

Pioneer Vote Brings Candidates to Campus

BY EMMA TURNER
Staff Writer

Pioneer Vote, a student-led club, was formed to help students at Sacred Heart University raise their political awareness and help them register to vote.

Carlos Ruiz, former president of Pioneer Vote, said, “SHU does well with many things, surprisingly what we’re still lacking in is voter engagement. You look around, and everyone is pretty opinionated.”

With a large portion of the student population being out-of-state, a big part of this disengagement stems from a lack of knowledge about the process of registering to vote in a different state.

Pioneer Vote hosted a “Come Meet the Candidates” event on Sept. 6 to encourage Sacred Heart students to vote and get interested in politics. Those attending the event got to speak with candidates from the local Bridgeport primary election. Students were able to, in addition to free pizza, receive voter registration cards.



Tracy Deer-Mirek, Sacred Heart University
Angelica Sampson, President of Pioneer Vote, and Coach Jon Basti greet students as they arrive at the event.

“When the pizza was brought out is when they started signing people up to vote and registering (the students),” said Coach Jon Basti, who attended on behalf of Sacred Heart’s men’s lacrosse team.

A variety of candidates came to the university to talk to attendees about the political and voting processes. Mayoral candidate Joseph P. Ganim, 134th District Councilwoman Michele Lyons, and Willie Medina, who is running for a seat on the city school board, among other hopeful elects.

No matter the political stance, all candidates were adamant about the importance of working with Sacred Heart to encourage the student body to vote. According to Princeton Review, SHU ranks fifteenth out of the twenty-five colleges with the least politically active student body.

This is where Pioneer Vote comes in.

“Pioneer vote aims to help student’s voices get heard on campus, and also to get students educated on politics,” said Angelica Sampson, president of Pioneer Vote.

In addition to this, Sampson hopes to get students more familiar with the voting process.

“They get registered and then they don’t know what to do,” said Sampson. “Being president of the club, I really want to get people understanding who’s running, what their party platforms are, and how that impacts us as students, workers, and members of society.”

Pioneer Vote hopes to increase engagement between voters at SHU and the community of Bridgeport. One key aspect of this is educating students on the resources available to them.

“When I was in college, I was registered to vote in the presidential election in New Jersey, but then when it came down to me to go and vote while I was in college, I couldn’t do it because I couldn’t get home,” said Basti. “I encouraged many members of the lacrosse team to fill out registration cards and brought some back for students who could not go to the event.”

Matthew Waggner, from the Town of Fairfield Registrar of Voters, advises students to visit voterregistration.ct.gov to begin the process of registering.

“On-campus students should remember to list their dorm, so you are registered for the correct polling place,” said Waggner.



Tracy Deer-Mirek, Sacred Heart University
Angelica Sampson, President of Pioneer Vote, pictured with John Gomes (right), Bridgeport mayor candidate.

Guess Who’s Back: COVID on Campus

BY ANGELINA SPIEZIO
Staff Writer

The Sacred Heart University Coronavirus Planning Team sent out an advisory email on Sept. 7 regarding the university’s updated policies regarding COVID-19 on campus. The newest COVID-19 variant, referred to by the CDC as “BA.2.86” also known as “Pirola” is a highly mutated Omicron that has spread globally.

“The email was concerning at first since my freshman year was so negatively affected by the virus, but now we know more and can plan accordingly, said senior Caroline Abrams, who experienced her first year at SHU under strict Covid restrictions. “I remain hopeful for no restrictions. It is nice they addressed it so that the whole campus community is on the same page.”

According to the Connecticut Department of Public Health (CTDPH), as of Aug. 1, since Oct. 2022, the cumulative number of laboratory-confirmed and probable COVID-19 cases reported among Connecticut residents is 983,652. In the neighboring SHU communities, the cases of COVID-19 in Bridgeport total 48,917

and Fairfield reports 18,493.

In an interview by email, Michael Iannazzi, Senior Vice President for Administration responded as a spokesperson for himself and Gary MacNamara, Executive Director of Public Safety & Governmental Affairs. Both Iannazzi and MacNamara serve as co-chairs of the university’s Coronavirus Planning Team.

Despite the rising cases, both SHU’s Coronavirus Planning Team and students, “remain focused on monitoring the COVID environment and reacting quickly when needed,” said Iannazzi in the email.

In joint efforts with the broader community including local health authorities and neighboring institutions, the university’s Coronavirus Planning Team “remains in contact with our fellow universities statewide on a regular basis to learn of trends and share best practices,” Iannazzi said in their email.

Per SHU’s coronavirus policy, there is currently no mask mandate, no restrictions for in-person classes or activities, and no

requirement for vaccines or boosters.

Iannazzi said in the email interview, “We also have regular discussions with our local health officials. As we have done since the beginning, we continue to look to the CDC for guidance.”

According to CVS, as of Sept. 12, an updated vaccine to combat new variants of the COVID-19 virus is available at local pharmacies. Detailed in SHU’s Coronavirus on-campus policies, students are not required but encouraged to receive the booster to prevent the spread and lessen symptoms if COVID-19 is contracted.

Some students compared the surge of Covid to the flu and noted a sense of adaptability and normalcy to the virus.

“Like the flu, COVID-19 will come and go, we must learn to live with the virus and not be debilitated by its presence,” said Junior Annalisa Diaz. “It sounds like common sense, a narrative we have heard once before. If we did it once, we can do it again. COVID is something our campus has combatted before; it is important we stay updated and safe.”

If symptomatic, students are urged to continue getting tested. Via appointment through the University, in conjunction with Yale, Student Health Services will perform a saliva-based COVID-19 test, referred to as Saliva Direct. The results of these tests typically take 24-48 hours.

“Mask if you live with others. Wash your hands often. Be mindful of your symptoms. Be in touch with your healthcare providers. Keep hydrated and rest, rest, rest, until you are back to normal without any symptoms at all,” said Iannazzi.

Sacred Heart’s Coronavirus policy urges students who experience COVID-19-like symptoms or test positive for COVID-19 to follow common CDC protocols.

“Like the flu, we expect that it will come and go throughout the university community,” said Iannazzi. “So, our efforts continue to be on education and reminding people that it is still out there and to be mindful of your own personal health and hygiene while we all learn to adapt and live with it.”

News

Tens of thousands march to kick off climate summit, demanding end to warming-causing fossil fuels

BY ASSOCIATED PRESS

NEW YORK (AP) — Yelling that the future and their lives depend on ending fossil fuels, tens of thousands of protesters on Sunday kicked off a week where leaders will try once again to curb climate change primarily caused by coal, oil and natural gas.

But protesters say it's not going to be enough. And they aimed their wrath directly at U.S. President Joe Biden, urging him to stop approving new oil and gas projects, phase out current ones and declare a climate emergency with larger executive powers.

"We hold the power of the people, the power you need to win this election," said 17-year-old Emma Buretta of Brooklyn of the youth protest group Fridays for Future. "If you want to win in 2024, if you do not want the blood of my generation to be on your hands, end fossil fuels."

The March to End Fossil Fuels featured such politicians as Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez and actors Susan Sarandon, Ethan Hawke, Edward Norton, Kyra Sedgwick and Kevin Bacon. But the real action on Broadway was where protesters crowded the street, pleading for a better but not-so-hot future. It was the opening salvo to New York's Climate Week, where world leaders in business, politics and the arts gather to try to save the planet, highlighted by a new special United Nations summit Wednesday.

Many of the leaders of countries that cause the most heat-trapping carbon pollution will not be in attendance. And they won't speak at the summit organized by U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres in a way that only countries that promise new concrete action are invited to speak.

Organizers estimated 75,000 people marched Sunday.

"We have people all across the world in the streets, showing up, demanding a cessation of what is killing us," Ocasio-Cortez told a cheering crowd. "We have to send a message that some of us are going to be living on, on this planet 30, 40, 50 years from now. And we will not take no for an answer."

This protest was far more focused on fossil fuels and the industry than previous marches. Sunday's rally attracted a large chunk, 15%, of first-time protesters and was overwhelmingly female, said American University sociologist Dana Fisher, who studies environmental movements and was surveying march participants.

Of the people Fisher talked to, 86% had experienced extreme heat recently, 21% floods and 18% severe drought, she said. They mostly reported feeling sad and angry. Earth has just gone through the hottest summer on record.

Among the marchers was 8-year-old Athena Wilson from Boca Raton, Florida. She and her mother Maleah, flew from Florida for Sunday's protest.

"Because we care about our planet," Athena said. "I really want the Earth to feel better."

People in the South, especially where the oil industry is, and the global south, "have not felt heard," said 23-year-old Alexandria Gordon, originally from Houston. "It is frustrating."

Protest organizers emphasized how let down they felt that Biden, who many of

them supported in 2020, has overseen increased drilling for oil and fossil fuels.

"President Biden, our lives depend on your actions today," said Louisiana environmental activist Sharon Lavigne. "If you don't stop fossil fuels our blood is on your hands."

Nearly one-third of the world's planned drilling for oil and gas between now and 2050 is by U.S. interests, environmental activists calculate. Over the past 100 years, the United States has put more heat-trapping carbon dioxide in the atmosphere than any other country, though China now emits more carbon pollution on an annual basis.

"You need to phase out fossil fuels to survive our planet," said Jean Su, a march organizer and energy justice director for the Center for Biological Diversity.

Marchers and speakers spoke of increasing urgency and fear of the future. The actress known as V, formerly Eve Ensler, premiered the anthem "Panic" from her new climate change oriented musical scheduled for next year. The chorus goes: "We want you to panic. We want you to act. You stole our future and we want it back."

Signs included "Even Santa Knows Coal is Bad" and "Fossil fuels are killing us" and "I want a fossil free future" and "keep it in the ground."

That's because leaders don't want to acknowledge "the elephant in the room," said Ugandan climate activist Vanessa Nakate. "The elephant is that fossil fuels are responsible for the crisis. We can't eat coal. We can't drink oil, and we can't have any new fossil fuel investments."

But oil and gas industry officials said their products are vital to the economy.

"We share the urgency of confronting climate change together without delay; yet doing so by eliminating America's energy options is the wrong approach and would leave American families and businesses beholden to unstable foreign regions for higher cost and far less reliable energy," said American Petroleum Institute Senior Vice President Megan Bloomgren.

Activists weren't having any of that.

"The fossil fuel industry is choosing to rule and conquer and take and take and take without limit," Rabbi Stephanie Kolin of Congregation Beth Elohim of Brooklyn said.

"And so waters are rising and the skies are turning orange (from wildfire smoke) and the heat is taking lives. But you Mr. President can choose the other path, to be a protector of this Earth."

WATCH THE PIONEERS IN ACTION:

THURSDAY 9/21:

WOMEN'S SOCCER VS. FAIRLEIGH

DICKINSON UNIVERSITY

AT 7 P.M.

SATURDAY 9/23

WOMEN'S SOFTBALL VS.

UNIVERSITY OF BRIDGEPORT AND

FAIRFIELD UNIVERSITY

AT 11 A.M.

SATURDAY 9/23

MEN'S CLUB FOOTBALL VS. CT

WILDCATS AT CAMPUS FIELD

AT 1 P.M.

SUNDAY 9/24:

MEN'S SOCCER

VS. MERRIMACK COLLEGE

AT 12 P.M.

UPCOMING EVENTS:

THURSDAY 9/21 - SUNDAY 9/24

CRIMES OF THE HEART

ACADEMIC BUILDING

LITTLE THEATRE

FRIDAY 9/22:

F.R.I.E.N.D.S. DRIVE IN MOVIE

63'S PATIO LAWN

8 P.M.

SATURDAY 9/23:

TROPICAL PARTY

63'S PATIO LAWN

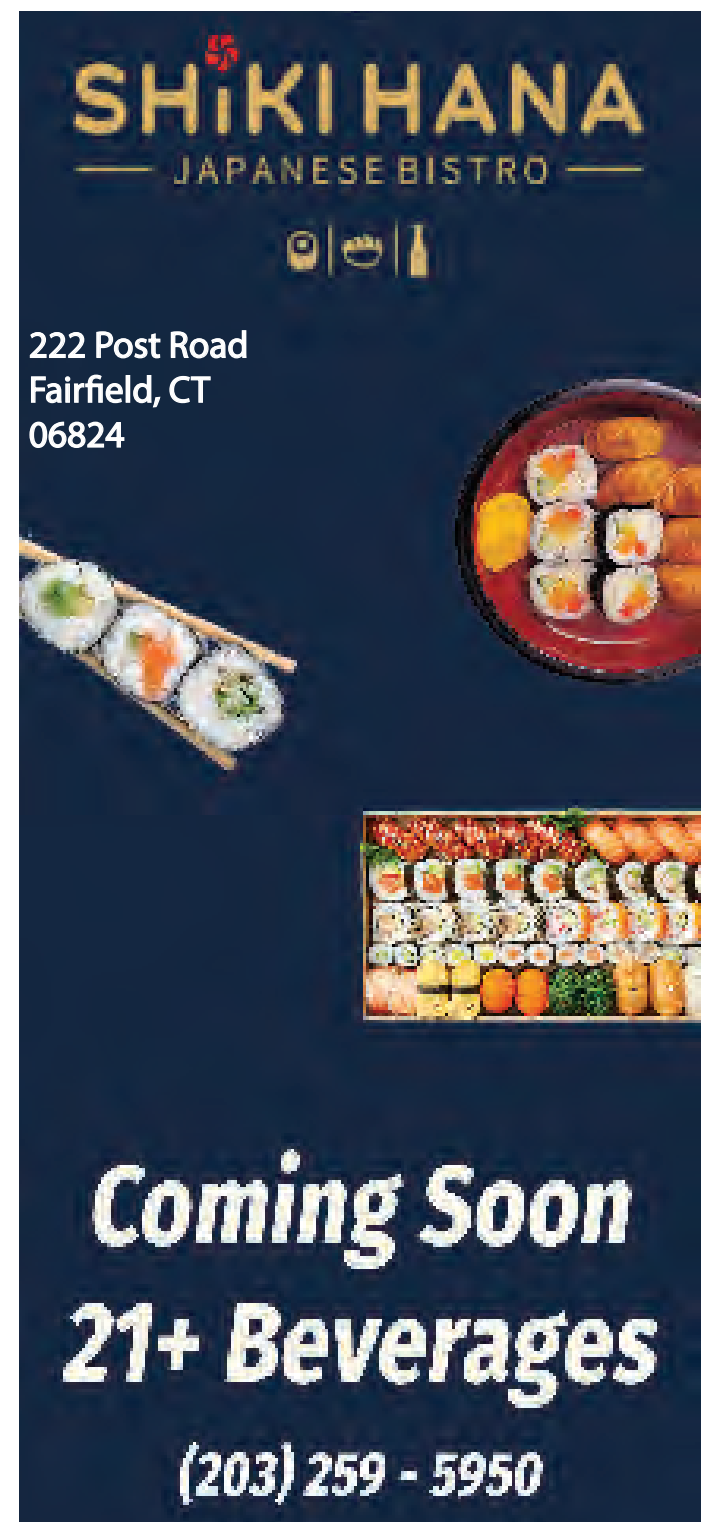
5 P.M.

TUESDAY 9/26:

TAP'S TUESDAY NIGHT LIVE

EDGERTON THEATRE

9:30 P.M.



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Features

We Are Family: Weekend Preview

BY KATHLEEN CHIDO
Staff Writer

This year, family weekend will take place throughout the weekend of Sept. 29 all across campus at Sacred Heart University. There are events being held Friday through Sunday, ranging from games to live performances.

A few of the events include the Pioneer fireworks show, a SHU vs. Merrimack football game, bingo, and the women's hockey game against Saint Michael's College. During the football game, there will be a beer garden under a tent right next to the football field, making it very accessible to fans.

Certain events, like the football game, sold out after just a few hours after going on sale. However, events like the wine and cheese party, SHU Hoops Madness and the shuttle to Silverman's Farm are free and tickets are still available.

"There are some tickets left for the Saturday Night Arena Concert and Champagne Breakfast on Sunday. Other than that, this weekend is very popular, and events sold out after one day of sales," said Director of First Year Programs, Katherine Morovich, who is involved with the planning and setting up of family weekend.

There will also be live shows with musicians and cover bands throughout the weekend.

"I'm looking forward to the Saturday Night Arena Concert with Mike DelGuidice, who is currently on tour with Billy Joel," said Morovich. DelGuidice will be performing on Saturday, Sept. 30 at 8 p.m. in the Martire Family Arena. This will be Sacred Heart's first concert held in the new arena.

At the same time, across campus in the Little Theatre, there will be a performance of "Crimes of The Heart," a play that will be put on by Sacred Heart's Theatre Arts Program and tickets are still available on the Edgerton website.

Senior Kayla Goncalves and her family are planning to enjoy the women's hockey game on Friday night.

"We are really excited for the hockey game because this will be our first time at the new rink," said Goncalves. "My family loves hockey, so I am pretty excited to have my first experience in the new arena with them."

With the new Martire rink opening not even a year ago, several families will be making their first trip there this family weekend.

Many seniors are taking advantage of their last family weekend by participating in several events over the course of the weekend. Senior Jillian McCoy is most looking forward to the football game.

"My family and I are going to the football game on family weekend, and I'm pretty excited for that because it will actually be everyone in my family's first Sacred Heart game," said McCoy.

A list of all of the events can be found on Sacred Heart's official website. The list gives information about times, ticket availability, and the events themselves. On Saturday, events begin as early as 8 a.m. and go until 8 p.m., giving students and families all day to enjoy the activities.

"I'm really excited to spend some time with my family and actually get to participate in some of the events on campus," said Goncalves. "Because

of the pandemic, we weren't really able to fully take advantage of family weekend for my first two years of college. So, I'm really glad my family could come down for my last year to celebrate together."



Mark F. Conrad, Sacred Heart University

The football games are a major event during family weekend, where the Sacred Heart community gathers at Campus Field to support their team.

Sneak Peek Into S.E.T.

BY CAYLA NISTA
Staff Writer

At Sacred Heart University, the Student Events Team (S.E.T.) is responsible for many of the engaging and interactive events on campus all year long. Their hope is to bring students together and find ways to enhance their college experience here at SHU.

Junior Christina Braga, has consistently gone to one of the most popular events that S.E.T. puts together, bingo.

"I have gone to bingo the last two years here as a student and it's a great way to meet new people and also maybe even get some great prizes. S.E.T. does a great job of organizing a really fun event," said Braga.

The bingo events which happen every year are largely known throughout the SHU community and take place in the Edgerton Theatre on campus.

Senior Molly Teeter, president of S.E.T., joined her freshman year and has loved being a part of the team. She looks forward to thinking creatively to make a lasting impact on the SHU community with the events she puts together.

"I have met so many students through this program and students keep coming back to our events. Seeing a smile on the students' faces at an event makes me so happy and is the whole reason I joined the executive board," Teeter said.

S.E.T. has a lot of big plans for the SHU community this year and they are always looking for new ways to improve from the year prior. They love hearing from SHU students to get some new ideas of what events students would like to see on campus.



Alanna Wunsch, Arts & Entertainment Editor

Bingo night is a popular, long running event held by SET, where students have the opportunity to win big prizes.

For students who are looking to get involved with S.E.T., they can attend the general member meetings. The meeting information can be seen posted on the S.E.T. Instagram account; typically they host meetings on Monday at 10:10 p.m., biweekly.

Junior Tori Miller, Communications Chair of S.E.T., said, "S.E.T. has a lot of big plans this year. We have our Fall Fest coming back this year mid-October. We are also keeping the favorites like Stuff-a-Bear and bingo. But keep an eye out for some new and improved events."

S.E.T. is keeping a tight lid on the bingo prizes and other events for the school year. The anticipation of this has SHU students curious to know what's in store for this year.

Senior Kayla Pereira, S.E.T. member, is keeping the logistics of these events classified to keep the students excited about what's to come.

"We are currently working out the logistics of Fall Fest and I can't give any information yet. The only thing I can say is that it will be Oct. 14 from 12 p.m. to 4 p.m.," Pereira said.

Keep an eye out around campus to see what fun upcoming events S.E.T. is putting together.

First 50 Days: We're Halfway There

BY ANNA MCGRADY & GERALDINE PAGLIA
Staff Writer & Assistant Features Editor

The "First 50 Days" series began on the first day of the academic year. As the event series at Sacred Heart University continues, students find themselves immersed in exciting activities designed to foster a sense of belonging and engagement within the campus community.

The early days of the series included essential orientations, ensuring new students felt comfortable and informed about the resources available to them. These sessions helped build a sense of belonging, laying the foundation for a successful academic year.

Director of First-Year Programs, Katherine Morovich said, "Each first-year student is given a booklet in their first FYE class. We also give out these booklets to a bunch of offices on the main campus and they could go online to sacredheart.edu/50."

The calendar is packed with exciting happenings, including live music performances, movie nights under the stars, community service projects, and informative workshops on career development and academic success.

The calendar is filled with opportunities to make friends and get involved.

On day 27, a drive-in movie night is planned on 63's lawn, featuring the beloved show, "Friends," for students to enjoy under the open sky.

Orientation co-chair and sophomore Stasia Dussault said, "By attending these events, joining clubs, and leaving your room, there is always something to do on campus, and all you must do is take that first step."

The event series is filled with a diverse range of activities that cater to a wide array of interests. From sports enthusiasts participating in intramural games to art aficionados engaging in creative workshops, there is something for everyone.



Anastasia Nikolopoulos, Staff Photographer

Promotional posters can be found hanging around campus to encourage students to attend events, like Taylor Swift Night.

The upcoming days promise engaging events, including thrilling pool tournaments, a pioneer fireworks display, and a trip to Salem, Mass.

Many of these events have already garnered considerable anticipation, with Taylor Swift Night and the "Stuff-a-Bear" activity being early crowd-pleasers.

These First 50 Days events are not only significant for students but also play a crucial role in boosting the visibility and involvement of clubs and organizations on campus.

Vacca said, "It gets their names in front of a lot more students, and on the flip side, it's important for students that are here, not necessarily just for first-year students but for students looking to get more involved."



Instagram, @shu.involvement

Trivia night is just one of the many events planned for the "First Fifty Days" series.

Audrey's Corner

The Importance of Campus Involvement for All Students

BY OLIVIA TEDESCO

College life is a key turning point in one's educational career. Whether you are a first-year student just embarking on this wonderful journey or an experienced returning student, being involved on campus cannot be overstated. It is an essential part of the college experience that provides a wide variety of chances to further one's personal, intellectual, and social growth.

No matter what year you are in school, Sacred Heart University provides hundreds of opportunities for students to participate in campus life. Students of all ages are encouraged to join local clubs and organizations in order to get more involved in their community. Campus involvement plays a crucial role in helping college students achieve academic success.

Sacred Heart University offers over 80 student-run clubs and organizations to all undergraduates on campus. Academic clubs include the English Club, Criminal Justice Club, Neuroscience Club, Women in Business Network, and more. By joining one of these academic-based clubs students of all class years can



Contributed by Daniella Zacharis, '26

Zacharis is a student representative for Turning Point USA, where she gets the opportunity to attend political conferences nationwide.

collaborate with peers in study groups fostering a deeper understanding of course materials and academic excellence. Joining clubs aligned with your major or interests allows you to engage in enriching discussions and events that complement your coursework.

College is a time of self-discovery and personal growth, and involvement can significantly contribute to this development.

Sophomore Daniella Zacharis is a double major in marketing and finance with an honors minor here

at SHU. On campus, she is involved in the Choral Program as one of the Recruitment Chairs, a Finance Specialist for Alpha Delta Pi, a Senator on Student Government, a Delight Ministries Member, and a Student Representative for Turning Point USA.

Zacharis explained how she felt as a freshman, starting completely new experiences here at SHU.



Tracy Deer-Mirek, Sacred Heart University

Daniella Zacharis (left) pictured participating at the Just SHU It Fair.

“As a freshman, I was not overwhelmed. I was ready for a new start and ready to see what my next chapter had in store,” she said. “I found that going into freshman year with that mindset helped me keep my stress levels to a minimal level. The more you think about the difference in

lifestyle, homework, or difficulty, the more likely you will stress about it.”

Zacharis also mentioned that being involved helped her grow into the person she is today and would encourage everyone to get involved.

“Being involved in all these different organizations has helped me find what I love to do and what I want to continue to focus on for the rest of my years here at Sacred Heart University. I met some of my best friends, and amazing mentors, and found resources I would have never known existed without these people and organizations,” Zacharis said.

“Getting involved is not only the ‘resume builder’ people like to nickname it. You get introduced to different communities and find where you can fit perfectly. You can find new passions and explore opportunities and realms that you never knew existed or have wanted to explore before,” she said. “Step out of your comfort zone, don’t run along with the herd. Take a different path, take your own path, and start to explore your unknown.”

Audrey Niblo

Audrey's Corner is a section made in honor of staff writer for The Spectrum, Audrey Niblo. Such a bright and passionate woman, Audrey passed away due to a heart condition in May 2018 but her story continues. She was an advocate and ally for bully victims and shared her own experiences as a way to connect with others and inspire change. We hope that this section expresses the kind of person Audrey was, and the legacy she has left at Sacred Heart University and the world at large.



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

Counseling Center

Open 9-5 on Weekdays

Make an Appointment: 203-371-7955

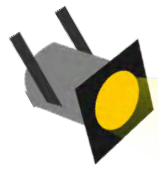
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Follow the s.w.e.e.t. Peers on Instagram @shu_sweetpeered and stay updated on the programs run by their team.

Public Safety

Routine Calls: 203-371-7995

Emergency Calls: 203-371-7911 or 203-374-9352



Spotlight



SHU's Newest Greek Life - Lambda Delta Xi

BY VALENTINA MASSONI
Co-Spotlight Editor

This fall, Sacred Heart University welcomes a new Greek life organization to campus, and it is the first of its kind. Lambda Delta Xi was the first diaternity nationwide, and is now the first at Sacred Heart.

In 2014, the founders of Lambda Delta Xi at Kutztown University of Pennsylvania coined the term diaternity.

“The word avoids using the gendered terms of ‘sorority’ or ‘fraternity’; to make a place where anyone can feel welcome,” their website states.

The organization focuses specifically on the LGBTQ+ community and its allies, accepting members of all gender identities and sexualities.

Junior Daniella Monteforte is the president and a founder of Lambda Delta Xi at Sacred Heart. She gathered a group of five students during the spring semester of 2023 to pioneer the chapter. Since then, they have worked with the university and national representatives of the diaternity to expand.

The chapter is still in development, but Sacred Heart will be the fourth campus where Lambda Delta Xi has been recognized. Currently the main concern of the five founders is determining how to structure the recruitment process.

“I just want it to be a safe space for everyone, you know, have people come to Sacred Heart and feel like they have a home,” Monteforte said.

Monteforte represents many other students on campus who have not had a place in Greek life up until this point.

Sacred Heart’s website states that 31% of undergraduate students are involved in fraternity and sorority life. Because all gender identities are accepted in this new organization, a larger, more diverse group of students will be encouraged to become involved.

to their website, the Trevor Project’s mission is to end suicide among young LGBTQ+ people.

Additionally, Sacred Heart’s local philanthropy is the Triangle Community Center in Norwalk.

“This community is a group of teens and young adults that meet and hangout weekly just to give each other support and friendship,” Monteforte said.

The Trevor Project’s 2023 national survey on LGBTQ+ youth mental health found that 56% of young LGBTQ+ people who wanted mental health care in the past year were not able to get it.

The diaternity will provide a safe space for the campus-wide LGBTQ+ community, while also supporting local and national LGBTQ+ communities through their connection with the Trevor Project and the Triangle Community Center.

“Lambda Delta Xi Diaternity seeks to make a difference for the LGBTQ+ community on and off campuses across the country,” the diaternity’s website states.

The vision of the original founders of Lambda Delta Xi, the vision of president Monteforte, and the chosen philanthropies associated with the organization are all seamlessly aligned.

“I would honestly say that Lambda Delta Xi is a forever family where everyone is on the same playing field. It’s awesome,” Monteforte said.



Contributed by Natalia Scipioni, '26
Junior Daniella Monteforte is the president and one of the five founders of the Sacred Heart’s newest Greek Life organization, Lambda Delta Xi.



Contributed by Natalia Scipioni, '26

The five founders of SHU’s new diaternity seek to provide a safe space for all LGBTQ+ students on campus.

“People come to college and they want to be in a Greek life organization. It’s kind of what college is about,” said Monteforte. “I definitely didn’t have that opportunity myself, so I wanted to give it to other people.”

The national philanthropy of Lambda Delta Xi is the non-profit organization, the Trevor Project. According

Do you know a person, club, organization, etc. that deserves a Spectrum Spotlight? Scan the QR code below to send suggestions to our editors!



Arts & Entertainment

TAP Presents “Crimes of the Heart”

BY MOIRA STAPLES
Staff Writer

Sacred Heart University’s Theater Arts Program (TAP) takes the stage for its first performance of the year in “Crimes of the Heart” on Sept. 21 at 8 p.m. in the Little Theatre.

“Crimes of the Heart is the story of three sisters all fighting their own battles, but who are always there for each other,” said senior Danielle Savino. “The story follows what ensues when the three sisters are back in one place, trying to heal past wounds and make a better future for themselves.”

“Crimes of the Heart” follows the Magrath sisters, Lenny, Meg and Babe, who come together after tragedy strikes, forcing them to confront the ghosts of their past. While these sisters may be nothing alike, they need each other in order to deal with the consequences of their passions.

Savino, who plays Lenny, the oldest sister, described the show as capturing something that is “human and real,” which makes this show so special.

“Beth Henley, the playwright, has crafted this beautiful story about family, grief, loss, and love,” said Savino. “It reminds the audience of the importance of family and human connection.”

The story begins when Babe, the youngest sister, shoots her husband, forcing her to return home and reunite with her sisters. These dysfunctional and damaged characters come together to heal in a way that demonstrates the meaning of family. While bizarre circumstances drive this family together, it is their relationship that captures the hearts of audiences.

“Before I started working on the show, I just knew that the show starts with the

youngest [sister] killing her husband, so that is what I assumed that the whole show was about, but really, when we started working on it, it was super cool to learn that it really is just about these three sisters. Yeah, she kills her husband, but that is sort of like a secondary plot to everything that is going on,” said senior Chris Conte, the production’s stage manager.

“I think there is a really beautiful message of the strength of family and how a family can be such a strong pillar in someone’s life,” said Conte.

This show deals with loneliness, pain, and suicide all through a dark, yet humorous tone. “‘Crimes of the Heart’ is an incredibly sad, yet heartwarming piece that discusses pain in a way that is very human,” said sophomore Erin Pellegrini, who plays Babe.

“I really have a fun time playing her [Babe] because of just how many sides there are to her character,” said Pellegrini. “I have had a blast tapping into this character and seeing everyone else work on their stuff... it just makes you really excited for the show.”

“I think that ultimately, it’s just something where you can go and understand and be like, ‘Yeah, the hardships they go through is kind of sad,’ but in the end, it’s just a story about being together,” said Pellegrini. “I think that if you go and see it, leaving the theater, you will take that with you.”

TAP’s “Crimes of the Heart” will have performances in the Little Theatre on Sept. 21-23 and Sept. 28-30 at 8 p.m., as well as Sept. 24 and Oct. 1 at 3 p.m. Tickets are available for purchase in the Edgerton Box Office or by calling (203)-371-7908. Visit www.edgertoncenter.org for more information.

Rooting for the Anti-Hero: Taylor Swift Sweeps VMAs

BY CAROLYN DOHERTY
Staff Writer

On Sept. 12, the 40th annual MTV Video Music Awards (VMAs), hosted by Nicki Minaj, took place in Newark, New Jersey. The VMAs recognize some of the most popular artists from the past year to commend their great efforts. According to Variety, this year’s ceremony brought in 37% more viewers than 2022. Rounding in at 865,000 watchers in total. With all the riveting performances and record-setting female nominees, the 2023 VMAs were one to remember.

Junior Haiely Genzale said, “I was really looking forward to this year’s show. With all the great new music that came out in 2023, I knew it was going to be a good one.”

The show jumped right into performances from Lil Wayne and Olivia Rodrigo. While it seemed that Wayne’s performance went off without a hitch, Rodrigo had some technical difficulties. However, it was all a hoax leading into her singing “get him back!”, a song off of her new album.

Eve Calabria, who attended the show said, “I think Olivia Rodrigo’s performance was the most unexpected. She did a bit where the stage and props were malfunctioning, so there were fireworks going off and curtains coming down all over the place and she had a stagehand run in and pull her off, it seemed extremely real in the moment.”

Even after this year’s VMAs, Beyoncé still holds the record of the most VMAs with 30 titles. However, Taylor Swift is getting closer to that number, with 23 awards. Swift swept this year’s show, tying the record for the most VMAs won in a single night, clocking in at nine awards.

The categories Swift took home include, Video of the Year (“Anti-Hero”), Artist of the Year, Song of the Year (“Anti-Hero”), Best Pop (“Anti-Hero”), Best Direction (“Anti-Hero”), Best Cinematography (“Anti-Hero”), Best Visual Effects (“Anti-Hero”), Show of

the Summer (Eras tour), and ultimately, Album of the Year for “Midnights.”

“My favorite artist at the VMAs was Taylor Swift,” junior Nico Bogardus said. “She’s got so many great songs and they are all so catchy.”

During the show, Shakira was recognized for her contribution to music and pop culture. Wyclef Jean came on stage to honor her. He said, “Latin music would not be the global force that it is without Shakira.”

Shakira then took to the stage to sing some of her most popular songs, “She Wolf,” “Objection (Tango),” “Whenever, Wherever,” and finished off with “Hips Don’t Lie” and “Bzrp Music Sessions, Vol. 53.”

Afterwards, Shakira made history and accepted the MTV Video Vanguard award. An award previously won by artists like The Beatles, David Bowie, Beyoncé and more. As she took the stage, the crowd shouted her name. In her speech, Shakira said, “I want to share this award with my fans who always support me through thick and thin. Thank you so much for being my army and for helping me fight all my battles.”

“The standout moment to me was Shakira’s performance, she is just unreal,” said Calabria.

Another historic moment happened during the “Artist of the Year” category, as all the nominees were female. Ultimately, Swift took home the award, but Beyoncé, Doja Cat, Karol G, Nicki Minaj, and Shakira were all nominated as well.

“It was so fun, 10 out of 10. It was like the best concerts ever rolled into one. The only thing that would have made the night better for me was if Taylor had performed,” said Calabria.



AP Photo, Charles Sykes

Taylor Swift won nine awards at this year’s VMAs, including Artist of the Year and Album of the Year.

Spill Your Guts: Olivia Rodrigo Releases Sophomore Album

BY ANGELISE ROY
Staff Writer

Singer Olivia Rodrigo released her highly anticipated sophomore album “GUTS” on Sept. 8.

According to AP News, Rodrigo’s career took off in January 2021 when she released her hit single called “drivers license.” Her debut album “SOUR” was released in May 2021, earning her three Grammy Awards, and making her the youngest solo artist to debut at No. 1 on the Billboard Hot 100.

“GUTS” is a pop album that consists of 12 tracks and was co-written by Rodrigo and her producer and creative partner, Daniel Nigro, according to the New York Times.

“I was impressed by ‘GUTS,’” said senior Kristina Tocio. “I thought that ‘SOUR’ would be tough to follow but I think that both albums are equally good.”

In an interview with Rolling Stone, Rodrigo said, “This album talks about me making a bunch of mistakes in my life and being awkward, not knowing who I am, and not knowing what I want.”

Before the release of “GUTS”, Rodrigo released two singles, “vampire” and “bad idea right?”

Senior Taylor Barone, a casual fan of Rodrigo, said that while she did not love the songs at first, they grew on her and are now two of her favorite songs.

“This album captures the emotions that a lot of young women feel, and Olivia writes lyrics that a lot of us can relate to,” said Barone.

Rodrigo has a dedicated fan base, which includes senior Elaina Edwards who said that Rodrigo is her favorite artist. Edwards has been to one of her concerts and knows the lyrics to all her songs.

“There’s not one bad song on this album. They are all so catchy and easy to sing,” said Edwards. “The song ‘making the bed’ is very personal, and I feel like I can really connect with it.”

Edwards said that she liked how Rodrigo was vulnerable by telling her stories through her own style. She said that Rodrigo’s songwriting is something that has been strong since the beginning, and this album gave her a chance to show her production capabilities.

Tocio said that the format of “GUTS” is very similar to “SOUR” in the way that it goes from having pop-rock songs to beautiful ballads. She liked that this album has more fast-paced and upbeat songs than “SOUR.” The rock elements shined through a little more, making the album even more different and unique.

“Something that I love about this album is how it is very cohesive because every song has its own story that represents the common theme of spilling your guts, which can mean so many different things,” said Barone.

Fans have been showing their admiration for “GUTS” on TikTok by posting videos to various songs from the album. Barone said that Rodrigo’s songs are all over her “For You Page” because a lot of the songs from the album have their own trends.

According to Billboard, three of Rodrigo’s songs from “GUTS” are on Billboard’s Hot Trending Songs chart, with “the grudge” at No.1 for Sept. 16.

“I would definitely recommend this album to people because it’s very different from other music out there and I don’t think anyone could listen to this album and not relate to any part of it,” said Tocio. “It’s an album that people will be talking about for a while.”

Sports

100th Win For Women's Soccer Coach

BY SHANNON TUTTLE
Staff Writer

The Sacred Heart University (SHU) women's soccer head coach, Matt Micros, won his 100th game on Thursday, Sept. 7. The team secured a 2-0 victory over the Manhattan Jaspers, providing Micros his milestone achievement.

This season kicked off Micros' sixth year of coaching at SHU. Prior to his position at SHU, Micros was the head coach at Post University in Waterbury, Connecticut, where he picked up 64 wins. In 2018, Micros found his new home at SHU, and since then earned another 36 wins to accomplish a career milestone of 100 wins.

"It shows that I've just hung around long enough to do it," said Micros.

In late August, the team faced off against San Diego State University. During their game, an announcer made a comment about Micros being one win away from 100 victories. His wife heard the good news and informed Micros about his soon-to-be triumph.

"I had no idea. I hadn't really paid that close attention to it until she mentioned it," said Micros.

Two of his athletes gave some insight and shared their feelings towards their coach.

One of them was senior and captain Maria Nolan, who has played under coach Micros for four years.

"Every season he has us all come to his house for a team dinner. For game days, he takes the time to find a game day quote, he then prints and laminates 40 copies of that quote so we can play with it in our left shin guards," said Nolan.

Junior Grace O'Hara also talked about Micros.

"To play under him I feel like I have improved a lot as an athlete," said O'Hara.

Although Micros is grateful for this experience and proud of his 100 wins, he is already looking ahead.

"I would love to see the girls win the conference championship. That's a goal I have more than anything. That'll be the ultimate accomplishment," said Micros.

The Pioneers look to extend Micros' win count as they host the Fairleigh Dickinson Knights on Thursday, Sept. 21 at Park Avenue Field.

Sacred Heart Athletics contributed to this article.

To Serve or Be Served

BY NICHOLAS VUKOTA
Staff Writer

As the fall season unfolds, the Sacred Heart University (SHU) men's tennis team had their first match last Friday. Their sights are set on tournaments this upcoming fall and dual matches scheduled for January, while also carrying the momentum from last season when they reached the Northeast Conference (NEC) semifinals.



Instagram, @sacredhearttennis

Sacred Heart's men's tennis team is ready for a competitive season following their first game of the season.

experienced upperclassmen with the four promising newcomers.

"I think all four guys are a good fit with our players," said Guastelle. "It's going to be pretty competitive amongst them for who's going to be starters."

Head coach Mike Guastelle laid out his objectives for the initial games.

In a challenging encounter against the United States Military Academy (Army), the SHU men's tennis team fell short of victory this past Friday with a final score of 4-3.

Head coach Mike Guastelle laid out his objectives for the initial games.

"For the freshmen, it's about seeing where they fit in competitively," said Guastelle.

Guastelle's approach underscores the importance of evaluating the team's development and integrating

Guastelle has strong expectations for his team.

"I think the goal for them is to play on that championship Sunday and, you know, win it," said Guastelle.

Sophomore Arya Alla reflected on his freshman experience with the team, shedding light on the competitive atmosphere.

"My outlook on it was I'm going to come in here every day and work my tail off. Give it my all not just for myself but for all the guys around me," said Alla.

Alla was named to the NEC All-Rookie team last season, earning himself a spot in the starting lineup.

Another one of the team's starters will be senior Lefteri Apostolou, who was All NEC-First Team in singles and All NEC-Second Team in doubles last season.

"Reflecting on last year, we welcomed some great guys to the team who greatly helped us both on and off the court to get where we did," said Apostolou. "I think we grew closer as a team and became more like a family, which was key to our achievements last year."

Apostolou continued, "I hope I can stay competitive and healthy throughout the season, and I'm looking forward to having some good results that will hopefully contribute to the team."

As a senior, this will be Apostolou's final season with the Pioneers.

"I look forward to creating more great memories with this team one last time. I really just want to do as much as I can to give back and help the team achieve the success it deserves," said Apostolou.

The Pioneers are set to take on their crosstown rivals, the Fairfield University Stags, at the Fairfield Invitational next weekend, Sept. 22- Sept. 24.

Sacred Heart Athletics contributed to this article.

Sacred Heart's Getting Stronger: New Club Powerlifting Team

BY JOHN HEINZE
Staff Writer

Club powerlifting is a new club sport at Sacred Heart University (SHU). The program was founded by junior Ryan Tashman, The Spectrum's web and graphics manager. The team is run by junior Antonio Lagana, who is the president of the club.

Many schools across the country have big powerlifting programs that offer scholarships for top powerlifting competitors. While powerlifting at SHU is brand new, it is now providing people who love the gym and the sport to compete in an activity they love.

"The team is not big at the moment. We have a lot of interest, and we hope to create a fun and safe environment for students to learn how to lift and advance their skills," said Lagana.

New sports can be tough to advertise and grow, but that is not stopping these students from expanding the team. As the president, Lagana has multiple responsibilities.

"My job currently is running the social media accounts and reaching out to students to giving them the information they need to make an informative decision on if they want to join the team or not. I'm also trying to set up competitions and programs for the team," said Lagana.

Some might wonder, what exactly is competitive powerlifting?

"Powerlifting is a sport that revolves around three main exercises: the squat, bench press, and deadlift. It's a healthy way to stay active that combines strength and determination through weightlifting," said Tashman.

These exercises are what powerlifters practice and use in competition.

"Put simply, powerlifting competitions are scored by who can lift the most weight in a specific workout," said Tashman.

Powerlifting workouts are different from the workouts an everyday lifter might practice.

"Non-competitive lifting prioritizes lots of high-volume training and a lot of slower form as opposed to competition lifting which is quick and explosive," said junior Ryan Vano.

Although there are differences between powerlifting and everyday lifting, they also have some similarities.

"Although my style of training is strictly hypertrophic, I will routinely add in compound lifts to shock my body and joints to progressively gain strength and muscle over time," said Vano.

Even if you have never lifted before, powerlifting can be a great way to get involved on campus. Club sports in college are seen by many as a great way to compete and stay in shape.

"I came to college, never powerlifted or really weightlifted before with a gym so close on campus and a friend group who was eager to workout. I just showed up and as I kept doing it, I started to enjoy lifting," said Lagana.

"Powerlifting is more than a sport to me. It's a lifestyle and creates discipline, mental and physical strength, and friends that will last a lifetime. This sport is simply for anyone who wants to learn," said Lagana.



Instagram, @shu_powerlifting

Members of club powerlifting, one of SHU's newest club sports teams, pictured after the club's first meeting last year.

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So I Went to the VMAs...

ALANNA WUNSCH
ARTS AND ENTERTAINMENT

The VMAs have always been at the forefront of pop culture and controversy. Between Beyonce's pregnancy announcement, the infamous Kanye West and Taylor Swift incident, and the unforgettable Miley Cryus performance from 2013; the show has truly had some crazy moments. The show never fails to make headlines, and the events that occur are talked about for years after. I have always imagined what it would be like to witness pop culture history, and this year my wish came true. Here's what it was like attending the VMAs.

While the show didn't start until 8 p.m, check-in began at 3 p.m.. I arrived at the designated parking lot that check-in was held at to see a very unglamorous setup. It included: three large tents, a row of porta-potties, and an extensive security line. As I got to the front of the line, I went through security, received my wristband, and was escorted to the waiting area. Sitting in anticipation was definitely the worst part, but I definitely made the best of the situation by making friends with other attendees. Around two and a half hours passed and I was finally making it somewhere, making it to the point where they locked up my phone. I totally understand the logic behind locking them up, but boy was it brutal feeling my phone vibrate for the next six hours and not being able to see what was going on.

Now to the fun part! After "yondering" our phones as they called it, we were escorted through the backstage area to get to our "seats" in the pit. Our line was quickly halted to make way for an incoming set piece which turned out to be for Cardi B and Megan Thee Stallion's performance. This was the moment that made me pinch myself... was I really here? I will never forget walking onto the floor of the Prudential Center and seeing the giant silver moon man front and center, surrounded by an A-list seating chart. Seeing everything being set up and perfected before cameras started rolling was so surreal. After another hour of standing around and receiving directions from the crew, it was finally show time!

The celebrities packed into the arena in their gowns and outrageous outfits. Seated directly in front of me were the celebrities I have seen on my screen so many times before, but this time- I was actually in the room with them. Selena Gomez in her sparkling red gown was escorted to a seat in the front row. Renee Rapp, a newer artist who has quickly become one of my favorites, was sitting at the top of the section with her friends, chatting away. Tiffany Haddish was having the time of her life during even the most mundane of interactions, and Shakira was seated next to her young sons who looked like they were ready for bed all night. Seated on the other side of the stage was Taylor Swift, Sabrina Carpenter, Ice Spice, Lil Nas X and so many other iconic celebrities. One of the most incredible parts of this whole experience was seeing how all of the celebrities interacted with one another when a camera wasn't on them. I loved seeing celebrities fawn over each other, cheer each other on and even just have side conversations during the commercial breaks. Watching Taylor Swift reacting to her friends winning awards and all of the live performances was almost as entertaining as the actual show.

As previously mentioned, the VMAs are known for outrageous performances and grand announcements. This year brought a highly anticipated NSYNC reunion, a fake-out performance from Olivia Rodrigo and history-making wins for Taylor Swift. While nothing truly monumental or controversial happened, it was still an incredible experience I will never forget. I am so grateful I got the opportunity to witness the award show this year, and hope to be in attendance again in the future!

Now you may be asking...how did I pull this off? How much money did I have to spend to get these tickets? Well, I have great news for you, it's actually really simple. Oh...and it's free! My go-to site for unforgettable television experiences is Iiota.com. There, they offer tickets for all of your favorite late night and daytime talk shows, a few award shows (like the VMAs) and other random fan experiences. While based mostly in NYC and Los Angeles, they do offer a few experiences in other cities. They upload new experiences everyday so keep checking if you do not see one you're interested in yet. If you are a pop culture fanatic like me, this is the site for you.

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