

Final Four Bound

Joey Batt and Natalie Bremer secure nail-biter



Courtesy Maverick Athletics

The Minnesota State women's basketball team defeated Georgia Southwestern State 93-88 in St. Joseph Missouri Monday. Their 22 free throws propelled them over the top to secure the win to advance to the Final Four for the first time since the 2008-09 season. Joey Batt tallied 21 points, six assists, four rebounds and one steal while Natalie Bremer scored 14 points, six steals and five rebounds. They will play California State San Marcos. A win would advance them to the National Championship.

FINAL on page 10▶

Women Elected Panel highlights women in politics

By LAUREN VISKA
Staff Writer

Minnesota State alumnae Nelsie Yang is the youngest and first Hmong-American woman elected council member in St. Paul's history, and is on an all-women city council.

"I think a lot about the children and young people who I've met along the way, who believe in themselves even more because they see another young person who's able to be in a leadership position. Growing up, I didn't have that," said Yang. "I didn't see myself as a leader, nor could I ever imagine myself running for office. Being somebody who makes it more possible for people by being that real-life example and testimony is one of the most rewarding things."

Yang spoke at the Women Elected Panel Thursday.

The Women's Center hosted this event and its goal was to focus on local government and its importance when national politics is something people mostly hear about. Yang, who graduated in 2017, said she tries to prioritize



DAVIS JENSEN • The Reporter

Minnesota State alumnae Nelsie Yang spoke at the Women Elected Panel Thursday hosted by the Women's Center.

her time in Mankato and share her story.

"I share my story in hopes that it'll be an inspiration for people, especially young folks, to be the best version of themselves and reach their biggest hopes and dreams. It's a way for me to not only pay it forward for all of the people who brought me to where I am today

in my life, but to also get me closer to the world that I want to live in, which is the world where like young people are thriving and they have everything that they need to be successful in life," said Yang.

Director of the Women's Center, Liz Steinborn-Gourley, said having an all-women council in St. Paul is important.

"I think that it's an opportunity to hear from folks who have historically been excluded from the government. I think if you look at the national level, if you look at a lot of local levels, you see that the ratio tends to favor men, for a whole list of reasons," said Steinborn-Gourley. "When women run, they're thinking about many dynamics of their family and their community and serving others. So I think it's a really cool opportunity and it'll be interesting to see what they get up to this year."

Student Government President, Sierra Roiger, was a part of this event and said that students should care about local elections because it affects them, whether they know it or not.

"Students make up a huge part of the Mankato community. Of course MSU has 14,672 students, however, on campus, we have around 10,000 that take on-campus classes," said Roiger. "That's a big chunk of people that could really influence what the city does for them and how they view the area and how the state views

WOMEN on page 2▶

MSU's
brand to be
updated for
the first time
in 25 years

By AMALIA SHARAF
Staff Writer

Minnesota State has presented a new visual identity for the university, highlighting its position as a top choice for prospective students and energetic attitude of current students.

Senior Director of University Marketing and Communications Sara Frederick said the visual identity was not updated since 1998. She said the desire to look into the brand started about six years ago, when the cabinet of advancement started doing research. The results led to a decision to move forward and refresh the brand.

"One thing we had heard was that our current logo was quiet and it didn't really represent the boldness or the energy that students felt here and we really wanted to capture that we don't want to be quiet," said Frederick. "We want to represent the energy that we have on this campus."

Associate vice president of university marketing and communications Amy Meckeler said the research consisted of multiple steps. The effort utilized focus groups and thousands of survey responses regarding the new brand.

"There was some market research and there were conversations with campus leadership," said Meckeler. "There were focus groups with students, I think, 75 to 100. That included student focus groups' surveys. All of that put together, they kind of synergize all of that and then come up with concepts on the first three concepts that people reviewed and voted on."

Meckeler said the official start date to use the new brand elements is April 26.

"It won't be like everything just changes right away," said Frederick. "But over time, over a period of years we hope to get everything updated to the new brand starting. We will start with the digital footprint of the university because it's easier to update our digital footprint and then we'll just move through all the representations."

The new elements are available for everyone on the main university's website. The

REBRAND on page 2▶

Deaf/Hard of Hearing Community share experience

By ANAHI ZUNGI
Staff Writer

The American Sign Language Club hosted its main event of the semester: ASL Night Out, a panel consisting of members from the deaf and hard of hearing community in the Ostrander Auditorium where the individuals shared experiences living in the hearing world.

The panel consisted of members from Minnesota State and the Mankato area; assistant ASL professor Kari Sween, adjunct ASL instructors Joel Sween and Sara Gerdt, and community members Mark Thompson, Tracy Bell-Slater and Curt Slater.

A surprise addition to the panel was the inclusion of CODAs, or children of deaf adults, where the children shared experiences in what it's like to be a CODA.

They all aimed to educate both MSU students and Mankato community members on the differences of how they live their lives.

Kari Sween is an advocate for social justice and said she wanted to share awareness about "implicit and explicit bias that comes with assumptions people have about deafness."

"I believe if deaf people share their life experiences with others, it puts things in perspective and hopefully makes a long-lasting impact," Sween said.

The panelists discussed how they first discovered they were deaf, what education they received as a deaf person, socializing with hearing individuals, finding aid



DYLAN LONG • The Reporter

The American Sign Language Club hosted its main event of the semester: ASL Night Out, a panel consisting of members from the deaf and hard of hearing community in the Ostrander Auditorium

with technological advancements, finding community among other deaf/hard of hearing individuals and facing misconceptions and discrimination in public places and workspaces, a keypoint greatly highlighted by Sween.

"Hearing people usually think that deaf people are less than because they cannot hear. This means they think deaf people don't have a 'voice' but we do. We express our

'voices' differently by using our hands," she said. "This also applies to people who have a small degree of hearing loss, they can use their voice to share the awareness that hard-of-hearing people do face difficulties as well."

Despite the challenges faced, the deaf/hard of hearing community continues to share a culture among its members, which greatly has and will continue to impact the

lives of many deaf/hard of hearing people.

Sween said how she "would love to see hearing people in general gain a better understanding of what entails in the deaf community."

"Learn about the rich history of deaf culture. Be more active when you see something is not right, we appreciate all the advocacy work. I like it when we work together side

by side to make the world a better place for future generations instead of having hearing people stand in front of us thinking they can do all the work," Sween said.

"Oftentimes, hearing people have this 'hearing savior complex' thinking that deaf people are helpless which could make the situation worse because then people will only rely on hearing facts from hearing people, not deaf people."

For people who wish to become better allies to the deaf/hard of hearing community, Sween suggests to "keep your mind and heart open to decrease the resistance to what you already learned before."

"Usually, this means that hearing people have a prior experience with deaf people and think when they encounter deaf and hard of hearing, it will be the same experience. It will not be the same and it is hard not to stereotype because we have a human tendency to bundle a cultural minority group together," she said. "Sometimes, we need to unpack what we learned and keep our minds open for a new learning experience."

Several members of the ASL club participated in leading the panel. ASL president Anna Symens and vice president Zoe Porter shared how important it was to have deaf/hard of hearing people share their stories to the hearing world, with Symens saying how glad the club was to put on the panel and saw that "it did serve its purpose."

"The purpose of the panel was

DEAF on page 4

'The Miracle Myth' questions belief of miracles

By JEREMY REDLIEN
Staff Writer

In his presentation "The Miracle Myth," Lawrence Shapiro, a professor of philosophy from the University of Wisconsin-Madison, argued that believing in miracles is irrational and unjustified.

"My claim is that no one has ever been justified in believing in miracles," said Shapiro.

According to Shapiro, he was not trying to prove that miracles never happen but that believing in miracles, given current scientific knowledge, is neither rational nor justified.

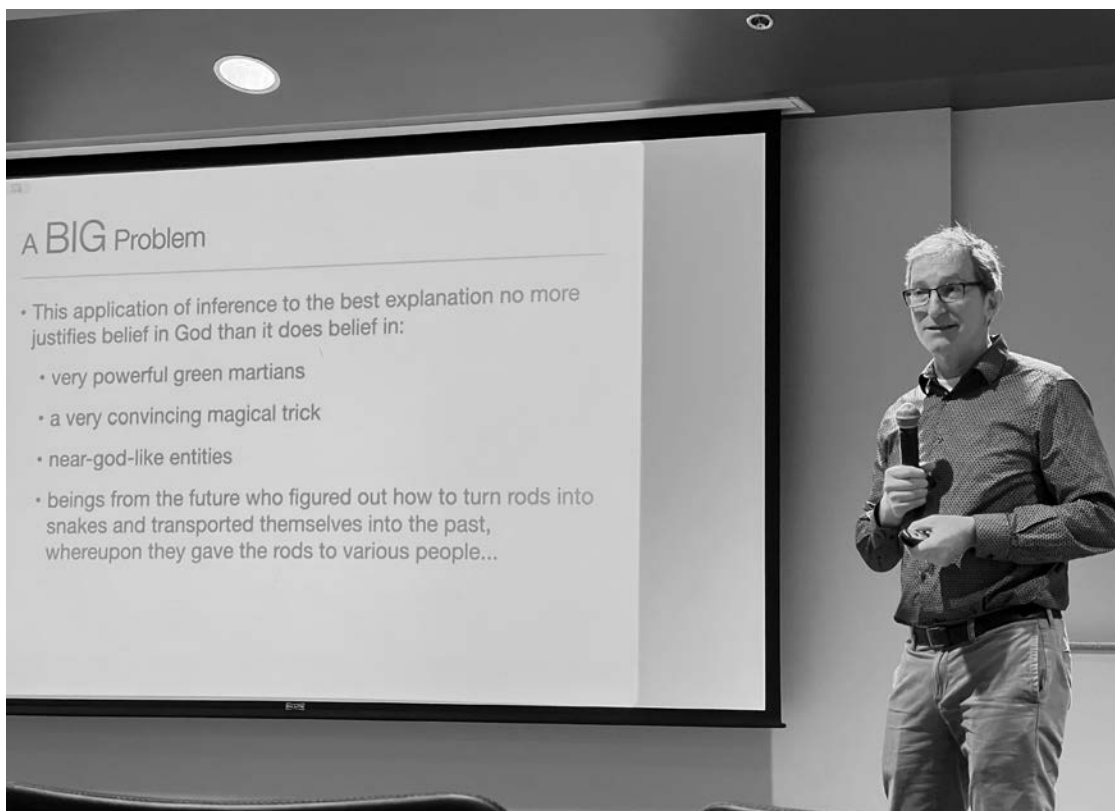
In the introduction to his lecture, Shapiro took the time to both define what constitutes justified beliefs.

To Shapiro, justified beliefs may be true or false but the important thing is that there is well sourced evidence to justify them. Shapiro listed several things that might not constitute good evidence such as fortune cookies and certain newspapers, like the National Enquirer.

"Since my sister-in-law is not in the audience, I can say that astrologers are not a good source of evidence," said Shapiro.

Shapiro also took the time to explain what he meant by miracles, first by defining what they are not.

"So I don't mean events that are merely awe inspiring or majestic or fortunate or surprising," said Shapiro.



DAVIS JENSEN • The Reporter

Lawrence Shapiro, a philosophy professor from the University of Wisconsin-Madison, argued that believing in miracles is irrational and unjustified at his presentation.

iro.

Shapiro described several events that have been popularly described as miracles but which he did not consider miracles. One of these was the "Miracle on Ice" victory when the United States defeated the Russian hockey team at the

1980 Olympics.

What miracles are, according to Shapiro, are events that lack rational or observable causes.

"They are things for which we don't have any explanations, given the way we understand the world

to work," said Shapiro.

Shapiro used statistical arguments to claim that eyewitness testimony on its own should not be used as a source of evidence for miracles. Shapiro also relied upon the philosopher David Hume to make his points.

During the presentation, Shapiro frequently connected belief in miracles with belief in God. Wanting to argue that belief in God is unjustified was in fact a motivating factor behind Shapiro wanting to give this presentation in the first place. This was because, in his opinion, many problematic laws are being created by politicians using religion to justify their positions.

"So much legislation in this country now, which creates the laws that dictate how I'm allowed to live my life, is coming from people who think that their legislation should reflect God and Christianity," said Shapiro.

"These people are telling us how to live our lives based on their belief in events like miracles, that they're not justified in believing."

At the end of the presentation, several members of the audience debated and discussed Shapiro's arguments with him at length.

"The Miracle Myth" was given by Shapiro Thursday and was the second presentation in the Nadine B. Andreas Lectures in Philosophy given by him this semester. The first lecture was on Embodied Cognition and focused on how embodied cognition differed from more traditional approaches to cognitive science and the potential future of embodied cognition as a discipline.

Trump’s New York hush money case is set for trial April 15



SETH WENIG • The Associated Press
A protestors demonstrates outside Manhattan criminal court while awaiting the arrival of former President Donald Trump, Monday, March 25, 2024, in New York. A judge will weigh on Monday when the former president will go on trial.

By MICHAEL R. SISAK,
JAKE OFFENHARTZ and
ERIC TUCKER
The Associated Press

Former President Donald Trump will stand trial April 15 on charges related to hush money payments meant to cover up claims of marital infidelity, a New York judge ruled Monday, tersely swatting aside defense claims of prosecutorial misconduct.

Assuming the date holds, the decision from Judge Juan M. Merchan ensures that the prosecution will be the first of four criminal cases against Trump to reach trial, with the presumptive Republican nominee facing a jury in the city where he built a business empire decades ago and gained celebrity status.

The trial had been in limbo after a last-minute document dump caused a postponement of the original date. In setting jury selection for April 15, Merchan bristled at what he suggested were baseless claims by Trump’s lawyers that prosecutors intentionally failed to

pursue tens of thousands of pages of records from a federal probe covering the same issues.

Prosecutors said only a handful of those newly released records were relevant to the case. Defense lawyers contended thousands of pages are potentially important and require painstaking review. Merchan, who earlier this month postponed the trial until at least mid-April, told defense lawyers that they should have acted sooner if they believed they didn’t have all the records they felt they were entitled to. Trump wasn’t harmed by the recent provision of material and the prosecutors who turned it over were not at fault, Merchan said. Outside the courtroom, Trump complained about the ruling, characterizing the case — as he has done repeatedly — as an act of “election interference.”

“This is a case that could have been brought three and a half years ago. And now they’re fighting over days because they want to try and do it during the election. This is election interference. That’s all it is. Election interference and

it’s a disgrace,” the former president said.

The hearing took place on the same day that a New York appeals court granted Trump a dose of good news by agreeing to hold off collection of his \$454 million civil fraud judgment — if he puts up \$175 million within 10 days.

The two developments underscored the extent to which New York, the city where Trump was born and raised, has emerged as an epicenter of his criminal and civil jeopardy. Though the hush money case filed last year by prosecutors in Manhattan is seen as involving less serious accusations than his other prosecutions — which charge him with conspiring to overturn the results of the 2020 presidential election and illegally retaining classified documents — it has taken on added importance given that it’s the only one that appears likely for trial in the coming months. Monday’s hearing centered on a documents dispute that had threatened to delay the case for additional weeks if not months.

◀**DEAF** from page 3

to spread awareness of the deaf community, deaf culture and see it from their perspective and their families and friends, the CODAs or the child of deaf adults and I think they really serve that,” Symens said.

“We just wanted to get the deaf and hard of hearing voices out there and educate people on what it’s like to be part of the community. And spreading the word about ASL and how it’s not meant to be seen as an impairment. It’s no different than English. It’s just another language,” Porter said.

Along with Symens and Porter, treasurer Courtney Young and social media manager Abby Strong shared their thoughts on the purpose of the ASL and deaf panel.

“It was to definitely allow the

community to see it in a different way.

“I bet a lot of people in the audience may haven’t gotten an opportunity to hear from their perspective like that before,” Young said. “It was good. Even for me too, I had not heard some of the things that they’re talking about and I thought it was really interesting and kind of brought a new perspective to it.”

“Opening up to people’s eyes and seeing their perspectives, especially as a student who is earning her ASL certificate, it was cool to hear people in the community and learn more about their story and what they’ve gone through growing up,” Strong said.

There are ways to provide accessibility and services to Deaf and Hard of Hearing people, such

as close captioning, figuring out the best ways to communicate and Sween mentions deaf and hard of hearing people appreciating “when hearing people take the initiative to ask questions.”

Sween said there are ways for students to spread awareness on campus already.

“You can take ASL and Deaf Studies classes. When you see something not right, speak up and be a difference-maker. Educate others who may not know much about deaf people and their culture. Getting the answers directly from a deaf and hard-of-hearing person is the best way to learn and spread awareness,” Sween said.

For more information on the ASL Club, visit www.mnsu.edu/mavcentral

Supreme Court again confronts issue of abortion



ALLEN G. BREED • The Associated Press
Boxes of the drug mifepristone sit on a shelf at the West Alabama Women’s Center in Tuscaloosa, Ala., on March 16, 2022.

By MARK SHERMAN
The Associated Press

The Supreme Court will again wade into the fractious issue of abortion this week when it hears arguments over a medication used in the most common way to end a pregnancy, a case with profound implications for millions of women no matter where they live in America and, perhaps, for the race for the White House.

Two years after the Supreme Court overturned *Roe v. Wade* and cleared the way for bans or severe restrictions on abortion in many Republican-led states, abortion opponents on Tuesday will ask the high court to ratify a ruling from a conservative federal appeals court that would limit access to the medication mifepristone, which was used in nearly two-thirds of all abortions in the United States last year.

That decision to reverse *Roe* had immediate political consequences, with Democrats making the case that the court had taken away a right that women held for half a century and winning elections as a result. Even conservative-leaning states like Kansas and Ohio voted against abortion restrictions. If the court were to uphold restrictions on medication abortions it could roil the election landscape in races for Congress and the presidency.

By rolling back Food and Drug Administration changes to the use of mifepristone, the ruling would cut off access to the drug through the mail and impose other restrictions, even in states

where abortion remains legal. The restrictions would shorten the time when mifepristone can be used in pregnancy, to seven weeks from 10 currently.

Most adults in the U.S., 55%, believe medication abortion pills are very or somewhat safe when taken as directed by a doctor, according to a KFF poll from May 2023, and 65% have “a lot” or “some” confidence in the FDA to ensure that medications sold in the U.S. are safe and effective.

A decision should come by late June. But no matter the outcome, the Supreme Court has not seen its last abortion case. Legal battles are pending over state restrictions, and new federal limits are likely if former President Donald Trump, Republicans’ presumptive nominee for 2024, returns to the White House. Next month, the justices will hear arguments over whether a federal law on emergency treatment at hospitals must include abortions, even in states that have otherwise banned them. Mifepristone, made by New York-based Danco Laboratories, is one of two drugs, along with misoprostol, used in medication abortions. Their numbers have been rising for years, and they accounted for 63% of the more than 1 million abortions in the U.S. last year, according to an estimate by the Guttmacher Institute, which supports abortion rights. More than 5 million people have used mifepristone since 2000.

Mifepristone is taken first to dilate the cervix and block the hormone progesterone, which is needed to sustain a pregnancy.

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How the deadly Russian attack unfolded killing 137

By DASHA LITVINOVA and
KOSTYA MANENKOV
The Associated Press

The auditorium at Crocus City Hall was about three-quarters full, with the crowd waiting to see Pic-nic, a band popular since the Soviet days of the early 1980s. But the concert was sold out in the 6,200-seat hall, so some of the audience was still likely getting food or were shedding their heavy coats in the cloakroom.

It was 7-10 minutes before the start of the show, scheduled for 8 p.m., said concertgoer Dave Primov.

Then came the popping sounds.

"Initially I thought: fireworks or something like that..." Primov told The Associated Press. "I looked at my colleague, and he also said: 'Fireworks, probably.'"

But it wasn't pyrotechnics. At least four khaki-clad men with automatic weapons were in the building, firing incessantly. Then they set the concert hall on fire.

It was the start of the deadliest attack on Russian soil in years that left 137 people dead and more than 180 more injured in what President Vladimir Putin called "a bloody, barbaric terrorist act." Although he sought to tie Ukraine to it, an affiliate of the Islamic State group claimed responsibility — which U.S. intelligence officials confirmed. Kyiv denied any involve-



VITALY SMOLNIKOV • The Associated Press

A woman reacts as she comes to place flowers at the fence next to the Crocus City Hall, on the western edge of Moscow, Russia, Sunday, March 24, 2024.

ment.

Four suspects were arrested in Russia's Bryansk region. Identified in Russian media as Tajik nationals, they were charged with carrying out a terrorist act and face a life sentence. They appeared before a Moscow court on Sunday night showing signs of severe beatings.

FRIDAY NIGHT

Crocus City Hall is a large entertainment and shopping complex in Krasnogorsk, a suburb on the northwestern edge of Moscow. It was built by Azerbaijan-born billionaire and property developer Aras Agalarov, who had ties to Donald Trump before he became

U.S. president. While Trump was a co-owner of the Miss Universe beauty pageant, he signed an agreement with Agalarov to hold the event at Crocus in 2013.

On Friday night, its vast hallways became a scene of slaughter as the gunmen entered and made their way to the auditorium, firing

at anyone nearby, sometimes at point-blank range.

Videos taken by those in the hallways and in the auditorium showed people screaming and trying to flee as the gunmen continued firing shots. Some hid behind the dark-red seats and tried to crawl toward the exits, according to footage and accounts of survivors reported in the media.

In one video, a young man says into the camera, with gunshots ringing out, "They set the auditorium on fire. The auditorium is on fire." For a moment, flames could be seen in a corner of the theater.

Primov and others were able to leave the auditorium before the gunmen got to it, he told AP. It took him about 25 minutes to leave the building altogether. He described the scene as complete chaos: The panic-stricken people tried to find exits, with gunmen still roaming through it and firing; people fell and collided with each other as they ran; men broke down locked doors, hoping they led to safety.

"We don't know what's ahead. We don't know what is behind this door. We don't know what is going on outside, maybe we're encircled (by the attackers), maybe someone is waiting there," Primov said.

Another survivor who identified herself only as Maria, echoed Primov: "This uncertainty, where to go, what to do, it scared (us) the most as every person there had no idea what was happening."

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Why students should speak up

A college is not a college without its students; valuing our opinions, beliefs and suggestions can shape our university experience, but we may feel intimidated by those on a pedestal.

It is both normal and expected to find concerns within our college. It's the place we go to nearly every day of the week, the place we learn, the place we grow, but every person walking through the hallways at Minnesota State is different.

Our needs are different, but our needs can't be met without speaking up.

An important element to enriching a university is diverse perspectives.

The individual views we have toward our university are prized; they transcend critical thinking, communication and understanding with one another as a college community.

Tying into the community aspect, most of us want to be heard. We want to be seen. We want somewhere to feel included. Speaking out for change brings people together.

We can find common interest with those who agree with us, and it makes it easier to break the initial discouragement of expressing an opinion.

Speaking up also helps us advocate for ourselves in our future endeavors.

The real world is intimidating, but we have the ability to create change or come to compromise over certain situations. Beginning to speak out on a smaller scale, whether it's reaching out to a professor, the president or other faculty in-between, is effective in strengthening our trust in our words.

Speaking out against something can be difficult, but the key components are preparation and confidence.

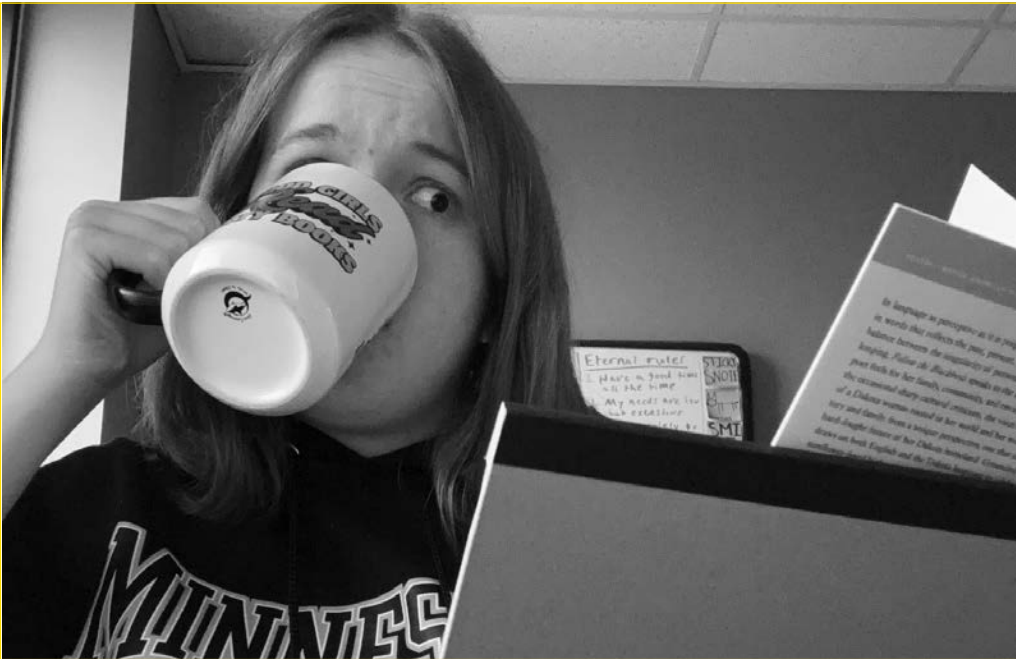
We do the research, practice with our peers and lay the groundwork for resolving a dispute. Then, we approach with intelligence, certainty and a smile. Treat it as a conversation, and work to find middle ground rather than expecting the hoped outcome.

The place where we receive our education is not only a learning experience in the classroom, but it is also where we learn from one another.

By speaking up we can begin to challenge the norm, build relationships on common ground, and draw awareness about complex subjects. We have the ability to create a ripple effect by being the initial touch of reform, and by speaking up as students we can be a part of growing and improving our university.

Perspectives

Mindful Journeys: The balancing act of mental health



Courtesy Emma Johnson

Taking time to enjoy coffee is hard when you have things to do.

Mental health is no walk in the park and it always seems to pop up at the most inopportune times. I can be working on schoolwork, feeling perfectly normal, and then get hit with all of my anxiety symptoms at once. When invasive thoughts swarm your head, all you can focus on at the moment is trying to keep yourself calm and get rid of them.

Once I had an official diagnosis of anxiety, my doctor told me I should try to find ways to relieve any stress I had that could be contributing to my anxiety until I went to my therapist for my first appointment (who I couldn't see for two months). With staying on top of my internship and worrying about starting my job as Editor-in-Chief, keeping my anxiety at bay was difficult. Since a lot of the thoughts are subconscious, trying to focus on tasks can be near impossible.



Emma Johnson
Editor In Chief

One thing therapists tell you is "If you hyper-fixate on your anxiety, it won't go away." You're supposed to distract yourself and it will alleviate. However, when you're nauseous, your mind is mucked with horrendous thoughts and myriad other symptoms, you want to get rid of those feelings as soon as possible. You also think about what caused you to get anxious in the first place. It puts you in a never-ending spiral.

Setting boundaries is one

of the most important parts of anxiety recovery. It's also the one that's taken me the longest to learn. Multi-tasking can be beneficial but it wears you down quickly as well. I've also been the type of person to be on go-mode that when I have time to do absolutely nothing, my mind and body don't know how to fully relax.

I've now learned to take time out of my day to take quick breaks to reset my mind. When I get to work in the morning, I'll drink coffee and play the New York Times mini-games before jumping into my emails.

If I've been working on an assignment for a couple of hours, I'll go for a brief 15-minute walk around campus or talk with my co-workers for a bit. Taking time to step away from my stressors has helped me manage my day. Prioritizing what's im-

COLUMN on page 7 ▶

Pulse

"What do you think of the brand refresh?"

Compiled by Alexis Darkow



CHLOE BEGIN,
FRESHMAN

"I think it's not bad. Just the school trying to keep up with the new logo trend."



JAKE STENSVAD,
SOPHOMORE

"I have not heard about it."



JULISSA PARAMO,
JUNIOR

"I think it is nice that the school is trying to improve and update its image. It's also sad to see change."



KAEL NEUMANN
FRESHMAN

"I think it is nice to see some change."



LUCAS YOUNGERBERG,
FRESHMAN

"I think it would have been cool to see the art department help make the change."



WREN ZWASCHKA,
GRADUATE STUDENT

"I didn't realize there was a 'brand refresh'."

Small businesses may struggle from a TikTok ban

By HALELUYA HADERO and ANNE D'INNOCENZIO
The Associated Press

If content creators and corporate executives made TikTok videos about the platform's possible U.S. demise, disco diva Gloria Gaynor's "I Will Survive" could supply the soundtrack.

Sure, businesses that built strategies around TikTok and promote products there would prefer not to seek eyeballs on another app. Smaller firms and solo entrepreneurs are bound to feel more pain in the event of a breakup. But if the popular video-sharing service remains under Chinese ownership and Congress bans it, many companies would learn to get along.

A lot of "What ifs" still surround a bill the U.S. House passed this month that would mandate TikTok's Beijing-based parent company, ByteDance, to sell its stake in the platform within six months or face a nationwide ban.

It's unclear when the Senate will take up the legislation or if it will approve a ban when it does.

Big brands that have relied on TikTok to reach younger consumers do not appear to be panicking as they wait to see what happens in Washington. But they also have started planning.

Some are retooling promotional campaigns that were originally intended just for TikTok. Many are testing alternatives and prioritizing work with influencers who have sizable followings on multiple social media platforms.

"I'm not the kind of marketer who wants to put all their eggs in one basket anyway," said Jeremy Lowenstein, chief marketing officer for the makeup brand Milani Cosmetics. "We can always pivot. And like any technology, there will always be something new to try."

To be sure, brands like Los-Angeles-based Milani will lose a valuable tool if TikTok isn't welcome in the U.S. anymore.

Last year, sales of a new Milani mascara spiked after an influencer couple known as The Lipstick Lesbians posted a TikTok video about it, Lowenstein said.

He's already looked at alternative apps like Flip, a little-known



ANNE D'INNOCENZIO • The Associated Press
Some of the 30 child influencers invited by toy company Cepia LLC wave at an event held to launch its new fashion doll line called Decora Girlz, at an FAO Schwarz store on March 2, 2024 in New York. Cepia began investing in TikTok in 2019.

shopping platform that allows users to earn money by reviewing beauty items and then buying them from featured brands.

Another cosmetics company, Oakland, California-based e.l.f. Beauty, created a viral sensation with a 2019 TikTok campaign that used an original song to explain the company's name stood for "eyes. lips. face." E.l.f. also was one of the first beauty brands to join TikTok Shop, the platform's e-commerce arm, during the U.S. beta testing.

E.l.f.'s chief marketing officer, Kory Marchisotto, said the in-app shop, which allows viewers to buy products from seller accounts and videos, is doing well. But she noted that Instagram Reels, YouTube Shorts and other venues also offer short real-time videos, unlike when TikTok stood alone.

"We'll take that incredible muscle that we built and develop and go with it wherever our community wants to go next, and they have always been the signal that has carried us," Marchisotto said.

Some marketing agencies are

telling brands to take basic precautions in case Congress ends up sending TikTok out the door. Billion Dollar Boy, a New York-based influencer marketing agency, has encouraged clients to spread their influencer spending across platforms, Edward East, the agency's founder and group CEO said.

Well-established TikTok influencers, including beauty and fashion gurus, continue posting regularly on the app.

But they're also posting exclusive content on Instagram or YouTube or devoting more attention to their other social media accounts, said Nicla Bartoli, the vice president of sales at The Influencer Marketing Factory, an agency that works to pair content creators and brands. Jasmine Enberg, a principal analyst at research firm eMarketer, thinks a TikTok ban would have a bigger effect on businesses today than a few years ago. Even though Instagram Reels and YouTube Shorts provide competition, they haven't cracked the magic formula of a TikTok video in driving

sales, Enberg said.

"Even though you can replicate the technology, you can't really replicate the culture, and people aren't behaving necessarily in the same way as they are on TikTok," she said.

TikTok does not receive the same level of ad revenue as Instagram and Facebook, according to data from eMarketer, but the firm predicts that it will surpass the other two this year in terms of the percentage of users that will make at least one purchase that originates on the platform.

"I think the impact will be felt across the board" if TikTok goes away, Enberg said "But it will be much more dramatic for small and medium businesses, as well as creator-founded businesses."

Toy company Cepia LLC, which was behind the 2009 holiday hit Zhu Zhu Pets, began investing in TikTok a decade later with the launch of Cats vs. Pickles, a collection of plush toys. Compared to other social networks, the platform has proven the best for telling sto-

ries about products and building a community of fans, Laura Frerichs, Cepia's head of marketing, said.

To introduce Decora Girlz, its new fashion doll line, the medium-sized company based in St. Louis, Missouri, invited 30 influencers with a strong presence on TikTok - most of them children - to FAO Schwarz in Manhattan this month.

Since the launch event, the doll line has amassed more than 53 million social impressions — the number of times Decora Girlz-related posts were viewed across social media platforms, according to Cepia.

Yet the toy industry is used to adapting, Frerichs observed, and would again in a post-TikTok market. Until 10 years ago, Cepia focused its advertising on three TV channels — Nickelodeon, Cartoon Network and the Disney Channel.

"The world has really changed now very quickly," Frerichs said.

Deborah Mayer, who has sold new and pre-owned handbags and other designer goods out of her New Jersey home for 16 years, understands that all too well. Early last year, TikTok recruited her business for the live component of TikTok Shop.

Mayer says her sales have jumped 50% since October largely due to purchases made during Debsluxurycloset's live-streamed displays, which can draw more than a thousand viewers. She estimates that 60% of her revenue now comes from TikTok, which would make a ban "devastating."

"We put a lot of time and effort building up this platform," Mayer, 52, said. "It would be a year of work down the drain."

A classified Senate briefing on TikTok held Wednesday prompted several senators to say legislation that would force ByteDance to sell on national security grounds was urgent. Others indicated they would prefer to consider a variety of proposals rather than rush to pass the House bill.

In a tacit acknowledgement that congressional action could be unpopular with the millions of Americans who use the app, some senators called for making a public case about TikTok's alleged dangers.

◀COLUMN from page 6
portant can also help you balance your mental health. I write down all of my assignments and meetings in my planner at the start of each week. Checking

things off of my to-do list makes me feel accomplished and having a visual reminder of what I still need to work on lets me keep my priorities straight. I found

that having small routines has also helped me out. Every night, I do some sort of skincare and write in a journal to help clear my mind for the day.

School, jobs, maintaining physical health and life in general can be a lot to handle, especially when you have to focus on your mental health at the same

time. However, practice takes time. The more work I've put into trying to balance my mental health, the more it's paid off over time.

◀COLLAGE from page 2
At President Inch's retreat in August, various portraits Madson captured of the local community were displayed.

"Josh had this way about how he captured the pictures that were different from a typical, 'Hold still-say cheeseburger' type of style. He made it fun and brought out the personality of each person and group which I thought was truly beautiful. I wanted to bring that same energy back to our campus and our students."

Roiger also shared that the col-

lage, "will hopefully be used in various ways, at commencement ceremonies, events, etc."

Ekaterina Kleshchenko, a student majoring in TESOL, was one of the students to take part in the photo shoot.

"I decided to go come here to meet Josh, because apart from taking photos here, he is going to be a keynote speaker at the GSEA conference organized by the English department on Friday. So I wanted to get acquainted with him," Kleshchenko said. "I was not a fan of photos, but he managed to per-

suade me to get the photos taken."

Kleshchenko took different types of poses for photo shoots.

"I tried a leaning pose and also smiled. Because once I was told by a professional that it's not just about poses, facial expressions are just as important."

Kesha Rana Thapa, also majoring in TESOL, mentioned the poses that Josh Madson helped her with when the photos were taken.

"All the poses were chosen by Josh, and as I took a photo with my friend, he held my hand on

her shoulders and also took photos with us making different poses together with my friend," Thapa said.

Thapa was excited to be at the event, because it is "great to have this kind of opportunity in the university, and also give many students a chance to see first hand his methods and skills."

Student Anthony Payne, majoring in finance, who took part in the event shared some of the reasons why he was compelled to join.

"I think the photos are excellent and it's a well run program. There's nice upbeat music and warm faces.

They also have a hype man who motivated me," Payne said.

Payne explained the different poses he struck were, "kind of a more serious pose."

I got my jacket on. I took photos without the jacket, where I looked at the camera."

When focusing on thoughts about the entire event, Payne had this to say. "I think it's very good on a given day to have all these people with different faces. It's representative of what a day in the union looks like."

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THE REPORTER'S MONTHLY



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SPORTS

Mavs make Final Four by surviving the Hurricanes

By MOHAMED WARSAME
Sports Editor

The Minnesota State women's basketball team outlasted Georgia Southwestern State 93-88 in a hard-fought victory Monday to punch its ticket to the DII Final Four — its first Final Four berth since the 2008-09 season.

With the win, the fifth-seeded Mavericks will face the eighth-seeded Cal St. San Marcos 7:30 p.m. Wednesday. If they win that game, they'll play the winner of the other national semifinal: either Texas Women's or Ferris State.

The Mavericks' first Elite Eight game in 15 years began with a jump shot made by Natalie Bremer after the Mavs won the opening tip.

The Hurricanes scored their first points of the game on their first possession after Kayla Langley got an offensive rebound and put it home after Destiny Garrett's missed jumper.

Joey Batt, who led the Mavs in scoring their last time out in the NCAA Central Region Tournament Championship game with 28 points, got herself on the scoreboard with a pair of free throws just over a minute into the game. The Mavs forced a turnover on the Hurricanes' next possession thanks to a steal by Emily Herzberg, which resulted in a layup by Destinee



Courtesy Maverick Athletics

The Minnesota State women's basketball team will take on Cal St. San Marcos 7:30 p.m. Wednesday with a chance to advance to the NCAA DII Championship.

Bursch to give the Mavs an early 6-2 lead.

Over the next four minutes of the quarter, GSW went on a 13-4 run and had a 15-10 lead with 3:51

left in the first. A pair of free throws by Batt and Herzberg pulled the Mavs to within one point of the Hurricanes. With 2:50 left in the quarter, a three-pointer by Bremer

tied the game at 17. The Mavs went on to outscore GSW 7-4 for the remainder of the quarter, including another three made by Bremer, to give them a 24-21 lead at the end

of one.

Scoring in the second quarter was kicked off by a jumper by Bursch to extend MSU's lead to 26-21. After the two teams traded getting points over the next few minutes, the Hurricanes took over at about the halfway point of the quarter.

With 4:04 left in the second, GSW's Kayhla Adams made a three to give the Hurricanes the 36-35 lead. This sparked a 16-4 run by the Hurricanes, and their lead was 49-39 with 1:43 remaining in the half.

A quick 5-0 run due to a three-pointer by Batt and a second-chance layup by Ava Stier quelled the Hurricanes momentum before the game got out of hand for the Mavs.

GSW's Adams made a three with five seconds left in the half, and at the end of two the Hurricanes had a 52-45 lead.

After trailing going into the half, the Mavs came out swinging in the third. In the first minute of the quarter, a jumper by Batt and layup by Emily Russo cut the Hurricanes' lead to 3. This jump started a 14-2 run for the Mavs over the next four and a half minutes.

The Mavs regained the lead and the score was 55-54 after a layup by

FINAL on page 11 ►

No. 1 seed Mavericks in Elite Eight

By HAYDEN LEE
Staff Writer

In its 102nd campaign as a varsity sport at Minnesota State, the men's basketball team has reached the NCAA Division II Elite Eight for the second time in school history.

The Mavs earned the No. 1 seed at the Elite Eight in Evansville, Ind. and will take on the No. 8 seeded Ferris State Bulldogs Tuesday.

The Mavericks are riding a scorching hot wave into the final stage of the season, and have not lost since January.

They are on a 13-game win streak, which includes winning the Northern Sun Intercollegiate Conference regular season championship Feb. 23, the NSIC Tournament championship March 5, then advancing to the Elite Eight on March 19 on their home court.

The most recent development for the team has been the National Association of Basketball Coaches All-District Teams, which had Malik Willingham on the All-Central District First Team and saw head coach Matt Margenthaler take home NABC Central District Coach of the Year.

However, all of these accolades



DYLAN LONG • The Reporter

Minnesota State has advanced to the NCAA Elite Eight for the second time in program history and will take on Ferris State on Tuesday at 6:00 p.m. at the Ford Center in Evansville, Ind.

and awards will not mean as much if the team doesn't achieve its ultimate goal: winning it all.

If they are to take home the DII Championship, the Mavericks will have three games left in their sea-

son.

First up is Ferris State, who they

have only faced once in school history.

Back in the 1992-93, MSU narrowly defeated FSU 74-73 at home.

In the present day, the Bulldogs have been hot as of late, winning nine straight including an NCAA Midwest Region Championship.

Their 28-7 record this season comes off the back of an explosive offense that averages 85.3 points, 37.4 rebounds and 20.1 assists per game on 49.7% from the field and 38.5% from three point range.

Ethan Erickson leads the team with 15 ppg and has made the most three-pointers on the team with 115.

Oddly enough, the Bulldogs did not have a player or coach representative on the All-Midwest District Team.

The winner of Tuesday night's showdown will move to the Final Four of DII Men's basketball, where they will take on the winner of West Texas A&M vs. North Georgia.

Dates and times are still to be determined.

The Mavericks and Bulldogs will take the court at 6 p.m. for the third game of the Division II Elite Eight at the Ford Center in Evansville, Ind.

Minnesota State take care of St. Cloud Huskies



Courtesy Maverick Athletics

Minnesota State’s Mitch Gutknecht clinched the win for the Mavericks after collecting his second save of the season Friday.

By AHMED HASSAN
Staff Writer

The Minnesota State men’s baseball team took care of business against the St. Cloud State University Huskies in a three-game series.

The Mavericks split a double header Thursday winning 3-2 and losing 5-1.

The Mavs were set to face the Huskies in a double header Friday, but one of the games was canceled.

The Mavs defeated the Huskies 3-2 Friday in a comeback win.

The Mavericks got off to a rocky start in game one going down 1-0 in the first inning.

The Huskies held the Mavs scoreless for the first five innings.

The Mavericks responded big in the sixth scoring three runs.

Senior Ryan Wickman and sophomore Louis Magers each smashed home their fifth homers of the season to cement the comeback.

Junior Mitch Gutknecht sealed the win for the Mavs in the top of the seventh after collecting his

second save of the season.

Game two was a different story for the Mavs as they weren’t able to get on the board after Magers’s RBI drove home Aiden Byrne for his second run of the day.

The Huskies dominated from this point defeating the Mavs 5-1.

“Two well-played games today. Spencer Wright did a great job on the mound keeping us in the game, head coach Matt Magers stated after the game.

“Byrne, Wickman, and Magers had great at-bats all day which propelled our offense.

In the second game, we had great at-bats to get baserunners on but were unable to get the ball to fall in.”

Friday’s game sparked another comeback win for the Mavs.

The Mavs were trailing 2-1 going into the ninth inning.

The Mavericks got on the board first in the bottom of the second after the Huskies made an error which contributed to the Mavs scoring.

Magers was forced onto third base and brought home after a

sacrifice bunt from Zach Stroch.

Ryan Friedges registered his 15th RBI of the season on the play.

The Huskies had a strong eighth inning, scoring twice to bring their lead up to 2-1.

The Mavs put in Sean Gamble in response to close out the ninth.

Gamble delivered a clean inning giving the Mavs momentum heading into the bottom of the ninth.

Magers opened the ninth with a leadoff walk, and was pushed to second base after a sacrifice bunt by Nick Baker.

The comeback was sealed for the Mavs after Stroch smashed his second home run of the season for a 3-2 win.

“A big win in tough conditions to clinch the series,” Matt Magers stated after the game.

“We got impressive efforts on the mound from Magers, junior Mitch Gutknecht, and Gamble to limit a strong offense.”

The Mavericks travel to Duluth to take on the University of Minnesota Duluth Thursday.

◀**FINAL from page 10**

Russo with 7:14 left in the third. MSU then extended their lead to 59-54 after buckets by Russo and Batt.

The Hurricanes responded to the haymakers the Mavs were throwing by going on a 9-0 run in a two-minute span and regained the lead 69-65 with 1:03 left in the quarter.

Batt got a three-point play after she was fouled on a layup. MSU went into the final quarter trailing 71-68.

Bursch got the first score of the fourth quarter after she got an and-one layup following a turn-

over by the Hurricanes.

This tied things up at 71. Stier’s jumpshot put the Mavs up again after a turnover by the Hurricanes, but GSW’s Garrett tied things back up at 73 almost immediately.

Both teams went back for over the next couple of minutes to set up a nail biting finish.

With 3:30 left in the game, GSW’s Lexi McCully knocked down a three-pointer and gave the Hurricanes their first lead since the opening minute of the fourth, and the score was 80-79.

The Mavs led 84-82 with under two minutes left to play before GSW’s McCully and Herzberg

traded threes and MSU’s lead was now 87-85 with 1:14 left in the game.

After free throws made by Batt and Russo in the final minute, the Mavs were up 90-85 with 31 seconds left.

The Mavs held on to advance to the Final Four.

As a team, the Mavs shot 42.5% from the field, 32.1% from three and made 22 of 32 free throws.

Batt led the way in scoring for MSU with 21 points.

She also got six assists and four rebounds in 39 minutes played.

Battle for Western Conference Play-In tournament



ABBIE PARR • The Associated Press

Golden State Warriors guard Stephen Curry (30) celebrates after scoring during the first half of an NBA basketball game against the Minnesota Timberwolves, Sunday, March 24, 2024, in Minneapolis.

By AHMED HASSAN
Staff Writer

There’s only three weeks to go until the playoffs start and the NBA’s Western Conference is tight, and has been tight from the beginning of the season, but it doesn’t get much tighter than the teams who are in contention for the play-in tournament.

The Play-in tournament only holds spots for the 7-10 seeds. The seventh and eighth seed will face off with the winner of that game advancing to the playoffs as the seventh seed. The loser of that game will face the winner of the ninth and 10th seed game (loser of this game is eliminated) where they will move forward as the eight seed, meaning only two teams get out of the play-in.

The Western Conference teams have stayed neck and neck, with six teams being in contention for making the play-in tournament- Houston Rockets, Golden State Warriors, Los Angeles Lakers, Dallas Mavericks, Sacramento Kings, and the Phoenix Suns.

6-8 seeds

The Suns haven’t been on a good run of form since the All-Star break even with the amount of stars on their team. All season, it’s been said that the Suns just need time and that they’ll figure it out, but clearly that hasn’t been the case.

The Suns are 42-29 putting them only one win ahead of the Mavericks and the Kings, which is a scary sight for the Suns. The Suns have won their past three games, and will need to keep up that form in order to avoid the play-in.

The Mavericks and Kings are both in very similar situations with both teams holding a 41-29 record. The Kings have gone 10-6 since the All Star break while the Mavericks have gone 9-6.

The Mavericks have caught fire with Luka Doncic and Kyrie Irving seemingly figuring things out. This could set up the stage for another run in the playoffs, but they’ll need to make it first.

The Kings appear to be a shadow of themselves from last year, but their talent speaks for itself.

De’Aaron Fox, Domantas Sabonis, Keegan Murray and Malik Monk can all make some noise.

9-11 seeds

The two teams that were expected to be contenders are the two teams that are fighting for a lifeline in the playoffs. The Warriors and Lakers have been far from great this season, with both teams showing signs of being contenders, but the inconsistency kills them.

The Rockets have been on a tear going 10-1 since March 2 despite the injury to Alperen Sengun. Jalen Green has emerged in this time, averaging 27.8 point per game and shooting over 40% in 10 of those games.

The Rockets are a team to watch as they’ve elevated to 35-35, putting them only one game below the Warriors.

The Warriors have suffered from injuries, suspensions and much more which has limited them, but you can absolutely never count out Stephen Curry as he’ll always find a way. The Warriors have gone 9-8 since the all star break.

The Warriors have seen the emergence of young star Jonathan Kuminga who’s been the highlight for the Warriors as he consistently becomes better. The Warriors will always have a shot, but need to win fast if they want a shot at getting the eighth seed at this rate.

The Lakers have gone 9-6 since the All-Star break and 6-4 in March. LeBron James and Anthony Davis have performed at the highest level for the Lakers this year, with Davis 24.6 points and 12.5 rebounds, while James is averaging 25.4 points, 8.1 assists and 7.2 rebounds.

D’angelo Russell has caught heat for the Lakers, averaging 20.1 points since January.. The Lakers have a deep roster, but will need all their players that stepped up last year like Austin Reaves to step up once again.

The Lakers are only three wins away from the Suns. There’s still a chance for them to avoid the play-in tournament, but the opportunity fades every game and they will need to be consistent in order to make a run.

NFL owners approve rule that bans the hip-drop tackle



PHILAN M. EBENHACK • The Associated Press

Rich McKay, left, Atlanta Falcons CEO and Competition Committee Chairman, looks on as Jeff Miller, NFL Executive Vice President of Communications, addresses reporters about rules changes at the NFL owners meetings.

By ROB MAADDI
The Associated Press

The NFL is eliminating the hip-drop tackle.

NFL team owners on Monday unanimously approved a rule that bans players from using a swivel technique to tackle an opponent.

A violation will result in a 15-yard penalty and could ultimately result in fines for players.

NFL executive Jeff Miller said the hip-drop tackle was used 230 times last season and resulted in 15 players missing time with injuries.

The NFL Players Association has adamantly opposed the rule.

"It doesn't get used very often, but when it is used, it's incredibly injurious to the runner," NFL Competition Committee chairman Rich McKay said.

"The runner is purely defenseless. And I have heard defenders say it before, and I hear them, 'Hey, you're putting me in a really tough spot. You're saying I can't hit here. What do I do?' And my response has always been, 'Well, you can't do that, and that's just because the guy you're hitting is defenseless and has no way to protect himself.'"

So we've got to protect him and you've got to come up with other ways, and you know what, they do."

The league played a video during a news conference to show six specific plays in which the hip-drop tackle was used in games, with Bengals tight end Drew Sample, Cowboys running back Tony Pollard, Bengals receiver Tyler Boyd, Seahawks quarterback Geno Smith and Titans quarterback Ryan Tannehill all being on the receiving end of the now-illegal hit.

NFL teams will continue to receive videos showing illegal hits and ways to make tackles within the rules.

"It's a new rule, so they'll not have seen it," McKay said about officiating the penalty. "This is never practiced; nobody does this in practice. There's never a player that's going to use this tactic on a player on his own team in a practice so they're never going to see it. They're only going to see it in the game. We will tell them, 'Listen, this a penalty on the books. You can call it.'"

You got to see all three elements of what's going on here. You got to see him grab him. You got to see him control them. You got to see him swivel himself up in the air and you got to see him go unweighted. You don't see it, don't call it.

"We're going to take all these tapes that you've seen. ... we're going to take them all to the clubs and show them: this is what we don't want. This is what a foul looks like."

A significant change to kickoffs wasn't presented for a vote but McKay said it's possible owners will consider it on Tuesday instead of waiting for the league meetings in May.

All rules proposals require 24 out of 32 votes for approval.

Only two other proposals were approved by owners.

Teams will now receive a third challenge following one successful challenge. Previously, teams had to be successful on two challenges to receive a third.

Also, if there is a double foul during a down in which there is a change or changes of possession, including if one of the fouls is a post-possession foul by a team during a scrimmage kick, the team last gaining possession will keep the ball after enforcement for its foul, provided it did not foul prior to last gaining possession.

McKay said there's urgency to vote on the complicated new kickoff rule this week because it could impact the way teams select play-

ers next month in the NFL draft.

"I like voting on it sooner rather than later because there's no question that bringing the play back, we had 1,970 touchbacks last season, so if you bring the play back in, let's just say that 1,200 of those become returns, the person you're going to have as a returner is going to matter more," McKay said. "And we do have a draft coming up. And we do have college free agency coming up. So I think personnel people need to know is this play going to be in or out, and that would lead me to want to have the vote sooner."

The new rule proposal takes elements of the kickoff rules used in spring leagues such as the XFL.

For a standard kickoff, the ball would be kicked from the 35-yard line with the 10 kick coverage players lined up at the opposing 40, with five on each side of the field.

The return team would have at least nine blockers lined up in the "set up zone" between the 30- and 35-yard line with at least seven of those players touching the 35. There would be up to two returners allowed inside the 20.

Only the kicker and two returners would be allowed to move until the ball hits the ground or was touched by a returner inside the 20.

Any kick that reaches the end zone in the air can be returned, or the receiving team can opt for a touchback and possession at the 30. Any kick that reaches the end zone in the air and goes out of bounds or out of the end zone also would result in a touchback at the 30.

If a ball hits a returner or the ground before the end zone and goes into the end zone, a touchback would be at the 20 or the play could be returned. Any kick received in the field of play would have to be returned.

Timberwolves outlast Warriors 114-110



ABBIE PARR • The Associated Press

Minnesota Timberwolves center Naz Reid (11) celebrates after making a 3-point shot during the first half of an NBA basketball game against the Golden State Warriors, Sunday, March 24, 2024, in Minneapolis.

By DAVE CAMPBELL
The Associated Press

Anthony Edwards scored 23 points and made 3 of 4 free throws in the final 12 seconds for the Minnesota Timberwolves in a 114-110 victory over the Golden State Warriors on Sunday night.

Naz Reid had 20 points and a season-high-tying 12 rebounds, and Rudy Gobert added 17 points and 12 rebounds for the Wolves, who matched their season best with 21 3-pointers on 40 attempts.

"When we go to the paint where there's a crowd, make a kick out. It's just simple basketball stuff we've been doing really well," coach Chris Finch said.

Steph Curry scored 31 points for the Warriors, but he missed the tying 3-point try with 1:27 to go.

After rebounding a forced airballed 3-pointer by Edwards, Curry took the rebound all the way for a layup that cut the lead to one. But Edwards got fouled and made two foul shots, before rebounding Klay Thompson's missed 3-pointer from the wing — a play Wolves assistant coach Micah Nori correctly warned the players to watch for in the huddle.

Mike Conley added 14 points and seven assists for the Wolves (49-22), who are one game behind Denver (50-21) in the Western Conference race and a half-game back of Oklahoma City (49-21).

The Nuggets passed the Thunder, who lost at Milwaukee on Sunday.

The Warriors led by 12 points in the first half.

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Vinícius still a target for racial abuse



JOSE BRETON • The Associated Press

Real Madrid's Vinícius Junior celebrates after scoring his side's first goal during the La Liga soccer match between Valencia and Real Madrid, March 2, 2024.

By TALES AZZONI
The Associated Press

Vinícius Júnior clenched his right fist and raised it high above his head after scoring at Mestalla Stadium, posing for a moment to make sure everyone noticed.

The symbolic gesture in early March came nearly a year after the Real Madrid forward was on that same field with tears in his eyes after being racially abused by some Valencia fans.

That incident sparked an outpouring of support for the Brazil forward, who is Black, and set off widespread calls for action by Spanish authorities and society in general.

At the time, many saw it as a turning point in the fight against racism in Spanish soccer.

But some 10 months later, Vinícius has continued to be subjected to racist abuse in Spain despite the initial uproar that accompanied the incident at Mestalla.

The Brazilian broke down in tears while talking about the insults ahead of Tuesday's international friendly between Spain and Brazil that was originally set up under the theme "One Skin" following the racial abuse aimed at Vinícius last year.

"Things have gotten worse since the first time I denounced what happened to me," Vinícius said. "Because people are not punished, they feel like they can keep saying things about the color of my skin to try to affect how I play. But they could try to do that in other ways, and I wouldn't have a problem with that. I just want to play, and I want to be able to go to stadiums without anyone bothering me because of the color of my skin."

The Spain-Brazil game will take place just days after a new wave of racist and hate insults targeted Vinícius in matches in Spain.

"We haven't fully advanced," said Esteban Ibarra, president of the Movement Against Intolerance, Racism and Xenophobia in Spain.

"There was some response, but it wasn't a significant step forward. In the end, if there still is a

dominant feeling of impunity, the fans will keep acting the same way as before."

On the same night on March 2 when Vinícius gave the Black Power salute at Mestalla, Brazilian media reports said a child in the stadium had called the player a monkey. The Spanish league was looking into a video of the incident, though it wasn't clear from the images published online if Vinícius was targeted.

A couple of weeks ago, there were reports of racist chants targeting Vinícius outside the stadiums of Atletico Madrid and Barcelona before Champions League games that didn't even involve Real Madrid.

Vinícius retweeted a video that showed a few Atletico fans jumping and chanting "Vinícius chimpanzee," and a day earlier some Barcelona fans allegedly chanted "Die, Vinícius."

"I hope you have already thought about their punishment," Vinícius said at the time on X, formerly Twitter, and tagged the Champions League and European soccer governing body UEFA. "It's a sad reality that happens even in games where I'm not present!"

There were also reported hate chants of "Die, Vinícius" in Madrid's Spanish league match at Osasuna on March 16.

Real Madrid called the game's referee "negligent" for not including the chants in his match report. The club also reported them — as well as those alleged chants by Atletico and Barcelona fans — to the prosecutor's office for hate crimes.

"We must continue to fight to eradicate racism and it is a daily struggle to prevent players like Vinícius or any other from experiencing episodes of intolerance," Spain defender Álex Grimaldo said Sunday.

Some of Vinícius' opponents contend his aggressive playing style — not uncommon for a forward — and clashes with the opposition have made him a bigger target for fans.

Vinícius often gets into verbal altercations and more than once was seen responding to fans' provocations from the stands.

Ohtani says he never bet on sports

By GREG BEACHAM
The Associated Press

Shohei Ohtani said Monday he never bet on sports or knowingly paid any gambling debts accumulated by his longtime interpreter, Ippei Mizuhara.

Instead, the Los Angeles Dodgers star claims his close friend lied to him for years and stole millions from the two-time MVP.

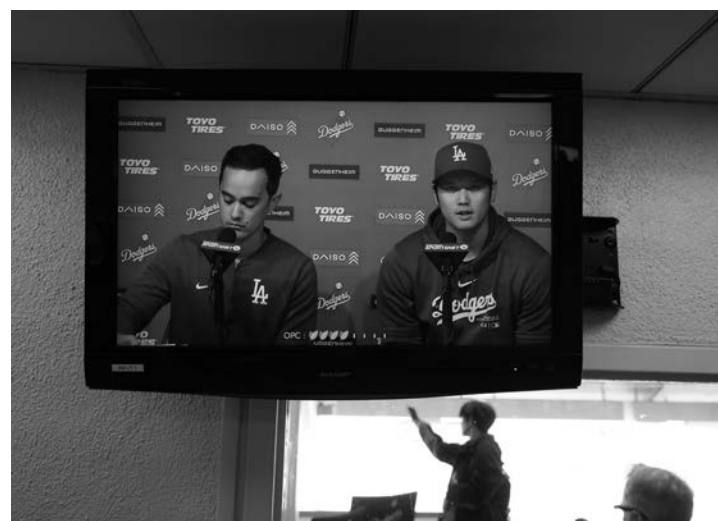
Ohtani gave his version of events during a news conference at Dodger Stadium, five days after Mizuhara was fired by the Dodgers following reports from the Los Angeles Times and ESPN about his alleged ties to an illegal bookmaker and debts well over \$1 million.

"I am very saddened and shocked someone whom I trusted has done this," the Japanese star said while sitting next to Will Iretton, the team's manager of performance operations, who translated.

"Ippei has been stealing money from my account and has been telling lies," Ohtani said. "I never bet on sports or have willfully sent money to the bookmaker."

Ohtani spoke for nearly 12 minutes in a small room packed with dozens of reporters, describing several ways in which Mizuhara deceived him. Wearing a Dodgers cap and sweatshirt, Ohtani read quickly in Japanese from a document and did not take questions.

Ohtani still attempted to answer the most important question by repeatedly emphasizing he was never knowingly involved in gambling. He provided no details on how Mizuhara might have been able to steal his money to pay gambling debts.



JAE C. HONG • The Associated Press

A video screen displays Los Angeles Dodgers' Shohei Ohtani, right, and interpreter Will Iretton during a news conference at Dodger Stadium in Los Angeles.

"I never bet on baseball or any other sports or never have asked somebody to do it on my behalf, and I have never gone through a bookmaker to bet on sports, and was never asked to assist betting payment for anyone else," Ohtani said.

Ohtani left the Los Angeles Angels in December to sign a record \$700 million, 10-year contract with the Dodgers. Ohtani and Mizuhara had been daily companions since Ohtani joined the Angels in 2018 until last week, when Mizuhara's gambling became public.

The IRS has confirmed that Mizuhara and Mathew Bowyer, the alleged illegal bookmaker, are under criminal investigation through the agency's Los Angeles Field Office.

Mizuhara told ESPN on March 19 that Ohtani paid his gambling debts at the interpreter's request, saying the bets were on international soccer, the NBA, the NFL

and college football. MLB rules prohibit players and team employees from wagering — even legally — on baseball, and also ban betting on other sports with illegal or offshore bookmakers.

ESPN said Mizuhara changed his story the following day, claiming Ohtani had no knowledge of the gambling debts and had not transferred any money to bookmakers.

"All of this has been a complete lie," Ohtani said. "Ippei obviously basically didn't tell me about the media inquiry. So Ippei has been telling everyone around that he has been communicating with me on this account to the media and my team, and that hasn't been true."

Ohtani said he first became aware of Mizuhara's gambling problem during a team meeting after last Wednesday's season-opening victory over San Diego in Seoul, South Korea.

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VARIETY

Student Events revive roller skating rave



NATHANAEL TILAHUN • The Reporter

The Student Events Team at Minnesota State held a skating event with a Y2K theme in the Otto Recreation Center Saturday night with music, a deejay, food and drinks.

By JACK HARDING
Staff Writer

It's no secret college students are under a lot of stress.

It's also no secret that giving students a night of plain ol' fun is a shrewd idea. That's exactly what went down Saturday in the Otto Recreation Center as the Student Events Team turned the place into a roller rink.

The event was a hit with students.

"It's nice to go out and forget about problems," student Katharine Meyer said. "It's easy to learn,

something anyone can do, like Ice skating," Meyer said.

The skating event, which included music by a deejay and food, was free for Minnesota State students.

Students seemed pleased with the event was a massive success, as the gym was packed with students. So many students attended that they had to let people onto the rink in waves. About 30-40 people skated at a time.

While students waited to skate, they munched on cotton candy and popcorn and played games on the floor above.

The Student Events Team had hired a company to set the place up. They simply told them the size they needed and the theme they were going for.

Maverick After Dark chair Janat Kazibwe said ice skating events have always been a success in the past. And the last time they had a roller skating event was before COVID.

"I've always liked ice skating and it's close to that. I'm a big hockey guy too. Rollerblading takes my mind off everyday things," graduate Nathan Hyde said.

Roller skating has been around

for a long time. A lot of people enjoy it for the nostalgic factor. Senior student Breanna Widmer is one of those people.

"There was a roller skating rink in my hometown, so I used to do it a lot. It gives me something fun to do that's not like sitting around watching tv," Widmer said.

Freshman student Jordyn Anderson talked about the social aspect of roller skating.

"No one makes fun of you. You can be terrible at it and no one cares. And it's fun to be here with your friends," Anderson said.

ASIA Lotus Night blooms in celebration

By ELLIE MESCHKE
Staff Writer

The Asian Students in America organization held a Lotus Night Market in the CSU ballroom Saturday with handmade crafts, cookies, boba tea, raffle, noodle-eating contest and entertainment by students and visitors.

ASIA President Alene Sengpanya the event took a lot of preparation.

"It took a lot of teamwork and help from not only just the board members but general members, and Pakou, she was a big support. We did a lot of decorations ... it was very eye-opening because we got to see a lot of the behind the scenes stuff that we don't really know about," Sengpanya said. "I did come to this event last year, and I didn't realize how much work you have to put in, and luckily with all that work we did, the turnout was amazing."

Alex Vang, one of the MC's for the event and the future ASIA vice-president, said "As one of the MC's or one of the performers on the stage, it was, again, a lot of work because there's a lot of communications between not only the board members but also my other MC partner, as well as trying to put together all the performers to see how we're going to make it flow and transition to one another."

ASIA is an on-campus organization dedicated to recruiting and



ALEXIS DARKOW • The Reporter

Asian Students in America held a Lotus Night Market with crafts, treats, contests, and entertainment Saturday evening.

retaining Asian students by promoting, educating, and focusing on Asian and Asian American topics or issues in America. The Lotus Night Market is one of the events held by the organization, and is put on every year.

Sengpanya said the group's goal

is to share the culture with everyone. And even though she's the one sharing, she says she's still learning.

"It's very eye-opening to meet new students and I feel like, with Mankato, it's not a very populated Asian area, so with this it kinda feels like a home and it feels wel-

come, because that's the whole reason why I joined ASIA; because it was kind of scary going into a new city or town where I didn't know anyone, and I saw this as an opportunity to meet new friends, and with that, it really helped. It's kind of a safe environment where you

ASIA on page 15▶

Ariana Grande's album 'Eternal Sunshine' is eternally a banger

By MERCEDES
KAUPHUSMAN
Variety Editor

The year 2024 is a grand one for Ariana Grande. Freshly into her 30s and freshly divorced, the pop star dropped her freshest album in four years last week titled, "Eternal Sunshine."

Since her previous Album "Positions," Grande has switched to new positions on love, loss and discovering her next chapter. The album, including a list of 13 tracks, navigates her journey of heartbreak and healing while finding her sunshine.

Her lyrics are heartfelt and dainty, compatible with her powerful vocals and range. To top it off, Grande collaborated with talented competitors in the industry — Mariah Carey and Troy Sivan — as well as her own grandmother she calls, "Nonnie."

The album was released March 8, coincidentally falling on National Women's Day. As Grande embodies her feminine resilience through this album, she highlights the capability of women during the day and month of our recognition.

"Eternal Sunshine" refers to the film, "Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind," according to Genius. Jim Carrey, a friend of Grande, starred in the 2004 film about a couple who erased their memories of one another after a breakup; the title may sound romantic, but it's heart wrenching — similarly to how Grande may have been feeling while writing the album after her split from Dalton Gomez in October.

One of my favorite songs on the album, "I wish I hated you," may hint at certain feelings following the breakup. The instrumental is light and simple, leaving the focus on the emotion in her voice. The song is bittersweet as it expresses a lack of animosity toward a former lover; she wants to wish him the worst, she can't help but wish him the best. Grande sings, "Hoping life brings you no new pain," acknowledging there was pain in the relationship, but she hopes they can find one another without it.

Grande has her sweet side, but she also brings out her sass in, "Bye." The song is upbeat and catchy, while waving a respectful goodbye to an ex. Much like in her song, "Thank You, Next," this song describes a bittersweet end to a relationship while connect-

GRANDE on page 15▶

◀GRANDE from page 14

ing with herself again, signified through the lyrics, “Bye-bye. I’m takin’ what’s mine.”

Grande’s ninth track, “Yes, and?” is her most popular song, but her least popular with me. As she was caught in public scrutiny from her new relationship with “Wicked” co-star Ethan Slater, this song may exemplify Grande brushing off the haters and staying true to herself. The song itself may send out her intended message, but I simply didn’t enjoy the tune. The robotic beat paired with her monotone chorus gets stuck in your head, but not in a good way.

The album’s namesake, “Eternal Sunshine,” is Grande’s nod to the referred film, wishing she could wipe the memories of her love with Gomez than have to face the pain of betrayal. She sings, “I showed you all my demons, all my lies, yet you played me like Atari.” Showing someone all the parts of you, worst ones included, yet being played like a game is relatable, and it’s told via a captivating melody, securing its spot as another personal favorite on her album.

The last to be mentioned and my top song on the list, “Imperfect for You,” plays on the phrase, “I’m perfect for you,” hence its sharp, out of place notes in these words of the chorus. The song emphasizes the beauty of imperfection in a



Courtesy Genius

Singer-songwriter and actress Ariana Grande dropped her seventh studio album titled, “Eternal Sunshine,” March 8 by Republic Records.

relationship, showcasing Grande’s songwriting skills. The song begins with her own perception of her imperfections, and ends alluding to her partner expressing the same insecurities, but finding comfort in each other. It’s imperfect, but perfect for me.

As one of the biggest artists

out there, Grande solidifies her top placement on the Billboard Charts with this album. It brings listeners on a sweet, whimsical journey while recognizing hurt, and although I feel for Grande’s painful end to her marriage, I’m grateful we got to hear this music because of it.

◀ASIA from page 14

can learn and also expand on other cultures and play fun games.”

“It really provides a safe space to students,” Vang added. “This is

my first year coming to Mankato, so joining ASIA has really allowed me to grow as a person, make new friends, and just really enjoy my time here at the college.” If you’d

like to know more about ASIA, contact Pakou Lee at pakou.lee@mnsu.edu, or take a look at the school website for more information.

What to stream this week: Beyoncé, Steve Martin, J-Hope, and more



Prime Video/Apple TV+/Netflix • The Associated Press

This combination of photos shows promotional art for the docuseries “Hope on the Street,” about BTS member j-hope, left, the documentary “Steve! (Martin) a Documentary in 2 Pieces,” and the film “The Beautiful Game.”

The Associated Press

Beyoncé’s country album and a documentary about a Nigerian boy who dreams of being a professional ballet dancer are some of the new television, movies, music and games headed to a device near you.

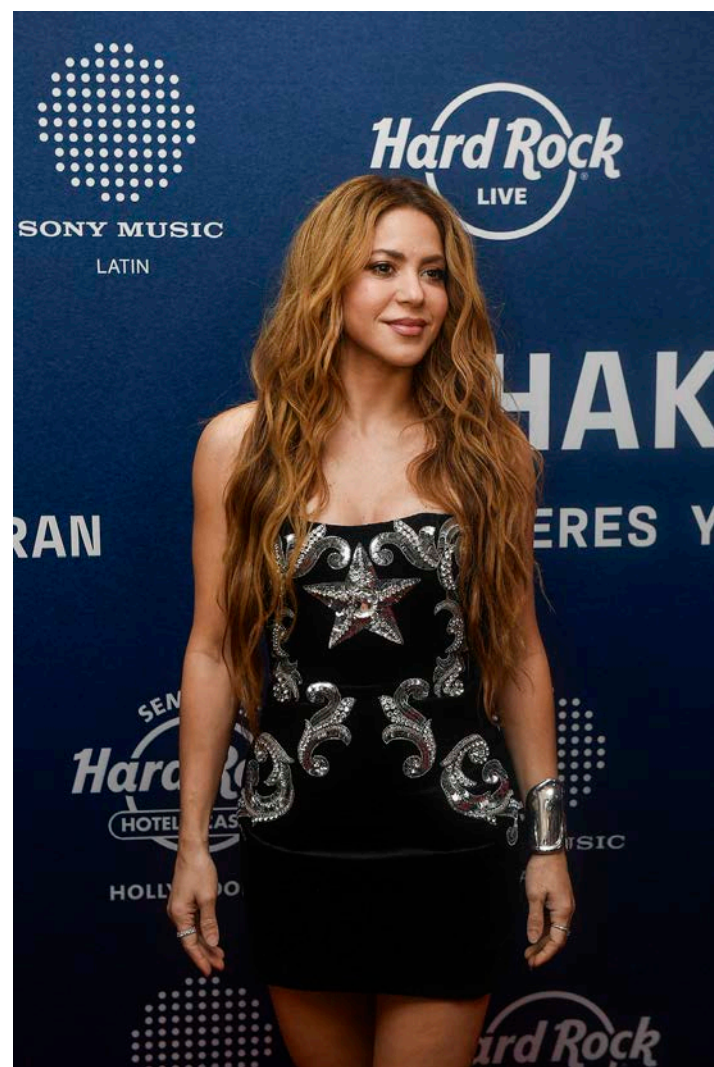
Also among the streaming offerings worth your time as selected by The Associated Press’ entertainment journalists: Bill Nighy plays an English soccer manager taking a team to the Homeless

World Cup in “The Beautiful Game,” a two-part documentary about comedy master Steve Martin and Netflix offers “Testament: The Story of Moses,” just in time for Easter.

NEW MOVIES TO STREAM — Bill Nighy leads a charming crowd-pleaser on Netflix, “The Beautiful Game,” in which he plays an English soccer (sorry, football) manager taking a team to the Homeless World Cup in Rome. Michael Ward co-stars as an especially talented player, Vin-

ny, who reluctantly joins the team. New to housing insecurity, he feels above his teammates and the circus of the games at first. The story, written by Frank Cottrell-Boyce and directed by Thea Sharrock is loosely inspired by the real thing (Cottrell-Boyce worked with the Homeless World Cup Foundation to develop the characters) but at heart is very much a movie, tidy and feel-good in the vein of “Ted Lasso” — perhaps what “Next Goal Wins” wanted to be. It starts streaming on Friday, March 29.

‘Las Mujeres Ya No Lloran’ turns Shakira’s pain into art



MICHAEL LAUGHLIN • The Associated Press

Shakira stands for pictures during her official “Las Mujeres Ya No Lloran,” album release party and immersive experience red carpet event, late Thursday.

By MARIA SHERMAN
The Associated Press

Shakira, the boundary-breaking Colombian performer, has been remarkably consistent since beginning her career in the early ‘90s. Without fail, she toured, released albums, won awards, woven global, genre-defying sounds into her pioneering singles, performed at the Super Bowl halftime show and more. Then, things slowed. Or so it appeared.

In reality, the last few years haven’t been kind to Shakira. In 2022, after 11 years and two children together, she separated from soccer player Gerard Piqué, leading to what she’s called the “dissolution of my family.” She faced charges of tax evasion in Spain; in November 2023, she received a suspended three-year sentence and paid a fine of 7.3 million euros (\$8 million) in addition to previously unpaid taxes and interest.

On “Las Mujeres Ya No Lloran,” her first new album in seven years, Shakira transforms her pain into art — from the bachata “Monotonía” to the electro-pop “Te Felicito” to the mega viral “Shakira: Bzrp Music Sessions, Vol. 53” and beyond.

“I’ve been through so much in these past few years that I had to literally pick up the pieces of myself and put them back together,” Shakira told The Associated Press over Zoom from Miami. “And during that process, I think that music was the glue.”

This interview has been edited for clarity and brevity.

AP: It has been seven years since your last album, “El Do-

rado.” What did you learn about yourself, musically, in that time?

SHAKIRA: Well, in those seven years I’ve been raising kids, I’ve been learning a lot about myself as a mother, as a woman. But I’ve also been making music. It’s just that it’s been more of a sporadic thing, you know, here and there. Whenever I had a chance to put out a song, I did that. But I didn’t have the time to really put a whole body of work. This time, it was a compulsion and a need. It was really important for me to be able to express, in and through these songs, so many life experiences and to find catharsis, you know, and to be able to find the therapeutic effects of writing and see myself back in the studio.

AP: You’ve called “Las Mujeres Ya No Lloran” a concept album. What story is it telling?

SHAKIRA: Because there’s a great diversity in this album — I know it’s a conceptual album — but it didn’t happen on purpose. Nobody chooses to go through the kind of life experiences that I went through when I was writing and creating this album, you know, life gives you lemons. So what do you do? Make lemonade. So I made songs. But there is a great variety within this album. There’s pop, there’s Afrobeat, there’s reggaeton. There’s some Mexican regionals as well. Rock. But there is a common thread. And that is based off of genuine, authentic life experiences and the process of elaborating those intense emotions and feelings that I’ve been having to deal with during this past couple of years.

AP: You’re no stranger to embracing global sounds.

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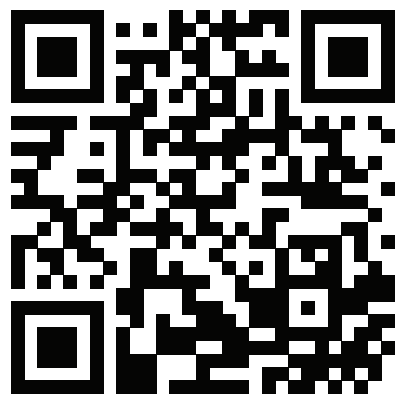


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\$161	LOT 16 LT. GREEN RES. HALL (FALL)		9AM Tuesday, August 6th - Until Gone
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\$124	DK. GREEN RES. HALL (FALL)	Lot 1, Lot 2, & Lot 20 Overflow	9AM Tuesday, August 6th - Until Gone

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