the Griz fall short is passing defense, allowing the other team to gain 291 yards per game.

However, fans are excited about the team's success.

"Watching the Grizzlies rise back to being the best team in the state has been a lot of fun," said Jake Iverson, a University of Montana alum from Billings.

As a Montana native, Iverson was raised a Griz fan and he said he is glad to see them win. "I think everything about Montana sports is more exciting if it's better at the top," he said. He pointed to the team's 24-23 comeback win over North Dakota early in

the season as one of his favorite moments.

By beating North Dakota, the Griz got revenge from last season where the Fighting Hawks secured a comeback win. The victory over Weber State is also noteworthy, since the Griz had not beat the Wildcats since 2019.

Some fans still aren't convinced that the Griz are the real deal. Kyle Dexter, an alum from Rockville, Maryland, said he's not impressed.

"I think we've had a pretty weak schedule," he said. "And I don't think we can really say anything until we reach the playoffs. I think it's the same thing every year."

Dexter echoed the concerns of critics, saying the Griz pick a weak schedule and fall short once the playoffs begin.

"They may play some cupcakes in the front of the season, but they always seem to put it together by the time November comes," Peterson said. "When people say [the Griz] haven't played anybody, just wait. I mean, they will play somebody in the Big Sky eventually and you'll find out if they're frauds or they're not, and right now it looks

like not."

Looking forward, the Griz host Eastern Washington this Saturday before traveling to play Portland State and then finishing the season at home for the Brawl of the Wild against Montana State in a game that will likely decide the Big Sky champion.

In the preseason poll, Montana State was predicted to win the conference, with coaches voting Montana would finish third, while the media picked the Griz to finish second. Montana currently leads the Big Sky, with the Bobcats in a close second.

"I think they look to have a real chance to go undefeated leading into Cat-Griz, which would be the most exciting setup for Cat-Griz in a few years," Iverson said. "It feels like [the Griz] have been little-brothered by the Bobcats for the past decade almost, so it's been fun to watch that flip a little bit."

Peterson said one of the keys to victory against Eastern Washington is to stop the run and get to the quarterback.

"That sounds really simple, but if you do those two things their offense just doesn't work," he said.



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Griz basketball siblings teach each other lessons

HANNAH BENITEZ | SPORTS EDITOR
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For most athletes at the University of Montana, the only support system that they have to lean on is their teammates, but that isn't the case for redshirt sophomore guard Connor Dick and senior guard Lauren Dick.

The siblings, born and raised in Missoula, still live in neighboring apartments. They've strengthened their bond on and off the court as they continue their basketball careers with the Griz and Lady Griz.

The closeness of the University made the college decision process easy for the two.

"I lived here my whole life, and I really love Missoula and the outdoors. The coaching staff and culture on this team always drew me in, plus I was able to stay close to my family," Lauren Dick, an integrative physiology major, said. "I looked at other schools, but I decided to commit to UM before I even decided to join the team. It was just the perfect fit."

Connor Dick, a business management major, was already able to have a good idea of what life at UM would be like from his sister's experience, and he knew it was the place he wanted to be.

"The legacy here is just incredible. I grew up coming to as many games as I could, and it's always been a dream to come here and put on this jersey," he said.

Both players were able to see their team succeed throughout the regular and postseasons last year.

The Lady Griz basketball team made it all the way to the final of Starch Madness before losing to Montana State on a buzzer beater.

The men's basketball team saw great success, with the team going 25-10 in the regular season, bringing home not only the regular season championship, but also the Big Sky Conference tournament championship trophy. The Griz then made its first appearance at the coveted March Madness tournament since 2019.

"It's every kid's dream. It was amazing to go to March Madness and see all the Griz gear and the logo everywhere in the stadium. It made everyone feel like they had really made it," Connor Dick said.

However, both had to see their team achieve victory from the sidelines.

Connor Dick decided to redshirt for his

second year with the Griz, meaning he wasn't able to see any on-court action.

"We had some great talent last season with players like Kai Johnson and Malik Moore, so I knew I wasn't going to get much playing time anyway," he said. "I just decided that I would try and gain an extra year of eligibility and focus on being the best teammate I could be on the sidelines."

Lauren Dick committed as a walk-on, something she knew wasn't going to allow her much playing time.

But she knew that being a member of the Lady Griz was something she wanted, so she decided to take a chance, no matter the nerves. The risk paid off.

Due to having help from his sister and their father, Ryan Dick, who played for the Griz and had the Most Improved Player award named after him, the move from the Hellgate High School team to the Division I Grizzlies was easy for Connor Dick.

"To play on the same court and to wear the same jersey, I just know we are both making our parents proud," he said.

But the legacy of the Dick family doesn't start with this pair of siblings. Both parents went to UM and played a sport for the Griz. Their mother, Kelsey Dick, was a member of the dance team, and their father, Ryan Dick, played for the men's basketball team.

"It's cool, he's definitely built a legacy here. His story was inspirational. He wanted to get an education and was able to get a scholarship through basketball to put him through school. He just worked really hard, and he's always someone who I look up to and aspire to be," Lauren Dick said.

For Connor Dick, the relationship goes a little further. Not only is he able to play on the same team as his father, but also under a coach that played alongside his father, Travis DeCuire.

"To follow in his footsteps gives me energy. He's my hero. He played with Travis DeCuire, so to do the same things as he did is a dream in life," he said.

Meanwhile, Lauren Dick was happy to share the experience of sharing the court and the colors of maroon and silver with her brother as it meant the pair can be closer than they were before.

"We're a lot closer because of it, even if sometimes he doesn't act like it, but it's been fun. I'm very proud of him and just excited to see what he can continue to do," she said.

Being able to still be together but



University of Montana siblings Connor and Lauren Dick stand on the University's recreational basketball court on Oct. 31. **TORI KUEHL | MONTANA KAIMIN**

become more individual has helped the pair strengthen their bond. They've both been able to grow and fail in their own ways and go to each other for help or advice when the times get tough. But that doesn't mean that the sibling teasing has

gone away.

"We've always been really close, though it got better after he got out of that high-school phase where he wanted nothing to do with his sister," Lauren Dick said. "It's been really fun, we've both grown up and can support each other when the other is

“We’re a lot closer because of it, even if sometimes he doesn’t act like it, but it’s been fun. I’m very proud of him and just excited to see what he can continue to do,” Lauren Dick said.

playing. I’ve finally been able to get him to hug me, so that’s great.”

Because they both play the same sport, they know the grueling practice and the time that is put into winning a championship or even making an appearance at a tournament.

“It was so much fun to be able to share something like that with her. To be able to go and achieve something like that and have her by my side was a dream,” Connor Dick said.

While Lauren Dick saw her dream trip to March Madness cut short as Montana lost to Montana State by one point, she was still ecstatic to see her brother take on the journey, and she made sure to be the loudest one cheering him on.

“It was so good to get to see him succeed last season. It makes the experience more fun and I was just so proud of him afterward,” she said.

Both siblings have the same goal for one another: to be in the stands cheering for each other while the other has a great game or adds a new trophy to the case.

“I want him and the team to be the strongest and go as far as they can,” she said. “I’m close with his teammates and he’s close with mine, and we all just root for the other team the best we can. I also just hope he can have fun while on the court, no matter the score.”

Lauren Dick was prepared to take on the older sister role and show her younger sibling the ropes of college life. However, with only a year separating the two, she was still finding her own way through university living.

“He’s learned a lot from my mistakes, like I didn’t know getting an A- would drop your GPA. It’s definitely a transition going from high school to college. There’s all different kinds of hardships that you have to face, but it’s been fun just being able to be with him,” she said. “We live like right next door to each other, so we spend a lot of time together. Though, knowing him, he could just move halfway across the country and be fine.”

Connor Dick praised his sister for helping him acclimate to the new demand that comes with college classes and the hardships of Division I basketball.

“She’s a year older than me and has always been my role model. I’ve learned a lot from her. She’s given me a lot of confidence,” he said.

Before they committed to life on the court of Dahlberg Arena, they had their own individual achievements to show off outside the world of basketball.

Lauren Dick played soccer at Hellgate High School, becoming a state semifinalist during her senior year. But she eventually decided that basketball was the best option for her at the collegiate level instead of soccer.

“I got burnt out over soccer, and basketball was this new shiny thing, since I started playing later on in high school. I just decided to play my senior year and that was pretty special to continue for my final year and be able to close that chapter on a good note,” she said.

While Connor Dick only had basketball in his sight, he also knew the importance of academics, finishing high school at the top of his class with a 4.0 GPA.

“I give a lot of credit to my parents. They’ve always told us how important school is and to prioritize it over sports,” he said.

Growing up in a family that is surrounded by athletics, they said they never felt any pressure or push by their parents.

“We definitely love all sports, basketball, football, you name it, we all love it, even my mom, though she doesn’t really know what she’s talking about. In my family there’s no pressure over athletics. One of my brothers doesn’t even play a sport, so it’s nice to come from a place where you don’t feel pressured to be the best all the time,” Lauren Dick said.

However, their parents made sure to express that sports aren’t everything in life, and that academics carry importance over sporting events.

Growing up, both Connor and Lauren Dick were taught to value academics over basketball.

Cheering on the Griz was a rite of passage, not only because of their parents’ involvement with the University, but also with them living just a couple of miles from campus.

This included going to football games every weekend in the fall, cheering on both the men’s basketball team and the Lady Griz every week in the spring, and seeing the Griz advance to the NCAA March Madness tournament in 2018 and 2019.

“I grew up not that far from here, only five miles away, so to be able to see people I knew from high school, old coaches and of course my family in the standings during games, it means a lot to have the support system here,” Connor Dick said.

The family was born to be die-hard Griz fans, and now it means even more once they officially don the classic maroon and silver for the 2025-26 season.

“In Montana there are no pro sports, so this is it. Montana is here, and why would you want to be at any other college when you could be with the Griz?” Lauren Dick said.

While each team has different goals and moments to check off their lists, both Connor and Lauren Dick want the same out of this upcoming season.

“Win some games, win some titles and have fun,” he said.

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SPORTS BRIEFS

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FLAGS FLYING

Montana Griz football was able to get its first win against the Weber State Wildcats since 2019 with a score of 38-17, its first time winning in Ogden in a decade. The Griz still sit undefeated in the Big Sky Conference.

The Griz started the scoring off early with wide receiver Brooks Davis gaining a touchdown one minute into the game, gaining 34 yards on three plays.

That wasn’t all the action the Griz and Wildcats saw in the first quarter. Blake Bohannon, in the endzone, received a 62 yard pass from Keali’i Ah Yat, and ran it in for a two yard touchdown, finishing the first quarter with a score of 21-3.

Montana entered the locker room during halftime with a comfortable lead after Eli Gillman got on the board, receiving a pass from Ah Yat, which completed 84 yards in four plays.

Gillman became one of four players in Grizzly program history to rush more than 3,000 total yards in his career.

The third quarter was a quiet one for the Griz as the only scoring drive came from the Wildcats’ Jayleen Record, who was able to get the Wildcats some life, bringing the score to 31-17.

However, that would be short lived as the teams entered the fourth quarter. Three minutes in, Evan Shafer sealed the game and scored the final touchdown.

The blowout win for the Grizzlies allowed head coach Bobby Hauck to play some newer, fresher faces, like redshirt freshman quarterback, Luke Flowers, who was able to get 21 yards on one completion.

But it wasn’t just the offense that showed up in the game, the defense was able to quickly put a stop to the Wildcats. Diezel Wilkinson picked up the fumble on the Wildcats’ first drive, setting up the ball to get the Griz its quick touchdown.

“They had just a little over 100 yards rushing and couldn’t run the ball on us. They got some of their yards at the end with the young kids in, but when they can’t run it successfully, they’re going to have a hard time beating the Grizzlies,” Hauck said.

However, the game wasn’t always easy for the Griz. Players jumping the gun and other penalties caused Montana to see the yellow flag 10 times, resulting in a loss of 85 yards.

The Griz now look to the game this weekend against the Big Sky’s fifth-ranked team, Eastern Washington, UM’s last remaining home game before Montana State enters Washington-Grizzly Stadium.

Many fans are looking toward the game to see if this will be the time Montana gets its first loss of the season.

Zach Top headlines Adams Center

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Country singer Zach Top performed last Thursday to a crowd of over 7,000 in the Adams Center, with his performance including some of his most popular songs, covers of country classics and a genre switch in the middle of the performance.

Top opened for Lainey Wilson last year in the Adam's Center. This year, with his neo-traditional country and bluegrass placing him on "Best of 2024" lists from the Rolling Stone and the New York Times, according to Logjam, Top was ready to impress.

"I'm excited for a more personal experience," concertgoer Kiana Krueger said before the concert began. Krueger drove 10 hours from Alberta, Canada, to see Top play.

Jake Worthington opened the night, a country singer from Laporte, Texas, who brought a similar honky-tonk vibe to the stage. Worthington played multiple songs from his new album, "When I Write The Song." He also joined Top on stage for one of the last songs of the night.

When Top came to the stage, fans heard classics like "Sounds like the Radio" or "I Never Lie," as well as "South of Sanity," in which he mentions Missoula.

"It was definitely a great experience," Uni-

versity of Montana freshman Miles Gould said after the concert. "It [was] my first big concert in Missoula and I'm happy to do it with my fellas here and it was a great overall experience."

Top also played other country classics that got the fans cheering, such as "Two Dozen Roses" by Shenandoah, which has over 150 million streams on Spotify, and "Slow Hand" by Conway Twitty, which included a saxophone solo by Ryan "Stiggy" Stigman.

In the middle of the performance, Top switched genres from country to bluegrass, which he played early in his career before transitioning to country music. The band members gathered by a large diaphragm-condenser mic with Top in the center. The style is usually used in bluegrass songs so that the whole band can be heard through one microphone.

The fan favorite that night was "South of Sanity," which was released on his newest album. When Top sang the lyric "but I'm somewhere outside of Missoula," the crowd erupted.

Montanans appreciated the nods to their home and Top's work with other artists and genres.

"I'm not a huge country dude and it was my first concert ever, and considering that it was awesome," UM freshman Benjamin Nosbisich said.



Zach Top, a country artist from Sunnyside, Washington, sings to the crowd at the Adams Center on Oct. 30. Top played at the Adams Center as an opener for Lainey Wilson last year.



Top walks up to the mic as the band gets ready to play.



Top smiles at the crowd while performing one of his opening songs.