



Scotus Central Catholic

Rock Bottom

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Wallish and Rusher debut at Craft Boutique

By Aubree Beiermann

As the Christmas season arrives, many traditions come along with it. Some are family traditions and others are community-based. One of the yearly traditions in the Scotus community is the Craft Boutique. Held on the first Sunday of December every year, the Craft Boutique is an annual event everyone looks forward to, not just moms and grandmothers.

This craft show brings many vendors to Scotus' gyms, cafeteria, and, in the past few years, the hallways. People can be seen selling an array of items from wood cutting boards to Christmas decorations to handmade jewelry. Some of the vendors have been selling their goods for many years, for others, this was their first time.

One of the first-time vendors was the campus minister here at Scotus, Molly Wallish. Wallish had a booth at the Craft Boutique where she sold prints and stickers of her own hand-drawn and painted artwork. She also sold tea towels with her designs of flowers on them.

"I'm an artist and I've been working on trying to get a small business going. I needed a little motivation, so I signed up to sell at the boutique in the summer. This gave me something to work toward with my business," Wallish said.

Wallish sells artwork she made in college and after online through Etsy, but this was her first craft show.

"It was really nice having that in-person experience of people admiring my work or asking about my work. I liked being able to explain it in person or share it with people," Wallish said.

Wallish excelled in her art classes in high school and wanted to go further with her art in college where she studied studio art. After college, she taught art at Lincoln Pius

X before coming to Scotus. She has always loved making art, whether its for her job or her family.

"It's been a part of my whole life. I haven't necessarily turned it into a business until recently, but I feel like I've always been doing artwork for people or doing artwork as part of my job," Wallish said. "I know I have this desire in my heart that God plays into. I love working with my hands and bringing an idea to life."

Another first-time vendor was junior Jillian Rusher. At the boutique, she sold hand beaded full-sized rosaries, pocket rosaries, rosary bracelets, and keychains.

"I learned how to make rosaries in May of this year and learned quickly they make great gifts! I began my business in July," Rusher said.

Like Wallish, Rusher has only ever sold her products online through an Instagram account.

"I have never sold my products in person; I have only done my online form, so the Craft Boutique was the first official booth I have ever had," Rusher said.

This year, the Craft Boutique was the weekend of Thanksgiving, which brought in fewer people than normal. For first time vendors, it still seemed like a lot of people.

"I was pleased with how many sales I had, and I felt like the craft boutique was a great way to get my name out there as a small business," Rusher said.

Like all traditions, the Craft Boutique will be back in December next year. There, people will be able to visit and see both Wallish and Rusher's handmade artwork and rosaries again.

"I definitely will be at the craft boutique next year; it was a great experience for me!" Rusher said.



Junior Jillian Rusher and campus minister Molly Wallish sell rosaries and hand-painted artwork in the Scotus cafeteria at the Craft Boutique. This is the first time selling at the Craft Boutique for both of them, which was on December 1st.

Interviews introduce juniors to jobs

By Ava Rickert

November is known for its chilly weather, fall scents, and seasonal drinks. However, the minds of Scotus juniors become focused on something completely different as soon November rolls around - the infamous junior interviews.

Community members from the Columbus Area Chamber of Commerce come to Scotus each fall to interview juniors as if they were being offered a job at their place of employment. A long time tradition at Scotus, junior interviews take place every November in Memorial Hall. Students participate in two ten

minute interviews with different members of the community from various companies.

In the weeks before the interviews, juniors take time during English class to prepare a resume, answer practice questions, and learn proper interview etiquette.

Junior Alejandra Lopez-Martinez spent time outside of school preparing for her interviews.

"I talked with my parents the night before so they could give me advice and give me their opinions on my responses from the notes I wrote down that Mrs. Rusher gave,"

Lopez-Martinez said.

Regional recruitment director coordinator at the Columbus Area Chamber of Commerce, Rylee Seim, is in her second year putting on these interviews at area schools.

"It is so important [to have these interviews] because we are utilizing local volunteers who work in the businesses in Columbus, and I think it can prepare them for future interviews," Seim said.

All the volunteers, no matter what job they come from, enjoy being able to help the junior students prepare for real interviews in the future by asking them questions about what they are involved in, what their interests are, and much more.

Mayor of Columbus Jim Bulkley is in his third year of helping at the event as an interviewer.

"[It is important to have these interviews] because this is the real thing, this is what life is all about. When school is over, you want to have a job somewhere, even if it's part time, because you're going to college," Bulkley said. "So you need to understand the process and have help going through the process."

The interviews started by juniors shaking the community member's hand, introducing themselves, and giving them a printed copy of the student's resume, which highlighted accomplishments, awards, and service the student has completed throughout high school. After that, the interviewer asked the juniors different questions which would be asked at a real job interview.

Junior Emilia Gassen was excited for the opportunity junior interviews offered.

"Going into the interviews I was anxious, but I am pretty good at talking to people so

No Shave/Sock and Shoe sets the tone for the Christmas season

By Caleb Cameron

As the weather gets colder, excitement fills the air as Christmas approaches. During the Christmas season, there are many opportunities around school to support those who are less fortunate.

Every November, student council puts on a fundraiser to support those in need in the Columbus community. The fundraiser cost students \$10. It permits boys to grow out their facial hair and allows all students to wear socks or shoes not allowed in the student handbook. Student council has put on No Shave/Sock and Shoe November for 10 years. Science teacher Joan Lahm is the advisor for student council.

"When we started No Shave/Sock November, it was a national trend that many businesses promoted. We decided to jump on the bandwagon and to give proceeds to the Simon House," Lahm said.

The funds generated by No Shave/Sock and Shoe November are given to the local Simon House to help with their Christmas program. The Simon House uses the money to get Christmas gifts for children living in low-income households. In total, 136 students participated in the fundraiser.

Senior Sofia Karges has been involved in student council since her freshman year and is the student council president.

"No Shave/No Sock November has been a tradition for as long as I can remember. It's always fun to see how good or bad the boys' beards get, and I like wearing socks or shoes I normally don't get to wear," Karges said.



ANGIE RUSHER / JOURNALISM ADVISOR

Junior Claire Oakley greets a community member before her mock interview. Columbus Area of Chamber Commerce held junior interviews at Scotus on November 18th, which gave students the opportunity to experience what a real-life interview feels like.

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2024-2025 Rock Bottom Dates

October 10
 November 13
December 17
 February 6
 March 6
 April 1
 May 1

NO SHAVE

Scotus boys are required to keep clean-shaven throughout the school year. If they do not keep clean-shaven, they are fined and are given razors to shave during school by the administration. Many boys decided the fundraiser was worth it to bypass the regulations put on their facial hair. As a result, many boys walked around the school with beards, mustaches, or whatever stubble they could grow without having to stress about being fined.

Over the last couple of years, junior Seth Druempel has grown out his beard during November.

"It's fun comparing my beard from year to year. I knew my beard would look better

than last year, but I was still pleasantly surprised. I couldn't believe how many compliments I got as it grew and after I shaved it," Druempel said.

Students are also required to wear black, white, or gray socks and closed-toed shoes. The fundraiser permitted students to wear socks with different colors and designs. They were also able to wear any footwear they wanted. There was a wide variety of selections, as many students were seen wearing vibrant socks with their sandals, Crocs, or Birkenstocks.

Junior Helene Chard has participated in No Shave/Sock and Shoe November since her freshman year.

"The most interesting pair of socks I wore this November was a lime green pair of long socks with black spiders on them. I like to wear them because they almost rise up to my knees, which I like, and they are super comfortable," Chard said.

The Christmas season is a time of thanksgiving and almsgiving. Overall, student council raised around \$1400 for the Simon House.

Senior Mallory Dreesen has participated in student council and No Shave/Sock and Shoe November since coming to Scotus.

"I always like to participate in No Shave/Sock November because the money goes to a good cause, and every person who participates helps people in need," Dreesen said.

INTERVIEWS



Junior Andy Padilla-Arrieta talks to a community member during his mock interview on November 18th. Each junior had two interviews with a community member that lasted ten minutes followed by feedback.

once it began all my worries went away," Gassen said.

Many students were weary coming into the interviews because they had never experienced what a real interview looked like. Luckily, the community members anticipated the students' nerves.

Junior Noah Chohon's interview experience went smoother than he expected.

"There was no reason to be nervous because the people doing the interviews were all nice and supportive," Chohon said.

Toward the end of the interview, students were asked a couple random questions, such as what they would bring to a deserted island or if they would choose infinite time or money, which students had to answer on the spot in a creative way.

Before leaving for the next interview, community members gave feedback to the juniors on how their interview went and if they would have gotten the job if it had been a real interview.

"The interviewers were great and honest. Getting to do this was a great opportunity and great practice because I'll eventually have to go in for an actual interview someday," Lopez-Martinez concluded.

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Fangirls receive vindictive views

By Ella Hash



In 2010 one of the most influential bands of the century formed in England: One Direction. The 16-18 year old boys shot to stardom while competing on a popular UK singing show, The X Factor. While they did not place first, the band signed their first record deal with Syco Records and immediately released their freshman album Up All Night in November of 2011. As their popularity began to

grow, their fans seemed to grow by the thousands each day. The term “One Direction Infection” began to be used to describe the crazy young girls were experiencing. While this was only one term used, other media and news outlets used words such as crazy, deranged, and insane to describe the young fans.

Today, this is the same way many fangirls are labeled by media outlets. These outlets seem to go after young fans who are just trying to show their love and support for their favorite artist or celebrity. Fangirls are called fans for a reason. They know facts about their favorite celebrity that a regular person would not. While this may seem a little weird to some people, they do not bat an eye when boys or men obsess over their favorite athlete or team. The misogynistic way we as a society treat female fans needs to change.

The topic of fanboys and fangirls is one I have not seen many discuss. Being a fan of singers, actors, and athletes, the difference in

how I am treated when talking about them is disconcerting. When I mention my favorite singers to people, they often do not listen or scoff. When talking about athletics, more people seem to care and even include themselves in the conversation.

The difference between these two also brings up gender stereotypes. Most of the time, people and media outlets look down on fangirls simply because they are female. When a boy admires a football team, no one is criticizing him for being a big fan, he is called passionate. There are many men whose support for the Huskers is more than passionate, it is weird. I do not think fangirls are more passionate than these fanboys. Oftentimes, they are the same level of “crazy.”

Another way female fans get painted as “crazy” is when they dress up for concerts. Taylor Swift’s Eras Tour has many of her fans dressing up as her different eras. On social media outlets such as TikTok and X, these

fans are being bashed for dressing up or making their costumes. I want to point out that many fans of NFL teams will dress up for the games in the team’s gear or colors. The more passionate fans paint their faces or wear crazy costumes. How is this any different from girls dressing up for a concert?

While most fans are not crazy, there are some that do go above and beyond for both celebrities and athletes or sports teams. Most of the time, the “fandom” or supporters of these people or groups do not want to be associated with the extremists.

Fans have been around forever, and they are not going away anytime soon. As girls are painted as crazy by other people and the media, I encourage you to take a look and see if they actually are crazy or if they are dedicated fans.



Jillian Rusher / Rock Bottom Staff

Winter can't melt my heart

By Aubree Beiermann



When one thinks of winter, they might think of sparkling Christmas lights, candy canes on trees, and soft pillowy snow on the yard and roof. This is the best version of winter because the Christmas spirit in the air and people are enjoying the fresh bright snow. When December ends though, this idea of winter goes too.

In January, winter turns into a dreaded season for me. The weather is dreary and cold, cars are freezing and frosted over before school, and there is nothing to look forward to besides spring break. Even though everyone has their own problems with each season, I

believe winter has the most unwanted characteristics.

One of the main and obvious reasons why winter is the worst season is because of the weather. It has wind, snow, which turns into gray ugly slush, below freezing temperatures, and no color to be seen besides the buildings. The temperature drops and so do the colorful leaves. All the beautiful green leaves that turn red, yellow, and orange, now become brownish gray and lay sadly on the ground. Along with the dead leaves, there is dead grass everywhere, which makes everything look gross when there is no snow covering it.

The change into winter also brings the changing of the time. The time change is one characteristic of winter I think is the worst. The early darkness causes me to be very tired and unmotivated to do anything. The dark-

ness mixed with the ice and snow is also very dangerous to drivers. People usually go home from work around six at night, and by then, it is already pitch black out. With all these drivers and the hazardous snow and ice, accidents are more likely to occur. This is definitely

a downside to winter because I love driving around.

These chilly days make the months of winter drag on for forever. Usually winter only last for a part of November, December, January, and February. In Nebraska, however, winter lasts two more months. There is no definite spring; it’s a mix some freezing cold days mixed in with days that almost feel warm. There might be a couple of snowy days and then the next week there is sunshine.

The summer season brings warmer temperatures, which allows people to enjoy the outdoors. Camping, hiking, and swimming are

all activities I enjoy, and in the winter people are unable to do any of these unless people want their toes and fingers frozen off. Winter traps people inside of their house, either because of the temperature or the 10 feet of snow blocking the door.

Even though winter hasn’t melted my heart yet, I can see why some people enjoy it. First off, the anticipation for snow days and everyone saying there’s definitely going to be one, and then there is not, is exciting. Being stuck inside has its perks too. Playing board games and watching movies with my family is something I enjoy and don’t often do in the summer.

Despite winters unwarm qualities, people should try to enjoy it by being with family and celebrating the holidays. Holidays are sprinkled ever so often through the winter season. Romanticizing and trying to make the best of the holidays will make the dullness outside disappear. Instead of worrying about slipping on the frozen ground when walking to your car after a Christmas party, focus on all the gifts you got! When preparing for this winter, make sure to do your best to focus on all the things that make you happy.

“When preparing for this winter, make sure to do your best to focus on all the things that make you happy.”

Aubree Beiermann ROCK BOTTOM

Cheer catches unsanctioned controversy

By Ava Rickert



Whether it be volleyball, cheerleading, or speech, Scotus offers many activities for students to be involved in throughout the course of their high school career. Each activity takes part in games or competitions, practices, and team bonding, but there is one major factor that distinguishes them: whether they are NSAA sanctioned.

As a cheerleader at Scotus the last four years, I have heard my fair share of cheer slander. “You guys don’t have games or anything, so why should it be a sport?” or, “The

most physical thing you guys do is wave your pom poms,” and lastly, my favorite, “You guys don’t actually have to qualify for state, so it is not a real activity.” All of these are, in some way, misconceptions about cheerleading, and it should be an NSAA sanctioned activity.

Currently, high school cheerleading in Nebraska is sponsored by the Nebraska Coaches Association. The association hosts its own form of a state tournament, which takes place at the Heartland Event Center every February in Grand Island. Teams compete in various classes, and routines are broken down into several categories, such as Tumbling, Game-Day, and Traditional.

The first common stab at cheerleading is it does not have its own “games” like other activities, so it should not be sanctioned by the NSAA. Surprisingly enough, cheering on other teams at their games is not the sole purpose of a cheerleading team. Cheer teams around Nebraska, including Scotus, go to multiple competitions each winter to prepare for the state competition. Along with that, oth-

er activities, like one act and speech, attend roughly the same amount of competitions as some cheer teams do, but they get to be sanctioned NSAA activities while cheerleading does not.

Another common misconception with cheerleading is it is not a “physical activity”, so it should not be sanctioned by the NSAA. This claim can quickly be debunked by realizing not all NSAA activities are physical. Journalism, speech, and play production are all NSAA sanctioned and are not any more physical than cheer. Also, do not tell me cheerleading is not a physical activity until you have had to do a hundred high kicks in a row for a warm-up.

The last piece of criticism I have received concerning cheerleading being an NSAA activity is teams do not have to qualify for the state tournament like other NSAA sports and activities - which is true. Cheer teams pay a certain fee to participate in the Nebraska State Cheer and Dance Championships and do not qualify based on skill. However, this is not a valid reason why cheerleading should not

be an NSAA activity because not all NSAA activities have to qualify for state either.

Boys and girls tennis are prime examples of NSAA activities that do not have to qualify for the state tournament. According to the Boys & Girls Tennis Manual provided on the NSAA website, “Each school may enter one individual in number one singles, one individual in number two singles, two individuals in number one doubles and two individuals in number two doubles” (11). Coaches from each team get to handpick who gets to go to state. Tennis gets the privilege of being an NSAA activity even though they do not qualify for state, so why would it be any different for cheer teams across Nebraska?

Cheerleading teams are a vital part of schools across Nebraska, from cheering on teams at their games to performing at competitions and pep rallies, to being a positive role model to boost school spirit. For that reason, the NSAA should consider sanctioning the activity so it can be taken more seriously by students and fans alike.

Boys basketball wins big in home opener

By Sofia Karges

Lots of sports teams have mottos or sayings they hope will be an indicator for what the season will look like. The Scotus boys basketball team has summarized their past three seasons into one word: family. This year is no different.

The Shamrocks unofficially kicked off their season playing a jamboree game against Cross Country on November 26th. The team lost to the the Cougars last year; this year the result was the same. Ultimately, the Shamrocks lost 32-47.

Senior forward Caleb Cameron tallied a total of 7 points and 7 rebounds against the Cougars.

“The jamboree game was an eye-opener. We went into it thinking we were going to be able to come out playing our best without being locked in. However, it showed us what we needed to work on, and we were able to

fix that for the first game,” Cameron said.

The Shamrocks played Hastings St. Cecilia the following Thursday for their first official game of the season. This time, shots fell and the Shamrocks played together, which all resulted in winning the game 66-20.

Senior point guard Cohen Pelan was the second leading scorer of the game with 11 points and 3 assists against Hastings St. Cecilia.

“The first game went really well,” Pelan said. “We played great on defense, which then gave us momentum and allowed us to play good on offense.”

This year, the team is working to improve their basketball skills but also their team chemistry. The coaches took the boys on a trip to Denver this past summer to play in a tournament against higher-level teams that would challenge them.

Senior center Max Wemhoff led the team in points in the Hastings St. Cecilia game, scoring a total of 15 against the Bluehawks.

“We all have great team chemistry,” Wemhoff said. “A lot of us have been playing on the same team since we started playing basketball. Now, it feels like we are family.”

Last year, the NSAA released a shot clock regulation for Class C starting in the 2024-2025 season. To accommodate to the quick pace of the game, the team had two-a-days for the first two weeks of the season. They conditioned in the morning and had regular practice after school. Even though the days were long, the team is hoping it will pay off in the long run.

“We are more conditioned this year than in years past, and I credit this to two-a-days. We are also having more fun, which has made this season different already,” senior guard

Evan Steffensmier said.

The Shamrocks have six seniors on the team, each one having past varsity experience, which has contributed to the boys’ success over the recent years.

This is senior guard Owen Lindhorst’s second year starting for the Shamrocks.

“It’s comforting to know that we have as much experience and depth as we do, with guys that understand what it takes to win games and be a part of the Scotus boys basketball team. We have lots of leadership, which has helped us in practice and in games,” Lindhorst said.

The Shamrocks played Grand Island Central Catholic last Friday and Archangel Catholic on Saturday. Their next home game is against Omaha Concordia on December 17th.



Kiya Taylor / Yearbook Staff

Senior Owen Lindhorst drives the ball to the hoop against St. Cecilia on December 5th. The Shamrocks defeated the Bluehawks 66-20, starting off their season with a win.



Kate Hendricks / Rock Bottom Staff

Senior Cohen Pelan defends the ball at the jamboree game against Cross County on November 26th. The Shamrocks faced the Cougars in the preseason for the second year in a row, this year ending 32-47.

Girls basketball starts the season 2-0

By Jillian Rusher

The beginning of every basketball season consists of two-a-days, learning plays, and playing Hastings St. Cecilia. The Scotus girls basketball team started their season playing the Bluehawks and lost in tight games the past three years. Scotus broke this streak, Thursday, December 5th, defeating St. Cecilia 50-25.

Head coach Jarrod Ridder has led the Shamrocks for 16 years.

“The girls did a great job of preparing for the season with how hard they practiced leading up to the game. They did a very good job executing on both offense and defense,” Ridder said.

The Shamrocks had the opportunity to play Cross County in a jamboree before the

season officially started. The team won 43-38.

Senior Larkyn Mahoney led the team in scoring with 19 points against St. Cecilia.

“I think it was a good test for us to adjust to the shot clock. [It helped us to] find our pace we want to go at,” Mahoney said.

Junior Lola Doerneman had her first varsity start against St. Cecilia with 6 points and 4 rebounds.

“I feel like it was very helpful to our team to get all our nerves out and try out our new offense. It showed us exactly what we needed to work on,” Doerneman said.

After the home opener, Scotus traveled to West Point on December 10th to play against Guardian Angels Central Catholic. The Shamrocks won 49-40.

Senior Quinn VunCannon scored five points against GACC.

“The win against GACC was very rewarding. We hadn’t beaten them in all my four years in the program. We played very mentally focused, which gives us confidence for the long stretch of season ahead,” VunCannon said.

The Shamrocks will play a total of six games before Christmas break, and then will come back for the Holiday tournament at Lakeview High School.

Senior Sofia Karges had five points in the opener against Hastings St. Cecilia.

“We are focusing on going hard the whole 32 minutes. In years past, we haven’t played as many people, so we have gotten

tired quicker, but now if we get tired, we can sub quick. This has allowed us to play 100% the whole game,” Karges said.

The team played back-to-back nights traveling to Grand Island Central Catholic last Friday and Archangels Catholic on Saturday.

Senior Mallory Dreesen is in her second year starting for the Shamrocks.

Dreesen concluded, “I think this year, we have a really great group of girls. Our goal is to play fast and run the floor as much as we can, and we are able to do that because of how many players we put in. I am so excited to see where this group goes!”



Kate Hendricks / Rock Bottom Staff

Senior Mallory Dreesen defends the ball during the exhibition game against Cross County on November 26th. The Shamrocks defeated the Cougars 43-38.



Meah Sackett / Yearbook Staff

Senior Emma Brezenski shoots a layup against Hastings St. Cecilia on December 5th. Brezenski had 10 points and 3 steals against the Bluehawks.

Shot clock speeds up basketball season

By Ella Hash

For close to seven decades, the sport of basketball has been using shot clocks to speed up games. While this was first used in the NBA, shot clocks have slowly made their way into college and now high school games. This year, per NSAA rules, all classes in Nebraska will officially have a 35 second shot clock.

In the 2022-23 basketball season, the NSAA implemented the shot clock for class A member schools. The following season, they implemented the same rule for class B member schools. This past spring, the NSAA Board of Directors voted to implement the shot clock for all classes. The vote passed 6-2, making it the first time all six classes have had a shot clock.

While there has been some dissent on whether all classes should have the shot clock, most people have been in favor of the change. Senior Ian Karges has been playing

basketball since elementary school and is in support of the new rule.

“I think [the shot clock] is going to add an interesting aspect to the game we’ve been playing since fifth grade,” Karges said. “I think it’ll make us more active on defense because we’re trying to pressure the other team to waste time on the clock and force turnovers more often than when we would be on defense the whole game last year.”

With the new rule, schools have had to find ways to accommodate for the change. All member schools were required to buy their own shot clocks.

“Everything that’s new in the activity center, from the video board to the shot clocks to the new scoreboards, were funded by outside sources,” activities director Merlin Lahm said. “The sponsors [Great Plains State Bank and Columbus Bank and Trust Company],

the sign that you see underneath the video board and the sign that you see underneath the scoreboard on the east wall, that’s where those funds came from.”

Another change due to the shot clocks are teams’ offenses. With only 35 seconds to score, coaches will have to find ways to run a quicker offense and capitalize on the other team’s mistakes to score.

Scotus girls basketball coach Jarrod Ridder is in favor of the new shot clock rule.

“So I think for us, the biggest part of the impact for us as coaches is probably going to be the end of quarters. You can’t stall,” Ridder said. “The end of games for us [as a team] is going to be big because we’re a very big free throw, layup team with four minutes to go. You can no longer do that, so all of us have to have those plans in place.”

The new rule has had both basketball

teams practicing with a shot clock so they are prepared for it in the regular season. Both teams had a jamboree game on November 26th where they utilized the shot clocks.

“We’ve taken shot clocks up to the old gym, and in practice we’ve been putting 35 seconds up on the shot clocks and we’ve [played] five on five while it’s going so that we kind of get a sense of how long it actually is,” senior Mallory Dreesen said. “I think that’s been good to prepare us, so I think we’ll be ready for it in games.”

Sports in Nebraska are always changing with new rules and regulations. The new shot clock rule aims to speed up basketball games for all classes. Teams will learn to play with it, as the girls basketball team only had one violation in their game on December 5th. The NSAA is committed to this new rule, and it is here to stay.

Working out the winter off-season

By Austin Long

Everyone knows the saying, “If you don’t use it, you lose it.” This applies to any spring athletes not participating in a winter sport. They must keep in shape to perform well in their upcoming seasons.

In recent years, Ryan Baker was the one to help Scotus athletes do that; however, last summer Heidi Field replaced Baker as the strength and conditioning coach. With master’s degrees in curriculum and instruction and K-12 PE and now going for her PhD in health and exercise science, Field knows everything, from A to Z, in her field.

“[Workouts] will be like what we did in the fall,” Field said. “Sports teams have specific days they come in depending on what we’ve worked out with coaches up until Christmas. Then, we will reevaluate.”

Before and after school, Field offers workouts for out-of-season Scotus athletes. For example, dedicated track and field athletes currently not in a winter sport, such as senior Sam Olmer, are working with Field to get a strong start to the track and field season.

“We are working on a very delicate balance between explosiveness and endurance in the weightroom with Mrs. Field,” Olmer said.

Along with the track and field athletes, Scotus boys soccer players not in a winter sport, including senior Jacob Rother, are training for their spring season.

“We will host footies during this off-season, and we will also be playing in an indoor league in Grand Island,” Rother said.

‘Footies’ are mock soccer matches that

give players a chance to practice their in-game skills before the regular season. Usually, these are held at the Fieldhouse as the winter weather does not permit outside play.

In addition to footies, the boys soccer team will participate in an indoor league in Grand Island. As this also does not count towards their regular season record, this will help them prepare for the matches that count.

These athletes need to train not only their physical adeptness, but also their ability to focus. With that in mind, Field decided to incorporate NeuroTrainer, a virtual reality focus trainer, into the Scotus athletics agenda this winter.

“[NeuroTrainer] is a workout for the brain. It helps with attention span, being able to focus on multiple things at once, reaction time using peripheral vision, being able to read an opponent, and anticipation,” Field said.

While equipped with a Meta Quest VR headset, Shamrocks can train their brains with NeuroTrainer’s various activities to choose from. From dodging bombs being launched from peripheral vision to focusing on one dot amongst a swarm of dots, NeuroTrainer will help Scotus athletes succeed in their spring sports.

In the future, Scotus athletes will be using NeuroTrainer to prime their focus directly before competitions. Although, it will be kickstarted in their strength training classes or sessions prior to or after school.

“Most kids will see results in about 8 to



Austin Long / Rock Bottom Staff

Strength and conditioning coach Heidi Field helps junior Kate Hoffman set up NeuroTrainer on one of Scotus’ new Meta Quest VR headsets. NeuroTrainer will be incorporated into the Scotus strength training curriculum this winter.

10 sessions,” Field said. “They will start to see a big difference in their attention span and reaction time.”

For Shamrock athletes who are not par-

ticipating in a winter sport and are interested in preparing for their spring sport, meeting with Field would be a beneficial first step to succeeding.

‘Rocks wrestling takes down first tournament

By Sydney Stuart

High school teams change yearly, going through periods of exemplary leadership, athletics, and enthusiasm due to incoming and outgoing students. This year, the Scotus wrestling team has seen a new perspective in all these categories.

Shamrock wrestling has seen changes to their season including practicing at the Knights of Columbus Hall afterschool rather than in the morning in Memorial Hall at Scotus and having a significantly larger team than past years. December 6th was their first tournament and they found success earning 2nd place at the Lakeview Invitational.

Senior Spencer Shotkoski has wrestled all four years at Scotus and placed 4th at the Lakeview Invitational.

“It feels really good [to get 2nd at the Lakeview Invitational] based on my freshman year. We only had a handful of guys

and didn’t place at any tournament. Now we have 26 guys who push each other to be the best. The way we push each other in practice [shows] our hard work at tournaments,” Shotkoski said.

The team has 3 seniors, Spencer Shotkoski, Henry Ramaekers, and Gabriel Madora. The 26 Shamrock wrestlers have their eyes set on state duals with all of the weight classes filled except 106 and 113.

Ramaekers has wrestled since his sophomore year and placed 4th at the Lakeview Invitational.

“[Being a senior] feels good. It’s nice to be able to lead a group you’re passionate about,” Ramaekers said.

Junior Carter Sucha has been in wrestling for all 3 years of high school and is excited about the upcoming season.

“I think the team has taken steps in the

right direction as we look for many top 5 finishes this season,” Sucha said. “Overall, I am very excited to see our work pay off.”

Sucha placed 3rd in his division earning the team 19 points.

“[The tournament] gave us confidence as it shows we can compete with good teams and lets us know we can win,” Sucha said.

At the Lakeview Invitational, Scotus came in second to Ashland Greenwood, with many wrestlers contributing to the team score. Junior Hunter Brunkhorst placed first in 132 contributing 27.5 points to the teams total of 134 points, and junior Kobe Micek placed 2nd in 126 and added 20 points.

Micek was a state qualifier last year; this is his 3rd year wrestling in highschool.

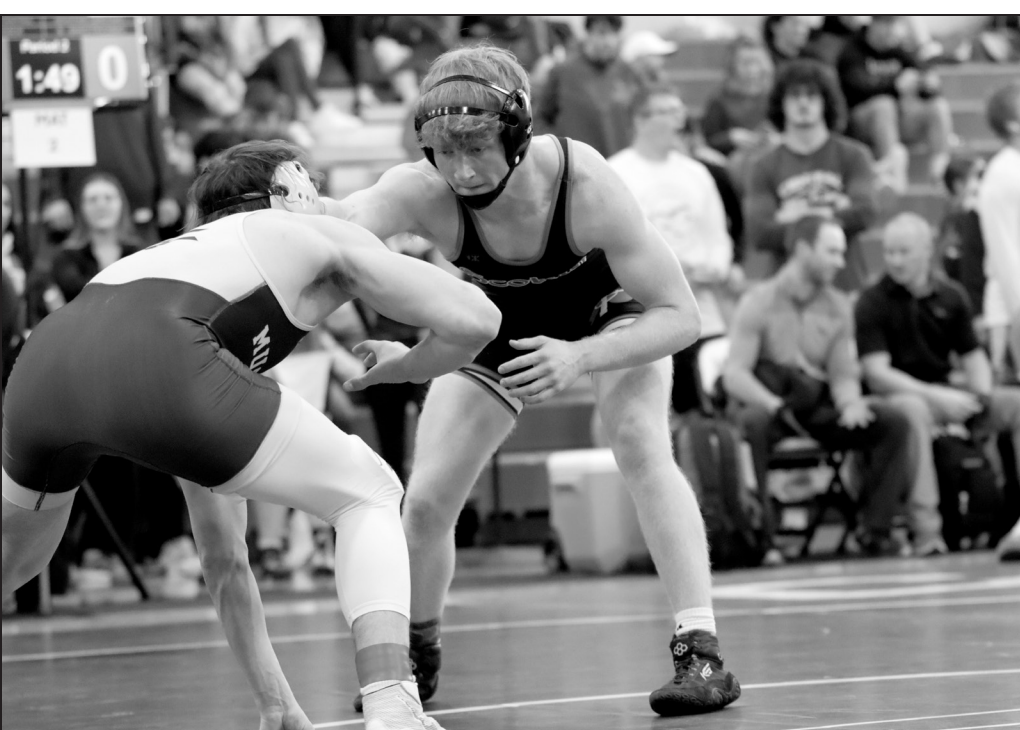
“I was pretty nervous going into [the season] then I won my first match, and I got back in the groove of it,” Micek said. “It gets

me really excited because we competed really well as a team.”

Along with Brunkhorst and Micek on the podium, sophomore Parker Newman and junior Mike Krienke each earned 3rd place in their weight classes.

Shotkoski concluded, “The one main thing I noticed [that needs improvement] was our stamina. We got tired after the 2nd period and lost a few matches in the 3rd period. We should all be prepared to wrestle 4 or even 5 periods and be in more shape than everyone else. If we can accomplish that, our season will be very successful.”

The next wrestling tournaments were away on Friday, December 13th at the Raymond Central Dual tournament and Fort Calhoun Invitational on Saturday, December 14th.



Adrianna Kush / Yearbook Staff

Senior Spencer Shotkoski sets up a shot against a Raymond Central wrestler on December 6th at the Lakeview Invitational. The team is hoping to make it to the State Duals this year.



Adrianna Kush / Yearbook Staff

Junior Carter Sucha earns takedown points and goes for back points in his match at the Lakeview Invitational. Sucha placed 3rd individually, adding 19 points to Scotus’ 134.



Adrianna Kush / Yearbook Staff

Sophomore Parker Newman looks to score from a front headlock against a Lakeview wrestler at the Lakeview Invitational. Scotus’ 2nd place ranking this year was the highest at the Invitational since 2015.



Adrianna Kush / Yearbook Staff

Junior Favio Rivero-Rubio finishes a double leg takedown against a wrestler at the Lakeview Invitational. Rivero-Rubio is looking for a varsity spot after Christmas Break due to the transfer rule.

Taking a deeper dive into diabetes

By Caleb Cameron

Diet is an essential aspect of a healthy lifestyle. The foods people eat affect energy levels, prevention of illnesses, mood, stress, and much more. It is important to eat a balanced diet of carbohydrates, fats, and proteins, but for diabetics, a balanced diet is even more vital.

Glucose is the body's main source of energy. The body gains glucose from the food eaten through carbohydrates. As carbohydrates are consumed, the body breaks them down into sugars. The body reacts to the rise in blood sugar, and the pancreas, an organ in the upper abdomen, releases a hormone called insulin. Without insulin, the amount of sugars in the blood will rise and the sugars will not be able to enter the cells and be used as energy. With insulin, the sugars are absorbed by the body's cells and converted into energy,

and the amount of sugar in the blood will fall back down to a normal level.

According to the National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases, diabetes is a chronic disease occurring when an individual's blood glucose levels become too high or low. An individual's blood sugar depends on the last time they ate, but a normal fasted blood sugar is between 70-100 mg/dl. A diabetic without insulin's blood sugar will be consistently higher or lower than the normal range. There are multiple types of diabetes, Type 1 and Type 2 being the most common. Some common symptoms of Type 1 Diabetes are feeling extremely thirsty, continuously feeling hungry, losing weight, and impaired eyesight. Over 38 million Americans live with diabetes, Type 1 or 2. There are many similarities and differences between the types of diabetes.

According to Mayo Clinic, Type 1 Diabetes is an autoimmune condition where the pancreas makes little to no insulin. The disease is caused when the body's immune system destroys cells in the pancreas that create insulin. The disease is nonpreventable with the only risk factor being a family history of diabetes. It is most commonly diagnosed during adolescence and young adulthood. About 1.5 million people in the United States have Type 1 Diabetes.

According to Mayo Clinic, Type 2 Diabetes is a hormonal condition where the body struggles to regulate and use sugars consumed through food. This leads to an excess amount of sugar in the blood. When an individual has Type 2 Diabetes, their pancreas still makes insulin but not enough for the cells to absorb the sugar consumed. Type 2 Diabetes has many risk factors including age, family histo-

ry, ethnicity, and obesity. The disease is most commonly diagnosed later in life. About 36 million Americans live with Type 2 Diabetes.

Diabetics are tasked with checking their blood sugar either with a continuous glucose monitor or manually with a blood sugar meter, taking insulin either through shots or through an insulin pump, adjusting their diet, and reacting to high and low blood sugars. If diabetics neglect making these changes, the disease will damage their organs, nerves, and blood vessels and can lead to increased chance of kidney failure, eye failure, and heart attacks.

Diabetes, like other incurable conditions is an adjustment to daily life, but it does not hold an individual back from anything. For diabetics, the adjustment to life is worth it to remain healthy and to be able to fully participate in life.

Type 1

An **autoimmune disorder** where the pancreas makes little to no insulin

1.5 million people in the US have Type 1 Diabetes.

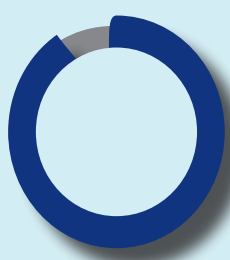
Type 2

A **hormonal condition** where the body struggles regulating and using sugars consumed through food

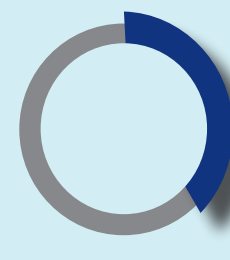
36 million people in the US have Type 2 Diabetes.

Did you know?

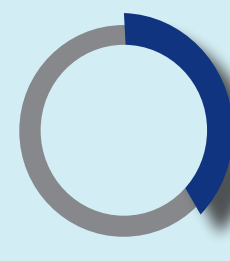
Diabetics have to check their blood sugar with a continuous monitor or manually with a blood sugar meter.



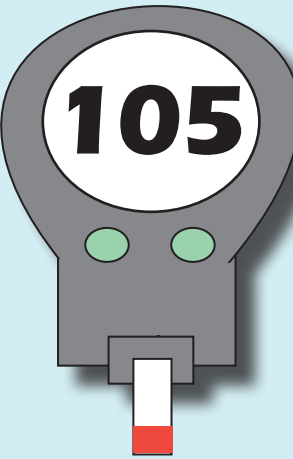
90-95% of people with diabetes have Type 2 Diabetes



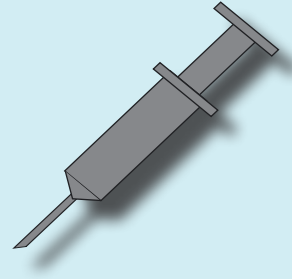
30% of Americans have prediabetes



30% of adults 65 and older have diabetes



Diabetics have to either give themselves insulin shots or use automatic insulin pumps to manage blood sugar levels.



Scotus' Diabetic Stories

Mara Hash

Eighth-grader Mara Hash was diagnosed with Type 1 Diabetes during Labor Day weekend in 2021. Her family noticed she had unusually lost a lot of weight, was always thirsty, and had to go to the bathroom all the time. When her mom asked other diabetic parents what symptoms their children had, it became clear that diabetes could be what was causing these symptoms. Mara was taken out of school to go to the doctor on Friday of Labor Day weekend where they tested her blood sugar and officially diagnosed her. From there, they took her to the emergency room in Columbus to put her on fluids and start treating her. After a few hours, she was transported to Children's Hospital in Omaha where she stayed for the weekend to learn all about this new disease. On Sunday, she returned home. She went to school on Tuesday and has been living with diabetes ever since. September of 2025 will be her fourth year as a Type One Diabetic.

Brynn Homolka

Junior Brynn Homolka was diagnosed with diabetes on April Fools Day of her eighth-grade year. She was experiencing all the symptoms diabetics usually experience, including urinating often, always being thirsty, losing weight, and sleeping any chance she could get. However, unlike most diabetics, Brynn experienced these symptoms for close to three months before they figured out what was causing them. The symptoms progressed as time went on until eventually she couldn't function like anyone else around her. They started in basketball season and continued through two weeks of junior high track. Her mom eventually took her to the doctor to see if she needed a therapist because they thought she could be having panic attacks. They didn't know what else could be wrong, but after explaining how she was feeling, the doctor suggested she might be Type 1 Diabetic. They tested her blood sugar, which ended up being about ten times the normal amount (around 1020). After being diagnosed, she was transported straight to Children's Hospital in Omaha where she spent the next three days getting treated and learning about the changes she would have to make to her lifestyle. April of 2025 will be her fourth year as a Type 1 Diabetic.



Angie Rusher / Journalism Advisor
Eighth-grader Mara Hash, junior Brynn Homolka, and seniors Sofia Karges and Caleb Cameron pose next to diabetic supplies they carry with them every day. These supplies include alcohol wipes, lancet pokers, needles, insulin pumps and pens, meters, glycagon medication, and more.

Sofia Karges

Senior Sofia Karges was diagnosed with Type 1 Diabetes in first grade, shortly after her seventh birthday. During the Christmas season, her parents noticed she was always tired, sluggish, thirsty, constantly had to go to the bathroom, and had lost weight. One day, after Sofia's grandma mentioned she might have the symptoms of diabetes, her mom took her out of school to go to the doctor and see what was wrong. When she got there, they checked her urine and blood sugar. She had high ketones in her bloodstream, and her blood sugar was way higher than normal levels, which confirmed she had Type 1 Diabetes. After the doctor broke the news, she was taken to Children's Hospital in Omaha where they immediately gave her insulin to bring her blood sugar down. She finally started feeling better. Her hospital experience consisted of playing games and eating lots of food, and she didn't want to leave. After three days, however, she returned home. Sofia has adjusted to life since being diagnosed, and now, just like other diabetics, it is part of who she is. January of 2025 will be her eleventh year as a Type One Diabetic.

Caleb Cameron

Senior Caleb Cameron was diagnosed with Type 1 Diabetes a couple of days after he graduated from sixth grade at St. Isidore's. In the weeks leading up to his diagnosis, he was always feeling too tired to complete simple tasks, would never have an appetite for food, experienced periods of blurry vision, and lost a lot of weight. At the time, his parents thought he was just going through a short illness. Eventually, his symptoms progressively worsened, so they knew it wasn't temporary. One night, after going to bed, he woke up a few hours later and threw up. His dad, who has a background in the medical field and knew the symptoms of diabetes, took him to the Karges household where he checked his blood sugar with Sofia's testing meter. (Sofia had been diabetic for five years at that point.) Caleb's blood sugar levels were so high that they wouldn't register on the meter, and at that point, his dad knew he was diabetic. The Camerons went to Columbus Community Hospital for a few hours but were eventually transported to Children's Hospital in Omaha. There, Caleb was treated like other newly diagnosed diabetics. After two days, he was released to go home. May of 2025 will be his sixth year as a Type 1 Diabetic.

What is something you wish other people knew about being diabetic?

"I wish other people knew I can have sugar and eat just like anyone else; I just have to give insulin for what I eat. Also, there are two different types of diabetes, and they are very different."

Mara Hash

What is a misconception about diabetes?

"Some people say, 'Oh, I wish I had diabetes, so I could sit out like you do.' Actually, they don't want diabetes. No one realizes how much work goes into simply staying alive."

Brynn Homolka

What is one thing having diabetes has taught you?

"Being Type 1 Diabetic has taught me to be grateful for my life. Everyone has struggles they go through; some people's trials are just greater than others' at times. Having diabetes just happens to be the cross I carry, and other people have their own, too."

Sofia Karges

What is something you have learned through the whole process?

"Living with diabetes has taught me to never take health for granted. I have realized the adjustments I have had to make to feel how I want are well worth the effect."

Caleb Cameron

Black Friday fades from day to weeks

by Austin Long

Black Friday, now known for its great deals and savings, has a darker history than most believe. A common myth surrounding Black Friday's origination entails businesses being "in the red," or at a cash deficit, prior to Thanksgiving. After the Friday and a few days post-Thanksgiving, these businesses would be "in the black," or profitable, and see major money making because of impulsive holiday spending, hence the name Black Friday.

According to *History*, however, Black Friday's true origination comes from the 1950's Army-Navy football games. Hordes of fans flocked to Philadelphia, Pennsylvania each year where the event was held on the Saturday after Thanksgiving. Because of this tremendous migration and the holiday, police had to work around the clock that Friday to keep their city in order. Traffic was terrible, and shoplifters took advantage of the large crowds. These negative connotations and more led Philadelphia cops to coin the name Black Friday.

Not wanting to continue the negativity surrounding the day, business owners used the "in the black" folk tale as a cover story. As a result, the Friday filled with scandal

flipped to spending sprees. Businesses were then genuinely in the black and considering extending the holiday deals for exponentially larger payouts.

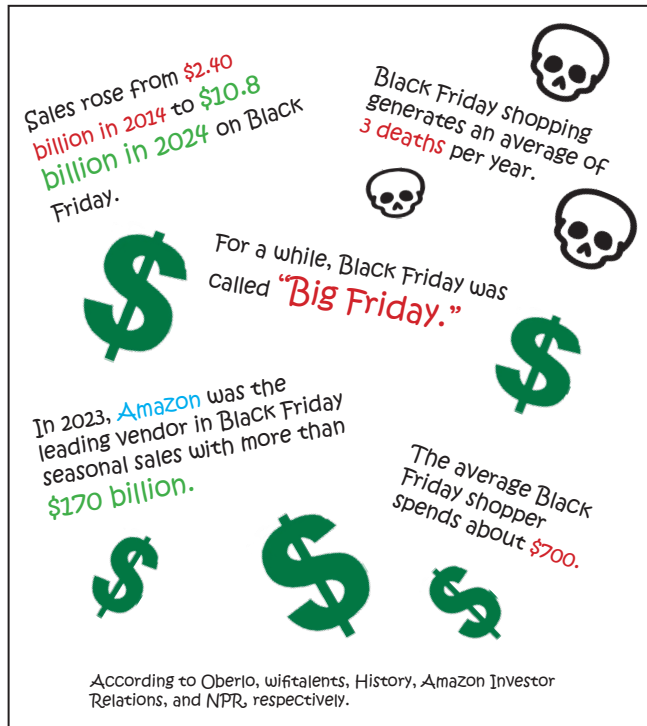
Recently, Black Friday sales have done exactly that. This year, big companies, including Walmart, Target, Best Buy, and Amazon, offer early and extended Black Friday discounts.

"[I would choose to have Black Friday over] multiple days; one day would be chaotic and very stressful for many

individuals. It would be good for businesses, though, because it would make people buy things without thinking since they do not have time to deliberate if the sale is worth it,"

senior Brody Splittgerber said. While having a one-day sale, stores actually put their customers at risk. With the main causes being stampeding and shootings, Black Friday has accumulated more than a dozen deaths and over a hundred injuries.

Transforming the day of deals into weeks would substantially decrease human harm



derived from Black Friday every year. Doing so would also give customers more time to think about whether what they are buying is sensible or not, thus eliminating silly impulse purchases.

"I think one day of Black Friday is better because when it spans over multiple days and weeks it loses the excitement and deals get more broad. When Black Friday is one day, it is much more exciting and businesses are willing to have better deals," sophomore Lillian Miller said.

All side-effects considered, changing Black Friday to span over multiple days would effectively water down the special day. This is where the controversy comes in. Some people see Black Friday as a day to celebrate, but others see it only as a way to save cash. Although, it can be seen as both.

"My family has a tradition where once you are in 7th grade and a girl, you get to go to Omaha on Black Friday with my grandma, mom, and all my aunts," junior Lola Doerneman said. "We rent a huge van, wake up at 4 am, and shop in Omaha literally all day long. We don't get back to Columbus until 10 pm. It's the best and worst day of the year."

Movie magic sparks holiday spirit

by Kate Hendricks

When the holiday season approaches, many people start watching their favorite Christmas movies and shows. Watching Christmas movies is as much of a tradition to many as decorating trees, making cookies, and looking at Christmas lights. These holiday movies bring back nostalgic memories and provide an escape from daily stressors.

On November 21st, a survey was sent out to Scotus students' emails about their opinions on Christmas movies. They were asked if they enjoy Christmas movies, what movie is their favorite, and which *Home Alone* movie was the best. There were 123 students who participated in the survey. Freshman Josie Westring has mixed feelings about Christmas movies.

"I like certain Christmas movies, like *The Grinch* or *The Nightmare Before Christmas*, but I'm not too fond of Hallmark movies because they are so corny and unexciting and

all revolve around the same plot: someone either goes back to their hometown or one of their old loves or someone from their past, they meet a few times, and then a Christmas miracle happens, and they fall in love," Westring said.

According to *Entertainment Weekly*, the most popular Christmas movies are *Christmas Vacation*, *Elf*, *A Christmas Story*, *The Polar Express*, *The Grinch*, *The Santa Clause*, and *Home Alone*. Junior Bear Scott's favorite Christmas movie is *Elf*.

"I like the vibe that Christmas movies bring. Will Ferrell is one of the best actors ever to step foot on earth," Scott said.

Home Alone is a Christmas classic about an eight-year-old troublemaker, Kevin, who is mistakenly left home alone and must defend his home against a pair of burglars on Christmas Eve. The sequel, *Home Alone: Lost*

in *New York*, tells the story of Kevin McCallister, who loses his father at the airport and mistakenly gets on a plane headed to New York City while the rest of the McCallisters fly to Florida. When Kevin discovers that the Sticky Bandits are on the loose, he struggles to stop them from robbing a toy store before Christmas. The students voted between *Home Alone* and its sequel, *Home Alone: Lost in New York*. Out of 123 participants, 99 students voted for *Home Alone*, while 22 students voted for the sequel. Senior Emma Brezenski's favorite movie is *Home Alone*.

"I love Christmas movies. They just make me happy and get me in the holiday mood. [*Home Alone*] is a classic, if it's not in someone's top 3 movies, there is something wrong with them," Brezenski said.

Old Christmas classics are an annual staple for many families. There are still

Christmas movies being made, but none have managed to become an accepted yearly staple among Americans. Senior Ben Sueper loves Christmas movies with *The Grinch* being his favorite.

"Every Sunday during the holiday my family gets Godfather's pizza and watches a Christmas movie together. [*The Grinch*] has so many quotes. I think my family quotes *The Grinch* at least 4 times a day no matter the weather," Sueper said.

Christmas movies provide a break from the busyness of the holiday season. The classic Christmas movies provide more than a sense of entertainment. Christmas movies are special, and who doesn't love happy endings?!

As Kevin said in *Home Alone*, "This is Christmas. The season of perpetual hope."



Scotus shares holiday traditions

by Abby Schumacher

Waking up on Christmas and opening presents is a common tradition for around 56.2% of students, while only 8.5% open them on Christmas Eve. Around 35.4% of students do a combination of both days. Some have to wait impatiently to open their presents while others stay entertained until then.

"Me and all my siblings wake up at about 3 am on Christmas Eve and sneak downstairs to peek at the presents and watch a movie, maybe play games too until we wake our parents up too," 8th grader Audrianna Splittgerber said.

Some ancient Christmas traditions date back to the 1890s in Germany and are still in use today. "My favorite Christmas tradition is when there is a hidden pickle ornament in our tree and whoever finds it first gets to open their presents first," senior Becca Kosch said.

A widespread debate across America is when it is the appropriate time to set up Christmas trees and decor. 78.3% of Scotus families wait to set up their Christmas decorations and trees until after Thanksgiv-

ing. However, senior Jordan Kouma's family breaks from those standards and sets their decorations up shortly after Halloween. His family does this because it takes them a while to set up and the decor has to be ready for when they host Thanksgiving at their house.

"[My family] always decorates the house together, and I enjoy it very much," Kouma said.

When they do set up, they have a record 17 Christmas trees around their house. At Scotus, around 47% of families have 1-3 Christmas trees set up in their house, while around 36% have 4-6 trees, and around 17% have 7 or more.

Statistically, most families relax and stay at one party on Christmas day and do not jump around to different family Christmas parties. This is a different case for senior Becky Policky.

"My favorite Christmas tradition is running around three towns trying to hit 3 family Christmas in 3 days," Policky said.

Christmas is the birth of Jesus, and, of course, people take time to recognize this.

"We always make a birthday cake for Jesus," junior Lola Doerneman said.

8th grader Noah Miller's family also has traditions centered around the birth of Jesus.

"[Everyone in my family gets] 3 presents because Jesus got 3, and then also stocking stuffers," Miller said.

Christmas Eve is when 72.9% of Scotus families attend Mass. Around 20.2% of students attend Mass on Christmas morning and only 9 Scotus students go to the midnight Mass.

"Our whole Christmas always starts AFTER Christmas Eve Mass with presents and waffles. One year we had to go to midnight Mass and it threw the whole holiday off," journalism advisor Angie Rusher said.

Some people pull pranks as one of their yearly traditions. One of these people is senior Aubree Beiermann. She finds objects around her grandma's house and rewraps them for her to open on Christmas.

"When my grandma first started to open them she was unaware that they were her own items! But then the next few 'gifts' came

along and she got suspicious," Beiermann said. "Then when she got to the final 'gifts' she was like 'alright guys these are literally my things!' And then we all laughed because it took her forever to catch on to this prank."

Wearing the same clothing while spending time with family is proven to symbolize togetherness and family unity. A few Scotus families participate in this tradition.

"I think my favorite Christmas tradition would have to be after Christmas Eve church we come home there are normally new pajamas on the coffee table waiting for us so we get changed into our pajamas and we sit down as a family, or we play board games," 7th grader Daley Olberding said.

Food is shown to bring people closer together when they eat together. It is also one of the biggest commodities around Christmas time.

"The sheer amount of food [at my grandparent's house] and people is awesome, and the food is always delicious," sophomore Lillian Miller said.

New opportunities offered in health sciences

By Madden Saenz

The health and science classes at Scotus have become quite popular among students. With Anatomy and Physiology, Medical Terminology, Advanced Biology, and other courses available to more students than ever, students who want to prepare for a future in the medical and science fields have a firm foundation to build from.

For the second year, the Health Sciences class taught by Joan Lahm will also teach BLS training in their current curriculum. BLS, or basic life-support, is necessary for anyone interested in the medical field. The training includes CPR certification, AED use, airway clearing, and more. However, instead of having nurses come to Scotus to teach, students travel to the hospital for training, which Lahm's instruction has aided.

"Last year I was not certified as a [BLS] teacher, so we had to have nurses come in to teach it at Scotus," Lahm said. "We decided instead of seven class periods, we would just take it to the hospital and do it all in four hours."

The ease of having BLS taught in such a short period has helped students be trained and certified faster and more efficiently.

"They have done a great job," Lahm said. "The nurses who taught them were so impressed with our Scotus students and how well they learned and were respectful, and they passed all of their tests!"

Thirty students from both Health Sciences sections have received BLS training this year, which will benefit them and others around them.

"Anyone who has CPR and AED training is going to benefit because if they happen to encounter someone who needs it, hopefully, they are confident enough to actually perform

it," Lahm explained. "I think everybody in the world should have BLS training."

However, for those who want to pursue a medical profession, CNA training has also been made available to Scotus students through the hospital's health science pathway program. For the first time at Scotus, students are allowed to take their medical education even further with various hands-on and textbook forms of learning. The instruction is led by CNA instructor and former OR RN Tracy Long, who also currently teaches CNA training at Lakeview as of last year.

"When we started the Health Science Pathway Program, including the CNA class two years ago, it started at Columbus High," Long said. "The following year it was picked up by Lakeview and then this year we started the program here at Scotus. We have one full-time instructor at Columbus High. I was the instructor at Lakeview, so I went to Lakeview in the morning and went to Scotus in the afternoon. So that's how it worked out."

CNA training is far more complex than BLS with various techniques and practices being necessary for those interested in just nursing, with large time and test requirements.

"The curriculum is a hybrid curriculum; they spend 46 hours in the classroom, 30 hours online, for a total of 76 hours," Long said. "It includes 42 skills that I demonstrate and they test, which they then demonstrate and test out on themselves. They test over 13 topics, and then there's a comprehensive final at the end. Then they go to Central Community College where they take a state test and state skills test as well."

However, the workload has not been a deterrent to eager students. Those taking the class are satisfied and eager to continue their



Addi Beiermann / Yearbook Staff

education under Long's instruction. "The training at Scotus has been extremely hands-on and the learning has been very individualized," senior Haylee Faltys said. "The instructor has guided us through the work and has made learning enjoyable."

With CNA training, students can take this education and apply it to their future careers while also using it to find work and job opportunities before and during college. "I plan to use my CNA training this summer and work either at a long-term care

facility or try and get a job elsewhere," senior Emma Brezenski said.

BLS and CNA training are being taught next semester, with two sections of Health Sciences and a jump from three students to eleven in the CNA course.

"Yes, I hope [these are permanent additions] because our community wants it. The hospital is very invested in it, and we have a lot of Scotus students who do end up in the health field," Lahm said.

The Great Gatsby secures spot at state

By Quinn VunCannon

What started out as one senior's passing idea a year ago, has turned into a state level play production.

The Scotus one act is producing yet another successful season, placing highly at all their events, and qualifying for the state competition for the third time in four years.

The home performance took place on Friday, November 15th in Memorial Hall.

Senior Madden Saenz plays Jay Gatsby in their adaptation of *The Great Gatsby*.

"With only one director, the cast has had to be self-sufficient, which means experimenting and seeing what works and what doesn't," Saenz said. "We are able to be extremely creative in every aspect of the show, and it has shown in our performances."

Their 4th performance of the season was held on November 19th at Concordia where

they placed 2nd out of 10 teams competing.

This year, 20 seniors head the one act cast and crew, including Lily Humphrey who plays Myrtle Wilson.

"Having so many seniors has created our own little community where we all work together to be that role model for everyone else. This group that I've worked with, no matter if it is a freshman or senior, is my family," Humphrey said.

On November 23rd, the Shamrocks took the stage at Central Community College for their Centennial Conference competition where they placed 3rd.

Senior Caroline Klitz adapted and wrote the script for the play as well as stars as Jordan Baker.

"Seeing something I wrote be so loved and excel is a wonderful blessing. This show

is beyond special," Klitz said.

The Shamrocks traveled to West Point on Wednesday, December 4th for their district performance. Being awarded 1st place finishes from all the judges, they came away with a district title and their ticket punched to the state competition.

Senior Jordan Kouma plays George Wilson and won a distinguished acting award at the district performance, along with seven other Shamrocks.

"The hope everyone had was special. The whole team wanted badly to go to state, and it felt like everyone was so invested. Our cast all plays their roles perfectly, all the way from Gatsby to the ensemble," Kouma said.

The crew has been a crucial part of the team's success throughout this season.

"Our play would be so awful without

our crew, but the cherry on top is the fun and positive environment they create for everyone else. So much positivity can truly make a difference," Humphrey explained.

Director Clyde Ericson has been to state a multitude of times throughout his tenure as director.

"We've always had a group of kids committed to telling a story, especially this senior class. This year has just been a continuation of the success we have been building," Ericson commented.

Scotus performed at state at the Johnny Carson Theatre in Norfolk on December 13th.

"I'm beyond proud of this show. To think this started as an idea I had back in May is crazy. I thank God for everything this year. He had a plan, and He's the reason for every success," Klitz concluded.



Caleb Cameron / Rock Bottom Staff

Junior Ryan Allen and senior Madden Saenz act as Nick Carraway and Jay Gatsby at a party in *The Great Gatsby*. The one act placed second out of ten teams at Concordia on Tuesday, November 19th.



Quinn VunCannon / Rock Bottom Staff

Seniors Madden Saenz and Jessica Jackson as Jay Gatsby and Daisy Buchanan reunite in an emotional scene. Saenz has been apart of the cast for two years, and Jackson has been in one act for four.



Quinn VunCannon / Rock Bottom Staff

Freshman JR Oehrlich, senior Ian Rages, and freshman Julia McPhillips perform for partygoers freshman Bailey Faltys and senior Abby Schumacher in *The Great Gatsby*. The one act placed 3rd at the conference competition on Saturday, November 23rd.



Quinn VunCannon / Rock Bottom Staff

Seniors Henry Chard and Caroline Klitz, Junior Ryan Allen, and seniors Jordan Kouma and Lily Humphrey perform a pivotal scene in the one act's performance of *The Great Gatsby*. The home performance was Friday, November 15th and was critiqued by science teacher Zach McPhillips.

Mock trial rocks preliminary rounds at districts

By Abby Schumacher

Many students during the year meet up to play a sport, practice their music, or create artwork together. However, there is one group that meets for the sole purpose of arguing with others. These are not just any arguments; however, they are arguments the mock trial team needs to prepare for trial. All the competitions were held downtown at the Platte County Court House.

Mock trial is a simulation of a courtroom trial where students play the parts of lawyers and witnesses. It allows them to have a better understanding of the criminal justice system and determine if they want to follow this career path. Junior Elizabeth Stoner, who plays the witness Chris Summon, has participated in mock trial for two years.

“I find it to be a fun activity that’s different from other activities,” Stoner said.

On November 8th, the JV mock trial team had their first competition of the year. Their team was made up of one freshman, two sophomores, four juniors, and one senior. Junior Seth Druempel was one of the three lawyers and questioned the characters Billy and Riley. This is his third year in mock trial, but his first year being a lawyer.

“I actually wanted to be a witness but being one of the most experienced on the JV team meant I was the one to step up,” Druempel said. “I originally did [mock trial] out of curiosity, but after my first year, I fell in love with the courtroom.”

The JV team then went on to compete the following day. They lost their trial both days and did not advance to the final round of districts. Junior Alejandra Lopez-Martinez was

another first-time lawyer on the JV team who has been competing since her freshman year. She questioned the characters Jordan Jones and Cameron Anderson and did a cross-examination of both.

“I screamed ‘hearsay’ without saying ‘objection’ first, and Gigi and Seth were laughing. I was super embarrassed. Even the judge laughed,” Lopez-Martinez said.

The varsity team had two competitions on November 9th. They won their morning competition against Howells-Dodge by over 100 points and barely won the competition against York 1 in the afternoon. Since they were victorious in both rounds, they were able to advance to the district finals round on November 11th. This was the first year since 2022 they had advanced this far. Senior Jordan Kouma was one of the three lawyers on the varsity team.

“I was confident we could make it to district finals. Everyone on our team put in great effort,” Kouma said. “I feel like we were the best prepared that we have been in the past few years. All of our witnesses were great actors, which helped us win our preliminary rounds.”

The teams met on Sunday afternoons and discussed matters with attorneys Emilee Higgins, Breanna Flaherty, and Tonia Soukup.

“We practiced together as a team each weekend. On my own, I read up on objections and watched previous mock trial cases,” senior lawyer Jessica Jackson said.

The varsity team went against York 2 in the finals round but lost by 4 points.

“I thought [the rounds] went very well.

Even in the final when the odds were stacked against us, we fought to the end,” senior witness Caroline Klitz said.

There was a new mock trial coach this year, Bill Policky. His daughter, senior Becky Policky, has been competing since her freshman year, but he had no previous court experience.

“I learned about a new competition I had never been a part of before,” Policky said. “I

was proud of every one of the students and the time they put into mock trial this year.”

The mock trial team will be losing six seniors after this year. Some team members have aspirations for the future, including junior lawyer Ryan Allen.

“I hope that we can do at least as well as we did this year. Even if we don’t do well in the competition, I know it will be a heck of a good time,” Allen said.



Abby Schumacher / Rock Bottom Staff

Senior Evan Steffensmeier and juniors Seth Druempel, Alejandra Lopez-Martinez, and Gigi Chilapa-Bello discuss their closing remarks during their trial on November 8th. It was Druempel and Lopez-Martinez’s first year being lawyers.



Abby Schumacher / Rock Bottom Staff

Senior Jordan Kouma presents an exhibit to the opposing counsel on November 8th during their trial. Kouma is a two-time lawyer.



Abby Schumacher / Rock Bottom Staff

Senior Jessica Jackson hands the jury a piece of evidence while junior Evan Pavlik waits to be questioned. Jackson has been a lawyer her entire mock trial career.

Unique topics take to science fair

By Kate Hendricks

From mice, fishing lines, and Orbeez, Memorial Hall had many unique science projects fill the science fair this year. The annual Scotus science fair was held on Friday, November 22nd. The eighth-grade class participated in the science fair, organized by the eighth-grade science teacher Annie Sokol.

“The scientific process is an important part of the curriculum, so that is why we do this project. The last step of the process is to share the results, which is what the science fair is. It allows students to show their hard work and how they worked through the whole process. It also hits a few standards for 8th grade in general,” Sokol said.

The judges for the science fair included students ranging from sophomores to seniors, the principals from St. Anthony’s, St.

Bonaventure, and St. Isidore’s, and a few adults from the community. The judges were then assigned to score the projects, narrowing it down to their top three favorite projects. Eighth-grader Logan Hall was judged at the science fair for his project titled “Type of Lure versus the Number of Fish Caught.”

“Presenting and judging went really well, and I felt confident,” Hall said.

Students chose a variety of topics for their projects. Many of them came up with their own project while others chose from a list provided by Sokol. Kaydee Wennekamp did a project on her pet mouse titled “Food Reward vs. Time it takes to finish the maze”.

“I looked at the list of options under the animal category, due to recently getting new pets (mice) and wanted to do something with

them. I spent probably around 10 minutes on the experiment and 2 hours on organizing the data and board,” Wennekamp said. “The part of my project I would choose to change would have to be using peanut butter instead of bacon, due to the large time gap between bacon and cheese. When I looked up the most appealing scents for mice, cheese and peanut butter were the first two choices that showed up, I thought they were close enough so I should only use one of them.”

Wennekamp was not the only one who included their pets in their project. Garyn Ramaekers did a project titled “Will the Lick make you sick?” Ramaekers’s project was awarded first place at the science fair. The other winners were Hank Sokol, Logan Hall, Lily Windedahl, and Kiley Kruger, who were

awarded second, third, fourth, and fifth place.

“I did the type of animal versus a bacteria grown. I am interested in science and veterinary practice, so I thought this would be a good project to learn how animals transfer bacteria to humans. I spent about seven days on the project. My favorite part about my project was watching the bacteria grow each day and seeing each day how it changed,” Ramaekers said.

Sokol believes the science fair went well and was beneficial for all the students.

“I also feel it is good for all students to talk to adults and upperclassmen they would normally not talk to. It prepares them for interviews for a job or for scholarships,” Sokol said.



Addi Beiermann / Yearbook Staff

Eighth-grader Kiley Kosch explains her hypothesis to the judge, parent and Columbus High School teacher Julie Kreikemeier. The Scotus science fair took place in Memorial Hall on November 22nd.



Addi Beiermann / Yearbook Staff

Eighth-grader Garyn Ramaekers explains her project to her judges. She was awarded first place at the science fair on November 22nd.

Musical *Wicked* revived in cinemas

By Sydney Stuart

Recall the ruby shoes, tinman, scarecrow, cowardly lion, Glinda The Good, and last, and maybe least the, Wicked Witch of the West, Elphaba. They portray fond memories from watching *The Wizard of Oz*. Glinda and Elphaba are back in the theater, but this time at the movies with all the catchy songs and beloved plot from the Broadway musical *Wicked*.

The musical *Wicked* adaptation was announced in 2016 and released part one to theaters on November 22nd, and part two will be released November 21st, 2025.

The Wizard of Oz is a childhood favorite movie based on L. Frank Baum's novel written in 1900. The story of the two witches caught the attention of many watchers, including Gregory Maguire who wrote the novel *Wicked: The Life and Times of the Wicked Witch of the West*, which serves as a prequel to the film *The Wizard of Oz*. Later in 2003, we came to know the Broadway musical *Wicked*. Universal Studios announced the musical's movie adaptation in 2016 and the cast in 2021.

From the actors and actresses to the run time and incredible storytelling, *Wicked* is a must-watch for all ages.

Jon M. Chu, the director, could not have picked a better duo to tell the magical fairytale. Starring in the movie is Cynthia Erivo as the Wicked Witch of the West, Elphaba, and Ariana Grande as the Good Witch, Glinda. To summarize, the story is set long before the arrival of Dorothy from *The Wizard of Oz* and highlights the lives of two witches, Elphaba

and Glinda. In the opening scene a foreshadowing of Dorothy and her arrival is portrayed, relating the movie to the *The Wizard of Oz*. New viewers unfamiliar with either movie's backstory can find relief in the detailed foreground set in the movie's beginning, easing them into the story.

Wicked captures viewers' minds because it tells a tale of friendship, heartbreak, and being misunderstood, producing comfort for all ages of viewers. It reimagines the historical context from *The Wizard of Oz* and transforms

itself into modern ideals and struggles. Elphaba is portrayed as a misunderstood girl from being unwanted for her skin color, which leads to deeper wounds to fuel her future decisions. Winnie Holzman and Dana Fox tap into viewers' hearts and cause self-reflections of times in their lives they relate to the characters.

What makes this a must-watch movie? The longer run time of 2 hours and 50 minutes allows sufficient time to include all the details to portray the characters perfectly. Chu knew it was a no-brainer if they wanted to avoid unnecessary cuts. The musical turned movie ends the first part of two at "Defying Gravity". In the movie, there are tributes in almost every scene to the original movie *The Wizard of Oz*, which is what makes the movie more enjoyable. Viewers watch in excitement to scout for these minor or major details.

Nonmusical lovers may argue 2 hours and 50 minutes is unreasonable and too long for a two-part series, implying if a viewer wants to watch both parts, they are committing six hours to watch a musical that originally has a run time of 2 hours and 45 minutes. However, slowly most movies are averaging longer run times, and series including *Star Wars* are averaging over 2 hours per movie. Musical enthusiasts would argue six hours is reasonable for the amount of details included and to avoid cutting songs, especially since the second part does not come out until next year, on November 21st.

Whether you love, hate, or have never watched a musical, checkout *Wicked* while it's

The Emerald City Train is real and weighs 16 tons



9 million tulips were planted for Munchkin Land.

It took 4 hours everyday to color Cynthia Erivo green



Information from Buzzfeed

Giving gratitude to girl dads

By Jillian Rusher

Elle Duncan from ESPN News once said, "When I reflect on this tragedy and that half an hour that I spent with Kobe Bryant two years ago, I suppose that the only small source of comfort for me is knowing that he died doing what he loved the most—being a dad. Being a girl dad." On January 26, 2020, Kobe Bryant along with eight others were killed in a helicopter accident. Bryant had been vocal about his love of being a girl dad, and after his death #GirlDad went viral.

I have a girl dad. Brett Rusher is highly outnumbered by myself, two sisters, my Mom, and dog, Molly. With no boys in the equation, Brett partakes in all of the dress shopping trips, including the fashion shows when we get home. He is an opinion when needed and generously shares his credit card to buy all of our finds. He deals with all of the

teenage girl hormones, whether he wants to or not.

We are so grateful to have such an amazing girl dad, the Rusher girls want to make sure Brett is just as grateful to have all of his girls.

The Rusher girls have done almost everything a person can do in an outdoor remodel. We know more than we would like about building a patio, and we decided to retire this service after completing our first with our dad. We have hauled away an entire evergreen tree by hand, pulled all the weeds around the yard, and assisted in the painting and building of our deck.

According to GodBuddies in the article "Differences Between Male & Female Friendships" it states, "Men Do Things together – We are more likely to bond by engaging in

shared (side-to-side) activities, such as sports, while women tend to bond through (face-to-face) interactions such as disclosing secrets, talking, and spending time together."

I might want to sit down and talk about one topic for a long time with my dad, and he would listen, but I do not think this would be his ideal "fun" activity. He would rather do something with me. With my sisters at college, I have extra bonding time with my dad. One of the ways I have done this is by watching sports with him. I am involved with his fantasy football team and watch Kansas University basketball and Denver Broncos football every time they play. In return, Brett watches *The Great British Baking Show* with my mom and I. Watching sports with my dad has been something easy for me to do. This has meant so much to him, for me to be inter-

ested in something he is interested in too.

When people see our family, they often make comments such as, "I guess you girls could use a brother," or "your poor dad." All I have to say about these comments are, maybe I would have had to do less yard work if I had a brother, but that also means I would have had less bonding with my dad. Having a brother would create a completely different dynamic within my family. Brett loves all of his girls, and all of Brett's girls love him. We would not have it any other way.

If you are a girl, and you have a dad, spend time with him. It does not have to be a complicated hangout, it could simply be watching the Husker football game with him, but do SOMETHING with your dad.



GirlDAD~A FATHER with one or more daughters inspiring them to be STRONG, smart, & BOLD

Deserving games in FromSoft's *Shadow*

By Madden Saenz

In February 2022, award-winning video game studio FromSoftware rocked the world with their new action role-playing game, *Elden Ring*, headed by FromSoft veteran Hidetaka Miyazaki with the story written by *Game of Thrones* author George R. R. Martin. The game followed the trend of previous FromSoft games like *Dark Souls* and *Sekiro*, with harsh, unforgiving, challenging, and innovative gameplay delivered through a visually stunning world with a diverse and complex story. The game received vast praise from critics

and fans alike, so much so, that the game was nominated for and won "Game of the Year" at the 2022 Game Awards.

With the success of *Elden Ring*, FromSoft decided to expand on the world of the Lands Between, releasing the *Shadow of the Erdtree* expansion in June of 2024. This seventy-dollar expansion gave players an even harder challenge with even more to explore and conquer, with over 70 hours of gameplay and content added to the already 130-hour main game of *Elden Ring*. The expansion

received the same high praise that the main game received two years previously; however, this praise has raised a large amount of controversy.

The Game Awards have several categories, the most prestigious of which is "Game of the Year." This year, the Game Awards changed the criteria of what is a game: remakes, expansions, downloadable content (DLCs for short), and remasters are all now contenders for "Game of the Year". The issue is many believe this snubs other projects that deserve recognition, since none of these new entries are entirely original or unique, usually building off of a previous game and its mechanics or relying on a studio's reputation.

The main complaint comes from fans of *Cyberpunk: 2077* and its expansion, *Phantom Liberty*, myself included. *Cyberpunk 2077* is a game rife with controversy, mainly due to its disastrous launch in 2020, but has gained renewed praise and following since the developers produced massive and constant updates, including the DLC. However, many feel *Cyberpunk 2077* was snubbed from both of these awards. Infuriated fans claim this is due to FromSoft's content and reputation since only one DLC was selected given the new criteria, making it seem like the Game Awards are catering to big-money studios.

Shadow of the Erdtree has received four nominations, including "Game of the Year." The issue with this is that *Shadow of the Erdtree* is not a new game nor is it a stand-

alone product but an expansion to an already existing game. Many believe *Shadow of the Erdtree* should instead be removed and have an entirely new award category created, or the Game Awards nominate more games. I agree with both ideas.

While I haven't played *Shadow of the Erdtree*, I have had the privilege of enjoying *Elden Ring* along with various other FromSoft products. With this in mind, I can confidently say the praise and acclaim are deserved. FromSoft has consistently delivered masterpiece after masterpiece and is an absolute powerhouse in the gaming industry, rightfully so. However, the powerhouse reputation and amazing artwork do not warrant an expansion, however expansive or in-depth it may be, to take the place of "Game of the Year." I am on the side of having *Shadow of the Erdtree* removed and re-nominated or allowing more full-fledged, no-strings-attached projects that have no expansion or otherwise be nominated into the "Game of the Year" nominations.

Relying on star power or nostalgia is shallow, tactless, and takes away from the whole point of the Game Awards: to celebrate talents, developers, and studios and the unique talents and gifts they put out into the world. Instead, the Game Awards should create a category specifically for those games that are redux or DLC. This way, those fuelled by nostalgia and brand name can have their cake, and those who appreciate art and individuality can have theirs too.



The Verge

The Tarnished travels beneath the shade of the Erdtree in FromSoft's new DLC (downloadable content). The DLC has sparked controversy over its seemingly pandered nomination for the 2024 Game Awards.