

LEJOURNAL

NOTRE DAME DE SION HIGH SCHOOL | VOLUME 41 | DECEMBER 2022



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Zahra Parsons

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FLIPPING INTO FIRST

Fresh off their Novice category win at the NCA Regional Championship, the cheer team performs their first-place routine at the Winter Sports Pep Rally Dec. 1. They received no point deductions on their performance from the judges. "I could tell some of the team had some jitters and were nervous, especially the freshmen," junior **Imani Cutler** said. "My way of getting them out of their head is just letting them know that no matter what happens, you worked so hard for this and it all just depends on all the work that builds up to it."

PHOTO | LAUREN SMITH

EDITORS' INK

Hi everyone! It's almost winter break (yay!), and we are so happy to bring you our last Le Journal issue of 2022!

We also have some very exciting news to share: this November, our staff traveled to St. Louis to attend the JEA/NSPA National High School Journalism Convention. While there, we had the opportunity to compete live against student publications from all across the country for Best of Show, and Le Journal took home First Place for Newsmagazine serving a student population of under 1,800!

We are so proud of our amazing staff for all of the hard work that they have put in this semester to make this possible, and we look forward to bringing you even greater content in the new year.

For our cover story this issue, we chose to focus on the

polarization within our school that impacts the daily lives of many of our students.

Through poll data, individual interviews and two group discussion interviews, we listened to you, our Sion community, and used your responses to create a story that reflects the experience of being a Sion student today as our school grapples with its complex identity as a Catholic school with a liberal student body.

Our hope for this story is that it will inspire the conversations and actions that are deeply necessary to make Sion a place where all girls can feel safe and empowered to authentically express themselves.

We hope that you enjoy this issue, and we'll see you in 2023.

Cheers,
Sophie & Zahra

Sophie & Zahra



STUDENT SPACE CAROLINE HAMMETT



“I started making charcuterie boards in 2020. It was one of my COVID hobbies. I’ve always been into creative stuff and cooking and things like that. I saw charcuterie boards becoming really popular, and I thought it would be something fun to dip my toe into. I ended up really loving it. It’s such a destressor for me, and it’s super easy. Plus it’s a big source of compliments, people are usually super impressed. They can

get pretty expensive depending on where you get your stuff and how bougie you want it, but they’re usually quick and easy. I made one for Thanksgiving, and it took me about 15 minutes. Once I have all the stuff prepared, I just start placing the bigger items and then filling in the spaces with the smaller stuff. When I started, I would look at videos on TikTok and be like, “Oh that’s cool, I could replicate that.” But charcuterie boards are one of those things where I kind of just let my brain do the work so now I just come up with them as I go.



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Sion's annual can drive, Food For Thought, benefits Redemptorist Social Services Center, which provides many services for the impoverished and working poor within our community.

BY ELLE SIMON
WEB EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Food For Thought, Sion's annual food drive, collects donations to benefit **Redemptorist Social Services Center**, which serves the impoverished in the Kansas City metro. To reach the school wide goal of 10 tons, students are incentivized to bring in cans with the promise of a day off of school.

In addition, the class that brings in the most donations is rewarded with a week of civvies. While these prizes are a good motivator, they make it easy for the real reason why students should be bringing in cans to get overshadowed.

This year's Food For Thought drive took place Oct. 31 through Nov. 11. A total of 69,172 ounces, or 2.16 tons, of food were collected and donated to Redemptorist.

Established in 1986, Redemptorist Social Services Center works to stabilize families, senior citizens and communities living in poverty in the Kansas City metro. The center offers many programs including senior services, legal assistance, clothing, houseware, hygiene products and financial assistance to help impoverished members of the community.

"We're much more than a food pantry," longtime volunteer **Carol Lillis** said. "We help with rent, utilities, medicine. We feed our seniors."

Due to inflation and the rising cost of groceries, Redemptorist has expanded their ministry to serve the "working poor," in addition to those who fall under the federal poverty line guidelines. The classification of "working poor" refers to individuals who have cars, jobs and rent, but still require some assistance to make ends meet.

"We see a lot of new professionals, teachers and parents starting out," Redemptorist Executive Director **Julie McCaw** said. "They do not qualify for programs of assistance, but being able to rest their budgets by getting food and hygiene from our food pantry allows them to alleviate their budget for other expenses."

In 2021, Redemptorist served close to 200,000 people through their food pantry, mobile food distribution, emergency assistance and senior adults programs. Beyond these programs, Redemptorist also has a clothing boutique where clients can come in and pick out clothes with no charge. Clients can pick out professional

attire for their jobs, and Redemptorist recently started collecting school uniforms. They also distribute personal hygiene items like toothpaste, deodorant, cleaning products and Band-Aids to families and the homeless.

The items are "so important in promoting their dignity and confidence," according to Redemptorist Social Services Center's 2021 annual report.

Lillis's parents were founding members of the Redemptorist executive board. Her mother, a member of the 1959 Sion graduating class, worked with members from **Saint Elizabeth's Parish** to get Redemptorist up and running.

Lillis grew up never knowing how many people would show up for dinner at her home each night. Her parents always invited the hungry to come and eat at their house, and her family would use a bit of what they had in their pantry to make a meal for many people.

"Our motto at home was 'have a little, leave a little,'" said Lillis. "We'd take a little and leave a little for the next person."

Lillis continued the work her parents started by volunteering at Redemptorist every day, often staying after the food pantry is closed to feed those who come to the door.

"I think they would be happy with what I'm doing," Lillis said. "I'm living in Redemptorist."

The help they receive from high school students is vital especially during the holiday season. The majority of their donations come from the drives put on by Sion and Rockhurst.

They heavily rely on these donations during a time where food on the table is a large part of holiday celebrations. Redemptorist served Thanksgiving meals to almost 1,400 families and Christmas baskets to 1,820 families.

"When Sion first started to bring in the underwear, socks and food. I said, 'Mom, that's your high school,'" Lillis said. "She said, 'That makes me feel pretty good.'"

Part two of Food For Thought will take place during Catholic Schools Week from Jan. 30 to Feb. 3. To reach the school goal of 10 tons, 7.84 more tons still need to be collected. In addition to collecting food during part two of Food For Thought, an additional five dollars will be added to Winter Formal tickets to continue fundraising for Redemptorist.

"It opens your eyes to how you are very, very lucky," Lillis said. "Everybody is a paycheck away from being hungry."



HELPING CAN



CANS IN HAND

Two donation recipients, who wished to remain anonymous, walk out of Redemptorist with Thanksgiving meals.

PHOTO | ELLE SIMON

WAVING FLAGS

Once every four years, fans across the globe gather to watch the FIFA World Cup, and here's what you need to know about this year's cup.

BY KATE PETERS
NEWS & SPORTS EDITOR

WELCOME TO THE WORLD STAGE

The **FIFA World Cup** is a worldwide tournament held every four years in rotating host countries. The 2022 Qatar World Cup began Nov. 20 with 32 teams from all over the globe, including a very young United States squad. Currently, remaining teams are fighting for their spots in the quarter finals. The tournament ends Dec. 18, and it's not too late to watch between semester exam study sessions.

This tournament is the first ever winter world cup. Typically it's a summer tournament, but due to Qatar's hot climate the FIFA organization moved the tournament dates.

Even still, temperatures in Doha, the country's capital, are currently in the 70s and 80s. You might notice officials, fans, and your favorite players with a little extra sweat for a December month in the northern hemisphere.

The U.S. Men's National team did not qualify for the last World Cup tournament, and the current team's average age is just 25 years old, meaning for most of the United States players, this was their first world cup. Star midfielder **Christian Pulisic**, just 24 years old, scored one of the three total goals for the U.S. team before they were knocked out of the tournament by the Netherlands Dec. 3.

GOLDEN BOOT

The Golden Boot is an award given at each World Cup to the player who scores the most goals throughout the competition.

This year, the top contenders are England's **Henry Kane**, France's **Kylian Mbappe** and Argentina's **Lionel Messi**. Kane won the award at the 2018 World Cup in Russia, and as England's captain, he has a high chance of winning it again.

Mbappe and France won the tournament in 2018, and have made it to the quarter-final round this time. They are expected to continue to go far, increasing his chances of winning.

Messi is considered to be one of the best players of all time, and since this could be one of his last times playing in the World Cup, he has more motivation than ever to win.

SIGNING OFF

These legendary players will be competing with their national teams for the last time at the World Cup.



CLAGS AT THE CUP

The World Cup brings people together. Many people like watching the event with company, whether it be for the comradery or the rivalry. Assistant athletic director **Doug McLagan** attended the several matches of the tournament in person in Qatar with his son and with friends.

"I watched Croatia against Canada. Croatia won, but that was probably the best game because Canada took the lead early," McLagan said. "It was just a good game. Canada scored the first goal and absolutely attacked Croatia, they were tremendous for the first 30 minutes. But then Croatia slowly got into the game. They just showed up. I mean, they were just brilliant."

McLagan's trip to Qatar was a gift from his family for a 60th birthday present.

He knows he is lucky to have attended a World Cup in person, and he may get to go twice, as the 2026 World Cup will be held in North America with some matches here in Kansas City.

"I think a lot of the average people have no idea what the World Cup can bring to the table. It's going to change Kansas City," McLagan said. "For one, the infrastructure is going to have to be better in Kansas City to get from Arrowhead to Power and Light, from the airport to Arrowhead. So it's just going to change the look of Kansas City. And it's going to be one heck of a time. I think the population is going to absolutely love it because it is the biggest event in the world."

USA VS ENGLAND

As the world's most-known rivalry since 1776, the England versus USA match in the group stage was largely anticipated by both nations. The match ended in a tie, and despite England's historic superiority, they were out-shot by the United States, who also nearly matched their possession.

"I think America, from what I saw, probably should have won the game - if they could have had somebody who put the ball in the back of the net, which obviously makes a difference," varsity soccer coach **Doug McLagan** said. "But I thought America was brilliant in that game. And I think England was lucky to get away with a tie."

England striker **Henry Kane** was close to putting England on the board early, but the shot was blocked by American defender **Walker Zimmerman**. American midfielder **Christian Pulisic** had a promising on-target shot, but it hit the crossbar and flew back out.

By the end of the game, England took a total of eight shots, committed nine fouls and had one offside call. The US had a total of 10 shots and committed 15 fouls. Both teams advanced to the next bracket round.

The United States ultimately fell to the Netherlands Dec. 3. England defeated Senegal and advanced to the quarter-finals.



MATCH MATES

McLagan went to Qatar with his son and two of his hometown friends. "The two friends I went with, I've not seen for over probably 15 years. I grew up with these two and they're just like, my best buddies," he said. "Going with those two and then also my son coming from Iceland to join me was just the time of my life. It was not only just to see the World Cup, but just hanging out with people that have been friends my whole life, was fantastic."

PHOTO SUBMISSION | DOUG MCLAGAN



GLOBAL CONNECTIONS

Besides watching the games, McLagan's favorite part of the trip was meeting people from all across the globe. "Most exciting thing to do was to drop off my luggage off so I could get right out and go meet people from all over the country. And that's what we did while we were there," he said. "And so I just wanted to join the festivity of it all, and it was fantastic."

PHOTO SUBMISSION | DOUG MCLAGAN



Neymar da Silva Santos Júnior, commonly known as "Neymar" is a forward on the Brazilian national team. He is second on Brazil's all-time top goalscorers list with 74 goals in 119 appearances. Brazil lost to Croatia in penalty kicks during the quarter final game Dec. 9.

PHOTO | SEBÁSTIAN FREIRE | FLICKR



Cristiano Ronaldo is a forward and captain for Portugal. He has been playing for 20 years. Throughout his career, he has scored over 800 goals. In an astonishing upset, Morocco defeated Portugal in the quarter finals 1-0.

PHOTO | CC BY-SA 3.0 GDFL | WIKIMEDIA COMMONS



Lionel Messi is a forward for Argentina and is arguably the best player in the world. He has scored 94 goals in 169 international matches in his 18-year career. Argentina is the only team with a legendary retiree to advance into the semi-final round of the cup.

PHOTO | SERG STALLONE | WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

BLAME IT ON THE LEGAL DRINKING AGE

Many issues related to alcohol can be resolved by lowering the minimum legal drinking age from 21 to 18.

Voting. Enlisting in the military. Getting married. Purchasing a gun. Buying a house. Adopting a child. All of these are legal rights that citizens of the United States receive upon turning 18.

With each of these new rights come immense responsibilities, displaying the amount of trust that our government and we as a society place in individuals once they have reached the legal age of adulthood. We consider them responsible enough to select the next president, own a lethal weapon and raise another human being. So why then do we not consider them responsible enough to legally drink alcohol?

In the United States, the minimum legal drinking age (MLDA) has been 21 since President Ronald Reagan passed the National Minimum Drinking Age Act of 1984. The act required states to prohibit persons under 21 from purchasing or publicly possessing alcoholic beverages at the expense of state highway funds, according to the National Youth Rights Association.

But in the 38 years since the act was passed, it still hasn't achieved the desired effect of eliminating teen alcohol consumption. More than 70% of teens have consumed at least one alcoholic beverage by the time they turn 18, which is still three years below the MLDA, according to American Addiction Centers.

In fact, the CDC's 2019 Youth Risk Behavior Survey found that 29% of high school students reported drinking alcohol within the 30 days prior to being surveyed.

Keeping the legal drinking age at 21 also has the consequence of turning alcohol into a sort of taboo for young adults, who are finding themselves in new environments where they suddenly have much more independence, such as college or the workforce.

Lacking a responsible drinking education, which encourages moderation, many young adults engage in unsafe drinking practices, such as binge drinking. Binge drinking is defined as consuming five or more drinks on an occasion for men and four or more drinks on an occasion for women, according to the CDC, and it is associated with many health issues such as heart and liver disease, high blood pressure and increased risk of cancer.

The 2019 National Survey on Drug Use and Health found that 33% of college students between the ages of 18-22 reported binge drinking within the month prior to the survey.

Because the majority of these young adults are below the legal drinking age, drinking is taking place in unsupervised locations such as house parties and fraternities, which also increases the risk of sexual assault and alcohol-related injuries.

Many countries throughout the world have minimum legal drinking ages lower than 21. Australia, for example, has an MLDA of 18.

In 2021, the number of alcohol related deaths in Australia was 1,559 out of a population of 25.7 million, according to the Australian Bureau of Statistics. Comparatively, the United States

experienced 52,000 alcohol related deaths in 2021 out of a population of 331.9 million, according to the CDC.

This means that the rate of alcohol related deaths per population is 2.6 times greater in the United States, despite having a higher drinking age.

Additionally, underage drinking between the ages of 14-17 has consistently decreased in Australia over the past 15 years, with 72% reporting that they do not drink at all, according to Alcohol Beverages Australia. This is a stark contrast to the 70% of teens who have consumed one alcoholic beverage by the time they turn 18.

This data shows that having a lower drinking age has the potential to result in healthier drinking practices, with dramatically decreased rates of underage drinking and alcohol related deaths.

By lowering the drinking age, alcohol consumption in young adults could become much safer by being allowed to take place in supervised environments where teens could learn responsibility and moderation. Additionally, it could alter teenagers' perception of alcohol as a sort of 'forbidden fruit' by becoming another privilege that they will gain upon turning 18.

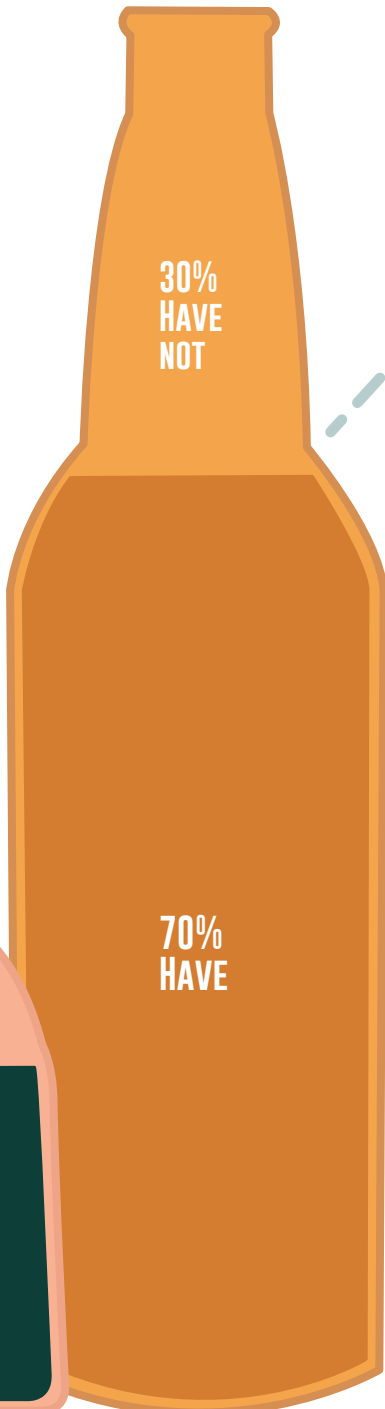
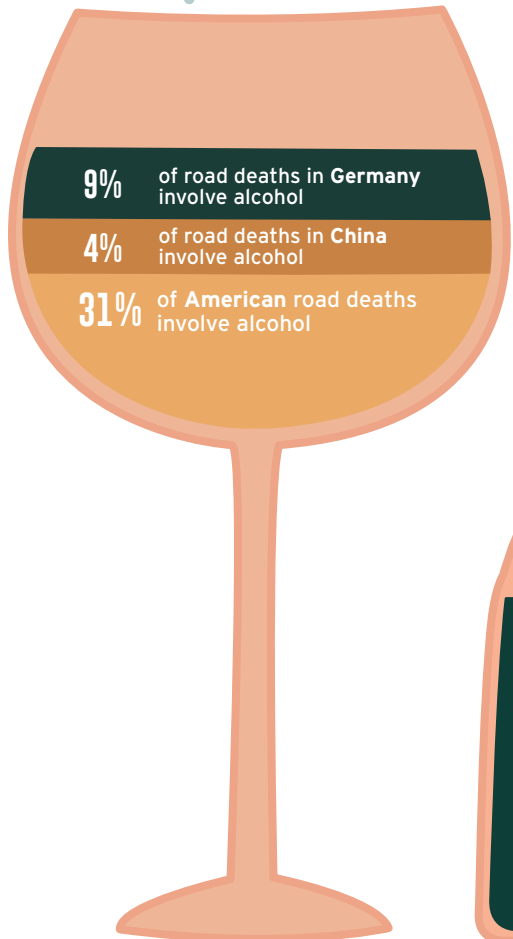
Lowering the legal drinking age to the age of legal adulthood, along with promoting responsible drinking education, could create a healthier, safer drinking culture within the United States and result in the protection of teenagers and new adults alike.

7 out of 10 staff members voted in favor of this editorial.

ROAD DEATHS INVOLVING ALCOHOL IN THE UNITED STATES AS COMPARED TO COUNTRIES LIKE GERMANY AND CHINA — WHOSE MINIMUM DRINKING AGES FALL BELOW 21
according to *The University of Pittsburg*

PERCENTAGE OF COUNTRIES WITH LEGAL DRINKING AGES ABOVE OR BELOW 18
according to *Vine Pair*

TEENS WHO HAVE CONSUMED AT LEAST ONE ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE BY THE TIME THEY REACH 18
according to *American Addiction Center*



LA DIVISIÓN DE PRIMERA GENERACIÓN



What does it truly mean to be First Generation?

BY EDITORIALS EDITOR ARLETH GUEVARA

According to Merriam-Webster Dictionary, "first generation" means being "born in the U.S. of immigrant parentage." Additionally, The Center for First-Generation Student Success recognizes being first generation as being the first in your family to earn a degree from a four year college or university.

I fit in both categories, and although I'd never considered this status very deeply until I came to Sion, I feel affected by it constantly, especially as the time to begin the college application process becomes closer.

I began to notice the impact of being first gen at my first college fair. My friends were familiar with many of the colleges and universities, what programs and majors they were known for and knew all the right questions to ask the representatives.

I didn't. I had no idea we were meant to come prepared with questions, nor what questions I was even supposed to be asking that would lead me to the answers I'm looking for. . What are the answers I'm looking for?

The difference between me and my friends is that they have the knowledge and advice of their parents' experiences, and I don't.

The familial support that I receive in my college search is automatically different because of the fact that I am first gen. My family's mentality when it comes to college is, "let's figure this out together" as opposed to "this was my experience."

My parents were born and raised in Mexico, which automatically makes me not only Mexican-American, but strongly rooted on my hispanic heritage. Because of this, my family prioritizes certain values more so than other families might, and the important aspects of my culture heavily inform the college process for me, where they may not for other people.

One example is how we value family. Everything we do and every choice we make prioritizes our family. For us, being on

your own does not begin at 18. Even if the law considers you an adult at 18, with us, you're still a kid. You're not considered your own adult and are expected to follow your parents' rules. 45% of Hispanics still live at with their parents between the ages 18-34 according to Pew Hispanic Center.

My parents did not get the opportunity to finish their college degrees, but I will. The weight that this automatically puts on my shoulders can be suffocating at times, knowing that it is up to me to start the first generation that will receive a higher education

I hope to set an example for my two younger brothers, to show them where hardwork and dedication can take them, and to say I was first in the family to achieve my dreams. It kickstarts a cycle of achievers, doers, go-getters, and above all accomplish my parents' "American dream" for me.

It can be frustrating when friends or classmates look down on my accomplishments and setbacks. For some of them, it might not be as big of a deal to get a B or C, but for me, it's a wasted opportunity that must never be repeated. My family has been through a lot to get me where I am now, so it is incredibly important that I use every opportunity to my advantage. If that means getting all A's, I must get all A's. Not for my sake, but for that of the others. To prove that their sacrifices were not for nothing.

Sion is a college preparatory school, as opposed to a 'traditional' highschool. This makes being a first gen college student even harder, since it raises the expectation that not only the school, but my family has set for me to get into a good college. It also isolates me even further from my classmates, since most students at private high schools have families who graduated with a higher education.

Beginning the college search junior year is a good way to prepare for the application process, and is almost expected as a



part of proper planning, however, my family cannot afford to go on college visits.

The only tours I have done have been through the school, and not even to colleges that interest me. However, it is not easy for my family to just plan a weekend trip to an out-of-state college.

It is a large amount of money to travel out of the state, even if just for a weekend, and visiting multiple colleges is even more difficult. Flying is simply not an option for us, so we require an extra day of driving, an extra day that my parents' jobs will simply not allow them to take off. With my two little brothers and grandma living with us as well, we also need to take their schedules.

While money, and scheduling conflicts can be issues for others, as well, it is yet another item to add to my list of obstacles needed to overcome without the aid of my parents' experiences.

I don't even know how to schedule a college tour. While it probably isn't too hard to figure out, it just adds another item to a list of things I need to learn how to do.

College counseling at Sion has no specific help dedicated to first gen students, and if there is, it's not being offered to those who need it. Yet, it does have more help accessible than other schools, but that is not enough. If schools want to truly help their first generation students, help needs to be accessible starting freshman year, because many aspects of the college process start freshman year.

As of right now, my goal for college is UMKC, specifically their 6 year MD/BA program. Going through the list of requirements and recommended items on their website, I realized they strongly recommend prior medical experience. If I would've known this freshman year, or had I even known to look for this information freshman year, I would've found some type of internships or volunteer opportunities to help strengthen my application, but I

didn't, until now.

Now, as a junior, I have less than a year to find somewhere to intern/volunteer at, and with everything that has happened with COVID-19, it has proven much harder than I expected.

Because of this, it would be beneficial to have small presentations or classes going step by step on how to research colleges, what questions to ask at college fairs, how college tours work and how to schedule them, and explaining how the ACT and SAT differ and which colleges prefer which.

While Sion has offered 'first gen' sessions during the Deep Dives, I have sat through the presentations, and they are all the same. They are about how to get help while actually at college, but nothing is ever mentioned for receiving help while in high school to actually get accepted into college.

According to the Urban Institute, children of immigrants are approximately 70% more likely to live in low-income families with working parents, meaning when it comes to searching for colleges, tuition is a big aspect, and often a limiting factor, to consider in our choices.

I have been lucky enough to be pretty financially stable, but college is expensive, and I am not looking forward to the long tedious process of filling out the FAFSA, another thing me and my family are going to have to learn to do.

It will all be worth it, though, both the hardships now and the ones yet to come. Something my mom has told me since I was a little girl is that my brothers and I are her 'American Dream.' If we succeed in achieving our dream careers, then she has succeeded, and migrating to the U.S. was worth it.

I represent two different cultures, American and Mexican. I am both versions of first generation. Despite the hardships those things bring, I will achieve my dreams, and I will show future generations that it is possible.

HOLIDAY HORRORS

Holidays centered around food cause an increase in disordered eating.

BY CLAIRE BOMA
COPY EDITOR



When thinking about the holiday season, what comes to mind? Is it the savory combination of turkey, stuffing and mashed potatoes? The sweet smell of Christmas cookies? The holidays can be incredibly special, but they can also be incredibly dangerous.

People stress about their weight and appearance more than any other time of the year. 47% of 119 Sion students polled think about their weight more during the holiday season.

"I think that holiday meals are hard because there is so much food around, and you can forget your limits," sophomore **Tessa Lind** said. "You either feel terrible after eating too much or you hold yourself back."

The **National Eating Disorders Association** states that 5.2% of adolescent girls are diagnosed with an eating disorder, and for them big holiday meals can be particularly challenging.

"When I was in recovery my parents would portion out my food, and it would be so stressful because people would see that," an anonymous student said. "I'd get a lot of questions because [extended family] wouldn't always know what was going on."

Even individuals who don't struggle with eating disorders report increased difficulty in their relationships with food during the holiday season. 50% of the 119 students polled said they felt more conscious of the food they ate during the holiday season than any other time of year.

"We tend to see an increase in distress with our patients around the holiday season," **Bellatore Recovery** Co-Founder and Program Director **Brooke Wesley** said. "When an eating disorder is present, the holidays feel more connected to food than faith and community."

Extended families don't often conceal their judgments about their family members, which leads to many harmful comments often targeted at younger relatives.

"When there's someone you haven't seen in a few years, your appearance has often changed. You get a lot of comments like 'Oh, you've lost so much weight,' or, 'You've gained weight since I last saw you,'" junior **Amalia Millard** said. "Sometimes you get shamed for gaining weight, even if it's a positive thing, or praised for losing weight when it is not a good thing."



The comments family can make about your appearance, while often with good intentions, are inappropriate and harmful. 40% of the students polled said they have been pressured to eat more or less by family members at holiday meals.

"My cousins and I will eat because it's Thanksgiving, and my grandma will say things like 'You should go on a run after dinner,' and will comment on our weights," freshman **Loren Clarkson** said.

Unsolicited comments from relatives are often targeted at women. Society holds higher expectations of their appearance, and many girls begin receiving these comments from a young age.

"My younger sister is a little above average [weight] for her age, so sometimes extended family will comment on how much she's eating and tell her, 'You need to have less of this or that,'" Lind said. "And I would say something [to them] because she's a child. She can eat until she's full or until she's happy."

In addition to comments from family, many young people also grow conscious of their weight due to social media.

"Social media needs to stop promoting things like 'lose

weight for the holidays' or 'workouts for after Thanksgiving', because it gives people bad vibes for the holidays," Clarkson said.

Trends like Keto and flash diets fill social media pages, as well as diet and exercise advice from people with no real evidence behind their messages.

"Diet trends in general are incredibly unsafe and not effective," Wesley said. "The dieting industry is a multi billion dollar industry with a 98% failure rate. However, their marketing has managed to convince people that these ideas and products are magical."

But holiday meals don't have to be toxic. Don't make rude and unnecessary comments about people's weight or what they're eating, and reach out to someone if they're struggling and offer to help.

"Remember, food doesn't hurt people, people hurt people," Wesley said. "All foods are fine in moderation. I wouldn't encourage somebody to have carrots all day every day just like I wouldn't encourage somebody to have donuts all day every day."

LIVING IN IT

The whole city talks about it. The rumors are out. Sion's not "Catholic enough."

But when you consider how Sion operates as a Catholic school, it's hard to see how that statement could be true.

With monthly all-school Masses, class retreats, Kairos, weekly Wednesday morning Masses or prayer services, peer ministry and theology requirements - Sion possesses all of the standard faith-based activities and requisites of a typical Catholic high school.

However, over the years, the school has also developed a reputation for possessing a more progressive student body, which some consider to be at odds with its identity as a Catholic institution.

"Sion is known for being a more liberal school. That's why

some people from my middle school didn't want to go here," freshman **Heidi Nance** said. "The student body is more liberally-leaning, and a lot of the kids at my school didn't think it was 'Catholic enough.'"

In an increasingly polarized world, Sion now finds itself in a uniquely complex position: a Catholic school, centered in Catholic traditions and values, made up of a student body where the loudest voices heard, at least currently, are the liberal voices. The community now faces the question of whether it's possible to reconcile these identities, and if students of different beliefs can find a way to communicate respectfully in order to coexist.

As a Catholic school, Sion's institution is already separated from other area schools by its unique commitment to honor all faith traditions by promoting interfaith dialogue and education. The manifestations of this commitment create a diverse faith education that differs from most other Catholic schools and, correspondingly, also promotes greater diversity within the student body.

"In our school there are lots of different ethnicities, religions and backgrounds," freshman **Adele Milligan** said. "It shows you that people come here not just because it's Catholic, but because other Catholic schools don't have that wide range of ethnicities and religions like Sion does. It's a big part of Sion's community that helps people to choose to go here."

DIVERSITY OF THOUGHT

79% of 143 polled students and staff members answered "yes" or "maybe" when asked if they feel the Sion community leans in a particular political direction. When asked to elaborate, the majority expressed the belief that the school community is left-leaning.

While the belief systems of the Catholic church and the Democratic party do not always oppose one another, some topics have become especially contentious within the school walls.

"The Catholic church does lean conservative, but they also sometimes lean on the liberal side too. They're pretty anti death penalty, pro-immigration and pro taking in refugees, which I feel like isn't really talked about," sophomore **Natasha Wulff** said. "But abortion is a pretty heavy topic. I've heard some people say that they can't talk about what they believe here for fear of being kicked out of their friend groups."

Many young people start becoming civically engaged in high school. When asked which aspects of their lives played the biggest roles in forming personal political identity, most poll respondents cited parents and family as their first sources of political socialization.

Many also added that as they have gotten older, exposure to new ideas, people, higher education and social media have played a significant role as well.

Social media is the easiest and most convenient setting to engage in unproductive debate. Carefully constructed algorithms feed one-sided information to consumers, building a false sense of the reality of political dynamics.

Social media also allows people to convey opinions with the safety net of being faceless, nameless and unidentified.

It should be much more difficult to look at a classmate or



HE GRAY

BY CO EDITORS-IN-CHIEF ZAHRA PARSONS
AND SOPHIE GROMOWSKY AND FEATURES
EDITOR LILY WILKIN

In an increasingly polarized world, Sion finds itself in a uniquely complex position: a Catholic school, centered upon Catholic traditions and values, made up of a loudly liberal student body.

friend in real life and speak to them with the same demeaning tone used in Twitter timelines and TikTok comments. Even so, the emotionally-charged reactions exhibited in online arguments translate to in-person conversations.

"There's become this sort of mob mentality. If one person says something against someone else, then a lot of people feel like if that person's beliefs even slightly align with their own that they can do that as well," senior **Chloe Welch** said. "So even if they're able to have a thoughtful conversation individually, when it becomes a large group it turns into the problem of everyone attacking one person."

Almost 70% of polled respondents replied they feel most people in our country are unable to hold respectful conversations with people they do not agree with.

However, 85.3% of respondents felt that they personally know how to have respectful discussions with others on topics that they disagree on.

Over half of those respondents chose to elaborate with important strategies to having difficult conversations. Answers included respecting others' points of view and experiences, listening to understand rather than to reply, keeping an open mind and finding common ground.

Despite all this, only 40% of students and faculty reported that they believe everyone feels comfortable sharing their beliefs. So, if the majority of people feel that they themselves can have respectful discussions, then why does only half that population see Sion as a space accepting of all views?

"People claim that they're very open-minded and that they are open to other people's opinions, but then when they hear the word 'Republican' or even the word 'Catholic' they cringe," senior **Annie Stevens** said. "And I think that's very hypocritical because you claim that you're super open-minded, and you can stay firm in your beliefs, but that doesn't mean that you have to judge other people."

The inability of some students to show respect to peers who hold different beliefs has created a climate in which only students whose opinions align with the majority feel comfortable to express themselves. Those in the minority often choose to keep opinions private for fear of being outcast.

"If you're one of those people who doesn't have the exact same opinion as everyone, you're really scared of talking about it because you're afraid that people are going to judge you or you're going to get kicked out of a friend group," junior **Amalia Millard** said. "There is one dominant opinion, and maybe not everyone shares that, but the people that don't are really scared to talk about it."

A topic of polarization within the Sion community, made even more complicated by the school's Catholic identity, is the pro-life vs. pro-choice debate and women's rights to reproductive healthcare.

When asked on the poll to share their perception

of the school's political leaning, most students who offered opinions contrary to the school being liberal did not use the terms 'conservative' or 'Republican,' but rather responded specifically 'pro-life.'

As a student body composed of young women, many students feel that this issue is highly personal, particularly after having witnessed the recent changes to abortion legislation and abortion rights being put to vote in their home states of Missouri and Kansas.

Catholic ideology upholds the "dignity of life from conception to natural death" and condemns abortion as well as anything else considered to be a violation of the right to life.

Left-leaning ideology, which currently seems to make up a



larger, or at least louder, portion of the student body, promotes women's right to abortion as a healthcare service and generally clashes with the Catholic perception of this issue. This creates tension among students who may identify with different sides of the argument and causes liberal students to feel as if their beliefs on the subject cannot be heard in the realm of the school, whereas conservative students feel overtly ridiculed among their left-leaning peers.

"I feel like it's very much a complex issue because the student body as a whole is very much more left-leaning, and so in classroom settings and amongst peers those are the students who feel like they can speak up and share their opinions," Welch said. "But then this is obviously a Catholic school and the Catholic Church has more conservative viewpoints so then a lot of their thoughts aren't able to be expressed to the whole school."

Students whose views on abortion align more closely with the Catholic Church also find it difficult to express their opinion within the school community.

"I've always been more shy and quiet about my beliefs, but since joining [Alive for All Life] club it's been even harder. Making announcements at Mass or all-school events makes me uncomfortable because I know that people are judging me," senior **Kaitlyn Miller** said. "Even sometimes talking with my friends about it, I can just tell that they're judging me a little bit, and I get it. It's just frustrating sometimes because if we really are a school that's about healthy dialogue, I should be able to share my beliefs about abortion through my club and so should everyone else and we should listen to each other."

THE TRAINING

Thursday, Nov. 10, Sion conducted its first-ever "dialogue training" during activity period.

"Over the past several years we've just found that sometimes girls can talk about things together in a compassionate and understanding way, and other times it gets really heated," principal **Ellen Carmody** said. "And people say things they don't mean, or they say things in kind of an aggressive way. They don't mean to be hateful but it really hurts people."

In maisons, students first learned about compassionate learning as defined by the congregation of Notre Dame de Sion. They were also shown a video of faculty members having a debate over **Taylor Swift** and then a dialogue over the same subject in order to illustrate

the difference between the two conversations. Students were then asked to debate or dialogue through the "either/or" game using topics such as candy, the weather, festive holidays, social media, caffeinated drinks and movie franchises.

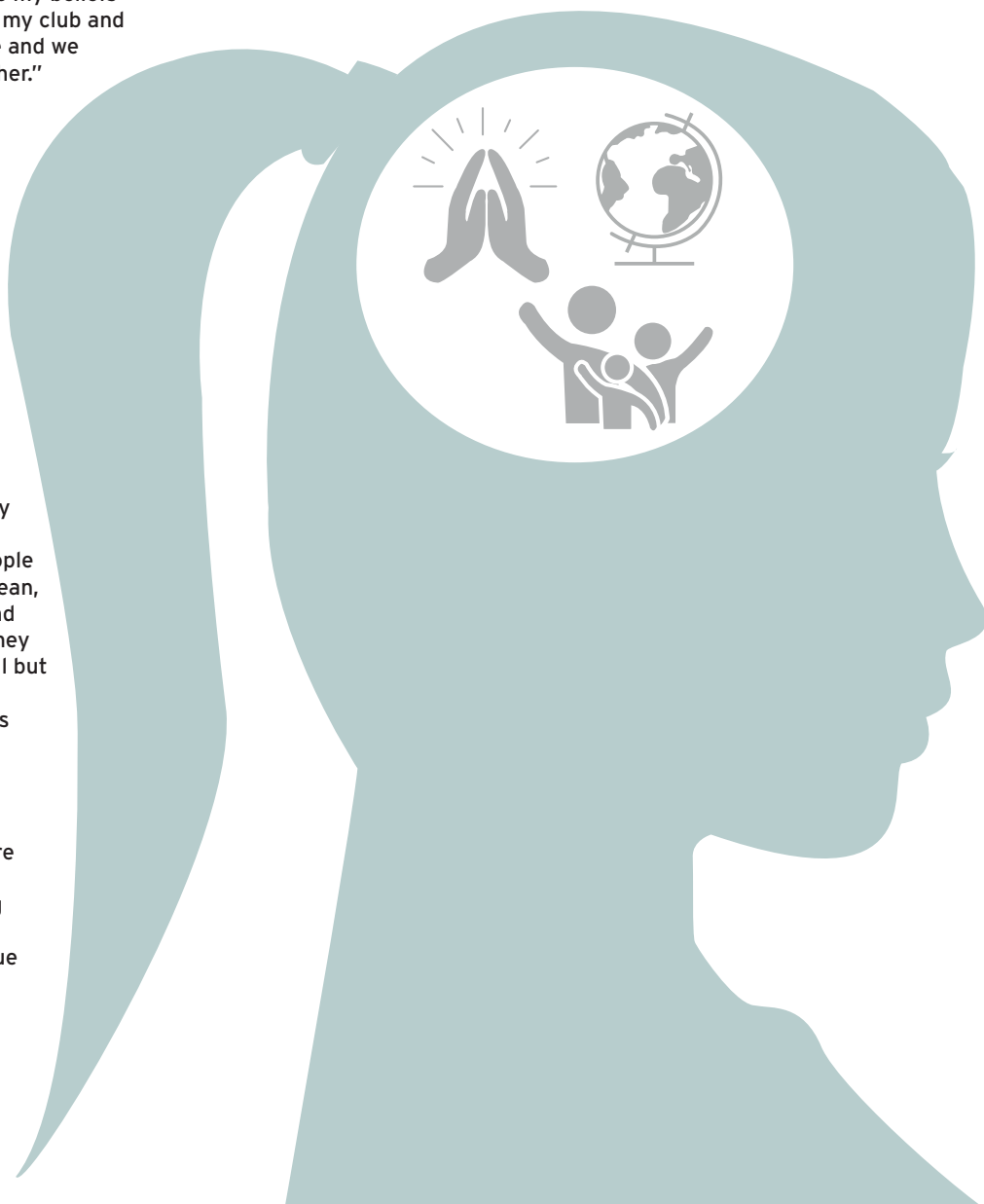
Many students believe the training pushed the wrong message about the purpose and manner of dialogue, as well as trivialized and oversimplified the necessity of debate.

"I think what they were describing was more of a passive conversation and an aggressive conversation," senior **Lauren Millard** said. "It didn't really have a middle ground, which is where most productive conversations tend to go."

While practice is an important step in having productive and respectful conversations, the training session portrayed debate as an overwhelmingly negative way to interact, and encouraged passive dialogue as the only way to have respectful conversations.

"The way that it was presented, it was like dialogue should be something where, whatever the other person says, you should not ever disagree with them and just listen to them completely and be super nice about it and smile," senior **Addie Hiestand** said. "And [it said] that debate is something that is super unhealthy, which is just not true whatsoever, and with the video [they showed], that's not what debate is."

An all-girls school is a unique atmosphere to help young women grow into critical thinkers who can stand strongly in their own opinions while keeping an open mind to others.



Teaching adolescent girls to have passive dialogue and avoid challenging others' ways of thinking reinforces what society historically pushes on women--to stay unassertive and resigned.

"This wouldn't be happening at Rockhurst. This wouldn't be happening if it weren't an all-girls school, and it clearly isn't intended to be this way, but it feels like they are trying to make us into pleasant people," senior **Caroline Dold** said. "Not good people, not people who stand up for themselves, not people who are moral and have good ideas of who they should be, but people who are pleasant and nice to look at and good for marketing. I have a serious problem with people trying to make me into a pleasant person because none of us owes it to the world to be pleasant. It's a lot rooted in sexism."

Moreover, using pop culture references for discussion doesn't open the space for more difficult topics. Often, people feel an emotional connection to political topics because they experience the effects of them firsthand. Things like racism, homophobia and sexism affect individual lives. It is significantly more challenging to talk about your personal beliefs, identities and experiences.

"It's much more of a complex issue than what they made it. They made it 'dialogue is good, debate is bad,'" Welch said. "Someone who calls someone a slur, you're not just supposed to sit there and say 'Oh, thank you for sharing your opinion' and move on."

Additionally, without a middle

ground exemplified, these conversations are simply the coexistence of two separate opinions, and the discussion is ended upon disagreement.

"There are healthy forms of debate. Debate is really important in some situations, especially political situations," Dold said. "Talking like debate is always attacking other people creates an idea that debate always has to be like that, which is unhealthy and makes it harder to create productive debates."

Learning to have respectful conversations with others while in high school is vital to being a productive human in the real world. Again, 85.3% of students say they can have respectful discussions with people they disagree with, but an adequate and effective space to practice that is a core necessity.

"I want my students to be curious, I want them to practice productive disagreement, I want them to respectfully debate matters of importance," English teacher **Emily Grover** said. "I want them to feel safe to stumble and walk back their words, and to see class conversations as places where opinions evolve and adapt—not as cage fights."

HOW TO SUCCESSFULLY LIVE IN THE GRAY

Sion's Portrait of a Graduate states that the school aims to produce students who are well-rounded individuals possessing the ability to think critically and communicate mindfully. In order for this to truly be achieved, it is crucial that Sion becomes an environment where all students can feel comfortable and capable of sharing their beliefs without fear of being censored by administration or ostracized by their peers.

As students, teachers and administrators we all bear the responsibility for creating such a culture.

Teachers and administrators, you bear the heavy responsibility of ensuring not only that we are equipped with skills we need to go out in the world and communicate with all types of people, but also to coexist within our own classrooms.

To do so requires fully acknowledging the complexity of the issues that our community faces and building lessons accordingly, rather than trivializing or pretending the issues do not exist.

Students, this requires showing more grace to one another. Over the four years spent in high school, exposure to more education and new ideas equips each of us to begin developing our own system of belief and creates the opportunity for us to leave Sion a completely different person than how we entered.

As we go through this process, providing an environment that allows room for growth, forgiveness of mistakes and understanding of differences will be important in making our school a community where all students feel safe to make their voices heard.





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PHOTO | DAVID FUENTES | FLICKR



PHOTO | HANNA FORD | FLICKR

POV

POC

Marvel's release of "Black Panther: Wakanda Forever" begs the question as to whether or not the company's diversification within films is purely performative.

BY ARLETH GUEVARA
EDITORIALS EDITOR

In the past decades, Marvel has employed predominantly white casts and crews for their productions. However, the release of the award-winning film "Black Panther" in 2018 marked Marvel's first attempt to change that narrative.

They didn't stop there; in 2021 they debuted the film series "Phase Four," which featured several female and POC leads. However, in the age of performative activism and marketing manipulations, this begs the question: is Marvel diversifying their cast for the right reasons?

"You do 'Black Panther,' you have a Black director, Black producer, you have a Black costume designer, you have a Black stunt choreographer," The Falcon actor **Anthony Mackie** said in an interview with *Variety*. "That's more racist than anything else. Because if you only can hire the Black people for the Black movie, are you saying they're not good enough when you have a mostly white cast?"

A study done by *Forbes* magazine in 2018 found that 61% of Marvel actors are white, 69% if you count only main leads.

The need for diverse casts and crews is crucial to our growing world today. We need superheroes on screen and behind the scenes that accurately portray our diverse society.

Future generations need to see themselves represented. They need role models that look like them being superheroes, bringing goodness to the world. What kind of message do we give to kids if POC are only ever the villains or simply side characters? What kind of expectations does that set for them? That their role in society is to be 'evil', simply because of their race? Or that they are second best simply because of their race?

"I grew up rarely seeing girls on-screen that looked like me or shared my culture," "Doctor Strange in the Multiverse of Madness" actor **Xochitl Gomez** said in an interview with *Teen Vogue*. "In the past, Latinas were often portrayed with negative stereotypes. It's great to see more diversity on-screen than what I had growing up."

A report from UCLA states that in the scope of just the last 11 years, the percentage of films with high cast diversity rose 17% after Marvel's increase in diverse casting.

Out of Marvel's 200 employees, only about 45% are members of minority groups. Even with this low diversity rate, Marvel is growing. Minorities now take lead roles and are highlighted in new Marvel movies and series. Some examples include "Ms. Marvel," "Eternals," "Black Panther," "Black Panther: Wakanda Forever" and many more.

Marvel is trying, and compared to the rest of the film industry, they are succeeding. Each new movie and show that has come out this year has featured greater representation of all minorities.

One example is the new "Black Panther" movie, which showcased not only Black women, but also celebrated diverse cultures and heritages by portraying both Latin-American and African cultures.

"With this character [Namor], this movie ['Wakanda Forever'] and the background of the character, you can help a lot of people reconcile themselves with their ancestors and their identity," "Black Panther: Wakanda Forever" actor **Tenoch Huerta** said in an interview with KTLA 5's **Sam Rubin**. "We have a big problem of racism. So, we deny our Indigenous or African roots. I hope this helps people, especially kids, to embrace their roots and embrace their identity and feel proud of it."

Marvel is doing a great job showing diversity, but they are far from perfect. Marvel needs to go beyond just showing movies with diverse actors.

The entirety of the crew, the directors and the screen writers need to be diverse in order to accurately portray minorities and have their struggles and achievements in the real world mirrored in movies. This will not only help new generations feel heard and understood, but it will bring awareness to others around the world, and in the long run bring an end to racism.

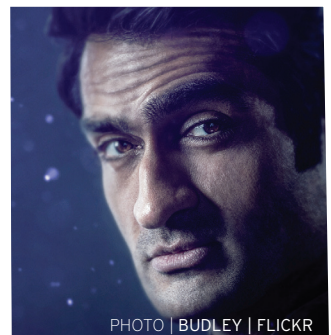


PHOTO | BUDLEY | FLICKR

PLACES, PROFESSIONS AND PERSPECTIVES

Polly Holmes has had a variety of jobs and lived in many countries and has learned from these experiences.

BY LAUREN SMITH
MANAGING EDITOR

It's another day in the fish factory, and below freezing outside. Wind gusts as she opens the door. Inside, she pulls on big yellow fishing waders - straight out of an episode of "Wicked Tuna" - as she begins working on the cod assembly line. An older man in front of her slices each fish as it comes down the shoot. She separates males from females and removes their livers. It's disgusting, and the smell still haunts her.

Before theology teacher **Polly Holmes** ended up at Sion, she worked a multitude of careers all over the world, taking experiences and valuable lessons from each profession into her next phase of life.

Holmes' began at Benedictine College in Atchison, Kansas where she studied business administration.

"It was the '70s and '80s, and I wasn't going to be a teacher. I refused to take Home-Ec or anything like that, so I'm like 'Okay I'll be a business woman,'" Holmes said.

She met her husband **Mark Holmes** in Atchison and got married just over a year later at the age of 19. At this time, Mark was playing professional basketball internationally.

"I grew up lower middle class and so I didn't get to travel at all. So then when I did get to travel it wasn't just trips. I got to live in places," Holmes said. "What a change to go to Argentina and when you first land there are sheep on the runway. That's a culture shock."

Their first move was to Resistencia, Argentina the same month they got married. She knew little Spanish, but taught English to a variety of ages as a job.

During their time there, the country was in turmoil as it transitioned from a dictatorship to a democracy.

"We were kind of thrown in," Mark said. "You'd go down the roads and there's a guy with a machine gun on every corner just to make sure that everything was staying peaceful."

The political climate led to widespread poverty, which struck Holmes' interest in social justice. Her friend, a missionary with five kids, lived in a home with a dirt floor. Holmes watched her kids when their mother left to give birth to her sixth child, but she returned after about two hours because the hospitals were overcrowded and understaffed.

Holmes returned to Atchison to continue school that semester, but followed her husband to Reykjavik, Iceland that winter. There, she worked in the fish factory that sponsored her husband's basketball team, and learned to tie knots and throw fish by their tails.

"Because you live on the coast of Iceland, everybody works in the fish factory. That's the only job there is. That or cook for tourists," Holmes said.

The following year, she graduated college and moved to Oslo, Norway where she continued her studies and was exposed to a new political and social climate. Norway has socialized healthcare, which she witnessed this first hand when she gave birth to her twin sons. She emphasized how the healthcare system "took care of their little ones."

"We're so lucky. Because they were premature, with socialized medicine everything was taken care of, we didn't have this huge medical bill," Holmes said.

She soon returned to Atchison with her newborn sons, while her husband finished up the basketball season. Once he returned, they moved to Kansas City in order to find what she called "real jobs."

"You want to be this big business woman. But then you also want to be a mom and it just took me a long time to reconcile the fact that you can do that, but just for me it couldn't be all at the same time," Holmes said. "So, I wanted to be the best mom I could be."

She stayed at home with her kids during the day, and at night she bartended at Johnny's Tavern. Her job gave her the opportunity to connect with others and learn how to manage people quickly on her feet. Once, she even worked up the courage to break up a fight.

"I thought that I could do it, two guys were fighting and I broke it up," Holmes said. "That was so stupid, I could have gotten my teeth knocked out, but I did it. You just learn."

While bartending, she regained interest in the Catholic Church. She took religious courses and obtained certification as a master catechist. She then became the director of religious education at Prince of Peace, where she ran the junior high and youth ministry programs.

She often took groups of up to 400 kids to do service projects at various locations outside of Kansas City. Groups volunteered at the Winnebago Indian Reservation in Nebraska, in New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina and at the border near El Paso, Texas.

"I got really involved in those trips and just saw the transformation that could happen to kids when they experienced new cultures," Holmes said.

And since moving to Sion, she has continued to lead several trips to the Winnebago Reservation.

"I have been most impressed and inspired by her work with the Winnebago tribe and the St. Augustine Indian Mission," theology teacher **Jessica Hull** said. "Hearing her stories and experiences makes me want to learn more about indigenous people, tribes and traditions."

Holmes was attracted to Sion's foundation of service learning, and is thankful for the exposure to a new perspective on Catholicism, and the exploration of different faiths - even if she admits she made more money back in her bartending days.

"I love allowing young people to ask questions about their faith and not feel bad about it because that's not the faith I grew up with," Holmes said. "It's not the faith that you grew up with the diocesan schools. I don't think they would like me to say that, but just to stop this binary thought of good and evil, and to find a new way of expanding your way of thinking about the larger world and the world beyond."



SERVICE IS SELF-CARE

Polly Holmes gives a speech at senior retreat on the importance of serving others. "I think service is important," Holmes said. "I think service is my self-care. Getting out of my own head, and doing something for somebody else." PHOTO | ZAHRA PARSONS



WOMEN IN WINNEBAGO

Polly Holmes and her sister pose for a photo with a member of the Winnebago Reservation in Nebraska during her most recent service trip with Sion in the summer of 2019. "It's a whole new world. Sovereign government, everything's their own, and they run it themselves," Holmes said. "And most of them do it well because they are so poor, but the Winnebago are an international model of economic development." PHOTO SUBMISSION | POLLY HOLMES



NORDIC NEWBORNS

Polly Holmes holds her newborn son while in a hospital in Norway wearing a traditional Nordic sweater. The girls basketball team her husband was coaching at the time knitted the twins sweaters, as well. "It's a lot with twins and not having anybody around you. But that also made me really strong," Holmes said. "And then they came early and we didn't know what to expect but it all turned out fine. I don't know if I was ever scared. I don't know if moms are ever scared." PHOTO SUBMISSION | POLLY HOLMES



FOSTER FANATIC

Athletic director Kate Pilgreen brought joy into her life in a creative new way: fostering puppies.

BY CLAIRE BOMA
COPY EDITOR

Tiny paws, fluffy ears and destroyed carpeting. For most dog owners the puppy stage comes and goes, but for athletic director **Kate Pilgreen**, it's a permanent part of her life.

"It came to me by my spouse," Pilgreen said. "Our end goal is to have land and to have a haven for senior dogs, but what we can do right now to help is foster puppies."

Pilgreen has always enjoyed being around dogs, so being able to dedicate her time to helping those in need is the perfect experience for her.

"I'm a dog person, I grew up with dogs, I love dogs," she said. "I had adopted Wilson, who is my second dog, and that was my first encounter with a shelter dog."

She has been fostering since 2017 and has helped 32 puppies since then. She does the work through **Midwest Animal ResQ**, a small foster-based animal rescue in Raytown, Missouri.

"The first time I ever did it, it was super hard, and super hard to let go of the puppy," she said. "But if you focus on the growth that you see, even if it's just two weeks, it's super rewarding."

The list of challenges that come with having puppies in the home are numerous and sometimes expensive, especially when the puppies come from traumatic situations.

"There's so much pee and poop, like so much," Pilgreen said. "And you have to be okay with a dirty house. We go through towels, potty pads. It is somewhat expensive if you spoil them."

Fostering is also a very emotional experience, as many shelter puppies come from bad or dangerous situations.

"The ones that come really badly off, it's heartbreaking," she said. "And it's a good thing because you can give them the safety to get better, but the ones that come from really bad situations are heartbreaking to see at first."

Another challenge of fostering is the time commitment the puppies need. Working a full time job, Pilgreen especially feels this difficulty.

"It's a super rewarding experience, but it's a very time consuming experience," she said. "It's hard when you are out of the house all day because puppies need to pee every two hours, so it's nice to have someone home or working from home to help out."

Despite the physical and emotional challenges that come with fostering, there are many amazing experiences too. Pilgreen especially enjoys the rewarding feeling of doing something good for the community.

"It's totally selfish on my part. You do a good deed, but you also get a puppy fix," Pilgreen said. "I felt this overwhelming sense of 'wow, I really feel like I did something good here to help,' and so I got greedy from the feeling and did it over and over again."



LARGER THAN LIFE

Clio, named after the greek muse, lived up to her godly name. Despite her small size she wanted nothing more than to play with the big dogs.

PHOTO | KATE PILGREEN



CUDDLE BUG

Daphnie, the runt of her litter, loved to cuddle. Pilgreen nicknamed her "Daphnie with the socks" because of the white markings on her paws.

PHOTO | KATE PILGREEN

PUPPY MONEY

When getting a dog there are many options you can rescue from a shelter, adopt from a breeder or buy from a pet store

BY A&E EDITOR ELLA ALEXANDER

The shrill screech of a puppies barking mixes with the foul stench of feces. Cramped cages, stacked from the ground up to the ceiling, house puppies. There is a piercing cold wind that blows through the barn, the puppies unable to do anything but shiver. Most are sick and require immediate medical care, however they won't receive any. This is what happens behind closed doors. This is a puppy mill.

Puppy mills are inhumane, high-volume, high production establishments that breed puppies for sale. Their goal is not to benefit the dogs in their care, but to make a profit. They cut corners and often deprive dogs of veterinarian care, human contact and proper exercise and diet.

"Those puppies in the pet shop window commonly begin life in massive breeding mills," PETA Senior Vice President of Cruelty Investigations Daphna Nachminovitch said. "They're taken from their mothers prematurely, exposed to diseases and shipped off to make a quick buck."

Puppy mills routinely inbreed and over-breed dogs in order to make a profit, resulting in genetic mutations. This is called selective breeding. Selective breeding is when dog breeders try to breed out the "ugly" traits of dogs and make them more appealing to consumers. Mills work to meet the demand for trending dog breeds, like hypoallergenic, purebreds and teacup puppies, regardless of the health implications, and they will go to great lengths to sustain that supply.

Female breeding dogs are forced to breed over and over again until their bodies give out and they are no longer able to have puppies, at which point they are shipped to kill shelters or auctioned off. According to the Humane Society of the United States (HSUS), female dogs give birth to an average of 9.4 puppies. But because of the poor health conditions, most mothers don't produce enough milk, hence why many puppies die days after being born.

Over 2.6 million puppies are sold each year by puppy mills. Some are either sold to customers directly or to a pet shop. Many people walk into a store, look at the sad puppy in the window and want to "rescue" it. Don't: when people buy a puppy from a pet store

it shows the store that consumers are interested in buying from them, leading to the store placing another order to replace the puppy bought. Unintentionally when buying puppies from pet stores, it keeps puppy mills in business.

An alternative for this would be to buy from an ethical breeder. The difference between an ethical breeder and a puppy mill is puppy mills care only about a profit, while an ethical breeder cares about their dogs. It is imperative that you know whether the breeder you're buying from is ethical.

Unethical breeders may mix certain breeds, and participate in selective breeding or breed too frequently, harming the dogs. Similarly to puppy mills unethical breeders will submit their dogs to inhumane living conditions in order to make more of a profit.

If you choose to buy from a breeder, you should do ample research on the breeder from which you buy. This should include researching buyer testimonies and visiting the site that you are planning to buy from to observe the conditions yourself. Insufficient research causes people to support unethical breeders and keeps these individuals in business and harming the animals.

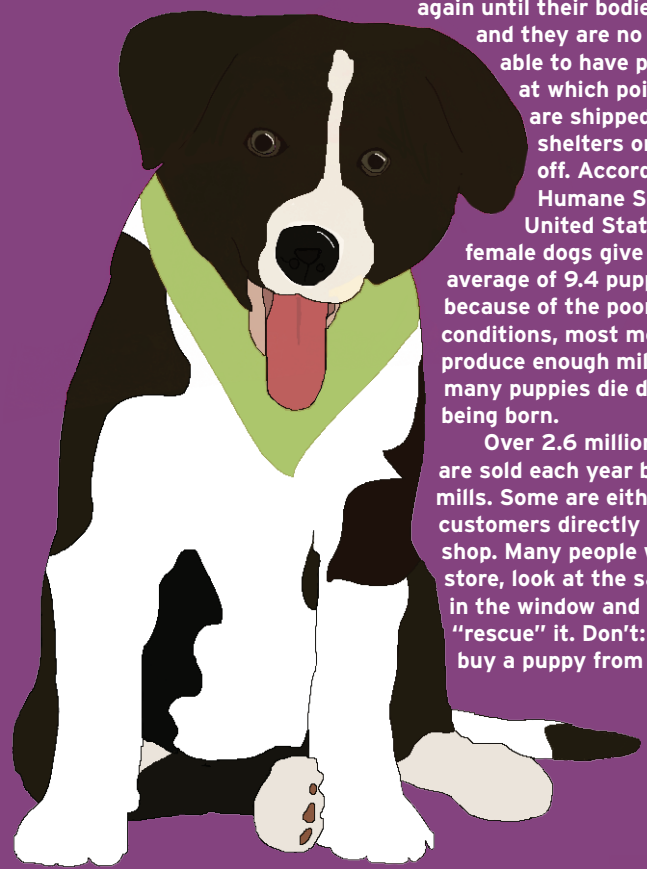
Although I believe that the act of breeding dogs is not inherently immoral, it is wrong to breed dogs when the shelters are overpopulated. According to the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, 3.1 million dogs are brought into shelters each year, but only approximately 2 million are adopted. This leads to shelters having more dogs in their care than they are equipped to house.

When shelters become overcrowded they rely on euthanization to control the population. According to the HSUS over 1.5 million cats and dogs are euthanized each year in the United States.

Dog breeders can not justify bringing more dogs into this world when there are mass killings in the animal shelters due to overcrowding. Dog breeding only leads to more overpopulation, and it becomes a cycle. Everytime a breeder brings another puppy into this world, a different dog waiting in an animal shelter loses its chance at finding a home.

Fostering dogs is a great way to benefit the shelters and help reduce overcrowding. This could be helpful if you are wanting to adopt a dog but you aren't sure if shelter dogs are the right fit for your home. Fostering dogs gives great experience to get a taste to see what it would be like to adopt.

When it comes to buying a dog, it is most beneficial and ethical to adopt from a shelter. Unfortunately, some shelter dogs come with behavioral issues and may not be the best choice for the customer. In this case, buying from a breeder can be more suitable, however, do your research and be informed on whom you are buying from. And most importantly never buy from a pet store or a puppy mill.



FAITHFUL FEST

Sion, although a Catholic school, honors many different faith traditions within the student body. Sophomore **Camryn Markey** and junior **Aleena Khan** share how their families celebrate religious holidays.

BY ELLA ALEXANDER
A&E EDITOR

For some people December is filled with Christmas trees bursting with ornaments, Santa Clause, sleigh bells and stockings hung alongside the fireplace. For others, it's gathering around the Menorah at night lighting each candle until the eighth day. For still others, it's just another winter day.

Sophomore Camryn Markey is Jewish, so this year, from Dec. 18-26, her and her family will gather together to celebrate Hanukkah.

"My favorite memory from Hanukkah as a child is lighting the candles with my parents and then getting a gift each night," Markey said. "It was a tradition my family has done since I could remember."

Hanukkah takes place over a period of eight days. Every night, Jewish families gather around the Menorah and light the shamash (servant) candle. They light each candle consecutively. The first candle will be lit on the first night, the first and second candle on the second night and so on.

"The Menorahs we light are special to our family in a way," Markey said. "The Menorah we still use to this day, my great-

grandma gave to us when I was born."

In addition to lighting the Menorah, there are other traditions that are unique to Hanukkah, such as the dreidel game. To play, there is a pot of tokens, and a player spins the dreidel, which falls on one of four Hebrew letters to dictate how much of the pot the player receives.

"My brother and I would play dreidel when we were younger. We would always play it with M&M's as the 'pot,'" Markey said. "My brother and I loved playing it, mostly because we got to eat M&M's."

While Hanukkah and Christmas fall around the same time, they hold very different religious meanings. Christmas marks the birth of Jesus Christ in Christianity, while Hanukkah commemorates the rededication of the Second Temple in Jerusalem.

"I know a lot of people assume Hanukkah is just like Christmas because they take place at similar times but they are not anything alike," Markey said. "The meanings are not the same and the traditions don't feel anything like Christmas because we don't put out cookies or anything like that."

HOW TO PLAY DREIDEL



WHAT YOU NEED

2+ Players
Token (coins/candy)

HOW TO PLAY

1. Divide the tokens evenly among the players
2. To start the game each player puts an anti (one token) into the pot
3. Each person spins the dreidel and depending on what it lands on, completes an action



NUN: The player does nothing



GIMMEL: The player takes the entire pot



HEY: The player takes half of the pot *if there is an odd number round up



SHIN: The players put a token in the pot

4. After each player has spun, everyone puts one token into the pot and the game continues

5. If the pot is ever empty each player puts in one token and the game continues

6. The game ends once one player has all of the tokens

VITIES

Other religions, like Islam, don't have holidays during Christmas time. Junior Aleena Khan is a Muslim, so for her there are no religious holidays during the school's Christmas break.

"Christmas is spent just like any other break," said Khan. "I don't celebrate Christmas in any way but I still enjoy things like holiday movies and other winter things."

Muslims have many other holidays, like Eid al-Fitr and Eid al-Adha. Eid al-Fitr is a celebration at the end of Ramadan, the month of fasting. Eid al-Adha celebrates a story from the Quran about the Prophet Ibrahim's willingness to sacrifice Ismail as an act of obedience to God.

"I would say Eid al-Fitr is my favorite Eid because it's a lot bigger and more festive," Khan said. "One of my favorite parts is before the morning Eid prayer my mom always makes the dessert called seviyan and we have it that day and it's always fun."

Seviyan is a pudding made of fried wheat vermicelli simmered in milk that is eaten at every Eid. Eid al-Fitr begins at sunrise, when Muslims break their fast after Ramadan, and the rest of the day is spent with their community, praying and celebrating.

"Usually after prayers, when it's so early in the morning, my whole family would fall asleep," Khan said. "But I would never fall asleep and neither would one of my older sisters so we would just watch Vampire Diaries. We just watched it until everyone woke up and it was about half a season every time."

Similar to Judaism, Islamic holidays don't follow the Gregorian calendar. Instead, they follow the Hijri calendar. The Hijri calendar is a lunar calendar, meaning the start of each month is based on the cycles of the moon. Similarly to the Gregorian calendar, the Hijri calendar also has 12 months. Because of the different calendar, Muslims don't get days off to celebrate the holidays, unlike how the western world stops for Christmas.

"I usually take the day off for Eid anyway, which sucks to miss school," said Khan. "But you know, during Ramadan it's pretty tough because I'm not eating all day but then I'm still doing all this stuff. I just try to treat it like a normal day but it's kinda hard."

Although Sion is a Catholic school, it is very diverse in faith. The annual Interfaith prayer service took place Thursday, Nov. 17, where six students from three separate faith traditions, Islam, Christianity and Judaism, spoke about their experiences. The theme of the service encouraged students to reflect on religious doubts or struggles, and afterwards students decorated wooden hearts to express gratitude towards those who helped them during their struggles.

"I think Sion definitely does a good job of being accepting of all faiths," Markey said. "They have the interfaith prayer service and compared to a lot of other Catholic schools I was looking at, this school in particular does a good job of including everyone and allowing me to share my faith with others."



HANUKKAH HIGHLIGHTS

Moments before lighting the Menorah during Hanukkah in 2014, sophomore Camryn Markey and her brother Dylan Markey sit together so their mom could capture their photo. "This was a fun memory because we got to open our present that our parents put in the baskets behind us," Markey said.

PHOTO SUBMISSION | CAMRYN MARKEY



EID MUBARAK

After praying on Eid al-Fitr, junior Aleena Khan gathers with her family May 23, 2020. "This year was during COVID so there weren't any parties and we couldn't do much that day," Khan said. "But it was fun to have it with just us at our house."

PHOTO SUBMISSION | ALEENA KHAN

TICKETDISASTER

Ticketmaster has a multitude of issues that make buying concert tickets nearly impossible.

BY ELLE SIMON
WEB EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Over 2,000 people are in front of you. 1,206 people. 876 people. 538 people. 124 people. 20 people. 5 people. The seat map finally appears after three hours of waiting in the general public sale queue. And the tickets are all over \$1,000. Never mind.

Ticketmaster is the largest ticket broker, and millions of people use the platform to buy tickets to see their favorite artist or band live. It would be expected that the platform would be correctly coded and ready to provide users with an easy ticket-buying experience. However, Ticketmaster has many challenges that make buying coveted concert tickets nearly impossible.

The biggest challenge with buying tickets on Ticketmaster is pricing. There are four key elements that contribute to the pricing predicament. The first element is that ticket prices have nearly tripled since the mid-'90s; this is largely due to inflation and the use of more elaborate costumes and technology in recent years.

Element number two is that around 90% of tickets are reserved by Ticketmaster for the secondary market. Credit card companies, artist fans clubs, radio stations and other businesses buy out tickets to sell for profit or enter in giveaways.

According to a 2022 article by Variety's **Jem Aswad**, "professional brokers [charge] outlandish markups, which a 2018 government report said can range from an average of nearly 50% to an astonishing 7,000%."

Beyond the markups that are caused by the secondary market, Ticketmaster has additional charges that cause ticket prices to be as much as 78% higher than face value. These can include venue fees, access fees, paperless transmission fees and more. The money made from these fees goes to venues, promoters, Ticketmaster and sometimes the artist.

Dynamic pricing is another factor that contributes to high ticket prices. Dynamic pricing originates with Ticketmaster's parent company, Live Nation, and causes ticket prices to increase as demand for tickets increases. Live Nation claims that the artist enforces dynamic pricing, which would give them an increase in revenue from ticket sales.

Rock singer **Bruce Springsteen** is the most recent artist to come under fire for using dynamic pricing when tickets were more than \$5,000 a piece. Springsteen defended his use of dynamic pricing saying, "The ticket broker or someone is going to be taking that money. I'm going, 'Hey, why shouldn't that money go to the guys that are going to be up there sweating three hours a night for it?'"

Ticketmaster's system does not offer the ability for maximum planning prior to buying tickets. Users cannot see the stage map or ticket prices before a presale has occurred or tickets go on sale to the general public. The inability to see prices puts buyers at a disadvantage, as they are not able to plan how much they are willing to spend and where they would like to sit prior to entering the queue. The lack of planning slows down the ticket purchasing process as buyers spend more time figuring out where they can and want to sit, causing the queue to stay backed up.

While competing against other buyers to secure tickets, users also have to compete against robots. You heard me right, robots. Ticket bots are automated programs that scour the internet performing ticket-related tasks such as buying tickets or scraping pricing deals. Prior to tickets going on sale, ticket bots will create accounts or take over existing accounts. Then, once tickets are on sale, the bots will exceed purchasing limits and sometimes commit credit card fraud.

In January 2021, the Federal Trade Commissioner fined three New Yorkers using ticket robots for \$3.7 million. According to a 2021 article by PCMag's **Michael Kahn**, the three men "collectively made \$26.1 million in revenue from the ticket scalping, which started in 2017."

To help combat the robots, Ticketmaster invented Smart Queue. Smart Queue calculates demand and puts it into a separate virtual queue that separates fans and robots. Ticketmaster claims that since its inception, Smart Queue has been "blocking over 13 billion bots on over 17K events and counting."

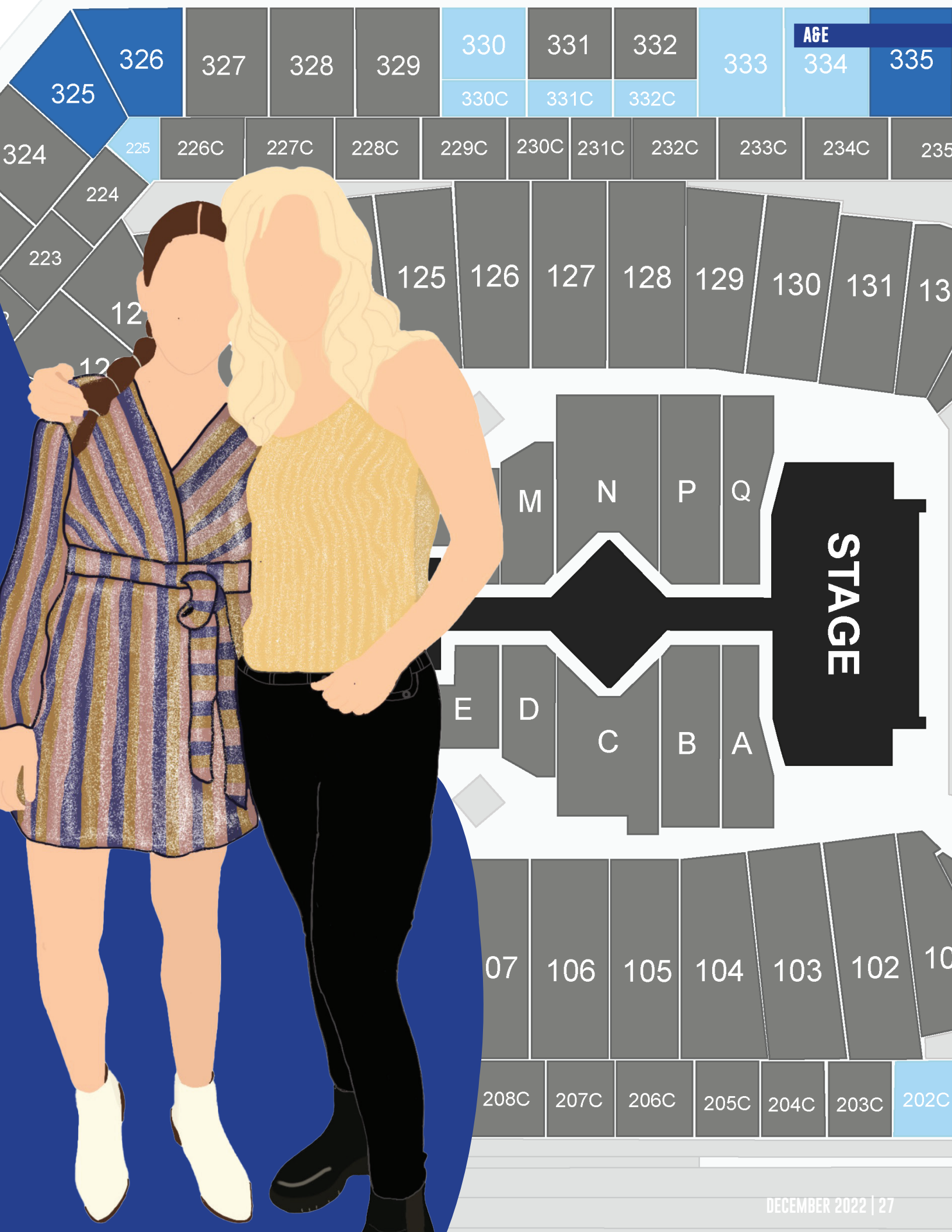
Smart Queue works by having fans enter the waiting room about 14 minutes before the sale starts and signing in to their account. When the sale starts, fans are assigned a numbered spot in the queue and as they enter the event page, they can see the interactive seat map.

Presales are a way for dedicated fans, or "verified fans" to have earlier access and a better chance at getting tickets. Ticketmaster's verified fan program works to give fans the chance to purchase tickets at prices set by artists, event managers or teams. But even before a verified fan presale, sometimes artists will collaborate with credit card companies or other corporations to hold exclusive presales for card holders and members.

As someone who has benefited from **Harry Styles**'s collaboration with American Express, I'm biased towards credit card presales, but I can see why it presents an unfair advantage. Credit card presales give people who may not be big fans of an artist the opportunity to buy tickets before huge fans. Those who use credit card presales can get the best seats in the house without the hefty price tag, a benefit that many dedicated fans do not get.

There have been various ways artists have tried to combat the unfair opportunities that come with presales, however the system still isn't fair. For her Reputation stadium tour, **Taylor Swift** used a game that allowed fans to boost their chances of getting tickets through gaining points by buying merchandise or music products, watching music videos or signing up for the email list.

Although it might seem like getting tickets to your favorite artist is impossible, there are still things you can do to ease your ticket-buying journey. When using their platform, Ticketmaster suggests the following: signing into your account 10 minutes prior to joining the waiting room, confirming a valid form of payment and turning up the volume on your device to hear when you've entered the queue. Despite these tips, high pricing and the insufficient ability to plan still makes buying tickets on Ticketmaster more difficult than it should be.



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2022 YEAR IN REVIEW

Le Journal takes a look back on some major events of 2022.

LAUREN SMITH
MANAGING EDITOR

JANUARY



Jan. 3, America records one million new COVID-19 cases for the first time, Omicron accounting for an estimated 95% of these.

FEBRUARY



Russian leader **Vladimir Putin** launches a full-scale invasion of Ukraine by land, air and sea Feb. 24 with bombings in multiple cities.

MARCH



Will Smith slaps host **Chris Rock** on stage during the 94th Academy Awards March 27 after Rock makes a joke comparing his wife **Jada Smith** to "G.I. Jane."

PHOTO | FLICKR, BUDIEY

APRIL

Ketanji Brown Jackson becomes the first black woman to be confirmed by the U.S. Senate to the Supreme Court in a 53-47 vote Apr. 7.

PHOTO | FLICKR, MIKI JOURDAN



MAY



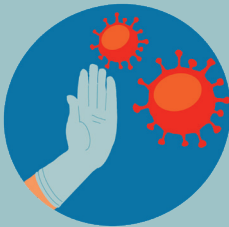
U.S. government says WNBA player **Brittney Griner** has been "wrongfully detained" in Russia May 3, after being taken into custody when 0.702 grams of hashish (cannabis) oil were found in her luggage in Feb. 2022.

JUNE

U.S. Supreme Court overturns **Roe V Wade** June 24, eliminating constitutional right to choose abortion, in a 6-3 vote, and leaving the issue up to each state.



JULY



The World Health Organization declares monkeypox a public health emergency of international concern with 16,000 cases in 75 countries.

AUGUST

Tennis superstar **Serena Williams** announces her intention to retire after the conclusion of the U.S. Open in an interview with "Vogue" Aug. 9.



SEPTEMBER



Queen Elizabeth II dies Sept. 8 at the age of 96 becoming the longest reigning monarch of the United Kingdom and the Commonwealth, serving for 70 years.

PHOTO | WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

OCTOBER

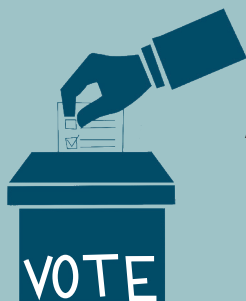
Elon Musk takes over as owner of Twitter Oct. 27. After months of lawsuits he closes the \$44 billion deal and implements numerous immediate changes.

PHOTO | FLICKR, THOMAS HAWK



NOVEMBER

Americans head to the polls to vote Nov. 8 for the midterm elections. Voting results in Republicans winning the House of Representatives and Democrats keeping narrow control of the Senate.



DECEMBER

The U.S. Mens National Soccer Team advances past the group stage of the 2022 World Cup in Qatar, but falls to the Netherlands in the round of 16.

