

MONTANA KAIMIN

Green Light

**On Jan. 1, Montana recreational
marijuana sales are a go**

Story by Emily Tschetter
Photos by Olivia Swant-Johnson

5 Ho-Ho-Horoscope

6 Aber gets new life

15 New Lady Griz coach



December 9, 2021 | Volume 124 | Issue No. 14



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.”

EDITORIAL STAFF

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
Addie Slanger

SPORTS EDITOR
Jack Marshall

NEWS EDITORS
Mazana Boerboom
Griffen Smith

ARTS & CULTURE EDITOR
Clarise Larson

FEATURES EDITOR
Mariah Thomas

MULTIMEDIA EDITOR
Antonio Ibarra

DESIGN EDITOR
MaKayla O’Neil

DIGITAL EDITOR/COPY CHIEF
Andrea Halland

AUDIO EDITOR
Austin Amestoy

NEWSROOM STAFF

NEWS REPORTERS
Grace Carr
Jacob Owens
Andy Tallman
Emily Tschetter

SPORTS REPORTERS
Tye Brown
Holly Malkowski
Asa Metcalfe
Max Dupras

ARTS & CULTURE REPORTERS
Josh Moyer
Haley Yarborough

MULTIMEDIA
Kennedy Delap
Ridley Hudson
Shanna Madison
Lukas Prinos
Olivia Swant-Johnson

COPY EDITORS
Rebecca Bryan
Alicia McAlpine
Andy Tallman

DESIGNERS
McKenna Johnson
Mariah Karis
Isabella Musgrove

CARTOONIST
Walter Medcraft

OFFICE ASSISTANTS
Danielle Airola

AD SALES
Mariah Karis

ADVISERS
Jule Banville
Jan Winburn

FIND US ON SOCIAL MEDIA



@Montanakaimin



@Montanakaimin
@Montanakaiminsports



@Montanakaimin
@Kaiminsports



@Montanakaimin

For comments, corrections or letters to the editor, contact editor@montanakaimin.com or call (406) 243-4310.

For advertising opportunities, contact ads@montanakaimin.com or call (406) 243-6541.

Tired of reading? **Start listening.**

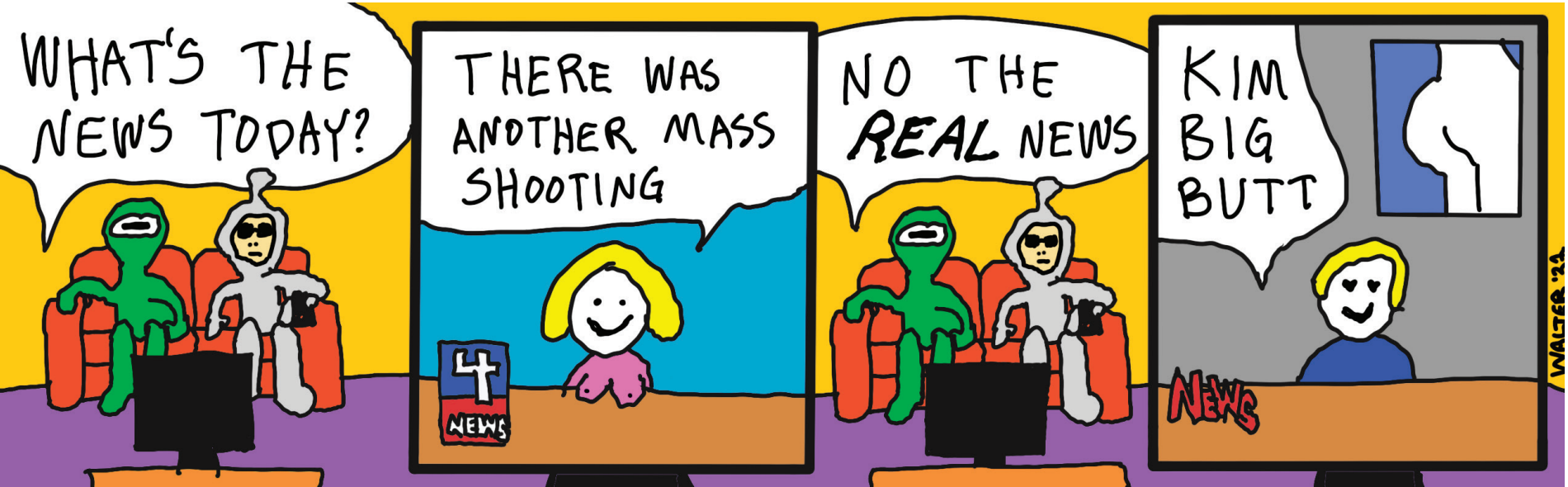
THE KAIMIN CAST

Available wherever you get your podcasts.



New episodes Monday

THE GARAGE: SE 1 EP 13



WALTER MEDCRAFT | MONTANA KAIMIN

Through the good and the bad, you showed up

As the semester comes to a close, the Kaimin is reflecting on what a crazy ride it's been. Last week, we published a photo essay detailing the resurgence of an in-person campus. We included photos from the fire Rob Smith protest, the law school walkout, theater productions, Griz games, live concerts and more. It's been impressive to watch – and it's been a lot to cover too.

You've celebrated Griz football on its winding journey to the quarterfinals, from its groundbreaking season-opening win against the University of Washington to its first loss of the season against the Eastern Washington Eagles. And you were there, at the highest-attended game of the 2021 FCS playoffs so far, when UM avenged itself Friday.

You saw UM's first enrollment increase in a decade, and read about the lingering issues that still remain – from more incentivized retirements to increased budget deficits. You showed your true colors for pride month, watching Main Hall light up in rainbow colors. You hula danced in the middle of the Oval.

And, when things weren't so great, you showed up for that too. You petitioned against misogynistic professors and DMed abrasive developers. You rallied for women to have their stories heard and higher education to be more equitable.

When it comes down to it, what matters the most at the University is that students care about the school we go to and the people we are surrounded by. This semester, you showed you did.

And we've seen it. We watched you join in on the causes you believe in, and cheer on our school when it earned celebration. We watched you hold it accountable when it deserved that, too.

We've been impressed. There hasn't been a semester like this, where the campus feels invigorated and our student body feels this present, in a long time. We know it can be hard to stay involved when so much is happening at UM – the good and the bad – but we take pride in the fact our student body is engaged with these nuanced issues.

It hasn't always been pretty, and we know firsthand the work still left to be done. Sex-based discrimination lawsuits and leadership accused of not reporting sexual assault allegations aren't issues to make light of. But we at the paper also know there will always be someone we can speak to, some student advocate taking action.

It's the Kaimin's goal to be there for it all. While we slog through dead week and finish finals strong (or in a desperate crawl, as many of us in this newsroom will), we hope you are looking forward to next semester as much as we are.

We want to extend our appreciation for your engagement this year. Keep showing up and we promise to do the same, through it all.

Like it? Hate it? Wish we were dead?
email us your opinions at editor@montanakaimin.com

SUDOKU

Difficulty: Easy

Edited by Margie E. Burke

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

Copyright 2021 by The Puzzle Syndicate

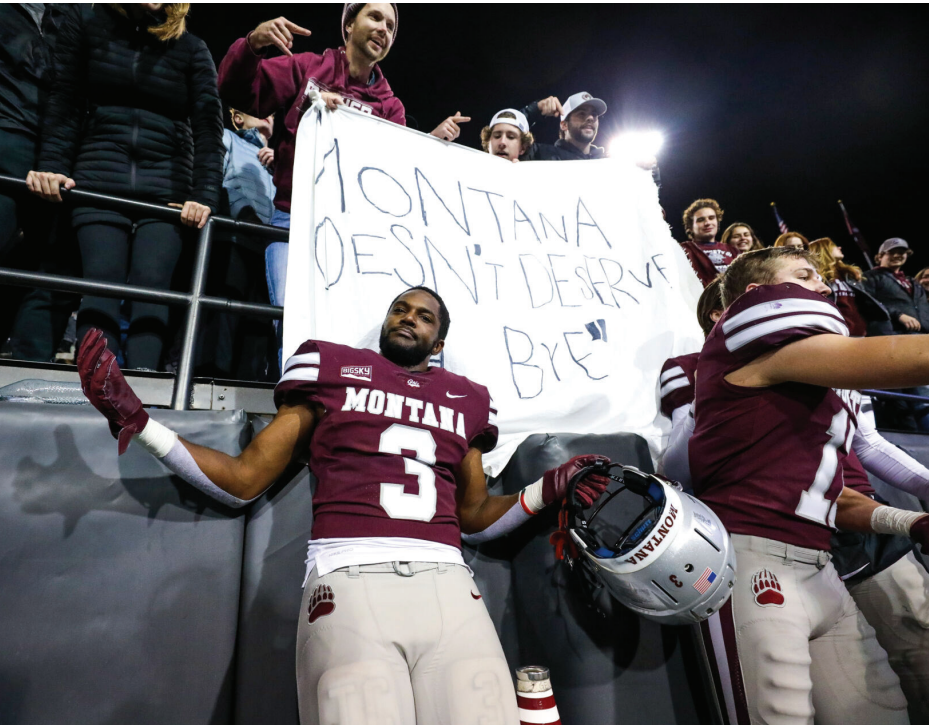
HOW TO SOLVE:

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:

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

Tastes like chicken



Montana redshirt cornerback Trajon Cotton celebrates in front of the student section and a student-made sign after flying past Eastern Washington at home on Dec. 3. The Grizzlies rode on to win the FCS second round playoff game 57-41 against the Eagles and will move on to play James Madison University in the quarterfinals on Dec. 10 in Harrisonburg, Virginia. **ANTONIO IBARRA | MONTANA KAIMIN**



Briefs: House Bill 102, town burned and sexual assault on campus

GRIFFEN SMITH
griffen.smith@umontana.edu

HOUSE BILL 102 ON HOLD

A district court in Lewis and Clark County permanently halted some parts of House Bill 102 Nov. 30, which would have allowed firearms on all Montana University System campuses. Yet the state of Montana appealed the ruling, likely setting up a showdown in the state Supreme Court.

Judge Mike McMahon placed a permanent injunction on the campus-carry portions of HB 102, saying the Montana Board of Regents — the governing body of the Montana University System — has the sole authority to regulate who has a gun on campus.

“Furthermore, there is no controlling legal authority that a member of the general public has the right to carry, openly or concealed, a firearm under either the United States Constitution or the Montana Constitution,” McMahon wrote in his decision.

HB 102, passed in February, would allow guns concealed or open on campus, including classrooms, lecture halls and residential facilities. The campus changes were part of the bill’s larger effort to allow concealed carry in all open-carry spaces, which remain intact under the ruling.

The decision comes after the legislature passed a series of laws in the 2021 session targeting universities and other local government regulations. The Board of Regents suit is not the only lawsuit the bill faces, as the Montana Federation of Public Employees made efforts to block several bills, including HB 102, in Gallatin County.

There is no timeline for when the Montana Supreme Court will hear the HB 102 case, but the Attorney General’s office did file the appeal the same day as McMahon’s decision. The Kaimin spent the semester following HB 102, and its implications to campus. Check out our “In the Crosshairs” tab on the Kaimin website to see more.

COVID-19 UPDATE

The Missoula City-County Health Department reported zero COVID-19 cases over the weekend. Numbers have dropped to 13 total UM-affiliated active cases as of Monday, the lowest since students returned to campus in August.

Countywide, there are only 229 active cases Monday, a sharp decline from more than 2,000 in October. New cases per 100,000 residents have dropped to 18 people per 100,000 a day. That number is even lower for those vaccinated, at 13 per 100,000.

Hospitalization rates are also down to 10 people, four of which are not county residents.

While cases are down, officials expressed concern over the omicron variant, a new mutation first found in South Africa. According to the New York Times, at least 17 states have reported the new variant, but there is no evidence the strain is more deadly.

Hayley Devlin, public information officer for Missoula County, said the health department has been able to relax for the last few weeks, but there are still concerns for the winter holi-

days and people staying indoors more. “We haven’t had time to see the effects of Thanksgiving or the omicron variant,” Devlin said. “There’s also flu in the area, and it’s possible to get both at the same time, which is usually a bad time.”

The health department suggests getting the COVID-19 booster shot to help prevent disease and infection from the virus. The shots are available to anyone 18 or older.

FIRE RAVAGES CENTRAL MONTANA TOWN

After a red flag warning blanketed most of central Montana last week, a fire sparked from a down powerline swept through a small town, burning more than two dozen structures, according to the Great Falls Tribune.

Abnormally late-season fire popped up all over the region, spurred on by a combination of severe drought affecting the eastern half of the state and unseasonably warm temperatures.

The West Wind Fire started burning brush nine miles southwest of Denton, Montana, a town of roughly 300 people east of Great Falls. With winds upward of 65 mph, the blaze pushed directly toward the small town, burning several commercial buildings, including century-old grain elevators.

After battling the fire into the center of town, the West Wind Fire subsided at 10,000 acres, scorching 25 homes, 18 secondary structures and six commercial buildings. To

donate to relief efforts, call Opportunity Bank of Montana at 406-932-5317 or visit a verified GoFundMe.

ON-CAMPUS SEXUAL ASSAULT REPORTED

A case of sexual assault without consent case reached UMPD’s desk Dec. 1 as officers in neighboring Ravalli County took a statement from a woman alleging a man raped her on campus Nov. 28. While the woman is not a student, the man is, and is currently under investigation by UMPD. A timely warning was issued to students in response to the case.

This report came after a Nov. 23 email sent out to students reported an on-campus sexual assault and strangulation of a student in a residence hall in September. UM sent the notification, as well as the Dec. 1 timely warning, to student emails in accordance with the Clery Act, legislation that requires universities to disclose campus crime data.

SANTANA TO PLAY AT ADAMS CENTER

Rock and roll legend Carlos Santana will be coming to Garden City in 2022 to perform at the University of Montana, GrizTix announced Monday. The grammy-winning guitar player will be touring his newest album “Blessings and Miracles” and appear in Missoula on April 2, 2022.

Along with Santana, guest appearances from Chick Corea, Corey Glover, Rob Thomas, Chris Stapleton, Kirk Hammett, Steve Winwood and Stantana’s wife, Cindy Blackman Santana, will headline the concert

Tickets are set to run between \$62 and \$96, and can be purchased at santana.com or griztix.com

The Weekly Crossword													by Margie E. Burke			
1	2	3	4	5		6	7	8	9		10	11	12	13		
14						15					16					
17						18				19						
20					21				22							
		23						24								
25	26						27									
28				29		30			31		32	33	34			
35			36		37			38		39						
40				41		42			43		44					
				45		46			47		48					
49	50	51						52								
53							54					55	56			
57							58			59						
60					61					62						
63					64					65						

Copyright 2021 by The Puzzle Syndicate

ACROSS

- 1 Wood for model planes
- 6 Moreover
- 10 Runner’s goal
- 14 Preserved, in a way

- 15 Hearty laugh
- 16 Live anagram
- 17 Open, as a cage
- 18 Stately
- 20 Aromatic herb
- 22 Bring to a boil?
- 23 Role player
- 24 Racing-stable V.I.P.

- 25 Swerve wildly
- 27 “Rio Bravo” star
- 28 2001 Will Smith biopic

- 29 Sticker for model cars
- 31 Put into law
- 35 Cut the crop
- 37 Harshness
- 39 ____ noted
- 40 Pavarotti, e.g.
- 42 Trivial Pursuit edition

- 44 Grammy category
- 45 Renewable energy source
- 47 Complain
- 49 Emulate Pollock

- 52 Hysterical
- 53 Head honcho
- 54 Party tray items
- 57 Green veggie in spears

- 59 Like a new candle
- 60 Fuzzy fabric
- 61 Bad thing to blow
- 62 Cabaret fixture

- 63 Priceless?
- 64 One’s partner
- 65 Boat propeller

DOWN

- 1 Attack
- 2 Fictional Karenina
- 3 Book keeper?
- 4 Hard to find
- 5 Carbonated
- 6 Intense feeling
- 7 Butcher’s offering

- 8 Sofa problem
- 9 Bad-tempered
- 10 Become pals with
- 11 Bird-related
- 12 Military attack
- 13 Person to respect
- 19 Senseless
- 21 One beyond hope
- 24 Prey grabber

- 25 Shopper’s item
- 26 On the safe side, at sea
- 27 Belmont transaction
- 30 Humidior item
- 32 Hearing-related
- 33 Highlands family
- 34 It can be bold
- 36 Follow in time
- 38 Beyond the ‘burbs

- 41 Chopper spinner
- 43 Parodies
- 46 Smooth, in music
- 48 Meal on a blanket
- 49 Part of SSgt
- 50 Phony
- 51 Waldorf salad ingredient
- 52 Amble along
- 54 Hair piece
- 55 Pitchfork part
- 56 Stash away
- 58 Cotton machine

Answers to Previous Crossword:

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

Ho-Ho-Horoscope: Merry Chrysler!



OLIVIA SWANT-JOHNSON | MONTANA KAIMIN

CLARISE LARSON

clarise.larson@umontana.edu

Hey ho-ho-HOES! You know what time it is: HOLI-DAY SEASON! We’re talking ugly sweaters, awkward present-giving and A LOT of alcohol. Listen, the holidays are hard :(... but that doesn’t mean you can’t be! That’s right: As long as you’re in the holiday spirit, anything is possible. So, to get you in the best mood, we made sure to pair your sign with a tasteful yet accurate holiday classic.

SAGITTARIUS (NOV. 22–DEC. 22): Grandma got run over by a reindeer? Did she though? Did she REALLY? I think she just wants attention tbh.

CAPRICORN (DEC. 23–JAN. 19): On the surface, you’re dreaming of a white Christmas. But really, you’re dreaming that humans are able to counteract the damaging effects of the increase of Earth’s average surface temperature and its oceans due to greenhouse gases released as people burn fossil fuels <3.

AQUARIUS (JAN. 20–FEB. 18): Better open that chimney nice and wide for old Saint Nick this year, cause you’re on the naughty list. This is a horoscope about songs? Well, you gon’ be singing on Christmas Eve if you catch my drift :).

PISCES (FEB. 19–MARCH 20): Justin Bieber: “sHaWtY wLt yOu! uNdEr tHe mIsTlEtOe!” OMG Justin stoppp you’re MARRIED we can’t kiss right now ... unless?

ARIES (MARCH 21–APRIL 19): You like to imagine Mariah Carey is singing “All I Want for Christmas Is You” about you because you need to be #1 at all costs.

TAURUS (APRIL 20–MAY 20): Nothing like sipping 5% eggnog with 95% rum while tearfully singing along

Blotter: Car jacked, yo mama jokes and missing diamonds

GRIFFEN SMITH
griffen.smith@umontana.edu

Between Nov. 27 and Dec. 6, the University of Montana Police Department reported 13 new crimes on and around campus. The most common offense was disorderly conduct — healthily supplemented by some shenanigans at last weekend’s football game.

MONDAY 11/29: THE CARJACKER

UMPD responded to reports of a vehicle parked at the Missoula College around 5 p.m. to find a man masturbating alone in the car. Officers charged the man, who is a

student, with disorderly conduct. The department will continue to investigate this case. Since his actions were not directed toward an individual, the incident is not labeled a sex crime.

FRIDAY 12/3: GAMEDAY BUS FIGHT

When one man started making fun of another man’s mother at UM’s Dec. 3 game versus Eastern Washington, things got heated. The two, surrounded by a large group of people, began arguing back and forth while leaving the game. Things took a turn for the worse when trying to get on a bus for downtown, where nearly a dozen people threw hands outside the stadium.

Only one person was charged with disorderly conduct, though the investigation is ongoing.

SATURDAY 12/4: TRACKING TERRORS

A new feature on iPhones lets users know if another iPhone has been nearby for an extended period of time, known as someone “tracking” another. While the feature is incredibly dystopian, there are a few reports of people being tracked on-campus. UMPD Chief Brad Giffin explained none of them were actual crimes. “The phone is just within the proximity of this phone, and that is all we can go on,” Giffin said. “I think it will be a little prob-

lematic.” There are no crimes associated with the tracking — and no suspects — but a lot of confusion with technology.

12/4: DIAMONDS LAST FOREVER

After a Grizzly victory at Washington-Grizzly stadium, one well-dressed woman called UMPD to report a missing one-carat diamond earring. Officers sent out their super sniffer dog, Rugar, to hunt down the earring in the beer-soaked bleachers. Luckily, the earring was found close to the woman’s seat. Always be ready to part with your belongings when sloshed at a football game.

Aber renovation clears way for new dining facility

JACOB OWENS
jacob.owens@umontana.edu

When students return to campus in January, the Lommasson Center will likely cease to be the student-centered space it has been for decades, as roughly 150 staff members from Lommasson and buildings across campus move to former dorm Aber Hall.

Over winter break, UM plans to move a large number of student services staff into the first six floors of Aber in preparation to demolish the east end of the Lommasson Center and the north end of Craig Hall. While some amenities like the Food Zoo will remain open, the move is a major step forward in bringing a new dining facility to campus in the next few years.

Paula Short, the associate vice president for campus operations, preparedness and response, said between the new dining center and other upcoming projects, it's an exciting time at the University.

"I would describe this as one of the most exciting and ambitious campus revitalization efforts, certainly in recent memory," she said.

Significant work needs to be done prior to these changes taking place.

Aber's first floor echoed with the pounding of hammers last Wednesday afternoon as construction workers placed steel framing and began hanging drywall. The wiring crisscrossing the rooms hung exposed.

Connor Stahly, the project manager for planning and construction, said the Aber work began on the sixth floor. The remodel's additions include new paint, a kitchenette and flooring that started going in last Thursday. There will also be a gender neutral bathroom added to the floor.

The University of Montana's Move Out plan includes relocations involving several buildings on campus, including Brantly Hall, the Gilkey building and Main Hall.

Services like Financial Aid will be moving to Aber's fifth floor, while the first floor will house staff from the Office for Disability Equity.

The move will also see departments like Experiential Learning and Career Services become more centralized. The department's staff from the Davidson Honors College basement and the Lommasson Center will move to Aber's second floor.

For Dawn Barnhart, an assistant registrar, the move will be reminiscent of her time as a UM student.

"It'll be a throwback for me," she said. "Because when I was a student here, I

lived in Jesse, Aber's twin, on the sixth floor, so it's a little bit like, oh, going back to my beginnings."

The Office of the Registrar will be on the sixth floor of Aber, with an open office space on the north side of the building with views of Washington-Grizzly Stadium. Six dorm rooms and their walls used to make up the space.

Barnhart said she's excited for the social element of moving into a building with departments the Office of the Registrar has not been with previously. She said this could increase collaboration.

Barnhart said the move is also "overwhelming" on top of day-to-day duties.

She said the department usually has flexibility on posting grades to transcripts, but not this year because it moves soon after the semester ends. The department is set to have its technology moved on Dec. 23 and furniture on Dec. 27.

She said the priorities will be posting final grades and graduating students for Fall 2021.

Barnhart said she has heard more complaints and concerns from those in Lommasson than excitement over the move. Her guess is that the concerns are due to the move being added to the normal workload and the uncertainty of it all.

She said UM has a history of being very collaborative, citing as examples the student and faculty senates, but there was less collaboration with the decision to go to Aber.

"I don't know that there was that much discussion here, and I don't know why," Barnhart said. "Maybe that was the only option."

Stahly said some staff in Lommasson are likely frustrated by the move, but he believes it will end up being well-received.

"So I know there's going to be growing pains, but I really think everyone's going to really enjoy it," he said.

The move is a small part of the future construction projects at the University. Plans also include the new dining facility and a remodel of Knowles Hall.

Jameel Chaudhry, the associate director of planning, design and construction, said this is the first time in his more than two decades at UM that a major building will be demolished.

He said the Lommasson Center has



Aber Hall, located at the back of the University of Montana campus near the tennis courts, is being renovated to be turned into office spaces for staff at the Lommasson Center and other buildings across campus. Over winter break, UM plans to move staff into the first six floors of Aber in preparation for the demolition of the east end of the Lommasson Center and the north end of Craig Hall. LUKAS PRINOS | MONTANA KAIMIN

a history of maintenance problems and stood through a series of remodels. The middle of the building was built in the 1950s.

Chaudhry said the current dining hall functions, but everyone knows it's not a fine facility.

"You can, again, only make an old building so good unless you're willing to pump a ton of money into it, and I don't think [the] administration wanted to go that route,"

ASUM is hiring!

Currently looking for Bus Drivers, Neighborhood Ambassadors, Childcare Staff, and a Receptionist.

Local engineers back away from new Hip Strip condos, developer says project will continue

GRIFFEN SMITH
griffen.smith@umontana.edu

The plans for a \$100 million redevelopment along the Hip Strip remain uncertain after the group designing the buildings canceled a public meeting, saying the project should not be finalized after a controversy over one of the developer's online messages.

Yet developer Aaron Wagner said the project will continue to move forward without the local firm.

"They have not even been awarded the project yet," Wagner told the Kaimin. "We are still moving forward, nothing is being stopped or even delayed."

WGM Group, the Montana-based engineering firm, released a Dec. 2 statement canceling a design input meeting with members of the public and developing partner Cole Bergquist. The company's reason: Wagner's insulting messages on Instagram, and outcry from locals opposing his involvement in the project.

"Now is not the time to review planning details," the statement said. "It's time to reassess how the community comes together to support our neighbors through a community project."

Though WGM canceled its meeting, the land has already been purchased by Wagner, his brother Jadon Wagner and Bergquist. Missoula's city council approved the rezoning of the property in October to mixed commercial and residential use, with a 125-foot height limit.

The development would replace the Missoulian building along the south bank of the Clark Fork River with high-end condominiums and commercial space on the first floor.

Wagner released an Instagram post in November with some renderings of what the new condos would look like, sparking backlash from Missoulians concerned with the lack of affordability of the project. Wagner responded to some comments from the post with insulting messages.

"I paid \$10 million for the land... more than your life and soul is worth," said one response obtained by the Kaimin. "So here's a little tip... fuck off and get a life."

Wagner has since apologized for the comments, telling the Missoulian his actions were "immature and childish." He added that his comments are the likely reason WGM canceled the design meeting.

Without the local firm, Wagner said he would likely contract with another group from out of town.

"They felt the heat and were appre-

hensive about the relationship with me personally," Wagner said. "What I tell people is, 'Look, you guys want locals, but the pressure against me is doing the opposite.' Now we are going to have an outside group that might not understand the goals and needs of the community."

WGM is currently working with Bergquist on the Reed Condo project, located just a few blocks east of the Missoulian lot.

A Nov. 30 column from city council members Bryan von Lossberg, Gwen Jones, Stacie Anderson, Mirtha Becerra and Amber Sherrill said there is little the government can do to regulate the development.

"Under Montana state law, we cannot condition rezones," the councilors wrote. "In other words, we cannot approve a rezone based on a building design or the individual developer. To be clear, council did not vote on a development. When privately owned property is being sold to another private owner, council lacks the legal authority to control the development."

"We have no legal power to demand an affordable housing component," the column finished. "To do more for affordable housing, we need federal and state support. And that is the next conversation for our community to have."

The Kaimin reached out to WGM to ask whether the company had completely pulled out of the development. A spokesperson said the company stands by the original statement, which listed Bergquist as a client for the company.

WGM said the Missoulian will continue to operate in the sold building through March 2022.

Request for comment from Bergquist had not been answered by press time.



The Missoulian office, which occupies the 500 block of Higgins Avenue, was sold to developers in October. The new owners, including Cole Bergquist and brothers Aaron and Jadon Wagner, have plans to build condos and commercial space at the location. GRIFFEN SMITH | MONTANA KAIMIN

Your career.

Grow it faster with us.

The future of Enterprise is fueled by our Management Training Program. Become one of our future leaders and learn first-hand what it takes to run a multi-million dollar business. From day one you will enjoy excellent training and real responsibility to help you build the skills you will need to succeed in your career.

Get started today:
careers.enterprise.com

Equal Opportunity Employer/Disability/Veterans

ENTERPRISE HOLDINGS.

©2019 Enterprise Holdings, Inc. K100001-0010



University of Montana senior Danny Brinkley checks on some of his marijuana plants, which he grows in climate-controlled tents under purple-hued grow lights. Brinkley is the mastermind behind his operation, directing his caregivers to feed and water his plants on a strict regimen. Growing his own marijuana plants means that he is able to control the quality of his medicine, while also supplementing the \$600 of disability benefits the state provides for him to live off of each month. OLIVIA SWANT-JOHNSON | MONTANA KAIMIN

Green Light

Montana's newest cash crop is about to hit the market

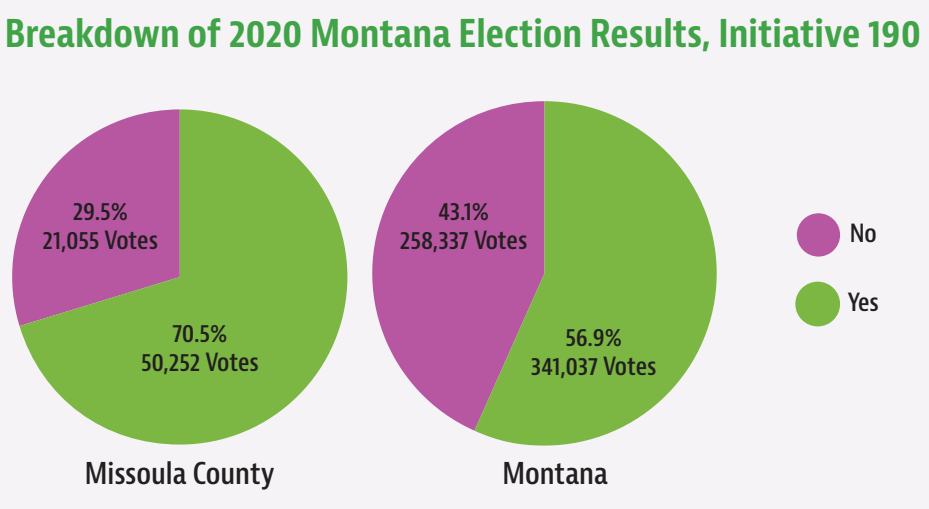
Story by Emily Tschetter | Photos by Olivia Swant-Johnson

DANNY BRINKLEY, a 41-year-old UM senior, maneuvered his motorized wheelchair around the hardwood floor in his living room, stopping for a moment to admire his saltwater fish tank before settling in the center of the room with his dog Nessa at his side. He turned off his air conditioning through a voice-activated system, but he cannot achieve every daily task on his own through such mechanisms. Brinkley has been unsuccessful in adjusting his caregiver arrangement in over a year, which he attributes to low wages for caregivers in Montana. Two friends consistently work for him and others pick up shifts when they can to help him with any part of his routine he cannot do on his own.

The living room has just enough space for Brinkley to drive his wheelchair between the couch and a black tarp tent where, in conjunction with two other tents in an office space, he grows about a pound of marijuana every two months to sell to his loyal clientele. After a snowboarding accident in 2006 left him almost fully paralyzed, Brinkley has committed much of his time to researching marijuana strain cultivation and tending to his own growth operation. Brinkley, a green card holder for over four years, smokes legally every day to relieve his anxiety and nerve pain associated with his injury. His sale of marijuana to others to supplement his disability checks is illegal in Montana, but it won't be for long. In November of last year, Montana voters

supported Ballot Initiative 190 with 57% of the vote. I-190 legalized possession of an ounce or less of marijuana for adults over age 21 immediately. It also allowed for the eventual legal sale of recreational marijuana with a 20% state tax rate. Along with this initiative, Missoula County voted overwhelmingly in the 2021 municipal election for an additional 3% tax on recreational sale within the county. The dispensary sale of recreational marijuana among already established shops in the state becomes legal on Jan. 1, 2022. New firms and third-party sellers can apply to enter the market beginning July 1, 2023. The expanded industry has the potential to create millions in tax revenue for the state. The funds will benefit a variety of conservation programs, and House Bill 701, which essentially made

Initiative 190 law, allocates most of the new revenue to the State General Fund. Though the date for legal recreational sale in Montana is swiftly approaching, many aspects of its future remain unclear. Brinkley, although already well-established in his sale and use within the current market, is optimistic for the expanded availability of marijuana, especially for student use. But he also has a complicated relationship with both Montana and with marijuana, and is wary of how the state will spend the extra money that comes as a result of legalization. The social, criminal and economic implications of the expanded industry are difficult to anticipate and widely debated for both the students of UM and for the broader Missoula and Montana population.



Data gathered from The Des Moines Register. MCKENNA JOHNSON | MONTANA KAIMIN

Thinking Green

Brinkley's life before the accident that left him paralyzed could be described as anything but sedentary. He chased any sport or activity that could fill him with adrenaline, and surfing in his hometown of Santa Barbara, California, was his favorite. "I miss the water and the living in the moment that goes on. That is the most in the moment sport — there's nothing but you and a wave," Brinkley said. "It's hard to live in the moment now. I get it from writing sometimes, sometimes painting too. But it's much harder. But now I realize I have mind powers that I wasn't aware of until I was paralyzed and not able to surf and skate." After the snowboarding accident, in which he attempted a jump and fell on his neck, he remained in a coma for three weeks and doctors told him he would not be able to talk again. But when he came out of the coma and could speak again after only a month, Brinkley didn't allow the new challenges he was facing to hinder his search for fulfillment and happiness. "They really give you no hope. They don't want to be sued for giving you false hope," Brinkley said. "I never had periods of depression for this injury; it just kind of was what it was and I rolled with it. I would get my days where I'm like, 'Fuck everybody walking,' but I haven't had that in a while." Now he channels his energy into studying psychology at UM with the hopes of turning his knowledge and familiarity with marijuana — which has been part of his life since he first stole a joint from his mom at 13 — into a full-fledged career in the psychology field helping people find cannabis products to suit their needs. "If I get a job in weed psychology I will never feel like I work a day in my life. I will be doing what I love and what I was meant to do," Brinkley said. "Everyone has a problem that cannabis can address. There are 65 different

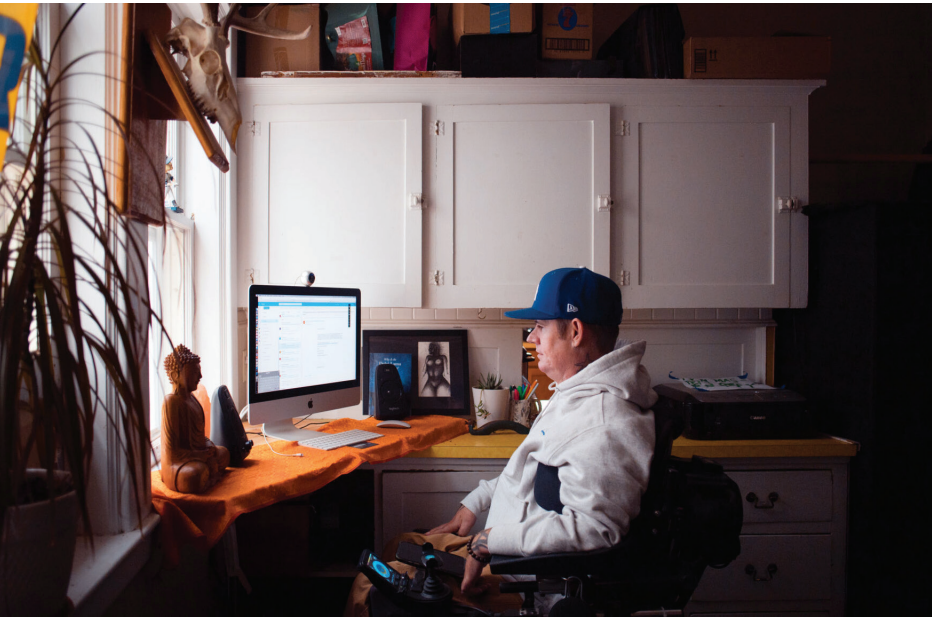
compounds in weed, and all these different combinations will help with different things." Brinkley uses medical marijuana to ease his anxiety and nerve pain. Medical marijuana has been legal in Montana since it garnered almost 62% of the vote on a ballot initiative in 2004. Even opponents of recreational legalization in the state have historically been supportive of the availability of marijuana for medical use, including Steve Zabawa, leader of the premier anti-legalization group in the state, Safe Montana. Safe Montana advocates for decreasing access to illegal drugs with an emphasis on family values. It has been involved in further regulating the medical marijuana market, as well as fighting the prospect of recreational legalization, since 2011 when Zabawa became outraged over a dispensary opening near his children's middle school in Billings. Zabawa voted for medical marijuana legalization in 2004, but sees flaws in accountability for medical providers giving green cards to patients who do not truly need them. In 2011 he backed Senate Bill 423, which limited how many patients each dispensary and medical provider could serve. Voters repealed limitations on how many patients medical marijuana providers could see, and law enforcement's capacity to conduct unannounced searches of medical marijuana facilities in Ballot Initiative 182 in 2016, but Zabawa continues to fight for further regulation of the market and wishes to stunt the potential rapid growth accompanying recreational legalization. "There are good people who use medical marijuana correctly, and there's a lot of people that don't do it in good faith. There are a lot of bad actors in the state that are supposedly doing medical marijuana, but it isn't legitimate," Zabawa said. "I'm going to do everything I can with Safe Montana to put recreational marijuana dispensaries out of business." The Montana Department of Revenue reported that medical marijuana sales reached



Brinkley was 26 when he broke his neck in a snowboarding accident that left him quadriplegic. Now 41, he is finishing his final semester as a psychology major at UM, a degree he hopes to use in conjunction with his understanding of cannabis to help people. OLIVIA SWANT-JOHNSON | MONTANA KAIMIN

about \$70 million in 2019. But a cannabis market potential report from UM's Bureau of Business and Economic Research (BBER) estimated recreational sales have the potential to reach \$176 to \$187 million annually. This would result in state tax revenue from the 20% tax on recreational sale ranging between \$43.4 and \$52 million per year. Dr. Robert Sonora, associate director of UM's BBER and co-author of the cannabis market potential report, said Montana won't benefit in tax revenues to the same extent as

states that pioneered legalization like Colorado and Washington, but he sees the opening market as economically beneficial. "Because Colorado and Washington were in the game right away, achieving those types of results is going to be almost impossible," Sonora said. "The big financial economic concern is the loss of productivity, you know, that people are too stoned to work. But if you're going to use that argument, then you better say that about any other legal mind-altering substance. Most economists agree that it should be legal-



Brinkley uses adaptive technology to work on homework for his comparative psychology class, a final piece of his degree in psychology. While he's thankful for the technology, it's clunky and he says homework takes him exponentially longer. As a practicing Buddhist, Brinkley manages frustration through meditation, the use of cannabis products and incense. **OLIVIA SWANT-JOHNSON | MONTANA KAIMIN**

ized; it's just the costs are not so high, and the benefits are sufficiently high that they easily outweigh the costs."

Zabawa sees recreational marijuana use as harmful, and argues it hinders productivity and leads to further financial burdens for the state when individuals use it as a gateway drug.

"A person that's gotten caught up in drugs is not a productive person. Normally they're hiding out in the social programs and doing everything they can just to get the next hit," Zabawa said. "It's a workforce issue. They can't have stoned people moving concrete trucks and operating jackhammers because it's dangerous."

But Brinkley said some strains of marijuana can actually increase productivity.

"You give me any topic at school that interests me and an hour with a good strain and I'll put down some real good content," Brinkley said.

Although many lawmakers hope legalizing recreational sale through dispensaries will disincentivize black market sales within the state, Brinkley sees the broader market as an opportunity for illegal growers and sellers like himself, especially since third party sales to dispensaries doesn't open until July 1, 2023. Since recreational marijuana will be taxed at 20%, Brinkley anticipates the black market blossoming due to its sales remaining untaxed.

"They're saying that they're going to keep giving the same medical prices to medical people? I'm not sure. I know it's going to make the black market more prevalent with the extra tax cost, which sellers right now are looking forward to," Brinkley said. "Corrupt people are the type of people that want in on weed, it's

a multimillion dollar industry. The cool thing about the cannabis community is most of the people in it don't want outside intervention and are not willing to sell out."

The Ganja Effect

Brinkley is excited for more individuals to benefit from marijuana without requiring a green card or medical diagnosis starting in January.

"You shouldn't have to have a medical condition to be able to cure a problem. Everyone's had a headache, everyone has gotten bummed out and everyone has not been able to sleep. I think everybody should have that option," Brinkley said.

Despite this, Brinkley admits he is addicted to marijuana, and believes the age to begin using should be higher than 21.

"I never decided how much I'd use. I'm an addict and I know that. I'm not an addict in the sense that I get THC sickness or whatever, but I definitely rely on it," Brinkley said. "I think it needs a higher age limit, actually, just because the frontal lobe isn't developed until you're 26."

Missoula County voted overwhelmingly in favor of recreational legalization with 70% of voters in support, and ASUM passed a resolution in support of the ballot initiative shortly before the 2020 election.

"My hope is that tax revenue will directly benefit students. If anything, it's benefiting our state tremendously, and students will feel the effects of that," ASUM President Noah Durnell said. "It's going to change student perspectives on marijuana as something harmful and dangerous and criminal, and I think that this is



In November of last year, Montana voters passed Initiative 190, which legalizes the possession of an ounce or less of marijuana for adults 21 and over and the eventual sale of recreational cannabis, with 57% of the vote. After the 2021 municipal election, Missoula County also voted for an additional 3% tax on recreational sale within the county. **OLIVIA SWANT-JOHNSON | MONTANA KAIMIN**

going to also reshape student perspectives on what a criminal is."

MontPIRG, a student civic engagement group on campus, collected almost 16,000 signatures to get the initiative on the ballot, and enjoyed heightened involvement from students due to its popularity.

"We are always really happy and fulfilled when there's an opportunity to devote student effort to something so in line with our belief structure. The ability to get students engaged on something that's, on the surface level, really fun and engaging is great," Tor Gudmundsson, vice president of the MontPIRG board of directors, said. "Hey, do you want to sign to legalize pot?" is a lot more fun than, "Hey, are you registered to vote?"

MontPIRG threw its support behind the initiative because of the prospective tax revenues benefiting conservation, but Gudmundsson, a UM junior, also values the decrease in incarcerations the law will allow. Without marijuana possession and use citation on students' criminal records, Gudmundsson believes their future opportunities will no longer be hindered by marks on their records under the new law.

"Once this is fully implemented, it's no longer a crime to smoke a little pot. I think that's really appealing from a college student perspective because a criminal record can pretty quickly derail your education," Gudmundsson said. "It doesn't seem very modern or reasonable to have something that's thought of pretty casually among college students as something that could derail your upward trajectory."

Zabawa believes recreational legalization will actually incentivize more individuals to begin using marijuana, even though research-

ers still disagree on whether marijuana serves as a "gateway drug" or whether legalization increases use.

"The other states that have legalized it have opened up a can of worms by making it very available for everybody, so I'm against more people using it in the state of Montana," Zabawa said. "There's enough people doing it already and there's already a distribution system here, so why do we want to encourage bad behavior?"

However, UMPD Police Chief Brad Giffin does not anticipate increased infractions with the law change and does not view marijuana as a burden on UMPD.

"I think we're going to probably get called as much as we got called before, the only thing that I think might change is the number of law violations versus the number of policy violations," Giffin said. "Honestly, it's not really anything that we consider to be a problem. Usually when we deal with those calls, they're really cooperative. The volume of marijuana related calls is steady, but not overbearing in any way."

Currently, any person older than 21 can possess less than an ounce of marijuana legally, but even after Jan. 1, any possession and use on campus remains a violation of the student code of conduct. UMPD still has to intervene if there are reports of substance abuse other than alcohol on campus.

Brinkley recognizes that he relies on marijuana, but has no plans to quit using completely due to the many health benefits he's experienced.

"There's a point in everybody's life where marijuana can help them, or they know somebody that could be helped from it. I

know that's been true for me," Brinkley said. "I would like to stop and take a break at some point, but there's no reason to stop. It's just too helpful."

Blazing Ahead

Brinkley did not vote on either of the 2020 ballot initiatives that led to marijuana's recreational legalization. He said he doesn't participate in the political process often, even on issues that directly affect him.

"I've never been a voter. I voted one time, and it was for Arnold Schwarzenegger for the governor of California, and that was a big fuck up. So I don't really want to vote anymore," Brinkley said.

The I-190 ballot initiative — the one passed by voters in 2020 — laid out a recommendation for the state tax revenues from marijuana legalization to be split halfway between the State General Fund, which pays for the state's biennial budget, and the rest to conservation efforts, addiction resources, healthcare and veterans' services.

Even though voters passed the ballot initiative with this recommendation, the Montana Legislature chooses how state tax revenue is spent. House Bill 701, the bill passed in the legislature this spring that solidified the legalization of marijuana, allocated \$6 million to addiction recovery programs, \$150,000 to the Board of Crime Control, 20% to conservation efforts and the rest to the State General Fund.

Zabawa believes if the ballot initiative hadn't listed its recommendations in specific values for state spending to conservation and veteran's services, it would not have won in the 2020 election.

"The initiative was written with specific allocation of the revenues. They broke it down in percentages. Everything seemed like a done deal, and they said that it would happen and nobody countered it," Zabawa said.

Gudmundsson and MontPIRG initially began advocating for the ballot initiative due to the prospective funds going toward conservation efforts. After the funds were scaled back significantly in HB 701, Gudmundsson said they are still pleased with the extra revenue.

"It's absolutely not the huge projection that I-190 asked for, but so few initiatives like this ever come out on the other side looking exactly like they did on the way in. It's going to generate almost \$16 million annually for the Department of Fish and Wildlife by 2025, and that's hard to not be really excited about. That's a huge win," Gudmundsson said.

Gudmundsson says conservation efforts are related to more than climate change. They are a student-specific issue — guaranteeing future access to natural recreation around the state.

"The student population will really benefit from this in the long term. If we think of students here in Montana as young adults who are going to come into professional lives here in the state, I want it to be a state that still has beautiful rivers to go fish in a decade from now," Gudmundsson said. "I want 19-year-old

students now in a decade to be able to take their kids on the same hikes that they went on while they were in college."

The true state benefits in tax revenues are impossible to fully estimate because many aspects of the new market in Montana remain unknown.

"There's always going to be some unforeseen things that happen, always," Sonora said. "It doesn't always have to be bad, either, or the unforeseen circumstance could be that nothing fundamentally changes when legalization happens. And that would also be unforeseen."

The legislature is flexible in how it may spend the tax revenues after every session, and the framework for recreational marijuana regulation and spending could look completely different in 2023. Zabawa already plans to campaign for individual counties to opt out of recreational legalization in 2022.

Although guidelines have been set, the nuts and bolts of recreational legalization in Montana are far from settled. Gudmundsson says students should voice their opinions — in and out of the ballot box — if they aren't happy with the rollout.

"I would 100% encourage, as this ball keeps moving along, if citizens of Montana and especially students aren't happy with it, we can change it. We have the ability to do so: We live in a democratic system where we can show up, voice those concerns and ask people to make changes," Gudmundsson said.

Not everyone would agree with Gudmundsson's view of democratic participation, though — like Brinkley.

While Brinkley may be poised to see higher profits once third party sales to dispensaries become legal, he's leaving Montana after he graduates this summer. He has experienced difficulty in receiving disability benefits and accommodations from the state and is seeking better care in his home state of California.

"I'm so tired of this state; it's kicked my ass for years now. The state gives you \$1000 a month for disabilities and takes away a third to 'help you.' Six hundred dollars is nothing," Brinkley said. "I don't want to sound like I've given up, but this county has stepped on me and the state doesn't care about disabled people at all. I'm just over it. I don't care what they do with the extra revenue. I know it probably won't go to anything good."

Whether individuals are pleased with the tax revenue allocation and the further regulation of the market or not, it is no longer a criminal act to indulge in some electric lettuce recreationally in Montana.

Brinkley plans to move back to California after he graduates, so he won't be in Montana to see the impact of legalization, but many other habitual growers, sellers and users of marijuana will see the lifestyle and industry surrounding weed fundamentally change in 2022. The true nature and impact of this expanded market cannot be anticipated ahead of Jan. 1, but plenty of students and community members alike are eager for the date to arrive.

Ask the Oval

Owen Lee

"I'm excited for marijuana legalization to be recreational, and I'm definitely going to use it. It will definitely be a beneficial thing for me."



Natalie Renk

"I'm totally here for recreational legalization, I think that it's a good source of revenue for the economy. I personally don't plan on using it, but I think that it should definitely be legalized."



Devin Jacaruso

"Legalize it. Legalize it all, baby. I 100% plan on using it once it's legalized, and I'm excited to be able to buy for myself without having to pay for a green card. I feel like that really bars some people from being able to use it right now."



Casey Denson

"I like that the tax revenue is going to conservation, which is great. I'm also excited to finally have dispensaries that can tell me exactly what's in my weed."



Erin Walden

"It should be legalized, it's not as harmful as other things that are legal like drinking. It can be useful for people that have undiagnosed mental illnesses, and for people who can't afford medical marijuana."



‘Hearth: A Yuletide Tale’ set to bring street music to theater for the holidays

HALEY YARBOROUGH
haleyyarborough@umontana.edu

Twelve students and local community members sat around a table with no shoes, occasionally strumming the banjo and guitar in song as they recited their lines for the Montana Repertory Theatre’s upcoming show “Hearth: A Yuletide Tale.”

While the play is not a musical, the students in the show act as musicians. The show, written by University of Montana alumni Tyson Gerhardt, tells the story of a young boy who wanders off into a world of ragpickers, tramps and buskers trying to survive a harsh Montana winter through street music.

“I’ve been a street musician since I was a teenager,” Gerhardt said. “So I decided it would be nice to write a play like this.”

Gerhardt said the play will focus on bringing awareness to contemporary issues like homelessness during the holidays. The protagonist grapples with his middle-class upbringing as his act of childhood rebellion becomes a window into both a world of wonder and cruelty.

Gerhardt, who graduated from UM in 2017 with a degree in musical theater, said he’s been involved in theater his whole life, but this is his first time writing a long-form play. He said he’s been working on the project since March of 2021 and it’s still a work in progress, even going through revisions during rehearsal and a planned “stage-reading” in front of a live audience on Dec. 9, 10 and 11.

As a member of the local Missoula band Recession Special, Gerhardt plans to integrate a lot of American Folk into “Hearth: A Yuletide Tale.” The show will feature music on the guitar, banjo, fiddle, concertina (small-button accordion), upright bass and washboard, played along to songs written by Gerdhalt.

Stephen Clement, a third-year student at UM majoring in musical theater performance, plays the concertina and said he’s excited to play in front of a live audience and especially with the show’s ensemble of talented local musicians.

“The time we get to perform together and make art together is certainly a privilege,” Clement said.

Clement, who is one of three UM students participating in the production, said “Hearth: A Yuletide Tale” is particularly important because it highlights local talent and brings Montana stories to life, including issues in Missoula. He said it’s pertinent to contemporary issues like the housing crisis and homelessness in Missoula.

“It’s really a play that forces people to reassess their understanding of the situation,” Clement said.

Michael Legg, the artistic director of the Montana Repertory Theatre, said during the past four years, he’s worked to bring Missoula



With instruments laid on top of tables set up in a square, actors and musicians in “Hearth: A Yuletide Tale” read through the script in preparation for the group’s performance at UM’s Masquer Theatre on Dec. 9, 10 and 11. **RIDLEY HUDSON | MONTANA KAIMIN**

stories like these to the stage, including stories about Gifro Poncho, a man married to a ghost, at Fort Missoula. Legg said the program plans to also expand its outreach to tell stories about income inequality, the housing crisis and veterans coping with loss after returning home from the military.

This show is not “traditional” in the sense that there will be no costumes or props. Legg said audiences will have a chance to provide feedback after the show is over. Legg said listening to reactions is a great way to revise the material to improve future performances and shows. He also said he hopes that based on feedback from the show, the MRT will truly perform “Hearth: A Yuletide Tale” this time next year.

“We hope this will become a true holiday tradition,” Legg said.

Shows for “Hearth: A Yuletide Tale” will be performed at 7:30 p.m. in UM’s Masquer Theatre on Dec. 9, 10 and 11. Tickets are pick what you pay.



University of Montana alumni Tyson Gerhardt, writer of “Hearth: A Yuletide Tale,” jams out with the banjo while Geoff Taylor follows along with the violin at the read-through rehearsal for the play put on by the Montana Repertory Theatre. **RIDLEY HUDSON | MONTANA KAIMIN**

Live dance makes a comeback with UM dance program’s ‘Dance Up Close’

JOSH MOYAR
jm144854@umconnect.umt.edu

While the Griz football team wiped the floor with Eastern Washington, the UM dance program celebrated a victory of its own, only a building away from the packed stadium. After more than a year, the UM dance program held a live recital – the first live performance since the pandemic began.

The show allows the dancers to perform at a close distance to the audience, thanks to the Masquer Theatre’s three-sided stage, and is aptly titled “Dance Up Close.”

During the show, nine different pieces were featured, highlighting 23 dancers in total. Each piece was choreographed by a student as part of junior or senior projects.

“It’s been really exciting to see the students transition into being in a theater again and preparing themselves to perform for a live audience,” said Brooklyn Draper, assistant professor of dance and a producer of the show. “It’s exciting, but I can imagine it’s also kind of scary. I know if I were performing, I would definitely be a little nervous.”

“It’s unreal,” Hannah Dusek, a third-year dance student said. Dusek performed in three pieces of the show and choreographed the piece “And Then, the Influence Shifted.”

“We haven’t heard people actually clapping for us for so long. Everyone’s really excited,” Dusek said.

Despite the second of four performances of “Dance Up Close” falling into the same time slot as football playoffs, the limited seats sold out and the crowd was engaged in every piece, voicing their praise of every flip, spin and lift in the show.

The first piece, “The Unexpected Movements of Tennis: Breaking the College Expectation to Conform Through Dance,” was one of the program’s more unique offerings, featuring only two dancers, two tennis rackets and a net.

It was choreographed by Bella Kasper, a UM student who is also studying psychology, as her senior project. Her dancers called her their tennis coach throughout rehearsals.

“I’ve never actually played tennis,” Kasper said laughing. “I just find the movement really interesting, and I really like doing something that no one’s anticipating.”

Other highlights of the evening included a piece themed around a coffee date, a prerecorded film that was projected on the wall, music by alt-J and Mac Miller and fresh hatchlings from a pair of giant eggs.

Tickets to all four showings were “pay what

you can,” Draper said. The price of each ticket was chosen by each individual person at the show for the amount they decided to contribute to the program.

In addition, shirts, sweat-shirts and raffle tickets were sold to raise money for the ASUM Dance Club’s trip to the American College Dance Association Regional Conference in Oregon, which is set to be held in-person this coming March.

Dusek stressed the significance of dancing with other people from around the country to help developing skills as artists, which the conference would provide. After a long stretch without these interactions because of COVID-19 restrictions, the club is eager to attend in 2022.

Though difficult, the time spent without live performances wasn’t all bad, Dusek said.

“We’ve really been able to dive into who we are as choreographers and performers,” she said. “And been able to figure out how we want to create, what we want to create.”

With much of UM’s curriculum returning to normal, Draper said many UM dance professors are drastically shifting their teaching methods.

“I’m really just taking it day by day,” Draper said. “I think the dancers are doing a phenomenal job at getting used to constant change and being ready for anything.”

Likewise, the Dance Club is preparing to revert back to live shows for primary events.

“I do think the focus is going to shift to bringing back live performance,” Dusek said. “It’s definitely not the same as it was. We still have to wear masks and there’s still a limit to the amount of times we can make contact with each other on stage doing certain movements, but it’s still something we want to do.”

“As dancers, we feed off of an audience’s energy so much,” Kasper said. “That’s why it was hard, especially performing for a camera. It’s just not the same thing and you don’t get the same feeling. There’s definitely a magic behind an audience.”



Georgia Littig, left, and Karter Bernhardt dance around and leap on stage at the Masquer Theatre during the pair’s performance of “Good Eggs.” Dance Up Close featured nine different performances, highlighting 23 dancers. Each piece was choreographed by a student as part of junior or senior projects. **OLIVIA SWANT-JOHNSON | MONTANA KAIMIN**



“Good Eggs,” choreographed by Littig for the University of Montana dance program’s “Dance Up Close” recital, explores the joy of waking up to a brand new world through elegant ballet movements, spastic flutters and tender moments shared between performers Bernhardt and Littig. After a year-plus hiatus, the UM dance program held its first live performance since the pandemic began. **OLIVIA SWANT-JOHNSON | MONTANA KAIMIN**

UM soccer is on track for a new legacy of champions

ASA THOMAS METCALFE
asa.metcalfe@umontana.edu

Griz soccer has the momentum of a run-away locomotive, and it doesn't look like it will be slowing down anytime soon. For four years Chris Citowicki has been coaching at the University of Montana, and those four years have been the most consistently successful years in the history of the program.

"I feel like we've gotten Grizzly athletics, Grizzly soccer in particular, back to the level that it used to be," Citowicki said.

UM soccer started in 1994 and has experienced a few years of big success since then, reaching the NCAA tournament four times throughout — but never with this much frequency.

As head coach, Citowicki has taken the Griz Women's soccer team to the top of the Big Sky Conference each year — three conference championships and one semifinals match.

When the season began in the inauspicious spring of 2021, the world was still coming back to public life. The steel bleachers of Dornblaser Field had stood empty for a long time, their perforated grating touched by only sun and rain.

The outdoor seating was as parched for fans as the team. Neither had seen an audience since 2019. The Griz soccer team was coming from the loneliest season of its career with little idea of what the future months would hold.

The 2021 soccer season turned out to be one of the most successful in program history. The Griz tore through the Big Sky Tournament and entered the NCAA national tournament.

The bleachers saw their share of games, and the home crowd returned to cheer and applaud. The only thing that remained lonely through the season was the back of the Grizzlies' goal net.

The team was largely stocked with freshman players and first-time recruits. Its new goalie seemed promising, but she was untested in the division.

"We had 10-plus freshmen. Couple of transfers. So it was basically a pretty brand new team," said Taylor Hansen, an accounting senior in her fifth year on the team.

"I really didn't know what to expect," Hansen said. This was her first year serving as a team captain. "It was a new role for me."

The seniors on the Griz team are the first in program history to make three NCAA tournaments.

"That's crazy. It's unbelievable. People are lucky if they get one," senior Zoe Transtrum said during a press conference in November.

The success of the women's soccer team isn't attributable to just one factor. Citowicki



After an impressive and tremendous year for Griz soccer, the 2021 season has been one of the most successful in program history. The Griz dominated the Big Sky Tournament and entered the NCAA national tournament for the third time under Head Coach Chris Citowicki's tenure.

ANTONIO IBARRA | MONTANA KAIMIN

claims it to be a melange of good recruiting and good training. His players say that good coaching is part of that mix, too.

"Chris is just a great coach. I've learned a lot from him," Hansen said. "And I definitely don't think I would be the player I am today, or the person I am today, without this program and with his help."

Hansen, who has now played more minutes than any other UM soccer player ever, is graduating this semester with plans to continue onto the National Women's Soccer League — plans which she said would not be conceivable without her years on the Griz team.

"I almost quit soccer," Hansen said. "And I happened to show up at Montana and just, yeah, the timing of everything was kind of surreal. The fact that I'm even in this spot, contemplating whether I want to continue to play, and where I have options is surreal."

Hansen will be the only UM player entering the NWSL draft, but Montana has sent other players to pro leagues in recent years.

Janessa Fowler signed with Eastern Suburbs FC of Australia's National Premier League in 2020, Alexa Coyle signed with Hibernian of the Scottish Women's Premier League, and Rita Lang went to play for Estoril Praea in her home country of Portugal this past year.

"If the NWSL doesn't work out, I think I'll probably look to play overseas, and we'll see what happens there," Hansen said.

Despite so much talent graduating and moving on to bigger fields, Citowicki keeps looking

to the future and puts a lot into his recruiting process. While he is happy for the successes gained, he doesn't want the legacy of the team to end within just a few years.

Hansen will enter the NWSL draft on Dec. 13.

"Obviously losing Taylor Hansen hurts," Citowicki said. "But we still have the core of the group, and these new additions, and we've got a very young goalkeeper who is good, and most of the backline stays intact."

Redshirt freshman goalie Camellia Xu was this year's breakout star. She was named Big Sky Conference Defensive Player of the week six times and Goalie of the Year for her outstanding season.

The Griz defense only had 14 goals scored against it in the entire 2021 season and eight total shutout matches.

"Since I've gotten here in 2018, it's been about defending exceptionally well and priding ourselves in having the best goalkeeper, you can find it," Citowicki said. "We definitely have that situation right now for many, many years."

Xu was a last-minute recruit from Vancouver, and she earned her spot as starting goalie in an already very capable and competitive defensive lineup.

Along with the strong defense UM had, an offensive revival came in the 2021 season too.

"When you look at the sport of soccer, everybody's like, this is how you want to possess," Citowicki said. "This is how we want to attack.



As head coach, Chris Citowicki has taken the Griz soccer team to the top of the Big Sky Conference each year consecutively, totaling three conference championships and one semifinals match against Washington State. The seniors under Citowicki leadership are the first in program history to make three NCAA tournaments.

ANTONIO IBARRA | MONTANA KAIMIN

But the question I was asking all of my coaching mentors was like, 'Alright, well, how do you score?'"

He came to a press conference with a prophetic air and announced, almost cryptically, that he had figured out how to score.

"I can't tell you too much, because I'll give too much away," Citowicki joked. "If you study it enough then you start seeing the themes that come out."

In the games following that announcement, the Griz started averaging two goals per game instead of the previous one per game — a 100% point increase.

It seems that Citowicki's forecasting was correct, and that could mean some developments for future seasons.

The Griz has already announced a string of new recruits for next year, mostly forwards and midfielders to balance out the already stacked defensive line.

The new class will give UM a chance to do something that Citowicki hasn't done in his tenure: win a game in the NCAA tournament.

"It's just about closing the gap with recruiting, and I think we're doing that very well right now," Citowicki said.

Brian Holsinger brings a new face to the Lady Griz

MAX DUPRAS
max.dupras@umconnect.umt.edu

After turmoil at the position since the retirement of legendary coach Robin Selvig, the Lady Griz has a new head coach with a 7-1 season start.

"I didn't know what to expect honestly," said Brian Holsinger, the new head coach for the Lady Griz. "The better we get, the more chances we have to win."

After nearly 14 years of assistant coaching, Holsinger is settling in as the Lady Griz's fourth basketball coach since the start of Selvig's legendary tenure in 1978. Holsinger follows Mike Petrino, who was hired as an interim head coach for a year after the firing of Shannon Schweyen. Schweyen was fired in the spring of 2020 after coaching for four years and is now suing UM for sex-based discrimination. Holsinger has had a near perfect start, including a 2-0 Big Sky Conference mark with a team that has seven upperclassmen.

"We really are a family at this point," said senior guard Sophia Stiles, who has seen three different coaches at the helm in her time at UM. "Everyone is just completely bought into this program."

Holsinger's coaching experience at the University of Montana is just beginning, but his career as a coach has included assistant coaching positions for top basketball programs such as Oregon State and Washington State.

The last time he led a team in Montana was during his two-year stint as the head coach of the Montana Tech Orediggers.

UM's Lady Griz team is off to a start with seven victories under its belt and one loss to a strong Gonzaga team. The two conference wins the Lady Griz pulled off were both by double digits.

"It is amazing when everyone is just clicking," said Stiles, who has averaged just over 10 points a game this season. "Everyone is moving as one unit it is a lot of fun."

The team has won four straight away games since its Nov. 14 loss including a tough overtime victory against Houston Baptist University and a blowout versus Nicholls State on the final day of the Grand Canyon Women's Basketball Classic.

"You never know if there is some adversity on the road and we figured out a way," Holsinger said. "We didn't know they were gonna zone us and they zoned us the entire game. So, we kind of figured things out and it was awesome to see our team react well in the second half and execute what we wanted."



Lady Griz Head Coach Brian Holsinger talks to the team in a huddle during a match against Sacramento State, Dec. 4. After nearly 14 years of assistant coaching, Holsinger is the Lady Griz's fourth basketball coach since the start of Robin Selvig's tenure in 1978. **ANTONIO IBARRA | MONTANA KAIMIN**

Holsinger's job is to coach, but the cast of young recruits and hardened vets is a challenge when making the right rotations.

The team includes five seniors, including one of the lead-scorers Sammy Fatkin and Stiles, who was recently named the Big Sky Conference Player of the Week. The Lady Griz also boast redshirt junior forward Carmen Gfeller, who also won a player of the week award.

Fatkin is currently having a breakout start to her season with career highs in rebounds and points per game on nearly 48% from the field. Fatkin was a member of the Lady Griz in 2019 before leaving the team. When it was announced that Holsinger would coach, Fatkin rejoined.

Holsinger's staff is also settling into the Dahlberg sidelines with two new assistant coaches, Joslyn Tinkle and Nate Harris.

Tinkle, daughter of Grizzly legend Wayne Tinkle, is a Missoula native and former four-year standout at Stanford. This is her first year of coaching at any level of competition.

Harris is also a native of Montana, hailing from Ronan and spending most of his 13-year career as a coach in the Big Sky. His tenure includes stops at Montana State, MSU Billings and Angelo State University.

The pressure has been on for the Lady Griz ever since the departure of Selvig in 2016. The three subsequent coaching changes come six years apart from each other. Holsinger's start to the season is by far the best of any of his predecessors after the Selvig era.

"Yeah we're improving. That's the main goal," Holsinger said. "We are nowhere near to a finished product yet, but they are buying into the things that we want them to do."

While consistency in coaching has been a concern, Holsinger continues to bring his style and meld together the team's learned knowledge.

"I think more than anything, we have been working a ton on defense. That's something that we hang our hat on," he said. "We've had a few too many turnovers than I like. We've got to take better care of [the ball.]"

The start to a season hasn't been this good since the 2013-14 season when the Lady Griz went on to the Big Sky Tournament, beating out Southern Utah and rival Montana State.

Holsinger believes in the culture the previous coaches have set for incoming athletes. His cast of young coaches and even younger recruits are coming into a new era of Lady Griz basketball.

"It is new for them, so there is sort of a freshmen-like energy for them. They have done a great job, I'm so proud of them. They're improving every game. They're getting better and better and they're having fun," Holsinger said.

Holsinger will be on the sidelines Dec. 9 when the Lady Griz take on Utah Valley at home.

The 'Beagle Guy' sports new festive look at this year's Parade of Lights

SHANNA MADISON

shanna.madison@umontana.edu

Santa's helpers looked a little different at this year's Parade of Lights, sponsored by Black Cat Bake Shop, in downtown Missoula.

The "Beagle Guy," aka Greg Mergethaler, paraded down Higgins Street all evening, with his four festive beagles leading the charge and one taking up the rear in a fashionable Christmas-themed cart.

"We first met him because we had a cart that he wanted to purchase," said Black Cat Bake Shop co-owner Christy Wich. "We always give him free dog bones whenever he comes by."

Christy and Jack Wich are the owners of the Black Cat Bake Shop and are always delighted when the Beagle Guy pays them a visit.

The beagle-drawn bike is Mergethaler's main mode of transportation. He trains each dog, and they are able to take directional commands and lead him to wherever he wants to go.

"He'll be going to Target and he has his beagles right there with him, always," Jack said.

The Beagle Guy is a well-known figure around town, and while Missoula is always happy to see this local celebrity, there was a little extra holiday cheer this year with Santa and his beagle-shaped reindeer parading the streets of downtown Missoula.



Dressed in a full Santa Claus costume, the "Beagle Guy," Missoula resident Greg Mergethaler, biked and paraded around the streets of downtown Missoula on Dec. 4 with his four beagles leading the charge.



Due to alleged "overfeeding" from her previous owners, Shiloh, one of the five beagles owned by Mergethaler, prefers not to run alongside her siblings and instead rides inside in a Christmas-themed bike cart behind Mergethaler.



Downtown onlookers and Parade of Lights attendees of all ages stop to take photos and cuddle with the beagles.



Each pup was draped in festive gear along with their service vests. These dogs accompany Mergethaler when he travels around town on his bike.



The "Beagle Guy," donned a new look at this year's Parade of Lights show in downtown Missoula. A crowd of onlookers quickly formed as Santa and his helpers arrived.