

SHU Celebrates LGBT History Month

BY MOLLY BRUTON
Assistant News Editor & Copy Editor



Tracy Deer-Mirek, Sacred Heart University

National Coming Out Day celebration on the Pioneer Village Quad - 10/12/22

This October marks the 29th consecutive year of celebrating lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) History Month.

LGBT History Month is recognized on the Sacred Heart University (SHU) campus through clubs, events and advocacy.

“It’s important to take some time every year to honor the work that various activists have done to promote LGBT rights in the past and also celebrate the milestones within American society. LGBT History Month allows supporters to reflect on how far they have come and how far they still have to go. The month is a reminder that much work remains to be done in the future to promote equal rights,” said Dr. Kelly L. Marino, Coordinator of Women’s, Gender, & Sexuality Studies, Dept. of History.

According to See Change Happen UK, LGBT History Month was first observed in Oct. 1994, when it was founded by Missouri high school history teacher Rodney Wilson. Wilson believed that it was important to recognize and celebrate the achievements and contributions of the LGBT community, and to raise awareness of the struggles and challenges that LGBT+ people face.

On SHU’s campus, LGBT History Month is recognized through the Gender Sexuality Alliance (GSA) organization. According to SHU, the

GSA was started in the fall of 2000 to promote a safe environment on campus for LGBT students and their allies.

“The GSA is important to raising awareness for the LGBTQ+ community on campus at SHU. They are constantly pioneering new programs and events to bring people together on campus interested in issues of gender, sexuality and networking with others passionate about these topics,” said Marino.

The GSA co-sponsored a national coming out day event alongside PRIDE and the Office for Inclusive Excellence, which took place on Oct. 11 on Upper Quad.

“This event is to celebrate the LGBTQ+ community and the coming out experience. This event benefits our SHU community as GSA’s mission statement clearly encourages the vision of social justice to make a difference in the global community,” said senior Nicole Sperling, president of GSA.

GSA has given many SHU students an outlet to be a part of something they are passionate about.

“The presence of GSA on campus has made my experience at SHU so extraordinary. GSA is a big community where people have found acquaintances and lifelong friends. I feel so lucky to be president of such an amazing organization like GSA that is doing important work,” said Sperling.

This fall, SHU introduced the Lambda Delta Xi Diaternity to its campus. According to SHU, Lambda Delta Xi is an all-inclusive Greek-lettered, service organization. It is also the first Greek-lettered organization on the east coast of the United States that is dedicated to advocating for the LGBTQ+ community and their allies.

“It’s really an honor to be a part of Lambda Delta Xi and bring some representation to campus in a way we’ve never seen before. A lot of people feel like they’re missing out on a huge part of the college because they don’t fit into a specific fraternity or sorority, so it’s really exciting to offer a place where anyone can feel welcome,” said senior Nick Rubano, Secretary of Lambda Delta Xi.

In addition to the Oct. 11 event, the “Remembering Activism and Trailblazers” Colloquia will be held on Oct. 18 at 2 p.m. in the Martire Forum led by Marino.

“The event is a presentation about the history of the LGBTQ+ movement and key leaders. It helps to support the social justice initiatives and mission of the college. LGBTQ+ history is not always taught in the classroom,” said Marino.

WATCH THE PIONEERS IN ACTION:

FRIDAY 10/20
SHU WOMEN'S VOLLEYBALL VS LeMOYNE
PITT CENTER
AT 5 P.M.

SATURDAY 10/21
SHU CLUB SOFTBALL
PIONEER PARK SOFTBALL FIELD
AT 8:30 A.M.

UPCOMING EVENTS:

THURSDAY 10/19
MARTIN FLETCHER: LECTURE AND BOOK SIGNING
MARTIRE CENTER LORIS FORUM
AT 1 P.M.

THURSDAY 10/19:
“SHU’S LINE IS IT” IMPROV SHOW
LITTLE THEATER
AT 10 P.M.

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News

Clery Compliance Report

BY HELENA MEDICI
Staff Writer

By Oct. 1 of each year, Sacred Heart University publishes their Annual Campus Security Report to the public.

The Clery Act, officially known as the the Jeanne Clery Disclosure of Campus Security Policy and Crime Statistics Act, enacted in 1990. It requires colleges and universities to record specific campus crime statistics and safety policies for consumer protection as well as publicly out the policies and procedures they have put into place to improve campus safety.

Institutions of higher education must include criminal offenses, hate crimes, and arrests and referrals for disciplinary action in their report.

This report is updated annually and includes statistics on public property that is leased or owned by Sacred Heart. Institutional policies and procedures concerning campus security, crime or fire reporting, fire drills, fire related injuries, property damage, sexual misconduct, sexual harassment, alcohol, drugs, weapons, emergency procedures and other matters such as these are also included in this report.

“Nothing was reported that surprised me. The reported Clery incidents type are consistent with past years,” said Jack Fernandez, Director of Public Safety at Sacred Heart.

Public Safety reports that the crime spike from the calendar year of 2021 is due to the 2020 spring semester classes being moved online until the fall semester of 2020.

Additionally, the student population continues to increase at Sacred Heart, which Fernandez also attributes a slight rise in crime each year.



Sean Kaschak, Sacred Heart University

The vehicle fleet for Sacred Heart's Public Safety Department, where there were no unusual crime reports in their Annual Campus Security Report.

Junior Adriana Lamano has just moved into off-campus university-owned housing after living on campus for the past two years.

“I think that having access to this report provides a sense of comfort and it is nice to know that there is accountability within the university,” said Lamano.

The goal of the Clery Act report is to ensure students, prospective students, parents, and employees have access to accurate information about crimes committed on campus and campus security procedures.

However, the Clery report does not cover the crimes committed off campus, such as crimes that involve students' houses in the local community, which raises concerns for junior Kelsey Hottenstein who lives off campus.

“Living off campus in a house can be scary. I have heard of my teammates' houses getting broken into over breaks. Luckily, my housemates and I have cameras and do feel very safe in the area we live in,” said Hottenstein.

According to Fernandez, off-campus crimes are only informed to the university community if needed.

One of the best ways to decrease offenses is to prevent them from occurring in the first place. “Be aware of your surroundings, report suspicious activities, utilize the locks and access control systems in place and if going out, travel with others,” said Fernandez.

This past year, there were no illegal weapon violations, and no liquor or drug law violations that warranted any arrests. There were 461 liquor law violations and 51 drug law violations that led to judicial referrals within the school's conduct office. No criminal homicides happened this past year. There were six offenses of rape and three accounts of forcible fondling. In regards to dating violence there were three offenses and one offense of domestic violence as well as eight accounts of stalking.

To access this year's Clery Report and the university's policies, go to sacredheart.edu/offices--departments-directory/public-safety/crime-prevention--reporting/.

Printed copies are also available upon request at the Public Safety Dispatch Center located in the WSHU Broadcast Center in the lower level.

The US is moving quickly to boost Israel's military. A look at what assistance it's providing

BY ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON (AP) — Within hours of the horrific attack by Hamas, the U.S. began moving warships and aircraft to the region to be ready to provide Israel with whatever it needed to respond.

A second U.S. carrier strike group departs from Norfolk, Virginia, on Friday. Scores of aircraft are heading to U.S. military bases around the Middle East. Special operations forces are now assisting Israel's military in planning and intelligence. The first shipment of additional munitions has already arrived.

More is expected, soon. Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin will arrive in Israel Friday to meet with Israeli leaders to discuss what else the U.S. can provide.

For now, the buildup reflects U.S. concern that the deadly fighting between Hamas and Israel could escalate into a more dangerous regional conflict. So the primary mission for those ships and warplanes is to establish a force presence that deters Hezbollah, Iran or others from taking advantage of the situation. But the forces the U.S. sends are capable of more than that.

A look at what weapons and options the U.S. military could provide:

WEAPONS AND SPECIAL OPERATIONS FORCES

The U.S. is providing some personnel and much-needed munitions to Israel. Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin announced that a small special operations cell was now assisting Israel with intelligence and planning, and providing advice and consultations to the Israeli Defense Forces on hostage recovery efforts. Those forces, however, have not been tasked with

hostage rescue, which would put them on the ground fighting in the conflict. That's something the Biden administration has not approved and White House spokesman John Kirby has said the Israelis do not want.

The U.S. is also getting U.S. defense companies to expedite weapons orders by Israel that were already on the books. Chief among those are munitions for Israel's Iron Dome air defense system.

“We're surging additional military assistance, including ammunition and interceptors to replenish Iron Dome,” President Joe Biden said Tuesday. “We're going to make sure that Israel does not run out of these critical assets to defend its cities and its citizens.”

Iron Dome's missiles target rockets that approach its cities. According to Raytheon, Israel has 10 such systems in place. Beginning with Saturday's attack, Hamas has fired more than 5,000 rockets at Israel, most of which the system has been able to intercept, according to the Israel Defense Forces.

Raytheon produces most of the missile components for Iron Dome in the U.S., and the Army has two systems in its stockpile.

The Iron Dome munitions the U.S. provides to Israel will likely be above and beyond what Israel has ordered and will be part of ongoing military assistance packages. Those packages will also include small diameter bombs and JDAM kits — essentially a tail fin and navigation kit that turns a “dumb” bomb into a “smart” bomb and enables troops to guide the munition to a target, rather than simply dropping it.

NAVY SHIPS AND PLANES

One of the most visible examples of the U.S. response was the announcement just hours after the attacks that the Pentagon would redirect the Gerald R. Ford carrier strike group to sail toward Israel. The carrier had just completed an exercise with the Italian Navy when the ship with its crew of about 5,000 was ordered to quickly sail to the Eastern Mediterranean.

One week after the attacks, as Israel positioned for a major ground offensive into Gaza City, Austin announced a second carrier group would be sailing toward Israel, as he ordered the USS Dwight D. Eisenhower carrier strike group to join the Ford in the Eastern Mediterranean. In a statement announcing the move, Austin said he was sending the Eisenhower too “as part of our effort to deter hostile actions against Israel or any efforts toward widening this war following Hamas's attack on Israel.”

The carriers provide a host of options. They serve as primary command and control operations centers and can conduct information warfare. They can launch and recover E2-Hawkeye surveillance planes, recognizable by their 24-foot (7-meter) diameter disc-shaped radars. The planes provide early warnings on missile launches, conduct surveillance and manage the airspace, not only detecting enemy aircraft but also directing U.S. movements.

They also serve as a floating airbase for F-18 fighter jets that can fly intercepts or strike targets. And the carriers can flex to provide significant capabilities for humanitarian work, including onboard hospitals with ICUs, emergency rooms,

medics, surgeons and doctors. They also sail with helicopters that can be used to airlift critical supplies in or victims out.

The Eisenhower had already been scheduled to deploy to the Mediterranean on a regular rotation, and the Ford is near the end of its scheduled deployment. But the Biden administration for now has decided to have both carriers there.

AIR FORCE WARPLANES

The Pentagon has also ordered additional warplanes to bolster A-10, F-15 and F-16 squadrons at bases throughout the Middle East. More are to be added if needed.

Air Force Secretary Frank Kendall said Tuesday at an Atlantic Council event that the service was directing units that were about to come home to remain in place along with their replacements.

The U.S. Air Force already has significant airpower in the region to conduct manned and unmanned operations, most notably in Syria where an Air Force F-16 last week was ordered to shoot down a Turkish drone that was posing a threat to U.S. ground forces.

Kendall also said Air Force C-17s have landed in and departed from Israel since the attacks. The transport planes were picking up U.S. military personnel who were there for a military exercise that hadn't started yet when the attacks began, the Air Force said in a statement.

Neither the Air Force nor Central Command would comment on what additional missions U.S. airpower might take on in response to the conflict.

Associated Press writer Colleen Long contributed to this report.

Features

Watch SHU Sports On WWAX

BY SHANNON DOVE
Staff Writer

Sacred Heart University (SHU) has announced their exclusive media partnership with Connecticut's newest television station, The Wax (WWAX). WWAX is Channel 3 WFSB's sister station.

"We wanted to showcase the great teams, coaches, and student-athletes competing here at SHU and WWAX was the perfect fit for us," said Associate Athletic Director Steven Conn.

As part of this collaboration, WWAX will rebroadcast select games from a multitude of sports offered by SHU Athletics, spanning from baseball and hockey to softball, soccer, and volleyball.

According to a statement from the university, "We are excited to have a new broadcast partner to showcase our passionate and hard-working student-athletes and coaches in their quest for championships," said Judy Ann Riccio, SHU's director of athletics. "Re-airing our



Instagram, @sacredheartbsb

Sacred Heart's baseball team, pictured at their first full team practice, is one of many SHU sports teams that will have their games rebroadcast.

games on WWAX around the state is also great for our brand and our ability to further connect with alumni and prospects."

With games rebroadcasted on WWAX, SHU athletes will gain exposure, recognition, and support from the local community. This partnership will open doors for future opportunities in their respective sports.

Junior Carly Koltko of the SHU women's softball team is looking forward to the expansion this collaboration can bring her team.

"Women's sports are continuously growing and expanding, with softball

in particular," Koltko said. "It would also be a great way to inspire and educate the next generation of softball players for them to have a specific team to follow and look up to throughout the season."

WWAX is home to the various college sports you cannot see anywhere else on

broadcast television. This collaboration signifies a step forward for both the university's athletic program and its aspiring broadcast journalism students.

Senior Isabella Giardina, majoring in broadcast journalism, is hopeful for potential opportunities the partnership can bring her.

"As a broadcast journalism major, I'm looking forward to possible connections with WWAX," Giardina said. "I think it's important for students to have the opportunity to promote themselves while getting involved."

The accessibility of this partnership also provides a way for family and friends of Sacred Heart athletes, who may be unable to attend games in person due to work or distance, to watch and show their support from afar.

"Coming from California, my family and friends aren't able to make it to every single game," Koltko said. "With this type of livestream, it will be so beneficial for them to be able to watch each game, as well as other sports here at SHU."

It also offers a way for alumni and fans of SHU Athletics to stay connected with the university's teams and rewatch their favorite sporting achievements.

"One of the things I see is that we do a good job telling our story about Sacred Heart University, but not a great job," said Deputy Athletics Director Charles Dowd. "Athletics is just one part of our story, but if it's a part that gets people interested and brings in an audience of supporters, that's how we can make it great."

SHU Athletics events will be rebroadcasted on both audio and video platforms. To tune in to these games, you can listen to Channel 27 or watch it on WFSB 3.4.

Sacred Heart Athletics contributed to this article.



Instagram, @sacredheart_vb

SHU's volleyball teams are amongst the sports that will have games rebroadcast by the WWAX station.

Meet Matthew Shields

BY CAYLA NISTA
Staff Writer

Matthew Shields has been appointed Executive Director for Mission Integration here at Sacred Heart University (SHU). Shields will now be overseeing all proceedings that include campus ministry, working on community engagement and SHU's mission.

SHU's mission is an integral part of the university and Shields' plans on ensuring that this mission can be instilled within all students during his time in this position.



Nicholas Vukota, Staff Photographer

Matthew Shields, SHU's newly appointed Executive Director of Mission Integration, pictured speaking at a new student induction ceremony.

Anne Johnson, Director of Volunteer Programs and Service Learning, expressed her excitement with the decision to appoint Shields to this position.

"We are excited to welcome Matthew to the Mission Integration, Ministry and Community Engagement team. He brings with him his infectious energy and jumped into programming right away to get to know our students.

Matthew is a strategic, empathetic leader who is the perfect fit to continue pushing the mission of the university forward both on and off campus," said Johnson.

According to a SHU press release, before coming to SHU, Shields was the Director for Mission and Ministry at the College of Mount Saint Vincent in the Bronx, NY. In his time there he was able to work on volunteerism, spirituality, and mission integration with students, faculty, and staff. Shields was also a campus minister at William Paterson University in New Jersey, where he was able to engage students in service, self-awareness, and spiritual activities.

Students of the Peer Ministry group will be able to work with Shields to help spread SHU's mission across campus. Junior Alex Fernandez is involved with Peer Ministry and will be working with Shields in the future.

"I'm on the Events Pillar of Peer Ministry and we basically plan a lot of the fun events on campus like Bowling with Peer Ministry, Paint and Pray, and our upcoming Pumpkin Palooza event," said Fernandez. "Some ways I like to get involved are by attending mass on Sundays, going to our latte events, and helping lead our weekend retreats. I really enjoy campus ministry because it allows me to strengthen my faith while also meeting new friends and working with them to plan these awesome events and activities."

Girl Gains Lifting

BY KYLEE CREGAN
Staff Writer

The Sacred Heart Girl Gains Lifting club's goal is to positively encourage female weightlifting to help women feel strong and empowered.

You can be at any level in the gym, whether that's beginner or advanced. All levels of fitness journeys are encouraged.

"No experience needed to join, we're open to anyone interested in lifting or living a healthy lifestyle and/or that wants to learn," said senior Jordan Italia, a member of the club.

The club has created a judgment free environment.

"My favorite thing about Girl Gains is that we have established an extremely positive community of empowering individuals that support each other through their fitness journeys," said senior Gabriella Sarmento, president of the club. "We have girls that are extremely experienced and more than willing to help guide the girls that may just be starting out, thus creating a less intimidating process."

The club is all about girls encouraging each other to lead a healthier and stronger lifestyle.

"In our club, we educate girls about lifting and nutrition, we want to motivate girls to get in the gym and feel comfortable doing so. Girl Gains was created to provide women

of all backgrounds and fitness levels with community, resources and confidence," said Italia.

The Girl Gains Lifting club has multiple events for potential members to meet friends that share the same interests.

"We also have systems that pair up club members to get to know each other more, workout with, motivate each other, share meal plans/nutrition goals, and more," said Sarmento.

The club also does a series of events and activities that encourage fitness, whether that's a guided fitness class, or an outdoor walk to get to know other club members.

"We already had our first event which was a hike to get to know each other more and get some exercise," said Italia.

The club also hosts educational informational presentations led by Certified Personal Trainers (CPTs), nutritionists, and dietitians to help members be more educated in health.

"We have guest speakers that share their insight and tools for success and all members are welcome to these events," said Sarmento.

To join the Girls Gains Lifting club, students can visit their Instagram, @shugirlgains and click the link in their bio to sign up. The club meets in HC202 every other week at 8 p.m.

Audrey's Corner



Hamlet Interpretation Creative Story

BY CAROLINE CLIFFORD
Audrey's Corner Editor

No way. This can't be happening. I do not imagine ghosts. Ghosts aren't real. Maybe they are. My father looked pretty real. I can't decide if I want this to be real or not. If the ghost of my father appeared in front of me and commanded me to murder the King, then I'm royally screwed. But if it wasn't real, then I'm going crazy. Not sure which option sounds most desirable right now.

What am I supposed to do with this information? How can he dump this on me and leave me to decipher it all?

Maybe I should blame Claudius for this situation and leave it be. If the ghost was right, then the King is to blame for my father's death. But even so, I can't be a godforsaken murderer. What will become of me then? How could one kill the King of a country without getting caught? What would the punishment even be? I shouldn't think about that.

But that is the position I am in. I am either a murderer or a psychopath, or I disrespect the dead. My life can never be the same. I must live with the guilt of my action or inaction for the rest of my time. Why couldn't he have shown up when I was already wasted? Then maybe I could just forget this whole nightmare completely.

And oh, what about my mother? I would be betraying her by killing her

new husband. She moved on so quickly after my father's death, barely waiting until his casket was closed to be swept into another man's arms. It still baffles me. But my love for my family must surpass my anger and jealousy towards her. I cannot stray from my values now; I wouldn't be any better than him.

So badly, I want to confide in someone. Perhaps Horatio? Or sweet, sweet Ophelia? I couldn't bear to burden them with my darkness. One must not haunt any more souls with this weight. Their knowledge of this could make it all the more dangerous too. Although it would be quite relieving to have someone to navigate this with. Ugh. Why did my father have to do this? Why am I blaming my father when Claudius is in the wrong?

The guilt I'm feeling over this already is insane. Almost as insane as admitting to seeing a ghost of my dead father. Morals suck. How do I decide if I get vengeance for my father or remain loyal to my country and mother? I used to think I was better than revenge.

Ophelia would be ashamed of me. Probably horrified at my capabilities. The way I love her so gently, then go out and become a violent monster. Alas, I must obey my father as the good peasants of Denmark deserve their proper King. It will not be easy, but it must be done.

To Say or To Not Say

BY OLIVIA TEDESCO
Audrey's Corner Editor

If you could say one thing to the person that hurt you the most in your life what would you say? Would you even say anything? Because when an author writes, "and then she said..." or "(insert character name said..." the tone you usually get is a speaking one. A calm face-to-face type of conversation tone. Now for me unless the author says, "she exclaimed..." I would think she then has a change in her tone.

So would you even say anything to the person who hurt you most in life? Or would you yell, tell, command their attention, demand their eye contact when you speak to them?

Would you ask, question them as to why they did what they did to you, would you forgive them, would you argue, would you profess your emotions and tell them over and over again that what they did to you was unexceptional and you would never treat them like that, would you blow a gasket, would you yell and scream at them, rip their head off with your words, like a lion with their prey?

Would you tell them off by cursing, would you have wept, cried and fell into sorrow at just the sight of them, would you feel powerful, so powerful that you can finally tell them your emotions and you can communicate with them, or would you feel so feeble, like a baby deer who is first learning how to walk?

Would you fall down into your sorrows and your darkness, would you be overjoyed that you can see them, would you feel so high like a cloud in the sky that you are standing next to them again, or would you be guilty, innocent until being proved guilty?

Would you, would you, would you, would you?

So what would you do, if you were faced with the person who hurt you the most is the more appropriate question.

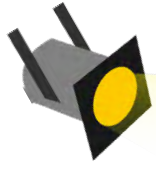
Not, what would you say, since for me I don't know if I would do any saying...

For counseling services and support reach out to the university resources:

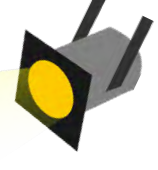
Counseling Center
Open 9-5 on Weekdays
Make an Appointment: 203-371-7955

s.w.e.e.t. Peers
Follow the s.w.e.e.t. Peers on Instagram
@shu_sweetpeered and stay updated
on the programs run by their team

Public Safety
Routine Calls: 203-371-7995
Emergency Calls: 203-371-7911
or 203-374-9352



Spotlight



Dancing Through Deutschland: Brayden Wihbey Takes Tap Skills Internationally

BY BRAD HUTCHISON

Co-Spotlight Editor

One Sacred Heart student has taken her dance skills to the international level and represented the United States on stage this past September.

Brayden Wihbey is a versatile student at SHU, who has been dancing ever since she could walk, as her mom had introduced her to dance from a very young age.

“Ever since I was a little girl, before I would go on stage, my mom told me to come off stage with no regrets. That is what I’ve carried through all my performances to this day,” Wihbey said.

She is a junior psychology major with minors in dance and social work. She chose Sacred Heart so that she could be part of the Dance Company here, and still teach at her family’s dance studio in Prospect, CT.

Connecticut Dance Theatre & the Arts in Prospect, CT opened in 1978 when her grandmother started the business, and the studio has been passed down two generations. Wihbey has been choreographing there since she was a sophomore in high school, and she teaches dancers from ages 9-17.

On campus, she has played a role in the Theatre Arts Program as well. She has starred in “A Chorus Line” and “The Rocky Horror Picture Show” as a dancer, and she is currently working as the head choreographer in SHU’s fall musical, “Ride the Cyclone.” One of the cast members, Sean Ryan, had high praise for Wihbey’s work ethic.

“Brayden has brought a fresh, new energy to the Little Theatre, and working with her has been such a great experience,” said Ryan. “She has been open to a great deal of collaboration

with the cast members, and I think she has allowed us to grow as dancers.”

Wihbey studies all styles of dances, including jazz, contemporary, and hip hop, but her favorite has always been tap dance, and that’s what she believes that she thrives in.

Some of her biggest inspirations in tap dance are icons such as Gregory Hines, Donald O’Connor, and Gene Kelly, who are all male dancers. It has always been her goal to make a name for herself as a female tap dancer, choreographer, and performer.

Back in February of 2023, Brayden auditioned for the U.S. Tap Team, American Dance Collaborative, and was accepted onto

at the International Dance Organization (IDO) World Tap Dance Championship, an international tap dance competition that hosted performers from 20 different countries. After self-choreographing an audition, she was accepted to go to Germany with other U.S. tap dancers.

In Germany, Wihbey represented the U.S. with wild success. She placed third with her trio dance, which earned her a bronze medal to bring home. On top of that, she placed 12th overall for her solo, and fifth overall for her group number. Rehearsals for these numbers required her to travel to Brewster, New York every Sunday to collaborate with the other dancers and perfect their routines.

Not only was Wihbey able to immerse herself into the German culture during her time abroad, but she was able to share the experience with her grandpa, who was stationed in Germany from 1959-1962. She was excited to be able to travel back to the country with him, and when he saw her on stage, she recalls it being one of the most memorable moments of her life.

“It was so amazing to explore the history and culture of Germany, and being able to bring my grandpa back to where he was stationed was a heartwarming experience. Hearing him and my mom cheering me on from the audience was an unforgettable experience,” she said.

The competition will be taking place in the Czech Republic next year, and Wihbey plans to continue to grow in her dance as she works to represent the country on the international dance level once again.



Contributed by Brayden Wihbey
Wihbey with her grandfather and mother in Old City, Dresden, Germany.



Contributed by Brayden Wihbey

Wihbey pictured at WT Energiesysteme Arena in Riesa, Germany where the IDO World Tap Dance Championship took place.

the adult team. Once she was accepted to this team, she was given the opportunity to send in a video audition to compete



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**Do you know a person,
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Spotlight? Scan the QR code
below to send suggestions to
our editors!**

Arts & Entertainment

TheatreFest Takes the Stage for Round 1

BY JULIA SCIORRA
Staff Writer

Sacred Heart University's Theatre Arts Program (TAP) kicked off its first round of TheatreFest, from Oct. 12-14 at 8 p.m. and Oct. 15 at 3 p.m. in the Little Theatre. TAP united to host the yearly celebration of short, student-run productions in the hope that some will have the opportunity to be professionally staged.

Senior Stephanie Patella holds the position of New Works Chair for TAP. In this position, Patella introduced every student-run play and helped to close them off with a Q&A between the writers, directors and audience.

"It's a grant requirement for people in the TAP program. After a specific show has their reading, they have a talkback where the audience or people from the program can ask questions for the writer or director," said Patella. "Round one is the play reading. Now that actors have been cast into the shows, they have the binders with their scripts, and they read out loud."

TheatreFest consists of three rounds. The first round consisted of student actors reading off their scripts in order for the playwrights to get an idea of how their production will be performed. The second round, occurring in November, will act as the black box production where student actors will once again perform their plays, but with no script and a minimal set. The third round, happening in late spring, will consist of a narrowed down two final shows that will be fully produced with lights, sound, props, and costumes.

Senior and student playwright Kayla Goncalves said, "The most fun part is taking a step back and realizing that this is my own work, and I can do whatever I want to it."

With the whole production being student-driven, members of the TAP

program are free to write about whatever they feel, in hopes that it will be fully produced.

"It's really fun, it's difficult at times for sure. I suffer from writer's block pretty often, but when I'm not suffering from writer's block it's just so fun because you realize that there really are no limits to what you can write," said Goncalves. "You don't need to hold yourself back really for any reason, there's nothing stopping you from changing the plot or changing the character."

For the first round, Goncalves wrote a play, "Don't Forget To Visit." It consisted of a younger couple and their older relatives looking out for them beyond the grave. Her play, which revolved around a very sensitive topic, managed to move some audience members to tears. Four actors performed the play reading, one of them being sophomore Sami Millerick.

Millerick, who played Michelle, said, "It's a fun character to play in the sense that she still has this positive energy even though she's talking about things that hurt her."

The actors, while sitting on stage and reading their scripts off of music stands, still had to perform with emotion in order for the writer, as well as the audience, to gain a sneak peek into what the play could potentially be like if fully produced.

"Round one helps the writers hear out loud how their story is being told by these actors," said Millerick. "It's just as much of a show even though it doesn't have blocking, costumes and makeup."

For more information on dates and ticketing for TheatreFest, visit edgertoncenter.org.



Instagram, @shutheatrearts

A promotional poster advertising the first round of TAP's TheatreFest, where SHU students have the opportunity to write their own plays in the hopes it will be chosen for a full production in the spring.

A New Era of Influencers

BY MARIA KELLY
Staff Writer

In the ever-evolving landscape of marketing and the use of social media, a new trend is taking college campuses by storm: the rise of college influencers.



Instagram, @livjordan_fit

Liv Jordan in a promotional photo for her collaboration with the fitness clothing brand, DFYNE.

"One of the most rewarding feelings about being a fitness influencer is being able to inspire others to want to become the best version of themselves. My platform has enabled me to create my own online fitness coaching app called 'The LivFit Guide,'" said senior Olivia Jordan.

Jordan is a fitness influencer and posts content on all aspects of wellness, including training videos, recipe ideas, and inspirational messages for her audience. She has over 300,000 followers on TikTok and 140,000 on Instagram.

These young and dynamic individuals, like Jordan and Novello, are not just students, they are the voices and faces of some of the biggest brands, forging a path that is changing how companies connect with the next generation of consumers. Some of the brands that they and other university influencers have worked with are Clinique, Edikted, Bearpaw, Dossier, Bloom Nutrition, Fanfix and more.

Being a college influencer offers students practical experience in marketing, event

planning and networking. According to Novello, she's been able to network with a multitude of individuals in the fashion industry thanks to her social media presence. This has led to her being invited to New York Fashion Week during the past two seasons.

The key word in student influencers is student. These young influencers are still in school, so it is important for them to learn skills on how to manage their time.

"Becoming an influencer has helped me further develop time management skills. I have a content calendar that I make at the beginning of each month with ideas for posts and any collaboration I have that month. This helps me stay organized and on top of it while also being a full-time student who's very active on campus," said Novello.

There are many positives for campus influencers. However, they must also contend with some adverse aspects. At times, people on social media face many discouraging comments and hate on their content.

"As much as social media is a great source, it can also be very dangerous. I have received comments or direct messages that bring me down. People say hurtful things, and you may never know the reason why, but it is always important to stay positive and continue something if you believe in it and love it," said sophomore Paige Rivera, influencer on Instagram and TikTok.

As a student influencer, it is important to engage with fellow students on campus. This engagement fosters a sense of community and brand loyalty among college students.

"During recruitment, some girls told me they have recognized my sister and I from our TikTok platforms, which was funny because I still forget at times that I have a bigger following on TikTok," said TikTok influencer and junior Michela Costigliola.

Keep an eye out for these influencers on campus, you never know who the next break-out star could be!



Instagram, @briellaa

Influencer Briella Nova pictured at New York Fashion Week.

Sports

Anna Stark: Women's Field Hockey Retires #30

BY **DILLON KNEUCKER**
Staff Writer

Oct. 1, 2023 marks the last day that a member of Sacred Heart's women's field hockey team would be able to wear the number 30. Prior to a 2-1 victory over Quinnipiac at Johnson Field in New Haven, there was a ceremony held to retire the number and celebrate Anna Buhrmann's legacy as a member of the team.

Last spring, when Buhrmann was a freshman, her career was cut short due to a skiing accident in Colorado that left her permanently paralyzed from her shoulders down. Despite this, the team has carried on her legacy with the jersey retirement, as well as constantly wearing "Anna Stark" on wristbands, jerseys, and more.

"Stark" is a German word that translates to strong. Buhrmann, who is now home in Germany, has had constant support from teammates and coaches.

"Anna was one of my best friends on the team. We're both foreign and as every foreigner says we have a unique connection. Just being around her was so much fun because it's like you're a little foreign family. She was always such a positive and happy person who always uplifted the room," said senior Hannah Fawle.

Fawle also reflected on what Buhrmann's legacy is to her.

"It's just her positivity. I think through her adversity she's kind of always pushed through. Right now, I'm going through an injury, and I sometimes look towards her to go to rehab and do all those things and push through because Anna pushes through every single day. Just pushing through and doing better for Anna because you never know when somethings going to happen to you," said Fawle.



Sacred Heart's women's field hockey team poses with Buhrmann's now retired jersey at their game against Quinnipiac University

Buhrmann's resilience left a lasting impact on her team that has motivated them, but also led to high emotions at the ceremony.

"It was really emotional. I tried to hold back tears because you had to play a game after, but it was really great to remember her and know that it was going to keep going forever," said senior Claire Skumurski.

"We really wanted to win and show up for her. She was able to watch it in Germany so just knowing to compartmentalize those for a really good reason so we could win," Skumurski said.

Field Hockey head coach Sydney Van Der Merwe was the driving force behind why the team retired Buhrmann's jersey number.

"When we went out to Colorado, I took her jersey with me, gave it to her and I said, 'You're done, no one's got your number,'" said Van Der Merwe. "It was a decision I made on my own, I said to her your jersey is retired and we are going to have a ceremony and play a game for her."

Van Der Merwe said that his decision was met with overwhelming support from the team as well.

The Pioneers will be back in action at 5 p.m. on Oct. 20 at Johnson Field in New Haven for Senior Day when they take on Stonehill College.

Sacred Heart Athletics contributed to this article.

Aces of the NEC

BY **THOMAS MALONEY**
Staff Writer

The Sacred Heart University women's volleyball team is currently 8-10 this season, with their ten losses this season matching their total losses from last season.

Despite their record, the team currently sits in first place in the Northeast Conference (NEC).

"We graduated a very successful group last year. We're bringing back a very talented group, but they hadn't played too much together at these new positions," said head coach Rob Machan.

These new dynamics have been an adjustment for the team as a whole.

"We had really high expectations coming in and we have a young team this year. A lot of our starters and main contributors left after last year. It's kind of a learning curve and I feel like we are just getting over that learning curve," said senior Dominique Felix.

After a 1-9 start to the season, the team has turned things around, winning seven of their past eight games.

"It has given us a lot of confidence. I think we all knew we were going to be good. It is nice to see all the hard work pay off because we have been ramping it up at practice and us being the hardest working team is really going to pay off," said Felix.

The recent turnaround is not something that comes as a surprise to Coach Machan. He credits his team for not faltering during the early season slump.

"This team, as much as any I have ever had, worked hard to establish their identity

and kept together when times were rough. They are just a special group," said Machan.

After losing many players to graduation last year, junior Camryn Luginbuhl has stepped up this season. She leads the team in kills.

"Cam has really stepped up this year. She has been a role model, a leader, and a hard worker. We were missing that fire, that edge and I think she has brought us that this year," said Felix.

Felix has also stepped up, as she is second on the team behind Luginbuhl in kills.

"We talk a lot about accountability on our team and I think that Dom has done a really good job with holding people accountable and holding herself accountable," said Luginbuhl.

The Pioneers lead the NEC with a 6-0 conference play record.

"If there were a tangible goal, we would want to win the conference and make the NCAA tournament. We hope to win the tournament and host again but if we don't, we want to be the team to beat and then you win those games and the team's record does not matter anymore," said Machan.

The Pioneers will take on Bryant University in Smithfield, RI on Wednesday, Oct. 18.

Sacred Heart Athletics contributed to this article.

Breaking the Ice: Women's Hockey Opens New Season

BY **ANASTASIA NIKOLOPOULOS**
Staff Writer

The Sacred Heart University (SHU) women's hockey team opened their season with a 5-2 win over Saint Michael's College on Sept. 29th. They are currently 1-4 on the season.

Junior Kate Helgeson and sophomore Kailey Smith lead the way with one goal and one assist each.

"The team played really really well, we had five different goal scores, a lot of players contributed assist-wise as well. It was a total team effort, total team game. Our goaltender Carly Greene played extremely well, and it was a good start to the season, and it was a good message that we sent to the hockey world too," said head coach Thomas O'Malley.

This season, the team was picked to finish fourth out of eight teams in the New England Women's Hockey Alliance Conference (NEWHA).

"Being back on the ice is always a good feeling and it was a solid way to start the season. I'm glad we won; it was a game that gave us a lot of things to work on going into the regular season," said junior Carly Greene.

Helgeson is one of the SHU women's hockey team's transfer additions after she spent the last two seasons at Quinnipiac.

"It has been amazing. Sacred Heart is a great school, and a lot of the things feel the same. Coming to a brand-new arena and a new team has been super fun and it has been an awesome transition for me," said Helgeson.

O'Malley highlighted the values instilled within the team on and off the ice.

"The pillars of the program are the character part, the academic part, and of course, the hockey part. Our team is made up of good people, really good people," said O'Malley.

The Pioneers were the fourth seed in the NEWHA tournament last season. After defeating Post University in the first round of the tournament, SHU fell to Franklin Pierce University in the second round of the tournament.

"I am excited for our two tournaments that are coming up and being able to play lots of non-conference opponents," said Greene.

The Pioneers are currently ranked fifth in the NEWHA.

"I think our team has so much potential and chemistry, and we all have high hopes for this season. We have all the resources to be a very successful team. I am new to this conference, but our team's expectations for this year is to win the NEWHA Championship," Hegelson said.

"Our main goal is to have fun and enjoy the season because it goes by too fast," said Helgeson.

The women's hockey team is back on the ice against Lindenwood University on Friday, Oct. 20 at the Martire Family Arena.

Sacred Heart Athletics contributed to this article.

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An Open Letter: Responding to the Nightmare of October 7

RABBI JOSH RATNER
 JEWISH CHAPLAIN

Saturday, October 7th, was the worst day in Jewish history since the Holocaust. As Jews across the world prepared to celebrate the joyous conclusion of our fall holiday season, Hamas terrorists snuck into Israel from Gaza and murdered more than 1300 innocent men, women, and children, including hundreds of peaceful music-lovers at an overnight concert. They also kidnapped at least 150 Israelis to be used as human shields back in Gaza.

Today, we sit in grief, horror, shock, disgust, and anger at the carnage, brutality, and inhumanity experienced on the 7th. What happened on that day was not merely another skirmish in the long history of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. It was Israel's version of 9/11. The trauma, pain, and savagery Hamas inflicted on Israelis, and by extension on Jews everywhere, is something now indelibly stamped in our consciousness. How can we even begin to process the depravity of an evil like Hamas who indiscriminately murdered babies, elderly grandparents, and anyone else they could find? How can we grieve the losses of so many beautiful lives while knowing, simultaneously, that Israel now must fight a ground war in Gaza to ensure that Hamas never again can terrorize Israel?

First, I urge all of us to condemn the atrocities committed by Hamas. Hamas' acts of hate, terror, and murder should be publicly rejected and excoriated by anyone who values the sanctity of human life. Whatever one's political persuasion, religious orientation, or opinion about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, there should be no equivocation about or justification for kidnapping, raping, and murdering innocent civilians. Hamas is not a political party or a traditional army; it is a terrorist militia no different from ISIS in its perpetuation of hate, extremism, violence, and nihilism. Hamas' sole reason for existing is to destroy Israel, and their heinous actions on October 7th are part and parcel of this sadistic and despicable intent.

Second, please reach out to any Jewish friends or acquaintances you might have. We are hurting right now, feeling vulnerable and isolated. Many of us here at SHU and throughout America have family members and friends in Israel who have been directly impacted by the attack on October 7th, who face daily rocket fire from Hamas in Gaza, and who are serving in the Israeli Defense Forces in the impending war. When you check in on your Jewish friends and colleagues, you let us know that we aren't so alone. When you are present and sensitive to our despair, we feel the support and stabilization of solidarity that we so urgently need right now.

Finally, I encourage us to approach the coming war in Gaza with restraint, empathy, and open-mindedness. Israel owes its people a guarantee of safety and security; it would be immoral and an abdication of its

responsibility to its citizens if Israel didn't act in a sufficient capacity, and it has become abundantly clear that Israel cannot guarantee safety for its citizens as long as Hamas remains in power in Gaza.

And, because Hamas cowardly hides in civilian enclaves, including schools, hospitals, and apartment buildings, any attack on Hamas will inevitably lead to the deaths of thousands if not tens of thousands of innocent Palestinians in Gaza, who are unable to flee the Strip. Israel is faced with an impossible, bloody, and repugnant situation. Either it eradicates Hamas by sacrificing Israeli and Palestinian lives; or it tries to limit any further bloodshed short-term but fails to protect its people long-term by letting Hamas live to see another day.

My heart is broken not only by the thousands of Israeli and Palestinian lives already taken, but also by the inevitability of the thousands more Israelis and Palestinians who will perish because of Hamas' actions.



Liyam 20, pays respects at the grave of his fellow commander at Mount Herzl military cemetery in Jerusalem, Monday, Oct. 16, 2023. (AP Photo/Petros Giannakouris)

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