

MONTANA KAIMIN



LEAVING IT ALL ON THE FIELD

AFTER ANNOUNCING
HIS RESIGNATION FROM
OFFICE, UNIVERSITY OF
MONTANA PRESIDENT
SETH BODNAR
REFLECTS ON EIGHT
YEARS OF LEADING UM

STORY BY ELLE DANIEL | COVER PHOTO BY HENRY DOELLINGER

7 HORsing AROUND

12 HERE FOR BEER

15 MIDSEASON CHECK-IN

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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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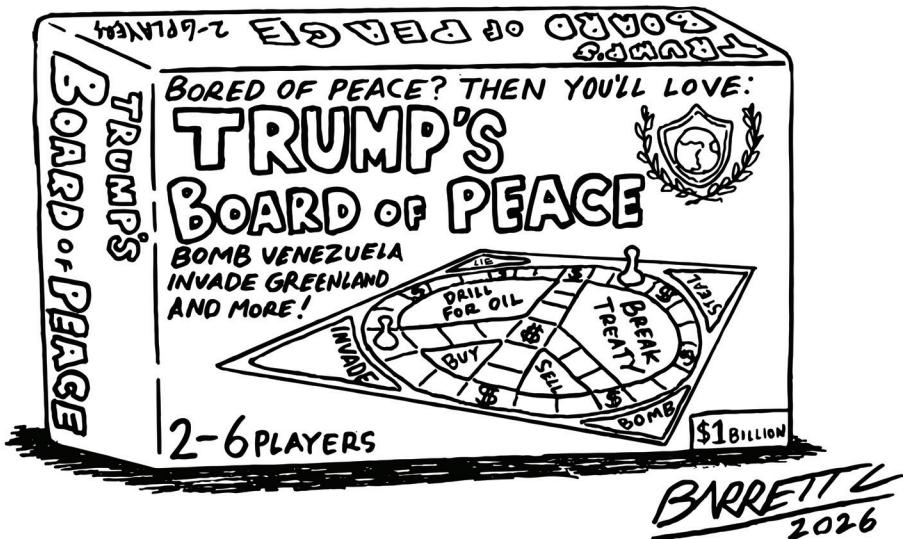
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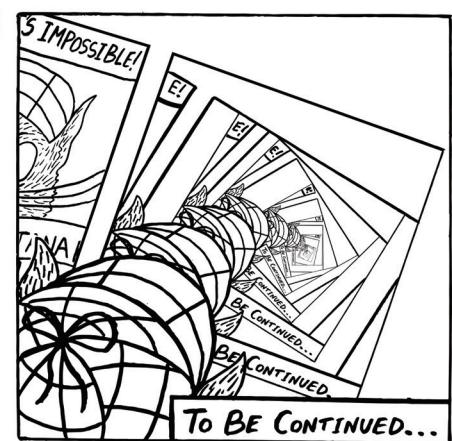
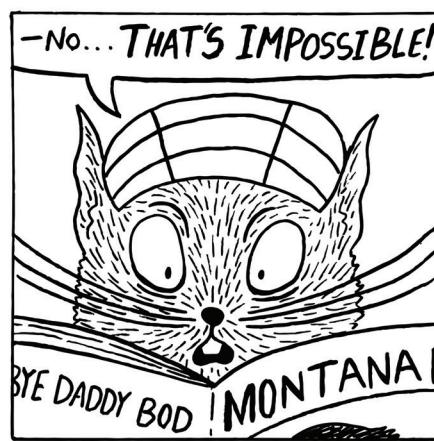
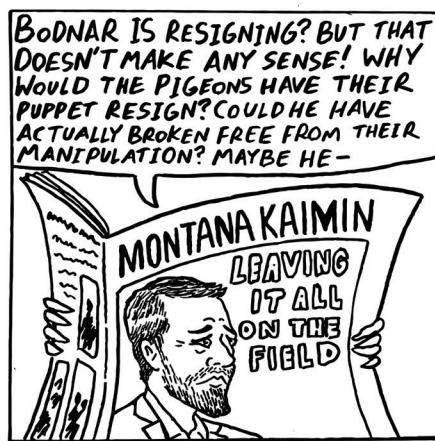
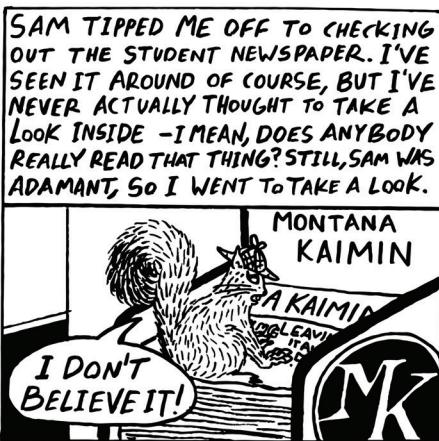
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POLITICAL CARTOON



DETECTIVE SQUIRREL: SE 3 EP 7



BARRETT CLEMENT | CARTOONIST @FUNNYFERRETSTUDIOS



Don't throw away your hard-earned cash

As Americans prepare for the Super Bowl on Feb. 8, online gambling sites, such as FanDuel and DraftKings, see a spike in activity.

According to a 2024 article by PBS, cybersecurity company GeoComply recorded more than 1.7 million new users signing up for betting accounts in the two weeks leading up to the big game.

But gambling isn't just a way to potentially double your money. It can cause serious problems to those at risk of becoming addicted or cause harm to the athletes involved.

FanDuel, a popular online gambling company, reported that it took more than 14 million bets totaling \$307 million during the 2025 Super Bowl, setting new records for the site.

During last year's Super Bowl between the Kansas City Chiefs and the Philadelphia Eagles, fans gambled \$1.39 million in online bets. The American Gambling Association estimated that around one in four Americans bet on some aspect of the game.

However, the act of betting isn't just restricted to sports. The Golden Globes

included betting odds throughout the show on Jan. 11, something that no award show has ever done before.

There are sites that allow users to bet on if America will invade Greenland or if there's going to be a streaker at the upcoming Super Bowl game.

Gambling isn't something new. As someone who watches sporting events, I'm used to seeing live betting odds on my screen. I use them when I'm watching the game to predict who has the best chance of winning.

A 2025 survey by the University of Bristol in England analyzed 29 hours of Premier League football games from Aug. 15 to 18. During that time, over 27,440 messages were visible through logos, jerseys, interview backdrops and stadium signage. According to the survey, that averaged out to roughly 22 gambling advertisements a minute.

When I was younger, I remember gambling fake coins in an online game to get a new character or weapon, and I quickly became addicted to it.

I remember the rush of adrenaline I would get when I saw a flash of pink or

purple on my screen, meaning I got a high ranking character. It was exhilarating.

As I watched sports and saw the betting odds on the screen or was bombarded with ads talking about how much money you could make if you gambled, I couldn't wait to turn 18 and make my own wagers.

But, I quickly learned the repercussions that betting could have on someone's life.

In a 2024 study published by the National Library of Medicine, suicide was the leading cause of death in those with gambling addictions.

But it's not just the ones placing the bets that are feeling the effects of gambling, it's also a burden on the athletes being bet on.

Out of 780 Major League Baseball players, 78% said online betting changed the way that they or their teammates have been treated by fans. Some players' families have even experienced being targeted with death threats over lost bets or parlays, groups of multiple bets.

"I personally hate gambling. Hate everyone talking about parlays this, parlays that. I hate getting [direct messages] in my Instagram talking about, 'You fucked up my parlay.' I hate people sending me threats because I messed up their parlay," an anonymous National Basketball Association player told the Athletic.

Other athletes have reported getting Venmo requests from fans that lost a bet during a game.

While it's hard to look away from the act of betting when you're constantly being fed images of people winning, it's important to remember that it's a very addictive activity.

According to the organization Responsible Gambling, gambling releases dopamine, which is responsible for triggering feelings of happiness. But it doesn't just release this when you win at gambling – it also releases when you lose, making it even harder to recognize when it's time to step away.

It's easy for all of us to think we can just place one bet and walk away. It's something that all bettors want to believe. I used that logic so often when I was playing my video game.

If you still want to bet on the upcoming game, make sure to bet responsibly and don't bet money that you don't have. Don't let gambling steal your money – or your happiness.

- Hannah Benitez, sports editor

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Honoring Alex Pretti



Courteney Smith places flowers at a memorial for Alex Pretti, near the Beartracks Bridge in Missoula, on Jan. 25.
WESTON FUDGE | MONTANA KAIMIN

SUDOKU

Difficulty: Easy

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

Edited by Margie E. Burke

HOW TO SOLVE:

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

Answer to Previous Sudoku:

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

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In local news...

JACK SNOW | NEWS EDITOR

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MARIJUANA DISPENSARIES FACE POTENTIAL LOCATION LIMITS

Marijuana dispensaries may be subject to new zoning laws in Missoula following a proposed amendment which was approved by the City Council on Jan. 21.

The potential change would require dispensaries to be located more than 1,000 feet from each other, churches, schools and various government facilities, according to Montana Free Press.

Existing dispensaries will not be changed by the amendment, but any future buildings would have to abide by the rule, creating a possible change over time for Missoula businesses.

Previous zoning laws required a buffer of 500 feet, but certain City Council Members said they felt it was inadequate.

The amendment was proposed by Council Member Gwen Jones due to concerns about youth marijuana use and the number of dispensaries present in Missoula.

"Absolutely these businesses can be here, but where they are is pretty crucial, and we can start drawing some lines," Jones said.

MISSOULA ECONOMIC PARTNERSHIP CARRIES ON WITH CITY REDEVELOPMENT

The Missoula Economic Partnership plans to continue redeveloping several areas of the city in the new year.

Two weeks ago the organization was approved to receive \$50,000 by the Missoula Redevelopment Agency's board of commissioners, according to the Missoula Current.

Mike Nugent, a City Council member and the city's liaison on Missoula Redevelopment Agency's board, explained the benefits of the decision. "This contract allows the city to achieve

some things that we otherwise could not do," he said.

These things include several of the city's goals, such as a plan to redevelop 13 acres of land near Southgate Mall.

Missoula Economic Partnership economic development director Julie Lacey detailed the partnership's contribution to the redevelopment plans.

"Our role in these last two months has been to help stakeholder engagement, partner engagement, help the city work communications and other public engagement aspects of the project," she said. "It's really ensuring the goals of the project — that housing and the park — can be delivered."

MONTANA OFFICIALS REACT TO MINNESOTA ICE SHOOTING

Several of Montana's Government officials have issued statements in response to the death of Alex Petti at the hands of Immigration and Customs Enforcement on Jan. 24.

The event sparked heated political debate across the nation. Montana lawmakers weighed in with their own opinions, according to NBC Montana.

"Law enforcement officials published a photo showing the suspect was carrying a loaded gun with an extra magazine," wrote Sen. Tim Sheehy. "I strongly urge Tim Walz and other Minnesota politicians to turn the temperature down and stop encouraging violent riots."

Across the aisle, the Montana Democratic Party released the following statement:

"The Montana Democratic Party is outraged and horrified by the news that ICE shot and killed Minneapolis resident Alex Petti. Our hearts go out to Petti's family, friends and all those mourning this tragic loss. The repeated violence committed by this administration is unacceptable and needs to stop now. Get ICE and their inexperienced agents off the streets before more lives are needlessly lost."



REPUBLICAN CANDIDATE DROPS OUT OF MINNESOTA GOVERNORS RACE

Minnesota Republican candidate Chris Madel announced that he was leaving the governor's race on Monday due to recent Republican immigration enforcement actions.

"I cannot support the national Republicans' stated retribution on the citizens of our state, nor can I count myself a member of a party that would do so," Madel said.

He went on to say that national Republicans have made it hard for a conservative candidate to win, according to NBC.

Madel also pointed out that he initially supported ICE's goals in his state, but that he believes its operation has "expanded far beyond its stated focus."

WINTER STORM CAUSES FATALITIES IN LOUISIANA, MISSISSIPPI

Three Louisianans and two Mississippians lost their lives last weekend due to extreme weather conditions in both states.

The winter storm responsible has caused havoc across the U.S., but has proved especially devastating to some southern states, according to NBC. Louisiana and Mississippi experienced major power outages and some of the highest ice reports in the country.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency has been working to distribute fuel and generators across Mississippi, but the storm has slowed its efforts. "Weather hazards, debris and road conditions are making it difficult to restore power," stated Gov. Tate Reeves in a Sunday news briefing.

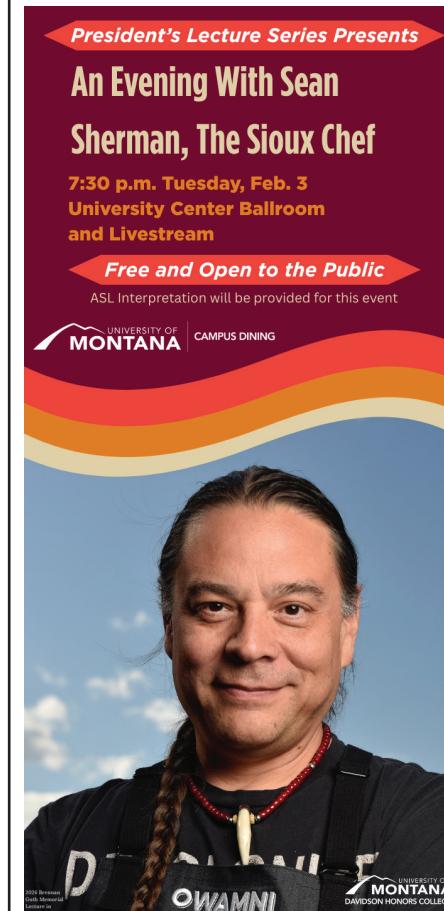
IRAN WARNS OF RETALIATION AS US WARSHIPS APPROACH

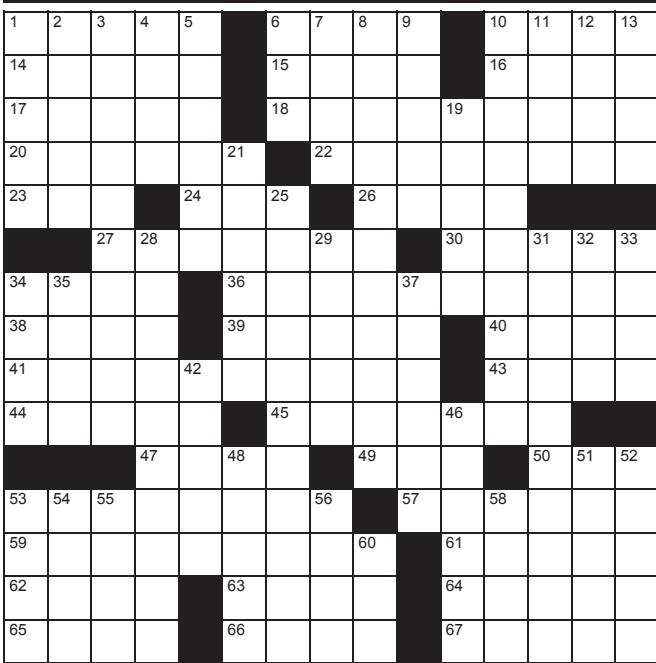
Tehran and Iranian allies have stated a willingness to respond violently to a potential strike as U.S. aircraft carriers move toward the Persian Gulf.

The warnings come following an announcement given by President Trump last Thursday, where he stated that he was sending a large naval force into the area, according to the New York Times.

"Our response will be more decisive and more painful than before if we become the target of a U.S.-Zionist attack," said Reza Talaei-Nik, Iran's defense ministry spokesman.

Middle Eastern government officials are worried about the possibility of a U.S. strike against Iran in the near future and the conflict it might spark.





ACROSS

1 Judgment payout
6 "What the ___!"
10 "Dude..."
14 Lowest point
15 Soon, to a bard
16 Stairstep measure
17 Fleetwood RV line
18 Now and then
20 Bering, for one
22 Those going 80, say
23 Kyoto currency
24 "Lilies of the Field" character
26 Designer Cassini
27 Shellfish dish
30 Bocelli, for one
34 Brown bird
36 Gift-wrapper's need
38 Tear apart
39 River in Hades
40 Place for a roast
41 Like some parties
43 Riesling, for one
44 Puccini opera
45 Rising sky-high
47 Taylor of "American Crime"
49 A.T.M. need
50 Fly ball's path
53 "See you then!"
57 Hostage taker
59 Bluffing game
61 Easily duped
62 Suffix with leather or lay
63 2023 Oscar winner Michelle
64 Middling poker pair
65 Pigeon-__

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66 Taxpayers' IDs
67 Uneasy state
29 State-run game
31 Plotting, as a course
32 Pop the cork
33 Fiona on TV's "Tracker"
34 Order in the court
35 City near Sparks
37 Comic dubbed 'the Entertainer'
42 Speakeasy risks
46 Canadian actress Sarkis
48 ___ mantle
51 Wanders
52 Colgate alternative
53 "Why should ___ you?"
54 Jackson 5 member
55 Fill beyond full
56 Course for bus. majors
58 Liniment target
60 "Say what?" sounds
28 No Clue

Answers to Previous Crossword:

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

Electr-o-scope

BLUE ROGALSKI | ARTS & CULTURE REPORTER
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For the accident-prone, electrical appliances can be a sticky obstacle to navigate, with the threat of electrocution lurking around every corner of the home and world beyond. If you were (or are) one of these unfortunate people at risk of electrocution, this is how I think it would go down.

AQUARIUS (JAN. 20-FEB. 18):

As a creative soul, it's only fitting that you would fall victim during your latest and greatest artistic venture. So wrapped up in your vision, you don't notice the sparkling set lights illuminating your avantgarde photoshoot.

PISCES (FEB. 19-MARCH 20):

New taser, who dis? You're a sensitive soul who likes to have protection from the harsh world around you. However, there's a learning curve to using these things. Maybe try aiming next time? And not at yourself.

ARIES (MARCH 21-APRIL 19):

You're definitely a risk taker and always down to take on sometimes stupid challenge. On a dare, you touch the third rail on the New York City subway and find out it really is all it's cracked up to be.

TAURUS (APRIL 20-MAY 20):

As one of the earthiest earth signs, you love your outdoor time and some prized thrifited finds. You use your vintage (and somewhat performative in the fishing community) metal fishing rod and accidentally cast it over a nearby power line, instantly exposing you to an electrical current.

GEMINI (MAY 21-JUNE 20):

You two-faced prankster! Messing with your friends using one of those electric hand shakers isn't as funny as you think it is. Unfortunately for you, you put it on backwards and end up shocking yourself as an unfortunate cycle of karmic payback.

CANCER (JUNE 21-JULY 22):

As a wet, wet water sign, you get in touch with nature by going for a nighttime swim. Unbeknownst to you, you're swimming in the home of an electric eel. I'm sorry to say Cancer, you're not Ariel.

LEO (JULY 23-AUG. 22):

Always looking glamorous, you reach for a hairdryer before a spicy night out, when disaster strikes and the electrical current comes in contact with your wet hair. Next time you might opt for air-drying, but probably not, because sometimes beauty is a little fried hair.

VIRGO (AUG. 23-SEP. 22):

As a Virgo, you would be far too smart and way too lucky to put yourself in harm's way of electrocution. The only electricity you're at risk of is static from your smarty pants wool sweaters, ya nerd.

LIBRA (SEP. 23-OCT. 22):

As a certified neat freak, you need everything to be spotless, including the toaster. In a fit of frustration, you find yourself digging in a plugged-in toaster with a butter knife trying to rid it of all its burnt crumbs, with an all-too-late realization this might not be the best idea.

BARRETT CLEMENT | MONTANA KAIMIN

SCORPIO (OCT. 23-NOV. 21): You're so magnetic even lightning is attracted to you. In

the rare event that lightning travels through the wiring in your home, I'm sorry Scorpio. You're a goner. Stop, drop and roll can't save you here.

SAGITTARIUS (NOV. 22-DEC. 21):

You straight-up stick a fork into a socket out of curiosity. Classic. We've all been there. Actually? No. No one does that. What did you think would happen?

CAPRICORN (DEC. 22-JAN. 19):

As a down to earth, practical person, you take pride in maintaining your home. You start repairing a wall socket when you get electrocuted. Flopping around on the floor like a fish is where paramedics will find you.

The Poverello Center and Missoula Interfaith Collaborative help homeless from freezing temperatures

SAMUEL ARMSTRONG-DUBOIS | NEWS REPORTER
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The Missoula Interfaith Collaborative and Poverello Center raised \$20,000 in funds to help individuals experiencing homelessness.

With winter temperatures fluctuating, housing shelters see an influx of people, resulting in a need for partnerships across Missoula to develop additional space. Partnerships between the Interfaith Collaborative and the Poverello Center, which grants housing to homeless people, and eight other corporations opened up space for people experiencing housing insecurity. The program runs from November through March, using congregation centers as overflow housing when temperatures feel like 10 degrees or below.

Casey Dunning, executive director of the

Interfaith Collaborative, developed the idea of joining religious communities together to generate help while studying social work as a graduate student at the University of Montana.

"One of the advantages, or good things about this, is it's using existing space in congregations that have the heart or mission to make this happen," Dunning said.

The collaborative also partnered with nonprofits like the Poverello and the Montana Food Bank Network. Their funding supports the price of paying for overnight staff and administrative costs. "The budget has gotten \$10,000 from the county and \$10,000 from the city, which is covering the cost," Dunning said.

Beckett Redinger, communications coordinator at the Poverello, explained that the cooperation with the Interfaith Collaborative has been ongoing since last year.

"The Interfaith Collaborative stepped up

last year as the Johnson Street shelter was at capacity," Redinger said.

Finding shelter for homeless people is one issue, but there are other factors that add complexity to the program. Last week, Missoula experienced temperatures of 50 degrees. As temperatures rise, housing policies that are dependent on temperature rather than time of year could get convoluted.

"I don't know what the future looks like for those policies as climate change progresses," Redinger said.

The Poverello Center tries to house as many people as possible during the winter, which is why it is expanding to the Clark Fork housing project. Through its Housing Montana Heroes program, the Poverello Center aims for the housing to be apartment-style with private kitchens and bathrooms.

Currently, the Poverello Center has shared bathrooms and shared kitchens. It is designing

the new building to open more space in the Poverello Center and grant a way to serve veterans with more privacy and dignity. Construction started in 2025, and it is hoping to open it up to 18 veterans in the fall.

Housing capacity is another problem it has run into, but mental and physical health play major roles in the dynamics of the shelter as well.

"Mental health is a major issue for the homeless we're trying to look into more," Redinger said. "It's a chicken-and-the-egg situation for if homelessness generates mental instability."

Bodily health also proves an issue. Two ambulances were parked outside the Poverello Center on Tuesday of last week. As a group of people huddled around the building, a person was wheeled out to the ambulance on a hospital bed. Howard Gillian, one of the people staying at the Poverello Center, sat in his car and was focused on a conversation with his friend like nothing was happening.

"Ambulances come in eight times a day, sometimes double ambulances," Gillian said. "Either someone is sick or they've gotten beaten up."

An aspect that is controllable is the sense of community homeless folks feel. The partnership with the Interfaith Collaborative opened opportunities for people to go out and share a night with each other.

Every other Thursday it holds a potluck, which is open to anyone to enjoy a meal and company. Last Thursday, the Interfaith Collaborative put on its first open mic night, at which people could get food and spend time listening to music.

The event was developed by Sarah Butts, Engagement and Communications Manager at the Interfaith Collaborative, who received her master's of social work at UM.

"We try to build a community of belonging for people to build connections," Butts said. "Life is lonely."

People gathered around the floor and took seats as Butts filled out a sheet for the open mic participants. Ages ranged from toddlers sliding across the floor, to older folks who wanted to kick back and listen. Sitting with a black bandana and cowboy hat was Carl Spitsbaucker, enjoying a slice of Domino's pepperoni pizza.

Spitsbaucker is currently homeless and often attends city council meetings and social events like the open mic night.

"People who are successful have a passion," Spitsbaucker said. "It's a graduated program where you slowly get better over time, just like playing guitar or harmonica."



Landon Greenough and Javona Clinkenbeard lay together under sleeping bags outside the Poverello Center on Jan. 23. **WILL LADYMAN | MONTANA KAIMIN**

Feral horses spark debate in Miller Creek

JOCELYN HOOD | NEWS REPORTER

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Feral horses roaming in the Miller Creek area have recently caused concern with residents over public safety and a debate over how the horses can, and should, be managed by local government.

The horses have been in the area for decades, but after one was hit by a car and had to be euthanized in September 2025, UM Equestrian Club sport president and 19-year-old senior Annabelle Davis, said started conversations on how to handle the horses.

"People took to Facebook to start talking about them and wanting them rounded up or just euthanized altogether," Davis said.

The horses are considered feral, not wild, because they are abandoned, meaning any government organization that has jurisdiction over wildlife can't interfere. Miller Creek resident and active voice on the topic Vanessa Fink said this is the biggest issue regarding the horses.

"There is nobody to take responsibility for them," Fink said. "So, when there's an altercation, or one gets hit by a car, or there's one that's sick or injured, there's nobody to call to help facilitate a positive outcome for them."

A meeting was held in December 2025 among various agencies that would be involved in the management of the horses to understand the challenges around the size of the herd, according to Chris Lounsbury, the Missoula County chief administrative officer and UM alum.

Lounsbury said the feral horses don't fall under federal jurisdiction, leaving the Board of County Commissioners and the Department of Livestock with authority over them under the terms "feral," "abandoned" and "estrays."

They are also not under the jurisdiction of the Bureau of Land Management, according to Lounsbury, because they are on private property.

One of the primary reasons why many want the horses to be managed is that they carry diseases.

"It ranges from equine influenza to much more deadly diseases, including equine piroplasmosis, which is basically a blood disease that is highly contagious and unfortunately, does not have any kind of treatment," Lounsbury said.

According to Fink, there are also issues with residents feeding the horses and a lack of education in schools in the area regarding interacting with the horses, both problems she hopes to see ordinances



A horse grazes the grass of a Miller Creek home on Jan. 22. Horses have been an increasing issue in the Miller Creek area. **WILL LADYMAN | MONTANA KAIMIN**



A horse walks across a road in the Miller Creek area on Jan. 22. **WILL LADYMAN | MONTANA KAIMIN**

about in the future.

"There are no ordinances," Fink said. "Like with deer, you're not allowed to feed them or pet them, but for some reason people feel that they can approach, pet and feed these horses, and it's just a matter of time before it implodes."

However, some think that the herd should just be left alone entirely.

"I think on a day to day, they're calm, they're peaceful, they're just living their lives," Davis said.

Davis saw the feral horses near her own barns once and said they just looked at the domesticated horses there and left peacefully.

She also said that if people followed speed limit laws, collisions with cars, like the one in September, may not be an issue.

"Horses are consistent animals," Davis said. "They like a routine, and they cross one of the roads around Miller Creek about the same time every morning, so I think it's just more of a problem of people. If they were going the posted speed limit, I don't think this would have happened."

According to Lounsbury, none of the management options discussed so far have been a full removal of the horses.

"We recognize, and I think all of the large landowners recognize, that there is aesthetic value and certainly community

sentiment around these horses," Lounsbury said.

However, a partial removal is on the table, including potentially rounding up some horses and selling them at auction.

Montana legal codes detail the ability of the Board of County Commissioners to authorize a roundup and auction of abandoned horses, and for stock inspectors with the Department of Livestock to do the same for stray horses.

These roundups have happened in the past, but Lounsbury said they've never "gone to a public auction that could result in some kind of sale where the horses would be destroyed."

Despite this, some residents, including Fink, are opposed to any kind of roundup.

"I really think that would be devastating for the community if that were to happen," Fink said.

Lounsbury said that another option that has been done in the past is taking some horses out for sterilization or birth control to limit the size of the herd.

No plans for the horses have been confirmed, but Lounsbury said the agencies involved in their management will invite the community to hear information about the situation and provide feedback in late February or early March.



UM President Seth Bodnar delivers pizza to the student section during the third quarter of a Griz football game against the Portland State Vikings on Nov. 16, 2024. The tradition was named "Pizza with the President" **MARLEY BARBOEISEL | MONTANA KAIMIN**

On the drive into campus on Wednesday, Jan. 21, Seth Bodnar felt a mix of emotions.

He felt grateful, first and foremost, but there was also a sense of anxiety and lingering uncertainty. Earlier that morning, he pressed send on an email forwarded to the entirety of the University of Montana, the last newsletter he'd ever send.

After eight years in Main Hall, Bodnar announced his plan to step down as the University of Montana president.

"I feel this University is like a family member to me, and I'm going to miss so many parts of it tremendously," Bodnar said.

Since he took office in 2018, UM has handled a bevy of challenges and successes, including weathering the COVID-19 pandemic, the chaotic turnover of federal presidential administrations and achieving the first consecutive climb in enrollment rates since 2011. As Bodnar looks toward the future, he's also looking back on what made his time at UM impactful and the things he'll miss most when he leaves it behind.

WHAT'S NEXT?

Bodnar has been quiet when it comes to sharing his plans for the future.

While Bodnar's priorities lie in shifting out of the office as smoothly as possible, leaked text messages hint at a potential campaign for Senate as an independent candidate.

The transition process for Bodnar, account to UM spokesperson Dave Kuntz, is undefined in part because of the abrupt nature of Bodnar's resignation.

Part of that accelerated process required transitioning Bodnar out of the office as quickly as possible.

"Really, my only focus is thinking about this University," Bodnar said. "My focus is just handing off my responsibilities here and ensuring a smooth transition, after that my wife and my family and I will think about what's next for us."

Recent events within the Montana political world hint at what might be next for Bodnar.

Weeks before his resignation, a leaked text message allegedly sent by former Democratic

LEAVING IT ALL ON THE FIELD

STORY BY ELLE DANIEL

AFTER ANNOUNCING HIS RESIGNATION FROM OFFICE, UNIVERSITY OF MONTANA PRESIDENT SETH BODNAR REFLECTS ON EIGHT YEARS OF LEADING UM

Sen. John Tester accused the Democratic party of “poisoning” his campaign against Republican Sen. Steve Daines. While it caused ripples within the Democratic party, another part of the message immediately caught the attention of the media.

The message hinted at a potential campaign for the Senate by Bodnar as an independent candidate. The Montana Free Press later reported an unnamed spokesperson for Bodnar confirmed his plan to run for the Senate, and accurately predicted his resignation.

When asked by the Kaimin about a possible upcoming campaign, or whether he’s considering moving into politics at all in the future, Bodnar didn’t confirm nor deny a potential Senate run.

In the meantime, the University of Montana continues its academic year while facing a new challenge — finding the next person to follow in Bodnar’s footsteps.

LEAVING MAIN HALL

For the foreseeable future, the UM executive team, composed of leaders from departments across campus, will continue following the 2026 academic affairs playbook, an outline for the year’s goals for student life, financial achievements and projects.

So while there may not be one distinct leader at the University in the foreseeable future, there is still a plan in place to guide

faculty, staff and the remaining administration for the rest of the academic year.

According to Kuntz, the Montana Commissioner of Higher Education, Clayton Christian, is prepared to step in to make executive decisions for the University if the need arises, but said he is not an official interim president.

Montana University System spokesperson Galen Hollenbaugh said the process would not look like the resignation of former Montana State University president, Waded Cruzado, who announced her plans to retire a full year in advance.

Hollenbaugh said last Friday that the MUS hopes to wrap up the process within the following few days, but did not give a clear

date or timeline for how quickly UM will transition Bodnar out or when his exact last day would be.

Bodnar said the executive team was part of why he felt comfortable to step away now. “We have solid momentum and a great leadership team to carry things forward,” he said. “That’s been becoming more and more clear to me over the past month.”

BUILDING MOMENTUM

When it comes to that momentum, Bodnar specifically cited increasing enrollment numbers at UM.

In 2018, when Bodnar first stepped into the role, retention rates and enrollment rates were down by 9.1%. But for the past four years, UM has seen a consecutive increase in enrollment numbers.

In 2024, retention rates were up by 9%, meaning a record 77% of students finished their first year of college and continued onto their second.

The University also saw an increase in veterans, first generation and Native American students between the Spring 2024 and 2025 semesters.

Timothy Nichols, Davidson Honors College dean, echoed Bodnar's sentiment. Nichols said during Bodnar's time in office, enrollment at the DHC increased from roughly 700 students to 1,200. "Our honors enrollment has really flourished during his presidency," Nichols said. "He's advocated for us with donors and helped to bring in private gifts to support student scholarships."

While enrollment numbers for spring 2026 have yet to be announced, Bodnar said the applications coming in for the fall semester looked strong. He said he felt good about the direction UM is headed in, especially with improving enrollment marketing and student outreach.

"We're going to start seeing some of the benefits from that in this fall's class," he said. "The next president will get to celebrate those wins, which is great for her or for him. I'm going to be watching and cheering from the sidelines."

Though the University has yet to select its next president, Bodnar offered a piece of parting advice. "There are amazing people at this University. Don't ever underestimate their talent, their commitment, their passion."

He said he hopes the next president to take the office in Main Hall will continue to accelerate progress and hopefully take it to another level. "And I'm going to be here doing every single thing I can to help whoever that person is," he said.

REDEFINING NONTRADITIONAL

Selected by the Board of the Regents in 2017, Bodnar was the only one of the potential presidential candidates to not have a doctorate.

Considered a nontraditional applicant, Bodnar went to the United States Military Academy, also known as West Point. He later attended Oxford University after receiving the prestigious Rhodes Scholarship and the Truman Scholarship. There, he earned two master's degrees in economics and social history and comparative social policy.

He served for eight years in the army as a Green Beret, a Special Forces unit within the U.S. Military known for learning guerrilla warfare tactics. There, he commanded a unit on multiple deployments and served as Special Assistant to the Commanding General in Iraq.

He returned to West Point as an assistant professor to teach economics and later took a job in 2011 at General Electric as a senior executive in its transportation department.

Although he started working at UM in January 2018, Bodnar was officially inaugurated into office in October as the University's 19th president.



Confederated Salish and Kootenai tribal elder Tony Incashola Sr., who died in 2022, strokes the shoulder of University of Montana president Seth Bodnar with a snow-white feather during Bodnar's inauguration on Oct. 26 2018. As part of a prayer ritual, Incashola used the feather and steam from the cup of tea to inaugurate the president into the greater Montana community. **DANIEL DUENSING | MONTANA KAIMIN**

The ceremony took place during a two-day celebration titled "Inauguration Weekend: A Celebration of Service," and included a volunteer event immediately afterward with Bodnar and former Missoula Mayor John Engen to pack dinners for families in need. In his speech, Bodnar highlighted working with the University's collective impact in mind, rather than focusing on the individual.

"It's not my job to set the values for the institution," Bodnar said. "It's my job to help understand this institution and to serve the people who work here." One of those ideals was something he called inclusive prosperity, the hope that students, staff and faculty of all backgrounds work together to progress forward.

"We live in a time where I think a lot of people feel like the pathways to prosperity are narrowing, right? The system's rigged for the elite select few, and if you don't know somebody, or if you don't have a connection somewhere, you can't get in," Bodnar said. To him, the University of Montana is not a place that cares about financial status, political affiliation or background. "If you're willing to show up and work hard, you have a spot here," he said.

That isn't to say that UM hasn't faced its challenges. Major political events like the reelection of President Donald Trump and

the 2025 assassination of political influencer Charlie Kirk impacted campus attitudes.

"It's been an interesting journey coming in and facing a lot of challenges," Bodnar said. "There's been a lot of turbulence and a lot of attacks on higher [education]."

Locally, funding cuts from the executive level resulted in a \$6 million cut from the Mike and Maureen Mansfield Center.

But the intense ebb and flow of national and local politics wasn't the only significant challenge Bodnar faced in his time as president. Mere months into 2020 came the COVID-19 pandemic, which swept through the United States.

The pandemic would shift the University into a new era, and in March 2020, Bodnar posted a video from his office, announcing the cancellation of large-scale events on campus, pulling back on study abroad programs and the shift of UM onto remote classroom learning. Bodnar's straightforward, polished demeanor hinted at the seriousness of COVID-19's impact.

But in April 2020, Bodnar posted a separate video from his home, this time with far more levity. "I would much rather be with you out on the Oval on this beautiful afternoon," he said in the video, before continuing on to discuss updates on campus and encouraging social distancing.

Looking back on that time now, Bodnar said surmounting these challenges required focusing on the University's core missions and continuing from there. "Doing that's really hard, and it requires trade-offs," he said. "You never have the budgetary resources you would like, and trying to deliver on that mission is the biggest challenge."

But budgetary challenges and external pressures haven't stopped him from engaging with students and expanding opportunities on campus.

TAKING ACTION ON CAMPUS

Overall, Bodnar's eight-year run puts him at roughly twice the average tenure in office. The last president, Sheila Stearn, served from 2016 to 2018. Stearn died in 2023.

Among his actions at the University was the founding of the President's Native American Advisory Council (PNAAC), a monthly meeting in which Bodnar met with various tribal leaders and organizers on campus.

"When I came here in 2018, I realized very quickly that Indigenous culture and heritage, that's not only an important part of this University's past but also should inform our future," Bodnar said.

Aaron Thomas, a chemistry professor and the director for Indigenous Research and STEM Education at UM stated in an email to

the Kaimin, "I appreciated his attentiveness to the requests of the PNAAC and his willingness to work closely with us, visit tribal communities and the efforts he made to support our Indigenous population."

Bodnar highlighted the different achievements to come out of the council, including creating the Tribal Outreach Specialist position and another in financial aid to assist Native American students with college tuition. "All of those ideas weren't mine," Bodnar said. "They came from the community of leaders who are committed to serving our Native American students. I'm deeply grateful for the ways in which people took the time to share their knowledge with me, to teach me."

The University of Montana saw a 9.3% increase in Native American student enrollment between the fall 2024 and 2025 semesters.

The Kaimin reached out to current Tribal Outreach Specialist Karla Bird but did not hear back.

Within the student population, Associated Students of the University of Montana President Buddy Wilson said he's gotten to work closely with Bodnar in his time on the student senate.

Wilson said Bodnar's leadership style was one of delegation, giving him opportunities to work with other faculty and administration members on campus. "[Bodnar] has a really strong vision for the University that really comes across," Wilson said. "I think that's sort of shown in how the University has changed for the last eight years."

Between their weekly meetings, Wilson said Bodnar connected with him over student outreach. "I don't think anyone knows the best way to always reach students," Wilson said. "He shared challenges on that. ASUM has trouble reaching students as well, so he's given his advice on what he's figured out over the last few years."

Part of his advice to Wilson was to hold off on communicating until something really important comes up, something Wilson said he keeps in mind when trying to make ASUM active on social media.

"He's a great leader, and I'm excited to see him move on to other stuff," Wilson said.

SAYING GOODBYE

Until Bodnar's replacement arrives, students and faculty are left to wonder who may be next – whether it's an interim or an official appointee.

For Davidson Honor's College Dean Nichols, he said he hopes the next president is someone who can build on the positive momentum he believes UM has created.

"Someone who will with their own style and sort of embrace the values and the cultures of Montana," Nichols said. "And be ready to hit the ground with their feet running."

When it came to working with Bodnar, he expressed gratitude for the president finding the time among busy schedules to meet with him. "Personally, Seth has always been a great colleague, and very kind and personable," he said. "I'm sad to see him go and I wish him well wherever the adventure takes him."

It's a sentiment Wilson echoed from ASUM. He said he hopes the next president will care

about students first, something he said he thinks Bodnar did. "I feel like the University is going in a generally strong direction," Wilson said. "I'd love to see someone who can come in with an eye toward keeping that going."

For Bodnar himself, it's about recognizing the qualities he loves most on campus. "Grizzlies are special," he said. "This place is special, and that will continue. The next president is going to see that, they're going to feel that. It just permeates all that we do. And the president's job is really to harness that and channel us toward progress."

Bodnar noted that the work as a president is never over. "You work 24/7," he said. "Two nights ago, it's 7:30 p.m. and we're talking about some construction folks who hit a water line and flooded some parking lots ... you really come to have this University become a huge part of your identity."

Leaving that behind is no easy feat, but Bodnar noted his place in a long line of presidents, and that every president before him and after has their chapter to write. "My goal has always been to be a good steward of

this University," he said. "Then when it was time to hand that off, I could hand off the University in a better place than I found it, and hopefully hand it off to a leader who will take it to new heights and be far better than I ever was."

Ultimately, he said, he realized leadership positions are about knowing you'll make some people happy, others angry, but that you always have to do what's best for the institution.

After he's made the transition out of office, Bodnar said he'll take time to process his time at UM and its ups and downs, but he stressed often that he'll be leaving with gratitude.

So what will he miss after he leaves Main Hall for the last time?

"I love our students, and I'm gonna miss them so badly," Bodnar said. "I'm going to miss going into the student section and bringing you guys pizza and the funny signs that I'd see about the other team."

Bodnar highlighted the Foresters' Ball and the overall attitude he encountered at UM. "You can't be a pessimist if you're on

this campus," he said. For him, he said, the students renewed his faith in the future.

Additionally, Bodnar admired the faculty and staff. "Many of them have the ability to make salaries higher than what they make here, but they chose to be here," he said. "They care about this mission and it's a rare opportunity to get to work on that with people who are passionate and committed and extremely talented. I don't take that blessing for granted."

When asked how he wants his legacy to be characterized at UM, Bodnar said he doesn't see it that way. Instead, there's just been the goals he set for himself and the attempt to reach them.

With his final day on the horizon, all that's left to do is say goodbye.

"I hope our amazing alumni, our donors, our fans know that I got up every single day and poured my heart and soul into this place that I love," Bodnar said. "I'm gonna miss it dearly, but I left it all on the field."



University of Montana President Seth Bodnar speaks at the Fallen Soldier Memorial for the 20th anniversary of 9/11 on Sept. 11, 2021.
ANTONIO IBARRA | MONTANA KAIMIN

Missoula's beer explored

SABRINA PHILIP | ARTS REPORTER

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Stepping into Draught Works Brewery, one of Missoula's many breweries, the smell of hops immediately permeates the air. A woody, musky and almost sour smell, it comes from the contents of a defining part of Missoula's culture: beer.

Missoula is known for many things, including its variety of outdoor activities, the bustling college landscape, Grizzly athletics, live music and its beer scene. In an article by Food & Wine, Missoula ranked number 10 for the highest number of breweries per capita.

Missoula has about 10 breweries that make their own beer and is home to multiple taprooms, bars and brewpubs. While the beer scene is extensive, it allows a chance for Missoulians to engage with local businesses all over the city.

"I've had a few great days ordering flights from Missoula breweries, or visiting them when the weather turns for the better around springtime," said Devin Reich, a marketing major from UM class of 2025. "Going to these breweries definitely makes me reach for these beers when out and about at other locations, simply because I know them from previous experiences."

While patrons of beer culture in Missoula enjoy the opportunity to try beers, owners of taprooms and shops enjoy the opportunity to engage customers.

"I think it's just about being able to be a part of the community that it's become, and feeling like you're contributing to that," said Zach Millar, a co-owner of the Dram Shop and UM class of 1999 alum. "That's the most rewarding thing by far, all the wonderful people you get to know. Hopefully, you get to make their life a little better."

The Dram Shop's original location is in Downtown Missoula, with a second location near Southgate Mall. Opened almost 11 years ago, the shop contains 40 taps with all different types of beer, wine, cider and kombucha.

"We try to focus on variety, and just invite people to try new things, new styles and a variety of flavor profiles," Millar said. "We sort of help guide people into stuff that they like that maybe they didn't know that they like."

While Millar emphasized the shop's focus on variety, he also highlighted its "easygoing, family-friendly" atmosphere. He shared the selection of beers the shop offers in its taps.

"We also keep some of the favorites that people love. It's about maintaining a nice balance in the variety so that everyone can find something that they like, and there's enough variety to keep people interested," Millar said.

Millar said his favorite part of working at the Dram Shop is the community, and being able



Co-owner of Draught Works Brewery and UM alum Paul Marshall stands in front of his empty beer can way that he stores at Draught Works Brewing on Jan. 21. **JACKSON MAILEY | MONTANA KAIMIN**

to be a part of the beer scene in Missoula, a sentiment echoed by Paul Marshall, co-owner of Draught Works Brewery and UM alum from the class of 1992.

Draught Works opened its doors in October of 2011. The owners, Marshall and his friend Jeff Grant, started in the industry after exploring different careers and eventually returning to their passion for beer. After they each separately attended the Siebel Institute of Technology in Chicago, a well-known brewing school, they decided to open a brewery in Missoula.

"I'm born and raised here, and Jeff's from Miles City and went to school here, so it was a no-brainer that we opened here," Marshall said. "But really, it was very obvious at that time that Missoula was a real craft beer town. We had three big breweries in the state of Montana at that time, and they were all in Missoula."

Marshall explained that while they were questioned for opening another brewery in Missoula, they were packed opening night and have been ever since. He shared that the brewery also includes a wide demographic of patrons, gaining more popularity in the summer due to tourists.

He said they are most known for their Scepter IPA, and "brewing great, hoppy beer."

According to the Sierra Nevada website, "Hops are the green cone-shaped flowers, or 'inflorescence,' of the *Humulus lupulus* plant. Hidden inside each cone are tiny yellow pods or glands called lupulin — the source of

bitterness, aroma and flavor in beer."

Besides being known for the hops, Draught Works also has sour beers, or more tart beers, in rotation, approaching almost 300 different recipes at this point in its history.

Marshall also said Draught Works has a total of 20 taps at the brewery, eight of which are permanent, 11 of which are rotating, and one is a root beer tap. A unique aspect of the brewery is that of the 20 drinks on tap, three are "community beers."

"Trail Tracks is a Hefeweizen that we did for the Trail radio station," Marshall said. "They came to us and were like, 'Hey, can you make an anniversary beer for us?' So we did that. The Quadfather is a Belgian Quad. It was done with Zoo City Zimmergists, which is the homebrew club."

"Up With Premium Lager is our NIL beer. So that literally is the beer that helps support Montana Grizzly athletics," Marshall said.

Marshall said every spring Draught Works also collaborates on a beer with the University's brewing science certificate class. Both of these, he said, highlight the importance of involvement at Draught Works in Missoula.

Another brewery that also gives back to its community is Highlander Brewing, located both in Missoula and in Salmon, Idaho. While Highlander originally established itself in 1910, it opened in Missoula 10-and-a-half years ago.

"Beer and pizza," said Bruce Kitts, the taproom manager at Highlander Brewing,

commenting on their specialty.

"Pretty simple, but our pizza's really good. I think we're really known for that. We have a big pavilion outback that we rent out in the summertime. That's a big part of our business."

Kitts said Highlander's demographic, as the others mentioned above, is a variety with a focus on those from the Grant Creek area of Missoula. Highlander also experiences an influx of tourists in the summer due to its proximity to the airport.

Kitts said the beer Highlander is most known for is the Strange Haze IPA, which he said "at one point it was, as far as distribution goes, one of the top IPAs in Montana."

Highlander Brewing has 12 beers on rotation, and Kitts commented that its taproom, which is located next to Grant Creek, is what creates a unique environment at the brewery.

"Our tap room is really successful, given the size," Kitts said. "Especially in the summertime, it's really great. Go sit by the creek, grab a beer, sit in the Adirondack chairs. I think our facility is just a really nice place to come and enjoy the environment."

In addition to beer, Highlander also sells New York-style pizza by the slice from its pizza ovens. It has five different flavors of pizza, and rotates three of them every Tuesday.

Yet, the involvement for Highlander Brewing is seen in their support of Montana's outdoor recreation. Highlander works closely to support local firefighter crews through donations and awareness.

"We work with a lot of firefighters," Kitts said. "We do a lot of support for them. Once a year, we host a 'Putt and Pull', which is a big thing to help raise money for the families of firefighters who have been killed or injured on the job and help their families out."

Highlander also works closely to support conservation in Montana with their restoration project, which they started on Grant Creek next to the brewery. According to Kitts, Highlander fenced off the area and planted native plants there to restore the bank of the creek.

Kitts also shared Highlander's role in the Montana Brewers Association, which, according to its website, is "a statewide association of breweries organized for the purpose of promoting the production and sales of the freshest and highest quality Montana-made beers." In doing so, he shared what he believes is the importance of Missoula beer brewing.

"It's a good community," Kitts said. "We support each other. When we do Beer Fest, it's like seeing a lot of your friends in the community. It's not really a competition, it's more just supporting each other."

UM's MakerSpace brings students together as it gains popularity

BEE REISWIG | ARTS REPORTER

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Sweet, short, motivational quotes. Photos of the outdoors and running shoes and people doing screen-free activities. Carefully sticking each picture onto the page, overlapping into a visual collage. Each one represented something that students want to bring with them into 2026 — and it's all taking place in the University of Montana's MakerSpace.

The event, called "Goal Digger," lets students can make vision boards decorated to manifest goals in the new year. It's the latest crafting event at UM's MakerSpace, a free resource for students to sew, iron, make buttons, engrave with lasers and more.

The MakerSpace began around last April after the space had been closed for years. The 2025 spring semester was slow, according to UM MakerSpace supervisor Jordan Crawford, though this academic year has picked up the pace. Around 90 different students used the space throughout the fall semester — something the MakerSpace can track with the online student safety forms for the studio.

"Originally, they wanted it to be like a business innovation lab where people can start their business ventures, like entrepreneurship," Crawford said. "But I think there's more of a calling for just crafting."

Students like resident assistant Tru Hayes, a 20-year-old elementary education sophomore from Bellingham, Washington, used the "Goal Digger" event to get students out for a tag along.

"I thought it would be a great way to get some residents out, and I love doing arts and crafts," Hayes said. "People with the same interests, we all get together and craft and it's fun."

Two of her residents, Amanda Berne and Allison Abel, came along with Hayes to cut and paste photos for their New Year's manifestations. Berne, a 20-year-old creative writing and psychology sophomore from Seattle, has used the MakerSpace before to make clay magnets and scrapbook.

"It crosses creativity and gives students an outlet to release some stress or hang out with friends in a school environment," Berne said.

Abel, a sophomore in pharmacy, business and music, had never been to the MakerSpace before. The 20-year-old from Whitefish often enjoys crochet, painting and digital design in her free time.



University of Montana sophomore Ella Macek chooses pieces for her vision board at the Makerspace Goal Digger event on Jan. 22. **TORI KUEHL | MONTANA KAIMIN**

"[The event] was really fun, and they did a good job at encouraging everybody," Abel said. "It's a really great resource for students to explore their own creativity and make things. Like, I know I have friends who have made posters here for school."

Crawford expects the space's usership to continue increasing throughout this semester.

The MakerSpace plans to offer short sessions in which participants can learn a new skill — this Friday and Saturday, Missoulians can learn how to engrave a metal water bottle with the X-Tool S1. It's important to RSVP, and workshops like these come with a fee, unlike other MakerSpace events. This one costs \$20.

It's a skill that even MakerSpace workers — UM students — have taken a while to figure out. Student lead Lindsay Torres, who will lead the upcoming workshop, has learned how to use each of the different machines

over her time working there, often with the help of ChatGPT.

"[ChatGPT is] great, for example, using it for things like this, when it would take so much longer to watch a whole YouTube video," Torres said. "I don't agree with a lot of AI being used to recreate art but I think it'll be good if we learn how to incorporate it now."

Torres, a 19-year-old sophomore from Atlanta, Georgia, is getting her bachelor's in fine arts with a focus on painting. She is also minoring in business administration and art history. She's been a part of the MakerSpace since last spring — she was their first employee.

"The Makerspace is a good place for students to collaborate with each other on arts and crafts, things that they normally would not be able to access for free," Torres said. "It's a very accessible place for everyone."

In her role at the MakerSpace, Torres helps

plan for events, run them and assist students who need guidance with their crafts. She is also running upcoming workshops, including one in which she will dress as Bob Ross and teach participants how to paint a landscape. Those who are interested can find the RSVP information on GrizHub.

Above all, those at the MakerSpace want students to come and use the "no judge" space to collaborate and craft.

"There's no dumb question here," Crawford said. "If you need help with something you're doing, you're mending pants and you might not know a specific stitch, someone else might and they can help you."

The Makerspace is open Monday through Friday, 10 a.s. to 4 p.m. in the University Center.

Time to get slopin'

ABIGAIL STENKAMP | SPORTS REPORTER

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The three scenic mountain ranges that surround Missoula can be enjoyed all year long. However, during the winter season, most adventurous locals swap out their hiking boots for skis.

Ski and snowboard season is upon us. With the mild winter in the U.S. this year, it has been difficult to get students interested in ski and snowboarding clubs on campus.

Tucker Sargent, the assistant director of club sports at the University of Montana and a Missoula native, said, "We have had a lot of students interested in next year, but we don't have anything that I'm aware of set up for an official ski team this season."

Currently UM has no competitive team, but the campus has ski club available to students. Sargent has taken the proper steps to get a team eligible to compete, however, he needs student participants in order to get the club off the ground.

"Since I took this position a year ago, it is something that I would really love to see again," Sargent said. "I think that there are a lot of great skiing opportunities at the University of Montana, and I would love to attract more skiers and get people out racing and competing."

Skiing is commonly separated into three main categories: alpine, nordic and the least known, telemark.

The most popular is alpine. This type involves using gravity to ski down the mountain. The riders' heels are fixed into the bindings.

Alpine also has different disciplines, such as slalom, giant slalom and downhill.

Sargent described Nordic skiing, otherwise known as cross country skiing, as, "Mostly human powered with very little gravity assistance, where you go over different types of terrain. It's a free

heel where you are kind of just pushing yourself along."

Telemark is a combination of the two other types.

Sarah Duncan, the Montana Snowbowl base area manager from Ellensburg, Washington, said, "The skis are similar to alpine skis. However, the binding is different so that the heel isn't locked into the binding and you can actually lift it up. So those guys you actually see do a lunge in order to turn."

Despite minimal success with alpine and nordic ski teams, telemark is a completely different story.

"Telemark is rockin' n 'rollin,'" Sargent said.

The telemark club competes every Thursday night up at Snowbowl on the Sunrise Bowl run. They have teams within the club who race as a group through gates, earning points based on speed.

Phillip Tillman, a current member of the club and sophomore student studying parks and recreation management, said, "I'm very new to skiing, so this was an opportunity for me to get out of my comfort zone and be comfortable in the uncomfortable. Also, the people in [telemark] are some of the most crazy and just full of life people I have ever met."

The club's final race is on Feb. 21. A lot of competitors dress up in costumes, and after the winners are announced, they have a party afterward at the base of the ski resort.

Snowbowl, which is the closest ski resort to Missoula, has been partnering with the University of Montana for around 10 to 15 years, offering students an activity elective for one credit.

"There is an intro to skiing and snowboarding and then intermediate skiing and snowboarding," Duncan said. "It's a way for college students to be able to gain credit, have class outside and be doing something in nature, which is a super fun opportunity."

It is a great way to fit in learning a new skill, or improving the knowledge one already possesses, all while getting credit.

As well as partnering with the University, Snowbowl hosts a multitude of different snow sport events. On Feb. 21 and 22, Snowbowl is hosting the Snowbowl Cup Gelande Championship.

Duncan describes the event as "a big jump that people come in and do, and the goal is to see who can jump the farthest. If you have ever seen the Olympics and seen people go on a massive jump and kind of look like a flying squirrel, that is Gelande."

Snowbowl is the most prominent place that still offers this style of competition, providing an amateur division and a pro division, with a good number of college students participating year-to-year.

Since Missoula is one of the dwindling few places that offer this style of competition, people come from all around the world to participate and watch this event.

Despite this winter having minimal snowfall, there are still dedicated people who find exciting ways to get involved and enjoy the snow sport season here at the University of Montana and Missoula.



1/30 Trent Brooks Band @9PM!

1/31 Hunter Stiles @9PM!

2/4 BINGO @7!

Tuesdays & Thursdays Karaoke @ 9PM!



1101 Strand Ave, Missoula, MT 59801

Griz basketball rebounding after slow start

DILLON RICHARDSON | SPORTS REPORTER
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The University of Montana's men's basketball team is nearing the halfway point of its conference schedule, and the Griz are bouncing back from a non-conference schedule that saw the team fall to 6-7.

The Griz sit at 6-2 in Big Sky play as of Jan. 24, which puts them in third in the conference, only behind Portland State University and Montana State University.

Coming off their first conference championship since 2019, the expectations for Montana were high entering this season. The team's returning starters were junior guard Money Williams, the Big Sky preseason MVP and graduate student Te'Jon Sawyer.

After the rough non-conference performance, the team jumped to a 3-0 conference record for the second-straight season.

Sawyer said the team's success was due to physicality.

"It's just being tougher, applying more contact, hitting guys first," Sawyer said. "In this conference, a lot of teams crash all five guys, so one through five have to rebound, even guards."

Sawyer, who leads the team in rebounds, said he believes the Griz are one of the best teams in the conference.

"We have to live up to it," Sawyer said. "The competition is somewhat up there, but we have more talent. If we're losing, it's really on us."

He said if Montana is to repeat as conference champions, it needs to be consistent and not complacent.

"Last year we went on a 10-game win streak," Sawyer said. "I feel like we can go on a win streak right now, scare the conference a little bit and show who the top dog is."

Montana picked up its third straight win on Sunday, defeating Idaho State University 69-60. One player that was impactful in that game was freshman Kenyon Aguino.

Sawyer said he has been impressed by Aguino's play.

"It's good to see him be more aggressive," Sawyer said. "It opens up the court, so I think he's been doing a great job. He's been dialed."

Sawyer also said that another key for UM is for the team to be aggressive on both sides of the court.

"When we're all aggressive and passing

the ball, we're hard to stop," Sawyer said. "We got a lot of scorers on the court, so it just opens the floor for everybody."

For head coach Travis DeCuire, the team has gotten better over time as the new players have grown accustomed to being at UM.

"We just have a lot of new faces in a new system, so it takes a long time when you play basketball the way we do to get everybody on the same page," DeCuire said. "So for us, we needed to grow and mature into our roles, and I think we're starting to do that."

One recent change for the Griz has been the addition of redshirt sophomore Grant Kepley to the starting lineup. Kepley started the last three games for the Griz instead of junior Tyler Isaak. In those three games, UM outscored its opponents by a combined 51 points. DeCuire said Kepley has been a great addition to the lineup.

"His pace has really been helpful for us offensively," DeCuire said. "We've got a good balance and now higher than it had been."

Williams said that Kepley is making a great impact, but it's not all because of him.

"[His defense] is exciting, Grant is a special kid. Having him in the starting lineup is a blessing," Williams said. "But we have a lot of guys that can start. It's not about the starting lineup. We got 14 guys that can get in there."

Williams said one of the reasons the team has been focused during conference play has been the attention to detail.

"Shout out to the coaching staff keeping us mentally prepared," Williams said. "A lot of mental reps in practice, taking care of our bodies and just sticking together."

He said the reason conference play has gone well is easy to see.

"It's just defense," Williams said. "Going back to the drawing board, trusting one another and being really aggressive on defense."

Williams said if UM is to

win another championship, defense would be the reason. DeCuire echoed that idea.

"Just continue to defend the way we're defending right now, and continue to take care of the ball," DeCuire said. "If you do those two things we got a shot."

DeCuire said he hopes his team's play this season will draw more people to Dahlberg Arena.

"I'd like to see more people here," DeCuire said. "You would expect that a team that consistently wins would increase attendance, not have it dip the way it did. I don't know what's going on, but hopefully as we pick up steam, the crowd will do the same."

The Griz are on the road this week against a Portland State team that is currently undefeated in the Big Sky Conference. The game will take place on Thursday, followed by a Saturday night matchup against California State University, Sacramento.

UM returns home next Thursday to kick off the second half of conference play against Eastern Washington University.



Redshirt freshman Tyler Thompson goes for a layup against Idaho State forward Connor Hollenbeck at the annual N7 game on Jan. 24.

JACKSON MAILEY | MONTANA KAIMIN

SPORTS BRIEFS

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STRIPPED CLEAN

UM's soccer team will have a new look this upcoming season after the departure of head coach Chris Citowicki, who led the Griz to a 79-39-32 record along with nine combined regular season and tournament championships in his eight-year tenure.

Citowicki said to Montana Sports that he "couldn't be more proud" of his time at UM, and that his final memory is of the conference championship win in front of a sold out South Campus Stadium.

Citowicki took over the head coaching role at Washington State University, bringing along assistant coach Ashey Herndon.

Since Citowicki's departure was announced, 10 Griz players have transferred to Washington State, including Big Sky Goalkeeper of the Year Ashlyn Dvorak, as well as Reagan Brisendine and Makenna Smith, who both earned second-team all conference honors in 2025.

As of Jan. 24, the only players that started the Big Sky Conference Championship game that are returning for Montana are Lucie Rokos and Liv Thorne-Thomsen. The team also remains without a confirmed head coach for the future.

GRIZ SWEEP WILDCATS

Both UM basketball teams defeated Weber State University last week, with the Men's team winning 81-65 and the Lady Griz hanging on to win 51-50.

Redshirt freshman Tyler Thompson led the way for the Griz, scoring 21 points on seven out of nine on three-point shooting.

"It's a great feeling. It's kind of just knowing that if you let me get it up, it's going in," Thompson said to UM Athletics after the game.

Another highlight came from junior Money Williams, who became the 38th Grizzly to reach 1,000 career points, taking him only 67 career games, the sixth-fastest in UM history.

Add in a fastbreak alley-oop off the backboard from Thompson to Trae Taylor, and UM took care of business at home.

In Ogden, it was a much tighter affair for the Lady Griz.

Sophomore Avery Waddington dropped 20 points, including a crucial layup to put Montana up three late. It was her third 20-point game of the season, which was massive for a team still without Mack Konig, who has missed six games due to injury.

After the game, head coach Nate Harris told UM Athletics, "That's what we needed from [Waddington] today. I don't know how many times I told her, lead us there. Take over. This is yours. And she did. She made some huge plays down the stretch."

N7 game honors Native heritage

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Rhythmic footwork matched the beat of the drum as Kyiyo dancers stepped and swayed around Dahlberg Arena during the Griz Men's basketball game on Jan. 24.

The annual partnership between the University of Montana and the Nike N7 program, designed to inspire young Native Americans to participate in sports, included merchandise with this year's Native Griz logo designed by local artist Kendallynn Charging.

During halftime, dancers organized by the Kyiyo Native American Student Association represented tribes across Montana on the court.

Jacob Brien, one of Kyiyo's leaders and a citizen of the Crow Tribe, was one of two drummers as the dancers circled the arena. To him, the event offers a sense of familiarity.

"When you first leave home, you go to college. It's scary because there's no one else that looks like you. You show up and everyone talks a little different," Brien said. "When you see stuff like this, it really kind of motivates you to keep going to school."



Griz basketball players wear special jerseys and clap after the national anthem and flag ceremony at the beginning of the Nike N7 game against Idaho State in Dahlberg Arena on Jan. 24.

This year, Kyiyo organizers spread their events throughout the game. The evening started with a tribal flag ceremony and flag song by Shawn White Grass, then the dancers prepared for a halftime show.

In years past, the flag ceremony, song and dance had been stacked at the same time. This required more workers and coordination, according to Richelle Cobell, Kyiyo's secretary, and a citizen of the Blackfeet Nation.

Participants ranged from children to adults, each dressed in a variety of regalia representing their heritage. The event first prioritized including students, then opened to wider community participation, according to Brien.

The dance lasted less than 10 minutes, but the drumming and regalia offered a valuable opportunity for students to share their culture and learn from others.

Adam White Grass, 10, was one of the younger dancers. He said he had only been in two dances before, but wasn't nervous for the halftime appearance.

"It was fun. I didn't really think about it. I didn't think about being scared," Adam White Grass said. "I just thought about dancing and the moves and the downbeats and the rhythm to the song."



Jonni Stewart, left, and Ashton Earthboy, right, dance during the halftime of the Nike N7 Griz basketball game in Dahlberg Arena.



Adam White Grass, 10, dances during the Kyiyo performance at halftime of the Nike N7 Griz basketball game.