Everyday Should Be Earth Day

By Aubrey Monaco

Although Earth Day celebrations looked different this year due to the Covid-19 pandemic, it is important (now more than ever) to do all we can to celebrate and protect our environment.

Earth Day, which falls on April 22 every year, is usually celebrated with simple things such as being sure to recycle. However, it is vital, especially now, to take things a step further and not only celebrate Earth Day, but implement eco-friendly changes into everyday life.

According to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the 2010s was the hottest decade on record, and temperatures are continuing to rise. Without real change from people around the world, climate change will bring about more natural disasters, including hurricanes and wildfires. It will displace the people and animals who live in areas susceptible to flooding, heatwaves, and more. Climate change will ultimately make the planet uninhabitable.

For Earth Day this year, the most vital thing to do may be to educate oneself and others about the serious and real issues that our planet is facing. By knowing more information about climate change and the balance that nature requires, it is easier to start making simple changes. If we know the significance of our environment, we will then be able to see the cost of losing it. It is also important to learn about things that are harmful to the environment, such as fossil fuels and the ways they are obtained, as well as excessive waste. The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) says nonrenewable resources release harmful chemicals into the environment which contribute to the warming of the atmosphere, and excessive waste can reach oceans and harm marine life.

An interesting way to learn new things about the planet could be to watch nature documentaries, like Our Planet on Netflix, which provide insight into all the different ecosystems on the earth in a fun and intriguing way. Reading books like Jane Goodall’s In the Shadow of Man can also provide a great look into the relationship between humans and nature.

A further step could then be to start implementing this new knowledge into everyday life. By informing others and beginning to treat the planet properly, real change can begin to take place.

Changes can be big or small, but they count no matter what. Some little modifications could be to turn off the sink when brushing one’s teeth or simply taking shorter showers. This can help reduce water use and water scarcity, which is incredibly important because water is not available to everyone.

Going paperless can help to reduce the amount of paper used, which then helps to halt deforestation. Deforestation is the act of clearing large amounts of trees for agricultural or industrial use. Trees have been called the lungs of the Earth because they provide the oxygen we breathe. It is vital that we work to protect trees all over the world.

Planting a tree or creating a garden is a great way to help produce cleaner air and grow sustainable food. Knowing where our food comes from and buying organic, local items, if they are available and affordable, is also a great way to help the planet.

Another alteration could be to walk or bike more and drive less. By cutting down on driving, transportation pollution—which according to the EPA is the leading source of pollution in the world—will be reduced. This issue can also be minimized by taking public transportation, as doing so lessens the number of people driving, or even by investing in zero-emission vehicles.

Turning lights and electronics off when one leaves a room is also a small way to conserve energy. On a larger scale, investing in solar panels is another way to save and use renewable energy, rather than using energy that is harmful to the environment, such as oil and coal.

There are so many changes that people can make in their daily lives. While doing these things on Earth Day is great, it is important, especially now, to try to factor these improvements into everyday life.

Mercy Girls Can Crush Cancer!

By Jenna and Paige Angle

This year Mount Mercy Academy introduced new clubs, including the “Crushing Cancer Club.” This club was founded by Ms. Bakkila, one of the school counselors. The co-presidents are Jenna and Paige Angle, the secretary is Kayla Pietrzkiewicz, and the treasurer is Aubrey Monaco.

In an interview, Ms. Bakkila stated, “I created this club because in my position I learned that we have several students who are affected by cancer. We require a space where students can go for support.” Being affected by cancer in any way is emotionally impactful. Everyone should have a place to go where others can support and guide them.

The club meets about once every month and students come up with activities that raise awareness and offer support to those affected by the disease.

“This is just the starting point for the club. We hope to do bigger ideas like a walk-a-thon,” said Ms. Bakkila excitedly. The students came up with many big ideas that they hope to accomplish as the club grows. Some of the ideas include a walk-a-thon, creating t-shirts, and honoring a family member who is dealing with, or who has dealt with, cancer.

“The overall goal is to have students come together to support one another and give back to those in the Mercy community who are affected by the disease,” added Ms. Bakkila. The club hopes to reach out to more families and students in the future.

At the second club meeting, the group made posters virtually and physically to promote the group more. The students decorated the posters and came up with slogans and facts about the club. Some of the posters included facts about different types of cancers to provide information for those who do not know much about the disease. Next year, the club hopes to have more members and do more activities.

When asked about how Covid-19 affected the club, Ms. Bakkila responded, "Covid impacted the club in a small way because we now have to gather in a small group." Covid-19 protocols prevented the club from hosting certain activities like a walk-a-thon and anything that would work best in large groups. However, this year has been just the beginning and with more time and growth, Crushing Cancer Club is sure to achieve its vision.
**Sister Jenny**  
Spotlight by Joyce Hibbs

Sister Jenny is a theology teacher at Mercy, and she is also the school’s Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion coordinator. She sees this role as a way to help all people feel welcome at Mount Mercy. Part of her job as DEI coordinator is to provide Mount Mercy staff and students with opportunities and experiences that will help everyone at Mercy further understand the importance of being inclusive and welcoming to everyone, regardless of their background. There is also a DEI student leadership team that works with Sister Jenny to help with ideas and activities at Mount Mercy. The idea is that this helps create an inclusive environment for everyone at our school.

Aside from being a teacher and DEI coordinator, Sister Jenny is also a Sister of Mercy. One of Sister Jenny’s goals is to share her life as a Sister of Mercy with her students. “There used to be many Sisters of Mercy teaching in our schools, but today there are fewer,” she said. One of the many challenges she faces is “being considered one of the younger sisters and knowing that there will be less people joining the Sisters of Mercy.”

She loves teaching her students about the critical concerns of the Sisters of Mercy, advocating for social justice, working with students on service projects, and providing opportunities to make changes in the Buffalo community. After college Sister Jenny joined Mercy Volunteer Corps, an organization that promotes volunteering full-time after college. She volunteered for a year at a homeless shelter in Philadelphia, which is where she met the Sisters of Mercy. A few years after this first volunteer experience, she again signed up and went to volunteer in Guyana, which is located in South America. She worked alongside the Sisters of Mercy in Guyana and saw their love for God, service, and the poor. “I realized that by becoming a Sister, I could continue to have a deep relationship with God and with others,” added Sister Jenny.

Sister Jenny has been a Sister of Mercy since 2006 and took final vows in 2015. Final vows are when a Sister of Mercy for life. This final commitment is marked by a special mass. At that mass, Sister Jenny received a simple silver ring which is traditional for all Sisters of Mercy to receive. This ring represents their lifelong commitment to God and to the Sisters of Mercy. The tradition is that each Sister gets a ring inscribed with a motto that is meaningful to her. The motto on Sister Jenny’s ring is “love never fails.” She says that she tries to live by that every day by bringing kindness and compassion into her teaching and into her relationships with everyone at Mercy. Having spent most of my life in Lebanon, I have a deep love for my place of birth and the people there. I feel that my Lebanese heritage has influenced the way I approach life. I feel that my upbringing has instilled in me a deep love for my family and my community. I feel that my Lebanese heritage has helped me to become the person that I am today.

“Love never fails”

**Ms. Ramia**  
Spotlight by Ashley Cirbus

Ms. Ramia is Mount Mercy Academy’s ninth-grade English teacher. Fortunately, it just so happens to be her favorite grade to teach. Ms. Ramia says she has wanted to teach from a young age, since she always loved school and enjoyed helping others at her school. As she got older, she further realized her love for teaching and literature.

Ms. Ramia feels as though she’s “been here for years” because of how welcomed she felt coming to Mercy. She likes the sense of community and the small student population, which makes our school feel like home to her. Some of her favorite things about her teaching career include interacting with students and making connections with them. She tries to develop good relationships with students even after the year ends.

She especially loves teaching ninth grade because of the exciting topics discussed and the positive energy, excitement, and interest the students bring to the classroom. Her favorite unit to teach in class is *Romeo and Juliet* because she loves how students can still connect to and feel excited and passionate about the story despite how old it is.

Outside of the classroom, Ms. Ramia loves reading books, which is not surprising for an English teacher. One of her favorites is *Love in the Time of Cholera*, a book that according to her is “so much more than a love story.” She particularly likes how the characters are presented in such a deep way. Her second favorite book is *The Great Gatsby*.

Ms. Ramia also enjoys exploring parts of Buffalo she hasn’t seen before. “There is so much beauty that I am just starting to explore,” she added. She also enjoys traveling, and after the pandemic would like to go somewhere “nice, tropical, and far.”

In her daily life, Ms. Ramia is inspired by quite a few different people. One she mentioned specifically is Mother Teresa. Mother Teresa is inspiring to her because she shows that we are capable of anything. She also reveres writers from the 1920s such as F. Scott Fitzgerald and Ernest Hemingway, who wrote exciting stories.

Ms. Ramia truly values her family. She is close with her parents and brother and loves spending time with them. She has a big extended Lebanese family and particularly prides herself on her Lebanese heritage. Growing up, her parents always made sure she was proud of being both American and Lebanese. She has visited Lebanon several times to see family living there.

On a more personal note, I am very lucky to have Ms. Ramia as my English teacher for my ninth-grade year here at Mercy. Because of her kind and caring approach to everything she does, Mercy has become a better place.
Mary Grace Wood
Spotlight by Catherine Klozinski and Ashley Cirbus

Students surprise Mary Grace Wood (center) with appreciation cards created by the Mount Mercy student body.

Since the beginning of the 2020-2021 school year, we have had many new faces join our Mercy community. One of the new faces walking the halls is Mary Grace, a 19-year-old woman with Down Syndrome.

Mary Grace participates in art, theology, dance, and photography, to name a few classes, and has an enthusiastic spirit that everyone absolutely adores. When asked about which of these classes she likes the best, she stated that art and dance are by far her favorite. Art class is a fun environment that allows Mary Grace to express herself through colors and different materials, and she is always eager to start a new painting or project.

Along with art, Mary Grace loves dance class, as it provides a space to relax and be herself. Fellow dance classmate, Ashley Cirbus, stated, “I truly appreciate having dance with Mary Grace. I saw throughout the year how much she grew as a dancer. We are in our tap unit now! It is very fun, and it seems like Mary Grace is enjoying learning new steps.”

Mary Grace loves to get involved, even outside of school. Some of her favorite things to do are getting her nails done, going on bike rides, and attending a club at Our Lady of Victory. She said that at this club, they plant flowers and serve food, and she even has made some close friends, one of them being Ryan. She and her friend, Ryan, recently made a video about social distancing while attending this club at Our Lady of Victory.

Mary Grace has a bright vision of what she wants to do when she’s older, and ultimately, she wants to help others. She wants to help others in her community in any way that she can and make a difference in the world for the better. Specifically, Mary Grace told us how she intends to help Ms. G, her aid who assists her in her daily living.

Mary Grace has a special connection to one another that is like family, and their close relationship is evident! At home, Mary Grace has three brothers named Liam, Dan, and Connor, a brother-in-law named Chris, and a soon-to-be-sister-in-law named Ellen. She also loves to talk about her puppy, Lucy, and her dog, Wilson!

Although Mary Grace’s life seems packed with fun activities and events, she shared some of her favorite things to watch when she has some time to relax. She really enjoys the movie Mamma Mia, but is open to watching any movie. She also thoroughly enjoys the television show The Office, which is definitely a favorite for many other students and classmates here at Mercy.

Mary Grace has brought a positive attitude and uplifting spirit to Mercy as a whole, and can always be found getting involved in the things that she loves to do. She stated that her favorite part of 2021 has definitely been making new friends at Mercy, and I can assure you that many students have loved becoming friends with Mary Grace as well!

Correction: In the previous issue of Merciette, there is an editing error in the review for The Invisible Man. The review says that "Adrian faked James's death" when it is really that Adrian faked his own death.

Movie Reviews

Film Chronicles Billie Eilish’s Journey

By Ashley Cirbus

I have been a huge Billie Eilish fan for several years, and when I heard she was making a documentary, I was thrilled. I asked my mom to purchase an Apple TV subscription to watch it the day of the release. After watching, I realized it was everything I wanted out of a documentary. The World’s A Little Blurry, directed by R. J. Cutler, gives viewers and fans alike a view of Billie’s journey through her music career. Even the title of the documentary has a notable lyric from “ilomilo,” her favorite song on her album When We All Fall Asleep, Where Do We Go?

“My family’s the reason I am the way I am,” Billie says in the film. It is clear that family is very important to her. Her brother, Finneas, makes many appearances and is always seen helping with writing and making her music, while accepting that they don’t always agree when making songs. There is also some home footage shown documenting their process. There are moments where Billie is not confident in herself, but Finneas is always there to help, especially knowing her past mental health struggles. Billie is harsh on herself and the hate she receives on social media discourages her. “The more popular something is, the more hate it’s gonna get,” she says.

Something fans and viewers learn in the film that wasn’t mentioned ever before is about her boyfriend, referred to as Q. At first, Q seems like a sweet and loving boyfriend who supported her in everything. Then we get clips that show exclusive scenes before she performed at Coachella, a music festival, showing the rough part in their relationship. Billie asks Q to come to see her perform, and after much pleading, he finally agrees. He is extremely angry with her and tells her to break up with him.

Her performances play a big role in the film. She is seen performing almost every single one of her songs. We also see the challenges she faces while doing so. In addition to illustrating the way Q affects her performances, we also view Billie getting injured before one of her concerts, and she says that she would rather not do a show at all than do a mediocre one.

There are many features in this movie that I could mention like getting her dream car, her close relationship with her fans, or even her love for Justin Bieber. The film is two hours and twenty minutes which leaves you with a lot to unpack. Overall, The World’s A Little Blurry is a brilliant, quality film that gives viewers a look into Billie’s musical journey and major events in her life.

Sightless: Best Eye-Opening and Spine-Chilling Movie of the Year

By Paige Angle

Sightless is a drama/psychological thriller movie (rated R) which was released on September 2nd, 2020. It was directed by Cooper Karl starring MadelainePetsch (from Riverdale) as Ellen and Alexander Koch (from Under the Dome) as Clayton. Sightless is a spine-chilling, unpredictable, and eye-opening film about a woman who had her eyesight taken away from her after a deadly attack. She gains a caretaker named Clayton who helps her try to adjust to her new life.

Ellen can no longer play the violin, which was her favorite thing to do. Due to the attack, Ellen is left with PTSD as well as severe anxiety and depression. Ellen’s brother bought her a new “apartment” and “hires” Clayton, the caretaker, to help her. Having many trust issues, Ellen has a very hard time adjusting to what becomes her new reality.

She grows suspicious of most things around her, including Clayton. Throughout this movie, the viewers see everything through the perspective of Ellen and what people describe about her surroundings. She tries to imagine what others explain to her and meets new people along the way.

I would rate this movie five out of five stars: because of its plot, I was very interested right from the beginning. Madelaine Petsch played the lead role very well. The acting made the movie more realistic and dramatic. She expressed her character wonderfully and made me emotional and compassionate towards the main character. Viewers will gain an understanding of people with disabilities after watching Sightless.

The movie was very empathetic and made me realize the struggles that someone who is blind may endure. Although Sightless was depressing to watch, it made me think about the movie for a while after watching the film. It was intriguing, sorrowful, and interesting. I would recommend Sightless to anyone who likes the movies Dangerous Lies, Run, Clinical, My Secret Obsession, and Intruders.
A Guide to the Faces in the Mirror

Short Story by Brogan Maloney

This is essential information for living with guilt. Guilt for what? Why are you guilty? You shouldn’t be. You didn’t do anything. The darkness is scary. It’s unsettling. But if you know what to avoid, what to do, what not to do, you’ll be fine. Yeah, you’ll be fine. The darkness isn’t scary.

This is taking too long. You need to go fast. It’s following you. Just don’t turn around. Don’t look in the mirror.

Something’s Nothing’s there.

1. Don’t dwell on what you see in the dark. It’s just your imagination. Humans can make themselves see anything if they think about it for too long. Don’t think about it too long. Thinking about it for too long will only make you question it, and questioning leads to fear, and fear leads to -

It’s better to ignore the movements beyond the doorway.

2. Forget about what happened in the past. It won’t do you any good remembering. Besides, you couldn’t have changed anything. You couldn’t have stopped it. No one knew what was going to happen. Nobody blames you for anything. What happened to her isn’t your fault. It’s not your fault.

3. Don’t look in mirrors in dark rooms. Mirrors are scary. So many people, well… “people” is a complex term. So many things have looked in the same mirror and saw different faces. This world has too many different faces. How do people know which one is which? How do you know that’s your face? You’ve never actually seen it.

You better still be here. Don’t abandon this, please. It’s not scary out there. You’ll be okay. No one will hurt you. You just need to know, you need to be safe. Please.

4. That’s not your cousin’s voice, no matter how much it sounds like him. He’s at home, in another city. Your sister is not with you, regardless of how loudly and clearly she just asked for a snack. She’s asleep at home and you’re in the woods. Why are you in the woods?

5. NEVER go in the woods after dark. These aren’t pretty woods. There are too many things in there. Things that are too big to be a rabbit or squirrel. Things with fingers too long to be human. Teeth too sharp. You wouldn’t notice, would you? Not everyone casts a shadow. There’s a girl with too many teeth and psychedelic eyes.

6. Noises are only noises. Voices might be a cause for concern. But noises are only noises. It’s natural. It’s nature. Everything has a sound. The wind. The ground. The leaves. The grass. The branches. The animals. The dead girls. The bridge. The creek. The car engines. The voices. Voices aren’t noise.

Noise is natural.

7. Squirrel teeth shouldn’t be that sharp. They’re only in the woods. Why would you be in the woods? If you encounter a squirrel with sharp teeth, run. If you encounter anything with sharp teeth, run. Long nails. Sharp teeth. Disfigured voices. Too many teeth. Psychedelic eyes. She keeps flickering, in and out of view.

8. Don’t leave your bed after dark. Put a chair under the door knob. Your sister doesn’t need you. She’s asleep in her room. You’re in the woods. You weren’t a minute ago. Why are you in the woods?

9. NEVER go in the woods after dark. These aren’t pretty woods. Too many things. Too many things.

The bathroom lights are flickering. Linoleum floors are always cold. Why are they always cold? It’s fine. It’s fine. It’s fine. It’s not tapping on the window. The screams are fainter than usual. There’s a park nearby. Fireworks. That’s good. It’s good. It’s a nice creature. It has never ripped apart anyone you loved. It has never raked its jagged nails from the base of her skull to the bottom of her feet. At least it wasn’t you.

Don’t be scared. Fear isn’t good. Thinking too hard isn’t good. Some things shouldn’t be thought about. Don’t be scared. Are you still scared? You shouldn’t be. It’s just trees. It’s just trees.

A Review of the 2021 Grammy Awards

By Aubrey Monaco

The 2021 Grammy Awards ceremony was full of many historical moments for the music world. The majority of these moments centered women, and Black women specifically.

An incredibly notable event was that Mickey Guyton became the first Black female solo artist ever to be nominated for a country music category. She also performed her song “Black Like Me,” which was an incredibly powerful moment to witness. The song uses emotional, conversation -starting lyrics, such as, “If you think we live in the land of the free, you should try to be black like me.”

Later in the night, H.E.R. won the Grammy for Song of the Year with, “I Can’t Breathe” which provides a moving look into the ongoing racial injustices in the United States with lyrics like, “If we all agree that we’re equal as people, then why can’t we see what is evil?”

Additionally, Megan Thee Stallion won the Grammy for Best New Artist, making her the second female rapper to do so, after Lauryn Hill in 1999.

Beyoncé took home her 28th Grammy for Best R&B Performance with her song “Black Parade.” According to the New York Times, with this award, Beyoncé broke the record for most Grammys won by a solo artist.

March 14th was a very historical and meaningful night for Black women in the music industry.

Along with these accomplishments, Lady Gaga and Ariana Grande became the first all-female crew to win Best Pop Duo/Group Performance with their song “Rain on Me.”

Taylor Swift won the Grammy for Album of the Year, making her the first artist to win the category three times, with albums in three different genres, as stated by CBC News.

Other winners included Miranda Lambert for Best Country Album with Wildcard, Harry Styles for Best Pop Solo Performance with “Watermelon Sugar,” Dua Lipa’s Future Nostalgia for Best Pop Vocal Album, and Everything I Wanted by Billie Eilish for Record of the Year.

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, performances looked a bit different. Opening performers, which included Harry Styles, Billie Eilish, HAIM, and Black Pumas all sang in a large room socially distanced while cameras rotated to each of them. Other performers, such as Taylor Swift and Dua Lipa, had separate rooms accessible only by cameras and backstage crew.

Though the 2021 Grammys looked different than years past, it was still full of incredible performances and history-making moments for the music industry.

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Dominique Khoury

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Paige Angle
Addison Barth
Ashley Cirbus
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Book Reviews

Perfect Read for Fans of Gillian Flynn’s Gone Girl

By Sydney Gunner

The Woman in the Window, a #1 New York Times bestseller, by A.J. Finn is a completely thrilling and captivating novel. The reader follows Anna Fox, a woman who suffers from agoraphobia and post-traumatic stress disorder, as she spends her days holed up in her New York City home. Anna passes time by helping others with agoraphobia cope through the use of an online chat room and watching black and white movies, as well as peeping at her neighbors through her windows.

The story sounds relatively mundane, but it quickly starts to turn when the Russells move into the house across the street. This seemingly-ordinary family consists of a mother, father, and teenage son. As Anna gets to know the Russells by watching them through her windows, she witnesses something shockingly horrific. At this point, the novel becomes incredibly fast-paced and gripping. Chilling twists and turns lead the reader to realize that no character can be trusted. It’s impossible to guess what is real and what is hallucination, and who is dangerous and whose life is at stake.

I’ve read a wide expanse of mystery novels, and I have to admit that this thriller has quickly become one of my favorites. Finn manages to develop such an intense and rich plot that will no doubt captivate you. I held onto my copy with white knuckles until the very last page. Finn also creates extremely complex and dynamic characters, complete with an array of their own faults, strengths, and backgrounds.

I cannot recommend this novel enough, especially if you need an enthralling book to get you out of a reading slump. Fair warning, however, if you’re sensitive to heavy topics such as substance abuse and violence: this may not be the perfect read for you. It’s a fantastic novel but not for those who avoid such subjects. I, however, am a sucker for the dark and twisted, so I have to rate The Woman in the Window five out of five stars.

Eleanor & Park: A Crazy First Love

By Vayana Stoyanova

Are you in love? Is it your first love? Eleanor & Park, by Rainbow Rowell, is a story of young love between two teenagers from different worlds. This is a young adult romance novel set over the school year in 1986. It features 16-year-old star-crossed misfits falling in love for the first time, despite outside problems and the ever-present thought that first love seldom lasts.

Eleanor Douglas is the new girl at school, who dresses in mismatched mainly men’s clothing that accompanies her unruly red hair. She sticks out like a sore thumb, as the saying goes. She’s smart and brave but also has an unfortunate family situation, which weighs on her.

Park Sheridan keeps to himself. He is always wearing black clothing and constantly reading comics. Park is half-Korean, which is pretty much all people see about him, so he’s given up on trying to blend in. He’s an outsider who knows just the right amount of “popular” kids to be left alone. His love for comics and music, as well as martial arts, were the only highlights in his life before Eleanor came along.

The title characters meet on Eleanor’s first day at Park’s school. Park begrudgingly lets her sit next to him, since no one else will. For a while, they don’t speak. Eventually, Eleanor begins reading from the comics Park always has. They begin to talk, Park shares his comics and music with Eleanor, and they develop a friendship that quickly turns into something more.

In the “villain” of this story is not so much a person, but the increasing family tension and problems Eleanor has to face. To find out if this young love lasts, you’ll have to give it a chance. I promise this story will have you on a rollercoaster of emotions. One minute you’ll be laughing, and the next crying, and so on.

If you’ve read The Fault in Our Stars by John Green, and loved it, this is another novel for you. #1 New York Times Bestseller John Green said Eleanor & Park “reminded me not just what it’s like to be young and in love with a girl, but also what it’s like to be young and in love with a book.” If that sounds like something you could relate to, you’ll enjoy it too. With themes relating to love, abuse, poverty, and bullying, as well as acclaimed writing, Eleanor & Park is a fast-paced novel that’s sure to make you feel

Eleanor Trivia

By Madison Serafini

What room are the announcements filmed in? What is Ms. Rauscher’s pet chinchilla’s name? Which teacher rides her bike to school every morning around 6 AM? Who established the Sisters of Mercy? What is the five critical concerns of the morning in good weather? For freshmen… 1. She is 5’8”. 2. She hates the color pink. 3. Her favorite subject is English. 4. She plays 5 sports. 5. She loves Panera. Who am I?

Guess Who?

By Madison Serafini

Merciette has selected 4 girls (one from each grade) for this new section of Merciette. Below are clues that describe each student. Guess who you think is being described! Turn to page 7 to find out if you were right!

First up is a senior… 1. She plays volleyball. 2. She plays basketball. 3. She is tall. 4. She is loud. 5. She is going to college at St. Bonaventure. Who am I?

Next up for juniors… 1. She was born in North Carolina. 2. She is an equestrian. 3. She has a lot of pets. 4. Her birthday is on Valentine’s Day. 5. Lastly, she went to St. John Vianney for middle school. Who am I?

Our sophomore… 1. She is Irish dances. 2. She does crew for Mercy. 3. She is a Student Ambassador. 4. She is a part of Merciette and Mock Trial. 5. She is in AP classes. Who am I?

The Terrifying Man

Short Story by Jenna Angle

The air around me suddenly becomes heavy and dark. With each step I take, I feel the anticipation eating away at me like a predator. I carefully make my way onto the front porch, only to find that nothing is there.

(Three hours earlier) With my parents away for the weekend, I decided to take advantage of having the house to myself. I invited my boyfriend over almost every night, along with a couple of my friends. Unlike the past few nights, I am spending the night alone. I lie down on the couch with a giant bowl of vanilla ice cream while I watch.

Bang, Bang, Bang!

I peek out my front window to find a shadowy figure knocking on the door. Before approaching the door, I become paranoid and grab my phone in case of a possible emergency.

“Can I help you?” I shout through the wooden door.

“Hello, Miss, could I use your phone? My car broke down further along the street. I was wondering if I could call my dad to pick me up,” the man hollers.

I think about what I have seen on TV, as my imagination unwinds.

“I’m sorry sir, I can’t help you,” I state, avoiding conversation.

“Please ma’am, I won’t take up too much of your time. No one else will open their door,” the man pleads.

I walk away from the door with the hope that the man would as well. I sit in silence for a moment, waiting for the man’s chilling presence to leave the area. When I feel that the man finally gives up and storms away, I resume the movie.

Bang, Bang, Bang!

I hesitate with fear and approach the door again.

“Sir, I can’t help you! You need to leave.” I burst out. I could tell that the man knew I was afraid and alone.

The tone of the man’s voice shifts as he sternly says, “I understand, ma’am. Carry on with your movie and have a good night.”

An hour has passed and the man hasn’t returned.

Beep, Beep, Beep!

Something activates my car alarm. I study my car from the window, investigating what made the alarm go off. After a minute of viewing the vehicle, I fetch my keys and turn off the alarm.

Beep, Beep, Beep!

The car alarm is triggered again. I snatch my keys once more and glare at the car as I see a figure emerging from the darkness that surrounds the vehicle.

Before the man can reach the porch, I shout, “Go away. I’m calling the police!”

No words were exchanged between me and the man, but I could feel his presence suffocating me. With my phone in hand, I call my boyfriend and inform him about the man. My boyfriend insisted on coming over right away.

Bang, Bang, Bang!

I creep over to the door, unaware of what awaits outside of it.

“Are you okay? Open the door!” My boyfriend shrieks.

I tell John everything that has been happening and send him to find the man that has been terrorizing me. I watch from the window as John vanishes into the night.

Then, I hear footsteps approaching the porch. The air around me suddenly becomes heavy and dark. With each step I take, I feel the anticipation eating away at me like a predator. I carefully make my way onto the front porch, only to find that nothing is there.

John tramples around the corner and through the door wearing a ski mask, gloves, and his favorite leather jacket.

“Why are you out of breath?” I question, hoping this nightmare is almost over.

“Do you have a glass of water?” John sternly asks, while gasping for air.

I leap over to the sink and pour John a glass of water. He sits down at the table and chugs down the water I prepared for him.

“Seriously John, what happened?” I ask.

John sits in silence before breaking out the back window. I rush over to the window, eager to see what stole John’s attention. My stomach drops as I see a man dragging a body across the grass and shouting at the house. I focus on the man’s broken legs and his dirty clothes.

The man shouts the most spine-chilling sentences. “Run! That guy isn’t me! That’s the man that was terrorizing you!”

As I zone in on the hurt man’s voice, I soon realize that he is the real John! I turn around in fear to find the terrifying man is nowhere in sight.

The Mysterious Friday at Hiddenvale Elementary

Short Story by Megan Amicone and Catherine Klodzinski

It was a sunny and quiet Friday afternoon when the bell dismissed the students from school. All of the children had exited the building within a few minutes to head home after a long day. Ms. Hawkins, the fifth-grade teacher, had decided to stay after school and get some work done so she could have a nice, relaxing weekend. As she looked at the pile of ungraded papers on her desk, she realized that she would be at the school for quite a while. She told the janitor that she would lock up so he could have an early start to his weekend.

By the time four o’clock came around, all of the teachers had left the building, leaving Ms. Hawkins as the only person in the school. Since it was only the beginning of spring, the sun still stood high and set pretty early. She was three hours into the big pile of work on her desk when she noticed that it was starting to grow late into the night. She decided to push through and continue grading the papers. While marking up a student’s project on biodiversity in the Amazon rainforest, Ms. Hawkins took a look up from her desk and saw something quite astonishing.

She first noticed flickering lights in the distance of the hallway. She quickly remembered that the janitor told her that there were some electrical difficulties with the lights and not to worry if she saw anything strange, so with this in mind, she continued her work. A couple of minutes later, after the sky had gotten darker and the students had gotten quieter, she heard the squeaking of a door opening. She slowly raised her head as her heart started to beat a little faster. After hearing such a noise, Ms. Hawkins knew that she had to check it out… as a safety precaution. She couldn’t let anything happen to the school on her watch. She slowly stood up and started walking towards the slow squeaking sound. As she turned the corner of the hallway, she saw the janitor’s door swinging back and forth in the darkness of the hall. In a moment of panic and shock, she decided to call the janitor. After dialing the number, she didn’t hear the janitor’s voice, but instead heard the ringing of his phone somewhere in the building.

Ms. Hawkins slowly pulled her phone away from her ear and looked around in confusion. Her heart started to beat even faster as the ringing continued. Her gut was telling her to run, leave the school, and drive away as fast as she could, but her mind was telling her to follow the sound of the ringing. She ignored her instinct and started to walk through the halls of the school with her footsteps echoing behind her and the sound of the phone still ringing in the distance. She turned another corner, which led to the back doors of the school, and when she looked down, she saw the ringing phone lying face up on the floor. The ringing suddenly stopped as a cool breeze blew through the hallway.

Ms. Hawkins glanced up to see a black car facing the transparent doors, and within seconds, the headlights of the car flashed on. Ms. Hawkins thought that she was the only one in the school, but that was certainly not her car. The bright lights of the dark car blinded her as she stood with the cold darkness surrounding her body. Behind her, she heard a loud bang and jerked her head to see what was there. She saw absolutely nothing. She whipped her head back around towards the car, and as she did so, she saw the blinding sight of the headlights… and then everything went black.

The next morning was bright and filled with the quintessence of spring. The school was furnished with sunshine yet empty of people, as the children and teachers were at home enjoying their Saturday morning. The small pile of ungraded papers was left on Ms. Hawkins’s desk, though Ms. Hawkins was nowhere to be seen. When Monday morning came around, the children piled into their fifth-grade classroom and waited for their teacher to arrive. The janitor slowly passed by Ms. Hawkins’ room with a menacing look on his face. The principal called Ms. Hawkins to ask if she was coming into school that day, but all she heard was the ringing of a phone throughout the school hallways…
Dear Catherine

Disclaimer: “Catherine” is just another Mercy girl, like you. She’s trying her best to give you the best advice she can, but her responses still reflect her views, not absolute facts. She hopes to give advice that can help, but acknowledges that these are her opinions and she is not always right.

What is a good way to manage time while being stressed?

Many people have different ways of managing their time under pressure. Although it is very important to get all of your work done, your mental health is just as important. After all, it’s difficult to do your best work when you aren’t in a positive headspace. When I am stressed, I tend to say a prayer. Connecting with God makes me feel empowered and motivated to complete all of my work. Also, a quick break doesn’t hurt. Eat a snack and listen to some music. Then, take your time and finish each assignment one at a time. You can also break up longer assignments into smaller pieces and take one piece at a time. Do not think about any other assignments as you are completing each one. It will only make you more stressed and less motivated. When I was a schoolgirl, a long time ago, I liked to take a deep breath and do something relaxing after each assignment. For example, I would watch a television show after one difficult assignment and two easier assignments. Most importantly, try your hardest not to procrastinate. Although you may think that your work is just as good when you rush to finish it, it’s not, and waiting until the last minute is a sure way to increase your stress levels. You need time to put thought into your work so that you are proud of it. Also, try not to procrastinate. Although you may think that your work is not due, and waiting until the last minute is a sure way to increase your stress levels, you need time to put thought into your work so that you are proud of it. Also, try not to procrastinate. Although you may think that your work is just as good when you rush to finish it, it’s not, and waiting until the last minute is a sure way to increase your stress levels. You need time to put thought into your work so that you are proud of it. Also, try not to procrastinate. Although you may think that your work is not due, and waiting until the last minute is a sure way to increase your stress levels. You need time to put thought into your work so that you are proud of it. Also, try not to procrastinate. Although you may think that your work is just as good when you rush to finish it, it’s not, and waiting until the last minute is a sure way to increase your stress levels. You need time to put thought into your work so that you are proud of it. Also, try not to procrastinate.

I have many “friends” in my class at Mercy, but I always feel left out and like nobody wants to talk to me. How can I make more friends?

Feeling left out can be one of the hardest things about being a teenager. I completely understand isolating and challenging school is when you’re struggling to fit in or when you’re not feeling truly included by friends. I think one of the most important things to remember is to always be authentic to yourself. Don’t feel like you need to change in order to be more included or think that people will want to talk to you more if you act differently. The most valuable friends you will make are the people who love and accept you for who you really are! It sounds cliché, I know, but it’s so true. In regards to how to make more friends, I would recommend really involving yourself in the Mercy community. Join as many clubs and sports as you can. Even if you don’t join at the start of the year, you could always email a club moderator and ask to join a meeting. Also, when you’re attending practices or club meetings, make sure you step out of your comfort zone and try to talk to people from other grade levels. I know it’s instinctual to only talk to the people we already know, but try having a conversation with someone new! The other grade levels at Mercy offer you a large pool of possible new friends. Do your best to be approachable and friendly, although I know this can be a little difficult at 8:00 AM club meetings. I understand that putting yourself out there in such a way can be really scary and uncomfortable, but just remember that it’ll be so worth the awkwardness if you try to develop meaningful, new friendships.

Word Search: Mercy Sports

By Madison Serafini

CHAMPIONSHIP PCLMWDOMYS
THFGYHCUFYHMHTIRAUOAC
SCGNWONKEDORPOXSFAX
IMBFHZQRMEEZAAURZTO
EFDSMAVLRSRCBQBTBAT
LALBEYELLOVTKTAOCRKD
MLGPOCERASQCPMLVZUWMY
UIZFOAUDBGOQLNSPCHIN
GSJUDMGZTFAWHYENAWJ
YNOITNUELLLORHHTPYWA
NSNCMAIKNTQYYZCPCFH
YWNGCNYSHMMJHXTLQDY
MINHGEHAOQGRJRSGCTUF
JIVDBHRLVFLXNNVROEQE
WPQURTSSUBNUXAHVBNS
UMFNEFUMEMVYTRPPTAFI
HULKWCRCRJAPETZTBKVIT
VHESCIZBNSWGYQLDVI
ESSORCALFYMHPXRURRDO
BXBPKYZFBWNRIRIYCLSC

Can you find all 10 words?

Softball
Volleyball
Tennis
Basketball
Winning

Championship
Soccer
Cheerleading
Lacrosse

Answer Keys

Guess Who? Answers
Senior: Hannah Fredo
Junior: Annie Bernard
Sophomore: Catherine Klobzinski
Freshman: Meghan Balen

Mercy Trivia Answers
1. 1964
2. Miss Ilecki
3. Catherine McCauley
4. Miss Colby
5. The Mercy Magic
6. Marvin
7. Miss Burns
8. To practice nonviolence, to deepen our response to racism, to revere the earth, to embrace our particular concern for women, and to stand in solidarity with immigrants
9. The STEAM room
10. 7 pearls

Pandemic Impacts Easter Season

By Joyce Hibbs

This year, as most of us know, Easter was a little different for many reasons like wearing masks while buying Easter gifts and not seeing as many family members due to the pandemic. I know that I didn't do as much as usual to celebrate. Although, I was able to try new things to commemorate the holiday, like making homemade pierogis and painting eggs instead of using dye kits, because my family and I stayed home. These changes were especially hard for some people because they are used to participating in certain traditions on Easter. Some of these traditions include Easter egg hunts and brunch with the Easter bunny. Many towns have an annual Easter brunch where children can eat with the Easter bunny, but due to many COVID-19 restrictions, they were unable to continue that tradition this year. Other towns have Easter egg hunts, which they were unable to host.

Additionally, the holiday was very different in churches than in previous years. Churches usually have an Easter blessing of food, where people put their chocolate bunnies, and other Easter delicacies in their baskets to be blessed. Some people would even bring their meat and other goods unwrapped because they believed that the blessed holy water directly touching their food gave them an extra special blessing from God. This year, pandemic restrictions did not allow foods to be unwrapped.

Another challenge to Easter celebrations presented by the pandemic was that many people could only visit with grandparents and parents, rather than their whole extended families. Some Buffalonauts and other people in the northern United States usually travel to Canada for Easter. I, myself, have family in Canada, but the pandemic has caused border shutdowns. These border shutdowns are still in place and, at the time of this article, we are currently unable to enter into Canada the way we used to. Sadly, we were also unable to visit family members in nursing homes without face coverings and shields. To see my grandma, I had to wear multiple facemasks and a face shield. It can be difficult for our loved ones to recognize us with all of these layers on our faces.

While this year's Easter was very different, we have to take into account the aspects of Easter that were normal, such as receiving our Easter baskets in the morning and eating that nice Easter dinner. This year's Easter was definitely atypical, but it still managed to be a lovely holiday.