School showcase done, regionals around corner

Helena Squires Mosher
Staff Writer

The time is nigh. OWL students. The time for proof reading drafts, annotating bibliographies, and making sure you know 110% of the facts about something, because the History Day season is upon us.

On February 13th, about 150 Open World Learning students showcased exhibit boards, papers, websites, performances, and documentaries about notable events or people in history, relating to this year’s History Day theme: Triumph and Tragedy. Judges examined their projects, and asked questions about their topic, to inform their decision on who to choose to move on to the regional competition in March. From there, projects may even move on to the state competition at the University of Minnesota, and the best of the best then go to Nationals, in Washington DC.

History Day is a big thing here at Open World Learning. Multiple students continue to do History Day past 7th grade, when it’s no longer required for a grade. “Believe it or not, I actually enjoy working on it! I think it’s fun to dive in and become an expert on a specific topic,” says Zoe Campion, a 10th grader currently making a group documentary on the Manhattan Project with fellow 10th grader Elza Carlson. “It’s also so rewarding to see your final product after all of the work you have put into it.” Zoe and Elza have placed at Nationals twice in the past two years, and are feeling nervous but still confident going into this season of History Day.

Students spend a lot of their time out of school working on their projects. They go to libraries, conduct interviews, review and revise over and over again based on comment from mentors and judges until they have a finished project for competitions. “It’s too much work,” said 10th grader Jon Kam-meyer-Mueller when asked why he doesn’t do History Day.

The Brick Birds at the recent regional competition (left), and The After School Squad testing their robots before the competition (right). The competition

Under pressure: stress in sports

Emily Yang
Staff Writer

Blood runs through my heart with pounding adren- aline coursing in my veins. The last arrow set on the bow with steady hands set on the string, ready to fire. Take deep breaths in slowly, get ready to focus. One thing wrong can break a perfect round, but with the right way to stay focused, anything is possible.

During tournaments and even at a typical practice, pressure is a constant weight always on my shoulders. Pressure can either be my best friend or my worst enemy, but instead of letting it get me, I zone everything out and focus on the goal. “Be consistent every time I release, clearing my mind with every deep breath.”

Many new students who have never been to or participated in a tournament have expressed nervousness. From learning how to shoot, scoring, and preparing for the first tournament, it can be a lot to comprehend. Sixth graders, Grace Moua and Charlie Aco-sowar, know that those things get in their way of their upcoming success.

Charlie has been shooting with a bow since he was in fourth grade. Now as a sixth grader, he plans on taking archery to the next level. Charlie shot a 249 out of 300 and Grace shot a 251 out of 300 at the first tournament.

Like many athletic sports, in team and in individual, archery is no different when it comes to getting your head in the game. There is a goal that is right in front of you, but sometimes what’s in front of the goal is so difficult obstacles to mentally overcome. Clearing your mind and staying fo- cus is the key factor in doing

Coming soon to a court near you

Boys volleyball starting at OWL, Humboldt, but not with MSHSL

Paloma Leone-Getten
Staff Writer

Boys volleyball is coming to OWL and Humboldt. Yes, you read that right. Boys volleyball is coming. It’s like girls volleyball, but with boys.

Recently, there has been a bigger push to get boys volleyball clubs started in Minneso-ta, and then to make it a varsity sport. The idea to start a boys volleyball team at Humboldt and OWL began with some boys at Humboldt. They were interested in the idea and talked to a teacher there, Hannah Osborne. “The athletic director contacted me just to see if I had any information or knowl-edge and I got on board with that. I have volunteered to coach for this year and I would love to see it become a varsity sport,” said math teacher Da-mon Liberatore.

For now, boys volleyball is not considered an MSHSL sport, so it is similar to the Ul-timate Frisbee team. But, there is a push to make it a varsity sport as soon as next year. “If it was a varsity sport, it would be funded just like any varsity sport at Humboldt or OWL. If
history Day. It’s right, it is a lot of work, but the kids who continue to put themselves through it are extremely passionate about the work they do. OWL is one of the most competitive schools in Minnesota, one of the most competitive states in the competition. Indegno’s decisions get quite dicey as you move up in the competition, especially for divisions that have a lot of entries, like websites and exhibits, or divisions with a lot of high school quality entries, like documentaries. But don’t fear, as long as you’re having a good time, the prizes and judging won’t be the end of the world, and if History Day isn’t your forte, once you’re out of 7th grade, you can avoid the chaos.

Middle schools looking at the results from the school competition.

Lego league, 1

performance or dynamics merit recognition,” according to FIRST Lego League. This is an open section, allowing judges to give awards to teams who did well, but did not otherwise place.

The core values include

- teamwork, innovation, impact, inclusion, and fun. Ian said that he developed such skills while on the team. They eventually started to work together. Ian said the team was “working with everybody no matter what.”

Volleyball, 1

it’s a club sport it gets paid off of donations,” said Damon. Damon has high expectations for how well the team will do, especially because a lot of the athletes on the team have never played volleyball before. “I do really well with athletes that are starting from scratch. I feel like I get them from point A to point B really fast. When you get people who are fresh, you can get the raw talent, and sometimes it takes them longer, and sometimes, depending on the athlete, especially if they’re in another sport, it goes pretty quick,” said Damon. “I think because it’s a club sport you’re going to be a little bit outnumbered at the beginning but with practices and competition and exposure, we’ll definitely move up the ranks.”

Currently, about 40-50 boys are interested in being on the volleyball team, and about half of them are OWL students. Practices will start in March, but there may be some open gym time in late February or early March. The season wraps up by the middle of May. Because of the lack of funding for club sports, the boys volleyball team is asking for donations or helpers throughout the season. “If their families who are willing to support or who want to volunteer their time or anything like that, they can certainly contact me or Hannah Osborne,” said Damon.

Teacher feature: Andy Kunkel

New special education teacher thrives in his role at OWL

Elia Pratt Staff Writer

You may have seen the tall dude rocking the blood bun and beard in the halls before and wondered, who is he and where did he come from? Well I’m here to tell you about the mysterious special education teacher, Andrew (Andy) Kunkel.

When asking Andy how he got into teaching he says he “got lucky” with his job as a custodian, giving Andy needed assistance to people who are sick, injured, mentally or physically disabled, or the elderly and fragile. When Andy started as a teacher’s assistant he continued working with autism programs full time, until he solidified his passion for teaching. Andy started teaching at Arlington working as a teacher’s assistant for 3 years, afterwards he moved to Johnson High School still working as a teacher’s assistant for 3 more years. He then moved on to Parkway Montessori middle school where he started an autism program and influenced the school greatly all before applying to be a special education teacher at OWL.

Having mined grades in math classes forced Andy to adjust his teaching style. “It’s really cool. I’ve never seen mixed grades in math classes before.” Andy helps out in Clara Olson and Patricia Housfield’s math classes, and says teaching is “all about comprehension and communication,” helping with teaching the class and bringing students to test in his quieter room, that is when it’s not too cold because of the lack of heaters.

Andy says one of his favorite parts of teaching is “seeing kids learn from it.” As much as Andy enjoys teaching there are many challenges such as OWL being a “cell phone school” he says “it’s hard to determine whether a kid is actually doing work or playing video games.” Despite having cell phones allowed in our school Andy loves the opportunity to go on field trips and creates a closer bond with students.

Andy grew up in “an outer ring suburb” in the small town of Buffalo, Minnesota, before moving to Saint Cloud for college. Despite not being able to bike to work anymore because of the longer days, Andy still makes his way around by staying busy with friends. When Andy is done with teaching during the day, he likes to stay busy by going to concerts at night or sitting on his hanging couch that looks over his friends playing ping pong in his garage. He is also an obsessive fan of the Minnesota Wild.

Katie’s room decor is topical, fun, and has a lot of personality.

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I’m going to be Dr. Hall!: An interview with Megan

Megan discusses her path to getting her doctorate, the importance of self-motivation, and how the natural world gives her hope for the future.

Nik Logue
Staff Writer

You’ve been teaching at OWL since the 2012-2013 school year. What do you think is the greatest thing you’ve learned about teaching in such a non-traditional environment?

Oh, that’s a good question. Well our school motto is nurturing self-directed learners since 1971. And I think, probably, the most valuable thing I’ve learned as an OWL teacher is about how to help a young person become self-directed, which is a really gradual process. I think it is really important that teachers model organization, responsibility and clear communication, and then slowly, over the years, release that responsibility to students so that by the time they are juniors and seniors, students have that sense of owning their education and really being in charge of what they’re doing. It’s been really fortunate that I’ve been able to work when there were a lot of veteran teachers on staff that had a ton of experience with helping students in becoming self-directed learners without expecting that to just be something that people could naturally do. Because I don’t think anyone can automatically take charge and know exactly what to do, but learning how to help students become self-directed.

Do you believe your education made you strive to go to those lengths of getting your doctorate?

Oh yeah… so my education, starting from when I was little, was kind of about self-direction too. I went to a Montessori elementary school, then went to a traditional middle school and high school—which I pretty much hated—but I was kind of self-directed even as a little kid probably because of the Montessori start. So I knew how to navigate the system and philosophy of the school. But you don’t really need a PhD to be a really strong teacher. And PhDs are kinds expensive, so the thing that really clicked over the difference and helped me go to get my PhD was getting a scholarship. Walden University gives a full scholarship for any degree that a Teacher of the Year chooses. So because I received the Minnesota Teacher of the Year award, I had the opportunity to get a free PhD. So I was like “Yes! Just like mom! I’m going to be Dr. Hall!”

 ventas Are you going to make your students call you Dr. Hall?

I don’t really feel like that would be a good fit with the philosophy of the school, (checkers) so I think I’ll just make my colleagues call me that if they’re being rude.

Circling back to self-direction, do you have faith that the people you teach will strive to go the lengths you’ve gone?

Well… I think the real goal of education is to help people be who they are meant to be, and to really become self-actualized as the full person they want to be. So if I have a student whose true destiny is to own their education and get a PhD, then I hope that going to OWL helps them become that person. But there are a lot of different paths to happiness and success in life, so if being true to themselves,  

Megan, 4

Senior Spotlight
Emilie McCormick

How many years have you been at OWL?

This is my first year.

What are your plans for next year?

I have confirmed my enrollment at the U of MN Twin Cities and I’m going in under a sociology of law, criminology, and deviance major.

What was your favorite class in high school?

I enjoy crew.

What extracurriculars are you involved in?

I’m in the school’s Outward Bound.

What was your favorite fieldwork trip you’ve been on? And why?

I liked Fall retreats because of the sauna in Ely.

What’s your favorite book, movie, or TV show?

My favorite movie is Coraline.

If you had a walk up song what would it be?

Oh my god, Nine in the Afternoon by Panic! at the Disco.

That One Little Kid
Ratha Johnson

How tall are you?

I don’t know about that one yet...

Where do you think you’re going to college?

Undecided.

Who’s your favorite senior?

I think like, six feet.

How tall are you?

11th grader Tom Hobday shoots a free throw.

Pressure, 1
well in anything you put your mind to.

“Before my free throws, I take two dribbles, take a deep breath, pause, and shoot. I do this before every free throw, it helps me get in the right state of mind,” said 11th grader Tom Hobday.

Tom has been playing basketball since the age of 7. During his freshman year, his Penalties Kicks, feeling some kind of pressure is normal. He has represented his country through a developing Olympic team comprised of the best players in the state.

“The key thing to doing well in soccer or in sports in general is being able to always find the love and passion that you developed in the early stages of your career,” said Micah.

Before Micah starts his pk’s he always tends to replace the ball. It is a way for the kicker to have confidence in their shot. This part of the game can be the hardest as the flow of the game has stopped.

“I do believe it is harder because when you are in the flow your constantly moving and leaving yourself up to instinct,” said Micah.

When you’re taking a free kick that flow has been stopped and you have maybe too much time to think about your next action.

11th grader Abby Davis has been in volleyball for 11 years. Being a part of a team where everyone has the same passion as you do, Abby believes that it is an important do her best. Being a middle hitter means that it is important to have a strong hit.

The biggest pressure in the game is when it comes to serving. The flow of the game has stopped and a point can be determined based on how well the serve is. Abby has a ritual of bouncing the ball 5 times before serving the ball. During this time, the whole game is still as everyone is watching.

“I always take a deep breath and take a mental picture of where I want the ball to go,” said Abby.

Being in the right state of mind and having the love and passion is the best way to succeed. They all believe that being a good teammate comes first over their individual performance. Everything else will come naturally after that.

“Before my free throws, I take two dribbles, take a deep breath, pause, and shoot. I do this before every free throw, it helps me get in the right state of mind”

11th grader Tom Hobday shoots a free throw.

OWL Staff photo
Megan teaching her AP Environmental Science class.

Reviews 'n' stuff

Kids, magic, and robots, oh my!

Eight-book long Amulet graphic novel series seems to mix elements of sci-fi and fantasy

Cy Christensen
Staff Writer

The Amulet book series is about two little people who travel to another world and use magic to slay some ghosts and elves and become bigger people (emotionally, not physically). They’re still children. There’s also robot houses. It’s an amalgamation of some elements from fantasy like magic and curses, and sci-fi, ‘cause eventually they’re in space.

All the problems might turn you away from the series, but with all the noticeable elements from fantasy like magic and elves and become bigger people (emotionally, not physically) and from sci-fi, ‘cause eventually they’re in space.

A common theme in science fiction is how the world is in the future. Will we have our own personal robots? Will we have an improved health care? Will we have our own personal robots? Will we have an improved health care? Will we have our own personal robots? Will we have an improved health care? Will we have our own personal robots? Will we have an improved health care? Will we have our own personal robots? Will we have an improved health care? Will we have our own personal robots? Will we have an improved health care?

I think I don’t think, I don’t think, I don’t think.

Milo Zimmerman-Bence & Staff Writers

Boss battles are an integral part of the video game experience. When done right, they can be an amazing way to add weight to the story. However, they can be difficult for the makers of the game to balance. There are always going to be the very real risk that one or more of the bosses will fall flat. What sets a good boss fight apart from a bad one?

Even though visuals have little bearing on the quality of a game, they still can make it memorable. The story’s memorable aspects aren’t just about the actual character, but also the story behind the character. Did you have a set of (usually subtle) plots that you were going to do?

Megan

What is something you hope every graduating class will learn from OWL when going out into the world?

I think that would be a fun thing to teach, but only if it were a weekend class, or a weekend class, or an online class, because I want to stay at OWL for a long time. And, I think I want to study in order to change the situation and gradually changing our lifestyles.

Do you have faith in the future?

Yeah, I mean, I have faith, but there are things that are happening in the world that make me want to just close my eyes or sit down and cry. There really are bad things happening in the world, but I also believe, fundamentally, that human beings are good, and that the human beings want to be peaceful and kind and that there are going to be fewer bad outcomes, fewer bad outcomes, fewer bad outcomes, fewer bad outcomes.

We have just scratched the surface of what sound is. It’s the Legend of Zelda: Majora’s Mask, but for different reasons. It’s the classic retro boss setup. You find a new room, walk in, the door slams behind you and out comes a boss. Odowb pulls from the ceiling and swings his sword, however what stands out to me was his voice. He has an intimidating chant in a language he doesn’t speak or understand, creating a mysterious aura around him.

In most games, bosses will have a set of (usually subtle) animations conveying to the player what they are about to do. Odowb doesn’t really have these, but instead his series of chants perform that role. Visual design, of course, can bring a lot to a character in terms of intimidation. But I think in lots of cases, sounds produced by said character can do more leagues to make more the player know it will be a long, well structured battle.

We have just scratched the surface of everything that goes into this essential en counter. Before you know it, we have a lot more to say. Tune in for the next issue, in which we will go into the game play as aspects of these fights, and more.