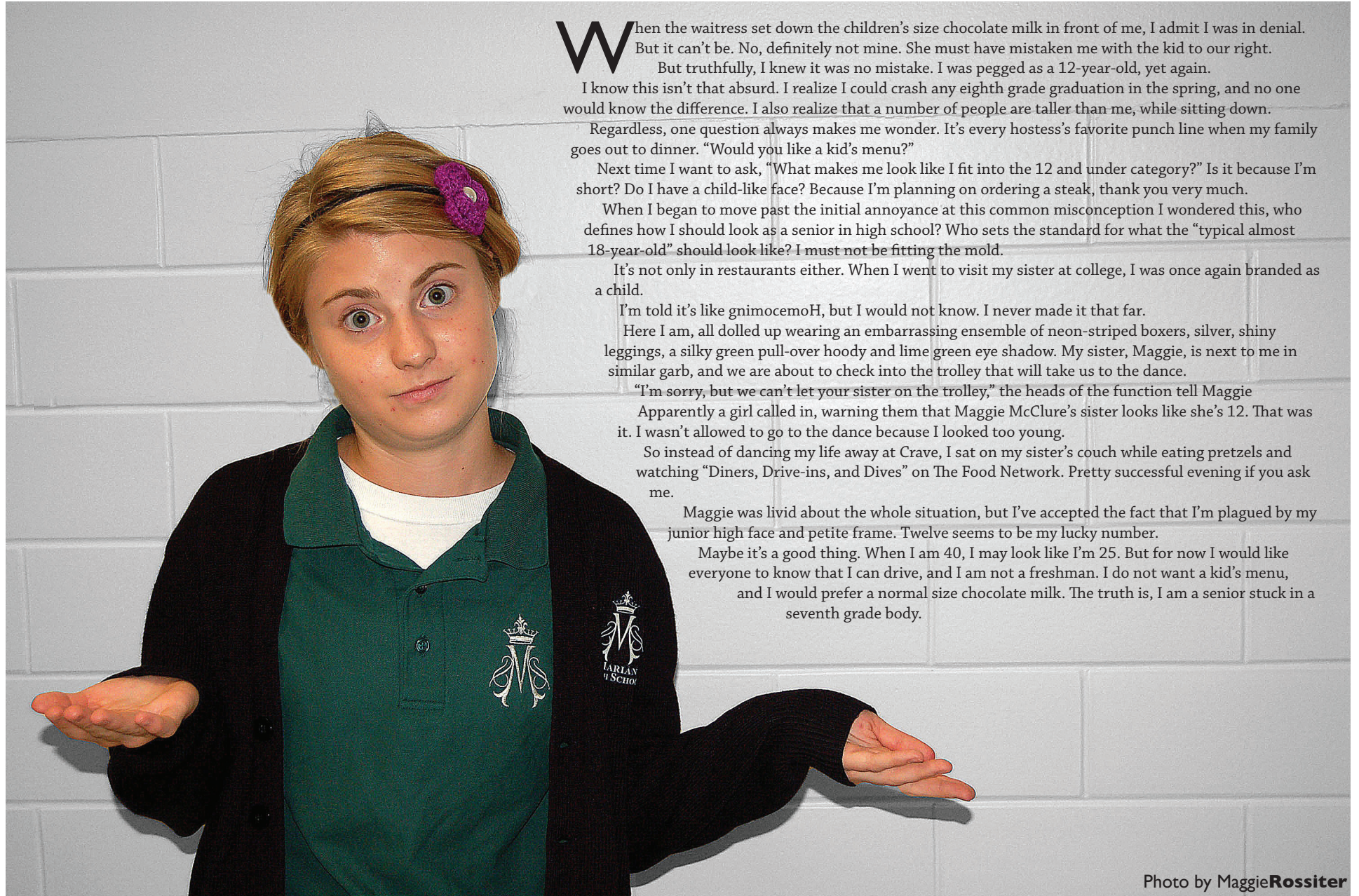


# Looking your AGE

## 17 going on 7

Annie McClure



When the waitress set down the children's size chocolate milk in front of me, I admit I was in denial. But it can't be. No, definitely not mine. She must have mistaken me with the kid to our right. But truthfully, I knew it was no mistake. I was pegged as a 12-year-old, yet again. I know this isn't that absurd. I realize I could crash any eighth grade graduation in the spring, and no one would know the difference. I also realize that a number of people are taller than me, while sitting down. Regardless, one question always makes me wonder. It's every hostess's favorite punch line when my family goes out to dinner. "Would you like a kid's menu?"

Next time I want to ask, "What makes me look like I fit into the 12 and under category?" Is it because I'm short? Do I have a child-like face? Because I'm planning on ordering a steak, thank you very much.

When I began to move past the initial annoyance at this common misconception I wondered this, who defines how I should look as a senior in high school? Who sets the standard for what the "typical almost 18-year-old" should look like? I must not be fitting the mold.

It's not only in restaurants either. When I went to visit my sister at college, I was once again branded as a child.

I'm told it's like gnimocemoH, but I would not know. I never made it that far.

Here I am, all dolled up wearing an embarrassing ensemble of neon-striped boxers, silver, shiny leggings, a silky green pull-over hoody and lime green eye shadow. My sister, Maggie, is next to me in similar garb, and we are about to check into the trolley that will take us to the dance.

"I'm sorry, but we can't let your sister on the trolley," the heads of the function tell Maggie. Apparently a girl called in, warning them that Maggie McClure's sister looks like she's 12. That was it. I wasn't allowed to go to the dance because I looked too young.

So instead of dancing my life away at Crave, I sat on my sister's couch while eating pretzels and watching "Diners, Drive-ins, and Dives" on The Food Network. Pretty successful evening if you ask me.

Maggie was livid about the whole situation, but I've accepted the fact that I'm plagued by my junior high face and petite frame. Twelve seems to be my lucky number.

Maybe it's a good thing. When I am 40, I may look like I'm 25. But for now I would like everyone to know that I can drive, and I am not a freshman. I do not want a kid's menu, and I would prefer a normal size chocolate milk. The truth is, I am a senior stuck in a seventh grade body.

Photo by Maggie Rossiter

# What's YOUR STORY?



**Betsy Ronspies, senior**

"When I worked at HyVee, and people came through with alcohol, and I would have to go get someone who was 19-years-old. People would say 'Oh gosh! I thought I picked someone who was at least 19.' And they were really shocked to find out my real age."



**Ms. Maria Hahn, math teacher**

"I was in college and I went out to dinner with my family. I was with my brother who was 9-years-old and was asked how many children's menus we needed, and she assumed two. I was 19 and my brother was 9."



**Gabriella Martinez-Garro, junior**

"Okay, well, one time I was at a restaurant with my dad, and they offered me a bottle of wine. I guess they thought I was a lot older than I actually am."



**Helen Burns, freshman**

"My sister is 20-years-old and a lot shorter than I am. I was 13 at the time, and they mixed us up, thinking I was 20."



**Olivia Hershiser, junior**

"One time I especially remember was when I was at my mom's work function at the College World Series. It was the summer going into seventh grade and I got asked if I was going into fourth."

Graphic by Maggie Rossiter  
Photos by Maggie Rossiter  
Erin Reed



# who thought this was a GOOD IDEA?

Kyra Lindholm

I glance over at the clock. 11:15 p.m. Although it's not that late, I know I should probably head to bed considering that my world ends tomorrow at 7:50 a.m. As I run downstairs to fish my boxers out of the laundry room, I see my blue, beat-up, Jansport backpack leaning innocently against the dryer. Yet something isn't quite right. What's missing? And then I realize...it's completely empty. Frantically sprinting around my house, I ask my mom where she's put all of the school supplies I've tried to avoid seeing. I hurry to feed my limp backpack until it is stuffed with new notebooks and binders that my mom stocked up on from Target.

And that is how I spent the last possible minute of my summer break last year. I didn't act like a model student. I was not cheerfully whistling a Disney tune as I sharpened a stack of No. 2 pencils. I was not happily inhaling the smell of freshly opened notebooks. And I certainly was not writing the names of my classes on different, color-coded tabs in my binder.

I fought the impending doom that was the night before school with every weapon at my disposal. I discovered that if I simply didn't look at the dates in August, I could enjoy my last few weeks in ignorant summer bliss. I was able to look for cute summer outfits without worrying about seeing my uniform because I had banished it to the darkest corner of my closet in May. By opting to view the words "school supplies" as expletives, I convinced myself that the school monster was coming for everyone but me.

The transition from summer to school is not an easy one to make for me. Giving up day-to-day freedom and tank tops for due dates and plaid seems like a crazy exchange. I dare you to find me someone (free of previous mental health conditions) who is eager for days where she has to sit in a small desk and regain an attention span instead of running through sprinklers and soaking up the sun.

I am an unwilling participant in the whole back to school craze. I simply refuse to go back to a scheduled week without a fight. I desperately try to cling to whatever shred of summer is left for me. Throughout the first week of school, I might be found tanning on my back porch, as if the previous eight hours of classes had just been a bad dream. When my mom asks the typical "How was school today?" question, I'll just give her a look over the top of my sunglasses and pause before replying, "I have no idea what you are talking about."

Everyone knows that the back to school phase is the introduction to the rest of the school year. What people don't realize is that in those first weeks, you are lulled into a false sense of security. You think you're safe because you get to see all your friends again and enjoy discussing new classes and teachers over a fresh batch of Marian cookies at lunch. You are almost able to forget about the homework, tests, finals and essays. I am not so easily fooled. I always remember.



Cartoon by Allison Dethlefs

## THERE IS NO PLACE LIKE HOME

Kathleen Gerber

From the moment that fateful letter, otherwise known as my schedule, arrives in my mailbox, I instantly get a buzz of excitement for the new school year. It's not only time for school, but time for football games and Prep dances, time for Marian Mom's and a fresh start. Time to get back into the swing of life at Marian. New classes with new people and new teachers. What's not to love? (Other than that thing called learning, of course). Naturally, the first thing I do is hop on my Facebook and start comparing schedules with the classmates I haven't seen in months.

A new school year means one thing: school supply shopping. Walking down the aisles of Target and seeing the crisp, clean notebooks and writing utensils makes my heart skip a beat. It is the time to pick out the cutest notebooks, folders, pens and pencils that money can buy. I grab a basket and make my way down these breathtaking aisles. I make sure that all my notebooks and folders coordinate. As I look at the price of the Five

Star notebooks, I see the heavens open up. Five Star notebooks for \$1?

Target has a good sense of humor. When I realize the price is no joke and I begin to pile up my basket with every Five Star notebook in stock. With my notebooks taken care of, I grab some snazzy folders and a binder to pile them into. I check out and prepare for the next step of my school supply process.

I arrive home and run upstairs to my room, my Target bags in tow. I search for my trusty backpack that has lead me through my three years at Marian. I finally locate it, sitting modestly next to my dresser. I sit down on my floor, pull out my multi-colored sharpies, start labeling my supplies and placing them into my dependable North Face.

I grab my No. 2 pencils and walk over to the sharpener while whistling, "Be Our Guest" from *Beauty and the Beast*. I place those, and my brand new clicky pens in the front pocket of my bag. Once everything is done, I lean my backpack against the dresser once more, right next to my nicely folded green uniform and

begin to count down the days until I can go back to my second home.

Now, don't get me wrong, I love summer as much as the next girl. Nothing is more fun than staying up late on those summer nights and being able to sleep in the next day. However, I love being at Marian with my 706 closest friends just as much.

From past experience, I have learned that being prepared for school can help in more ways than one. It helps me to get organized and stay on track with classes, at least for the first few weeks. It also means I don't have to worry about running around my house trying to find notebooks and folders at the last minute. I enjoy having one less thing to stress about on the night before and the morning of the first day of school. I have been known to procrastinate here and there, so having all my supplies ready to go is extremely helpful.

I glance over at the clock. 11:15 p.m. Although it's not that late, I know I probably should be heading to bed considering that my world begins tomorrow at 7:50 a.m.

opposing viewpoints

# BACK TO

# SCHOOL