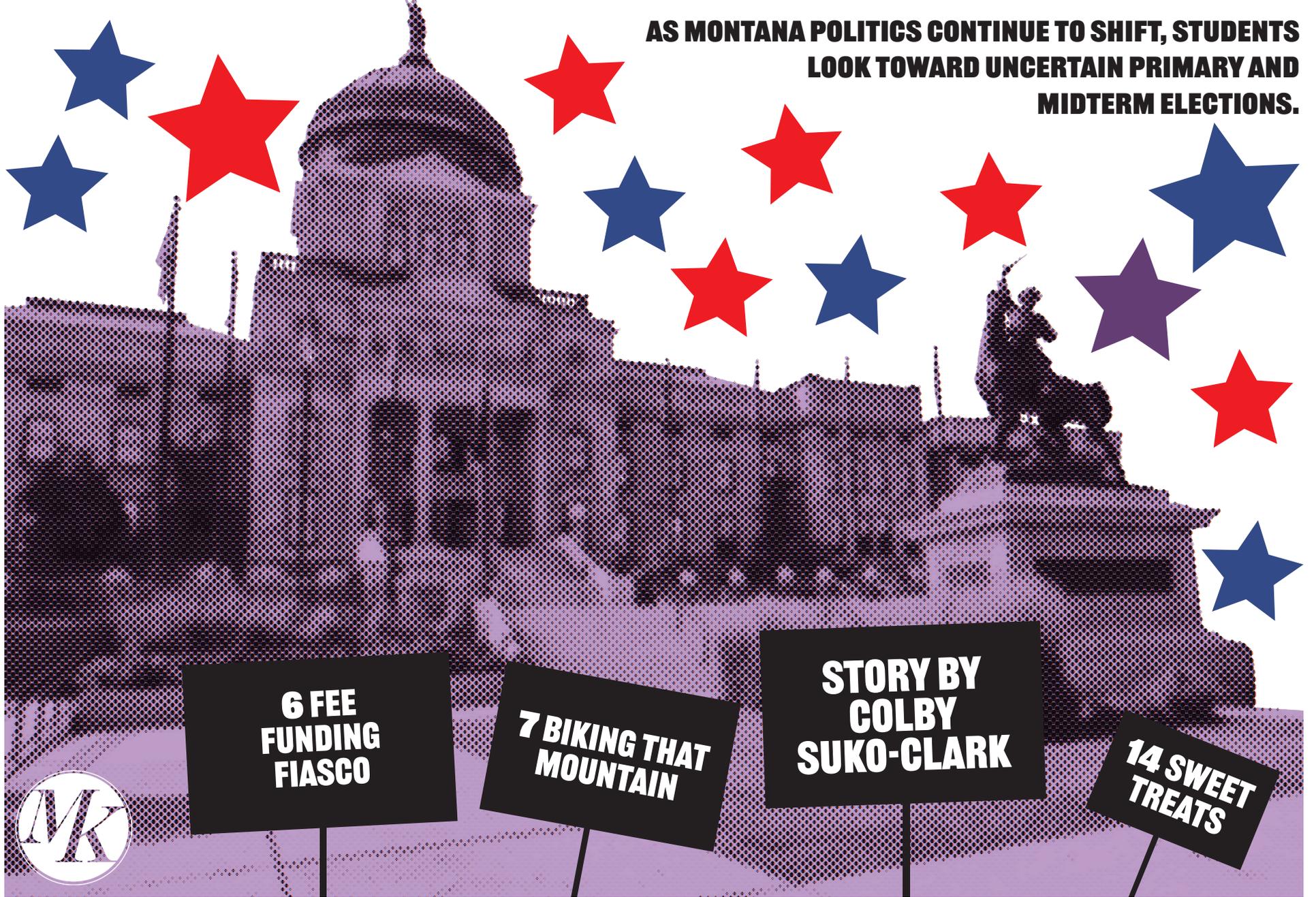


POLITICAL CHANGES STR CONCERN ON CAMPUS

AS MONTANA POLITICS CONTINUE TO SHIFT, STUDENTS
LOOK TOWARD UNCERTAIN PRIMARY AND
MIDTERM ELECTIONS.



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COVER GRAPHIC BY LILY PETERSON

MONTANA KAIMIN



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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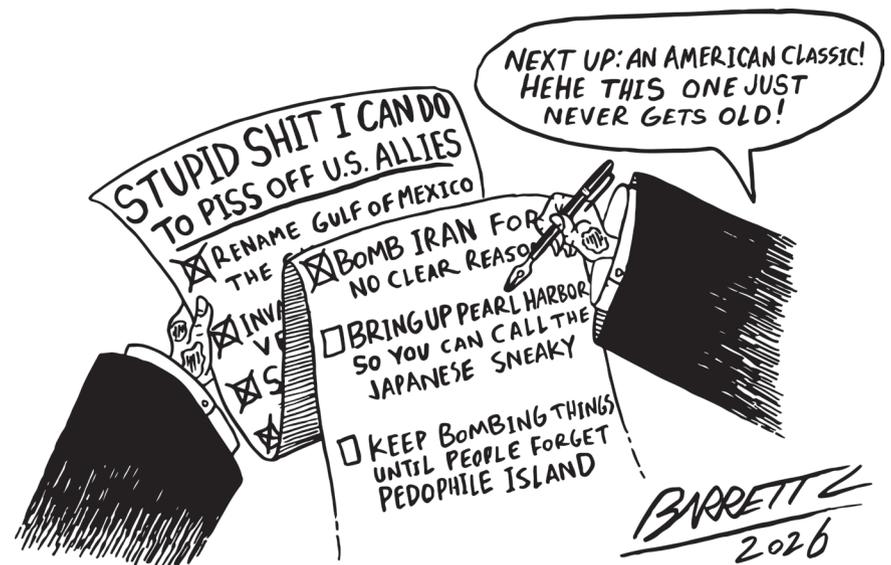
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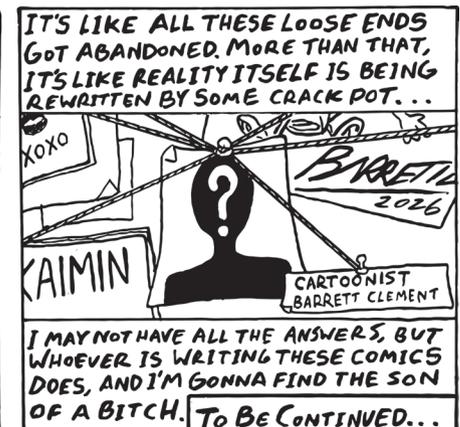
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POLITICAL CARTOON



DETECTIVE SQUIRREL: SE 3 EP 10



BARRETT CLEMENT | CARTOONIST @FUNNYFERRETSTUDIOS

Rave on it



Lasers fill the room as EDM producer Space Laces plays during a rave at the Zootown Arts Community Center on March 12. WILL LADYMAN | MONTANA KAIMIN

UM should have a designated midterms week

Like the designated finals weeks, the University of Montana should have a separate, set week for midterms in the eighth week of the semester.

In this hypothetical, a midterm week would allow students to complete all their exams at once, instead of sprinkled throughout the months of October in the fall semester and March in the spring semester. No regular classes would be held, and there would be a special schedule for exams, like finals week.

In the spring semester, this would ideally be the week before spring break. In the fall semester, midterm week would be around the second week of October, near the Indigenous Peoples' Day Monday holiday.

A designated midterm week could reduce stress for students with exams spread out across multiple weeks. Without regular classes happening at the same time as exams, students would not have to worry about balancing homework from some classes while studying for a midterm in others.

While this could create more stress for students to have all midterms concentrated at once, they could get their exams done and then truly relax during spring break. With only one week of exams, stress won't accumulate for a long period of time, leading to burnout in the latter half of the semester.

If UM adopted a designated midterm week, the school's academic calendar would function somewhat like a quarter system, like fellow Big Sky Conference schools Portland State University and Eastern Washington University.

Quarter systems have classes that take place over fewer weeks than a semester, usually 10, as opposed to UM's 17, including a final week of exams.

UM's current midterm season is a stressful, drawn-out affair. A quarter system, or a semester system with a midterm break, could eliminate weeks of exams and reduce anxieties in students and faculty alike.

- Mariah Henry, copy chief
Like it? Hate it? Let us know.
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FOR MORE STORIES



VISIT THE KAIMIN'S
WEBSITE

SUDOKU

Difficulty: Easy

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

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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:

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

In local news...

JACK SNOW | NEWS EDITOR
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HOLLAND LAKE LODGE SEWAGE TANK ASSESSMENT CAUSES CONTROVERSY

Public land watchdogs increased opposition to a variance granted by Missoula County following information that a Holland Lake Lodge sewage tank is smaller than previously claimed.

The Alliance for the Wild Rockies, alongside Save Holland Lake, is now demanding that the Missoula City-County Board of Health rescind the health code variance that it had granted to Holland Lake Lodge for its wastewater holding tank, according to the Missoula Current.

Save Holland Lake had previously sent a letter of protest to the Board of Health on March 4 due to the fact that Missoula Public Health staff weren't aware of the size or condition of the tank, or even if it was watertight.

The two organizations said they learned that Missoula County environmental health specialist, Kyle Crapster, conducted an assessment of the tank in the first week of March.

He estimated that the tank has a capacity of about 2,353 gallons, less than half of the 5,000 gallons originally claimed by Holland Lake Lodge.

Crapster's assessment also showed that the sewer pipe enters the tank at a low point, which could limit its working capacity to 670 gallons. If the amount of sewage exceeds that capacity, it could start backing into the inlet pipe.

"These figures further establish that reliance on the existing tank is infeasible, and [Missoula Public Health] must consider alternatives, including those outlined in the March 4 letter," the two groups said in a second letter sent to the Board of Health on March 19.

The tank is buried less than 100 feet from the lake and is over 50 years old. It was last pumped in October, but Crapster's assessment found that there is about 388 gallons of sewage in the tank.

The Board of Health is now requiring Holland Lake Lodge owner Eric Jacobsen to perform a test to prove that the tank is watertight, following concerns of it leaking. Health department staff will be involved in critical parts of the testing process.

If the septic tank fails the leak test, Jacobsen will not be allowed to use the tank, although the board of health will not hold the variance.

At a board meeting in February, Save Holland Lake proposed a plan to pump waste water into the 8,000-gallon septic tanks on a hill near the lodge.

In the case of a test failure, the tank would need to be replaced either way though, because sewage would need to flow through the tank regardless.

MONTANA GAS PRICES CONTINUE TO RAPIDLY RISE

Montana gas prices continue to rise as seasonal factors combine with the conflict in Iran to spike costs across the country.

Patrick De Haan, head of petroleum analysis at GasBuddy, an app that helps drivers find the cheapest gas prices, explained the sharp increase in price.

"Average gasoline prices in Montana have risen 22.3 cents per gallon in the last week, averaging \$3.57 per gallon today," De Haan said on Monday. "Prices in Montana are 82.9 cents per gallon higher than a month ago and stand 48.4 cents per gallon higher than a year ago."

According to GasBuddy, the cheapest gas station in Montana had prices set at \$2.86 per gallon on Sunday, while the most expensive was \$4.19.

With these numbers taken into account, Montana is now ranked 41st in average gas prices, one spot lower than last week, according to KGVO.

De Haan said that national prices are on the rise for both diesel and gas due to seasonal factors, as well as disruptions in the Strait of Hormuz, which have raised concerns about gas supply for the U.S.

"There are few signs of stabilization so far, as global oil prices continue to climb and early indications suggest consumers may begin to pull back in response to the rapid pace of increases," De Haan said.



This week on the Kaimin Cast ...

Tyler Yaney became an Uber driver after he moved to Missoula and found himself between jobs. His 10-year-old dog, Shannon, rode along with him until she passed away. Uber has now been his full time job for nine years, and his new four-legged companion is a seven-year-old golden retriever-Australian shepherd mix, Timber.

Last April, Yaney started creating content of Timber's Uber rides for social media. The account, @timbersgottaroll, now has 100,000 followers on TikTok and over 60,000 followers on Instagram. Timber has become well known around Missoula through his backseat hangouts with locals, and across the nation through his social media content and references to the jam band Phish.

"I petted it and then it grabbed his toy and came in the back. And then, I don't know, we just snuggled. It was great," said passenger Nathan Gendreau, a freshman at the University of Montana.

Hear more about Missoula's four-legged influencer by checking out last week's podcast, "Need a ride? Timber provides" 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



SUPREME COURT REJECTS JOURNALIST'S CASE

The Supreme Court rejected a citizen journalist's civil rights claim on Monday after she was arrested for solicitation of information from a police officer.

Reporter Priscilla Villarreal claims that her arrest violated the First Amendment by infringing on her freedom of speech, but the court's refusal to take her case means it cannot move forward.

Justice Sonia Sotomayor dissented to the decision, saying that choosing not to take the case was a mistake, according to NBC.

"It should be obvious that this arrest violated the First Amendment," she wrote.

Villarreal was arrested for allegedly breaking a Texas state law in Laredo, which prohibits the solicitation of information from a public employee for benefit.

The law could apply to all journalists who seek information from the government if consistently enforced.

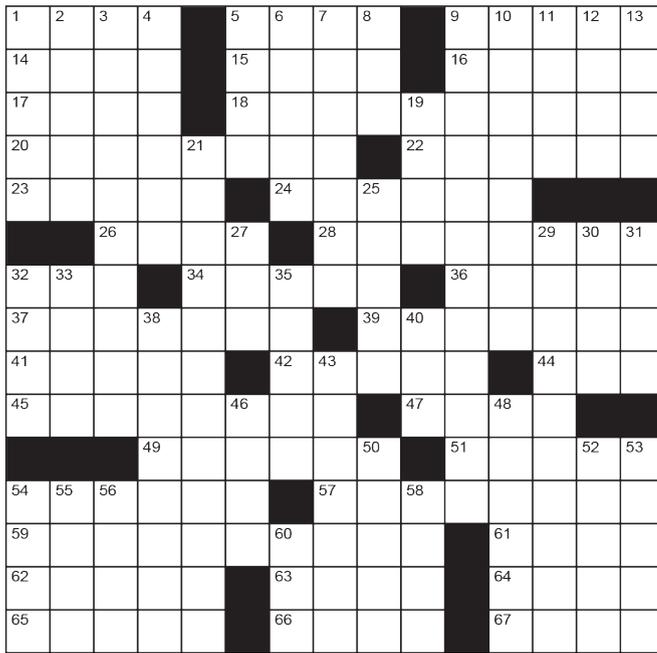
After the charges against her were dropped, Villarreal filed a civil rights lawsuit based on the claim that her freedom of speech was violated.

IMMIGRATION AND CUSTOMS ENFORCEMENT STEPS IN FOR AIRPORT SECURITY STAFF

Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents deployed to 14 airports on Monday to fill in for Transportation Security Administration personnel amid the Department of Homeland Security shutdown.

The TSA has been facing more callouts from officers who haven't been paid since February when Department of Homeland Security funding lapsed, according to CNN. Wait times for travelers increased as a result, with airports like George Bush Intercontinental Airport in Houston warning flyers of a potential four hour wait for security.

Sources told CNN that President Donald Trump rejected a potential deal to end the Department of Homeland Security shutdown on Sunday night, and that he told Republicans to only settle if they can pass a federal elections overhaul bill.



ACROSS

- 1 Melville captain
- 5 Crumbly cheese
- 9 West Indies native
- 14 Hit the bottle
- 15 Diva anagram
- 16 Dwelling place
- 17 Textile machine
- 18 Out of place
- 20 Fender bender, e.g.
- 22 Whoops it up
- 23 Lewis with Lamb Chop
- 24 Blind as a bat, e.g.
- 26 For fear that
- 28 Worthy of mention
- 32 Youngest March sister
- 34 Like babies' legs, often
- 36 Smooth and glossy
- 37 Filled to the gills
- 39 Put into servitude
- 41 Subatomic particle
- 42 Baseball great Hank
- 44 Free (of)
- 45 Cowboy hats
- 47 "American Pie" actress Tara
- 49 "MMMBop" band
- 51 Get the point
- 54 Whirl about
- 57 Raised road
- 59 Like healthy food
- 61 Start the pot
- 62 Part of a TV feed
- 63 Composer who had 20 children

- 64 Active one
- 65 Use a dressing room
- 66 Bullfight cheers
- 67 Means justifiers

DOWN

- 1 Traveler's aid
- 2 1989 film, "Turner and ____"
- 3 End of the world
- 4 Drag through mud
- 5 Notability
- 6 Cowgirl Dale
- 7 On a slant
- 8 Dentists' org.
- 9 Negligence
- 10 First and foremost
- 11 It may be skipped
- 12 Matinee ____
- 13 Harry's First Lady
- 19 ____ and proper
- 21 Exemption
- 25 Film mogul Louis B.
- 27 Boy king of Egypt
- 29 Approach rapidly
- 30 First name in jeans
- 31 Barely managed, with "out"
- 32 Something to take up
- 33 Face up to
- 35 College bigwigs
- 38 Ladies' man
- 40 Hide-hair link
- 43 Not the mixing kind
- 46 Addition column
- 48 Cooling-off period?
- 50 "Eraserhead" star Jack
- 52 Like most movies
- 53 Observers
- 54 Small winged insect
- 55 Part of BYOB
- 56 Sean Astin football movie
- 58 Sounds of disgust
- 60 "Industry" network

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Answers to Previous Crossword:

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

Serve-o-scope

KAIRI LISING | ARTS & CULTURE EDITOR

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Enough of the negative self-talk! Let's be real, we've gotten way too insecure lately. It's time to recognize that we're all serving something. If you didn't know, serving is a better way to say "This is what my whole vibe is doing right now." So what are you serving?

ARIES (MARCH 21-APRIL 19):

The party doesn't start till you walk in, Aries. You're serving Charisma, Uniqueness, Nerve and Talent every time you step into a room. All eyes shoot to you, how could they not? Save a crumb of the attention for the rest of us?

TAURUS (APRIL 20-MAY 20):

Order up! The only thing you're serving is tables, Taurus. You're caring and thoughtful, all great traits, but how long can you go on just living for other people? Lock in Taurus, it's time to be the served, not the server.

GEMINI (MAY 21-JUNE 20):

Hellooooo sailor! You're serving nothing but looks, Gemini. Really, all I can say is HUMINA HUMINA AWOOGA.

CANCER (JUNE 21-JULY 22):

Grow some balls, Cancer. You're giving soft serve. You're just like a kid who dropped their ice cream. We get it, you're sensitive and emotional, but literally who cares? In this economy, you gotta save your tears and five-second rule the ice cream.

LEO (JULY 23-AUG. 22):

They need to lock you up! Seriously, though, Leo. You're serving time. I mean, the number of things you get away with without getting in trouble? Insane. You're insane. Prison orange would be a cute color on you.

VIRGO (AUG. 23-SEP. 22):

Did someone say daddy's money? Virgo, you're serving it on a silver platter. It's not your fault you're rolling in dough you didn't earn, but could you throw a bone to us peasants?

LIBRA (SEP. 23-OCT. 22): Call you legally blonde, because Libra, you're serving papers. You're straightforward and to the point, which we need. Sure, you may be the bearer of bad news sometimes, but you always handle it with grace and tact.

SCORPIO (OCT. 23-NOV. 21):

We get it, you're always winning. Scorpio, you're giving first-come, first-served — and probably by Taurus. We seem to always find you at the top of the leaderboard, first in line or first one picked. How does it feel knowing everyone wants to be you?

SAGITTARIUS (NOV. 22-DEC. 21):

We all have our selfish moments, but you, Sag, are self-serving. Your mantra is if you want it done right, you gotta do it yourself. You do what you have to do to get ahead, and if that means stepping on some toes? These boots were made for walking.

CAPRICORN (DEC. 22-JAN. 19):

Capricorn, the only thing you're serving is serving ... the country? You've got this idea in your head that if they drop you in Iran, you'll fix everything. Maybe what you're really serving is delusional? So kind of you to want to help, though.

AQUARIUS (JAN. 20-FEB. 18):

You've had "Challengers" on your mind ever since the movie came out. Your serve? Game, set, match, it's tennis. Your whole vibe seems to lean toward sporty and independent, perhaps with an affinity toward boys kissing?

PISCES (FEB. 19-MARCH 20):

Go girl! Give us nothing! Sorry to say, Pisces, but you're NOT serving. Not a bad thing, though. You live a simple life, making it through every roadblock. Want to break the pattern? Take a risk!



BARRETT CLEMENT | MONTANA KAIMIN

ASUM prepares for changes as student fee funding dips

AIDAN GRAHAM | NEWS REPORTER
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While the University of Montana has seen enrollment growth for its 11th consecutive semester, student fee totals have reduced by 2.5%, sparking concern from student Senate leadership on what the future could look like for themselves and University-associated organizations.

“We’re not on a cliff, but we are prepared,” ASUM Business Manager Liam Edwards said.

Student fees are mandatory fees paid by University students that fund a number of UM-associated programs. The mandatory fees total \$79, which are charged to any student taking seven or more credits on the University campus.

The majority of the fees support direct ASUM programs such as the food pantry, campus transportation and ASUM legal services. The remainder is divided among the KBGA college radio station,

the Montana Kaimin, the ASUM Child-care Center and the Experiential Learning Scholarship, which funds student research and professional development.

“I was definitely up in arms at first,” Edwards said. “But the key point I’d emphasize is that enrollment and student fee revenue aren’t one-to-one. While overall enrollment is up, much of that growth is coming from dual enrollment and partnership programs.”

Dual enrollment students, like online students, are not charged mandatory fees, but the UM dual enrollment program offers Montana high schoolers the opportunity to enroll in up to six credits at the University of Montana. This spring it saw a record high of 1,240 students dually enrolled at UM, a 10% increase over spring 2025. According to the UM administration, programs like dual enrollment are not only in place to increase higher education, but encourage future full-time enrollment.

“If you’re a high school student, down the Bitterroot, in Frenchtown, down in Helena, and you’re already enrolled in classes, the likelihood you’ll go to college is very high,” UM Communications Director Dave Kuntz said in an interview with the Montana Kaimin last fall. “It allows us to really target these people and get them on as full-time freshmen for next year.”

This, alongside 2,192 part-time students at the University, shows that while student headcounts may increase, this does not always correlate with the increase of student funds.

“It’s a very working-class student body,” Kuntz said about UM’s demographic. “You have a lot of students who have jobs outside of school and things that may prevent them from enrolling in full-time credits.”

According to ASUM leadership, this decrease has forced them to weigh the value and use of certain campus services.

“We’re not seeing a huge new demand for our services, luckily, so we’re able to slim down without harming the services we give to our students,” Edwards said. “So we’re trying to find places that students don’t use as much.”

Transportation sits at the top of the list of programs under consideration for funding shifts. According to ASUM, pulling funding from lesser-used bus lines such as the and silver line, while increasing funding for more heavily used lines such as the maroon, will not only allow budgets to fit in the current funding model, but increase student quality of life.

Additionally, in efforts to protect the stability of services offered, ASUM offices have reduced and managed their own use of funding, restructuring leadership roles and reducing paid office hours in ASUM facilities.

“We’ve definitely shed a few tears in what we’ve had to do, reevaluating and shifting roles, but we’ve done the work so we hope the stability of the services continue forward,” Edwards said.

Leadership claims it’s preparing for what the future may hold if revenue continues to decrease.

According to Edwards, future plans include the introduction of a ballot initiative to increase student fees, although Edwards did not state how much fees could increase by. An increase in fees could balance a reduced budget and give greater protections to services if trends continue downward.

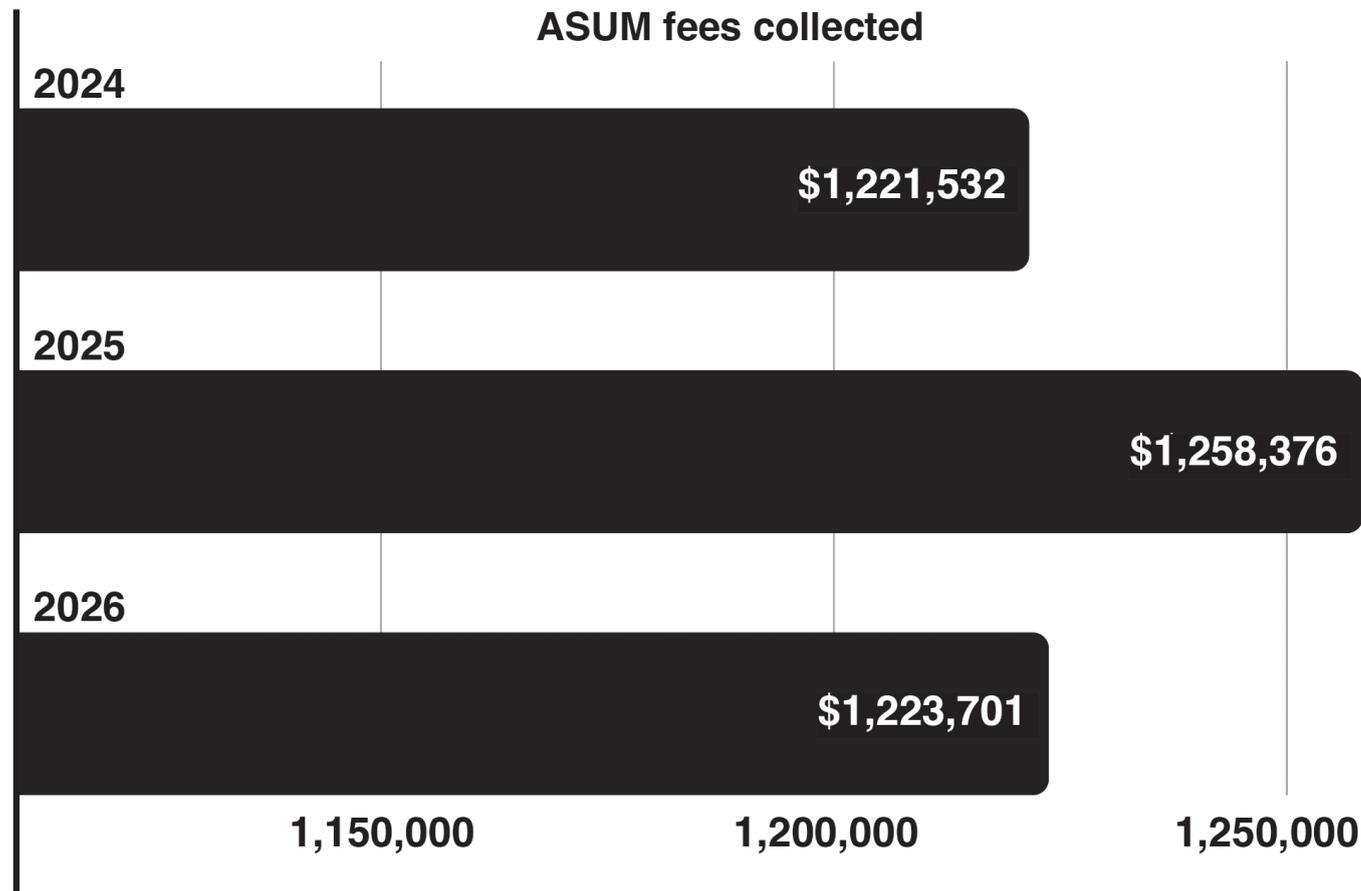
The concern around these decreases mirrors the trending demographic shift facing high school graduates in the United States, also known as the “enrollment cliff.”

According to education contributor Scott White in his 2025 Forbes article, “The primary pool of college applicants will decline by 13%, or nearly half a million students, by 2041.” This is following a proposed cultural shift surrounding the importance of college alongside the ever increasing cost of education.

Despite this, ASUM remains confident in its ability to not only prepare for the future, but keep the safety of student-funded services at the forefront.

“If we do see a decrease, ASUM stands to remain adaptable to protect our student services in any way we can,” Edwards said. “I can’t tell the future, but I’m confident.”

ASUM fees collected



DANE CLEMENTS | MONTANA KAIMIN

Record warmth impacts Missoula mountain biking

AIDAN GRAHAM | NEWS REPORTER

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While warmer weather increases access for outdoor recreation in Missoula, the Missoula Mountain Bike Coalition, a local non-profit organization, expects to have its work cut out for more trail maintenance in late spring.

Inconsistent and above average temperatures across Western Montana have impacted the composition and stability of Missoula's mountain biking and multi-use trails.

Unexpected warm weather has attracted heavier recreation usage than is typical for this time of year, increasing maintenance and labor to prepare these trails for the upcoming summer season.

"I can't even remember a time being able to ride dirt trails in January and February," said Nic Hertzler, field program manager at the coalition.

Hertzler, a 28-year-old Pennsylvania native who moved to Missoula in 2021, has worked with the coalition since 2024. "Rather than just a lack of snow, it's been so warm and moist while still being below freezing most evenings."

A large component to the weakening of trail systems is known as the freeze-thaw cycle, a yearly event typically seen in early spring when moisture collected in soil from rain or melting snow soaks into the soil, freezes and expands, leading to softer and easily displaced soil during warmer hours.

Typically, this period lasts a few weeks in Western Montana. However, inconsistent temperatures have led to this cycle lasting multiple months.

"The fact the cycle began so early and some people never even put their bikes away for winter makes it all add up," Hertzler said.

According to patterns recorded by the National Weather Service, typical La Nina conditions, predicted for this past winter, see a high pressure front over the Pacific Ocean. Alongside the polar jetstream, these conditions push both heavy moisture and cold over the Rockies and across the northern United States.

This winter, however, the positioning and strength of these fronts shifted, curving the polar jetstream and effectively bypassing much of the Pacific Northwest, leading to warmer temperatures while still bringing heavy precipitation from high pressure fronts.

While the National Weather Service claims patterns like these are not necessarily indicative of a permanent shift, the continued effects of climate change increase the odds of extremes on either side.

"I think the future is going to be more extreme," said LeeAnn Allegretto, a hydrologist and meteorologist for the National



Missoula local Marty Kardos mountain bikes on the Sawmill Gulch Road near the Rattlesnake Trailhead in Missoula on March 23. AIDAN GRAHAM | MONTANA KAIMIN

Weather Service in Missoula. "We are used to seeing cold winters, but having those swings between exceptional cold and sudden warming is not balanced, and we need that balance."

According to the Missoula Mountain Bike Coalition, trails affected by these current conditions, even in an atypical year, buff themselves out, drying and packing down soil by May.

However, continued recreation on these trails in this state, whether mountain biking, hiking or any trail based activity, may cause difficulty to repair and sometimes permanent damages to the trails composition, as well as surrounding vegetation.

According to the American Trails non-profit, damages caused by improper trail usage to both trail composition and vegetation not only damages biodiversity surrounding our trail systems, but creates safety hazards for other recreators, such as exposed roots, rocks and trail washouts.

Additionally, riding or hiking on wet, unpacked soil may leave potholes, also known

as "brake-bumps," and expose hazards, not only ruining smooth riding conditions, but creating fall risks and increasing possible injury.

"Things are pretty wet this time of year," said Oivind "Abe" Westereng, a 28-year-old Missoula local and avid mountain biker. "People need to take not just the day before but a few days of weather into account before they ride."

The coalition states that the best way to maintain proper trail usage is to remain both informed and logical surrounding trail conditions. Be aware of recent weather conditions and what hazards to look for while riding.

During freeze-thaw conditions, an entire trail system is rarely affected. While current conditions don't necessarily have to keep people from recreating, riders must remain aware of trail conditions, alongside features such as loose soil, mud and deep puddles.

According to Hertzler, if a rider comes across one of these features, the best course of action is to head directly through it, as

attempting to avoid it has more potential to expand damage to soil composition alongside vegetation.

"If you're gonna go out and are a bit unsure of a trail's condition, just be prepared to do the right thing, lessen your impact. Maybe find something to do in town, even though I understand we're all itching to get out," Hertzler said.

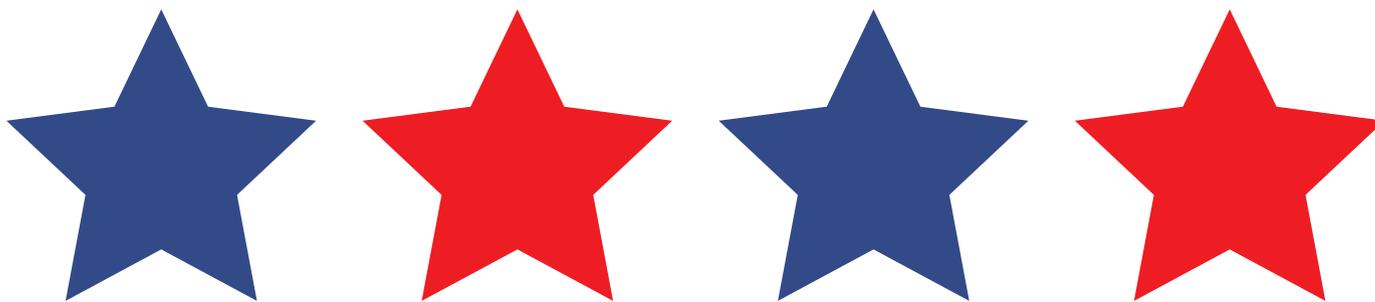
The Missoula Mountain Bike Coalition consistently releases trail reports on its social media, providing information on trail conditions and present hazards.

Primary trails affected by current conditions have been the Marshall Mountain Park trails and those in the lower Rattlesnake Wilderness Area.

Additionally, the non-profit organizes "dig-days" throughout the spring and summer, giving opportunity for community members to assist in trail maintenance. These events are also announced on social media, the most recent occurring on the Mo-Z trail on March 21st.

POLITICAL CHANGES STARTER CONCERN ON CAMPUS

AS MONTANA POLITICS CONTINUE TO SHIFT, STUDENTS LOOK TO THE PRIMARY AND MIDTERM ELECTIONS



STORY BY COLBY SUKO-CLARK

In recent weeks, a series of unexpected changes and campaign announcements surprised Montana local and federal politics.

After Rep. Ryan Zinke and Sen. Steve Daines both dropped out of the House and Senate races and former University of Montana President Seth Bodnar launched an Independent run for Senate, students await the upcoming primary and mid-term elections to resolve the recent string of upheavals.

While politics have always been present on campus, they have become more prevalent with groups like Turning Point USA, which promotes right wing ideology, and Stand Up Fight Back, a more left-leaning group known for organizing protests. Paired with the recent string of announcements and the ever-growing political divide, many UM students must cope with strong feelings about the political state of the University itself.

Kevin Fortin, a freshman at UM majoring in economics, said he wants to see protests take a stance. "I see the protests, and on the surface they look good, but they fall flat when they are happening every week. I just want them to organize better, and have a real stance on something," Fortin said. "We need open conversation, but the protesters are not listening, and the people being protested are not doing anything, so there is nothing changing."

The most recent protest on the University of Montana campus was outside of a Turning Point USA event with Gov. Greg Gianforte on March 3. "The protest was chaotic, there was just a lot of screaming," Fortin said.

However, protests are not the only thing causing a stir on campus. Montana's Senators — including hopeful Seth Bodnar — have caught national attention.

SPOTLIGHT ON THE SENATE

Bodnar announced he would resign from his position on Jan. 21 after two weeks of rumors surrounding a potential Senate campaign. Bodnar officially announced his run for Senate as an Independent on March 4.

In the press release, Bodnar stated he planned to run as an Independent because Montanans "deserve a leader who bridges divides with common sense solutions, stands up to political elites in Washington and answers only to Montana, not national party bosses or D.C. insiders."

The decision to run as an Independent caused mixed feelings among students, like Alexis Burgos, a junior at UM.

"I hate that he is running as an Inde-

pendent, either run as a Republican or Democrat, this is the game and you need to play the game to win,” Burgos said.

Not all students share this feeling. For UM freshman Thomas Nicholson, the idea of having a third party candidate is a welcome change. Some, like Nicholson, believe this could help the political landscape through more voter opportunities.

Ethan Andersch, a political science major at the University of Montana, said an Independent candidate is “a good middle ground in a polarized environment.”

A third-party candidate has never won a Montana U.S. Senate race. Third-party candidates accounted for a combined 1.9% of the vote in the 2024 Montana U.S. Senate race, according to Politico.

On top of the constantly changing political environment, some students are concerned about the idea of a new University president, as UM currently does not have one.

“Although I did not like Seth Bodnar, he was consistent, so I worry about a new president changing the things I like about campus,” said Trevor Lohof, a 21-year-old senior from Billings studying history. Bodnar is not the only politician causing mixed feelings on campus.

Controversy arose around Sen. Tim Sheehy after he was filmed forcibly removing a protester from a Senate committee meeting in early March.

After Marine Corps veteran Brian McGinnis began shouting in protest against the U.S. military action in Iran, police officers attempted to remove him from the room. Sheehy then grabbed McGinnis and attempted to drag him from the room. In the scuffle, McGinnis’s hand caught in the door. McGinnis later stated on X, formerly known as Twitter, that his arm had been broken in the altercation.

Sheehy later posted about the incident on X, stating:

“Capitol Police were attempting to remove an unhinged protester from the Armed Services hearing. He was fighting back. I decided to help out and de-escalate the situation. This gentleman came to the Capitol looking for a confrontation, and he got one. I hope he gets the help he needs without causing further violence,” Sheehy wrote.

Even after the statement, students like Andersch have concerns over the effects this could have on the Republican’s chances in the midterms, although Sheehy himself is not up for re-election until 2030.

“Sheehy breaking anyone’s arm is problematic for the party,” Andersch said.

Not all students are worried about the impact of the widely circulated video.



University of Montana police sergeant Kurt Feilzer speaks with an attendee before removing him for making disruptive comments to Montana Gov. Greg Gianforte during a Turning Point USA event in the UC Theater on March 3. **HENRY DOELLINGER | MONTANA KAIMIN**

“I think it is bad [press] for Sheehy, but I don’t think it will have an impact in the midterm elections,” said Hogan O’Donnell, a senior at UM majoring in political science and history.

Sheehy’s involvement in the news makes him the second Senator to find himself in the spotlight. The first came when Montana Republican Sen. Daines announced his resignation just two minutes before the deadline to file for candidacy, which raised concerns from students like Robbie Corbett, a junior at UM.

“There is an unprofessionalism between both parties right now,” Corbett said.

Kurt Alme, who has never had a statewide position of office before, submitted his application to run for Senate eight minutes before the deadline. He made a formal statement on March 4, which stated, “As a native Montanan, I have always been committed to serving our communities, upholding the rule of law and fighting for the safety and prosperity of every family in our state.”

President Donald Trump and Sheehy both endorsed Alme for the senate. But

Daines is not the only incumbent to unexpectedly drop out of their race.

OVER AND OUT

Rep. Ryan Zinke announced his retirement on March 2, citing health concerns from injuries he sustained during his military career as the cause.

“The injuries sustained from a career in Special Operations are not immediately life threatening, but the repair cannot be deferred any longer and recovery will require considerable time with Lola and the family,” Zinke stated in a formal letter to his constituents. “My judgement and experience tell me it is better for Montana and America to have full-time representation in Congress than run the risk of uncertain absence and missed votes.”

However, the decision has been questioned by the students.

“It feels like he is giving up, and is lazy for doing so,” Andersch said. “It is a copout to [drop out] this late and abandon the people of Montana. It feels like he made his money and is done.”

These topics of conversation have become a prevalent part of the political landscape. Sam Forstag, a Democratic

candidate for the U.S. House of Representatives, agreed with the sentiment.

“I feel frustrated, and deeply disappointed, and also pretty hopeful for our chance to finally change things,” Forstag said. He cited concerns that neither party is looking at history to make a decision.

“They didn’t learn anything from the national democratic party. Just a year ago, they just tried to coordinate their own replacements for the House and the Senate,” Forstag said. “Last time this happened, people were pretty angry, and they should be angry, because that’s not how a democracy is supposed to work.”

Zinke endorsed Aaron Flint to run for the House of Representatives as his replacement. While the Republicans have clear candidates for their races, the Democrats have a number that still need to go through the primary election, which have piqued the interest of some students.

“Some of the candidates for the Democrats look exciting,” Corbett said. The candidates in the Democratic primary for the Senate are Alani Bankhead, Michael Black Wolf, Michael Hummert, Christopher Kehoe and Reilly Neill. These candidates will run for the primary endorsement on June 2, and the winner will be the Democratic candidate in the general election.

However, some students believe the Democratic party will not be able to beat the Republicans in the races.

"I think that regardless of everything going on, Montana Democrats don't have a plan to win after Tester," O'Donnell said. "I didn't always agree with Tester, but he was successful. There is no clear candidate for the Democrats."

Corbett said he hopes to see change in the future.

"More Democrats are filed than the Republicans, which means they are looking for a shake-up," he said.

Currently, Democratic candidates outnumber Republicans in both the House and the Senate races.

Aaron Flint is running as a Republican and Ryan Busse, Russell Cleveland, Forstag and Matt Rains are running as Democrats. However, even with so many candidates, some students want to abstain from voting.

“I DON’T WANT A SINGLE MAJOR PARTY OR BODNAR TO GET A VOTE, THEY DON’T DESERVE IT,” ANDERSCH SAID.

"I don't want a single major party or Bodnar to get a vote, they don't deserve it," Andersch said. "None of them serve the American people anymore, it's just about lining their own pockets and the pockets of billionaires." Frustration with both parties is a sentiment shared by candidate Forstag.

"I am frustrated with both parties and we need something to change if we want to improve ourselves," he said.

The change, for Forstag, comes in the form of campaigning.

THE COST OF CAMPAIGNS

Montana's recent elections have been expensive for both sides. The Tester v. Sheehy race spent \$140 million between the two, according to the Montana Free Press. It's not a number Forstag is impressed with.

"Yeah, they spent \$140 million, and where did that get us," he said.



Tim Sheehy, left, and Charlie Kirk sit at the Save Big Sky Rally where they discussed immigration, inflation and other political hot topics on Sept. 30, 2024. Kirk was shot and killed at a Turning Point USA event on Sept. 10, 2025. **AIDEN HAVENS | MONTANA KAIMIN ARCHIVE**

Now, most candidates receive funding from political action committees, which pool money together for the candidate of their choosing. However, Forstag is not taking any money from committees.

"I am running entirely on donations and fundraising from people," Forstag said.

For him, this symbolizes a shift that could be seen as more candidates don't want to see the winner be decided by the money.

However, others are voting for different reasons.

TO VOTE OR NOT TO VOTE

Students at the University of Montana are looking for candidates that will solve the problem they care about. Students all are impacted by recent congressional decisions.

"Iran is a major voting issue, especially the lack of transparency in Iran compared to the transparency around voting is completely unfair," Lohof said.

While the conflict in Iran has taken center stage in recent weeks, other issues signal a change in party lines.

"People just want to vote for what's best for their families, what's best to survive and put food on the table," said Colin Trewhella, a freshman at the University of Montana.

Trewhella represents a changing landscape from having a full party allegiance to focusing more on personal beliefs. Yet there is still contention about the landscape of Montana.

The University of Montana recently received a bust of Mahatma Gandhi to celebrate his legacy from Indian Consul General Prakash Gupta. Some have cited concerns that both federal legislative incumbents leaving office could affect the recent decisions to engage in trade with India.

"I am hopeful about them continuing the programs," said Emily Brandenburg, a freshman at UM. The programs include trading partnerships between Montana and India.

"I think they will follow the money, and find that India is a good trade partner," Brandenburg said. Montana has opened up more trade partnerships with India under Daines and Zinke.

Even with so many voting issues, candidates still need to contend with the political affiliations with the state of Montana as a whole.

Montana has long been a red, or Republican state, with Missoula considered a more democratic city within. The

last presidential election to see Montana turn blue was in 1992, when Bill Clinton won the plurality vote, or the relative majority.

"Jon Tester has won this district, so we can win it again," Forstag said.

However, former Sen. Jon Tester himself criticized the Democratic party. Alleged text messages sent by Tester called the party a poison to his name that cost him his re-election in 2024 when he lost to Sheehy by 43,000 votes, according to the Montana Free Press.

"He was correct to point out the Democrat title is a curse in Montana," O'Donnell said. This reflects the changing political landscape as Montana works to find its identity. While federal representatives may be dealing with controversy, the state level is looking much healthier.

LOCAL LEVEL

The state-level congress, which includes a state Senate and House that make and vote for legislation, both follow the same schedule and are currently on a break. Even though they are not in session, there is still work being done in the political space.

"We are not making laws, but are working on policy, and I'm always working on constituent issues, visiting with constituents, trying to help navigate state government," said Jonathan Karlen, the minority whip, which is the second in command for the minority party in the state Senate of Montana.

There are currently 125 seats that are up for re-election in the state Senate, including Karlen's seat. He is encouraging people to run in the election regardless of political affiliation.

"You pay \$15 and you can run for the legislature, and I feel very strongly that it's good, we want people to run, we want the voters to have choice," Karlen said.

He also stressed the importance of working together after the campaign season is over. Montana is known for being very partisan or polarizing during election season.

"Campaign seasons are really partisan, and after the partisanship of the campaign season ends, it's like, 'Let's get to work,'" Karlen said.

The "getting to work" argument is about focusing on the policies once someone is in office, rather than continuing to campaign for re-election. Karlen agreed that not a lot of money should be put into campaigning.

"It's disappointing from the perspec-



Sam Forstag poses outside of the University of Montana's Natural Science Building on March 11.

TORI KUEHL | MONTANA KAIMIN

tive of I think there are better uses for money than campaign flyers, and I think that is our state of affairs, but that's the nature of it with our campaign finance laws," Karlen said.

The other battle for Montana congressmen is the lack of votes for incumbent officials.

"Nationally, it does seem there is an anti-incumbent mentality, it almost feels like every election is a change election, and I think that corresponds closely with the growing angst and frustration people have with politics," Karlen said.

The anti-incumbency sentiment was also seen in the last Senate election

where Tester, the incumbent, lost to Sheehy. This push for new people in Congress seems to be a direct result of the frustration with the current government.

"They are not listening to what the people want," Lohof said.

As the primaries close in, students on campus juggle the idea of whether they will vote or not. Historically, Montana's primary election turnout rates have been half the amount of the general election turnout rates.

The primary election takes place Tuesday, June 2. Students can register to vote in person or online to support their candidates.

UM's broadcasting club completes

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With so many Grizzly club sports, there's always something to see, and the University of Montana's new broadcasting club hopes to bring live coverage of club sports to anyone who can't make it in-person to the games.

"I've told all the kids that this is really for the students by the students," said Tucker Sargent, the director of club sports at UM and facilitator of the broadcasting club. "We want to give [students] the platform. We've given them the equipment, to help to just get it off the ground."

Despite not being an official, formalized club, organizers like Sargent have big plans to expand the program. This includes working alongside any club that would like them to broadcast one of their games.

"I'd love to cover all [club sports], especially this spring. I asked all the clubs to send us their schedules, and we'll see how much we can cover," Sargent said.

This type of opportunity allows UM students to be able to announce sports that they are specifically interested in or would like to learn more about.

"Personally, I think flag football would be a ton of fun, not only to broadcast and commentate over, but just to watch," Clayton Byrne, a junior from Calabasas, California, said. "I'm excited about that, coming to campus in general, and the University of Montana being the first Montana school to do so."

The club doesn't claim to know all when it comes to the array of different club sports, but is hungry to learn how each one operates.

"Ideally, we're gonna cover all sorts of things that we don't know anything about, but you can learn it as you're going on the fly, and also you don't have to pretend to be an expert," Sargent said.

The club creates a unique opportunity for its members to learn firsthand how sports broadcasting works. Students can be involved in setting up the broadcast and announcing during the live to inform those watching.

"I think it's taught me a couple things," Byrne said. "I think the biggest thing that it's given me is experience both in front of a camera and behind the camera. I would like to pursue a career in broadcasting, sports broadcasting specifically, and I think it's rare to get an opportunity to practice relatively freely in front of a camera with a relatively professional setup."

This is a controlled environment for students because they don't have to worry about Federal Communications Commission guidelines, unlike other broadcasting platforms, since they will be live-streaming on YouTube.

This makes the clubs the perfect playground for students who are passionate about sports or broadcasting and are excited to get on air.

Matthew Evenson, from Red Lodge, Montana, said "The whole approach is fairly laid back, so the team gets a chance to learn as you go and not be constrained by things like suits or pesky [Federal Communications Commission] guidelines."

There are currently 10 students learning how to work the broadcasting equipment. However, most broadcasts can be run by a two-person crew.

This allows for students to get experience while not having to announce an entire game for their first time.

If there are multiple events on the same day, then different teams of broadcasters can tackle whichever game or sport they feel more passionate about.

The club partners with Missoula broadcast radio stations in order to acquire all the equipment that it might need to make these casts happen. At the moment, the club is open to any skill level.

"What attracted me the most to this is how big of an opportunity it is for the people featured. Not just for the broadcast teams, but for the club sports community," Evenson said. "To be able to broadcast new and exciting events in the area under the banner of ESPN really lends a layer of legitimacy to the whole operation."

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Kickoff

6th Annual
Mules on the Oval
March 31 | Noon - 1:00 p.m.

UM Summer | The College of Humanities & Social Sciences | Department of Political Science | Back Country Horsemen of Montana | US Forest Service

partnership with local sports

The club will benefit the teams these broadcasters are announcing for, from the University's partnership that was previously developed through men's hockey and men's lacrosse, both of these clubs have been able to secure key sponsorships, which includes working alongside ESPN.

Sargent said, "It's helped for prospective students, those who are looking at UM wanna watch the games and see what's going on, and I think there's, you know alumni, and other people that would be interested, so we said we did that for hockey and lacrosse. Well, we've actually been able to get some sponsorships to help people run ads during breaks and stuff like that, which has helped offset cost for those teams."

The club hopes this broadcasting service will fundamentally change how club sports at the University of Montana are viewed. Out-of-state families and friends would be able to watch their children or peers from the comfort of their own home, and on their cell phones or televisions.

They can support their players even when they can't show up for the games in-person. These viewers can tune in live on YouTube or view the recording that is uploaded after the live has finished.

"I think it's something that's really cool, like, you know, this is another avenue that we could make UM stand out amongst other institutions," Sargent said. "What I hope to do is to develop a really good team of broadcasters, they kind of set the standard for other students coming in, kinda teach each other and develop as professionals."

Players can also watch themselves after competing to learn and improve on their techniques, or send the footage to scouts.

These types of recordings may also bring in different traffic when it comes to securing athletes at the University of Montana, including potential students who are interested in playing at the University. Now they can tune in to watch how the various club teams compete.

So far, the club has broadcast for the lacrosse and rugby teams, but there are many more livestreams to come.

Anyone interested in watching a broadcast can find a link to the YouTube account on the club sports page on the University of Montana's club sports website.



Montana Kaimin employee Dillon Richardson, left, Marty Lavin, center, and Montana Kaimim employee Logan Yantes, right, broadcast a lacrosse game in Washington-Grizzly Stadium on March 6.

CONTRIBUTED | TUCKER SARGENT



Members of the UM Broadcasting Club meet to learn how to use equipment on March 3.

CONTRIBUTED | TUCKER SARGENT

SPORTS BRIEFS

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FIRST TIME AT HOME

The University of Montana's softball team saw its first home games fall short after losing to Pacific State University three separate times.

The first game was not the expected outcome for the Griz, ending with a score of 0-9.

However, the second game, ending in a 8-9 loss, gave the Griz hope coming into the final game of the series.

After hitting a .369 batting average, the team's fifth win of the season seemed promising after leading the Tigers 6-2.

Brianna Gutierrez started off with a two-run double, then Grace Lopez had a RBI double and Anna Cockhill hit a RBI triple.

However, after the third inning, the Tigers scored eight runs on four hits after facing four different UM pitchers, to bring the score to 10-6.

The Griz then fought its way to tie the game at 10-10, but the score did not last long after the Tigers made the game 11-10.

The Griz were only able to gain two points, finishing the game 13-12.

Stef Ewing, head coach of UM softball said, "We know from the three games we played against them that it's going to be a battle. We know they are going to bring it. They are going to swing it and we'll need to swing it too."

SWEEPING THE COURT

University of Montana's men's tennis team will return to the Peak Racquet Club on Friday after sweeping the Lewis-Clark State Warriors.

UM defeated the Warriors in the doubles matches to put them up by one.

The Griz quickly continued to add to its points after Baltazar Wiger-Nordas defeated Louam Boivin 6-2. Duncan McCall beat Pablo Herrera Serna.

Joseph Townes lost the only singles match for UM when he went up against Nell Rollin.

Jason Brown, the head coach for UM men's tennis, said, "That was a great test for us. That's the best LC State team they've had since I've been head coach ... They were there to win today and that's exactly what we needed out of those guys. It was competitive in a lot of spots, so hats off to them."

Sweetest dessert spots

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The bell on the door chimes as patrons walk into Tandem Bakery and Cafe. Before them is a menu filled with vegan and gluten-free cakes, cupcakes and donuts. The bakery itself sits on Helen Avenue and is one of Missoula's many dessert shops.

Desserts and sweet treats are a core tenet within the average college student's survival pack.

In particular, "sweet treat" culture helps to define the generational obsession of dessert, a trend that highlights college and high school age students going out with their friends and socializing while eating desserts.

Beyond the trend, each small business has a strong driving force behind its creation keeping people coming back for more.

Working in Tandem

Located among fraternity and sorority houses in the University district, Tandem Bakery & Cafe is known for serving only gluten-free and vegan desserts.

The shop opened its doors in March 2022 and is coming up on its four-year anniversary in the building. Co-owners David Tyson and his wife, Beth Gherlein, named the shop after a date they had.

"My wife and I met in Chicago, and maybe a month after we'd been dating, she saw a Craigslist ad for a 1963 Schwinn Twinn tandem bike for sale," Tyson said. "We went in on it as a joint purchase. So we would ride the tandem together throughout Chicago, bar hopping."

Tyson said this inspired the couple to name the store after this memory, along with the metaphor behind a tandem bike. He said when two people ride the bike, they have to work together, and are always "helping each other to move forward."

The store specializes in vegan and gluten-free bakery products, and focuses on inclusivity by serving customers with dietary restrictions. Tyson said about 90% of their products are scratch-made, including fillings, frostings and buttercreams.



Tandem Bakery and Cafe offers a variety of coffee and pastries in Missoula's University District.

WILL LADYMAN | MONTANA KAIMIN

"For a long time, our name was Tandem Donuts, so people will come in for that," Tyson said. "I think that [the] oat bar is pretty delicious. I think those are the things that we sell the most, pop tarts, oat bars and donuts."

Stuffed with memories

Another local business specializing in donuts is Stuffed 406, owned by Hannah Kirk. The store is located on Broadway, right

in front of the Missoula County offices.

Kirk, like the owners of Tandem, was similarly inspired to start an ice cream-stuffed donut business by a date she had at a similar donut shop with her husband nine years ago. Kirk thought the concept could be a fun idea to recreate at home, and eventually, it turned into a food truck.

After creating a donut recipe and



Hannah Kirk prepares a donut on March 23 at Stuffed 406, in downtown Missoula.

WILL LADYMAN | MONTANA KAIMIN

trying multiple variations to get the right sweetness, Kirk said she thought a lot about the ice cream to fill the donut. The decision was ultimately inspired by a family memory.

"I grew up kind of like, halfway, in Bozeman, my dad lived there," Kirk said. "So whenever I had school breaks, I'd go to Bozeman. I always had Wilcoxson's ice cream when I came to Montana, and so I was like, 'Oh, we have to try it with the Wilcoxson's ice cream to make sure that it'll pair well,' because that's the one I would want to use if we were to do the business."

Kirk said when creating the business with her husband, she "wanted everything to mean something." With this goal, she said, her business is centered around Montana and using local ingredients.

"The name Stuffed 406, the idea behind it, is like 'Stuffed with Montana,'" Kirk said. "So all our ingredients, we try our hardest to source them from Montana, if not around the community. So that means that we're using Montana flour when we make our donuts and our brownies, the Wilcoxson's ice cream. We use Kalispell Creamery milk, and we also sell it, eggs, anything that could be sourced, we have as much as we can."

Another inspiration for the business is "sweets at night," pushing to have a desire for her business, even if in food truck form, to be open super late. This is reflected in their current hours, with the store staying open till 3 a.m. on Friday and Saturday.

Kirk said social media has been a big part of the identity as a dessert business due to their desserts being "very Instagrammable."

"I think people really like to enjoy what they're looking at before they eat it, and so I think that is part of that college culture. We get tagged in a lot of photos, and I think that helps boost our business, because it's like that overindulgent, in a way, sweetness of the photo to like the taste," Kirk said.

Rolling in trends

Another local business owner who noted the use of social media to attract customers was Frankie Yuan, the owner of Tea & Crepe Missoula. First opening stores in Grand Forks and Fargo, North Dakota prior to 2020, it was not until 2022 that the third store opened in Missoula.

Yuan said he wanted a location in a college town in order to draw in business from younger people looking for fun desserts. By opening downtown, he could catch business from patrons leaving restaurants. “They also have a lot of visitors who will come downtown,” Yuan said. “Just like walking around, they will see us and try us.”

The store stands on the corner of East Main Street and Higgins. Yuan said the store specializes in lots of desserts, including boba tea. This practice is one rooted in experience, and learning and seeing what works firsthand in other parts of the world.

“Before we opened the first store in North Dakota, me and my friend went to Thailand,” Yuan said. “We saw those ice cream they sell by the street, and we were like, ‘Oh, it’s very nice, if we open a business, we can sell the ice cream, and we can also sell some boba tea.’”

He said what makes the store unique is the freshly made rolled ice cream and crepes.

“Fresh-made ice cream is made with fresh fruits they can make in front of you, and we get the fresh fruits every day from the grocery store,” Yuan said. “The thing we’re very proud of is our crepe. We are focused on the quality, and all the fruits are fresh and nice, and our crepe is like a Japanese-style crepe, so it’s not too sweet.”

Yuan said one of the most popular items sold is the classic crepe, which has strawberry and banana, with or without Nutella. He said a lot of their business is made up of college students from the dorms, as well as those who view their rolled ice cream and crepes on social media.

“This is a very good place for me to live, and to open a business here,” Yuan said. “I like to see people reorder from us, and I like to see those smiling faces after they eat the dessert. They will come to me, they will say, ‘Oh, it’s so delicious.’ I feel so good at the moment, you know, this is what we’re trying to do.”

Sweet at its peak

Sweet Peaks Ice Cream, an ice cream store owned and founded by Marissa Keenan, is another Montana business centered around community.

Growing up in Big Fork, Keenan found her love for ice cream through traveling to the East Coast.

“I have always loved ice cream, mostly because I used to go visit a bunch of my family on the East Coast, and going out for ice cream was an adventure,” Keenan said. “It was an event, it was



John Shelton scoops ice cream at Sweet Peaks in Missoula on March 5. TORI KUEHL | MONTANA KAIMIN

something that you did, it was social. You stood in the lines, you got to pick your flavors ... I felt like we didn’t have that in Montana, at least when I was growing up.”

Keenan’s original idea for the shop surrounded making ice cream sandwiches in the shape of mountain peaks and calling it Sweet Peaks, which eventually turned into an ice cream shop. She opened her first store in 2010 in Whitefish, with locations now in Bozeman, Kalispell and Missoula.

Keenan highlighted the social connection in going out for ice cream, explaining the positive aspect of being able to stand in line and connect with people you otherwise wouldn’t have the chance to.

“Part of the experience of going out for ice cream is that you get to stand in line, you get to talk to the people in line with you,” Keenan said. “It’s really great, and something that we wanted to recreate at Sweet Peaks, and that’s where we are. So going out for ice cream is, like

99% of the time, people that show up are already happy, anticipating something awesome and delicious, and we get to make them happier. And that’s like a pretty awesome gift.”

Keenan said they try to have a variety of flavors that everyone likes. She said that every store “becomes part of the community and the fabric that we’re in as well.”

“I hire people now that their first memories of ice cream involve Sweet Peaks, and that, to me, is such a full circle moment,” Keenan said. “I talk a lot with my new staff that’s coming in, ‘What’s your first memory of ice cream? What’s your favorite ice cream memory?’ because I think that taste creates a connection, whether it’s good, bad or whatever.”

Keenan also commented on the significance of Missoula in Sweet Peaks’ culture, stating that the people in Missoula is what helps to define the brand and the mission of the store.

“I love the Missoula community,” Keenan said. “There’s a great business community. I’m so lucky to be in that downtown core. I’m on a group text with a handful of female business owners, and they’re so supportive. There’s a connective tissue there that I really, really appreciate.”

Keenan said that what makes Sweet Peaks unique is her mission to be intentional about the ingredients used in the ice cream, and the staff that carry out the joy behind ice cream. This, she said, helps support her goal to use Montana products.

“I think we stand out because we are very intentional about our ingredients, and we’re very intentional about our flavors,” Keenan said. “It matters to me that there is at least a couple of flavors on the menu at all times that have some story that has to do with some other Montana connection. I think that is a really big differentiator for us, and it is what makes Sweet Peaks, what it is.”

The Kaimin's best of spring break

Yellowstone National Park

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A coyote crosses the snow in northern Yellowstone National Park on March 15. Most of the park's roads are closed in the winter and are expected to reopen between April 17 and May 22, according to the park's website. Coyotes frequent roadsides in the park to feed on small mammals.



La Fortuna, Costa Rica

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A remodeled school bus sits next to a house in La Fortuna, Costa Rica on March 16. The school bus lies along the road to the La Fortuna waterfall, a popular tourist destination. There are also shops with woodwork, \$1 coconut water and local artwork along the road.

Wenatchee, Washington

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Forward Jesse Heslop, center, of the Everett Silvertips and forward Sam Elliot, left, of the Wenatchee Wild, battle as the puck rings off the crossbar past Wild goaltender Carsten Leyerzapf. The Wild's last home game of the season took place at the Town Toyota Center in Wenatchee, Washington, on March 21. Everett won 6-5.

