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Main Hall ^{to} Main St.

Vol. 3, No. 6

Connecting Campus and Community

December 1997

Financial aid workshop offered

An upcoming event at The University of Montana will reveal some hidden secrets for dealing with the financial aid process.

High school students and their parents are invited to attend Financial Aid Night Tuesday, Jan. 13, in the University Center Ballroom. Mick Hanson, UM financial aid director, will walk through the Free Application for Federal Student Aid form to help eliminate some of the frustration and confusion that come with applying for federal financial student aid. Refreshments will be served at 6:30 p.m., and the presentation will begin promptly at 7 p.m.

UM and its affiliated campuses will have representatives available to answer questions about the admissions process at 6:30 p.m. and again at 9 p.m.

Similar workshops will be presented in other Montana communities in early 1998.

Griz mascot gives birth

There's a new addition to the Montana Grizzly family—a new cub on campus to help UM's senior mascot promote school spirit.

The junior Griz arrived in response to calls from retailers for a less fearsome mascot for little kids to wear, said Bob Frazier, executive assistant to UM President George Dennison.

Many universities around the nation have a junior version of their mascot, Frazier said. The cub looks as good in maroon and silver as the elder bear does, but this guy is only for children's clothing. He's also the mascot for Cub Club, an organization for young Grizzly fans.

Clothing bearing the new youngster is available only at the M Store in the Harry Adams Field House during Lady Griz and Grizzly basketball games. Local merchants and The Bookstore at The University of Montana will carry the clothing in the near future.

The logo was created by Missoula artist Steve LaRance, who designed the senior Montana Grizzly logo last year.



Missoula, alumni pledge support for UM Excellence Fund

Missoula business owners and service providers dug deep into their pockets this fall to help raise more than \$300,000 for UM-Missoula's immediate academic needs for the upcoming year.

University of Montana staff, faculty and alumni pitched in to bring the total for the 1997 UM Foundation's Excellence Fund Drive to \$495,131.

"I continue to be gratefully surprised at the depth of commitment that alumni and Missoula folks demonstrate for UM," said Shawn Gunnin, director of annual giving for the UM Foundation.

The annual Excellence Fund business and campus drive brought in \$304,177, inching above its \$300,000 goal and last year's total of \$269,109. Dr. Robert

Seim of Missoula Orthopedic Associates chaired this year's drive, while Tom Cook, UM music department chair, spearheaded campus fund-raising efforts. UM staff and faculty accounted for the largest group donation with pledges of \$83,450.

Leading community contributors were: organizations, \$60,250; banks, \$19,670; doctors, \$19,391; lawyers, \$16,056; individuals, \$15,575; media, \$14,600; bars and restaurants, \$8,060; and Realtors, \$6,420.

The six-week drive officially ended Nov. 12, but pledges continue to trickle in, Gunnin said.

The fall drive, now in its 19th year, is a major source of income for the Excellence Fund, which helps UM meet

immediate academic needs such as scholarships, faculty and staff development, and special programs. It also funds special events such as last month's Montana Model United Nations and last summer's Leadership Institute, both of which brought high school students to UM's campus.

Initiated in 1978 by a group of Missoula business leaders, the drive becomes increasingly important each year as other funding sources — such as taxpayer assistance — dwindle. For the past seven years, the business drive has used the theme "Count Me In" to encourage the campus and Missoula communities to band together in support of UM.

(continued on page 2)

Excellence—continued

After 30 nights of calling, campus was almost \$191,000 richer, thanks to the generosity of UM alumni and parents of current UM students. The phonathon goal of raising \$115,994 from alumni was easily surpassed with total pledges of \$181,781 made by 3,004 donors, including 499 who contributed for the first time this year.

Gunnin said this was the first year that parents of current UM students were contacted. They responded with \$9,173 in pledges.

College of Arts and Sciences alums topped the list with \$42,458 in pledges, followed by the School of Business Administration with \$41,525. Law school alums accounted for the single largest increase over last year's contributions with \$24,343, compared with \$9,167 in 1996.

UM Calendar

Saturday, Dec. 20

Christmas vacation/semester break—through Jan. 25.

Thursday, Dec. 25

Holiday—UM offices closed for Christmas.

Sunday, Dec. 28

Basketball—Lady Griz vs. Princeton (6th Annual Western States Showdown), 6:30 p.m.; consolation game 6:30 p.m. and championship, 8:30 p.m. on Dec. 29 Dahlberg Arena.

Tuesday, Dec. 30

Basketball—Grizzlies vs. Alaska-Fairbanks, 7:05 p.m., Dahlberg Arena.

Thursday, Jan. 1

Holiday—UM offices closed for New Year's Day.

Saturday, Jan. 3

Basketball—Grizzlies vs. Idaho State, 2:05 p.m., Dahlberg Arena.

Monday, Jan. 5

Intercession classes begin—through Jan. 23.

Thursday, Jan. 8

Basketball—Lady Griz vs. Northern Arizona, 7:05 p.m., Dahlberg Arena.

Saturday, Jan. 10

Basketball—Lady Griz vs. Cal State Northridge, 7:05 p.m., Dahlberg Arena.

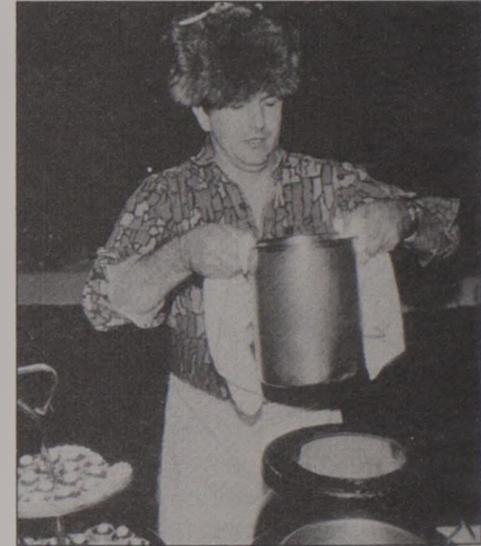
Get Wild: Cookbook shares UM chefs' recipes for big game gourmet

With hunting season behind us, many Montanans have freezers stocked with venison to get them through the coming year. Instead of frying a slab of deer meat for dinner, try one of UM Dining Services' tantalizing alternatives — a seared venison steak with mushroom wine sauce on a savory mushroom charlotte, or perhaps a venison stroganoff soup.

Since 1993, Dining Services chefs have shared their favorite big game recipes with University staff and faculty at an annual "Getting Wild With Wild Game" night. The chefs team up with UM's Wellness Center to teach healthier, more appetizing ways to prepare all sorts of wild game, from duck and goose to cougar and bear. The cooking show brings rave reviews from capacity crowds each year.

Now recipes for gourmet game dishes can be yours with Dining Services' "Getting Wild With Wild Game Cookbook." Cookbooks include a collection of recipes from each year of the event, along with a few of the chefs' personal favorites. Also included are tips for stovetop smoking, nutritional benefits of wild game and butchering guides.

Cookbooks cost \$12, plus \$2.50 for this year's insert, which includes recipes



UM chef Martin Albrecht serves up pots of venison stroganoff soup at this year's "Getting Wild With Wild Game Cooking Show" held recently on campus.

for scarlet salmon and trout, moose mincemeat tartlets, gumbo with pheasant and elk sausage, and venison and pheasant in scotch whiskey thyme sauce.

To order a cookbook, call (406) 243-6325 or write Dining Services, Lodge 152A, The University of Montana, Missoula, 59812.

UM seeks public input on Mount Sentinel weed plan

Public comment is invited on a new draft plan for controlling noxious weeds on Mount Sentinel.

The plan, which replaces an earlier, controversial plan, proposes a six-year program of grasslands restoration, weed management and research on weed control techniques. Three alternatives are proposed, one of which will be implemented in five management zones in accordance with management goals for the zones.

Alternative A would offer no action or treatments of any kind. Alternative B proposes native plant restoration and integrated weed management without herbicides, which includes hand-pulling, biomanagement, revegetation and experimental grazing. Alternative C uses the same techniques as Alternative B, but with the addition of minimal herbicide use. Alternative C is the choice preferred by the plan's drafters, but public comments will be taken into consideration before a final decision is made.

The plan outlines directives for the use of herbicides, including ground application in spot treatments, public notification

and monitoring for herbicidal leaching.

The plan's objectives are to achieve weed control methods that don't have negative impacts on human health and the environment; control invasive weed species and prevent the spread of weeds from UM land to neighboring properties; facilitate restoration of native plants; apply species- and site-specific treatments; and time treatments according to the natural life cycle of weeds for maximum effectiveness.

Reserved copies of the plan are available for public review at the Missoula Public Library. Individuals may obtain their own copies on campus at the Mansfield Library and at the University Center Information Desk.

Written public comments may be directed to: Mount Sentinel Management Plan, Environmental Studies Program, Rankin Hall, The University of Montana, Missoula, MT 59812.

Public comments and suggestions will be accepted in writing through Feb. 5, 1998. Public comment also will be accepted at a follow-up meeting to be held in early February.



Bear Briefs

2017, Montana Odyssey—UM President George Dennison and Gov. Marc Racicot co-hosted a daylong conference at the Center at Salmon Lake to discuss the major trends likely to shape Montana's future into the next century. The Nov. 3 conference, titled Montana Trends, was attended by 28 Montana leaders representing virtually all sectors of the state's economic, government and education systems. Conference participants were challenged to provide a vision for Montana 20 years from now. The idea for Montana Trends grew out of the current strategic planning process and a perceived need to align UM's plans to the state's projected future. A summary, list of conference participants and the group's vision statement are posted on the Web at: <http://www.umt.edu/mttrends>.

Wilderness, Web-style—A wilderness management course developed at UM for use on the Internet has received the Outstanding Credit Program of the Year Award from Region 7 of the University Continuing Education Association. The course, one of six in the UM forestry school's Wilderness Management Distance Education Program, was successfully piloted last winter with 23 students at the University of Minnesota-Crookston. It was the first offering of its kind nationally for a wilderness-oriented college course.

Brotherly Run—Keeping with tradition, members of the UM chapter of Sigma Phi Epsilon made the fraternity's biennial run to Bozeman for the Griz-Cat game Nov. 22 to raise money for Missoula's YWCA. The runners divided the distance into four shifts of 50 miles, with each runner in his shift taking a few miles at a time.

Frigid Frolics—Grizzly football fans have enjoyed tailgate parties before home games for years. Now basketball fans can do the same. The Polar Bear Club, located in a tent set up on the lawn in front of the Campus Rec Annex, will sport parties where hamburgers, chili, beer and pop are sold an hour before select home games. Party at the Polar Bear Club before Lady Griz games Jan. 10, 25 and 30, and Feb. 21. Parties will be held before Grizzly men's games Jan. 3 and 17, and Feb. 6, 7 and 28.

Worldwide Warbler—One of the world's foremost ornithology journals is quietly being edited at UM. The Auk, now in its 114th year, has called UM home since November 1995. Like many scientific journals, The Auk is passed from editor to editor. Current Editor-in-Chief Tom Martin, of UM's Montana Cooperative Wildlife Research Unit, has made a four-year commitment to producing The Auk. UM's Jeff Marks serves as the quarterly's managing editor. Published by The American Ornithologists' Union in Washington, D.C., The Auk contains cutting-edge scientific research on birds. With a reputation for impeccably high standards, The Auk commands the respect of the world's leading ornithologists.

Academic All-star—Grizzly running back Josh Branan has never been short on academic honors when he's not running long to score touchdowns on the football field. Branan was selected as a National Football Foundation Scholar-Athlete for 1997. The honor earned him an \$18,000 two-year, post-graduate fellowship. The senior in pre-physical therapy, from Moscow, Idaho, maintains a 4.0 grade point average at UM.

Top Scholar—Elaine Caton, a postdoctoral scholar at UM, is one of 28 people nationwide to receive a National Science Foundation fellowship. She was awarded the Postdoctoral Fellowship in Science, Mathematics, Engineering and Technology Education for her program proposal on forming "eco-partnerships" between ecologists and K-12 teachers in western Montana. The project aims to get scientists and teachers working together to develop ecology teaching programs. The fellowship is for two years with a third year contingent on funding.

Native Tribute—Johnna Espinoza, an Arlee native and former UM student, was honored recently with a first-place award for "best documentary" from the Native American Journalists Association. As part of her project for a master's degree in journalism, Espinoza produced a half-hour documentary, "Indian Basketball: A Wider Circle," which focuses on four legendary Indian basketball players from Montana and the cultural importance of the sport. UM

students James Rafferty and Shannon Dell were photographer and editor for the documentary, which premiered on Montana television networks last March.

Griz Connections—Montana Grizzly basketball fans can catch play-by-play action on the Grizzly Sports Network with live broadcasts on 18 radio stations across Montana. Half-time shows hosted by veteran broadcaster Bill Knowles, a UM radio-TV professor, feature interviews with University faculty, staff, administrators and students about academic programs, research and UM events. The Grizzly Sports Network can be heard on KYLT, Missoula; KCAP, Helena; KXGN, Glendive; KXTL, Butte; KGLM, Anaconda; KDRG, Deer Lodge; KMTA and KMCM, Miles City; KXLO, Lewistown; KXCF, Great Falls; KOFI, Kalispell; KBLG, Billings; KLYQ, Hamilton; KPRK, Livingston; KVCK, Wolf Point; KWYS, West Yellowstone; and KATQ, Plentywood.

'Backroads' Accessible—The latest addition to UM's award-winning "Backroads of Montana" documentary series is now available at more than 140 city, county and college libraries in Montana. "Wool and Wind" does some sailing on ice near Helena, gliding over Flathead Valley, sightseeing in Glacier National Park and sheepshearing near Absarokee. It's a much more "physical show" than the previous nine episodes, co-producer Gus Chambers said. Individual copies of the 10 episodes are available for \$19.95 each. Call (406) 243-4093 to request an order form.

Technology Access—UM's Rural Institute on Disabilities has opened the Montana Technology Access Center to demonstrate and evaluate assistive technology for people with disabilities. The service, located in the Human Development Center at UM's Student Health Service, 634 Eddy Ave., offers disabled people the chance to see — and even try — equipment that will enable them to be more independent. A public open house early next year will feature equipment demonstrations, and vendors of assistive equipment will provide displays and demonstrations as well. For more information, call Frances Miller at 243-5956 or (800) 732-0323.

From the bones up

UM anthropologist helps law enforcement reconstruct remains

Written by Patia Stephens
Photographed by Todd Goodrich

Skulls, skeletons and corpses are something most people want to confront only on Halloween. But Garry Kerr faces them on a regular basis, and what's more, he enjoys it.

Kerr doesn't look like a man obsessed with the macabre. He doesn't act like a guy who spent this morning performing an autopsy. His demeanor is more that of an enthusiastic, overgrown boy-next-door than that of an anthropologist who specializes in forensic assessment and reconstruction of human remains. But Kerr's life resembles something out of a best-selling crime novel.

An instructor at UM, Kerr spends his classroom time teaching anthropology, casting and facial reconstruction. Outside the classroom, he is often found working with Montana law enforcement on forensic cases or assisting the state medical examiner on autopsies. Teaching and learning are central to everything he does.

"Teaching has been my goal since the day I first had conscious thought," Kerr said. "There's something about it, watching it spark an idea. You get such a rush from teaching students who want to learn."

In his facial reconstruction classes, Kerr teaches students how to rebuild a face from the bone up. Starting with a plaster cast of a skull, the class assesses the skull for age, gender and race. Markers are then placed on the skull to signify flesh thickness, based on statistical norms collected by anthropologists during wartime. Art and science combine in the next step, when the business of building facial expression begins. Based on what is known about the age, health and lifestyle of the person who once inhabited the skull, facial characteristics such as wrinkles and scars are added.

The result is an object that looks eerily human and often evokes emotional responses from students working on it.

"It's kind of spooky watching them communicate with these people," Kerr said. "One student working on a 3-year-old girl killed by her father started talking to her. She said 'Oh, I'm so sorry this happened to you. You must have been so beautiful.'"

Facial reconstruction is often able to give crime victims back their identity, which means cases can be closed and families can get answers.

The same motive underlies Kerr's interest in unidentified skeletal remains. Even a small bone fragment can provide clues that will help law enforcement get to the bottom of a crime.

In one prominent Missoula case, Kerr found himself at the bottom of an outhouse looking for clues. It was February 1994, and a 15-year-old girl had confessed to shooting her father and, with her mother's and brother's help, burning his body

and dumping it in the outhouse. Kerr, at the time a graduate student in anthropology, was called to the site to help officials positively identify the remains.

While he and two other students excavated the outhouse and law enforcement looked on with relief that they weren't the ones down in the muck, Kerr found a chunk of bone marred by a small, callous-like bump. When the bump was removed, it revealed a brass screw that perfectly matched an X-ray taken by the murder victim's surgeon. The positive ID saved law enforcement from having to put the remains through extensive — and expensive — DNA testing.

Kerr is currently involved with the investigation of a body found recently in Gallatin County. His role includes transporting the body from the crime lab to the University and, likely, working on the investigative team alongside UM anthropology Associate Professor Randall Skelton. Once the body is assessed for basics such as gender, age, race, height and trauma, the team will turn that information over to the coroner's office and the crime lab.

Searching for clues is a big part of Kerr's work with the state medical examiner. When someone dies without a witness, an autopsy is performed to try to ascertain whether the death was by natural causes, suicide, homicide or an accident.

"Most of the time we can find out how the person died," he said. "And you find out as much about how they lived as how they died."

Kerr sees his work as a community service and, often, a chance to right a wrong.

"When it's a young child who's been abused or a woman who's been violated, you really want to find out what happened so that whoever did it can be held accountable," he said.

But what keeps him coming back is the vast knowledge that can be gained by performing an autopsy. Although he said he never loses sight of the human being he is working on, the body's internal workings fascinate him.

"I've learned more by assisting the ME (medical examiner) than I would have in 10 years of med school," he said.

Kerr's enthusiasm is contagious; his fascination with the dead hard to resist. No doubt he's inspired more than a few students to pursue a career in forensics. And it's a field open to all, he stressed.

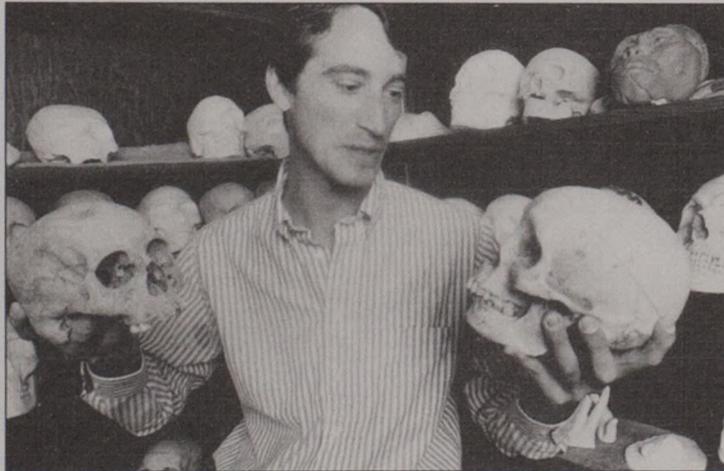
"You don't have to be an old, white male to be in forensics," he said. "There are more women than men, and more under 40 than over 40."

At only 38 years old, Kerr has a reputation for being an excellent teacher. In an "Uncensored Course Guide," in which students give their no-holds-barred opinions on instructors and classes, Kerr received straight A's. He pointed to his rich life experiences and love of learning to explain students' rave reviews.

"Having had a full life is great when you're a teacher," he said. "The more things I do, the better I am."

The worst crime, according to Kerr, is boredom. By getting up close and personal with death, his zest for life is renewed.

"Life fascinates me," he said. "As we say in the crime lab, it's better than the alternative."



Kerr identifies skulls in his UM lab.

"Most of the time we can find out how the person died. And you find out as much about how they lived as how they died."

—Garry Kerr

UM students take President Clinton's reading challenge

Twenty-six students from UM are taking President Clinton's America Reads Challenge to heart by volunteering to tutor elementary and middle school children in the Missoula community.

The UM students are members of AmeriCorps, a national program that provides community service in exchange for educational grants.

The America Reads Challenge, announced last year, is designed to address the fact that 40 percent of American children are not reading well enough by the third grade.

To combat the problem, Clinton called for 30,000 reading specialists and tutor coordinators to help mobilize an army of reading tutors.

UM President George Dennison was appointed to President Clinton's steering committee of America Reads

Challenge, and this semester the program is beginning to benefit the local community.

"Teachers are excited about the concept of college students getting involved in the classroom outside the realm of student teaching," said Andrea Vernon, director of Volunteer Action

Services at UM.

In 15 schools around Missoula the UM students are each tutoring an average of 10 hours a week. After 300 hours of tutoring, the student will receive an educational grant of \$750.

Aubrey Hancock, a French major, is a reading tutor who

works with two students in first grade. One student is hyperactive and the other didn't attend kindergarten.

"I'm basically working one on one to help them catch up to the other kids," Hancock said.

"They're both really bright kids. For the most part they just get distracted."

Several studies have shown that sustained individualized attention and tutoring combined with parental attention can raise reading levels substantially.

Vernon said the program has benefited UM student tutors as well, by making them feel more connected to their community.

"I have been very impressed with the amount of student interest in the program," Vernon said. "There seems to be a growing commitment to student involvement in the community."

—Beth Ann Cogswell

Listen to tales of Christmas

Those who attend Children's Story Hour at The Bookstore at UM will get a special holiday treat in December. From 11 a.m. to noon Saturday, Dec. 20, the story hour will feature Missoula author Lorinda Smith, who will read to children from her book, "Christmas Eve Stories." Smith also will autograph her work.

Although the Children's Story Hour on Dec. 20 is extra-special, the story hour program is nothing new. For the past five years, parents in the University and Missoula communities have been able to bring their children to the free weekly event. Every Saturday from 11 a.m. to noon, a UM student volunteer reads stories to children of all ages.

Besides listening to stories, children can also enjoy cookies and coloring. The only requirement for story hour is that parents stay in or close to the children's area of The Bookstore in the University Center.

Grizzly athletes visit local schools

While most UM students were enjoying a break from classes on Veterans Day, Grizzly student-athletes were busy teaching Missoula children and teens how to make smart choices in life.

About half of UM's student-athletes donated their time on their day off to visit Missoula County Public Schools' K-12 classrooms as part of a new program, Griz ACES (Athletes

Committed to Excellence in School, Sport, Services and Social responsibility).

Griz ACES is a comprehensive personal development program designed to provide a variety of educational life-skills opportunities, as well as opportunities for community involvement and service.

Dubbed as "Smart Choices Day," the Nov. 11 trek to local schools gave students a chance to meet Grizzly athletes and athletes a chance to gain public-speaking experience while presenting



Ryland Jollymore (standing), Grizzly inside linebacker, visited an English class at Sentinel High School on Smart Choices Day. (UM photo by Andy Kemmis)

themselves as positive role models for youngsters.

"We get so many requests from teachers for our student-athletes to visit area schools," said Marie Porter, Grizzly associate athletic director. "We felt we should implement a program that would benefit both parties."

Porter expects Smart Choices Day to become an annual event. For more information on the event or the Griz ACES program, call Porter at 243-5331.

UM, Missoula provide harmony for humanity

An evening composed of music and charity ushered in this year's holiday season Nov. 30, on UM's campus. To benefit Missoula's Habitat for Humanity, a performance of Handel's "Messiah," originally created for a charity event in the 1700s, graced the stage of the refurbished University Theatre.

More than \$9,000 was raised to help the organization build houses for families in need. Community members joined UM students, staff, faculty and administrators in contributing their talents, both vocal and instrumental, to the second annual benefit.

Admission to the concert was free. Money raised for the charity came mainly from choir members and public donations, which were accepted at the door.

Nancy Cooper, concert coordinator and visiting assistant professor at UM, played the harpsichord. Retired UM Professor Donald Carey conducted the program. Vocal soloists included UM music faculty Anne Basinski, soprano; Esther England, alto; and Stephen Kalm, bass.

Sounds of silence

Deaf UM cheerleader spreads school spirit to hearing world

Written by Beth Ann Cogswell
Photographed by Andy Kemmis

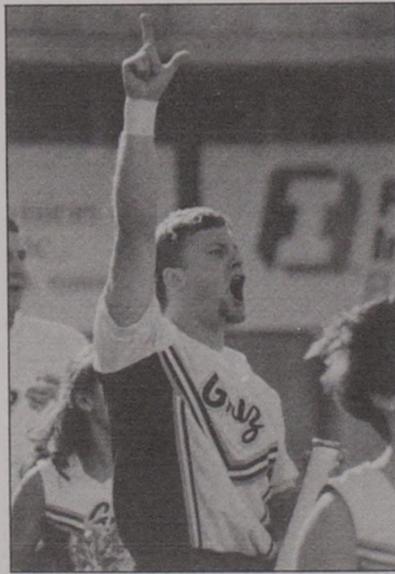
To the casual observer, Charlie Phillips looks like a typical college student. He lives in a fraternity house and cheers on the UM cheerleading team. He hangs out with friends, swapping jokes. But, like only a minute percentage of Americans, Phillips is profoundly deaf. He cannot hear. He cannot speak.

Cheerleading is one of the many challenges Phillips has undertaken at a university where he is one of four deaf students.

Like many who are hearing-impaired, he depends on other senses. Phillips usually communicates through an interpreter while on UM's campus. Without an interpreter, Phillips relies on a pen and paper passed back and forth to facilitate a conversation.

It is, he says, a very personal way of communicating. In the absence of voices, nonverbal exchanges — emotion expressed in the eyes, the sense of touch as the pen passes — take on a new importance.

"I can't exactly jump into a conversation to 'break the ice,' and not many women are comfortable going one-on-one with me in conversations because it seems too personal," he says. "But that's not really a concern to me. People need to know they can tell or ask me anything if it's through writing on paper or lip reading — anything



that gets the point or idea across works."

Phillips, who became interested in cheerleading after watching several practices, hears none of the music that guides his cheerleading teammates' sense of rhythm. Instead, he says, he watches their body language to pick up the rhythm and relies on an interpreter, who accompanies him to practices and games. While the other cheerleaders are screaming their hearts out, Phillips signs his cheers to the hearing crowds.

Growing up in Kalispell, Phillips attended mainstream schools, although he went to the Montana School for the Deaf and Blind in Great Falls from fifth through 10th grade. But he missed his friends and family in Kalispell and returned there for public high school.

Before coming to UM in 1993, Phillips attended a college for deaf students in Washington, D.C., an experience he calls "incredible and rich" because of the area's cultural diversity and the fact that he was surrounded by more than 2,000 deaf students and faculty.

"I felt like I was part of a big family," Phillips says. "I do still miss it. Being able to say anything anytime and have them respond in a common language was something I took for granted until I came here."

But Phillips says his desire to be a part of the hearing world overcame his desire for comfort, and he returned to Montana and entered UM as an elementary education major.

"Like it or not, it's a hearing world," Phillips says. "I realize that I need to learn the tools that enable me to fit in and make the most of myself."

Phillips is an enigma in the deaf population, says Mary Morrison, a specialist in UM's Disability Services for Students who works with deaf and hard-of-hearing people. Charismatic and charming, Phillips functions well among the hearing, which is especially amazing, says Morrison, considering that he has been deaf since birth. Morrison says Phillips has an incredible capacity for English, which is quite an accomplishment since English is essentially Phillips' second language; signing, his first. Signing's linguistic structure is more similar to Japanese than English. At both Stanford and Harvard universities, signing is taught in the foreign languages departments.

"Charlie has an innate ability for language," Morrison says.

Phillips started reading at a young age, a development that Morrison says is highly unusual for a deaf person because speech acquisition normally precedes learning to read.

Therefore, deaf people have low reading levels nationally.

"It's Charlie. It is not his upbringing," Morrison says. "He didn't get any better shake than other deaf kids."

He is keenly aware of the barriers that deaf students face, having existed in two worlds, the silent and the hearing. Phillips wants to teach deaf children after he graduates, as well as help parents deal with their child's disability.

But for now, Phillips is caught up in university life, hurrying from class to cheerleading practice, then home to his fraternity house. While UM does a good job of providing him with an interpreter

and other resources, Phillips says he is frustrated that assistance isn't available for off-campus activities like fraternity meetings.

"There are times that I feel left out and wish I

knew what was being said or was going on," Phillips says.

His fraternity brothers, however, decided to do something to help. One night a week, they gather in the house's living room for sign language lessons.

Morrison agrees there's a need for interpreters at other off-campus functions. She says that is where real learning happens, where students become informed about culture.

Phillips says he is dealing with the communication difficulties he faces daily by focusing on his friends and people like Morrison who try to help make his life easier. "I just live life as it goes and play the hand I'm dealt," Phillips says.



The University of
Montana

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