Shamrocks strive through the



Fall







Rock Bottom

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Kathol commits to Scotus community

By Josie Rother

At the end of the 2024-2025 school year, the Scotus Central Catholic staff were subject to many changes. Due to 7 teachers and administrators retiring, staff were shifted around to open room for new hires.

With the retirement of Merlin Lahm, who held the title of activities director and assistant principal, Brady Vancura moved from the position of principal to fill the role. The new opening of principal was subsequently filled by Terry Kathol, who has experience in many different schools and departments within those schools.

Starting out as a social studies teacher for junior high and high school students, Kathol looked to further his education. After deciding to pursue administration, he began his new career at Holy Trinity Elementary School, the school he attended when he was a child. From there he worked as an activities director and principal until he eventually accepted the role of leading Lincoln Pius X High School, the largest Catholic high school in Nebraska.

"One thing that was important at Pius X was communication," Kathol said. "Strong communication keeps families engaged and helps build a supportive community."

With his family to consider, Kathol's decision was not easy to come by. Accepting a job in a town he was not familiar with was a leap of faith that would change many aspects of his and his family's lives.

"There was a lot of reflection and asking, what does God have in mind for me? What is he asking me to do?" Kathol said.

Kathol's wife, Amy, who previously worked as a teacher for Lincoln Public Schools, is now teaching at St. Isidore Elementary. The opportunity for his wife to be able to share her faith in a classroom was one of the factors that led Kathol to decide to accept the job.

His favorite part of Scotus so far has been talking to students and staff and getting to know a little about them.

"A big goal I have is learning more about the culture of Scotus," Kathol remarked. "I want to learn more about the traditions at Scotus and what people look forward to."

Kathol has also enjoyed attending school activities such as volleyball and football. He hopes Scotus is a place where students have fond memories.

"I always want students to enjoy their experiences in high school," Kathol said. "That doesn't mean every day is going to be great, but overall, hopefully they look back and say, I really enjoyed my classes, activities, and the atmosphere at Scotus."

Kathol aims to build a culture of quality education and faith even better than what it is today.



Emma Splittgerber / Yearbook Staff

New principal Terry Kathol converses with students as they enter the gym for the homecoming pep rally on September 24th. Kathol was the principal at Lincoln Pius X High School before accepting the job at Scotus.

"I want our students to grow in their faith. I hope that in some way I can help foster growth in that and help students understand the importance of their faith," Kathol said.

Once he is able to acclimate to the Scotus way, he will start to work in his own ideas for the betterment of the school. Kathol has big goals for the future of Scotus.

Kathol concluded, "I think [I] can have an overall impact on the direction of the school."

Dance team twirls into first season

By Jacqueline Stoner

Cheerleaders are no longer the only group students can look forward to seeing perform at Friday night football games. With the addition of Scotus' new dance team, fans can expect double the school spirit at not only football games, but also basketball and volleyball events throughout the year.

This is the first year Scotus has had a dance-only team as opposed to the flag and dance team led by vocal director Laura Salyard in years past. However, according to Scotus activities director Brady Vancura, the idea of starting a solely dance-oriented team itself is not new.

"We've actually been approached by parents for multiple years about having a dance-only team," Vancura said. "There were just a lot of kids who wanted to dance. They didn't want to do the flags. We also understood that the flags part of it was important for the marching for the parades, and it has been something that existed at Scotus for quite a while."

However, an opportunity arose over the past year when the flag and dance team lost several members and unfortunately had to disband.

Tryouts were held, and of the many girls who participated, fifteen were selected to join Scotus' new dance team. The team is led by Scotus communications director Amarha Bridger with the help of track coach Sydney Mroczek.

For Bridger, the dance team provided an opportunity to continue her history in competitive dance.

"In high school and in college, I really looked forward to [dance]. I enjoyed it and made a lot of good memories, and I kind of just wanted to continue doing it," Bridger stated.

Assistant coach Sydney Mroczek also grew up dancing.

"Everyone thinks that I'm just track, but I actually danced before I started running track," Mroczek shared. "[Dance] was a big part of my life growing up. When they said that they were going to start a dance team, I first asked and was like, what is this going to be like? Then I eventually heard that they hired a head coach, and I wanted to be that support system and come on and help kids start a dance team for Scotus."

When asked about their goals for the season, Bridger and Mroczek both agreed they plan on taking it slow.

"[Our goal is to] just build a strong foundation for the first year. It's a new team and new dynamics, so we are starting new traditions and building something that we can keep growing on year after year," Mroczek said.

Of the students selected to join the dance team, seniors Josie Rother and Lily Lancaster and junior Tanner Schultz were all chosen as captains.

Lancaster was drawn to the dance team as an alternative to cheer, which she had been participating in since freshman year.

"I wasn't always very comfortable using

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Grace Hamling / Yearbook Staff

Seniors Lily Lancaster, Gigi Chilapa-Bello, and Alexis Knowlton, freshman Molly Eickmeier, and junior Sadie Matulka perform the team's hip-hop dance at halftime of the homecoming game on September 26th. There are 15 girls on this year's team.

Schedule changes simplify and prioritize

By Lillian Miller

No breakfast, no snack break, earlier start time, longer periods, no even/odd classes, new faces in old classrooms, and old faces in new classrooms are all changes that came with the 2025-2026 school year.

Interestingly enough, all of these changes tie together in one way or another. Scotus' activities director Brady Vancura, who was the principal for the past two years, was the driving force behind the changes in the bell schedule.

"There's a calculation that gets done at the state level, basically, from your course description book, by the length of your period, and by the number of days you're in school," Vancura said. "It came down to the fact that we've always been just right on the bubble [of school hours] and in case we would lose a class because we lost a teacher, we wanted to get off of that bubble. By adding literally 2 minutes to each period, it gets us off of that bubble."

Because Scotus offers religion classes and a study hall, the nine period day differs from the more typical seven or eight period day. One sacrifice made to make up for the time lost was the elimination of snack break.

"I know people are upset about losing snack break," Vancura said. "It was a nice break to have, but the snack portion of it is supposed to meet the same requirements that the cafeteria does their a la carte items, and we were not necessarily meeting that."

Because of this, students are now allowed to eat at their lockers throughout the day.

In addition to losing snack break, the cafeteria has discontinued their breakfast pro-

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2025-2026 Rock Bottom Dates
October 9
November 11
December 16
February 10
March 10
April 1
May 5

DANCE

my voice a lot in cheer, so it's nice in dance because you don't have to do that," Lancaster said.

Schultz, meanwhile, joined the dance team as a way to stay involved during the fall. She has been happy with her experience so far.

"All the girls get along well and everybody's super nice. It's a really positive atmosphere," Schultz stated.

The dance team made its debut at the August 28 pep rally, and they have performed at several home football games since. The team plans on continuing to perform at various Scotus events and will also attend CHS' Jam the Gym dance competition in January. They will make their first appearance at state dance in February as well.

According to Vancura, though, it is about more than simply winning awards.

"I'm always in favor of giving more kids an opportunity to participate," Vancura said. "At a football game, we're going to have 30 to 40 girls down there on the sideline instead of 15. I think it's great for school spirit that we can all represent Scotus in a positive way."



Emma Splittgerber / Yearbook Staff

Senior dance captain Josie Rother debuts her moves at the August 28th fall pep rally. This was the teams first performance since its creation earlier this year.

CHANGES

gram. Columbus Catholic Schools executive director Jeff Ohnoutka and cafeteria manager Margie Swanson decided making breakfast for the few kids who ordered it every day was not logical.

"[There were] not a lot of participants in the breakfast program, so it doesn't make any sense to do it if nobody's using it," Swanson said. "We would like to have at least 50 or 60 kids participating in our breakfast program in order for it to work."

Snack break and breakfast were originally implemented for the junior high kids who had early morning practices, but other changes in junior high have made their lives much easier. In the junior high schedule, prioritizing religion has led to an adjustment of the old schedule, which consisted of classes that alternated on an even/odd basis.

"I've probably laid out 70 or 80 different schedules to try and figure out how to get the junior high to where there wasn't any even and odd and where they could have religion every day," Vancura said. "The main factor that drove all this was getting religion every day. As a Catholic school, that was something that needed to happen."

Altering the schedule gives the students less to think about. Annie Sokol, who has taught junior high science for five years, has seen positive results from the change.

"I know that it's much easier for them to manage. They don't have to [keep track of if] it's an odd day or an even day, and I just feel their stress level is a little bit lower because of it," Sokol said.

Junior high teachers have also had to adjust to a different kind of study hall. Instead of having junior high kids scattered between study halls throughout the day, every junior high core teacher monitors a structured ninth period study hall to teach students how to manage their time. Math teacher Sam Rose has taught seventh graders for six years.

"The ninth period study hall is nice," Rose said. "In fact, it creates a little bit of certainty for where each kid is going to go, but then there's the flexibility of the kids who really need to go see the math teacher get to go see the math teacher, and the kids who really need to go see the English teacher can see the English teacher. All of those core teachers have a study hall and should be available to answer questions or send their kids to someone else."

The only changes junior high students will see throughout the year is at the quarter when they will switch between exploratory courses in vocal music, computer applications, literature, and art.

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The teens of Columbus are bored

By Isabella Chasteen



"Okay so…. What do you want to do?"

"Well… we could spend all of our money on coffee or a movie, drive around and spend money on gas, or, my favorite, bomb someone's mother by hanging out at one of our houses?"

"Oh…"

Most teenagers in Columbus can relate, in some way, to this conversation. Once kids hit the milestone of getting their license and unlocking more freedom, they quickly realize they have a limited list of activities. As new drivers, their parents are not likely to let them traverse the half hour or more to surrounding towns simply to browse a Target. Compared to other small towns like Grand Island and Norfolk, Columbus is lacking!

Having actual activities for teens to be a part of is vital to their high school experience. It is decompression and bonding with their friends and peers. Having places to go and activities to do allows for happier, healthier, and more successful teens.

Over time, Columbus has changed, as every town does. One notable change would be the Columbus Event Center closing. In May of 2021, in the midst of the pandemic, the institution closed. Within this center, there was a roller rink, arcade, laser tag, indoor soccer, and more. A significant haven for the teens of Columbus, gone.

Not to say Columbus is completely lacking in every department of activities for teens; there are some! Various organizations within the community attempt to hold events for teens. The main problem is their advertising. During the first week of school, there were several back to school "bashes". Who heard about them? No one! The most advertising I witnessed was a few kids going around school a day or so before the event telling everyone to go and bring friends. It is wonderful that these organizations put on events for the teens of Columbus, but the advertising is usually rushed or simply done poorly.

While there is the library in the center of town and the YMCA fieldhouse, many have found that, outside of studying and exercising, there is not anything particularly enthralling or relaxing about these environments.

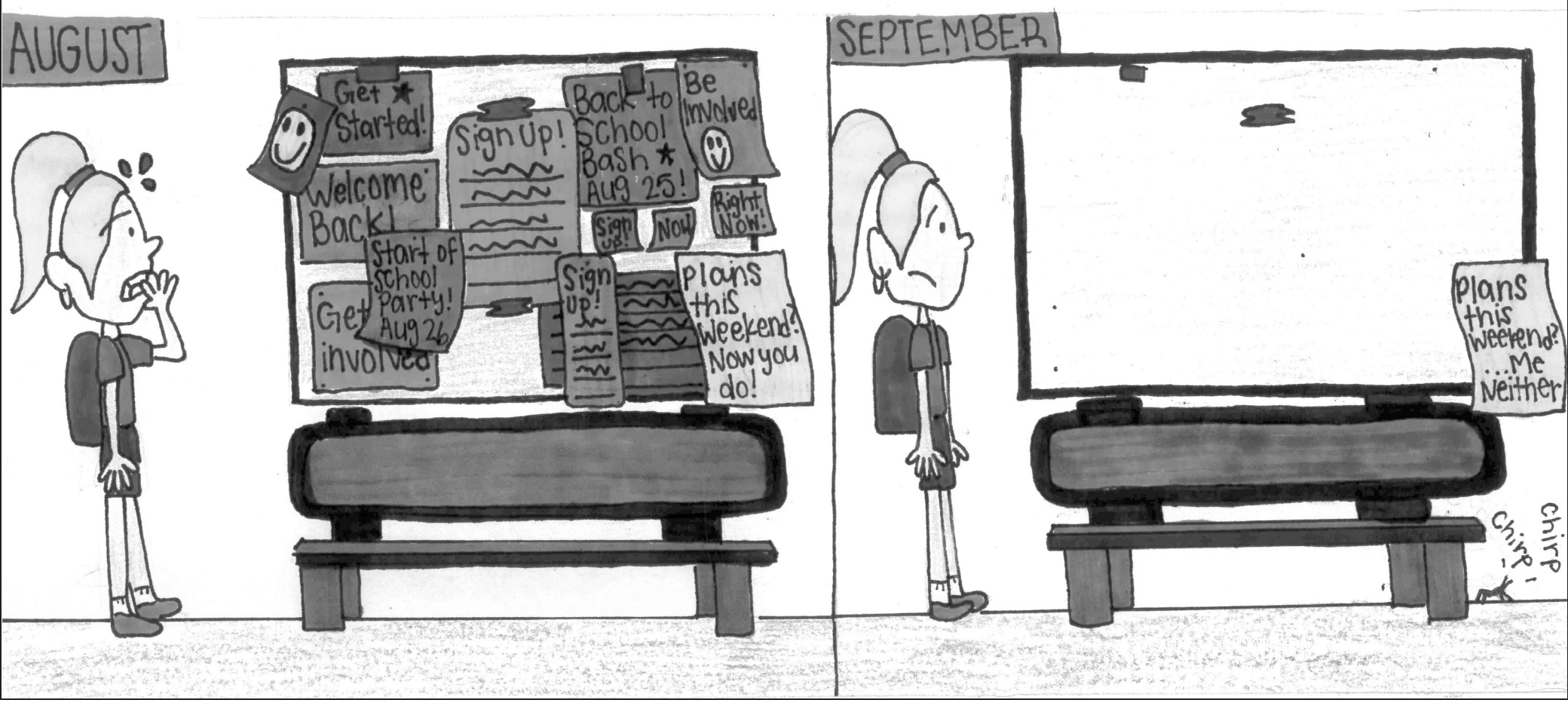
The Columbus Public Library provides a wonderful study environment and does its part in holding rooms and events for teens with the knowledge they have of what teenagers like. Teens are not going to go running to socialize with people they have never met before and try to bond over a jigsaw puzzle. That is scary!

As for the YMCA, it is not free for anyone to access. A youth membership is $27 a month. Most high school students do have jobs, but they most likely would not get a fair use out of their membership with the time school and activities take up. The YMCA has a multitude of amenities, but again, would a teenager be able to get the full use out of a $27 a month subscription?

In Columbus, Nebraska, it seems teens may be slightly out of sight and mind for certain communities of adults. There are attempts to bring teens together and secure a place for them to simply be, but there are areas to improve.

First off, when there is an event, advertise! Facebook, Instagram, even the morning announcements; get word to us! Secondly, take feedback from the ones attending the event here and there. If the event is meant for teens, perhaps ask them what they are excited about or want to see in the future. These events do not have to be a full blown party or something big at all. Consider the schedule teens have to adhere to during the school year and put more thought into events beforehand, rather than advertising the night before and getting discouraged when kids do not show up.

Teens of Columbus are not boring, they simply long for places to have fun.



Jillian Rusher / Rock Bottom Staff

Stop complaining and start acting

By Jacqueline Stoner



Walk the halls of school, and it will not take long to pick up on one of students' favorite pastimes: complaining. Whether it is about friends, teachers, schoolwork, or activities, no subject is off limits.

It is easy to believe complaining in such a way is harmless; after all, the best connections are often made through the existence of shared problems. However, the truth is that complaining simply becomes a waste of time and negative energy when not paired with action. Instead of wasting time complaining, students should take action on the factors of a situation they can control.

There are many common complaints students make that can be easily resolved with a little time and thought. In order to do this, though, it is important to stop playing the blame game and identify the real issue at stake. Saying, "My teacher is so bad; I have no idea what we are learning", or, "The school always gives us bad lunches" are common complaints where students tend to blame others and not themselves. Yet, playing the blame game is entirely unhelpful because it causes students to fixate on the shortcomings of others instead of what they can actually control. This is why the first step to solving a complaint should always be to take others out of the picture and use "I" statements instead. For example, the above complaints would turn into, "I do not understand what we are learning in class", and, "I dislike the school's lunch options", which makes them seem much more solvable.

Once the main problem has been identified, it is time to find some concrete action steps that can be taken in order to solve it. For instance, if the issue is, "I feel cold every day at school", then some action steps might include wearing pants instead of shorts or bringing a sweatshirt for when it gets extra chilly.

Of course, students are not going to be able to control every aspect of every situation. In fact, there may be some situations they have no ability to change whatsoever. Consider a student who says, "I think my English class is so boring; I wish I had never signed up for it." In this case, the student cannot change their enrollment in the class or the material being taught, so their only option is to change their attitude. These kinds of situations will be what they will be, so it is best to simply accept them and choose to focus on the positives. Instead of dreading English every day, the student could keep an open mind and appreciate what they can, such as having a friend who is also in the class. In doing so, they are much more likely to gain from their difficulties and have a more positive experience overall.

Some may argue complaining in the form of ranting is beneficial as it helps release stress and verbally work through problems with others. I agree venting frustrations can be helpful, but ranting is something that needs to be done responsibly. It is not healthy to be ranting all the time, nor should ranting take place in front of a crowd. Similar to complaining, students are also only going to feel worse after ranting unless they follow it up with either action or acceptance. So students can go ahead and rant, but they should do so with the end goal of finding a solution or sense of peace about the situation at hand.

The next time you feel the urge to complain, stop and ask yourself, "What can I do about this situation?" Come up with a few action steps and then get out there and make the situation right. If each of us made a commitment to stop complaining and start acting, the halls of Scotus would certainly be a more positive place.

On behalf of youngests everywhere

By Jillian Rusher



"That's my little sister."

Hi, I'm the little sister. Not only that, I'm the littlest sister. I'm the youngest of three girls, and for the most part, I'm content about it, but I feel when it comes to being the youngest, there are misconceptions.

Misconception #1: The youngest is a spoiled brat. I'm the youngest, not a spoiled brat, simply the baby of the family. I do not think the amount a child is spoiled is a scale from oldest to youngest. Being spoiled differs from family to family, person to person. It has little to do with how you land in your family.

There may be positives to being the youngest, but it also comes with its own set of challenges. I have a love-hate relationship with being the youngest, and while this is an ongoing dilemma, I know one thing: being the youngest is an adventure not everyone takes the time to understand.

Misconception #2: It is great to do activities after your siblings have already tried them all out. The oldest may be considered the parents' experiment child, but the youngest is the family's experiment child. Raising the youngest is not only the parents job; the youngest is raised by their older siblings.

Growing up, I was found doing whatever my sisters were doing. It is not uncommon to find younger siblings following their older siblings around. It is a blessing to have a person before you to be the "trial run" for activities, but it is hard to have to be the last to get to join in on the excitement.

My childhood was filled with sports. Watching my sisters play sports and knowing I wanted to be exactly like them, it was hard to sit in the stands knowing when I finally got to play, they would be off to college and not here to watch me.

Misconception #3: I was looking forward to my sisters leaving and excited to have all the attention on myself. I have heard many comments about being the last one left at home. "Guess you get to be spoiled by your mom and dad now." My typical response is to laugh and shrug it off, but if I am being honest, I do not know if my answer would be socially acceptable. No, I am actually not a spoiled brat… my sisters are my best friends, and I miss them like crazy.

No one talks about what happens with the youngest when all the older siblings have moved out. Being your parents' constant third wheel is a little different than when your siblings are around. It is not amazing to have all the attention on you. Yes, there is more attention on me. There is actually all the attention on me. I tell my parents all that is going on in my life, and it still does not fill a whole conversation. I am glad when my sisters are home to talk about our family and not just about me. My life is not exciting enough to talk about year round.

Do not get me wrong, I love talking with my parents, and I am lucky to have extra time with them. It is just not the same as being all together with my family.

Being the youngest comes with a mix of adventures, and every youngest will have their unique experiences, but on behalf of the youngests everywhere, I want to say, cut them some slack. They might be lonely without their older siblings, tired of the spotlight, or just need a hug.

Band marches into a new year

By Isabella Chasteen

Standing on the bleachers at a football game, people are screaming their hearts out in support of the team, and the air is swelling with the sound of the music. It is hard to imagine any game without the band; the atmosphere would be missing something.

Scotus Central Catholic's band kicked off its season before the school year even began. In early August, they performed at the Columbus Days Parade.

Kristen Cox has been the Shamrock band director for 32 years.

"I thought the parade went well. I was happy with the band's performance, and we even had junior high kids volunteer to join. It is hard, especially for their age, but everyone who came to practice ended up doing the parade," Cox remarked.

After beginning their season with the Columbus Days Parade, the following parades provided new opportunities.

"The Lions Parade in Norfolk and the second Columbus parade here in town are, for the first time ever, sanctioned by the Nebraska Band Masters Association. This is exciting for us to be able to participate in both parades for the first time," Cox said.

This means the Shamrock band participated in parades with the possibility of being selected for the State Parade Marching Championship. With this new opportunity, they had to ensure they were fully prepared.

Sophomore trumpet player Julia McPhillips has been in the band for six years.

"As a smaller group, we depend on everyone in the band, which means you really have to know what you are playing," McPhillips said.

The Scotus band received first place in their division in both the Norfolk Lions parade and the Columbus Marching Festival parade.

Every member of the band played a key role in their success at parades this year. Their work did not end there either; they are in preparation for Scotus' football, volleyball, and basketball games.

"One might think it would all be the same, but we have completely different music that we work on for football, opposite what we do for volleyball," Cox stated.

Preparations for each band event are different. For pep band and concerts, the band prepares in class, and they have early morning practices in the streets around school for marching band.

Besides the sports events within school and the parades, the band has more endeavors approaching.

Senior drum major Dante Smith has been a part of the band for eight years.

"I am looking forward to playing for district music, but I am also worried because we don't have every instrument this year," Smith said.

Many students are already thinking about district music even though it is not until April. It takes much time and effort from the members of the band, and it occurs during a busy time.

Another significant event fast approaching this year is the Christmas concert.

"With the Christmas concert coming up, I hope that we have plenty of time to practice and enjoy playing the songs," Smith said.

Not only are band members performing in their concerts, but they are the ones setting the atmosphere. Before each concert, namely the Christmas concert, they decorate the gym on their own. The group must know what they are playing and simultaneously be able to balance all their responsibilities.

This season the band has their work cut out for them. With their Lions Parade and second Columbus parade in September, Christmas concert in December, pep band, and district music, they have a considerable amount to work on. Regardless of their lengthy to-do list, their director has full faith in them to do well.

"The students in this group are extremely dedicated and mature in their decision making. With the effort they put forth, I am looking forward to a good year with them," Cox said.



Isabella Chasteen / Rock Bottom Staff

Senior drum major Dante Smith leads the band down 14th Street during the Columbus Band competition on Saturday, September 27th. Smith can also be seen on the drum set during pep band.



Isabella Chasteen / Rock Bottom Staff

Eighth grader Bailey Gilbert plays clarinet in the Columbus band competition on September 27th. This was the third of three parades completed by the band.



Jillian Rusher / Rock Bottom Staff

Sophomore trumpet player JR Oehlrich marches with the band at the Columbus Days parade on August 10th. Oehlrich is one of five trumpet players from grades seven through twelve.

Senior Bonding Day fosters fun and connection

By Audrey Stoner

Senior year: a bittersweet mix of closing doors, new beginnings, and blossoms of hope for the new phase of life ahead. All the breakdowns over chemistry homework, 2 a.m. panicked study sessions, hundreds of dollars spent on the ACT, and endless sports practices endured all seem worth it as college life looms ahead. As this year's seniors began their final year together this August, hopes and expectations soared high not only for their last year of high school, but also for the new Senior Bonding Day at Timberlake Ranch on August 20th.

The Senior Bonding Day marked a new addition to the seniors' schedule, taking the place of the former senior retreat. The day was organized to cultivate connection within the class while still incorporating the afternoon of fun activities the former senior retreat was known for. The seniors will now have a separate retreat in the spring.

New seventh and eighth grade religion teacher Nate Tenopir was one of the main organizers of the Bonding Day this year.

"[Our purpose for Senior Bonding Day was] getting back to being with each other without having to worry about activities, academics, or anything like that. [It was focused on] being together because the time is running short," Tenopir explained.

This new theme of connection was something senior class member Seth Drueppel looked forward to as the school year began and the Bonding Day approached.

"I was really excited to reconnect with my class after the summer break," Drueppel said.

The Bonding Day took place at Timberlake Ranch, a camp near Central City focused on outdoor adventures and group bonding exercises. The seniors were able to participate in many different activities, beginning in the morning with a talk and time for reflection on their high school experiences. Tenopir had high hopes for these new additions to the schedule.

"The first couple days of school, seventh graders come in and most of them are afraid. They don't know where they're going, and they have to stick together, and then that changes. [The reflective activities were made for] getting seniors back into the mindset of, we're gonna stick together, we're a team here, we're a class," Tenopir said. "I thought it went really well."

Later in the afternoon, the seniors were able to explore a wide array of outdoor activities, including a ropes course, walkable trails, an inflatable launcher into the lake, swimming, kayaking, a zip line, rock climbing, and canoeing. For senior Andy Padilla, the water sports made his Bonding Day especially memorable.

"[My favorite activity was] canoeing because it was very fun tipping each other over. I felt like it created a lot of memories with people who I don't talk to much," Padilla said.

Between the outdoor activities and time for reflection, the majority of the seniors' responses to the new agenda were also positive.



Jillian Rusher / Rock Bottom Staff

Senior Favio Rivero Rubio jumps for the trapeze bar at the Senior Bonding Day at Timberlake Ranch on August 20th. The Bonding Day took the place of the former senior retreat on the seniors' schedules.

"I think overall for what we wanted to accomplish, to help people see each other as people for a day and whose time together is running short, [the Bonding Day] accomplished its goal," Tenopir said.

As the Senior Bonding Day drew to a close, the senior class was able to carry both fun memories and strengthened relationships with them as they departed Timberlake Ranch.

"I got to know more of the people in my class, especially those I haven't been close to throughout highschool. We were able to grow as a class knowing it is coming to an end," senior Sophie Parker concluded.

Homecoming location creates new atmosphere

By Sydney Stuart

After the first week of school, Scotus high school students start to plan their bows, bowties, and dresses to attend the annual homecoming dance. Over the years, attendees have danced and grooved in many places and at many times.

Homecoming week started on Monday, September 22nd and ended on Saturday, September 27th with the dance.

Leading up to the dance, students dressed up and showed their school spirit during the week. The themes for each day were 'Merica Monday, dress to unimpress and anything but a bookbag, twins or dynamic duo, dress the hallway theme, and Scotus spirit day.

Freshman Mara Hash was excited to participate in the homecoming themes.

"My favorite day was dress to unimpress and anything but a bookbag because I liked seeing everyone's different bags, and how we got to dress comfortably. I wore PJ pants and a One Direction t-shirt with a tote bag," Hash said.

The homecoming pep rally was on Wednesday, and there the cheer team and dance team debuted their homecoming routines. After their performances, the students on homecoming court played a relay game. Senior Kate Hoffman was a part of this year's homecoming court.

"It was fun to [be on court] with the people I grew up with and get to see how we have all grown since elementary school. In the week leading up to the crowning, I thought about how time really did fly by," Hoffman said.

At the end of the day on Friday, the freshmen were awarded the best hallway decorations. Their hallway theme was Monsters, Inc.

This year's homecoming king and queen were seniors Myles McGannon and Josie Rother. They were crowned on Friday, September 26th after the football game against Pierce.

"I was excited to walk out in front of the crowd for the coronation. I was a little nervous for the crowning itself because I didn't know what would happen," McGannon said. "[After being crowned], I just felt a sense of accomplishment and pride that people view me as a good role model. I couldn't imagine a better senior homecoming."

New this year, candidates were escorted onto the field by their parents instead of students from the senior class. After each candidate was led to the middle of the field, they took their place to hear the name of the king and queen be announced.

"It was a surreal experience to hear my name called as homecoming queen," Rother said. "Everyone was so supportive, and I loved that people got to share in my excitement and shock."

The biggest change from homecoming last year was the location change from the cafeteria to Memorial Hall.

Senior Claire Oakley has attended the homecoming dance all 4 years of high school.

"I really enjoyed having the dance in the gym instead of the cafeteria. It was refreshing to have the dance in a new space; it gave it more of a high-school dance atmosphere," Oakley said. "I was most excited to see the set up of the dance in the gym. It was nice that the floor wasn't slippery so we didn't have to worry about falling."

Career and college counselor Bridget McPhillips took over science teacher Joan Lahm's position as student council leader this year. This is her first year being involved in student council.

"I thought the dance went well! The gym provided a great open space," McPhillips said. "I actually prefer the gym, becasue when you think of school dances, you think of your school's gym."

The idea of moving the dance to the gym was not an impulse decision. The last year the dance was in the old gym was 2020, implying that moving to the gym was not anything entirely new.

Junior Lillian Miller is a member of student council.

"Having [the dance] in the gym was a very positive change. I think it brought more people to the dance floor since there was more room to dance, and because there were no tables, it was a much faster cleanup. I also liked having the north door entry way as a place to cool off or take photos if needed," Miller said.



Lillian Miller / Rock Bottom Staff

Seniors Ryan Allen, Seth Drueppel, Eli Maguire, Carson Wessel, Thomas Settje, Myles McGannon, Josie Rother, Kayla Hoffman, Lola Doerneman, Addi Beiermann, Kate Hoffman, and Hannah Heinrich stand on the football field on September 26th at the annual coronation of the homecoming king and queen. This year, the king and queen were Myles McGannon and Josie Rother.



Caroline Rickert / Yearbook Staff

Senior Valeria Rodriguez watches the cheer team perform at the homecoming pep rally on September 24th. Rodriguez won best dressed on dynamic duo/twin day with her Lorax costume.



Jacqueline Stoner / Rock Bottom Staff

Freshmen Samantha Karges and Libbie Sliva dance together at the homecoming dance on September 27th. This year, the dance was moved from the cafeteria into Memorial Hall.

New ministries made for students

By Jillian Rusher

Scotus campus ministry leads all the school's faith activities and, like many groups, has seen changes to begin the school year.

Last school year, Scotus campus ministry welcomed new campus minister Molly Wallish and this year welcomed Cecilia Brichacek, who will be assisting Wallish with the many events this school year brings.

"I'm so excited Mrs. Brichacek has joined the team. It's been so life-giving to have her to work with and see her interact with the students. She brings life and new ideas to this ministry," Wallish said.

Some of these new ideas include reformatting the way the school is doing Rock Talk going forward. Instead of having 7-12th grades be a part of assigned small groups, this style of Rock Talk will only be continued for junior high students within their religion classes. High school students are now going to form their own discipleship groups.

"I think Rock Talk will bring so much life and community to the junior high. I'm really excited to get that started," Wallish said.

Campus ministers are assisting all highschoolers interested in starting their own discipleship group. A group consists of 5-7 members with a goal to meet once a week to grow in fellowship and faith. Each group has the choice of the curriculum they cover and who they would like to lead their group on their faith journey. Students decide when and where they meet, giving them the opportunity to find a time that works best for them.

"We want to give students the freedom to utilize their free will in prioritizing our Lord and their relationship with Him in a community," Brichacek said.

Campus ministry is also working to provide a variety of retreats for students, giving them a place to encounter God that sounds most appealing to them.

"Since there are so many different ways for people to have an encounter with the Lord, and every relationship is personal and unique to each person, we have a variety opportunities we provide in campus ministry. We want to make sure we're catering to all the needs of the students," Brichacek said.

10-12th graders are given a choice in what retreat sounds most interesting to them. A few retreats are offered including a men's retreat at St. Gregory the Great Seminary, a women's retreat at Christ the King Sisters' Motherhouse, and the senior retreat at the Newman Center in Lincoln.

"Being able to bring our students outside of the school, take them to a place where it separates them from their normal routine, and give them a secluded space to encounter the Lord I think is really important," Brichacek said.

Besides offering opportunities for students outside of the school, the campus ministers, along with Fr. Nicholas, will be doing spiritual conversations during the school day.

"We want to have one-on-one conversations with every student in the school, starting with the seniors and going down through the grades, in which we can help them feel seen, known, and loved. We want to see where they're at in their faith and meet them there," Wallish said.



Kate Hendricks / Rock Bottom Staff

Freshman Natalie Dush participates in the ice breaker game at the freshmen retreat on September 17th. This was the first retreat organized by campus ministry this school year.

Campus ministry also leads the faith opportunities available every week. These include Worship Wednesday and Mass on Tuesdays and Fridays, all at 7:20 in the morning. Fr. Nicholas also offers confession twice a week during 6th period.

Brichacek concluded, "We have a goal to bring the students before the sacraments, specifically the Eucharist, because what better way to encounter Christ than to put students in front of Christ himself?"

Krienke jumps to junior high PE

By Lillian Miller

With fist bumps and hype in the hallways, head football coach and new junior high health and fitness teacher Roger Krienke is an energetic new addition to the Scotus teaching staff.

After growing up in Pierce, Nebraska, playing football at the University of South Dakota, and teaching at St. Anthony's elementary school for 25 years, Krienke moved to teaching at Scotus this year. His youngest son Jake is now a seventh grader at Scotus, and his oldest Mike is a senior. He also has junior daughter Brooke, so he pursued the opening. Now, all of the Krienkes are at Scotus!

"I had been asked before to possibly come over and teach math, [but this time] it just seemed like the timing was right," Krienke said. "I always wanted to teach all my kids, so it just worked out with timing. A new opening as far as strictly junior high PE I thought was a good opportunity, so I took it."

This transition from teaching fourth, fifth, and sixth grade math and history at Anthony's to teaching junior high health and fitness at Scotus has been quite a change for Krienke.

"[I've been] adjusting to the pace here - it's a really high pace. Dealing with junior high kids, the energy levels are outstanding, so I have had to keep up with that," Krienke said. "It's been going really well though. I like the kids a lot; they're well behaved, and they've got good energy. We're trying to get them lifting and doing things like that. It's been a good transition."

In teaching the junior high kids, he and senior high health and strength training teacher Dr. Heidi Field have started from ground zero in their curriculum rather than adapting the material from former health teacher Janet Tooley.

"I really am not teaching what Coach Tooley taught; we're teaching a new curriculum right now," Krienke said. "This new curriculum is just a health based curriculum, and things are going well in the classroom, weight room, and gym. I think a lot of the things we're going to learn are widely applicable to kids and teenagers. Today, we're going to look at the health triangle. We're going to kind of start there and build from there. It doesn't matter how successful you are if you're not healthy, so we're trying to make a difference in that regard."

As well as being the new junior high health and PE teacher, Krienke has returned to the position of head football coach. For the first time, he is able to teach in the same building as his athletes.

"You know, building relationships as a coaching staff and in football, that's real, real big. We want to get to know the kids [and] build relationships, so it's been good seeing kids all the time and through passing periods," Krienke said.



Sydney Stuart / Rock Bottom Staff

New junior high health and fitness teacher Roger Krienke instructs students during warmups in seventh grade fitness class. Krienke made the move from St. Anthony's this fall.

Krienke has loved seeing all the kids, grades seven through twelve, throughout the day. He has enjoyed every aspect of Scotus so far.

Krienke concluded, "It's been a lot of change and it's good; change is good. That's how you grow. It's been exciting and there's never a dull moment, that's for sure."

Hutchinson takes new opportunities at Scotus

By Kate Hendricks

Scotus has welcomed many new teachers and coaches this school year, seven to be exact. One of these is seventh grade English teacher Cathy Hutchinson. Hutchinson came to fill the gap left by previous English and literature teacher Deb Ohnoutka. Ohnoutka is still present in the Scotus building but teaches various consumer science classes. Hutchinson's new role consists of teaching seventh grade English and literature and eighth grade literature.



Sydney Stuart / Rock Bottom Staff

English and literature teacher Cathy Hutchinson instructs her class on their new material. Hutchinson was a Scotus graduate in the 1997 class.

Hutchinson attended St. Isidore's Catholic School as a child and graduated from Scotus Central Catholic High School in 1997. She attended the University of Nebraska and then Doane to get her masters degree. She previously taught at St. Anthony's Catholic School for 15 years. Staying in a Catholic school environment was always her goal.

"I talked to Mr. Ohnoutka and Mr. Vancura, and because I've been doing language arts at St. Anthony's in 4th, 5th, and 6th grade, the switch over to language arts for 7th and 8th grade should not have been much of a change," Hutchinson said. "I am so grateful we can pray and share our faith in our Catholic schools, especially when the world seems full of hate. It is comforting to know we have our faith and prayer."

Hutchinson has a daughter, Bella, in the sophomore class here at Scotus.

"I love seeing my daughter and her friends at school. This is not new for me. I taught all my children for several years at St. Anthony's. Teaching your own children is a unique position that has its pros and cons, but I wouldn't go back and change a thing," Hutchinson said.

The other teachers' impact on her during her time at Scotus did not go unnoticed, paving her path to education as well.

"I attended Scotus as a student many years ago, and I know most of the staff here at Scotus. I also understand the high standards set for both teachers and students at Scotus. I think I went into teaching because I had good teachers at Saint Isidore's and Scotus, and so I wanted to be like them," Hutchinson said.

With teaching at St. Anthony's for many years, many changes happened as she took her new teaching position. She had to adjust to teaching junior high.

"St. Anthony's had self-contained classrooms, so this is the first time the students have moved from class to class, so it is quite a bit different, but it's going well," Hutchinson said.

Along with teaching in a new school and environment comes some challenges, but Hutchinson has already enjoyed her time at Scotus.

"Something that has challenged me so far is there are definitely more students per class than I've had before, so getting used to the extra students, the extra papers, and the extra prep has been a little challenging," Hutchinson said.

Coming from a much smaller school such as St. Anthony's to a much larger school similar to Scotus is an immense change. The atmosphere, community, students, and environment is something Mrs. Hutchinson is happy to be in.

"I have enjoyed the enthusiasm of the students and the helpfulness of the staff.The Scotus staff and students have been welcoming. I am proud to say I now know all my students by name," Hutchinson said.

Kouma kicks off change in the classroom

By Audrey Stoner

As the new school year finally comes into full swing, a sea of new faces can be seen making their big debut at Scotus. The excitement, nerves, and hope for the year are palpable to anyone who enters the school's doors, and overall, spirits are high. However, the seventh-graders are not the only ones making nerve-wracking first appearances at Scotus; a host of new teachers faced the same anxious excitement as they joined the faculty this fall. For one of these teachers, new religion teacher Cassie Kouma, this is not her first rodeo with Scotus.

Kouma, who graduated from Scotus in 2021, once again can be found roaming its familiar halls as she steps into her new role as junior and senior religion teacher.

"I've been in the Catholic school system here in Columbus for my entire life," Kouma said. "When I graduated from Scotus, I went on to UNK and studied to be a high school English teacher. During the summers, I would come back to Columbus and teach Theology of the Body to the Columbus community, and that's where I got some experience teaching theology and fell in love with it."

Kouma takes the place of former theology teacher Tyler Linder, whose unique teaching style and ability to connect with students left behind big shoes to fill.

"Mr. Linder was good at making his classes a sort of conversation with the students, and I want to recreate that for my current students," Kouma explained.

Beyond incorporating her fond memories of Linder's classes into her own curriculum, Kouma also plans to focus on fostering the individual faiths of those she teaches.

"My goal is for the students to grow in relationship with the Lord most of all," Kouma said. "I want them to have the head knowledge of him to know what he's like, but, ultimately, I'm hoping that head knowledge will go deeper and actually foster a really good relationship with Him that will carry them through their entire lives and into eternity."

Longtime freshmen and sophomore religion teacher Kelly Koranda has been mentoring Kouma since her return to Scotus this fall.

"I've had previous students come back and teach at Scotus before, but this is the first person whom I taught religion and now she's teaching religion, so that's been a really cool experience," Koranda said. "She's really excited to be able to share the experiences she's had just coming out of college and being able to say, here's some of the challenges you're going to face in your faith, here's some of the questions people might ask you, let's prepare you for that. So I think that will be a really good element for her, being a younger teacher."

Outside of teaching, Kouma will also assist in coaching one act and speech.

"Those were kind of surprises," she admitted. "I didn't do one act or speech myself in high school, but if I had been able to, I certainly would have. I just had scheduling conflicts. I had a lot of experience teaching speech during student teaching and really loved it, so when I was interviewing for a position here as a teacher, I knew I wanted to help with the fine arts."



Sydney Stuart / Rock Bottom Staff

New junior/senior religion teacher Cassie Kouma tallies the points after a round of her class' saint of the day guessing game. Kouma returned to Scotus for the time this fall since her graduation in 2021.

Now that her hopes have come true, Kouma is looking forward to where the one act and speech seasons take her.

"I am excited to work with the kids because I think the students in those two activities are so exceptional, and I'm looking forward to getting to know them even better and to work with Mr. Ericson and Miss Mimick, too."

When not coaching on the one act stage this fall, Kouma can be found surrounded by saint posters and students alike in her third-floor classroom or by the quiet presence of Jesus in the Scotus chapel.

Maestra Miya starts a new chapter at Scotus

By Kennedy Krueger

Coming off of seven years of experience teaching Spanish, Lorena Miya is no beginner in this subject as she takes over the Spanish department this year. Miya has always had a passion for teaching, but she wondered which age would be the perfect fit. She started with early childhood and also tried out elementary and exclusive education along the way. Eventually, she made her way up to secondary education, and she taught it with a little bit of Spanish history.

"I fell in love with [Spanish] all over again, like I did when I was in my Spanish classes when I was in high school," Miya said.

This love brought her back to her hometown in Columbus, NE. As a student, Miya attended Lost Creek, Columbus Middle School, and Columbus High School. She started her teaching career as a preschool para educator at Centennial before teaching at Columbus High School. After seven years, she decided she was ready for something new.

"I was at a point in my life and in my career where I was looking for a change and had been praying for some time about what God had for me and my family," Miya said.

Shortly after, Miya had the opportunity to teach at Scotus. Miya knew parents whose children attended the school and heard Scotus was a good school with great families, students, and community. This was the change she had been looking for.

"I do feel like this was a door that was opened, an answer to one of my prayers, so I decided to take a leap of faith and say yes. And so far I have enjoyed my time here," Miya said.

Miya has experienced many changes here after coming from a school about three times the size of Scotus. The biggest change for her is the smaller class sizes, and she is the only Spanish teacher. Because of this, she wants to build the program. Right now, she is only teaching Spanish I and II, but she is hoping to eventually offer more levels of Spanish.

"I get to hopefully see [students] take higher levels and build those closer relationships with them. That's kind of hard to do when it's a bigger school and more students," Miya said.

In Miya's free time, she enjoys looking for new projects to do around her home or in her yard by watching home renovations. She also loves to travel. Her favorite place to go is Mexico because her family is from there. Two years ago, she took a trip to Africa so she could see where her husband grew up. She also learned more about the schools there.

"It was nice because I got to visit schools and get another perspective of how education is, and I got to see the private schools, the international schools, and the local community schools and take it all in," Miya said.

Since this is Miya's first time teaching at a private school, an adjustment Miya has had to make is to incorporate the faith into her classroom. Her students' growth in their faith is one of the goals Miya has this year. Another is their ability to tackle obstacles.

"I think my main goal for the students is to help them overcome the challenges; learning a language is full of challenges, and it's hard, but I want them to realize how capable they are of overcoming those [challenges]," Miya said. "Building relationships with students [is] what inspired me through my teachers, and being able to connect with my students and build those relationships is my favorite thing to do."



Sydney Stuart / Rock Bottom Staff

New Spanish teacher Lorena Miya announces the winner of the class' Quizlet Live game. Miya has been teaching Spanish for seven years, with this being her first year at Scotus.

Wallish, a welcome "addition" to the math department

By Lydia Dostal



Sydney Stuart / Rock Bottom Staff

Math teacher Matt Wallish assists seventh grader Gia Legenza with her work during class. Wallish teaches junior high math along with geometry.

Golf, fractions, and junior high — these three items have one common factor: new math teacher Matt Wallish. Serving as a golf coach last year, Wallish has entered the building and joined the Scotus teaching faculty as the math 7, math 8, and geometry teacher. Wallish has extensive experience as a teacher, working in elementary, junior high, and high school in his former home of Lincoln.

"I actually grew up in Lincoln. I went to school at Pius X, and I thought I'd stay in Lincoln my whole life, which was true until a couple of years ago. I just fell in love with teaching in college, which wasn't even on my radar at the time," Wallish said.

Wallish formerly taught at St. John's Elementary and Pius X in Lincoln, but last year, he took a position teaching sixth grade at St. Bonaventure Elementary in Columbus. While he enjoyed teaching at St. Bonaventure, he was not content.

"I honestly was really missing teaching math, and the junior high kids in particular. So when there was an opening in the math department at Scotus, they knew I was really interested. That's how I ended up here," Wallish said.

Working at Scotus is a family affair for Wallish. In addition to his wife, campus minister Molly Wallish, he is working alongside his in-laws Mr. and Mrs. Zach and Bridget McPhillips.

"I love working with my wife, and it's been pretty awesome seeing [my family members] every day. To see what they're doing and the impacts they're having at the same place I work; it's really cool," Wallish said.

While a Catholic school environment is not new to him, there are a few differences between Scotus and Wallish's previous jobs. A Pius X alum and former faculty member, Wallish is in uncharted territory when it comes to Scotus traditions.

"I want to get to know the students better, the staff, and just more of the traditions. I have some friends who went to Scotus. I'm kind of curious what kind of things they experienced that were different from me at Pius," Wallish said.

Following his positions at Pius X and St. Bonaventure, Wallish is excited about his return to teaching junior high. He enjoys working with this age group, and he feels best about teaching math at this level.

"I know that this is what I have been called to teach, and I would say that it's my strength," Wallish said.

Although he is looking forward to it, teaching junior high is no easy feat. With a seventh grade class of 78 students, Wallish definitely has his hands full.

"It has certainly been a challenge," Wallish said with a chuckle. "Just trying to meet the needs, trying to answer all the questions. I just can't get to everyone all the time."

The large number of students he sees has given him a good insight into the different needs of the kids. Wallish understands that not all students learn the same way, and he has ideas on how to accommodate the abilities of all.

"I really want to get a placement test for the seventh graders and be able to split them into math 7 and then something like pre-algebra. It gets them going on the right track and makes them feel less overwhelmed," Wallish explained.

Mr. Wallish certainly cares, and it seems he is in the right place with the right students.

Wallish concluded, "It really is a fun age, sixth to eighth grade. The kids are just trying to figure themselves out; all of them are just perfectly awkward."

Guess who: new teacher fun facts



Matt Wallish
Math 7/8 & Geometry Essentials

- I go on a fly fishing trip every summer.
- I spent a week in New Zealand in 2008 and got to shear a sheep.
- I love to raise beta fish, but I'm notorious for killing them.
- I play a little bit of drums.
- I got 3rd place in a national pageant representing Nebraska.
- I wash windows and power wash houses.
- I'm related to Blessed Stanley Rother.



Cathy Hutchinson
English 7 & Literature 7/8



Roger Krienke
Heath & Fitness 7/8



Cecilia Brichacek
Campus Minister



Terry Kathol
Principal



Cassie Kouma
Theology 11 & 12



Lorena Miya
Spanish I & II

Shamrock volleyball starts from scratch

By Kennedy Krueger

The Shamrock volleyball team started this season with a clean slate. From a completely different starting line up to new head coach Joe Held, the volleyball team had a fresh start to build from. Despite these changes, the team has adapted and is still improving.

"We have many new faces, and many of us have not played together before. It's going to be a work in progress this whole season. We just have to work on improving ourselves," junior outside hitter Grace Hamling said.

The Shamrocks started off their season playing some tough teams. They began with a match against Kearney Catholic. Even though they ended up falling to the Stars, their win in the first set put them in the right mindset. Senior middle hitter Lola Doerneman had nine kills in this game.

"I'd say the Kearney Catholic game at home was [the] most impactful [game] because we really saw how well we can play, especially against a tough team like Kearney. It gave us some confidence going into the season," Doerneman said.

In the next games, the Shamrocks battled against Omaha Concordia, Platteview, and David City before their match up with Cedar Catholic. This game was crucial to the team's morale because it was the first win of the season. Senior Kate Hendricks has moved from playing middle to right side this year.

"The Cedar Catholic win was important because after the loss to David City, it encouraged us to all play to the best of our abilities. Our communication really picked up, and we did a great job of working as a team," Hendricks said.

During the Malcolm Invite, the Shamrocks played some difficult matches against Lincoln Lutheran, Kearney Catholic, and Superior. At the end of the day, they secured a win against Superior.

"We knew going into that weekend it was going to be tough. We played well and even gave Kearney Catholic a good challenge again [in] our second game. The win against Superior felt good at the end of the day," Hamling said.

A few days later, the Shamrocks swept Aquinas Catholic at a home game. The following weekend, they had a successful tournament at Fillmore Central, ending with victories against Hastings St. Cecilia and Tri County. Senior defensive specialist Sydney Stuart made a return to volleyball this year.

"The wins over the past weekend gave our team the confidence we needed, and we proved we can compete and show up for each other. We went into the weekend with a goal of growing as a team, and we definitely proved ourselves," Stuart said.

The game against Battle Creek was another big win for the Shamrocks, beating the Braves 3-1.



Jillian Rusher / Rock Bottom Staff

Junior defensive specialist Brooke Krienke prepares to pass the ball in the Kearney Catholic game on August 28th. This game was the Shamrocks' first game of the season.

Finally, the big rivalry game against Lakeview arrived. No matter the outcome, this game is always highly anticipated. Junior defensive specialist Brooke Krienke has played in the back row for the Shamrocks since her freshman year.

"I love having a cross town rivalry. It just makes it so hype because the crowd is always packed, and it just brings attention to high school sports," Krienke said.

The Shamrock volleyball team is now preparing for the conference tournament at the end of this week.

"We are all here to win and trust in each other. We do this sport because we love it, and the people we share it with," freshman outside Mya Langan said.

Girls cross country continues big wins

By Lola Doerneman

Even though fall seems to be just beginning, the cross country team only has 2 more weeks left in the season. Returning all but one varsity runner from last year, the girls team came back stronger than ever. They have won every meet so far except for a runner-up finish at the Boone Central Invitational and 7th place at the Aquinas Catholic Invitational.

At the opening meet in Grand Island, the girls team took 1st while the boys placed 6th. Sophomore Avery Heinrich and junior Emilyn Kavan placed in the top 5 for girls. Sophomore Michael Klaassen led the Scotus boys team. The following week in Albion, the girls placed 2nd, boys 7th.

Last year at the state meet, A. Heinrich finished in second overall, only 1 second short of first place. A. Heinrich has continued this success, placing 1st in 4 out of 11 meets so far this season.

At the Platte River Rumble on September 12th, the girls team won the meet with 3 runners finishing in the top 10. A. Heinrich led the team placing 4th out of 111 runners.

"It was really exciting that we competed well at the Rumble. It is a big meet with a lot of good competition, so it's always good to compete there," Heinrich said.

Junior Leslie Medina is one of the varsity runners for the girls team.

"[Winning the Rumble] was a very good step towards the right direction. It showed us that even against higher classes, we can still win," Medina said.

The boys cross country team also ran at the Rumble at Mahoney State Park. The team placed 16th. Senior Evan Pavlik is one of the top 5 runners for their team. Being the only senior on the boys team, Pavlik has important goals for his last year running for the Shamrocks.

"The Platte River Rumble [was an important step for our team because it] showed our guys that we can push each other and run together," Pavlik said. "My goal this year is to lead and be a good example to the team. I want to leave behind the team with fun, old traditions that will last forever."

Junior Aiden Zegar is a returning varsity runner for the boys. He has run cross country for Scotus since junior high.

"[The most important race] for me was at the River Rumble because I finished 1st for Scotus, and I proved to myself that I can actually do this," Zegar said. "I'm hoping to break 20 minutes and continue to be the number one boy for Scotus."



Lola Doerneman / Rock Bottom Staff

The girls cross country team celebrates after winning the Platte River Rumble at Mahoney State Park on September 12th. Freshman Avery Heinrich, junior Emilyn Kavan, and senior Hannah Heinrich all finished in the top 10.

At the home meet on September 18th at Lutjelusche, the boys took 8th place with Zegar finishing 1st for the team. For the girls, senior Hannah Heinrich placed 4th out of 80 runners, and the team once again took 1st place. A. Heinrich and Kavan placed 1st and 2nd, respectively.

"Winning meets is starting to become an expectation for us," H. Heinrich said. "We always have to work to balance the amount of pressure and not let it get into our heads."

Both teams ran at Malcolm's meet on September 23rd. The girls placed 1st, boys 15th.

At the University of Nebraska-Kearney invitational on September 29th, the girls team placed 1st with 3 runners in the top 10, while the boys team placed 30th.

On October 2nd at the David City invitational, the girls team finished 7th with Kavan taking 2nd, and the boys placed 9th.

The conference meet was on October 7th at Omaha Concordia.

After getting runner-up at the state meet last year and 5th the year before, the girls are again in contention for the gold this season. The meet is scheduled to be on October 24th back at Kearney.

"We have a stronger team than ever this season," H. Heinrich said. "I truly believe the third time is the charm, and we will finally win it all this year."

Golf team swings for continued success

By Ainsley Kuhl

While upholding a reputation of state qualifications and placing fourth at state last year, the Shamrock girls golf team is shooting for another year of success. The girls are aiming for continued growth and wins throughout this season, and so far they have shown this by placing at a majority of their meets.

The team has shown their success by placing first at 9 of their 12 meets. Though they have had plenty of victories, they still have minor fixes they hope to improve. They want to have the team's overall score lower for state and try to break the school's record. Senior Brynn Homolka has been out for golf for four years and on varsity for three.

"We are mainly focusing on getting consistent with our lower scores. We've spent a lot of practices just playing and getting time in on the course," Homolka said.



Josie Rother / Rock Bottom Staff

Senior Kiya Taylor tees off at Quail Run Golf Course at the triangular against Battle Creek and Norfolk Catholic on August 26th. Taylor was this year's conference tournament champion, finishing with a score of 86.

Each of the girls have also set personal goals for themselves. They hope to drop their individual scores from last year and past meets. Senior Kiya Taylor has played at state three years in a row.

"I would like to break 80 this season. My goal last year was to break 90, and I succeeded, so I would like to make another big improvement this year," Taylor said.

At Quail Run Golf Course on September 11th, the team won the Lakeview Invite. Their overall score was a 379, with junior Libby Langan placing runner-up and scoring an 88, while Taylor carded a 91, finishing right behind Langan. Junior Ava Sokol placed fifth at this meet with a score of 94.

"I think we had a good performance because it was our home course," Sokol said.

The girls have six meets at Quail Run this year, giving them lots of experience.

On September 16th, the girls competed at the Blair meet where they played both Class A and Class B schools. The team overall placed 2nd, with three of the girls breaking their personal records. At this meet, their overall team score was a 353, which is only two away from the school's 351 record on an 18 hole course. With 17 other teams to compete against from Class A and Class B at this meet, most of the girls were anxious but felt accomplished following their success.

"I PR'd and we almost broke the school record," Langan said. "I played good and never got into the hazards."

At the Fullerton meet on September 3rd, the team combined a score of 378, earning them 1st place. They played again on September 25th at the Wayne Invite where they finished 2nd.

The Shamrocks hosted the conference meet this year at Quail Run Golf Course on September 27. Conference is a big meet for the team because they have won it five years in a row. This year, the team placed 1st with Taylor winning the tournament by shooting an 85, followed by Langan at 3rd, Sokol at 4th, Homolka at 6th, and sophomore Lauren Fleming at 9th.

"It felt great to win conference individually, especially because it was the first meet I've ever won. As a team, I am very glad we were all able to play to the best of our abilities and win. We have all worked very hard to get to this point, so it's very nice to see it all pay off," Taylor said.

The team continued that feeling at the district tournament at Quail Run on Monday, October 6th. They shot 352 as a team to take home the championship. Their score was one shy of the school record. Four Shamrocks placed in the tournament. Taylor was the champion with an 82; Langan placed 3rd, Homolka 4th, and Sokol 5th. The team was one shot long of tying the school record.

The state tournament is October 13th and October 14th at Lake Mahoney Golf Club.

Shamrock football battles challenges

By Kate Hendricks

The Shamrock football team has been put to the test this year with a difficult schedule, coaching changes, and injuries. The Shamrocks' record this season so far is 2-4.

The team faced the Aquinas Monarchs for their season opener on August 29th at Aquinas. The Shamrocks took the win against the Monarchs 49-7.

Senior Carson Wessel has been the quarterback for the squad since last season.

"Aquinas was the highlight of our season so far because it felt great to get a big win in the season opener," Wessel said.

This year, a familiar face stepped into the head coaching position. Roger Krienke has made the move from assistant coach back to the head coach. He was the head coach at Scotus from 2004-2013.

"Coach Krienke stepped up greatly and knows what he is doing. We just need to bring what we learn from him to the games," Wessel said.

On September 5th, Scotus faced Mount Michael. This was a special game for many players as former head football coach Tyler Linder took on the role as assistant coach this year for the Knights.

Junior Parker Newman is a linebacker and a halfback for the Shamrocks.

"Mt. Michael was fun to play in, considering it was our first home game with a lot of people in attendance as well as playing against Mr. Linder. They knew everything about us, so it made it really hard on offense because they knew it inside and out," Newman said.

The biggest test of the season came in week three when the Shamrocks faced the ranked Bluejays from Ashland-Greenwood. J

Junior Michael Brandt is a tight end and outside linebacker.

"I think the most impactful game for the season so far was the game against Ashland-Greenwood. Even though we lost, we showed we can compete with the top three teams in the state. We were up by 14 points at one point and were just a few stops short of winning and finishing that game," Brandt said.

The Shamrocks played the Aurora Huskies on September 19th and were tied with them at halftime. After a tough second half, the Shamrocks fell to the Huskies 21-41. Senior Eli Maguire is a wide receiver.

"Aurora had the biggest impact on our season because we realized that we are better than we thought at passing, but we also realized how important it is that we stop the run," Maguire said. "The first half of every game except Aurora has gone well for us. We need to be a better second half team."

Scotus faced Schuyler on Thursday, October 2nd at home, winning 76-9.

"Practices and games have not changed very much up front, but it feels like there is much more positivity during practice," Maguire said. "There is still time to turn our season around, and we are doing everything we can to make that happen."

The Shamrocks will take on Lakeview, O'Neill, and Wayne before the playoffs.

"When we get things figured out and we're healthy, we'll be dangerous," Newman said.



Sophia Langan / Yearbook Staff

Senior quarterback Carson Wessel celebrates after he reached a first down during the first quarter of the Ashland-Greenwood game on September 12th. This is Wessel's second year of starting as quarterback.

Softball hits through hurdles

By Lydia Dostal

Softball is in full swing in Columbus as the Scotus Co-op team enters the back half of their season. Scotus has eight girls out for softball with the team's total number of players being twenty-two. With small numbers, the team has had to overcome much adversity.

Scotus junior Sophia Belina plays second base and short-stop for the Discoverers.

"We are a small team, but we have all been working hard to prove ourselves," Belina said.

The Discoverers started the season on a high note with a first game win against Lincoln North Star. This win was especially impactful as it was the first time the team has beat North Star since 2016. Sophomore Karsyn Bridger plays left field for the JV Discoverers.

"We all came together as a team, and we worked really hard to get the win," Bridger said.

After an optimistic start to the year, the Discoverers went on to beat Omaha Burke before unfortunately losing five straight games. In the aftermath of these losses, the team has taken various steps towards improvement.

Junior Cali Harrington plays second base and pitches for the Discoverers.

"We've been working to improve our bats, our energy, and communication. A big thing for us is not letting the mental side of the game take us out," Harrington said.

The effort put forth by the team paid off, resulting in a 14-1 win against Lincoln High to snap their losing streak. Freshman pitcher Jaci Harrington played a part in securing this victory.

"The difference maker in this game was our energy and positivity on and off the field. We continued to push ourselves even through the hard plays," Harrington said.

Following the win, the Discoverers participated in the Lincoln Public Schools Invite where they faced powerful conference opponents, including a rivalry game against Norfolk. After a tough battle, they fell short, losing to Norfolk 7-9 in extra innings. They finished the tournament 0-3, falling in a close game to Lincoln Standing Bear and to Lincoln Southwest. Rather than getting down on themselves, the Discoverers used this experience as a learning opportunity.

Junior catcher Taylor Blaser caught during the game against Norfolk.

"We have had team discussions to see what we can improve on. We've been able to take those discussions and use them to guide us during practice in order to make adjustments," Blaser said.

The Discoverers battled back with a win against Omaha Central on September 16th to bounce back from their losses. After losing three straight in their home tournament on September 20th, the team responded with a triumph over Fremont.

"This team has so much potential and talent. We have learned to celebrate the little victories this season," Bridger said.

The Discoverers took on their conference tournament in Lincoln on October 4th, finishing with a record of 2-2 for the weekend. Post-season play begins for them this week at Gretna High School. The team is looking for a late season surge to propel them into the state tournament.

Junior third baseman Naomi Roberston serves as the team's lead-off hitter.

"Our goal is to finish the regular season strong because when it comes to districts, every team starts 0-0," Robertson said.



Lydia Dostal / Rock Bottom Staff

Junior catcher Taylor Blaser throws a ball back to the pitcher during the Discoverer's home game against Bellevue East on September 8th. The Discoverers will begin post-season play at the district tournament on Wednesday, October 8th.



Josie Rother / Rock Bottom Staff

Junior Libby Langan putts the golf ball at their home triangular on September 2nd at Quail Run Golf Course. Langan has placed in the top 10 for 8 meets so far this season.



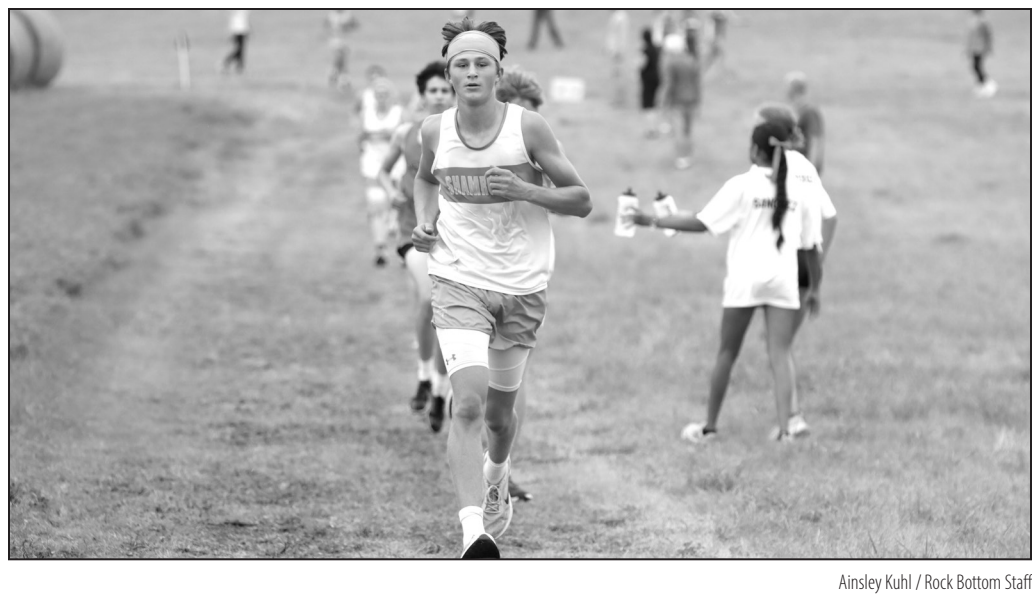
Audrey Stoner / Rock Bottom Staff

Senior running back Thomas Settje advances the ball as junior Michael Brandt blocks for him at their home opener against Mount Michael on September 5th. Settje has rushed 739 yards so far this season.



Angie Rusher / Journalism Advisor

Freshman outside hitter Mya Langan spikes the ball as seniors Lola Doerneman and Sophia Langan cover her shot at their home game against Aquinas on September 16th. M. Langan is the only starting freshman on the varsity volleyball team.



Ainsley Kuhl / Rock Bottom Staff

Junior varsity cross country runner Aiden Zegar leads a pack of runners in a sprint to the finish line at Scotus' home meet at Letjelusche on September 18th. The boys placed 8th, with Zegar finishing first for the team.

Columbus scoops up new shop

By Josie Rother



Josie Rother/ Rock Bottom Staff

Senior Valeria Rodriguez receives her ice cream from a What's the Scoop employee after school on September 11th. The new ice cream shop has been open in Columbus for about 4 months.

Attention all Mcflurry freaks, blizzard bros, and all other icecream lovers: there is a new ice cream shop in town, so here's the "scoop".

What's the Scoop is a new hard ice cream shop that officially opened on May 27th of this year. The store is open Tuesday through Saturday from noon to 9 pm, as well as Sundays from noon to 8 pm. Flavors as wild as strawberry cheesecake and espresso oreo are available alongside the classics, such as rocky road and old fashioned vanilla.

The Nebraska-native business focuses on opening hard ice cream shops in towns that lack one. The first What's the Scoop location was opened in Seward, Nebraska in October of 2024. The second location is in our own town.

What's the Scoop was also involved in this year's Columbus Days Celebration titled Peace, Love, and Columbus Days. Their ice cream truck provided a sweet treat to those craving ice cream in the summer heat.

Made with Wisconsin Cream and other real ingredients, their flavors rival those of the other ice cream outlets in town. The menu offers homemade waffle and sugar cones along with dishes of different sizes.

The inside of the store, with its bright and bubbly decorations, truly reflects their fun flavors and creates a whimsical atmosphere. The blasts of color on the walls and the ice cream throne are a hit among customers of all ages. What's the Scoop definitely has character, which keeps customers coming back to try more flavors.

After giving it a try, I came to the conclusion that What's the Scoop's tasty ice cream is definitely one of a kind, especially in the Columbus area, but I can not put it above a Dairy Queen blizzard on the ice cream tier list.

As for the prices, they are fair, but not the best. My go-to order is a dish with two scoops of ice cream, which rings up to $8.02. For the quality and the interesting flavors offered, I would say that is reasonable, but a large blizzard is available at Dairy Queen for less than $6.

Although What's the Scoop offers exciting flavors and an inviting climate, it is hard to look past the inaccessibility of the store due to the construction the past year. At no fault of their own, the construction happening on 23rd street makes it difficult for customers to navigate their way to the storefront. Perhaps with the end of construction hopefully coming soon, What's the Scoop will have an increase popularity and be able to have a bigger influence on Columbus.

Another critique of the new business is they are not open on Monday. Monday is no doubt the hardest day of the week for most people. Having to go back to school after a weekend that was short and unrestful is no easy feat. After a long Monday successfully lived, many people want a treat. What's the Scoop not being open on Monday ultimately takes them out of the running for my top ice cream shop.

What's the Scoop's interesting flavors and colorful atmosphere make it a must stop. I am a returning customer who has a punch card and loves to try the different flavors as they rotate. Their ice cream truly is one-of-a-kind in Columbus, but I do not think it will ever top the accessible cookie dough heath blizzard I get from Dairy Queen.

K-pop Demon Hunters not so "Golden"

By Sydney Stuart

You can assume the #1 movie on Netflix is there for a reason. K-Pop Demon Hunters cannot be that bad if it was #1 globally for 11 weeks straight, right?

Wrong.

K-pop Demon Hunters has earned many nominations and world-wide recognition for its production and fan entertainment although I am not sure why it is so popular.

On July 20, 2025, the movie premiered, and the internet went crazy. Co-directors Maggie Kang and Chris Appelhans brought this Korean influenced film to life.

The film features Korean popular music (K-pop) songs, dancing, and animated characters. The main characters Rumi, Mira, and Zoey are popstars and secret demon hunters. Their mission is simple: save their fans from the demon world. To win, they must strengthen the hanmoon, which is the barrier between the demon and human world, by their commanding voices.

Along with the references from Generation Z trends, inside the movie contains rich Korean culture. These details make the movie stand out as culturally different from other movies in Netflix's top 10 but can also cause confusion among viewers who are unfamiliar with Korean culture. It is great to include nationality backgrounds, but to make it stick with movie enthusiasts, there needs to be more context in the movie.

When I sit down to watch a movie, I expect a simple, easy-going movie. However, I fear our society has become fixated on highly stimulating productions, including this one. For instance, when comparing the popularity of movies from 10 years ago, films such as Home and Inside Out have noticeably less action happening all the time. High stimulation makes the movie more of an impulse watch rather than a timeless piece of entertainment for all generations.

The big question in the movie is: will the superstars save their fans from the ruler of the demon world, Gwi-ma? The question was proposed at the start of the movie and basically gave away the whole narrative. Viewers can already predict the resolution before halfway through the film because it lacks multiple storylines. Not to claim there is no climax in *K-Pop Demon Hunters*, but it seems to have less of a build up due to only having one storyline. Including more storylines is what makes good movies great.

K-Pop Demon Hunters, compared to Home and Inside Out, also has a production that is drastically more thrilling, yet lacks a complicated plot. According to the entertainment website *Screen Rant,* the production's budget was $100 million. Somehow, the plot felt lost in the midst of all the vibrant colors and music. Do not get me wrong, the main characters' personalities were entertaining at times, yet they still seemed to have a shallow character development.The deepest theme in the story was tied to one of the main characters, Rumi, who struggles with her identity. As viewers of all backgrounds watch this movie at home, I am unsure of who would relate and become personally interested.

The movie deserves some credit for its catchy songs although I personally don't enjoy them. Per Spotify, their top song *Golden*



nbcnews.com

K-pop Demon Hunters main characters Zoey, Rumi, and Mira stand ready for battle. The movie has had 4 songs in the Billboard Hot 100 for 11 weeks.

has 543,225,445 streams on Spotify alone; you cannott deny its popularity. Not to mention, the film passed movies on Netflix's most watched list, including Red Notice, Birdbox, and Carry-on, to claim the #1 movie of all time in streams on Netflix with 266,000,000 watches according to Netflix.

Overall, I would rate K-Pop Demon Hunters a 3 out of 10. It is by far nowhere near being the best movie I have ever watched. Directors Kang and Appelhans certainly hit the dot with their goal of producing a film inspired by Korean culture. However, if you are like me and want to watch a timeless, impactful film, I recommend finding a different movie that really knows "how it's done, done."

"This happens once every few lifetimes"

By Ainsley Kuhl

On August 26, 2025, Travis Kelce knelt to the ground, pulled out a ring and Taylor Swift said "yes." Singer and songwriter Taylor Swift and Chiefs tight end Travis Kelce broke the internet with news of their engagement. This was announced via Instagram with the caption, "Your English teacher and your gym teacher are getting married." The couple have been together for almost 2 years and are now ready to say forever and always.

Since the jaw-dropping announcement, there have been many mixed reviews. There were people bawling their eyes out in joy and others who did not care at all. However, everyone should care a little because of how beneficial Kelce and Swift's marriage will be.

This marriage will be good for society. According to the news magazine *The Week*, Swift has hundreds of millions of fans who look up to her. With her deciding to settle down and start a family, the majority of her fan base (young women) will want to do the same. The couple have set a higher standard for young men and women to look for because they are so happy together. They are both powerful figures in the entertainment industry, so their decisions influence many.

From the public's view, Kelce and Swift's relationship looks perfect. They are never seen arguing in public and always have a smile when they are around each other. It is good to see a positive relationship in the celebrity world. In Hollywood, it is rare to see a lasting relationship. It seems as if every day, there is news of another celebrity relationship failing. With how strong this couple's relationship has been, it seems it will last.

Swift is also blowing up the narrative of having to be a "forever girlfriend" by getting the ring. Before Kelce, she was in a seven year relationship with Joe Alwyn, and it left her heartbroken and haunted. In her album *THE TORTURED POETS DEPARTMENT*, she wrote about that relationship and how she gave away her youth to him waiting for his proposal. Swift is 35 and ready to start a new era in her life, so Kelce came in at the right time.

This engagement is great for culture, but it is even better for them. They both are getting to the end of their careers and are ready to start a family. Any person who is a fan of either of them should at least be happy they have found their significant other. They are glowing every time they are seen out with each other. Kelce has been supporting Swift, and she has been doing the same but receiving backlash for simply going to his games.

Many people find their relationship annoying or overrated. I agree Taylor Swift is covered a little too much in the media, and it can be annoying seeing her ten times throughout a football game. However, it is not her fault because she is not the one controlling the cameras and is simply supporting the person she loves. Swift is a successful businesswoman with an enthusiastic fan base and a media frenzy that follows her everywhere. She cannot be blamed for the media's obsession.

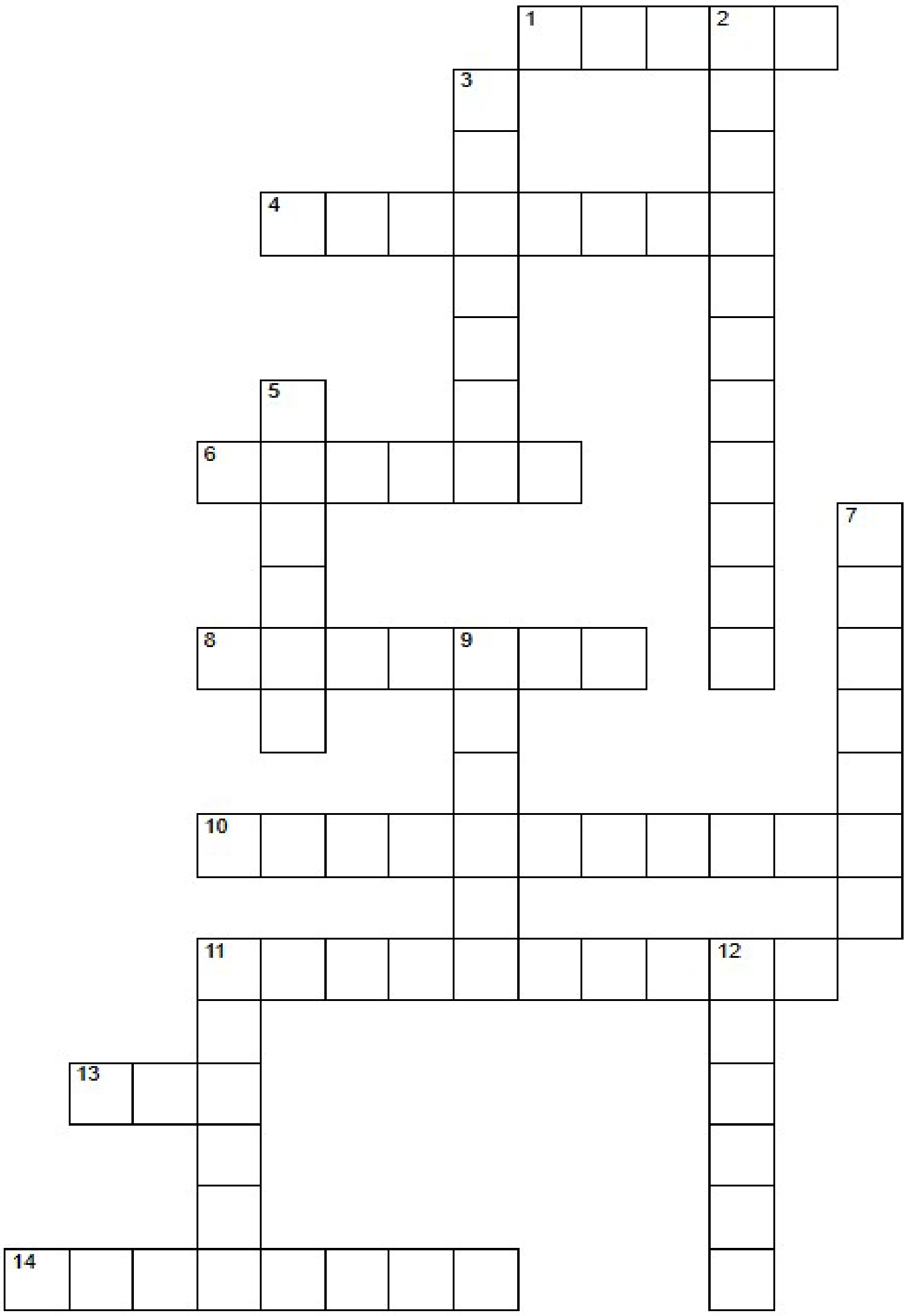


people.com

Chiefs tight end Travis Kelce and singer Taylor Swift embrace moments after Kelce's proposal on August 26th in the backyard of his Kansas home. They have been together for almost 2 years.

Fans of Kelce and Swift or not, their engagement has taken the world by storm and fascinated many. People should stop worrying about it and making it out to be bad when it is providing hope to a whole generation. Congratulations to Taylor and Travis!

The "Did you read the *Rock Bottom*?" Crossword

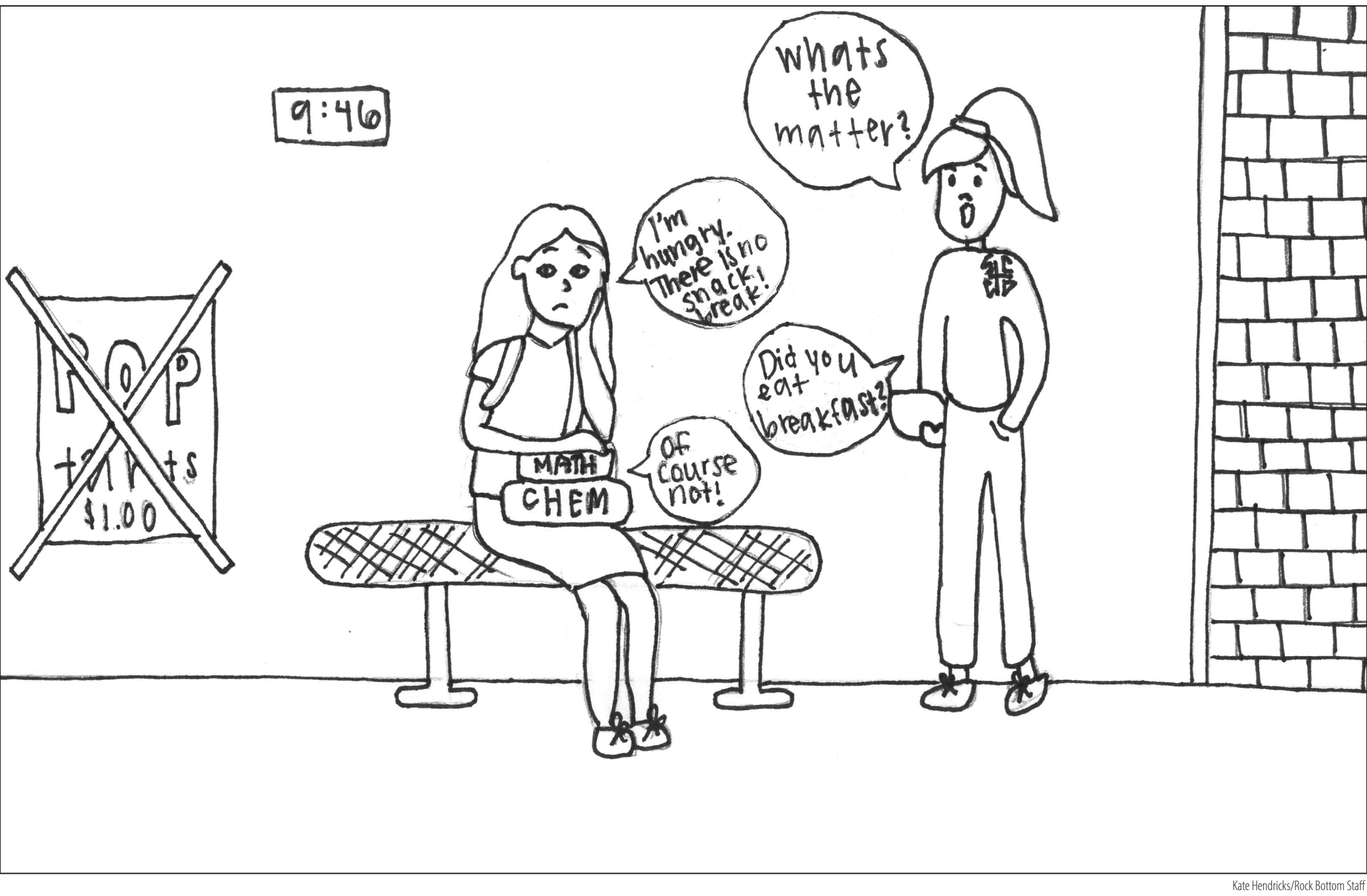


Across:

1. The place the cross country girls got at their opening meet in Grand Island
4. The position Jillian Rusher holds in her sibling hierarchy
6. The day of the week What's the Scoop? is not open
8. The month the Scotus dance team will perform at the CHS Jam the Gym Competition
10. Scotus girls co-op with this team for softball
11. The campus minister who works alongside Mrs. Brichacek
13. How many meets the girls golf team has at Quail Run this year
14. The gym homecoming took place in this year

Down:

2. The university Coach Krienke played football for
3. Scotus' activities director
5. The culture *Kpop Demon Hunters* is based on
7. The kind of teacher Taylor Swift was described as by her fiance
9. Who the Shamrock football team tied with at halftime (hint: Huskies)
11. Ms. Miya's favorite place to travel
12. Ms. Kouma's alma mater



Kate Hendricks/Rock Bottom Staff

Shamrock Volleyball Dominant Dynasties Award

1990 1995 1996 1997 1998 1999 2001

"I am so proud of what [my former players] accomplished as well as all that they have accomplished in their lives." Coach John Petersen

71 of 105 former players attended the ceremony.

14 state championship & 5 runner-up trophies

8 undefeated seasons

"For more than two decades, Scotus volleyball set the standard in the state, winning 14 state championships - five in a row from 1995 to 1999 - and five state runner-up trophies." Nebraska High School Sports Hall of Fame Association

"We always said our goal in practice was to get more repetitions than any team in the state. Don't know if we did, but we tried. We strived to be fundamentally sound in every aspect of the game. We tried to be perfect; we were not, but we tried for perfection." Coach John Petersen

19 state finals in 22 years

93% winning record within 22 years

"Coached by John Petersen, the Shamrocks qualified for the state tournament every year but one." Nebraska High School Sports Hall of Fame Association

2002 2003 2005 2006 2008 2009 2011



Angie Rusher / Journalism Advisor

Former Scotus volleyball coach John Petersen gives his acceptance speech at the ceremony for the Dynasty Award. Petersen led the Scotus volleyball team to 14 state titles and 5 runner-ups in 22 years.



Angie Rusher / Journalism Advisor

Former Scotus volleyball coach John Petersen acknowledges his previous players during the Dynasty Award ceremony on September 14th at Lincoln East High School. 71 of Petersen's former players were in attendance.

Head coaches filled with familiar faces

Boys Basketball-Cody Mroczek

The boys basketball team welcomes a familiar face to the head coach position this coming season. Track and cross country coach Cody Mroczek has been the assistant coach since 2022, but his love for sports and coaching started many years ago.

Starting in elementary school until graduating college, Mroczek grew up in the Scotus gym. From managing the team as a kid, playing as a highschooler, and eventually coaching, Mroczek has been a part of the basketball team his whole life. More recently at Scotus, Mroczek has been coaching 3 sports year-round at the varsity level.



"I've always been interested in coaching, just having a knack for it," Mroczek said. "[It's something] I'm passionate about."

Mroczek's new role as head coach will be a small adjustment thanks to the past years of being assistant to former head coach Mike VunCannon.

"I'm very thankful for [Coach] VunCannon. He let me do probably more than most assistant coaches have done," Mroczek said. "[I'm most excited to] be able to put my twist on things and dictate stuff throughout the program."

Dance-Amarha Bridger & Sydney Mroczek

The 2025 school year welcomed a new addition to Scotus: the dance team. Leading this new team communications director Amarha Bridger and track coach Sydney Mroczek assumed roles as head and assistant coaches.

"What we're doing now is different than how the dance [team] has been in the past," Bridger explained. "I'm excited for people to see how it's more of the dance aspect and less with flags. It's a different dynamic, so I'm excited for people to see the girls perform."



Starting a new program at Scotus, the coaches had to overcome some difficulties along the way. For instance, tryouts were later than the coaches had planned.

"We didn't have anything to go off of, so building the program from scratch was kind of a struggle, but I'm really proud of the girls," Bridger said. "They have been really good about listening to Sydney and I and our ideas, and they've been putting in a lot of input and hard work through the season. I hope they make great memories."

Football-Roger Krienke

The beginning of the football season has been a smooth transition as junior high health and P.E. teacher Roger Krienke stepped into the role of head coach.

Krienke started his coaching journey at Scotus in junior high football in 2000. In 2004 he took the role as head coach until becoming former head coach Tyler Linder's assistant in 2013. Krienke returned as head coach this season.



"It was sad to see Coach Linder go," Krienke said. "We were great friends, and I really enjoyed coaching with him, but it's been really good. I have a great group of guys coaching with me, and the kids have been fantastic."

The coaching staff has adapted by starting to set this transition in motion back in March.

Krienke was instrumental in some adjustments to the football team this past summer.

"We try to push kids to go out for a spring sport. I really believe in that. Making sure they're lifting year round and not just the summer. Those are huge for me," Krienke said. "Other than that, I think we hit the ground running. We have the kids organized, and it's been really smooth."

Volleyball-Joe Held

The 2025 school year waved farewell to one of the Shamrocks' longtime coaches and teachers. Former head volleyball coach Janet Tooley retired after 8 years coaching varsity and 21 years of junior varsity. As the position opened up, Scotus alumnus Joe Held stepped back into the Dowd.



"It's good to be back home," Held said. "I'd say the most difficult part of the whole thing has been the girls getting to know me and trying to get the relationships to where [they] trust me from a volleyball standpoint, and I trust them, and we know we have each other's best interests in mind."

Starting off the season with this change, Held is eager to get some wins for the Shamrocks.

"I go in the locker room and tell the girls we can do it, and I think they all believe it, but until we start [winning more games], we need to do it to believe it too," Held said.

Boys Golf-Matt Wallish

After coaching golf for three years at Lincoln Pius X and last year assisting girls and boys golf at Scotus, math teacher Matt Wallish will assume the role as head coach of the boys golf team this upcoming season. Wallish's inspiration for coaching began in Lincoln where he started his coaching career.



"[At Pius,] I got to work with a great coach, Steph Kolbas. She has many years of coaching experience. When things got difficult, she always stuck with [it] and taught me how to bring out the best in others," Wallish stated. "I've been striving to meet that same high bar she set for me. I think I always wanted to eventually become a head coach just because of her inspiration."

Former head coach Brady Vancura stepped down this past year to assume the role of activities director, leaving it open for Wallish to consider. Already familiar with the golfers, Wallish's decision was easier than most.

"I did feel God calling me to be open to accepting that position. Especially now that I've got a lot more experience under my belt," Wallish said. "I've got to see a lot of great coaches and how they work, so I've slowly been adding strategies they used to improve my own coaching."

Golf places 2nd with school record at state

SPORTS 9





One act presents *Pistols and Posies*

ACTIVITIES 4

Rock Bottom

Scotus Central Catholic columbus-catholic.org/rock-bottom-newspaper/ Columbus, Nebraska 68601

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Schools grow resources through merger

By Sydney Stuart

At the end of the school year, many goodbyes take place, whether that be students graduating or moving schools or teachers retiring or taking a different job.

All students in grades preschool through sixth at St. Anthony's Elementary School will be waving goodbye to their school at the end of this school year for forever.

Columbus Catholic Schools (CCS) announced on September 18th that at the end of the 2025-2026 school year, St. Anthony's will be merging with St. Bonaventure.

Jeff Ohnoutka, who has been executive director of CCS for 3 years, led the way with this decision.

"We've been looking at this for about 3 years, and we had five possible solutions that we looked at over that time. We involved our parish councils and the parish finance committees, and we used parent surveys. We looked at a lot of different things during that time," Ohnoutka said.

Columbus Catholic Schools announced the merger through an email sent to parents and teachers. Scotus also posted a FAQ page on their website with more details about the transition.

Seventh grader Delaney Kelly graduated from St. Anthony's, and her mom teaches at the school.

"My initial reaction was shock; I thought I hadn't heard my mom right. I feel glad that the students will be able to still attend a Catholic School and keep learning about the faith," Kelly said. "I am glad they will be able to make new friends at another fantastic school and that they still get to openly talk about Jesus."

The layout for the merger will allow for two classrooms of each grade, with class sizes ranging from 18-20 students. The teachers currently at St. Anthony's will be offered the new teaching positions first. Among these positions will also be a reading specialist and programs for academically advanced students.

Freshman Jaci Harrington also attended St. Anthony's.



Amarha Bridger / Communications Director

St. Anthony's 3rd grade teacher Deb Svehla leads St. Anthony and St. Bonaventure students in a group activity on October 23rd. Prior to teaching at St. Anthony's, Svehla taught at St. Bonaventure.

"I could see [a benefit of the merger being] that the St. Anthony's kids will meet new friends because Anthony's has such small class sizes. Also, more kids will learn the same way since it will be two elementary schools and not three," Harrington said.

The two track system was favored due to many factors including low class sizes, teacher shortages, and foreseen retirements.

Senior Helene Chard graduated from St. Anthony's in 2020.

"I was very sad to hear that my elementary school will be closing. I was surprised yet at the same time knew their numbers had been low for quite a few years now," Chard said.

On the administrative side, Cheryl Zoucha, current St. Bonaventure principal, will enter a new role as head of family engagement and campus ministry for all Columbus Catholic elementary schools. Amy Sokol, the current St. Anthony's principal, will become the principal of the new combined school.

"My biggest hope is that we can take all of the great things of St. Anthony's and merge them with the great things happening at St. Bon's and then create an incredible school," Sokol said.

To help the students from both schools get to know each other, Sokol and Zoucha have organized opportunities for students to meet one another through games and activities. St. Isidore's and St. Bonaventure have also held open houses for parents to come in and look at the schools.

"I'm excited about meeting new people. I love people and I love building relationships. I'm looking forward to meeting new people, and just being that person, that instructional leader for the teachers but also that friend for the new students that I will meet," Sokol concluded.

Legacy leads Columbus community events



Photo Courtesy Reece Vasina

Legacy members join together for their Groove and Grub event at Frankfort Square this past summer. Other projects they are working on include a drive-in theater and a drone show.

By Lillian Miller

From ice skating rinks to drive-in theaters to tri-school intramurals, exciting activities for high school students seem to be far from reach in the small towns of Nebraska. A common complaint in Columbus is there are no activities for the high school students. A group striving to fix this problem is Legacy.

The Legacy Youth Foundation grew out of a youth survey done by the Columbus Future Fund in 2023. This group is a unique opportunity for youth-led community engagement. K.C. Belitz, a Legacy advisor, described the vision of the organization.

"They simply want to make Columbus an even better place to live," Belitz said. "I hope the members see Columbus as a place where they can make a difference. What we're really working toward is creating a place where these students can impact their community!"

Since Legacy is student-led, the meetings are unique to their organization. Two-year Legacy member and Scotus senior Jillian Rusher joined Legacy because her sister was a part of the original group that formed it two years ago.

"Meetings are really a group effort," Rusher said. "Everyone is in charge of different projects, and throughout the meeting, we share where we're at with them. Legacy has been able to give the teens in the community a voice, showing how to take charge and help an event come to life."

Events the group has organized in the past, such as the Groove and Grub and the Back to School Bash, not only provided entertainment, but also supported local businesses.

Junior Lydia Dostal enjoys how Legacy balances fun with community impact.

"We try to incorporate local businesses into our events because a goal for us is to help give back to our community," Dostal said. "Events such as the Groove and Grub and the Back to School Bash offer variety to the community to attend different events. They give opportunities to students and families to get out of the house and do something fun."

Other activities Legacy is currently organizing include a downtown holiday event, intramural sporting events to bring together all three high schools, an ice skating rink, and new family-friendly events.

"I hope we will be able to accomplish all of the big ideas we have been working toward," Dostal added. "A few of the projects have been works in progress, and I would love to see them actually come to life. I also hope we are able to spread our name and make Legacy a well-known foundation people are proud to be a part of."

See **LEGACY**, Page 2

Tutoring takes off

By Lola Doerneman

A new program at Scotus has begun to help junior high students with their academics. During 9th period in an open classroom on the 2nd floor, junior high students can meet with upperclassmen tutors every day to receive instruction and assistance on their assignments. Whether it is math, reading, English, social studies, or religion, there are upperclassmen ready to lend a helping hand.

Guidance counselor intern Trevor Halligan launched this program to connect with the students at Scotus while also giving them a chance to learn from upperclassmen.

"This is a great opportunity for students to learn from students who have [already taken] the classes [they have questions about] and can help them navigate those problems," Halligan said.

Senior Peter Faltys is one of the upperclassmen who helps tutor the junior high students.

"It has been going really well. [This tutoring] provides an opportunity for the students to ask questions and get a more personalized learning experience," Faltys said.

Even though the program is new to Scotus, the turnout has been successfully consistent. With only one quarter of school underway, the program has achieved a promising start with about 6 to 8 students coming to receive assistance every day.

"It's rewarding to see [the students] make

See **TUTORING**, Page 2

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2025-2026 Rock Bottom Dates
October 9
November 11
December 16
February 10
March 10
April 1
May 5

Legacy

The biggest project Legacy is tackling is the construction of a drive-in movie theater in Pawnee Park, a massive undertaking led by the students themselves.

Senior Kayla Hoffman joined Legacy to stay involved in the Columbus community, so she has enjoyed contributing to this project.

"The construction of the drive-in theater has been a hard process, but Legacy is excited to get it up and running during the summer," Hoffman said. "We are looking forward to the community being able to use it."

Through all of their efforts, Legacy students hope to set a strong foundation for their program and their community.

"Legacy has established a reputation around the state as a group of young people who are doing incredible things," Belitz said.

One of these "incredible things" is the upcoming downtown stroll. Junior Legacy member Brooke Krienke is helping with the planning of this annual event. The event will hopefully take place at Frankfort Square and will include choir performances in the square, food stands, and a scavenger hunt.

Additionally, a drone show is tentatively scheduled for sometime in December.

"The person who runs the drone show at Nebraska football games reached out and said they could put together a show for [us]," Krienke said. "I'm super excited about this because it will be a good way to attract a lot of people."

Keep an eye out for advertisements for the event!

Tutoring

connections and solve problems. They have been bringing great questions and have been learning quickly," Faltys said.

Eighth grader Adrea Anderson has gone to receive help on algebra and has enjoyed her experience with the tutors.

"The tutoring program is nice because you can go with friends who have the same problems and work through them. The tutors show us how to work through the problems on the whiteboard, which is nice to have a visual," Anderson said.

Each day of the week, certain upperclassmen who have a 9th period study hall or independent study are scheduled to tutor. Because of a new change to the 2025 schedule, all junior high students have a 9th period study hall, which is the perfect time for tutoring.

The tutors give these students an opportunity to get a different type of assistance on their homework. While some students may be too nervous or shy to ask the teacher questions in front of the whole class, being tutored by upperclassmen gives them a welcoming smile with no judgement.

Eighth grader Cason Pelan has greatly appreciated the new program.

"The teachers usually have other stuff to do, but the tutors give you their full attention and make studying more fun," Pelan said. "It helps me become more successful and a better student."

Seventh grader Annah Layman has obtained assistance on her math and history homework.

"It's nice to share ideas with other students and then figure it out together," Layman said. "[Because of the help from the tutors], I have gotten better grades, and I [get my homework] done faster and more efficiently."

Not only do the junior high students receive help, but the upperclassmen have been enjoying themselves as well. From meeting new faces and building new friendships to reminiscing about junior high problems and challenging their intellect and patience, no parties leave empty-handed.

Junior Taylor Blaser has helped tutor and looks forward to coming more often.

"I hope I can use my knowledge to help students when they are struggling," Blaser said. "I want them to know that it's okay to ask for help because it means you are learning."



Leslie Medina / Yearbook Staff

Senior Jillian Rusher helps seventh grader Adele Ramaekers with a math problem during 9th period tutoring. Rusher is one of the seven upperclassmen who regularly volunteer to tutor.

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Embrace the freedom uniforms bring

By Rock Bottom Staff

Twas the night before a dress down day,
When all through the house, not a
creature was awake,
Except the teenager with a headache,
Struggling with what to wear,
Clothes thrown over the floor
everywhere.
Wanting to scream,
Maybe uniforms are not as bad as they
seem…

Life is simple and less stressful when there is no thought of what to wear. It is hard to figure out an outfit to wear for P.E class; how are people able to do it everyday for school?

Many think that uniforms are restrictive and serve no purpose. The Rock Bottom staff believes they are beneficial to schools and their students. Uniforms save time for students, reduce comparison, are cheaper for families in the long run, and provide representation for schools.

When getting ready for school, it is less stressful when the options are limited. Choosing what to wear is one less thing to worry about in one's morning routine if there is a uniform. There is more time that can be spent on making breakfast or studying for a test. It is easier to grab what is needed for school and go without having to think about what to wear. No one would know if someone put on the same thing multiple days in a row, so there is no need to stress about outfit repeating, and it saves a load of laundry. Spending less time getting ready in the morning eases anxiety for already-stressed students.

With uniforms, everyone is wearing close to the same thing, so comparison is not a problem. According to the website *Everyday Health*, 73% of teen girls and 69% of teen boys are self-conscious about their appearance at school. The top thing they stress about is hair and clothing, along with acne and body image. Uniforms eliminate the worry of trying to fit in. Having to buy new clothes is not often a problem when there is a uniform.

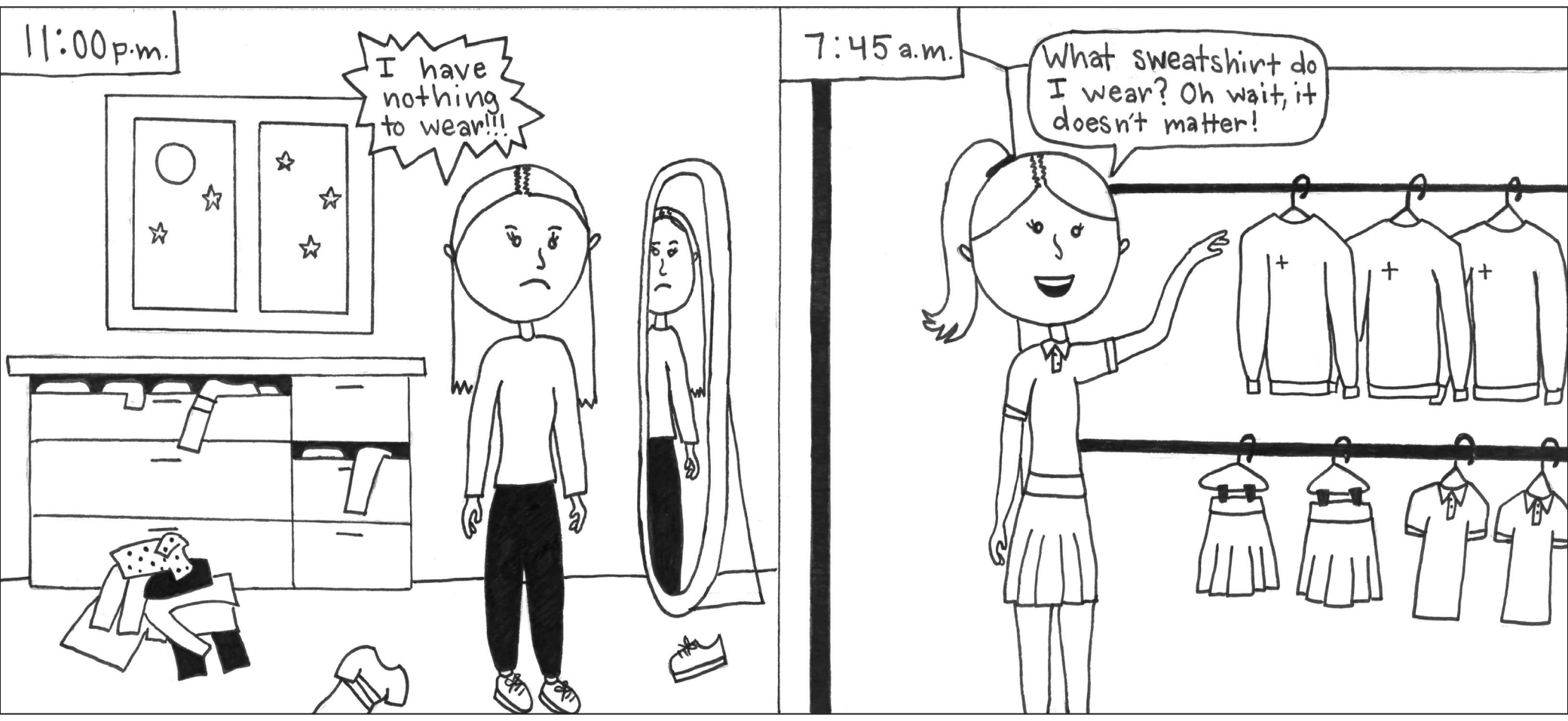
According to the website *The Guardian*, an average family spends about $586 per child on clothing for going back to school; meanwhile, school uniforms can last a couple years if kept in good condition. For parents, there is no need to buy a new uniform unless their child grows.

At a non-uniform school, students tend to want to conform to the crowd rather than stand out. They feel the need to stay on top of the trends in order to do that. A uniform removes that need.

When students wear uniforms, they are representing their school. In uniforms, the school's colors are showcased, allowing students to be identified easier throughout the community. The wearer of the uniform has a responsibility to uphold the school's morals and values, encouraging positive behavior.

Some students prefer not to wear uniforms because they want to be able to express themselves with their clothes. However, there are many other ways to express oneself. The most important way to show who you are is by revealing your personality. Clothing is not what makes a person; it is how they act. Uniforms encourage more authentic relationships that are not based on image.

Uniforms are not as terrible as people think. They are more helpful to families and to students who have enough to worry about already.



Ainsley Kuhl / Rock Bottom Staff

In defense of the so-called stubborn

By Lillian Miller



We all know someone who always insists they are right. Maybe it is the classmate who asks for help with a math problem but then argues with every step of your explanation. Maybe it is the uncle who refuses to use GPS because "he knows a shortcut." You try to help, and they insist they are right. It is irritatingly comical, and, unfortunately, we all have been there.

Stubbornness, according to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, is defined as being unyieldingly determined to not change one's attitude or position on something, especially when given good reasons to do so. This kind of rigidity limits communication and hurts relationships. In fact, playwright and critic George Bernard Shaw stated, "Progress is impossible without change, and those who cannot change their minds cannot change anything." Lately, however, stubbornness has become a lazy label for anyone who does not immediately agree with society, and it is tossed at anyone who refuses to let the world tell them what to think.

When someone knows what they believe and stands by it thoughtfully and humbly enough to listen, it is not stubbornness. It is being grounded in their beliefs.

Standing firm in an opinion is not the same as being inflexible. Stubborn people are often bad listeners and will not consider other perspectives. A person grounded in their beliefs listens, learns, reflects, and carefully chooses their position. They are open to growth but not easily swayed. Even if they do not agree, a grounded individual can hear an argument and appreciate it. There is a huge difference between saying "You're wrong" and saying "I hear you, and I still disagree."

Society has adopted a copy-and-paste culture where true thinking is discouraged. Teenagers are told to "be themselves," but only if "themselves" look, talk, and post similarly to everyone else. While it might be easier to scroll than to study and copy instead of consider, these habits lead to an inability to form opinions and original ideas. Forming a true opinion takes work: listening, reading, questioning, and wrestling with ideas. Stubbornness often stems from holding an opinion without ever wrestling with it. Independent thinking is rare, and it makes others uncomfortable. People often call it "stubborn" when someone refuses to go along with the crowd for this reason.

Unfortunately, a person standing their ground and working to form their own opinions could risk isolation. Even a grounded person can become so focused on having a well-founded opinion that the opportunity for growth and change is missed. Sometimes, yielding is not conformity or cowardice, but an act of charity or empathy. This is a fair point. After all, moral strength does not only come from standing firm; knowing when to shift is a huge component as well. Everyone should stand firm when their conviction has been tested by honest study, listening, and humility and yield when new evidence, clear moral obligation, or genuine charity calls them to do so.

Being grounded in one's beliefs requires humility. It requires listening, empathy, and being willing to be wrong along the way. Someone can be compassionate and kind without yielding their own ideas. Listening does not mean surrendering beliefs; it refines them. Research from the *National Institute of Health* suggests thinking critically after being presented with new ideas actually strengthens decision making, problem-solving, and creativity. It suggests the strongest people are not the ones who never change their minds. They are the ones who know why they believe what they do.

Someone cannot stand firm in a belief they do not understand. Therefore, when someone calls you stubborn for standing your ground, do not take it as an insult. Hear it as a challenge. A challenge to think deeply, listen carefully, and be the rare person in a copy-and-paste world who truly knows what they believe and *why*.

Teens should turn back to boredom

By Josie Rother



Lying on the floor with nothing to do but watch the minute hand make its way around the clock is a rite of passage for all kids. Begging your parents to entertain you because you are so bored you could "die" and throwing a tantrum when they say "being bored is good for you" is something many people have experienced as kids. It has taken a while, but I have realized our parents were right. Boredom is an essential feeling that fosters creativity and helps people find themselves.

As children, we had the ability to amuse ourselves if we were ever bored. Our heads teeming with wonder made occupying ourselves simple. Being innovative seemed easier when we were younger because we were naive, but creativity is not limited to childhood. We had the ability to be imaginative because of boredom. Without the absence of an activity or some other stimulus, children would never have had to turn to their own curiosity for entertainment. Just as a flower needs the sun to bloom, a child needs boredom to activate inventive and critical thinking.

> "Just as a flower needs the sun to bloom, a child needs boredom to activate inventive and critical thinking."
>
> **Josie Rother** ROCK BOTTOM

When a child grows into a teenager, imagination is replaced with harder schoolwork, more activities, and technology. The teenage years are an important time for the development of ideas and opinions, so with the absence of boredom and time for our artistic and problem solving skills to improve, it is easy to say creativity disappears as a person gets older. This, of course, is untrue. Teens and adults still have creative ability; it is just neglected. The moments of silence in a teen's life, instead of being utilized, are usually covered by noise.

Our minds and bodies need moments of silence. By flooding our senses with noise all hours of the day, it is almost impossible for us to form our own opinions, pursue our passions, and truly realize who we are and who we want to be. Instead of allowing ourselves to grow, we restrict ourselves by constantly avoiding boredom. Endless scrolling, constant activities, or never ending work are ways we avoid the uncomfortable silence our minds and bodies long for.

We can see this decline of creativity in subtle ways in our lives. One example of this is the ever growing trend culture. Trends are always changing and take root in the lives of teens. Instead of making their own decisions and judgments on what they like or do not like, many teens look to the latest trends in order to fit in. Now, buying a Stanley or liking bows is not a bad thing until you find yourself losing your identity by basing all of your interests and opinions on what others do or say. We are all created differently, yet many teens lose sight of who they are in order to fit in.

It is time for teens to look at boredom differently. The silence of not having anything to do needs to be utilized and not avoided. We need to be willing to sit in moments of silence and allow our minds to form our ideas, or we risk losing our individuality. We have not lost our creativity, we have just forgotten the importance of boredom. So, before you pick up your phone, consider taking a page out of your younger self's playbook. You may be surprised by how much you still enjoy drawing, playing with neighbors, building, riding your bike, and using your imagination.

One act presents *Pistols and Posies*

By Audrey Stoner

Illegal bootlegging. Mob bosses. Secrets. Romance. *Pistols and Posies* is the perfect mashup of crime and comedy sure to live rent-free in audience members' heads long after the curtains fall on the final act.

The use of this comedy script for Scotus' one act is a welcome change for the cast and crew this year, who performed an adaptation of *The Great Gatsby* last season. *Pistols and Posies* centers around Primo Malvone, a bootlegger in 1920s Chicago using a flower shop to disguise his illegal dealings. The drama begins when Primo accuses his accountant, Vincent, of stealing from his business; at the same time, rival bootlegger Mama Mia makes deals with the police to expose Primo's illicit business. A huge party organized by Primo's wife threatens to bring everything hidden to light, with chaos bound to follow.

Senior Ava Bettenhausen plays the role of Isabella, Primo's bold and bossy wife whom he hides his true career from.

"I think the best thing about this season is the relationships. I look forward to practice because it's always a blast, and the script allows us to have fun since it's a comedy," Bettenhausen said.

Head one act coach and art teacher Clyde Ericson has also seen positive effects on the cast and crew since beginning practices for *Pistols and Posies*.

"Our most common shared goal this year is to have fun. If we are going to make it to state, it will be because the fun shows through," Ericson said.

However, not all of one act's season so far has been such smooth sailing. With many of *The Great Gatsby*'s lead cast members graduating last year, this year's younger members have had to step up into new roles.

"Our young crew and cast makes everything different, but we are all ready for a challenge," Bettenhausen said.

New junior and senior religion teacher Cassie Kouma also stepped up as assistant director this season.

Senior Seth Drueppel plays the role of Luigi Lamborghini, brother-in-law to Primo.

"[Having] Ms. Kouma as assistant director is a game changer. It allows a coach to be working on stage at all times while also aiding the crew with more direction," Drueppel said.

Besides the team's young age and new assistant director, one act members also battled time as their first performance in Schuyler on November 1st quickly approached. This marked the earliest competition one act has ever competed in.

After going up against 8 teams and placing 4th overall for the weekend, though, senior Ryan Allen was optimistic about the group's performance in such short timing. Allen plays the role of Primo himself and earned a top acting award at the meet.

"I think we had our best performance we've ever done. We were really focused, we were all jumping on lines, our characterization was strong, our energy was good, and the accents were good," Allen said. "I think, compared to the other shows there, we told a story the best and most coherently."

The Shamrocks hope to continue their strong start to the season as they compete again on November 10th at Humphrey Archangels, in their conference competition on November 22nd, and on November 25th at Midland.

"Our most common goals are having fun, meeting new people, making memories, and going to state. If we put in the time, strive to get better each day, and value each others' contributions, those goals are more likely to happen," Ericson said.

One act members will also perform *Pistols and Posies* for the public on November 14th in Memorial Hall.

Ericson concluded, "I am looking forward to sitting in a chair, starting the timer, and seeing the work we put in turn into a story on the stage."



Lydia Dostal / Rock Bottom Staff

Isabella (senior Ava Bettenhausen) invites Mama Mia (senior Gigi Chilapa), Luigi (senior Seth Drueppel), and Mama Mia's thugs (freshmen Kaydence Wennekamp and Audrianna Splittgerber) to her party against the will of Primo (senior Ryan Allen) at their first meet in Schuyler on November 1st. Allen won a top acting award for his performance.



Lydia Dostal / Rock Bottom Staff

Nino (sophomore Dominic Chard), Dino (senior Jillian Rusher), and Tito (senior Aiden Meers) present the flowers they found to Primo at the Shamrocks' first meet in Schuyler on November 1st. The Shamrocks placed 4th overall out of 8 teams.



Lydia Dostal / Rock Bottom Staff

Vincent (senior Evan Pavlik) explains to Adriana (senior Issy Chasteen) and her sisters (junior Lillian Miller and sophomore Celeste Sucha) how Mama Mia tricked Primo at their opening performance on November 1st in Schuyler. One act recruited 52 members for their cast and crew this year.

Retreats offer many opportunities

By Ainsley Kuhl

Every year, Scotus provides the opportunity for students to grow in their faith through different retreat experiences. Whether it be helping others by acts of service or connecting with peers on a deeper level, students have the chance to take a day out of school to "retreat".

Scotus offered four options of retreats this year for sophomores and juniors to choose from: the Men's or Women's Retreats, the Mother Teresa Service Retreat, the Going Deeper Retreat, or a Diocese Retreat (Quest or TEC). These retreats have happened or will happen throughout the school year.

On October 22nd, both the Men's and Women's Retreats were held. The Men's Retreat took place at St. Gregory the Great Catholic Seminary in Seward. There, they played games, had a tour of the seminary, and listened to different witness talks. The talks were about masculinity and friendship.

A fan favorite activity among the boys was Huskerball. Huskerball is similar to ultimate football, but a person can run the ball after they catch it and only have to stop once they are tagged by the other team. If the ball is dropped or a team scores, the opposing team gets the ball.

Junior Trevor Niedbalski was one of many who enjoyed this game.

"It is fun because it has constant action and scoring. It is definitely more offensive than defensive," Niedbalski said.

At the Women's Retreat, which occurred at The Sisters of Christ the King Motherhouse in Lincoln, there were three speakers.

Emma Strecker, a former Scotus student and now campus minister at Archangels Catholic High School, talked about relationships with oneself.

Another speaker was Sara Racicot, who is a youth minister in North Bend. In her talk, she spoke about a relationship with Jesus, and then she led the girls through a prayer.

Scotus freshman and sophomore religion teacher Kelly Koranda spoke to the ladies about relationships with others. She used her relationships with her friends and her husband as examples in her talk.

Junior Audrey Naughton went on the Women's Retreat to connect more with the girls in her class.

"I loved Mrs. Koranda's talk; it felt very relatable, and she did a very nice job explaining and connecting [her talk] to us," Naughton said.

The Service Retreat took place in downtown Omaha on October 27th. There, the volunteers who went helped the homeless with the organization Hope for the Poor. They helped by serving coffee to the homeless people and talking with them.

Sophomore Emily Beiermann was in attendance for this retreat.

"I chose this retreat because I wanted to talk and hang out with the homeless, learn something, and see what life was like being homeless," Beiermann said. "This is a good retreat to go on because it shows what life is like for people who are less fortunate and how their life might look different."

The next retreats to happen are the Going Deeper Retreat and Diocese Retreats, which provide the choice of the Quest or TEC retreats.

The Going Deeper Retreat will be on March 25th at Cloisters on the Platte. Quest and TEC are on different dates and both will be for multiple days in the spring.



Maia Foreman / Yearbook Staff

Religion teacher Kelly Koranda gives her witness at the Women's Retreat at The Sisters of Christ the King Motherhouse in Lincoln on October 22nd. There were three different speakers on this retreat.



Maia Foreman / Yearbook Staff

Sophomores Grace Holmstedt, Allie Brezenski, Zoe Doerneman, and Abbi Pavlik laugh together during an activity at the Women's Retreat on October 22nd. Both the Men's and Women's Retreats took place on the same days in different locations.

National Honor Society takes charge of a new year

By Isabella Chasteen

"As a National Honor Society member, I am aware of the honor that has been bestowed upon me by my election to membership in this Honor Society."

As of October 5th, 88 students at Scotus have said this pledge in front of their community while being inducted into NHS.

Math teacher Wendy Shotkoski has been an NHS sponsor since last year.

"I think [our numbers are] a testament to the students working hard and understanding that grades are important," Shotkoski said.

The NHS sponsor in past years was chemistry teacher Jane Dusel-Misfeldt; however, Dusel stepped down last year. Her role was passed to Shotkoski and junior high science teacher Annie Sokol.

"I feel we are more prepared this year. We had a few bumps last year, but we learned some hard lessons, and I feel we will be able to run smoother," Sokol said.

NHS puts on several events throughout the school year. A new addition to this list is the Food Feud, a competition between rival schools Lakeview and Scotus to raise the most donations.

NHS president Josie Rother has been an NHS member for the past three years and was elected vice president last year.

"The transition from FBLA organizing the Food Feud to NHS leading it was smooth. I, along with former FBLA members, were able to integrate what we previously knew to keep everything organized," Rother said.

The result of the Food Feud was Lakeview's win with over 2,700 donations and Scotus as runner-up with around 2,200. Regardless of the competition, the Food Feud helps to provide for those in need in the Columbus community.

NHS still has a couple of their usual events coming up, namely the Christmas Candy-Grams and their annual blood drive.

Candy-Grams are slips of paper purchased by students to write Christmas greetings to friends. NHS attaches the notes to candy and delivers them before Christmas break. The Candy-Grams are a hit amongst the entire school. Last year, 2,625 Candy-Grams were sold.

"I love the candy sales NHS puts on towards Christmas time. Being able to show gratitude to friends and teachers with a simple piece of candy is a beautiful tradition I am sure will last," Rother said.

The Christmas Candy-Grams money will be put towards needs around the school, specifically new microwaves in the cafeteria.

The second most popular NHS event is the annual blood drive. While students can choose to sponsor and plan their own blood drive, the whole group blood drive requires all members to participate.

Officer Hannah Heinrich has been in NHS for three years.

"I am looking forward to hosting the blood drive because I love seeing our school and community come together to support a good cause," Heinrich said.

The blood drive had 93 productive units donated last spring. NHS not only serves the community, but also has potential to save lives.

Through the activities it sponsors, National Honor Society gives students the opportunity to grow in leadership, scholarship, and character.

"I pledge myself to uphold the high purpose of this Society to which I have been elected. I will strive in every way, by word and deed, to make its ideals the ideals of my school and of my life."



Kate Hendricks / Rock Bottom Staff

Junior vice president Lydia Dostal leads officers and inductees in their pledge at the NHS induction on October 5th. Dostal will replace senior Josie Rother as president next year.



Lola Doerneman / Rock Bottom Staff

NHS seniors Addi Beiermann and Sophia Langan sort food donations on October 10th in the chemistry room from the Food Feud. This annual fundraiser is a competition between Lakeview and Scotus.

Students scare community for a cause

By Jacqueline Stoner

Elaborate costumes, gory displays, and bloodcurdling screams are all things students can expect to encounter within the Haunted Forest at Camp Pawnee. This jump-scare-filled trail system is organized by junior high religion teacher and Teens for Life sponsor Nate Tenopir, and it opened up to the public on four Friday and Saturday nights over the past few weeks. With lines to enter often stretching all the way to the parking lot, the Haunted Forest has proven to be a resounding success even though it is only Tenopir's second year running it.

However, this event made a name for itself in the Columbus community long before Tenopir took it over. It was a regular attraction during the Halloween season up until 2018, when the resignation of former leadership and flood damage caused it to be discontinued. That is, until last year, when a Haunted Forest board member asked Scotus advancement coordinator Erin Schmidt if any school activities would be interested in using it to fundraise. As the new leader of Teens for Life, Tenopir had already been looking for ways to finance a trip to the March for Life, so he gladly volunteered.

Figuring out how to run the Haunted Forest for the first time, however, turned out to be a challenge.

"Nobody got back to me who had done [the Haunted Forest] before, so we were going in blind," Tenopir explained.

Thankfully for him, a group of juniors stepped up to help coordinate the event. Some of them spent up to 50 or 60 hours brainstorming scare tactics, recruiting volunteers, and turning ideas for the Haunted Forest into reality.

"[The junior coordinators] are invaluable to understanding how I could even make it possible for [the Haunted Forest] to happen," Tenopir shared. "They kind of just took my vision and ran with it."

Thanks to the effort put in by Tenopir, the junior coordinators, and close to a hundred other student and parent volunteers, Teens for Life was able to raise $5,500 last year and send 28 students and 4 chaperones to the March for Life in Washington, D.C.

Though Teens for Life only plans on traveling to the March for Life every other year, the Haunted Forest has still seen an overabundance of student volunteers this year.

For senior Emilia Gassen, helping with the Haunted Forest has been a fun way to work towards a greater purpose.

"Doing something like this for the community has been very rewarding. Not only do I get to serve the people of Columbus, but I also get to fight for an important cause," Gassen stated.

Fellow senior Jake Demuth, meanwhile, continues to volunteer because of the people he works with.

"I have gained friends from the [Haunted] Forest that I would have never have made in my daily life," Demuth explained.

Though Teens for Life will not be returning to the March for Life this year, that does not mean they will have nothing to do after wrapping up the Haunted Forest. In fact, according to senior high religion teacher Cassie Kouma, who assists Tenopir with Teens for Life, the group's work is only beginning.

"A lot of people think Teens for Life is just to go on the March for Life, but there are so many other things you can do in the pro-life movement right here in Columbus," Kouma shared. "Being able to give [students] the tools [they] need to be pro-life leaders and activists right here in our own community, I think that's really important."

Tenopir and Kouma plan on using a portion of the $4,000 generated from this year's Haunted Forest to fund additional pro-life resources and experiences, both for members of Teens for Life and the Scotus community as a whole.



Isabella Chasteen / Rock Bottom Staff

Junior high religion teacher and Teens for Life sponsor Nate Tenopir surveys the setup for a display at the Haunted Forest ahead of their second showing on October 25th. Close to a hundred student and parent volunteers assisted with the Haunted Forest this year.



Isabella Chasteen / Rock Bottom Staff

Sophomores JR Oelrich and Bella Hutchinson prepare their clown makeup for the Haunted Forest at Camp Pawnee on October 25th. The two trails this year were "Big Top Terror" and "The Forsaken Trail".



Isabella Chasteen / Rock Bottom Staff

Teens for Life senior Sydney Stuart directs Haunted Forest actors at Camp Pawnee on October 25th. Both this year and last year, she assisted advisor Nate Tenopir with organizing and leading the event.

Teen Health Matters

By Kennedy Krueger, Josie Rother, Jacqueline Stoner, and Kate Hendricks

Sleep

Everyone can remember dreading the idea of going to bed as a kid. Yet, once they reach adolescence, many students suddenly find themselves envying their childhood early bedtimes. With the addition of after-school jobs, increasingly difficult homework, and early morning practices, chronic sleep deprivation is often the only way students can stay on top of everything. 49% of Scotus students find themselves in this situation, reporting they receive less than the recommended 8-10 hours of sleep per night during the school week.

While it may be the norm, sleep deprivation is not healthy and can have serious effects in both the short and long term. It is essential students become aware of the importance of sleep and make changes to prioritize it in their lives.

The urge to stay up late and miss out on sleep is not entirely students' fault. According to senior Helene Chard, it can be a struggle to feel tired enough to fall asleep at night.

"My brain thinks it is time to bake, do schoolwork, or think up crazy stories at all hours of the night," Chard explained.

The National Sleep Foundation attributes this problem to changing circadian rhythms, or the body's internal clock that dictates times of alertness and drowsiness. During the teenage years, this clock shifts to later times, causing many students to feel wide awake late at night and unable to focus early in the morning.

Many students are also forced into late nights due to activities, including freshman Vivienne Karges.

"Going from volleyball to one act to doing homework [at night] prevents me from getting enough sleep," Karges stated.

Of course, social media and other online activities can also keep students up longer than intended. It is easy to lose track of time while chatting with friends, scrolling, or playing video games, and logging off early often triggers the fear of missing out on important conversations or happenings.

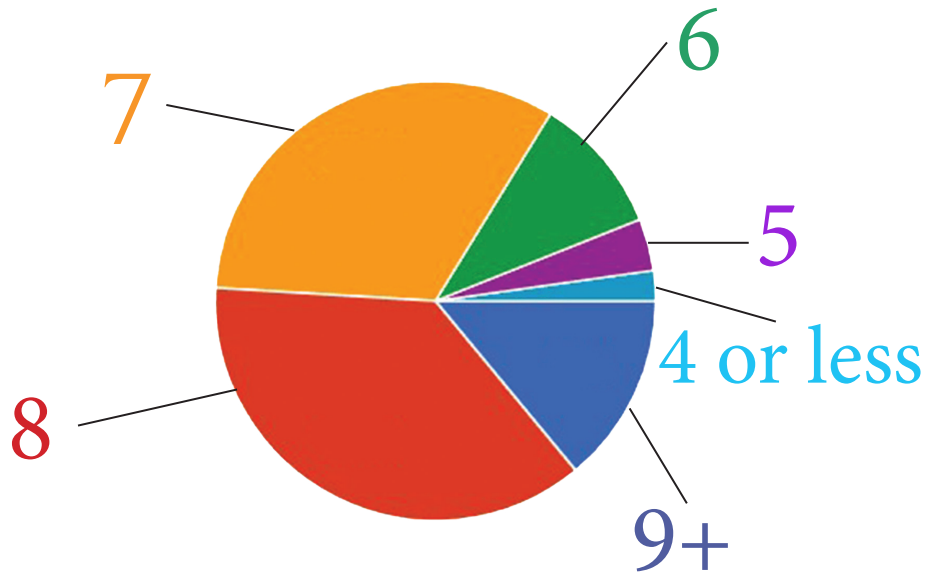
Students may think losing a few hours of sleep each night is not a big deal, but studies have shown the effects of chronic sleep deprivation are not to be taken lightly. The Center for Disease Control (CDC) reports teenage sleep deprivation has been linked to an increased likelihood of obesity, diabetes, and injuries. It can also limit emotional regulation and control over behavior, causing a significant increase in mental health problems, risky or impulsive decisions, and an inability to focus or learn properly. Worst of all, according to the Child Mind Institute, close to 100,000 car accidents occur every year due to drowsiness. Over half are caused by adolescents, and many result in fatalities.

Thankfully, there are several ways students can increase their amount of sleep each night. For an easier time falling asleep, students should turn their screens off one hour before bedtime to protect against stimulating blue light. Many phones allow users to create "downtime hours" where their access to certain apps turns off, which can be a helpful reminder each night. The Child Mind Institute also recommends students keep a regular sleep schedule instead of taking frequent naps or sleeping in late on the weekends. It may seem counter-cultural, but consistency is the best way to train the brain into sleeping and waking at earlier times than it normally would.

In order to get to sleep at a better time, students may need to consider quitting a few activities as well. It is better to be involved in only a few meaningful activities than to lose enjoyment for all of them due to constant sleep deprivation.

Getting less than 8-10 hours of sleep a night is not something for students to brag about; it can actually have serious consequences for both them and the people around them. So, it is time students took a page out of their parents' book and brought back early bedtimes once again.

How many hours of sleep do students get per night?



Social Media

Social media provides both benefits and conflicts in society. It provides an outlet for those to express their creativity and the opportunity to share it with others. Although this is great, social media can also jeopardize creativity and cause problems in social life. According to the website *Exploding Topics*, an average teen spends 7 hours and 22 minutes on screens each day.

Freshman Makynley Paitz uses Tiktok the most and thinks social media can take away from life but can be used for good as well.

"Sometimes I do think the amount of time I spend on social media is unhealthy because there is so much more to life than socials, and I think they can take a lot of time away from your life that could be spent enjoying the life God gave you to live," Paitz said.

Since the Covid-19 pandemic, teenagers' average screen time has increased by two hours each day. Many teenagers may have physical and mental problems from their technology usage. Excessive screen time can cause neck and back pain and even eye strain. People also experience anxiety or depression from the lack of face to face communication.

Senior Gigi Chilapa-Bello uses her phone for 3-5 hours a day.

"I say I use an alright amount of social media. I check up on all my DMs, limit my screen time so I don't doom scroll, send streaks if I remember, and post on my spam instagram account every now and then," Chilapa-Bello said. "As much as I would like to say it doesn't affect me, it does. I hardly have any free time to do what I like to do, but the transition from activity to school to work, I go on my phone for a 'quick debrief' when in reality, that pushes me to procrastinate and distracts me."

According to the website *Aspen Valley Health*, on average, teenagers are online almost 9 hours a day, not including homework. Studies have shown that this generation has a shorter attention span the more people use social media. Scotus students have felt this way as 47.1% believe they spend 3-5 hours on technology. Teenagers are also choosing their phones or devices instead of doing school work, which causes poor focus and academic performance in school.

Junior Trevor Niedbalski uses technology for less than an hour a day.

"I use no social media. No need to compare my life to others. Delete all social media for a month; you won't miss anything, I promise. Sometimes, it has a strong drawing power that often sucks people in getting in the way of how people spend their time. Time in the chapel is the number 1 factor. Second is self mastery, not becoming a slave of my phone as the majority of society is," Niedbalski said.

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends no more than two hours of screen time per day for children and teenagers. To lower screen time, you can set app limits and turn off notifications so you are not tempted to check your phone. Also, try to replace screen time with alternate activities, such as exercising or doing hobbies you enjoy.

Students' most used apps



Instagram - 12.4%



Snapchat - 8.9%



TikTok - 30.6%



YouTube - 10.8%

Tips and Tricks for Overall Wellness



Sleep

- Turn off devices 1 hour before bed
- Keep a regular sleep schedule
- Consider quitting a few activities



Social Media

- Set app limits
- Turn off notifications
- Replace screen time with alternate activities

Students strive for healthy habits

By: Jacqueline Stoner, Kate Hendricks, Kennedy Kruger, and Josie Rother

Stress

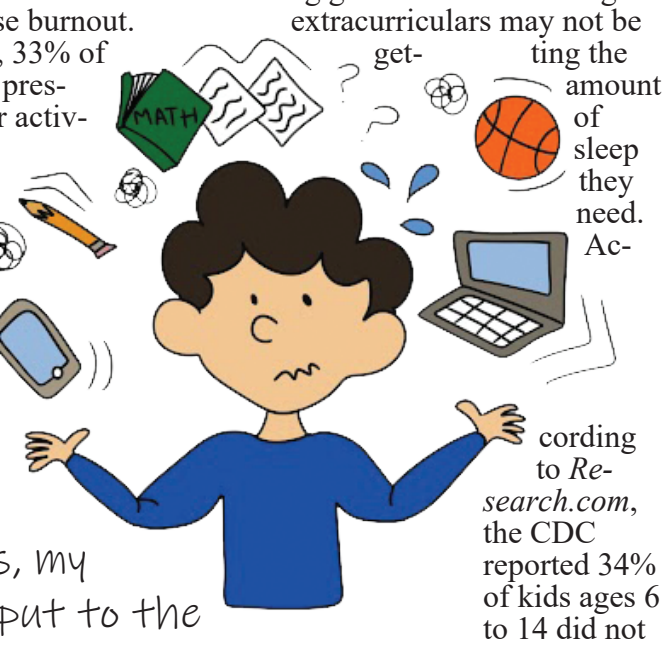
There are only so many hours in a day, and involved students are filling their schedules to the brim. Clubs, organizations, and sports seem to be taking over high school students' lives. These activities are only adding to the mountain of stress students are suffering from due to homework and lack of sleep.

"[Activities affect my personal life and overall health because I] get home at a late time and do not get enough sleep or do not have enough time to do my homework," seventh grade student Kai Ramaekers said.

Some students think they benefit by staying active and making connections, while some feel they have no more free time to spend time with friends and family. Others might feel a little bit of both sides.

"The pros of participating in sports are that you will get stronger and healthier. The cons are many sports can be everyday, and practices can last up to a long time. This contributes to less family and free time," eighth grade student Dreya Fiala said.

The reason why students are overwhelming themselves with activities might actually be a result of the expectation to improve their resume. While it is true students should be involved, too much can cause burnout. According to *Research.com*, 33% of teenagers believe they were pressured to have extracurricular activities. Students want to make themselves look the best they can for colleges, but their GPAs may be suffering for this.



"Sometimes I feel like I am falling behind in classes, and I can't hang out with my friends all the time," freshman student Molly Eickmeier said.

The students who are successfully maintaining grades while excelling in extracurriculars may not be getting the amount of sleep they need. According to *Research.com*, the CDC reported 34% of kids ages 6 to 14 did not get enough sleep. Moreover, 77% of high school students lacked sleep. They may be waking up early most mornings for meetings and staying up late to complete assignments, resulting in stress and exhaustion.

"[Something preventing me from getting enough sleep is] having to do homework and studying for tests after a long sports practice and then getting up early for a meeting for the various things I'm involved in," junior student Brooke Krienke said.

One solution to this problem is time management. There are several ways busy teens can approach this. For some, all they need is a simple to-do list to make sure everything can get done before relaxing. Another way to stay organized is to use a planner. Students often think they can remember what homework they have, but they would be saving brain space by simply writing it down. Using study halls wisely is also a huge time saver for those who are busy with after-school activities.

This may not be the perfect solution for everyone. Some students are always busy, and when they finally get home, it is already way past their bedtime. The only way to solve this problem could be to take a break. Some high school students are involved in so much, and it is difficult to do all of their activities while still excelling in school. Something may have to be sacrificed, and it is up to students to choose what is important to them.

Study Habits

There are many components in a high school student's day, but a major one is their schoolwork. Scotus Journalism conducted a survey where 80% of students at Scotus reported studying 0-40 minutes a night, with 11 % studying more than 1 hour a night. Studying is an important life skill, and with the right techniques and habits, it is a stress free skill.

At Scotus, out of 277 responses, 56% of students feel they have healthy study habits, regularly study, and stay organized. There are many factors to leading a healthy schoolwork balance in life, such as organization, time management, and study techniques.

However, there were also 43% of students who did not feel their study habits were healthy. Factors include procrastination, lack of studying, and low motivation. Besides those universal factors, there are other impacts more specific to each student. Many are involved in 2 or more activities, have a busy home life, work jobs, do chores, volunteer, and have their own personal hobbies.

Senior Max Beshaler feels his study habits are not healthy.

"Procrastinating [affects my study habits the most] because I find studying monotonous and boring, and I never want to do it," Beshaler said. "I almost never study at night, and most of my studying happens the day of the test, often only a few periods before."

Organization makes a huge impact on lessening stress when busy with homework and activities. Ways a student can be organized are by keeping a planner, separating homework by subjects, time blocking, and keeping to-do lists. All of these methods are used to help busy students keep track of their assignments and extracurricular activities. Not every student utilizes them, however; out of the 313 Scotus students who responded to a survey, 55% claimed to keep a planner, and 29% used to-do lists.

A study was conducted by students at the University of Princeton to target the effectiveness of organization. *The effect of workspace tidiness on schoolwork performance of high school students* by Charlotte Annes, Jordan Taylor, and Robert Hallock found organization cannot only cause stress but affect efficiency and focus on school work. Meaning, the more organized a person is, the higher the chance they have of scoring well on homework and exams.

According to the results, "85% of the students reported that the disorganized environment was more stressful than the organized environment, and 89% reported feeling more focused in the organized workspace."

Being organized, time blocking, and using study techniques positively impacts student wellbeing and study habits. Time blocking goes along with organization but goes into more specifically time. There are only 24 hours in a day; 8-9 of them are spent sleeping, 8 are at school or work and, 2 hours are basic necessities such as eating, showering and getting dressed. When added up, that is 19/24 hours spent, which only guarantees 5 hours of free time. In that free, time many students are involved in activities or jobs.

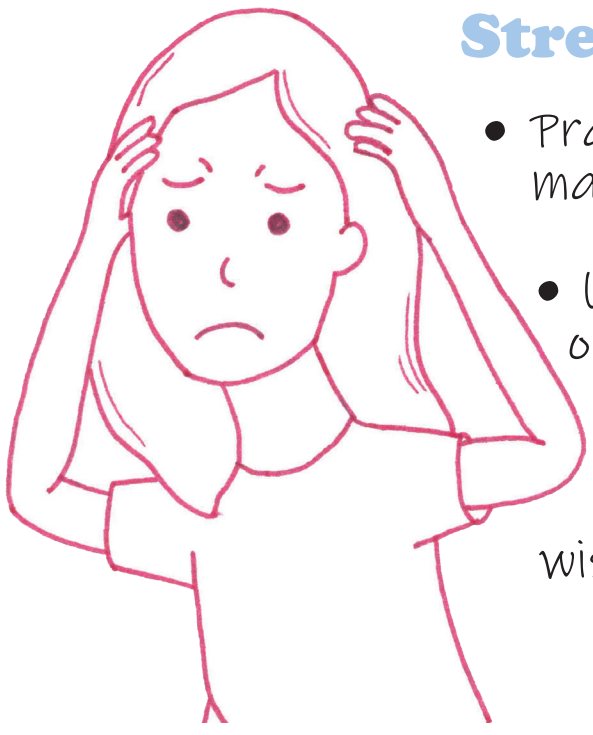


This is where time blocking and study techniques can be extremely beneficial. Students can map out every hour, or even down to the minute, of their day. When students know when and how they are going to study, it allows them to relax and conquer one task at a time.

Students can schedule time to study into their day and then plan out how they are going to study. Ways to study include flashcards, quizlets, using a whiteboard, teaching the material to a peer, or making a diagram.

Building good study habits is not easy; it takes time and hard work. It takes one day at a time to become a better student, which makes an overall better person.

Tips and Tricks for Overall Wellness



Stress

- Practice time management
- Use a to do list or planner
- Use your study halls wisely



Study Habits

- Set specific goals
- Set up a designated study space
- Get an accountability/ study partner

Cross country takes home third place

By Kate Hendricks

Although the girls cross country team's season didn't end as they wanted, it was still a season most teams would dream of having. They placed first at every meet this year but one, with seniors Hannah Heinrich and Mia Fehringer paving the way for their success to continue in the post season.

Sophomore Avery Heinrich was the top runner on the girls team this year.

"My biggest takeaway is that the winning team isn't always the team with the most trophies and medals; it's the team that is the closest to one another and pushes each other everyday, and I feel that we had that this year," A. Heinrich said.

The girls cross country team took on districts at Pierce on October 15th. They swept the class C-3 district with 3 girls placing in the top 15. The team placed first, A. Heinrich placed second, junior Emilyn Kavan fourth, and H. Heinrich sixth.

"It felt great to win districts for the third year in a row," Kavan said.

On October 24th, the top six varsity girls runners attended the state meet in Kearney. This year, the conditions were more favorable for running than the past couple years, providing a much cooler environment than the blazing hot days of the past. The girls competed against 113 other runners in class C.

"My favorite part of state is the atmosphere. There is much more anticipation than most meets, and there are people everywhere. I love seeing all 8,000 people running around on the course and cheering," H. Heinrich said.

For this state meet, the girl's team was composed mostly of girls who had competed at state before. Everyone was familiar with the course besides freshman Garyn Ramaekers. After placing first at almost every meet this season, the Shamrocks were ready to end their season off on a high note at the end of the day. The girls team took home third place, ending their season-long winning streak.

"We planned for the state meet by seeing where we would run with certain people, but it didn't work out very well. I will take away the memories I have made with the seniors and the rest of the team, and that is worth more than 1,000 gold medals to me," Kavan said.



Kate Hendricks / Rock Bottom Staff

Junior Emilyn Kavan races toward the finish line at the state meet in Kearney on October 24th. She placed 13th out of 119 runners, earning her 3rd straight state medal in cross country.

Kavan was the lone individual medalist from Scotus, placing 13th, making this her third state medal in cross country. A. Heinrich placed 16th, H. Heinrich placed 17th, Fehringer 82nd, Ramaekers 89th, and Leslie Medina-Perez 92nd.

"I feel that we should be proud of our season as a whole. I think we were the winners this season, but state did not reflect that. I am disappointed with third place because I feel like we were the best team there; we just had a bad day," A. Heinrich said.

Chase County was the class C champion with 67 points. Adams Central came in second with 77 points. The Shamrocks had 81 points, only 4 points behind the Patriots.

"Finishing third place was definitely disappointing because we fell short of winning a state championship yet again. Still, it is something to be proud of," H. Heinrich said. "Our team learned that having high goals and expectations for yourself will sometimes leave you disappointed. However, the disappointing finish at state takes nothing away from the fun and successful season we had. I will miss these girls like crazy, and I hope I was a good role model and leader for them!"

Volleyball fights to the finish at districts

By Jillian Rusher



Ava Bettenhausen / Yearbook Staff

Junior Shayla Borchers tips the ball against Columbus Lakeview in the Columbus Classic on October 4th. Borchers had 124 kills this season.

The Scotus volleyball team has not been spared in this year of change. They have completed their season with a new coach and many players who played their first season at the varsity level. The Shamrocks finished with a record of 11-19, ending the season with a loss to Battle Creek in subdistricts. Their record, however, does not tell the story behind their games.

Junior Grace Hamling started as an outside hitter for the Shamrocks.

"I would say our toughest matches were against Kearney Catholic. We played them three times this season, and each time, we got better and performed to the best of our ability. They were a good team, but we always showed up even if it did not result in a win," Hamling said.

To start the year, the team rarely took a set in their losses until October 14th when the Shamrocks traveled to Grand Island Central Catholic. Scotus swept GICC in 3 sets, a much needed win for the team.

Senior Kayla Hoffman had 16 digs throughout the game.

"After defeating Grand Island in three sets, we were excited to see where the rest of the season would lead us. We knew we needed to take that motivation and build off it for the rest of the season," Hoffman said.

This win seemed to flip the switch on the team's season. After this game, even through losses, Scotus would take their opponents to 4 or 5 set matches. One of these games was October 21st against St. Cecilia. Although the Shamrocks fell in the fifth set, it was a nail biter throughout the whole game, from a first set victory 25-21 all the way to falling in the fifth set 12-15.

Senior libero Sophia Langan had 7 digs in the St. Cecilia game.

"We went through so many new changes in all aspects of the game. I think the attitude of the team kept us all going, knowing we played for each other, not as individuals," Langan said.

Even though the team would go into subdistricts on a loss, the five set battle gave the team more momentum.

"From the beginning of the summer to the end of October, our team faced a lot of adversity. Positions were switched, injuries happened, rotations were moved. Even through all of that, we promised each other to work hard and believe in the process because by the end it would finally come together," Hoffman said.

The Shamrocks played Wakefield in the first round of subdistricts on Monday, October 27th at Battle Creek. The team won in 3 sets and would play Battle Creek the following night.

"The team really relied on each person to play the best they could. We would all do our part, and it would come together," Langan said.

On Tuesday, October 28th, the Scotus volleyball team's season came to an end, but again, this was not without a fight. The Shamrocks fell to Battle Creek in the first set 15-25 but would turn around and win the next two sets 25-20 and 25-21. Battle Creek won the fourth 23-25 and closed out the win in the fifth set 6-15.

Senior middle hitter Lola Doerneman had a personal best of 15 kills against Battle Creek.

"We really did play well against Battle Creek, so it definitely was a heartbreaker. Although we lost, I'm super proud of how we competed and never gave up on each other. This team battled hard throughout the whole season, and I'm just so grateful for all of them," Doerneman said.

Football secures win on senior night

By Josie Rother

The Shamrock football team's season came to an end with a win against the Wayne Blue Devils, finishing their season with a 3-6 record. Ending the season on a win is something many teams fall short of and was an end the Shamrocks were fighting for.

Prior to senior night on October 10th, the Shamrocks played the Lakeview Vikings. The Shamrocks, coming off a win against Schuyler, ended the first half 11 points behind the second ranked team in class C. Scotus held the Vikings to a scoreless third quarter before Lakeview sealed up their win with two more touchdowns in the fourth quarter. The Shamrocks lost the rivalry game to the vikings 3-35.

Senior Noah Chohon was a starting offensive and defensive lineman for the Shamrocks this year.

"Even though the Lakeview game did not end the way we wanted it to, the team is better than our record shows," Chohon said.

The following week on October 17th, the Shamrocks suffered another loss to the O'Neill Eagles 7-37. The two losses ended the team's chance of making it to the playoffs, which meant there was only one game left to play.

Senior running back and linebacker Thomas Settje ran 1045 rushing yards this season, meeting his personal goal of 1000.

"We were shown [against O'Neill] what level we needed to rise to to be a top team in C1," Settje said. "The game showed us a level of physicality we hadn't seen yet."

On October 24th, the Shamrocks bested the Wayne Blue Devils 55-12, earning the seniors a win on senior night. The seniors playing football were honored before kick-off along with the other fall sport athletes.

Senior wide receiver Eli Maguire scored a touchdown with a leaping one-handed catch during the game against Wayne.

"The win made the end of the season less emotional and sort of bittersweet. It was a weird feeling to win my last game ever," Maguire said.

Senior defensive and offensive lineman Bear Scott was one of Scotus' leading tacklers all season. Scott leads the team in sacks and is a team captain.

"We became closer as a team because it wasn't about the wins; it was about showing up everyday with a smile on your face," Scott said.

The team will be graduating 10 seniors this year, including their starting quarterback and leading rusher.

Junior running back Parker Newman was a key player for the Shamrocks this season on both sides of the ball. Parker led the team this year in tackles per game.

"I think [the seniors] set a great example of what it's like to be a team," Newman said. "They showed up everyday and worked hard while still having fun. In my opinion, the team had a sense of brotherhood it had locked in previous years. Everyone was involved and did their part."

Settje scored 11 rushing touchdowns this year, making him the Shamrock's leading scorer.



Kayla Hoffman / Yearbook Staff

Senior running back and linebacker Thomas Settje stiff arms a defender on October 24th at the home game against Wayne High School. Settje put up 234 yards and 4 touchdowns against the Blue Devils.

"A lesson I have learned, and probably the greatest lesson football can teach, is how to get back up after getting knocked down," Settje concluded. "Life will throw many challenges in your way, but the most important thing is you recover and get back up."

Golf places 2nd with school record at state

By Kennedy Krueger

The Scotus girls golf team ended their season with an exciting finish. Not only did the team place runner-up at state, but they broke a school record while they were at it. The team shot a score of 350, ending the season with a huge win.

"We had been trying to break the school record the entire season, and we were one or two strokes away multiple times. So, finally achieving that goal at the last tournament ever for me was the perfect way to end the season," senior Kiya Taylor said.

The team's success at state began with their first place win at districts. This was an important win for the Shamrocks going into state. Four of the five varsity golfers placed in the top five, and Taylor claimed the gold medal. Junior Libby Langan, senior Brynn Homolka, and junior Ava Sokol placed third, fourth, and fifth, respectively.

"Competing at districts helped prepare me for state by learning how to handle pressure and stay focused for every stroke. I learned to trust my swing and stay patient throughout my round. By the time state came, I felt more confident and prepared," Sokol said.

At state on day one, the team shot a 362. The following day, they were able to bring their score down by twelve strokes. This score of 350 beat the previous Scotus team scoring record by one stroke. With this score, the Shamrocks placed second at state.

"The state tournament [was the most impactful tournament] because it was where we broke the record and placed second. It showed that all our hard work paid off in the time we needed it most," Langan said.

Homolka was the last to shoot at the tournament. Unbeknownst to her, her score determined if the Shamrocks would finally break the record they had been trying for all season. When she pulled it off, the team erupted into cheers.

"I was pretty surprised even though people kind of expected it from us. I knew from the start we had a chance and was glad we were able to pull through," Homolka said.

The winner of the state tournament was Minden. They also ended up breaking their school record with a score of 321, and it is one of the top scores in NSAA history. They had golfers place 1st, 2nd, and 6th. West Holt won the third place title and had a golfer place 3rd.

"I would say Minden was the most difficult to compete against because they had a really strong team this year with their top three girls placing at state," sophomore Lauren Fleming said.

Fleming's success at state came in her first year on the girls golf team.

"I was blessed with the opportunities to play varsity golf with the best team, and I could not ask for more for my first year," Fleming said.

Taylor placed 8th individually with a score of 167. She scored an impressive 78 on her second day.

"All of our scores have significantly improved throughout the season; we all formed a tight bond, so it was very fun to be around the team," Taylor said.

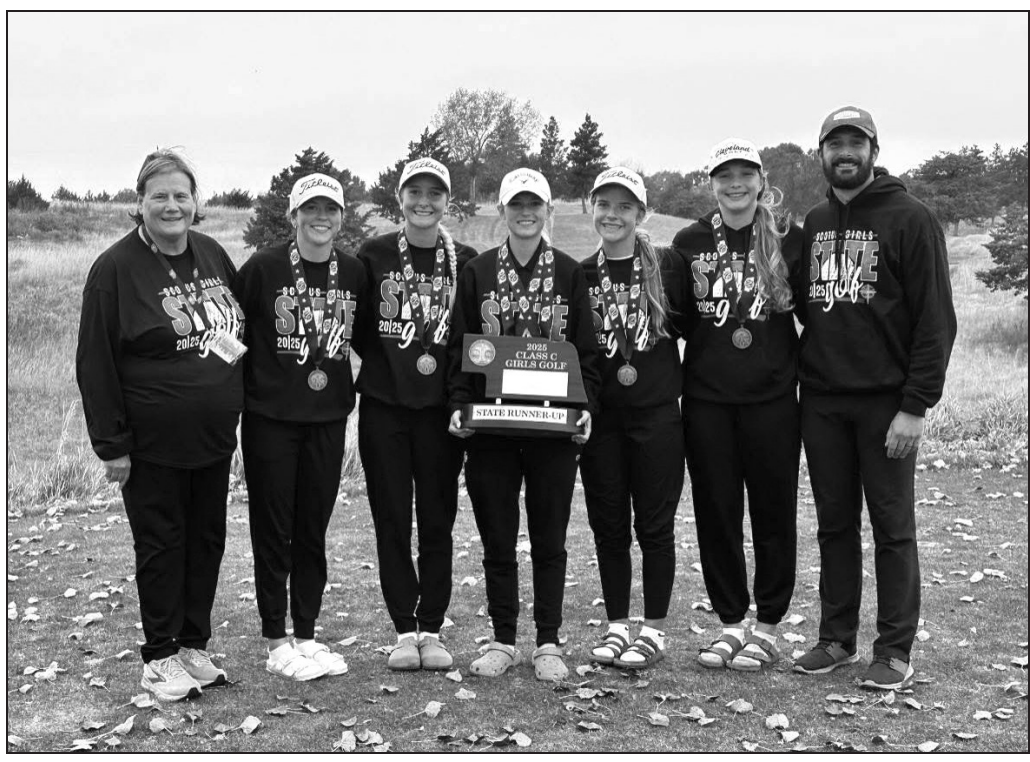


Photo Courtesy Annie Sokol

The Shamrock girls golf coach Tanya Niedbalski, junior Ava Sokol, junior Libby Langan, senior Kiya Taylor, sophomore Lauren Fleming, senior Brynn Homolka, and assistant coach Matt Wallish celebrate with their runner-up trophy at the state tournament at Lake Mahoney Golf Club in North Platte on October 14th. The Shamrocks scored a 350 on their second day, breaking the previous school record.



Josie Rother / Rock Bottom Staff

Senior Brynn Homolka follows her tee shot at the September 2nd competition at Quail Run. Homolka joined the golf team her sophomore year.



Josie Rother / Rock Bottom Staff

Sophomore Lauren Fleming tees off at Quail Run Triangular on September 2nd. This was Fleming's first year playing golf, and she made the varsity team.

Tennis takes improved swings

By Lydia Dostal

The Columbus boys tennis team recently wrapped up their season with fierce competition in the Class A state tournament. Facing tough opponents such as Millard North and Creighton Prep, the team had to battle for success.

Junior Calben Pelan is one of few returning varsity players with state experience who competed in the tournament.

"Our goal going into state was to make it past the first round. We didn't get the draw we liked, so it was a challenge," Pelan said.

The road to state began for the team on August 28th with their home duel against Grand Island. For their first match of the season, the Discoverers came out victorious, besting Grand Island 5-4. Senior Hudson Kloke and his partner Pelan secured a victory in #1 doubles at the matchup.

"[This match] was very impactful because it set a tone for the rest of the season, and it exposed the weaknesses we needed to improve on," Kloke said.

The team travelled to Lincoln on August 29th for their first road match of the season. While there, they faced opponents such as Lincoln Northeast, Papillon-La Vista, and York. Junior Dallas Wemhoff went 2-2 on that day in #2 doubles with his partner junior Alex Steffensmeier.

"Our team plays better against more difficult opponents because we are more determined to win the harder games," Wemhoff said.

The majority of duels were away this season with the team only having two matches at home. To prepare for this, the players had to train for the conditions of the courts they would be playing on.

Senior Max Beshaler competed in #3 doubles for the Discoverers with his partner senior Jake Demuth.

"We prepared by serving on both sides [of the court] with the sun in our eyes. We also practiced on our non-shaded courts because most [away courts] are wide open," Beshaler said.

Their preparations were put to the test on September 19th when they traveled to South Sioux City. The practice strategies proved to be successful as the team finished runner-up at the invite. Steffensmeier went three for four at the invite with Wemhoff.

"Our team was playing great tennis, which led to success as the end result," Steffensmeier said.

Throughout the season, the team took on difficult Class A schools out of Lincoln and Omaha. The players used their matches against these larger schools as motivation for improvement.

"[Playing against them] definitely shows how much more these Omaha and Lincoln teams practice. Being consistent is key for making that jump from good to great," Steffensmeier said.

The team faced one such opponent on September 25th, travelling to Norfolk for a duel. Demonstrating their consistency, the Discoverers came out on top, adding another team win to their record.

"[The win felt] relieving as well as rewarding. It is always nice to beat those bigger schools that we are not used to playing," Pelan said.

Following this matchup, the Discoverers competed in the York triangular against York High School and North Platte. While they defeated North Platte 4-0, the Discoverers unfortunately fell short to York with a score of 1-3. With the state tournament quickly approaching, the players needed to fully refine their game to ensure success.

"We had to improve our serving and cross-court shots to make big steps in our season. Serving is the most important part of tennis as it can make or break games," Steffensmeier said.

The day of the state tournament arrived on October 16th in Lincoln. Out of the competitors, Wemhoff and Steffensmeier were the only two to win the first round before falling to Creighton Prep. Although this may not have been the outcome they wanted, the team was still pleased with the results of their season.

"Overall, the season was a success, and the team improved greatly," Beshaler said. "We expected to have a down year, but we outperformed what was expected [from us]. The tennis team has a bright future."



Lillian Miller / Rock Bottom Staff

Junior Alex Steffensmeier returns a serve at Pawnee Park during the team's first matchup of the season on August 28th. Steffensmeier and his doubles partner junior Dallas Wemhoff were the only pair to continue on past the first round of state tennis.



Lillian Miller / Rock Bottom Staff

Junior Calben Pelan competes against Grand Island in doubles on August 28th. Pelan was a returning varsity player this year and bested Grand Island 5-4.

An aroma of opportunity

By Jillian Rusher

Scents ranging from Japanese Cherry Blossoms to Mahogany Teakwood are a staple in a Bath & Body Works store. Lucky for Columbus residents, they now can experience these smells everyday. On October 10th, Bath & Body Works was added to Columbus' growing list of shopping locations. It is in the Village Centre Mall next to JCPenneys. The store brings great scents and opportunity to the Columbus area.

The Village Centre Mall has some of Columbus' best shopping including the Buckle, Famous Footwear, and Maurices, but this apparel lineup was missing something. I think this was Bath & Body Works.

The store provides all the beloved fragrances and usual sales that would be expected within the fragrant space. Open from 10am-8pm, the Columbus location itself is spacious and not as cramped as other stores located within a mall. More space does not get rid of the strong scents that come along with the products, but this is not surprising due to the grand amount of stock available. I, for one, find the aroma of fragrances to be a wonderful addition to the Village Centre Mall area.

According to the Bath & Body Works website, the store is a global leader in body care and home fragrance. It has top-selling personal care collections including fine fragrance mist, body lotion and cream, and home items such as 3-wick candles, fragrance diffusers, and liquid hand soap.

The workers within the store are friendly and eager to assist all customers. With a large teen presence in the area, I think many young adults would be happy to work there. The store community seems welcoming, and being an employee would add a 40% discount to all merchandise.

Now is a great time to visit the store with all the fall discounts. Bath & Body Works has five big sales going on throughout the fall: 75% off select items, buy 3 get 3 free on body and skin care, 5 hand soaps for $27, 2 laundry detergents for $30, and 6 hand sanitizers for $10.

In Columbus, it is common to see people from Humphrey, Schuyler, Shelby, and other surrounding communities. The entire Columbus area will be able to enjoy this new shopping location, giving Bath & Body Works and other local stores more business.

Columbus expanding to provide more popular stores gives residents fewer reasons to venture to Omaha or Lincoln for a shopping day. I know, personally, a store to hit while out of town is Bath & Body Works. While one may say the excitement of Bath & Body Works is traveling to buy from the store, I think it will be a great addition to our community.

While there will always be a few bad smelling reviews about a store, I believe the arrival of Bath & Body Works to Columbus is positive for our town. It is a great addition to the Village Centre Mall, providing an element our town was missing. It opens more jobs for our community, and with its wide array of products, it offers many exciting opportunities for Columbus.



Angie Rusher / Journalism Advisor

The photo above gives a sneak peak into the newly added Bath & Body Works in Columbus, which opened on October 10th. Columbus became one of 1,904 Bath & Body Works locations.

The great pumpkin spice latte showdown

By Audrey Stoner

August 1st. Fall will not officially start for another 51 days, but people the world around are awoken by an insatiable hunger for the internationally recognized drink of the season: the legendary pumpkin spice latte. Lines for coffee shops stretch out for blocks, fall decorations appear overnight, and grocery store workers pile pumpkins for sale by every store entrance. Where the pumpkin spice latte goes, fall follows. Fall has surely come to our own humble town of Columbus, Nebraska, but which coffee shop captures the famed flavor of fall best of them all?

After a rigorous round of information gathering and taste-testing, I am proud to present the Broken Mug in first place with the best pumpkin spice latte around. The first sip of the drink did make me nervous with its strong, slightly bitter aftertaste; however, once the drink cooled and mixed with the whipped cream and pumpkin spice topping, the spice flavor became stronger and the coffee tasted sweeter and smoother as a whole. I also appreciated that I could taste more spices than merely cinnamon or nutmeg in the latte. It did wonders in rounding out the fall flavor and made the drink stand out from its competition. For my fellow coffee lovers for whom the sweeter the drink, the better, the Broken Mug's pumpkin spice latte will be a favorite.

Coming in at second place, surprisingly enough, is Scooter's. Scooter's is usually not on my coffee radar compared to Starbucks or the Broken Mug; however, I was pleasantly pleased with their fall drink. The Scooter's pumpkin spice latte definitely had the best whipped cream and spice mixture topping. This would have launched it to first place if I had been going of first impressions alone, as well as the cute pumpkin sticker they put on the lid. However, once the latte cooled down to a stronger espresso flavor with some nutmeg, it lost a few points in my book. I enjoyed how the nuttiness of the espresso flavor was not as overpowering as other lattes I have tried in the past, but it left a bitter aftertaste I do not prefer. For those who savor the spice without too much sweetness or an overpowering espresso flavor, though, the Scooter's pumpkin spice latte is a natural choice.

38th Street Coffee is mentioned in the coffee shop category even less than Scooter's; in fact, I usually forget it exists. I was sure its pumpkin spice latte would fall to last place by a landslide. However, this coffee surprised me by finding its way to third place. My main issue was that I could taste no spice at all in the latte; at both first sip and when it had cooled, it tasted more similar to black coffee than anything else. Since I prefer sweet flavors, this was, unfortunately, not something I would go for again. To those who prefer minimal sweetness in their coffees, though, it would be the perfect option. 38th Street also gets bonus points for the cheapest price point and the free breath mint they offered with my drink.

In last place, Starbucks disappointed me. I have tried seasonal drinks of theirs in the past and been impressed, so I had high hopes for their pumpkin spice latte. However, upon first sip, all I could taste was espresso and some cinnamon, which disappeared after the drink cooled. The flavor did grow on me slightly once I mixed the whipped cream in, but I still found it lacking. There was also an unpleasant aftertaste as if the cardboard cup had mixed in with the spices. Speaking of the cup, Starbucks lost points for this, too: the lid would not stay on and fell off every time I tried to pick it up. This made a mess and also made it impossible to drink in the car. For those who have tried Starbucks' espresso before and enjoyed it, they might get lucky; otherwise, I would stay away from this pumpkin spice latte.

With an hour of my day off, an eighth of a tank of gas, and twenty-five bucks down the drain, I am proud to stand by the Broken Mug's pumpkin spice latte as the best around. The next time you are driving to school and become overwhelmed with the irrational desire to taste the flavors of fall, try a quick pit stop there. It might even make that pile of chemistry homework or frantic cramming for the forgotten math test a little more bearable. After all, with pumpkin spice comes everything nice.

Which pumpkin spice latte do students prefer?



35%
300 cal
$4.75
41g sugar
75mg caffeine

48%
300 cal
$6.75
38g sugar
75mg caffeine

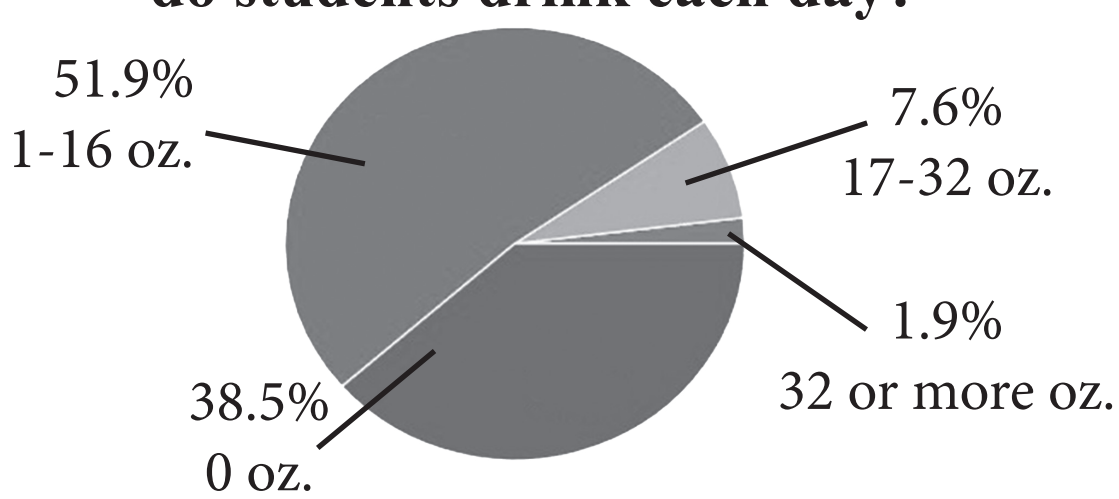
1%
260 cal
$3.75
36g sugar
150mg caffeine

16%
260 cal
$6.00
38g sugar
75mg caffeine

45.2%
of students would never drink a pumpkin spice latte.



How many ounces of caffeinated beverages do students drink each day?



New release is worth reading till the *Sunrise*

by Lola Doerneman

A prequel to one of the most popular book series of our time is now available. The *Hunger Games* series, written by Suzanne Collins, has sold more than 100 million copies since it was released in 2008 according to the website *Wordsrated*. It has been translated into 54 different languages. Some say authors should "quit while they're ahead" or "leave a good thing alone." Contrary to these beliefs, Collins continued to expand on the series, adding a prequel *The Ballad of Songbirds and Snakes*, and now another *The Sunrise on the Reaping,* which was released on March 18th of this year.

Wordsrated states the *Hunger Games* franchise is worth $3.3 billion dollars. With 4 books and movies for each series, the fame and profit it has brought is undoubtedly the definition of successful. Fans and readers alike hope for prequels and sequels to fill their desires to continue their fantasies. Although it may seem the author wants to answer those desires, another reason to continue the franchise may be to add to the already enormous profit. This may be the case, but I believe *The Sunrise on the Reaping* is worth all the ulterior motives. While it could have easily been a boring addition dragging on the series, I believe it is as good as or even better than the original *Hunger Games* series itself. Even though Collins may be solely trying to increase her fame and success, she wrote an intriguing prequel, diving even deeper into the backstories of the well-loved characters.

According to the website *Book Riot*, more than 1.5 million copies of the prequel *The Sunrise on the Reaping* have already been sold since it was released in March. The question of whether or not a movie would be made to recreate this extraordinary book was answered quite swiftly. On November 20, 2026, *The Sunrise on the Reaping* will be shown in theaters. Now, some fans might be wondering, should I just wait until next year to see the movie or read the book first? Personally, as a life-long *Hunger Games* fan, the answer is glaring. You should 100% devour the book immediately. Some life-long *Hunger Games* "tributes," as the fans are called, say the movies do not exactly line up with the books, which is common for book to film adaptations. This is why reading the book first then watching the movie is important. Not only will this exhilarating plot keep you reading throughout the night into the *Sunrise*, but its touching characters will most likely move you to tears as well.



Lola Doerneman / Rock Bottom Staff

Main character Haymitch Abernathy shows his passion and love for his girl Lenore Dove, often saying, "I love you like all-fire." While fighting in the area separated by lovers, they held on to the fire-like love that burned in their hearts.

The Sunrise on the Reaping recounts Haymitch Abernathy's story. During his life as a young adult, the 50th Hunger Games were unfolding. As most *Hunger Games* fans would know, Haymitch Abernathy was the mentor of main characters and tributes Katniss Everdeen and Peeta Mellark in the 74th Hunger Games. They were the District 12 tributes who competed in the games. Haymitch is described as an uninterested drunk who only cares about forgetting his past. This unknown past, though, is the entire plot of *The Sunrise on the Reaping.*

Simply based on this storyline, the book was bound to be exciting and moving. Fans get to go even deeper into the mind and heart of the well-known character Haymitch Abernathy. Although some may despise Haymitch for his actions in the series, they might possibly gain understanding and sympathy when reading his story. The book is far from boring, revealing a new plot exceeding fans' expectations.

Mark your calendars for November 20 of next year, grab your *The Sunrise on the Reaping* book, and get to reading!

Who's watching you around Scotus?

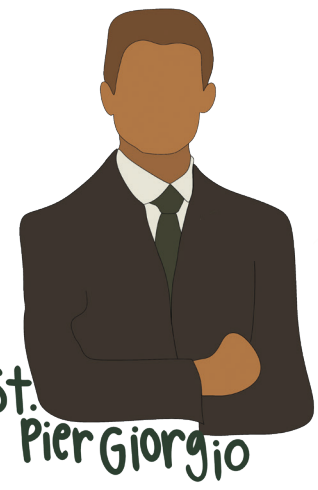
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1. Mr.Wallish
2. Mrs.Sokol
3. Mrs.Rusher
4. Mrs.Lahm
5. Mr.Mroczek
6. Ms.Mimick
7. Mr.Krienke
8. Mrs.Dusel
9. Mr.Vancura
10. Mr.Ridder
11. Mrs.Field
12. Mr.Ericson
13. Mrs.Cox
14. Mrs.Koranda
15. Mr.Brockhaus
16. Mr.Rerucha
17. Mr.Ohnoutka
18. Mrs.Podliska
19. Mr.Kathol
20. Mrs.Shotkoski
21. Mr.McPhillips
22. Mrs.Hutchinson

Answers: 1.I 2.E 3.K 4.R 5.P 6.A 7.G 8.N 9.S 10.D 11.J 12.T 13.B 14.V 15.L 16.M 17.C 18.H 19.O 20.U 21.Q 22.F







Saints define student identity

By Jillian Rusher, Lydia Dostal, and Isabella Chasteen







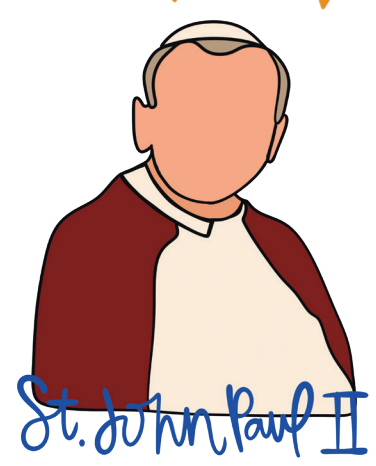


















Maria, Michael, Helene, and Peter. Four names out of the millions existing in the world. When a parent names their child, they face the dilemma of which name to choose. A prominent way of doing so is to use names of their role models. Common role models children are named after are saints. Parents name their children after these individuals because they are powerful examples for their child's life.

There are thousands of saints recognized by the Catholic Church and many more on their way to sainthood. One may ask, what even is a saint? Fun fact, everyone is called to be one! According to the Catholic missionary organization Focus, a saint is a soul reunited with God in Heaven. The word "saint" comes from the latin word "sanctus", which means holy. Whether they are officially canonized or not, their souls are in heaven. Saints lived virtuous lives and are paradigms of holiness for all the people here on Earth. The canonization of a saint, according to The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, is a process of three steps: examination, beatification, and canonization. During this process, two miracles must come about when the saint's intercession is requested. Eventually, the infallible statement will be made by the Church stating that the saint is in heaven.

> "[St. Gianna] is important to me because I love how she chose to give her child life even though she knew it was a possibility that she could die. She's very strong mentally, and I admire that."
>
> ~Sophomore Allie Brezenski

A common misconception of the Catholic faith is the idea of worshipping saints. This is wholly untrue. Worship is reserved solely for God. When one prays for the intercession of a saint, it is similar to asking a family member or friend to pray for them in a time of need. Saints are believed to intercede on one's behalf due to their closeness with God. This opens up the idea of saints sympathizing and aiding with the struggles of the people on earth.

During All Saints Day on November 1st, these holy people were celebrated. All Saints Day is a holy day of obligation during which the Church honors all those formally canonized who have attained heaven. Through prayers, reflections, and celebratory meals, these Saints are honored by the people of the Church.

All Saints Day is not only distinctive to Catholics. It has inspired a whole other holiday. According to *Catholic Answers*, in the early days of the Church, Catholics would gather for All Saints Day. At the time it was known as All Hallows' Day. They would hold vigils the night before, and these preparations became known as All Hallows' Eve. As time went on, it eventually became a secular holiday now known as Halloween.

To assume that most saints are from centuries ago is true, but according to *America: The Jesuit Review*, during Pope Francis' 12 year term, he canonized 942 saints. Some saints were alive as recently as 2006.

In September of this year, Carlo Acutis and Pier Giorgio Frassati were canonized on the same day. Although Saint Pier was alive during the early 1900s, Carlo Acutis was alive from 1991 to 2006.

Saint Carlo Acutis is the first millennial saint. He lived a short life of only 15 years, but he used that time to make quite the impact on the world. Carlo Acutis used the internet to find new ways of evangelization, and this makes him more relatable to the younger generations of Catholics. Having this active connection with Saint Carlo Acutis may allow more people to follow in his holy footsteps.



While a person's first name is chosen for them at birth, they eventually get to choose their own saint names through Confirmation. The website *U.S. Catholic* dates the practice of choosing Confirmation saints back to the 16th century. Originally, missionaries in Europe urged Catholics to name their children after saints to avoid using the names of pagan deities. Choosing a new name also helped to promote a devotion to the saints that still carries on today. This transformed into the modern tradition of selecting a new name at one's Confirmation.

Adopting the title of a saint goes far beyond simply sharing a name. A change of name in the Bible famously meant a person was beginning a new phase in their life characterized by their devotion to God; for example, Abram became Abraham when he made a covenant with God. In this same way, Confirmation signifies a deepening in spiritual life making choosing a new name a fitting practice. When adopting the name of a saint, people are, in a way, taking on a new identity. The chosen saint serves as a spiritual guide and role model for them to imitate in life, as well as a person in Heaven to intercede for them.

When going through the process of selecting a saint for Confirmation, many people choose to find a saint whom they share similarities with. For example, a person gifted in music may choose St. Cecilia, the patron saint of music. Others decide upon a saint who has characteristics they admire and would like to emulate in their own lives.

At Scotus, students are confirmed in eighth grade. The students go through the preparations for Confirmation in their religion classes leading up to the Confirmation Mass in the spring. These preparations include the process of selecting their saints. Out of the confirmed students at Scotus, the most common Confirmation saints are St. Gianna Beretta Molla for girls and St. Francis of Assisi for boys. These saints may be commonly chosen, but all students have their own meaningful reason for why they selected them.

"[St. Gianna] is important to me because I love how she chose to give her child life even though she knew it was a possibility that she could die. She's very strong mentally, and I admire that," sophomore Allie Brezenski said.

St. Francis appeals to young men who have a love of nature as he is the patron saint of animals and the environment.

"[I chose St. Francis because] he is the patron saint of animals, and I want my job to have some correlation with animals," junior Braeden Liebig said.

The lives of the saints were filled with virtue, serving as inspiration for how people should live their own lives. Freshman Samantha Karges was particularly moved by the life of Bl. Imelda Lambertini.

"I love her story. She inspires me to love and admire Jesus more through the Eucharist," Karges said.



> "[I chose Saint Francis because] he is the patron saint of animals, and I want my job to have some correlation with animals."
>
> ~Junior Braeden Liebig

For some, their chosen saints have worked tangible miracles in their lives. Their prayers have been answered by the saints who advocate for their own personal needs. Saint Bernardino is the patron saint of respiratory illnesses. Senior Max Beshaler experienced his little miracle from this saint.

"When I was younger, I suffered a lot from various respiratory illnesses, such as pneumonia. Prior to picking him, I [was sick with] pneumonia again, so I thought it was fitting. I have not had pneumonia or anything similar since," Beshaler said.

Whether they were chosen because of their story, their patronage, or their interesting name, all the saints serve their own special purpose to the person who selected them.

The Communion of Saints

The Communion of Saints is the unity of all believers: the living on Earth, the dead in Purgatory, and the saints in Heaven. This communion is a spiritual sharing of graces, prayers, and love among all members of the one Body of Christ, where those in Heaven can pray for those on Earth and in Purgatory and the living can pray for those in Purgatory. (U.S. Catholic website)



Merry Christmas



Rock Bottom

Scotus Central Catholic columbus-catholic.org/rock-bottom-newspaper/ Columbus, Nebraska 68601

Volume 25 • Issue 3 • December 16, 2025

Students support friend fighting cancer

By Jacqueline Stoner

Walk the halls of Scotus, and it will not take long to notice a familiar face is missing. Ever since October, many classrooms have contained an empty seat, and a little less laughter echoes across the lunchroom each day. The missing presence is that of senior Sam Nahorny, who was recently diagnosed with cancer and is currently undergoing treatment at Children's Hospital in Omaha.

Unfortunately, this is not Nahorny's first battle with cancer. At just four years old, he was diagnosed with stage four neuroblastoma, or a nervous system cancer that had already spread throughout his body. It took four years of intensive treatment before the disease finally stabilized, though it has remained active since that time. With consistent monitoring, however, Nahorny and his family were able to return to relatively normal lives.

That is, until this past October, when weeks of difficulty swallowing led to the discovery of a large tumor within Nahorny's chest. This tumor was later identified as a separate and unrelated form of cancer known as spindle-cell sarcoma, which is an aggressive cancer that attacks muscle cells. Nahorny underwent both chemotherapy and radiation to shrink the tumor before having surgery on December 4th. Thankfully, the operation was successful in removing the tumor, and Nahorny is now focused on recovering while doctors determine the next steps in his treatment.

Though Nahorny is in the midst of a long and difficult battle, several of his friends have stepped up to ensure he does not have to face it alone.

Immediately after Nahorny was admitted to Children's, senior Evan Pavlik came up with the idea to pay him a visit and lift his spirits. With permission from Nahorny's parents, Pavlik and several of Nahorny's other friends drove to Omaha on October 19th to see him.

Among the group was Max Beshaler, who has been friends with Nahorny since 7th grade.



Photo Courtesy Erin Nahorny

Seniors Favio Rivero Rubio, Aiden Meers, Evan Pavlik, Sam Nahorny, Hudson Kloke, Max Beshaler, and Peter Faltys all pose for a photo in Nahorny's room at Children's Hospital in Omaha on October 19th. Nahorny was recently diagnosed with cancer for the second time and has so far undergone chemotherapy, radiation, and surgery to fight it.

"I visited the hospital because I missed Sam," Beshaler said. "Even though I was busy that day, when my friends mentioned going, I dropped everything to go."

Once reunited with Nahorny, the group had pizza and ice cream, watched football, and even enjoyed a surprise visit from former Scotus religion teacher Tyler Linder.

Senior Aiden Meers, who was present at the hospital, has been close with Nahorny since 8th grade.

"I visited Sam to show my support for him," Meers explained. "Being isolated from everyone isn't easy. When we visited Sam, we just hung out with him, trying to bring a bit of normal back into his life."

A few weeks later, Nahorny was told he would have to shave his head as a result of chemotherapy, and so he asked if any of his friends would get buzz cuts with him. Of course, many of them jumped at the opportunity to outwardly show their support. In total, seven seniors and one junior gathered together on November 6th to receive their new haircuts. Nahorny was able to watch over FaceTime, and his aunt and uncle were present to help with cutting hair, making the event that much more meaningful.

One of the participants was senior Favio Rivero Rubio, who has been friends with Nahorny since transferring to Scotus last year.

"I made the decision to get a buzz cut as a way to show my support for Sam during a challenging time in his life. It was important to me he knew he wasn't alone, and I was standing by him," Rivero Rubio stated.

Senior Seth Drueppel also volunteered to participate as he has been friends with Nahorny since enrolling at Scotus his freshman year.

See CANCER, Page 2

Activities change award recognition

By Kate Hendricks

With many changes already this year, Scotus decided to add another to the list. A decision was made to part ways with the longtime awards night, which was held in the spring for many years. All seniors involved in an activity were asked to participate in awards night where coaches, teachers, and advisors would recognize them and their accomplishments. This has been one of the many traditions Scotus has had, but this year, teams and groups will meet after their season is completed and have individual banquets with awards.

Activities director Brady Vancura organized the change.

"I think this is an opportunity to give the activities the true recognition they deserve. When we had them at the senior awards night, each coach was talking for five minutes or less and trying to rush through talking about each of the sports and the seniors," Vancura said. "It also did not give a great opportunity to truly honor the season and talk about some of the awards."

Most activities will have a banquet or gathering recognizing at least 9-12 students involved in their program.

"It gives an opportunity for not just the

See AWARDS, Page 2

Priest's presence meets campus ministry needs

By Ainsley Kuhl

Scotus has offered many faith-based activities to students, such as retreats, campus ministry, confession, Bible studies, and so much more. None of this would be possible without the help of the local clergy.

One priest who was able to make himself available was St. Bonaventure associate pastor Fr. Nicholas Mishek, who joined the Columbus community last year.

Fr. Nicholas was ordained a priest on June 3rd in 2017. He became a priest due to a calling from God and a thought that had been on his mind for a while.

"The simple answer [to why I became a priest] is God asked me to, but the longer answer is as I started to grow in my relationship with God, I started to trust Him more. I started to trust His plan for me was good," Mishek said.

Fr. Nicholas grew up around the suburbs of Omaha, attending Creighton Prep High School, so moving to Columbus has been a change of scenery for him.

"I've really enjoyed being out in the rural area just enjoying the slower pace of life, getting to know people," Mishek said.

Priests often travel and go to different communities throughout their priesthood. Before Fr. Nicholas moved to Columbus, he worked at different parishes in Omaha, such as Our Lady of Guadalupe, St. Peter's, St. Mary's, and more. He also had the opportunity to do hospital ministry at the University of Nebraska Medical Center.

Last year, two priests who helped with many Scotus activities left, causing a big void to fill. Fr. Nicholas started working with St. Bonaventure last year, filling the absence of priests.

"[My involvement] came about from a desire, both from the school and from the church, with Father Heithoff leaving," Mishek said, "We see it is a great need for a priest's presence to be available to the school just because Scotus does so much for our community, and it continues to build up disciples for Christ."

Though Fr. Nicholas already helps with so much, such as campus ministry and doing confession, he still makes time for getting to know the students and helping them grow in their faith.

"I've been very impressed with the maturity level of several students and just really grateful to have those conversations," Mishek said. "I hope they can see there is a person available and present who wants to know them."

Campus ministry has gone through many changes recently. Fr. Nicholas being a part of it is one of them. With his presence in campus ministry, he is able to help with retreats.

See PRIEST'S, Page 2



Kate Hendricks / Rock Bottom Staff

St. Bonaventure associate pastor Fr. Nicholas Mishek speaks to the attendees at the freshmen retreat on September 17th at St. Isidore Parish Hall. This year Fr. Nicholas has been present for 4 Scotus retreats.

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2025-2026 Rock Bottom Dates
October 9
November 11
December 16
February 10
March 10
April 1
May 5

CANCER

"[I chose to get a buzz cut] to support Sam. It is terrible to see a friend suffering and not be able to help. Besides prayers, I wanted to show Sam a sign we were with him through this, that he wasn't alone," Drueppel said.

Though undergoing chemotherapy has weakened Nahorny's immune system to the point where he can no longer have visitors, his friends have continued to keep in touch and are working on other ways to further show their support.

Other students and staff have also been eager to encourage Nahorny in his fight. In the days leading up to his surgery on December 4th, senior Jillian Rusher and career counselor Bridget McPhillips came up with the idea to create a video for him featuring upbeat messages from several students and staff. The video was posted on Facebook on December 3rd and has since garnered over 1100 views.

The Nahorny family is incredibly grateful for all the support they have received since Nahorny's diagnosis. As they await the next steps in his treatment, they would encourage students and community members to continue praying and also consider donating to Sammy's Superheroes, which is a non-profit they started during Nahorny's first battle with cancer to provide funding for childhood cancer research.

Though there are many unknowns in Nahorny's future, his friends remain optimistic.

"Even though what Sam is going through is extremely hard, he is still able to stay positive and have a good attitude," Meers said. "Going through chemo is so isolating. All I'm trying to do is show Sam that no matter how isolated he may feel, he is never alone."

PRIEST'S

"The retreats have been very fruitful. I have been seeing and hearing a lot of great things happening with the small groups," Mishek said. "I have been very blessed to work with Mrs. Wallish and Mrs. Brichacek, and they have been doing a great job building retreats or creating small groups and providing opportunities to grow deeper in faith."

With Scotus now offering confession 6th period on Wednesdays and Thursdays, there is another activity for Fr. Nicolas to participate in.

"I think there's this temptation to be like wow, there's so much going on, or is this too much? But I think just being able to step back from work or step back from our day-to-day lives and to be able to get together and to really encounter the Lord in each other and in His word is so important," Mishek said.

This year, the campus ministry office is trying to get all students to have the opportunity to have a spiritual conversation. Fr. Nicholas is one of the people who will have these conversations with students.

"My main role so far has just been doing spiritual conversations, and they've been very fruitful. I have also just been very glad to be available to and be present for the students," Mishek said.

AWARDS

seniors to hear about the team, but the whole 9-11th grade as well. Even for cross country, 7-12, because those coaches invite their junior high kids too. So, it gives an opportunity to celebrate together as a program and not just on an individual level," Vancura said.

Vancura knew after last year's awards night that it was time for a change.

"The process of moving to individual activity banquets was pretty easy. It was after taking feedback after the end of last year and just the three-hour awards night that went until about 9 o'clock, it felt like most people were bored. I had to make a decision myself if that's what we wanted to do," Vancura said.

Journalism advisor Angie Rusher has been an advisor for 18 years and has attended many of the past banquets.

"I think this was a much needed change. Though I really appreciated when activities were included in awards night alongside all the sports, it made the evening too long and did not do justice for all the students involved in the activities," Rusher said. "Individual gatherings allow for plenty of time with a group of people who are all invested in the same activity."

Head girls basketball coach Jarrod Ridder agreed with Rusher.

"I think it is a good idea for a variety of reasons. First, it gives us the chance to celebrate all girls on our teams in grades 9-12 and celebrate all levels of our high school program. I like the idea of being able to celebrate our kids right after our season before the next one begins," Ridder said.

Fall activities and sports have already completed all of their banquets.

"The feedback I have received from coaches has been very positive. They are all really excited. Some of our fall coaches were having a hard time. They were waiting 7 or 8 months to honor their seniors or their teams. Now they can do that right away while it is still fresh in everybody's minds," Vancura said.

There still will be an awards ceremony in the spring but with a different structure. The ceremony this year will take place on May 6th.

"We will still go through each student, and they will be recognized and have their packets. We also will still do some scholarship recognition. From an activity standpoint, we'll honor and recognize athletes of the year and lifters of the year," Vancura said. "I think then we can also not feel like we have to rush through those celebrations as well. We can truly recognize the great accomplishments some of those individuals had."

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Sold at Hy-Vee

Energy drink pandemic escalates

By Kennedy Krueger



According to the website *Epic Research*, the number of caffeine-related ER visits for high school-aged children nearly doubled in the past few years, rising from 7.5 per 100,000 visits in 2017 to 13.7 per 100,000 visits in 2023. Energy drinks have become a problem in society, especially with middle and high school students. These drinks are harming the body not only as immediate effects but as health problems that can last a lifetime.

Teens are not concerned now what future health problems could stem from excessive consumption of energy drinks, but they should be. Students should be more mindful of what they are drinking in the morning and how much of it they are drinking. Many think the alarming amount of caffeine in these drinks is the problem, but in reality, that is only a fraction of the danger.

The ingredients in energy drinks are harmful to the body and can create problems most do not realize. According to the website *Mayo Clinic*, the FDA classifies energy drinks as dietary supplements and does not approve them before they are marketed, and that means they are not subjected to the same rigorous review process as prescription medications. The caffeine serving in an Alani Nu is double what a teen should be consuming in a day, so it becomes an issue especially when they are drinking more than one. According to the website *Harvard Health*, the FDA considers up to 400 milligrams per day safe for most healthy adults, but teens should limit intake to 100 milligrams or less per day. When energy drinks like Red Bull, Celsius, Alani Nu, and Monster contain hundreds of milligrams of caffeine in a single can, it makes it easy for teens to overload their bodies with caffeine.

Side effects of drinking too much caffeine are a fast heart rate, trouble sleeping, anxiety, and restlessness. Over time, consistent caffeine use can cause withdrawals when someone does not have their daily energy drink.

The amount of added sugar in a single energy drink alone can exceed the daily recommended amount. This excessive sugar can lead to a crash shortly after the initial boost of energy, defeating the purpose of the energy drink. Eventually, this build up of sugar can lead to acne, obesity, diabetes, tooth decay, and heart disease. The ingredients in these drinks can cause heart attacks and strokes after long time use.

The issue with energy drinks is teens do not realize how much they are putting into their bodies. The main problem with these drinks is not only the fact people are drinking them, but how much they are drinking in a day. In the morning, they might get a fun coffee or energy drink to start the day. By the afternoon, they are feeling a little tired and need something to wake them up, so they might have another energy drink or head to the coffee shop. In the evening, they might want a pop to drink. By the end of the day, they have already consumed a crazy amount of caffeine, added sugar, acid, and artificial sweeteners.

Some healthy individuals may argue they are able to drink energy drinks occasionally and not experience any symptoms, and they enjoy a short term energy boost with no issues. This is a valid take as long as they are not exceeding the caffeine intake guideline.

Another pro of energy drinks is their convenience. They are easily available almost everywhere people go, and they save time by not having to prepare a drink. However, energy drinks only benefit someone for a short time before they become dependent on them. Energy drink companies like to advertise their drinks as healthy, but they fail to include the unhealthy amount of sugars, sweeteners, and caffeine. In the end, the risks outweigh the benefits. There is a better solution to get caffeine without overloading it.

The solution to stop this crisis, even though no one wants to hear it, is to prioritize sleep. Getting the recommended amount of sleep may be difficult for some people, but sleep is not the only solution. There are better alternatives to energy drinks, including drinks like Bubblr. These sparkling waters are low calorie and have zero sugar. They also use natural caffeine and no artificial sweeteners. Bubblrs only include 69 milligrams of caffeine, which is equivalent to a cup of coffee. Coffee, green tea, and matcha are also safe ways to boost your energy in the morning without excessive sugar and caffeine. While these options are more beneficial to the body, this does not mean they should be a daily drink. The key to caffeine is moderation.

Change your ways to stay out of the emergency room and transform the statistics. Your body will thank you later.

Hallway etiquette: a forgotten art

By Lydia Dostal



The passing period can be the most chaotic four minutes of a person's life. The hallways become a warzone as bustling students race in hundreds of different directions. People duck under arms, dodge flailing bookbags, and wait behind giant clumps of loitering guys, all to make it to their class one minute late and with a missing binder. Although walking in a straight path toward a classroom should be an easy task, it seems many students have forgotten the basic rules of hallway etiquette.

Our school has a set of unspoken rules when it comes to walking in the hallways. These rules are simple: stay on the right side, do not crowd in one place along the hall, and keep a fairly brisk pace. While never explicitly taught to us when we came to Scotus, these guidelines are the expectation when it comes to hallway travel. Lately, our hallways have been facing a rebellion as people refuse to follow these simple rules. Scotus students need to be reminded of the basic manners that come with walking through the halls.

One of the most pressing issues with our current hallway situation is the students who choose to not walk on the right side. There are countless times in a week when I am involved in a head-on collision with a person who is striding at full-speed down the left side of the walkway. The hallway works similarly to a road, and travelling in the wrong lane creates a hazard for both the person in the correct lane and incorrect lane. If everyone stays to the right side, we can breeze through the halls without having to worry about protecting ourselves.

A problem that has become increasingly worse this year compared to previous is the hallway blocking from water fountain meetings. Between every period, at least a dozen boys convene at the water fountains to debrief the happenings in their day. While gathering to catch up with friends is not abnormal, this particular location creates a tremendous inconvenience for the rest of us trying to get to our next class. The obstacle formed by the boys blocks off almost the entire hall, making it difficult for more than one person to squeeze past their group at a time. The worst part about this problem is that, most of the time, no one standing there is even filling up their water bottles, but their presence makes it impossible for other students to fill theirs. Although many teachers have told the boys to find a new spot, these students continue to crowd the area.

The issue that poses the greatest concern within our hallways are slow walkers. People who stroll leisurely through the halls are disruptive to the steady flow of foot traffic. They walk with no sense of urgency, holding up the people behind them who have places to be. Getting stuck behind these people is highly inconvenient to others who are in a rush to get to class. The line of students that forms behind one slow walker creates a long, slow train of annoyed students.

There are, of course, exceptions to the hallway code of conduct. Injured students need to be given grace. There has recently been a large number of students in our school wearing boots or walking on crutches. These people cannot control their slowed pace or the amount of space they may take up. It is important for us all to be considerate of these facts when walking alongside these students. However, unless you have a genuine reason to be blocking the way or trudging slowly, you should try to follow these guidelines as closely as possible.

The people of Scotus need to make a change. Whether it's moving a conversation to their locker or putting a little extra pep in their steps, these simple adjustments would make the hallways a better, less chaotic place.



Lydia Dostal / Rock Bottom Staff

Tall girls: one size does not fit all

By Kate Hendricks



Do you play basketball? How tall are your parents? Have you always been tall? How tall are your siblings? These are common questions I get asked wherever I go.

I have always been tall, even throughout elementary school. My height is something that can't be controlled, either.

According to *VerywellHealth.com,* the average height of a woman is 5'3". Women who are over 5'8" make up 2% of the female population. Being tall as a girl comes with many advantages and disadvantages.

Long legs and size 11 shoes are some of the aspects that come along with being tall. One of the main problems I have faced is finding pants that are long enough for me. I've heard many people say they need to get their pants fixed because they are too long on them. Nope, I have never had that problem before. Sure, this may not be a problem for boys, but to be a tall girl in this generation is rare. Most of the pants I find at every store are way too short and look weird on me. Most of the time, when I like pants I find, I have to go on their website and order the tall version if they have it. Some clothing stores and websites do not even have tall pants available.

Another problem I have with being tall is dress shopping. Every year when homecoming rolls around, I dread dress shopping. This should be a fun activity but instead feels like a chore. Even normal dresses are short on tall girls. Not only do I hate trying on every dress in the whole store, but I also hate how it is impossible to find a shorter dress that is long enough for tall girls. Learning to find clothes that fit me right is a daily problem.

I have always faced having my knees jammed and having no leg room whatsoever. Planes, cars, and you name it, tall girls' legs are getting squished. Short people never have this problem and basically live in first class at all times. Being tall is great, until you have to cram your legs into a tight school desk.

Being tall does come with advantages. Being tall is great if you find a way to cultivate a positive mindset by reframing how tall girls' height is seen. If you're a girl who is tall, you have to accept that you will probably be a post in basketball and a middle in volleyball. Not only is being tall good for sports, but it is also always a plus to have the best view at concerts and events. It is nice to be able to reach the top shelf wherever you go. You also should accept that with every group picture you are in, you will be in the back. With being tall, on the brightside, your shoe size is normally always available.

These past couple of years, I have learned to embrace being tall and have a more positive outlook. Being a tall girl now positively affects my life more than not, and I hope others who are in the same situation as me learn to fully accept their height with confidence. Some people wish they could be as tall as me, so if you are a tall girl, people do wish that they were taller, so learn to embrace it because everyone else is jealous of how tall we are. Hopefully soon, brands and companies will embrace it too and to make their pants and dresses a little longer and give more options with sizing.

Boys basketball starts season strong

By Kennedy Krueger

Boys basketball is in full swing, and the Shamrocks are preparing for the season ahead of them. With only one full week of practice, they traveled to Cross County for a jamboree game and came away with a preseason win of 81-66.

Junior guard Connor Cameron scored 29 points during the jamboree.

"[The Cross County jamboree] went well. We were able to share the ball with each other, leading to success. We also made many hustle plays, which leads to success in the future," Cameron said.

The Shamrocks then traveled to St. Cecilia for their season opener. The boys started the season with a win, defeating the Bluehawks 50-32.

Junior Michael Brandt returned to basketball this year after wrestling last season. He had three rebounds during the game.

"[While preparing for the St. Cecilia game], we worked on our defense as a team and learned how they ran their defense," Brandt said.

Junior Alex Steffensmeier scored five points in the game against St. Cecilia, contributing to the win.

"I feel we played great team defense throughout most of the game. We were able to learn all of our strengths and weaknesses this game. It was a great start to our season with having a completely new varsity team," Steffensmeier said.

Junior Charlie Olmer scored six points in the St. Cecilia game.

"The win against St. Cecilia was a great win because it was our first regular season game. The win made us feel really good because it started us out in the win column," Olmer said.

After four years at Scotus, business teacher Cody Mroczek took over the role of head boys basketball coach after assistant coaching for three years.

Senior Carson Wessel has started on varsity for both of his years at Scotus.

"Coach Mroczek has brought new drills to practice. He wants both guards and posts to learn new dribbling and finishing moves," Wessel said.

The Shamrocks are looking to improve from their 18-7 record from last year. Junior Brody Lindhorst is a starter this year, and he has ideas on how the team can be more successful.

"We are working on communicating and defense so we don't let teams score, and that leads us to scoring more," Lindhorst said.

Senior Eli Maguire is a first year starter, but he played varsity minutes as a junior.

"We need to work on our conditioning. We always start well but then drop off. We also need to work on our energy," Maguire said.

Seven Scotus players contributed to the scoreboard during the St. Cecilia game.

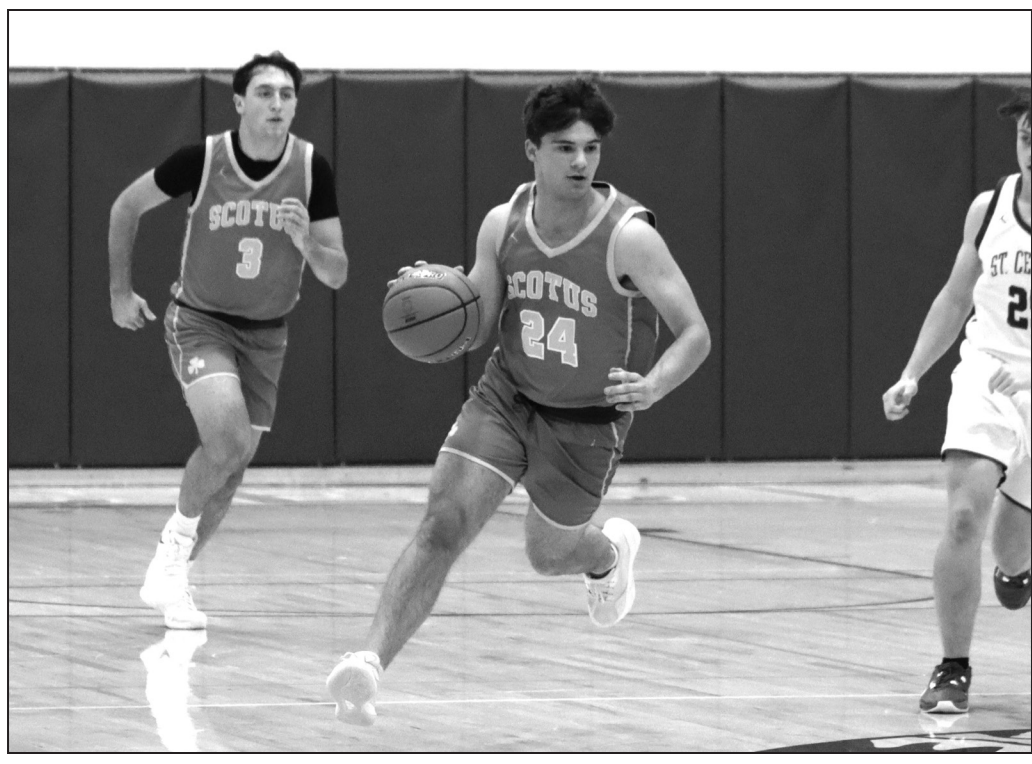
"I am hoping that we keep doing what we are doing but knock down more shots. In Thursday's game [against St. Cecilia], we all contributed a big part to the team. There wasn't anybody who had to step up and score a lot. I hope to work on all of us trusting our own and each other's abilities on the court," Wessel said.

The Shamrocks played at home against Grand Island Central Catholic and Archangels Catholic back-to-back on December 12th and 13th, respectively. The Shamrocks will play away at Concordia on December 16th.



Kate Hoffman / Yearbook Staff

Senior Carson Wessel wins the tip off for the St. Cecilia game on December 4th. Wessel scored 14 points during the game.



Kate Hoffman / Yearbook Staff

Junior Connor Cameron dribbles the ball down the court during the St. Cecilia game. The Shamrocks defeated the Bluehawks 50-32 on December 4th.

Girls basketball opens with wins

By Sydney Stuart

As autumn fades away and leaves fall, students in sports transition from one to another. Winter practice started on November 17th, and the Scotus girls basketball team started their season with two-a-days the first week.

There are 25 girls out for basketball, and 3 are seniors. They have many new faces to the varsity starters list, including senior Kate Hoffman.

"I'm excited to see where this season takes us. With losing seniors from last year, we have a whole new team," Hoffman said.

Senior post Lola Doerneman is a second-year starter for the Shamrocks.

"Practices have been pretty tough starting the season with two-a-days, but it's been good for us. We as seniors have been making an effort to keep the energy up during the slower parts of practices, and I think the other girls have caught on," Doerneman said.

They opened their preseason right before Thanksgiving break on November 25th in a jamboree against Cross County, where they won 59-36.

Senior Kayla Hoffman is a guard and co-led the team in scoring 14 points against Cross County.

"Before the jamboree, I was a little nervous to see how we would play against someone who wasn't us. After the game, I was very happy and excited to see us play hard and compete together, especially to start the year off with a strong win," Hoffman said.



Hannah Heinrich / Yearbook Staff

Senior Kayla Hoffman shoots a 3 during the home opener against Guardian Angels Central Catholic on December 9th. Hoffman had 12 points and 3 steals in the game.

Junior Shayla Borchers had 2 points in the jamboree against Cross County.

"[I am most excited] to play more varsity and play with all my teammates. We have a lot of talent and potential for this season to go far," Borchers said.

The Shamrocks faced St. Cecilia at Hastings on December 4th and secured their second win 45-33.

"Winning our first 2 games has been super rewarding for us. After a couple weeks of difficult practices, we definitely earned those wins. It shows our team that the sky is our limit and as long as we believe in ourselves, we can achieve what we want to," Doerneman said.

On December 9th they faced Guardian Angel Central Catholic (GACC) at their home opener and 43-47.

Sophomore starter Allie Brezenski contributed 4 points and 3 steals against GACC.

"We learned to slow down and take a break after some turnovers. They we got back in the game and worked hard for each other. We're still learning how to play in control but it is getting better because we push each other in practice," Brezenski said.

The Shamrocks played 2 nights in a row at home on December 12th and 13th against Grand Island Central Catholic and Archangel Catholic.

"This season should be an exciting year. We have tons of talented girls who are willing to work hard and push each other every day. Ultimately, our goal is to return to the state tournament in March," Kayla Hoffman concluded.

This season, the Shamrocks have 6 home games. They have 3 home and 3 away games before Christmas break. After they return, they will travel to St. Paul to face the Wildcats.



Hannah Heinrich / Yearbook Staff

Junior Emilyn Kavan dribbles the ball against Guardian Angels Central Catholic on December 9th in the Shamrocks first home game. Kavan had 7 rebounds against GACC.



Maia Foreman / Yearbook Staff

Senior Lola Doerneman drives the ball at the Shamrocks home opener against Guardian Angels Central Catholic on December 9th. Doerneman, a second-year starter, had 18 points against GACC.

Wrestling sets the standard

By Lydia Dostal

Winter is here, kicking off a busy season of wrestling. The Scotus wrestling team has been preparing in the weeks leading up to their first meet. Scotus has 29 boys out for this season. These numbers allow for each varsity weight class to be filled, which will aid the team's chances in scoring at events.

Senior Hunter Brunkhorst was a state qualifier last year.

"We have a full lineup, so hopefully we will be more competitive in duals," Brunkhorst said.

A team goal for the upcoming season is to qualify for state duals. Although they were not able to achieve this in previous years, they feel more confident in their abilities this season.

Sophomore Lamberto Campuzano is a returning varsity wrestler.

"The team really wants to make it to state, and we have a good chance this year," Campuzano said.

With a stacked roster comes weight changes, as every spot needs to be filled. Many returning wrestlers are changing weight classes in order to solidify their roles on the team.

Senior Kobe Micek will be wrestling in the 126 weight class.

"[It will be challenging] to make weight and maintain it while still having energy," Micek said.

Growing team numbers, while beneficial, has made a need for adjustments in order to accommodate everyone. Changes in preseason practices have been working to help all of the wrestlers prepare for the forthcoming competition.

Senior Favio Rivero Rubio is the only returning state medalist.

"The team is split up into two groups: experienced and novice or intermediate. The experienced group focuses on improving moves they already know while the novice group focuses on learning [new moves]," Rivero Rubio said.

The winter season can be difficult, as the athletes must be able to persevere through the lull that comes with the holiday break.

Junior Aiden Zegar is wrestling in the team's 170 spot.

"I think the hardest part of the season will be how long it lasts. Staying motivated while the weather is bad [will also be challenging]," Zegar said.

The wrestlers are looking forward to finally competing, especially at their home meets. They will face many difficult opponents, but the wrestlers agree that Battle Creek will be their most challenging matchup.

Junior Parker Newman is a returning state qualifier.

"We line up really well against [Battle Creek], but they are still the best team in the state," Newman said.

The Shamrocks faced their first competition on December 5th at the Lakeview Invitational. This meet pitted the Shamrocks against opponents from Lakeview, Cross County, Elkhorn Valley, North Bend, and Raymond Central. The Shamrocks put on a successful performance, finishing as tournament champions.

"It's good to see our work paying off and know we can compete with the best," Newman said.

The championship was earned due to multiple wrestlers placing in the top 3. Seniors Carter Sucha and Rivero Rubio finished 1st in their respective brackets while Micek, Brunkhorst, and Newman finished 2nd.

The next matchup for the team will be the Raymond Central Dual Tournament on December 12th.

"Our performance at Raymond Central will be important, as it could make or break our state dual hopes," Sucha concluded.



Lydia Dostal / Rock Bottom Staff

Senior Favio Rivero Rubio breaks down his opponent at the Lakeview Invitational on December 5th. Rivero Rubio was the champion in his respective bracket.



Maia Foreman / Yearbook Staff

Freshman Zoe Doerneman flies through the water during the 100 yard freestyle at Columbus' home meet on December 5th. This was Doerneman's first-ever high school swim meet.



Lydia Dostal / Rock Bottom Staff

Senior Kobe Micek works toward the pin in his match at the team's first tournament at Lakeview on December 5th. The Shamrocks were tournament team champions.



Lydia Dostal / Rock Bottom Staff

Sophomore Lamberto Campuzano pins his opponent at the Lakeview Invite on December 5th. Campuzano came in 4th place at the meet.



Maia Foreman / Yearbook Staff

Freshman Wyatt Recek soars into the water during warm-ups at the home meet on December 5th. Recek is the only male swimmer from Scotus this year.

Two new swimmers dive into swim team

By Lola Doerneman

After a year of not having a student from Scotus on the CHS swim team, two new swimmers have jumped back into the pool. Freshman Wyatt Recek and sophomore Zoe Doerneman have had practice for 4 weeks now and 2 high school meets under their belts.

Recek has swam on the Columbus Youth Swim Club (CYSC) for 5 years and is now on the high school swim team. He is one of the 6 freshmen boys who joined the team this year.

"I am excited to swim with my friends and see improvement in our relays," Recek said.

Doerneman joined the team for the first time as a highschooler after swimming with CYSC for 3 years.

"[I'm most excited about being on the high school team] to meet new people and to feel the unity of a team as this is my first time doing a high school sport," Doerneman said.

Even though Recek is only a freshman, he has high expectations for his first year on the high school swim team.

"My goal is to PR in every meet, and our team goals are for everyone to improve and have fun," Recek said.

Not only is this Doerneman's first year on the high school swim team, it is also her first year doing a high school sport.

"[My goals are] to get stronger and faster and make new friends along the way, and I feel like the swim team has been very welcoming since I've started. The practices have been challenging, but it's nice to know my team just wants the best for me," Doerneman said.

After 3 weeks of two-a-days, the Discoverers had their first chance of the season to make a big splash. The meet was on Friday, December 5th at the Columbus Aquatic Center. Recek swam the 100 yard breaststroke and the 50 yard freestyle.

"I feel pretty good about how I swam on Friday; I PR'd in every race," Recek said.

Doerneman swam the 50 and 100 yard freestyle and the 400 yard relay.

"[For my first meet], it went pretty well. I PR'd from our time trials [at the end of two-a-days] in my 50 and in my 100. We got last in the 400 medley relay, but that was all right because there was only one heat," Doerneman said.

As a team, the Discoverers placed 3rd, following Fremont and Standing Bear.

"There were two huge schools there and we scored last, but overall as a team for our first home meet, we did fairly well. We only have 18 swimmers on our team while the other teams had 30 to 35, so I think we did very well for the small number of swimmers that we have compared to Fremont and Standing Bear, who are far more prominent swim schools," Doerneman said.

Their second meet was the Hastings Invite on Saturday, December 6th, a quick turnaround for the Discoverers. Recek swam the 100 yard freestyle and the 100 yard breaststroke.

"[I didn't swim] as good as Friday because I was tired," Recek said.

Doerneman competed in the 100 yard freestyle and the 400 yard relay.

"It went very well. We scored higher in our 400 medley relay, and I shaved 5 seconds off my time in my 100. Two people on our team got state secondary times, so we are very close to being state bound with our times," Doerneman said.

With a couple of races swum and personal records set, the new swimmers are excited to continue working hard and earning success in their winter season.

"Our coach always tells us that swim is supposed to be fun, so I guess our goal [as a team] is to have fun and win some medals along the way," Doerneman said.



Maia Foreman / Yearbook Staff

Freshman Wyatt Recek practices his butterfly stroke during warm-ups at the home meet on December 5th. Recek set a personal best in his 100 yard breaststroke and 50 yard freestyle races.

Students' jobs fuel them for the future

By Ainsley Kuhl

It is a half day, and you are trying to figure out what to get for lunch with your friends. The final decision is your friend group's favorite cafe. There, you end up seeing a peer of yours working at the counter with a smile on their face, ready to serve you. As you watch them succeed at their job, you get a boost of motivation and pride. You are glad you picked this place for lunch and even happier to get to see a friend.

Students can be found all throughout town working at various places. Out of the 273 students who answered a newspaper survey, 41.4% of people have a job, and 11.5% of those people work with food service in some way.

Plenty of students tend to work with food service because it is an easy first job. It offers flexible hours, does not require prior work experience, and helps workers with skills such as teamwork and customer service. It may not directly correlate with their career interests, but it certainly gets them prepared for the future in some way.

Senior Brynn Homolka works as a barista at the Downtown Mug.

"My job helps me with communication skills, which I need to have for my future job," Homolka said. "Working at the Broken Mug has helped me to work on my communication and teamwork skills."

There are multiple students who work for the same company or on the same spectrum of business. Out of the students who answered the survey, 3 are baristas, 8 are in fast food, and 13 are waiters or waitresses.

In the fast food part of the food industry, there are many options for students to work here in Columbus. Some students work at McDonald's, Runza, Subway, and Tropical Smoothie Cafe.

Senior Max Beshaler currently works at Arby's, where he takes orders, makes the food, and helps to train new employees with tasks like cleaning or taking orders.

"I like getting money I can spend on essentially whatever I want, and I enjoy having responsibilities that go beyond school," Beshaler said. "I have learned how to work as a team to accomplish difficult or impossible tasks and also lead those who do not have experience like me."

When being involved in a work environment, a new relationship can grow and prosper with a co-worker. The person someone may work with right now could possibly end up being a lifelong friend.

Freshman Josie Niedbalski is currently working at Runza, where two other students are also employed, Chase Adamy and Sadie Knowlton.

"I like working in the food industry because it is a chance to meet new people, and socialize with customers," Niedbalski said.

People tend to work with friends they already know. This can make them feel more comfortable in their workplace and have someone they can already trust.

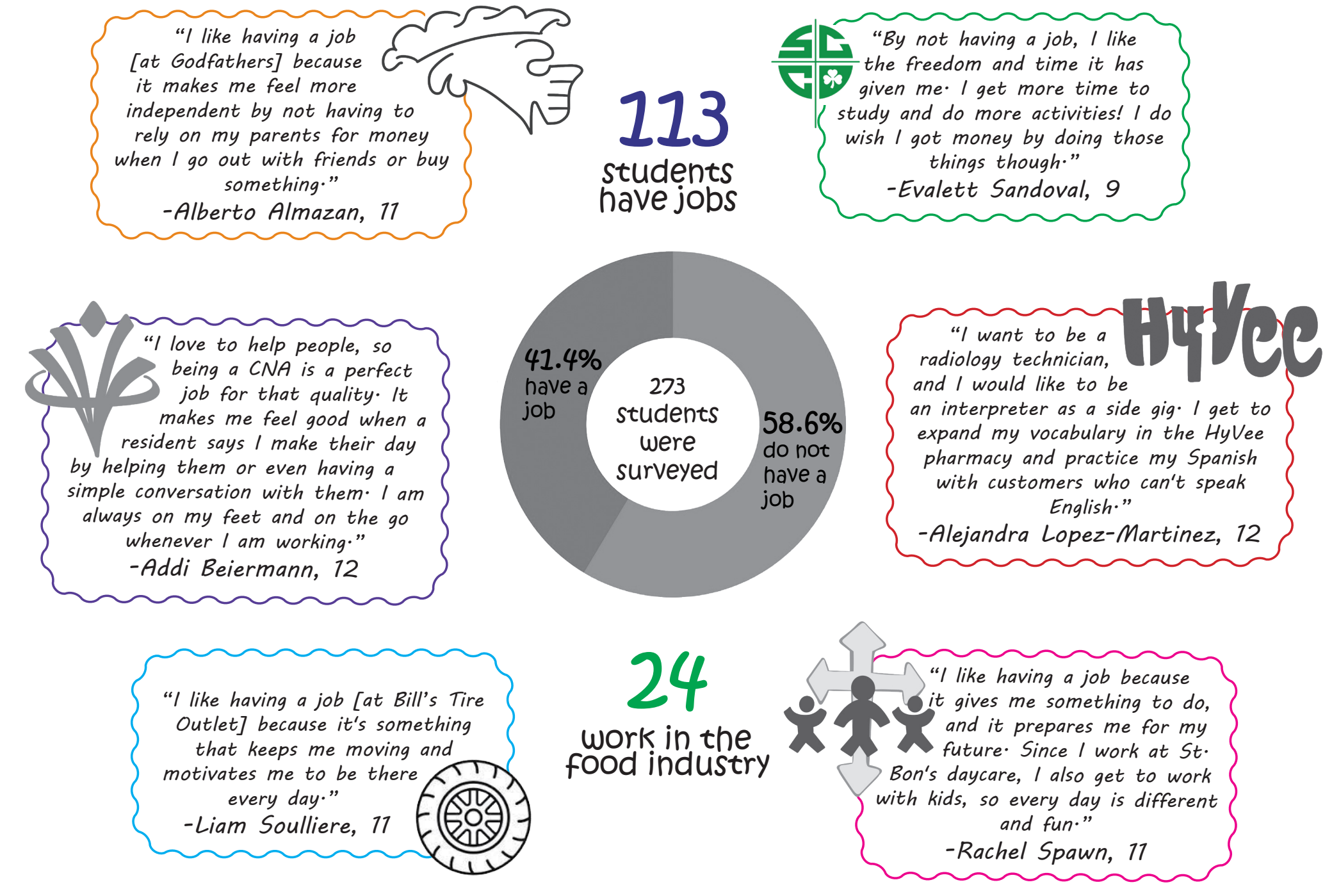
A handful of students work at Godfather's Pizza. Junior Beto Almazan is one of the 6 students who work there.

"I like having a job because it makes me feel more independent by not having to rely on my parents for money when I go out with friends or when I want to buy something," Almazan said.



Ainsley Kuhl / Rock Bottom Staff

Junior Alberto Almazan makes a pizza at Godfather's Pizza on December 1st. He has worked at Godfather's Pizza, along with other Scotus students, for about eight months.



Hands-on jobs appeal to students

By Sydney Stuart

Instead of checking out groceries, making coffee, or serving food, some Scotus students prefer hands-on jobs. These students' work is different from some of their peers whether they are a farmhand, help a family business, or start their own business.

There are many maintenance jobs around town hiring teenagers interested in manual work, such as Bill's Tire Outlet and Mueller Sprinklers.

Junior Liam Soulliere works with his grandpa and dad at their family business, Bill's Tire Outlet. After school and on Saturdays, he can be found repairing, rotating, balancing, and changing tires.

"It means a lot to me to be a part of my dad and grandpa's family-owned business, and I hope I can take over the business someday. It is a great experience working with others to help complete the customers' needs," Soulliere said.

Senior Peter Faltys has worked for Mueller Sprinklers for 3 years.

"I work 50-60 hour weeks in the summer. I have done everything from installing sprinkler systems and grading yards to installing doors and windows," Faltys said. "I enjoy the variety. My favorite week was when we painted one of the boss' tractors for the tractor show."

The farming business is always in need of hands, and with new technology comes new jobs. Many students help on their family farms or find work as a farm hand for local farmers.

Eighth grader Emberly Cech gets to spend time with her dad and brother spraying fields in the summer. She helps to fill the tank of the drone, change and charge batteries, and clean the drone after use.

"Even though it is boring to sit there, grab batteries, and fill up the drone tank, it is fun to talk with my dad and brother, which makes it 10 times better," Cech said.

Junior Parker Newman works on a goat farm for his sister's business partner.

"I usually move [the goats] between pens, feed them, and get them water. Recently I have been putting up a fence and making a new pen for this year's kids," Newman said. "I enjoy being with animals and operating machinery."

Sophomore Madilyn Klug's family operates one of 622,000 beef feedlots in the United States according to the 2022 Census of Agriculture. Klug works on her family's cattle farm after school, during weekends, and in the summer.

"I most enjoy the work I get to do with cattle on a daily basis. Since I plan to be a part of this business in the future, it is good to grow up learning about it and have this knowledge built in as I grow," Klug said.

For students without connections, they have created their own jobs.

Junior Josue De Leon is carrying on a sibling legacy of detailing cars. Josue's older brother David is a Scotus alumni and started the business, but after he moved away for college 2 years ago, J. De Leon kept the business running.

"I got my job from experience [when] I helped Carlos at Pacific Window Tint and got the idea of detailing with my brother. [My favorite part is] the reactions of people when they see their car finished," De Leon said.

No matter the job, students get to take pride in their work in high school and learn valuable traits and skills that will last a lifetime.

Cech concluded, "It means a lot to me that they can trust me to do what is best for the company and maybe one day take over and pass it on."



Sydney Stuart/ Rock Bottom Staff

Junior Liam Soulliere dismantles a tire from its rim at his job at Bill's Tire Outlet. Soulliere works alongside his dad and grandpa, who co-own the business.

Thrifting on the rise:

Thrifting satisfies the soul and saves the world

By: Josie Rother, Lola Dorneman, and Audrey Stoner

Thrifting has become more and more popular in society today. In a survey taken of 273 students at Scotus, 45% say they thrift, and as the reasons why people thrift unfold, it is evident more students should. With almost half of students at Scotus thrift shopping, it must be worth the time.

According to Ben Shaw from the THRIVE project, "Between 2001 and 2006, Goodwill Industries (a common thrift store) reported a 67% increase in its sale of donated goods." As prices increase on many name brand items, buying used or refurbished can save money.

Thrifting is a fun activity to do with friends, and it's good for the earth, too. By remaining frugal, reducing waste, and restoring the soul, there is no way to go wrong in thrifting.

While shopping at many stores can be costly, thrifting provides a unique alternative that saves shoppers a few bucks. Buying new items can be expensive, but choosing refurbished or used clothes, shoes, toys, and even cars won't break a shopper's budget. It is obvious why thrifting is cheaper than buying new; unwanted items are cheaper when resold.

Peter Faltys, 12



"[My favorite item I have thrifted is] my Polaris Sportsman 850. I bought it out of Minnesota a couple weeks ago."

Senior Hannah Heinrich enjoys thrift shopping a couple times a month. Her favorite thrift store in Columbus is Fabulous Forever because of their high quality items.

"[I love thrifting because] it is an affordable way to find clothes. I love to shop, but I don't have much money as a high schooler. I have found so many amazing deals on name brand clothes!" Heinrich said.

Thrift shopping not only saves money; it also saves the Earth. Thrifting reduces waste by giving items a new life. According to the ThredUp (an online thrifting outlet) 2023 resale report, buying and using second-hand clothing rather than new reduces carbon emissions by an average of 25%. Thrifting clothes is an easy way to reduce pollution.

Senior Ava Bettenhausen likes to thrift many different types of clothes, such as tops, skirts, and jeans, and every once in a while, she finds an item she can't live without.

"Thrifting is a great way to reduce textile waste, which has skyrocketed in the past few years, and I also love the quality of vintage clothes; they're always higher quality than items today," Bettenhausen said.

Similar to its economic and environmental benefits, thrifting can be good for the soul. Thrifting has shown to be an outlet for relaxation, self-expression, and bonding with family and friends.

Emilia Gassen, 12



"My favorite item I have thrifted is a strawberry sugar jar. I got it at Cottonwood Antique Mall, and it is my favorite because it something I will keep forever."

According to Retail Brew's website, 52% of Americans use retail therapy as a way to relieve stress. With over half of the country turning to shopping when they are feeling overwhelmed, it is not surprising that many retail therapy participants have turned to thrifting. In fact, according to Forbes' website, thrift stores in the U.S. experienced a 40% increase of customers from the beginning of April to the end of June in 2025. These shoppers looked for and found relaxation in the different treasures that can be found in thrift stores throughout the country.

Shopping secondhand also gives people a creative outlet. With items constantly circulating, shoppers are able to see new merchandise every time they visit their favorite thrift store. The variety allows the shopper's creativity to blossom and makes the goods found even better.

Senior Addi Beiermann is a frequent secondhand shopper, who loves thrifting cozy grandma sweaters.

"I thrift because I love to find unique clothing or items you wouldn't typically see at a regular store," Beiermann said. "Each item holds a story behind it and where it came from."

Finding their personal style and having a cheap way of expressing it is one of the major factors that draws young people to shoping secondhand.

Bettenhausen has found a style she loves and expresses it through her thrifting finds.

"I am huge on 2000s fashion, and thrifting is where I fulfill that for a good price," Bettenhausen said.

Whether a shopper is into vintage, grunge, or anything in between, they can find items to match their style in thrift stores or online secondhand sites.

Not only can thrifting be a personal expression or hobby, it can also be a fun activity to do with family and friends. Going to thrift stores together is a bonding experience that rivals others. Rummaging through racks with friends or family is a way to grow closer with them and save money while doing it.

Freshman Kiley Kosch thrifted her homecoming dress at a Goodwill.

"[Thrifting] is such a fun way to bond with friends or siblings! I have been able to find so many cute items for a fraction of their original price," Kosch said.

Another benefit of having family and friends at the thrift store is being able to ask for their opinions on potential buys. These positive effects thrifting has on the well-being of shoppers and the world are attainable not only all over the world, but also in Columbus.

Kiley Kosch & Milo Dowd, 9



"[My favorite item I have thrifted is] my puffer coat because it's perfect for fall and winter!" - Kosch
"I got a Hollister sweatshirt I wanted for half the price. I was so happy." - Dowd

Contrary to popular opinion of the Scotus students, Columbus has many secondhand and thrift stores. From the well-known Goodwill store on 23rd street to the hidden gems downtown, Columbus has more thrifting opportunities than people know. For most students at Scotus, they turn to Goodwill and Simon House when they are looking to go to a thrift store.

Freshman Milo Dowd loves to thrift random items at Simon House.

"I got a Hollister sweatshirt that I wanted for half the price. I was so happy," Dowd said.

Teens looking for a more constant, high-end selection tend to frequent Fabulous Forever. Unlike Simon House and Goodwill, who take all donations, Fabulous Forever pays people for the clothes they are getting rid of but only buys items they think will sell.

Freshman Avery Heinrich thrifts monthly and found one of her favorite pairs of jeans at Fabulous Forever.

"[Fabulous Forever] has the highest quality clothes of all the thrifting options, in my opinion," Heinrich said.

The selective nature of Fabulous Forever contributes to it being more organized and having a reputation of quality, but the prices are also the highest out of all the second-hand stores in town. Other thrift stores in town include The Salvation Army, The Bargain Store, and a few antique shops.

The antique shops located across the tracks in downtown Columbus are not as popular among the Scotus community but have lots of potential within their walls. These unknown antique stores include Cottonwood Antique Mall and Colonial Antiques located on 11th street and Tapestries Vintage on 26th avenue.

Senior Emilia Gassen thrifts clothes, glassware, and anything else that catches her eye.

"My favorite item I have thrifted is a strawberry sugar jar I got at Cottonwood Antique Mall. It is my favorite because it is something I will keep forever," Gassen said.

These shops offer items with a story behind them for a reasonable price. So, whether a person is looking for high-end fashion, an antique gem, or a deal, thrift stores will meet their needs.

Not only can shoppers thrift shop in Columbus, but there are also many online sites where they can fulfill their passion for thrifting. Some common online thrift stores are ThredUp, Facebook Marketplace, Poshmark, eBay, and Depop. Facebook Marketplace is most popular at Scotus, though, with almost 45% of Scotus' online thrifters saying it's their favorite.

Senior Peter Faltys enjoys shopping on Facebook Marketplace, eBay, Platte County Classified, and BigIron for, "anything that's a good deal," Faltys said.

"Marketplace is easy to use. It has more options than many other sites, a user-friendly interface, and does not have any fees when a sale is made," Faltys said.

Emma White, 10



"[My favorite item I have thrifted is] my pageant gown because it is the one I have wanted for years, and I got it for $1800 cheaper."

While shopping may be more of a stereotypically female hobby, 55% of the online thrifters at Scotus are guys. It is apparent thrifting is for everyone.

Thrifting is good for the environment and for the soul. It benefits shoppers by helping them save money, improves the environment by decreasing waste, and gives shoppers an activity to bond with friends and discover items with unique charm.

With nearly no cons to thrift shopping, why not start today? Who knows what one will find.

Columbus Area Thrifting

goodwill
4330 23rd Street

COTTONWOOD ANTIQUE MALL & FLEA MARKET
2423 11th Street

FABULOUS FOREVER
UPSCALE RESALE
LOCALLY OWNED SINCE 2012
2508 13th Street

THE SALVATION ARMY
2470 1/2 32nd Avenue

SIMON HOUSE
1853 10th Avenue

Student interests invite involvement

Junior Interviews

By Jillian Rusher

This November, Memorial Hall was filled with experienced business professionals waiting to learn more about the Scotus junior class. For several years, Scotus, with the help of the Chamber of Commerce, has brought in community members to do mock interviews with the junior class. These interviews are a tool for students to practice interview skills to help them in their future.

Before the day of the interviews, junior English teacher Angie Rusher and careers counselor Bridget McPhillips help students prepare by making updated resumes and practicing skills that will be helpful to them in their interviews.

"[Junior interviews] begin the very needed process of creating a resume prior to senior year when they will need it for applications, scholarships, and jobs," Rusher said.

On the day of the interviews, students are critiqued by two community members on a variety of aspects of their interview. They are given a rating on their resume, how well they answered questions, their attitude towards the interviewer, how professionally they dressed, and other interview skills.

Emma Wangler is a junior in Rusher's fourth period class.

"I was nervous at first, but the people interviewing me were super nice and helped the interview be more like a conversation rather than a scripted interview," Wangler said.

The community members ask a variety of questions, giving the students a mix of what they may hear in a future interview.

Rusher concluded, "Having community members come in for interviews is such a great experience for our students. It raises the students' level of concern and gives them real life skills of thinking on the spot and being personable."



Joise Rother / Rock Bottom Staff

Junior Matthew Dinslage shakes a Columbus Chamber member's hand during junior interviews on November 20th. Twenty-five Chamber members volunteered to assist with junior interviews that morning.

Science Fair

By Jillian Rusher

Nights spent with interesting odors, bubbling liquids, and repetitive experimenting paid off for the eighth grade class on November 28th.

In recent years, junior high science teacher Annie Sokol has organized an eighth grade science fair. This science fair gives the eighth graders a chance to learn a new aspect of science by choosing a topic they find interesting and at the fair, sharing their results with the community.

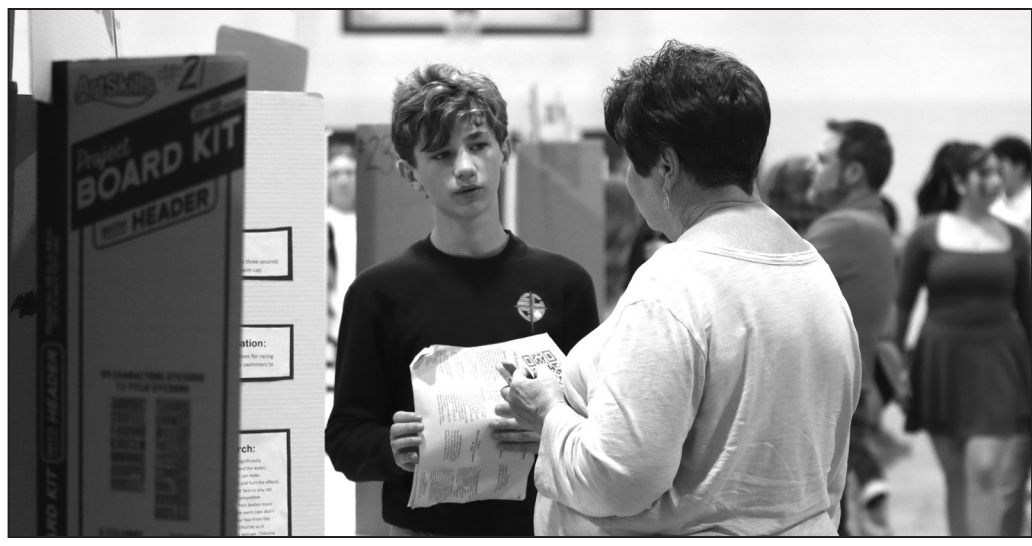
All the students are critiqued by three judges on their overall experiment and presentation skills, and at the end, the judges pick which projects were their favorites. This year, the winner and overall favorite of the science fair was eighth grader Everley Luchsinger, with her experiment "Does the person affect crawling time?"

"My overall experience with the science fair was fun and exciting. It was a lot of hard work that paid off and a great experience. It was cool to be a part of something like that," Luchsinger said.

The judges consisted of several members from the Columbus community, along with upperclassmen at Scotus. The fair was also open to parents and friends to come see the eighth graders' hard work.

Eighth grader Shanita Nkoume received second place for her project "Does the ingredient affect crystal size?"

"I really enjoyed the science fair. I was a bit anxious at the beginning, but I had a lot of fun. It was exciting to meet new people and explain my project," Nkoume said. "Seventh grade was my first impression of the science fair. It ended up being a lot harder than I thought, but when I look back at my project and medal, I know it was all worth it."



Caroline Rickert / Yearbook Staff

Eighth grader Blaise Head explains his science project to a science fair judge on November 28th. The eighth grade students were critiqued by 3 different judges on their overall projects.

Quiz Bowl

By Lillian Miller

Some teams bring helmets and uniforms to their competitions. Quiz bowl brings pencils, buzzers, and more random facts than anyone asked for, from who wrote The Odyssey to how many electrons fit in an s-orbital.

The quiz bowl season usually starts in September and can go all the way to April. The Scotus high school team tries to go to six competitions every year and for junior high, usually four. So far this year, both junior high and high school attended the Seward competition, and the high school team also traveled to Central City.

The Scotus quiz bowl teams are coached by junior high science teacher Annie Sokol, who guides students through the complicated rules and prepares them for tournament-style competition.

"The random questions [are the hardest part]. Some students have enough knowledge that if they're reading a question, they can kind of guess what it should be, but it's also being able to think on your toes," Sokol said. "Some teams just practice buzzing quickly and knowing their questions, and there are some so fast you can't keep up. You wonder if they had the questions ahead of time, but they probably didn't; they just know them really well."

Buzzer speed can make it or break it for a team, but quick thinking and concentration can give any team an edge.

Senior Hudson Kloke has been a quiz bowl member for three years.

"One time, my buzzer was not working and by the time it worked, we were down by a lot of points," Kloke explained. "I had to focus in, but we completed the comeback."

The teams are currently preparing for the junior high competition at Central City, competitions at Nebraska Christian, and the ESU quiz bowl at Central Community College later this school year.



Photo Courtesy Annie Sokol

Seniors Peter Faltys, Elizabeth Stoner, Max Beshaler, and Hudson Kloke compete at the Central City Quiz Bowl Competition on November 12th. The quiz bowl season started in September and goes through April.

Robotics

By Lillian Miller

Robot inspections, interviews, engineering notebooks, and alliances are all aspects of a robotics competition.

The Scotus robotics club is in full swing, with a season starting early in the school year to spend time building and practicing with their robot. As they practice and compete, they are constantly revamping and redesigning their robot, whose name is KLYDE. They were scheduled to first compete with KLYDE at Norfolk on December 6th, but this competition was postponed to February.

The robotics club is student-led, but the sponsor for Scotus' two teams is math and STEAM teacher Betsy Rall.

"Since robotics is highly academic, there are a lot of real-life parts to it," Rall said. "You have to document everything you do, articulate it to judges, and then go out on the course and be able to drive your robot and program it to do things. You have to compete with it and keep your cool while you compete and make adjustments on the fly."

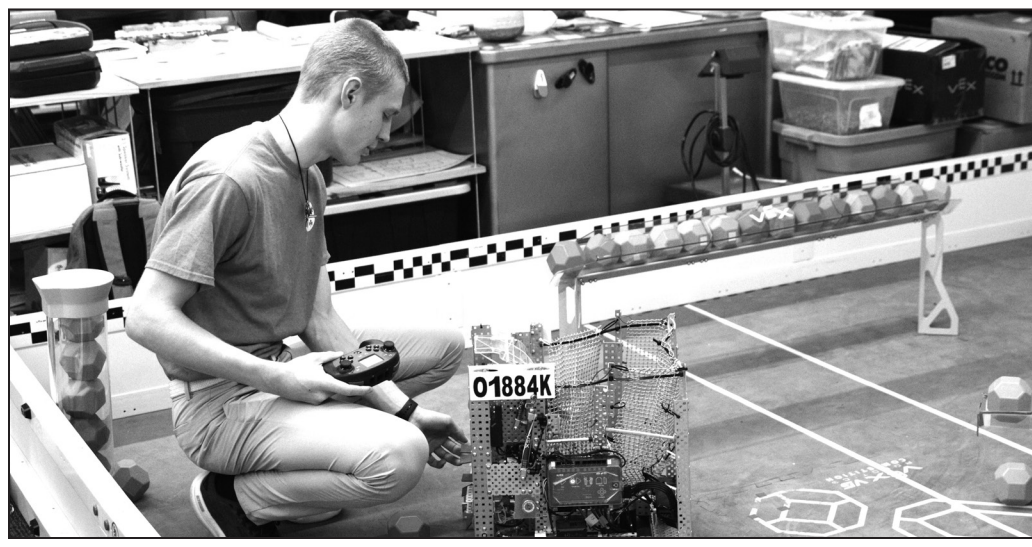
Up until this year, the robotics club and the programming class have been separate. This year, however, Rall has allowed students interested in competing to work on their robot in class and practice for competition, while those not interested in competing learn other programming skills.

Senior Jake Demuth is both in the class and on the team this year.

"My favorite part of competitions is being able to see all the other robots," Demuth said. "With our complex design, we've faced a ton of challenges in building each part and trying to perfect them. Robotics requires a ton of logic and technique; it isn't much about physical strength but mental strength."

The next competition they are scheduled for is at Columbus High School on January 31st.

"Every competition, we are going for the win," Demuth said.



Lillian Miller / Rock Bottom Staff

Junior Trevor Niedbalski troubleshoots after the team robot KLYDE overheated while practicing in robotics class. The first robotics competition is at Columbus High School on January 31st.

HOSA

By Audrey Stoner

As winter sports begin and semester tests draw near, HOSA plows beyond December towards new and exciting plans for the spring semester.

Scotus career counselor Bridget McPhillips has served as HOSA's advisor for the last two years following a year-long hiatus in 2023.

"A lot of times when you think of healthcare, you just think maybe doctors, PAs, and nurses, but we really see the whole spectrum," McPhillips said.

Recently, HOSA members traveled to the University of Nebraska at Kearney to attend a mental health symposium called Mind Bending. This is merely the first of many trips planned for HOSA members' future, including the Northeast Community College Health Science Symposium and the Scotus Health Science Exploration in January, as well as spring visits to Columbus Community Hospital, Northeast Community College, and the University of Nebraska at Kearney.

"We've had more students these last couple of years going to UNK, and they get to be familiar with the campus, the different programs, and even the faces that they see on the discussion panels," McPhillips commented.

This theme of college preparation is essential for senior HOSA president Kate Hendricks.

"This year, I am looking forward to attending some of the events that we haven't had in the past and further expanding my knowledge about the healthcare field to prepare me for college," Hendricks said.

As all of HOSA's members look forward with Hendricks to a bright future in the second semester, McPhillips has lofty plans to go along with it.

"I am hoping we can start to really focus not so much on things that are new, but on consistency," McPhillips concluded.

Spanish Club

By Audrey Stoner

The first two months after the school year's beginning are all about fall activities. This busy time of the year can cast major shadows on smaller Shamrock clubs, though; a shadow that Spanish teacher Lorena Miya has known well since kicking off the return of Spanish club in September. "I think the goal is just having students who [are and] are not taking Spanish class come and be part of it and be able to enjoy it," Miya said.

Despite struggling with low attendance, the club recently celebrated Day of the Dead with arts, crafts, and comparisons to American Halloween traditions. This learning about cultural awareness is a big theme in Miya's plans for the year, including the Spanish club Christmas party she held on December 11th.

Senior Alejandra Lopez-Martinez has attended almost all of Spanish club's meetings this year.

"[The Christmas party went] great!" Lopez-Martinez said. "Everyone seemed to enjoy the environment, and it was great social time while Spanish students applied their learning to games."

Looking forward, an especially exciting opportunity for Spanish club members comes in the form of the University of Nebraska at Lincoln's language fair in the spring. They will to travel to Lincoln and compete in language and culture-based categories such as dance, song, art, and writing. Attending the fair will mark a first not only for Spanish club, but also Scotus as a whole.

As Spanish club hits the ground running toward big dreams, Miya hopes every student can find fun and belonging at its meetings.

"This is a club for all those who are not only interested in [Spanish] language and culture, but [also] art, music, history, and food," Miya concluded. "We will have a good time, and everybody is welcome here."

Pistols and Posies flourishes in final performance

By Josie Rother

After a season filled with body slams, banana pistols, dramatic mafia men, excentric jazz lovers, and powerful female figures, the curtain has closed on all the laughs of the season.

This year's one act production *Pistols and Posies* was a comedy highlighting a bootlegger in Chicago in the 1920's. The one act team's performance season officially kicked off on November 1st when the Shamrocks attended the Schuyler Invite and earned themselves fourth place.

The Shamrocks then attended the Humphrey Archangels Invitational on November 10th, before showcasing their performance on November 14th for a home crowd.

After a successful home performance, the Shamrocks traveled to Wahoo on November 22nd for the conference competition. The Shamrocks placed a disappointing 5th out of 10 teams. Although the Shamrocks did not place as well as they had hoped, many of the team's cast received acting awards.

Senior Aiden Meers played Tito, one of Primo Malvone's henchmen.

" [Through conference], we learned that we had a lot more work to do," Meers said. "Our play was good, but it could definitely have been improved, and that was what pushed us to practice to be better."

In a short turn around, the Shamrocks earned 2nd place on November 25th at a competition held by Midland University in Fremont. A major highlight from the Midland competition was defeating Omaha Concordia's comedy performance. After losing to Omaha Concordia's production at the conference competition, the win gave the team hope of further success since the teams would meet again at districts.

Senior Ava Bettenhausen has been a part of one act for two years and played Isabella Malvone this season.

"That success gave the team a new confidence and, I think, improved our work ethic and relationships with ourselves and the rest of the team," Bettenhausen said. "It improved the season on many levels."

The Shamrock's performance needed to place first at the district competition to earn a spot in the Class B state competition. With a week to prepare for districts, the Shamrocks continued improving their production.

Senior Valeria Rodriguez Gutierrez was a member of the crew and was one of the members in charge of the spotlight in this year's production.

"[Preparing for the district competition,] my teammates and I tried to do our best while also trying to enjoy our possible last moments in one act," Rodriguez said.

On December 5th, the Shamrocks placed 3rd in their district, eliminating their chance to return to the state competition.

Senior Ryan Allen, who played Primo Malvone in the play, has been in one act all four years of high school. Allen received a best actor award at the district competition.

"We went first [at the district competition], so it was going to be an uphill battle to win," Allen said. "Regardless of placing, we had our best performance of the year [at districts] and had the most fun doing it. I couldn't be more proud of my one act family."

After a long season, the Shamrocks play production team has had a successful season, placing top five or higher in every competition they attended.

One act had 17 seniors who helped lead the team in both the cast and crew.

Senior Jillian Rusher played Dino in this year's production. This year was Rusher's first in one act.

"I think we all agree we were disappointed to see our season end, but we couldn't have asked for a better performance to end on. We had our best performance yet, and I wouldn't trade it for anything," Rusher concluded.



Emma Splittgerber / Yearbook Staff

Audriana (senior Issy Chasteen) attempts to prevent her dad Primo (senior Ryan Allen) from threatening her fiancé, his accountant Vincent (senior Evan Pavlik). The home performance was on November 14th.



Emma Splittgerber / Yearbook Staff

Detective O'Neal (sophomore Logan Sell) returns from a warehouse full of "buckets and buckets of flowers" while trying to bust Primo. One act placed 2nd at the Midland Competition on November 25th.

Trial experience prepares students

By Isabella Chasteen

Buttoned suit jackets, vicious objections, observant eyes of the jury, and emotional witness testimonies.

When one thinks of a courtroom, the typical picture is that of TV shows and murder documentaries; however, high school students are actively participating in reenacting these potentially intense environments.

On November 11th, the Scotus mock trial team competed at the Columbus courthouse against two teams. Round one was against Howells-Dodge, and the second round was against York's team B. The results of the competition were released on November 17th. The Scotus team did not make it to district finals; they did, however, defeat Howells-Dodge.

In mock trial, there are two roles: witness and lawyer. They each have their own process of preparation. Witnesses must give a testimony and absorb details of the case from the perspective of someone involved.

Senior Evan Pavlik has been involved in mock trial all of his high school career and was a witness in the second round.

"[Preparing] is mostly memorization; being a witness has you do your best to know your witness statement and understand the rules," Pavlik said.

On the other hand, lawyers must memorize questions and statements rather than a personal experience.

Senior Ryan Allen played a lawyer for both rounds during this competition.

"The team met on Sundays for one to two hours [to practice]. When we came together, the lawyers would review questions and procedures with their witnesses," Allen stated.

With their many moving parts, the team received assistance from two real Columbus lawyers: Breanna Flaherty and Tonia Soukup. These individuals assisted the team in keeping their roles realistic, understanding the rules of the courtroom, and preparing for their competition.

Senior Seth Drueppel played officer Shay Nolan in this case.

"It is a good mix of individual and team work; the individual must work to be as prepared as possible, so the team can be an effective force," Drueppel said.

In order for the team to be official, they must have a teacher sponsor. This year, science teacher Joan Lahm was the mock trial advisor.

"I love mock trial, especially the competition. When you go and watch a mock trial competition, it is kind of intense. It is as close to the real thing you can get at their age, and if anyone is thinking of going into law, I suggest they join mock trial," Lahm said.

Mock trial differs from other theatrical competitions. They only have one competition with two rounds that define how their season will go. If the team does not qualify for the final round, their season is over.

Unfortunately, the Scotus team did not make it to finals, but each member agreed that mock trial has been a positive learning experience.

"Mock trial has helped me to become a more confident person and figure out how to work well under pressure," Pavlik stated.

The mock trial team, although strong this year, will be losing many members. Since half of the team was made up of seniors this year, students are invited to give mock trial a shot next year.

Sophomore JR Oehlrich played witness Jordan Jones during this competition.

"If you are interested in law or quick thinking, [mock trial] would be perfect for you!" Oehlrich concluded.



Lola Doerneman / Rock Bottom Staff

The mock trial team organizes their closing statements. Their only competition was on November 11th, and they competed first against Howells-Dodge.



Lola Doerneman / Rock Bottom Staff

Senior Giselle Chilapa-Bello testifies during direct examination on November 11th. Chilapa-Bello played the role of Addison Williams, a teen involved in a road rage accident who was seeking compensation.



Lola Doerneman / Rock Bottom Staff

Senior Ryan Allen presents his closing statement as a lawyer representing the state on November 11th. This was Allen's fourth year as a lawyer on the mock trial team.

Long-awaited sequel more wicked than good

by Jacqueline Stoner

"Are people born wicked? Or do they have wickedness thrust upon them?"

This is the age-old question, and one the widely popular *Wicked* movie and its recent sequel *Wicked: For Good* attempt to answer. Through exploring the perspectives of the Wicked Witch of the West and the Good Witch of the South originally introduced in the book *The Wizard of Oz,* this two-part series explores the circumstances that might sway an individual towards good or evil. With its recent record-breaking debut on November 21st, earning $150 million at the domestic box office and $226 million worldwide according to *CNN, Wicked: For Good* proves this question is still on the minds of many today.

However, *Wicked: For Good*'s success does not necessarily reflect the quality of its content. In fact, I found the movie to be full of concerning scenes and messages that set a poor example for the younger audiences it is marketed towards.

One of the most glaring problems I have with *Wicked: For Good* is its plot. For most of the movie, time seems to tick by at a snail's pace. Though Elphaba is supposed to be fighting corruption as the Wicked Witch of the West, she appears to have no real plan besides finding validation from others about her worth. It is tough to watch as she lets her sister Nessarose, as well as Glinda, the wizard, and Madame Morrible, use and manipulate her over and over again all while the plight of the animals in Oz is more or less forgotten. I get how hard it can be to be rejected and misunderstood, but is continuing to chase approval from others really the appropriate solution to be promoting?



Screenrat.com

Elphaba and Glinda listen as the wizard attempts to convert Elphaba to his side while at his castle in the Emerald City. The unlikely pair became friends after they were forced to share a room at Shiz University in the first Wicked movie.

Speaking of the characters in *Wicked: For Good*, I found it hard to discern who I was actually supposed to be rooting for. Elphaba, as discussed above, seems focused on finding acceptance for herself, and Glinda refuses to do anything that could jepordize her comfortable lifestyle. In pursuit of these selfish desires, both girls often choose to lie, manipulate other characters, and even physically harm innocent people in order to get their way. This behavior made both of them seem far more like villains than heroes to me.

Unfortunately, *Wicked: For Good* does no better when it comes to relationships. I honestly have no idea how Elphaba and Glinda consider themselves to be friends because their relationship seems incredibly toxic. Both girls clearly care more about achieving their personal goals than each other, and they can often be found either fighting or using each other to get their own way.

Even worse, the movie also features more than one abusive dating relationship, which I am not sure is appropriate for its PG rating. Regardless, instead of addressing these relationships, the film seems more as if it is trying to sweep them under the rug. Uninvolved characters fail to see the relationships as wrong, and some even go so far as to help the perpetrators continue their abuse. Clearly, these are in no way, shape, or form the kind of relationships we should be normalizing for young viewers.

Lastly, I was disappointed by the way *Wicked: For Good* attempts to answer the problem of evil. Though I do believe individuals can be driven to be "wicked" by factors beyond their control, it feels as if the movie uses this to justify characters' harmful actions. "Wickedness is a social construct," it seems to say, "so following your heart is all that matters." However, as Catholics, we know this is not true. Being "wicked" is a choice brought about by continually rejecting God and His plan of goodness for our lives and the lives of those around us. Choosing to commit evil actions is wrong and inexcusable no matter what the circumstances leading up to them may be. Contrary to popular opinion, our hearts also make terrible guides, which is why God gave us the Bible, the Church, and the opportunity to have a personal relationship with Him as resources instead.

So, despite what *Wicked: For Good* portrays, the answer to the age-old question seems to be neither. No one is born wicked nor forced to be so, only tempted by Satan and given the choice whether to acquiesce. As Catholics, it is our job to continually resist so that one day in Heaven, we can at last join Dorothy in saying, "There's no place like home."

Christmas cookie conundrum

by Isabella Chasteen

It is Christmas Eve, the warm, sweet smell of cookies is wafting throughout the house, The Grinch is playing on the TV, and your cat is scaling the tree, again.

The oven dings and the cookies are done, but as you are so excited to dig in, you realize what kind they are…

Christmas, while a time of giving and being with those you love, is a holiday known for its desserts. Without treats, what would Christmas be? The true dilemma of this holiday is what flavor should be made. What is the best Christmas cookie?

This year, I decided to run an experiment. I gathered a list of the eight most popular Christmas cookie flavors in the United States, prepared them, and rated each. My list, in no particular order, consisted of sugar, gingerbread, snickerdoodle, peppermint, shortbread, lemon melting moments, chocolate chip, and snowball. When selecting each recipe, I chose the most popular or familiar ones. Each flavor was ranked on its preparation, taste, and contribution to the Christmas spirit.

The first tier of being considered the best Christmas cookie is ease of preparation. Can I make these cookies in a pinch?

Unfortunately, many of the cookies had lengthy preparations, specifically the outrageous chill times. Four hours is far too much time to wait for cookies, especially when they still are not done after all the waiting! Cookies are usually not too complicated, but waiting around for them to sit in the fridge is an irritating process. Cutting out the chill time is always an option, but doing so means sacrificing the fluffiness and perfect shape of the cookie!

In this tier, the winners were peppermint, chocolate chip, and snickerdoodle, the simplest recipes.

The next tier is taste. I am not entirely a cookie person, but I enjoyed most of these. My one gripe, however, would be the shortbread cookies. To me, expecting a sweet treat and then biting into the equivalent of an extremely dry mini biscuit is not pleasant.

For this tier, my top choices were sugar, peppermint, lemon melting moments, and chocolate chip.

Now for the last, most important tier of this challenge: contribution to the Christmas spirit. I narrowed the list to the four above, but what is the ultimate Christmas cookie?

First up, the chocolate chip cookie. While this cookie is my personal favorite, it is not Christmas enough to be the ultimate cookie; therefore, it was eliminated.

Next up, the lemon melting moments. Another classic, but for me, they are simply not Christmas enough. They were still delicious, and I still recommend trying them.

The last two contestants in this challenge were the classic sugar and peppermint. When I think of Christmas, these two things come to mind: sugar cookies and candy canes. While I do still enjoy sugar cookies, they simply are not as exciting or unique as the peppermint ones.

My final word must be crowning the peppermint cookies as the best Christmas cookie. The recipe I used can be found on the website *Our Best Bites* as "Peppermint Sugar Cookies." They are quick to make, tasty, and promote the Christmas spirit.

I do not recommend making eight types of cookies in one day, but I do say branching out and trying new recipes is exciting. Expanding your tastes opens many doors and can make the holidays more interesting for everyone!



Isabella Chasteen / Rock Bottom Staff

Featured above is the cookie catastrophe of November 29th in senior Isabella Chasteen's kitchen. These were six of the eight types of cookies prepared on this festive Saturday.

Christmas lights up controversy

by Lillian Miller

It's beginning to look a lot like Christmas / Lights on every house / There's the one right off 33rd, you can't even see the yard / From a blinding compilation of decor!

The holidays are now in full swing; wreaths are hung downtown, classic Christmas tunes ring in the back of everyone's mind, and houses are decorated with assortments of festive lights.

Unfortunately, one of the most controversial topics during this joyful season is the use of Christmas lights. People are either bothered by mismatched or crooked lights or say they add character. They claim anybody who goes all out is overwhelming, or they think the more, the better. Some prefer incandescent lights to create a warm, clean environment while others think white lights take all of the fun out and prefer color.

In a survey conducted by the Scotus journalism staff, 273 students voiced their opinions on Christmas lights.



Lillian Miller / Rock Bottom Staff

Christmas spirit is whole-heartedly reflected in the decor of this well-known house on 29th Street off of 33rd Avenue in Columbus. The glow from this densely decorated yard can be seen from many blocks away!

When it comes to the time of year people put up their lights, some are hung as soon as decorations hit the shelves in October. Certain families are excited to start the season, while others prefer to honor Halloween and Thanksgiving first. Scotus is split around Thanksgiving; 36.8% prefer sometime before Thanksgiving and 46% prefer sometime after Thanksgiving. Some don't care as much what time of year but prefer nice weather to hang their lights; 13.6% put them up whenever Nebraska is blessed with a warm day.

Students were also asked about preferred style or color, and results show a running theme of order. Eighth grader Matthew Fernandez is one of this majority.

"They don't look good if they aren't straight or don't match with other lights," Fernandez said. "It makes the decoration look unorganized and messy."

Over half of Scotus agreed with Fernandez; 26.5% claim they don't care as long as the style matches, 12.1% insist the color must match, and 11.4% say they must be hung straight.

With this trend of order and "clean-looking" lights comes a popularity of white LED lights or warm white incandescents.

Senior Carter Sucha voiced his opinion about this shift.

"The white lights take all the fun out of Christmas," Sucha said. "It should be colorful."

Seventh grader Ashley Klitz, on the other hand, prefers matching styles but loves all Christmas lights. She enjoys the atmosphere they create.

"I think Christmas lights are awesome," Klitz said. "I like that they bring so much joy to people. They brighten up everything, even your mood."

No matter how the lights go up, they are there for all to enjoy and create memories with their loved ones.

Ninth grader Evalett Sandoval loves all Christmas lights, regardless of the color or style.

"I absolutely LOVE driving around at night to see all the Christmas lights with my family and friends!" Sandoval said. "It makes me feel jolly and really gets me into the Christmas spirit."

Christmas lights are about how every family celebrates their traditions and shows their festivity, not what other people think is best.

Another student who appreciates lights mainly for the memorable drives with family and friends is senior Addi Beiermann.

"I personally think [christmas lighting] makes the house look fancier and more put together," Beiermann said. "It shows holiday spirit."

Conflicting opinions create tension and a judgmental atmosphere during this time of year oriented toward gratitude, joy, and Christmas spirit. Let us all put our opinions aside, celebrate, and be merry, lights and all.



Rock Bottom

Scotus Central Catholic columbus-catholic.org/rock-bottom-newspaper/ Columbus, Nebraska 68601

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Catholic Schools Week calls for celebration

By Lillian Miller

Catholic Schools Week is an annual, nationally celebrated week that highlights the values, faith-based mission, and community contributions of Catholic education. This year it started on Sunday, January 25th and ended on Saturday, January 31st.

First year Scotus campus minister Cecilia Brichacek, with the help of religion teacher Kelly Koranda and others, did a lot of the behind-the-scenes logistical work to bring the week's plans to life.

"I definitely had nerves, but it was nerves about wanting to do good things for the students, put on something beautiful for our Lord, and to celebrate our Catholic school," Brichacek said.

Columbus Catholic Schools kicked off their week of celebrations with Restore Night at St. Isidore's on Sunday to acknowledge parishes.

Monday honored the community, and there was no school due to a teacher retreat. Unfortunately, the presenters putting on the retreat had trouble coming to the area due to the extreme cold, so they had to cancel.

Tuesday recognized faculty and staff. Parent volunteers came in to supervise lunch so teachers could enjoy a meal together in a space of quiet, laughter, and relaxation as a staff. In addition, students wrote notes to personally thank each and every faculty and staff member.

These notes had a positive impact on many teachers, including art teacher Clyde Ericson.

"Teaching can be a tiring occupation," Ericson said, "but reading notes of appreciation from students helps affirm that what we are doing is worthwhile."



Ainsley Kuhl / Rock Bottom Staff

Seventh graders Sydney Kosch and Luke Hendricks shake hands prior to competing against each other in a round of Family Feud on January 30th. Family Feud has been the entertainment during the faith rally for several years.

Junior high math teacher Matt Wallish enjoyed his first Catholic Schools Week at Scotus.

"When students share their appreciation, it renews me and drives me to become the teacher that each of my students deserve," Wallish said. "Their notes mean more than anything they could buy me."

Wednesday celebrated family. Marketing and communications director Amarha Bridger put together a video to send to parents to thank them for sending their kids to Catholic schools, and activities director and assistant principal Brady Vancura led saint trivia during lunch.

"I think it is important to celebrate our families," Vancura said. "Our parents sacrifice in many ways to allow their children to attend Catholic school and specifically Scotus. There is always a financial commitment, but we also ask for volunteer time as well as parents using their talents to positively impact our school."

On Thursday, fourteen visiting priests and religious from six different orders came to Scotus to celebrate vocations by holding a panel during religion classes.

The visiting religious then stayed to celebrate all-school Mass with the students. The Mass was presided by Archbishop Michael McGovern and seven concelebrating priests. Following Mass, a reception was held in the parish center for the campus ministry students to meet the Archbishop.

"I loved watching the Archbishop sit down at a table that was overflowing with so many students; he was very, very intentional about getting to know his flock," Brichacek said.

Friday was the grande finale for the week with the faith rally to celebrate students. The rally began with a game of Family Feud and was shortly followed by the testimonies of seniors Lola Doerneman and Seth Drueppel.

"It was cool to have the whole school's attention and be able to share my faith witness," Doerneman said. "Being able to be that witness to our school was exciting, and I hope students find God through my story."

This year, there was an addition of a Eucharistic procession from the chapel to the gym with guest priest and speaker Fr. Wahlmeier. After the procession, there was Adoration with live music and the opportunity for prayer teams.

"I could see the Holy Spirit working through the preparations for the week and how the students felt prompted to share their stories; He was definitely guiding through all of that. Then Father Wahlmeier, the only priest who would say yes to us because everyone else we were asking was busy, ended up just being so perfect for our day. It was the other no's guiding us to where the Holy Spirit wanted us to be," Brichacek said.

CNA growth promotes career readiness

By Isabella Chasteen

From nursing and radiology to physical therapy, becoming a member of the medical field is a long and strenuous process.

The Scotus students interested in pursuing the healthcare field have received a new opportunity in the last three years, namely, the CNA class taught through Central Community College by Tracy Long.

As of this semester, the class has been expanded to have three sections throughout the day, holding 17 students total. In the last three years, 25 students have already completed and passed the course even with far fewer class periods available. Having three sections available for this class allows students to more easily fit it into their schedules and properly get their head start into the medical field.

Regardless of what specific fields students want to pursue, taking this class is still an encouraged opportunity.

Senior Myles McGannon is interested in being an orthopedic surgeon.

"I chose to take this class to get more experience and even a job, which will help me see if I want to continue that career path," McGannon said.

Although this course is helpful down the road, it is demanding. Students are required to have 76 total class hours.

Long has been teaching the CNA class at Scotus for the past three years.

"Since I started teaching at Scotus, Central introduced a hybrid program where students have to be in the classroom for 46 hours, and then they can complete 30 hours online. It has been beneficial to students busy with sports and other activities," Long said.

Regardless of its demands, the course is a significant boost to the journey of students going to medical or nursing school. It is also a well-timed course as most students would have to commit summer hours to this course if it were not for its current availability.

The substance of the class is learning basic skills of the medical field. For example, making a hospital bed unoccupied versus occupied, taking care of an elderly patient, and learning the procedure of putting stockings on a patient. When students learn a skill, they practice it for however long they see fit and then test out, or check off, on it.



Isabella Chasteen / Rock Bottom Staff

Junior Emilyn Kavan practices the skill of making an occupied bed in one of Scotus' current CNA classes. 25 students have completed this course in past years, and, between the 3 sections, 17 students are currently enrolled.

Junior Calben Pelan is pursuing a career in dentistry.

"The most challenging part of this class is remembering all of the steps to the skills and testing out," Pelan said.

Although the course's expansion has been beneficial to more students, it is still a large change from before.

Junior Libby Langan is pursuing a career as a NICU nurse or a nurse practitioner.

"The most challenging thing is having six people in a room compared to three in past years, so it takes longer to check off skills," Langan said.

With class registration approaching, students are making the decision on whether or not to take the CNA class; however, all students must take health sciences with science teacher Joan Lahm beforehand. This course serves as a discernment and learning period for the students considering the medical field.

Long concluded, "[This class] is a great benefit to the community because it means many kids are interested in becoming medical professionals. Our hope is that once they are finished with school, they will return to our community to practice."

VolunTEEN offers helpful opportunities

By Lydia Dostal

As Scotus students scout for service opportunities, one program brings many options for all. The VolunTEEN program, sponsored by Columbus Community Hospital, provides an easy outlet for service hours while also allowing students to explore their career interests.

Sophomore Celeste Sucha has been in the program since September 2024.

"I saw the opportunity at the service fair my freshman year. It seemed like a fulfilling program to begin my first step into the medical field," Sucha said.

In this organization, teens have the ability to assist healthcare workers with mundane tasks that might take away from their time with patients.

Senior Elizabeth Stoner is currently assigned as a volunteer in the fieldhouse.

"I feel like I've made a difference in the fact that I can help lighten the workload on some of the staff," Stoner said.

The VolunTEEN program offers students a variety of opportunities with multiple departments to choose from. The students at Scotus have assignments in areas such as the ACU/ICU, fieldhouse, childcare center, information desk, beverage cart, radiologic imaging department, and Premier Physical Therapy.

Since joining the program, senior Alejandra Lopez-Martinez has volunteered in the radiologic imaging department, at Premier Physical Therapy, and with the beverage cart.

"It's kind of like shadowing different jobs. [I like] getting to learn about different

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VOLUNTEEN

professions and seeing if I'd be interested in them," Lopez-Martinez said.

Freshman Bailey Becker has been a VolunTEEN since April 2025.

"VolunTEEN has made me appreciate all the hard work healthcare workers put in to make the patients feel better," Becker said.

Being in the hospital setting allows volunteers to meet individuals from all walks of life. This interaction can help prepare them for future career endeavors.

"I absolutely love the people. All people in the VolunTEEN program are welcoming, warm souls. I've [been able] to meet new people, which has helped to bring me out of my shell and become more confident," Sucha said.

Patient interaction is a large part of the VolunTEEN experience. Many volunteers find speaking with the hospital residents and visitors to be the most gratifying part of the program.

Senior Lily Lancaster volunteers at the information desk but has previously been stationed at the beverage cart.

"Getting to visit with the patients in the hospital while providing beverages for them was a very rewarding experience. I feel like I made a difference by being kind and friendly to everyone I interacted with. You never know how someone's day is going, so I tried my best to be positive to everyone I saw," Lancaster said.

For many, the program provides more than service hours. VolunTEEN has created a community of people who support one another in their goals and make each other feel welcomed.

"I've volunteered with the program for so long that when I go to college and leave the program, it will be like leaving a part of me behind. It's just become so much a part of my life, I don't know what I'll do," Stoner said.

Students live busy lives, but VolunTEEN offers hours that allow for more participation from teens.

"The best part about VolunTEEN is their flexibility with your schedule. You can volunteer any day of the week that best suits you. They want you to prioritize school and activities, so they are very understanding," Sucha said.

VolunTEEN is a viable option when it comes to community service.

Senior Thomas Settje volunteers at Premier Physical Therapy.

"[I think people should] join because if they don't like it, they can always leave, but taking risks is good for you," Settje said.



Lydia Dostal / Rock Bottom Staff

Junior Salette Adame-Hernandez fills purple bags in the ACU / ICU department during her VolunTEEN shift. Other departments for VolunTEEN include the information desk, the Fieldhouse, and Premier Physical Therapy.

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Taking the formal out of Winter Formal

By Rock Bottom Staff

Despite its music video having over 2.7 billion views and its lasting presence as a dance floor staple since its 2011 release, Jennifer Lopez's hit single "On the Floor" tends to fall flat for Scotus Winter Formal attendees. Instead of heeding Lopez's urges to 'get on the floor' and 'dance the night away', most students take a few selfies with friends, join the crowd jumping up and down for a few songs, and then grab their dates and leave the gym practically empty by 9. With its record for low attendance and critical reviews, we believe it is high time Scotus took the formal out of Winter Formal.

In 2023, Columbus High School hosted the town's first informal school dance in years after facing similar problems with attendance and engagement levels. With the use of three of their gyms, students could participate in a traditional dance experience with a DJ and dance floor, a movie watch party, or a game room with dodgeball, spikeball, lasertag, and ring toss. Attendees were given the choice of arriving in style or taking the comfier route, with many beginning the night in formal wear and changing later on. The changes worked. As principal David Heibner wrote in an article on CHS's website, a record 400 students attended the dance. However, would Scotus students have the same reaction?

One of the most obvious advantages to an informal dance is the pressure it takes off of getting ready. For some, dressing to the nines while laughing and snacking with friends is the highlight of their night. However, other students can find it hectic and stressful or simply would much rather wear sweatpants and a baggy T-shirt than a fancy dress or suit. Making Winter Formal an informal dance would allow students to choose the level of dress they prefer most, resulting in higher comfort levels and lower overall stress.

> "From movies, to games, to the dance floor, everyone is bound to find something they will enjoy."
>
> **Audrey Stoner** ROCK BOTTOM

Another big selling point of a Winter Informal is the wider variety of kids it attracts. While formal dances tend to only draw students who either enjoy getting dressed up and dancing or have a date to go with, an informal dance caters to all students. From movies, to games, to the dance floor, everyone is bound to find something they will enjoy. This also can deter students from leaving early as anyone tired of one activity could easily try out another instead of going home.

On the other hand, there are a few major concerns raised when switching from a formal to informal dance. Most often, both the cost and the need for extra volunteers either delay or deter such a change entirely. These hiccups in the planning process are far from unsolvable, though. Concessions could be sold to cover extra costs, a small entrance fee could be implemented, school service hours could be offered for helping set up, or sophomore parents could be asked to volunteer similar to freshman parents assisting with Homecoming and junior parents facilitating Prom.

Another snag in the works of a Winter Informal is the idea of abolishing the Winter Formal court and coronation. However, in our experience, the nomination and voting process can cause more frustration for court members than excitement. Nominees can be seen by themselves and others as the 'second string'candidates when compared to Homecoming, or feel devalued by the lack of attendance at the typical Winter Formal coronation. Furthermore, it is not a rare occurrence for candidates to be nominated who did not plan to attend the dance at all. These candidates then feel trapped into going for the sake of their place on the court, setting up a negative experience on their part and a mood killer for other court members. Eliminating a Winter Formal coronation would prevent this coercion from happening and allow everyone who attends to have the best experience possible.

The annual Winter Formal dance is not perfect, and a Winter Informal will never be either. However, we believe the benefits of the latter would far outweigh the costs, and student attendance and engagement would soar accordingly. While the thought of 'getting on the floor' and 'dancing the night away' may send bad dancers sprinting, introverts burrowing under the covers to hide, and single students on a collective wave of wistful thinking, a Winter Informal would hit the billboards as a long-awaited remix.

Proactive preventatives top pharmaceuticals

By Sydney Stuart



As I stroll down the grungy grocery store floors with my creaky shopping cart, I look at the hundreds of bottles of vitamins and pills for every cause you can imagine. Take a look in your medicine cabinet at home; there you will find your own grocery list of prescriptions. The medicine in the orange bottle is for headaches, the green bottle is for indigestion, the red bottle is for aches, the yellow bottle is for colds, and the purple bottle is for nausea. When will the cycle stop?

As a whole, big pharma has taken advantage of people's need to quickly solve their problems. Instead of relying on quick fixes, people should get to the root of their problems and use preventive measures. The biggest preventative measure is natural medicine, which includes daily nutrition and herbal supplements.

"Do you have any ibuprofen? I have a headache," I hear my classmate ask after explaining to me how they skipped breakfast, forgot their water bottle, and got 4 hours of sleep. No wonder they have a headache. There is no reason to rely on tiny man-made pills when a balanced diet and lifestyle takes care of 80% of various complaints I hear daily.

According to Harvard Health Publishing, nearly 30 billion doses of nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (ibuprofen) are taken by people a year. To put this enormous number into perspective, that means on average, 82.2 million doses are taken a day worldwide.

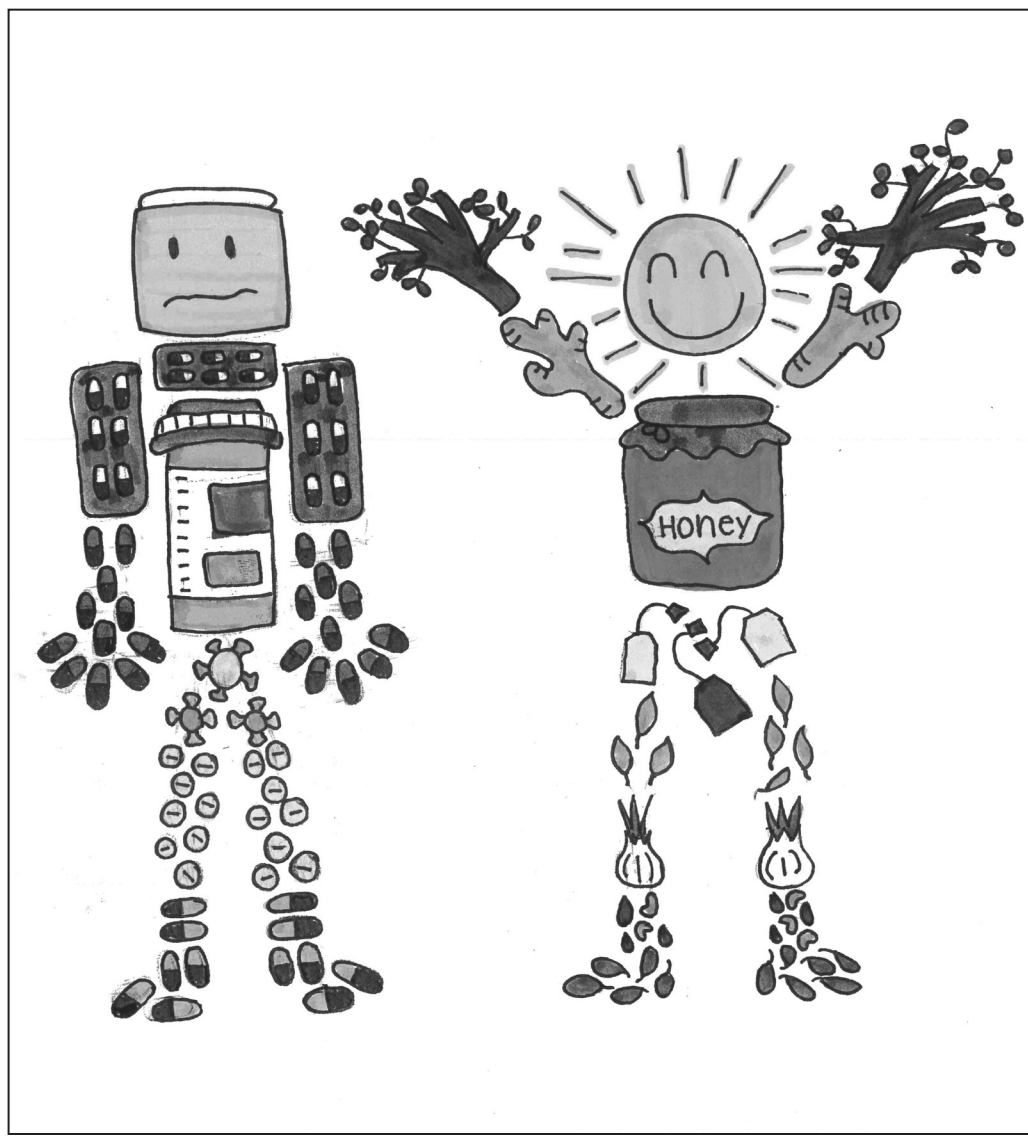
Along with encouraging people to neglect their body' s actual needs, big pharma encourages the rapidly growing need for speed rather than quality. The problem lies in people trying to solve a problem in 3 days that they developed over the past 3 years. The reason herbs and daily nutrition don't work overnight is because they aren't an override button that sends the body into fight or flight. Pills are an abrupt override button that sends the body into fight or flight. Herbs and nutrition work with the body to naturally resolve issues. There is no rushing mother nature without complications. While using herbs and nutrition takes more time to "work", their benefits outweigh any pill you can make.

After continual drug usage, the liver takes a toll. Although ibuprofen is a quick fix, people seem to forget its side effects, including digestion issues, heartburn, ulcers, and allergic reactions. Sticking to natural solutions ensures the safety of the liver and function of the body.

I will admit, it is not always the easiest to plan ahead and become knowledgeable about herbal medicine, but with time and consistency, it is possible.

There are many herbal solutions to the many ailments in our daily lives. They can be found online or through local farmers markets or grocery stores. There are readily available herbs you may not know about. Ginger is excellent at soothing an upset stomach. Fermented honey and garlic helps to clear up respiratory illness, and if you need an extra boost, try elderberries. Chamomile is popular in teas and helps to reduce inflammation and promote sleep. With a little research, the possibilities are endless.

I am not saying I have never or will never take medication. Medication has a time and a place, and modern medicine has expanded further than humans could ever imagine. Many people are dependent on certain medicine to keep their body functioning properly. This is a fantastic use of modern medicine to improve the lives of people with life-threatening diseases and disorders.



Jillian Rusher / Rock Bottom Staff

However, what might not be realized is it is hard to rely on pills, and it is hard to be 100% only natural medicine. Everyone will have a different balance of man-made to natural medicine. Unfortunately, the 30 bottles of medicine sitting in people's cabinets is ruining their ability to pay attention to their bodies' cues. Medicine suppresses the body's ability to communicate properly. People feel drowsy and have headaches when they need more water because the body is communicating through those symptoms.

Next time you feel a cold or headache coming on, do some research into herbs and foods to rejuvenate your body. Lay off o nthe pills and experience what it means to be in tune with your body's needs. You might be surprised to find out you feel better than before.

Nature harvests healthier and happier lives

By Lola Doerneman



The months of winter seem as though they will last forever. The impatient darkness draws the day to a close before 6 pm. Sunlight showers over Nebraska less and less each day, and yet, we spend those precious hours of day inside. These dull, cold months keep people inside when what truly makes us happy is being outside. Seasonal depression is a very real concern; people are made to be out in the sunlight.

Unfortunately, being a basketball player means I truly never see the sun. Wrestlers and swimmers can relate. We wake up and drive to school, it's dark. After school and practice driving home, it's dark. It's as if we live underground. The darkness and length of the winter sports season allow for higher levels of sadness and stress to creep in. As soon as the glee of Christmas break comes to a close, the sighs over returning to school become too loud to bear. The 28 days of February feel like a century.

This winter has been different from years before, though. Rather than the usual blizzards and sleet, we have been blessed with amazingly warm weather. The sun has quickly melted the snow and warmed our earth. Being able to go on a walk outside in a T-shirt and shorts on Christmas Day was glorious.

> "Simply stepping away from the busyness of school and life and into the fresh air makes us happier."
>
> **Lola Doerneman** ROCK BOTTOM

Being outside in nature truly makes us healthier and happier. Breathing fresh air improves sleep, builds immunity, and reduces stress. Fortunately for us winter athletes, sunlight is supremely helpful but not necessary in order to reap the benefits of nature.

Constant scrolling on social media, which has become a common habit of high school kids, is widely known to increase anxiety and disrupt sleep. Nature combats both of these bad effects. I believe students could dramatically better their mental health by putting their phones down and stepping outside once a day. Ten minutes in the sun boosts serotonin (happiness hormone) levels and helps regulate your body clock to improve sleep.

The winter months hold the record for most sickness plaguing our school and world. Nature is once again the answer. According to Florence Williams in her book *The Nature Fix*, sunlight boosts Vitamin D, and airborne chemicals released from plants increase the production of white blood cells, which fight infection in our bodies. Nature reduces the risk of getting sick.

The most dramatic benefit, I believe, is how nature is proven to improve mood. Packed schedules bring stress and anxiety, but being outside in nature helps us decompress. It scientifically lowers the cortisol (stress hormone) levels in our brain and raises serotonin. Being cooped up inside for almost every minute of the day is bound to make us more stressed, anxious, and depressed. Even ten minutes of relaxing in the breeze reaps benefits. Simply stepping away from the busyness of school and life and into the fresh air makes us happier.

Being involved in winter sports truly makes it hard to get the recommended time of sunlight and fresh air, but I believe if people knew the enormous benefits of nature, they'd spend every free moment outside. Even if I get home after practice at 7 pm and it's dark, looking up at the stars for 5 minutes and breathing in the fresh air helps me relax and realize life is alright.

I challenge all the students and teachers at Scotus to take advantage of the slightly-warmer-than-freezing weather we have been given during these difficult times of winter. Go on a walk or simply sit on your porch and breathe in the fresh air. Nature's benefits reach higher than the tallest of trees.

Boys basketball battles tough teams

By Kate Hendricks

With a record of 2-4 before the holiday tournament, the Shamrocks boys basketball team has shown steady growth while battling through close games and tough opponents. Now sitting at a 8-9 record, the team is focused on building consistency, capitalizing on close games, and having a strong finish to the regular season.

The Shamrocks played Clarkson-Leigh in the first round in the annual holiday tournament, winning 82-44. This was the 44th annual holiday tournament put on by the Columbus Area Chamber of Commerce. The Shamrocks then claimed their title for the 6th straight year as holiday tournament champions after beating Lakeview 60-44.

Senior post Gavin Beiermann averaged 22 points per game during the tournament.

"It felt good keeping the streak of winning the tournament again," Beiermann said.

The Shamrocks then hosted Lincoln Christian on January 3rd. They fell to the Crusaders 54-58.

"Lincoln Christian was an important game because we play them again in conference, so we like our odds because beating a team twice is very hard. We learned a lot from our mistakes in that game. We have been trying to better ourselves and become better players. We also are trying to become more comfortable playing together," Beiermann said.

The team then went on to face St. Paul and Humphrey-Lindsay, coming home from both with victories.

The Shamrocks faced Norfolk Catholic on the road on January 16th and came up short again by 10 points.

Junior Karsten Killham is a shooting guard for the Shamrocks.

"Their student section was one of the best we have seen. They played a big factor. We were hitting three's in the first half; we couldn't buy one in the second half, and that was what killed us. We just wanted to keep shooting the three when we shouldn't," Killham said.

Junior guard Connor Cameron scored 18 points in the Norfolk Catholic game.

"Their crowd was very active, which caused some problems. We learned we have to stay connected together on the court," Cameron said.

Heading into post-season play, the team has many goals they want to accomplish.

Junior Calben Pelan is a guard for the Shamrocks.

"Our team has been focusing on doing the little things right and not beating ourselves. A majority of the games we lost, we've beat ourselves. We learned to take it one day at a time. Our focus has shifted to locking in on what's right in front of us and not what's ahead," Pelan said.

Following Norfolk Catholic, the team bounced back and defeated Battle Creek 58-50. The Shamrocks then hosted North Bend on January 20th, falling to the Tigers 48-60.



Kate Hendricks / Rock Bottom Staff

Junior Brody Lindhorst looks to pass the ball to one of his teammates during the North Bend game on January 20th. Lindhorst leads the team in assists with 61 for this season so far.

"We were sitting sloppily in the second half, and we weren't sharing the basketball as much as we usually do. Not a lot of shots were falling in the second half, which made it tough to score," Killham said.

Junior Michael Brandt scored 12 points against Battle Creek and 3 against North Bend.

"In the first half of the [North Bend] game, we were playing well. The second half, we weren't playing our brand of basketball. We lost that game with all of the mistakes we made in the second half. Our practices have been more competitive and intense, and I think they will prepare us for our schedule," Brandt said. "We've learned we have the potential to be a good team, and we just have to show it."

The Shamrocks play at Wahoo Bishop Neumann on February 6th.

Girls basketball opens with wins

By Jillian Rusher

Some people receive money for Christmas, others get toys, and this year, the Scotus girls basketball team won themselves the holiday tournament, a Christmas gift for the whole team.

On December 31st the Shamrocks won the Columbus Holiday Tournament, making their record 7-2.

Senior Kayla Hoffman leads the team with the highest three-point goal percentage.

"Winning the holiday tournament was exciting, but expected. The teams there are not as highly competitive as other teams we play during the season. Aside from that, coming out on top is every team's end goal no matter what," Hoffman said.

The excitement led on until January 3rd. Scotus traveled to Lincoln Christian, whose team is currently ranked second in class C1. The Shamrocks took a loss of 19-63.

Junior Brooke Krienke leads the team with the highest free throw percentage.

"[After the loss], we needed to get our confidence back and reinstate the offense and defense we had previously played with," Krienke said.

The loss was difficult for the team, but they did not have time to dwell on it because three days later, they played against St. Paul. The team was given a needed boost when they took a victory, winning 55-29.

"After the loss, our team focused on and emphasized taking care of the ball, so we got as many opportunities on the offensive side as possible," Hoffman said.

The win against St. Paul started a trend for the Scotus girls basketball team, winning games against Humphrey-Lindsay (54-28), Bishop Neumann (34-32), Norfolk Catholic (56-38), Battle Creek (41-37), and North Bend (58-50).

These games were not all handed to the team. On January 10th the Shamrocks beat Bishop Neumann with a buzzer beater layup made by Lola Doerneman. Doerneman is the leading scorer on the team.

"The Bishop Neumann game was huge for us. They are an athletic and aggressive team, so being able to compete with them to the end was rewarding," Doerneman said.

The Shamrocks beat North Bend at home on January 20th. Krienke had 17 points in the team's win.

"The North Bend game was definitely the most fun game to play all year. We exhibited great teamwork, and everyone filled their role to win. We have a rivalry built up, so it feels great to come through after last year's abrupt ending," Krienke said.

Scotus took their first loss in 6 games against Boone Central 50-60, and with little time to recover, came right back and beat Fremont Bergan the following night 52-32.

Senior Kate Hoffman is a starting guard for the Shamrocks this season.

"We have grown in many ways from the beginning of the season. Our biggest improvement has been our offense. We have been moving the ball and shooting better," Hoffman said.

The Shamrocks hosted the first round of conference on Tuesday, January 27th against Kearney Catholic. Scotus lost 47-49. On Thursday, January 29th Scotus bounced back, beating Aquinas Catholic 58-46.

The team continues to battle in hopes of more victories. They played Aquinas Catholic again on February 3rd, going in with a record of 15-5.

Doerneman concluded, "We have challenging games coming up, but I know this team is in it for the long run. We have worked so hard, and I'm so excited to see how far that takes us."



Emma Splittgerber / Yearbook Staff

Sophomore Allie Brezenski dribbles into the lane against North Bend on January 20th. The Shamrocks took a victory of 58-50.



Jacqueline Stoner / Rock Bottom Staff

Coach Jarrod Ridder and the bench celebrate a buzzer beater over Bishop Neumann on January 10th. Senior Lola Doerneman scored the winning layup, along with 9 other points for the team.

Footy Mania kicks into the offseason

By Lola Doerneman



Angie Rusher / Journalism Advisor

Senior Mia Fehringer prepares to pass the ball to seniors Andy Padilla-Arrieta or Maclain Bailey as freshman Calan Windedahl tries to intervene during a soccer "footy" at the Columbus Fieldhouse on January 28th. Both the girls and boys soccer teams have been getting touches on the ball to prepare for the spring season.

During the winter months, the soccer team has kept their feet on a ball. By having many indoor "footies" at Scotus, which are basically open gyms, and participating in leagues, the players have stayed busy.

Senior Aiden Meers has played on the boys soccer team for 3 years and has taken advantage of the opportunities available during the offseason.

"[In the offseason], we have been playing soccer in the gym or fieldhouse. We also have been going to Lincoln to play in an indoor league," Meers said. "[These opportunities] help us gain chemistry and take care of the ball under pressure."

Not only are the footies fun, but they also have a great impact on the players' abilities by getting them to improve their skills all through the year.

Junior Braeden Liebig has played soccer for 2 years and is grateful for the many chances to play in the offseason.

"[These open gyms are] preparing us to deal with adversity and helping our communication," Liebig said.

Senior Mia Fehringer has been a starter for the girls varsity soccer team for 3 years.

"Playing in the offseason is very fun, and every time I attend an open gym, I never regret going," Fehringer said. "Playing on the gym floor [also] allows us to play at a faster pace and gives us a chance to get some touches on the ball before the season starts."

One of the most exciting activities the team will take part in is the Footy Mania tournament held at Scotus.

"I am most excited to play with my friends [at Footy Mania] as well as taking home the winning trophy," Fehringer said.

On February 6th, 2026, the exciting games of the third annual Footy Mania will take place in the Dowd Activity Center at Scotus. The tournament will begin at 6 pm.

"[Footy Mania is] a great opportunity for us to get better," Meers said. "The journey to state starts now."

Wrestling turns toward state tournament

By Josie Rother

The Shamrock wrestling program has sped off to a busy start this year having already competed in 14 out of their 16 competitions.

After placing 6th as a team at the Raymond Central Dual Tournament on December 12th, the Shamrocks turned around and earned 1st place at the Fort Calhoun Invitational the next day.

Senior Carter Sucha placed 1st at the Fort Calhoun Invitational.

"Winning the Fort Calhoun Invite was significant to many of the guys who have struggled, stepped up, and made their way to the podium," Sucha said. "We had 5 champions at [the Fort Calhoun] meet, and it shows everyone that we have a strong core group with many hungry young guys."

The following week, after their first day of semester tests on December 18th, the Shamrock wrestlers traveled to Aquinas Catholic High School to compete in a triangular. The Shamrocks prevailed against Central City, but were defeated by the Aquinas Monarchs. Two days later, on December 20th, the Shamrocks traveled to Logan View High School, where they placed 8th out of 16 teams.

Junior Parker Newman wrestles in the 157 weight class.

"Beating Central City got us ranked pretty high since they were ranked 4th [in the state] at the time," Newman said. "Although we lost to Aquinas, it was a close dual and was very fun to be a part of."

After a rejuvenating moratorium, also known as "dead week", the wrestlers hit the mat again on January 3rd at Shelby-Rising City High School, where the team placed 1st out of 16 teams, and 9 of their wrestlers took home a placement of 6th or above.

Junior Aiden Zegar wrestles in the 175 weight class and placed 5th at the Shelby-Rising City Invite.

"We were all excited to see our hard work start to pay off, celebrate the wins of our teammates, and help them through their losses," Zegar said.

The team's success at the Shelby-Rising City Invitational led them into the next 3 competitions before the conference tournament. The first two were duals hosted by the Shamrocks, who bested both the Archbishop Bergan Knights on January 6th and the Schuyler Warriors on January 8th. The final competition leading up to the conference tournament was the Schuyler Central High School Invitational on January 17th where the Shamrocks secured 4th place as a team out of 16 teams.

Sucha was a state qualifier last year along with 6 of his teammates.

"[The Bergan Knights] are a good competitive team in our conference, so competing with them gave our guys good momentum going into the conference tournament," Sucha said.

At the conference tournament on January 24th, the Shamrocks wrestled their way to a 2nd place team finish.

Senior Kobe Micek placed 1st at the conference tournament in the 132 weight class. The Shamrocks had three other conference champions: Favio Rivero Rubio (144), Carter Sucha (138), and Parker Newman (157).

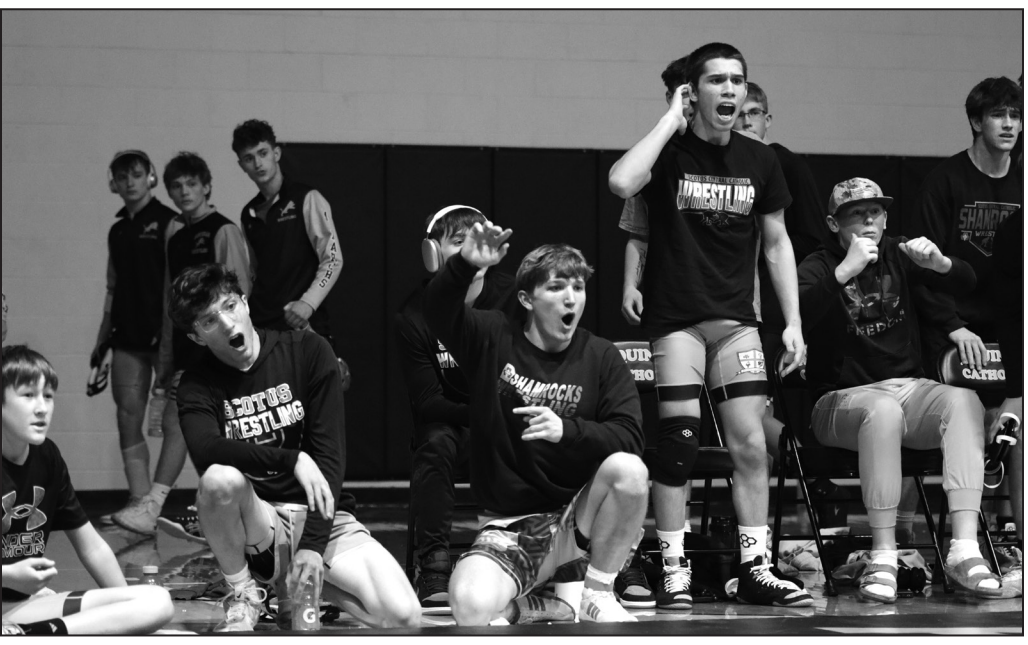
"We had some good wins and some kids stepped up, but I think we have a team that is good enough to win the conference," Micek said. "[Our success at conference] will be a good confidence boost going into districts."

On January 27th the Shamrocks took the win against Lincoln Christian in a dual at home. Two days later, the Shamrocks beat Lakeview in a dual before competing at the invitational held by Boone Central on January 31st. The Shamrocks did not place as a team at the Boone Central Invitational but had a few individuals place.

The Shamrocks only have the Grand Island Central Catholic Invitational on February 7th standing between them and the district tournament on February 14th.

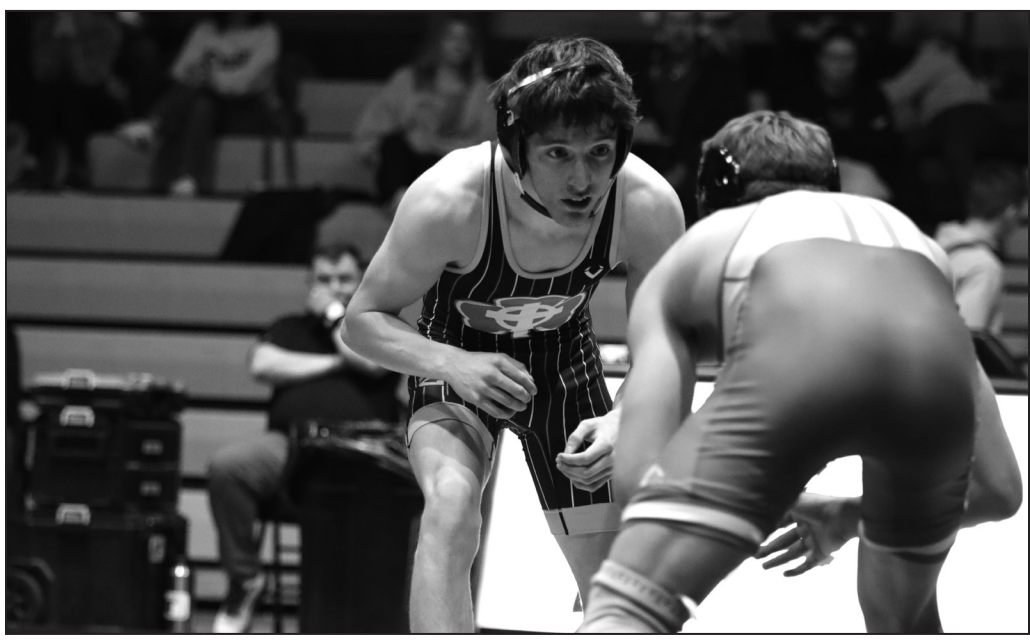
Rivero Rubio, who wrestles in the 144 weight class, has individually placed 1st 5 times this season.

"The goal for the team is that we can wrestle at the State Dual and have more than 7 state qualifiers this year," Rivero Rubio concluded.



Jillian Rusher / Rock Bottom Staff

Senior Carter Sucha, junior Parker Newman, senior Favio Rivero Rubio, and freshman Bode Roberts cheer for their teammate with the rest of the team at a triangular hosted by Aquinas Catholic High School on December 18th. The Shamrocks lost to the Monarchs but beat their other opponent, Central City.



Jillian Rusher / Rock Bottom Staff

Senior Carter Sucha faces off with a Central City wrestler at the Aquinas Catholic High School Triangular on December 18th. Sucha was one of 6 state qualifiers on last year's wrestling team.

Cheerleaders set tone for state

By Kennedy Krueger

Even though cheerleading is a year round sport, the busiest time for cheerleaders is the winter. During this time, not only does the cheer team continue supporting the school's activities, but they also perform their routines at competitions and state.

The Scotus cheerleaders are laying the groundwork for state after becoming class champions for the C1 division at the Heartland Competition on January 11th. They earned this title from their score on their first place Non-Tumbling routine, meaning they had the highest scoring routine out of any C1 performance. The cheerleaders also performed a Game Day routine and placed fifth. They earned a special award from the judges for their usage of props in their routines. Using feedback from the competition, the Shamrocks are continuing to prepare for state.

Senior Kate Hendricks, along with the other four seniors, captains the cheer team.

"Heartland and Jam the Gym give us so much insight on the things we need to fix or improve on, and having those under our belt before state gives us a lot more confidence with routines. Confidence comes from preparation, and it shows after all the work we put in through practices and competitions," Hendricks said.

Experiencing the feeling of performing in front of crowds is an important aspect of preparing for state. Not only do the cheerleaders get to show off what they have been working on, but they can get over performance nerves as well.

"My favorite parts of being a cheerleader are the friendships with the cheer team and performing our routines. We all get an adrenaline rush right before we are about to perform, and it is such an amazing feeling after we perform, and everything went well," senior Eva Foreman said.

The cheerleaders have been practicing and perfecting their routines for months with the help of head coach Sarah Langan and assistant coach Liz Gonka. This is their second year coaching the cheer team.

"We have had many full-on two to three hour practices where we go over even the smallest critiques that can help so much. We also have the best coaches who have helped us improve throughout this season," freshman Makynley Paitz said.

The cheerleaders have been up to more than performing, though. They put on a prep clinic on January 26th for those interested in trying out for the cheer team this spring or in the future. It was open to all girls from sixth to twelfth grade. It was an opportunity for girls to learn more about what cheerleading involves and to help them decide if they wanted to try out for the team.

"For me, [the prep clinic] benefited me a lot for tryouts because I already knew the fight song, and it let me experience performing in front of a crowd," freshman Evy Kluever said.

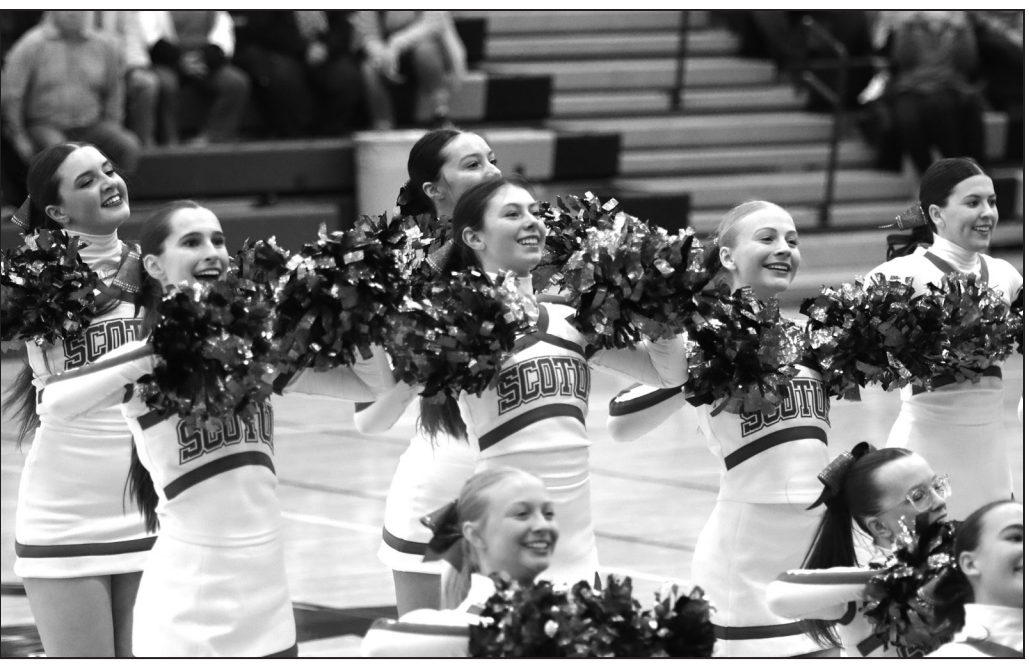
On January 28th, the Scotus cheerleaders went to the Columbus Catholic elementary schools to visit the students there. The following weekend, they performed their state dance at Jam the Gym on February 1st. At halftime of the girls game on February 3rd, the cheerleaders performed their annual guy/girl dance. The Shamrocks will finally wrap up their season on February 20th at state cheer.

Freshman Mya Langan concluded, "Throughout the year, the team has only grown. In the summer, we went from dropping our flyers in stunts to getting them up with ease. Our routines have had some ups and downs, but we have grown as a team and overcome challenges."



Photo Courtesy Sarah Langan

The Scotus cheer team celebrates with their awards following the Heartland Competition on January 11th. The cheerleaders were class champions, and they scored 1st and 5th on their Non-Tumbling and Gameday routines, respectively.



Sydney Stuart / Rock Bottom Staff

Sophomore Karsyn Bridger and juniors Naomi Robertson and Kennedy Krueger hit a move at the end of their dance during Jam the Gym on February 1st. They performed the same routine that earned first place at the Heartland Competition.



Kate Hoffman / Yearbook Staff

Senior Camila Carrizales strikes a motion in the cheerleaders' Non-Tumbling Dance at Jam the Gym on February 1st. The Shamrocks are preparing for state cheer in Grand Island on February 20th.

February Favorites

DAYS TO LOVE

By Josie Rother, Jillian Rusher, and Jacqueline Stoner

GROUNDHOG DAY

February 2nd

Groundhog Day is a holiday unique to the U.S. and Canada. According to news organization KQED, thousands watch on this day in Punxsutawney, Pennsylvania as a groundhog designated "Punxsutawney Phil" emerges from his burrow. If he sees his shadow, it means there will be six more months of winter, and if not, an early spring. Some swear by this tradition, though unsurprisingly, it has historically had a less than 40% accuracy rate. Some little-known facts about Groundhog Day are that it originated from a similar German tradition involving badgers and shares a name with one of the top-voted comedy movies of all time.



SUPERBOWL SUNDAY

February 8th

According to the Nielsen Data Center, 127.7 million Americans tuned into the Superbowl game last year. Among Scotus students, 82% say they watch the superbowl, but their reasonings for tuning in are varied. Whether they are there for the football, half-time show, or the iconic commercials, Scotus students have decided overall, the Superbowl is an event worth watching. The popularity of the Superbowl is not only attributed to being a great opportunity for entertainment, but it is a time the average student at Scotus says they spend with family and friends. Who do you think will win: the Seattle Seahawks or the New England Patriots?

NATIONAL PIZZA DAY

February 9th

Whether the pizza's crust is stuffed full with mozzarella cheese or pressed as thin as a cracker, a person can always count on the greasy goodness of a freshly baked pizza. In Columbus, there is an abundance of pizza-making restaurants. Some of the crowd favorites among the student body include Domino's, Casey's, and, with almost 50% of the school's favor, Godfather's.

Seventh grade student Nora Beller is among the students who believe Godfather's Pizza to be the best in town.

"Godfather's pizza is just so rich and whole. It's the best example of pizza at its finest," Beller said. "Also, Godfathers was founded in Omaha, so it's kind of like supporting a local business."

The basic formula of pizza crust, sauce, cheese, and toppings allows for endless possibilities. When it comes to pizza crust, the student body decided stuffed crust was superior, but what truly makes a person's pizza order unique is the combination of toppings they choose. Some prefer all the vegetables they can eat, every type of meat available, or a plain classic cheese. It is easy to agree on veggies, meat, and cheese being allowed to be on pizzas, but it seems as a school, it was difficult to agree if pineapple belongs on pizza. Overall, 70% of the school decided the prickly fruit should not be allowed on pizza, leaving the other 30% in the minority with their beloved pineapple.

HUG DAY

February 12th

According to Bluecross Blueshield, there are numerous effects to someone who receives a 10 second hug. It releases feel-good hormones like oxytocin. This hormone is often called the "love hormone"; it fights stress chemicals and helps lower blood pressure. One study showed hugs can lower chances of catching the common cold. Participants who received more hugs had fewer severe symptoms and shorter colds. Family therapist Virginia Satir says for basic survival, a person needs about 4 hugs per day but for growth should strive for 10 or more per day. Don't carry stress about, hug it out.



VALENTINE'S DAY

February 14th



- Four states have a city named "Valentine": Arizona, Nebraska, Texas, and Virginia.

- Around 500 A.D., Pope Gelasius declared February 14th as St. Valentine's Day.

- Alexander Graham Bell applied for a patent for the telephone on Valentine's Day 150 years ag

(thepioneerwoman.com) (localpulse.com).

PRESIDENTS DAY

February 16th

- President's Day was established in 1885 in honor of President George Washington's birthday.



- The White House was once called the President's Palace, President's House, and Executive Mansion. Teddy Roosevelt, the 26th U.S. president, officially named it the White House in 1901.

- Abraham Lincoln, the 16th U.S. president, was the tallest president to date, standing at 6 feet 4 inches! On the other hand, James Madison, the 4th U.S. president, was the shortest, measuring a whole foot shorter at 5 feet 4 inches.

(metropolisresort.com) (kids.nationalgeographic.com)

RANDOM ACTS OF KINDNESS DAY

February 17th

Random Acts of Kindness Day celebrated its 30th anniversary last year, having been started in the United States by the Random Acts of Kindness Organization in 1995. Their hope is this day will be a reminder of how small acts of kindness can make an immense impact on others.

There are many reasons to participate in this holiday according to the organization–acts of kindness have been proven to release chemicals in the brain that decrease stress, pain, and self-doubt, and they can also improve physical health through decreasing blood pressure and the risk of heart problems.



Many students at Scotus have experienced these effects first-hand through performing acts of kindness year-round, including junior Caroline Rickert.

"I give compliments [as acts of kindness] because I know how much they mean to me," Rickert said.

Freshman Noah Miller also tries to show kindness in his daily life.

"[I perform acts of kindness by] smiling, saying hello, holding doors, and seizing any opportunity I can to help someone out," Miller stated.

Of course, the joy acts of kindness bring to others is far more rewarding than their personal benefits.

Freshman Maggie Holmstedt is grateful for the kindness she has experienced from other Scotus students.

"[I have been impacted by acts of kindness through] joining one act. The seniors were so welcoming, and same with the musical. They let you be yourself and are such good role models. I'm going to miss them so much next year," Holmstedt explained.

ASH WEDNESDAY

February 18th

Ash Wednesday marks the first day of Lent for Catholics around the world. It is celebrated by receiving ashes on the forehead at Mass that represent our need for repentance. Additionally, Catholics aged 14 and up are required to abstain from meat, and those who are 18 to 59 are required to fast. According to Catholic.us, some fun facts about Ash Wednesday are that the ashes are made out of palms from Palm Sunday, it is not a holy day of obligation, and non-Catholics can receive ashes too.



LOVE YOUR PET DAY

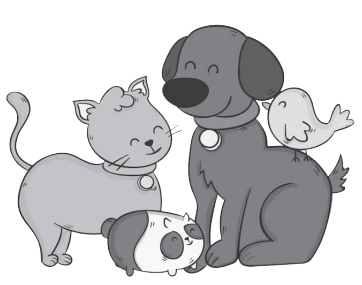
February 20th

If a person needs a reason to give their cat an extra cuddle or play a little more with their dog, February 20th is the day for them. February 20th is National Love Your Pet Day, and with 82% of Scotus students having a pet, it seems like a day worth celebrating.

Eighth grader Emma Ogle is best friends with her cat, Franki.

"She is my whole world! I got her early this school year, and I spend every day with her. I love giving her cuddles and playing with her! She is the best cat in the world—a mix of calm and sweet. I love her to the moon and back," Ogle said.

According to the National Institute of Health, having a pet has been shown to decrease levels of cortisol (a stress-related hormone) and lower blood pressure. Having a pet as a companion can reduce loneliness and boost overall mood. Love your pet every day, but on February 20th, give your pet an extra squeeze, a couple treats, or a little belly rub.



Scotus staff share milestones with students

By Ainsley Kuhl

With the month of love here, there has been plenty of love roaming around the school air, and much has come from teachers' exciting news. Many of the teachers have experienced big steps in their personal lives with a significant other. In the past two years, there have been 2 weddings, 4 babies, and 1 engagement.

Teaching is a unique job because students are so curious about their teachers. At a normal corporate workplace with twenty to thirty coworkers, it is not as big of a deal to share news. At a school with 387 students, it is a greater deal to tell all of them about these announcements. As a teacher, especially a young one, students are interested in knowing all about teachers' relationship status.

This school year, campus minister Cecilia Brichacek and school counselor Jill Kassmeier both had their weddings, campus minister Molly Wallish and math teacher Matt Wallish had their baby, business teacher Cody Mroczek and his wife announced they are currently expecting, and art teacher Clyde Ericson announced his engagement.

Ericson recently put a ring on his now fiance's finger. To ask her, he put the ring in a box of a game they were going to play and told her to open it. He then got down on one knee and popped the question. After he told his family, he then took the news to Facebook.

"I wanted the students to find out, but it didn't take much effort on my part to make the news known," Ericson said. "The reaction was completely positive. There was a lot of surprise; I assume for a variety of reasons."

Kassmeier's wedding was January 3rd at St. Bonaventure's.

"One of the challenges [with my job] is Columbus is a smaller town, and I do appreciate boundaries and privacy because I like to keep my personal life within my family," Kassmeier said. "Over the years, it's something I've learned to not worry about as much!"

Though Kassmeier changed her last name from Brichacek, there still is a Brichacek here at school: Cecilia Brichacek, who was recently married this school year.

"The way I view it is Mrs. Brichacek took her husband's last name…not mine," Kassmeier said. "Being a Brichacek was the best, and I'm so happy she gets to have that last name!"

Brichacek's wedding was September 26th, at St. Thomas Aquinas Newman Center in Lincoln. Brichacek has a public Instagram account where she posts about her faith as a young adult and sharing it with her husband.

"Growing in faith in context of the sacrament of marriage is the greatest blessing," Brichacek said. "It's a dynamic built on service towards each other, and in that selfless space, we serve the Lord as we love each other."

Business teacher and track, basketball, and cross country coach Cody Mroczek and his wife, dance team and track coach Sydney Mroczek, had their wedding in the summer of 2024. Though they coach different activities during the fall and winter, they are able to coach track together in the spring.

"Being a three-sport coach year-round, sometimes I don't get to see her as much, so being able to see her everyday after school during track season is enjoyable," Mroczek said. "It's even more fun that we are both passionate about what we do and love seeing kids find success."

Mroczek and his wife will soon be starting their journey as parents.

"I look forward to building a relationship with my kids and watching them grow throughout the years and am excited for all the memories I will be able to make along the way," Mroczek said.

The young Scotus staff continues to be a big family.

"The people (friends, boyfriends, girlfriends, family…etc.) you want in your corner should defend, encourage, and challenge you," Kassmeier said.



Photo Courtesy Jill Kassmeier

School counselor Jill Kassmeier and her husband Mitch kneel during Mass at their wedding on January 3rd at St. Bonaventure's Church. Both Kassmeiers are originally from Schuyler.



Photo Courtesy Cecilia Brichacek

Campus minister Cecilia Brichacek and her husband Jordon celebrate on their wedding day on September 26th at St. Thomas Aquinas Newman Center in Lincoln. They also just announced they are expecting a baby in October.

"The guy should pay for everything... It is the respectful thing to do."

Gavin Beiermann SENIOR

"Not many guys do these small gestures for their partners anymore. They don't realize that it is not the flowers that matter, but the gesture itself."

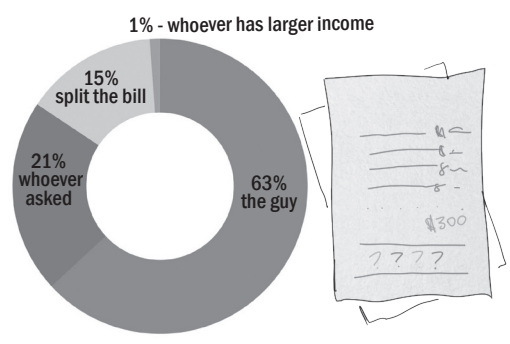
Maia Foreman JUNIOR

"[I love] listening to each other's music and when they say, 'This made me think of you.'"

Salette Adame JUNIOR

"Homemade gifts show they value your time, and they don't even need to be super expensive."

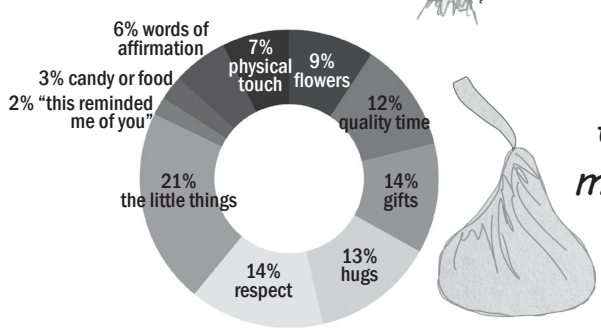
Kaydence Wennekamp FRESHMAN



Who should pay?



90% of ladies like to receive flowers



What is the most meaningful romantic gesture?

"I don't think there is anything wrong with how [dating culture] is or was. Dating is not about society, it's about the couple."

Noah Miller 8TH GRADE

Scotus defines dating culture

By Isabella Chasteen

With all of its cheesy Valentine cards, cheap heart-shaped chocolates, and extravagant flower deliveries, February is known as the month of love. The pressing matter is: what do the students of Scotus Central Catholic find romantic?

A survey was sent out to the student body asking a range of questions: "What is your love language?", "Do you like receiving flowers?", "Who should pay on a date?", and more.

By the end of the survey period, the Scotus student body made their views of courting culture clear and voiced their many opinions on dating.

When asked, "Who should pay for a date?", one choice won by a landslide. 113 individuals, or 63.5% of participants, agreed on the guy footing the bill.

"I think the man should lead and protect a woman; he should treat her like she is everything to him. It should not be on her to pay," junior Trevor Niedbalski said.

Although this was the overall mindset, Scotus is still a high school with few financially independent individuals.

"It is hard to expect a young guy in high school to pay for everything, especially if they are involved in sports and do not have a steady job," junior Haley Van Diest said.

The women of Scotus were then questioned on their opinion of receiving flowers. Out of the 124 voters, 113 said receiving flowers was something they enjoy. Most of the girls view flowers as a romantic and kind gesture that shows the care between the couple.

"Not many guys do these small gestures for their partners anymore. They don't realize it is not the flowers that matter, but the gesture itself," junior Maia Foreman said.

Though this seemed to be the more popular sentiment, 10% of lady respondents disagreed.

"I do not keep [flowers] alive and am not a huge fan," freshman Jaci Harrington said.

When all students were asked, "What is better for a dance: going with friends or with a date?", the overall sentiment from the 178 respondents was in favor of going with friends rather than a date.

"If I could pick both, I would. If you have never dated someone, it could be awkward, but if you are good friends, it could be fun. Going with your friends can be fun because it would be less stressful, and you are more likely to be relaxed and have fun," seventh grader Gia Legenza said.

This choice did not win by a landslide. Going with a date had 30.9% of votes, and going with friends had the remaining 69.1%.

When asked about overall dating culture and whether or not it should change, there were a range of responses, most of which displayed Scotus' traditional views.

"There is too much pressure around dating; instead of getting to know someone calmly, there is a sense where the person feels they need to impress their date," junior Connor Cameron said.

Students believe dating culture has become more impersonal and rushed, which leaves little room for actual relationship building and causes a loss of authenticity.

"Dating culture has had a downfall recently with people creating insanely high standards for one another and getting the 'ick' over the tiniest of things. Nobody should settle for less, but we should think on whether or not we're meeting the standards we hold towards others," freshman Evalett Sandoval said.

From the survey results, Scotus' preference for the traditional style of dating and men paying for the meal and buying flowers is extremely apparent. So, guys, buy the special girl in your life those heart-shaped chocolates and big bouquets. She, most likely, will enjoy them, and if she does not, she will appreciate the thought.

Speech season develops young team

By Sydney Stuart

While the students at Scotus Central Catholic hustle around for different winter sports and activities, the speech team waits patiently for their season as they meticulously perfect their performances in the months before their first meet.

The team started preparing at the beginning of November and spent all of December and winter break getting ready for their upcoming tournaments. Students chose their events to compete in and either wrote a speech or used a script to compose their speech.

This year the team has 16 members, 8 of whom are freshmen. Members are coached by head coach Melanie Mimick and assistant coach Cassie Kouma. Kouma is a first-year theology teacher at Scotus. This is Mimick's 10th year coaching speech and Kouma's 1st year.

Sophomore Celeste Sucha has been on the speech team for 2 years; this year she is in Oral Interpretation of Drama (OID).

"[Ms. Kouma] is very helpful and ready to help with anything. Although she is new, she learns quickly and is eager to learn from Ms. Mimick," Sucha said.

Overall, the Shamrocks will attend 8 meets before districts where they will compete for the chance to attend the state tournament.

Senior Evan Pavlik joined the team his junior year of high school. This year he is competing in Serious Prose and OID.

"[I am most looking forward to] districts; I'm excited to compete for a state spot and see everyone's work evolve over the year," Pavlik said. "We don't have the ability to win every meet, but I think we can show schools we are still good."

On January 17th, the team debuted various varsity speeches at the Raymond Central Meet. Senior Seth Drueppel was one of the only individual medalists, taking home 3rd in Extemporaneous Speaking while an OID group took 7th. This is Drueppel's 4th year competing in Extemporaneous Speaking.

"It was good to see the team together. With such a younger team, there are bound to be hiccups, but it also means extraordinary room for growth. I believe this is the closest-knit speech team I've been on, and it's only the start of the season," Drueppel said.

Following their start to the season at Raymond, the 'Rocks hosted their own tournament, the Shamrock Invite, on Saturday, January 24th.There, seniors Seth Drueppel, Evan Pavlik, and Jacqueline Stoner led the way for the Shamrocks, placing top 3 in their respective events.

Stoner placed third in Persuasive Speaking and has been in speech since her eighth grade year. Last year she picked up Extemporaneous Speaking.

"We faced a lot of challenges at the home tournament, including poor weather conditions, multiple teams dropping out, and half our team being sick or unable to attend. Considering those circumstances, I think we did really well. We might not have placed as a team, but individually, we were still able to gain valuable experience that will help us improve for future meets," Stoner said.



Mia Fehringer / Yearbook Staff

Senior Seth Drueppel gestures during his Poetry on Saturday, January 24th at the Shamrock Invite. Drueppel was named Extemporaneous champion at the Scotus meet.

Their next competition is in Aurora on February 7th.

Senior Ava Bettenhausen has competed in speech all 4 years of high school and attended the state meet twice. She competes in Entertainment and OID.

"I am looking forward to districts because state is on the line there. I would really like to go because it is my last year. Districts can really prove hard work pays off. Our goal is to get as many people as we can to succeed, whether that is going to state or finding an event they really enjoy," Bettenhausen concluded.



Mia Fehringer / Yearbook Staff

Senior Evan Pavlik performs his Serious Prose "Touch" at the Shamrock Invite on Saturday, January 24th. This is Pavlik's second year in Speech.



Sydney Stuart / Rock Bottom Staff

Senior Jacqueline Stoner presents her Persuasive Speech at the Shamrock Invite on Saturday, January 24th. Stoner placed 3rd in Persuasive at the home tournament.

Dance dives into state preparation

By Audrey Stoner

With the promise of state competitions carried in alongside the party hats and confetti of the new year, the Shamrock dance team has been busier than ever working for a place on the coveted podium.

The Shamrocks kicked off the new year with the first competition of the season on January 11th the Heartland Competition at Standing Bear High School in Lincoln. They came in third overall after debuting their future state routine.

Sadie Matulka is one of four juniors who joined the dance team last year.

"As a first-year team and for our first competition, we did amazing. We should all be proud of ourselves for getting third out of seven," Matulka said.

Josie Rother is among the dance team's seven seniors and shares the title of co-captain with junior Tanner Schultz and senior Lily Lancaster.

"As a first year program, Heartland was our debut into the high school dance competition world. Being up there with teams that have dominated the state competition for many years was a great boost for us as we prepare for state," Rother said.

The teams that came out ahead of the Shamrocks were two of Nebraska's best high school dance teams, Grand Island Central Catholic and Wahoo. Grand Island Central Catholic earned first at state dance last year in jazz and pom, and Wahoo placed third in jazz and second in pom.

Preparation for this year's state competition has been a theme since the dancers' first practice, fueling countless hours of work and many high hopes this last month before the event. The dance team will travel to the Heartland Event Center in Grand Island on February 21st to perform their pom routine in the early evening.

"We are breaking our routine down piece-by-piece and cleaning everything up, making sure we all look the same, and making sure we know all of the counts," Schultz commented. "I feel confident about it and that it will do well."

In the meantime, the Shamrocks have filled their time with a dad-daughter dance event at Scotus on January 20th and Columbus High School's annual Jam the Gym fundraiser on the 24th.

Freshman Josie Niedbalski enjoyed the break the dad-daughter dance provided from the flawlessness demanded by the team's state routine.

"It was super fun to do a dance and not have to be perfect," Niedbalski said. "My dad was super excited to perform… he and I had so much fun dancing together."

The Shamrocks were back to state preparation soon after, though, as they practiced for Jam the Gym on February 1st. Jam the Gym is an annual showcase that gives both local cheer and dance teams and younger dancers from area studios an opportunity to present their routines without the pressure of competition. The event marked the second public unveiling of the dance team's hard work since the new year, and it was also attended by the Scotus cheer team.

Hannah Heinrich joins Rother as one of the seven seniors on the dance team.

"We have worked on our state routine for the past 7 months, so we were all excited to get to show it off for the Columbus community!" Heinrich said.

Tensions and nerves remain high as the dance team faces their biggest chance yet to prove their merit at state dance on February 21st. However, the countless hours of practice and building apprehension have only served to unite the team's members instead of dividing them.

"The team is very positive, and I am so thankful for each girl on [it]!" junior dance team member Maia Foreman concluded. "Joining has been the best decision I've made. From friendships to valuable memories made, I couldn't ask for a better team!"



Kate Hoffman / Yearbook Staff

Junior Tanner Schultz lunges into a move at Columbus High School's annual Jam the Gym showcase on February 1st. Schultz joined the team with the role of co-captain last fall.



Kate Hendricks / Rock Bottom Staff

Senior dance team co-captain Lily Lancaster strikes a pose with her dad at the end of the team's dad-daughter performance on January 20th. The event was the Shamrocks' only break between back-to-back performances of their state routine on January 10th and February 1st.

Students split over Winter Formal

By Jacqueline Stoner

Students and staff alike braved icy roads and frigid weather to attend this year's Winter Formal on January 17th. Community members joined them in Memorial Hall at 7:45 pm for the coronation of the Winter Formal king and queen, after which students flocked to the cafeteria to show off their dance moves.

In the week leading up to Winter Formal, four girls and four boys from the senior class were nominated by their classmates to be members of the Winter Formal court. From there, the rest of the student body was tasked with selecting the king and queen. At the coronation, students, staff, and community members all watched in eager anticipation as the members of the court lined up to hear who would become the Winter Formal king and queen. This year's winners were seniors Aiden Meers and Ava Bettenhausen.

"I was pretty shocked [to hear I won]!" Bettenhausen stated. "I was super happy, and I was surprised to hear the loud cheers because I didn't think I had that many people rooting for me! It was definitely a highlight for me, and I am so glad I got to experience it."

Meers had a reaction similar to Bettenhausen's.

"I was very surprised. I wasn't expecting to be on court, let alone win," Meers explained.

While Meers and Bettenhausen posed for photos, students headed down to the dance floor where they were met with several changes new to this year. These incuded the decision to use the same DJ from Homecoming and shortening the length of the dance to only two hours.

Many students approved of these modifications, including senior and Winter Formal court member Eva Foreman.

"I thought the dance was better than it has been in the past. The DJ actually played requested songs, and there was a good amount of people on the dance floor!" Foreman said.

However, some felt the dance fell short of expectations. Freshman Harper Spale was among those who held this opinion.

"I thought [the dance overall] was fun, but the music could've been better, and it felt really short," Spale explained.

Senior and Winter Formal court member Gavin Beiermann was also disappointed with his experience at the dance.

"[The dance] was not terrible, but I noticed a lot of people did not show up, and it felt empty," Beiermann said.

In total, 128 Scotus students attended Winter Formal this year, which amounts to 53% of the high school student body. This low number is due in part to a growing trend over the past few years for some students to skip Winter Formal. Many feel it is a far cry from the excitement of Homecoming while others believe they have better things to do with their time.

Senior Brayden Fleming was among those who opted not to participate.

"[I skipped Winter Formal] because it's the least fun dance we have. It needs to be an informal dance, and then I think a lot more people would go," Fleming shared.

Junior Trevor Niedbalski also expressed frustration with the current Winter Formal setup.

"The school won't listen to students' requests for something different, so the numbers [of students attending Winter Formal] are going to drop," Niedbalski stated.

However, math teacher and Winter Formal organizer Sam Rose has an entirely different stance.

"Just like anything else, [Winter Formal] is a voluntary event. Students don't have to come. It's on a weekend. It was cold. Kids are busy. If you have other interests, that's totally fine, but I think it's a good opportunity to give those who want to be there something they can enjoy," Rose explained.

That being said, students' opinions do matter to Rose, and he hopes they know the details for Winter Formal are not set in stone.

"I am always open to suggestions on how to improve [Winter Formal] next year," Rose concluded. "If those who skip it have a different idea of how it should be done or what can be added, then I'm always down for suggestions, and I hope to see you next year."



Caroline Rickert / Yearbook Staff

The Winter Formal candidates pose for a photo after the coronation on January 17th. Members of the court included seniors Eva Foreman, Gavin Beiermann, queen Ava Bettenhausen, king Aiden Meers, Devin Riedmiller, Camila Carrizales, Andy Padilla-Arrieta, and Mia Fehringer (not pictured).



Jacqueline Stoner / Rock Bottom Staff

Freshmen Calan Windedahl, Layne Hollmann, and Noah Sjuts take part in a conga line at the Winter Formal dance on January 17th. In total, 128 Scotus students attended the dance this year.



Jacqueline Stoner / Rock Bottom Staff

Senior Andy Padilla-Arrieta creates a game of limbo using his tie while at the Winter Formal dance on January 17th. The dance was held in the Scotus cafeteria from 8 to 10 pm this year.



Jacqueline Stoner / Rock BottomStaff

Freshmen Samantha Karges and Kate Sell participate in a line dance together at the Winter Formal dance on January 17th. One change to the dance this year was to use the same DJ from Homecoming.

Job shadowing continues to guide students

By Ainsley Kuhl

After finishing high school, the next step in life is usually college. You pick a college and a major, but half way through the year decide the major you picked is not what you hoped it would be. You wasted half of a year only to figure out it was not something you wanted to do.

Making the decision of a future job can be challenging. There is a worry of making the wrong decision and ending up doing something you do not love for the rest of your life and wasting money on it.

Job shadowing, according to Texas State University, is defined as taking your chosen career interest for a test drive by "shadowing", or conducting a site visit with a professional in the field.

Throughout the years, many students have had the chance to job shadow. So far this year, there have been around 40 different placements students have attended. Compared to years past, this is right on track.

Senior Will Sueper has taken advantage of job shadowing by visiting the hospital five times in various different areas.

"[Job shadowing] helped me gauge where I might see myself in the future and confirm my passion for medicine," Sueper said. "I encourage everyone going into the healthcare field or any other field to see what it entails."

The most popular place students have gone to visit this year has been the Columbus Community Hospital, but there have been many other companies students have visited, such as BD construction, Behlen's, Trouba Law, and more.

Career counselor Bridget McPhillips organizes these opportunities for students. Because she has been helping with this for many years, she has heard of many unique experiences.

"I had a student who went to the National Weather Service located in Valley, Nebraska," McPhillips said. "I thought it was so cool because she was interested in meteorology and the station was fairly close to home."

With job shadowing, students are able to decide if they are certain in pursuing the job they plan to have in the future. Some people may end up changing their plan after a job shadow because they realize their original pick is not fit for them.

"When you go and job shadow your interests, you are coming back with valuable information," McPhillips said.

The benefits of job shadowing include experiencing a work day, getting insight into what the job may include, asking questions about the position, and giving the student a better idea of what decision to make.

Junior Grace Hamling shadowed a genetic counselor at Nebraska Hematology Oncology clinic in Lincoln this past November.

"The experience and knowledge I gained will help me when I have a job in the future, and it will look good on applications," Hamling said.

With the help of McPhillips, all students have a chance to go somewhere and observe their future career interests. If a student wishes to schedule a visit, they can talk with Mrs. McPhillips, and she will guide them through the process.

"A goal of mine is for every graduating student to have participated in at least one job shadow," McPhillips said. "It is an experience they should have before graduating and having to do it all themselves."



Josie Rother / Rock Bottom Staff

Senior Josie Rother poses for a photo at Beaver Creek Veterinary Services in Albion on January 5th with Dr. Cody Gulbrandson. At this job shadow, she helped with vaccinations and observed the day-to-day life at the clinic.

Stranger Things: still strange, but not good

By Lydia Dostal

It's New Year's Eve, one hour to midnight. After two hours of being glued to your couch cushions, you watch as the credits roll on the show that you have followed for ten years. Staring at the screen in silence, you turn to your friend and say, "That's it?" This was the experience for many a month ago as they finished the final episode of the iconic Netflix series *Stranger Things.*

The fifth and final season of *Stranger Things* was finally released 1,279 days after the conclusion of season four. The season was wrapped up in a series of three volumes released on November 26th, December 25th, and December 31st of last year. Dedicated fans awaited the new installment of the show, eagerly anticipating the end of the series. With such a long wait time, viewers had high expectations. Unfortunately, although it lived up to the hype in some aspects, countless people, including me, were highly disappointed. The *Stranger Things* finale failed to provide a satisfying conclusion to the beloved show.

One problem that contributed to the failure of this season was the drop in acting quality and emotional weight compared to previous seasons. The core of *Stranger Things* has always been the relationships between the characters and how the friendships they formed helped them to overcome the evil forces they were up against. As the show gained popularity and became the global phenomenon it is now, it seems the writers became lazy with their character development, and the actors simply stopped caring about their performance. While watching, I found myself laughing during some of the intended emotional moments due to the lack of feeling being portrayed by the actors. This lackluster showing from the cast heavily distracted me from enjoying the adventures of the characters.



matthasanopinion.com

The original actors of the Stranger Things cast assemble as their characters for a promotional photo. The plot of the show centers around these five as they attempt to overcome darkness and save the world.

Along with the disappointing acting, this season felt as if it had extremely low stakes. There were multiple instances that built up to what was supposed to be a dramatic moment, only for everything to be resolved at the last minute with no harm done. As a viewer, this was frustrating because it seemed as if nothing big would ever happen to move the story forward. The writers made choices that felt "safe", almost as if they were too afraid to make a creative move that could potentially upset their audience. This made for a boring viewing experience as I knew that, ultimately, there was no real conflict to worry about.

The writing problems present this season make sense when looking at the attitudes of the creators,the Duffer Brothers. In the past, there has been controversy following the pair as it has been speculated that they stole the entire script of the show from their college roommate and coined it as their own. This checks out when listening to their interviews, in which they speak of the show as a cash cow instead of a passion project, even stating that the only way they would return to *Stranger Things* was if they were broke in ten years. Personally, this is not how I would speak about a show that was my life's work for the last decade. This lack of care demonstrated by the show's own developers serves as a reasoning for why the last season seemed so devoid of life.

Of course, there were plenty of good things to say about this season, and many viewers actually thought it was the perfect ending. Since the show was released in 2016, fans have devoted themselves to the characters and their world. The last episode provided a large portion of the audience with the closure they were craving from the show they spent so many years loving. Even though the emotional substance and acting were lacking for me, many found the sentimental moments meaningful. Also, it cannot be denied that the set designs and special effects were impressive and made for a visually beautiful show.

The sad conclusion to *Stranger Things* left me and many others wishing for more. Hopefully, this failure will do some good by serving as an example of how not to end a series, so future shows can avoid this fate.

Join the Nebrasketball bandwagon

By Kate Hendricks

"I'm gonna pass out!","Bang-a-rang!", and "Got it!" are all common phrases said by Nebraska men's basketball announcer Kent Pavelka this year during their close game matchups.

Husker men's basketball has been the topic of many sports conversations. This year, Nebraska men's basketball team's coach Fred Hoiberg has taken not only his team, but also his coaching to another level. For the first time in program history, they started their season 20-0. They have led the BigTen in many stats while being ranked the highest in sixty years. While the team has struggled on the road in past seasons, this year has been different with big key contributions from many of their star players.

Week after week, the team continues to make plays, translating into wins. A team that has never won an NCAA tournament game will have the chance to make it happen this year.

Nebraska basketball has been the best in a long time, and maybe forever, because of this season. As a result of their success, fans who have never watched previous seasons of Nebraska men's basketball are tuning in to watch. Pinnacle Bank Arena, the home of Husker basketball, is sold out at almost every home game. I think it is great for Nebraska athletics to have many different popular sports that have seen success. Of course, many people root for this team mainly because of their success, but why not have more people join the bandwagon? The more people cheering the team on, the better success in the post season!

With all of their success, the spotlight is put on the team and the awards that could be won at the end of the year. Could Reink Mast win player of the year? Could Fred Hoiberg win coach of the year? For the first time, players are getting recognized, and I think it is great to have them finally be put on the map.

Many fans can be found buying and purchasing shirts with various puns and sayings on them. Common ones found throughout PBA include, "We're good at basketball now", "Fear the Fred", and many statements made by Pavelka.

The sea of red rushed onto the court after the Huskers defeated Michigan State at home on January 2nd. Fans after the game were interviewed. A common theme in those interviews was how long they have waited for this day to come. Many fans have had season tickets for years even when the team won 10 games or fewer. They are glad not only to be called a "volleyball" school, but also now a "basketball" school, too.

On January 27th the team faced the biggest game of their entire season, number 3 ranked Michigan. A few of the Huskers' best players and leaders, Reink Mast and Braden Frager, did not step on the court. Mast was out with illness and Frager with an injury from the game prior. The Huskers battled the whole game and had the lead at halftime but ultimately fell to the Wolverines 72-75. Although it was the first loss of the season, it made fans excited to see how successfully they played without their top players.

With the high-success rate of most of the games this season, will it cause the team to choke in the tournament? A close to undefeated record always comes with the pressure and the thought of losing. Especially after the loss of the volleyball team in the tournament, I can see this being a thought placed in many fans' minds. This might be the best basketball team to come out of Nebraska in 130 years, but in the end, can they achieve their first win in the tournament and not choke?

So, what if the team chokes? What could be better than thousands of Husker fans cheering for a sport that has seen success this year? Even if the team loses in the tournament or more games in the future, it can still be said that this was one of the greatest or even the best men's basketball team to come out of Nebraska athletics, and that is worth all the hype! So tune in on February 7th to watch the Huskers take on Rutgers!



huskers.com

Freshman Braden Frager drives in for a layup against a player from Michigan State. The Huskers defeated the ranked Spartans 58-56 on January 2nd, and the crowd rushed the court.

Wins overshadow NE volleyball's big loss

By Kennedy Krueger

All of Nebraska was devastated on December 14th when the Husker volleyball team's perfect season came to an end after the loss to Texas A&M in the Elite Eight. The Huskers battled through five sets before falling short to the Aggies. After going undefeated all season, it was an understatement to say fans were in shock by the loss. This was going to be Nebraska's year. Texas A&M went on to be the national champions, playing games the Huskers should have been in. If Nebraska would have pulled through the regional game victorious, they would have easily moved on to the championship game and won.

Even though this ending to the season was detrimental to the team and fans, this loss was actually the only negative outcome from the season, considering all the Husker wins off the court.

The Husker volleyball team does so much more than play volleyball. They are actively involved in their community and are great role models to young girls who love volleyball. The way they give back to their volleyball community while providing a positive example is through their volleyball camps. These camps are not only for superstar volleyball players; anyone is welcome to attend. At these camps, girls learn specific skills such as attacking, setting, passing, and serving. Aspiring athletes can also attend camps where they can have a wider variety and practice all of the elements. Many girls look up to the Nebraska volleyball players, so attending a camp led by them can inspire these girls to continue playing the sport they love.

The team also had their first season with Dani Busboom Kelly as their head coach. Taking on the position previously held by John Cook for 25 seasons, Kelly had big shoes to fill. Cook led the Huskers to four national championships and multiple BigTen championships, creating a lasting legacy. Despite all odds, Kelly more than exceeded the expectations for a new head coach. In her first season with Nebraska, she led them through an infallible season. She also became the first new coach in BigTen volleyball history to win the conference championship in her inaugural season. A former Husker volleyball player herself, she has been in her players' shoes. Although this season did not end in the grand finale everyone was hoping for, Kelly's coaching set a high bar for seasons to come.

Something unique about the Husker volleyball players is their tight bond with one another. From their interactions on social media to the way they play with each other, the players' friendships are obvious. The Nebraska volleyball girls have a team dynamic like no other team. Because of the team's genuine connection, they play well together. Their growth from the beginning of the season to where they ended was astronomical. The closer they grew as friends, the more seamlessly they played together. The Husker players' chemistry on the court is undeniable.

The Nebraska girls may not have finished their season as national champions, but they have many other wins to celebrate. The Husker players have demonstrated leadership and knowledge to young athletes who look to them as role models at volleyball camps. Not only are they helping girls to improve in their technique, but they are also inspiring them to pursue their dreams by playing the sport they love. The Huskers began this season with a new coach and played better than ever, beginning right where they left off last season. Some of this may also be accredited to the team's bond on and off the court. The rise in the Huskers' confidence became even more visible as the players improved throughout the season. Maybe next season will be Nebraska volleyball's chance to add another national championship to their list of wins, but that will not be all that matters.



profoobtall.network.com

The Husker volleyball players celebrate after winning a point against the Aggies. Nebraska fell to Texas A&M in the Elite Eight game after battling for 5 sets on December 14th.

Shamrocks Lean into Lent






Rock Bottom

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Senior men continue Mr. Shamrock tradition

By Jillian Rusher

Some schools have talent shows, others have pageants, but Scotus takes the best of both worlds. The Mr. Shamrock Pageant has been a part of Scotus tradition for many years. This year, eight senior men competed for the Mr. Shamrock crown on March 1st. This was the 15th Mr. Shamrock contest held.

The contestants prepare a dance leading up to the pageant and then kicked off the evening by performing it for the audience and judges.

Senior Aiden Meers' favorite part of the evening was doing the dance together with all of the boys.

"We were slightly embarrassing ourselves, but we were doing it together. It was also a very diverse group of people who don't really get to hang out. Getting to know them better was awesome," Meers said.

The first judged category is an interview portion. The senior men answer questions from, "What is your most memorable moment at Scotus?," to "If you could invent anything in the world, what would it be?"

Senior Seth Drueppel said the colors that represent him best are red, white, and blue to resemble his patriotism.

"[Mr. Shamrock] is a great, long-standing tradition. Helping restart it in my underclassman years and then get to be a part of it is truly something special," Drueppel said.

The second judged category is the contestants' talents. The candidates get to choose a talent to perform for the crowd. Some contestants, such as senior Will Sueper, sang a song and played the guitar. Others, such as Meers, senior Eli Maguire, and senior Devin Riedmiller participated in a pie eating contest. The senior men enjoyed seeing each other shine during their talents.

"My favorite part was seeing Will perform. It makes me so happy to see how talented he is," Riedmiller said.

The third and final judged category is the "catch their dream girl" outfit. This is where the contestants choose a runway outfit with an explanation on why that outfit will help them "catch their dream girl."

Maguire dressed as an airplane, stating, "Ladies, fasten your seatbelts as feelings may develop unexpectedly."

"My brother did Mr. Shamrock, and they needed more people this year. I knew it would be fun to participate," Maguire said.

After all of the excitement, the judges deliberated, and the senior men came out one last time to perform their dance for the audience.

Drueppel was announced this year's Mr. Shamrock runner-up; his talent was singing and playing guitar to "Ring of Fire." He then wore 40 ties to tell his dream girl he's ready to tie the knot.

"It is a great honor. I'm so thankful to our judges, hostesses, audience, and my fellow contestants," Drueppel said.

Senior Evan Pavlik was crowned the 2026 Mr. Shamrock. Pavlik had humorous answers for the interview, gave a performance to the song "Careless Whisper," and dressed as a Leprechaun to "catch his dream girl."

"It feels bitter sweet; this is the last time I am doing everything at Scotus, and I am not ready for it to all be over. Everyone did great, and it was all a lot of fun to do," Pavlik said.

While this contest is a light-hearted, fun event, the meaning goes deeper than senior men doing a pageant. Entry into the event is $2 or 2 canned food items. All of these proceeds go to Simon House after the event.

Riedmiller concluded, "Mr. Shamrock was really fun, but all good things come to an end. I feel honored and grateful to be able to participate in this tradition."



Isabella Chasteen / Rock Bottom Staff

Seniors Evan Pavlik, Dante Smith, Will Sueper, Eli Maguire, Devin Riedmiller, Seth Drueppel, Ryan Allen, and Aiden Meers dance in a kick line at the Mr. Shamrock pageant on March 1st. The senior men had 3 practices before the event to prepare their dance for the audience.



Isabella Chasteen / Rock Bottom Staff

Senior Evan Pavlik cheers after being named the 2026 Mr. Shamrock on March 1st. Pavlik sang "Careless Whisper" for the talent portion of the event.

Anne Frank Exhibit inspires historical awareness

Isabella Chasteen

During the first half of February, the Nebraska Institute for Holocaust Education's "Anne Frank: A History for Today" exhibit made its first stop of 2026 at Scotus Central Catholic. It was coordinated by Jane Hesbit and former Scotus teacher Becki Zanardi.

Zanardi taught at Scotus for 19 years before retiring and is now studying for her PhD in genocide studies, focusing on missing and murdered indigenous women and girls.

"Scotus is an ideal place in the Columbus area–in academic, cultural, and humanitarian senses–for this exhibit. I hope it serves as a jumping-off point for many schools to consider hosting it," Zanardi said.

The exhibit was set up in the media center for three weeks, and it incorporated the student body into its every function. Eighth grade students, since they had recently read The Diary of Anne Frank, were selected to be a part of the exhibit and trained to give tours. They were prompted to apply for the position and were then selected by exhibit officials.

"The standard to which Scotus holds students has always been impressive. It explains the draw for me to teach here a few times. I feel the eighth graders chosen understood the gravity of being trained as ambassadors for an international exhibit," Zanardi stated.

English teacher Dani Urkoski was a coordinator for the eighth graders being a part of the exhibit.

"It was really special for the eighth graders to take on a leadership role. They were called Anne Frank Scholars, and they definitely took the title on. It was cool to see them grow from the first tour they gave and how excited they were about it," Urkoski said.

While the exhibit may seem new to Columbus and Scotus, it has reached audiences in over 80 countries. The exhibit began with Otto Frank opening the Anne Frank house to the public in 1960, and in the mid-1980s, a form of the exhibit began traveling around the world. Over many years, it branched into two exhibitions, the one seen at Scotus and another titled "Let Me Be Myself–The Life Story of Anne Frank".

"Anne Frank: A History for Today" is a two-fold exhibit. On one hand, it gives gener-

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Grace Hamling / Yearbook Staff

Former Scotus teacher Becki Zanardi trains eighth grader Baylee Gilbert to lead tours for the Anne Frank Exhibit. The exhibit was at Scotus from February 2nd to the 20th.

Blakesley brings ballads and blessings

By Lillian Miller

Each year, almost a hundred students from Scotus travel 514 miles to attend the Steubenville Youth Conference for a weekend of talks from famous Catholic speakers, Mass with 20,000 people, and time for individual prayer. In addition, one impactful aspect of this conference students bring home is the music.

Last week, this music made its way to the Dowd Activity Center. Nationally recognized Catholic musician and recording artist Josh Blakesley visited Scotus. Behind microphones, flashing lights, and hype lyrics, he has a goal of making music that moves people into prayer and action. No longer a newcomer in contemporary Christian music, he and his band have performed at some of the biggest faith-based events around the country.

In fact, he has led music at four of the past five Steubenville Youth Conferences and the National Eucharistic Congress. This is what inspired junior high religion teacher Nate Tenopir to reach out to him nearly two years ago.

"His ability to create an environment, to have an opportunity to encounter the Lord in a way that we don't normally do has benefited me," Tenopir said. "So I thought, 'why not try

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2025-2026 Rock Bottom Dates
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March 5
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BLAKESLEY

to get him here and see what happens?'"

Since Blakesley is based out of Texas, the cost of his travel and performance was not something Columbus could take on alone at that time.

However, two years after reaching out to Blakesley, a friend of Tenopir's reached out because they were working to bring Blakesley to Saint Columbkille parish in Omaha, and Blakesley's team mentioned there was another school in Nebraska that had looked into it. After working with Sarah Doerneman and Columbus Catholic Youth Ministry to fund it, Tenopir arranged to bring him to Scotus' gym.

"Did I ever expect to actually get this national musician and singer into our gym in Columbus? Not really," Tenopir said. "It's one of those situations where, with prayer, God never says no. He says not yet, or I have a better plan. It was one of those not yet moments. If you trust and you hope in the Lord, if it's part of his plan, it will eventually come to fruition."

And it did. Blakesley was thrilled for the opportunity to perform at a Catholic school.

"I grew up in Catholic schools, and I think it's more important now than ever to be learning about our faith, diving into our faith, and to be in an environment where it's okay, not just okay, but encouraged to pray and to speak to the Lord," Blakesley said. "There's not enough of that environment around the country and around the world. If we really understood the gift that it is to come here every day, and if we really entered into that, I think it would be a different planet."

After the concert for students at Scotus in the afternoon, Blakesley returned to the gym in the evening to open his music up for the community. Junior Sean Smith attended both events.

"I could feel the Holy Spirit working through different people who changed their lives to have an encounter with our Lord," Smith said. "It really made me happy that people wanted to come and experience him."

The evening performance included about half an hour of Eucharistic Adoration, followed by Benediction.

"It's been a long week, so this will be the last of several events that we're doing, but a good way to wrap it up with Adoration and spending some time with Jesus," Blakesley said. "One of the beautiful things about what I get to do is that a lot of times there's a holy hour incorporated into it. I'm able to spend some time face to face with Jesus, and it allows me a moment of calm even though I feel like I'm kind of on and trying to keep people involved and engaged in what's happening. Even in the midst of that, I can let go and know that Jesus is at the center, and I can take some time to pray for my family and for what's going on. That's important to me, to be able to do that, and it's a gift," Blakesley concluded.



Lillian Miller / Rock Bottom Staff

Nationally recognized Catholic musician and recording artist Josh Blakesley performs in the Dowd Activity Center on Wednesday, February 25th. His evening performance concluded with Eucharistic Adoration and Benediction.

FRANK

al Holocaust information, and on the other it is a deep dive into Anne Frank's life, offering a new perspective on this era of history.

"It gives visitors a chance to learn about Anne Frank, not as a victim, but through the multi-faceted lens of her life. It is impressed upon us that six million Jews were murdered, which is an impossible number to grasp," Zanardi said. "The exhibit gives a face to one victim, a girl who had dreams, aspirations, goals, resilience, and strength, similar to students. Anne's story goes beyond the pages of her diary."

While the Holocaust may seem a distant and unrelated event to today's students, having the perspective of someone closer in age makes the whole event more comprehensible.

Eighth grader Addy Beller was a selected tour guide for the exhibit.

"I learned more about how terrible and horrifying the Holocaust was," Beller said.

Scotus was not the only school to benefit from the exhibit, as East Butler and Palmer schools visited and received tours from the Scotus students.

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Make common sense common again

By Lillian Miller



Didn't you see the warning label right there? Didn't you know the pan you pulled out of the oven would be hot? How can you not know the difference between your and you're? Wasn't it obvious that, no, she doesn't like you after she turned you down for the fourth time? Why don't people have common sense anymore?

GPS killed sense of direction, spellcheck dulled attention, and social media stole social skills. Common sense is essential for making safe, practical, and rapid decisions in daily life without requiring specialized knowledge. It acts as a foundational, instinctive tool for navigating social situations, solving routine problems, and avoiding unnecessary, obvious risks.

People no longer practice the essential skill of common sense because of the uprising of avoiding discomfort and an increased dependency on others.

Common sense is often learned through personal, real-world mistakes. Learning from mistakes is vital to building character and learning essential skills. However, many people avoid the discomfort of failure or practical engagement. They avoid failure due to a fear of shame, social judgment, and the painful emotional experience of not living up to expectations. This avoidance results in a lack of hands-on, foundational knowledge. This lack then leads to a dependency on services such as Google.

With the improvement of technology and AI, reliance on devices for navigation and information has replaced individual critical thinking and problem-solving skills. People who use GPS lose navigation skills because they aren't looking at a map. Therefore, they often don't know the relative location of places, even in their hometown. In addition, simple problems like running out of an ingredient are googled instead of evaluating substitution options or considering a quick store run. With the store run, however, comes having to talk to people.

Reduced social interaction, especially after the COVID-19 pandemic, is causing cognitive decline, reduced mental stimulation, and hindered emotional intelligence. Without regular social input, individuals experience increased anxiety, memory lapses, reduced empathy, and awkwardness in basic interactions. An uprising in 'social anxiety' due to fear of being judged, watched, or humiliated is resulting in a decrease in people who know how to articulate their thoughts and feelings. With communication being so vital to human interaction, reduced experience leads to this lack of common sense in social situations.

So what's the big deal with using Google and relying on GPS? Some might consider it using resources. Effectively taking advantage of these resources is excellent for the brain. It builds cognitive reserve and strengthens neural connections. There is a constant flow of new resources in the world today, improving efficiency and productivity.

Why stop using the tools we have at our disposal then?

There is a difference between using resources and depending on resources. Rather than depending on GPS to navigate to every destination, consider getting as far as you can using landmarks you recognize before turning to the navigation system. Practice mindful observation of your surroundings to form landmarks even while using GPS.

To reduce social anxiety, start small. Make that phone call, gradually expose yourself to social situations, and practice mindful listening.

It will feel good to grow awareness, solve problems, and connect with people face-to-face, using your brain to make connections without the help of technology. Expanding your general knowledge and perspective is empowering. Common sense can be common again.



Lillian Miller / Rock Bottom Staff

Surprise! Smart kids struggle too

By Jacqueline Stoner



"What's the answer to number 6?"

"Oh my gosh, I can't believe I did better than you!"

"How do you not know? Aren't you supposed to be smart?"

Yep, that's me–the smart kid. These are just a few of the comments I receive on a daily basis due to my high grade point average.

Don't get me wrong; I am incredibly grateful for the intelligence God has given me and the blessing it has been in my life. That being said, I think I speak for all smart kids when I say we are tired of being treated as if our lives are better than everyone else's. Being smart does come with benefits, but it also comes with unique challenges that it's time we as a society finally acknowledged.

First of all, it is important to note the term "smart kid" is not confined to just individuals who naturally excel in school. A smart kid may learn with ease and yet choose not to apply themself in school, or they might have no natural abilities and yet work hard enough to get good grades anyway. No matter what kind of smart kid a person is, though, they have no doubt experienced the challenges that come with being smart.

For starters, many people automatically assume being smart means a person is condescending or not any fun. This misconception, coupled with the fact that smart kids already do not fit in with their peers academically, can make it much harder for them to find friends compared to everyone else. When smart kids do find individuals to surround themselves with, those people do not always have their best interests at heart. Other students might initially act friendly, only to later reveal they simply wanted answers or extra help. This can lead smart kids to feel as if they are not valued for who they are but rather simply by what they can do for others.

On top of struggling socially, smart kids also face many unfair expectations. When it comes to grades, for example, they are not given the same grace their peers often are. Anything less than an A+ often leaves their teachers and parents both shocked and concerned—as if they are not allowed to have bad days or struggle with certain topics. Speaking of which, many seem to equate being smart to knowing everything. If a smart kid does not have the answer to a certain question, others often act surprised and question if that individual is "even smart". Similarly, when smart kids express frustration over subjects they struggle with, they are often accused of overreacting or dismissed as having nothing to worry about because they are smart. These double standards not only teach smart kids to avoid asking for help, but also encourage them to hold unnecessarily high expectations for themselves.

Besides concealing their struggles, smart kids also often downplay their successes. This is because whenever they mention an accomplishment they are proud of, others are quick to accuse them of bragging or trying to make their peers feel bad. In the meantime, however, any achievement by one of their classmates is an immediate cause for celebration—even if it means congratulating someone for doing better than a smart kid. In fact, when told, "I can't believe I did better than you!" smart kids are expected to act excited even as their own feelings about doing poorly are completely ignored.

So, the next time you find yourself longing to be smart, remember the grass is not always greener on the other side. Being smart may seem beneficial, but as with anything else, it comes with its fair share of problems, too. Instead of envying smart kids, try choosing gratitude for your unique gifts and talents instead–and give the smart kid in your life a break, because they deserve it.

Winning costs well-being in club sports

By Ainsley Kuhl



It is Friday, and your friend is wondering if you can finally hangout over the weekend. Unfortunately, you have to give them the usual answer, no, because you have another soccer tournament.

I have done this far too many times. During the fall, my week nights consist of driving to Omaha for soccer practice, and my weekends are filled with soccer games and tournaments, with many being out of state. Sometimes there even ends up being only one game, which can be a waste of a weekend. Club sports are something I feel I have to do if I want to be successful in my high school season, but is spending tons of money, time, and stress worth it?

Club sports are out of control and need to focus more on developing athletes rather than wrecking them.

In many cases, people choose to quit all other sports and focus on one activity year round because of the demands of certain sports. Though some people may have a passion for only one sport, doing multiple can give a mental break for athletes and provide a different environment with other teammates and coaches to be around.

When doing one sport, the body is working the same muscles over and over again. When someone is doing the same sport all year, there is a higher risk of injury. According to the website Children's Hospital Colorado, high school athletes who specialize in one sport are 70% more likely to gain an injury. Other sports provide the body the chance to rejuvenate itself and use different muscles.

Though club sports can have a physical effect, they can also have a mental effect on some people. When doing these extra activities, especially during the school year, many experience burnout. Practices are hard and long, and then to top it off, there is a pile of homework waiting for them at home. Anxiety and depression also come about because many teams play for recruitment purposes, so there is an overwhelming need to succeed and fear of failure.

It seems today, club sports are not even about improving skill; they have turned into playing as many games as possible and winning. Club coaches will only play the best people instead of letting everyone participate even though everyone is paying the same outrageous price, so some people do not get the practice they thought they signed up for. This creates a toxic environment for athletes, especially for younger ones who then have the idea they must always win.

It is good to have more repetition with games, but you could drive five hours and sit the bench for two games. No skill is being put into practice with this, except maybe high fiving and cheering on teammates.

Instead of playing so many games, club teams should focus more on improving in order to be less demanding of the athletes' time and money. Practices should be centralized more on building certain techniques and skills rather than doing a bunch of prep for games. Games should be more local and less often, which would ultimately cut the cost as well.

Club sports should be about having fun and growing. It is good to want to excel in one thing, but when it is at the point where it takes over your whole life, it is important to find a better balance so you do not end up hating something you used to be passionate about.

Girls basketball falls short in district final

By Kate Hendricks

With minimal losses under the Shamrocks girls basketball team this season, the team was looking to go far and possibly return back to the state tournament for the second year in a row.

The team came in as the 1st seed of the C1-6 subdistricts this year, having the privilege to host. The 20-6 Shamrocks faced 4th seed Winnebago with a record of 12-9 in the second round of subdistricts. The Shamrocks beat the Indians 50-33.

Senior Kayla Hoffman is the point guard for the Shamrocks.

"When playing Winnebago, the team focused on execution. Throughout the season, some games we struggled with running plays correctly or at the right time. We knew Winnebago was a chance to show we can do it, and I thought we did," Hoffman said.

The team faced a quick turnaround and played Pierce two days later in the subdistrict final. The Bluejays came in as the 2nd seed with an 18-8 record. Earlier in the season, Pierce defeated the Shamrocks by 4. The Scotus girls ultimately defeated the Bluejays in a close game, 38-37.

Senior Kate Hoffman had 63 rebounds on the season.

"Since we have already played them this season, we worked a lot on defense, working a man and zone. Our defense was what we struggled with the first time we played them, and we realized that if we locked down on defense, we would have a better chance at winning," Hoffman said.

Senior post Lola Doerneman led the team with 13 points, 3 rebounds, and 2 steals against Pierce.

"We knew Pierce was a different team and wouldn't be easy to beat, so we had to really step up our defense and not let them get easy buckets. It was such a close game in the second half, so we knew there was no room for errors. We all stayed in control until the very end, and it felt so good to come out with a win," Doerneman said. "The environment of the game was crazy and exciting and really helped us play with confidence. We were so happy we executed on offense and defense even when the pressure was high. It was so rewarding to celebrate with the team and student section and know we were on our way to a district final."

The Shamrocks played Gothenburg Swedes in Gothenburg for the district final on Friday, February 27th. It was a close game, with the Shamrocks only trailing by 7 at halftime. The Shamrocks competed tough but eventually fell to the Swedes in the last few seconds, 52-53.

"During this entire season, we had ups and downs, but we never chose to quit. If we were down, we never had doubt we could come back and win. This was such an exciting and fun season, and I am very grateful for all that basketball has given to me. Although we were short of our end goal, it does not take away from all the work, effort, and dedication of every player and coach this season," Kayla Hoffman said.



Mia Fehringer / Yearbook Staff

Sophomore Brooke Hendricks goes up for a layup against Aquinas on February 3rd. The sophomore scored 5 points against the Monarchs.

The Shamrocks concluded their season with a 20-6 record and as C1-5 district runner up. The team graduated three seniors: Lola Doerneman, Kate Hoffman and Kayla Hoffman.

Doerneman concluded,"I'm so thankful for this season and the amazing teammates I got to play with. Their relentless effort and positive attitudes every day made us what we were. We made it so far and I'm just so proud of everything we accomplished. I'm going to miss everything about it, the jokes with our coaches and diving on the floor in practice because we were going so hard, but I know the memories we made are worth it all."



Emma Splittgerber / Yearbook Staff

Senior guard Kate Hoffman shoots the ball against North Bend on January 20th. She scored 6 points against the Tigers.



Audrey Stoner / Rock Bottom Staff

Junior Brooke Krienke dribbles down the court to score against Kearney Catholic on February 7th. The junior has scored 180 points this season.

Boys basketball fights to finish in subdistricts

By Ainsley Kuhl

After a tough loss to Yutan by 1 point on February 12th, the boys basketball team rallied to finish the rest of the season by winning three games in a row, propelling them to the subdistrict final. Though all of them hoped to continue playing, they closed the season in the subdistrict final, finishing their season with a record of 14-11.

The Shamrocks faced Aquinas on February 20th in the last game of the regular season, winning 72-26. Even though it was a big win, the boys used the game to help prepare themselves for subdistricts by giving them the opportunity to run through plays and offense.

Senior Gavin Beiermann is a first-year starter in the forward position and scored 4 points in the game.

"We went into the game knowing we were going to win and had a lot of confidence," Beiermann said. "We all just had fun and kind of used it as practice for subdistrict games."

At practices, the team prepared by focusing on playing their game and style of basketball. They knew it was going to be tough subdistrict play, but they made sure to go one game at a time.

Senior Carson Wessel has started for the team for two years.

"We definitely amped up our energy at practices," Wessel said. "Scout teams gave us great looks and great energy as well."

For the first round of subdistricts at Winnebago, the team took on Omaha Nation. They won 71-62, advancing them to the next round.

Senior Eli Maguire scored 9 points in the game against Omaha Nation, helping the team to their victory.

"It was what we expected, but we knew we had to play better the next game," Maguire said.

The Shamrocks played Winnebago for the subdistrict final game on February 26th and lost 43-45, ending their season.

Junior shooting guard Calben Pelan scored 5 points in the Winnebago game.

"There were many runs we went on, but Winnebago responded and went on a run in the final minutes, giving them all of the momentum," Pelan said. "We kept it close the whole game with our composure but fell short."

Despite the team ending on a loss, they had a season full of growth and improvement.

Junior Michael Brandt returned to basketball this season and was a key player off the bench for the Shamrocks.

"We were not the same team in February as we were in November," Brandt said. "We grew and got so much better as a team and individually."

This wraps up the first year of coaching for head coach Cody Mroczek.

"[I am] extremely proud of this group this season," Mroczek said. "We came into the season basically only returning 1 starter in Carson. Connor and Brody saw varsity action last year, but very sparingly. So to get 4 new starters and then the 3-4 guys coming off the bench caught up to varsity speed, the environments they face, and just building that chemistry was a growing experience throughout the year. I asked them to get better every month, and they did exactly just that. Of our 11 losses, every single one of those teams have either already clinched a ticket to state or are in a current district final. So these boys competed with the best of them and gave some of the top teams a run for their money during the regular season. [I am] just extremely proud of their hard work. and seeing from where we started to how we ended was extremely rewarding as a coach."

Junior Connor Cameron led the team in points this season with an average of 13 per game.

"Win or lose, you play for the people next to you because that is what you will remember and be remembered for," Cameron said.



Leslie Medina-Perez / Yearbook Staff

Senior Eli Maguire dribbles down the court during the Kearney Catholic game on February 7th. Maguire led the team in points this game, scoring 13.



Caroline Rickert / Yearbook Staff

Senior Gavin Beiermann barrels down his defender during the Lakeview game on February 14th. The team beat the Vikings 61-55.

Wrestling increases success at state

By Lydia Dostal

The Scotus wrestling team recently wrapped up their season at the NSAA state tournament. With seven qualifying wrestlers, Scotus had multiple opportunities for success. After a 2nd place finish at conference and four individual champions, the team went into the district and state tournaments with renewed vigor.

Senior Kobe Micek placed 1st in the 126 pound bracket at conference.

"Getting runner-up at conference as a team was a confidence boost for us. Having multiple individual champions showed how far our team has progressed," Micek said.

State qualifiers from Scotus included seniors Favio Rivero Rubio, Kobe Micek, Hunter Brunkhorst, and Mike Krienke, junior Parker Newman, sophomore Lamberto Campuzano, and freshman Jace Jakubowski. Out of these were four returning state athletes: Rivero Rubio, Micek, Brunkhorst, and Newman. Having previously wrestled at the state level, these wrestlers had additional insight to aid them in their competition.

Brunkhorst wrestled in the 150 pound bracket and finished in 5th place.

"[The difference maker this year was] having experience. Since this was my fourth time going, I wasn't as nervous," Brunkhorst said.

For first-time contestants, the tournament brought varying feelings of nervousness and excitement.

Krienke made his state debut in the 165 pound bracket.

"[Going to state] was a relief because it has been my dream since seventh grade," Krienke said.

State wrestling takes place in the CHI Health Center in Omaha. Wrestling in this arena is a surreal experience for many of the athletes.

"The atmosphere [of CHI] is great. State is unlike any tournament I have ever been to. The amount of people, size of the arena, and the noise are big factors," Brunkhorst said.

While the setting was overwhelming for some, others were not phased by the thrilling environment.

Rivero Rubio is a returning state medal winner, placing 4th in the 144 pound bracket at the tournament this year.

"This year [state] felt underwhelming. It felt like another normal tournament. The atmosphere was nice knowing we had a crowd supporting us," Rivero Rubio said.

The state competition is fierce as all athletes battle to make it to the medal rounds. In tense matches, the wrestlers must find a way to attain dominance over their opponent.

Newman finished 5th in the 157 pound bracket.

"It's all mental. [You have to] be the aggressor, attack, and set the pace of the match," Newman said.

Other situations warranted a comeback approach after falling behind.

"Staying calm when I was in bad situations [was important]. There were a couple of times when I was down in a match, and staying calm allowed me to win," Micek said.

Four of the seven Scotus athletes—Brunkhorst, Rivero Rubio, Micek, and Newman—made it to the podium, with Rivero Rubio placing 4th and the others 5th. Although those who did not medal may not have ended their season the way they wanted, the achievement of making it to the state tournament does not go unnoticed.

Jakubowski qualified for the tournament in the 132 pound bracket.

"Wrestling with the upperclassmen helped me to better myself. This was the best freshman season I could have asked for," Jakubowski said.

Senior state wrestlers Brunkhorst, Krienke, Micek, and Rivero Rubio have been under the direction of head coach Rod Bos since beginning their high school wrestling careers. Bos has been a part of the program since it began in 2013.

"Having all the same coaches in my corner one last time [was special]. They all care about us off the mat just as much as they do on it," Brunkhorst ended.



Jillian Rusher / Rock Bottom Staff

Junior Parker Newman attempts to break down his opponent at the David City Aquinas meet on January 29th. Newman was one of the 4 returning state wrestlers from Scotus.



Sydney Stuart / Rock Bottom Staff

Senior Kobe Micek battles for control during the home meet on January 8th. Micek placed 5th in this year's state tournament.

Shamrocks shine at state cheer

By Jacqueline Stoner

"Let's go, Shamrocks! Go, fight, win!"

This cheer has reverberated through countless stadiums and auditoriums over the past year as the Scotus cheerleaders have rallied their peers toward victory. However, at the state cheer competition on February 20th, it was the cheerleaders' turn to be encouraged for once as they fought to cinch a win. In the end, their performances in the Traditional Non-Tumbling and Game Day categories earned them a third and fourth place finish, respectively–the highest rankings the team has achieved since 2020.

Leading the cheer team to this victory was head coach Sarah Langan, who stepped into the role only two years ago after former coach Pat Engel announced her decision to retire.

"This year, we really focused on all our feedback from state in 2025," Coach Langan shared. "Starting in June, we focused on strength training, sign work, arm motions, and power in our jumps. We also took a lot of time building confidence in our volume while performing in front of crowds."

With their ranks improving in both of their chosen competitive categories compared to last year, it is clear the cheerleaders' hard work ended up paying off. That being said, their road to victory was not without its fair share of challenges.

"In [the past seven months], we have had two girls recovering from surgery, two girls in a boot, and of course the winter illnesses," Coach Langan explained. "Challenges like these make it a little hard at times, but these girls worked so hard to come back and fight through injuries and illness to stay prepared for state."

Many of the Shamrocks' competitors faced additional difficulties in the days leading up to and even at the state competition due to harsh winter weather conditions. However, senior Kate Hendricks believes these challenges worked out in the team's favor.

"[Due to the poor weather, we] went to Grand Island the morning before we performed the next day. [This] provided us with more time to spend together before we competed," Hendricks said.

After their performances at state, emotions among the team were mixed. Some cheerleaders walked away with feelings of pride and relief, including senior Sophia Langan.

"We had been practicing these routines since the summer, and it was so rewarding all our hard work paid off," Langan shared.

Others, however, found the experience bittersweet. Senior Eva Foreman was among those who felt this way.

"At state cheer, I experienced a lot of different emotions. I was very confident in my teammates and our routines prior to performing… After our last performance, the whole team was very emotional. We were proud but also sad because it was our last time doing it as a team," Foreman said.

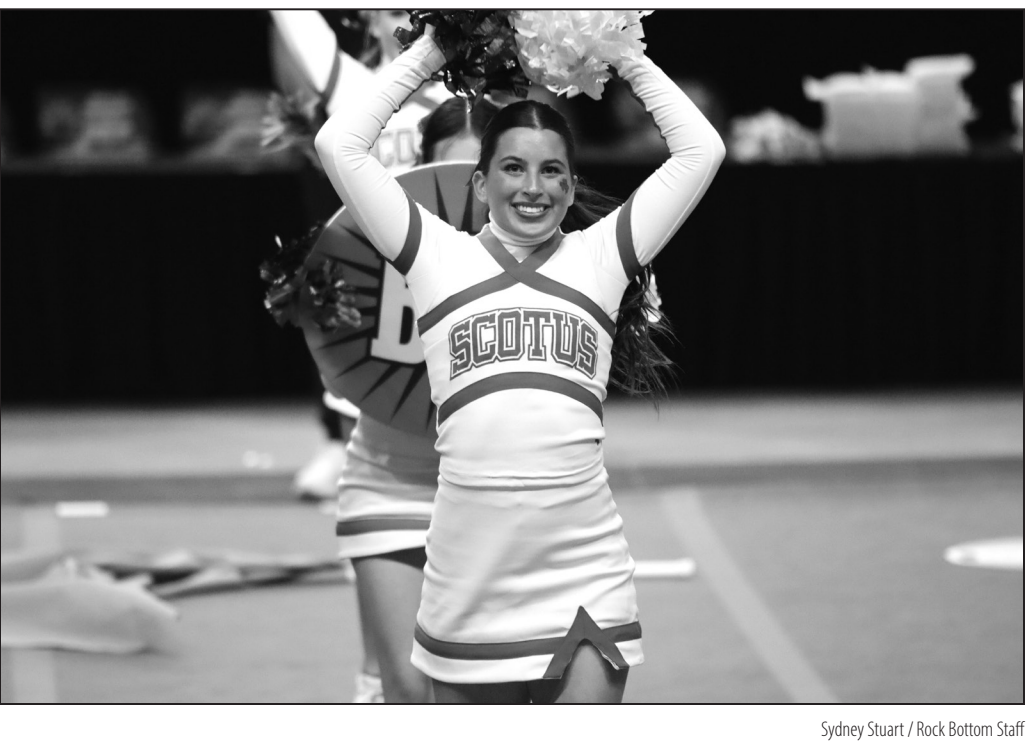
The team has already begun preparing for next year with tryouts for new members beginning in March.

"Your first year [of coaching] is so new and exciting with no expectations for how it will all go," Coach Langan said. "Now… the girls see the potential, and their individual confidence and fire have been lit! So, we will take what we learned this year from state to come back even stronger next year!"



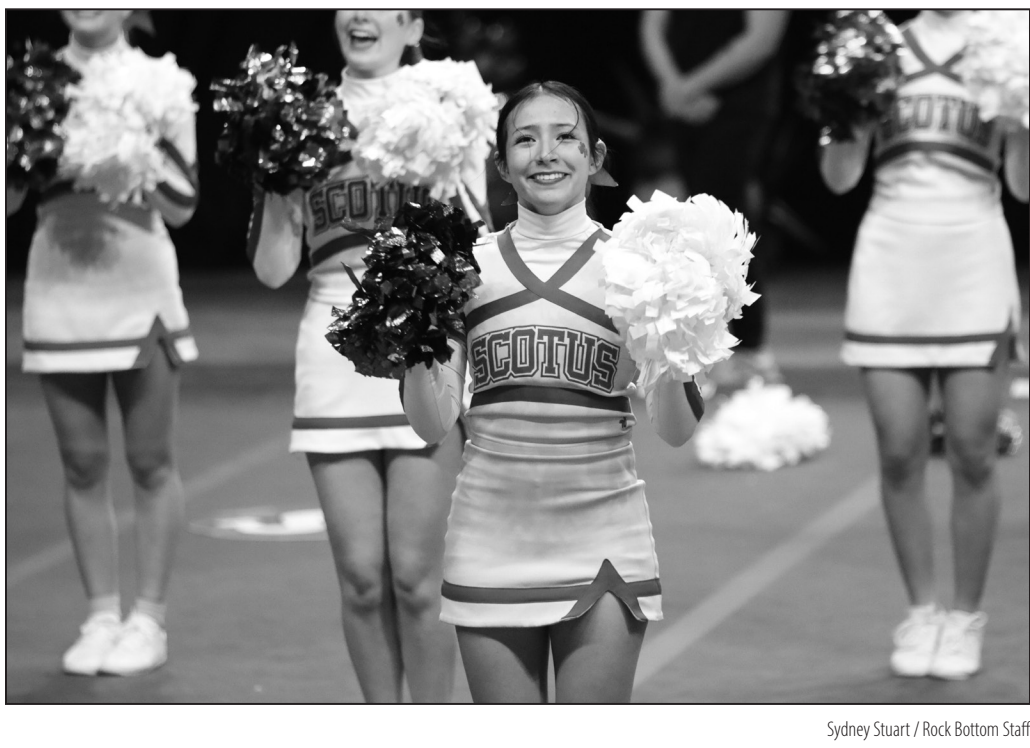
Sydney Stuart / Rock Bottom Staff

Senior Eva Foreman leads her group while performing along to the fight song at state cheer on February 20th. The cheer team ultimately placed 4th in the Game Day category and 3rd in Traditional Non-Tumbling.



Sydney Stuart / Rock Bottom Staff

Senior Sophia Langan strikes a pose as a part of the cheerleaders' Game Day routine at state cheer on February 20th. This is the team's second year performing under the direction of head coach Sarah Langan.



Sydney Stuart / Rock Bottom Staff

Senior Camila Carrizales claps along during the fight song at state cheer on February 20th. There were 19 girls on the Scotus cheer team this year, with five of them being seniors.

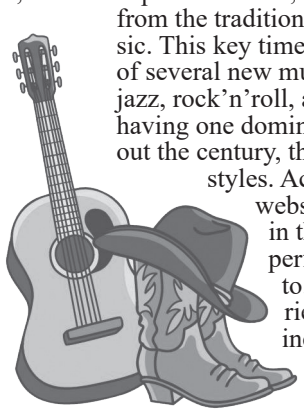
Music travels through time

BY KENNEDY KRUEGER

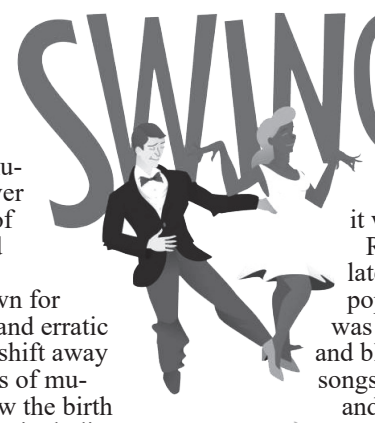
Music is something that seems to never stop changing and is always adapting to the current time. The history of music goes back all the way to the early humans. Because of this, the exact moment music originated is impossible to pin down. It is thought prehistoric music was used for rituals and communication. Skipping forward to the current time, music has come a long way. During the 20th century, music underwent several changes, impacting the music that is listened to today.



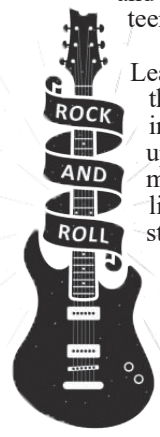
Prior to the 1900s, all music was live, with eras separating music into different periods. According to the Akron Symphony website, the first era was Medieval music, and this was composed of religious songs and Gregorian chants. The Renaissance era followed this period. This era proved to be a turning point for music. During this time, songs with multiple melodies emerged as well as music sung by a choir. The next musical period was the Baroque period. This period witnessed the rise of opera. The Classical era consisted of more structured music compared to the other eras, and it was during this period where the symphony was developed. The final period before the start of the 20th century was the Romantic period. The music from this time period was characterized by more intense emotion, along with larger orchestras.



Next in store for the music world was a rapid change in music styles over the course of one hundred years.



The 20th century is known for the rise in recording music and erratic experimentation, causing a shift away from the traditional qualities of music. This key time period saw the birth of several new music genres, including jazz, rock'n'roll, and hip-hop. Rather than having one dominant music genre throughout the century, there was a diverse range of styles. According to the Future Learn website, swing jazz was created in the 1920-30s, and it was the perfect beat for people to dance to. Eventually, more categories of jazz were developed, including free jazz, cool jazz, and bebop. These other styles were more difficult to dance to because their rhythms were either too fast or too slow. As a result, more people began to focus their attention on the musicians.



The next breakthrough for the music community was the introduction of country music in the early 1920s. This style was rooted in folk music, stories from immigrants, and the African American blues. When country music was first being recorded, it was called "hillbilly music".

Rock'n'roll made its debut in the late 1940s, but it gained national popularity in the 1950s. This style was formed by a mix of rhythm and blues, country, jazz, and gospel songs. Rock music was high energy and upbeat, appealing especially to teenagers at the time.

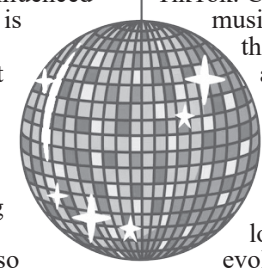
Still following the Future Learn website, shortly following the rise of rock, hip-hop was introduced in the 1950s. This upbeat music largely influenced much of the music that is listened to today. This style did not appear out of thin air, though. It was derived from the African American rhythm and blues.

Closely following the rise of hip-hop in the 1960s, funk also emerged as a result of African American music culture. This style focused on the groove in the music, and audiences were unable to stay in their seats.



The next part of the musical experimentation was disco music. While it started in the 1970s, it had spread to everywhere by the end of the decade. The disco scene at the time was characterized by electronic synthesized dance music.

In the music world today, styles like pop, hip-hop, and rap are the highest streamed music styles. The popularity of the genres is pushed by digital trends, especially on TikTok. Country, rock, and electronic dance music are also popular genres across the world today, and K-Pop songs are taking off globally right now. Because of social media, new songs and artists gain popularity quickly. Although it may not be known exactly when music first started, it has surely come a long way since then and will keep evolving.



Music awards bring bombshells and bureaucracy

BY SYDNEY STUART

Some people especially love the Super Bowl, World Cup, or Olympics, but some are all about music award nights. They get dressed up, hold watch-parties, and binge watch their television all night, even rating outfits and nominations.

Music awards celebrate artists, shape emerging artists' careers, and showcase milestones that resemble our generation's music. They first became a staple part of the 1900s; as televisions became popular and accessible, they have become widely viewed and celebrated.

The Grammy Awards kicked off the start of award shows we know today, started in 1959 by the Recording Academy. Artists such as Frank Sinatra, Ella Fitzgerald, Andy Williams, and the Kingston Trio attended the first formal award ceremony. Originally, the Grammys were named the Gramophone Awards after the Gramophone Trophy winners received. After the first award show, the Academy held a drawing to choose a new name. The winning name was a nickname for gramophone, grammy, according to the Grammy Awards website.

Many various award shows have started following the Grammy's debut. The Academy of Country Music Awards launched in 1966, and the American Music Awards followed eight years later in 1974.

This year, the 68th Grammys were held on February 1st, and the night covered a vast variety of genres and categories ranging from major awards to genre-specific ones. Record of the year went to Kendrick Lamar for Luther, album of the year was awarded to Bad Bunny for DeBÍ TiRAR MáS FOToS, and song of the year to Billie Elish for "WILDFLOWER".

While some award shows are founded on fan voting, the Grammy winners are selected by their peers, which includes producers, songwriters, and engineers. There has been widespread controversy about the integrity and accuracy of these judges.

Eighth grader Cora McGinnis would change nominees to be experienced artists.

"I wish that they didn't put newer singers in. They should make a rule that you have to have been in the industry for three years before you can be nominated for a Grammy; that way others that have been in the business longer can win awards for all of their hard work," McGinnis said.

Out of 111 students who responded to a survey at Scotus, only 19% of students watched the most recent Grammys. Some students were surprised by the winners, but others were not.

Freshman Bostyn Marksmeier did not watch the Grammys but did keep up to date with the award winners.

"I was surprised that Billie Eilish won since her song came out last year, but I am still happy for her! I was also surprised Bad Bunny won his awards," Marksmeier said. "I feel like I would change who gets to vote for the music. I know they are professionals, but they choose what they like but not what the public actually likes."

Senior Jackson Baumert, however, had a different opinion about the outcome of the award winners.

"I wasn't surprised at the winners. I don't think people who have no talent should win a Grammy, but they do every year," Baumert said.

At the most recent award shows, singers have started to use their platforms and thank you speeches to make political comments. This causes more controversy about the awards and their purpose. Some view the awards as strictly about music and honoring the top artists of the year.

Senior Favio Rivero Rubio is a student who views the awards separate from politics.

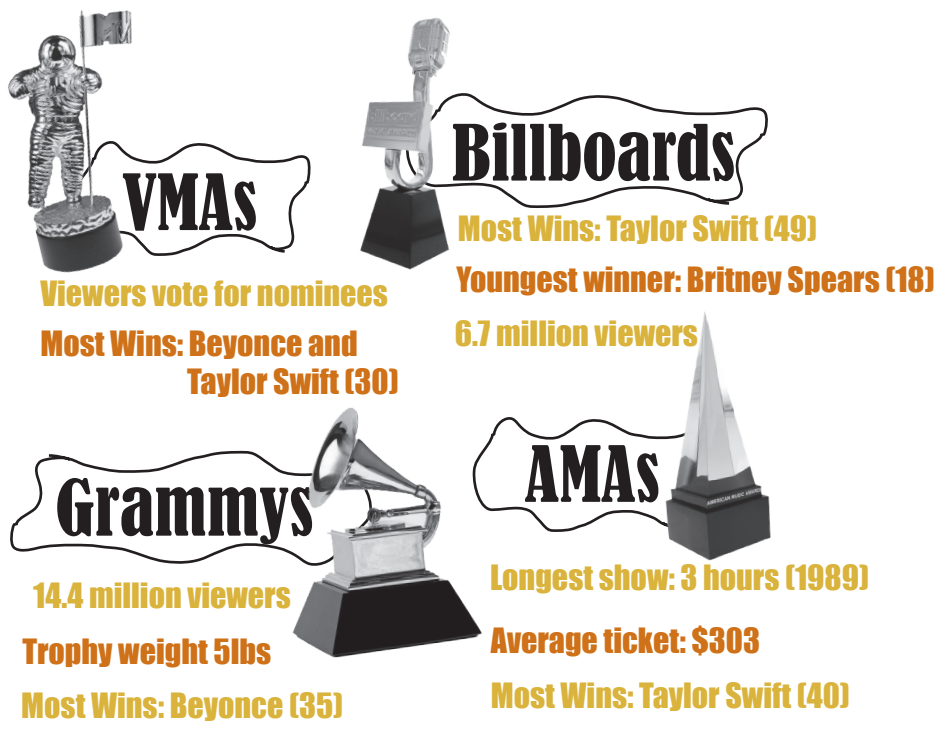
"[Artists should not make political comments] because politics shouldn't even be there. It is a thank you speech; they should speak about appreciation or speak about those who helped them get to where they are," Rivero Rubio said.

On the other hand, some people see the platform as an opportunity to reach people and persuade viewers, and not allowing them to voice their opinions would take away their freedom of speech.

Freshman Mara Hash is in support of artists speaking out at awards.

"Yes, [artists should be able to make political comments] because they can speak on things happening in the world and have a strong influence on what people do about it," Hash said.

The next music award shows are the Academy of Country Music on May 17th and the American Music Awards on May 24th.



The impact and influence of music

BY JILLIAN RUSHER

Music has been around in different forms since the beginning of time. There are definitely opinions when it comes to the genre, artist, amount, or volume of music, but most will agree music is a large part of society. There is music on the radio, at concerts, and background music online. It inspires or overstimulates people and becomes more widespread year after year.

Senior Jackson Baumert generally likes to listen to heavy metal music.

"Music has a big inspiration on me because it is my most consumed form of media. Music also ties into my hobbies of playing guitar and going to concerts," Baumert said.

The impact of music goes further than connecting to interests people have, though. According to Tallahassee Memorial Healthcare, active music positively affects the body's chemicals, such as dopamine and serotonin, influencing mood. Dopamine influences focus, concentration, memory, sleep, mood, and motivation. Likewise, serotonin impacts mood, sleep patterns, anxiety, and pain.

Freshman Alivia Kreikemeier's favorite artists are Anne Wilson and George Strait.

"[Music] calms me and helps me understand that if I am going through something, and there is a song about it, I am not the only one who is going through it. It also makes cleaning and homework more enjoyable," Kreikemeier said.

Furthermore, different types of music can help enhance different focus and memorization skills. According to National University, the best study music is usually instrumental because lyrics often compete for a person's attention. Quiet sounds are often good to enhance math and reading, rhythmic beats for memorization, and upbeat tunes for creative work.

Eighth grader Noah Miller believes the best decade of music was the 1980s.

"I like listening to music because it is definitely a powerful tool for shifting moods. It can calm, energize, or help process emotions. It also helps me with focus and with concentration during tasks," Miller said.

When looking at the scientific effect of music, it seems everyone should be listening to it, but as with most things, there is always a downside as well. According to Manning Family Children's LCMC Healthcare, rumination, or constant dwelling on negative feelings, can occur when a teen is listening to sad music to induce rumination and, therefore, experience affective harm and worsening of mood. In addition, researchers find music-induced harm can occur when people listen to sad music during moments of psychological distress.

Junior Trevor Niedbalski believes the 2000s is the best decade of music.

"I like to listen to music every now and then. Today's society is constantly filled with noise, and music can be part of the problem. People have forgotten how to sit in silence and be bored. Being bored is actually really good for humans. It drives creativity and helps teach our bodies that we do not have to always be doing something," Niedbalski said.

Music has had an impact and will continue to have an impact on society for many years to come.

Seventh grader Lizzy Sidwell concluded, "I believe that music is an important part of each person, and I enjoy listening to it whenever I can."



"[My favorite singer] is Brandon Lake because he has amazing worship music, and its praise and beat are great."
~8TH GRADER ADREA ANDERSON



"I love the sound of [Luke Combs] voice and the emotion his music makes me feel. I love to feel the message in the flow of the songs."
~SENIOR HELENE CHARD



"Michael Jackson [is my favorite] because he is the greatest singer and performer of all time."
~SENIOR EVAN PAVLIK



"Green Day's punk rock music is amazing. I think it's really cool and unique how some of their albums tell a story."
~7TH GRADER LIZZY SIDWELL

Favorite artists and genres reveal range in music interests

BY JOSIE ROTHER

From the heart-wrenching ballads of Olivia Rodrigo to the hard-hitting rock and roll tunes of AC/DC, music is something almost everyone finds joy in. Each genre is different and attracts different listeners, but music is a sensation that connects people from all walks of life.

The Scotus students' taste in music is diverse and overlaps over many genres. The country and pop music genres tied as the students' favorites, each having 28% of the school's vote. Rap music received second place with 14% of the school's vote, followed by rock music with 12%.

With statistics all across the board, it is hard to make a judgement on what genre of music is truly most popular among the students at Scotus. Some of the uncertainty comes with the overlap of genres in the songs coming out recently.

The general genres of country, pop, rock, rap, etc. are broad categories a particular song or artist may fit into, but these categories, although popularly used, are too broad for most songs. Songs such as "Austin" by Dasha or "Son of a Sinner" by Jelly Roll are great examples of how the country music genre is changing to incorporate more pop and rap elements. The rap genre has also been expanding as it has been including more R&B elements within its verses. An example of this is "All the Stars" by Kendrick Lamar featuring SZA, a popular R&B artist. The genre overlap in music is apparent and can be traced back to the student's favorite artists.

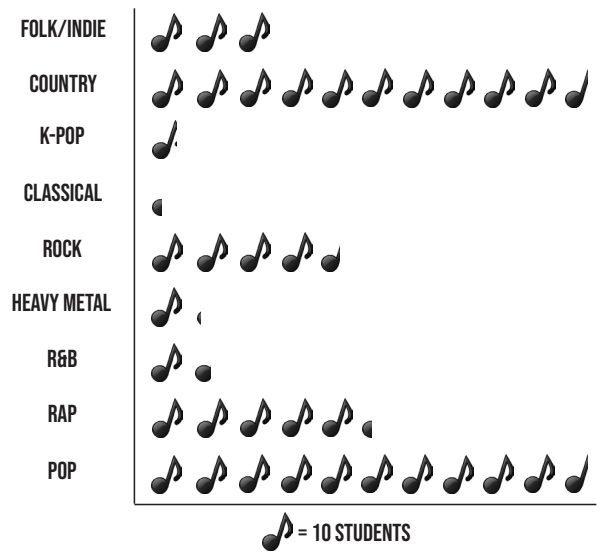
The favorite artists in country music within the school are Morgan Wallen, Jon Pardi, and Megan Moroney, who, although all fit under the country music banner, have vastly different music.

The pop music lovers favored artists such as Tate McRae, Olivia Dean, and Billie Ellish, who each have their own unique style and flare. Olivia Dean, with her soulful voice, won Best New Artist at the Grammy Awards, and her popularity is definitely reflected by her high standing at Scotus.

Freshman Mara Hash has a few favorite artists, and among them is Olivia Dean.

"I really enjoy listening to [Olivia Dean's] music, and it is perfect for car rides," Hash said.

Although technically in the minority, most of the students who said rap music was their favorite genre put the artist Drake at the top of their list.



Senior Myles McGannon's favorite genre of music is rap music.

"Drake [is my favorite artist because] his music is just so soothing and relatable," McGannon said. "Everyone likes at least one [Drake] song."

Although less popular than pop, country, and rap music, genres such as heavy metal, rock, and folk/indie music have found their way into the hearts of some students.

Senior Jackson Baumert's favorite genre of music is heavy metal.

"[My favorite artist is] Avenged Sevenfold because I grew up listening to them and their music never gets old for me," Baumert said.

7th grader Lizzy Sidwell's favorite genre of music is rock.

"My favorite music artist is Green Day because their punk rock music is amazing," Sidwell said. "I also think it's really cool and unique how some of their albums (American Idiot and 21st Century Breakdown) tell a story."

While it is true that over half of the school favors pop and country music, it is impossible to lump everyone into those categories. With students also listening to K-pop and a few students naming classical music as their favorite, it can undoubtedly be said that the students at Scotus have a diverse taste in music.

2026 Music Madness Bracket



2026 Winner!

LUSH LIFE-Zara Larsson

Small cast conquers *The Prince of Egypt*

By Lola Doerneman

This winter season at Scotus was once again filled by the musical performance. The cast presented *The Prince of Egypt*, a storyline that follows the biblical Book of Exodus and the life of Moses, who transforms his life from an Egyptian prince to the prophet of God's chosen people. The cast performed 3 times starting Friday, February 13th through Sunday, February 15th. Vocal music director Laura Salyard and assistant director Matt Mosemen were the coaches behind the performances.

Starting with auditions in October, the team worked for four months leading up to the performances. They focused on perfecting the music and vocals before Christmas, and after, they worked on piecing together the scenes onstage.

Senior Issy Chasteen has been involved in musical for all four years of high school. She played the part of Queen Nefertari, who is Pharaoh's wife.

"[My favorite part of this musical season was] the people. Regardless of our energy levels, how late the practices were going, or how well we were doing, the team was continuously encouraging one another and helping each other do their best," Chasteen said.

Senior Seth Drueppel played two major roles: Seti, who is the Pharaoh before he dies, and Jethro, the high priest of Midian and father of Tzipporah.

"It was a unique challenge to play two characters who were so dramatically different," Drueppel said. "[The hardest part was] balancing all the responsibilities of two characters, helping crew, and the other activities."

This year the musical cast was made up of 12 high school students. With a shortage of actors and actresses, the group called upon junior high students to help out. Three stepped up and volunteered.

Senior Jake Demuth joined musical for the first time this year. He was in charge of the lights for the practices and performances.

"I think [the junior high actors and actresses] did a good job," Demuth said. "They had fitting roles and filled them well."

Junior Lillian Miller played the role of Tzipporah, who takes the stage as a hostage dancer but ends up falling in love with Moses. Miller was the only junior in the musical this year.

"[The most rewarding part of musical is] the moment the curtain closes every show and the immense relief that hits you when you realize, 'I did it. We did it. We just put on something amazing.' It's a level of rewarding that is unmatched," Miller said.

The Prince of Egypt musical was full of musical numbers in the 31 scenes. Out of 24 songs, Miller had 1 solo and 1 duet with Moses.

"This year, everyone in the musical was so genuine; they were supportive and loving. It gives me so much hope that future musicals can truly be a place where people can let their guard down and be themselves," Miller said.



Lola Doerneman / Rock Bottom Staff

Miriam (freshman Bostyn Marksmeier) and Aaron (sophomore Alex Chvala), Moses' biological siblings, help guide Moses' mother (senior Gigi Chilapa-Bello) to the river. The musical cast consisted of 17 high school students and 3 from junior high this season.

With this year's musical consisting of five seniors, the main role of being Moses was given to senior Evan Pavlik.

"I do musical because I love it. I love just about everything about musical, so I'm sad it's over," Pavlik said. "I'm satisfied [with how the musical went this year.] There was a lot of stress a few weeks before the show, but everyone locked in, and we had fun."

Drueppel has been involved in musical for 3 years.

"It is a great feeling to be a part of something bigger and share that with the people you care about," Drueppel said.



Lola Doerneman / Rock Bottom Staff

Tzipporah (junior Lillian Miller) and Moses (senior Evan Pavlik) embrace in a heartfelt scene. Pavlik was one of the 6 seniors in the musical, and Miller was the only junior.



Lola Doerneman / Rock Bottom Staff

King Seti (senior Seth Drueppel) lies on his deathbed as Tuya (freshman Audrianna Splittgerber), Nerertari (senior Issy Chasteen), Rameses (senior Ryan Allen), Hotep (JR Oehlrich), and Huy (freshman Maggie Holmstedt) say their goodbyes. Drueppel played two major characters in this year's musical.

Band gals and greasers achieve concert success

By Audrey Stoner

As calendars flip to February each year, the Scotus community has more than Valentine's Day chocolates and Punxsutawney Phil's predictions to look forward to. The month also holds the band's annual dinner concert, which features unique yearly themes, a plentiful potluck-style dinner, and music showcasing the talent of all ages of band students.

Elementary through high school band director Kristen Cox has led the band at Scotus since 1994 and has worked hard since the new year to have the concert ready by February 9th.

"It is always a challenge to get a concert prepared in three weeks, this one especially [with] decorations and the meal," Cox said.

However, the high school band worked overtime to compensate, volunteering to put up decorations the Sunday before and setting up chairs, stands, and the cafeteria's decorations the day of. The music program and band members' clothing were also organized to fit the themed decorations.

Junior Rachel Spawn plays percussion and is the high school band's only junior member.

"The concert's theme this year was the 1950's. We played old classic songs… and dressed up in jeans and dresses," Spawn explained.

The night began with a buffet-style meal in the cafeteria organized in coordination with cafeteria manager Margie Swanson. The food offered included pulled pork sandwiches, meatballs, fruit, salads, and a wide array of homemade desserts, with lemonade and water served as refreshments. A new addition in the drinks category this year was a malt bar, which was manned by several high school percussionists serving root beer and orange soda malts. The bar was a new concept brainstormed to fit the 50's theme and one of the night's biggest hits.

Sophomore Gianna Braziel currently plays as the band's only bass clarinet.

"[The dinner portion of the night] was awesome! I loved the food, and the floats were a good idea," Braziel said.

The concert portion kicked off soon after with the fifth grade, sixth grade, and junior high bands performing an array of classic 50's anthems and mashups. The high school band closed out the night by performing the songs "Sincerely", "Hound Dog", "Can't Help Falling in Love", "Blue Suede Shoes", and "Rock Around the Clock."

"['Rock Around the Clock' was my favorite song to play] because it had a bunch of low notes, and it had great swing to it," Braziel commented.

This upbeat swing rhythm was taken advantage of by seniors Ryan Allen, Helene Chard, Issy Chasteen, and Seth Drueppel, junior Lillian Miller, and sophomore Alex Chvala. While the song played in the background, Allen and company paired up to showcase their country swing dancing skills in front of the crowd. Chard and Chvala play the baritone and the drums, respectively, while Allen, Chasteen, Drueppel, and Miller were volunteer participants.

"I was sick [from school] the day [Mrs. Cox] decided we were going to [swing dance], so I was voluntold I would be dancing," Chvala said. "I was just trying not to mess up and to have fun at the same time."

As the dinner and concert came to an end, the decorations, themed songs and dress, and the playful new elements earned praise from both the crowd and band members alike. It was especially bittersweet for Chard and senior percussionist Dante Smith, who faced the closeout of eight years' worth of dinner concerts since their introduction to band in fifth grade.

"It's a little disappointing to think about this being my last dinner concert…but I am glad I've been able to have fun with [the band] in the last eight years," Chard reflected. "This was one of the greatest dinner concerts I have been a part of."



Sophia Langan / Yearbook Staff

Band director Kristen Cox signals the junior high band to hold a note during the band's annual dinner concert at Scotus on February 9th. Cox has been teaching band at Scotus for 31 years.



Sophia Langan / Yearbook Staff

Sophomore trumpet players Julia McPhillips and JR Oehlrich, sophomore trombone Ethan Fiala, and freshman clarinetist Ariana Hissong play their instruments during the band dinner concert at Scotus on February 9th. The concert's theme this year was the 1950's.

Dance team debuts at state

By Sydney Stuart

School spirit takes sporting events and student involvement to the next level. This past year, Scotus took theirs up to the next step by adding a dance team to the football sidelines and basketball halftime shows.

Along with their school spirit, the 14 dancers took their talent to the NCA State Cheer and Dance competition held at the Heartland Event Center in Grand Island on February 21st. The team placed 14th out of 17 teams.

Junior Maia Foreman is one of 4 juniors on the team.

"I thought we did well considering we have been changing up this dance throughout the season. Our team came from different dance studios, so we were not all on the same skill level," Foreman said.

To prepare for state, coaches Amarha Bridger and Sydney Mroczek invited Husker Scarlet alum Olivia Kriz to choreograph their state pom routine this past summer.

Senior Josie Rother is a captain on the team.

"Having a Husker Scarlet choreograph our pom routine was exciting and really pushed our team. The two choreography days were long and intense, but it showed us that our team is capable of a lot," Rother said.

The team practiced multiple days a week in the morning to perfect the dance for their first state appearance.

Senior Hannah Heinrich is one of 7 seniors.

"Having morning practice 2-3 times a week wasn't easy, especially in the winter. Our team is involved in many other activities, so we did what we had to in order to make it work. All of our practices were mainly spent learning our state pom routine, so we did it at least 100 times," Heinrich said.

Before their competition at state, the Shamrocks previously performed at the Heartland Dance Championships at Standing Bear High School, Columbus High School's Jam the Gym, and basketball halftimes. State dance was a new atmosphere for many girls.

Junior Sophia Belina is one of 4 juniors on the team.

"I was nervous but also excited because we had worked hard. We were all ready to perform but nervous. Right before it was our turn to go out, it got real and touched our hearts that this team was the first Scotus dance team," Belina said.

Following the competition, the award ceremony was held that night at 8:30 p.m.

Senior Lily Lancaster was one of the 3 captains this year.

"I think [state] was our best performance yet. We all performed the best we could and stayed with the right counts. Our energy was high, and we all showed up and gave it everything," Lancaster said. "As a first-year team, I feel we all did a great job building the program, and I think the future of the dance team will be successful for years to come."

The state dance competition concluded the team's first year. To prepare for their 2026-2027 team, the Shamrocks dove straight into tryouts on February 27th.

"The girls made this season so fun! I couldn't have asked for better girls to dance with. We grew together, which made the season so successful. The environment was very positive. I'm grateful to have a team that felt like a family," Foreman concluded.



Kayla Hoffman / Yearbook Staff

Junior Sophia Belina dances during the team's pom routine at state dance on February 21st. The Shamrocks placed 14th at state.



Addi Beiermann / Yearbook Staff

The Shamrock dance team performs their pom routine at state dance on February 21st. This was the Shamrocks' first appearance at state as a new team.



Addi Beiermann / Yearbook Staff

Seniors Hannah Heinrich, Josie Rother, and Lily Lancaster bring an energetic pom routine to state dance in Grand Island on February 21st. Their pom dance was choreographed by former Husker Scarlet Olivia Kriz.

Seventh grade retreat makes a difference

By Kennedy Krueger

Faith retreats provide students with a way to grow closer to God, and Scotus utilizes these retreats for the students. The 7th graders took part in one of these retreats on February 11th. They took the day off of school to spend time with the Lord in Adoration, listen to upperclassmen speeches, participate in small groups, sing live worship songs, and play games with their classmates.

The theme for the retreat this year was abundant life. Campus minister Cecilia Brichacek put together the retreat for the 7th grade students.

"I always enjoy the process of thinking and praying through the theme. We had this theme picked out from the beginning of the year, and it was John 10:10, looking at what it means to live life abundantly. It was a verse that we had decided way back in August or September that we wanted to have. It just kept coming to my heart that this is what the 7th graders needed," Brichacek said.

Senior campus ministry students Jillian Rusher, Sydney Stuart, Jacqueline Stoner, Evan Pavlik, and Aiden Meers spoke to the students at the retreat.

"The talks [were my favorite part of the retreat] because they gave me a different perspective, and God has a plan to help us," seventh grader Sariah Flores said.

Rusher spoke to the students about abundant life in high school.

"I felt drawn to give this talk because as 7th graders, they have a lot of high school left. I wanted to give a talk on how they can best live these years joyfully and abundantly, keeping God at the center," Rusher said.

Stuart shared her talk about the Eucharist to the 7th graders.

"As a Catholic, especially 7th graders, trying to slightly wrap our heads around the Eucharist is a huge task. I wish when I was a 7th grader, I had good examples of people living an abundant, fun life while falling in love with the Eucharist. I wanted to share with them my greatest love, and in return, all I hope is to one day rejoice in heaven with them," Stuart said.

Pavlik discussed the importance of the sacrament of confession.

"I chose to talk about confession because it is a sacrament I participate in regularly, and I felt like I could provide a good insight into the subject. Hearing a talk about confession when I was in 7th grade would have helped me prioritize the sacrament sooner," Pavlik said.

After the students listened to the seniors' talks, they discussed in small groups what they learned from the talks.

The students also spent time with Jesus in the Eucharist during Adoration. During this time, students were also invited to go to confession or prayer teams.

"The Adoration [was my favorite part of the retreat] because I felt God. I got to slow down from my daily, busy life and spend time in prayer talking to God," 7th grader Cooper Niedbalski said.

Along with Adoration, the 7th graders participated in singing live worship music.

"I liked spending time in Adoration and sitting with the live worship music, and my other favorite part was the snacks," 7th grader Emily Quinonez-Rodriguez said.

To grow closer to their classmates, the students played games while at the retreat. This included Who Am I?, Two Truths and a Lie, Human Knot, and Musical Chairs.

"My favorite part about the retreat was the games because I had so much fun talking and laughing with my friends," 7th grader Ty Pensick said.

By the end of the retreat, these students had plenty to take home with them to aid them in their faith lives. This retreat was a change from the years past, but it is safe to say the 7th grade retreat is here to stay.

"I believe it was one of the best coming to Jesus moments in my life, and I think I learned some things that I will carry with me throughout my life," Niedbalski said.



Jillian Rusher / Rock Bottom Staff

Seventh grader Pierce Ridder completes his group's "four men eating" pose during a game of ships and sailors at the 7th grade retreat on February 11th. This was one of the many activities the 7th graders participated in at the retreat.



Jillian Rusher / Rock Bottom Staff

Senior campus ministry student Sydney Stuart shares a talk with the 7th graders at their retreat. Stuart spoke about the Eucharist.

Hamlet movie peels back the layers

By Isabella Chasteen

It is 9:55 in the morning, you are in a cozy, dark room, and the only thing you want to do is take a nap. The only downside, one may ask? You have to focus on making sense of Shakespearean gibberish. The only thought running through your head now is, "Though this be madness, yet there is method in't," because this has to make sense somehow, right?

Whether it was Romeo and Juliet, Julius Caesar, Hamlet, or Taming of the Shrew, many Scotus students have had the opportunity to read a Shakespearean play. While Shakespeare's writings may not make sense to modern man, his works paved the way for the literary world; thus, the importance of high school students interpreting them at ten in the morning.



nextmag.ca

Anne (Agnes) Hathaway and William Shakespeare have an intimate moment before their engagement. The Hamnet movie was released on November 26th, and it earned Jessie Buckley, who played Anne, a nomination for the 2026 Academy Awards' best actress.

On November 26, 2025, the movie Hamnet was released. It is a dramatized telling of what led to the creation of the well-known tragedy Hamlet. The film, rather than focusing solely on William's story, introduces more depth to his wife, Anne Hathaway, by showing both sides of their marriage. Anne takes care of the children and must cope with loneliness while William is away in London, and William must cope with his wife never joining him in the city even though it is where his success lies.

While the movie keeps the Shakespearean charm of being confusing at first, it is still an interesting and enjoyable watch.

Hamnet has a long run time, but at no point does it fall short on adding to the emotion of the story. It shows Anne and William's entire journey, from their first meeting, complicated wedding, and birth of their first child, to the devastation that led to the production of Hamlet. The film does an extraordinary job of capturing the audience and making them feel as if they are in the story themselves. From overwhelming happiness to crushing devastation, all is portrayed.

Another strong point of the movie is its cinematography. The forest near the Shakespeares' home plays a big part in the story, and the camera work makes it look beautiful. It captures the lush green of the trees and grass in a way that makes it dreamlike. Overall, it makes every scene appealing.

The character relationships are extremely realistic. Rather than putting the spotlight on one person or relationship, it shines light upon every character. Whether it is Anne and William's rocky marriage or their children's interactions with one another, no one is left out when it came to character depth.

It must be prefaced, those who did not enjoy reading Hamlet may not enjoy this movie. Without knowing the story, the deep meaning does not settle as well, and it may seem like a nice-looking snoozefest.

However, the play Hamlet receives a whole new meaning from this movie. Hamnet amplifies the voice of a father who lost his only son and how he coped with the loss. For anyone who enjoyed Hamlet, I implore you to watch this movie. If you haven't had the chance to read it, wait until junior year!

Halftime show faces the music

By Lydia Dostal

After watching Bad Bunny prance around the stage at Levi's Stadium for the Super Bowl Halftime show, I opened social media to gauge the public's opinions on his production. As someone who enjoys all forms of live music, I was shocked to see dozens of angry Facebook users ripping each other apart over a 13 minute video. The only thought I had when reading these enraged comments was, "Why does it matter?"

The Super Bowl is arguably the most highly anticipated sporting event of the year. The game garners hundreds of millions of viewers although a large portion of them do not tune in to watch the football game itself but instead to witness the halftime show. This mini concert has earned a reputation over the years as being highly extravagant, and Super Bowl LX was no exception. Headliner Bad Bunny put on an impressive performance, capturing over 128 million viewers.

Unlike previous years, a second halftime show was also hosted by Turning Point USA, featuring artists such as Kid Rock, Brantley Gilbert, and Gabby Barrett. The idea of a second show seemed innocent enough until it turned into a battle of political values between the opposing watch parties. These arguments raised the question of what place politics should have in popular media if all they do is soil the enjoyment.People should be able to enjoy the halftime show without fear of judgement for their preferences or political biases.

Disapproving comments centered around the political messaging from both variants of the halftime show. Differing values between the two productions' audiences caused clashes on social media for weeks. The main criticism of Bad Bunny was his inclusion of cultural and political themes. People also felt that his lyrics and choreography were inappropriate for a family-friendly event. On the other hand, Turning Point USA's show was judged as being overly political, focusing more on pushing conservative values than on the actual quality of the music.

After watching both events, I have found my faults within each. While I agree with certain points made by both sides, my overall stance remains the same: the halftime show has become unnecessarily focused on promoting political beliefs instead of highlighting the music. Live performances with the popularity of the halftime show should bring people together to appreciate the art, not tear them apart in heated discourses. There is a time and place to discuss politics, and a glorified commercial break is not one of those times.

Another large problem circulated about the halftime show was the genre of music. With Bad Bunny being an artist who predominantly sings and raps in Spanish, many viewers disapproved of the choice because he is not someone who typical football viewers would listen to. As someone who does not listen to Bad Bunny myself, I thoroughly enjoyed his performance because it brought a new style to the table after the last few halftime shows. Even though I may not have been able to sing along, I could appreciate the production.

Unfortunately, I could not say the same for Turning Point USA's show. Despite most songs being ones I was familiar with, I did not find the show entertaining.

Even though I personally preferred Bad Bunny's show, I see no harm in choosing Turning Point USA over him. We cannot expect all people to enjoy the same things, so having alternatives is a great option. Viewers of these two shows should be able to accept one another for who they are instead of turning it into a battle of who's best.

In today's political landscape, it's hard to disconnect beliefs from everything we consume, and it is important for us to stand firm in our values. No one should be forced into watching something which supports a cause they do not align themselves with. In addition, people shouldn't be condemned for choosing the option they enjoy best, regardless of others' opinions.

The Super Bowl LX halftime show will go down in history as one of the more controversial shows to date. Setting our differences aside to enjoy the music will hopefully allow for more neutral years to come.



Chicago Tribune.com

Bad Bunny and Kid Rock perform at their respective halftime productions on February 8th during the Super Bowl. Both shows were held live at the same time with Bad Bunny performing at Levi's Stadium and Kid Rock in Atlanta.

Sequel breaks through budget blues

By Audrey Stoner

"You got your dream. You inspired millions of people," MercyMe band manager Scott Brickell (Tracy Adkins) tells lead singer and songwriter Bart Millard (John Michael Finley). "What'd you think was gonna happen? You were just gonna ride off into the sunset, no more struggles or pain?"

It is sixteen years after MercyMe released their hit single, "I Can Only Imagine". The song rocked music charts and captivated audiences around the world, but after so long without another big hit, the band is left questioning if they still have what it takes. Amid crumbling lives off the stage, each member must learn to keep their hope in God even if He does not intervene in their battles.

In this sequel to the 2018 movie that told the story of "I Can Only Imagine", the band's collective journey to healing and their next greatest hit, "Even If", overcomes low funding to become a worthwhile watch for moviegoers of all ages.

"I Can Only Imagine" and its resulting fame no doubt granted Millard and his band all they hoped for their careers. However, I Can Only Imagine 2 provides a refreshing perspective on what happens after success. As the movie progresses and Millard's life beyond the tour bus worsens, he is forced to realize achieving one's dreams does not grant lasting happiness, and fame does not guarantee continued success. In a world where the idea 'when I buy this, achieve that, or look like him or her, I will finally be happy' runs rampant, Millard's struggles are a much-needed reminder that no one is as perfect as they seem, and Jesus is the only one who can bring true fulfillment.



icanonlyimagine.com

I Can Only Imagine 2's movie poster shows characters Sam Millard, Bart Millard, and Tim Timmons performing their 2017 hit "Even If" in front of a crowd. The movie continues B. Millard's story from its 2018 prequel.

Another key message from the movie centers around Millard's relationship with his son, Sam (Sammy Dell). Sam wants independence, and Millard wants to ensure Sam stays healthy with his Type 1 Diabetes diagnosis, leading to a power struggle any teenager can relate to. The movie portrays their rocky journey without sugarcoating, an element I appreciated and resonated with. It also reinforces the value of family bonds and the importance of relationships over pursuing wants or dreams.

Finally, I Can Only Imagine 2 powerfully shows God's place in every struggle. From pressure to succeed and tough diagnoses, to broken relationships and old personal demons, MercyMe band members are broken beyond the stage. When tour events bring each of their battles to a head, the songs they sing about God's goodness seem to become mere empty promises.

From this pain and doubt, "Even If" is born. "It's easy to sing / When there's nothing to bring me down / But what will I say / When I'm held to the flame / Like I am right now," Millard writes. "I know You're able and I know You can / Save through the fire with Your mighty hand / But even if You don't / My hope is You alone."

For those struggling, "Even If" is a powerful reminder that God never promised an easy path in life, but He remains good no matter what life brings. No matter what comes, He can be relied on to walk with us through it. As band headliner Tim Timmons (Milo Ventimiglia) reminds a crowd, "Whatever you're going through, all of the storms, the pain, the trauma… God is in the fire. You are never alone."

Compared to the staggering $550 million budget for recent popular releases Wicked and Wicked For Good, I Can Only Imagine 2's $18 million price tag largely explains why it is not exactly the movie of the century. I still prefer the raw emotion of the first I Can Only Imagine movie and found its sequel's storyline slower than ideal, but I Can Only Imagine 2 overcame its limitations with the impactful themes it conveyed. No amount of success or fame will save us from struggle, and life will never be all sunshine and rainbows; Jesus is the only one who can truly fulfill us.

Whether at the top of a mountain or in the depths of a valley, I Can Only Imagine 2 reminds us to follow Millard's footsteps and cling to this hope, come what may.



Seniors

Rock Bottom

Scotus Central Catholic columbus-catholic.org/rock-bottom-newspaper/ Columbus, Nebraska 68601

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Journalism secures 6th state championship

By Lillian Miller

The clicking of medals, sighs of relief, and whoops of laughter followed the journalism team out of the Northeast Community College doors after competing at the state championship on Monday, April 27th. After entering the competition with 20 students and 25 entries, the team returned with 344 points and a golden championship trophy.

Entries were submitted on March 1st, and qualifiers were announced on April 1st.

Senior Sydney Stuart qualified for and placed in 3 newspaper events and 1 broadcasting event.

"I felt excited and proud to see my hard work over the past two years help me to qualify," Stuart said. "Journalism has been one of my favorite classes, so knowing that I was going to state for it made me feel excited."

Eleven students qualified in competition events and created new pieces the morning of state journalism, and 9 who qualified in preliminary events arrived later for the awards ceremony.

Junior Lydia Dostal placed 3rd in Editorial Writing.

"I wasn't really nervous until about 15 minutes before my round, which surprised me a lot," Dostal said. "I was mostly just excited to be there to represent Scotus and do my best for the team. Although I was nervous, once I got in the room, I was the most locked in I have ever been."

After all competitive writing materials were submitted for both sessions, students waited a painstaking 2 hours before the awards ceremony began.

Senior Lola Doerneman secured 4th place in both Broadcast Feature Story and Newspaper News Writing.

"Listening to who placed in each event, I felt so thankful to be a part of such an amazing team," Doerneman said. "Mrs. Rusher is an incredible journalism coach and deserves to be recognized for it."



Photo Courtesy Janae Rusher

The Scotus state journalism team celebrates with the championship trophy at the state journalism contest in Norfolk on April 27th. Along with the trophy, the team brought back 25 medals with 2 individual champions.

Going into her 18th and final year of her role as journalism advisor, Angie Rusher secured her 6th state journalism championship in 10 years.

"My students always amaze me," Rusher said. "We rarely have more than a handful of returning state journalists; this year it was 4 of 20. They go with no experience and lots of nerves and compete to the best of their abilities. I will leave with a full heart of all the students and stories of success that have come with our state championships."

One of these stories is her own, as she has won a state championship with each of her three daughters: Janae in 2021, Joanna in 2023, and this year, Jillian.

Senior Jillian Rusher qualified in 2 newspaper events and 4 broadcasting events.

"I was so excited to get to compete for a state championship trophy with my mom," Rusher said. "It being both of our last times at state journalism, there were extra nerves and so much added excitement! It came out in our favor, which is so exciting and the best way to end a chapter!"

Even though Scotus went in with the most qualifying entries, they knew they would still have to average in the top half to win. They secured 17 of 25 medals in the top 4 places, with 2 individual champions. Junior Lillian Miller won Newspaper News Writing, and senior Josie Rother won Newspaper Column Writing. Rother placed in 6 other events to lead the team in medals.

"I am still in disbelief that I won my event," Rother said. "As the names were being called, I kept thinking, 'I got at least this place' until my name was called as the champion. I am beyond blessed to walk away from Scotus journalism with a personal and team gold medal."

There were 6 juniors and 14 seniors at state this year. Senior Audrey Stoner placed 5th in Editorial Writing.

"I'm so proud of our team—how we cheered each other on and grew together all year—and I'll be so sad to see my journalism class go," Stoner said. "We have truly connected as a family, so this win wasn't personal, but rather a victory for us all."

English teachers close the chapter

By Ainsley Kuhl

After 20 years together, two friends will be walking out the door with each other at the end of the school year. English and Journalism teacher Angie Rusher and Family and Consumer Science and former English teacher Deb Ohnoutka have both decided this will be their last year teaching.

Rusher started teaching freshmen and juniors in 2005, and Ohnoutka followed her shortly after in 2007.

"When I was in high school, I liked English, and it was probably my best subject," Ohnoutka said. "It was recommended to me that I get an English endorsement, but my first endorsement was in family and consumer science."

Ohnoutka started out teaching junior high English, and this past year she took over the Family and Consumer Science classes.

"I felt it was time to do something different," Ohnoutka said. "When Mrs. Johnson retired, I kind of jumped on that opportunity to go back to my first choice of teaching subjects."

Building relationships with other teachers and students has been important to Ohnoutka during her time here.

"I have just really loved it here," Ohnoutka said. "I have developed some great friendships. I have taught many kids and watched them come from 7th grade all the way up to graduating."

The main reason Ohnoutka wants to retire is to spend more time with her family. She now has three grandchildren who will keep her plenty busy during retirement.

"I have plenty of other hobbies that I would like to pursue, so I am looking forward to that and spending time with my family,"



Ava Bettenhausen / Yearbook Staff

English and Family and Consumer Science teacher Deb Ohnoutka helps freshman Samantha Karges during textiles and clothing class. Ohnoutka has been teaching a total of 19 years with her final year teaching Family and Consumer Science.

Ohnoutka said.

Rusher announced her retirement after winter break. She has been teaching for a total of 25 years, 21 of them being at Scotus.

"When we moved to Columbus, Janae was one," Rusher said. "My first year at Scotus, Joanna was born, and my first year in journalism, Jillian was born. We have all grown up in Columbus Catholic Schools together, and it seems fitting to finish with my girls, too."

In college Rusher planned on majoring in P.E. and coaching but decided to become an English teacher after her professor talked with her about a paper she wrote.

"That interaction would forever change my life, and it is the reason why I decided to take over the journalism program," Rusher said. "I wanted a place for student talents with words and design to grow. Sometimes a student just needs to be told they are good at something."

As a graduate of Scotus, many of Rusher's colleagues were once her teachers, too. When she first came back to Scotus, there were sixteen of her former teachers still teaching.

See TEACHERS, Page 2

Speech sends eight to state

By Audrey Stoner

Despite the challenges of a small team with many younger members and competing at several meets without their full roster, the Scotus speech team still overcame the odds to find success at this year's district meet.

Evan Pavlik was one of five seniors in speech this year and has been a part of the activity's ups and downs since his junior year.

"We could not rely on the same three people to place well at every meet [like last year], so we all had to put in more time and effort to compete well [this season]," Pavlik said.

Districts was held on March 16th at Raymond Central where Scotus took 4th in overall sweepstakes and qualified almost half of its team for the state tournament.

Junior Lydia Dostal competed at districts in both Informative and Oral Interpretation of Drama (OID). She performed the latter as a group with junior Salette Adame-Hernandez and freshmen Natalie Dush and Kaydence Wennekamp.

"Going into districts, I thought I was going to be extremely nervous," Dostal said. "When it came time for me to actually compete, though, I wasn't scared at all. I kind of had the mentality that whatever happens, happens, and I just had to go do my best. Although I didn't qualify for state, I am happy with how I did my first year at districts."

Eight Scotus students qualified for the state tournament in seven different events following a 1st, 2nd, or 3rd place award in their event. This included all five seniors in speech,

See SPEECH, Page 2

ROCK BOTTOM STAFF

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2025-2026 Rock Bottom Dates
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November 11
December 16
February 5
March 5
April 1
May 1

TEACHERS

"They were the ones who inspired me to go into education, and they became my mentors, colleagues, and friends," Rusher said. "I admired their professionalism and ability to teach the fundamentals whether that was in the classroom or on the court or field. I wanted them to be proud of me then, and I still hope for that today."

When there was an opening in the newspaper and yearbook classes in the fall of 2008, Rusher was asked to take it over. She sought to turn them into a 'journalism program' rather than separate classes. She has earned many achievements while coaching journalism, such as winning state journalism in 2017, 2018, 2021, 2022, 2023, 2026, and the NSAA Champions For Coaches Journalism award for 2023-2024.

"I love to help students have a deeper understanding, and, hopefully, inspiring view of words and to give them confidence to use their words in a more meaningful way," Rusher said.

While in retirement, Rusher will be found at her parents house making salsa and freezing corn. She also will be the only one at home with her daughters all in different towns.

"Though we will be 'empty nesters', there will be a lot to do keeping track of everyone, and I will very much enjoy the flexibility to do that," Rusher said.

Both teachers have played major roles in the school, especially in the English department.

"I have done 'all the things', and I will leave with a full heart," Rusher concluded.

SPEECH

two sophomores, and one freshman.

Senior Seth Drueppel qualified for the state meet in both Poetry and Extemporaneous.

"It is a fantastic feeling to know that what we have been working towards and looking forward to has finally come to fruition," Drueppel said.

Eleven days later, on March 27th, the state qualifiers traveled to Kearney to face the next day's state competition with renewed determination.

Senior Ava Bettenhausen competed at the state meet in both Entertainment and OID, the latter of which she performed with Pavlik, sophomores Abbi Pavlik and Celeste Sucha, and freshman Bostyn Marksmeier.

"I am very proud with how all my rounds went, especially OID. I thought they were my best performances all season, and I left my rounds feeling content and satisfied," Bettenhausen said. "If I could go back, I would love to perform my third rounds again just because they ended up being my last performances [ever]. I don't think I would change anything, but I would be sure to live in the moment a little longer."

Although none of Scotus' eight competitors placed at the state meet, the team remained optimistic about their performances and season's ending.

Senior Jacqueline Stoner performed at state in both the Persuasive and the Extemporaneous categories.

"We have a really young team this year, so we may not seem as successful as we used to be from the outside," Stoner said. "However, I have watched our new members grow so much as speakers over the course of this season. That growth may not show in our team rankings yet, but I am confident it will in the years to come."

The meet also posed a tough moment for the team's five seniors as it marked the conclusion of four long seasons of hard work, bonding, and improvement.

"It is really bittersweet to say goodbye to the activity that has shaped my life for the past five years… beyond just ribbons and medals, it has forced me to put myself out there, become more confident, and learn to believe in myself," Stoner reflected. "Having already gained these benefits and more, this year felt more like a victory lap than a competition."



Lydia Dostal / Rock Bottom Staff

Senior Evan Pavlik, sophomores Abbi Pavlik and Celeste Sucha, freshman Bostyn Marksmeier, and senior Ava Bettenhausen pose during a performance of their OID at conference speech on February 25th. The OID, titled "Radio TBS" was about a roadside nativity reenactment by trailor park residents.

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Boys soccer team raises record

By Kate Hendricks

Heavy with senior leadership, the Scotus boys soccer team has had the best start to their season in a long time.

The season started off strong as the team defeated Madison 10-0 on March 19th.

Senior Devin Riedmiller plays as a left back defender for the Shamrocks.

"I feel like this year it feels like we are more of a team and family. We have also focused on lots of correct positioning," Riedmiller said.

The boys followed up their dominating start with one more win that week and two in the following week. They won in overtime against Gross Catholic 2-1 on March 21st. In the following 2 games, the Shamrocks faced Holdrege and Ralston on March 24th and March 27th. The Shamrocks won both games 4-0 and 2-1.

Junior Braeden Liebig plays left wing for the Shamrocks and has 4 goals and 2 assists on the season so far.

"The win against Gross showed that we won't give up when we are down, and we need to keep playing until the whistle blows. We have played many technical teams, showing us the level we need to set," Liebig said.

The Shamrocks then played Platteview the next week, winning 5-1.

Junior forward and backup goalie Charlie Olmer has scored 5 goals this season.

"We have focused on team bonding, which has helped us go on team runs, leading us to win games," Olmer said.

Soon after earning an almost undefeated record, the Shamrocks fell to Gretna, losing 0-9.

"The game that impacted our season the most so far was Gretna because playing a team that is that good was a wake up call and helped us not get too comfortable with our record and work harder to win the games ahead of us," Riedmiller said.

The team then went on to face Lincoln Lutheran/Raymond Central/Parkview Christian Soccer (LLRCPC), winning 3-0. The Shamrocks then followed it up by defeating Conestoga on April 11th and Northwest on April 13th.

Senior goalie Aiden Meers has had over 77 saves this season so far.

"This is my first time playing goalie. 10 days before the first game, Coach Bailey asked me if I would be able to step back there. It has taken a ton of work, but I feel I've stepped into the position well," Meers said.

Next on the Shamrocks' schedule was Kearney Catholic and St. Albert. They fell to Kearney Catholic in a shootout and tied with St. Albert.

Senior Maclain Bailey plays forward and midfielder for the Shamrocks.

"My highlight of the season so far is winning and understanding that I may not be scoring goals or doing what everyone wants, but we are winning and having good outcomes. We need to keep playing our game and not worry about other people talking," Bailey said.

On April 23rd, the team looked to upset rival and reigning state champion Schuyler. The Shamrocks defeated the Warriors 2-1.

Olmer scored the winning goal for the Shamrocks.

"It felt really good to celebrate in the corner flag with the boys," Olmer said, "I think the difference in us beating Schuyler was being able to keep our composure and having fun."

The team will play their last home game against Lakeview tonight before entering the postseason.

Liebig concluded, "We have focused on persistence and not giving up when it's hard. We have been putting in the work since November, and it's been paying off."



Sophia Langan / Yearbook Staff

Junior Charlie Olmer and the Shamrock boys soccer team celebrate after beating the Warriors. The Shamrocks broke Schuyler's 31 game winning streak.



Caroline Rickert / Yearbook Staff

Senior Maclain Bailey takes the ball up the field against Kearney Catholic on April 17th. The Stars won in a shootout.



Hannah Heinrich / Yearbook Staff

Senior Andy Padilla-Arrieta looks to pass the ball up the field against Lincoln Lutheran/Raymond Central/Parkview Christian Soccer at home on April 7th. Padilla-Arrieta leads the team with 7 assists on the season so far.

Soccer kicks back against injuries

By Lydia Dostal

Spring sports are fully underway, and the Scotus girls soccer team has officially kicked off their season. There are 17 members on this year's team. With a current record of [#-#], the girls have been seeing success and are searching for more.

Junior Ainsley Kuhl is the starting goalie for the Shamrocks.

"We're always looking to go to state, but this year we need to win some big games in order to make it that far," Kuhl said.

The team has not had it easy as they have dealt with season ending injuries, leaving them with only three substitute players. Adjusting to these losses has been difficult for both the injured and healthy players.

Sydney Stuart is a senior currently out with a broken clavicle.

"It has been hard and a big adjustment. Many people are having to play different positions. I wish I could be on the field playing with my team, but I am in a new role and trying to be a leader from [there]," Stuart said. "Our team has great effort and is striving to adjust and [continue] getting better."

The girls' opening game took place on March 19th at Bennington High School. The team fought hard, tying the score at one and forcing a shootout. Ultimately, they were defeated by the Badgers.

"The Bennington game [was] the most impactful because it was a good challenge to start the year with," Kuhl said. "We ended up making it to a shootout, and they, unfortunately, hit the shots they needed to win."

Following the disheartening season starter, the Shamrocks took to practicing in the areas they fell short in during the match.

Senior Kayla Hoffman plays midfield for the team.

"After we lost to Bennington, we focused on pattern plays and first touches. The team has done a great job responding ever since," Hoffman said.

The team took on their next two matches at home on March 21st and 22nd against Lexington and Holdrege. They responded to their previous loss, dominating Lexington 9-1 and Holdrege 7-0.

The Shamrocks accomplished their biggest win of the season in their next match up against Concordia on March 30th, defeating them with a score of 10-0.

Sophomore Emily Beiermann has played for two seasons and is a current starter.

"[Both our] offense and defense played amazing. [This game] helped our confidence after playing in other close games," Beiermann said.

Coming off of the three game win streak, the Shamrocks travelled to Gretna on April 6th, where the streak was snapped with a loss of 0-1. The team took this loss into the following days to reflect on how they could improve their game in order to prevent more close losses.

Maia Foreman is a junior center back for the team.

"I think this game really opened our eyes on how much work we needed to put in to get better and grow as a team," Foreman said.

Over the course of the next week, the Shamrocks responded with two wins against Lincoln Lutheran/Raymond Central/Parkview Christian Soccer and Lincoln Lutheran/Norfolk Catholic and one close defeat from Northwest. They travelled to Millard North on April 20th where they were bested 0-1.

Senior Hannah Heinrich is a midfielder on the team.

"It's been hard having to play fast-paced games when the majority of us are playing the entire 80 minutes. We are getting more in shape with each game, however, and we will have the endurance to play with the best teams by the end of the season," Heinrich said.

On April 23rd, the team travelled to Schuyler where they came out victorious with a score of 13-0. The Shamrocks will play their last regular season game tonight against Columbus Lakeview.

Senior Mia Fehringer is currently out with an ACL tear.

"We might not be the most skilled team out there, but, overall, we have great attitude and effort in both practices and games," Fehringer ended.



Lydia Dostal / Rock Bottom Staff

Senior Kayla Hoffman works past the Kearney Catholic defenders during their game on April 17th. This game was one of 8 home games for the Shamrocks.



Lydia Dostal / Rock Bottom Staff

Junior Emilyn Kavan dribbles down the field during the game against Kearney Catholic on April 17th. The Shamrocks were defeated 2-3 in a shootout.

Track prepares for postseason

By Kennedy Krueger

The Scotus track team is preparing for the last leg of their season after a busy run. They have had success at several meets this spring, and they will soon be competing at conference and districts.

To kick off the season, the Shamrocks competed at an indoor meet at Wayne State College. Although this meet did not count toward their season, the team had the chance to prepare for their first real meet.

The team's first official meet was the Jim Puetz Memorial Track Meet on March 31st. At this invitational, the Shamrock girls took 3rd place while the boys took 6th place.

Freshman Evy Kluever competes in long jump, the 100m and 200m races, and the 4x100m relay.

"Our home meet was the most impactful for me so far because I had a big PR in long jump and did well in all my other events," Kluever said.

The next meet for the track team was the Wayne Blue Devil Invitational on April 8th after being rescheduled for weather. The girls brought home 1st, and the boys placed 2nd.

Junior Lillian Miller competes in the shot put and discus throwing events.

"The Wayne Blue Devil meet was rough for discus. I threw three scratches but still ended up placing fourth with my last throw," Miller said. "I PR'ed in shotput, beating my career record by a foot and winning a gold medal for the first time since junior high. It was super exciting to have a real shot at making it to state or placing at districts."

Up next for the Shamrocks was the Boone Central Invitational on April 14th. This meet was a success, with the majority of the team earning personal bests. The girls placed 4th, and the boys took 6th place.

Senior Lily Lancaster competes in the 200m and 400m races and the 4x400m and 4x100 m relays.

"I thought the Boone Central meet went well for both the girls and boys teams. I think we competed better at Boone than we did at previous meets," Lancaster said.



Lillian Miller / Rock Bottom Staff

Junior Grace Hamling leaps over a hurdle at the Wayne State College Invitational on March 21st. Hamling ran a personal best of 15.19 seconds in the 100m hurdles race at the Central City Invitational.

The track team's next meet was on April 17th in Central City. Both the boys and girls placed 6th at this meet.

Freshman Evan Cameron competes in medium and long sprints including the 200m and 400m races and the 4x100m and 4x400m relay races, along with long jump.

"The Central City meet was kind of a road block for me. I had a cold, and it was also very chilly outside. On the bright side, I PR'ed in long jump with all of the wind at my back, so that made me feel better," Cameron said.

On April 23rd, the Shamrocks competed at the Schuyler Invitational. At this meet, the girls took 2nd place, and the boys placed 4th.

Senior Lola Doerneman competed in pole vault, triple jump, long jump, and the 4x100m throwers' relay.

"We had a succcessful meet at Schuyler. The rain and lightning set us back, but it was a blessing because we got more rest time between events," Doerneman said.

This past Tuesday, the team traveled to the Lakeview Invite.

Senior Mike Krienke participates in the shotput and discus throws.

"[I was looking forward to] Lakeview because they're our rivals, and we could win the meet," Krienke said.

On Saturday, the Scotus track team will have their conference meet at Pawnee Park in Memorial Stadium.

Following the conference meet, the team will travel to Battle Creek on May 7th. After this meet, track districts will take place at home on May 12th.

Junior Brooke Krienke races in the 800m race and the 4x800m and 4x400m relay events.

"I am looking forward to districts because it's exciting to compete for state, and we have a chance to compete in a couple of events," Krienke said.

To finish off the season, the state track meet will be held at Burke High School on May 20th and 21st.



Addi Beiermann / Yearbook Staff

Freshman Mya Langan flies over the bar at the Jim Puetz Memorial Track Meet on March 31st. Langan jumped a personal best of 4'10'' at the Wayne Blue Devil Invitational.



Jillian Rusher / Rock Bottom Staff

Junior Aiden Zegar launches over the bar during the Jim Puetz Memorial Track Meet on March 31st. Zegar's personal best is 12'6'' from the Central City invitational.

Golf sets lofty goals

By Jacqueline Stoner

As temperatures climb and the smell of freshly cut grass fills the air, many students are eager to soak in the sunlight and beautiful scenery that signal the beginning of spring. For the Scotus boys golf team, there is nowhere better to enjoy the spring weather than Quail Run Golf Course where they have been busy practicing in between their many meets.

Several familiar faces remain from last year's team–including junior high math teacher Matt Wallish, who made the move from assistant to head coach this year. He takes the place of Scotus activities director Brady Vancura, who led the team to a state runner-up title in 2024 before stepping away to focus on administrative duties.

Senior Carter Sucha has been a member of the team for four years and on varsity for two.

"[Coach Wallish brings] a good relationship with players [to the team], which can help with nerves a lot as you aren't worried about him being judgmental and can just focus on improving," Sucha said. "The atmosphere at practice is a good mix of friendly competition as well as drills, and that makes it very enjoyable. Getting better and showing up day in and day out doesn't feel like a chore."

This postive practice environment allowed the team to debut a strong performance at the David City Invite on March 31st. They placed 2nd overall, with senior Brayden Fleming and sophomores Tyson Cielocha and Clint Saltzgaber each receiving 4th, 6th, and 7th, respectively.

On April 7th, the team delivered another impressive performance for their dual with Schuyler. Fleming, sophomore Matthew Dinslage, and Sucha all swept the top three places, enabling the team to emerge victorious.

However, the Shamrocks fell short at their next tournament at Norris on April 9th, earning low placements individually and as a team. A triangular with Lakeview and David City on April 13th yielded similar results. Though Fleming placed 5th, the team overall was bested by both of their opponents.

Sophomore Alex Chvala has been on the golf team for two years.

"[I think] the Lakeview meet [helped the team grow the most] because it helped us to focus and play well in tough conditions like wind and heat," Chvala said.

The team was able to learn from their mistakes and climb the ranks to 2nd place at a triangular with Stanton and Battle Creek on April 14th. Cielocha led the team with a 4th place finish individually.

At the York Invite on April 16th, however, the Shamrocks faced another tough loss. The team did not earn any placements, but Wallish still feels they walked away with valuable experience.

"[The Stanton and Battle Creek triangular and York Invite] were bigger tournaments with not only Class C, but also Class B teams. We got the chance to see some really good golfers and some really good playing," Wallish explained. "Being able to see that and realize we have some work to do helped us focus on our goals more clearly."

On April 23rd, the team competed at their home tournament where they once again faced disapointing results.

Fleming has been on varsity for the past four years and was the only state qualifier from Scotus last year.

"I am not satisfied with my results [from the home tournament] after having my worst round this year. I was just putting too much pressure on myself before the tournament," Fleming said. "If [the team] learns to destress before tournaments, we should do better in the future."

As the team wraps up their regular season, the pressure is certainly building over their post season goals. On May 8th, they will compete at conference, followed closely by districts on May 18th. They hope to place in the top three at both meets, which will allow them to distinguish themselves as a team and also qualify for state.

The road to victory will not be easy, but according to Wallish, the team is far from giving up.

"At the beginning of the year, we set a goal to make it to state," Wallish said. "In order to do that, we have to do the small things right. So, we are really working on our focus, working on doing the small things well, working on that short game to make sure we're taking the steps to lower those scores so we can make it to state."



Emma Splittgerber / Yearbook Staff

Senior Brayden Fleming tees off at the home tournament on April 23rd. Fleming was the only state qualifier from Scotus last year.



Caroline Rickert / Yearbook Staff

Senior Noah Chohon prepares to putt at the home tournament on April 23rd. Chohon is one of three seniors on the team this year.

Juniors impact baseball's season

By Ainsley Kuhl

With a tough schedule to start the year, the Columbus Discoverers baseball team is not backing down and hopes to swing back to finish the season. After losing 8 varsity seniors last year, the team needed to fill many positions. There are 5 players from Scotus on varsity this year, filling 3 starting positions. Out of the 5, 4 of them are juniors, and 1 is a senior.

For the first game of the season, the Discoverers started strong, beating the Norfolk Panthers 6-2. Between then and now, the team has had a difficult schedule, but there are still many opportunities for the team to bounce back.

Junior Connor Cameron is a third baseman for the Discoverers this year.

"Our goal is to reach state," Cameron said. "We had a hard schedule to start the year, but this second half are all winnable games to give us a good seed in the post season."

On March 24th, the Discoverers faced the Skutt Catholic Skyhawks. They kept it close, but ended up losing 5-6.

Junior Brody Lindhorst is a varsity starter for the Discoverers playing second base.

"We were playing very well and had the game tied going into the 7th inning," Lindhorst said.

The team played the Kearney Bearcats on March 30th. They lost 1-2 but battled, making it a tight, low scoring game.

Junior Karsten Killham is a pitcher for the Discoverers.

"We did everything we could. We just couldn't hit," Killham said. "Then we finally got in a groove and started to hit the ball."

On April 2nd, the team took on the Class B number 5 Norris. With the game starting off slow, the Discoverers pulled through and won 1-0.

"Our pitchers did really well, and our fielders made plays when it mattered most," Cameron said.

The Heartland Athletic Conference Tournament took place on April 14th and 15th in Lincoln. The team prepared by fine tuning their play, and many players also chose to stay after to practice extra reps.

"The biggest help to succeeding in the first round was mental toughness," Cameron said. "It is hard to win a game down 7, but the guys came together to crawl back and win."

For the first round, the Discoverers played the Fremont Tigers. They won the game 10-7, which advanced them on to the next.

"Everyone was excited to play a rival for the first round," Lindhorst said. "We started off slow but came back and won."

On the second day of the conference tournament, the team faced Lincoln East, whom they had already played earlier in the season. They kept it close, but ended up losing to them 4-9.

On April 25th, the team faced the Buena Vista Bison. They came out on top with a score of 12-1.

Tomorrow, the Discoverers will take on the Pius X Thunderbolts in one of the last 4 games of the normal season. With it quickly coming to a close, the team is looking to finish it off strong.

"We are excited for the rest of the season and can make it far," Lindhorst said.



Ainsley Kuhl / Rock Bottom Staff

Junior Connor Cameron runs back to 1st base in the Discoverer's game against Norris on April 2nd. Cameron starts at third base for the Discoverers.



Ainsley Kuhl / Rock Bottom Staff

Junior Karsten Killham pitches against Norris on April 2nd. The Discoverers won the game with a score of 1-0.



Ainsley Kuhl / Rock Bottom Staff

Junior Brody Lindhorst bats against Skutt Catholic on March 24th. Lindhorst lead the team with 2 hits in the game.

Tennis involvement increases

By Josie Rother

With a packed schedule to start off the spring sports season, girls tennis has already competed in 11 meets. There are 5 girls from Scotus out for tennis this year: 2 on the junior varsity team and 3 on reserves. Tennis has not been a popular sport among the girls at Scotus the last few years, so the increasing interest in tennis at Scotus may be a sign of its future growth.

Libbie Sliva is a freshman at Scotus and plays on the junior varsity team.

"I went out for tennis because I didn't really want to play soccer or do track, and I wanted to enjoy my spring sport," Sliva said.

Although most of the girls out for tennis this year have limited experience in the sport, they still decided to give tennis a try. The girls supported each other and looked at tennis as an opportunity to have fun with each other and better themselves.

Sliva enjoys playing doubles with her partner Samantha Karges.

"[I like to play doubles more than singles] because I get to play with Samantha," Sliva said. "It is fun when we get a point because we get to do our celebration."

On April 2nd, the junior varsity tennis team took on Waverly. The team had a successful day with all of its players winning their matches.

Karges is also a freshman at Scotus and plays on the junior varsity team.

"The Waverly meet [was my favorite because] I got to play singles and doubles," Karges said. "On the ride back we went to Chick-fil-A and played games, and it was so much fun."

Unlike many sports, tennis does not have officials overseeing the matches. Instead, the players "call their own balls" and rely on sportsmanship and good character. The lesson of character and sportsmanship are among the many lessons the Scotus players have learned from this tennis season.

Leah Fleming is a sophomore at Scotus who plays on the reserve team. This year is Fleming's first year on the tennis team.

"[One lesson I have learned from tennis is] there will always be something to improve on," Fleming said.

The junior varsity team has 6 meets left in their season. The last meet on May 14th is 8 days before the varsity team heads to the state tournament. As the end of the season approaches, the team will continue practicing and improving.

Vivienne Karges is also a freshman at Scotus who plays on the junior varsity team.

"My favorite memory so far has been the practices," Karges said. "The coaches are really nice, and the drills we do are a lot of fun."

Karges prefers singles over doubles because she enjoys the rallies and smaller court.

"Trying something new with your friends makes it so much more enjoyable," Karges concluded.



Mia Fehringer / Yearbook Staff

Freshman Libbie Sliva lines up her forehand during her singles match against Hastings at Gerrard Park on April 14th. Sliva is one of four freshmen from Scotus who went out for girls tennis this year.



Mia Fehringer / Yearbook Staff

Freshman Samantha Karges serves the tennis ball during her singles match against Hastings on April 14th at Gerrard Park. Karges plays doubles and singles on Columbus High's junior varsity team.



Isabella Chasteen / Rock Bottom Staff

Freshman Vivienne Karges returns the ball during her doubles match against Norfolk on April 23rd at Pawnee Park. Karges plays both singles and doubles.



RYAN ALLEN

St. Gregory the Great Seminary

Philosophy

"All will be well, and all manner of things will be well."
~ St. Julian of Norwich



MACLAIN BAILEY

Southeast Community College

Automotive Repair

My favorite memory is my dad coaching me through high school and making it to state soccer freshman and senior year.



JACKSON BAUMERT

Northeast Community College

Applied Science

"Bruh, I paused my game to be here."
~ Unknown



ADDI BEIERMANN

University of Nebraska-Lincoln

Pre-Nursing

"Life is what happens to you when you're busy making other plans."
~ John Lennon



GAVIN BEIERMANN

Southeast Community College

Electrical Automation Technician

My favorite memory is doing the Petri dishes with Mrs. Lahm in biology. We swabbed random things, and it turned out disgusting.



BRETT BELZER

University of Nebraska-Omaha

Civil Engineering

My favorite memory is going to all the Scotus football games my senior year.



MAX BESHALER

University of Nebraska-Lincoln

Biology

"You could fix anything with duct tape and a spool of baling wire on the farm."
~ Mr. Brockhaus



AVA BETTENHAUSEN

University of South Dakota

Creative Writing

"And maybe then, we'd remember to slow down at all of our favorite parts."
~ Paramore



HUNTER BRUNKHORST

National Guard

My favorite memory is going to the Gothenburg wrestling camp and walking around the town with my friends.



CAMILA CARRIZALES

University of Nebraska-Kearney

Biology

"Sometimes you will never know the value of a moment until it becomes a memory."
~ Dr. Seuss



HELENE CHARD

Central Community College-Grand Island

Occupational Therapy Assistant

"A day without homework is like a day without sunshine."
~ Mr. Salyard



ISABELLA CHASTEEN

Texas Christian University

Physics & Pre-Law

"What is done in love is done well."
~ Vincent Van Gogh



GIGI CHILAPA

University of Nebraska-Lincoln

Psychology & Business and Law

"Whatever you do, always give 100%. Unless you're giving blood or getting a divorce."
~ Bill Murray



NOAH CHOHON

National Guard

"An airball is better than a shot clock violation."
~ Unknown



JAKE DEMUTH

St. Gregory the Great Seminary

Philosophy

"Never, ever give up on hope, never doubt, never tire, and never become discouraged."
~ Pope St. John Paul II



LOLA DOERNEMAN

University of Nebraska-Lincoln

Secondary Spanish Education

My favorite memory was the deep conversations, blaring music, and moments when we were laughing till we were crying on bus rides.



SETH DRUEPPEL

University of Nebraska-Lincoln

Mechanical Engineering

My favorite memory is freshmen orientation when Peter was the first person to talk to me.



PETER FALTYS

Dixie Tech

Heavy Equipment Tech

"The list is long but distinguished."
~ Goose, *Top Gun*



MIA FEHRINGER

Benedictine College

Biology

"You're fine. Drink some water and go outside."
~ My Mom



BRAYDEN FLEMING

Southeast Community College

Auto Collision Repair

"The more I work and practice, the luckier I seem to get."
~ Gary Player



EVA FOREMAN

Southeast Community College

Radiology Technician

My favorite memory is when the projector fell in Mrs. Lahm's class!



EMILIA GASSEN

Wayne State College

Nursing

"Lift yourself up to Him, who has lowered Himself for you."
~ St. Gemma Galgani



SIDNEY GONKA

The CLI Conservatory

Pre-Professional Dance Training Program

My favorite memory is cheering on the sidelines at games!



HANNAH HEINRICH

University of Nebraska-Lincoln

Animal Science

"This is the moment, be confident, have fun!"
~ Fudge



KATE HENDRICKS

University of Nebraska-Lincoln

Nutrition & Health Sciences

My favorite memory is making it to state volleyball, along with all the friendships I built and the people I've met.



KATE HOFFMAN

University of Nebraska-Lincoln

Health Sciences

"If you see beauty in something, don't wait for others to agree."
~ Sherihan Gamal



KAYLA HOFFMAN

University of Nebraska-Lincoln

Nutrition & Health Sciences

My favorite memory was having the opportunity to play games and experience state with all my friends and family throughout high school.



BRYNN HOMOLKA

Florida Gulf Coast University

Business & Agribusiness

My favorite memory is going to state golf and the practices leading up to state.



HUDSON KLOKE

University of Nebraska-Lincoln

Political Science

"Roads? Where we're going, we don't need roads."
~ Dr. Emmett Brown



ALEXIS KNOWLTON

University of Nebraska-Kearney

Political Science

"It does not do to dwell on dreams and forget to live."
~ Albus Dumbledore



MIKE KRIENKE

University of Nebraska-Omaha

Civil Engineering

"There is no tomorrow."
~ Apollo Creed



LILY LANCASTER

Montana State University

Chemistry

My favorite memory was performing at games with my friends.



SOPHIA LANGAN

University of Nebraska-Lincoln

Nutrition & Exercise Science

"Not my name quarterback!"
~ Siena Agudong



ALEJANDRA LOPEZ-MARTINEZ

Central Commmunity College

Nursing

"I trust the next chapter because I know the author."
~ Mary Morrissey



ELI MAGUIRE

University of Nebraska-Omaha

Mechanical Engineering

My favorite memory is chemistry class with Mrs. Dusel.



MYLES MCGANNON

University of Nebraska-Kearney

Biology/Health Sciences

"The best way to predict the future is to create it."
~ Peter Drucker



AIDEN MEERS

University of Nebraska-Lincoln

Electrical Engineering

My favorite memory is shaving my head at Evan's house to support Sam.



JEM MEYER

Southeast Community College

Busisness/Realtor

"A tree falls the way it leans; be careful which way you lean."
~ The Lorax



KOBE MICEK

University of Nebraska-Lincoln

Pre-Veterinary Medicine

My favorite memory is the state wrestling tournament my senior year.



CLAIRE OAKLEY

University of Nebraska-Lincoln

Nursing

My favorite memory is going on the March for Life my junior year.



ANDY PADILLA-ARRIETA

United States Army

Parachute Rigger

"If you are not living on the edge, you're taking up space."
~ Mr. Ericson



SOPHIE PARKER

College of Hair Design

Cosmetology

A fun fact about me is, despite my last name, my car never ends up between the lines.



EVAN PAVLIK

Benedictine College

Political Sciences

"I feel like we fell out of the lucky tree, hit every branch on the way down, and ended up in a pool of cash and Sour Patch Kids." ~ Ted Lasso



DEVIN RIEDMILLER

Central Community College

Criminal Justice

"Before you try once, think twice."
~ Cole Roach



FAVIO RIVERO RUBIO

Doane University

Software Engineering, Wrestling

"Are you a different animal and the same beast?"
~ Kobe Bryant



VALERIA RODRIGUEZ

University of Nebraska-Lincoln

Biochemistry

My favorite memory is sitting on a stool on top of a bus seat with Josie Rother during my junior year of one act.



JOSIE ROTHER

University of Nebraska-Lincoln

Pre-Veterinary Medicine

"You have to give yourself the chance to fail before you will ever succeed."
~ Kayla Hollatz



JILLIAN RUSHER

Wayne State College

Elementary & Special Education

"There are good days, and there are bad days."
~ Mrs. Rusher



ADDI SCHUMACHER

University of Nebraska-Lincoln

Interior Design

"Even if you fall short, what better way is there to live?"
~ Gwen Stacy



BEAR SCOTT

Midland University

Criminal Justice, Football

"You're braver than you believe, and stronger than you seem, and smarter than you think"
~ Christopher Robin



THOMAS SETTJE

Midland University

General Studies, Football

My favorite memory is when we had a dance circle in football and Coach Linder joined in the middle of the circle without question.



DANTE SMITH

United States Air Force

Electronics

"Life moves pretty fast. If you don't stop and look around once in a while, you could miss it"
~ Ferris Bueller



AUDREY STONER

University of Texas at Dallas

Biochemistry

My favorite memory is when Jessica asked Mr. Salyard if we could get a class pet, and he said, "We already have one!" as he pointed at Peter Faltys.



ELIZABETH STONER

University of Nebraska-Lincoln

Physics

"And know this too, My daughter; all creatures, whether they know it or not, and whether they want to or not, always fulfill My will."
~ Jesus to St. Faustina



JACQUELINE STONER

University of Nebraska-Lincoln

Biochemistry

A fun fact about me is I once had to make up a list of petitions on the spot for a school Mass.



SYDNEY STUART

Southeast Community College

Early Childhood Education

"If you love someone, you prove it."
~ Sister Bethany Madonna



CARTER SUCHA

University of Nebraska-Lincoln

Business Administration

"Don't count the days, make the days count."
~ Muhammad Ali



WILL SUEPER

University of Nebraska-Kearney

Biology

"The reward for conformity is that everyone likes you but yourself."
~ Rita Mae Brown



KIYA TAYLOR

College of Saint Mary

Kinesiology

"Wanting to be someone else is a waste of who you are."
~ Kurt Cobain



CHASE WANGLER

Northeast Community College

Building Construction, U.S. National Guard

"Your only limitation is the one you set up in your own mind."
~ Napoleon Hill



CARSON WESSEL

University of Nebraska-Kearney

Health Sciences, Football

"Nice catch, cheer."
~ Noah Beck



KADE WULF

University of Nebraska-Lincoln

Construction Management

"Eat, sleep, game, repeat."
~ Unknown

WE LOVE YOU AND MISS YOU, SAM!



SAM NAHORNY

From Sammy Superheros Foundation:

As many of you know, our sweet Sam is currently inpatient and not feeling his best. While this isn't the graduation season anyone imagined, we still want to celebrate this incredible milestone for such an amazing young man. To help lift his spirits, the family has chosen to do a card shower in honor of Sam's graduation! If you'd like to send a note of encouragement, congratulations, or just a little love, cards can be mailed to:

Sammy's Superheroes Foundation
Attn: Sam Nahorny
2002 23rd St
Columbus, NE 68601

Your kindness, prayers, and support mean more than words can say. Let's surround Sam with love as he reaches this special moment. # StandWithSam

Heavenly Father, we thank you for the gift of our brother, Sam. We thank you for the times of joy, the times of health, and the times of companionship. In this time more than ever, we ask your healing hand upon our dear brother. We ask that he may be brought home to us as a sign of your fidelity and charity, but either way, prepare our hearts and our dear brother's heart to accept your will. Amen



Issy Chasteen

During my time at Scotus, I have done three years of one act, four years of musical, four years of choir, one official year of speech, and many side quests in between. While I may seem like a loud, comfortable-in-my-skin senior, I was not always.

My first year of high school, ignoring eighth grade because it was a doozy, I was horrified by everyone and everything. I talked so quietly no one could understand me on the first try, and I never thought my existence was relevant.

One day after Shamrock Singers, Ms. Salyard asked me a question.

"Hey, Issy…We need people for the musical, can you help out?"

Without my consent, the words, "I'd love to!" fell out of my face.

I was horrified. I had skipped auditions because I had a bone-shaking fear of being in front of people, and now I was going to sing on a stage in front of 40 of them?

Four months later, I was on stage singing "You're Never Fully Dressed Without a Smile" as a Boylan sister in Annie, and it was amazing. I had absolutely fallen in love with the activity and the exhilaration of being on the stage.

Looking back on it all, I kept surprising myself. I had seen my peers doing the junior high play and the stubborn, close-minded part of myself decided I would never be good enough to do the same. Fast forward a few years, and I had a lead role in one act and musical, and I did a solo for district music.

I never expected to end up where I am right now, and I think I finally know how I did it. I let myself be surprised and accepted the change. While it was utterly horrifying, a part of me knew I was doing something good.

I changed in many ways, and I found a group of people who made me feel seen and valued. I had previously thought I would never be involved with them, but somehow they ended up being the people I needed most.

If there is one thing I could say to someone coming into high school as afraid as I was, it would be to expect and accept the surprises you will inevitably encounter.

I make it sound light and fluffy, but not all surprises are good ones.

There is a range of unpleasant surprises, and each can carry a different weight. Whether it is losing a family member, being ditched by a friend, or getting a bad grade on a project you were proud of, there is an upside to it. Maybe you will build a stronger bond with a family member, open a door to a new friend group, or simply get better at accepting criticism. Life is a strange, bumpy road that no one can navigate with a closed mind.

When I discovered my desire to join the Church, I had to face the fear of becoming the only Catholic in my family. While it was a time of much conflict in my life, I embraced the surprise and joined the Church at the Easter Vigil.

Accepting the strangeness of my life led me to the Lord, all the people I love, and to the person I am now. I implore you, whichever grade you are in, to encourage and welcome the unexpected into your life.

An extremely common saying is, "Variety is the spice of life," and I believe this applies to daily life. Mix it up once in a while: try to go out for a new activity, join a club, or give a stranger a compliment. The only thing to avoid during these precarious years of your life is to shut your heart and your mind.

I am grateful that I was brought to this school and to all of you.

This is Isabella Chasteen, signing off.



Kate Hendricks

It was August and the start of my senior year. The day started off like any other day, bringing three or four bags into school with my hands filled: my school backpack, my volleyball bag, my cheerleading bag, and my lunchbox in my spare hand. The time had flown by, and in a way, I still felt like the nervous seventh grader who walked through the north doors.

Looking back at my first days at Scotus, seventh grade me was scared and confused for the new year ahead of her. Sixth grade was cut off by the pandemic, our graduation was cancelled, everyone was quarantined in their homes, and friends were seen over zoom. Stepping into those doors on the first day of seventh grade gave me so many emotions. I was scared to go to a new school but excited to finally be with all of my friends again.

As normal seventh graders did at the time, we attended all of the sporting events, activities, and anything else. Watching all of the high schoolers compete with their friends and be involved in all of the activities made me want to be included in those groups. Because of that, I decided to try almost everything even though I dreaded coming to school every day. I joined volleyball, track, cheer, campus ministry, HOSA, NHS, FBLA, journalism, and GodTeens.

Just like everyone when joining a new activity, there was much uncertainty on how they would go. Being so involved made me extremely busy. There were many ups and downs, but I can proudly say I stuck to all of these activities to this day.

Being so involved pushed me out of my comfort zone at the time, and I met many people I would never have crossed paths otherwise. I realized being involved in all of these sports and activities gave me not just experiences, but friendships.

By the end of my junior year, I was finally enjoying school. My busy schedule with cheer and athletics made me realize how much the people around me shaped the experience. One of the greatest parts of high school has been sharing these experiences with my sister, playing volleyball and running track.

Freshman and sophomore year me wanted time to fly by and school to end. Now, looking back, the late-night practices and weekend activities were all moments that shaped my high school experience.

I'd often hear, "senior year goes so fast, so enjoy it" from my friends who graduated last year. I shrugged off those words, not realizing how true they were. My senior year, I've hit every last possible. My last volleyball season came to an end, and I was faced with the fact that something I had spent countless hours on was finished. These final moments made me appreciate the people I've met and the memories I've created.

Needless to say, never will any activity replace the atmosphere, energy, and friendship of a high school sport, competing with my friends and people I have grown up with for years. I am so grateful God gave me the opportunity to participate in all of these activities, give the glory to him, and meet so many amazing people along the way.

Cherish your time, memories, and the people you spend it with because they will fly by in an instant. As Ecclesiastes 3:1 says, "For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven."

This is Kate Hendricks, signing off.







Josie Rother

Getting stuck in the routine of high school is dangerous. Tests, assignments, classwork, and projects seem to drown us even when we leave the school, and freshman me wanted nothing to do with school. Sure, I was still obsessed with having good grades, but I wanted to avoid school as much as I could. All the mundane of my daily routine seemed to suck the life out of me. The bell rung, I move mindlessly to the next classroom and spent the next 43 minutes of my life stuck inside my head, and in all honesty, I was comfortable with this existence. A true thought daughter, I escaped to movies, books, and music constantly, which powered my day dreams. In my head, I could escape what I was convinced were the worst eight hours of my life, but this thinking completely undermined the blessings and experiences God wanted to give me in the dull moments of my life.

It was in one of my methods to escape reality that I realized one of the most important lessons I will ever learn: every moment of life is precious and has a purpose. In a simple movie about high schoolers living a seemingly mundane life similar to the one I felt trapped in, I was finally able to recognize the value in each moment of my life. Making its debut in 1989, *Dead Poet's Society* was a movie that had been on my "To Be Watched" list for almost a year before I finally decided to watch it. This movie changed my perspective on high school, and the lesson it taught me can be described in a simple latin phrase: "Carpe Diem," meaning "Seize the Day". The movie is a story of a few high school boys trying to find passion and critical thinking in their everyday lives. In their pursuit, and with the inspiration from a teacher, the boys decide to form a club called The Dead Poet's Society. Through the movie, the viewer can see each of the boys grow into their interests and character as they strive to seize the day. Now, I am not going to spoil the ending of this movie, but the overall message changed my perspective on school.

Striving to "Seize the Day" in school seemed impossible at first, but after a while, I started to see the value in the boring, everyday moments of classroom life. By seizing the day, my internal monologue turned into a driver of conversation and connection instead of a cage. I started to have real conversations with my classmates instead of retreating into myself, and by paying attention to what my teachers were saying, I was able to solidify my beliefs and find my interests. Some parts of school are still "boring" to me, but by staying present in those moments, I have strengthened my critical thinking and creative mind.

Life is not like the movies. The plot is not linear, and it does not always make sense, but that does not mean it has no value. From my high school experience, I have made friends and grown apart from a few, achieved many goals, quit every sport I have ever played, found my passions, and realized my future career needs to be something that has a slightly different schedule each day.

High school was not one big highlight reel, but by striving to seize every day, I have been able to see the value in all my experiences.

As I move into the next chapter of my life, I will carry the lesson of "Carpe Diem" close to my heart. I want to strive to find the beauty in my reality, so when I arrive at the final credits of my life, I am certain I lived every moment and seized every day.

This is Josie Rother, signing off.



Audrey Stoner

"Nobody is perfect."

This refrain is repeated over and over to kids of all ages by parents, teachers, and classmates alike. In fact, we hear it so often, it becomes the automatic response to any mistake or failure confided in us. It was not until my junior year of high school, though, that I finally grasped the saying's true meaning beyond a mindless string of words.

I spent my entire freshman and sophomore years chasing academic perfection instead of letting go of what I could never be. Sure, my grades benefitted, but by the time junior year hit, I was miserable. I would get a paper back with a 100 scribbled at the top in red pen, but instead of celebrating, waves of anxiety crashed over me that I would not measure up on the next one. My life was consumed with looking forward instead of living in the present, my worth was always in question based on the scores I received, and everything less than perfection felt like the end of my world. Then, I started college physics.

Physics class was unlike any other class I had ever experienced. I was perpetually lost, constantly catching up to the course's fast pace and spending hours cramming notecards for tests, only to watch my grade slowly slip further and further down. The breaking point was earning a C- on a test, the lowest I had ever received. As I stared at that bright red score scribbled across the top of my text, I spiraled. *What does Mr. Salyard think of me now? What will my parents say? Will my classmates see this and think I'm not smart anymore?* The thoughts raced circles in my head until I could hardly focus, the only thing remaining being a singular crushing sense: *I can't do this.*

You know what, though? Life went on. The sun still rose the next morning, and I woke up and pushed through. I corrected my test, learned from my mistakes, and moved on. In doing so, something miraculous quietly occurred: I let go of being perfect.

Of course, I still gave my all on every test. However, instead of beating myself up over the eventual result being less than perfect, I celebrated the B's I earned because they were not F's. When I missed 8 points on a test, I was proud it was not 9, accepting I had tried my best, and that was all that mattered. It felt quite literally like a million pounds had been lifted off my shoulders. In letting go, I finally found the peace and joy I had spent years chasing in every next academic score or achievement.

The point is, no one here on earth will ever be perfect. Whether it is at school, work, or home, there will always be those heart-skips-a-beat, pit-in-your-stomach, oh-crap-I-messed up moments. However, that does not mean you are not worthy, not good enough, or good for nothing. My spiritual mentor once told me something along the lines of, "Just because it's not perfect doesn't mean you can't be proud of it," and it stuck.

If I could give any high schooler one piece of advice, it would be this: learn from my mistakes and be proud of yourself for the best you gave. Quit dwelling on the endless "what if" questions as if they ever could change what is done and gone. The old saying to "do your best and forget the rest" is cliche, yet it is worth its weight in gold.

This is Audrey Stoner, signing off.



Sydney Stuart

Ever since I was a little girl, I thought high school would be the place where I found myself. I thought I would get life "figured out" and know exactly who I was and who I wanted to be. I looked up to the seniors and juniors in the hallway as a seventh grader and thought they had life figured out.

Growing into eighth and ninth grade, the looming feeling of being behind never left me, and especially in ninth grade, I learned high school was harder than I thought it would be. I compared myself to everyone around me. I thought I had to be perfect to be an A/B honor roll student, a starting athlete, or a friend worthy enough to be picked first. If I was perfect in everything, that meant I had life figured out, but I knew I was far from perfect; thus, I thought I would never achieve honor roll, a starting spot, or genuine friends.

It's not hard to imagine how my sophomore year went based on the mindset I clung to. At some point, all of my imperfections and repeated belief of not "figuring it out" caught up to me. I made sophomore year incredibly harder on myself than it needed to be. I was trying to make me into someone I was never meant to be. This mindset I curated towards school and achievements convinced myself to stop trying because I would never be enough. I felt more lost in life than ever before; I felt like a nobody.

A mix of maturity and growing deeper in my faith led to some revelations the summer before junior year. I kept busy by working at a daycare, attending retreats, and even journeying to the National Eucharistic Congress where I encountered Jesus in the Eucharist for the first time. That summer, a peculiar longing started to enter my heart. I didn't want to be a nobody anymore. The Eucharist I encountered showed me the place reserved for me in Heaven, and Someone who loved me despite my imperfections and didn't need me to get life figured out. He didn't make me feel incomplete or unloveable. I decided I was going to turn my high school career around and for once not use all my energy trying to be "perfect" in the eyes of other people, but live knowing my identity is in Christ. I wanted to find who God made me to be.

With the newfound fire in my heart, I used my energy to grow in relationship with God and, most importantly, myself. I started going to Mass on Sunday, journaling, taking walks, and genuinely praying.

Junior year turned out to be my favorite year; I hung out with friends I loved, found hobbies and activities I liked and looked forward to everyday, and I learned to be my true self. Junior year felt like I was fully living. Part of understanding who I was meant accepting change and loving myself at the same time. Truth is, I will always be changing and learning more about myself. What I learned was that I will never truly know who I am. Life became easier when I instead gave it to God and trusted in his plan.

Now, as I am a senior, I have been thinking about when I was in seventh grade looking up to the seniors in the hallways. Here is what I wish they told me. I have missed meetings, forgotten to turn in assignments, almost failed a class, cried at night because I couldn't figure out a math problem, slept in too late and missed class, did things I regret, fought with friends, and more. These, however, have never made me any less worthy or affected who I am. In reality, life goes on, and we figure it out. No one deserves to feel like they can't be their true self. As Oscar Wilde said, "Be yourself, everyone else is already taken."

This is Sydney Stuart, signing off.



Jillian Rusher

High school is hard. Whether it's a good or bad hard, high school is not easy. Most students are involved in a million activities, want to get good grades, have friends, get sleep at night, eat enough, and on top of everything, simply keep their sanity.

I watched this life of busyness with my two older sisters, Janae and Joanna. They both played sports, were a part of in-school and out-of-school activities, and had good grades, and this life seemed exciting to me. I couldn't wait for it to be my turn.

As I went through my freshman and sophomore years, I felt the path my sisters led was the only path there was. I would play sports, be a part of clubs and activities, and get good grades.

After my sophomore year, I felt burnt out. I was tired of looking for my identity in places that weren't satisfying my heart. I had to decide whether I would continue through the path I felt people expected from me, or if I would stray away from that norm.

This was the hardest part of high school for me. I've always been an overthinker, and since…forever… I knew what my high school career would look like. All of a sudden, I was contemplating changing my plan. Going down this unknown path? No thank you, but still, there was a little pull on my heart. It was telling me this wasn't as good as it gets. What was the best for my sisters wasn't set to be what was best for me.

Junior year, I started down my own road. I decided to quit basketball, and that was one of the hardest decisions I have made in my entire life. I don't think it is fair to say I quit because of one aspect of the sport. Basketball is still my favorite sport, but I knew it wasn't fulfilling for my heart anymore.

I decided to start working at the St. Bonaventure after-school care. It brought me more joy than I could have ever imagined being around kids, seeing their happiness, and realizing how much I love helping others feel seen and loved. Having a job didn't necessarily lighten my load, but my load was satisfying and enjoyable for me. There were definitely times my thoughts went to, what if I stayed out for basketball? And I would be lying if I said I didn't miss it sometimes, but at the end of the day, I can see how closing that chapter was the best decision for me.

So, now we're finally here, senior year, filled with all the lasts. Along with all of the lasts, I decided to try something for the first time, one act. I wasn't a lead, but I had lines. I was quickly a part of the "one act family" as I had heard it called, and this is exactly how I would explain it. I was so gladly accepted into this new group of people, and it was the best part of my senior year.

Looking back, I realized my sisters didn't do one act, they didn't work at the St. Bonaventure Daycare, and I seemed to have carved my own path–but what I noticed most is in the end, it didn't matter. By the end, I wasn't thinking about what my sisters did or didn't do. It wasn't a contest to see how different I could be from them. I was thinking about what Jillian *did* want to do and what was best for *my* heart.

High school is hard, and there isn't much way to make it easy, but you still have a choice. Do you want it to be unfulfilling or fulfilling hard? I promise, even when high school is hard, if you have chosen to do what brings you joy, you will make it through.

This is Jillian Rusher, signing off.







Lola Doerneman

To be completely honest, I struggled writing this signoff. I had so many memories, activities, and events from Scotus running through my head that impacted who I am today. They all have importance, so I had no idea what to write about. I am going to miss everything about Scotus, and I don't think I realized how much I love this school until my senior year.

When I look back on my favorite memories, though, one activity stands out the most: basketball. Since kindergarten, I have played this sport, and the skills and relationships built around it have greatly influenced me. I wish I could say I loved every minute of it, but I would be lying. The hard times taught me how to find joy in life and make every moment count.

I can't explain how much I loved high school basketball. It's the feeling before home games when your heart is beating so loud you can hear it during the national anthem. It's the pure joy of diving on the ground to get a loose ball just so your teammate can get an open layup. It's the tears streaming down your face because the conversations you're having on the bus can't possibly be any funnier. It's the "I can't believe it's over" sitting on the bench in an empty gym as you stare at the scoreboard. All these moments will never happen again, but I won't ever forget the way they made me feel because they taught me so much.

Basketball is not an easy sport. You are always out of your comfort zone. Practices are extremely physical and strenuous. This can be exhausting and make people hate going to practice every single day. I know I did when the season got long, but if I have learned anything from all those tough practices, losing close games, and especially showing up when I don't want to, I have learned you have to find joy in what you are doing. I found myself in the middle of my sophomore season just trying to survive and get through each practice. I'd constantly be looking at the clock and counting down the minutes until I was set free to go home. I always saw the difficult parts of practice as negative. This quote I heard from Saint Pier Giorgio Frassati changed my whole perspective. "We must never just exist, but live." From that day, I started taking every day as it came and tried to see the good in everything. Our lives become real when we decide to start actually living abundantly. I started being grateful for the activities I "got" to do, rather than I "had" to do, and I became so much more joyful.

Hearing this quote didn't make practices any easier, though. I still had to run many lines and give 100% effort when I felt like I was dying. I still had days when the last thing I wanted to do was work hard and have a good attitude. What changed was my purpose for it all. I never knew when my last practice would be, the last time I would get to suit up, or the last time I would get to tip off for the game. Instead of counting down the minutes, I chose to laugh at the funny analogies Coach Ridder made or the silly moments I messed up. I chose to smile when I walked in the gym every day after school because you only get to play the sports you love for a short amount of time. I made some of my best friends with the teammates I competed against. These are the moments that made basketball so fun and enjoyable.

Life isn't going to be easy, and if you are in sports, practice every day sure isn't easy, but if you choose to look on the bright side, your whole perspective will change. By choosing joy and optimism when it's hard, we go from just trying to survive to living. John 10:10 says, "I came so that they might have life and have it more abundantly."

This is Lola Doerneman, signing off.



Jacqueline Stoner

My childhood best friend was a basketball. Yes, you read that right. For years in elementary school, I spent every recess bouncing my favorite basketball around the playground, talking to it, and even coming up with elaborate trick routines for us to perform together. Teachers constantly told me I needed to play with my friends more, but they didn't realize I couldn't seem to make any no matter how hard I tried.

Walking into Scotus for the first time, I resolved to make my time here different. No more nicknames, no more conversations that stopped when I walked up, and no more spending free time with a basketball instead of real friends. Like the main character in every high school coming-of-age movie, I was going to reinvent myself into the kind of person others would jump at the chance to hang around.

Unfortunately, real life has a way of turning out nothing like the movies. I changed countless things about myself–my signature hairstyle, my sense of style, the way I sat and stood and talked and breathed–and though I gained more friends as a result, it didn't make me happier. I often laid on my bedroom floor at night and cried, begging God to tell me who I was because I didn't know anymore. I had become so focused on gaining others' approval that I had lost sight of what it meant to be me.

I tried to fill the void with activities, but that didn't work either. I placed last at almost every cross country race I ran, was fired from my first job, and somehow managed to dislocate my elbow during an easy warmup in track. It seemed like no matter what I did or how hard I tried, I always managed to fail miserably. I began to think maybe that was just who I was. A failure.

Sitting in a dusty chapel at a retreat my sophomore year, I remember confessing to a nun who was there how lost, empty, and worthless I felt. She listened patiently, then suggested I ask God how He saw me. As soon as I did, the phrase "daughter of the Most High King" popped into my head. Six words, and yet they changed my life forever.

I started taking my faith more seriously, and the closer I became with God, the more I believed the words I'd heard were true. My identity didn't come from my achievements or what other people thought of me; it came from a God who saw all my failings and still claimed me as His beloved daughter. In Him, I finally felt free to be the real me.

Since then, I have put in a lot of work to become confident in my authentic self again. It hasn't been easy, and I am still learning and growing every day. That's okay, though, because my struggles force me to rely on God's strength and not my own. Every time I pray, He gives me the peace and patience I need to be joyful no matter where I'm at in life. I no longer feel empty and unfulfilled because I know there is a greater purpose for my life, and I have surprisingly gained more friends than ever by engaging in my faith and simply being me. I guess I achieved my dream high-school-movie makeover after all–just not at all in the way I expected.

If you take anything away from my story, let it be to find your identity in God sooner rather than later. As St. Augustine once said, "You have made us for Yourself, O Lord, and our hearts are restless until they rest in You." I hope and pray you won't waste your time at Scotus chasing approval and achievements like I did. Instead, let the God of the Universe show you that you, too, are infinitely valuable as His beloved son or daughter. I promise you won't regret it.

This is Jacqueline Stoner, signing off.

Seniors sign for sports and service

By Kennedy Krueger

With the seniors' time at Scotus coming to an end, they have to make some big decisions about what the next step is. Whether this is college, trade school, or the military, everyone's path will look a little different.

This year, four students have the opportunity to extend their athletic careers in college, and another five are considering joining the military. While being two distinct paths, both offer an exciting future for the students taking these routes.

From the 2026 class, Favio Rivero-Rubio, Bear Scott, Thomas Settje, and Carson Wessel have signed to play sports after high school.

Rivero-Rubio will continue his wrestling career at Doane University. He signed in October, and most of his wrestling team was there to support him. Rivero-Rubio will now have the opportunity to travel to different countries for his wrestling.

"For me, I had a few motivators that led me to continue wrestling in college. The main motivator was my dissatisfaction with my high school career. It left me with a desire to achieve more than what I had done in high school," Rivero-Rubio said.

Scott will be attending Midland University where he has committed to play football. His signing day was on March 16th at Midland, and he was surrounded by coaches, friends, and family.

"I can't wait to see where my football journey takes me. I have high hopes and can't wait to be in a new environment and compete," Scott said. "[I chose Midland because] they were recruiting me for the position I wanted to play, had NFL-level coaching at my position, and offered me a great scholarship as well."

Settje will also be continuing his football career at Midland University. He signed on February 4th, and he was able to meet all of the other recruits.

"[I chose Midland because it] felt like a family environment. They care about you, and everyone there is happy to be at this school," Settje said. "[I am also excited] to be a part of a new team with new faces and new coaches."

Wessel will be pursuing his football career at the University of Nebraska-Kearney. He signed and officially committed on February 4th.

"[I chose the University of Nebraska-Kearney because] it's a great college, academically and athletically, and I think my future is best at Kearney," Wessel said. "I'm most excited for the atmosphere of a college football gameday."

Scotus seniors Andy Padilla-Arrieta, Dante Smith, Hunter Brunkhorst, Noah Chohon, and Chase Wangler will be joining the military after high school, and they are going into three different branches.

Padilla-Arrieta will be joining the U.S. Army. He chose this branch mainly because it was the first one to get back to him.

"All of the benefits that come with the military definitely played a factor [in my decision], but for me, it was the opportunity to travel the world and experience things I never would have," Padilla-Arrieta said. "I'm most excited to start my own life and the stories that I'm yet to make."

Smith is planning on joining the U.S. Air Force. He chose this branch because his family had served in this branch.

"[My decision to go into the military was influenced by] talking to my grandpa and the recruiter. No debt, free housing, and free college also played a role," Smith said. "I am most excited to learn new skills and to serve my country."

Wangler decided to join the U.S. National Guard. He chose this branch because it had the jobs he wanted to do.

"My dad and the fact that [the military] has good benefits and will pay for my college [influenced my decision]," Wangler said. "I'm not sure [what I am most excited for], to be honest, but the Army has a lot of equipment that will be fun to use that goes boom."

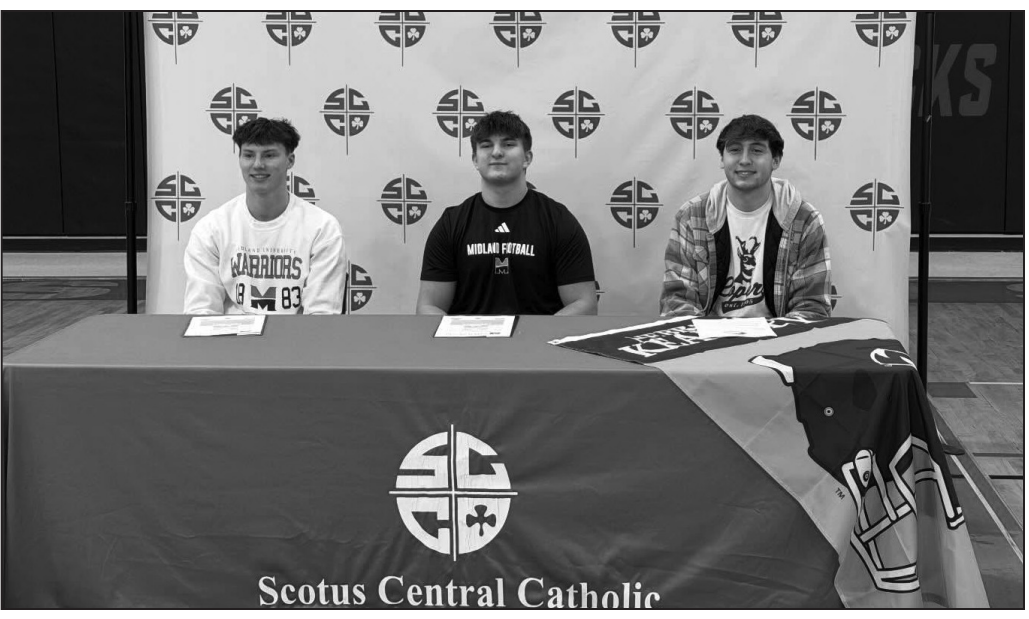
The students going into service or sports also committed to summer training before the other students begin college.

"I am excited to see what blessings God has in store for my future!" Settje concluded.



Photo Courtesy Nicole Wangler

Senior Chase Wangler states his National Oath of Enlistment on March 13th in Omaha at military entrance processing. It is the same oath used across all U.S. military branches, and it is a formal pledge to support and defend the Constitution and follow lawful orders.



Amarha Bridger / Communications Director

Seniors Thomas Settje, Bear Scott, and Carson Wessel pose while signing to play football in college. Settje and Scott will be attending Midland University, and Wessel will be attending the University of Nebraska-Kearney.



Amarha Bridger / Communications Director

Senior Favio Rivero-Rubio smiles for a picture on his signing day on November 5th. He was surrounded by his team, friends, and family.

Robotics team dominates competition

By Lydia Dostal

The Scotus robotics team recently wrapped up their year with a season marked by success. With three bots used–teams Klyde, Sammy, and CKevin–Scotus had high chances of winning at each competition.

Senior Aiden Meers joined robotics this year to gain hands-on experience in engineering.

"Our design for our robots and understanding of the game was better than anyone else out there. With more experience, we began to do much better at competitions," Meers said.

Certain changes in the robotics program contributed to the team's victories. One such change was making robotics a class period instead of an out-of-school activity.

Senior Jake Demuth has been a member of the robotics team for three years.

"Being able to shift our time spent on the robot to an actual class was critical to our success," Demuth said. "It allowed us to have more time to make a more efficient and well-thought-out design."

The team's three bots had unique characteristics, allowing them to pull ahead of most of their competitors. Utilizing factors such as pneumatics, sensors, and an X-drive, which allowed the bots to drive in any direction, greatly improved the robots' overall performances.

Junior Trevor Niedbalski was a member of team Klyde, who ended the season with four tournament champions, four skills champions, and four honor awards.

"Team Klyde specifically could do something nobody else could: double by color sorting," Niedbalski said. "This gave us a huge advantage over opponents."

The team kicked off their season on January 20th at Columbus High School. While there, teams CKevin and Klyde joined forces as a winning alliance, taking 1st place out of 23 teams. CKevin was made up of freshmen Grayson Bonk and Noah Sjuts while Klyde consisted of seniors Elizabeth Stoner and Demuth, Niedbalski, and freshman Ben Melliger.

"Team Klyde had very few changes after the first competition. The biggest improvement was probably my driving after tons of practice and our code becoming more refined and reliable," Niedbalski said.

On January 31st the team took on their next challenge in Holdrege, where only teams Klyde and Sammy competed. With one robot down, the team still came up with wins as the bots placed 1st and 4th, respectively, out of 28 teams. Also in Holdrege, team Klyde claimed the honor award and skills award.

Senior Seth Drueppel competed as a member of team Sammy.

"Improving after each meet was so important. Reflecting on what went well and where we needed improvement [was crucial to our success]. The teams working together to improve each other [was also helpful]," Drueppel said.

Their final, and largest, competition took place on February 28th at Nebraska Christian. Out of 38 total teams, the three Scotus bots placed in the top 10 with team Klyde finishing tournament champions, Sammy in 3rd place, and CKevin in 6th place.

"This was my third year in robotics, and I have enjoyed every moment. The people involved are all wonderful, and it allows all the members to show off their skills in a technologically advanced way," Demuth said.

Team Klyde in particular garnered major success, going undefeated throughout the season, winning the top three most prestigious awards at each tournament, and even qualifying for nationals. In the end, they decided not to attend because it would mean missing too much school and the Lenten retreat.

"[Robotics] drives creativity, engineering, determination, and problem solving. I also find the environment is great. Everyone is there to help each other out," Niedbalski ended.



Photo Courtesy Betsy Rall

Senior Jake Demuth, junior Trevor Niedbalski, and freshman Ben Melliger assess their robot before competing at the meet at Nebraska Christian on February 28th. Their bot, Klyde, went undefeated this season.



Photo Courtesy Elizabeth Stoner

Freshman Noah Sjuts points out a problem while competing with his 7th grade brother Micah Sjuts at the Nebraska Christian meet on February 28th. They placed 6th out of 38 total teams with their bot, CKevin.

Scotus finishes fruitful Lent

By Jillian Rusher

In the Catholic Church, Lent is a time to reflect and prepare for Easter. Scotus campus ministry worked this Lent to give students a variety of opportunities to grow deeper in their faith.

Three different speakers came and gave witness talks to the school in Lenten prayer services. Scotus alumni Emma Strecker, Angie Rusher, and Kade Wiese all gave unique talks on the topic of their faith journeys.

Rusher is a 1995 Scotus graduate and has been an English teacher at Scotus for the past 21 years.

"It is really hard, even for teachers, to get up and speak about personal faith; it is a vulnerable position nobody really wants to be in. With that said, the students and faculty were so very gracious to me afterward that I am glad I agreed to it. God is good! And he moves us in ways we don't always anticipate," Rusher said.

The students were able to experience these speakers in assemblies within the school day. However, some upperclassmen were able to take a step further in their faith lives and go on day long retreats, including the senior retreat and going deeper retreat.

The senior class attended the senior retreat on Wednesday, March 18th at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln Newman Center. This retreat gave the seniors a chance to reflect back at their time at Scotus. They did this by listening to different witness talks and having the opportunity to read letters that were written by their 7th-grade selves.

Senior Hannah Heinrich participated in the retreat and will be attending school at UNL next year.

"I'm really happy our senior retreat was at UNL, considering so many of us will be there next fall. I want to get involved with the Newman Center next year, so I was excited to see the space and meet a bunch of the college students," Heinrich said. "It was great to have the chance to reflect back on my high school experience and thank God for all the highs and lows that came along with it."

Similarly, on March 25th, a group of upperclassmen were given the opportunity to attend the going deeper retreat. This retreat was held at The Cloisters on the Platte Retreat Center.

"The going deeper retreat was super impactful to me. The beautiful facility and great speakers helped me take a deeper dive into my faith during Lent. This retreat was a very positive experience with music, prayer, speakers, and seeing the life-sized stations," junior Rachel Spawn said.

The students were able to spend the entire day at the retreat center, listening to witness talks and walking through the large sculpture Stations of the Cross available there.

"I felt walking the stations of the cross was the most impactful part of the retreat. I felt immersed in the passion narrative while listening to the stations of the cross," junior Cohen Micek said.

All of these opportunities, along with penance, morning Mass, and two Restore events were all organized by campus ministers Molly Wallish and Cecilia Brichacek.

Wallish concluded, "I believe each speaker reminded us of the hope and freedom that is given when we seek Jesus and surrender to the will of the Father. I think personal testimony has the ability to impact each of us in different ways and build up the body of Christ in a special way. I'm sure different students were drawn to different testimonies depending on their personal story, and I think this Lent encouraged us all to deepen our personal relationship with God."



Angie Rusher / Journalism Advisor

Seniors Seth Drueppel, Jake Demuth, and Peter Faltys pray over Scotus alum Kade Wiese before his Lenten talk on March 27th. Wiese led the school through an imaginative prayer.



Mia Fehringer / Yearbook Staff

Scotus students close their eyes and open their hands for a receiving prayer led by English teacher Angie Rusher on March 19th during the Lenten prayer service. Rusher was the second Lenten speaker and gave a talk on her journey of surrender.

Lenten tradition leads into Easter break

By Lola Doerneman

On the last full school day before Easter break, all students and staff at Scotus gathered in Memorial Hall to prayerfully watch and listen to the live Stations of the Cross presented by the seniors.

The live Stations have been a Lenten tradition for Scotus for many years. This year, Jesus was played by senior Aiden Meers.

"Being able to participate in portraying the Passion of Christ was a cool experience," Meers said. "I was able to, in a way, take part in His suffering. I have had a greater understanding and a grasp of Christ's suffering than I have ever had before. No one will ever truly understand the pain Christ went through, but this experience helped me comprehend it much better."

With 36 seniors taking part in this presentation and many different roles to display, religion teachers Nate Tenopir and Cassie Kouma took the lead in assigning roles and costumes, conducting practices, and helping the live Stations go smoothly.

Senior Hannah Heinrich read the voices of the women who were present during the Passion: Mary and Mary Magdalene.

"The hardest part was organizing all the different parts of actors and readers. There were many moving parts, but it all worked out in the end!" Heinrich said.

Senior Carson Wessel played the role of one of the main soldiers. He was in every scene, urging Jesus to keep going on the Way of the Cross.

"My favorite part [of the Stations] was picturing myself as someone who was actually at the Crucifixion, and the hardest part was holding my arm in the air for multiple scenes," Wessel said.

As the seniors posed as Jesus, Mary, soldiers, and many other characters, the audience heard reflections also read by seniors.

Senior Seth Drueppel was a voice in the Stations. Being involved in musicals and one act, Drueppel was not new to staging presentations.

"Getting to help everyone who ordinarily isn't on stage was a bunch of fun," Drueppel said. "I've also found helping run the live Stations is more an act of service to the school rather than a prayer for myself."

Senior Devin Riedmiller also participated in the Stations. He was a Roman soldier who held back the crowds from getting too close to Jesus.

"I thought it was entertaining to dress up, but it also helped us gain a better perspective on what it was like," Riedmiller said. "Playing the roles made it feel more interactive, and I would definitely encourage the underclassmen to consider participating [when they get the chance as seniors]."

Senior Elizabeth Stoner played the role of Mary Magdalene on stage.



Kayla Hoffman / Yearbook Staff

Senior Jillian Rusher, playing the role of Mary, the Mother of God, reaches out to her son Jesus (senior Aiden Meers). The live Stations were held on Wednesday, April 1st.

"My favorite part about being involved in Stations this year was getting to fulfill a childhood dream. Ever since I saw the live Stations for the first time in grade school, I have wanted to be a part of them," Stoner said. "It was one of the best things I have ever done in my high school career, and I felt immersed, like I was actually there."

At the conclusion of the Stations, the students and staff left Memorial Hall reverently in silence to begin the Triduum.



Kayla Hoffman / Yearbook Staff

Seniors Devin Riedmiller and Carson Wessel pose as soldiers as they strip Jesus (senior Aiden Meers) of his garments in the 10th station. Each year the seniors get the chance to participate in the live Stations of the Cross.



Kayla Hoffman / Yearbook Staff

Senior Favio Rivero Rubio, posing as Joseph of Arimathea, covers Jesus (senior Aiden Meers) in the 14th station. This year, 36 seniors participated in the live Stations of the Cross.

Prom prospers despite mishap

By Sydney Stuart

The best way to end the annual winter slump is shopping for the perfect dress and tuxedo for prom. Prom stands as the light at the end of a long, cold winter tunnel for many juniors and seniors.

Prom was held in the Dowd Activity Center on March 28th. Similarly to last year's Once Upon a Time theme, the junior class was able to share decorations with the gala.

"I thought the setup looked nice. The floors were also cleaner than the cafeteria. I also thought there was more air flow because of the taller ceilings," junior Kynley Mahoney said.



Angie Rusher / Journalism Advisor

Seniors Aiden Meers, Favio Rivero Rubio, Evan Pavlik, Hudson Kloke, Ryan Allen, and Max Beshaler start a kick line during prom on March 28th. The dinner and dance were from 7 p.m. to 10:30 p.m. with post prom from 10:45 p.m. to 2 a.m.

The junior class prom committee spent their days before the event decorating tables with vases, feathers, masks, and a decorative backdrop to follow the theme Masquerade.

Students arrived at prom from 6:15-6:50 p.m. to take pictures with the backdrop or chat with friends until dinner started at 7 p.m. HyVee Catering provided a choice of steak or chicken with green beans, mashed potatoes, salad, a dinner roll, and a cookie.

Following dinner, the DJ kicked off the dance; however, 30 minutes into the dance the speakers malfunctioned, leaving the dancers with muffled music.

"Honestly, I laughed; obviously, it was frustrating, but I thought about how funny it would be to say that during my senior prom, the speakers blew out on the third song," senior Seth Drueppel said.

The DJ and chaperones worked to bring the music back by connecting to the gym's overhead speaker. After the speaker malfunction was fixed, the dance lasted until 10:30 p.m.

"I think the music was okay; I did like that they played iconic 2010s music. I loved "Roses" by the Chainsmokers; all the girls were yelling the lyrics, and it was funny," senior Alejandra Lopez Martinez said.

Following the dance, students made their way to the YMCA Fieldhouse to continue the prom celebrations at post-prom starting at 10:45 p.m. The juniors' parents organized games, snacks to eat, and prizes to win at the end of the night.

"The Knocker Balls [were my favorite] because my friends and I got to hit each other. It was also funny watching people get trucked and bounce everywhere," junior Michael Brandt said.

Students were given tickets if spotted competing or having fun. With the tickets, students would write their name on them and drop them in one of the five big raffles. The raffle prizes included a mini fridge, electric scooter, gaming chair, Blackstone grill, and an Apple Watch. At the end of the night, the winners' names were drawn and announced.

"Winning a big prize felt great, and I liked how the new system of drawing gave a better chance of winning what you wanted. I won a gaming chair, and I am excited to use it in college," senior Jackson Baumert said.

Family and consumer science teacher Deb Ohnoutka and English teacher Danielle Urkoski sponsored the event.

"The best part about being behind the scenes was watching the students bring their vision to life. I was especially impressed with how well the junior class officers worked together. Their leadership skills shone through during the planning process," Urkoski said. "[Overall], I think it went well. Having prom in the Dowd creates a beautiful environment and helps make the event memorable for students."



Angie Rusher / Journalism Advisor

Seniors Sydney Stuart, Lola Doerneman, Jillian Rusher, and Emilia Gassen dance to "Wobble" by V.I.C. on March 28th at prom. The theme for the night was Masquerade.



Angie Rusher / Journalism Advisor

Senior Seth Drueppel and junior Lillian Miller swing dance at prom. This was the second year prom was held in the Dowd Activity Center.

Templars opens opportunity for young men

By Isabella Chasteen

In the year 1119 amidst the Crusades, Christian pilgrims were being persecuted by Saracen forces. In order to ensure the safety and freedom of these Christians, an order of knights was formed. The Order of the Poor Knights of the Temple of Solomon, now known as the Knights Templar, dedicated themselves to defending their faith and becoming servants of God.

As time passed, so did the Crusades, and the Knights Templar were no longer needed. In recent years, however, it was revived and made into something new.

On January 10, 2026, a chapter of Templars was launched in Columbus. This organization has chapters across the United States and several in Nebraska; however, this is the first rural order in this state. While these young men are not fighting with swords to protect Christian life, they are taking on a new role in the spiritual battle.

Senior Jake Demuth is the Master or head of the group, for Templars.

"We are hoping to provide an inspiration to young men through our reverence and respect to the Eucharist," Demuth said.

Templars responds to the lack of Catholic men by promoting the faith and openness to natural and supernatural vocations. It provides opportunities for serving at the altar, being a part of a brotherhood, and partaking in service projects, which allows these young men to find their purpose and belonging in the Church.

Father Nicholas Mishek is the chaplain for the Columbus chapter of Templars.

"This is not just a group to serve; it is meant for community and camaraderie, which means investing in it and giving of yourself for the good of others," Father Mishek said.

Although the chapter was launched this year, the real journey began two years ago in July 2024. While attending the National Eucharistic Congress, Jake Demuth encountered the Templars' booth and met the founders. He collected the idea, but it was a long period of planning and finding members before the chapter could be launched.

Being a part of Templars is only for high-school-age young men, so in order for the chapter to survive, young men must be continuously willing to step forward and take on the responsibility.

"There is a sense of structure and community, a sense of taking part in something bigger. We as humans long for this, so here is an opportunity for high schoolers to have something like it," Father Mishek said.

As of right now, the group is in search of a sponsor since they need funding to host special events and grow their order. In the future, the group hopes to acquire cassocks in order to add to the atmospheric portion of altar serving and bring more reverence to the Mass. They also hope to organize an official ceremony for incoming members.

In order to be a Templars member, the young man must be of good moral character and have willingness to live by the honor code and rule of the order. Once the young man applies, the brothers must vote him in, and the ceremony will take place upon acceptance.

Senior Ryan Allen is the Marshal of the order, in charge of serving and ceremonies.

"You will recognize a Knight Templar by their gentlemanly quality, strong witness of faith, and their exemplary skills whilst serving at the altar," Allen said.



Photo Courtesy Aiden Meers

Templars members celebrate the opening of their chapter. Pictured above are Ben Melliger, Ryan Allen, Jake Demuth, Evan Pavlik, Alex Chvala, Trevor Niedbalski, Seth Drueppel, Noah Miller, Aiden Meers, JR Oehlrich, and Logan Sell.



Ainsley Kuhl / Rock Bottom Staff

Senior Ryan Allen leads the Eucharistic procession through the halls during Catholic Schools Week, followed by juniors Trevor Niedbalski and sophomore JR Oehlrich. The young men all hold official positions with the Templars group.