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Montana Kaimin, February 18, 2009

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MONTANA KAIMIN

Wednesday, February 18, 2009

www.montanakaimin.com

Volume CXI, Issue 59

Senate takes first stab at killing the death penalty

Molly Priddy

MONTANA KAIMIN

HELENA — A bill that would abolish the death penalty in Montana passed its first vote in the Senate, 27-23.

Senate Bill 236, sponsored by Sen. David Wanzenried, D-Missoula, would replace capital punishment with life-in-prison sentences without the possibility of parole.

"In order for punishment to be effective, it must be swift, and it must be sure," Wanzenried said. "The death penalty is neither."

Lawmakers spent over an hour debating the pros and cons of capital punishment. Support and opposition for the bill were not defined by party line.

Those supporting the bill said the death penalty is more expensive than life without parole and the possibility of executing an innocent person is too great a risk. They also said capital punishment is meted out arbitrarily and unfairly. Some senators said execution did not give victims' families closure, while others equated it to murder.

"It is not our duty to pass that judgment onto one another," said Sen. Jonathan Windy Boy, D-Box Elder. "That's the law of the universe, that's the law of the Creator."

Sen. Gary Perry, R-Manhattan, said he began supporting death penalty abolition last session. He said life in prison without parole accomplishes the same goal, but the offender dies naturally.

"The only means of leaving the prison, being in a body bag and with a toe tag, is a death sentence, but according to God's timetable," Perry said.

Sen. Roy Brown, R-Billings, said although he believes terrible crimes deserve punishment, he would support the bill to stay consistent with his pro-life stance.

"Death is the easy way out for many of these monsters," Brown said. "Even a guilty life is worth saving."

However, senators who opposed the bill said the death penalty is needed as a deterrent against killing for those already in prison and as a useful tool for prosecutors to get plea bargains.

"Having the death penalty gives prosecutors a bargaining chip to get plea bargains from murderers," said Sen. Joe Balyeat, R-Bozeman. "If we remove this bargaining chip from prosecutors, I would argue that a lot more cases are going to go to trial."

Some senators said they would vote against the bill because some criminals deserve to die for their terrible crimes. See DEATH, page 12

Rock 'n' California Roll



Alisia Muhlestein/Montana Kaimin

Ken Gene, a member of the Japanese Student Association, teaches senior Kristina Becker how to roll sushi at Take A Break Tuesday in the UC. Gene, who comes from Malaysia, said that not all of the JSA members knew how to make sushi, but that the opportunity to do some outreach for their group was really great. "It was sushirific," Becker said about her first time making the traditional Japanese dish.

Montana to receive \$626 million from federal stimulus

Allison Maier

MONTANA KAIMIN

With the passage of the federal stimulus package Tuesday, universities are slated to see increases in funding for Pell Grants and work study programs as well as the establishment of a tax credit to help students afford college.

With President Barack Obama's signature on the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act aimed at creating more jobs and jumpstarting a struggling economy, \$787 billion in federal money will be directed at everything from natural resources and transportation to education and health services. Montana is expected to get about \$626 million.

Both of Montana's U.S. Senators voted in support of the bill.

"The bill creates jobs and opportunity in Montana and throughout America by putting people first," said Sen. Jon Tester in a statement to the Kaimin. "Helping families and students pay for college without crippling debt is a smart investment in our economy and our future."

Sen. Max Baucus agreed in his statement to the Kaimin.

"In the face of the uncertain economy, a higher education is vital to ensuring Montanans continue to succeed," he said.

The federal stimulus package will provide a \$15.64 billion increase in funding for Pell Grants nationwide, though the amount Montana will receive hasn't been determined. Pell Grants are available to help low-income undergraduate students pay for college. All other federal financial aid a student receives is awarded after a Pell Grant amount is determined. About 21,000 Montana students receive Pell Grants each year, according to a report by the Democratic Policy Committee.

With the money from the stimulus, See STIMULUS, page 12

Speakers tout both saving and making energy

Carmen George

MONTANA KAIMIN

Making a "greener" home can save big bucks and isn't that difficult, according to Chris Daum, a panelist who will speak at the "Small-Scale Renewable Energy Applications" seminar at the College of Technology Wednesday night.

"Every buck spent on efficiency will save you another

three or four," said Daum, treasurer of the Montana Renewable Energy Association and owner of Oasis Montana, a renewable energy supply and design shop based in Stevensville.

Daum, along with seven other renewable-energy professionals, will be speaking from 6:30 to 9:30 in Room HB01 at the COT East Campus as the last of three free seminars on

energy efficiency this year.

"I'll be talking about efficiency and how to calculate your (energy) load," Daum said.

A lot of energy is lost from what Daum calls "ghost loads" — energy that is sucked from appliances even when they are off.

"Your TV uses 35 to 50 watts (of energy) for every hour it's off," Daum said. "Refrigerators are also a huge load. The new

ones use one-fourth to one-eighth of what the old ones used."

Along with appliance efficiency, the seminar will also cover small-scale renewable energy systems for homes and small businesses, such as solar and wind technology, battery storage and hydroelectric and solar hot water systems.

Ashley Preston, director of See ENERGY, page 12

TODAY ON CAMPUS

• RESUME AND COVER LETTER WORKSHOP

Lommasson Center Room 154
Free and open to the public 3:30-5 p.m.

INSIDE THE KAIMIN

SPORTSWHIT page 7

Rodriguez and Phelps deserve what they get

AGRICULTURE CENSUS page 9

Farms and local food

FORECAST

High 40F
Low 25F



Editorial

Seatbelt law constricts more than passengers

Montana's stricter seatbelt law was due to pass two Wednesdays ago with the Senate supporting it 25-24. The measure would make not wearing a seat belt a primary offense, giving police the right to stop cars solely because they spy unbuckled passengers. Not buckling up is already illegal in Montana as a secondary offense, meaning police have to catch you for something else first.

The bill's prospects took a sudden turn overnight when three lawmakers changed sides from yea to nay, leaving the bill deadlocked at 25-25 on Feb. 5. Many supporters think the bill is doomed, just like similar legislation that came through in 2005 and 2007.

People are better off without the new law.

Statistics from Montana's Department of Transportation prove that seatbelts save lives, and changing the law so that not buckling up is a pull-over offense could very well entice more people to buckle up. The link between unworn seatbelts and vehicular deaths is as indisputable as the link between cigarettes and lung cancer. But, same as with cigarettes, that's not what matters when it comes to passing law.

The government doesn't have the right to demand that any adult wear a seatbelt any more than it can demand a person put down his cigarettes, stop drinking alcohol or wear a helmet when riding a bicycle or motorcycle. Not wearing a seat belt could very well have harmful consequences, but isn't it the same story for many daily personal choices we make, like lighting up?

Laws exist to provide a safe environment for the public, not to inhibit the individual.

If a decision harms only one person, yourself, it's your prerogative to do it or not. The government isn't our mother or father, babying us through our daily lives and micromanaging our decisions that have nothing to do with anyone else out there.

The government's role is more like a teacher enforcing rules to create a safe environment — no hitting other students — and providing facts on how to stay healthy. "Drugs are bad for you, and smoking causes cancer." But teachers don't follow you around town, giving you a detention when they catch you with chew in your lip. They don't have the right, and neither does the government.

Obviously, booster-seat laws for babies and seat-belt laws for children need to exist, but adults need to retain their rights to decide if they're going to buckle up or not. It's the same as when we turn 18 and answer the question, "Do I want to smoke or not?" and when we turn 21 and ask, "Am I going to binge drink every weekend to the point of regurgitation?"

Americans need to take responsibility for their decisions without a controlling agency taking on the role of the conscience.

Just so you know, I wear my seatbelt. But you won't catch me preaching to people I ride with, requiring them to buckle up before I shift into drive. It's not my place any more than it is to walk up to a fat person and demand he eat less and workout more because he might die of a heart attack or diabetes.

Sen. Ryan Zinke, R-Whitefish, is one of the three lawmakers who switched his vote Thursday and said, "Personally I want a law to be a law, and I don't like many laws or half laws."

In the past decade, our government has had the tendency to take a hand in more and more private affairs, like business bailout packages and trivial matters that should be without laws. Too many laws can do more harm than good by taking away our freedom of choice.

Look at Oregon, where it is illegal to pump your own gas. It drives me crazy and is without reason. I once tried to grab the nozzle and pump a few gallons in before the pump attendant showed up, but he got a little territorial.

Oregon is a trivial example, but gas-pumping laws and seat belt laws are a definite step in the wrong direction.

—Trevon Milliard, News Editor
trevon.milliard@umontana.edu

The heroin junkie's trail: following or building it?

A good guidebook to a new city can take you places that you might not have found on your own. Some find that a travel guide is the appropriate way to go.

I, on the other hand, chose to lead myself around Edinburgh on the path of Mark Renton, the heroin-junkie antihero of Irvine Welsh's novel "Trainspotting."

I had only seen snippets of the film version, which I always mistakenly thought was set in Glasgow, perhaps because of an early stereotypical view I acquired of Glasgow as a rough, drug-crippled city. It wasn't until I snatched a copy of the book from a used bookshop on the edge of Old Town that I realized Welsh's odyssey of addiction and self-destruction was set in Leith, just on the other side of the city from my flat.

Unlike any other book that you tend to shut yourself in with and read over a cup of coffee, or, in my case, a bottle of Newcastle, reading "Trainspotting" in Edinburgh compelled me to wander along the same paths, much in the same fashion, I'm told, that tourists should do with James Joyce's "Ulysses" in Dublin.

There is a chapter halfway through Welsh's book that describes an ecstasy-fueled night gallivanting through the Meadows, one of the biggest parks in Edinburgh, conveniently located outside my front door.

My night in the Meadows didn't evoke a situation like the one in the novel that lead to Spud's analysis of Renton, attributing "Rent's" desire to kill squirrels to his deep-seated hatred of any creature that has more freedom than he has. But it certainly did have a surreal feeling to it. Perhaps it was all the Jameson I had that night.

While it hadn't snowed yet, light from the lamp-posts shimmered against the frost collecting on the grassy, rolling hills of the Meadows, as my new flat-mate and I wandered around without purpose.

What we were looking for, I don't know. Perhaps we were just wandering. I couldn't be sure. There was a lot that I wasn't sure of at that point, like if this happy patch of green grass was just a place where folks come to chip golf balls, or if it actually covers vast piles of bodies killed by a plague hundreds of years ago.

Dancing on someone's grave may be considered rude, but trying to sink a birdie on it must be a good gesture around here.

The more I read about Renton's seemingly hopeless battles against heroin withdrawal, I couldn't help but feel a kind of mild combination of mental exhaustion and sickness. Some at home warned me about

STUMBLING THROUGH SCOTLAND

With Mike Gerrity



this feeling. They described it as "coming down off the European high."

But, was it really Europe I was coming down off of, or the horror of the culture I left behind that was followed me across the Atlantic Ocean?

The most jarring link I found between my experience in Edinburgh and Welsh's book was my take on the city's version of the Mall of America: Princes Street. An endless stretch of fashionable clothing shops for deep-pocketed shoppers, accompanied by block after block of Pizza Huts, McDonald's, Starbucks and every other monument to obese American consumption I tried to flee in the first place.

Instead, here it all was, lined up in a grotesque procession in full view of Edinburgh Castle. It all seemed so perverted to me, almost as heinous a violation as opening a Chuck E. Cheese in the Lincoln Memorial.

In an excerpt where Renton is on a shoplifting spree on Princes Street in order to score more smack, I found Welsh's description creepily mirrors my own.

"Ah remember walkin' along Princes Street wi' Spud, we both hate walkin' along that hideous street, deadened by tourists and shoppers, the twin curses of modern capitalism. Ah looked up to the castle and thought, it's just another building tae us. It registers in oor heads just like the British Home Stores or Virgin Records."

The disturbing thought of being able to relate to a fictional smack junkie was gradually overcome by a sinking guilt; as if by being from America, I played a small part in the whoring out of what had once been a crown jewel of this city.

By trying to escape all the pressures and false hopes of American culture, I felt almost like part of the same germ, a walking STD with symptoms of excess, materialism and shallow dreams of cell phone cameras, fake tans, luxury cars, "American Idol," bottled water and all the other pus spewing out from a compulsive urgency to create and buy bullshit.

I try to tell myself otherwise, that I'm not that kind of American. I'm not like them.

But I look down at the iPod in my pocket and suddenly, I'm not so sure.

michael.gerrity@umontana.edu

The Kaimin invites letters to the editor and guest columns.

Letters should be 300 words or fewer, and columns should be about 700 words. Please e-mail both to opinion@montanakaimin.com, or drop them off in Don Anderson Hall 208. Make sure to include a phone number.

MONTANA KAIMIN

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Letters to the Editor

Rethink the Think Tank

At the last meeting of the Arboretum Committee, I voted to remove a mature white fir from the southwest corner of the old Journalism Building. The tree has to go for the proposed expansion of the Think Tank cafe. Its monetary value will be "banked," used for future plantings on the campus, which is also the State Arboretum. The wood will be cut, milled and recycled in the new LEED-certified or "green" cafe.

This is a vote I have come to reconsider — not because I have a particular love of white firs or because I don't support recycling trees for new buildings. We have other good specimens on campus, recycling is good and banking allows the committee to enrich the arboretum with future trees. Rather, I am convinced that the Think Tank expansion is misguided and will irreparably mar a corner of our beautiful campus.

The area around the underground Urey Lecture Hall is already too densely built up. Mammoth modernist buildings marching from the south seem to overwhelm the historic Chemistry and elegant Journalism buildings, as well as A.J. Gibson's graceful Math Building (once Women's Hall).

The boxy, brick bunkers on Urey plaza are a violation of the dramatic

north-south axis that once linked Social Science (the old Library), the Oval, and the Chemistry building. If you stand on the Oval today and look north to Social Science, the comparison will demonstrate what is sadly missing at the southern end of this axis. The Think Tank expansion will add more clutter to an already compromised area.

The design of the cafe itself seems to devolve with each new version. Once planned as a historicist makeover of the central structure on Urey plaza, this design proved too expensive. Sacrilegiously moving it to the Oval proper was met with great opposition. Now pushed back toward the old Journalism Building, the latest plan adds even more mass to an already crowded area.

The cafe will be a two-story, modern glass, brick and metal box with an external staircase leading to a green, but inaccessible, rooftop garden. I am not convinced of the need for a demonstration garden that few will see — especially when there are underutilized greenhouses all over campus.

Fundamental questions about the Think Tank expansion have to be answered. Is there a crucial need for a cafe in such close proximity to existing food services at the University Center and Lomasson Center? Is the volume and/or demand so great as to warrant such a phenomenal expense, sacrificing yet another increasingly precious patch of green and compromising the architectural integrity of the campus

and the spatial fabric of the State Arboretum?

Locating a coffee shop in a stairwell from the underground lecture hall should never have been allowed. Growing it into a full-fledged modernist bauble in an already architecturally-incoherent area is now the proposed solution. No amount of mitigation will repair that damage.

UM has done a good job of protecting our historic buildings and public spaces. The Urey Plaza and the relationship between its buildings from the Oval to Chemistry demand special attention and particular respect for its historic structures. If you need evidence of what happens without that degree of sensitivity and care, just visit our sister institution in Bozeman or any of the countless, claustrophobic, and otherwise poorly-planned campuses around our great land.

—Rafael Chacón, Ph.D.
Professor of Art
History and Criticism

Yes to relationship column, no to sex column

I am not opposed to a column that discusses healthy sexual relationships. I am opposed to a column in a newspaper of general distribution that advocates bondage ropes, pornography, and the return of a holiday where men are "playfully" whipped by women. The content of this column is neither appropriate nor professional.

—Kristen Juras
Professor of Law

U-Wire

Shoddily-built stimulus bill will not be enough

Keith Yost
THE TECH

MASS. INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

By any measure, the \$787 billion stimulus bill will fall well short of solving the problems facing the economy. Over the next two years, the expected shortfall between potential and actual gross domestic product is projected to reach \$2 trillion — this legislation doesn't even come to half of that.

But wait, it gets worse.

Around a third of the stimulus is designed merely to counteract the expected decline in state government spending. States, unlike the federal government, are obligated to balance budgets, and will be forced in the near future to cut spending rather than raise it. Right away, a third of the stimulus bill is spent just treading water.

But wait, it gets worse.

Roughly another third of the bill is in tax cuts. Tax cuts are great, and make no mistake: it was good that both Obama and congressional Republicans pushed for them. In a sense, tax cuts are the ultimate in "shovel-ready" stimulus — their effect begins as soon as you can get the checks out. But tax cuts have a problem: the name of the game in stimulus is to increase spending, and some fraction of every tax cut dollar is going to be saved instead of spent.

Furthermore, the more tax cuts

are relied upon as a form of stimulus, the greater the marginal propensity to save will be. In other words, tax cuts have diminishing returns to scale, and give or take a few hundred billion, the stimulus bill exhausts just about all that can or should be achieved with tax cuts.

The great strength of tax cuts is that they reduce the distortionary impact of government involvement and increase the efficiency of the economy (hence the perennial enthusiasm of conservatives for tax cuts). However, the tax cuts in the stimulus bill are not geared to capture these efficiency gains.

Instead, they're almost entirely given out in the form of lump-sum transfers — the marginal tax rate, the fraction of your next earned dollar that is diverted to the government, will either stay the same or increase for most people. There will be no efficiency gains from this bill.

But wait, it gets even worse.

The most salient failure of the stimulus bill is in the last third, which is good old fashioned spending. The goal of stimulus spending is two-fold: to be shovel-ready (in other words, timely) and productive. The vast majority of the spending fails on both counts — not only is it delayed until well after it is needed, but it's also of questionable real value.

Crossword

- ACROSS**
- 1 Gymnast Korbut
 - 5 Pitcher Maglie
 - 8 Mary Tyler and Roger
 - 14 Nearly hopeless
 - 15 Money player
 - 16 Insincere
 - 17 Soared past
 - 19 Frilled strip
 - 20 Finery
 - 21 Certainly!
 - 22 Crater edge
 - 23 Hanoi holiday
 - 24 Paraffin
 - 25 Colleen
 - 26 As it were
 - 30 Disney dwarf
 - 31 Become too hot
 - 32 Baby's foot
 - 35 Jacob's fifth son
 - 36 Repair job
 - 38 Mamie's mate
 - 39 Los __, NM
 - 41 Island of Ireland
 - 43 Writer Hentoff
 - 44 Plans again from scratch
 - 45 __ de foie gras
 - 47 Fizzler
 - 48 Bribe
 - 49 Kubrick's computer
 - 50 Wrath
 - 51 Superlatively tangy
 - 55 You better!
 - 57 Tyrant
 - 58 Snooping
 - 59 Wapiti
 - 60 Immaculate
 - 61 Beginnings
 - 62 Help!
 - 63 Web location

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2/18/09

Solutions

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- 10 Canceled
- 11 Acting as a lens
- 12 Writer Peters
- 13 Parts of pipes
- 18 Red-light district
- 21 Flap gums
- 24 Observed
- 25 Old card game
- 26 Word with water or pop
- 27 Racetrack layout
- 28 Lacking lessees
- 29 Take in food
- 30 Infers from info
- 32 One-size-fits-all footwear
- 33 Coating
- 34 Some votes
- 37 Put out of the way
- 40 W.C.'s co-star, often
- 42 Foundation stones

- 44 Regret
- 45 Graph starter?
- 46 Slugger Henry
- 47 Cabernet sediments
- 50 Fails to be
- 51 Storage cylinder
- 52 Sewing case
- 53 Alphabetize
- 54 Sycamore or palm
- 56 Perjure
- 57 __ Moines

open forum

12pm-1pm, UC224
2.18.09

The Division of Student Affairs is proposing fee increases for:

Curry Health Center
Campus Recreation
University Center

Questions?
Comments?

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ASUM leaders consider losing pay premium to help out group budgets

Josh Potter

MONTANA KAIMIN

At the same time the decision has been made to increase the federal minimum wage to \$7.25, ASUM is considering not taking a pay raise under a new bill to freeze student employee wages.

ASUM Vice President Siri Smillie said if they pass the bill during their Wednesday meeting, ASUM executives would not continue to earn the current premium on top of their regular pay. That premium will actually decrease when the new federal minimum wage is instituted in July.

Business manager Alex Gosline said ASUM's last president and vice president instituted the premiums when the state's minimum wage was "unlivable." Now that the minimum wage is increasing, the premiums are not neces-

sary, he said.

"An 85 cent premium is a pretty luxurious payment for a student employee," Gosline said. "I believe the executives in this office work more than what they're paid for, but at the same time, we're students and work for students."

Smillie said the decreased premium would free up money that student groups and other ASUM agencies may need.

"We realized that there's no way we could meet the needs of the student groups and agencies if we were paying these wages," she said.

Smillie said the point of the bill is not to decrease ASUM executive wages, but to lower their premiums so they're not receiving them on top of the increased minimum wage.

"It's more rational than still get-

ting paid \$7.25 plus the 85 cents," Smillie said.

The best way to ensure student groups have as much money as possible was to find money elsewhere in the ASUM budget, Gosline said.

"To spread the wealth around, we decided that a top-down approach would work the best," Gosline said.

Among the executives who will see their premiums decrease are Gosline himself, Smillie and ASUM President Trevor Hunter. Also, executives of other ASUM agencies, like UM Productions, will have fewer work hours.

"We felt that if we're responsible for student groups' money, we needed to be as conservative and generous as we possibly could," Gosline said.

josh.potter@umontana.edu

Muslim TV exec accused of beheading wife in NY

ASSOCIATED PRESS

ORCHARD PARK, N.Y. — The crime drips with brutal irony: a woman decapitated, allegedly by her estranged husband, in the offices of the television network the couple founded with the hope of countering Muslim stereotypes.

Muzzammil "Mo" Hassan is accused of beheading his wife last week, days after she filed for divorce. Authorities have not discussed the role religion or culture might have played, but the slaying gave rise to speculation that it was the sort of "honor killing" more common in countries half a world away, including the couple's native Pakistan.

Funeral services for Aasiya Hassan, 37, were Tuesday. Her 44-year-old husband is scheduled to appear for a felony hearing Wednesday.

The Hassans lived in Orchard Park — a well-off Buffalo suburb that hadn't seen a homicide since 1986 — and started Bridges TV there in 2004 with the message of developing understanding between North America and the Middle East and South Asia. The network, available across the U.S. and Canada, was believed to be the first English-language cable station aimed at the rapidly growing Muslim demographic.

Orchard Park Police Chief Andrew Benz said his officers had responded to domestic incidents involving the couple, most recently Feb. 6, the day Mo Hassan was served with the divorce papers and an order of protection.

"I've never heard him raise his voice," said Paul Moskal, who became friendly with the couple while he was chief counsel for the FBI in Buffalo. Moskal would answer questions in forums aired on Bridges TV that were intended to improve understanding between Muslim-Americans and law enforcement.

"His personal life kind of betrayed what he tried to portray publicly," Moskal said.

On Feb. 12, Hassan went to a police station and told officers his wife was dead at the TV studio.

"We found her laying in the hallway the offices were off of," Benz said. Aasiya Hassan's head was near her body.

"I don't know if (the method of death) does mean anything," said the chief, who would not discuss what weapon may have been used. "We certainly want to investigate anything that has any kind of merit. It's not a normal thing you would see."

Hassan was not represented by an attorney at an initial appearance on a charge of second-degree murder. Neither police nor the Erie County district attorney's office knew if he had hired a lawyer.

The New York president of the National Organization for Women, Marcia Pappas, condemned prosecutors for referring to the death as an apparent case of domestic violence.

"This was, apparently, a terrorist version of 'honor killing,'" a statement from NOW said.

Nadia Shahram, who teaches family law and Islam at the University at Buffalo Law School, explained honor killing as a practice still accepted among fanatical Muslim men who feel betrayed by their wives.

"If a woman breaks the law which the husband or father has placed for the wife or daughter, honor killing has been justified," said Shahram, who was a regular panelist on a law show produced by Bridges TV. "It happens all the time. It's been practiced in countries such as Pakistan and in India."

There was no answer at the network on Tuesday and its Web site has a message saying Bridges is shocked and saddened and requests privacy.

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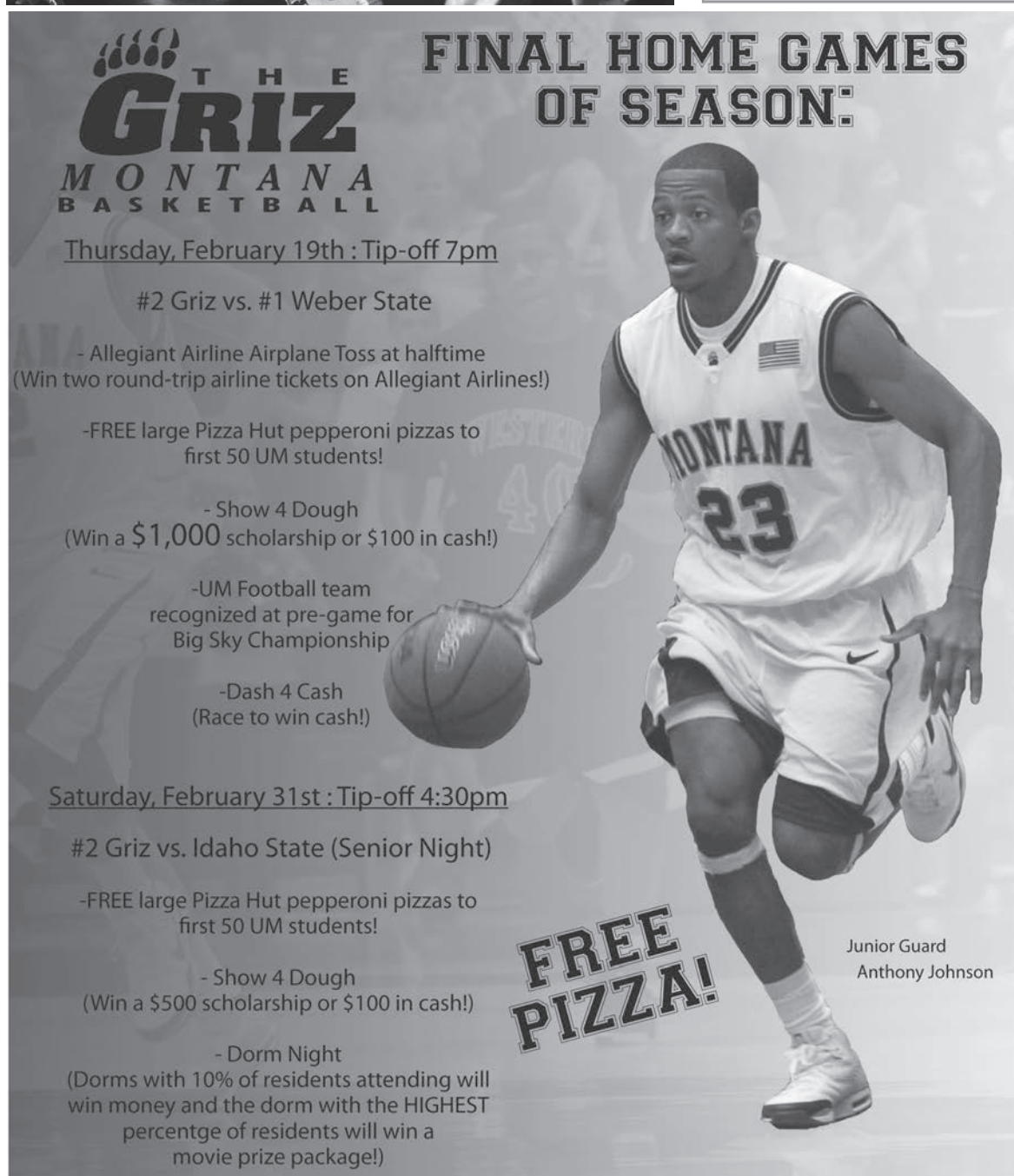
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Saturday, February 31st : Tip-off 4:30pm

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Drug gangs drive off cops, terrorize Mexican town

ASSOCIATED PRESS

VILLA AHUMADA, Mexico — For people caught inside Mexico's drug corridors, life is about keeping your head down and watching your back, especially when the sun dips behind the cactus-studded horizon.

No town knows this better than Villa Ahumada, where the entire police force quit after 70 cartel hit men roared through last spring, killing the police chief, two officers and three townspeople.

Residents were left defenseless again last week when gunmen returned and kidnapped nine people, despite the soldiers manning checkpoints far outside town.

"This was a mellow town where we would walk along main street at night. But now we're too scared to even go out," said Zaida de Santiago.

For this lanky 14-year-old, everything changed last May 17. She was dancing at a neighbor's ranch when gunfire shattered the night. The party's hosts turned off the lights and silenced the music. The guests stood frozen, ears trained to the sound of automatic weapons as the gunmen raced down gravel streets in their SUVs.

When the sun rose hours later, the party guests learned that armed cartel commandos had killed the police chief and five others. Soon after, the rest of the 20-member force quit in fear.

"That day will always remain burned in my mind," Santiago said.

Federal investigators say Villa Ahumada is a key stop along one of Mexico's busiest drug smug-

gling routes, where the Sinaloa cartel has been challenging the Juarez gang for control. The military staffs checkpoints miles outside town, and soldiers and federal police roll through each day, but residents are largely left on their own.

Sliced by a railroad and the PanAmerican Highway heading straight to the U.S. border, the town is one of many outposts across Mexico — many of them too small to appear on maps — that cartels need to dominate in order to ensure passage of their U.S.-bound loads of marijuana and cocaine. The town of 15,000 is about 80 miles south of El Paso, Texas.

"In the small towns, the narcos want to have an open sesame," said George Grayson, a Mexico expert at the College of William and Mary in Virginia. "They want to be able to pass through as they see fit, and they've got the muscle to enforce that, but it's unfortunate for the residents. This is where you've got enclaves of failure."

Cartels treat these towns as fiefdoms — in some communities, everyone from the furniture owner to the barman to local officials pay a kind of tax to the gunslingers, border expert Victor Clark said. The extortion not only gives gangs an extra income, it also makes clear who's boss.

"In land occupied by organized crime, society's rules are completely altered," said Clark, a lecturer at San Diego State University who has studied one such town in the Mexican state of Baja California. "This is their territory, and you pay them for protection, or they will kill you."

Villa Ahumada has been without a city police force since May, unable to find anyone brave enough to take the job. Even Mayor Fidel Chavez fled for a time to the state capital, Chihuahua City, last year. After the army and state police pledged to have more of a presence in town, he returned and put 10 residents in charge of reporting suspicious activities to the authorities.

But there was little these unarmed citizen patrols could do when heavily armed assailants in black ski masks drove SUVs into town last week, kicking in doors and carting off nine residents in blindfolds.

They called state authorities, closed their office and fled.

The gunmen had already executed six of the hostages near a desolate ranch called El Vergel, about 30 minutes north of town, by the time soldiers swooped in. The other three kidnapped men were rescued as soldiers rappelled into the desert from helicopters to chase those fleeing on foot.

By the time the shooting stopped, 14 suspected pistoleros and one soldier were dead, and townspeople felt more desperate than ever.

"We want some authority here. They kill here and no one does anything," complained a frail 67-year-old woman, gripping a cane as she walked past crumbling ado-

be homes.

Her daughter stopped her from giving her name, warning: "They might kill our entire family if you do."

Villa Ahumada is a town where scruffy dogs amble down gravel streets alongside slow-moving pickups. The economy depends on highway travelers stopping to eat at countless wooden burrito stands, but business has dropped by 50 percent since last week's violence, and the mayor has criticized the media for harming tourism. He declined repeated requests by The Associated Press for an interview.

Many townspeople have turned to God for answers, said the Rev. Fernando Nava, who presides over the Roman Catholic church.

"Fathers have lost sons, sons have lost fathers," he said. "This is affecting families, which is what the church is concerned about."

Some residents are stepping forward despite the risks to demand more safety. Nine men applied to be police officers this week as part of a renewed effort by the state of Chihuahua to establish a presence in town.

"These are all people from the town who want peace and security for their families," said Manuel Rodriguez of the Chihuahua State Public Safety Department. He was administering an exam Monday designed to evaluate their skills,

character and psychological stamina, with questions like: "Do you consider men and women equal?" and "What would you do if there was an attempt on your life?"

Ismael Rivera, a lifelong resident, decided to apply after spending seven months as an unarmed guard.

"A lot of us don't know how to read or write," said Rivera, donning a black baseball cap with the word "guard" emblazoned in yellow across the front. "But they are going to give us the chance to study and work at the same time."

Rivera keeps an eye on things from the former police station, a small office where a yellow note on the wall lists the cell phone of a state police officer. Taped above it is a list of telephone numbers of federal officers. A toy Spider-Man and a picture of Jesus Christ adorn another wall. A bike with "police" painted on its rusty frame leans against the fence outside.

Joining the force is an opportunity to do something for his three children, but Rivera admits he's nervous.

"Of course, you are scared," he said. "You go home and you think about quitting."

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Wednesday, February 18 40th Anniversary Classic Movie: Easy Rider
7:00 pm - UC Theater

Nooner Performance
Dan Dubuque
12:00 pm - South Atrium

Friday, February 20 & Saturday, February 21 UC Theater-Weekend Movies
7:00 pm - Role Models
9:30 pm - Quantum of Solace

Saturday, February 21 **The Clintons**
Live in Concert!
8:00 pm - UC Ballroom

Sunday, February 22 40th Anniversary Classic Movie: Midnight Cowboy
2:00 pm - UC Theater

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Officials to kill mountain lion to save deer

ASSOCIATED PRESS

RENO, Nev. — Mountain lion advocates are up in arms over new plans announced by Nevada wildlife officials to kill more lions in order to help reverse a decline in mule deer numbers.

Ken Mayer, director of the Nevada Department of Wildlife, said his agency now plans to conduct regular statewide studies of deer and other "priority" wildlife species.

The department will initiate "a program of intensive, sustained predator reduction" in areas where lions have been found to adversely affect deer numbers and base the exact number of lions to be killed on science, he said.

The state Board of Wildlife Commissioners, meeting in Reno last week, directed agency staff to pursue the policy with the help of sport hunters and contract employees from the U.S. Agriculture Department's Wildlife Services.

Unlike California, Nevada allows hunting of lions. Commissioners also set a quota of 306 lion tags to be issued for the year beginning March 1 — down 40 from the previous year — but increased the

number of lion tags that a hunter could obtain from two to three.

At the same time, they rejected a proposal by Assemblyman Jerry Claborn, D-Las Vegas, to establish a \$500 bounty for the return of any lion carcass.

"It's not an effort to exterminate mountain lions," Mayer said. "It's an effort to better manage lions with the prey base. Some hunters think the solution to the deer problem is to kill a lot of lions and the deer will come back."

But lion advocates sharply criticized the new policy, saying studies show drought and habitat loss due to wildfires and development are far more important factors for declining deer numbers.

Nevada's deer population fell from 240,000 in 1988 to 108,000 in 2008, while its current lion population ranges from 1,500 to 2,400, according to the wildlife department.

"Basically, what they're doing is applying the Sarah Palin method of wildlife management, which is to remove animals with big teeth in order to promote the animals hunters like to shoot," said D.J. Schubert, a wildlife biologist with the Animal Welfare Institute based

in Washington D.C.

"It's an archaic form of wildlife management. Unfortunately, they're making the mountain lion a scapegoat, despite the importance of the mountain lion as a top-line predator in any ecosystem," he said.

Palin, the Alaska governor, supports a predator control program that allows private permitted citizens to shoot wolves from the air in an effort to reverse a decline in moose and caribou numbers.

Don Molde, a former board member of the Defenders of Wildlife and a longtime member of the Humane Society of the United States, said Washington, Oregon and New Mexico have cut back on similar programs because of unintended damage to lion numbers.

Molde contends the effort is being orchestrated by "extremists" on the wildlife commission who were appointed by Republican Gov. Jim Gibbons. The governor made four appointments to the nine-member panel last year.

"This whole thing is nonsense," the retired Reno physician said. "This is a non-scientific effort to kill an animal just because they don't like it. It's an irrational dis-

like of an animal that has every right to live here."

But wildlife commissioner Scott Raine of Eureka said he thinks lions are a major factor for the deer decline in many areas, citing studies that show lions eat one "deer-size" animal a week.

"Nobody is trying to eliminate them," said Raine, an avid hunter. "We just want to bring them down to a reasonable number, a sustainable number. Otherwise, deer will continue to die off."

"They have to be managed. It's time to keep a happy medium," he said.

Mayer said the department has targeted lions for removal in some areas in the past but not as extensively as the new policy requires.

"We're going to do it more on a statewide basis now," he said. "We want to make sure we're taking them in appropriate areas and at appropriate numbers."

In 2007, hunters killed 145 lions and Wildlife Services killed 37 lions in the state for a total of 182.

Claborn and commission Chairman Gerald Lent, a Gibbons appointee, did not return phone calls seeking comment over the weekend.

Michael Jackson auctions awards

ASSOCIATED PRESS

LOS ANGELES — The King of Pop is lightening his load. At an April auction featuring more than 2,000 personal items, Michael Jackson is set to sell his American Music Award for "Thriller," a velvet cape given to him by his children for Father's Day in 1998, a pair of rhinestone-trimmed socks from 1981, a basketball signed by Michael Jordan and his own original artwork.

The 50-year-old singer is also parting with his platinum and gold records, a customized Harley Davidson and a Rolls Royce limousine.

The five-day sale was announced in December by Julien's Auctions, but the full extent of the items available wasn't known until Tuesday, when the auction house released images of the lots. The auction begins April 21.

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Attention All Students, Faculty and Staff: Save the Dates for Town Hall Meetings!

Would you like to share your ideas and opinions regarding strategic direction for Academic Affairs at UM? You are invited to participate in the Academic Strategic Planning Town Hall meetings listed here. Learn more in the January 2009 newsletter at www.umt.edu/asp/.

Topic	Date	Time	Place
Graduate Education	Wed. 2/18	12:00-1:30 pm	UC326
Research, Creativity and Scholarship	Fri. 2/20	2:00-3:30 pm	UC Theater (3rd Floor)
Technology	Wed. 2/25	12:00-1:30 pm	UC330
International Connections and Engagement	Fri. 2/27	1:10-2:30 pm	UC326

Montana oil tax idea hits dead end

ASSOCIATED PRESS

HELENA — A proposed tax hike on thriving oil and gas operations, backed by Gov. Brian Schweitzer, hit a dead end Monday as Republicans turned against it.

The Senate Taxation Committee, along party lines, tabled the idea with a 7-4 vote.

Senate Bill 258 proposed to raise taxes on oil once the price hits \$80 a barrel, and proposed a similar tax for natural gas. Proponents pitched it as a partial repeal of a decade-old oil and gas tax holiday given to new wells in the state.

A similar plan is still cooking in the House, although that measure has yet to receive a commit-

tee vote. But even if it clears the House it would have to pass muster with the Senate Taxation Committee that soundly rejected the idea Monday.

Schweitzer sought to portray Republicans who opposed the measure as anti-education because the money could be used to bolster schools and increase teacher salaries.

The governor had prepared a list of Republicans who had spoken in favor of better pay for teachers — and said such statements meant they would have to support the tax.

Republicans countered that Schweitzer's support shows he is going back on previous statements opposing tax increases.

The governor's politicking on the issue appeared to entrench Republican opposition to the plan, although they likely would reject a plan they clearly view as a tax increase they have previously vowed

to oppose.

The Taxation Committee chairman, Sen. Jeff Essman of Billings, said the whole proposal was "all about the rhetoric."

He argued Republicans believe the increase over current tax levels would hamper development and cost jobs in eastern Montana.

Democrats, who sought to earmark the money for education, said it would give a much-needed boost to schools around the state.

Supporters pointed to record profits out of the state's oil patch in 2008 and said companies should be willing to relinquish old tax breaks if such windfall profits again benefit the industry.

"This has been lost windfall to the state, and we ought to consider correcting that with a trigger," said Sen. Christine Kaufmann, D-Helena. "With these kinds of huge profits out there I think it is OK to ask them for a little bit more when times are good."

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SIDE LINES



HOME GAMES THIS WEEK

Men's basketball at Dahlberg Arena — Feb. 19 vs. Weber State, 7 p.m.; Feb. 21 vs. Idaho State, 7 p.m.

Lacrosse at Washington-Grizzly Stadium — Feb. 21 vs. Oregon; Feb. 22 vs. Oregon State. Times TBA.

SPORTS BRIEFS

Men's basketball: Junior guard Anthony Johnson notched his fourth Big Sky Player of the Week award of the season, garnering co-honors for his performances against Northern Arizona and Sacramento State. Johnson averaged 24 points and 3.5 assists in the two road matches. He leads the Big Sky in scoring and free throws.

Football: Montana head coach Bobby Hauck signed a one-year contract last week to stay on at the helm for the Griz. Hauck holds a 66-16 record in his six years at Montana, ranking fourth all time in the Big Sky Conference.

STANDINGS

WOMEN'S BASKETBALL

School	Conf.	Total
Portland State	11-1	18-7
Montana	10-1	21-4
Idaho State	5-6	8-16
E. Washington	5-7	10-15
N. Arizona	5-7	8-17
N. Colorado	4-6	11-13
Montana State	4-7	10-13
Sac. State	4-8	6-19
Weber State	3-8	8-16

MEN'S BASKETBALL

School	Conf.	Total
Weber State	11-1	17-8
Montana	10-3	16-9
Portland State	8-5	17-9
Montana State	6-6	12-11
N. Colorado	6-6	12-15
Idaho State	6-6	9-17
E. Washington	5-9	11-15
N. Arizona	4-9	7-17
Sac. State	1-12	2-24

WOMEN'S TENNIS

School	Conf.	Total
Sac. State	2-0	5-0
Montana	2-0	3-1
Montana State	1-0	3-6
N. Colorado	1-0	1-13
Weber State	1-0	1-5
E. Washington	0-1	2-3
N. Arizona	0-1	0-4
Portland State	0-2	2-7
Idaho State	0-3	0-5

MEN'S TENNIS

School	Conf.	Total
Weber State	2-0	3-4
Montana State	1-0	2-1
E. Washington	1-0	4-3
Portland State	2-1	1-13
N. Colorado	1-3	1-7
Sac. State	0-0	2-4
N. Arizona	0-0	1-8
Montana	0-0	0-0
Idaho State	0-3	0-6

Women's club hockey team improving yearly

Tyson Alger
MONTANA KAIMIN

In the back corner of the break room of the Glacier Ice Rink, Sarah Midthun sat at a table, frustrated over a scoring opportunity gone awry.

"Did you see that shot?" she gasped after the UM women's club hockey team's 2-1 win over a local Missoula U-19 girls' team. "I can't believe I hit cross-bar."

Although she missed that shot, Midthun found the back of the net for both of the Griz's goals to lead the team to the win.

Midthun, a sophomore from Anchorage, Ala., has quickly become a reliable scoring threat and leader for the vastly-improved team.

"It helps having girls that have played the game for a while," head coach Troy Dvorak said. "Sarah has had good coaching in the past and she is great at helping out the other girls as she goes."

The Griz women's team plays in the Glacier Ice Rink's Advanced Women's League. They play other local teams once a week, but a couple times a year the team travels out of state to play in tournaments.

The program was founded in 2000, but Dvorak said that for the first time since its inception, his team has the talent to match the effort his girls have always given.

"In the past years, practices were always spent teaching the girls how to play," he said, noting that, in prior seasons, up to two-thirds of his team had never laced up skates.

"This year we are now a team that competes, a team that can win."

Winning is something to which the team isn't accustomed. Dvorak, who has been coaching Montana off and on since 2004, said that the Griz haven't taken home any hardware higher than a fourth-place trophy.

That changed in November of last year when the Griz went undefeated in the Hot Autumn Ice Champions tournament in Wenatchee, Wash., bringing home the program's first championship trophy.

Then in January, fresh off Christmas break, the Griz traveled to Spokane, Wash., and swept another tournament.

Leading the way for the Griz in both tournaments, like she has for most of the year, was Midthun.

During the Spokane tournament, Midthun said the "Gretzky" rule was applied to her sev-

eral times. The rule states that a player can only score three goals in a single match before being penalized.

Needless to say, Midthun isn't a huge fan of the rule.

"It's frustrating," she said. "Especially after that third goal, the net seems to be wide open."

While Midthun has a knack for lighting the lamp, relying on her teammates isn't a problem for her either.

"The team has definitely gotten better," Midthun said. "We're better at skating and passing and we're able to make plays."

Dvorak echoed Midthun, saying even players from previous seasons who hadn't skated before have shown huge improvements.

One of those players, Laura Wold, is in her fifth season with the Griz.

"Laura couldn't even stop the first time I saw her skate," Dvorak said. "But she has worked very hard and is now on our first line."

Wold gives credit for her and her teammates' improvements to the coaches and the expanding program.

"The coaches have always been very inspiring," Wold said. "All the girls are great, and it's a positive atmosphere. It also helps having girls like Sarah and Kendall (Kendall Cole) out there. They are kind of like player-coaches."

Wold said that as the program becomes bigger, more girls become aware of the team, and hopefully more experienced girls will tryout.

That was the case for Midthun, who is now in her 14th year of playing hockey.

"I just wanted to continue to play hockey," she said. "This team provided me with an outlet, and it's been a lot of fun."

And adding to the fun for Midthun is skating for a program that now expects to win.

"I think every team goes in with hopes to win," she said. "But this year we have the ability and capability to win. These girls have now played hockey before, and instead of going in and being like, 'OK, let's go in there and try to get one win,' now we actually feel confident about our skills. Now we can be like, 'OK, let's go win this tournament.'"

The Griz will play their weekly league game Wednesday at 10:30 p.m. at the Glacier Ice Rink.

The Griz will also host their annual tournament, the Griz Cup, April 3-5 at the Glacier Ice Rink.

tyson.alger@umontana.edu

Federer to miss Davis Cup match, Dubai tournament

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Roger Federer pulled out of Switzerland's Davis Cup series against the United States next month and a tournament in Dubai next week because of a back problem that has bothered him since last year.

The 13-time Grand Slam singles champion had announced in October he would play for his country against the U.S. team led by Andy Roddick in Birmingham, Ala., on March 6-8. It would have been the first time since 2004 that Federer played in first-round Davis Cup matches.

"As a precautionary measure, I will use the next few weeks to make sure the back injury is fully rehabilitated and I am ready for the rest of the 2009 season," Federer said in a statement posted on his Web site Tuesday.

He has not played a competitive match since Feb. 1, when he lost to top-ranked Rafael Nadal in five sets in the Australian Open final.

A victory over Nadal in that match would have allowed Federer to tie Pete Sampras' career record of 14 majors.

A right leg injury could force Nadal to miss the Feb. 23-28 Dubai tournament, too, but he said Monday he hopes to play for Spain in the Davis Cup.

"This was a hard decision to make as I am missing not only one of my favorite events on tour in Dubai, but I am also missing out on an opportunity to help my country try and move on to the next round of Davis Cup," Federer said.

Tickets for all three days of the Switzerland-U.S. contest at the 16,000-seat Birmingham-Jefferson Convention Complex Arena sold out in less than an hour last month.

"I'm kind of disappointed, to be honest. Obviously, it changes the complexion of the match, in that it makes us a pretty significant favorite," U.S. Davis Cup captain Patrick McEnroe said in a telephone interview.

"He's a big part of the reason we sold out. I'm kind of disappointed for tennis," McEnroe said.

Without the No. 2-ranked Federer, Switzerland probably will rely heavily on No. 18 Stanislas Wawrinka against the United States. Wawrinka teamed with Federer to win the gold medal in doubles at the Beijing Olympics.

The U.S. team is expected to include No. 6 Roddick, No. 13 Blake and the doubles pairing of twins Bob and Mike Bryan.

No rest for the wicked: Phelps, Rodriguez deserve what they get

Oh, how the mighty have fallen. It's nearly impossible to open a sports section these days without seeing the on-going sagas of sports greats Michael Phelps and Alex Rodriguez.

Once they were men America loved to admire, loved to cheer for and loved to place on the highest pedestals. Now, because of Phelps' pot-smoking scandal and Rodriguez's positive steroid tests, the whole sporting world has been in an absolute tizzy. People just can't get enough stories about these two fallen angels.

All I have to say is it's about time. No one is perfect, and I dare you to find anyone out there who is genuinely surprised by these men's actions.

Some argue that these two are receiving this scrutiny only

to drive home a point: if you do drugs, you pay the price. But these men must be held to the highest standards and punished to the greatest extent for their idiotic exploits.

What do you expect after you've just signed a \$252 million contract, or if you're a 14-time Olympic medal winner? Do you really think people are going to let something like drug use go? Of course not!

Major League Baseball is accountable for its athletes and all the shenanigans they pull, both on and off the field. Each and every



Whitney Bermes
MONTANA KAIMIN

team has an image to uphold. Stunts like what Rodriguez and many other players have pulled do nothing but tarnish this reputation.

And USA Swimming has every right to slap a three-month suspension on Phelps. You do the crime, you do the time. And while a lot of 23-year-olds have hit a bong a time or two, Phelps isn't just any other 23-year-old.

With the out-of-this-world amount of money these men bank, they must be held to the highest level of scrutiny for their wrongdoings. A-Rod isn't just a random 34-year-old dabbling with some

human growth hormone concoction trying to keep up with the young pups in his recreational baseball league. And Phelps isn't just any other 23-year-old frat boy taking a bong hit just looking for a good time.

No matter how many press conferences they hold, no matter how many statements they release to the media via their agents, no matter how many "tears" they shed in forced apologies, their actions are not justifiable.

Yes, to err is human. But most humans aren't being paid multi-million dollar sums to sport a Speedo for the cameras. And most humans aren't the highest-paid player in professional baseball. A whole different set of standards applies.

whitney.bermes@umontana.edu

Rodriguez says he took over-the-counter substance

ASSOCIATED PRESS

TAMPA, Fla. — Alex Rodriguez offered new details Tuesday about his performance-enhancing drug use, saying his cousin injected him with an over-the-counter substance to gain an energy boost.

The New York Yankees star said using the banned drug that he said he obtained from the Dominican Republic was a "stupid mistake."

"I knew we weren't taking Tic Tacs," said Rodriguez, who was joined at the head table with Yankees general manager Brian Cashman and manager Joe Girardi.

The three-time AL MVP and baseball's highest-paid player met the media 10 days after Sports Illustrated reported that he tested positive in 2003.

Rodriguez started his news conference by reading from a prepared statement. At the end, he paused for 37 seconds — a dramatic break in which he looked side to side, blinked several times and took a sip of water — then finally turned to his teammates and said "thank you."

Sitting in the front row were Derek Jeter, Andy Pettitte, Mariano Rivera and Jorge Posada. Jeter, with his arms crossed, and the other three stared right back at Rodriguez as he apologized directly to them.

In an interview with ESPN last

week, Rodriguez admitted to using banned drugs from 2001 to 2003 while playing for the Texas Rangers. He insisted then and again Tuesday that he has not used banned drugs since.

"I'm here to take my medicine," Rodriguez said. "One thing I will say after today I hope to focus on baseball. We have a very special team here."

Asked whether his stats during those years should count, he said it wasn't for him to decide.

The 33-year-old Rodriguez has hit 553 home runs and is expected by many to break Barry Bonds' record of 762.

The drug-related apology has become a near-annual February rite for the Yankees.

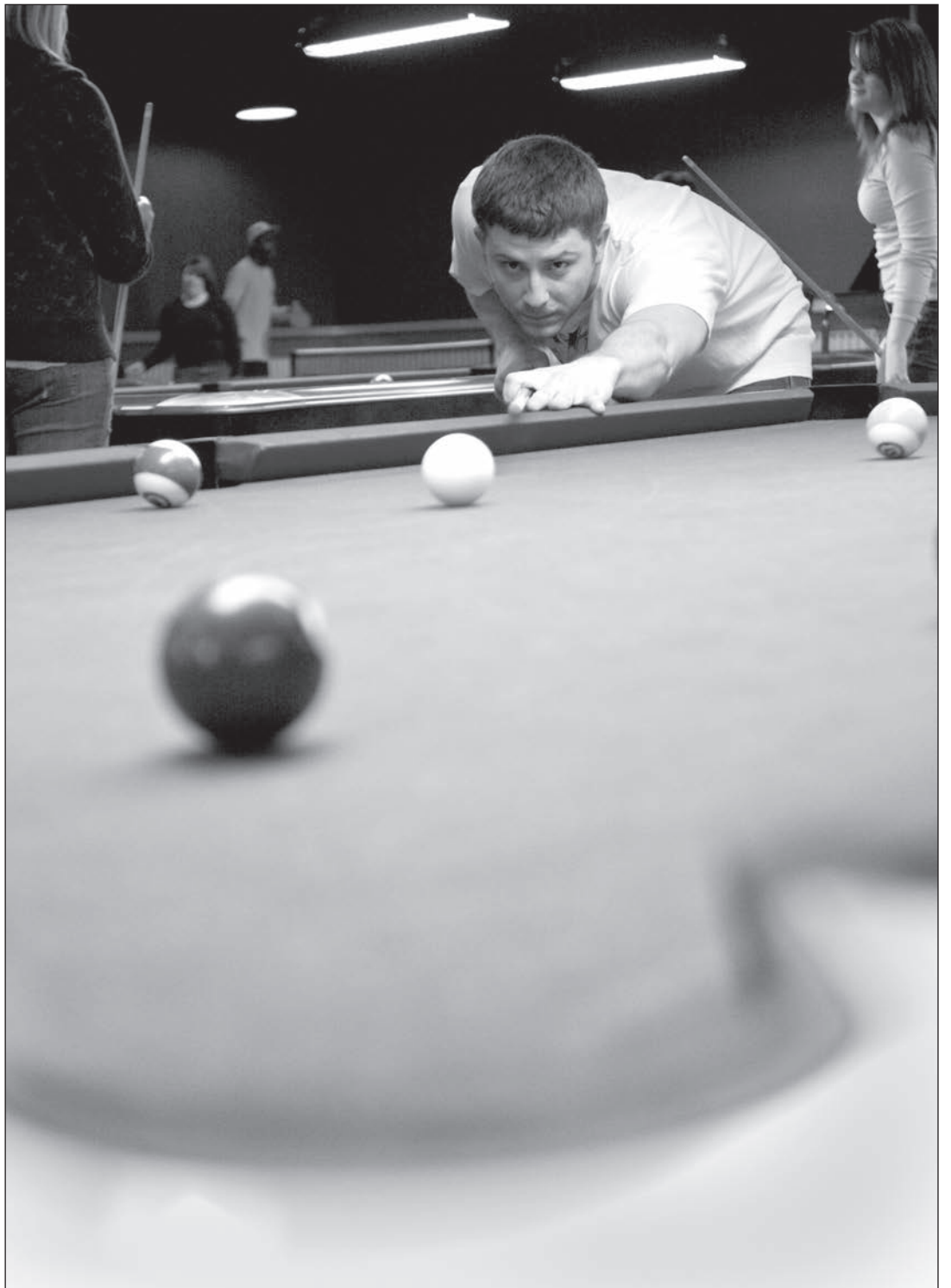
Jason Giambi gave an ambiguous one at Yankee Stadium on the eve of spring training in 2005.

Pettitte gave an emotional and lengthy one when he arrived at spring training last year.

That confessional lasted 55 minutes. Rodriguez's on Tuesday was far shorter, lasting about 32 minutes before it was cut off.

For years, Rodriguez denied using performance-enhancing drugs. But SI reported he was on a list of 104 players who tested positive during baseball's 2003 survey. SI identified the drugs causing the positive test as Primobolan and testosterone.

A school of sharks



Blaine Dunkley/Montana Kaimin

Stephen Simpson, a senior international business and finance major and UM billiards instructor, takes aim as he runs the table in a match against one of his students, Tuesday afternoon in the UC Game Room. "(Simpson) was my instructor last semester," said another player, Ian Stokes, a freshman in business marketing. "I'm in here all the time now."

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9am-2pm

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Diversity Advisory Council Student Mini-Grant Applications Spring Semester 2009

The Diversity Advisory Council (DAC) invites applications from student organizations for Spring 2009 (and retroactive Autumn 2008) student-sponsored cultural or diversity-related events. Application deadline is Friday, March 5. For details and application forms go to:

<http://connect.umt.edu/diversity/awardsandgrants.php>

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Snowbowl hosts wild Gelande Championship

Matt McLeod
MONTANA KAIMIN

The annual North American Gelande Championship at Snowbowl this weekend sounds like a kitchen showdown featuring chefs making jiggly Italian desserts, but it's nothing so mundane. In fact, it's a contest for the borderline insane.

Gelände is similar to the Olympic Nordic ski jumping competition, where skiers shoot off graded ramps, soaring for distance. The main difference is, while Nordic jumpers have the benefit of the traditional free-heel binding, useful for taking off, gelände jumpers use fixed-boot downhill equipment, upping the amount of speed needed for lift.

The world-record Nordic leap is 780 feet, more than twice as far as the record 366-foot gelände mark. But as world-class gelände flier Erik Wilson explained, hurtling off a gelände jump can be even more dangerous.

"The Nordic guys would tell you we're all a little crazy," Wilson said. "We sometimes have to hit our jump going upwards of 65 miles per hour."

The Snowbowl competition is one of three national gelände championships, the other two taking place at Steamboat Ski Resort in Steamboat Springs, Colo., and Snowbird Ski Resort in the Wasatch Range east of Salt Lake City.

Pros could be leaping distances of more than 200 feet during Sunday's final, but the answer to the question of how far the winner will sail should be harder to predict than his name, or last name at least. The smart money is on Wilson or his middle brother, Rolf. Between these two and their eldest brother, Brent, a Wilson has walked away with top honors the past 11 years.

Rolf holds the world record, which he set at the Pro Alpine Flying Championships in Steamboat in 2004 and tied again a year ago. Last year, he was the top dog at Snowbowl with a jump of 194 feet, besting Erik by a foot, though Erik set the hill record with a 205-foot jump in 2006. Erik calls Rolf "the man, the master of gelände," but says he isn't ready to take a backseat on Sunday.

"I'd say I'm going to take Rolf out," Erik said. "I'm feeling pretty good about this one."

The good news for professional

challengers is they'll only have to battle two Wilsons. Brent, who started the winning tradition with a 1998 Snowbowl win, is laid up with a blown knee and shattered wrist after recently botching a landing on a 320-foot jump at Steamboat. In true ballsy Wilson style, Brent limped away, refusing a toboggan ride down the hill from medical personnel.

Organizer and two-time competitor Jesse Goldsmith said he expects around 15 to 20 pros from Utah, Colorado and the rest of the Montana to make the trip to Snowbowl, while a handful of local amateurs should round out the field. Goldsmith said the event is the perfect test for thrill-seekers looking for a rush.

"If you want to do something scary and challenging, anyone and everyone is welcome," Goldsmith said. "All you have to do is come sign your life away."

The Snowbowl jump is a milder version of its larger Steamboat and Snowbird counterparts, but landing in one piece is still a daunting task. First, jumpers must negotiate a tricky, high-speed turn in the run up to the table, then streak up the ramp to take off, before shooting an 80-foot gap and touching down safely on the other side.

Erik has a piece of advice for first-timers.

"Try to have fun and stay alive," he said.

There is a silver lining for those taking the perilous plunge: a possible pot of gold at the end of the flying rainbow. Entry fees are \$75 for amateurs and \$125 for professionals, and organizers will use the funds to divvy up an expected \$8,000 to \$10,000 in prizes to winning contestants. First prize in the pro division is a \$1,000 check, while the runner-up will earn \$900 and the third place contestant will walk away with \$750. Those looking to compete should show up Friday for practice runs.

Amateurs won't go away empty-handed either, but one might end up feeling a little chilly. The first-place amateur prize is a \$250 gift certificate to Snowbowl, but there's a string attached. It's a running tradition that the amateur winner performs an encore jump — naked. (Need to see it to believe it? Log on to YouTube and search "naked gelände" to check out 2007 win-



Photo courtesy of Lake Missoula Motorsports

Jesse Goldsmith flies off a ramp during last year's North American Gelände Championship at Snowbowl.

ner Chris Newey in all his barren glory.)

On Saturday, all competitors take to the slopes. The pros will be seeded by the length of their preliminary jumps, with competitors mastering the longest leaps performing last on Sunday; amateurs do six jumps to qualify for the next day's final, then the finalists perform two more.

Spectators won't be sitting on their hands, either. There is a Calcutta auction to get fans involved Saturday. Bidders will pick contestants and potentially win money based on their athlete's performance. Goldsmith said banking on a winner could fetch \$800 to \$900. The bar is charging a \$3 cover Sunday, but Goldsmith said the spectacle is well worth the price of admission.

"The bar is going to be hopping," Goldsmith said. "It'll be a Sunday fun-day for sure."

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Snowbowl's annual NORTH AMERICAN GELANDE CHAMPIONSHIP kicks off at noon this Saturday, Feb. 21, with rounds one and two of the amateur division. Stick around until Sunday to watch the amateur finals at noon. Pro competition begins at 1 p.m.

The event is open to anyone who dares to compete. Brave souls should register on Friday between 9 a.m. and 4 p.m. Amateur division registration is \$75, pro division costs \$125.

Non-skier admission price is \$3 per person. Bring a lawn chair if you plan to sit.

Local farms shrink but are big at local markets

Jeff Osteen
MONTANA KAIMIN

Missoula County's farm count is growing, but the total value of farm production has decreased, according to the 2007 Census of Agriculture released this month.

The number of Missoula County farms increased 9 percent, from 641 in 2002 to 699 in 2007. But the market value for the agricultural production (crop and livestock) from these farms dropped by 9 percent, from \$8.36 million to \$7.58 million.

"I'm not really sure the number of farms are increasing," said Paul Hubbard, land use program

coordinator for Missoula County Community Food and Agriculture Coalition.

Hubbard said the census results might be misleading, depending on what the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) considers a farm.

The USDA defines a farm as "any place from which \$1,000 or more of agricultural products were, or normally would be, produced and sold during the Census year."

"One thing's for sure," Hubbard said, "we continue to lose farmland."

Hubbard said developers con-

tinuously buy farmland and turn it into housing subdivisions. It is difficult to turn a house back into a farm because the fertile land required to grow food is lost.

He said there are many reasons to get into farming, the most romantic of which is the appeal of living "closely with the rhythms of the earth."

According to the census, most new farms nationwide rest on fewer acres and produce lower revenue than in past years. Of the 699 farms reported in Missoula County, 487 have operators who don't list farming as their main occupation.

He said people who become small farmers enjoy growing food for their communities, and although total revenue from USDA-defined farmland has declined, there are emerging business opportunities in the local markets.

Hubbard said that while regional farmers and ranchers won't strike it rich, their operations can be viable.

He said local fare is in demand and higher profit margins for local farmers make selling locally more attractive than "selling into the oblivion of the global market."

Missoula has many community-minded restaurants, Hubbard said. "They want to develop relationships with local farmers and local ranchers."

Even the Clark Fork River Market, Missoula's farmers' market under the Higgins Street Bridge, has recently begun accepting food stamp money via electronic benefit transfer cards.

This way, Hubbard said, locally-grown food goes straight from producer to consumer, which translates into tens of thousands of dollars that stay in Missoula.

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Devoted downhill skier dies

ASSOCIATED PRESS

PORTLAND, Maine — Paul Schipper, an avid skier who obsessively hit the slopes every day of the season for more than 24 years, has died. He was 85.

Schipper died Monday of complications from pneumonia at the Maine Veterans' Home in Bangor, according to his wife, Christine Schipper. He had been hospitalized since breaking his hip in December.

Schipper was a familiar figure at Sugarloaf ski resort in Carrabassett Valley, where he and his wife owned a ski lodge. Between 1980 and January 2005, he skied the 3,903 consecutive days that the mountain was open.

Schipper skied in blizzards and through illness and once put off having a cancerous kidney removed so he could keep the streak going. Another time he arranged to ski down the mountain just after midnight in front of the lights of a ski groomer so he could drive to his son's graduation in Poughkeepsie, N.Y., and keep the streak alive.

"He had a lot of spirit," his wife said. "Physically, it was astound-

ing. I don't see how anyone could keep up with the things he did."

Schipper was born in Detroit and grew up in Westchester County, N.Y. He attended Syracuse University but left after three years to join the military and serve in World War II, his wife said. He later served in the Korean War.

Schipper became a pilot for Eastern Airlines, but then retired from flying and moved to western Maine in the 1960s. He and his wife owned the Lumberjack Lodge near Sugarloaf and Kibby Kamp fishing and hunting camp in nearby Kibby Township.

After Schipper started the streak, it was considered a feat after only three or four years, said Nancy Marshall of Carrabassett Valley, a friend who first met Schipper in the 1980s.

Over time, he felt compelled to ski every day simply to keep the streak going.

The streak ended without fanfare on Jan. 4, 2005. That day, he stayed home with a serious bout of the flu, circling the date on his calendar to mark the end of an era.

Schipper wasn't an expert skier, Marshall said, but he was certainly inspirational.

"He wasn't a god of the slopes by any means. He was a regular guy who did something incredible with this streak," she said.

A ski trail — Schipper's Streak — is named in his honor at Sugarloaf mountain. Plans are in the works for a ski parade at Sugarloaf in his honor.

Montana and Wyoming wind projects still blowing

ASSOCIATED PRESS

CHEYENNE, Wyo. — The recession may have taken the wind out of the sails of some wind energy projects around the nation, but that's not the case in Wyoming and Montana.

Officials in both states say they have not heard of any wind projects being delayed. If there are projects being delayed, they say there are plenty of others still going forward.

"The developers are all still exercising their best efforts to move their projects forward," Steve Ellenbecker, energy adviser to Gov. Dave Freudenthal, said.

Chantel McCormick of the Montana Department of Commerce's Energy Promotion and Development Division, said her office is tracking more than 50 wind projects in various stages of development.

"We still have wind folks coming in to look at our resources," McCormick said.

The recession has slowed demand around the country for wind turbines, siphoned off available financing and put many projects on hold, forcing turbine manufacturers to lay off workers

recently. The \$787 billion stimulus package passed by Congress contains money to help revive the industry.

"I think it's endemic of the slowdown, but I think we still have reason for great optimism and enthusiasm," Ellenbecker said.

The Anschutz Corp. is going ahead with plans to build 1,000 wind turbines near Rawlins in southern Wyoming as well as a \$3 billion power line project to carry the electricity to the southwest United States.

"We're committed to them and we're very aggressively pursuing them," Jim Miller, who is overseeing both projects for Anschutz, said. "And we're cautiously optimistic that this is all going to work."

The company is negotiating through the permitting and environmental study stages for the projects, Miller said.

Plans are to start building the wind farm in 2011.

Jerry Vanietti, vice president of Trans-Elect Development Co., said his company was looking into accelerating a \$300 million power line project in southeast Wyoming in order to take advantage of extended production tax

credits in the federal stimulus package.

"The economic downturn has certainly affected our industry, the electricity industry, but I'd say that the one shining place is in renewable power and transmission associated with it," Vanietti said.

And both Wyoming and Montana are rich in wind resources.

"We have more to offer in these Rocky Mountain states," McCormick said. "Our wind speeds are higher, they're stronger, they're more consistent."

Ellenbecker said the wind energy industry is in an enviable position in terms of support from the favorable federal policy toward renewable energy but still has to be taken into account the economic slowdown.

"We're in a situation where we got to re-evaluate what's the economic slowdown going to do to customer demand for power and match all of that against the continuing need to provide resources to keep the lights on," he said.

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Washingtonian wins dogsled race

ASSOCIATED PRESS

LINCOLN, Mont. — A musher from Riverside, Wash., Mark Stamm, crossed the finish line in Lincoln at 11:32 a.m. Monday, with 11 dogs, to win the 300-mile sled-dog race in Montana's annual Race to the Sky.

It took Stamm approximately nine hours to run

the 74 miles to the finish, which included resting on the trail.

Early Monday, musher Rick Larson of Sand Coulee, Mont., won the Race to the Sky 200-mile event. Larson and 10 dogs crossed the finish line near Lincoln at 12:11 a.m.

An awards ceremony will be held Tuesday at 6 a.m. at Lincoln Community Hall in Lincoln.

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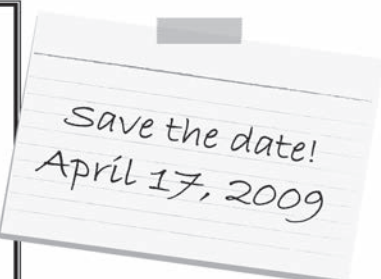
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Cache of Ice Age fossils found in Los Angeles

ASSOCIATED PRESS

LOS ANGELES — Scientists are studying a huge cache of Ice Age fossil deposits recovered near the famous La Brea Tar Pits in the heart of the nation's second-largest city.

Among the finds is a near-intact mammoth skeleton, a skull of an American lion and bones of saber-toothed cats, dire wolves, bison, horses, ground sloths and other mammals.

Researchers discovered 16 fossil deposits under an old parking lot next to the tar pits in 2006 and began sifting through them last

summer. The mammoth remains, including 10-foot-long tusks, were in an ancient riverbed near the fossil cache.

Officials of the Page Museum at the tar pits plan to formally announce their findings on Wednesday. The discoveries could double the museum's Ice Age collection.

Such a rich find usually takes years to excavate. But with a deadline looming to build an underground parking garage for the next-door art museum, researchers boxed up the deposits and lifted them out of the ground using a

massive crane.

"It's like a paleontological Christmas," research team member Andie Thomer wrote in a blog post in July.

The research dubbed "Project 23" — because it took 23 boxes to house the deposits — uncovered fossilized mammals as well as smaller critters including turtles, snails and insects. Separately, scientists found a well-preserved Columbian mammoth that they nicknamed Zed.

An examination reveals Zed, which is 80 percent complete, had

arthritic joints and several broken and re-healed ribs — an indication that he suffered a major injury during his life.

"It's looking more and more as if Zed lived a pretty rough life," Thomer blogged in December.

Some scientists not connected with the discovery said this is the first significant fossil find since the original excavations at the tar pits more than a century ago.

"Usually these things are either lost in the mixing or not recovered in the processing of the oily sand and soil they occur in," paleontolo-

gist Jere H. Lipps of the University of California, Berkeley wrote in an e-mail to The Associated Press.

The La Brea Tar Pits ranks among the world's famous fossil sites. Between 10,000 and 40,000 years ago, mammoths, mastodons, saber-tooth cats and other Ice Age beasts became trapped by sticky asphalt that oozing upward through cracks and fissures in the ground. The newly recovered fossils were also in asphalt.

Since 1906, more than a million bones have been unearthed from the sticky ponds.

Sen. Burris tried to raise funds for ousted Illinois Gov. Blagojevich

ASSOCIATED PRESS

SPRINGFIELD, Ill. — U.S. Sen. Roland Burris now acknowledges attempting to raise money for ousted Gov. Rod Blagojevich — an explosive twist in his evolving story on how he landed a coveted Senate appointment from the man accused of trying to sell the seat.

Burris made the admission to reporters late Monday, after releasing an affidavit over the weekend saying he had more contact with Blagojevich advisers about the Senate seat than he had described under oath to the state House panel that recommended Blagojevich's impeachment. The Democrat also said in the affidavit, but not before the panel, that the governor's brother asked him for fundraising help.

Though Burris insists he never raised money for Blagojevich while the governor was considering whom to appoint to the seat President Barack Obama vacated, the revelation that he had attempted to do so is likely to increase calls for Burris' resignation and an investigation into whether he committed perjury before the panel.

Illinois Democrats have sent documents related to Burris' testimony to a county prosecutor for review. In Washington, a good-government group recommended Burris' expulsion from the Senate

if an ethics committee investigation shows he lied to Senate leaders.

Burris, in the middle of a previously scheduled tour of northern and central Illinois cities, would not discuss his attempts to raise funds for Blagojevich, but said he didn't do anything wrong and encouraged officials to look into the matter.

"I welcome the opportunity to go before any and all investigative bodies ... to answer any questions they have," he told reporters in Peoria, before declining to answer questions.

Burris, who declined to address reporters again during a later stop in Bloomington, also said he planned to release later this week "a concise document" related to his testimony, but he would not elaborate.

After an event Monday night in Peoria, Burris told reporters that he had reached out to friends after Blagojevich's brother, Robert, called him before President Barack Obama's election asking him to raise \$10,000 or \$15,000 for the governor.

"So sometime shortly after Obama was elected, the brother called (again) and I had talked to some people about trying to see if we could put a fundraiser on," Burris said, according to an audio clip provided by the Journal Star of Peoria.

But Burris said his friends weren't willing to contribute and

suggested that Robert Blagojevich talk to Burris' partner about approaching other potential donors.

Burris reiterated that in the end, he raised no money and hosted no fundraiser. He told Robert Blagojevich in a later conversation that he couldn't raise money because he was interested in the Senate seat. Burris, however, already had indicated his interest in the Senate seat to gubernatorial aides, including Robert Blagojevich, before the November election.

Lawmakers of both parties have said Burris should resign after he admitted over the weekend that he had talked to several aides of the governor before getting the Senate post. During his testimony before the panel, he said he remembered talking only to one aide about the seat and did not say he was hit up for campaign donations.

The new affidavit submitted to the impeachment panel indicated contact not only with Robert Blagojevich, but with Blagojevich's former chief of staff John Harris and two other close friends — all of whom Burris had been specifically asked about by the committee's top Republican.

"You would think those would be the kind of people you'd remember you had a conversation with," said Rep. Gary Hannig, a Litchfield Democrat and a member of the impeachment committee.

Thong-wearing robber sentenced to 12 years

ASSOCIATED PRESS

DENVER — One of two Colorado men who used women's thong underwear to cover their faces while they robbed a convenience store has been sentenced to 12 years in prison.

Twenty-year-old Joaquin Rico was sentenced Tuesday. He and 25-year-old Joseph Richard Espinoza pleaded guilty to the May 15 robbery.

Prosecutors say the pair threw a

large rock through the store's window at 5 a.m., soon after the clerk opened the store.

One man wore a green thong; the other wore blue.

Prosecutors say Rico grabbed the store's clerk by the neck and punched her in the face several times, breaking her jaw. He then collected about \$100 from the cash registers, while Espinoza stole 37 packs of cigarettes.

Espinoza's sentencing is scheduled for Monday.

Obama OKs more Afghanistan troops

ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON — Defense and congressional officials say President Barack Obama has approved an increase in U.S. forces for the flagging war in Afghanistan.


The Obama administration is expected to announce on Tuesday or Wednesday that it will send one additional Army brigade and an unknown number of Marines to Afghanistan this spring. One official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said the total is about 17,000 troops.

That would be the first installment on a larger influx of U.S. forces that have been widely expected this year. It would get a few thousand troops in place in time for the increase in fighting that usually comes with warmer weather and ahead of national elections this summer.


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DEATH

Continued from page 1

crimes. Sen. John Brenden, R-Scobey, used the case of convicted child killer and pedophile Joseph E. Duncan III as an example. Duncan kidnapped an 8-year-old girl and her 9-year-old brother, tortured them and killed the boy.

"If somebody did that to one of my own, I would be enraged like Jesus was in the Bible," Brenden said. "Jesus could get mad."

Sen. Rick Laible, R-Darby, said life in prison without parole allows the offender to remain in the public eye. He argued that if Charles Manson had been put to death, there would not be so many documentaries still focusing on him.

"If he would've been put to death, there would have been closure," Laible said. "When I see true evil, I want closure."

A similar bill in the 2007 ses-

sion was the first to make it out of the Senate in Montana's history. It died in House committee.

Those to vote for the bill were Sens. Gary Branae, D-Billings; Roy Brown, R-Billings; Taylor Brown, R-Huntley; Mike Cooney, D-Helena; Ron Erickson, D-Missoula; Steve Gallus, D-Butte; Kim Gillan, D-Billings; Bradley Hamlett, D-Cascade; Bob Hawks, D-Bozeman; Larry Jent, D-Bozeman; Carol Juneau, D-Browning; Christine Kaufmann, D-Helena; Jim Keane, D-Butte; Cliff Larsen, D-Missoula; Lynda Moss, D-Billings; Gary Perry, R-Manhattan; Trudi Schmidt, D-Great Falls; Jim Shockley, R-Victor; Carolyn Squires, D-Missoula; Donald Steinbeisser, R-Sidney; Sharon Stewart-Perego, D-Crow Agency; Joe Tropila, D-Great Falls; Mitch Tropila, D-Great Falls; David Wanzenried, D-Missoula; Carol Williams, D-Missoula; Jonathan Windy Boy, D-Box Elder; Ryan Zinke, R-Whitefish.

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ENERGY

Continued from page 1

COT's Energy Technology Program, which is putting on this series in conjunction with the carpentry program, is looking forward to Wednesday's seminar.

"Folks that come tend to be interested in their options," Preston said. "They are trying to figure out 'What will work on my site?' So we're hoping bringing in some experts will help people make some decisions."

At least 125 people attended the last seminar, said Mary Opitz, an associate for COT's Outreach Program.

"It's for everybody, and we advertise it that way," she said. "There's been students from the energy tech program and just regular homeowners (who have attended). We try to make it accessible for everyone who's interested."

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STIMULUS

Continued from page 1

there will be a \$500 increase in the maximum Pell Grant available per student. This means that the maximum grant will be increased to \$5,350 starting July 1, according to Brad Eldredge, director of Institutional Research for the Montana University System.

The federal stimulus also directs \$200 million to college work-study programs, another area in which Montana's portion will be determined later. Through the Federal Work Study program, students can earn funds through part-time employment to help pay for college.

Also part of the stimulus is the "American Opportunity" tax credit that gives students the opportunity to receive up to a \$2,500 tax credit to offset the costs of college tuition, fees and textbooks. This is an increase from the current \$1,800 higher education tax credit available.

It's possible the Montana University System could receive other funding from the stimulus as well. Gov. Brian Schweitzer's office will have discretion over how it wants

to spend a \$124 million education fund granted by the stimulus. The governor also has control of an additional \$27 million for other government services, such as repairing and modernizing buildings, Eldredge said.

According to Eldredge, the stimulus will have less of an effect on the Montana University System than it will in other states because Montana has only recently begun to feel the effects of the economic recession and therefore has not needed to make as many drastic budget cuts.

"Our budget is in better shape than a lot of states," he said.

Until recently, Montana has had a strong economy because of the high commodity prices of many of the state's main exports, including agricultural products, minerals and oil, he said.

"We've done very well as a state," he said.

Though many of the details are unclear at this point, Eldredge said the Montana University System is working to understand the various aspects of the stimulus package so it can decide how best to direct money to the state's universities.

"We're trying to digest it," he said.

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GM, Chrysler seek more government aid

ASSOCIATED PRESS

DETROIT — General Motors and Chrysler said Tuesday their request for federal aid ballooned to a staggering \$39 billion — only months after receiving billions in loans — in new plans that envision massive job losses and intense restructuring to survive a deepening recession.

General Motors Corp. presented a survival plan that calls for cutting a total of 47,000 jobs globally and closing five more U.S. factories, a move that represents the largest work force reduction announced by a U.S. company in the economic meltdown. Chrysler LLC said it will cut 3,000 more jobs and stop producing three vehicle models.

The grim reports came as the United Auto Workers union said it had reached a tentative agreement with GM, Chrysler and Ford Motor

Co. on contract changes. Concessions with the union and debt-holders were a condition of the government bailout.

GM said it could need up to \$30 billion from the Treasury Department, up from a previous estimate of \$18 billion. That includes \$13.4 billion the company has already received. The world's largest automaker said it could run out of money by March without new funds and needs \$2 billion next month and another \$2.6 billion in April.

"We have a lot of work to do," GM Chairman and Chief Executive Rick Wagoner said. "We're still going at this with a great sense of urgency."

GM's request includes a credit line of \$7.5 billion to be used if the downturn is more pronounced than expected. But the automaker claimed it could be profitable in two years and repay its loans by 2017.

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