

Piecing the clues to Steve Burns journey

By MERCEDES KAUPHUSMAN
Variety Editor

Nickelodeon fans likely remember Steve Burns as the singing, smiling, dancing host of the hit show "Blue's Clues."

But behind the scenes, Burns was fighting against the blues.

In a conversation on campus Tuesday with Minnesota State students and the Mankato community, Burns opened up about his experience with mental illness.

"The whole time I was the host of 'Blue's Clues,' I was suffering with undiagnosed severe clinical depression," Burns said. "You can imagine that made my job kind of hard, right? It was literally my job to be the happiest man in North America, and I did not always feel that way."

"Blue's Clues" invited viewers into an animated world with Steve and his non-human friends where they solved puzzles with the help of the audience. For six years, Burns played the role of Steve in nearly 100 episodes.

"I (Burn's character) was super happy all the time. I was so happy; oh my god. I was happy, and so excited about absolutely everything," Burns said. "And I was bright eyed and so excited, and I talked to my soap and my furniture, and I had deep conversations with my condiments."



DYLAN LONG • The Reporter

The Student Events Team hosted Steve Burns from "Blue's Clues" in the Centennial Student Union Ballroom. Burns talked about his battle with depression while making the show.

However, while Burns portrayed this positive person on the show, his real self was living an opposite life.

"I felt extremely unqualified to be doing what I was doing. I felt extremely unworthy to be empow-

ering people. I found it difficult to show up every day happy. I found it difficult to provide a gazillion children with self esteem when a lot of days I didn't even have my own approval," Burns said.

While Burns became a recog-

nizable figure online, rumors circulated about the actor's alleged death. False accusations such as death by suicide and overdose filled the media, "all of these horrible things that I would never want

BURNS on page 2

A new approach for women to be nominated for awards

By EPHRATA BEZUAYENE
Staff Writer

This year, for the first time, three specialized awards will be given to a total of nine faculty, staff and students at the annual women of courage and vision reception. After considering the feedback received from previous years, three categories, namely: advocacy, sense of belonging and professional development support were put into place to personalize the awards.

The President's Commission on the Status of Women (PCSW), established in October 1995 by President Richard Rush, has since sponsored and cosponsored, along with Women's Studies and the Women's Center, several annual events, including receptions for the recognition of the extraordinary contributions of women at MNSU.

The Women of Courage and Vision reception plays an important role in acknowledging and recognizing women who have faced gender inequity and aims to support their work.

"I think both the President's Commission on Diversity and the President's Commission on the Status of Women are doing great work to support and advance social justice on our campus, and I think that events like the Women of Vision and Courage event make people aware of the work that folks are doing and recognize it in a unique and particular way," says Brooke Burke, chair of the PCSW.

The event typically starts in the morning, where the first half hour is dedicated to attendees socializing and enjoying a meal. Followed by a welcome from both the president and members of the commission. Afterwards, awards and recognitions are given out, along with the announcement of grant award recipients. Another component of the program is the invited guest speakers, who deliver inspirational messages that highlight their significant contributions to the larger Mankato community.

This year, there will be three awards, according to the commission's strategic plan. Each is connected to the goals the commission established

WOMEN on page 2

Coping with depression and its effects

By BIRUK MENGESHA
Staff Writer

Depression can come in many forms.

"Sometimes that's tied in with a loss of energy, being physically unable to get out of bed. Or taking a long time to do those tasks that are really simple, like brushing our hair or our teeth," said Nayeli Hernandez Moctezuma, a licensed social worker with Counseling Services of Southern Minnesota. "Now it becomes a struggle with someone who's experiencing depression."

Moctezuma and fellow social worker Stephanie Trejo participated in a mental health awareness event Wednesday in the Centennial Student Union.

Depression, they said, can cause a person to experience a full range of emotions. It can affect your day-to-day functioning.

"In college, there can be a lot of procrastination because you're only one person and there's like 50 million things that you have to do," Trejo said. "So you're like, well, there's 100 tasks that I need to complete today. And I'm just not gonna do any of them."

Hiding our emotions can be



NATE TILAHUN • The Reporter

Nayeli Hernandez Moctezuma and fellow social worker Stephanie Trejo participated in a mental health awareness event Wednesday in the Centennial Student Union.

draining, physically and mentally. And we need to find people who we can trust and have conversations about the experiences, to have that safe space to share.

"If you're noticing that they might be depressed," Trejo said. "Checking in with people and like if you're close with them, you're going to notice a change."

Coping skills help manage negative emotions. Long-term reliance on unhealthy coping mechanisms (such as substance abuse) is not healthy.

"If every time I have a bad day at school, I'm going to go and buy chocolate cake, financially that's not the best choice. And that can go for other things too. So you

know, people turning to substances, drugs and alcohol. But that isn't in reality, like benefitting us or helping us," Moctezuma said.

Student Gabi Juan-Christiansen attended the event and said she wanted to work on her mental health, "to manage it better."

Juan-Christiansen explains what she learned throughout the event, and her main takeaways.

"I learned a lot about how depression is not just a state of being," Juan-Christiansen said. "You can fix it if you go to therapy."

After the event, Juan-Christiansen mentioned her favorite part.

"Just being able to talk freely being surrounded by people that look like me, and it's always best to have the best where people just understand."

Mara Maxana, a mental health counseling first-year graduate student, also got the chance to attend the event. She shared why she attended.

"I was more motivated to come when I found out we were having a Latino speaker," Maxana said. "I'm also from that community and I don't see too much latina counseling."

COPING on page 3

SAGE creates community through entertaining educational events



ALEXIS DARKOW • The Reporter

SAGE members meet weekly to listen to updates from the treasurer or other members and make announcements about events and news on campus.

By AMALIA SHARAF
Staff Writer

The Registered Student Organization SAGE (Sexuality And Gender Empowerment) is open for students to join. SAGE started operations in the Fall of 2023 after the club stopped operating several years ago.

The president of the club Alex Glaser said this was their first year on campus, when they decided to start the RSO.

“Me and our advisor Zeke are both new here,” said Glaser. “We found that there really wasn’t actually any LGBTQ activist group on campus and we were a little surprised because MSU is for the most part pretty LGBTQ friendly. And so Zeke approached me and a few other people to see if we were interested in starting this up and I said absolutely.”

SAGE members are meeting weekly. Glaser said they listen to updates from the treasurer or other members and make announcements about events and news on

campus. Glaser said they are also using that time to get ready for events and activities that SAGE plans to host.

“Right now we’re trying to get a sit-in organized to protest some anti-trans bills that have been introduced in Minnesota,” said Glaser. “So we’re working on figuring that out and organizing for what we need to do.”

According to Glaser, the event is still a work in progress. Executive members of the team need to discuss the details and sign particular forms before hosting the protest. Additionally, Glaser said the SAGE would like to host educational events in the future.

“I think it would be very important to focus on educating about trans people because there has been a very big spike in transphobia in the past few years,” said Glaser. “And so with all the bills getting introduced, and all the bills getting passed in some other states, a lot of that happens because transphobic people just

don’t know enough about trans people and people fear what they don’t understand.”

SAGE also works on hosting entertaining events for students and other visitors.

“We have the drag show coming up,” said Glaser. “There is no confirmed date but it is happening. We just have to find a time that works for Drag Me With A Spoon and that’s who we work with to do the drag shows.”

Glaser said students can join SAGE if they are looking to do LGBTQ-focused activism, take part in events or learn about the community if they weren’t familiar with it.

“SAGE creates the community because it brings people together for a united goal which is fighting LGBTQ+ discrimination,” said Glaser. “And having a united goal really does bring people together. We should stand up for what we believe in and be loud about it because the oppressors hold their power in our silence.”

◀ WOMEN from page 1

for the strategic plan designed to guide their work from 2024 to 2029. The awards correspond to the three main goals of the commission.

One is connected to advocacy for those who have faced gender inequities. In order to be nominated for that award, the nominee would have had to be actively engaged in advocating for the rights and policies of individuals who have faced gender inequities on campus.

The second involves supporting the professional development of women who have faced gender inequities. This includes individuals who have worked to secure or support women to engage in professional development to support their professional growth and goals on campus.

The commission and the president’s office also fund attendance

at the HERS Leadership Institute as a unique opportunity for professional development. The PCSW accepts applications and passes on nominations to the president, who then selects a woman-identifying individual interested in leadership in a higher education setting to attend the leadership institute.

The final award is for creating a welcoming and inclusive environment. To be nominated for this award, nominees would need to be actively engaging in work that is designed to ensure that people feel welcome and connected to one another in the campus community.

In addition to the three awards, an extra award is given out to recognize a woman who is a staff member, student or faculty member nominated for exceptional work that they do for the campus.

“Having specialized, specific awards and recognition to really

acknowledge and make folks more aware of the work that amazing women and women-identifying individuals are doing on our campus is very important,” says Burke.

As for recognitions, each year, around 200 women are recognized across campus among students, staff and faculty. All nominees are recognized during the reception. To nominate for recognition, a form can be accessed through the President’s Commission on the Status of Women web page found on the MNSU website. Nominations are due on March 1.

The commission is open to providing students with the opportunity to get involved, and students can do so by reaching out through their email address at PCSW@mnsu.edu. “We are always looking for more individuals to support the work of the Commission,” says Brooke.

Students sit-in for Palestine at Student Government meeting



ALEXIS DARKOW • The Reporter

Students sat amongst senators and held signs and the Palestine flag to advocate for a resolution protecting pro-palestinian voices and opinions.

By EMMA JOHNSON
Editor In Chief

The gallery of the Student Government meeting room was packed with students Wednesday night. Around 40 students stood amongst the senators holding signs and the Palestinian flag to advocate for a resolution to protect pro-Palestinian voices that was initially presented a week ago.

Sophomore and member of the Kessel Peace Institute’s Student Advisory Council Cole Koats presented the resolution last week. Koats said “over 500 students signed a petition” and were “eagerly awaiting” the decision of the Student Government.

A part of the three-page resolution reads, “The student government exercises its representative authority to issue a statement affirming its dedication to upholding free speech and protecting pro-Palestinian demonstration, activism, and academic research concerning Palestine with respect to students and faculty.”

Koats also said at other universities, such as the University of Minnesota, students have faced “academic discipline and all sorts of punishments for holding an opinion” on the war in Palestine. He said he didn’t want students to face “similar repercussions.”

At-Large Senator Abbey Andree motioned the resolution from last week while At-Large Senator Brooke Van Gelderen seconded the motion. The senators then went into executive session for an hour.

President Sierra Roiger said the reason behind the executive session was to allow senators to read the updated resolution in its entirety and to make sure there were no distractions to focus on the content.

“It was to get on the same page and then to really hone in on ‘OK, what is our role here?’ Who are we here to represent and how do we go about safely representing them, while also promoting and continuing to acknowledge the fact that this is a university where we are supposed to have a role we should be all be able to safely express our opinions or thoughts and respectfully talk to each other and respectfully disagree without being harmful or threatening towards one another?” Roiger said.

Roiger said the resolution was tabled to vote on next week “to allow senators to ask questions of their representatives.”

“It’s typical procedure to have a two-week period with a resolution and we want to make sure to still allow everyone the op-

PORTS on page 3▶

Traditional Yoga Meditation

Four Weekly Classes including Yoga Postures, Meditation, and Mantra

Beginning Monday, February 26th at 7 p.m.

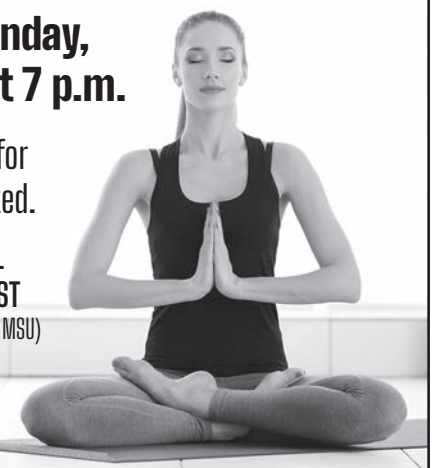
No charge. Donations for service projects accepted.

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

150 Stadium Court (down hill from MSU)

507-779-9736

Sponsored by Ananda Marga “Self-Realization and Service to Humanity”



►Burns: ‘Look for the signs from the universe. The little things’



DYLAN LONG • The Reporter

associated with the show that I worked so hard on and loved so much, and it was just terrible,” Burns said.

As the speculation about Burns continued, he attempted to brush off the comments through humor and public statements. Years passed, yet rumors of his death persisted.

“It started to feel like a cultural preference, like what, would everyone prefer this to be real?” Burns said. “And I can tell you that it went on long enough that when coupled with unaddressed, undiagnosed severe clinical depression, it started to make me wonder if I was supposed to be.”

Although Burns fought an internal conflict behind closed doors, he learned how to speak up about his hardships through his ‘Blue’s Clues’ character’s teachings.

“Weird, stripy Steve stepped back up to the plate and he reminded me of something very important,” Burns said. “He reminded me that it is so totally OK to stand in front of someone and stare at them, and say with all the vulnerability you can find, ‘Will you help me?’”

From analyzing his character’s curious nature, Burns found the clues toward healing his mental state regardless of the online commotion.

“Curiosity plus anticipation and excitement and a sense of awe — that was what I used to play Steve,” Burns said. “Practicing how to live your life in a practice of wonder is an awesome thing.”

Paired with wonder, Burns also recognized the importance of looking for signs from the environment, or to, “look for the clues.”

“Look for the signs from the universe, the little things. The little things in your life that seem small, but actually when you take them in aggregate, are part of the path to greater understanding, much like clues on the show,” Burns said.

Burns also stressed the value in mindfulness and listening to one another.

“When you do that (listen), that’s when you start to notice the good clues,” Burns said. “The awesome clues. The stuff that moves you. The stuff that lights you up. The stuff that inspires you. The stuff that resonates with you. The stuff that explains the

world to you. When it makes you think, that’s the good stuff.

Rather than thinking of listening as a natural action, Burns considers listening to be a gift.

“Mr. Rogers, a friend, said, ‘Listening is one of the greatest gifts a human being can give another person.’ I love that because we tend to think of listening as receiving information. It’s not, it’s giving the gift of your attention,” Burns said.

While Burns was sharing his own struggles, he also touched on the idea of struggles in life as, “mandatory.”

“From a certain perspective, to struggle is part of a beautiful life as a human being on planet Earth. You know, it’s about how we meet that struggle that kind of becomes what life is about,” Burns said.

MSU freshman Caitlynn McCarthy grew up watching Burns’ character like many other students in the crowd, and saw a different side to Burns’ authentic self.

“I liked how personal it was just because it didn’t make you feel like you were just a watcher, it made you feel like you were actually part of the show,” McCarthy said.

“I just liked how he was very vulnerable, and he was like, ‘I don’t feel like I’m qualified to do this, but let me tell you what helped me personally.’ I think that really made a better connection with the audience.”

Additionally, MSU freshman Bethany Cacka shed light on what resonated with her from Burns’ talk.

“It was really interesting to see such a childhood idol, and then to have him talk about more stuff that nobody would think he’d talk about. He’s a real person, and just seeing that was really interesting,” Cacka said.

With many Blue’s Clues supporters in the audience, Burns expressed his gratitude for having the ability to reconnect with the same viewers at the university decades after his departure from the series.

“That’s why I’m here,” Burns said. “That’s why I’m doing this. I love doing this. I love the fact that we are continuing the conversation all these years later. That feels special to me, anyway. It feels pretty unique and rare and cool to me.”

How the Kremlin weaponized Russia

By DASHA LITVINOVA
The Associated Press

Earlier this month, when Tucker Carlson asked Vladimir Putin about his reasons for invading Ukraine two years ago, Putin gave him a lecture on Russian history. The 71-year-old Russian leader spent more than 20 minutes showering a baffled Carlson with dates and names going back to the ninth century.

Putin even gave him a folder containing what he said were copies of historical documents proving his points: that Ukrainians and Russians historically have always been one people, and that Ukraine’s sovereignty is merely an illegitimate holdover from the Soviet era. Carlson said he was “shocked” at being on the receiving end of the history lesson. But for those familiar with Putin’s government, it was not surprising in the least: In Russia, history has long been a propaganda tool used to advance the Kremlin’s political goals. And the last two years have been entirely in keeping with that ethos.

In an effort to rally people around their world view, Russian authorities have tried to magnify the country’s past victories while glossing over the more sordid chapters of its history.

They have rewritten text-



Gavriil Grigorov, Sputnik, Kremlin, Pool Photo via AP, File

Russian President Vladimir Putin, right, speaks during an interview with former Fox News host Tucker Carlson at the Kremlin in Moscow, Russia, Tuesday, Feb. 6, 2024.

books, funded sprawling historical exhibitions and suppressed — sometimes harshly — voices that contradict their narrative. Russian officials have also regularly bristled at Ukraine and other European countries for pulling down Soviet monuments, widely seen there as an unwanted legacy of past oppression, and even put scores of European officials on a wanted list over that in a move that made headlines this month.

“In the hands of the authorities,” says Oleg Orlov, co-founder of Memorial, Russia’s oldest and

most prominent rights group, “history has become a hammer — or even an axe.”

THE GLORIFYING

From the early years of his quarter-century rule, Putin has repeatedly contended that studying their history should make Russians proud. Even controversial figures, such as Soviet dictator Josef Stalin, contributed to Russia’s greatness, Putin argues. (Russian media have counted over 100 monuments to Stalin in Russia, most of which were installed during Putin’s rule.)

◀COPING from page 1

There are healthy and unhealthy coping skills. Maxana mentioned the amount she learned from the types of mechanisms that were explained at the event.

“Someone might think that it’s helping them but it’s not helping them long term and that’s what I end up questioning,” she said.

There are many skills mentioned prevalent to people who suffer from depression. Maxana

shares her main takeaways.

“The five senses, I know they don’t really talk about it too much, but there’s something about grounding. Find other ways to keep myself sharing.”

◀GOVERNMENT from page 2

portunity to go ask the questions of their representatives,” Roiger

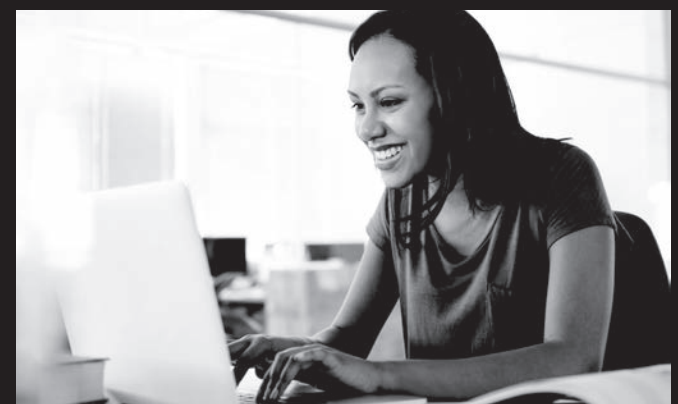
said. “We want to make sure that (senators) have that time and that they’re truly putting their full rep-

resentative weight into it.”

MINNESOTA STATE UNIVERSITY, MANKATO
LIBRARY SERVICES

ASK A LIBRARIAN

service is available online 24/7 to assist you with your research questions big and small!



libguides.mnsu.edu/ask/



Minnesota State University, Mankato
A member of Minnesota State

A member of the Minnesota State system and an Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity University. This document is available in alternative format to individuals with disabilities by calling Library Services at 507-389-3097 (V), 800-627-3529 or 711 (MRS/TTY). LIBR321CR 08-22

Editorial

Editorials represent the opinions of The Reporter editorial board. The opinions expressed here are not necessarily those of the college, university or student body.

Emma Johnson
Editor In Chief

Luke Jackson
News Editor

Mercedes Kauphusman
Variety Editor

Mohamed Warsame
Sports Editor

Don't burn out during midterms

It's the time of the semester when students are filled with dread. It is one of the worst weeks, second only to finals week. We're talking, of course, about Midterms.

Midterms can be difficult, especially if you have several assignments piling up, you're studying for lengthy tests or putting the final touches on projects. With over half the semester finished, students can understandably start to feel a bit overwhelmed. However, we need to prioritize ourselves now so we don't burn out later.

Academic burnout affects nearly every student on campus. According to the National College Health Assessment, 80% of college students reported feeling overwhelmed. Another 40% reported it was difficult to function in their daily lives. With all the pressure that society and students face, it can become too much. It doesn't stop at the collegiate level, either. A March 2021 Indeed survey found nearly 60% of Gen Z and Millennial workers experienced burnout at their post-graduate jobs.

Preventing burnout starts with being able to recognize the warning signs. These include feeling extremely tired, losing interest in doing schoolwork, increased frustrations and experiencing physical symptoms of burnout such as headaches or stomach aches. During these times, it's a good idea to evaluate stressors and, if necessary, change routines to better fit our needs.

With all the responsibilities put on students during midterms, it's easy to put self-care on the back burner. If students neglect their needs, it can increase the risk of anxiety or depression. In other words, when you feel the need to accomplish everything right away, that might be when you actually need to step back for a breather. A simple walk around the block, grabbing dinner with friends or going to bed an hour earlier can work wonders and keep your mood boosted.

Before burnout triumphs, take the opportunity to improve the skills that apply to not only your workload but will serve you after graduation. Working on time management, setting realistic and achievable goals and asking for help are a few ways to deal with stressors before burnout overwhelms you. Planning can help us organize our schedules and prioritize which assignments need our attention first and can sort out the stress in our brains.

It's important to recognize the signs of burnout sooner rather than later to prevent ourselves from going downhill later in life. Tackling midterms head-on can help ensure that grades and well-being are the best they possibly can be. It promotes success for the second half of the semester and just might give you the boost you need to achieve your goals. And if all else fails and there's little to no motivation, remember this: spring break is a week away.

Perspectives

Ceiling soap, an LGBTQ survival essential



A soap dispenser in a bathroom near the Jim Chalgren LGBT Center. Note that it is on the wall, not the ceiling.

Courtesy Jeremy Redlien

This is a story I heard in passing. Gay bars, the story goes, used to nail bars of soap to the ceiling in the bathroom. The reason was because police officers would steal the soap in order to force a health code violation and get the bar shut down. To get around this, bar owners started nailing bars of soap to the ceiling. When the health inspector showed up, the bar owners would merely point to the ceiling.

A lot has changed since the days queer bar owners had to get creative to stay open. We still have a lot of prejudice and discrimination to deal with as LGBTQ people, but unless I missed them, I've never seen a bar of soap nailed to the ceiling in the bathrooms of the Coffee Hag.

There is a long history of LGBTQ people facing vi-

WHY NOT TODAY?

By JEREMY REDLIEN

olence and discrimination because of who we are and who we love. But we have also managed to develop many creative ways to survive in hostile social environments.

Queer bars, an early means of creating community and organizing, and their use of ceiling soap are just a few examples. Some of the earliest well documented examples of gay bars were the London molly houses, which date back to the 18th century.

Code was another method used to survive and create community. The phrase "Are

you a friend of dorothy?" became so ubiquitous that, according to urban legend, the Navy started a formal investigation to find an actual Dorothy leading the giant underground queer networking ring. See also: Boston married.

In fact, queer men in the early 19th century even developed and used Polari, an entire language to better communicate and help expose undercover police officers.

Newsletters and magazines were an early means of organizing and disseminating educational information. Now historians can use them to better understand our queer past.

In Mankato, the tools we developed to help survive started with private pizza parties, which became the

COLUMN on page 6

Pulse

"How do you prevent burnout?"

Compiled by Alexis Darkow



JOELLE LENTZ,
FRESHMAN

"Watching TV with my roommate."



KYLE CONNEY,
FRESHMAN

"Taking time to relax with friends."



LUIS CATARINO,
SOPHOMORE

"Voluntering with community."



MACKENZIE KARGER,
FRESHMAN

"Watching motivational videos."



MALLORY SYLVESTER,
FRESHMAN

"I take breaks to do crafts to do crafts and activities that will help me destress."



MATT CALZONE,
FRESHMAN

"I sit down and stare at the wall for a little bit before I get back to work."

School dress codes promote traces of racism

By CHEYANNE MUMPHREY
The Associated Press

For as long as schools have policed hairstyles as part of their dress codes, some students have seen the rules as attempts to deny their cultural and religious identities.

Nowhere have school rules on hair been a bigger flashpoint than in Texas, where a trial this week is set to determine whether high school administrators can continue punishing a Black teenager for refusing to cut his hair. The 18-year-old student, Darryl George, who wears his hair in locs tied atop his head, has been kept out of his classroom since the start of the school year.

To school administrators, strict dress codes can be tools for promoting uniformity and discipline. But advocates say the codes disproportionately affect students of color and the punishments disrupt learning.

Under pressure, many schools in Texas have removed boys-only hair length rules, while hundreds of districts maintain hair restrictions written into their dress codes.

Schools that enforce strict dress codes have higher rates of punishment that take students away from learning, such as suspensions and expulsions, according to an October 2022 report from the Government Accountability Office. The report called on the U.S. Department of Education to provide



LEKAN OYEKANMI • The Associated Press

Darryl George, an 18-year-old high school junior, stands outside a courthouse in Anahuac, Texas, on Wednesday, Jan. 24, 2024.

resources to help schools design more equitable dress codes.

In stringent public school dress codes, some see vestiges of racist efforts to control the appearance of Black people dating back to slavery.

In the 1700s, South Carolina's "Negro Act" made it illegal for Black people to dress "above their

condition." Long after slavery was abolished, Black Americans were still stigmatized for not adopting grooming habits that fit white, European beauty standards and norms.

Braids and other hairstyles carry cultural significance for many African Americans. They served

as methods of communication across African societies, including to identify tribal affiliation or marriage status, and as clues to safety and freedom for those who were captured and enslaved, historians say.

Black Americans have a variety of hair textures that can require

chemicals, time and equipment to style or make straight. Some common natural styles include afros, braids, cornrows or locs. But many have felt pressure to straighten curly hair or keep it cut short.

Whether in professional workplaces, social clubs or schools, research has shown that such beauty norms and grooming standards have inflicted physical, psychological and economic harm on Black people and other people of color.

Dress codes are built upon regulations that stretch back decades, which explains why they often are complex, said Courtney Mauldin, a professor at Syracuse University's School of Education.

"Schools were not designed with Black children in mind," she said. "Our forefathers of education were all white men who set the tone for what schools would be ... and what the purposes are of schooling — one of those being conformity. That's one of the key ideas that was actually introduced in the 1800s."

In some cases, students and advocates have pushed back successfully.

In 2017, then-15-year-old Black twins, Deanna and Mya Cook, were punished for wearing box braids with extensions at their charter school in Malden, Massachusetts.

The sisters were told their hair did not comply with the school dress code.

Private US spacecraft enters orbit around moon

By MARCIA DUNN
The Associated Press

A private U.S. lunar lander reached the moon and eased into a low orbit Wednesday, a day before it will attempt an even greater feat — landing on the gray, dusty surface.

A smooth touchdown would put the U.S. back in business on the moon for the first time since NASA astronauts closed out the Apollo program in 1972. The company, if successful, also would become the first private outfit to ace a moon landing.

Launched last week, Intuitive Machines' lander fired its engine on the back side of the moon while out of contact with Earth. Flight controllers at the company's Houston headquarters had to wait until the spacecraft emerged to learn whether the lander was in orbit or hurtling aimlessly away.

Intuitive Machines confirmed its lander, nicknamed Odysseus, was circling the moon with experiments from NASA and other clients. The lander is part of a NASA program to kickstart the lunar economy; the space agency is paying \$118 million to get its experiments on the moon on this mission.

On Thursday, controllers will lower the orbit from just under 60 miles (92 kilometers) to 6 miles (10 kilometers) — a crucial maneuver occurring again on the moon's far side — before aiming for a touchdown near the moon's south pole.



Intuitive Machines via AP, File

This photo provided by Intuitive Machines shows the company's IM-1 Nova-C lunar lander in Houston in October 2023.

It's a dicey place to land with all the craters and cliffs, but deemed prime real estate for astronauts since the permanently shadowed craters are believed to hold frozen water.

The moon is littered with wreckage from failed landings. Some missions never even got that far. Another U.S. company — Astrobotic Technology — tried to send

a lander to the moon last month, but it didn't get there because of a fuel leak. The crippled lander came crashing back through the atmosphere, burning up over the Pacific.

A rundown on the moon's winners and losers:

FIRST VICTORIES

The Soviet Union's Luna 9 successfully touches down on the moon in 1966, after its predecessors

crash or miss the moon altogether. The U.S. follows four months later with Surveyor 1. Both countries achieve more robotic landings, as the race heats up to land men.

APOLLO RULES

NASA clinches the space race with the Soviets in 1969 with a moon landing by Apollo 11's Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin. Twelve astronauts explore the

surface over six missions, before the program ends with Apollo 17 in 1972. Still the only country to send humans to the moon, the U.S. hopes to return crews to the surface by the end of 2026 or so, a year after a lunar fly-around by astronauts.

CHINA EMERGES

China, in 2013, becomes the third country to successfully land on the moon, delivering a rover named Yutu, Chinese for jade rabbit. China follows with the Yutu-2 rover in 2019, this time touching down on the moon's unexplored far side — an impressive first. A sample return mission on the moon's near side in 2020 yields nearly 4 pounds (1.7 kilograms) of lunar rocks and dirt. Another sample return mission should be launching soon, but this time to the far side. Seen as NASA's biggest moon rival, China aims to put its astronauts on the moon by 2030.

RUSSIA STUMBLES

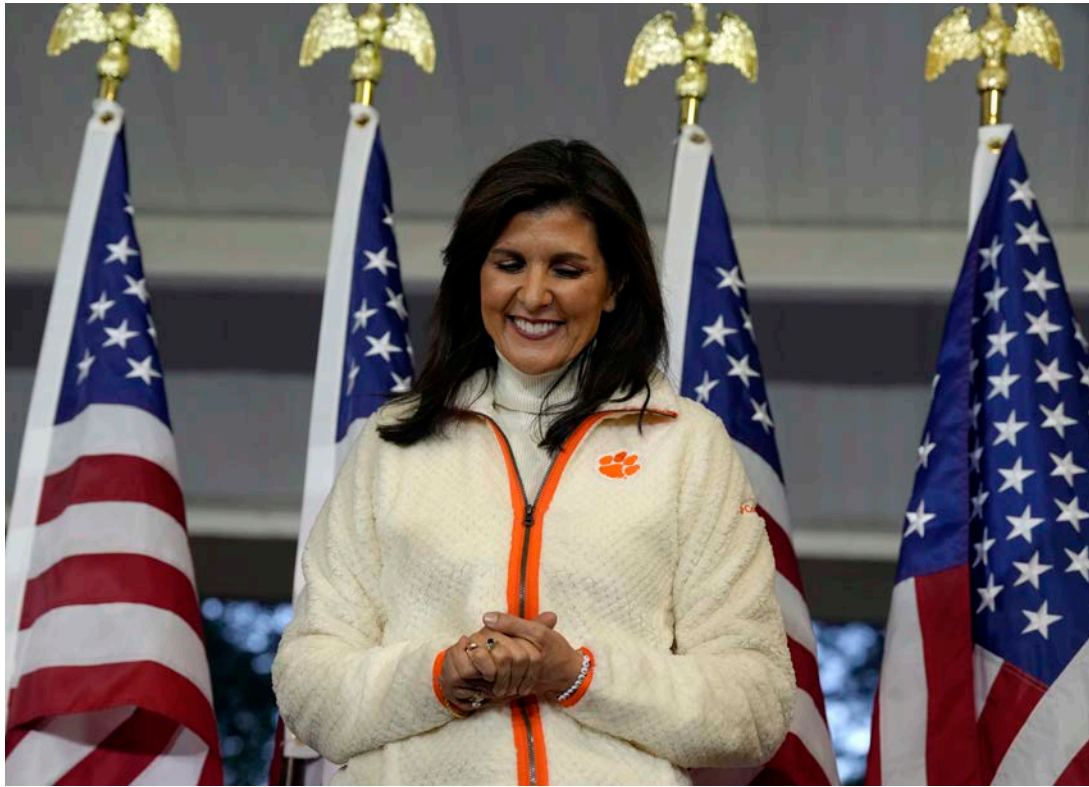
In 2023, Russia tries for its first moon landing in nearly a half-century, but the Luna 25 spacecraft smashes into the moon.

The country's previous lander — 1976's Luna 24 — not only landed, but returned moon rocks to Earth.

INDIA TRIUMPHS ON TAKE 2

After its first lander slams into the moon in 2019, India regroups and launches Chandrayaan-3 (Hindi for moon craft) in 2023. The craft successfully touches down, making India the fourth country to score a lunar landing.

Nikki Haley vows to keep fighting Donald Trump in GOP contest



MEG KINNARD • The Associated Press

Republican presidential candidate former UN Ambassador Nikki Haley smiles as she's introduced at a campaign rally on Tuesday, Feb. 20, 2024, in Clemson, S.C.

By STEVE PEOPLES and
MEG KINNARD
The Associated Press

There are no wins on the horizon for Nikki Haley.

Those close to the former United Nations ambassador, the last major Republican candidate standing in Donald Trump's path to the GOP's 2024 presidential nomination, are privately bracing for a blowout loss in her home state's primary election in South Carolina on Saturday. And they cannot name a state where she is likely to beat Trump in the coming weeks. But in an emotional address on Tuesday, Haley declared, "I refuse to quit."

And in an interview, she vowed to stay in the fight against Trump at least until after Super Tuesday's slate of more than a dozen contests on March 5 — even if she suffers a big loss in her home state Saturday.

"Ten days after South Carolina, another 20 states vote. I mean, this isn't Russia. We don't want someone to go in and just get 99% of the vote," Haley told The Associated Press. "What is the rush? Why is everybody so panicked about me having to get out of this race?"

In fact, some Republicans are encouraging Haley to stay in the campaign even if she continues to lose — potentially all the way to the Republican National Convention in July in the event the 77-year-old former president, perhaps the most volatile major party front-runner in U.S. history, becomes a convicted felon or stumbles into another major scandal.

As Trump's "Make America Great Again" movement presses for her exit, a defiant Haley on Tuesday repeatedly likened Trump to Democratic President Joe Biden — and both as too old, too divisive and too unpopular to be the only options for voters this fall.

She also pushed back when asked if there is any primary state

where she can defeat Trump.

"Instead of asking me what states I'm gonna win, why don't we ask how he's gonna win a general election after spending a full year in a courtroom?"

Haley's hurdles

History would suggest Haley has no chance of stopping Trump.

Never before has a Republican lost even the first two primary contests, as Haley has by an average of 21 points, and gone on to win the party's presidential nomination. Polls suggest she is a major underdog in her home state on Saturday and in the 16 Super Tuesday contests to follow. And since he announced his first presidential bid in 2015, every effort by a Republican to blunt Trump's rise has failed. Yet she is leaning into the fight.

Lest anyone question her commitment, Haley's campaign is spending more than \$500,000 on a new television advertising campaign set to begin running Wednesday in Michigan ahead of the state's Feb. 27 primary, according to spokesperson Olivia Perez-Cubas. At the same time, the AP has obtained Haley's post-South Carolina travel schedule that features 11 separate stops in seven days across Michigan, Minnesota, Colorado, Utah, Virginia, Washington, D.C., North Carolina and Massachusetts.

The schedule also includes at least 10 high-dollar private fundraising events.

Indeed, Haley's expansive base of big- and small-dollar donors is donating at an extraordinary pace despite her underwhelming performance at the polls. That's a reflection of persistent Republican fears about Trump's ability to win over independents and moderate voters in the general election and serious concerns about his turbulent leadership should he return to the White House.

"I'm going to support her up to the convention," said Republican donor Eric Levine, who co-hosted

a New York fundraiser for Haley earlier this month. "We're not prepared to fold our tents and pray at the altar of Donald Trump."

"There's value in her sticking in and gathering delegates, because if and when he stumbles," Levine continued, "who knows what happens."

Levine is far from alone. Haley's campaign raised \$5 million in a fundraising swing after her second-place finish in New Hampshire that included stops in Texas, Florida, New York, and California, Perez-Cubas said. Her campaign raised \$11.5 million in January alone — her best fundraising month ever. Her allied super PAC brought in another \$12 million over the same period.

In fact, Haley's team actually outraised Trump's last month, according to federal filings released late Tuesday.

Trump's campaign raised \$8.8 million in January, with his primary super PAC taking in another \$7.3 million. A separate pro-Trump political action committee brought in another \$5 million, but spent a big chunk on the former president's legal fees.

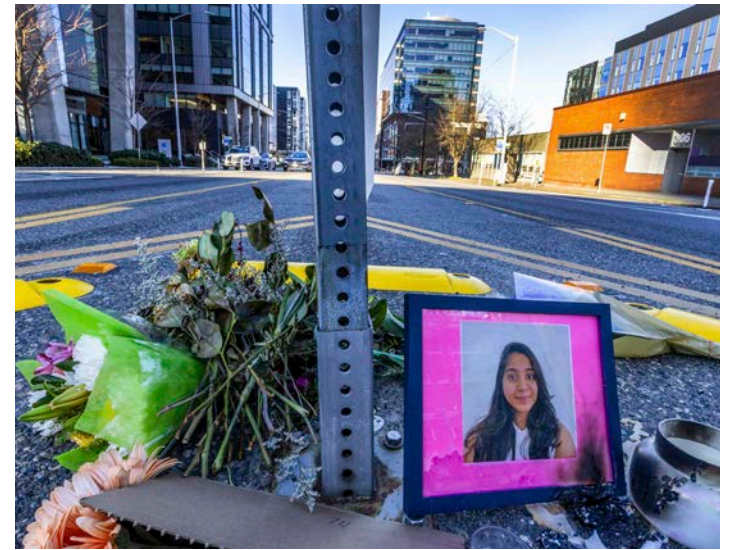
Even with Haley's newfound financial advantage, Rep. Ralph Norman, R-S.C., the lone member of Congress who has endorsed Haley, acknowledged it may be difficult for her to win South Carolina, a state where she lives and served two terms as governor.

"Obviously, you want to win them all, but for those who say it's going to embarrass her, or end her political career, I disagree. She's willing to take that risk," Norman said in an interview. "I think it's a courageous thing she's doing."

Trump not happy

Trump, in recent days, has shown flashes of fury in response to Haley's refusal to cede the nomination. He called her "stupid" and "birdbrain" in a social media post over the weekend as part of a sustained campaign of personal insults.

Seattle police officers who killed student won't face charges



KEN LAMBERT • The Associated Press

Prosecutors in Washington state said Wednesday, Feb. 21, 2024, they will not file felony charges against the Seattle police officer who struck and killed the graduate student from India while responding to an overdose call.

By GENE JOHNSON
The Associated Press

Prosecutors in Washington state said Wednesday they will not file felony charges against a Seattle police officer who struck and killed a graduate student from India while responding to an overdose call — a case that attracted widespread attention after another officer was recorded making callous remarks about it.

Officer Kevin Dave was driving 74 mph (119 kph) on a street with a 25 mph (40 kph) speed limit in a police SUV before he hit 23-year-old Jaahnavi Kandula in a crosswalk on Jan. 23, 2023.

In a memo to the Seattle Police Department on Wednesday, the

King County prosecutor's office noted that Dave had on his emergency lights, that other pedestrians reported hearing his siren, and that Kandula appeared to try to run across the intersection after seeing his vehicle approaching.

She might also have been wearing wireless earbuds that could have diminished her hearing, they noted.

For those reasons, a felony charge of vehicular homicide was not warranted: "There is insufficient evidence to prove beyond a reasonable doubt that Ofc. Dave was consciously disregarding safety," the memo said.

It remains possible that city prosecutors could file lesser charges, such as negligent driving,

←COLUMN from page 4

Mankato Area Gay Consciousness Group. It was the Gay Consciousness Group that led to the founding of what is now known as the Jim Chalgren LGBT Center, the second-oldest campus center of its kind.

In Minnesota, the earliest organization to fight for LGBTQ rights to be formed was FREE or Fight Repression of Erotic Expression. FREE formed in May 1969 on the University of Minnesota cam-

pus.

In more modern times, we use the internet and other tools to form ever more complex social groups and communities. Sure, there are a few downsides, such as making ourselves more vulnerable to harassment and such. But overall I think that the internet and social media have been a net good for us.

I look forward to whatever cool new tools we create for ourselves in the future.

YOUR IT SOURCE FOR COMPUTER SALES, REPAIR & SERVICE

New & Refurbished Computers
Managed Services • Virus & Malware Removal
Tune-Ups for Slow Computers • Networking
Websites • Email • Virtual IT Office
Business IT • Data Recovery • Digital Signage



VETERAN OWNED

Geeks2u
507-345-GEEK

We come to you

507-345-4335 • www.Geeks2u.us
620 N. VICTORY DRIVE • MANKATO • GALLERIA EAST

SPORTS

Joey Batt steals NSIC conference title

'Everybody wants to be Joey Batt'

By LUKE JACKSON
News Editor

As a kid Joey Batt hated basketball. She wanted to quit at a very young age.

Now in her senior year, the New Ulm native has cemented herself into Maverick history as one of the best to touch the court.

"I started in second grade and almost quit," Batt said. "I thought it was the most boring thing ever."

When her dad made her try out for an Amateur Athletic Union (AAU) team in seventh grade she was skeptical but did it anyway. That is when she ultimately found her love for the sport.

"I used to be really softball focused. Once I made the AAU team my focus changed and that's when my passion and drive took off," Batt said. "The coaches I had throughout high school helped a lot and made it a really fun environment for me."

Batt is now the second-highest scorer in Maverick program history.

She has been the team's captain for three straight years. She has been awarded All NSIC-First team



DYLAN LONG • The Reporter

Minnesota State guard Joey Batt (1) scored a career-high 33 points in Saturday's loss to Northern State University.

twice, D2CCA All-Central Region Second Team, NSIC South Division Defensive Player of the Year, NSIC All-Freshman Team and NSIC All-Academic Team of Excellence three times.

She is the "heartbeat of the team" according to head coach Emilee Thiesse.

"She is an extension of me out there on the court," Thiesse said. "She leads by example. She is vocal

and she holds people accountable. She has embodied our entire identity of what our program is. She has a spark that lights a fire to the team. She impacts pretty much every single play on offense and defense."

In her 125 games she has scored 1,750 points, assisted on 366 baskets and stolen the ball 339 times. In Saturday's game versus Northern State she scored her single game career-high 33 points.

Batt earned these stats through their ruthless full-court press defense. She uses her speed to trap players as the opposing team brings the ball up the court. She capitalizes on their mistakes converting defense to offense.

Shooting 80.5% from the free throw line and 43.5% from the field adds to her success on the Mavs.

She is not only a leader to the team but she is a leader to the community according to Thiesse.

"Everybody wants to be Joey Batt," said Thiesse. "All the little girls want to be her. My kids even worship her. It's just the type of person she is. She is approachable, she is personable and she loves the community. I could go on for days about her," Thiesse said.

Two home games remain before the NSIC Conference Playoffs begin. She says her biggest achievement as a Maverick was being a part of their NCAA playoff team last year; making it back to the dance this year is her goal.

Through all of her success she attributes it to her teammates and

BATT on page 8 ▶

Mavericks to make their last home stand in the regular season

By AHMED HASSAN
Staff Writer

After a series split against Michigan Tech, the Minnesota State men's hockey team is back at home to face the Lake Superior State Lakers this weekend.

The Mavericks are looking for a crucial win as the MacNaughton Cup is up for grabs next weekend.

The Mavs are trying to win their seventh consecutive title (Mavericks hold record with six).

After their series split, the Mavericks have a 15-11-4 overall record, and a 11-7-2 conference record. This places them second in the CCHA with 35 points, two behind conference leaders Bemidji State.

The Lakers have a 13-17-1 overall record, and a 9-11-1 conference record, which places them sixth in the CCHA with 28 points.

The last time these two teams faced off, the Mavs swept the Lakers in two close games.

First by winning 2-0 in the overtime shootout, and beating them 4-3 the next day.

The Mavs have been on a good run of form lately, winning seven of their last 12 games.

They are peaking at the right time looking to make a push for the number one spot in the CCHA.

The Lakers haven't been in the



DYLAN LONG • The Reporter

The Minnesota State men's hockey team will host Lake Superior State Friday and Saturday in what will be their final home series of the season.

best form.

They have managed only four wins in their last 12 games, but managed to end their three-game losing streak by splitting their series against Augustanna last weekend.

Hobey Baker Nominee Sam Morton will be the forward to watch for the Mavs as he still leads the CCHA in goals (20), shots (127) and total faceoff wins (635).

Morton was named CCHA for-

ward of the month in January and slipped to ninth in Division I with 20 goals.

Morton has accumulated 30 points thus far, only trailing behind Lake Superior State's Jared Wescott

(31) in the CCHA.

Five Maverick players have accumulated 20 plus points so far this season- Morton (30), Lucas Sowder (23), Evan Murr (22), Kaden Bohlsen (21) and Adam Eisele (20).

"I think our depth scoring has grown a little, we're getting some balance." Stated head coach Luke Strand during a press conference on the Mavericks YouTube channel.

Goaltender Alex Tracy continues an impressive second year with the Mavs, averaging 2.34 goals against (second) and a 0.912 save percentage (fifth).

Tracy made 48 saves against 52 shots in his last outing against Michigan Tech.

The Lakers haven't been impressive on the road season. They have a losing 5-10 record so far, averaging 3.00 goals and 29.2 shots per game.

The Lakers will look to senior Wescott and sophomore Connor Milburn as both players have combined for 58 points so far this season.

Wescott has had a great year, leading the CCHA with 31 points and leading the Lakers in goals (16) and assists (15).

Milburn has 12 goals and dished out 15 assists for 27 points

HOME STAND on page 8 ▶

Women's basketball look to bounce back against Golden Eagles



DYLAN LONG • The Reporter

The Minnesota State women's basketball team will try to make things uncomfortable for Minnesota Crookston by making them take shots they are not used to.

By MOHAMED WARSAME
Sports Editor

The Minnesota State women's basketball team is back in action to close out their regular season with home games against the University of Minnesota Crookston Friday and Bemidji State University Saturday.

The Mavericks are coming off of their first loss since Nov. 21. Their 92-87 defeat to Northern State University also snapped their 19-game winning streak.

The game against Northern State was a tightly contested affair to begin with, before a monster run by the Wolves saw them seize control of the game.

A few minutes into the second quarter, the Wolves went on a 16-4 run.

During that run, they went five for five from the field and went three for three from beyond the arc. Northern State's Decontee Smith came up huge for the Wolves during this stretch as she scored eight of those points.

The Wolves ended the game shooting 49% from the field. Something that the Mavs' pride themselves on is their defense and creating turnovers for the opposition.

Despite getting 17 steals and forcing Northern State to commit 24 turnovers, MSU's Natalie

Bremer said she thinks the Mavs allowing the Wolves to play comfortably helped lead to the loss.

"During the game we needed to convert a lot better on offense. Making the easy finishes could have gave us a cushion early on.

Along with that, defensively, getting and creating more havoc with steals and turnovers.

They were playing very comfortable, and that allowed them to be able to get whatever they wanted," Bremer said.

Reminding themselves of what has worked on defense for them throughout most of the season has been a point of emphasis during practice since the defeat.

"The team has had a good response to the loss at Northern.

We acknowledge that it wasn't our type of basketball that was shown in that game, and are ready to bounce back this weekend.

We reminded ourselves of what works so well in our defense, and went back to that during practice this week.

Our practices are very driven, intense and focused. But that is also how it has been the entire season," Bremer said.

Even with a 21-5 overall record and a 18-2 conference record, there is still a lot for the Mavs to prove.

"We know that our basketball team still has so much to prove.

We remind ourselves to stay hungry instead of being satisfied.

It doesn't matter who we play, we know that during the game we control what we can do to be the best versions of ourselves," Bremer said.

Minnesota Crookston is heading into this matchup after suffering a 67-52 defeat at the hands of Wayne State College.

They are also on a 11-game losing streak.

In their attempt to make it a 12th loss in a row for the Golden Eagles, the Mavs will try to make them take tough shots.

"Going into the Friday game against Crookston, we want to get their key players uncomfortable, which was something that didn't go too well against Northern.

Making them make uncomfortable shots or take shots they aren't used to taking will play right into our hands," Bremer said.

Taking away Minnesota Crookston's two-person game is another thing that the Mavs will put emphasis on during Friday's matchup.

"Crookston is good at playing a two-person game with their point guard, who is a key player.

Taking away this action will send them to try and create elsewhere," Bremer said.

Regular season concludes at home for no. 4 ranked men's basketball



DYLAN LONG • The Reporter

The Minnesota State men's basketball team moved up to the fourth spot in the most recent edition of the NABC Poll.

By HAYDEN LEE
Staff Writer

Ahead of their final two regular season games, the Minnesota State men's basketball team was promoted to the fourth spot in the most recent edition of the National Association of Basketball Coaches Poll.

The Mavericks jumped up one spot compared to their previous ranking after defeating Northern State 85-83 Saturday night. As it has been for most of the year, the Mavericks are ranked the highest of four other Northern Sun Intercollegiate Conference teams.

The others from the NSIC that join the Mavericks in the top 25 are MSU Moorhead, Minot State and UMD. However, UMC has seen a dramatic rise in recent weeks, as they now sit at no. 12, one spot ahead of Moorhead and 12 spots above Minot State.

The Mavericks are in a good spot heading into the weekend, as their 24-2 record overall will likely carry them to the top spot in the conference. However, this Mavericks team would not be satisfied with just phoning in the next two games. There is still work to be done, and two more teams to take on before the NSIC Tournament rolls around.

This weekend, the Mavs will take on Minnesota-Crookston and Bemidji State as their final opponents of the regular season. First up will be Minnesota-Crookston Friday night.

The Golden Eagles are currently owners of a 6-20 record, including a 3-17 conference record, which has them ranked as second-to-last in the NSIC, above only UMary. They are coming off of a weekend in which they lost to Augustana and Wayne State

at home. Those two losses contributed to their current six-game losing streak that the Golden Eagles hope to snap this weekend.

Minnesota-Crookston's offense averages 65.1 points per game, and nearly one-third of those points have been scored by Blaize Sagna, who averages 21.3 ppg. Reid Grant serves as the second option in the offense, scoring just over 14 points per game and dishes out 3.3 assists per game on the season.

After they take on the Golden Eagles, they will host the Beavers in their last regular season game of the 2023-24 year. The Beavers are in the middle of the pack when it comes to the NSIC Standings, with a 13-13 overall record, and a 9-11 conference record. It is fitting that a .500 team also went 1-1 in their games from a week ago, defeating Sioux Falls before falling to Southwest Minnesota State at home.

Just like Minnesota-Crookston, Bemidji State also boasts a 20+ points per game scorer in John Sutherland, who averages 21 points per game, along with 7.8 rebounds and 4.1 assists per game on the season. Dalton Albrecht also poses a threat on the offensive and defensive glass, averaging a near 17 point double-double with 10.3 rebounds per game. BJ Davis also makes his presence known as a sharpshooter, with 44 made threes on the season.

As the regular season concludes, the Mavericks have already locked up a first-round bye in the NSIC Tournament. Looking forward to this weekend, Friday's clash with the Golden Eagles will begin at 7:30 p.m. and Saturday's regular season finale will start at 5:30 p.m.

◀BATT from page 7
coaches.

"They pour their belief into me," Batt said. "They push me in ways that I wouldn't have ever imagined. They helped me get to this point and they have helped me earn all the success I've had."

She'll miss them the most after graduation.

"We are a very tight knit group," Batt said. "It will be hard to all go

our separate ways after college but we will still obviously be close.

Not being able to walk to my teammates house and hang out with them everyday will be something I will really miss."

After graduation she plans on using her major in Elementary Education in a bigger city.

She says she'll continue her hobbies of running, hanging out with friends and her newfound

love of reading.

Her recent favorite is a mystery thriller called "The Locked Door" by Frieda McFadden.

She still has basketball in the back of her mind and wants to eventually coach.

She says she's keeping an open mind to playing ball overseas as well.

◀HOME STAND from page 7
(second on squad). Milburn's plus-10 rating is the best on the squad, and ties him for third best in the CCHA.

First-year defenseman Jack Blanchett was named as CCHA Defensemen of the week Monday. Blanchett scored the game winning goal against Augustana Friday.

Goaltender Ethan Langeneg-

ger averages 2.94 goals against and holds a 0.905 save percentage so far this season.

"They've got a well balanced team, and play a good brand of hockey together," said Strand.

"They're opportunistic and we want to make sure that we do our job so that they're not able to get loose, and we have to take advantage of those opportunities that way."

Champions League unfolded: Was the moment too big for Arsenal? Can Barcelona finally advance without Messi?



GREGORIO BORGIA • The Associated Press

Napoli's Victor Osimhen celebrates after scoring his side's opening goal during the Champions League, round of 16, first leg soccer match between SSC Napoli and FC Barcelona at the Diego Maradona stadium in Naples, Italy.

By AHMED HASSAN
Staff Writer

The game was scoreless with only one minute remaining when Wenderson Galeno brought it onto his right foot, took a touch inside and fired a dagger from outside the box into the top right corner to win the game for FC Porto.

Wednesday's Uefa Champions League matchups did not disappoint as FC Barcelona faced off against Napoli, and Arsenal took on FC Porto.

Wednesday's matchups posed major questions for Barcelona and Arsenal as this was Barcelona's first knockout stage game in the Champions League since 2021 and Arsenal's first since 2017.

Are Arsenal prepared for the challenge?

It was a game that had had limited chances and a low quality of football defined by a moment of magic.

Arsenal traveled to Portugal having won their past five games scoring over five plus goals in three of those games, and dominating league leaders Liverpool beating them 3-1.

Arsenal seemingly defeated the takes of many that they needed a striker and true goal-scorer up top in order to win games and score goals.

They were ultimately the favorites going into the match.

However, the Champions League is a tournament in which titles don't mean a thing along with the styles of play.

The only thing that matters is that you win, not how.

Arsenal dominated the ball, but Porto's defensive setup and or-

ganization was clear to see, along with their hustle and effort on both ends of the field.

Porto didn't give the Gunners an inch, leaving the Gunners with no sight at goal along with no chances in the first half.

Arsenal turned it up a notch in the second half getting chances, but Porto fought back getting good chances on goal.

It seemed as if the game was going to end scoreless, until Galeno hit an absolute beauty of a strike that was essentially the last kick of the game.

Arsenal have their work cut out for them if they are serious about advancing to the quarter-finals.

They just simply need to play better football.

All credit should be given to Porto for an absolute defensive masterclass, and a crucial win at home to take into the second-leg.

Arsenal will kick themselves for this, but with their fans behind them in the second leg they'll have to answer many questions and prove they are one of the best in the world.

It should make for a much more action packed second-leg.

Osimhen and Lewandowski live up to the hype

Napoli have had a month and season to forget so far, as they sit in ninth place in Serie A.

They also fired manager Walter Mazzarri just two days before the round of 16 game against Barcelona.

Barcelona fall into the same boat as Napoli, as they haven't had a great season so far, seemingly falling out of the title race, Xavi announcing his last year at Barca and dealing with many injuries.

Barcelona came into Naples and dominated from the get go,

and getting chance after chance.

Barcelona weren't able to score until the 60th minute, when Pedri threaded a pass to Robert Lewandowski, who took one touch and fired it into the bottom left corner.

Barcelona manager Xavi described the events of what happened next perfectly in an interview with Amazon Prime Video Italia.

"After we took the lead, they woke up, which is precisely when we should've killed off the game. This is the Champions League."

Napoli's talisman Victor Osimhen having returned from the African Cup of Nations wasted no time being in the right place at the right time, and only needed one chance resulting in a goal in the 75th minute.

Napoli took control after the goal awakened their fans, but were unable to score.

Napoli proved they still have the quality to play at the highest level despite having a disappointing season.

If they play the way they played at the end of the game, then they can find themselves in the quarter-finals yet again.

Barcelona needs to play good football for 90 minutes, not 60, if they want a chance of winning.

Second leg Predictions

The stage is set for two phenomenal second-leg games in the round of 16.

I predict Napoli will upset Barcelona at home winning 2-1, and 3-2 on aggregate.

I predict that Arsenal will pull the comeback off and prevail, winning 3-1, and 3-2 on aggregate.

The stretch run of the NBA season has arrived. It's time for the playoff push



DARRON CUMMINGS • The Associated Press

Denver Nuggets center Nikola Jokic (15) goes up for a shot during the first half of an NBA All-Star basketball game in Indianapolis, Sunday, Feb. 18, 2024.

By TIM REYNOLDS
The Associated Press

There's no NBA player who is a bigger fan of harness racing than Denver's Nikola Jokic. He owns horses, goes to tracks whenever he can and even accepted one of his MVP awards while riding around at his farm in Serbia.

He knows the stretch run often decides races.

And the same holds true in the NBA, which is entering its stretch run.

The All-Star break is over, games resume on Thursday and the defending champion Nuggets — along with a slew of other contenders — are hoping that this is the time when they can start hitting their best stride. Denver is coming out of the break in fourth place in the Western Conference, three games back of No. 1 Minnesota.

"We don't try to listen to what people say," Jokic said. "We know what we are capable of. And it's working for us. So, I don't know what people are saying, that we are not good. I don't say that we are the best, but we are not bad."

They were the best last season. This season, the best won't be crowned until June, of course. The next couple of months are all about jostling for playoff position — or in some cases, fighting for playoff spots.

It's not the second half — what people commonly call the period after the All-Star break — but rather the final third of the season. The league is exactly two-thirds of the way through the season, 820 games down, 410 games to go. It's the time of year when playbooks tend to get tweaked a little and things get a little more serious.

Paul George of the Los Angeles Clippers knows the playoff push is underway. But as a veteran, he also knows that the most important game is always the next one.

"Can't look too far ahead," George said. "Take it one game at a time. Because that's what you tend to do, second half of the season, start to look ahead and look forward to playoffs and just trying to get to the playoffs. But we just got to take it one game at a time."

Boston has the NBA's best record and sits high atop the Eastern Conference, Minnesota and Oklahoma City — a pair of surprises — are first and second, respectively, in the West and some teams with championship pedigrees like Golden State and the Los Angeles Lakers are hoping their pre-All-Star momentum carries over now.

The Warriors were 8-2 in their last 10 games before the break, the Lakers 7-3.

"The most important thing for me is definitely my health, where I'm at right now, where our team is leaning," Lakers forward LeBron James said. "We're trending in the right direction. Obviously, with our Laker team, it's been about health all year. Trying to do what's best for me for the betterment of the team."

He's been dealing with an ankle issue that limited him in the All-Star Game but didn't prevent him from playing. Other teams have far bigger concerns — primarily the Philadelphia 76ers, who spent a bit of time in November atop the East but have dropped nine of their last 12 games with reigning MVP Joel Embiid out with a knee injury.

ST. PETER'S FIRST BREWERY SINCE 1942!

PADDFISH
BREWING CO.

108 S. Minnesota Ave., St. Peter | 507-934-0061 | www.paddlefishbrewing.com
Hours: Monday-Tuesday, Closed; Wednesday-Thursday, 3-9pm; Friday, 2-10pm; Saturday, 12pm-10pm; Sunday, 11am-6pm

VARIETY

Future educators talk consent for kids

By ANAHI ZUNIGA
Staff Writer

The Women's Center hosted "Consent for Kids" Wednesday, an open discussion about how to have conversations about consent with children.

The discussion included bodily autonomy, sharing, personal space and how to learn to teach consent in classrooms.

BriShaun Kearns, graduate assistant of the Women's Center, explained why it's important for students who plan to become potential future educators to know how to teach consent in a classroom or a childcare institution.

"I think consent is important for everybody. But it's especially important to develop the skills at a very early age. I talked to a lot of people who are elementary ed. about consent and oftentimes, the conversation gets directed around sexual conversations," Kearns said. "So we wait until people are like 15-16 years old, whereas this programming is really going to be focused on sharing personal space and that kind of consent, which I think can help kids develop the skills to be able to communicate in the future the things that they need and want."

Kearns said teaching consent to children can help them understand the definitions of personal space and boundaries.

It can also help the idea of consent extend to other communication lenses.

"I hope to be able to broaden the idea of consent from a sexual health lens into a community care lens so that people aren't afraid to say the word consent in relation to children. I think a lot of times right now there's kind of a lot of conversations going on around like what you can and cannot say in terms of sexual health development, LGBT



The Women's Center held the event, "Consent for Kids," to discuss the topic of consent with potential future educators.

community, race," They said. "All of these things are very difficult and a lot of people are very scared of the repercussions they're going to face. And if we are able to get students aware of the fact that it's more than just talking about sex, it's also about talking about personal space."

First-year student Olivia Johnson and third-year student Deyton Drost, both Gender and Women's Studies majors, shared what advice they took from the discussion and how they will apply it in classrooms and also explained why consent is important for everyone to know, not just as a potential educator.

"I think that consent is definitely something you can implement on kids, or as a teacher anywhere. It's a preventative measure that we should be using more, especially for anybody that's going to be going in and working with children,"

Johnson said. "I think it's really important especially with learning boundaries especially if you're going to be an educator. Consent is something that you should have an idea of as a kid. We should be able to respect somebody's wishes."

"I think one of the big misconceptions or conversations around consent, and it's always inherently like thought about as sexual, but I'm really glad that this event talked about how important it is to implement it into children and also some of the specific measures that you can take to do that and examples of how you can do that with kids," Drost said. "It's really important for all aspects of life. Even like 'Can I give you a hug?' Like, I guess you just never really know what's okay and what's not with people so always checking in."

Consent is permission for

something to happen or to do something. Permission is given by someone who is free to choose and able to choose for themselves.

Kearns explains that consent overall is a great part of our everyday lives.

"Consent is important for everyone to learn because it's a part of our everyday lives. Anytime you ask someone a question, you're trying to get consent from them, whether that's asking people to share food, share space, asking to borrow something, asking to touch someone, like intimate partner interactions, family and friends. These are the skills we need as part of our communication," Kearns said. "We navigate a lot of those conversations and we've realized people don't really have this skill building for the kind of intense

CONSENT on page 11▶

OPINION: Reading is good for you

By LAUREN VISKA
Staff Writer

When I was growing up, I was super into reading. I would read anything from fantasy to action. I would get super into the books and create pictures of what they looked like in my head.

But as I've gotten older, I have been reading less and less. Technology has had an impact on my reading.

When I was in middle school, I got a phone and an iPad, and that's when I stopped being into reading.

It wasn't until college that I realized how much reading affects you. So, I made a goal for myself to read more.

In 2022, I did a bullet journal and had a reading tracker. I started great; I read every day and finished a book in a week. I thought I was doing so well. In reality, I read seven books that year.

Last year, I only read two.

I plan to really start reading more this year, as it helps your brain.

When you read, you are using your memory muscle, located in your brain's Cerebrum region. Using this muscle helps your memory in the long run.

Reading is a neurobiological process that exercises your brain muscles. As you do so, you can help to slow cognitive decline and even reduce the rate at which memories fade.

Scientists at the University of California, Berkeley, have discovered that reading lowers the level of beta-amyloid, a protein in the brain linked to Alzheimer's. So reading can help you maintain your memory.

You can learn new words while reading. Think about how many words are in books. The average word count for adult fiction ranges from 70,000 to 120,000 words.

The general rule for children's fiction is that the younger the audience, the shorter the book, while the average length for YA novels is 50,000-70,000 words. Non-fiction word counts range between 70,000 and 120,000 words.

Reading is entertaining as well. I remember a book I read in 2022 called 'As Good As Dead' the third book in the 'A Good Girl's Guide to Murder' trilogy. That book changed the way I saw reading.

It follows a girl named Pip who is trying to solve a cold murder case and finds out many shocking truths along the way. I couldn't put it down because of how into it I got. I read 300 pages in one sitting because of how good it was. With each page turn, I was on the edge of my seat. I didn't care that it was 2 a.m. and I had

READING on page 11▶

Diversity and dancing at Ebony Ball



ALEXIS DARKOW • The Reporter

Minnesota State students gathered for an eloquent ebony night in the CSU Ballroom Wednesday from 5-7 p.m. Attendees were encouraged to dress their best for a night of food, music and dancing. There were also awards given to undergraduate and graduate pan-african students voted by fellow students on campus.

Photography club hopes to capture new members

By JACK HARDING
Staff Writer

Interested in improving your photography skills?

If so, try joining the recently created Photography Club on campus.

All you need is simply any kind of camera. Many students are already members of the club, each with different equipment, different knowledge and/or different photography styles. This allows everyone to learn from each other and develop new skills. They learn through weekly meetings, a Discord server and even small shoots that they sometimes do for other clubs.

Club President Jordan Joyce has been into photography for about five years and even ran a photography club in high school. He said he enjoyed running it so much that, after discovering MSU didn't have a photography club, he immediately jumped at the opportunity to start one last November.

At the moment, the club is still young and quite small. Joyce talked about the struggles he faces because of the low number of members, altering how the club is running. For example, lately they haven't been able to have their weekly meetings because most of the students in the club don't have the time in their schedule to make those weekly meetings.

"We can't exactly do the club how I would like the club to be run at the moment. We just don't have enough people at those meetings to do the kind of workshopping stuff that I want to do," Joyce said.

Recently they've been participating in fairs and advertising to gain new members. Joyce said he wants to do a fundraiser this semester to raise the group's profile.

Joyce also talked about the importance of photography and why he felt it was necessary to start a photography club.



Courtesy Jordan Joyce

This photo of an elephant taken by club president Jordan Joyce is one of the many photos students in photography club shared during meetings.

"It's an important art because it allows a lot of people to see parts of the world in a way that they never would have been able to see it before. Traditional art allows you to see everything through the artist's lens. The artist will show you their view of the world. In photography, I believe you get a much more objective stance," Joyce said.

"It all sort of just boils down to the point of: The camera doesn't lie. So 90% of the time, what you

take a photo of is what you see in the world, and I believe that's quite an important perspective to have," Joyce said.

The Photography club is always open for students to join.

"Regardless of if you have a proper camera, just being able to take some slightly better photos or just have a little bit of knowledge around editing and things like that, I feel is just quite beneficial regardless of what you do," Joyce said.

Kodak Black freed from jail after drug possession charge was dismissed

The Associated Press

South Florida rapper Kodak Black was freed from jail Wednesday after a federal judge sentenced him to time served for a probation violation, though a drug trafficking case from 2022 remains ongoing.

U.S. District Judge Jose E. Martinez in Miami handed down the sentence nearly two weeks after a drug possession charge was dismissed in neighboring Broward County, according to court records.

Broward County Circuit Judge Barbara Duffy ruled earlier this month that prosecutors could not refute or negate the fact that the rapper, whose real name is

Bill Kapri, had an oxycodone prescription filled by a pharmacy.

Plantation police arrested Kapri in December after finding him asleep at the wheel with white powder around his mouth, officials said. Although authorities said the powder initially tested positive for cocaine, a lab test later revealed it was oxycodone, for which Kapri obtained a prescription in July 2022.

The arrest was a violation of his probation from an unrelated case, which led to him being locked up in Miami for two months.

Kapri was arrested in 2022 on charges of trafficking in oxycodone and possession of a controlled substance without a prescription. He was freed on bond with regular drug testing as a con-

dition of his release. Kapri was ordered into drug rehab for 30 days early last year after missing a drug test in February and then testing positive for fentanyl several days later, according to court records. Then last June, a warrant for his arrest was issued after authorities said he did not show up for a drug test.

In January 2021, then-President Donald Trump commuted a three-year federal prison sentence the rapper had for falsifying documents used to buy weapons. Kapri had served about half his sentence.

As Kodak Black, Kapri has sold more than 30 million singles, with massive hits such as "Super Gremlin," which reached No. 3 on the Billboard Hot 100 in 2022.

Guided meditations relax stressed-out students



DAVIS JENSEN • The Reporter

Campus Recreation hosted 15 minute guided meditation sessions with calming music and free tea in the Centennial Student Union Wednesday.

By ELLIE MESCHKE
Staff Writer

Close your eyes. Breathe. Feel the tension fade away. That's the power of meditation, and that was the goal of Campus Recreation's 15-minute meditation sessions on campus Tuesday.

Organizers dimmed lights, played calming music and offered free tea. The meditations were led by Carly Hopper, the fitness and wellness program coordinator in campus recreation.

"I think it is important for students to take time to meditate, even if it's just a few moments to bring a little mindfulness to just pay attention to what they're doing," Hopper said. "We live in a society that it's so busy. We're hurrying up and we get somewhere and then we wait and there's so much anxiety and so much that is happening all the time that we're stimulated all the time, that I think it's really helpful to just take a few moments just to sit."

With midterms and spring break on the horizon, it's easy to forget to take care of yourself and ignore your mind and body's wishes. By taking a moment to meditate, in whichever form you

choose, you can come back refreshed and ready to take on the next big thing.

Campus Recreation has a group exercise schedule that includes yoga, pilates, fitness, exercise and cycling-based classes.

"Are you gonna get the meditation part in a cycling class? No," she said. "I'm gonna tell you to breathe, so it's different in that way, but I would guess something similar to this that anyone can attend at any time would be the 9 a.m. yoga class that I teach Friday mornings."

Hopper said they usually spend time at the beginning or the end of classes on meditation-like "awareness" breathing. They also offer a couple of other yoga classes that are more strenuous and utilize more weights.

"I'm not saying it's not relaxing, because at the end we're just going to lay there and relax at the end of any kind of yoga class, but I would say that the Friday morning one is a little bit more all levels or more beginner friendly," Hopper said.

Yoga classes are held at the Otto Recreation Center as well as an assortment of other exercises and classes.

◀**CONSENT** from page 10
conversations that it takes to really talk about consent deeply. And I think personally, that stems from the lack of conversation of consent around the entirety of

our lives rather than just sexual experiences."

The Women's Center is located in CSU 218. For more information, visit www.mnsu.edu/diversityequityinclusion

◀**READING** from page 10
a 9 a.m. the next day. I was finishing that book no matter the time.

The next book I read was the first in the "The Inheritance Games" series. I became obsessed with that book. It took me two weeks to read it. I would've read it faster, but I was busy with school. But I read the second book in the series in four days. Like 'As Good As Dead' each page turn had me wanting more.

This series follows Avery, who discovers that a billionaire has left her in his will, and she has to live in his house for a year before she can get his inheritance.

She has to live with his fami-

ly, including his four grandsons. The book had so much mystery that I couldn't put it down.

In 2024, I haven't read many books yet, but I've been busy with work and school.

I aim to read more this year, which I said last year.

I know that I probably won't read as much as I want to, but my overflowing TBR pile isn't going anywhere.

SECONDHAND BOOKSTORE & EXCHANGE:

South Front St. across from Fillin' Station Coffee House. All types of leisure reading. Browsers welcome.
Hours: Mon.-Sat. 10-5pm.
ONCE READ | 507-388-8144

JOIN OUR TEAM!

The Reporter is looking to hire the following positions:

- **SPORTS WRITERS**
- **ADVERTISING SALES**

*For more information, stop by the
Reporter Office (CSU 293)
or call 507-389-1776*

PLEASE APPLY ON
 **handshake**

MINNESOTA STATE UNIVERSITY, MANKATO
THE **REPORTER**

WWW.MSUREPORTER.COM