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Censorship in the Land Down Under:
Facebook Bans News in Australia



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The Experience of Being Black
on Broadway



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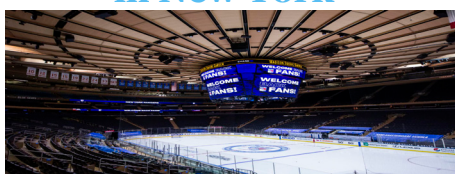
Insula Cast Reflects on their Experiences Performing



Seven theatre students portrayed modern-day versions of Shakespearean characters from Feb. 26 to the 28.

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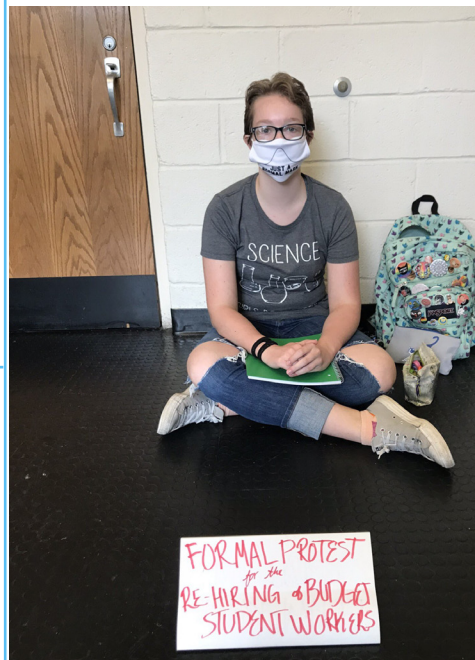
Fans Reenter the Stands
in New York



On Feb. 10, New York Governor Andrew Cuomo announced all professional sporting events could bring back fans in attendance.

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Students Outraged Over Work-Study Only Policies For Campus Jobs



COURTESY OF SHAYLA HARRIS

Shayla Harris protesting the new policy

BY EMMA ROBINSON

NEWS EDITOR

Students who are not eligible for work-study at Post have been restricted from working on campus as of the fall 2020 semester. This has created a lot of friction between students who previously had jobs on campus and were unable to return, as well as students who now want jobs, and the administration.

Senior psychology major Shayla Harris has been protesting the school's decision since October, when she was let go from two campus jobs that helped her career and her financial obligations.

"So, before the beginning of this year, I was working in the psychology department as a statistics and methods tutor [where I was] paid above minimum wage, and for a professor in education as a research assistant [I was paid] above minimum wage with the promise of co-authorship on articles in professional journals, which is huge for an undergraduate student. I

had 17 hours of work per week, which is the maximum for students. In September, Dr. Frye [the professor I previously worked for] was having a hard time re-hiring me, so I was still working solely for my boss in education 17 hours a week. But sometime around the beginning of October, we find out that I'm not going to get paid because [the school] fired me back at the beginning of the school year, and somehow failed to tell my boss," Harris said.

"It was very easy to convince them to pay me because it would have been too obviously illegal for them to not have paid me for the month that I worked. It was at this point that I started protesting outside of Dean Bowditch's office," she said. "During this time, I wrote a letter to Ed Weiss explaining exactly how this policy to not hire budget students was affecting me, and perpetuating the systemic age-based discrimination in FAFSA, which got Bowditch in trouble for allowing me to be a free person."

After the administration saw Harris's attempts to regain her positions on campus, Chief of Student Affairs Michael Berthel held a Zoom conference with Harris.

"He said that I would not have a job on campus ever again because I did not have work study, and I needed to calm down about that, which I found to be such a cool thing to say to someone who's just lost all of their financial security due to a policy that you were complicit in," Harris said.

Harris used the money from her campus jobs to pay for food and rent. Eventually, the school allowed her to work for minimum wage as a tutor again.

Harris believes that this is due to the fact that the school has had a difficult time filling positions

after letting go so many budget students.

"I wanted a tutor [for a chemistry class]. It took until about November or late-October, I want to say, for someone to realize that they needed to hire people to be tutors based on their qualifications rather than how little they could be paid. So, I finally got a chemistry tutor about five weeks too late, and I ended up dropping the class," Harris said.

Sophomore musical theatre major BrayLynn Willis is also disappointed that the school no longer hires students without work study.

"I want to work in the PTC costume shop because costuming is outside my major, but something I am still interested in," she said. "I can't get the experience that would benefit me after graduation because I don't have work study."

Like many campus residents, Willis is unable to work off campus, because she does not have access to a car to get there.

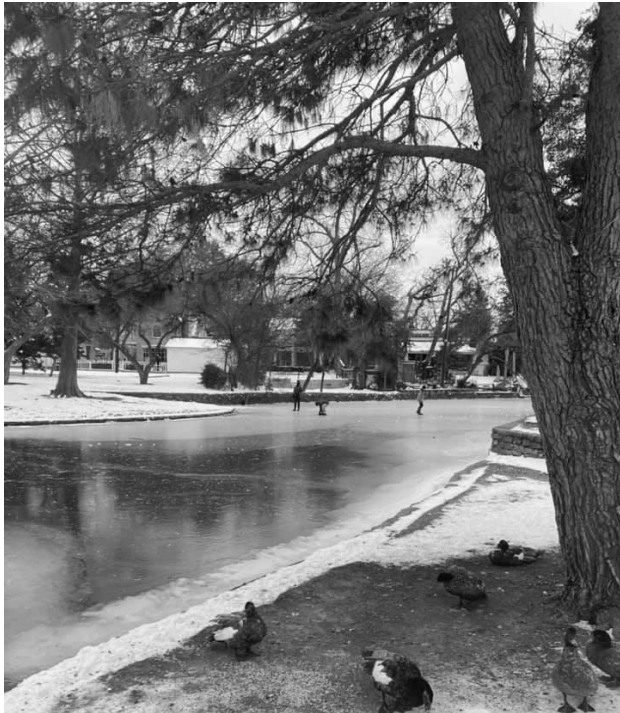
The hiring process has also become an issue for businesses on campus. Like Harris's issue with not being able to find a chemistry tutor, The Student Body Boutique (SBB) has had difficulties filling sales associate positions.

"[The Boutique has used] word of mouth, the SBB instagram, and sending out flyers via email: these have been the most successful ways we've let LIU students know we're hiring," freshman fashion merchandising major Anna Johnson said. "Zoom meetings have been conducted all year in order to have interviews with SBB applicants."

Even though she is the store manager, Johnson does not get paid for working at the SBB because she does not qualify for work study.

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Winter Storm Uri Leaves Texas in Disarray



A frozen road in Texas

COURTESY OF JOHNSON SCOGGINS

BY LILA NOLAN

STAFF WRITER

The Texas storm, unofficially referred to as “Winter Storm Uri”, hit the Lone Star State causing power and water outages for millions of Texans on Feb. 13.

Over the course of the past few weeks, news coverage has shown what life is like for Texans that have been affected by the recent snow/ice storm. During this time, the nation has been exposed to the severe weather conditions that have Texas in a disarray. Over 2 million Texas residents have been affected by the sudden severe winter weather.

“This has all been very unexpected for Texans,” senior musical theatre major and Texas

resident Lee Metaxa said. “One word I’d have to use to describe the current conditions down here are overwhelming- because no one down here is used to or even knows how to deal with this kind of weather. Seeing the content on social media, especially from friends and family, of them struggling through this is tragic. It’s all just a complete disaster.”

When the news of this aggressive winter storm hit the media, the masses were extremely worried for Texans.

“Before this awful weather hit, I was here at school. Once I saw the weather report the night before, I knew things were going to get bad quickly so I booked the first flight out that next morning before the snow even started,” sophomore music entrepreneurship, technology and production major Scoggins said. “And even though it’s been snowing a lot in New York recently, I’d have to say that it’s absolutely nothing compared to what’s going on in Texas; because nobody down here really knows how to deal with it, everything is just worse. To put things into perspective, the unplowed areas on campus are way better than the roads in Texas. They don’t drop salt or sand on the roads, they just wait for it to melt and then it’s even worse because it becomes ice and even more dangerous.”

Along with the dangerous road conditions that Texans have been undergoing, another major issue is the widespread loss of water and power across the state; even in the areas that haven’t been directly hit. Over the course of the past few weeks, Texans have been forced to live through freezing conditions with no water or power.

“After the storm hit, many of my family and friends were without water and electricity for so long that we had to adjust, accommodate and even learn how to live without it,” Scoggins said. “When I went home this past weekend, I had to go two houses over just to take a shower for a family birthday party.”

Metaxa also commented on the detrimental loss of water and power in Texas due to Winter Storm Uri.

“I saw a post from a family friend literally living out of their car, with their two children, just to charge their phones and get some heat,” Metaxa said. “They had no heat, no power, and no water all due to the freezing cold conditions. It’s been extremely hard and scary for me to see people I know and love go through that.”

Millions of Americans are still living through these conditions, and the Texas government has limited-to-no resources to help them because of Uri’s unexpected element of surprise.

“My take away from this whole situation would have to be that this is all just more proof that climate change is real,” Metaxa said. “For the sake of people’s lives, we need to acknowledge this as something that’s actually happening. For future reference we need to be more aware so that we can combat these situations before they happen again, even in different ways. Overall, we must take all this seriously, this is not a joke. There is something we can all do within all of our communities so this hopefully won’t happen again; or at least we’ll be more prepared for it.”

For more information on how to help those in need in Texas visit redcross.org.

Video of Gorilla Glue in a Woman’s Hair Goes Viral

BY JADA HARRISON

STAFF WRITER

Tessica Brown posted a video on TikTok that explained how she ran out of Got 2 B hair-spray, and instead used Gorilla Glue adhesive spray because she believed it would have the same effect. The video was posted on Feb. 3, and went viral.

The Gorilla Glue stuck to Brown’s hair for over a month, and she claims that she had tried to wash her hair over 30 times, even showing her followers that shampoo would not remove the glue in a video. After weeks of trying different solutions recommended by the internet, a doctor reached out to Brown. Dr. Obeng flew Brown out to California for glue-removal surgery for free. Obeng used medical grade adhesive remover, aloe vera, olive oil and acetone to break down the polyurethane, which is the main ingredient in Gorilla Glue. Brown had set up a Gofundme page, where she asked for \$1,500 to help seek the original medical

attention she needed, but she quickly received over \$20,000 from donors as the video of her showing the glue in her hair reached millions of people.

After the Gofundme surpassed its \$1,500 goal, and Brown’s story began getting lost in translation throughout the month, people began to question if getting media fame and money was the plan from the beginning.

Junior nursing major Jahaila Harly disagrees with Brown’s mishap being planned.

“I don’t think she did it on purpose because I don’t think a woman more specifically a Black woman would ruin their hair for short lived internet fame,” Harly said. “She also ended up giving the money away.”

Harly doesn’t think Tessica knew the implications of gorilla glue or the power of the internet.

“The people on the internet are really the ones who made the entire situation blow up, but then again, the internet is known for making people famous for their stupidity.”

Students like senior biology major Rondino

Rameau have mixed feelings about Brown’s intentions.

“I honestly think she genuinely didn’t know and was trying to maybe be funny a bit in her video,” he said. “Then again, I can’t really tell what was going on since usually with viral videos. It’s always the same story of ‘I don’t know why this blew up.’”

Rameau doesn’t think that Tessica should’ve gotten donations.

“I don’t really think she should’ve received it, because she did do it to herself, and doesn’t the bottle say not [to] use[it] on the skin or hair?”

Both Rameau and Harly agree that it was a relief to see Brown get the glue removed from her hair.

“I didn’t expect the result to look undamaged, I am happy for her though I’m sure a month with gorilla glue on your scalp is painful,” Harly said.

Events this Week

Wednesday, March. 3

- Price is Right| 7:30 p.m.
Students can join Promise for a game of The price is Right

Friday, March. 5

- Feminine Product Drive| 1 p.m.
Alpha Xi Delta and Promise will host a program to create packets containing feminine products for Bethany House.

Saturday, March. 6

- ESTA Celebrates Artists of Color| 8:30 p.m.
Students can join ESTA for a cabaret celebrating artists of color.

Sunday, March. 7

- International Womxn’s Day Informational and Trivia | 5:30 p.m.
Circle K hosts an information session on their organization and host a trivia game with a prize of a \$100 gift card.



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Students Outraged Over Work-Study Only Policies For Campus Jobs

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"It's really frustrating, if I'm being totally honest," Johnson said. "I work in the Student Body boutique as the store manager, a position that I'd normally be paid for, a position that I feel I should be paid for. I essentially do most (if not all) of the hiring, training, scheduling, and communication between staff and eboard. And yet, I'm not paid."

It took the SBB almost an entire month to hire three new sales associates due to the restrictions of who could apply.

Some students believe that the university is using the pandemic as a cover-up for not want-

ing to hire more students.

"If the university is okay with in-person classes and forcing their faculty to teach in person despite the risks to their health, I doubt how much they actually care about reducing the spread of COVID; it doesn't affect them because they never actually see students," Harris said.

Willis agreed that while it may seem like a good way to reduce coronavirus cases on campus, it is ultimately ineffective.

"It does limit the amount of people working in one given area, but I can't imagine that it reduces the spread by any significant margin,"

she said. "Limiting the amount of people working does not limit the amount of people still coming through the workplaces. Those with work study are just as exposed."

The Pioneer reached out to Promise asking for more information about the situation, but no response was received.

Censorship in the Land Down Under: Facebook Bans News in Australia



BY CHRISTOPHER TRICK

STAFF WRITER

Facebook has been under scrutiny in the media due to allegations that the company is suppressing freedom of speech, invading people's privacy and exercising undue influence in national elections.

In April 2018, Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg appeared before Congress to answer questions about his company's mishandling of data, allowing so-called fake news to be disseminated on his platform and suppression of unconventional opinions.

In 2020, Zuckerberg gave a speech in Utah saying, "At some point, Facebook must stand up for free speech."

Zuckerberg's words, however, have not held up in light of recent events.

According to BBC News, Facebook users in Australia have been blocked from viewing and sharing local and international news, while local publishers have been banned from sharing or posting any link on their pages.

Facebook's actions came following a newly proposed Australian law that seeks to curb obscene profits amassed by big tech companies, as over \$80 of every \$100 spent on digital advertising is spent on Google and Facebook in Australia, posing a threat to smaller publishers.

Facebook's Australian managing director William Easton, however, says that the law punishes the company "for content it didn't take or ask for" because Facebook has little control over which individuals decide to use its platform.

The tech-giant's latest move has been criticized by many Australian officials, including Prime Minister Scott Morrison, who called Facebook's actions a plot to "unfriend Australia," and that the company was "as arrogant as they were disappointing."

Almost 17 million Australians view Facebook each month, making it the number one social media platform for news in the country.

Some have expressed concerns that conspiracy theories and half-truths may take the place of objective reporting due to the newly created information vacuum.

These concerns prove especially valid in light of an increasing need for accurate information regarding the COVID-19 vaccine.

Human Rights Watch's Australian director Elaine Pearson called Facebook's latest move a "dangerous turn of events."

In the face of heavy criticism, however, Facebook has said that it will continue to remove harmful misinformation, provide users with reliable health advice, and work with fact-checkers to prevent inaccurate information from spreading across its platforms.

Several students have expressed dismay and shock at Facebook's actions.

"I just can't believe what's going on," freshman journalism major John Carter said. "One of the biggest news platforms in the world is banning an entire country from seeing the news. Talk about irony."

"I'm not surprised they Facebook is doing this," sophomore journalism major Clara Lopez said. "They've censored things they don't like and tracked your every move like a hawk. These guys really freak me out."

"I bet they're going to ban people from talking soon, too," junior journalism major Shawn Darcy said. "I love how all these big tech companies like Facebook say they're 'for the people' and 'encourage free expression' when everyone knows they don't. It's a joke."

Though Facebook's measures may seem tyrannical to many Australians, some remain hopeful that the company's decision is only temporary. "I use Facebook to keep in touch with many people I do business with," Leonardo Smith, a partner at the Australian law firm Smith, Ryan, and Harding LLP, said in an interview with BBC. "I hope Facebook allows people to communicate freely again soon."



The Experience of Being Black on Broadway



BY CALEB PALMER

SATFF WRITER

On Friday, Feb. 26 Promise hosted the Black on Broadway Q&A session over zoom.

Four high profile theatre actors and LIU alumni, Diamond White, John Eric Parker, Morgan Siobhan Green, and Rhamell Burke-Missouri, discussed their experiences not only with LIU’s theatre program but their general experiences of being a Black theatre actor after graduating from Post.

One question asked was about what kind of lessons they learned from campus and how they applied those lessons to their theatre work after graduating. A common theme from the answers given was that they all developed a good work ethic. Through her hard work and dedication to the arts, Siobhan Green commented saying that she felt like she could fully advocate for herself as a performer. White agreed, responding that “you may not be the most talented person in the room but there’s no reason to not be hard working.”

Another common theme was the importance of being able to fully express themselves through their work. Parker told the audience a story about how he felt like he was about to give in but a friend reminded him that there’s only one person in the world like him and that he needs to make the people around him see

that. “You have to walk into a room and think ‘you need me and this is why,’” he said.

Another question asked was about their vision of a diverse and ideal theatre industry. The entire group expressed generally the same idea of having the theatre industry not only be a safe space for people to fully express themselves but also to have a more diverse array of stories be told.

It was mentioned by White that one shouldn’t have to worry about being a “diversity hire” and one’s role in a production should be based on their work. Burke-Missouri has expressed the desire of having “characters of all shapes and sizes” and “people being able to be themselves in all aspects.” Siobhan Green expresses similar desires adding on to that by saying that she wants to “debunk the myth that a certain education is required to play a certain role.”

In terms of stories being told, Parker said that we “can we have an industry where a piece can exist without saying ‘oh great another Black trauma story.’”

No Talent Talent Show Returns



Gabriella Cavaleri

Students attending the No Talent Show

BY GABRIELLA CAVALERI

SATFF WRITER

Thursday, Feb. 25, Kappa Kappa Gamma hosted their Second annual No Talent, Talent show where students perform their not-so-special skills. This virtual event included creative acts such as dance performances and a Kayne West voice impression. Were the acts impressive? Not necessarily, but they certainly were entertaining.

The show was open to the public and audience members were able to vote for their favorite act via a virtual poll. During the show, students were also encouraged to participate in a raffle where they can win a variety of gift baskets. With raffle purchases, sorority Kappa Kappa Gamma was able to raise over \$500 for their philanthropy. All the proceeds went to



Gabriella Cavaleri

Maxwell Morris showing off his special cooking talent

the non-profit organization Reading is Fundamental (RIF) which provides resources to help children grow their literacy skills.

The show had some tough competition, and Maxwell Morris’s Chef Boyardee cooking tutorial was a hard act to follow. However, Kristina Occhino dazzled the crowd with her extensive knowledge of her Squishmallows. In the end, she was announced the winner.

“The acts were all amazing,” freshman art therapy major Rebecca Whalen said. “I think my favorite has to be our winner, showing us her huge collection of Squishmallows and telling us about each one. The cooking tutorial of how to make chef Boyardee is a close second.”

There were slight concerns about getting people to participate in the virtual event but the

show was successful in the end.

“I think the show went very well,” senior childhood education major Kristina Occhino said. “The sisters of Kappa did a great job of promoting their event, running it smoothly, transitioning, and working through any hiccups they faced due to the event being virtual. It was a great event and I had a lot of fun.”

Occhinor had a fun time at the event, and recommends that students attend future shows.

“I would recommend the event to any one whether it be watching or participating because it was so great, and the sisters of Kappa are amazing hosts.”

Insula Cast Reflects on their Experiences Performing

BY EMMA ROBINSON

NEWS EDITOR

Seven theatre students portrayed modern-day versions of Shakespearean characters from Feb. 26 to the 28. The show could be streamed online, and followed the isolation and emotions that many college students have faced during the pandemic.

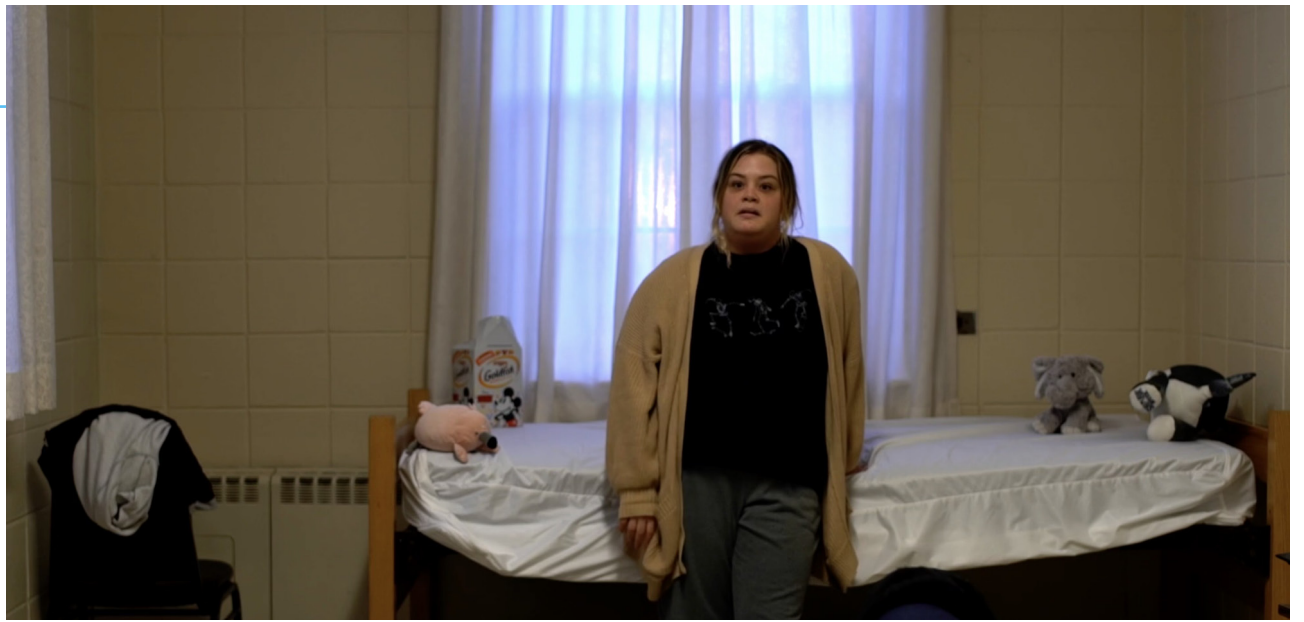
"The show is basically about the pandemic and our lives as students in current times, but told with Shakespeare texts," sophomore musical theatre major BrayLynn Willis said. "Our director, Steele [Whitney] studied a lot of monologues and sonnets and picked ones that reflected how it feels to be alive right now. He pieced together a seven-actor show about isolation and how it feels to be our age in 2021."

The rehearsals and performances were allowed to be in-person due to the small cast size.

"We rehearsed in person because we were learning an entirely new training for this show," Willis said. "We had to be together in order to have a cohesive energy and connection in the ensemble. We still had some people on Zoom at certain times, who observed the rehearsals and [that] was also interesting and beneficial to the process. But Zoom would not have lent itself well to create the show [for the entire cast]. We were grateful to have a small ensemble that could work together with our masks on and windows open."

While most of the cast was in-person for all of the rehearsals, sophomore musical theatre major Hannah Winston was exposed to COVID-19, and had to isolate herself until she tested negative twice. This was useful for Winston because her character spent the majority of the show in isolation as well.

"I had a different experience virtually because I had only about two weeks of training for the show before I went into quarantine on campus," Winston said. "I really felt a real sense of isolation. It gave me a better understanding of



Hannah Winston performing in her room

Courtesy of Hannah Winston

how to portray these two pieces. Having everything, and then losing everything. I was taken away from society, and I wanted to get back into it."

Some of the cast members were weary about performing Shakespeare for the first time.

"I was terrified of Shakespeare because I have never actually performed his work," Winston said. "I have always read aloud because my teachers loved having the theatre kids read [in high school]. But, I was scared to take on this massive amount of text [by memory]. Now, I feel so much more confident about understanding his text and being able to act it out."

Willis felt excited to take part in one of her favorite authors' work.

"I am a fan of Shakespeare to begin with, but what's so interesting about it is that you're able to change the meaning of texts based on how you speak it," she said. "We were able to refresh and recontextualize old stories to mean something about our lives today. I find that fascinating."

The cast felt overwhelmingly happy to see themselves on their computer or television screens after rehearsing and practicing their parts for a month.

"I was so proud of all of the work our whole cast and all involved," Willis said. "It was beautiful, thanks to our cinematographer and director. I think it was more than I could imagine it to be."

Since theater is pre-recorded and shown virtually due to the coronavirus pandemic, the actors were able to assess their performances live.

"It's useful to be able to look back on your performances, because if you're on stage, you never know what you look like from the audience's view," Willis said. "It's also so different to act from a camera from your own energy then from an audience that is giving you the energy."

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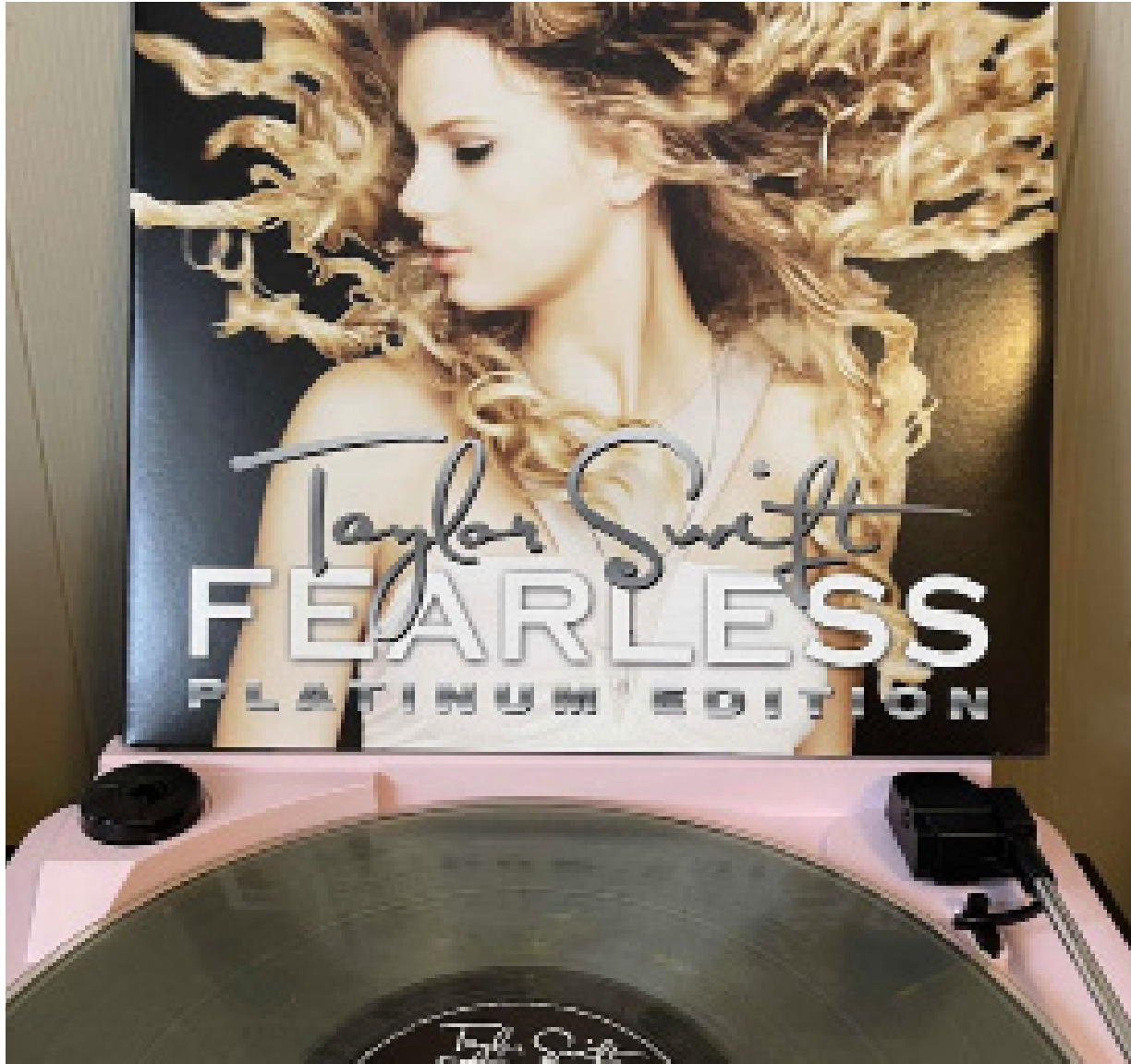


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Fearless But Make it Taylor's Version



Taylor Swift's "Fearless" record

Photo Courtesy of Trevor Swihart

BY SHELLEY DEAN

STAFF WRITER

On Feb. 11, Taylor Swift announced she was re-recording her 2008 album "Fearless", only this time it will be retitled "Fearless (Taylor's Version)." The release began with her re-recorded version of "Love Story," which dropped that night.

This announcement had Swift fans excited and surprised. However, Swift isn't doing this project just for her fans but also for herself as an artist. Similar to most artists, Swift signed with a record label at the start of her successful career. Swift signed with Scooter Braun the owner of Big Machine Label Group who worked with her when she recorded her first albums. These recordings, referred to as her masters, were owned by Big Machine Label Group, not Swift herself.

Swift owns the publishing rights to her songs, which includes the lyrics and melodies; however, she does not own the master's rights. Without the master's rights, Swift does not completely own her own music. Throughout her career, Swift's masters have been sold multiple times without her knowledge.

Scooter Braun, the owner of Big Machine Label Group, and chairman of Ithaca Labels is the current holder of Swift's masters

for her first six albums. For years Swift and Braun have been in a legal battle over the rights to her music. He refuses to sell them to her, only offering for her to come and "earn" the albums back one at a time. Braun offered one of Swift's old albums back to her for every new record she made with Big Machine Label Group.

Swift has hinted at re-recording her older music for a while now, but the Feb. 11 announcement was the first official word the Swift fandom had about the matter.

When she re-records her music, Swift will own the publishing, and master's rights to the songs. All profits earned from the new songs will go directly to her. This will also decrease the value of the original masters, taking money away from the people holding them.

"Artists should own their own work for so many reasons, but the most screamingly obvious one is that the artist is the only one that really *knows* that body of work," Swift said in an Instagram statement announcing the release.

Swift also revealed the release will feature 26 songs, including six unreleased tracks she wrote from ages 16-18. In a series of seemingly random capital letters, Swift hinted at the date

the re-recordings will be released in full, spelling out "APRIL NINTH".

Students on campus are also excited about Swift's Announcement.

"I was so excited I immediately texted all of my friends, we screamed about it," junior musical theatre major Ellie Lauthner said.

Lauthner is a longtime Swift fan. She reminisced on how Swift's song "Teardrops On My Guitar" was the first song she actively recognized on the radio. Since Swift's release, Lauthner has listened to both "Love Story" and "Love Story (Taylor's Version)".

"I prefer the version that pays Taylor and not some random guy who felt the need to exploit a vulnerable young woman," Lauthner said. She believes all artists should own their own music.

Lauthner is looking forward to the release of "Fearless (Taylor's Version)". "I'm really excited for "Fifteen", for her perspective on the song as a 31-year-old woman," Lauthner said.

Other students on campus are listening to "Love Story (Taylor's Version)" for the first time.

"When I first heard the song, I didn't realize it was the version from this year. It's nice to hear her current voice on this iconic song," junior music education major Kaitlyn Sottung said.

Though Sottung doesn't keep up with Swift as often as Lauthner she was happy about her new release. "Good for her that she's finally getting justice," Sottung Said.

Much like Sottung, recent college graduate Charlotte Beshers is also a fan of Swift's music but doesn't keep up with her too much. "I'm glad there's a movement starting that is bringing the struggles artist's go through to light," Beshers said.

Beshers supports Swift in her efforts to own all of her music and hopes more people hear about why she is re-recording, so they will exclusively listen to the new versions.

"The recording of instrumentals definitely pulled the song together and gave me a wonderful nostalgic feeling of being back in middle school and wishing I was in a fairytale," Beshers said. Swift's music played throughout Beshers' upbringing. "I'm excited to feel nostalgic on top of being able to support her during this time," Beshers said.

All three students are excited to support Swift in this new venture, and by listening exclusively to Taylor's version of her old songs, they are doing just that.

On just the first day of its release, "Love Story (Taylor's Version)" earned 5.8 million streams. Swift's mission is off to a successful start, and her fans are ready to keep up that attitude all the way until April 9.

To All the Boys Finale Tops Netflix



Courtesy of Netflix

BY LILA NOLAN

STAFF WRITER

On Feb. 12, Netflix released the third and final chapter of the hit movie series “To All the Boys” starring Lana Condor and Noah Centineo.

This series follows the unpredictable life of a young Asian American high schooler, Lara Jean Song Covey. Lara Jean is a hopeless romantic with three sisters, a supportive father, an edgy best friend and a huge secret. She writes love letters to express her feelings and get them off her chest. When Lara Jean’s crafty little sister, Kitty, exposes her most confidential hobby and sends the love letters to the addressed crushes of Laura Jean’s past.

In this latest installment of “To All the Boys,” viewers see the sequential ending to Lara Jean and her most prized crush of the past, Peter Kavinsky. Here viewers see the outcome from the first two “To All the Boys” and watch Lara Jean and Peter navigate their way through the bittersweet endings of high school, the college selection process and young love. Within the first ten minutes of the movie, we are introduced to LJ’s choice of a lifetime; go to a west coast college to please her first love or pursue the east coast university she fell in love with at first sight.

In this final chapter, “To All the Boys: Always and Forever,” many viewers went in with excited but skeptical attitudes. It seemed as though all possible story outcomes were exhausted in the first two movies, but viewers were pleasantly surprised.

“My initial reaction to this movie was that it was just another cheesy romance movie, but in the end, I’d have to say that the third movie

definitely brought everything together. It’s even my favorite of the three because of how realistic and relatable it was,” senior elementary and special education major Katie Ginty said.

Many students agreed with Ginty about the realistic and relatable tone this final chapter added to the “To All the Boys” three-part movie franchise. Throughout the series viewers see Lara Jean make her way through confusing and heartbreaking times, but in this final movie it seems the cliched and unrealistic situations originally presented to audiences are put to a halt.

“I appreciated that they didn’t use love triangles as a crutch in this one,” sophomore broadcasting major Kerry Cullen said. “Though one might counter that they did use NYU as part of a symbolic love triangle with Lara Jean and Peter Kavinsky. I think ‘Always and Forever’ was the most realistic of the three films because it didn’t feature more out of touch love triangles.” Cullen continued.

In this film franchise, another appreciated factor for viewers is the diversity within the characters and casting; specifically Lara Jean played by Lana Condor. Condor tackles this very similar rom-com situation as a culturally different lead actress in an industry filled with archaic stereotypes. She has brought Lara Jean to life while shedding light on the industry’s typecast.

In an interview with US Weekly, Condor said “It is so special to me that Lara Jean, a character of Korean descent, finally got a ‘Cinderella moment’.”

It’s evident that Hollywood has a long way to go, but it’s worth mentioning that “To All The Boys” is one of several films in recent years

to give a character of Asian heritage a leading romantic comedy role.

In its opening week on Netflix, “To All the Boys: Always and Forever” has broken boundaries yet again by remaining on Netflix’s Top 10 list for a consecutive 14 days since its release date on Feb. 12. The film franchise has built a fan base over the years that anticipate a new love story of Lara Jean Song Covey around Valentines Day every year. As the franchise’s final chapter, “Always and Forever” had many engaging conflicts and plot twists for Lara Jean. In the end, viewers were given the comforting end they all hoped for.

“It was a long movie with a lot going on, but right when you think it’s over, something new happens,” senior physical and health education major Cassie Zangerle said. “I really enjoyed ‘Always and Forever’ because, in my opinion, this is way more than just a love story. ‘To All the Boys’ is about family and friends who are always there for each other through thick and thin. I would recommend this movie to anyone who is looking for a feel-good, ‘girls supporting girls.’ You will laugh, you will cry and you will want to watch it again.”

Throughout its three-part saga, “To All the Boys” has brought viewers on the whirlwind adventures of the life of high school student Lara Jean Song Covey; and in this final installment, viewers are taken on one last ride with LJ. Stream “To All the Boys: Always and Forever” on Netflix now, to join Lara Jean and her crazy life of family, friends and love.

Students react to Britney Spears Documentary



Photo Courtesy of AP Images

BY NICHOLAS ROSA

STAFF WRITER

A documentary has recently been released regarding Britney Spears and her conservatorship, called “Framing Britney Spears.” Although she appeared on the Forbes list of highest paid celebrities in 2002 and 2012, she has not had control over her money or career since 2008.

A conservatorship is “granted by a court for individuals who are unable to make their own decisions, like those with dementia or other mental illnesses. Under this legal agreement, Spears has not controlled her financial or many career decisions since 2008. Her father and lawyers have had the power to do so on her behalf, allowing them to make decisions about her personal life,” according to BBC.

Certain incidents have led to up to Britney Spears’ conservatorship. Britney completely shaved her head, fought with paparazzi, spoke in a British accent, drove with her baby in her lap, refused to give up her children and allegedly abused substances. Britney started to have concerning incidences after she and Kevin Federline divorced.

The term #FreeBritney has been used to raise awareness about the situation with her conservatorship. A report from the New York Times mentions that #FreeBritney originates from a website made by Britney’s fans in 2009. Britney is now considered a “high functioning

conservatee.”

Britney has had a complicated relationship with the media. There is a lot of misinformation spread about her situation. Paparazzi have been known to stalk her. Britney recently checked into a mental health facility, claiming it was voluntarily. She also canceled her residency at Las Vegas. An article from the LA Times discussing the legitimacy of her reason states, “that her dad was sick and she needed the space and time to be there for her family. Theories of what was actually happening inside Spears’ guarded private life were growing more numerous and more frenzied, but ultimately shared one notion: that she was being silenced and manipulated, and had been for years.”

Nancy Park, a freshman psychology major, is a big fan of Britney Spears. “People keep bringing up things she’s done in her past. So people never made big mistakes in their lives? What, you make one too many mistakes and you lose the right to your money? It’s just weird,” she said. “I feel like there’s something more going on. Something doesn’t feel right about this and it’s not just about the money. I’m worried that she’s around people that don’t have her best interest in mind.

In the documentary Framing Britney Spears, her conservatorship is described as a “hybrid business model.” An article from BBC states, “in the years under the conservatorship, Spears has not been short of work: she released three albums, held a Las Vegas residency, and

made numerous television appearances.” Many people think this reason alone shows that Britney has been, and still is capable of being in control of her own life.

“While it does seem like she’s able to take care of herself now, you can’t forget the things that happened in the past. I’m not saying that people can’t change or have a momentary lapse of judgment,” junior art administration major Mel Ramirez said. “If she continues to seem alright, I think she should be in control of her life and money. If she then proves that she’s not able to solely be responsible for herself and her money, then go back to the conservatorship.”

The caption on an Instagram post on Britney’s account addresses her situation. “I wanted to say hi, because things that are being said have just gotten out of control!!! Wow!!! There’s rumors, death threats to my family and my team, and just so many things crazy things being said. I am trying to take a moment for myself, but everything that’s happening is just making it harder for me. Don’t believe everything you read and hear. She continues, “my situation is unique, but I promise I’m doing what’s best at this moment. You may not know this about me, but I am strong, and stand up for what I want! Your love and dedication is amazing, but what I need right now is a little bit of privacy to deal with all the hard things that life is throwing my way. If you could do that, I would be forever grateful. Love you.”

The Experience of a Leap Day Baby



Shelley Dean

BY SHELLEY DEAN

STAFF WRITER

Editor's Note: The Personal Essays section of the paper is one that invites students to share their personal experiences and thoughts about subjects they are passionate about.

There's something special about being part of a group of people that make up less than 0.07 percent of the world's population. When you meet someone that was also born on Feb.

29, it's an instant and lifelong friendship. They understand what it is like to be asked "do you celebrate on the 28th, or March 1st?" everytime you tell a person you're a Leap Day baby.

This never gets old though. Being born on Leap Day means I have my own personal party trick to always pull out, and it's just my birthday. It's a nice feeling knowing I will probably be the only person with this birthday people will ever meet, because from then on whenever they think of Leap Day, they automatically think of me.

As interesting as my birthday is, there are some serious ups and downs. The biggest up? All of the free stuff I get just for being born. I have a free lifetime pass to see the Harlem Globetrotters whenever they're in town, as well as the same pass to see Big Apple Circus. I'd be lying if I said I haven't cashed those perks in once or twice.

And those are just the year round perks. Every four years when my birthday is on the calendar, the free food and even airline tickets are up for grabs for Leaplings. It's been rumored a free admission to Disneyland can also be arranged for us.

All of these companies do this for us because they feel bad we live three out of every four years watching all our friends celebrate their birthdays. They know the only birthday we have is when the clock is changing from 11:59pm on Feb. 28 to midnight on Mar. 1.

I've gotten used to that over the years though. It always amuses people when they ask how old I'm turning and I have to say 5 and one-fourth. The same people love to point out I can't get my license until I'm 64, and I can't drink until I'm 84.

This does hold a little truth though. On my license my birthday is a different day than the day it says I turned 18. I've gotten quite a few looks from anyone who has needed my license to verify my age.

That is just one of the downsides of being born on Leap Day. The worst out of all of them has to be the bad luck. It's rooted in Irish myth that being born on Feb. 29 brings that person bad luck. I wholeheartedly believe in this. When I turned 12, three in leap years, I broke my wrist while jumping on a bed. That was brutal. When my 16th, and fourth birthday came around, my cat was killed by a raccoon.

Last year, when I had my long awaited 20th, or fifth birthday, I was worried all week about what awful thing was going to happen. I was more scared than excited to celebrate. But the day came and went, and nothing terrible happened. I was beyond relieved. It wasn't until a couple months later I realized the first person that died of COVID-19 died on Feb. 29.

I'm not that superstitious of a person, but sometimes it is a little too hard to look away from recurring facts. Most Leap Day babies agree with me on this. When you're born on

Feb. 29, you're offered a spot in the Honor Society of Leap Year Babies. We have a web page and a facebook group. This is where everyone who shares my birthday talks about everything Leap Day related. Last year they even planned a Leap Day 2020 Cruise. The boat was full of Leaplings all getting to know each other.

Sometimes I wish I had a normal birthday, just so I would be able to celebrate every year. I think about the bad luck that may or may not be waiting for me, and I get a little scared. But at the end of the day, I will always have this one thing about me that makes me special, and honestly confuses everyone I meet. For that, I don't think I'd give it up for the world.



Shelley Dean





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Fans Reenter the Stands in New York



Courtesy of Eddie McQuade

The inside of Madison Square Garden

BY ANDREW SCARPACI

SPORTS EDITOR

On Feb. 10, New York Governor Andrew Cuomo announced all professional sporting events could bring back fans in attendance. Any stadium or arena approved by the NY Department of Health could have an attendance of up to 10 percent capacity. Every individual must have a negative test within 72 hours of the event and follow all proper mask and social distancing guidelines.

The cross-town rivals Knicks and Nets of the NBA were the first teams to host fans on Tuesday, Feb. 23. This was the first time a live game had fans in attendance since St. John's basketball played on March 12, 2020, a game that was ultimately canceled at halftime due to the growing coronavirus concerns.

The Knicks hosted the Golden State Warriors at Madison Square Garden. The Nets would play the Sacramento Kings at Barclays Center. MSG is hosting the max two thousand people for their twenty thousand seat capacity, while the Barclays Center limits their attendance to just three hundred per game. On Feb. 26, three days after the Knicks squared up their first game back with fans, the Rangers played their next home game against the Boston Bruins at MSG with the same crowd size of two thousand.

Eddie McQuade is a senior sports management major who has been a Knicks and Rangers his whole life and currently works security at

Madison Square Garden. McQuade thinks this is a huge milestone for sports fans and New Yorkers overall.

"To have fans back in the stadium means a lot to us sports fans. It's definitely a step in the right direction in terms of trying to make life what it was prior to the shutdown," he said. "It also is vital to the players as they feed off of the energy of the crowd, and they would probably tell you it was just as weird not having fans in the stands."

McQuade is extremely excited to have the ability to see his favorite teams play in person again.

"Watching games in person are a lot different than being on tv, and if you have never been to a hockey game, I'd recommend seeing a Rangers game, especially at full capacity," he said.

McQuade believes despite the limited number of fans, you can still sense the massive energy of the fans.

"While two thousand fans max is obviously not a lot, you still feel the atmosphere of MSG. You can feel the Knicks crowd when they're chatting 'DEFENSE' or when the Rangers score a goal, and they're singing the goal song," he said. "It may not be as loud as a full house, but you still notice the fans have been waiting for this."

McQuade claims due to the small crowd size, there are some circumstances that happen that never could at full size.

In between periods/halftime when fans go get food or whatever they do in between play, you can hear a pin drop bc it gets that quiet, and sometimes you'll hear the players talking on the court or ice," he said.

McQuade says there have been lots of changes and rules fans must follow.

"You can't use cash anywhere nor even use the ATM. You also have to go to your seat to eat your food, and if you are to buy a beer in the building, it isn't served in cups anymore," he said. "A lot of stores have closed too, so many people won't go shopping at once."

McQuade says there have been many changes to the structure around seating for everyone.

"All tickets for the games are sold in either groups of two or four, and they must be bought online. No print-out tickets are being accepted

at this moment, and there are hand sanitizer stations almost everywhere you turn. The ticket windows are all closed, and we as staff also have to enforce social distancing," he said. "It's hard on us too because in the cafeteria there used to be tables that seat four per table. Now you have to sit at tables by yourselves."

McQuade says his job is still the same and has all the same foundations.

"Our jobs are still the same for the most part. Our number one priority is to make sure everyone is safe. Many rows are closed, so that way no fans are within six feet of each, and most seats are at the end of the aisles," he said. "The biggest change is making sure people wear their masks at all times unless they're eating or drinking. Obviously, not everyone listens to that rule, but when they don't, we politely ask them to put their mask back on."

McQuade claims the biggest change is around the process of items that would otherwise need to be handled differently.

"No book bags are allowed in the building anymore, and we don't hold onto items anymore. Pre lockdown if you had something that you couldn't be brought to your seat, we had a place to hold onto it for you. However, that's now a thing of the past because we don't know where the item is coming from and whose hands have been on it," he said. "So, for example, if you bring a pocket knife in the building, you either throw it out or return it to your vehicle. No questions asked."

The Islanders are the only other NY sports team to have held fans in attendance. Since their first home game under the new guidelines on Feb. 25, they have been hosting roughly 1,400 people per game at Nassau Coliseum.

Once the MLB starts regular-season games, the Yankees will allow up to 5,500 at Yankee Stadium. The Mets will have a capacity of 4,500 at Citi Field.

Game Results

Men's Basketball

Friday, Feb 26 at Bryant University
Loss 60-63

Women's Basketball

Monday, March 1 vs Bryant University
Win 83-42

Men's Cross Country

Sunday, Feb 28 NEC championship
7th of 7 teams

Women's Cross Country

Sunday, Feb 28 NEC Championship
5th of 7 teams

Men's Lacrosse

Saturday, Feb 27 vs Wagner College
Win 19-8

Women's Lacrosse

Saturday, Feb 27 at Sacred Heart University
Win 14-9

Men's Soccer

Monday, March 1 at Bryant University
Tie 1-1

Women's Soccer

Tuesday, March 2 vs Mount St. Mary's College
Win 1-0

Women's Bowling

Friday-Sunday, Feb 26-28, NEC Meet #2
4 Wins, 5 Losses

Women's Volleyball

Tuesday, March 2 at St. Francis Brooklyn
Win 3-1

Women's Gymnastics

Sunday, Feb 28, vs University of Pittsburgh
Loss, 191.925-194.050

