

Mercy grads prepare seniors for college life

By Barbara Ann Homick
Staff writer

ROCHESTER — When three college students met with 15 seniors at Our Lady of Mercy High School to talk about their school experiences, one word kept popping up again and again.

The buzzword was "respect."

On May 29, Mercy graduates Megan Baird, Deanna Sloan and Aimee Turner volunteered advice to seniors about what to expect when they go away to college in the fall. The college experience is a drastic change from life at Mercy, the girls warned, but they agreed that if a student respects themselves and others on campus it makes life a lot easier.

Turner, a senior at Regis College in Weston, Mass., said one of the most difficult things to get used to during the first semester of college is how to manage time wisely. The psychology major recalled that when she was in high school her schedule was regimented with daily classes. But when she got to college, she realized her schedule was not quite as routine.

"I had all this time on my hands," said Turner, who noted that some students only have one class a day.

Although she had extra time on her hands, Turner noted that she also had an increased work load. She said it's important for students to know their own limitations when it comes to balancing homework and social activities. She advised students to budget enough time for their studies.

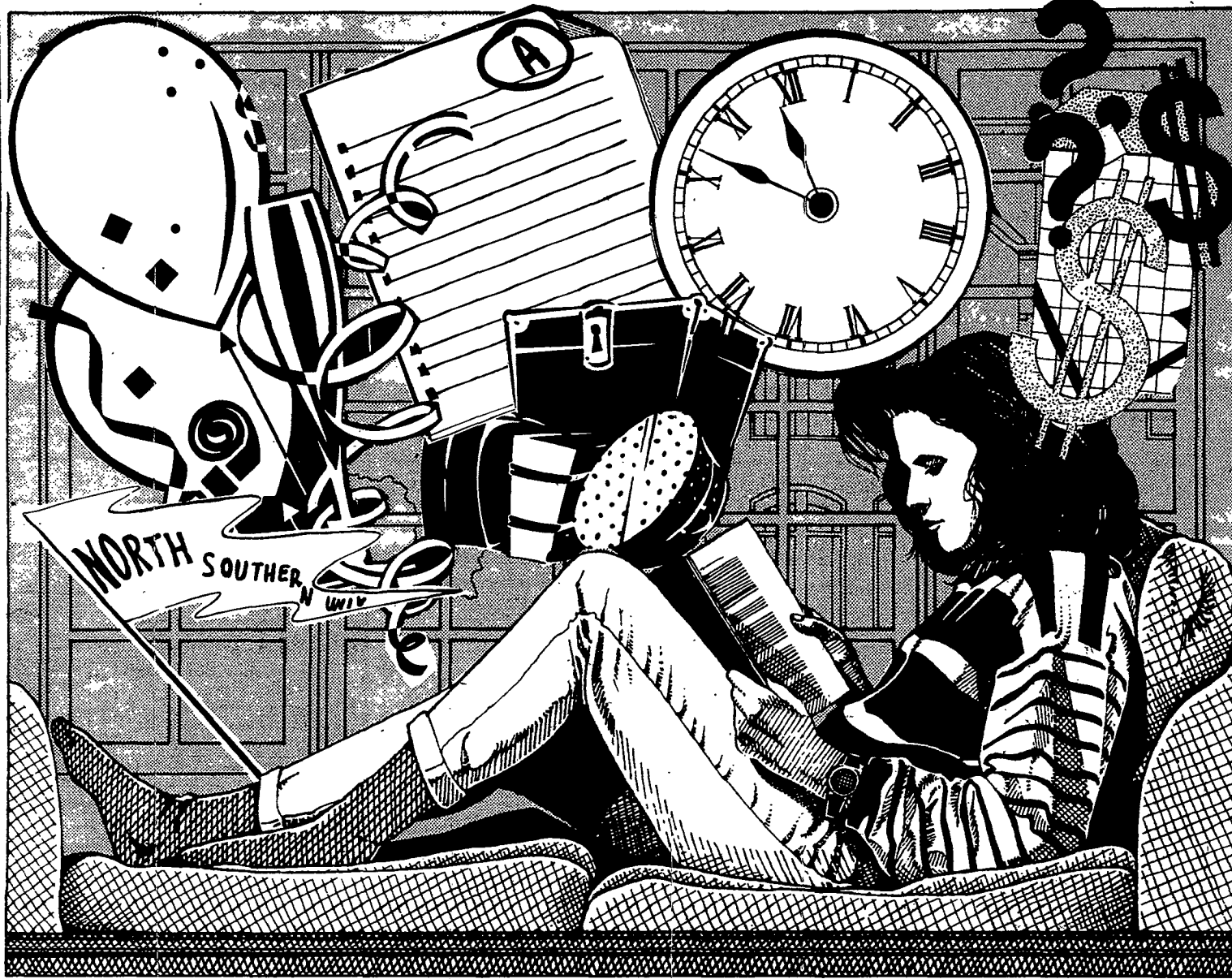
"Homework is something you have to set aside time for," explained Turner. "There is more work to do, but everyone is doing it. It's not like everyone is running around partying."

Sloan, a sophomore at Boston College, said no one was looking over her shoulder telling her to do her homework before she watched television. She recalled that some nights she wouldn't start doing her work until 11 p.m. — something she never did while living at home.

When it comes to finances, all three women agreed that it is important to budget money at the beginning of the semester. Baird, a sophomore at Ithaca College, said she works during her summers to help pay for tuition and then works in a dining hall during the school year to take care of personal expenses.

The math-education major suggested one way to save money is to buy used books. "There's no point in buying new ones," said Baird, who noted that new books at college bookstores can be quite costly.

Baird also admitted that she eats a lot of pizza during the school year. So much, in



fact, that when she comes home for the summer she can't eat another slice. But pizza is a cheap dinner, if you don't have to tip the delivery man, noted Baird.

"College people don't tip their pizza men and they get so bitter," joked the Ithaca student.

Sloan noted that she always seems to be short on cash at the end of the week. She said she also loses her desire to eat cafeteria food by week's end, too.

"By the end of the week I don't want cafeteria food anymore. I want McDonald's, but I can't even afford McDonald's," Sloan lamented.

Turner urged the seniors to start saving change now because the silver is a necessity for laundry, soda and candy machines.

"You end up nickel and diming it, and pooling your change together to go out at night," declared Turner.

The women agreed that college offers many social activities and new friendships.

They also agreed that the most important relationship — the alliance that can make or break the first semester — is the one a person has with his or her roommate.

Turner noted that it is important for roommates to establish ground rules as soon as they meet. She also advised against rooming with a very close friend.

"If you room with your best friend, you get too secure and you don't have the motivation to go out and see what's out there," warned Turner.

She also noted that even if a person gets along with his or her roommate, the pair will still get on each other's nerves at times. She stressed the importance of communication.

"Find ways to say things politely, but say it," suggested Turner. "Don't keep it inside because you'll burst."

Baird said she has had many interesting experiences with her roommates. "I have enough roommate stories to pack in a room," joked Baird.

The sophomore said she realized that she would have to pick up a little more than usual when she went to school. "I am a slob," she admitted.

She remembered she didn't get along with one of her first roommates because she was extremely neat. "She had a plaid bedspread and had to have the lines all perfectly straight when she made her bed,"

Baird recalled.

She added, "I used to wonder how could her neatness bother me, but it did. It drove me crazy."

Through communication, Baird said she eventually worked through her problems with her roommate and now the two are good friends. Sloan also eventually became friends with her first roommate, but it was a rough road, she said.

The special education major said she was so eager to make friends with her roommate during her freshman year that she became a pushover.

"I set myself up to be walked on," recalled Sloan, who added her roommate often borrowed her clothes without asking permission or broke appliances she used.

"One day she walked across my bed — with me in it!" exclaimed Sloan. "She didn't respect me because I didn't set it up that she had to respect me."

The women also discussed the importance of attending classes, finding a place to study with no distractions and being wary of the possibility of date rape on campus.

But regardless of the topic of conversation, the panelists stressed that it's important for students to be individuals and know their own limitations.

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