

Secretary of State candidate highlights students’ role in Kansas elections during town hall

Jennifer Day discusses voter education, civic participation during Student Union event.

ALEX LANTERMAN
staff writer

State elections affect everything from university funding to health-care costs, Jennifer Day, Democratic Kansas Secretary of State candidate, said during a town hall Tuesday evening at Forum Hall in the Student Union.

Day, a former state represen-

tative, spoke at the first event of a 2026 candidate town hall series. Indivisible MHK — a pro-democracy grassroots progressive organization founded in Manhattan — and the Manhattan branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People

sponsored the event along with K-State Young Democrats.

While federal races often dominate political conversation, Day said state and local decisions frequently have a more direct impact on students and young voters.

“Legislators are deciding a lot

about what’s happening with your funding for your facility,” Day said. “That’s happening for KU, K-State, Washburn, all of the state schools.”

Day said students are often unaware of how much the state government influences their daily lives.

SEE DAY ON A2 »



Photo by Henry Pfannestiel | COLLEGIAN MEDIA GROUP

A closer look at the sign posted under the Flock camera near South Seth Child Road. The sign states that Flock cameras are “warrantless,” “AI powered” and contribute to “mass surveillance.” The sign provides a QR code to DeFlock.org where people can learn more about Flock cameras and locate ones in their area. This is one of 11 Flock cameras that the Riley County Police Department operates in Manhattan.

‘Our community is a lot safer because of this technology’

RCPD officials say AI-powered Flock cameras are beneficial amid privacy concerns.

DECLAN PHIPPS
managing editor

Perched high over roads and heavy-traffic areas across the nation, Flock cameras have been the subject of relentless backlash as concerns about privacy violations and law enforcement misuse have mounted.

The black, commonly solar-powered cameras use artificial intelligence to read and recognize license plates and vehicles. There are 118,000 set up nationwide and 3,300 in the tri-state area, according to KSN.

In Manhattan, the Riley County Police Department operates 11 Flock cameras, with 10 on major roads on the outskirts of the city and one at the

intersection of Moro Street and North 12th Street in Aggieville. Most were installed in 2023, but recently, local community members have expressed disapproval.

DeFlock Riley County is a community group that formed in July over concerns about government overreach through systems like Manhattan’s Flock cameras.

“They’re creating a surveillance state,” Al Terwelp, organizer of DeFlock Riley County, said. “A lot of people, including myself, don’t want this, and we feel like we have no choice but to take action and become advocates on this because there’s a lot at stake. Not only are the rights of our privacy for ourselves as individuals, but also for our families, friends, children, grandchildren.”

However, Major Brad Jager, who oversees RCPD’s investigations division, said Manhattan’s Flock cameras are connected to an internal criminal database and only alert the department if the cameras’ AI software captures a license plate in that database. He said the database includes vehicles registered to individuals with an active warrant, individuals connected to an active investigation or a missing person, but the cameras themselves don’t detect who the vehicle belongs to.

“It doesn’t read the registration [and] say that this is the individual’s car,” Jager said. “I think there’s a lot of misunderstanding there. It doesn’t pick up on individuals in the vehicle in

regards to facial recognition or stuff like that.”

Instead, Jager said RCPD officers must manually compare a camera’s alert to their registration database to find out who owns the vehicle.

“We physically verify it because there are times where it’s not accurate,” Jager said. “Because one, it’s the wrong state, or maybe it read the character wrong. So we do verification. It’s a tip ... It’s something that ... tells us where to go, and then we have to verify before we have any intervention in it.”

On top of human verification, Jager said RCPD only allows Flock camera-trained officers and communications personnel to access them.

SEE FLOCK ON A2 »



Photo by Kasha Kemnitz
COLLEGIAN MEDIA GROUP

Junior **Ven Vilorio** and sophomore **Sareah Rason** who play Betti and Benny Randle in “I Wanna F*ck Like Romeo and Juliet” embrace at the end of a scene.

‘We’re still here’

Theatre Program presents first production of semester.

COLIN JARCHOW
staff writer

Coming up next week at Mark A. Chapman Theatre in Nichols Hall is a student production of Andrew Rincón’s “I Wanna F*ck Like Romeo and Juliet.” The show follows an LGBTQ+ love story, with the lead roles remarking that they want to love like Romeo and Juliet.

Dominic Moore, senior studying theater and assistant director, said that the production aims to give a love story of similar standing to Romeo and Juliet.

“The show is a great queer love story,” Moore said. “They want to love like Romeo and Juliet did because we recognize that as one of those great love stories. We’re taking that and giving you another great love story.”

Gerianne Meals, senior with a dual major in theatre and English who is playing the role of Cupid, said there is urgency in giving a voice to marginalized communities in need of representation, which the production strives to provide.

“Now more than ever is when we need art that speaks out like this,” Meals said. “It’s important for people to know that they’re not alone and be able to see themselves reflected in the art they’re consuming.”

Veah Castillo, junior studying secondary education and playing the role of Alejandro Diaz, also said the show provides an opportunity to bring light to the LGBTQ+ community.

SEE THEATRE ON A2 »

Starting conversations | Thrive raises awareness about resources during Suicide Prevention Month

RICA BLUML
staff writer

On K-State’s campus, a green bandana is more than a fashionable accessory. It is a sign of solidarity, understanding and connection between students.

The Green Bandana Project is just one of many ways mental health awareness is promoted on campus. Thrive, a student well-being organization, leads the project at K-State and aims to destigmatize mental health on campus.

“The Green Bandana Project is a student-led suicide awareness pro-

gram,” Nadiya Al-Murrani, senior in biology education and president of Thrive, said. “Its purpose is to empower students to seek help and talk about mental illnesses.”

September was christened Suicide Prevention Awareness Month in 2008, and since then it has served as a reminder to make mental health a topic of conversation in everyday life. Thrive is one of many organizations across the K-State campus that aim to ensure silence is never an option.

“Thrive is an organization focused on peer-to-peer mental

health advocacy and support,” Al-Murrani said. “Hearing from your peers is often more meaningful than hearing from a professor or advisor, so we are determined to make that happen.”

Students who partake in the Green Bandana Project go through a training session where they learn the best ways to support people who are struggling with their mental health. The training also includes strategies on how to have productive conversations and guide fellow students to helpful resources.

SEE HEALTH ON A3 »



Graphic by Juli Tanksley | COLLEGIAN MEDIA GROUP



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DAY

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“Our state-level government and our municipal government are impacting our day-to-day lives,” Day said. “From the roads that we drive on to the schools that we go to, my health care costs have changed a lot over the last few years. That’s due to a lot of what’s happening in our legislature.”

The event was the first in a town hall series designed to connect Manhattan voters and K-State students directly with candidates on the ballot ahead of the 2026 midterm elections, according to the Indivisible MHK website.

Rep. Sydney Carlin, D-Manhattan, whose 66th district includes all of campus and much of the city,

said younger voters should educate themselves on candidates before casting their ballot.

“I think [students not following politics] is normal, but we need to change that,” Carlin said. “It’s really dangerous to vote if you don’t have any idea who you’re going to vote for when you walk in the door. If you don’t vote, you have no voice in the election.”

Amber Starling, board member of Indivisible MHK, said many college students underestimate the influence they can have at the ballot box.

“While I was in college, I didn’t realize how much political power I had, so I never tried to use it,” Starling said. “Now I look at State House District 66 and see that 49% of eligible voters in that district are college-aged, and that voter turnout is only

about 20%. K-State students could run that district and demand whatever they wanted from that elected official.”

Philip Nel, board member of Indivisible MHK and K-State university distinguished professor, said organizers wanted to make state politics more accessible to students by bringing candidates directly to campus. Nel also said hearing directly from candidates helps voters make more informed decisions at the polls.

“People should be able to see the difference between the candidates they’re voting for,” Nel said. “The candidates work for you, not the other way around. This is a chance for you to hire those people, or to fire people who you do not like currently doing the job.”

Organizers also invited Pat

Proctor, Republican secretary of state candidate, to speak at the event, but he declined.

Much of Day’s discussion focused on voter education and helping college students understand the election process. She encouraged students to make a plan before Election Day and stressed that K-State students can either vote in their hometown (if accessible) or update their registration to vote in Riley County. Voter registration in Kansas closes Oct. 13, early voting begins Oct. 14 and citizens who are registered to vote can request mail-in ballots any time before Election Day on Nov. 3.

“Your vote matters,” Day said. “Get involved, and take your friends with you.”

Students will have another opportunity to hear directly from a candidate when the 2026



Photo by Kasha Kemnitz COLLEGIAN MEDIA GROUP
Secretary of State candidate, **Jennifer Day** poses for a picture after speaking to K-State students on Sept. 15.

Town Hall series continues at 7 p.m. on Tuesday, Sept. 22, at Forum Hall in the K-State Student Union. The event will feature Democratic congressional candidate Lauren Reinhold.

FLOCK

« CONTINUED FROM A1

Additionally, officers must go through the department’s intelligence agency to enter someone into an internal database, and there are strict parameters for database searches, which Jager said undergo multiple layers of audits throughout the year.

“Four of those audits are conducted by our investigations lieutenant,” Jager said. “So somebody outside of the realm of utilizing that system audits our searches ... and makes sure that when somebody searched it or queried it, that it met the parameters. Then there’s two additional [audits]. ... Our Internal Affairs Office will do one announced and one unannounced.”

RCPD can also use Flock’s own database to check if a vehicle of interest has recently passed under a Manhattan camera. The photos, however, only stay in Flock’s database for seven days before being wiped.

Terwelp said his main concerns in the future of Flock cameras in Manhattan, claiming that a lack of funding is the only factor keeping RCPD from installing more cameras. He referenced the minutes from the Riley County Commission meeting on December 15, 2025, which indicate that RCPD intended to apply for

a million-dollar grant to expand surveillance technology. However, Terwelp said he filed a records request and was told RCPD had no records related to the grant.

Jager said he would like to see the department install more Flock cameras in Manhattan, but denied that RCPD applied for a grant.

“I think you can see that, one, there’s evidence that it’s extremely beneficial for us, that it does solve crimes that would not have been solved,” Jager said. “Would I like to see us increase those? Yeah, I think it would be beneficial. But we have to do it responsibly, and we have to have the acceptance of the community to do so.”

Sgt. Michael Dunn, supervisor of RCPD’s intelligence unit, trains officers on Flock camera usage and frequently works with the department and Flock’s databases. He said Flock technology has successfully assisted over 250 cases since the cameras’ installation in 2023.

“We’ve used it for a wide range of successes,” Dunn said. “People with felony warrants for their arrest. We’ve used it to solve robberies. It’s assisted in a homicide case.

There’s been a case where there was a missing juvenile out of Missouri. It led to officers being able to make contact with that car and recover the missing juvenile. We’ve used it to solve rape cases. We’ve used it to make arrests on violation of court orders and stalking cases

and even sexual batteries.”

Terwelp, however, said DeFlock Riley County believes the majority of those crimes could have been solved without Flock cameras.

“We [DeFlock Riley County] are absolutely convinced that there is no need for this, especially in Riley County,” Terwelp said. “The large majority of all those crimes supposedly solved by the Flock cameras ... those would have been solved through Riley County Police Department detective work. And so we can’t give the surveillance the credit for this.”

K-State students are also among those in Manhattan who are concerned about Flock cameras. Jamie Pemberton, senior in mathematics and social transformation studies, said the camera in Aggieville makes going out uncomfortable.

“I discovered that there was one in Aggieville, and now I’m hesitant about whether I want to go there and spend time with my friends there because I don’t want us to be surveilled by them [RCPD],” Pemberton said. “It’s already concerning that that’s something that has been implemented and that we can’t go enjoy ourselves without being surveilled by the state, but it’s another level when you know that there’s that AI-integrated technology.”

On the other hand, Silas Thoennes, senior in political science and president of Young Amer-



Photo by Henry Pfannestiel | COLLEGIAN MEDIA GROUP
A close-up shot of the Flock camera overlooking South Seth Child Road in Manhattan, as it sat on Aug. 24. According to the Riley County Police Department, Manhattan’s Flock cameras have successfully assisted the department with over 250 cases.

icans for Freedom at K-State, is aware of the privacy concerns but said the technology is nothing new and worth it for increased safety.

“I do think that most of the public outrage is logically inconsistent,” Thoennes said. “All the privacy concerns one might have with Flock cameras are already a thing with smartphones right now, and to a much greater extent. Also, it’s our [Young Americans for Freedom’s] position that the utility of combat-

ing crime on public roads does outweigh the privacy concerns.”

Jager said he acknowledges and welcomes the community pushback regarding Flock cameras, but stresses the technology’s importance.

“We understand people have, rightfully so, some concerns with it or [are] suspicious of it,” Jager said. “I totally understand that. But our community is a lot safer because of this technology.”



Photo by Kasha Kemnitz | COLLEGIAN MEDIA GROUP
Grace Parrish, junior in theater, portrays Valentine in, “I Wanna F*ck Like Romeo and Juliet” while she rehearses on Sept. 14. The show will run from Sept. 24-27.

THEATRE

« CONTINUED FROM A1

“This show is incredibly important,” Castillo said. “Especially with the Spectrum Center on campus being shut down ... that was a fundamental support system for [the LGBTQ+ community] that was taken away. So I think continuing to tell these stories, regardless of current political climates, is incredibly integral to not only our community, but all of society.”

The Spectrum Center served as a hub for the K-State LGBTQ+ community from its founding in 2010 until it was shut down at the end of the 2025 spring semester. The closing came in the wake of legislative changes regarding diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives.

Cheyenne Niblack, senior studying secondary education and the director of the production, said the opportunity to lead a production that breaks the mold was enticing.

“I was very interested in having the chance for under-represented groups on campus or within the theater department represented on stage,” Niblack said. “We’re still here. We still have a voice, doing shows like this or pushing boundaries like this show does. We won’t be silenced, and the idea in this story specifically is that love is love, and we should all have love for everyone.”

Opening night is at 7:30 p.m. on Thursday, Sept. 24, with two more 7:30 p.m. shows on Friday and Saturday. The final show will be at 2:30 p.m. on Sunday, Sept. 27.

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Bringing bleacher energy to the ‘Ville

EMMA MCATEE
arts & culture editor

For K-State football fans, kickoff doesn't always start on Saturdays at Bill Snyder Family Stadium; it begins 12 hours earlier in Aggieville, driven by the soundtrack of the K-State Little Apple Pub Crawl Band.

The Pub Crawl Band is composed of members of the K-State Marching Band. Throughout the past 27 years, the band has spent Friday nights before home games turning 34 of Manhattan's favorite bars, restaurants and stores into pep rallies, where instruments, fight songs and generations of Wildcat traditions collide. Stepping into his first year as director of bands and director of athletic bands, Alex Wimmer aims to carry forward former director Frank Tracz's habit of fostering band spirit.

Wimmer said he remembers stories told about the beginnings of Pub Crawl.

"There was a week during the 1999 season where things took a temporary slide due to injuries and a few stinging losses," Wimmer said. "The community, students and band were feeling down, and the excitement wasn't what it usually was."

Wimmer said that at the end of marching band rehearsal on a Friday night, Tracz knew he needed to motivate the students for the upcoming football game on Saturday.

"[Tracz said] ... 'If I were in college again, I would gather some friends, and without telling

the directors or asking permission, get everyone to grab their instruments and head to Aggieville to play the Fight Song in the middle of the street.'"

Tracz's students did just that, marching to Aggieville right after rehearsal.

"As he headed up to his office, he also heard sirens, as traffic had backed up on Anderson Avenue due to the commotion," Wimmer said. "Soon after, he received an office visit from a police officer, half-heartedly admonishing him for urging the band to pull this stunt. [Tracz] said ... 'I didn't know what he was talking about,' and he [the officer] just laughed and said, 'let's just talk about it in advance next time.'"

Both fans and Aggieville patrons and business owners loved the surprise performances. Throughout the season, dozens of businesses asked for the band to come back and play. What started as a spontaneous boost in morale ended up being a beloved tradition that has spanned decades, allowing the Manhattan community to come together every Friday night.

"My favorite part is seeing the smiles and emotions on people's faces when the band runs in yelling and playing the fight song and Wabash," Wimmer said. "There are so many things in our world that push people apart, but something as simple as our school songs brings people together and back in time, to a simpler time in their lives. Seeing people impacted this way by music is inspiring; [it] is the reason why we

do what we do, and why we will continue to do it."

With the excitement of Wimmer's rookie year as head band director, members of the Pride of Wildcat Land are eager for the new atmosphere surrounding Pub Crawl Band. Olivia Franco, fifth-year in music education with an instrument emphasis, has stepped into the role as one of three assistant drum majors.

"I was really lucky to be a sub for Pub Crawl in 2023, then a full-time member in 2024," Franco said. "I am excited to be back in action this year. The energy is definitely a huge factor into what makes Pub Crawl so exciting. Not only from the students in Pub Crawl, but the community that shows up to each destination."

This year, Franco gets to conduct members through fan-favorite songs instead of playing them on her instrument.

"My favorite part of Pub Crawl is interacting with the fans, especially when they aren't expecting us to be there," she said. "When I played sousaphone, I loved to grab a seat at their table and immerse them with our school spirit. It really makes my day when participants that are shy at first get a little loose and participate with us. When it comes down to it, we are just a big group of band kids having some 'good college fun,' as former Director of Bands Dr. Tracz loved to say."

As she wraps up her time in the K-State Marching Band, Franco said she is trying to soak up as



Photo by Zoe Taylor | COLLEGIAN MEDIA GROUP

Evan Maschler, senior in psychology and a trombone section leader, performs the "Wabash Cannonball" at Buffalo Wild Wings on Friday, Sept. 11. Guests watched from tables and gathered around the band during the sixth stop of the Little Apple Pub Crawl.

many memories and experiences as possible.

"I am looking forward to seeing young musicians that love watching the marching band," Franco said. "It fills my heart when I see kids who want to grow up to be in the band or our Classy Cat team. I see myself in them. Everything that I am able to do now is because someone told my younger self that I could do it. Shout-out to all the young girls in band; you are the future of music."

That passion for tradition and school spirit doesn't disappear as students grow; it simply broadens from the stadium bleachers to the downtown streets. For Max Nelson, sophomore in secondary education in environmental science, Pub

Crawl has expanded his view of the band as a whole, allowing him to feel more connected to his peers and the K-State community.

"It's hard to pick one part that stands out because it's all a blast," Nelson said. "My favorite part is probably when everyone runs into wherever we are, screaming our heads off and seeing everyone's reactions."

Pub Crawl is not just about the venue or itinerary; it's about the raw, unscripted energy that keeps K-State traditions alive to this day. Long after the crowds disappear and the noise settles, that lingering adrenaline fuels the band and football fans as they gear up for kickoff the very next day.

Folk music brings lively ambience to Manhattan Farmer's Market

JULIETTE FALO
staff writer

When strolling through the vendors at Manhattan's weekly farmer's market, shoppers may hear the sound of acoustic instruments and singing voices. The sweet sounds come from behind George LeRoux's table, where a group of instrumentalists sits, enjoying themselves while playing folk music.

LeRoux, owner of Flint Hills Prairie Bison Reserve, has been selling bison meat and holding jam sessions at the farmer's market since 1999.

"It's just a bunch of local musicians, you know?" LeRoux said. "We like to get together and play music. Some of us has played in a band in the past. Me and Brian played in a band called The Haymakers for a while. The rest are just local musicians."

LeRoux said there has been a rolling jam for about 30 years that continues today. Originally, the musicians played together every Thursday night, before moving to Fridays when the group would jam until midnight. Eventually, they lost players for various reasons, and there were no longer enough instruments. However, the group experienced a revival.

"It kind of slid, and then, all of a sudden, it was picked up with one of the original jam members from 15 years earlier, 20 years earlier," LeRoux said. "The next thing you know, there's a conglomeration of musicians getting together every week to continue it on, and that jam still goes on today, every Tuesday night."

On Tuesdays, the group gets together in a more private setting to play, where local musicians and their spouses can come together and enjoy the music.

LeRoux said most of those local musicians are people that he considers long-time friends, including Dan Richards.

"I've known George for a long time, but I didn't start playing guitar 'till I was 42," Richards said.

Richards is also a long-time member of the group; however, he had no previous musical background before joining.

"When I first got hooked up with these guys in the jam, I wasn't even playing," Richards said. "Then I started playing, so I just went to the jam, sat in the back and watched and tried to emulate. We've been playing together off and on ever since."

LeRoux had no specific goal in mind when the musical group formed. He was simply jamming

with his friends and enjoying the moment. Richards said that care-free approach is what sets their group apart from bands.

"There's always an ulterior motive," Richards said. "Here, there's no ulterior motive, and I think that's what makes it unique."

The group's welcoming atmosphere is another defining characteristic. The crew encourages anyone to hop in and join jam sessions.

"Sing along if you want, or play along, bring your guitar and sit in," said LeRoux. "It's an open jam. Anybody can come play with us."

For LeRoux, the open jam is about bringing the music community together by sharing one thing: a song.

Richards thinks that the spontaneity of jam sessions makes them even more entertaining and accessible to people who may not have the chance to hear live music often.

"So many people don't have the time or the means to go to organized functions," Richards said. "Spontaneous stuff like this just gives people a chance to hear something, relax and maybe have a good time. Maybe hear an old song or two they haven't heard in a long time."

Along with market visitors, vendors nearby also enjoy hearing



Photo by Payton Lee | COLLEGIAN MEDIA GROUP

Two women, playing the guitar and the cello, concentrate on each other as they play a tune during the Saturday jam sessions at the Manhattan Farmer's Market on Sept. 5.

the music every Saturday morning. Kat Sellers works for a booth close to LeRoux's that sells baked goods and said she has heard the sounds of folk music ever since she started working at the farmer's market in December 2024.

"Rain or shine or snow, they're out there, at least a couple of them," Sellers said.

Showcasing local artists and music is important to Sellers. She often sees a crowd form to listen and join the jam sessions on Saturday.

"Normally, the coffee cart is right there, so it's, like, a line of

people for the coffee and the music, so it's just a huge group of people," Sellers said. "This is the prime spot, honestly."

Over the years, Saturday morning folk music has become part of the atmosphere for shoppers and vendors alike.

"I think it'd be very quiet and sad if they weren't here anymore," Sellers said.

As long as the musicians keep showing up, the Saturday morning jam will remain a familiar part of the market, bringing the music community together one song at a time.

HEALTH

« CONTINUED FROM A1

According to the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention, around 24,000 college students attempt suicide every year, making suicide the second leading cause of death among college-aged people.

"A recent ACHA [American College Health Association] survey found that 25% of undergraduate students screened positive for suicidal ideation," Karan Bha-

tia, LCPC, Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) staff therapist, said. "Suicide Awareness Month matters because it gives us a dedicated moment to say that it's okay to not be okay, and that help is available."

Al-Murrani said open discussions about mental health can save lives and make asking for help easier for people who are struggling.

"The best way to reduce the stigma surrounding mental illness is to talk about it," Al-Murrani said. "The more we talk about it, the less taboo it becomes. If

I'm openly talking about mental illness, someone else might feel comfortable opening up to me about their experience."

While the Green Bandana Project primarily promotes conversation between students, there are other resources around K-State that connect students with mental health professionals. Lafene Health Center offers counseling services through CAPS that are free for students to use. One service provided through CAPS is TimelyCare.

"We'd love for you to register

for TimelyCare services," Stephanie Jacobs, CAPS associate director, said. "Once registered, you can access self-care materials, access TalkNow visits for when you're stressed and need immediate assistance or schedule regular telehealth counseling visits."

All these resources exist to support K-State students and provide an opportunity for students to be listened to without judgment. But there are also things individuals can do on a personal level that can reduce the stigma.

Knowing what resources to

recommend, asking meaningful questions, recognizing changes in mood or behavior and checking in with friends and family can help build a community where mental health is no longer a taboo subject.

"Know you're not alone," Al-Murrani said. "It sounds cliché, but knowing that there are so many people on campus who have similar experiences and can help you out is comforting. K-State wants students to feel supported and has many resources to help with that."

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The Kansas State Collegian, a student newspaper at Kansas State University, is published by Collegian Media Group. It is published Fridays during the school year. Periodical postage is paid at Manhattan, KS. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to 828 Mid-Campus Drive South, Kedzie 103, Manhattan, KS 66506-7167. First copy free, additional copies 25 cents. [USPS 291 020] © Collegian Media Group, 2024

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Why you should pick up a tile and play mahjong

AMELIA LIKENS
opinion editor

Have you ever heard a woman utter the words “crack, dot, bam,” or heard your aunt or mom going on about a game called “mahjong?”

A new favorite among middle-aged women, mahjong is much more than a way to fit into a social group. It is an exchange of knowledge and time, a game that mixes strategy with luck.

Mahjong is a four-player game played with a set of 152 tiles — almost all with their own unique design. Players draw and discard tiles on the mahjong mat, building patterns listed on a card. The end goal is simple: be the first to complete a winning hand.

While that may sound simple, the game takes time, strategy and has just enough competition to keep everyone invested. Mahjong might be having a moment right now, but it's not just any game.

At first, mahjong may seem intimidating; the card is filled with complex patterns, and the game comes with many special rules. But the more you play, the more you learn. You begin to recognize patterns, develop your own strategy and, eventually, know exactly which tile you need.

And just when you think you have mastered it, a whole new mahjong card is released the next year. The National Mah Jongg League has released a new playing card every year since 1937, keeping the challenge fresh for players.

Mahjong itself dates back to the 19th century in China and has a rich history that transcends its re-

cent popularity. Evolving into different versions around the world, mahjong has always had a sole purpose: bringing people together.

And unlike any game you download on your phone, mahjong cannot be learned alone. Someone has to sit with you, shuffle the tiles and teach you the ropes. That is how mahjong becomes more than just a game. It becomes an exchange of knowledge, passed from person to person.

Mahjong is also more than just fun — it's good for your brain, too. According to research available through the National Library of Medicine, playing mahjong can improve short-term memory, attention and logical thinking.

So while you're having fun with your friends and learning more about one another, your brain is learning, too.

But there is something else that makes mahjong special. The tiles themselves are beautiful, each one designed with intricacy and charm. Laid out on a beautiful mat from the mahjong brand Oh My Mahjong, the game looks just as gorgeous as it feels.

You just cannot replicate the experience of sitting around a table of friends, a spritz in hand, with the sound of mahjong tiles shuffling in front of you.

Mahjong has been passed down through generations as a way to be present with the people around you without technology. If you have been wanting to get into mahjong, this is your sign.

There is no feeling quite like picking up that final tile to complete your line, placing it on your rack and saying, “mahjong!”



Graphic by Evan Gnagy | COLLEGIAN MEDIA GROUP
Mahjong is more than just a game. Passed down through generations, mahjong's 152 tiles connect players through strategy, time and a little competition.

Bandidas Coffee Co. review | Come for coffee, stay for bagels

KATHRYN GREENWOOD
staff writer

Bandidas Coffee Co. has a fun, cozy atmosphere right when you walk in. The owners clearly put in the work to make it an inviting place, as its warm lighting and curated decorations feel intentional.

The shop was buzzing when I got there. It felt like a great place for students to study and collaborate, especially since it's only a short walk from campus. Bandidas offers free Wi-Fi and a quiet place to lock in for homework and projects.

While the environment is welcoming with chic couches and tables, more seating and furniture — specifically, more table surface area to put electronics on — would be handy.

The staff was friendly and accommodating with any questions I had regarding order options. Although they were fairly busy, there was hardly any wait to get my drink.

During one of my visits, I got the dulce de leche latte. The

coffee flavor coupled phenomenally with the cajeta caramel and the cinnamon sprinkled on top. The latte was funky and unique, and I understand why it is a fan favorite.

I really appreciate the level of care Bandidas puts into making their horchata and tres leches bases in-house. It really stands out among the products that they sell. Also, as someone who can't have cow's milk, I love that they do not upcharge for alternative milks.

Unfortunately, both times I was there, they were out of matcha. This is understandable for a new business, but it will be important to keep popular items in stock as they establish themselves as a shop.

They also have special fall drinks that will keep customers coming back to try something new. The drinks include blueberry maple pancake latte, s'mores latte, dulce de pumpkin latte, pumpkin pie chai latte and cinnamon sugar cold brew. While I appreciate new and exciting flavors, the blueberry maple pan-

cake latte was heavy on the blueberry and lacked that maple and coffee flavor.

Despite their fun flavors, Bandidas' drinks cost around eight dollars a cup, which is not sustainable for college students, who are a large portion of Bandidas' customers.

I understand that to make any type of profit, the drinks have to be pricey, but it can also turn students away. This is where I think Bandidas' baked goods could really set themselves apart from other shops.

Manhattan lacks many places to get pastries or fresh bread. Bandidas already features bagels and muffins, and I think they could really add to their existing menu with more baked goods.

I had the jalapeño red pepper bagel with the jalapeño garlic schmear during my first visit. It was absolutely delicious, and the heat was well balanced with the savory cream cheese. If they made these bagels into breakfast sandwiches, they would have all of my money.

Bandidas could also add other

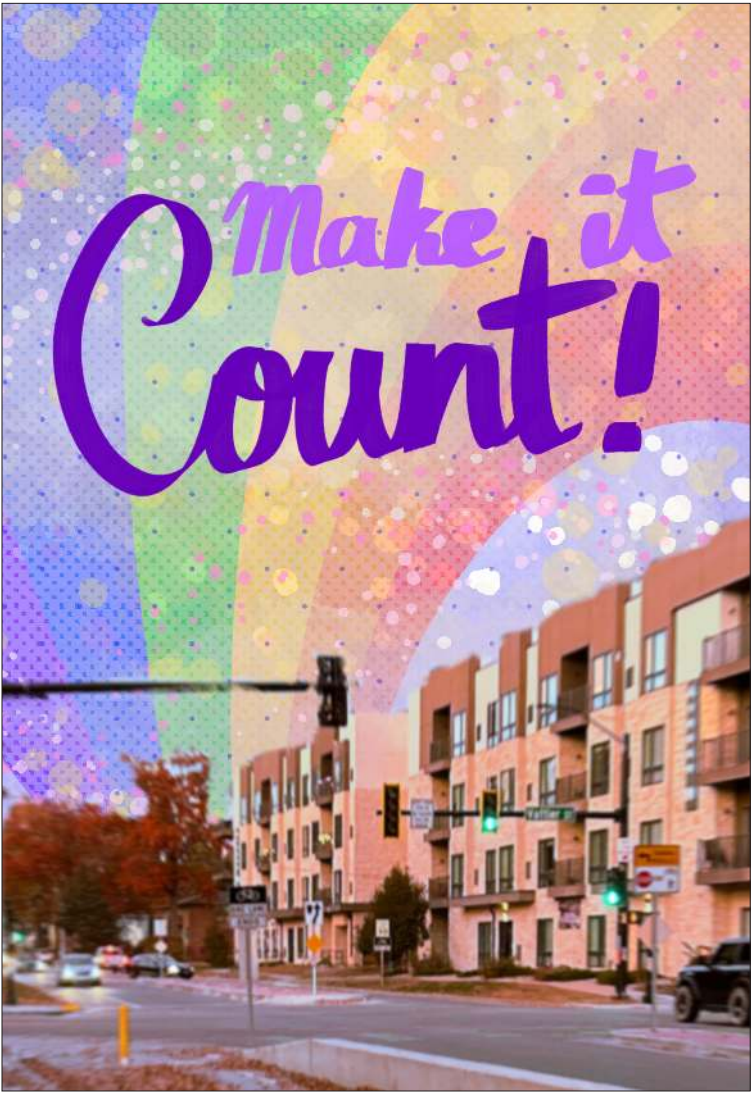
pastries that pair well with their drinks, like conchas or orejas. A sweet bread with their featured Abuelita's Mocha or hot chocolate would be phenomenal.

Overall, I think Bandidas Coffee is a great addition to Manhattan's local businesses

and a cool place to study and hang out. The prices may be out of a college student's normal budget, but the unique, house-made drinks, delicious bagels and vibrant atmosphere are not something you can get from just any drive-thru coffee chain.



Photo by Rylie Kaberline | COLLEGIAN MEDIA GROUP
A customer's coffee and bagel sits on the counter at the newly opened Bandidas Coffee Co. on Sept. 15.



Graphic by Juli Tanksley | COLLEGIAN MEDIA GROUP

Back to bliss Making college as fun as freshman year

CADENCE BRIER
staff writer

It's 10 p.m. on a Wednesday, the first week of school. The entire dorm floor is walking to Dawgs for the first time, excited to dance.

The Aggieville lights are approaching, and the sound of boots against concrete and non-stop laughter fills the air. It feels euphoric. Unbelievable, even, that this is your college life, surrounded by so many people.

Flash forward to the second semester of junior year, however, and the image is much different. It's 10 p.m. on a Wednesday, and the feeling of burnout is approaching. After staring at your computer screen for hours, the stress of landing an internship this summer lingers.

Like most things in life, the more we do them or the longer they go on, the more mundane and less exciting they feel. A whole floor of dorm friends

turns into a whole apartment building of strangers. Sharing a meal with a classmate in the Derb turns into sitting alone in a booth in the Union.

Why was freshman year so good?

The excitement of college overtook that entire first year. Everything was new, stimulating and fun. There was always something to do, someone to do it with and the energy was always high.

Football games made for the best Saturdays. There was an entire group, a long, detailed plan and the anticipation for the first Wabash ever, knowing it would surpass all expectations.

However, during junior and senior year, everyone seems to have their groups and is so firm on staying in them. Cliques and comfort zones are limiting lifelong memories and new friendships.

So let's go back to the bliss! Those purple-colored glasses from freshman year weren't you being naive or immature. It

was pure excitement, independence and freedom that made social interactions feel exciting, with attitudes more uplifted.

Try new things, meet new people and embrace the pride of wearing the Powercat. Start going to the random, free, fun activities UPC puts on. Chat with the person in line behind you at the coffee shop. Smile at people on campus or in passing. One kind interaction could turn into a new friendship, or just a pleasant way to pass the time while waiting for a coffee.

Don't put yourself into the box you formed freshman and sophomore year.

College is only four years, and it already goes by too fast. Being a Wildcat and going to K-State is a gift that a lot of us forget, and a lot of people wish they had. Manhattan is fun, K-State is fun and college is fun!

Let's start embracing the bliss again and make our four years here count.

Don't let scammers crash your school year

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Today's students and young adults are true digital natives, having grown up online, learning to navigate digital spaces as a normal part of daily life. As they transition to college, they turn to digital platforms and social media for everything from apartment hunting and job searches to shopping, banking and talking with friends.

That familiarity, however, can create a false sense of security, making younger adults just as much of a target for fraud and scams as older individuals. According to the FBI's Internet Crime Report, Americans ages 20–29 reported more than \$500 million to internet-crime losses in 2025.

As scammers become more sophisticated, including using AI, students need to be more vigilant than ever about fraud and scams. Understanding the most common ones can help you avoid becoming a victim.

Common scams
targeting students

Online shopping and
marketplace scams

Whether you're furnishing a dorm, moving into an apartment or buying textbooks, online deals and secondhand marketplaces can help you save money while also creating more opportunities for scammers.

Buy from official and trusted retailers whenever possible, double check website URLs for misspellings or other red flags, and make sure the site uses https://. Be wary of deals that seem too good to be true as well. Avoid clicking links in unsolicited emails or text messages, including fake "missed delivery" notifications that often lead to fraudulent websites or malware.

Before making a purchase,

read seller reviews and ratings. If you're buying locally, meet in a safe public place and inspect the item before paying.

Job scams

As students return to school this fall, some may be looking for part-time jobs or internships. Scammers target students with fake jobs offering high salaries, flexible schedules or jobs you can do from your residence hall, apartment or home.

If you receive a job offer by text, email, or direct message – be cautious, especially if you never applied to work at that company. Always use well-known job boards and then apply directly through the company's official website.

Also, if an employer asks you to pay upfront for training, equipment, background checks or application fees, it may be a sign of a scam. Legitimate companies will never charge you to get a job. They also won't send you money and then ask you to return a portion of it.

Rental and housing scams

Scammers know student housing is in high demand. They'll often post fake apartment listings or copy legitimate ones to trick potential renters into sending money for a deposit.

Rental prices that seem unusually low should raise a red flag. Use a reverse image search to see if photos of the property appear on a different website or in a different location. Research unfamiliar property managers or housing websites before sending money, and avoid paying deposits through wire transfers, gift cards or peer-to-peer payment apps.

Double check the address, read online reviews of the property management company and schedule a tour of the house or apartment before signing

a lease or sending a deposit. That way, you'll know the listing and location is real.

The influence of AI

Thanks to artificial intelligence, scammers can now create cloned voices and deepfake videos, along with fraudulent emails, text messages and even websites and apps that look real. These AI tools let scammers impersonate family members, employers, banks, law enforcement, delivery companies and trusted brands to get you to send money or share personal information.

How to protect yourself

No matter what type of scam you encounter, a few simple habits can go a long way toward reducing your risk:

- **Limit the personal information you share online and make social media profiles private whenever possible.** This can help reduce the information scammers can use to target you, guess your security questions or attempt to access your financial accounts.
- **When you're making a payment, use more protected methods,** such as credit and debit cards, which generally offer stronger consumer protections than wire transfers, gift cards or peer-to-peer payment apps. Treat peer-to-peer payments, such as Zelle, like cash — once the money is sent, it's often difficult to recover.
- **Scammers can spoof phone numbers to make calls look like they're coming from your bank, law enforcement or another trusted organization.** Don't automatically trust your caller ID — if you get a call demanding immediate action or claiming there's a problem with your account, hang



Photo courtesy of JPMorgan Chase

up and call back directly using a verified phone number. Banks will never call and ask you for account information, tell you to transfer money to 'protect' it or pressure you to act immediately.

- **Don't click links or download attachments from unexpected emails or text messages** and avoid accessing your financial accounts or making online purchases on public Wi-Fi, where savvy cybercriminals can gain access to your login credentials.
- **Perhaps most importantly, slow down.** Back-to-school season brings a flurry of financial decisions and scammers know students are looking for deals. They often create a false sense of urgency to try to pressure people into making quick decisions. Taking a few extra minutes to verify information can make the difference.

The bottom line

Whether you're shopping for school supplies, searching for a job or signing your first lease if you're entering college, your status as a student can make you a prime target for scammers.

Stay skeptical of unsolicited offers, verify before you pay or share personal information, and slow down when something feels rushed. Those simple hab-

its can help protect your money, your identity and your peace of mind throughout the school year from scams and fraud.

For more financial health tips, visit chase.com/scamproof.

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Photo by Sophia Ryan | COLLEGIAN MEDIA GROUP

Rockin K's, located near Bill Snyder Family Stadium, offers dining, catering and event spaces in Manhattan. Owner **Scott Sieben** opened the restaurant in 2020, adding it to his lineup of locally owned restaurants alongside Mr. K's and Kite's.

Think Local | Rockin K's, 'for K-Staters, by K-Staters'

SOPHIA RYAN
marketing / PR manager

Just down the road from Bill Snyder Family Stadium, Rockin K's offers Manhattan diners a little bit of everything, with a side of K-State history.

Owner Scott Sieben describes the locally owned restaurant as a place with something for everybody, with a menu ranging from salads, sandwiches and bowls to cheeseburgers, brisket nachos and birria tacos.

Rockin K's opened in 2020, after the restaurant previously occupying the space closed during COVID-19. At the time, Sieben already operated Mr. K's and Kite's, neither of which

were open because of the pandemic.

"At first I didn't want to touch it," Sieben said. "I had two restaurants at the time that weren't even open." Still, Sieben saw the location's potential, including its event spaces and proximity to K-State, which made taking over the restaurant worth the risk.

"It was just kind of a 'let's take a leap of faith' kind of thing on this," Sieben said. "And it's worked out really well for us."

Sieben's connection to Manhattan and K-State began long before Rockin K's opened its doors. "I grew up a K-State fan," he said. While attending K-State, Sieben began working at Kite's in 2002. He later started

with Mr. K's in 2010 before taking over Kite's in 2018.

The connection between Sieben's three restaurants goes back even further. In the 1970s and 1980s, Kite's, Mr. K's and the original Rockin K's were all owned by Terry Ray. When Sieben opened the current Rockin K's, he saw an opportunity to bring the name and some of its history back to Manhattan.

"It was kind of like, 'All right, how do we bring back some of these historic names?'" Sieben said. Many alumni visiting Rockin K's think back to when it was a country-western bar, bringing a sense of nostalgia for longtime K-State fans.

Today, Rockin K's connection

to the Wildcats extends beyond its name. The restaurant caters events on campus and hosts locals and Manhattan visitors from nearby athletic events throughout the year. On football weekends, the K-State band stops by Rockin K's on Friday nights, where fans often gather ahead of game day. "They play, and it just pumps people up for the game," Sieben said.

The menu also continues to evolve with newer additions, including chopped brisket queso and a cream cheese jalapeño burger, which became a permanent menu item after customers repeatedly requested it. One of Sieben's personal favorites is the hot roast beef, a hearty dish

served over Texas toast with brown gravy and mashed potatoes. He also highlights the birria tacos as a unique offering and the brisket nachos as a popular shareable appetizer. "I like to say, it's kind of a mix of all kinds of restaurants," he said.

Beyond the dining room, Rockin K's also offers event spaces for private gatherings, lunch meetings and graduation parties. Sieben, who primarily handles catering and events for the restaurants, said graduation season is an especially busy time for the spaces.

"I always say, 'for K-Staters, by K-Staters,'" Sieben said. "Obviously, we'll take KU people's money as well."

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Photo by Zoe Taylor | COLLEGIAN MEDIA GROUP

K-State golfer **Joshua Thompson**, tees off on the second hole at Colbert Hills Golf Course during the Wildcat Invitational on Monday. Thompson would go on to finish the hole with a birdie. At the time of his signing he was ranked No. 39 in the under-18 European Amateur Golf Rankings.

K-State finishes second at Wildcat Invitational

BRADY HOWARD
staff writer

K-State shot a 1-under-par 287 in the final round at Colbert Hills Golf Course, bringing its three-round total to 12-over 876. The Wildcats briefly pulled even with St. Thomas during the closing stretch, but the Tommies closed with a 5-under 283 to finish at 2-over 866 and claim the team title by 10 strokes. South Dakota State placed third at 17-over 881.

The final-round result was a strong turnaround for K-State after the Wildcats dealt with windy conditions during Monday's first 36 holes. K-State entered Tuesday needing to make up ground and managed to do so throughout much of the round before St. Thomas separated itself late.

"I'm proud of how we competed today," head coach Grant Robbins said. "We played very steady for the first 12 or so holes and got to the point where we were tied for the lead with six holes to go. Hats off to St. Thomas. They really clutched up on the last few and just plain beat us."

Sophomore Oliver Toyer led

the Wildcats individually, carding a 3-under 69 Tuesday to finish third at 3-under 213. The Cambridgeshire, England, native also excelled on par-5 holes, averaging 4.75 strokes per hole.

Ville Virkkala finished just one stroke behind Toyer. The sophomore from Espoo, Finland, posted a 2-under 214 to finish fourth and was one of only two players in the field to shoot par or better in all three rounds.

"Oliver and Ville were rock solid for us all week and gave us a chance," Robbins said. "It was also a great learning experience for the new guys, and I know they will continue to get better."

Fionn Dobbin finished at 6-over 222 after closing with an even-par 72. The junior from Lisburn, Northern Ireland, improved over the final two rounds, combining to shoot 1-over par across the final 36 holes.

Freshmen Oscar Stendahl and Peyton Smith rounded out K-State's scoring lineup. Stendahl tied for 43rd at 11-over 227 in his collegiate debut, while Smith tied for 71st at 27-over 243.

K-State also had four players compete as individuals.

Octavio Laurent, a sophomore transfer, made his Wild-

cat debut by tying for eighth at 3-over 219. His finish was the best among the individual competitors. Erik Sabelström Holmberg tied for 26th at 8-over 224, while freshman Joshua Thompson tied for 32nd at 9-over 225 in his first collegiate tournament. Jules De Brauwere finished 81st at 36-over 252.

The Wildcats did not record an eagle during the tournament but finished second in the field

in both par-3 scoring, at 3.23 strokes per hole, and par-4 scoring, at 4.16.

South Dakota State's Jake Olson won the individual championship at 5-under 211, finishing one stroke ahead of St. Thomas' Tyler McNeive and two strokes ahead of Toyer.

K-State will return to competition Oct. 3-5 at the University of Arkansas' Blessings Collegiate Invitational.



Photo by Zoe Taylor | COLLEGIAN MEDIA GROUP

K-State golfer **Joshua Thompson** putts on the first hole at Colbert Hills Golf Course during the Wildcat Invitational on Monday. Thompson finished the par-5 hole with a birdie, helping K-State get off to a strong start in the tournament.

Wildcats rally from a first-set loss to remain undefeated this season

JAKE GRAYSON
staff writer

For the first time this season, K-State volleyball found itself playing from behind. Rallying back with a season-high 14 blocks and a relentless offense, the Wildcats shook off a slow start against Nevada to stay unbeaten and push their record to 6-0 — the program's strongest start in 13 years.

Nevada controlled much of the opening set and never gave up its advantage, handing K-State its first opening-set loss of the season. The Wolf Pack capitalized on several Wildcat errors to build an 11-5 lead, prompting head coach Jason Mansfield to call a timeout. K-State struggled to find rhythm offensively in the opening stretch, managing two kills, committing five attack errors and hitting .000 before the timeout.

Although the Wildcats settled in late and cut the deficit to 23-21 with a late 4-0 scoring run, the comeback fell short. Nevada won the set 25-21, hitting .314 and totaling 17 kills, while restraining K-State to a .179 hitting percentage.

Looking for a comeback, the Wildcats started set two in another deficit but chipped away at the Wolf Pack's 11-5 lead. Reese

Resmer and Cadence Lundgren sparked the comeback with crucial middle kills, along with Addison Massey and Lauren Latham giving K-State a 17-15 lead. The Wildcats then went on an 8-4 run to close out the set, winning 25-20 and tying the match at 1-1.

"Reese [Resmer] led the way at the net and also gave us a lot of offense with eight kills, and we needed every one of them," Mansfield said.

With momentum beginning to swing, K-State played its best set of the afternoon in the third. Massey provided a spark with back-to-back kills, which helped the Wildcats reach a 9-6 lead. Nevada remained in striking distance most of the set, but K-State's offense continued to create opportunities. The Wildcats committed just one attack error while hitting .438 and pulled away late to win 25-21.

"I thought Emerson [Van Lanen] and Lauren [Latham] did a really good job setting our offense, making so many quality sets and spreading things around," Mansfield said. "Addison [Massey] and Skylar [Brady] were both exceptional, taking so many great swings and making aggressive choices."

The fourth and final set belonged almost entirely to



Archive Photo by Erica Merz | COLLEGIAN MEDIA GROUP

K-State. After a competitive opening stretch for both teams, the Wildcats broke open the match following a strong service run from Caleigh Ponn. K-State scored seven of the next eight points to build a sufficient lead, with Nevada never generating a rally. Behind an aggressive defensive effort that improved throughout the match, the Wildcats closed out the set with a dominant 25-15 victory.

Massey once again led the Wildcats offensively, finishing with 18 kills while posting a .577 hitting percentage. Skylar Brady added 13 kills and eight digs, while Resmer contributed a season-high five blocks. As a team, K-State record-

ed a season-best 14 blocks and hit .321, continuing a balanced effort.

"I'm really proud of our start," Mansfield said. "We are learning and growing every week, with a better understanding of how we need to play the game and what we need to do to beat each opponent. There has been a lot of maturity in the way we've prepared for each team, and we've executed extremely well to get us to a 6-0 start. Now we just need to keep getting better every day and continue to do it together."

K-State aims to maintain its perfect record with a trip to Omaha next week, where they will face No. 15 Creighton at 7 p.m. on Sept. 18. ESPN2 will televise the match.



Photo courtesy of K-State Athletics

K-State closes historic non-conference slate with thrilling win at Colorado College

ALEX LANTERMAN
staff writer

After dominating the first half and fending off multiple Colorado College comeback attempts in the second, K-State left Colorado Springs with a 3-2 victory and some history Sunday afternoon.

The Wildcats built a two-goal advantage before halftime and survived a back-and-forth final 45 minutes to defeat Colorado College (2-3-2). The victory completed K-State's first unbeaten non-conference stretch in program history. It also improved the Wildcats' record to 5-0-3 and extended its unbeaten streak to nine matches, dating back to last season.

K-State controlled the match from kickoff and produced five shots in the opening 11 minutes. The 'Cats finally broke through in the 22nd minute behind a strike from senior forward Rilyn Rintoul, who fired a left-footed shot from near the left touchline to give the Wildcats a 1-0 lead. Anna Pagano and Sydney Coffman assisted the goal — Rintoul's third of the season — and marked Coffman's first career assist.

K-State doubled its advantage 14 minutes later with one of the rarest goals in soccer.

After Emerson DeLuca earned the Wildcats a corner kick, freshman defender Lauren Moylan curled a left-footed inswinger directly into the net for an Olimpico goal, becoming just the second Wildcat to ever score directly from a corner. The goal sent the Wildcats into halftime ahead 2-0 after dominating much of the opening 45 minutes.

"Lauren's goal was definitely surprising and exciting, but that's also that type of whipped-in service we have been working on in training," head coach Colleen Corbin said. "Olimpico goals are always so fun, and I'm stoked that we collectively continue to score goals in multiple ways."

Colorado College came out with energy after the break and cut the deficit in half in the 55th minute. Goalkeeper Maddie Sibbing made the initial save on a Tigers attempt, but Bella Stewart was the first to collect the rebound and finished to make it 2-1. With K-State's lead down to one, the game intensified as both teams looked for the decisive next goal.

That next goal belonged to the Wildcats 16 minutes later courtesy of sophomore forward Gabby DeMers. Midfielder Langley Mayers sent a through ball to DeMers, who fired underneath the crossbar from a short distance to make it 3-1. The goal was DeMers' team-leading fourth goal of the season and ultimately proved to be the game-winner — the first of her career.

The Tigers refused to go away quietly, as Colorado College earned a penalty kick in the 88th minute. Stewart converted into the lower left corner from the spot for her second goal of the game, pulling the Tigers back within one. With just a couple of minutes to go, the crowd stood, hoping for an equalizer that did not come, and K-State held on for the crucial victory.

The Wildcats finished with a 17-13 advantage in shots, 12 of those on target. Rintoul led K-State with a career-high seven shots, while Sibbing recorded five saves. The victory capped a milestone day for Sibbing, whose 12th career win moved her into sole possession of the program record for goalkeeper victories.

More importantly for K-State, the result wrapped up a historic non-conference campaign. The Wildcats finished their opening eight-game slate with five wins, three draws and zero losses, the best in K-State soccer's 11-year history.

The Wildcats return to Manhattan to begin Big 12 action against Houston (4-1-3 in non-conference play) at 6:30 p.m. on Friday, Sept. 18.

KNOW YOUR OPPONENT

Klein says ‘no doubt’ 2022 loss lingers as K-State hosts Tulane.

JOSH WILSON
staff writer

K-State 2-0

With no signs of slowing down, K-State dominated Washington State 34-7 at Bill Snyder Family Stadium. The Wildcats outgained the Cougars 487-166 in total yards. K-State ran for 295 yards on the ground, delivering gut punch after gut punch, while looking disciplined and committing only two penalties. Quarterback Avery Johnson continued his hot start to the year, completing 22-of-34 pass attempts for 192 yards and three touchdowns for the second week in a row. The only blemish on his record was two interceptions, one of which went back for six to end the half and became Washington State’s only offensive points. The strong running game continued, with

junior running back Rodney Fields Jr. eclipsing the 100-yard mark for his second game in a row and scoring a 75-yard rushing touchdown on the Wildcats’ first play of the second half. The nationally recognized defense didn’t want to be forgotten either. The Wildcats rank first nationally in passing yards allowed per game, second in total defense, third in scoring defense and 12th in third-down defense. For the second straight week, the Wildcats totaled eight or more tackles for loss. Over two games, K-State’s defense has allowed only 95 passing yards. Junior defensive end Wendell Gregory totaled five tackles, two sacks and three tackles for loss and played a key defensive role.

Tulane 1-1

The Green Wave return to Manhattan for the first time since upsetting K-State 17-10 in 2022. Head coach Will Hall earned his first win, defeating South Alabama 38-24 and bouncing back after a 17-3 loss to Duke in week one. Senior running back Jaylin Lucas has been the star of the offense and tallied 214 rushing yards on 11 attempts, slicing and dicing through the Jaguars’ defense. Lucas will need to lead the way for the Green Wave against the Wildcats. Klein praised Tulane’s running game in his press conference Monday. “You can tell there is athlet-

icism, there are instincts when he [Jaylin Lucas] carries the football,” Klein said. “Those guys, again, have good movement skills, they are competitive and they expect to win.” On the other side of the ball, Tulane will need to rely on its linebackers. Junior linebacker Dickson Agu led the charge for Tulane against South Alabama with 14 total tackles, while senior linebacker Makai Williams added eight tackles and two tackles for loss. Their ability to get into the backfield and disrupt plays will be key for the Green Wave if they want to slow down this K-State offense.



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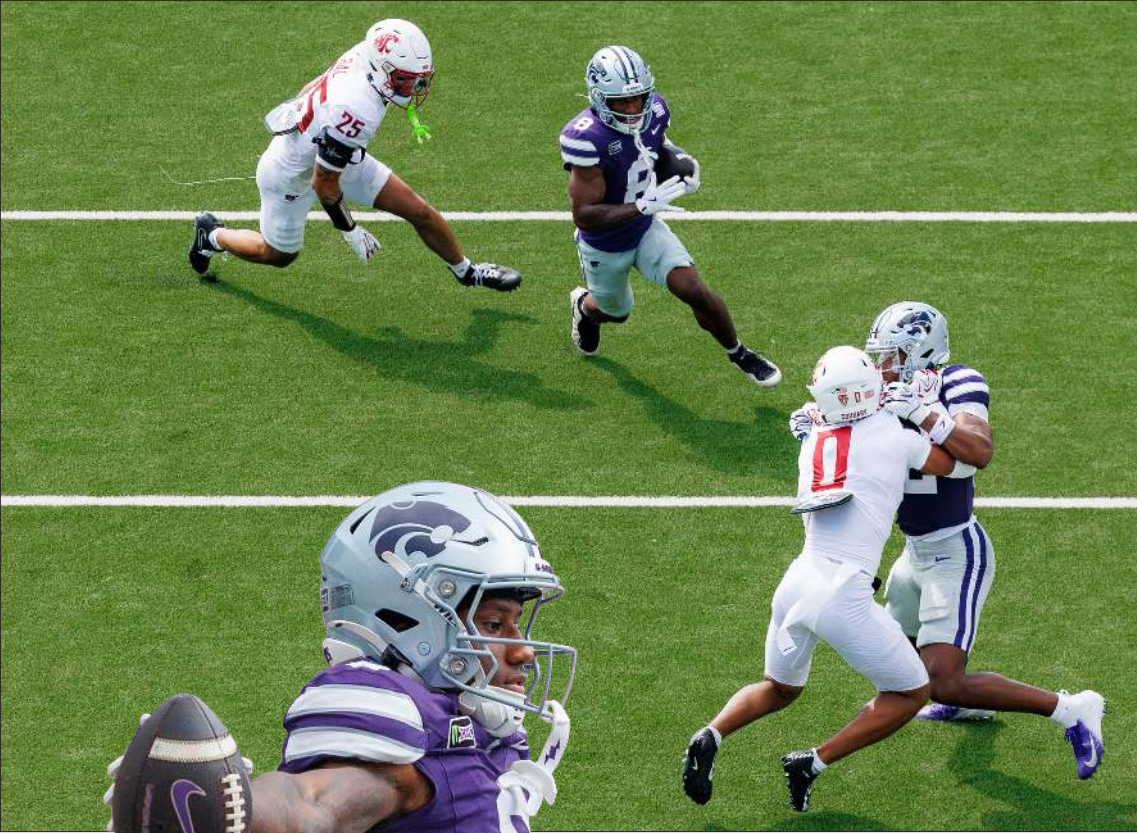
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(TOP PHOTO) Pride of Wildcat Band director **Alex Wimmer** shouts the next song to the band as students cheer in the stands during the game against Washington State on Sept. 12.

(TOP LEFT) Wide receiver **Brandon White (8)** cuts upfield with blocks from teammates during the Wildcats game against Washington State where White recorded a massive 62-yard punt return.

(TOP RIGHT) Wide receiver **Brandon White (8)** runs past a Washington State defender near the 20-yard line. In only two games this year, White has matched his total carries from last season.

(MIDDLE LEFT) K-State running back **Rodney Fields Jr. (20)** accelerates downfield to score a 75-yard touchdown. Fields capped off the win with 105 rushing yards and one score.

(MIDDLE RIGHT) Wildcat defender **Rex Van Wyhe (28)** celebrates after recording one of his two solo tackles against Washington State on Sept. 12.

(BOTTOM LEFT) **Garrett Oakley (86)** lifts **Brandon White (8)** into the air after White's touchdown. The score was part of K-State's dominant 34-7 performance against Washington State at Bill Snyder Family Stadium.



Graphic by Evan Gnagy | COLLEGIAN MEDIA GROUP

Sydney Sweeney's Novig ad causes controversy.

GRETA KLEIN
editor-in-chief

Seeing, comprehending, understanding and forming opinions are things we do on a daily basis. So when it comes to seeing a controversial video, why do we zone in on our perspective so much that the other side can't even be heard?

Sydney Sweeney, best known for her role in the TV series "Euphoria," has found herself in another controversy. Featured in an ad campaign for Novig — a peer-to-peer sports prediction and trading app — Sweeney has yet to strip society of new ideas. Highlighted in sports equipment and very little else, Sweeney was met with

intense backlash from women who felt the ad undermined their role in sports. In response to the campaign, many female athletes posted photos of themselves competing, using the phrase "This is what women in sports look like."

From women athletes to women who work in sports, this niche has spoken out about the disrespect and demeaning behavior that Sweeney has caused women in the industry.

No matter who you are, respect should be shown in any industry. The exponential growth of women in sports in the past several years is transformational, but did all the work, dedication and extra hours just get erased by Sweeney's 60-second nude ad?

According to Novig's website, Sweeney said the campaign was about embracing a fun idea. She also mentioned that the concept was simple, focusing entirely on sports.

She definitely embraced the fun side of the campaign, saying, "You can't trade this, I just look good here," while lying on a pool table bare-skinned.

In an interview with Front Office Sports, Jacob Fortinsky, co-founder and CEO of Novig, said, "Sydney's an actress. We're a prediction market that is focused on sports, and that was the story she was communicating."

Despite her witty remarks and questions about her motive, the campaign achieved its purpose. Whether it was to rage-bait, please a demographic or genu-

inely promote a new sports betting app, one thing changed: two weeks ago you didn't know what Novig was, and now you do.

Sweeney's reputation is one that many know, even if you're not immersed in pop culture. The partial stakeholder in Novig is known for her attractive physique and scarce clothing options, often leading to debates about her image.

Regardless of comments or backlash, Sweeney continues to be cast in campaigns, acting roles, producing roles, along with equity partnerships, making money and continuing her career in whatever way she chooses.

Additionally, the idea that Sweeney's campaign team wasn't expecting the backlash associat-

ed with the commercial is far-fetched. Looking back at the fallout over the American Eagle campaign, her team was ready for it, making it likely they were ready for this, too, knowing her reputation would cause talk but not one that directly impacts her overall status.

An app's "success" is defined by awareness and how much traffic or clicks the app receives. Despite the furious pushback, Sweeney's campaign brought that traffic to the Novig app.

Controversial? Most definitely. Effective? That too.

Sweeney continues to push the boundaries of society, but in a way people dispute. Her image gains fame, and she still lives her wealthy, famous lifestyle.

The AP Poll has a massive K-State blind spot

NATE LOWEN
staff writer

With the second week of college football wrapping up, K-State is off to an electric start that is going seemingly unnoticed in the eyes of national voters.

The history of K-State and the AP Top 25 Poll

Looking back to the preseason poll, the Wildcats were left unranked for the first time since 2022 — the year they went on to win the Big 12 title under former head coach Chris Klieman. That championship roster sent 11 players to the NFL draft, led by national champion Will Howard and two-time consensus All-American rusher Deuce Vaughn.

Is 2022 different from 2026?

The short answer is no; today's team faces a remarkably similar dynamic. In 2022, the central question was how to handle a dual-quarterback dynamic between veteran Will Howard and transfer Adrian Martinez.

Fast forward to 2026, and the situation feels eerily similar with veteran Joe Jackson and Oklahoma State transfer Rodney Fields Jr. Once again, the newcomer won the starting nod out of camp.

"I feel great with all three of those guys in the ballgame," head coach Collin Klein said during a press conference after K-State's victory against Nicholls on Sept. 5. "When we went live in camp, Rodney separated himself by a fraction of how he was able to make people miss, find extra yards and how hard he ran with the football."

In Manhattan, this isn't a controversy — it's a luxury. The 2022

dual-QB system proved depth wins championships, especially when Howard stepped up following Martinez's injury to bring home a Big 12 trophy. The Wildcats thrive on a "next man up" mentality, and this three-headed backfield is built on that exact foundation.

How can K-State make it to the Top 25 Poll this season?

UTSA's Greg Luca is the lone AP voter who ranked K-State (25th) after their 2-0 start. For context, the Wildcats sit at 39th overall in the Week 2 consensus poll.

While most AP voters play it safe early in the season by leaning on brand names and returning continuity, Luca isn't afraid to go against the grain. His decision to rank K-State relies on underlying efficiency rather than brand reputation.

"I'm big into the efficiency ratings," Luca said, citing advanced metrics that place the Wildcats 24th in SP+ and 19th in FEI — well ahead of conference rivals like Texas Tech.

Before committing to K-State on his ballot, Luca harbored the same questions buzzing around Manhattan: Could the new staff unlock quarterback Avery Johnson? Would a revamped offensive line hold up? Could the defensive line generate a pass rush?

According to Luca, the early tape has answered every question. He pointed to Johnson's 67% accuracy rate, an offensive line that hasn't allowed a single sack and a defense that has logged five sacks as proof that the Wildcats' potential is becoming reality.

"I would rather take a shot on a team with a lot of change, a lot of newness; maybe they end up being a really special team this

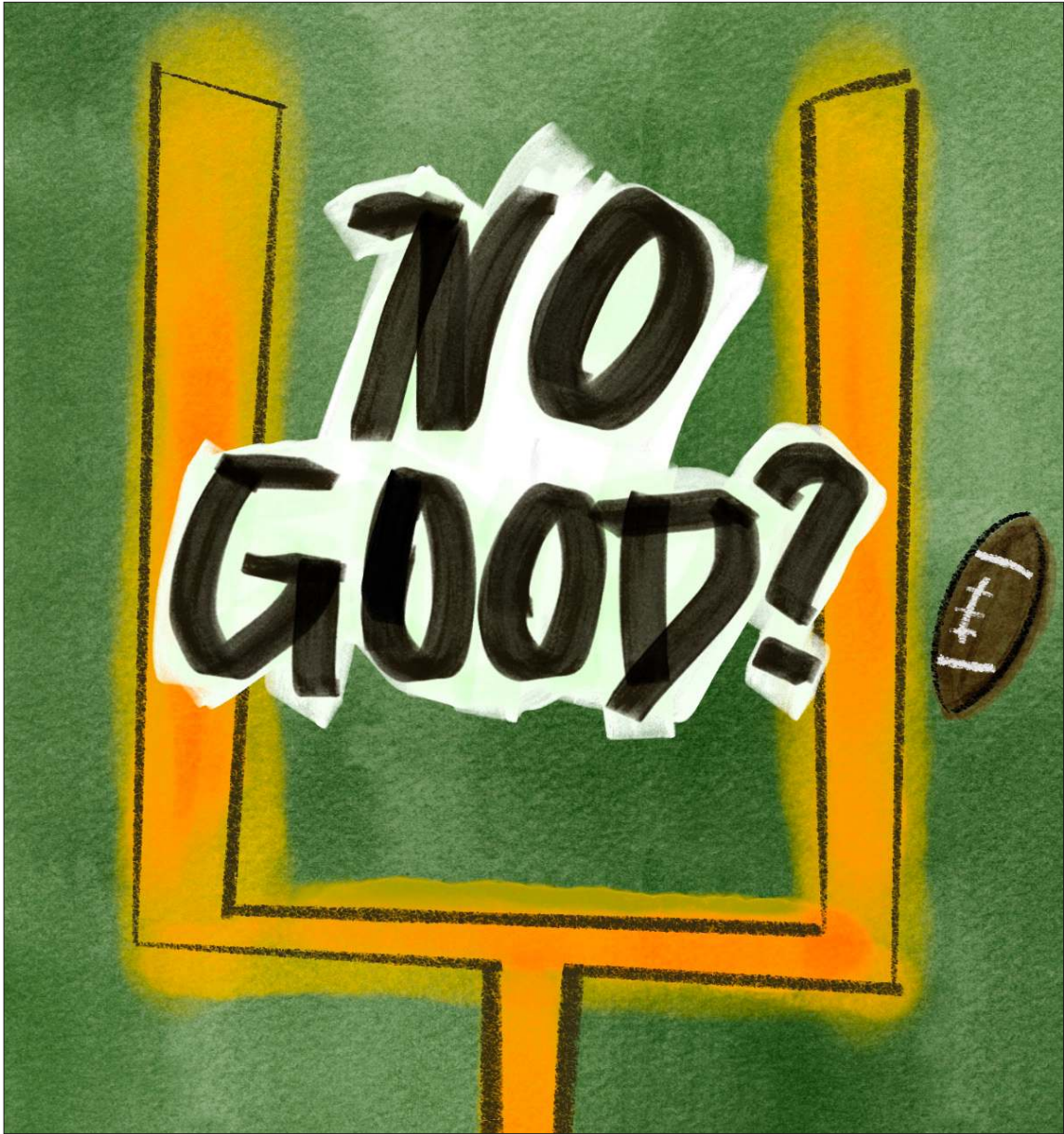


Illustration by Evan Gnagy | COLLEGIAN MEDIA GROUP

year," Luca said.

When it comes to K-State's College Football Playoff path, Luca believes the road is narrow due to a soft non-conference slate that leaves little margin for error.

"I imagine they would have to do it as a conference champion," Luca said.

However, he offered a simple

formula for overcoming national skepticism.

"If you just keep stacking up wins, eventually the zero in the loss column does a lot of heavy lifting, and you get ranked because of that."

The verdict

A slip-up against Tulane this

Saturday could derail K-State's playoff ambitions before Big 12 play even begins. Without a high-profile non-conference schedule to lean on, the Wildcats can't afford an early stumble. But if they handle business against the Green Wave, the zero in the loss column will become impossible for AP voters to ignore.

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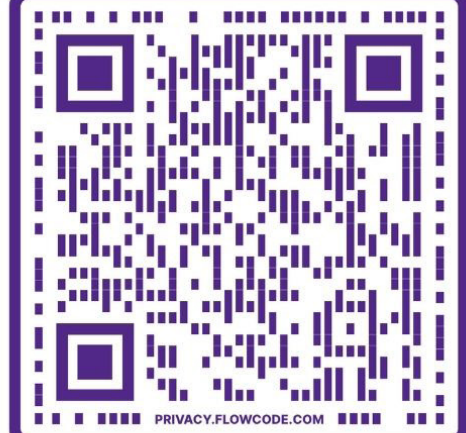
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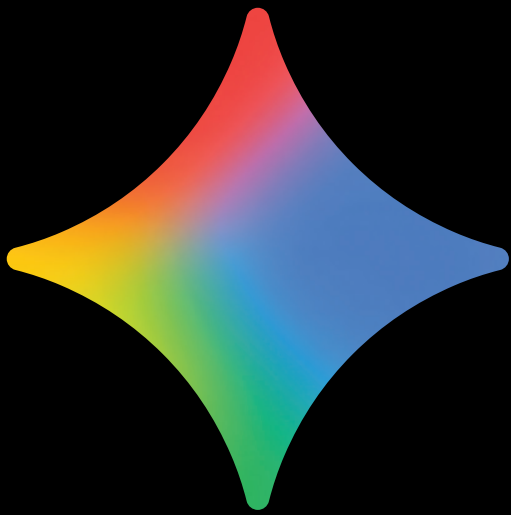
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