

MONTANA KAIMIN

Finding Felines

University of Montana researchers
look into the purr-plexing cats
roaming around Missoula

Story by Haley Yarborough | Photos by Chris Lodman



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12 Finding ohana

14 Cat-Griz sweep

Cover photo by Chris Lodman

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Kiosk



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

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For comments, corrections or letters to the editor, contact

emily.tschetter@umontana.edu
or call (406) 243-4310.

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- Water Bottle Fillers



UNIVERSITY OF
MONTANA

DETECTIVE SQUIRREL: SE 1 EP 10



SUDOKU

Edited by Margie E. Burke

Difficulty: Easy

HOW TO SOLVE:

Each row must contain the numbers 1 to 9; each column must contain the numbers 1 to 9; and each set of 3 by 3 boxes must contain the numbers 1 to 9.

Answer to Previous Sudoku:

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

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

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Can't get enough? Start listening.

This week, hear Bayliss Flynn speak to a Montana author about his solo experiences in the unforgiving winter wilderness.

"Somebody asked me what was the biggest thing that changed in me that winter, and that's always a tough one, but it's ... Afterwards, I've never been intimidated by anything. People are missing so much, that kind of the willingness to take a dare, you know, just to be daring enough to say 'well, I want to try something,'" - Pete Fromm



New episodes out every other Monday.
Scan for the latest.

K-12 cuts will darken UM's future

In 2020, when I was a senior in high school in Billings, Montana, I was in a similar place as many Missoula students last week: In front of a lectern at a school board meeting pleading for the classes I loved most to avoid falling victim to painful, sweeping budget cuts.

I started playing cello in my fifth-grade orchestra class at my elementary school and it became my passion and escape for the rest of my K-12 education. I showed up with fellow orch dorks, some as young as 10, to comment when elementary music classes, along with many school district jobs, were on the line.

Our efforts failed. There are no more fifth-grade orchestra classes, and Billings has yet another budget shortfall to the tune of \$8 million this year. Now, Missoula is also facing an \$8 million deficit. In a meeting lasting almost five hours with dozens of students, teachers and community members in attendance last week, the local school board voted to move forward with plans that could result in up to 100 teacher and staff layoffs.

Superintendent Micah Hill called the planned cuts "the worst in a generation" and said no matter how drastic they end up being, "the teachers will bear the burden," according to Missoulian reporting. Arts positions, library services and instructional coaches will likely be the first jobs to go, especially in Missoula's elementary schools.

The situation is dire, yet unavoidable with declining enrollment in elementary schools, the loss of COVID-related emergency grants and continued underfunding of the district by the state Legislature.

In the face of the inevitable crisis, it's hard to stay motivated and find ways to soften the blow. But we have to for the sake of current K-12 students, for future University of Montana students and even for those studying to become educators at UM right now.

Every UM student had their lives upended by the pandemic, but those in middle or elementary school in 2020 had an even harder time returning to a sense of normalcy.

Students still catching up will suffer from the cuts prompting larger class sizes and overwhelmed teachers. It will only be harder for those students to graduate high school, let alone consider going to college. Considering UM caters to in-state students, this will be detrimental to future enrollment for years to come.

This will only get worse if the arts are gutted. Arts classes serve as an escape for students, particularly students struggling in basic curriculum classes like math and English. Music teachers spend many more hours than they're actually paid for making those classes the best they can be.

Keeping the arts program alive is key to opening doors for students. Extracurriculars

are widely considered a major factor in determining scholarship awards, something music fulfills for many students, especially when it's offered as a regular class.

It's that sort of environment that inspires students to go on and pursue creative degrees like music education, many of whom are at the University today. UM's School of Music consistently posts updates on Facebook about graduates finding jobs teaching music in towns across Montana. UM is also partners with K-8 arts education efforts, exposing kids to more opportunities and encouraging participation.

Not only do these cuts make it less likely for students to pursue creative careers through the University, they also hurt new graduates' abilities to find teaching jobs in Montana. This could create a vicious cycle where Montana, which 2023 data shows is struggling to fill 60% of its vacant school positions, continues losing dedicated teachers, and students' quality of education continues to deteriorate.

We can keep showing up to board meetings in the short term, but in the long term, we need to use our ballots. While they can't save every position, the four levies, tax increases voters decide on, in the upcoming school election on May 7 could limit the number of cuts the district is forced to make.

District officials are proposing two safety levies to bring in \$2.5 million for K-12 security costs, along with a \$303,000 high school levy and a \$166,000 primary school levy to go towards general funds.

Missoula voters barely pushed levies through last year, and fighting for more funds in 2024 is even more challenging. We've already been hearing this is the most important election in our lifetimes, and it makes it hard to look further down the ballot — let alone turn out for a separate election months ahead of November.

No matter what the endless campaigning is doing to your psyche, the levies are worth filling out your ballot for. If forking up a few extra dollars of your taxes means Missoula children have a better education, eventually contributing to UM's enrollment and opening up more job opportunities for our graduating peers, there couldn't be a smaller price to pay.

Let the MontPIRGers track you down and get registered and ready when the election comes around. If you need to check your registration, go to voteinmt.org/check-your-status.

It takes a village. So, be the village for K-12 students, the foundation of our campus' future.

-Emily Tschetter, Editor-in-Chief

Like it? Hate it? Let us know.

Email us your opinions at emily.tschetter@umontana.edu

Briefs & Blotter

UM & MSU see spring enrollment increases; Avalanche risk high for skiers & boarders; State files Held v. Montana appeal with MT Supreme Court

MSU SPRING ENROLLMENT REACHES RECORD HIGH, UM UP 2%

Montana State University reported a record number of students this spring semester, reaching 16,110 students at the Bozeman flagship. This is a 3% increase, or 393 more students, from last spring, and the first-time spring enrollment topped 16,000.

This follows an all-time high enrollment last fall, when MSU brought in 16,978 students. MSU also saw an increase in minority students, including African American, Native American, Asian and Hispanic students.

“We are immensely proud of this spring enrollment because it shows how hard students are working to pursue higher education, stay enrolled and make progress toward their college degree from Montana State University,” MSU President Waded Cruzado said to the Daily Montanan.

The University of Montana also reported an enrollment increase of 2%, or 240 students, from Spring 2023 to Spring 2024. This semester’s total students now sits at 10,349. The Fall 2023 semester head count sat at 10,327 total students, with 800 graduating at semester. Last spring, there were 10,109 students across main campus, Missoula College, the law school and UM’s partnership programs. Enrollment for first generation students, Native American students, veterans and students with a disabilities all rose as well.

“Not only are more students choosing UM, but they are persevering toward graduation at a record rate,” UM President Seth Bodnar said in a press release. “As a result of these efforts, we are seeing benefits to our students beyond consecutive years of enrollment and revenue growth.”

(Claire Bernard)

HIGH AVALANCHE RISKS THIS SKI SEASON, FORECASTERS ADVISE AVOIDING THE BACK-COUNTRY

After a season slim on snow, skiers and snowboarders enjoyed a healthy snowfall that hit Montana last weekend – but the fresh layer sitting on a shaky foundation pack, combined with fast winds, puts parts of the state at risk of avalanche.

The worst of the warnings, released by the Gallatin National Forest Avalanche Center, are centered around southern Montana, the Missoulian reported. Areas at risk include the Centennial Range near Island Park, Idaho, the Lionhead area near West Yellowstone, the Madison and Gallatin ranges near Big Sky

and south of Bozeman and the mountains around Cooke City.

The areas are marked under “considerable” danger, the third of five levels marked by the Avalanche Center, meaning natural avalanches are possible and human-triggered avalanches are likely. Cautious route-finding is essential, experts said. Multiple avalanches have already been triggered, a majority by skiers, the Avalanche Center reported.

Across the United States, avalanches have already caused eight deaths, four of which occurred in the last month, as of Feb. 18, according to the Center.

“The mountains are yelling at us to stay off of and out from underneath slopes steeper than 30 degrees,” forecaster Alex Marienthal said on Feb. 18. “Plan your routes carefully. Don’t trust the snowpack, even if you don’t see obvious signs of instability such as collapsing, nearby avalanches, or poor test scores.”

(Christine Compton)

STATE’S FIGHT TO OVERTURN LANDMARK CLIMATE CASE UNDERWAY, APPEAL BRIEF FILED WITH MONTANA SUPREME COURT

The state of Montana has officially filed an appeal to the Montana Supreme Court, asking it to overturn the landmark climate change case, *Held v. Montana*.

District Court Judge Kathy Seeley found two bills passed by the state Legislature were unconstitutional last August, as both bills would have undermined the Montana Environmental Policy Act’s requirement for the state to consider greenhouse gas emissions when approving projects.

A group of 16 plaintiffs, at least one of whom is a University of Montana student, also argued the bills violated their right to a “clean and healthful environment” set by the state constitution.

The state argued on Feb. 12 in its appeal brief that a judge calling one policy unconstitutional won’t address the plaintiffs’ specific issues, like physical and emotional injury or distress caused by climate change since it’s a global problem. It further argued those issues are not solely the responsibility of the state.

The other section of the brief requests the Supreme Court specify what climate change effects the state is required to analyze when doing Montana Environmental Policy Act reviews.

“MEPA cannot be the legal cause of climate change injuries if MEPA does not

give agencies any legal authority to prevent the environmental effects of climate change,” the brief said.

(CB)

FEDERAL GOVERNMENT REFUSES TO ADD GRAY WOLVES BACK TO ENDANGERED SPECIES LIST

The United States Fish and Wildlife Service, which oversees the Endangered Species Act, announced it would not relist Rocky Mountains’ gray wolves to the endangered and threatened species list earlier this month. The decision, after years of debate and investigations from public groups, led to outrage from conservationists.

Northern Rockies gray wolves were first added to the endangered species list in 1978 and boomed under the “Northern Rocky Mountain Wolf Recovery Plan,” which trapped and released wolves into Central Idaho and Yellowstone National Park. They’ve been taken off and readmitted multiple times since.

Ranching and hunting groups argued wolves were a threat to livestock and urban areas. When not under federal protection, hunters were allowed, and sometimes paid, to kill wolves, as long as the species stayed above a required population number.

The Sierra Club, an environmental organization that petitioned to keep the wolves protected, argued legislation regulating wolf populations was a “political football,” according to the Montana Free Press.

“We’re not going to stand by and allow Northern Rockies states to push their radical agenda and ignore the American people who want healthy, abundant wildlife on our public lands and [to] have a healthy ecosystem that is in balance,” Nick Gevock, the club’s Northern Rockies field organizer, said in a statement to the Free Press.

In 2021, U.S. Fish and Wildlife said more hunting of wolves may threaten wolf populations. Despite this, a December 2023 report by the agency said it was confident Northern Rockies gray wolves would not face extinction in the next 100 years, “as long as future mortality rates are within the bounds.”

Instead, the agency plans to introduce a nationwide recovery plan for the Northern Rockies gray wolves by December 2025. Part of the plan is finding alternatives for states like Montana, which it said uses “measures that are at odds with modern professional wildlife management.”

(CC)

POLICE BLOTTER

SAV CHAVEZ

savannah.chavez@umontana.edu

Live, laugh and commit a crime. Campus erupted with a variety of incidents this week, from streaking to peeking. The University of Montana Police Department received reports of 10 crimes this week, so the mischief-makers are back from their hiatus in full swing. The Kaimin presents the acts of Valentine’s week.

FRIDAY, FEB. 9 – SORORITY SLEAZE

On the afternoon of Feb. 9, a man scampered to the Alpha Phi sorority house to take a peek into the building. Knocking and glancing around through the back door, the man discovered people were indeed at home. With this new realization in mind, he scurried away. UMPD could not find the man, but did extra patrolling in the area just in case he, or anyone else, came back.

SUNDAY, FEB. 11 – ART AND FART

A Duniway Hall bathroom fell victim to a modern art idea by an unknown interior designer on Sunday. When UMPD arrived on scene, a cover to a bathroom light was on the floor, next to three empty beer bottles. UMPD has no idea who did this or why, but we can only assume they wanted to redecorate the rather dim bathrooms of Duniway.

SUNDAY, FEB. 11 – NAKED AND NOT AFRAID

Late on Sunday night, a student decided to get down, dirty and... naked? With unknown reasoning in mind, a student was reported running through a hall in Aber, leaving nothing to the imagination, booty cheeks included. Surprisingly, UMPD was not informed of the streaker until a resident assistant reported the incident later in the night. Whether the student put their nudity on the line for a 49ers win or was just having too much fun during the Superbowl, the world may never know.

MONDAY, FEB. 12 – PETTY BO-BETTY

Miller Hall is home to 326 students and, occasionally, rather petty disagreements between roommates. At around 1 a.m., two roommates’ argument escalated from verbal lashes to physical shoves. While neither wanted to press charges, the incident was documented with UMPD in case someone changed their mind. I understand living as close as roommates do can be tough, but let’s not shove each other around. Whatever happened to, I don’t know, an adult conversation?

Pussy-o-scope

MACKENNA GLEAVE
mackenna.gleave@umontana.edu

Our kitty companions need to be recognized more, no matter how fat, lazy and asshole-y they are. Yeah, the musical was the equivalent of some furry's twisted Taylor Swift fantasy, but it's time to get over it and embrace the cat life, 'cause who rules the world? Our fur-ocious feline friends. So climb on top of the counter to lick a beer can, throw up in your owner's shoe, sleep all day, bite someone as soon as they start petting you and live as spitefully as you can (Just maybe don't lick your asshole in public). Take a whiff of that catnip and look to the stars for your purr-fect feline persona.

PISCES (FEB. 19-MARCH 20): All should fear your wrath as Church from "Pet Sematary." Life has been rough and it's those damn humans' fault for all your sorrows — there will be no survivors. Revenge is a dish best served with claws, sneak attacks and teeth meant for the blood of those who call you their pet.

ARIES (MARCH 21-APRIL 19): Humanity sucks, and no one gets that more than you, Grumpy Cat. We encourage acting out of spite and really saying how you feel, no matter how many times people tell you to stop being a sourpuss. #EmbraceIt

TAURUS (APRIL 20-MAY 20): You may not eat pussy (that's cannibalism), but you are an avid lasagna enjoyer. You're Garfield, and you know what that means? You're a lazy piece of shit, so cuddle up on your couch, eat your lasagna, bitch about everything wrong in this wretched world and never think about exercising again. Mondays are terrible and we agree.

GEMINI (MAY 21-JUNE 20): As the Cat in the Hat, you have plenty of dirty hoes on your roster. A six-foot anthropomorphic cat who's almost as smooth and wise-cracking as Austin Powers? You may need to work on some impulse control, but you better bet you can make any other cat purr.

CANCER (JUNE 21-JULY 22): As Puss in Boots, you're equal parts fierce and adorable. You may have a bit of an ego, but you're the best at sticking your shiny sword in unsuspecting eggs and manipulating anyone with that kitty-eyed gaze. Seriously, those eyes should be a war crime.

LEO (JULY 23-AUG. 22): There's a reason people stock up on Frosted Flakes, and it's not because of the cereal itself. It's because they want to admire your big-ass biceps. As Tony the Tiger, you're basically Hercules in feline form. Ripped, good with kids, unafraid to roar in the bedroom — keep it up champ, you're doing GR-R-REAT.

VIRGO (AUG. 23-SEP. 22): Logic is something you lack, but your mediocre detective skills always seem to work out in the end. You are the Pink Panther and all your problems will be solved with a good makeover to cover the hot mess that is your life. We recommend all things pink for your future and you'll have all your greatest desires — the world revolves around you, after all.

LIBRA (SEP. 23-OCT. 22): No one is quite as skilled with whips as you, Cat Woman. Your resourcefulness and badassery will soon be rewarded with a nice bat-daddy, as long as you aren't too skittish. Stay a while and bask in the glory of your hotness.

SCORPIO (OCT. 23-NOV. 21): We know about your arch nemesis and we think it's time to end this "friendly" feud. As Tom from "Tom & Jerry," revenge is in your future. We know you can be lazy and a bit extreme with your tactics, but we believe good things are coming. That little shit plaguing your life will meet his demise soon.

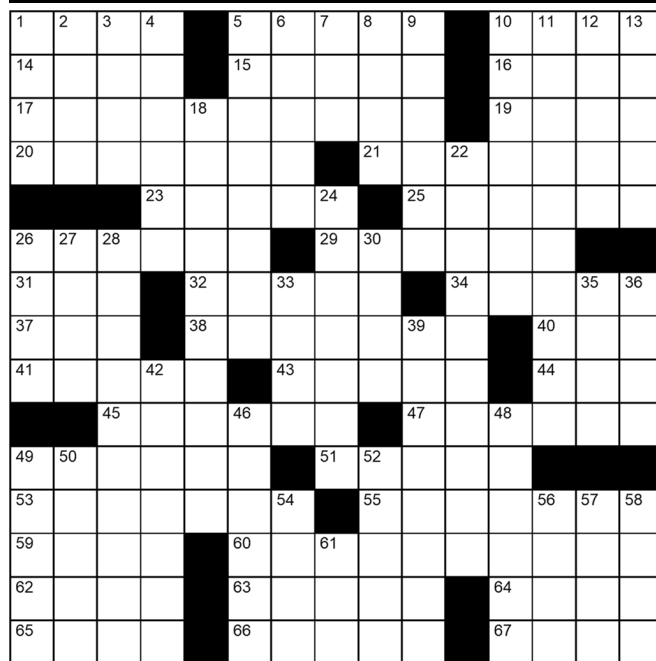
SAGITTARIUS (NOV. 22-DEC. 21): The situationship you're in is a no and it's time to get out. As Sylvester from "Looney Tunes," we applaud you for your persistence and dedication, but you have to learn to get over it. Like come on, there's more than one blonde out there for you, we promise.

CAPRICORN (DEC. 22-JAN. 19): You're the Cheshire cat. You're a bit mysterious, sneaky, unpredictable, a little insane and not good at hiding it, but it's fine... it's fine.

We heard catnip helps the voices, worth a try. **AQUARIUS (JAN 20-FEB 18):** When you get upset, people die. You are Mr. Bigglesworth from "Austin Powers" and you love living your little hairless, pampered life with Dr. Evil. Your head is still in the stars from your last trip in the woodpecker, but all your troubles will soon be solved once you get a number two to do everything for you.



BARRETT CLEMENT | MONTANA KAIMIN



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ACROSS

- 1 Goya's "Duchess of ____"
- 5 Tumbler, e.g.
- 10 Track figures
- 14 Lender's protection
- 15 Renegade
- 16 Sign of secrecy
- 17 All-powerful
- 19 Salinger girl
- 20 Bringing up the rear
- 21 Obtained
- 23 Knotted neckwear
- 25 Except that
- 26 Part of HMO
- 29 Reach, as a goal
- 31 World Series mo.
- 32 Radio and TV, e.g.
- 34 Hero's award
- 37 Resistance unit
- 38 Dye ingredient
- 40 Tavern offering
- 41 Meat and potatoes, e.g.
- 43 Amber or umber
- 44 Hound
- 45 Volleyball position
- 47 Linux software package, informally
- 49 Habanero, for one
- 51 Pasta topper
- 53 Get what's coming?
- 55 Keyboard in a Bach title
- 59 Tied up
- 60 Mosquito repelling candle
- 62 Parachute pull
- 63 They may buckle
- 64 Lunar trench
- 65 Shirley Temple film, "Bright ____"
- 66 Perception
- 67 Slip (into)
- 22 Part of HUAC
- 24 Clothes pros
- 26 Horseshoe locale
- 27 Sound effect
- 28 It covers the earth
- 30 Lobster part
- 33 Chop up
- 35 Banned apple spray
- 36 Danish toy company
- 39 Lumpy
- 42 Relies (upon)
- 46 Magic show makeup
- 48 Like arctic winters
- 49 Chessman
- 50 Diplomatic messenger
- 52 "Green ____"
- 54 Rake part
- 56 Hip bones
- 57 Building additions
- 58 Breathing rattle
- 61 Midmorning hour

DOWN

- 1 Skin cream ingredient
- 2 Portray artistically
- 3 Fudge, as a rule
- 4 Kind of cracker
- 5 Old coin
- 6 Bingo's kin
- 7 Get on in years
- 8 Phoenix team
- 9 Embark, as on a journey
- 10 Rest on top of
- 11 Progeny
- 12 March of ____
- 13 Mushers' vehicles
- 18 USPS manager

Answers to Previous Crossword:

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

Out of stock: What's causing campus-wide textbook issues?

ELLE DANIEL
elle.daniel@umontana.edu

When Tabby-Kai Ashtyn Lawrence and their classmates didn't have "The Passion," a required reading for their literature class at the University of Montana, their professor decided to stop class and get to the bottom of it. After a phone call with the Go Griz Store, formerly known as UM's bookstore, they put in a rush order, but only seven copies arrived the next week.

"I was like, 'Okay, it will probably be here in a few days,' and then I kept checking and it wasn't," Lawrence, a creative writing major from Missoula, said.

For many UM students, getting textbooks on time — or even at all — has been a struggle this semester. But the empty shelves and back-ordered books aren't the result of a one-time error, but a storm of tech issues, miscommunication and, in some cases, an ongoing struggle spanning years and multiple store ownerships.

In Lawrence's class, students began to notice missing textbooks around the second week of school. According to Lawrence, their professor provided updates on the book arrival timeline. "We waited a couple of weeks and checked again, and still hadn't gotten it," they said.

The bookstore in the University Center has been a resource for students for years, from school and art supplies to course materials, including a range of new and used book prices and a textbook rental program.

The store changed management to Follett Higher Education after its five-year contract with Barnes and Noble ended in 2023, and the name changed to the Go Griz Store. Follett, an education service provider, helps universities build out campus stores, from sourcing course materials to creating merchandise with local businesses and national brands.

According to an article from The Pulp, a proposed contract in December said Follett could annually pay UM roughly \$500,000 based on 2022 fiscal year sales, and included a proposed \$600,000 renovation to the store.

No one from Follett responded to the Kaimin in time for publication. UM Spokesperson Dave Kuntz said though he did not know the specifics of the final multi-year contract, it ended up "pretty similar" to the proposal.



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The rebranded store scaled back on art and school supplies it previously offered to focus on Grizzly-themed merchandise instead, like clothing, wine glasses and memorabilia.

The store also offers a selection of course materials for students, alphabetically arranged in a self-help style. But instead of grabbing their textbooks and going, students found half-empty shelves.

Requests for spring semester textbook orders are sent out as early as October. This year, the reminder was sent out to faculty on Oct. 30, 2023, with a deadline on Nov. 23, 2023, according to emails Ione Crummy, a French professor, shared with the Kaimin. Bookstore management was turned over to Follett and its new staff in October 2023.

In an email from store manager Klent Palmer and course material manager Justin Nixon-Hawes sent to Marissa Geiger, the College of Humanities and Sciences operations director, this mid-semester turnover meant "the moment the new bookstore opened it was running to play catch up."

The email between the store managers and Geiger were provided to the Kaimin by the co-interim dean Julie Baldwin.

Kuntz, the UM spokesperson, noted there was little to no communication between Barnes & Noble and Follett during the bookstore turnover, with no instruction on how to order textbooks or handle student information.

Kuntz said there's also an emphasis on faculty to get orders in early. He added a "significant amount" of faculty turned in requests late or even a week before the start of the semester.

For some faculty members who request-

ed textbooks before the deadline, the issue becomes more complex. Crummy, a French professor, noted an ongoing struggle to get foreign textbooks.

Crummy recalled past years when students would buy copies from other sources, leaving the bookstore with unsold copies. To avoid this, she said she believes the bookstore under-ordered books for the next semester.

"If you said, 'order like 10 copies of this book, because that's how many students are enrolled in the class,' they'd order five, and then that wouldn't [be] enough," Crummy said.

One of Crummy's students, Lauren Driessen, a junior French major from Missoula, also struggled to get her books this semester.

"I just came in in-person to get my books, but usually I don't have a problem when I do that, although my book wasn't even available to buy online," the 21-year-old said.

Requests for materials from the store were submitted by email, but according to the email to Geiger, this process requires "much more time and labor to process emailed [requests] than ones that flow directly into the bookstore system," Palmer and Nixon-Hawes, the store managers, wrote.

Baldwin doesn't know how long professors might've waited to alert administrators about textbook issues, but said she wishes they heard about them sooner.

Other complaints filed by professors revealed various issues, some caused by human error. According to the email from Palmer and Nixon-Hawes to Geiger, the re-

quest from history professor Richard Drake was initially missed because misspelled email address sent it to the wrong account. One employee remembered the titles after the semester began and sent in the order.

In another case, the store managers said in the email to Geiger that English associate professor Kathleen Kane's ordered textbooks were "completely incorrect," and they "overlooked" her requests for correct materials when Nixon-Hawes had to take a "medically necessary leave of absence."

In the email to Geiger, Palmer reassured the Humanities and Sciences faculty he is "confident that we will deliver and indeed exceed the level of service that Montana's faculty and students expect and deserve."

Baldwin said the bookstore responded in a detailed and timely manner after Geiger reached out.

"I think they recognized there were some mistakes made and acknowledged their responsibility," Baldwin said.

The Kaimin reached out to bookstore employees and they deferred commenting to Palmer. The Kaimin called Palmer on Feb. 12 to see if he was available for an interview and he said he had no availability that week. After receiving the emails from Baldwin, the Kaimin called him three more times and he did not respond in time for publication.

In the meantime, students have been on the hunt for other options. Driessen is still missing some listed course materials. "My first French textbook I was able to get off the bat, my second French textbook, I haven't been able to get at the bookstore in general," Driessen said.

Lawrence, however, was able to find "The Passion" at the Book Exchange, a local secondhand bookstore. "It was their last copy," Lawrence said. "I was like, 'Oh, fantastic. Please save that for me.'"

"The moment the new bookstore opened it was running to play catch up."

- Klent Palmer & Justin Nixon-Hawes, Go Griz Store managers, in an email to the College of Humanities and Sciences operations director.

Speakers use storytelling to sow collective climate resilience

VIVIANNE OSTHEIMER

vivianne.ostheimer@umontana.edu

On the fourth floor of the Missoula Public Library last week, Laura Garber passed around a jar of calendula seeds, urging audience members to take a few and hold them in their hands. This is her 26th year of farming, and she looks forward to the process of sowing seeds, literally and metaphorically.

"Seeds are the link to the past and are linked to the future," Garber said. "Our great-grandmothers grew seeds and our great-granddaughters will grow seeds."

Now we are the ones holding the seeds, according to Garber, and we have the opportunity to make the future happen or let it die in our hands.

The library became a place for storytelling and planting seeds of change on Feb. 14 when a University of Montana business professor, a UM environmental studies graduate student and the founder of an organic farm shared their experiences surrounding climate change and new ways to address the global issue.

Garber, founder of Homestead Organics Farm, followed the theme of resilience by discussing plants' superpowers.

"To me, plants in nature are superheroes," she said. She encouraged the audience to take inspiration from nature.

"I look at the world, and I know that there are all these human effects that are happening, but yet nature is still ripening the tomatoes, still producing the seeds, still using all that she can to give us, all she has," Garber said.

Justin Angle, a marketing professor, also presented, asking, "Some of you may be thinking, why is a marketing professor here

to talk to you about wildfire? Why is a marketing professor talking to you about stories of resilience?"

It's because of Angle's podcast "Fireline," he said. Over the last few years, he's been collecting the stories of scientists, historians and firefighters to explore what fire means for the West, the planet and human livelihoods.

In 2023 alone, more than 15,000 fires broke out across Montana, according to state data. Forty-eight percent of those fires were human-caused.

During his 12 years as a professor in the College of Business, he has felt his interests shift from marketing to social psychology.

"I've grown more and more nauseated with marketing," Angle said. "My study of it started as an interesting way to think about how people make decisions and how they carry themselves in their world." It quickly devolved into helping students get jobs in fields Angle felt did more harm than good, like helping politicians run their campaigns using data available on Facebook.

"At the same time, as I was growing disillusioned in my academic discipline, I started getting interested in people's stories," Angle said, stories including those who are on the front lines of climate change in Montana.

According to the Environmental Protection Agency, the state has warmed about two degrees Fahrenheit in the last century. Heat waves, snow melt, drought, invasive species and forest fires have increased and are continuing to increase.

The Fire, Weather and Avalanche Center also reports 45% of Montana is experiencing "abnormally" dry conditions.

"It's been pretty remarkable to learn and sort of track how people have adapted to that," Angle said. "How we sort of deal with the climate crisis has always been top of



BARRETT CLEMENT | MONTANA KAIMIN

mind." As a business educator, he said he felt guilty about his participation in the world of consumerism.

That was when Angle realized his contribution could be sharing others' stories to raise awareness about people working to address climate change in Missoula.

"I mean, this is one of the pieces of climate change that we actually have some agency to improve," he said. "Oftentimes when you're reading about climate or talking to a scientist, you get a lot of facts. Learning more information about what's happening with the climate is not changing our ways."

16 young plaintiffs from across Montana prevailed in *Held v. Montana*, a landmark climate case last August, where a judge blocked two bills that would undermine the requirement the state to consider greenhouse gas emissions when reviewing projects. The ruling also cited the state's constitutional right to a "clean and healthful environment."

The case was the first of the kind in the nation and swept national and global headlines. It is being appealed by the state in the Montana Supreme Court.

Priya Subberwal followed Angle's lecture with the importance of storytelling and their own story about climate change and fire. The environmental studies graduate student from Frisco, Colorado, read their original piece,

"Untitled poem about fire".

"I have a confession to make. I love the smell of wildfire. It makes me homesick," the piece began. Fire reminds Subberwal of summer smoke in the Mountain West and chai simmering over their grandmother's stove in India.

"Forgive me for loving a burning world. You see, I have no other world and I have no other love," they said.

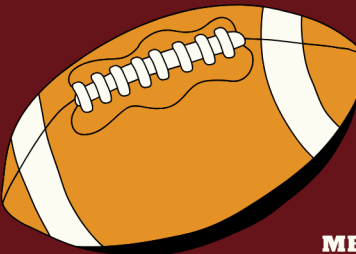
Subberwal demonstrated the resilience of the natural world and our responsibility to care for it. "I believe in life after death, not because I'm a little bit Buddhist or a little bit Hindu, but because I'm a little bit of an ecologist," they said. According to Subberwal, the cones of lodgepole pines must burn to release seeds.

"What I'm saying is all I have are these two hands, and you have yours, and the fact of the matter is that we are capable of burning things," Subberwal said. "For better or for worse, and often for both, we are left with what has been burned."

This live storytelling event, "Cultivating Community Climate Resilience Through Storytelling," was sponsored by Spectrum Discovery Area, the UM environmental studies program and Families for a Liveable Climate with their Montana Climate Stories project.

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University of Montana wildlife biology major Jay Schutze, with a research notice sign, navigates towards coordinate points mapped on their phone in the Waterworks area to set up a research field in May 2023. Motion-activated cameras Schutze used to study the ecological impact of feral and domestic cats in the Missoula area.



Findling

Hundreds of rogue cats occupy the Missoula area. UM researchers

Story by Haley Yarborough
Photos by Chris Lodman

THE COLONY OF KITTENS emerged from the side of Butler Creek Road in a small, squirming mass of fur. Driving up the dirt road in their Mini Cooper, Jay Schutze and her fiancé did a double take, watching the cats crest a hill behind a fence. The sight was so coincidental they couldn't help but laugh.

The area was relatively remote, a dirt road roughly 11 miles north-west of Missoula. Schutze, who uses she/they pronouns, knows feral cat colonies can be used as a "green alternative" to control mouse and rat populations in rural places. Still, she did not anticipate seeing a hoard of roughly 15 fun-sized felines. At least, not when she wasn't working.

"It was definitely like, there's no way [out] of all people I'm seeing this right now," Schutze said.

Schutze, a 30-year-old terrestrial wildlife biology student at the University of Montana,

spent the summer of 2023 setting up wildlife cameras in 60 different locations across Missoula to observe cats. The reason? To better understand how cats influence the wildland world.

Cats have contributed to the extinction of 63 species of birds, mammals and reptiles, and harm a variety of other species, including those at risk of extinction, according to the American Bird Conservancy. The conservancy said Cats kill an estimated 2.4 billion birds every year and, as an invasive species, are the number one human-caused threat to

avian wildlife. How they affect Missoula's fauna, however, has been relatively unexplored.

The colony Schutze saw that day is one of potentially tens or hundreds of colonies within or near Missoula city limits. As of January 2024, the no-kill cat adoption center AniMeals reported it was feeding around 55 cat colonies in Missoula County. In a place like Zootown — which, according to the Montana Heritage Program, harbors 68 different mammal species and 305 avian species — roaming cats can raise questions among wildlife biologists about



TOP LEFT: Former environmental science graduate student Stephanie Barron shakes her cat Ziggy's paw in exchange for a treat on Nov. 1, 2023. The two would practice tricks after Stephanie's classes at the University of Montana. She graduated with a master's in environmental science in Fall 2023. She studies carnivore conflicts and is working on a curriculum incorporating traditional ecological knowledge to educate people on carnivores in western Montana.

TOP CENTER: Stephanie Barron's cat, Ziggy, outside on his patio on Nov 1, 2023. Barron built the patio out of recycled materials so Ziggy could be outside while unsupervised, without freely roaming around the neighborhoods.

TOP RIGHT: A Tabby cat shares a shelter with a group of cats that were brought in by a man with a carrier fastened and held together with straps. AniMeals, a no-kill animal shelter, will often try to keep cats together if they come in as a group or if they form a bond at the shelter.



are on the prowl to learn what it means for cat lovers and our pets' prey

how they're affecting animals' behaviors and populations up and down the food chain.

Schutze herself is an animal lover, and was naturally drawn to the topic. They have a dog, a snake and a 9-year-old tabby cat named Calypso, who they adopted at three-months-old from a shelter in Colorado.

Growing up in Dallas-Fort Worth, Texas, her interest in wildlife began when she became a ranch hand at 14, but her true passion for protecting animals formed when she started wildlife rehabilitation. Over their time working at four rehabilitation centers, they started

to notice a trend: over half the animals coming into the facilities were because of cats.

"You had to euthanize [other animals] for these things that seemed easily preventable," Schutze said.

Cats' overall impact is ecologically complex, and sometimes a point of contention between conservationists, biologists and animal shelters. There is often a belief that you're either pro-cat or pro-wildlife, an assumption Schutze acknowledged.

"I love cats," Schutze said. "This isn't an anti-cat project. They're not bad guys, they're

just being cats, [and] we just want to know if they're impacting wildlife here."

In the context of ecology, "impact" refers to the effects that human activities like pollution, deforestation, climate change or urbanization have on natural habitats and populations of wild animals. So, what is the impact of cats present in Missoula?

Using both her own research and others, Schutze is trying to find out. Because the U.S. Intermountain West has been significantly understudied, truly understanding how our furry friends impact birds, mammals and

BOTTOM RIGHT: Jay Schutze embraces her 9-year-old rescue tabby cat, Calypso, in their apartment on Feb. 9. Schutze adopted Calypso when she lived in Colorado, where she worked in animal rehabilitation, before moving to the University to study wildlife biology.

BOTTOM LEFT: Rachel Taft visits Waldorf on Oct. 4, 2023. Waldorf is one of the cats taken in by AniMeals with Cerebellar Hypoplasia, a neurological disorder in cats that causes abnormal, sometimes wobbly, movement. Taft fell in love with cats after starting her work at AniMeals, a nonprofit and no-kill animal shelter, roughly four years ago. She tends to the needs of cats and manages AniMeal's advertising and online platforms.



Jay Schutze sets up one of the motion-activated trail cameras used to observe cats' interactions with wildlife. Schutze began work on the project in May 2023 and set up multiple cameras over roughly 20 days.

other animals may take years to decades. But Schutze's work may be a start to understanding domestic cats' role in the wild, and as Missoula continues to expand, whether it's man's job to intervene.

Bridging the Cat Data Gap

The idea for a feline-focused research project began when postdoctoral researcher Christopher Hansen noticed dark figures with glowing eyes occasionally strutting across his pictures with small animals in their mouths. Hansen was researching the effects of human development on mammals.

"Going through literally millions of photos within town, you begin to notice patterns of other species," Hansen said. "One of those was cats."

Hansen, who got his masters degree at the University of Missouri and moved to Missoula to get his doctoral degree, confirmed around 1,300 cat sightings on his cameras. Approximately 70% of suburban sites in Missoula County were occupied by cats. Sometimes the felines were alone, other times he caught them passively passing deer, or, in one instance, prompting a deer to run away.

Eventually, Hansen nonchalantly remarked on his findings in a hallway conversation with Victoria Dreitz, the director of the Avian

Science Center and an associate professor in wildlife biology at UM. Dreitz was well aware of the roles cats were playing in declining bird populations, and interested in seeing how animals were affected by cats in Missoula, put out an advertisement for research.

In the beginning, Schutze intended for their research to be more avian-focused. Taking on some treacherous field expeditions, which ranged everywhere from hikes up Moose Can Gully to Mt. Jumbo, Schutze performed point counts at each site to roughly estimate the number of bird species in the area. But without more helping hands, her work was often difficult and inaccurate, so she shifted her focus to mammal species.

Two other undergraduate students, Katia Chavez and Jacob Steinle, are combing through thousands of photos collected from Schutze's fieldwork to identify cats and other mammals present. So far, most of their pictures have included deer and an occasional cat-meo.

"What we know is that cats are going everywhere," Schutze said. "And now we'll come up with a good model trying to get an idea of who they're spending their time with."

Schutze also plans to use some data collected from Hansen's work, which revealed how urban animals are becoming more nocturnal to limit their interactions with humans during

the day.

Hansen said this begs the question of how interactions with domestic outdoor cats or strays could alter animals' behavior and even their health, as they harbor transmissible diseases that can affect other species like white-tailed deer. All mammals react differently to felines' presence, making the idea of this research both difficult and daunting, according to Dreitz.

"When you see cats in the cameras you can't see their behaviors beyond the cameras," Dreitz said. "Cats also have very diverse personalities. They can react to wildlife differently."

The kinds of impacts from cats can differ between remote deserts, small islands and urban areas, and also vary depending on whether vegetation has been stripped, making small mammals more vulnerable to predators like cats.

"It's like, to me, we're more wild, even though we're in Missoula. And so if wildlife do run into domestic cats, they may have that behavioral response of like, 'This is foreign. I'm going to run away.' Where out east that's been developed longer. The urbanization has been there a lot longer," Dreitz said.

The basis of the project hinges on Missoula's growing Wildland Urban Interface, an area where human development and wildland

overlap. As WUI increases, so do human-animal interactions and the potential for more conflict, which can result in changes in the size and structure of wildland communities.

From 2020 to 2022 alone, Missoula's population has grown by approximately 3.8%, according to the U.S. Census Bureau. There's no concrete numbers on stray and feral cats within Missoula, but cat shelters are feeling the effects of growing human and, potentially, cat populations.

Meow-mageddon

Rachel Taft sits in a chair with a small, black kitten nicknamed "Twinkle Toes" resting in her lap. She wears a graphic tee of a cat holding a samurai sword in its mouth. Four other kittens meow-under around the office clumsily. Taft has worked at AniMeals, a non-profit no-kill animal shelter based in Missoula, for almost four years.

"I didn't grow up with cats. My dad was allergic," Taft said. "I've always been a dog person, but then I got this job kind of accidentally and fell in love."

Currently, Taft owns two cats, including a rescue cat named Tanjiro, named after the protagonist from the anime "Demon Slayer."

While her position is technically managing social media and advertising, she takes on several duties at AniMeals, like occasionally helping rescue stray cats. Taft helped trap 66 stray cats residing under Reserve Street Bridge in December 2021. Most of the cats were attracted to a houseless camp that has since moved.

That was only a fraction of the stray cats living in Missoula. As of January 2024, AniMeals was housing around 72 kittens, with approximately 17 out in foster care. Depending on whether it's "kitty season," which typically lasts from March through December, Taft said these numbers could fluctuate, but strays are not decreasing.

"We hear about a new colony in Missoula every month," Taft said.

On average, AniMeals takes in around 200 cats per year. In 2023, it took in a total of 323 cats. These cats are the total for a year, not at one time. Taft said their max capacity is around 110.

"There are a lot of colonies in Missoula and I think that comes down to the lack of spay and neuter resources," Taft said.

Per Missoula's city animal ordinance, any cat that has not been fixed in Missoula must be spayed or neutered before returning to the owner at the owner's expense. Prices can range anywhere from \$50 to \$500 depending on the clinic performing the surgery.

All veterinary care at AniMeals is outsourced, but they do have a trap-neuter-release program and typically fix and vaccinate around one to two colonies a year, according to Taft. Nicole Nolte, the director of operations for Western Montana's Humane Society and a UM alumna, said they have one veterinarian who fixes cats in their care.

While Nolte said the number of cats the



A cat and a deer caught together by one of Christopher Hansen's wildlife cameras on August 7, 2019. Hansen is a postdoctoral researcher at the University of Montana who recently published a paper on how urbanization influences mammal communities. "I know there's a lot of domestic cats here, but it was a bit of a surprise when I saw how many cameras had domestic cats on them," Hansen said. **CONTRIBUTED | CHRISTOPHER HANSEN**

Humane Society received peaked in 2021, the number of kittens they're caring for has seemed to go up in recent years. Nolte thinks it's partially due to a veterinarian shortage prompted by the COVID-19 pandemic. At the core of this issue may be supply and demand; there's more people with more pets and only a limited number of veterinarians.

"I think the delay of getting your pets in

has increased and I have seen the cost go up," Nolte said. "I do think there's a temporary veterinary shortage where there were a lot of family veterinarians retiring."

Both Nolte and Taft acknowledged cats' impact is an issue, but not something that can be solved overnight. Nolte, who studied wildlife biology at UM, thinks the key to reducing these kinds of interactions is preventing them

from having more litters of kittens.

For domestic outdoor cats, Taft encouraged owners to put bells on collars to scare away birds. While bibs and bells have proven effective in reducing the number of birds cats can hunt, they don't completely eliminate hunting. A study in the United Kingdom found cats equipped with a bell or bib captured 41% fewer birds.

For a more fool-proof method, students who own outdoor domestic cats may have an alternative to keep their cats living free outside but away from wildlife: catio.

Into the Catioverse

Stephanie Barron keeps her cat on a tight leash, literally. Barron, who studied human-carnivore conflict prevention at UM and graduated with a master's in environmental science in the Fall 2023, owns a 6-year-old tabby cat named Ziggy. Like many other cats in Missoula, Ziggy enjoys the outdoors, but Barron does not leave him without supervision.

Ziggy has his very own catio, an enclosed outdoor area for cats to roam. Barron's is self-made, mainly from recyclable materials like chicken wire and plywood. Typically, catio can cost anywhere from under \$100 to up to \$1000; Barron got almost everything she needed from Home Resource for \$60.

"I'm very aware of how cats have contributed to the songbird decline," Barron said. "That was the catalyst for what made me want to build a catio because he spent so much time outside, and it's controlled that way."

When Barron travels, she often takes him with her. Ziggy is what Barron calls an "adventure cat." Fitted with a harness and leash, and occasionally snug in a backpack, Ziggy has joined Barron on trips along California's Northern Coast, up the Blue Mountain Nature Trail and several National Parks across the western United States.

Barron suggested for anyone interested in turning their outdoor cat into an adventure cat, to start young and to start simple.

"It's important to listen to your cat and not force them, but if they are interested and they are young, keep up the intention, go outside, maybe to a park, and watch them as they wander," she said.

It's not just the small cats Barron loves. Growing up in Michigan, she was raised watching "Big Cat Diaries," which follows the lives of African big cats in Kenya's Masai Mara. From there, her love for big cats sprung into a career focused on carnivore conflict. She's working on an online platform called Coalesce Curriculum of Coexistence, which combines science with traditional ecological knowledge to train people how to coexist with large carnivores, like bears and mountain lions, roaming the Flathead Indian Reservation.

Her work on the curriculum has increased not only her love for carnivores, but her understanding of how cats operate, big and small.

"Out of all carnivores, cats are perfectly designed," Barron said. "Every single aspect of a cat is designed to facilitate stalking, hunting

and catching prey."

Many naturalists consider cats to be one of the most effective killers on Earth. A study based in Australia found that in open areas, feral cats were successful at killing 70% of their prey, more than three times more successful than the tigers observed. Of course, a cat's diet is a little different than a tiger's, sometimes consisting of birds, mice, snakes and even frogs.

The extent of cats' effects on wildlife in Missoula is not completely known, but Barron said Schutze's research is a promising springboard into better understanding their place.

Cat to the Future

Standing in their living room, Schutze tries to entice their cat, Calypso, with a treat. Calypso, hunched under a chair near the door, stubbornly refuses. Schutze sighs. Taking care of animals can be difficult, but to her, they're worth the effort.

With a resumé that lists her work syringe-feeding orphaned squirrels and taking care of captive wolves, Schutze said eventually she wants to get more into the policy side of managing wildlife.

After they graduate in the fall, they plan to apply for graduate school at the University of Washington to get a concurrent master's of science in field research and public administration. The program will let Schutze explore topics she enjoys, including science, management and policy.

For now, however, they're focused on defending their thesis at the end of the semester. With only a few months left, Schutze hopes the findings from their work will be significant. Regardless, her advisers assure her any kind of data is usually worthy of attention.

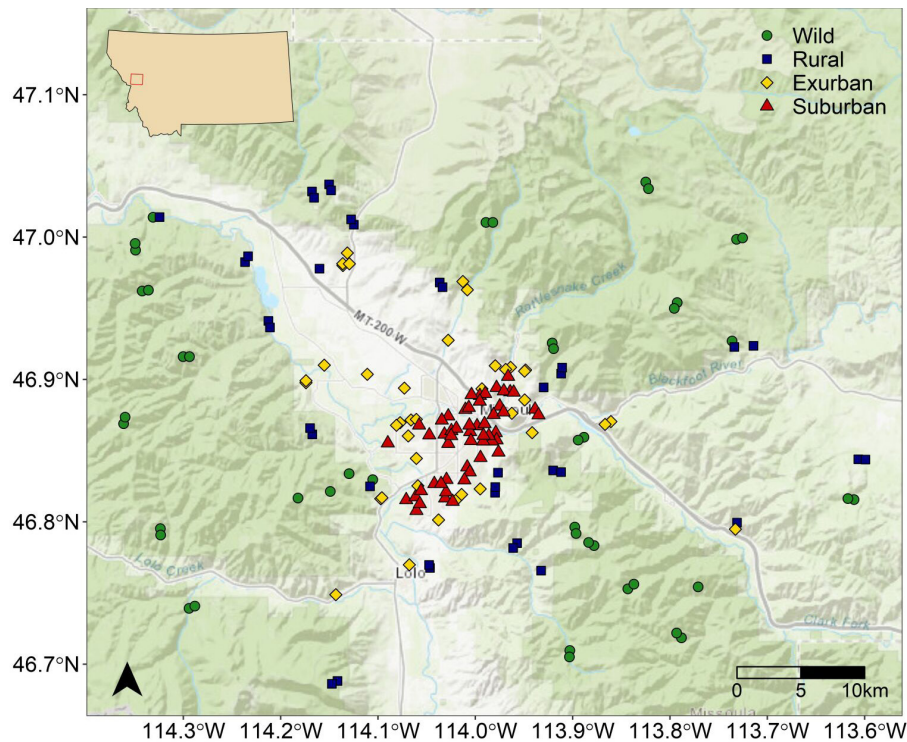
"I always say it's a story, this is when science becomes art," Dreitz said. "It might not be sexy to publish but it's still important to show."

Their work also has the potential to expand. Schutze said exploring the impact of the Missoula meowerson birds specifically would be valuable, but likely would need more hands on deck to realistically get conclusive answers. They also said there could be promise in UM's birding club assisting with data collection.

Schutze said at the beginning of her research project, she also intended to explore how feral cat colonies interact with wildlife. While she did witness a herd of cats in the wild, like many other researchers trying to find answers to their complex questions, she never got the chance for her idea to fully come to fruition.

But, they do have a chance to continue what they enjoy. Schutze said one ultimate goal of theirs is to improve the communication between wildlife biologists and the rest of the cat community, especially if human-wildlife interactions continue to increase.

"There is a definite rift there," Schutze said. "I'd like to be able to bridge that gap because the two of them need to communicate so we can make sure cats are safe and wildlife are safe."



A map of locations in Missoula where Christopher Hansen detected cats on wildlife cameras. Roughly 1,300 cat detections were confirmed on his cameras, with approximately 70% of suburban sites, in the study occupied by cats. **CONTRIBUTED | CHRISTOPHER HANSEN**

Pacific Islander Club's winter Pacific tour finds ohana

KAIRI LISING

kairi.lising@umontana.edu

The Pacific Islander Club went on its annual winter Pacific tour to learn more about Hawaiian culture, but found a different feeling: ohana. The concept of the Hawaiian term ohana involves creating loving relationships with more than just blood relatives.

Isaac La'a, club executive and University of Montana alumnus from Nānākuli, Hawaii, started doing the annual tour in 2019 with a goal in mind.

"We take the students back to learn about the songs that we teach so that they can have a better understanding of what the song is about and where the song and dances actually come from," La'a said.

The club holds a hula class every weekend, teaching members hula songs and dances. Every year, the club spends two weeks in Hawaii during winter break, going from the Big Island to Oahu to Maui. La'a plans the trip and programs the itinerary to hit all the historical sites like Iolani Palace, the Polynesian Cultural Center and Haleakalā National Park.

Haleakalā means "house of the sun" in Hawaiian and the national park is known for its spectacular sunrises. La'a took the club to hike up to one of Haleakalā's lookouts, starting at 3:30 a.m. so members could see the sunrise.

"One of the exciting parts was seeing the sunrise," La'a said. "The sun appeared and we chanted with other local people who were up there too."

On the club's way down the mountain, they ran into an old friend.

"This one uncle that we met two years ago at Flathead at a different event met us at the bottom unexpectedly," La'a said. "He took us to the beach where he put us in a canoe."

The group paddled out far enough to only see a little bit of the shore. He faced the group to the sun, then pointed.

"He made everybody open up and pour their hearts out," La'a said. "Whatever was on their mind, could have been negative, good, anything. He just wanted the sun to hear it. Everyone was crying. And the best part was we started up with the rising of the sun and ended at the setting of the sun."

Straying from the carefully planned itinerary, the club spent the whole day out on the water.



KA'AUMOANA AHINA | CONTRIBUTED

Shien Medrano, the senior club executive from Manila, Philippines, felt ohana in those moments.

"I'm also far away from my family in the Philippines," Medrano said. "I am not a Pacific Islander, but the moment I came there I felt like I belonged. I felt welcome and they didn't treat me as if I was a stranger, but rather like a family member."

A boat retrieved the group, but Medrano struggled to get into it.

"I don't know how to paddle," Medrano said. "I don't even know how to get on the boat. But when we start paddling or when I know that they have me, they'll help me out the same way I'd do for them."

The trip was supported by donations and out of students' pockets, but in Hawaii, old friends and alumni hosted the students overnight and cooked for them. The club executives plan to keep the winter tour going as long as possible, even past their

graduation, because of how much they've learned.

Medrano appreciates the new lens of learning she's developed from going on the tour.

"I don't think tourists really realize that as much because they come there, take their picture and go and don't really learn about the people or the land that has been there for years and years," she said.



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Montana punk band means business: Invest in Bull Market

KATE WIDMER

kate.widmer@umontana.edu

Bull Market's investment seminars often begin with Phil Griffin, the firm's front-man, tossing a roll of toilet paper into the crowd. He does this so attendees can ball up the tissue and shove it in their ears as makeshift earplugs. Longtime investors, their fans' nickname, know that's not necessarily an act of kindness so much as it's a warning.

Hailing from Billings, Montana, Bull Market is a three-piece investment firm that also happens to make ragged punk music. Employees include the aforementioned head-honcho Griffin, Nels Jensen (middle school history teacher by day, local legend drummer by night), and Stephen Redmund, the firm's intern/bass player.

They've achieved an impressive local following for their inventive, simple-yet-effective discography, and for their mind-shattering live performances, including last weekend's Daisy Chain show at VFW 209. If you've been lucky enough to attend one of the firm's seminars, then

you'd know that you're not in for a typical punk show — Bull Market takes the stage dressed like characters out of a Dilbert comic strip and proceeds to bring the entire house down, sometimes even literally (RIP DIY Venue Squish).

The firm's sophomore album "work weak", released this past June, might not capture all of the batshit insanity that tends to characterize their shows, but it does capture the ingenuity that gave Bull Market its reputation in the first place: The firm's sound is largely characterized by throbbing, discordant riffs and build-ups/stop-starts that keep your adrenaline at level 13/10, while their lyrics wax poetic on the various miseries found in living the Ameri-corporate life. Nothing they've released so far epitomizes that better than "work weak."

"I feel like [Jensen] and I were trying to write slower songs... and we were like 'hey this song sounds like Monday,'" Griffin said. "Just like, dragging and like, boring. Yeah, so we just kind of went with that. And we were like, well, what if we just wrote a song for every day of the week and we're always punning shit, so like, 'work weak.'"

Following the release of "work weak," the band went on a summer tour, winding across Montana into Idaho, Washington, Oregon and back again. Touring has been an important part of Bull Market's universe for a while.

"Performing is kind of like, weirdly important to my mental health," Griffin said. "I just have parts of me that are kind of crazy... just, like, being able to scream at people is really nice. And also, in a way that's not totally negative. It's like, just kind of energy, like, flowing, and yeah, so it's bad for me when I don't perform."

The tour was an ambitious undertaking for the firm, but a rewarding one.

"We had a really chill tour, like our most relaxed tour. So there's not really any crazy stories," Griffin said. "We were actually really well prepared."

Griffin said touring, combined with the fact that Bull Market has been around for more than a decade, has also allowed the band to become a huge inspiration for other local bands through the years, given that its one of the only bands that was making the trek throughout Montana in the 2010s.

"It's kind of surreal — I was in school



Bull Market at American Legion on June 24, 2023.

DONAL LAKATUA | CONTRIBUTED

in Missoula going to shows and I wanted to be a cool band in that scene," Griffin said. "Now that we have something of a following there, it's kind of crazy! It's rewarding to see our persistence 'pay off,' haha, money pun."

Bull Market's complete package is available for purchase on Bandcamp and is available on all streaming services! Pursue profit! INVEST!

Bringing new life to an old classic

KEELY PROEBSTEL

keely.proebstel@umontana.edu

Staging "A Midsummer Night's Dream," a nearly 500-year-old play, for a modern audience has its challenges, especially without changing the original dialogue. The University of Montana's School of Theatre and Dance circumvents these challenges in compelling, innovative ways.

The production makes ample use of the Montana Theatre's technological capabilities, utilizing a projection system to cast back-grounds onto the stage. The costuming is fresh and interesting; the wardrobe for the human characters gives late 1800s and early 1900s vibes with a modern twist, and the fairy costumes feel timeless and whimsical.

The strengths of the play are twofold, first in the talented performers. The entire cast nails the comedic timing of the play, sometimes verging on outright slapstick, yet still packs

an emotional punch in more dramatic scenes. Several of the actors also provide live music for the production, with a mandolin player, two guitarists, a cellist and several accomplished singers.

That music is the other strength of the production. The songs for the play are original pieces composed by Mark Plonsky, UM's adjunct professor of dance, for Director Bernadette Sweeney's production.

Plonsky said the text of "A Midsummer Night's Dream," which includes characters who are not bound by "laws of the natural world," inspired the way he formatted the songs.

"The style of the compositions evolved along with the production's development in rehearsal..." Plonsky said. "As the show developed, it was clear that the magic evoked by the music would need to be in the realm of the darker arts... songs that reflected the beauty and balance of the natural world, but also hinted at the discord, chaos and tension that's

a part of it as well."

The music was specifically written for the cast with their skills and musical aptitudes in mind. The result is a production that feels classic and new at the same time.

"I couldn't be more proud of how they brought the music I wrote to life," Plonsky said.

"A Midsummer Night's Dream" runs at the Montana Theatre Feb. 22 to Feb. 25. Performances start at 7:30 p.m. Thursday to Saturday and at 2 p.m. on Sunday. Tickets are available online at GrizTix.

Audrey Stenhouse plays the cello during "A Midsummer Night's Dream" rehearsal on Feb. 14 at the University of Montana. The Shakespeare classic, accompanied by live music, runs through this weekend at the Montana Theatre.

RENNA AL-HAJ | MONTANA KAIMIN



Lady Griz best Bobcats 72-50 with hot three-point shooting

HOLLY MALKOWSKI
holly.malkowski@umontana.edu

The Lady Griz jumped out to an early lead and could not be stopped in the first Cat-Griz matchup on Feb. 17, winning 72-50 and securing third place in the Big Sky Conference.

The Montana State University Bobcats traveled to Missoula on Saturday for the double-header men's and women's Cat-Griz basketball matchups. Before the contest, the Lady Griz and the Bobcats were tied for third. Last month, the Bobcats women's team defended their home turf and took down the Lady Griz 64-55.

The win put the Lady Griz ahead of the Bobcats in the standings with a 9-4 conference record, besting the Bobcats's 8-5 record. The MSU women's team is 14-12 overall and Montana is 17-7. The Bobcats are now on a two-game losing streak, while Montana is on a two-game winning streak.

"More than anything, for us it's to continue to play the right way. That's what we focus on all the time," head coach Brian Holsinger said in a Griz Athletics press release. "We feel like from top to bottom, we have enough talent to be successful if we do the right things."

In front of a crowd of 3,955 fans from both rival schools, the Lady Griz were able to fend off the Bobcats on Robin Selvig Court. The crowd was ecstatic for the matchup and led by the Zoo Crew, the Montana student section leaders.

The night before the game, the University of Montana hosted a bonfire and pep rally to kick off the weekend. The game was a maroon-out and featured free Lady Griz t-shirts and face paint for students.

The Lady Griz has relied on its three-point shooting abilities all season, and it typically worked out in the team's favor. Going into the game against the Bobcats, Montana led the Big Sky Conference in three-pointers, with 253 on the year. When the team is hitting its shots, it seems to be unstoppable. The games where it hasn't been so hot shooting, though, have been tough, like its recent loss to Northern Arizona University, where Montana only put up 60 points. Montana held a commanding lead in the first half of its last contest with MSU, but only made five three-pointers in the second half, which led to the nine-point loss.

But the team did not stop shooting threes in the Saturday matchup, making 14 three-pointers out of 27 attempts. The team shot .519 from the three-point line, making over half of the threes it shot. MSU shot .308 from the three-point line and .385 overall, which wasn't enough to catch up to Montana's scoring.

The rivalry matchup in Missoula started out with a strong Montana team, draining three

"Once our offense is moving and all five of us are touching the ball and we're getting into the flow of the game, it's really fun."

- Gina Marxen

three-pointers to take an 11-2 lead after four minutes when Montana State took its first timeout. Dani Bartsch started the game with the first three and was followed by two more by Gina Marxen. The Bobcats fought back from the deficit and chipped at Montana's lead throughout the first. After one quarter, Montana was up 19-13.

The second quarter started out much the same for the Lady Griz, and it pulled ahead to a 29-13 lead that forced Montana State to take its second timeout of the game. The Bobcats were unable to score for the first four minutes of the second quarter. At halftime, Montana was leading 38-29.

After halftime with a Griz Cheer performance and a showing from a local dance studio, Studio M, Montana came out swinging with a three-pointer right away from Carmen Gfeller, which set the tone for the rest of the half. At the end of the third, the Grizzlies were pulling away, 56-38.

Montana kept the lead throughout the contest and won 72-50.

Mack Konig, Bartsch and Marxen led Montana to victory with 14 points apiece. Montana shot 54% in the first half and 43% in the second. MSU shot 44.8% in the first half, but dropped off to only 30% in the second. Marah Dykstra led the Bobcats with 13 points and nine rebounds, closely followed by Taylor Janssen adding 10 points.

"Once our offense is moving and all five of us are touching the ball and we're getting into the flow of the game, it's really fun," Marxen said in a press release after the game.

The Lady Griz go on the road now to face Sacramento State on Feb. 22 and Portland State on Feb. 24 before coming home to play Eastern Washington on Feb. 29.

Gina Marxen, a fifth year guard for the University of Montana Lady Griz, absorbs contact in an attempt to draw a foul on a lay up. Marxen scored 14 points during the Lady Griz's 72-50 victory at Dahlberg Arena on Feb. 17. **WALKER MCDONALD | MONTANA KAIMIN**



Grizzlies dunk their way to victory over Montana State Bobcats

SOPHIA WARD

sophia.ward@umontana.edu

The Brawl of the Wild is a beloved rivalry game in Montana. This matchup between the University of Montana and Montana State University is the fifth most-played college rivalry game in the country with 307 matchups. The Bobcats traveled to Missoula on Saturday to take on the Griz men's basketball team in Dahlberg Arena.

This Brawl of the Wild was more personal for Montana's head coach Travis DeCuire and Montana State's head coach Matt Logie. They have known each other for a while; DeCuire played basketball in high school and Logie's grandfather was his coach.

Last year, the Grizzlies didn't take any wins against the Bobcats during the season, but this year it's different. The men's team have taken back-to-back wins in Bozeman and now in Missoula this season.

Though this was a good matchup this season, the lineups for each team were completely different. The Bobcats are a younger team, with most players only having one Brawl of the Wild experience last month in Bozeman. On the contrary, Montana's starting lineup consisted of seasoned Grizzlies.

All five starters for Montana will be done after this year, leaving the team with a whole different lineup against Montana State next season. The Bobcats only have two starters that are seniors this year.

The game started out close, with both teams battling out buckets. The Bobcats scored first, but the Grizzlies answered back, going shot-for-shot.

The Bobcats had great shots from Tyler Patterson, making back-to-back three-point shots, and added threes from Robert Ford III and Sam Lecholot. MSU went 40% from behind the line. But that wasn't enough to beat the Grizzlies' five three-point makes. Josh Vazquez had three three-pointers alongside Dischon Thomas, Aanen Moody and Jaxon Nap. UM went 41.7% on deep shots.

The Grizzlies' offense was just getting started in the first half, with Thomas making five out of seven attempted shots. Laolu Oke led the team with eight total rebounds in the first half. Montana really stepped out with Vazquez stealing the ball from MSU. He drove the ball down the court, finding Oke open for his first slam dunk of the night. A little over a minute later, Montana regained possession of the ball. Moody drove the ball back down the court, finding Thomas to seal yet another slam dunk.

Thomas had possession of the ball and



Montana forward Laolu Oke drives the ball down the court as the defender tries to draw a charge in the men's Brawl of the Wild game on Feb. 17. Oke scored 10 points and played for 26 minutes. **AVA ROSVOLD | MONTANA KAIMIN**

found Moody. Moody drove under the net, making a reverse layup to secure his 1500th career point. Nap got the final rebound of the first quarter and ran it to the other side, finishing off the quarter with a three-point shot. The first half finished with UM up 40-30.

Going into the second half only up by ten, the Grizzlies knew it had to extend its lead or the Bobcats would claw its way back. Montana State able to go bucket-for-bucket with the Montana at the beginning of the second half.

Montana State came out scoring first off of free throws, but Moody responded with a three-point shot from the corner. Montana had two back-to-back three-point shots from Moody and Vazquez drilling in another deep shot from the corner.

The Grizzlies kept the net hot all night. Brandon Whitney stole the ball from the Bobcats and drove down the court to see Oke. Oke slammed the ball into the net, securing his second dunk of the night. From there on, the Bobcats fell asleep on the court while the Grizzlies kept it on fire.

Vazquez blocked a shot from MSU, keeping UM 17 points ahead. Thomas got another double-double this game with 10 rebounds and 20 points. UM had multiple starters with double-digit points. Moody led the way with 29 points alongside Vazquez with 15 and Oke with 10. Whitney was close to getting double digits with 9 points and 7 assists.

Montana finished this game with an 88-69 win, getting its sixth season sweep against Montana State in the last 10 sea-

sons. Both the Grizzlies and the Lady Griz swept the Bobcats with both the men's and women's teams pulling through with a win.

After the Grizzlies' win on Saturday, the team is fourth in the Big Sky Conference standings and is looking to improve in the last couple games in the season. The Grizzlies are going into its next game with a two-game win streak.

Montana has three back-to-back home games including Saturday's Brawl of the Wild. Its next game is against Sacramento State on Thursday, Feb. 22 at 7:00 p.m., and the men's team is looking to jump on the home-court advantage against Portland State on Saturday, Feb. 24 at 7:00 p.m. after losing to them last month. The Grizzlies only have five games left in the season before the Big Sky Conference Tournament.

Cat-Griz weekend rallies up the crowd

WORDS BY WALKER MCDONALD
walker.mcdonald@umontana.edu

On Feb. 16, students, alumni, faculty and people from all around the University of Montana community gathered on the Oval to hype up everyone's Grizzly spirit in preparation for the double-header rivalry basketball games against the Montana State University Bobcats.

The 2024 Winter Pep Rally kicked off with the lighting of a bonfire by the UM Zoo Crew, followed by speeches from both the Lady Griz and Grizzlies men's basketball teams. After warming their bones beside the fire, attendees looked up as fireworks lit the night sky, marking an end to the celebration.

The Lady Griz set the tone for the Brawl of the Wild with a 72-50 victory over Montana State on Feb. 17. After a sluggish first half, the Lady Griz turned its game up a notch, only allowing 21 points in the second half and finishing the game with 14 made three pointers.

Riding off of the momentum from the Lady Griz's victory, the Grizzlies faced a close battle in the first half of play, going into halftime up eight points. Senior guard for the Grizzlies, Aanen Moody, helped the team pull away in the second half and finished the game with 29 points, his second highest scoring game of his career. The Grizzlies sealed the sweep with an 88-69 point victory over the Bobcats.

RIGHT: Fireworks shoot high into the dark sky on Feb. 16 during the UM Winter Pep Rally. The fireworks marked the end of a celebration and began the anticipation for the upcoming rivalry games between the men's and women's basketball teams from UM and MSU.

WALKER MCDONALD | MONTANA KAIMIN



People huddle around a roaring bonfire on the Oval on Feb. 16 during the Winter Pep Rally. The pep rally was held to boost support for the upcoming Cat-Griz basketball games and included speeches from both the men's and women's basketball teams. WALKER MCDONALD | MONTANA KAIMIN



UM Spirit Squad and Zoo Crew members chant "Go Griz" during the men's Cat-Griz game on Feb 17. The maroon-clad student section was prevented from rushing the court with string barriers when the Grizzlies won against the Cats 88-69. AVA ROSVOLD | MONTANA KAIMIN