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## Independent - Apr. 12, 2022

Monty Stites

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# NORTHEASTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY'S INDEPENDENT

TUESDAY, APRIL 12, 2022

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Student-run newspaper since 1962  
VOLUME 41 ISSUE 6

## Believing Sexual Assault Survivors

By: Leslie Lozada, Campus Life Editor

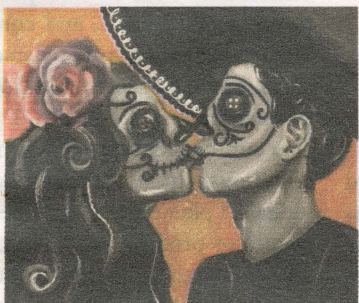
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DIVERSITY FOOD  
FEST BRINGS NEIU  
FLAVORS FROM  
ALL AROUND THE  
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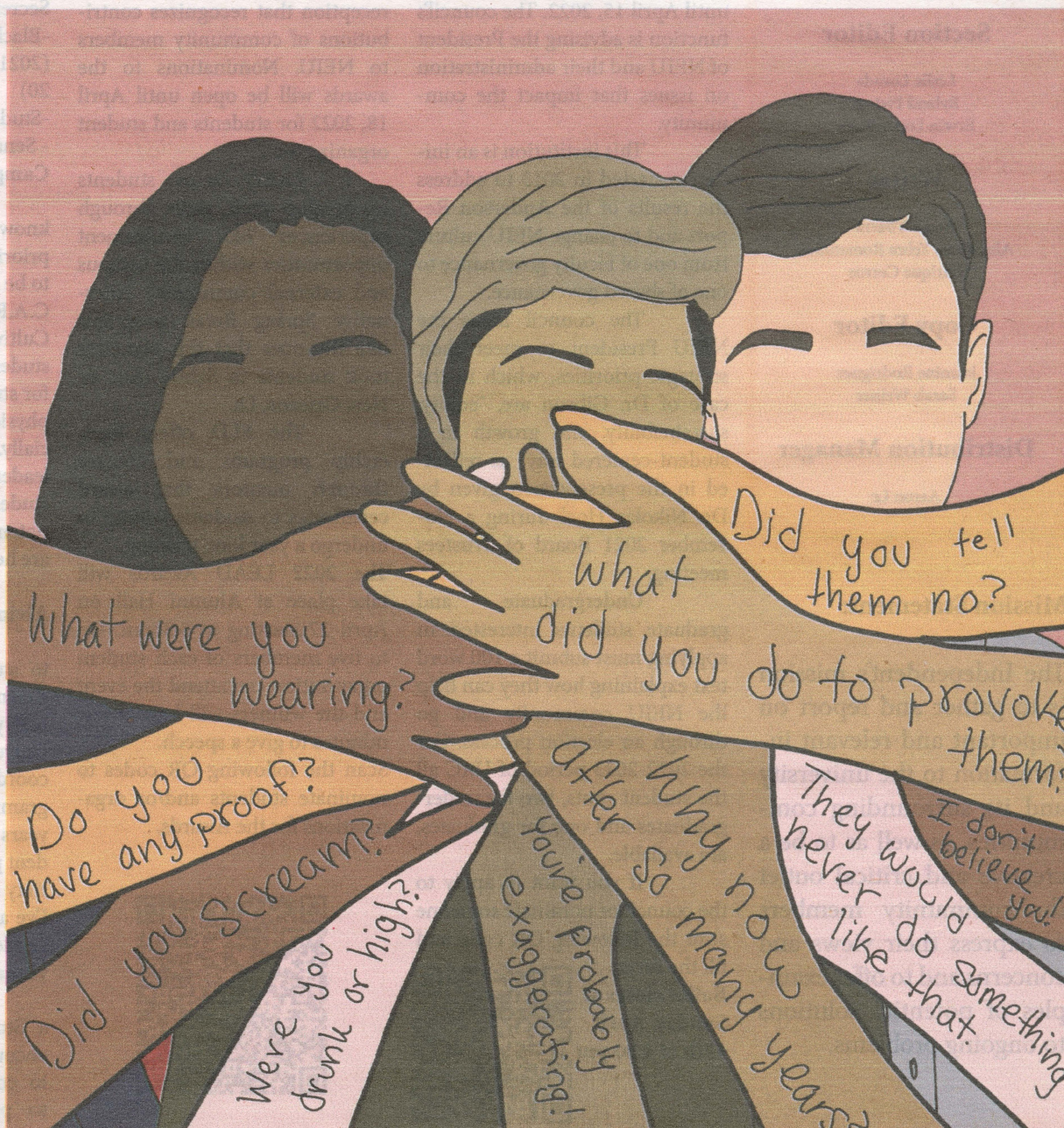


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MILA KUNIS AND  
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CAMPAIGN GOAL  
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Illustration by Savannah Owens.





# News Nuggets No. 1

By: Erwin Lopez Rada, News and Sports Editor

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### Mission Statement:

The Independent's mission is to gather and report on important and relevant information to the university and its surrounding communities, as well as to be a creative and critical outlet for community members to express their views and concerns and to offer examples of potential solutions to ongoing problems.

### NEIU University Advisory Council (UAC) Opens Nomination Process to Community.

Students, staff and faculty can apply for or be nominated to an advisor position in the UAC until April 15, 2022. The council's function is advising the President of NEIU and their administration on issues that impact the community.

This institution is an initiative started in 2013 to address the results of the Anderson Report and to change NEIU culture from one of faculty governance to one of shared governance.

The council helps the NEIU President to meet their strategic priorities, which in the case of Dr. Gibson are, "equity, sustainability, and growth in a student-centered way" as reflected in the presentation given by Dr. Nikolas Hoel during a November 2021 Board of Trustees meeting.

Undergraduate and graduate students interested in applying must submit a 100 word text explaining how they can help the NEIU community and go through an election process. For the 2022-2023 period of UAC all the student spots, two for undergraduates and one for graduates, are available.

If you want to apply to the council or nominate someone scan the following QR code and fill the form.

Ballot closes at  
Sunday, April  
17th at 4:00 pm



### Leaders Emerging And Developing (LEAD) Awards Reception on April 27 at Alumni Hall

Student Leadership Development (SLD) is organizing the annual LEAD Awards reception that recognizes contributions of community members to NEIU. Nominations to the awards will be open until April 18, 2022 for students and student organizations.

LEAD helps students to develop their skills through experiences like involvement opportunities within the campus and external community. Alternative Spring Break programs like the ones that this semester took students to Selma, Ala. or New Orleans, La.

The SLD offers leadership programs and courses through mentors that award certificates to students willing to undergo a year long training. The 2022 LEAD Awards will take place at Alumni Hall on April 27 starting at 5:30pm. Up to five members of each student organization can attend the event and the winners will have a few minutes to give a speech. Scan the following QR codes to nominate students and/or organizations for the Awards.



### 2022 UAC Nominations:

#### Shyrice Howell for Treasurer

-Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc.  
| Pi Nu Chapter  
-President (2021-Present)  
Vice-President, Treasurer & Secretary (2020-21)  
-Black Caucus - President (2021-Present) Treasurer (2019-20)  
-Student Government Association  
- Senator (August 2021 - Present)

#### Campaign platform

I want students to know that I am a leader who prioritizes C.A.R.E., and I'm able to be a voice for all. My acronym C.A.R.E. means the following:-  
Cultivate more collaboration with student organizations. Advocate for students needs academically, physically, mentally and financially. Reaching out to promote leadership while encouraging students to recognize their full potential. Ensure all student voices are heard, and action is initiated.

#### Alvin Gutierrez for Treasurer:

I was first introduced to student involvement and engagement on campus during my first year at Northeastern Illinois University. I have been an event coordinator for Northeastern Programming Board (NPB) for three years now. I work to promote student participation by hosting a variety of social events on campus. I've also served as an Orientation Leader working with both first year and transfer students.

Last year, I served as a Student Ambassador where I encouraged prospective students to consider NEIU as an option to pursue higher education. I

currently hold the position as Co-President of Pin@y Club where we have the blessing of a culturally rich group of people from all different backgrounds. I currently serve as President of the Student Advisory Board for the University Honors Program. As of today, I am also serving as the current Treasurer of the Student Government Association and Chair of the Council of Clubs.

#### Campaign platform

I will campaign individually and collectively. First and foremost, I will have my own original flier that promotes my individual aspirations, achievements, and overall commitment to serving the student body as a whole. I will present my case to my classes encouraging students to vote in the SGA elections. Additionally, I will branch out and communicate the election process to my peers, friends, and current NEIU students via my personal social media pages. In addition to campaigning individually, I will also run collectively in a team of ambitious, student-centered individuals. I plan on visiting different classes to promote SGA elections and encourage students to vote as this matter ultimately influences the student body as a whole. I will ensure that the entire week of elections is productive. I am confident that this team will not only succeed in its pursuits, but effectively represent the student body in large through transparency, communication, and outreach.

#### Itzel Linares for Vice President:

-Student Government Association (SGA) - Vice President (May 2021 - present) - My job is to lead  
Continues on Page 3.



with integrity, embracing our diversity to promote a cohesive and unified student body while also maintaining relationships with all our executive board members and representatives of the Senate and Council of Clubs.

**-Undocumented, Resilient & Organize (URO)- President (August 2020 - present) -** I help provide a safe space, and access to resources, leadership opportunities and a strong network of support and ensure Undocumented students' success in and out of NEIU while also challenging any denial of resources and programs to undocumented students.

#### **Campaign platform**

Honestly school is hard. Don't you think? Specially if you don't know how to navigate higher education or if you're simply having a hard time communicating with a professor or advisor. I was once in those shoes. As a first-generation undocumented Latine commuter student, I struggled to find my path in college, I'm not saying I still don't struggle, but I now know who to go to in the institution when I need help. I found groups of people that helped me get through many hardships, and one of those groups was SGA. I now am the person that I needed when I first started this journey at NEIU, and I want to continue helping others. I want to continue advocating for you, by writing legislations, connecting you to the right people, creating a welcoming environment, but mainly listening to you and what you need. My name is Itzel Linares (she/they), and I need your vote to continue being your Vice President.

#### **Lilly Madrigal for Secretary:**

I have served as an NEIU First-Year Experience Peer Mentor, Council of Clubs representative, Secretary of Student Government Association, MSTQE Social Media Content Specialist, and a Spin class instructor at NEIU's Campus Recreation.

#### **Campaign platform**

I will be campaigning via social media (instagram, tiktok, group me) and through tabling with flyers.

#### **Belvet Trejo for President:**

The only time in my life where I felt like a leader was in elementary school. I volunteered for the position of group leader in our discussions, group projects and even won prizes for the work we contributed. In high school I became an introvert until I joined a poetry club that exposed me to speak in front of an audience. My innate desire to be seen made it possible for me to tuck away my shyness in favor of exploring my extroverted side. I was part of a group of like minded people that encouraged my creativity and sense of belonging. I grew comfortable in that setting and by personal circumstances I did not force myself to go beyond the demands of the group. I continued to endorse strong leaders in my community by attending their art shows, poetry slams and events. I learned a lot of what a good role model should be and always guarded my dream of being in a leadership position one day. I feel the calling to a higher purpose for my dreams to take flight today at NEIU. The time has come for me to start living up to my full potential. Through your help and my hard work I plan on including being president of the student body as my first tangible experience in a leadership role.

#### **Campaign platform**

I believe that in order to have a safe and united community it is dire that we destigmatize mental illness by raising awareness and provide the resources needed to those who suffer. One of the most important aspects of the college experience is socializing with peers whether it be transfer, first year or seniors, we all share things in common and are all interconnected one way or another. I would like to encourage clubs and students to exercise their friendly dispositions in an effort to

build a sense of community. I feel a moral and intrinsic obligation to promote eco-friendly practices such as recycling and practicing compassionate actions such as reducing the amount of meat and animal products we consume. Educating and leading by example is a great way to encourage a true change in the world. A major concern for college students is their development of interpersonal skills. Skills developed for the purpose of achieving goals and careers such as communication skills, conflict management, and practicing empathy. I want to help students graduate with the skills needed to not only pass tests but land careers and build solid connections with their colleagues. Lastly, I am a strong advocate for the motto of "Less Talking More Action" initiatives including volunteering, taking responsibility for one's actions and promoting activism through radical actions.

#### **Ardeshir Tabatabaei for Senator:**

Having 2 masters degree in aerospace engineering have given me experience in leadership. My most recent new opportunity in leadership came from being a graduate research assistant in aerospace engineering at Illinois Institute of Technology where I worked on time sensitive projects that required organization and effective team work. Also, as a management board member of a consulting engineering company for nearly 10 years, I have gained lots of experience in leadership roles.

#### **Campaign platform**

Improving academic and students life to create a better sense of belonging for students at NEIU.

#### **Edwin Medina for President:**

Currently I am the President of Student Government Association (SGA) and President of the College of Business and Technology (CBT) Student Advisory Council (SAC). I am also a

member of the Executive Board for the College of Business and Technology. I previously served as SGA Secretary and Treasurer at Wilbur Wright College, and the President of The Latin American Student Organization. I was a student representative for a committee that developed initiatives for Equity, Diversity and Inclusion and part of cultural event planning committees such as Latinx Hispanic Heritage Month, LGBTQ+ History Month, Black History Month, and Asian Pacific Islander Desi American History Month.

#### **Campaign platform**

Have you ever felt as if no one is listening to you at NEIU? Are you concerned on how you will pay for college? Or are you having difficulty resolving an issue that is interfering with your educational experience, such as waiting for an NEIU staff or faculty to respond to your email? Facing these challenges is why I decided to run for SGA President. As a first-generation Latino student, I learned that college is HARD (trust me I thought about using my talents to make a living and realized I didn't have any \*sad face\*), and it's even more difficult when you're doing it alone! Especially if you don't have the right support to guide you through the process in obtaining your degree. I began to listen to students and found solutions to problems that were negatively impacting their educational progress.

Students made me aware of the invasion of privacy with proctoring programs and I brought that to the Provost and he was on board with resolving this concern immediately. NEIU didn't have any official sports, but I came up with a bill and gained support from the university community that made it official that Division III sports would be back. I am in this role to represent the students, my job is to make sure that I make your experience at NEIU a positive one. But I need you in order

to do this, and we can do this together. #LetsGetThisDone

#### **Nicole Vangelista for President:**

Leadership roles at NEIU include serving the student body twice as an SGA Senator to create legislations, such as "Senate Resolution on Hazing Prevention" (2021) to ensure members of an NEIU organization are enrolled students to prevent an incident from repeating and hold accountability to protect NEIU students from outside parties. I have served twice as Student Life committee chair. I served as SGA Secretary during the fall term and was promoted to Chief of Staff for the Spring term. I currently serve as a student representative on University Planning and Budget Council (UPBC). I have served as Treasurer and currently am the Vice President for Society of Physics Students. I also have gain leadership roles outside of NEIU. In my spare time I organize fundraisers for American Cancer Society, Domestic Violence Survivors, and Delta Alpha scholarship as the Fundraising Director for KDCHI's Chicago Alumnae Chapter raising almost four thousand over the last 9 months.

#### **Campaign platform**

It's not about making ideas; it's about making ideas happen to improve the NEIU climate in sustainable ways driven by transfer, first time, graduate, and returning students. Reform to bring back optional health insurance options for students and create navigation for students in need of health care access. Working towards minimizing costs for students while working towards sports coming to NEIU, looking into sponsorship deals to ensure low costs. Reduce the university ecological footprint through interactive educational collaborations. Work with university leadership to implement mental health days. Create more accessible scholarship information relays.

Continues on Page 4.



### Javonti Mordican for Communications & Public Relations Director:

NEIU Student Trustee: This position taught me effective leadership skills, decision making, and how to advocate for a good cause, and when and where to implement change. Serving as the Student Trustee for NEIU gave me an even deeper insight into the institution than ever before, I have come to understand that NEIU is an institution that is thriving continuously to build a better learning community for our students. I have continue to stay motivated in helping to serve the NEIU community.

Resident Assistant- The Nest: This position is student focused, naturally I am a person who values helping others and making sure that individuals feel tended to. Working as an RA here at The Nest has exposed me to a wider population of NEIU students; students from far and wide, personalities by the dozens. It has shown me that NEIU values diversity and that this institution will stand as one that is, home for all. I have had the wonderful chance to create programs that are geared towards increasing our students comfortability levels and giving them a space to connect with other students.

First Year Experience Peer Mentor: This was my first leadership position here at NEIU. The FYE Peer Mentor program acted as the diving board I needed to jump head first into the community of NEIU. Since then I have been connected every since, this position allowing me to establish and maintain positive personal and professional relationships here on campus. I was able to share positive experiences with students and have even kept up contact and strong mentor/ mentee relationship. There are some mentees I have form 2018 who I still know today, the FYE program taught me how to share empathy with students and meet them

where they're at.

### Campaign platform

I began my academic career here at NEIU in the Fall of 2017. I am overjoyed to be running for your Communications & Public Relation Director for SGA. I consider myself to be a strong advocate for my peers. I am a person who is insightful, and innovative, I have the natural ability to take a small idea and work to blossom it into something great. I am constantly looking for new ways to improve. One of my core beliefs is that student voices matter; if chosen for this position I will make sure to have student voices represented- your stories deserve to be highlighted. I have a natural skill for motivating others, along with my ability to market myself and organizations well. I look to strengthen relationships with our campus departments, SGA is a important piece to student life and people should know what we and what we stand for. My experience as a first-generation college student has allowed me to analyze and observe what support and resources are needed for long-term success as a student and beyond.

I am always looking for new ways to increase the quality of things on campus to ensure that students feel at home when they step foot onto NEIU grounds. The NEIU community should be a safe, captivating, and fun place to receive your education. I want to expose the student government across the NEIU campus, I want to encourage those from the NEIU community to join SGA and to help fight our cause. I look to build and maintain relationship with both students and university departments.

**Francys Munoz for IBHE-SAC:** Social Media & Outreach Specialist - Office of Equity, Diversity, and InclusionStudent Government Association (NEIU) - Council of Clubs RepresentativePR & Communication Coordinator - URO

(Undocumented, Resukient, and OrganizedLeadership Youth Advisory Panelists with State Senator Adriane Johnson Peer Mentor at College of Lake County

### Campaign platform

I am a Latina first-gen college student and currently a junior. My major is in Social Work, with a minor in marketing. I transferred to NEIU last year from the College of Lake County. I am passionate about creating access and resources to higher education for those who are currently starting their college process. I take on many roles like a student, volunteer, SGA representative, and most recently, social media analyst for the Office of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion. I value equity, diversity, and inclusion in a higher education setting and at the state level because it makes sure that historically marginalized students have a voice on campus. These spaces of higher education were not originally meant for black students or other students of color.

But we are here now and we are creating a door for those students that are barely beginning their journey into this new space. I want to create a welcoming environment and offer them the advice, counseling, and the shoulder to lean on that I wish I had. To me, equity means that every student at NEIU receives the proper help and resources that they need to reach their highest academic potential. Our campus is extremely diverse. The students and key staff work to create a space that embraces diversity and is inclusive. Our work in these fields is never over because we can always better ourselves and the NEIU community.

## POLICE BLOTTER



**These incidents occurred on NEIU campus property between the dates of 03/29/2022 and 04/06/2022.**

### 03/29/22 - NEIU

Former student came in looking for help with a place to stay for the night. Shelter options provided. He chose to go back home to his mother.

### 04/03/22 - PARKING LOT J

Officer responded to complaint of subject pulling plants near nest. Subject was in possession of steak knife. After brief language barrier issue, subject left campus.

### 04/06/22 - THE NEST

Student reports harassment by classmate on social media. Subject also shows up at class he is not registered for. Police Dept assisting student.

\*\*\*  
The NEIU police blotter is requested from our campus police for every issue of NEIU Independent because this publication exercises its right to do so, courtesy of the Clery Act. The Clery Act is a federal statute requiring all higher education establishments that participate in federal financial aid programs to maintain records of campus crime and campus security information. Any case that is considered ongoing may not be listed in the blotter. For this reason, there may be updated reports published retroactively once those cases are closed. For more information about the Clery Act, visit the NEIU police department's webpage.





# Tiki- Taka Takes Over NEIU 4 v 4 Soccer Tournament

By: Erwin Lopez Rada, News and Sports Editor

Months after the Pedroso Cup, the Northeastern Illinois University (NEIU) soccer community gathered to compete on March 30, 2022, at the P.E Complex. The attendance was expected to be weak, as Derek Ansong, one of the coordinators at Campus Recreation, told me that only 12 people had registered to play six days before the event.

But that did not mean fun was not had and neither was it reflected in the mood of the players. I was texting with Emmanuel, Mathieu and Tony, the other members of my team, since the morning and everybody arrived inexplicably early to the court.

In the end, 14 students showed up, so we played a tournament of elimination between three teams.

Our team conceded one goal in the practice game and could not score because of the nonsensical rule of shooting only outside of the three-point line. Emmanuel told the team later in his car, "Man, I was scared at that moment that we might lose when we actually had the better team." But we have been playing together for almost a year now and we know perfectly the strengths and weaknesses of everyone. We play with a lot of passing, to a point that it can look inconsequential, but Emmanuel and Tony have this kind of connection that is pleasant to watch and more to participate in.

They play the ball to each other five or six times in the same area doing tiki, taka, tiki, taka. They serve short passes to each other to disorient the rival, then play to me, the goalkeeper, to get him out of his position. We are constantly doing Tiki-Taka. This way we make it easy for Mathieu to be alone with the ball and score or I can open the field for them to run with a long pass that they can then send into the net.

The English press says that the

Tiki-Taka game style was developed by Spanish players in the early 2000s. But the word and the style had always been present in Hispanic soccer lore.

We do not like the quick, straightforward English soccer style, we prefer to pet the ball, move it around, and entertain. This way we got rid of our first opponent 6-1.

I also had the chance to make some runs and try for a goal – although goalkeepers are not used to doing so – my team knew that I was able to play out and score. I did not score once, but it did not matter. We advanced to the finals and there we defeated the opposing squad in the final game 3-1. They were able to find the net in the last seconds of the game, when we were already tired of Tika-Taka, and were ready to go home with our victory.

As a prize, Ansong gave us intramural sport champions shirts that copied the logo of a famous Will Smith show that read "Fresh Champs of NEIU." I never thought of it that way, but of course, we are. If a word represents our style of play, it would be fresh.

The NEIU soccer community has the P.E Complex available for the rest of the semester on Wednesdays from 6pm to 8pm.



Pictures by NEIU Campus Recreation.  
Erwin Lopez Rada/ The Independent



Pictures by NEIU Campus Recreation. Erwin Lopez Rada/ The Independent



Emmanuel, Erwin, Mathieu and Tony. The Fresh Champs of NEIU Soccer. Photo by NEIU Campus Recreation.



# Believing Sexual Assault Survivors

By: Leslie Lozada, Campus Life Editor

"Believe all survivors" was one of the many things said at a recent NEIU panel regarding sexual assault. You would think that is a given, right? Especially with the rise of the "Me Too" movement, where several women have shown what they have gone through from the various abuses men in positions of authority have perpetrated. Of course, abuse is not tied to one gender; survivors and perpetrators may be men, women or non-binary.

There are so many people who go through some type of sexual harassment, abuse or assault. One person, a member of the LGBTQ+ community, said she was harassed on the street while walking home one night. She chose not to go to the police because it was something she considered minor. While her friends helped in the aftermath, they made unhelpful comments about what happened. That she should have had her friends to walk with her at night, in her own neighborhood. That she should have had protection on her, which is not a bad thing, especially with reports of harassment in public spaces in Chicago and elsewhere.

That she should not have worn revealing clothing, even though that is part of her primary outfits. However, these should not have been the main focus. The primary focus of criticism should be laid on the harasser, the predator, the abuser. He, she or they are in control of their own actions and should have known better.

Joss Whedon, a notable pop-culture figure who created "Buffy the Vampire Slayer," has had a slew of allegations of sexual misconduct, harassment and abuse of various types throughout the years. One notable actress, Charisma Carpenter, who portrayed Cordelia Chase in both "Buffy the Vampire Slayer" and "Angel," reported for years how much she suffered on set while working with Whedon, even alleging that she was fired for not aborting her pregnancy for the sake of a storyline. In recent years as well, there have been sever-

al allegations from cast members that have worked with him in the past, like Michelle Trachtenberg, who was a minor during an undisclosed event involving Whedon, as stated from her personal Instagram page. His ex-wife, Kai Cole, disclosed in her essay on "The Wrap" that Whedon had several affairs and used his claim of feminism as a personal and professional shield.

There are so many stories out there that deserve to be heard. There are some survivors that are moving on in their own way, some that are trapped by their experience due to the complex trauma and others that just break under it all. Going through any harassment or abuse is a lot for one person to take. Coming forward and sharing that information also takes a lot of bravery on the part of the survivor,

as some may not at that point of admitting it to themselves.

What we should do as a community when we hear stories like this is to be there for the survivors, be what they need, give them space to decide what to say and do. When claims are made that they deserved it because of how their clothes were, or how they were smiling at the predator, or just looking their way, it does not help these survivors in the slightest.

Believe all survivors, there are many more than you think.



Unsplash: Photo by Markus Spiske.



# "Healing is Not Linear": A NEIU K(NO)W More Panel Helping and Giving Knowledge to Survivors

By: Leslie Lozada, Campus Life Editor  
All photos provided by Annette Brandt

Throughout the month of March, there were several online and in-person campus events for Women's History Month, to highlight the powerful and talented women throughout the past and in the present. On March 28th, 2022, there was an event sponsored by NEIU's K(NO)W program titled "Women Healers," held in the south section of Alumni Hall. The panel discussed services that help students who have experienced sexual assault, dating/domestic violence, or stalking in some form.

The panelists were Lauren Miller, Legal Advocate, who was representing Howard Brown Health, Dr. LaShanda Nails, a Trauma Therapist from Resilience, a not-for-profit organization for helping sexual assault survivors, Melissa Murph, a Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner (SANE), at Swedish Hospital and Mary Hain, an Assistant State's Attorney in the Special Victims Unit at Cook County State's Attorney Office. Jennie Lasko, Assistant Director for Student Health Services, was the moderator for the panel. The event was organized by Annette Brandt, who is the Grant Project Director as well as the organizer for the K(NO)W MORE program.

There was additional information from a package provided by Swedish Hospital, given out to the audience at the panel by Brandt. It had information involving consent, power dynamics for abusive and violent behavior, as well as information about Swedish Hospital.

There were a lot of topics discussed in the two hour panel centered around sexual assault. The panelists talked about various misconceptions around sexual harassment and abuse; such as when to file a police report, with Hain saying that people should "mak[e] the [police] report as soon as you're ready to." Later, comments on the panel mentioned other options for reporting and varying degrees

of involvement from the victim, detailing that a report can be held in the system for up to two years.

Murph mentioned that if someone is at the hospital for sexual assault they can request an advocate, as well as other services during the hospital visit. Miller said, "All advocacy services are free," helping with concerns about financial assistance for going to the hospital, and other medical concerns. It was also mentioned that Illinois hospitals provide state medical vouchers for survivors, for things such as covering hospital pay up to 90 days from the start of treatment as well as going into detail on who is able to get the voucher and the time limit to access the voucher. Even survivors who reported weeks or months after the assault can still receive services.

There was also a section which addressed concerns about consent, which Murph and Hain went into detail. Murph said that "It should be an enthusiastic 'yes!'" from all parties, while Hain went into the legal definition of the word and how the second definition, which is to [give permission for something to happen] has caused some contention in the courtroom for her cases. They also discussed what the involuntary responses to assault or harassment could look like, like the freeze and fawn responses, as well as the guilt that can arise from them.

Lasko also mentioned that NEIU has various resources to help students including who provides services, reporting for Title IX, who has neurobiological training on campus and which people to reach out to disclose information about assault or harassment.

The panelists concluded with final comments ranging from being an advocate for sexual assault survivors to self care relating to disclosing information about sexual assault.

## April is Sexual Assault Awareness month.

As noted in the panel, there are several resources around campus that can help students affected by sexual harassment, violence and/or assault. NEIU's K(NO)W MORE is planning several table events, as well as other events throughout the year to give more information as well as provide resources. If there is something that NEIU students would like to disclose, they can do so through NEIU's Confidential Advisors, at the email [confidentialadvisor@neiu.edu](mailto:confidentialadvisor@neiu.edu), with Title IX at their email [titleix@neiu.edu](mailto:titleix@neiu.edu) as well as reporting any incident on their page on the NEIU site. People can even report or disclose with Student Health services as well, it can be disclosed, through their email, [health-services@neiu.edu](mailto:health-services@neiu.edu) and in person at their office in E 051.



From left to right, Jennie Lasko, Lauren Miller, Dr. LaShanda Nails, Melissa Murph, Mary Hain





# Diversity Food Fest Brings NEIU Flavors From All Around The World

By: Almudena Yebra Romanillos, Writer  
Photos provided by: Almudena Yebra Romanillos

After starting off with a table dedicated to intricate henna tattoos on Monday afternoon, Diversity Week began at NEIU, a week full of events to promote the inclusion and discovery of other cultures with events like an Origami and Snack Bar with sweets from Japan or Korea, or Hula Dance Night. But without a doubt, one of the more popular events of this week is Diversity Food Fest.

On Tuesday, March 29, student organizations sold all kinds of dishes, snacks, sweets, and drinks from around the world to raise funds for their organizations. With the promise of various types of foods, along with the affordable prices offered there, plenty of people from the NEIU community come out to the event. Not only students but also faculty and staff stopped by Diversity Food Fest to try something new and support the student organizations that largely represent and advocate for the diversity of backgrounds and interests of NEIU students.

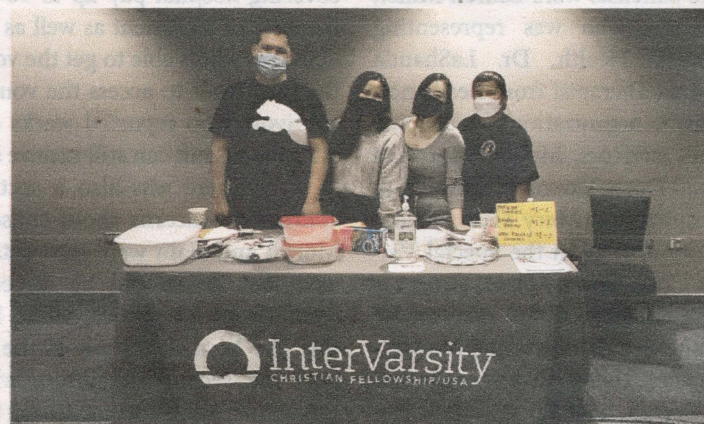
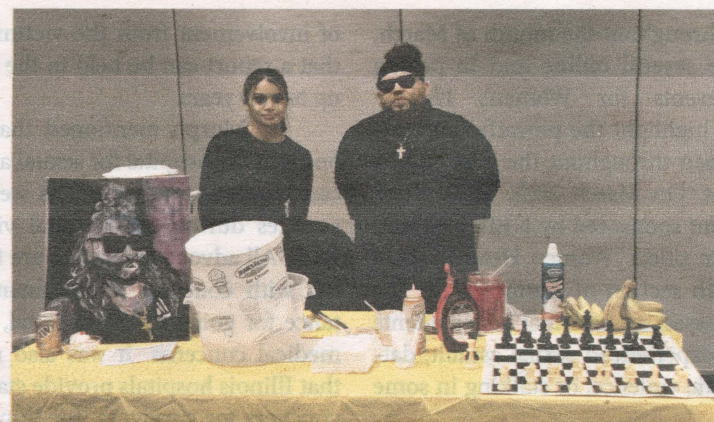
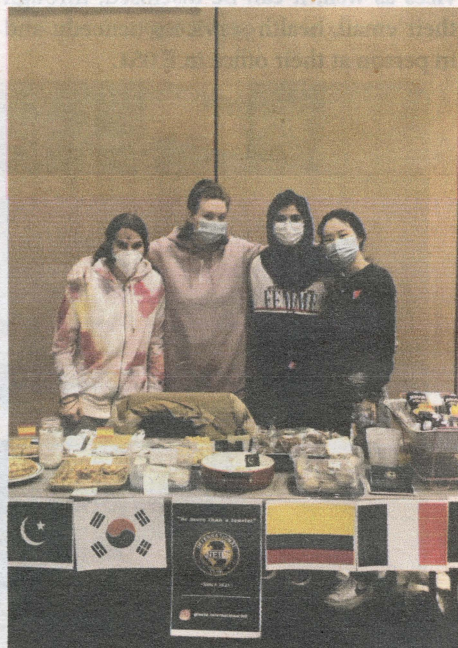
Eleven organizations participated in this new edition of Diversity Food Fest: Association for Supply Chain Management (ASCM), Asian American InterVarsity, Black Caucus, Chess Club, Delta Tau Lambda, Gamma Phi Omega, Health and P.E., NEIU International Club, Omega Delta, Sigma Lambda Gamma and Undocumented Resilient & Organized club (URO). Some of the most popular dishes were the Popusas from Gamma Phi Omega and the menu from Black Caucus with its Jerk Plate and Macaroni & Cheese.

For Chess Club and NEIU International Club, it was their first time participating in Diversity Food Fest. Chess club members went with a sweet display offering Root Beer Float, Ice Cream Sundae and horchata. Chess Club president Anthony Gunderson was ready for the occasion in a chef's uniform. As for NEIU International Club, they brought together in one table

dishes from Pakistan and France, as well as home-baked Guava and Cheese Pastelitos and Banana Mini Bundt Cakes.

Diversity Food Fest was also a great opportunity to take a little break from the daily routine, to socialize and have a good time. Although on this occasion it was not allowed to eat in the same room where the organizations were selling their products, tables set up in Alumni Hall South provided the perfect environment for a more relaxed atmosphere for conversation.

The NEIU Student Media Board was also represented at Diversity Food Fest with a table for the organizations associated such as The Independent, Seeds and Que Ondee Sola (QOS) and a table for rotating WZRD DJ's throughout the afternoon livened up the event by playing some original songs, and hits that made more than one attendee dance along.





# NEIU Alumna Comes Back to Curate Student Exhibition at Fine Arts Center Gallery

By: Ryland Pietras, Managing Editor/Arts and Life Editor

Sometimes life has a funny way of bringing you back to where you started.

Millicent Kennedy, a 2015 NEIU graduate, is the new curator of the NEIU Fine Arts Center Gallery, wherein she is currently overseeing the 2022 Annual Juried Student Exhibition.

The role of the curator is to organize programming for the NEIU student body and the wider community. That entails bringing in artists who, by exuding professionalism and different themes, can be resources to students who are interested in learning more in the Fine Arts field.

"One thing that we're definitely really interested in, with such a diverse student body, is trying to have artists where the students can see themselves in them," said Kennedy.

For that reason, Kennedy said her goal is to bring in many artists of different disciplines. That can encompass everything from painting and sculpture to ceramics and photography.

A practicing artist herself with two upcoming shows, Kennedy said that a lot of the artists that she meets will either be at shows or at their studios throughout Chicago. It is through this networking that she invites them to show at the Gallery.

While a student at NEIU, Kennedy worked as a student aid in the gallery and helped with installs.

"I learned a lot about installing work and kind of planning and exhibition and that had been helpful for me as I went to grad school and worked in an art museum there," said Kennedy.

She also showed in the 2015 Juried Student Exhibition – an exhibition that sounds a lot like what the name implies.

Kennedy elaborated, "Every year, the art and design department has a professional artist, preferably one that has shown at the space or has some kind of a professional relationship with the gallery

and invites them to look through submitted work by student artists and select what they think will be exceptional work for the juried show."

This year's juror is Kristin Abhalter Smith, who was one of the two people in the show *Anything Can Be a Dragon*, *Anything Can Be a Snake* from Jan. 10-Feb. 4, 2022, and is also the founder and director of Roman Susan, a gallery in Rogers Park.

"It is an opportunity to kind of get some exhibition history for the students," said Kennedy. "They can start making a CV that they can share after they're done with school and kind of grow their professional portfolio."

The NEIU community can witness the different displays at the Fine Arts Center Gallery through Friday April 22. Reception for the show will be held from 6-8 p.m. that evening with the awards ceremony being held at 7 p.m. Students will also receive awards for Best in Show, Best 2D and Best 3D, as well as two honorable mentions. Concurrent with the reception will be this year's Art-travaganza – a big art party showcasing different work from students throughout the art department.



Photo provided by Savannah Owens.





# THE INDEPENDENT

Vol 41 Issue 8

@neiuinddienews

## NEXT ARTIST INTERVIEW: ?

ARTIST OF THE WEEK 16 TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 15, 2022

### NEIU Artist Interview, Jackie Sanchez

Interview by Savannah Owens



What's your background and how do you think it has affected your work?

I am a Mexican-American artist who spent most of her life living in Mexico. Despite the beautiful life and culture in my country, I had to move to the U.S. in 2013. In order to describe my work I must comment on my childhood.

I was raised in a chaotic environment; my parents' alcoholism and neglect impacted my life as a child.

It wasn't until I became an adolescent and started socializing that I encountered people who were as hurt as myself. I always had an interest in human behavior and psychology.

During my time alone I would spend time observing, talking to people and putting the pieces together. As a result, I noticed a pattern in everyone's unhealthy behavior and attachment styles, our inner child was wounded

and nobody knew.

My current work seeks to further explore the theme of mental health and the impact that childhood trauma has on adulthood; a topic often ignored, but one that must be addressed with urgency.

What type of art do you create and what motivates you to make it?

I make sculptures that capture raw emotions. As a sculptor working primarily with the human figure, I find the human body a powerful agent for personal narrative.

Some people may find emotionality or intense emotions as a weakness, I truly believe that one must experience and dive deep into those sensations to become fully

aware of oneself. It is only through self-awareness that one can heal fully.

What's the purpose or goal of your work?

My ultimate goal as a sculptor is not only to bring awareness on relevant topics, but to invite my audience to a journey of self-discovery and self-healing.

Where do you find inspiration?

I find inspiration every-

where I go, but mostly through music and through conversations with people. People's body language is especially intriguing to me.

There is a lot of information in nonverbal communication, it only takes curiosity to decipher the meaning behind it.

How do you define success as an artist?

Success comes when you are at peace with what you are currently sharing with the world. If doing what you love makes you happy, that is success. There are not a lot of happy people out there.

How do you market yourself and your work?

I market myself mostly through social media. I used to be a Content Creator on YouTube so I am familiarized with the process of filming and photographing my work.

I recently launched my own website so that people can read more about my current work and take a look at some of my work in progress pictures.

If you could give one piece of advice to another artist trying to navigate their way in the artworld, what would it be?

I would say my biggest advice is to pursue your passion, but do not forget that everything in life takes discipline and commitment.

Staying motivated is hard, but envision where you want to be

Cont. to page 17

Continued from page 16

and what it is you want to achieve just fight for it.

Moreover, something else I wish someone would have told me earlier is to make connections. It is crucial to your development as an artist to meet new people.

I'll add one more thing, get yourself out there in whatever way possible, believe in you and magic happens.

What are your handles, or contact information so people can check out your work?

People can check out my latest work through my Instagram: @jackiesanchez.art  
Scan here for Jackie's Website!



TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 15, 2022 17 ARTIST OF THE WEEK

This can be you! Reminder that we're still looking for artists to complete an interview and submit some work to be featured in NEIU's Newspaper!  
If you're interested, please send an email to [pindpnews@neiu.edu](mailto:pindpnews@neiu.edu)





# NEIU Events Calendar



## April 12th - 26th

### **Tuesday, April 12**

Annual Juried Student Art Exhibition  
10:00AM – 5:00PM  
Main Campus, F. A Center Gallery

APIDA Heritage Month:  
Dismantling Hate Workshop and  
AAP(I Belong) Pop-Up Exhibit  
6:00PM-8:00PM  
Main Campus: SU 107

### **Wednesday, April 13**

Annual Juried Student Art Exhibition  
11:00AM – 4:00PM  
Main Campus, F.A Center Gallery

Blood Drive  
2:00PM-7:00PM  
El Centro

Piano Studio Showcase  
3:05PM – 4:05PM  
Main Campus, Recital Hall

### **Thursday, April 14**

Annual Juried Student Art Exhibition  
11:00AM – 4:00PM  
Main Campus, F.A Center Gallery

CCICS 4th Annual Poetry Slam  
6:00PM – 8:30PM  
CCICS, Room 212

### **Friday, April 15**

Annual Juried Student Art Exhibition  
10:00AM – 2:00PM  
Main Campus, F.A Center Gallery

Spring Dance Concert  
7:30PM – 9:00PM  
Main Campus, Auditorium

### **Saturday, April 16**

Spring Dance Concert  
7:30PM – 9:00PM  
Main Campus, Auditorium

### **Monday, April 18**

Annual Juried Student Art Exhibition  
10:00AM – 5:00PM  
Main Campus, F.A Center Gallery

Justice Studies Lecture: Access to Social  
Services in Post-Socialist Cities  
11:30AM – 12:45PM  
Main Campus, Golden Eagles Room

APIDA Heritage Month: Grief and Loss is  
Power  
2:00PM-3:00PM  
Virtual, Zoom

### **Tuesday, April 19**

Annual Juried Student Art Exhibition  
11:00AM – 4:00PM  
Main Campus, F.A Center Gallery

Commencement Resource Fair  
3:00PM-7:00pm  
Main Campus, Student Union, Alumni Hall

Ruth Page Dance: Behind the Curtain: Pink  
Nights Never End  
3:05-4:05PM  
Main Campus, Auditorium

### **Wednesday, April 20**

Annual Juried Student Art Exhibition  
10:00AM – 5:00PM Main Campus, F.A Center Gallery

Justice Studies Lecture: Migrant Children's Rights  
11:30AM – 12:30PM Main Campus, Golden Eagles Room

Brass Studios Showcase  
7:30PM – 8:30PM Main Campus: Recital Hall

Chicago Film Society Presents "The Ballad of Cable Hogue"  
7:30 – 9:30pm Main Campus, Auditorium



# NEIU Artist Interview: Adriana Rosales

Interview By Savannah Owens,  
Images Provided By Adriana Rosales

**What's your background and how do you think it has affected your work?**

I am a Mexican American that didn't grow up with much pride in Mexican culture. I had difficulties with a parent that complicated my relationship with my ethnicity and it took me a while to learn about and accept my culture. In my late teens and early twenties, I started to accept my place in the world and especially with looking like a brown woman, I wanted to be more a part of my culture. I draw a lot of my color inspiration from Mexican culture and art. Mexican art can be so playful and colorful and it's one of my favorite parts of the culture.

**What type of art do you create and what motivates you to make it?**

My motivation to make art lies in the way it acts as an outlet for letting out difficult emotions. It feels so invigorating to escape from the world for a while and turn tough life stressors into a work of art. I feel like sometimes, it's not enough to just talk about my feelings and even trauma. In a world where therapy and mental health care is hard to obtain, we are forced to find other ways to cope. I am excited to one day be a therapist and specialize in art therapy to teach others how to express emotion through art.

**What's the purpose or goal of your work?**

The purpose of my work varies; sometimes my art is playful and is meant to tell a story in my own reimagination. Most recently, my work has been a way for me to cope with life challenges and the woes of mental illness.

**Who are your biggest influences?**

Frida Kahlo, Vincent Van Gogh, Patssi Valdez, and a myriad of artists fea-

tured at the Museum of Mexican Art.

**Where do you find inspiration?**

My Mexican culture; I fell in love with the celebration of Dia de los Muertos because of the way afterlife is looked at and especially all of the bright colors involved.

**How do you define success as an artist?**

One thing I find to be very important to my own artistic journey is to stay true to why I started creating art in the first place. I think it's easy to fall into capitalist ventures and lose your motivation as a creator.

**How do you market yourself and your work?**

I am in the works of getting an online shop up and featuring prints. Right now, I use Instagram as a platform to display my art. I would really like to do something with plant pots and am working on a way to market those. Ultimately, I don't think I am in a space currently to devote a lot of my time to selling my artwork; and I am okay with that! I do like to take commissions, though.

**What do you believe is the role of an artist in society?**

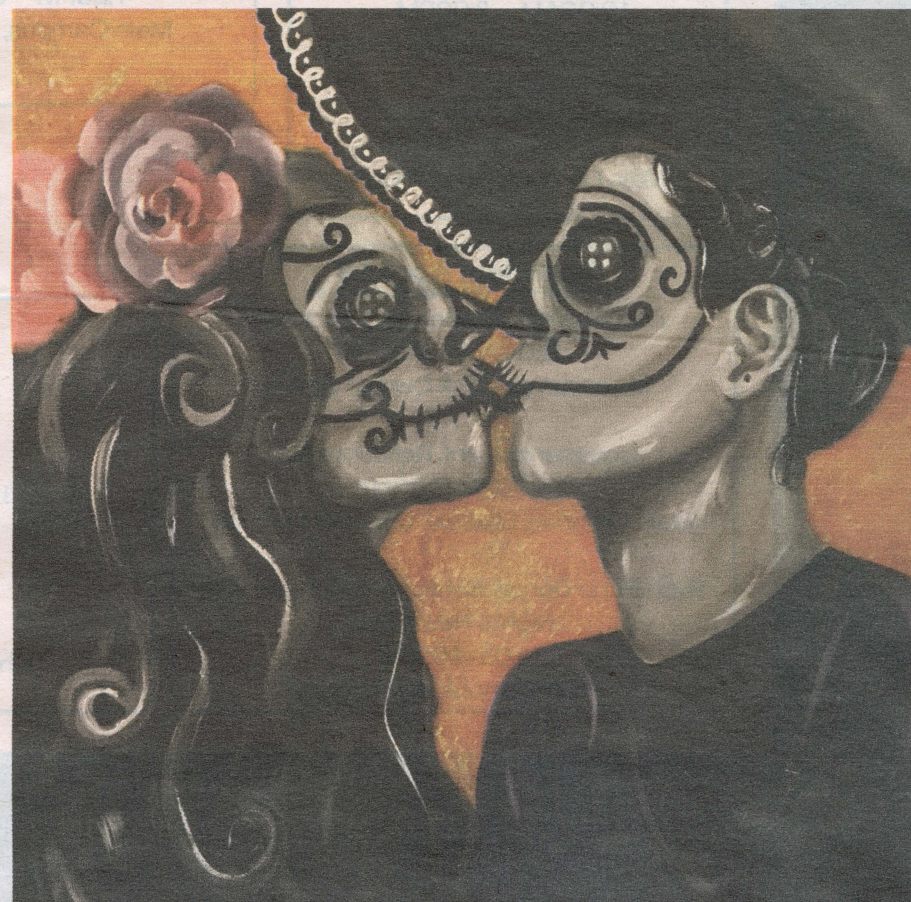
I love knowing that every artist has a different response to this question and has their own reasons as to why they create artwork. My personal belief is that artists play a role of evoking emotion in people through visuals. That emotion does not even necessarily have to be deep but an emotion, nonetheless.

**If you could give one piece of advice to another artist trying to navigate their way in the artworld, what would it be?**

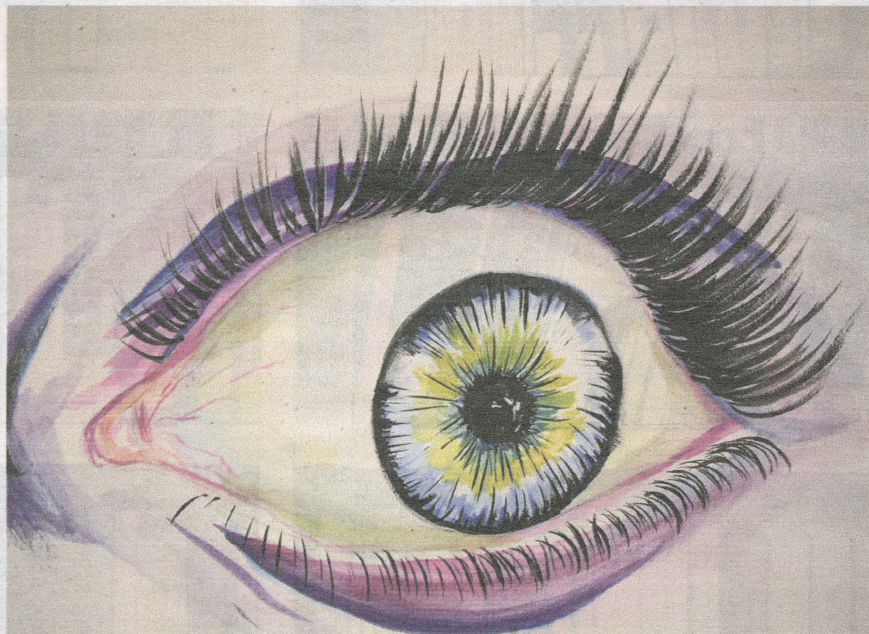
Art is whatever you want it to be; that's the point. It's okay to have ruts and mediums that you're not good at, but keep creating because it's where growth happens.

**What are your handles, or contact information so people can check out your work?**

My handle on Instagram is @growingoptimist. Look out for some fun pieces that I am soon to finish!









# The Library Book Reviewed

By: Angie Ybarra, Writer

I will admit that books and their titles are my weakness, then the cover, and finally, word of mouth about how good a book will sometimes get me. I love books and have since a young age. I fell in love with books a long time ago. My father was an avid reader, whatever he could get his hands on is what he read and he taught me to have not only a love of reading but to respect books too. I colored with Harold, was wild with Max, sat on a New York City fire escape with Nelly, traveled the world with Lestat, the most beautiful vampire and so many other lives lived and adventures taken because of books I have read.

The cover of "The Library Book" is a stark contrast to what I usually read. The jacket is ordinary, and the title is perhaps a bit, well, ordinary. I am not sure why I picked this book or rather why it picked me but it did. I started to read it and could not put it down. I did not even mind the books listed by the Dewey Decimal System and just what they meant to the story. The stroll down memory lane caused by the author, Susan Orlean was able to take me back to the day I got my first library card.

I was transported to my own childhood library and almost able to recall the scent of old books and how exciting it was to be in this wondrous place that let us borrow books.

Orlean takes the reader on a journey, she tells of her love for books, her visits to libraries with her mom, trips she takes with her son nowadays, and bits of world news that seemed to eclipse this major true-life mystery: Who started the fire in the library? I can remember that I myself was a junior in an all-girls Catholic high school here on the Northwest side of Chicago, and the world watched Sally Ride die in the explosion of the Challenger rocket, and let's not forget the Chernobyl accident that we all thought would end the world as we knew it.

The events flashed before us and seemed to play out in slow motion but somewhere buried beneath the news of the

Challenger explosion and the meltdown at Chernobyl there was a fire on April 29, 1986, that destroyed the Central Library of Los Angeles, California. The fire claimed 400,000 books and another 700,000 were damaged.

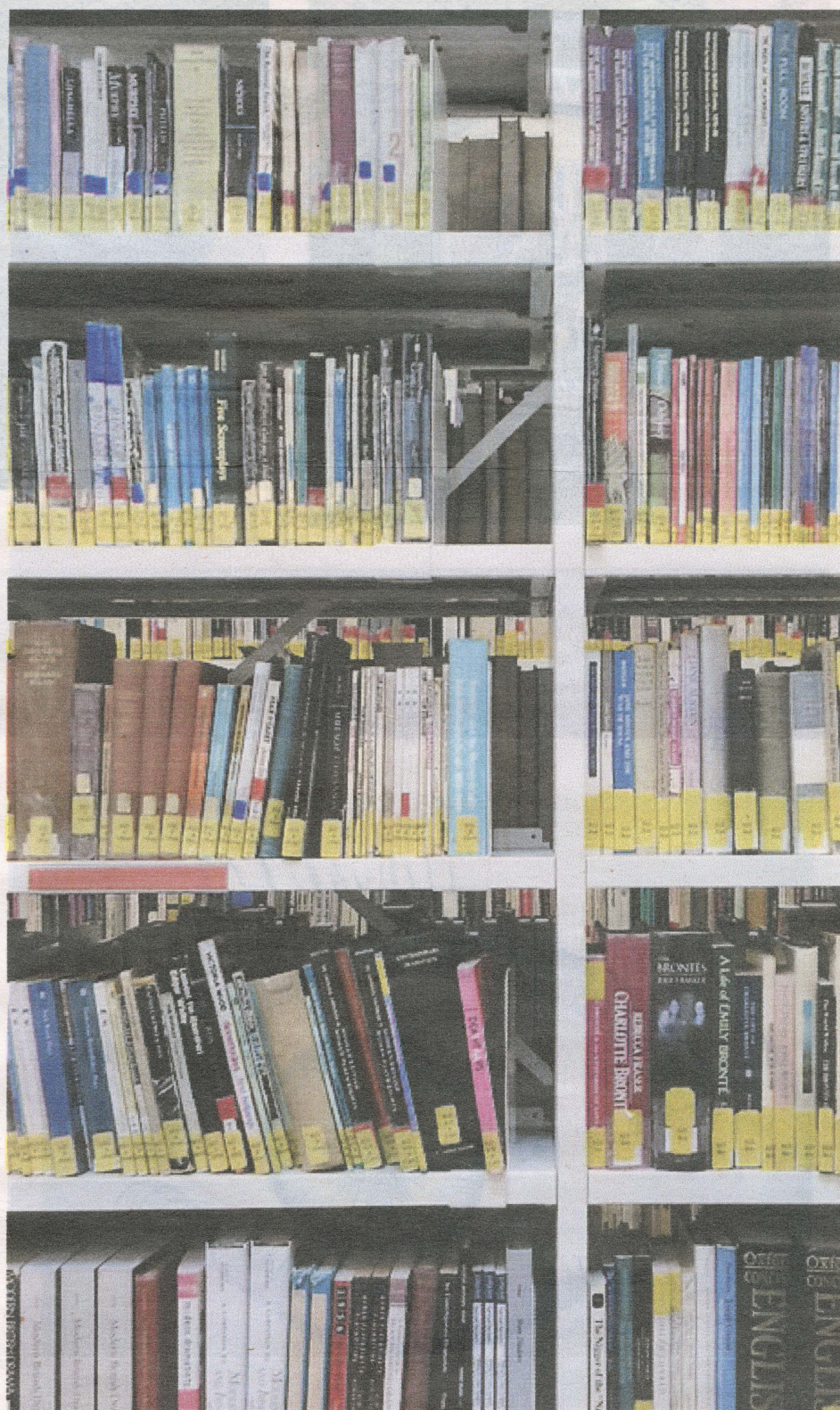
People literally watched, smoke first, and then all at once a raging inferno. The building's design was the perfect storm, so to say, and just what caused such a massive loss for the library.

The library reopened months later and the "Save the Books" charity was able to raise funds for the library. Sadly, insurance covered the building but not the books. If you are a book lover it is hard to think of highlighting in a book, dog-eared a page of the said book so as not to forget your place, or worse yet folding a book in half cracking the spine but the thought of lighting a book on fire is even that more troublesome. That April day hundreds of people came together to try and save what they could, comfort each other, and to provide hope like a phoenix rising from the ashes, the library would be back.

If you love a heartfelt walk down memory lane, true crime and biographies then this book is for you. I was not able to stop reading this book, it is a page-turner. Pick up a copy and enjoy the behind scenes of a library, the series of unfortunate events, and a person's love for books as it all seems to be brilliantly captured in Orlean's book. I give the book four book-marks.



"Library Bookshelf" by tweezy is marked with CC BY 2.0.





# Mila Kunis and Ashton Kutcher Surpass \$3 Million Refugee Campaign Goal for Ukraine

By: Enrique Cerros, Writer

Celebrity couple Mila Kunis and Ashton Kutcher launched a GoFundMe fundraiser last month to support Ukrainian refugees. The couple promised to match \$3 million in donations to help refugees from Ukraine and managed to surpass their goal by earning more than \$30 million with the help of their followers.

In a video posted to Kutcher's Instagram and Twitter accounts, Kunis, who was born in Ukraine and immigrated to the United States when she was just 7 years old, expressed her grief over Russia's war in Ukraine.

"I have always considered myself a proud American. I love everything this country has done for me and my family," said Kunis. "But today more than ever I am so proud to be Ukrainian. The events that have unfolded in Ukraine are devastating; there is no place in this world for this unwarranted attack on humanity." It is great to see Kunis honor her Ukrainian heritage and use her platform to speak up about what is happening in the world.

"While we are witnessing the bravery of the country she was born into, we are also witnessing the needs of those who have chosen safety," Kutcher said in the video.

Kunis and Kutcher, who have been married since 2015 and starred on the sitcom "That '70s Show" together, said the GoFundMe donations will go to Flexport, which is organizing shipments of relief supplies to refugee sites in Poland, Romania, Hungary, Slovakia and Moldova. Additionally, funds will go to Airbnb, which provides free short-term accommodation to refugees fleeing Ukraine.

"We are overwhelmed with gratitude for your support. [Two] weeks ago, we asked you to join us and more than 65,000 of you stepped up and donated what you could. Now, with your help we have reached our \$30 million goal," said Kutcher in a tweet.

Kunis continued to show support

for Ukraine at the 2022 Academy Awards ceremony, where she participated as a presenter.

"Recent global events have left many of us feeling gutted," the actress said in reference to Russia's war against Ukraine. Kunis said she is moved by people's resilience and is in awe of "those who find strength" amid the darkness.

Following Kunis's speech, a message informing viewers to support Ukraine appeared on the screen. It said, "While film is an important avenue for us to express our humanity in times of conflict, the reality is millions of families in Ukraine need food, medical care, clean water, and emergency services. Resources are scarce, and we — collectively as a global community — can do more."

Several celebrities also made their voice heard by wearing blue ribbons that sported the hashtag #WithRefugees to represent Ukraine at the event.

You can donate to Kunis's and Kutcher's GoFundMe fundraiser by visiting:

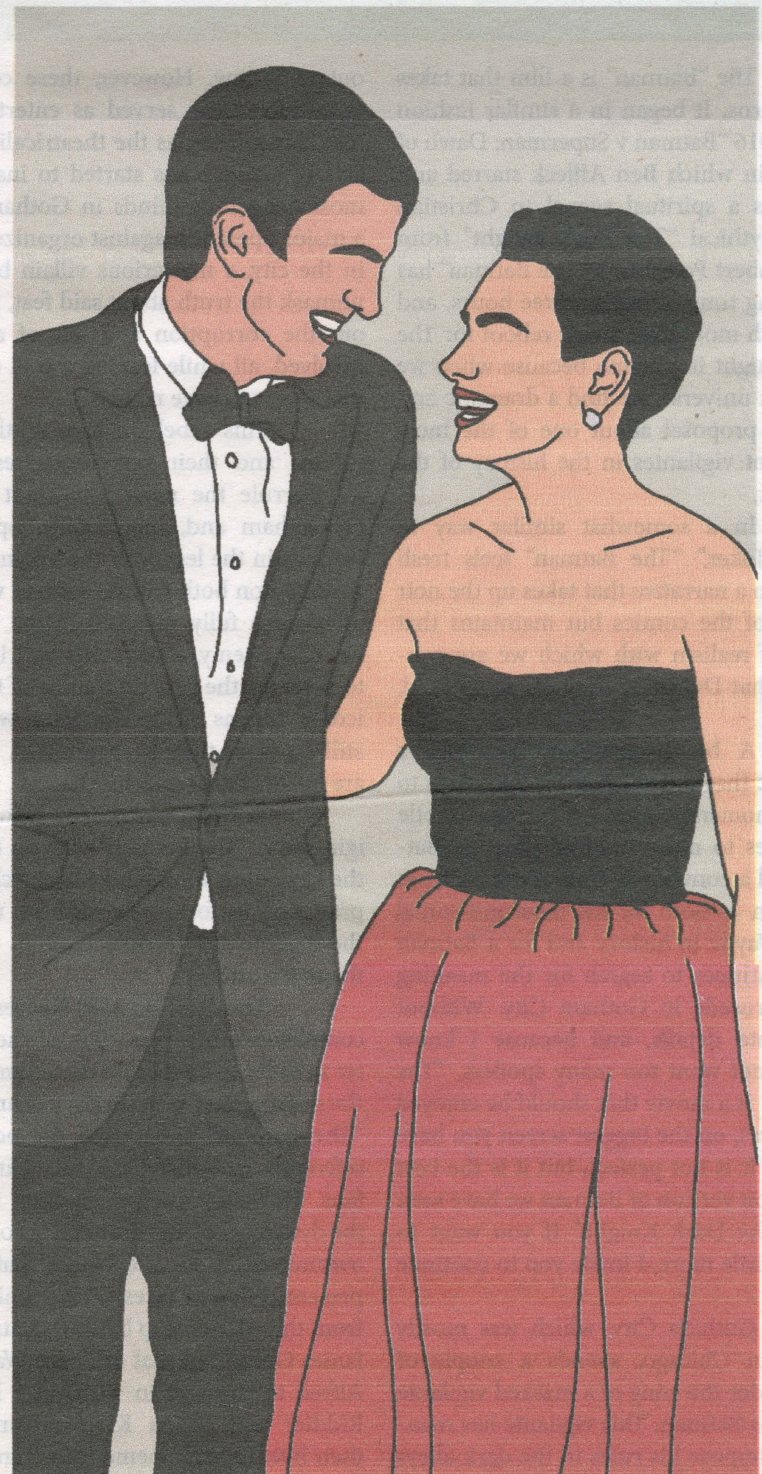


Illustration by Savannah Owens.



# Robert Pattinson Gives Us Everything We Needed in "The Batman" (Review)

By: Enrique Cerros, Writer

The "Batman" is a film that takes many turns. It began in a similar fashion to the 2016 "Batman v Superman: Dawn of Justice" in which Ben Affleck starred and ended as a spiritual sequel to Christian Bale's mythical "The Dark Knight" from 2008. Robert Pattinson's "The Batman" has a running time of nearly three hours, and it is much more than a new reboot for The Dark Knight in cinema because when we enter his universe, we find a dramatic and exciting proposal about one of the most important vigilantes in the history of the ninth art.

In a somewhat similar way to 2019's "Joker," "The Batman" feels fresh thanks to a narrative that takes up the noir fantasy of the comics but maintains that touch of realism with which we are convinced that DC is far superior to its rival, Marvel.

A bit complacent, but with a structure that allows all of its characters to have a moment to shine, it includes subtle references to more than 80 years of Batman and a convincing interpretation from Pattinson — both for the most millennial Bruce Wayne in history and for a Batman who continues to search for the meaning of his crusade in Gotham City. Without going into details, and because I know you do not want too many spoilers, "The Batman" is a movie that should be enjoyed in theaters, on the biggest screen you have at hand. It is not perfect, but it is the best live-action version of Batman we have seen since "The Dark Knight." If you want to know a little more, I invite you to continue reading.

Gotham City, which was mostly filmed in Chicago, spends a couple of years under the wing of a masked vigilante known as Batman. This vigilante has managed to impose his rules in the dark alleys of the city, so once his signal shines in the sky, criminals think twice before coming

out of hiding. However, these couple of years have only served as entertainment for the vigilante, as the theatricality in his acts of revenge has started to inspire the most dangerous minds in Gotham. After a major operation against organized crime in the city, a mysterious villain begins to unmask the truth about said feat, pointing out the corruption and lies of all those involved, all while leaving a trail of blood that seems to have no end.

This rebellion against the institutions and their representatives begins to overrule the most important citizens of Gotham and, incidentally, opens old wounds in the legacy of the Wayne family. Attacked on both fronts, Batman will have to become fully involved in the mind of his new enemy, a path that will lead him to meet for the first time some of the most iconic villains of the character, which are still far from their best moment, but they are no less dangerous for that.

Without necessarily being an origin story, "The Batman" puts on the table the key points to understand the character, preparing us for a new saga but updating the hero to the terrible modern times of the real world.

The director, Matt Reeves, almost completely omits the origin of the character in order to fully build the action, he lists the great gallery of secondary characters of "The Batman" and leaves the occasional reference to satisfy the most inveterate fans. However, once everything is ready, the dynamic of "The Batman" is completely overturned in small episodes that seek to present different faces of this universe — from the relationship between Batman and James Gordon to that of Bruce Wayne and Alfred to the way in which the Penguin, Riddler and Selina Kyle/Catwoman live their lives in this cinematic universe. There are even times when we can understand how the Gotham police deal with the vigilante.

This rhythm between characters and settings allows the film to always have something to draw us in, at first with a brief introduction of those involved, and later with the intrigue that the plot itself promotes through the Riddler's puzzles and his different victims.

Without the need for obvious references or simple plots, Matt Reeves executes "The Batman" as if we were in the video game, "Arkham Knight" from 2015 where the only thing that matters are the main missions. There is the Riddler waiting for us at the end of the story, but first, we need to find out what is going on at the Penguin's club, help Catwoman on a robbery and solve a crime with James Gordon.

All these missions have an important weight in the development of the protagonist, who until now has remained on a personal revenge crusade, and not so much as a hero for the people. As Batman, Pattinson manages to keep up with his predecessors, with great action sequences, good fight choreography and a stoic presence in the thick of things but also with a lack of experience that can make the man under the suit explode. On the other hand, this millennial Bruce Wayne can generate mixed opinions, since despite his training and detective skills, he is still a scared child who never found peace after the death of his parents.

Matt Reeves keeps Bruce Wayne out of the action for much of the film, as clearly the development of the plot is linked to the growth of Batman and how his presence has caused a great impact in Gotham. When Wayne enters the scene, we see the billionaire as never before: lost, lonely, depressed, tired and far from being a playboy trying to confuse the masses. This version of Bruce Wayne reveals the real element of the character, with a total disinterest in material things and a single objective: revenge. Who does he want

revenge on? At this moment, anyone who stands in front of him.

To give the character greater dimension, Pattinson not only bets on the side of the infallible vigilante to whom every hit goes well, but also on the side of the detective. Without much flaunting of his skills and technology, this Batman stands in the middle of a crime scene and sees clearly what everyone else has missed. Between clues and deductions, Pattinson presents a face that we have rarely seen portrayed with such quality in previous films. Therefore, it is impossible not to give credit to the conception of his villain, who puts everything on his side so that the hero can show off.

Unlike previous Batman films, this new Batman seems to be trying something different. Beyond being an all-powerful character, able to outrun anything with a grappling hook and a modified car, Matt Reeves points to a more marked development in Bruce Wayne than in "The Dark Knight." Without going into details, it is Wayne himself who points out the path of his quest and the focus of his next actions.

There are things that are glimpsed within the future of "The Batman," but it is the way in which the protagonist can present a better version of himself, far from the gadgets and impossible plans, that excites the most after this impressive debut. Pattinson exceeded expectations and showed us a different side of Batman, in a good way. We see him angry, regretful, romantic and very emo, all while being heroic and saving Gotham.



# FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022 Draw Results

## in Less Competitive Groups

This year's competition is marked by the absences of Italy, Nigeria and Chile national teams.

By: Erwin Lopez Rada, News and Sports Editor

Beginning at the 1970 Mexico FIFA World Cup, there has always been a "group of the death" in the competition. This is a group, denominated as such by specialists and journalists, that has many teams that are favored to win spots in the playoffs. These groups usually play the most dramatic games with one of the favorites out of competition as an usual outcome.

However, last week's group draw in Doha — the capital of Qatar — brought relief to the heavyweights in the race to win the FIFA World Cup in 2022. There are exactly two clear favorites to advance to the playoff rounds in each of the eight groups.

This happened partly because of the friendly draw rules for the best seeded national teams but also because of the absence of many teams that usually compete with the top teams in FIFA ranking for a playoff spot. By tournament rules, the best two teams out of four make it to the playoffs; the rest are sent home.

The chart above shows which teams are the best seeded in the FIFA/Coca-Cola World Ranking and in what group they were placed. As of today, only two groups look competitive. Group E includes world champions Spain (7) and Germany (11), but they are joined by Japan (23) — not as strong lately — and the winner of the series between New Zealand (101) and Costa Rica (31). Costa Rica surprised the world of soccer by taking out powerhouses Italy and England in the group stage at the FIFA World Cup held in Brazil in 2014.

Group H might be the most complicated to forecast since it includes one former world champion and multiple-time protagonist Uruguay, a favorite to advance to playoffs, but this group also has Cristiano Ronaldo's Portugal. The Portuguese superstar wants to retire with a big win after finally winning the Euro Cup, but Ghana, who usually advances to playoffs and has a powerful team with many players in the best European leagues, will oppose CR7's — Ronaldo's nickname in English — intentions.

The United States (15) and Mexico (9) will play in groups B and C respectively. The Americans could face a relatively easy "British" group where the strongest team is the 1966 champions and European powerhouse England, followed by Iran. Scotland and Wales are defining the other spot in the next few months if Ukraine is not able to assemble a team due to the war.

The Americans are expected to have a breakthrough participation in this World Cup since they are organizing the 2026 tournament. The American team will be the youngest in the competition with a median age of 23.7 years old, and it also has many players in the best European leagues.

The Mexicans will face an uphill battle to advance to the playoffs. Irregular presentations in the Confederation of North, Central America and Caribbean Association Football qualifiers relegated them to second place after Canada (38), and the team had lost most of its games against teams that are similar to them in the FIFA/Coca-Cola Rankings.

They should get a win against Saudi Arabia (39) but then will have complicated matches against superstar Robert Lewandowski's Poland (22), that qualified in a difficult European group, and Argentina, that comes into the competition uplifted by its huge Copa America victory against Brazil in the finals and wants the best player in the world, Leo Messi, to bring the trophy home in his last chance to

do it.

The most noted absence in the draw was Italy (6). The two-time world champions lost their chances to move on to Qatar 2022 when North Macedonian (67) Aleksandar Trajkovsky scored a well-placed long shot goal at the 92 minute mark that decided an incredible second round of qualification game.

The Azzurri's forward Domenico Berardi became the match villain after missing at least three clear chances in front of the goal before the Balkanics scored in the last seconds of the match.

Colombia (17) and Chile (28), two of the best-ranked South American national teams, will also watch the World Cup on the TV. Colombia had an irregular qualifier play

— and changes of coaches. Chile's national team, one of the power houses of Latin American soccer, is going through a generational transition that did not allow for the team to accrue enough points in the elimination rounds.

Nigeria (30), one of the most consistent teams in Africa, and an usual upsetter of favorites, lost its ticket to Qatar 2022 after goalkeeper Francis Uzoho failed to dominate a frontal, easy shot from Ghanaian (60) midfielder Thomas Partey and gave away a goal that trashed Nigerians' hopes to secure the ticket at home.

The Qatar 2022 FIFA World Cup will start in Doha, Qatar on November 21, 2022 when Senegal (20) plays the Netherlands (10).

A	B	C	D
QATAR	ENGLAND	ARGENTINA	FRANCE
ECUADOR	IRAN	SAUDI ARABIA	UAE/AUS v PER
SENEGAL	USA	MEXICO	DENMARK
NETHERLANDS	SCO/WAL/UKR	POLAND	TUNISIA
E	F	G	H
SPAIN	BELGIUM	BRAZIL	PORTUGAL
NZ v CR	CANADA	SERBIA	GHANA
GERMANY	MORROCO	SWITZERLAND	URUGUAY
JAPAN	CROATIA	CAMEROON	SOUTH KOREA

FAVORITES TO ADVANCE TO PLAYOFFS  
WILL LEAVE THE TOURNAMENT  
AFTER GROUP STAGE

FIFA WORLD CUP QATAR 2022  
GROUP STAGE

Groups for Qatar 2022 chart by Erwin Lopez Rada/The Independent.



# Chicago Fire Tops MLS Defense Rankings, In a Dreamed Start of Season

Ezra Hendrickson's team had only allowed two goals in six games this season.

By: Erwin Lopez Rada, News and Sports Editor

Chicago Fire FC and FC Dallas played a scoreless game last week that could have been just another bleak performance by a team in which not a lot of soccer people in the Second City believe in.

But at the beginning of the 2022 MLS season, the story is different. The draw against FC Dallas was the fourth game in which the team kept its clean sheet and now sits eighth in the MLS power rankings and fourth in the Eastern Conference.

The Fire holds this position for the first time since 2009 because the team performed well in all aspects of the game in the first month of the campaign. They scored 5 goals on 17 shots on target in 5 games.

The offensive improvements might be one of the benefits of incorporating Switzerland's international player Xherdan Shaqiri to "La Maquina Roja" roster. Shaqiri turned the Fire into a vertical team, with his prodigious ability to assist his teammates and his determination to try the goal. He participated in four of the five Fire goals.

But the big change has been in the defense, an area in which the team dominates the MLS. Coach Ezra Hendrickson confirmed the trust that assistant coach Frank Koplas deposited during his temporary tenure at the end of last season on Homegrown goalkeeper Gabriel Slonina. The 18-year-old rookie stood up to the challenge.

"Gaga," as Slonina is known by his teammates and fans, had saved his team from debacle several times, including in the last game when he stopped a low shot by Dallas FC's Nanu at the 88' minute.

The team has been brave in defense in its first four games, an attitude that Chicago's

back zone lacked when Costan Rican defender Francisco Calvo was its leader. The Central American veteran led a defense that tied fifth in goals received with 54 in the 2021 season.

Hendrickson made defender Wyatt Omsberg and Homegrown player Mauricio Pineda starters, both players performed well in the few games they had in the Raphael Wicky era.

They share the defense with German center back, and Chicago Fire's captain, Rafael Czichos, who motivated his teammates by proclaiming that "Nobody wins here [In Soldier Field] but us," in the circle formed by the squad before the game against Sporting Kansas City. Czichos, who had Bundesliga — the German soccer top flight — experience with the Augsburg FC, had saved his team on the line of goal several times and had kept the defensive line motivated to hold the clean sheet until the final whistle.

Omsberg said to the Chicago Fire press about Czichos, "Yeah, I feel really comfortable next to him. I feel like we communicate really well together. We kind of understand each other and work well with one another. That's been great for both of us and yeah, three clean sheets is an awesome start but again it's just a start so we'll have to keep going."

Czichos and Shaqiri absences were felt this Saturday, April 9, when Chicago conceded its first match of the season to Orlando City SC. Forward Kara found the end of the net with a header after a set piece dislodged Chicago defense on the 59 minute mark. Orlando City SC's Exploria Stadium is a venue where the Fire had been defeated soundly the last couple of seasons, and 2022 was not an exception.

"La Maquina Roja" comes back to Soldier Field on April 16 when they host

L.A. Galaxy and its Mexican superstar Javier "Chicharito" Hernández who just scored a goal in their victory against L.A FC 2-1 at "El Tráfico" derby.



Fans responded to the team recent performances providing support, even in the middle of injury. Photo: Erwin Lopez/ The Independent.



Chicago Fire added offensive power to the squad. Here the team celebrates their victory against Inter the Miami last summer at Soldier Field. Photo: Erwin Lopez Rada/ The Independent.



# SUDOKU

Sudoku is a puzzle game that begins with a grid in which some of the numbers are already in place, depending on the game difficulty level.

A completed puzzle is one where each number from 1 to 9 appears only once in each of the rows, columns and blocks.

Study the grid to find the numbers that might fit into each cell.

Solution will be posted in the next issue. All the best!

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





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