

The Gonzaga Bulletin

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take on the
NCAA TOURNAMENT!

Zags slated to take on McNeese State in first round of March Madness

By ZACH WHITE

After an off-rhythm start to the season, Gonzaga University men's basketball changed the tempo and are now set for the big dance in March.

The Zags (25-7) will take on the McNeese State Cowboys (30-3) in the first round of the NCAA Tournament on Thursday. GU will make its 25th straight appearance in March Madness, the second-longest active streak in college basketball.

"That's a team and a program that a lot of people at our level aspire to be," said McNeese State head coach Will Wade. "We'll get to check our temperature and see how close we are."

The Zags will head to Salt Lake City, Utah, as the No. 5 seed in the Midwest Regional bracket.

GU enters March Madness off the back of a 69-60 loss to Saint Mary's in the West Coast Conference Tournament championship. Before the loss, the Zags had won their previous nine games, clinching a 17th straight 25-win season in the process.

Before its fateful late-season run, GU struggled against elite opponents in the early part of the 2023-24 season. The Zags lost to Purdue, Washington, UConn and San Diego State before a loss to Santa Clara during WCC play.

In total, GU enters the NCAA Tournament with seven defeats, the program's highest number of losses since the 2015-16 season. It wasn't all doom and gloom for the Zags, though, as a number of historic wins came during this season.

GU continued its streak of beating college basketball's blue blood programs with an emphatic road victory of Kentucky to earn its first Quad I victory of the season. Head coach Mark Few also won his 700th game in charge of the Zags, and GU earned its first win against Saint Mary's in Moraga, California, since January 2021.

"We've come a really long way," said junior guard Ryan Nembhard. "We were a new group coming in. A lot of guys had to figure certain things out, including myself. I feel like at this point of the season, we're really gelling. We're a really close group off the court and I think that's starting to show on the court. I think that's just going to keep going into the tournament."

Ultimately, the Zags will begin March Madness ranked No. 18 in the Associated Press Top 25 poll, 17th in the NET rankings and 15th in KenPom. McNeese State is unranked in the AP poll, 56th in the NET and 60th in KenPom.

While these rankings seem to indicate that GU will overpower McNeese State, the Cowboys excel in a number of areas that have plagued the Zags this season.

McNeese State boasts an effective offense that is third in the country in steals, eighth in 3-point shooting and 10th in field goal percentage. The Cowboys have outscored opponents by an average of 18.9 points per game en route to their first March Madness appearance since 2002.



JOSHUA GARCIA IG: @flamedticks

Watson is second in blocks for the Zags, averaging 0.7 per game, which may play a role in Zags' defense against McNeese.

Having won 30 games on the season, McNeese State finds itself among elite company in the 30-plus win club, joined only by national contenders Purdue and UConn. The Cowboys boast wins over VCU and Michigan on the season, and won the Southland regular-season and conference tournament titles.

A slowed offensive pace is a hallmark of McNeese State's playstyle, as the Cowboys are ranked 282nd in offensive tempo. Among tournament teams, McNeese leads the field in percentage of shots at the rim (47.6).

Shahada Wells is the leading scorer for the Cowboys, averaging 17.8 points per game while shooting 47.5% from the field and 40.2% from 3-point range.

Wells, a graduate guard, transferred from TCU this season. Last season, he was a member of the Horned Frogs team that lost to the Zags in the second round of the NCAA Tournament.

"Just a revenge tour," Wells said on the opportunity for a rematch against GU. "I lost to [GU] last year at TCU, so just getting another chance to go and beat them. We know what [McNeese State] can do. Just getting there and trying to win a couple of games, really trying to win it all."

After Wells, Christian Shumate is the second-leading scorer for McNeese State. The 6-foot-6-inch forward averages 11.9 points and 9.5 rebounds per game. Javohn Garcia is the third-leading scorer for the Cowboys, averaging 11.4 points on 45.5%

3-point shooting.

The Cowboys employ a slow tempo on offense, and will look to use the entire shot clock to either shoot 3-pointers or get a close look at the rim. GU, by contrast, runs a fast-paced offense, and is ranked ninth in adjusted offensive efficiency by KenPom.

"[GU] is always elite in transition," Wade said. "Our transition defense is going to be critical. They play at one of the fastest paces, and best tempos in the country. My assumption is that they have a top-15 or top-20 offense in the country just based on how they typically play and how easily they score in transition."

It will be a tight matchup as both teams look to establish their clashing playstyles early on. The opening minutes will be critical for the two teams, and will likely have a massive impact on the rest of the game.

GU can play itself out of the game by committing excessive amounts of turnovers, which McNeese State excels at forcing. Similarly, guard play will be critical for the Zags in maintaining pressure on shots and keeping up with switches on defense.

For McNeese State, its key would be to play through its guards. Antavion Collum is the only true big man for the Cowboys, standing at 6 foot, 9 inches and 245 pounds. Wells, McNeese's leading scorer is 6 foot, and Shumate, the team's leading rebounder, is 6 foot.

GU is at a significant size and skill advantage in the low block, and should have favorable matchups for Graham Ike and Anton Watson.

"We've got to stay on our toes, it's March," Ike said. "Everything is right in front of us, we just have to be ready for the next moment. Our staff is doing a great job of preparing us for that, and I know the guys are prepared as well."

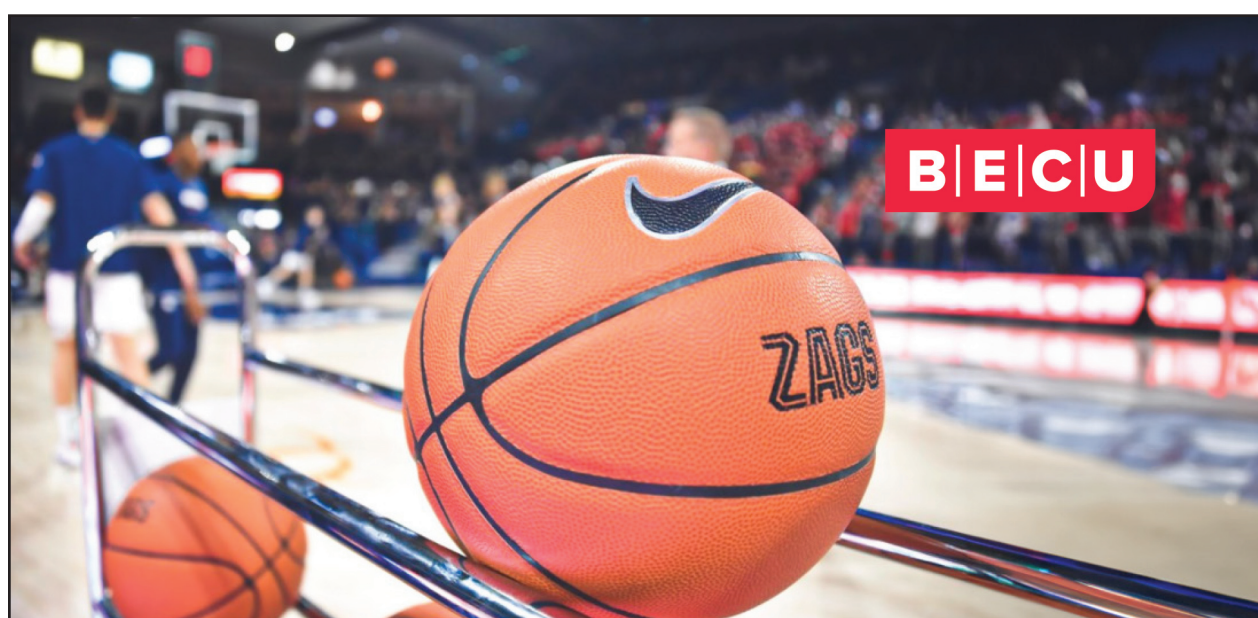
The Zags will also need important scoring and rebounding contributions from Ben Gregg and the freshman duo of Dusty Stromer and Braden Huff, who will be competing in their first NCAA Tournament.

Head coach Mark Few, who has been with the program since 1989, will be participating in his 27th tournament as a member of the coaching staff.

"I really appreciate moments like this," Few said on competing in the NCAA Tournament. "To be involved in, I think, the greatest sporting event that there is. Obviously, [McNeese State] is a team that's won a lot of games and plays a really interesting style ... It'll be a really interesting challenge and probably something different from what we've faced all year."

GU will begin its quest to cut down the nets on Thursday when it faces McNeese State at 4:25 p.m. PST. The matchup will be televised on TBS.

Zach White is a sports editor.



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GU women to host NCAA Tournament first and second round, face UC Irvine

COMMENTARY
By CAM MCCANN

Lisa Fortier has led the Gonzaga University women's basketball to its seventh straight NCAA Tournament appearance and this year will see her team as a program-best No. 4 seed facing 13th-seeded UC Irvine.

This will be UC Irvine's (23-8) first appearance in the NCAA women's tournament in the 21st century, while the Zags (30-3) have made the tournament 15 times since 2007. Not only do the Bulldogs have more program experience, but also copious amounts of tournament experience within their lineup.

Despite this, GU was left wondering if its loss against Portland in the West Coast Conference Championship was enough to drop it from its projected seeding.

"When we saw Kansas State [come up], it was a gut-wrenching moment," Second Team All-WCC forward Eliza Hollingsworth said on Selection Sunday. "Then Colorado was a five, then maybe we thought we had a chance. Oh my, it's such an amazing feeling."

The Bulldogs and their fans eagerly waited until the last region was announced during the ESPN special, and were one of the last matchups to be released in the entire tournament.

As a No. 4 seed, GU will host the first and second round of the NCAA Tournament, meaning Zags fans do not have to travel to show their support.

"I've been able to coach [NCAA Tournament] games in The Kennel as an assistant coach, but not yet as a head coach," said Fortier, the WCC Coach of the Year. "I thought we had done a lot of work to prepare ourselves for hopefully hosting. And then it was just a little touch and go after our last game."

Fortier set her team up for success this season by giving it a competitive nonconference schedule, then followed it up with an undefeated WCC regular season. The team earned its highest-ranked win in program history with an 18-point victory against Stanford, the No. 2 seed in GU's region.

"I'm happy that we scheduled how we needed to and we beat some teams that we needed to beat," Fortier said.

The Zags spent most of the games this season winning by double-digit margins, going on a 20-game streak of winning by 10 or more points. Up until its late-season loss to Portland in the WCC Tournament title game, GU hadn't lost a game since the Thanksgiving break.

On the flip side, UC Irvine's resume has more conference losses and a season record of 23-8. The Anteaters suffered early-season losses against Pepperdine and Saint Mary's, two familiar teams to the Zags, may allow GU fans to rest easy, but one never knows what could happen in March.

UC Irvine's offense isn't as explosive as GU, averaging almost 20 less points



Yvonne Ejim averages 19.8 points per game to lead the Zags in scoring.

“

When we saw Kansas State [come up] it was a gut wrenching moment. Then Colorado was a five, then maybe we thought we had a chance. Oh my, it's such an amazing feeling.

Eliza Hollingsworth, GU forward

per game as a team and shooting just 26% from beyond the arc.

The Anteaters' defense, however, is where this team can look to lean on. UC Irvine is the 14th-best scoring defense in the nation, holding opponents to 55 points per game. The Big West Player of the Year, Déja Lee, averaged 2.5 steals per contest and has the single-season school record for steals. The junior guard is also

the team's biggest threat from 3-point range.

Lee wasn't the only one in this lineup to receive a Big West award, with graduate transfer from Miami, Moulayna Johnson Sidi Baba being recognized as Newcomer of the Year. Fifth-year senior Diaba Konaté also won Best Defensive Player of the Year.

These three players will be big keys to

the game and their cumulative experience could help the Anteaters offset GU's previous tournament exposure.

Konaté will have a tough time trying to quell the sheer amount of star power in the Bulldogs' backcourt of Brynna Maxwell and Kayleigh and Kaylynne Truong, who were all named to the All-WCC First-Team.

However, the most challenging task for the Anteaters will be GU's own WCC Player of the Year, Yvonne Ejim.

Guarding her will likely be Nevaeh Parkinson, a 6-foot-3-inch senior center averaging a 8.3 points per game and shooting 53% from the field.

Statistically, Ejim outshines Parkinson across the board, averaging more points, rebounds, steals and blocks per game, while also shooting an absurd 61%. Fouling Ejim isn't any remedy to stopping her either, as she nets 80% of her shots from the charity stripe.

Should the Zags move past the first round, they will go up against the winner between No. 5 Utah and No. 12 South Dakota State. That game is predicted to be an offensive onslaught, but with Gianna Kneepkens of the Utes injured, the Jackrabbits could find a way to outpace the No. 5 seed. Kneepkens averaged nearly 18 points per game and while she'll be missed, the leading scorer of the team is Alissa Pili, who averages just under 21 points per game.

Familiar teams in the NCAA Tournament to GU are No. 14 Eastern Washington University and No. 13 Portland. Both teams find themselves as double-digit seeds against tough opponents, with EWU playing against third-seeded Oregon State, and the Pilots matched up against fourth-seeded Kansas State.

The Eagles from Cheney will have a hard time putting a stop to Raegen Beers, who's averaging a double-double, recording 17.7 points and 10 rebounds per game. Even in Eastern Washington's program-best season, it still might not be enough if the Beavers can get hot from behind the arc like they have most of the season.

The Pilots gained an automatic bid to the NCAA Tournament after defeating GU in the WCC Tournament title game and now they'll have to put a stop to Ayoka Lee. The Kansas State center stands at a tall 6 foot, 6 inches and is averaging 20 points per contest and has the 7th best field goal percentage in the nation at 62%. The Pilots' trio of Maisie Burnham, Kennedy Dickie and Emme Shearer will have to string together runs throughout the game to keep up, but coming off their biggest win of the season, anything can happen.

GU will play its first round game against UC Irvine in The Kennel on Saturday at 4:30 p.m. The matchup will be broadcast on ESPN2.

Cam McCann is a staff writer.

Ike named honorable mention All-American and NABC All-District First Team; Watson listed on Second Team

By KAYA CRAWFORD

Graham Ike was named an honorable mention All-American by the Associated Press and National Association of Basketball Coaches First Team All-District 9 on Tuesday. Anton Watson was named NABC Second Team All-District 9.

Ike recorded seven consecutive games with 20 or more points this season, the first Zag to do so since Adam Morrison in the 2005-06 season. He secured his seventh straight 20-point game in Gonzaga University's win at Saint Mary's on March 2 where he put up a 24-point performance.

The forward is averaging 16.7 points and 7.2 rebounds per game, while shooting 61.1% from the field.

Ike led the West Coast Conference with 18.4 points per game and had the highest shooting percentage from the field at 64%. Ike is sixth in rebounds, bringing down 7.2 rebounds per game.

He is the sixth player to lead GU in both categories and the second to do so since the 1980-81 season.

Ike matched Drew Timme's 2022-23 regular season total of 20-point games to lead the WCC with at least 20

points in 16 games this season.

Watson, with 1.7 steals per game, led the WCC in steals per game and was second overall averaging 1.5 per game. This season, he moved to second all-time at GU with 211 career steals and is the only player in program history to have 1,000 points, 700 rebounds and 200 steals in a career.

The graduate forward is ninth in the WCC with 14.4 points per game, seventh in rebounding with 7.1 and second in steals with 1.5.

The All-District honors are decided based on votes by NABC-member coaches across NCAA Division I.

Alongside Ike on the District 9 First Team were UCSB's Ajay Mitchell, San Francisco's Jonathan Mogbo, UC Davis' Elijah Pepper and UC San Diego's Bryce Pope. Watson was joined on the Second Team honors by Santa Clara's Adama-Alpha Bal, San Francisco's Marcus Williams and Saint Mary's Aidan Mahaney and Augustus Marciulionis.

Purdue's Zach Edey headlined the All-American First Team, receiving a unanimous selection to the team. He was joined by Tennessee's Dalton Knecht, North Carolina's RJ Davis, Houston's Jamal Shead and Connecticut's Tristen Newton.

The All-American Second Team included Marquette's Tyler Kolek, Dayton's DaRon Holmes II, Alabama's Mark Sears, Duke's Kyle Filipowski and Kansas's Hunter Dickinson.

The All-American Third Team was made up of San Diego State's Jaedon LeDee, Auburn's Johni Broome, Arizona's Caleb Love, Creighton's Baylor Scheierman and Illinois' Terrance Shannon Jr.

All-American Honorable Mentions (alphabetized, appeared on multiple ballots): Armando Bacot, North Carolina; Keion Brooks Jr., Washington; Boo Buie, Northwestern; Devin Carter, Providence; Donovan Clingan, Connecticut; L.J. Cryer, Houston; Tucker DeVries, Drake; Enrique Freeman, Akron; PJ Hall, Clemson; David Jones, Memphis; Ryan Kalkbrenner, Creighton; Tamin Lipsey, Iowa State; Kevin McCullar Jr., Kansas; Great Osobor, Utah State; Antonio Reeves, Kentucky; Reed Sheppard, Kentucky; Braden Smith, Purdue; Cam Spencer, Connecticut; Isaiah Stevens, Colorado State; Vonterius Woolbright, Western Carolina.

Kaya Crawford is a sports editor.





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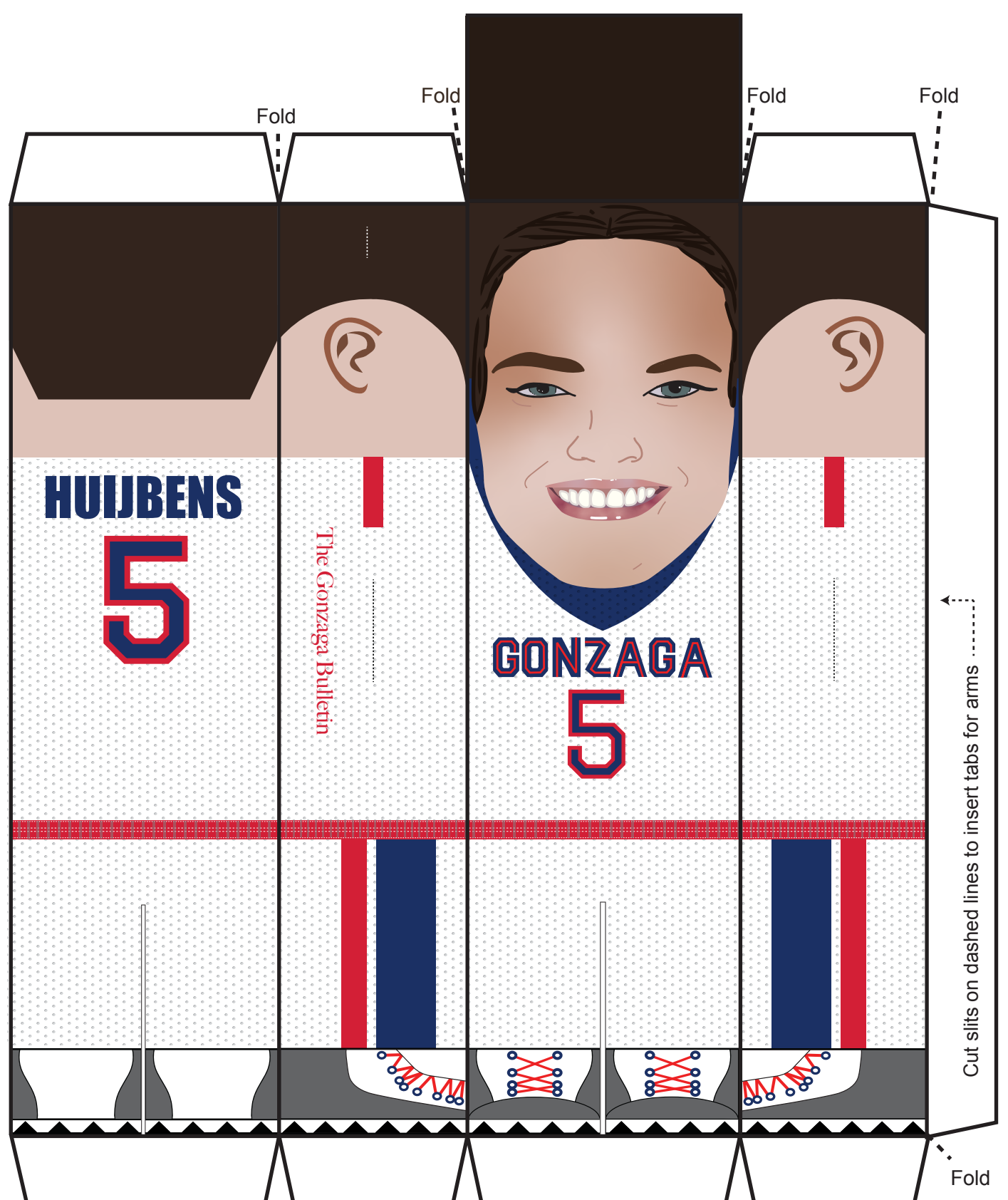
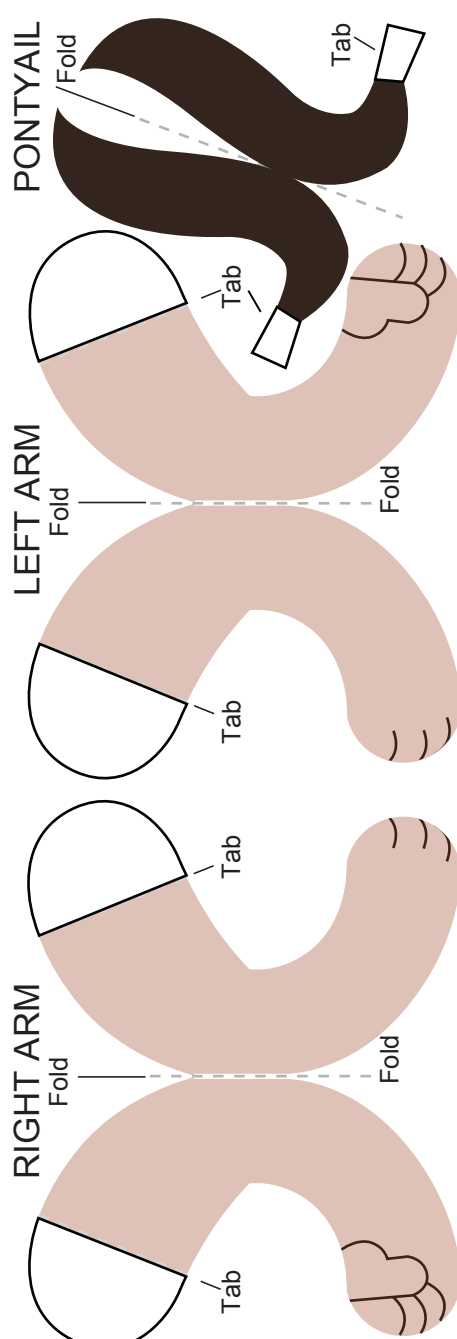
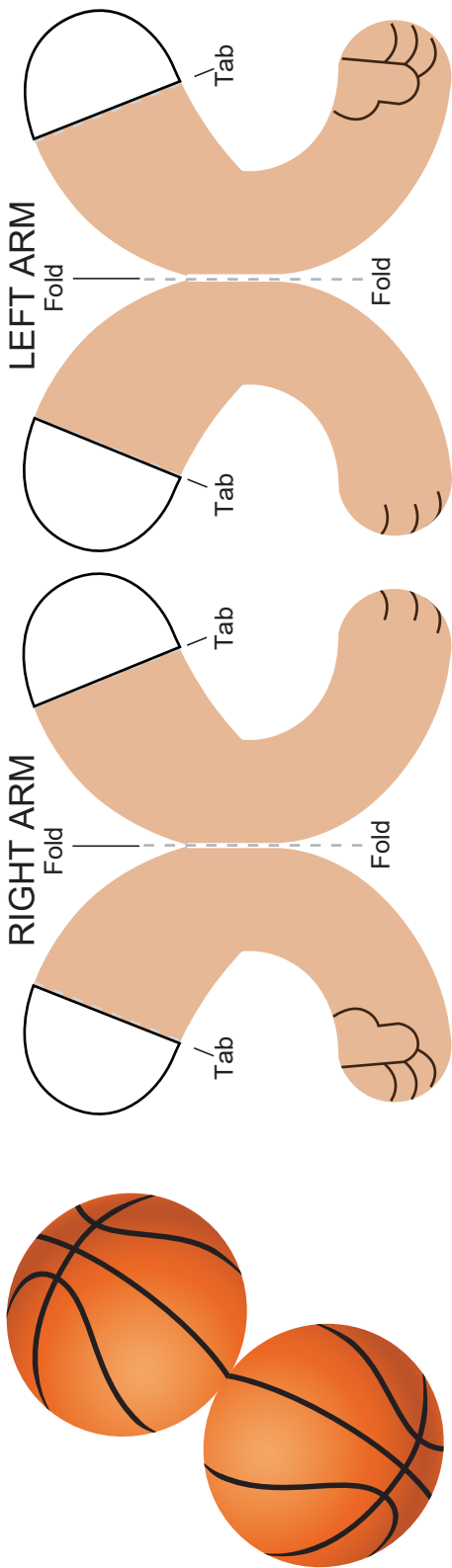
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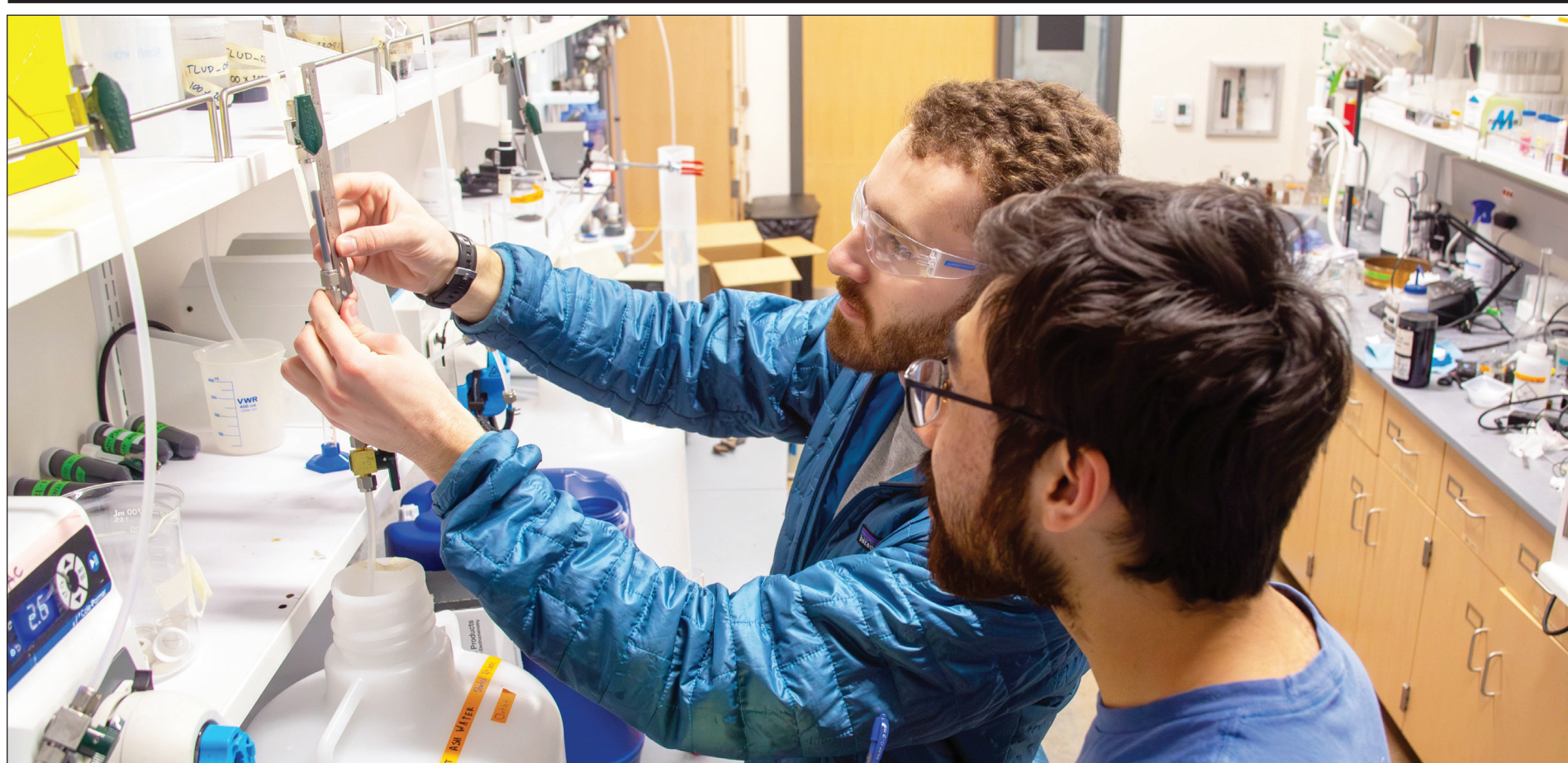
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Seniors Matt Foley (left) and Adam Chin (right) test water quality to learn about the impacts of wildfires on drinking water.

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Researchers get \$850k to study wildfires

By KAITLIN SMITH

Researchers at Gonzaga University recently received an \$850,000 grant from the U.S. Forest Service to study the impacts of wildfires on drinking water quality in the Pacific Northwest.

Kyle Shimabuku, an assistant professor of civil engineering, and Eric Ross, a professor of chemistry, are the two GU researchers involved with this project.

With collaborations from Montana State University, Washington State University, Oregon State University and the U.S. Forest Service Research Station, GU is embarking on a four-year journey to conduct research on how wildfires impact a variety of different water sources and how water treatment plants can improve its practices to ensure clean drinking water.

"Broadly, we're trying to improve the resilience of water systems to wildfires, with a focus on how wildfires will contaminate surface water like rivers and

lakes," Shimabuku said. "These then serve as drinking water sources for cities and towns."

According to Shimabuku, many of the contaminants that are found in water sources after wildfires are known carcinogens. The project is also committed to finding financially realistic options for treatment in a variety of different communities.

"We hope to be at the interface of advancing scientific understanding of how wildfires impact water quality and treatment processes," Shimabuku said. "At the same time, we want to generate real world results that can help inform water systems from different scales, both small communities ... and larger urban centers."

The funding from the grant is split across all of the involved institutions. Shimabuku was involved in the grant process through a colleague at Montana State, Amanda Hohner. Working

together in the past, Hohner was aware of Shimabuku's experience with specific water filtration systems.

"I have a background with a different set of water treatment technologies that [Hohner] has less experience with," Shimabuku said. "She recognized this would be pretty effective at addressing a lot of the contaminants that are of concern from wildfires."

Ross was invited to join the research team after working with Shimabuku on a previous project. As an analytical chemist, Ross' expertise allows for the experimentation to be analyzed in a variety of ways.

"I think they saw the value of having a specialist in chemical analysis to streamline the analyses and ensure data quality," Ross said. "Also, adding some flexibility into the types of analyses that we can do as the project develops."

As part of this project, researchers plan

to study different watersheds affected by wildfires and find ways to predict what the best response efforts will be for water treatment facilities in the future.

Currently, there are mostly isolated case studies on this topic in the research community. Shimabuku and the other researchers involved hope to study the long-term effects of wildfires on water sources throughout the Pacific Northwest and would like to find some results that can be translated throughout the region.

Currently, the project has just begun to enter the hands-on phase of their research. On campus at GU, researchers and lab assistants have begun to experiment with water samples from a previous storm event. As the study is designed to last for at least four years, researchers are flexible with their experimental plans as more data is collected.

SEE GRANT PAGE 2



GRES students host a panel discussing their experiences within the department and the future of the minor.

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Law School to spotlight LGBTQ+

By CLARINNE KIRK

Highlighting the importance of LGBTQ+ advocacy and representation within the legal sphere, Gonzaga University Law School is hosting a nationally unprecedented legal summit on April 19. "With Pride: 2024 LGBTQ+ Rights and Advocacy in Legal Education Summit" is the first of its kind to include a wide scope of legal discussion specific to LGBTQ+ rights and advocacy.

Sarah Harmon, staff director of the Center for Civil and Human Rights at the GU Law School and organizer of the event, said the importance of this event is heightened given the current global and political climate of increasing LGBTQ+ legal discrimination.

"We're seeing anti-LGBTQ legislation being proposed and even passing in local and state governments at the highest rate it's been, really ever," Harmon said. "So, we saw a need for this, and we saw a space to do this."

Jessica Herzer, student program assistant for the Center for Civil & Human Rights, said this summit is also important given the current lack of LGBTQ+ focused clinics in law schools across the country.

"It was shocking to me how few [law schools] are doing those kinds of exclusive services to address such a specific need," Herzer said.

The summit will include three separate panels with topics spanning from how to be a more prepared advocate for LGBTQ+ clients, attacks on LGBTQ+ individuals in higher education, how organizations are doing advocacy work within the community, to discussing goals for future advocacy work. The panels will also feature a range of speakers including faculty from GU Law School, professors from law schools across the country, a justice from the Washington Supreme Court and keynote speaker Kellye Testy, president of the Law School Admissions Council.

According to Harmon, the panels will include a roundtable discussion format in order to better engage audience members and encourage open conversation.

"We hope to have the panels really engaged with the attendees and the audience and create a safe place for dialogue and discussion about what the issues are and how to be better at addressing them," Harmon said.

GU law student Ashlyn Hannus will be speaking about her experience working within the Lincoln LGBTQ+ Rights Clinic, where she has witnessed firsthand the discrimination LGBTQ+ individuals face.

"The clinic works with cases where people are being discriminated against, their rights are being taken away or their claim never would have been brought forward in the first place," Hannus said. "So, it's important that these communities are seen, heard and represented."

Part of understanding why LGBTQ+ rights are under attack at such prevalent levels, according to Herzer, comes

SEE CRES PAGE 2

SEE SUMMIT PAGE 2

Students mobilize for CRES minor

Group presented demands to McCulloh amid faculty departure

By CLARINNE KIRK

After the departure of two faculty members placed Gonzaga University's critical race & ethnic studies minor in jeopardy, students and CRES department chair Bernadette Calafell hosted a student town hall regarding the future of CRES, its importance at GU and the steps necessary to secure its security within the university.

Following the first town meeting, which took place on Jan. 29, and a follow-up CRES student panel hosted on March 6, a group of students from the CRES Student Coalition and Calafell met with Interim Dean Matt Bahr, Provost Sacha Kopp and President Thayne McCulloh to discuss the future of CRES where the group presented a list of demands for the administration to ensure the existence of CRES.

These demands included hiring

two tenure-line faculty by the spring semester of 2025, teaching at least four CRES-specific classes per semester and increasing the accessibility of CRES to students by expanding promotional efforts and integrating CRES classes into the university core requirements.

These demands also included distinctions that faculty positions must include competitive salaries and health benefits in order to address a lack of faculty retention which Angela Gill, a GU student employed within the department, said is necessary for CRES's survival at GU.

"Yes, they are our list of demands, but they are very essential for our survival," Gill said.

According to Calafell, after the meeting, plans have been put in place to hire a replacement for former CRES Professor Cassandra Dame-Griff in time for the 2024-25 academic year and to ensure the

security of CRES's future.

"Going back to the meeting that we had, it became very clear the university will support a program in critical race & ethnic studies that fits within the university's budget model," Calafell said.

Calafell is also working with the university to add affiliate faculty members to the department and to cross list more courses which she said would expand offerings in line with the university's fiscal needs.

Creating another vacancy within the department, Calafell said she is leaving the university at the end of the academic year. To fill her absence, Calafell said that, if everything goes according to plan, the university will hire a second tenure-track or tenured professor, creating a total of two CRES professors, one of which has tenure standing and one with tenure-track status. In the meantime, Calafell said

INDEX

News.....1-3
Opinion.....5
Arts & Entertainment.....6-8
Sports.....9-10

OPINION

Biden's State of the Union address shows history may be repeating itself.

PAGE 5

A&E

Local Spokane cafe is a love letter to the owner's granddaughter.

PAGE 8

SPORTS

Hooptown USA prepares to host men's and women's March Madness.

PAGE 9

Deadline to confirm enrollment extended

By NATALIE KELLER

In response to national delays in the student financial aid application process, Gonzaga University has extended its confirmation deadline for newly accepted undergraduate students.

This year, prospective undergraduate students will have until June 1 to commit to attending GU in the fall, a month longer than the typical May 1 deadline.

According to Sarah Everitt, dean of student financial services, the change was influenced by significant delays in the Free Application for Federal Student Aid, an online form facilitated by the U.S. Department of Education that many college students use to apply for financial aid. Everitt said that, typically, the application is available to students starting Oct. 1. This school year, the online form did not open until Dec. 31.

"We have never experienced a delay in the FAFSA like this," Everitt said. "Anyone who uses financial aid to attend school is going to be feeling the impact of the FAFSA delays."

Everitt said the U.S. Department of Education has been in the process of overhauling the online application since the FAFSA Simplification Act was passed in 2020. The changes to the form, she said, will ultimately make the financial aid process simpler for students and their families.

"The FAFSA was long overdue for an overhaul," Everitt said. "As we're working through these delays, and as hard as it is on families, it ultimately will be better. But we're living through the hard part of the change right now."

As a result of the three-month-long delay, Everitt said GU has not received any financial information from prospective or current students who have filled out the FAFSA for the 2024-25 academic year. Normally, GU receives this data from students two to three business days after they fill out the form and releases its financial aid offers to students in late February or early March. This year, Everitt said she anticipates GU will provide students with their financial aid offers in mid-April.

Everitt said if GU had kept its May 1 confirmation deadline, it would have allowed prospective students and their families only a few weeks to review their financial aid offers and make college decisions.

"For some families, this could be a large financial decision," Everitt said. "There may just not be time to sit around and have a conversation about, 'Is this the school you want to go to? Is this a good decision for our family? Can we afford this?' So, it just buys more time to be able to have those conversations."

Stephen Keller, senior director of undergraduate admission, said that with the deadline extended, students and families will have more time to make sound decisions.

"The extended deadline is an expression of Gonzaga's care and concern for students," Keller said. "Delayed access to financial aid packages means that students will not have the usual amount of time to discern their options and make the best college decision for themselves. The extended deadline allows students to fully consider



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Prospective students are welcomed onto campus during the spring as they make their decision about enrolling at GU.

their options without being rushed into making a college decision."

Julie McCulloh, vice provost for student enrollment, said she hopes the deadline extension will also be a way to remove barriers for students who may not have much support in the college and financial aid application process, including first-generation college students.

"As a country, we're seeing the number of students choosing to go on to college of any kind — technical, community, four-year — the percentage of high school graduates going on to college is dropping," McCulloh said. "The concern is this is just one more barrier that will keep students from pursuing their college degree. And it's a pretty significant barrier."

McCulloh also said the FAFSA delays will prove particularly difficult for private schools like GU.

"Private schools are really at a disadvantage here because we're so much more expensive, and the majority of students rely on federal and state aid to make up the difference," McCulloh said. "It's just really put so many students and so many schools in a vulnerable place."

According to McCulloh, extending the confirmation deadline will present logistical challenges for GU in terms

of housing, class planning and staff hiring.

"Everything has to be squished and accommodated because of this delay," McCulloh said. "Our colleagues have been great. Because this really does put stress on them."

While prospective and current students wait for their financial aid offers from GU, Everitt said there are resources they might find helpful. In mid-February, GU launched an online form for students to request an estimated financial aid offer. Everitt also said she encourages students and families to reach out to GU's financial aid office for individual support.

"First and foremost, what Gonzaga does really well is just being there for students and helping students," Everitt said. "Finances can be super personal, and we get that. And we also have a dedicated, experienced and just compassionate group of colleagues in the financial aid office, and also in the admissions office, willing to work with students and families."

Natalie Keller is an art & entertainment editor.

GRANT

Continued from Page 1

"By design, not everything is already planned out exactly how it will go," Shimabuku said. "We need to remain flexible for future fire events and associated water contamination events that occur."

With experimentation happening in labs at GU, Ross said there are a number of students that are gaining valuable experience while working on this project. Currently, there are five civil engineering majors and three chemistry majors working under Shimabuku and Ross, respectively.

"[Chemistry] students that are involved in this project are doing professional level analysis, following some rigorous methods that are beyond what they get exposed to in their chemistry laboratories," Ross said. "We're doing analyses at the limits of our instrumental performance with methodology that we have to adapt or develop in the lab. This is very akin to what professional chemists have to do."

In addition to opportunities for students, funds from the grant have been used to purchase a \$65,000 piece of equipment

for the chemistry lab that has both research applications and academic uses. Shimabuku is also bringing the benefits of this project into the classroom, allowing students in environmental engineering labs work with samples of contaminated water.

"Students are able to work on something that is pretty tangible and easy for them to relate to with the increasing amount of wildfires in the area," Shimabuku said. "They're able to work on local environmental engineering challenges as well, which I think helps make the science and engineering we're doing a lot more relatable."

Shimabuku and Ross hope that this project will create a basis for further research on the topic and be important in the applications of water treatment for communities in the region.

"It can give us an impactful platform from which we can develop more research in the future," Ross said. "Research is inherently unpredictable, so what you discover always leads to new questions."

Kaitlin Smith is a staff writer.



MYERS GORRELL IG: @myersgphoto

Kyle Shimabuku talks with his two students helping him on the experiments.

SUMMIT

Continued from Page 1

from understanding how the legal system functions and who benefits from this functioning.

"You would expect that these rights would be solidified and easy to fight for, but it's exactly the opposite," Herzer said. "Because our systems are not built around equity and equality. They're built around gatekeeping power, maintaining power."

According to Harmon, increasing the representation of LGBTQ+ individuals and advocating for their rights works to further the mission of the law school by fulfilling commitments to education and community engagement and connecting to the law school's values of honoring human dignity.

"This is important work to understanding what advocating for the whole person looks like and what recognizing every individual's dignity looks like," Harmon said.

Another goal of the event, according to Harmon, is to make it accessible to a community beyond the legal world and lawyers working within human and civil rights.

"We are trying to make a summit that's accessible for anyone who's kind of interested," Harmon said. "Lawyers that don't practice this area of law should be able to come to this and leave feeling better prepared

to advocate for LGBTQ folks. Students should be able to come and learn something maybe even about themselves, what they maybe want to do."

From this event, Harmon hopes that participants will grow their understanding of both the issues facing LGBTQ+ individuals and the ways to address these issues.

"We're hoping that folks leave either just better educated or better prepared to advocate for LGBTQ+ rights," Harmon said.

Hannus said that participants will be armed with knowledge to better protect themselves against discrimination or be a better ally to the LGBTQ+ community.

"Come learn what is important and often overlooked regarding LGBTQ rights, how to protect the community, how to be part of the community, how to be an ally and how to be an ally actively adding to the community," Hannus said.

Herzer said that she hopes that the event can provide an opportunity to create community and solidarity, dispelling the feelings of isolation often felt by marginalized individuals and those involved with advocacy work.

"The summit is really important to collectively come together and realize that we have power together and we're better together," Herzer said.

Clarinne Kirk is a news editor.

CRES

Continued from Page 1

she is working with affiliate faculty members to find an interim department chair.

While Calafell said that the administration has been supportive of CRES, she said her decision to leave is, in part, due to seeking employment where her expertise is placed at a higher level of value.

"I want to be someplace where my expertise is valued in ways that are not just superficial," Calafell said.

In the demands written by the CRES Student Coalition, they specified that in the event of the department chair leaving, CRES would remain its own department.

According to Calafell, the instability of CRES is largely related to a hesitancy to address low faculty retention, particularly among faculty of color.

"The big issue is that nobody wants to talk about faculty retention," Calafell said. "It's about recruitment, hiring, but we don't talk about what we do to keep faculty of color here. We had three faculty members in the spring last year, now we have one, and in a few months, we'll have zero."

Gill said that by having to fight for the stability of their minor, CRES students carry out "racial labor" that the university benefits from by increasing their diversity numbers and commitments to

DEI initiatives.

Lucy Kramer, a student employee of the department, similarly said that the CRES department currently shoulders a heavy load of the university's diversity efforts. Gonzalez said that this undue burden on CRES to uphold GU's mission without the necessary support speaks to hypocrisy from the administration.

"We have this mission statement where we're talking about intercultural competence and social justice and solidarity," Gonzalez said. "This department has a curriculum that's living that out, and we're trying to build stability in that curriculum. There is a hypocrisy in that we haven't had that stability."

Given that GU is a predominantly white institution, Calafell said that CRES's existence at GU is vital to ensuring that students of color feel represented within their classes when typical class material often does not reflect their experiences. CRES also helps all students think about systems of power and become better citizens, according to Calafell.

"One of the things that CRES does first and foremost, is it creates a space where students of color are able to feel safe in the classroom, and they're able to learn about their experiences," Calafell said.

Gill similarly said that CRES benefits students by teaching them to be critical of the way privilege functions within all

aspects of society and to work to dismantle those structures.

"You're trained in a language that is critical of power, and it refuses the notion that it's not all about race or it's not all about class," Gill said. "[CRES] looks at such pertinent realities in the way that our racist or racial settler colonial society is structured, and it provides you with the language to get to deconstruct it."

The tools learned in CRES classes apply to all areas of study or future career sectors, according to Kramer.

"[CRES] carries everywhere, especially with growing efforts of diversity, equity and inclusion," Kramer said. "The lens that you get here is not able to be taught everywhere else, even though you do need that lens everywhere else."

While the administration has made plans to hire a new faculty member and secure the future of CRES, Gill said she remains uncertain.

"My hesitancy lies in the fact that we were in a precarious position a year ago ... We still don't have that faculty member," Gill said.

Despite the hesitancy, Calafell remains certain that CRES will still offer a minor in the fall.

"I don't know what it will look like right now and what classes will be offered, but there will be CRES classes in the fall," Calafell said.

Clarinne Kirk is a news editor.

Free Rein: Horsin' around in therapy

Spokane-based equine center serves people with disabilities through therapeutic riding programs

By CLARINNE KIRK

For Paityn, a young girl participating in Free Rein Therapeutic Riding's services who was born with optic nerve hypoplasia and is blind as a result, horses provide her with a new way to see the world. Through these equine therapies, Paityn has been able to get increased vestibular input and physical therapy by feeling the movement of the horses and the ability to move quickly without fear.

Paityn is just one of the 43 individuals Free Rein, a Spokane nonprofit, currently serves in its mission to provide "health, hope and happiness to children and adults with disabilities."

Established in 2008, Free Rein serves the community through two programs: an adaptive riding program, which teaches participants how to ride, and an unmounted military horsemanship program, a program open to active-duty military and their immediate families that focuses on teaching horsemanship and building relationships with the horses from the ground.

Free Rein's founder, Sandy Jones, volunteered at an equine therapy program while attending college at Washington State University in Pullman. After moving to Spokane, she realized that there was no similar program available to those in the Spokane community and decided to start a program with six horses and 18 riders participating. Currently, Free Rein remains the only equine therapy service in Spokane.

Typical programs last for 12 weeks, with one in the fall and one in the spring. Free Rein also offers shorter programs in the summer such as an eight-week program and one-week summer camps, which they expand to offer a wider range of community members, including a camp specifically for foster children.

Within the adaptive riding program, participants not only learn to ride but come in with goals tailored to their therapeutic needs. These needs can range from physical needs to developing communication skills, according to Free Rein's Program Director Katie Smith.

"We work on goals and skills, so it can be anywhere from physical and cognitive and learning skills to social interaction skills," Smith said.

In addition to strengthening specific skills tailored to the individuals, Smith said that the programs offer a wide range of benefits, from physical to social. The ability to ride and bond with the horses allows participants to learn horsemanship



ISABELLA STOUT IG: @isabellacarlin.photography

Free Rein offers programs tailored toward physical and social development for participants.

and understand how to read the horses' body language, which Smith said can help with developing communication skills. The act of riding itself helps participants use and strengthen their muscles, which can be especially helpful for individuals who may be restricted in the ways they can exercise.

"For our riders with cerebral palsy, they like being on a horse better, because feeling the warmth of the horse on their muscles will help relax their muscles over time, as they ride and get stronger," Smith said.

Not only is Free Rein's programming important due to its benefits to participants' physical and social development, Smith said the programs are also crucial in providing therapy to people who may not have access to alternatives. Unlike traditional therapy which takes place in an office and can be overwhelming or redundant for some individuals, Free Rein allows its participants to be outside and interact with horses and others.

"A lot of [participants] will not go to traditional therapy," Smith said. "They would rather come be with the horse and

be outside."

Smith said that allowing participants to focus on the horse often makes participants feel more comfortable and open up in ways they wouldn't when dismounted.

"A lot of riders interact very differently when they get on the horses," Smith said. "We've had some riders that have never really talked unless they're on a horse; it's like the horses are a distraction to them."

Smith's love of horses began at a young age, as her family was in the horse racing industry. She also spent her childhood trail riding through the mountains, soaking in the scenery and enjoying a connection to nature. Smith's connection to Free Rein began in 2010 when she started working as a volunteer. Three years later, she got certified to work part time as an instructor. In 2021, Smith began working full time as the program director, juggling many hats to manage volunteers, funding and the coordination of participants.

Besides a background in horses, Smith's previous experience working at Division of Vocational Rehab, which serves people with disabilities, in addition to her own experience living with a disability helped

enable her to better serve the participants of Free Rein's therapies.

"When I became a volunteer, I really got to learn some more disabilities and how to interact with them," Smith said.

Luca Maffoni, a junior at GU and volunteer at Free Rein, said the most rewarding aspect of his time volunteering has been witnessing the growth of participants.

"I really like being able to see their improvement over the course of the months," Maffoni said.

Smith similarly said that one of the most rewarding aspects of her job has been seeing the improvement of riders and the joy they experience while on a horse.

"I really like seeing the riders come into power and seeing the improvement that they make week-by-week and hearing stories about how much they really enjoy coming out," Smith said.

According to Smith, Free Rein is currently searching for more volunteers. Volunteering is open to anyone over the age of 14 who passes a background check, no prior experience with horses necessary. Volunteers can fill a variety of roles from walking alongside riders during lessons to filling out paperwork in the office to completing landscaping or maintenance tasks, all depending on the skills and interests of the volunteer.

While volunteering may seem overwhelming at first, Maffoni said with an open mind, new volunteers can quickly see the benefits of their work.

"I think it's a little daunting at first, but after you go for a while, then you get to see why it's a cool opportunity," Maffoni said.

In addition to lacking volunteers, Smith said another challenge Free Rein currently faces is a lack of horses and the search for a permanent location. Once these obstacles have been addressed, Smith said Free Rein hopes to expand their offerings to include programs for first responders, which will address a current community need for first-responder-specific services. Smith also said that Free Rein is working on expanding its therapy services.

"Down the road, we hope to provide some other services, such as mental health therapy and other types of therapy, incorporating equine and [Occupation Therapy] and [Physical Therapy]," Smith said.

To learn more about Free Rein or apply to be a volunteer, visit its website or reach out by email.

Clarinne Kirk is a news editor.

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Student Facilitators Needed!

The Spokane Alliance for Fentanyl Education is hosting a youth summit to give current information to local high school students about illicit fentanyl and teach skills to be leaders in their community. It will be March 28th from 10 to 1. We are seeking college students that want to participate as group facilitators. Each facilitator will receive \$100. Facilitators will be trained prior.

To apply, please sign up at <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/508054CAFAE22A6FD0-47455621-volunteers>

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State of the Union address sours voters

On March 7, President Joe Biden delivered his annual State of the Union address which amounted to little more than a shout-filled blame game, but can any Americans act surprised?

With the 2024 presidential election quickly approaching, the stakes were high for Biden, and it is obvious that he set out to prove rumors about his health wrong. He stuttered little and seemed fully cognizant of the words coming out of his mouth, a significant change of pace from his traditional ramblings toward the press and during speeches.

Health aside, Biden's raucous sentiments about present sociopolitical dilemmas are likely to fall deaf on the ears of young, left-wing voters as the election approaches, setting the stage for another face-off between Biden the most likely Republican candidate — former President Donald Trump.

With urgency to unite the American people amid a plummeting approval rate, Biden's address was overflowing with fiery rhetoric.

He addressed Trump's ties to Putin, commanding potential voters to recognize Russia as a formidable threat to both the United States and Ukraine.

"What makes our moment rare is that freedom and democracy are under attack, both at home and overseas, at the very same time," Biden said of the prior Jan. 6th insurrection and Russian advancements into Ukraine.

His attitude toward freedom and democracy is largely ironic considering his consistent support for Israel amid its indiscriminate bombing of Gaza civilians in an open-air prison after Oct. 7, per AP News. It's an issue that voters — especially younger voters — aren't likely to turn a blind eye to. Yet, the people in Palestine were one of Biden's last



By KAELYN NEW

objectives in his address.

Instead, he continued to sow fear in the face of a potential second Donald Trump presidency. He boasted his own accomplishments, namely a soaring economy, infrastructure projects and the lessening racial wealth gap before addressing on how his opponent would divide the American people further.

Notably, interspersed with loud calls to action, Biden hung Roe v. Wade and the right to reproductive rights over prospective voters' heads during the speech.

"If Americans send me a Congress that supports the right to choose, I promise you, I will restore Roe v. Wade as the law of the land again," Biden said.

Regardless of his words, he failed to acknowledge that the case was overturned under his administration, albeit with the help of Trump-instated justices. Likewise, his other predecessor and former running-mate Barack Obama had the ability to codify Roe into federal law, but didn't, despite Democrats controlling the House, Senate and White House during 2009-2011.

It essentially boils down to the two-party system acting as a tactical game

wherein politicians can hold looming threats over constituents' heads in order to win another term. Career politics have become less about the people that legislation affects and rather about what can be said to maintain a cult of personality, and fear is often the most powerful force.

It's no doubt that fear is an extremely useful political tactic in uniting people amid national and global tension — just ask former President George W. Bush whose red-hot words helped fuel national support for an unjustified invasion of Iraq post-9/11.

But unlike during the Iraq war, people are more connected than ever — not through ideology nor companionship, but through social media. And through social media, journalists and organizations have been able to disseminate information quicker than ever before. Thus, politicians like Biden can no longer make faux promises that won't be upheld to get re-elected, nor can he brush aside the massively detrimental necropolitics the U.S. has employed overseas in Palestine.

In real time, American citizens have been able to see the horrific impacts of Israel's nonstop bombardment of Palestinian citizens in the name of freeing hostages that were taken on Oct. 7 when nearly 1,200 Israeli citizens were killed.

But American citizens have also never had information as readily accessible at their fingertips as they do now. Over 30,000 Palestinians have died, over 72,000 have been injured and 1.9 million have been displaced without access to clean water since Oct. 7. Most of those affected are children, according to United Nations Press.

With easy access to Palestinian journalists and news outlets as well as globally sourced fact-checkers, the young

voting demographic has additionally become aware that this conflict didn't begin on Oct. 7, but rather decades prior when Israel was established in 1948 after the Holocaust and excessive persecution, displacing Palestinian people in the Nakba. Now, the UN reports that over 5 million Palestinians have been displaced throughout the Middle East.

While Biden called for a temporary ceasefire in his address, it is likely far too little too late for prospective young voters and U.S. Arab populations. In Michigan, the state with the nation's largest Arab American community, more than 100,000 Democrats cast protest votes for "uncommitted" in the presidential primary, according to TIME.

Regardless of his words in his address, Biden's actions speak otherwise. On March 13, Jacobin reported that the Biden administration has kept a low profile by spreading arms provision to Israel across 100 smaller munition sales, and in breaking down a classified briefing, the Biden administration has sent weapons to Israel every 36 hours in the 150 days since Oct. 7.

"History is watching," Biden said in the address.

He couldn't be more right. History is watching as he continues to meander through speeches, holding threats of demise against American people, and history is watching as he maintains allyship with the Israeli state as it continues to launch its attack on the Palestinian people.

But history won't forget, and Joe Biden won't be absolved. Voters' eyes are on Palestine.

Kaelyn New is a copy editor.

Spring fashion: What should be left in the snow

Spring is a period of rebirth, a time where nature and people decide to clean out the old and usher in the new. Just as the Earth dawns warmer days, all of us will be donning new styles that match the rising temperatures.

Like last year, I think "European summer" is going to continue to be a common trend. While some of the pieces associated with this trend will probably die out, like our newfound appreciation for Adidas, the lucky aspect of this style is that much of it is classic pieces that will always be cute.

It features an aversion to cut-off denim shorts and a focus on natural fabrics like linen and silk. Simple, patterned dresses and linen pants will be your best friend. Just try to stay away from those t-shirts that say the name of a random European city; they're not as in-line with this style as you think.

For menswear, you can't go wrong with a cotton or linen short-sleeved collared shirt. Style it with a nice pair of shoes or khaki shorts, a few buttons unbuttoned and you'll have nailed it.

I think we'll continue to see muted, natural colors and a tone of "quiet luxury" among the pieces that are popular this year. Understated elegance will be more popular than loud logos and designs.

Personally, I'd really like to see low-rise bottoms rise



By EMILY NEIMANN

in relevance. While it hasn't had the most body-positive past, it could definitely have this in the future. Now that we live in an era that is kinder than the early 2000s, I think we can handle a style like this.

Though some items need to stay buried in the snow. While I know this is an incredibly hot take, I'm so over the bow trend. It was cute for a little, but now I think we've taken it too far. Not everything needs to be coquette, and I feel like we've taken this trend and driven

it into the ground. It's time for something new.

The frustrating part of social media is that we always seem to come up with new trends that are such a strict "aesthetic" that it encourages people to buy into microtrends and not wear items they previously owned.

While it might sound cliché, avoid letting trends dictate who you are and how you present yourself. Try to only participate in trends that aren't so trendy, ones that you can continue to wear for a couple years. It's not only good for your wallet, but the environment too.

Let your clothes become a form of genuine self-expression, rather than an attempt to look like everyone else. Don't be afraid to stand out and ditch the trends as the seasons change and the sun starts to warm up our closets.

The trick to participating in trends is picking out certain aspects of it that you really enjoy; these pieces should be in line with your current style or are only a slight departure from it. That will ensure that you'll get more use out of it, rather than donating it after a few wears.

Emily Neimann is a staff writer.

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Painful presidential border visit

In late February, the presumed presidential nominees from the Republican and Democratic parties both traveled to the United States-Mexico border to address the issue of rising undocumented border crossings. Democratic incumbent President Joe Biden traveled to Brownsville, Texas. Republican Donald Trump opted for Eagle Pass, a smaller community located about five hours northwest of Brownsville. Eagle Pass is found directly across the Rio Grande from Piedras Negras in Coahuila, Mexico.

For many undocumented migrants seeking asylum in the United States, the promise of the "American Dream" is one worth tremendous savings relative to local incomes. At times, individuals will spend upwards of \$5,000 USD (about 83,500 Mexican pesos) to be led by guides colloquially known as "coyotes." Migrants sometimes travel hundreds of miles north from Mexico and various countries in Central America toward areas directly across from cities like Eagle Pass and Brownsville. The final step of this trek is hazardous and often ends in tragedy without proper guidance. Hundreds die annually, with some succumbing to the unpredictable currents and depth of the Rio Grande.

In March 2020, the Trump administration invoked a policy colloquially known as Title 42 under the command of then-Vice President Mike Pence. Title 42 was first passed within the Public Health Service Act in 1944 that initially sought federal authority to isolate American borders in the case of disease-based threats. A clause in the provision noted that "expulsion" rather than deportation could be used, meaning that migrants did not have the opportunity to appear before an immigration judge before being promptly removed from American land. This was



By AIDAN BRAATEN

noticeably uncharacteristic from what the typical legal process of deportation granted, which allowed individuals suspected of breaching immigration laws an appearance in court.

Despite a convincing campaign promise to eliminate the policy upon entering office, its repeal did not come until May 2023. Extended disapproval over increasing numbers of detentions at the U.S.-Mexico border has left many conservatives wary of Biden's ability to monitor crossings and has distressed liberals who are desperate to seek emphasized humanitarian policies when regulating the border.

Granted, it is absolutely true that undocumented border crossings have exponentially risen under Biden's term than his predecessor's; according to the National Performance Review, the calendar years of 2022 and 2023 saw more than two million of such instances, roughly twice the figures seen prior to Title 42's implementation in 2019. However, this data ignores recidivism rates. Under Title 42, migrants removed from the United States could theoretically re-enter the country an infinite number of times, adding to the tally of apprehensions in each instance.

While Biden's approach has been largely flawed and noticeably more conservative

in alignment than expected from a Democratic president, former president Trump is no stranger himself to unfulfilled border policy. The inflated and largely hyperbolic "Build the Wall" mantra that circulated throughout his 2016 campaign only yielded around fifty miles of new barrier construction by the end of his term, albeit several hundred more miles were in fact renovated.

Excessive and anti-immigration rhetoric is no unfamiliar concept for Trump. This was recently reignited by his December 2023 comments on his Truth Social app that migrants are "poisoning the blood of our nation."

A comment like this from a former president is an egregious misconception that denies the social and economic reality of our nation's history. Immigrants have been the true backbone of the continuous expansion that the American economy has boasted throughout its existence. To clarify, thousands of Chinese migrants worked to construct the transcontinental railroad throughout the 1860s that enabled western expansion toward cities like Seattle and San Francisco. The Bracero Program brought over five million permanent agricultural workers to the United States from Mexico during dire post-World War II labor shortages.

A reasonable path toward asylum, working permits and citizenship has been adopted before and certainly can again. Yet, quite frankly, neither geriatric candidate has made any indication that the inflammatory, partisan division our nation now suffers from will be paused for the greater good of our economy, society and for the millions of individuals seeking entry to our nation for numerous purposes.

Aidan Braaten is a staff writer.



RACHEL TRUSSELL IG: @racheltrussellphotography

Taking a few minutes to tidy up your spaces and do that one chore you always put off will leave you feeling refreshed.

Spruce up your space this spring

COMMENTARY
By MADELEINE REED

March is finally here, marking the long-awaited return of 7 p.m. sunsets, daily highs above 40 degrees and a general uplift in morale from the harsh, looming dampness of January and February. Yes, spring is well on its way, and it is worth celebrating.

As the ground and seasonal sleepiness begin to thaw, many of your spaces may begin to feel cramped and ready for a fresh start. I know I am ready for a revamp, so here are some of my personal tips for a spring clean that will leave you feeling clean both inside and out.

1. Clothing organization is a must.

My winter boots have made their last appearance of the season (I hope). My thick coat has become a burden too heavy for the rising heat, and I'm ready to break out the pastels and lighter clothes. A thorough go-through of your wardrobe is a must to ease this transitional chaos.

Give yourself a couple hours to really sift through every drawer of clothing — pull out any winter apparel that has done its time and put it in a storage bin. Out of the way, you'll be able to see all that you have to work with without the constant need of unnecessary shuffling through turtle-necks and thermal socks.

While you're in there, take note of what is left behind, and take out whichever items you know will hardly make it out of the closet in coming months. I love looking through Pinterest or other spaces to get an idea of the outfits I'll want to put together, and then reduce to those specific pieces.

While options are great, a realistic, minimal wardrobe will help you to feel put together and ready to take on whatever the March weather brings.

2. Take time to do a deep cleaning when you have a break.

Cleaning is the last thing most people want to do on their days off, but a deep cleaning of your space — whether you are in a dorm or a Logan house — will help you to reset midsemester and shake off any lingering grime. To get the full effect, you need to really clean. Break out the Lysol and the Windex; dust the blinds and clean the weird stain off your couch.

To break down an efficient cleaning routine, start with picking up any clutter accumulated in your room, then move your way from top to bottom, hitting counters and shelves before the floors. While you're cleaning, crack a window open and let some fresh air and light in; the dense winter air can be draining, and a few seconds of fresh circulation will liven up your space.

While you're at it, clean a few of your personal belongings, too. Pick three things that you wouldn't normally clean and do a thorough wash — this could be your shoes, your backpack, your heavy jacket (before you put it away) or anything that just may be collecting dust. Give yourself ample time to make these items feel new again.

3. If you have one, clean out your car.

This past weekend, I decided to take this step toward my spring goals, and let me tell you, it has changed me. I drove over to Mister Car Wash on Division Street and

got a standard car wash. I vacuumed out the cup holders and under the seats. I even went as far as to wipe down the interior with special car wipes.

Since then, I've been on cloud nine. My car is a safe, pristine place; the lemony scent of the wipes is lingering, and I feel like a brand-new woman. If you have a car, I strongly urge you to not skip this step.

4. Prioritize your health.

Between the stress of midterms and the tail end of cold and flu season, it's no wonder that everyone on campus is battling illness. A sick spring may be quite miserable, no matter the weather, which means that your health should take precedent.

One of the best ways to really embrace a season is to appreciate the natural selection of produce and to incorporate it into your meal plans. While farmers markets are still months away, there is still some produce that will be fresh. In season now are hearty green vegetables like artichokes, asparagus and greens like arugula and spinach.

Citrus also remains in season through the month and can serve to add a zing into your life. Experiment with brighter, citrusy tastes as well as herbs like basil and mint to refresh your palette.

Try to engage in some form of exercise, be it walking in nature every day or training at the gym. Staying in touch with and moving your body will help you to feel refreshed and ready to take on the coming months.

Madeleine Reed is a digital editor.

Los Angeles Times Sunday Crossword Puzzle

Edited by Patti Varol

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IN TUNE

By Kyle Dolan & Dylan Schiff

ACROSS

1 Capital known as "The City of Trees"

6 HS course for a future poli-sci major

11 "How silly of me!"

14 Cook brisket, perhaps

19 Capital known as "The City of Stairs"

20 Quinceañera accessory

21 Singer profiled in the 2022 Netflix documentary "Halltime," familiarly

22 Ancient manuscript

23 Friends in Low Places?

26 Outkast rapper ___ 3000

27 Org. whose logo features crossed clubs

28 Oct. 24 observance

29 Chemical in bagel-making

30 Cream-filled pastries

32 Way off

34 Some truffle hunters

36 Colorado State's sports team

37 Jellide Ball attendee

38 Dust in the Wind?

44 Love, in Verona

46 Walking tall

47 Half-finning trio

48 Can opener

49 Pixar swimmer

50 Lacking proper punctuation, perhaps

51 Delight

53 School member

54 Party in the U.S.A.?

58 "Am ___ blame?"

59 Presto, musically

60 20s dispensers

61 Capitol Hill fig.

62 Amsterdam waterway

64 "Just watch me!"

66 [Crying emoji]

70 Video art pioneer ___ June Paik

72 Licensed transport

73 Train, as a boxer

76 Hilton-owned hotel chain

77 Dancing in the Street?

83 Basic ballet move

84 Antibiotic units

85 "___ Kai"; Netflix series

86 Central Plains tribe

87 Organ with a hammer

88 Foie ___

89 Ticket prices?

90 Tons and tons

91 Crazy in Love?

95 DOJ agency

96 Bench press targets, for short

97 College administrators

98 High-end hair dryers

101 Flatbread served with dal

104 Projectile's path

105 Beach balls?

108 Noisy fight

109 Vessel implant

110 Down in the Boondocks?

114 Play place?

115 To's opposite

116 Model/actress Kate

117 "___ mañana"

118 Less spicy, in a way

119 Bros

120 ___ profundo: low voice

121 Oyster cracker?

DOWN

1 Unflattering media coverage, briefly

2 Rolex competitor

3 "Seriously?!"

4 Maple syrup base

5 Like a hotel bathroom, often

6 Teeny bit

7 Gyro wrapper

8 "Slow Horses" actor

9 Oldman

9 Deposit for processing

10 Unit for soccer practice carpool, say

11 Video game with a turntable-shaped controller?

12 Copa América cry

13 Slip 'N Slide need

14 Quantities such as mass and time

15 Address for Hercule Poirot

16 "Weird, right?"

17 Steve with nine NBA titles as a player and coach

18 Old flames

24 Finish

25 The "C" of the CMYK color model

31 Prepare to move, as artwork

33 Christmas tune

34 Pop star Mars

35 Scrubs

38 Root veggies

39 "... then again, we could try something else"

40 [It's gone!]

41 Ardent desire

42 "Truthfully," in a text

44 Shenanigan

45 Conductor Zubin

50 Generic letters

51 Many NYC addresses

52 Tibetan dumpling

53 Festival entry

55 Major key of Chopin's "Heroic" Polonaise

56 Spreading fear

57 Bête ___

63 "The Favourite" queen

64 Candy ___

65 Graph line

67 Minnesota's Paul Bunyan, for one

113 Prominent part of a beekeeper's uniform

69 Bros

71 Wild hurry

72 Threw out

73 Serious

74 Coach purchase, perhaps

75 ___ plancha: Spanish cooking method

77 Concrete piece

78 Classic travel trailer

79 Castle defense

80 Sour compounds

81 One-named Irish singer

82 Power base?

83 Test subject for Gregor Mendel

88 Nail polish enhancer

89 Devotees

90 "Oh, really?"

92 Mandarin, e.g.

93 "I'll follow you"

94 Patio spot

98 Green owl in a popular language app

99 El ___ America, in Mexico

100 Necessitate a bliep

101 Soft "Over here!"

102 "___ boy!"

103 Radio toggle

105 Oodles

106 Sci-fi craft

107 Latin dating word

111 Anger

112 AirNow.gov partner

SUDOKU

THE SAMURAI OF PUZZLES By The Mepham Group

Level 1 2 3 4

2	7			6			8	
				5				
6	4	8						
						4	2	
	5		7		1		9	
	9	1						
						8	5	
				1				
7				5				
						2	6	3

Solution to Last Week's puzzle

3/17/24

6	4	5	3	8	2	9	7	1
1	8	7	9	4	5	3	6	2
3	2	9	1	7	6	8	5	4
9	7	2	6	5	8	1	4	3
4	1	8	7	3	9	6	2	5
5	6	3	4	2	1	7	9	8
2	3	6	8	9	4	5	1	7
7	5	1	2	6	3	4	8	9
8	9	4	5	1	7	2	3	6

Complete the grid so each row, column and 3-by-3 box (in bold borders) contains every digit, 1 to 9. For strategies on how to solve Sudoku, visit sudoku.org.uk

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Island Style Food and BBQ uplifts Spokane cultural food scene

By SOPHIA MCKINSTRY

For Nicholas DeCaro, known as Chef Sin' in the restaurant world, food and cooking have always been a way for him to connect with his family and culture.

"Sin'" is short for "sindalu," which means "warrior" in Chamorro. Chamorro is the name of the Indigenous language spoken throughout the Mariana Islands and DeCaro's tribe on Guam.

Growing up, Sin' spent a lot of time in the kitchen, as well as at his parent's restaurant called DeCaro's Little Italy. Sin' was born in Spokane, but has gone to Guam and the Philippines numerous times, and many of his Chamorro relatives live in Spokane.

"So for me, I grew up around the food and the culture and I've always had a huge draw for the food," Sin' said. "I learned to cook growing up from my grandma, my grandpa and my mom."

Sin' also said he became an entrepreneur at a young age.

"My parents owned a restaurant growing up, I've been an entrepreneur since I was really young," Sin' said. "I was selling candies at school when I was young, and just kind of always had it in me."

In 2020, Sin' decided to open a food truck alongside his cousin, who had bought a truck from an auction and was thinking about turning it into a food truck. Sin' suggested they partner up to create Island Style Food and share Pacific Islander food with the Spokane area.

Sin' said the process, while tedious and lasting over a year, ended in success. He said the things he learned from his family growing up helped him to be successful in starting the business.

"I grew up in big restaurants, business and seeing what it took, hard work and all that," Sin' said. "So for me, that really helped me getting back into the food industry because, restaurants have high failure rates. If people aren't



Nicholas DeCaro, known as Chef Sin', opened Island Syle Food in 2020, initially starting out as a food truck.

coming to eat and you don't know how to run the business you're going to fail. The knowledge that I grew up with, and owning several other businesses in between then really helped me with our success that we're having now."

For Sin', his favorite thing about the food truck is the interactive aspect; employees are on the streets, meeting new people and seeing new faces each time.

Sin' said this contributes to a more meaningful and personal connection between customer and employee.

"Everything we've done is very intentional," Sin' said. "When you come to our food truck, it doesn't matter if it's sunny, raining or snowing, there will be a cashier that greets you outside of the food truck."

The menu at Island Style Food, while keeping the popular items, also changes regularly. Sin' said changing the menu creates more demand because people will try new dishes.

Some of the most popular items on the menu, according to Sin', are the kalbi ribs, lechon fried pork belly, island style noodles and coconut breaded chicken. Most dishes are served with either red rice or garlic rice, macaroni salad and cucumber salad.

The process of opening a physical restaurant began two years ago, Sin' said. The search lasted a little over a year before he found the current space, which opened on Nov. 15 and is located on Division Street.

One of the main reasons for expanding was the high demand. Last year, the truck sold over

25,000 lumpia, a traditional Filipino spring roll.

"The restaurant demand is huge in Spokane, so it was really hard finding a place," Sin' said. "We ran into a lot of obstacles and hurdles."

For Sin', however, a challenge is always encouraged and faced with determination.

"It's my personality type," Sin' said. "I don't know that I'm the type to ever be happy, because I achieve goals and then I feel like something's missing and have to achieve something else, so it's perpetual progress. I'm always setting new bars, new goals and things to achieve."

The impact is immediate when a customer walks into the restaurant, according to Sin'. The selfie wall, a vapor fire place, tropical plants and music all contribute to the environment and ambience that is felt inside the space. Sin' also said he hopes to add a fish tank, koi pond and a patio so that visitors will be able to sit outside.

The restaurant also places an emphasis on fresh, local ingredients and partners with Twin Calves Ranch, a farm located in Cheney.

Sherice Palacio, a prep cook at the physical restaurant, started working at Island Style Food in November. She said she has enjoyed cooking since she was a kid, and that her mom and grandma taught her to cook.

"I love learning new things and recipes, and I love the open communication and it's just a fun environment," Palacio said.

In terms of goals, Sin' said Island Style Food has a bottle of sauce that's been FDA-approved and processed and plans for releasing more this year. They are also working with a spice

company to make custom rubs, and the food truck is expanding into a 24-foot trailer which will be ready by June.

"We've always only had like, three items on the food truck," Sin' said. "This will give us a little more versatility to do some of our more specialty stuff like you see in the restaurant."

A collaboration with Indaba Coffee is also in the works, and Sin' said he hopes to engage more with the Gonzaga University community in the future.

Ultimately, the team makes an effort to engage with the Spokane community as much as possible. When the food truck was first getting started, Sin' created an Instagram account, followed a number of Asian and Pacific Islander businesses in the area and would engage with their posts to connect with other businesses and gain traction.

Maya Ortiz-Camacho, a senior at GU, worked with Island Style Food through New Venture Lab last spring. She said Sin' and the rest of the Island Style food team were eager and interested to learn more about how they could use social media to reach a wider audience.

"They were really just trying to grow their audience, but also say who they were which was really cool," Ortiz-Camacho said. "I think if anybody deserves success, it should be good people."

Follow Island Style Food and BBQ' on Instagram and visit the brick and mortar restaurant located at 2931 N. Division St.

Sophia McKinstry is a diversity editor. Follow her on X: @sophvmckinstry.



Popular dishes at the restaurant include the island style noodles and kalbi ribs.

RACHAEL HALEY IG: @rhaleyphoto

French food guide to eating like a local

COMMENTARY

By ELLIE BAYER

The City of Love, the City of Light, the city of immeasurable charm — Paris truly entrances all who come to visit, work and study.

Yet, beyond its historical landmarks, renowned celebrities and bustling streets lies another treasure: Parisian cuisine. People come from all over the world to taste the flavors Paris has to offer but often find themselves drawn to the most "famous" restaurants that aren't necessarily the best quality.

However, for those seeking to truly experience a real Parisian meal, here are five hidden (and a few not-so-hidden) gems where one can experience and taste Paris like a true local, ranked.

5. Vagenende

There is no such thing as a trip to Paris without trying their escargot. While some may be hesitant to try this mysterious, foreign dish, Paris offers a vast range of restaurants that offer the dish in different ways and styles. Among those restaurants is Vagenende.

Located in the Saint-Germain-de-Prés, the sixth arrondissement, this "Belle Epoque" brasserie (19th century brewery) offers the classic French escargot, served with a lemon dressing and dipped in garlic to give it the perfect balance of flavors. Between the timeless French dishes and the beauty and culture of Saint-Germain, this restaurant offers a feel of what it's like to be a true Parisian.



In one of the oldest areas of Paris, Chez Julien specializes in traditional French cuisine.

COURTESY OF CHEZ JULIEN ON FACEBOOK

4. Café de la Paix

If you are looking for the classic "fine dining experience" in Paris, look no further: Café de la Paix has it all. Sitting in a beautiful, Napoleon III-inspired building just across the street from the famous Opéra Garnier, this historic café is renowned for its classic French cuisine suitable for any meal of the day.

You enjoy a coffee and croissant before a morning stroll in the ninth arrondissement or indulge in a three-course dining experience before attending the Opera. Its sophistication and timeless

beauty have attracted several famous French names, including Victor Hugo, Émile Zola and Oscar Wilde.

3. Miss Kō

With all the bread, cheese and meats in Paris, it is understandable to want a break from the heavy, rich French foods — no matter how delicious they can be. Thankfully, Miss Kō gives us exactly what we need: the perfect seafood break.

Sitting on the bustling Champs-Élysées, Miss Kō's ambience, both interior and exterior, is truly like no other. Its hypnotizing neon lights, bold graphics

covering every wall and electric music filling the room add to the experience of delicious sushi, seafood and Asian cuisine.

2. Pink Flamingo

Sometimes, when traveling around the world and trying new foods every day, we get a little homesick. And other times, something as simple as a slice of pizza can fix that feeling. Rather than fixating on the issue, Paris welcomes us to create a sense of belonging with its delivery pizza restaurant: Pink Flamingo.

However, this pizza place comes with a twist. Instead of delivering your pizza curbside, this restaurant delivers "canal-side." Here's how it works: you order inside the store, they hand you a pink balloon in turn, then you leave. That's it.

You get to go explore the area of the Canal Saint-Martin (either by foot or canal) and it is their job to find you with your pink balloon. The best part is you get to keep the balloon.

1. Chez Julien

The top spot on this list goes to Chez Julien. Held in the Marais, one of the oldest areas in all of Paris, this small, yet charming French restaurant has stood for 100 years. Chez Julien offers a traditional French menu that specializes in truffles, meats and cheeses. Housed in a gorgeous 17th-century building, Chez Julien provides a simple yet elegant experience of what "traditional French dining" means in the heart of Paris.

Ellie Bayer is a staff writer.



RACHAEL HALEY IG: @rhaleyphoto

Customers relax and enjoy a cup of coffee in Spokane's Café Coco, which was named after the owner's granddaughter.

A love letter to a granddaughter inspires coffee and community

By EMILY NIEMANN

A grandma sits in a green velvet chair, sipping her Americano. Further in the European-inspired café, a couple gossips quietly about their last meeting with their friends, while a pair of women laugh raucously at each other's quips.

This is the scene on an unseasonably warm spring Saturday in Downtown Spokane. "Dear Coco," reads an inscription on the café's wall.

The café's owner, Celeste Shaw, said that's the beginning of her love letter to her granddaughter, Coco. As a testament to the bonds between women and the importance of family and connection, Shaw said the café is an ode to passing on wisdom and knowledge to those who come after us.

On the last day of July 2023, Shaw, a seasoned restaurateur and local business owner, opened her new café, Café Coco, in Downtown Spokane.

With Spanish-inspired decor, green velvet couches and ornate tiles, Shaw said the café celebrates the success of her granddaughter's tumultuously terrifying, yet miraculous birth.

"It's the beginning of my love letter for [Coco]," Shaw said. "She's kind of the baton that you just keep carrying on."

After the success of another one of her restaurants, Chaps, Shaw said opening a smaller restaurant was relatively simple. The idea to open a café was something

Shaw said felt like a part of her journey, which culminated with Coco's birth.

"I think it was always a little bit in the back of my mind, because I had another café in Kendall Yards that I closed during COVID, but it was so different when [Coco] came," Shaw said.

Coco frequents the café with Shaw's daughter-in-law. Shaw said it is obvious that, even though Coco is only 3 years old, her granddaughter knows the café is for her.

"She walks around like she knows she owns the place," Shaw said.

The manager and head pastry chef, Eden McMaster, used to bake at Chaps, but switched to Café Coco after it opened. She said that she values the supportive customer base that carried over from Chaps to Coco, and the community of the café's location.

"Also, just joining another community downtown, with the tattoo shops and Kizuri and Chosen [Vintage], everybody supports each other and is aware of how their business is doing," McMaster said.

Shaw said she holds a philosophy that small businesses are the "golden thread" that tie the community together.

"We really support and try to champion support of small business[es]," Shaw said. "The best friend you could have is another small business. Community over competition should always be the perspective."

Some of the pastries and baked goods

that Café Coco is known for are from Chaps, but others are the creations of McMaster, such as the Sweetheart Toast and the Croissant Bread Pudding.

"I make the majority of everything besides what we get at Chaps," McMaster said. "A little sprinkle of love everywhere."

Shaw said she tried to create a space that is welcoming and kind, somewhere where customers and employees can feel safe. She said she tries to not only feed the community literally, but also feed it with kindness and humility.

"We're all just old shoes together, very comfortable, easy," Shaw said.

The customers' understanding and ease make the experience enjoyable for employees too, according to McMaster.

"The majority of people are so kind and so excited to come in and enjoy the space," McMaster said.

Shaw said she struggles with imposter syndrome, yet she still believes her greatest success is being a mother. She said she takes pride in the fact that her children know how hard she works, how she tries to add to her community and that her womanhood does not hinder her success.

"The truth is, especially for women, we are the sum of all the women that came before us, that blazed the trail that gave us inspiration that were willing to rip off the bandaid and create something bigger than themselves," Shaw said.

She said she hopes to inspire her own daughters and granddaughters and

continue to strengthen the immovable bonds between women, mothers and daughters.

"As I've stood on shoulders, it's really remarkable to me now that I have shoulders [for others] to stand on," Shaw said.

Shaw is also a Gonzaga University alum, having gone through the school's leadership and nursing programs.

"I think the leadership program at Gonzaga is incredible," Shaw said. "I love when they ask me to speak. It parallels so much of what I believe in."

Shaw said she has tried to create businesses that embody her ideas about service and community. She loves seeing other women, granddaughters and their grandmothers enjoying the space she's created.

"I know Coco is tiny and little and it's only a little drop in the bucket in downtown Spokane, but it's my drop in the bucket," Shaw said.

Shaw said she has gratitude for all those who came before her and who helped get her to where she is now, and that she hopes she can be that person for Coco.

"We are the sum of all those who came before us," Shaw said.

Café Coco is located at 24 W. Main Ave. and is open Tuesday through Saturday from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Emily Niemann is a staff writer.

A GU student's guide to late night snacks

COMMENTARY

By JACK TALBOTT

College students sometimes run on a clock different from the entire world. Our circadian rhythms have no rhythm. Between studying, scrolling and maybe a long-distance relationship, college students could be up at any hour. I'm not even kidding, my sophomore year I knew someone who was nocturnal. You might know someone too.

"Staying up late in college doesn't make you a party animal or lazy student," said Benjamin Smarr, a Ph.D. of neurobiology and behavior in an interview with Northeastern Illinois University. "Circadian clocks get later in puberty, and so people in their teens and early 20s tend to be more owlish."

Unfortunately, Spokane and the Logan Neighborhood aren't very accommodating to the night owls in terms of places to eat. Other colleges boast their 3 a.m. campus calzones or midnight dining halls, but here, the late-night eats are quite slim since the disappearance of Gonzaga University's late-night COG.

Most restaurants, including the COG, are open until about 8 p.m. (some are open until 9 p.m.). For those who stay up into the a.m. hours, the time to eat is long after the closure of those establishments. Luckily there are options and strategies for the late-night hungry Zags.

Let's say you want to eat around 10 p.m. Options are

already quite limited. Burger joints like Wendy's and McDonald's are always there, and commercial pizza places are open until 2 a.m.

For a late-night snack on the weekend, this could be the play, however eating multiple McChicken's in a week could have disastrous consequences. It should be noted that a quick search can find if any of these places have a screaming deal. In that case, sometimes it is worth it, but always be cautious.

While fast food isn't healthy, it is fast. Speed is a relevant statistic when it comes to nighttime eating since it can be both cold and deserted outside. For a compromise, you could go to Jimmy John's or Chipotle, both recently changed their hours and now close at 11 p.m.

It should be noted that these two places do run out of ingredients from time to time later in the evening. Chipotle is the main culprit here. I think I've seen guac after 10 p.m. twice in my time here and it's the only company I've mentioned that does not accept Bulldog Bucks. Maybe one day they will, but even still, it's probably the best option for calories and protein after a late-night lift.

That's the thing, though, past 9 p.m. there are not many options that won't leave your stomach craving for a bruising. This is where we think outside of the box. Or in this case, inside the microwave.

Let's say you're headed for Caruso's or maybe Frugals

— both are very close to campus and accept Bulldog Bucks — go ahead and order way more food than you need at the moment. Splurge on some extra burgers or a full-length meatball sub, because later, when those places are closed, you can heat it back up and enjoy.

Often the larger item is only a few more dollars for double the food. This not only maximizes the food but helps the budget. Storing food for later is in our DNA, you're embracing your ancient roots when you do so.

Thinking ahead is also in our DNA, and some of us prepare at grocery stores or at the on-campus "store" Iggy's Marketplace. Classic college foods like ramen and macaroni and cheese are always good, but they could be better. Google the term "upgrades" on these late-night foods and figure out how to add eggs to ramen or pancetta to your mac. A little goes a long way when it comes to these foods.

But the best tip for late-night eating is, unsurprisingly, to prepare at Trader Joe's. They have the best freezer items that can turn from ice cubes to delicious in five quick minutes. Bowls, corn dogs, pasta, rice, chicken, whatever it is, Trader Joe's probably has it. It doesn't always break the bank and you can stock up on at least a week's worth of late-night snacks.

The world might not always be helping fuel our night owls but at least there's Trader Joe's.

Jack Talbott is a staff writer.

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LUCY BOOTH IG: @lucyboothphoto

In her first season, Robertson is 8-3 in singles matches after arriving at GU as a five-star recruit from Redondo High School.

Freshman Emily Robertson stays 'mentally tough' as lead singles player

By **ABBY SCHREUDER**

Many Division I athletes have dreamed of playing their sport in college since they were barely able to read and write, and Gonzaga University women's tennis player Emily Robertson worked from a young age to make that dream a reality.

Robertson said her determination and consistent hard work throughout her career are what led her to occupy the No. 1 singles position on the GU women's tennis team as a freshman.

Robertson, a five-star recruit from Redondo Beach, California, spent the majority of her high school career training at Gomez Tennis Academy in Naples, Florida, while attending Redondo High School online due to the pandemic.

She was introduced to the sport through her childhood friend's mom, and Robertson first started taking tennis lessons when she was only 6 years old. She also played soccer until high school. According to Robertson, at that point she decided to focus on becoming as good at tennis as she possibly could.

"Once I picked tennis, I was like okay, I want to play in college, and to do that, I knew I had to spend a lot of time training and competing," Robertson said.

Robertson said she trained long hours during high school, often multiple times a day, and was competing almost weekly at one point. Since she predominantly trained on her own at Gomez Tennis Academy throughout her high school career, Robertson recognized the individuality of tennis, which has helped her immensely in singles play.

"When you're out there, I get in a different kind of locked-in zone that gives me so much adrenaline and I feel like that feeling can't be replicated with anything else," Robertson said. "Obviously other athletes feel that as well, but with tennis it's a bit different because you're out there by yourself."

Robertson has had a strong performance at GU so far, boasting an 8-3 singles record. However, throughout parts of her career Robertson has encountered feelings of burnout.

Considering that much of her time in high school was devoted to improving as an athlete, Robertson said she felt the need to take some time off from tennis during her senior year of high school to embrace her last years as a teenager.

"Taking breaks actually really helps you know that you're not a machine," Robertson said. "Your body needs a break and your mind needs a break, too."

Ultimately, Robertson said she was able to find a balance between tennis, school and her social life, and saw the benefits of her perseverance when she was recruited as a junior to play tennis for GU. Robertson said that she appreciates GU's size, as it has allowed her to easily find community and form valuable relationships with the rest of the team.

In addition to bolstering her team in competitions, Robertson's teammate and doubles partner Ella Nielsen said that Robertson brings a positive energy to practices that brightens the environment for the whole team.

"The more I've gotten to know her over the course of the last six months, she's very outgoing and super funny and a really good person to have on and off the court," Nielsen said.

The benefits of a supportive team were something that Robertson didn't have in high school, and she said that she partially accredits her recent achievements to those around her. Robertson said that the team has been there for her regardless of whether she wins or loses, and being a part of the GU tennis program has given her something to fight for alongside her friends.

So far, according to head coach Natalie Pluskota-Hamberg, Robertson has been a major asset for the team coming into its spring season.

"She's really starting to find her footing and confidence, and to come in and play court one as a freshman is unbelievable," Pluskota-Hamberg said.

This spring, the team has faced tough competitors in nonconference play and recently suffered losses against Washington State University and Cal State Fullerton.

Considering these challenges, Robertson said that she has had to work on improving her mindset going into matches and overall, she has increasingly prioritized the mental aspect of playing tennis over the years. Although Pluskota-Hamberg said she has developed unique resilience as an individual player, Robertson attributes this improvement to the coaches she has had both in the past and at GU.

"Her biggest thing is believing that she can play at this level against anyone and everyone ... but we're seeing her kind of embody that with more and more matches," Pluskota-Hamberg said.

Robertson said that her coaches' guidance has helped her to realize her potential this semester, and their advice to stay present while competing has helped her to not get caught up in future results when facing other talented players.

"She's gotten better at handling ... the pressure of playing at one," Nielsen said. "She's done a really good job of staying mentally tough in a lot of hard situations. I'd say on the court and in tennis in general she's very driven."

Robertson's personal experience with challenges in tennis have allowed her to apply this knowledge to other areas of her life as well, which she said has been one of the most rewarding outcomes of playing tennis that she has noticed.

Robertson is a human physiology major, and she said that while it has been difficult at times to balance school with tennis, the sport has allowed her to think about what it takes to succeed in all of her pursuits.

"If I keep this mindset, I think I can keep doing well," Robertson said.

Robertson said that she is optimistic about GU's performance in upcoming matches. Although the court one position comes with a certain amount of pressure to maintain it, Robertson said that she tries to remember that her team is with her through it all, and appreciates the distinctive characteristics that make the sport so gratifying for her.

Aside from improving her mindset over the course of this season, Robertson has set goals for herself to measure her future success on the tennis court, one of which is becoming ranked in the Intercollegiate Tennis Association standings. Pluskota-Hamberg said that the staff is eager to help Robertson achieve anything she sets her mind to.

"She embodies everything that we stand for," Pluskota-Hamberg said. "She's young and still learning, but ultimately, she's really bought into what we're doing here and wants to succeed, which is exciting."

Abby Schreuder is a staff writer.

March Madness events expected to bring in millions in visitor spending to Spokane

COMMENTARY

By **HENRY KRUEGER**

As March ushers in the feverish excitement of college basketball's most anticipated event, Spokane finds itself at the epicenter of the action this year. Playing host to a series of first and second-round games of the men's and women's NCAA Tournament, the city is welcoming fans from all corners of the country to witness the madness unfold.

Spokane Arena and McCarthy Athletic Center will welcome a total of 12 teams for nine games from Friday to Monday. Officials are expecting 150 players, 50 officials and roughly 15,000 spectators to arrive in Spokane for this weekend's festivities, according to The Spokesman-Review.

The effort to bring the tournament to Spokane Arena was led by the University of Idaho, and has been years in the making. Idaho was an official host school for the 2020 men's tournament before the competition was canceled by the COVID-19 pandemic. Seven months later, Idaho was named a host for this year's men's first and second rounds, along with the women's Sweet 16 and Elite Eight in 2025.

"Even if you don't follow basketball, you follow it in March," said Stephanie Curran, Public Facilities District CEO. "No matter where you are, the office betting pools and little kids and everybody gets into it. So for us to be able

to host it is amazing."

Many local residents and students hoped the Gonzaga men's basketball team (25-7, 14-2 WCC) would get placed in Spokane's section of the bracket, but those wishes were not granted by the NCAA Selection Committee. Instead, the fifth-seeded Zags will open March Madness in Salt Lake City, where they face 12th-seeded McNeese State in the first round at 4:25 p.m. on Thursday.

The downtown arena will host Auburn University, the University of Alabama (Tuscaloosa), Saint Mary's, San Diego State University, the University of Alabama at Birmingham, Grand Canyon University, College of Charleston and Yale University.

While Spokane Arena had multiple years to prepare for this weekend, McCarthy Athletic Center's designation as a tournament venue was revealed less than a week ago on Selection Sunday. The women's tournament awards first and second-round hosting privileges to top-four seeds, and head coach Lisa Fortier's squad was the final No. 4 seed to hear its name called over the ESPN broadcast.

The announcement prompted a burst of cheers from the Gaffney Champions Room at McCarthy Athletic Center, where the Zags had eagerly awaited the committee's verdict. GU (30-3, 16-0 WCC) will battle 13th-seeded UC Irvine at 4:30 p.m. on Saturday, with the winner advancing to play the victor of the 7 p.m. matchup between fifth-seeded Utah and



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Spokane Arena will host the first and second rounds of the men's NCAA Tournament.

12th-seeded South Dakota State.

"I'm really happy for our team and I'm happy for Spokane and our staff," Fortier said on Selection Sunday. "This is something new for us. Sometimes we think of new as being scary, daunting and bad. But it's really exciting."

This weekend marks the first time Spokane has hosted the men's tournament since 2016 and the women's tournament since 2013. Tickets for both events have already sold out.

"We're really excited, clearly there's an economic impact, but I think it's more

than that," said Mayor Lisa Brown to The Spokesman-Review. "It really just fits our identity as an outdoor recreation and sports region, and this just fits right into it."

Last year, long before Spokane was named a women's tournament host, Visit Spokane projected this one weekend to bring in \$4.4 million to the local economy.

Henry Krueger is the managing editor. Follow him on X: @henrykrueger.

Bulldog Band turns up atmosphere inside Kennel

By CAM MCCANN

When the calendar flips to March, Gonzaga University fans everywhere glue their eyes to Zag basketball games and turn their ears to the Bulldog Band, the program's live musical accompaniment.

"We're there to keep the energy up," said Bulldog Band Director David Fague.

The ensemble of musically-gifted Zags was founded in 1994 and has evolved from a close-knit group to one that currently boasts 142 members. These numbers have grown over the years, according to Fague.

Though the band's progress was set back during the COVID-19 pandemic, the group has quickly come right back to form. Members of the band believe it to be a perfect environment for student camaraderie, fostering school spirit and community for Zag students of all class levels.

"It has pulled me out of my shell a lot, and I've met a lot of new people," said Ray Dagher, a Bulldog Band student conductor.

Playing an instrument at the college level is not for everyone, but the volunteer members of the Bulldog Band embrace the challenge of playing for raucous crowds in high-pressure environments.

"For a lot of students, they tell me it was their favorite part of college," Fague said. "The people that are playing in [the band] just want to keep playing their instrument in college, and so it gives them an audience and gives them a purpose."

The band performs at every GU home game in McCarthy Athletic Center, but also travels with the men's and women's basketball teams for a yearly adventure to the WCC and NCAA tournaments.

The WCC Tournament and accompanying Vegas trip are a rite of passage for most senior Zags, but members of the band are given this opportunity in a setting that allows for both social and musical growth.

The West Coast Conference Tournament during her first year at GU is Dagher's favorite Bulldog Band memory.

"That was when I first got to know a bunch of people and made new friends," Dagher said. "It was a great experience."

Dagher spoke to the difference between



Bulldog Band currently boasts around 142 members, and plays at every GU home game.

the WCC Tournament as a regular fan, and as a member of Bulldog Band.

"It's a different experience when you're going on a fan trip for basketball," Dagher said. "Then getting to play the games and experience being there in the first person was really fun."

While the WCC and NCAA tournaments are momentous showcases for the Bulldog Band, their season's preparations begin with a single preseason rehearsal, the band's only practice opportunity before the men's basketball team's Kraziness in the Kennel and women's Fan Fest.

"The first-year students, by the fourth or fifth game, feel like they got it all," Fague said. "So [the rehearsal] is really more of a run through and just the logistics situation."

Bulldog Band represents a crucial element to the gameday experience, as a

link between the game and the fans. Fague said that his band aims to bring The Kennel audience together as one group with the music they play.

"My goal is to bring us all together," Fague said.

Under Fague's leadership, Bulldog Band seeks to gain information from other GU fans and organizations, such as Kennel Club or the Zag cheer squad.

"When I started, the Kennel didn't sing along to what we did, they didn't share with the cheerleaders," Fague said. "Cheerleaders wanted to do their own thing, the band wanted to do their own thing."

The Bulldog Band will show off their talents throughout March Madness, beginning with the first rounds in Spokane and Salt Lake City.

GU SPORTS

Thursday, March 21

- Track at Buc Scoring Invitational, Whitworth University, Spokane, Washington, all day
- Men's basketball vs. McNeese State, Salt Lake City, Utah, 4:25 p.m.

Friday, March 22

- Baseball vs. Loyola Marymount, 6 p.m. (three-game series)

Saturday, March 23

- Men's rowing at OSU Tri-Dual, Corvallis, Oregon, all day
- Men's tennis at UC Irvine, Irvine, California, 10 a.m.
- Women's tennis vs. Portland, 11 a.m.
- Women's basketball vs. UC Irvine, 4:30 p.m.
- Women's tennis at Cal State Fullerton, Fullerton, California, 11 a.m.

Monday, March 24

- Men's tennis at Pepperdine, Malibu, California, 2 p.m.
 - Women's golf at Fresno State Classic, Fresno, California (two-day tournament)
- *Home games in bold**

Cam McCann is a staff writer.

Ejim, Hollingsworth, Nembhard and Watson named to All-Tournament teams

By KAYA CRAWFORD

LAS VEGAS — The Gonzaga University men's and women's basketball teams each had two athletes named to the All-Tournament team following the West Coast Conference Tournament on Tuesday.

Eliza Hollingsworth and Yvonne Ejim were named to the All-Tournament team for the women.

Hollingsworth led the Zags in scoring in the semifinal against Pacific with 20 points and had 12 rebounds, accounting for a double-double. In the final against Portland, she recorded another double-double

with 11 rebounds and 13 points.

Ejim also had a double-double in both tournament matchups, leading the Zags in scoring against Portland with 17 points, to go along with 11 rebounds. Against Pacific, Ejim put up 18 points and brought down 13 rebounds.

The other athletes named to the women's All-Tournament team were Pacific's Anaya James and Portland's Maisie Burnham and Kennedy Dickie.

On the men's side, GU's Anton Watson and Ryan Nembhard were named to the All-Tournament team.

Nembhard secured a double-double in the semifinal

against San Francisco, putting up 16 points and 12 assists. In the final against Saint Mary's, he recorded another double-double with 13 points and 11 assists.

Watson had 17 points against USF and led the Zags in scoring against Saint Mary's with 18 points. The graduate forward also had seven rebounds against the Gaels.

Saint Mary's Aidan Mahaney, Mitchell Saxen and Augustus Marciulionis made up the other three athletes on the All-Tournament team.

Kaya Crawford is a sports editor.

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