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NEWSPRINT

WHERE ARE THEY NOW? MERCY ALUMNAE

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Clare's Corner

Tick tock...time will tell

STORY, PHOTOS, GRAPHICS: CLARE JONES, EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Despite teens' inability to travel back to the past, positive recollections drawn from the media can overwhelm us with nostalgia. Thinking about in the past can also inspire young people to become interested in phenomenons from previous decades that provide a frame of reference about the former cultural influences that have shaped current pop culture.

Being a very curious child, I explored my aunt's Washington D.C. home and stumbled upon her record collection of 70s rock music. Immediately, I asked her to play the songs and, to my surprise, I loved the beat and the lyrics. Her album collection featured artists and bands like David Bowie, Paul McCartney and Wings and of course, The Rolling Stones. These musicians were mainstream in America's music scene at the beginning of a new evolution of rock and roll that included mixtures of punk and pop within the refrain and bars of rock songs.

My fascination with the 70s and 80s pop culture was also influenced while spending much of my summers at my grandparents' house during my elementary school years. With not many entertainment options available, I learned to enjoy watching 70s sitcoms like *The Mary Tyler Moore Show* and *That Girl*. Also during this time I began to admire hip-hop's influence on young urban 80s fashion. Over the years while sitting in the backseat of my father's car as he drove me to school, I listened to the music group Run D.M.C. While I was not a fan of their music, I loved their trademark Adidas Superstar gym shoes and now very iconic tracksuits.

As society moved forward over the last 40 years, I have observed a rebirth in trends from past decades that are now influencing current pop culture. This revival in recycling past trends is being utilized today in a variety of genres, particularly in the fashion, media and music outlets.

For example, over the past year, sales in fanny packs, the once-staple fashion accessory made popular by dads on vacation from the 80s and 90s, have skyrocketed into becoming a worldwide fashion statement again. Companies from Gucci and Prada to Target and Kohl's now have a constant inventory for fanny packs. In addition to the fanny packs, as upscale fashion houses and designers begin to launch their 2021 spring collections, it is evident their new fashion pieces are heavily influenced by the 70s. The return of neck scarves, bell bottoms, tapered collars, trouser suits and monochromatic outfits are now back in style. Celebrities like actress Zendaya and model Kendall Jenner have been heavily photographed embracing trouser suits with neck scarves. Professional athletes can be included in representing the 70s fashion style. Basketball players Russell Westbrook and Dwayne Wade have been photographed wearing monochromatic suits to press conferences.

In the television media industry, the Disney Plus streaming platform's latest show *WandaVision*, introduces its followers to throwback set designs and costumes from the classic 1960s American sitcom *The*

Dick Van Dyke Show. The Disney Marvel creators juxtapose the futuristic superhero characters that are heavily based upon the main characters Laura and Robert Petrie, into the retro 1960s scenery and fashion. In the film industry, the stories of older rock bands and singers such as Queen, The Beatles, ABBA and Elton John have captivated a new generation on the silver screen. The movies *Bohemian Rhapsody*, *Yesterday* and *Rocketman* took a new group audience through the creation of these iconic rock and roll artists' claim to fame while also unknowingly promoting songs like "Radio Gaga", "Help!" and "I'm Still Standing" to reach the top of the song charts almost 40 to 50 years after their original release dates. And the 2008 and 2018 musicals *Mamma Mia!* exclusively included ABBA songs like "Dancing Queen", "Take a Chance on Me" and the eponymous "Mamma Mia." These films provided a revival of a 70s music sensation for younger audiences to adore as they also embraced the older pop/disco music genres. Also, music artists like Miley Cyrus introduced her largely younger followers to the 70s artists rock idols such as Blondie and singer-songwriter Stevie Nicks. In Cyrus's newest album, *Plastic Hearts*, the singer is styled to have the iconic blonde mullet hairstyle similar to the lead singer in Blondie, Debbie Harry. The album features Cyrus performing live Harry's cover song "Heart of Glass" that eventually topped the current record charts and streaming platforms. Cyrus also uses the vocals and melody of Fleetwood Mac's lead singer Stevie Nicks when she sings the song "Edge of Midnight." If one listens closely, Cyrus sounds remarkably like Nicks.

Mercy is no exception as we continue to embrace the traditions of an all-girls Catholic school. The cotton white blouse and plaid or solid colored skirts remain the uniform staples that started in 1945. What was once called the "earth shoe" has been replaced with Wallabies and Birkenstocks, similar styles with different names. Along with our dress codes, the foundations of Catholicism remain an essential part to the Mercy education with religion classes and Mass. And as for the curriculum, Mercy's English classes still remain challenging to say the least.

As the 1974 song by Peter Allen states, "Everything Old Is New Again." What we have learned from these past decades is that pop culture is merely reincarnated,

modified and influenced from the past decades. As "new" trends continue to appear, I wonder how we, Gen Z, will be represented in future pop culture. Tick tock...time will tell.



Trailblazing to become the first: celebrating women in Black history

STORY AND GRAPHICS: GRACE O'DEA

African-American women are to be celebrated every day. But, to celebrate women more specifically this Black History Month, *Newsprint* dives in the lives of some of Mercy students' favorite women in African American history.



Michelle Obama

Former First Lady Michelle Obama was born on Jan. 17, 1964, in Chicago, Illinois. After graduating high school in 1981 as her class salutatorian, Obama went on to earn a bachelor's degree in sociology from Princeton University, and later her Juris Doctor from Harvard Law School. She began her career in corporate law, but soon after focused on public service. She married former President Barack Obama in 1992 and they had two daughters together, Malia and Sasha.

By the time Barack Obama was inaugurated in 2009, Michelle Obama had already made a name for herself as a woman dedicated to improving the lives of citizens in and out of Chicago through her various public service initiatives and prominent positions in the public service field. As the first African American First Lady, though, Michelle Obama was able to serve the public on an even larger scale.

"As the first African American First Lady, she faced much scrutiny and negativity; however, she didn't let the negativity get to her," said senior Mya Williams. "She was never anything less than compassionate, graceful, and inspiring. She is an inspiration to many young girls around the world, especially African American young girls."

As First Lady, Michelle Obama dedicated herself to many causes dear to her. In her Let's Move! initiative, she highlighted the importance of healthy living and encouraged Americans, especially youth, to stay fit. Her Let Girls Learn initiative was created to further education for young girls around the world and encourage them to attend school. Today, Michelle Obama continues to improve the world around her by pursuing her passions as an advocate for girls' education and healthy living, and, in turn, inspiring other young women to do the same.

Photo from The Hollywood Reporter



Katherine Johnson

Mathematician Katherine Johnson was born on Aug. 26, 1918, in White Sulphur Springs, West Virginia. Her interest in mathematics allowed her to be extremely successful in school, and helped with her admittance into West Virginia State University, where she graduated from in 1937 with a bachelor's degree in math and French. After graduating college, Johnson began working as a teacher in Virginia. Shortly after becoming a teacher, she was offered a spot as one of the only three African American students allowed to enroll in West Virginia University's graduate school.

Johnson then made history as one of the first students to integrate the school. Although Johnson did not stay in the graduate math program at the university, her work in math was far from done. In 1952, she earned a position in the West Area Computing section of NASA's Langley laboratory. The start of space travel launched Johnson to positions of greater importance at NASA, including membership in the Space Task Group, which helped NASA begin its work in space travel. She was the first woman in the Flight Research Division to be credited for a research report after she co-wrote "Determination of Azimuth Angle at Burnout for Placing a Satellite Over a Selected Earth Position". Johnson worked at NASA for 33 years, a time in which she helped with the calculations for numerous space ventures and other NASA projects. Johnson was recognized more recently for her achievements in math and space travel, receiving the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 2015 and being a focus character in the 2016 film *Hidden Figures*. Johnson died on Feb. 24, 2020, in Newport News, Virginia.

"Katherine Johnson worked really hard for a really long time and [in *Hidden Figures*] finally got that credit she deserves," said freshman Carrington Wash. "She's just very notable and very awesome."

Photo from NASA



Jane Bolin

Judge Jane Bolin was born on April 11, 1908, in Poughkeepsie, New York. Upon graduating from high school, Bolin went on to earn her Bachelor of Arts degree from Wellesley College in 1928. Immediately after, she began pursuing law at Yale and earned her law degree from the university in 1931. This achievement made Bolin the first African American woman to earn a law degree from Yale. At both Wellesley and Yale, Bolin faced extreme discrimination, but clearly persevered.

"Her academic achievements serve as a reminder to me that through succeeding, being in predominantly white spaces, and simply living my life as a proud Black woman, I am living a life of protest," said junior Maria Johnson. "Activism comes in all shapes and sizes, and Jane Bolin showed my form of activism."

After practicing law in Poughkeepsie for several years, Bolin moved to New York City with her husband. It was there that Bolin made another stellar achievement for African American women when in 1937 she became the first female African American New York City Assistant Corporation Counsel. Her time as a councilwoman was brief, considering she was sworn in as a judge just two years later in 1939 by then New York City Mayor, Fiorello La Guardia. At only 31-years-old, Bolin made history yet again by becoming the U.S.'s first female African American judge. She would serve four terms on the bench, where she dealt mostly with family and segregation-related issues. Bolin dedicated time outside the courtroom to organizations like the New York Urban League and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. She lived a life full of work in helping those who struggled to help themselves and, through her many notable achievements, made history for African American women. Bolin died on Jan. 8, 2007, in Long Island City, New York.

Photo from New Haven Register

Science in action

STORY, PHOTOS, AND GRAPHICS: MEGAN MALLIE, ASSOCIATE EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Have you ever wanted to further your knowledge of genetics or the medical field? Mercy's GIDAS and HOSA clubs combine a scientific aspect with interactive learning opportunities for Mercy students to experience and enjoy.

GIDAS

At Michigan's summer GIDAS (Genes In Diseases And Symptoms) program, then freshman Olivia Milosevich sat in class fascinated by the material they were discussing. Her interest piqued, she then began to consider how to make this program extend beyond the week. This led her to come up with an idea she would later put into action with three other Mercy seniors: GIDAS club at Mercy.

Mercy's Genes In Diseases And Symptoms club, or GIDAS, focuses on studying genetics and how they play a role in real-life issues. Many members of GIDAS are interested in pursuing a career in the medical field, and want to further their knowledge through participation in this club.

Each year, GIDAS focuses on one relevant topic; past topics include depression, pancreatic cancer and opioid addiction. This year, members have been studying COVID-19, a prevalent topic. Students use a variety of websites and programs to compile research and discuss their findings during meetings. An especially valuable resource students have access to is national databases used by scientists who rely on this information to conduct research of their own. From there, the students write an abstract paper about the material and data they have analyzed and their conclusion based on that information. All abstracts are then collected and published.

Senior Olivia Milosevich is one of GIDAS's four leaders, and she feels that the research she does in GIDAS is preparing her for what she hopes to be doing in college.

"You're learning about everything you would learn [in college] early so you get a little extra grasp on it," Milosevich said. "You're going to have to learn how to use these sites and connect them to everything you've been learning, so it's good to get a head-start on it."

Although GIDAS lacks an abundant membership, the girls who are in it

are driven, focused and always looking for opportunities to learn something new. Members meet every other week on Thursdays, with some students in-person and those in the other cohort joining virtually via Zoom.

GIDAS club moderator and Mercy science teacher Mrs. Christin Schmitt also sees her club members' passion for their future.

"We're a small group this year; we're hoping to grow," said Mrs. Schmitt, "but the girls that are showing up and are coming are really dedicated to doing. . . their research and working hard to find out what they can."



Senior Sophia Tesic writes directions for how to access a GIDAS website, String. Photo by Megan Mallie

HOSA

Mercy students who desire to pursue a career in the medical field benefit from participating in HOSA club, or Health Occupations Students of America. HOSA meets about once a month, and offers plentiful opportunities for its members to be active in their interest for a medical profession.

The regional HOSA competition takes place at the end of first semester. Students are able to participate in skill-based assessments, whether it is a written test, a performance test or a presentation. Almost every speciality within the medical profession offers a test that students can take to prove their knowledge and potentially gain recognition for.



HOSA is considering a service project involving front-line healthcare workers this year. Photo by Megan Mallie

H O S A moderator and science teacher Mrs. Lisa Wilson appreciates the fact that HOSA is available to students who want to pursue a future in the medical field, and that it

offers a chance for students to engage in the informative, yet social, club.

"The whole goal of HOSA is to give students opportunities to learn skills, and it provides students opportunities to demonstrate that," Mrs. Wilson said. "It [also] improves their leadership skills."

Senior Gabby Pough has been a member of HOSA since freshman year, and co-founded it with fellow senior Lexi Zydeck during freshman year. Both are current club leaders.

"There wasn't a club here [at Mercy] that you could do if you wanted to be in the medical field," said Pough. "There was Business Professionals of America if you wanted to go into business or mock trial if you wanted to go into law, so we kind of wanted to make a club for [those of us who] wanted to go into the medical field."

Pough's idea to bring HOSA to Mercy coupled with her passion for the subject have proved successful, and the club is thriving. Club participants meet to study and prepare for upcoming competitions while getting a preview of their future careers.

Besides having a medical focus, HOSA also has a service aspect. Members join with other high schools to complete a service activity after their competition. Last year, Mercy partnered with Saint Catherine's and Catholic Central to assemble clean birthing kits that included gloves and a plastic surface to provide a clean birthing surface for women in Central and South America who lack access to a sanitary birthing environment. Each kit equates to saving two lives: both the mother and baby. Mrs. Wilson feels it is important for the club to not only be focused on academic learning, but acts of service as well.

"[HOSA] is not just about health care tests and skills," Mrs. Wilson said. "It's also about service to help provide healthcare to those that are underserved."

STORY AND GRAPHICS: MEGAN MALLIE, ASSOCIATE EDITOR-IN-CHIEF AND DELILAH COE, WEB EDITOR

Every Mercy girl is told they have the power to make a difference, whether it is in her community, amongst her peers, or in a stranger's life. Mercy High aims to prepare and educate young women to go out into the world and make an impact. *Newsprint* interviewed four Mercy alumnae who are currently making a difference socially or professionally.

Maria (Joseph) Thompson '80

After founding CEO and serving as President of T/J Technologies for 15 years, an alternative energy company, Maria (Joseph) Thompson is semi-retired and works as a Venture Partner for a private equity firm. She advises entrepreneurs by analyzing business plans and gives her recommendations on worthwhile investments.

Thompson received a BFA in Industrial Design from the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. She was heavily influenced by her Mercy art teacher and intended to pursue an art school education immediately following high school.

"The creative process that I learned [at Mercy] was very, very helpful in being a successful businessperson," said Thompson.

Thompson also earned a Masters in Business Administration (MBA) from the University of Michigan's Ross School of Business which was critical to her company's success. Graduating magna cum laude as an undergrad, Thompson was able to earn a full fellowship to Michigan's MBA program.

Her advice to any aspiring Mercy student is to do well in school in order to keep your options open for post-high school life. She believes that leading others with kindness and understanding enables employees to reach their full potential.

"I think that despite what you often hear, nice women can get ahead," Thompson said. "No one is successful in business by themselves. It takes strong relationships that can only be developed through integrity and finding ways for all stakeholders to benefit."

She also advises students to keep their connections with their Mercy sisters open. Thompson still remains close friends with several of her classmates to this day. She also appreciated the unique leadership opportunities that Mercy offers its young women and the leadership skills they form.

"Use your time as a student to talk to people, talk to Mercy alumni," Thompson said. "They're always happy to talk to students, and [you should] get their advice early on."



Christie (Duguanno) Swickard '92

Christie (Daguanno) Swickard is currently a learning specialist for students at St. Fabian Catholic School in Farmington Hills, Michigan. She works exclusively with children in grades one through eight. Swickard's position enables St. Fabian teachers to analyze their student data to identify, overcome, and advance student learning gaps. Before becoming an educational specialist, she previously worked as a preschool, kindergarten and second grade teacher at St. Fabian Catholic School for 16 years. By maintaining her teaching certification, Swickard remains determined to expand her knowledge about how to best educate a variety of students in order for all of her students to reach their full potential in the classroom.

The Catholic school environment has been a strong pillar of Swickard's life. She has attended Catholic schools her entire life, worked at one and has enrolled her own daughters at Mercy, Avery Swickard '21 and Kamryn Swickard '22.

After Swickard graduated from Mercy, she attended Madonna University. She knew early on in her life that she wanted to be an educator, particularly in Catholic schools. Madonna University was known for its excellent teaching program, which drove Swickard to go there and fulfill her career aspirations. Her lifelong Catholic education from preschool to college not only inspired her to teach at a Catholic school, but also made her transition into her professional life much easier.

"Mercy prepared me for my life beyond high school," said Swickard. "[It] gave me the tools to succeed in my profession as well as building my character so I would have success in my personal life."

Swickard hopes to inspire Mercy students to consider teaching as a profession.

"[Don't] become overwhelmed in your determination to succeed," said Swickard.

"Happiness leads to success. Success does not necessarily create happiness. Follow your passion and trust in God and your faith. Stay patient, be eternally grateful and trust in your journey."



Chanel Taylor '16

Full-time law school student and co-founder of a nonprofit organization, Chanel Taylor is successful, educated, and taking on the world. In March of 2020, Taylor identified a need within her community. Senior citizens were in a vulnerable position due to COVID-19, so Taylor and a fellow alum Kayla Kennard '16 decided they wanted to find a way to get groceries to seniors. Since many seniors lacked family or friends to depend on, or the technological capabilities to order from online delivery services, Taylor and Kennard started what was essentially a free delivery service.

"What we found out within the first day was that not everybody has a credit card, not everybody has a bank account, and not everybody can actually afford the groceries that they need," said Taylor. "We really had to shift our mindset."

They redoubled their efforts, soliciting donations from the community and rallying more volunteers. They appealed for assistance on the news and joined with King Solomon Baptist Church in Detroit, which had a partnership with Forgotten Harvest. From there began what Taylor called a "grassroots effort."

Volunteers packed boxes late into the night, answered phone calls from seniors in need, scheduled deliveries, mapped out delivery routes and sorted donations. Taylor and her volunteers later partnered with larger organizations to get more meals, solicit more donations and got the city of Detroit to supply workers to help pack and distribute boxes. In Dec. 2020, Taylor co-founded the nonprofit organization, The Detroit Benevolence Society.

Taylor's advice for Mercy students is to know that the Mercy alumnae community is expansive and a great resource. She recommends that students stay connected with others to succeed, as many of her current connections are Mercy-related.

"That connection to those women really does make a difference long-term," Taylor said. "Those are some of the best and strongest friendships that I have, and I know that I can count on them to support me."

Taylor is grateful for the Mercy values she was taught, and carries them with her to this day. She thinks high school is a time to appreciate your support system and know you will be connected to that community for the rest of your life.

"There are opportunities everywhere that you look, even when you're in high school," Taylor said. "If you see a need that's not being met and you have the resources to meet that need, which doesn't necessarily mean money—it could mean time, it could mean skills, it could mean connections to the right people—then do what you can do to meet that need."



Luanne (Thomas) Ewald '87

Luanne (Thomas) Ewald is the Chief Operating Officer (COO) at Michigan Medicine C.S. Mott's Children Hospital and Von Voigtlander Women's Hospital. After graduating from Mercy, Ewald ventured to continue her studies at Marquette University, earning a degree in Business Administration and Marketing and then receiving a master's degree in Hospital and Health Administration from Xavier University in Cincinnati, Ohio. She then went on to complete a 12-month fellowship at the Children's Hospital of Michigan. During her time in graduate school, Ewald became a member of the American College of Healthcare Executives, which is an international organization for healthcare administrators. Before becoming COO of Michigan Medicine, Ewald was named the CEO of the Detroit Medical Center (DMC) in 2016, which she worked at for 27 years.

Ewald credits her Mercy education with preparing her to be able to accomplish many things in her professional career as a leading executive in Michigan's healthcare. She has continued to support Mercy through sending her daughters, Maggie '18, and Mollie '21 who is a current senior at Mercy for their high school educations. She believes that Mercy will continue to educate young women to be prepared for their professional lives, no matter what they go on to do.

"I always recommend a Mercy education because that is where my foundation as a person and as a professional was set," said Ewald. She believes the diverse atmosphere, opinions, and people helped prepare her to be a strong woman and face the real world.

Ewald is very passionate about her Mercy education and encourages you to take advantage of yours to help you in a future career that you will thrive in. Ewald's advice to current and future Mercy students is to "find a career that you are passionate about, that challenges you and that consistently helps you grow. Work with teams that are supportive and helpful. Know your value and worth," said Ewald.



Executive change

STORY AND GRAPHICS: RACHAEL SALAH, DESIGN EDITOR

Welcoming a new year also meant welcoming a new president, elected to govern the country. President Joseph (Joe) R. Biden was inaugurated on Jan. 20, 2021, and was determined to set new laws and create new executive orders upon becoming the country's leader. Biden has set a new record for the most executive orders signed in a day (17) and is actively working to keep the promises he and Vice President Kamala Harris created during their campaign. The president is creating new orders and reversing a high number of orders enforced by his predecessor. Here is a breakdown of some executive orders most applicable to Generation Z signed thus far by the Biden administration.

On President Biden's first day in office, he signed the "Preventing and Combating Discrimination on the Basis of Gender Identity or Sexual Orientation" order. His administration plans to focus on more equality for all Americans.

The Federal Register reported the executive order states "it is the policy of my administration to prevent and combat discrimination on the basis of gender identity or sexual orientation, and to fully enforce Title VII and other laws that prohibit

identity or sexual orientation."

This order will combat discrimination against LGBTQ+ individuals in employment, healthcare, housing, and education. Amongst

these numbers by "phasing out the Federal Government's reliance on privately operated criminal detention facilities" according to the Federal Register.



Photo by: Getty Images

The order also notes that incarceration and correctional systems should prioritize rehabilitation and redemption. It also claims that privately operated criminal detention facilities "consistently underperform federal facilities with respect to correctional services, programs, and resources."

Biden's tone in the executive order implies that America's justice system should focus more on rehabilitating prisoners rather than solely punishing them. "We should ensure that time in prison prepares individuals for the next chapter of their lives" states the Executive Order. The order also explains that

by reducing privately operated prisons, the prisoners will have a fair chance at democracy outside of prison.

The Biden Administration is attempting to make efforts to keep the promises said in the Biden-Harris campaign. However, it is every American's job to ensure that the administration is being held accountable and continuing these efforts for the next four years.

the many executive orders President Biden has created to aid in ending the pandemic such as national mask mandates and protecting worker health and safety, the "Economic Relief Related to the COVID-19 Pandemic" order signed on Jan. 22 focuses on implementing money to stimulate stability for businesses while unemployment rates remain high. This order states that "the current economic crisis has affected Americans throughout the Nation, but it is particularly dire in communities of color." The goal of this order is to help the Americans who have significantly suffered with income loss due to the pandemic.

The Census Bureau's monthly "Current Population Survey" released on Dec. 9 states "some 25 million people met the official definition of 'unemployed'...in November [of 2020]." These Biden executive orders aim to provide government assistance to those 25 million Americans and give them some financial stability in hopes of recovery.

Mass incarceration rates in America are exceedingly high. President Biden signed the "Reforming Our Incarceration System To Eliminate the Use of Privately Operated Criminal Detention Facilities" executive Order on Jan. 26 to reduce profit-based incentives to incarcerate. He plans to decrease

discrimination on the basis of gender



Photo: Fair use

Accessing the COVID-19 vaccine

STORY AND GRAPHICS: FATIMA SIDDIQUE

After a year of wearing masks, social distancing, and Zoom meetings, it's no question that everyone is wondering when life will return to normal. While these safety measures have become the new normal and our current lives revolve around COVID-19, medical experts have been working hard to quickly develop an effective vaccine. Nationally, the death toll of this pandemic has just reached the grim milestone of more than 500,000 deaths within the United States. And while it was assumed the development of a vaccine could take years, the biomedical companies have created a vaccine in extreme time to save lives and stop transmission of this virus. As of Dec. 2020, the Federal Drug Administration (FDA) granted emergency use authorization for COVID-19 vaccines created by Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna. Both vaccines require two shots taken over a few weeks to ensure a higher rate of effectiveness.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), as of Feb. 23rd approximately 64 million people have received at least one dose of a vaccine, with 19 million of those being fully vaccinated. However, due to limited supply, in Michigan the vaccine is currently only available to specific groups of people: those aged 65 and older, those with underlying medical conditions and frontline essential workers, which includes those in education. In fact, many teachers at Mercy have had the opportunity to get the vaccine.

The Mercy staff was able to sign up through the Oakland County Health Department to receive the vaccine. However, due to excessive amounts of people, the website crashed and only a few managed to book their appointments.

"I had just gotten really lucky," said Physical Education and Health teacher Mrs. Brandi Lavelly, who had gotten her first dose of the vaccine on Jan. 26th. "A lot of staff members tried to sign up and weren't able to."

Some vaccinations are given at a drive-through, so you have to drive up and roll down your window.

"I was in the car when I got the shot," said Principal Mrs. Patricia Sattler, who took the Moderna vaccine. "We just had to drive from station to station."

However, the process takes roughly an hour with the long lines and multiple verifications. To ensure nobody reacts badly to the vaccine, you're required to stay 15 minutes after receiving it.

"I had to sit in an observation area with my window down and my door unlocked in case I had a reaction to the vaccine," said Mrs. Lavelly. "There were paramedics all around who would be able to come around and help if anyone needed."

In regards to the actual shot, it feels just like

any other flu shot, and while some experienced some pain and minor side effects, some felt nothing at all.

"The shot hurt; it's painful," said Social Studies teacher Mrs. Cindy Richter, who took her first dose of the vaccine on Jan. 24th. "My arm was very sore for the next day and a half." However, for Mrs. Sattler, "the shot was absolutely nothing, just like a flu shot."

All teachers are due to receive their second shot in just a couple of weeks, which will increase the vaccine's effectiveness.

The Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) has set a goal of vaccinating 70% of people 16 years of age and older for COVID-19 by the end of 2021.

"Getting the vaccine is a great thing because as more of us get vaccinated, maybe we can get herd immunity and finally take the masks off," said Math teacher Mr. Adam Walker, who got his second shot on Feb. 20.

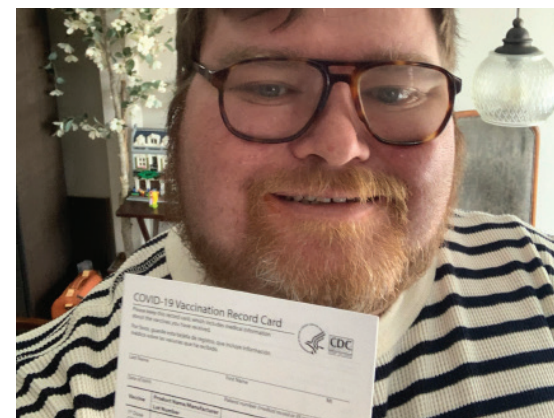
But as the supply of vaccines increases, this goal might be achieved sooner rather than later. In fact, On Feb. 19, President Joe Biden visited a Pfizer vaccine plant in Kalamazoo, Michigan as the administration says there will be enough COVID-19 vaccine supply to vaccinate 300 million Americans by the end of July. And while it is unknown when exactly the vaccine will be available to the general public, it's a remarkable accomplishment that it was developed so quickly and is already saving lives today. With the help of the vaccine and the goals set by the Department of Human Services (DHS), there might even be hope of life returning to some type of normalcy by the end of this year.



Mrs. Brandi Lavelly taking a selfie with her COVID-19 Vaccination Record Card in her car after receiving the shot. Photo used with permission from Mrs. Lavelly



Mrs. Cindy Richter taking the Moderna vaccine on January 24th. Photo used with permission from Mrs. Richter



Mr. Adam Walker planned on taking the second shot of the vaccine on February 20th. Photo used with permission by Mr. Walker

Photo: Fair use

The show will go on

STORY BY: JULIA HOLT '24, GUEST WRITER GRAPHICS: CLARE JONES EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

PLAYBILL

MERCY HIGH SCHOOL THEATRE

My heart is pounding, adrenaline pumping through my veins as the curtain is slowly drawn up, revealing a crowd of people silent with anticipation. I love the adrenaline rush being on stage gives you and the thrill of performing in front of hundreds of people. You pour your heart out and leave everything you have on stage. Theater brings people together.

Not only do you grow close with your cast and crew, but actors can bring the audience together to celebrate and tell a story that leaves an impact. Family, friends and strangers are brought together to see your show. For a few hours, people from different walks of life are joined in the same auditorium and all experience and witness the same adventure displayed on the stage.

A live performance can make its audience laugh, cry and smile all within the same scene or whole performance. As an actress, having the privilege to bring people together in this way is wondrous.

The theater has always been a part of my life. I was seven when I was in my first show. My parents had signed me up, thinking it could be something fun for me to do to build confidence. Little did they know that once I first stepped onto the stage as the character “Dwarf Sleepy” in *Hansel and Gretel* my heart immediately fell in love with the idea of portraying personas to connect with the audience.

Soon after experiencing my first glimpse of stage acting, I could not stop. Suddenly, I found myself rigorously practicing and memorizing lines, perfecting choreography, or singing Broadway masterpiece songs that many of my friends could not recognize from the radio.

Even when I am not in an ongoing production, the theater still plays a role in my life, whether singing show tunes or acting out skits with my sister. The theater is always there.

However, notwithstanding my adoration for theater, there remain challenges to being a part of this community as an actress. Personally, the most challenging aspect of the performing arts lifestyle is the auditions.

Even if performers have done the routines countless times, auditions frequently cause actors to feel an uneasy sensation of doubt that can cause intense stress and possibly impact audition performance. Typically artists receive limited time to prepare. If the casting call is filled with an exquisite talent pool, the possibility of knowing you may not be cast at all can be devastating to an actor, similarly to an athlete not making a certain sports team.

The recurring questions like “what could I have done better?”, “did I put an emphasis on the right words in the lines?” or “did I do all the correct choreography?” continuously loom in my mind and create an excruciating feeling of anxiety. Though auditions can be extremely stressful, once the process is complete, the sense of relief if selected to participate in a show immediately turns into excitement as you begin to build your character’s foundations.

But theater is more than simply practicing and performing. It extends from there, with the friendships you create and the experiences you have on and off stage. I’ve met a variety of unique, kind and authentic personalities throughout my years of being a part of the performing arts community. I would not be the person I am today if my parents had not signed me up for that play years ago.

The theater helped me learn to gain confidence within myself and build up others around me. It’s so exciting to see your friends do amazing things, and watch them grow from their first rehearsal to opening night. You build off of each other’s strength and improve each other in areas you may fall short. The theater is a community that has made me feel welcomed, loved and wanted.

Whether you’re part of the stage crew, ensemble or the lead, every role is important. The show could not go on without you, and everyone can’t wait to see you flourish.

Participating in performing arts on stage can help provide individuals with life skills to communicate with others effectively through public speaking, increased confidence and understanding how to be a team player.

For those uninterested in participating in the arts, I encourage you to become a patron for them. The theater has universally taught society about controversial topics that impact people to make a difference. These stories showcase various perspectives through a plethora of characters and incorporate a lesson to be learned in each performance.

Lin Manuel-Miranda’s *In the Heights* teaches about the issues of conveying new immigrants in New York City. *Dear Evan Hanson* informs its audience about mental health, and *Hairspray* teaches the history of racial prejudice and racism, to name a few. The theater helps to amplify people to see from a different perspective or understand the issue better to make our society a better place for all.



Photos by Playbill

A drink full of surprises

STORY, PHOTOS AND GRAPHICS: CAITLYN BEGOSA



From Starbucks's Unicorn Frappuccino to rainbow bagels, many food trends come and go on social media, but a certain beverage seems to have a constant presence on people's Snapchat and Instagram stories lately: bubble tea. This drink comes in a large variety of tea flavors and contains tapioca pearls, also known as boba. To see if bubble tea is really worth the hype, I reviewed three different places specializing in the drink with some of my friends.

The first place we tried was Ding Tea in Novi. Ding Tea is an authentic Taiwanese tea house franchise that prides itself on serving quality drinks to customers. Other locations around Michigan can be found in Ann Arbor and Canton.

Ding Tea currently does not have indoor dining available, but there is a seating area where patrons can wait for drinks to be prepared.

The decorations definitely contribute to the comforting atmosphere of the tea house. The decor includes Polaroids of customers with their drinks and a wall covered in leaves with a heart created out of pink flowers, which is great for taking photos with friends.

The customer service at Ding Tea is superb. The employees are very welcoming and friendly. The usual wait time for drinks is five minutes due to the staff's excellence.

The signature milk tea with golden boba (\$3.65) was a refreshing start to the day. The combination of the black tea and milk flavor left me going back for a second sip.

"Ding tea is one of the only bubble tea places that have golden boba," said junior Meghana Govindaraj. "It's less sweet compared to the black or brown boba other places have. Because it's not sweet, it tastes like whatever tea you have."

The lychee black tea with golden boba and lychee star jelly (\$4.20) tasted exactly like the fragrant fruit. The tea was mouthwatering and will disappear in 10 seconds if you have no self control. The lychee star jelly gave a great bite along with the golden boba. This drink has definitely become my go-to order.

The taro milk tea (\$3.65) had great flavor. The taro root provided the tea with an earthy sweetness and nutty flavor. Additionally, the taro made the milk tea a stunning lavender color.

On average, all the beverages at Ding Tea cost less than \$5.00, but the toppings, such as boba and fruit jellies, are an additional \$0.55.

Ding Tea



Bursting with flavor, the lychee black tea and taro milk tea from Ding Tea are a must-have.

Tea Gather



Located in downtown Northville, Tea Gather is the perfect spot for drinks and snacks.

even people who do not like tofu will swoon over Tea Gather's crispy tofu (\$4.85).

"The tea was good, but I would come here just for the food," said junior Rachel George. "The food was amazing for a place that specializes in drinks."

All the beverages at Tea Gather are between \$3 to \$5 with toppings costing an extra \$0.50.

Our final destination was Tea Ninja in downtown Ann Arbor. The vibrant yellows and pinks of Tea Ninja bring a lively ambience to the location. The themed decor definitely makes the bubble tea shop stand out compared to other restaurants nearby.

The seating, comprising of high-rise stools and tables surrounded by chairs, makes Tea Ninja the perfect place to relax with friends while enjoying a delicious beverage.

The ninja milk black tea (\$4.15) was not as flavorful as the other locations. The black tea was dull and overpowered by the milk tea that accompanied it.

The dragon fruit tea (\$4.55) was unbearably sweet to the point the actual tea flavor went by unnoticed. The flavor had no resemblance to actual dragon fruit and tasted like pure sugar. The only plus side was the drink provided coconut and other fruit jellies to reduce the sweetness.

Even though the temperature was below ten degrees, the piña colada slush (\$5) is a must-have. The combination of pineapple and coconut gives the sensation of warmer weather, and the texture of the slush was smooth and creamy.

Along with drinks, Tea Ninja also has a variety of macaroons and cakes to try.

The cereal milk macaron (\$2.25) tasted exactly like Fruit Loops, and the raspberry rose macaron (\$2.25) was pleasantly sweet and extremely cute.

With the toppings included, the drink prices at Tea Ninja range from \$3 to \$6.

Is bubble tea a timeless trend? The overall consensus from a day reviewing is yes! Coming in so many different flavors and versions, bubble tea is not leaving the public's eye any day soon.

Tea Gather in downtown Northville was our next stop. The bubble tea shop officially opened late January and is quickly becoming a favorite among avid boba drinkers.

"The aesthetic is very modern and clean looking," said junior Madelyn Leiter. "The music adds to the vibe of the place, and I really like the location."

Socially distanced seating is available at Tea Gather. The shop has a wide selection of seating ranging from sleek high top stools, wooden booths and comfortable white couch chairs.

The staff is extremely friendly and provided great recommendations on drinks and food.

The classic milk tea (\$3.65) at Tea Gather was the best out of the three locations. The milk tea was bursting with black tea flavor, making the other locations' teas bland in comparison.

From Tea Gather's fresh fruit series, the honey grapefruit drink (\$5.00) was extremely bitter and could have used more sweetness from the honey. With fresh-squeezed grapefruit juice and pulp, this drink is absolutely for those who can get over the bitterness of the citrus fruit.

The peach green tea (\$3.75) was refreshing and not overwhelmingly sweet.

"I was really surprised," said Govindaraj. "I usually don't like green tea, but the peach tea was actually really good."

What makes Tea Gather different from other bubble tea locations is that it also has savory snacks on their menu.

The basil popcorn chicken (\$5.75) was tender and had a delicious crispy covering. Tea Gather's bubble waffle (\$4.95) was heavenly; it was rich and not overbearingly sweet. Govindaraj even compared their bubble waffle to those she had during her trip to China. The crab rangoons (\$4.75) were to die for; the filling was excellent and was complimented nicely by the sweet and sour sauce provided. Additionally,

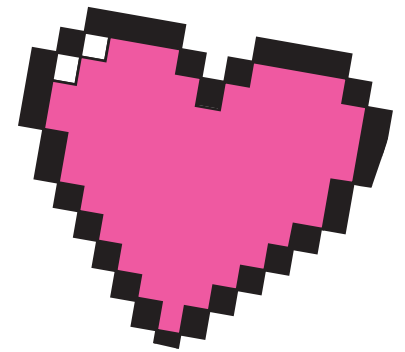
Tea Ninja



Tea Ninja is the only bubble tea place that offers the piña colada flavor, which is worth the trip to downtown Ann Arbor.

21st century romance

STORY AND GRAPHICS: MADDIE SULLIVAN, COPY EDITOR



Valentine’s Day may be over, but love is still in the air. And to get you in the Valentine’s spirit, *Newsprint* brings to you a variety of romance movie recommendations featuring two iconic on-screen couples. Whether you are searching for a nostalgic film to take you back to the 2000s or you long for a modern-day teen romance movie, *Newsprint* has got you covered.

2000s: 50 First Dates



If you’re looking for the perfect blend of comedy and romance to keep you entertained, look no further, Drew Barrymore and Adam Sandler have got you covered. This iconic Hollywood duo has worked side-by-side in numerous big-screen productions like *The Wedding Singer* and *Blended*, solidifying their spot as one of the best on-screen couples. And their 2004 film, *50 First Dates*, is no exception.

The plot follows Henry Roth, a shallow, young veterinarian living in Hawaii, who spends his free time wooing women with no intention of settling down. However, this all changes when he falls for a local on the island, Lucy. As he pursues his new love interest, Roth discovers that Lucy was in a terrible car accident and suffers from short-term memory loss. And the audience gets to see Roth’s plight as he must make Lucy re-fall in love with him everyday.

Although the film’s plot may seem rather extreme, the movie exhibits the perfect combination of slapstick humor and sweet romantic comedy. Additionally, we get to see love depicted in a way that it has not been seen before. It is truly spectacular to see Roth’s dedication to Lucy, along with how supportive Lucy’s father and brother are after the accident. From the tropical setting to the unique storyline to the comedic genius of Sandler and Barrymore, *50 First Dates* is the perfect film for Valentine’s Day, or any day honestly!

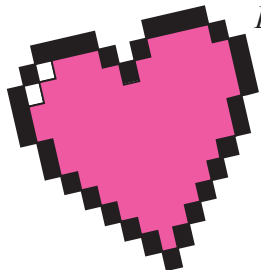
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2010s: To All the Boys I’ve Loved Before

If you’re a Gen Z looking for a heartfelt high school rom-com to watch on Valentine’s Day, *To All the Boys I’ve Loved Before* is the perfect movie for you. Rather than placing an emphasis on finding “the one,” this movie explores the emotions surrounding crushes and the revelation of feelings—something that would likely appeal to younger viewers. Love triangles, high school drama, frenemies, and family tragedy are just some of the topics explored in this 2018 Netflix drama.

Based on Jenny Han’s best-selling 2014 novel of the same name, the movie’s premise follows Lara Jean, a book-loving, quiet, and family-oriented high school student. Lara Jean writes letters to the five boys she has crushes on with no intention of sending these deeply embarrassing letters. However, what would this movie be if these letters never got out? So to Lara Jean’s surprise, her letters are sent to the respective boys, leading first to excruciating humiliation but eventually opening the door to new relationships, both friendly and romantic. This movie is followed by a sequel, *To All the Boys: P.S. I Still Love You*, which was released in 2020.

The newest installment of the Netflix movie series *To All the Boys: Always and Forever* was released on Feb. 12. Overall, I would definitely recommend these movies to anyone looking for a sweet, light-hearted high school romance movie.



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