

The State News

Weekend

MYSTERY ALASKA



Journalism senior Anthony Pollreizs gets the whole student section involved during his second intermission performance Saturday at Munn Ice Arena. **JOSH RADTKE / THE STATE NEWS**

Student section leader from Alaska soon to graduate, has led hockey crowds at every game

By Brittany Shammass
THE STATE NEWS

Anthony Pollreizs is late. It's about 4:05 p.m. — five minutes after doors opened at Munn Ice Arena on a Saturday night, game night against Ferris State. By now, Pollreizs has pulled on his Spartan hockey jersey and taken the bus from his Chandler Crossings apartment to the International Center, where he stopped in the men's bathroom to paint a green and white design on his face.

If his white paint hadn't run out, the MSU senior would have been here earlier, wearing a pair of shorts and standing toward the back of the bleachers of the Slapshots student section.

By the time his friends arrive to or 15 minutes before game time, he might already have eaten three hot dogs. It would be no different from the last three and a half years at the arena, where Pollreizs has become a fixture. Event staffers wave when he walks in. Some of the players recognize him in the stands. The rest of the Slapshots members, who in most cases know Pollreizs only as Alaska, fill the empty stands around him.

The puck drops. He starts yelling.

The hockey guy

Pollreizs remembers his first game as a freshman at MSU, not long after he'd flown here from his home state of Alaska and started getting used to sunlight after 4 p.m. He was miles and miles from home: the sleepy but "strikingly beau-

tiful" city of Soldona, Alaska.

He had spent that whole day looking forward to his first game at a major university's ice arena.

But in the stands, students sat talking to boyfriends or girlfriends. The building itself seemed to frown upon "acting up."

"All of the complaints I heard about the building — you know, it's a nice building but it's an absolute desolate wasteland for in-game atmosphere — all of those complaints were validated," said Pollreizs, now a journalism senior. "And I really didn't like that."

It felt more like a social event than sporting event, geographic information science senior Jim Spiber said. "You couldn't hear the students from the other side of the arena and saw students chatting with friends, cheering only when the team scored, said Spiber, a friend of Pollreizs's who has been attending games since his freshman year.

"I learned very quickly the winter sport is basketball, so all the crazy lunatics went to the basketball games," Spiber said.

Since that first game, Alaska has tried to change that. It began with yelling, then a dance, until he became the extreme fan — "bat crap crazy" enough to break the building's atmosphere, he said.

"It's kind of developed into this crazy character type thing that I attempt to unveil at every hockey game, and it's just I'm doing my damndest to get everyone in that section as loose as possible because the rest of that build-

ing, that building culture, is just so difficult to work with," he said.

Students know him as the loud guy who leads chants and always wears shorts, even when it's degrees outside. Spiber has never seen him in a pair of pants. It's pretty sure it's because where Alaska is from, it gets to be 20 degrees below zero. But Pollreizs says it's only 10 to 12 degrees colder in Alaska compared to East Lansing.

"This is like spring break for him," Spiber said.

Maybe his dedication has worked: The section has doubled, Spiber said. It now has its own chants. Students follow Alaska's leads. They buy tickets their freshman year and then buy them again the next year.

"When you have people like him yelling and screaming, that's when other people join in," Spiber said. "When he's loud, other people get loud. He sets an example."

Leading the crowd

Tonight's home game against Ferris State is the most important of the year, Pollreizs says. Wearing a pair of beige plaid shorts, he stands to scream at the goalie and lead the rest of the section in chants. "You better make this loud!" he yells to the rest of the students.

Seconds later, everyone yells with him and "SIEVE, SIEVE, SIEVE!" echoes through the rink.

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To hear Pollreizs speak about his routine and to view photos from a game visit stateneews.com/multimedia.

KEANE SCORES CAREER-HIGH 27 POINTS IN WIN AT PURDUE

By Matt Bishop
THE STATE NEWS

West Lafayette, Ind. — Throughout the Big Ten season, Kalisha Keane has hit big shot after big shot for the MSU women's basketball team.

Thursday was no exception. The junior forward scored a career-high 27 points, including a

key stretch of eight straight points in the second half, as the Spartans put away a scrappy Purdue team

MSU 79 late Thursday, 79-64, at Mackey Arena.

PUR 64 "She was just not going to have Purdue make a run that put them in front," MSU head coach Suzy Merchant said of Keane. "She was absolutely the

reason why we came out of here with a win today."

Keane's 27 points — 16 of which came in the second half — are the most scored by a Spartan this season and the most since Aisha Jefferson scored 31 against Notre Dame in November 2008.

"I was just trying to be aggressive for my team," Keane said. "I think we needed someone to step

up and hit a big shot for us when they had cut it and their crowd was really getting into it. Luckily for me tonight, my shot was falling, which was a good thing."

Keane shot 9-of-15 from the field and tied a career-high with four 3-pointers. She added four rebounds, three assists and three steals.

"She hit some tough shots, she

was just hitting big shots," junior guard Brittney Thomas said, "We kind of rode on her for a little while."

The Spartans (20-8 overall, 11-6 Big Ten) looked to pull away in the first half, going up by as many as 17. Purdue battled back, though, trimming MSU's lead to two in the second half on what appeared to be potential game-

changing play.

Boilermakers guard Brittany Rayburn was fouled on a 3-pointer by Keane. She made the first two free throws but missed the third. The rebound went to Purdue's K.K. Houser. She dished it to Rayburn, who drilled her only 3-pointer — and only field goal —

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