

Board Seeks Ways to Expel Warde Hall Spooks

Ghosts: ‘We’ll Move to Tunnels if Evicted’

First MMU President Says She Gets Along With Current Leader

By Annie Barkalow
Staff Writer

A petition is underway to exorcise the ghosts from Warde Hall before Easter. For the third time this year, the ghosts have been cited for failure to maintain a safe distance of six feet or more from individuals, per Mount Mercy’s policy based on the recommendations from the Centers for Disease and Control in order to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Complaints have been made about the ghosts hovering too close and “breathing down people’s necks,” according to a statement made by the University.

“Students are concerned, staff are concerned,” said Nate Klein, vice president for student success. “You could say we’re spooked.”

“We strive to maintain a safe campus, and right now we are unable to do that. They (ghosts) are also exceeding the 25 percent capacity in the building, so we’ve had to hold classes online until the matter is resolved,” he said, “Plus, it’s creepy.”

At a board of trustees meeting Friday, Sister Linda Bechen, VP of mission and ministry, presented the members with the petition, strongly suggesting they resolve the matter by April 4, which is Easter.

“We want to be welcoming to everyone here, ghosts included, but our requests for cooperation have gone unheeded,” Sister Bechen said. “Besides, we just finished Spirit Week in March, there is simply no room for any more spirits.”

The ghosts offered a different point of view.

“The only thing we give to people are the heebie-jeebies,” joked one ghost, an unidentified male who claims he used to work in facilities.

“This is completely political, that’s all there is to it,” said ghost Sister Mary Ildephonse Holland, who served as the college’s first president.

Holland refused to answer any questions about whether she or other ghosts had any role in recent leadership changes at Mount Mercy.

“I cannot confirm nor deny it,” she said.

“I love Warde Hall. I feel a special connection to it, it’s the



Annie Barkalow
and Brianna Ostwinkle
/Times

A special spirit filter allowed MMU Times journalists to capture rare images of a ghost, who claims he used to work for facilities, at Warde Hall. The ghost, one of many in MMU’s oldest building, says ghosts are always more active when winter turns to spring. “We’re tired of being cooped up, too, although the cold doesn’t really bother us.”

oldest building on campus. As former president, I feel I have every right to haunt this building,” she said, adding that some individuals are just “yellow” and “can’t take the heat.”

“Sometimes, I just get tired of the living,” she added with a sigh.

Interim President Dr. Tim Laurent says that he has not experienced any negative interactions with the ghosts. At least one ghost says the feeling is

“We want to be welcoming to everyone here, ghosts included, but our requests for cooperation have gone unheeded. Besides, we just finished Spirit Week in March, there is simply no room for any more spirits.”

Sister Linda Bechen, VP, mission and ministry

mutual.

“I like him,” Sister Holland said, turning a fetching shade of pink.

This is not the first time Warde Hall ghosts have been a problem. Last year, a spook known as “Cashew” frightened students on the fifth floor by hiding behind a plaster recreation of Grant Wood’s “American Gothic” telling nonsense riddles, and sometimes demanding a password to enter the art rooms.

A student ghost who resides

the art labs on fifth floor acknowledged the incident but claimed it’s not an issue anymore.

“I know the ghost who did it, and he’s just a harmless idiot,” the student ghost said. “We all think Cashew is nuts. All he haunts now is the elevator, and that thing makes so much noise no one knows if it’s him or just the elevator itself.”

“He doesn’t even belong here, honestly,” said the facilities ghost. “He’s not affiliated with Mount Mercy. We think he was supposed to haunt Coe but got lost and ended up here instead.”

Asked where they would go if exorcised, the ghosts pondered a moment.

“We’ve gone to the grotto

before. Lightner is pretty welcoming, but he likes his peace and quiet,” said one ghost, who identified herself as a former nursing instructor. The individual she referred to is William H. Lightner, who designed and built the Our Lady of Sorrows grotto starting in 1929.

“We probably won’t go very far. (We’ll) most likely camp out in the tunnels until all this blows over,” said the ghost student, “We’ve done that before. Plus, the tunnel ghosts are pretty rad.”

At press time, the board was discussing eviction options and was researching whether derecho insurance funds can be used for wholesale purchase of garlic.

Nursing Student Refuses Vaccine

Says She Believes Stars Will Protect Her, Also Agrees Earth Is Flat, Trump Won in Landslide

By Jada Veasey
Senior Opinion Editor

Most people would assume that someone who works in health-care would be thrilled to get a vaccine for the novel coronavirus. Many Mount Mercy nursing students have been thrilled, as they work with local hospitals and agencies to both give and receive the shot that has the whole world excited.

But there are exceptions to every rule.

A senior nursing student who has asked to remain any-

mous recently contacted the Times staff and asked that her side of the story be shared with the world.

The student was adamant that getting the vaccine would be a waste of time, seeing as her horoscope for the remainder of the year looks great. She is a Virgo, if that matters.

The student is relying on a popular astrology app called Co-Star to get her through the pandemic safely. Co-Star was popular far before the world knew what COVID-19 stood for, but the app is even more of a hit

now. The astrology app owes much of its success to the social media app Tik Tok, another pandemic fan favorite.

On Tik Tok, many users claim that Co-Star creates accurate predictions for their futures, and even tells them how to live out their daily lives. While no one can be sure that the app isn’t accurate, it doesn’t seem particularly wise to put all your eggs in an astrological basket.

The nursing student doesn’t seem to agree. She said, “Co-Star has done more for me than any vaccine ever has.

That’s good enough for me!” She declined to comment on whether she enjoyed the world as it is now, nearly devoid of both polio and the chicken pox.

The student also mentioned that she recently accepted a job offer to begin working in a local ICU next August. For her sake, hopefully the pandemic is over by then.

Apparently for her, a Mount Mercy nursing education can indeed teach you how to be a great nurse, but the curriculum doesn’t touch on why the stars can’t always be trusted.

Author Urges MMU Audience to Pursue Passion for Learning

By Viktorja K Heires,
News Editor

This year’s President’s Lecture featured Dr. Zena Hitz, an advocate of learning for the sake of learning on March 9.

A large part of the human experience involves learning for the sake of learning (also referred to as free learning) but isn’t always recognized as valuable. Free learning by and large is without personal profit or private gain. It also doesn’t usually end in any original contributions to science, though at times, it can.

In her recently published book, “Lost in Thought,” from which she pulled heavily for her presentation, Hitz shared several examples of historical figures who chose to learn things of interest to them. These things weren’t learned just to enrich their lives, but at times to escape the problems they faced at home or work.

Charles Darwin for example, was not held in great esteem in his academic life. Nonetheless,



Princeton University Press

Dr. Zena Hitz, author of “Lost in Thought,” spoke at Mount Mercy March 9.

he took a great interest in natural history. Although eventually he would go on to make great contributions to science, at age 8 it was the furthest thing from his mind. He was interested in the natural world around him simply because he was, and not because it would pay off in a six-figure income.

In another example, Hitz shared an excerpt from the life of

Alice Foley, a 19th century mill worker who became involved in the labor movement and especially in workers’ education.

In the group she helped found, the workers provided opportunities for themselves to learn for the sake of learning. Because of this movement, one former craft worker found his own liberation by giving “magic lantern” shows indoors in the evenings and on clear nights, letting others make use of his telescope to view the night sky.

None of these folks were looking to profit from their newfound knowledge. They simply wanted to enrich their own lives for the sake of doing so.

“Leisure is not just a break from life, a day on the beach or at the spa restoring ourselves,” Hitz stated. “What we are after in trying to define ‘leisure’ is the state that looks like the culmination of a human life.”

She then put forth questions designed to make one ponder their own ideas of leisure and learning. What parts of your life seem to be the culminating

parts? The days or hours when you are living life to the fullest? When do you stop counting time and become fully present to what you are doing? What activities are you engaged in when this takes place?

Activities are not worthwhile unless they are satisfying or work towards something satisfying. There must be activities beyond work or academics that give our lives meaning.

Hitz then asked another set of questions aimed at getting to the heart of our motivation for doing what we do. If you are a student, why are you studying? Why did you pick the course of study you did? Why go to college at all? If you’re faculty, why did you choose your field of study? What did you find worthwhile about it?

The point Hitz strove to make in her lecture is that leisurely learning is its own reward. It is a much-needed break from the hectic pace which most of us as college students and faculty are used to living at. Darwin took joy in what he was doing. He

wasn’t aware that he was building his future and could have done something entirely different as an adult.

Hitz also collects stories of women prisoners’ past and present; a stark contrast to what ended up being a success story for Darwin.

A woman imprisoned by Soviets would recite poems from memory and would write them down and give them to others as a form of rebellion. Romanian prisoners taught each other Morse code and would tap out messages and stories to one another. Some former prisoners referred to this as their “time at university.”

None of it was done with a view to personal profits; the motive behind it was the joy they took in connecting with others, remembering their stories, and the love of learning for learnings’ sake.

The full President’s Lecture presentation can be viewed on YouTube at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gP7fFxtH7XY>

Tenure Under Fire

MMU Professors React to Iowa Bill

By Annie Barkalow
Staff Writer

Iowa’s Republican lawmakers are targeting the state’s three public universities with strident new policies, and professors are in their crosshairs. On Feb. 11, a senate education subcommittee passed a measure to ban tenure for faculty employed at the University of Iowa, Iowa State University, and The University of Northern Iowa.

The bill is part of a series of measures proposing to crack down on “bad” professors, partly out of concern that liberal biases may suppress the viewpoints of conservative students on campus. Lawmakers believe that tenure makes it harder for institutions to deal with problematic instructors, and that eliminating it will make firing them easier.

What does this mean for Mount Mercy? And what is tenure, anyway?

Since Mount Mercy is a private institution, the legislation does not affect its policies regarding personnel. “I have no concerns that a bill impacting the regent universities would have an impact on Mount Mercy. We are independent and make our own policies,” said interim president Tim Laurent in an email.

That still leaves the question—what is tenure, and why is it so important to professors and institutions?

“I’ll start with what it’s not,” said Joe Nguyen, associate professor of chemistry and faculty chair at Mount Mercy. “It is not something that keeps somebody from being fired.”

Tenure is a professor’s permanent job contract, given after a probationary period of anywhere from five to seven years. During this time, the instructor goes through a rigorous evaluation process by department heads and colleagues and must meet standards in the areas of teaching, research and service.

“By the time somebody’s up for tenure, they’ve gone through dissertation review, they’ve gone through the hiring process, they’ve gone through third year review, they’ve gone through yearly reviews from their chair,” said Joy Ochs, professor of English.

“If there’s a problem with the professor, it’s going to come up way before tenure time—and then the professor and the university can make a mutual agreement to separate.”

The freedom to research without political or economic strings attached ensures that an instructor can pursue and acquire knowledge in their field of study, without fear of the repercussions that may result from the outcome of that research—which is why tenure is important to faculty.

“The truth is not partisan,” said Adam Myers, assistant professor of philosophy.

“It doesn’t matter whether you’re Democrat or Republican, the truth can make you mad. Seen that way, tenure is a radical, philosophical invention that aims to ensure that in universities we are not ruled by some ‘truth’ won by coercion or bribery.”

Ochs agrees. “Our whole business is pursuing knowledge, and sometimes when new knowledge is discovered it can be disturbing to certain people... so it’s super important to have a structure where knowledge can be pursued freely without getting shut down. That’s the basic reason we have universities. Tenure is important because it’s a protection, it’s a guarantee people who have dedicated their

lives to discovering and extending human knowledge can do that without being shut down if somebody doesn’t like what they’re finding out.”

A large part of a college instructor’s job, aside from the part most see—teaching a class—involves extensive research in their field in order to teach their students better. Tenure is an incentive for professors to stay at an institution and invest their talents there over the long term. For universities, it can mean the chance to recruit better faculty.

“I will tell you that when I was on the job market, I didn’t apply to any schools that didn’t have it,” said Nguyen, who’s been teaching for 11 years. “It’s nice for me to be able to know that if I worked at an institution, that institution allows me some flexibility to be able to teach the way that I think is important for the students to learn.”

Asked if the proposed legislation could deter instructors from moving to Iowa,

“It doesn’t matter whether you’re Democrat or Republican, the truth can make you mad. Seen that way, tenure is a radical, philosophical invention that aims to ensure that in universities we are not ruled by some ‘truth’ won by coercion or bribery.”

Adam Myers, assistant professor of philosophy

despite Mount Mercy not being affected, Ochs asserted it would.

“It sends a message that (our state) will not invest in higher education, and that sort of contaminates the pool for any institution in Iowa.”

“I think some very talented people who would have moved here, wouldn’t want to

make that huge move if they didn’t have the security of being able to earn tenure,” she continued.

Nyugen also thought there was a chance of missing out on recruiting academic talent.

“If we have young professors that aren’t as well informed on what tenure means, like how does one schools’ decision impact another—they might not even be open to applying, and then we lose out on individuals like that.”

Individuals like Meyers, who moved here in August 2020 with his wife and two young children, and holds multiple degrees from universities such as Wheaton, Yale and Baylor. Meyers is currently on a tenure track.

“On the one hand, desperate graduate students on the market for a job are apt to take an academic post anywhere, regardless of any promise of tenure...on the other hand, the opposite extreme—work without any degree of ‘job security,’ where an employer could fire someone for any reason at any time, so long as the reason is not illegal—is obviously uninviting. Tenure at least protects faculty from the vagaries of at-will employment,” he said in an email, when asked if legislation like this would have deterred him from moving to Iowa.

The overall consensus among academics is that the legislature doesn’t understand—or doesn’t want to understand—that a university does not operate on a conventional business model, and policies such as hiring and firing look different from most businesses.

“I think that legislators need to understand [that] what it means to produce human knowledge is not the same thing as, you know, making widgets. We function a little differently, and need different internal incentives and processes,” said Ochs. “To sum all that up, the university is not a business and needs different rules.”

Nyugen echoed this sentiment, saying that for most businesses experiencing a loss in profit, laying off employees can be a quick solution to saving money—however, practices like this don’t work in an academic setting.



Jada Veasey/Times

As a counterpoint to “whine week,” when students can express any problems they have, SGA sponsored its second “Cheese Week.”



‘Cheese Week’ Gives Students Time to Share Joys of MMU

By Jada Veasey
Senior Opinion Editor

From March 9 to March 10, the Student Government Association (SGA) hosted a relatively new Mount Mercy tradition in the University Center. SGA’s new tradition is called Cheese Week. It follows the more established Whine Week, which ran from March 1 to March 5.

Two SGA members staffed a table outside of the cafeteria for two consecutive days and encouraged interaction from students. Students were able to participate in the event by writing their thoughts on a large sheet of paper near the cafeteria checkout counter.

Cheese Week was created by two-term SGA president Emma Lantz. The first ever Cheese Week happened last February, in the time just before coronavirus sent

“I hope that in future years it is still done, and that future students can still express their joy.”

Emma Lantz, SGA President

many Mustangs home for the remainder of the school year.

Lantz created Cheese Week to be a more positive follow up to Whine Week. While Whine Week allows students to share what they would like to see improved about Mount Mercy, Cheese Week encourages them to share the things they do like.

“The purpose of Cheese Week is to share why we love Mount Mercy,” Lantz said. She also added that Cheese Week garnered significantly more student response than Whine Week did, which Lantz hopes is a good sign.

Zoey Paone, SGA’s director of public relations, believes more students responded to Cheese Week because

the event was more interactive and visible, adding that “it’s out there for everyone to see.”

Cheese Week is significantly more interactive than its Whine Week counterpart. Whine Week allows students to anonymously submit their negative thoughts about campus into boxes, which SGA emptied at the end of the week.

Overall, SGA members seem satisfied with the success of Cheese Week. Lantz, who is in her last term as SGA president as she will graduate in May of 2022, said, “I hope that in future years it is still done, and that future students can still express their joy.”

University’s Plan for Next Fall Has Us Cautiously Optimistic

On March 10, Mount Mercy University released to the press and the public that the school intends to return to fully in-person operations by Aug. 1. The University’s plans rely heavily on three main points.

The plan mostly relies on the fact that the COVID-19 vaccine is expected to be widely available to the public by this summer, which means many students, faculty, and staff members may be fully vaccinated by the time the new school year rolls around. The release also says that masks may still be a requirement next school year, and that social distancing measures could be relaxed by then.

The University also expects to operate

Staff Editorial
The opinion of Times editors

all residence halls at full capacity, therefore increasing the number of residential students on campus. Residential numbers were impacted by several factors this year, including both the significant damage caused by last August’s derecho and of course the COVID-19 pandemic.

While it is exciting for the University to announce a return to complete in-person operations beginning next fall, it also seems a bit optimistic.

Medical experts are still unsure how new variants of the novel coronavirus could change vaccine efficacy. They are also not yet clear how long the current

Planning for the upcoming school year will be tricky, but so was planning for the current one.

vaccines will offer people protection from the virus. Since every state has its own way of rolling out the vaccines, there is also not a definitive guess as to when the United States will achieve the much sought after herd immunity.

Summertime could also drive new waves of infections, as Americans resume the travelling many of us avoided during the colder months of the pandemic thus far. Already there is a buzz on campus, as students and staff members alike chat about their plans for summer vacation. Long distance trips may not bode well for infection rates in the long run.

So, though we hope that the press release is accurate, and that Mount Mercy will be back to somewhat normal this August, we urge the Mount Mercy community to remember that things can change in an instant. The coronavirus situation could look stable one week and look radically different the next week. Here in Iowa, we saw this happen as numbers took a turn for the worse in November and continued to climb for months.

Planning for the upcoming school year will be tricky, but so was planning for the current one. If everyone tries to be flexible and continue following public health guidelines, hopefully the optimistic in-person operation plan can become a reality.

Here’s to a better, healthier school year!

Ballistic Epidemic

Gun Violence Looms Amid Pandemic; How Do We Fix It?

It would have been easy for me to write another opinion column disparaging the country’s handling of the COVID-19 pandemic. But I’ve written lots of those this year. We need to talk about another pandemic that’s been ravaging the United States for far longer than the coronavirus has been – we need to talk about gun violence.

On March 16, eight people were killed by a gunman in a race-related act of violence in Atlanta. Less than a week later, on March 22, 10 people were killed by a gunman in a grocery store in Boulder, CO. In the days between the incidents, politicians invoked familiar sentiments. Those on the left called for action and made vague promises of a future less influenced by gun violence. Those on the right sent out thoughts and prayers and defended the Second Amendment both in congressional spaces and on the internet.

I was a senior in high school when the Parkland shooting happened on Valentine’s Day in 2018. Many of my classmates and I were horrified – those kids could have easily been us. We took action because we felt like

Opinion



Jada Veasey
Senior Opinion Editor

I’ve voted, and marched, and volunteered for politicians. I’ve donated, spoken out, and written letters to those in charge. And yet, nothing has changed. I’m so tired. And I’m so sad.

we had to. We staged walkouts and wore orange ribbons and followed Parkland survivors on Twitter. On March 24, I attended the Davenport, Iowa March for Our Lives. My mom virtually joined Moms Demand Action, a grassroots movement created to prevent acts of gun violence.

Well. Now it’s three years later, and I ask myself, what did any of that do? Americans are still dying by way of gun violence every single day. This is the only developed nation on Earth where this sort of thing happens regularly. The Atlanta shooting came as a shock, if only because America’s been on partial lockdown, preventing mass shootings. School has largely been out of session, driving down the incidents of school shootings in the past year. But gun violence is still happening.

What do we need to do to convince the people in charge that this is an issue? And no, I don’t have an answer to that question, I am genuinely asking. I’ve done everything I was taught to do when I see an issue in the world – I’ve voted, and marched, and volunteered for politicians. I’ve donated, spoken out, and written letters to those in charge. And yet, nothing has changed. I’m so tired. And I’m so sad.

When is America going to wake up and start caring more about people than it does weapons?



Screenshots from Twitter showing TikTok video/Sedona Prince

University of Oregon basketball player Sedona Prince posted a TikTok video, which she also tweeted, showing the stark differences between women’s weightlifting equipment (left) and the mens facilities. Soon after, the NCAA installed more equipment for the women.

Social Media, Social Justice

The True Madness in March is Gender Inequality

In the age of social media, access to current issues and events is at our fingertips. March Madness is an event that draws all ages and sports fans. People can bet, and brackets are made, bringing people together for the whole month of March. On Thursday March 18 in Indianapolis, men’s NCAA Division I basketball began, and it was covered by more than just ESPN.

On all major social media platforms, including TikTok and Twitter, the players on most participating basketball teams documented their opinions and experiences of the tournament. Their weight rooms, food, trackers, and gift bags were shown on display for the entire world to see. The men’s basketball tournament was not the only tournament going on. Four days later March 22 in San Antonio, the women’s NCAA Division I basketball tournament was underway.

The excitement was higher than usual as the 2020 March Madness tournament was cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic. As players from the different women’s teams started to arrive in San Antonio, more social media coverage was on display from the women’s tournament, and many differences could be seen in comparison to the

Opinion



Carter Lawler
Staff Writer

men’s side.

One main difference that was shown was the weight rooms for each tournament. A women’s basketball player showed the various sizes of dumbbells and yoga mats that were given to the players for them to use in between games. Earlier in the week, men’s players displayed the squat racks, bench presses, numerous sets of dumbbells, and the excessive space given for the players to use.

As a collegiate baseball player, emphasis from my coaches is put on practice, staying in routine, great shape, and being able to compete at the highest level possible. The women’s players were outraged at the visible difference between the tournaments. More TikTok videos came from San Antonio that showed the gift bags; the women received significantly less NCAA gear and toiletries than the men.

Overnight, the women were given a full weight room and space to freely workout. The uproar caused a change in heart from NCAA. If the women are supposed to workout, practice, and play the same as men, the same opportunities should be given.

The women players were outraged at the visible difference between the tournaments.

Planting Seeds is Something All of Us Can and Should Do

When I was little, I had big dreams of changing the world. I wanted to go everywhere and just tell people to be nice to each other so that the world would be a better place. I sometimes laugh at how simple I thought the world’s problems were. As I started to reflect on this more, I realized that the simplest actions do speak volumes. Think of the

Faith on the Hill



Vanessa Milliman
Columnist

times that you share laughter with friends or enjoy a walk together.

At Mount Mercy, we are continually asked, “What is your one?” We are called to reflect on what impact we would like to have on campus. My freshman year, I took this into deep consideration and thought about the ways that I would like to impact this community. Bringing God’s love and joy to others was one of my goals. I do this by planting seeds. Planting seeds of faith, hope, and love in others that would one day sprout and give them an opportunity to grow in

these virtues.

When you shine a little light onto someone’s day, you are planting a seed. When you witness to others, you are planting seeds. In your conversations, you may not change minds, but you will plant a seed that will later grow and bear fruit.

In Matthew chapter 13, Jesus gives the parable of the sower. “A sower went out to sow. And as he sowed, some seed fell on the path, and birds came and ate it up. Some fell on rocky ground, where it had little soil. It sprang up at once because the soil was not deep, and when the sun rose

it was scorched, and it withered for lack of roots. Some seed fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked it. But some seed fell on rich soil, and produced fruit, a hundred or sixty or thirtyfold” (Matthew 13:3-8).

Jesus explains that the seeds are the Word of God. We are the sowers. Our focus is not on the type of soil, but on the action of sowing. God will take care of the rest.

You never know how much of an impact that you can have in your everyday interactions with others. Maybe they had a family member or another friend plant a

seed and you were the water that they needed to grow. You were the sunshine that helped them to grow. Any way that I can put it, the message is the same. Doing good things will always have an impact, even if you cannot see it.

Maybe the person that you are with has had a seed planted by someone else (like their parents or high school friends). You could be the one that waters the seed or the sunshine that allows them to grow. The simplest gestures can go a long way. Reflect on the interactions that you have with those around you. Are you planting seeds?

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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. During the pandemic, meetings may be remote, at the discretion of editors.

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Letters are due Friday at noon for consideration of publication the following Thursday.

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Aunna Escobedo poses next to her artwork in the Janalyn Hanson White Gallery.



Artist Alumna Speaks

Printmaker Aunna Escobedo Returns to Campus to Showcase Water-Based Art

By Ayra Aminuddin
Staff Writer

A printmaking artist shows her artworks that imitate water by using printmaking and drawing techniques. “By observing water and the natural world and utilizing my personal memory, I make imagery that evokes association without the limitations of conventional western representation.” Aunna Escobedo is a fine art Mount Mercy alumna. She then went to North Texas University

to complete her graduate degree in printmaking. She held her “Waterscapes” exhibition at the Janalyn Hanson White Gallery from Feb. 15 to March 12 and held a virtual talk from the art gallery on March 5. Escobedo creates imagery that oscillates between imitation and abstraction as contemplation of our human relationship and natural forces. She is interested in creating impulses that revolve around structure, process, and methodology. The water in her exhibition is a metaphor for her

physical way of working and her studio practice. “As a printmaker, I move spontaneously between print processes,” said Escobedo. “It allows me to react and act in the moment of making. This mode of work is reflected in the way that water can be contained yet shift depending on the environment.” In “Drifting: Sweeping Through,” Escobedo did a cascading piece to represent snow that she saw while driving. She mimicked the motion by repeating how the snow drifts across

the road using different layers of paper. She used thin to thicker paper as the artwork goes down. She wanted to show the visual weight to the viewer of the piece. The pieces in this exhibition were made when she was in Texas and was her way of reconnecting with her hometown here in Cedar Rapids. Escobedo feels a deep connection to this place. “In some ways, it just makes sense to have this exhibition here because it is about the places I know and feels connected to,” said Escobedo. “Having an exhi-

bition here at Mount Mercy feels like a homecoming.” Before, this exhibition was called “Navigating the Waters” and was installed at Cora Stafford Gallery in Texas in early 2020 but was not able to be shown to the public because of the pandemic. Escobedo has also been working on other projects related to water that you can view at her website Aunnaescobedo.com.

“Bly Manor” is Frightening Fun

“The Haunting of Bly Manor” immediately throws viewers into madness to find out why there are supernatural experiences within the manor and why the ghosts of the past are haunting and tormenting its inhabitants. At the beginning, we follow Danielle Clayton, who accepts the position of an in-home tutor and caregiver for two orphaned children, named Miles and Flora, that live within the eerie manor. During the time of the show, Danielle also befriends Jamie, Owen, and Hannah, who are all household members that help with upkeep in the manor. As time goes on, Danielle, as well as the viewers, learn the dark and sinister secrets of the manor. Hidden in the walls are affairs, murder, and a dark family history that formed Bly Manor. Ghosts with a forgotten story and past appear and torture the house. The story captures attention with every episode ending on a cliffhanger. What happens next? Does the ghost

Review



Emily Winchester
Staff Writer

The story captures attention with every episode ending on a cliffhanger. What happens next?

come back? Why is this character acting a certain way? The production value is amazing. The ghosts are terrifying and realistic, maybe even uncomfortable to look at for some people. Sickness and death play a huge theme in the series and are portrayed in both a realistic and figurative way. When scenes contain dangerous situations, it leaves the viewer with a pounding heart, feeling on edge and wanting even more. The visuals and the storyline show just how much the creator and the production team put their hearts into making this show that people would enjoy. In the end, if you like an eerie, thrilling storyline, this is the show for you.

That is what it was like for me. I am a fan of feeling on edge during a movie, wondering what is going to happen next. I was sucked into the storyline, wanting more on the action and the intense scenes. The characters were my new friends, developing a relationship with them and hoping they can get to escape the ghosts. If this is something that falls into your interest, I can assure you that you will love it just as much as I did.

H. H. Holmes Movie Bombs

Anybody interested in true crime or serial killers has probably heard about the infamous Henry Howard Holmes (born Herman Webster Mudgett). Unfortunately for those looking to learn more, documentary “H. H. Holmes: Original Evil” missed the mark with a lack of content and over-abundance of horrible reenactments. Holmes presided over what has come to be called “The Murder Castle” and “Murder Hotel” in downtown Chicago. Originally an empty lot, Holmes purchased the land and in 1887 began construction for a two-story building which was to have apartments on the second floor and retail spaces on the first. The building’s real use, however, would not be known for years. It turned out to be filled with trapdoors, and doors leading to brick walls, not to mention dead end hallways designed to confuse his unwitting victims. They were often beaten to death or tortured prior to being killed. His favorite way to dispose of a body was the furnace in the building’s basement, and rumor has it that he occasionally sold the articulated skeletons of his victims to universities and

Review



Viktorja K Heires
News Editor

hospitals. The creators of “H. H. Holmes: Original Evil,” released in 2018, stated they would attempt to build a profile of Holmes by looking at key aspects of his life and the path he took. He was the middle of five children and had a relatively uneventful upbringing, graduating high school at 16. He then went into a medical apprenticeship learning about dissection before attending the University of Michigan, where he worked in anatomy lab. He would use this knowledge later in con jobs to defraud insurance companies. Many of the images in this documentary are period stock footage of street scenes and shows, mixed with somewhat awful reenactments. None of the footage or still photos are of the building itself, which stood until 1884 when it was gutted by a fire and turned into a post office. Lastly, this documentary doesn’t provide any type of legit profiling of Holmes or his motivations for murder. My recommendation is that you read “Devil in the White City” by Erik Larson or listen to the Serial Killers podcast’s 2-part series about him (released on Feb. 17, 2020), and don’t bother with this C-Movie-esque documentary on Hulu. I rate this documentary 1 out of 5.

Women’s History Month Panel Explores Important Questions

By Nabil Abugattas
Staff Writer

In the United States, March is National Women’s History Month. The office of diversity and inclusion hosted a panel to celebrate. Various participants discussed what it’s like being a woman in America, and how far the country has come in a Zoom panel on Friday, March 25. I was the only man participating on this panel. For privacy purposes, the names of the participants won’t be revealed.

The panel was meant to be an open and safe place for everyone to discuss and express themselves. The open discussion began by addressing the struggles of being a woman during the time of COVID-19. “My mom was out all summer, so I had to take her role during that time,” one participant said. As the discussion kept going, more people felt comfortable participating and giving their opinions. The panel also focused on the struggles that come from society, its stereotypes and its expectations.

Do women need equal rights or equity? How long will it take until we get equal rights or equity? How can we change this problem? “This male dominant mentality and ideology has been going for so long, that it is already imbedded in our DNA,” another participant stated. “I think it can and will change, but it will take so much time.” That is a big problem that was discussed during the panel; the struggles women face because of their gender were exposed and solutions to it were explored. To solve this problem, we need

a societal change. We need to change the entertainment we consume (Disney movies and Instagram influencers, for example) that only sell these stereotypes against women. After reflecting on the problem and listening to many testimonies, the discussion was near its end. The final question was: “How can we bring more awareness to the struggle we have as women?” The final thoughts and reflections of the participants suggested more open and safe

environments for discussion, including adding more men into the discussion. Participants also emphasized working through discomfort to speak, express, and get things off of your chest during these discussions. Finally, the Zoom session ended with a thought: We need to be better mentors for the next generations if we want to see a real and lasting change in this world.

April Fool’s Day History is More Complicated Than You’d Think

By Viktorja K Heires
News Editor

April Fool’s Day has a long and storied history. According to some sources, it dates back to Chaucer’s “Canterbury Tales” in 1392, though this claim has been the subject of much scholarly debate. There is a mention of *poisson d’avril* (April’s Fish) in 1508 by a French poet, indicating that it had been celebrated for some time before that. In France and French-speaking countries, it has been popular over the centuries to attempt to attach paper fish to a person’s back without them noticing. Other sources say that April Fool’s Day was invented in France as a way to make fun of those who celebrated the new year on March 25 rather than January 1. Regardless of the exact year and how it came to be, the day itself is now celebrated in countries worldwide as a day on which to pull pranks and play practical jokes on friends, family, and—if you are famous enough—an entire city or country.

In countries like Finland, Iceland and Denmark, news outlets will post a front-page hoax story to catch readers unaware. Clearly, despite our Irish roots, MMU must be partly Danish. Some past headlines have included a shortage of daycare workers resulting in the Danish army being called in to babysit. Or perhaps a supermarket has decided to expand its revenue streams by opening its own discount airline. Many celebrities and media companies have been getting in on the practical joke action for decades. In 1957, the BBC ran a hoax episode of one of their programs, teaching people how to plant spaghetti trees. In 1962, Sweden broadcasted a special on how folks could obtain color television simply by stretching a pair of nylons over their black and white screens; they even took the prank a step further and gave a compelling explanation of why it would work. In certain other countries, a person may be given a letter to deliver to someone, only to find themselves sent to

another person and another, and so on. A “fool’s errand,” if you will. Pranks don’t always turn out the way we hope, however. Over the years, several would-be-pranksters pulled hoaxes that were in somewhat poor taste. A Boston news station aired an April Fool’s Day bulletin at the end of a broadcast in 1980 that warned folks that Great Blue Hill, a former granite mine and quarry in Milton, was erupting, paired with stock footage of a real volcano erupting. This caused a widespread panic as people tried to flee their homes. Though the reporter eventually stated that it was a hoax, he was fired for the tasteless prank and for violating FCC regulations for causing the uproar. A morning radio talk show duo also

pulled a prank that backfired in a big way. In 1998, shock jocks Opie and Anthony were discussing hoaxes when one of them said that the Boston mayor had died. People who tuned in late to the broadcast didn’t realize they were being sarcastic, and the mayor, who was on a flight at the time, couldn’t be reached. This only added to the confusion and panic as other news outlets picked up the story and ran with it. April Fool’s Day has been celebrated for at least 500 years and probably longer. It’s true origins are shrouded in mystery, but one thing that is true is that much fun can be had on this day with a little foresight and planning. Have fun and keep the pranks safe, Mustangs.

Related Content:

Since this is the April 1 issue of the Times, we decided to celebrate with some April Fools Day content. See page 1. We also ask students in “Heard on the Hill” about their pranks, see page 6.

Mahlon Steepleton/Times

The MMU catcher (right) goes after a popped up ball. A runner for Waldorf (below) tries to steal a base.



Seniors Lead Mustangs to 12-8 Win in Wind

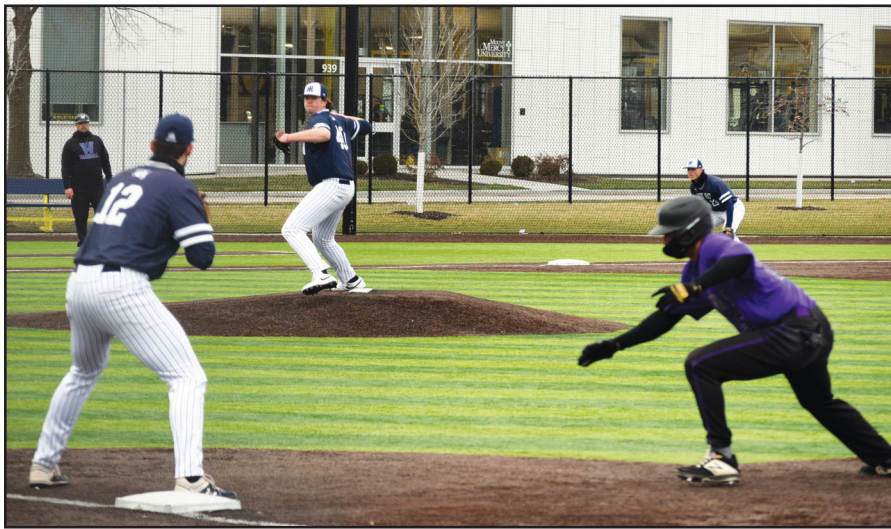
By Mahlon Steepleton
Sports Editor

The Mount Mercy men’s baseball team defeated Waldorf University 12-8 in a nonconference game on the cold, windy, Wednesday evening of March 24 at the Robert W. Plaster Athletic Complex.

Seniors Lyle Fini and Jake Faur led the Mustangs to a solid victory over the Warriors. Even though Mount Mercy came out on top, they trailed 5-3 during midway through the fifth inning. Then, they scored four runs in the bottom of the fifth inning, along with two more runs in the sixth inning.

Waldorf tried to close the overall gap by getting the score to 9-7 in the eighth, however, Mount Mercy scored three runs in the bottom of the inning to lead the team to another win. The combined help of Fini and Faur contributed to five of Mount Mercy’s 11 total hits in the game.

Fini did well, batting 2-for-3 with a pair of RBIs. Faur finished batting 3-for-4 with a double and four runs batted in, to help the cause. Left-hander Nolan Frey



earned the overall win with his relief pitching—he only allowed one earned run, with three hits in 2 1/3 innings of pitching.

The Mustangs have an overall record of (15-7, 4-4 Heart of America). The team is looking to build even more momentum in the coming weeks.

“We started off the season fast and hit a bit of a rough patch, but we are start-

ing to put the pieces all together again,” senior shortstop Chili Moseley said.

Moseley is excited the direction the team is headed in.

“It feels good knowing we are about to hit our stride as a team,” he continued. “It is fun watching guys get through the rough times and succeed.”

Men’s Volleyball Seeded Fifth After Senior Night Victory

By Josh Harmon
Senior Multimedia Editor

Mount Mercy’s men’s volleyball team faced off against William Penn University to conclude their regular season and potentially celebrate a win for Senior Night on March 23.

The Mustangs came out the gates with an intense energy to start the game. After a first set mostly dominated by Mount Mercy, the ‘Stangs won the first set to take the lead 1-0.

Caught a bit on their heels by the Statesmen in the second set, MMU found themselves on the opposite side of the game. William Penn turned their first set around by only committing 3 errors in the second set, compared to the 8 committed by Mount Mercy. The Statesmen also led in kills during the second set with 14 over the Mustangs’ 9. William Penn evened the match score, 1-1.

During the start of the third set, Mount Mercy switched to a much more serious game plan, knowing they needed to put the game away before William Penn could gain more momentum. The Mustangs started strong and kept their composure to close out the third set with a win and regain the match lead, 2-1.

After regaining the match lead, it was important for MMU to not allow William Penn any room to breathe. In the closest set of them all, Mount Mercy showed discipline and held on to win the set 25-22.

Senior from Cedar Rapids, Evan Gaskill led the team with 18 kills. Gaskill, along with senior teammates Ben Ruggles from Oswego, Illinois and Ben Steffen from Madison, Wisconsin, were able to celebrate their senior night with a 3-1 win over William Penn.

“I think the idea of senior night is bitter-sweet, but I couldn’t have asked for a better end to my final regular season game, and I am excited for the conference tournament.”

Ben Ruggles, senior

Batter Up!

Bruner Sets All-Time Hits Record

By Mahlon Steepleton
Sports Editor

The Mount Mercy women’s softball team had their home opener over spring break weekend on Saturday, March 20. The Mustangs had not played on their home field in almost two years, as their season got shut down last March because of the coronavirus pandemic.

The Mustangs split their Heart of America Conference doubleheader against William Penn University. MMU won the first game 7-2 and used a 3-run sixth inning to pull away from the Statesmen. Senior Payton Bruner of Cedar Rapids, Iowa also became Mount Mercy’s all-time hits leader during the first game. She got a triple in her first at-bat, resulting in 195 hits for her career.

Bruner came back to play softball in 2021 after graduating with a degree in criminal justice last year. She has played softball now for a total of 11 years and still loves playing the game. Bruner primarily plays the infield as a shortstop as her natural position and sometimes switches

over to playing third base.

For Bruner, it is an amazing experience to be a part of such a storied softball career and to achieve such a high goal of being the all-time hits leader for Mount Mercy.

“It is a really big accomplishment for me,” Bruner said. “It is surprising and awesome to see myself at the top of the list. I was nine hits away last year before COVID-19 ended our season. I decided to come back and get that record under my belt.”

Payton Bruner, senior

Bruner is excited not just for what she can accomplish, but for the overall goals that the team can accomplish this season.

“My goal and our team’s overall goal for this season is for us to make the conference tournament,” she said. “We need to take it one game at a time. We want to get a sweep and not just only split our conference games this season. We don’t want to get complacent.”

The Mustangs host the Heart of America Conference Tournament this season, so keep your eyes open for more opportunities to see them play.



Mahlon Steepleton/Times

Payton Bruner, who became Mount Mercy’s all-time hit leader March 20.

Sports In Short

Women’s Softball

The Mount Mercy women’s softball split a doubleheader with Grand View University on Sunday, March 21, at Busse Field. The Mustangs won the first game in a 6-0 shut-out victory. The Vikings easily won the second game in a 13-4 fashion.

The Mount Mercy women’s softball team won 3-out-of-4 in Missouri on the weekend of March 26-27. The Mustangs split a doubleheader against Evangel University in Springfield, Missouri on Friday, March 26. The Mustangs lost the first game in a close contest 6-5. They came back and won the second game 8-3.

The Mustangs then took on Missouri Valley College on Saturday, March 27, in Marshall, Missouri. They swept the doubleheader against the Vikings. Winning the first game 8-3, they also easily won their second game 9-1.

Men’s Baseball

The Mount Mercy men’s baseball team swept a doubleheader against Graceland University on Saturday, March 27, at the Plaster Sports Complex. The Mustangs won Game one in a close fashion 1-0 against the Yellow Jackets. The Mustangs won the second game in tight finish 4-3.

Women’s Bowling

The Mount Mercy women’s bowling team became the first program in school history to finish the regular season ranked number one in the country. The women’s team dominated at the Five Seasons Classic hosted by Mount Mercy on Saturday, March 27, and Sunday, March 28. The competed at May City Bowl and the Cedar Rapids Bowling Center. The Mustangs dominated and led the field in qualifying, finishing with a total pinfall of 8,115.



Jada Veasey/Times

Quinton Gaul, sophomore, says he has always enjoyed writing, and the computer science-actuarial science double major is now editor of Mount Mercy’s student literary and art magazine, PAHA, expected on campus later this month. He holds (right) previous editions of the annual publication.

Must Love Words

PAHA Editor Has Always Been Writing

By Jada Veasey
Senior Opinion Editor

When picturing a head editor of a college literary magazine, the average person probably doesn’t think of a computer science and actuarial science double major. PAHA editor, sophomore Quinton Gaul, doesn’t seem to mind that he doesn’t fit the mold people expect him to.

Originally from Dyersville, Iowa, Gaul came to Mount Mercy to study two subjects that had little to do with literature. Gaul has always been passionate about writing though, and when he committed to coming to MMU, he had to decide between pursuing a cross country scholarship or a writing scholarship. The writer in him beat out the athlete, and now he runs one of the campus’ most prominent publications. He eventually added an English minor, too, to be able to write more often.

Gaul says he “can’t remember not writing,” and that he’s been doing it for a long time. Though he’d never had his writing published before coming to Mount Mercy, he says,

SNAPSHOT
Meet the people
on the Hill
Quinton Gaul

“Most of it is behind the scenes, like calculating page count, and organizing submissions. It’s just a lot of small things you wouldn’t even think of until you realize something you’re missing.”

Quinton Gaul, sophomore, PAHA editor

“I’ve always kept a journal, though I’ve lost a lot of them now!”

He joined the PAHA in his freshman year as a requirement of his writing scholarship – all writing scholars have to contribute to a campus publication. He jokes that he avoided joining the Mount Mercy Times staff because he was “nervous about the idea of taking pictures of strangers.”

Now, Gaul is glad to be a part of the PAHA team, and happy to be one of the students in charge.

Of course, running a literary magazine is no one-man show.

“I have my hands in most parts of the process, but Annie Barkalow and I have shared responsibilities, more or less,” Gaul said. “We have pretty similar roles; we kind of help bring everything together.”

Gaul also loves collaborating with

the PAHA’s art team.

“I appreciate art, but don’t know anything about it,” he said.

This year has been one of learning for Gaul. He’s enjoying learning about what goes into making a magazine.

“Most of it is behind the scenes, like calculating page count, and organizing submissions,” he explained. “It’s just a lot of small things you wouldn’t even think of until you realize something you’re missing.” He also jokes, “I’m not really in charge, this is still Mary’s magazine,” referencing PAHA advisor and English professor Dr. Mary Vermillion.

Gaul says this year’s edition of the PAHA is unique and hopes Mustangs will pick up a copy when the magazine is finished. The PAHA is expected to be released April 28, and some of the writers featured in it will also appear in a taped reading that will be available for viewing online.

\$1 Million Gift Supports Nursing, Accounting

By Viktorja K Heires
News Editor

Mount Mercy alumni Lonnie and Linda Schwartz have gifted MMU a \$1 million endowment to support the nursing and accounting programs. Dr. Kim Bro, dean of the Martin-Herold College of Nursing and Health, says this endowment means that future nursing students will pay less out of pocket for their

bachelor’s degree.

According to Tim Laurent, interim president, the Endowed Nursing Scholarship is designed to fund renewable scholarships for undergraduate nursing students from Iowa.

“Think of an endowment as a savings account,” Laurent explained. “We use money from the interest that is gained to support the nursing and accounting

scholarships. That way, the endowment can last in perpetuity and the scholarships can continue. So, an endowment is intended to last forever.”

The counterpart to this, the endowed accounting scholarship, funds scholarships for undergraduate students from Iowa majoring in accounting with second preference being given to business majors. Students must maintain a 3.0 GPA to be eligible for

renewal of the scholarship.

“Because Lonnie and Linda had a positive experience at MMU, they are helping students have the same high quality Mustang experience,” Laurent said.

The money will go directly to student scholarships, with awards being made in fall 2021. This will be an attractive prospect for those looking for a quality private university education at a lower cost.

Heard on the Hill

What people are saying on topics of interest

By Josh Harmon
Senior Multimedia Editor

April 1 is celebrated as April Fool’s Day (see page 1 and page 4). So the Times asked students: Have you ever had a playful ‘April Fools’ prank pulled on you? Or have you ever pranked someone else?



Alicia Jacobs, sophomore, nursing major.

“I threw a big surprise birthday party for my husband who thought we were just going out to eat together.”



Bre Nail, freshman, nursing major.

“Dad woke me up at 9 p.m. saying I was late for school.”



Cameron Ollendick, freshman, nursing major.

“In fourth grade we had a class hamster. One day a student of mine rolled up a pair of his brown socks and then threw them across the classroom. My teacher screamed, thinking it was our hamster.”



Gyvanziel Quinonez, freshman, biology major.

“I got grounded after pranking my sister by placing saran wrap over the toilet.”



Rachel Feight, sophomore, nursing major.

“I’m generally a gullible person, so whenever people tell me things I tend to believe them too easily.”



Yu Sasaki, junior, business management major.

“My club soccer teammates told me we didn’t have practice on my first day joining the team. I called my coach who confirmed that we did in fact have our regularly scheduled practice.”

Spirit Week

Spring Celebration Takes Place of Fall Homecoming Due to COVID-19

By Veronica Jons
Editor-in-Chief

Mount Mercy held Spirit Week on March 22-27 to replace the homecoming celebration that would normally occur in the fall.

Festivities started early with Emmaus hosting a chalk walk on the UC patio. Monday officially kicked off with the classic Mug Monday for root beer floats, that was a regular occurrence prior to COVID-19. The late-night breakfast pep rally was hosted in the cafeteria with goodie bags along with sausage, eggs, potatoes, and fruit cups to-go.

Tuesday was the annual t-shirt swap with students donating either a different college’s shirt or a canned food item that would be

donated to the Mustang Market. Later in the day, there was a virtual trivia competition via Zoom.

A volunteer service event was hosted in student services by making inspirational cards for cancer patients through Gems of Hope. Eco club hosted a movie showing of “Brother Bear” in the McAuley auditorium on Wednesday.

Thursday was filled with goodies by having a coffee, tea, and donut bar in the morning. Later in the afternoon they also did a trail mix in a mug giveaway.

With Spirit Week coming closer to an end, the Spirit Week royalty winners were announced on Friday. The court consisted of seniors Megan Croghan, Jena Bemiss, Emily Northup, Veronica Jons, Jakob Perks, Marshall Muehlbauer,



Veronica Jons/Times

and RoyShawn Webb, along with junior Rebecca Francois. Mount Mercy’s 2021 Spirit Week Queen is Emily Northup with the Spirit Week King being Marshall Muehlbauer.

Friday also consisted of a new activity on campus: a glow run. Students gathered in glow paint and neon colors to get glow sticks and follow the trail along

campus.

The university’s baseball team played against Graceland University winning the doubleheader, while students enjoyed a tailgate of food and yard games. The UC takeover has been rescheduled for Saturday, April 17.

In light of COVID-19, event organizers, SGA and student engagement gained

Games and food were available at a Spirit Week tailgate party held during a baseball game double header with Graceland University. The week took the place of homecoming, a fall event in normal times.

student participation with an event that did not seem possible last fall with capacity limits. The 2021-2022 academic school year will host homecoming week in the fall as regularly scheduled. Mount Mercy’s next big event is Have Mercy, Give Mercy, which is kicking off on April 28.