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New Business Owners Shine

By Layla Joseph
Asst. News Editor

Two Slippery Rock residents launched Steele Mill, downtown's newest attraction, in March, opening their doors as a gathering place for community members and students alike to indulge in unique flavors with the drinks they serve and the food they prepare.

The owners, Annessa and Jeff Steele, live in Slippery Rock Borough. Annessa was originally from Butler and is an education professor at The Rock. Her husband Jeff is a fourth-generation Slippery Rock resident.

Most of the staff are Slippery Rock University students, including their daughter, Alexandra, who is a senior at SRU.

When the building on the corner of Main Street

and Franklin Street went up for sale in 2021, the couple said the opportunity to buy the property drove their desire to start the business.

"It kind of all just fell together," Jeff said.

Annessa said that the two fell in love with the building and the front windows that came with it. The pair said when refurbishing the building's interior, they drew inspiration from distilleries they have visited while traveling in the Midwest.

According to Jeff, they tried to repurpose materials that came with the building, including the wood paneling behind the bar and the metal material covering the back wall.

The couple preserved the original wood floor of the building that served as the post office in the 1920s.

SEE On PAGE A-3



Swatting hoaxes increase

Safety director discusses SRU's awareness and survival training

Rock football closes spring with annual Green and White game

By Layla Joseph
Asst. News Editor

Matt Glover
News Editor

Swatting, or more specifically, school-shooting hoaxes, have grown in frequency and affected students across the country. On March 29th schools across the Commonwealth were disrupted by lock-downs, evacuations and a growing police presence to investigate threats from external sources. Pennsylvania schools were not the only ones affected by computer-generated calls on March 29, according to AP. Schools in Utah received false threats the same day, just one day after nearly 30 schools in Massachusetts received similar calls and two days after six people were killed in a Nashville school shooting. The 911 calls that came in across Pennsylvania involved threats of active shooters or bomb threats, according to the Pennsylvania Pressroom. Altoona, Erie, Meadville, Hollidaysburg, New Castle, Bellfont and multiple other schools were subject to these false threats. Slippery Rock High School did not receive calls. Central Catholic and Oakland Catholic, two high schools in Pittsburgh, were also victims of the swatting, causing their students to go into lockdown. Due to their proximity, the University of Pittsburgh and Carnegie Mellon followed the high schools' lead and went into



Emergency E-phones are placed around campus to help ensure students' safety.

lockdown. Although the threats were fake, the waste of resources and potentially dangerous situation for students was genuine: Police officers cleared some schools one room at a time, expecting to find a shooter.

Matt Moore, 22, is a senior politics and philosophy major at the University of Pittsburgh. Just two weeks after the prior lockdown for false threats of an active shooter one mile away from campus at Central Catholic, Moore concluded a study session on campus at Pitt and began walking home on April 11 when he said he heard an endless round of emergency sirens not too far away.

WPXI said the first of three swatting calls were made at 11:10 p.m.

As he got home, people in Moore's circle at Pitt also became concerned. Moore said he received conflicting information in group chats among classmates and student organizations.

He said some students were reporting Hillman Library was being evacuated. In contrast, others said they heard gunshots

from Lawrence Hall, and another person said they heard gunshots farther away from campus.

Moore said he received a video of students who were facedown in the library and police officers rushing into the building with weapons telling students to evacuate. He said that for nearly an hour he, like many of his peers, thought this was a real threat.

An additional video circulating showed students jumping over construction areas surrounding the library to evacuate.

"Every day in this country, especially as a young person, we have to read headlines about an institution of education being under siege by guns," he said.

As of April 19, there have been 165 mass shootings – a shooting with four or more victims – this year alone, according to the Gun Violence Archive.

SEE SHOOTING PAGE A-2

By Tyler Howe
Sports Editor

When you go anywhere in Western Pennsylvania, football is always being talked about. It doesn't matter what season it is. Everyone is always counting down to the next time players step on the field.

There is once every spring when college football teams get to see the field. Granted it's against each other, but that's when the hype for the next season starts to build. The pain of last season starts to fade, and the hope for the next begins to grow.

The hurt from last season has continued to fade for Slippery Rock.

Last season was what many around the program considered to be a down year. The Rock suffered two regular season losses, with the first coming on the road at Indiana (Pa.).



GRAPHIC BY EDDIE CLANCY

That game caused a whole lot of disdain in itself. It's never fun losing to a rival, but when you close it out them two years in a row, it makes that pain a whole lot worse.

The Slippery Rock-IUP rivalry feels a lot like that of the Pittsburgh Steelers-Baltimore Ravens rivalry. The hate is there, it's undeniable. But the respect is also there.

Respect is something that The Rock football team and Lutz have earned. Back to the point of last year being a down year, any team would kill for the year that Slippery Rock had.

The Rock made their way to the second round of the NCAA playoffs where they fell to fellow PSAC member, Shepherd. The ending wasn't what anyone around the program had envisioned, but to be fair, the whole season didn't go the way they thought it would.

The Rock wasn't a lock to make the playoffs after they dropped their final game of the season at home against Kutztown—but they were selected to go. They made the trip to Massachusetts to face Assumption. They walked out with a 17-14 win.

SEE JUMPING PAGE C-1



SRSGA tables proposed amendment

SRSGA approves the 2023-24 budget, a \$38,854 capital request and tables a proposed amendment for future elections

By Layla Joseph
Asst. News Editor

Slippery Rock Student Government Association (SRSGA) met Monday for their second-to-last formal meeting of the semester, where they passed the 2023-24 Budget Proposal, approved a capital request and tabled a proposed amendment for their constitution.

College of Liberal Arts Senator Amanda Brock proposed an amendment of SRSGA's constitution, adding a subsection that would require the candidates running for president of SRSGA to previously serve the senate for at least one semester.

"I have heard concerns that the president who is running a large organization, such as SRSGA, should have to attend more than the current requirements," Brock said.

"It's extremely important for the president, especially, to know how the daily operations run and

everything else that goes into this whole organization," she continued.

The proposed amendment was tabled but will be addressed during a hearing followed by a vote by the SRSGA senate. With elections concluded for the upcoming school year, these rules would apply to future candidates if passed.

A capital request for \$38,854 from University Program Board (UPB) would assist them in purchasing two new security systems that would be used for concerts and other large functions.

The security systems being purchased were utilized at the Yung Gravy concert earlier this semester. According to the finance report, the machines efficiently got students into the concert while preventing any dangerous weapons or firearms from entering the venue.

Since the machines are portable and funded by SRSGA, they would be

available for gatherings and functions not affiliated with UPB. Vice President of Finance Nikole Husnick said that, unlike the old machines that have been utilized for over a decade, the new system allows for easy set-up and take-down and cannot be activated without University Police.

"Since this is for students' security, and we're using their money, I feel it's important to make sure that they're safe," Husnick said.

"With all the big (school sponsored) events, especially in the world climate we're at now, we all thought this was a very reasonable request."

The senate approved the capital request, which uses money from a different, more significant reserve, unanimously without debate or discussion.

The 2023-24 budget proposal was also approved unanimously by the senate. The requested amounts by clubs and organizations were over the allotted budget that SRSGA had, according to



SRSGA senate tables an amendment to their constitution that will impact future elections for the organization. The amendment proposes that before running for president, a candidate must first serve in SRSGA.

Husnick. She said that after cutting penalties, they were still over the original budget. Husnick said that penalties like not having an advisor and not attending budget meetings took more money from clubs' budgets than were cut by the finance committee.

In an attempt to decrease the budget, Husnick said the finance committee cut

10% for organizations that submitted a budget over 10% of the previous year. The finance committee then had to cut another 5% across the board.

"No (club) is getting less than what they submitted for last year," Husnick said.

Husnick also informed the senate that there are no reserves for next year, but they are still waiting for

the final amount of unused funds in the organizations' budgets. Clubs will still have the opportunity to appeal their budget for the fall.

Lauren Moran, an SRSGA advisor, said that the finance committee worked hard to complete the budget, which approved funds for 151 organizations, the highest number of clubs in several years.

SRU hosts Transfer Appreciation Week

Transfer students explain what brought them to university

By Matt Glover
News Editor

This week, SRU hosted Transfer Appreciation Week to highlight how transfer students contribute to the campus community while learning what makes the university unique.

The SRU Center for Career and Academic Progress (CCAP), Exploratory Studies & Academic Progress (ESAP) and the Office of Inclusive Excellence (OIC) hosted events for transfer students while Transfer Admissions and Rock Athletics sponsored food.

For Sophia Naugle and Hadley Baughman, the amount of student organizations and opportunities to get involved created a needed balance between work and play.

"There's a great balance of academics, professional development, lots of resources on campus and the ability to do all the things I like outside of school," Naugle said.

Naugle, a senior studying safety management, transferred from a private university in Spring 2022. Since coming to campus, she has become a peer mentor, peer career coach, orientation ambassador and vice president of the American Society of Safety Professionals (ASSP) at SRU.

She is also a member of the American Industrial Hygiene Society, the National Society of Leadership and Success and SRU's Marching Pride.

Naugle's favorite things about SRU are the connections she has made on campus and the number of academic resources available. Coming from a private university, she is also not accustomed to the variety of scholarships, student organizations being as well funded and the diversity of the population.

"There's a great balance of academics, professional development, lots of resources on campus and the ability to do all the things I like outside of school."

— Sophia Naugle, transferred in Spring 2022



EDDIE CLANCY / THE ROCKET

On Wednesday, students gathered at Weisenfluh Dining Hall for a transfer commuter lunch sponsored by Commuter Services. Transfer Admissions and Rock Athletics also sponsored food during transfer events.

of the biggest leadership roles I've taken on and definitely put me out of my comfort zone," she said.

Orientation ambassadors introduce parents and prospective students to campus via tours, hosting program sessions and other administrative duties.

The Rock Life program drew her to SRU since she wants to work with people with disabilities.

Unlike Naugle, Baughman admitted coming to SRU was hard at first because she did not know anyone.

"Then I went to one of the transfer events on campus; it was the transfer picnic, and I met a group of people that I'm still really close with today," she said. "I had to get comfortable with being uncomfortable."

It continued to become easier for her after classes started and she got more involved. The wide variety

of clubs and an app to tell her when events were happening also helped, she said.

Ian Moore and Eban Double both transferred from community colleges. Moore transferred in Fall 2021, and Double transferred in Fall 2022.

Moore saw how much his sister enjoyed SRU's Health Care Administration and Management program and wanted to see it for himself. He studies finance and health administration concentrating in financial management. He also minors in accounting.

Moore immediately felt welcome at SRU and is extremely grateful to his faculty advisor for helping him secure an internship with UPMC in the summer.

"Without her assistance and guidance, I wouldn't have gotten this opportunity," he said.

He admires that his faculty are always willing to go the

extra mile and all have real-world experience.

Double, a junior studying computer science, enjoys frequently seeing familiar faces in common areas allowing him to connect with them more easily. He's an advocate for taking the initiative to walk up and introduce yourself.

"What sets us apart is the people that come here," he said. "Especially the faculty because each one of them is trying to help us succeed in our own ways."

Double knew when he game here that he wanted to join the Slippery Rock Student Government Association (SRSGA) and applied on his first day. He now serves as a commuter senator and orientation ambassador.

SRU has been a large part of his life, Double said. His mother and brother both attended, and he remembers fondly visiting his older brother before he graduated.

"It just always felt right," he said. "It's a very welcoming campus."

Regarding Transfer Appreciation Week festivities, SRU Peer Academic Coaching began the week on Sunday with group success coaching in a Bailey Library multipurpose room sponsored by the Student Success Coaches.

On Monday, Rock Athletics sponsored an ice cream social for transfer athletes in the Morrow Field House collaboration room.

On Wednesday, a transfer commuter lunch was held at Weisenfluh and sponsored by Commuter Services.

On Thursday, CCAP and ESAP spoke in the Bailey Library about opportunities they offer, and OIC spoke about involvement opportunities in the Boozel Dining Hall lobby with Transfer Admissions sponsoring food.

On the rocks in The Rock



LAYLA JOSEPH / THE ROCKET
Annessa Steele owns Steele Mill with her husband Jeff. They employ their daughter and other SRU students.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE A-1

Their website says that the business emphasizes the value of sustainability, and their kitchen uses local ingredients whenever possible. Steele Mill is the only moonshine distillery in Butler County that allows for on-site consumption. Jeff said he has been around moonshine manufacturing for a lot of his life; his cousin runs a successful, multi-generational distillery in West Virginia. The couple has made moonshine a hobby long before they knew it would become profitable. Prior to opening Steele Mill, Annessa and Jeff both owned the license to make moonshine and had over ten years of experience making drinks behind the bar.

With the license they have, Steele Mill can sell anything that is produced, brewed or distilled in Pennsylvania, according to Jeff. This means patrons who would rather stick to their comfort zone rather than try one of their hand-crafted selections can choose from the 12 Pennsylvania beers on tap. When creating a menu, the couple put full faith in their chef and tackled the drink selection together. On Friday they had drink specials named after football coaches at SRU to celebrate the Green and White Spring Game. In addition to their regular drinks, they served mixed drinks like "Lutz Lemonade," "Moose's Drinking Water" and "The Raspberry Razzano" to commemorate the coaches and celebrate after the game.

Steele Mill embraces both the university and the community of Slippery Rock. Jeff said that he was involved in youth sports at Slippery Rock as a player and a coach for many years, and now their two youngest kids are involved in youth sports. He and Annessa wanted to give back to the community: For each serving of Rocket Fuel, a cinnamon moonshine, the business donates a portion of the sale to the Slippery Rock youth sports program. The business is currently operating from 4 p.m. to 11 p.m. Wednesday through Saturday with a DJ on Fridays and live music on Saturdays. The couple says they hope to extend their hours this summer as they get a handle on staffing and production.



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Shooting hoaxes prompt real fear for students

CONTINUED FROM PAGE A-1

Waiting for any kind of response or alert from his university, Moore said he was watching videos on social media, listening to the police scanner, talking to his peers and trying to figure out what was going on. While there was no active shooter on campus at Pitt, shots were fired by police. Moore explained that due to ongoing construction, there was only one available entrance to the library. WPXI reported that a Pittsburgh City Police officer fired shots at the locked door on the ground floor to gain entry to the building. "I can't speak for other peoples' perception of fear and trauma," he said. "But if I were getting evacuated and rushed by police with assault weapons and hearing the gunshots, I would have considered that traumatic." Among all the confusion and conflicting information he received, Moore said he was disappointed and angry that his university didn't alert students sooner. After realizing there was no actual threat, Moore said he was relieved, but for a short time before, those feelings grew to frustration. "I had a sense of anger towards the school, as an institution, because their emergency notification system is just not up to par," he said. "It doesn't fairly or accurately notify students of an impending threat; how are we supposed to know if something's a threat or a hoax?" Moore is not alone in his feelings. Pitt students have been demonstrating their outrage with their university after the hoax. According to CBS

News, some students participated in a "die-in," laying in the grass on campus for 82 minutes, the same amount of time it took for the university to alert students after the initial 911 call. "I think it affected the campus pretty deeply since it was the second instance in a short amount of time," Moore said. "It has put the entire campus on high alert and injected collective anxiety." "We only have another week of school, but it could happen again," he continued. "We don't know if our university and administration are equipped to handle it." The swatting that led Pitt students to evacuate the library was a different occasion than the spree of calls that disrupted Pennsylvania law enforcement and schools on March 29, but it serves as an example of how serious these hoax calls can be and how school districts and universities alike should be prepared. Although these swattings do not pose the same danger as an armed gunman, they still impact the mental health of students. Paul Novak, the executive director of Planning and Environmental Health and Safety, explained SRU was among the multiple high schools that received hoax calls on March 29. The first call alleged an active shooter threat against the university, and the second confirmed it had been identified as a hoax. Kevin Sharkey, SRUPD's Chief of Police, said that they did not inform students because by the time they found out, it was already confirmed as a hoax. "That is the danger of

swatting," Novak said. "You have to assume a threat exists and need to investigate if it's credible or not." Police are trained to listen during a phone call for keywords and background noise while asking questions to determine the situation. The line is also recorded. Prerecorded calls offer no such evidence. Similar to false fire alarms, swatting calls can build public complacency so they do not react until they hear or see evidence. Swatting also endangers deployed officers and resources while causing possible disruptions to the community like increased traffic and a state of panic. Novak said there is no evidence to show potential motives behind placing swatting calls, but as a public safety professional, he explained possible motives could be to disrupt security or make other targets more accessible. Novak has been at SRU for 12 years and has been involved in emergency response for 30 years. He began conducting active shooter training in 2007. This was the first shooter-related incident he had seen at SRU. The call came into a university office separate from campus police, which is why the calls were not reported in the blotter. By the time that office called Safety to inform Novak, multiple sources had already reported it as a hoax. Novak conducts active shooter awareness and survival training for students and for employees through human resources. The training takes about two hours, and the most recent university-wide



EDDIE CLANCY / THE ROCKET
Paul Novak has served as SRU's head of safety and maintenance for 12 years. This was the first shooting-related incident he has seen here.

session was completed in April 2018. "The trainings that we facilitate for the campus are meant to get people to think not what someone else should do, but what I should do, and not everybody's there," Novak said. When he conducts the training, professors often tell him they are participating to keep their students safe without worrying as much for their own safety in an emergency. When he started, emergency preparedness and planning was not as clearly defined. Training revolved more around law enforcement response than safely fleeing. SWAT teams were commonly dispatched in earlier shootings like Columbine, and training videos often showcased an office or work environment instead of a school. Novak recalled using one ALICE video that displayed a college classroom and demonstrated how events might unfold with student reactions. Later, the protocol changed so the first four officers on the scene were to dawn armor and enter the building. Once data came out to show that response was not quick enough, they changed the protocol so the first officer on scene dawns armor and enters. "Much like the response, the awareness and survival training has also evolved because it's meant to focus on the individual and to try to build confidence in people to know their situation, be able to react to it and survive," Novak said. Novak focuses on teaching people situational awareness so they can survive as an individual. Once law enforcement dispatches the threat, the university has their own recovery plans on how to care for students and get essential services running again. The awareness and survival training is updated often with data from the most recent incidents. However, after-action reports can sometimes take up to a year to come out after a shooting. "The public naturally wants to see results whether it's with gun legislation, school resources or staffing officers," Novak said. "Public perception has changed into not just being more fearful, but also being frustrated." Regarding a shooting in Uvalde, Texas last year where officers waited to enter the building, there is no evidence to show this has happened elsewhere. Novak also shared he is enthusiastic about taking his active shooter awareness and survival training to the classroom and working with campus organizations to advocate for campus safety.

POLICE BLOTTER

April 13 – Police responded to a verbal argument between two roommates in Building E. Their GRD was notified and responded to the location. One roommate left the dorm for the night and stayed at another location; the incident was referred to Residence Life.

April 13 – Police received an E-phone activation from an elevator in Rhoads Hall. Dispatch determined that the call button was accidentally hit by an individual in the elevator.

April 14 – Police responded to a fire alarm activation at Building F. An officer responded and found the cause to be steam from the individual taking a shower. The officer reset the alarm system and cleared.

April 14 – Police responded to a traffic accident in the PT Lot. The officer arrived and spoke to the driver who stated that while they were pulling into a parking spot, they made a wide turn and struck the vehicle in the next spot. No injuries were reported, all required information was exchanged and no further police action was taken.

April 14 – Police received a complaint from the custodial staff about an unknown person(s) defecating in the waste containers in the restroom at Eisenberg Classroom Building. The case is under investigation.

April 14 – Police were requested to conduct a welfare check on an individual in need of medical treatment in Building A. An officer arrived and EMS was notified. The person was transported to Butler Memorial Hospital.

April 14 – Police were notified of smoke coming from the University Union. Slippery Rock Volunteer Fire and Rescue Team (SRVFC) was also dispatched to the location. Upon investigation, it was found someone set a smoke bomb off and the smoke blew to that area.

SRVFC confirmed there was no fire in the building. All units cleared.

April 14 – Police responded to an alarm at the Morrow Field House. An officer responded and confirmed that all was okay. The alarm was reset.

April 15 – Slippery Rock Borough Police came to SRUPD to utilize the data master for a suspected DUI.

April 15 – Police received a report of harassment that has been occurring at North Hall. An officer was able to speak with all parties involved. The individual was advised to have no further contact with the victim.

April 16 – SRUPD was requested by Butler Control to respond to a large party, a person with a gun and a report of a robbery at the University Village. Officers responded with Slippery Rock Borough Police and were able to get the crowd to disperse. Once on location, no person(s) reported anyone having a weapon or having been robbed.

April 16 – Dispatch received an E-phone activation for an elevator in Building F. Officers responded to the location and confirmed that all was okay. The E-phone was reset and the officers cleared.

April 16 – While on patrol, an officer observed a vehicle that should have a boot immobilization device for unpaid parking citations in Lower Stadium Parking Lot A. It was found that the vehicle was previously booted and **Christopher Powell, 19**, removed the device without paying their citations. The case is under investigation.

April 16 – Police were notified of a burning smell in Rhoads Hall. No alarms were received at SRUPD. Upon arrival, an officer found burnt food in a microwave in the common area. The officer cleared.

April 17 – Police were notified of damage done to a door in Building E. Upon investigation, it was determined that the damage occurred from normal wear and tear and no intentional damages occurred.

April 17 – Police received a fire alarm activation in Rock Apartment #2. It was found that the cause was burnt shrimp. The panel was reset and the officer cleared.

April 18 – Police were called for an individual at Dinger Building who was having a seizure and had passed out. Officer and EMS were on location, and the person was transported to Grove City Medical Center.

April 18 – Police received a fire alarm activation from Rock Apartment #1. It was found that the cause of the alarm was overcooked bacon. The alarm panel was reset and Safety cleared.

April 18 – Police received word from an unknown person(s) issuing fake checks in the name of SGA Co-Op. It was determined that no funds were taken from their account. The case is under investigation.

April 18 – Police received a call that an individual was not feeling well and was requesting an ambulance be dispatched. An officer and EMS arrived on the scene and the individual was transported to Butler Memorial Hospital.

April 19 – Police received a fire alarm activation from Building F. An officer responded and determined the cause was steam from a shower. The panel was reset and the officer cleared.

April 19 – Police received a call from a person who was told not to enter North Hall. The person was located, taken into custody and transported to Butler County Jail on numerous charges.

COMPILED BY LAYLA JOSEPH

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Our View: The waiting game

Demand for therapists, psychiatrists surge with no changes to mental health care in sight

The mental health epidemic is just as urgent as any other sickness, and often times, it has an even larger scale.

About one in five Americans (17%) say they have had to choose between getting treatment for a physical or mental health condition because of their insurance policies, according to the National Council for Mental Wellbeing in 2018.

More than half of Americans (64%) who have attempted to find treatment also believe the United States government needs to do more to improve mental health services.

We need a new standard of American mental health care for anything to improve.

Therapists admit that therapy wait times can be three to six month or longer. What's even worse: This is the norm.

Psychiatry is just the same. A recent study found that the average wait time for an initial psychiatrist evaluation is 25 days. Some clients wait more than 90 days.

that they do not have a full scope of services.

The SCC refers students who need additional support to outside resources. Some instances may include a crisis where a student needs emergency care, intensive outpatient or inpatient treatment and other extreme cases.

They are not able to provide medical detoxification or stabilization, on-going mandated treatment, comprehensive assessments for disability accommodations, documentation for an emotional support animal, and the list goes on.

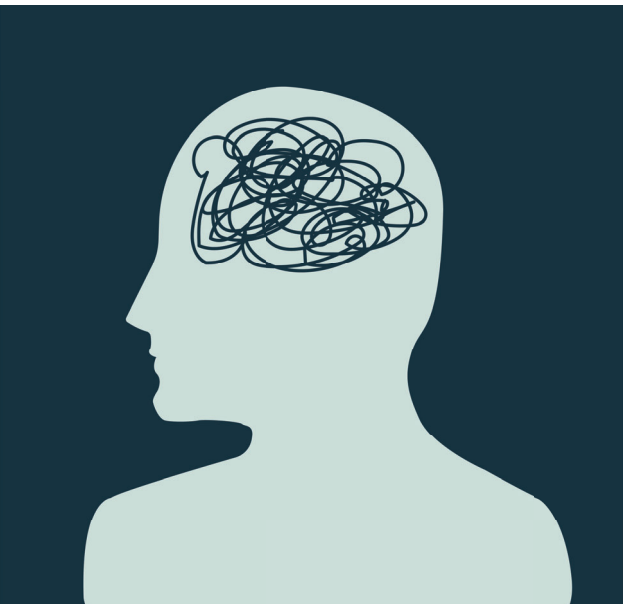
This isn't to discredit what the SCC does for SRU students, but it is important to recognize they are still limited in what they can provide. Students with other mental illnesses outside of the moderate generalized anxiety disorder, most times, need different types of counseling outside of traditional therapy.

In many European countries, healthcare is free. This includes care for those who are mentally ill. However, our health care industry is a little too for-profit for this.

The median price for one therapy session is \$140 in Pennsylvania, according to therapyden.com. With an insurance copay, it is still around \$20-50 per session. If someone needed weekly therapy sessions, they would be paying at least \$100 a month just to get by.

Healthcare providers are people, too

SRU has much room for improvement, but what is halting them? A major counselor shortage



and burnout within the profession.

The struggle of inaccessible mental health care isn't just affecting patients. According to Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC), more than 150 million people live in areas that have been federally recognized as having a mental health professional shortage.

The medical field is thinking of solutions for this issue. Experts are training more residents in psychiatry, but there are flaws in this plan. Residency training in psychiatry is expensive and there is very limited government funding to help relieve this solution.

According to a press release from AAMC, Terri Sewell (D-Ala.) and Brian Fitzpatrick (R-Pa.) introduced the Resident Physician Shortage Reduction Act. This legislation is hoping to gradually expand Medicare-supported medical residency positions by 14,000 over seven years.

In a field with an increasing amount of patients and a decreasing amount of professionals, how are patients supposed to find care?

"Self-management" apps have made it easier

for patients to manage their mental health without consulting a therapist. After the user inputs information, the app can give them medication reminders and create tools to help them manage stress, anxiety and sleep.

These apps offer care to clients in remote areas with small concentrations of healthcare professionals. A study out of Atlanta and New York medical schools highlighted higher suicide rates in areas with a lower concentration of mental health providers. This trend has grown over time.

While these apps are convenient and cut costs for patients, some question if they are as effective as other therapy methods, if they are properly regulated and how much privacy they offer.

The current mental health care system works only for those who are lucky to find care at all. This standard is inadequate in trying to meet the current demand. Restructuring is only part of the solution. And as for the rest, that requires thinking way outside the box.



In the Quad

BY:



Gavin Knapp
Freshman
Cyber Security
Franklin, PA

"I haven't used them, as of yet. But I have friends who have, and they say they've been pretty good."



Christina Vega
Senior
French
Mechanicsburg, PA

"I went once in the spring of freshman year for some anxiety-related things. They were very nice and worked pretty quickly to get you scheduled in. But the person that I met with, they were OK... They just kinda were listening to me and not actually saying, 'Here's what you can do.'"



Haylee Oates
Senior
Accounting
Ligonier, PA

"I have not had to use those, but I know that they are available on campus. They are very easy to reach out to."

Can you describe your experience with mental health services?

Turning the page



Nina Cipriani

Nina is a graduating senior majoring in multimedia journalism with a certificate in global and intercultural communication. She is the current editor-in-chief of The Rocket.

After four long, tiring years on The Rocket staff, I am graduating. It's so difficult to put into words just how much The Rocket has helped me grow as a person. It makes me very emotional, actually. I think a lot about little freshman Nina (quite literally, I'm 5'2") walking through the doors of The Rocket Newspaper office not knowing just how life-changing that room and the people who created a second home there would be. The journey was an absolute nightmare, to be honest.

When I was assistant news editor in 2019, I was 18 at the time. Freshly. Walking into the office for my first budget meeting, I was overwhelmed by people who seemed dramatically older than me. The other staff members were probably only 20 or 21 years old. Now I am the 21-year-old. Compared to the events that I would later live through, nothing major happened when I was assistant news editor. When I was news editor in 2020, it felt like a punch in the gut left and right. The 2020-2021 era was such a surreal one. I reported on an unprecedented pandemic, Zoom bombings, COVID-19 cases at SRU and in the Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education (PASSHE), the 2020 U.S. Presidential Election and much more. Despite the hardships, it was "worth it" in the end, I guess. I did kind of receive 38 national and state journalistic awards, which was definitely spearheaded by my COVID-19 coverage. Then, I made the leap: I became editor-in-chief (EIC) in 2021. The transition from news to EIC was awful, for sure. The staff was still navigating the changes from the pandemic and I felt like I was drowning. I did get the hang of it, though, and I would like to consider myself a good leader. During my time as EIC, The Rocket won a multitude

of awards, including the number one best newspaper overall in the 2022 Society for Collegiate Journalists National Contest. The editor-in-chief era was by far the most difficult time of my life. I developed PTSD, had panic attacks every day, and stopped taking care of myself. I didn't think I would survive, let alone graduate. I am a domestic abuse survivor. And here I am, graduating summa cum laude. **Not goodbye, but see you later** Sarah, where do I start? I'm tearing up already. I'm gonna miss you so much. It's hard to imagine my day-to-day life without you attached to my hip. You are so kind, compassionate, intelligent, creative, funny and the perfect best friend. If I could ask you to do one thing for me, it's to be more confident in yourself. Trust me, I know how hard and scary college is and everything that comes with it in life. But you are already doing so well, and if you believe in yourself a little more, you would be absolutely unstoppable. As I'm sure everyone knows, I could write thousands of words about you. But it means so much to be able to thank you for all that you've done for me. Please know I mean it so sincerely when I say I think you saved my life.



DAN FLEMING / THE ROCKET
The Rocket staff went to Primanti Bros. in December 2019 to celebrate the last print week of the semester. All members pictured have graduated.

Mr. Joe Wells, the O.G. old man. I can't thank you enough for helping me become a better journalist. Your time on staff was monumental for me. Although you're not currently on staff, I had to include you in my staff goodbye because you made me the journalist I am today. Of course, you still make more AP errors than me, but I'll try my best to forgive you for that. Tyler, we did it. We made it to the end. Graduation crept up on us so fast. I'll miss your stupid laugh and when you play the Simpsons on the office TV at max volume. Aidan, I cannot describe to you how talented of a writer you are. It's crazy to think that you are only a

freshman. That just means you'll only get better, and I can't wait to see where that leads you. Can't lie to you, Aidan, I want to see you become EIC someday. Eddie, you are immensely talented. You're only a freshman and you've accomplished so much already. I can't wait to look back at theonlinerocket.com and see your improvement (as if you could get any better at photography... god, leave some talent for the rest of us). Dr. Fleming, thank you for letting each year's Rocket staff be their most authentic selves. At the same time, sorry about all the things we put you through. Till I see you again a few years down the

line, please watch my baby for me. (I'm talking about The Rocket, by the way.) Thank you to all those original staff members who pushed me to become editor-in-chief. As much as I complain about The Rocket, I will miss being part of a group of such intelligent, talented journalists who can lean on each other when s--- hits the fan. I hope to make previous and current members of The Rocket proud by continuing my journalistic career after I graduate. I may be ambitious, but I would like to think I'm talented, too. So, maybe you will see my byline in The New York Times someday?

Thank you, SRU



Layla Joseph

Layla is a graduating senior majoring in multimedia journalism. She is the current assistant news editor for The Rocket..

My time at The Rocket has been short but very sweet. Although I have not been on staff for long, I have appreciated every moment. Being a senior and reflecting on my time not just in the newsroom but at Slippery Rock University, I realize how lucky I am to be surrounded by those who want me to succeed. The professors in the communication department at Slippery Rock are some of the most genuine and uplifting people I have met. Not only have they given me the tools I will carry throughout my career in media, but they also taught me how to use them and treated me like a human in the process. I never felt like I couldn't come to a professor for help in class or help in life. I have enjoyed learning from experts like them and feel prepared heading into the workforce. As for my peers, both in class and at The Rocket, it's been a pleasure to work with you. Tyler and Matt, having served as mentors for me since we've met, have helped me

become the writer I am today. Getting to write with people who not only have the talent but also the passion for what they do is admirable. When I started contributing for The Rocket, Tyler helped me get in the groove of professional writing. Matt has helped me navigate and cover news, something I only did independently (and not as well) before starting at The Rocket. Denney and Katie are two individuals I have loved getting to know during office hours. I wish I had more time before graduation to spend with both of them. The two of them are both stellar in their contributions to The Rocket; their charismatic personalities and kindness are a bonus. Annabelle, Aidan and Sarah have allowed me to unleash my silly-goofy moods. It is always more fun when someone can match your energy, and I look forward to every conversation we have. Giggling is the best form of stress reduction. All three of you have clear talent. Eddie and Sophia, two of the non-writers on staff who make magic happen. Eddie, I am excited to see where your camera takes you. Sophia, in the interactions we've had, I know you will accomplish anything you set your mind to. Nina's talent goes beyond writing. How she has managed the staff, written pieces and designed layouts continues to impress me. She has been very successful at The Rocket, but this is only the beginning for her. Dr. Fleming and Dr. Quinn, thank you both for pushing me outside of my comfort zone and encouraging me to join The Rocket. I wish I would have done it sooner. There have been times when I've doubted the media and how it operates. If half of the industry has the heart, talent, education and drive of this staff, I think the future could be bright.



Eric Gondella

Eric is a political science major with a concentration in professional politics, as well as a minor in gender studies. He is president of the SRU College Progressives, his academic interests include: left-wing politics, redistricting and post-colonial theory.

I'm a gay man. I am also a sissy, a f-----, a fairy and a queer. I have a limp wrist and a loud mouth. I've got a little sugar in my tank. I am a homosexual. I am a gaybo. A sodomizer, if you will. So what? There's something so powerful about using the same words once meant to demean me. Dear fellow queers, Embrace the taboo, reject assimilation, be weird. Be weird right now! As long as you aren't harming yourself or others in the process, go for it! After you're done being weird, go fight for that oppressed queer over there, and their right to be weird. We are under attack; will our allies help us? While Target, Walmart and others parade our colors, the queer people they employ aren't being protected by

their employer from bigoted customer's micro-aggressions, provided gender affirming care in healthcare plans, etc. These are just some of the queer-related issues they might face. How can a company claim to support an LGBTQ+ person and profit from our aesthetics while we struggle to make rent, pay bills, make it to work in good health and thrive? I understand being legitimized by seeing representation of LGBTQ+ people in media and products in stores, but we shouldn't accept this at face value. As long as they're profiting from and economically exploiting us, I reject their "support." United States President Joe Biden on Trans Day of Visibility said trans people deserve "dignity and respect." Biden didn't say that trans people deserve free gender affirming care. Biden has not announced that he will use Title IX to rule out discrimination of transgender athletes in America's schools. In fact, the proposed Title IX rule change that was

recently announced would do the opposite, giving schools some leeway in banning trans athletes from competing. Make no mistake, any leeway is a betrayal. Undoubtedly, any loophole in the policy will allow for the wrongful ban of a trans student from their school's sports. So, for liberals who want to come and rush to tell me about how much Obama and Democrats have done to "help" our community, see yourself out. I will not bow in graciousness to the party who helped pass the Defense of Marriage Act, don't ask don't tell, and for the most part didn't even come around to gay marriage until it was publicly supported. It's time for a radical re-imagination of the queer political imagination. Queer people are inserted into politics by simply existing. I am not politicizing us, they politicized us first. The NYPD were the ones raiding Stonewall that night

in 1969. Police were the ones enforcing bans on what we do in bedrooms and what we put on our bodies. State violence has always been used to subjugate us. We are betraying those who suffered the worst consequences of police brutality in our own community. The first pride was a riot. Parading around with our own oppressors will never bring about liberation. The longer we are satisfied with homo-consumerism and assimilating into cis-hetero society, we will get what we've been getting for years. Nothing. "For the master's tools will never dismantle the master's house", said Audre Lorde, a self-described "black, lesbian, mother, warrior, poet." She continues, "They may allow us to temporarily to beat him at his own game, but they will never enable us to bring about genuine change." What are the tools? What is the house? For that matter, who is the master? It's something to consider.



PHOTO COURTESY OF ERIC GONDELLA
Pictured above is a memorial for the murdered homosexuals of Europe during the Holocaust.

Thank you for everything



Tyler Howe

Tyler is graduating senior who has been with The Rocket since his freshman year. He took over as sports editor in December 2021.

Every story has an ending. Sometimes the ending can be the hardest part of that story. You can become so attached to that story and everything that goes on in between. In this instance, no, I'm not talking about the end of the third season of the Mandalorian. I'm of course talking about my time with the Rocket and at SRU.

My story here started almost four years ago. It felt so much different back then. I remember on my first day when Brendan brought me to the office, and I met Karl, Keegan and Hannah for the first time. They seemed so mature, and in a way, it was kind of intimidating.

Nothing about being in that office for the rest of that semester and the start of the spring semester was intimidating again. Hannah, Karl and especially Brendan made sure of that.

It wasn't long before I got my first beat. Karl told me I was going to be in charge of women's soccer. For those of you who don't know, the women's soccer office is all the way out past the football field. The first walk there was miserable. Karl and I took a stroll out there in 90°F weather. Don't worry, Karl was wearing his staple grey sweatshirt. I have to say, the commitment was impressive, and I was too young to question it.

I didn't miss a game that year. It was a good thing I didn't, because Coach Giegucz (Griggs) and the SRU women's soccer team won the PSAC that season. They were the first and only team I covered that won the conference.

The long days were commonplace (and still are). Brendan and I would arrive to school at 8 am after blasting "minimal" by ROLE MODEL. Because we commuted, we didn't have anywhere to hang out, but the Rocket office seemed like home. We would be in there all day and sometimes all night. Or we would be at JD's place playing some NCAA 14 or NBA 2K19.

Print nights were crazy with that staff. On a side note, that

staff treated me like I was part of staff even though I wasn't at the time. I credit a lot of that to the way Hannah and Karl led, and the close relationship that I have with Brendan. Every print brought something different, but two of them stuck out.

The first was the sports edition. I don't think Karl, Brendan or Zach left the office for more than an hour that week. It set the standard for how I wanted to run the sports section someday. It was at that time I started to feel like a real journalist because of Coach McGraw. Still thankful for every interaction I had with him.

The second was just a random edition at the end of November. It wasn't the edition that stood out, but rather the snowball fight we had in the quad at 11 pm. I'm still sorry about your snowman, Keegan. But I'm not sorry I laughed at Brendan spearing it.

The spring was the continuation of everything that fall had been. It was going so well until—you know, COVID-19 hit.

That year and change was by far my least favorite part of college. But I think it's important to note that as much happiness that the Rocket has given me, it also gave me some adversity.

Coming back from COVID-19, I thought I was set to finally take over the sports section. Unfortunately, things don't always go the way you planned it. I was so frustrated and so upset. I thought I deserved the sports editor spot. I wanted to leave the Rocket, but Dr. Fleming wouldn't let me. I'm thankful she was there for me during that time because she didn't tell me what I wanted to hear, but rather what I needed to.

I think that was turning point for me. Up to that point, I hadn't earned anything. But after that semester, I knew I had earned that spot.

The trip to New York City was the icing on the cake though. I was so excited for that trip. But when Dr. Fleming called me into her office and asked me if I wanted to cover the Big East Tournament at Madison Square Garden...I thought I was dreaming. I in fact wasn't. I got to cover the 2022 tournament, which was Jay Wright's final one as the head coach of Villanova.

I thought the fall of 2023 was going to be the final semester I was part of the Rocket. I had the opportunity to leave early and thought I would take it. So, I took every chance I could to cover every game I could.

After Niel and I went to a concert in Columbus and got back at 4 am, I was up the next day to drive Eddie, Niel and I to California (Pa.). Just so you know, Eddie, you and I singing Kanye and Let it shine on the way home remains one of my top five memories with the Rocket.

I feel like I've got about 100 words left before I have to get into thanking people, so here's a couple more quick things. First, Brendan I don't know if you remember all the notes you'd write and stick on your computer, but every one of them I could find, I stuck to my computer for the past two years. Karl, I still have the essential oils from my freshman year. If you ever need a hit, just let me know.

Now I guess it's time to thank people, huh? Where do I even start?

With Hannah and Aaron, of course. You guys are both so great. Hannah, you were perhaps the best leader I've ever had the pleasure to work with. Aaron, I'm really proud of everything you've been able to accomplish thus far. Also, I'm sorry about LA.

Nicole, you were like an older sister my freshman year. I'm so glad I had you to get advice from.

Nina, you and I are the only ones who saw this thing through. Crazy how time flies, right? But I'm really glad I had the opportunity to work with you for the past four years and I know you're going to go on to do incredible things.

Sarah, you never failed to make me laugh or put a smile on my face. I'm happy you decided to come back, because the Rocket was always your home. I made sure to tell you that by texting you my rendition of "Gary come home," by changing Gary to Sarah.

Kaitlyn, I'm so grateful that we got to spend the time together that we did. New York with you was one of my favorite things ever. You're such an amazing human being.

Brandon, it was great working with you. We did some cool things and won a couple awards so that's pretty neat.

Katie, you always impressed me, and I know you're going to do great things. Be safe in Denver this summer!

Sofia and Denney, thank you guys for putting up with every story I turned in. You guys are such a great duo.

Matt, you worked so hard from the time you stepped into the office. Putting aside the fact that you went to IUP, you earned the right to be the next editor. Good luck, but you don't need it because you're going to do great.

Annabelle aka the most talented writer ever, you're not only the most talented, but one of the funniest people I've ever met. Keep up the good work and the awards will keep coming.

Layla, you're such an amazing journalist. I'm glad you joined staff, even if it was just for one semester. You're going to kill it wherever you go.

Alex, good luck on staff next year. I know you're going to do some cool things.

Dr. Artman, thanks for listening to me every time I'd come to talk to you. You always knew the right answer to deal with InDesign, and always had good insight on everything I brought to you.

Dr. Dolan, thank you for all the talks and the help throughout the past four years. You're the best adviser ever.

To the WSRU-TV crew, thank you guys for putting up with Eddie, Aidan and I. I'm glad we got to do work together. Zac, you're going to do a lot of cool things, you have so many talents. Aver, you're a great leader and it's been fun working so closely with you. James, you always made me laugh, but on a serious note you have a knack for this stuff.

JD and Jonny, thank you guys for always being so supportive and giving me a place to crash. You guys were there to talk to me when I was frustrated so many times. I don't what I did to deserve you two, but I'm glad I have you guys.

Joe, thank you for being by my side since senior year of high school. From the highs and the lows of college, you were there every step of the way. You've been an amazing friend to me, and it means the world.

Cam, you're one of the few people I know that has supported Brendan and I through everything. You've always taken the time to talk about anything under the sun with us and read everything we've ever sent you. Thank you for being a good friend to the both of us.

To Dan Hart, thank you for taking a chance on me and bringing me into to learn with you and the Pittsburgh Pirates. I know I wouldn't be there without my work here, but it means a lot to be part of the team this summer.

Halle, again you're one of the most talented people I've ever met. I figured that out pretty quick sitting next to you in Dr. Artman's class. Thank you being so awesome and helping me with whatever I've asked of you. I know you'll continue to do amazing things. Hopefully we have the opportunity to work together again soon.

Rayni, speaking of working with people again...I can't believe that we'll both be at PNC Park all summer. But you earned that, you're one of the four best photographers I've ever met (I refuse to rank you guys). You've taken some of the best pictures I've ever seen and on top of that been such a great friend to me. Without you, I wouldn't know how to use a camera. Thank you for all your help and I can't wait to spend the rest of the summer with you at the ballpark.

Keegan, I miss you a lot. You're the reason I wanted to pick up a camera in the first place. And while my sticky note sits next to yours on the photo cabinet and says my staff



goodbye will be way more than 98 words, I promise to keep your section under that. Thank you for everything and please come visit me soon.

Karl, you're one of the best writers I've ever met. I'm sure we'll see a lot of each other, but I'm glad I got to see your start. Soon you'll be at the top of Pittsburgh media or wherever else you choose to be. Thank you for taking me under your wing and showing me everything you knew and more. Essential oils on me next time I see you, yeah?

Eddie, you're one wild cat. In all seriousness, I'm glad the Rocket brought us together. I've always said that I was blessed to work with all the photographers that I did, but you have the unlocked talent I've ever seen. Thank you for being there for whatever I needed and for being one of the reasons I came back for this spring.

Aidan, you're the best writer I've worked with since Brendan and Karl. That's saying something, considering you're still just a freshman. Now the reigns are yours and I can't wait to see what you do. You can do whatever you set your mind to and I'm so incredibly happy that I get to hand things off to you. It's time to usher in your era. I'm extremely proud of how much you and Eddie have grown and I'm happy to call you guys some of my best friends.

Dr. Fleming, thank you for everything. You've been the best adviser, mentor and friend I could've ever asked for. I don't know what I'd do without you. I seriously can't say thank you enough.

Niel, thank you for always being by my side and pushing me through even when things get tough. You've

been such a great support system for me. Jules, I hope you'll come to Slippery Rock, because as you can see, we love everything about this place. Nolan, maybe you could do what I do someday as well. You'd be pretty great at it. I love you, Niel, and the whole Gesing family. Thank you for always supporting me and taking an interest in what I do.

Grandma Helen and Papa, thank you guys for supporting everything I've done since I met you guys a year and a half ago. Papa, I know you've read every article and print edition I've gave you. Hope you've enjoyed everything. Love you guys.

Cheyenne, I love you and I'm so proud of you. Do me a favor and come see Matt and Dr. Fleming when you get to campus in the fall.

Lyssie, I love you and I hope you'll follow in the footsteps of all three of your siblings and come to Slippery Rock.

Mom and Dad, thank you for all the support that you guys have given me since I started down this path when I was in ninth grade. Brendan and I have always been a handful, but you guys put up with us well. I love you guys.

Brendan, last but definitely not least. Thank you for being my best friend, my role model and my biggest critic. We may not say it a lot, but everything you do for me means so much. I've always looked up to you and wanted to be like you. I hope that I've made you proud, just like you've made me proud.

And with that, the clock strikes triple zeroes, and an era ends. Thank you all for being apart of my journey.





Jumping into competition



EDDIE CLANCY / THE ROCKET
The Rock is coming off of a down year to their standards, where they lost regular season games to Indiana (Pa.) and Kutztown. They still managed to fight their way to the second round of the playoffs against Shepherd, but ultimately fell to Tyson Bagent and the Rams on the road.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE A-1

To the Green and White's standards, it was not enough. A share of the PSAC West title did not mean as much to them as it would to other programs. That second-round loss hurt because it was an accurate representation of what the season was.

The buzz from the win in Massachusetts had them feeling good and feeling as if they could make a run. However, Tyson Bagent had something to say about it. Bagent, who might be an NFL draft pick in the next few weeks, outplayed Noah Grover in the game, but Grover still had SRU in the matchup the whole way through.

That disappointment has stuck with them, but it has not gotten them down. Lutz went out and had a spectacular class of players come in, some of whom got to take the field last week.

More importantly, on the offensive side, they lost just two major starters with Grover and Max Maciejewski departing. The Rock has guys ready to step up to their roles, though.

At quarterback, The Rock has Brayden Long. Long sat behind Grover for two seasons and saw play sporadically. He got his first start against Kutztown University in the regular season finale.

In a sloppy game, Long was sacked five times. That is a rarity for The Rock offensive line, but nothing felt correct in that game. Despite that, Long still showed spurts of promise and threw for 227 yards in the 23-21 loss.

"Kutztown has one of the top defenses in the region and they were senior-oriented. We put him in a difficult position, and he did a good job," Lutz said. "I thought he was calm, cool and collected, and he's been waiting for his turn."

Now Long seems set

to take the reins for The Rock. Lutz has full confidence in him.

"I think he solidified his position as the starter. He's had a really good spring and he knows the system and he has a little bit of playing experience," Lutz said. "We really like the direction that he's ready to lead our football team in."

When it comes to weapons on offense, the team will not be at a short either. They will have back Cohen Russell, Chris D'Or, Jawon Hall and maybe the biggest impact: Kyle Sheets.

"Our receiving core is loaded right now, I think that it can one of the best we've had," Lutz said. "Cohen is so electric there and Kyle has got NFL opportunities ahead of him."

Sheets has been dominant in the past couple of seasons. He was able to learn under some of the best wide receivers that The Rock has ever seen: Henry Litwin, Cinque Sweeting and Jermaine Wynn Jr.

In 2021, Sheets tallied 23 receptions for 357 yards with three touchdowns. He did that while sharing reps with Litwin (67 receptions, 1,032 yards and 13 touchdowns), Sweeting (60 receptions, 777 yards and eight touchdowns) and Wynn (56 receptions, 774 yards and eight touchdowns).

2022 was the year that Sheets really came alive. He was the premier talent going into the season, and he did not disappoint. He racked up 887 yards on just 54 receptions and also scored nine touchdowns. Long will be able to have

a reliable piece back and someone who can win 50-50 jump balls.

Russell will also be back, and his speed will make all the difference in the slot. Russell caught 54 passes last year and had 679 receiving yards and six touchdowns. When he gets going, it is tough to slow him down.

Add in Jacob Odom, who spent most of last season on the sideline due to injury, and The Rock may have one of the most dangerous receiving corps in the PSAC. Odom showed flashes in his time on the field last year with 284 yards and two touchdowns in five games. The biggest key will be his health.

At the tight end, Maciejewski was a big, reliable target. He was one of the rare tight ends who could do it all.

In 11 games played last year,

Maciejewski had 31 receptions with 365 yards and five touchdowns. Kam Kruzelyak will have the job of taking over along with Nathan Waltman. Lutz is confident that both of them will be able to have significant

production when the fall comes.

"I think we got two really good tight ends; Kam is really athletic and Nathan is a good blocker but he can also catch the ball," Lutz said. "Max was really good and he'll be hard to replace, but both Kam and Nate bring a lot to the table."

The biggest factor is the return of every starting lineman from the 2022 season. The Rock had one of the most consistent lines last year. Colton Rossi, Nick Stazer, Yuriy Hryckowian, Sawyer Morgan and Jeff Burkhardt will all be on the field when the fall arrives. That sense of security will be huge for not only Lutz but for Long as well.

The defense left a few holes with Kevin Hyde, Jeff Marx and D.J. Adediwura all graduating. Marx was part of the 2019 team who made it all the way to the national semifinals. His experience on the defense played a huge factor last year on a defense that was able to hold all but one opponent to under 24 points.

The defensive line is something that Lutz is already looking at. Lucky for Lutz, he will have back Munchie Johnson and Cottrell Hatchett.

"We're excited about Cottrell and Munchie, but we've got some young guys, so we've just got to get some experience so we may bring in a transfer or two," Lutz said. "You're only going to go as far as your offensive and defensive lines can take you, so we've got to improve there."

Lutz still wants to address the position. This may be the one year where Lutz has felt

confident in all but one major area.

Part of that may be due to the fact that he brought a very good recruiting class.

On the defensive line, they brought in Sherman Hatton from Marshall University and Aeden Holler from Kent State University. Both of them have three years of eligibility left, and they will look to help fill that need.

The linebacker position was filled by six new incomers after The Rock defense lost multiple contributors there including Brandon Tuck-Hayden and Brandon Bischof. To fill the need, they brought in transfers Kyle Kudla and Andrew Vince.

Some of the new players got a chance to see the field last week.

The Rock hosted their annual spring game on April 14, and the event saw many players sit but also gave fans a glimpse at what each side of the ball will look like this upcoming season.

Long took the first team reps, and just a few plays in, Long hit Hall for a 55-yard touchdown strike.

After the White squad scored their first touchdown, they followed it up with another good drive. The drive ended with another three points being put up on the board to give them a 10-0 lead.

The game was moved from its original date, and it is a good thing it was. The squads continued to battle on an 80 degrees Fahrenheit day. Lutz and The Rock Football team were able to showcase a number of big-name players and starters from last year, but some players did not suit up for the contest.

Among the players who did not don the Green and White were Odom, Hatchett, running back Chris Wells, defensive back Selvin Haynes and

"The standard doesn't change though. We expect to compete for a national title this fall."

– Shawn Lutz, SRU head football coach

Rossi.

The final points of the game were scored in the third quarter when Bradley Hoffman hit Connor Chrisman for a 17-yard touchdown strike. The second half of the game featured a running clock in order to prevent injuries.

The game ended in a 10-7 decision and for Lutz, it helped him figure out exactly what they wanted to work on in the summer and when camp comes.

Slippery Rock has a long way to go until September 2 arrives and they take the field again. All in all, Lutz was happy with how things went in the spring and has the same aspirations that he has every year.

"We've got a lot of room for improvement, but I was pleased with how our spring went," Lutz said. "The standard doesn't change though. We expect to compete for a national title this fall."



Trying to survive and advance

Rock tennis looks to make their way back to the title match



Slippery Rock tennis has been on a roll heading toward playoffs on the back of thier stars. Gabriela del Val del Toro and company hope they are able to continue their flourishing success on the path to winning postseason contests.

By Tyler Howe
Sports Editor

It has been nearly a year since The Rock Tennis team fought their way all the way to the Pennsylvania State Athletic Conference (PSAC) title where they squared off with their bitter rival, Indiana University of Pennsylvania (IUP). They dropped the match 4-1, but their quest did not end there.

Less than a week later, they faced West Liberty University and won the match 4-0. As fate would have it, they wound up playing IUP for the third time in one season. The

Crimson Hawks swept the matchup to send The Rock home.

This planted the seeds for their revenge season.

The comeback may not have gone exactly to plan either. Their 4-4 start felt like it was just going to be an early season slump, and that was exactly what it was. After their .500 start, they only dropped three more matches.

More importantly, they dropped just one PSAC match, but that match was to the one team that they wanted to beat. The Crimson Hawks came out on top 4-3 and handed The Rock their only PSAC loss of the regular season.

“[Our conference play] has definitely helped our confidence, no doubt about it,” Rock Tennis head coach Matt Meredith said. “We’re playing really good doubles right now and we have been all year. That sends a message to the teams we play.”

After tearing through the rest of the PSAC, the team is back to exactly where they wanted to be. The Rock will square off with Mercyhurst University to determine who will advance.

The Green and White faced Mercyhurst just a week ago and walked away with a 5-2 decision. However, beating a team twice in any sport

can be a difficult task to accomplish. Last year is a great example of that.

Slippery Rock was in a similar position during the 2022 season. The Rock beat the Lakers 6-1 during the regular season. The match was not even close. Just a couple of weeks later, they snuck past the Lakers 4-3 to advance in the playoffs.

Meredith and Rock Tennis will look to avoid making things that close again.

“Having already played them, we kind of know what to do, but you never take them lightly,” Meredith said. “They’ve switched their doubles around a little bit, but

I don’t think it’s going to make too much of a difference of how we’re going to play.”

For Meredith, he feels that it is about making sure the team is just focusing on themselves and not looking ahead at other opponents.

“We’ve got to play every match and focus on the things that we do well, and that’s what we always do,” Meredith said. “We’re always looking at the match ahead of us, not the one after it.”

For anyone, that would be tough to accomplish, especially when you take into consideration that if the team is to get back

to the title match, they might have a rematch with IUP.

Something that SRU has on their side is that they have a lot of experience. They will look to lean on Ariana Gonzalez Sanchez and Gabriela del Val del Toro. The two have been a huge part of their success in the past two years, but they still have one thing left to accomplish.

That of course is a conference title. In order to get back to it, they need to fight their way back to the title match.

“This time of year, you’ve got to be ready for everyone because it’s the playoffs now,” Meredith said.

Pushing for the playoffs

The Rock continues to dominate on the field as they aim to make the PSAC playoffs

Aidan Treu
Assistant Sports Editor

Rock Softball sits three wins away from clinching their first winning season since 2018 with nine games remaining. They are currently second in Pennsylvania State Athletic Conference (PSAC) West standings at 14-9 in conference play, behind only Seton Hill University.

Head coach Stacey Rice said she coaches her team to stay level-headed and maintain their standard of play through all the highs and lows.

“We haven’t changed too much of our approach from the start of the season until now,” Rice said.

Speaking of ups, The Rock is coming off a recently ended, but massively impressive, ten-game winning streak. Energy and team spirit are high.

“First and foremost, it gives our players lots of confidence. We beat really good teams, we shut teams out, we came from behind, we had a lot of different situations that they had to work themselves through to get through that winning streak,” Rice said.

The White and Green outscored opponents 44 to 23 in the stretch, combining multiple outstanding pitching performances with great, consistent hitting.

“It feels good and certainly brings us confidence, but if you look at everyone else in the standings in the PSAC West, it’s really anybody’s game,” Rice

said. “We can’t get overly confident in this situation. There’s still a lot of games left, and anything can happen.”

Rice was correct. As tempting as it may be to get excited and leave caution to the wind after a big winning streak, the race at the top of the PSAC West standings is tight. Focus is as imperative as ever.

Aforementioned Seton Hill University sits atop the conference at 15-5 in the conference while Gannon University, Mercyhurst University and California University (Pa.) sit close behind with 12-8, 13-9 and 12-9 conference records respectively.

“We certainly can’t relax,” Rice said.

Perhaps the highlight of their winning streak was the final two games. Two home victories, 2-0 and 8-4, over Indiana University (Pa.) clinched The Rock’s season series sweep of their bitter rival.

“Anytime you sweep somebody it is a great feeling and IUP is a great team. Anytime you sweep a great team it feels even better,” Rice said.

Alexsa Hurd, Aubrey Mansfield and Anna Villies all put up big numbers in the latter game’s eight-run outburst. Each of them collected two

hits and scored at least once. Hurd got the win in the circle.

All three players are putting up strong offensive seasons, each being one of the team’s four qualified hitters batting over .270.

Hurd specifically has

put together an outstanding season, not only leading SRU in batting average (.422), slugging percentage (.719), on-base percentage (.470), (home runs (9), R B I

(49) and Doubles, (13), but additionally contributing as a pitcher.

“Man, she is a stud,” Rice said.

The two-way player has solidified herself as a great number-two starter at The Rock, accruing a 3.10 ERA and a team-leading 1.34 WHIP to go along with 88 strikeouts.

“It is odd, in this sport, to have a person that can

do it all at this level,” Rice said. “It’s rare, it’s just not something that happens.”

Rice said that Hurd has been proficient at keeping herself as a batter different than herself as a pitcher, so as not to allow one subpar hitting

performance to throw off her pitching game.

“If she’s hitting well, she’s normally pitching really well... If she isn’t hitting well, she’s still pitching well. She’s handling that with a lot of maturity which, as a sophomore, is exceptional,” Rice said.

She is certainly good

enough to be many teams’ ace, but at Slippery Rock that honor remains with Kelsi Anderson for the time being. Anderson has impressive statistics across the board. She is striking out well over one batter per inning, has a 2.47 ERA, 1.44 WHIP, eight complete games and a measly .204 batting average against. She even tallied a save in a 7-6 win over Pitt-Johnstown, although closer Chloe Sharman leads the team in that regard with five.

Anyone who watches baseball or softball will tell you that a bad pitching staff can severely limit a team’s potential, whereas consistent good pitching performances can almost single-handedly win games. Rice agrees with this sentiment.

“Pitching plays such a big role in the success of a program. In baseball and softball at any level, your team is about as good as your pitching staff,” Rice said.

Hurd and Anderson have been putting up great pitching performances all season. The rest of the team has their backs

through and through.

“We feel with Kelsi and Alexsa on the mound that we can win any game,” Rice said. “Our coaching staff and our team believe so much in them.”

It’s hard in any sport to not get ahead of yourself when you have multiple star players and a well-rounded lineup around them, garnering contributions from everyone. Rice has been able to keep the team composed over the full course of this season anyway. She emphasizes finding what works and capitalizing on it.

“We’ve really just been trying to find the great things and the good things to build on them,” Rice said.

The mentality created by this is one where every player knows they bring value, but a team effort is crucial to team success.

“We recognize that confidence breeds competence and competence breeds confidence,” Rice said.

Outside of IUP, The Rock has beaten several other talented and established teams. They are currently 2-0 against first-place Seton Hill and have taken at least one win from every PSAC-West team at or above .500 except for Mercyhurst University.

SRU has shown the ability and talent to take down any level of competition, which bodes well over the course of the final PSAC playoff push.

“We all believe they can beat anybody, which is huge,” Rice said.



EDDIE CLANCY / THE ROCKET



Graduate student Alex Robenolt is hoping his bat and leadership skills can help guide Slippery Rock's perennial competitor team back to the PSAC playoffs. The team has been swinging hotter bats as of late as they look to make a playoff push in the back half of the season.

Aidan Treu
Assistant Sports Editor

As a student of Danville Area High School, Alex Robenolt lettered four times in baseball while being named an all-conference and All-Susquehanna Valley honoree. He had a great senior year, batting .317 and leading his team in multiple offensive categories. He wasn't sure where he was going to pursue an academic and athletic future. Head Coach Jeff Messer helped ease his nerves and make the decision easier. The outfielder knew he wanted to come into a program where he could play competitive baseball, and few coaches in the country have a better history than Messer in that regard. "Coach Messer is just a great coach, and he has a track record of winning," Robenolt said. It didn't take long for Robenolt to be a contributor at The Rock. He made ten starts over 20 appearances as a freshman. His first career start was one of the better performances of his career, collecting three hits including his first home run against Seton Hill on April 2, 2019. He must have a knack for

hitting well against Seton Hill, because another one of his more memorable career moments came on April 15, 2022, against those same Griffins. The Rock kicked off scoring early when now-graduated star catcher Connor Hamilton launched a solo home run to left in the bottom of the first inning. Seton Hill answered with a go-ahead, two-run single to center in the fourth. Not to be outdone, The White and Green responded with an RBI single of their own with Eddie Morris bringing Robenolt in. No more runs would score for either side until extra innings. The dominant pitching performance for SRU was orchestrated by Luke Trueman and Andy McClymonds. Trueman went 7.2 innings and struck out 11 in a career performance. McClymonds got one out in the top of the eighth, bringing up the heart of Slippery Rock's order for the home half. Jon Kozarian saw six pitches and struck out swinging. Hamilton, who had already homered in the game, worked a full count on six pitches but struck out swinging on the seventh. Up comes Robenolt. Two

outs, tie game, extra innings, home team in a conference game. It's every young player's dream scenario. He took two pitches out of the zone. 2-0 hitter's count. "I was just trying to get on base and see what the next guy can do," Robenolt said. Even in the perfect scenario, Robenolt was focused on staying within himself, the approach that has allowed him to be a good hitter at every level he's ever played in. And just like that, he roped a ball to left field and out of Jack Critchfield Park. Final score: 3-2 Slippery Rock. "Those are like once-in-a-career things... It's something I wasn't intending to do when I went up there," Robenolt said. "It's one of the things you don't plan for." This is just one specific example of understanding your approach. In baseball, trying too hard to be a hero or come up with a big swing often leads to bad results. Staying within your abilities is almost always the way to success. Robenolt, in his fifth year with the program, is doing his best to instill that into younger players. He understands the

time every athlete here has devoted to their craft and the importance of maintaining the plate approach that has gotten them this far. "As hitters, if I see something mechanically with guys, I'll go over and say something. . . But you don't want to change too much, these guys have had the same swing for so long," Robenolt said. "All of these kids have had so many at-bats during their lives, and you don't get here without being successful." Part of being a leader is being able to provide advice to younger players, even when it may not be specific mechanical corrections. "With pitching, it's not my expertise, but I try to make sure those guys stay confident in their stuff. They wouldn't be here either if they didn't have good stuff," Robenolt said. The help is showing, and hitting has gotten better as the year goes on. Veteran presence commonly helps teams grow; it's why you see Major League Baseball teams sign formerly successful players past their prime every year. Robenolt brought that veteran presence back while

still being one of the most important and successful offensive contributors. If it wasn't already clear, Robenolt's simple approach has helped him tally some impressive numbers during his career at Slippery Rock. The graduate student outfielder, who still has time to add to these numbers, currently sits at sixth in SRU program history for doubles, 17th in home runs and 18th in hits. "That just shows the hard work that I put in," Robenolt said. "I never would've imagined coming in initially that those numbers would be where they're at now." Those numbers wouldn't quite be where they currently are had Robenolt chosen not to come back as a graduate student for one more year. He said after his parents moved to South Carolina he was leaning toward ending his collegiate career with Slippery Rock, but after figuring out the finances and having some conversations with Coach Messer, he knew he needed to run it back one last time. "I had that extra year with COVID," Robenolt said. "With the graduate program

being a one-year program it all made sense. You never know how long you can play, so why not finish it out one more year and see where things go." The Rock is currently loading up for a playoff push in the second half of the 2023 season. They have fallen somewhat behind in conference standings, but at 18-17 overall and as a historically very successful program, no one is counting them out yet. "We really put a lot of pressure on ourselves, especially hitting," Robenolt said. "We lost a couple of guys from last year and things didn't go our way initially." The squad has turned things around somewhat, scoring five or more runs over a recent four-game stretch and scoring 15 in two games at Mansfield University. Robenolt attributes his team's recent offensive success to staying confident through hardships and staying relaxed when it may be easy to lose focus. As Robenolt says, trying too hard isn't going to get you anywhere most of the time. "Our pitching has been good all year, so I think we just need it all to come together at once," Robenolt said. "We're just trying to play our game."

Striving to make history

Camryn Whipple aims to bring SRU lacrosse first PSAC playoff win

Aidan Treu
Assistant Sports Editor

Slippery Rock women's lacrosse currently holds a 5-4 record in conference play with hopes of a playoff berth still alive. The program does not currently have a PSAC playoff game victory on its resume. Junior attack Camryn Whipple would be the first to tell you that this year's squad fully intends on putting their all into ending the drought. Whipple had a decorated high school career. She lettered four times in lacrosse at Canon McMillan High School while being named a team captain in lacrosse and volleyball. She holds the records for career goals there at 172 and single-season goals after finding the back of the net an astounding 88 times as a junior. These performances brought her multiple accolades, namely she was a member of the WPIAL All-Section team, a WPIAL Scholar-Athlete and was part of a WPIAL championship volleyball team. Unfortunately, like most athletes who have competed over the past several years, COVID-19 threw a wrench into the works. After her record-breaking junior year, Whipple found herself somewhat lost in the mix of life when she couldn't play her senior season of lacrosse. Playing a sport for much of your life and into college will undoubtedly change the course of anyone's life, but Whipple said that one of the more important lessons she's learned came in the time she wasn't

able to play. She said it taught her to remember the importance of "taking advantage of every opportunity that you have to play and not taking it for granted." Family has always been important to her, and that sentiment helped guide her decision to further her academics and athletics at Slippery Rock. "Being close to my family is important to me... my parents coming to my games makes all the difference," Whipple said. She also quickly saw that the SRU lacrosse team shares similar values of being a close-knit community. "What really sold me on Slippery Rock was the team culture was really strong," Whipple said. Of course, it didn't hurt that the PSAC has a strong reputation of consistent competitive play, something that Whipple absolutely wanted to be a part of. "I knew coming to Slippery Rock would be a competitive program," From her early days here, Whipple made sure to learn from the experienced players what she could about becoming a better player, teammate and person. She noted Emily Benham and Katie Dlugosz as key components to her growth. "Getting to play with players like Emily Benham and Katie Dlugosz last year, they were an established

group of players together. It taught me about leadership." Whipple's leadership ability in tandem with having a close relationship with the whole team has helped the squad become a well-functioning unit. There isn't one individual player carrying the team, everyone is contributing. "What makes our team so special this year is that it's not a two or three-man show. We are such a balanced offense and team this year," Whipple said. "That's really what makes us go far." No one on the roster is playing selfishly, and the proof is in the numbers. Seven different players have eclipsed double-digit goals and 14 players have scored at least five, with 15 total players having multiple goals. "I've always prided myself on being an

unselfish player," Whipple said. "In a team, it's so important being able to make your teammates look good and set them up for success." The cooperative playstyle where the ball is distributed everywhere has made all the players' favorite game even more fun. "It's really really fun to be a part of a team that's not all about two people." The selfless nature of the squad has not only made the game more enjoyable for The White and Green but also made them hard to defend. "We have a lot of different ways that we can win, and we have a lot of different people that can step up and score goals," Whipple said. "Coach said that's what makes it difficult to scout us." Whipple is referring to Head Coach Taryn Burkholder, who was an assistant coach when Whipple first joined the team in 2021. The transition from assistant to head coach wasn't a difficult one. "Burke," as Whipple referred to her, has

always been well-liked amongst the players and clearly has the drive to win. "We were definitely all really excited to have her back. She's very passionate about elevating our team," Whipple said. That passion has shown on the field this year. Not only is SRU above .500 within the conference, but they also played close games against the best of the PSAC-West. Both Seton Hill University and Mercyhurst University have been ranked this year, and SRU wasn't outmatched against either team despite the losses. "It's huge. It just shows that we can compete with anyone," Whipple said. "We're a very strong team in a lot of different ways." One of their closest losses of the season came in the form of a 10-9 home loss versus Indiana University of Pennsylvania (IUP). Whipple and her teammates believe they have what it takes to flip the script on their rival next time around for a season series split. "I'm very excited... I think our team is ready... We know what kind of team we are. We know we can compete," Whipple said. "I think we're all just excited to get out there and compete and prove to the PSAC how special of a team we are." After putting up good performances but falling short a few times, the team will likely need a big win or two against teams like IUP if they

want to achieve their goal of winning the first PSAC playoff game in program history. "Our goal all year has been to make the postseason and have a playoff win." The Rock has proven once this year already they are capable of making program history. Slippery Rock hadn't beaten Lock Haven University at Lock Haven in over three decades, and the season series had always been dominated by the Bald Eagles. So, what did they do? They went out and swept Lock Haven for the first time ever. Whipple said, especially playing on a team whose goal this entire season has been making strides to set new standards for the program, this win was one of her favorites. "My favorite memory is probably beating Lock Haven on their turf," Whipple said. The 2023 lacrosse team has already set a higher standard for future teams with their play this year, but Whipple and Burkholder want nothing more than to stay locked in until the dust settles. "Coach Burke always says today we're going to go 1-0. We just have to focus on the game in front of us right now," Whipple said. Such is the strategy that has helped them already have big moments this year, although for Whipple, the biggest moment hasn't been realized yet. "I think our goal all year has been making history," Whipple said. "I think overall it's making playoffs, taking that first PSAC playoff win because it's never been done in school history."



EDDIE CLANCY / THE ROCKET



EDDIE CLANCY / THE ROCKET



Wechachochapohka

A native perspective on SRU history

By Annabelle Chipps

Asst. Campus Life Editor

Before Slippery Rock land belonged to the university or even the town, it was inhabited by members of the Seneca nation. According to legend, the area and school were named after native defeat.

"[I]n colonial times, soldiers were being chased by the local Seneca Indians. The troops, wearing heavy boots, were able to cross the creek, but the Indians, wearing moccasins, slipped on the rocks in the creek bed. They named the creek Wechachochapohka - a slippery rock," the official SRU website states.

However, not everyone believes that this mythological defeat is a cause for triumph. For some, it represents a broader history of oppression and brutality toward Native American people.

The people of Western Pennsylvania

"The fact is that [in] the Slippery Rock Creek area, the people that were there were the people who were all over Western Pennsylvania," a member of the Three Rivers Tribal Council, Miguel Sague, said.

"The main population group that controlled Western Pennsylvania was a group called the Senecas... the Seneca Nation belonged to a larger group of people called the Iroquois," he said.

There were around 15 Iroquoian tribes that governed land as far west as Ohio and as far north as Ontario, Canada. The Seneca people attempted to create a coalition with all 15 tribes but were only successful in securing five. The group was subsequently called the Haudenosaunee, or The Iroquois Confederacy.

Because English settlers had occupied the east, more and more Native people moved to Western Pennsylvania with permission from the Seneca. One of those groups was called the Lenape.

"There were several Lenape settlements...one I know that was right next door to the university was called Kushkushking," Sague said.

The village of Kuskusky, where the Kushkushking and other tribes lived, was characterized by its large stand of maple trees. Residents performed maple tree ceremonies and hosted maple tree gatherings.

"That maple tree stand lasted long after the native people had been driven out," Sague said. "The European settlers, mostly English, they kept harvesting the maple syrup from those maple trees that the [Natives] had been harvesting. That's one of the important features of that region that Native Americans were dealing with—the maple sugar."

Conflict with the English

"The English, they came in as friends at first...but when they got settled in, they started...doing some really horrible things," Sague said.

Native people made treaties with the British government that were supposed to deter the English from crossing the Alleghenies. However, European colonists continued to move west.

"They didn't really care... as far as they were concerned. London was far away and they didn't like the king anyway," Sague said. "The [Natives] would get mad and they would attack the settlements. And then there would be an outcry, 'Oh massacre, massacre, the Indians are killing white people.'"

The English eventually began to fight with the French over what is now American territory. Native people allied themselves with the French since they were more likely to honor their land treaties. This conflict is better known as The French and Indian War.

At first, the British suffered major defeat. "The Native people of this area were very happy. They felt like 'we beat the British and the French helped us and now we can have our land to ourselves'," Sague said.

This British failure led to policy and law changes that allowed English soldiers to hide behind trees and carry shorter guns. Soon after, the French and their Native allies lost the war.



ANNABELLE CHIPPS / THE ROCKET

Along Slippery Rock Creek this sign can be found to honor the Natives of the local land. The creek is only 2.8 miles from SRU.

"They took over the Three Rivers area and burnt it to the ground..." Sague said. "Native people in this area were really ticked off...they lost more and more trees and land because more colonists kept coming over."

In retaliation, Native Americans surrounded what is now Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania with the help of indigenous tribes from all over the area. The Kushkushking joined in the fight. After many battles, British troops from Philadelphia were finally able to save Fort Pitt.

The effort to protect this land came to be known as Pontiac's Rebellion. "That was the last time there was really serious Native American opposition... there was no more Kushkushking by the end

of the rebellion," Sague said.

Revolutionary War closes doors

Because the British government had more closely honored their treaties, Native people sided with them in the Revolutionary War.

"The Revolutionary War was one of the worst things to happen to the Iroquois... The general [Washington] sent up there...he went systematically village by village, burning and killing anybody that he could see," Sague said. "He cut down all their trees...and burned all their food and crops... they went through the whole Seneca."

"That was pretty much the end of the Iroquois Confederacy," he said. The

only Seneca land left in western Pennsylvania was a reservation in Warren County. The other groups had been displaced to northern areas, like New York State.

By the 20th century, Pittsburgh had become a bustling city which led to flooding. In 1965, the Seneca people in Warren County asked the government to help with this issue.

The government went back and forth with plans that would either save or flood out the reservation. They decided to build a dam that flooded the last reservation. The people who lived there were forced to move to reservations in New York, West Virginia and elsewhere.

SEE MAINTAINING PAGE A-4

Celebrate Earth Day and a birthday

Macoskey Center celebrates both Earth Day and center's 33rd anniversary

By Annabelle Chipps

Asst. Campus Life Editor

SRU's 33rd annual Earth Fest will be taking place at the Macoskey Center on Sat. April 22, 2023 from 12 to 6 pm. The event is held each year to celebrate both Earth Day and the center's anniversary.

The free event will feature entertainment and education for people of all ages. Some of those activities will include a vendor market, an electric car show, live music, horseback riding and more. It is also a space students will present work through the Student Sustainability Project Showcase.

Food and drinks will be offered via local businesses. One of those is Fuzzy Monkey Coffee, a veteran owned business that works closely with their coffee farmers.

"We try to seek businesses that are aligned to our sustainability ethics," the manager of the Macoskey Center, Samantha Laurence, said, "but we're also

just trying to support local businesses in the community."

Market vendors are picked for their sustainable practices as well. For example, Silver Maple Ceramics will be present because of their nature inspired designs, and another company will be there to sell reusable beeswax covers.

The market will also include informational vendors such as Climate Lobby and Citizens Climate Education, which is a local climate activist group. The electric car show will be presented by an anti-fracking activist group called Marcellus Outreach Butler.

"[We're] trying to just raise awareness of businesses and or companies who are leaning into... their sustainability ethics," Laurence said. "Especially in terms of sustainability of social, economic and environmental systems."

Aside from raising awareness, Earth Fest also serves as a way to raise money for

the Macoskey Center. This year, they are introducing a raffle basket fundraiser for the first time ever. The baskets will feature products from sustainable businesses. Fundraising methods have changed over the years, but Laurence believes that this one may stick.

Something else that changes every year is the educational activities that are available. Students who are taking an Interpretive Methods class create the activities and center them around a theme. This year, there will be six programs and they will all focus on the growth and development of local birds.

The Keystone State Literacy Association is also working with this avian theme. They are planning a nature walk based around the children's storybook, "The Nest that Wren Built."

"They're going to actually have a...Hawk trainer present to talk about birds and to just



PHOTO COURTESY OF MACOSKEY CENTER

Earth Fest has many events to keep kids occupied and entertained. Some of the events include educational events, raffle baskets and much more!

get to introduce people to bird conservation," Laurence said. "But they're also going to have some great hands on activities for the kids, [like] teaching them how to build their own nest, that connects to the themes of the storybook as well."

Another event for children is horseback riding. While horseback riding has not been available every year at Earth

Fest, it is something they've done in the past. The Storm Harbor Equestrian Center will partner with the Macoskey center to take children on horseback through the sensory trail.

"We typically have a little over 500 people attend the event at least," Laurence said. She believes this is important for several reasons.

"It inspires them and encourages them

to get involved with sustainability activities and demonstration projects, as well as maybe even some of the research we're doing here..." she said. "It's really important that we have an event that's welcoming people from all different walks of life...they get inspired once they're here to either get more involved...or take that sustainability ethic with them into their own lives."

'Love is a terrible thing to hate'

OIE brings in philanthropist and advocate Gisele Barreto Fetterman

By Annabelle Chipps
Asst. Campus Life Editor

The Office for Inclusive Excellence invited Gisele Baretto Fetterman to participate in a moderated conversation

"I think it's important to walk into rooms and think, 'Who is missing from this room? Who is missing from conversation ... Whose voice would we benefit from— who is suffering, and why are they suffering, and how can we fix that suffering?'"

– Gisele Barreto Fetterman, social advocate, philanthropist

at SRU on April 5, 2023. The conversation took place from 5-6:30 p.m. in Miller Auditorium. Admission was free for both students and the general public.

Barreto Fetterman is a social advocate, philanthropist and volunteer firefighter among many other things. Her husband, John Fetterman, currently serves as a junior United States senator from Pennsylvania.

During the talk, she spoke and addressed questions about life as a young immigrant in America, mental health, intersectional identities, work-life balance and more.

Barreto Fetterman described herself as a “dreamer,” which is a term for a child who comes illegally to the US with their parents. She was born in Brazil, where she lived with her brother and mother until the age of seven.

“We lived in a place that was very violent,” she said. “So [my mother] came home with a suitcase and courage and said we were going on an adventure.”

Afterward, Barreto Fetterman spent her days adjusting to life in the United States.

“[M]y mom would say, ‘I love you, have a great day, be invisible’...there was the price to pay. If I wasn’t invisible, my family could have been deported,” she said. Her dream for many years was to be called for jury duty and to vote in a U.S. election.

Years down the line, Gisele Barreto Fetterman was working on a nonprofit in New Jersey. She stumbled upon multiple articles about

Braddock, Pennsylvania. She discovered that the steel that built the Brooklyn Bridge, “which [she] was in love with,” had come from this community.

“I wrote a letter to the borough and I shared the work that I was doing that I was curious to visit and learn,” she said. “They handed the letter to John, who was the mayor, and then he called me and then I came to visit...of course, he fell madly in love with me.”

Her husband went on to become lieutenant governor of Pennsylvania before acquiring a seat in the United States Senate. Since then, Barreto Fetterman and her family have been the targets of an onslaught of hate.

“I receive physical threats and verbal threats. I’ve always received more hate mail than my husband,” she said. “It was everything from going back to your country to immigrant hate to eyebrow hate.”

She explained that she handles comments and threats by remaining sensitive rather than developing a thick skin. “No one should get used to harassment or hatred,” she said. “But I’ve learned how to navigate, I’ve learned how to manage.”

Barreto Fetterman has several identities, aside from being an immigrant, that people have attempted to weaponize against her. She is a wife, mother, member of the LGBTQ+ community and holds a diagnosis of Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD).

“[ADHD] is absolutely a superpower... as an artist...it allows me to be really creative and hyper-



EDDIE CLANCY / THE ROCKET
Community members gathered in Miller Auditorium for a conversation with Gisele Baretto Fetterman. Audience members had the chance to ask questions.

focus on the things I care about,” she said.

One of the things Barreto Fetterman is passionate about is nonprofit work. She is the founder of Free Store 15104 and the co-founder of 412 Food Rescue and For Good PGH. All aim to fulfill the needs of those who may not have a voice.

“The Free Store was the nation’s first free store. It was a place where surplus and excess goods can be made available at no cost to families in need... it’s a commitment to the environmental impact of filling our landfills, but also meeting the needs for families,” she said.

412 Food Rescue started as a branch of Free Store. Its purpose is to reach more stores and focus on food specifically, whereas Free Store provides things like clothes, diapers, baby formula, etc.

“We’ve rescued tens of millions of pounds of food,” Barreto Fetterman said.

For Good PGH focuses on uplifting women of diverse backgrounds.

She said she was inspired to open a nonprofit because she worked in a community that was a “food desert,” or a place where families do not have frequent access to food.

“I think it’s important to walk into rooms and think, ‘Who is missing from this room? Who is missing from this conversation?’” she said. “Whose voice would we benefit from— who is suffering, and why are they suffering, and how can we fix that suffering?”

Nonprofits are not the only way Barreto Fetterman helps those who are struggling. Her childhood dream was to be a volunteer firefighter, which recently became a reality.

“I was the oldest person in the academy... I’ve worked with some of the most remarkable people I’ve ever met,” she said. “Volunteer Firefighters

are truly incredible...I’m in awe of them and what they do.”

She later stated that people are occasionally surprised when Gisele Barreto Fetterman answers their fire calls.

She not only gives back to communities in Pittsburgh but those in the greater Pittsburgh region as well—including Slippery Rock.

A close personal friend, who is also her husband’s Chief of Staff, is an SRU alum.

“I’m so excited to meet all of you and learn from you. I’m really looking forward to today’s event,” she said when asked prior to the conversation if there was anything she wanted Slippery Rock students to know.

During the event itself, students were given the opportunity to ask Barreto Fetterman questions.

“[Students] are literally going to save us. I love learning from them. I love listening to them,” she said.

‘Euphoria’ actress ‘Storms’ in

UPB hosts 'A Conversation with Storm Reid'

By Annabelle Chipps
Asst. Campus Life Editor

Actress Storm Reid visited SRU on Monday, April 10 in the Smith Student Center Ballroom after an invitation from the University Program Board (UPB). She sat with communication

"[We're] storytelling and we're having a lot of fun. I try to take that attitude to every set that I'm on."

– Storm Reid, actress

professor Emily Dolan for a moderated conversation, answering questions from Dolan and students.

At the age of 19, Reid has acted in numerous big-budget movies and tv shows. She is best recognized for her work in The Last of Us, Euphoria and A Wrinkle in Time. She also co-owns a production company and recently launched a swimsuit line with PacSun.

She said that she had never heard of Slippery Rock before but thought the campus was “beautiful” and “really pretty.”

During the talk, Reid discussed her upbringing and career before delving into acting tips and fun facts. She began acting when she was three years old.

“My first acting job was a PBS Kids Sprout commercial,” she said. She then described what it is like to work on the set of Euphoria.

“It always feels like a family, and it never really feels like a lot of work,” she said. “It’s just [that] we’re playing,

we’re storytelling and we’re having a lot of fun. I try to take that attitude to every set that I’m on.”

The actress went on to explain that one of the biggest responsibilities in acting is “to be a part of purposeful content and align yourself with creators that have your same morals or values.”

“I have the responsibility to...be a representation for women, for women of color and for young people in general...I just always have to remind myself that I need to be purposeful,” she said.

The last portion of the event was dedicated to audience questions.

One student, a freshman named Heath Chase, asked Reid what her favorite acting technique was.

“The best actors are the best listeners,” she responded.

A photo opportunity was provided and some students were able to take pictures with Reid after the event.

Maintaining Native relationships

CONTINUED FROM PAGE D-1

Where are the Seneca today?

Today’s only existing Seneca reservations are in New York.

“The thing we have now is coalitions...it’s just a random collection of different tribes that live in the area. There’s a very small minority of indigenous people in Western Pennsylvania right now, and we don’t have a whole lot of political power,” Sague said.

Tribes across the country are united by environmentalism. Native people from several different nations now live in the greater Pittsburgh area. There are groups dedicated to protecting its land.

According to Sague, one organization is called Defend Ohi:Yo’, which is named after the Seneca’s name for the Allegheny River.

“We’re bound and determined to save this region from things like fracking and fossil fuels and pipelines.”

Acknowledging history

“We’ve begun to acknowledge that we are settlers who are occupying, often in legally murky contexts, land that was

taken from indigenous peoples,” Mustafa ‘Aksel’ Casson, an associate professor at SRU, said. Casson has been working on a land acknowledgment report for the university.

According to him, Canada is much further ahead than the United States when it comes to land acknowledgments. Canadian public institutions routinely start off events by recognizing the original inhabitants of the land they are on.

Some schools in the Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education (PASSHE) have begun releasing formal land acknowledgment statements. One of those schools is East Stroudsburg University, which also offers scholarship plans for Indigenous students. They also center programming around Indigenous events.

“I’ve really wanted Slippery Rock to follow that kind of model,” Casson said. “I think, optimistically, they will probably get there at some point. President Behre has been open to the idea but has been very cautious about the kind of language we would use in that statement.”

Casson believes that land acknowledgment can easily become an empty gesture if not followed through.

“For [it] to have any real power or authority, we need to take that next step. We’re still stuck on that first step of just making a statement that acknowledges past occupants of this land,” he said. “A really effective [one] has to go further and try to create equity and reparations to native communities, and I fear that step is really going to be difficult for us.”

Isabel Fernando, president of First Nations at SRU, said she is glad land acknowledgment is happening, but there is still a lot of work to be done.

“I have been in a few of the meetings where this has been brought up...I’m really trying to push them to listen to the people from Three Rivers Tribal Center and the Seneca museum...As a Native person, I want to be respectful to the people whose land I am a guest on,” she said.

“I think it’s really important that Native students see they are welcomed on this campus.”

GIESO takes pride in SRU

President's commission revamps before new university president arrives

By Nina Cipriani
Editor-in-Chief

"We are a united front as a commission," Erin Street said. "[I]t's great to be a group of people that have a lot of ideas, but we also wanna have ideas and then [carry them out]."

The President's Commission on Gender Identity & Expression and Sexual Orientation (GIESO) advocates and advises on lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and intersex (LGBTQ) issues to make SRU a more inclusive and supportive campus.

Street, a co-chair of GIESO and SRU assistant volleyball coach, said GIESO brings together people from all over campus, such as herself and the other co-chair James Eng, who is an associate professor of the graduate school of physical therapy.

What sets them apart from other presidents' commissions is their focus on policy and advocacy.

Eng said GIESO spearheaded efforts to put all-gender bathrooms in over 26 buildings on campus.

The commission also developed the chosen name policy, which supports individuals of all gender expressions and identities

and respects preferred pronouns for students and faculty. This policy most commonly appears in course syllabi.

"[These] things are policy procedures that didn't exist 10 years ago," Eng said. "But we [GIESO] all care, so now we're bringing them up."

While GIESO handles policy, the Women's and Pride Center mainly handles the LGBT-related

"Any LGBTQ high school senior, or [a student] looking to transfer and trying to figure out if SRU is a safe place to be, then let's look at that [index]"

– Erin Street, co-chair of GIESO

programming.

A main focus every year for the commission is the campus pride index, which rates universities out of five stars on how welcoming, respectful and inclusive campuses are. It analyzes elements like LGBTQ inclusion policies, academic life, housing and campus safety.

Street hopes the index can be used as a recruiting tool in the future.

"Any LGBTQ high school senior, or [a student] looking to transfer and trying to figure out if SRU is a safe place to be, then let's look at that [index]," Street said.

The commission's largest annual event is Night Out, which involves a keynote speaker. But this year, it's a little different.

As opposed to a formal event like in previous years, local drag queen Calipso will host the 2023 Night Out in Drag, with keynote speaker Justice Horn. The event will be in the Smith Student Center Ballroom on April 25 from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m.

"[The Night Out event's] original intention was [to complement] our LGBTQ lavender graduation ceremony," Street said. "It's a way we can celebrate our LGBTQ graduating students. It actually is kind of turning into a big party, with

dance, song, celebration, guest speakers and awards."

Horn is a LGBTQ advocate from Kansas City, Missouri. He is the first openly gay National Collegiate Athletics Association (NCAA) multicultural wrestler in South Dakota.

GIESO joined the Office of Inclusive Excellence and the music department to host an event in February. Cee Adamson hosted two lectures and an open forum during the event, "Gender and Performance from the Trans/BIPOC Perspective."

Adamson is a classically trained opera singer that identifies as a transgender woman of color. She is



SRU PRESIDENT'S COMMISSION ON GENDER IDENTITY & EXPRESSION AND SEXUAL ORIENTATION

GRAPHIC COURTESY OF GIESO

furthering her education at the University of Washington, earning a doctoral degree in vocal performance.

Before the University of Washington, Adamson received two master's in music and performance at the Guildhall School of Music & Drama in London. She was designated a Guildhall artist.

Street said it is GIESO's goal to update the commission's bylaws before Karen Riley steps into her new role as SRU president. The bylaw subcommittee is working on restructuring the commission's membership, so the composition may look different next semester.

"Basically, right now, we're

trying to get GIESO in a really good place through updating our bylaws and trying to keep moving in the right direction as a commission," Street said. "[W]e have a lot of great new voices."

GIESO plans to meet with Riley when she starts her term, introduce their history and find out how the commission can support the university president and vice versa.

"We've had a lot of changes over the last bunch of years," Eng said. "[We want to make it] clear who we are when we meet with her [Riley]. But at the same time, nothing is set in stone."

Album review: 'the record'

Boygenius's new masterpiece explores queer femininity

By Sarah Anderson
Campus Life Editor

Sophia Bills
Asst. Copy/Web Editor

Supergroups are no new thing, some of the most iconic being Bad Company, Them Crooked Vultures and the list goes on and on. A successful all-queer female-led supergroup is a rare commodity. Boygenius puts the "super" in supergroup.

The current music industry is in a bit of a stand-still with a lot of classic 2000s bands making comebacks (Fall Out Boy, Blink-182 and Weezer as some examples). As a pretty relaxed music listener, this is one of the first albums other than Taylor Swift's "Midnights" that has had us drooling all the way up to the release date and beyond.

A raw and moody album that discusses the complicated navigation on intimate relationships between queer women, "the record" has blown fans away and brought in even more listeners than before.

Solo careers

The trio is made up of iconic artists Phoebe Bridgers, Lucy Dacus and Julien Baker. Their solo careers all fall into the alternative indie category, but each artist has a distinguished sound. That sound can be felt and heard throughout the newest release.

Bridgers released her debut album, "Stranger in the Alps" in 2017 which took the chronically online sad girls into a new dimension. She dropped "Punisher" while we were locked down during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Her music is often described as anxious, melancholy and haunting. Her voice is incredibly light and airy across many tracks, but she has shown in both her solo music and her vocals in boygenius that she does not mind a guttural scream every once in a while.

Bridgers brings her soft voice into the trio by holding songs down with her middle part harmonies and perfectly blending with the varying voices of her counterparts.

We love Lucy [Dacus]. Her

vocals are rooted in straight emotion and she has a gorgeous lower register. She has released music in 2016, 2018 and most recently 2021, her album "Home Video."

Dacus is known for her hard-hitting songwriting, which is oftentimes autobiographical. It is no wonder she is such a powerhouse in boygenius.

Julien Baker is arguably one of the most underrated members of the band. We must admit, neither of us knows much about her solo career. It is astounding to see her have less than 500 thousand listeners while Dacus and Bridgers each have over one million.

Baker's voice is the highest of the three, often carrying the airy and eerie tones in the band. She layers smoothly with Dacus' low voice and Bridgers' middle harmonies. Without her voice, boygenius would simply be incomplete.

The three women have bonded over their queer identities, all of whom have been in the music industry for some time now. Dacus and Baker have shared experiences of coming into their identities while in conservative religious environments.

The band recognizes the safe space they have with one another to make their hopelessly romantic, heartbreaking and powerful music about queer women and their intimate relationships-- romantic and platonic.

Getting into "The Record"

This album exceeds any expectations that we had for it. It is impossible to go through the beauty, power, and pain of every song throughout this album. Being young women navigating adulthood, relationships and life is challenging.

Somehow this album puts all of those feelings into words. You do not need to be queer or a woman to feel the absolute whirlwind of emotions squeezed into 42 minutes and 18 seconds.

It is impossible to narrow down a phenomenal 12-track album to just a few talking points, but we chose three songs that stood out during our listen.

Emily I'm Sorry

Phoebe takes the lead on the third track of the collection. Phoebe's airy mid-range vocals

complement the isolating melancholia of this song. A good song to cry to, "Emily I'm Sorry" is up there with the "Maybe I'm the problem" part of Billie Eilish's similarly lonely "TV."

As seen in the title, the track is apologetic. We feel that it comments on the female urge to apologize-- but uniquely through the queer female lens. The emphasis on the apology can be heard and felt with the vocal layering throughout the song.

As discussed, the album features the rarely-seen platonic side of queer female relationships. Even without a man in the mix, the string that pulls women to overly apologize stays prominent because the construct is so deeply ingrained.

Standout lyrics include "I can feel myself becoming someone only you could want" which beautifully encapsulates the ways that we adapt ourselves to be loved by a select few, tailoring ourselves to their wants.

The line "I'm 27 and I don't know who I am, but I know what I want" puts the feeling of growing up as a young woman into painful perspective. There is a persistent need to apologize constantly, question your place in relationships and try to navigate the chaos.

Cool About It

This song opens with an assumed familiar scene for the narrator at the dive bar, shooting pool and getting to know each other.

Our interpretation of the lyrics is that the story narrates two sapphic women meeting in a movie-like scene. Starting with the basics "about work and school," flirting begins.

The pain isn't "cool," and there is no way to be cool about the discomfort between the two characters in the song. The singer wishes the other individual was "kind enough to be cruel about it" and give a clear rejection, desiring a "no" over the gray in between of "What are we?"

"I came prepared for absolution, if you'd only ask," Julien sings. Again, our character yearns for an absolute answer to the question looming in the dimly lit room. The whole song is full of yearning and need to be understood and loved.

Notable lyrics include "I'll pretend being with you doesn't feel like drowning," leading listeners who have felt fluttery romantic feelings before to wonder if this is the good kind of out-of-breath feeling.

We also appreciate the line, "I took your medication to know what it's like / And now I have to act like I can't read your mind" because the mention of a presumed mental health medication illustrates the universality of such struggles.

Letter To An Old Poet

The final

track of the album harkens back to earlier on in boygenius' career. Seasoned listeners notice parallels in the lyrics and sound to boygenius' 2018 release, "Me & My Dog."

When Phoebe begins a line with "I want to...", listeners expect her to finish: "be emaciated" or "hear one song without thinking of you," two lines of "Me & My Dog."

Fans of "Letter To An Old Poet" and "Me & My Dog," were quick to pick up on the parallel between the two. The track from "the record" has a verse that begins "I want to," and listeners may perk up expecting to hear "be emaciated."

Online, typically TikTok, fans of boygenius have been directing the song and parallel between the two. Aside from the digital discourse, this track is a strong ending for an album with such a fiery buildup.

Fire is a motif throughout "the record," mirroring the chaos and passion that is coming of age. Phoebe is not unfamiliar with fire, as this is a common theme throughout her solo work.

The group has already kicked off performing after their release of "the record." They announced North American tour dates at the beginning of April, beginning in June in Phoenix, AZ, and concluding in early June at the iconic Red Rocks Amphitheater in Denver, CO.

The tour technically started in April with a one-off show in Pomona, CA. Before they dive further into the headlining tour, they will be playing at a new outdoor concert series called Re:Set, which is three concerts in three different cities, with a different artist each night.

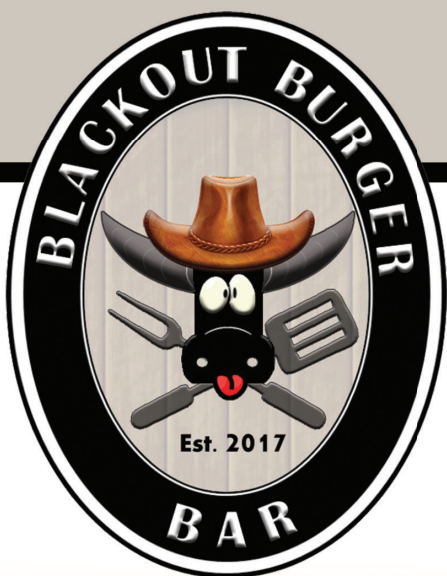
The boys also had a 50 minute set at Coachella this past week where they played songs from the album. The set was opened with the record's eerie opening track, "Without You Without Them," as well as more hits off the newest release.

They were sure to play some classics from their first EP, including "Salt in the Wound" and "Me & My Dog."

Touring and staying connected with one another is the priority for boygenius for now. Who knows what will come from their solo careers and the trio's future collaborations.



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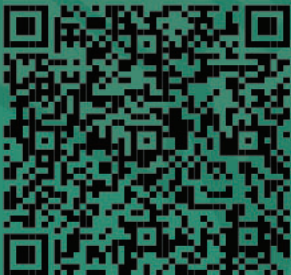
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