

GIRLS BASKETBALL MAKES STATE



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Scotus Central Catholic

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Rock Bottom

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Scotus announces new administration

By Austin Long

As life can feel like it is moving at a million miles an hour, changing every second, Scotus' staff seems to be changing that quickly every year. Next school year, Scotus will see a plethora of position changes with activities director (AD) and principal being no exceptions.

Scotus principal Brady Vancura will step down as principal, become Scotus' assistant principal (AP), and take the role of AD in the fall.

"It [is] an opportunity to do something I really enjoy doing," Vancura said. "I always had a desire to be [an] AD, be around sports, and get to see kids in a different environment having fun and building their character."

Gaining 2 years of experience as AP and 2 years as principal made Vancura an excellent choice for AD.

"I've seen it all from working alongside Mr. Lahm. I am still involved in activities related decisions such as weather cancellations. I've already done the AD side of it," Vancura said.

The 2011 Scotus graduate will assume AD and AP roles beginning in July.

"I'm excited to work in a different environment that is an important part of the student body and to be involved with the

S-Club and student section decisions because they are really important parts of our school," Vancura said.

To fill Vancura's spot as principal, Lincoln Pius X principal Terry Kathol will be joining Scotus. Through much thinking and prayer, Kathol decided to make the transition.

"Mr. Ohnoutka reached out to me multiple times over the past few years about the principal position," Kathol said. "When he contacted me again this year, it prompted me to pause and reflect on God's plan for me and what He was calling me to do. As I discerned the decision, more doors opened, ultimately leading me to Scotus."

Prior to being principal at Pius, Kathol was a teacher, AD, and elementary school principal at Hartington Cedar Catholic in Hartington, Nebraska. Moving from a large school to Scotus, Kathol will retain experience with a rural high school.

"I do not anticipate anything being overly difficult with the switch, however, with any transition there is time to learn the culture and operations of the school," Kathol said. "I anticipate this will take place quickly due to the great people at Scotus."

With a background in special education, Kathol's wife will teach 4th grade at St.

Isidore, further converging his family with Scotus'.

"I am excited to collaborate with teachers, foster excellence in the classroom, and uphold the strong academic tradition that Scotus is known for. I also look forward to meeting the students, learning about the

school's valued traditions, and working with student leadership to enhance their overall experience," Kathol said.

Kathol will meet teachers this spring to start building relationships and officially start in July as well.



Terry Kathol
Principal



Brady Vancura
Activities Director and
Assistant Principal

Herrera crowned 2025 Mr. Shamrock

By Quinn VunCannon

Sparkly dresses, hairspray, and pounds of makeup are what typically come to mind when thinking about a beauty pageant. However, Scotus' own Mr. Shamrock is not your typical beauty pageant.

For the second year in a row, Mr. Shamrock was crowned from a selection of senior men. The pageant included interview questions, a display of talents, and a runway model of an outfit that would catch a dream girl.

This year was the 18th Mr. Shamrock pageant, and it took place on Sunday, March 2nd. Ten boys competed for the coveted title including seniors Joaquin Azurduy Castellanos, Adam Gonzalez-Gomez, Eddy Herrera, Ian Karges, Owen Kluever, Henry Ramaekers, Jacob Rother, Brody Splittgerber, Ben Sueper, and Connor Wurtz.

Student council sponsor and science teacher Joan Lahm organizes the event with student council member help.

"Admission was \$2 or 2 canned food items, and the food items were taken to the Simon House," Lahm said.

Senior Eddy Herrera was crowned Mr. Shamrock by former winner David De Leon. Eddy wowed the audience with his talent of playing guitar and singing "Beautiful Crazy" by Luke Combs.

"Honestly I didn't think I was going to win it, but I felt pretty happy with the outcome," Herrera said. "I was originally going to sing Backstreet Boys with a couple other guys, but that fell through, so I had a week's notice to come up with my talent."

Senior Jacob Rother took first runner up,

and his talent involved an impression and costume of former president Joe Biden in a debate with senior Connor Wurtz, playing and dressing the part of president Donald Trump.

"There was a lot of preparation that went into our skit. I was really nervous at first, but then it was fun once I did it. I thought maybe if the crowd didn't laugh, I was going to cry on stage, but they did laugh. It felt like I was part of something," Rother said. "I was kind of ecstatic, I didn't have a real talent to show off, so I just got to goof around as Joe Biden."

Student council president Sofia Karges was a host for the night, as well as the choreographer of the dance routine the boys performed twice during the pageant.

See Mr. Shamrock, Page 2

Scotus welcomes familiar faces

By Sydney Stuart

When students return to school after the summer there will be new faces to Scotus in the classrooms. These teachers are not new to the Columbus Catholic Schools though.

After this school year, many teachers will be retiring, leaving teaching positions open. Scotus announced 3 teachers from the Columbus Catholic elementary schools: Cathy Hutchinson, Roger Krienke, and Matt Wallish will join the teaching staff at Scotus next year.

Cathy Hutchinson teaches language arts to 4th, 5th, and 6th graders at St. Anthony's Elementary. She has taught there for 16 of her 20 years of teaching. Next year, she will teach junior high language arts and 7th grade English.

"I look forward to seeing my former St. Anthony students in the hallways," Hutchinson said. "I'm excited to teach junior high students the incredible wonders of grammar!"

Hutchinson knew when the Language Arts position opened it would be a good fit for her and her expertise.

Hutchinson is not the only teacher from St. Anthony's joining Scotus' campus. Math and social studies teacher Roger Krienke will head the junior high P.E. classes next year. Krienke has 25 years of teaching experience all at St. Anthony's.

"After a quarter of a century at St. Anthony's, I thought it was a great opportunity. I loved every minute at St. Anthony's. My youngest child is a 6th grader, so I was fortunate enough to teach all three of my children, which was a blessing," Krienke said.

Moving forward from teaching math and social studies, Krienke is dipping his toes into a different area of teaching, P.E.

"The past two years I have coached junior high track, and I found that I enjoyed that age group," Krienke said. "My number one goal is to get our junior high students excited about the weight room."

Unlike Hutchinson and Krienke, Matt Wallish is a new face to the Columbus Catholic Schools community and will be moving

See FAMILIAR FACES, Page



KAYLA HOFFMAN / YEARBOOK STAFF

Seniors Henry Ramaekers, Adam Gonzalez-Gomez, Brody Splittgerber, Ben Sueper, Owen Kluever, Jacob Rother, Connor Wurtz, Joaquin Azurduy Castellanos, Ian Karges, and Eddy Herrera strike the final pose of their dance routine at the Mr. Shamrock contest on Sunday, March 2nd. Student council president Sofia Karges and vice president Ava Rickert choreographed the dance, and the boys had practices the week leading up to their performance to learn it.

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2024-2025 Rock Bottom Dates

October 10
 November 13
 December 12
 February 6
March 6
 April 1
 May 1

FAMILIAR FACES

from teaching 6th grade math at St. Bonaventure to joining the junior high math department at Scotus.

"I'm excited to be teaching junior high next year," Wallish said. "Over half my time teaching has been junior high math so I feel confident I will be able to help the students."

Wallish has been teaching for 11 years and 10 of those years were in Lincoln with this year his first year teaching at Columbus Catholic Schools. Along with teaching at St. Bonaventure this year, Wallish also was the girls' assistant golf coach.

"It will be helpful to be in the same building as my golfers so I can see them during the school day and see how they interact with their teachers and their peers," Wallish said.

For each of these teachers, Scotus will be a new chapter in their lives. Scotus principal Brady Vancura hopes to welcome them into the Scotus part of Columbus Catholic Schools. Vancura has been at Scotus for 4



Cathy Hutchinson
 Junior High Language Arts



Roger Krienke
 Junior High PE



Matt Wallish
 Junior High Math

years. "They're going to bring energy and enthusiasm, and they've spent a lot of time working with younger kids," Vancura said. "They are highly trained, highly educated

people who are very skilled as teachers. The biggest [reason we are excited for them] is you get new ideas and new perspectives on things."

MR. SHAMROCK

"There was a lot of planning that went into the event to make it a successful night," Karges said. "Mrs. Lahm does a really good job organizing everything and making it run smoothly every year, and I'm really grateful for her to do that."

Senior Ben Sueper's talent was showing off his karate skills with senior Owen Kluever.

"I signed up for Mr. Shamrock because I thought it'd be fun to dress up and show off. It was a little scary at first, but then I got going and it was super fun," Sueper said.

Senior Brody Splittgerber performed the song "Careless Whisper" with fellow seniors Ian Karges and Adam Gonzalez, with Karges showing off his skills on the saxophone.

"I signed up for Mr. Shamrock because I saw last year's performance and it looked really fun. I also wanted to make a memorable performance with my friends," Splittgerber concluded.



Senior Eddy Herrera accepts the Mr. Shamrock crown from 2024 Mr. Shamrock winner David De Leon. Herrera sang and played the guitar to the song "Beautiful Crazy" by Luke Combs.

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AI dependence halts critical thinking

By Rock Bottom Staff

In the '80s, '90s, and even early 2000s, many parents of students at Scotus Central Catholic were learning how to use a computer and handheld phones, essentially living in what could be considered the "stone age" to our time. Our parents used their free time to hang out with friends and cruise around town. Contrary to their time in high school, our years have been spent by scrolling through TikTok and other social media apps. Now, our feeds are being bombarded by the newest technology advancement: AI videos and assistants.

Websites such as ChatGPT, OpenAI, and Snapchat AI are available at the fingertips of millions of individuals. They allow anyone to type a question into their software and the question will be answered in seconds. Want a five paragraph essay over the book *1984*? Type a short sentence and ChatGPT can have the essay ready within thirty seconds! As students, society's recent views towards AI and its "dependability" is disappointing. The general public would rather invest their time and effort into integrating AI technologies into everyday life, especially schools, than

worry about the students' lives that will be affected.

Last semester in one of the senior English classes, students were able to use AI on their essays. The only stipulation was the AI was used to a minimum. Some used this rule to their advantage, only using sites to look up more descriptive words or to help reword a sentence. Others, however, completely disregarded the rule and used ChatGPT to write their whole essay. While this instance is blatant cheating, the students were not reprimanded as the teacher could not find where the AI started or ended.

Students who actually do their own work are being put in a difficult position by AI. At Scotus, the school pays extra on Turnitin.com for AI checking, but that in itself is using AI to check for AI. How can this clearly tell the difference between what a student writes themselves or what another AI software writes?

Many teachers have taken to social media to share their thoughts on the AI epidemic, and most have come to the conclusion that AI is causing more harm than benefit for stu-

dents. According to the *Pew Research Center*, 35% of high school teachers see AI as a harm in the classroom, while 7% say the benefits outweigh the harms. The other 58% either are not sure about AI or see both harm and benefit.

As students, we can see the harms AI has on our peers easier than our teachers can. There are multiple instances where there is a dependence on AI functions on websites. Some students cannot go through a simple homework assignment without asking their Snapchat AI for an answer to a question. The critical thinking most students should be doing on their assignments has been deduced to asking some website to do the homework for them. No wonder older generations call ours one of the dumbest.

While there are ways students search for AI websites, most apps and school websites we use have now opted to utilize AI. Snapchat was one of the first social media platforms to include an AI assistant for its users. Now, Instagram, or Meta platforms, and X also have AI features that will answer any question the user poses. Along with social media apps,

school platforms such as Microsoft Office and digital presentation websites have integrated AI to "help" with whatever the user needs. These technologies could be great, but they lead to a dependence which we do not and should not need.

Even though schools are becoming more technology focused, it's time to step back and reevaluate what we're doing. Although we hate to admit it, the only way to thoroughly eliminate AI in schoolwork is to switch back to paper and pencil, keeping homework and assignments in the classroom. Teachers should evaluate their students' strengths at the beginning of the school year, then determine if some are using AI on their homework. If this happens, then timed, handwritten assignments should become the norm in classrooms, putting an end to the use of AI.

With AI on the rise, our classrooms have been changed in ways many cannot comprehend. This new technology revolution is not what our parents faced in their high school days. This is something bigger that will change education for the worse in the long run if left unchecked.



Kate Hendricks/Rock Bottom Staff

Academic success stems from effort

By Ava Rickert



I am tired of constantly hearing the remarks, "You are so lucky you did good on the test, I definitely failed," or, "How are you doing good in so-and-so's class? I swear the teacher hates me, she must love you!" I am not "lucky" I aced my test - I studied for three hours the night before. Also, I am not doing well in a class because the teacher loves me - I turn in all my homework on time and pay attention in class. Students in this generation need to realize being smart is not a gift people are given the day they are born, but instead it

is a choice they make and continue to make every day.

My entire life I have been considered the "gifted" child of the Rickert family. In kindergarten I learned my word ring as fast as humanly possible, was assigned the maximum number of A.R. points throughout junior high, and scored a 31 ACT as a sophomore taking it for the first time. Some people might look in on my life and chalk up my smarts to luck or a gift I have always possessed. However, the assumption of smartness being an attribute someone is born with is completely false, and the first step to becoming smart is realizing intelligence is a quality one must seek out themselves.

One way to do this is to take advantage of study halls. Regardless of how generic it sounds, study halls are literally my saving grace when it comes to getting work done and getting ahead of my classes. There are many people in my study hall who take the time for granted. The same people who complain about their poor grades or beg me for my Quizlets the night before every test are the

same people who spend the entirety of their study hall playing Clash of Clans or watching Netflix. If they had made the simple decision to prioritize their academics over games on their Lenovos, they would see how intelligent they have the potential to become if they apply themselves to their studies.

Many people who are in numerous sports and extracurricular activities often find themselves stressed out by the homework load that comes with being a highschooler. This is often used as an excuse as to why they do bad on a test or do not finish an assignment. This is not a valid justification for not getting work done. Trust me, I have been there too. I have played multiple sports throughout my time at Scotus and am in almost every club imaginable. Despite this, I still manage to stay on top of my work at all times. This can be achieved by learning to utilize every drop of free time offered throughout the day. Whether it be studying on the bus ride home from a game or coming in early to ask a teacher a question, being smart is something everyone can achieve, no matter the frenzied schedule

one may have.

Some are probably thinking, "Who is she to say being smart is a choice? Some people can't help it!" It's true - some people ARE smarter than others. I am smarter than my sisters and there are most definitely people out there who are smarter than me. I am not saying I am better than those people who struggle in academics more than I do. However, there is a vast difference between not being smart and not trying to be smart. Everyone can attempt to gain intelligence, regardless if it comes to them naturally or not.

My advice is to not complain about doing poorly on a test - study the extra three hours the night before (even if you want to fall asleep the entire time). Do not swear you failed a class because the teacher hates you - turn in all assignments on time and pay attention in class. If you do this, not only will grades improve, but you will realize all along, all you had to do was choose to be smart.

Failure forms a finer future

By Quinn VunCannon



Losing is a good thing. This might seem like a jarring statement for any athlete or anyone who is even a little bit competitive, but it really is the truth. My dad likes to say winning makes you soft, and I couldn't agree more. The culture of participation trophies and the sentiment 'everyone's a winner as long as you try your hardest' is ruining kids' attitudes and creating a generation of young people who don't know how to overcome adversity.

Losing helps you develop a truer sense

of self, gives you motivation in ongoing challenges, and helps you to face even harder realities down the road.

Everyone has heard the phrase 'character is who you are when no one is looking', and while this is a good reminder, I disagree to some extent. I believe character is who you become when things aren't going your way.

Did you get a -22 on your last Calculus test? Awesome, you now have two choices. One, study extra hard and ace the retake, or two, sulk about your bad grade, forget about the retake, and fail the class.

Even though in that situation losing was more like failure to succeed, the same lesson applies. If you want to discover who you truly are, you have to fail. Making choices is so incredibly easy

when you're winning, but when you fail, you actually get to see what kind of person you truly are because you're faced with a hard choice. Are you hard working, or are you lazy? The only way to find out is your response to setbacks.

Another element losing helps is motivation. Now, I'm not saying it feels good to lose. Trust me, I've choked away too many close golf tournaments to say that, but I am saying because of those experiences losing, I had a drive to achieve more and win my next tournaments. When you lose, it gives you that much more drive to achieve your goals.

The last point I want to make is this:

“Going through loss right now will build a strong character for even tougher situations in the future.”

Quinn VunCannon ROCK BOTTOM

losing, even in trivial matters growing up, prepares you for the real world.

I hate to burst anyone's bubble of naivety, but once you leave high school, the world is not as peachy as it seems inside the walls of Scotus. A sad reality of going into adulthood is facing a no. I know many young adults in my own life who have sent in hundreds of job applications and done dozens of interviews, only to get rejected at every turn. Situations like these, where your family might not have food on the table, seem much more dire than whatever failure you're facing right now as a high school student.

If you have faced a failure that felt significant before, it might make the burden of your future job search a little easier. Going through loss right now will build a strong character for even tougher situations in the future.

Does losing a district final basketball game suck? The answer is yes, but facing challenges now as a highschool student and younger does miles and miles of important character building that will only help you in the future.

Cheer improves scores at state

By Ava Rickert

As the end of February draws near, winter sports all prepare for one thing: postseason competition. What some don't realize is while cheerleaders are supporting the teams as they wrap up their seasons, they are also perfecting routines and techniques as they prepare for their final performances of the season at the State cheer competition.

On February 22nd, the Scotus cheerleaders traveled to Grand Island to show off their routines at state. The team competed in two categories: Non-Tumbling and Gameday. Last year their Gameday routine scored 11 out of 24, and Non-Tumbling scored 11 out of 11. These disappointing results fueled a fire in the team's hearts to cheer to their full potential this year. The cheerleaders spent many Saturday practices, early mornings, and sports games perfecting their routines to better prepare for state.

This year was the first time the team's routines were not made by the seniors. In-

stead, both performances were crafted by the team's choreographer, Shay Deidel.

Senior Raya Kluever is a captain and performed at her fourth state competition.

"Having a choreographer this year for cheer really improved our scores at state because she made sure we had all the required elements and was able to critique us throughout the year, allowing us to really improve," Kluever said.

Their Non-Tumbling routine placed 4 out of 12, the highest the team has placed in the category since 2021.

Junior Eva Foreman is in her third year on the cheerleading squad.

"Placing higher than we usually do was an amazing experience because we know that we can keep improving from here!" Foreman said.

The team's Gameday performance placed 6 out of 23 teams, which was another big jump from past years' results. The team had

zero deductions and hit all stunts in both of their routines.

Sofia Karges is one of three seniors and has been on the team since her freshman year.

"The most memorable part of state was placing fourth and sixth my senior year!" Karges said. "We had never placed that high before, and it was so exciting to hear our team get called!"

Unlike past years, the team performed in the afternoon as opposed to the early morning. This made it easier for the girls to feel more prepared heading into the routines.

Sophomore Kennedy Krueger is a base in one of the team's stunt groups.

"[Performing in] the afternoon was so much better because I was more awake and had way more energy!" Krueger said.

State cheer can be an overwhelming atmosphere, which is notably different from normal competitions. However, the team was comforted by the family and friends who

made the trip to support them.

Sophomore Libby Langan is a flyer for one of the stunt groups in the routines.

"[My favorite part] was standing behind the curtain waiting to go on and when we were running out, just seeing all of the Shamrock fans who came to support us," Langan said.

The cheer team's season will end after girls and boys basketball come to a close in March.

Sophomore Emma Wangler wrapped up her second cheer season at the state competition.

"This cheer season was a lot of hard work, but it paid off in the end. Even though we didn't get first at state, we have so many positive things to look back on," Wangler concluded.



Kiya Taylor / Yearbook Staff

Junior Sophia Langan jumps out with a sign during the team's Gameday performance at the Heartland Event Center on February 22nd. The Gameday routine consisted of a band chant, two cheers, and the school's fight song.



Kiya Taylor / Yearbook Staff

Sophomore Naomi Robertson waves to the crowd during the team's Non-Tumbling routine at state cheer on February 22nd. The team placed 4th out of 12 teams in the Non-Tumbling category.

Girls basketball returns to state tournament

By Jillian Rusher

In 2018, the Shamrock girls basketball team was the C1 Nebraska State Champion. Since then, Scotus girls basketball has not returned to the state tournament. With many district final tries, the team has not made it back to Lincoln. On Friday, February 28th, the Shamrocks were able to defeat the Broken Bow Indians in the district final, ending the 7-year drought.

Senior Emma Brezenski is a four-year starter for the Shamrocks.

"We were all so motivated to get the win for each other, especially since our freshman and sophomore year we had lost in the district final, so having it be our last chance to make it to state we were all super excited and motivated," Brezenski said.

Not only was Scotus back in the district final, but they were also able to host on their home court. Head coach Jarrod Ridder was also the coach of the championship team in 2018.

"The student section was there early and affected the game during warmups all the way until it was over. We had such a fun, big crowd, and our kids fed off that energy," Ridder said.

The team led 24-8 at half and defeated the Indians 47-30, punching their ticket to the state tournament. Senior Quinn VunCannon is one of the six seniors on this year's team.

"I cannot say enough about the leaders we have on this team. No one plays for individual glory; everyone puts the team first,"

VunCannon said.

No one, including the six seniors, has played in the basketball state tournament before.

Senior Sofia Karges is a second-year starter for the Shamrocks.

"These seniors have been everything to me. It means so much more to make it to state with them by my side, especially since we've grown up dreaming about this. Now we get to be the ones for other little girls to look up to and be inspiration for. I love these girls so much and wouldn't be who I am without them," Karges said.

To make it to the district final, Scotus defeated Logan View Scribner-Snyder (61-32), along with Battle Creek (48-37) in the sub district rounds. Scotus was the top seed giving them the opportunity to host.

"We all want to win for each other. No one cares about stats or being the all-star on the team, we understand our roles and play to each other's strengths in order to win," Brezenski said.

These wins along with their win over Broken Bow make the Shamrocks current record 21-4. Junior Lola Doerneman had seven points during the district final and is a first-year starter for the team.

"No matter what happens, we are in it together. Our team has been united throughout this entire season, why would that change now? I am so proud of everyone on our team and how hard we've worked, and I can't wait

to play in the state tournament with them," Doerneman said.

At the end of the game, coach Ridder celebrated by jumping into the student section along with the team.

Ridder concluded, "They are all won-

derful teammates on and off the court. They have worked hard together and I'm very proud of all these kids."

The Shamrocks played at Devaney in Lincoln on Wednesday at 1:30 against Minden.



Jillian Rusher / Rock Bottom Staff

Senior Mallory Dreesen shoots a jump shot in the first half of district final against Broken Bow on February 28th. Dreesen finished the game with eleven points against the Indians.



Jillian Rusher / Rock Bottom Staff

Junior Lola Doerneman dribbles down the court on Friday, February 28th at the district final against Broken Bow. The Shamrocks defeated the Indians 47-30.



Angie Rusher / Journalism Advisor

Scotus Rowdy Dowdies cheer on the girls basketball team at the district final Friday, February 28th. Junior Evan Pavlik wore the leprechaun mascot costume at the game.

Wrestling qualifies seven; Rivero places sixth

By Ella Hash

The Scotus Central Catholic wrestling team competed at the district C-1 wrestling meet in Malcolm on February 15th, qualifying seven members for state. This was the second most in school history, coming short of the nine qualifiers in 2016. Of the seven qualifiers, one placed first, five placed third, and one placed fourth. There were two returning qualifiers on the team while the rest made their first state berths.

Senior Henry Ramaekers wrestled in the 190 weight class this year and placed third at districts, winning the match 8-4. This was Ramaekers first time qualifying for state.

“It feels really good [to make it to state]. I’ve only been wrestling for about three years, and when you start wrestling, I think [state] is everybody’s goal,” Ramaekers said. “I’m really proud of myself and also my teammates who have worked all year to make it there. I think it’s just a great accomplishment and any matches after you get there is just the cherry on top.”

There was a four day turnaround from districts to state, giving wrestlers some time to prepare for their first match. Nebraska weather caused some issues during these four days with freezing temperatures and heavy snowfall. For Scotus, the wrestlers were still able to practice, unlike other teams.

Senior Spencer Shotkoski placed fourth at districts in the 157 pound weight class. This was Shotkoski’s first time qualifying for state.

“We practiced in the morning at a decent time, so they let us sleep in a little bit. That helped us to have a fresh practice,” Shotkoski

said.

On February 20th the team made their way to the CHI Health Center for their first round of wrestling. Compared to previous years, the various Shamrock singlets were a welcomed sight.

Junior Hunter Brunkhorst placed third at districts in the 132 pound weight class. This was Brunkhorst’s third time qualifying for state.

“What’s mostly different is the culture by having more guys down there,” Brunkhorst said. “We had more than one hotel room and for warm ups we didn’t have to sneak any guys on the mat because we had seven guys out there.”

In the first round, Brunkhorst and sophomore Parker Newman won their first matches then lost in the quarterfinals. The other Scotus wrestlers lost their first matches. The next day, all wrestlers had the chance to continue their seasons in the heartbreak rounds. In heartbreaks, if the wrestler won the first two matches, they’d wrestle a third match in the night session. Brunkhorst and fellow juniors Kobe Micek and Favio Rivero were the only Scotus wrestlers to make it to the night’s “blood round”.

Rivero transferred to Scotus this past year and qualified for state with a third place finish at districts. This was Rivero’s first year qualifying.

“I kind of knew what I was going to do. I was waiting for the right moment. Funny enough, I did the same move that I did to him at districts, and at districts I didn’t do it right,

so that’s how I got pinned by him,” Rivero said. “At state, I did the move right and was able to pin him. I went in there ready to wrestle, and I didn’t feel any pressure.”

By winning the “blood round” in Friday’s evening session with a pin in the first period, Rivero secured a medal finish. This was the first for Scotus since Wren Allen in 2017.

Rivero went on to wrestle two matches on Saturday, placing sixth.

“I just felt really happy because it was my first time at state, and I was able to place,” Rivero said. “Scotus hasn’t been able to get a state medalist in seven years, and I finally got to accomplish something with all my hard work.”



Ella Hash / Rock Bottom Staff

Junior Favio Rivero looks to turn his opponent during his second match at the state wrestling tournament on February 21st. Rivero placed sixth in the 144 pound weight class after qualifying for state for the first time.



Ella Hash / Rock Bottom Staff

Junior Kobe Micek works to gain the advantage during a scramble on February 21st at the state wrestling tournament. Micek qualified for state for the second time and won the match 7-4.



Ella Hash / Rock Bottom Staff

Junior Hunter Brunkhorst attempts a takedown of his opponent on February 21st at the state wrestling tournament. Brunkhorst qualified for state for the third time and won the match 17-9.

Boys basketball closes season at district final

By Kate Hendricks

The Scotus boys basketball team came off a tough loss to David City Aquinas on February 21st, to turn things around with a postseason push ending in the district final.

The Shamrocks first faced the North Bend Tigers on February 25th at West Point-Beemer. They won the game 59-52.

Senior point guard Cohen Pelan was pleased with how they prepared for districts.

“We had a great week of prep up to sub districts, and I have to give credit to the coaches and our scout team because they had us prepared for the teams we played,” Pelan said.

The boys basketball team moved on to the second round of sub districts and faced West Point Beemer. The Shamrocks defeated

the Cadets 56-42.

“Our main focus was to play solid defense and shut down their best players. We knew if we would play good defense and take care of the basketball, that it would be a close game,” Pelan said.

With the victory over the Cadets, the Shamrocks were set to play the Cozad Haymakers at Cozad on March 3rd. The Cadets record was 23-3. Junior Carson Wessel is a guard for the Shamrocks this year.

“To play our game, our plan was to get them to make tough passes and take tough shots. We wanted to face-guard 22, and most of the other guys we wanted to close out with our hands up and not let them shoot. We worked on communication and help for

defense, and we worked on running plays correctly and throwing in some new ones offensively,” Wessel said.

The Haymakers defeated the Shamrocks 47-37 to clinch a spot in the state tournament. Senior Max Wemhoff is a post for the Shamrocks this year.

“To play a solid four quarters with sound defense and a smooth running offense and to obviously come out with the win in the end but...it was fun. I think it was cool that I got to spend my last season with the guys I’ve been playing with my whole life winning most of our games. We worked on our team chemistry and playing as a family and not for ourselves,” Wemhoff said.

The 2024-2025 Shamrocks boys basket-

ball team had a winning season with a record 18-7.

“This school and the people in it are great; everyone welcomed me and helped me try to be the best I can be. That makes me want to work harder,” Wessel said.

The Shamrocks are graduating six seniors this year, Max Wemhoff, Caleb Cameron, Cohen Pelan, Evan Steffensmier, Owen Lindhorst, and Ian Karges.

Sophomore Connor Cameron was a guard for the Shamrocks.

“I think this season was a roller coaster of a ride, and I was glad to be a part of every step,” Cameron said.



Kate Hoffman / Yearbook Staff

Senior Max Wemhoff jumps for the tip against North Bend in the first round of subdistricts on February 25th. The Shamrocks went on and faced West Point-Beemer on February 27th, winning 56-42.



Kate Hoffman / Yearbook Staff

Junior Carson Wessel shoots the ball against North Bend at West Point-Beemer in the first round of subdistricts on February 25th. The Shamrocks beat the Tigers 51-41.

Schedule shifts for junior high

By Austin Long

As our ancestors evolved to become better equipped for their environment, Scotus' junior high class schedules will soon adapt to better prepare junior high students for their future. Changes being made for the next school year involve even and odd days, a homeroom study hall, and electives.

Scotus Central Catholic principal Brady Vancura has been working on changing the schedule for 3 years and will implement them in the fall of 2025.

"Even and odd [days] are going away," Vancura said. "I never felt that it was fair to junior high kids to have 12 classes on their schedules and have to figure out where they're supposed to be and what homework they're supposed to be doing. We don't ask

high school kids to do that."

Since Vancura felt pity toward the more than 30 years of junior high classes that have graduated Scotus' current grueling even-and-odd-day junior high schedule, he decided it was time for modifications. If classes were not flipped every other day, then some would have to be reduced. Instead of having a literature class daily for the entire year, students will only have the class for one quarter. Other quarter classes will include art, vocal music, and computer apps.

To further condense classes, health and PE will become one joint class as opposed to scheduling them separately. Strength and conditioning coach Heidi Field will be the one to teach this class.

"[Compacting junior high health and PE] will be a huge benefit. If we are lifting weights, then we can talk about what happens to your muscles afterward. It gives us a chance to revamp the curriculum and get all the topics throughout junior high that we want to talk [about] before senior high," Field said.

Contrarily, religion will expand to be an all-year, everyday class, and core, year-round classes occurring daily will remain as English, math, history, and science.

On top of ditching even and odd days, Vancura decided a 9th-period study hall for the junior high would be advantageous for both students and teachers.

"We wanted to position our junior high kids [to] keep a better eye on them and be

in a smaller environment. It's essentially a homeroom and gives them a person to check in with every day [while] giving them a home base," Vancura said.

This 9th-period study hall for junior high students will allow more time to manage homework and school life. If a student gets behind or misses school for any reason, they will have an allotted time to meet with any teacher they will need as no junior high teacher will be teaching a class.

"It's an opportunity to standardize and simplify what we do and make sure what we do with the junior high kids is perfected before trying to blow it up into something bigger," Vancura said. "The simpler we can make it, the more focused we can be on academics."

Junior high wraps up fall and winter seasons

By Kate Hendricks

The junior high has seen immense growth and success through the fall and winter sports seasons. Students in junior high are allowed to participate in many varying sports. These sports include football, cross country, volleyball, wrestling, and basketball.

The junior high football team saw success during their season. There were 50 seventh and eighth graders combined on the team this year. The eighth graders went 6-0 and the seventh grade was 4-2. Junior high football coach Jarrod Ridder was happy with the success of both teams.

"Each young man worked hard and became a better football player. Collectively we had a really successful season," Ridder said. This year, junior high volleyball had A

and B teams for both 7th and 8th grade. The eighth grade A team's record was 11-4, and the B team's record was 5-4. Kim Dreesen is the head coach for the eighth graders.

"It was a fun season of competitive and hardworking girls in the gym! This group of 8th graders likes to be challenged and is up for learning new skills and trying them out in a game! I enjoyed this group of girls and wish them the best of luck as they enter into high school this next fall," Dreesen said.

Junior high girls basketball was fortunate this year to have lots of girls go out, being able to form A and B teams for each grade. Their exact record is unknown because the games and quarters they play are split between the eighth graders. Many of the schools

they play do not have the same situation, which can make playing time a little tough at times. School counselor Jill Brichacek is the seventh-grade girls' basketball coach.

"It was a great season with a lot of growth from both the 7th and 8th grade girls! I appreciate the leadership the 8th grade brought. The 8th grade had a great season as they continued their dominating offensive performances, and the 7th grade made great improvements by taking advantage of the strong points each girl brings to the table," Brichacek said.

Seventh grader Bella Faltys participated in basketball and volleyball this year.

"I think all my sports seasons went well. My favorite thing about the sports season

would have to be the coaches because they taught us how to be good teammates," Faltys said.

Addy Beller is a seventh grader who participated in cross country and basketball.

"Cross Country is honestly my favorite sport. It's super fun, and it's the only sport where you actually practice and learn from the high school team. I think my season went great. My cross country team won almost every meet, and I had tons of fun running with my friend Sienna," Beller said.

Junior high sports will wrap up with the track season. Their first meet is on April 8th, competing with Aquinas Catholic, Bishop Neumann, Columbus Middle School, Lakeview, and Wahoo.



Junior high girls grow with new group

By Aubree Beiermann

For most students, starting junior high is a drastic change from elementary school. New school, new peers, and new classes all come along with being the tough age of 12-14 years old. Junior high students are mostly left to fend for themselves, but counselors Jill Brichacek and Bridget McPhillips have swept in and taken the 7th and 8th grade girls under their wings.

Last year, Brichacek and campus minister Dana Ritzdorf started the junior high girls group with the intention of bringing a sense of community to the girls. With Ritzdorf leaving last year, Brichacek wanted to continue the group to benefit the girls.

"I just remember how difficult junior high was and I was noticing a lot of hard things happening within the 7th and 8th grade girls," Brichacek said. "We wanted to give the girls a space to learn about healthy friendships and how to build them."

The group started with eating lunch in the courtyard during the spring, but this had limitations because not all of the girls had lunch at the same time. This year, McPhillips, new campus minister Molly Wallish, and Brichacek decided to change the time so they would meet in the morning before school. However, due to junior high sports being in the morning, the group hasn't been able to meet until now.

"Ms. Brichacek, Mrs. Wallish, and I were talking about the need for community

amongst women. Particularly in those first couple of years here at Scotus in junior high," McPhillips said. "They're still trying to figure out who their friends are and what they want to be involved in. It's just a good age to teach and model certain skills and that's the goal of the group."

On February 11th, the group met up for the first time this year for a Galentine's Day meeting. During this time, the girls were led by Brichacek and McPhillips in active listening activities.

"Each time we will have a different focus, to teach them different skills they can have in their toolbox to become well-rounded Christian women," McPhillips said. "We hope this becomes something they can refer to."

Having this opportunity to hang out and learn more about each other has strengthened the bond between girls. This group also helps girls grow in their faith life and their relationship with God. Seventh grader Preslee Augustine attended the Galentine's Day meeting.

"I decided to join the girls group because I thought it would be an opportunity to have fun with more people I might not know as well," Augustine said.

Junior high is a time for girls when they are learning who their friends are, the kind of person they want to be, and the type of activities they want to be involved in. Becoming closer with their peers helps them feel more comfortable trying unknown experiences.

Seventh grader Daley Olberding has felt the group's efforts to bring support and friendship to these girls.

"The girls group has helped me not be so afraid to speak with people and to reach out for help when it is needed," Olberding said.

This is only the start of the group.

Brichacek and McPhillips have major plans for the girls.

"We'd love to have a few more meetings in the morning before the school year ends. We'll have different topics each time and obviously a snack," Brichacek said.



Aubree Beiermann / Rock Bottom Staff

Career counselor Bridget McPhillips chats with junior high girls about good active listening skills at the Galentine's Day girls group. McPhillips and counselor Jill Brichacek plan to host more meetings for the junior high girls to give them a space to grow in their friendships and learn skills to aid them in becoming women.

The fuzzy and furry facts about pets

By Madden Saenz

Dogs, cats, hamsters, guinea pigs, mice, rats, snakes, lizards, spiders, cockatoos, parrots, and parakeets are all examples of animals humans have domesticated. Whether for utility or companionship, humans have shared bonds with animals for millennia, some stranger or more unique than others.

Of course, the most widespread pets are cats and dogs. According to the American Veterinary Medical Association, of all the households in the U.S., 45.5% or 59.8 million homes own dogs. It is a bit smaller margin for cats with 32.1% or 42.2 million homes in the U.S. owning cats. Almost 90 million dogs and over 73 million cats are domesticated and living in the United States today, with various breeds among the two. According to the American Kennel Club, the five most popular dog breeds are the French bulldog, labrador retriever, golden retriever, German shepherd, and poodle. For cats, it is the domestic shorthair, domestic longhair, Siamese, Maine coon, and ragdoll.

In most cases, pets are adopted through breeders or family members, a kind and gentle way of taking in and caring for the animal. However, not all animals are fortunate enough

to have a home or family who love and care for them. Some are mistreated and abused, abandoned in the wild or on the street, or surrendered to shelters throughout the U.S. According to the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty for Animals (ASPCA), 6.3 million animals enter rescue shelters or humane society shelters each year. Of these 6.3 million, 920,000 are euthanized. Fortunately, this has decreased drastically since the high of 2.1 million in 2011—however, 4.1 million shelter pets are adopted each year, a

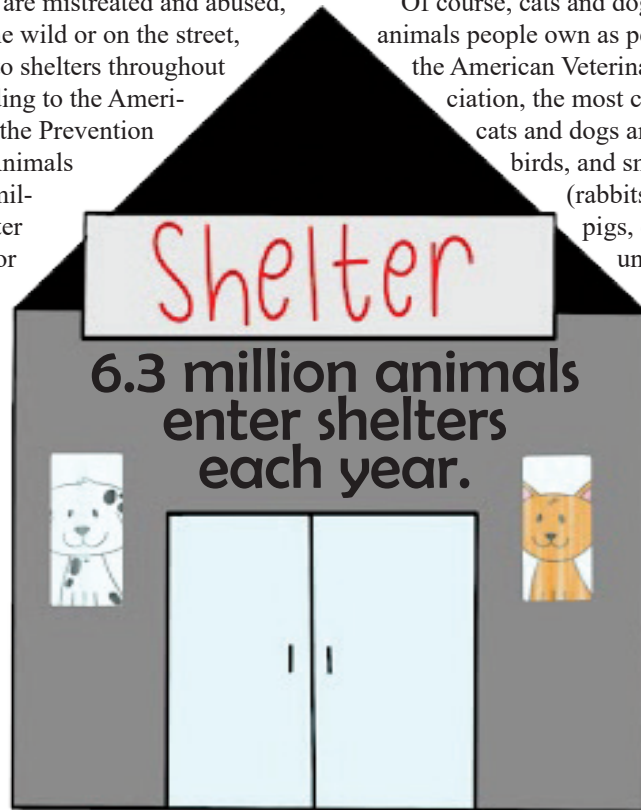
hopeful outlook for animals in shelters.

Of course, cats and dogs are not the only animals people own as pets. According to the American Veterinary Medical Association, the most common pets after cats and dogs are fish, reptiles, birds, and small mammals (rabbits, gerbils, guinea pigs, etc.). Of these unique critters, guppies are the most common species of fish kept as pets. For reptiles, it's the bearded dragon, and for birds, it's the parakeet. For small mammals, hamsters sit at the top of the list.

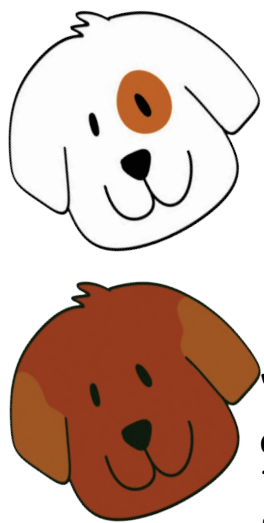
While reptiles or rodents may be strange for some, there are stranger

pets still. The laws may vary by state, but most states allow for the most experienced or obsessed of handlers to care for exotic pets. According to Nebraska state law, an exotic pet is any animal unusual or out of the ordinary to be domesticated. Some people love primates and may adopt capuchins or marmosets. In more extreme or professional cases, chimpanzees or young gorillas have been recorded with human ownership as well. When it comes to rodents, sugar gliders, ferrets, and skunks are documented as exotic pets and have been seen in human possession at various times. In even wilder cases, snakes like cobras or anacondas, or lizards like an American crocodile or alligator have been reported to be owned by someone.

Whether furry, fishy, or scaly, people and their pets are a wholesome phenomenon that bring more happiness and companionship to the world. According to the United States Mental Health Organization, pets provide many benefits to the humans who care for them: anxiety de-stressors, increased physical activity, added structure and routine, and companionship.



Dogs VS Cats

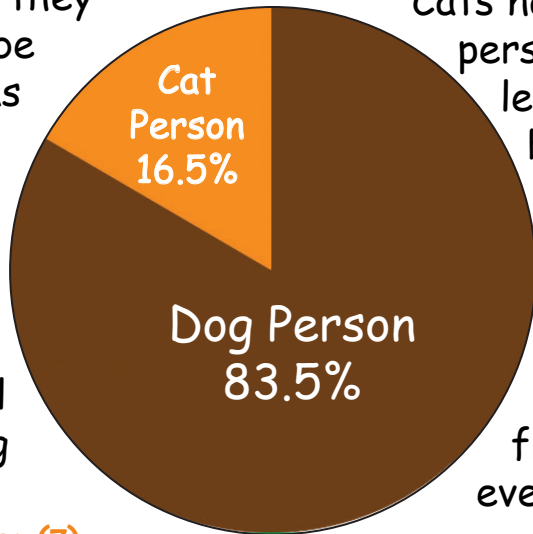


"I am allergic to cats, but they are also not enjoyable to be around and not as active as dogs; I like to be able to do things with my pets."

-Brody Splittgerber (12)

"Dogs are compassionate and loyal to their owners. There is something special between the bond of a dog and their owner."

-Everley Luchsinger (7).



"Cats have a very chill independent personality, which makes them less work and very enjoyable to be around. They can also be funny and entertaining."

-Josie Rother (11)

"I just love my cats, they are super friendly and love to cuddle; plus they were free, and we get a new litter every year full of pretty kitties."

-Ava Bettenhausen (11)



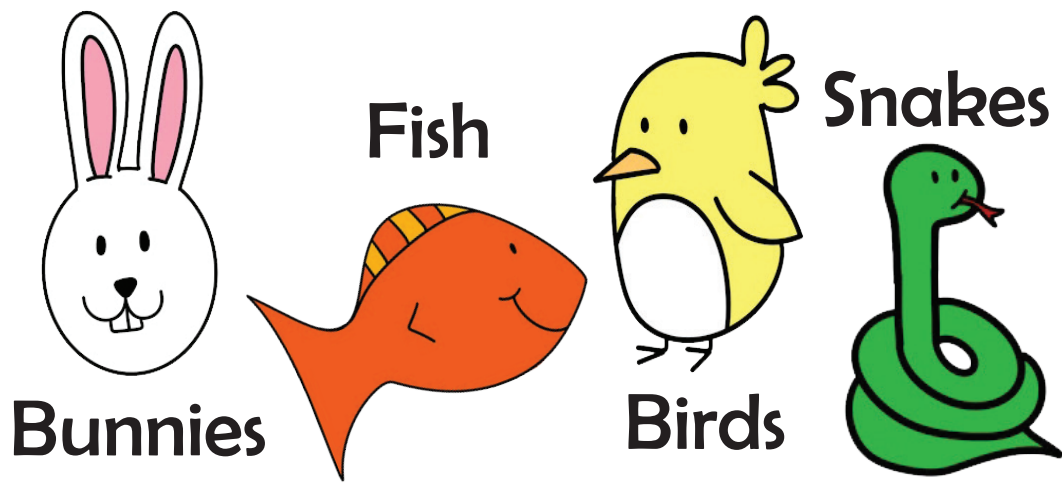
42.2 million homes own cats.



59.8 million homes own dogs.

Fur, Fish, & Feathers

Dogs and Cats are not the only pets filling homes!



Scotus students 'paw'sitive pet stories

By Sydney Stuart

They sit, stay, heel, blub, meow and all the noises and tricks in between. Pets are a significant part of society and have forever ingrained their presence in peoples' homes.

Along with the never ending fur everywhere, pets provide stress relief and comedic humor.

Some people go to great lengths to get their pets. Junior Jake Demuth and his family drove 2 hours to get their dog.

"It was a long drive to go get Beemer; we were so bored we began to create a bracket to pick his name," Demuth said.

Meanwhile some find their homes on a spur of the moment decision like Morgan and Wallen, senior Rebecca Kosch's dogs and her cat Autumn.

"I found my cat on the street and took

her in, but my dogs I found through a cattle sale," Kosch said. "I had heard someone was giving away free dogs at a cattle show and knew it was my chance to pick up two dogs to take in as my own. I didn't tell my mom I was getting them until I showed up at my house with them in my hands."

Some pets traveled farther than their owners to reach their home. Junior Maclain Bailey's ducks flew to him.

"I went to the post office to get my ducks at 5:30 in the morning, and they were in a cardboard box with tiny holes in it so they could breathe. It was also 10 degrees out, and they just hatched 2 days before in California," Bailey said.

Once people get their re-

ward, there are many stories to follow. Other than the indoor furballs, people love goats, fish, and turtles. Sophomore Rachel Spawn owns goats and shows them at the fair every summer.

"My goat Lucky is a fainting goat. There have been several occurrences where he has frozen and fallen over. One time, practicing for the fair, I was running through an obstacle course with him then he hit one of the cones and fell over on me," Spawn said.

Seventh grader Everley Luchsinger also has a farm animal. Her nature's alarm clocks cluck their way around Luchsinger's home.

"I have six chickens and one of my chickens looks like it has a lion's mane on it. It actually kind

of looks scary, like a lion; his name is Rango," Luchsinger said.

Seventh grader Lien Hung-Rodriguez's hamster makes a unique pet.

"Everytime we go near his cage, he always comes out from under the bedding and waits for us to give him a treat," Hung-Rodriguez said. "[My favorite thing about him is] he is silly when we let him free roam because he always falls and gets back up and starts running again."

Pets overall have impacted everyone's lives. They bring positive, comedic, and heartwarming stories to share, including senior Noah Kuhl's dog.

"My golden retriever, Nellie, will bring anyone she meets a gift. That being anything she can grab around the house. It could

be anything like a dog toy or a shoe. She brings it to you and follows you until you acknowledge she did a good job, then she will drop the toy," Kuhl said. "Our other retriever doesn't do this, just Nellie, so it's unique to her."



Rebecca Kosch (12) Cat Autumn, Black Lab-Border Collie mixes Morgan and Wallen



Jake Demuth (11) Golden Retriever Beemer



Maclain Bailey (11) and his three waterfowl ducks

Anatomy students discover through dissection

by Sofia Karges

When students are taking a tough class, it may be hard for them to grasp new concepts when taking notes, especially if they are visual learners.

The Anatomy and Physiology class combats this problem by taking a break from notes and lecture for five weeks in the spring and seeing how their material applies to real life using cat dissection.

Science teacher Zach McPhillips' anatomy classes started this annual process on February 3rd this year, and the smell has been lingering in the second-floor hallway ever since.

McPhillips took over cat dissecting from biology and health sciences teacher Joan Lahm three years ago.

"A big part of anatomy is understanding structure. By dissecting the cats, students get a physical visual of learning the material versus just taking notes and seeing graphs and videos," McPhillips said. "They get to see the muscles and organs within the cat and learn more about their own bodies in the process."

When students signed up to take anatomy class last spring, they learned they would be dissecting cats in class at some point. For some, this was the reason they signed up for it. For others, not so much.

Junior Sophia Langan has been looking forward to dissecting cats all year.

"I was super excited to be able to do this," Langan said. "It was giving everyone the opportunity to use our studies and put them into practice."

Although the visual might be cool to see, the smell is not pleasant, and it is something most students commented on when asked about dissecting cats.

"My least favorite part about dissecting cats is how bad our cat stinks," senior Adrianna Kush said. "All of the cats stink, but Mr. McPhillips said my group's cat smells the worst. My cat also has fleas in it, so it is just a bad cat all in all."

McPhillips has a total of eight cats in his room; two to three students are partners to work on one together. Because of the limited amount of space and cats, the back-to-back anatomy classes are assigned to share one cat together. One set of partners works on the left side of the body, and the other set works on the right side.

"I love how much control we get in the whole process," senior Mallory Dreesen said. "Mr. McPhillips allows us to work at our own pace, which has helped a lot. He comes around to guide us, but for the most part, we get to do it ourselves."

The cat dissection process has provided the students with a better understanding of how anatomy works in their own bodies. Even



Sofia Karges / Rock Bottom Staff

Juniors Mike Krienke and Ryan Allen dissect the muscles of their lab cat in anatomy class. This is science teacher Zach McPhillips' third year of dissecting cats in his anatomy classes for three weeks in the spring.

with the unfortunate factors, most students agree the hands-on approach has been beneficial in this case.

"It is one thing to see muscles and the parts of the body on a screen, but to actually

cut and separate these features with your own tools and hands is a much richer way of learning," junior Seth Drupeppel said. "It is really cool to experience even if it does smell bad."

Speech season starts with success

by Aubree Biermann

After the success the speech team felt getting second place at their first meet, the team was hard at work preparing for the next ones, especially considering the next two meets were some of the hardest of the season.

On February 1st, the speech team had their second meet of the season at Millard

West. This was a big meet for the team and is considered a "class A" meet because of all the bigger schools there. Out of 32 teams, Scotus placed 3rd. Scotus had 4 events place for varsity: senior Rebecca Policky placed 5th in Informative, senior Aubree Beiermann, junior Ava Bettenhausen, junior Giselle Chilapa-Bel-

lo, freshman Celeste Sucha, and freshman Abigail Pavlik placed 5th in Oral Interpretation of Drama, and senior Jessica Jackson placed 1st in both Poetry and Program Oral Interpretation. Four students placed in the next-in finals, one in the merit finals, and one in the consolation finals.

Senior Jordan Kouma placed 2nd in the next-in finals for Extemporaneous at Millard West.

"3rd at Millard West was a good show of our talent. The fact we were able to place high at a higher level meet in the first half of our season is a good sign for the rest of the year," Kouma said.

The third meet for the speech team was held on February 8th in Aurora. At this meet, they had 8 events final for varsity, and 3 won first. Jackson won in POI, senior Madden Saenz in Humorous, and senior Caroline Klitz in Informative. They also had 9 events final for novice (junior varsity). Scotus placed 5th in varsity and 2nd in novice at this meet.

"Getting 5th at Aurora was also great since we had 3 people win in varsity, and we also weren't at full strength with people being gone or sick," Klitz said.

Then on February 15th, Scotus was supposed to travel to David City to compete in a meet there, but due to the weather, it was rescheduled to March 8th. This postponement and the snow days caused the team to miss practices but also gave them a little break.

"The David City meet getting postponed removed a lot of stress with it being the day of the musical. I got to get a lot of things done and felt prepared and organized for the musical that night," Sucha said. "The snow days were great days of rest; I got all of my stuff done plus do some things that I haven't had time for lately like reading for fun."

Their latest meet was held at Grand Island Northwest on February 22nd. At this meet, the Scotus team placed 3rd. 6 events made the champion finals, and Jackson was the only one to win first with her Poetry. 6 events also made it to the next-in finals, and 4 won first. Jackson in POI, Saenz in Serious, junior Evan Pavlik in Humorous, and junior Seth Drupeppel in Extemporaneous.

On March 1st the team competed at the Centennial Conference Meet at Grand Island Central Catholic. Then on March 10th, they go to Riverside to compete.

"I am hoping my OID can get super polished and have more developed characters by districts because we are shooting for state," Bettenhausen said. "Three of the girls haven't competed in that event until this year, but they are so good and cooperative, Giselle Chilapa and I love working with them and having them in our group."

District speech is on March 22nd and Scotus is hosting. Then the state competition is to take place on March 26th at Kearney High School.



Aubree Biermann / Rock Bottom Staff

Seniors Jordan Kouma and Madden Saenz perform their duet at the Grand Island Northwest meet on February 22nd where they placed 2nd in champion finals. At this meet, Scotus had 6 events make champion finals and 6 make next-in finals. Overall, the team placed 3rd.

Quiz Bowl makes a comeback

by Abby Schumacher

The QuizBowl team is bigger than ever this year with 16 in high school and 15 in junior high. QuizBowl is a competitive event that works when two teams go against each other and are asked trivia questions based on math, science, history, grammar, and common knowledge. The teams are organized into brackets for competitions.

Although there are many in QuizBowl, there are only 7 competitions throughout the year for high school and 3 for junior high.

"The very limited competitions make it frustrating when you miss one or have an off day," junior Seth Drupeppel said.

The season started strong on October 2nd when the high school team participated in a Young Women's QuizBowl competition. In preparation for these competitions, the

high school team met once in science teacher advisor Annie Sokol's room to practice trivia questions on the buzzers, but the junior high meets every Thursday morning leading up to competitions.

"[To prepare for competitions,] my friends and I ask each other questions that might come up," 7th grader Sophia Hamling said.

On November 1st, the team took a trip down to Central City where both the A and B teams were eliminated during the first round of single-elimination.

"[The hardest part about QuizBowl is] knowing the right answer, but not being able to press the buzzer on time," junior Gigi Chilapa-Bello said.

January 13th was the Nebraska Christian

QuizBowl where both junior high and high school competed. Both junior high teams and Team B on the high school team did not make it past the second round of the single-elimination round in the afternoon. Team A on the high school team made it to the quarter-finals where they were beaten out by the Cross-County QuizBowl team. Win or lose, the team has traditions they uphold after every competition.

"[My favorite memory from QuizBowl was] going to Dairy Queen after we lost quarterfinals [at Nebraska Christian]," senior Jessica Jackson said.

On February 4th, seniors Jessica Jackson, Becky Policky, and Abby Schumacher participated in a Radio QuizBowl tournament at Scotus put on by KTCH 104.9 Big Red

Country. The three girls lost by one point and did not move on to the next round.

"Radio QuizBowl is quite different since you can't see who you're competing against, but it is still an exciting challenge," Policky said.

Many QuizBowl competitions will be happening in the next few months. On March 10th, the high school will attend the ESU QuizBowl competition at Central Community College. The junior and senior high teams plan on attending a David City competition on March 22nd, and the 7th grade and high school teams will be taking trips down to Seward for competitions in April.

"[QuizBowl is] super fun and a great opportunity to get to know your classmates better," 7th grader Natalie Becker concluded.



Abby Schumacher / Rock Bottom Staff

Sophomores Brooke Krienke, Grant Jakub, Lydia Dostal, and junior Elizabeth Stoner answer a question correctly at the Nebraska Christian Quiz Bowl Tournament on January 13th. Team A made it to the quarter finals round where they were defeated by the Cross-County team.



Abby Schumacher / Rock Bottom Staff

Seventh graders Emerson Schoenfelder, Lien Hung-Rodriguez, and Kennedy Wulf listen to a question being read. The seventh grade team has another competition in Seward in April.

Band serves a subzero summer concert

By Madden Saenz

Each year, the Scotus band hosts three concerts, two with a theme or goal in mind. In December, the band held the winter concert which featured several Christmas-themed tunes and activities. The concert was a heartwarming and eventful success, from Christmas cookies after the performance to snow-themed jokes in between sets to Santa forcing Mr. Ohnoutka to give students a snow day.

On February 10th, the band hosted its themed dinner concert. The event began with a fundraiser dinner followed by a performance in the Dowd Activity Center. The concert also gave students a small service opportunity and a way for Scotus students and families to connect, including freshman clarinet player Gianna Braziel.

“The dinner concert is when you get to talk to people, eat, and get to know others, like new families who just joined the band,” freshman Gianna Braziel said. “It is different because most of the time people come and

then leave and are usually hungry, but it is also the band’s biggest fundraiser.”

Senior flute player Jessica Jackson shared a common enjoyment of the pre-concert dinner.

“I love the dinner section before the concert,” Jackson said. “It’s a fun time to meet new band members and invite some non-band friends to join in and have fun.”

Along with the dinner and food comes the previously mentioned concert theme. The theme relates to the season, an event, or other ideas that might impact the concert. This implies that the theme will influence how band members dress, what type of music will be played, and the overall ambiance of the concert. Ironically, the concert’s theme contrasted with the 20-below temperatures outside: “Beach Vacation.” This provided the band with plenty of opportunities to play classic summertime songs and incorporate some sunny activities during the concert

intermissions.

“In high school band, we played ‘California Girls’, ‘Hawai’i 5-0’, ‘Hot Stuff’, ‘Land of 100 Dances’,” junior baritone player Helene Chard said. “[For] jazz band, we played ‘Limbo Rock’, ‘Fun Fun Fun’, and ‘Tequila’. The theme influenced all the music that night.”

A new aspect that made waves was the addition of games to garner audience involvement during the concert. From some corny joke stand-up routines to audience games to a limbo competition to a freestyle drum solo by junior drummer Dante Smith, there was fun for everyone in attendance, not just the band.

“During the beginning of ‘Hawai’i 5-0’ and during ‘Land of a Thousand Dances’ [I had a solo],” Smith said. “It was improvised, not written. I think the audience really enjoyed it.”

Likely the most notable event, however, was the crowd joining in on a limbo competition during the band’s performance of “Limbo

Rock” toward the end of the concert.

“It was a lot more chaotic than what we had expected,” Jackson said. “We were unsure if anyone was going to stand up and do the limbo, but it was a success and all the kids and seniors had a fun time.”

All of these new additions to the concert did serve a purpose: to help sway the audience into donating and supporting the Scotus band.

“This was the best concert we’ve ever had,” senior clarinet player Abby Schumacher said. “From the music arrangements to all the fun outfits and decorations, it was awesome. I really enjoyed how we did the limbo for ‘Limbo Rock’ and all the kids had their try at going under the limbo bar. Throwing the beach balls around during some of the jazz band songs was also an extra element that helped the audience be engaged.”



Sofia Karges / RockBottom Staff

Senior Abby Schumacher prepares to launch a beach ball into the crowd during the concert intermission. The dinner concert provides band students with the opportunity to serve and connect with other Scotus families.



Sofia Karges / RockBottom Staff

Freshman Clint Saltzgaber and seniors Henry Chard and Ian Karges play away during the band dinner concert on February 13th. The “Beach Vacation” theme gave the audience classic summer time jams including The Beach Boys and “Wipeout”.

Little Shop of Horrors plants audience in their seats

By Sofia Karges

One of the most popular school events during the winter season is the annual Scotus musical. This year, the students performed the Broadway musical *Little Shop of Horrors*. As usual, the musical was directed by vocal music instructor Laura Salyard and assistant Sarah Wacha. Tryouts for parts were done in November. For the next three months, the students perfected their lines, songs, and acting for hours every week.

Junior Ryan Allen played the role of Mr. Mushnik, the owner of Mushnik’s Skid row Florals.

“I enjoy acting a great deal. The singing adds a fun challenge on top of it. It is an immense show of talent and ability,” Allen said.

Little Shop of Horrors is set in a run-down flower shop in a town called Skid Row. The shop is struggling to find customers and the main characters of Seymour and Audrey, along with Mr. Musnik, desperately look for a solution. Suddenly, Seymour, the play’s main character, discovers a new plant species which he names the Audrey II. The show covers the rise of Seymour’s popularity, Seymour and Audrey’s relationship, and the effects the Audrey II has on him and his relationships.

This year was senior Madden Saenz’s first year participating in the musical. He played the lead of Seymour.

“It’s a lot of time and effort. It feels great when people show up to watch all the hard work we’ve put into it for the past 2 months,” Saenz said.

One of the main storylines for the show

was Audrey II. Seymour names the plant Audrey II because of his crush on his coworker Audrey. Audrey II is a talking plant with a large mouth and giant teeth. The plant feeds on blood and constantly pressures Seymour to feed it. This causes Seymour stress as

he internally struggles to support the plant. Ultimately, the plant claims the lives of all the main actors.

Junior Evan Pavlik took on the challenge of voicing the Audrey II plant.

“I enjoyed sitting backstage and being a

voice actor for the Audrey II plant. The most challenging part for me was getting the voice down well enough so I could sing the songs confidently,” Pavlik said.

Throughout the months of practice, many challenges arose when preparing for the show. Two added challenges with the musical versus one-act are a smaller cast and crew and perfecting the songs. The smaller cast often meant extra time building the set and perfecting lines and songs. The songs posed a challenge, as not all the actors were used to singing on stage in front of a large audience.

Senior Henry Chard played the role of Orin Scrivello, a mentally insane dentist who dates and abuses Audrey.

“The most challenging part of the musical for me was during my death scene. It was hard to hear the music with my gas bubble, so I had to listen hard to make sure I kept my tempo,” Chard said.

After many hard months of preparation, the musical was finally performed in Memorial Hall on February 14-16th. All three shows brought in large audiences and much laughter and enjoyment.

Senior Caroline Kiltz played the role of one of the three doo-wap girls, one of the main ensemble singers.

“Sunday was my favorite show. The audience was laughing a lot, and we fed off the energy. If the audience seems to enjoy it, the actors use the energy to give the best possible show,” Kiltz concluded.



Ava Bettenhausen / Yearbook Staff

Senior Lily Humphrey, junior Giselle Chilapa-Bello, and seniors Caroline Klitz and Jessica Jackson sing about Audrey’s relationship with Seymour. Audrey plans to move away with Seymour before being eaten by the plant.



Ava Bettenhausen / Yearbook Staff

Senior Henry Chard gives senior Madden Saenz advice about being famous with senior Jessica Jackson and the Audrey II plant. All three characters were eventually eaten by the plant.



Ava Bettenhausen / Yearbook Staff

Senior Madden Saenz and junior Ryan Allen plan the future of their shop after discovering the Audrey II plant. This duo became father and son after Seymour discovered the plant.

Don't raise your ya ya ya for slang

By Abby Schumacher

"You have negative skibidi Ohio rizz", "Does this look slay?", "I'm crashing out", and "Let him cook" are all common phrases you would hear if you walked through the junior high and underclassmen hallways. Slang has been around for centuries; however, some phrases have left a lasting mark on society while some should be left behind. The issue with excessive slang is it gives off a sense of immaturity. Slang is informal and should be used minimally in daily life and only when appropriate.

Once slang is understood by culture as a whole, it is no longer slang and may be considered "informal" language. The word "bling" was once a slang term, but then *Shorter Oxford English Dictionary* put it in their dictionary in 2002. The term "rizz" was an online slang term first used in 2021. Now, some people can't even go a day without hearing this word! In 2023, it was a term added to the *Merriam-Webster Dictionary*.

Sports teams frequently use slang by coaches, players, and fans. Examples include "That was a home run" and "That's a slam dunk."

These were first introduced exclusively as terms in that particular sport, but society decided to steal and use them as positive phrases.

However, if too much slang gets accepted, it will make society worse. Many people are familiar with the term "brain rot" and how society is becoming affected by it. "Brain rot" is a slang term itself and refers to the "supposed negative effects of consuming too much low-quality content, especially online." Most people who suffer from brain rot use slang as the majority of their language since they are glued to their phones, and this is the only language that gets fed to them.

What's even worse is when older people use slang. We all know of an awkward time when we've heard an adult try to use the words "sus" or "fetch." It does not sound good at all and leaves people feeling uncomfortable. People should use the slang from their generation and not try to look cool by using other generation's slang. Gen Z does not go out of their way to try and appear cool to millennials or boomers, simply because it does not affect them as much as how those people perceive them. Older generations should do the same and not try and gain the younger generation's approval by learning slang that is foreign to them.

Slang can also cause problems if used in the wrong setting. There are times when slang is not appropriate under any circumstances. If you walked into a college or job interview and the first thing you said was "sup" instead of "hello", "bet" instead of "That sounds good", and "lit" instead of saying "Amazing!", the interview would go drastically downhill, and the person would certainly not get the job. The interviewer would also be left with many questions as to what has our society come to as a whole, as well as what the speaker was thinking. Unless the speaker was from that generation, he or she would probably not understand a word they were saying. This impedes understanding and makes it hard for certain ideas, emotions, and thoughts to be conveyed.

On the other hand, slang may express togetherness and unity. In some contexts, it creates an environment that shows friendship that formal language may not be able to convey. For example, some friendships might use this as a common ground in friendship or as an inside joke. One friend might say something like "I'm so hungry." The other friend might say to them "But your outfit ate today" to show humor and hopefully make the other person laugh.

If you are in junior high, definitely take the slang down a notch. If you are in high school, try to use it sparingly since when you move on to being an adult, slang won't be used as much and will make you appear unprofessional. Boomers and millennials, please only use the slang from your generation so people aren't left feeling uncomfortable. "It's cringe."

Rowdy Dowdies dip in dedication

By Sofia Karges

UPDATE
Thank you to the Rowdy Dowdies and Coach Ridder for your efforts in making the district final game one of the best atmospheres to play in this year! We appreciate you so much!

"Are you going to the game tonight?"

"I don't know yet. I don't really want to."

"Oh, well, are you going to dress the theme if you do? I think it's green machine."

"Probably not. I'll just wear whatever."

This is a very prevalent conversation I've heard around school this year. Not many people show up for sporting events anymore, and even if they do, no one can tell what the theme is because everyone dresses however they want.

When I was a seventh grader, I remember everyone from my class going to the Scotus games. I thought it was so cool that the student section was always filled with people, and everyone dressed the theme. The parents even started getting mad because we would overflow into their section. This year, we're lucky if the first five rows are filled with people.

We need to bring the student pride back to Scotus games and make our student section better than ever before.

One of the biggest reasons people say they don't want to go to games is because "no one else is going." However, this is not a valid excuse because while you may not think so, most times, there are people you know going. Also, you don't need to have somebody go with you to have a good time. Student sections are filled with students of all different grades, and you can make some new friends even if they aren't from your close circle.

When I was a junior high kid, I remember the juniors and seniors would come up to the top and cheer with us. It was fun to get to know people from different grades, and I felt more united and excited to be a part of the student body because of it.

Sporting events used to be the place everyone was hanging out at, and if you weren't there, you missed out. Recently, students may show up, but they will not sit in the student section. Instead, they sit by their parents or in a group of other students within the crowd.

S Club was rejuvenated this year in hopes of creating a better environment for games, and they have provided extra activities for many events. There were tailgates before football games, free food and t-shirts for volleyball and basketball games, and now, during halftime of



Jillian Rusher / Rock Bottom Staff

The Rowdy Dowdy student section cheers during the match against Wahoo at state volleyball in the fall. The last few opportunities to be a Rowdy Dowdy will be state basketball and state soccer.

basketball games, games are being played as form of entertainment. These are all exciting things happening that the student section gets to be involved in.

Plus, when student sections are loud and involved, it changes the whole environment of the gym. The team is able to hear and feed off of the energy of the student body, and it changes the way they play. Parents are also more willing to stand up and cheer when there is good energy, and the cheerleaders feel the difference when students

are chanting back cheers as well. Everyone has more fun when the student section is lively.

Unfortunately, there are not many opportunities to show our school spirit at games anymore because the end of the year is approaching fast. However, next time there is an event to go to, whether that be state soccer or next year's football and volleyball games, let's make an effort to show up for our teams. Find out what the theme is, text your friends, and go pack the student section.

Super Bowl halftime show turns personal

By Caleb Cameron

Every February, millions of Americans gather around their televisions for the most televised event of the year - the Super Bowl. Super Bowl LIX was played on February 9th between the Philadelphia Eagles and the Kansas City Chiefs. Around 120 million people watched the Super Bowl. The game had many storylines including a 34-0 start for the Eagles, interesting commercials, and the Chiefs being held from the first 3-peat in NFL history.

The halftime show is one of the most popular and unique aspects of the Super Bowl. This year, hip-hop

star Kendrick Lamar performed at the show, which featured many celebrities as special guests, including SZA, Serena Williams, Mustard, and Samuel L. Jackson.

Overall, I think Lamar did an outstanding job of storytelling and showing his beliefs throughout the performance, which gave the songs more meaning. However, I think the show would have been better if he focused on more storytelling and picked meaningful tracks. I think the show should not have been used to relay his drama with Drake but more focused on maximizing enjoy-

ment for the audience.

Two major aspects of the show I thought were important were Uncle Sam, portrayed by Samuel L. Jackson, and the theme of "The Great American Game." Throughout the show, we see how Uncle Sam, who symbolizes the American government, tries to control the way Lamar sings and acts throughout the performance. Two major instances that make this evident are when he told Lamar to be quiet after playing "Squabble Up" and when he discouraged Lamar when he hinted at playing "Not Like Us." I think it's clever how Lamar included these interactions to show how he believes the American government operates.

Another hidden gem in the performance was the American flag during the song "Humble." Lamar stood in the middle of dancers dressed in red, white, and blue in the makeup of an American flag. This shows how Lamar believes the government aims to divide the people versus bringing them together. I enjoyed these easter eggs because they made his performance interesting.

Lamar's song selection surprised me a little bit. Coming into the show, I wasn't sure Lamar would bring up his past beef with Drake, another famous rapper. The beef and diss tracks were exchanged mostly in the spring and summer of 2024, so I expected Lamar to come out and perform more songs from his new album, GNX, and not his

diss tracks "Euphoria" and "Not Like Us." I can't say I was super surprised though, as "Not Like Us" won 5 awards at the Grammy's and has become one of his most popular songs ever. I would have preferred more songs from GNX because it is newer and has a more laid-back feel to the album. I think it would have been a bigger hit with people who do not follow hip-hop and know nothing about the relationship between Kendrick and Drake.

Kendrick also chose to have SZA and Serena Williams as special guests in the show. He did this because both women have been in past relationships with Drake. I can understand why he picked SZA because Lamar has produced multiple tracks featuring her. Also, I thought her portion of "All the Stars" and "Luther" was the best part of the show. But Lamar picked Williams strictly to take a shot at Drake. Once again, I do not think Lamar should have used these selections to take a shot at Drake.

Overall, I think Lamar executed his performance excellently, but I don't think he should have used the show to resurface his beef with Drake as much as he did. The show highlighted a night full of unforgettable stories. The miraculous performance broke the record for viewers for a halftime performance defeating Michael Jackson's 1993 performance. This year, 133.5 million people tuned into the performance.



NPR

Hip-hop artist Kendrick Lamar stands in the middle of dancers as he performs his song "Humble" at the Super Bowl LIX on February 9th. Lamar's show became the most viewed halftime show ever with 133.5 million people tuning in for the performance.

THE ROCKWORD

N	P	B	A	H	L	O	S	I	N	G	N	S	I
O	W	A	G	A	T	M	O	S	M	A	D	C	E
I	R	N	N	T	J	L	H	I	S	J	C	A	D
T	E	D	I	M	U	S	I	C	A	L	U	T	L
C	S	P	D	U	N	E	A	L	I	C	E	S	S
E	T	E	A	N	I	B	C	L	S	R	E	A	H
S	L	T	E	Q	O	A	N	A	N	E	S	B	A
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D	O	A	E	B	G	E	C	K	D	U	E	U	C
U	B	R	H	O	H	H	G	S	I	A	S	C	K
T	T	T	C	W	S	P	A	A	S	L	A	N	G
S	A	S	D	L	N	H	D	B	I	W	C	L	A

- JUNIOR HIGH
- CHEERLEADING
- BASKETBALL
- SPEECH
- SHAMROCK
- MUSICAL
- LOSING
- CATS
- WRESTLING
- PETS
- STUDENT SECTION
- QUIZBOWL
- BAND
- SLANG
- SMARTS