

MONTANA KAIMIN

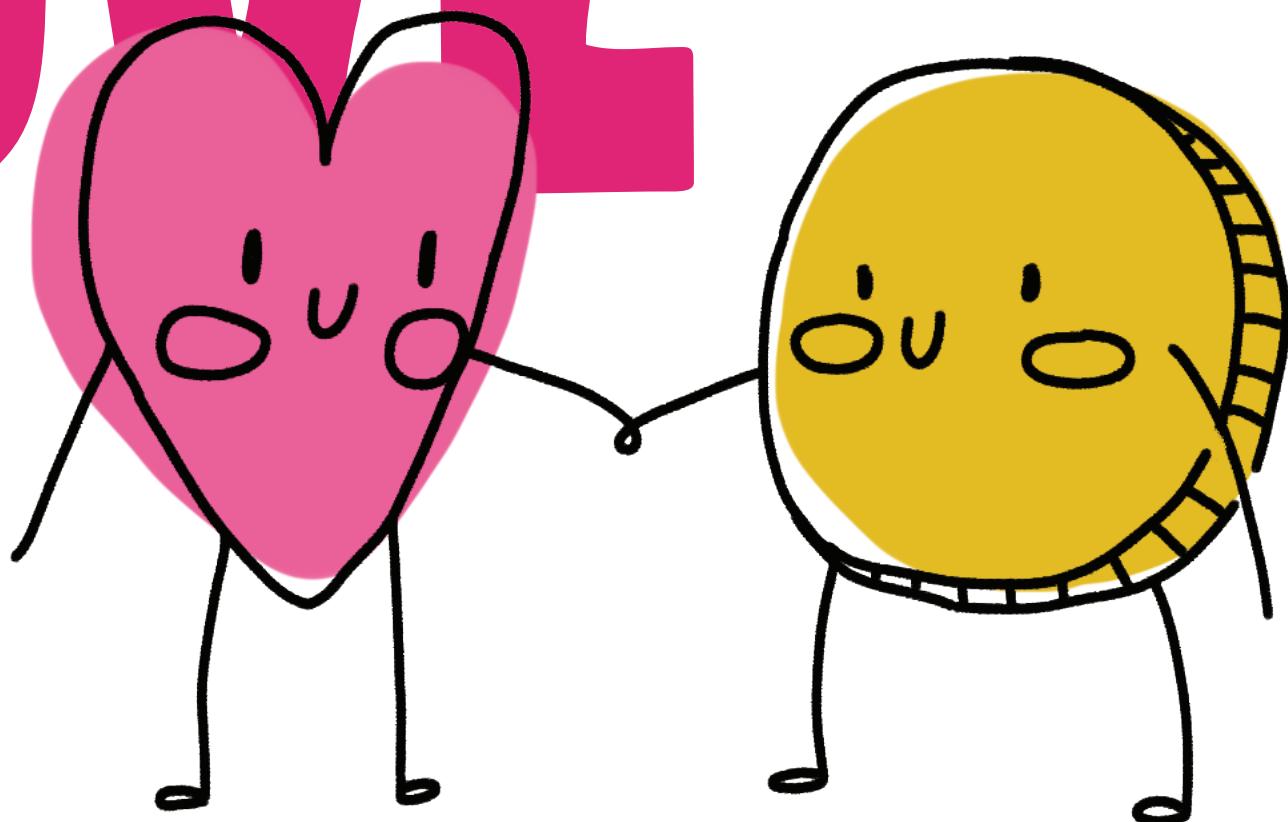


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COVER ILLUSTRATION BY LILY PETERSON

FEBRUARY 12, 2026 | VOLUME 128 | ISSUE NO. 17

WANT TO AVOID
GOING BROKE THIS
VALENTINE'S DAY? THE
MONTANA KAIMIN
HAS YOUR NEXT DATE
NIGHT COVERED.

STORY BY ELLE DANIEL
PHOTOS BY HENRY DOELLINGER

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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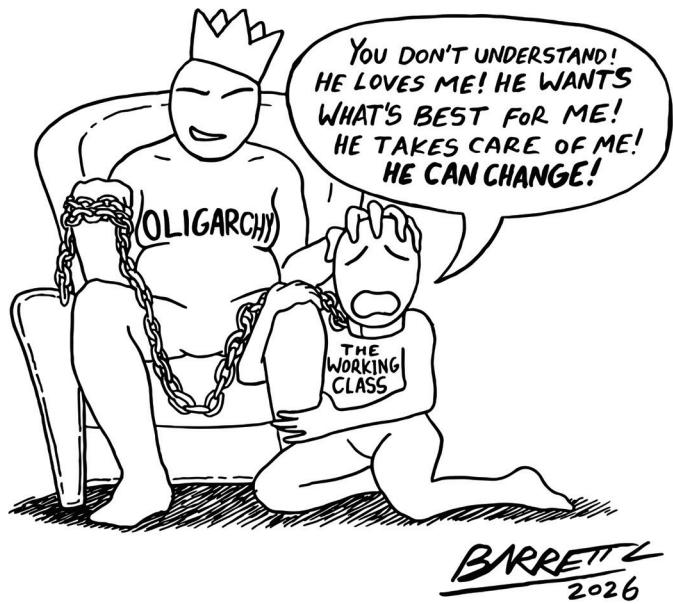


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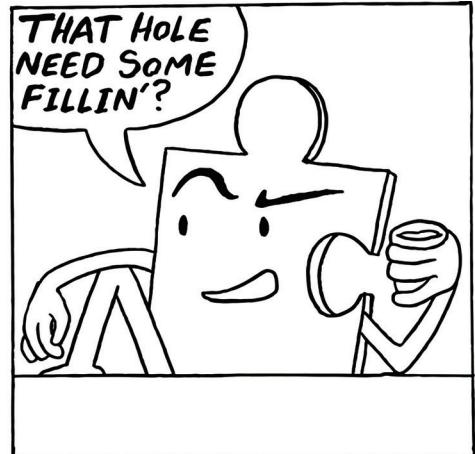
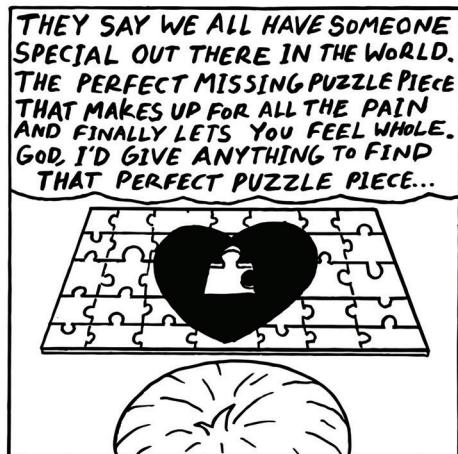
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POLITICAL CARTOON



KAIMIN KOMICS: SE 3 EP 10



BARRETT CLEMENT | CARTOONIST @FUNNYFERRETSTUDIOS

Love authentically

There is a foul demon that haunts our holidays, and its name is consumerism.

A profane mountain of chocolate hearts and mass produced plastic toys has risen over our land, blocking out the sun and plunging America into a romantic apocalypse from which no dawn could follow. Valentine's Day is upon us.

The American obsession with consumption has permeated Valentine's Day and corrupted the spirit of what was once a pure day of celebrating love and romance. As a broke college student in a long term relationship, I won't stand for it.

Valentine's Day isn't about anything that can be bought or sold. It's about connection and the passion that two people inspire in one another. Don't fall into the trap of letting a prewritten card say how you feel, or thinking that materialism can replace love.

Yes, purchasing gifts can be wonderful, but it could be about so much more. Buying chocolate and flowers is a lovely gesture, but ask yourself what you can get your partner that will make them feel seen. Truly listen to the

wants and needs of the people in your life and get them things that they'll cherish.

Many of the best gifts I've ever received have cost next to nothing, but demonstrated great effort and understanding by the gifter. There's nothing money can buy that compares to laying under the blanket my girlfriend crocheted for me or hanging up her paintings around my room. Go out on a limb and try something new, create something for the people you love.

This issue is made all the worse by our generation's fixation on nonchalance. Be chalant, I say! Write your partner a love poem. Learn to play the piano and serenade your loved ones. Love authentically and be unafraid of what anyone else might think, because no matter who you are, you deserve to love and be loved in a way that feels genuine.

- Jack Snow, news editor

Like it? Hate it? Let us know.

Email us your opinions at
elle.daniel@umontana.edu



Lucas Houston dials in a trick during the Sigma Alpha Epsilon rail jam in the house's front yard on Feb. 2. **WILL LADYMAN | MONTANA KAIMIN**

SUDOKU

Difficulty: Medium

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

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Edited by Margie E. Burke

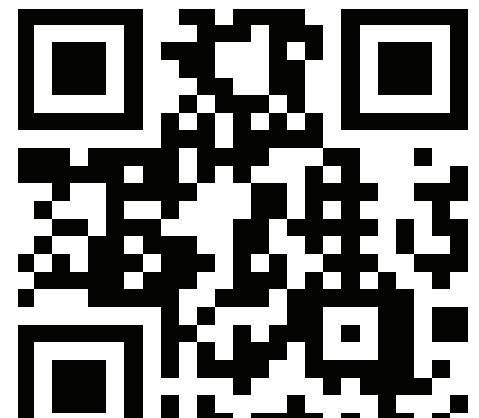
HOW TO SOLVE:

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:

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

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WEBSITE

In local news...

JACK SNOW | NEWS EDITOR

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MISSOULA PLONK FOR SALE

Missoula wine bar Plonk is listed for sale after almost 13 years of operation. The restaurant will remain open and operating under its usual hours in the meantime.

Owner Brett Evje cited the fact that he lives in Bozeman as the reason for selling the downtown staple business, according to KPAX. He said he would like the bar's legacy to continue under new ownership.

"I really think that Plonk's been great in Missoula, and, you know, I'd like to find the right person that could take it over," he told KPAX.

Plonk is currently listed at \$4 million, which includes the building, liquor license, furniture, equipment, brand and inventory.

COUNTY PLANS NEW MISSOULA FIRE STATION

The Missoula City Council approved funding for the design of a sixth fire station in the western part of the city last Wednesday.

Fire Chief Lonnie Rash said he hopes to begin construction in a year, according to the Montana Free Press.

Construction of the station is expected to take about 18 months after ground is broken some time in the next year.

"Ultimately, it's community safety," he said. "We basically are going to fulfill the promise we made to the citizens to provide an additional fire station, reduce response times and locate our mobile support team in a location with the fire department."

The funding will go toward a \$125,000 contract with 45 Architecture to complete a needs assessment and design for the station.

HISTORICALLY WARM WINTER BREAKS RECORDS

Billings, Bozeman, Great Falls, Helena and Missoula have all recorded warmer average temperatures than any previous

winter dating back to the mid-20th century.

Trent Smith, a meteorologist with the Missoula office of the National Weather Service, told the Montana Free Press that this winter has been equivalent to the warmest ones that Montana has recorded.

"So far the [western side of Montana] is on par with one of its warmest winters on record," Smith said.

Not every town has broken records. Northern towns, like Glasgow, have stayed closer to historical averages, which Smith attributed to the town having more exposure to arctic air.

In contrast, Bozeman has experienced the biggest departure from past winters, with its 45 degree average temperature setting a mark 10 degrees higher than the town's average winter and 3.5 degrees higher than the previous warmest.

Missoula has also notched a record winter with a 42 degree average temperature from November to January, beating the town's previous record by several degrees as well.

MISSOULA POLICE ISSUE WARNING ABOUT MOUNT JUMBO CLOSURES

The Missoula Police Department and Missoula Parks and Recreation issued a reminder that most of Mount Jumbo is closed to hikers and recreationalists following a reported increase in trespassing.

The closed areas are clearly marked with signage and barriers at all access points.

Trespassing in the area can result in a citation and may carry a fine of up to \$500. Missoula police will monitor the area to enforce the warnings.

Despite the closures for most of the mountain, two trails remain open year-round, both stemming from the Cherry Street Trailhead.

Mount Jumbo's closure is important for protecting vulnerable wildlife from human contact, according to the Missoula Current.



This week on the Kaimin Cast ...

It's the second week of February and campus does not look like it should.

Students linger on the Oval, throwing footballs in T-shirts and walking barefooted on slacklines tied between trees. There is no snow, no ice rink and no study igloos.

While students in Missoula can enjoy the sun and warmer walks to their classes, students in the east face snow and cold temperatures. The odd weather this season is caused by changes to the polar vortex and jet streams due to climate change.

"If they're having a cold outbreak back east, that's probably because we've got a high over us that's keeping us nice and warm and dry. Right now, we're just totally enjoying that, and they're getting a really nasty cold spell," said Anna Klene, a professor of weather and climate.

Learn more about the changing patterns and what can be expected for the rest of winter on last week's podcast, "What no snow means for Earth and for Missoulians," by heading to our website at montanakaimin.com.

- Grace Golbach,
audio editor



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



GHISLAINE MAXWELL PLEADS THE FIFTH IN DEPOSITION

Convicted Jeffrey Epstein co-conspirator, Ghislaine Maxwell, pled the Fifth Amendment during a virtual deposition before the House Oversight Committee on Monday, according to chairman James Comer.

"This is obviously very disappointing," Comer said. "We had many questions to ask about the crimes she and Epstein committed, as well as questions about potential co-conspirators. We sincerely want to get to the truth to the American people and justice for the survivors. That's what this investigation is about."

Lawmakers did not expect that Maxwell, who is currently serving a 20-year prison sentence, would answer questions, but her lack of cooperation has made the investigation difficult, according to ABC.

One of the major goals of the deposition was to gain insight into Epstein's connections with some of the world's most powerful figures.

"Unfortunately, she had an opportunity today to answer questions that every American has, questions that would be very important in this investigation, and she chose to invoke her Fifth Amendment right," Comer said.

SAVANNAH GUTHRIE ASKS FOR HER MOTHER'S SAFE RETURN

Television host Savannah Guthrie posted a video on Monday asking for the public to assist with the return of her missing mother, eight days after she was first reported missing.

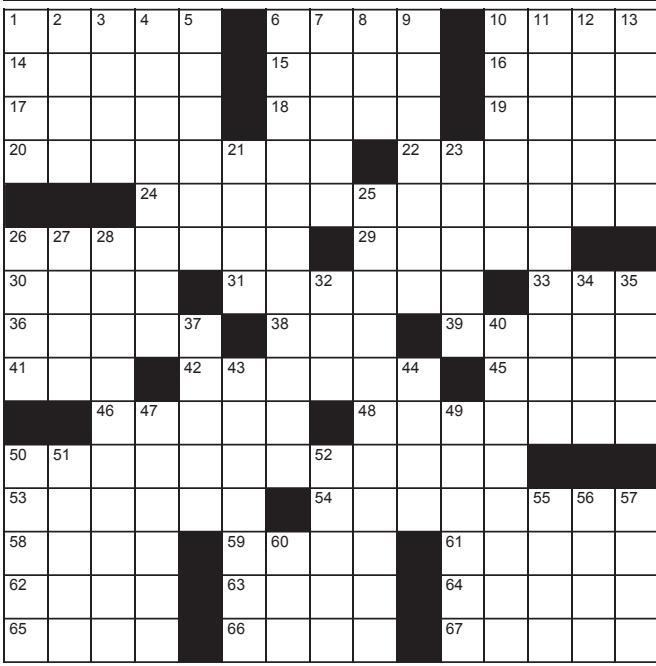
"We need your help," Guthrie said. "Law enforcement is working tirelessly, around the clock, trying to bring her home, trying to find her. She was taken and we don't know where. And we need your help."

Guthrie went on to ask that anyone with information about her mother's disappearance come forward and help law enforcement, according to The Guardian.

Detectives working on the case are still analyzing a purported ransom note which requested \$6 million for the return of Guthrie's mother.

The Weekly Crossword

by Margie E. Burke



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ACROSS

- 1 Yeshiva leader
- 6 Casino cubes
- 10 Campbell of the "Scream" movies
- 14 Indian, for one
- 15 Ares' twin sister
- 16 Line on a graph
- 17 Outbuildings
- 18 Entree item, often
- 19 Gift add-ons
- 20 Lawn improvement process
- 22 Musical Keys
- 24 Astutely
- 26 L.A. hoopster
- 29 Allude (to)
- 30 Winning streak
- 31 Most secure
- 33 Mooth
- 36 Corby of "The Waltons"
- 38 Vacation rental
- 39 Forestall, with "off"
- 41 Actor Wallach
- 42 Footnote word
- 45 Line-__ veto
- 46 Bibliography entry
- 48 Rectangle's four
- 50 Like old 3D images
- 53 __ borealis
- 54 Ones putting up buildings
- 58 Extended family
- 59 "I __ you!"
- 61 Kind of being or race
- 62 Stringed flyer
- 63 New York canal
- 64 Daughter of Zeus
- 65 Risked a ticket, say

- 66 Property title
- 67 Begin again
- DOWN**
- 1 Santa __, Calif.
- 2 Longing
- 3 Ballpark beverage
- 4 Spoiler of a sort
- 5 Marching together
- 6 U.S. and others, politically
- 7 "Goodnight" girl of song
- 8 "The Recruit" org.
- 9 They're left behind
- 10 Lifelong local
- 11 Make worse
- 12 Close watch
- 13 English assignment
- 21 Tees off
- 23 Certain shoe inserts
- 25 Like robocalls
- 26 Chief Big Bear, for one
- 27 Droop laxly
- 28 Unable to read
- 32 Pet rocks, once
- 34 Veer anagram
- 35 Tiara inlays
- 37 Gunpowder ingredient
- 40 Dyeing substance
- 43 Swollen
- 44 Pout about
- 47 Pressed
- 49 Heavier, as a dessert
- 50 Gives the axe to
- 51 Flower for Tiny Tim
- 52 "The Color Purple" protagonist
- 55 Arabian gulf
- 56 Word with birth or interest
- 57 Winter coat?
- 60 Crude metal

Answers to Previous Crossword:

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

Horoscope

What turns you on?

KAIRI LISING | ARTS & CULTURE EDITOR

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HI SLUTS! It's that wonderfully wet time of year again when Kaimin Sutra comes knocking. We've been saving ourselves for you and now we're finally ready to give in to all your base desires. We won't be gentle and we're keeping the lights on for this one, so sit back and take it like the good little Kaimin reader you are. Everyone has that one thing their eyes or hands or mouth immediately go to. For some, it's the classic T&A. For others? Something more perverse is their prerogative. Well, how about you? What revs your engine?

AQUARIUS (JAN. 20-FEB. 18): Baby got back! Your turn-on is a good, solid back. You say it's because of posture and that's attractive blah blah blah. Let's be real. Backshots are always on your mind. Hey, game recognizes game.

PISCES (FEB. 19-MARCH

20: You've got the number one turn on, Pisces. Everyone knows that hips are elite. No matter what gender you're attracted to, we all gotta admit that we love a slutty little waist. You just want a sip of that hip and no one can blame you.

ARIES (MARCH

21-APRIL 19: You have a catch phrase, Aries. "I hate to see you go, but I love to watch you leave." Dat ass is your turn on and a good ass is worth its weight in gold. Sure, it might be a little basic, but I accept you for the butt lover that you are.

TAURUS (APRIL 20-MAY 20): You and Aries are two sides of the same perverted coin. The best for you is some good ol' chest. Boobs, pecs and breasts are your forte. I would say, "Eyes up here, buddy," but who am I to judge? We're all in the same perverted coin purse.

GEMINI (MAY 21-JUNE 20): I'm really trying to not to kink shame on this one, Gemini. But feet? I could understand Capricorn, but something about being

turned on by grippers is something else. I do applaud your bravery, though. No one is more outspoken than a motherfucker who loves feet.

CANCER (JUNE 21-JULY 22): Alright, I'll be honest. I'm a Cancer and I like shoulders. I know my fellow Cancerians will agree with me. Nothing sexier than a nice strong upper body. I mean, there are so many possibilities ... so much space for activities ... you get the idea.

LEO (JULY 23-AUG. 22): Whatever dude. We get that you're a hopeless romantic. You say your biggest turn-on is someone's eyes. Aww, so cute. NOT. Get more perverted like the rest of us Leo. Join the club. The water is warm.

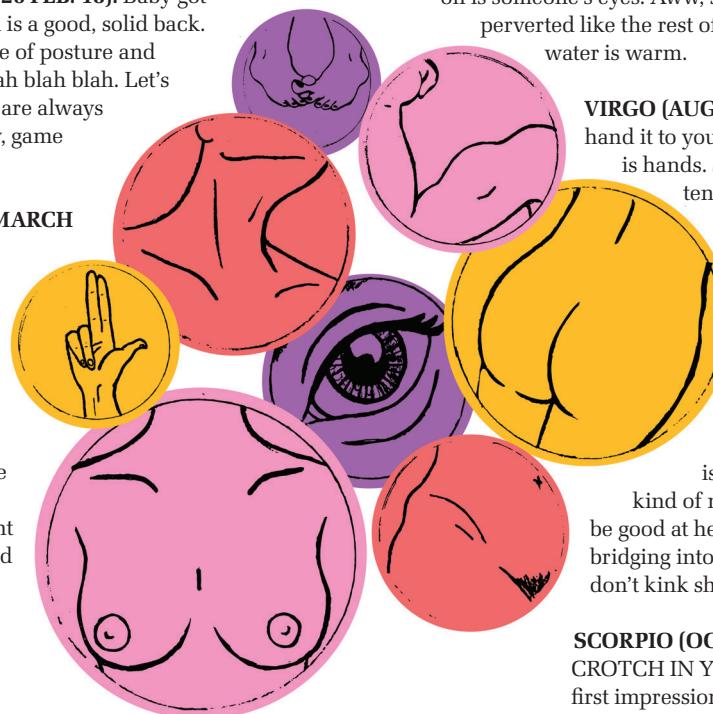
VIRGO (AUG. 23-SEP. 22): I've got to hand it to you, Virgo, what turns you on is hands. Something about rippling tendons and veins popping is more than enough to send your ankles between your ears. Underrated pick, good on you.

LIBRA (SEP. 23-OCT. 22): A hot person walks down the street and your first thought is "Wow, what a neck!" The kind of neck that says "They've gotta be good at head." I'd say you could be bridging into serial killer territory, but I don't kink shame.

SCORPIO (OCT. 23-NOV. 21): BOOM! CROTCH IN YO FACE! You're not one for first impressions, but maybe you're one for first objectifications? I mean, I get it. When someone is packing heat there's nothing wrong with taking a gander at the gun safe.

SAGITTARIUS (NOV. 22-DEC. 21): You prefer someone who could squash you like a bug, Sag. The first thing your eyes go to is a person's biceps. You've got this fantasy of a strong-armed individual whisking you off your feet with just one arm. You know ... those arms can do a lot more than just lifting.

CAPRICORN (DEC. 22-JAN. 19): I'd call you an old soul, Capricorn. You're just so sweet and innocent that your gaze will only grace the joint connecting someone's foot and their shin. For you, a freshly bare ankle is more than enough to get your panties around your own ankles.



BARRETT CLEMENT | MONTANA KAIMIN

University assures student safety after asbestos settlement

AIDAN GRAHAM | NEWS REPORTER

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After seven years of disputes, parents at the University of Montana received settlements over asbestos exposure in McGill Hall's daycare center in 2019.

The University refuted claims of wrongdoing, settling with impacted families last December for a total of \$850,000.

While asbestos still remains in multiple campus facilities, the University has continued to ensure student safety. Additionally, UM claims its plans going forward involve greater transparency toward faculty and students, as well as updated procedures for maintenance, abatement and emergency response regarding asbestos.

"If there were instances where we did not feel students were safe, we would pull them out," UM spokesperson Dave Kuntz said.

In January 2019, after inspection of University HVAC systems, UM employees discovered asbestos in the building's ventilation system as well as on surfaces in the ASUM Daycare Center on the building's first floor. While UM hygienists claimed the exposure was comparable to normal adult working conditions, the effects of exposure on young children have not been studied.

Over 16 parents of children at the daycare center sued the University of Montana, with settlements lasting until December 2025. Additionally, McGill Hall closed from January to March of 2019, with asbestos abatements costing the University over \$200,000.

According to a 2026 interview with KPAX, both the University and the families found closure through the settlement.

"We're really glad that this has come to a conclusion so that the University can move on, and also a lot of the families involved can too," Kuntz said.

Parents in the settlement could not be reached for comment.

If microscopic asbestos fibers are disturbed, they gain the possibility to aerosolize, attaching to dust particles and becoming airborne.

When breathed in, asbestos may scar lungs, cause respiratory dysfunction and increase cancer risk. According to the National Cancer Institute, negative health effects can occur from any rate of exposure and may take years to appear.

"There's huge safety procedures for all this. Asbestos is a big deal, and anything built before, I think '78 or so, has asbestos in it," said Mark Hlebichuk, head of UM Environmental Health and Safety. "We



UM's Charles H. Clapp Building contains asbestos and is expected to be demolished in within the decade.

HENRY DOELLINGER | MONTANA KAIMIN

use precautions to coat, cover, remove what we can and treat vulnerable areas."

According to UM historical records, over half of all buildings on campus grounds were built before 1978, including student housing such as Aber, Miller, Jesse Hall and the Craighead-Sission villages.

The University maintained that asbestos on UM property poses no negative health effects unless disturbed.

The UM 2023 Asbestos Management Plan states that disturbances, whether through renovation, maintenance or demolition, will be preceded by abatement procedure, allowing minimum exposure to workers, students and faculty.

UM Health and Safety confirmed its commitment to consistent testing across campus, student access to those results and plans to work with experts outside the University in an exposure event.

"We know where it's at, where it is on campus and where those most immediate threats are," Kuntz said. "That's where our responsibilities are."

According to the University, asbestos abatement on campus may cost UM

millions of dollars on top of additional renovation or demolition costs.

"Abatement alone will add about \$1 million to the demolition costs," Kuntz said in regard to the demolition of the Clapp Building.

The plan included new protocols for maintenance workers, as well as a list of academic buildings containing a higher disturbance risk for maintenance workers to be aware of. Buildings listed include Main Hall, the Math Building, Natural Sciences, Forestry and Stone Hall.

Additionally, the University of Montana, according to management plans, has banned the use of asbestos in any further construction projects.

Future plans for abatement have been discussed, according to the University. The Office of Risk Management could not be reached for comment.

While asbestos remains a concern on campus grounds, the University remains positive in both the assurance of safety and future safety management.

Asbestos Containing Materials In This Building:

- Fireproofing on building steel
- Contaminated ceiling tile
- Floor tile
- Floor tile mastic
- Cement (transite) board on inside of exterior walls
- Roofing material
- Laboratory bench tops (black)
- Mudded pipe fitting insulation

DO NOT – cut, grind, drill or otherwise damage these materials.

DO NOT – move lay-in ceiling tiles.

DO NOT – run temporary wire or tubing above ceiling.
DO NOT – hang plants or anything else from ceiling grid or tiles.
DO NOT – change light bulbs, etc.

DO NOT – sand asbestos floor tiles or backing material. Use only low-speed buffing and burnishing methods.

Where there are exposed beams in the room, do not disturb the fireproofing.

Call Facilities Services at ext. 6091 for assistance or to report damaged asbestos.

A sign in the Clapp Building warns of asbestos on Feb. 9.
HENRY DOELLINGER | MONTANA KAIMIN

First female dean announced at College of Forestry



Libby Metcalf, the first female dean of the College of Forestry at UM, poses for a picture in the Schreiber Gym during the set up for the Foresters' Ball on Feb. 5. **WESTON FUDGE | MONTANA KAIMIN**

SUNRISE Saloon
Missoula's only Country Western Saloon!

2/13 **Neal Elder @9PM!**

2/14 **Valentine's karaoke hosted by PRO DJ@9PM!**

2/17 **Dance Lessons by Misfit Country Dancing @7:15PM!**

2/18 **BINGO @7!**

Tuesdays & Thursdays Karaoke by PRO DJ @9PM!

1101 Strand Ave, Missoula, MT 59801

JOCELYN HOOD | NEWS REPORTER
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The W.A. Franke College of Forestry recently announced Libby Metcalf as its new dean, making her the first female dean at the college and breaking a 112-year run of male deans.

Metcalf, 44, came to the University of Montana in 2010 as an assistant professor and has had many roles in her 16 years at UM.

Previously, Metcalf has been a program director for the parks, tourism and recreation management program, a co-chair for the department of society and conservation, the associate dean for the College of Forestry. She became the interim dean starting in July 2025.

"When I first started, we had this wall of the former deans in one of our conference rooms," Metcalf said. "There were like 20 pictures, and they were all these men in suits. I remember a few of us women who were faculty, together looking at that wall and saying, 'Wow, something has to change. We've had this legacy too long.'"

Metcalf said she never imagined she'd be the change.

UM spokesperson Dave Kuntz said having a female dean is representative of the student population. Kuntz said the ratio of female to male students is almost even in the College of Forestry, and the campus as a whole is majority female.

"If we were to look back 15 or 20 years, it would have been a significantly higher male proportion, so having a female leader is starting to accurately reflect the proportion of female students studying in the college," Kuntz said.

According to Beth Hubble, an instructor in the women's, gender and sexuality studies program, five of the graduate students pursuing a certificate in that program and two of the professors teaching in it are also in the College of Forestry.

Hubble said it's good for those students and faculty in both programs to have a female leader, and that the faculty members she works with said they were excited.

"[Science, technology, engineering and math] have often been dominated by men and have been dominated by white men," Hubble said. "One of the

barriers to people getting involved in those fields is when you can't see yourself achieving that highest level, so you can't have a role model."

Metcalf didn't see many women in leadership positions growing up or in graduate school. She said she wished she had seen more representation of women, particularly those who managed families and worked simultaneously.

According to Kuntz, strong leadership in the College of Forestry is "critical" because of the school's uniqueness in Montana. Kuntz said the College of Forestry is one of UM's biggest draws for out-of-state students, particularly those from urban areas, to study things like forestry, wildlife biology or hydrology.

Metcalf will take on several new projects as dean, such as breaking ground on a new facility between the Clapp Building and the Forestry Building to house the growing programs.

"We're really at a point where the college is ready to shift into the next year, and the University thinks she's the right leader to get us there," Kuntz said.

However, Metcalf said her main objective is connection.

"I had one simple goal for the year when I started in the fall, which was to build a community, and that's what we've done," she said.

Alden Whitney, a 22-year-old senior forestry major from Olympia, Washington, and UM's student chapter chair for the Society of American Foresters, said he appreciates her efforts to connect with students.

"She's always been really receptive to coming in to help out students," Whitney said. "She's gone out of her way to make extra commitments to the Society of American Foresters chapter, with helping to get us to nationals, hanging out at the national convention with us and helping to get alumni back together."

Metcalf said that diversity in leadership is important, and while it's daunting, she is "beyond excited" to have her new role at UM.

"Being able to step into a more senior leadership role, like the dean, feels like the right next step for me in my career, and it feels like I'm doing it in the place that I care so deeply about," Metcalf said.

AFFORDABLE LOVE

Want to avoid going broke this Valentine's Day? The Montana Kaimin has your next date night covered.

Story by Elle Daniel
Photos by Henry Doellinger

Consider for a moment a Valentine's Day scenario. Last year you and your partner enjoyed a formal date night at a fancy restaurant. It took some work, but you saved up to go to one of the more expensive restaurants in town and you had a lovely, very traditional Valentine's Day. This year, though, you're looking to mix it up — not like that. For that, go read the Kaimin Sutra.

Valentine's Day is an economic juggernaut. In 2025 alone, the National Retail Federation reported a record-breaking \$27.5 billion spent on Valentine's Day, up by \$2 billion from 2024. Roughly \$5.4 billion of that was spent on an evening out.

There are plenty of fancy locations in town for anyone looking to enjoy a formal date night. A dinner at the downtown 1889 steakhouse costs \$62 for an 8 ounce filet mignon, or closer to \$50 at the golf-club adjacent, hillside restaurant, The Keep. Both have a litany of appetizers and cocktails, and both offer a classically romantic, candlelit aesthetic — particularly at 1889, with its table arrangements and dark furniture.

There's also a long list of well-arranged bouquets available at Bitterroot Flower Shop. The cheapest goes for \$41, but others, including roses, quickly climb into hundreds of dollars. All of these are great

Valentine's Day options for dinner and flowers, if you can afford them.

But if those options are out of your price range and you're still looking for a romantic way to spend Valentine's without declaring bankruptcy, or you're single or planning to spend it with friends in the true spirit of Galentine's, there are a litany of fun places and events in town for you to explore.

IT'S A LOVE STORY

If dinner and a movie is the go-to, consider going to the Roxy Theater for what are arguably some of the best romance films of all time.

"If you're looking for a date night, we've got you covered," said Roxy programming director Mike Emmons. "I think [the

Roxy's] just a very comforting place, it's a very warm and inviting place. If you're looking to have a low-key Valentine's Day, we're perfect."

Located just across the street from Big Dipper, the Roxy skips on the massive, IMAX-sized screens in favor of smaller, intimate theaters. It offers all the classic concessions, like house-made popcorn and a selection of candies and sodas. Cinephiles over 21 can get wine or beer to enjoy as well.

The Roxy keeps the pre-show trailers to a minimum, only previewing what's upcoming on its schedule. While viewers don't have to sit through 40 minutes of trailers and commercials, it's still worth it to get there early to get good seats.

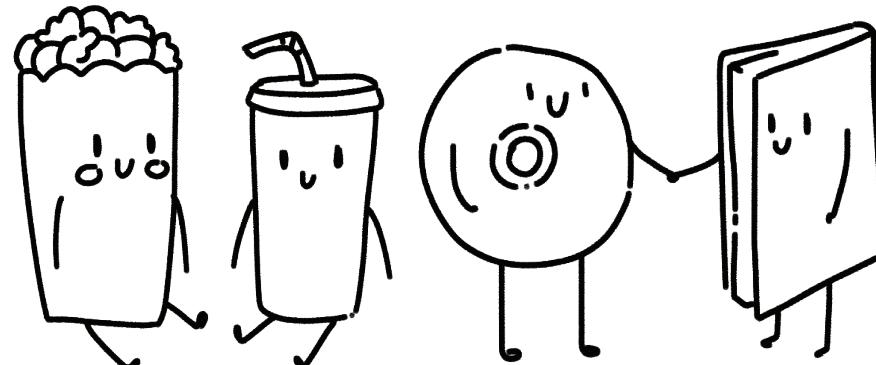
The theater will host multiple showings

of "When Harry Met Sally," a rom-com starring Meg Ryan and Billy Crystal, two college graduates who roadtrip together to start the rest of their lives in New York City. Spanning over a decade, the pair find their lives intertwining ever closer as they navigate the city, their friendship and their love lives.

Part of the Nora Ephron's trio of romantic comedies, it's known for its iconic scene where Ryan's character fakes an orgasm right there at the table, in front of her sandwich and a packed diner of New Yorkers — resulting in the all-time one-liner, "I'll have what she's having."

"When Harry Met Sally" is playing at the Roxy on both Friday and Saturday. If the soul yearns for something more whimsical, the theater is also showing "The Princess Bride," the 1987 fantasy comedy starring Cary Elwes and Robin Wright as Westley and Princess Buttercup. It's zany and heartfelt, and a perfect movie for anyone looking to laugh. Both films were directed by Rob Reiner.

"We're dedicated this entire month to [Rob Reiner's] legacy," Emmons said. "It just made sense to play 'Princess Bride' and 'When Harry Met Sally' over Valentine's Day. I think both are going to be packed. It's going to be wonderful." Reiner and his wife were found dead in their home on Dec. 14. Tickets cost \$10 per person and can





be purchased online or at the Roxy's box office, though availability on the day may be limited as the smaller theater sizes can often result in shows selling out ahead of time.

The theater is also showing Emerald Fennell's adaptation of "Wuthering Heights," starring Jacob Elordi and Margot Robbie.

Of course, if delightful romantic comedies and sweeping gothic romances aren't your flavor of romance, Ear Candy Music is sponsoring a special Friday the 13th showing of "Friday the 13th Part VIII: Jason Takes Manhattan."

For stay-in movie nights, there's always the buffet of films and TV available on streaming services. Platforms like Tubi and Freevee are free with ads, and YouTube offers a small host of movies anyone can watch for free with ads in all different genres.

The Missoula Public Library also offers a collection of movies on DVD for anyone to rent, as one Instagram user recommended in a poll by the Kaimin.

But not all stories have to be on the screen.

At FMC Books, a romance bookstore located downtown, a table decorated with pink novels and little hearts stands out at the front of the bookstore. The owner, Tara Hamma, had an easy time finding entirely pink books to put out on a specialty display for the holiday.

Even though the bookstore has never been open during the Valentine's Day holiday, Hamma said, "It's kind of like Valentine's Day every day here."

Books, particularly romances like the ones sold at FMC Books, which stands for Female Main Character Books, could provide an option for those celebrating Valentine's Day on their own.

"Books don't ghost," Hamma said. "You don't have to wait around for a book to call you back."

Hamma recommended the "Raiders of the Lost Heart" series by Jo Segura, a tongue-in-cheek genderbent take on the Indiana Jones films, for a Galentine's Day book club. The bookstore also plans to offer a specialty Galentine's Day craft night on Feb. 18, co-hosted by Bathing Beauties Beads store owner Katie Ghen-Simpson.

Cozy local theaters, stay-in movie nights and delectable romance novels are three possible options, but if you're looking for something more involved, or a night out with more opportunities to talk and food to dig into, there are other places downtown waiting for you.

PIZZA AND PINBALL

Gild sits along the Hip Strip by the Beartracks Bridge, a brewpub known for its selection of beer on tap, small plates of Mexican food and the surprise it keeps in the basement.

Beneath the tiled taproom on the first floor hides a densely packed arcade. Pinball machines line the rough stone walls. There are soft, warm lights to offset the neon glow of the space. Music pumps through the room, clashing appropriately against the electronic whirring of the nonstop arcade games and the chatter of people.

The space is cramped, but not so much that it feels claustrophobic. Down here among the cacophony of "Jaws"- and "Stranger Things"-themed pinball machines, a classic Pac-Man cabinet and more, it's easy for a person to feel like they've found the spot where the nightlife is happening.

The fact that the arcade allows patrons under 21 years before 9 p.m. makes it even



FMC Books in downtown Missoula features a variety of romantic literature recommended for Valentine's Day reading on Feb. 5.



FMC Books, a romance bookstore in downtown Missoula, is preparing for its first Valentine's Day in business on Feb. 5.



Hudson Vegoren serves pizza for a customer at Pie Hole in downtown Missoula on Feb. 5. The restaurant offers a variety of affordable by-the-slice options and stays open until 3 a.m.



Abbey Ostheimer, left, and Logan Bosak, right, take turns playing their favorite game, *Ice Cold Beer*, in Gild's arcade on Feb. 6.

more enticing for the college crowd. With its own bar at the back of the room, patrons can buy 20 arcade tokens for \$5, roughly four to eight games, depending on the machine.

On February's First Friday event, one weekend shy of Valentine's Day, groups of friends, couples and families packed Gild's bar. Often, a particular pinball machine or arcade game attracted one group, where they stayed until they drank their pints of amber colored beer down to foam.

For Abbey Ostheimer and Logan Bosak, a couple still early in their relationship, an old-school wooden arcade game called "Ice Cold Beer" dominated their attention. Tucked away in a corner by the entrance, they swapped turns trying to carefully maneuver a metal ball up and past holes carved in a wooden board to score ten points.

"I just got four. Motherfucker, how did you get five?" Ostheimer asked.

"You just gotta thread the needle," Bosak replied.

While Bosak and Ostheimer agreed that Gild wasn't necessarily the most affordable place for college students to eat at, they saved money by splitting up the night between two different stops. Before finding their way into the bar-arcade, they enjoyed a few slices of pizza from Bridge Pizza just down the street.

Across the space, a small horde of former Lolo Hotshot firefighters and their partners teamed up on Big Buck Hunter Reloaded. Outfitted with two fake rifles, players attempt to shoot animals, zombies, and, of all the possible options in the world, terminators from the action sci-fi franchise, "Terminator."

Gathered around the machine, they cheered and jeered at the failures and successes of their friends. The group, including Dede Hayworth and her husband, former hotshot firefighter Zack Smith, felt Gild was for the most part an affordable option for couples looking for a night out.

Though, looking around the busy atmosphere, the loud chatter and thrumming music, Hayworth said, "If you want romance, it's not here."

The intimacy of Gild's bar-arcade can be created out of the small space's forced proximity and dimmed lighting. When asked for other date-night ideas, the group suggested the local dive bar, Flippers, or bowling at Westside Lanes.

But given the range of patrons, from families to friends to couples and even groups of couples like Hayworth, Smith and their friends, Gild is a great spot for anyone looking for a place where getting a drink doesn't just have to mean sitting down at a table.

Over the bridge, on the opposite end of downtown sits a walk-up restaurant known for its late-night pizza. At Pie Hole, the walls are covered in funky murals and layers of stickers. It might not have the expansive pinball machine collection, but it's cozy, casual and highly affordable at around \$4 per slice.

Pie Hole employee Morgan Peters, who's worked at the pizzeria for a little over two years, said he feels like it's a great spot for a date. Part of that, he said, is due to the seating. Most of the tables at Pie Hole are small round tables meant to seat two, with community-style bench seating in the center of the room. Peters joked that often the people who come to Pie Hole by themselves look like it's the most alone they've been all day.



Thomas Harbor, left, Zak Thom, center, and Madeline Evans, right, take turns at a shooting game in Gild's arcade on Feb. 6.

Like Gild, what the pizzeria lacks in a traditional “romantic” atmosphere, it makes up for in character. If pizza isn’t the top choice, other Pie Hole employees recommended going to Masala, an Indian restaurant also located downtown.

If those options aren’t enticing, never fear: University of Montana students and a packed Missoula events calendar have even more to find over Valentine’s Day weekend.

KEEP IT PERSONAL, NOT PRICEY

For those looking for something beyond the tradition of a dinner date or movie night, there are truly activities for everyone happening over the Valentine’s Day weekend.

From the morning to the evening, there are other opportunities like sports races and art shows, an easy way to break out of what some consider to be traditional date night ideas.

Run Wild Missoula is hosting a 5k race on

Feb. 14, starting at 10 a.m. and only costing \$20 to register. The theme of the run is ‘80s clothes, and a portion of the race’s proceeds are going to The Center, Missoula’s LGBTQ+ community center. Last year, the race donated \$2,150 to The Center.

More information on registration, start time and location can be found at the race’s website.

But running isn’t everyone’s thing, and in that case, couples, friends and anyone flying solo can visit Cringe: A Love Story, at the Missoula Midtown Event Center. The art show will display anonymous pieces showcasing embarrassing stories, love letters and more that demonstrate the enduring — and occasionally awkward — power of love and attraction. The show opens at 6 p.m. to anyone over the age of 18.

A full list of events happening around town can be found at missoulaevents.net.

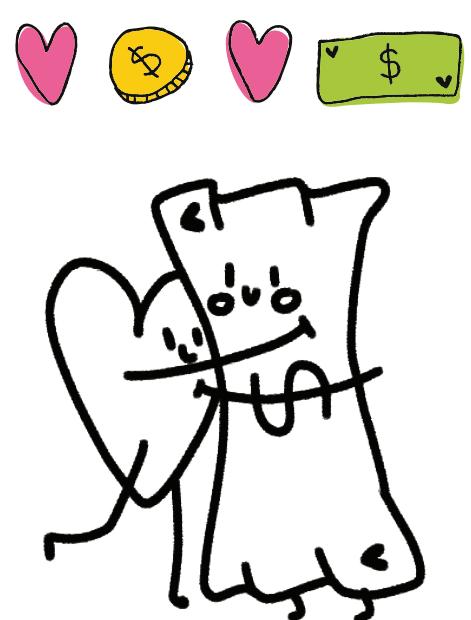
For other ideas and ways college students can enjoy date night on a budget, the Kaimin

went right to the source: college students themselves. In an online poll asking about ways to save money for date night, several users threw out suggestions.

One suggested making art together as well as keeping an eye out for free events happening around town. Others suggested buying cheap wine and holding a picnic by the river.

As for Valentine’s Day-specific plans, other students said they planned to make chocolate covered strawberries and heart-shaped pizzas.

Additionally, Valentine’s Day doesn’t have to be an evening event. There’s always going out for a hike, or having friends or a partner over to do arts and crafts. One art project went viral on TikTok and Instagram for its often ridiculous, mixed results. In the challenge, couples or friends attempt to paint portraits of each other, painting them out of view before revealing the finished — and often hilariously botched — product.



Abbey Ostheimer takes a turn at a game in Gild's arcade on Feb. 6.

YouTube has hundreds, if not thousands, of fun crafting and art projects ideas, as well as tutorials. Similarly, it also has endless pre-made trivia videos perfect for Galentine’s.

Valentine’s Day comes in many forms, and not all of them have to be expensive. After all, the holiday isn’t about extravagant gifts or fancy dinners. Originally, it wasn’t about love at all, but a Christian holiday meant to celebrate a martyr named Valentine. Over time it’s shifted its roots to something lighter and based in love.

If you’re feeling the pressure to give into the more expensive side of Valentine’s Day traditions, find something that works for you, your friends or your partner. Because ultimately, the holiday isn’t about spending money, or proving who loves their partner or their friends the most. It’s about spending time in each other’s company, no matter how it looks.

The chemistry and psychology behind love

SYDNEY MOATE | NEWS REPORTER

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Boy meets girl, boy likes girl, boy and girl experience intense chemical surge in the brain and near addictive levels of dopamine.

While going on dates and falling in love can be an exciting part of coming of age, some researchers in the fields of psychology, counseling and neuroscience have studied love and attraction from a chemical point of view to find out exactly what is going on in our brains when we meet that special someone.

Lucy Owen, a computational cognitive neuroscientist who has been teaching computer science at the University of Montana for two years, talked about three chemicals that release in the brain when experiencing attraction.

These three, oxytocin, vasopressin and dopamine, are all involved in the reward system of the brain. Oxytocin and vasopressin are bonding chemicals. Dopamine is that pleasurable, “feel good” chemical.

People get little hits of dopamine throughout the day, caused by things like scrolling social media, exercise and listening to music. Activities that produce dopamine can become addictive by causing people to keep chasing down those dopamine hits.

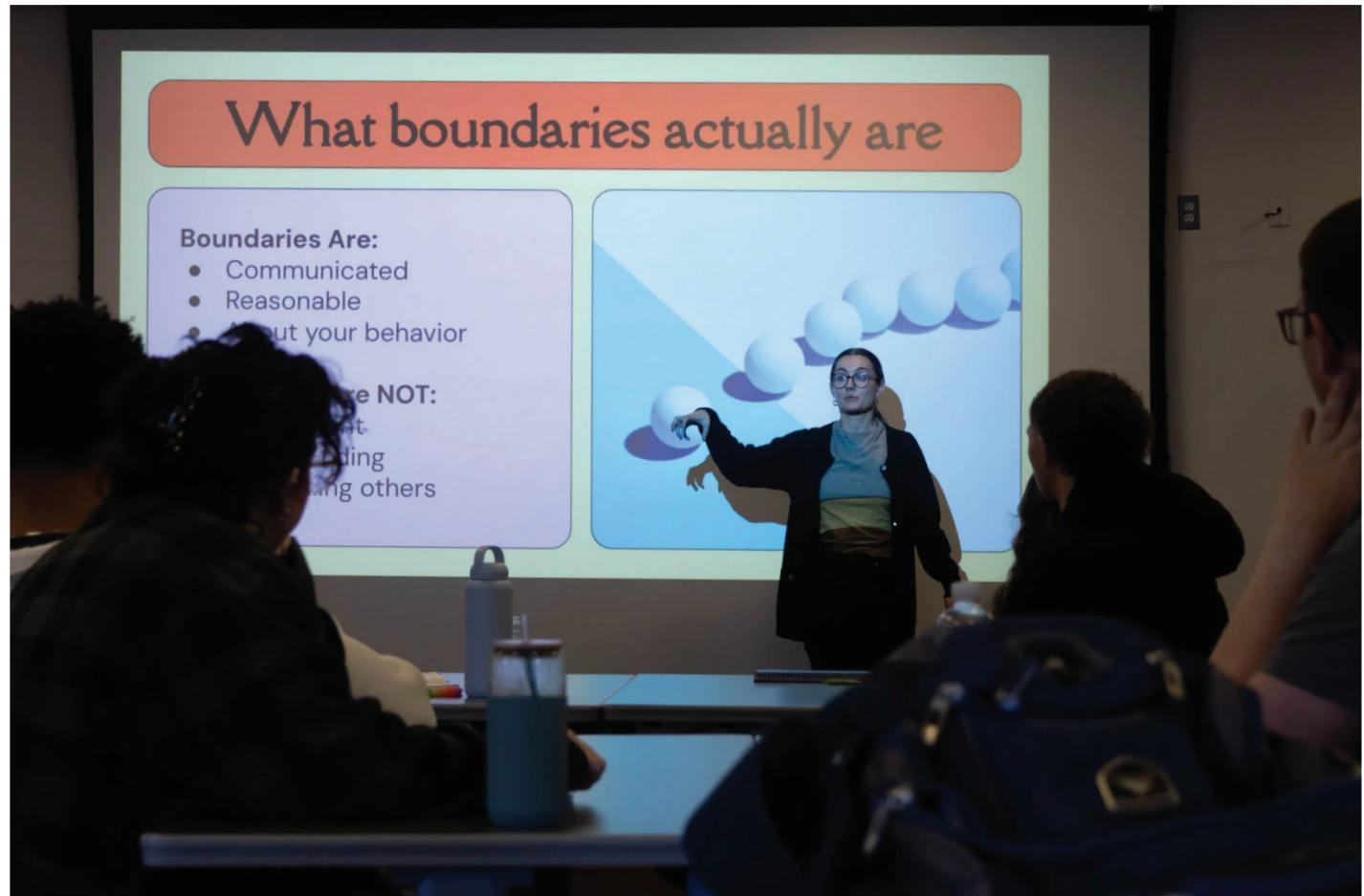
“Early love is like a drug,” Owen said. “People can become addicted to the feeling of falling in love. But lasting relationships work because there is something highly valued in the bond you make with someone. It goes above and beyond the good feeling of the early stages.”

Owen believes there are many different meanings of the word “love.” Her first instinct when she hears Valentine’s Day is of early love. But as she’s grown older, she now feels love is a dynamic state.

Love changes into bonding over time and relationships become more stable.

“All this is really happening to perpetuate the species,” she said. “Everything we do in love determines how our children view love. It’s kind of a beautiful cycle that way.”

One class on campus studies the relationships people make with each other. This semester, Intimate Relationships is taught by Isabella McShea, a 28-year-old Ph.D. student in her first year in counselor education and supervision in the counseling department.



Isabella McShea teaches her Intimate Relationships class about boundaries on Feb. 5. **WESTON FUDGE | MONTANA KAIMIN**

McShea said there are four factors of attraction: proximity, availability, attractiveness and compatibility.

McShea said there are better chances of getting to know someone more deeply depending on physical proximity. This factor can apply to any relationship.

For example, students might become really good friends with their roommate. A person could become closer to family members they live closer to. Technology has altered this factor by closing physical gaps.

“Technology can close that proximity,” McShea said.

Availability adds to the potential for attraction, McShea said. If two people have schedules that align, it can help to form a relationship, like getting out of class at the same time and walking to the cafeteria together, McShea said.

“These are logistical factors,” McShea said. “They’re not super exciting or romantic, but they do have a lot to do with who we end up being in close, intimate relationships with.”

Physical attractiveness is an obvious factor of interest. But a less obvious part of that attraction spectrum is pheromones, which are chemicals that are secreted by an organism that trigger a social response in members of the same species. There are alarm pheromones, food pheromones, sex pheromones and many others that affect behavior or physiology. These smells correlate to attraction.

McShea said it has to do with biological and evolutionary dispositions we have to be attracted to someone. A person attracted to someone with certain pheromones might have better biological and genetic compatibility with them. This could mean that if those two people had a child, their offspring may have a higher chance of survival.

The final attraction factor is compatibility, or complementarity, of a relationship — the differences that fit together.

“We might have differences, but they’re more useful together,” McShea said. “A partner that likes to cook and a partner that likes to do the dishes are complementary factors in a relationship that could lead to success, as opposed to two people that like to cook or two people that like to clean.”

While new relationships can be very exciting, they can sometimes go wrong when the excitement causes people to overlook red flags, which are toxic or unhealthy behaviors in a relationship.

McShea said our brains like novelty. “It’s fun and it’s new, it’s like watching a TV show you’ve never seen before,” McShea said. “You don’t know what’s going to happen next. You don’t know their favorite color, favorite food or what their mom is like. It’s exciting for your brain, there’s a lot of new stimulation.”

McShea said when a person watches a TV show for the first time, they’re looking at it very presently and in the moment. On

their fifth rewatch of that show, they're noticing things in the first season that come to play out in the third season. People make connections they didn't make before. They pick up on new jokes. Over time, neural connections get stronger in relationships. When a person knows someone's favorite food, it doesn't surprise them when that's what their partner wants to eat.

The same logic can apply to why people overlook unhealthy behaviors in new relationships. They don't notice red flags because they're excited by the novelty and don't have the ability to zoom out and look at the general pattern. At first, a new partner who goes out every night seems fun and exciting, but after every night for seven months, the other person in that relationship might be really tired, have slipping grades and be drinking more than they want to. What seemed at first like a spontaneous, exciting person might actually have a lifestyle that's very different from the one they want.

In McShea's couples counseling work, she has found that a lot of people go into couples counseling when the excitement has died down and they're trying to figure out if they just had a really intense initial spark that has faded once they're just living day to day life.

She compared it to the vacation effect, where a person visits Hawaii and wants to live there, but once they live there it stops feeling like a vacation because they're living a regular life and the realities of the place become clear.

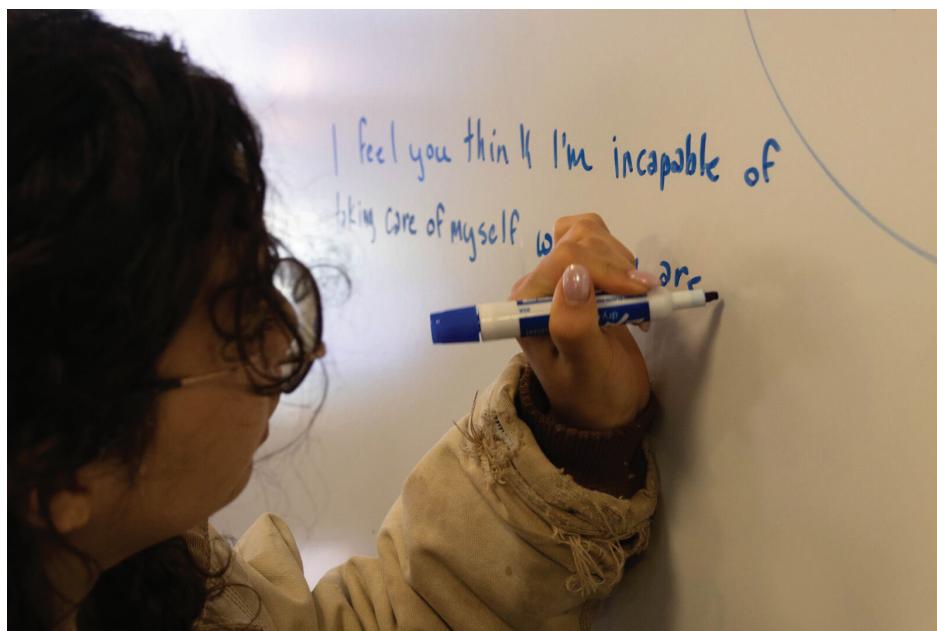
"That's not to say if I move to Hawaii, I might not love it," McShea said. "But I do have to readjust my conceptualization that it's not a vacation. And to translate that to relationships, it's not all first dates, and it's not all crazy, exciting, falling in love feelings. Those things will fade."

She said the couples who tend to have successful relationships tend to understand that relationships are going to grow and change over time. A growth mindset is key to whether or not relationships sustain.

"If you're both cooks or both cleaners, that could be your breaking point, or maybe one of you learns to love cleaning or cooking more," McShea said.

McShea said that one big thing that goes into establishing a person's "type" is the attachment theory, which says a person's early attachment experiences with parents or caregivers as children impact the way that they relate to relationships later in life.

If caregivers were absent and inconsistent in their affection, a person might exhibit a similar attachment style and be attracted to people who are not consistent, because they view that as love. People model the kind of love that was modeled for them.



Mariah Wiediccombe writes out her hypothetical response to a prompt in her Intimate Relationships class on Feb. 5.

WESTON FUDGE | MONTANA KAIMIN

"All this is really happening to perpetuate the species," Lucy Owen said. "Everything we do in love determines how our children view love. It's kind of a beautiful cycle that way."

Attachment styles are not static. They grow and change and can even do so within one relationship.

According to McShea, to break out of an unhealthy attachment style, a person can practice corrective emotional experiences. They should notice expectations that may arise. Someone ignored by their caregivers as a child may be afraid of having their boundaries ignored.

The next step is to take a risk. Try bringing it up in a low stakes environment, like with a good friend. Set a boundary and pay attention to how they respond. For example, if a person says they're feeling overwhelmed and not in a place to discuss

what's bothering their friend, they might ask that they talk about it with someone else. If that friend reacts badly, maybe they shouldn't be in that relationship. If it goes well, it sets a new attachment style.

"These corrective emotional experiences only work if we let ourselves notice them," McShea said. "You should also respect their boundaries if a friend is practicing vulnerability with you. Security isn't earned by trying harder. It's built where your needs are met with care. We can try again and again to have corrective emotional experiences with someone, but if they're not ready and mature enough to do that, then we're just going to keep getting disappointed."

McShea stressed that there are lots of misconceptions in relationships, like love at first sight or "they'll know what I need without me telling them."

In reality, relationships are more complicated than that. It's not all or nothing, things grow over time with sustained effort. There can be a lot of shame and guilt when a person doesn't have a movie romance. Healthy relationships rely on clear communication, even when people care deeply about one another. Chemistry is often about familiarity, not long term compatibility.

"Most healthy relationships just require effort, communication and adjustment, especially when things are stressful," McShea said.

While complementary traits, like who likes to cook and who likes to do the dishes, can create a strong relationship, similar interests also go a long way.

Psychology professor Bryan Cochran, who has been teaching at UM for 23 years, said, "That's one of the really big questions that psychology has a lot to say about. I think the fact that like attracts like is more substantiated than the idea that people who are opposite might be attracted to one another."

He said people who are different may have attraction, but in terms of long term relationships, it's usually the similarities and even the mundane things that keep people together. Similar daily activities, liking the same things, listening to the same music, are good traits for building a relationship.

While chasing that dopamine high and the reward centers in the brain that it activates can lead to looking for love in the wrong places, Cochran believes it's also important to take risks at a young age.

"When people are trying to figure out who they are, there's a lot of different risks," Cochran said. "But I also don't want to lose sight of the fact that if people don't try to figure out who they are during this time, they're potentially missing out on a bigger opportunity. For 18 to 25-year-old college students, it's a risky period of time in life for a lot of reasons, but it's also one of the most exciting periods of life too."

He said that when college students are exploring their beliefs, their attitudes, what they like and what they don't like, that has to do with how they might engage with partners, and that's just an important part of the process.

Boy gets girl. Boy falls for girl. Girl falls for boy. Boy and girl respect each other. Boy and girl communicate effectively. Boy and girl live happily ever after.

A global court craze turns competitive at UM

ABIGAIL STENKAMP | NEWS REPORTER

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The sound of a plastic ball whacking against a stiff paddle has become a distinctive part of the commotion heard on the University of Montana's lively campus as well as Missoula's active community.

In 2021, Mindy May, a faculty member at UM, wished to play the sport she loved closer to where she worked. There were a few students who also showed interest — thus, the club was born.

"It was a grassroot start," May said. "We played out on the tennis courts, and we drew out our own lines with chalk. From there it just grew and grew."

Ryan Labus, a marketing student from Burbank, California, and co-president of the pickleball club said, "The club has really grown in the last year or two. The pickleball club is very inviting. It doesn't matter what skill level you are, just come and have a great attitude and you'll have a great time."

To ensure that members of the club get to meet new people and play at different levels during practices, each attendee is given a number, and from those numbers pairings are randomized. This ensures that members play with different people for each practice.

"Pickleball is like if tennis and ping-pong had a baby," May said.

At its core, the game is rather simple. It involves hitting a plastic ball with a paddle on a small court, typically played with two people on one team, but can be played in singles as well. A player can only make points on their serve and must serve the ball diagonally into the square across from them.

"It's one of those sports that anyone can just pick up and play," said Hannah Worden, a pharmacy student, Missoula native and president of the competitive pickleball team. "Tennis is one of those sports that is a little more difficult, the minutia of the shots and how to hit the ball takes a lot of technical skill. However, with pickleball, people who haven't even played a sport before can pick it up rather easily."

Allison Molloy, a new club member and finance student from Burbank, California, said, "Not only does this help improve someone's game, it's just a really fun environment to get to know new people that you wouldn't meet otherwise."

The pickleball club is open to the public.

Megan Guenther, a four-year club member and senior studying integrated physiology from Kewaskum, Wisconsin, said, "A lot of the non-students that show up have good



UM pickleball club member Ian McAlpin plays a doubles match in the Fitness and Recreation Center on Feb. 4.

ABIGAIL STENKAMP | MONTANA KAIMIN

knowledge on how to play. It gives club members more variation of the people you play against, and it makes you a better player."

From the popularity the club has gained this year it has created two teams, a competitive team and a leisure team. The competitive team competes in tournaments around the Northwest. The team participated in a tournament last semester in Boise, Idaho, and have plans to compete in Seattle next month.

David Firth, the club's competitive coach said, "Typically at any tournament there is going to be men's doubles, women's doubles, mixed doubles and sometimes singles as well."

This gives students three different opportunities to play in a tournament.

"Students who do want to take their game to a higher level will have that opportunity with this competition team," May said. "It's just a great way for students to showcase their skills, continue to grow the sport, but also promote the University of Montana as well."

"Tournaments are usually levelled," Firth said. "This means you get to compete against

people who are at the same level as you, so if you're a beginner you can compete against other beginners. If you're intermediate, you compete against intermediate and if you're advanced you compete against the advanced players."

This style of play allows participants to be competitive no matter their skill level and helps promote an inviting atmosphere both at practices and during matches.

As a result of pickleball's competitive yet welcoming community, the sport gains new supporters and players daily.

"It's become a national phenomenon," May said. "It has overtaken our nation. This wave of pickleball is just covering everyone."

The sport made an impressive step in January 2026, as Anna Leigh Waters signed a deal with Nike. Waters has won 181 gold medals and 39 triple crowns making her the top-ranked professional player.

At 18, Waters is the first pickleball player to sign a deal with Nike. In a statement on the deal, Waters said, "Growing up, I watched my idols wear the Swoosh in their biggest moments, so joining the Nike family is a dream realized."

This partnership is said to bring more recognition to the pickleball community.

"The signing with Nike is a huge deal," Worden said. "Nike is not just a United States thing, it shows other countries that pickleball is becoming a big thing. It can also show people that it's not just a sport but a lifestyle that anyone can get into."

The University's leisure pickleball club practices in the Schreiber Gym on Mondays 4 to 6 p.m. and Wednesdays 6 to 8 p.m. The competitive team practices off campus, at PEAK Racquet Club on Wednesdays and Fridays 8:30 to 10 p.m.

"The only way to get better is by doing, the first step is to go out and see if you even like the sport," Guenther said. "We also have people at the club who are willing to teach new people how to play and be patient with them."

The club is free to attend, and supplies paddles and balls to players.

"What I love about it personally is you get to meet a ton of people that you may not have met before," Firth said. "It's just a wonderful opportunity to meet people from across campus that you might not ever meet any other way."

Callie Wilson's record-breaking arrival at Montana

TIAAN VALDEZ | SPORTS REPORTER

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For Callie Wilson, the goal was simple: to run.

By the end of the Montana State Bobcat Challenge in Bozeman, the University of Montana freshman broke two school records and clocked the third fastest 200 meter time in Big Sky Conference history — a performance that showcased both her speed and potential.

In just her first indoor season wearing maroon and silver, Wilson delivered a performance that announced her arrival on the collegiate stage and signaled what could be a standout career in the sprints for Montana track and field.

"In the moment, it felt really great just knowing I had [gained a personal record]," Wilson said. "Once I crossed the line, it kind of hit me what I had just done, and that made it even more exciting."

Wilson won both the women's 60-meter and 200-meter races at the meet, setting a new school record in each event. Her 200-meter time made her the third-fastest in Big Sky Conference history and the 13th fastest athlete in the women's NCAA.

Wilson credited much of her motivation and improvement to the teammates she trains alongside every day, especially during the long and often challenging indoor season.

"I train better when I'm with the team because they always push me to reach my limits," Wilson said. "It was hard not being around them and having to train by myself during winter break, so a lot of my motivation comes from wanting to show up for my team and match their energy."

Wilson's transition to collegiate competition has required a mental adjustment, particularly as she competes in events like the 400 meter sprint, a race she once approached with hesitation. "Don't be scared, just run it in," Wilson said, recalling advice she received from a teammate or coach. "No matter what, you're going to be tired, so you might as well run as fast as you can."

Embracing discomfort rather than avoiding it helped shape Wilson's approach both on and off the track. Balancing the demands of being a Division I athlete while pursuing a challenging academic path has required discipline and organization.

Wilson, who is majoring in human biology, has plans to pursue a master's degree in forensic science after graduation.

Managing practices, travel, and coursework comes down to time management. "I try to plan my days so I have time to get my homework done after practice and not let things pile up," Wilson said. "I just try to take everything one day at a time and stay organized."

Despite the pressure that can come with competition and academics, Wilson has found joy in the daily routine of being a student-athlete. Some of her favorite memories with Griz athletics have come not from meets, but from practices. Being out there with her teammates, laughing and competing together, has made the experience worth it, she said.

Away from the track, Wilson finds simple ways to recharge after long weeks of classes and training. "I usually just like to lie in my bed and watch movies or shows," Wilson said. "It's a simple way for me to shut my brain off, relax and reset before the next week."

Wilson grew up in Washington, spending her early years in Yakima before moving to Bonney Lake. She said her hometown experiences helped shape who she is today.

"My neighbours and I were really close, and we were always playing together growing up," Wilson said. "Those friendships, along with my friends and family back home, made it such a fun and memorable place to grow up, and I think that sense of community really stuck with me."

Wilson continued to build momentum at the MSU Carignan Classic on Feb. 6, where she beat her own personal record in a head-to-head meet against Bozeman. The performance marked another step forward in an already strong indoor season, reinforcing her consistency as the competition level rises.

"It is a very difficult thing to have your breakout meet and then come back two weeks later with so much expectation," head coach Doug Fraley said. "Not only that you've put on yourself as an athlete, but also that everyone has of you after a performance like [Wilson] had."

With each meet, Wilson has shown steady improvement, a trend that hasn't gone unnoticed by Fraley. As the indoor season continues and the Big Sky Championships approach, her recent performance is really just the beginning.

"To come and run 7.35 [seconds] twice, better her school record, and then finish with a really fast 200 [meter] at the end of the meet is something that we are very proud of," Fraley said.

For Wilson, however, the goal remains the same: keep improving, trust the work, and lean on her teammates along the way. If her performance at the MSU Bobcat Challenge is any indication, the record books may not be done hearing her name.



Callie Wilson races in the women's 200 meter event during the MSU Bobcat Challenge on Jan. 23.

CONTRIBUTED | UM MARKETING

SPORTS BRIEFS

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BOBBY 2.0

Following former head coach Bobby Hauck's resignation and announcement joining the University of Illinois's defensive coaching team, the University of Montana announced Bobby Kennedy to take over as head coach.

Kennedy enters the position with over 30 years of coaching experience in NCAA football, even leading the University of Texas to a national title in 2008. He has led teams to 17 bowl games, including two Rose Bowls and one Fiesta Bowl, in his career.

While Kennedy is entering the head coach role for UM, he also hopes to be a role model for the players.

"We are going to represent the University of Montana the right way. Coach Hauck has done a masterful job with these guys in what we do, and what we represent. That's going to continue," said Kennedy in a recent press conference. "We are going to get our degree from the University of Montana. We are going to go to class and represent ourselves in the right way."

As the Grizzlies 38th head coach, Kennedy said he hoped to put the Griz forward and produce a national title with the Griz.

"Let's not forget about football. Our goal is to win the Big Sky Championship, and ultimately the national championship," Bobby Kennedy said. "That's what we are setting dead aim for. Trust me when I say this, as long as I'm in this position, that's going to be my goal, that's going to be my purpose, every day."

BRAWL OF THE WILD WEEKEND

On Saturday, the Lady Griz and Men's basketball team will take on the Montana State Bobcats in the Adams Center. The University has a packed schedule throughout the day to bring excitement to the event.

The day starts with the Lady Griz game at 2 p.m. and then moves onto the bonfire pep rally completing the game. To conclude the night, fans can make their way back into the Adams Center for the men's game at 7 p.m.

Both the Griz and Bobcat's men's basketball teams enter the game with 14-11 record.

Money Williams, who leads the Griz with 485 points, takes on Jed Miller, who leads the Bobcats with 360 points.

The Lady Griz are currently 7-16 on the season, compared against the Bobcat's 16-6 season record.

Avery Waddington will be leading the charge against MSU for the Griz with 297 points on the season.



Haircuts and jail cells

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Darkness envelops the University of Montana, but the Schreiber Gym comes alive. Students gather beneath a circle of Lodgepole pines and Douglas-fir to participate in a tradition more than a century old.

On Feb. 6 and 7, students in the University of Montana Forestry Club hosted the 107th annual Foresters' Ball. Months of planning and hard work culminated in the transformation of Schreiber Gym into a makeshift logging town, complete with a post office, chapel, jail and barbershop. While some parts of town, such as the chapel and barbershop, are managed by outside help, the rest are managed by what's called the "posse."

The posse is a group of mostly first-year or transfer students at the College of Forestry who are required to volunteer in order to access the scholarships funded by donations to the Foresters' Ball.

Emme Priest, a UM Advocate majoring in geosciences and environmental science from Grand Rapids, Michigan, started the night working the post office at a cramped station next to a newspaper lounge.

Priest enjoyed the roles created by the town. "It's really fun. It's probably the best part of it," Priest said.

At the post office, guests can buy postcards for the Foresters' Ball. The station also features a mailbox where guests can deposit their postcards, which will be mailed after the event.

At a small wooden jail cell located between the stage and the barbershop, friends could decide who they would pay \$1 to have arrested, and debate who would pay the \$2 bail fee.

"The prison is probably the best, because you just get to go after people," Priest said.

Across the stage from the jail, dance-goers lined up for a \$3 marriage or \$5 divorce. The chapel is traditionally managed by members of UM's Delta Gamma sorority.

"It's a longstanding tradition to have Delta Gamma running the chapel, and so to keep that going on, I just try to make sure we have girls who are willing, and I also love working in the chapel myself," said Cassidy Johnson, a former forestry major who stays involved with the Forestry Club to keep in contact with old friends.

One of the most popular stations isn't run by students, but by Brian Foster, a barber who owns Master Barber barbershop in Missoula.

"The Foresters' Ball committee reached out to us and asked us to come over and cut hair," Foster said. "It's a really fun event, and we just love being a part of it."

At midnight on Saturday it all came to an end. The small town that had popped up for one weekend disappeared, not to be seen again until next year.

"Forestry is a very, very small world, and this just makes it feel so much bigger with the community that's around here," Forestry Club member Miranda Allen said.



TOP LEFT: Brian Foster, owner of Master Barber in Missoula, cuts Alpine Griffin's hair at the 107th annual Foresters' Ball.

TOP RIGHT: Kira Weter, left, and Malakhi Spint pose for a photo by Taylee VanSickle after getting married at the Foresters' Ball on Feb. 7.

LEFT: Students could get a haircut for \$25 at the Ball's barbershop.

BELLOW: A guest laughs with their friend, who they paid to have arrested.

