

Access Your Abilities builds community at MSU

By AMALIA SHARAF
Staff Writer

A year ago, a new recognized student organization called Access Your Abilities was established at Minnesota State to increase awareness of and support for students with disabilities.

AYA President Sheridan Follis said accessibility resources have helped establish the club.

“A lot of students who go to the accessibility resources were saying they want more of a community,” said Follis. “And so we were able to get that started. Our general goal is to bring more awareness on campus about accessibility, students with disabilities and available resources.”

Accessibility Resources at MSU provides disability-related accommodations to students to provide equal access to education and campus life.

AYA Vice President Emily Dittrich named resources such as TRIO, Student Health Services and Counseling Center. Dittrich said there are more resources on campus that are useful.

Follis said while they are focused on building a community for students with disabilities, they are also welcoming students who care about it and want to support the group.

“I think students just wanted to



Courtesy of Amy Gorka

From left to right Al Worrall, Benjamin Bowden, Sheridan Follis, Sophia Lee are members of AYA. The club allows students to build community that provides needed support and connections.

connect with other students who had disabilities so they didn't feel so isolated on campus, to know that they're not alone,” said staff advisor Amy Gorka.

Dittrich said some medical conditions, which students might

not know about before college, can develop in early adulthood.

“Starting at college, maybe living in a dorm in a different town, is a rough time to have these developments in your life and have those changes. And when trying to go to

school, maybe working, it would be great to have other people that know what you're going through,” said Dittrich. “But for the most part, it could feel definitely very isolating if you were especially nervous about having a disability.”

“About 80% of disabilities are invisible. About 20% of the population has a disability; this is one in five people. If you have a lecture course of 100 students, in there 20 of those students may have a learning disability or ADHD or significant clinical depression,” said Gorka. “Those are the disabilities that nobody can see and nobody knows about and that can make it difficult for students to come forward. This group is just a great support and advocacy group.”

Dittrich said while students with visible disabilities cannot hide it, students with invisible disabilities might need support to share about their condition. AYA's goal is to create a community that can provide needed support.

AYA meets at 4 p.m. every fourth Monday in CSU room 202. According to Follis, the group has planned events and activities they want to do throughout the semester.

“AYA also has game nights, they have study group nights,” said Gorka. “They do things like that just for students to come together and hang out or not feel alone in their studies.”

“But we also plan to check in and see how everyone is doing,” said Follis. “If we're able to just get together and support each other, it makes a lot of difference.”

Maverick Diversity Institute offers new workshops

By LAUREN VISKA
Staff Writer

Minnesota State's Maverick Diversity Institute is offering workshops to help students explore new skills and, eventually, intercultural collaborations.

Liz Steinborn-Gourley, the director of the Women's Center and the coordinator of the Maverick Diversity Institute, said this was inspired by wanting to make Minnesota State “a warm and welcoming place for all students; we recognize that our backgrounds are all different.”

“The workshop's goal is to help people reflect on their own beliefs, values, and experiences while holding space and empathy for the experiences of the community they are part of,” said Steinborn-Gourley. “Amalia Sharafkhodjaeva developed it in partnership with the Maverick Diversity Institute and Mavericks Involvement Team. It is a specific student track for the Maverick Diversity Institute.”

The first of the three-part series took place Tuesday in the CSU, and there were over 40 students in attendance. This event was titled “Curiosity and Empathy,” which Steinborn-Gourley said it was titled because “It takes curiosity and

empathy to begin understanding our own and the culture of others.”

“Trying to understand the experiences of folks who have different identities and lives than we do can be challenging,” said Steinborn-Gourley. “It takes curiosity and empathy to understand that our lived experiences are true for ourselves, but not necessarily for those around us.”

These three workshops are helping prepare students for Equity 2030, a goal the Minnesota State System put together to help close the educational equity gap at all Minnesota State colleges and universities. It also wants to have the student body at all Minnesota State schools reflect the racial diversity of the State of Minnesota by 2030.

“The goals also include having staff and faculty that are representative of our students. And we want to close equity gaps so that all students have the same opportunity to be retained and graduated in a timely manner,” said Steinborn-Gourley. “This means addressing policies that hold people back and building programs that lift people up. Students can talk with student government, stay engaged in this series, and reflect on their own organizations and who is and is not around the table.”



DAVIS JENSEN • The Reporter

Students attend Minnesota State's Maverick Diversity Institute workshop which helps students explore new skills and intercultural collaborations.

Equity 2030's core value is to provide all Minnesotans the opportunity to build a better future for themselves, their families, and

their communities. The initiative aims to improve graduation rates and other outcomes for students in these categories by addressing in-

equalities, understanding the basic challenges these students face and providing more resources and stu-

Sore throat? More schools suggest mildly sick kids attend anyway



ABBY DREY • The Associated Press

This photo taken Aug. 15, 2016, shows the front of the Bellefonte Area School District certified school nurses office. Schools are confronting soaring absence rates.

By BIANCA VAZQUEZ TONESS
The Associated Press

Trenace Dorsey-Hollins' 5-year-old daughter was sick a lot last year. Dorsey-Hollins followed school guidelines and kept her home when she had a cough or a sore throat — or worse — until she was completely better.

Near the end of the year, the school in Fort Worth, Texas, called her in to talk about why her daughter had missed so much school.

During the pandemic, schools urged parents and children to stay home at any sign of illness. Even though the emergency has ended, she said no one has clarified that those rules have changed.

"It's extremely confusing," she said.

"In the past, if the child didn't have a fever over 100, then it's okay to send them to school," said the mother of a 5- and 13-year-old. "But now it's like if they have a cough or they're sneezing, you might want to keep them home. Which is it?"

Widely varying guidance on when to keep children home has only added to the confusion, which many see as a factor in the nationwide epidemic of chronic school absences. Some advocates and school systems — and the state of California — are now encouraging kids to come to class even when they have the sniffles or other nuisance illnesses like lice or pinkeye.

Families need to hear they no longer must keep kids home at any sign of illness, said Hedy Chang, the executive director of Attendance Works. The national nonprofit aimed at improving attendance has issued its own guidance, urging parents to send kids to school if they can participate in daily activities.

"We have to now re-engage kids and families and change their thinking about that," Chang said.

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends staying home when there's fever, vomiting or diarrhea, or when students "are not well enough to participate in class."

But many districts go far beyond that, delineating a dizzying array of symptoms they say should rule out attendance. Fort Worth Independent School District, where Dorsey-Hollins' youngest daughter attends kindergarten, advises staying home if a child has a cough, sore throat or rash. A student should be "fever-free" for 24 hours without medication before returning to school, per district guidelines.

Austin Independent School District in Texas lists "eye redness," "undetermined rash" or "open, draining lesions" as reasons to stay home. Kids with lice can't attend class in New York City schools. Maryland's Montgomery County recommends keeping a child home with a stomachache, "pale or flushed face" or "thick yellow discharge from the nose."

Finding the right balance is difficult, and it's understandable that different places would approach it differently, said Claire McCarthy, a pediatrician at Boston Children's Hospital and professor at Harvard Medical School.

"Each school or school district has a different tolerance for illness," said McCarthy.

It all leaves many parents feeling puzzled.

"It's a struggle," said Malika Elwin, a mother of a second grader on New York's Long Island.

She doesn't want to expose other children or burden the teacher with her daughter's runny nose, so she's kept her daughter home longer even though she's feeling better because she still has cold symptoms. "Then I regret that because she just runs around here all day perfectly fine," she said.

For those who test positive for COVID-19, the CDC still calls

for staying home and isolating for at least five days. But guidance from states and individual schools varies widely. In some school systems, guidance allows for students who test positive to go to school as long as they are asymptomatic.

Trenace Dorsey-Hollins said it is hard for parents like her to keep track.

"Is it actually OK to sit in school with a cough if you don't have a fever and haven't tested positive for COVID?" she said.

When schools closed during the pandemic, kids fell behind academically — and continued chunks of school absences have made it harder for them to catch up. So some authorities have re-evaluated their tolerance for illness. During the 2021-2022 school year, more than a quarter of students missed at least 10% of the school year, up from 15% before the pandemic.

Missing that much school puts students at risk of not learning to read or graduate. Absent students also lose out on meals, socialization with peers and caring adults, physical exercise, and access to mental health counseling and health care. In other words, missing school has its own health effects.

And when a class sees high levels of chronic absenteeism, it hurts the students who are there because a teacher has to spend time reorienting the students who've been away.

The state of California, where 25% of students last year missed 10% of the school year, took a new approach to sick-day guidance this fall. Instead of only saying when a child should stay home, the guidance describes circumstances when a child might be slightly unwell but can come to school.

Overall, students should stay home when their symptoms "prevent them from participating meaningfully in routine activities."

US drone strike in Baghdad kills high-ranking leader



HADIMIZBAN • The Associated Press

Civil defense members gather at the site of a burned vehicle targeted by a U.S. drone strike in east Baghdad, Iraq, Wednesday, Feb. 7, 2024.

By QASSIM ABDUL-ZAHRA,
LOLITA C. BALDOR and
AAMER MADHANI
The Associated Press

A U.S. drone strike blew up a car in the Iraqi capital Wednesday night, killing a high-ranking commander of the powerful Kataib Hezbollah militia who is responsible for "directly planning and participating in attacks" on American troops in the region, the U.S. military said Wednesday.

The precision blast hit a main thoroughfare in the Mashtal neighborhood in eastern Baghdad, attracting a crowd as emergency teams picked through the wreckage. It came amid roiling tensions in the region, and will likely further anger Iraqi government leaders, who U.S. officials said were not notified in advance of the strike.

Security forces closed off the heavily guarded Green Zone, where a number of diplomatic compounds are located, and there were concerns about social media postings urging protesters to storm the U.S. embassy.

There were conflicting reports on the number of those killed,

with U.S. officials saying the initial assessment was one, and saying there were no civilians hurt or killed. But two officials with Iran-backed militias in Iraq said that three died, including Wisam Muhammad Sabir Al-Saadi, known as Abu Baqir Al-Saadi, the commander in charge of Kataib Hezbollah's operations in Syria. Kataib Hezbollah announced Abu Bakr's death "following the bombing of the American occupation forces" in a statement.

Those officials spoke on condition of anonymity because they weren't authorized to speak to journalists.

In a statement, U.S. Central Command said "there are no indications of collateral damage or civilian casualties at this time." It added that the U.S. "will not hesitate to hold responsible all those who threaten our forces' safety."

The strike is certain to inflame already seething relations between Washington and Baghdad. It comes just days after the U.S. military launched an air assault on dozens of sites in Iraq and Syria used by Iranian-backed militias.

◀DIVERSITY from page 1

dent support opportunities.

Steinborn-Gourley said she hopes students got a lot out of this

event, and it was "a great turnout, and we're looking forward to having those students join us again next month."

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Diapers and baby formula are becoming hard to find in Gaza



FATIMA SHBAIR • The Associated Press

Medics prepare premature babies for transport to Egypt after they were evacuated from Shifa Hospital in Gaza City to a hospital in Rafah, Gaza Strip on Nov. 20, 2023.

By WAFAA SHURAFU and SAMY MAGDY
The Associated Press

Zainab al-Zein was forced to make a desperate decision: Feed her infant daughter solid foods that her tiny body may not be able to digest or watch her starve because of a lack of baby formula in the besieged Gaza Strip.

Al-Zein chose to give 2 1/2-month-old Linda solids, knowing the choice could lead to health issues.

"I know we are doing something harmful to her, but there is nothing," said al-Zein, feeding her wailing daughter crushed biscuits in the cold tent they now call home. "She cries and cries continuously."

The war between Israel and Gaza's Hamas rulers has sparked a humanitarian catastrophe that has brought shortages of the most basic necessities. Some of the hardest-hit are babies, young children and their parents, with diapers and formula either hard to find or spiking to unaffordable prices, leading parents to resort to inadequate or even unsafe alternatives.

Their plight is further complicated due to sporadic aid deliveries that have been hobbled by Israeli restrictions and the relentless fighting.

Displaced Palestinians are also being squeezed into ever tighter areas of the tiny coastal enclave, prompting outbreaks of illness and disease, to which malnourished children are particularly vulnerable. The U.N. says the population is at imminent risk of famine, with a quarter of people already starving.

For Palestinians enduring increasingly dire conditions, the most basic of acts — such as changing a child's diaper — have become a luxury that can require sacrifice.

"I sold my children's food so I can buy diapers," said Raafat Abu Wardeh, who has two children in diapers.

Aid is not reaching everyone, and shortages of basic goods have caused prices to skyrocket. With Gaza's economy decimated, few Palestinians have regular incomes and most are either depleting

their savings or subsisting on handouts.

At makeshift street stalls, older children working as hawkers sell individual diapers for three to five shekels (\$1 to \$1.50) or entire packs for up to 170 shekels (\$46). A pack of diapers before the war cost 12 shekels (\$3.50).

"The prices of diapers are very ridiculous," said Anis al-Zein, who was buying them along a street in central Deir al-Balah and is not related to Zainab. "A child costs you 20 shekels (\$5) a day. Especially in a bad situation like this, all prices are high and there is no income for people. There isn't even aid."

Some parents are using cloth diapers, but those require washing with water, which is also scarce.

Mohammed al-Khatib, the local program manager for the U.K.-based Medical Aid for Palestinians, said some people have been forced to buy smaller diapers and tape them together.

Lack of fresh produce, the proliferation of unregulated food stalls and cold weather has contributed to the spread of illness, including respiratory infections, skin rashes and diarrhea. "It is winter, and the kids are wet most of the time," al-Khatib said.

The war, triggered by the deadly Oct. 7 Hamas assault on southern Israel, has unleashed unimaginable destruction, with more than 27,000 Palestinians killed and close to 67,000 wounded in Israel's offensive, according to local health officials.

The Health Ministry in Hamas-run Gaza does not differentiate in its count between civilians and combatants but says two-thirds of those killed were women and children. Israel blames Hamas for the high death toll because the group carries out attacks and militant activities in residential areas.

The Hamas attack killed about 1,200 people in Israel, most of them civilians, and roughly 250 were taken hostage.

The lack of diapers has added to the poor sanitary conditions for the estimated 1.7 million displaced Palestinians, many of whom are crammed into overcrowded shelters.

Los Angeles records 475 mudslides

By STEFANIE DANZIO and JULIE WATSON
The Associated Press

One of the wettest storms in Southern California history unleashed at least 475 mudslides in the Los Angeles area after dumping more than half the amount of rainfall the city typically gets in a season in just two days, and officials warned Tuesday that the threat was not over yet.

"Our hillsides are already saturated. So even not-very-heavy rains could still lead to additional mudslides," Mayor Karen Bass said during an evening news conference. "Even when the rain stops, the ground may continue to shift."

Officials expressed relief that the storm hadn't yet killed anyone or caused a major catastrophe in Los Angeles despite its size and intensity, with nearly 400 trees toppling. There were seven deaths reported elsewhere, including several people crushed by fallen trees in Northern California. Someone trying to enter the United States was swept up by a swollen Tijuana River channel and died early Tuesday as the California-Mexico border, according to U.S. Customs and Border Protection.

Though the rain was tapering off, forecasters extended a flood



ETHAN SWOPE • The Associated Press

Workers survey a mudslide Tuesday, Feb. 6, 2024, in the Beverly Crest area of Los Angeles.

watch through early Wednesday, warning the ground was too filled with water to hold much more after back-to-back atmospheric rivers walloped California in less than a week. Another heavy burst of rain is expected Wednesday evening before the region begins to dry out, said Tyler Kranz, a meteorologist with the National Weather Service.

Bass said the city is now looking toward recovery and will seek federal aid including emergency vouchers for homeless people in

shelters. It may see if it can qualify for FEMA money to help people whose homes were damaged in hillside communities where insurance companies won't cover. How many they are could take a while to count.

As of Tuesday, seven buildings had been deemed uninhabitable, officials said.

Another 10 buildings were yellow-tagged, meaning residents could go back to get their belongings but could not stay there because of the damage.

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Exercise your mind and body

Whether it's sitting in lectures, lounging on couches or laying in bed for a few hours during the weekend mornings, it's no shock students are constantly stagnant. However, with our long lectures and generally sedentary lives, it's important for us to find time to get up and get our bodies moving.

At a young age, we were told to get at least 60 minutes of physical activity a week. According to TIME magazine, less than a third of U.S. adults were getting the recommended amount of exercise. The exercise they should be getting is 20 minutes a day of moderate-intensity aerobics, such as walking or dancing, and a few muscle-strengthening sessions a week.

Besides increasing incidences of adverse health conditions being a limiting factor, long days at school or the office make it harder for us to find time to exercise.

Modern transportation such as cars and buses make traveling a lot easier than biking or walking to our destinations. Activities we do in our free time such as video games, reading or watching the latest Netflix series also prevent us from getting the exercise we need.

The benefits from exercise are plentiful: boosting mood and strength, improved sleep, and even lowering the risk of chronic conditions and early death.

However, exercise can be a difficult issue for those who don't frequently hit up the gym or have even stepped foot in one. An embarrassment from gym class as a kid or not knowing what to do in a gym can hinder someone from exercising.

Sometimes these setbacks overtake our minds more than the motivation to get moving.

The hardest part of trying something new is doing it for the first time. Taking a walk around the block and building up distance over time is a great start.

Having a gym partner to keep each other accountable is not only helpful for staying on track, but it grows our confidence to have someone to rely on, especially on the days working out doesn't seem workable.

It doesn't even have to be a high-intensity workout with the heaviest weights or the fastest speed on the treadmill either. It could be taking the long way to our classes to get a little extra movement or having a dance party in our dorms. All that matters is getting up and moving.

Dedicating time out of our busy lives to workout every day pays off in the long run. Whether we have 15 minutes or an hour and a half, it's time we set aside for ourselves.

Perspectives

How does anxiety actually feel?



Courtesy Emma Johnson

Brain fog can make it really hard to concentrate on homework or any usual activities.

Imagine you're going about your average day. You've had your morning coffee, checked over a couple of emails and are about to start one of the items on your to-do list. Then, suddenly, you lose your focus. It's no big deal; the thought of upcoming deadlines just passed your mind. You start work again only to not produce a single coherent thought.

The description above is just one of the most common symptoms I and many other people experience with anxiety. Usually referred to as "brain fog," it can take longer to complete relatively easy activities. Forgetfulness or trouble trying to organize thoughts can also occur too. To people who don't experience anxiety, it can be easy to chalk it up to "putting too much on their plate." Even



Emma Johnson
Editor In Chief

more people think mental health symptoms are just dealing with the thoughts in their head.

Anxiety goes so much beyond brain fog. The subconscious takes over our thoughts without even realizing it, which can make it difficult to focus on anything but worrying. When those worries come to the forefront, a lot of people will avoid the things that trigger their anxiety. In turn, being restless and tense are two of the feel-

ings that people with anxiety constantly feel. Oftentimes, it's hard for us to relax when all of the fears—real or imagined—seem to be all we focus on.

The adrenaline of constantly being in fight-or-flight mode activates an array of physical symptoms as well. Anxiety can trigger panic attacks that come on suddenly. In the moment, it can seem like it will never go away. Your heart beats out of your chest, you're dizzy or lightheaded, your breathing brings you almost to the point of hyperventilation. It's like a workout without any of the health benefits.

Even achieving basic needs can be extremely difficult. Sometimes, you'll feel like eating absolutely nothing due to nausea and the feel-

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Pulse

"What clubs are you involved in?"

Compiled by Alexis Darkow



ALLISON KOENIG,
GRADUATE

"Mavs4MentalHealth"



ANA BANUELOS,
JUNIOR

"None."



JAMES LUNDE,
FRESHMAN

"Speech and Debate."



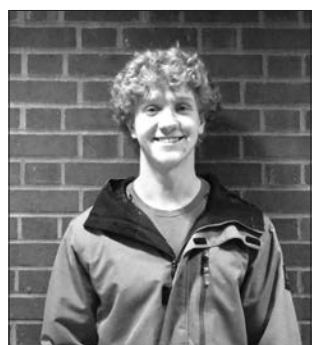
JUSTIN SCHREIBER,
FRESHMAN

"Hockey."



SHREYA PRADHAN,
SOPHOMORE

"None."



TREVOR LANGEBERG,
FRESHMAN

"Baseball and a learning community."

King Charles III's cancer diagnosis lays pressures at Buckingham Palace



KIN CHEUNG • The Associated Press

Britain's King Charles III and Queen Camilla arrive to attend the Christmas day service at St Mary Magdalene Church in Sandringham in Norfolk, England on Dec. 25, 2023

By DANICA KIRKA
The Associated Press

King Charles III's cancer diagnosis heaps more pressure on the British monarchy, which is still evolving after the 70-year reign of the late Queen Elizabeth II.

When he succeeded his mother 17 months ago, Charles' task was to demonstrate that the 1,000-year-old institution remains relevant in a modern nation whose citizens come from all corners of the globe. Now the king, who turned 75 in November, will have to lead that effort while undergoing cancer treatment.

Buckingham Palace announced Monday that Charles had been diagnosed with an undisclosed form of cancer.

The king plans to continue fulfilling his state duties, such as reviewing government papers and meeting with the prime minister, but he will step back from public appearances.

While royal experts say the diagnosis is unlikely to destabilize the House of Windsor, significant pressures remain.

Here is a look at the major challenges facing the royal family.

AGING MONARCH

Charles waited almost 74 years — longer than any previous heir — to become king. Now, at an age when most of his contemporaries are well into retirement, Charles has had less than two years to put his stamp on the monarchy.

Although the duties of a constitutional monarch are largely ceremonial, the royal whirl can be exhausting.

Besides the occasional procession in full royal regalia, there are meetings with political leaders, dedication ceremonies and events honoring the accomplishments of British citizens. That added up to 161 days of royal engagements during Charles's first year on the throne.

The pressures on an aging

monarch aren't unique to Charles. Denmark's Queen Margrethe became the first Danish monarch to abdicate in nearly 900 years last month when she handed over the throne to her son, Frederik. Margrethe, 83, had always maintained she wouldn't quit.

But Britain isn't Denmark. Queen Elizabeth II stuck by a commitment to devote her life to service before she died on the throne at the age of 96. Charles made a similar commitment during his coronation.

"I don't think he will go anywhere anytime soon," said Joe Little, managing editor of Majesty Magazine. "I still think that abdication is not a word that is banded about at Buckingham Palace. I mean, who knows what the coming years will bring, but with the best will in the world, Charles III will reign as his mother did, and until the moment of his death."

A SHRINKING WORKFORCE

Charles' illness comes at an awkward time as he cuts costs, in part by reducing the number of "working royals."

Not only is Charles stepping away from public duties, his daughter-in-law, Kate, the Princess of Wales, isn't expected to resume her royal tasks until April after recent abdominal surgery.

With two of the most visible family members out sick, it will be more challenging for the family to keep up. Hundreds of charities look to their connections to the royals to keep interest in their work at a high level.

Who will cut the ribbons, open the swimming pools, shake the hands of civic leaders at institutions across the land if not the Windsors.

"They are resilient. Lord knows the royal family's been through a lot of things over the years ... and they've bounced back. But the underlying fact is ... he is 75. The queen is 76," said Sally Bedell

Smith, author of "Prince Charles: The Passions and Paradoxes of an Improbable Life."

"It's a reminder that they are vulnerable in ways that people haven't particularly liked to think."

HARRY & MEGHAN

Charles' relationship with his younger son was strained even before Harry and the Duchess of Sussex moved closer to the former Meghan Markle's home in California and left royal duties in 2020.

Charles told Harry the news about his cancer, and his son traveled to the U.K. soon after it was announced.

But with his book "Spare" and his Netflix series, Harry has been a shadow over the early years of the monarch's reign.

Can illness offer an opportunity for reconciliation?

"That can only be a good sign," Little said of Harry's visit. "What will come of that remains to be seen. It's unlikely that we will be told anything officially by the palace. So, again, a lot of conjecture will come into play. But we think the king and his younger son haven't seen each other since the coronation back in May."

"So, it'll be a welcome meeting from both sides."

THE MONARCHY'S RELEVANCE

Charles reigns over a country that looks much different from the one his mother inherited in 1952.

Over the past seven decades, the U.K. has become a multi-cultural nation where school children speak more than 300 languages and less than half the population identifies as Christian.

Against this backdrop, Charles has tried to demonstrate the continuing relevance of the monarchy by reaching out to faith leaders, ethnic minorities and each of the four nations that make up the United Kingdom.

Supporters argue this is what makes the monarchy so important.

A record number of Americans can't afford their rent



DAVID ZALUBOWSKI • The Associated Press

Monique Gant moves belongings out of an apartment after being evicted, Wednesday, Jan. 31, 2024.

By JESSE BEDAYN
The Associated Press

Single mom Caitlyn Colbert watched as rent for her two-bedroom apartment doubled, then tripled and then quadrupled over a decade in Denver — from \$750 to \$3,374 last year.

Every month, like millions of Americans, Colbert juggled her costs. Pay rent or swim team fees for one of her three kids. Rent or school supplies.

Rent or groceries. Colbert, a social worker who helps people stay financially afloat, would often arrive home to notices giving

her 30 days to pay rent and a late fee or face eviction.

"Every month you just gotta budget and then you still fall short," she said, adding what became a monthly refrain: "Well, this month at least we have \$13 left."

Millions of Americans, especially people of color, are facing those same, painful decisions as a record number struggle with unaffordable rent increases, a crisis fueled by rising prices from inflation, a shortage of affordable housing and the end of pandemic relief.

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ings of a tight stomach. Other times, you'll want to eat every comfort food you can get your hands on. It can be difficult to fall or stay asleep due to all the racing thoughts going through

your head. Talking with your doctor about getting on medication or going to therapy is so beneficial. The sooner you can go, the quicker you can keep your anxiety at bay.

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SPORTS

Mavs to take on Huskies in the Winter Carnival Series

By AHMED HASSAN
Staff Writer

After a series split against St. Thomas, the Minnesota State Mavericks travel to Michigan this weekend to face the Michigan Tech Huskies in the Winter Carnival series.

The Mavs sit second in the CCHA with 32 points while the Huskies are five points behind them with 27.

The Mavs are 1-1-2 against the Huskies in the Winter Carnival series.

The Mavs currently sit with a 14-10-4 overall record and a 10-6-2 conference record while the Huskies sit with a 11-12-6 overall record and a 8-8-2 conference record.

The last time these two teams played in November, the Huskies swept the Mavericks at home in two tightly contested games, beating them 3-2 in both.

The Mavs have been on a roll since their last matchup against the Huskies winning 10 of their last 16 games peaking at the right time in the latter end of the season.

Sam Morton has earned a nomination for the Hobey Baker Award as he is one of seven players in the conference to receive this honor.

Morton has been on a great run of form this season, but saw his five game point streak end against St. Thomas. Morton leads the CCHA in goals (19), points (29), shots per



DYLAN LONG • The Reporter

After their series split with St. Thomas, the Minnesota State hockey team ranks second in the CCHA standing with 32 points and a 10-6-2 conference record.

game (119), and faceoff wins (335).

Evan Murr continues to shine in his rookie season for the Mavs being named to the Tim Taylor Rookie of the Year watchlist.

Murr led the CCHA rookies by accumulating six points in January with one goal and six assists contributing to him winning CCHA defensemen of the month in Jan-

uary.

Murr sits at 15 assists in the conference, two short behind first place while scoring five goals on the season thus far.

The Huskies are coming off a loss and a tie against Northern Michigan.

The last series sweep for the Huskies came against the Mavs as

they haven't been able to replicate it since.

The Huskies haven't been as good on the road this season, but have held their ground at home with a 6-5-3 winning record.

The Huskies will look to their star rookie Isaac Gordon to continue his impressive first season. Gordon is a front-runner for the

CCHA rookie of the year and was named to the Tim Taylor Award watch list as he sits at second this year in goals with 14 only behind Morton.

The Huskies will also expect big performances from Chase Pietila who's also been named to the Tim Taylor Award watch list and from their senior forward Ryland Mosley.

Mosley was an All-CCHA first team selection last season, and has kept up his form from last season scoring 13 goals and nine assists on the season so far.

Goaltenders Alex Tracy and Blake Pietila will be players to watch for the game as both goalies have been on track for great seasons thus far.

Tracy holds a .911 save percentage and 2.37 goals against in 23 games played so far.

Tracy earned CCHA goaltender of the month in January after posting two shutouts.

Blake Pietila ranks eighth in the nation this season with 711 saves on the season. Pietila holds a .914 save percentage (second) and averages 27.35 saves a game (first).

Mavs have won six out of their last 10 games, and will look to continue that form.

The Mavericks play at 7:07 p.m. Friday and 5:07 p.m. Saturday at John MacInnes Student Ice Arena.

No. 5 Mavericks returning home for the weekend

By HAYDEN LEE
Staff Writer

In a week where they won two games and lost another, the Minnesota State men's basketball team dropped from No. 2 in the National Association of Basketball Coaches Poll to No. 5.

Although they dropped in the national rankings, they still reign supreme in the NSIC. According to the poll, Minnesota State is one of four NSIC teams ranked in the top 25. MSU Moorhead slots in at No. 9, Minot State improves to No. 15 and Minnesota Duluth, whom the Mavs lost to last week, enter the top-25 at No. 22.

This week, the Mavs will have another chance to pick up two more wins as they hope to reclaim the top spot in the NABC Poll. Their challengers? Conference opponents Wayne State and Augustana.

The Mavs will have the luxury of playing their two games at home in Bresnan Arena in the Taylor Center. The first game will tip-off at 7:30 p.m. Friday against the Wildcats. This meeting between MSU and WSC will be their 40th. The Mavs currently lead the all-time series, 33-6. MSU is on a four-game



Courtesy Maverick Athletics

MSU, which was ranked second in last week's poll, fell three spots after going 2-1 on the road. The Mavericks fell to Minnesota Duluth 85-70, before besting Southwest Minnesota State 68-58 and Sioux Falls 70-65.

winning-streak in the rivalry. Their most recent win came earlier this season, where the Mavs went on

the road and took home the 110-77 victory.

The Wildcats will enter the

weekend with a 13-10 record (6-10 NSIC) after splitting their games last weekend against Concordia St.

Paul and UMD. The Wildcats are led by a coach with plenty of experience, as he is in his 30th season of coaching, (sixth with the Wildcats). The Wildcats have an offense that has scored 75.1 points per game and their defense has forced 291 turnovers this season.

Following their duel with the Wildcats, the Mavs will take on the Augustana Vikings Saturday at 5:30 p.m. There is much more history between these two teams, as this will be the 131st meeting between the Vikings and Mavs, with the Mavs holding a 68-62 series lead. The Mavs bested the Vikings earlier on the road this season, 85-72.

The Vikings will enter the weekend with a 14-8 record, including a 9-7 NSIC record.

The Vikings also took on CSP and UMD last weekend, splitting the games as well. The Vikings offense packs a larger punch, averaging 80.2 points per game, led by Isaac Fink, who leads the team in scoring with 19.4 ppg.

With only five games remaining, the Mavs look like they could take home the NSIC title, but they will need to finish strong to keep momentum as they head into tournament season.

Patrick Mahomes has a new perspective on football and life



CHARLIE RIEDEL • The Associated Press

Kansas City Chiefs quarterback Patrick Mahomes waits to start a drill during the team's NFL football practice Friday, Feb. 2, 2024 in Kansas City, Mo.

By DAVE SKRETTA
The Associated Press

Patrick Mahomes is a much different quarterback than he was four years ago, when he helped the Kansas City Chiefs beat the San Francisco 49ers in the Super Bowl to end a championship drought stretching back five decades.

He's a different man, for that matter, a father of two these days with different priorities in life.

Sometimes the two intersect, one job making him better at the other.

"I think you learn a ton being a father, man. You learn how to be patient," said Mahomes, who will lead the AFC champion Chiefs into a Super Bowl rematch against the NFC champion 49ers on Sunday. "You learn how to try to really boost people's confidence, especially your kids. Through seasons like I've had this last year, it's never losing hope, never going too negative in adverse times. Just continue to boost people's confidence, continue to strive for hard work and really be patient."

Mahomes' patience certainly has been put to the test this season.

He watched his wide receivers drop more passes than any team in the NFL, and the rest of the Kansas City offense commit more penalties than any team but one. He had to choke back his angst — sometimes successfully, other times not so much — when a missed call by the officials may have cost the Chiefs a game. And he had to finally accept the fact that defenses simply were not going to let him chuck the ball all over the field anymore, and that his sandlot-style of play had to change.

In some ways, Mahomes had to reinvent himself, becoming what he once seemed to loath: a game manager.

Unlike that championship run four years ago, or the two Super

Bowls since that earned Mahomes a second ring, the Chiefs this season did not rely entirely on their offense to carry them. They had the No. 2 scoring defense in the NFL, which had to bail out Mahomes' side of the ball when it was struggling so mightily midway through the season.

So while he can still make the audacious no-look throw, or throw that wizardly rocket through double coverage, he also learned to check down to running backs when deep shots were covered. He accepted that audibles to running plays when defenses stacked the line of scrimmage were OK. Mahomes even learned that he could take a sack when it was most beneficial to keep the clock running, which he did in the AFC championship game in Baltimore.

"I think guys understood," Mahomes said upon reflection, "that we could play a different way to win football games."

Sounds like a quarterback that has learned a few things in six years as a starter.

"He's the catalyst. He's the reason why we're here and why we're able to keep coming back to back," said tight end Travis Kelce, perhaps Mahomes' closest friend on the team. "And honestly, he just gives his team a certain sense of urgency and confidence that we can go and get it done, and that goes a long way."

Mahomes has always been mature beyond his years, even if he didn't always possess the patience that comes with experience. He almost had to be, because growing up, Mahomes was so much better than other kids his own age that he would usually have to play against older ones, whether that was in football, basketball or his first love, baseball.

The son of longtime big league pitcher Pat Mahomes recalled that one time, during a T-ball game, a grounder was hit toward him at

shortstop. Most kids at that level would throw a looping rainbow to first base, but he sent a laser across the diamond.

"It hit the kid right in the face and broke his glasses," Mahomes said with a smile, "and so they told me after that they wanted me to roll the ball to first base, and I ended up just playing first base and catching it from then on."

Good thing for the Chiefs he didn't fall in love with catching balls.

Then again, maybe he would have been a heck of a wide receiver.

"I mean, I always just loved sports from the beginning," Mahomes said, "all sports. I loved watching. I love playing. I mean, I remember my mom used to get mad at me, because I would throw — like, you know, kids throw the ball off the wall? I'd throw it off the TV, because I was watching TV at the same time, and she used to get real mad that I was doing that."

The dad in Mahomes — his daughter, Sterling, is 2, while his son, Bronze, turned 1 in November — might better understand where Mama Mahomes was coming from back in those days.

While much has changed for Mahomes over the past few years, much has remained the same. He's still one of the best QBs to play the game. Still putting up big numbers every time he steps on the field. And still a fierce competitor, as evidenced by a game against Buffalo, when he roared up and down the sideline after an offside call cost Kansas City a go-ahead touchdown.

"We don't take him for granted," Chiefs coach Andy Reid said. "We know we're seeing something special."

Reid points out that Mahomes is still "young in this business," just 28 years old. And for all his success, Mahomes has only been a starting quarterback for a short while, and he could have more

Who has the most to gain from a win in Super Bowl 58?



JEFF CHIU • The Associated Press

The San Francisco 49ers will be making their second Super Bowl appearance under head coach Kyle Shanahan. Shanahan's record in the playoffs is 8-3.

By MOHAMED WARSAME
Sports Editor

As Americans plan for who they will be watching the big game with — and what they are going to be stuffing their faces in while they watch Usher perform at halftime — here are the three people with the most to gain from a victory in Super Bowl 58.

Kyle Shanahan

After a tough first two seasons, the San Francisco 49ers' head coach has had an incredible five-year run. The 49ers have made it the NFC Championship in four of the last five seasons, and have gone to the Super Bowl twice. Most fan bases would do anything to have that kind of success. If the 49ers lose to the Kansas City Chiefs, no one but attention seekers would be calling for his job, but this game could be legacy-defining for him.

Shanahan is already regarded as one of the best coaches in the NFL. His genius schemes and play calling is a huge reason why. An underrated facet to his coaching is the toughness his teams exude on offense. Everyone knows about the physicality that players like Trent Williams, George Kittle and Deebo Samuel display. Shanahan's mindset and commitment to running the ball is the reason why those players can punish defenses the way that they do.

The 44-year-old has been able to have this success without a superstar quarterback. After getting to a Super Bowl with Jimmy Garoppolo, the 49ers drafted Trey Lance, and hoped he could be a quarterback that elevates others around him. Instead, "Mr. Irrelevant" Brock Purdy has been under center for the team's run to the Super Bowl. Shanahan has the opportunity to cement his legacy as a hall of fame coach, and check off the only thing missing from his resume.

Christian McCaffrey

McCaffrey getting traded to the 49ers has not only rejuvenated his career, it was the best thing that could have happened to it.

In his last few years with the Carolina Panthers, McCaffrey dealt with injuries that kept him off the field, which caused peo-

ple to forget just how special of a player he is.

In the regular season, he rushed for 1,459 yards and 14 touchdowns in 16 games.

He also had seven receiving touchdowns.

The 49ers' running back is also a finalist for this season's MVP. For a player that hasn't enjoyed much success at the highest level in college or the pros, a win and potentially a Super Bowl MVP would be a nice stamp to one of the best seasons we have seen from a running back in a long time.

Patrick Mahomes

As we've seen throughout these playoffs, Mahomes has no equal.

He's in a league of his own, and the people he's "competing" with are retired folks like Tom Brady, Joe Montana and Peyton Manning.

During the regular season, the Chiefs' offense wasn't the well-oiled machine we've become accustomed to.

Travis Kelce was dealing with injuries and isn't quite what he used to be, and most of their wide receivers did not perform well enough.

It seemed as though this was a great year for other AFC teams to capitalize on that and make a run of their own.

Instead, the Chiefs have been able to lean on their great defense, and allow the best player in the league to control the game on offense.

With a win Sunday in Las Vegas, Mahomes would get his third Super Bowl victory.

It was clear from early in his career that he had the potential to be considered the greatest player of all time one day. The unfathomable thing is that his case for that would be strong at age 28.

In his six seasons, he has at least made it to the AFC Championship game in all of them, has won the regular season and Super Bowl MVP twice and has playoff stats that no one comes close to at this stage of a career.

There will be some interesting conversations to be had about who the greatest quarterback of all time is if the Chiefs win.

Caitlin Clark was a grade-school phenom



CHARLIE NEIBERGALL • The Associated Press

Iowa guard Caitlin Clark celebrates on the court after an NCAA college basketball game against Michigan, Sunday, Feb. 27, 2022, in Iowa City, Iowa.

By ERIC OLSON
The Associated Press

Caitlin Clark's skills were so advanced when she was in grade school that her parents signed her up to play on boys teams. By the time she entered middle school she was well-known in basketball circles across Iowa.

This was long before Clark became one of the faces of women's basketball and, now, on the cusp of setting the NCAA Division I scoring record.

Clark was in sixth grade when Jan Jensen first heard about her. Not long after, Iowa's associate head coach and chief recruiter went to watch the prodigy from West Des Moines.

She saw a confident player making pinpoint passes often too hot for her teammates to handle, someone who was creative on drives to the hoop and of course someone willing to launch the deep 3-pointers that would become her signature and one of the reasons she's one of the United States' highest-profile female athletes.

"It didn't take but a second, maybe a minute," Jensen said. "That little step-back sassy 3, this little seventh-, eighth-grader. Yeah, she's diff. You could just tell. They're easy to identify but really hard to get. Everybody can see the true, true ones. The trick is to get them."

Clark needs 66 points to break the NCAA career record of 3,527 by Washington's Kelsey Plum (2013-17). The Hawkeyes play Penn State at home on Thursday. With an average of 32.4 points per game, Clark is on track to break the record at Nebraska on Sunday or Feb. 15 at home against Michigan.

"I didn't predict this to happen, but just knowing her work ethic, knowing her passion for the sport, knowing her fearlessness, I'm really not surprised," said Kristin Meyer, who coached Clark from 2016-20 at Dowling Catholic High in West Des Moines. "More than anything, I'm so happy for her to get to accomplish all of these things, to grow the sport and to grow the popularity of women's basketball and also the state of Iowa."

The daughter of Brent Clark and Anne Nizzi-Clark grew up as the middle child in a sports-centric family. Caitlin said when she first started playing basketball, she would cry after every game her team lost.

"That's because of how much I cared," she said in an interview with The Associated Press. "I'm like 6 years old and it didn't matter, obviously. But it mattered to me."

That passion for winning took root when she and brothers Blake and Colin played board games and all kinds of sports against each other. She recalled a basement Nerf basketball game with Colin that got overheated.

"I just threw him into the wall," she said. "He went flying and his head slapped into it. He put his hand back and it was just full of blood. He runs upstairs to my mom. She goes and gets a bunch of staples in his head."

Meyer was preparing for her first year as Dowling High coach in 2016 when she first heard about a "stud eighth-grader" who would be joining the team.

"I was, 'OK, that's nice. We'll have a good player,'" Meyer said.

And then she went to watch Clark's AAU club the spring before her freshman year — "Oh, she's real good," Meyer remembers thinking — and realized she would build her first team around Clark.

Coaching Clark was sometimes a challenge, Meyer said, because she was so advanced in her skills and basketball IQ. As has happened during her career at Iowa, Clark would show frustration if the target of one of her passes wasn't ready to catch it or if a play didn't unfold as designed.

"There were times the competitiveness of her kind of took over or she wasn't as patient," Meyer said, "but every high schooler has to grow through some things and, looking back, her skill level was on a different level than other people, so it was harder for her at times."

Clark, who never won a high school state title, ranks No. 4 on the Iowa high school five-on-five career scoring chart with 2,547 points. Many Iowa schools played six-on-six into the 1980s and '90s.

Kyrie Irving scores 36 points in return to Brooklyn

By BRIAN MAHONEY
The Associated Press

Kyrie Irving was traded away a year ago, but he's never fully left New York.

Not when he grew up in the area as a Nets fan, and not when so many family and friends were in attendance when he came back Tuesday night.

He gave them quite a show.

Irving scored 36 points, leading the Mavericks to a 119-107 victory and then spending time signing autographs and greeting his old fans in the stands.

"Just like any other basketball game, but it felt like I was home tonight," Irving said.

Luka Doncic had 35 points, 18 rebounds and nine assists as the Mavericks' guard tandem took turns hitting some deep 3-pointers in the second half when the Nets were trying to make a run. Doncic quickly shed the mask he began the game with to protect a nasal contusion and just missed his 10th triple-double of the season.

Irving was booed when he touched the ball in the early going, though he turned those to cheers after finishing one of his fancy drives for a reserve layup or hitting one of his six 3-pointers — and especially when he rose high to slam down a lob pass in the third quarter.

"That was amazing. That was impressive," Doncic said of the play that Irving said he called for himself, telling Josh Green he could get up to catch the pass.

Irving, who is second to Vince Carter in Nets franchise history with his 14 40-point games, nearly got one against Brooklyn after returning from a six-game absence



PETER K. AFRIYIE • The Associated Press

Dallas Mavericks guard Kyrie Irving (11) shoots next to Brooklyn Nets guard Cam Thomas (24) during the first half of an NBA basketball game in New York.

with a sprained right thumb for Monday's victory at Philadelphia.

Mikal Bridges scored 28 points and Royce O'Neal had 18 for the short-handed Nets, who trimmed a 23-point deficit to 107-101 with about five minutes remaining before Irving knocked down two straight 3-pointers for a 113-101 lead.

"It's tough. Ky has the extreme ability to shot-make versus anyone and I thought he had some timely buckets for that group," Nets coach Jacque Vaughn said.

Brooklyn's Ben Simmons had nine points, nine rebounds and seven assists after sitting out a loss to Golden State on Monday.

Mavericks coach Jason Kidd said Irving has been a calming presence for the young Dallas players, though calm certainly wasn't the word to define his time in Brooklyn. He played in just 143 games in his 3 1/2 seasons, missing time during one season after taking a leave of absence, nearly all

the home games another season because of his refusal to get vaccinated against COVID-19 as mandated in New York City, and then getting suspended by the team last season when he refused to apologize for posting a link to an antisemitic work on social media.

The relationship with the team deteriorated to the point that Irving wanted the homecoming to be over by the middle of last season. The Nets, who had already passed on giving him a contract extension the previous summer, then traded away Kevin Durant days after moving Irving, ending an era that had so much promise when the All-Stars came together in 2019.


There was no tribute video, which Durant received when he returned for the first time last week. Rather, the Nets showed photos of Irving, Seth Curry and Markieff Morris on the overhead videoboard, welcoming the three

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VARIETY

Mav Machine named featured performer

By MERCEDES KAUPHUSMAN
Variety Editor

Minnesota's largest gathering of music educators will feature nationally-recognized headliners, as well as Minnesota State's own Mav Machine.

The Minnesota Music Educators Association, or MMEA, is bringing back the annual Midwinter Convention, a convention of professional development Feb. 15, where the Mav Machine will perform for educators, students and the general public.

"I'm just so proud of the students," band director Michael Thursby said. "They're the ones that do hours and hours of work and they attend all of the events and support the university, so for them to kind of get the reward for the work that they have put in— It's a pretty incredible feeling."

MSU junior Drew Burling recalls attending the conference years prior; however, instead of watching as a student, the trombonist will be playing for them.

"I'm just super excited as an aspiring music educator to get to have other people see us, and be able to see a bunch more people perform and learn a lot from the convention," Burling said. "It's always super educational and fun."

With recent accomplishments like their march in last November's Thanksgiving Day Parade in Chicago, the band's success was recognized and selected for a spot for the



Courtesy Maverick Machine Athletic Bands Facebook

The Mav Machine headed to MSU's Ted Paul Theatre Sunday for a 4 hour rehearsal in preparation of MMEA's Midwinter Convention. The convention is the largest gathering of music educators in the state, and will feature the Machine Feb. 15.

first time in Mav Machine's history.

"Most of these educators know of Mankato, but now this is going to be a chance for them to see us up close and personal," Thursby said.

Their program titled, "Changing the Game," contrasts from the regular, peppy music played during Maverick games, and instead focuses on a syncopated Cuban-type rhythm, incorporating pieces

from well-known musicals such as "Hamilton," "In the Heights" and "The Greatest Showman." The concept as a whole draws attention to the importance of mental health in both the ensemble and audience.

"The music that we're doing is where we look at using our platform and our voice to perform different music and to bring visibility to maybe underrepresented

composers, composers that come from an LGBTQ+ background," Thursby said.

The program is also considered to be more challenging than the band's typical lineup. To prepare for the advanced selection, MSU sophomore Caiden Rademacker has focused on leading the team of strings and playing the electric guitar.

MACHINE on page 12

Student leaders go head-to-head

By ELLIE MESCHKE
Staff Writer

Last night at the Taylor Center, a trivia night was held between the student government and student affairs. Consisting of five rounds ranging from pop culture to math riddles, attendees worked together to answer questions and win the trophy.

Todd Pflingsten, the director of campus recreation, and Ben Nelson, the program coordinator, sat down to discuss the event.

"Predating this event, we thought about the ones we've done before, where it was kickball, or it was softball, or bowling, those were all physical events and activities. We decided to add this as a different type of event that counteracts those physical competitions with more of a mental one, just to mix it up a little bit to have a little bit of difference, because competition comes in many forms, it doesn't always have to be a physical activity," Pflingsten said.

"That's exactly right. Not every senator, not every staff member that participates is involved in sports," Nelson added.

Events between the student government and student affairs have been going on for about seven to eight years; there are usually two to four events per year. Sometimes the event involves a sport or, in this case, the event will require you to bring your wits.

"It's easy to have some of your interactions be mostly business related, and there's a lot lost, sometimes," Pflingsten said. "There are two different ends of communication that may collide, and when you have events like this, it's a lot easier to see the professional outside of their normal environment, students outside of their normal senator roles as well. It really does help with relationships. People tend to take things less personally when you know the person across the table. You know they're coming from a good place rather than if you're dug in on each side of what you're arguing about for or against something."

"I attend most senate meetings, most student government meetings, and it's more professional, formal, Robert's rules, those types of things. So, getting to know the student body president, vice president, some of the senators, outside of that room, outside of that meeting, is real important because you're trying to develop a relationship when a student can just stop by the office and say 'Hey, I want to talk to you about something.' It may be related to student government, it may not be, but we're developing relationships and I think getting to know people more on a personal level that you can just walk

STUDENT on page 12

Students relax during Black History Month

By ANAHI ZUNIGA
Staff Writer

Black History Month has arrived and many Black and African American organizations have planned and offered many activities to celebrate, such as Black Jeopardy and the showing of the film, "I am Ali."

On Wednesday students attended the African American Affairs's Black History Month Rest, Restore, Replenish event, and participated in paint and sip, sound bowl therapy, a conversation pit: podcast, body scrubs and masks, candids and more relaxing activities that allowed them to destress.

"AAA's Black History Month Rest, Restore, and Replenish began through conversations between me and Arianna Moore who is a sophomore," said BalenciaSariah Crosby, director of African American and Multicultural Affairs and organizer of the event. "We speak often about restorative healing practices and during our conversation, I asked her if she would be interested in attending a retreat on campus that would center around Black wellness" Crosby said.

Multicultural programs at Minnesota State allow diverse students to celebrate their heritage and



DYLAN LONG • The Reporter

The African American Affairs hosted an event for students to rest, restore and replenish during Black History month in the CSU Ballroom Wednesday.

racial background proudly. Still, challenges and obstacles often prevent students and staff from fully expressing their culture.

For Black History Month — an annual celebration that takes place throughout the month of February and highlights the history and significance of the Black and African American community, — Crosby said it's important to acknowledge

such struggles and confront them.

"African American students are not afforded many opportunities to rest. This radical and necessary act is largely unsupported and, during Black History Month, our responsibilities often increase further," she said. "Several higher education institutions make it especially challenging for the Black community, students and staff especially. We

are made to do a great deal of work and criticized for how we do it. We are provided minimal resources and criticized for not doing more. We are measured and told how 'Black' we can be, and criticized for daring to exist freely. If not for the small but mighty group of anti-racist abolitionists who genuinely support, I wouldn't be able to carry out this work."

For Crosby and African American Affairs, it was important recognize mental health during Black History Month and allow the Black and African American community at MSU to relax, restore, and replenish, and overall celebrate wellness with all MSU students on campus.

"Black students need regularly to rest, restore, and replenish themselves so that they are well, both physically and mentally. The most important relationship we individually hold is the one between our inner and outer selves. This is a radical and transformative action required to allow the nervous system a chance to relax from constant actions," Crosby said.

For more information on African American Affairs, visit www.mnsu.edu/universitylife/diversityequityinclusion or stop the Multicultural Center CSU 269.



ALEXIS DARKOW • The Reporter

Student Government and Student Affairs played in a trivia battle Wednesday.

◀**MACHINE** from page 11
down the hallway and say 'Hi' and have a quick chat and not be student government related."
The next event between stu-

dent government and student affairs will be on April 10th, keep your eyes peeled for any future updates.

Toby Keith dies at 62



CHRIS PIZZELLO • The Associated Press

In this April 7, 2014, file photo shows Toby Keith performs at ACM Presents an All-Star Salute to the Troops in Las Vegas. Keith has died. He was 62.

By KRISTIN M. HALL
The Associated Press

Toby Keith, a hit country crafter of pro-American anthems who both riled up critics and was loved by millions of fans, has died. He was 62.

The "Should've Been a Cowboy" singer-songwriter, who had stomach cancer, died peacefully Monday surrounded by his family, according to a statement posted on the country singer's website. "He fought his fight with grace and courage," the statement said. He announced his cancer diagnosis in 2022.

The 6-foot-4 singer broke out in the country boom years of the 1990s, writing songs that fans loved to hear. Over his career he publicly clashed with other celebrities and journalists and often pushed back against record executives who wanted to smooth his rough edges.

He was known for his overt patriotism on post 9/11 songs like "Courtesy of the Red, White and Blue," and boisterous barroom tunes like "I Love This Bar" and "Red Solo Cup." He had a powerful booming voice, a tongue-in-cheek sense of humor and range that carried love songs as well as drinking songs.

Among his 20 No. 1 Billboard hits were "How Do You Like Me

Now?!" "As Good As I Once Was," "My List" and "Beer for My Horses," a duet with Willie Nelson. His influences were other working class songwriters like Merle Haggard and he tallied more than 60 singles on the Hot Country chart over his career.

Throughout the cancer treatments, Keith continued to perform, most recently playing in Las Vegas in December. He also performed on the People's Choice Country Awards in 2023 as he sang his song "Don't Let the Old Man In."

"Cancer is a roller coaster," he told KWTW during an interview aired last month. "You just sit here and wait on it to go away. It might never go away."

Keith worked as a roughneck in the oil fields of Oklahoma as a young man, then played semi-pro football before launching his career as a singer.

"I write about life, and I sing about life, and I don't overanalyze things," Keith told The Associated Press in 2001, following the success of his song "I'm Just Talking About Tonight."

Keith learned good lessons in the booming oil fields, which toughened him up, but also showed him the value of money.

"The money to be made was unbelievable," Keith told the AP in 1996.

'Puppy Bowl' celebrates 20 years

By MARK KENNEDY
The Associated Press

The annual "Puppy Bowl" turns 20 this year, well over middle age in dog years. But does the sheer cuteness of it really ever get old?

"Who doesn't want to watch dogs play all day long?" asks Laurie Johnson, the director of Florida Little Dog Rescue in St. Cloud, Florida, who has been part of "Puppy Bowl" for a decade.

There are some changes this year to the canine football telecast: Four previous puppy players return to be inducted in the new Puppy Bowl Hall of Fame and the show, which has grown to include armadillos, hedgehogs and chickens, will focus on dogs.

"What we've done this year to flip the whole script is because it's sort of a celebration of the fact that it's the 20th year," says "Puppy Bowl" referee Dan Schachner. "We've decided to go all in on puppy, making it the 'most puppiest 'Puppy Bowl' ever."

The "Puppy Bowl" made its debut as counter-programming to the Super Bowl in 2005. Dogs score touchdowns on a gridiron carpet when they cross the goal line — any goal line — with a toy.

The show is really just an excuse to spend time watching adorable, clumsy pups in colorful sweaters play with chew toys, wag their tails furiously and lick the camera. A deeper reason is to encourage animal adoption.

"We always say the same message every year: Adopt, don't shop," says Schachner. "There are responsible breeders out there, but it kind of defies logic that somebody who's searching for a dog would look beyond their local shelter or rescue."

According to the ASPCA, approximately 390,000 shelter dogs are euthanized each year and 2 million shelter dogs are adopted. Schachner says the number of animals languishing in shelters is back up after falling during the pandemic. "It's worse than ever," he says.

Florida Little Dog Rescue, which like all puppy groups is vetted by Animal Planet, sent seven pup players and two Hall of Fame inductees this year. Johnson, who



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This image released by Animal Planet shows referee Dan Schachner with participants of the annual "Puppy Bowl" airing Sunday, Feb. 11 at 2 p.m. ET.

volunteers her time, says it's an honor that Animal Planet picks her pups year after year.

"It does bring attention to our rescue, which helps some of our other dogs get adopted. But, honestly, for us, the biggest excitement is that we're helping dogs all over the country get into homes, because rescue is not a competition, it's a cooperation," says Johnson.

Most of the puppies are usually adopted by airtime, since the show is filmed in the fall. But the point is to show that animals just like the ones on the show can be found at any shelter at any time.

Schachner also has some advice for anyone who falls for a particular pup on the broadcast: "That animal is probably likely part of a litter, right? So there's probably siblings out there that are still up for adoption or their parents — their mom, their dad — is in the shelter looking for a forever home."

Florida Little Dog Rescue was the first to send a Shar Pei to the "Puppy Bowl" — the pup, Wrinkles, was quickly adopted by a crew member at the taping — and Johnson says many viewers might not know that all kinds of breeds — Corgis, Westies, Doodles and Cavapoos, included — are available at shelters and rescue groups.

The inaugural "Puppy Bowl" was watched by nearly 6 million viewers. Last year, 13.2 million viewers tuned in, the largest reach for the event in five years. In comparison, The Emmy Awards telecast on Fox this year reached just 4.3 million viewers. This year's show will be simulcast across Animal Planet, Discovery, TBS, truTV, Max and Discovery.

The dogs are split into two teams — Team Fluff and Team Ruff — and each dog is given a nickname — like "Slick Rick" or "J-Paw" — and a specialty, like "Epic end zone dance."

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"I've had to step up my own guitar game in order to play it, and I've had to make sure that the other people in my section are able to do it, too," Rademacker said.

For many band members with families in the Twin Cities area, this performance will be the first time they see their Maverick in action. Many students will also get to connect with former band and choir teachers.

"I think that this is a great chance for us to allow the students to be in front of people that they know, and that I think is a really big opportunity for them," Thursby said.

The band itself, containing more than 150 members, has dedicated extra hours outside of regular practice times toward mastering the setlist.

"Seeing everything come together and all the work that everyone's put in has been super cool because you can really tell that everyone really cares about being successful," Burling said.

Despite the lengthy hours, the Mav Machine remains committed to showcasing their talent alongside support from colleagues.

"Being part of the band has been nothing short of awesome," Rademacker said. "It lets me and a bunch of other people do stuff that we wouldn't have been able to do otherwise."

The pressure of performing on a prestigious platform can be intimidating, but Burling stresses the importance of "always having fun with it."

"A lot of times in music, we always strive for perfection or you just have to keep getting better,

often to the point of frustration," Burling said. "I think as long as people are having fun with it, that's going to come across, and that often is something that people care about more than perfect technique."

On a smaller scale, the Mav Machine will perform this program for free to the public at 11 a.m. in Myers Field House Sunday. The convention itself is also free with a ticket at the Minneapolis Convention Center at 6:45 p.m. Thursday. Students can reach out to Thursby at michael.thursby@mnsu.edu if interested.

"They're (Mav Machine) at almost every sporting event on campus and really bleed purple and gold," Thursby said. It's an attribute to the work that they do that they were selected for this honor."