

Energy drink pandemic escalates

By Kennedy Krueger



According to the website *Epic Research*, the number of caffeine-related ER visits for high school-aged children nearly doubled in the past few years, rising from 7.5 per 100,000 visits in 2017 to 13.7 per 100,000 visits in 2023. Energy drinks have become a problem in society, especially with middle and high school students. These drinks are harming the body not only as immediate effects but as health problems that can last a lifetime. Teens are not concerned now what future health problems could stem from excessive consumption of energy drinks, but they should be. Students should be more mindful of what they are drinking in the morning and how much of it they are drinking. Many think the alarming amount of caffeine in these drinks

is the problem, but in reality, that is only a fraction of the danger. The ingredients in energy drinks are harmful to the body and can create problems most do not realize. According to the website *Mayo Clinic*, the FDA classifies energy drinks as dietary supplements and does not approve them before they are marketed, and that means they are not subjected to the same rigorous review process as prescription medications. The caffeine serving in an Alani Nu is double what a teen should be consuming in a day, so it becomes an issue especially when they are drinking more than one. According to the website *Harvard Health*, the FDA considers up to 400 milligrams per day safe for most healthy adults, but teens should limit intake to 100 milligrams or less per day. When energy drinks like Red Bull, Celsius, Alani Nu, and Monster contain hundreds of milligrams of caffeine in a single can, it makes it easy for teens to overload their bodies with caffeine. Side effects of drinking too much caffeine are a fast heart rate, trouble sleeping, anxiety, and restlessness. Over time, consistent caffeine use can cause withdrawals when someone does not have their daily energy drink. The amount of added sugar in a single energy drink alone can exceed the daily recommended amount. This excessive sugar can

lead to a crash shortly after the initial boost of energy, defeating the purpose of the energy drink. Eventually, this build up of sugar can lead to acne, obesity, diabetes, tooth decay, and heart disease. The ingredients in these drinks can cause heart attacks and strokes after long time use. The issue with energy drinks is teens do not realize how much they are putting into their bodies. The main problem with these drinks is not only the fact people are drinking them, but how much they are drinking in a day. In the morning, they might get a fun coffee or energy drink to start the day. By the afternoon, they are feeling a little tired and need something to wake them up, so they might have another energy drink or head to the coffee shop. In the evening, they might want a pop to drink. By the end of the day, they have already consumed a crazy amount of caffeine, added sugar, acid, and artificial sweeteners. Some healthy individuals may argue they are able to drink energy drinks occasionally and not experience any symptoms, and they enjoy a short term energy boost with no issues. This is a valid take as long as they are not exceeding the caffeine intake guideline. Another pro of energy drinks is their convenience. They are easily available almost

everywhere people go, and they save time by not having to prepare a drink. However, energy drinks only benefit someone for a short time before they become dependent on them. Energy drink companies like to advertise their drinks as healthy, but they fail to include the unhealthy amount of sugars, sweeteners, and caffeine. In the end, the risks outweigh the benefits. There is a better solution to get caffeine without overloading it. The solution to stop this crisis, even though no one wants to hear it, is to prioritize sleep. Getting the recommended amount of sleep may be difficult for some people, but sleep is not the only solution. There are better alternatives to energy drinks, including drinks like Bubblr. These sparkling waters are low calorie and have zero sugar. They also use natural caffeine and no artificial sweeteners. Bubblrs only include 69 milligrams of caffeine, which is equivalent to a cup of coffee. Coffee, green tea, and matcha are also safe ways to boost your energy in the morning without excessive sugar and caffeine. While these options are more beneficial to the body, this does not mean they should be a daily drink. The key to caffeine is moderation. Change your ways to stay out of the emergency room and transform the statistics. Your body will thank you later.

Hallway etiquette: a forgotten art

By Rock Bottom Staff

The passing period can be the most chaotic four minutes of a person's life. The hallways become a warzone as bustling students race in hundreds of different directions. People duck under arms, dodge flailing bookbags, and wait behind giant clumps of loitering guys, all to make it to their class one minute late and with a missing binder. Although walking in a straight path toward a classroom should be an easy task, it seems many students have forgotten the basic rules of hallway etiquette. Our school has a set of unspoken rules when it comes to walking in the hallways. These rules are simple: stay on the right side, do not crowd in one place along the hall, and keep a fairly brisk pace. While never explicitly taught to us when we came to Scotus, these guidelines are the expectation when it comes to hallway travel. Lately, our hallways have been facing a rebellion as people refuse to follow these simple rules. Scotus students

need to be reminded of the basic manners that come with walking through the halls. One of the most pressing issues with our current hallway situation is the students who choose to not walk on the right side. There are countless times in a week when people are involved in head-on collisions with others striding at full-speed down the left side of the walkway. The hallway works similarly to a road, and travelling in the wrong lane creates a hazard for both the person in the correct lane and incorrect lane. If everyone stays to the right side, we can breeze through the halls without having to worry about protecting ourselves. A problem that has become increasingly worse this year compared to previous is the hallway blocking from water fountain meetings. Between every period, at least a dozen boys convene at the water fountains to debrief the happenings in their day. While gathering to catch up with friends is not abnormal,

this particular location creates a tremendous inconvenience for the rest of us trying to get to our next class. The obstacle formed by the boys blocks off almost the entire hall, making it difficult for more than one person to squeeze past their group at a time. The worst part about this problem is that, most of the time, no one standing there is even filling up their water bottles, but their presence makes it impossible for other students to fill theirs. Although many teachers have told the boys to find a new spot, these students continue to crowd the area. The issue that poses the greatest concern within our hallways are slow walkers. People who stroll leisurely through the halls are disruptive to the steady flow of foot traffic. They walk with no sense of urgency, holding up the people behind them who have places to be. Getting stuck behind these people is highly inconvenient to others who are in a rush to get to class. The line of students that forms

behind one slow walker creates a long, slow train of annoyed students. There are, of course, exceptions to the hallway code of conduct. Injured students need to be given grace. There has recently been a large number of students in our school wearing boots or walking on crutches. These people cannot control their slowed pace or the amount of space they may take up. It is important for us all to be considerate of these facts when walking alongside these students. However, unless you have a genuine reason to be blocking the way or trudging slowly, you should try to follow these guidelines as closely as possible. The people of Scotus need to make a change. Whether it's moving a conversation to their locker or putting a little extra pep in their steps, these simple adjustments would make the hallways a better, less chaotic place.



Lydia Dostal / Rock Bottom Staff

Tall girls: one size does not fit all

By Kate Hendricks



Do you play basketball? How tall are your parents? Have you always been tall? How tall are your siblings? These are common questions I get asked wherever I go. I have always been tall, even throughout elementary school. My height is something that can't be controlled, either. According to *VerywellHealth.com*, the average height of a woman is 5'3". Women

who are over 5'8" make up 2% of the female population. Being tall as a girl comes with many advantages and disadvantages. Long legs and size 11 shoes are some of the aspects that come along with being tall. One of the main problems I have faced is finding pants that are long enough for me. I've heard many people say they need to get their pants fixed because they are too long on them. Nope, I have never had that problem before. Sure, this may not be a problem for boys, but to be a tall girl in this generation is rare. Most of the pants I find at every store are way too short and look weird on me. Most of the time, when I like pants I find, I have to go on their website and order the tall version if they have it. Some clothing stores and websites do not even have tall pants available. Another problem I have with being tall is dress shopping. Every year when homecoming rolls around, I dread dress shopping. This should be a fun activity but instead feels like

a chore. Even normal dresses are short on tall girls. Not only do I hate trying on every dress in the whole store, but I also hate how it is impossible to find a shorter dress that is long enough for tall girls. Learning to find clothes that fit me right is a daily problem. I have always faced having my knees jammed and having no leg room whatsoever. Planes, cars, and you name it, tall girls' legs are getting squished. Short people never have this problem and basically live in first class at all times. Being tall is great, until you have to cram your legs into a tight school desk. Being tall does come with advantages. Being tall is great if you find a way to cultivate a positive mindset by reframing how tall girls' height is seen. If you're a girl who is tall, you have to accept that you will probably be a post in basketball and a middle in volleyball. Not only is being tall good for sports, but it is also always a plus to have

the best view at concerts and events. It is nice to be able to reach the top shelf wherever you go. You also should accept that with every group picture you are in, you will be in the back. With being tall, on the brightside, your shoe size is normally always available. These past couple of years, I have learned to embrace being tall and have a more positive outlook. Being a tall girl now positively affects my life more than not, and I hope others who are in the same situation as me learn to fully accept their height with confidence. Some people wish they could be as tall as me, so if you are a tall girl, people do wish that they were taller, so learn to embrace it because everyone else is jealous of how tall we are. Hopefully soon, brands and companies will embrace it too and to make their pants and dresses a little longer and give more options with sizing.