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Montana Kaimin, March 31, 2022

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MONTANA KAIMIN

Finding Belonging

Missoula group fights to dismantle barriers to the outdoors

STORY AND PHOTOS BY ANTONIO IBARRA



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March 31, 2022 | Volume 124 | Issue No. 24



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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Information Sessions:
March 17th, March 27th
March 30th, March 31st
Campaigning Begins:
April 4th at
Midnight

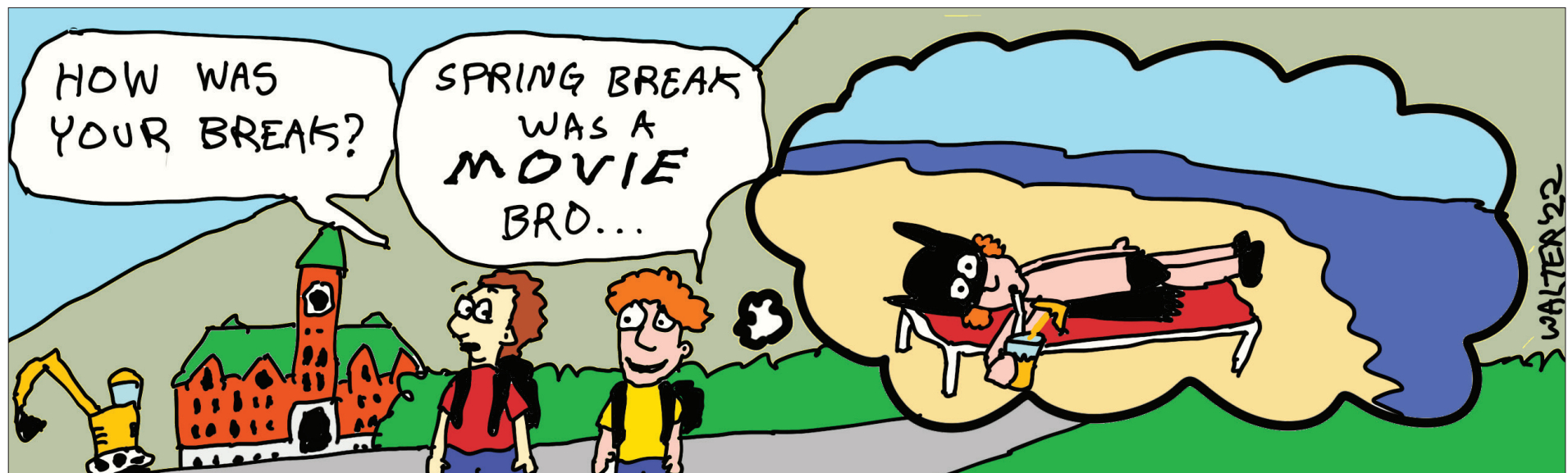


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THE GARAGE: SE 2 EP 10



WALTER MEDCRAFT | MONTANA KAIMIN

We paid for parking, not a construction site

On Monday morning, UM students driving to their normal Lot P parking spaces were met with a wall of chain link fences and half of the University's largest parking lot turned into a dirt pit. The construction is making way to house the Montana Museum of Art and Culture, the University's newest infrastructure initiative.

The project, though, presents a frustrating obstacle for students, faculty and staff.

The construction eliminated more than 220 parking spots, based on an aerial view of the lot provided by UM in an email. By 8:30 a.m. Monday, the rest of Lot P was already almost full. Tough if you're not a student with a 9 a.m. class.

"It's honestly like they are trying to build things their students don't want or need," said Instagram account oldrow_montana, in a post discussing the new museum. Comments on that post expressed frustra-

tion at the lack of parking and disruption to campus.

"My tax money would prefer to go to a triple decker parking garage," one commenter said.

"They're already tearing down the building I'm currently living in to make room for a bigger Food Zoo. Which is dumb cuz they're not going to have enough students to work it," another commented.

The entire construction project is set to take around a year and a half, to be completed in fall 2023, said Dave Kuntz, UM's director of strategic communication. And soon construction on the indoor practice facility near the future museum will eliminate more parking spots.

UM seems to have a pattern of embarking on ambitious construction initiatives when the projects could most inconvenience students, faculty and staff. Craig

Hall's demolition and the Lommasson Center to Aber Hall transition have disrupted student living and displaced staff offices.

And it's most frustrating that we have to grin and bear it. We, as paying customers, should be taken into account in these big decisions.

It's a sticky situation for the University. Talks for a stand-alone art museum have been in the works for years, with construction price increases and multiple possible building sites.

But is there a good time to start an 18-month project that impacts parking in such a significant way? The apparent lack of thought toward customers, who need a place to park for their education, is frustrating.

Maybe the University could refund some money to those who purchased parking passes (\$256 for a year or \$128 for a half

year, according to UM's website). Maybe the University could be more lenient with ticketing students who are just looking for places to park at the school they pay to attend. Maybe UM could open up the reserved and metered parking spaces to students with parking passes.

We are never going to complain about UM prioritizing the arts, and investing in itself to draw interest from prospective students around the state and country.

When it comes down to it, however, we hope the University will understand the frustration — and recognize the interruption in students' daily routines — this construction effort will cause. Brownie points if it actually does something to address the issue.

Like it? Hate it? Let us know!
email us your opinions at editor@montanakaimin.com

Bustin' out the rakes



Last week's warmer weather brought a new sense of joy around campus. Birds were chirping, students gathered on the Oval with friends and campus grounds keepers dusted off their gloves and pulled out their rakes. Montana Native Botanic Garden volunteer Danielle Rose, pictured next to her four-legged companion Pinniped, took advantage of the warm weather to rake leaves and clean debris from a newly installed interactive grassland exhibit outside the Natural Sciences Annex. "Every year we hope to make this an inviting place for students to come and play while allowing them to assimilate with Montana's natural spaces," Rose said. The exhibit showcases the different types of grasslands and plant communities found along Mount Sentinel. **ANTONIO IBARRA | MONTANA KAIMIN**

SUDOKU

Edited by Margie E. Burke

Difficulty: Medium

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

HOW TO SOLVE:
Each row must contain the numbers 1 to 9; each column must contain the numbers 1 to 9; and each set of 3 by 3 boxes must contain the numbers 1 to 9.

Answer to Previous Sudoku:

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

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Briefs: Low COVID rate, tight housing market, UM partner assault rising

COVID AT LOWEST RATE IN YEAR

With a majority of Americans immune to the latest version of COVID-19, caseloads in Missoula County have reached their lowest point since July 2021. The Missoula City-County Health Department reported zero cases over the weekend.

At the University of Montana, there was only one active case recorded Monday. Countywide, there were 48 cases total. County hospitalizations have dropped to two, and there has not been a reported death since February.

Health department data suggests the region is on the verge of full control over the virus, as only three cases per 100,000 people have been reported in last week's seven-day average. The CDC recommends one case per 100,000 people for containment.

At Missoula County's COVID-19 peak in late January 2022, there were nearly 337 new cases per 100,000 people per day.

Statewide, there were 426 active cases as of March 25. Of those, just 27 are hospitalized. **(Griffen Smith)**

DATA: MISSOULA NEXT SAN FRANCISCO HOUSING MARKET

A recent story from the San Francisco Chronicle listed a familiar name to western Montana, but the article did not bear good news. The story, titled "10 real estate markets on the cusp of a San Francisco-style affordability crisis," listed Missoula as the top city by comparing three housing data sets.

The City of Missoula reported the most extreme changes in vacancy and price for any other metropolitan area in the country, the Chronicle data suggested. The cost of a home in Missoula rose 57% between January 2020 to January 2022. The median housing price in Missoula County hovers at \$500,000.

While prices soared, vacant houses declined by 58%. The inventory per capita, at 1.4 per person, was the lowest in the country.

Other cities listed in the Chronicle

story included Port Angeles, Washington; Provo, Utah; Salt Lake City, Utah; Raleigh, North Carolina; and Bozeman, Montana. **(GS)**

UM PRESIDENT'S LECTURE FEATURES SUFFRAGE, WOMEN IN POLITICS TALK

As the United States crested 100 years of women having the right to vote, the University of Montana is bringing an expert on women's political organization to recall how the suffrage movement succeeded.

Elaine Weiss, a journalist and author, will headline the April 2 lecture at 7 p.m. in the University Center. Her speech, titled "The Woman's Hour: The Great Fight to Win the Vote," profiles a handful of women who pushed for equal rights between the end of the Civil War to 20th-century organized movements.

Weiss also wrote the book "Fruits of Victory: The Woman's Land Army in the Great War," which follows the overshadowed suffrage movement during World War I. Her work has been featured in *The Atlantic*, *Harpers* and *Christian Science Monitor*.

Weiss has also been invited to shows like NPR's "All Things Considered" and "CBS Sunday Morning."

The president lecture series features several speakers each year. Weiss' speech is UM's Lucille Speer Lecture and is sponsored in part by the League of Women Voters and the

American Association of University Women. **(GS)**

REPORT: INCREASE IN PARTNER ASSAULT AND SEXUAL MISCONDUCT

The University of Montana Police department arrested a man for assaulting his partner March 21 at the University Villages. He violently tried to restrain her, and his partner broke a ceramic mug over his head to get away, according to UMPD Chief Brad Giffin.

After his partner called the police, the man was arrested around 2 a.m.

The altercation was the second report of domestic violence in student housing in March. The first happened in Sisson Apartments between a mother and her son on March 8.

In 2020, UMPD responded to 21 instances of domestic violence, according to the 2021 Annual Campus Security & Fire Safety Report. There were also 10 instances of stalking, six rapes and one case of fondling, the report said.

Many reports come from mandatory reporters and direct calls to UMPD. Mandatory reporters make up most campus professionals, including professors and resident assistants, and they are required to tell UMPD about criminal behavior.

Students can report crimes directly to UMPD by calling 406-243-6131 or using the UMPD website at umt.edu/police. **(Christine Compton)**

Blotter Blotter

CHRISTINE COMPTON

christine.compton@umontana.edu

Hope you enjoyed your relaxing break, because crime will have you right back on your toes. Between March 12 and 28, the University of Montana Police Department responded to 30 crimes. Averaging at 15 a week, crime is heating up alongside Missoula's weather.

FRIDAY 3/11 - THREE-ACT RAGE

This is a story in three parts, just like any high school English teacher said it would be. Act one: Two drivers got inexplicably pissed at each other on the road. Act two: They find each other in a parking lot at Missoula College and have a scream off before they storm apart. Act three: At the holy hour of 9:59 a.m. on the same day, one comes back to find their car vandalized with spray paint. The raw rage must have blinded them, because they can't remember any identifying information about the alleged perpetrator. UMPD has no suspects.

SATURDAY 3/12 - OPEN-FIELD SIPPING

Officers spotted six people parading open alcohol containers around a bus stop at Dornblaser Field at 2 a.m. All were above 21, but Montana forbids anyone from carrying half-drunk cups in public. The six were warned and sent on their way.

TUESDAY 3/15 - REPEAT OFFENDER

Someone called faculty members on the first and third floors of Skaggs and said uncomfortable, sexual things over the phone. This is already textbook creepy, but it gets worse: The same thing happened three years ago, and one of this year's recipients was the same person called way back when. UMPD cannot trace the number and has no suspects.

WEDNESDAY 3/16 - BUSTED STASH

A resident of Pantzer was hit with a minor in possession charge after RAs found weed in their room. The catch came during routine room inspections conducted by UM Housing, when RAs check to make sure people are following the rules and nothing in the room needs to be fixed. Imagine their surprise upon finding the stash laying in plain sight.

THURSDAY 3/17 - SUSPICIOUS SYRINGES

Someone found syringes in the law school women's bathroom at 7 p.m. Police could not connect the syringes to anyone, so officers did not test them, but took them to be properly disposed of.

THURSDAY 3/17 - GOING DOWN SCREAMING

A woman younger than 21 was spotted looking dazed in her car at the Craighead Apartments at 11 p.m., and someone called UMPD to check on her. When the officer arrived, UMPD reported she was very intoxicated and started screaming at the officer. The officer arrested the woman for three crimes: disorderly conduct, minor in possession of alcohol and resisting arrest.

Tired of reading? Start listening.

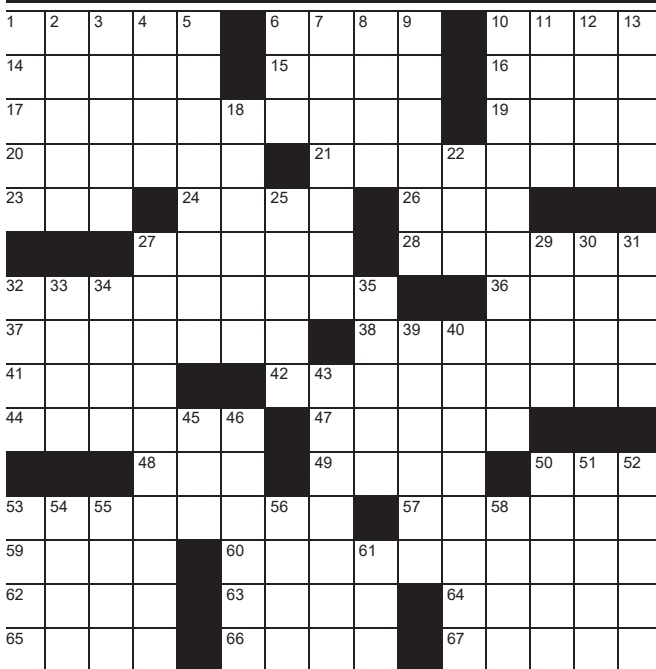
THE KAIMIN CAST

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New episodes Thursday





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ACROSS

- 1 Worked for Uber
- 6 Baker's supply
- 10 S.A.T. section
- 14 Sound studio work
- 15 Drawn tight
- 16 Spicy stew
- 17 Sure to happen
- 19 Holiday tune, "The First ___"
- 20 Musically connected
- 21 It will get you nowhere
- 23 Shepherd's locale
- 24 Like driven snow
- 26 Fireplace fodder
- 27 Gives the slip
- 28 Newspaper section
- 32 Excite
- 36 Meadow mom
- 37 Paved the way for
- 38 Artless one
- 41 Something to build on
- 42 Fries, perhaps
- 44 Tennis garb
- 47 Like some divorces
- 48 "I knew it!"
- 49 Star anagram
- 50 Resinous deposit
- 53 Having little elevation
- 57 Salma Hayek, for one
- 59 VIII less than XXX
- 60 New Year's Eve gadget
- 62 Blow off steam
- 63 Color quality

- 64 Edit
- 65 Deep black
- 66 Slant unfairly
- 67 Takes a breather

DOWN

- 1 Practice
- 2 She played Judy in "Judy" in 2019
- 3 Last Greek letter
- 4 "___ Las Vegas"
- 5 Election predictor
- 6 Flight board abbr.
- 7 Chatty gathering
- 8 Seaside soarer
- 9 Takes the wrong way?
- 10 "Bewitched" star
- 11 Cream additive
- 12 Wedding cake layer
- 13 "___ cow!"
- 18 Muss, as hair
- 22 Lonely place?
- 25 Enjoys a book

- 27 Generosity
- 29 McNally partner
- 30 Wayne's 1969 film, "___ Grit"
- 31 Clairvoyant
- 32 Pekoe and oolong
- 33 Creep along
- 34 Edible root
- 35 Comforter filling
- 39 Hershey rival
- 40 Sheer fabric
- 43 Lennon classic
- 45 Your, biblically
- 46 Superdome team
- 50 Social media metric
- 51 Concerning
- 52 Asks for ID
- 53 Caesar's 66
- 54 Plow-pulling team
- 55 Sly signal
- 56 Cozy corner
- 58 Break, as a horse
- 61 Mend a hem

Answers to Previous Crossword:

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

Welcome to spring



MCKENNA JOHNSON | MONTANA KAIMIN

MARIAH THOMAS
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Here comes the sun DOO DOO DOO DOO!!! Zootown's been showing UP recently with the 70-degree days over spring break — we see you Zoo!!! With all this nice weather, we're still out here thinking about all the things we wish we were doing outdoors instead of being back in school (don't worry, summer's around the corner... kinda). Anywho, here's what y'all do when the ~sun~ finally decides to show up, based on the stars of course.

ARIES (MARCH 21–APRIL 19): The fuckin' daredevil in you means you HAD to be the first one to jump off the bridge and into the Clark Fork this season. Hope it wasn't too cold!!!

TAURUS (APRIL 20–MAY 20): After your friends panicked cuz they thought you were missing, you hit 'em with this: "Sorry I didn't text you back, I lost service while I was hiking 18 miles in the mountains this weekend."

GEMINI (MAY 21–JUNE 20): In the winter, you wanted it to be warm out so you could go on hikes, but now that it's warm out, you're bummed that ski season's over. It's okay though — that mindset always gives you something to look forward to I guess?

CANCER (JUNE 21–JULY 22): We know your vibes were harshed with some ~seasonal depression~ the last few months (for real though, that shit is the WORST). The sun coming out means a good day of cleaning your space and feeling better. Love it for you. For REAL.

LEO (JULY 23–AUG. 22): The second, and I mean second, the UV index is higher than two, you've got a string

bikini on and you're workin' on that tan. Out there doing the most as per usual. We get it, you're hot, but wear sunscreen plz <3.

VIRGO (AUG. 23–SEP. 22): We all know Virgos are sitting on a blanket in a park with that iced chai, reading a book and soaking up some rays. And they packed their own little lunch. Unproblematic sunny ~queens~.

LIBRA (SEP. 23–OCT. 22): You already went through your closet to decide which of your clothes are still *in style* and which aren't. Taking any excuse to buy yourself a new wardrobe amirite? XD

SCORPIO (OCT. 23–NOV. 21): You're enjoying LITERALLY every second you can get outside. On the first day it was warm you went on like three hikes and organized a game of ultimate for all two of your friends. So happy for you and your happiness <3.

SAGITTARIUS (NOV. 22–DEC. 22): You DID fully skip school and call in sick just so you could skip around in the woods all day. Period though, we all wish we were you. Enjoy the sun while it lasts.

CAPRICORN (DEC. 23–JAN. 19): You're going on a nice ~leisurely~ walk along the Kim Williams trail. Vibes? Immaculate. Ass? I'm smacking it, respectfully.

AQUARIUS (JAN. 20–FEB. 18): You never ever complain about anything. The only change the weather brought for you was wearing shorts outta the house instead of jeans. You're just vibing and honestly we love that energy. You're doing great sweetie XO.

PISCES (FEB. 19–MARCH 20): You KNOW you're the bitch who's complaining it's still cold — even though the 70-degree weather has everyone else sweating after months of freezing our asses off.

'Culture of Care': Curry and SARC working to meet increased student mental health care demand

EMILY TSCHETTER

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Mental health struggles among college students became more prevalent and widely recognized as a problem during the pandemic, and the University of Montana is no exception.

A recent UM survey found 62% of UM students reported lacking companionship and feeling isolated from others. The 2021 UM National College Health Assessment, which surveyed 1,320 students, also found a 15% increase in students feeling nervous and hopeless most or all of the time, and an 8% increase in students reporting moderate-to-severe levels of psychological distress since March 2020.

After moving online last semester, both Curry Health Center and the Student Advocacy Resource Center are once again offering in-person counseling. Both said they are determined to meet increased student mental health care demands.

Megan Westover, a licensed clinical professional counselor candidate with Curry counseling, started working as a staff counselor in fall 2021. Westover said she had no counseling experience prior to the pandemic. She has been impressed with her coworkers' resilience in the face of COVID-19 surges and heavier workloads to meet student needs.

"We're facing challenges globally that we have never had to navigate, and it's been really rewarding to be able to provide a space for students to be able to process all of that," Westover said. "Just getting through your day can be hard right now, so being able to talk about it is so important."

Curry offers general counseling services with a free initial consultation and \$25 subsequent sessions, while SARC counseling is reserved for victims of identity-based discrimination for up to 14 free sessions.

Brooke Nicklay, a senior psychology student, began work as a peer advocate with SARC in fall 2021. She coordinates outreach efforts and helps run SARC's 24-hour support line with the YWCA. When she started her work, she recognized differences in stigmas around mental health care in Montana compared to her home state Colorado.

"Mental health has definitely gotten worse on campus because of isolation in the pandemic, and there is an energy of judgment

towards therapy here. You mention that you go to therapy and the first thought people have is 'Well, there must be something wrong with you,'" Nicklay said. "I think it's good to promote that you don't have to have anything wrong with you mentally to seek therapy, and all students could benefit from it. Sometimes it's just nice to talk to someone."

Like most other offices on campus, SARC is understaffed to meet increasing demand, Nicklay said. SARC Director Jen Euell said Curry's tight schedule complicates referring clients to outside counselors after their free session. SARC hired two new staff members, doubling its staff in the past year, and has seven graduate student interns to provide counseling services.

Euell is confident in UM's ability to see every student seeking care, whether it be for regular counseling or emergency crisis resources.

Euell first directed SARC from 2000-02, and said she immediately recognized the center's more professional organization and services when returning almost 20 years later.

"I was so excited to come back and work with folks who are young, energetic and have a lot of drive for change. We're at a unique place where this work, especially around Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, has a lot of potential for changing the rest of campus," Euell said. "Twenty years ago this was not nearly as professional of a service, and the better advocacy now has been crucial through the pandemic."

Both Euell and Westover said while telehealth counseling over Zoom was uncharted



Jen Euell has been directing the University's Student Advocacy Resource Center (SARC) for more than 20 years. As COVID-19 restrictions begin to ease around campus, Euell hopes to continue serving students face-to-face as SARC and Curry Health Center return to in-person counseling. **NATE SANCHEZ | MONTANA KAIMIN**

territory for most counselors, SARC and Curry will preserve the online option for students.

"Everyone was nervous about moving online initially because many of us had no clue what therapy over Zoom could look like," Westover said. "We've been pleasantly surprised to find many prefer the telehealth option, and for a lot of people, it's better so they can make appointments between classes. It uniquely meets the needs of students, so we'll keep it as an option permanently."

Workers at SARC and Curry are trained to mitigate what Westover called "the parallel process," when mental health professionals internalize their client's traumas as their own. Nicklay said without her training on self-care, the issues she helps students navigate would be harder for her to contend with.

"I'm lucky that we're trained on trauma responses, but also on maintaining self-care

and having boundaries in dealing with these difficult circumstances. You don't want to take someone else's trauma on, and it's really hard in the pandemic because everyone has had their own experiences that are hard not to apply to yourself," Nicklay said. "I go to a therapist, and without their help and prioritizing doing the things I love to do, it would be a lot harder."

Euell hopes SARC and Curry can continue expanding their services to not only meet student needs, but to change mental health culture on campus.

"We want to create a culture of care here with our services. We have more capacity to check in on people and make sure they're okay, so we encourage friends and coworkers to check on those around them, as we all learned the pandemic can be incredibly isolating," Euell said. "Operating with a broader culture where self-advocacy and asking for help is well accepted would make things a lot better."

Brown water in Corbin raises concerns for lead safety

CHRISTINE COMPTON

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Corroded pipes in North Corbin and Corbin Halls have been turning water brown for years — but University of Montana officials recently said there is nothing to fear.

The problem started in 2018, when UM's routine testing yielded alarming results. North Corbin showed 0.03 mg/L of lead — double the allowed amount in Montana.

By 2021, UM said North Corbin's lead levels had been reduced to 0.003 mg/L, removing 90% of the lead in water. However, this doesn't stop water from appearing brown, multiple Corbin and North Corbin employees said.

UM's Facility Services tests water from different buildings for lead and copper every three years, said Paul Trumbley, associate director of engineering and utilities.

After the 2018 test, facilities traced the lead to galvanized pipes that had corroded with age. Galvanized pipes were common in the early 1900s when Corbin Hall was built, but after decades of infrequent use, they tend to rust. The rust and build up of toxins are what sometimes give the water its brown hue.

Lead can seriously harm people if they consume too much of it, the 2018 report said. Drinking too much lead can damage someone's brain, kidneys and blood cell production.

To prevent people from drinking the water, facilities cut off the water to sinks in each Corbin and North Corbin office, Trumbley said. UM then set up five-gallon water jugs around North Corbin and Corbin Halls for people to use.

Later, a water bottle filter would be installed. Facilities also hung signs to remind people where the water wasn't drinkable.

Robert Lambeth, a teaching assistant and PhD candidate, has worked from Corbin Hall for nearly six years. Lambeth said the water has grown darker and darker since 2018, and sometimes the water doesn't clear up even after running it for a full minute.

"Today, it was dark brown," Lambeth said in a March 2 email. "Someone is going to get sick or worse."

Trumbley said it is safe to drink clear water even if it runs brown at first. There are no plans to renovate the pipes in Corbin or North Corbin, Trumbley said.

Some Corbin and North Corbin employees said they didn't feel enough was being done to fix the water.

Amy Bremner, the business operations manager of Montana State University's Mis-



soula branch of nursing school, remembers being told not to drink the water on her first day in North Corbin Hall in July 2021.

"You can't use the water, you can't use the sinks, you can't use any of it because the pipes are so old," Bremner recalled her peers saying. "There's lead, there's this, there's that."

Because Bremner and her team are a branch of MSU, they paid for their gallon water jugs without UM facilities' help. They also put up their own signs and eagerly waited for a solution to come.

However, Bremner said she didn't receive any notice that the water was fixed, even months later. Bremner said she could understand being left out of the loop as a Bobcat, but she was surprised her UM neighbors didn't hear anything about water being fixed.

"You'd think they would have told their own department," Bremner said. "Nothing's been fixed. We just got the water fountain, and that's it."

Bremner said she has come to accept the lack of help, and she said she sometimes laughs at the lack of action.

"You learn to just adjust with it," Bremner said. "It's disappointing and entertaining at the same time."

Lambeth said he didn't want to accept inaction. He said he feels like no one wants to accept responsibility.

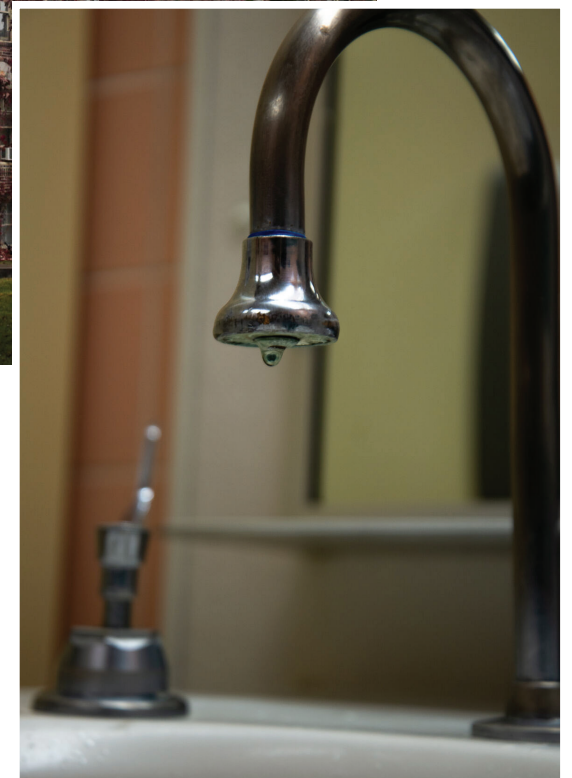
"I just want them to shut it off," Lambeth said.

ABOVE: North Corbin Hall, which is adjoined to Corbin Hall, used to have lead levels twice the EPA safety standard, according to water tests back in 2018. By 2021, North Corbin's lead levels have been reduced by 90%.

SARA DIGGINS | MONTANA KAIMIN

RIGHT: A faucet drips water in Corbin Hall. Employees say the water has been dirty for years, although lead safety reports say otherwise.

NATE SANCHEZ | MONTANA KAIMIN





Latinx Student Union



Latinx Student Union

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Finding Belonging

STORY AND PHOTOS
BY ANTONIO IBARRA

Missoula's chapter of Latino Outdoors and its mission to bring outdoor recreation to all



ABOVE: UM student Zeo Walters soaks their hair in the cool waters of Granite Creek before continuing their hike through the Bob Marshall Wilderness Complex on July 19, 2021. Walters joined Here Montana last summer on an all-BIPOC four-night, five-day backpacking trip into the Bob and is now a member of Missoula's Latino Outdoors chapter.

LEFT: Erynn Castellanos helps lead a group of Here Montana backpackers down the Granite Creek Trail on July 19, 2021, after four nights in the Bob Marshall Wilderness. "It's been really great to just see more and more people reach out to [Latino Outdoors] to see how their culture is represented in these spaces," she said.

ERYNN CASTELLANOS, 28, recalls the many hours spent climbing up trees in her grandmother's garden with her cousin when she was 5 – the tree bark and leaves brushing on the pair's arms and legs as the warm East Los Angeles sun doused their brown bodies from sunrise to sunset.

Castellanos and Juan Gabriel Verduzco, her cousin, would pick ripe yellow guavas from the trees' canopies. They'd throw the scraps to the bottom of the tree where squirrels would rush to store the guava pits in their cheeks.

Innocencia Jiménez, Castellanos' maternal grandma, would run out from the house and chase the squirrels away from the scraps as Castellanos and Verduzco giggled from the treetops.

Much of Castellanos' childhood was spent at her grandmother's home, as she and Verduzco explored the East L.A. suburban house's small plot of green.

"We were just outside all the time there. I don't even remember really playing inside ever," Castellanos said. "Looking back and

seeing how small spaces like my grandma's garden were, it felt so huge when I was little. To me, those were like huge forest jungles with immense trees."

Even at the smallest of scales, for Castellanos, who is Mexican-American, playing in her grandma's backyard or taking daily trips to her local park are some of her fondest memories connecting with the outdoors.

Fast forward 23 years and Castellanos, now a University of Montana graduate of environmental studies and environmental education, is working toward making the outdoors more accessible and inclusive for everyone. She is spearheading the Missoula chapter of Latino Outdoors, a Latiné-led organization working on amplifying the Latiné and BIPOC – Black, Indigenous, people of color – experience in outdoor recreation.

Latino Outdoors of Missoula is currently comprised of five members – Christine Riesgo, Erick Valencia, Martin Ceja Mejía, Edgar Cisneros, Bonita Serna and Zeo Walters – from Latiné and other backgrounds.

Castellanos founded the Missoula chapter of the national organization in late 2021.

When she first started thinking about creating the group, she had a clear goal in mind: To work in partnership with the city's minority population and learn together when addressing diversity, equity and inclusion issues in outdoor recreation.

"You don't want to be the only individual speaking on behalf of your community. You want to be able to let other people share their narrative," she said. "Being in a space and then translating that outdoors and not inhibiting other people from expressing themselves is definitely part of the Latino Outdoors mantra."

When the pandemic struck, halting normal life around the world, people everywhere were forced to take shelter. Life transitioned from daily in-person interactions to endless hours on Zoom. But soon, people began recreating in public lands as a way to take a break from the screens and cope with long-term isolation.

A 2021 Outdoor Participation Trends Report, commissioned by the Outdoor Foundation, found that in 2020, 53% of Americans ages 6 and up took part in some form of outdoor recreation at least once, making it the highest outdoor participation rate on record.

But even as a record number of Americans were getting outside, recreation is still largely dominated by white people. In the survey by the Outdoor Foundation, a nonprofit in the recreation industry working to increase outdoor participation, 72% of 2020 participants in a variety of outdoor recreation activities were white. In stark contrast, 11% were Hispanic, 9% were Black and 6% were Asian American.

People like Castellanos — with help from organizations like Latino Outdoors — have stepped up to tackle these disparities by working to dismantle barriers preventing BIPOC from recreating and enjoying the outdoors.

Rooted in nature

Aside from the backyard excursions at her grandma's house, Castellanos attributes many of her first connections with the outdoors to her dad, Fernando Castellanos, and mom, María Jimenez.

Fernando, an ex-U.S. Marine who served in Iraq, immigrated to America from Ocatlán in Jalisco, Mexico, when he was six months old. He grew up in East L.A.

Castellanos remembers him being gone on and off because of his job. But after he hung up the uniform, she remembers the first time she went camping. Her family traveled to the south of Sequoia National Park next to the Kern River when she was in middle school for a trip with her dad, mom and 17 other family members.

"It was a big family thing. We'd spent about a week or so camping along the river floating on innertubes and having a ton of fun," she said. "We would always go on these really intense hikes and I remember thinking, 'Whoa! We went on a 14-mile hike today!' I think we were all just very competitive and wanted to show the inner athlete in us. But in the end it all comes back to having that sense of exploration."

Year after year Castellanos and her family would take similar camping trips until she graduated high school.

Although her dad encouraged these family trips, Castellanos described Fernando as someone who wanted to check things off the list, and would hardly ever talk about his feelings while in the mountains. She gives most of the credit to her mom, María, for pushing her out of her comfort zone and instilling her love of the outdoors.

Back when Castellanos was in high school, barricaded in her room studying for her AP classes and prepping for the SAT, her mom would encourage her to step away from the desk, take breaks and go for a walk around the park or a quick hike with her in California's San Gabriel Mountains.

Spending time in nature allowed her to take mental releases and step away from the screens. But most importantly, she was able to connect and relate with nature through her family and culture — something that people



ABOVE: Jaclyn Rushing, a PhD student in the Department of Society and Conservation at the College of Forestry, focuses on studying outdoor recreation through a holistic lens and how nonprofits build community in the outdoors. "Affinity groups like Latino Outdoors are so awesome and to see them talking about issues of equity, diversity and inclusion and changing the narrative is exciting to see," she said.

RIGHT: Latino Outdoors Missoula founder Erynn Castellanos, left, and Here Montana's Alex Kim met during their time at UM. Now, through their grassroots organizations, they're working to reduce the racial gap in outdoor recreation and make the outdoors accessible.

FAR RIGHT: Erynn Castellanos, left, and UM student Jazzelle Elias stop next to a huckleberry bush to pick some snacks along the Granite Creek Trail during a backpacking trip organized by Here Montana. Castellanos, who is the education and partnership specialist with the Bob Marshall Wilderness Foundation, wants Latino Outdoors Missoula to be a space where all people come together to connect with wildernes.

of color have historically and generationally missed out on.

"Unless you have someone to help you find that path or help you reaffirm that you belong in these spaces, it can be really scary if you're embarking into new territory," she said.

Living in a big city like Los Angeles presented barriers for Castellanos to get outdoors. While Castellanos said her white friends and classmates took regular weekend trips to get outside, she didn't have that same opportunity.

Residing in an urban area meant getting access to trailheads and national forests was a big undertaking for her and her family. Taking trips to the mountains or going floating in the river often meant her parents would need to take time off work and drive long hours to get to any trailhead or river access site.

But even though it was harder for her family to get outdoors compared to classmates, Castellanos counts herself lucky she had influences that still encouraged her to recreate.

"Whenever I get really terrified in different spaces — and I still do even though I go hiking a ton — I always think back on my grandma and her coming to the U.S. She didn't speak the language, and in a lot of ways, I think in [outdoor] spaces you feel like you have to speak the language ...," Castellanos said. "She was an adventurer, and being outdoors is just

a different type of adventure, which makes me feel like I can do this, too."

Her grandma Innocencia, aside from encouraging her play in the garden, is one of Castellanos' biggest inspirations whenever she's outdoors. Innocencia immigrated from San Martín de Hidalgo in Jalisco, Mexico, when she was young. Castellanos recalls her grandma talking about how terrifying and shocking it was to become accustomed to a new territory and culture.

Sense of belonging

Castellanos is not alone when it comes to tearing down social barriers in outdoor recreation. The City of Missoula's Justice, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion specialist and UM alum Alex Kim has worked over the years to degentrify outdoor recreation culture in Missoula. He founded Here Montana in 2019, an outdoors program run through the Missoula Parks and Recreation Department.

As a first-generation Korean-American with family roots in Maryland, Kim didn't grow up in a community or family that utilized the outdoors. After moving to Montana for college in 2014, he saw that people were happy in the outdoors, which made him want to find his own identity in Montana's open spaces.

"I asked myself the question, 'How do people have fun here and stay happy? Do I go skiing, hiking or snowshoeing in the snow?' I didn't know what that was or even how to do it, but I realized and recognized that people were happy outdoors," Kim said. "That was their happy space and where they were learning things and growing as people."

Kim first met Castellanos back in May 2020 after she invited him to be a part of a panel of outdoor leaders for her master's thesis dissertation on outdoor education. They've continued collaborating since.

In the summer of 2021, Castellanos — who at the time was the education and partnership specialist for the Bob Marshall Wilderness Foundation, a nonprofit that helps provide access and guided tours in the outdoors — helped Kim lead a crew of eight Here Montana backpackers. All the backpackers were members of the BIPOC community, and Kim and Castellanos led the four-night, five-day trip into the 1.5-million-acre Bob Marshall Wilderness Complex.

Kim believes the strength of his collaboration with Castellanos is built around their different identities and cultures. The pair aims to create spaces for people who historically have not had the opportunity to enjoy everything Montana's outdoors has to offer.





“If your community thrives and our communities thrive, we all thrive,” he said. “For me it’s about how I can help with the Latino Outdoors Missoula chapter and how that inherently helps Here Montana, which then helps our greater community.”

//////////////////// The full picture

Historically, outdoor recreation is almost always linked with white culture. In the U.S., demographics gathered from studies in the last couple decades show the lack of diversity within outdoor recreation spaces such as national parks and national forests, suggesting people of color are marginalized within recreational spaces.

Jaelyn Rushing, a PhD student in the Department of Society and Conservation at the W.A. Franke College of Forestry & Conservation, has devoted most of her research on recreation, parks and protected area management to diversity, equity and inclusion in the outdoors. She recently presented her dissertation thesis looking into the social setting among visitors, the management of protected wilderness areas in Southern California and the inclusivity of those spaces.

Hailing from Corvallis, Oregon, Rushing had the opportunity to connect with nature at a very young age, and she’s aware of her own privilege.

Growing up, Rushing enrolled in Girl Scout summer camps where she took field trips to national forests to hike and camp. But similar to Castellanos, some of Rushing’s fondest memories with the outdoors are playing in her backyard with her two dogs.

Before coming to UM, Rushing did her master’s research at Oregon State University on urban parks in the Portland, Oregon, area. At OSU, she looked at the constraints that communities of color faced in comparison to the white population when visiting parks in and around the city. She found communities of color were typically more limited than the white majority in terms of access to parks.

“[People of color] were more constrained by health-related constraints and knowledge-related constraints. So, knowing what opportunities are out there, and where to go. There was also fear of discrimination, whereas for white communities, it was fear of crime which was a salient constraint for them,” she said.

In a way, the pandemic redefined the way people view their surroundings. Rushing said the pandemic brought new recreationists and increases in accessibility to outdoor spaces as people got outside to cope with the isolation. But she stressed that despite recreation profiles and patterns changing, the issue of equity and equality still remains in the outdoor recreation culture.

Rushing cited a Denver study that shed light

on recreation habits during the pandemic. In the study, officials closed roadways throughout the city during certain days of the week and opened them up for bikes and pedestrians. The findings showed that people living in higher socioeconomic neighborhoods – which are often majority white and are closer to parks and bike paths – had a higher turnout than lower socioeconomic status areas of town, which normally don’t have a lot of access to green spaces.

“I think it goes toward stereotypical issues with urban planning and what we call ‘green gentrification,’” Rushing said regarding the disparity in the study’s findings. “You still see an equity issue in terms of the quality of those resources.”

A couple doors down from Rushing’s office on the fourth floor of UM’s Clapp Building, Will Rice has collaborated in research efforts to better understand the disparity in outdoor recreation based on race. As an assistant professor of outdoor recreation and wildland management in the Department of Society & Conservation, Rice also delved into why there’s racial disparity in the outdoor recreation community.

Rice said part of the issue regarding unequal access to America’s public lands has to deal with the way the outdoor industry – which includes marketing agencies and federal and state agencies in charge of public lands – shuts

out ethnic minorities from their marketing and public outreach.

“There’s been a big push to show all different types of ability level, ethnicity, gender and body type across advertising. But I think what we’re running into is that the outdoor industry still has elitism around it,” Rice said. “The outdoor industry is so huge and it has so much sway in our culture. Having representation is really important, and it’s just not there.”

Before coming to UM, Rice worked as a National Parks interpretation ranger at Grand Canyon National Park and Missouri National Recreational River on the border of Nebraska and South Dakota. There he saw firsthand how the National Parks system lacked accessibility for a broader demographic of outdoor recreationists and how the allocation of campsites around parks tends to be tailored for white and higher-income people.

According to Rice, studies have shown that proximity of national parks affects visitation across different ethnicities. He added that “some of the national parks historically have been designed to tell stories of white people” on lands that were forcibly taken from Indigenous nations. On the other hand, “sites that are telling stories that aren’t just white stories had a much more diverse visitation,” Rice said.

//////////////////// Planting seeds for the future

After moving to Montana in 2016, learning to live far from home and without her family and culture, Castellanos noticed there was an immense need for community building among Latiné people in Missoula. This drove her to start the Missoula chapter of Latino Outdoors as a way to connect people of color with the outdoors through culture, family and education.

“Right now we have a really solid foundation of participants and volunteers who have helped out getting Latino Outdoors started. It’s been great to just see more and more people reach out to see how their culture is represented in [outdoor] spaces,” Castellanos said.

Since the chapter’s founding in 2021, Castellanos is excited for the organization to host new activities and events. On April 30, it will host Semillitas Outdoors (Little Seeds Outdoors) – one of its biggest events to date. The event, which will be hosted in partnership with the Montana Natural History Center, is geared toward promoting youth participation and engagement with outdoors spaces offering activities.

The Missoula chapter is also hosting a series called Yo Cuento (I Also Count) where participants share their stories of how they began engaging with outdoor recreation and group adventure outings called Vamos Outdoors (Let’s Go Outdoors).

In the meantime, Castellanos is planning to continue planting the seed of adventure while helping minority communities access the outdoors.

Buddy DeFranco Festival returns for live annual jazz fest

HALEY YARBOROUGH

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The sound of guest artist Brad Leali riffing on the saxophone filled the seats of George & Jane Dennison Theatre with the raw melodies of improvised jazz. Backed by the chorus of John Clayton's "Nice to Meet You," a group of student saxophonists stood in a close circle, waiting in anticipation to improvise a response.

After two years without a live audience, University of Montana students shared the stage with middle and high school students from across Montana and Washington to be judged and taught, and to perform with guest artists and clinicians for UM's 42nd annual Buddy DeFranco Festival.

"I love meeting new people and sharing the common knowledge and love for music," said Leali, professor of jazz saxophone at the University of North Texas. "You meet so many young students hungry for the music and you see how the music affects them and their parents, and seeing how their parents react to their kids is a very gratifying environment."

Leali was one of five artists who participated in the festival on March 17 and 18, along with more than 45 middle school, high school and

college jazz combos and bands. The event, whose name was coined from legendary jazz clarinetist Buddy DeFranco, featured two days of daytime activities, master classes, performances and music and jazz education. Around 1,000 music students, directors, jazz lovers and artists attended, eager to perform in front of the Missoula community.

"One of the reasons I attended UM was the festival," said Sam Purvis, a UM sophomore student majoring in jazz studies and forestry.

Purvis spends his summers fighting fire and his school year playing the drums, an instrument he said he's enjoyed since the fifth grade. He said playing the drums involves a lot of improvisation, which is the crux of jazz performances.

Only a handful of students selected from daytime events participated in the Thursday and Friday evening performances, which featured UM's Faculty Jazz Collective, high school's outstanding soloists and "best selection" big band, and UM's jazz ensemble.

In total, the two evening programs played around 10 songs, some of which were arranged and composed by guest artists. From hard-bop classics like Herbie Hancock's "Watermelon Man" to Leali's self-composed piece about his wife "Carla Ann," each song featured at least a

few solos, where students, UM faculty and guest artists got to flex their improvisational muscles.

Lane Ulberg, a fifth-year senior majoring in music education, said he was especially happy to play the trombone in front of a crowd this year instead of a camera.

"It's a little easier to do it in front of a crowd because you only do a few performances," Ulberg said. "In front of a camera, you were almost more critical of yourself. It's almost easier to be in the moment and be yourself when you're performing for a live audience."

Throughout the two days, students were selected for awards like "Outstanding Soloist" and "Best Section." The events also featured UM School of Music's newest award, which was given on behalf of two music education legends Chuck and Brooke Florence, who have taught hundreds of woodwind students and current music educators over the years.

While students and UM faculty were happy the festival returned to its in-person structure, coordinating the event came with challenges. Rob Tapper, UM's professor of trombone and festival director, said UM's school of music began planning the event in January of 2022, during the height of the COVID-19 omicron wave. Once the number of cases started declining, Tapper said the school scrambled to

organize the event.

"We really went into Plan F mode," Tapper said.

Despite challenges, Tapper said he's overall happy with the result and excited for more Jazz community events in the future though the festival stands out as a definitive highlight. Guest artist Leali agreed.

Although this is Leali's first time attending the Buddy DeFranco Festival, he said part of what distinguishes it from other jazz festivals is it allows students from middle school through college to develop their own sense of style on the stage, something he thinks is significant in the field of jazz performance.

"Young people are the future," Leali said. "Doing anything that can inspire them to fulfill their dreams or express themselves and give back to the world and being part of that transition is beyond words."

Tune in to other jazz events, including UM Jazz Groups on April 18, String Orchestra Restrung on April 24 and UM School of Music's 10th Annual Jazz Arrangers Concert on April 29. Missoula will also be celebrating 20 years of jazz in the community for Jazzoula '22, which presents 20 plus jazz combos, big bands, vocalists and multi-instrumentalists over four days: April 28, 29, 30 and May 1.



Featured musician Brad Leali fills the walls of the Dennison Theatre with a soulful and harmonious saxophone solo on March 18 for UM's 42nd annual Buddy DeFranco Festival. "It feels like I'm in another universe, in another world. I'm just at complete peace, complete happiness," Leali said about his experience performing live. **ASTON KINSELLA | MONTANA KAIMIN**

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UM Zootown Cabaret ensemble celebrates women and rock and roll at the ZACC

NANCY BESTON

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As audience members wandered into the purple-lit Zootown Arts Community Center showroom, the sound of laughter echoed behind the black curtain of the stage. While the clock ticked closer to showtime, performers of the Zootown Cabaret peeked their heads from behind the black drapes, stacking on top of each other like a scene from *Scooby Doo*. Soon, the lights dimmed and the show began.

UM's performing ensemble for musical theater, the Zootown Cabaret, performed a showcase of female songwriters on March 20 at the ZACC. The show celebrated musical theater and rock and roll songs written by women throughout history. The performance was arranged by UM graduate student Spencer Stern and Zootown Cabaret Director David Cody.

"This is basically Spencer's show. He picked the music but not only that, he picked music that fit the students," Cody said.

Zootown Cabaret is a class open to all students at UM. The group is known on campus for performing songs and scenes from musical theater and popular music. The group combines singing, acting and dance, accompanied by a small band, and performs throughout Missoula.

The cabaret hosts one large performance every semester, with smaller ones scattered in between. The class usually has a theme consistent throughout the semester, and this semester is focused around impactful female songwriters throughout history.

"I'm excited for expanding and exploring different facets of music, like exploring different genres of music and exposing more people that they might not encounter in their normal Spotify browsing," Stern said.

The show began with five songs by Jeanine Tesori, an American who composed five Broadway Musicals and won five Tony awards. The first three songs were from the musical "Thoroughly Modern Millie," a story about a woman who moved to New York in the roaring '20s to find someone to marry for money. She then becomes a flapper, until things go south when she checks into a motel. The longing and romantic tension of the production was recreated on the ZACC stage.

Although Stern said it was a coincidence the cabaret's first performance was during National Women's Month, he still said it's important to showcase women in music.

"There is just so much good music written by women and a lot of people thought some of the songs were originated by guys, but are actually originally written by women. So I thought I really wanted to highlight that,"

Stern said.

The next two songs were from the musical "Fun Home." It follows a woman's story of struggles with her identity and relationship with her gay father. Throughout the musical, she tries to discover and understand the mysteries surrounding her dad.

The Cabaret finished this section of the set with raincoats and dancing on stage with "Raincoat of Love."

"Oh, [performing] is so fun because we all just get along really well and it's just a group of friends all singing together. That's a bonus," said Danielle Hoyer, cabaret member and UM musical theater major.

The show included songs by artists like Dolly Parton, Susan Gibson and Kacey Musgraves. The performances varied from feeling like an intimate hairbrush-in-the-mirror moment to a 1960s music video. The few dozen audience members clapped loudly in between each performance.

"I think doing a female show, like all female composers and songwriters, was super relevant right now just in general and I think they picked some great music. It was a lot of fun," said Karlee Palagi, cabaret member and UM musical theater major.

Hoyer led a trio of women singing Abi Harding's "Valerie" as one of the last songs of the night. For the final song the female performers gathered on the stage to perform Dolly Parton's "9 to 5," to close out the night. The show ended with a standing ovation from the audience.

"I loved '9 to 5,' just all those powerful women, do not need to say any more," said Andy Lottis, cabaret member and UM musical theater major.

Luckily, this isn't the cabaret's last performance this semester. The group will be performing at the end of the school year in front of UM's Prescott House and is open to the public to enjoy their tunes.

"If you enjoy music, and just having a good time with just a lot of your peers, come and watch the show," Hoyer said. "We all work really hard and when people come to our shows, it's super rewarding because we have someone to perform to."



Danielle Hoyer gives a powerful and emotional performance of Jeanine Tesori's "Changing My Major" from "Fun Home" on March 20 during Zootown Cabaret's live show at the ZACC theater. The performance was a celebration of musical theater and rock and roll songs written by women. ASTON KINSELLA | MONTANA KAIMIN

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UNIVERSITY OF MONTANA

Hammer throw and hockey: Tanessa Morris' key to victory

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The Dornblaser track was prepped as senior University of Montana hammer thrower Tanessa Morris made her way to the throwing circle. In one swoop, she sent a hammer deep down the pitch of marked grass, signaling the start of a new outdoor track season at UM.

The UM track and field team shook off its indoor season this weekend with the Al Manuel Invitational, its inaugural outdoor meet, on March 25-26.

Morris was coming off a month-long hiatus from competition due to an ankle sprain, and now her sights were set on the first of two Missoula-held track meets for the outdoor season. In addition to the increased track size, the field events now show no bounds for athletes like her.

Morris is from Canada, and started off her sporting career as a hockey player before transferring her skills into figure skating.

"I am from the flat, flat prairie," Morris said. "I actually sent one of my friends that goes here a picture when I was at home over Christmas. And he said, 'You can watch your dog run away for six miles.'"

After spending years mastering figure skating, she decided to try out track and field as a multi-event athlete. Once Morris saw the hammer throw, it was love at first spin.

"I picked up weight throw while I was still doing the other events and figure skating. And weight throw shifted into hammer when it got warm enough outside," Morris said. "And that same year I was at nationals and my figure skating coach looked at me and said, 'We think you are too tall to figure skate.' I was like, 'All right, I'm leaning for hammers.'"

Indoor field events have the advantage of no sun and no wind, but the feeling of stepping outside to perform is one that Morris treasures. Canada's harsh winters make it hard for outdoor athletics to start on time and the promise of performing outdoors was one Morris wanted to keep.

"I actually went to a university in Canada for a couple of years and we only had an indoor season, which was a huge motivating factor for coming to the U.S. so I could throw the event I actually do. The switch was like night and day," Morris said.

The move to Montana proved her right, and the outdoor track season is looking bright. She now has placed in both the United States and in Canada.

The distance has continued to be a challenge for her parents, but they still support her dreams from the plains of Alberta.

"I can't begin to express how much

support they've shown me. Even from a distance, they're the first ones like, 'Hey, where can I watch this? Where can I see your event?' They honestly signed up for Facebook to be able to watch my events," Morris said.

However, her costly ankle sprain meant the indoor season had a rocky start.

"I can walk. That's a positive. For the first week or two, I was on crutches, and that felt like forever to me," Morris said.

The shortened season led to mostly positive results for Morris with her most recent performance on the weight throw raking in a ninth place finish. She received top-five finishes in the five prior meets, including one first place.

Even with the season setback, her goals remain the same: Win it all and pass personal records along the way.

"I would like to make it back to regionals," Morris said. "This year they're in Arkansas. Last year, they were in College Station, Texas. And I'd like to move on past regionals to nationals in Eugene, Oregon. Hopefully capture that school record too."

At regionals, Morris finished short of the national meet with a non-qualifying but impressive throw of 183 feet, 6 inches.

Morris nearly made history with the second-longest hammer throw in program history at 202 feet, 1 inch.

She feels the love from everyone in Missoula as well. Even when she's not competing, there is someone asking when her next meet might be.

"We actually get people coming to watch normally. I'm used to coming from an environment where if you have your parents in the stands, that's a big crowd," Morris said.

Her tenacity showed after day two of the meet ended with both Morris and hammer thrower Matt Ward sweeping the event for the Grizzlies. Morris' throw of 199 feet, 8 inches is the second-best performance of her career.

"When someone else on your team is throwing, you can't do anything for them except be encouraging and be genuinely interested. She's got that across the board," Head Coach Clint May said.

Her accolades include one Big Sky Conference championship and one NCAA regionals qualifier in addition to her U.S. Track & Field and Cross Country Coaches Association All-Academic selection in 2021.

Morris also claimed multiple medals at her previous school, the University of Lethbridge in Alberta, earning silver and gold honors in separate meets.

Morris and Grizzly track & field will make their second outdoor appearance on the road at the Hayward Premiere in Eugene, Oregon.



Tanessa Morris competitively figure skated for 10 years before falling in love with the hammer throw. After her figure skating coaches told her she was "too tall" for the sport, she focused on hammer throws instead. Now she throws for the University track and field team. **MADDIE CRANDALL | MONTANA KAIMIN**

UM basketball sees four transfers and new coach contract

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The University of Montana men's basketball team has seen four players enter the transfer portal since its season ended on March 10 at the hands of Weber State in the Big Sky Conference Tournament.

The four Griz transfers add to the more than 25 Big Sky Conference men's basketball players who have entered the portal this year.

"I really enjoyed my time at UM. Not only was the student body excellent and showed support the whole season, the coaches would do anything to help me succeed in the classroom and on the court," freshman guard Jack Wetzel, who is currently in the portal, told the Kaimin.

After this considerable chunk of the UM men's roster entered the portal, MTN Sports broke the news that the team's Head Coach Travis DeCuire had re-signed a contract on Dec. 9. The contract has a base salary of \$185,711 and extends through June 2025.

DeCuire has won 160 games in his seven years as head coach and has helped UM qualify for the NCAA Tournament twice. UM's first-game exit in the Big Sky Conference Tournament in 2022 was DeCuire's first first-round loss since 2017.

"We are excited to have a new contract in place for Travis," said Kent Haslam, UM's athletic director. "He has done a great job leading our men's basketball program and we look forward to great things to come."

DeCuire can earn an additional \$260,000 if he capitalizes on contract incentives, including \$15,000 for playing in the first round of the NCAA Tournament and \$25,000 for every win in the tournament. He can also receive \$85,000 from guaranteed games where higher-ranked schools pay UM to come play against them. In 2021, UM had guaranteed games against Oregon, Mississippi State and Santa Clara.

Junior forward Kyle Owens entered the portal first on March 13, according to a Twitter post where he thanked UM for his three years in the program.

Owens had a breakout season in 2020-21, where he scored 10 points per game and was named an All-Big Sky Conference honorable mention. In the most recent season, Owens' minutes declined. In UM's final game, he only played seven minutes.

"I'm grateful to have learned what I learned from them because it made me a better basketball player and a better man," Owens said. "My time here may not have ended how I wanted it to, but I'm thankful for everything I got out of my overall experience."

Following Owens was UM senior guard Freddy Brown III, who spent four years at UM



Montana's Kyle Owens celebrates at the sound of the halftime buzzer during the Brawl of the Wild conference match between the Griz and Montana State at Dahlberg Arena, Feb. 27. Four UM men's basketball players, including junior forward Owens, entered the transfer portal since the end of the season.

ANTONIO IBARRA | MONTANA KAIMIN

before entering the transfer portal on March 14. Brown, who is the grandson of famous NBA player "Downtown" Fred Brown, only played in six games for the Griz in the most recent season.

Brown earned an undergraduate degree in Business Administration at UM and had a job lined up at Boeing as a finance contract representative. He scored a total of 60 points in his UM career.

After Brown was Jack Wetzel, who entered the transfer portal on March 15. Wetzel joined UM's program as a walk-on and played in 10 games.

"I haven't decided where I am going next, but I am looking forward to continuing my basketball career," Wetzel said.

The most recent UM transfer was senior guard Cameron Parker, who entered the portal on March 16. Parker transferred to Montana in 2020 after a stint at Sacred Heart University, where he broke the NCAA Division I record for assists in a game. Parker was named the Big Sky Conference's Top Reserve in the 2021-22 season.

"I can safely say I became a better basketball player and a better person here during my time,

nothing but love for the Griz," Parker said in a Twitter post.

According to Hoop Scoop Media, Parker has heard from Minnesota, the University of Central Florida, Loyola Marymount, College of Charleston and Montana State since entering the transfer portal. Parker was honored during UM's senior night ceremony along with Brown.

As of March 29, none of the former UM hoopers have committed to a new school.

Last fall, the UM men's team also saw freshman guard Cooper Kriegmont leave the program. Kriegmont and Wetzel were two of four freshmen on UM's team.

Out of the 13 players on UM's team at the beginning of the 2021 season, only six remain.

The four transfers open up roster spots for some future Griz commits including in-state commits Rhett Reynolds (Shelby) and Caden Bateman (Missoula). The Griz also anticipate Renton, Washington, native Jaxon Nap and Mountain View, California, native Isaiah Kerr to join the UM squad as freshman in fall 2022.

The Lady Griz have not had a single transfer out of the program, and according to a UM spokesman, the team is still evaluating which of its six seniors will return next season.



2022 Dean Stone Lecture

Mark Trahan

Editor at Large - Indian Country Today

"Crafting a Narrative of Indigenous Excellence"

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UC Theater - 3rd Floor
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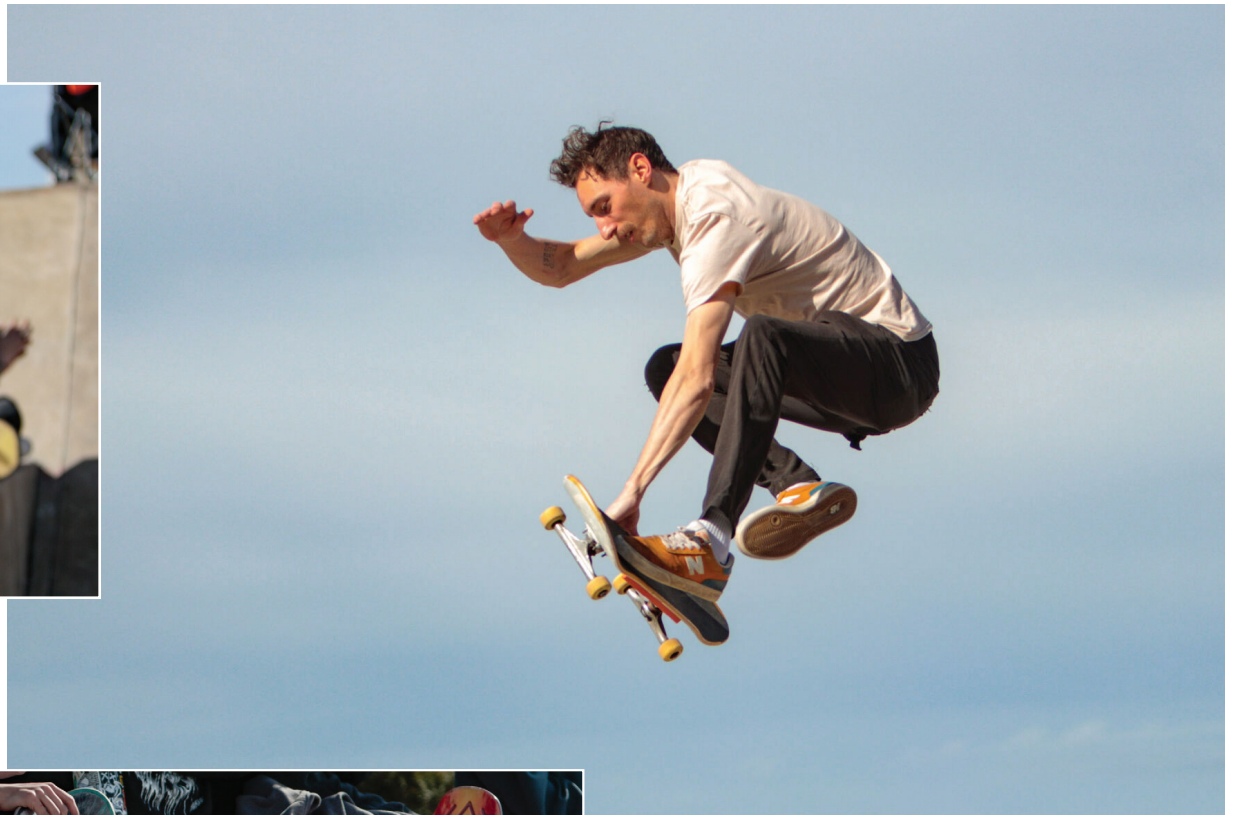


Grinding rails and mid-air jumps, skaters clamor to compete at Mobash

PHOTOS BY SHANNA MADISON
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ABOVE: Skaters react to a trick performed off the pipe. More than 50 people came out to the park to watch the day's events. Along with the boarding, there was also a live DJ, drinks, food and prizes.



ABOVE: Jake Spencer executes a melon grab on the descent of his jump during the pipe-trick portion of the year's first skating competition at Mobash Skatepark on March 13 in Missoula. The top prize for the tricks' round was \$100.

BELOW: Thane Morin, a Never Sober-sponsored skater, announces winners at the Mobash skate event. As an avid skateboarder, Morin puts together skating events and competitions. Many have found a community at Mobash skatepark, and these events are one of the many ways they can come together.



ABOVE: The skating competition at Mobash was sponsored by various businesses such as Board of Missoula, Never Sober Skates and Hometree. Board of Missoula is the town's local skate shop and a favorite amongst riders.

LEFT: Jaxton is a 10-year-old Missoula skateboarding prodigy. Placing second place in the pipe portion of the competition, Jaxton is no stranger to the park. He has been skating since he was 5 and is loved and cheered on by most riders who frequent Mobash.

