

# Resolution protects Palestinian voices

By EMMA JOHNSON  
Editor In Chief

After two weeks, several hours of meetings and the support of nearly 500 Mavericks, the Student Government passed a resolution to protect pro-Palestinian voices.

Similar to last week, around 50 students surrounded the senators holding signs in support of the resolution, waiting for the answer which came to 19 yeas and two nays.

Sophomore Cole Koets said the sit-ins from last week and Wednesday were a way of making their mission visible.

“We felt that 500 signatures was more than enough to put forward and sponsor a bill,” Koets said.

Koets said the resolution came about from looking at ways to protest the war in Gaza while also giving students at MSU material results of their support.

“We want to be able to point to something and say ‘Look, this is the culmination of your support for us.’ I think the easiest guarantee is we should be able to give our students the freedom to hold an opinion on something like this,” Koets said.

Bringing the resolution to the Student Government was about a two-month project. Koets, graduate student Zena Al Safar and senior Natalia Orocio looked at resolutions from other universities,



NATE TILAHUN • The Reporter

The Minnesota State University, Mankato Student Government successfully passed a resolution to protect pro-Palestinian voices. Students surrounded the senate holding signs to ‘vote yes’ to protect student voices.

tabled at multiple places around campus and met with student senators.

It’s been over 140 days since the war in Palestine started on Oct. 7. In the five months since the war began, over 30,000 Palestinians

have been killed. Orocio said how the media and government have handled coverage surrounding the war has made her perspective “realistic.”

“I know this is happening to these people and it’s very upset-

ting that our politicians know this. They know that we can see what is going on because there have been so many forms of protesting happening like Aaron Bushnell who did the most extreme act of protest which is lighting himself on fire.”

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## Free educational opportunities on MSU’s LinkedIn

By ANNISA ECHOLS  
Staff Writer

You can thank IT Solutions for providing students with extra opportunities to earn and gain useful skills that apply to educational and career growth.

According to Carrie Lewis Miller, instructional designer and technologist at Minnesota State, “About 10 years ago, IT Solutions moved from a platform called Atomic Learning to LinkedIn Learning,” Miller said. “LinkedIn Learning had a broader content base and a wider variety of video topics than the previous vendor.”

According to the MSU website, “LinkedIn Learning gives you the option of connecting your LinkedIn profile for career-based personalization to help fuel a lifetime of learning and professional development.”

There are many features and functions available for students including uploading custom content, custom collections, access to a variety of learning paths, recommended courses, learning trend projections and the ability to use their intelligent search tool.

If you want to explore new skills, maybe learn graphic design LinkedIn learning is the right place. Additionally, there are many other options to explore. LinkedIn learning can help you explore new career paths and supply you with resources that lead you to achieve your goals.

“LinkedIn Learning doesn’t just offer videos about Microsoft or Adobe products,” Miller said, “but also about marketing strategies, job hunting, managing employees, creating a diverse and inclusive work environment, and teaching methods.”

Students can log in to LinkedIn learning through the MSU website to connect their current LinkedIn with their MSU account with their STAR ID. If you need additional assistance please contact IT Solutions in person or through MSU’s website.

LinkedIn Learning is a large database full of a variety of videos and audio recordings that can help you improve your current skills or help you develop a brand new set of

**FREE on page 3**

# New bus route to Echo Food Shelf

By AMALIA SHARAF  
Staff Writer

In November, a new city bus route was launched for students to get to the ECHO Food Shelf pantry.

ECHO sits on Downtown Express Route 7. The bus route, which is free for Minnesota State students, is funded by Mankato Area Transit. Bus route 7 runs Monday-Friday.

The ECHO Food Shelf was established in 1981. ECHO stands for Emergency Community Help Organization. It began as a short-term assistance for people experiencing food insecurity and today is one of the busiest food shelves in the state.

The need for a free bus ride to the food shelf has never been more important than now. Research by MSU faculty and students shows students have a higher than average incidence of food insecurity.

“The reason a student would want to go to any food shelf is just to meet their nutritional needs,” said Associate Professor Carol Glasser. “And research shows that students who are malnourished have a lot of consequences socially and academically, as well as in terms of their mental health and well-being



Courtesy of Mitchel Pomije

Mitchel Pomije presented at the Undergraduate Research Symposium on April 20th, 2023.

in a lot of different areas.”

Senior Mitchel Pomije and Glasser co-authored a food and transportation insecurity research paper. As it’s written in their work, “Mavericks experience food insecurity at a higher rate than the national collegiate average, with 64% of Minnesota State Mankato students experiencing some form

of food insecurity. This study also found that 39% reported their food insecurity negatively affected their academic success.”

Pomije said they were able to look at a variety of factors that might affect food insecurity among students.

“We also saw as a result of the

COVID pandemic a lot more individuals in general becoming more food insecure, and college students tend to be more food insecure than the general population,” said Pomije. “So we assumed coming into this survey that the population of our students was going to be about the same as far as how many of them were food insecure.”

Glasser’s research team also found that it can be hard for students to travel to food pantries and grocery stores to address their nutritional and dietetic needs.

“The students found, when exploring in one of our studies going to Echo Food Shelf, that it could also be quite challenging to use because there’s no easy way to get there,” said Glasser. “And that’s why we’re really excited that there’s now a bus route.”

“Just the process of getting to Walmart alone took us about the same amount of time that it would take me just to hop in my car, get there and do half of my grocery shopping,” said Pomije. “I have to think of, well, I can’t necessarily get frozen things or I can’t get refrigerated things because I’m taking the

**ECHO on page 3**

# UprootED sheds light on serious topics



Courtesy Dani Scott

From left to right, Dani Scott, Chelsea Mead, Hannah Radcliff-Hoy and Timothy Berry participated in the second-round of a two part talk show where audience members participate actively in the experience.

By LAUREN VISKA  
Staff Writer

The darker a person's skin is, the worse they have it, no matter their ethnic group.

That was just one of the revelations from a presentation Wednesday by Timothy Berry, interim associate vice president for faculty affairs and equity initiatives. Berry's talk was part of the Interactive Theater of Isms show. This was a two-part talk show called "UprootED," where audience members participated actively in the experience. The speakers performed as characters, but their stories were true.

Beth Beschorner, associate director of Equity Initiatives in the Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning, was one of eight speakers at the shows. She said

performing made her nervous and pushed her outside her comfort zone.

Despite that, she said she hopes students got a lot out of these shows.

"Theater or role-playing gives the audience a different type of learning opportunity than a traditional lecture or workshop. The audience is often able to make deeper connections to this type of presentation style because it is engaging and realistic," said Beschorner. "I hope that students, faculty and staff saw themselves and others in some of the characters and think about what that means for them personally so that they can reflect on their own next steps in advancing equity, inclusion, and justice on campus."

Speaker Dani Scott, an associate professor in communication

studies and disorders, said speaking at this event during Black History Month was important to her as a woman of color as they discussed anti-blackness.

"We have to learn and unlearn. If you do know about it, you might have learned a misconception, and most people have not learned about a lot of the things that we've been talking about," said Scott. "To center topics that are foundational to DEI (diversity, equity and inclusion) work, especially in higher ed, there's a lot of red tape, so we don't get to have very candid conversations often, so this just presents an opportunity to have those."

Sophia Lee was one of the students in the audience. She said she was there for extra credit as one of her professors was a speaker. She

**UPROOT on page 3**

◀**RESOLUTION** from page 1  
Orocio said.

(Bushnell, a member of the U.S. Air Force, lit himself on fire in front of the Israeli embassy in Washington D.C. Feb. 25 in protest of the war in Palestine.)

Al Safar said the issue in Palestine isn't only about some other country that doesn't affect anyone. She said it impacts everyone.

"When we solve one issue, it doesn't mean we are solving only that issue. We're solving so many other issues that are interlinked and interconnected. We need to think of it as an international thing," Al Safar said.

She also said the resolution allows her and anyone else to openly talk about the war in Palestine without fear of consequences.

"Last semester, I was at a rally and shouting 'Ceasefire for Palestine,' but at the same time, I didn't know if it was acceptable," Al Safar said. "I'm an international student here on a scholarship and I wasn't sure if I was going to be expelled. I had to email multiple people saying, 'Hey, is this OK?'"

Director of the Kessel Peace Institute Jameel Haque said other forms of protest have not been received positively in the past. Haque said a rally titled "Rally for Peace in Palestine" was discouraged by the Minnesota State system.

Haque also gave a lecture at Gustavus Adolphus College which was attempted to be shut down by a professor.

"The Minn State system office is looking at our events. They've got an eye on us in telling us not to do certain freedom of speech events. That's a problem," Haque said.

Al Safar said just because the resolution is for freedom of speech, it isn't shutting off any other voices.

"We are just asking for freedom of speech for voices that are potentially going to be prosecuted or oppressed," Al Safar.

Haque said students have always tried to keep their activism positive, inclusive and open to all ideas while simultaneously calling out the wrongs.

"There is a way to talk about it that's peaceful and reconciliatory and that's what we've really focused on," Haque said.

Orocio said she wants to encourage students to use their voices.

"I think that especially Mavericks, we are like the next generation, and it is going to be our responsibility to undo those injustices," Orocio said.

Al Safar said while the resolution may seem like a small project, she's proud it passed.

"My Palestinian friend is going to be able to say something about his country and not be afraid that he will be disciplined," Al Safar said.

Al Safar said she hopes "more people will go to the Student Government" for any future issues they want addressed.

Now that the resolution has passed, Al Safar said she and other members of the Kessel Peace Institute's Student Advisory Council members are hoping to create an RSO called Mavericks for Change.

## US troops begin exercises in response to North Korea threats



LEE JIN-MAN • The Associated Press

U.S. soldiers participate in a joint military drill with South Korea in Paju, South Korea, on March 16, 2023.

By HYUNG-JIN KIM  
The Associated Press

South Korean and U.S. troops will begin their expanded annual military drills next week in response to North Korea's evolving nuclear threats, the two countries said Wednesday, a move that will likely enrage North Korea because it views its rivals' joint training as an invasion rehearsal.

In recent months, North Korea has inflamed animosities on the Korean Peninsula with fiery rhetoric and continued missile tests. While it's unlikely for North Korea to launch full-blown attacks against South Korea and the U.S., observers say the North could still stage limited provocations along the tense border with South Korea.

On Wednesday, the South Korea and U.S. militaries jointly announced that the allies will

conduct Freedom Shield exercise, a computer-simulated command post training, and a variety of separate field training, from March 4-14.

Col. Lee Sung-Jun, a spokesman for South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff, told reporters that the allies' drills are designed to bolster their joint capabilities to prevent North Korea from using its nuclear weapons. He said the allies are to carry out 48 field exercises this spring, twice the number conducted last year, and that this year's drills would involve air assault, live-firing and bombing training.

"Our military is ready to punish North Korea immediately, strongly and to the end in the event of its provocation, and we'll further strengthen our firm readiness through the upcoming drills," Lee said.



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## What to know about a US couple missing in Caribbean



KENTON X. CHANCE • The Associated Press

The yacht "Simplicity", that officials say was hijacked by three escaped prisoners with two people aboard, is docked at the St. Vincent and the Grenadines Coastguard Service Calliaqua Base.

By DANICA COTO  
The Associated Press

Authorities in the eastern Caribbean are scouring waters in the region in hopes of finding a missing U.S. couple who were aboard their catamaran Simplicity more than a week ago when police say it was hijacked by three escaped prisoners from Grenada.

Police have said that Ralph Hendry and Kathy Brandel are presumed dead.

The search for them began on Feb. 21 after someone discovered their catamaran abandoned on the shores of St. Vincent and alerted authorities.

Police say the three prisoners escaped from a police station on Feb. 18 and hijacked the catamaran a day later.

Authorities said the prisoners then illegally entered the southwest coast of St. Vincent on Feb. 19 and docked the boat.

Two days later, the three men were arrested along the island's northwest coast.

Here's what to know about the case:

### WHY WAS THE COUPLE TARGETED?

It's unclear why the escaped prisoners hijacked the couple's catamaran, but it was moored at Grand Anse beach, near to the police station where the three men escaped.

Police believe the men hijacked the catamaran with the couple aboard and then allegedly threw them into the water while traveling to St. Vincent, which is located north of Grenada.

◀ **UPROOT from page 2**  
said she was engaged in the conversation.

"It was eye-opening to have a show, but also some realism too. It was really interesting to watch," said Lee. "Some of it kind of res-

onated with me, and some of it I definitely would maybe not see myself doing as much. That kind of led me to dive deeper into my thought process of how everything was going and how I interact with certain situations."

◀ **FREE from page 1**  
skills.

According to the LinkedIn Website at linkedin.com,

In addition, the website also states, "The courses on LinkedIn fall into four categories: Business, Creative, Technology, and Certifications."

## Biden 'continues to be fit for duty'

By DARLENE SUPERVILLE  
and WILL WEISSERT  
The Associated Press

President Joe Biden "continues to be fit for duty," his doctor wrote Wednesday after conducting an annual physical that is being closely watched as the 81-year-old seeks reelection in November.

Dr. Kevin O'Connor, Biden's physician, wrote that the president is adjusting well to a new device that helps control his sleep apnea and has experienced some hip discomfort but also works out five times per week.

"President Biden is a healthy, active, robust, 81-year-old male who remains fit to successfully execute the duties of the presidency," O'Connor said in a six-page memo on the president's health, following a physical that took Biden to Walter Reed National Military Medical Center for more than 2 1/2 hours.

His memo added that Biden "feels well and this year's physical identifies no new concerns."

The oldest president in U.S. history, Biden would be 86 by the end of a second term, should he win one.

His latest physical mirrored one he had in February last year when O'Connor described Biden



EVAN VUCCI • The Associated Press

President Joe Biden departs Walter Reed National Military Medical Center following a physical, Wednesday, Feb. 28, 2024, in Bethesda, Md.

as "healthy, vigorous" and "fit" to handle his White House duties.

Still, voters are approaching this year's election with misgivings about Biden's age, having scrutinized his gaffes, his coughing, his slow walking and even a tumble off his bicycle.

After he returned to the White House on Wednesday, Biden attended an event on combating crime and suggested that when it

came to his health "everything is squared away" and "there is nothing different than last year."

He also joked about his age and people thinking "I look too young."

Former President Donald Trump, 77, is the favorite to lock up the Republican nomination later this month, which would bring him closer to a November rematch against Biden.

### ◀ **ECHO from page 1**

bus or anything along the lines of, oh, I need to make sure I only take three bags of groceries because I don't have a way to carry them."

Glasser said the rate of car ownership for domestic students was reasonable and, therefore, might make the study feel less important. However, Glasser's research team also believes it is important to consider the international student population. While

that was not measured in the original study, Glasser said other research suggests international students experience food insecurity at higher rates.

"And we argue that it systematically disadvantages one population, and this population is particularly disadvantaged because they don't go home on breaks," said Glasser. "And in the summer, the bus routes are even further reduced, making it harder to find

transportation."

"We want to make sure that, well, if more than half of our international students don't have regular access to the vehicle, we make sure that we are accommodating them correctly," said Pomije.

Glasser said they are happy about the newly launched route and hope more students will be able to get access to necessary nutrition.

# Memorial Library

## Upcoming Spring Break hours

**Friday, March 1** 7:30 am - 6 pm

**Saturday, March 2** 10:00 am - 4:30 pm

**Sunday, March 3** CLOSED

**Monday, March 4 - Friday, March 8** 7:30 am - 4:30 pm

**Saturday, March 9** CLOSED

**Sunday, March 10** 11:00 am - 12 am

Hours may vary. Please check the website for up-to-date information at [link.mnsu.edu/libraryhours](http://link.mnsu.edu/libraryhours) or call 507-389-6201.



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# 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.

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## Treat yourself during spring break

This year the Minnesota winter wasn't quite the same harsh climate it normally is but that doesn't mean it didn't take a toll on our bodies and mind. As spring break approaches make sure to utilize this time to the best of your ability.

Whether you are going to a beach destination, staying in Mankato or traveling home, make the most out of it and treat yourself - it's a break!

In an era where the conversation around mental health and wellness is more open and critical than ever, spring break offers a vital period of decompression.

The relentless school year weighs us down and this break can be the chance to feel refreshed before returning back to the final stretch of the year.

Students often experience burnout and this is the time to hit a pause and a reset before the year drags on to the finish line.

This break is not only luxurious but necessary. Seize this moment to unwind and chill.

Heading into the weekend we will get a glimpse at spring. The forecast is warm and sunny.

Perfect for getting away from school and escaping into whatever hobbies we can't find time for during the exhausting school year.

Take this time to go on a walk, exercise outside, cook on the grill and if you're lucky, get a tan. It is the perfect time to get some vitamin D.

Spring break is also the perfect time to achieve things that seem out of reach during the school year. While having classes and homework it can be challenging to get projects done or see distant friends and family.

Apply for summer internships, build a portfolio, update your resume or do the most dreaded task - taxes. Although it is not the definition of an ideal spring break, these are things we all most likely have to do and will not want to do in the heat of the school year.

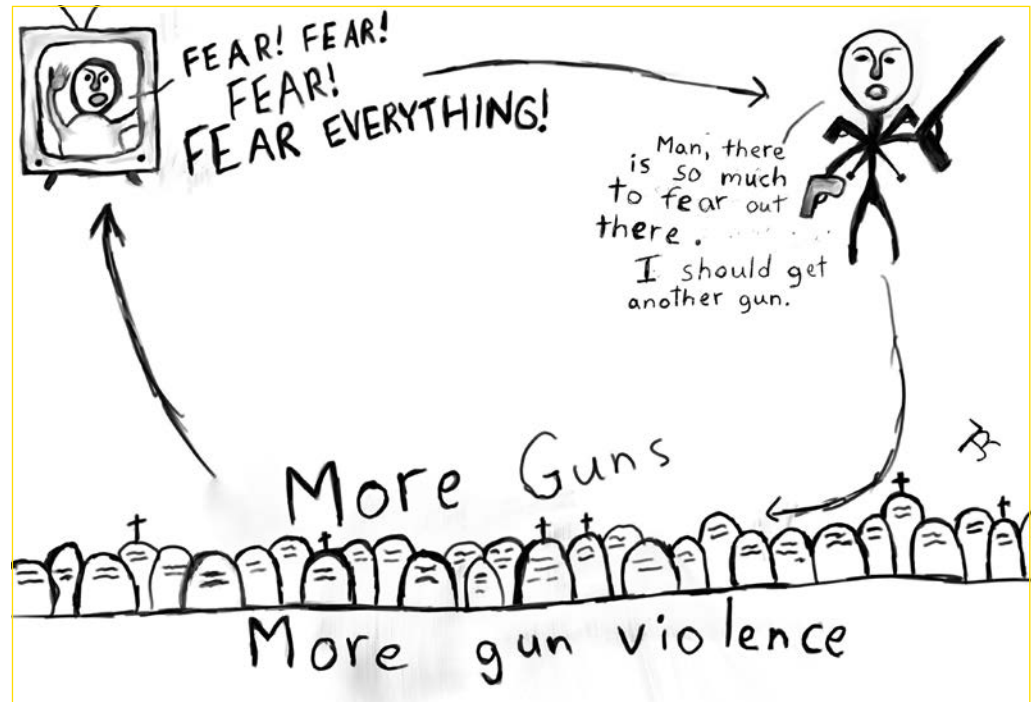
While a lot of students will be staying in Minnesota or the surrounding states, some will be traveling for vacation. If that is you, take it all in.

Vacation is such a rewarding feeling. If you are going to a beach, enjoy the sun, sand and water. If you are going to a ski resort, take in the beauty of the mountains.

If you're going to an all inclusive resort, let loose. Try new foods, party it up and build relationships with those you are traveling with.

# Perspectives

## We need to stop scaring ourselves



Courtesy of Jeremy Redlien

On Feb. 18, two Burnsville police officers and one firefighter/paramedic were killed in a shooting that started out as an investigation into a domestic incident.

Feb. 18 was also the day "The Weight of the Crown" (about the shooting and recovery of former police officer Arik Matson) was shown in Ostrander Auditorium in Minnesota State's Centennial Student Union. With so many police officers present, the Burnsville shooting weighed heavily on everyone.

The topic of gun control is a fraught one. Fewer countries love their guns more than the United States. But there are plenty of reasons why the topic needs to be addressed.

I was in high school when Columbine happened. I remember the way fear gripped people afterward. First my school banned backpacks before changing the rules to al-



low students to bring in clear or netted bags. There were even mass shooting drills.

Since Columbine the issue of mass shootings has gripped the United States in a state of paralyzing terror.

What I am going to be arguing here is probably going to sound counterintuitive but allow me to put forth two seemingly contradictory positions.

One is that the United States needs stronger regulations on the sale and possession of firearms.

My second position is that we probably over-sensationalize, and hyper focus on, the

issue of mass shootings.

In fact, we probably spend way too much time scaring ourselves. More conservative media too often tells viewers they should be terrified of minorities, be they immigrants or transgender people. Meanwhile, more liberal media often seems to be telling us that we could all be killed at any moment in a mass shooting.

Neither is really promoting a healthy or balanced perspective. Ironically, in fact, liberal media over-obsessing about mass shootings appears likely to be leading to overall support for better gun control decreasing in the United States.

When you scare people enough it appears it just drives them to wanting to buy more guns to protect themselves. While overall support for better gun control laws has remained over 50% according to Gallup polling,

COLUMN on page 5

# Pulse

## "What do you think of leap year?"

Compiled by Nathanael Tilahun



ASHLEY BASS,  
FRESHMAN

"I didn't even know what a leap year was."



ATRINITY TIPTON,  
FRESHMAN

"Nobody pays attention to it, it's just a day to get off."



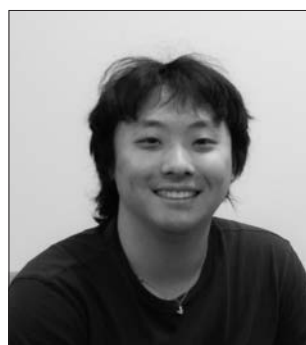
CHIARA CARNELUTTI,  
GRAD STUDENT

"One more day in a year doesn't matter, as long as we're alive it's fine."



DYLAN CLEMENTE,  
FRESHMAN

"I feel like it's cool."



JUSTIN YOUNG,  
JUNIOR

"An excuse for people to take a day off."



TOMMY ALVAREZ,  
JUNIOR

"I think it's useless."

# The killing of a Georgia student continues US immigration debate



NELL CARROLL • The Associated Press

Augusta University students, in blue, and University of Georgia students gather at the Tate Plaza on the UGA campus in Athens, Ga., Monday, Feb. 26, 2024, to pay tribute to Laken Riley, a nursing student at Augusta University's Athens campus

By JEFF AMY, ELLIOT SPAGAT and WILL WEISSERT  
The Associated Press

Laken Riley was a 22-year-old nursing student out on her morning run at the University of Georgia when authorities say a stranger dragged her into a secluded area and killed her, sending shockwaves through campus as police searched for a suspect.

The arrest of a Venezuelan man who entered the U.S. illegally and was allowed to stay to pursue his immigration case put the tragedy at the center of the 2024 presidential campaign.

Former President Donald Trump blamed President Joe Biden and his border policies for the Augusta University student's fatal beating.

A conservative news site blasted "open-border elites" for accepting the deaths of women such as Riley as "collateral damage."

It is familiar ground for Trump, who launched his 2016 White House bid by saying Mexicans were "bringing crime. They're

rapists. And some, I assume, are good people." As president, he created an office for families whose loved ones were victims of violent crimes committed by immigrants, which was quickly dismantled under Biden.

The debate over the nation's broken immigration system has emerged as a major campaign issue amid an unprecedented migration surge that has strained budgets in cities including New York, Chicago and Denver and divided some Democrats.

Trump has dialed up his anti-immigrant rhetoric to say migrants are "poisoning the blood" of the country.

And he and other Republicans have suggested migrants are committing crimes more often than U.S. citizens even though the evidence does not back up those claims.

Biden has criticized Republicans for turning against a bipartisan border security deal after Trump decried it.

He will visit the Texas border city of Brownsville on Thursday, while Trump will be in another

Texas border city, Eagle Pass.

On his social media site, Trump posted, "Crooked Joe Biden's Border INVASION is destroying our country and killing our citizens! The horrible murder of 22-year-old Laken Riley at the University of Georgia should have NEVER happened!"

"He's an animal that came in," Trump said Tuesday on Michigan's WFDF radio station.

Democrats have been more muted, with many expressing sorrow for Riley's death and some accusing Trump of exploiting a tragedy and using xenophobic rhetoric for political gain.

The White House extended "deepest condolences" to Riley's family. "People should be held accountable to the fullest extent of the law if they are found to be guilty," said spokesperson Angelo Fernández Hernández.

U.S. Sen. Lindsey Graham, a Trump ally, predicted Riley's death is "gonna change this election as much as anything."

"That's a parent's worst nightmare," the South Carolina Republican said.

◀ **COLUMN from page 4**  
the strongest period of support for better gun control laws was during the 1990's, when there existed less media coverage of mass shootings.

In any event, one would imagine gun control would bring a large number of groups together. For example, both those who support law enforcement and those groups that support criminal justice reform, such as Black Lives Matter, should be able to support gun control.

Efforts to reduce gun violence should not only make it safer for police officers to do their jobs (and thus reduce the

number of incidents like the Burnsville shooting) but also reduce the number of people killed in officer-involved shootings. According to the Washington Post's database on police shootings, which has collected data since 2015, 83% of those killed in a police officer involved shooting were armed.

There are several things that can and need to be done. One thing would be to repeal the Dickey Amendment, as it effectively banned the Center for Disease Control from researching gun violence. If the National Rifle Association, which advocated for the amendment, really believed firearms protect-

ed people from violent crime, it would have to object to the repeal of the amendment.

A second thing that needs to be done would be to bring back the Public Safety and Recreational Firearms Use Protection Act, popularly known as the Federal Assault Weapons Ban.

But most importantly, we need to let our fear go. We need to stop fearing this world and those who are different from us. Firearms are tools and, when used correctly, there are places they can be useful.

Most importantly, we should not allow fear to drive us to reject reasonable regulations that could save lives.

# French Senate approves a bill to make abortion a right

By SYLVIE COBERT and BARBARA SURK  
The Associated Press

50 against. "This vote is historic," Justice Minister Eric Dupond-Moretti said. "The Senate has written a new page in women's rights."

France's Senate on Wednesday adopted a bill to enshrine a woman's right to an abortion in the constitution, clearing a key hurdle for legislation promised by President Emmanuel Macron in response to a rollback in abortion rights in the United States.

Wednesday's vote came after the lower house, the National Assembly, overwhelmingly approved the proposal in January. The measure now goes before a joint session of parliament for its expected approval by a three-fifths majority next week.

Macron said after the vote that his government is committed to "making women's right to have an abortion irreversible by enshrining it in the constitution." He said on X, formerly Twitter, that he would convene a joint session of parliament for a final vote on Monday.

Macron's government wants Article 34 of the constitution amended to specify that "the law determines the conditions by which is exercised the freedom of women to have recourse to an abortion, which is guaranteed."

The senate adopted the bill on a vote of 267 in favor, and

None of France's major political parties represented in parliament has questioned the right to abortion, which was decriminalized in 1975. With both houses of parliament adopting the bill, Monday's joint session at the Palace of Versailles is expected to be largely a formality.

The government argued in its introduction to the bill that the right to abortion is threatened in the United States, where the Supreme Court in 2022 overturned a 50-year-old ruling that used to guarantee it.

"Unfortunately, this event is not isolated: in many countries, even in Europe, there are currents of opinion that seek to hinder at any cost the freedom of women to terminate their pregnancy if they wish," the introduction to the French legislation says.

In Poland, a controversial tightening of the already restrictive abortion law led to protests in the country last year. The Polish constitutional court ruled in 2020 that women could no longer terminate pregnancies in cases of severe fetal deformities, including Down Syndrome.

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# Food aid reaches north Gaza for first time in weeks

By WAFAA SHURAFIA and SAMY MAGBY  
The Associated Press

A cluster of wildfires scorched the Texas Panhandle on Wednesday, including a blaze that grew into one of the largest in state history, as flames moved with alarming speed and blackened the landscape across a vast stretch of small towns and cattle ranches.

Authorities warned that the damage to communities on the high plains could be extensive.

Known as the Smokehouse Creek Fire, the largest blaze expanded to more than 1,300 square miles (3,370 square kilometers) and jumped into parts of neighboring Oklahoma. It is now larger than the state of Rhode Island, and the Texas A&M Forest Service said the flames were only about 3% contained.

"I believe the fire will grow before it gets fully contained," said Nim Kidd, chief of the Texas Division of Emergency Management.

The largest fire recorded in state history was the 2006 East Amarillo Complex fire, which burned about 1,400 square miles and resulted in 13 deaths.

Authorities had not reported any deaths or injuries in the sparsely populated counties as of Wednesday, while huge plumes of smoke billowed hundreds of feet in the air. The smoke delayed aerial surveillance of the damage in some



TSAFRIR ABAYOV • The Associated Press

Families of hostages held by Hamas in the Gaza Strip gather in Re'im, southern Israel, as they begin their march to Jerusalem calling for the release of hostages, Wednesday, Feb. 28, 2024.

areas, but officials warned residents of potentially large property losses.

"There was one point where we couldn't see anything," said Greg Downey, 57, describing his escape from the flames as flames bore down on his neighborhood. "I didn't think we'd get out of it."

Hemphill County Emergen-

cy Management Coordinator Bill Kendall described the charred terrain as being "like a moonscape. ... It's just all gone."

Kendall said about 40 homes were burned around the perimeter of the town of Canadian, but no buildings were lost inside the community. Kendall also said he saw "hundreds of cattle just dead,

laying in the fields."

Treresa Rankin videotaped her own home in the town of Canadian as it burned.

"Thirty-eight years of memories, that's what you were thinking," Rankin said of watching the flames destroy her house. "Two of my kids were married there ... But you

know, it's OK, the memories won't go away."

The town of Fritch, with a population of less than 2,000, lost hundreds of homes in a 2014 fire and appeared to be hit hard again.

The people in that area are probably not "prepared for what they're going to see if they pull into town," Hutchinson County Emergency Management spokesperson Deidra Thomas said in a social media livestream. She compared the damage to a tornado.

Authorities have not said what ignited the fires, but strong winds, dry grass and unseasonably warm temperatures fed the blazes. Near Borger, a community of about 13,000 people, emergency officials at one point late Tuesday answered questions from panicked residents on Facebook and told them to get ready to leave if they had not already.

"It was like a ring of fire around Borger. There was no way out ... all four main roads were closed," said Adrianna Hill, 28, whose home was within about a mile of the fire. She said a wind that blew the fire in the opposite direction "saved our butts."

Republican Gov. Greg Abbott issued a disaster declaration for 60 counties. The encroaching flames caused the main facility that disassembles America's nuclear arsenal to pause operations Tuesday night, but it was open for normal work on Wednesday.

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# SPORTS

## Men's hockey travel to Bemidji to battle for MacNaughton Cup

By AHMED HASSAN  
Staff Writer

The Minnesota State men's hockey team travels to Bemidji this weekend to take on the Bemidji State Beavers in the last regular season games of the year.

After splitting last weekend's series against Lake Superior State, the Mavericks kept their MacNaughton Cup hopes alive sitting four points behind the Beavers.

In order for the Mavericks to win their seventh straight MacNaughton Cup, the Mavericks will need to win Friday and Saturday.

If the Mavs get one regulation win and one overtime/shootout win, then they will be CCHA co-champions for only the seventh time in 100-year history of the trophy.

The Mavericks need five points to earn a shared title, and six points to win the MacNaughton Cup straight up.

The Mavericks go into the series holding a 16-12-4 overall record and 12-8-2 conference record. This places them second in the CCHA with 38 points.

The Beavers have a 15-15-2 overall record and 13-7-2 conference record, which places them first in the CCHA with 42 points.

"We're going up against a first place team, for us we've got a job to



DYLAN LONG • The Reporter

After their dramatic win against Lake Superior State, the Minnesota State men's hockey team close out their regular season with a road series against Bemidji State University.

go about," head coach Luke Strand in a press conference posted to the Maverick Athletic page. "We gotta take care of Friday to even be in the conversation for Saturday. We've got to go beat the first place team."

Earlier this year these two teams split their series in two high scoring games.

The Mavs won 5-1, and lost the next game 7-6.

Maverick captain and Hobey

Baker Nominee Sam Morton will be the main guy to watch up front for the Mavs.

Morton has scored a league leading 22 goals and dished out nine assists for 32 points (second in

CCHA).

Maverick wings Luc Wilson (16 points) and Lucas Sowder (25 points) will also be players to look at, cementing a dangerous offense for the Mavs.

The second line has been a highlight for the Mavs with Evan Murr, Carrabes and Josh Groll leading the Mavs in February with six points.

Four Maverick players are on active scoring streaks- Evan Murr (3 games), Adam Eisele (3 games), Lucas Sowder (3 games) and Brian Carrabes (3 games).

The Mavs go into this series averaging league leading goals scored per game (3.13), assists per game (5.16) and points per game (8.28).

Bemidji State goes into the series having been the hottest team in the CCHA in the month of February winning seven of eight games.

Strand had nothing but praise for the Beavers, calling them "dangerous."

"They got a really good balanced group, that's why they're in first place," said Strand.

The Beavers are coming off a series sweep against St. Thomas which propelled them to the top of the CCHA.

Four Beaver players have 20 plus points so far this season: Lleyton Roed (28), Kyle Looft (23), Eric Martin (22) and Carter Jones (21).

**CUP on page 8▶**

## Mavs look for redemption in NSIC Tournament

By MOHAMED WARSAME  
Sports Editor

The Minnesota State women's basketball team tip-off their Northern Sun Intercollegiate Conference Tournament run in the quarterfinals against Minnesota State University Moorhead Saturday.

The Mavericks go into the tournament after handily beating Bemidji State University 92-62 Saturday, and breaking the program's single-game scoring record in their 123-61 victory over the University of Minnesota-Crookston Friday.

Last time out against Bemidji State, the Mavs had just a four-point lead at the end of the first quarter. Early in the second quarter, Bemidji State's Erin Barrette hit a three-pointer to cut the Mavs' lead to three points. The Mavs then broke the game open with a 16-0 run after Barrette's shot. Natalie Bremer and Destinee Bursch both scored four points during that stretch, and Mackenzie Schweim and Hannah Herzig each contributed with three-pointers. This huge run helped the Mavs go into half-time with a 43-29 lead.

The second half started with both teams trading baskets on their opening possessions. MSU then went on another massive run and



DYLAN LONG • The Reporter

The Minnesota State women's basketball team heads into the NSIC Tournament with a 23-5 regular season record.

established their dominance early in the third quarter. The Mavs scored 14 unanswered points that put them up 59-31 with 6:26 left in

the quarter.

MSU forced the Beavers to commit six turnovers during that stretch, while Bremer and Bursch

each scored six points.

The Mavs went into the fourth quarter with a 73-49 lead, and Bursch's two quick layups 33 sec-

onds into the quarter extended their lead to 28. The Beavers would go on a 6-0 run, before MSU's Taylor Theusch ended their run with a three-pointer and kickstarted a Mavs' 10-0 run.

The Mavs ended the game shooting 44% from the field, 39% from the three-point line and made 15 of their 20 free throws.

Bremer led the way in scoring for the Mavs with 18 points. She also had seven rebounds and five steals. Bursch ended the game with 16 points, three assists, three rebounds and four steals. Joey Batt scored 11 points, had five assists and four steals.

As the team heads into the NSIC Tournament, head coach Emilee Thiesse said she believes the team responded well to the slight hiccup toward the end of the regular season.

"I thought our team responded really well after coming off of our loss last weekend. I think that sometimes can shake your confidence when you want to be building a lot of momentum. We talked a lot about how we could really use that as some motivation to really right some things that we needed to focus in on and I think we've done that over the course of the last two weeks," Thiesse said.

**NSIC on page 2▶**

# Justin Fields' next destination should be...



MORRY GASH • The Associated Press

Chicago Bears' Justin Fields throws during the first half of an NFL football game against the Green Bay Packers Sunday, Jan. 7, 2024, in Green Bay, Wis.

By MOHAMED WARSAME  
Sports Editor

A divorce between Justin Fields and the Chicago Bears feels inevitable at this point.

It should have never been as much of a debate that it was over the last few months whether or not the Bears should trade Fields when it became evident the Bears would end up with the first overall pick of the upcoming NFL Draft.

Fields just completed his third season in the NFL, which means the Bears would have to think about his long-term contract if he was to stay.

There is no way after what we have seen from him thus far that they should be comfortable making a significant commitment to him.

In the decision-making process of whether they should trade Fields, who is available is a major factor.

This year's draft isn't like the 2022 draft where the quarterback position was pretty much devoid of talent. Apart from "Mr. Irrelevant" Brock Purdy of course. The Bears have the first pick in a draft that has a generational talent like Caleb Williams.

Despite the reasons for why the Bears should trade Fields, that doesn't mean he isn't worth taking a flier on by another team.

He is a physical specimen, with

a big arm and an elite runner at the quarterback position. Here are three teams I think would be a good fit for the former Ohio State Buckeye.

Atlanta Falcons

This seems to be where a lot of people think he will land, and it makes sense.

It would be a homecoming for the Georgia native.

He would also be joining a young and talented group of offensive skill position players such as Bijan Robinson, Drake London and Kyle Pitts, that have underachieved thus far in their careers relative to where they were drafted.

Apart from the Carolina Panthers, there is very little separating the other three teams in the NFC South.

The Falcons have a talented roster and it is easy to envision a world where new head coach Raheem Morris brings positive energy to the building and he and his coaches get the best of their young talent.

Pittsburgh Steelers

This is another team with a lot of talented offensive pieces for Fields to work with. With guys like George Pickens and Diontae Johnson on the outside and a solid tight end like Pat Freiermuth, he would have good pass catchers.

There would also be the potential for them to have a dangerous

running game.

Fields is already a great runner. That combined with Arthur Smith calling the plays for Fields and the solid running backs they have could be something fun to watch.

The Steelers also have a guy by the name of Mike Tomlin as their head coach.

In case you haven't heard of him, he's never had a losing season in his 17 years as the Steelers head coach. That kind of stability would be good for Fields.

Los Angeles Rams

This is my wild-card landing spot for Fields.

The Rams just had a bounce back season, and look to be heading in the right direction again. Matthew Stafford just had a great season after battling injuries the previous one.

The reason this could be a good fit is because Stafford is 36 years old and has been beat up throughout his entire career.

Who knows how much more punishment his body can take. Similarly to the Steelers, the Rams are a stable organization with a great head coach in Sean McVay.

Fields could sit behind Stafford for a year or two and learn from a true professional and be developed by McVay.

The Rams also have a very young roster that Fields could grow with.

Kirk Cousins and Chris Jones head an NFL free agents list filled with star-quality players



DUANE BURLESON • The Associated Press

Minnesota Vikings' Kirk Cousins throws during the first half of an NFL football game against the Detroit Lions Sunday, Dec. 11, 2022, in Detroit.

By ROB MAADDI  
The Associated Press

Need a Pro Bowl quarterback, an All-Pro defensive lineman or a future Hall of Fame wide receiver?

NFL teams could find one of these guys and plenty more star-quality players when the free agency period begins on March 13. Kirk Cousins, Chris Jones and Mike Evans are among the best players who will be available on the open market unless their teams use a franchise tag by March 5.

The Bengals already used it on wideout Tee Higgins.

They'll be joined by running backs Derrick Henry, Saquon Barkley and Josh Jacobs, edge rushers Josh Allen, Brian Burns and Danielle Hunter and several

other talented players at various positions, including wide receiver, safety and linebacker.

Defensive line is the deepest position while offensive tackle has the fewest starting-caliber players on the list.

Here are the top 25 players set to become free agents:

1. KIRK COUSINS, QUARTERBACK, MINNESOTA VIKINGS: The four-time Pro Bowl QB was having an excellent season before he tore an Achilles tendon in October.

He has said he wants to stay in Minnesota and coach Kevin O'Connell reiterated the team feels the same way.

"I believe Kirk wants to be a Viking, and we're going to work to try and make that the outcome," O'Connell said Tuesday.

## ◀CUP from page 7

Mankato West graduate Kyle Looft is fresh off winning his fourth CCHA defenseman of the week accolade after his performances against St. Thomas.

Looft put up three points and blocked four shots Friday.

Rookie Rhy Chiddenton is fresh off winning the CCHA rookie of the week accolade after

leading all CCHA rookies with three points last weekend.

The Beavers have been a solid side this season averaging 14.88 blocked shots per game (2nd in CCHA), 0.11% shots per game (1st in CCHA) and 2.97 goals per game (3rd in CCHA).

This weekend's games will be held at the Sanford Center at 7:07 p.m. Friday and 6:07 p.m. Satur-

day.

"I'm way more confident than everyone who picked us sixth in the beginning," said Strand. "I love our guys and I love our crew, they've got a warrior mentality, and an underdog attitude.

If we can get the right bodies on the ice this weekend, then our confidence keeps going up."

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## The wild, wild Western Conference: Tight race to the finish awaits with slim separation among teams



RICK SCUTERI • The Associated Press

Los Angeles Lakers forward LeBron James (23) dunks over Phoenix Suns forward Kevin Durant (35) and forward Royce O'Neale during the first half of an NBA basketball game, Sunday, Feb. 25, 2024, in Phoenix.

By PAT GRAHAM  
The Associated Press

It's almost hard to picture a postseason without both LeBron James and Stephen Curry.

And yet it very well could happen. They're both on the bubble.

That's just the strength of the Western Conference this season.

As it currently stands, James and his ninth-place Los Angeles Lakers would host Curry and the 10th-place Golden State Warriors in the play-in tournament, with the loser being eliminated and the winner still needing to win another to actually make the postseason field.

From top to nearly bottom, the West has been a grind this season. Consider this: Kawhi Leonard and the Los Angeles Clippers reside in fourth and 2 1/2-games out of the No. 1 seed.

They're also a four-game slide away from falling into play-in territory.

Uncertainty reigns in a conference where the Minnesota Timberwolves and youthful Oklahoma City Thunder sit atop the standings with matching 40-17 marks.

The next several weeks are going to be a mad dash for seeding — and playoff survival.

"The depth of the West and the amount of teams that are legit threats is as deep as it's ever been,"

said Phoenix coach Frank Vogel, whose team has an identical record (34-24) as New Orleans, both a half-game away from the play-in line.

A quick refresher course on the format for the play-in tournament that takes place April 16-19: The seventh and eighth seeds will play in each conference and the winning team will earn the seventh seed into the NBA playoffs. The eighth seed still has a safety net and will face the winner of the ninth and 10th seeds to see who gets in.

Last season, Miami lost its first game in the play-in bracket, then beat Chicago to advance.

The Heat made it all the way to the NBA Finals before losing to Denver in five games.

The Lakers, too, were in the play-in tournament, winning their matchup, before going on a run all the way to the Western Conference finals.

Right now, Sacramento sits in the seventh spot and would host Luka Doncic and the Dallas Mavericks.

The loser would draw either the Lakers or the Warriors, with either James or Curry being knocked out — or both.

That's still down the road, though.

The playoff picture in the West remains way too blurry, unlike the Eastern Conference where

Boston leads by 7 1/2 games over Cleveland. Miami, which resides in sixth position, is 13 games back.

"The Western Conference has just been a bear for as long as I can remember, and this year is no exception," Thunder coach Mark Daigneault said. "Great teams up and down. Very, very potent and capable teams on any given night."

The path to the crown, of course, goes through Nikola Jokic and the reigning champion Denver Nuggets after they won their first NBA title in franchise history.

Jokic is putting up MVP-worthy numbers once again, averaging 26.1 points, 12.3 rebounds and 9.3 assists.

But with Jamal Murray and Kentavious Caldwell-Pope dealing with nagging injuries this season, Nuggets coach Michael Malone has stated he will prioritize health over chasing a particular seed.

"I'm much more concerned with getting all of our players to the finish line healthy," said Malone, whose team is currently third. "Knowing that if we are healthy going into the postseason, I have the utmost confidence this team can go into any building in the entire NBA and win a series."

This season may be dawn of a new era for the Warriors, who captured four titles behind the nucleus of Curry, Draymond Green and Klay Thompson.

### ◀NSIC from page 7

Even though the Mavericks didn't know who they will be playing earlier in the week, their play style allows them to be ready for different opponents.

"That's one of the nice things about our style of play. We make little tweaks in maybe what we do with our full court defense, but it's so chaotic and hectic, it really takes other teams out of what they want to do. So it makes our scout

and our prep so much easier because we're just constantly focusing on us and what we do, so that actually plays right into our hands when it comes to postseason play," Thiesse said.

Not letting outside noise distract the team is a key focus for having a successful tournament.

"When our team was playing so well over that course of 19 games where we had that winning streak there, what really was

separating our team was just how locked in we were to us and each other. We were having so much fun. Our road trips were enjoyable. We didn't get caught up in, where do we have to go? Who do we have to play? We call that outside noise.

We want to come back to that kind of that same, staying present and not getting caught up in outside noise," Thiesse said.

MLB wants to make starting pitching more prominent, but it's a tough task in today's game



ROSS D. FRANKLIN • The Associated Press

Texas Rangers' Max Scherzer flips the ball in the air as he paces the dugout during the seventh inning of a baseball game against the Arizona Diamondbacks Tuesday, Aug. 22, 2023, in Phoenix.

By JAY COHEN  
The Associated Press

We're so scared now to let guys fail."

Max Scherzer logged at least 179 innings in 10 of his first 16 years in the majors. And the three-time Cy Young Award winner learned some tough lessons on the road to pitching deep into games.

That's one reason why the Texas Rangers right-hander thinks Major League Baseball needs to look a lot deeper than a roster limit if it wants to return starting pitching to prominence.

"I became a better pitcher once I went through three times in the lineup and was failing on that third time through the lineup," the 39-year-old Scherzer said. "That's every young pitcher's struggle, is learning how to pitch three times through a lineup. ...

The state of starting pitching has the attention of MLB Commissioner Rob Manfred, who said in October the league is considering lowering the maximum of 13 pitchers per team to 12 possibly as soon as the 2025 season — with the goal of placing a greater emphasis on starting pitchers.

Big league starters averaged 15.4 outs and 85.1 pitches last year, according to Sportradar, and 15.6 outs and 84.9 pitches in 2022. But the numbers were 17.4 and 93.1 as late as 2015, and 17.8 and 98.6 in 2000.

"I grew up a fan of the game, and me and my dad used to pick Astros games based on when Roy Oswalt was pitching," Chicago Cubs right-hander Jameson Taillon said.

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# VARIETY

## Resilience, faith and triumph in 'The Destined Child'

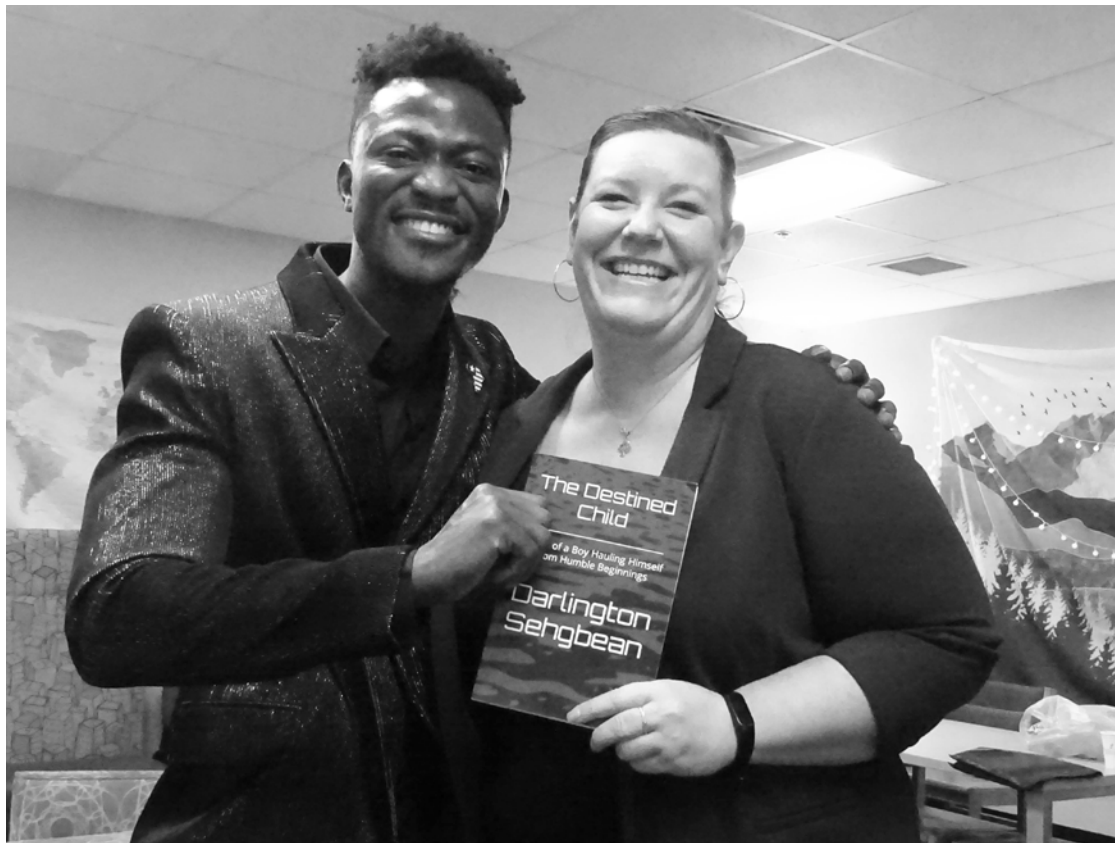
By ANAHI ZUNIGA  
Staff Writer

Minnesota State senior Darlington "Destined" Sehgbear celebrated the launch Wednesday of his now-published autobiography "The Destined Child," where he was finally able to share his story in a panel discussion and exclusive interview organized by the Maverick Involvement Team in the International Student Association Office.

Set in post-war Liberia, Sehgbear tells a tale that captures the strength of the human spirit in overcoming challenges. He also covers his personal experiences as an international student in the U.S. and provides inspiration and a celebration of dreams against all obstacles.

Sehgbear shared what inspired him to write his own story, which had been in the works for two years.

"I really got inspired to write this book when I came to the US because just looking back and trying to pay tribute to my mom, she's been a huge part of my life since I was born. I didn't have a dad, just my mom. Then she unfortunately passed away when I was 8 years old. I had to survive a civil war and overcame a lot of



ALEXIS DARKOW • The Reporter

Minnesota State senior Darlington Sehgbear celebrated the book launch of his autobiography, "The Destined Child," Wednesday. The book takes place in post-war Liberia and has been in the works for the past two years.

barriers, a lot of obstacles until I found a scholarship to come to the US. So just reflecting on my own life. I feel like I needed

to nail this down into a book," Sehgbear said.

"The two reasons I wrote it, first to pay tribute to my mom

and just try to bring her story to life. Because she lived her entire life in a village so I wanted to just make that to be something

**CHILD on page 11▶**

## The importance of charcuterie boards

By MERCEDES  
KAUPHUSMAN  
Variety Editor

In this world there are meat lovers, cheese lovers, fruit lovers, vegetable lovers and snack lovers. It seems unlikely a meal could satisfy all of these listed categories, but fear not. The world gave us its greatest gift to quench all taste buds: the charcuterie board.

A charcuterie board is a plate filled with an assembly of cured meats, cheese, crackers, nuts, sauces and anything else your heart desires. It's typically listed as an appetizer, and pairs well with a glass (or five) of wine.

The charcuterie board is not only a delectable tray, it is an experience: picking out each ingredient to blend together, cutting and slicing into intricate pieces, arranging the ensemble in a creative way, and stomaching the entire slab after a hard day's work.

Whether it is for birthday parties, weddings, holidays or even funerals, charcuterie boards bring people together. They're classy, sophisticated and scream, "I chose to put effort into my dish because I have a heart of gold." If you are the charcuterie-board supplier, you are guaranteed to snag the title of favorite guest (Besides funeral circumstances, then you are the second favorite).

A charcuterie board is also something you could make 100 different times with 100 different combinations, and it never gets old. After all, charcuterie has been around for hundreds of years, and I expect it to stick around for thousands more. As long as the Earth wants to be a happy place to live, it is essential for charcuterie boards to also be present for consumption.

One of my fondest memories was the day I made my first charcuterie board. I put together a Christmas-themed plate for my roommates with various cheeses (gouda is mandatory), salami, ham, prosciutto, chocolate-covered almonds, jams, crackers, toast, dates, grapes, olives and strawberries. I also bought wine (also mandatory), set it on the table and patiently waited for them to arrive. Once they trickled home from their day jobs, my beautiful charcuterie board greeted them hello. They were so proud of me for my charcuterie placement skills, and we cleaned the entire plate.

Moral of the story: go to

**CHARCUTERIE on page 11▶**

## Contemporary Vocal Group takes the stage

By JACK HARDING  
Staff Writer

Singing and applause filled Halling Recital Hall Tuesday in response to a performance from the Contemporary Vocal Ensembles (Maverick Vocal Precision and Maverick Fusion).

Maverick Vocal Precision is an a cappella group consisting of around eight people. Maverick Fusion is a Pop choir that performs a variety of contemporary songs, consisting of around a dozen people.

During the show, the groups switched off every few songs. They performed popular songs like "Everybody Wants to Rule the World," "Mr. Blue Sky, Beggin'," "Viva La Vida," "Centuries," and more. In addition to singing, the performances included acting. Several performers sang solos as well.

Maverick Vocal Precision members Claire Sundquist, Michael Wohlman and Drew Burling talked about what it's like performing for a live audience.

"It's just kind of an intrinsic motivator. I love performing. Just kind of like an exhilarating feeling when you step out onto a stage, especially if you're singing a solo. It's hard to describe it but it's a very special feeling," Sundquist said.

"I always enjoy performing for an audience. I like to be seen, makes me feel noticed and my talents recognized. And then hopefully, in case people are out there, I like to think that it inspires others," Wohlman said.

"It feels really exciting because we've put so much time and energy into making a cool performance. Being able to finally put our hard work into fruition and perform for friends, family and faculty is always super exciting. It's a little nerve wracking because you only get one shot at it. But it usually goes really well," said Burling.

When it comes to preparing for performances, the students have different ways of getting the butterflies out. Excessive amounts of practice, vocal warm ups and even, as Wohlman said, taking a shower.

"Before any performance I always take a nice relaxing shower. Just get the jitters out, get the stress out, just kind of relax and know things are gonna go well. I've gone through enough shows at this point that I know that things are gonna go fine. There's nothing to worry about. You've practiced, you've perfected, you're good to go," Wohlman said.

According to Wohlman and Burling, forming the show is



NATE TILAHUN • The Reporter

The Contemporary Vocal Ensembles (Maverick Vocal Precision and Maverick Fusion) performed in the campus Recital Hall Tuesday night.

an extensive process. First they worked together to figure out what songs they wanted to do by pitching and listening to a variety of music. Once the list was narrowed, they voted on the best ones. Then they went through the process of assigning roles to the different members for each song, taking into account what sounds everyone is best at.

A few weeks prior to the concert, once everyone had the singing down, they worked on

choreography. Around this time they started using microphones to get people used to performing with them. They spend the last couple days making sure everything works well and everyone is comfortable.

For those who missed it, the Contemporary Vocal Group's next performance will be in April. Returning viewers, including myself, are already getting excited to see what they cook up.

# Your guide to avoiding abject boredom this spring break



Courtesy Flickr

Spring break is around the corner, and many students may be spending their time off at home. To make the most of spring of break, there are many things to do around Mankato and Minnesota for the week.

By ELLIE MESCHKE  
Staff Writer

Spring break is finally here and you find yourself with nothing to do and an entire week to kill. Well, worry not! Here are some fun ideas to spice up your spring break.

**Touch grass:** I know the weather is a little weird, but go outside. Take a walk. Sit in the grass and watch the birds fly by. With midterms and the scholarship deadline, it's important to sit down, relax and refresh. And what better way to refresh than sitting outside?

**Just Binge it:** Do you have a show or a movie you've been meaning to watch? Now is the time! Take a look through Netflix or Hulu; with thousands of titles, there has to be something that speaks to you. Or, take the time to watch something new. Some titles I'd recommend would be "Lucy," "Wonder Woman" and "The Disastrous Life of Saiki K."

**Get friendly:** I know that a lot of people travel or have plans during the break, but it doesn't hurt to reach out to your friends. Whether it's watching a movie together on

Discord or just having a chat over the phone, it's always nice to take time to talk with your friends.

**Go exploring:** Whether you're a longtime resident or you're just staying for school, this is the perfect time to explore Minnesota and its lovely tourist attractions and landmarks. While some attractions that immediately come to mind are the Mall of America and Nickelodeon Universe, there are other fun attractions such as the Guthrie Theatre, the Minnesota Zoo, the Minnesota Sculpture Garden and more.

**Get a hobby:** Is there a hobby or skill that you've always wanted to learn but never had the time? Or just something that you saw that looks interesting? Well, now's the time! I know, a week is a short time to start learning a new hobby, but think of it this way: you can give it a try, and if you like it, you can continue learning and improving in your free time, and if you don't, well, at least you gave it a try.

**Pod people:** Now I'm one of those people who enjoy listening to podcasts, and if you like having something in

the background while you lie down or work, I highly recommend browsing Spotify for something new to listen to. If you don't know where to start, I would recommend "Welcome to Nightvale," "Batman Unburied" and "The Magnus Archives."

**Book it:** Look, I know a lot of you would rather scroll through Instagram instead of reading a book, but honestly, read a book. I mean it. Go to the library, find something that sounds interesting, and lose yourself in a good book. Sitting down with a cup of coffee or tea in a comfortable chair with a good book and a blanket is one of the best ways to unwind.

**Catch some zzzz:** And finally, get some rest. I know a lot of you were probably thinking it, but yes, take the time to catch up on sleep and enjoy not having to get up and race to class for a while. Get comfortable and close your eyes, and let your stress melt away.

No matter how you choose to spend your break, I hope it's a great one. Congratulations on finishing midterms, and may you all have a wonderful spring break!



Courtesy Mercedes Kauphusman

A charcuterie board is comprised of meat, cheese, fruits and more.

◀CHARCUTERIE from page 10 the store tonight, pluck out

◀CHILD from page 10

that people can use as an inspiration. And then also my personal life discussion based on obstacles and challenges I overcame to be where I am today and where I want to see myself in the next five years. I feel like it brings a lot of courage, a lot of inspiration and perseverance. I wanted to share that to inspire other people."

As a full time MSU student, Seghbean said he tried to find balance between his free time to write around his schoolwork in addition to having no expertise on how to write a book.

Another challenge Seghbean discussed was the difficulty contacting his long-distance family from a different country and recounting life-changing events.

"Because this is a life story that is not just about my personal life; it's about my mom, it's about my grandparents and how I was raised, where I came from and our cultures. And I didn't really live much of my life in the village. I was 8 years old when I left," He said. "I needed to really refresh my memory of things that I needed to include in the book. And lastly the conversation, it was uncomfortable. Because when you read the book, you will learn that my mother's death was not typical. So having that conversation with people who know the story; they didn't want to explain that because it comes with a lot of emotional trauma."

Seghbean said he hopes that by sharing his experiences as an international student in his book, other international students can find the resources they need at Minnesota State and help them overcome any barriers presented.

"I think they can draw inspiration, courage and also, I think this book is going to give a new perspective in seeing the different resources they have on campus, because when we first get to the US, the only thing that I think most international students tend to think about is the fact that we have limitations. All of these different immigration limitations are the biggest things that our minds tend to go to," he said.

"So because of that, we tend to forget about the other resources that we can actually utilize. I feel like there are a lot of opportunities out here, but people don't really tend to em-

phasize on them that much. So we feel limited and because of that we feel like there's no solution. So this book is going to provide that avenue that international students can seek."

Michelle Harvey, the assistant director of RSOs, Leadership, and Nontraditional Students, helped organize the panel and shared how many international students will be able to relate to Destined's story as well as discovering helpful resources at MSU.

"I think Destined's work is really just a story of inspiration and resiliency. So I think international students can easily see themselves in the story. I mean, obviously his personal life is his personal life, but the journey from leaving his country to come here for education, and I think that part of the story will resonate with a number of international students," Harvey said.

"I think the Kearney International Center is a great connection for international students to get connected to and our office is fantastic for getting connected. I know one of the things we talked about in this discussion was international students finding their place and finding their home and so that's the Student Activities; helping students get connected to student organizations to experiences and to really just make some Maverick memories so we can help with that specifically."

Seghbean hopes for his life story to live on in memory of his mother and also shares the potentiality of writing more books about his experiences and exploring more topics.

"Like I said, one of my purposes in this writing process was to pay tribute to my mother. I understand that she's not around and she's not alive, but then I want for her story to live on and a way that I thought I could do that was put that into a book, where even if I'm dead, that story is going to live on," Seghbean said. "My life still continues, I still have a lot of goals to accomplish. I still have a lot of experiences to have. And I plan to write more books not just about my personal life, but also about different topics."

"The Destined Child" is available for purchase on Amazon and will be available for purchase at the Maverick Campus Bookstore.

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