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NEWSPRINT

Newsprint presents a special
Christmas King edition of...

DANCE MOMS





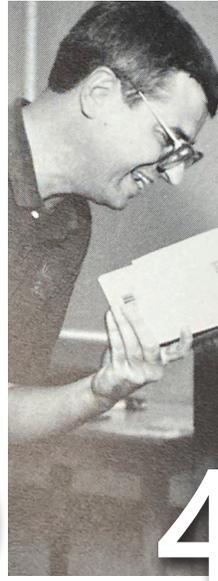
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Letter from the Editor

Dear reader,

As you probably know by now, *Newsprint* releases a new issue each month. One day, copies appear in your adviser group and you are asked to take one. But what is very much unknown to the student body is the hard work and passion that goes into creating every paper.

This staff is a very special one. We are extremely dedicated to producing the best paper possible for all of you, the students and staff. *Newsprint* encompasses writing, editing, photography, design, creativity, and hard work, but most of all, we are a group committed to the Mercy community. We put in extra work to try to highlight as many students as possible throughout the building to provide an in-depth look and analysis of life at Mercy.

This issue, we highlight the life, legacy, and impact Mr. Baker has had on the Mercy community. We also celebrate the end of the semester and the annual Christmas dance (formerly A-Ball) with *Newsprint's* Christmas King tradition. This issue is just a glance at the many amazing people, places, and events of Mercy that we highlight throughout the school year.

When the staff starts a new cycle to create the next issue, we go through many face-to-face interviews with an array of people, and take hundreds of pictures. Their stories are told through ours. Our storytelling is what shares the small, but important, details of a person's life, the depth behind their appearance, and celebrates the people who have come, left, and impacted Mercy High.

Additionally, *Newsprint* analyzes national or world events and how they impact the school community. It is a great outlet to understand the connection between your own life and the world around you while becoming more aware of the events heavily affecting all of us today.

It's true that all of us are busy. We get that. But this is your newspaper, so we encourage you to read *Newsprint*

and tell us if there are more stories that need to be told. During Christmas break and this time of new beginnings, the *Newsprint* staff invites you to become more immersed in Mercy through your paper. And I personally ask all of you to read and learn more about the stories of the diverse student life that *Newsprint* communicates to you.

Happy Holidays,
Isabelle Sawicki
Editor-in-Chief

MEME THIS PIC

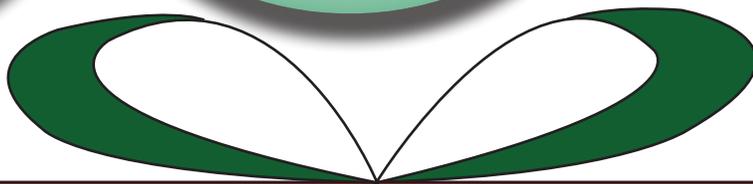


Can you think of a funny caption for this photo? To have your caption featured in the next issue, go to www.newsprintnow.net and comment on the "Meme This Pic" story under the entertainment tab! Photo by Dunya Kizy

LAST MONTH'S WINNER

When you JUST walked in and you get juggled for wearing a coat

Submitted by: Annabel Shammami



CAIT'S TOP 8

Associate Editor-in-Chief Caitlin Flynn dives into her top eight favorite albums of this decade.

1.

MELODRAMA BY LORDE (2017)

2.

CHANNELORANGE BY FRANK OCEAN (2012)

3.

PARAMORE BY PARAMORE (2013)

4.

FLOWER BOY BY TYLER THE CREATOR (2017)

5.

APRICOT PRINCESS BY REX ORANGE COUNTY (2017)

6.

BAMBI BY HIPPO CAMPUS (2019)

7.

ARDIPITHECUS BY WILLOW (2015)

8.

DRIVE NORTH BY SWMRS (2016)

Bye bye Baker

Mercy bids farewell to a school legend

STORY: ABBY SHAW

Twenty-two year old Larry Baker stepped into the doors of Mercy High School in 1975 and never looked back. Straight out of college after receiving a degree in political science and English at the University of Michigan, he entered the job that changed his life. Mr. Baker considers himself fortunate to have been offered a position as a full time English teacher and Varsity basketball coach at Mercy.

Now in his 45th year as an integral part of the Mercy community, he plans to retire at the end of this semester, leaving behind his beloved legacy as an English teacher, basketball coach, and administrator. He has contributed so much of his time to Mercy, which can be seen through the lives of students and staff members who he has impacted.

Mr. Baker fell in love with Mercy on his first visit, and from that moment on, he knew it would be his future home.

"I was amazed by the college prep curriculum," he recalls. "When I made my first visit here, I was wowed by the atmosphere."

Mr. Baker passionately taught the majority of the English courses in the curriculum for his first 36 years at Mercy. He significantly contributed not only to the overall advancement of the English department, but to the way in which Mercy students were taught English through his passionate teaching.

"Mr. Baker set the tone for striving for excellence in his class, and challenged us to do our best," said alum Colleen McClorey ('79).

McClorey had Mr. Baker as a teacher her freshman year for English 1. She recognized and admired his ability to bring the stories to life, and his challenging yet fair learning environment. His active and passionate teaching style also inspired McClorey in her future career.

"Because of his passion and enjoyment of literature and encouragement in analyzing the books we read, I became an English major in college,"

said McClorey. "I am grateful to him for instilling my own passion for reading."

Of all the English courses and books Mr. Baker has taught, one class in which he taught the novel *Great Expectations*, stands out. He taught the students to love the novel, and they decided to celebrate in style.

"We had a Charles Dickens party and we all got into costumes for a day," said Mr. Baker. "Everyone got so into it and we were all enjoying the novel by living it in costume."

His ability to immerse his students fully into

"Mercy has been a complete part of my life" - Mr. Baker

literature is part of why he is so beloved as a teacher. His engaging and thought-provoking learning environment has touched the lives of many past students over his 36 years as an English teacher and has also made an impact on his current students. Before his retirement, he decided to teach one last Shakespeare class to finish off his career as an English teacher.

"Mr. Baker is very enthusiastic and goes in depth

into his character when we are reading out certain plays," said senior Lily Beasley.

Beasley is currently in Mr. Baker's class, and enjoys his teaching style and his sense of humor. She and the class always look forward to the in-depth conversations and laughs from Mr. Baker.

"He makes every class fun with his hilarious observations of certain plays and sonnets, and pieces of information which you would never think of," said Beasley. "Every time we're reading a play or sonnet and we come across a funny word, Mr. Baker explains what it means and usually the meaning is just as funny as the word."

Not only has Mr. Baker created a fun and entertaining environment for his students, but he has also broadened their horizons and provided them with wise lessons for their futures.

"Mr. Baker is and always will be a piece of Mercy," said Beasley.

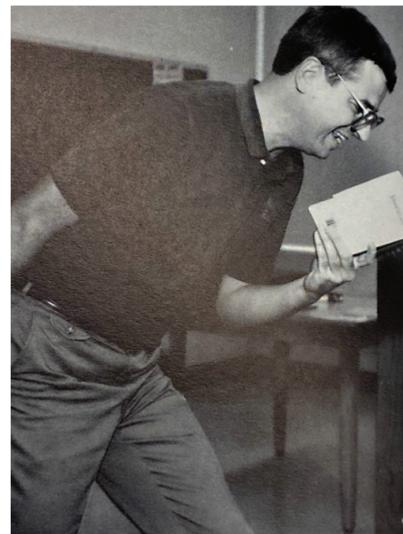
Mr. Baker also began teaching American Government in addition to his English classes. He even started the first Advanced Placement (AP) American Government class.

Mr. Baker has appreciated all the people he has met at Mercy, including his fellow educators. He still sees these long lasting friends and is thankful to Mercy for bringing him to them.

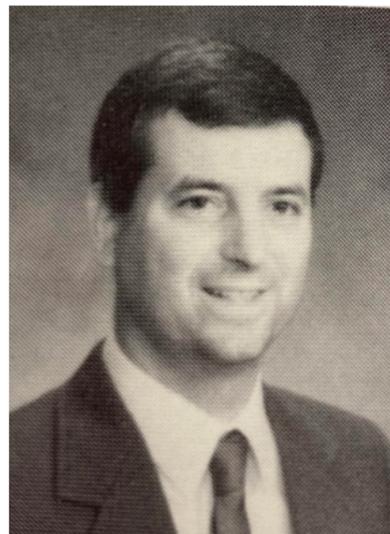
"In my first years, I made a set of friends that I have kept my entire life," said Mr. Baker. "My very best friends were people I started working with my first few years at Mercy."

As his time comes to a close, he will always be able to recount his fond memories stemming from Mercy High School.

"[Mercy] has been a complete part of my life," he recalled. "It has brought me some of my greatest joys."



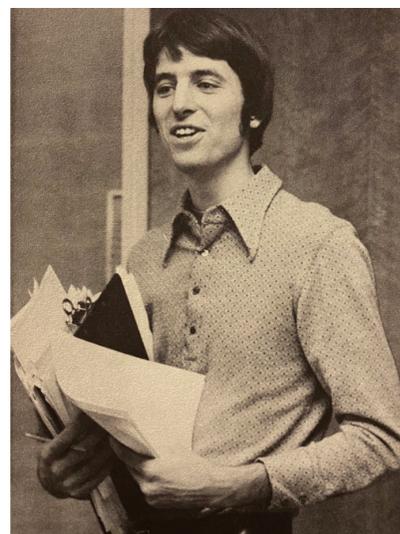
Mr. Baker brings a Shakespeare character to life during his English class in 1989. Photo used with permission from LORE



Mr. Baker's portrait in the school's yearbook in 1989. Photo used with permission from LORE



Mr. Baker strikes a pose resembling a Shakespeare character with his last Shakespeare class in 2019. Photo by Clare Jones



Mr. Baker carries English papers during his early years as an English teacher in 1976. Photo used with permission from LORE



Basketball Coach Baker prepares his team in a pep talk before a game in 1982. Photo used with permission from LORE



Mr. Baker embraces technology by using an Ipad during his Shakespeare class in 2019. Photo by Clare Jones



Coach Baker evaluates the basketball team's performance during a game in 1992. Photo used with permission from LORE



Mr. Baker stands proudly as Associate Principal of Operations as he walks through the Mercy halls during his last days before his retirement in 2019. Photo by Clare Jones

Closing his final chapter at Mercy

STORY: CLARE JONES

As Associate Principal of Operations, Mr. Laurence "Larry" Baker, walks the halls of Mercy High School, he feels a sense of both sadness and excitement about his upcoming retirement at the end of this semester. During his tenure of nearly 45 years, Mercy has grown to be very near and dear to his heart. When those familiar with Mercy hear his name, they immediately think of him as an English teacher and administrator. But Mr. Baker's contributions to Mercy mean so much more.

Along with his love of literature, Mr. Baker spent many years as the school's basketball coach, leading the Marlins varsity basketball team to the Michigan High School Athletic Association (MHSAA) state championship finals five times, while capturing two Class A titles in 1977 and 1982. Mr. Baker shared that coaching the basketball team is one of his fondest memories, particularly during the second championship game played at the University of Detroit at Callahan Hall.

"We were nearly 20 points behind at one point during the game and came back to win," he said. In true form, he credits the win to the hard work and talent of the girls on the basketball team.

During that game, the MHSAA recognized successful coaching skills by honoring Mr. Baker as the first inductee into the "Legends Of The Games" at the 1997 basketball final. The "Legends" program was created to acknowledge coaches who not only develop athletic talent but also create a team environment that values sportsmanship.

Mr. Baker's multifaceted achievements also include administering the implementation and management of Mercy's I.T. infrastructure. In 2013, Mr. Baker championed Mercy to be an academic leader in the use of technology by becoming an Apple Distinguished School. This distinction recognizes Mercy's commitment to educational

excellence through the use of innovative technology that provides students a progressive learning experience. He also developed the iWizards program that uses students to help integrate Apple technology into Mercy's curriculum. For example this year, the iWizards are focusing on designing a more functional app for the school. Junior iWizard

Aisling Heaphy said "the group will continue to grow without his presence because he has established a solid foundation of training with others in the administration."

"We have really strong leaders, and they will help us to continue the advance in technology," Heaphy said. "We will have Mr. James and Mr. Janush ... they're obviously very well versed with technology and prepared to guide the iWizards to continued success. Overall, I think the Wizards will continue to thrive without him, but he will be greatly missed."

Information Technology Director Tom James feels although Baker will not be present in leading the advancement of technology at Mercy, there will still be a continuation of technology in the classrooms. For example, Mr. Baker recently helped Mercy gain access to virtual reality headsets. Mr. James said he hopes to include virtual reality technology as available tools for educational purposes in all classrooms in the future.

"With technology changing so quickly, as we go forward I still think Mercy will stay in the forefront of educational technology," James said. "It is just a first step down that road. We see this expanding a lot in the future and are hopefully able to get more educational virtual reality tools."

Additionally Ms. Colleen McMaster, Associate Principal for Academic Affairs, said Mr. Baker is very diligent in completing projects and has the ability to see things from many different angles. Along with the work Mr. Baker has done to integrate

the school's technology with student learning, she also praised Mr. Baker's podcasts featuring past Mercy graduates.

"He's been able to take different tools with technology and apply them in the appropriate way," Ms. McMaster said. "He learned how to podcast and now reaches out to alum to record interviews that feature amazing things."

Through his podcasts, Mr. Baker is able to engage listeners with Mercy alum as they share their career paths, community involvement and other interesting facts.

Going forward, Mr. Baker hopes to see technology and learning intertwined in the classroom to help students create strong critical thinking skills.

"My greatest hope, which has already started with iExplorer... is using technology to make learning experiences with technology so you can get to solve your own problems. You get to immerse yourself in a challenge through problem solving, building things [and] being able to network," Mr. Baker said.

He has been a long time ticket holder of football games held at the University of Michigan, his alma mater, and recently bought season tickets for the university's basketball home games. In addition, Mr. Baker is looking forward to volunteering as a coach and a teacher in a more limited way.

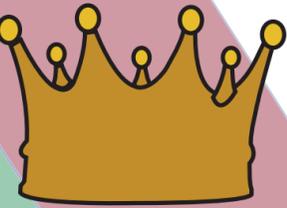
"I want to retire while I was feeling good, able to work out six times a week at more convenient times, and continue to be very active," Mr. Baker said. "I'm looking forward to traveling to Hawaii and attending cultural and athletic events like Big 10 games," he said.

Mr. Baker is closing his extensive professional career, while leaving behind an impactful legacy Mercy will forever remember and be grateful for.

CHRISTMAS KING 2019

Be sure to watch the Christmas King video on newsprintnow.net!

STORY AND GRAPHICS: DUNYA KIZY, PHOTO EDITOR AND BELLA APRILLIANO, WEB EDITOR | PHOTOS: CAITLIN FLYNN, ASSOCIATE EDITOR-IN-CHIEF





Grant Alshab

Why do you want to be Christmas King?
 “I want to have the first slow dance of the night with my girlfriend.”

What do you want for Christmas?
 “To hang out with Rachel on Christmas.”

What’s your favorite Christmas song?
 “‘All I want for Christmas is you’ - Mariah Carey.”




Nick Abdelnour

Why do you want to be Christmas King?
 “I just love Christmas and Ashley is kind of making me do it.”

What do you want for Christmas?
 “I want world peace.”

What’s your favorite Christmas movie?
 “Gremlins.”

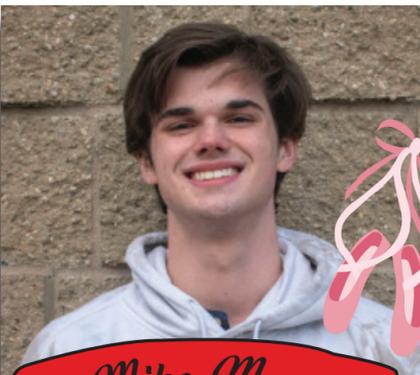



Colin Knittel

Why do you want to be Christmas King?
 “Because my girlfriend has been dreaming about this since she was born.”

What do you want for Christmas?
 “I want to make my girlfriend happy, which I can only do by being Christmas King.”

What’s your favorite Christmas movie?
 “Elf.”




Mike Moss

Why do you want to be Christmas King?
 “I think I really embody Santa Claus, the original Christmas King.”

What do you want for Christmas?
 “I just want there to be a ton of mosh pits at the A-Ball dance.”

What’s your favorite Christmas movie?
 “National Lampoon’s Christmas Vacation.”




Brendan Zemke

Why do you want to be Christmas King?
 “So I can make Macey happy.”

What do you want for Christmas?
 “I want the A-Ball crown.”

What’s your favorite Christmas song?
 “‘All I want for Christmas is you’ - Mariah Carey.”




Kameron Finn

Why do you want to be Christmas King?
 “I look a lot better in a crown”

What do you want for Christmas?
 “I want a brand new leopard skin pillbox hat”

What’s your favorite Christmas song?
 “‘This Christmas’ - Chris Brown.”

Embracing different religious holidays

STORY: SAANYA ZAIDI | GRAPHICS: DELILAH COE

The colorful Christmas trees and brightly lit houses always fascinated junior Mariam Asghar, who practices Islam, when she was younger. Asghar always wished to celebrate Christmas as a holiday because of the many presents and colorful decorations associated with the holiday.

“As I grew up, I realized that each person has their own traditions and that I should embrace our holidays in Islam—Eid Al-Fitr, the birth of the Prophet,” Asghar said.

For Asghar, attending Mercy as a practicing Muslim in a predominantly Catholic environment has encouraged her to be stronger in her faith.

“The past years at Mercy have made me more confident in my religion because [I am] not surrounded by Muslims all the time, like I was growing up. It has undeniably taught me to stand up for my religion and to properly explain my beliefs to those who ask,” Asghar explained. “It has also made me realize my knowledge of religion is not as in depth as it should be and has inspired me to learn more and truly understand why I chose to be a Muslim.”

The week after Thanksgiving, Mercy becomes filled with Christmas decorations, wreaths, and lights. The commonly known holiday season includes the Christian and Jewish celebrations of Christmas and Hanukkah, but November and December also include spiritually significant days for religions such as Islam and cultures that observe Kwanzaa.

Christmas is a holiday celebrated to commemorate the birth of Jesus, the proclaimed Son of God in the Christian faith. Overtime, Christmas has also become a season focused on kindness, giving, and family, in addition to

celebrating it’s core religious foundations.

Although Mercy is a Catholic high school, not everyone celebrates Catholic holidays like Christmas. Yet, the generosity and spirit of Christmas make it possible for everyone to be a part of a celebration of joy and gratitude in our lives.

Dr. Alison Kline-Kator, a religious studies teacher at Mercy, explains how almost every religion has a celebration that encompasses the same values that are relevant and important to Christmas.

“They are different holidays, so we do not want to say that all of these holidays are exactly the same because they have different origins and different meanings,” Dr. Kline-Kator said. “Yet in different ways people are celebrating their faith with family, which is a time of joy and love whichever holiday you are celebrating.”

One of these holidays is Ramadan, which is celebrated in the Islamic faith. Ramadan is the ninth month in the Islamic calendar and is celebrated at a different time every year. The holiday consists of fasting, reflection, prayer, community, and is meant to cleanse an individual and deepen one’s connection to God. It is a holiday centered on family, togetherness, and love. For Muslims, this holiday embodies similar values to those of Christmas: giving, strength, and togetherness. Breaking the fast at the end of the day is a community event that brings family and friends together.

For those practicing Judaism, Hanukkah is a time for family, giving, and love, but it is also a large celebration of connections between individuals. The eight-day Jewish celebration commemorates the rededication during the second

century B.C. of the Second Temple in Jerusalem. According to legend, it was in that temple where Jews had rose up against their Greek-Syrian oppressors in the Maccabean Revolt. Ms. Gillian Herold, an English teacher at Mercy, has her own family traditions when celebrating Hanukkah.

“I give my kids a small gift every single night until the last night, and I give them a big gift,” Ms. Herold said. “We also eat latkes to commemorate the miracle of the oil lasting eight days.”

According to author Keith Mayes, author of *Kwanzaa: Black Power and the Making of the African-American Holiday Tradition*, he estimates half a million to two million people in the U.S. celebrate Kwanzaa. Kwanzaa is a seven-day holiday that celebrates African culture, beginning on December 26th and ending on January 1st. Although sophomore Arym Ward is Catholic, her church puts on a Kwanzaa celebration every year.

“My family celebrates Kujichagulia, or self-determination, and Kuumba, a day of creativity,” said Ward. “Those are two principles that resonate with me and my family.”

Kwanzaa is also celebrated through lighting the Kinara, a candle holder for the seven candles, performing and listening to traditional music, and discussing African principles and history.

“My family and I put on a performance for my church for Kwanzaa every year,” said Ward.

Dr. Kline-Kator says it is important to be more open-minded about the different religions and traditions of others.

“Learning more about these traditions and acknowledging them for the people that practice those traditions are important for everyone to do in life,” said Dr. Kline-Kator.



Coffee and cram

A review of the best finals study spots

STORY, PHOTOS, AND GRAPHICS: CAITLIN FLYNN, ASSOCIATE EDITOR-IN-CHIEF



Photos by Caitlin Flynn

Congratulations tea lovers, this one's for you! Located at the corner of Main Street and West 14th street in Royal Oak, Goldfish Bubble Tea is a must for this finals season. The beauty of Goldfish is all in the details. From the multicolored reusable straws and scattered plants throughout the store to comfortable tea beds within this shop you'll find an ideal study spot. The uniquely dented left wall holds shelves filled with a variety of teas, as well as unique local art that is switched out monthly, providing a new experience with nearly every visit. My top tea recommendation is the unsweetened peach and mango infused green tea with mango bobas. This sugary treat can liven up any seemingly dull night of cramming for any A.P exam. If you're looking for something to do after studying, grab a board game from the back and try the raspberry macaroon! Goldfish Tea offers a fun, quaint, relaxing, and unique environment not available anywhere else.



Photos by Caitlin Flynn

Located on the edge of downtown Plymouth, Plymouth Coffee Bean's cozy study atmosphere is perfect for every type of student. Personality beams throughout the Bean whether it is through the odd ball artwork covering the brightly painted walls, the old school lamps, or the fairy lights decorating the coffee counter. When looking for a seat, you stroll through the hallways of what was once a home, encountering circular, long, or high bar table tops either made of wood, colorful marble or crayola scatterings, as well as comfortable couches and chairs made to sink into. Everything at the bean is so personal, even the menu. My top coffee recommendation is an exclusive on the "Barista Love" list: Orla's Oh Honey latte with honey and cinnamon to keep your energy up for late night study sessions. If you plan on working through dinner, the Bean's got you covered. Offering a wide menu from avocado toast and toasted turkey clubs to professionally made crêpe created in front of you, there will never be a hungry moment. While on your food break, check out the Saturday night concert schedule to hear stellar performances from up and coming local bands and singers. Whether it's a paper, an oral, or a final exam, the Bean's quaint and homey halls are an ideal learning environment.



Photos by Caitlin Flynn

Tucked away behind the Northwestern Highway Service Drive in Southfield lives a little cafe that serves a delicious variety of teas, coffees, and patbingsu, a Korean shaved ice desert. This trendy cafe with an open floor plan, large bulb fairy lights running across the ceiling, and tall plants sprinkled throughout the shop offers generously spaced out tables giving all the room you need to get organized for finals. While Myomee does not offer outlets or strong WiFi, it makes up for it in desserts! My top desert recommendation is the unicorn shaved ice, which is a whimsical Korean delicacy topped with marshmallows, Fruity Pebbles, strawberries, mangos, blueberries, and raspberries. With a staggering price of \$15, purchase this treat as a reward to yourself for a job well done after a few hours of studying. Grab matcha green tea with strawberry bobas on your way out to have something delicious to sip on during finals!

Study Playlist

Here are 10 songs off of *Newsprint's* 2019 Finals Study playlist. Go to www.newsprintnow.net for the rest!

1. **APRIL COME SHE WILL**
- SIMON AND GARFUNKEL
2. **LONG AND WINDING ROAD**
- THE BEATLES
3. **ONE AND TWO**
- SMASHING PUMPKINS
4. **LOOK AT ME**
- JOHN LENNON
5. **LANDSLIDE**
- FLEETWOOD MAC
6. **MARCELINE**
- WILLOW
7. **400 LUX**
- LORDE
8. **SOMETHING IN THE WAY**
- NIRVANA
9. **SUNDAY MORNING**
- THE VELVET UNDERGROUND
10. **OXFORD COMMA**
- VAMPIRE WEEKEND

A promise you can't keep

Why New Year's resolutions fail

STORY, PHOTO AND GRAPHICS: JULIA CANTY, ASSOCIATE EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

“New year, new me.” “Tomorrow I’m starting my diet.” “This year is going to be my year.” As each New Year approaches, it’s common for people to evaluate what they would like to change about themselves or their situation in the year to come. Many view this time of year as an exciting opportunity to get a fresh start. While self-evaluation and taking active steps toward self-improvement is healthy, the culture surrounding New Year’s resolutions can be harmful to one’s mindset and destructive to their future.

The most common New Year’s resolutions are blanket statements with no real direction. For example, plans to lose weight, diet, save money, or have less stress are each incredibly broad end goals. Think of it this way: a marathon runner’s ultimate goal is to cross the finish line. However, they don’t stand on the starting line with an objective to simply “finish the race.” It’s a marathon, not a sprint. Instead, runners develop strategies of how to break down and tackle the race itself in order to ultimately reach the end. The same can be applied to New Year’s resolutions when someone with a goal wakes up on January 1st with the question “where do I begin?” Most people who make resolutions know where they want to be but don’t consider how they will get there. Without a plan in place, how can anyone be successful?

Most New Year’s resolutions are not sustainable, due to a lack of planning and strict self-inflicted circumstances. For example, 71 percent of Americans surveyed by *statistica.com* claimed their

resolution was to diet or eat healthier. It can be assumed that many of these people viewed December 31st as their last night to eat whatever they wanted, devouring everything in sight as a result. However, when the sun rose in the morning they told themselves they would eat nothing but grilled chicken and salad for the next 365 days.

Yet New Year’s resolutions require serious commitment; they simply can’t happen overnight. The idea that the date on a calendar constitutes an entire life change is absurd and leaves people feeling discouraged when they aren’t able to keep up with their own impossible standards.

The quick fix mindset ensures disappointment when they have not eliminated all of their stress, dropped 20 pounds, or dramatically increased their savings overnight. This is why 80 percent of people fail to keep their resolutions, according to *The Washington Post*.

Aside from the personal shortcomings of adhering to a resolution, consumers waste money on these unrealistic goals. According to *CNBC*, over 50 percent of people who make New Year’s resolutions spend money on them, but a financial investment does not equate to long-term success. In 2017, Planet Fitness saw a 79 percent increase in the number of memberships purchased in January. However, most of those people had thrown in the towel by February 1st.

It requires a lot of time and self-discipline in order to commit to a resolution, two things rarely associated with New Year’s. Considering how long it takes to develop negative habits, how

could anyone logically eliminate the patterns of behavior that got them there in such a short period of time? Instead of wasting time chasing impossible goals only to be left with guilt and defeat, there are alternatives to both view the holiday and take steps towards realistic growth.

Setting specific short-term goals is a much more effective way to make change happen. While New Year’s resolutions tend to be long-term goals, there is merit in developing short-term goals because they inevitably lead to long-term success. Focus on the journey, not the destination.

Generating daily, weekly, and monthly intentions is a far more practical solution than chasing a pipe dream. Setting intentions allows one to enter a period of change with a positive and clear mindset. Often times, New Year’s resolutions are born out of guilt, which heavily contributes to their failure. However, mindful intentions create a more sustainable path.

The initial excitement of creating New Year’s resolutions can be enticing because it’s easy to be overly motivated by new possibilities. The problem is that with any goal, motivation is fleeting. Those who are successful can look past times without motivation because they remember why they started. But goals based solely on motivation are almost always destined for failure.

Instead of spending 2020 waiting for 2021 in order to start over, spend the year celebrating life and recognizing how to effectively grow as an individual. Stop wishing for the future and start living in the present.

Instead of Resolutions...

1. Follow month-long challenges.

Create a list of twelve-month long challenges and arrange them accordingly for the year.

2. Create a list of things to look forward to this year.

Instead of focusing on the changes you wish to make in your life this year, highlight the things you cannot wait for!

3. Decide on one word you want to describe your year.

This word will guide you through the ups and downs of 2020.



Roughly 8 percent of people who develop resolutions are able to achieve their goals, according to *Forbes Magazine*.



Only 25 percent of people who set New Year’s resolutions for themselves are still committed after 30 days, according to *Forbes Magazine*.



55 percent of New resolutions are centered around topics of health and wellness, according to *The Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*.

STAR WARS

A reflection on the historical franchise

STORY AND GRAPHICS: LAUREN KRILL, COPY EDITOR

It was a period of boredom. No spaceships, lightsabers, or intergalactic battles were gracing the big screen. During this time, however, George Lucas was planning to release his ultimate weapon which would have enough power to save cinema: *Star Wars*. Equipped with outlandish characters and heart-pounding storylines, Lucas raced to save the viewers craving more adventure and restore science-fiction entertainment.

A long time ago, in a galaxy not so far away, *Star Wars* premiered in 1977. Generating more than \$775 million worldwide, according to numbers.com, *Star Wars* quickly became a motion picture phenomenon. Never before had a science-fiction adventure been released on such a grand scale. It could have been the special effects, the charm of the characters, the drama, or perhaps all of the above that grabbed people's attention. Whatever the reason, the result was a pop culture marvel.

Now, 42 years later, the Skywalker Saga comes to an epic end with its final installment, *Episode IX: The Rise of Skywalker*. Despite its success, it has not always been smooth-sailing for this franchise. Let's take a jump back into hyperspace and reflect on how this saga has developed over the years.

The original episodes are, confusingly enough, labeled *Episode IV, Episode V, and Episode VI*. The numerical order of the movies did not come into play until the release of the first prequel movie in 1999, *Star Wars: Episode I - The Phantom Menace*. The original movies are most beloved among the fanbase, as their story is at the heart of nearly every spin-off movie, show, and video game following their release. Despite a setting of space-travel and mind-control, Luke Skywalker and Princess Leia's journey of self-discovery transcends its sci-fi exterior, making it truly timeless.

Following the first three movies, it was another 16 years before the controversial prequels hit theatres in 1999. The first prequel grossed over

\$1 billion worldwide, blowing previous *Star Wars* earnings out of this world. Fans were eager for the backstory of one of the most complex characters in the series, Anakin Skywalker. Despite the overwhelming success of *The Phantom Menace*, the following *Episode II* and *Episode III* did significantly worse at the box office. Many believe the prequels lack the originality and depth of the first three movies, but other fans fell under the spell of Anakin and Padme's star-crossed love. Disagreements aside, the prequels proved to be of value because they revealed that *Star Wars* was more than merely a series, but instead a continuing franchise.

Fast-forward to 2015, and it is revealed that George Lucas Films will be releasing another three movies as part of the Skywalker Saga that will take place after *Episode VI - Return of the Jedi*. Upon its release, *Episode VII - The Force Awakens* proved it was not going to be a repeat of the prequels' lesser earnings as it grossed over \$2 billion worldwide, breaking every previous *Star Wars* record. Fans were wary of *Episode VII* because they feared all of the Skywalker's stories had been told, and were better off being left alone. But a new twist pulled people back into the story.

Star Wars is known for its fearless and confident female characters, such as Princess Leia and Padme Amidala, but for the first time ever, the movies featured a female lead, Rey. As well as the expanded representation, *The Force Awakens* contained cutting-edge computerized effects that enhanced the viewing experience of the film in a way that was never achieved before.

Finally, four years after *The Force Awakens* was released, *Episode IX - The Rise of Skywalker* is set to be released December 25, 2019, officially bringing the Skywalker Saga to a close. Looking back at the ups and downs of the franchise, one can conclude that no matter the reviews, the *Star Wars* franchise will stay cemented in history as a sci-fi sensation.

50.5% EPISODES IV, V, AND VI

25.7% EPISODES I, II, AND III

23.8% EPISODES VII, VIII, AND IX

WHICH STAR WARS ERA IS YOUR FAVORITE?

Based on an informal Newsprint poll of 105 respondents

