

Joy brought through toys



DYLAN ENGEL • The Reporter

The Women's Center is one of the locations students can drop off unwrapped toys at for the Holiday Toy Drive which runs through Dec. 5.

By EMMA JOHNSON
News Director

With the holiday season right around the corner, one of the best ways to boost spirits is by giving back. This year, the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion office teamed up with the Minnesota State Track and Field Team to bring festive cheer to the Mankato community.

The project was spearheaded

by MSU students Rashion Walker and Jeremiah Revere. Revere said the idea came to them from a trip to Five Below.

"In early August before school started, we were walking through the aisles and we noticed there were a whole bunch of different toys. We thought we could start a toy drive and with 180 (team members) in a group chat, I thought 'That's a lot of toys we could give out,'" Revere

said.

Walker and Revere grew up in the inner streets of Miami and were once on the receiving end of toy drives. Revere said it's nice being on the giving end.

"My mom did whatever she could to get what I wanted for Christmas. Being able to get that toy is special," Revere said. "It makes me feel good to have the roles reversed."

Associate Track and Field

Head Coach Chris Parno said the ownership of track students taking initiative for starting the drive can be implemented back to a teamwork mindset.

"It's the call to action. There's no 'Let's get it done' but being more intentional about getting (the drive) accomplished," Parno said. "It's not from the coaching staff putting it on them, it's the people from the team."

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Mav Machine brings Maverick pride abroad

By ALEXANDRA TOSTRUD
Staff Writer

The Maverick Machine will ring in the new year this winter break with a parade performance in Rome.

According to Michael Thursby, director of the Mav Machine, the band was initially invited for the 2021 parade which was canceled due to COVID.

"We're the only college group that got invited to come and perform. It's through downtown Rome, going past the Spanish steps, the Trevi fountain, and we get to go through the historical center of Rome," said Thursby.

The band last had the opportunity to travel on this scale in 2019 when their trip to Puerto Rico was shaken off course.

"We had earthquakes—those were some of the most difficult situations to go through as a band director. I honestly feel like this is going to be easy compared to that. Traveling across seas presents its own challenges just because many students have not traveled over an ocean before," Thursby said.

The students will have the opportunity to see locations outside of the sites along the parade route, like the Roman Forum and Pompeii.

"It's a different feeling when you're there. Everything is so much older, and you don't think about it when you see it on TV, but when you're there, it gives me goosebumps just thinking about it and having the parade be in that location, it'll be very neat," said Thursby.



LILLY ANDERSON • The Reporter

The Maverick Machine will be marching through Rome over winter break, an experience that was delayed due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Junior Sophie Seegar has played with the band for her

entire college experience and is

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Graduation Planner helping students get on track

By AMALIA SHARAF
Staff Writer

Graduation Planner, a new class planning tool, has been created by the MinnState system and implemented into MSU for more convenient academic planning.

Student Degree Planning and Completion Coordinator, Lindsay Smith is responsible for sharing information and teaching students how to use Graduation Planner to create individualized plans for a better understanding of students' academic pathway to graduation. She believes that this tool is helpful for planning and organization.

"I think it's helpful because I know that a lot of students like to have an idea of what they want to take and when they want to take it. I know people will write everything out, semester by semester. In this way, everything is in one place. It's telling them exactly what they need," said Smith.

Fourth-year student Ryuto Hashimoto agrees with that statement.

"I tried to look at the DARS and understand the total credits that I have, and that wasn't sometimes that is helpful enough. Because I ended up writing on a piece of paper to organize things. And planning ahead was hard because there is no way that I can save that somewhere," said Hashimoto.

Graduation Planner allows students to plan their classes ahead, save their plans and create plans for "what-if" situations. Smith explains that Graduation Planner will help students understand what their plan is in case of unexpected situations.

"It's pretty common for students to come into college and think that they want to study a certain major and then maybe change their mind or maybe they need to come up with a backup plan just in case they don't get into a certain major," Smith stated.

First-year student Aruzhan Betigenova has learned

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MSU makes efforts to curb decline in admission rates



AJAY KASAUDHAN • The Reporter

The COVID-19 pandemic caused 13% decrease in students attending MSU. Some of the reasons behind the decline are the rising cost of tuition rates and students choosing to attend two year programs.

By ANDREA SCHOENECKER
Staff Writer

Since 2018, there has been a decline in students applying to college in the United States. For MSU, in the past 5 years, there has only been a 1% decrease in the overall student body. Incoming first-year students saw the biggest decline that it has had from 2020 to 2021, seeing a 13% decrease in students. Director of Admissions Brian Jones stated that this was a record low in his career in admissions, but has since recovered.

“From 2020, that was the single largest decline in one year’s freshman class in my entire 21 years in admissions. But as of Fall 2022, we’re back up to over 2,300 new first-year students,” said Jones.

Although the decline state and nationwide in students applying for college has been steady, the pandemic had an impact on student admissions. Unlike other schools in the area, MSU was fortunate to have only seen a small decline in numbers comparatively.

“Most schools around us suffered and had a much smaller class. So I think we benefited from students who were going to have to travel far away, or go to more expensive institutions. Feeling safe, and like they could afford our institution and getting started. But in Fall 2021, there was still a lot of uncertainty around,” said Jones. “So I think the public health reality, and unfortunately, a lot of politics intervened in people’s decision making a lot more than they would in a normal cycle, at least among new students.”

Bringing students to campus is one of the top ways to bring in admissions alongside college fairs and high school visits. During the pandemic, new and creative ways were put in place to keep students interested in MSU.

“We worked with marketing to create a video tour walking around campus as well as offered some virtual sessions

on how to sign up for housing and financial aid over Zoom. Some of those were successful enough that we continue to do them post-COVID, even though we’re all back in person and everything, there’s still some value in offering those sessions virtually,” said Jones.

MSU has automatic admission requirements that range from GPA, test scores, and a combination of both. Because MSU is a public institution, the selection is not prestigious. Student acceptance qualifications are based on historical data of the campus that help determine the criteria. As recognized by Jones, students are more than a number on a page; if a student is not admissible out of high school, there is an opportunity for them to attend MSU later in their college career.

“There are a lot more factors that go into a student’s education and ability to be successful than just a number on a page. We have a comprehensive review process that allows us to consider other factors before we say no to a student,” stated Jones. “We do recognize that there are a lot of ways for students to become prepared or demonstrate their ability to be successful.”

An aspect that is important to note that has led to a decrease in college admissions is the increase in cost. Many states have opted to disinvest in higher education, which leads to students paying more in tuition costs. Programs such as financial aid and scholarships based on need are available to students to help combat the costs.

“Less of a percentage of the state budget supports public higher education than there used to be. That means an institution like ours costs a lot more money out of the pockets of students and families than it did. As a society, we as a state, we as communities, need to decide how important having an educated population is,” said Jones. “The more we think about the types of jobs that

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MSU alum’s juicy career as co-founder

By JULIA BARTON
Editor in Chief

When Hannah Perez arrived at Minnesota State, she thought her path would be to follow in her family’s footsteps and become a teacher.

But her mind would often wander to thoughts of starting her own business one day.

“I always had ideas about businesses and wanted to start a business. If the end goal is to start a business, I asked myself ‘what do I need to sell a product?’ and marketing is the best way to learn that,” Perez said.

She chose to follow those business thoughts.

Today she’s the co-founder of SEEQ, a company that makes a protein supplement with a juice-like feel which has gained an impressive following on TikTok.

Graduating from Minnesota State in 2019, Perez started her journey working in multiple fields of marketing.

She worked full-time after graduation at Social Butterfly, a digital media and social media marketing agency in Minneapolis. There she met Ben Zaver, who was an intern at the time. After his internship ended, Zaver brought in his product of juice-like protein for his colleagues to try.

Shortly after trying the product and hearing Zaver’s ideas, Perez knew this unique product was something she wanted to be involved in.

“If I see someone that has a passion for something and wants to start anything, I want to help in any way because I have different business experiences through IBE and other college experiences.”

She had a limited role for Zaver when the company started in October 2021, but gradually became more involved and moved into full-time production.

“I love that this brand has everything that I am already passionate about. Fitness, supplements and being a part of a group of go-getters,” Perez



Photo courtesy of Hannah Perez

Hannah Perez (above) is the co-founder of SEEQ, a juice-like protein supplement that was launched in October 2021.

said. “I suggest that everyone out of college work at a start-up because you get a say in how things go.”

Seeing ideas come to life and gaining experience by wearing many hats, working in a start-up environment has its feats.

“If you asked me a year ago, ‘What would you be doing?’ I’d say I don’t know. We didn’t know the success of the company or when we were even going to pay ourselves,” Perez said.

SEEQ currently has over 30,000 followers on TikTok and had one of their first videos go viral.

This gave them the momentum to sell out their first 4,000 units of product about a month after their first launch.

Mark Cuban, an entrepreneur featured on Shark Tank, tried their product on TikTok rating the flavor 10 out of 10 which led to an influx of orders. Redirecting Perez’s plans, she knew she had something worth working on.

Showing consumers what goes on behind the scenes of a company is one of the unique ways TikTok has helped businesses go viral.

“Being able to show the realness behind a company is the biggest thing business and brands can do on social media,” Perez said. “TikTok specifically gives companies the

opportunity to show the real people working behind it.”

After selling out for five months, they quickly outgrew their basement space and moved into a warehouse in April 2022. They launched three more flavors, the newest tropical punch.

One of their main goals for next year is to expand their team as well as launch another flavor on the market.

“We want to be the White Claw of this protein powder,” Perez said. “Although White Claw didn’t invent the seltzer, whenever you think seltzer you think White Claw, so when you think of a juice-like protein we want you to think of SEEQ.”

SEEQ predicts a steady stream of sales to round off the year. The company’s goal is to be at \$2.5 million in revenue at the end of the year; it currently sits at \$2.25 million in revenue.

Perez had a few odd jobs before finding gold. After switching majors, Perez got involved in the United Prairie Bank Integrated Business Experience program at MSU.

The program allows students to come up with a product, obtain a loan and then sell it to consumers in the span of one semester.

“I recommend anyone to do IBE,” Perez said. “I learned

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MSU Graduates and
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your future endeavors!**

PRESIDENT EDWARD S. INCH



Photo courtesy of Hannah Perez

SEEQ has over 30,000 followers on TikTok which allowed them to sell over 4,000 units of product within a month after their first launch. The business moved into an official warehouse in April 2022.

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how to make quick decisions, to work with a team and to not let pride get in the way. We were all working toward the same goal and a lot of it was making decisions for the company as a whole.”

Her company, MN Comfort, sold hand-made wooden coasters and coffee tumblers.

Prior to being one of the co-founders of SEEQ, Perez owned her own marketing agency and worked directly with entrepreneurs and founders.

“The biggest thing I realized is that no one has their stuff to-

gether,” Perez said. “That was a big wake up call for me because you think after you graduate from college everyone has it figured out. But no, there are 55 year-old businessmen that are still figuring it out.”

No matter how old you are, in today’s society a simple message can go a long way.

“LinkedIn is definitely the best place to reach out, and the power of the DM is so underrated,” Perez said. “I know so many people who have gotten jobs from so many big companies just from sending out a simple DM.”

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Revere added the importance of Maverick Athletics getting involved also comes from wanting to give back after receiving support from sponsorship and donors.

“A lot of people come out and support us from the community and I feel that if we’re being supported all the time, we should show that support,” Revere said.

A friendly competition to see which department can gather the most toys has resulted. Those who drop off toys can mark their unwrapped toys with a gold sticker for the track team while purple stickers represent the DEI office.

Interim Director of African American and Multicultural Affairs Balencia Sarah Crosby said the DEI office’s goal is to bring in around 50 to 100 toys. Crosby said the spirit of competition has been helpful in building connections with staff and departments.

“I don’t mind losing the competition because we are still building rapport in the grand scheme of things,” Crosby said. “There’s been some students saying ‘you’re going

down,’ but it’s all in good fun for a good cause.”

While the budget of a college student is a bit tighter, Parno said it’s easy for students to swap their morning coffee or a takeout order for a \$5 toy.

“By making that replacement, you feel good knowing that someone is going to open that gift and be excited about it,” Parno said. “I think it’s getting in the mindset that we can make a sacrifice to make somebody else happy.”

Crosby said the simple act of donating a toy or even a pack of stickers can still make a difference in a child’s life.

“The children that we are able to give toys to are going to make a difference. When we put all these small differences together, it changes the world,” Crosby said.

The drive is looking for unwrapped toys elementary school children would like. All the donations will be given to Toys for Tots. For those looking to participate in the toy drive, donation boxes are set up in Myers Fieldhouse, McElroy’s front desk and the Women’s Center. The drive runs until Dec. 5.

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are going to be required, and the types of jobs that are going to be available for students, personally, my opinion is that we need institutions of higher education, both two-year and four-year. Someone’s got to pay for it, so I’m concerned.”

It is also important to recognize that not all individuals want to attend a four-year

university and would be better suited to a two-year college or certificate program.

“I’ve always believed that not every student belongs at a four-year university. The most important thing is that a student is exploring what their goals are and what their interests and skills are, and identify the right preparation for that,” said Jones.

Student government held a two and a half hour meeting to wrap up semester



DOMINIC BOTHE • The Reporter

Senator Nick Frenz attended the last Student Government meeting of the semester by talking about a potential tuition freeze. Frenz answered student’s questions about student loans and taxation forgiveness as well.

By CARLY BAHR
Staff Writer

Senator Nick Frenz and Representative-elect Jeff Brand visited the 90th Student Government during their final meeting of the fall semester.

Frenz spoke to the senators about a possible tuition freeze. According to him, Minnesota is not living up to its promise to cover two-thirds of higher education costs. The state’s budget allocates roughly 40% of these

costs to be covered by the state leaving students responsible for the remaining 60%. According to Senate President Emma Zellmer, the state contribution is about 33% for Minnesota State University, Mankato students.

“We’re nowhere near that (two-thirds). The state is breaking its promise to you. We pay about 40-43%. Why, because that’s just what previous legislators chose to do. We spent the money on something else or

they reduced taxes for wealthy people or whoever it is,” Frenz said. “Higher education funding is one of the best investments we can make in the state. One of the reasons Minnesota has been successful over the last hundred years is generally we have invested more in higher education. It’s just that we’re breaking our promise to students now, which is why we find more students stressed, not just for tuition reasons, but for

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Study: U.S. gun death rates hit highest levels in decades



BEBETO MATTHEWS • Associated Press

According to a study published by JAMA Network Open on Tuesday, Nov. 29, the U.S. gun death rate hit its highest mark in nearly three decades, and the rate among women has been growing faster than men.

By MIKE STOBBE
Associated Press

The U.S. gun death rate last year hit its highest mark in nearly three decades, and the rate among women has been growing faster than that of men, according to study published Tuesday.

The increase among women — most dramatically, in Black women — is playing a tragic and under-recognized role in a tally that skews overwhelmingly male, the researchers said.

“Women can get lost in the discussion because so many of the fatalities are men,” said one of the authors, Dr. Eric Fleegler of Harvard Medical School.

Among Black women, the rate of firearm-related homicides more than tripled since 2010, and the rate of gun-related suicides more than doubled since 2015, Fleegler and his co-authors wrote in the paper published by JAMA Network Open.

The research is one of the most comprehensive analyses of U.S. gun deaths in years, said David Hemenway, director of the Harvard University’s Injury Control Research Center.

In October, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention released data on U.S. firearm deaths last year, counting more than 47,000 — the most in at least 40 years.

The U.S. population is growing, but researchers say the rate of gun deaths has been getting worse, too.

America’s gun-related homicide and suicide rates both rose 8% last year, each hitting levels not seen since the early 1990s.

In the new study, the researchers examined trends in firearm deaths since 1990. They found gun deaths began to steadily increase in 2005, but the rise accelerated recently, with a 20% jump from 2019 to 2021.

Why did gun deaths rise so dramatically during the COVID-19 pandemic? That’s “a straightforward question with probably a complicat-

ed answer that no one really knows the answer to,” said Fleegler, an emergency medicine physician at Boston Children’s Hospital.

Factors could include disruption of people’s work and personal lives, higher gun sales, stress, and mental health issues, experts said.

The researchers counted more than 1.1 million gun deaths over those 32 years — about the same as the number of American deaths attributed to COVID-19 in the last three years.

About 14% of those killed by guns were women, but the rate increase among them is more pronounced.

There were about 7 gun deaths per 100,000 women last year, up from about 4 per 100,000 in 2010 — an increase of 71%. The comparable increase for men was 45%, the rate rising to about 26 per 100,000 from about 18 per 100,000 in 2010.

For Black women, the firearm suicide rate rose from about 1.5 per 100,000 in 2015 to about 3 per 100,000 last year.

Their homicide death rate last year was more than 18 per 100,000, compared with about 4 per 100,000 for Hispanic women and 2 per 100,000 for white women.

The highest homicide gun death rates continue to be in young Black men, at 142 per 100,000 for those in their early 20s.

The highest gun suicide death rates are in white men in their early 80s, at 45 per 100,000, the researchers said.

In a commentary accompanying the study, three University of Michigan researchers said the paper confirmed racial and sexual differences in U.S. gun deaths and that homicide deaths are concentrated in cities and suicides are more common in rural areas.

“Firearm violence is a worsening problem in the United States,” and will require a range of efforts to control, they wrote.

Deforestation in Brazil hits new high

By FABIANO
MAISONNAVE
Associated Press

Deforestation in the Brazilian Amazon slowed slightly last year, a year after a 15-year high, according to closely watched numbers published Wednesday. The data was released by the National Institute for Space Research.

The agency’s Prodes monitoring system shows the rainforest lost an area roughly the size of Qatar, some 11,600 square kilometers (4,500 square miles) in the 12 months from August 2021 to July 2022.

That is down 11% compared to the previous year, when over 13,000 square kilometers (5,000 square miles) were destroyed.

For more than a decade it looked as though things were getting better for the Brazilian Amazon. Deforestation had declined dramatically and never rose back above 10,000 square kilometers. That was before the presidency of far-right President Jair Bolsonaro, beginning in January 2019.

This will be the last report published under Bolsonaro, as he lost his reelection bid and will leave office Jan. 1. But part of the destruction that took place on his watch will not appear until next year, including the key months from August to October of 2022.

A preview of those months comes from a different federal satellite system that issues faster but less accurate data: It shows deforestation skyrocketed 45% over the August to October period the prior year. Traditionally, that time of year sees peak



EDMAR BARROS • Associated Press

Deforestation in the Brazilian Amazon rainforest slowed slightly last year, a year after a 15-year high, according to closely watched numbers published Wednesday, Nov. 30.

destruction, due to the dry season.

An analysis of the new yearly data from Climate Observatory, a network of environmental groups, shows that in the four years of Bolsonaro’s leadership, deforestation rose 60% over the previous four years. That is the largest percentage rise under a presidency since satellite monitoring began in 1998.

In one state, Para, a fierce rate of destruction went down by 21% yet it was still the center of one-third of all Brazil’s Amazon forest loss. Part of the tree cutting and burning happens in areas that are ostensibly protected. One such area is Paru State Forest, where the nonprofit Amazon Institute of People and the Environment registered 2 square kilometers (0.7 square miles) of deforestation in just October.

“In recent years, deforestation has reached protected

areas where previously there was almost no destruction,” Jacqueline Pereira, a researcher with the Amazon Institute, told The Associated Press. “In Paru’s region, the destruction is driven by lease of land for soybean crops and cattle.”

Another critical area is the southern part of the state of Amazonas, the only state that increased deforestation in the most recent data, by 13% compared to the year before. It’s largely attributable to Bolsonaro’s push to pave about 400 kilometers (250 miles) of the only road that connects Manaus, home to 2.2 million people, with Brazil’s larger urban centers further south. Most Amazon deforestation occurs alongside roads where access is easier and land value is higher.

Researchers and environmentalists have blamed Bolsonaro’s policies for the surge in deforestation.

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Prince William focuses U.S. trip on climate

By DANIC KIRKA
Associated Press

Prince William and the Princess of Wales will be looking to focus attention on their Earthshot Prize for environmental innovators when they make their first visit to the United States in eight years this week, a trip clouded by tensions with William's brother, Prince Harry, and his wife, Meghan, who have criticized Britain's royal family in the American media.

William and his wife, Catherine, will travel to Boston on Wednesday for three days of public engagements before announcing the prize winners on Friday in a ceremony headlined by pop star Billie Eilish.

Boston, birthplace of John F. Kennedy, was chosen to host the second annual prize ceremony because the late president's 1962 "moonshot" speech — setting the challenge for Americans to reach the moon by the end of the decade — inspired the prince and his partners to set a similar goal for finding solutions to climate change and other environmental problems by 2030. The first Earthshot Prizes were awarded last year in London just before the U.K. hosted the COP26 climate conference.

But as much as the royals try to focus on the prize, Wil-



DANNY LAWSON • Pool photo via AP

Britain's Prince William and Kate, Duchess of Cambridge visit the Church on the Street in Burnley, England, Jan. 20, 2022. Prince William and the Princess of Wales will make their first trip to the U.S. in eight years this week.

liam is likely to face questions about Harry and Meghan, who have criticized the royal family for racism and insensitive treatment in interviews with Oprah Winfrey and other U.S. media. The Netflix series "The Crown" has also resurrected some of

the more troubled times of the House of Windsor just as the royal family tries to show that it remains relevant in modern, multicultural Britain following the death of Queen Elizabeth II.

"You could say that the royal family, particularly as far as

America is concerned, have had a bit of a bumpy ride of late," said Joe Little, the managing editor of Majesty Magazine. "They've come in for huge amounts of criticism on the back of 'The Crown' and also the Oprah Winfrey interview, which

has not particularly reflected well on the House of Windsor, so I think it's a good opportunity whilst they're in the U.S. ... to sort of redress the balance if at all possible."

Whatever those efforts are, they will take place in and around Boston, where William and Kate will remain for their entire visit.

The royal couple will keep the focus on environmental issues, meeting with local organizations responding to rising sea levels in Boston and visiting Greentown Labs in Somerville, Massachusetts, an incubator hub where local entrepreneurs are working on projects to combat climate change.

But they will also address broader issues, using their star power to highlight the work of Roca Inc., which tries to improve the lives of young people by addressing issues such as racism, poverty and incarceration. They will also visit Harvard University's Center on the Developing Child, a leader on research into the long-term impact of early childhood experiences.

William and Kate will also meet with Boston Mayor Michelle Wu and visit the John F. Kennedy Memorial Library and Museum with the late president's daughter, Caroline Kennedy.

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Apple Music reveals top music in 2022 and listener charts



ASSOCIATED PRESS

The Kid Laroi appears at the 64th Annual Grammy Awards in Las Vegas in 2022, left, and Justin Bieber appears at The Met Gala in 2021. “Stay,” the smash hit topped Apple Music’s global song chart in 2022.

By MARK KENNEDY
Associated Press

“Stay,” the smash hit by The Kid Laroi and Justin Bieber topped Apple Music’s global song chart in 2022 as the giant music streamer released its end-of-year lists and provided listeners with data on their own most listened-to tunes.

“Stay,” which stayed atop the Billboard Hot 100 for seven weeks this summer, was No. 1 on Apple Music’s top 100 global songs chart, staying on top for 51 days straight. Elton John and Dua Lipa’s “Cold Heart (PNAU Remix)” was

No. 1 on the streamer’s Shazam chart and “We Don’t Talk About Bruno” from the movie musical “Encanto” was the song with the most-read lyrics in 2022 on the platform.

Joining “Stay” at the very top of the global songs list were “As It Was” by Harry Styles, “Wait For U” by Future featuring Drake and Tems, “Super Gremlin” by Kodak Black, “Easy on Me” by Adele, and “Heat Wave” by Glass Animals. Hip-hop continued to lead the different genres on the global top 100 with 32 songs, followed by pop with 23 songs and R&B/soul in third place with 11 songs.

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one of the 42 students traveling to Rome.

“I’m really into history, so I’m excited to see Pompeii and all those historical sites because they have a lot of meaning, and some of those buildings are crazy old, not like anything we have here,” Seegar said.

Many members, like junior Emily Aldrich, are looking forward to the opportunity to play without the stressors that come with the academic semester.

“Because we’ll be on break, it’ll be a nice time to just do band and be able to play trombone in a place I’ve never been before and perform for people,” Aldrich said.

While some students have never traveled overseas, sophomore Max Shannon traveled internationally with his high school band and testified that experiences abroad are better with a band.

“Traveling abroad with a band is like traveling abroad with fifty of your closest friends. It’s way more fun since you know your entire group,” Shannon said.

Thursby hopes that students will learn from being surrounded by history.

“It puts things in a different perspective for you. Specifically, for us as an athletic band, going to see the coliseum, one

of the oldest stadiums in the world, is a type of experience that is hard to put into words,” said Thursby.

The band will perform familiar tunes for spectators during the parade on New Year’s Day.

“The majority of the music is normal, go-to pep band tunes. We’ll play the MSU rouser to represent our university internationally as best we can,” Thursby said.

Since the Mav Machine is an athletic band, their style is unlike marching bands in Europe.

“We’re going to be very different from any other group that’s there. We are the Maverick Machine. We are our own energy, our own vibe, and being able to share that with them in Rome I think is going to be really fun,” Thursby said.

Now that the band is fast approaching its 10th anniversary, Thursby hopes to secure more experiences like this for the program in the future.

“I didn’t do it when I was an undergraduate. I had opportunities to travel internationally and I didn’t take them. I want to make sure that I give those opportunities to our students as much as I possibly can,” Thursby said.

The Mav Machine will fly out Dec. 27 and will return Jan. 3.

San Francisco Police to use robots

By JANIE HAR
Associated Press

Supervisors in San Francisco voted Tuesday to give city police the ability to use potentially lethal, remote-controlled robots in emergency situations — following an emotionally charged debate that reflected divisions on the politically liberal board over support for law enforcement.

The vote was 8-3, with the majority agreeing to grant police the option despite strong objections from civil liberties and other police oversight groups. Opponents said the authority would lead to the further militarization of a police force already too aggressive with poor and minority communities. Supervisor Connie Chan, a member of the committee that forwarded the proposal to the full board, said she understood concerns over use of force but that “according to state law, we are required to approve the use of these equipments. So here we are, and it’s definitely not a easy discussion.”

The San Francisco Police Department said it does not have pre-armed robots and has no plans to arm robots with guns. But the department could deploy robots equipped with explosive charges “to contact, incapacitate, or disorient violent, armed, or dangerous suspect” when lives are at stake, SFPD spokesperson Allison Maxie said in a statement.

“Robots equipped in this manner would only be used in extreme circumstances to save or prevent further loss of innocent lives,” she said.



ERIC RISBERG • Associated Press

The Democratic San Francisco Board of Supervisors could allow police to use potentially lethal, remote-controlled robots in emergency situations. The 11-member board will vote Tuesday, Nov. 29, 2022.

Supervisors amended the proposal Tuesday to specify that officers could use robots only after using alternative force or de-escalation tactics, or concluding they would not be able to subdue the suspect through those alternative means. Only a limited number of high-ranking officers could authorize use of robots as a deadly force option.

San Francisco police currently have a dozen functioning ground robots used to assess bombs or provide eyes in low visibility situations, the department says. They were acquired between 2010 and 2017, and not once have they been used to deliver an explosive device, police officials said. But explicit authorization was required after a new California law went into effect this year requiring police and sheriffs departments to inventory military-grade equipment and seek approval

for their use.

The state law was authored last year by San Francisco City Attorney David Chiu while he was an assembly member. It is aimed at giving the public a forum and voice in the acquisition and use of military-grade weapons that have a negative effect on communities, according to the legislation.

A federal program has long dispensed grenade launchers, camouflage uniforms, bayonets, armored vehicles and other surplus military equipment to help local law enforcement.

In 2017, then-President Donald Trump signed an order reviving the Pentagon program after his predecessor, Barack Obama, curtailed it in 2015, triggered in part by outrage over the use of military gear during protests in Ferguson, Missouri, after the shooting death of Michael Brown.

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Higher food prices worsen the hunger crisis

By ASHRAF KHALIL
Associated Press

Staffers at Bread for the City, a venerable charity in the nation's capital, thought they were prepared for this year's annual pre-Thanksgiving Holiday Helpers food giveaway.

The pandemic had faded, but inflation was high, so they budgeted to give out 12,000 meals, 20% higher than normal pre-pandemic levels.

But they were quickly overwhelmed, with long lines of clients waiting hours to receive a free turkey and a \$50 debit card for groceries. They were forced to shut down three days early after helping 16,000 people, many more than anticipated.

"We don't want to retraumatize our community by having them wait outside four hours for a turkey," said Ashley Domm, the charity's chief development officer. "We are not set up to have hundreds of people lined up on a city street."

Bread for the City's experience reflects a larger dynamic playing out across the country. What many Americans hoped would be the first normal holiday season in three years has instead been thrown into a heightened hunger crisis once again, with Christmas on the horizon.

A September report by the Urban Institute estimated that about 1 in 5 adults experienced household food insecurity last summer, about the same as during the first year of the pandemic but a sharp increase from the spring of 2021. Black and Hispanic adults reported higher rates of food insecurity than



JACQUELYN MARTIN • Associated Press

Ricardo Barrett, of Washington, accepts a turkey from church volunteer Rita James, left, during an annual Thanksgiving food giveaway at The Redeemed Christian Church of God New Wine Assembly in Washington.

their white counterparts, according to the report.

"In the pandemic, nobody had jobs and nobody had money," said Nancy Murphy, a 45-year old caregiver picking up a frozen turkey and groceries last week from a giveaway at the Redeemed Christian Church of God New Wine Assembly church in northeast Washington. "Now they're back at their jobs but the money isn't going far enough. It's still hard."

The government estimates food prices will be up 9.5% to 10.5% this year. And that's

squeezing the budgets of many Americans and the food banks that have helped them, especially with the expiration of the massive flow of pandemic relief aid.

"Inflation has been the story of the year," said Michael Altfest, director of community engagement at the Alameda County Food Bank in Oakland, California.

Altfest said the level of community need remains 50% to 70% higher than pre-pandemic levels, and about 30% of calls to the food bank's emergency help-

line are from first-time callers.

In multiple cases, charities and food banks had prepared for increased numbers due to inflation, only to find the level of need had far exceeded their projections.

The Capital Area Food Bank in Washington originally projected it would need to distribute about 43 million meals during the July 2022-June 2023 budget year. Now four months into that fiscal year, it already is 22% ahead of those predictions.

"That was an educated pre-

dition with a good four or five months of information," said the food bank's CEO, Radha Muthiah. "We are always thinking about Thanksgiving and Christmas right when everybody's heading to the beach in summer."

In Illinois, Jim Conwell of the Greater Chicago Food bank says the need remains elevated. "So we're purchasing more and we're spending more on what we do purchase," he said.

His organization's network served about 30% more households in August 2022, compared to the previous August.

"Families that were just getting their feet back underneath them are experiencing a whole new challenge or even if they have employment, or have several jobs or sources of income, it's just not going as far as it was two years ago," he said.

Higher prices are forcing people to make "sacrifices on their food," Altfest said.

For example, he said, the price of chicken has more than doubled — from 78 cents per pound last year to \$1.64 per pound this year.

Estimates from the Farm Bureau set the cost of turkey as 21 percent higher than last year.

And market researcher Datasembly estimates that a 16-ounce box of stuffing costs 14% more than last year, while a 5-pound bag of Russet potatoes averages 45.5% more.

Mike Manning, president of the Greater Baton Rouge Food Bank in Louisiana, draws a distinction between the increased hunger levels sparked by the

HUNGER on page 9▶

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Grades don't define you

Finals season is officially underway, and with it comes an onslaught of negative feelings and emotions. Late nights, early mornings and cramming can leave a student feeling overwhelmed.

Good grades are undoubtedly a matter of high importance for us as college students. And for good reason, of course.

High marks in a class can lead to good job opportunities down the road, letters of recommendation from faculty or invitations to honors societies that can serve as a sick flex on a resumé.

However, we should take the importance of a letter on a transcript with a grain of salt. As students, we should realize that good grades aren't everything.

Some faculty grade harshly. Some center 50% of the student's grade around one singular final essay or exam. Some spring pop quizzes onto sleepy-eyed students in the early hours of the morning, expecting them to ace it without a sweat.

That's not to say a student's work shouldn't be analyzed, or that assigning a student work to further their understanding is an evil, mean spirited thing.

But at the end of the day, the reason we as students attend school is to learn everything there is to know about our respective majors, to prepare us for our futures as efficiently and sufficiently as possible.

A deep, profound understanding of a course matters more than a grade. A student could receive an A+ as their final grade in a class but not remember anything, since they looked up all the answers online. In that same vein, a student could receive a C as their final grade, but leave the semester with a brand new understanding of the topic they were studying.

Contrary to cheating their way up the ladder, the "C" student suffered failures and underwent many trials and many errors before eventually learning.

As students, an educational key point that we should all learn and remember is that failure can be a good thing.

There is no succeeding without first failing. By falling down and getting back up over and over, we learn what does and doesn't work. We identify the problem and troubleshoot solutions until we reach a successful conclusion at our own respective pace.

The road to success is not a linear, straightforward one, either. Rather, the road is windy and curvy, in desperate need of a snow plow, and has lots of road bumps and potholes.

Messing up is part of the process. If you don't make mistakes, you don't grow and learn from them.

Perspectives

Letter to the Editor: Gratitude for Scholars Serving Time



Photo courtesy of Nastassia Frees

These MSU students are part of the Scholars Serving Time program administered by Dr. Vicki Hunter. They live at the Federal Correctional Institute in Waseca. This semester the students are taking courses in English, Spanish, and Gender and Women's Studies. Pictured from left to right, first row: April Bell, Leshay Rhoton, Paige Thurman, Amanda Gregg, Amelia Lesemann. Second row, left to right: Amanda Ferguson, Safara Shortman, Valerie Kupka, Channing Lacey, Rainbow Stoneman, Nastassia Frees, Sybil Rogers. Service dogs in training, left to right: Natty, Bell, Oaklee. Students not pictured: Monica Williams and Kelle Lehman.

Dear editor:

My name is Channing. I'm currently a student at MSU. My situation is very different from most MSU students. I'm serving time at Waseca federal prison on drug-related charges. My drug addiction prior to prison was severe. So honestly prison is the reason I'm alive today.

Then I got into the Scholars Serving Time program and have been in it for two years now. This program has given me something to strive towards; prison tends to strip you of everything if you allow it. The MSU program gave me hope and it gave me confidence. I know when I walk out these gates I'm going to continue my education, getting my BA in kinesiology.

MSU has given me a path and a purpose. It's shown me I'm capable of more than I ever thought possible. If this program was offered to more people in my position, rehabilitation might become a real possibility, not just a made-up idea.

I want to personally thank all the professors who took the time to come into the prison. All of you made me feel like a human being again. I will always remember every single one of you, and I will be thankful to you everyday.

Channing Lacey

Pulse

"What's your favorite holiday tradition?"

Compiled by Dominic Bothe



ALLISON DAVIS,
SENIOR

"Going to my grandparent's house on Christmas Eve."



ISMAACII MOHAMED,
SENIOR

"Giving and getting gifts."



CHARLIE KRUGER,
JUNIOR

"Setting up all the Christmas trees on Black Friday."



SYDNEY BLAKE,
SENIOR

"Christmas Eve and Day, watching hours and hours of 'A Christmas Story.'"



JENNA WHITMORE,
SENIOR

"Making hot chocolate (with all the toppings) with my cousins on Christmas Eve."



ELLIOT AALBERG,
JUNIOR

"Drinking."

AG: Penalize doctor who spoke of Ohio 10-year-old's abortion



JENNA WATSON • Associated Press

Dr. Caitlin Bernard, a reproductive healthcare provider, speaks during an abortion rights rally at the Indiana Statehouse in Indianapolis. Bernard has spoken publicly about providing an abortion to a 10-year-old.

By TOM DAVIES and
ARLEIGH RODGERS
Associated Press

Indiana's Republican attorney general on Wednesday asked the state medical licensing board to discipline an Indianapolis doctor who has spoken publicly about providing an abortion to a 10-year-old rape victim who traveled from Ohio after its more-restrictive abortion law took effect.

The complaint alleges Dr. Caitlin Bernard violated state law by not reporting the girl's child abuse to Indiana authorities and violated patient privacy laws by telling a newspaper reporter about the girl's treatment.

That account sparked a national political uproar in the weeks after the U.S. Supreme Court overturned *Roe v. Wade* in June, with some news outlets and Republican politicians falsely suggesting Bernard fabricated the story and President Joe Biden nearly shouting his outrage over the case during a White House event.

Bernard and her lawyers maintain the girl's abuse had already been reported to Ohio police and child protective services officials before the doctor ever saw the child.

A 27-year-old man has been charged in Columbus, Ohio, with raping the girl.

Bernard's lawyers argue Indiana Attorney General Todd Rokita, who is stridently anti-abortion, has been spreading false or misleading information about the doctor with his investigation allegations for several months.

The attorney general's complaint asked the licensing board to impose "appropriate disciplinary action" but doesn't specify a requested penalty.

State licensing boards ensure physicians have the appropriate training and education to practice in the state and can suspend, revoke or place on probation a doctor's license.

"Dr. Bernard violated the law, her patient's trust, and the standards for the medical profession when she disclosed her patient's abuse, medical issues, and medical treatment to a reporter at an abortion rights rally to further her political agenda," the office said in a statement. "Simply concealing the patient's name falls far short of her legal and ethical duties here."

White House press secretary Karine Jean-Pierre on Tuesday condemned the Rokita's request.

"This is not about the concerns of the victim," she said. "This is not about the victim at all. This is an elected official going after a doctor for helping a child who was raped and seeking health care."

The attorney general's office filed the action as an Indianapolis judge considers whether to block the attorney general's office from trying to obtain patient medical records for its investigation.

The attorney general's office filed the action as an Indianapolis judge considers whether to block the attorney general's office from trying to obtain patient medical records for its investigation. The judge's ruling is expected later this week.

Kathleen DeLaney, a lawyer for Bernard, pointed to testimony from that investigation, including from Bernard, who on Nov. 21 testified that both child abuse authorities and law enforcement in Ohio were involved in the case before the child came to Indiana for treat-

ment.

Marion County Deputy Prosecutor Katharine Melnick also testified that day and said child abuse would be reported by hospital social workers, not doctors, and such reports would be referred to law enforcement where the crime occurred.

"Though I am disappointed he has put my client in this position, we are not surprised given Mr. Rokita's consistent efforts to use his office to seek to punish those with whom he disagrees at the expense of Indiana taxpayers," DeLaney said in a statement Wednesday.

Bernard treated the girl in Indianapolis in late June, as she said doctors determined the girl was unable to have an abortion in neighboring Ohio. That's because Ohio's "fetal heartbeat" law took effect with the Supreme Court's June 24 decision.

Such laws ban abortions from the time cardiac activity can be detected in an embryo, which is typically around the sixth week of pregnancy, before many realize they are pregnant.

Deputy Attorney General Caryn Nieman-Szyper said during a court hearing last week that Bernard wouldn't be under investigation if she had not disclosed the girl's rape to a reporter to advance her own advocacy of abortion rights.

Nieman-Szyper said Bernard had not shown she had permission from the girl's family to discuss her care in public, exposing the child to national attention.

Bernard testified that she spoke with an Indianapolis Star reporter about the girl's impending abortion at an event protesting the Supreme Court's abortion decision.

Letter to the Editor: Gratitude for Scholars Serving Time

Dear editor:

I've been very fortunate to have been selected to be in the Scholars Serving Time program. Because of this program I've changed my life in all aspects. I am a 41-year-old Native American from Rosebud, S.D. I have made a lot of mistakes in my life and I've learned some hard lessons.

The first time I went to prison was in 2011 and have been in and out since. Before this program I carried a lot of anger, guilt and regret. I lived my

life like I had nothing to lose. Since giving my all and my best to the SST program, I am living my life like I have something to lose, taking nothing for granted. This program has taught me to believe in myself.

After I finish my associate's degree I plan to further my education with my bachelor's degree. I won't be a statistic of recidivism any more. Thank you Minnesota State University, Mankato, for saving my life.

Humbly,
Rainbow Stoneman

◀HUNGER from page 7

pandemic and the current crisis. During the pandemic, millions of people's jobs and incomes essentially disappeared, creating an immediate wave of need that he compared to the aftermath of a hurricane.

But the current crisis has been a slow and steady rise, starting in late February and still climbing. Manning said his food bank has seen a 10% to 15% rise in local food insecurity in just the past two months.

"You're talking to people who are on lower incomes and they're working multiple jobs — just think of the cost of them to get from one job to the other with the gas eating up whatever extra they're trying to make," he said. "What are they going to do? Do they give up gas so they can't get to work or sacrifice on food and come back and ask us for help?"

And with no clear signs on

when the long-term inflation wave might ease, "This almost feels like more of a marathon with no finish line in sight," said Conwell of the Chicago food bank.

Domm recalls the lines at Bread for the City that "just stayed overwhelmingly long," for weeks.

The fact that clients were willing to stand outside for hours for a turkey and a debit card speaks to "the intensity and depth of the need," she said.

Domm also believes there's a psychological element at play as well; after two consecutive holiday seasons warped by the pandemic, families are intensely eager to have something closer to normal.

"People have avoided their families for the last two years. So this year, there's more pressure to really get groceries and have a group meal," she said.

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◀PLANNER from page 1

about this tool recently. She believes that the ability to create backup plans is helpful in her situation.

"I did my plans manually, so it took much more time than it should have and I'm still fluctuating between minors and their classes, so I need more backup plans," said Betigenova.

Mariana Dermenji, a fourth-year student, wished that she could have used this tool during her academic journey.

"I believe that a graduation planner is a very useful tool. And I wish it existed back in my sophomore year, because the lack of a graduation planner and the ability to fill out the spreadsheet didn't prevent me from taking classes that I didn't even need," said Dermenji.

According to Smith, Graduation Planner not only allows students to plan their classes, but is good to explore other majors as well.

"It's a good way to explore

other majors. Students can look at classes that they have already taken and compare them to requirements for another major," said Smith.

Besides all of the features that this tool already has, it is planned to develop the Graduation Planner with slight adjustments for the future. Smith said that she collects students' feedback for future improvements.

"Right now we're taking information from people that are using it across the Minn-State system. Product owners will make adjustments like with any other program. Since it's new, we don't know what could change but it's possible that there will be changes," Smith said.

Nevertheless, the tool is already available for students to use. They can start to plan classes using Graduation Planner. Smith said that she is holding office hours to help students learn how to use Graduation Planner for their benefit. For more information email lindsay.smith@mnsu.edu.

◀STUGOV from page 3

basic needs reasons."

Both Frentz and Brand were questioned about their stance on student loan forgiveness taxation. Under the Biden-Harris Administration's Student Debt Relief Plan President Joe Biden made an executive order to forgive up to \$20,000 in individual student loan debt, which was struck down by a federal judge in Texas. Minnesota has a "basic accounting rule," according to Frentz, that requires forgiven debt to be taxed as income. Should the Supreme Court rule in Biden's favor of the debt relief, any amount of student loan forgiveness students and past students qualify for will be taxed.

Brand said, "That's a tax conformity issue. That's a conversation we need to have in Minnesota," and he hopes to return to the tax committee when the legislative session resumes and he supports eliminating taxes on student loan forgiveness, as he foresees this coming into question in the next session.

Frentz said he is "neutral on forgiveness" but would rather see tuition decreased, so students do not need to borrow large amounts of money. This would be the case if the state's budget allocated more money for higher education to reach the "promised" 60% coverage.

Brand also spoke on the issue, and called attention to the state's \$9-12 billion surplus as a possible source for higher education funds and a viable tuition freeze.

"But, we also have some really big challenges. We have housing challenges that we have to address. We have some tax fairness issues that we have to address. Our healthcare system is sick and our students at the E-12 level don't have the fully-funded education

that I think we owe it to our students to provide. So, there are a lot of challenges, but we have resources to do a lot of those good things right now. I would characterize that (tuition freeze) within that category of things that we can accomplish," Brand said.

The senate passed a motion to increase stipends for graduate assistants; motioned by Zellmer and seconded by Senator Bruce Wenzel.

The motion calls for stipends to be increased from \$10,000 yearly to \$18,000, as graduate assistants "have not seen an increase in many years," according to the resolution.

Senator Douglas Roberts (who uses they/them pronouns) has been vocal about this issue, since they passed a similar motion last spring. Senator Darlington Sehgbear said it is "frustrating" to continuously pass resolutions to increase graduate assistant pay with no changes made by administration.

"This is something the senate has passed before, and it is somehow frustrating that we have to keep passing resolutions about something that means a lot to students and that senators have voted on. I really support this resolution and I hope we will not pass another resolution again," Sehgbear said.

The resolution passed unanimously and awaits further action by administration.

The meeting also included presentations from Resident Hall Association President Sierra Roiger about the 2023-2024 proposed room and meal plan rates, a new RSO called Mental Health Mankato and a sociology student led Basic Needs Research Group who presented their research on the link between transportation access and food insecurity.

Social media makes Jada Williams a face of high school NIL



GREGORY BULL • Associated Press

La Jolla Country Day high school point guard Jada Williams, center, drives to the basket during a basketball game. Williams' videos of crazy basketball shots first got her noticed on social media and brand deals.

By BERNIE WILSON
Associated Press

It's the middle of the afternoon and Jada Williams begins a live stream on Instagram. In a heartbeat, more than 1,000 of her 671,000 followers join the broadcast and begin typing in questions and comments.

Williams does her best to follow along as the comments and questions scroll past. She laughs and interacts with fans, whether the topic is her basketball career or what shoes and clothes she should wear on an upcoming trip.

If there's a face of the bold new frontier of name, image and likeness (NIL) at the high school level, it might as well be the 17-year-old Williams, who is a senior point guard at San Diego's La Jolla Country Day. Engaging and charismatic, she constantly updates her feed with photos and videos from

her 6 a.m. basketball workouts, anything to do with her high school team and women's hoops and her flair for fashion.

Social media is a big part of NIL, which allows athletes to get paid without jeopardizing their eligibility. There are certainly bigger names in the prep ranks, like Bronny James, the son of LeBron James, and Arch Manning, the third generation of the first family of quarterbacks.

James has more than 10 million followers on social media and Mikey Williams of San Diego's San Ysidro High and a Memphis commit has more than 5 million.

Jada Williams has been a fixture on social media since she was 11 and stands out because of her flair for engagement. With the advent of NIL, she has parlayed her basketball skills and social media presence into six major endorsement

deals that bring in a total of six figures a year. Among them are Spalding, Gym Shark and Move Insoles, which was co-founded by NBA star Damian Lillard.

She moved with her mother, Jill McIntyre, and an older sister from a Kansas City suburb to enroll at the same high school that counts WNBA star Kelsey Plum among its alums, and take advantage of California being the first state to allow high school NIL.

Williams' videos of crazy basketball shots first got her noticed on social media and ultimately led to endorsement deals.

"As a young kid everyone just expected the boys to do all the crazy stuff," Williams said. "I was doing 360 layups and between-the-legs layups and people haven't seen that from a girl. It made a lot of people realize, 'Oh my.'

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Trump's dinner disaster sparks new campaign rules

By JILL COLVIN
Associated Press

Donald Trump is betting he can win his way back to the White House by reviving the outsider appeal that fueled his success in 2016.

But his dinner with a Holocaust-denying white nationalist and a rapper who has spewed antisemitic conspiracies is demonstrating the risks of that approach. It underscores the dangers of his limited campaign operation and leaves the former president subject to stinging criticism from fellow Republicans who increasingly see him as a liability for their party after a lackluster showing in this year's midterm elections.

In an acknowledgment of the severity of the backlash and an effort to prevent a repeat, Trump's campaign is putting new protocols in place to ensure that those who meet with him are approved and fully vetted, according to people familiar with the plans who requested anonymity to share internal strategy.

The changes will include expediting a system, borrowed from Trump's White House, in which a senior campaign official will be present with him at all times, according to one of the people.

The decision follows the anger and handwringing from people close to Trump over how the former president became embroiled in scandal just two weeks after launching his third campaign for the White House under the cloud of numerous investigations.

And it highlights their con-



ANDREW HARNIK • Associated Press

Former President Donald Trump had dinner Tuesday, Nov. 22, 2022, at his Mar-a-Lago club with the rapper formerly known as Kanye West, who is now known as Ye, as well as Nick Fuentes, a far-right activist.

cerns about Trump's vulnerability as GOP strategists and officials increasingly conclude that new leadership is the party's best hope for winning in future elections.

"Republicans, we're looking to 2024 and we're looking for a winner," said New Hampshire Gov. Chris Sununu, who blasted Trump's dinner as "absolutely reprehensible."

"I think it makes him even less electable in November of 2024," he said.

Trump has repeatedly said he did not know until after the fact that he had had dinner with

Nick Fuentes, the far-right activist who has used his online platform to spew antisemitic and white nationalist rhetoric. Fuentes arrived by car with Ye, the rapper formerly known as Kanye West, and was waved into the club by security, even though only Ye had been on the security list, according to one of the people present and others briefed on the events. (Fuentes apparently did not show his ID and the car's driver, a frequent guest at the club, got in using a credit card after misplacing her license.)

Some aides had advised

Trump against meeting with Ye, who has made his own antisemitic comments. But the two have a longstanding relationship and Trump rebuffed the advice.

They were supposed to meet one-on-one in the club's library, but Trump, eager to show off his celebrity guest to his paying club members, decided to divert the group to the club's main patio dining area. Fuentes joined the dinner at Ye's invitation.

Trump is no stranger to controversies of his own creation. His 2016 campaign was fueled by an endless cycle of outrage. Trump would make an inflam-

matory statement, calling for Muslims to be banned from entering the country, saying John McCain was "not a war hero" because he was captured in Vietnam, or asserting an Indiana-born federal judge had "an absolute conflict" on a case because of his "Mexican heritage."

Those comments would spur days of media coverage as critics responded with outrage, keeping Trump in the news.

But the political landscape is fundamentally different now. Trump is no longer a political outsider or newcomer. He's a member of a most elite circle — the former presidents club — and a seasoned politician mounting what is now his third campaign for the office.

And after nearly eight years of his dominating the news cycle, many in his party and the voting public are tired of the constant drama and chaos.

"If you have people who are constantly creating distractions and taking you off message and forcing people to answer questions like the ones that you're asking, that's not a good thing," South Dakota Sen. John Thune, the No. 2 Senate Republican, told reporters on Capitol Hill on Tuesday.

And While Trump has advised aides that he wants to try to recapture the energy of his first campaign, when he was the anti-establishment outsider fighting better-financed and organized rivals, the Mar-a-Lago episode revealed the limits of his threadbare operation, which has yet to hold a single public event since Trump's announcement two weeks ago.

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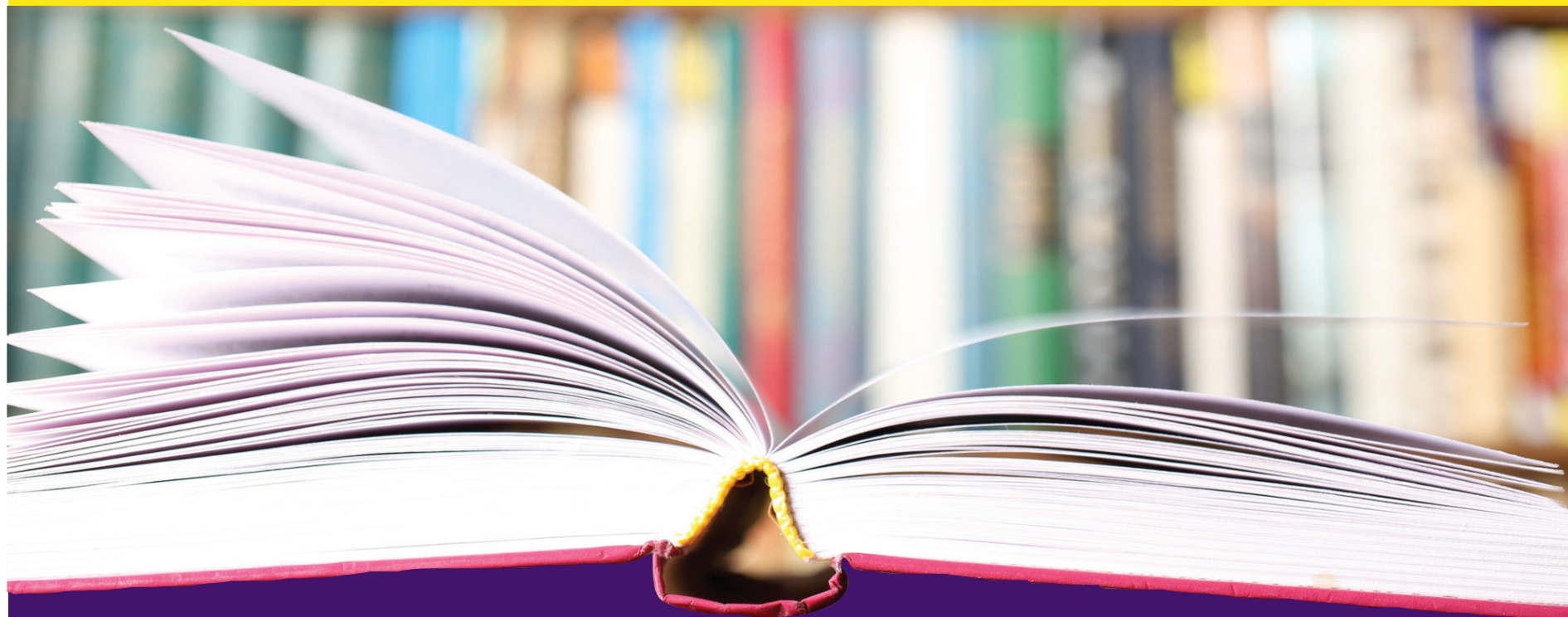
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SPORTS

The end of an era in athletics

Paul Allan to retire after 37 years at Minnesota State University, Mankato

By ALI REED
Staff Writer

After more than 37 years of directing Minnesota State's athletic department, Paul Allan has decided it is time to move on after this semester.

"What's it going to be like not being here anymore? I don't know," said Allan. "It's a little bit unbelievable that I won't be working here in some respects."

A native of Calgary, Canada, Allan decided to come to the U.S. to attend college at West Texas State.

"I didn't know a soul when I came here," said Allan. "I just wanted an opportunity and it turned out to be here."

After applying for several jobs, Allan joined MSU's athletics department staff in 1985. (Prior to that, he spent three years at Northern Arizona University as a Graduate Assistant, later turned Assistant, in the sports information office.)

Ending up in Minnesota brought nothing but excitement to Allan. He saw a lot of similarities between Minnesota and Canada and appreciated the fact that he found a school with hockey, along with many other sports.

"I'm lucky I ended up with a school that had 20 sports," said Allan. "I was even more excited about being in a situation where I could build my own sort of athletic communications program and work with young people."

During his time at MSU, Allan was named assistant athletic director/communications in 2003, associate director of athletics in 2009 and senior deputy director/external operations in



DYLAN ENGEL • The Reporter

Paul Allan, senior deputy director/external operations, will retire after this semester from Minnesota State after 37 years.

2022.

According to Allan, one of the most important parts in his line of work is the relationships built and connections made.

"Public relations is a relationship business," said Allan. "We connect with people so we can do a better job.

It extends not just from here at MSU, but outside of MSU."

Making connections has proven to be beneficial for Allan outside of MSU, as he was given the chance to work for the U.S. Olympic Committee multiple times.

Allan not only served as a press of-

ficer at two U.S. Olympic Festivals, he also served as a press attache for speed skating in the 1992 Winter Olympic Games, as well as venue press chief for hockey in the 2002 Winter Olympic Games.

"Part of the goal was to get some

RETIREMENT on page 16 ►

Minnesota State Men's Basketball searches for wins 8, 9 this week

By HAYDEN LEE
Staff Writer

Malik Willingham didn't mince words about his goals for this year's Maverick men's basketball team.

"We've been in this spot before, this year is personal for us and we want to prove that we are better than last year," he said. "We want to be a team to remember."

Willingham has been the Mavs' most impressive player this season, averaging 22.9 points per game on 50% from the field, 52% from three, and 90% from the free throw line. To put that into perspective, only one NBA player has shot that well throughout an entire season. Willingham's career high coming into the year was 20 points, a number that he has already surpassed four times this season, including a 41-point performance against Concordia St. Paul.

"Malik is playing at an elite level



DYLAN ENGEL • The Reporter

Minnesota State Men's basketball team aim to continue the win streak as they travel to Winona State today. Trevor Moore (above) taken from Tuesday, Nov. 22 game at home.

right now offensively, the basket has been really big for him," said Mavs coach Matthew Margenthaler. "Right now, we're playing as well as he has been playing."

In addition to the outstanding play from Willingham and the starters, the Mavs are loaded with a great bench unit led by sophomore guard Harrison Braudis. Embracing a sixth man role, Braudis has come off the bench in all seven games and is the teams' second leading scorer with 14.6 ppg on 66% from the field and 60% from three.

"Our bench has done a great job as well," said Margenthaler. "Harrison has been unbelievable, Tyrell Stuttley has been efficient, and Mason Mueller has been helping us a lot as well."

With a 7-0 record, Minnesota State is ranked No.16 in the NABC poll and off to another great start.

Thursday's game marks the start of conference play, beginning with the Winona State Warriors. The Mavs **UNDEFEATED on page 16 ►**

Women's basketball, Someone's 'O' has got to go



DYLAN LONG • The Reporter

Minnesota State Women's basketball team look to stay undefeated as they play away against Winona State today.

By CHARLIE GROEBNER
Staff Writer

As the December freeze begins, Minnesota State women's basketball is white hot entering the month. Five games into the regular season, MSU is undefeated as they prepare to extend their streak to 6-0.

This week, the team travels to take on the Winona State Warriors Thursday in a conference showdown. Both teams enter the undefeated matchup meaning someone's "0" has got to go. A chance to keep perfect and jump in the standings is on the line for both sides.

The last time these two met was last year's regular-season finale, where the Mavericks won 78-55, ending the Warrior's season in the process and qualifying for the postseason.

The Mavericks ultimately lost in round two of the NSIC tournament and the first round of the NCAA tournament.

MSU has not let a post-season hangover affect them this year and has been blazing through competition. However, the big story about the group entering the contest is junior guard Joey Batt. Last Saturday, Batt became the 23rd member of the 1,000-point club in a victory over Wisconsin-Parkside. Since her freshman year, the New Ulm native has blossomed into the heart and soul of the team and credited others for her success.

"It means a lot to me, having all the support and being close to home," Batt said "so having my family in attendance was awesome. My teammates

HOT STREAK on page 17 ►

Mavericks host Bulldogs in CCHA clash

By KARSON BUELOW
Staff Writer

This weekend, the No. 11 Minnesota State men's hockey team returns home to host unranked Ferris State in a set of CCHA conference matchups.

Minnesota State comes into this weekend's series with its slowest start in the first 14 games since the 2016-17 season. The Mavericks sport an 8-5-1 overall record and 5-2-1 in conference play.

Senior forward Ryan Sandelin gave his thoughts about the Mavericks' slow start to this season.

"We have a lot of guys that have played in big games and moments and that's on us to make sure we pass that experience on to the young guys," Sandelin said. "Experience is the best teacher."

The good news for the Mavericks this weekend is they will be returning home to a building where they are nearly undefeated this season at 7-1-0. The Mavericks will also be facing a struggling Bulldog team with a 4-6-2 record on the season and no wins against ranked opponents.

Unfortunately for the Mavericks, Minnesota State head coach Mike Hastings confirmed that senior forward Sam Morton's injury during the St. Thomas series will keep him sidelined through Christmas and possibly longer. Hastings did confirm, however, that junior forward Josh Groll is ready to go for this weekend.

Junior Maverick forward David Silye has continued to impress so far this season as



DYLAN ENGEL • The Reporter

Minnesota State Men's hockey team face Ferris State in a two-game home series Friday at 7:07 p.m. and Saturday at 6:07 p.m.

he leads the team with 16 pts through 14 games. The Arnprior, Ont. native was recently named CCHA forward of the month for his stats through the month of November and is tied for fourth in the nation in goals per game.

The Mavericks' leading scorers have been balanced on the back end as well, as junior defenseman Jake Livingstone sits in second on the team with 14 pts in 14 games played. The blueliner also contributes well defensively as he is +1 on the season and has accumulated a team-leading 22 blocked shots.

On the other side of the ice, Ferris State has had a wealth of scoring coming from their front end, as four of their top five scorers are forwards. Sophomore forward Bradley Marek leads the team with nine points despite being -9 on the season.

The Bulldogs, despite their low record, have had two very

solid goaltenders step up so far this season. Sophomore Noah Giesbrecht holds a .911 save percentage this season and a 2.60 goals-against average.

The Mavericks have struggled this season with slow starts, and last weekend was no exception. Minnesota State let up a season-high 18 shots in the first period while only mustering three.

Hastings spoke briefly about the slow starts and what needs to change heading into this weekend.

"Whether you do well or not as a team, you've gotta own what your actions are," Hastings said. "We have to own what happened in that game and learn from it."

The Mavericks will take on the Bulldogs this weekend in their fifth conference matchup of the season. Puck drops are set for 7:07 p.m. Friday and 6:07 p.m. Saturday.

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Hoping for second win against MN since 2007

By KOLE BUELOW
Staff Writer

“We’re playing the Maverick way,” said freshman forward Taylor Otremba, who leads Minnesota State with five goals this season. “We’ve improved a lot and now we’re healthy.”

Despite being plunged into three straight top-five matchups to begin the season and dropping all six of those games, the Mavericks 7-1 since then. This has propelled the team to a 7-7-0 record, while also sitting fourth in the Western Collegiate Hockey Association standings.

The Mavericks will be tested this weekend, however. The Mavs are back facing the No. 5 Minnesota Gophers, a team who beat Minnesota State 11-0 and 9-4 at the beginning of the season. The story is a bit different this time, though, with the Mavericks now having seven wins under their belts without senior defenseman Anna Wilgren and others who have missed time.

Injuries have riddled the Mavs this year, but the team has stayed strong in recent weeks. Otremba has been a significant contributor during the Mavericks’ hot streak, earning two WCHA honors down the stretch.

“We’ve had a lot of confidence that we’ve built that up, and we’ve been working more as a team,” Otremba said. “For this weekend, we’re going to have to be more aggressive and we’re going to have to be on them and not play scared. Try to control the game.”

As for what Otremba has



LILLY ANDERSON • The Reporter

The Minnesota State Women’s hockey team play against the U of M at 2 p.m. Saturday at in game two of the home-and-home series.

done well to steady herself in the top five for scoring this season for the Mavericks, she credits her teammates.

“It definitely goes back to my linemates and us working together pretty well,” explained Otremba. “We’ve been making plays and we see each other more. We work the puck down pretty well. I’ve been in the right place at the right time and we’ve been hammering the puck at the net and getting the rebounds.”

Despite an outstanding 7-1 record in their last eight games, the Mavericks did not play a team inside the top 15 rankings during the stretch. Minnesota State will now go up against a Gopher team that scores the third-most goals per game in NCAA Division I women’s hockey.

When it comes to what the Gophers do well, they simply play good team hockey. That showed earlier this season

when the Mavericks fell to the Gophers in both contests by a goal margin of 2-0. Being ranked No. 5 in the nation you would expect Minnesota to have players inside the top 10 in points, goals, or assists per game, but they do not.

Otremba said this time around the Mavs need to, “be on them right away and pressure them hard so they aren’t given a lot of time.” In turn, Otremba believes, “that will help us get the puck and turn it over to their end of the ice where we can capitalize.”

Last season, senior forward Kelsey King buried an overtime winner for the Mavericks to break a 53-game win streak the Gophers held since 2007. That goal came on a similar win streak to this year and could be a huge confidence boost to an already-hot Minnesota State team.

The University of Minnesota

MATCHUP on page 16 ▶

Senior Spotlight: Carah Drees



DOMINIC BOTHE • The Reporter

Senior forward #35 Carah Drees hopes to carry on the momentum as the Mavericks have yet to face defeat.

By ALI REED
Staff Writer

From hoops to hospitals, senior forward Carah Drees grabs life by the horns, as she showcases her talents on the basketball court, while also working toward a medical degree.

“I honestly always wanted to be a doctor,” said Drees. “It sometimes can be hard balancing labs with practice and all that stuff, though.”

Drees is from the small town of Sloan, Iowa, where she grew up in a world filled with basketball. Her father was a high school basketball coach and brought her to almost every practice as a kid.

“I’ve basically been in a gym for as long as I can remember,”

said Drees. “My dad was the high school coach when I was younger, so I’d always go to practice with him.”

After spending so much time around her dad’s basketball teams, Drees began her own basketball career in first grade. When she reached high school, she rejoined her dad on the court as a player on his team.

“For two years, my dad was my high school coach,” said Drees. “I actually liked it a lot.”

At Westwood Community High School, Drees was a force to be reckoned with. She finished her high school career with over 1000 points, 900 rebounds and 500 blocks. Drees was also an Iowa Academic

SPOTLIGHT on page 17 ▶

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Messi and Argentina advance at World Cup, beat Poland 2-0



ARIEL SCHALIT • Associated Press

Argentina's Lionel Messi smiles during the World Cup group C soccer match between Poland and Argentina at the Stadium 974 in Doha, Qatar, Wednesday, Nov. 30, 2022.

By STEVE DOUGLAS
Associated Press

Rest easy, soccer fans. Lionel Messi will grace the World Cup stage at least one more time.

The Argentina great had a penalty saved but his team still beat Poland 2-0 Wednesday after second-half goals from Alexis Mac Allister and Julian Alvarez and advanced to the last 16. After opening the World Cup with a shocking 2-1 loss to Saudi Arabia in one of biggest upsets in the tournament's history, Argentina wound up finishing in first place in Group C and will next play Australia — a surprise qualifier for the knockout stage.

Messi rolls into Saturday's game suddenly in a strong position in likely his final World Cup.

"Now another World Cup begins," Messi said, "and hopefully we can continue to do what we did today."

As for Poland, it was ultimately a happy night, too, because the team went through as the group's second-place team — on goal difference ahead of Mexico — and will next play defending champion France.

Messi ended up relieved after failing to score a penalty for the second straight World Cup.

It was awarded after he was hit in the face by the flailing hand of Poland goalkeeper Wojciech Szczesny, who made amends by diving to his left to block Messi's kick in the 39th minute.

"I'm upset that I missed the penalty, but the team came back stronger after my error," he said.

A largely pro-Argentina crowd, waving flags and scarfs and beating drums behind both goals, had been sweeping Messi and his team along at the 44,000-seat Stadium 974 and they didn't stop after the penalty. Within seconds, a chant of "MESSI! MESSI!" immediately reverberated around the venue in a bid to keep their idol's head high. And the roars were even louder at the start of the second half, first after Mac Allister's goal — a scruffy finish from Nahuel Molina's cut-back from the right — in the first minute and soon after as news filtered through that Mexico had taken the lead against Saudi Arabia, which started the day in third place. Playing an Argentine-record 22nd World Cup game, Messi never stopped surging forward and he was a menace all game to Poland with his dribbling ability and vision. One 40-meter solo run saw him weave past three opponents, drift past another only to mis-

kick as he took aim. The match was billed as a head-to-head between Messi and Poland striker Robert Lewandowski, perhaps the best center forward in the world, but it proved to be a mismatch.

"If Messi played with us and Robert played for Argentina, Robert would have scored five goals," Poland coach Czeslaw Michniewicz said. "Robert needs to be helped and the match was only played in our half."

Messi wasn't involved in either goal, though. For the second, Enzo Fernandez scooped a pass to Alvarez — starting ahead of regular striker Lautaro Martinez — and he took one touch before curling his shot into the top corner in the 67th minute. Things couldn't have gone better for Argentina coach Lionel Scaloni, who made more bold changes in bringing in Alvarez, Fernandez and Molina and seeing them play a part in the goals. Mac Allister, meanwhile, didn't start against Saudi Arabia and has added energy in midfield in the two games since.

Suddenly, Argentina looks more like the team which entered the World Cup on a 36-match unbeaten run and as one of the tournament favorites, a year after winning the Copa America.

teams and athletics staff.

"We've been crazy successful and it's been unbelievable," said Allan. "I also feel really good about the young people who have come through here, who are now professional PR people."

Allan declined to say what is next for him. For now, he looks forward to spending

more time with his wife Lori (who he also met at MSU), their three sons and their grandkids.

"I knew even when I started, this is the work I wanted to do," said Allan. "Nothing but gratitude. I've always sincerely felt that I was the luckiest guy around just to be able to do this."

◀**UNDEFEATED** from page 13 have struggled against the Warriors lately, especially in Winona where they have not won since early 2017.

"We were sitting here at 7-0 last year before the wheels fell off, so these next few weeks will be critical to where we end up at the end of the season," said Margenthaler.

This seasons' Warriors team is 5-1, averaging 72.8 points per game on 40% from the field and 32% from three as a team. They are led by sophomore guard Dillon Connor, who has been enjoying a season in which he is averaging 20 points and 5 rebounds a night. Behind him are sophomore forward Drew Connor (13.3 ppg), and senior Luke Martens (12.2). The trio make up most of the offensive production for the Warriors, accounting for nearly 60% of the teams' points this season.

"In this conference, everyone can win, and I'm excited for every opportunity we get to prove ourselves," said Willingham. "I want people to be scared to come over and play MSU."

Following their matchup with the Warriors, the Mavs will return home to play in the first of three straight home games, beginning with

the Upper Iowa Peacocks.

The Peacocks have won 5 of the last 6 matchups between these two teams, with the Mavs' only win being a 2-point overtime victory early last season.

The Peacocks entered this week with a 4-3 record, including handing the Warriors their only loss on the year. On the season, the Peacocks are putting up 80.6 points per game on 42.5% shooting from the field and 34.2% from three.

The backcourt duo of seniors Jake Hilner (22.6 ppg) and Lucas Duax (19.1) lead the charge for the Peacocks. Despite their ability to put up points, the Peacocks have also been prone to turning the ball over, committing 81 turnovers on the year. Two challenging opponents stand in the way of the Mavericks' quest for 9-0, and it will be important for the Mavs to focus on one game at a time.

Tip off for Thursday's game in Winona is set for 7:30 p.m. and Saturday's game begins at 4 p.m. at Taylor Center.

"At the end of the day, I'm here to win. I want to put MSU on the map, and I want to do a lot of big things in my last few years here," said Willingham.

◀**MATCHUP** from page 15

will be a lot for the Mavericks to handle this weekend, but with a strong winning streak to ride into the series, the Mavs will have a good chance at repeating last year's success again. The two teams will play

a home-and-home split this series, playing a game in Minneapolis on Dec. 2 and a game in Mankato on Dec. 3.

Game one will begin at 6 pm, while game two puck drop is scheduled for 2 p.m.

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◀**RETIREMENT** from page 13 additional experience, some professional development type of opportunities," said Allan. "It was a lot of fun and really cool. A lot of great memories from both of those things."

Ever since Allan joined the MSU staff, he has witnessed such growth and many successes of both the athletic

Messi and Argentina advance at World Cup, beat Poland 2-0



MANU FERNANDEZ • Associated Press

FP511 Mexico's Kevin Alvarez retracts after the World Cup group C soccer match between Saudi Arabia and Mexico, at the Lusail Stadium in Lusail, Qatar, Wednesday, Nov. 30, 2022.

By ANNE M. PETERSON
Associated Press

For a long time after the final whistle, Luis Chavez crouched on the field in anguish.

He had just scored in Mexico's furious attempt to stay alive at the World Cup, but the 2-1 victory Wednesday over Saudi Arabia wasn't enough. Because of Argentina's 2-0 victory over Poland in a simultaneous match, Mexico failed to advance out of its group for the first time since 1978.

"We had a chance to qualify," Chavez said glumly. "We didn't achieve it."

Mexico had reached the knockout round at the last seven World Cups, second only to Brazil, which has gone through to the round of 16 since 1986.

El Tri went into the match at Lusail Stadium needing both a victory and help from Poland playing across town against Argentina to advance in Group C. Argentina's victory meant goal difference came into play — and Mexico didn't have enough of them.

Henry Martin scored in the 48th minute to give El Tri hope, and the team's chances got even better with Chavez's goal on a free kick four minutes later.

Mexico tried desperately in the final 20 minutes to get another goal — including an effort by Uriel Antuna in the 87th minute that was ruled offside — but came up short.

"We needed one more goal. I didn't know exactly what happened at the end," said veteran Mexico goalkeeper Guillermo Ochoa, who was playing in his fifth World Cup. "For us, the object was to score three or four goals. It's a shame."

Salem Aldawsari scored in second-half stoppage time for Saudi Arabia, which was

eliminated along with Mexico despite beating Argentina in its opening match.

Martin's goal ended Mexico's 431-minute scoring drought at the World Cup, dating back to their second group match at the 2018 tournament in Russia. It was the team's longest ever stretch without a goal at the tournament.

Mexico opened the tournament in Qatar with a 0-0 draw against Poland and but fell 2-0 to Lionel Messi and Argentina.

Mexico hadn't been eliminated from the group stage since the World Cup in Argentina 44 years ago. El Tri didn't qualify for the 1982 World Cup in Spain, and was banned from the 1990 event in Italy for using overage players at an under-20 tournament.

"I must say that I assume all the responsibility for this massive failure," Mexico coach Gerardo "Tata" Martino said.

Mexico advanced to the round of 16 in its last seven appearances — but no further. El Tri came to Qatar looking to play in an elusive "quinto partido" — a fifth game — for the first time since Mexico hosted the tournament in 1986.

Saudi Arabia had one of the tournament's biggest ever upsets ever when it beat Argentina 2-1.

But the Green Falcons couldn't pull off another surprise in its second match, a 2-0 loss to Poland.

The Saudis reached the round of 16 back in 1994, the team's World Cup debut, but haven't made it past the group stage since.

"Tonight it was difficult to breathe with the intensity Mexico put into the match," Saudi Arabia coach Herve Renard said.

Many on the Saudi team

were also part of the squad that went to the 2018 World Cup. But none play outside of their home country.

twelve players on the roster are with Al Hilal, which has won a record 18 Saudi league championships.

Mexico dominated the first half. Orbelin Pineda had one of the best of three good chances for El Tri, but it was easily grabbed by Saudi Arabia goalkeeper Mohammed Alowais in the 25th minute.

The game turned quickly in Mexico's favor with Martin's goal, but the celebration was muted. Chavez's free kick in the 52nd that went into the upper corner just out of Alowais' reach brought Mexico's reserves rushing onto the field.

Hirving Lozano nearly had a third goal but he was offside. Chavez had another free kick that missed as Mexico tried in vain to score more goals.

Martino had been roundly criticized for the lack of scoring. He had already been questioned over some of his choices, including his decision to leave all-time leading scorer Javier "Chicharito" Hernandez off the team.

Hernandez, who now plays for the LA Galaxy in Major League Soccer, scored the team's last goal in a 2-1 group-stage victory over South Korea in Russia.

After the match, Martino said his contract with the Mexico had ended with the final whistle.

Ochoa, however, wasn't ready to say if he'd still be with the team in 2026 when Mexico, the United States and Canada will host the World Cup.

"We will see. We will see," Ochoa said. "Tonight I'm sad so I have to think about that. But maybe that could happen."

◀**HOT STREAK** from page 14 and coaches have helped me so much over the years and given me the confidence to become the best player I am able to be. So, it just feels awesome to see all those years of hard work pay off."

As for their opponent, the Warriors have rebounded into incredible form after a disappointing 2021-22 season.

Starting out with a record of 7-0, they currently sit atop the NSIC standings. Coming off a 75-46 win against Viterbo University, they look to continue their undefeated streak.

Currently, four team members have over 30 points in seven games. However, one of the big impact players for the Warriors is junior forward Alex Dornfield. The native of

Markesan, WI currently leads her team in points and field goals. She is the spark plug that ignites the offense whenever she has the ball.

Both sides are eager and ready to prove themselves going into this contest. MSU they are not afraid of the challenge. Batt along with her teammates are looking to step up and prove themselves ahead of Thursday's contest.

"They're 7-0 and we're 5-0, so we are looking to prove ourselves instead of falling to their style or worrying about all their assets or what they have.

Obviously scouting them and trying to find where they thrive and where they don't. So, it comes down to keeping our tempo going into the game," said Batt.

◀**SPOTLIGHT** from page 15

All-State Selection.

As Drees transitioned from high school basketball to collegiate basketball at MSU, she noticed a number of big changes.

"I went to a really small school, so I was definitely the biggest one. That was a big change when I came to college," said Drees. "Also, the pace in college is so much faster."

What drew Drees to play for the Mavericks was the relationships she built with her teammates right off the bat.

"When I came and visited here, I got to go have lunch with the girls I went with and they were all so nice and just made me laugh constantly," said Drees.

Being a part of the Maverick basketball team has taught Drees a great deal, which she has been able to bring into oth-

er aspects of her life.

"I definitely learned a lot for sure," said Drees. "Just like what hard work gets you and knowing that there's value in every single player on the team."

Basketball has been the center of Drees' life ever since she was young. After this season, she will be transitioning to a life outside of basketball, which will keep her just as busy, if not more. Following graduation in the spring, Drees plans to take a gap year, in order to get more medical field related experience. She also plans to start the application process for medical school come summer.

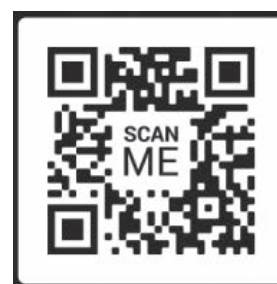
Leaving a life dominated by basketball behind will be a major adjustment for Drees. As the only senior on the team, she hopes to lead the Mavericks to a Conference Tournament Championship for her final season.

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Changes let high school athletes bank big endorsement bucks



GREGORY BULL • Associated Press

La Jolla Country Day high school basketball player Jada Williams poses for a portrait Monday, Sept. 12, 2022, in San Diego. Jada Williams has been a fixture on social media since she was 11 and stands out because of her flair for engagement.

By BERNIE WILSON
Associated Press

Jada Williams was a social media star and a talented point guard when she moved with her mother from a Kansas City suburb to San Diego, looking to play basketball for a high school powerhouse and parlay her online prowess into endorsement deals.

She found it all in California, which has become the trendsetter among the 19 states that allow high school athletes to profit from their name, image and likeness without affecting their eligibility to play in college.

The 17-year-old Williams is now pulling in six figures a year from six major endorsement deals. The senior at La Jolla Country Day School has signed to play at the University of Arizona.

"It's definitely a big change for me, but it was good in every single direction," Williams said during a break from her exhaustive practice routine, which she often documents with videos and photos posted online. It was the right decision for school and basketball, "and on top of that I was able to start capitalizing off NIL," shorthand for name, image and likeness.

The effort that began when former UCLA basketball star Ed O'Bannon took on the college sports establishment over NIL rules is quickly reshaping high school sports. Elite prep athletes are banking six and even seven figures before heading to college. The buzz extends to social media, where the top stars have millions of followers on Instagram, TikTok and Twitter, which in turn helps boost their NIL valuation.

"It's getting bigger by the day," said Michael Caspino,

a Newport Beach attorney who became NIL savvy while reviewing deals for his son's high school friends and pushing back against the ones that tried to take advantage of the athletes.

Three high school stars are at the top of On3.com's NIL valuations, which include both college and high school players. They are Bronny James, the son of Lakers star LeBron James; Arch Manning, the third generation of the first family of quarterbacks; and Mikey Williams, a basketball star at San Ysidro High in San Diego.

James tops the list with a valuation of \$7.5 million. He attends Sierra Canyon High in the Los Angeles area and recently signed a deal with Nike. Mikey Williams, who has committed to Memphis and has a multiyear deal with Puma, has a valuation of \$3.6 million. Manning, who attends Isidore Newman High in New Orleans and has committed to Texas, is at \$3.4 million.

The On3 NIL valuation, considered the industry standard, uses performance, influence and exposure data. While the algorithm includes data from deals, it does not act as a tracker of the value of NIL deals.

Jada Williams has a half-dozen deals, including with Spalding; Move Insoles, which was co-founded by NBA star Damian Lillard; Lemon Perfect, a bottled water company in which Beyonce is a major investor; and Gym Shark.

"My social media was already kind of big so I was just doing basically NIL without getting paid because it was illegal," she said.

After being approached by a few large companies with NIL offers, the family discovered

that the deals weren't permitted in Missouri and that California was the only state that allowed it at the time.

"I realized wow, this is insane," said Williams' mother, Jill McIntyre. Jada Williams moved to San Diego with her mother and an older sister ahead of her junior year.

"She had to take advantage of the opportunity where she can literally invest in her future at 17," said McIntyre, a regional sales manager for a tech company who helps her daughter manage her business affairs.

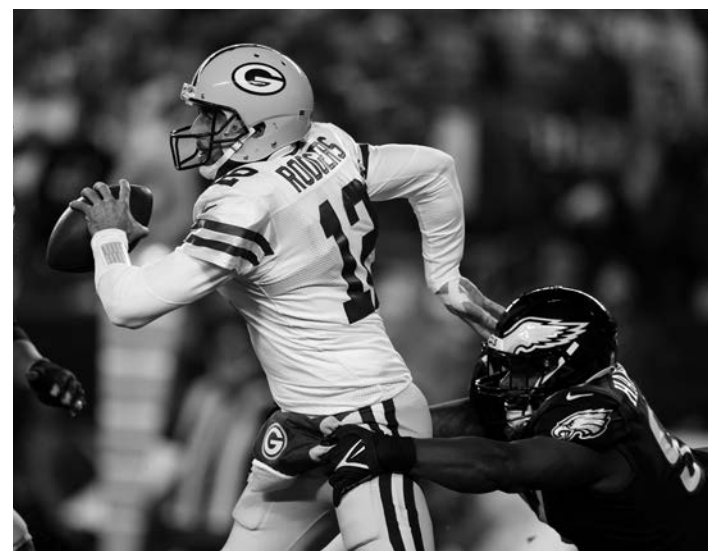
"We're still young, but at the same time we're learning about how to manage money and just learn a lot of life skills that are way bigger than just NIL," said Williams, a two-time gold medalist with the U.S. junior national team who has incorporated as Jada Williams Inc. and plans to start a foundation.

Malachi Nelson, a senior quarterback at Los Alamitos High who has committed to USC, landed big deals even before signing with Klutch Sports, the agency that represents LeBron James. He's 42nd on the top 100 with a valuation of \$794,000, 10 spots ahead of UCLA quarterback Dorian Thompson-Robinson. Jada Williams is at No. 71, with a valuation of \$550,000.

California was the first state to allow high school athletes to sign NIL deals. Southern California has always been a hotbed of prep talent. Athletes from other regions, like Williams, are moving to the Golden State to take advantage of NIL. Some transfer for just their senior season.

NIL has become such a big deal that a Los Alamitos High coach who helps players with recruiting also guides them through the new frontier.

Rodgers says he'd have open mind if Packers ask him to rest



MATT SLOCUM • Associated Press

Green Bay Packers quarterback Aaron Rodgers (12) is pressured by Philadelphia Eagles' Javon Hargave during the first half of an NFL football game, Sunday, Nov. 27, 2022, in Philadelphia.

By STEVE MEGARGEE
Associated Press

Aaron Rodgers said he'd have an open mind if the Green Bay Packers get eliminated from playoff contention and team officials approach him about resting to allow more game reps for his backup, Jordan Love.

He's just hoping the Packers (4-8) make it a moot point by winning out.

"I'd love to finish the season out, but I understand this is a business and there's a lot of us kind of older guys who play a decent amount and they might want to see some younger guys play," the four-time MVP said Wednesday. "Hopefully we don't have to have that conversation. But if that conversation comes up, I'll approach that with an open mind and without any bitterness or resentment."

Rodgers has played through a broken right thumb for Green Bay's last seven games and left the Packers' 40-33 loss at Philadelphia on Sunday with injured ribs. Rodgers, who turns 39 on Friday, has said he wants to keep playing as long as he's able and the Packers remain in playoff contention.

Rodgers also says he's healthy enough to play Sunday when the Packers visit Chicago (3-9), although he might need to wear protective gear for his ribs. The Packers have beaten the Bears seven straight times, and Rodgers has completed 76.1% of his passes for 16 touchdowns with no interceptions in those games.

Rodgers wouldn't specify whether any of his ribs were broken.

"I've done a lot of rehab the last few days, got some stuff I do at the house as well," Rodgers said. "Always on my herbs and my teas and all the other things that help make me feel better. So, not surprised I'm feeling better, just happy I avoided a major injury."

Rodgers didn't practice Wednesday, but that's been his usual routine since breaking the thumb on the final play of a 27-22 loss to the New York Giants on Oct. 9.

The Packers still have faint postseason hopes, though they probably would have to win their last five games and get plenty of help.

"Obviously, like I said, I want to win out and we don't have to have those conversations," Rodgers said.

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VARIETY

Christmas deer brings Christmas cheer to campus

By LAUREN VISKA
Staff Writer

A pair of reindeer and free hot chocolate greeted students on the campus mall Wednesday.

The event, put together by the Student Events Team each year, is a way for students to relax and take a break from finals.

Jack Wheeler, the graduate advisor for the SET, helped organize the event this year.

"We try to do this event every winter as it is more of a seasonal event, and it has been going on for many years. It is an event that students look forward to every year," said Wheeler.

"Reindeer especially now have a kind of a significant meaning with Christmas time and the holiday spirit. It is a great turnout of students, staff and community members."

During the pandemic, it was hard for SET to host this event.

"Many students were not on campus during the pandemic, so there was not a huge turnout. However, the turnout in the past has been great. We get members from all over the community and students," said Wheeler.

"Usually, we expect around 700 students to pass through. However, this year we expected



LILLY ANDERSON • The Reporter

Students gathered around outside the Centennial Student Union to visit the fuel-source powering Santa's sleigh on Wednesday, Nov. 30.

around 700 to 900, and I think we had just that number."

Noel Productions, the company that brings the reindeer,

has been working with the university to bring the reindeer and spread holiday cheer for the last couple of years.

So they were excited to return this year and continue spreading the holiday cheer.

"The company was excited

to come back and bring the reindeer back to campus. The staff that works is very knowledgeable about it, and the person who comes and speaks and also dresses up as something festive," said Wheeler.

"It is also something to do that is just a quick 20 minutes, and people can understand a little more about reindeer."

This event was also a chance for students to destress before the craziness of finals next week.

"Many people do not actually think that reindeer are real. So going and seeing reindeer and learning a little bit about them while taking a couple of photos and enjoying a cup of hot cocoa is something that students love every year," said Wheeler. "It also gets students in the holiday spirit as it is right between Thanksgiving break and finals week, so it should act like a stress reliever."

One of the farm workers gave students an educational seminar to get some information about the festival creatures.

It was a short five- to 10-minute spiel about how they raise the reindeer as well as basic information about the animals.

To learn more about Noel Productions and the reindeer, visit noelproductionsllc.com.

Egyptians call on British Museum to return Rosetta Stone

By JACK B. JEFFERY
Associated Press

The debate over who owns ancient artifacts has been an increasing challenge to museums across Europe and America, and the spotlight has fallen on the most visited piece in the British Museum: The Rosetta stone.

The inscriptions on the dark grey granite slab became the seminal breakthrough in deciphering ancient Egyptian hieroglyphics after it was taken from Egypt by forces of the British empire in 1801.

Now, as Britain's largest museum marks the 200-year anniversary of the decipherment of hieroglyphics, thousands of Egyptians are demanding the stone's return.

"The British Museum's holding of the stone is a symbol of Western cultural violence against Egypt," said Monica Hanna, dean at the Arab Academy for Science, Technology & Maritime Transport, and organizer of one of two petitions calling for the stone's return.

The acquisition of the Rosetta Stone was tied up in the imperial battles between Britain and France. After Napoleon Bonaparte's military occupation of Egypt, French scientists uncovered the stone in 1799 in the northern town of Rashid,



THE BRITISH MUSEUM • Associated Press

This undated photo provided by the British Museum, shows the Rosetta Stone, the centerpiece of a new exhibition at London's largest museum titled, "Hieroglyphs unlocking ancient Egypt," celebrating the 200th anniversary of the stone's decipherment, at the British Museum, in London.

known by the French as Rosetta.

When British forces defeated the French in Egypt, the stone and over a dozen other antiquities were handed over to the British under the terms of an 1801 surrender deal between the generals of the two sides.

It has remained in the British

Museum since. Hanna's petition, with 4,200 signatures, says the stone was seized illegally and constitutes a "spoil of war." The claim is echoed in a near identical petition by Zahi Hawass, Egypt's former minister for antiquities affairs, which has more than 100,000 signatures. Hawass argues that Egypt had no

say in the 1801 agreement.

The British Museum refutes this. In a statement, the Museum said the 1801 treaty includes the signature of a representative of Egypt. It refers to an Ottoman admiral who fought alongside the British against the French. The Ottoman sultan in Istanbul was nominally the ruler of

Egypt at the time of Napoleon's invasion. The Museum also said Egypt's government has not submitted a request for its return. It added that there are 28 known copies of the same engraved decree and 21 of them remain in Egypt.

The contention over the original stone copy stems from its unrivaled significance to Egyptology. Carved in the 2nd century B.C., the slab contains three translations of a decree relating to a settlement between the then-ruling Ptolemies and a sect of Egyptian priests. The first inscription is in classic hieroglyphics, the next is in a simplified hieroglyphic script known as Demotic, and the third is in Ancient Greek.

Through knowledge of the latter, academics were able to decipher the hieroglyphic symbols, with French Egyptologist Jean-Francois Champollion eventually cracking the language in 1822.

"Scholars from the previous 18th century had been longing to find a bilingual text written in a known language," said Ilona Regulski, the head of Egyptian Written Culture at the British Museum. Regulski is the lead curator of the museum's winter exhibition, "Hieroglyphs Unlocking Ancient Egypt," celebrating the 200th anniversary of Champollion's breakthrough.

Brave Heart aims to open the minds and shut out the stress



JOEY ERICKSON • The Reporter

MK Thao, a graduate assistant on campus for the Violence Awareness and Response Program, works at the Women's Center on campus. She is one of the driving forces behind the Brave Heart discussions, an event that has been occurring on campus in one form or another for years.

By JOEY ERICKSON
Variety Editor

Brave Heart is back for their bi-monthly open discussions, and everyone can finally take a deep breath out, literally.

On December 1, The Violence Awareness and Response Program is holding a healing activity event in the Centennial Student Union, giving students the option to release any pent up stress from life.

Headlining the discussion is MK Thao, graduate assistant on campus for the Violence Awareness and Response Program. Thao has been behind all of the Brave Heart discussions, and finds herself learning just as much as the students who attend.

"A lot of what I learned was just from a textbook, and from news and articles, but hearing peoples' personal experiences really helped me. I feel like these events always help me check my bias and my ignorance," Thao said.

This week's Brave Heart event is serving as a means of unwinding and an opportunity to have a more relaxed discussion, contrasted to the event's usual more pressing and heavy-weighted themes, such as domestic violence or sexual assault.

Plans for the day include a

meditation event with breathing exercises to soothe the soul, the making of custom door signs and open discussions on whatever the students feel they need to talk about. Unlike previous discussions, the topic for this week is up in the air, allowing coverage of any topic, no matter how big or small.

"Even if they just wanna rant about how their professor makes them feel frustrated, we don't care. Come with what you want, it's a healing activity, you can dump it on us and walk away, and we'll collect your stress and burn it," Thao said.

A major stressor for many college students are post-graduation plans. The uncertainty of a new graduate's professional future can weigh heavily on their mind—and when family members are consistently knocking on the door asking what the future holds, it is easy to feel empty handed.

For Thao, setting aside time in one's day to take a mental break is essential. Whether that be reading a book, drawing or "cocooning in your bed" as Thao describes, taking time to let off steam is critical.

"Personally, as a young adult, there's a lot of people telling you their expectations, and I forget about my own expectations sometimes. A healing activity could really help

you figure out yourself, and who you need in your life," Thao said.

Brave Heart was originally titled "Conversation Circle." However, the name was re-coined to "Brave Heart" this year, in an effort to eliminate the connotation of students feeling required to speak at the event in order to attend.

Next semester, Brave Heart plans to continue openly speaking on the unspoken issues in society in combination with the Women's Center and their respective discussion series, "The F Word."

"The F Word" in question is feminism, a topic that scares many. Both conversations aim on tackling the topics deemed too taboo to speak on by the general public. The two hope to team up, tackling typical Brave Heart topics like domestic violence and sexual assault, while also discussing women's rights.

According to Thao, students consistently leave the event more knowledgeable.

They appreciate that we focus on a wide range of topics, as well as a wide range of race and ethnicity. Each group's experience is different. I feel like race and culture really play a role when we talk about these things, and we can't expect everyone to experience the same things," Thao said.

'Tis the season of giving, and GP's are in high demand



Flickr Photo

Christmas Season is fast approaching, and 'tis the season for gifting. While money is nice, sometimes the best present you can give is quality time.

By EMMA JOHNSON
News Director

My grandma always tells my brother and me that we are GPs (good person).

To her, that means thinking about others and overall being a genuine person through and through without having to ask others if they are good people.

As the holidays roll around, more and more people try to prove their generosity and graciousness.

During this time of year, people are encouraged to volunteer, donate and show more compassion to others.

Why does it take us almost an entire year to show these el-

HOLIDAY on page 23▶

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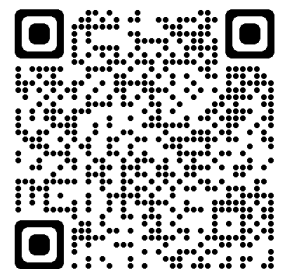
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Christine McVie, Fleetwood Mac singer-songwriter, dies at 79



CHARLES SYKES • Associated Press

Musician Christine McVie attends the 2019 Rock & Roll Hall of Fame induction ceremony in New York on March 29, 2019. McVie, the soulful British musician, sang lead on many of Fleetwood Mac's biggest hits.

By HILLEL ITALIE
Associated Press

Christine McVie, the British-born Fleetwood Mac vocalist, songwriter and keyboard player whose cool, soulful contralto helped define such classics as “You Make Loving Fun,” “Everywhere” and “Don’t Stop,” died Wednesday at age 79.

Her death was announced on the band’s social media accounts. No cause of death or other details were immediately provided, but a family statement said she “passed away peacefully at hospital this morning” with family around her after a “short illness.”

“A few hours ago I was told that my best friend in the whole world since the first day of 1975, had passed away,” bandmate Stevie Nicks said in a handwritten note posted to Instagram.

She added that one song has been “swirling around” in her head since she found out McVie was sick, quoting the lyrics to HAIM’s “Hallelujah”: “I had a best friend/But she has come to pass.”

McVie was a steady presence and personality in a band known for its frequent lineup changes and volatile personalities — notably fellow singer-songwriters Nicks and Lindsey Buckingham.

Her death is the first among Fleetwood Mac’s most famous incarnation of McVie, Nicks, Buckingham, drummer Mick Fleetwood and bassist John McVie, Christine’s ex-husband.

In recent years, the band had toured without Buckingham, who was kicked out in 2018 and replaced on stage by Mike Campbell and Neil Finn.

Fleetwood Mac started out as a London blues band in the

1960s, and evolved into one of the defining makers of 1970s California pop-rock, with the talents of McVie, Nicks and Buckingham anchored by the rhythm section of Fleetwood and John McVie.

During its peak commercial years, from 1975-80, the band sold tens of millions of records and fascinated fans as it transformed personal battles into melodic, compelling songs.

The McVies’ breakup — along with the split of Nicks and Buckingham — was famously documented on the 1977 release “Rumours,” among the bestselling albums of all time.

Everyone in the group played a distinctive role: Fleetwood and John McVie formed a deep and bluesy groove, Buckingham was the resident mad genius and perfectionist, Nicks the charismatic dramatist and idol to countless young women and Christine McVie the grounded counterpoint, her economy as a singer and player well suited to her birth surname: Perfect.

“I was supposedly like the Mother Teresa who would hang out with everybody or just try and (keep) everything nice and cool and relaxed,” she told Rolling Stone earlier this year.

“But they were great people; they were great friends.”

Fleetwood Mac was inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in 1998, when at the ceremony they played McVie’s “Say You Love Me.”

The group’s many other hit singles included Nicks’ “Dreams,” Buckingham’s “Go Your Own Way” and McVie’s “Little Lies.” One of McVie’s most beloved works, the thoughtful ballad “Songbird,” was a showcase for her in-con-

cert and covered by Willie Nelson, among others.

The midtempo rocker “Don’t Stop,” inspired by the end of her marriage, would gain unexpected political relevance when Bill Clinton adopted the song — and its “Don’t stop thinking about tomorrow” refrain — as a theme to his 1992 presidential run.

The band, which had essentially stopped making albums at the time, reunited to perform at his inauguration gala.

McVie’s two marriages, to John McVie and Eduardo Quintela, both ended in divorce. Her boyfriends included the Beach Boys’ Dennis Wilson, about whom she wrote “Only Over You.”

McVie, born Christine Anne Perfect in Bouth, Lancashire, came from a musical family. Her father was a violinist and music teacher and her grandfather played organ at Westminster Abbey.

She had been playing piano since childhood, but set aside her classical training once she heard early rock records by Fats Domino and others.

While studying at the Moseley School of Art, she befriended various members of Britain’s emerging blues scene and, in her 20s, joined the band Chicken Shack as a singer and piano player.

Among the rival bands she admired was Fleetwood Mac, which then featured the talents of blues guitarist Peter Green along with the rhythm section of Fleetwood and John McVie.

By 1970, she had joined the group and married John McVie.

Few bands succeeded so well as Fleetwood Mac, which has sold well over 100 million records, against such long odds.

Rolling Stones’ 60th year honored with UK coin



EVAN AGOSTINI • Associated Press

The Rolling Stones, from left, Ronnie Wood, Keith Richards, Mick Jagger and Charlie Watts attend the opening night party for “Exhibitionism” in New York on Nov. 15, 2016.

Associated Press

They want money — that’s what they want, that’s what they want. Well, now the Rolling Stones can say they’re also ON money, the face of a new collectible coin issued by Britain’s Royal Mint to celebrate the band’s 60th anniversary.

The new 5-pound (\$6.04) coin features a silhouette image

of the iconic band performing — frontman Mick Jagger, guitarists Keith Richards and Ronnie Wood, and the late drummer Charlie Watts — as well as the band’s name in what is described as their classic 1973 font. The mint said it was one of the last coins of the year to be released bearing the image of Queen Elizabeth II.

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Mistrial declared in actor Danny Masterson's rape trial



BRIAN MELLEY • Associated Press

Actor Danny Masterson leaves Los Angeles superior Court with his wife Bijou Phillips after a judge declared a mistrial in his rape case in Los Angeles on Wednesday, Nov. 30, 2022. Jurors said they were hopelessly deadlocked at the trial of "That '70s Show" actor.

By BRIAN MELLEY and
ANDREW DALTON
Associated Press

A judge declared a mistrial Wednesday at the rape trial of "That '70s Show" actor Danny Masterson after jurors, who were leaning strongly toward acquitting him, were deadlocked following the month-long trial in which the Church of Scientology played a supporting role.

Masterson, 46, was charged in Los Angeles Superior Court with the rape of three women, including a former girlfriend, in his Hollywood Hills home between 2001 and 2003. He pleaded not guilty and his lawyer said the acts were all consensual.

All three women were members of the church at the time, and Masterson remains one.

"I find the jurors hopelessly deadlocked," Judge Charlene Olmedo declared after inquiring whether there was anything the court could do to move them closer to reaching a unanimous decision. She set a March date for a retrial.

Olmedo had ordered jurors to take Thanksgiving week off and keep deliberating after they said on Nov. 18 that they could not reach a consensus.

The jury began deliberations anew Monday after two alternates replaced jurors who had COVID-19.

Jurors said they had voted seven times Tuesday and Wednesday without being able to reach consensus on any of the three counts.

The jury foreman said only two jurors voted for conviction on the first count, four voted for conviction on the second count and five voted to convict on the third count.

The result was a serious setback for prosecutors, and for the three women who said they were seeking long overdue justice.

Two of the alleged victims in the case issued a statement saying they were disappointed "Masterson has evaded criminal accountability for his deplorable acts. However, we are collectively resolved to continue our fight for justice."

Two of the women and the husband of one are suing Masterson, the Church of Scientology, its leader David Miscavige and others for allegedly stalking, harassing and intimidating them after they sought to expose Masterson.

Masterson left court with his wife, actor and model Bijou

Phillips, without speaking to reporters.

The proceedings took place amid a flurry of cases on both coasts with #MeToo connotations, including the Los Angeles trial of Harvey Weinstein just down the hall from Masterson's.

In New York, Kevin Spacey won a sexual misconduct lawsuit brought by actor Anthony Rapp in New York, and a jury ordered director and screenwriter Paul Haggis to pay \$10 million in a civil case there.

But at the Masterson trial, as at the Haggis trial, #MeToo implications were largely eclipsed by the specter of Scientology, despite the judge's insistence that the church not become a de facto defendant.

Deputy District Attorney Reinhold Mueller said the church had tried to silence the women and that was the reason it took two decades for the case to get to trial.

Masterson attorney Philip Cohen said the church was mentioned 700 times during trial and argued that it became an excuse for the prosecution's failure to build a believable case against Masterson, a prominent Scientologist.

Judge bemoans bike hazard in 'Gone Girl' actor's death



VICTORIA WILL • Outlet

Actor Lisa Banes poses for photos in Park City, Utah, on Jan. 26, 2015. A judge decried New York City's problems with electric and gas-powered bikes on Wednesday, Nov. 30, 2022.

By LARRY NEUMEISTER
Staff Writer

A judge decried New York City's problems with electric and gas-powered bikes on Wednesday as he sentenced the electric scooter rider who crashed into "Gone Girl" actor Lisa Banes to one to three years in prison for his manslaughter conviction.

Brian Boyd, 27, was led away in handcuffs after sentencing in Manhattan state court by Judge Gregory Carro in the death of Banes. She was struck by the scooter Boyd operated as she crossed a midtown Manhattan street in June 2021. She died 10 days later at a hospital.

Carro said Boyd sped through a red light, struck Banes and fled to a bike shop,

where he drank a beer.

The judge said the city "has a problem" with the motorized bikes and he wants drivers of unregistered and unlicensed bikes to know they can go to jail when they do harm.

Traffic fatalities have been on the rise in the city. Transportation Alternatives, an advocacy group for safer streets, found that they rose 44 percent in New York City during the first three months of 2022, with pedestrians accounting for 29 of the 59 dead. The study found that Manhattan experienced a 120 percent increase compared with the same period in 2021.

Before Carro announced the sentence Wednesday, Boyd said he was "extremely sorry."

The sentence was consistent with an agreement.

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‘Everything Everywhere All at Once’ wins at Gotham Awards



ALLYSON RIGGS via A24 FILMS • Associated Press

This image released by A24 Films shows, from left, Stephanie Hsu, Michelle Yeoh and Ke Huy Quan in a scene from, “Everything Everywhere All At Once.”

By JAKE COYLE
Associated Press

“Everything Everywhere All at Once” won best feature at the 32nd Gotham Awards on Monday, taking one of the first major prizes of Hollywood’s awards season and boosting the Oscar hopes of the anarchic indie hit of the year.

Also taking an award for his work on the film was Ke Huy Quan, the “Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom” child star who made a lauded comeback in “Everything Everywhere All at Once” and won for best supporting actor.

“This time last year, all I was hoping for was a job,” said an emotional Quan who had nearly given up acting before landing his role in the film. “For the first time in a very long time, I was given a second chance.”

The Gotham Awards, held annually at Cipriani Wall Street, serve as a downtown celebration of independent film and an unofficial kickoff of the long marathon of ceremonies, cocktail parties and campaigning that lead up to the Academy Awards in March.

Presented by the Gotham Film & Media Institute, the Gothams last year heaped awards on Maggie Gyllenhaal’s “The Lost Daughter” while also, with an award for Troy Kotsur, starting “CODA” on its way to best picture.

But aside from any possible influence, the Gothams are also just a star-studded party that gets the industry back into the awards-season swing. Last year’s ceremony was the first fully in-person award show for many after a largely virtual 2020-2021 pandemic-marred season.

This year, the Gothams were held amid mounting concern

over the tepid box-office results for many of the top awards contenders. Though moviegoing has recovered much of the ground it lost during the pandemic, adult audiences have inconsistently materialized in theaters this fall.

But in feting “Everything Everywhere All at Once,” the metaverse-skipping action adventure directed by Daniel Kwan and Daniel Scheiner, the filmmaking duo known as “the Daniels,” the Gothams selected an unlikely runaway success. Released in March, “Everything Everywhere All at Once” made more than \$100 million worldwide against a \$14 million budget, making it A24’s highest grossing film.

The warm affection for the absurdist film now has it poised to potentially play underdog at the Oscars. The film also recently led nominations to the Film Independent Spirit Awards.

“This movie has been celebrated by the Asian American community, by the immigrant community, by people with weird brains, people who are overwhelmed or sad,” said Scheiner accepting the award with his filmmaking partner. “This award is for you guys. Your stories matter. You matter.”

While the Gothams are known for exalting the hard-scramble pursuit of lower budget filmmaking, one of its many tribute awards went to another box-office force in Adam Sandler.

The 56-year-old actor-comedian, who this year starred in the well-received Netflix basketball drama-comedy “Hustle,” provided the night’s most raucous speech, after an introduction by “Uncut Gems” filmmakers Josh and Benny Safdie.

Sandler, explaining that he had been too busy to prepare remarks, claimed his speech was written by his two daughters. His career, as he read, was launched with two guiding principles: “People in prison need movies, too,” and: “TBS needs content.”

The Gotham award, Sandler read, “means a lot to him seeing as most of the awards on his trophy shelf are shaped like popcorn buckets, blimps or fake mini Oscars that say Father of the Year which he sadly purchased himself while wandering in a self-pitying fog through the head shops of Time’s Square.”

The Gothams give gender neutral acting awards, which meant that some awards favorites this year that wouldn’t normally be head-to-head, like Brendan Fraser (“The Whale”) and Cate Blanchett (“Tár”), were up against each other. Todd Fields’ “Tár,” starring Blanchett as a renowned conductor, came into the Gothams with a leading five nominations and went home with an award for Fields’ screenplay.

“Till” star Danielle Deadwyler ultimately prevailed in the crowded lead acting category. Deadwyler, who plays Mammie Till-Bradley in the piercing drama, wasn’t able to attend the ceremony. “Till” director Chinonye Chukwu accepted on her behalf.

Deadwyler’s win should add momentum to her Oscar chances, as should the award for Quan, who is best known as the child star of “The Goonies” and “Temple of Doom.”

The breakthrough director award went to Charlotte Wells for “Aftersun,” the Scottish filmmaker’s tender, devastating debut about a father (Paul Mescal) and daughter.

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evated levels of kindness?

During the holiday season, people are so consumed by the thoughts of buying presents and what they can purchase for friends.

In addition to Christmas, secret Santa and white elephant parties are common, adding more purchases to the never-ending list. In the back burner of our minds, it’s always “where can I score the best deals?” and “what gift speaks to them?”

As someone who enjoys giving my friends and family gifts that they will love, this year has been different.

Being a college student, my budget has been tight and I realized that participating in all those side parties would tank my bank account.

I don’t like getting gifts if I can’t give them in return; it makes me feel like a bad person.

Therefore, I made the tough decision to not participate in any of them (although I’m still planning on attending because I easily contract F.O.M.O.)

At first, I felt a bit down since one of my favorite parts

of the season is seeing their excited expressions. Being home for Thanksgiving and hearing friend’s wishlists made me ache to go broke.

However, these conversations were easily passed as we started to catch up on what happened during our semesters.

This moment made me realize that spending time with the ones I love is the best gift I could give to them.

Attending college out of state, I don’t go home often to see family and with majority of my friends at colleges around the midwest, it’s a rarity to see them as well.

Whether it’s having a game night with my friends or sitting around the dinner table with my family, sharing conversations and quality time is the cheapest, yet most valuable present.

This year, while you’re contemplating if your wishlist will be fulfilled, take my grandma’s advice and become a GP this year.

It’s the gift that keeps on giving the whole year.

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