



Northern Light



VOLUME 56, NO. 3

GREAT NECK NORTH MIDDLE SCHOOL NEWS

SPRING 2021

AUTHOR JASMINE WARGA VIRTUALLY VISITS NMS

By Daniella Nissim



On Friday, April 16, award-winning author Jasmine Warga virtually visited NMS to speak about her book *Other Words for Home* and what it is like to be a writer.

Jasmine Warga has always loved reading and telling stories as a child, and while working as a teacher, she used to write stories. In 2019, Warga published *Other Words for Home*, an inspirational story about a young girl, Jude, who had to move to America due to the dangerous situation going on in her home of Syria. Jude is based off of Warga's cousin, who went through a similar situation to Jude.

What makes this book even more extraordinary is that it is written in stanza form. When asked, Warga explained that when she originally wrote *Other Words for Home*, she had written it in the traditional novel format, but something had felt off about the book, so she changed the format entirely. Warga said that since she had already written the book once before and had the plot figured out, it made it easier to rewrite the book into stanza form.

When interviewed about how she wanted *Other Words for Home* to change people's lives, Warga said that she wants Jude to be a role model for young people out there who are not represented in literature. Warga explained that growing up she never used to see people like her in the books she read. Warga's book allows people to understand and empathize with the 8.4 million children who were affected by the Syrian refugee crisis.

Overall, the book, *Other Word for Home*, by Jasmine Warga is a wonderful story for people of all ages to read in order to learn more about what life was life for a young girl living through the Syrian refugee crisis.

Fun Facts About Jasmine Warga:

- *Other Words from Home* is a *New York Times* bestselling novel
- *Other Words from Home* has won multiple awards, including: a John Newbery Honor, a Walter Honor for Young Readers, and a Charlotte Huck Honor
- Her other books, *My Heart and Other Black Holes* and *Here We Are Now*, have been translated into over twenty different languages.
- Her next novel for middle school students, *The Shape of Thunder* will be published May 2021.

<http://jasminewarga.com/about>



In this issue...

School/World News

PS I Love You Day.....2

NYS Exams.....2

Robot on Mars.....3

Alien Existence.....3

International Women's Day....3

Allergy Therapy.....3

Entertainment

TikTok Buzz4

Recipes.....4

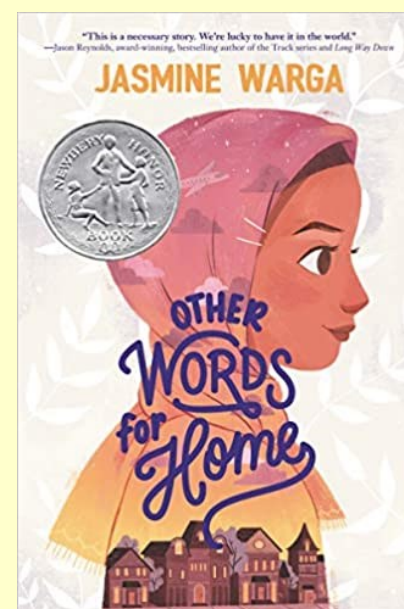
Weird Food Review.....5

Book Review.....4

Car Review...5

Sports.....6

Read a review of Jasmine Warga's
novel, *Other Words From Home*
on page 2..



Book Review: *Other Words For Home* by Jasmine Warga

Reviewed by Elliot Kane

The book *Other Words For Home*, by Jasmine Warga, was an amazing and heartwarming story of love and hope. It is about the hardships many people face just trying to find a new home.

The book follows the story of Jude, a young Syrian girl who journeys to America with her mom to escape war and conflict back in her homeland. The book is written in verse, which I think is a very powerful and a thought-provoking way to tell this story. Even if you cannot connect with the experiences and struggles these characters are facing, you can still sympathize with them, and I think the way the novel is written helps with that.

In the story, Jude and her mother must leave their home in Syria, because it is becoming too dangerous. Moving into her uncle’s house in America, Jude must learn that “home” can mean many different things. A big message you could take away from this book is that home is anywhere you are with people you love.

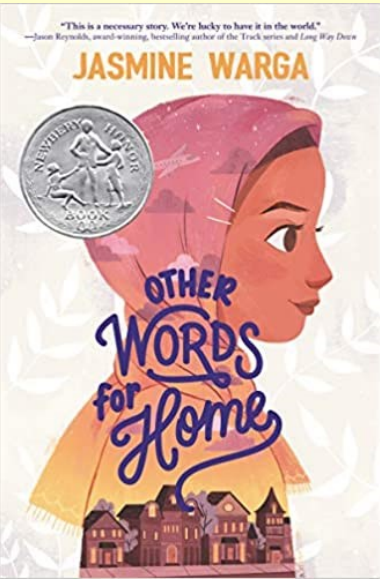
The book is mainly set in Jude’s home in Syria (in the beginning,) and then her uncle’s house in America, as well as her school. The setting is detailed and described very well, especially her town in Syria and her new home in America. Other places in the story, like Jude’s new school, or the new town that she lives in are less detailed in their description. However, the overall setting is very well written.

The plot of the story is different from other stories I’ve read, seeing that the book is written in verse. However, it is a good plot that takes its time, instead of rushing through the story. Therefore, there’s a lot more time to describe how Jude is trying to fit in, what hardships she’s facing, et cetera. The book is packed with detail, and the plot, though different from other stories, is very good.

There are many different characters in this story, and each one has a different, well-written personality. From Jude’s hope to Issa’s determination, every character fits into the story perfectly.

There are several different themes in this story. Among them, I would put “don’t be afraid to be yourself” and “home is where the heart is.” Both of those themes come to mind when I think of this story. There are many lessons you could take away from this book, and it has taught me many new things about the world.

In conclusion, this book is a beautiful, albeit different tale. I had never really read a novel in verse before I read this, but reading this makes me want to read more. Overall, this story is a powerful, heartwarming read that I would recommend 10/10. It can teach all of us that no matter how hard things get, there is always hope in the world.



P.S. I Love You Day 2021

By Johnathan Ahdout

P.S. I Love You Day is a day that is always observed by Long Islanders on the second Friday of February. It is a day to bring about awareness to mental health and how your mental health can really affect lives. The day was created by a Long Island teenager who lost their retired NYPD officer dad to suicide. At NMS, students were encouraged to wear purple and white to commemorate this day, and even purple masks due to the global pandemic. In health classes, mental health lessons took place, and students were taught about this day and why our mental health is so important. To learn more, visit <http://psiloveyouday.net>, and remember that if you just remember to say “I Love You” to your loved ones, you could be saving their life.



St. Jude Valentines

By Letizia Kaya

This year the North Middle School 6th graders had the opportunity to make virtual valentines for patients at St. Jude Children’s Research Hospital. .This was an eventful day!

The teachers and a student had organized a “lunch bunch” session where the kids came to room 151 after they ate their lunch. When they arrived, they were told to go to a specific website, where they created the virtual cards. There were a lot of teachers there, including: Mrs. Weissman, Ms. Andreacchi, Ms. Rice, Dr. Cozine, Ms. Sposito, Ms. Sicurella, and Ms. Blasi. The students had an opportunity to chat with each other, listen to music and make valentines. A big crowd showed up! Over two rooms were filled! The teachers even thought it was an amazing idea!

“Anytime we can get students together for a good cause it is a success. Having our students show kindness knowing what they created would make kids at St. Judes smile always warms my heart!”- Ms. Sposito Adventure 6th Grade Math Teacher.

"It was wonderful seeing students and staff come together for the St. Jude event. There's a lot more to who you are and what people remember you by when you choose to be kind and bring positivity into people’s lives. Your words of encouragement could mean the world to someone."- Ms. Weissman, 6th Grade Adventure Social Studies Teacher.

"I thought it went really well. I didn’t expect how many participants came and how much interest they had. It was a very fun event!- Ms. Andreacchi, 6th Grade Discovery Reading Teacher.

The best part is even JFK was able to hold this amazing event! Mrs. Constantino’s 3rd grade class was able to hold this amazing event as well, making valentines for the St. Jude patients! It was a great event and we inspired many kids to do a good deed.



NYS ELA and Math Assessments

By Naomi Zarnighian

Every year, children from grades 3-8 take the ELA and math assessments. Usually, students are sitting at a desk in complete silence. Their teacher will put the packet of problems in front of them and they will have to complete it by the end of the day. Things weren’t always like this. Before 2015, there was a time limit on the assessments. You would have 70-95 (depends on your grade and what day) minutes to complete them. In 2021, there will also be changes on how the grade 3-8 students will be taking their assessments.

One change that is being made for this year is that every test will be one day. Based on your hybrid schedule, you would take the ELA test on either April 20th or 21st, and the math test on May 4th or 5th. In previous years, the tests rolled out over 2-3 days. Accommodations will be different for the 8th grade science assessments. The performance test will be on May 25th to June 4th. June 7th will be the date of the written test.

“Considering the unique school year that we have experienced this year, I think it makes sense that the assessments are not being administered in the same way as previous years,” said Mrs. Rice, a 6th grade English teacher, “I am interested in seeing the data that comes from this change.” She feels as if a different way of testing was destined in this peculiar year.

An anonymous student had more of a concern about the way we will be tested. They said “I’m not necessarily excited, but I am glad that we will still get to take these tests. The reason why is the tests are very good practice for our future tests. I think that the accommodations are fine, I just hope that because it’s going to be in one day that they won’t cram 2 days of work into a 1-day test.”

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Allergy Therapy

By Jonah Berkowitz

Allergy therapy is the long process in which someone reduces their sensitivity towards certain allergens. The most common allergens used in allergy therapy is peanuts and tree nuts. As of now there are three main types of immunotherapy for food allergens. The three types are oral, sublingual, and epicutaneous.

Oral immunotherapy is the most commonly used, and most effective form of immunotherapy. Many allergy therapists recommend this form and although it is the most effective, it comes with the highest risk for severe side effects. The less severe side effects are sneezing, coughing, and hives which are very itchy welts that arise on the skin. Some side effects which can be a bit more severe are gastrointestinal which can cause long lasting painful stomach ache, excessive nausea, and excessive vomiting. The two most severe side effects of oral immunotherapy are anaphylaxis and eosinophilic esophagitis (EOE). Anaphylaxis can occur seconds after the antigen (allergen) goes into the bloodstream. It can start of as just a rash and swelling around the face. Anaphylaxis can lead to nausea, vomiting, low blood pressure, shock and the most dangerous, difficulty breathing. The difficulty breathing is caused by inflammation of the throat, that inflammation can lead to suffocation and in the worst of cases death. Luckily, the mortality rate of anaphylaxis is a low 1% due to the life saving epi-pen. The epi-pen contain a medicine called epinephrine, which relieves the “patient” of his/her reaction to an allergen.

Sublingual and epicutaneous immunotherapy are a bit less common. Sublingual immunotherapy is a lot safer but less effective, as the allergen is inserted under the tongue and then spit out. The amount builds up and soon the patient is able to swallow the allergen. The overall process takes a lot longer than oral immunotherapy but has much less side effects. Epicutaneous immunotherapy is transferred onto the skin through a patch. The process is the longest of all three forms of immunotherapy and is mainly used for people with the most sensitive of allergies. It has the smallest chance for side affects, still taking the longest amount of time.

Allergy therapy has still not been perfected and there are many cases of side effects that occur in patients. In the rest of this article I will be elaborating more on the most common, popular, and effective form of immunotherapy. Oral immunotherapy has been increasing in popularity very quickly. Recent trials were held to test the product used for peanut immunotherapy and the results were very interesting. The company that I will be talking about is called Palforzia. The trials were held with kids 4-17 years of age with a peanut allergy. Half were given a placebo and the other half were given a peanut powder. Both doses increased over time until the maximum dose was reached. Overall, studies showed that the peanut powder made cross-contamination of peanuts 95% less dangerous. This caught many peoples eyes and encouraged them to try out the new “cure” for their peanut allergy. The whole thing became FDA approved just last year January 21, 2020, so it is still a very new treatment.

Many researchers, allergists, and more are working to perfect the allergy treatment to make it safe for all kids and adults with peanut, and tree nut allergies. They are also working to perfect immunotherapy for all of the other top 8 allergens. There’s still so much unknown in the region of allergies and how to cure them.

International Women’s Day

By Elizabeth Sheydina

What is International Women’s Day?

International Women’s Day is a day to celebrate women’s achievements and bring attention to women’s social issues. It is celebrated on March 8th. Having a women’s day is so great since women had only a few rights for thousands of years. Women didn’t get an education or the right to vote. Instead of a proper education like the men had, girls were only taught how to weave and cook. In the U.S it took 72 years, from 1848 all the way to 1920 to get women the right to vote. Women’s rights activist, Suzan B. Anthony was devoted to getting their fellow females democratic power. Can you believe that it took 232 years for the U.S to have a female Vice President? Read this article to find out how and when International Women’s Day started, what countries celebrate it, and how you can celebrate this fantastically female holiday!

When and how did International Women’s Day start?

In the U.S the year of 1908 was filled with unrest and critical debate amongst women. Women were sick of being oppressed. They wanted equality! Then in that same year 15,000 women marched into New York City demanding shorter hours, better pay, and voting rights. Then in 1909 the Socialist Party of America declared the first National Women’s Day. It was celebrated across the country on February 28th. It was then celebrated on the last Sunday of February until the year 1913. You are probably thinking to yourselves, but that isn’t International Women’s Day! In the year 1910 the second International Conference of Working Women was being held in Copenhagen. A woman named Clara Zetkin talked about International Women's Day. She wanted there to be an annual holiday in every country of the world celebrating females. Many women from 17 countries, three of which were elected for Finnish government, agreed on International Women’s day at the conference.

When did other countries start following the girl party?

In 1911 European countries such as Austria, Denmark, Germany, and Switzerland celebrated for the first time on the 19th of March. More than a million men and women attended IWD rallies. On the eve of the First World War, Russian women celebrated Women’s Day on February 23. Another reason why Women’s Day is celebrated on Sunday the 23rd of February in Russia is because on that day women began a four day strike for the right to vote. They didn’t stop until the Czar had no choice but to grant their rights. Back then the Russian people used the Julian Calendar. After a few discussions they agreed to have International Women’s Day on March 8. That is the same day but in the more widely used Gregorian calendar, and it’s been that way since.

Who and How do people celebrate now?

The countries that celebrate IWD are Afghanistan, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, China (for women only), Cuba, Georgia, Guinea-Bissau, Eritrea, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Laos, Madagascar (for women only), Moldova, Mongolia, Montenegro, Nepal (for women only), Russia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uganda, Ukraine, Uzbekistan, Vietnam and Zambia. People celebrate with men giving their mothers, wives, girlfriends, colleagues, etc flowers and small gifts. In some countries IWD has the same status as Mother’s Day. Kids give gifts to their mothers and grandmothers. To add on, people throw events, political rallies, fashion parades, and more.

I hope you enjoyed reading my article on International Women’s Day. I hope you found it interesting about how this female based holiday came to be. I found all my information from <https://www.internationalwomensday.com/Activity/15586/The-history-of-IWD>.

Robot on Mars

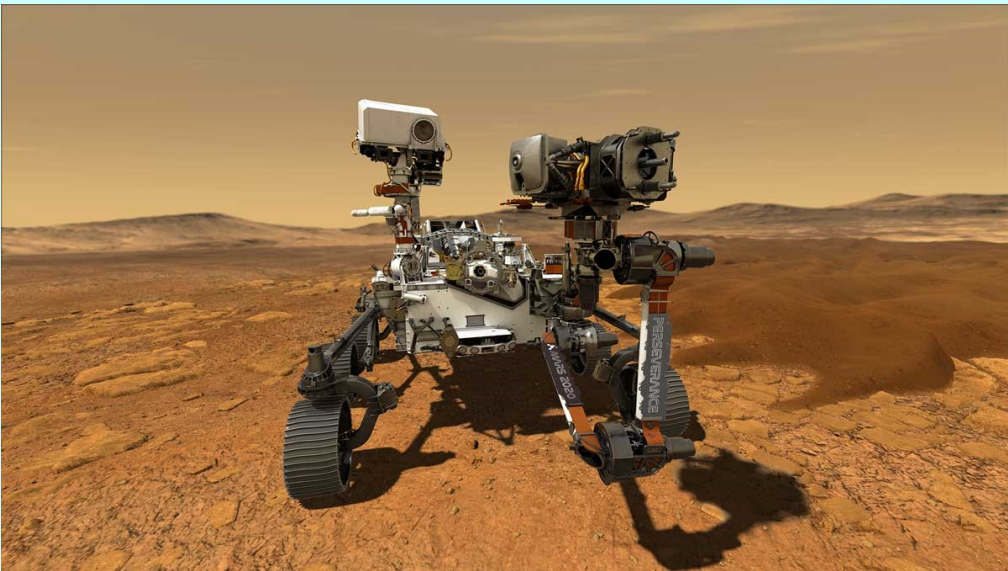
By Mia Rios

Imagine about 1.5 million years ago, when people were just beginning to evolve, to rise. Now, July 30, 2020, we find ourselves consistently sending high tech robots 159.11 million miles away to a whole new world. A whole new planet, Mars.

Mars is a cold desert world. It is about half the size of Earth. Mars, also called the Red Planet, is red because of rusty iron in the ground. Mars and Earth are very common. Like Earth, Mars has seasons, volcanoes, canyons, and weather. Unlike Earth, it has a very thin atmosphere made of carbon dioxide, nitrogen, and argon. Scientists discovered there are signs of ancient floods on Mars, but now water mostly exists as frozen ice and thin clouds. On some hillsides in Mars, there is evidence of liquid salty water in the ground.

NASA has launched various attempts to send robots on Mars to investigate the possibility of life there. One of their first attempts was the Mars Pathfinder, which was launched December 4, 1996 and landed on Mars Ares Vallis on July 4, 1997. It was designed as a technology demonstration of a new way to deliver instrumented lander to rover to the surface of the red planet. Pathfinder accomplished this goal and also returned an abundant amount of data and its primary design life. This robot carried instruments for scientific observations and to provide engineering data on the new technologies being demonstrated. Some of these instruments were to analyze the atmosphere, climate, and the composition of its rocks and soil. Pathfinder used a very creative way of entering Mars atmosphere. It was assisted by a parachute to slow its descent through the thin atmosphere and a giant system of airbags to cushion the impact.

On July 30, 2020, NASA launched a brand new and technologically advanced robot. Its name was Perseverance. The robot also had the added challenge of the global Covid-19 pandemic. On February 18, 2021, it landed in Jezero crater, an ancient river. There, the robot searched for fossils in rocks that formed in Mars’ warm, wet past. Perseverance will also collect soil and rock samples as it travels, and store them in tubes that future missions by NASA to collect. Despite technological advances in making small, low-power science instruments for space missions, many types of laboratory analyses still can’t be performed in space or can’t be done very precisely. Additionally, science is all about being able to reproduce results; getting Perseverance’s samples back to Earth means we could run the same science experiments in multiple laboratories.



Alien Existence

By Gabriella Sadaghati

The topic of alien existence in the universe has always been questioned, most of the time disregarded and thought of as absurd. The idea of other mystical creatures potentially living in outer space sounded ridiculous to most individuals. For the past few decades, there have been amateur claims by ordinary people who have witnessed “alien existence.” However, these theories do not level up to the affirmations which have recently been made. Why isn’t there much talk about extraterrestrials then, one may ask? Well, with newfound knowledge of extraordinary and unbelievable information comes government secrecy and propaganda. Nation leaders were forced to shield this information from society in an effort to prevent “mass hysteria”. One such claim comes from a very reliable source, former Israeli space security chief Haim Eshed. He is one of the few responsible for this astonishing bombshell.

On December 8th, 2020, NBC news released an article originally published in the Jerusalem Post, speaking about possible extraterrestrial life in outer space. According to the article, Eshed was aware of the aliens for quite a while; and has known of earthlings who have been in contact with a number of extraterrestrials from a “galactic federation.” "The Unidentified Flying Objects have asked not to publish that they are here, humanity is not ready yet," Eshed shares with Israel’s *Yediot Aharonot* newspaper. Eshed also states that aliens were equally wondering about human life, and were looking to comprehend “the fabric of the universe.” Additionally, he states that numerous cooperation agreements have been signed between the extraterrestrials and humans, where bases have been made. One base is said to be under the “depths of Mars” where US astronauts and alien deputies meet. According to Eshed, there is an agreement between the U.S. government and extraterrestrials. They signed a contract with government officials to do experiments on earth, and together partner to study and understand the universe, he says. Eshed also shares that President Trump was knowledgeable of these extraterrestrials’ existence and was on “the verge of revealing” the confidential data, but he was asked not to in order to prevent public frenzy. One might give the above claims more credibility while thinking that President Trump’s addition of the 5th branch of military, The Space Force, was an affirmation of such future interactions between earthlings and extraterrestrials. Eshed additionally claims that the aliens have asked their existence to remain classified, because they do not believe humanity is not ready yet. To learn more about Eshed’s notions, they are published in “The Universe Beyond the Horizon - conversations with Professor Haim Eshed.” Additionally, Eshed states that he is revealing this information recently as opposed to sooner because at the age of 87, he says that he has “nothing to lose”. "If I had come up with what I'm saying today five years ago, I would have been hospitalized," Eshed says.

Eshed is not the only government professional with these ideologies. Paul Hellyer, former Defense Minister of Canada, also shares similar claims with Haim Eshed. In a television interview which was published on DailyMail UK, Hellyer describes an extraterrestrial who he has seen in an exclusive video clip: this alien deemed to share similar physical attributes and qualities as humans, however more olive-skinned and bony. He also states that he finds that these creatures are short, (roughly 5 feet) have slim arms and legs, and large heads and brown eyes. Both Eshed and Hellyer additionally state that the creatures do not want to be associated too closely with humans, as they do not admire our lifestyle. According to Hellyer, they are not in favor of our pollution and other things which we lack care of. He claims he knows of this information from a friend and his brother who conducted a 1974 experiment in Peru, where they were in contact with extraterrestrials through some form of a special teleprompter device. As previously mentioned, Eshed also stated that aliens do not want humans to be aware of their existence; which may signify some sort of reluctance of association with our society.

Extraterrestrials are not entirely proven to exist, however there have been reasons to believe they do. Is it possible that what we thought was impossible for thousands of years exist today? Although there has been lots of speculation and an immense amount of likely evidence, nothing is certain. One day, their discovery will impact the way we perceive the world and affect both our planet and theirs. Who knows what is in store next?

Book Review: *The Perks of Being a Wallflower* by Stephen Chbosky

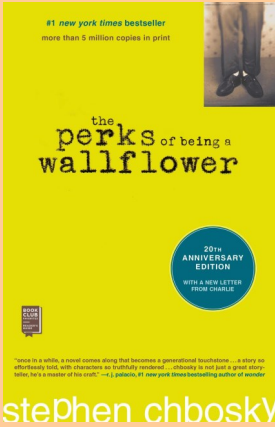
Reviewed by Noya Zarnighian

Charlie is starting freshman year in high school. After the death of his only middle school friend and his older brother moving away for college, Charlie has no one to talk to besides his sister, who spends all of her time with her new boyfriend. Charlie’s English teacher, who tells Charlie to call him Bill, notices his intelligence and starts giving him extra books to read and write about. Bill motivates Charlie to participate more actively in life, which Charlie tries to do.

At a football game, Charlie recognizes a kid from his shop class—a senior named Patrick. Patrick, or sometimes called “Nothing,” is sitting there with his half-sister, Sam. Charlie approaches the two of them and soon forms a friendship with them. They bond over music, theater, and past experiences.

The Perks of Being a Wallflower is a book about friendship and high school written in letters. We don’t know who the letters are for, but we do know the world Charlie shares. Join the narrator as he navigates parties, high school football, and unforgettable friends.

You can find this book in the Great Neck Public Library and on Sora as an ebook and as an audio book. *The Perks of Being a Wallflower* is an epistolary young adult coming-of-age story. In 2012, a movie adaptation was released under the same title.



TikTok Buzz

By Eylon Yudalevich

If you know anything about social media you have probably heard of the media sensation app known as Tiktok. Tiktok is wildly popular around the world and people like myself use it on a daily basis. In this article I will discuss some famous creators and celebrities that are part of the “TikTok Buzz!”

There are many creators on TikTok. Many creators actually become celebrities because of this wild social media platform. Creators such as: Charli Damelio, Addison Rae, and many other creators have become celebrities due to a large amount of followers. They have become so popular because of their dancing. This is known as a “TikTok dance” because these creators make them.

Of course there are many other famous creators who go into other topics. Animators such as: King Science and Tootymcnooty. These other creators draw and animate cartoons in an extremely hilarious way. All of these creators are verified, meaning they have gotten a large amount of followers. These TikTok stars all have many followers and have definitely been part of the “Tiktok Buzz.” There are many other creators and celebrities out there that use TikTok, so be sure to check them out!

TikTok Cooking Trends

By Letizia Kaya

Tiktok has had a long evolution of cooking trends! From whipped coffee, to cloud bread, to even the feta pasta dish. It makes me wonder how one person’s extremely weird food combination recipe inspires almost every TikTok user! The majority of people ended up liking these recipes! Here’s some of the most popular TikTok foods and their recipe!

Whipped Coffee

2 tbsp instant coffee
2 tbsp sugar
2 tbsp hot water
Now you can either buy a whipper or use your mixer or get a great arm workout and mix it by hand with a whisk!



Edible Cookie Dough

2 tbsp brown sugar
1 tbsp sugar
2 tbsp melted butter
½ tbsp milk
4 tbsp flour
Chocolate chips (optional)
First mix together the brown sugar, sugar, and melted butter. Mix until there are no more clumps. Then add in your milk, mix. Then your vanilla extract. Mix again. Then add your flour and chocolate chips and enjoy!



Cloud Bread

3 egg whites
Sugar
Baking powder
Whip the egg whites, then add in the sugar, add in a little bit at a time until it dissolves, then add in your baking powder. Shape it into a circle or cloud shape and bake it!



Oreo Mug Cake

4 Oreo cookies
3 tablespoons milk
Crush 4 Oreos (or more if you want more cake!) in a bowl or blender until you have an ultra-fine consistency. If you want to make your mug cake fluffier, add 1/4 teaspoon baking powder. Then add 3-4 tablespoons of milk and mix well. Place in the microwave for about 90 seconds, and that's it! Sprinkle with your favorite toppings if desired. Enjoy!



Baked Feta Pasta

2 pt. cherry or grape tomatoes
1 shallot, quartered
3 cloves garlic, smashed (optional)
1/2 c. extra virgin olive oil, divided
Kosher salt
Crushed red pepper flakes
1 (8-oz.) block feta
3 sprigs thyme
10 oz. pasta
Zest of 1 lemon (optional)

In an oven safe pot add in your tomatoes, garlic, salt, pepper, thyme, olive oil, and shallot. Mix it all up. Next add in your block of feta. Bake it. Take it out of the oven and mix it up with your pasta!



Top 3 Netflix Shows To Watch

By Elena Zhuang

1) *The Untamed* is in Chinese, but putting subtitles helps you understand what they are saying. For people who don't like scary shows or movies I recommend not watching this for it is a bit creepy; however , it can also be a little funny at times.

2) *Henry Danger* is a show about a boy who just wants an afterschool job. He gets a “job,” which ends up being a new identity as Kid Danger, the superhero who fights alongside Captain Man. Now he “blows bubbles and fights crime”.

3) *Avatar the Last Airbender* is a show about elements. If you like shows that are animated and are in the category of fantasy this is for you! Avatar’s main character is the last airbender alive in the world. He encounters many difficult events and fights against the fire nation who are trying to kill the avatar because of a prophecy .



Dear Miss Know-It-All, I’ve been having a lot of problems with math. All the numbers just swirl around in my head and don’t make sense at all! What should I do to understand it?

Albert (Bell) Newton

Dear Albert,

A lot of people experience this too! You just have to attend extra help and inform your teacher about what you are having trouble with. If you talk to your teacher, they could give you a small lesson, specialized for you and your troubles. Until then, try to focus on things you know and maybe try to look at things you find familiar about the problem.

Sincerely,
Miss Know-It-All

Dear Miss Know-It-All, I have this friend from my elementary school that turned against me out of nowhere. He started hanging out with a different group and spreading rumors. What should I do?

Martin McCartney

Dear Martin,

This is not a true friend. This person is very insecure and desperately trying to fit in at the cost of ruining friendships. You can try talking to your friend, and let them know how it makes you feel. If that doesn’t work, it may be time to move on and make new friends. You don’t want to be friends with someone who’s just going to be toxic.

Good luck,
Miss Know-It-All

Prehistoric Marvels

By Daniel Goldberg

In this article you will read about three of the earth's most spectacular animals ever to have existed. I’m sure you have your own opinions on this topic, but hear me out, these three are still spectacular in every way.

The first animal I will be talking about is the Giganotosaurus. This huge dinosaur was one of the largest carnivorous dinosaurs, as its name suggests, and hunted huge Siropods (long necked dinosaurs) in the mid Cretaceous South America. When it was found, paleontologists overestimated its size to be almost twice as big as T.rex. But as they found more fossils they realized that they were about the same size, with Tyrannosaurus possibly a bit heavier than Giganotosaurus while Giganotosaurus being longer and taller. Giganotosaurus had a huge 6 ft long head, bigger than T.rex’s head, full of long, serrated, knife-like teeth that were designed to cut flesh. Giganotosaurus was a colossal predator reaching sizes of 45 ft long and weighing from 8-10 tons. T.rex was 40 ft long and weighed the same, but it’s possible that some individuals would have reached 11 tons. Spinosaurus was 50-60 ft long and weighed 4-9 tons, but what makes Giganotosaurus amazing is not only it’s size, but it’s speed. Giganotosaurus could have ran at speeds of over 33 mph. That is almost as fast as a white tailed deer! Compare that with T.rex’s lousy 17 and Spinosaurus’s pathetic 5 (on land). Giganotosaurus would use such speed to run around a big Siropod taking bites out of it. Probably in a pack as well. The Siropod would bleed out, or die of infections in it’s wounds. It bites like a shark, runs like a deer.

Another animal that I find amazing is the Levyatan. This huge toothed whale is a relative of modern sperm whales and other toothed whales. It is often depicted as a sperm whale with huge teeth on both jaws. But this depiction is incorrect. Now, scientists think that Levyatan looked more like a modern day orca, or a pilot whale (a relative of the orca). Levyatan had the largest biting teeth of any animal ever, bigger than even sabre-toothed cat teeth or even tyrannosaurus teeth. It’s teeth were by far bigger than Megalodon’s, and could have reached sizes of a foot and a half and could have weighed over 10 lbs! Levyatan was huge, 45- 60 ft long, about the same length as the Megalodon. It weighed 45-60 tons, which is relatively more than Megalodon. This is because Levyatan has bones, and Megalodon doesn’t. Not only its size, but paleontologists highly suspect that Levyatan lived in pods like modern whales, and could have worked together like modern orcas to bring down whales bigger than themselves.

Another amazing prehistoric beast is Deinosuchus. At 40 ft long and 9.5 tons, it was the largest crocodilian of all time. It lived in North America in the late Cretaceous and ambushed large dinosaurs when they came for a drink. Crocodilians existed for over 200 million years without changing form. Yes, sizes varied, but the general body plan stayed the same. They have evolved to look like floating logs at a distance. When they spot their target, they disappear underwater and sneak up on the target, then they Kung out and use their super powerful jaws (many times more powerful than a T.rex’s) to drag their prey into the water and drown it. Modern crocodiles and alligators use the same strategy, except at a smaller scale and bite force.

It seems like you have finished our prehistoric animal journey. Remember, none of these animals lived at the same time, but all of them were apex predators in their environments. All of these animals were very big and set some kind of record. In all, I have just told you about three of the Earth's most spectacular living beings ever.

Anniversary of COVID: How Far We’ve Come

By: Liel Kafaierad

January 21, 2020- Washington State announced its first case of COVID-19.

February 29, 2020- Seattle announced its first death due to COVID-19.

March 1, 2020- COVID-19 was announced to the state of New York.

Do you remember these times??? I don't even have to write down what happens next. Trust me, we all remember the difficulties COVID-19 put us in. Here’s a list of what had to be shut down due to the virus:

- Amusement parks
- Restaurants
- Some schools
- Travel
- Large gatherings
- Malls
- Small businesses which are considered “inconvenient”
- Theatres
- Broadway productions
- TV shows being delayed
- Live Sports games
- Factories

As 2021 approached, we started to view a more positive change in COVID-19 restrictions in New York state, such as:

- Restaurants reopening, with little outdoor dining restrictions and indoor with up to 50% capacity
- Schools opening to some extent, with social distancing guidelines and other COVID regulations
- Live sports games
- March 26 2021- Indoor amusement parks can reopen at a 25% capacity, and outdoor amusement parks at 33% capacity in the state of New York.

New Lexus NX350

By Michael Zaken

Recently, the car brand Lexus, a sub-brand of the automaker Toyota, has seen many new refreshed and new models come out of the factory. To be more specific, they want to completely overhaul their brand ideology, and have a new design style. This is shown with the officially leaked 2022 Lexus NX, as the interior style is completely new, and frankly improved on a different level. This new style isn’t only on the interior though, as the exterior style is new and reminiscent of the also new IS300, 350, and 500, which we will discuss. Coming back to the current subject, here is a photo of the interior of the discussed Lexus NX.



As you can see, the new and improved interior looks more well kept, touch screen infotainment system, with a new software as well. There is a new steering wheel, taken straight from the halo coupe of the Lexus lineup, the LEXUS LC, and in front of that, a brand new, never seen before, digital instrument cluster. It’s the first of its kind of Lexus products and indicates a move in materials and technology in future Lexus products. Additionally, a new gear shifter taken from the infamous Lexus LC and LS has been revealed. The new exterior can be seen in the photos below.

Clearly, you can see the improvement compared to the Last-Gen NX, shown below. The headlights are more defined, and the body lines are also very sharp and presented. An all new grille shows the new body language and frankly, I think it will sell like hot cakes.

Apparently, the new Lexus NX will be the first model in the company’s history to offer a plug-In hybrid, dubbed the NX450H+. It will use the 2.4 Liter 4 cylinder engine paired with 3 electric motors to generate upwards of 370 horsepower, more then most CUV’s in its class, such as the Audi Q3, BMW X3, Porsche Macan, and Acura RDX.



Weird Food Review

By Riley Cheng

Welcome back for the third issue of Weird Food Review. If you forgot, in this column I will try weird foods and tell the history and the taste. This time I’m eating jellyfish and frog legs.

Jellyfish

Background

It’s mostly eaten in China but also Southeast Asia and is a delicacy. Edible jellyfish are all in the Rhizostomeae order so you can’t just take a random jellyfish and eat it. You can eat it with salad, sushi, noodles, and main courses, but it’s most of the time a side dish. Also there are much more preparation styles not just the one I listed.



History

It was mostly eaten in the coastal area of China and was a source of ingredients for Chinese cuisine for over 1,500 years. The two main jellyfish eaten in China are cannonball jellyfish and jelly blubber. When alive the cannonball contains toxins so they did a long method which they don’t explain. Rhopilema hispidum are also edible and the most popular in Japan and Korea and also very popular in China. There’s also numerous other edible jellyfish of Aurelia aurita, Crambionella orsini,[8] Chrysaora pacifica, Lobonema smithi, Lobonemoides gracilis and Nomura's jellyfish. They have low calories, so lower fat and 95 percent water, but they mostly are part of other dishes like I mention. Plus, in some areas of Asia it is said to ease bone and muscle pain.

Taste

It’s very crunchy, but soft at the same time. It isn’t chips crunchy, more like soft crunchy. There’s really no taste and is mostly squared. It is really weird because it’s like soft crunchy with no flavor but the texture is really satisfying to hear.

3 out of 5: It’s so-so.

Frog legs

Background

They are a famous dish in mostly China and France, but it’s also consumed in Vietnam, Cambodia, Thailand, Indonesia, northern Italy, the Alentejo region of Portugal, Spain, Albania, Slovenia, Romania, Bulgaria, northwestern Greece, South Africa, and southern US. It contains a lot of protein, omega 3, vitamin A, and potassium and is really similar to chicken.



History

In 2014 the largest exporter in the world wasn’t France or China but Indonesia. About \$40 million worth of frog legs were sold internationally but there more than one major exporter which was Indonesia, China, Belgium, France, and the US, but this doesn’t take into account production which will make it \$3 billion worth of frog legs. In medieval and early modern Europe frogs were not considered meat and could be eaten in the Christian fast of lent along with fish and birds flesh. Monks in Lorraine were recorded to eat frog during lent in the 13th century.

Taste

As I already mentioned it was kind of like chicken with the meaty texture and was kind of like chicken wings because the meat was between 2 bones. It also kind of tasted like chicken with pepper and salt. It was good though because chicken wings are great and the piece was big.

4 out of 5: very good

Traveling During Covid

By Elliot Ganjian

Traveling during Covid is hard in this world and you travel you SHOULD follow many rules. Now when you travel international here are the CDC guidelines.

If you must travel, take steps to protect yourself and others:

- If you are eligible, get fully vaccinated for COVID-19.

- Before you travel, get tested with a viral test 1-3 days before your trip.

- Wear a mask over your nose and mouth when in public.

- Avoid crowds and stay at least 6 feet/2 meters (about 2 arm lengths) from anyone who did not travel with you.

- Get tested 3-5 days after your trip and stay home and self-quarantine for a full 7 days after travel, even if your test is negative. If you don’t get tested, stay home and self-quarantine for 10 days after travel.

- Follow all [state and local](#) recommendations or requirements after travel.

These are the rules and regulations to travel.



Front Office Members and Service Time Manipulation

By: Liana Kase

MLB has been faced with a lot of issues lately. From pitchers using pine tar, to players marketing themselves on the field, commissioner Rob Manfred has not handled it great. This situation doesn’t help Manfred.

A month ago, Seattle Mariners CEO James Mather held a press conference via Zoom with his rotary club—pretty weird if you ask me. A reporter had asked him about Seattle’s two top prospects, Jarred Kelenic, who was acquired from the Mets in a trade, and Julio Rodriguez, both of whom are Major League ready.

There could be multiple reasons why this question was asked. Could be that the Mariners are a small market team who has struggled over the past year. Could be the fact that Kelenic has batted .290 in the minors. The reason most people thought the reporter asked this question was because the Mariners could be practicing service time manipulation.

Service time manipulation is when a team won’t bring up Major League ready prospects due to money and time. Because of this, it is common to see service time manipulation affect minor leaguers. The reason owners won’t bring them up is that they owe the player more money. A salary around \$500,000 shouldn’t really matter to billionaire owners, but there is more that goes into it. Let’s say that prospect lives up to the hype, and now enters his final year on his contract. Most teams would be inclined to offer this player a contract extension, right? Here’s the thing, a six digit salary might be a lot for the average human, but for a baseball player, it’s not much. If this guy lives up to the hype, and establishes himself as a top tier player, he is going to ask for a multi-million dollar extension. The natural decision would be to pay up, just some owners, specifically owners of small market teams, are cheap.

Obviously, all owners are in it for the money. Just there is a right and wrong way to make money if you’re an owner. The right way is to go after key players. If you get key players, most likely your team will play well. If your team plays well, people will show up to games, if people show up to games, you make money. The wrong way is to not go after key players, have a terrible team, and make money from the fans that are passionate enough to show up, plus save money from not adding to their payroll.

A lot of people know that teams practice this, but no team or team official has publicly admitted that they practice service time manipulation. Mather, on the other hand, said that he would be out there playing before he brought up Kelenic and Rodriguez. Pretty much saying that the Mariners practice service time manipulation. If things couldn’t get any worse, Mather criticized Rodriguez, who is Dominican, on his choppy English.

Quickly after this statement was released, Mather resigned from his position. Even though this should benefit the Mariners, it just shows how teams are purposely not putting the best product on the field. Because of this, fans have requested a salary floor. Meaning teams will have to spend a certain amount of money. This would definitely increase revenue, and make the league a lot more competitive. In other words, making sure owners make money the right way.

The Truth About Pollen Allergies

By Elizabeth Sheydina

You probably know a person who has pollen allergies or hay fever. That might even be you. If you ever wondered what these pollen allergies are and what causes them. Read on to find out.

What is pollen?

Pollen is produced by plants. These tiny grains of pollen help fertilize the plants of their same species. A tulip could use it’s pollen to help another tulip and so on. Think of it like how members of a community help each other. For example, it’s like how you help your siblings with their homework sometimes. You gave them your knowledge so they could grow stronger just like plants do. Since plants cannot move they must use pollinators like bees and other insects to help them out. As well as insects the grains of pollen travel with wind, because of this pollen contaminates the air.

How are pollen allergies caused?

We love plants, we love their smell, we use them for food, and they are beautiful. So why do so many people’s bodies react so badly against otherwise harmless pollen. You might be surprised to find out that there isn’t a huge science behind pollen allergies. Pollen allergies just like food or pet hair allergies are caused by frequent exposure in childhood. You probably played outside a ton when you were a little kid. In the spring, a single cubic meter of air can contain thousands of pollen grains. Allergies are caused when your immune system mistakes a friendly protein as a threat. Unfortunately you will be stuck with pollen allergies for the rest of your life. Every time your immune system senses the “enemy” it raises its armies a.k.a the antibodies. As the antibodies pass the allergens through to the white blood cells chemicals get released causing the allergy symptoms that we hate.

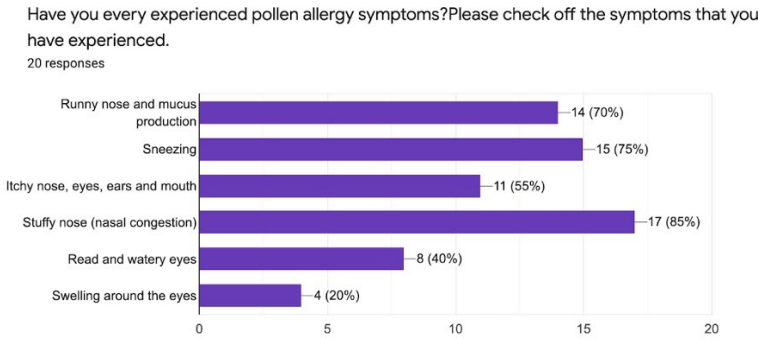
What plants cause pollen allergies?

Grasses are the most common cause of pollen allergies. Ragweed is the main cause of weed allergies. Other causes include sagebrush, pigweed, lamb’s quarters and tumbleweed. Species of trees, such as birch, cedar and oak also produce a highly allergenic pollen. Plants like roses, and some other flowering trees like cherry and pear trees do not typically cause allergic reactions.

What are the symptoms of pollen allergies. And what should I do about them?

The symptoms are: runny nose and mucus production, sneezing, itchy nose, eyes, ears and mouth, and stuffy nose (nasal congestion), red and watery eyes, and swelling around the eyes. One thing that you can do is talk to your parents. Your parents could take you to the doctor. As a kid who has been getting pollen allergies since third grade I know what it’s like. I complained about it to my dad and he took me to his allergy doctor. They can prescribe or recommend different types of allergy medicine. Such as sprays, eye drops, pills and liquid meds. Maybe even allergy shots.

Pollen allergies are nothing to worry about. Although there are no magical cures, there are plenty of options to temporarily stop the symptoms. You aren’t alone— roughly 20% of Americans experience spring pollen allergies. I hope you liked reading my article. Below are the results of a poll where students answered on what pollen allergy symptoms they experience.



I got my information from: <https://www.aafa.org/allergies/types-of-allergies/pollen-allergy.aspx>
<https://www.livescience.com/33871-pollen-allergies-common.html>

Exotic Animals

By Daniel Goldberg

The world is a home for millions of different kinds of animals, with extraordinary looks, amazing abilities, and many more. In this article you will learn about three animals that I think have some of the most incredible characteristics, abilities, and looks.

This is a cuttlefish. Cuttlefish are close relatives of octopus and squid. They have the biggest brain to body size ratio of any invertebrate, and very highly developed eyes. The cuttlefish, just like octopus and squid are able to spray ink out of an ink sac at the back of their bodies. The ink blinds and confuses any attacking predators. But even this isn’t their coolest trait. Cuttlefish prefer to hunt crabs and other crustaceans, and have a really cool way of doing it. A cuttlefish will flash super bright, glow-in-the-dark stripes to hypnotize it’s prey. It is able to change color many times faster than an octopus or chameleon and uses this ability to hypnotize it’s prey. Then, it shoots out a dart-like pair of tentacles to grab hold when within range.

Our next animal is the killer whale, otherwise known as an orca. The killer whale is an extremely intelligent and successful hunter. What makes this animal amazing isn’t only it’s physical abilities, but it’s mental abilities too. Killer whales terrorize everything from tuna to whales, and when they see a target, the chance for it to survive is very slim. One of their favorite prey are seals. But seals like to escape the orcas by hiding on ice flows. Orcas have two ways to counter this. First, they try to tip it over. One or two killer whales tilt the ice flow while the third waits for the seal to fall in its mouth. If the ice flow is too big, then the orcas use an even more impressive trick. A few killer whales swim at full speed in a line at the ice flow. Right in front of it they stop. Their momentum causes a wave to wash the seal off the ice flow. To hunt dolphins, they chase them into a bay, and then trap them in. They form a line and advance at the dolphins until they are so packed together they can’t escape and panic, resulting in dinner for the orcas. If you thought a Great White shark was the king of the ocean, think again. Orcas eat them regularly. First they surround it and force it toward the surface. Then one rushes in and flips the shark over. This disorients the shark, and it is easily killed.

Even whales have to be afraid. Humpback whales are a common prey for orcas. A few of the orcas ram into it, to stun it for a second, enough for the killer whales to get on top of it to cover it’s blowhole. Orcas use this whale hunting strategy against other types of whales as well. Orcas are bigger, stronger, faster, and smarter than great white sharks and are estimated to have a stronger bite force than a t.rex. But the fact that they live in the ocean makes it hard to measure their biting strength.

For our last animal we have the jaguar. The jaguar is one of the five big cats in the world and is by far the biggest cat in the Americas. With a bite force of 1,500 psi, they have the strongest bite force of any cat and one of the most powerful bite forces in the animal kingdom. Jaguars are the strongest cat in the world and have the biggest claw to body size ratio of any big cat. Jaguars can weigh 190 to 300 pounds. They are fast and can climb trees well and swim even better. They use ambush as their most deadly weapon. They are the bulkiest of all cats and eat caiman (a type of crocodile) and tapir, which can weigh 500-700 pounds. They also like to eat deadly tusked peccaries. But their most common prey is the capybara. They are the world's biggest rodent and can swim very well. What makes them difficult prey is their ability to swim faster than a crocodile, almost as fast as a shark. When they feel threatened they leap into the water to escape the king of the Amazon. The jaguar stands out from the other big cats, because of their killing strategy. Instead of suffocating their prey by biting their prey’s throat, they bite the back of their prey’s skull, to break the braincase.

It seems like you have finished our animal journey. You’ve explored the mysterious cuttlefish, the cunning orca, and the powerful Jaguar. You’ve seen how each one’s traits help them succeed in their environments. But all of their amazing abilities are useless against our mass destruction. We are hurting all of these animals as never before. All of these animal’s future is in our hands, and we should try to save them.



March Madness

By: Ben Ginsberg

March Madness is an event where college basketball teams play against each other in a bracketed tournament. This was an interesting year for March Madness. First up were Baylor against Gonzaga. Baylor were the underdogs, as they won 28 of their games while they faced Gonzaga with 31 wins.

The game was underway. Right off the bat, Baylor was on fire, scoring 47 points in the first half, which was ten more than Gonzaga. In the second half, Gonzaga came back with 9 more points. To counter that, Baylor came out scoring 16 straight points. Baylor ended up winning 86 to 70, a crushing 16 point defeat, winning Baylor their 12th championship. Baylor wouldn’t have won the game if it wasn’t for Jared Butler, who scored an outstanding 22 points, 7 assists, and 3 rebounds.

