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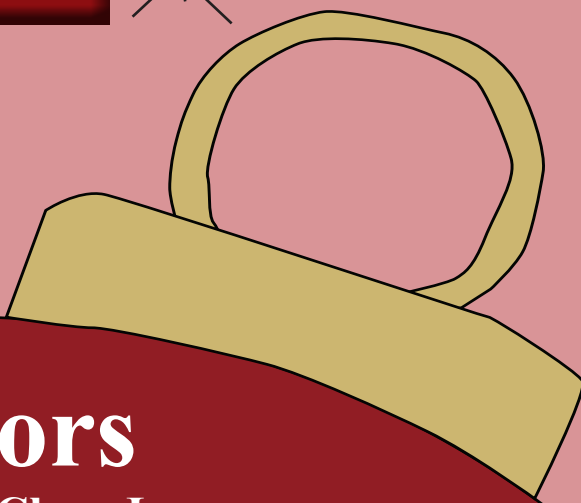
# Who will be king.?

View pages 12 and 13 to see  
your 2020 Christmas King  
candidates!





From the Newsprint staff to you, have a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!  
Stay healthy and enjoy your break!



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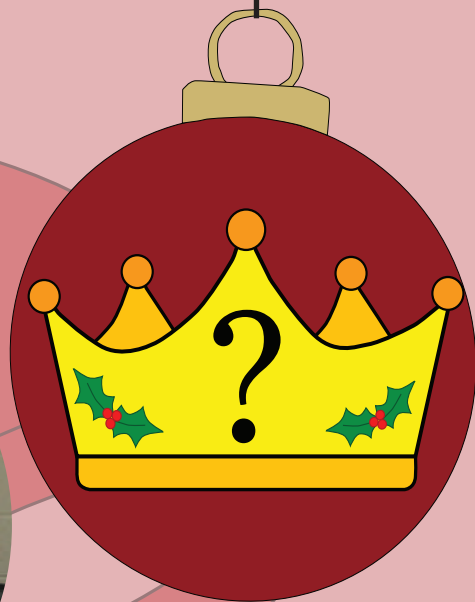
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# Sisterhood to Sister Pie

STORY AND PHOTOS: DELILAH COE, WEB EDITOR

Are you looking for a cozy bakery with unique and seasonal ingredients? Maybe a new trendy spot in Detroit to hang out with friends or family? If you want to branch out of your comfort zone to try exciting flavors such as buckwheat chocolate chip cookies, savory hand pies, or a salted maple pie, support a fellow Mercy sister by heading to Sister Pie. Mercy alumna Lisa Ludwinski ('02) opened a bustling corner bakery in 2015 on the east side of Detroit that encompasses a feeling of home and pays tribute to the flavors of Michigan by season.

After graduating from Mercy and attending Kalamazoo College, Ludwinski's dream was to pursue a career in theatre. With a bachelor of arts degree in Theatre, Ludwinski packed her bags in 2006 and moved to New York City. There, she worked as a barista and nanny, among other various jobs, to support herself. As she immersed herself in the NYC culture, she started a job at the iconic dessert and bakery restaurant chain Milk Bar and developed a passion for baking. With this newfound love of commercial production baking, Ludwinski traveled home to Michigan to learn more about the business aspect of becoming an entrepreneur baker. She learned the concept of

a triple bottom line business, which focuses on companies making an impact on the people involved, as well as helping the environment, instead of strictly on the profit.

"I had known that baking and cooking were in the career of my future, but finding the social mission inspired me to actually go for it," said Ludwinski.

Ludwinski officially started her business, Sister Pie, out of her parents' house in Milford in 2012. The company launched on Thanksgiving, and Ludwinski was thrilled to sell 40 pies. As time went on, Ludwinski hired a team and worked tirelessly to create the business they have established today. After working in a commercial kitchen, paying many loans and hosting fundraisers, Ludwinski had gained a following and was successfully able to open her own shop, located at Parker and Kercheval Streets in Detroit. Ludwinski and her team are honored to now have lines out the door and a consistent following. Fast forward to 2020, Sister Pie is a finalist for the James Beard Award, which is one of the highest honors given within the food industry.

"Before COVID-19 hit, we had a cozy customer experience inside the bakery, where folks could watch the bakers at work," said

Ludwinski.

Although the pandemic has negatively affected the Sister Pie business and dynamic, they are still doing pre-orders and sidewalk sales. By doing this, Ludwinski is still able to do her favorite part of the job, which is interacting with customers.

"There is a special joy in being able to hand over lovingly baked cookies and pies to folks, especially during a time of struggle," said Ludwinski.

This personal touch is important to Sister Pie, as well as keeping their customers happy and satisfied.

Coming from Mercy High School, Ludwinski says her education prepared her for the community side of the business world.

"My first inklings towards social justice and community spirit were developed at Mercy, and I'm grateful to bring that with me in every phase of life," said Ludwinski.

She values her Mercy education and encourages Mercy students to do the same.

"Use the privilege of your Mercy education and opportunities to build a more equitable country," said Ludwinski.



Sister Pie has a line out the door on a Saturday morning due to COVID-19 precautions. Photo by Delilah Coe



Sister Pie's four Thanksgiving pies for sale on their website. Fair use: Instagram



## Clare's Corner

# Staying connected while apart

STORY, PHOTO AND GRAPHICS: CLARE JONES, EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

The once normal student daily experiences of walking the school hallways, waving “hello,” and talking with peers in person are considered, by most in today’s academic environment, peculiar luxuries during the COVID-19 pandemic. The typical onsite classroom presentations have transitioned to, for most, virtual learning.

Mercy’s commitment to academic excellence through the use of technology has provided a seamless transition during the pandemic that allowed us to successfully adjust to the virtual learning model since the beginning of the COVID-19 lockdown that occurred in March of 2020. For example, every student learns to proficiently use an iPad after receiving it the first day of freshman year.

Despite the enormous efforts by teachers to make remote classroom environments interesting, it can be challenging for students learning in a non-traditional manner to stay focused on the daily lessons through a laptop or iPad screen. However, there are benefits that distance learning offers, such as being in loungewear for class instead of a uniform, being able to roll out of bed two minutes before first hour class, along with having the flexibility to order a Starbucks drink or lunch through Uber eats that gets delivered anytime between class periods.

With this new freedom to choose our preferable home learning environment that accommodates our own educational needs, we must be mindful to stay proactive and motivated to focus and pay attention to online lectures given by our teachers to ensure we achieve our personal best grades.

The welcomed, and sometimes not so welcomed, distractions from phones, push notifications, family and pets are common disturbances we must effectively work to avoid. A few suggestions to steer clear of these distractions is to turn off your personal electronic devices and schedule time to check your social media. These practices will help you stay focused on your lesson and support student participation in class discussions.

In addition to the distractions that come with remote learning, being at home without seeing friends can lead to feelings of isolation and loneliness. While we are used to communicating with friends virtually through our phones and social media, the option of physically seeing one another can now be hazardous to our health. Designated times to stay home to prevent the spread of the virus is the responsible thing to do. However, many miss the classroom environment where students look forward to seeing friends and talking about topics like who is on “The Bachelorette,” the latest fashion and what food Chef Mike has prepared in the cafeteria for the week.

Fortunately for Mercy students, we have the benefits of the hybrid learning model that allows us to attend school in-person half of the week that provides the social connection we desire.

On the other hand, some students have chosen Mercy’s option to go online all year (GOAL), exclusively learning from home.

However, one of the concerns about distance learning due to the pandemic is that there may be an increase in learning gaps with students who are not adapting to remote classroom environments.

Many have found it beneficial to replicate the classroom environment in their homes as much as possible given that throughout the year they will be at a different location from their teachers. As students, making sure we have sufficient lighting for our learning space, the proper desk and chair, along with a designated area for books and school supplies, helps to facilitate an effective remote learning environment. Select the quietest place in your home and let your family members know this is your spot. Claim your territory!

Instead of looking at how to sustain traditional learning practices, it is more practical to look at how we—students, teachers, administration and parents—can become innovative in furthering education and adapting to the new virtual school learning environment. The challenges of the pandemic will not be solved overnight, but our efforts to improve can start today.

During our time off to celebrate the holiday season, remember to check on friends and loved ones. Along with the common ways we communicate with our mobile devices, try the newly popular drive-by and wave from the car to say hello to dear ones. Also, consider the old fashioned ways of communicating by calling someone on the phone or writing a letter and send it via “snail mail.”

Be safe, stay connected and see you all—whether virtually or in-person—next year. Happy holidays!



# Klueg's new classroom

STORY, PHOTO AND GRAPHIC: GRACE O'DEA

Mr. Curt Klueg loads up his car with his two teenage daughters and starts his routine commute to Mercy High School. Once arrived, he heads to room N18, the classroom he now calls his own. At the beginning of the day, the room is only filled with decorations and religious imagery, like the tapestry art with the word “peace” on it in many different languages. By the day’s end, though, his room will have been filled with liveliness, intellectual conversation, faith inspiration and lots of learning for all who were present in the classroom. After two years of working in Mercy’s campus ministry, Mr. Klueg has entered Mercy’s classroom environment this year by taking the role as a theology teacher.

“I was very interested in teaching,” said Mr. Klueg. When a teaching opportunity opened in Mercy’s Religion Department, Mr. Klueg immediately agreed to fill the spot. He currently teaches two Justice and Peace classes and one section of the sophomore Bible class.

Mr. Klueg was the ideal candidate to fill one of Mercy’s religious studies teaching positions. Having a bachelor’s degree in religious education and theology and a master’s degree in social justice, Mr. Klueg has an extensive expertise in Catholic Theology. More importantly than having a strong education in religion, though, Mr. Klueg is also very devoted to helping others learn about faith and the importance of their morals in society.

“I like formation, which means helping folks, whether it be students, young adults or adults, shape their understanding of their faith and their understanding of justice,” said Mr. Klueg. “Formation has always been an important part of what I’ve enjoyed, and, teaching is, in many ways, kind of the purest form of that.”

In all of his classes, Mr. Klueg helps guide students to understand the meaning of faith in their lives

By taking on a teaching position at Mercy, Mr.

Klueg has gotten a new opportunity to help students discover and practice their faith, but his passion for doing so has not always been limited to just students. Before coming to Mercy, Mr. Klueg worked in the Jesuit Volunteer Corps and spent many years doing missionary work in Africa under the Maryknoll Society. He spent four years in Africa with his wife; while there, they had their daughters, Rehema Klueg, a Mercy sophomore, and Bethany Klueg, a Mercy freshman. The family returned to Chicago for five years and then went back to Africa for another three.

“My work there was a variety of things,” said Mr. Klueg. “Largely, I was working with prisoners, death row prisoners in particular. I helped facilitate Alternative to Violence Project workshops, which is teaching practical non-violence to prisoners.”

Mr. Klueg also visited prisoners’ family members on their behalf, co-coordinated a project to help supply basic school needs for students who had lost a parent to HIV-AIDS and helped orphaned children, among other things in his seven total years spent in Africa.

Mr. Klueg hopes to return to Africa one day, but for the time being, he can find parallels between his missionary work and teaching at Mercy.

According to Mr. Klueg, “There are certainly many similarities and personality traits that are required for both.”

One thing he believes necessary for both mission work and teaching is the ability to adjust. Mr. Klueg’s movement from a campus minister to a religion teacher has been an adjustment, but he has had help from other teachers in the Theology Department.

“With the Justice and Peace class, Mrs. [Ann] Lusch had a good structure in place,” said Mr. Klueg. “I’ve utilized a lot of that same structure for the semester

and just added things that I find interesting or that I’m passionate about.”

Mr. Klueg also draws on the structures used by Mrs. Andrea Kowalyk and Ms. Sandy Mals when it comes to teaching his Bible class.

By using class structures previously used by other religious teachers and taking his own approach to educating

students, Mr. Klueg has, according to many of his students, done excellent thus far with engaging his students and making their learning experience

enjoyable.

“We with other which helps learn,” said Ali a sophomore Klueg’s Bible Frequent and homework such as making are common in of which Jinsky helped her better material.

“I do look forward to going to the class,” said Jinsky. “It’s one of my favorite classes.”

Although he enjoys teaching the Bible, Mr. Klueg’s master’s degree in social justice makes the Justice and Peace class more aligned with his studies.

“I’m an activist to some extent,” said Mr. Klueg. “I like to be involved in the issues of the day.”

Mr. Klueg’s shares his knowledge of current social justice issues with his students in his Justice and Peace classes. Students also have the opportunity to better understand current issues in the world by engaging in frequent class-wide discussions.

“I really like the class because there’s room for all of us to share all of our opinions,” said Chloe Kilano, a senior in one of Mr. Klueg’s Justice and Peace classes.

This class is specifically centered around the seven Catholic Social Teachings (CST), which are: solidarity, human dignity, care for creation, option for the poor, rights and responsibilities, worker rights and family and community participation. Students in the class are often assigned homework about a specific topic that is related to one of the CSTs and then given the chance to discuss their thoughts on it the next day. Students claim the class is made even more enriching by Mr. Klueg’s obvious interest in what he is teaching.

According to Kilano, “It’s so evident he’s really passionate about teaching and what he does.”

By talking with his students about sometimes difficult topics, Mr. Klueg has made his classroom an open environment where students feel safe to express their thoughts and feelings.

“I have a lot of respect for the way he teaches,” said Kilano.



Mr. Klueg presents a powerpoint to his seventh hour Bible class. Photo by Grace O'Dea



# A GLANCE INTO THE WORLD OF LAW

STORY AND GRAPHICS: CAITLYN BEGOSA

After bingeing “How to Get Away With Murder,” “Forensic Files” and other true crime programs, junior Maria Johnson wished to know more about the trials and lawyers in her favorite shows and how they take place in real life. Interested in law and debate, Johnson joined Mercy Varsity Mock Trial (MVMT) to gain a real glimpse in the judicial world.

The closest glance many Mercy students have of the judicial system is watching the intense courtroom cross-examinations on “Law & Order” and crime documentaries on Netflix. For students who aspire to learn more about law, MVMT provides a firsthand experience of the judicial system. Additionally, Mock Trial supplies its participants with coaches who are established attorneys.

Along with other talented lawyers, Mrs. Missy Kreucher coaches MVMT. Many students know her as the Media Center’s acting librarian, but she provides her background in law to the members of MVMT.

“Mock Trial is a team that competes in a courtroom setting,” said Mrs. Kreucher. “Our team presents as one side, either the prosecution or the defense, and in doing that we are also the attorneys, and we are the witnesses. So, it’s partly acting and partly understanding the judicial process in the courtroom.”

Similar to any Mercy varsity team, MVMT hosted tryouts in October to find well-spoken individuals and critical thinkers. Students who wanted to try out had to give a two to three-minute presentation on an issue they are passionate about.

Using the Socratic method of questioning, which is a form of cooperative argumentative dialogue between individuals, the tryouts often get unpleasant as the student undergoes another three minutes of questioning by the professional attorneys who coach MVMT.

“[This] causes the student to dig deep down in their side to defend their position,” said Mrs. Kreucher. “It can get very uncomfortable, but what the coaches are looking for

during the audition process is someone who can speak confidently and not get rattled and stick to their position. It takes less than 10 minutes, but it’s pretty intense.”

Each year, the team receives a new case. These cases can range from civil issues concerning defamation or property damage to criminal cases like theft or murder. Last year, MVMT received a civil case concerning an immigration issue. This year, the team is working on a criminal murder case involving arson.

Mock Trial currently practices two times a week. The practices begin with learning a multitude of law terms, such as affidavits and plaintiffs. The team also learns how to become lawyers and review trial tactics to successfully compete in their competitions with the help of their coaches, who are distinguished attorneys. The MVMT was given the opportunity to work with three lawyers, two who are United States attorneys and one is Wayne County prosecutor. These coaches create a realistic experience of what it is like to work in a courtroom.

“At practices, we’re going over the case and reading over it to find things in the case that could help us out for when we go to court,” said senior Madelyn Bahoorra. “There’s witness statements, affidavits, [and] exhibits, which is like the evidence.”

Bahoorra is one of the captains of MVMT this year. “I was a sophomore when I first joined the team,” said Bahoorra. “I was really interested in law at the time and considered being a lawyer. I thought Mock Trial could help me decide, and I ended up loving it a lot. I changed my mind on being a lawyer, but I still club, so I stayed in.”

Mock Trial’s competitions consist of three rounds. The team divides into the prosecution defense. team competes with three

different schools across Michigan including International Academy in Bloomfield Hills, De La Salle Collegiate in Warren and St. Mary Catholic Central High School in Monroe.

During competition, the two teams perform a fake trial with a realistic courtlike setting.

“A mock trial begins with opening statements from both the defense and prosecution,” said Johnson. “This is kind of where each side gives you an outline of their version of the story to introduce to you the witnesses on their side.”

The trial continues with direct and cross examinations where each team questions witnesses and finishes with closing statements from each side.

“When we go to competition, [the schools] are all on the same page [by having the same case],” said Mrs. Kreucher. “We’re all arguing the same arguments, and the judges determine which team is best prepared and best presents, so it is determined by the state board.”

Knowing the law and how to be a lawyer is a big part of Mock Trial, but the ability to speak clearly and fluently and knowing how to debate is equally important, as the judge also bases their decision on how the members present themselves.

“[Mock Trial] is really the best opportunity to see the ins and outs of being a lawyer,” said Mrs. Kreucher. “There is much more to it than just reading cases and following the law. [The girls learn] to never go into an argument unless you know the other side’s argument. . . . They should be able to defend both sides of the argument at any time so that [they] are never taken by surprise.”

Photos used with permission from Gracie Grady, Madelyn Bahoorra and Dalia Housey



# Diversifying your school schedule

STORY AND PHOTOS: CLARE JONES EDITOR-IN-CHIEF AND MEGAN MALLIE ASSOCIATE EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

As a new semester dawns near, there is still an opportunity for students to take the time to review electives that enrich our schedules with classes the Mercy curriculum offers. Elective classes enable students to learn about subject areas that may align with personal interests rather than other classes such as English, mathematics, history and science. Based on a Newsprint November poll that asked students to write in their most enjoyable electives taken at Mercy, the results showed that Drawing, Contemporary Issues, and AP Computer Science and Principles were among the most popular responses. The Newsprint staff randomly selected and interviewed three students who felt strongly about their opinions of these three electives.



Senior Madeline Kenny begins to set up her computer in order to code a digital music player. Photo by Clare Jones

## A.P. Computer Science Pricipals

Although an Advanced Placement (AP) class can seem extremely challenging and overwhelming, A.P. Computer Science Principles gives students an introduction to coding, algorithms, security and privacy. Last year was the first year Mercy offered this class as an elective.

One current student in the class is senior Madeline Kenney, who is almost done with the first semester of the full-year class. She is interested in pursuing a degree in business, but she took this class to diversify her learning.

“I’m thinking about [going into] business,” Kenney said, “so I feel like even if it doesn’t directly help me in business, I feel like it’s related in every career being useful with technology.”

Kenney recently completed a project in A.P. Computer Science Principles where she created her own app through a website. She also enjoys the group work and learning new technical terms specific to the class that she had not previously encountered.

## Drawing

Junior Grace Rastelli took Drawing during her sophomore year, knowing little information about the class objectives. As Rastelli picked up her drawing utensil, she felt relaxed as she began to draw away the stress of her core curriculum classes.

“It was really great to have a break in my day and have a class where I did not have to worry about upcoming tests and quizzes consistently,” said Rastelli.

Drawing is a foundational art class that offers students the opportunity to create drawings that reflect the look of realistic objects. Rastelli reminisced about her time deeply enjoying drawing her still-life object, where she created a coffee mug.

“I had no experience in drawing, but after the semester I saw my progression and I was proud of the work I was able to do.”



Junior Grace Rastelli’s still-life object of a coffee cup that she created during her Drawing class. Photo by Clare Jones

## Contemporary Issues

Senior Hailey Scott currently taking the Contemporary Issues elective, which she was persuaded to take by previous seniors who recommended the class.

“I’m naturally into that stuff,” said Scott. “I thought that as an HRC Representative it was important for me to take that class.”

One thing Scott appreciates most about the class is the opportunity to discuss current issues and relating them back to the five critical concerns of Mercy.

“Nothing is ever repeated or boring,” said Scott. “It’s interesting for us to acknowledge that [the values] are a part of the Mercy curriculum, but to really dive way deeper into each one.”

Scott enjoys being involved within Mercy, and feels that contemporary issues is a great bridge between what she learns about in school and what she can connect with her social life and educating others. She learned how to navigate challenging discussions while respectfully listening to others who have differing opinions. This is a useful life skill and good practice for real-life situations.



Senior Hailey Scott discusses how the impacts of world’s current state have shaped her beliefs in Ms. Richter’s third hour Contemporary Issues class. Photo by Clare Jones



# Zoomin' to the House: "10 Ways to Survive Life in a Quarantine"

STORY, PHOTOS AND GRAPHICS: FATIMA SIDDIQUE

End

zoom



Join Call



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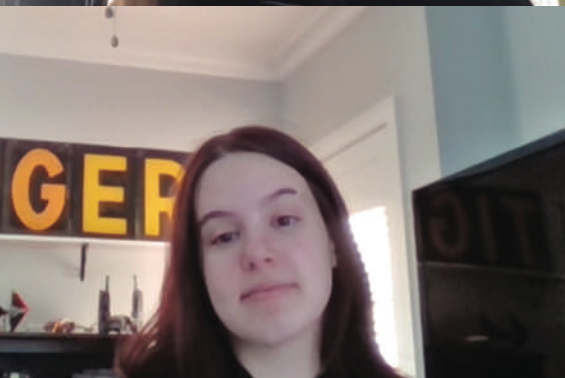
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The Mercy community has faced many losses this year due to the coronavirus pandemic, one of them being students having the opportunity to perform a fall play in front of a live in-person audience. Despite the circumstances, the Performing Arts Department has found a way to keep theatre alive in a way it has never done before: through Zoom.

Theatre and speech teacher Mrs. Shelley Bajorek directed "10 Ways to Survive Life in a Quarantine," a comedy written by playwright Don Zolidis where two hosts, played by junior Sawyer Evans and senior Grace Ajo, put together a series of monologues to showcase the strange ways people pass the time during quarantine. From putting on a musical with your dog to falling in love with an inanimate object, the play is full of solutions to cure quarantine boredom. The actors performed from the safety of their own homes on Nov. 13-15.

"With the amount of audience members and social distancing, it didn't seem feasible to do a regular play with a live audience," said Mrs. Bajorek.

For many Mercy students passionate about performing arts, the news of a virtual play might have been quite the disappointment. However, it was also a chance for them to break out of their comfort zone and try something completely new. Actors were challenged with the notion of having to act without an audience while keeping up the over-the-top style of acting usually found in plays.

"It's been very weird and very challenging," said Evans, who is the host of the show. "I thought the acting would be more subtle, the way you act for TV, but Mrs. Bajorek still wants it to be as similar to a play as it can be."

The actors in the play did their best to maintain a theatrical style of acting through loud voices, dramatic tone and exaggerated facial expressions.

Performing a play on Zoom definitely comes with its benefits and challenges. Along with the usual concerns revolving around a play, such as the lighting and props, a Zoom play presented many more challenges the company had to overcome.

"Directing for the stage and directing for Zoom are very different in the fact that I usually don't have to worry about an actor staying in the frame or a dog barking in the background," said Mrs. Bajorek. "A lot of students also aren't familiar with how to act for a screen while making it look like they're acting for an audience."

The actors and hosts had to be prepared to keep the show going through internet connection issues and blurry screens. But what might've been the most difficult part of it all was learning to perform without a live audience.

"Having a live audience helps us a lot because we can usually work off of their reactions and it encourages and reminds us that they enjoy what we do," said junior Julia Metas, whose character Neima develops an obsession with the squirrels outside her window. "The audience is such a huge part of the show, so it's sad to not be able to see their reactions."

Not only did the actors perform without seeing the audience, they also had to perform without seeing each other. Loss of communication between the cast and the crew is a problem that doesn't usually occur when performing in-person plays. But with virtual rehearsals and emails instead of face-to-face conversations, it was much more difficult to work together and communicate efficiently.

"Usually, the cast and crew are a lot more connected," said junior Katelyn Moyer, the stage manager, who worked hard to keep order behind the scenes. "But being on Zoom and not being [able] to meet in person, they aren't as close as they used to be."

However, group chats and the opportunity for the cast to watch the Zoom rehearsals kept them in contact with each other in even the smallest ways.

Similarly, the roles of the costume and makeup crew were slightly different as well. Each crew member was assigned specific actors and was responsible for meeting with them and creating their looks. The crews worked a lot more independently and creatively as they were given much more freedom with costumes and makeup.

In regards to the future performances at Mercy, with coronavirus cases increasing, it is difficult to make plans for the spring musical.

"The spring musical is something we have been thinking about non-stop," said Mrs. Bajorek. "We have a musical in mind, but at this point we are not announcing anything until we know for sure what we can and can't do."

The next in-person spring musical is a performance that the whole Mercy community can look forward to attending. Until then, Mercy students and their family were able to enjoy a Zoom performance of "10 Ways to Survive Life in a Quarantine."

"With everything going on right now I think putting on this lighthearted play can really lift the spirits of people," said Moyer. "It's definitely helped make my gloomy days better when I get to laugh at the scenes."

And while Zoom plays and virtual audiences are not something we had envisioned or planned for, in the end the curtain must rise and the show must go on.

Mrs. Shelley Bajorek, Sawyer Evans, Julia Metas, and Katelyn Moyer (from top to bottom) attend Zoom rehearsals from the safety of their own homes. Screenshots taken during rehearsal by Fatima Siddique



# OVERCOMING 2020

STORY: **MEGAN MALLIE, ASSOCIATE EDITOR-IN-CHIEF & MADDIE SULLIVAN, COPY EDITOR** GRAPHICS: **MADDIE SULLIVAN, COPY EDITOR**

## January

People were celebrating the start of a new decade and looking ahead to the new year and new beginnings, largely unaware of the impending pandemic. The first case of COVID-19 was reported in the United States on January 21. NBA star Kobe Bryant and his daughter Gianna died in a tragic helicopter crash along with the other seven passengers.



Creative Commons, from top left: Stock Luong, Amin Eshaker, Keith Allison, Sayyed Shahab, Din Vajedi, Raimond Spekking

## February

President Trump was acquitted on both impeachment charges, for abuse of power and obstruction of Congress. The first American citizen died of COVID-19 in Wuhan, China, the center of the pandemic outbreak. There was a delay in the Iowa caucus in the beginning of the presidential primaries.



Creative Commons, top left: Rievers, Lars Crommelinck, Paul Sableman, Gage Skidmore, Tom Ford

## March

The COVID-19 pandemic forced shutdowns in states across the U.S., with thousands of schools switching to online learning. People quarantined with their families from places of work, restaurants and other nonessential activities. Sports seasons were canceled and the Olympics were postponed to the summer of 2021. The last of the Australian bushfires were extinguished, ending one of the most devastating bushfire seasons in its history.



Creative Commons, top left: Tajiana Delamora, Angeliqui22, SpaceX Imagery, Alexis Fotos, Alexandra Koch

## June

Black Lives Matter protests continued for weeks throughout the U.S., with hundreds of thousands of citizens demanding justice and an end to police brutality. The World Health Organization (WHO) announced that all people should wear a mask in public to help prevent the spread of COVID-19. In Lebanon, anti-government protests ensued due to the country's severe economic crisis. Yemen faced a civil war, as well as two pandemics (cholera and COVID-19).



Creative Commons, top left: David Shankbone, Paladin Zhang, Ibrahim Qasim, tedeatlan

## May

Murder hornets incited fear in Americans as they were found for the first time inside the United States in Washington. For the first time in history, New York City shut down all its subway systems due to COVID-19. A wave of protests arose in Minneapolis, where George Floyd, an unarmed black man, was killed by a police officer. A video of the incident incited outrage on social media platforms, and people were shocked at the police brutality exercised on Floyd. This incident sparked massive support of the Black Lives Matter movement.



Creative Commons, top left: Fibonacci Blue, Adam E. Moreira, Washington State Department of Agriculture, Mike Kalasnik, Singlespeedfahrer



Creative Commons, top left: Gage Skidmore, Michael Noonan, Vesadi Viorrel, Bruce Emmerling, Puta Ama



The global number of COVID-19 cases exceeded one million, with over 50,000 virus-related deaths. The lockdown in China lifted as the curve there flattened, but officials warned it would not be the same everywhere else in the world. Places like Spain, Italy and New York City experienced huge surges in COVID-19 cases, and Wuhan officials released the city's updated statistics, which were much higher than originally reported.

## April

## July

Roughly a year after financier and convicted sex offender Jeffery Epstein's arrest and suicide, his alleged accomplice and ex-girlfriend Ghislaine Maxwell was arrested on charges relating to sex trafficking and abuse of young women and girls. Kansas City Chiefs quarterback Patrick Mahomes signed a 12-year contract that could be worth \$503 million, the largest contract for an athlete in sports history. Pop band One Direction celebrated its 10 year anniversary on July 23 with the release of updated music videos, audio videos, and an unreleased video of one of the band's concerts.



Creative Commons, top left: Tennessee Titans, j4p4rn, Eva Rinaldi, Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities, Adam Bishop

## August

Residents had to be evacuated from East Los Angeles after a device used at a baby gender reveal party sparked a fire, burning thousands of acres of land. Democratic presidential nominee Joe Biden chose California Senator Kamala Harris as his running mate, making her the first woman of color on a major party ticket. Actor Chadwick Boseman, most recognizable from Marvel's "Black Panther," died at the age of 43 after losing a battle with cancer. Aug. 18 marked the 100 year anniversary of the ratification of the 19th Amendment, which guarantees and protects women's right to vote.



Creative Commons, top left: Gage Skidmore, George Skidmore, Eddiem360, LSE Library

## September

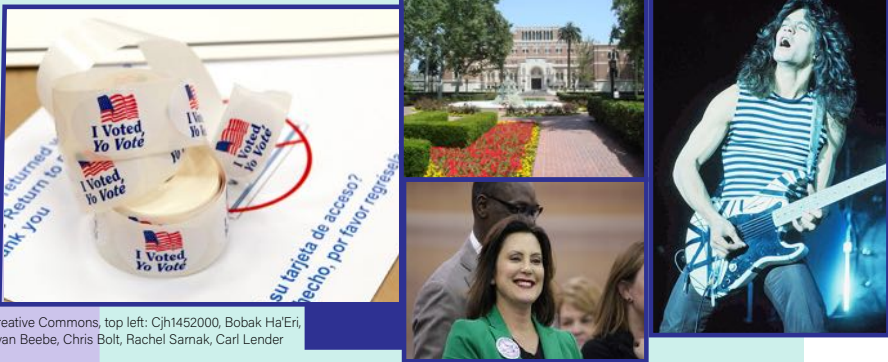
After nearly 30 years of serving on the U.S. Supreme Court, Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg died. Shortly after her death, President Donald Trump nominated Judge Amy Coney Barrett for the U.S. Supreme Court. The first presidential debate was held in Ohio, and both candidates were criticized for their frequent interruptions and unprofessional behavior, and the chaos that occurred led the Commission on Presidential Debates to implement stricter rules for the second presidential debate held in October.



Creative Commons, top left: Lucy Sanders, Sheelah Craighead, George Skidmore, Krasotkin, The U.S. National Archives, Carol Brennan, Sarah Mirk

## October

Donald Trump revealed that he and the First Lady Melania Trump, as well as numerous staff members, tested positive for the coronavirus. The White House physicians treated President Trump with an experimental drug called monoclonal antibody cocktail; the drug's safety and efficacy were not completely proven at the time. A week later, the FBI discovered the plot created by a militia group called the Wolverine Watchman to kidnap Michigan Gov. Gretchen Whitmer, and the 13 conspirators were arrested and charged. Lead guitarist of American rock band Van Halen, Eddie Van Halen, died from cancer. At the end of October, actress Lori Loughlin started her two month prison sentence for her role in a college admission scandal.



Creative Commons, top left: Cjh1452000, Bobak Ha'Eri, Evan Beebe, Chris Bolt, Rachel Sarnak, Carl Lender

## November

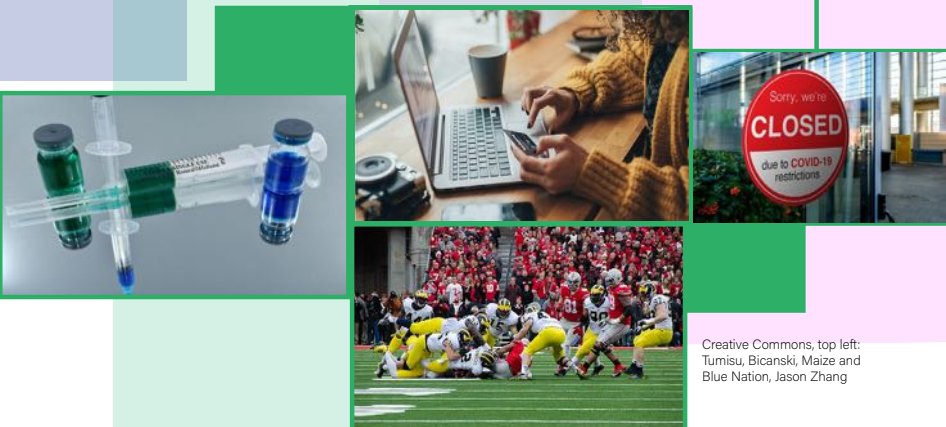
Nov. 3 was Election Day for the 2020 presidential election. There was a historic number of early votes due to the pandemic, with over 97 million votes cast before election day. On Nov. 7, Joe Biden was declared the winner of the 2020 presidential election, but President Trump refused to concede. "Jeopardy!" host Alex Trebeck died from pancreatic cancer.



Creative Commons, top left: Minorax, Jim Greenhill, Mhar564, Edward M. Kenney Institute

## December

The final month of 2020 has brought hope for many Americans as there are currently multiple research facilities working tirelessly to create a vaccine for COVID-19. Cases are once again on the rise nationwide, causing a second shut-down in several states, with restrictions tightening in the majority of those states.



Creative Commons, top left: Turnisu, Bicanski, Maize and Blue Nation, Jason Zhang





# 2020 Christmas King

STORY AND GRAPHICS: RACHAEL SALAH, DESIGN EDITOR AND DELILAH COE, WEB EDITOR

Be sure to click [this link](#) to vote for your 2020 Christmas King!



**DATE: SABRINA VANACKER**

***What do you like to do for fun?***

“I spend my winter evenings chilling by the fire eating fondue with Sabrina’s dog, Ricky, on my left and my queen, Sabrina, on my right.”

***Why should you be Christmas king?***

“I should be Christmas king because I love Christmas and I am a king. I also passed the fitness gram pacer test with honors. If I do not win, my three year relationship with Sabrina will be in shambles. Not only that, my mom would be very mad at me.”

***What present would you make for your date this year?***

“I would spend countless hours creating a finger painting of Ms. Rob. I would do this because I know how much my girlfriend idolizes her.”



**DATE: CAROLINE WISELEY**

***What do you like to do for fun?***

“Play lacrosse and make jewelery with my girlfriend.”

***Why should you be Christmas king?***

“Because I am the gingerbread man.”

***What present would you make for your date this year?***

“A hamburger because she is vegan.”



**DATE: GRACE BOJI**

***What do you like to do for fun?***

“For fun, I like hanging out with my friends and family. And I like to go fishing.”

***Why should you be Christmas king?***

“I should be Christmas King because if you know Grace you know how mad she will be if we lose. PLEASE DON’T DO THAT TO ME. SHE WILL BE ANGRY AND THAT’S GOOD FOR NO ONE.”

***What present would you make for your date this year?***

“I would make Grace a really nice dinner because all she eats is McDonald’s.”



**DATE: DELILAH COE**

***What do you like to do for fun?***

“When I have free time, I like to lift weights and bake brownies. I love the “Great British Baking Show,” which inspires me to make brownies, and I’m very into fitness.”

***Why should you be Christmas king?***

“I should be the Christmas King because I have big muscles and curly hair, and I want to make my girlfriend happy this Christmas.”

***What present would you make for your date this year?***

“If my date asked me to make a Christmas gift for her, I would write her a poem. I would package it with brownies and cookies inside a basket.”



**DATE: GABI MICALIEF**

***What do you like to do for fun?***

“I like to hangout with friends, play football with friends, and accidentally go viral on TikTok again with friends.”

***Why should you be Christmas king?***

“I believe why I should be trusted with the responsibility of being not only Mercy’s Christmas King but the best one is I really like cool hats, and a crown is definitely a cool hat. Why would you want somebody who doesn’t like cool hats to be wearing a cool hat, when someone who likes cool hats could be wearing it instead?”

***What present would you make for your date this year?***

“I would make her a scrapbook because we have this joke where all of the pictures we have together are in a folder called “the book of Landen,” so I think I should make it a real thing.”



**DATE: HAILEY SCOTT**

***What do you like to do for fun?***

“Bird watch and play croquet.”

***Why should you be Christmas king?***

“My girlfriend/date is already a queen so it’s only fitting for me to be king.”

***What present would you make for your date this year?***

“I would make her a painting of myself for her.”



# Shooting toward a season

STORY BY SAAYNA ZAIDI PHOTO AND GRAPHICS: CLARE JONES, EDITOR-IN-CHIEF



The Mercy Varsity Basketball team accepts the Districts Award after defeating North Farmington 66-40 near the end of last year's season. Photo by Clare Jones



Captain Julia Bishop shoots a two pointer during the second quarter at District Finals in March of 2020. Photo by Clare Jones

For many basketball players, the game is more than a sport. It teaches the players lessons that can only be learned playing the game: teamwork, sportsmanship and time-management skills. The inability to compete and play because of the coronavirus hits hard for many athletes.

The uncertainty of COVID-19 with athletics has been tough on all sports this year. Many athletes and coaches are left wondering if their season will continue before their first game even happens. While some sports, such as field hockey and cross country, were able to have a season, the basketball team's season is unpredictable at the moment, and players are left wondering when they will be having a next game or practice.

On Nov. 15, Gov. Gretchen Whitmer announced that all sports in Michigan, other than professional and college, must stop competing for three weeks in an effort to control the spike of Covid-19 cases in Michigan. The news broke during the early weeks of the basketball season.

"We were able to pick all three of the teams: freshman, junior varsity and varsity. Then we had our practice on the 14th of November, and then the restrictions were put into place," said Varsity Head Coach Gary Morris.

Before the restrictions were put into place, the basketball team had to follow strict rules in order to be able to practice.

"All players and coaches have to wear masks at all times," said Coach Morris. "It is definitely an adjustment for the players as they are super active and always running around."

While the masks make it physically difficult for players, it also creates a mental challenge for them.

"You can't see facial expressions, and I think that they tell a lot for athletes. You can only see their eyes, and they can only see our eyes," said Coach Morris.

Not only is it hard for coaches, but it is extremely tough for athletes to keep up not only mentally, but also physically without the ability to hold practices over Zoom.

"Right now, we are on the three week pause, which is very hard from an athlete's standpoint because it is so hard to get into shape, but so easy to get out of shape," said Varsity captain Julia Bishop. "As a team, we are doing all we can to stay in shape and still get time to focus on our skills."

Although it is difficult for the coaches and players, there are some positives in this season.

"Basically, we are returning 11 players and four new players. We had a very good season last year, we

won 22 games and only lost four, so we are hopeful that we will have a good season this year," said Coach Morris.

The familiar faces like captains Julia Bishop and Alexis Roberts on the team help their teammates work through the nontraditional season. Before COVID-19, players participated in bonding activities outside of school to help them get to know each other better.

As a co-captain, Bishop implements her strong leadership skills in the practices and games.

"I am a vocal leader that loves to be loud and energetic during practices and during games," said Bishop.

Going into her fourth season on the varsity team, Bishop says she looks forward to the playoffs.

"We are always so excited about the playoffs because it is such a fun part of the season where every game is intense and important," said Bishop

Coach Morris commented on the uncertainty of potential practices and games. At the time of speaking with him, he said that the first games will begin in January.

"We are beyond excited about the season and are constantly praying that everything will go on as normal as it can," said Bishop.





# Meet the new staff

STORY AND GRAPHICS: **FATIMA SIDDIQUE**

This year, Mercy has welcomed many new staff members into the community, including english teacher Ms. Rebecca Cook, math teacher Mr. Adam Walker and health and physical education teacher Mrs. Adrianna Horvath.



Photo used with permission by HR Imaging Partners.

Ms. Cook came from De La Salle Collegiate High School, an all-boys high school, to Mercy for the opportunity to make a difference in young women's lives. Through her time teaching English 9, Composition and World Cultures in Literature, she says she has fallen in love with Mercy girls' passion.

"So many of the girls here have informed views on the world and are ready to discuss any issues I present to them," said Ms. Cook.

She spends her free time working out or baking, and, being an English teacher, she says she loves reading as well. She has a very tight-knit family and is constantly surrounded by dogs.

Ms. Cook has a large social media presence on TikTok, with 59K followers who are obsessed with her videos describing what it is like working at an all-girls school in compaison to her previous job at an all-boys school. She also gives book recommendations through "Cook's Corner" and gives her followers a glimpse of her life with her deaf dogs, Maximus and Eloise.

Although growing up she was not the best student academically, she said she always felt comfortable with younger kids and was able to discover her passion and skills for teaching. She enjoys teaching World Cultures as she gets the opportunity to examine the world and take part in in-depth discussions with her students. And now, Ms. Cook said she cannot see herself doing anything but teaching.

New to the Math Department is Mr. Adam Walker, who joined the Mercy family a few weeks into the school year and now teaches Probability and Statistics, Algebra and Calculus. Previously working at a company office, he said he found his job boring and fell in love with teaching when he tried substituting.

"I felt like I was really making a difference when I was teaching," said Mr. Walker. "I was helping people rather than just trying to make a little bit of money in a big corporate office."

With experience working as a statistician, he enjoys teaching Probability and Statistics, as he can make the class fun through exciting projects and personal experience. Mr. Walker has spent many years traveling the world and has visited 37 countries throughout the years. He is from Australia and played professional rugby for 12 years. He spends his free time playing video games and loves to watch comedies, his favorite being "Ghostbusters."

Through his time working here, Mr. Walker said he has grown to love his classes and the Mercy community.



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Mrs. Horvath teaches health and physical education as well as coaches the ice hockey and the JV-B field hockey team at Mercy. She says her favorite part about working at Mercy is the sisterhood that is formed between the students and the support she feels from the staff around her. Her passion for teaching began in highschool when she was a student at Mercy and had Ms. Jamieson as her PE teacher.

"Having [Ms. Jamieson] as a teacher kind of inspired me and pushed me towards the decision to teach," said Mrs. Horvath. "I've always loved athletics and I love kids so it just made sense."

She played division one hockey and has a passion for photography as it gives her the chance to be creative. She recently got married on Sept. 19 and became "Mrs. Horvath." She also has a pit bull named Hazel and comes from a large Italian family, having a close relationship with her brother and sister.

Mrs. Horvath previously taught health and PE at many different schools, but always knew she wanted to work at Mercy since she was a Mercy student herself.

"I went to Mercy and I've always loved it," said Mrs. Horvath. "It's been a dream of mine to work here since I was a student here and I love everything about it."



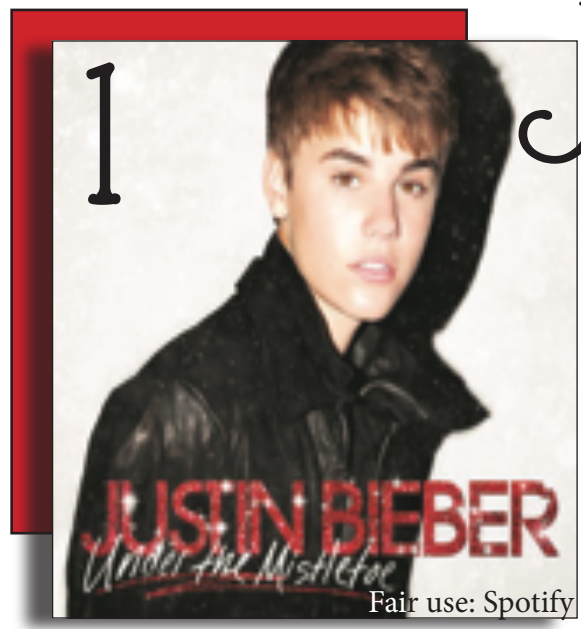
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# Holly jolly album reviews

STORY AND GRAPHICS: RACHAEL SALAH, DESIGN EDITOR

Every year, a multitude of festive traditions put me in the Christmas mood. Candy canes, Christmas trees, Freeform’s 25 Days of Christmas special, and above all—Christmas music. Countless artists have put their spin on the classics and some have even created new songs. I have taken my top three albums and ranked them by the following factors: catchiness, variety and their ability to get me in the spirit of Christmas. Here are my decisions:



## Justin Bieber’s “Under the Mistletoe”

Justin Bieber’s “Under the Mistletoe” album takes first place in my heart since I listened to it on repeat when I was a child, making me feel very nostalgic. This album not only reworked classics but also has new songs that stay true to the cheery Christmas spirit.

Among these is “Mistletoe,” a song about Bieber wanting someone to spend the holidays with a love interest. This song relates the tradition and evolution of Christmas music perfectly through mentions of his hopes for the holiday season and staying true to themes like the Wise Men and Santa Claus. Another unique song by Bieber is “Only Thing I Ever Get For Christmas.” This slower, less Christmas-y sounding song is still one that lingers in my mind for days on end. It does not have the typical bells and symphonies that most Christmas songs tend to have, differentiating it from the others. Finally, “Drummer Boy” by Justin Bieber and Busta Rhymes is very contrary to the traditional “Drummer Boy” Christmas song. Unlike the original, it is full of base and electronic sounds, making it more modern.

Each take on these songs is unique and has a less raw instrumental sound like older Christmas albums. These are just a few of many reasons why Justin Bieber’s “Under The Mistletoe” album is number one on my list.



## Frank Sinatra’s “Ultimate Christmas”

Frank Sinatra’s “Ultimate Christmas” album is one that makes the holiday season feel even more festive. Sinatra’s incredible voice singing everyone’s favorite holiday tunes has to make for an outstanding album.

“Have Yourself A Merry Little Christmas” is arguably the best song on the entire album. The dreamy sounds create a beautiful symphony that is played everywhere from malls to radios to grocery stores. Though a slower song, it still puts me in the holiday spirit. Another fantastic song from this album is “Mistletoe And Holly.” Whenever playing, it instantly reminds me of all the typical Christmas traditions. He describes these traditions by including mentions of presents, snowy Christmas trees and streets, and of course, Chris Kringle.

Lastly, Frank Sinatra’s “Jingle Bells” is the best version of the song on any album. Its catchy tune and the way it spells “jingle” never fails to put a smile on my face. This album brings me pure joy and feelings of a snowy Christmas night, securing second place on my list.



## Michael Bublé’s “Christmas”

Michael Bublé’s album “Christmas” is probably on every American’s top five list of holiday albums since Bublé seemingly remade almost every Christmas song there is. Taking third on my list, this collection of tunes stays true to the classics, but Bublé’s voice differentiates these songs from their originals. “Christmas (Baby Please Come Home)” is my favorite song from the album due to its upbeat sounds and range of instruments. The song especially highlights the feelings of holiday cheer around the Christmas season. Snowy nights and people bustling to get presents for their loved ones are mentioned, making this song the ultimate Christmas vibe.

His take on “The Christmas Song (Chestnuts Roasting on an Open Fire)” is a festive and mellow song that is unique compared to the rest of the album. It immediately takes me to a quiet winter night awaiting my favorite time of year. Another song that stays true to the real meaning of Christmas is, of course, “Silent Night.” “Silent Night” pushes the listener away from the presents and reindeer and back to the roots of Christmas.

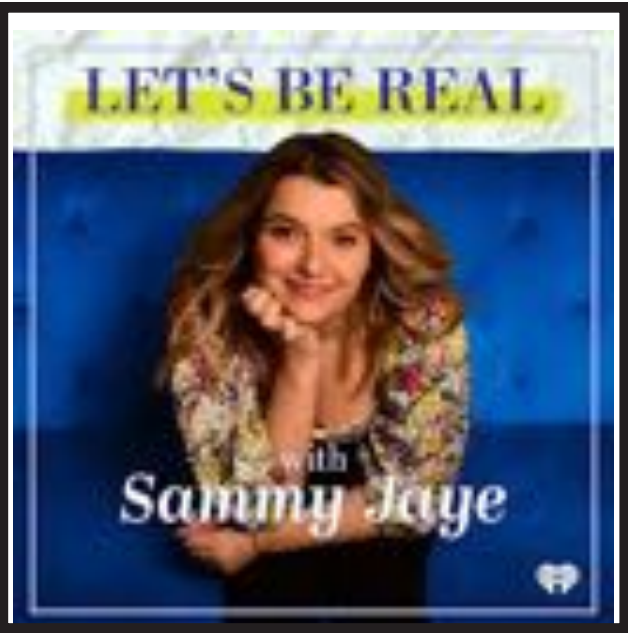
Despite all of the Christmas festivities, it is always important to remind myself of the reasons behind all of these traditions. Ultimately, Michael Bublé’s combination of new and old songs, along with his range of vocals, all lead to third place on my Christmas album list.



# Transition from playlists to podcasts

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

Are you bored listening to the radio where the same few popular songs constantly get played? Or, maybe you are tired of hearing the same playlist over and over again as you ride in the car heading to your destination. To get a break from your monotonous music selections, try listening to entertaining and informative podcasts. Audio podcasts offer listeners live and pre-recorded talk show interviews that can be streamed or downloaded. Many podcasts have a series of episodes that follow specific topics that meet the interests of a diverse audience. Also, these virtual entertainment venues can be conveniently accessed anytime, anywhere, with the added luxuries of the playback and fast forward features. Being an enthusiast for podcasts, I recommend three podcasts series for the Mercy community to consider. Easily accessible, these podcasts are available on Apple Podcast, as well as other streaming services.



Fair use: Instagram

If you are a pop culture junkie and love to know the latest celebrity buzz, try “Let’s Be Real with Sammy Jaye.” Unlike typical podcasts where most of the hosts have very long and established careers, Sammy Jaye is a 17-year-old high school student.

Jaye is the youngest person to have a nationally syndicated podcast. Despite her young age and limited podcast experience, she has interviewed singers Kesha, Meghan Trainor and Liza Koshy, to name a few.

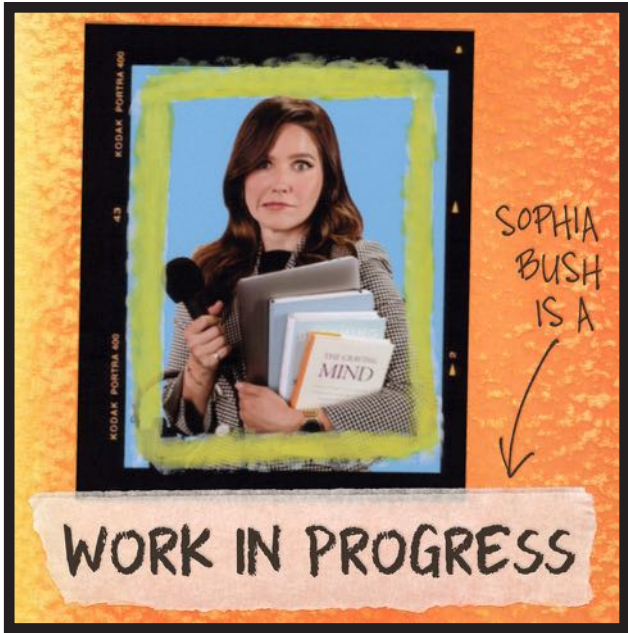
Not only does Sammy’s podcast have a fresh perspective on Hollywood, but it also allows many of the guests to be unfiltered in their comments. These casual interviews provide the podcast audience the experience of hanging out with friends and to connect with her guest on a more personal level. Season two for “Let’s Be Real” was just released in November and is now available.



Fair use: Twitter

Retired political strategist and former journalist David Axelrod has transitioned from being in the center of federal government to the founder and director of the University of Chicago Institution of Politics. “The Axe Files” series analyzes key figures in U.S. politics and gives an in-depth view of each individual’s background, theories on legislation, personal relationships in Washington and their predictions on the future political landscape.

Axelrod allows his guests to reveal heartfelt human stories that enable listeners to learn about current events and educate themselves about the global issues that are having profound effects on society at large. From supreme court justices, past presidential candidates and journalists, Axelrod’s guests share their personal perspectives about important issues related to the United States’ government. Mr. Axelrod’s podcast offers listeners a front row seat to “history in the making.”



Fair use: Twitter

Sophia Bush is immediately recognizable due to her portrayal of character Brooke Davis, in the drama series “One Tree Hill.” Since the show ended, Bush has created a podcast where she transparently examines her life experiences and the people who have inspired her.

Sophia interviews a wide variety of people like her favorite college professor, former roommate and even Rainn Wilson, who is best known for his role as Dwight Schrute from the comedy show “The Office.” Bush allows the audience to explore her deep curiosity about a diverse range of topics from Instagram poetry to climate change, and personal stories that have profoundly affected her life in both positive and negative ways.

An authentic representation of her life as a work-in-progress, through her podcasts, Sophia invites her audience to learn along with her life skills and how she can positively impact the world.



# Deck the Halls with Discussion

STORY AND GRAPHICS: CAITLYN BEGOSA

From sitting around the kitchen table eating turkey and stuffing at Thanksgiving to gathering around the Christmas tree to open presents, many holiday celebrations revolve around spending time with family. One subject many family members dread to talk about seems impossible to avoid during the holiday season: politics.

Politics is a taboo subject in many Mercy students' households. According to the November Newsprint poll, approximately 31% of respondents avoid talking about politics and other controversial subjects. When asked for proactive tips to talk about these subjects, student answers varied from "keeping an open mind," "scream[ing] at [their] parents," and "leav[ing] the room" to avoid the discussion altogether.

Politics is unavoidable to talk about as society and media is clouded by new policies, the results of the 2020 Presidential Election and Gov. Gretchen Whitmer's COVID-19 briefings. It is essential to have respectful discussions with family and friends without getting into an argument every five minutes.

"I think topics like this one can trigger almost any feeling along the spectrum of human emotions," said Mercy counselor Mrs. Trish Brown. "For some, political discussion brings about feelings of inadequacy. For others who are very passionate, strong feelings about specific topics can come to be. I think that not everyone is comfortable having respectful conversation surrounding topics where we may disagree or find ourselves in a vulnerable position. Most people avoid discomfort at all costs."

Many political conversations with family often lead to verbal arguments and mixed emotions from every member. It is vital to have civil conversations with others who differ from our own beliefs in today's current political atmosphere.

Social studies teacher Ms. Cindy Richter encourages political discussion in all her classes, including Contemporary Issues and AP Government.

"There's no way not to [talk about politics]," said Mrs. Richter. "I put forth from the onset of the semester the rules of the classroom, how we're going to make it a safe space for sharing and how we're going to keep it civil. I really have not had a lot of problems in all the years I've been teaching. Once the ground rules are set on how we're going to discuss things, I found that it is a very respectful and safe environment."

Being respectful and understanding toward those around us should be an obvious tip. If someone disagrees with our opinions, try to understand their point of view instead of trying to change it.

Another tip is listening to the other side's opinion and asking questions about their views. This tactic can lead to a mannerly discussion where each family member receives a better understanding and learns something new about an opposing side.

Having family from both political parties, sophomore Isabella Merruci uses this technique to create a safe atmosphere for discussion.

"Whenever someone has an opinion, they have time

to fully explain why they feel like that," said Merruci. "Everyone asks them questions, and we have a calm discussion. We just make sure everyone is respectful."

Recently, age seems to be a big factor that influences political beliefs and divides families even further. People from different age groups, like our grandparents and parents, were raised in a different time. Being from an older generation can help shape an individual's point of view based on the historical events Generation Z has never witnessed.

"We have to remember when our grandparents were a live, people weren't as open as we are now," said junior Gracie Grady. "Generation Z has just accepted that we need to accept people, even if someone identifies as something we don't agree with or make choices we don't agree with. It's not necessarily our place, unless they're harming other

people, to judge them for it. Our grandparents and parents weren't raised like that."

Another way to talk about politics is to keep the discussion vague.

"I would keep it less about specifics, like less about Trump, less about Biden and more about the generalness of the country," said Mrs. Richter. "I think if somebody insists on talking about something, I would keep it general. Also, try not to take it personally if they are against how you feel."

Check your intentions when entering a conversation. Avoid creating unnecessary conflict. Instead, follow the more respectful route: understand and listen to other's opinions.

"The rule that I follow with my family, and would advise students to follow as well, is to always check my own intentions first," said Mrs. Brown. "Am I wanting to enter this conversation to prove my family wrong? To [anger] them? To express my frustration with their views? If yes, then I find another outlet or kindly do not engage in the political topic at hand. If my intention is to better understand a differing view, offer a new perspective, or to correct straight up ignorance, I take the risk because I believe it is worth it for me."

Another tip is to prepare for discussion by researching the facts that have established your beliefs. Support your opinions with concrete facts from unbiased resources.

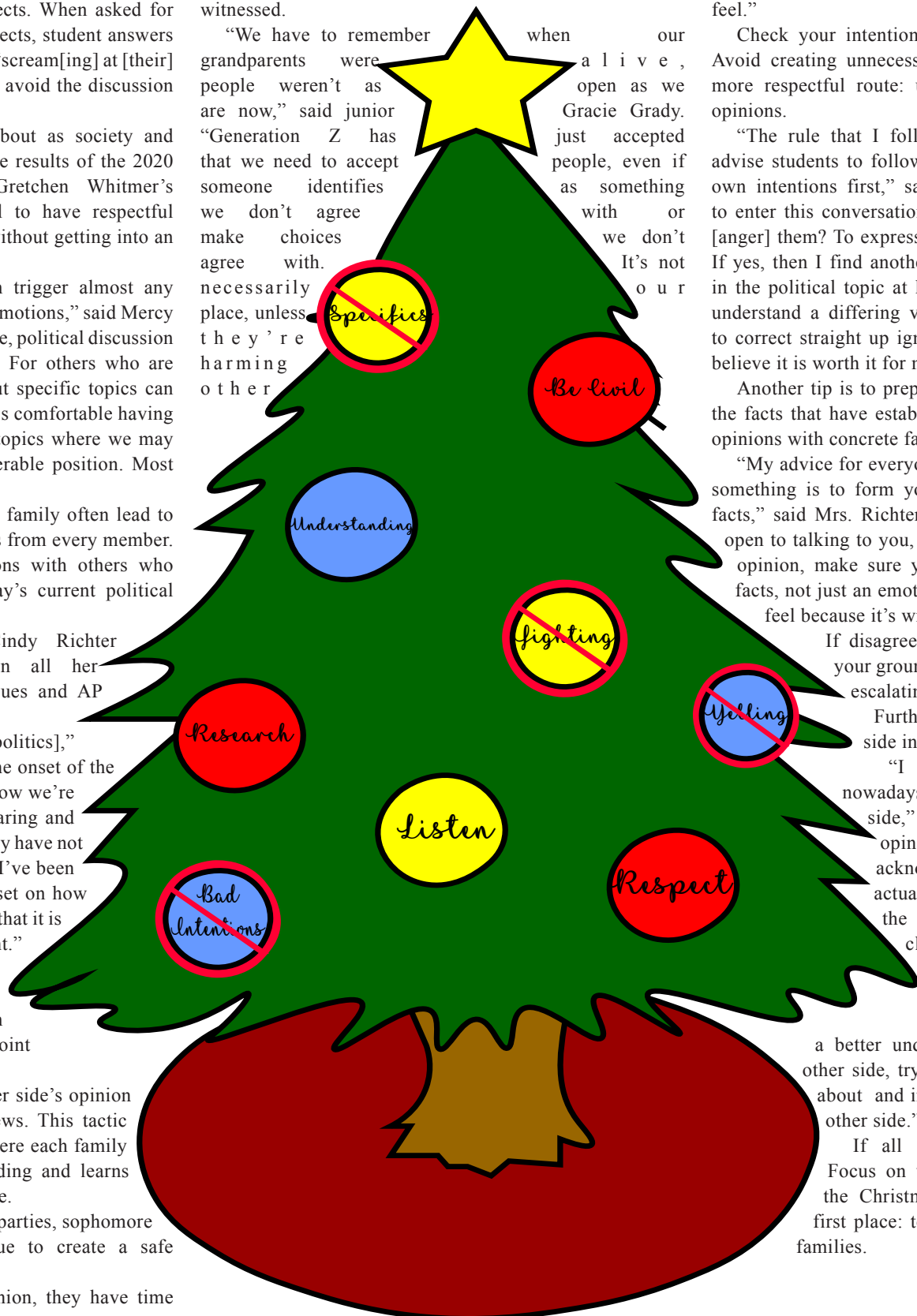
"My advice for everyone when they have a belief about something is to form your opinion and back it up with facts," said Mrs. Richter. "If your parents or whoever is open to talking to you, even though you have a different opinion, make sure you come to the table with your facts, not just an emotional [response like] this is how I feel because it's wrong or it's right."

If disagreements occur, remember to stand your ground and defend your beliefs without escalating the situation.

Furthermore, remember that another side in politics exists.

"I think it's important, especially nowadays, to acknowledge there's another side," said Mrs. Richter. "Our views and opinions aren't the end all be all, so acknowledge the other side. I think it's actually very good to try and research the other side. I know when I have class and people have to research the other side, it is not easy, but in the end, they say they've learned something. It's really given them a better understanding, so acknowledge the other side, try to see what the other side is all about and in the end just be respectful of the other side."

If all else fails, change the subject. Focus on why we are all gathered around the Christmas tree or kitchen table in the first place: to celebrate the holidays with our families.





# Black Friday business

STORY, PHOTOS AND GRAPHIC: GRACE O'DEA

The holiday season is often revered as a time of joy and peace, tidings of comfort and joy, all things calm and all things bright. Blankets of snow sparkle on rooftops while Christmas lights illuminate the street. Wood fires warm the whole house and Bing Crosby's Christmas hits seem to play on repeat in your head. Yet, despite its many joys, one fatal component is attached to the holiday season's tidings of comfort and joy: chaos. And, in the short blip of time between Thanksgiving and New Years, no single day seems to encompass the chaos of the holiday season quite as well as Black Friday.

Black Friday, the day immediately following Thanksgiving, is infamous for the havoc it wreaks on malls nationwide. Within hours of celebrating all they have to be thankful for, people crowd stores and fill shopping bags to spend and save money simultaneously.

"I got up close to 6:30 a.m.," said sophomore Olivia Gray when talking about her Black Friday experience last year. She and her friends left for the Somerset Mall early in the morning to start their roughly three-hour-long shopping trip.

With limited supplies in stores, it has become increasingly common for Black Friday shoppers to start shopping as early as Black Friday deals begin. Many stores open their doors on Black Friday right at midnight after Thanksgiving, but some have even begun opening on Thanksgiving evening.

"The mall is probably more packed at 1 a.m. than when I go later in the day," said senior Philomena Anton, who for the last three years has gone to Twelve Oaks Mall around one in the morning on Black Friday. She said the mall usually is more crowded early in the morning on Black Friday than later in the day, around noon.

Although the number of people in stores this year will be much smaller due to new COVID-19 restrictions, in past years, people have crammed to get into stores in enough time to find what they are looking for before it is gone.

"PacSun gets really bad," said Anton. "Everything is all over the place. Everything is so clustered."

Stores are quickly disorganized on Black Friday as shoppers pour in, but regardless of how well-kept a store remains on Black Friday, the number of people in a store alone can make it look like a mess.

"The Apple store is a zoo every year," said junior Maddie Leiter. Anton,

"These two people were fighting over a Canada Goose jacket," said Anton when talking about a previous Black Friday experience. "They were literally snatching it from each other."

Despite the craziness associated with it, Black Friday has its fair share of positive factors, such as giving many people the opportunity to Christmas shop on a budget.

"I usually go because I'm looking for something for someone else," said Leiter, who usually determines the stores she will be going to on Black Friday based on what Christmas gifts she needs for others.

"If I know my mom wants a candle, I'll hit Bath and Body Works," said Leiter.

Due to COVID-19, far less people shopped in stores this year for Black Friday. Several stores and shopping centers had limited hours on Black Friday when they would, in previous years, have been open nearly all day. Twelve Oaks Mall, which in past years opened at midnight on Black Friday, did not open until 7 a.m. this year, and, instead of remaining open all day, closed at 9 p.m.

In-person shopping is permitted amidst COVID-19 restrictions, but many still chose to opt-out of the hectic in-person shopping on this year's Black Friday. Many took part in online Black Friday or Cyber Monday sales.

"Cyber Monday is much easier," said Gray. With store deals being completely virtual on Cyber Monday, the shopping process is made much more manageable (and less squished). People can buy gifts and shop for themselves or others from the comfort of their couch. They also avoid lengthy lines to purchase their items.

Black Friday looked much different this year. Stores were less crowded due to rules for limiting the number of people inside them, and, of course, masks were required. Many more people flocked to the internet for their Black Friday shopping. Despite the change, though, sales still decked store halls and peace on earth was put on hold so that shoppers could Black Friday shop.

**SALE!**

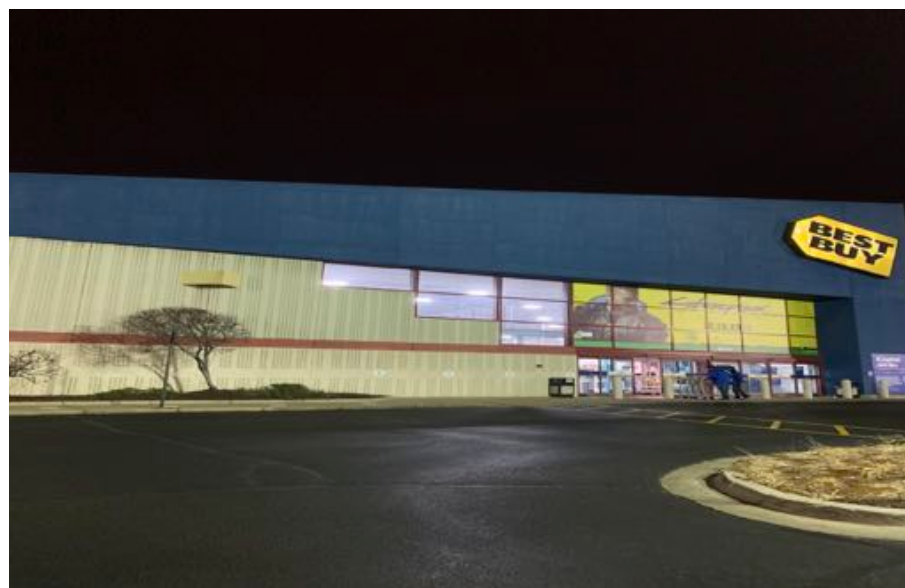
too, mentioned how hectic the Apple store looks on Black Friday. Other stores like Walmart, Target and Best Buy are notorious for the vast crowds they attract through big sales.

Black Friday's mass buying has been known to possibly lead to verbal arguments or outright brawls.

"I saw a fight happen one time at Twelve Oaks at some tech store [on Black Friday]" said Leiter. Witnessing intense arguments or brief physical altercations is almost considered normal on Black Friday.



Junior Francesca Petrucci shops online for Black Friday sales. Photo by Grace O'Dea.



The line outside of a Best Buy on Black Friday appears nonexistent. Photo by Grace O'Dea.



# DIY CHRISTMAS GIFTS

STORY AND GRAPHICS: **MADDIE SULLIVAN, COPY EDITOR**

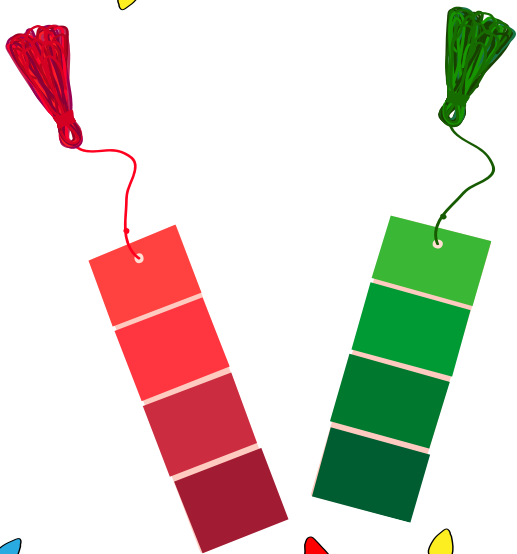
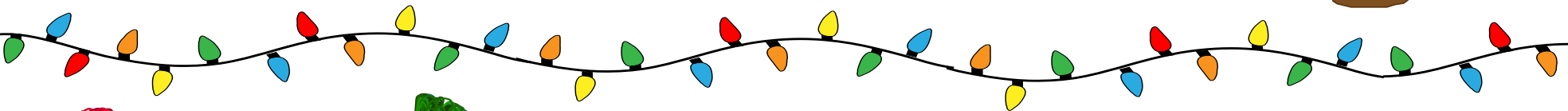
With the chaos that the holiday season brings, the last thing you want to be doing (especially in 2020) is last-minute Christmas shopping. The stress, the time and the price tag make gift-giving a hassle. But do not worry because Newsprint has got you covered with three unique and affordable DIY Christmas gifts that anyone on your list would be happy to receive.

## CHRISTMAS TEA TREE

This gift is perfect for tea drinkers and also doubles as an adorable holiday decoration.

- What you'll need:
- A styrofoam cone
  - Individually wrapped tea bags
  - Glue gun and glue sticks
  - A round cylinder to use as the "stump"
  - A wooden star
  - Uncooked rice (Optional)

- Steps:
1. Adhere the tea bags to the styrofoam cone using hot glue. Begin at the bottom of the cone and work your way up, overlapping each layer slightly.
  2. Fill the "stump" with rice to serve as a weight (Optional). Attach the "stump" to the bottom of the cone with hot glue.
  3. Glue a wooden star trinket to the top of the cone.
- That's it!

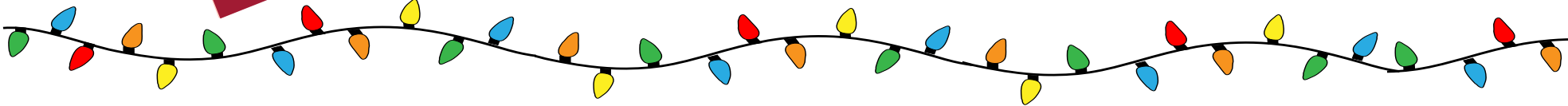


## PAINT CHIP BOOKMARK

These paint chip bookmarks are super customizable and great for anyone who loves reading.

- What you'll need:
- Paint chips
  - Matching embroidery thread
  - A single hole punch
  - Laminator (Optional)

- Steps:
1. Laminate the paint chips (Optional).
  2. Punch a hole at the top of the paint chip.
  3. Create a tassel using embroidery thread.
  4. Attach the tassel to the bookmark through the hole, and you're done!



## MASON JAR SNOWGLOBES

This traditional gift is so adorable and can be easily personalized depending on how you chose to decorate it.

- What you'll need:
- A mason jar
  - Figurine(s) and other decorations
  - Clear-drying epoxy
  - Glycerin
  - Glitter

- Steps:
1. Sand the inside of the mason jar lid until it is rough.
  2. Adhere your chosen figurine(s) and other decorations to the inside of the jar's lid.
  3. Fill the jar almost to the top with distilled water.
  4. Add glitter and a dash of glycerin to prevent the glitter from falling too quickly.
  5. Screw on the lid tightly. Turn the jar over and back again. Let it snow!

