

MONTANA KAIMIN

BACK TO THE BALLOTS

A stylized illustration of a hand holding a pen, writing on a ballot box. The ballot box is tilted and has the words 'BACK TO THE BALLOTS' written on it in a bold, distressed font. The hand and pen are in shades of pink and red.

**ASUM
ELECTIONS
ARE ON
APRIL 23.**

**GET TO KNOW
THE CANDIDATES
BEFORE YOU CAST
YOUR VOTE.**



7 PETA paranoia

12 AI exhibition

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Cover illustration by Dane Clements

April 17, 2025 | Volume 127 | Issue No. 26

Kiosk



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

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KAIMIN KOMICS: SE 2 EP 13



BARRETT CLEMENT | MONTANA KAIMIN

BARRETT

Say bye to AI

SUDOKU

Difficulty: Medium

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.

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

Answer to Previous Sudoku:

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

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Counting down days



UM elementary education major Tatum Ega pops a bottle of champagne during a graduation photo shoot on April 9. Her photographer, Kelsie Ring, is a senior studying marketing.

HENRY DOELLINGER | MONTANA KAIMIN

Artificial intelligence keeps getting better, and with it, we're falling for things more and more, such as a fake leaked audio of Vice President JD Vance dissing tech billionaire Elon Musk that went viral last week.

The audio sounds like it was recorded in a room with Vance, and he's just chatting with a trusted confidant. When I listened to it, I almost fell for it too. News outlets quickly debunked the clip, but if AI is already convincing more than just our grandparents on Facebook, then it's time to seriously consider what we see, what we make and what we consume.

It's become easy to give a bot an email that needs some work and let it run. And with AI seemingly everywhere, including in an animal rights campaign and an art exhibit in this week's issue, it feels more and more normalized. But AI doesn't exist in a vacuum. It's destroying the environment, contributing to stereotypes and misleading our reality. So put the robots down and take picture-perfect images with a grain of salt because AI isn't everything it's generating itself to be.

On Facebook, AI generated posts are everywhere. Those images have likely been generated by DALL-E, a text-to-image based program. DALL-E can create anything one's heart desires, but it comes with its own downfalls.

DALL-E's training data was filtered to remove violent and sexual imagery, but as a result, less women were being generated in its entirety. The AI itself seems to perpetuate an idea that women only belong in abusive or sexual situations. When you ask DALL-E to generate an image of a random occupation such as doctor or farmer, nine times out of 10 it'll generate an image of a white person.

On the surface, it seems harmless, but looking deeper, it seems like AI is saying that people of color can't possibly have jobs like that.

In September 2022, the creators of DALL-E confirmed to The Verge, a technology news site, that the program now invisibly adds phrases into user prompts to address bias in results. For instance, "Black man" and "Asian woman" are inserted into prompts that do not specify gender or race.

But AI isn't just misconstruing our reality, it's actively stealing from it.

It can be fun to ask AI to generate "Garfield

with a cigarette," but in reality, these models are trained by other artists' art. When artists post their work online, DALL-E uses those posts to train itself to be better at creating images and unconsenting artists lose out on a profit.

Bigger companies can now choose not to pay artists for their ads or graphics, too. In Coca-Cola's Christmas commercial last year, AI generated polar bears waved to trucks of Coke. It was terribly made and a poor homage to Ken Stewart, who created the original Coca-Cola polar bear character in 1993 — without the use of AI.

Robots were supposed to free us from menial tasks so we could spend more time creating. Instead, we're too busy working or too lazy to make art. And AI isn't just hurting human beings, either. It's destroying the planet.

AI models are stored in massive data centers which take huge amounts of energy to maintain. In a 2021 research paper, scientists estimated the training process alone consumed enough electricity to power about 120 average U.S. homes for a year, generating about 552 tons of carbon dioxide. In comparison, a car will omit 4.7 tons of carbon dioxide per year.

When you type a prompt into ChatGPT's engine, it sends it off to a data processing server where it generates a response. This immediately heats up the data center, which requires gallons of chilled water to cool. A large center, such as Google's, can go through 500,000 gallons of water a day.

With this all in mind, we need to start weaning ourselves off AI. It can feel harmless to type in an email draft or an essay outline for perfecting. But, in reality, it has been misleading us from the start. It's not worth killing the planet and our independent creativity and thought for an image that has one too many fingers in it. Let's start with generating ideas with the first and greatest computer: our brains.

-Kairi Lising, Arts & Culture Editor

Like it? Hate it? Let us know.

Email us your opinions at claire.bernard@umontana.edu

In this week's briefs...

MAXWELL JOHNSON
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BILL PREVENTING DISCIPLINE FOR PRONOUN MISUSE PASSES IN SENATE

A bill allowing for public schools and state employees to refuse to use preferred pronouns or deadname gender queer persons without discipline recently passed in the Montana Senate and is heading to Gov. Greg Gianforte's office.

This bill also applies to students and includes public institutions of higher education. The bill prevents discipline for those refusing to use something other than a person's legal name and their sex assigned at birth.

The bill's passage comes after University of Montana student Parker Mickel received several emails over the past months from the School of Theatre and Dance addressed to their dead name, or the name they were given at birth. Mickel had legally changed their name prior to the emails being sent.

DOGE DISMANTLES YELLOWSTONE GRIZZLY SCIENCE TEAM

The U.S Geological Survey's Interagency Science team has seen several cuts and attempted employee buyouts in recent months, according to Chris Servheen, a former leader of the team who retired in 2016.

Servheen told WyoFile that two members of the team had announced

retirement, one preliminarily, and that neither of the positions are being filled. That leaves only one full-time member alongside seasonal positions.

The 50-year-old organization, based out of the Northern Rocky Mountain Science Center in Bozeman, has led the revitalization and recuperation of grizzly bear populations in and around Yellowstone National Park.

Last month, 42 biologists from the center signed a letter addressed to Montana's federal representatives and senators advocating against cuts to the center and specifically the team. The letter published in the *Yellowstonian* stated, that without the team, "grizzly bear recovery and delisting will fail."

BILL ESTABLISHING INDIGENOUS PEOPLES' DAY HEADS TO GOVERNOR

A bill establishing Indigenous Peoples' Day alongside Columbus Day as a state holiday during the second Monday in October will soon land on Gov. Greg Gianforte's desk to be signed into law.

The bill passed with bipartisan support, avoiding hiccups associated with past attempts to outright replace Columbus Day. Proponents say the day will celebrate the thousands of years of Indigenous history that existed before Columbus or the modern state of Montana.

If the bill is signed, it would come close to the University's own celebration of Indigenous culture in the 56th annual Kyiyo Pow Wow celebration April 18 and 19.

The grandfather of Griz softball



William "Spike" Potter observes a UM Grizzly softball game from the back row of the stands at the Grizzly Softball field on April 5. The team lost its game against Weber State University, but Spike cheered for them nonetheless.

MARLEY BARBOEISEL | MONTANA KAIMIN

Listen to this week's Kaimin Cast where Maddie Pandis talks to 75-year-old William "Spike" Potter, Griz softball's biggest fan.

Since receiving a letter from a former Griz softball player during the COVID-19 quarantine, Potter has become part of the team's family. He donates his time and hundreds of thousands of dollars. Hannah Jablonski, 22, met Potter at practice her freshman year. Since then, she has watched him support the team by picking up balls after hitting days at practice.

"He always has his Griz softball linen bag, and he comes to practice and picks up our home run balls," Jablonski said. "It doesn't matter if it's 70 degrees and sunny, or if it's 20 degrees and pouring down rain, and he's always out there wanting to help us at practice. In the winter, he'll come in his muck boots that go up to his knees and he'll go trench through the snow and find us our balls that we hit out."

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



POLICE BLOTTER

ABBY WILLIAMS
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OK, what do we have, three weeks left, four? You know, I don't actually care. What I really care about is what the fuck happened because we have two shitty crimes to work with here, and one of them just had to be a bike theft. If finals creeping up wasn't enough, you guys had to psychologically torment me too.

APRIL 9 - PLACE YOUR BETS

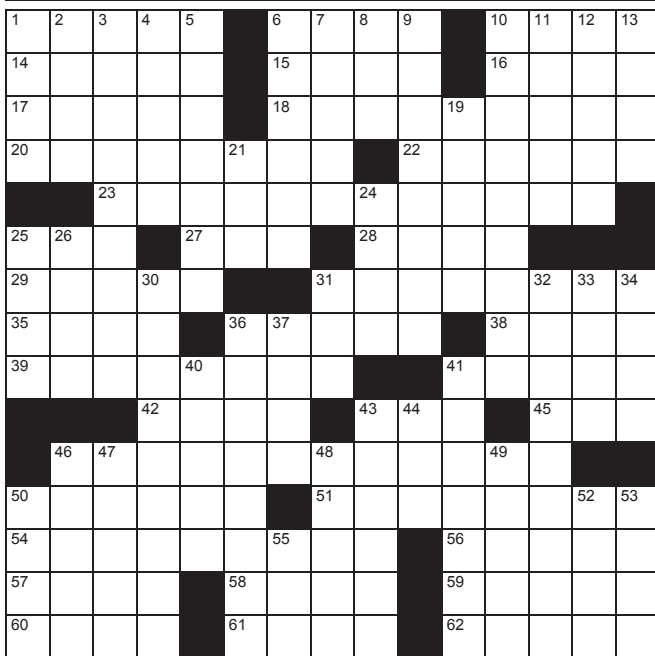
Let's play a guessing game: What happened in parking lot H-1 that got this guy a criminal mischief citation? Was it a fender bender? How about driving under intoxication or blasting "Pass the Dutchie" while lighting one up? If I was a gambling man, I'd place a hefty amount of \$1 bills on the table, then ask what I do next 'cause I don't know how to gamble. My last guess is an actual fight in the parking lot. I propose we start a fighting ring in a parking lot. I'd skip class for that. Especially if the UC Market provided popcorn and snacks.

APRIL 9 - FUCK YOU

So, April Fools' Day has passed. I literally double checked my calendar just to make sure. So, if April Fools' Day has passed ... WHY the fuck is there a BIKE theft? I tried to be a good sport, but I've decided that being a hater takes less energy. To the bitch that stole a bike from the Craighead apartments, I hope you stumble and fall in front of your crush. I hope you try to answer a question in class, but the teacher ignores you. I hope Canvas crashes when you try and check your grades. I hope you go to pick up a package, but it's not there and never comes. To the person who had their bike stolen, I hope you invest in a bike chain made of kryptonite, or get your fucking license. If you're old enough to live by yourself, you're old enough to drive. Don't talk to me about not being able to drive without someone 21+ in the passenger seat. I don't bike everywhere, I walk, like a bad bitch.

Earth Day
Tuesday, April 22nd
11:30 AM - 2:00 PM Sustainability Fair
2:00-2:30 Rally on the Oval
2:30 Walk
3:30 Rally at the Courthouse

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ACROSS

- 1 Scenic outlook
- 6 Hoover and others
- 10 Palindromic title
- 14 Playwright Chekhov
- 15 Pronto
- 16 Central European river
- 17 Graphic symbols
- 18 Strangles
- 20 Generosity
- 22 Halloween items
- 23 Breaks down
- 25 ___ Baba
- 27 Sun follower?
- 28 Wolfish look
- 29 Frida's husband
- 31 Most contrite
- 35 Not to mention
- 36 Broods
- 38 Scrabble piece
- 39 Dave ___ Band
- 41 Sponsorship
- 42 Scale deduction
- 43 Hymn homophone
- 45 Initials at sea
- 46 Copyright violation

DOWN

- 1 Colorado resort
- 2 Machu Picchu builder
- 3 Most turbulent, as weather
- 4 Neighbor of Fiji
- 5 Marin County's San ___
- 6 Nissan, way back when
- 7 White-faced
- 8 Calendar abbr.
- 9 Some gym helpers
- 10 Rock from outer space
- 11 Poe's middle name
- 12 Helps a hood
- 13 Something to clean up
- 19 A judge, e.g.
- 21 Airport near OAK
- 24 Blood flow blockage
- 25 "Bonanza" bro
- 26 Country singer McCann

- 30 Former voice of Aflac's mascot
- 31 Pension starter?
- 32 Bad thing to be behind
- 33 Like some pickings
- 34 Dick Tracy's gal
- 36 Passes away
- 37 Julia's "Wonder" co-star
- 40 Rabbits' relatives
- 41 Oil company that merged with Hess, once
- 43 Yard borders
- 44 "As I see it," online
- 46 Europe's "boot"
- 47 Defiant response
- 48 Turf claimers
- 49 Belly button
- 50 Meat loaf serving
- 52 ___-Brite (rhyming toy)
- 53 Zest
- 55 Wyo. neighbor

Answers to Previous Crossword:

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

- 50 Metric volume units
- 51 Just too cute
- 54 Giving in abundance
- 56 To no ___
- 57 Protected, at sea
- 58 Advantage
- 59 Letter before epsilon
- 60 WV senator from 1959 to 2010
- 61 Insolence
- 62 Ethan or Woody

Mob-o-scope

ELLE DANIEL

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Listen. I haven't even seen the movie yet, but I just know the Minecraft movie starring the one and only Jack Black is going to be this year's cinematic masterpiece. Academy Award for Best Picture, anybody? I'm nothing like the pixelated player, Steve, but for this week's horoscope, I'm going to put on my square-shaped gamer hat and break down what Minecraft mob you are.

ARIES (MARCH 21-APRIL 19): I'm going to be so real with you, Aries; I just really needed an excuse to type Hoglin, and you're it. Like the pig creatures in Minecraft, you're not afraid to attack on sight. But be careful, if you take that fiery personality too far — or worse, get left in the Overworld for too long — you could suffer a serious ego death and turn into a zoglin, and nobody needs that.

TAURUS (APRIL 20-MAY 20): Just like an Iron Golem, you're pretty chill until someone decides to fuck around and find out. You've got a heart of gold — I mean iron — and you'll fiercely defend your friends if someone goes after them, just like a golem defends villagers. You hear that guys? Don't mess with Taurus!

GEMINI (MAY 21-JUNE 20): Two words: CHICKEN JOCKEY!

CANCER (JUNE 21-JULY 22): Iconic, classic and unbeatable: Cancer, you're a Creeper. Nobody sees you coming, and by the time they do, it's too late. Your personality might seem subdued at first, but get a little closer and they'll find you've got an impressive blast radius.

LEO (JULY 23-AUG. 22): As a silverfish, you're quick and unrelenting and any player that sees you coming is probably going to panic and scream while you chase them down. Oh, that's just me? Well, what can I say, I've never been good at combat. Just don't wriggle my way, please and thank you.

VIRGO (AUG. 23-SEP. 22): At first you might seem like a regular old villager (shhh, don't tell Pisces I called them regular), but look closer and you'll see a pointy witch hat and some stylish robes. I guess you really can't judge a spell book by its cover with you, Virgo. When you're not brewing up new ways to stay on top, you're out hurling

potions of slowness at players.

LIBRA (SEP. 23-OCT. 22): Libra, you are axolotl. Nobody knows why there are axolotls in Minecraft, but when I look at their sweet little faces, I just know they're trying their best to keep the peace. But they've also got those cute pixelated frills, so you know they've got a little diva in them, and what is a Libra without their bad bitch energy?

SCORPIO (OCT. 23-NOV. 21):

Scorpio, you've got a whole lot going on! Maximize your chaos energy as the Warden, a blind, terrifying mob found in the deep dark biome. You've got an eye for details and when summoned, best believe you'll be setting off a sonic boom in the minds of the players around you.

SAGITTARIUS (NOV. 22-DEC. 21):

As the ender dragon, you are just stunning. Hidden away, and hard to beat, you're a bucket list moment for every Minecraft player who wants to get to know you — or beat you up with a diamond sword. Yikes. With those wings, the sky isn't the limit anymore, Sagittarius!

CAPRICORN (DEC. 22-JAN. 19):

Capricorn, you're a fun guy, or should I say fungi, or should I say ... fung-cow? Red and covered in mushrooms and truly one-of-a-kind, you're the mooshroom. Just a cow wandering the lands full of mushroom goodness. You get to sleep comfortably at night knowing you're the favorite mob of all the pastel gamer girls.

AQUARIUS (JAN. 20-FEB. 18): What's that tall, dark shadow looming nearby? Oh, it's just Aquarius, the enderman. You're sly and mysterious, and sometimes a little intimidating. But underneath that shadowy exterior, there's an ender pearl waiting to shine.

PISCES (FEB. 19-MARCH 20):

You better stay away from Jennifer Coolidge, Pisces, or else your villager ass might get hit-and-run by her sick-ass ride! Stoic, but maybe a little doofy, nothing is better than exploring the different mine-able biomes in Minecraft to find a village full of chill little dudes roaming around, and Pisces, nobody does chill little dude better than you.



BARRETT CLEMENT | MONTANA KAIMIN

The last month: Emotions, plans and next steps

EMILY MESSER

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Three seniors are slugging through the last month of their bachelor's degrees, with some leaving their jobs and the country, while feeling all the emotions and final decisions before they walk off campus.

Shea Highfill is a psychology major from Boise who has been at the University of Montana for the last three years after finishing her associate degree while in high school. With plans to attend roughly five years worth of grad school after this year, she spent the semester applying, but knew the acceptance rate was low.

"I've filled out many grad school applications. It's kind of wherever will take me, which is part of the crazy, stressful part, 'cause people were like 'Where are you gonna be?' 'I don't know. I have no idea. Wish I did,'" she said.

During Highfill's sophomore year, she decided to pursue clinical neuropsychology. She first thought the path would require a double major, however, her professor told her she would have to attend graduate school.

"I asked my professor, 'Am I gonna have to sink a couple more years into this?' He was like, 'Well, the good news is, you don't have to double major, the bad news is, to do the [graduate] thing is way worse,'" Highfill said.

Ultimately, Highfill didn't get into grad school this year. She now knows she needs further experience in a lab through an internship before reapplying.

Over a month ago, Highfill found her dream job working for Providence St. Patrick Hospital in Missoula and was excited to start something within her field. But she said the application pool is large and she still hasn't received an offer.

"It would be really perfect. I keep following up, and she keeps saying, 'We haven't made a decision yet,'" she said. "Honestly, I don't care if it's a no anymore because I was really invested and wanted it so badly."

In the week she has changed her headspace and accepted she can just stop school for now and doesn't have to land her dream job straight out of school.

"I've decided to turn off this stress in that respect," Highfill said, telling herself, "It's OK, why don't we get you graduated first before you start freaking out about trying to find an internship,"

While Highfill isn't heading to grad school yet, she is excited to stay in Missoula for the next year and watch friends who are one year behind her graduate, while continuing to enjoy one of her favorite hobbies: playing rugby with her friends on the Missoula Betterside team.

Another senior finishing up her year and



Senior Imogen Greenslade sits courtside in an empty Adams Center on April 11. Greenslade, who has played for the Lady Griz for the past two years, plans to move back to her hometown of Sydney, Australia after graduating. She feels sad about leaving her community in Montana but is hoping to find a job in theatre when she returns to Australia.

NOAH EPPS | MONTANA KAIMIN

going through the emotions, plans and coordination of graduation is Sam LaRose. She is a pre-athletic training major and the student manager of UM Intramural Sports, a position she has held since her sophomore year.

"I have my desk, I have all of my little knick knacks, and it's been every evening, Monday through Thursday, since my freshman year," she said. "I feel really good how I'm leaving it, because I definitely elevated it to a lot of new heights. And I got my boss to do crazy new things that he would have never thought of."

LaRose has created new things such as the intramural Instagram, stickers and championship banners. This has made her feel comfortable and proud of her time with UM Intramurals.

While LaRose feels like she's losing a sense of security leaving her position, it's bittersweet. She will be starting grad school in June at the University of Montana.

"I'm excited for graduation, but I'm more nervous for grad school. It's so fun to see the difference of reactions and see all my friends going through the motions of [fully] gradu-

ating, which I'm sure I'll be in those same motions in two years, when I am fully done with school," she said.

LaRose, who is also involved in Kappa Alpha Theta, decided not to walk at commencement. Even so, she purchased her cap and gown and will still be taking photos with her sorority. Her high school sweetheart is also graduating from Montana State University, meaning LaRose will be headed back and forth from Bozeman and Missoula to celebrate both of them.

The commute pales in comparison to the one of Imogen Greenslade, whose parents will be making the trip from Sydney, Australia, to see her graduate.

Greenslade is an international student who has been playing college basketball for the last five years, first at Arizona State University, then for the last two years in Missoula.

"I wasn't expecting to love the slow paced life coming from a big city, moving to Arizona and then moving to the mountains. I remember when I moved out here my parents were like, 'Why do you want to move to redneck country?'" Greenslade said. "I've absolutely loved it. It's something I've never experienced before, so I'm glad I moved out here."

Greenslade is sad to leave the "close-knit community" she has built in college. At the end of the semester, she will be subletting her apartment, selling her car and shipping everything back to Australia. She said at 23 years old it will be strange to move back in with her parents.

"God love them. They're just so nitpicky about everything. So it's gonna be an adjustment period," she said.

She has felt sadness and anxiety about moving back home, but is hoping to reconnect with friends, and as a theater major, she is looking for her future job.

"I have a few connections set up, meeting with people, hopefully getting some jobs lined up. But it's kind of a hard industry to break

into, so I'm hoping to just get a job on the side," Greenslade said.

About 60% of alumni's first jobs after graduation were in their field, according to the Strata Alumni Outcome Survey, which UM participated in from 2002 to 2022. Stacy Ulery, UM's associate director of experiential learning and career success, said during the past few years, the responses on the UM Graduation Survey has reported a smaller percentage of alumni saying they are still looking for a job.

Ulery's office is a resource on campus that provides a variety of services, such as career coaches, resume reviews and mock interviews for students planning their next steps. The office is available for any student and for alumni up to two years after they graduate.

"The number one reason students come to college is still to get a better job. We are critical to the mission of the University and to students feeling like they're getting a return on their investment," Ulery said. "I'd say we're an underutilized resource, and students would benefit from utilizing it."

Along with these services, the office typically puts together two to three career fairs a semester and can also help students decide if grad school or other next steps are right for them.

"Students come in dealing with a lot of different stressors and issues, figuring out their life plan, working through the stress of a job search that may or may not be going to plan, or having their plans upended by things out of their control," Ulery said. "So we, certainly our [career] coaches, are really well trained, empathetic, supportive professionals who can help students through that stress."

Emily Messer is a news reporter for the Montana Kaimin and can be contacted at emily.messer@umontana.edu. For more stories from Messer and other reporters, visit online at montanakaimin.com.

TACKLE LIFE
PLAY RUGBY!

Tuesday and Thursdays
5:30 - 7:30 pm

Follow for field locations!
Insta: UMGriZWRC
womensrugby.umd@gmail.com

Made by Giselle

VR experience on campus teaches students about animal labs

SAV CHAVEZ

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Last week a large truck boldly reading “Abduction” sat on campus. It was a bid by People Against Ethical Treatment of Animals to draw students into learning more about alleged animal abuse in fentanyl vaccine testing, a claim University researchers say is false on multiple levels.

The “virtual reality experience,” run by PETA2, gave students the chance to step into the truck and put on a headset that would transport them into another universe. Users left the familiar views of the Oval and discovered themselves and a few other researchers stranded in a desert. The group was then sucked out of the desert in an alien abduction. Waking up in a ship, surrounded by computer screens and tall, stick figures, the user would undergo a series of invasive tests, ones that would test the boundaries of humanity.

The virtual reality experience is meant to put someone into the shoes of a lab animal used in science research. It is part of a broader information campaign by PETA2, a branch of the animal rights group focused on instilling its beliefs into youth culture.

“We are hoping to give people a new perspective on this animal cruelty and bring awareness to the abuse animals go through at the University of Montana at the hands of science,” tour crew member Tristan Deehan said.

Deehan said he did not know about the fentanyl vaccine experiment and said the orders came from the PETA2 admin.

In an email obtained by the Kaimin, PETA2 stated the University of Montana injected mice with fentanyl and a fentanyl vaccine before placing them on a 129-degree hotplate to see how long it would take the drugged mice to lift their paws. This, according to one of the people listed on the lab report for this experiment, is false.

“PETA misrepresented anti-fentanyl vaccinations and challenge studies were not even conducted at UM, they were conducted by our collaborator,” Jay Evans, director of the UM Center for Translational Medicine, stated in an email.

According to a previous Kaimin article, the main purpose of the vaccine was to find what dose of the drug safely prevents fentanyl from crossing the blood-brain barrier, a layer of cells that defends the brain from harmful substances.

Evans said all animal studies conducted at the University must be approved by the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee, which is regulated by the Office of Lab Animal Welfare and the American Association for Accreditation of Laboratory Animal Care.

“The vaccine was optimized and tested



A representative for PETA2 places headphones on the head of masters student Jaymes Mozingo to get them ready for the Abduction virtual reality experience on April 9. PETA2 is an offshoot of PETA that aims to engage younger crowds. **NOAH EPPS | MONTANA KAIMIN**

for safety and immunogenicity at UM and then transferred to our collaborators at the University of Washington and University of Minnesota for the fentanyl challenge studies,” Evans stated.

Evans said the statements by PETA2 do not reflect animal research done at UM and believes the group publishes misleading and false statements to “push their misguided agenda.”

“Their views are so extreme, not even sure it warrants wasting time on an article in the Montana Kaimin,” he said.

The virtual reality experience travelled from Utah to Missoula for its three-day stay and left for Oregon on Wednesday, where it will spend three days doing the same thing.

“We are talking to people about animal experimentation and giving the facts, letting them know alternatives to scientific research,” Deehan said.

The Abduction Tour is a two-month trip across the west side of the United States with hopes to offer new perspectives to young peo-

ple on college campuses about animal testing and offer resources to products that do not test on animals. This is not the first of its kind. Last year, PETA2 did a similar tour, but on the east side of the country.

Sav Chavez is a news reporter for the Montana Kaimin and can be contacted at sav.chavez@umontana.edu. For more stories from Chavez and other reporters, visit online at montanakaimin.com.



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BACK TO THE BALLOTS

WITH A RANGE OF MAJORS AND EXPERIENCE, SIX PAIRS OF UM STUDENTS HOPE TO MAKE IT TO THE HEAD OF THE ASUM TABLE.

PHOTOS BY MARLEY BARBOEISEL

BY ELLE DANIEL

This year, six pairs of candidates are vying for the president and vice president positions at the Associated Students of the University of Montana. Liam Edwards is the sole candidate running for business manager.

They launched Instagram accounts for their campaigns, participated in debates and took to the Oval to talk directly with students. The candidates sat down ahead of the election with the Kaimin to discuss issues and topics seen on campus.

Many candidates highlighted student group funding, the protection of civil rights and communication with the administration as central to their campaigns.

The election comes after a turbulent semester that saw multiple protests on campus, state legislation threatening the removal of gender-neutral bathroom signage and most recently, the revoking of an international student's visa.

Elizabeth Kamminga, the current ASUM president, said she believes the Student

Senate put in good work this year to connect the student body and the administration by conducting student surveys and holding listening sessions. Kamminga said another ASUM priority was to make students aware of the student groups in Helena during the legislative season.

When it comes to advice for the next ASUM president, Kamminga said they should be careful to keep their personal opinions out of the Student Senate.

"You're always speaking on behalf of the

students," she said.

Additionally, students can expect to see one referendum on the ballot this year to update and formally readopt the ASUM constitution.

There will be an election debate on April 23, starting at 3 p.m. on the Oval. The general election will be held on April 24 and students will be able to vote online. For primary election results go to www.montanakaimin.com.

(Reporting by Maxwell Johnson)

O'BRIEN, TEGGEMEN WANT TO BE ELECTED BY THE STUDENTS FOR THE STUDENTS

BY SAV CHAVEZ

Sophomore and junior pair Chase O'Brien and Bella Teggemmen don't just want to win the ASUM election, they also want to win students' trust.

They plan to gain that trust by creating a mentorship program between ASUM senators and students. O'Brien, who is running for president and Teggemmen, who is running as her vice, hope the program can foster a clear line of communication from students to senators to the administration.

"We are in scary times. Now more than ever, we need to be a voice for the students," O'Brien, 20, said. "We are a group created by the students for the students."

The two decided to team up after working closely together as chairman and vice-chairman on the ASUM marketing and outreach committee. The two realized they shared similar goals and values.

"We knew we would be the most effective team to lead the student body," Teggemmen, a political science major, said.

Teggemmen, 21, has been an ASUM senator for two years. She said the work she has done contributed to her deciding to run.

Along with ASUM, O'Brien worked as a resident assistant in Miller Hall. Teggemmen is part of the Model UN Club.

"We've both served as committee chairs and vice chairs, tackling large projects head-on," Teggemmen said. "Our experience illustrates that we deeply understand ASUM as an institution, and therefore, we know exactly how to improve it."

O'Brien joined as a senator this year but does not think that makes her less capable than her counterparts. The pair wants to focus on advocating for the students.

"We hide away in this office and expect students to come in, and realistically, students aren't going to come to office hours and expect to talk to us," O'Brien said. "The last place I want to see senators next year is in the ASUM office."

With the recent changes in federal and state policy, the pair want to make students aware that they want the best for them. They plan to keep communication open between the campus population and administration in a time where people may feel left in the dark.

"Students need someone to turn to," O'Brien said. "The lack of communication is heartbreaking. Our administration always says, 'We want to support the students. We want to make sure students feel safe in this inclusive environment,' but there is nothing inclusive about changing bathrooms and not notifying students."



O'Brien, left, and Teggemmen, right, in a greenhouse on campus. The duo plan to prioritize sustainability on campus through UM sustainability, student groups and investment resolutions, among other things.

Teggemmen and O'Brien's proposed mentorship program would allow students to sign up to meet with members of the administration in an informal setting to build personal and professional connections.

"Students will actually see their representatives, they will know who we are

and they will know what we are doing and why," Teggemmen said. "There will be struggles, but there are struggles to achieve anything. [O'Brien] and I are ready to face any challenge head-on."

While the pair does not plan to run as write-in candidates if not elected in the primary, they both plan to return as senators to continue their work within ASUM.

MORRISON, DENNIS STRIVE FOR POLITICAL UNIFICATION, FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY AND STUDENT SUPPORT

BY EMILY MESSER

Hope Morrison and Jack Dennis want to use their communication and leadership skills to enact tangible change in ASUM.

"As more things come down the federal pipeline, I think that open lines of communication and the unification of student bodies across the nation is something that we should really try to achieve," Dennis said.

Morrison, the presidential candidate, is a sophomore from Polson. She's currently double majoring in political science and journalism and minoring in non-profit administration. Morrison has been the ASUM lobbyist in Helena during the 2025 legislative session. There, she said, she's advocated for students' priorities.

"The big thing is just direct change on issues that impact students. Things like housing, accessibility, environmental policies," Morrison said. "ASUM needs to reflect the student body in that sense."

Morrison, 19, wants the lobbyist position to continue year-round. That way, she said, the student lobbyist can attend Missoula City Council meetings and work on bills when the state legislature isn't in session. She said she believes ASUM can be doing more by working with city officials.

Dennis is from Philadelphia and is a junior majoring in marketing. He is currently an ASUM senator and a member of Phi Delta Theta. His campaign is centered on creating community spaces and setting fiscal standards.

"For me as VP, it is doing everything in my power to make sure that the business

manager is basically doing his job or her job and also not being undermined," Dennis, who is a chair on five ASUM committees, said. "We do need someone who is strong enough to not be afraid to ruin their workplace relationships with people for the sake of the student body."

Dennis, 20, wants to set a precedent that ASUM "can't step out when it's not convenient for them," in order to follow through on money they promise to clubs.

"You shouldn't have to lobby for the money that's owed to you," Morrison said. "That's why we're committed to breaking down the final budgeting process to just make it easier."

Dennis said he wants to create informational workshops on how to gain funding and build a better fundraising system for clubs on campus.

Dennis also plans to create more common spaces for students and clubs. Morrison said there is a "monopoly in the UC," with the cost to rent a space ranging from \$50-90 per hour.

She said she's unhappy with the cost of renting the indoor practice facility, which is \$170 per hour during the week and \$125 hourly on the weekend for a smaller size field, according to UM Spokesperson Dave Kuntz. However, Kuntz said this cost could change in the near future.

Morrison said she believes ASUM needs to revive its unified voice to start a conversation with the administration.

She plans to start town hall meetings for students, issue regular press releases and



Morrison, left, and Dennis, right, work in a rentable space in University Center. The two plan on making student access for rooms like this more affordable.

have a more clear and accessible ASUM social media account.

"This current administration really hasn't cracked down on anything," Dennis said. "Right now, we need strong leaders, especially with all the political uncertainty at the federal level and within the state level."

Dennis said he will be "the thorn in the side" of the UM administration.

"I'm hoping by the end that they can tolerate me because that means I'll have done a good job," he said. "I will measure success in how many things I can get done as well as how many people I can piss off."

While Morrison and Dennis haven't discussed running as write-in candidates, Dennis said he believes it would be better for them to run individually as senators if they are not elected in the primary.

KINAMON, KUNAU BRING A FRESHMAN PERSPECTIVE

BY ABBY WILLIAMS



Kinamon, right, holds an image of running mate Kunau, left, who wasn't available for a photo, while aboard a UDASH bus. If elected, the pair hopes to spend time improving ASUM transportation.

Trey Kinamon and Julia Kunau stand out from their fellow ASUM candidates for one reason: they are freshmen.

Running with the slogan "Be the change," Kinamon and Kunau have both had experience serving as student body president at their high schools. Additionally, the pair said they have attended meetings and talked to other senators about what issues they see in ASUM.

Kinamon also has experience working at the state capitol, representing young voices and students on various issues.

"Both of us were super involved in our schools," said Kinamon, a political science major from Conrad. "The [high schools] were kind of falling apart in terms of school spirit and financial transparency, kind of what we are seeing with ASUM now."

The pair met when Kinamon and Kunau worked together as president and vice president of the student organization Business Professionals of America.

As a freshman living in the residence halls, Kinamon said he wants to connect with students like him and make sure they're feeling represented.

Kunau, a journalism and neuroscience pre-med student from Lewistown, said she believes being a freshman is an advantage because it gives her a new perspective on ASUM.

Kunau and Kinamon both said they believe ASUM transparency is on the top of almost every candidate's list of essential issues.

"Everybody pays that \$79 ASUM fee at the beginning of the year, yet it seems like a hassle and so complicated for clubs to get the right footing, to be able to have good finances and make sure that they have the funding they need," Kinamon said.

Increasing communication between ASUM and student groups is one of their goals, Kunau said. One way the pair are planning to do that is by appointing a member from a fraternity, sorority and a student-athlete to represent the main student clubs on campus. They also said they want to start a "campus Uber" to safely get intoxicated students to and from campus.

Kunau and Kinamon are working closely with the current ASUM business manager when it comes to managing the budget.

"It's nice knowing that we are kind of on the same page," Kinamon said.

If Kinamon and Kunau are elected, they said by spring students will have more ASUM involvement in different campus events.

While Kinamon and Kunau are confident they have student support, they plan to run as write-in candidates if they are not elected in the primaries.

DAVID, HAUGAN DREAM OF AN ASUM PODCAST

BY ABBY WILLIAMS

Sophie David and Maya Haugan want to try something new: an ASUM podcast.

David, from Miles City, participated in her high school student council and joined ASUM her freshman year. Now a sophomore, she's running for president.

"I really have a passion for service, and ASUM was a great way to serve our community and students," David said.

Haugan, a sophomore from Bozeman, got involved with ASUM through David. She was looking for ways to get involved but didn't know where to start. "I just really loved [ASUM]," Haugan said.

"We are very much trying to get more campus community events going and make it more student centered," David said. "It hasn't been happening within ASUM and the community for a while."

Haugan said David and her have been friends for forever and have always been seen as a package deal. "We work well together. Our work ethic and personalities directly align with a great partnership,"

David said.

If elected, Haugan and David want to create a podcast about what happens inside Main Hall and get information out to students.

They also want to focus on political advocacy and connect students to people who are fighting to represent them.

One major thing Haugan said she wants to change as vice president is to engage actively with her fellow ASUM senators. Haugan said ASUM can feel like it has separate sections instead of working together as a unit. "I want to get our unit really in line with the students," Haugan said.

Having experienced the final budgeting process twice, Haugan said she wants to ensure that clubs understand how funding works.

"I think it would be cool to have our senators interact with student groups and get into the nitty gritty of it," Haugan said.

Through their podcast, Haugan and David hope to connect with administration,



DAVID AND HAUGAN

David, right, and Haugan, left, look through locks on the walking bridge near the north edge of campus. They want to bridge the Missoula community with campus culture.

then report back to the students.

"I think having those direct and concrete lines of communication and service will really help," Haugan said.

Haugan and David plan to run as write-in candidates if they are not elected in the primary.

GRAZIANO, LOHOF FOCUS ON OUTSIDE PERSPECTIVES, INCLUSIVITY

BY ELLE DANIEL



GRAZIANO AND LOHOF

Graziano, right, and Lohof, left, walk across a rainbow painted crosswalk in downtown Missoula. Emphasizing LGBTQ+ issues is at the forefront of their campaign.

UM students Owen Graziano and Trevor Lohof consider running for ASUM leadership roles without prior experience as an asset.

"[ASUM] feels like somewhere that I could actually make an impact on campus, and that's something that I've been craving,"

Lohof said.

Graziano, 21, and Lohof, 20, first met through debate club. The pair announced their candidacy through videos posted to Snapchat featuring Graziano dancing. They said these videos, which mirror popular trends on

social media, are their way of connecting with students.

"It's important for students to see who we are," Graziano said.

Graziano, who is running for president, said inclusivity is central to his campaign. "We want to ensure students feel safe continuing into the next semester," he said.

For Lohof, a history major from Billings, student accessibility to ASUM is equally important. "It's very telling that the majority of the time that we've been out and talking to people, they're like 'What's ASUM?'" he said.

Lohof said one potential solution to raising awareness on campus would be to go out on the Oval with ASUM senators and talk to students. That way, he said, senators can find out directly what students are feeling.

While they haven't served on ASUM, Graziano and Lohof said their perspective could help them bring change.

"Sometimes it's really hard to recognize problems and change those problems from the inside, because that's just the culture that's existing there," Lohof said. "We really want a campaign that's focused on maybe not breaking that culture, but reassessing that culture."

Transparency is also important to Graziano. He said he wants ASUM to be more proactive about posting meeting minutes for the public to see. Minutes for ASUM senate meetings are available on the ASUM website and are as recent as April 2. While committee agendas are available online, many have not posted meeting minutes since the fall 2024 semester.

"That's something I want to tighten up," Graziano said.

Graziano, a political science major from Helena, said he views increasing student fees as an opportunity to get more funding in the budget for student groups. Lohof said he might not know everything about handling the ASUM budget, but if given the opportunity to sit down and talk about it, he said he could be "pretty good at handling it."

"I've always believed that if I don't know something, I'm gonna pick someone smarter than me to help me with it," Lohof said.

When it comes to collaboration between ASUM and the administration, Graziano and Lohof want to find a way to bridge the gap. Graziano said changes can cause tension on campus. Making staff aware of these tensions by collecting "hard material" such as public comments and letters from students could be one way to make sure everyone is on the same page.

By collecting letters or petitions, Lohof said, ASUM could use students' voices like "ammunition" against the administration to stand up for students.

"ASUM should be the entity that connects students and their passions," Lohof said. "But it just doesn't work if ASUM is separate from the student body and the student body doesn't know what ASUM is doing, because then it's just ASUM fighting against the administration and that's a fight it's always going to lose."

If they're not elected in the primary election, Graziano and Lohof said they will most likely try to join ASUM as senators and accomplish their goals that way.

(Reporting by Maxwell Johnson)

WILSON, ANDERSON ARE BRIDGING THE GAP BETWEEN STUDENTS AND THEIR GOVERNMENT

BY LOGAN YANTES



Wilson, right, and Anderson, left, seen campaigning during a sunny day on the Oval. The pair encourages supporters to sign an inflatable ball while discussing their campaign.

Buddy Wilson and Maya Anderson have three goals for their campaign: enhancing student engagement, improving transparency and fostering a positive campus culture.

Wilson, a junior environmental science major, brings three years of ASUM experience to the ballot. Having served as a sen-

ator and running for ASUM President in 2024, Wilson said he is well-versed in how ASUM supports student organizations.

"It's doing a lot of great work that we need to inform students about, and there's a lot of work left to be done," he said.

A central theme of Wilson and Anderson's campaign is making students more

aware of what ASUM does. They plan to advertise events via social media and use the school-wide faculty and staff schedule to raise awareness within classrooms.

"If you're in classrooms talking, more people are going to want to come get coffee, and if they come to your coffee discussions, they're going to come to club meetings," Wilson said. "It's all one big effort, and the ultimate outcome is that students are more aware of what ASUM is doing."

Wilson aims to rework ASUM funding procedures to make it clearer for student groups on what they can expect.

"Everyone on campus is facing financial challenges, and ASUM is no exception," Wilson said. "We want to work with student groups not just to supplement funding for their events, but actually carry out the events."

Anderson, the vice president candidate, is double majoring in criminology and political science. Originally from Lake Stevens, Washington, Anderson said making ASUM more visible is a top priority. She said the pair feels ASUM is too removed from the students it represents.

Anderson plans to connect with students by being more present at events on campus, such as football games and tailgates.

"Some of our tailgates are being scheduled right now. I think that's going to be

a huge opportunity to make ASUM much more interwoven within the general fabric of campus," Anderson said. "I think that students would be that much more interested in coming out with us on their way to the football game."

While Anderson does not have prior experience on ASUM, Wilson said he believes her perspective can help them think outside the box.

Anderson said she plans to use the Student Political Action Committee to share information about the impacts of federal and state policies.

Her experience as the director of the committee has led to close collaboration with Wilson on political events, the student political priority survey and voter turnout efforts.

Wilson and Anderson want to invite UM faculty to participate in interviews discussing their roles, which would then be published on ASUM's social media. They said they believe administrators are willing to have these conversations but need the proper channels to reach students.

"How they're able to discuss those important things to a large audience of students is a barrier for them, and we want to break down that barrier," Anderson said.

Wilson and Anderson plan on running as write-in candidates for ASUM if they are not elected in the primary election.

LIAM EDWARDS SEES OPPORTUNITIES FOR A CHANGE IN PHILOSOPHY

BY ELLE DANIEL

Through working on the budget and finance committee, third-year accounting and finance student Liam Edwards is ready to bring a new philosophy to the business manager position.

"I realized there's a few more things the Senate and business manager can be doing to help clubs and improve our operations," Edwards stated in an email to the Kaimin.

The sole candidate for business manager, Edwards has prior experience working with and within ASUM. He spent a year as a senator and is currently the liaison between ASUM's transportation agency and the Senate.

The 21-year-old from Chinook discovered his interest in student politics piqued while working as a treasurer for a club on campus. Edwards wanted to learn even more about how student clubs were funded on campus and decided to run at

the last minute as a write-in candidate for a senate seat, which he won.

As the business manager, Edwards plans to continue the work he started in the Senate. He previously passed a resolution making the business manager responsible for compiling and presenting the Annual Comprehensive Financial Report, or ACFR, at the beginning of the academic year. It's a task he plans to continue.

"I want to make sure this is done right so the report functions in the way I intended," Edwards stated. "This will help senators get a clear understanding of our operations early on so they can make informed decisions throughout the year."

The financial report will summarize ASUM's financial activities and also highlight outstanding debts. "This is paramount to my campaign because students deserve to know where we spend their money and what financial commitments

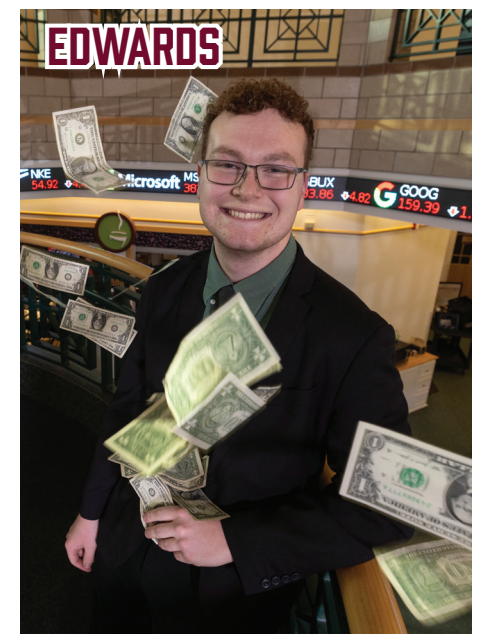
their elected peers are making," Edwards stated.

Making sure clubs know who he is is a priority for Edwards. "It troubles me that most of the communication between the business manager and student clubs is through paperwork and emails," he stated. To combat this, Edwards plans to attend at least one meeting for every club on campus.

After the primary election, Edwards said he plans to "hit the ground running" by distributing flyers and canvassing on the Oval.

The topics most central to Edwards campaign also happen to spell out his first name. LIAM, or leadership, in the know, accountability and meet them here, are the tenets of his candidacy, he said.

"I want to get past the paperwork and get straight to communicating directly with student groups," Edwards stated.



Edwards showers in money at the school of business. Running unopposed, Edwards hopes for an easy road to business manager at ASUM.

'A Real Life Indian' exhibition uses AI to reexamine Indigenous history

MADDIE PANDIS

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At the beginning of a vintage Kool-Aid commercial, there appears an antique version of today's Kool-Aid man who tells the tale of "the world's greatest Indian fighter."

In the ad, cartoons depicting Indigenous stereotypes prepare to battle an American cavalry. At the last minute, the colonel pulled out a pitcher of Kool-Aid to stop the fight seconds before it began.

"Soon Colonel Joe's only Indian war was to see who'd be burst in line for more," the narrator said.

For 21-year-old media arts senior O'maste Win Foster, visuals like these play a vital role in her recent exhibition. Foster uses the pseudonym Buffalo Riots when making art, a name she created in memory of a family member who passed away during her freshman year of college.

Originally from Rosebud, South Dakota, Foster has tribal affiliations with the Blackfeet, Assiniboine and Fort Peck Sioux tribes and said her identity plays a strong role in inspiring her art.

For her senior project, Foster created an exhibition titled, "A Real Life Indian." For

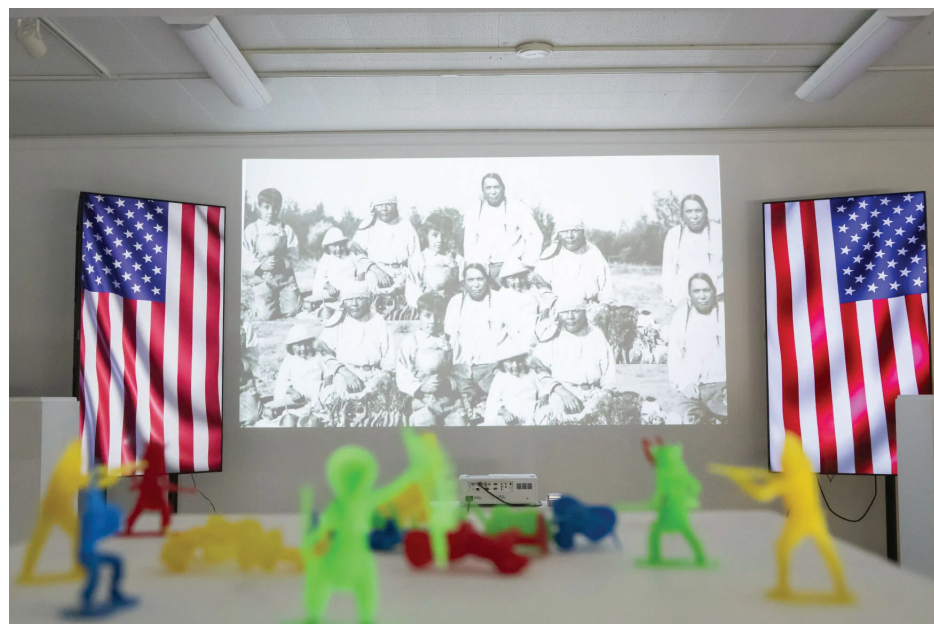
some, the word "Indian" is an outdated or even an offensive term to use when referring to Indigenous people, but to Foster, this word has become an empowering term.

"This word has been used to harm us in so many ways that eventually, we had adapted," she said. "It was just a way of being resilient and using a word to be proud of who we are rather than allowing this word to degrade us. I am proud to be Indian."

Foster created the idea behind the exhibit her freshman year of college. She knew she wanted to use art to retell history from a different point of view.

While preparing for her art exhibition, Foster spent hours looking through archival or historical photos in order to decide which materials to include. She often came across old photos taken by white settlers with a photo caption that fit into that settlers' personal narrative during that period. However, she said she rarely finds photos with captions that fit her "own people's" personal reality.

"Let's say you look at a photo taken by a certain photographer that has a whole collection. It will say: 'Indian people waiting in line for commodities as they go through starvation,' when in reality, that was a man-made famine," she said.



The "A Real Life Indian" art installation, set up in UM's Fine Arts building on April 14.

DIEGO HERNANDEZ | MONTANA KAIMIN

Foster uses these historical discrepancies mixed with art to retell history from the viewpoint of Indigenous people.

Another name for this style of art is database storytelling: The art of researching historical topics and then using historical materials, either film, photos, cartoons, commercials or posters that speak to her to create art.

However, Foster has put a unique twist on traditional database storytelling by using artificial intelligence tools to manipulate historical photos or film.

Using the materials Foster selected to tell a story, she uses AI systems and even Canva to apply different prompts. She also uses different filters and editing software to further manipulate materials until they fit the narrative she is trying to build.

Before this process, Foster had a feeling she wasn't going to like using AI. She proved herself correct. Watching the pictures come back to life through AI made her uncomfortable. Through her artistic process, she has become anti-AI and can't see herself using it in the future. She also discussed the greater effect of AI in today's world, and how it can be used negatively in society.

"I didn't know that AI has a destructive background," Foster said. "Whether it's just a basic computer image generating AI, but in the background, it's being used as an automated warfare tool. Through this experience I am definitely anti-AI."

Michael Murphy, a media arts professor at the University of Montana, helped Foster put together her exhibition.

"It's fine to look at old photographs and have

an emotional response to them, but to disrupt our viewing of them in a way that opens us up to a different way of experiencing them, to me, that is the great artistic skill that's beginning to be explored here," he said.

Murphy said one of the things that sticks out to him the most about Foster's art is the way that she's willing to make bold choices while experimenting. These artistic decisions linger in Murphy's head. It's not uncommon that Murphy has mixed emotions while viewing Foster's art, which, Foster hopes, others will experience, too.

"Sometimes there are surprises where I may be laughing at one moment, because she's using material that is humorous, and then the next moment I'm feeling a great sense of loss because of the images I'm looking at," Murphy said.

During the exhibition on April 14, from 5 to 7:30 p.m. in the Knowles Hall gallery, Foster showcased a mixture of different projectors displaying various images, videos and audio on different walls.

"This is what I hope to do with my life. This is some of my life's work, how I support my people," Foster said. "I wanted to do this to create an experience for my community because I love bringing community together. I think that's what had made me so excited for my senior project."

Maddie Pandis is an audio reporter for the Montana Kaimin and can be contacted at madelynn.pandis@umontana.edu. For more stories from Pandis and other reporters, visit online at montanakaimin.com.

SUNRISE
Saloon

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4/11 & 4/12 Joe Martinez @9:30PM!

4/15 Country Dance Lessons @7PM

4/16 BINGO @7PM!

4/15 & 4/17 Pro DJ Entertainment Karaoke @8PM

4/18 Justine Harris & The Pocket Aces @9:30PM!

4/19 Cody Bartel Band @9:30PM!

Drag show raises scholarship money for students

KATE WIDMER

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The performance space in the Zootown Arts Community Center buzzed with pre-show energy as friends and performers complimented each other on their bedazzled outfits and dramatic makeup, waiting with their dollar bills for the drag show, “Night of One Thousand Stars.”

Featuring performers from all over Montana and the greater West, the performance raised over \$1,800 for the Rosalinda de la Luna Scholarship, which is awarded annually to Montana students pursuing post-secondary education. The event was put on by the Imperial Sovereign Court of the State of Montana, the second longest running LGBTQ+ nonprofit in the state.

The organization gives out at least two \$500 scholarships each year, with last year seeing six \$800 scholarships and the year prior having eight \$500 scholarships Raymi Samson, the Imperial Sovereign Court president, said. Samson is also a drag performer who uses the stage name EuniceSexx. “We also just started our cancer fund, so for people dealing with

cancer, they can apply for funds and alleviate some of the cost in that regard,” they said.

The scholarships are available to any Montana resident currently pursuing post-secondary education. Students can apply via a Google form that asks about the student’s needs and demographics. The goal is to help those most in need of support rather than the most elite. Performer Christina Drake said an applicant would spend less time filling it out than they would spend on their Grindr profile.

The night’s performances were mostly lip syncs, which in drag, refers to high-energy dance numbers set to classic songs — some common songs were by Lady Gaga and Chappell Roan. Some drag artists were introduced as long-time favorites and some as newcomers, but all were welcome and celebrated.

“Some of my favorite shows to go to are the shows in Kalispell and Anaconda,” Samson said. “Those people go so hard because they don’t get us every month like Missoula does. Growing up in Helena, I did not see a lot of queer people, and it’s just fantastic that we get to do these events and show queer people across the state that you can grow up, you can be an adult.”

In addition to the performances and fundraising, the show was also an opportunity to raise awareness about civic engagement, particularly with the Montana legislature proposing multiple bills that would marginalize LGBTQ+ Montanans. Performers and representatives from Forward Montana, a grassroots organization that promotes civic engagement, spoke about voter registration and the importance of being involved in local politics. They also asked attendees to sign their petition to protest the shutdown of the Johnson Street shelter, which is set to close for good this August.

Walker Winterburn, a 22-year-old musical theater major who performs as Miss Honey Doo, credits drag as both an outlet and an agent for change.

“When fighting for queer rights, a lot of times it’s drag queens that are on the front of that line, doing advocacy like this tonight,” Winterburn said.

“[The imperial court] also has combated a lot of harmful legislation that’s tried to make its way into law, and that’s all possible through the money that is earned through drag shows like this,” Winterburn said.



Juicy Bouvier St. James plays the air guitar along to ‘Queen of the Night’ in a drag show at the ZACC on April 12. **DIEGO HERNANDEZ | MONTANA KAIMIN**

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Viewership in women's sports rises, as does inequality

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Throughout the past couple of years, sports fans have seen a gradual rise in the visibility of women's sports, but while viewership and recognition has been increasing for female athletics across the United States, there are still gendered gaps in treatment and pay.

With the U.S. government passing Title IX in 1972, women were able to have a spot in the world of professional sports. However, it would take nearly 50 years to see progress made in equality.

In March 2024, women's basketball had a major spike in viewership as the University of Iowa and Caitlin Clark took on the University of South Carolina in the Women's March Madness Final. According to Forbes, this game drew in 18.7 million fans from across the country, four million more viewers than the men's final.

This success doesn't just affect women's basketball, it helps to inspire other sports.

"It really feels amazing. Right now we see the success that the [Women's National Basketball Association] has been able to reach and I just feel so proud to be a part of this movement," said Maddie Pyles, a junior from Texas and member of the University of Montana's volleyball team.

The Women's National Soccer Team for the U.S. has also brought success and hopes for equality into the world of women's sports. In 2019 the team won its fourth World Cup title after beating the Netherlands 2-1. But for the team it wasn't just about winning a trophy. The team used this win as momentum in their push for equal pay, something that had been in the forefront of many female athletes' minds.

In 2022 the team signed a \$24 million settlement with the U.S. Soccer Federation after filing a class action gender discrimination lawsuit. Following the settlement, the federation decided to pay both the men's and women's teams the same amount of money.

"It's always been a goal of mine to play for the national team, but just to be able to watch all the wins and to see that we are dominating against some other great nations has been great," Chloe Seelhoff, a junior soccer player from Washington, said. "They've done so much to help close the gap."

But even with this new shift in the direction of equal pay, there isn't as many opportunities for equal pay. In America, men have three leagues to choose from, based on skill level. When they enter the world of professional soccer, women only have one league.

"Luckily the pay has gotten better, but we still have so much left to do. It makes it harder

for women to enter the professional world of this sport," Seelhoff said.

With the introduction of Name, Image and Likeness deals, women have found a new way to help build a platform within their sports. Out of the five players at March Madness with the most Instagram followers, the lone male player on the list, Duke's freshman Cooper Flagg, held the last spot.

Yet Flagg has gained over \$4.8 million from the deals in the 2024-25 season, compared to University of Connecticut's Paige Bueckers, who had the most followers and only gained \$1.4 million.

"A part of this spike in viewership is the market and media in sport recognized that they can make money off of the women's side of the game. People can market this side of the game now with betting, which drives a larger audience to games," said Allison Lawrence, head coach of UM's volleyball team. "It addresses the narrative that women's sports aren't watchable and shows that people want to see women be successful in their respected areas."

But the push for equality in women's sports isn't just for current players. It's for the generation to come.

"I love when we have our camps, to see the enjoyment in all the little girls and see the happiness they get from this sport is awesome," Pyles said.

Last year, volleyball fans across the U.S. saw the creation of the Pro Volleyball Federation, which helped create professional teams across America. This is just one of the many leagues that have been founded for female athletes.

"It's really exciting and it's about fucking time. We always knew the potential of women," Lawrence said. Lawrence said she has two sons and in her home, professional men's basketball and hockey games are always on. But Lawrence is excited to be able to take them to a professional women's volleyball game and "show them that women have this power."

In 2012, the National Women's Soccer League came to the U.S. and has been continuously growing. The league reported that during the 2023 championship game around 915,000 people tuned in.

However, even with the growth women's soccer has seen, it wasn't long ago that women weren't allowed to compete for a national title. In 1991, the first women's World Cup was held in China and the U.S. did something their male counterparts had never done: won a world title.

"If I was back then, I would've been pissed," Seelhoff said. "Why weren't we allowed to play? But it's super important to see that it wasn't that long ago and we've still been able

to accomplish so much."

But it isn't just on the national stage that gaps appear, it's also on campus, where there are more Division I women's sports than men's.

As students came back from winter break, they were welcomed with the annual Brawl of the Wild basketball games, with the women's game taking place first, followed by the men's. The event draws in Griz and Cat fans from across Montana.

However, players on the women's team didn't feel the same amount of support that the men's team received.

The women's game was early in the day, while the men's game was introduced with a large bonfire out on the Oval.

Around 3,400 people attended the women's game, while around 5,700 fans packed the Adams Center for the men's.

The disparity exists in coaching positions, too. Currently, UM has 10 head coach positions, but women only make up two of those spots.

"It worries me. You see women in the minority within the coaching staff, but also in the administration of this school and we must push back the narrative that women don't want these jobs or that we don't interview well enough," Lawrence said. "We need people of all identities here."

But it's not just in coaching positions, the gap can be seen within the treatment of the teams and the accommodations they receive.

"Funding is a big thing, Men's sports get a lot of funding, but it's not just about getting better gear," Pyles said. "It's also about the smaller things, having a decent locker room or even getting the right supplies to fuel our bodies."

Kent Haslam, director of UM athletics, did not respond to several phone calls asking for comment.

It's the fight for equality and acceptance that drew Lawrence to coaching in the first place.

"I wanted to coach because I wanted to become an advocate for women, but also for people who are non-binary. We must push and help change this system that is so rigid," Lawrence said.

But even as women work toward equality on the field, they still have some fights that exist outside of the sporting world.

The NCAA reported that women are three times more likely to receive threats than men during March Madness.

"It's really sad to see this happening to so many good athletes, but on this team we just make sure that we are there for each other and support one another if they do receive any hate," Seelhoff said.

While female athletes fight back against any

sexual or online harassment they receive, they aren't always met with praise. During a 2022 European Championship match, the Norwegian Handball team decided to wear shorts instead of the typical bikini bottoms that adorn their uniforms.

The team was met with a fine from the European Handball Federation of 1,500 euros, around \$2,487 U.S., for wearing "improper clothing." The team was later granted the choice of wearing shorts instead of bikini bottoms.

It's the same sexualization that many volleyball players have faced, as a portion of their uniform are spandex bottoms.

"[The uniforms] play into the narrative that sports are made to titillate the audience and viewers. The idea that women are in sports to be seen as an object and something to be sexualized," Lawrence said. "But we've seen this push in these past couple of years of women being confident in their strong bodies and showing off their strength."

When it comes to those who don't believe in women's sports, Lawrence said she doesn't even want to respond to them.

"If I remove myself from my position, I would just tell them to look at history," Lawrence said. "We have tried to limit the way women express themselves and their freedoms, but look how it's turned out."

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New transfers find a place in football's spring session

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This year's University of Montana football team's spring session has ended after providing players with opportunities to improve and giving new faces a chance to get in the game.

The 15 practices in 34 days was capped by the annual spring game held in Washington-Grizzly Stadium.

"Everyone loves spring ball," said Bobby Hauck, head coach of the UM football team. "We can work fundamentals, blocking and tackling, and we can play against each other. When you get into fall, you're trying to get ready for the game."

Hauck, who's entering his seventh year in his second stint with the program, said while spring ball is a great opportunity for the players, the spring game doesn't offer much in terms of value.

"It's the worst practice of the year," he said. "The shortest, least number of reps, slowest paced practice of the year."

But while the spring game may not do much for the team, the other 14 practices have proved valuable.

"We're working hard at getting better," Hauck said. "Each individual on the team's working to improve, and that's why you practice, to improve. If practice didn't improve your level of play, then you wouldn't do it."

Hauck also said the new transfers to the team are fitting in well.

"They're picking up how we do things both in terms of attitude and schematics," he said.

One of the new transfers to UM this spring is Michael Wortham, who transferred from Eastern Washington University prior to winter conditioning after being named an American Football Coaches Association Second-Team All American in 2024.

Wortham, 22, hails from North Highlands, California, and is getting a certificate for entertainment management at UM.

He said it was a bit of a struggle getting used to UM at first, but over time, he got accustomed.

"At first, it was a challenge, obviously a different system coming from Eastern Washington," he said. But Wortham said the team did a great job welcoming him

with open arms and helping him out while he grew into his new environment.

Part of the learning experience has been getting used to a new quarterback group, but Wortham said the team is making it easy for him.

"It's a lot of learning from them," he said. "Sometimes it can be stressful building with new receivers and a new o-line, and all this stuff, but they've been doing an amazing job in my eyes."

This year, UM's quarterback room is highlighted by newcomer Jake Jensen, who transferred to UM from the University of Southern California, along with Keali'i Ah Yat, who is returning to UM for his sophomore season.

While Wortham will be a weapon offensively for the Griz, his biggest threat is on special teams, where in 2024 for EWU, Wortham led the nation in kick-returning yards with 1,093.

He is expected to continue his role as returner in place of all-time Griz Junior Bergen. But while he has big shoes to fill, Wortham believes he has the ability to do so.

"[Bergen]'s an amazing returner," Wortham said. "We just gotta come out there, do what we got to do best. As long as we execute we'd be able to do some damage in that area."

Wortham also has the ability to play quarterback, receiver and running back for the offense, which showcases his versatility on the field.

Wortham said he has that "dog mentality" when it comes to his attitude, even if that's staying in the game if he's hurt.

"I just want to win," he said.

Wortham, who had 184 returning yards against Montana last season, recalled a specific game and said it definitely impacted his decision to transfer to UM.

"It was a dog fight when Montana played at Eastern," he said. "I just knew the fans would go hard for their team, so I wanted to be a part of that."

Eastern Washington is a historical UM rival, and because of that, according to Wortham, some fans were upset when he signed with the Griz.

"They're big [fuck the Griz] over there, so it was a rough one," Wortham said. "There was a lot of shocked faces of me choosing here, but this is where I wanted to be, so they had to respect it."



Michael Wortham reaches to catch a passing ball during warm ups for a Griz spring game on April 11.
DIEGO HERNANDEZ | MONTANA KAIMIN

Having never played in Washington-Grizzly Stadium before, he said he's excited to see a packed house come September.

"All I've been hearing is how loud it gets, and how electrifying it is," he said.

He said Montana's history of winning was a big reason for his move to Missoula.

"It's just the winning culture," he said. "You see teams that are always at the top and Montana's always one of those teams

that are always at the top, so that's just where I wanted to be. I wanted to compete with the best, and get that national championship."

Dillon Richardson is a sports reporter for the Montana Kaimin and can be contacted at dillon.richardson@umontana.edu. For more stories from Richardson and other reporters, visit online at montanakaimin.com.

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The loud sounds of machines and yelling filled the large warehouse in Helena, where the Montana Kaimin is printed every week. About a dozen workers constantly moved around the presses. Tuesdays are busy days for the ink-covered employees. They print a handful of papers from around the state, all with different paper types and processes.

The first printing press was created by German inventor Johannes Gutenberg in 1439 and the technology hasn't changed much since. The Kaimin has published a physical newspaper nearly every week of the regular academic year since 1998.

The Pew Research Center estimated the circulation of newspapers in the U.S. has dropped by over half since the turn of the century. This is seen at the Kaimin, too. Just last year, the Kaimin's business office audited print readership and found a significant decline from previous years.

In Montana, the number of printing presses is getting smaller. Some papers have stopped printing altogether due to a variety of factors. The Billings Times delivered its last physical paper last year and now only publishes online. A number of local publications that have maintained a printed paper have had to cut staff and increase prices to counteract the rising cost of equipment needed.

In a culture of progressively more accessible digital journalism consumption, people have come to expect their news faster, which is harder for print journalism to keep up with.

With the future of physical media unclear, print publications still serve as a useful form of communication and education for the communities they serve. In the meantime, one thing the Kaimin knows for sure is that digital media will never be as effective of a fire starter.

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Workers at the Independent Record's printing press move a large roll of paper while transitioning between print jobs on April 8.



Putty knives used to handle paint lay on a tray with other tools.



Copies of the Montana Kaimin's 25th issue roll out on a conveyor belt.