

major boost from hiring Howard Stern and merging with rival XM—has prevailed. Radio buffs may appreciate the account of Sirius's evolution, but general documentary fans may find the onslaught of details overwhelming. Optional. Aud: C, P. (T. Keogh)

SPORTS, GAMES & RECREATION

Chasing Sarasota ★★★

(2011) 92 min. DVD: \$49; public libraries & high schools; \$249 w/PPR; colleges & universities. Seventh Art Releasing.

One might think of Ultimate Frisbee as more of a carefree pastime for college kids than a competitive sport, but don't tell that to the members of the Portland Rhino, whose 2011 effort to reach the Club Nationals in Florida and win a coveted championship is recounted by team captain/filmmaker Matt Mastrantuono in this engaging documentary. *Chasing Sarasota* captures the intensity that players devoted to their team over a period of six months—from initial tryouts to the game that could qualify them for the championship—while also offering insights into the lives of individual players. One suffers a concussion early on but continues to train despite the fact that he might not be able to take the field again; another gets married midseason. Tempers flare as games turn on a dime and Rhino leads suddenly disappear; dissension arises over strategy and team leadership; and as the championship contest approaches, a number of players are disqualified due to a clerical error and a struggle ensues to have them reinstated.

After watching *Chasing Sarasota*, you still might not consider Ultimate Frisbee to be a significant sport—but you'll probably enjoy having traveled with the Rhino during their often frustrating and occasionally humiliating quest for glory. Extras include deleted scenes, outtakes, a highlights reel, and footage of two complete games. Recommended. Aud: C, P. (F. Switek)

Off the Rez ★★★

(2011) 86 min. DVD: \$99.95; public libraries; \$395; colleges & universities. The Cinema Guild. PPR. ISBN: 0-7815-0622-0.

Director Jonathan Hock's TLC-aired documentary focuses on Shoni Schimmel, a 16-year-old Native American girl who dreams of playing college basketball. As Hock tracks Schimmel's progress over two years, *Off the Rez* broadens into a larger portrait of Schimmel's extended family, along with other Native Americans who have failed to pursue their dreams due to fear, racism, or responsibilities that make it impossible to leave home. Schimmel aims to be the first student from Oregon's Umatilla Indian Reservation to win a college scholarship. She has the support of her father, brothers, and women in her family, including her great-grandmother, Delores, who says, "That's what's keeping me alive." Her non-native grandfather, however, has never acknowledged his grandchildren, because he didn't approve of his son Rick's cohabitation relationship. When Schimmel's mother, Ceci, a basketball coach, transfers to Portland, Shoni and her six siblings accompany her, while Rick remains on the reservation to work (although he and other

relatives drive across the state for games). Schimmel plays aggressively, but her strikingly attractive, foul-mouthed mother exhibits an even tougher personality on court, partially because she wants her daughter to go farther than she herself did. Schimmel breaks her foot during her junior year (while scouts watch) and misses half the season, and her mother becomes pregnant with her eighth child. Despite financial hardships, the family remains in Portland for Shoni's senior year, which doesn't always go smoothly as she works toward a goal that is as much a collective as individual one. Recommended. Aud: C, P. (K. Femmessy)

THE ARTS

Ghosts of the River: Out of the Shadows

★★★1/2

(2013) 109 min. DVD: \$150. ShadowLight Productions. PPR.

El Paso and the nearby Rio Grande hold many memories for playwright Octavio Solis, who documented his childhood impressions in a 2009 shadow play directed by Larry Reed and staged in San Jose and San Francisco. *Ghosts of the River: Out of the Shadows* features two programs: a shorter documentary by Reed and Leslie Dreyer about the conception and presentation of Solis's work—in which the actors, often masked, are seen in shadow behind a screen (and shadow puppets reminiscent of those used in Indonesian theater are employed); and a longer performance featuring an edited version of the play. *Ghosts of the River* serves up a series of engrossing and evocative "ghost" stories about the border crossing between the United States and Mexico. Two Latino youths who swim to Mexico and back end up being confronted by a hulking, fearsome immigration agent who insists that the pair are trying to enter the U.S. illegally—taunting them unmercifully when one of the boys drops a word while reciting the Pledge of Allegiance. In other scenarios, the ghost of an abused and murdered woman haunts the river shallows, and a special agent named Fiona forms an unlikely relationship with "Nacho," an 11-year-old who helps smuggle people across the border. At the end of the performance, the audience itself is filmed in silhouette during a well-deserved standing ovation. An illuminating portrait of a culture unknown to many in the U.S.—presented in a play that entertains and informs with thought-provoking stories—this is highly recommended. Aud: C, P. (F. Gardner)

Great African American Authors

★★★1/2

(2013) 3 discs. 232 min. DVD: \$199.99 (teacher's guide included). Ambrose Video Publishing. PPR. Closed captioned.

This fine introduction to the African

The Hooping Life ★★★

(2014) 70 min. DVD: \$24.95. Passion River (avail. from most distributors). Closed captioned.

For decades, kids have played with hula hoops. Director Amy Goldstein's *The Hooping Life* concentrates on teenagers and adults who have made "hooping" a significant part of their lives. Art Linkletter, promoter of hula hooping in the 1950s, explains in archival footage that Australian kids got the party started before the phenomenon spread to the States. Suzy Melin, the widow of toymaker Wham-O founder Spud Melin, recalls telling her husband that the gyrating was too suggestive to catch on, but he set out to prove her wrong. Anah, an L.A. resident who got into hooping through the jam band circuit, finds store-bought hoops too flimsy, so she makes her own out of insulation tubing. Now she teaches workshops and performs at parties and promotional events. Karis, who lives in New York, participates in similar gatherings, except he adds a gender-bending twist to his routines, which brings him to the attention of John Cameron Mitchell and the Scissor Sisters. For Jeff, a ward of the state, hooping keeps him out of trouble. He credits an afterschool program in East L.A. for introducing him to the pastime, noting that, "It takes your mind off of a lot of things." The most recognizable subject here is NBA player Shaquille O'Neal, who loved to hoop in his younger days. Other speakers credit hooping with helping them to heal from sexual abuse and depression, which may sound like a lot of credit to give a simple plastic circle, but it's hard to find much of a downside in such a harmless practice. An entertaining and offbeat documentary, extras here include a behind-the-scenes featurette, "how-to" segments, and stills galleries. Recommended. (K. Femmessy)

