



The Mercy Mimes perform the Red Balloon Show. Full coverage on newsprintnow.net



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As Mercy Newsprint staff we promise to keep you entertained and informed with accurate and unbiased information. Our goal is to provide timely news while promoting diversity and representing the entirety of the Mercy community. We encourage letters to the editors and any other feedback you may have. You may reach out to us through our email (newsprint@mhsmi.org), our Instagram (@[mercy.newsprint](https://www.instagram.com/mercy.newsprint)), or through any of our staff members.

Politics become entertainment for Americans

STORY, PHOTO AND GRAPHICS: MAURA MCSWEENEY, EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Take a look around when you are at the store, in school or even in the car. What are you often listening to, watching or reading? The news. As Americans, we are constantly bombarded with stories about pop culture, entertainment, environment and politics. Throughout the past decades, the media has notably played a significant role in politics, shaping how Americans view the government and political figures. Now, whether this can be a good or bad thing, is a debate that could go on for a long time, however, most people can agree that political figures are portrayed a certain way in the media that is controversial.

From mocking a President's personal life to making up nicknames for representatives, politicians have become a source of entertainment to the American public that, arguably, has taken away the focus from what their actual job is and what is getting done in the branches of government, whether that is on the state or federal level.

"I have noticed in the news how it can be more entertaining rather than informative," senior Sophia Ivezaj said.

While the media's job should be first and foremost presenting their viewers with true, unbiased information, these media outlets are also companies looking to make money. While some may not admit it, it is not a fact that can be overlooked when it comes to determining biases and what information they present. Once you

get viewers, you want to keep them, which may mean presenting information in a way the viewer wants to hear it. This presents some issues.

"Technology and social media has increased the place you can get information, whether right or wrong, which in turn affects how people vote," AP Government teacher Ms. Cindy Richter said.

With that being said, many viewers who are looking for the unbiased, less aggressive news channel turn to local news outlets who tend to present information very relevant to local communities. These news outlets still take what information they present citizens with seriously. From talking to their legal and corporate teams to making sure to reach out to both sides of the story, local news reporters put in effort to present quality news.

"Sometimes when I have to watch current events for AP Government, I'll turn on the local news because it is little less crazy and out there," Ivezaj said.

This rising problem is not only the fault of the news, but also how technology has changed the way elections work. Quite often, you might hear about a representative who said something outrageous or a "fight" that occurred on the Senate floor. Oftentimes, these individuals are not actually the way they portray themselves, rather they act in ways that will attract media and voter attention in hopes of securing the vote.

"At some point in history, we went from party

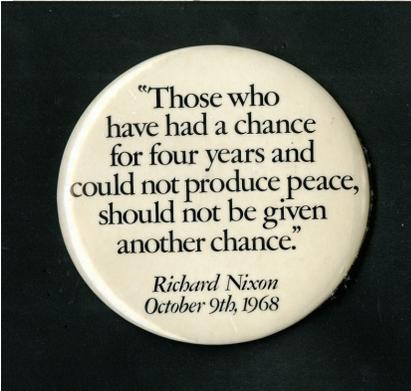
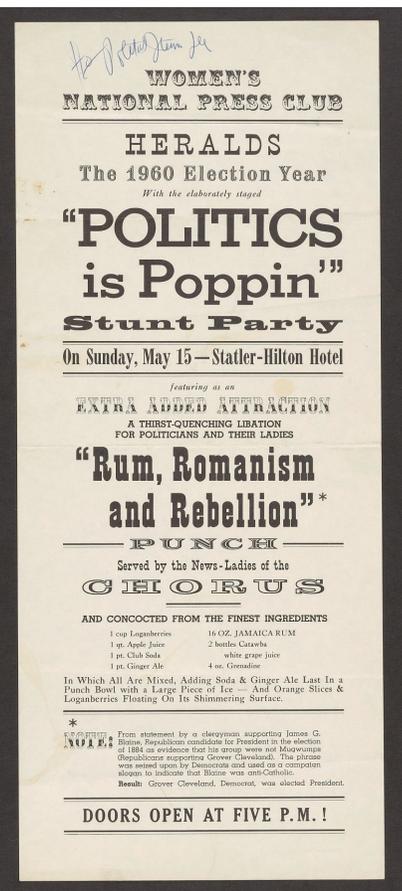
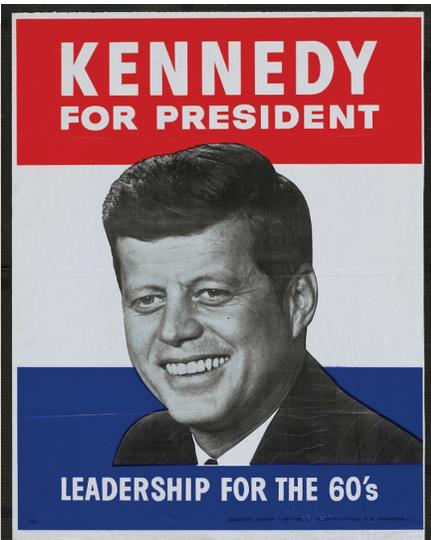
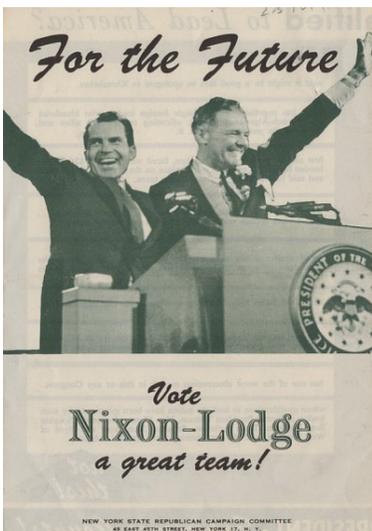
backed campaign while now it is more based on the candidate individually," Richter said "Partly, because we don't strongly identify with parties all the time so we look toward the candidate, and then the candidate wants to appeal to more people."

Technology has opened up doors for representatives to connect with their constituents, but unfortunately this is often not the case. Transparency is not a common theme and it can appear as a game show or competition for who can accrue the most attention.

"It's become more entertaining, and coupled with technology, they can get their message out there," Richter said. "You'll see candidates go on SNL or other various ways besides the tradition news channel."

With the rise and advancement of technology, it is also true that finding clear, truthful information about the government may be easier, but people must search for this information, an effort not many are willing to embark on.

Now, how does this affect Mercy students? Well, it is no secret that Mercy students are affluent in the ways of Instagram, TikTok, Snapchat and more, and these are beginning to be platforms news outlets are using to get fast news out there. Whichever platform students choose to get their information from, it is important to be aware of how the media is framing information and shifting your own biases, highlighting the need to view all sides of the story before forming an opinion.



Opinion: A TikTok ban threatens the rights of Americans

STORY AND GRAPHIC: HELENA NAJAR, EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Social media has been around for a long time. In the early days of the internet there was MySpace, then came apps like Facebook, Tumblr and Twitter (X). However, none of these apps even compare to the phenomenon that is TikTok.

TikTok first surfaced in China in 2016 but quickly made its way to the rest of the world in a few years. In 2018, TikTok became available in The United States and was quickly the most downloaded app in the country. With elements of Vine, Musically and Instagram all rolled into one it was no surprise that everybody was obsessed with TikTok.

The popularity of the app only continued to grow when the Covid-19 pandemic struck in 2020 and everyone was confined to their homes with nothing to do but scroll through TikTok and make their own videos. Now, there are over 150 million TikTok users in the U.S. alone and over 1.5 billion worldwide.

This, however, might change soon. The Protecting Americans from Foreign Adversary Controlled Applications Act, more widely known as the “TikTok Ban Bill” was introduced by Wisconsin Representative Mike Gallagher in March of 2023.

The bill, brought by Representative Gallagher targets not TikTok itself but its parent company ByteDance. ByteDance is the Chinese technology company that developed and distributed TikTok to the general public. Because ByteDance is a Chinese company, Congress claims that TikTok could be a threat to national security.

“The big issue for TikTok from a national security perspective is about the vast amount of information that the platform is able to collect about people and specifically the fact that because of its ownership there’s a direct line to the People’s Republic of China, which in the geopolitics of today is a deeply concerning issue,” Arati Prabhakar, the White House Director of Science and Technology Policy, said.

The bill proposes a full TikTok ban in America if the Chinese company, ByteDance, does not sell to a United States based business. They claim that selling to an American company would eliminate the national security threat that TikTok currently poses.

“This bill prohibits distributing, maintaining, or providing internet hosting services for a foreign adversary controlled application (e.g., TikTok). However, the prohibition does not apply to a covered application that executes a qualified divestiture as determined by the President,” an author for the Congressional Research Service said.

The House of Representatives first approved the “sell or be banned” bill on March 13 but on April 20 it was passed again but under different circumstances. This time, the TikTok related bill was attached to a sweeping foreign aid bill providing support for Ukraine and Israel. Considering the U.S. has strong relationships with both of the aforementioned countries, it was almost guaranteed that the bill would be passed in the house which was a calculated strategy made by the politicians involved. The bill that was passed on April 20 requires ByteDance to sell the app to an American owned company within the next year or face a nationwide ban in the U.S.

On April 23, the Senate passed the foreign aid/TikTok ban bill meaning that the bill will now make its way to President Joe Biden. On March 8, the President stated that if a bill proposing a ban on TikTok was passed he would sign the bill. Now, with the bill’s attachment to a foreign aid proposal there is a high possibility that he will do just that.

Now that the possibility of TikTok being taken off our phones, it is important for us to ask ourselves why. Why does the government so desperately want to take away an app that so many people enjoy? Why do representatives who have TikTok accounts themselves want to get rid of it? Why do the politicians speaking on behalf of us continue to ignore what we want? And most importantly, are there undercover motives for this possible ban on TikTok that they aren’t telling us?

The truth is I personally do not think that the government actually cares that much about our information being stolen. In 2021, Meta (an American company) leaked the personal data of over 533 million Facebook users but the app is still up and running as if nothing happened. I have to admit, I find it extremely coincidental that government officials only seem to care about the privacy of their citizens when it comes to a foreign company, like ByteDance. Other congresspeople have claimed that ByteDance was using TikTok as a tool to spread Chinese communist propaganda. This, however, has never actually been proven and considering that the CEO of TikTok, Shou Zi Chew, is not even Chinese himself, I find it hard to believe that this is TikTok’s ulterior motive.

Congress is not only exposing their hypocrisy but they are also exposing their attempts to control the American public. For many people, TikTok is more than just a silly app for dance and comedy videos. It can act as a source of income, a means of advertisement for small businesses or even as a free source of information and news.

In my opinion, I find it extremely suspicious that the U.S. government so desperately wants to ban an app that provides people with important, unbiased information. Because TikTok is owned and operated by a non-American company, the U.S. government is unable to regulate what is shown on the app. This means that U.S. citizens have access to information and opinions that may be critical of the American government and political system.

TikTok also gives many people a public platform to share their opinions on modern day issues in America and around the world. TikTok allows people to speak about the U.S. government completely unregulated so Congress trying to ban it unless it is sold to an American company seems problematic. In my opinion, this potential ban seems to be an infringement on the 1st amendment right to free speech. The bill not only affects free speech, but because people also share news and news companies have TikTok accounts to spread information on, it could also be argued that the bill tramples on the freedom of the press.

“It is unfortunate that the House of Representatives is using the cover of important foreign and humanitarian assistance to once again jam through a ban bill that

would trample the free speech rights of 170 million Americans,” TikTok spokesman Alex Haure said.

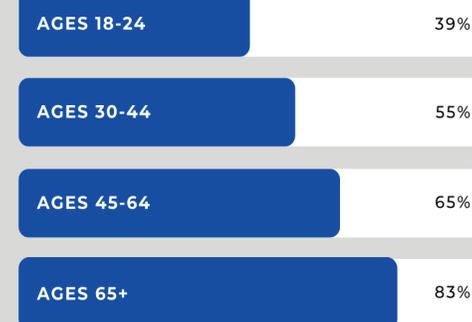
According to Josh Hogarth from Exploding Topics, 47.4% of TikTok users in the U.S. are under 30 years of age. In fact, the majority of TikTok users are aged 18 to 24 and are part of Generation Z. The average age of a person in Congress is 58 years old which is more than double the age of the average American TikTok user. In my opinion, the fact that a Congress that is so much older than the average TikTok user base is trying to ban the app is extremely problematic and seems to be yet another example of the government trying to silence the voices of young people.

The ultimatum that Congress has presented to TikTok is also problematic for a multitude of other reasons. TikTok is worth over 50 billion dollars so if ByteDance was to sell to an American company the only ones that would be able to afford it would be big tech companies like Meta, Google or Amazon. This is a problem in and of itself. The previously mentioned companies are already worth billions of dollars so if one of them were to obtain another multi billion dollar business the American companies could become monopolistic which would violate Sherman Antitrust Laws.

ByteDance selling to an American company would also inherently change the app completely. It seems that Congress keeps forgetting that U.S. citizens are not the only people who use the app. While it is true that U.S. citizens make up a majority of TikTok users, there are still hundreds of millions of users in the rest of the world. If ByteDance was to sell to an American buyer it would affect every user, even those outside of the U.S. This fact almost makes it seem like the U.S. government wants to control people in other countries.

Suffice it to say, the bill that could potentially ban TikTok is problematic in more ways than one. In my opinion, there are much more important issues that the government should be focused on but instead they have decided to spend their time attempting to ban an app that they have no proof is actually harming the U.S. population. The United States of America is supposed to be the land of the free and I believe the government has a duty to uphold that sentiment, even if that means letting the public have TikTok.

WHO FAVORS A TIKTOK BAN BASED ON AGE?



DATA COURTESY OF CBS NEWS

Pro/Con: veganism and vegetarianism impacting environment

STORY AND GRAPHICS: TESS O'DONNELL

April is Earth Month! When we think of ways to help the planet, many thoughts may cross our mind: recycling more often, composting, using less energy, and planting more trees in our local communities. Although all of these initiatives are important becoming someone who abstains from consuming or using certain animal products, known as being a vegan or vegetarian, is a very popular answer to the “help the Earth” question. Being vegan or vegetarian has its positives and negatives and becoming informed about these certain effects is a crucial step. Once you gather all the facts and information then you can make an educated choice about going vegan or vegetarian.

PRO: The diet helps the environment and yourself

There are many reasons that someone may choose to go vegan or vegetarian and all of them are equally important, it just depends on who you are. Health is one of the biggest reasons that people may choose a lifestyle that includes abstaining from animal products.

Eating no products produced from animals can help with weight loss, reduce risk for certain diseases, such as coronary heart disease (CDC), cancer and avoiding excessive calories (acc.org). Eating meat is not the only way to consume protein; many sources of protein that have nothing to do with eating animals including beans, lentils and soy products (beaconhealthsystem.org).

“I think that one of the benefits of being vegetarian is that it’s healthy,” junior Anna Melton, who was vegetarian for 8 months, said. “Meat, and the stuff that America puts into our meat, is not that great actually and there are other ways to get protein that don’t have to do with eating meat.”

Concern for the environment plays a major role in many decisions to go vegan or vegetarian.

Continuing to consume meat, in turn, contributes to the global livestock industry, which doesn’t have a very positive track record with the environment. It has been found that the global livestock industry uses the Earth’s resources in a harmful way by destroying forests and grasslands in order to build more slaughter houses, along with polluting the environment with runoff of fertilizer and animal waste.

The meat industry also has a significant impact on global warming, the rapid increase in Earth’s surface temperature due to the accumulation of greenhouse gasses in the atmosphere that reduce earth’s ability to support life.

Livestock productions produce a high percentage of greenhouse gas emissions and methane gas emissions

worldwide (woods.stanford.edu).

Choosing to go vegan or vegetarian also reduces the slaughter animals that produce meat. According to the Food and Agriculture Organization it is estimated that 92.2 billion land animals are slaughtered annually in the global food system. These animals are essentially tortured before their death, facing inhumane treatment and suffering in their living conditions.

“Being vegan or vegetarian reduces a lot of methane gasses from being released into the environment from all the slaughter houses, especially in regards to cows,” senior Animal Rights leader Audrey Guyot said. “Also it prevents any endangerment or torture of said animals or plants which can reforestations that have deforestations.”

Being Vegan or Vegetarian can lead to many benefits, not just for yourself but the world as a whole.

Having positive health effects, decreasing greenhouse gas emissions and advocating with action for the more humane treatment of animals in slaughterhouses, going Vegan or Vegetarian can sound appealing to anyone who educates themselves on its positive attributes.

CON: The diet does more harm than good

In the spirit of education we need to dive deeper into the misunderstanding of what it truly means to be a vegan or vegetarian and how certain factors can affect your life.

Not all plant- based diets are the same and not all of them are equally healthy. If you choose to go vegan or vegetarian and then simply cut out your sufficient protein source without working to rebalance your diet, then you are going to be in trouble. If you abstain from consuming animal products protein is not the only important nutrient your body could be lacking.

Without proper research and a balanced diet, there is a high chance that someone who is vegan or vegetarian could be consuming a diet that is poor in important nutrients including calcium, iron, and zinc (acc.org).

I didn’t eat any meat and I’m a really picky eater, I didn’t get any iron and I didn’t get proper nutrition and it made me feel sick.”

The effects of being vegan or vegetarian can potentially have great negative effects on your health and certain nutrient levels.

Although many people choose to go vegan or vegetarian because of worry for the environment, there is a high chance that a plant based diet may still be harmful to the planet.

If someone is not eating organic plant based foods then they are most likely still contributing to the growing stress the food industry is putting on the environment. Inorganic plant growth may use many pesticides in an attempt to control rapid growing weeds in the area, prevent insect infestation and diseases (epa.gov). Different pesticides used in inorganic agriculture have very negative effects on the environment, including contaminating the soil, creating toxic runoff, causing harm to nearby vegetation, and pesticides can be toxic to other organisms living in the area (ncbi.nlm.nih.gov).

“Unless you are growing your own plant based products or you are eating purely, pure organic foods, you’re not helping the environment because the pesticides that are in all of the fruits and vegetables that they are probably consuming are killing the earth and the insects and the butterflies and the bugs you need to sustain a healthy ecosystem,” Mercy nutrition and health sciences teacher Mrs. Adrianna Horvath said.

With an increase in the consumption of foods made with the use of damaging pesticides, there is an increase in the damage to the environment. It’s important to fully educate yourself on your lifestyle choices and how they will affect you and the environment because what is commonly believed due to misinformation and mainstream media is not always true.

Certain plant- based foods could also have high amounts of high-fructose corn syrup, artificial sweeteners, or salt- all of which contribute to an increase in certain diseases.

“Being a vegetarian made me iron deficient and unhealthy,” freshman Joy Seabolt, who has been vegetarian for 2 years, said. “Since

67 million birds die from pesticide poisoning every year

Source: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services

92.2 billion land animals are Slaughtered annually in the global food system

Source: Food and agriculture Organization

What's the deal with FAFSA?

STORY AND GRAPHICS: REESE KIZY

Deep in the minds of many of your class of 2024 classmates, lies the impatient, blatant worry about their financial aid for school next year. FAFSA— the Free Application for Federal Student Aid— is a nationwide application for students seeking financial help for college. Why is it causing so much agony this year?

Senior Miles Gouin knows all about the hassle with FAFSA. "I have really struggled with all of the glitches in the website," Gouin said. "Making sure the form itself was actually turned in was hard because sometimes it would ask for things, like a signature, but it would never actually let you submit the signature."

'Frustrating' seems to be the number one complaint about FAFSA amidst seniors. While the website is usually supposed to help ease the stress of incoming college freshmen, this year, it has only raised stress levels.

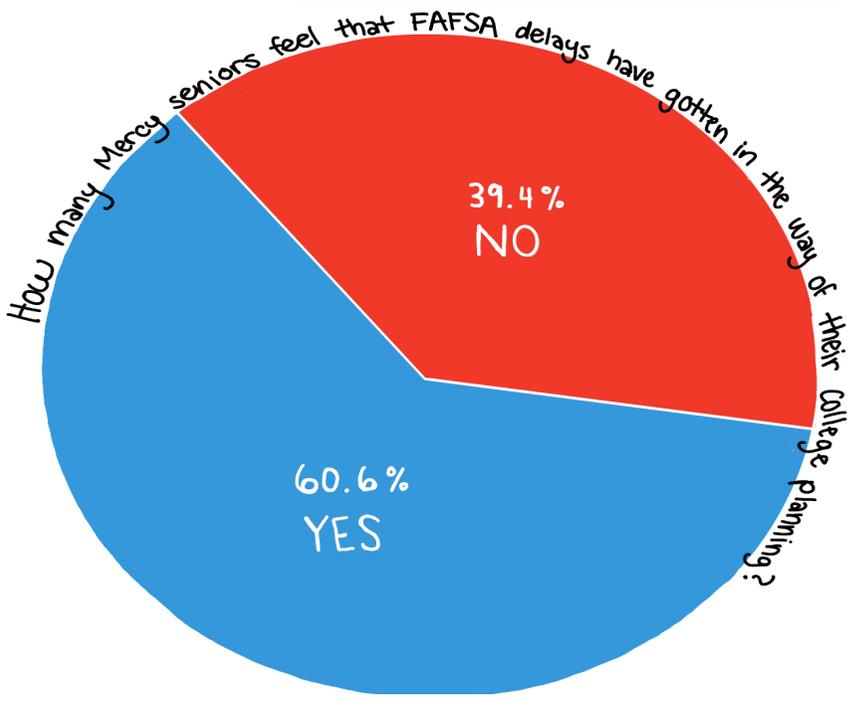
"The website was easy to navigate, all the steps were straight-forward, which I liked," Gouin said. "But, I could kind of tell that the website was rushed into being released, which is probably where the glitches and incorrect aspects of it came from."

Financial aid is a huge factor into college planning for many Mercy students. The delays and ongoing struggles with FAFSA have caused delays in decisions about next year.

"The glitches with FAFSA definitely made me decide where I was going a lot later," Gouin said. "I had to keep waiting to see what my financial situation would be for each school I wanted to go to, based on what my FAFSA results said. It sort of became a gamble and I had to estimate whether or not I could afford certain schools."

It is hard to tell when FAFSA will be remedied. Thankfully, many seniors have passed their era of having to fill out the form. Yet, that is not to say that FAFSA will

be completely back to normal by the time the class of 2025 starts applications. "For future students, I would say you definitely have to be prepared to be patient. It can be out of your hands at times," Gouin said.



Mrs. Holly Markiecki-Bennetts completed certification classes to become a certified FAFSA specialist through the Michigan College Access Network. She answered all that there is to know about FAFSA in general, and throughout the 2023-24 school year.

Why is FAFSA hard for students to complete this year?

"Two years ago, FAFSA made a change to their website, in order to simplify the process. Before, the form was very long, so they wanted to make it more user friendly. Unfortunately, the tech behind it and all the work done did not go as seamlessly as they had hoped, so all the problems that occurred when it was launched prematurely were not anticipated," Bennetts said. "There was no test phase. But, interestingly, there is a federal law that FAFSA has to come out by January 1st. Had they had maybe another month, there may not have been as many problems and bugs, but, by law, they had to release the website."

What are the typical benefits of FAFSA?

1. "Some colleges have scholarships— even if you don't qualify for any other financial aid— just based on the fact that you filled out the FAFSA," Bennetts said. FAFSA is nationwide, and although it does not include all scholarships that a student can receive, it is the primary beginning of a student's journey to receiving aid.
2. "The state of Michigan drastically retooled their scholarship program, so now, the qualification for the Michigan Achievement Scholarship is graduation completion and completion of the FAFSA," Bennetts said. The Michigan Achievement scholarship is designed to benefit 4 out of every 5 households in Michigan, and it is a scholarship based on household income. A student must have their student aid index in the \$30,000 or less range. The scholarship has a career training program and its eligibility is \$27,000 over 5 years, only based on a completed and submitted FAFSA form.
3. "FAFSA is required in order to be eligible for other merit or need based scholarships," Bennetts said. Scholarships from the university that are given after any federal money is taken out are called *Last Dollar*. Some *Last Dollar* scholarships are only available after FAFSA is filled out.
4. "When applying for outside scholarships, it is typical that the school's advancement office will want to see the filled out FAFSA," Bennetts said. The Student Aid report is what schools see after a completed FAFSA is filed. That can be helpful and admirable for schools to see because it shows how much they think you can afford, which will ultimately decipher a student's tuition more precisely.

How does FAFSA decide between grants and scholarships?

"A decision like that all comes down to the student aid index," Bennetts said. The FAFSA unlocks work study, which assists jobs on campus that the government pays the wage for, and the Pell grant. It may also give access to a competitive grant through your state, and student loans: both subsidized and unsubsidized loans. A subsidized loan has the government pay interest while the student is in college. An unsubsidized loan accumulates the interest while the student is in college. "Based on these aspects, universities will award other types of aid that could be either a grant or a scholarship," Bennetts said. "Other grants and scholarships can be given without the FAFSA being submitted."

How many students use FAFSA?

"Our numbers of FAFSA users are down this year. For the whole state of Michigan, FAFSA submissions are down by 26%," Bennetts said. "Last year at this time, Mercy had 105 FAFSA submissions completed, and this year, there are only 73 completed." In proportion to class sizes, last year at this time, 67% of students have completed FAFSA, while this year, only 52% of students have completed it. Every Mercy student is required to have a federal student aid ID, but not all students need to have the form completed. "Once FAFSA has fully worked out their kinks, the changes made to the website will definitely be for the better. One of the best parts about their reworking of the website is that now it is more student focused. Students can better understand it, which makes it easier for counselors and parents as well," Bennetts said.

Standardized tests: helpful or harmful?

STORY AND GRAPHIC: ZAARA AHMED

The constant debate surrounding whether or not standardized tests truly gauge someone’s potential is an argument that has been around for a long time. Standardized tests like the SAT and ACT can sometimes be the deciding factor for certain students when getting admitted into colleges, which is exactly what seems to cause dispute.

One of the most prominent standardized tests of today is the SAT. Administered by the College Board, the SAT was created in 1926 by American professor Carl Bingham. The SAT is most commonly taken during a student’s junior year of high school, right before applying to colleges.

According to the Princeton Review, the main purpose of the SAT is to measure a high school student’s readiness for college in an effective way. The test is lengthy and can take up to four hours when opting for writing the essay.

Similarly, the ACT is another notable standardized test. Introduced in 1959, the ACT was founded by Everett Franklin and Ted McCarrel and was created to serve as a competitor to the SAT. Students are eligible to submit either their SAT or ACT scores to colleges when applying.

The big question is are standardized tests like the SAT and ACT fair? As of right now, standardized tests are the most efficient and structured way to test

students’ abilities. Standardized tests offer a common data point that can be used to compare all students.

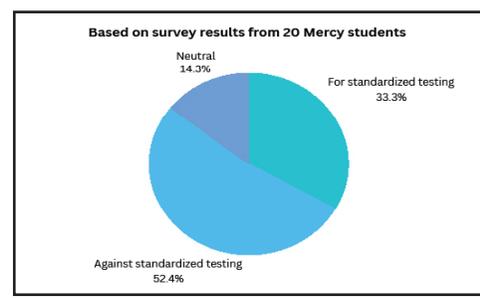
One of the major reasons as to why standardized tests are needed is because they are arguably one of the only ways to truly gauge a student’s achievement. Certain test scores can be used to validate or discredit parts of a high schooler’s application.

“I think that standardized tests are effective because they are able to test a student’s ability to retain the information they learned over the course of high school. Without standardized testing, colleges wouldn’t be able to truly judge a student’s learning abilities,” junior Eleanor Brook said.

However, some argue that standardized tests can sometimes be unfair because they don’t accurately measure a student’s learning and growth. It is contended that standardized testing is impartial and rational.

“Personally, I don’t like the idea of standardized tests,” junior Grace Loehner said. “I don’t think that they don’t properly reflect a person’s potential. Some people are simply just not good test takers and that shouldn’t be something that is used against them.”

One of the most common reasons as to why people



disagree with the idea of standardized testing is because of their limited scope. While the SAT and ACT test students on subjects such as math and English, they neglect testing other aspects of education, such as creativity and practical skills.

“I think that sometimes standardized tests like the SAT and ACT can be a good thing because they give you the opportunity to prepare for college,” junior Mia Bruno said. “However, I also believe that they can be tiresome to take and don’t express someone’s full potential.”

Furthermore, research shows that standardized testing results have direct correlation with socio-economic statuses. Some students have access to private school education and private tutoring lessons, while others only have access to public school education with no means of getting extra tutoring. This gives certain students an advantage when testing.

Additionally, some standardized tests, like the SAT and ACT, require fees to be able to take the test. On average, it costs around \$60 to take the SAT once, again giving certain students an unfair advantage. Some students are only able to take it one time while others have an unlimited number of times they can take it.

Overall, the arguments regarding whether or not standardized testing is fair are still being debated today. While some are completely opposed to the idea of standardized testing, some are firmly convinced that it is the

only way to fairly test students on a common ground. So, what are your thoughts on standardized testing?

Opinion: no finals for seniors

STORY AND GRAPHICS: MIRANDA MULLIGAN, DIGITAL MEDIA EDITOR

Are second semester finals necessary for seniors with good grades? It is no secret that by second semester, seniors have checked out for the year. With college acceptances, graduation and senioritis, it is for school to become an afterthought. Yet Mercy High School seniors are still forced to take second semester finals.

At Notre Dame Prep in Pontiac, if seniors have a 93% or above and less than five absences, seniors are not required to take finals during the second semester.

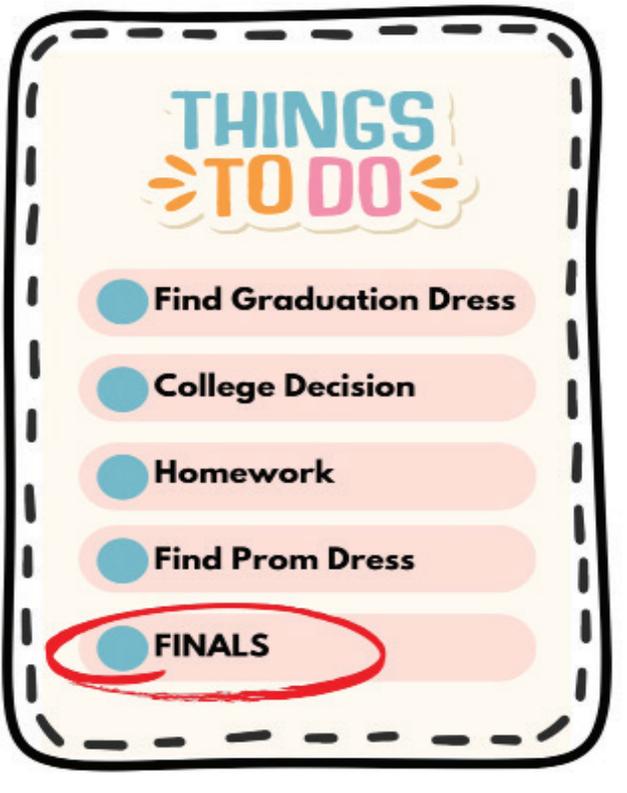
“Having this incentive motivates me to keep an A in all my classes, and I think that if this rule wasn’t in place, I would’ve missed a lot more school than I did,” Notre Dame Prep senior Maura Fitzpatrick said.

However, Notre Dame Prep is not the only Catholic high school in the metro Detroit area that offers a special incentive for seniors. In fact, Brother Rice, Marian and Detroit Catholic Central seniors are not required to take a final exam when they have a 93% or above in the class.

If multiple other schools do not require senior finals, then why does Mercy?

“This question comes up every year or so and it has gone to the curriculum council many times before,” Associate Principal/Academic Affairs Colleen McMaster said. “It comes down to the fact that other schools have senior only classes and Mercy has many blended classes, so if we take away finals for the seniors, how do we make it equitable for the juniors?”

In my opinion, I think that seniors should be awarded for all their hard work if they have an A in the class. I understand that the curriculum council’s concern is making things equal between grade levels. However, I think it’s not fair to make seniors suffer through finals just because there are younger grades in their classes. I understand that taking a final is not the end of the world and this is just the beginning of the many finals seniors will endure in college. Yet letting seniors off the hook for their last semester to reward their four years of hard work would be a thoughtful graduation gift.



Mercy debutantes grace the Masonic Temple stage

STORY AND GRAPHICS: MICAH ROGERS

The Summer I Turned Pretty. Gilmore Girls. The OC. What do these shows have in common, other than their virality? They all feature a cotillion, otherwise known as a debutante ball. The girls, usually around 16 years of age, dress in white ball gowns, opera-length gloves and engage in a waltz accompanied by their fathers and male escorts. In these shows, cotillions serve as an attention-grabbing platform for elevated dramatics, however many viewers do not know the reality of these events. In fact, many do not know that cotillions still take place today within our Mercy community.

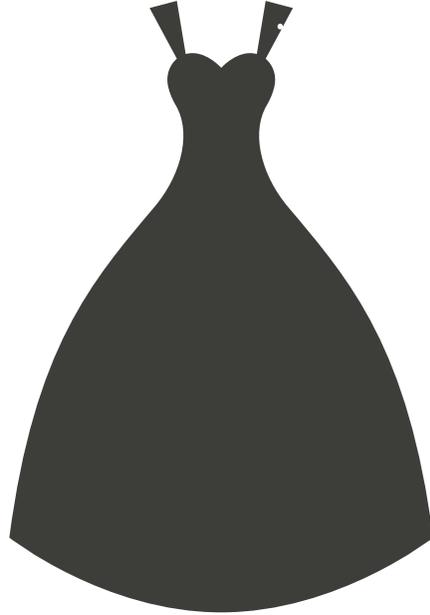
Since 2009, The Cotillion Society of Detroit Educational Foundation has hosted an annual cotillion with the focus of presenting young black women to polite society. Through weekly rehearsals and outings, TCSDEF prepares its members for the social engagements they may encounter as young adults.

“I feel like I gained a lot of social graces,” senior Sage Johnson and member of the 2023 class of debutantes said. “Things like networking and social etiquette are now second nature to me because of debutantes.”

With the Debutante Club experience also comes another form of sisterhood that the black community at Mercy benefits from. One of their many club events included a hotel sleepover which

multiple debutantes cite as their favorite offering of the organization.

“My favorite activity was the all-night party at the St. Regis Hotel in Detroit,” junior and current debutante Ava Prempeh said.



The overnight extravaganza consisted of camaraderie, a self-defense workshop and practicing their curtsies, a pinnacle part of their introduction at the cotillion. Though a sleepover may seem

recreational, TCSDEF uses its resources to turn typical high school experiences into opportunities to turn its members into well-rounded individuals. The high school boys responsible for escorting the young women also gain a myriad of benefits from their involvement in the Debutante Club.

“As an escort, I learned a lot of patience throughout the process because of all the new things we tried,” University of Detroit Jesuit senior and former escort Ian Mausii said.

Of course, the elaborate event could not take place without the help of volunteer advisors. TCSDEF was founded by Dr. Renita Clark, who is supported by a robust board of trustees. The trustees represent a diverse array of careers, lifestyles and personalities, allowing the debutantes the chance to interact with many role models.

“One of my favorite aspects of the club is building relationships with advisors,” junior and current debutante Jada Roberts said.

Overall, the work done by TCSDEF proves that debutante balls are more than just forums for frilly white gowns and formulated drama. Through the cotillion, TCSDEF embraces diverse backgrounds, empowering young men and women to seek exciting opportunities outside of their schools.

This year’s cotillion took place Saturday April 27, 2024 at the Masonic Temple.



The 2023 class of debutantes prepares to be presented on the day of the cotillion. The group consisting of 28 debutantes and 28 escorts was the largest since the conception of the TCSDEF debutante ball in 2009. Photo courtesy of Sage Johnson.

Arab American Heritage Month is approaching

STORY AND GRAPHIC: ANEESA SYED

April has arrived, and so has National Arab American Heritage Month, where Arabs all across the globe are recognized for their contributions to the United States. But where did this come from? In 2017, it became an initiative that only involved a handful of states and cities, until April 2021, when it was established as a national month. During this time, we take the time to learn more about Arab culture, which includes a variety of ethnic foods, dancing clothing and more.

“I’m eager to learn more about Arab American Heritage month”, junior Alex Knapp said. “I have a friend who is Lebanese and whenever we hang out at her house she always has the tastiest snacks from her mom’s Lebanese cookbooks!”

Middle Eastern food: one cuisine everybody loves. From the rich flavors and spices to the flavored drinks, the Arab cuisine ranks among some of the finest culinary arts. Some dishes include grapeleaves, stuffed with mixtures of meat and rice which is a global favorite. Others include Kebabs, Shawarmas and Hummus but these are just a few out of the hundreds of intricate and delicious dishes. Many may not know other favorites, such as baklava, manakeesh, Tabouleh, Fattoush and so many countless others.

Not only is the Arab culture known for its food, but its dances are widely known. Arabic dances include a rich variety of cultural expression that reflects the diverse traditions of the Middle East. The Dabke is a common folk line dance that is performed at many Arab weddings and festivals. It is native to Palestine, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon and Syria. Another traditional dance is the belly dance, or the Raqs Sharqi, originating in Egypt which features movement of the hips and torso. These heritage dances are often performed at weddings and festivals, and are a captivating form of Arabic expression.

“I went to a wedding where they all lined up and performed the Dabke. They all had their arms around each other and kept on inviting people to join. It was so fun and I can’t believe I didn’t know what this was before!” freshman Amirah Ahmed said.

Even Mercy High School’s Middle Eastern Student Association participated in the annual ethnic bazaar. Each girl wore all black, then paired it with a sequined gold skirt to showcase their cultural attire. They performed a mixture of dances and later offered a variety of ethnic dishes. Everyone shared exceeding reviews of their performances and thoroughly enjoyed experiencing Arab cuisine for the first time.

“MESA is such a fun club that brings awareness to middle eastern culture. Ethnic bazaar was one of my favorite days of the whole year because it was so fun to learn about other cultures and showcase my cultur,” sophomore Ava Eliya said. “All the practices and performances brought me closer to so many girls and I am so grateful for ethnic bazaar.”

There was one thing that didn’t go unnoticed: their clothing. The shiny sequins jangling at every movement, paired with the red hankerchiefs to symbolize the age old tradition of keeping the heat away from the scorching desert sun. This continues on, as does the tradition of wearing a Thobe, an Arab dress worn by men to any and all cultural and religious occasions.

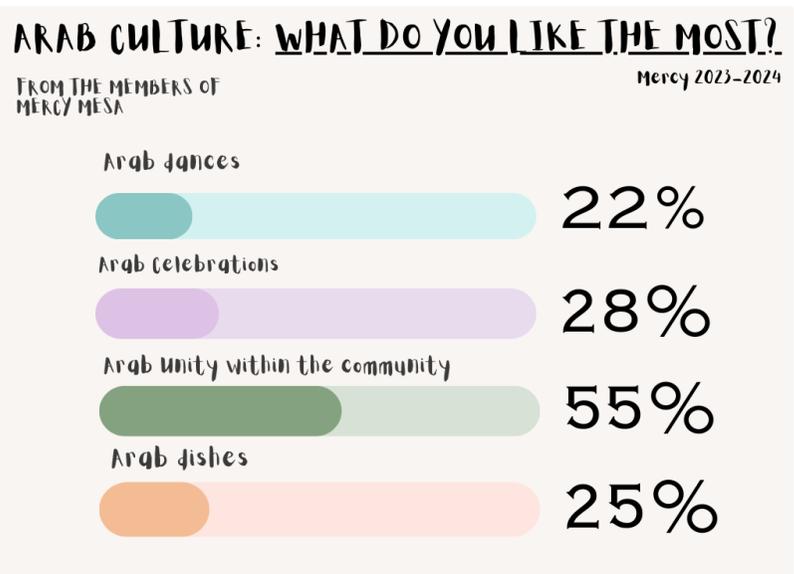
Similarly, women wear an abaya, a long gown that often features a beautiful embroidery. These two cultural/religious attire both arose from the Arabian Peninsula not too long ago. In parallel, the keffiyeh, a traditional Palestinian scarf, is being more prominently worn. It is a symbol of Palestinian nationalism dating back to the mid 1960’s.

Architecture: the extravagant Arabic domes

and buildings all across the globe, in countries such as Turkey, Cairo, Syria, Jerusalem and even Spain and Portugal. Built by distinguished Arab architectures, some are thousands of years mature while others were constructed only 20 years ago.

The Dome of the Rock is the oldest extant Islamic monument in Jerusalem, commissioned by the Umayyad Caliph Abd al-Malik and completed in 691 CE. It is known for its intricate carvings and geometrical patterns that express the Arab culture. Similarly, Masjid al-Haram is considered to be the most significant mosque in Islam located in Saudi Arabia. It features massive golden chandeliers with a black and white pattern across the walls and a royal burgundy carpet. It surrounds the Kabbah, the holy house in Islamic tradition.

You might’ve even heard about the Hagia Sophia, a former church now mosque in Istanbul. It was originally built as a basilica for the Greek Orthodox Christian Church, and its function has changed numerous times since, until 1453. It is celebrated for its several architectural elements like a mihrab, or a preachers platform, as well as its marble columns and Islamic calligraphy on its walls. It is common knowledge that this mosque even accomodates hundreds of stray cats, notably a tabby who went by the name Gli, meaning “union of love.” From the intricate designs of Arab clothing to the rythmic movements of traditional dances, to even the majestic aromas of Arab dishes and beauty of the global architectural marvels, Arab Americans have contributed their rich diversity and culture into the American society over the centuries.



Five members of Mercy High School’s MESA were surveyed on their favorite aspect of Arab American Heritage Month.



The Hagia Sophia Mosque located in Istanbul, Turkey. It has attracted millions of tourists within the last year and continues to hold its reputation as one of the world’s most extravagant mosques. Photo courtesy of Farheen Syed.

Springing into a new season of sports

STORY AND GRAPHICS: DARIA SMITH

With the start of spring, also comes the start of a new season of sports. After a season full of championships for the teams in the fall, those in the spring hope to continue their successes and add a few trophies to the wall themselves.

Starting off strong, Mercy's Varsity Lacrosse team has begun their season on the right note winning six of their last seven games. They have started their season having seven wins and only one loss to Birmingham United, who they lost to in a close game 12-13 at home. Despite this loss, they hope to keep their win streak going as they face Toledo Notre Dame Academy at home on Wednesday, May 1 at 4:30pm. The team has a lot of promise and hopes to achieve the many goals they set for the season such as competing for a state championship.

"This season, I hope to improve as a player and be a part of helping my team win Catholic Leagues and hopefully have a chance to make it to states," sophomore Balee Eason said.

In addition, Mercy's Varsity softball team is on a ten game win streak. They currently have a record of eleven wins and one loss, which came in a close three

to four back and forth battle against Gaylord High School at home. This team has a lot of high hope and is ranked one of the top teams in the state of Michigan. As they continue throughout the season they hope to achieve the many goals, they have set for this team including winning Catholics Leagues, Districts, Regionals and ultimately making it to states where they achieve the goal of bringing another state championship back to Mercy High School. As of right now, Mercy Varsity Softball hopes to continue their win streak as they have an away game where they face Stoney Creek on Monday, April 29 at 4:30pm.

After a successful season last year, Mercy Track and Field hopes to continue their strong run and place even higher than they did last year at states. Despite losing a few runners, all of their top placing athletes have returned for this season creating high hopes for this season. In addition to the returning athletes, there has also been an addition of a group of talented underclassmen, creating an even stronger team than the year before. Despite only having a few meets so far, the team is beginning to get their feet on the ground and make strong progress towards a

promising season.

"There is a lot of excitement surrounding not only our veterans who have returned but also our new athletes as well," Mercy Varsity Track and Field Coach Angela Harris said.

Continuing on, Mercy Varsity Soccer hopes to turn their season around at their next home game on Tuesday, April 30th at 6:00pm. Despite not starting the season as they wanted, the team is confident they can continue to grow as a team and still make it to their ultimate goal of making a run for a state championship. On the other hand, Mercy Varsity Tennis is out to a strong start. The season has begun with a promising start with three wins and one loss. They hope to continue their success in their next away match versus Utica High School at 4:00pm.

"I want to enjoy my final season on the tennis team as a senior," senior Rafi Sherman said. "I hope as a team to make a run at States and hopefully end up winning a state championship."

Track and Field

April 27

- 61st Elmer Ball Oxford Invitational @ 10:00 a

April 30

- Away meet vs. Marian @ 4:00

May 4

- Farmington Invitational @ 10:00 a.m

May 11

- CHSL championship @ 11:00

Soccer

April 30

- Home game vs. Fr. Gabriel Richard @ 6:00

May 4

- Away game vs. Brighton @ 12:00

May 7

- Away game vs. Divine Child @ 4:00

May 11

- Home game vs. Berkley @ 12:00

Tennis

April 27

- Away match vs. Utica Quad @ 9:00

April 30

- Away match vs. Marian @ 4:00

May 1

- Home match vs. Bloomfield Hills @ 4:00

May 4

- Away match vs. Forest Hills Northern Quad @ 9:00

Archery

May 18

- Michigan High School Archery Association/USA Archery Tournament

Softball

April 27

- Away game vs. South Lyon

April 29

- Away game vs. Stoney Creek @ 4:30

May 1

- Catholic League Quarterfinals

May 3

- Away Game vs. Trenton @ 4:30

May 4

- Home game vs. Saline @ 10

Lacrosse

April 27

- Away game vs. Haslett @ 2:00

May 1

- Home game vs. Toledo Notre Dame Academy @ 4:30

May 6

- Away Game vs. Livonia United LAX @ 7:00

May 8

- CHSL Semifinals

May 10

- CHSL Finals

Mercy welcomes home its loud neighbors

STORY AND PHOTO: LENA LAJOY, DESIGN EDITOR

At Mercy we know that Spring has arrived when the weather becomes warmer, flowers begin to bloom and the geese come back to lay their eggs! These geese love courtyards and areas where there is no easy way to transport their babies out of the school. Some people look forward to when these geese come back to Mercy while some loathe the noise and distraction they provide.

Everyone at Mercy has their own feelings about the geese whether they are beneficial or a hindrance to the community. One common complaint about the geese is the amount of noise they make and the distractions they cause. Whether the geese are running around or fighting on the roof everyone has heard or witnessed them in action.

“Their noise has disrupted class time due to me sometimes yelling out the window at them when I get particularly frustrated,” English Teacher Steve Morgan said.

Sometimes the geese can even become aggressive towards each other when trying to protect their children. One time the geese were so aggressive that teachers had to put down their blinds in order to block out the sight and noise. They were not only doing this to eliminate the distraction, but also to prevent the students from potentially seeing the gruesome attack.

“There was one year that all of the teachers in the south courtyard had to close their blinds because they started a goose fight,” English Teacher Angela Harris said. “They were chasing each other around the courtyard and bouncing off the windows.”

Geese are extremely territorial, especially when it comes to protecting their children. Geese are also not easily scared and

are ready to protect themselves from whatever or whomever they feel threatened by. Geese often lay their eggs on the ground or in areas where animals could easily try to attack them, explaining their protective nature. Some students came into contact with an angry goose while trying to relax in the media center courtyard.

“These geese were in the courtyard while me and some of my friends were doing homework and they were not bothering us so we stayed out there,” senior Lily Page said. “Then all of a sudden two geese started flying and yelling at us and we screamed and ran into the media center.”

This encounter is extremely startling, especially when one is simply trying to take a break outside during school. The courtyard is a common space used by students hoping to catch some fresh air and quiet while finishing their homework. However, now that the geese have laid eggs in that area, students risk facing their anger when going into the courtyard. This is a hindrance for students who frequently use this space in the Spring.

“This impacts students because we can’t go outside to study in the media center area, which is a bummer,” senior Maya Boertman said.

On another note, some people at Mercy think the geese are beneficial to the Mercy community and even step out of their way to help the geese. While in the courtyard, there is no food or water directly available. Therefore, the geese need to leave the courtyard in order to find food for themselves and eventually their goslings.

“I usually put out water and sometimes a little bit of bird



A mother goose lays on her nest in order to keep her goslings warm so they can grow. This location has caused some problems for mercy students and the goose itself. Hopefully soon the goslings will be born and protected by the objects and plants in this courtyard. Photo by Lena LaJoy.

seed for the mother goose while she spends days sitting on her eggs,” Religious Studies Teacher Andrea Kowalyk said. “One mother to another, we can all use the support.”

Also, after multiple goslings were killed last year by animals such as hawks some students think Mercy could start a program to ensure this does not happen. When students watch these goslings grow up it can be very upsetting to see them harmed by other creatures. Therefore, it might be beneficial to have students help with keeping the goslings safe.

“I think that if we helped the chicks survive it could be very cute to watch them grow up,” sophomore Emily Whelan said. “It would be a cool program to have at school and it would be interesting to see if students have any interest in it.”

Once these geese have their babies, a new problem surfaces: how do we move them out of the school? Multiple different techniques have been used in the past, yet, the most effective mode of transportation has been carrying the goslings outside and hoping the parents see them on the other side.

“The department says that we should physically remove the little goslings and put them in a field where they can wait for their mom and dad,” Facilities Director Gary Bank said.

In the past, there were attempts that did not work out well including setting up fake owls or coyotes. One additional trouble with removing the geese is that the parents become very aggressive because they think their goslings are being hurt. Geese are extremely territorial so removing the goslings with the parent geese present becomes a difficult task.

“We have these huge blue blankets which we spread out like wings and the geese will back off and give us a chance to grab the goslings to move them,” Bank said.

Overall, having the geese at Mercy comes with multiple positives and negatives. While the removal process and their noise can be bothersome, the goslings’ cuteness makes up for any problems. Students and staff should make sure to be careful around the geese and attempt to stay out of their way to both keep yourself and the geese safe.

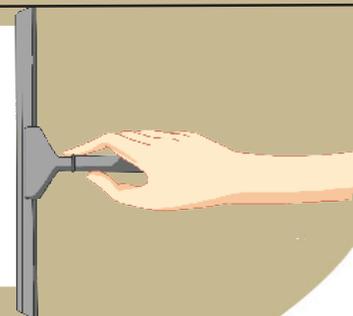
Mr. Banks praises Jonelle Linskey for all her hard work relocating the geese. Her efforts were greatly appreciated.



A family of geese wander around the north courtyard. After the mother layed on the nest for days the goslings in this courtyard hatched. So far they are being cared for and have plenty of protection from predators due to the nature in the courtyard. Photo by Lena LaJoy.

The Environmental Movement spreads: Earth Day inspires change world-wide

STORY AND GRAPHICS: MEGAN SULLIVAN



Earth Day is an annual global event with a focus on how we can take better care of our planet. This global celebration began as a “grass roots,” American movement during the 1960s, and was formally recognized in 1970 when Wisconsin Senator Gaylord Nelson wanted to bring to the forefront the risk that Earth was under, according to the Environmental Protection Agency. With an emphasis on air pollution, oil spills and preserving natural resources, Earth Day in the 1970s focused mainly on the environmental concerns prominent at this time.

However, as time has passed, the goals of Earth Day have changed and increased in prominence with the increasing global temperature. As our planet is put in greater risk than ever before, the embracing of Earth Day has spread throughout our country and worldwide. With the need for change being more prominent, Earth Day is now less about a “day” and more about a necessary movement. Today, Earth Day is recognized globally, drawing attention from 193 countries. Here are how some countries view Earth Day, and how they continue the environmental movement by paying respect to our planet.

Europe

Among many environmental issues, Europe’s largest risks include extreme sea levels, coastal flooding and air pollution. With many coastal regions throughout Europe, the rising sea levels due to melting glaciers are a dangerous threat, especially to France, Italy, Belgium and the Netherlands, all coastal countries at higher risk of flooding. For example, Venice, known as the ‘City of Canals’, is estimated to have sunk by about nine inches over the past century, according to Rick Steves and Gene Openshaw. Additionally, despite changes that have been made to reduce emissions

and improve air quality, air pollution remains a leading environmental health risk in Europe, according to the European Environment Agency.

To combat the rapid impacts of climate change, many countries throughout Europe have embraced the Earth Day movement. For example, in England, this movement is embraced and led by the Royal Family itself. In 2024, England will be celebrating its first ever “Earthfest”, a weekend long event to emphasize and spread awareness on the current climate crisis. Furthermore, Prince William created the Earthshot Awards to recognize, reward and fund those people and projects that have contributed and have ideas to help save our planet.

However, European nations’ promotion of environmental initiatives does not stop there, with many sustainable concepts like recycling and reusing being ingrained into the culture.

“I feel like the Europeans don’t make [Earth Day] a big deal because it is more part of their everyday life. It’s just added to an environmental movement that is already happening there.” Mercy history teacher Mrs. Faunce, a Michigan Local who previously lived in Germany and Belgium, said.

South America

South America is notably home to the treasured Amazon rainforest. However, this global wonder is facing the threat of deforestation like so many forests around the world. By National Geographic’s definition, deforestation is the “purposeful clearing of forested land” and is done for many reasons like creating farmland or selling timber. According to Martina Igini of Earth.org, it is estimated that more than half of the world’s rainforests have already been lost.

However, as some of Earth’s most diverse ecosystems turn into farmland and wood planks, people across South America are fighting for change. Many South American countries are making efforts to reduce deforestation through enacting laws limiting the amount of industrial and agricultural development, though development continues to threaten the natural forests and landscapes.

Australia

Australia is at risk of losing one of its most interesting and celebrated natural wonders due to global climate change, the Great Barrier Reef. In fact, scientists believe the Great Barrier Reef may face extinction within 50 years if actions are not taken. A phenomenon known as coral bleaching occurs when the waters become too warm, causing corals to expel the algae living in their tissues and turning

completely white. Although the corals can survive a coral bleaching event, it places much strain on them, leading to their mortality. With coral reefs seeing record bleaching, more people are fighting for a greener future, fearing this Earth Day may be our last with the Great Barrier Reef.

Asia

As the effects of climate change disrupt life around the world, no areas are spared. One example of global warming’s impacts can be seen in Japan, a small nation with a vast reputation world-wide for its spectacular scenery and nature. However, as climate change takes its toll, much of the natural wildlife is facing its impacts firsthand. Even Japan’s most notable image, the Japanese cherry blossom, is seeing the devastating impacts of humanity’s actions. According to Ayurella Horn-Muller of National Geographic, due to the Earth’s increased temperature during historically colder months, the cherry blossoms are now blooming around two weeks earlier than in the past.

However, Japan is one of the many countries aiding in the battle for a greener future. An example of this can be found in their celebrations of Earth Day, with two major festivals occurring in Miyashita Park and Yoyogi Park, Tokyo, from mid to late April, according to Nexamp. Furthermore, according to Mark Minevich of Forbes, Japan has recently partnered with The United Nations Development Program to launch their 36.8 million dollar project to support Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Timor-Leste and Vanuatu in their “Green Transformations” with a focus on reducing their reliance on fossil fuels as well as driving sustainable economic growth.

So, how can we do our part in the battle against climate change? To start, implement the ideal into your everyday life, not just one day.

“Everybody says all the time that everyday should be Earth Day, but at least it is a day that helps bring awareness and perhaps create some new habits. It’s a good reminder of things that we should be doing.” AP Environmental Science teacher Christian Schmitt said.

What ways can we transform Earth Day into everyday?

“Start with something that is doable”, Schmitt said. “You don’t want to set a goal that seems impossible like ‘I’m not going to drive a car anymore’...so start with something small. Something that’s doable. And then once that becomes part of your daily norm, add something else. And then, get more people to do it with you”.