

Second Annual Women's Appreciation Reception

BY BROOKE GODBERSON
Staff Writer

Sacred Heart University held its second annual Women's Appreciation Reception on Wednesday, March 26 at 12:30 p.m. in UC-205 on West Campus. This year's event, a formal luncheon, celebrated students, faculty and staff who have contributed to advancing dialogue and progress for women in the SHU community.



Tracey Deer-Mirek, Sacred Heart University
Anne Johnson, Director of Community Engagement, was the keynote speaker at the second annual Women's Appreciation Reception this year.

The reception, organized by the Office for LGBTQ+ Affairs and the Multicultural Center, honored individuals across campus nominated

by their peers for going above and beyond in supporting women's rights, leadership and inclusion.

"There are many talented and accomplished people on this campus who better each other and our community every day that are too humble to take credit for their achievements, so this is a great avenue to make appreciation a central focus," said Kyle Humphreys, associate director of LGBTQ+ Affairs and lead organizer of the luncheon. "We all need some joy and positivity right now, and this happens to be a fun way to do it!"

The event featured a full lunch spread, including Mediterranean dishes, mac and cheese, lemon squares, and tea. The luncheon was also streamed live, allowing virtual attendees to take part in the celebration.

A highlight of the event was the keynote address, delivered by Anne Johnson, director of community engagement at SHU. Johnson shared an inspiring message about leadership, purpose and action.

"My goal was to convey that leadership is not about titles or positions, but about purpose, action and impact," said Johnson. "I wanted attendees to reflect on their mission, recognize the power of their influence, and commit to using that influence to uplift others and drive meaningful change."

Using a framework of reflection—"What? So what? Now what?"—Johnson encouraged attendees to think deeply about their roles in creating positive change, both at SHU and beyond.

The theme of the event extended beyond the keynote. A large screen displayed nominee names and submissions, including heartfelt

messages recognizing the powerful work being done across campus. Humphreys noted that while the number of nominations was lower this year due to a shortened promotional period, the quality of submissions stood out.

"All our award winners are people who go beyond the duties of their titles for the betterment of their community and the advancement of women and girls," Humphreys said. "They are standout individuals whose work speaks for them, setting a strong example of what excellence looks like."

Students, staff and faculty gathered in support of the honorees, taking time out of their busy schedules to pause and appreciate the impact of women and allies across the SHU community.

One of the key messages organizers hoped attendees would take away is that making a difference doesn't require a large platform.

"I believe everyone has something valuable to contribute, even if they have yet to actualize their potential," said Humphreys. "You don't need to be rich, famous, or complete your education to make positive impacts in the world."

As the event concluded, organizers shared hopes to continue growing the reception in the future, making space for more voices, more stories and even deeper community engagement.

"I hope this event continues to expand its reach and impact, recognizing even more individuals and fostering deeper conversations around leadership, equity and advocacy," said Johnson.

"As SHU grows, I hope we continue to create spaces where women's contributions are honored, and where all members of our community feel empowered to step into leadership roles that drive meaningful and lasting change."

This Week in the White House

BY LAUREN KEHRLE
News Editor

On Saturday, March 29, United States President Donald Trump clarified that he would not fire anyone over an accidental leak of his administration's plan to fire an airstrike against the Houthis, an Islamic political and military organization that emerged from Yemen in the 1990s.

Trump stated in an interview with NBC News' Kristen Welker that he does not fire people due to "fake news and witch hunts," per AP News. He also expressed confidence in Mike Waltz, his national security advisor, and Pete Hegseth, the secretary of defense.

Trump's attitude endured even after Waltz inadvertently added Jeffrey Goldberg, editor of The Atlantic magazine, to a group text using the Signal encrypted messaging service where

top officials were discussing plans to attack the Houthis. Further, Hegseth shared details in the chat about how the strike would unfold before it took place.

The Atlantic then published an article on the internal exchange, a move that shocked the national security establishment.

Trump's hesitation to fire any members of his administration stems from his eagerness to avoid repeating some of the turnover that characterized his first term. Mike Flynn, his first national security advisor, was removed in February 2017, after only a few weeks during the early phase of the Russia investigation.

When asked if firing Waltz came up in conversation, Trump insisted that he had not heard anything about the matter and maintained that he is the only person who is entitled to make such a decision.



AP NEWS
Signal app on a smartphone is seen on a mobile device screen Tuesday, March 25, 2025, in Chicago.

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News

Guest Speaker Discusses Irish and American Culture

BY WILL MORGAN
Staff Writer

On Thursday, March 27, Sacred Heart University welcomed professor and historian Dr. Marion Casey to the Martire Forum for a lecture on her recent book "The Green Space: The Transformation of the Irish Image."

Casey specializes in Irish and Irish American history, receiving a Ph.D. from NYU in 1998 and being named Centennial Historian of the City of New York in 1999. She has received many awards for her work, including the Henry P. Lannen Award from the



Marion R. Casey, LinkedIn

Marion Casey, Clinical Professor and Historian at NYU, came to Sacred Heart for a lecture on her new book: "The Green Space: The Transformation of the Irish Image."

New York Irish History Roundtable and Irish Woman of the Year by the New York City Department of Education in 2010.

"Green Space" traces the evolution of the Irish image in America and the world, from distinctly American nativist racism, to the "Everybody's Irish Today" spirit of modern St. Patrick's Day celebrations. Casey identifies the titular "Green Space" as the avenues by which perception of Irishness changed across a century of the Irish in America.

Casey discussed the commodification of Irishness in her lecture, with St. Patrick's Day as a main object. In regions of America where the Irish and Catholics never ventured, like the South and Midwest, St. Patrick's Day's origins as a celebration of those intertwined groups was lost.

Celebrations of the holiday became diluted overtime, promoting a cartoonish stereotype of Ireland and Irish people. As late as 1937, the annual St. Patrick's Day parade was met with degrading racist humor towards the Irish, as heard on one of the top programs of the time, "The Fred Allen Show."

At the same time, however, this watering down contributed to a decrease in anti-Irish and Catholic sentiment and aided the upward mobility and assimilation of Irish Americans. The Protestants, who dominated America, found this springtime holiday with key symbols and mascots much easier to embrace than the religious and ethnic celebration it began as.

This Americanization of St. Patrick's Day also came back around to Ireland itself. Since the 1990s, Ireland has increased the promotion of St. Patrick's Day to increase tourism, what many Irish people

have dubbed "America on the streets of Dublin."

Historic Irish drinks like Guinness and Bailey's dramatically increase sales over the month of March. The modern iteration of the holiday might be owed to America, but it's truly gone global with celebrations drawing up shamrocks and leprechauns all over the world, from Australia to Zimbabwe.

Dr. Abby Bender, professor of Irish Studies at Sacred Heart, worked with Casey at NYU and put this lecture together. She hopes this lecture continued to draw support for the center for Irish studies, and events they organize.

"I hope they realize how much interesting history, culture, literature, music, there is, these parts of Irish traditions in both an Irish American context and broader Irish context," Bender said. "Like any place, Ireland is dealing with the complexities of modernity, but maybe in a more profound way because development was kind of slower there initially, a lot of radical change has happened there in culture and community in the past 50 years."

Freshman Blake Mattesich said that he was deeply moved by the lecture. "I found it all fascinating. It's really so interesting the ways in which Irish heritage was turned into something bought and sold to millions of people," said Mattesich. "The legacies are multifaceted, having changed things for better and worse, neutering both anti Irish/Catholic sentiment and the more complex aspects of Irish culture beyond the kitschy fashion."

The Center for Irish Studies' next event will be a conversation with Fulbright Scholar Conall Ó Fátharta on Ireland's institutional Abuse Scandals on Friday, April 5.

Trump has ordered the dismantling of the US Education Department. Here's what that means.

BY AP NEWSROOM

President Donald Trump's order calling for the dismantling of the U.S. Education Department has complex implications.

The Republican president has argued the federal office hasn't improved student outcomes and is unnecessary in a country where states and local districts primarily control education from funding to hiring and curriculum.

For decades, right-wing activists have called for eliminating the agency, which was created by Congress in 1979. As Trump remakes the federal government, he has assailed the department as wasteful and responsible for spreading "woke" ideas such as programs to support diversity, equity and inclusion and protections for transgender students.

The department has been largely responsible for oversight, enforcing discrimination laws and distributing aid money for schools with low-income students and students with disabilities. Federal funding makes up a relatively small portion of public school budgets, roughly 14%.

What Trump's order means for American children and teachers

In the short term, students, teachers and parents likely won't see much impact. Long term, it's harder to predict.

It depends how Education Secretary Linda

McMahon distributes the mandated functions of the department to other parts of government, including the states.

The biggest question is how the states will distribute the federal money the department sends to help educate students who are poor, disabled or still learning English and need extra support. School systems with weak property tax bases, including those in rural areas, depend on that money to pay teachers, pay for buses and buy classroom technology.

States such as Mississippi and Alaska depend on this money to fund more than 20% of school districts' costs. Advocates worry that without federal oversight, state leaders could spend the money on anything they want, including vouchers to attend private school.

What about student loans? Should college hopefuls still fill out the FAFSA?

Cuts the Trump administration has made already to the Education Department have eliminated hundreds of staff members and contracts dedicated to maintaining the Free Application for Student Aid, or FAFSA, website and helping users navigate the complicated form. But McMahon has said the federal programs will be maintained.

On Friday, Trump said the Small Business Administration would take over the \$1.6 trillion federal student loan portfolio. Conservatives,

including former Trump Education Secretary Betsy DeVos, have talked about setting up a quasi-private bank to administer loans.

Users should expect some hiccups. The StudentAid.gov website was down for several hours last week as the remaining department staff tried to troubleshoot an outage.

Will public schools still feed children meals?

School meal programs are funded by the U.S. Department of Agriculture so they are not affected by Trump's move to eliminate the Education Department. However, the USDA has cut a \$1 billion coronavirus pandemic-era measure that helped schools and food banks to buy local farm-fresh food.

How soon could the Education Department go away?

States and other organizations are vowing to bring lawsuits to halt the dismantling of the department, which could slow things down.

Eliminating the department entirely would require an act of Congress. Republicans in Congress are planning legislation to eliminate the agency, but they face heavy opposition from Democrats.

In the meantime, Trump still has plans for the department. Even as he ordered its closure, Trump has tasked the department with rooting out and punishing schools that have diversity, equity and inclusion programs.

**UPCOMING
EVENTS ON
CAMPUS**

**THURSDAY 4/3:
UNCOVERING BIASES
AND STEREOTYPES
WEST CAMPUS EAST
THEATER AT 11 A.M.**

**FRIDAY 4/4:
GREEN DAY'S
AMERICAN IDIOT
EDGERTON THEATRE
AT 8 P.M.**

**SATURDAY 4/5:
DANCE TEAM
NATIONALS SHOWCASE
PITT CENTER
AT 1 P.M.**

Features

Campus Club Empowers Women

BY FERNANDA GUEVARA
Staff Writer

Have you ever wondered where college women turn for advice, empowerment, and the latest trends? For millions of students across the country, the answer is Her Campus, an online media platform built by and for college women.

Founded in 2009 by three Harvard undergraduates, Her Campus has grown into a leading online publication covering topics such as academics, career development, health, relationships, and pop culture. Her Campus has chapters at more than 400 colleges and universities, including Sacred Heart University, providing young women with a space to express themselves, build professional skills, and connect with a like-minded community.



Rebecca Weinberger, Staff Writer and Photographer
President of the Her Campus Club, Honora Saccu '26 (middle left) pictured with other members of the club.

Honora Saccu, president of Her Campus at SHU, said the goal of Her Campus is to empower women and to inspire them to be the best versions of themselves.

“We are talking about real life girl power. Writing articles that get nationally published allows our girls to become confident with their words, writing about topics that inspire and educate,” said Saccu. “We are better together.”

Her Campus offers students the chance to become published writers

and build their portfolios, while also providing access to internship opportunities through its national network and fostering meaningful networking connections.

“As a student involved in Her Campus, your professional development will increase by gaining so much journalism experience,” said Saccu. “Her Campus serves as a career launchpad as members can get offered jobs and internships at major media companies like Vogue, Vanity Fair, and The New York Times.”

For many students, joining Her Campus is more than just a chance to write or contribute to a publication. It’s an opportunity to become part of a community that fosters empowerment, creativity, and personal growth.

“Her Campus can provide a lot of opportunities for students who get involved. Not only do we get to showcase your writing, but there are a plethora of internship opportunities available through Her Campus which is a great thing to put on your resume, as well as get experience in the field,” said Olivia MacNamara, member of Her Campus.

Students can join Her Campus by signing up on the global website, <https://www.hercampus.com/school/sacred-heart/register/>.

“Even if you don’t have writing experience, there is a place for everyone with every interest at Her Campus. We are always accepting new members, and we really encourage people to join because it is much more than just a club,” said McNamara. “It is an empowering and kind circle of women who truly want the best for each other, and it’s a great way to connect with others outside of the classroom.”



Rebecca Weinberger, Staff Writer and Photographer
Photos of activities HERCampus has done during the school year.

Hack the Future with the Cybersecurity Club

BY ALEXANDRA POND
Staff Writer

Students who are interested in cybersecurity, engineering, computer science or information technology (IT) may be interested in joining the cybersecurity club at Sacred Heart University. The club is a student-run organization that participates in tutoring sessions, faculty-led research projects, and hacking competitions.

Cybersecurity club President and junior Samuel Oaks said, “For students majoring in cybersecurity, this allows for extra time to collaborate with other students to explore and strengthen skills in the field. For other students this provides an opportunity to simply learn more about cybersecurity and maybe see if this would be a potential career option after school.”

Oaks said that cybersecurity is present in today’s digital age, and being knowledgeable about it poses benefits. Students who are interested in different technical fields are encouraged to look into cybersecurity.

“Cybersecurity takes place in all aspects of life and almost every single person practices basic cybersecurity measures day to day without even knowing it,” said Oaks. “The cybersecurity club aims to provide a space for students across multiple technical disciplines like IT, computer science, cybersecurity, and engineering as well as any other interested parties to explore the field of cybersecurity.”

Junior and Vice President Maniraj Chahal said that the club gives students the opportunity to apply their knowledge to real life scenarios and activities. By fostering a fun yet engaging environment, students can practice and hone their skills.

“The cybersecurity club offers hands-on workshops, training sessions on topics like ethical hacking and incident response, Capture the Flag competitions, guest lectures, and group projects that help members learn and practice cybersecurity skills,” said Chahal.

Chahal said that cybersecurity faces many challenges that include new types of threats like malware, ransomware, phishing, and advanced attacks. Other issues are unpatched software, zero-day vulnerabilities, protecting private data, securing IoT devices, cloud systems, and dealing with social engineering and insider threats.

“Cybersecurity can be improved by using a variety of approaches like better education and ongoing training for everyone, from experts to everyday users, is key,” said Chahal. “Investing in research and new technology, like AI for detecting threats will help too”

Chahal said it is crucial for organizations to collaborate to take precautionary steps when protecting their online data. By joining the cybersecurity club, students can learn more about these practices.

“Working together between businesses, government, and schools to share information and best practices, and taking a proactive approach with constant monitoring and quick responses are also important. Finally, updating regulations and raising public awareness can make cybersecurity stronger,” said Chahal.

Prof. Igor Khokhlov said the cybersecurity club not provides students with further knowledge about technical issues and skills, but gives a space for students to collaborate and meet others with common interests.

“Cybersecurity club is important because it addresses the skills gap, provides practical experience, fosters collaboration, cooperation, and networking. It can contribute to the actual security of SHU, creates a safe learning environment and it may serve as a launchpad for the actual career path and allows the addition of real projects to the members’ CVs,” said Khokhlov.

Oaks said that SHU having the club is crucial because of the evolving technical advances, especially with the use of AI. By being a niche career field, the cybersecurity club gives students the opportunity to put themselves ahead of others in the same field.

“When I started school here computer science was in such high demand.

It is a tough career to break into and I think the older generation of professionals plays a big factor in it, but this club really provides a great opportunity for students to excel and put themselves ahead of their competition when it comes to searching for an internship or a career after graduation,” said Oaks.

The cybersecurity club hosts meetings on Thursdays at 7 p.m. in the Cyberlab at West Campus in W-243. All are encouraged to attend.



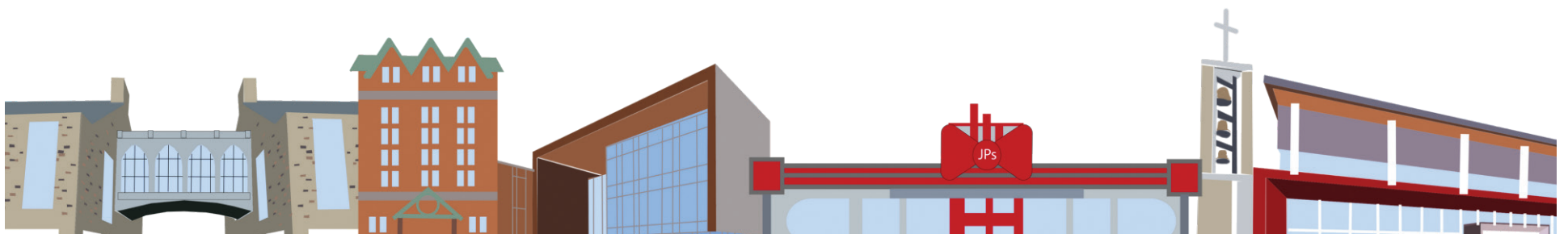
Contributed by Samuel Oaks, '26
President Samuel Oaks (right) and Vice President Maniraj Chahal (left) of the Cybersecurity Club posing for a photo.

CampusLife

April Events Calendar

APRIL

MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
	1 APRIL FOOLS DAY	2 MUSIC PANEL	3 SPRING CONCERT	4 AMERICAN IDIOT OPENS	5 DANCE TEAM SHOWCASE	6 OPEN HOUSE
7 2025 OPEN HOUSE	8 SPRING FLING	9 SWEET THERAPY DOGS	10 AGAPE LATTE	11 IRISH DANCE SHOWCASE	12 2025 OPEN HOUSE	13 SPECIAL OLYMPICS 5K
14 PAINT & SIP	15 LAVENDER GRADUATION CEREMONY	16 FOOTBALL BONE MARROW DRIVE	17 WOMEN IN SPORTS SYMPOSIUM	18 GOOD FRIDAY	19 MENS & WOMENS LACROSSE	20 EASTER SUNDAY
21 EASTER MONDAY	22 EARTH DAY	23 SET BINGO	24 CT BLOOD DRIVE	25 ACADEMIC FESTIVAL	26 SPRING CHOIR CONCERT	27 SPRING FEST
28 LAST DAY OF CLASSES!	29 SCMA SENIOR NIGHT	30 HONOR SOCIETY INDUCTION				



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

CampusLife

Who Wants A Sweet Treat?

BY EMMA RICOTTA
Assistant Campus Life Editor

Sweet treat o'clock is Sacred Heart University students' favorite time of day. If you're stuck on campus and looking for a sweet way to end your day, check out this list of the best treats on campus!

JP's Diner: Order a cookie skillet to share with some friends. Be sure to also order a milkshake and ask to add some whipped cream and toppings!

63's: After you have finished your buffet-style meal, check out the dessert table in the middle of the dining hall. They always have an assortment of sweet treats like brownies and cupcakes!

Einstein Bros Bagels: When you find yourself in Martire, be sure to pick up a pastry! The apple pastry is delicious.

Market on Main Campus: The most popular sweet treat is ice cream. You can find some in the freezer of the market all the way in the back on main campus.

Thea's Abbey and Linda's: When you are in line to check out for your meal at either Thea's or Linda's, be sure to grab a pack of candy!



Sacred Heart University photo by Daniel Passapera
JP's Diner on Campus is home to a wide selection of milkshakes and other sweets!



Sacred Heart University photo by Mark Conrad
Students grab sweets from 63's buffet style setup.

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Arts & Entertainment

Your Guide to Fall 2025 Media Classes

BY **SUNNIVA HALVORSEN**
Staff Writer

Want to know more about the media classes offered at Sacred Heart University and upcoming courses you can take next fall? Look no further to learn about the different courses offered and what students and faculty alike have to say about them.

Some of the courses you can take in the School of Communications, Media and the Arts (SCMA) include Intro to Media Production, Sports Broadcasting and History of Sports Media.

“There are a wide variety of classes which is great. There is Intro to Media Production, which is a [CM] 102 course, where you will kind of get a little bit of an introduction to everything, whether that is Adobe Photoshop or Adobe Premiere Pro. It is a little bit more of a hands-on experience for camera work. That is one of the courses that I teach,” said Prof. Anthony Mattariello, who lectures in the SCMA.

Intro to Media Production is a general course that focuses on camera work and use of digital media. Projects that students can participate in include introductions to digital programs on the Adobe Suite and video projects, such as a staircase editing and interview project.

“I like this class because it really goes in depth of parts of the camera and all the editing software and really how to use it. Instead of just being given the camera and saying ‘do it,’ the professor really goes into detail, which is helpful,” said freshman Catherine Narozniak, who is a student in the Intro To Media Production class.

When taking the Sports Broadcasting class, students learn the fundamentals needed to actively use programs in sports information, publicity and promotions. Students will also learn how to prepare news releases and use publishing programs according to the Sacred Heart Student Planning and Advising Portal (SPA).

“I also do Sports Broadcasting I, which again is an intro course, so you get an intro level of whatever it takes to be in sports broadcasting, so a little bit of on air, play by play, commentating and you will be editing any videos for live sports shows,” said Mattariello.

Students wishing to expand their knowledge on the topic of sports can further participate by taking Sports Broadcasting II.

“There is also Sports Broadcasting II, which has more live events, which is a lot of fun. Students are getting hands-on experiences doing live broadcasts for any athletics games, such as shooting at hockey games, whether it be men’s or women’s, along with football, basketball at the Pitt Center, lacrosse and



Daniel Passapera, Sacred Heart University
Jake Walsh '25, Assistant Photo Editor for the Spectrum, in the podcast studio at the Martire Center for the Liberal Arts.

baseball,” said Mattariello.

“You also will learn on how to shoot your own game and create your own highlights, which is great for any student who again wants to get into that business,” said Mattariello.

According to SPA, History of Sports Media is a course that focuses on the general history of sports, legal and political implications of national and international sports broadcasting, and technological developments from then to now.

“I came to Sacred Heart in the physical therapy program, and then I started working for our hockey team doing social media and creative content,” said sophomore Madison McCall, who is taking the History of Sports Media class. “I really like the documentaries the professor finds that are kind of like telling more of a story than a simple lecture, and they give a different perspective into more niche fields and industries within sports and the big four leagues, so the documentaries offer a special inside look.”

For students who would like to pursue journalism, students can take News Writing and Reporting to work for the Spectrum and TV News Magazine Production I, which develops the school’s TV News broadcast, The Pulse.

How Does SHU Listen to Music?

BY **SALO PIZON**
Staff Writer

The ways in which people listen to music has changed drastically over the last few decades, moving from physical formats like vinyl records and CDs to digital streaming services like Apple Music or Spotify.

However, traditional media is seeing a revival, particularly among Gen Z, despite streaming’s prominence. But how do SHU students prefer to listen to music, and what motivates their choices?

“Although I do love my record player, streaming is just so convenient. I can listen to whatever I want, whenever I want. Plus, I don’t have to carry anything around,” said sophomore Grace Francalancia.

According to the 2024 Year-End Revenue Report by the RIAA, streaming

accounted for 84% of the music industry’s revenue.

Vinyl records and CDs are making a return despite the enormous popularity of streaming. Sales of vinyl records initially overtook those of CDs in 2022 and have since increased, according to Camoin Associates. This resurgence is further highlighted by Record Store Day, which, for this year, is being observed on April 12.

For some SHU students, physical media offers a sense of nostalgia and authenticity.

“I started collecting vinyls during the pandemic,” said sophomore Nicola Cari. “There’s just something about holding the album, looking at the artwork, and hearing this certain sound that streaming just can’t replicate.”

Physical music formats are unlikely to completely disappear as long as streaming remains dominant. These formats preserve the elegance of record design and the experience of music as a tangible object, giving them cultural and historical relevance.

“I don’t think vinyls will ever go out of style, but I think people will start to realize their inconvenience. I also feel like it is important for us to use vinyls because you can physically hold the music in your hand,” said sophomore Hannah Thomas.

“Of course it will never fully go away. I mean, as long as you bought the CD’s, it will always exist,” said Francalancia.

Physical music formats, particularly vinyl, encourages album-focused listening where listeners experience a full body of work instead of jumping between singles. Additionally, collecting and preserving these formats help maintain a connection to the past and ensures that future generations can appreciate the artistry behind them.

For SHU students, the choice between streaming and physical media isn’t just about convenience—it’s about how they connect with the music they love.

“Music heals my soul. I don’t care what form it’s in,” said Cari.



Daniel Passapera, Sacred Heart University
Analog Record Shop, a record shop in Tustin, California, specializes in new and used vinyl records and vintage stereo equipment.



Instagram, @crosleyradio

A C65 Record Player blends modern design with the vintage feel of vinyl.

Sports

Softball Enters MAAC Play Against Niagara

BY **SAM MCCANN**
Staff Writer

With conference play starting, SHU softball stepped up to the plate in dominant fashion, opening their home Metro Atlantic Athletic Conference (MAAC) campaign with a series win over Niagara University (NU). The Pioneers hosted the Purple Eagles this weekend and dominated their doubleheader, bouncing them back from their series loss last week away at Rider University.

The Pioneers faced off against the Rider University Broncs last weekend, resulting in a 2-1 series loss.

"I thought we were prepared, but Sunday we just let our bats shut down and we didn't give it enough fight. We're prepared to not let that happen again," said Head Coach Pam London.

The Pioneers then faced Stony Brook University in a mid-week doubleheader, resulting in a 1-1 series tie, taking the first game and dropping the second. However, the Pioneers softball team is a very close-knit group who are highly motivated and ready to bounce back.



Instagram, @sacredheart_softball
Senior infielder Carly Koltko and sophomore infielder Cierra Bender celebrating at home plate after scoring.

"I think just working on believing in ourselves and picking each other up and getting momentum going into the weekend is going to be really important," said sophomore Jess Brown.

Heading into their MAAC home opener this past weekend, the team really homed in on where their focus is now.

"Take every game by the game itself. Game by game, inning by inning, pitch by pitch. We're just trying to win the little things right now," said junior pitcher Sam Kowalski. "Those are the little wins we are taking and are going to give us a bigger win at the end of the day."

"We're certainly confident going into league play. We know that we're battling every weekend. League is just a different animal," said London.

The Pioneers defeated the Niagara Purple Eagles in a two-game sweep on Saturday, March 29. In the first game, the Eagles scored two quick runs, but the Pioneers' bats got hot in the second, bringing in four runs. In the remaining five innings, the teams traded off runs, but Sacred Heart won 5-3.

In the second game between the two schools on Saturday, the Pioneers again had their bats go hot, scoring five runs in the third inning and four runs in the sixth inning to take a commanding 12-3 lead. The Pioneers out-hit their opponent 10-4.

Running off their two game streak and heading in the third and final game of the series on Sunday, the Pioneers came out strong once again. They rolled a 9-1 win over Niagara in six innings. This game secured a weekend sweep for SHU, and the first three-game series win in the MAAC.

The weekend series brings their conference record to 4-2, placing them fourth with an overall record of 14-13 on the season.

Sacred Heart Athletics contributed to this article.

Game On with Esports

BY **TAYLOR MAGUIRE**
Staff Writer

Have you ever dreamed of representing your college in an intense, high-stakes competition without ever leaving your gaming chair? Well, with SHU's club Esports team, you can. With casual or competitive gaming options, you can choose from over a dozen games to play.

"One of our club's biggest challenges is that people just don't know about it," said Prof. Sam Schelfhout, head coach of SHU club esports.

The current roster has over 60 students and continues to grow. The team competes in five games: Rocket League, League of Legends, Valorant, Super Smash Brothers and Overwatch.

"Being a part of esports has been an extremely fun and rewarding experience for me," said junior Ryan Shaker. "I've met a lot of great people and close friends through the club."

"I have been a part of SHU esports for three years now, and I absolutely love it," said junior Kristian Courville.

Just like any other athletic team, the esports team practices one to two times per week and competes in one match per week.

"A common misconception that I see about esports is the importance of practice and team play," said Shaker. "Often, I have heard confused reactions when I have told people how we actually have practices and scrimmages competing in video games."

"Esports takes as much commitment, strategy and teamwork as traditional sports," said junior Brandon Moore, captain of the club esports team.

The team competes in the Eastern Collegiate Athletic Conference (ECAC) as well as the Metro Atlantic Athletic Conference (MAAC).

"It's been a bit of a challenge for us because the teams in the MAAC are a lot better than what we're used to in our other league, the ECAC," said Schelfhout. "But the support from the MAAC has been awesome. It's cool to meet other schools that are close to us and share the same interests."

In the fall of 2020, Sacred Heart started offering esports as a minor. While not everyone on the club team is an esports minor, the program is designed to explore the esports industry.

"I am not minoring in esports, but I have taken the Capstone in esports class with Prof. Schelfhout, which was a fun hands-on experience," said Shaker.

"It's a great way of developing skills in sports management, event management and marketing," said Schelfhout. "Also, a huge benefit is getting that course work in esports while learning about the industry, the opportunities and all the types of different careers."

Other institutions, such as Fairfield University, Quinnipiac University, and the University of Connecticut, offer Esports programs as well.

"The challenge now is trying to figure out what sets us apart, how do we develop this competitive advantage to attract high school students to attend SHU for esports," said Schelfhout.

Every spring, Sacred Heart hosts an on-campus tournament called the Connecticut esports Showcase. Universities throughout Connecticut come for an exciting matchup.

"It's always a great experience for the players, and we have had audiences come to watch in the past few years," said Shaker.

The esports program SHU offers hopes to keep developing and has no plans of slowing down.

"Esports is a rapidly growing industry, with millions of people across the United States, the world is tuning in to experience it," said Schelfhout.

Women's Rugby Working Towards Two-Peat

BY **JAYDEN HUNTER**
Staff Writer

The women's rugby team is heading down the final stretch of the season carrying a 10-8-1 record finishing 1-3 in the Crimson 7's tournament this past weekend. SHU is looking to gain some momentum to carry through the final stretch of the season and into the College Rugby Association of America (CRAA) Women's collegiate 7's championship tournament.

"Last year we took home the plate and this year we are coming for more," said women's rugby Head Coach Michelle Reed.

SHU had success March 22 at the Brown University 7's tournament. The team split up using two teams in the tournament. Both teams were successful, as the Sacred Heart Red team finished in third place and the Grey team finished as bowl champions.

"To have two teams competing in a tournament is huge; it truly shows how much we have grown since my freshman year. The tournament also gave a lot of girls the opportunity to play and get the college rugby experience, as we did just get in a big freshman class was great," said senior Alyssa Cunningham.

History is also in the making for the team, as Cunningham has been nominated for the MaryAnn Sorensen Award for the second consecutive year in a row. The award is considered the highest award any collegiate women's rugby player can be given.



Contributed by Daniel Boye, '27
Sacred Heart University's women's rugby team preparing to take on Harvard University.

"I have been playing for a long time and for me to maintain the ability to grow and gain knowledge in this sport is huge. After being nominated two years in a row, it brings great recognition, that reflects not just me as a player, but the growth that this team has made together," said Cunningham.

Fans can vote on the nominees now, and a selection committee will determine the winner based on the pool of finalists.

"Aly has been phenomenal since she first got on campus. She brought into our program and what we were doing. She wanted to build this program from 'who is Sacred Heart' to 'watch out, it's Sacred Heart,'" said Reed.

Coming down into their final stretch, the team looks to have a successful post season.

"Rest, eat, hydrate is what our team will continue to do," said junior Ashley Torres-Brown. "Recovery is a huge part of D1 sports, and for us to continue to be healthy, rest, eat and hydrate will be key. In this sport, I have learned the hard way when we play so many games our muscles tend to get sore and tight, so our recovery, rest, eating, and hydration will be key for us."

The team will head to Indianapolis on May 2 to compete in the CRAA national championship. With a lot of hardware on the minds of the players, the team preaches on continuing rest and recovery to make sure their bodies are healthy for the tournament.

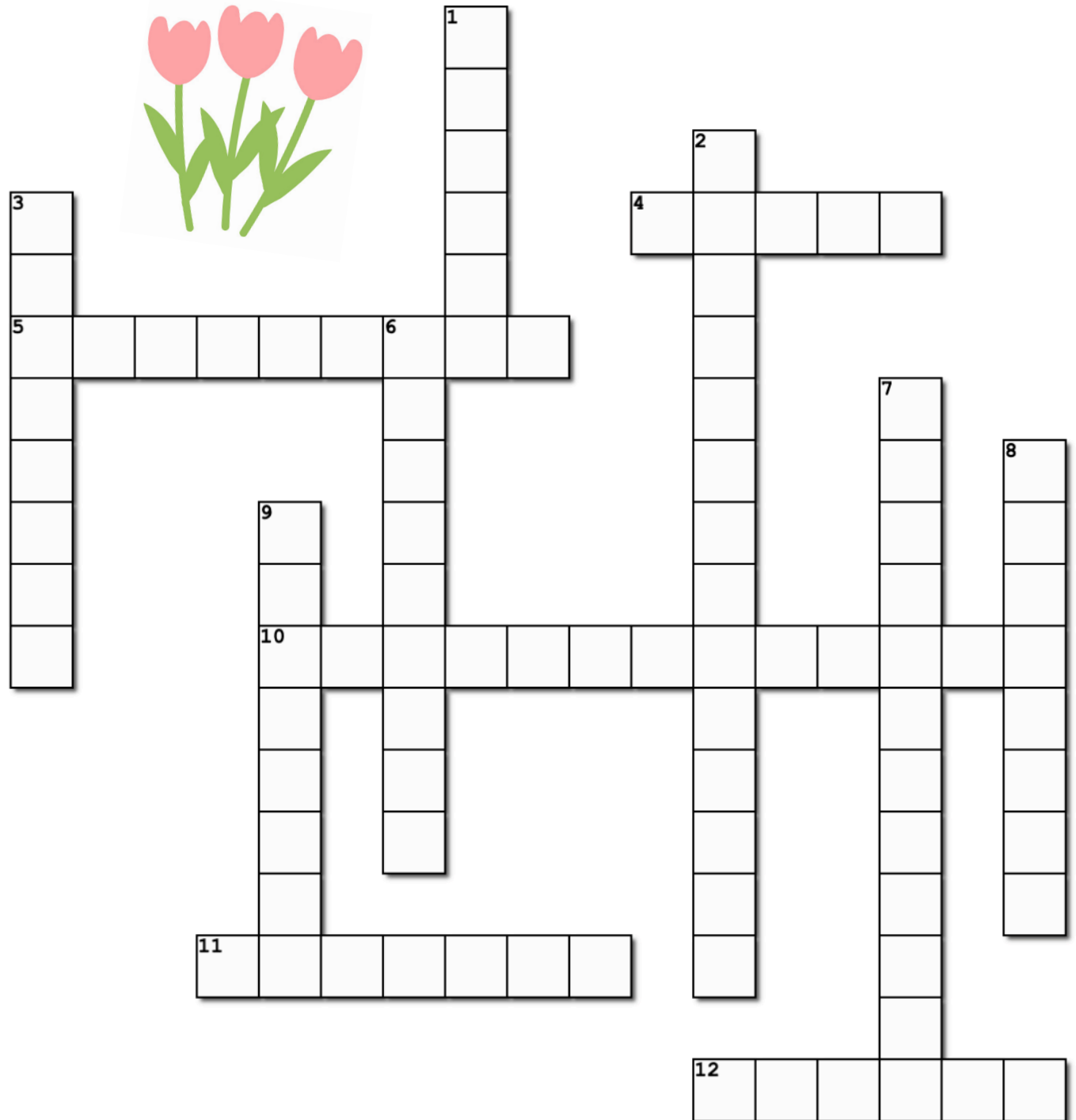
"Rugby 7s is a fast game when we are playing defense, it becomes a one on one with you and your opponent if you can beat them coming around the outside. Physically, we need to execute our skills and fundamentals, but at the same time during practices we tend to back off conditioning so players bodies are rested and recovered for a very hard 2-day tournament where we will play up to 5 games," said Reed.

SHU will play next on April 6 against the University of New Haven in West Haven, Conn.

Sacred Heart Athletics contributed to this article.

Editorial

Springtime at SHU Crossword



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Across:

- 4. What hatches from an egg?
- 5. Yellow and black striped bug
- 10. Annual event where a celebrity performs on campus
- 11. April showers bring these in May
- 12. Holiday that uses pastel colors, bunnies and eggs as decor



Down:

- 1. Amount of Spectrum issues to be published during this semester
- 2. Pink trees found around campus which begin to bloom in March
- 3. Handheld device to avoid rain
- 6. Insect known for its bright-colored wings
- 7. Where seniors will be honored on May 10
- 8. Holiday celebrating the world which takes place on April 22
- 9. Classic American sport that begins in springtime

Answer Key:

1. Twelve, 2. Cherry Blossoms, 3. Umbrella, 4. Chick, 5. Bumblebee, 6. Butterfly, 7. Commencement, 8. Earth Day, 9. Baseball, 10. Spring Concert, 11. Flowers, 12. Easter

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