Buffalo dinner, keg party highlight Aber Day activities

University of Montana--Missoula. Office of University Relations

Recommended Citation
University of Montana News Releases. 26635.
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MISSOULA--

There was a fair share of work for many, but "eat, drink and be merry" was the cliche of the day Wednesday as University of Montana students and faculty took a day off to reactivate a 39-year-old tradition at UM--Aber Day.

About 2,500 students and faculty took advantage of balmy, 70-degree temperatures to participate in a campus-wide cleanup and buffalo feed in the University Oval.

Aber Day, which had not been held at UM since 1954, was observed at the University for 39 years beginning in 1915. The event honors the late William M. "Daddy" Aber, a UM professor from 1895 to 1919.

Aber Day was officially revived when UM President Robert T. Pantzer proclaimed May 16 a holiday from classes, stating: "Observance of Aber Day traditionally focused on campus improvement and socialization among UM students, faculty and staff; and . . . we wish to rededicate ourselves to the ideals of environmental improvement and unification of the entire campus community in worthy purpose."

Students picked up litter, raked lawns, picked weeds--and washed the bear. Four students, clad in "Aber Day" tee-shirts and cutoffs, soaped down and washed off the bronze Grizzly statue at the west end of the Oval.

One student set up a table and displayed his fly-tying abilities, while another assembled a nylon tent and exhibited camping equipment. Two little two-year-olds in sunsuits picked dandelions.
BUFFALO DINNER, KEG PARTY--2

The crowd size grew as the UM Food Service started dishing out heaping helpings of roasted buffalo, corn-on-the-cob and sliced watermelon. The sounds of the UM Jazz Workshop set up just for the occasion was interrupted intermittently by whoops and cheers from students in a Frisbee throwing contest.

Although not officially part of Aber Day activities, students (nearly 3,000 strong) gathered at Bonner Flats east of Missoula for the "Second Annual Library Kegger" in order to raise money for the purchase of UM Library books. Last year's keg party raised $1,600 for the Library fund. Nobody is expected to know for several days how much money would be raised at Wednesday's kegger.

A spokesman for the University Liquid Assets Corporation, sponsor of the kegger, said a total of 270 kegs of beer were to be made available for the thirsty throng. If all the kegs are of the 16-gallon variety, the total available would be 4,320 gallons.

All in all, Aber day was everything that President Pantzer's proclamation said it would be.

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