

SHU M.E.N. Making their Mark on Nursing

BY **KAYLEE SHINDEL**
Staff Writer

Dr. Christopher Sage, Assistant Clinical Professor of Undergraduate Nursing, announced that the American Association for Men in Nursing (AAMN) accepted SHU's Men Entering Nursing (M.E.N.) Club application for chapter status.

Sacred Heart University's M.E.N. chapter of AAMN is inclusive to all genders while continuing its mission to support males in the nursing program. The club seeks to encourage more individuals to consider this career path.

"Both male and female students participate in our club and support our cause. That diversity is what makes us whole. This creates a safe space for men in the nursing program," said junior Cameron Ottaviani, M.E.N. Chapter President.

Sage has witnessed the lack of men in the nursing program on campus.

"Males only represent about 11-13% of the workforce. Here on campus there are as little as 7% of males in the undergraduate First Professional Degree program at this time. This is represented by the current 69 males out of 900 students in the nursing program," said Sage.

The club has provided a place for men entering the nursing field to meet and discuss hardships within their degree while also helping them overcome obstacles in their profession. The club's objective was established, and payment was provided for student membership in order to reach the goal of becoming a chapter.

"In order to achieve chapter status the club needed to create a new constitution and gain members of the AAMN.



Contributed by, Cameron Ottaviani '26

Vice President Vincent Buccheri, left, and President Cameron Ottaviani, right, after the Blessing of the Hands.

The club also needed to provide its purpose and mission," Sage said.

"The Dean of the College of Nursing agreed to pay for student memberships. In August of 2024, 24 of our students became members of the AAMN. After taking these steps, our application was passed by the chapter

committee's National Organization of Men in Nursing and then passed by the Board of Directors."

The club focuses on students' transition into the workforce, which they will be continuing with their new chapter status.

"Achieving chapter status will greatly aid our members when entering into the workforce due to now being nationally recognized through AAMN," said Ottaviani. "To have this chapter on your resume will help our members stand out in job applications, gain connections in the workforce and even develop communication and nursing skills for later use."

The club's founding members have witnessed its numeric growth.

"Our first year we had anywhere from five to 20 members at our meetings. For the first meeting of this year we had 45 students in attendance," said junior Vincent Buccheri, M.E.N. Chapter Vice President.

The club has participated in events on and off campus to inspire and inform young men. Events have been planned for the 2024-2025 academic year to continue fulfilling the chapter's mission.

"We visit Central High School in Bridgeport every year. We speak with their health sciences club and inform them about what it is like to be a nursing student. This year we have expanded from Central High School to Fairfield Notre Dame and Stratford High School," Buccheri said.

"Another event that we hold is our panel discussion where we gather nurses from different fields, and ask

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Family Weekend Festivities Planned

BY **DANIEL GREENE**
Staff Writer

Pioneer Palooza, Sacred Heart University's 33rd Annual Family Weekend, begins Friday, Oct. 4. Students and their families will be able to participate in various activities over the weekend and see what SHU has to offer.

Registration for Pioneer Palooza began on Aug. 27 and closed on Sept. 27 at 5 p.m. Family Weekend events include a Pioneer Firework Show, the Sacred Heart v. Norfolk State football game, an Almost Queen concert and a Champagne Continental Breakfast with SHU President Dr. John Petillo.

"It is a mixture of traditional events that always take place, and they usually always surround a home athletic game. There is a draw for families to come, and so they are larger attended events," said Katherine Morovich, Director of Involvement and First Year Programs.

Big Red Bingo, the Saturday night concert and breakfast with the president are annual events during Pioneer Palooza. The fireworks show, scheduled for on Oct. 4 at 9 p.m., was canceled last year due to rain but is back for 2024.

"It was a little hard to figure out Friday night. We always have our wine and cheese event, which is a pillar event that was bookended by SHU Hoops Madness. This year, we added in a fireworks show through athletics to close the loop on Friday night," said Morovich.

SHU Hoops Madness, typically a recurring event for Family Weekend, will not take place this year due to the ongoing renovations of the William H. Pitt Center.

"I am sad, obviously, because basketball is one of my favorite sports to watch. It is okay, though, because they are getting a brand new Pitt Center," said sophomore Sophie Seidman.

Over 9,000 people are expected to attend Pioneer Palooza. To accommodate all vehicles, families will receive their parking designation prior to Family Weekend, based on their students' class year.

"I think the parking situation for Family Weekend is atrocious. I think we need to be better prepared for it and utilize our spaces," said sophomore Ryan Buchan.

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Student Interns with Senator Chris Murphy

BY **JACK CAVICCHI**
Staff Writer and Asst. Web Manager

This past summer, senior Ciara Smith, a history major at Sacred Heart University, worked as a Congressional Intern in the office of U.S. Senator Chris Murphy.

Smith learned about this internship opportunity thanks to SHU's Career and Professional Development Office.

"I got an email from the school about this opportunity a week and a half before the application deadline," Smith said.

Smith was the first SHU student to participate in one of Murphy's internships.

"Our office is in constant communication with students via email, with most emails and information coming from us through Handshake," said Amy Novak, Senior Director of the Career and Professional Development Office.

"Whether we're promoting available internships, events or information about employers visiting campus, students will want to make sure they're looking for emails from SHU Career Development, or in some cases, their career coach," she continued.

The interview process consisted of multiple rounds in order to narrow down the pool of candidates.



Contributed by Ciara Smith '25

Ciara Smith and U.S. Senator Chris Murphy during her summer internship.

"It was very stressful. I only had a week and a half to complete the online application, submit my resume and complete a cover letter. And that was just the first round," Smith said.

After the first round, some applicants were invited to participate in an interview with a staff assistant as well as with a current intern.

"There was two weeks of silence where

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News

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BY KAYLEE SHINDEL
Staff Writer

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questions about the profession. We also attended every open house in the Center for Healthcare Education. Our members were pre-fall leaders and took on freshman orientation," said Buccheri.

These students have gained emotional support as well as security through their chapter status.

"The chapter provides our members the strength and perseverance to keep working towards that end-goal position that they long for in the workforce," Ottaviani said.



Contributed by Cameron Ottaviani '26

A group activity during the M.E.N. Club meeting.

Family Weekend Festivities Planned

BY DANIEL GREENE
Staff Writer

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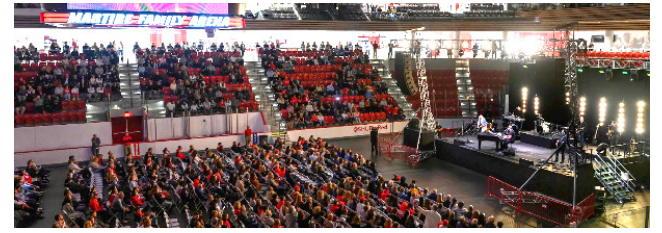
Pioneer Palooza's main event is the football game on Oct. 5 at 1 p.m. The game is free for all Sacred Heart students who are responsible for claiming their own ticket.

"The football game is sold out. It was on sale for three days before it sold out completely. We have a waitlist. People are getting off the waitlist slowly but surely, but there is not a guarantee that tickets will become available," Morovich said.

Family Weekend is a chance for families and friends to explore the Sacred Heart community and meet faculty and staff. For some students, it is the first time they will see their parents and siblings since beginning the semester.

"I have not seen my family in a while, so I am excited to see everybody. My brother and sister have not seen all of campus yet, so it should be exciting," said freshman Matthew Caliri.

Tickets for the Arena Show with Almost Queen: A Tribute to Queen will be available for purchase on Ticketmaster until the doors close on Oct. 5. Ticket prices range from \$30 to \$100.



Mark F. Conrad, Sacred Heart University

Families enjoying the Arena Concert with Mike DelGuidice during Pioneer Palooza 2023.

"The concert was my favorite event last year. I am excited for the Queen cover band concert this year. Last year, I had a blast, and I cannot wait to go again," Buchan said.

Not all parents can make it to SHU for Family Weekend, but those students can still attend Family Weekend events.

"My parents will not be here for Family Weekend. I will still be going to the dance show on Saturday to support my friends," said junior Laura Schroeder. "My parents and I usually go to the game, but this year, they plan on coming on a weekend that is less busy."

Student Interns with Senator Chris Murphy

BY JACK CAVICCHI
Staff Writer and Asst. Web Manager

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they didn't tell you what was happening, and then I found out I got the job," Smith said.

Smith was one of Murphy's eight summer interns, selected from a pool of 210 applicants. Smith's assignments varied; she worked answering phones, attending events and discussing issues. Working in Murphy's office taught her how important it is for citizens to pick up the phone.

"I think my biggest takeaway from this experience was how much an individual can do to stress their needs in their life. We had people calling about energy issues, social security and military benefits. If you call your in-state representative, you will get somewhere. There are people who care and want to help you," Smith said.

U.S. Senators are elected every six years serve to represent the citizens of the state in which they are elected.

"You are their support system, and why they are in power. They get paid to help you, put them to use; call them," Smith said.

The internship was geared towards a variety of majors. Smith worked alongside political science, economics, and public health majors, according to a SHU press release.

Smith's position often dealt with matters of immigration, such as learning about the laws in place that can effect immigrants. Smith's experience helped solidify her desire to pursue a career in federal law.

"My parents are immigrants. Seeing so many people struggle with immigration and not being able help was hard. I just want to be able to help," Smith said.

"Ciara is very well organized. She is intelligent and determined. She is mature in character and professional," said Dr. Kelly Marino, a professor in the history department.

Marino previously had Smith as a student in class and served as her internship coordinator throughout her experience as a Congressional Intern.

Smith's goals for the future include attending law school and pursuing a career in federal litigation. She plans to take a gap year, after completing her undergraduate degree, to study for the LSATs.

"I might go back to Ireland and study there to get a change of scenery," Smith said.

Concerns for Safety in Local Elementary and High Schools

BY GEORGE TRIEBENBACHER
Asst. News Editor

On Thursday, Sept. 19, Bridgeport schools were dismissed two hours early following a series of online threats made on social media.

Schools remained closed on Friday, Sept. 20, and students returned on Monday, Sept. 23, with increased police presence.

According to a Facebook message from the district, the decision to dismiss early and close schools was made "out of an abundance of caution."

Dr. Mel Horton, Dean of Farmington College of Education & Human Development at Sacred Heart University, said that situations like this can have long-term impacts on the well-being of a child.

"These threats disrupt the learning environment and create unnecessary fear and anxiety, which can have long-lasting effects on emotional and mental health," said Horton.

"From an educator's standpoint, it's critical to emphasize the importance of ensuring that schools remain a safe haven where students can learn, grow, and thrive and pre-service teachers can practice the skills of becoming a teacher," she continued.

According to NBC Connecticut, counseling and other support services were available at schools last week for students who needed them.

Senior Darcy Fruhschein, a student on the education track at SHU, said that these threats can make teachers concerned that they aren't doing their jobs properly, causing them to alter some of their classroom practices.

"Part of our jobs as teachers is to help our students succeed and this is done well, but we also have to protect them and sometimes us teachers don't know if we are fully doing our jobs since they are scared," said Fruhschein.

NBC Connecticut said that a 13-year-old was arrested on the night of Sept. 18 by the Bridgeport Police Department. There was also a second threat, made by an adult, that caused the safety precautions to go into place.

"The Chief of Police recognizes the importance of keeping Bridgeport's youth safe and free from the threat of violence. As always, the safety of our children will remain a major priority within our police department," said the Police Department in a report by the CT Post.

According to the New York Times, approximately 700 kids in the U.S. have been arrested for making threats, some being as young as 10 years old.

"Our role as educators is to continue advocating for policies and practices that prioritize safety, such as working closely with law enforcement, supporting mental health resources, and fostering open communication between educator preparation programs, schools, students, and families," said Horton.

This wasn't the only threat in the area, however, as

a separate situation occurred at Staples High School in Westport, where two threats were made.

One threat involved threatening language on a bathroom stall, while the other threat involved a student who was arrested and banned from the school, making a social media post, according to Patch.

Fruhschein said that, in situations like this, the reaction of the teacher is important in ensuring that the students remain in the best possible mental state.

"My biggest piece of advice would be for student teachers to understand even if you're scared, don't let the students know. The students value you and understand that if you're safe and calm they will react the same way," said Fruhschein.

The situations in Bridgeport and Westport occurred in neighboring communities to SHU, which now owns Notre Dame Prep of Sacred Heart University, a high school located on Jefferson Street across from Sacred Heart's main campus, as Spectrum previously reported.

Horton said that these types of situations not only affect the school itself but the community around the school, neighboring schools, families, parents and local businesses.

"We need passionate, dedicated individuals entering the teaching profession now more than ever," said Horton. "The ability to foster curiosity, resilience and compassion in young minds is a powerful and rewarding role."

Lauren Kehrle contributed to this article.

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

Counseling Center

Open 9-5 on Weekdays
Walk-Ins Welcome or 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

Features

Easton's Town Newspaper Fueled by Pioneers

BY MAIA SANTORA
Staff Writer

In 2020, Sacred Heart University's School of Communication, Media and the Arts (SCMA) took over the Easton Courier, a non-profit, digitally published newspaper of Easton, Conn. The Easton Courier is a partnership between the SCMA and residents of Easton.

Co-editor and News Director for the Easton Courier, Prof. James Castonguay said he collaborated with other faculty members of the SCMA to launch the Easton Courier.

"I partnered with several SCMA faculty members, including Ann Marie Somma, Nancy Doniger, Jane Paley, Rick Falco and Keith Zdrojowy, to revive the Easton Courier as a non-profit digital news outlet that offers a powerful experiential education for SHU students," said Castonguay.

Prof. Richard Falco, Photo Editor for the Easton Courier, said the newspaper allows students to enhance their resume and get a chance to practice journalism outside of SHU. Falco and other SCMA faculty members who contribute to the Easton Courier, have led their students to receive multiple awards from the Connecticut Society of Professional Journalism.

"The Easton Courier offers a lot of opportunities for students to develop a portfolio and work in journalism on a professional level. This gives students opportunities on two levels; the photojournalism class and the writing class are both contributors to the Easton Courier and complement one another," said Falco. "Easton community members also contribute to the paper and we've gotten really great responses from them."

Prof. Ann Marie Somma, the Co-Executive Editor of the Easton Courier teaches the CM-331 class, Topics in Journalism. Topics in Journalism gives students the opportunity to write for the Easton Courier.

"The Easton Courier means a lot to me because SHU stepped in and basically gave the community a newspaper where there was a void. I understand the power of journalism, and I understand how it's really important as far as giving people information about their community and telling stories about people in their community," said Somma.

Senior reporter for the Easton Courier, Theresa Tartamella, wrote for Spectrum first and then joined Topics in Journalism. Tartamella said Topics in



Photo by Roderike Pohl, Easton Courier

A photo featured in the Easton Courier titled "Farm Scene."

Journalism provided hands-on experience and allowed her to improve skills necessary for news-writing.

"This class provides students with hands-on experience in newspaper writing, allowing me to cover a wide range of topics and speak with various people outside of Sacred Heart which has helped me grow my interviewing and writing skills," said Tartamella.

Junior Emma Ricotta, Assistant Campus Life Editor for the Spectrum and Junior reporter for the Easton Courier, said that writing for the Easton Courier has granted her new experiences, and gave her an appreciation for Easton, Conn.

"I realized its importance when I had this story about a fourth grader and she created an invention for her school project and she was able to win all these awards nationally, and is now working with a lawyer to make her invention into a real thing," said Ricotta. "I think that interviewing her in-person and seeing her tell her story was such a cool experience. Even though she was just in fourth grade, learning more about a community that I wasn't raised into is a really cool experience."

To stay up to date with the Easton Courier, view their published articles though their website, at <https://eastoncourier.news/>.

From 30 Rock to 5151 Park Avenue: Meet Prof. Joe Alicastro

BY ANGELINA VARGAS
Staff Writer

Prof. Joseph Alicastro is a faculty member of the School of Communication, Media, and Arts program at Sacred Heart University. In addition to teaching, Alicastro also had a career as a producer at NBC for over 30 years.



Contributed by Joseph Alicastro

Portrait of former NBC producer, and current Sacred Heart University professor, Joseph Alicastro.

"I have always loved history and there is a well known line that 'journalists write the first draft of history,'" said Alicastro. "So, I think that connection was already there at an early age because I used to read a lot of history books when I was young."

Little did he know that he would go on to cover historic events like the fall of the Berlin Wall, the collapse of Communism in

Eastern Europe, and the war in Afghanistan, writing the "first draft of history" himself.

Alicastro attended Boston University (BU), where he pursued a Bachelor's degree in journalism. After graduating, he went on to work on a short documentary, and with the help from a BU alumnus, he secured a job at NBC.

"I was a dispatcher. We would send couriers on motorcycles and cars, racing around New York City, picking up video tapes and rushing it back to 30 Rock just to get them into the hands of the people who were actually

doing journalism," said Alicastro. "It was an entry level job, but it was a start, and I was in the door."

By the age of 26, Alicastro was producing Weekend Nightly News on NBC. Throughout his career, Alicastro had the "honor and privilege" of traveling the world covering essentially everything and everyone he had the opportunity to experience.

"Not only do you have this great privilege as a journalist to be out there and reporting, but you give a voice to the voiceless," said Alicastro. "Unfortunately as a journalist you often meet people on the worst days of their lives, but they need to have their stories told."

After leaving NBC, Alicastro began his "second act": teaching. He started at the New York Film Academy in Manhattan, and after meeting Prof. James Castonguay, he began working at SHU.

At SHU, Alicastro teaches full-time and serves as the Director of the Graduate Program in Journalism and Media Production. Alongside this, he works with students on The Pulse, SHU's student-produced television news magazine.

As a professor, Alicastro emphasizes the importance of media literacy in his curriculum, helping students understand the difference between what is real and reliable versus what is fake.

"The role journalists play in today's society comes down to just one word: truth. Truth is based on facts, and facts are gained. That's what a journalist does by asking very simple questions: who, what, where, when, why, how?" said Alicastro. "An algorithm on TikTok is not journalism."

Former Editor-in-Chief of the Spectrum and Class of 2024 alumnus, Brendan Williams, took many classes with Alicastro during his time at SHU and is now a production assistant for Fox News in New York City.

"I learned a lot about how to be a good journalist because he comes with a lot of expertise," said Williams. "He truly does care about his students."

On top of his successful journalism career, he takes equal pride in teaching.

"It has been a joy to be the director of the graduate program and see the incredible success my students are having," said Alicastro. "That just gives me tremendous satisfaction to see them out there."

Moira Staples contributed to this article.

CampusLife

Inside the Bridgeport Public Education Fund

BY COLLIN MOURA
Campus Life Editor

Established in 1983 as an independent advisory fund for the Bridgeport Area Foundation, the Bridgeport Public Education Fund works to mentor local youth for success.

The foundation aims to prepare students for higher education and future careers by revitalizing the educational climate in the Bridgeport public school system.

Operating as a non-profit educational organization, the Bridgeport Public Education Fund prioritizes the voices of students and teachers. It is one of the country's few education funds that recruits students to serve on the board of directors.

Their sponsorship of the Mini-Grants for Teachers program brought community members into schools and enhanced support for classroom projects.

Senior Carolyn Doherty spent her summer working for the fund, promoting their community outreach and Mentoring for Academic Achievement and College/Career Success (MAACS) program.

"Since June, I have had the pleasure of working for the Bridgeport Public Education Fund as a communications intern. My main focus has been to advertise the Campus Ambassador Program, manage the social media accounts and prepare posts to reach our target audience," said Doherty.

The Campus Ambassador Program is a joint initiative between the fund and the following universities: Sacred Heart University, Fairfield University, Housatonic Community College, UConn Stamford, Southern Connecticut State University, and the University of Bridgeport.

"It has been very rewarding. At first, I was nervous, but when I saw the first application come through for Campus Ambassador, I felt excited and hopeful," said Doherty. "This organization does so much good, and I wish more people knew about it but luckily that's my job, so I've made it my mission."

The MAACS program brings university students to Bridgeport high schools through mentorship systems at Bassick High School, Central High School, and Fairchild Wheeler Interdistrict Multi-Magnet Campus.

Faith Villegas has worked for the Bridgeport Education Fund since 2007, starting as the MAACS program coordinator. She became the executive director of the organization in 2018 when the founding director retired after 36 years.

Their College Assistance Program (CAP) began in 2003, working to provide emotional, social, academic, and financial support to high school seniors who have been MAACS participants for at least two years.

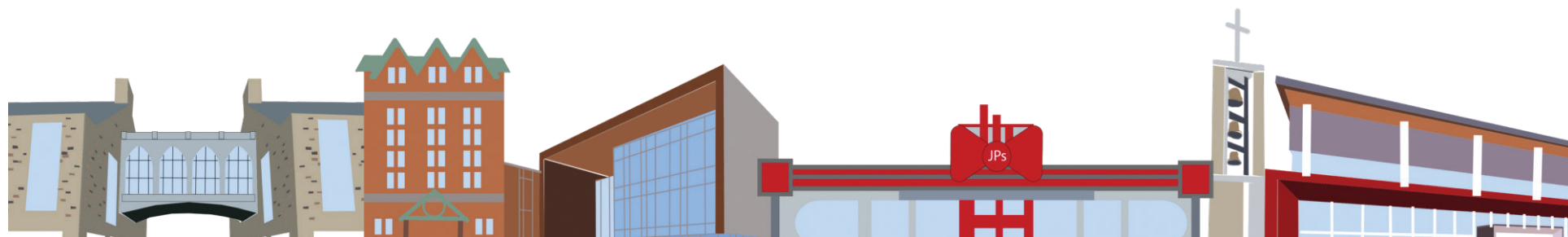
These programs and opportunities are set up by the Bridgeport Public Education Fund to improve local public education.

"The BPEF represents belief. Belief in mankind, belief in change, belief in community. We, the BPEF staff and board, are dedicated to ensuring that youth have the support and resources necessary to succeed in life," said Villegas. "Looking ahead, the BPEF will focus on expanding opportunities and partnerships."

Carolyn Doherty contributed to this article.



Instagram, @bpefinc
Pictured are the 2024 Inspiration Awards from the Bridgeport Education Fund's Teacher Appreciation Week in May 2024.



Interested in contributing to Campus Life? Contact us at spectrum@sacredheart.edu

CampusLife

Fall Festivities Near SHU

BY **COLLIN MOURA**
Campus Life Editor

Looking to enjoy some fall festivities near Sacred Heart? From apple picking to haunted houses, the local community provides it all! Check out this guide for the season's best activities and flavors.

Silverman's Farm:

Just a short 10-minute drive from campus, Silverman's Farm has been attracting Sacred Heart students for decades. The orchard is open for the season, with a wide variety of fruits available for picking. There are 22 apple varieties in stock, ranging from MacIntosh to Golden Delicious. Silverman's hosts live music and food trucks on weekends, with visitors eager to check out the animal farm and country market. The store sells homemade pastries, ciders and preserves, carrying some of New England's finest fall treats.



Silverman's country market is currently carrying an extensive selection of seasonal donuts, jams, ciders, syrups and more.

Collin Moura, Campus Life Editor

Beardsley's Cider Mill and Orchards:

Known for "The Best Pies on Earth," Beardsley's Cider Mill and Orchards has been serving the local community since 1849. The Shelton, Conn. staple bakes traditional double-crusters and crumb-tops, plus apple-cranberry, peach, pumpkin, pecan, fruit 'n' berry and no-sugar apple pies. Wash this sweet treat down with Beardsley's homemade hard cider for the ultimate fall experience.

East Coast Kombucha Company

East Coast Kombucha Company is an artisanal brewer of local, organic Kombucha. The tasting room in South Norwalk, Conn. is open every Friday and Saturday from 12 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. This fall, FREE brewery tours are available on Saturday's at 2 p.m.

Warrup's Farm

Warrup's Farm is a small, family-owned farm in Redding, Conn. that offers pumpkin picking and fresh seasonal vegetables every autumn. Visit the farm for pumpkin picking, hayrides, or a relaxing walk through the golden sunflower fields.



Warrup's Farm's sunflower fields are open Tuesday through Sunday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Instagram, @warrupfarm

Fright Haven | Legends of Fear

Fright Haven and Legends of Fear are two nearby haunted houses that are now open for the 2024 Halloween season. These scare centers offer thrilling chills for the local community throughout the fall months. Located in Stratford, Conn., Fright Haven is Connecticut's largest indoor haunted attraction. Legends of Fear is an interactive outdoor haunted hayride and trail based out of Shelton. These Halloween festivities are the perfect way to add some spookiness to your next October evening.

Arts & Entertainment

Fall Gospel Extravaganza

BY CAMRYN MCCUTCHEON
Staff Writer

The Fall Gospel Extravaganza was performed in the Chapel of the Holy Spirit on Saturday, Sept. 28. This performance showcased the songs Sacred Heart University (SHU) Gospel Choir has been working on since the beginning of the semester.

The Choir performed “I’ll Say Yes,” “Stand By Me,” “Be The Change,” “Jesus Be a Fence,” “Seattle,” “Forever Friends,” “Psalm 91,” “Lord, Help Me to Hold Out,” “Jesus Will Work It Out,” “Battlefield” and “SHU.”

Conductor Michael Brown has been with the Sacred Heart Gospel Choir for the past five years. “It’s just what it says, an extravaganza,” said Brown. “It’s a joyful, liberating experience.”

“I like to see the choir members develop and feel free enough to sing, because everybody has a voice,” said Brown. He has been performing since he was four years old. “It was God’s will,” he said.

According to the Choral Program page on the SHU website, “The SHU Gospel Choir is an ensemble that performs spirituals, anthems, contemporary and traditional gospel music. The ensemble provides a nurturing environment for students to learn technique and tradition, all while building a sense of community.”

Sophomore John Wassersug has been a member of the Choir since 2023. He joined the Gospel Choir this year.

“I decided to get involved after watching last year’s Gospel Choir show and seeing how much fun we all had, both the choir and the audience,” said Wassersug.

The choir rehearses every Tuesday in preparation.

“I love the dynamic of the Gospel Choir, because I am never afraid of messing up because we are all very supportive of each other,” said Wassersug.

“Being part of such an interactive choir is amazing. During shows everyone is clapping, singing, and having a great time,” he continued.

The performance was very interactive, with the performers directing the audience to clap along and snap to songs. “Amazing Grace” was performed by Beatrice Somerville, Guest Soloist and Directress. The crowd rose to their feet and sang along for two verses with Somerville.

“My favorite part of the whole thing was the energy. We stood up and kind of danced. You could feel the rhythm in the room,” said sophomore Will Luceno, who was in attendance at the performance.

“I really liked the part where the two friends sang together,” said Luceno, referencing the performance of “Forever Friends” by Anabella DiNatale and Christen Luongo. This song was introduced by Somerville, who told the crowd that the two first performed the song as freshmen and they are now seniors. “Don’t be surprised if this brings a tear to your eyes,” said Somerville.

“This was the first time I’ve gone to one of these, and I really enjoyed it. I’ll definitely be going to the next one,” said Luceno. The performance ended in a standing ovation.



Instagram, @shuchoir

SHU’s 4 Heart Harmony Choir performing in the Chapel of the Holy Spirit.

TAP Presents “The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time”

BY ERIN PELLEGRINI
Staff Writer and Circulation Manager

On Friday, Sept. 20, Sacred Heart University’s Theatre Arts Program (TAP) opened its production of “The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Nighttime” in the new Black Box Theatre. The play is based on the book of the same title by English writer and novelist Mark Haddon.

According to the Edgerton Center for Performing Arts, the story focuses on Christopher Francis Boone, a 15-year-old boy living in Swindon, England. He is on a journey to investigate the untimely death of his neighbor’s dog. It won an Olivier Award in 2013 for Best New Play and a Tony Award in 2015 for Best Play.

Junior David Irrizary, who plays Boone, spoke about the intense preparation it took to put this show up in a short amount of time. “A big part was memorizing lines because Christopher is on almost every page,” said Irrizary.

Despite not being directly stated in the script, it is recognized that the character Christopher is neurodivergent. Part of Irrizary’s research was to go to those who have neurodivergences and talk to them about their real life experiences. “I wanted to make sure I wasn’t doing a caricature or an impersonation,” said Irrizary.

“One of the takeaways is that everyone kind of has their own thing in life that they are going through,” said Irrizary. “They each have their own perspective.”

Junior Steve Bekhit enjoyed TAP’s portrayal of people living with a neurodivergence, and the family life for those who have neurodivergent children. “It can be complicated for a family when they don’t know how to deal with those issues,” Bekhit said.

TAP’s production is unique in its design elements, whether it’s the intricate lighting or even Christopher’s blue sweatshirt, to immerse the audience into the story.

“We have so many different design elements that affect the show, and it makes the audience really absorbed into the world,” said junior and co-projections designer Sami Millerick.

Millerick described the collaborative process of the technical department using visuals to bring the audience into Christopher’s mind. She had her co-projections designer source their own material online, with Millerick drawing some elements herself. They would then put these designs into the editing software Q-Lab, adjust as needed, and place them in the script as different “cues” for stage-management.

“It’s a long process,” said Millerick. “It’s a lot of turning your creativity and vision in your brain into editing and then putting it out onto that actual stage.”

Bekhit spoke about how the design elements enhanced his viewing experience. “I really liked the floor projections implying personal space,” said Bekhit. “The Black Box was really nice. It was really immersive, I felt like I was there.”

TAP’s production of “The Curious Incident of the Dog in Night-Time” has its final weekend of performances on Oct. 4-5 at 8 p.m. and Oct. 6 at 3 p.m. Tickets are available online on the Edgerton Center for Performing Arts website.



Instagram, @shutheatrearts

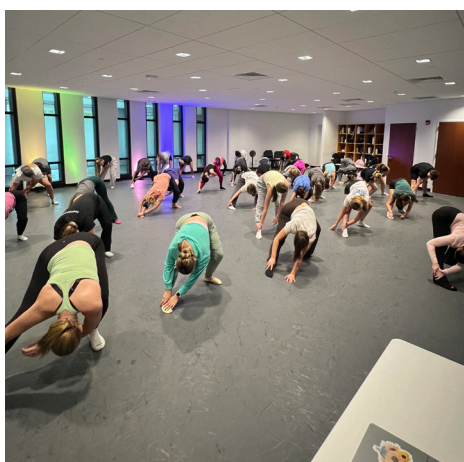
A sneak peek into the TAP show, “The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time.”

Dance Program Hosts First-Ever Open Dance Classes

BY OLIVIA MCNAMARA
Staff Writer

This past weekend, the Sacred Heart University’s (SHU) Dance Program hosted open dance classes of different styles as part of the First 50 Days event series. These classes were held from Sept. 27 to Sept. 29, with several of the programs hosting each class.

Inception Dance Crew held Hip-Hop classes, the Claddagh Dancers hosted an Irish step class, Dance Ensemble hosted a Jazz class and the Dance Company had an open contemporary class. The Dance Ensemble and Dance Company hosted an improvisation session together for any members in the dance program.



Contributed by Samantha Summa '25

Students participating in SHU Dance Program’s Open Dance Classes as part of the First 50 Days.

“It is a time that the entire Sacred Heart campus is open to taking class and getting a taste of what we do everyday,” said senior Victoria Aufiero, the Dance Company President.

“The classes are made to be fun and welcoming for all, a place for people of all abilities to take a class, learn a combo, connect with others and learn more about our program,” said senior Sam Summa, the Dance Ensemble President.

In light of the significance of dance in life, Aufiero said, “Dance has always been an important part of my life. I began dancing when I was two years old, I never

thought I would be the dancer I am today as a senior at Sacred Heart University.”

“Dance has allowed me to understand myself more as a person and experience skills that I will take with me in the future. I have also made the most special friends through dance,” Aufiero continued. “I really don’t know where I would be without them and sharing that passion of dance that we all have.”

“My favorite part of class is when the entire team is practicing together in the studio, cheering one another on. The camaraderie and friendship that our team has formed is incredible and I feel lucky to be a part of it all,” said senior Samantha Cunniff, Claddagh Captain.

Although dance is great for the body, it can also be a great form of positivity, according to Summa.

“My favorite part of my dance classes is the way they can turn my day around,” she said.

“Dance is not only a great way to stay active, but it also provides a sense of joy, freedom, and overall positivity in our daily lives,” Cunniff added.

For those curious about joining dance on campus, Cunniff said, “Even if you are not a member of the dance program, there are still plenty of opportunities to take a dance class at SHU! For instance, Hip Hop Production is a one-credit course that anyone can register for and perform in a show with the choreography they’ve learned from the class!”

Students can also attend the program’s shows for free.

“There are also many upcoming shows for the Dance Program in November that I encourage everyone to see, and student tickets are free,” said Cunniff.

“Students should get involved in the dance program because we have an excellent community that provides a powerful way to express emotions and creativity and allows a person to communicate without words,” said Aufiero. “It also allows for the student to learn about discipline, while developing in your skills and allowing for many performance opportunities.”

Sports



Cheering with Heart: Meet SHU's Pio Guys

Daniel Passapera, Sacred Heart University

Sacred Heart University's Pio Guys supporting the football team at the Homecoming game on Sept. 14.

BY JOHN HEINZE
Co-Asst. Sports Editor

The Sacred Heart University (SHU) football season is in full swing. Every Saturday when SHU plays a home game, the university's "Pio Guys" show up shirtless and loud to cheer on their team. The Pio Guys are a small group of fans that attend every home game and encourage school spirit amongst their peers.

The group's name was a natural choice as they each line up to spell out a variation of "Pioneers" or "Pios" at each event they attend.

The group's motto, according to sophomore member Zach Parker is, "There are only three guarantees in life: death, taxes, and Pio Guys on Saturdays."

This motto captures the passion that this group of fans has for SHU. The Pio Guys were formed in 2021 and have come up with a system to ensure their support year in and year out.

"They came to be when six of Sacred Heart's biggest fans, Connor Rossi, Allan Zilnicki, Bryan Calton, Gianni DiSanto, Alex Miras and Bryce Durney, decided to paint their chests in red paint spelling 'PIOS!' at one of the football games. Since they graduated, each of them picked someone from SHU to take their letter and keep showing school spirit, and we have continued that tradition since," said senior member Will Lowe.

The group's current members include seniors Will Lowe, Victor Colonna, Hunter Harris, Julian Percoco and Kyle Vaughan, junior Sean Whitaker and sophomores Zach Parker and AJ Vreeland.

According to Percoco, the group has been a big part of his time at SHU.

"The Pio Guys are my SEC football experience. This group has given me a chance to express my love for SHU athletics with some of my best friends for the past three years," he said.

Whitaker especially credited the seniors for "upholding the Pio Guy name and traditions."

Though primarily run by the students involved, the Pio Guys also work with the university.

"We work directly with the Athletic Director, Judy Ann Riccio. She has been an amazing outlet to helping us get into tailgates and football games to spread as much school spirit as possible," Percoco said. "We feel fully supported by the school and the fans, and we hope to keep showing our pride and encourage others to come join us in cheering on SHU sports."

Along with supporting the Pioneers at games, they also promote SHU athletics on social media. This allows students to not only follow the group but also see game highlights.

"We run an Instagram account, @pio.guys, where we will often post recaps of us at football games, hype videos, and you can even learn more about some of the guys and what letter they wear," said Vreeland.

The Pio Guys are more than just football fans. They expand their fandom to many different sports to support their peers at SHU.

"Although football is our main go to, we have done other sports. We have recently done hockey and hope to be at more games soon. Dating back to the original guys, we have also done equestrian, rowing, wrestling and basketball," said Colonna.

The group's members are committed to showing their school spirit and encouraging others to do the same.

"We love the SHU community and all the fans, and we hope to see everyone soon at some of these games," said Lowe.

The Pio Guys and SHU football will be in action at this week's home game on Saturday, Oct. 5 at Campus Field against Norfolk State University.

Aiden Reilly, Collin MacLeod and Madison Beekman contributed to this article.

Women's Golf Tees Off at Battle Creek Tournament

BY PRINCELY SEME
Staff Writer

The Sacred Heart University's women's golf team finished third in the Battle at the Creek tournament on Sept. 16-17 at Kings Creek Country Club in Rehoboth Beach, Del.

The Pioneers tied for third place alongside Bucknell University, both posting a team score of 959, 107 over par. Mount St. Mary's finished first in the tournament, posting a team score of 954, 102 over par.

The Pioneers were led by senior Maya Robilio, who finished the tournament with a score of 227, 14 over par.

"Of course every tournament I want to win, but that's just not possible. All I can do is have confidence and faith in my hard work and just put up a score and own it at the end of the day," said Robilio.

She claimed her second career medalist honors at the Battle of the Creek by shooting a 74, 77 and a final-round 76. Robilio was the only golfer at the tournament that posted three rounds with scores of 77 or better.

"Maya worked hard this summer at Great River [Golf Club] to get her game into shape, and it paid off at this event," said Head Coach Matthew McGreevy.

McGreevy is entering his 17th year coaching the Pioneers and credits the players and their experience for remaining level-headed when facing the pressure of tournaments, such as Battle at the Creek.

"We try to instill a calm competitiveness in our players. They all have a decorated resume coming into college, and we try to get them to remember that when they go out and represent Sacred Heart," said McGreevy.

Senior Jensie Nichols and freshman Nahia Paulerena both secured top 10 placements at the tournament, finishing tied for seventh and tied for 10th place, respectively.

In addition to Robilio, Nichols and Paulerena, junior Jessie Burch and freshman Maite

Cantu tied for 27th, while freshman Lauren Ogradowicz tied for 29th place. Rounding out the Pioneers were senior Emma Preissing and graduate student Ashley Moynahan, who tied for 44th and placed 47th, respectively.

The team's placement is an improvement on their performance in the SHU Fall Classic on Sept. 10, where the Pioneers finished off fourth place.

"We are a young team and are working on chemistry at the beginning of the season. I am happy at the progress the team has made in a short time," said McGreevy.

The Pioneers look to step forward again as the season progresses, aiming to perfect their craft and perform well at the upcoming tournaments.

"My goals for after the Battle at the Creek is to continue working hard," said Robilio. "I want to keep chasing that feeling of accomplishment that I felt at the tournament, and it's been a motivating factor for me."

The Pioneers compete next on Oct. 6-7 at the Normanside Country Club in Delmar, N.Y., for the Great Danes Invitational hosted by the University at Albany.

Sacred Heart Athletics contributed to this article.



Instagram, @sacredheartgolf

Senior Maya Robilio in action at SHU's Spring Break Invitational last March.

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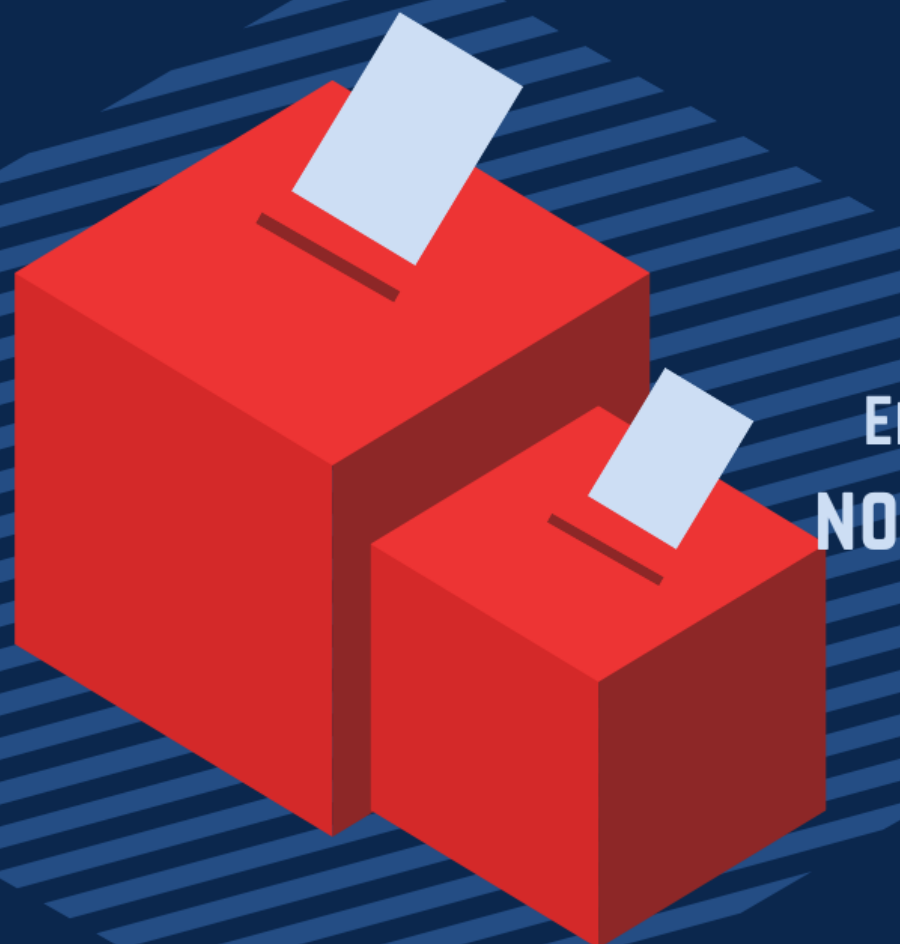
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