Have you heard of the movement “Birds Aren’t Real”? Mitchell Koch, graduate from the University of Memphis and digital reporter and producer for WREG, explained this “Big Brother” theory. According to Koch, “[Beginning] in 1959, the United States government started killing off all birds in the country while simultaneously replacing them with identical, undercover surveillance drones.” While it may seem farfetched to think of fake bird drones, this conspiracy theory has some validity.

Even thousands of years ago, birds were used for human advantage. Cormorant fishing, as described in The Atlantic, is the art of using trained cormorants. First, the fisherman “ties a snare near the base of the bird’s throat,” disabling them from swallowing larger fish.” After the cormorant catches a bigger fish, the fisherman “brings the bird back to the boat, and has it spit the fish up.” Cormorant fishing is a controversial art. In fact, 71% of Newport respondents in a school-wide survey agreed that animals should not be manipulated or tested on for human gain.

Today, scientists are widening their experiments to include birds. An article from LiveScience titled “Scientists Implant False Memories into Bird Brains” detailed the modification of finches using light to alter brain activity and teach them songs. The goal is to study speech and eventually help autism patients learn languages.

While this bird experiment’s goal was to improve the health of humans, others truly do surveil humans. A New York Times article titled, “They’re Stealthy at Sea, but They Can’t Hide From the Albatross,” entailed the use of radar technology attached to albatross birds to detect ships. Dr. Weimerskirch found that “roughly a third of vessels in the Southern Indian Ocean were not broadcasting their whereabouts,” meaning they did not have the required Automatic Identification System. This system monitors boats identity, position, and course to limit illegal fishing and human trafficking. Albatrosses were used because they often fly long distances across the sea and are attracted to fisher boats. With the location of boats trying to stay under the radar, government officials can “pinpoint suspicious vessels.”

The movement “Birds Aren’t Real” might seem unreasonable, but albatross birds have been used as ocean surveillance. Kevin Xu (11) responded that “alternate solutions” should be used for surveillance that “don’t require the use of animal testing.”

Even though Seattle does not have watchful birds, other technologies have similar goals. Explained by Seattle.gov, Acylica devices are located on street lights, and help “determine real time vehicle travel times...by identifying Wi-Fi-enabled devices in vehicles, such as smart phones.” This device “encrypts the unique addresses they collect” so that “personally-identifiable information...is not accessible” to the Seattle Department of Transportation or anyone else. Xu said that this technology “is already being used by applicants like Google Maps and provides data for other consumers to benefit.”

Surveillance may still seem an invasion of privacy, but Xu decided that “the benefit for more people outweighs the [costs]” in this case.
Maine’s Internet Service Providers Fight Back

NANCY HUANG
Editor

Passed just last year, a strict internet privacy law in Maine has already encountered pushback from the very internet service providers it had hoped to regulate. The law, originally set to be effective July 1st this year, required companies to receive explicit permission from their customers to use their personal data in any fashion, whether through selling, sharing, or even merely accessing.

Considered one of the strictest state laws regulating online privacy, Maine’s law follows a growing concern about internet privacy amongst Americans, with Pew finding in 2019 that 70% of Americans consider personal information to be less secure than it was five years ago. “The internet has been changing rapidly in the past few years,” said sophomore Samuel Satushek. “I feel like the amount of privacy you’re given has gone down in the past few years.”

An example of this growing concern for internet privacy manifested itself in last year’s panic surrounding the Russian app “FaceApp,” an app which took users’ photos and digitally transformed them into a prediction of their aged face.

Worries soon arose that the Russian tech firm behind the app could access and store not only uploaded photos, but also photos from users’ devices, with calls from the Democratic National Committee to immediately halt usage of the app. The Washington Post described the whole situation as indicative of “how quickly public attitudes about the Internet have changed amid a widespread reckoning over privacy and election interference, with more people beginning to think twice about the personal data they freely give up.”

Despite a general growing concern for digital privacy, there has remained a lack of understanding about how to protect oneself against privacy invasion. Velicia Firstianto (10) said, “I feel like if people want to protect their privacy, they shouldn’t post things that they don’t want other people to see, because once you post something on the internet, it’s there forever and you can’t delete it.” Still, according to a Winston Privacy survey, 65% of those surveyed stated that finding tools to improve privacy was “somewhat” or “very” difficult.

As for Newport, however, students appear less concerned about digital privacy. “I feel like as long as I’m aware of the fact that nothing on the internet truly stays private,” Meghan Huang (10) explained, “I’m not that worried because I’m aware of what I put out there.”

Additionally, when asked in the most recent Knightlife survey to rate how concerned they were about internet privacy on a scale of one to five, one being least concerned and five being most concerned, the average response was 3.09.

Maine is not the first state to address the matter of internet privacy at a statewide level. In 2018, California passed its own California Consumer Privacy Act, also to be effective this year, which will allow consumers to opt out of having their data collected and sold without any effect on the service provided.

With the law, California expanded their definition for personal information from simply information that can identify a person to “information that identifies, relates to, describes, is capable of being associated with, or could be reasonably linked, directly or indirectly, with a particular consumer or household.” Still, Maine’s law remains the most severe in that it allows consumers to opt-in for companies to use their data, not opt-out.

Four organizations representing internet service providers have sued Maine over the law, arguing that it restricts the companies’ First Amendment rights and ability to offer customers discounts and “non-communications-related services.” They have pointed to the law’s definition of personal information as too “vague” and “open-ended,” overstepping into restricting the access of information that is not genuinely sensitive and personal.

Other states like Nevada and Minnesota have too passed their own laws regulating internet service providers, with the result of this case possibly setting a precedent for later statewide laws to be passed. Attorney General Aaron Fey, who will be defending the state of Maine, explained, “If the telecom industry wishes to fight to preserve their right to exploit consumers’ personal data... this is a fight I am willing to have.”
The Rise and Fall of Mike Bloomberg
NING WEI
Reporter

The former mayor of New York City, Mike Bloomberg, recently dropped out of the 2020 presidential race after the Super Tuesday primaries. Bloomberg had spent hundreds of millions on his candidacy to communicate his message to America, populating popular sites such as Youtube with his advertisements. Nevertheless, he performed poorly in the polls and won only one contest: American Samoa.

"Three months ago, I entered the race for president to defeat Donald Trump," Bloomberg said in a statement after ending his bid for candidacy. "Today, I am leaving the race for the same reason: to defeat Donald Trump—because it is clear to me that staying in would make achieving that goal more difficult."

Bloomberg was the last candidate to join the 2020 Democratic presidential nomination race. His campaign was based on his accomplishments from this position: economic growth in the city, decreased crime, and a focus on public health. Bloomberg was also known for his advocacy work during and after his time as mayor, especially for gun-control and environmental causes.

Bloomberg joined exactly 100 days before Super Tuesday, at a moment when the Democratic Party was worried about candidate Joe Biden's performance. Bloomberg originally cast himself as a centrist alternative to Biden, which is where he gained much of his support. For many of his supporters, Bloomberg's appeal was his moderate platform; "he's anti-socialist, and that's why I like him," Newport student Colin Chang (10) explained.

What Bloomberg was perhaps best well known for was the amount of his own money he put into his candidacy, dropping an unprecedented $600 million in ad spending. Bloomberg's aggressive campaigning helped put his name out and catapult himself over his competitors, despite his late start.

Bloomberg's campaigning strategy was a stark contrast to the rest of the Democratic Party. More and more Democratic candidates are embracing grassroots fundraising, with candidates such as Bernie Sanders boasting that his campaign is entirely funded by individuals and isn't backed by a single billionaire. As a result, much of Bloomberg's backlash was directed at his source of campaign funding. As Newport student Braden Relyea (11) described it, "[Bloomberg] bought his way into the election, so he isn't a real candidate."

After dropping out of the race, Bloomberg threw his support in for Biden, a fellow moderate candidate, and vowed to use his vast financial resources to help and spend "whatever it takes" to defeat President Trump.

"I've always believed that defeating Donald Trump starts with uniting behind the candidate with the best shot to do it," Bloomberg stated. "After yesterday's vote, it is clear that candidate is my friend and a great American, Joe Biden."

The Race for the Democratic Presidential Nomination
GAVIN FRITZ
Reporter

As the 2020 election approaches, the race for the presidential nomination from the Democrats has been heating up with some clear frontrunners emerging. On the moderate side of the Democrats' playing field, Joe Biden is the leader, with Mike Bloomberg, Amy Klobuchar, and Pete Buttigieg having recently dropped out and endorsed Joe Biden. Bernie Sanders has made up the progressive side of the Democratic party.

Nhí-Lac Thai (12) believed that "[a] self-identified Democratic Socialist will scare away moderate voters," and that a moderate like "Pete Buttigieg would have the best shot at beating Trump." However, Pete Buttigieg did drop out of the race before Super Tuesday after he was unable to build the required momentum.

The process has been moving rapidly, with two-thirds of all delegates set to be committed by the end of March. Mike Bloomberg dropped out of the race on Super Tuesday after spending 500 million dollars but having failed to collect any significant number of delegates.

Super Tuesday happened on March 4th, 2020. It was an upset, with Joe Biden picking up a significantly higher number of delegates than predicted. Sanders won Utah, Vermont, California, and Colorado, with Biden winning the rest of the states, much of which were in south, revealing the preference of the moderate Democrats.

The Democratic Party is divided along ideological lines, with heated arguments bubbling over and repeated attacks on the frontrunner Bernie Sanders occurring in recent debates, leaving many concerned about a fracture in the Democratic Party.

The Democrats have been campaigning on many issues, with two of them being healthcare and climate change. They are fairly unified on their stances on climate change, but are heavily divided in their opinions on healthcare, trade, foreign policy, college tuition, along with many other issues.

Bernie Sanders is a proponent of an expensive universal healthcare plan like the healthcare policies of much of Europe and of Canada, while Biden supports a more moderate plan that provides a public option to those unable to afford private options. The Democratic primaries form a constantly developing story that changes by day.

Last Updated 3/13/2020

Images by Nancy Huang and courtesy of Google Images.
Fast Facts: The Coronavirus

The reality is that for most Newport students, having the coronavirus is unlikely to be fatal. Still, we have the power to limit the virus’ spread to the people who truly are at risk for dying from the coronavirus, like people who are elderly, have cardiovascular disease, diabetes, or some otherwise compromised immune system. Last updated 3/13/2020

Mask or No Mask?

According to The Guardian, the coronavirus is known to spread through droplets, which masks can help protect against, making them more important for people who are caring for the sick and people who are already infected. Staying home as much as possible can minimize a healthy person’s need for a mask and instead save masks for whom they are crucial, like doctors and nurses.

What to Do:

Don’t panic!
Take precautions for your own and others’ safety, but don’t go around stealing hand sanitizer and masks from hospitals.

Stay home as much as possible, especially if you are feeling sick!

Wash not only your hands, but also commonly touched objects, like phones, laptops, and door handles!

The Travel Ban:

As of March 13th, President Donald Trump announced a 30-day European travel ban, under which any foreigners who have been in Europe in the last two weeks would be restricted from entering the United States. However, American citizens would still be able to travel to Europe, with a warning from the State Department to “reconsider travel,” according to The New York Times.

Isabel Weibel
Reporter

Love dogs? You are not alone! According to a Knightlife survey, many student respondents commented on how dogs are fluffy, cute, and adorable, with 42% of them even owning a dog. Lucas Tam (9) loves how “dogs will always love their humans no matter what happens.” As it turns out, whether you own a dog or feel connected to a friend’s dog, the secure attachment leads to “biological brain effects that reduce stress response.” The connection can even impact “breathing rate or blood pressure or oxygen consumption or anxiety level” in positive ways, said Dr Fricchione, psychiatrist and director of the Harvard Institute for Mind Body Medicine.

Staring into the eyes of a loved one, even a dog, can boost oxytocin levels, “one of the body’s ‘feel good’ chemicals.” Jeffrey Myers (11) explained how petting dogs also releases a “surge of serotonin and adrenaline,” forming a “chemical cocktail [that] is perfect for relieving stress and living longer.”

The Uppsala University of Sweden studied over 3.4 million people and found that “owning a dog is linked to a longer life.” Dogs decreased the risk of cardiovascular disease among other causes of death, even “after adjusting for factors such as smoking, body mass index and socioeconomic status.” Afraid of a lonely future? Owning a dog “[has] a 33% reduced risk of death, and an 11% reduced risk of cardiovascular disease” as compared to those living alone without a dog.

Owning a dog is a win-win situation. If you are thinking about getting a dog, nonprofit adoption centers are a great resource. Hundreds of dogs are left at shelters with no home, so much so that CNN reported on Derrick Nnadi, a Kansas City Chiefs tackle, paying over 100 dogs’ adoption fees after the Chiefs won the Super Bowl.

In addition, the Humane Society of the United States presented some unique facts about dogs, such as having a “sense of smell [that] is 10,000 times better than yours,” allowing them to “detect dangerous substances,” and even “sniff out signs of cancer” in some circumstances.

That being said, it is important to take into account the challenges that come with owning a dog. PetHelpful, a website dedicated to knowing more about pets, explains some of the challenges. For instance, time commitment, cost, and training.

Nonetheless, Myers “[loves] dogs and so should you!”

Woof Woof

(From right to left)
Images courtesy of Lucas Tam (9), Jordan Ahlstedt (12), Anne Mcdonald (11), and Meghan Huang (10).
Chinese Government Censorship

The Chinese government has a history and reputation of censorship from moments like Tiananmen Square, which many young Chinese people are not even aware of, to online censorship that persists to this day. A current issue pertaining to Chinese censorship is the Coronavirus outbreak.

As the new Coronavirus first appeared in mainland China and spread rapidly across the city of Wuhan and its surrounding area, controversy followed the way the Chinese government handled the situation. The Chinese government has monitored and censored online platforms such as Twitter and WeChat for anti-government sentiments and messages.

Myra Lee (9) believed that “[media] shouldn’t be censored.” According to NPR, over two million posts on Twitter expressing sentiments of liberty and freedom of speech against the Chinese government were taken down.

As the coronavirus first came to light, the doctor who discovered the virus spread word of its existence. The doctor was silenced and in a matter of weeks later he was dead. After his death many Chinese people took to the internet to express their outrage at his death only to have their opinions censored by the government.

The Chinese government has also suppressed useful information about the outbreak that would’ve been useful information for its citizens. Many people believed the chinese government was slow in its response to the coronavirus and the outbreak could have been better contained had the response been more effective and lives could have been saved.

The coronavirus is believed to have originated in a live animal market in Wuhan, China from where it rapidly spread from person to person. The global market is also taking notice to the recent coronavirus outbreak with international trade taking significant hits. On February 27th, 2020 the American stock market dropped the most in one day since 2008 in part due to Coronavirus fears. Ports that commonly traded with China have begun to experience less traffic as Chinese exports decline. The global economy is feeling the effects of the coronavirus as overall economic activity has continued to decline.
Feature

Knowledge Bowl

JOHN LEE
Editor

Students hunch over a set of buzzers in the brightly lit Portable 8. It is quiet until the moderator begins:

“This constant is the same in all reference frames by special relativity, and it is about three times ten to the eight meters per second. For 10 points, name this maximum speed at whi—” (Kevin Li and Michael Yue, Harvard Fall Tournament XIII Round 2)

*buzz* “Speed of light.”

“Correct for 10.”

“Nice buzz.”

These intense edge-of-the-seat buzzes are routine at Knowledge Bowl practices where many students gather to learn, have fun, and play some Quizbowl.

“I am repeatedly and constantly impressed by the breadth and depth of students’ knowledge,” remarked club advisor Mr. Lang.

But what is Quizbowl? Is it like Jeopardy? Trivia Crack? Quizup? Knowledge Bowl’s president, Justin Zhang (12) explained, “Quizbowl sometimes gets a bad reputation as a loose game of useless trivia. For me, much of my playing ability comes from employing concepts I picked up in class.” According to Ken Jennings, the renowned Jeopardy GOAT from Seattle, “Quizbowl ... really tests players on the kind of expert-level knowledge they might have gotten from a chemistry class, Asian literature class, 20th-century history class.” With so many subjects, “I am able to learn things I never learned before,” according to Ziyang Song (9).

Given Quizbowl’s expansive “canon” for things to know, favorite topics among Knowledge Bowl members varied vastly, among which were: “Ivan the Terrible,” “‘Nighthawks’ by Edward Hopper,” “Shostakovich’s symphonies,” “MITOCHONDRIA,” and “‘July’s People’ by Gordimer.” It may seem like one has to know all of these diverse subjects, but that is why it is important to play within a team where everyone can cover for each other and specialize. Even so, “the exposure to a variety of different subjects has led me to explore areas I had never thought about exploring, such as Mayan mythology, 20th-century art, and organic chemistry,” stated Zhang.

Last year, the Newport team qualified for and attended their first ever Quizbowl national tournament, the 2019 High School National Championship Tournament (HSNCT) hosted by the National Academic Quiz Tournaments (NAQT). The Newport team pulled off another qualification this year by placing second at the 2019 Washington Fall Classic, and we wish them luck at the 2020 HSNCT! Knowledge Bowl will also send one player to attend the 2020 Individual Player National Championship Tournament next month.

Knowledge Bowl

How do I tell a college that I’m not going? Actions speak louder than words, so don’t go and they’ll get the memo.

Why are you asking about the government? That’s what the government wants you to think.

How do you get other people to become attracted to you? Magnets.

Are pears worst than apples? A-pear-ently so.

¿Donde esta leche? Baguette

Mike & Ike’s

‘The Column’

WE FEATURE QUESTIONS FROM YOU, THE STUDENT BODY, PLEASE CONTINUE TO FUND US BY ASKING MORE.

How do I tell a college that I’m not going? Actions speak louder than words, so don’t go and they’ll get the memo.

Why are you asking about the government? That’s what the government wants you to think.

How do you get other people to become attracted to you? Magnets.

Are pears worst than apples? A-pear-ently so.

How do you renegade? Learn from anyone but James Charles and you’ll do fine.

Why should I be motivated to go to school as a second semester senior? You are a pre-freshman not a senior. Welcome to freshman life :)

How do you nicely ask people to put away their Christmas tree? They don’t need to. They’re just ready for Christmas 2020.

¿Donde esta leche? Baguette
Abbey Regan  
Newport’s multitalented musician  

CAROLYN HAN  
Reporter  

On January 25th, many Newport students participated in the instrumental Eastshore Solo and Ensemble Festival. All students represented Newport well, and Abbey Regan (12) qualified for state in the guitar division! She will go on to perform in the Washington State Solo and Ensemble contest, which will take place in Ellensburg on the last Friday and Saturday of April, according to wmea.org. 

This year is Regan’s second time competing at the Solo and Ensemble Festival and her first time competing on guitar. At the festival, Regan played a piece by Yuquijiro Yocoh called Sakura and Variations, which she chose because it has many technical elements. It is a really expressive piece and considered one that she had already played for college portfolios. She also notes that coming up with a variety of musical contexts. She expressed that learning the classical guitar has taught her about how to play in a solo context, while playing clarinet has helped her learn how to fit into the larger picture and made listening to orchestral music more fun. As for singing, Regan said that it pushes her to be concise with her intonation and that being in Knight Sounds has given her an appreciation for jazz and dissonance. 

Nancy Fisher, Newport’s choir teacher and Knight Sounds director, appreciates Abbey’s work and talent, praising how Abbey “is an amazing, well-rounded musician” who has “a great work ethic and is very self-motivated: exactly the kind of student every director wants in their ensemble.” 

In the future, Regan would like to be in a concert band or philharmonic orchestra in college. As for guitar, Regan hopes to continue playing by taking classes in college and joining a guitar orchestra. 

Regan definitely feels nervous for the state competition but also looks forward to playing, hearing other classical guitarist, and reconnecting with people. Good luck, Abbey! 

Justin Chen  
A stellar violist and a state champion  

JAIME CHEN  
Editor  

Newport is home to many talented students, and Justin Chen (11) is one of our musically gifted stars. It all started as a cursory decision in the fifth grade when all students were required to choose an instrument to play, and ever since, Chen has been captivated by his choice: the viola. 

For the past six and a half years, the viola has been one of Chen’s primary focuses. He initially made up his mind thinking that the viola provided a “nice balance between high and low registers.” However, there was so much more to it. “In hindsight, I realized I had no idea what I was getting into,” admitted Chen. 

After joining the Seattle Youth Orchestra outside of school, Chen began to invest more in his music. From then on, he was able to explore and play new music is so much more enjoyable than just listening. 

Like any other extracurricular, time has been a challenge for Chen. He found it difficult, especially his freshman year, to balance homework with practice time. Though he ended up skipping two weeks worth of AP World homework at some point to prepare for a competition, he was really proud of his performance. Since then, he has learned to manage several long-term projects, structuring his schedule to accommodate the demanding time to practice. 

Chen’s improvement in time management can easily be seen in his successes. In 2018, he placed second at regionals, missing the qualification for state by just one rank. However, this past year, he won the State Solo and Ensemble Contest in the viola solo category (wmea.org). “I went in not expecting to even place so it was super cool and gave me a lot of confidence and motivation,” he reflected. He still placed second regionally, but lucky for him, he was pulled as an alternate, giving him a second chance which he used extraordinarily. 

“For a lot of middle school I regretted not picking cello, but I stuck with viola and I’m really glad I did,” Chen said. 

Chen’s fellow chamber member, Abigail Lee (12), has had a first hand experience with his musical talent. She commented, “Justin is not only a very talented viola player, both as a soloist and collaborative artist, but he is thoughtful, giving full understanding to the music he plays. I can hear that through the music that comes out.” 

This year’s state competition will take place April 25th, so make sure to keep an eye out for this stellar violist.
20 minute preparation time, **McKenna Plenger** (11) skillfully removes eyes from a potato with her knife, pairing them with her team’s lamb chops. At the other end of the table **Alex Thai** (12) prepares corral tuille and milk powder crumble for his black sesame ice cream and ginger cake. **Kian Bagasin** (12) suddenly overpowers the chaotic kitchen noises, as he cranks a hand-powered blender, making a cucumber-based sauce for the lamb.

Amidst the chaos, mentor **Chef Choi** makes a pass. “What is that smell?!”

Newport Knives is part of the national ProStart program dedicated to developing culinary techniques and management skills in high school students. The program gives students a platform to explore fulfilling careers in the hospitality industry, which according to the US Bureau of Labor Statistics, has grown by 69% in the last ten years (not adjusted for inflation). **Chef Green** and Chef Choi lead Newport Knives, and together, with occasional visits from Sepehr and industry operators from restaurants such as Ascend Prime Steak and Sushi, they make up the team of mentors supporting the culinary team.

The competition is made even more challenging by its strict rules. The groups have an hour to cook a starter, an entrée, and a dessert. Limited to one table and two burners, they cannot use electricity, and their menu must cost less than 75 dollars. They must strategically time their cooking so that all dishes are at the proper temperature at the time of presentation. Everything is judged: safety and sanitation, time management, knife skills, presentation, and taste.

The day I visited, representatives from Ascend Bellevue came to judge as a practice competition. The kitchen was bustling with organized movement, and it was only safe to watch from the corner. Work was strategically divided, and the scene was closer to an organized choreography than a home kitchen. After the presentation, Ascend representatives debriefed with the teams. They gave feedback on the cake density, on finesse of plating, and on choosing ingredients that best combine contrasting flavors.

To better understand the program, I turned to four seniors in the class. Thai found competing to be “really intense but it’s fun.” He added, “when we practice competing, the manager is [dicing your onions] the whole time and it can get hella annoying, but it forces you to be patient and work well with your team.” On the weeks preparing, he most enjoyed being able to “come up with and develop [his] own recipes.” After the competition, I reached out to **Deborah Chu** (12), who was pleased to have finally “completed all [her] dishes at the same time.” Deborah appreciated learning the “viewpoint from two really experienced people in the culinary industry.” Overall, she noted, “It’s been a challenging experience because at least for me, most of it has been trial and error and a lot of failure, but through the past couple weeks, I’m really proud of our team and how much we’ve improved.”

**Kian Bagasin** (12), while sharing Chu’s beliefs, felt “that being in a fast paced, high stress environment like in the kitchen is actually really fun.” He went on to say, “There’s honestly no other place I’d rather be to start my day and I always look forward to Culinary Arts.”

Lastly, I heard from **Elise Browder** (12). She is aspiring to enter the culinary industry and has applied to culinary institutes for next year. In fact, she has already interned at Ascend Prime Steak and Sushi, gradually learning about the different dishes mastered there. On that experience, Browder admitted that “it’s kind of crazy getting to work with all those people [because] everything has to come out perfect... Everyone I met was super friendly and excited to teach about what they love doing.” On the competition, Browder found that “it’s very self-gratifying even if it’s a little tedious doing the same dish over and over.”

Remembering her competition last year, she recalled a lot of “anxiety and adrenaline.” She commented, “Afterwards, it’s like wow, I really made that in an hour.” On her mentors in the class Browder was sure to mention that “Chef Green is amazing.” She said, “Since we’re together three hours every day it’s become more of a friendship. Having all these different people there to support me in what I love doing has been such a good experience for me and something I hope to find after high school.”
Library Specialist Ms. Croisier has found her calling in storytelling. Storytelling is more than its fairytale-folklore stereotype; it is the ability to turn even a real event into an exciting narrative that can engage an audience, and Ms. Croisier does just that.

After listening to an NPR Podcast called “The Moth,” Ms. Croisier was introduced to “personal truth-based storytelling,” or telling a story based on real events. She was immediately hooked, as she had always been drawn to the idea of telling stories.

Several years back, when she had lived in New York and worked on Wall Street, Ms. Croisier found success in arts similar to that of storytelling. She went from having radio spots to her own one-hour radio show as well as TV guest appearances.

Eventually, after moving to Washington, Ms. Croisier decided to explore this hobby. The podcast she listened to inspired her to take part in an associated open-mic competition known as Moth StorySLAM. A theme is prepared ahead of time, and anyone with a brief story can share (themoth.org).

Backtracking a bit, how does competitive storytelling work? Ms. Croisier explains it, or specifically Moth StorySLAM, as the following:

“During a Moth StorySLAM, storytellers are given a theme and they tell a story that happened to them that is truthful, that has a beginning, middle and end and can be told in six minutes or less. The crowd then gives each teller a score. The highest score is the winner. When there are ten winners (every few months), then they are invited to a GrandSLAM. Same as before, you get a theme and 6 minutes. The GrandSLAMs, however, are a little bit different in that you work with a producer in New York who helps you shape the story better and gives you pointers on performance, pacing, et cetera.”

In 2014, Ms. Croisier attended her first Moth StorySLAM. With the theme being “Accident,” she had just the perfect experience to twist up into a story. She talked about one of the car accidents that she had been in, turning it into a brief but emotive six minute story. “There were probably 120 people [in the audience], and they were on the edges of their seats. It was awesome,” said Ms. Croisier.

“I think I came in 2nd place that night. I’ve since won four StorySLAMs and have had the honor of performing at Seattle Town Hall. Sold out, 825 seats, packed!” Ms. Croisier recalled.

As her experiences have generally been extremely satisfying, Ms. Croisier recommends this activity to the student body of Newport. “Yes, yes, everyone should go to The Moth at least once. If not to tell, then to enjoy the audience,” she said. “I always feel cheerier after I’ve gone and less lonely. I think it is easy to get stuck in your head, worried that you are the only person that has done X or suffered Y, and The Moth provides such a great space to share your struggles. Saying them out loud is healing for me, and then hearing other’s stories makes me see the good in humanity and reminds me of our own internal resilience.”

If you would like to attend, more information regarding ticket sales, dates, and locations can be found on themoth.org.

Ms. Croisier also added that there is an alternative called “Fresh Ground Stories.” Host Paul Currington was a fan of The Moth but believed that taking the competition out of it would make it more inviting to storytellers. There is more flexibility in time for the story, as well as a priority for first-timers to reward their bravery. This event is free and open to the public, and they are kept family-friendly. More information can be found at freshgroundstories.com.
With a flurry of quick, calculated hand movements, Cody Ding (9) turns the chaotic cube of scrambled colors in front of him into a neat, 3-by-3 Rubik’s cube of uniformly colored sides. You may catch him in the commons or at home, working on his speed and hand-eye coordination. The goal of speed-cubing is to solve a cube as fast as you can, achieving an extremely low time. But how fast is fast enough? One minute? Thirty seconds? Nope, Ding’s best time is lighting 11.047 seconds. That is crazy quick, especially for those of us who cannot even imagine how to begin solving a cube given infinite time. Ding felt the same way when he first began cubing; “I thought this was an impossible task. After learning how to solve the cube, ... it soon became one of my favorite things to do,” commented Ding.

But how is Ding able to work so fast? There are a ton of different randomized scenarios for a Rubik’s Cube, so how does Ding know how to solve the cube? The short answer is formulas and algorithms. Like a computer, Ding evaluates the present state of the Rubik’s Cube and from there decides what he should do. Thinking ahead, he calculates which maneuver to carry out next based upon what type of scenario is in his hands.

You may have seen the famous 3x3 Rubik’s Cube, but that is not the only cube that Ding has mastered. Although it does take him longer to solve, Ding is adept at speeding through 4x4, 5x5, and even 7x7 Rubik’s Cubes. Aditya Rajesh (9) said, “I think Cody is a pretty experienced cuber and he is really dedicated as his improvements are consistent and large as well. He mainly competes in bigger cubes like 4x4, 5x5, ex cetera.”

However, cubers like Ding are not restricted to twisting only cube puzzles. Other puzzles like the Pyraminx (pyramid-shaped) and the Megaminx (you will have to Google this one) are within Ding’s abilities. Even “blindsolving” (solving the cube blindfolded) became doable for Ding after practice. “I have heard from other cubers that practicing blindsolving... helps improve your memory. I have found this pretty evident after I started to practice it,” remarked Cody.

Cubing is not just something Ding does for personal enjoyment. There are competitions in which people compete to see who can solve these twisty puzzles the fastest. The World Cube Association (WCA) is the largest organization for cubers; they host many competitions and provide guidelines as to how these competitions will be run. The WCA maintains a large database of competitions around the world, with a stated mission to “have more competitions in more countries with more people and more fun, under fair and equal conditions.”

For people just taking an interest in cubing, Ding recommended trying “to get a good cube online instead of going to Walmart” and also keeping a consistent practice routine, doing one’s best to build the necessary mind-hand connections and using mistakes to better develop algorithms.

You’re almost there seniors, have a great spring!

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Frozen Magic at Seattle’s Paramount Theater

Shana Huang
Reporter

A bustle of chatter sweeps across the crowd as excited show-goers settle into their seats, clutching drinks, snacks, and the occasional Elsa or Olaf doll. An announcer’s voice emanates through the theater, stating “five minutes until showtime folks,” as the surrounding lights start to dim and the music of the pit orchestra begins to pick up speed and volume, increasing slowly and steadily. The Frozen backdrop onstage radiates brightly in the darkening theater, an image of the northern lights flickering in the starry night sky behind the regal castle of Arendelle. The announcer’s voice booms over the crowd again, this time with a notification of “one minute until the show starts!” Suddenly, the hum of string and wind instruments reaches a reverberating peak, and a chorus of voices belt out Frozen’s iconic opening, “Vuelie.”

With performance dates from February 7th to March 1st, the North American Tour of Frozen on Broadway has recently found its way to Seattle’s prestigious Paramount Theater which had previously hosted notable guests including Nirvana and Madonna. A masterpiece in and of itself, the musical featured a number of technical wonders: from costume design, vocals, and instrumentals, to stage lighting, projection, and props. Intricately crafted, the costumes used in the musical follow the details of traditional Norwegian attire, and Tony Award winner Christopher Oram described Kristoff’s look as a “Sami-inspired mountain outfit,” while Hans’ outfit is a “regal take on bunad, a classic princely look,” according to reporter Adam Feldman of timeout.com. Wardrobe supervisor Jessica Dermdy from the production of Frozen on Broadway in New York states that there are many technicalities regarding costumes in the show. For instance, in an interview with Courtney Bowers of dancespirit.com, Dermdy explains how the costumes are “things you wouldn’t normally dance in, like giant ball gowns,” and as such, the team had to replace buttons with “zippers, hooks, snaps, or Velcro, or adding stretchy material to pants so they don’t rip.”

Besides the complex work behind making sure costumes function and fit well for the stage, many hours of practice and preparation is dedicated by the performers in order to make the show magical and memorable for audiences. An actress with experience performing in musicals herself, Allison Fennell (12) stated that she was wowed by the show and “blown away by all of the small movements the actor did to bring Olaf [his character] to life.” After attending Frozen on Broadway’s showing at the Paramount Theater, Fennell and other excited show-goers were able to meet the actors and actresses who performed in the show. Recalling this experience, Fennell stated she “had the most fun talking to Kristoff, played by Mason Reeves, at the stage door” and that he shared how the “key to success eight shows a week is lots of sleep, lots of water, warming up and down, and ginger!”

Sophia Powers (12) described the movie as “visually appealing,” and Fennell states that in the musical, “the detailing was the perfect mix between realism and animation like the film,” a sentiment echoed by Dany Margolies of dailynews.com, who describes the production as “stunningly bringing the movie to life onstage.” Margolies goes on to state that the show’s “special effects are more than special,” and they songs to give the tale a fresh, new spin. The beginning of the show offers deeper insight into the relationship between Anna and Elsa with a new song called “A Little Bit of You.” This sequence introduces Anna and Elsa as children when they created Olaf, providing important context for how close the sisters truly were before an accident tore them apart. As the show progresses, audience members are presented with many new musical numbers, including “Hans of the Southern Isles” which introduces Hans’ character and background, “What Do You Know About Love” detailing Kristoff and Anna’s banter about marriage, “Hygge” where Oaken introduces the Danish/Norwegian concept of “coziness,” and many more.

Overall, the show is a delight, and the amount of work put into the musical by cast and crew members is phenomenal. From a break in the fourth wall to interact with audience members, audience members are presented with many new musical numbers, including “Hans of the Southern Isles” which introduces Hans’ character and background, “What Do You Know About Love” detailing Kristoff and Anna’s banter about marriage, “Hygge” where Oaken introduces the Danish/Norwegian concept of “coziness,” and many more.

What do you call a bacteria that can swim? Micro Phelps.

If geometry is the study of geography, then what’s the study of stones? Rocketry.