Montana Kaimin, February 7, 2018

Students of the University of Montana, Missoula

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IN THE RED

How UM Dining’s upscale restaurant poured nearly $1 million down the drain

NEWS Muslim students searched by police

SPORTS How Griz basketball stays on top

OPINION What to do with all those textbooks
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**SUDOKU**

Edited by Margie E. Burke

**How to Solve:**

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

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**Answers to Last Week’s Sudoku:**

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5 4 7 3 6 1 8 2 9
2 3 1 4 5 9 6 7 8
4 5 2 8 1 3 7 9 6
1 2 9 5 7 6 8 3 4
3 8 4 9 6 2 5 4 1
7 6 5 4 3 1 2 9 8
8 9 1 2 7 3 4 5 6
6 1 3 7 8 4 9 2 5
9 7 2 5 4 6 1 8 3
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**Answers to Last Week’s Crossword:**

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1 Peter I, for one  11 Fugitive, e.g.
2 Quarterback’s  12 Dancer
3 Inexpensive  13 LILY
4 From the age of  14 Tex-Mex staple
5 Gulf  15 Fashion designer
6 D.A.C.E.  16 Buddhist leader
7 Deb  17 Answer
8 Ease  18 Answer
9 EASE  19 Answer
10 D.E.S.E.  20 Greeting
11 A.M.I.D.  21 Eggs, e.g.
12 A.M.I.D.  22 Personal air
13 T.O.N.E.R.  23 A.M.I.D.
14 T.O.N.E.R.  24 A.M.I.D.
16 T.O.N.E.R.  26 A.M.I.D.
17 T.O.N.E.R.  27 A.M.I.D.
18 T.O.N.E.R.  28 A.M.I.D.
19 T.O.N.E.R.  29 A.M.I.D.
20 T.O.N.E.R.  30 A.M.I.D.
21 T.O.N.E.R.  31 A.M.I.D.
22 T.O.N.E.R.  32 A.M.I.D.
23 T.O.N.E.R.  33 A.M.I.D.
24 T.O.N.E.R.  34 A.M.I.D.
26 T.O.N.E.R.  36 A.M.I.D.
27 T.O.N.E.R.  37 A.M.I.D.
28 T.O.N.E.R.  38 A.M.I.D.
29 T.O.N.E.R.  39 A.M.I.D.
30 T.O.N.E.R.  40 A.M.I.D.
31 T.O.N.E.R.  41 A.M.I.D.
32 T.O.N.E.R.  42 A.M.I.D.
33 T.O.N.E.R.  43 A.M.I.D.
34 T.O.N.E.R.  44 A.M.I.D.
35 T.O.N.E.R.  45 A.M.I.D.
36 T.O.N.E.R.  46 A.M.I.D.
37 T.O.N.E.R.  47 A.M.I.D.
38 T.O.N.E.R.  48 A.M.I.D.
39 T.O.N.E.R.  49 A.M.I.D.
40 T.O.N.E.R.  50 A.M.I.D.
41 T.O.N.E.R.  51 A.M.I.D.
42 T.O.N.E.R.  52 A.M.I.D.
43 T.O.N.E.R.  53 A.M.I.D.
44 T.O.N.E.R.  54 A.M.I.D.
45 T.O.N.E.R.  55 A.M.I.D.
46 T.O.N.E.R.  56 A.M.I.D.
47 T.O.N.E.R.  57 A.M.I.D.
48 T.O.N.E.R.  58 A.M.I.D.
49 T.O.N.E.R.  59 A.M.I.D.
50 T.O.N.E.R.  60 A.M.I.D.
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Nothing transparent about the handling of Lady Griz soccer coach’s firing

Another year at the University of Montana, another confusing, mysterious case of sexual misconduct emanating from the athletic department.

On Jan. 30, Lady Griz soccer coach Mark Plakorus was fired after the University discovered a series of phone calls from Plakorus to a Las Vegas escort service. These calls were made during recruiting trips to Las Vegas on a University-issued cell phone. UM athletic director Kent Haslam was looking through Plakorus’ phone records after receiving a series of complaints from players that Plakorus had been texting them at inappropriate times. These players also alleged experiencing various forms of inappropriate touching from Plakorus.

This was not the story initially told by the University, however.

The day Plakorus was fired, the University announced he had resigned from his position as Lady Griz soccer coach. This initial announcement indicated Plakorus’ resignation was the result of a “mutual agreement” between him and Haslam, and Plakorus claimed he resigned in order to focus on taking care of his father.

Two days later, Haslam told the Missoula Independent that Plakorus had not resigned; instead, the UM Athletic Department had decided not to renew his contract. He’d been fired.

While engaging in campus town halls and interviews during the fall semester, President Seth Bodnar repeatedly invoked the term “transparency” to describe his intentions if he were to be picked as UM’s next president. In a campuswide email sent out on Feb. 2, Bodnar claimed the process the University has engaged in to begin “a new leadership direction in the soccer program” has, and will continue to be, “supportive, transparent, and inclusive.”

There is nothing transparent, however, about allowing the student body to spend three days believing this “new leadership direction” was an innocent case of a man putting his family before his career, as opposed to a case of sexual misconduct that somehow managed to take the University three months to fully investigate.

UM, like so many other universities, has been the subject of extensive investigations surrounding its mishandling of sexual assault and harassment cases. At the foundation of many of these mishandlings has been an administrative desire to protect the reputation of the University over the safety of its students. Although Bodnar has maintained he was unaware of the initial decision to depict Plakorus’ departure as a resignation, it was ultimately the prioritization of the reputation of a coach and an athletic department that put students, particularly Lady Griz soccer players, in danger, as well as produced a confusing, unconvincing narrative about the reason for Plakorus’ dismissal.

In his email, Bodnar stated the University is “committed to our first priority, our students.” A commitment to transparency and the safety of students is too important to simply give lip service to. It should be the driving force of all administrative decisions. Hopefully, this obligation is one the administration will take seriously moving forward.
OPINION

KAIMIN COLUMN

Queeries: Bi bi bi

What is the difference between bisexual and pansexual? They seem pretty similar to me.

Oh, thank god! An easy question. Pansexual people are attracted to pans, while bisexual people are attracted to biker gangs. Super simple stuff.

Nah, those were all lies, especially the stuff about this being an easy question. It’s a pain in the ass question, so I’m enlisting a little help from everyone’s favorite boyband of the late ’90s: NSYNC. Its hit single, “Bye Bye Bye,” is secretly a pansexual anthem, but more on that later.

The most common explanation for the difference between bisexuality and pansexuality is that bisexual people are attracted to men and women (hence the “bi” part), and pansexual people are attracted to people of all genders, including non-binary and transgender people. When NSYNC sings, “Don’t want to be a fool for you, just another player in your game for two,” the “game for two” it’s referencing is the idea that bisexual people are only attracted to cisgender men and cisgender women.

The problem is that the bisexual community has been vocal for years about their inclusivity. On the surface, “pan” sounds great. If there are more than two genders, then the term for being attracted to people regardless of gender should reflect that.

But bisexuality is an older concept, with its first usage in the late 1890s, so it stands to reason that the name doesn’t encompass all the identities that have been labelled within the past few decades. It’s impossible to expect a label that’s over 100 years old to stand up to today’s inclusivity standards, and the bisexual community has been very aware of that. Pansexuality, on the other hand, didn’t emerge as a label until the 1990s.

The bisexual community is more established than the pansexual community, and the term is more widely recognized, which is part of the reason it’s so popular. It doesn’t require the same explanation that “pansexual” often does.

But, as NSYNC would say, “Don’t want to make it tough, I just want to tell you that I’ve had enough.” The point of the word “pansexual” isn’t to make life difficult for everyone else. It stems from a very real, but perhaps unnecessary, wish to be inclusive.

Essentially, these words mean almost the same thing, depending on the individual in question. Some define bisexuality as attraction to two or more genders, but not necessarily all. Again, both of these words have fluid definitions. It’s really a personal preference whether you use the word “bisexual” or “pansexual” to describe yourself. There’s no need to say “Bye bye, bi,” but you totally can if you want.

Got a queery? Send any questions you have to calreynolds.queeries@gmail.com. Ask me what you’ve been afraid to ask or what you’ve always wanted to know. Your name and any other personal information will not be published.

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How to use a textbook

Do you hear that? That “cha-ching” sound? That’s all the money getting sucked out of my wallet by the online Launchpad access code purchases and massive textbooks I now own. Buying books sucks, and I get even more frustrated when the semester passes by and I have yet to read more than three chapters combined in any of my hefty literature. So this year, I intend to make sure that all students get their full money’s worth out of new textbooks.

Do you have a gym membership? I know we all do, technically, but if you pay for an off-campus gym, you are wasting your money. You have weights at your disposal and you just paid hundreds of bucks for them. Treat yourself to a quick and debilitating workout by oversleeping and having to sprint to your class while carrying all of your books. Show up to lecture a classy nine minutes late with that post-workout sweat that says, “I care about my body, but I forgot about my education.” Get swole on your way to getting learnt.

This next tip only applies to some people, but if you are under 5 feet 5 inches and have a hard time getting pans out of the tallest shelf in your kitchen, don’t worry. Simply stack up all your books biggest to smallest, and you have a quick, easy and relatively safe step stool. Now you can get those pots without asking your roommates to help you all the time, you big baby.

Now, I know there are English lit kids who are reading this and thinking, “What the hell? I can’t use my 15 paperback novellas to hold my weight while I grab the lasagna dish. These tips aren’t helpful and they don’t apply to me.”

That’s where you’re wrong! For all you lit majors out there looking for some love this Valentine’s season, put all your novels on a shelf and casually ask a buddy to take a picture of you. Pretend you need to show your mom your new Warby Parkers. Boom! New Tinder pic. It shows that you’re an intellectual, a voracious reader and have impeccable taste. Watch those right swipes pour in.

I have a very special tip for those of you taking the new David Foster Wallace class. I saw in the bookstore that “Infinite Jest” is part of your assigned reading. First of all, try to read at least 400 pages so you feel qualified in recommending it to future girlfriends. As soon as that’s over with, hollow out the endnotes and stick a Ziploc bag full of Prozac in there. Then dunk the whole thing in black coffee. Now you have a David Foster Wallace themed collegiate trophy. When you reach the end of your academic years, burn it as a farewell salute to postmodernism.

I hope this gets those brains thinking about other ways to use your textbooks. Pressing flowers? A tent for a pet lizard? Maybe read them? Here’s to a semester where we don’t waste money on big, dumb books for nothing.

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STUDENT HEALTH

Flu at the U: Curry may run out of vaccines within two weeks

RYAN OCONNELL
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The University of Montana campus is riding a wave of flu cases, and Curry Health Center officials say they may run out of flu shots within two weeks.

Exact numbers are hard to gauge, but Curry Health Center Pharmacy manager Ken Chatriand describes this year’s flu as being slightly less prevalent than the 2009 swine flu, when 961 confirmed cases were reported in Montana.

The Center for Disease Control’s most recent influenza data is from Jan. 20. Last year’s influenza cases peaked between the third and fifth weeks of the flu season, Jan. 21 to Feb. 4. Montana is currently in week five of this year’s influenza season, the crest of the wave.

Chatriand says the pharmacy began with the usual starting amount of 1,100 doses of flu vaccine. Remaining doses were down to fewer than 130 by Wednesday.

Chatriand expects the remaining vaccine stock to be depleted within two weeks. Typically, the pharmacy runs out by March. If the pharmacy orders more, it will be in quantities of 10 at a time at a cost of $16 to $18 per dose. The vaccines expire in May, and the pharmacy doesn’t want to be left with unusable vials.

Even with vaccines’ effectiveness estimated at 33 percent, Chatriand recommends students receive the vaccine because it will lessen side effects.

“In college eyes, that’d be flunking. But actually, it’s not horrible,” Chatriand said of the effectiveness. He has seen vaccines that were only 15 to 20 percent effective in the past.

Along with vaccines, Chatriand said Tamiflu, a prescription antiviral used to fight flu, “is flying off the shelf” at the University pharmacy.

In residence halls custodial staff are doing extra disinfecting of door knobs, showers and water fountains.

Residence Life Director Sandy Curtis, who received her flu vaccination in October, says students have a responsibility to take care of their own health by taking advantage of the University’s flu shots and doctors. She also suggests drinking fluids, staying away from others if sick and contacting professors about missing class time.

The CDC website states, “on average, college students who get the flu experience illness of eight days or more.”

Symptoms of this year’s flu strain include an earache, which is atypical of flus, accompanied by body aches, chills and high fever.

Students can receive flu shots at the Health Services Pharmacy in the Curry Health Center from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. No appointment is necessary. The vaccine is $20, but most insurance plans, including the student health insurance plan, cover the full cost.

“Within 15 minutes, you will be protected,” Chatriand said.
STUDENT LIFE

ASUM president to be liaison to UM Foundation

MADELINE BROOM
madeline.broom@umontana.edu / @madelinebroom

After over a year of discussion and threats of a lawsuit, the student body officially has a non-voting representative on the Board of Trustees of the University of Montana Foundation, which controls all donations made to UM. The student liaison position will be filled by the president of the Associated Students of the University of Montana or another representative chosen by ASUM.

The foundation has an investment portfolio so it can generate income from the University's financial endowment, which is made up of donated money and was valued at over $186 million in 2017.

The fight for student representation in the foundation was largely spurred by increased student interest in divesting the endowment from fossil fuels. The student group Reinvest Montana is part of a national movement, and has unsuccessfully petitioned the foundation to divest for nearly four years.

ASUM passed a resolution in favor of divestment in 2015. The student body has voted on divestment in every annual ASUM election since then and it has received overwhelming support each time.

The foundation has declined to divest and has not released its investment portfolio to the public, so no one knows exactly how much the University is invested in fossil fuels. Former UM President Royce Engstrom was opposed to divestment, and in a recent interview with the Kaimin, President Seth Bodnar said he doesn't support divestment at this point and said, “we don’t have a clear plan for what divestment would mean.”

ASUM first requested an ex-officio seat on the foundation’s Board of Trustees through a resolution passed by the senate in September 2016. After the threat of lawsuit by ASUM and a year and a half of negotiations, student representation was granted.

Policy regarding the seat was passed by ASUM senate in September 2016 and the UM Foundation passed it in October, according to Cindy Williams, UM Foundation CEO. The position came into effect at the beginning of the spring 2018 semester.

ASUM President Braden Fitzgerald said he sees the liaison position as an act of good faith and hopes the position can improve communication between the foundation and the student body.

The policy states “the ASUM president may seek to engage the UM Foundation on issues of interest or concern to ASUM.”

Fitzgerald said he plans to use the new position to bring the issue of divestment to the UM Foundation and advocate for it. He said he has been communicating with Reinvest Montana leadership about tangible outcomes and a game plan for a conversation with the foundation.

PHOTO GALLERY

101st Foresters’ Ball swings campus back to the 1800s

LEFT: Hundreds gather to dance and socialize in the logging town built in Schreiber Gymnasium during the end of the second night of the Forester’s Ball on Feb. 3.
ABOVE: A couple swing dances to live music performed by Steve Frame and his Western Rebels during the second night of the ball. PHOTOS TATE SAMATA
Two Muslim students said they had their apartment searched by the Missoula Police Department Jan. 31 after someone reported they were acting suspiciously in a Wendy’s restaurant on Jan. 28.

The two students requested anonymity and for the Kaimin to refer to them as Zyru and Aishia. On Jan. 28, they visited a Wendy’s. They don’t recall exactly what they talked about while in the restaurant, although they said they discussed Middle Eastern politics. The couple dresses in traditional Islamic clothing. Aishia, as she usually does, was wearing a hijab. They were, Aishia said, “just having another Sunday afternoon.”

But on Wednesday, Aishia said she found herself at the Missoula police station after someone reported them for discussing setting off explosives in that Wendy’s.

Missoula Police Department Sgt. Travis Welsh confirmed police did have an investigation originating at a restaurant on Sunday “regarding people overheard discussing explosives.”

On Wednesday, three days later, Aishia said she was waiting for the bus to take her to campus when a Missoula police officer pulled up and told her that her picture had been circulated in the department and that police needed to talk to her about Zyru, pertaining to their overheard conversation.

Aishia said she was taken to the police station where she estimates she was questioned for 30 minutes. The questions were broad and concerned the couple’s conversation at Wendy’s, their political beliefs, cellular phones and if Zyru’s hobbies included making bombs.

“I know for a fact we weren’t talking about setting bombs off with a cell phone. At one point, I did talk about my cell phone bill,” Aishia said.

She complied with the police’s request to search her and Zyru’s home. Zyru arrived shortly after the police and an FBI agent began searching the apartment. Aishia says she allowed the search because the couple had nothing to hide.

Welsh confirmed that law enforcement “did follow up on the complaint,” but he “can’t confirm individual actions.”

Zyru said law enforcement acted professionally and were quick to realize that no threat was present, and at one point let Aishia sit in the front of a police vehicle.

Zyru said they brought their story to the Kaimin “to show what Muslims in America deal with.” He said he feels that reports originating in religious profiling inconvenience law enforcement who could be working on important cases.

Zyru and Aishia said the FBI were also involved in the search. The FBI declined to comment for this story.

Welsh says the Missoula Police Department takes every call it receives seriously, but cases like these are rare.

“We don’t get calls like that very often,” he said.

Welsh said the investigation “is over and done with.” The case is closed and no charges were filed.

“We don’t believe there’s a risk to the public,” he said.

UM students who suspect they are being discriminated against are urged to contact Jessica Weltman, UM’s Title IX coordinator, at 243-5710.
IN THE RED

How UM Dining’s upscale restaurant poured nearly $1 million down the drain

STORY MATT NEUMAN
DESIGN CATHRYN HABERMAN-FAKE
PHOTOS TATE SAMATA
At the restaurant owned by the University of Montana, local trout are grilled whole and beheaded tableside before being butterflied over sauteed kale and shoestring potatoes. Weekly wine tastings allow discerning diners to sample imports from places like Tuscany and South Africa, as well as bottles that pair especially well with raw oysters. Local beers and ciders flow into pint glasses through the bottom of the glass, a specific type of glass tap system.

Tucked away near the Lewis and Clark student housing complex and set back behind a garden on South Avenue, the Iron Griz also offers a memorable view of the University Golf Course at the base of Mount Sentinel. A few glasses of Sangiovese and the glow of the fireplace make it easy to forget that the cozy pub is indeed part of the University of Montana.

The UM Dining-operated restaurant provides the campus community, and Missoula at large, with upscale local foods, Montana beers and regional wines. After a short bus ride or a healthy walk from the main campus, students can access dining options several tiers above the University Center Pizza Hut or Noodle Express.

Of course, the meals at Iron Griz cost students a good bit more than a Food Zoo swipe, with dinner plates averaging $17.

But the Iron Griz costs students more than just the prices on the menu. Since UM Dining took over the golf course snack bar, renovated and reopened it as the Iron Griz in 2015, the restaurant has suffered losses of more than $820,000, including capital expenses, and is on pace to break $1 million in net losses next year, financial documents obtained by the Kaimin show.

UM Dining is funded by student and faculty food purchases, including meal plans, so this is money straight out of students’ pockets.

The financial problems of the Iron Griz have spanned changes in UM Dining leadership and restaurant managers. Documents obtained through a Freedom of Information Act request outline a trend in its financial record that would bankrupt most independently owned businesses. The restaurant has lost over $120,000 each full year it’s been in operation, in addition to spending hundreds of thousands of dollars on equipment and renovations.

Former UM Dining director Mark LoParco spearheaded the creation of the restaurant. LoParco retired from the University last year amid two lawsuits alleging gender discrimination, harassment and creation of a hostile work environment, though his retirement was reportedly planned before the suit was filed. One of the complaints was filed by former Iron Griz manager Kathleen “Kate” Slack, who left UM in March 2016. LoParco had not returned a request for comment by deadline, and Slack declined to comment on this story.

The current UM Dining director, Campbell “Camp” Howard, who took over in March of last year, said he and his staff are aware of the losses and are working to fix them. But if trends continue, the Iron Griz is set to lose more money in the first full fiscal year since Howard took over the operation than ever before, according to detailed reports on annual revenue and expenses.

UM Dining is a self-contained department, which means any losses at one operation within it must be made up elsewhere if UM Dining is to remain financially solvent. That leads to either higher prices on meal plans and other on-campus food choices, or a dwindling reserve fund intended for upgrades, repairs and emergencies, to cover the losses. Howard said profits from the Food Zoo were one of the main ways UM Dining covers losses elsewhere. Since the students are charged more for on-campus meal plans than is needed to operate the Food Zoo, those student fee dollars can be used to cover losses at the Iron Griz.

The Iron Griz isn’t UM Dining’s only money-loser, Howard said. Other operations that consistently operate at a loss, including some coffee shops and the UC Food Court, clearly cater to students, faculty and staff who think of them as vital campus services. The Iron Griz, though, is set apart from those on-campus options in more than just geography.

Prices are higher than what most students typically spend per meal and a focus on expensive craft beer and wine leaves the Iron Griz inaccessible to many students. Besides the higher-end dinner plates, lunch sandwich prices average $10.75 at the Iron Griz, and beers on draft and in cans go for $4 each. Student meal plans do include $150 to $200 in Flex Dollars per semester, which can be spent at any UM Dining operation. But those dollars can go twice as far at the more convenient, on-campus options, leaving students little incentive to dine at the golf course. A burger, fries and soda at the 406 Grill in the UC costs $8.25, while a burger and fries, drink not included, costs $17 at the Iron Griz.

Since the students are charged more for on-campus meal plans than is needed to operate the Food Zoo, those student fee dollars can be used to cover losses at the Iron Griz.
Montana Kaimin reporter Matt Neuman swirls a glass of red wine at Iron Griz’s weekly wine tasting.

Included, costs $12 at the Iron Griz. Both burgers are made with the same Montana-raised Wagyu beef.

UM Dining also made the decision to stop accepting students’ weekly allotment of All Campus Meal Plan money at the restaurant this year, making the Iron Griz even less accessible to students on a tight budget.

Howard said it was a mystery to him and his team why more students don’t come to the Iron Griz, characterizing it as “a puzzle we can’t crack” during an interview at the restaurant in November.

While the Iron Griz may not be a household name to college students more likely to frequent the Food Zoo, it wasn’t necessarily designed for students, and it’s not struggling for lack of their patronage. Plenty of other Missoulians frequent the Iron Griz and spend money there.

Sales more than tripled from 2015 to 2017, growing to almost $425,000 in 2017, according to profit and loss statements included in the FOIA request. But the documents also detail a trend of expenses outpacing income by about $130,000 per year on average, despite rapidly rising revenues. Expenses have risen at a roughly equal pace as revenue, so despite the huge jump in income, losses have stayed consistently high.

Labor costs 20 to 30 percent over industry standards were a major factor keeping the Iron Griz in the hole, Howard said. He said labor costs around 30 percent were ideal for a privately owned restaurant, but being part of the University requires UM

Montana Kaimin reporter Matt Neuman swirls a glass of red wine at Iron Griz’s weekly wine tasting.
Dining to provide benefits and higher pay than a typical restaurant would, he said.

Labor costs at the Iron Griz, including benefits for full-time employees, spiked as high as 94 percent in 2015. That means 94 percent of all money coming in the door went to paying full-time and student employees, leaving little to cover the cost of food, supplies and utilities.

Howard said there are a few silver linings to this: UM Dining pays its full-time employees at the Iron Griz a living wage and benefits, including health insurance — a rarity in the restaurant industry. The manager and sous chef both make more than $40,000 each per year. Additionally, students are learning to wait tables, a skill many will end up using after college, Howard said on multiple occasions.

The University of Montana has struggled in recent years to maintain all of its academic programs and amenities, as a 25 percent drop in students caused budget shortfalls. While the Iron Griz may also be hurt by this decline in students, financial problems within UM Dining don’t directly affect the University’s budget. UM Dining doesn’t receive any general fund money, which covers academics through tuition and state funding, but rather pays into it. A small percentage of UM Dining’s revenues are paid to Main Hall as a so-called administrative assessment, covering any of UM Dining’s overhead work performed by UM employees outside the department. UM Dining’s funding comes entirely from student meal plan fees and food sales.

Despite operating at a loss and its affiliation with a campus facing year after year of cuts, the Iron Griz is unlikely to close, Howard said, as closing it would have a negative effect on Campus Recreation, which manages the golf course.

Campus Recreation director Steve Thompson said having a food and beverage option on the golf course is vital to attracting golfers who might otherwise go to any of the other golf courses in Missoula, which all have restaurants. The golf course has always had a restaurant of some type, Thompson said. But before the full-service Iron Griz moved in, it was a simple burger and hot dog joint, which he compared to the Jus Chill’n smoothie stand in the University Center.

Both Howard and UM Dining’s associative director of business operations, Clay Meissner said they were working to market the Iron Griz to the right customers. They said because the location was not attracting students in the numbers anticipated, they were planning to focus more on golfers, the neighborhood and Missoula’s general dining scene.

Though operating a money-draining restaurant that doesn’t appear intended for students clashes with UM Dining’s published mission statement and guiding principles of supporting student success through fiscal responsibility, Howard said at this time he doesn’t have specific plans on how to turn the Iron Griz around.

“I think giving students the experience of working at a full-service restaurant is important. They’re getting real life training. That’s student success,” Howard said.

“I’m at a critical juncture here saying, ‘What do we do now?’ There may need to be some tough decisions in the next couple months. But the last thing we want to do is take away a service to the community.”
Sensationalistic Evil?

High school murder: Zac Efron and entertainment’s obsession with true crime

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When people think of Zac Efron, they might remember his role as the innocent Troy Bolton in “High School Musical.” Maybe the raunchy Teddy Sanders of “Neighbors” comes to mind. But these perceptions might change soon as Efron becomes Ted Bundy.

You heard that right, folks. The teen heartthrob will portray the notorious serial killer in the upcoming film, “Extremely Wicked, Shockingly Evil and Vile.”

True crime movies aren’t uncommon. Films like “Zodiac,” “My Friend Dahmer” and “I, Tonya” all focus on controversial real-life characters. University of Montana criminology student Kacie Hale attributes the interest in these movies to a fascination with real-life gore.

Hale worries these movies could cause a pop culture movement of romanticizing these criminals.

“They’re making serial killers into celebrities,” she said. “They’re making them god-like.”

Ted Bundy is not the kind of person you want people idolizing, Hale said. Bundy confessed to murdering at least 30 women during a killing spree that lasted from 1974 to 1978. A media frenzy surrounded his two jailbreaks, two trials, three death sentences and ultimately his execution in 1989. At the end of his life, he was no stranger to the spotlight.

Political science and sociology major Tom Hiett said movies like this might be giving many killers exactly what they want: fame. Decades after their death, they’re resurrected through documentaries and television shows.

“Part of the motivation for a lot of killers is being remembered,” he said.

Hiett mentions that many criminals from the past are immortalized. Criminals like Jack the Ripper, H. H. Holmes and Bonnie and Clyde still garner a wide interest. What makes these real-life criminals more intriguing than any fictional character?

“Because they’re the horror character brought to life,” said Jordan Bridgman, a senior in the criminology department. He compares the crimes of fictional character Hannibal Lecter to Jeffrey Dahmer, saying the latter is more frightening to audiences because there is an actual possibility of it occurring in their lives. The fear lends itself to entertainment.

This isn’t a new phenomenon. When Jack the Ripper terrorized the White Chapel district of London, in 1888, the story was printed in papers across Europe. The idea that fear sells explains why Hollywood continues to produce films about killers.

UM literature professor Rob Browning calls the subject of these films “sensationalistic evil.” He proposes that fictional serial killers have their own popularity because they provide a “comforting buffer” against the reality of violence.

But Hale believes that buffer may be leading to ever-increasing limits to what the public finds enjoyable in its pop culture consumption.

“Kids are becoming desensitized,” she said. “We need more for entertainment, a thrill for people to watch.”
A buzzing audience poured into the Gallery of Visual Arts in the University of Montana Social Sciences building Thursday, Feb. 1, at the opening reception of the 24th Annual Student Juried Art Show.

The show is a fundraiser for the student-run Artist Collective, and submission is open to all UM students. Each year a new juror curates the show based on personal criteria. This year’s jurors were Lisa Simon and Jason Neal, co-owners of Radius Gallery. Together, they selected two-thirds of the submitted artwork and awarded the pieces they felt were compositionally the strongest.

Neal and Simon were impressed with the content and craft of the work created this year.

“It’s sophisticated in both the concept and the rendering and the presentation. Even if it’s simple, there is a complexity there in thought, in execution and presentation,” Simon said of their criteria for selecting artwork.

The Artist Collective also presented three awards, and the Montana Museum of Art and Culture purchased three pieces for its permanent collection, housed in the Performing Arts Radio Television Center.

According to Jack Metcalf, the Gallery of Visual Arts director responsible for selecting jurors, the relationships among local galleries and the School of Art and its students are strengthened each year.

“Universities are better when they are tied closely to the community, and I think communities get energized by the new ideas and intellectual qualities of universities,” Simon said.

Tyler Brumfield, a third year MFA sculptor, has presented work all three years. This year, his wooden geometric abstraction plays with subtlety, illusion and discovery, demonstrating the clarity and commitment to a concept that the jurors were looking for.

“When someone who runs an actual gallery, a real place downtown, selects your work, it’s an honor that someone took an interest in it or saw something worth exhibiting,” he said.

Metcalf encourages all students to submit work to the show. He insists it’s an opportunity for them to “get their feet wet” and start promoting themselves professionally. With hundreds of visitor each month, the gallery is the perfect setting for developing artists to put themselves out there.

The Artist Collective also recognized Halisia Hubbard, a fourth year undergraduate in fine arts and journalism, with an award for her painting “Tennis Girl: Reincarnate in Paint.” Hubbard encourages other students to engage by submitting to the show and visiting the gallery to appreciate the artistic talent present on campus.

“As our school grows smaller and as enrollment goes down, all art and humanities departments are in pretty great danger,” she said. “I really urge other students to participate in that part of our school.”

The exhibit will be on display through Feb. 15 and is open weekdays from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.
Student groups on the University of Montana campus face a unique challenge at the beginning of each semester. How do they entice new members to keep their traditions alive? The dozen or so religious groups usually do so by handing out coffee or candy to passersby.

But the Campus Crusade for Christ is taking a different approach to spreading its’ message this year: a Christian illusionist.

On Wednesday, Feb. 7, students walking between classes might be stopped on the Oval to watch various acts of prestidigitation. The magician behind that? Bryan Drake, 30, who bills himself as an illusionist, mentalist and Christian speaker. That evening, he will be performing his show “Shattered” at the University Center ballroom.

Deanne Reid, an adviser for the non-denominational CRU, praised the idea to combine magic and religion.

“The first time I ever saw an illusionist or a mentalist was a few years ago, in front of about 5,000 people,” she said. “It was a Christian who tied his faith into his show, but not in a way you're listening to someone preach. He's blowing your mind and also sharing his faith.”

Bryan Drake’s show has all the intrigue and entertainment of the 2013 movie “Now You See Me.” He performs close-up card tricks a la Jesse Eisenburg, illusions in the style of Dave Franco and the same mentalist tricks Woody Harrelson uses to swindle people out of money.

But it’s not a trick, nor a scam. “Shattered” actually contains a Gospel message.

“It’s not a bait and switch. I tell you up front this is sponsored by CRU,” Drake said. “I’ve learned over the years that people respond better to honesty, which is what’s funny about doing illusions.”

Drake’s show is broken up into two parts. The first is a “traditional” mentalism show, a style of entertainment that relies heavily on deductive skills. During the second half, the tricks get crazier while Drake shares his story and his faith. He always prefaces the second half by saying anyone who might feel uncomfortable with that kind of talk is welcome to leave and call it a night.

While some people might question the melding of a magic show and faith message, Drake said they play off each other well.

“The only reason magic or illusions work is that there is clearly some sort of definite truth,” he said. He elaborated that a trick is only impressive if he shows you the correct card at the end. “If all truth is relative ... then if you took the ace of hearts and I showed you the two of clubs, you would be equally impressed. It makes a natural segue into thinking that maybe there’s a right and wrong in this world.”

He added that even though everyone knows at the gut level that a mentalism or illusion show isn’t real, there’s still a suspension of disbelief.

“If I come out and tell you it’s fake, your brain goes, ‘Well maybe I can just relax instead of worrying if he really is the devil or just doesn’t have the same budget as David Copperfield.’”

The idea of using an illusionist for outreach in evangelical settings has been around for decades. Even André Kole, a public speaker for CRU, was very active in the ’50s and ’60s performing magic and illusion shows as a way to convey his message.

As a kid, Drake was interested in magic, but really got into it as a college student at the University of Mobile in Alabama.

“I would start doing card tricks around campus. You know, close-up stuff ... when I was supposed to be studying,” he said. “I failed accounting because I was too busy doing card tricks in the back of the room.”

Drake graduated with a degree in Christian studies, and worked as a youth pastor before moving to full-time mentalism shows and speaking gigs about eight years ago.

“It was always my passion: students and teaching and preaching,” Drake said. “I believe people are gifted and suited to do things and use those gifts, talents and abilities. One of my things was I didn’t want to be a guy in a suit on a Sunday morning. I wanted to use these crazy illusion shows to get the message out there.”

Bryan Drake will be performing “Shattered” for free at 7 p.m. on Feb. 7, in the University Center Ballroom.
SOFTBALL PREVIEW

More firsts are nothing new for Griz softball

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The Griz softball team has seen many firsts in recent seasons. In 2015, the team played its first games. The year after, the Griz made their first Big Sky Conference Tournament appearance. Last year they won it all for the first time.

This year is no exception.

Last Thursday the team was voted No. 1 in the preseason Big Sky poll for the first time, and in March the Griz will begin to defend their first conference title without their first head coach, Jamie Pinkerton. The team begins preseason tournament play Feb. 8 in Phoenix with a doubleheader against Grand Canyon University.

Melanie Meuchel, who was an assistant under Pinkerton coaching pitchers and catchers, has replaced the two-time Big Sky Coach of the Year. Pinkerton took a job as Iowa State's head coach in August. Former Big Sky Freshman of the Year, Sydney Stites, followed Pinkerton to Ames.

“Jamie and I had a good balance,” Meuchel said. “We did things great together. We’re trying to maintain what we have...There’s a lot of things that we kept in play because they’re not broken.”

The Griz are used to change by now. Senior infielder Gabby Martinez recalls when the team practiced on high school fields while the brown and green turf was being laid on Grizzly Softball Field.

“It’s so incredible to see how far we’ve come,” Martinez said.

One thing has remained consistent in the team’s short existence: It has always been good at home. The team has gone 40-16 in Missoula since its inception.

In December, the reigning conference champs were rewarded with a permanent bleacher structure. The bleachers will triple seating capacity and help solidify the team’s staggering home field advantage.

The upgrade speaks to the snowballing popularity the team has gained during its rise to the top. The Griz drew a record 758 fans against Weber State in 2015 on a field that had just two temporary bleachers, one beside each dugout, which seated about 200 people combined. The new bleachers will seat 638 fans and will include a press box, concession stand and restrooms.

The $625,000 structure is the biggest upgrade to the compound to date. In 2016, the team received an indoor batting practice facility adjacent to the field.

As the structure neared completion in December, players watched anxiously as they filed into their indoor facility day after frigid day while the finishing touches were made on their well-deserved prize. Griz pitcher Michaela Hood said she brought hot chocolate to workers just to see how close they were to finishing.

Meuchel said the structure would not have been possible without the fans, the same ones who braved bitter Montana springs as they watched a team full of freshmen battle through each game, and who showed up in force, lawn chairs in tow, as they saw the Griz soar to Big Sky dominance.

“We play as a team, but we’re here to play for Griz Nation,” Meuchel said as she monitored batting practice during a Tuesday practice. “It brings a lot of comfort and pride to play on Grizzly Softball Field.”

“Every year has been a first,” she added. “Now they kind of have a feel of what they’re doing. They’re anxious to get out on the field.”

KAIMIN COLUMN

Views from the 406: DeCuire won’t last for long

Last Saturday, the Griz basketball team came from behind to beat North Dakota, the preseason favorite in the Big Sky Conference, on the road. It continued a couple of impressive streaks for the Griz, who have won a school-record seven straight road games and have started the season 11-0 in the Big Sky.

But the win was even more special for head coach Travis DeCuire, who reached 50 career Big Sky wins with the 72-67 victory. It continued a couple of impressive streaks for the Griz, who have won a school-record seven straight road games and have started the season 11-0 in the Big Sky.

DeCuire has managed this year’s team perfectly, blending different playing styles together to form a team that leads the conference in almost every stat imaginable on both sides of the ball.

The job he has done recruiting talent to contribute immediately has been one of his best qualities. The Griz have had a freshman that makes an impact every season that he’s been recruiting. Michael Oguine and Sayeed Pridgett had their turn, and this season Timmy Falls and Karl Nicholas are getting a chance off the bench.

Then add the players that DeCuire has been able to bring into Missoula on a transfer. Ahmaad Rorie left Oregon to come play for DeCuire, who had tried recruiting him when he was still an assistant at California. Rorie has been one of the Big Sky’s best scorers in his two seasons at Montana and will likely be the 33rd player to reach 1,000 career points at UM.

This year, DeCuire brought in Jamar Akoh from Cal State Fullerton, who instantly added a crucial piece that the Griz were missing, inside scoring. Akoh has dominated since conference play began and is a huge reason Montana is 11-0.

DeCuire is fantastic; there is no way around it. He is going to move to a bigger school eventually and when he does, Montana will have a huge hole to fill.

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The key to Griz hoops’ chemistry

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Last season, Sayeed Pridgett announced himself to Montana fans in style. The freshman scored 20 points off the bench against a good Wyoming team. He also added four rebounds, three assists and a team-high three blocks, while shooting an astonishing 78 percent from field that night.

The freshman made a statement in his collegiate debut and showed that he would play a significant role in the success of Griz hoops going forward.

He earned 11 starts in his freshman season and played in every game besides one for the Griz. This year, Pridgett has seen his role change. He is the sixth man for Montana, without a single start, but still a leader on and off the court.

“I just try to bring what the team is missing. The fire, the energy, the points, whatever I can do to make our team successful,” Pridgett said.

The transition from starting to coming off the bench often damages a basketball player’s pride, but not for Pridgett. He sees it as an opportunity to help his team and go on the court to produce whatever Montana is lacking.

Some nights that’s putting up 20 points, like he did against Cal State Northridge. Other nights it’s helping down low, like when he had seven rebounds against Southern Utah. His game-by-game role may change, but his primary focus is to help lead the Griz to a Big Sky Championship.

With Montana’s hard-knock style of defense, which has forced 383 turnovers in 23 games played, he believes no one can stop them from getting there.

“I’m just trying to be the glue guy. I want to be part of winning a championship,” Pridgett said. “When we are playing together and when we are being ourselves, no one can stop us.”

Freshmen Timmy Falls and Karl Nicholas have also played a key role off the bench for Montana this season. Both players have been crucial in the rotation for their own respective styles. Falls has provided a scoring punch at the guard position while Nicholas’ size and athleticism have helped bolster the Griz bigs.

Head coach Travis DeCuire attributed the success of this year’s team to roles that allow the players to play to their own styles and strengths, something missing from last season.

DeCuire juggled several different starting lineups in the 2016-17 season, which he coined as a crucial year of evolution. Chemistry was a struggle for DeCuire, as well as trying to fit pieces and roles for players throughout the season.

The roles of Falls, Nicholas and Pridgett this year blend within styles and strengths of the starting five, which hasn’t changed all year long.

When juniors Michael Oguine or Ahmaad Rorie need a break, DeCuire puts in Falls for his vision and scoring. When lone senior Fabijan Krslovic or junior Jamar Akoh get in foul trouble down low, he has a blocking brute in Karl Nicholas.

When the team lacks offense or needs some fire, in comes Pridgett. DeCuire didn’t have these types of roles or chemistry in last year’s squad.

“The guys I have right now didn’t fit the way we played last year in terms of our style, defensively and offensively. It’s difficult when you are asking guys to play a way that didn’t necessarily play to their strengths," DeCuire said. “This year we got guys in roles that allow them to play to their strengths.”

Over halfway through Big Sky play, Montana is a perfect 11-0 in conference games. The Grizzlies also are undefeated at home and hold the ninth-longest active win streak in the NCAA.

Montana returns home to play Portland State on Thursday. It then takes on Sacramento State on Saturday night.