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Montana Kaimin, January 18, 2024

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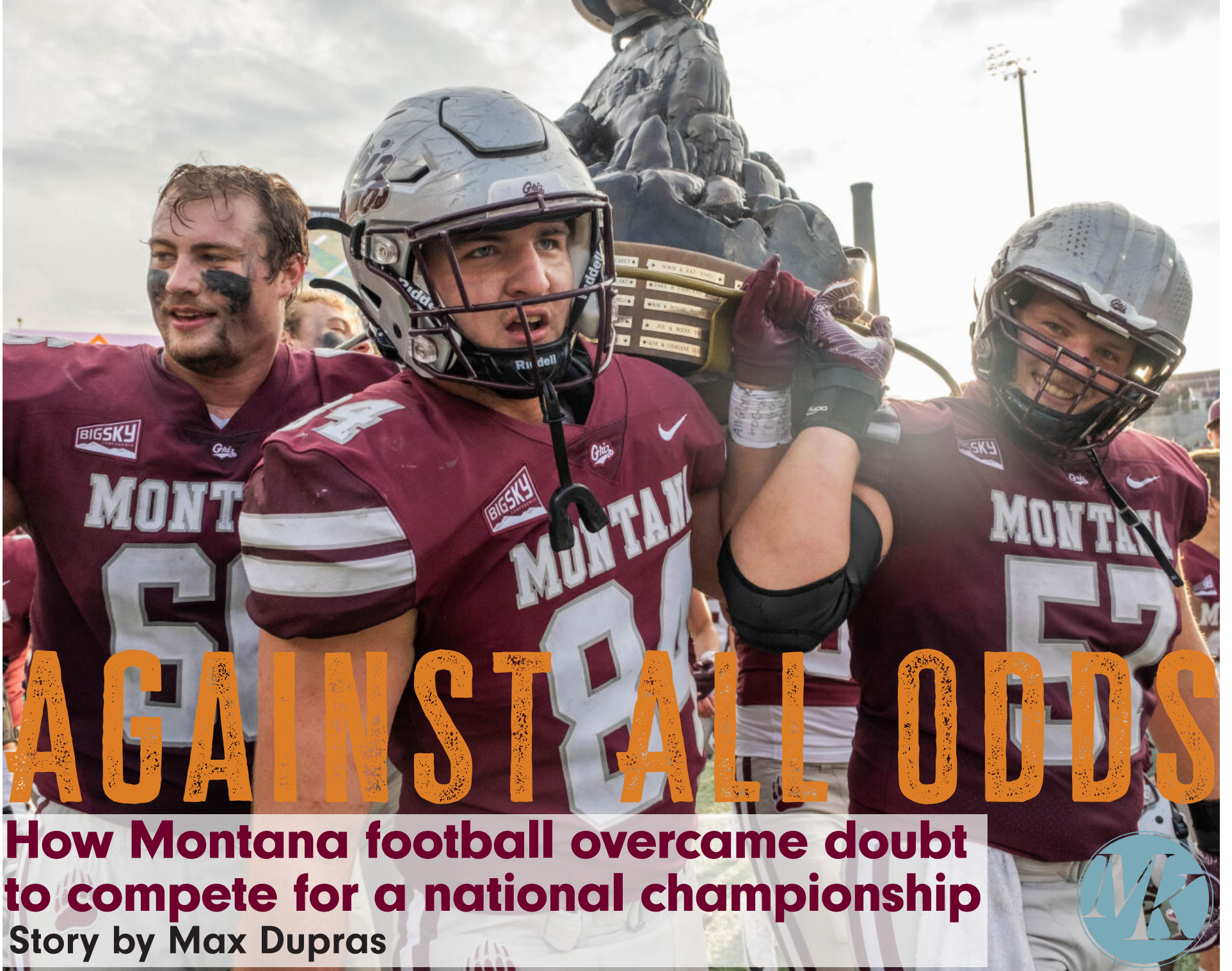
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MONTANA KAIMIN



AGAINST ALL ODDS

How Montana football overcame doubt to compete for a national championship

Story by Max Dupras

7 Housing hustle

14 Basketball over break

16 Gladstone gets gold

Cover photo by Walker McDonald

January 18, 2024 | Volume 126 | Issue No. 15

Kiosk



The Montana Kaimin is a weekly, independent student newspaper at the University of Montana. The Kaimin office and the University of Montana are located on land originally inhabited by the Salish People. Kaimin is a derivative of a Salish language word, "Qe'ymin," that is pronounced kay-MEEN and means "book," "message" or "paper that brings news."

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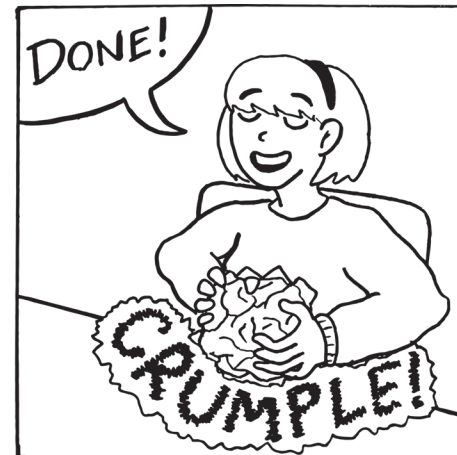
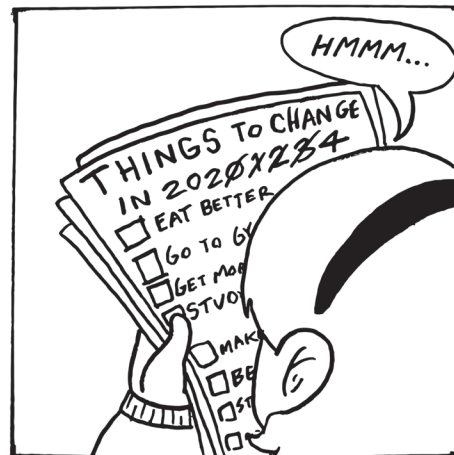
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Updates on student group events, fundraising opportunities, giveaways and more!

KAIMIN COMIC: SE 1 EP 8



BARRETT CLEMENT | MONTANA KAIMIN

BARRETT

SUDOKU

Edited by Margie E. Burke

Difficulty: Easy

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

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

Answer to Previous Sudoku:

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

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How the championship game made a band kid a believer

It was Dec. 9, just after the quarterfinal game against Furman, and I was willing my heart to stop pounding.

From my perch at the top of the south-side-stands, I watched the sea of Griz fans pour onto the field, their cheers echoing up the concrete bleachers. I almost didn't hear my dad until he was right next to me, pulling me into one of those back-clapping bro-hugs. He had tears in his eyes, and I did too.

"This is so cool for the Griz," he said.

I shook my head. "This is so cool for me!"

When it comes to football, I've never been a believer.

Which, given my four-year devotion to the Grizzly Marching Band, I realize is deeply ironic, but feel free to chalk it up to my skeptic nature. It's the hero worship I struggle with, along with the reckless drinking and the folks that get a little too into it. I didn't feel like there was a place for me.

As Junior Bergen ran into the endzone in the quarterfinal, I must've looked like every other Griz fan in the stadium, grabbing my neighbor and screaming so loud my teeth chattered.

I screamed because another win would mean one more game, one more parade and one more performance at Washington-Grizzly Stadium before I hung up my trombone after 10 years.

Then the Griz won the semifinals in double overtime, and I got a text from my director about fundraising for Frisco, Texas. There was planning and surveys to make sure everyone could make it to Missoula in time to jet off.

It was a scramble, for sure, but I wasn't bothered. I was too busy watching what was happening across Montana in dining rooms, barstools and over social media.

The University launched a fundraiser to send the band to Frisco, asking for a daunting \$200,000, and dollars started pouring in. Donation notes honored former musicians and Griz fans. Montana State University donated \$3,000, and posts across the nation declared some things were bigger than football rivalry.

Many of the people who should be cleared to travel got the green light: the band, the Spirit Squad, Zoo Crew and Monte, too. Missoulians lined the streets with posters and boards trumpeting, "We Believe!"

Even boarding the charter plane flying the band and athletics reps to Texas, the pilot's intercom came on, announcing a hearty, "Go

Griz!"

In Texas, the tensions rose, but the telltale hum of Griz Nation hung constant.

With the generous donations, the band was able to enjoy four days of Texas instead of the usual breakneck-paced two, and I watched some born-and-raised Montanans marvel at skyscrapers for the first time. At the GrizFest pep rally, thousands of Montanans and Grizzlies reunited under fireworks. I started to feel that high again as the band roared into the crowd, and it roared back.

At every step on the road, at pep rallies, even in hotel bathrooms, we had alumni run up to us to shake our hands and thank us for our hard work.

"We love doing it," became the default reply, because we do. It's months of sweltering training and freezing practice that make our shows.

There's a lot of labor and love that goes into all of this. The Spirit Squad pours countless hours and sheer athleticism into their routines. Monte is a legendary mascot that comes from a long line of hardworking gymnasts.

So many people who work hard that didn't get to come. The sports photographers and the Boom Crew — the ROTC students who light the touchdown cannon — didn't spend their Saturdays in the Washington-Grizzly Stadium on a whim.

The fans showed up — in person and not. They're the people who raised the \$200,000, the drivers who made the days-long trek and the mosaic of faces I looked up to at every game day as I took the field. They gave me and every other student fueling the football machine a chance to do something cool.

And I thought back to my dad, who I knew was somewhere in the stands watching me perform on the Toyota Stadium dirt, and I got it.

This was cool for the Griz, and he didn't mean just the team. This was good for Montanans, because Montanans showed how good they could be. They'd help give this band nerd and her lack of football grace a spot in the game.

So, congrats, Griz Nation. You've made me into a believer.

- Christine Compton, Features Editor

Like it? Hate it? Let us know.
Email us your opinions at
emily.tschetter@umontana.edu



Record setting Griz

University of Montana guard Josh Vazquez elevates beyond the three-point line to drain a shot, cutting the lead to just one point in overtime. This game was Vazquez's 135th game, a new program record for number of games played. The University of Northern Colorado Bears defeated the Griz in an overtime thriller at Dahlberg Arena with a score of 98-92 on Jan. 11. **WALKER MCDONALD | MONTANA KAIMIN**

UM lawsuit goes to trial, MSU facing second federal investigation, Pornhub disabled in Montana

UM LAWSUIT UNDERWAY ALLEGING UNNECESSARY TUITION FEES, PRIVACY VIOLATIONS

The trial for a class action lawsuit began on Jan. 8 involving the University of Montana's handling of student tuition payments and refunds from 2010 to 2015.

UM entered a contract from 2010 to 2015 with Higher One, a third-party company, to outsource student financial aid and tuition transitions. At that time, Higher One would either give students new accounts with debit cards to withdraw payments, send funds to a separate account or mail checks directly, according to the Missoulian.

Former students involved in the suit claim they had to pay extra fees when using Higher One's cards, and the company gained access to their personal information without their permission. According to the Missoulian, about 39,000 students received debit cards from Higher One in the five years the company worked with UM.

"UM firmly believes that it did nothing wrong in providing students with effective and efficient options to have their refunds electronically deposited," UM spokesperson Dave Kuntz told the Missoulian. "UM is prepared to present the facts to the jury."

Six former students first filed the suit in 2016, then two classes, meaning groups of plaintiffs, were certified in 2019 – past or present students who paid fees to Higher One, and past or present students whose information was shared with Higher One.

The Federal Reserve ordered Higher One to pay about \$24 million to 570,000 students for its "deceptive" financial aid practices in 2015, but, according to the Missoulian, this was not known during UM's contract. Judge Shane Vannatta in the Fourth Judicial District Court in Missoula is hearing the case and its jury trial. (Emily Tschetter)

MSU FACING SECOND FEDERAL CIVIL RIGHTS INVESTIGATION THIS YEAR

Montana State University is once again under federal investigation by the U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights after the office received more complaints alleging discrimination against

Jewish and female students.

On Dec. 5, the Office for Civil Rights sent MSU a letter, informing it of the second investigation into whether MSU failed to respond to harassment of students based on national origin and sex. In the letter – obtained by the Daily Montanan – the Office informed MSU, "As the University received federal financial assistance from this department, it is required to comply with these federal civil rights laws."

The letter also requested specific information from MSU regarding these complaints, including any documents relating to reports of sex- or national-origin-based discrimination and the University officials who handle these complaints.

The letter does not discuss any specifics about the allegations. It also does not make clear if this investigation is linked to the first federal investigation handed down by the office, which began in October 2023 and involves MSU's response to threats the Queer Straight Alliance student group on

campus received, among other claims. "While we are always willing to collaborate and assist OCR in their processes, it is important to note that these are allegations that are under investigation," Tracy Ellig, MSU vice president, told the Daily Montanan in an email. "OCR has not issued any findings indicating MSU's response was lacking."

(Claire Bernard)

PORNHUB DISABLES ACCESS IN MONTANA

The widely known adult pornography website Pornhub is no longer accessible in Montana due to a statewide law requiring age verification for website access passed last May.

Senate Bill 544, proposed by Democratic Senator Willis Curdy from Missoula, will require all websites with mostly "adult content" to verify users' ages through a government-issued ID or any other method "that relies on public or private transactional data." Once one's age is verified to be 18 years or older, individuals can have access to the website.

The bill, which went into effect Jan. 1, is intended to protect minors from the "public health crisis" and "corroding influence on minors" porn creates, according to court documents. Other concerns related to porn listed in the legislation include hypersexualization of minors, low-self esteem and promoting problematic or harmful sexual behaviors and addiction.

Pornhub, which has around 5.8 billion site views every month, issued a statement on its webpage to Montana users explaining why it decided to block access in the state.

"While safety and compliance are at the forefront of our mission," it reads. "Giving your ID card every time you want to visit an adult platform is not the most effective solution for protecting our users and, in fact, will put children and your privacy at risk."

The website encourages Montanans to "contact your representatives before it is too late" and "demand device-based verification solutions."

(CB)

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SAV CHAVEZ
savannah.chavez@umontana.edu

Just because you left for winter break doesn't mean the shenanigans, plots or schemes on campus did. After a break featuring distasteful photography, a grandma smackdown and burglary, we are ready to welcome you back with a few gems from the seven crimes UMPD responded to between Dec. 16 and Jan. 9.

SATURDAY 12/16 - THE SEAT SCUFFLE

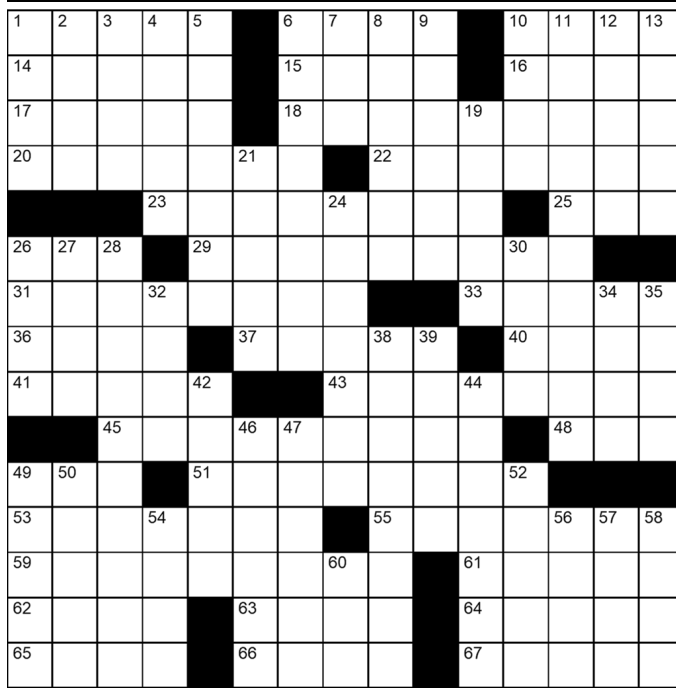
The FCS semifinal game against NDSU brought tension to the packed stands at an all-time high, maybe even a little too high. When someone took a 60-year-old woman's seat, they found out just how hard grandma could party rock. Following an exchange of words, the older lady punched the seat bandit and found herself receiving an unwanted early Christmas gift: a citation for assault. In other words, don't block a seat unless you want to get clocked.

TUESDAY 1/2 - LOOK, MOM! I'M DRUNK

On Jan. 2 at 8:30 p.m. an intoxicated man was removed from a property on Garnet Court in the University Villages for trespassing. The kicker? He was on his parent's property. However, their patience might've been running thin, even for their own kid. UMPD officers removed him and issued him a warning with no criminal charges. Next time that shot of vodka tastes like 'I should really go see my mom,' maybe just call first.

WEDNESDAY 1/9 - COMPUTER CROOK

At about 4 a.m. on Jan. 9, UMPD was blessed with the presence of a guest in Eck Hall, a man they had been waiting for. The former UM student had been involved with UMPD on Jan. 4 and 7 for trespassing and burglary after breaking into Eck Hall before, but we all know the third time's the charm. After UMPD received notice IT was missing some expensive equipment, officers decided to host a live feed watch party in hopes they would find the dirty thief. The man was arrested and charged with burglary, possession of burglary tools and trespassing... twice. After obtaining a search warrant for his apartment and car, UMPD recovered up to \$40,000 worth of stolen equipment and a ring of keys to various buildings around campus, although the keys didn't work anymore. Was he trying to build his own monitor or just pay the bills? The world may never know.



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ACROSS

- 1 Sudden gush
- 6 Defeat decisively
- 10 Rapids ride
- 14 "District 9" figure
- 15 Top-of-the-line
- 16 Rights org.
- 17 Gravy no-no
- 18 Kind of knockout
- 20 Intrinsic nature
- 22 They're followed
- 23 First to arrive
- 25 Grazing spot
- 26 Shirt part
- 29 Put back on the job
- 31 Something to tie up
- 33 Leave in the ____
- 36 Allen of "Candid Camera"
- 37 Henhouse sounds
- 40 Unadorned
- 41 Web site?
- 43 Coyote or wolf
- 45 Exploratory
- 48 Ram's mate
- 49 Duffer's dream
- 51 Scottish tourist draw
- 53 Retreat
- 55 Showed some teeth
- 59 Occurring every third year
- 61 ____ two-shoes
- 62 Mortgage
- 63 Program lines
- 64 Gentle push
- 65 Football gain
- 66 They may be split
- 67 Mighty mount
- 28 New England capital
- 30 Marching band member
- 32 Hubbub
- 34 Cornfield invader
- 35 Roll call response
- 38 Chips in a can
- 39 Dissolve
- 42 Panama port
- 44 Architects' output
- 46 Show the door
- 47 Netflix category
- 49 With precision
- 50 Papal court
- 52 Aardvark feature
- 54 Give for a while
- 56 Lymph bump
- 57 Cruise flick, "____ of Tomorrow"
- 58 Like Easter eggs
- 60 Put two and two together

DOWN

- 1 Store sign
- 2 Furthermore
- 3 Goals
- 4 Conical dwelling
- 5 Catch in a trap
- 6 Lester Holt show
- 7 Caviar
- 8 Mom's brothers
- 9 Command
- 10 Police action
- 11 Pick up speed
- 12 Highway warning
- 13 Oklahoma city
- 19 Regarding birth
- 21 Move sneakily
- 24 Very detailed
- 26 ____ Romeo (Italian auto)
- 27 Easy victory

Answers to Previous Crossword:

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

Award Show-o-scope

HALEY YARBOROUGH
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Award season is upon us, and as we gear up for yet another semester of cold hell, there's no better way to distract ourselves from bouts of seasonal depression than indulging in celebrity drama. But not just ANY celebrity drama. Award show celebrity drama. Streaking, slapping, kissing your brother on live TV; award shows are a clusterfuck for actors, musicians, and talentless TikTok stars to show their two faces. So, sit back, grab some popcorn and look to the stars to find out how you ruin (or make) the white man's choice awards.

CAPRICORN (DEC. 22-JAN. 19):

Telling a slightly offensive joke at an award show? Eh, nothing new. Getting slapped for it? That's a first. You could not just keep your fat mouth shut about Jada Pinkett Smith's shiny bald head and now Will Smith has slapped your ass to another dimension. Next time, keep Jada's name out of your fucking mouth.

AQUARIUS (JAN 20-FEB 18):

You heart titties. So much in fact, that you decide to grab '90s rapper Lil' Kim's boob on stage at the 1999 MTV Video Music Awards. Diana Ross let her impulsive thoughts win, but hey, now Lil' Kim wants Ross to play her mom in a movie.

PISCES (FEB. 19-MARCH 20):

What if the Oscars were like dancing with the stars, except the dancers are literal faceless stars swaying to the worst rendition of "Snow White" songs in history? Well, that's the 1989 Oscars for you. Nothing can save you or Rob Lowe now, especially after Disney sues you for copyright infringement.

ARIES (MARCH 21-APRIL 19):

After a truly iconic speech, your 73-year-old ass decides to show Hollywood you only get finer and stronger with age. Aries, just like Jack Palance in the 1991 Oscars, you show off your skills by doing three one-armed push ups on live television. Old? Check. Strong as hell? Fuck yeah.

TAURUS (APRIL 20-MAY 20):

You fell face-first into the Oscars Stage. But as the totally relatable Jennifer Lawrence, it's more iconic than it is embarrassing. Too bad you didn't lay there a little longer, you would have been swept away by not one, but two of PEOPLE's sexiest men alive.

GEMINI (MAY 21-JUNE 20):

You may be able to dirty dance, but you can't pronounce names for shit. It's Idina Menzel, not Adele Dazeem, but as

the "wickedly talented" John Travolta, you can seek redemption 10 years later.

CANCER (JUNE 21-JULY 22):

Oops, you did it again. As 2000s-era Britney Spears, you simply are MTV. One year after stripping on live TV, you decide to shock the VMA's by performing "Slave 4 U" with a live python. You're still slaying with the snake.

LEO (JULY 23-AUG. 22):

Let's get naked! There's no better way to stir the pot than waving your dingaling around for millions of people on live television to see. That's right, Leo. Only someone as vain as you would streak at the 1974 Oscars. Unfortunately, your nude statement will be the butt of many jokes about man's "shortcomings."

VIRGO (AUG. 23-SEP. 22):

You're a real soy boy, Virgo. And there's no better way to announce it to the world than interrupting a

Bob Dylan Grammy performance with "Soy Bomb" written across your chest. We get it, you're the future of music. Soy boy music, that is.

LIBRA (SEP. 23-OCT. 22):

Do you know what you're wearing to the VMA's? MEAT. That's right Libra baby, you're Lady Gaga and you're about to enrage all the vegans by maintaining the fashion standard of wearing

dead animals!

SCORPIO (OCT. 23-NOV. 21):

Fuck Taylor Swift and fuck the VMA's too. Beyoncé should have won Best Video by a Female Artist, and in typical Kanye West fashion, you down some Hennessy and unapologetically ruin her night.

Just be thankful this was before her Swiftie army would use their witch powers to tear you apart limb by limb.

SAGITTARIUS (NOV. 22-DEC. 21):

Just like Angelina Jolie before the 2000 Academy Awards, you decide to lock lips with a certain sibling on the red carpet. We get it, you really "love" your brother.

But on live TV? This is Hollywood, baby, not Alabama. All celebrities' weird sexual escapades are done behind closed curtains.



BARRETT CLEMENT | MONTANA KAIMIN

UM settles sex discrimination lawsuit for \$350,000, commits to Title IX review

CLAIRE BERNARD

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A University of Montana lawsuit that began in 2021, involving 18 plaintiffs who alleged sex-based discrimination, ended on Jan. 9 with UM agreeing to pay a \$350,000 settlement and provide “universally available” Title IX training to employees.

“This settlement provides UM and (the Office of Commissioner of Higher Education) with this opportunity to learn, grow, and improve,” Hillary Carls, lead legal counsel of the plaintiffs, said in a statement on Jan. 9. “With two hands, Montanans can build institutions of higher education for all.”

The lawsuit, first filed in August 2021, accused the University of mistreating female employees. The original four plaintiffs were Catherine Cole, former vice president of enrollment management and strategic communications; Barbara Koostra, once the director of the Montana Museum of Art and Culture; Mary-Ann Sontag Bowman, a tenured professor in the School of Social Work; and Rhondie Voorhees, the former dean of students. Cole, Koostra and Voorhees left the University since Bodnar became president in 2018. Bowman currently works at the University as a tenured professor.

The lawsuit alleged UM and the Montana University System created a “good ol’ boys club” with President Seth Bodnar perpetuating a culture that continued to create “wage, promotion and opportunity gaps for women.” In the end, the 18 total plaintiffs included some former faculty members who worked at UM during Bodnar’s tenure, one who still at the University and others who had left the University years before Bodnar’s arrival.

The settlement also requires UM to provide Title IX training to students and calls on UM to increase its “capacity and processes for addressing employee concerns and conflicts.” This also involves designating one person in human resources and Title IX as the contact for dealing with gender-related issues.

UM and OCHE are also required to find an independent third-party reviewer, approved by a judge, to make sure UM is adopting proper Title IX training and processes particularly with employees. If the third party

finds UM is not complying, OCHE and the University are required to follow the party’s new recommendations. The third party is yet to be selected, and the review will take a year.

A past review, completed in August 2023 by Philip Catanzano, a civil rights attorney based in Boston, found UM’s Title IX processes and policies “exemplary” and “exceeding what is required by law.” Catanzano, who used to work for the U.S. Department of Education’s Office for Civil Rights, was hired by UM and MUS to give his expert opinion on the case. This review cost UM \$500 per hour.

The last time UM was federally investigated for Title IX-related issues was around 10 years ago in 2012, after multiple allegations that UM, Missoula police and the Missoula County Attorney’s office mishandled sexual assault reports.

“Over 50 years ago Title IX became law, yet the pursuit for gender equity persists,” Carls said. “Equity ensures that everybody benefits from all the talent Montana has to offer.”

Parties agreed to “dismiss the case with prejudice,” meaning the plaintiffs can’t sue on the same claims in the future.

The settling document, signed by U.S. District Court Judge Brian Morris, included a joint statement from the plaintiffs and UM reading, “After meeting with the Federal Court, the parties have agreed it is in the best interest of all parties to resolve the litigation.”

Ali Bovingdon, Montana University System chief of legal counsel, signed on behalf of the MUS and UM in agreement with the settlement, as well as all 18 plaintiffs, including coaches, administrators, professors and more. After the deduction of legal fees, the \$350,000 comes out to a payment of \$1,855 per plaintiff.

According to Dave Kuntz, spokesperson for the University, the settlement sum was agreed upon after negotiating between the plaintiffs and UM’s attorneys, with UM ultimately deciding to settle because the continued dispute would have stolen “precious time from state employees and state resources that are better spent supporting students, faculty, and staff.” Despite this, UM is confident if the case continued, it would’ve won at trial, Kuntz told the Kaimin.

The legal fees portion of UM’s budget will



MONTANA KAIMIN ARCHIVE

cover the settlement, a sum of money set aside for dealing with issues like the lawsuit. This general fund could be a combination of student, federal and state money, Kuntz said, but there’s no way to find the specific source.

The agreement comes after a years-long lawsuit, starting three years ago and adding plaintiffs as it continued. Original plaintiffs, Cole, Koostra, Bowman and Voorhees were joined by 12 more women on the suit in July 2022 including: Courtney Babcock, UM’s former cross country coach; Laura Berkhouse, a former assistant in UM’s Office of Legal Counsel; Jennifer Cooper, a professor in the School of Music; Cindy Ferguson, another former systems analyst; Frieda Houser, the former director of fiscal affairs at MUS; Sherrie Lindbo, a former financial manager for MUS; Jennifer McNulty, the former interim dean for UM’s College of Humanities and Sciences; Kathleen Reeves, a former office manager at UM’s law school; Vida Wilkinson, Missoula College’s outreach director; and two Jane Doe plaintiffs who were former UM students and employees.

“UM did not create a glass ceiling for these women’s careers. UM created a brick wall for these women’s careers,” the lawsuit states.

Claims of mistreatment based on sex dated back to 2013. In 2021, the plaintiffs sought

a class action suit for the case, meaning a common policy or process at UM harmed a large group of people. However, Morris shot down class action status in 2022, stating the plaintiffs didn’t have enough proof to claim UM and the MUS system “acted under a general policy of discrimination.”

In January 2023, Jackie Hedtke, the assistant director of operations at the Adams Center from 2006 until 2013, and Laura John, a Native American graduate student who sought a doctorate in clinical psychology at UM in 2006, joined the case as plaintiffs. All 18 plaintiffs received a part of the \$350,000 in the lawsuit.

Since January 2022, 60% of campus promotions have been female employees and 58% of new hires have been female, said Kuntz. However, fall 2023 University statistics only 24% of UM’s highest-paid employees measured by base salaries alone are women, despite six deans, three vice-presidents and seven executives being female at UM.

“[Title IX] has been an emphasis over the past 10 years,” Kuntz said. “What this settlement does is puts this issue behind us and gives us the opportunity to continue to make improvements that future students and employees will benefit from.”

University apartments: desired & hard to acquire

VIVIANNE OSTHEIMER

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On an August morning at the University of Montana, Brooke Odenthal from Coeur d'Alene, Idaho, stood nervously with other freshmen, wearing a matching multicolored bear paw shirt and buzzing with anticipation as orientation for the incoming class began.

When she moved out of her family's home last summer and into Knowles Hall, the last thing on her mind was finding housing for her sophomore year. But as she began classes in the coming weeks, upperclassmen she met encouraged her to begin looking for next year's housing, something she had only heard once in an online orientation video.

"It is kind of scary," Odenthal said. "I moved out of my house three months ago and now I'm already trying to find a new place to live."

The Missoula housing market makes University housing an appealing choice for upperclassmen, but a lack of options creates a competitive market. While many students say they would like to live in cheaper University-owned apartments, relatively few can. Many freshmen want to know their options right away and apply early to get a spot.

The University administration provides a section informing students on University housing options during New Student Orientation, a series of online modules.

"There is a section that covers all aspects of housing, both on and off campus, so even first-year students learn about Lewis and Clark as well as University Villages as options," said Devin Carpenter, director of new student success at UM.

After covering housing in orientation, it isn't formally discussed again. However, during the Big Sky Experience, the in-person welcome week at UM, student advocates lead small group discussions in an "ask me anything" type of style.

"While it is not built directly into the curriculum, housing does usually come up," Carpenter said.

Finding off-campus housing for sophomore year is no simple feat for a college freshman, as Missoula has faced housing affordability challenges for longer than a decade. Dramatic increases in home prices and rent alongside a growing population have only exacerbated these issues, even if rental vacancy rates are starting to recover from record lows, according to the Missoula County website.

The online property search company Rent lists the average monthly rent for a two-bedroom apartment in Missoula as \$1,495. At this price, two roommates would each pay \$747.50 per month before utilities.

Odenthal works about six hours a week at \$12 an hour as a Zoom tech for the College of Business. That's about \$70 a week and \$280 a month.

For students like her who want to live close to campus and avoid navigating Missoula's real estate market, residence halls, Lewis and Clark and University Villages are available.

"Lewis and Clark was a good intermediary," Joseph Brady, a junior studying chemistry at UM, said.

Brady lived in the University-owned apartment complex Lewis and Clark Village during his sophomore year. Located on UM's South Campus, within 2.6 miles from main campus, placements are assigned on a first-applied, first-assigned basis. It has 462 bedrooms in two- or three-bedroom apartments and a rent-by-room option.

However, of those 462, only a percentage are available for new tenants to rent in the fall, resulting in a waitlist. According to the UM Housing Website, current Lewis and Clark residents who want to continue living there the following fall semester can keep their belongings in the apartments over the summer for \$300 a month or continue living there for full rent prices.

"I was kind of nervous about what I would do if I didn't get in because going straight from the dorms to renting something is a little freaky," Brady, who applied before January in his freshman year, said.

Lewis and Clark is available to all upperclassmen with at least 60 earned credits or students with 24 to 69 credits and a GPA of 2.5 or higher, according to Tyler Palmer, University Villages coordinator. Information on how to apply and the waitlist are on the webpage. Lewis and Clark Village costs \$648 per resident each month, and the Montana State Board of Regents approves rental rates for all UM Housing. According to Palmer, these rates have historically been under the market rate of local area prices.

Rent lists the monthly rent for a one-bed, one-bath apartment on the same street as Lewis and Clark as \$995.

Lewis and Clark is at the top of Odenthal's list for housing in the fall of 2024. She and two of her friends applied for a three-bedroom apartment in early October, and an automated email response notified them they would hear back in April.

University Villages, UM's other apartment complex, consists of separate building communities with unfurnished apartments ranging from studio prices of \$810 down to \$514 with utilities, and four-bedroom units costing \$1,282 including utilities.

"Honestly, the University housing is the

cheapest rent in Missoula that I've found," said Maddy Killian, a physical therapy graduate student living in Elliott Village, a University Village complex. She waited a year to get moved up on the waitlist for a single room.

Located on UM's South Campus, apartments are offered on a priority basis, with first spots given to students with families, second priority given to single students and third and fourth priority reserved for UM faculty and current residents requesting a transfer to another unit, according to Palmer.

Killian's advice to freshmen looking to live in University apartments in the fall of their sophomore year is to indicate on their applications that they can move in early.

It's also easier to get in during spring semesters. The apartments in University Villages have 565 units, according to Dave Kuntz, spokesperson of UM, and staff estimates 526 are occupied in the spring with 36 units in the cleaning and turnover process. As a result, 562 out of 565 units are projected to be full or unavailable this semester.

With a fall waitlist for Lewis and Clark and

University Villages, some students turn to privately-owned student housing like the Sawyer, which starts at \$890, and ROAM Student Living, which starts at \$845. Odenthal toured the Sawyer, but said she didn't seriously consider it because of the price.

Instead, Odenthal said she wishes for more apartment-style University housing options, but she appreciates UM can comfortably house all of its freshmen.

"I've talked to kids that go to other schools, and it's impossible for them to find dorm rooms," Odenthal said.

But Odenthal said UM should include more information about University housing options in the Big Sky Experience and reiterate it throughout the fall semester so freshmen can be proactive and start thinking about next year's housing right away.

"The housing department could have a couple of tabling events in the fall that encourage students to look at housing options," she said. "I think finding housing should be stressed repeatedly to freshmen, not just at orientation, but during the semester as well."



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The Griz football team sings the fight song and hoists the Great Divide trophy after defeating the Montana State University Bobcats 37-7 on Nov. 18, 2023. **MADDIE CRANDALL | MONTANA KAIMIN**



AGAINST

How Montana football overcame doubt

Story by Max Dupras

IT'S DEC. 16 IN WASHINGTON-GRIZZLY Stadium. Cold air fills the concrete titan as 26,544 University of Montana fans scream during every North Dakota State Bison offensive drive. Chants echo after Grizzly first downs. Montana play-by-play announcer Riley Corcoran calls it the “Mecca of FCS football,” and that’s what it feels like as Griz fans pray in anticipation for a win.

The game goes into overtime — not once, but twice.

Montana takes the lead off an Eli Gillman touchdown and the Grizzlies decide to run a trick play for the two-point conversion. Clifton McDowell fakes a handoff to running back Xavier Harris and tosses it back to Junior Bergen.

He runs out to the right as wide receiver Keelan White runs past NDSU defenders to get open. Bergen throws it and the ball tips off of a Bison player’s hands before it flies up and right into White’s grasp.

As Grizzly fans erupt, it’s slowly suppressed by a realization that North Dakota State has one more shot at tying it up.

The Bison set up a two-point play where Miller drops the ball off to wide receiver Raja Nelson.

Nelson has little room to run and has to pass the ball. He rips it with the hopes that tight end Joe Stoffel will catch the ball to tie it up.

Instead, Montana cornerback Corbin Walker stands tall as the ball flies into his hands. Players storm the field, and fans leap to their feet. The stadium rattles with noise.

With that catch, the Montana Grizzlies punched its ticket to the national title for the first time since 2009 — something seemingly

impossible at the start of the season.

Despite going into the playoffs with No. 2 seeding and a historic November win over the Montana State Bobcats, the Grizzlies were underdogs.

After just scraping past Division II team Ferris State and losing its Big Sky Conference opening game to Northern Arizona, Griz fans were livid. Arguments about Bobby Hauck’s time as a head coach and issues with position groups ran rampant online. An editorial titled, “Tick Tock, Bobby Hauck” ran in the Kaimin pages in October.

“Each week we had to kind of earn our



ALL ODDS

to compete for a national championship

respect, especially after dropping one early in the season,” UM safety TraJon Cotton said two days before the national title game. “Every week, everybody was kind of doubting us, you know what I mean? They thought it was over and we had to believe in ourselves ... to just prove that that was wrong.”

Hauck’s postgame press conference after Northern Arizona was low-energy. With slumped shoulders and downturned eyes, he not only looked sad, but frustrated at what happened. One loss was defining his return, and that needed to change.

After that, Montana went on to win nine games in a row, including beating the rival Bobcats in a 37-7 demolition. For Hauck and the Grizzlies, it wasn’t a time to die slowly as every other team outpaced them early in the season. It was a time for self reflection — and it worked.

But the Grizzly magic ended when Montana went to Frisco, Texas, and lost against the South Dakota State University Jackrabbits 23-3 in the FCS Championship on Jan. 7. Players were devastated. Seniors like center AJ Forbes wept and held their teammates one last time as they walked into

the tunnel.

“In terms of our team, everybody in our operation loves winning [and] hates losing,” Hauck said after the national title loss. “We have a very competitive group. They compete every time we take the field. I’m proud of them. It’s an honor to coach them.”

But despite the mourning looks on the bench earlier this month, fans see new life in a program that seemed destined for mediocrity to start the year. It has Montanans wondering: How did the Grizzlies go from a shocking upset early on to reaching the mountaintop of the FCS?

CENTER: The Griz collide with the Furman Paladins, taking down its wide receiver in the fourth quarter. The Griz outlasted Furman in overtime, winning 35-28 on Dec. 8, 2023. **CHRIS LODMAN | MONTANA KAIMIN**

ABOVE: Junior wide receiver Aaron Fontes hurdles over a defender during the first quarter of the Brawl of the Wild on Nov. 18, 2023. Fontes finished with 43 yards and four receptions.

MADDIE CRANDALL | MONTANA KAIMIN

Before the Grizzlies took down some of the best, it had to get over losses before the season even started.

TOUGH STARTS

Montana football came into this year off a season where it went 8-5, only winning four of its eight conference games. A combination of injuries and rough play still produced a winning record but was coupled with an embarrassing loss to Montana State in front of the ESPN College Gameday audience.

After losing out to North Dakota State in the second round of the FCS playoffs, Montana's future was uncertain. Multiple players went on to other, better gigs, with players like linebacker Patrick O'Connell getting to play in the NFL this season.

Montana lost 10 impact seniors like O'Connell and cornerback Justin Ford, leaving clear holes on the roster going into the next season. Even worse, there were questions about who was going to start at quarterback after Lucas Johnson graduated.

Those questions all led to Montana being ranked 14th in the FCS in the StatsPerform preseason poll. Even with Montana placed at third on the Big Sky media poll, it fell to sixth in the coaches poll.

At first glance, this team was relying on both up-and-coming players and newcomers. First were quarterbacks Clifton McDowell and Sam Vidlak. Both players were projected to compete for a starting role, but the depth chart marked them as co-starters.

The defense also had to learn to play with new talent. With multiple seniors on defense declaring for the draft, Montana-born players moved up the depth chart, including linebackers Braxton Hill (Anaconda) and Levi Janacaro (Missoula), who took over wearing the legacy number 37. Cornerback Trevin Gradney (Billings) and safeties Jaxon Lee (Phillipsburg) and Ryder Meyer (Fairfield) also moved up for more minutes.

"I'd say we got a good mix of guys that lead with vocals, with words, and guys that don't say as much, but they lead by how they work and how they do things, how they carry themselves," Janacaro said prior to the start of the season in August.

There were even major shakeups on the coaching staff as both Brent Pease and Ronnie Bradford moved up to the offensive and defensive coordinator positions respectively.

"I like the way this group is willing to do the things to prepare for the season, whether that was the spring, the offseason workouts, the summer program, all those things," Hauck said in a one-on-one prior to the season. "I mean, they're here every day, all summer, and they're committed to the Grizzlies winning games."

To start the season, Montana played well. It took down the Butler Bulldogs in a



Nick Ostmo attempts to break a tackle during the second quarter of the semifinal playoff game against North Dakota State University on Nov. 15, 2023.

ETHAN JAMBA | MONTANA KAIMIN

convincing 35-20 game that showcased the new defense while giving the co-starting quarterbacks some spotlight. Vidlak was the first to show off some impressive passing while McDowell came in for smaller bursts to help fuel the run game.

In addition to freshman running back Eli Gillman being a bright spot on offense, Montana also dominated the Utah Tech University Trailblazers. With two strong wins, Montana had to face the reigning Division II champion Ferris State University Bulldogs next.

It was a slugfest where the Bulldogs pulled ahead 10-3 in the first half. Montana's run game sparked to life in the third quarter, leading to two rushing touchdowns that ended in a 17-10 win.

Montana fans were skeptical after Vidlak only threw for 105 yards and an interception. However, his other impressive performances helped him stay in the driver's seat while the running backs led the offense.

However, it wasn't the near-loss to a Division II team that deterred fans. It was the conference opener where Montana traveled to Flagstaff, Arizona, to take on the Northern Arizona University Lumberjacks.

The game was almost immediately a disaster. Redshirt freshman quarterback Adam Damante diced Montana's secondary with a 24-yard pass to wide receiver Hendrix Johnson. Another score just under two

minutes into the second quarter gave NAU a 14-0 lead.

Montana scored to start and end the second quarter, but NAU managed to put up another touchdown in between both. A score halfway through the third quarter was the nail in the coffin, and neither team was able to put up points for the last quarter and a half, giving the Lumberjacks a 28-14 lead and handing Montana its first loss of the year.

"If you're not disappointed, then you don't care enough," Hauck said. "Everybody in here is disappointed. We've got to play better. That's what it is. Every guy in the room starting with me has got to look in the mirror and say, 'How do I do better this week?'"

Montana fans were furious, holding onto memories of last year's conference woes and lackluster playoff run.

For the Grizzlies, it was time to soul search. While Vidlak had a fine game with 210 yards, one touchdown and one interception, he was sacked seven times. McDowell was impressive while rushing, but he didn't get enough opportunities to throw the ball. Both quarterbacks were emerging but needed more trust to excel.

"We failed in all three phases of the game tonight," Hauck said. "[We] got beat in our conference opener. We've got to go home and lock it down and we got to get some things right."

While the defense was relatively stout,

forcing Damante to throw two interceptions, it was still not enough to keep the Grizzlies grounded early in the game.

It was time for a change, but it required more than just a switch in the line-up.

UPHILL BATTLE

Montana needed to win, not only to prove people wrong, but to contend for a playoff spot.

Fans and media weren't convinced after the Grizzlies beat the Idaho State University Bengals 28-20, but it was clear that McDowell was going to be the guy at quarterback. He threw for 160 yards and one touchdown while rushing for 66 yards and a touchdown as well.

It wasn't until the Grizzlies went to California to play the University of California-Davis Aggies that it was done playing catch up with the rest of its conference. The Aggies were ranked 21st in the country and served as the first step in Montana making a major season comeback.

It was McDowell's highlight performance as he threw for 243 yards and three touchdowns, leading the Grizzlies to its first ranked win of the season. It was a sign of hope for a team that looked depleted with more than half the season left, but not enough to sway the masses.

Montana's next matchup, the University



TOP: Griz linebacker Braxton Hill speaks to the media after Montana's 23-3 loss to South Dakota State on Jan. 7 in Frisco, Texas. Hill is from Anaconda, Montana. **MAX DUPRAS | MONTANA KAIMIN**

ABOVE: A football fan waves a Montana flag at the Big Sky Conference Brawl of the Wild on Nov. 18, 2023. **CHRIS LODMAN | MONTANA KAIMIN**

of Idaho Vandals, were the third-best team in the country with a win against Football Bowl Subdivision opponent University of Nevada. Its high preseason ranking helped set up a marquee game on national television.

Montana led early with a field goal and huge 76-yard touchdown pass from McDowell to Bergen. Another rushing touchdown by McDowell and a field goal gave the Grizzlies a 20-0 lead. The Grizzlies kept the Vandals scoreless for almost the entire first half before Idaho finally found the endzone, making it 20-7.

Idaho found life late in the game, scoring two touchdowns, but a field goal by kicker Grant Glasgow was enough to keep the Grizzlies ahead to pull off a 23-21 upset.

After back-to-back star-studded performances for McDowell, he was asked about feeling trusted by his team.

"It means a lot," McDowell said. "It means, it means a lot."

With eyes on the Grizzlies, it was time to keep winning.

"There was no worse feeling in the season

when we lost to NAU," defensive tackle Alex Gubner said. "Everyone counted us out. I don't look on Twitter, but I heard it was pretty rough. And, you know, getting picked sixth to win the conference and a lot of people not taking us seriously. To do what we've done so far, it's been awesome. Just proving everyone wrong and showing them that the Montana Grizzlies are here."

Montana demolished its next three opponents while only allowing a total of 17 points. The Grizzlies destroyed the University of Northern Colorado Bears in a 40-0 blowout. It also got an impressive home win against the seventh-ranked team in the country, the Sacramento State University Hornets.

Montana had crawled back from a titanic fall to become the third-ranked team in the country.

After a convincing 34-10 road win against the Portland State University Vikings, it was time for the biggest regular season game of the year, one that determined the future of the Grizzly postseason: the Brawl of the Wild. A Big Sky Conference title and the second seed in the playoffs were on the line.

Montana wanted both revenge and a chance at playoff glory, something that came easily in a game that the Grizzlies lost by double digits the previous season. Montana dominated in the first half with two touchdowns and two field goals.

Even with a Montana State touchdown to start the second half, Montana rolled with two more touchdowns including a long 64-yard run by running back Nick Ostmo. The Grizzlies closed out a dominant win over the Bobcats 37-7 and locked up a Big Sky Conference title along the way.

"The old Battle of the Brawl or whatever they call it," Hauck said during a postgame television interview after beating Montana State. "They call it an ass-kicking is what they call it."

The Grizzlies saw miracles during the regular season and now it captured a conference title for the first time since 2009. It also secured the second seed in the FCS playoffs, making it so every playoff game would be in Missoula.

While Griz football redeemed itself in the regular season, it was only half of what the Grizzlies needed to do in order to prove its worth.

MISSOULA'S MIRACULOUS RUN

The Grizzlies were in the midst of an undeniably successful season, but it could only be accomplished if it won in the playoffs. In 1993, the Grizzlies were stunned by Delaware 49-48 in the playoffs. This was Montana's first ever game played against the Blue Hens. Now, it had a chance to take down Delaware in a game 30 years in the making.

Montana annihilated Delaware, leaving

them scoreless in both the first and fourth quarter. The Grizzlies gained 49 points in only three quarters, cruising to a dominant offensive and defensive victory, only allowing the Blue Hens to score 19 points. Montana got its revenge and made its way to the quarterfinals for another rematch years in the making. This time it was the Furman University Paladins.

The only time the Grizzlies and the Paladins faced off prior to this season was in 2001 when Montana won 13-6 in the national title game. Furman had to make the cross-country trip to Missoula for a back-and-forth matchup that had hearts racing in the stands. The game had an electric start with Bergen running for a 99-yard kickoff return touchdown.

But every time Montana scored, Furman answered.

McDowell found the endzone to start, then Huff ran even farther for a 53-yard rushing touchdown. That continued, and in the fourth quarter, it led to Bergen taking the lead with a punt return touchdown.

“[Bergen] is a fabulous returner, as good as there is in the country, but those other 10 guys out there really work their tails off for him and for the Grizzlies,” Hauck said after the game. “They were great. It’s important to them, and they did a nice job with it.”

That impressive feat was erased with only 13 seconds left as Huff found tight end Mason Pline 13-yards out for a touchdown to tie it. That meant overtime in the Garden City.

The Grizzlies got the ball to start the extra period and multiple runs helped set up McDowell for a 13-yard pass to White for what could’ve been the game-winning touchdown. It was time for Furman to see if it could send it to double overtime.

Defensive tackle Alex Gubner started the drive off with a huge tackle for loss. Two incomplete passes later, and the Paladins were one play away from elimination. As Huff lofted a ball to wide receiver Kyndel Dean, Billings resident Trevin Gradney broke up the pass and sent Montana to the semifinals for the first time since 2011.

Now, one more game would decide if Montana’s miracle season would come to an end. The FCS powerhouse North Dakota State University Bison were next.

The Grizzlies lost 49-26 in the 2022 playoffs to North Dakota State, but new starters and hunger after winning crucial games made this set of Grizzlies a different team.

A chilly and cloudy Missoula afternoon was no match for Montana as it managed to keep a solid lead against the Bison in the first half, ending it 10-6.

North Dakota State kept it close, scoring the first points of the second half with a field goal. Bergen continued his special



Griz defensive end Kale Edwards breaks through the Bobcats’ defense in the second quarter on Nov. 18, 2023 at the Brawl of the Wild. CHRIS LODMAN | MONTANA KAIMIN

teams heroics and extended the Grizzly lead with a punt return touchdown.

But, just like its game against Furman, Montana gave up a touchdown with under one minute left in the game when quarterback Cam Miller passed it to wide receiver Eli Green from nine yards away. That touchdown led to another overtime playoff game in Missoula.

“Overtime is gut-wrenching,” Hauck said with a chuckle after the victory. “What does that make double overtime? Horrible. Nobody loves overtime. We want to win.”

After back-and-forth touchdowns, the Grizzlies finished off that game with a miraculous two point conversion and an interception to head to Frisco.

It was over. The wait was finally over as Montana made it back to the national title for the first time since Bobby Hauck’s first tenure as head coach over a decade ago.

The memories of teams making frequent national championship trips were alive in Griz fans’ minds. This team had finally done what seemed impossible just months ago: make it to a national title.

DREAMS AND DISAPPOINTMENTS

The Grizzlies had overcome every team in its path since Northern Arizona, and that streak continued even despite the low expectations. Its tenacious defense and dynamic run game helped expand the passing attack for the Grizzlies.

This formula was executed by a team with grudges, a team that had the media and fans doubt them with so much time left in the season. The Grizzlies finally made it to the championship, but making it requires one more win.

The South Dakota State University Jackrabbits were undeniably the best team in the country. It boasted the top quarterback in the FCS, including a defense that stopped a top pass offense in the University of Albany Great Danes while putting up 58 points.

The Grizzlies ran onto the field of Toyota Stadium with Jackrabbit fans to their back and to their right. But a loud sea of maroon buried boos with cheers for Montana.

Despite a loud crowd, the Grizzlies’ fight for its third national championship wasn’t going to be easy. The Grizzlies kept it close in the first half, scoring a field goal in the second quarter after failing to convert a goal line touchdown. Montana only trailed 7-3 with a chance to upset a team looking for a dynasty.

After the third quarter, the Grizzlies lost their steam. Jackrabbit quarterback Mark Gronowski started the scoring off with a 10-yard run before also getting wide receiver Jadon Janke a touchdown from 23 yards out.

One field goal late in the third quarter was what finished off the scoring for the game. Montana managed to hold a strong SDSU offense to 23 points, but its offense stalled out. The Grizzlies lost 23-3 after a

miraculous season filled with moments and players that will be cemented in Montana’s legacy.

“I’m just super grateful for Coach Hauck and the rest of the coaches, my teammates for bringing me in and treating me like I belonged,” Forbes said with tears in his eyes after the game. “Super grateful for the community in Missoula and the entire state of Montana, frankly. For a kid that didn’t grow up in Montana, I felt like it was home, and it will forever be a home to me from now on.”

It was heartbreaking. Getting all the way to the end and losing isn’t the way the Grizzlies expected to go out. But it isn’t the sting of loss that sits with fans. It is the success. From thrilling overtime victories to knocking off its bitter rival for a conference title, the Grizzlies’ season was nothing short of memorable.

“What really matters is just being with my teammates one last time because a lot of us seniors are, obviously, moving on,” Gubner said. “It sucks. I’d do anything to play one more year.”

The Grizzlies now have to reset. Multiple senior leaders are graduating, not to be forgotten soon, but leaving big shoes to fill. For these guys, they’ll forever be known as a team of miracles.

“We have special fans,” Hill said. “They come out, and they support us every single Saturday, as you saw today. Yeah, it’s meant the world to me. I really wish I could be a Grizzly forever.”

On the rise: Cosmic Sans in 2024

KATE WIDMER

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Cosmic Sans is a local psych-rock band made up of Jake Howell (vocals/guitar), Seamus Jennings (vocals/guitar/keys), Will Stoskopf (vocals/guitar/keys/synth), Lane Ulberg (bass), and Cole Bronson (drums). In the four years they've been together, the band has released two albums and played shows all over Montana and the surrounding states, including a show at last year's Treefort Music Festival in Boise. They're currently recording their third album and are gearing up for another slot at this year's Treefort. I caught up with Stoskopf about this past year and the band's ambitions for 2024:

YOU GUYS HAVE HAD QUITE THE YEAR IN 2023. CAN YOU GIVE US A RECAP?

Yeah it was! We played a total of 21 shows last year, including a single release party at Free Cycles in February with the Best Westerns (their first live show in five years!), a couple of shows at Treefort, an album release party at the Top Hat in May, a mini-tour through Seattle, Tacoma and Portland in the fall, and another big show at Free Cycles in December. We also released our second album "Psychedelicatessen," which was a culmination of music that we'd been sitting on since we started this project (one of the songs featured our original drummer who left in summer 2020, to give you perspective on how long we had been working on it). Jake also finished the majority of writing for our third album, which we're excited to start recording this year.

I HEARD THAT YOU GUYS ALSO GOT INTO THE FIRST WAVE OF THIS YEAR'S TREEFORT MUSIC FESTIVAL. HOW DOES THAT FEEL? WHAT WAS YOUR EXPERIENCE AT LAST YEAR'S FESTIVAL?

It was honestly a big surprise. Last time we didn't know we were playing until about a month before the festival, and we have some plans later this year that were dependent on us getting in, so it was a relief that we knew so early this time around. I think I can speak for the rest of the band when I say that last year was some of the most fun we've ever had. There were so many groups that were huge influences to us that we got to see, and so many more that were new to us that became our favorites. It was incredible to see the entire city of Boise come to life in a celebration of music and art, and it just felt like the perfect place to be for us (despite it snowing during our outdoor set).

BY THE WAY, CONGRATS ON RECORDING YOUR THIRD ALBUM! THAT'S SUCH A COOL MILESTONE. HOW HAS THE RECORDING PROCESS BEEN SO FAR, AND WHAT ARE YOUR HOPES FOR THE ALBUM?

It's been very different from our other ones.

Our first album was difficult because our original drummer and bassist left the group part way through recording, and the future of the band was in a state of flux afterward. Thankfully Cole agreed to join the group a few months later (and Lane a few after that), but Seamus, Jake and I had to split bass duties throughout most of the record. The album was also recorded in multiple locations and we didn't have the best equipment, which created a lo-fi sound that wasn't entirely intentional.

Our second album had a cohesive lineup and help from Matt Olson of Attack and Release Sound, but we still recorded in multiple locations and the songs weren't fully written when we began the recording process, which made everything less organized and cohesive.

This third one has been a very different experience so far; Seamus purchased a bunch of nice equipment and built a studio in our basement to make sure our sound is consistent. Jake had all the songs written by the time we started recording, and we were able to play the majority of them live last year, which has helped everything go quicker. These songs sound a lot different from the ones from the last two albums: on previous records Jake came up with vocals and rhythm guitar for all the tunes, and then live he would sing and either Seamus or I would play the guitar part he came up with. For this album, we decided to have Jake play the rhythm part he wrote, and then Seamus and I came up with our own parts to compliment it. Our basement studio is built so that it's really easy to just come in, plug in your instrument and start tracking, which is making the recording process a lot more fun. Lane and Cole have also been fully integrated into the creative process, which is something our previous releases didn't have, so I feel like this record is going to be the first one that has a definitive "Cosmic Sans sound."

One thing that's been a mainstay is that Seamus has recorded and produced all of the music we've released, and it's been exciting to see his skills grow as we evolve. This record has felt like a culmination of everything he's learned up until this point, and I'm excited for you all to hear what he's been cooking up.

Read the rest of this interview online.

You can find Cosmic Sans' music on all streaming services, including Bandcamp. Its next local show is at the American Legion Hall via Daisy Chain Productions with the Skurfs, on Friday, March 15, 2024.



CONTRIBUTED | ISABELLA MITCHELL

Winter break basketball recap: what you missed while you were out

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As Montana football went on a miraculous run through the playoffs, Grizzly sports continued across the board while students were away on winter break.

Montana's men's and women's basketball teams faced a gauntlet of nonconference opponents while also starting intense conference schedules. For the students who weren't able to watch or just want a recap of the action, here is what happened over winter break.

LADY GRIZ WIN OUT IN CALIFORNIA

Montana's winter break started in the Golden State when the Lady Griz took on three teams in California to finish up a tough nonconference schedule.

First, the Grizzlies headed to San Luis Obispo to face the California State Polytechnic University Mustangs in a thrilling back-and-forth contest.

It was Cal Poly who took the first blow with Annika Shah being the difference-maker with 15 points in the first half, giving the Mustangs a close 24-18 lead in the first quarter.

Montana kept it close, only trailing by 36-34 at halftime. Mack Konig was the difference-maker with nine points and only one missed shot out of six total attempts.

In the second half, it was Carmen Gfeller who led the way for Montana with 15 points and four rebounds. Even with improved offense, the game came down to the wire with Gfeller notching the game-winning free throws to give Montana a 67-65 win.

Montana wanted a more decisive win, and it got that when it headed south to play the University of San Diego Toreros. The Grizzlies were electric on offense, shooting 57% from the three-point line with Konig having a stellar 21-point performance as the Lady Griz cruised to a win.

Next, it was the other San Diego team at the University of California-San Diego Tritons who gave Montana another close game. Montana started the game hot once again with a 21-14 lead with Konig, Gfeller and MJ Bruno all leading the way in scoring.

That first-quarter lead was quickly diminished when the Tritons scored 26 points and only allowed nine to close out the first half.

The Lady Griz scored 16 in the third quarter to close the gap, but, just like its game against Cal Poly, this one came down the wire with Bruno being the hero. Her impressive four late three-pointers helped Montana rally as Gina Marxen dealt the final blow with a shot and a made free throw to win it 68-67.

MONTANA MEN'S BASKETBALL SWEEPS BAY AREA MATCHUPS

Montana's men's team also made its way to California, but it only took on two teams, both being in and around the Bay area. First, it was a rematch against the San Jose State University Spartans.

Montana beat San Jose State in its first matchup of the season in Missoula and it looked destined to take down the Spartans in its second game.

The Grizzlies started off slow on offense, only putting up 37 points to San Jose State's 40 points. The Spartans kept it close with some improved defense since last time and a well-rounded scoring output.

Despite the Spartans' renewed confidence, Montana dominated in the second half with 49 points and impressive showings late from Aanen Moody, Laolu Oke and Money Williams. It held the Spartans to 35 points and contained scoring bursts from the first half to cruise to an 86-75 win.

Next up was another rematch, this time against the University of California-Davis Aggies. The Grizzlies also won its previous matchup against the Aggies in Missoula.

Unlike its game against the Spartans, the Grizzlies maintained a lead for almost the entire game with a six-point first-half lead to start. This game also featured well-rounded scoring with five Grizzlies getting into double digits.

Moody had a less efficient game, but still put up 12 points. Brandon Whitney had 15 points with two steals to lead the Grizzlies. Montana also contained the Aggies' top scorer, Elijah Pepper, to only nine points all game. The Grizzlies won out 73-61.

CONFERENCE PLAY OPENS UP FOR MEN'S AND WOMEN'S BASKETBALL

The Grizzlies started the conference slate in the final week of December, with the men



Aanen Moody dribbles up the court Dec. 5, 2023 during a game against Montana State University Northern that ended in a 91-67 win for the Griz. Moody scored 18 points and had six assists.

MADDIE CRANDALL | MONTANA KAIMIN

tipping off the first game against the Weber State University Wildcats.

The Grizzlies struggled mightily, only putting up 28 points in the first half while allowing the Wildcats to put up 45 points. Montana struggled to put up shots and Blaise Threatt cooked the Grizzly defense.

Even though Montana put up more points in the second half, it also allowed more as the Wildcats scored 49 points to close the game out.

Te'Jon Sawyer was the spark plug for Montana, shooting nine of 10 from the free throw line, but it wasn't enough to get Weber State as the Grizzlies lost 93-63 in the conference opener.

The Lady Griz had the luxury of staying in Missoula for its first conference game and it wanted some revenge after the men lost the night prior.

Montana was unbelievable defensively to start the game, only allowing 12 points in the

first quarter. Despite inconsistent scoring runs, the Lady Griz locked down almost all of the Wildcats' top scorers.

Even as UM slowed down on defense, it matched the Wildcat offense with its best scoring quarter of the game with 28 points. Montana cruised to a victory 87-71 to win its first conference game of the season.

Next up, both teams had to take on the Idaho State University Bengals. The men had to play first and, after losing in Ogden, the team wasn't going to fold in Pocatello.

The game started off evenly, with both teams finding momentum on offense. It was Brayden Parker who helped get the Bengals to 35 points in the half and Whitney for the Grizzlies who did the exact same.

The Grizzlies halftime break gave it the boost it needed to run away with the game, scoring 41 points in the second half. Dischon Thomas notched a double-double in the game, putting up 18 points and 11 rebounds to help Montana get its first conference win 76-68.

Next up, the Lady Griz stayed in Missoula to take on Idaho State and extend its winning streak before the end of 2023.

In the first quarter, Montana dominated, scoring 27 points and only allowing 18 points in return. This lead stayed consistent throughout the entire game with Montana never relenting.

Despite a strong lead, the Bengals tried to come back by only allowing UM to put up seven points in the fourth quarter. However, 14 points just wasn't enough for Idaho State, and the Lady Griz took home another conference win 66-55.

GRIZZLIES CLEAN HOUSE OVER SUMMIT LEAGUE OPPONENTS

Montana men's and women's basketball had to take a break from its conference schedule in order to compete in the Big Sky-Summit Challenge.

First, the Lady Griz was dominant in its first of two Summit League games by taking down the University of South Dakota Coyotes.

The Lady Griz kept it close to start the game, only leading by one to end the first half, but it was the second half when Dani Bartsch shined, putting up 17 points and 11 rebounds on the night. South Dakota's traditionally impressive offense stalled, and Montana won 74-61.

Its next game was down in Omaha, where it faced the University of Nebraska-Omaha Mavericks. The Lady Griz left no doubts in this game, putting up 24 points in both the first and second quarters while only allowing Omaha to put up 24 points in the entire half.

That impressive lead was held strong as Gfeller showed up big time with 18 points and nine rebounds. Three other Lady Grizzlies scored in double digits and Montana won 81-60.

The men also had success in their Summit League slate. The Grizzlies first headed east to Fargo to take on the North Dakota State University Bison. Montana lost its previous matchup to the Bison earlier in the season.



Alex Pirog pivots away from the Blue Hawks defender keeping the play alive on Nov. 27, 2023. AVA ROSVOLD | MONTANA KAIMIN

The Grizzlies were amazing in the first half, putting up 43 points, and Moody had a career night. He couldn't miss and the Bison just weren't able to keep up.

Even though NDSU was able to crawl back and outscore Montana in the second half, it wasn't enough as the Grizzlies won 96-86 off of Moody's 36-point performance in his home state.

Next up, South Dakota played in Missoula. This game meant more than just a win on the Grizzlies' record. It was also a night to honor the late Anthony Johnson, one of Montana's most prolific basketball players. Johnson died at the age of 37 in November.

And what better way to honor the late legend than by winning in dominant fashion? The Grizzlies never relented, going up 36-24 in the first half before cruising to a victory 82-63. Thomas was able to get another double-double, with 19 points and 11 rebounds, while three of his teammates also scored in double digits.

GRIZZLIES SPLIT GAMES IN RETURN TO CONFERENCE

Montana returned to conference play with both the men and women playing the University of Northern Colorado Bears and the Northern Arizona University Lumberjacks.

On the road, it started well for the Lady Griz. A low-scoring first quarter was followed by a decent offensive performance in the second quarter. Coupled with keeping the Bears to only 12 points, Montana was cruising early.

Northern Colorado rebounded after the break and scored 26 points in the third quarter, setting Montana up for a low-scoring second half and its first conference loss of the year. Gfeller had 19 points as the Grizzlies lost 67-57.

The Lady Griz headed to Flagstaff, Arizona, and Montana was out for blood. It was a back-and-forth contest against the Lumberjacks, but Konig's impressive scoring and another double-double from Bartsch were enough to seal the victory.

Montana's impressive fourth quarter helped knock off one of the Big Sky's best teams 89-84.

The men stayed at home and also couldn't win in its game against Northern Colorado. It was a close game throughout, with both Whitney and Thomas scoring 24 and 22 points, respectively. However, it was the Bear's Saint Thomas who went off.

His late-game heroics and 37-point performance were enough to comfortably close the game out as Montana lost its second conference game 98-92.

The Grizzlies are all about bouncing back, and its next game against Northern Arizona was its most impressive conference win in 27 years. The Grizzlies scored 47 points in the first half, giving Montana a clear lead that it never relinquished.

Thomas scored 22 points and Montana won 90-47, marking its largest margin for victory in a Big Sky Conference game since 1997.

Both teams will head to Bozeman to face the Montana State Bobcats on Jan. 20.

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UM Alumna Lily Gladstone becomes first Indigenous Golden Globe Best Actress winner

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When Lily Gladstone ascended to the stage on Jan. 7 to accept the Golden Globe for Best Actress in a Drama, she made history as the first Indigenous person to win that award. Gladstone's victory came as no surprise to those who knew Gladstone during her time at the University of Montana.

"I have full confidence that Lily will win," said fellow alumna Marie Fahlgren a week before the award show. Fahlgren is a managing producer at the Montana Repertory Theatre and performed at Gladstone's side in a 2006 production of "Riders to the Sea" as well as a 2009 national tour of "To Kill A Mockingbird."

Gladstone was nominated for her portrayal of Mollie Burkhart in Martin Scorsese's "Killers of the Flower Moon." Gladstone plays a pivotal role within the film and arguably serves as the main protagonist alongside Leonardo DiCaprio and Robert De Niro.

Gladstone grew up on the Blackfeet Reservation in Browning and first felt the inspiration to become an actress when she watched "Return of the Jedi" and wanted to play the part of an Ewok. She first performed in "Cinderella" as an evil stepsister when the Missoula Children's Theatre visited East Glacier. She grew to love performing, training in ballet before eventually returning to the theater. Her family moved to Washington while she was in middle school, but she decided to return to Montana for college.

Gladstone ultimately graduated from the University of Montana in 2008 with a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Acting/Directing and a minor in Native American Studies. In the years since, she has worked on almost a dozen films and six television shows, including the hit FX series "Reservation Dogs."

As Gladstone took the stage, groups in the crowd stood and cheered, drawing a chuckle from Gladstone before she delivered a speech in a mixture of the Blackfoot language and English.

"This is a historic win that doesn't belong to just me..." Gladstone said. "Thank you to all of you, and this is for every little rez kid, every little urban kid, every little Native kid out there who has a dream, who is seeing themselves represented and our stories told by ourselves, in our own words, with tremendous allies and tremendous trust with and from



Lily Gladstone (right) and Tiffany Meiwald (left) perform in the School of Theatre and Dance and the Montana Repertory Theatre's coproduction of "The Frybread Queen." The play was a 2010 special coproduction among Native Voices at the Autry, Montana. CONTRIBUTED | TERRY J. CYR PHOTOGRAPHY

each other."

Gladstone's portrayal of Burkhart was full of nuance. These small moments of subtlety that formed the larger whole of her character have been a quality of her work since her first performances at UM.

"Even then, she had a very thoughtful presence. Her talent was evident, but she also asked smart questions and thought a lot about the work," said Bernadette Sweeney, a professor of Theatre and Performance Studies who directed Gladstone in her 2006 production of "Riders to the Sea." "She was always very comfortable with the power of stillness and the power of silence."

"Lily's commitment to storytelling and her grounded approach to the craft left a lasting impression on me," Fahlgren said. "In college,

I often looked to Lily as a model of how subtlety in acting can be incredibly effective."

Fahlgren said when she ran into Gladstone in the weeks after "Killers of the Flower Moon" premiered, she first wanted to know what it was like to work alongside celebrities like Leonardo DiCaprio and Robert De Niro. However, Gladstone's focus was on "the importance of her role in telling a significant story, emphasizing the responsibility to tell her story well."

"Killers of the Flower Moon" tells the true story of the Osage Nation, a tribe forced to migrate into Oklahoma in the 19th century who discovered oil on poorly valued land. The subsequent oil boom made many members of the tribe extremely wealthy. State law dictated that members of the tribe employed white

caretakers to manage their wealth.

The white caretakers often exploited the Osage people they intended to govern and committed several murders to strip away the Osage's wealth. While Burkhart survived what has since been called the "Reign of Terror" and some culprits were eventually punished, the story has largely faded from memory in the decades since.

While "Killers of the Flower Moon" was nominated for seven Golden Globes, Gladstone took home the only victory.

Gladstone is the second UM graduate to win a Golden Globe acting prize, following J.K. Simmons' 2015 victory for "Whiplash." Gladstone's performance is also stirring up buzz or a possible Oscar nomination, which will be announced on Jan. 23.