New York, New York!

In October, the seniors embarked on their senior trip to New York City, the city that never sleeps. As a senior myself I was beyond excited to travel with all of my friends and adventure out into the Big Apple. All of the seniors were counting down the days until we left and were all buzzing with excitement. We arrived on Friday, October 12th and immediately started off our journey at the 9/11 Memorial Museum. It allowed us all to take a step back from our crazy morning and remember all of the lives that were lost that day. It allowed us all to take a moment to appreciate our lives and the people who we love. I, among many of my friends, were in awe of New York and the combination of it all and could not wait to explore it more.

On the following day, we all woke up bright and early and made our way to the Coffee Festival in Manhattan. It was a rainy morning but that did not put a damper on our excitement and fun. We all enjoyed samples of coffee, tea, ice cream, baked goods, and even got to watch latte art. At the festival, there were so many art pieces and amazing companies who gave back to the community, these greatly inspired my friends and I in wanting to come live here and do things like this everyday! We then took the subway to Coney Island in Brooklyn and explored the boardwalk, the beach, and the theme park. A small group of friends and I walked along the boardwalk, taking pictures in front of the many gorgeous and elaborate wall murals. This personally was one of my favorite parts because my friends and I all bonded and laughed while acting like models and photographers in front of the murals. Then we journeyed to the Central Park Zoo and Central Park where we got to see so many animals including my favorite, the red pandas. My group and I walked all through Central Park and enjoyed the peaceful afternoon.

Our trip to New York allowed me to bond with my friends, make many memories, and explore the city that I want to live in in the future. We did so many different things that we all enjoyed very much, we went to the top of the Empire State Building, went to Aladdin, explored Times Square, did some shopping, saw the Statue of Liberty, and most importantly bonded as a whole class while on this adventure. We were all very sad to leave New York and the amazement of the city, but I knew that I would come back one day with all of the same friends and remember all of the amazing memories made on the trip and cherish them forever.

By Katie Collopy

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**The Midterm of Women**

by Abbigayle Reid

The past midterms have been a step towards breaking the glass ceiling for women, with its candidates and electees breaking multiple records, which were not only broken for women in general, but also for minorities and religious groups. There were also wins for women in the LGBTQ community. One record broken was the number of women in the House of Representatives, which is 98; 31 being elected into the House for the first time. There will be 121 women in congress, greatly surpassing the current total of 107 women.

Democrat Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez is the youngest woman to ever be elected into Congress at 29 years old. Tennessee elected their first female senator, Democrat Marsha Blackburn, and South Dakota elected their first female governor, Republican Kristi Noem. Democrat Lou Leon Guerrero is the first female governor of Guam.

Jahana Hayes is the first black woman to be elected in congress in Connecticut, Massachusetts elected their first black female Congresswoman, Democrat Ayanna Pressley, and Veronica Escobar and Sylvia Garcia are the first Texan Latinas to be elected into congress. Democrats Ilhan Omar and Rashida Tlaib are the first Muslim women to be elected into congress. Deb Haaland and Sharice Davis are the first Native Americans elected into Congress, both women are Democrats. Republican Young Kim became the first Korean American women in congress, representing California.

Women electees in the LGBTQ community include Democrat Kyrsten Sinema, Democrat Angie Craig, Democrat Kate Hill, as well as Sharice Davis.

The concerns of interest of women who ran include education, health care, immigration, job creation, and taxiation. Also a majority of women who won elections were Democrat, which shows the partisan between gender; 85 of the 98 women elected into the House are Democrats, 60 percent of women voted for a Democrat versus the 38 percent who voted for a Republican.

**What Comes with the Snowflakes**

by Ellie Wilson

The snow in Buffalo is starting to fall and, and even though the leaves are also still falling, people are getting more and more excited for the Holidays. The Holidays are such a wonderful time to be with the people you love and to celebrate with them, so being excited for the Holidays makes perfect sense but there still is the question of when it is okay to start this excitement.

People have often disagreed about when it is acceptable to start seeing Holiday decorations in stores and hearing Christmas songs on the radio and, although, everyone has their opinions on when the Holiday’s should start, that doesn’t stop the media or stores from promoting the early “Holiday arrival.” There is much irony outside the houses of Buffalo now that the snow is beginning to fall. The pumpkins, leftover Halloween decorations, and the fallen leaves have been covered in snow. This can symbolize how quickly we, as a society, move on from things. We are always waiting for the “next best thing” and that is because of our consumerist nature. We see it everywhere; once Halloween is over, it’s sales and online shopping for everyone, everywhere, and why? Well, the companies’ main goal is to make money and the Holiday season is a great opportunity for companies to increase their profits because of our need for “more.” We go from shopping for candy and a Halloween costume to shopping for the newest Apple product as a Christmas present. Christmas, a holy holiday for Christianity, has become mainly based on the gifts we will give and receive. Now, don’t get me wrong, I love Christmas and I think giving and receiving gifts should be a part of the holiday, but maybe not as much as it is. Christmas, and all the Holidays, should be seen as celebrations to be spent with people you care about; that should be the main focus, not what present they have for you. We should try and look for new ways to give during the Holidays, such as volunteering at a soup kitchen. This is a lot easier said than done, and I’m sure many people would do this instead but buying gifts has become a tradition that comes along with Christmas and it would be very, very difficult to change that. Overall, the question of when the Holiday excitement should start is a hard one to answer since we are pushed towards it through the media and our consumerist nature. We, as a society, run to the “next, best thing” and we need to decrease that fact. The Holidays are more than just the gifts given and received, we should make the Holidays go back to what they are supposed to be about which is the joy. The joy of being with the people you love is what the Holidays are about and “tis the season” to realize that.
Winter Sports by Angelina Larivey

Here at Mercy, winter sports have just begun and the basketball, bowling, cheerleading, hockey, and crew teams are all looking forward to great seasons supported by enthusiastic and hardworking athletes. Two of these athletes, sophomore Megan Reilly and freshman Amaya Milkowski, who both played Varsity soccer in the fall, weigh in on their outlook of the MMA JV basketball season as well as giving insight as to what it is like to be an athlete at Mercy.

Megan Reilly, team captain and a returning player for MMA JV basketball, expressed that it is not very difficult to balance sports and school work because coaches are very understanding and they always make sure that your school work is a priority.

Amaya Milkowski, a new-comer to the JV basketball team, remarked that sometimes it is difficult to balance sports and school work because both are very important and she wants to do her best in both. Both Megan and Amaya practice 6 days a week for 2 hours each day to improve their skills.

To calm butterflies before a game, both Amaya and Megan said that they liked to get pumped up with their team and remind themselves that if anything goes wrong, they’ve got a team that’s “got their back.” Getting into a ritual before a game also helps with pregame jitters. Megan said that she likes to give her team a pep talk to remind everybody what they need to focus and work on and also take her inhaler. Amaya said that she likes to get into a huddle with her teammates to pray and cheer and get pumped up and ready for the game. To fuel themselves up before a game, Reilly likes to drink a Gatorade and have a piece of fruit, while Milkowski prefers to just hydrate with water.

Reilly and Milkowski both express that teamwork is very important to them because basketball is a team sport and every member needs to work together and communicate in order to succeed. Every team member is valued and has different skills that are useful, as remarked by Amaya. Megan likes being a part of a team sport because it allows her to make new friends, it teaches her to work well with others, and it gives her a better understanding and communication with the people around her.

Amaya also enjoys being part of a team as well because she gets to talk to different people that are in different grades, she has teammates that always have her back, and she likes to experience fun things like team bonding and bus rides.

After a tough loss or practice, Milkowski says that she stays motivated by working harder at the next practice or game and reminding herself that you will never become successful without failing. Reilly motivates herself by saying that she can only get better and sets a goal for herself in order to do better next time.

This season, both Megan and Amaya are looking forward to forming close bonds with their teammates and all of the fun to be had at games, practices, bus rides, and team bonding events. They also hope that this season brings lots of wins. Good luck to all of the teams! Let’s make some Magic!!

Poetry Corner

“A Girl” by Mary Bush

A girl
Who is authentic
Who is loyal
And
What is a Mercy girl?
She is all the things listed above
and more
She is a girl
becoming a young women.
A young woman who is going to change the world
The very world we live in

Yes, it will be tough
But women have been doing this for years
Therefore let us raise a glass
A glass to life! To women!
To everyone!
This first quarter at Mount Mercy has been very busy, and students from all grade levels are participating in service projects to help serve the community. One class that has led the charge very well thus far is our senior class. In addition to the group effort for the hygiene items drive held November 5th to 9th, they have each come up with a service project to benefit various groups and organizations in the WNY area. Here are a few of their projects that all Mercy girls can help out with:

Allison Mazurkiewicz’s project is to work the JDRF Gala on January 19th. Participants will help as auction people, watch baskets, and answer questions. Contact Allison at amazurkiewicz19@mtmercy.org for more information or if you are interested in helping out.

Chloe Diebold’s project is throwing a party for the residents at the West Seneca Senior Center on December 1st. Participants will help out by making cookies and table decorations and serving the residents lunch and partying with them. Contact Chloe at cdiebold19@mtmercy.org for more information or if you are interested in helping out.

Abbigayle Reid’s project is baking Christmas cookies to donate to St. Luke’s on December 8th. Participants are asked to donate a package of socks. Contact Abbigayle at areid19@mtmercy.org for more information or if you are interested in helping out.

Eleanor Wilson’s project is making dinner for people in the community at Holy Family Church. Participants will help prepare the dinner to be served. Contact Eleanor at ewilson19@mtmercy.org for more information or if you are interested in helping out.

Sarah Kobler’s project is assisting in various respects at the West Seneca Senior Citizen Center on December 1st. Participants will help create centerpiece decorations for the dinner tables, decorate Christmas trees around the building, and prepare different types of Christmas cookies for the residents. Contact Sarah at skobler19@mtmercy.org for more information or if you are interested in helping out.

Sydni Condoyannis’s project is to help out at the Friendly Kitchen in Dunkirk. Participants will help set up and prepare dinner. Contact Sydni at scondoyannis19@mtmercy.org for more information or if you are interested in helping out.

Emily Eberl’s project is blanket making to donate to the Buffalo City Mission. Contact Emily at eeberl19@mtmercy.org for more information or if you are interested in helping out.

With all of these wonderful service opportunities available, Mercy girls are truly carrying on Catherine McAuley’s legacy by helping those less fortunate and creating a difference in the community. I encourage everyone to sign up for as many projects as possible, and as always, let our Campus Minister, Miss Colby, know of any other ideas for service projects Mercy girls can get involved in.
Teacher Spotlight: Mr. Govern by Bella Longo

A few weeks ago, I had a sit-down with a very popular teacher here at Mercy. After arranging a series of questions, I decided that Mr. Govern would be the best choice due to his brutally honest personality.

Mr. Govern is the mathematical expert who helps almost all of us with any question that we have. Mr. Govern has been working at Mercy for four years. Before Mercy he worked at Erie 1 Boces, teaching an alternative learning program up in the Northtowns. The reason he left, and soon came to Mercy, was because he was ready for a change in his career. He thought that Mercy would be better because, “It is more of a structured educational society with high academic standards.” Mr. Govern loves Algebra, and says that it’s one of his favorites to teach because he has been teaching that subject for well over 17 years. He also said that his favorite things about teaching at Mercy is the students because, “It gives me hope that my daughters can someday grow up to be like a Mercy girl.”

When I asked Mr. Govern what he went to school for, and how he knew he wanted to be a teacher, he said he didn't know at all. He actually went for chemical engineering. He then realized that chemical engineering was not what he wanted to do with his life, partly because he liked math better than science, but mainly because he knew there wasn’t a calling for that job, especially in Buffalo. He also said that he thought that being a teacher would be a better career path for him because he has the personality to be one.

Mr. Govern is a family man, being a husband to his amazing wife, and a father to his two angelic daughters. When I asked him what he thought his best success in his life was he answered with, “a tie between marrying the lovely, Mrs. Govern and being blessed with two healthy children.” However, when I had asked if he had any regrets, his response was that there was nothing he would take back because, “Without all the things that happened, good or bad, I wouldn't be where I am today.”

He explains that during his free time, when he isn't at school, he spends all of it with his daughters. He says he loves to watch movies, play soccer, and eat ice cream with them. The last thing I decided to ask him was if he had a weeks paid vacation, where would he go and why? He gave me the iconic response of Disney, his reasoning, “Why, because it's the funnest place on the planet.”

Overall, even though math may not be everyone's favorite topic, but Mr. Govern proves daily how much he cares about our success and that he only wants us to do well. Even if it means asking him a thousand questions a day. He is also a big family guy, and loves to spend the majority of his free time with them. Mr. Govern is a well-rounded man, who cares about the welfare of all people.

An Open Letter to All the Girls Starting High School by Kaitlyn Leaty

This is your time to decide what you want to be, but not just meaning where you want to go to college and for what but who you are and the person you want to be. High school will be something new that you have never experienced before. It can really be something amazing if you let it. High school is nothing like any movie has ever taught you and nothing can truly prepare you for it. One important thing to remember is be yourself. Yourself may not be the most popular girl in school, but it will attract the type of people that you want to be in your life.

Do not let yourself fall into the wrong crowd or be in a group of friends that are nothing like you just to say that you have a group. By senior year you will look at those times and laugh because then you will realize that you could have just been you and became friends with the people you will be friends with then. Don’t let yourself change to fit into someone that you are not. That can be something that you will always regret because after high school, the friends you made will fade away and you will be left as a person that you do not even know anymore.

Focus on your school work because your grades do matter...all of them. Not doing one homework or not studying for one test will not kill you then, but you may regret it when you are a senior and your GPA is just short of what your dream college will accept. This does not mean to spend all of your time studying and to have no social life at all. This just means actually doing homework in study halls and taking the extra time to study outside of school when you don’t understand a subject. You will still have time for your life, and your grades will show your extra effort.

Step out of your comfort zone at times. Not so much that you are intimidated but enough to try new things. You should join clubs and sports teams. Do things that are different because you do not know if you will ever have the chance to do things like this again. Clubs and sports can also be a good way to make friends that like the same things as you which will make it easier to choose what friends are the best to have for you.

Make memories. Those are what you are going to take with you when you leave high school. When you are an adult working every day you are never going to look back and say that you are glad that you skipped that dance, that field day, or that football game. Memories are so important because high school friends may not last forever, even though we all hope that they will. These may be some of the most important years of your life and you do not want to look back at them with any regret.
An Open Letter to the Person Who Wants to Make Themselves Better

By Clarity Eron

You are not something that needs fixing. You’re not just the sum of your parts, strown across the room like discarded drafts of the essay you’re convinced you need to fit yourself into. You’re not the voice in your head that says you aren’t doing enough, that you need to try harder and do better and impress everyone.

Everyone is not going to be impressed. There’s over seven billion people in the world. You won’t be able to get to all of them. Even if you did, too many have a steel dome around their hearts.

You were born of stardust and infinite possibilities. There are universes in every one of your neurons, worlds and planets in your mind, constellations at your fingertips. By some incredible and incomprehensible happenstance you were made from nothing, put into the wreckage of galaxies with the power of their rubble in your soul.

There is something working against you just as there is something working against us all. It may be death or luck or a god or something greater than we have the capacity to understand yet. But the importance isn’t in what it is; the importance is in how you face it. Will you stand taller than it, bare teeth and claws, tell it that you will not let it control you? Will you duck your head, hunch your shoulders and let it do as it pleases?

Or maybe you’ll look it in the eye and tell it, “I want to understand.” Because there is more to these strings of possibilities, to these universes firing in your neurons, than only fighting or fleeing. What makes you a person - not a human, but a person - is your ability to recognize the middle ground. Your ability to ask questions, to find the switch of your instinct and turn it off long enough to find answers. After all, life is only questions. It’s only trying to understand, asking how something works and why, an endless search for some truth that humans have convinced themselves exists.

And yet you’re so preoccupied with finding nonexistent breaks in the thread which makes your tapestry that you’re ignorant to the real picture it weaves.

You don’t ask questions. You don’t try to find answers or understand, because you’re too busy finding the right paint brushes to cover the crooked scars that stain the canvas of yourself. You’re so worried over your individual stars that you don’t see your constellations. And if you can’t see those, how can you see your planets, your universes?

You barely pay attention to the entirety of yourself. You take the details, the little parts, and dissect and analyze them until they’re worn to their nail beds, and then you let them grow again just enough to repeat. And the whole process, the tireless interrogation of yourself, slipping between good and bad cop like water, isn’t even for your own sake.

It’s for them, whoever they are. Their pearly grins and shiny eyes and bright futures, so energetic and approachable, the perfect conjugates to your unsteady foundation and weary smile. The bags under your eyes are bruises from the knuckles of their comfort, sleepless nights coloring purple beneath your lashes, a small price to pay to see them happy again.

You pull apart the threads of your pattern because you want to sew yourself better for them. You discard the drafts of this essay of yourself because you can’t find the right words that would make them remember when they read it. You take the constellations at your fingertips and scatter the stars across the dirty floor, hoping they’ll fall in a new picture, a new story that you can use to build new planets and worlds and universes.

But what you don’t realize is they are the same. The soft light you see, the dim glow of flickering candles in the skeletons of empty churches, blinds them as the reflection of fluorescent bulbs, harsh against linoleum tiles. You hear the quiet murmur of rain against window glass but they are deafened by the shattering pitches of explosions. They break themselves down and build themselves up to be better for you. The same shivering habit of wide-eyed insomnia to ensure your safety weighs on their shoulders, too.

Put the threads of your tapestry back where they were sewn all along. You want to be better for them, but they already think you are. Find them, keep them close, and let them know you believe the same.

Tell them, “We will understand this thing working against us.”

Tell them, “We are not just the sum of our parts.”

Tell them, “We were born of stardust and infinite possibilities.”

Because you - both of you - are not something that needs fixing.
Junior Jitters

You’re not alone. No, really. The anxiety and stress, the frustration and pressure. Feeling underestimated and weak. Fellow Juniors it’s here, the year everyone dreads, everyone hates with a stone smile and dirty look. The thoughts that cross our mind: SATs, college, picking a major, and kicking up our grades, comes to haunt our thoughts. Now some of you may be chuckling and commenting on the fact that I’m writing about the thing I know best, stress. I’m one of you and I know how you feel. I think the most difficult thing about this year is that I have no free time. I really don’t. I can’t remember the last time I sat on my own couch and watched a full movie without thinking about the things I should be getting done. I come home and lock myself in my room trying to get everything done: trying to please my teachers, and fellow collaborators. I’m trying to be a good sister and watch the last year of my sister’s hockey games. I’m trying to make all the student government meetings without missing work study. Now before I rant about everything on my list I’m telling you the real reason I decided to write this article: moments.

Through all my stress and attempts at success I’ve been looking back in regret of all the events I’ve missed. Everything that got in the way of being normal. I haven’t been to the movies in months and if I were to go, the only thing I’d be thinking about is how late I’ll get home. I constantly say to myself “I need to get my work done.” This is the very issue. We don’t take moments in “the now.” I’ll be the first to tell you if you don’t get a social life other than Snapchat you’re setting yourself up for failure. You can ace every course and be at the top of your grade but you’re depriving yourself of true happiness and friendship. Just remember the pride of good grades may last but it’s never the first thing someone remembers about you. It’s never the most important thing someone looks for when getting a job. The happiness from good grades only lasts for so long but friendship lasts a lifetime. From somebody who has no clue what she wants to do and is trying to decide from a spectrum of interests, I’m telling to not worry. You are going to figure it out, trust me. Even if it’s a year after high school the passion will reveal itself. Yes, it’s junior year but you can’t let it get to you. I know I do. You NEED to live in the moment. You need to go to the football game with your friends. You need to come to after school events to make friends. I went to a Timon game with two of my friends. I wish it could last. I spared a night of homework and worrying about my commitments. Instead, I froze my butt off on a metal bench, ate a gigantic cookie, and squeezed under a tiny blanket, but it was perfect. It was everything high school should be about.

In high school we are young, beautiful, and carefree. We are expected to do stupid things just for the sake of creating good memories. We are expected to have fun. Don’t waste your youth and your ability to do anything away. We don’t realize how much we are deprived of a certain normality when we go to a private school. We all live in different towns. We don’t have a homecoming. We don’t do the same things a public school does. There are pros and cons of this, but in the end it’s all about the education. How about we start making it about the moments we share? I never thought I could experience more stress than sophomore year and the research paper from Ms. Burns, but I digress. I am the kind of person who hates growing up. The thought of going to college amazes me because I don’t want to lose everything I have. Just think about it. You have to pay for gas, food, clothes; you have to do your laundry, cooking, cleaning, and remember your own appointments. After three months my brother realized how much money he saves while living at home. Growing up isn’t a blessing it’s a curse. Some of you laugh in scorn thinking you will be this awesome college freshmen going to parties and being independent, but let’s be honest do some of you know even how to make a hot meal? No, curbside doesn’t count. Most of our time is going to be studying and realizing how much work is involved.

My advice is to not rush. Don’t wish for something that is coming. You will only regret it. You will look back and remember how good you had it, but I’m a firm believer if you cherish things and don’t rush your future, your future will be spectacular and meaningful. If all you can think about is moving away from home it’s going to bite you back in some way. Stop your worrying and start living; some advice I need to accept.
Dear Catherine

Dear Catherine:
What is the hardest part of high school?
-Stressed-Out Sally

Dear Stressed-Out Sally:
For me, the hardest part of high school has been balancing my time. Many students are involved in clubs and sports, have jobs and family commitments, and participate in extracurricular activities outside of school, and all of this piled on top of homework and studying can make for a pretty hectic schedule! My first piece of advice would be to buy a planner (or use your school one) and on Sunday evening plan out everything you have to do for the week (homework, practices, doctors appointments, the more you include the easier your life will be). Then, throughout the week, strictly follow this schedule to make sure you get everything done that you need to. There may be some points throughout the year that you may need to put extracurriculars or work before school, it all depends on what is most important to you at the time. Also, a huge tip would be to use every second of the day in school wisely so it’s less you have to do at home! No matter how overwhelmed you get, always remember that everyone else is in the same boat as you and I’m sure most people would love to talk about their feelings :)

Dear Catherine:
How hard is it to find the right college for you?
-Enthusiastic Elizabeth

Dear Enthusiastic Elizabeth:
I am still undecided on a school at the moment, but for me, there were just some places that I did not feel comfortable and knew I could never see myself living or studying there. College is a big transition in your life, and feeling safe and happy while you are at a school is key. Go on a lot of tours and use the first few as a baseline to see generally what you like and dislike about campuses’. Then, as you get closer to the beginning of your senior year, think about what schools have good programs for your major and scholarship opportunities to begin thinking more scholastically about college.

Dear Catherine:
How should I prepare to get a good score on the SAT?
-Studious Susan

Dear Studious Susan:
For those of you that do not know what the SAT is, it is basically an entrance exam to college. To improve your score, take the review classes offered at Mercy, because the instructor really knows what he is talking about and gives good strategies for taking the test. Also, use the free website on Khan Academy to study. It gives you personalized practice questions based on past tests to improve your weakest areas to ensure a higher grade.

Dear Catherine:
How do you figure out what career profession you want to be in?
-Futuristic Fran

Dear Futuristic Fran:
For me, I think it is important to find something that comes easy to you and that you enjoy. Everyone is different in their strengths and weaknesses, so you should not choose a career path that someone else wants you to become. Also, do not choose a career based on money, because you could end up being very unhappy and having a lot of money is not worth sadness.