

\$40,000 Goal Set for Event

Third MMU Dance Marathon Seeks Volunteers

By Haley Weideman
Staff Writer

Mount Mercy Dance Marathon has started fundraising for its 2020 event. This year's big event will be held at the Hennessey Recreation Center on April 18, 2020. The event is free for students who are registered with a dancer account.

Apart from dancing, there will be food, games, and more. There will also be an opportunity to hear first-hand stories from survivors of pediatric cancer and other pediatric illnesses.

Taylor Wright, senior co-director, explained what Dance Marathon can do for students.

"Not only does Dance Marathon teach compassion and empathy to those involved through the power of our Miracle Families' stories, but it teaches responsibility, agency, and networking as well," Wright said. "Being involved in Dance Marathon means gaining these skills, but also gaining a sense of belonging and seeing how our generation can change the next."

Wright urges students to get involved to make a difference.

The upcoming Dance Marathon will be Mount Mercy's third annual. In 2018, MMU raised \$22,415.17, and in 2019, it raised \$32,780.67, with the theme of Toy Story. This year, the theme will be Lion King with Dance Marathon's fundraising goal to be \$40,000. Dance Marathon will conduct a variety of fundraisers in the spring semester, including selling Krispy Kreme donuts.

Dance Marathon has also closely worked with the school's improv club for an event that happened last month. Begging for Mercy hosted an improv show Friday, Nov. 22 at the McAuley Theatre for one of its improv festivals. At the event, all of the money from admissions, food and merchandise sales were given to Dance Marathon.

Prior to the improv festival, Dance Marathon had a family speaker Nov. 21 at 7 p.m. in the McAuley Theatre. The Schroeder family shared their story of their son, Austin "Flash" Schroeder's battle against childhood cancer. The event was open to all students, faculty and staff.

Dance Marathon also had the opportunity to crown the Turkey King and Queen at this year's Thanksgiving Dress dinner, with all proceeds going back to their organization as well.

Mount Mercy Dance Marathon is a student-run organization that raises money and awareness for those battling pediatric illness. All funds donated go directly to the University of Iowa Stead Family Children's Hospital.

"Being involved in Dance Marathon means gaining these skills, but also gaining a sense of belonging and seeing how our generation can change the next."

Taylor Wright,
senior co-director

DANCING FOR DANNY



Taylor Petersen/Times

The men's and women's volleyball team won the "Do it for Danny" dance contest on Dec. 2. More photos of the event on page 2. Evan Gaskill amazes his fellow players with how low he can go.

Focus on Farming

Final Fall Faculty Series Presentation Wednesday

By Jade Milota
Staff Writer

With a presentation on the health of America's food-production system and a final one on food sustainability, the 2019 Fall Faculty Series is concluding.

The 2019 series' theme was "Setting the Table: Pleasures and Perils of Food in America" and began Aug. 22 with the discussion, "Our Daily Bread: How the Agricultural Revolution Transformed Human Diet, Culture and Society" by Dr. Anna Waterman, associate professor of biology.

On Dec. 4, the series will conclude with a lecture by Rachel Murtaugh, director of sustainability, speech on Sustaining a Food System for a Growing World at 7 p.m. in Flaherty Community Room.

"I'm thankful to be a part of the series and to get the opportunity to speak on a matter that means so much to me," Murtaugh said.

The presentation before that on Nov. 19 saw Malinda Poduska, assistant professor of nursing, who discussed agriculture and the United States' food cultivating system.

Poduska has always enjoyed agriculture as she grew up on a livestock farm and then continued with her husband for a couple of years. When she left the industry, she became a professor and carried her passion with her. She now informs students, faculty, and staff of dilemmas in the field.

During her speech, she shared her disagreement towards Confinement Animal Feeding Operations (CAFO) in Iowa by sharing the unethical aspects imposed.

"There are 22 million hogs living in confinement as well as nearly seven thousand animals living under one roof that create fecal waste of 16 thousand people," Poduska shared.

She declares the biggest concern with CAFO is antibiotic resistance, with over 70 percent of medically necessary antibiotics being fed to animals as a form of disease protection.

These antibiotics don't kill superbugs, which kill 23 thousand people a year. Besides the cost of death, it additionally costs \$55 billion each year to treat another two thousand people affected.

The threatening nature of CAFO is one of the main components that fuels Poduska's concern towards agriculture and is what prompted her discussion at the series.

"This was my first time participating in the Fall Faculty Series, and I have enjoyed being a part of all the guest speakers on campus," Poduska said. "The series brings together faculty from all disciplines."

The Fall Faculty Series is an annual set of public presentations by faculty on a specific theme of public interest. The series currently is coordinated by Dr. Joy Ochs, professor of English. The faculty will choose a theme for fall 2020 early next year.



Six from MMU Present at Writing Conference

By Madelyn Orton
Multimedia Editor

Six Mount Mercy students presented at the 12th Annual Streamlines: Undergraduate Literature & Writing Conference on Saturday, Nov. 16 at the University of Dubuque, which co-sponsors the event with Clarke University.

Orlando Clark, Maraleen Ruiz-Diaz, Jessica Purgett, Haley Weideman, Allyson Killeen, and Madelyn Orton presented their literary analysis and creative writing pieces.

After submitting their work, the students were selected to present by the Streamlines committee. Students and professors from various schools such as Clarke University, Waldorf University, University of Saint



Mary Vermillion/Contributed

Students attending the Streamline Writing and Literature Conference include Orlando Clarke, Allyson Killiean, Haley Weideman, Jessica Purgett, Madelyn Orton and Maraleen Ruiz-Diaz.

Thomas, and University of Northern Iowa were in attendance.

"I really enjoyed listening to students from other universi-

ties speak on topics that I'm also interested in and am studying at Mount Mercy," said Haley Weideman, senior English major. Topics discussed throughout

Heads up:

Thursday Stress Busters

Stress Busters on Thursday, Dec. 5 will kick off with printmaking in the UC from 12 to 2 p.m. hosted by the Art & Design Club. SGA will be hosting mini golf in the Penthouse from 1 to 3 p.m.

Christmas Club Friday

Campus Ministry is planning the Christmas Club Friday on Dec. 6 from 2:30 to 4 p.m. in the UC. Students can expect prizes, carols, cookie decorating and a visit from Mr. and Mrs. Claus, and are encouraged to participate in a Christmas cheer contest.

Christmas on the Mount

Mount Mercy's university band and choir are coming together for a joint Christmas concert on Sunday, Dec. 8 at 2:30 p.m. in the McAuley Auditorium.

New in the Times

A cartoon by freshman Susana Zierke makes its debut on page 4 of this issue. That page, just for fun, also features a holiday crossword puzzle. Puzzle answers can be found online or in the next issue, which will be published Jan. 16 with submissions due Jan. 10.

the conference included film studies, environmental literature, toxic masculinity in literature, creative writing, and prose.

The keynote speaker was former executive director-editor of IowaWatch, Lyle Muller. He spoke on the importance of trustworthy communicators.

"I liked having the opportunity to sit in on panels for analytical pieces and creative works," said Weideman. "I was honestly surprised by how well-spoken everyone was and how supportive every crowd was during the panels that I attended."

Editor's Note: This is Madelyn Orton's final story for this newspaper. A senior, Orton has accepted a full-time job with Mount Mercy. The staff of the Times wishes her the best.



Taylor Petersen/Times
Grade Herring, sophomore, (left) leaps into the air as the MMU dance team performs Dec. 2 at the annual Do It for Danny basketball games. Besides the dance team, athletic teams also prepared and performed dance routines. The family of Danny Debacker (below) attended and was honored by former MMU coaches and by a Grandview baseball player (below).

Athletes Remember Danny Debacker

Night Honors MMU Player Who Died in 2015

More than 100 Items Collected for Charitable Donation

By Veronica Jons and Taylor Petersen
Editor-in-Chief and Sports Editor

Do It for Danny is an annual event that started after the death of the basketball and track athlete Danny Debacker, who passed away in 2015 after a car accident in the Quad Cities. Every year, Mount Mercy honors Debacker by having a basketball night dedicated in his honor.

After the starting line-up of the Mount Mercy men’s team was announced, Debaker’s parents and grandmother were honored with a bouquet of flowers from Grand View and a standing ovation from the crowd.

At Do It for Danny Night, the Mount Mercy sports teams have a dance-off, competing to show off their talents. The reigning champions, the softball team, dropped their crown and a new team gladly picked it up—the combined Mustang volleyball team.

New this year, the Council of Student Athletes (CSA) sponsored a donation drive for the less fortunate. The donations went towards the Catherine McAuley Center and ranged from nonperishable items to articles of clothing to keep people warm in the winter.

Along with the dance-off, all sports teams were required to donate at least one item per athlete to help with the donation amount. The CSA did not stop there, though. In order to get in to the games for free, fans could also donate items to help the charitable cause.

This drive was a huge success, having a total of over 100 items to be donated for the good cause.



Taylor Petersen/ Times
Members of the bowling team (left) act as pins and are about to be knocked over by a strike during their dance routine. A memorial bench (below) at the Hennessy Recreation Center honors Danny Debacker.



Men’s volleyball players (left) dance Monday at the event. The combined men’s and women’s volleyball teams won the dance competition.

Diversity Speaker Focuses on the Ties of Culture and Memory



Ekaterina Rangelova/ Times
Diversity speaker Dr. Wachanga speaks in the Chapel of Mercy on campus.

By Ekaterina Rangelova
Editorial Editor

How we remember and what creates memories is a popular question amongst scientists. A professor at the University of Wisconsin, Dr. Ndirangu Wachanga, spoke about how what we remember shapes how we see each other and what makes us forget certain things.

“To remember is to make a memory, because remembering presupposes that there are things that have defined us in the past,” said Wachanga. “The past always speaks to the present.”

He believes that this idea helps us to understand how we relate to each other in terms of social, economic and political relations. He incorporated this idea into his documentaries by looking at biographies of individuals to illustrate how they are also biographies of the process of

becoming of their own societies.

Wachanga has done three documentaries, one of which is about the life and works of political scientist and cultural thinker Ali Mazrui. It won the 2015 New York African Studies Association Book Award.

The documentary he presented showed the struggles, success and triumph of Micere Mugo.

“It is also important because it is a story of a black woman, who became a pioneer in so many things,” said Wachanga. “She was put in a school as an experiment by the British to see if black people could think the same way as white people.”

Colonials were wondering if the country would integrate, so it seemed as though the independence of her country depended on her performance. Wachanga said Mugo

“The past always speaks to the present.”
Dr. Ndirangu Wachanga

was used as a guinea pig. Mugo became an editor of a magazine, received a PhD in Canada and became the first woman in an African university.

“Her story is not told in the same length as the story of men who have not done as much as her,” said Wachanga. “I think her biography takes us to examine what has presently been called the Me-Too Movement, which in her story is a reminder that the disenfranchisement of women did not just begin with this movement, but it has started long time ago.”

There are women who, just like Mugo, have been very vocal about equality. Wachanga’s concern about memory stems from the fact that it leads people into those sorts of conversations by looking at lives that have already been lived.

Mount Mercy Needs New Traditions to Bring Alumni Back

Other Local Schools Provide Inspiration for Possibilities

We all are keenly accustomed to traditions in our lives. It could be as small as always having a meal at 6 p.m. or the family decorating the Christmas tree every year together. Most of us can say we have plenty of traditions. College, however, can be different. At Mount Mercy, there are a few student traditions. One that most of us remember is the tunnel signing, where each student from the freshman class gets to

Staff Editorial
The opinion of Times editors

sign the designated spot on one of the tunnel walls. At this holiday time when many of us get caught up in family traditions, we'd like to see MMU gain some traditions that engage students more—but that also draw in staff, faculty and alumni. If the Mount Mercy community came together to brainstorm ideas for traditions that will bring alumni back, we could have successful events that will never die. An event that would help is the school's homecoming. What traditions does homecoming bring, besides soccer games? We would like to see a bit more hoopla around this event. Maybe, for example, the school could host a homecoming parade, with floats from the court, different athletic teams, clubs and organizations, or even

faculty and staff. With the parade, there could be more added to the Party on the Plaza to attract more attendance; maybe a big meal event like a fish fry or grill out. During games the students may have more attendance if they did engaging activities every home game with Mustang merchandise thrown to the crowd at halftime. Basically, we think MMU asks students often what they want. We don't mind that—but want the question to be broader. What does everyone at the Hill want?

What would bring alumni back? For more ideas, we can look at our neighbors. Other nearby colleges have traditions that continue to bring in a multitude of people. Coe College has an alumni and faculty happy hour—not only does current faculty attend with alumni but also retired faculty! Alumni and students are both invited to partake in the Homecoming Showcase Concert, a Kohawk party called All-Alumni Celebration: Game On, a grill out tailgate and a brunch. The University of Iowa has

their annual homecoming parade that many alumni come back for. They also have campus departments host a block party or open house to show students and alumni what has been accomplished so far in the school year. Wartburg has many intramurals and small parties with silent auctions, allowing all proceeds to go to the school during homecoming week for alumni to attend. The school also hosts a big campus Oktoberfest for alumni and students of age, with children to be dropped off at Kidsfest with activities in a separate area on campus. We need more traditions at Mount Mercy. Such traditions create character, build students' memories and allow the campus to grow.

Advent is Time for Reflection

Advent is here! It started Dec. 1, which means if you want to take it seriously this year, you still have time. What is Advent you say? Well, it's a time to prepare for Jesus' coming on Christmas. Advent consists of the first four weeks before Christmas. It's a time to step back, relax, meditate and await the coming of Christ. It's a time to reflect on our lives and who we are. A time to surrender to Him once again and place our lives into His hands. For me, Advent teaches patience because it's so hard not to cave in to the secular world of celebrating Christmas before it happens. Our culture makes it hard not to when stores are putting up decorations, Christmas music is on every station, and decorations are starting to be put up. Don't get me wrong, all these things are good; however, they make it hard to await the coming of Christ when we act like He was already born. So why would we prepare for Christmas rather than just jump into the secular celebrations right away? Well, there's a good reason for it. When you have something important happen in your life, you usually want to pre-

Faith on the Hill



Kasey Kaimann
Columnist

pare for it. For example, you normally don't just wake up one day and get married. No, you plan and prepare for it. It's the same with Christmas! Christmas is such an important day for us because we are celebrating the coming of Jesus into this world. We are given the chance to receive Jesus into our hearts again in a very real way. Last year was the first time I really took this seriously and, wow, let me tell you, it was worth it! At Christmas Mass, I was so overjoyed. I felt the presence of God all around me and felt Jesus in my heart in a way I have never before. It's so hard to explain, but it was the most real, most joyful Christmas I have ever encountered. This is the reason I want to challenge you to approach this Christmas differently. I challenge you to take Advent seriously so that when Christmas comes, you also can receive Him in your heart in a new way. Open your heart to the Lord and spend more time with Him in prayer this season. The more open you are to Him, the more He can overflow your heart, soul and mind with Himself. So, go for it! Meditate on His word. Enter into silence. Surrender the stress of buying gifts. Spend time with family. Enter into Jesus' life. Pray every day. He came into this world to give you eternal life, everlasting joy, meaning to your life and a love like no other. Let that be something to prepare for!

Voting for a Candidate has a Bigger Impact than Most Think

Opinion



Jada Veasey
Opinion Editor

There are a lot of cliché political phrases that have really begun to grind my gears this caucus season, but there's one that really takes the cake – “choosing a Democratic candidate to caucus feels like choosing the lesser of many evils!” I'm sick of hearing this! Absolutely sick of it. I get it, we're Americans. At our very core, we are idealists. We're immediately suspicious of career politicians, yet also immediately suspicious of anyone who lacks political experience. We're walking contradictions, political paradoxes, etcetera. So, whatever, maybe none of the candidates in the running are your definition of “perfect.” Guess what? Your idea of a

perfect politician probably doesn't exist. It's a tough pill to swallow, but it had to be said. Sometimes it's easier to think of elections as something else. For the sake of this article, I'm going to talk about trains. You read that right. Trains! When you want to take a train, you check to see if there's a train going straight to your intended destination. Sometimes there is one, and it's awesome and easy, so you buy your ticket and you hop on that train. But other times, there is no train headed to your destination. So, what do you do? Do you give up on trains altogether, and swear off railroads for the rest of eternity? Well, of course not!

Instead, you check to see which of the trains that are running are headed close to your destination, and then you buy your ticket and you get on the train. Sure, you're not *exactly* where you wanted to be, but at least you're a lot closer than where you started. That's what voting is! If your perfect candidate isn't running, take a glance at the imperfect options and back the one that's closest to your beliefs. It's not a perfect solution, but politics and perfection don't tend to coexist, do they? It's better to choose a candidate who's close to what you want than to avoid choosing a candidate at all. Remember that when you go to caucus on Monday, Feb. 3!

Repeated Content Over Multiple Years Doesn't Help Students

While I love Mount Mercy and truly do believe that I'm getting a quality education that is preparing me for my future career, I have a suggestion for improvement. Just as at many other liberal arts universities, Mount Mercy requires students to fulfill certain “domain” courses, or general education courses. I'm completely fine with this. Just like other universities, there are levels of difficulty within each major that applies to individual courses. Once again, I'm completely fine with that; it makes sense. However, my issue comes when students have to take an introductory course their junior or senior year that doesn't challenge them, just because it wasn't offered at a time that fit their schedule before then. I understand that this is a

Opinion



Caroline Groesbeck
Managing Editor

challenge students face at any small university or college. Many times, classes are offered every other year. My problem comes when there's no alternative to taking such a course. For instance, I have written for the Mount Mercy Times for a year-and-a-half, served as editor-in-chief last year, secured a marketing internship over the past summer, and continued that internship into the school year, all while completing my English, communication, and business courses and working as a writing center tutor in the Academic Center of Excellence (ACE). Despite all of my experience with Associated Press-style, journalistic writing, I'm currently in a Media Grammar course. Before I go on, I would like to stipulate that I know that this course is very useful and necessary for many students; it's a great way to strengthen one's writing skills while still earning credits. However, for me, this class isn't challenging and doesn't provide much new insight into Associated Press-style. I know that I'm not the only student

who has taken a course later in their academic career that isn't challenging. Many students complete courses in high school that they then have to retake in college, just because they couldn't take it for credit or because the credit didn't transfer. For this reason, I think that Mount Mercy should implement a system for measuring whether or not a student has enough real-world experience to be exempt from certain, low-level courses. One solution could be to let students take a test similar to one students in that particular class would take at the end of the semester—it could even be a step above what the students would take and be more challenging. Allowing students who possess enough experience to pass these tests to “test out” of these courses would help not only the

student, but also the professor. If some students were allowed to test out, professor could give more attention to students who might be struggling more and their other classes. Less students also means less assignments to grade, allowing the professor to give more thorough feedback and time to catch-up if need be. Often times, introductory courses are also more tightly packed and allowing students to test out would help solve that problem. Administration and professors would also be able to see what courses are needed more by or have more interest from students. If a large number of students are testing out of a particular class, administration and faculty would be able to logically conclude that their efforts would be more effectively be used in a different class or by creating a

new class. Another solution could be combining two introductory classes. For example, much of the content we covered in my media grammar class in the beginning of the year was also covered in my Introduction to Journalism class I took my freshman year. If one were to combine these two classes, the overlapping content would be reduced, and the journalism class would be enriched and strengthened by the additional content from the grammar class. It would also strengthen students' writing sooner rather than later, an obvious benefit for both the faculty and students. While it might be more difficult for the university at first, this system would help the students sooner rather than later. It also will lessen overall work from the professors. Allowing students to test out of certain classes frees up time in their schedules to take the classes they want and need to take, rather than ones they already have experienced in the real-world or previous classes.



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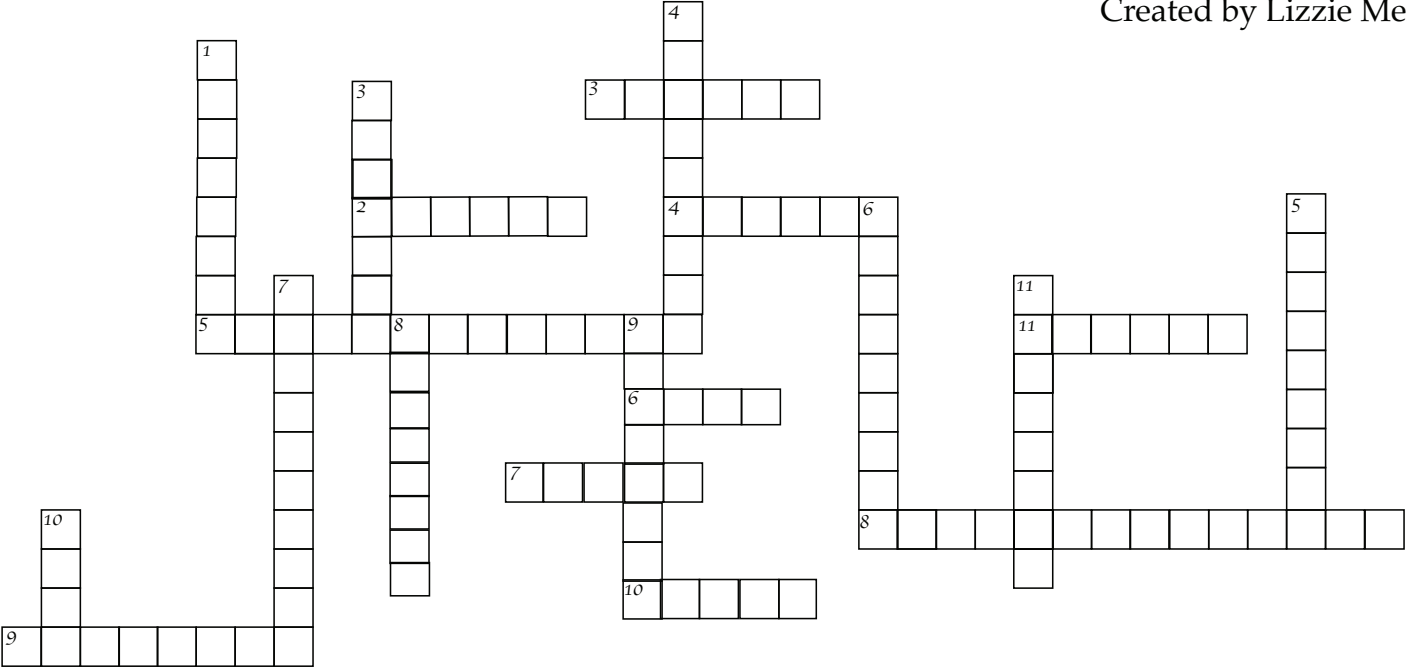
Joe Sheller
Faculty Advisor

The Mount Mercy Times is a biweekly student publication serving MMU students, faculty, and staff and those close to the Mount Mercy University community. The Times is published on alternate Thursdays during the school year (each issue has a Thursday date, but the paper is usually distributed Wednesday). In addition, the Times maintains a student-run website for the dissemination of additional news in various forms, including Times TV video stories. Membership on the staff of the Times is open to any MMU student, full- or part-time, undergraduate or graduate. Please attend one of our staff meetings, which are all open to the public, or contact an editor or our advisor for more information. Meetings will be announced in the paper, via social media and with on-campus posters. Staff Writers are listed by name on the stories they write, photographers are credited on photos.

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Created by Lizzie Meine



DOWN:

1. There are 8 days of _____.

3. You'll get coal if you're _____.

4. December 25th is _____ day!

5. City where Jesus was born.

6. Song: "Since we've got no place to go, _____!"

7. Fruit-based, hot, seasonal drink.

8. Hot drink topped with marshmallows, and drunk by the fireplace.

9. Time of the holiday season.

10. Naughty or _____.

11. Month of Christmas.

ACROSS:

2. _____ and receiving.

3. Songs sung during the holiday season.

4. Shiny strings people hang on their trees.

5. You wish someone _____.

6. Santa checks this twice.

7. The big, jolly guy that lives in the North Pole.

8. Bing Crosby is wishing for a _____.

9. _____ fly the sleigh.

10. Santa's little helpers.

11. Dairy-based Christmas drink.

We're Walking in a Winter Wonderland, Oh Yay!

By Nicole Carl
Club & Organizations Editor

On Saturday, Nov. 16, M2AP Board and student engagement came together to host the last UC Takeover of the semester. The theme for this chilly time of year was a winter wonderland.

Though the UC Takeover was supposed to start at 7 p.m., a line started forming at 6 p.m., extending all the way back to the Academic Center for Excellence. The first 120 people that stood in line for an hour received the event's soft, blue crewneck sweatshirt, which featured a mustang and snowflakes on the front.

When the event started, students were presented with many different things that they could choose to participate in. One way to get involved was with the gingerbread house contest, with four-person groups that were given a specific amount of time and the same materials to create the best gingerbread house. Once the building was over, there was a surprise visit from Mr. and Mrs. Clause, who judged the winner of the gingerbread house contest.

Many winter-themed games



Nicole Carl/ Times

Students spend the night painting winter-themed mason jars for the Holiday season.

were available to students, which gave them the chance to win different prizes. Two caricature artists were on-site working with a new student every couple minutes to draw them. There was also a giant inflatable snow globe to get your picture taken in.

In the cafeteria, mason jars were available to decorate, and down in Betty Cherry, customizable mini Christmas trees were supplied. If students completed activities, they could receive tickets that would be put into a drawing. The prizes for the

drawing were giant buckets filled with winter-themed items.

If you were not able to experience this winter wonderland, don't worry, there will be more opportunities in the spring semester.

Consider Sustainable Shopping for the Holidays

By Ekaterina Rangelova
Editorial editor

Sustainable shopping is a wonderful way for people to take care of the environment and themselves. Abbie Ring, freshman secondary English education major, has been passionate about this idea since she was a child.

She shares that she grew up thrift shopping as a means of acquiring clothes. In her recent speech about sustainability, Ring revealed some shocking information. "Apparently, 8 percent of the landfill content is textiles alone, and that was sort of shocking because I have always donated my clothes or handed them down to a sibling. But a lot of people just throw away their clothes," Ring said.

She says that even though these materials will biodegrade easily, for her, the bigger concern is that her culture is wasteful.

Ring hopes to change people's opinions on what they should do with their clothes once they no longer want them, and how they get them in the first place. Her favorite clothing stores include Goodwill, Salvation Army, and some charity shops back in her home state of Illinois. She tries to influence others into sustainable shopping by showing that thrifting is cheaper and better for the world.

"We are a very consumerist society, we have been trained to buy things and thrown them away."

Joy Ochs

Joy Ochs, professor of English, also has a passion about sustainable shopping. She says that taking care of the environment has always been important to her and her goal for society is to convey the idea that people should be more thoughtful when it comes to purchasing things.

"We are a very consumerist society; we have been trained to buy things and throw them away," said Ochs. "If you buy something that you know is going to break and replace it because it is cheap, that

is not very sustainable versus spending a little bit more getting something that is quality made, and will last for a while."

Another way Ochs lives sustainably is by trying to preserve her electronics to last as long as they can.

Ochs believes individuals can make their own choices. Making people aware of how sustainable shopping can help the environment is important, but Ochs has little hope that the current situation will change that easily.

"It is on corporations to make more durable goods, and stop selling us things that are meant to wear out really quickly," she said. "Advertising, which is asking us to buy and toss, buy and toss, and can we step into a different paradigm where we are not doing that."

For the holidays, consider repurposing items to create a new gift. It doesn't only save money, it can save the environment too.

'Let It Snow' Lets Us Down

It's the most wonderful time of the year... and Netflix is taking advantage of it. The streaming giant dropped its most recent original Christmas film, "Let It Snow" on Nov. 8, just in time for Christmas fanatics (like me) to get an early start on celebrating the holiday.

I'll admit, I had high hopes for "Let It Snow." The film is based on the charming 2008 fix-up novel; a fun collaboration between authors John Green, Maureen Johnson, and Lauren Myracle. The film keeps the original story's basic premise, three holiday romances that all intertwine in the end, but also makes a few updates and takes a couple of liberties.

As a fan of any and all things John Green, I hoped I would love this movie as much I loved the book. Unfortunately, the film fell short.

The story is centered around three sort-of-couples: Tobin and Angie (nicknamed "The Duke"), Stuart and Julie, and Dorrie and Tegan. There is a host of supporting characters scattered throughout the plot as well, from childhood best friends, ex-boyfriends, and the local cryptid, a woman who drives a tow truck while covered in tin foil. It's a lot to take in.

Overall, the film is a fun and festive experience. Viewers are treated to lots of lovely Christmas romance clichés—pop star meets normal girl, kisses in the freezing cold snow, and holiday party hookups. As far as romantic Christmas movies go, this one feels pretty much like the standard fare.

Perhaps that's my problem with "Let It Snow." Despite a star-studded cast featuring everyone from Jacob Batalon (who plays Ned in the most recent "Spider-Man" film franchise), Shameik Moore (of "Dope" and "Into the Spideverse" fame), to Joan Cusak (the star of "Working Girl" and the voice of Jessie in the "Toy Story" films), the film sometimes failed to keep my attention.

I found myself unable to get emotionally invested in the overlapping stories. Part of the problem was a lack of context – everyone in the story knew each other and had their own pasts and histories, but I was largely unable to understand those connections, and I knew little about their pasts.

That being said, "Let It Snow" is still worth the watch. The cast is delightfully diverse, there's decent LGBTQ+ representation, and the soundtrack is awesome. I'd recommend it to any Netflix subscriber in need of some holiday cheer, just don't expect it to push the envelope of Christmas cinema or anything. I give it a solid 3.5 stars out of 5.



Netflix Publicity Poster

'Shiny Temptations' New Comic

Editor's Note:

Mount Mercy Student Susana Zierke drew this cartoon for the Mount Mercy Times. Zierke is a freshman majoring in art education.



Women’s Volleyball Season Ends Against Grand View Vikings

By Chase Costa
Staff Writer

Mount Mercy’s women’s volleyball season has come to an end. The Mustangs played their final match in Des Moines, Iowa against the no. 11 nationally-ranked Vikings of Grand View University.

The Mustangs lost in three sets to the first-seeded Vikings in the Heart of America Women’s Volleyball Championship Semifinals. In their previous match before competing against Central Methodist, they needed to beat Evangel University in the quarterfinals of the tournament, they beat the Crusaders in five sets 3-2.

Even though the Mustangs’ season ended sooner than anticipated, they still managed to end their season at 21-12. Junior middle blocker Abbi Tunis had some positive thoughts about their season. Tunis said, “Overall I think the season went really well, we had so many players show growth and improvement. I feel like we always showed up to every match to compete. Our team also bonded very well, which I believe helped us be successful.”

Three Mustangs had major

career accomplishments this year; junior Maddie Bell and senior Alyssa Weldon both eclipsed 1,000 career kills. Junior setter Kayla Daggett reached 3,000 assists this year, which puts her 4th all-time in Mount Mercy Women’s Volleyball for assists.

Kayla Daggett also had something to say about how their season went, saying, “I think we surprised everyone this season. It was filled with ups and downs, but at the end of the day, we came together as a team and put our best foot forward. Our team went through a lot this year, but we came out on the other side stronger and better than we were before. I couldn’t be more proud of this team.”

Despite falling short of the conference championship this year, there is hope that they will come back even better next year. This year the team had four all-conference athletes who were voted in by the coaches around the conference: Maddie Bell, Abbi Tunis, Gabi Delsing and Kayla Daggett.

All these women will return next year for their last season. The Mustangs have a good chance to be nationally ranked next year and be a real powerhouse in the Heart of America Conference.

“Our team went through a lot this year, but we came out on the other side stronger and better than we were before. I couldn’t be more proud of this team.”

Kayla Daggett



Josh Harmon/ Times

Kayla Daggett (above) sets to the hitters during the first set of the night.

Mustangs (left) celebrate a kill against the Grand View Vikings, ranked no. 11 nationally.



Taylor Petersen/ Times

#5 Dennis McKinney, junior, (right) goes for a layup against the Grand View University Vikings on the Do It for Danny Whiteout Night, leading to a win for the men’s team.



Vikings Get Trampled in a Second-Half Comeback

By Taylor Petersen and Veronica Jons
Sports Editor and Editor-in-Chief

The Grand View University Vikings were no match for the men’s basketball team in the second half, with the final score of 80-65 at the Do It for Danny Whiteout Night on Dec. 2.

It was rough start out of the stables for the Mustangs, with Grand View consistently shooting threes, leading to a score of 42-35 in the first half. Grand View’s point guard, sophomore Ryan Miller, continued to block Mount Mercy’s baskets left and right.

However, juniors RoyShawn Webb and Dennis McKinney brought the Mustangs back in the second half with their precision in shooting threes and dunk shots. Halfway in the second half, Mount Mercy tied with the Vikings 50-50.

Going head-to-head, the Mustangs pushed back the Vikings, getting the lead by adding 45 points at the end of the second half.

McKinney said, “In the second half we went out there and we played solid defence that led to us getting out and running. When we run we are at our best and that showed tonight.”

The final score was 80-65, making them 2-2 for the Heart of America Conference and 5-3 overall.

The Mustangs were led in scoring by Webb with 22 points, followed by McKinney with 16 points. The Vikings lead scorer was junior Colton Kolowski with 16 points, followed by Miller with 14 points.

The next home game will be on Saturday, Dec. 14 at 2 p.m. in the Hennessey Rec. Center against the Baker University Wildcats.



Taylor Petersen/ Times

#21 Paris Sheck, junior, goes for a shot against the Grand View Vikings on the Do It for Danny Whiteout Night.

Women’s B-Ball Suffers Hard Loss to the Vikings

By Taylor Petersen and Veronica Jons
Sports Editor and Editor-in-Chief

Mount Mercy women’s basketball team took a hard fall against the Grand View Vikings Monday, Dec. 2, at the Do It for Danny Whiteout Night.

The first few minutes of the opening game seemed to be a good start for the Mustangs, with junior Grace Stalzer sinking a three-point shot. However, throughout the game, the Mustangs couldn’t take the heat of the fast-paced Vikings and fell behind after the first quarter with a score of 21-15.

The women’s team tried to fight back by adding an additional 15 points in the second quarter, but Grand View stayed on the top by adding 17 points to their score.

The lead scorer of the night was freshman Sofia Popp with 20 points, with senior Brianna

Thomas not far behind. Despite the baskets being made for the Mustangs, they were only at 43 for the third quarter, with the Vikings still in the lead with a score of 59. To add to Popp’s performance for the night, her and junior Kyleigh Milan were the top rebounders with 7 total for the game.

In the fourth quarter, both teams went back-to-back with shots, allowing both the Vikings and the Mustangs to score 23 points each. The game finished with a final score of 82-66, with the Mustangs suffering their third conference loss. They are now 2-5 overall. Grand View advanced to 6-2 overall and 3-1 in the conference, with the Vikings being led in scoring by Shannon Pinsey (20 points) and Casey Carr (14 points).

The next home game will be against the Baker University Wildcats on Saturday, Dec. 14 at noon in the Hennessey Rec. Center.

Sports In Short

XC finish 21 in NAIA Championships

After winning the Heart of America Conference, the Mount Mercy cross-country team travelled to Fort Vancouver National Historical Site in Vancouver, Washington, on Friday, Nov. 22 to participate in the NAIA National Championship.

The Mustang women placed three of their top seven inside the top 100 in this competitive national race, which helped them secure the 21 finish in the nation. They set another school record for the women’s highest finish which was previously 22.

Senior Vanessa Cortes was able to secure the 71 place with a time of 19:11. She was followed by two of her teammates Emily Erickson, sophomore, and Andrea Ertz, senior, who finished 86 and 89, respectively.

Rounding out the top seven Mustang women was Kelsi Huhndorf, sophomore, (195 place), Jessica Ertz, senior, (240

place), Hallie Kephart, freshman, (292 place) and Mady Roth, senior, (295 place). The only Mustang man to qualify for the championship, Jacob Blackmon, senior, finished with a time of 27:01, placing 183 place out of 335 runners.

Crusaders Dominate Mustangs in Third Quarter

The Mount Mercy women’s basketball offense wasn’t enough at the Heart of America Athletic Conference opener Saturday, Nov. 16 against the Evangel University Crusaders, losing 77-56. The Mustangs were able to keep up with the Crusaders, leading 31-28 by the end of the second, however, the Crusaders dominated the third quarter, outscoring the Mustangs 25-9. Brianna Thomas, senior, led Mount Mercy in scoring with 13 points.

Mustang Men Win First Season Conference Game

After their first loss of the season the Wednesday before, the Mount Mercy men’s basketball team came out on-top in the Heart of America Athletic Conference opener Saturday, Nov. 16. The Mustangs’ strong offense led to their 85-77 victory against the Evangel University Crusaders. They were able to shoot 40 percent from beyond the arc. Dennis McKinney, junior, led the Mustangs in scoring with 26 points. Junior Bailey Basala followed by putting up 16 points.

Benedictine Ravens Flock Women’s Basketball

The Mount Mercy women’s basketball lost to Benedictine College 84-69 Saturday, Nov. 23, making the Mustangs 0-2 in the conference and 1-4 overall. The Mustangs shot 40 percent from the field and 27.8 percent from beyond the arc. Freshman Sofia

Popp led the Mustangs, putting 23 points on the board. The women’s basketball team’s next home game will be Saturday, Dec. 14 against the Baker University Wildcats at noon in the Hennessey Rec. Center.

Mustangs Suffer Second Conference Loss

On Saturday, Nov. 23, the Mount Mercy men’s basketball team fell to 1-1 in the conference and 4-2 overall after their 76-64 conference match loss against the Benedictine College Ravens. The Mustangs shot 37.9 percent from the field and were 30 percent from beyond the arc. Mustangs were led in scoring by Davion Watson, senior, and Bailey Basala, sophomore, both putting up 14 points each. The men’s basketball team’s next home game will be Saturday, Dec. 14 against the Baker University Wildcats at 2 p.m. in the Hennessey Rec. Center.

Upcoming Home Games:

Saturday, Dec. 14

Women’s Basketball v. Baker University at noon in the Hennessey Rec. Center

Men’s Basketball v. Baker University at 2 p.m. in the Hennessey Rec Center

Monday, Dec. 16

Men’s Basketball v. Saint Ambrose University at 6 p.m. in the Hennessey Rec. Center

Tuesday, Dec. 17

Women’s Basketball v. Viterbo University at 5:30 p.m. in the Hennessey Rec. Center

Men’s Basketball v. Viterbo University at 7:30 p.m. in the Hennessey Rec. Center

Sunday, Jan. 5

J.V. Men’s Basketball v. Cornell College at 3 p.m. in the Hennessey Rec. Center

Wednesday, Jan. 8

Women’s Basketball v. Central Methodist University at 5:30 p.m. in the Hennessey Rec. Center

Men’s Basketball v. Central Methodist University at 7:30 p.m. in the Hennessey Rec. Center

Monday Jan. 13

J.V. Women’s Basketball v. John Wood CC at 6 p.m. in the Hennessey Rec. Center

J.V. Men’s Basketball v. Central CC at 6 p.m. in the Hennessey Rec. Center

Wednesday, Jan. 15

Women’s Basketball v. Culver-Stockton College at 5:30 p.m. in the Hennessey Rec. Center

Men’s Basketball v. Culver-Stockton College at 7:30 p.m. in the Hennessey Rec. Center

Friday, Jan. 17

Men’s Volleyball v. Dordt University at 7 p.m. in the Hennessey Rec. Center

‘Star Wars’ Inspired MMU Sophomore to Become a Fencer

Erickson Once Had Broken Sword Pointed at Her Neck

By Aaron Golding
Business Manager

Did you ever want to be a Jedi from Star Wars when you were younger? Emily Erickson did, so she decided to start fencing at the age of 10.

Erickson, a sophomore medical lab science major, wasn’t involved in a lot of sports other than running cross country and track. Her dad knew she really liked lightsabers, so he told Emily that she could be just like a Jedi with her weapon. She really liked that idea when she was younger, so she decided to join the Des Moines Fencing Club, which was the closest fencing location to her home.

“It was fun learning how to fence and I miss the excitement of it,” said Erickson.

She currently fences in the adult age bracket, which is 14 and up. She explained that fencing is a very fast-paced sport which requires a lot of critical thinking skills. These skills are important to fencers because they have to think a couple moves ahead so they are not stuck in a position where they may receive a touch



Aaron Golding/Times (left)
Emily Erickson/ Contributed (below)

Emily Erickson (below) poses before a fencing bout in her gear for the sport. Erickson (left) plans to focus on school and athletics at Mount Mercy before getting more involved in summer tournaments.



from their opponent.

A touch is like a point in any other sport. She explained that depending on what bout (round) a fencer is on, they may play anywhere between five and fifteen touches.

“Fencing is just like a game of chess,” said Erickson. “It uses the same type of skills that a chess player uses to be good at chess.”

Fencing is not usually dan-

gerous, but she said it could be if people aren’t careful. Once, Erickson was fencing and her opponent’s weapon actually snapped in half. This has been the only time Erickson was worried because the weapon they use can be sharp only if it happens to snap in half. His weapon snapped right in half while she was bouting with him and it was pointed right at her neck.

For the most part, fencing is very safe, and the touch may just hurt for a little bit.

“A touch feels like a pinch,”

said Erickson.

It doesn’t hurt too bad because fencers are required to wear a lot of gear. Erickson said that the gear usually gets very hot at times during practice, or while they are bouting since it is such a fast-paced sport. Erickson wears long socks, pants, sneakers, two different jackets, a chest plate, gloves, a helmet and an under-amour protector just to stay protected and safe while she is bouting.

Fencing has three different weapon types, foil, epee and

saber. Erickson explained that she is in the foil-weapon field. This type is the “right of way,” which makes this type special. The goal is to touch the torso to gain points.

Erickson participates in tournaments during the summer, which she really likes doing. She anticipates being more involved in fencing after college and after she finishes her collegiate athletics.

Connor Christophersen/contributed

Incoming SGA officers pose with Dr. Nate Klein, dean of students (far right). They include Devin Blish, treasurer; Andrea Lopez, vice president; Andrea Lantz, president; and Veronica Jons, secretary. Jons reported this story.

Emma Lantz Wins SGA President Students Sought For Cabinet Posts

By Veronica Jons
Editor-in-Chief

The Student Government Association election season is underway.

Nov. 14 was the start of the SGA executive elections, where four open positions were available to be filled. Those positions included presi-



dent, vice president, treasurer, and secretary. Candidates were given a week to campaign over campus in hopes they would get the vote of the student body.

Most of the campaigning was posters on boards, meetings with students for a Q&A, reaching out to students via social media platforms, and having photo shoots.

Polls closed Nov. 20, with calls going out to those who won their office positions the next day. At the annual dress dinner, the office positions were announced to

all in attendance.

The 2020 SGA executive officers are Emma Lantz, president; Andrea Lopez, vice president; Devin Blish, treasurer; and Veronica Jons, secretary.

SGA is now looking for students to fill on the cabinet. Applications are due Dec. 6 with call-backs to be expected before winter break. The open positions for the cabinet team on SGA is the activities coordinator, director of public relations, coordinator of clubs, and the administrative assistant.

Tuition Up \$1,644

By Veronica Jons
Editor-in-Chief

With every new year comes new price tags, and Mount Mercy is no exception. On Nov. 22, the 2020-2021 school year’s new tuition, room and board, and fees were released.

From this year to next year, there is a \$1,644 increase in tuition, with a \$198 increase of the room and board rate. Fortunately, all other fees such as the new wellness fee, SGA and technology fees are all the same as the current school year.

For a full-time student, tuition will be \$34,506 for 2020-2021. This year, tuition is \$32,862.

However, room and board rates have changed due to the

increase of the room and meal plan costs. This year for a semester a Regina double or McAuley room costs \$2,394, however next year it will be \$2,442. An Andreas triple this year is \$2,754 compared to next year is \$2,809; Lower campus is \$3,193 with next year being \$3,257; Hazel houses costs \$3,276 compared to \$3,341 next year.

Despite students’ outrage over the big change cost of the meal plan, the school is continuing to increase the price of the meal plans for next year. The VIP meal plan this year currently is \$2,563, but next year it will be raised to \$2,614. Luckily for juniors, seniors, and graduate students, they can get the Mustang meal plan now for \$2,087 with next year rising \$42.

Boston Singer-Songwriter Brings Acoustic Tunes to U. Center Concert

By Emilio Ramos
Staff Writer

“But I know my love for you is ever strong. Cause you show me the light when it’s dark. I can feel your heartbeat. It’s burning like a sun.” Those are lyrics from the song “Heartbeat,” an original song by Ryan LaPerle. They were sung in the University Center of Mount Mercy on Thursday, Nov. 14, when he performed a show for the students.

LaPerle is a singer-songwriter who is currently based out of Boston,

Massachusetts. During his set, he showcased his skills by combining his acoustic style with many different genres of songs, ranging from rock to rap and pop. While LaPerle mostly played cover songs, he also played a few of his original pieces.

Students came in pajamas and with their homework to listen to the music, but that wasn’t the only thing LaPerle provided. There was a table set up where LaPerle offered tea to audience members, and he said he likes to bring tea for people to enjoy for every show he does.

The small number of students who

came out for the concert enjoyed popular covers of songs including “Wake Me Up” by Avicii, “The Middle” by Zedd, “In My Blood” by Shawn Mendes, and “Closer” by The Chainsmokers. Classic songs like Ben E. King’s “Stand by Me” and Pentatonix’s “Hallelujah” were also played alongside songs by Michael Jackson, Whitney Houston, Ed Sheeran, Justin Bieber, Lauv, and Chance the Rapper.

LaPerle put on an entertaining show not only with his music, but also by the way he engaged with the audience

throughout the performance. He asked students about Mount Mercy’s campus and how some of their semesters were going so far. The night was closed with LaPerle taking a group photo of himself and the audience.

For anyone interested in hearing more music by LaPerle, his albums “Disguise,” “Crashed into Infinity” and “Disguise (Hidden Tracks)” can be found on Spotify, Apple Music, Deezer, and iHeartRadio. You can also find more information about him and his events on his website, www.ryanlaperlemusic.com.

Heard on The Hill

By Carter Lawler

What people are saying on topics of interest

With Christmas break coming soon, our minds are on traditions (see staff editorial, page 3). So the *Times* asked: What holiday traditions would you like to see at MMU?



Bri Fuller, sophomore, nursing major.

“Christmas lights around campus would be cool, it gives the campus more of a holiday spirit”



Lyle Fini, junior, business management major.

“Christmas caroling happens in my neighborhood every year and I think it would be a nice touch here.”



Chili Moseley, senior, communication studies major.

“Christmas music in the hallways and buildings would be sweet, considering most people do not listen to the radio”



Jessica Abdoney, junior, liberal studies major.

“I want to donate gifts to the Tanager Place, and start it off by lighting a Christmas tree”



Skylar Frese, junior, business management major.

“My mom has a cookie exchange with her friends, and I could see it working here at Mount Mercy as well”