



Mrs. Masrou's Library

By: Sarah Finkelstein

"The more that you read, the more things you will know. The more that you learn, the more places you'll go." – Dr. Seuss

The wise, and much beloved, Dr. Seuss taught many of us the pleasures of reading. Just open a book and you are transported to a different time and place. You can be anyone. You can go on an adventure. You can solve a mystery. You can fall in love. You can overcome an obstacle. Most importantly, you can learn. Books teach. Books take you to new places. But should you keep your head down in a book while life passes you by? Or should you get up and see the world? Are books as important today as they were in the past? Or has technology replaced the need for libraries?

These questions are answered by our very own Mrs. Catherine Masrou. Mrs. Masrou loves books and combines her love for reading with her professional training to share this love with others. Yet, her nose is not glued to her books. She knows the value of putting down a book and going out and seeing the world. She recognizes that books and libraries are losing ground against the conveniences of modern technology, and she wisely incorporates these new ideas with her tried and true library skills. Better yet, she teaches all of us how to use these new sources of information all the while fondly reminiscing about the value of a good book.

Mrs. Masrou is Smithtown High School West's Library Media Specialist. She transformed her love of books into a career in which she passionately maintains a library and makes it a wonderful and technologically advanced place for others to learn. According to Mrs. Masrou, her job is to "support teachers and students with the resources needed to learn. This means I provide books and materials, but also technology and hands-on materials." Simply put, Mrs. Masrou is motivated by students. She boasts that "Today's students learn in a dynamic world where information is changing as fast as technology. Because of this, I want to make sure that my students are challenged to think critically, search effectively, construct meaning and learning efficiently and ethically, and select the best resources and tools for learning. My goal is to prepare students for work and life in the 21st century."

This passion for reading is deeply rooted in her past. Mrs. Masrou grew up in an extremely small town called Dixfield, Maine. She recounts that the total population of her hometown was less than the population of Smithtown West. Mrs. Masrou told me that she had 63 students in her high school graduating class. "I knew every one of them by name. Dixfield is very rural and it is winter 9 months of the year. In Maine, I learned to do lots of outdoor things including skiing, skating, snowmobiling, sledding, hiking, and biking." Although she loved books and did cozy up in front of a warm fire with her favorite books, Mrs. Masrou knew the value of balance and never forgot to go outside and see the world.

Not everyone can find themselves a job doing what they love, but Mrs. Masrou accomplished just this. She was able to go to school and study a field she loved- Library Sciences. She started college at the University of Maine and transferred to and graduated with a B.A. in English from Colby College. She later received her M.S. in Information Science and doctorate in Education... (Continued on page 2)



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Closing a Museum, or Ending an Important Conversation on the First Amendment?

By: Rachael Kamel

Washington D.C. is most known for its amazing museums. People typically think of the Smithsonian: the Air and Space Museum, Natural History Museum, American History Museum, and many many others. However, there are many other museums in the city that go underappreciated, such as the Newseum.

The Newseum's goal "is to increase public understanding of the importance of a free press and the First Amendment." Exhibits throughout the seven floors and fifteen galleries include Pulitzer prize winning photos, front page newspapers from important events in history, a 9/11 gallery, a Stone Wall exhibit, a First Amendment gallery, and many more.

The wonderful museum, which brings much needed attention to a very important topic, will be closing at the end of 2019.



According to the Washington Post, "Johns Hopkins University is buying the landmark building that houses the Newseum for \$372.5 million, a purchase that will enable the struggling cultural institution devoted to news and the First Amendment to seek a new home in the Washington area."

Since 2008 the Newseum has been operating in its current location a few blocks northwest of the Capitol. It is a wonderful location which gives the museum an incredibly unique feature. On the seventh floor there is a balcony you can walk out onto and look directly at the Capitol building.

"Acquiring this iconic property in the heart of the nation's capital will represent a transformative moment for Johns Hopkins University and place our research and expertise in the midst of national and global decision-making," the university said in a statement.

While the purchase of this building on prime DC real estate will lead to amazing things for Johns Hopkins, the announcement of the purchase is sad news for journalism lovers. The Newseum will be reopening in a new location, but will need to change and cut down on some exhibits... (Continued on page 3)

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Masroure

(continued from front page)

Mrs. Masroure fondly recalls her mentor, and how she wanted to be like him. Her high school English teacher Mr. Libby got her interested in books and reading. But he also taught her to see the world. Mrs. Masroure explains that “Reading changed my life because even though I lived in a small town, books allowed me to travel and meet characters from a variety of different backgrounds. This made me more empathetic and more curious about my world”. Mrs. Masroure has seen the world and made her mark on it. Before coming to Smithtown, she served as a Peace Corps Volunteer in Morocco, North Africa. She taught English to scientists and researchers so that they could better participate in conferences and academic meetings around the world. Books taught her skills and she put these skills to good work. The believes that this experience was extremely beneficial to her learning, “Travel taught me that there are good people everywhere in the world. I also learned that pretty much everyone wants the same thing—love, peace, happiness, and health.”

This background of book learning and world travel made her a perfect candidate for our Library Science Teacher, but Mrs. Masroure did not stop there. She combines her skills with Science and technology as well. She spends her time running a non-profit organization that supports STEM. She is particularly interested in STEM because she believes that we are going to need a lot of creative scientists, technology experts, engineers, and mathematicians to solve the biggest problems of the future. Through her non-profit foundation, she runs a STEM Summer Camp, STEM Family Fun Night in the fall, and a STEAM Conference for high school students in the spring. She also brings new technologies to students like underwater robotics. In addition, she holds board meetings and works with teachers to ensure they have the resources to support students with a strong interest in STEM. You can also find her at the High School West STEAM Conference and at the BULL STEAM Ahead event at High School East.

Mrs. Masroure sounds like someone to truly emulate, yet she is humble. When asked “Do you have any advice for someone who would want to follow a similar path?” She responds that she does not think anyone could follow in her footsteps: “We all have our own paths. Even my children can’t follow my path because the world is constantly changing and evolving. The jobs of today may not even exist in the coming generations.” She is insightful and aware of the world around her and her place in it. When asked if there was anything that she would have done differently, she does not talk about her accomplishments. Instead, she wishes that she could have traveled more when she was younger. Although she can no longer travel and experience the world physically, her books allow her to keep exploring and learning about the world.

Mrs. Masroure doesn’t know if libraries and books will continue to exist in the future, but she is confident that there will always be a need for information. She hopes everyone will “seek, use, and share information to make the world a better place.” Mrs. Masroure stated that one of the most significant accomplishments of her career was playing a part in the renovation and re-imagination of the HSW library. “I wanted to create a welcoming, flexible learning space that would have a variety of resources to support all types of learners”. She feels very accomplished and believes Smithtown High School West will serve as a model for other libraries.

Arlene Maracina

By: Olivia Maracina

Arlene Maracina is not a household name. She’s no celebrity or activist. She’s not a politician nor is she a recipient of the nobel prize. She is, however, a cancer survivor, a sibling of seven and a mother of three. She is a retired sergeant on the New York State Police Department and a true believer that “Everything happens for a reason.” Arlene grew up in Queens, New York in a house of 10. “I had 6 siblings, my parents and my grandmother with one bathroom! I slept in the attic with my 4 sisters,” she relayed this to me yesterday over dinner. She began to reminisce about her childhood with a tint of nostalgia in her eyes. “My mother starting working part time at night when my youngest brother was 5 and my father worked. We all had to take care of each other, especially my younger siblings, which was difficult at times.”

Arlene’s parents were quite traditional meaning they believed strongly that children should be seen and not heard at almost any given time. She described how when her father came home from work he had exactly 45 minutes to speak to her mother alone, “we were not allowed to speak to them and only they would speak to each other.” I asked her what it was like to grow up with such strict parents, for I am fortunate that my parents are always around to help me and provide me with more than I could ask for. She reminded me of how lucky I am. “ My mom was the go between the kids and my dad. She was also very strict and handed out the punishments. If we misbehaved we were punished. Sometimes the punishment was physical and sometimes it was a matter of not being allowed to do something or go somewhere, ” she explained. “One time she threw a shoe at my sister, who was being very disrespectful to my mom, and broke the front window which was very funny. But what was even funnier was when my mom made up a story about the window so my sister wouldn’t get into any more trouble.” The words she said weren’t what surprised me but rather her composure. She was happy looking back at negative memories. Maybe it was idea of her mother who passed eight years ago, or possibly the remnants of a childhood shared with her siblings, or as she called them, “her best friends.” She went on to describe their summers at her father’s trailer upstate and her first job at twelve.

As she recalled her childhood to me, I looked to see how this foreshadowed her future life. She didn’t go to college after to high school, but rather applied to be a police officer at 17. At 22 she got the job. She spoke with a certain zest and spunk that quite obviously served her well as she entered a male dominated field. Sexism and harassment in the workplace is still an issue in 2019, so the notion a woman entering a “macho” field thirty years ago naturally sparked questions within me. “I was surprised that I did not experience much harassment. Every once in a while someone would say something rude or insulting but I held my own and didn’t let it get to me.” I asked her if she had ever heard of any stories, she responded with certainty. “One female officer said that the captain of her precinct was making advances on her. Not sure whatever happened with that. There were reports of sexual harassment made by a few of my female colleagues. I consider myself lucky.” She went on to explain that “every once and a while you would meet someone who made a derogatory remark but I would usually just brush it off or send back a response. You can’t have a thin skin doing this job. Working on the streets you heard a lot worse.” I was still curious as to how a woman of such humble background found herself challenging societal gender norms. I questioned her on other obstacles which made it difficult to succeed or even work in such a field. “My uncle told me I was crazy and that I would never succeed in such a difficult job. He said it was a man’s job and no place for a woman. My boyfriend who I was seeing for 2 years broke up with me because he didn’t want me to join the Department.” She had a wide smile as she answered that last question. She was proud. Next she said, “I became a Police Officer and after 11 years took the Sergeants test and finished 185 out of 4000 police officers that took the test. I enjoyed every minute as an Officer and I retired after 20 years of service to the New York City Police Department.” The sparkle of accomplishment grew brighter as she spoke.

She then went on to explain how life is always changing. Never did she think that one of her fellow cops would turn out to be her husband and father of her three children, or that she would move out of Queens to the suburbs of Long Island, or battle and survive breast cancer four times. But as her favorite motto goes, “Everything Happens For a Reason.”

Profile

Subscribe To Pewdiepie:

Do Your Part

By: Lily Davidson

As the minutes count away, so does the subcount in the ‘battle’ of most subscribed YouTube channel. This story took social media by storm. Allow me to explain. YouTube creator Felix Kjellberg, better known as Pewdiepie, is currently the most subscribed to account on YouTube. He started off making videos of gameplay, which was rare in the year of 2006. Quickly, he became popular, and made more videos, which varied in ideas. He would communicate with fans, answering their questions and having “Fridays with Pewdiepie.” Now, at 90,000,000 subscribers, he makes various series of videos and has gone on tours and to conventions as well.

The “Sub War” has come out of what has been a joke for Pewdiepie. He normally just jokes about things like these, but because of the media and his own fans, it becomes something much bigger. Suddenly, all around the internet and in life, you can see “Subscribe to Pewdiepie.” There was a printer hack done by TheHackerGiraffe on Twitter and people even put out posters. One person put the information on a truck and drove it around, some walk around playing his diss track, and some wanted to buy an ad for it at the superbowl. One person even got a billboard in Times Square of New York City that had said to Subscribe to Pewdiepie. An entertainer who goes by the name of Mr. Beast also bought billboards to bring attention to the cause. YouTuber Jacksepticeye even held a livestream on YouTube in order to make more of a ‘sub gap,’ which means more of a difference in subscribers between the two channels. People, when subscribed, say that they have done “their part,” as in to help Kjellberg remain on the top. Elon Musk had even hosted an episode of Kjellberg’s most famous series, known as Meme Review.

Though all of it seems to be fun and games only, the printer hack, for example, raised awareness for how weak systems can be for things like printers. TheHackerGiraffe contacted The Verge and said “that he got the idea for the hack while browsing Shodan.io, a repository for internet-connected devices. Here, they claim that they found 800,000 available printers, and decided to attack 50,000 of them.”



As a huge fan of Pewdiepie myself, and have been since I was possibly twelve or thirteen, this story greatly intrigued me. I am immensely interested in the world of YouTube and this competition that had originally started off as a joke.

A video released by Asian Boss on YouTube caught attention to the public, and especially to Kjellberg. He reviewed the video and was overwhelmed by support he had received, which he actually was not expecting, as T-series is a large part of Indian culture in the modern day at this point. As discussed in the video by one of the people interviewed, most of India had just received wifi, and as soon as they log into their devices, T-series is one of the first things to pop up. T-series is a music record label company that is extremely popular in India. A lot of people take Kjellberg’s side, due to the fact that he is a sole creator and T-series is a company. YouTube used to favor the creators and their content solely, not even taking a complete look toward companies. The community enjoys this about YouTube and likes to see what the creators make, for fun and not for money, even though it is a job for some.

Many like to argue that he is a bad and evil person, mostly for obvious jokes and little mistakes in which he has made. Pewdiepie “has raised and given millions of dollars to charity” (Jackson, Lara, editor. “Nobody Wants To Tell You The Things PewDiePie Has Done For Charity”). He even turned this “competition of sorts” into a charity event, for example, to raise money for children in India. Fans turned it toward a race war, so when he saw this, Felix turned it into a charity event, which he has done before.

As I was writing this article, a story had come to light in which involved the New Zealand shooting. As the shooting had occurred, according to the New York Times, the gunman had broadcast part of the shooting and urged others to ‘subscribe to pewdiepie’ (Chokshi, Niraj. “PewDiePie Put in Spotlight After New Zealand Shooting”). People then took a storm to social media with this uproar, and now pewdiepie is being used in order to spread hatred and anger. The whole thing with pewdiepie’s ‘subscriber war’ was supposed to be a joke, and now has turned into this. Felix returned to this with saying he was disgusted by the actions of the gunman. According to Dateline, he had said on his Twitter: “Just heard news of the devastating reports from Christchurch, New Zealand. I feel absolutely sickened having my name uttered by this person. . . My heart and thoughts go out to the victims, families and everyone affected by this tragedy” (Haring, Bruce. “YouTube Star PewDiePie ‘Sickened’ By New Zealand Shooter Reference During Massacre”). People then started to blame Felix and things got twisted very quickly.

With this being said, fans of a person, along with the person, can easily be deemed as horrible due to occurrences in which have association. This is extremely unfair. Felix Kjellberg is no stranger to this, and receives punishment often from misunderstandings and jokes taken the wrong way. Being the most popular on the YouTube platform absolutely has its consequences.

Closing a Museum or Ending an Important Conversation on the First Amendment?

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Some of the most enticing exhibits including the 9/11 exhibit, the Berlin Wall exhibit, and the Pulitzer Prize exhibit. The 9/11 gallery on the 4th floor displays “the upper section of the 360-foot antenna mast that toppled from the World Trade Center’s North Tower when the building collapsed,” as well as shows first-person accounts from journalists who covered the story. The walls of this exhibit are also lined with front covers of newspapers from all over the world telling the devastating news story in many different languages.

On the Hubbard Broadcasting Concourse floor, you can find “eight 12-foot-high concrete sections of the original [Berlin] wall.” When walking up to the exhibit you see the very busy, and colorful, graffitied Western side of the wall. Displaying positive messages such as “Act Up,” “You are power,” and “Step by Step,” this side of the wall shows freedom and outward displays of opinions.

However, when you walk around the wall, you enter the Eastern Berlin side of the gallery. Everything is blank. It is white concrete with zero writing. This side of the exhibit is more enclosed and you feel the emotions of Eastern Berlin. A few feet away from the wall, “A three-story East German guard tower that loomed near Checkpoint Charlie — Berlin’s best-known East-West crossing” stands. You look up and the tower just continues on. It is very tall and intimidating. It makes you understand why the residents of Eastern Berlin were so scared.

For people who may be slightly less interested in journalism, the Pulitzer Prize exhibit is a must. This gallery resides on the first floor and includes photographs from “every Pulitzer Prize-winning entry since 1942, when the award was first presented.” These photographs tell extremely emotional and intense stories. While looking at these photographs you can only imagine the pain these victims went through.

The incredibly talented and very deserving photographers have managed to capture both the best and worst emotions in these terrifying situations. Some of these photos include families being reunited or the excitement of victories, while others include the harsh realities of wars people aren’t even talking about such as starvation in third world countries and people crying for help in floods and other natural disasters that may never receive it. These photographs manage to capture every person’s true emotion and makes you want to do everything you can to help.

“The world tries to ignore the horrible things, it is a journalists job to bring attention to these things.” This is something Carol Guzy, the only woman to have won four Pulitzer Prizes, has said, and this is why journalism is important. This is why displaying these photographs and stories is so important. People need to be talking about these horrible things and need to be able to see how these harsh realities are actually affecting people. This is why the Newsseum is so important. It gives the public a place to be able to really learn about the importance of journalism and the harsh realities of the world.

San Francisco Facial Recognition

By: Sarah Finkelstein

On Tuesday, May 14th, San Francisco became the first major city to ban government agencies from using facial recognition, believing it caused racial bias and increased the government’s ability to invade the privacy of its citizens.

The “Stop Secret Surveillance” ordinance was passed by the San Francisco Board of Supervisors in an 8-1 vote. The ordinance will completely inhibit large tech companies like Microsoft and Amazon from selling surveillance footage to prisons and police departments. All 53 of San Francisco’s police departments would be forbidden from using facial recognition technology, and use of any surveillance technology by the city would require board approval.

However, federally-controlled facilities like San Francisco International Airport and the Port of San Francisco can still use these surveillance technologies, as can businesses and residents.

Other cities like Berkeley and Oakland restrict surveillance, but this is the first time a city has completely banned surveillance.

The “Stop Secret Surveillance” claims that facial recognition endangers civil liberties and that there are more problems than solutions caused by this technology. The “Stop Secret Surveillance” states that “the technology will exacerbate racial injustice and threaten our ability to live free of continuous government monitoring.”

The “Stop Secret Service Surveillance” ordinance will stop large companies from selling footage to government officials, which is the current situation nationwide. Big companies provide a facial recognition software used in identifying criminals. However, many claim that these services are incredibly inaccurate in actually identifying people of interest. In fact, the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) tested Amazon’s facial recognition software and found that it incorrectly misidentified 28 black members of Congress as criminals. This technology is currently being sold to police departments across the country despite this inaccuracy toward people of color. In fact, statistics show that Blacks, women and the elderly have a substantially higher rate of misidentification.

NEWS



This ban tackles the tough question of whether the government should have to the right to watch the peoples’ every move, and this technology can severely be misused. There is evidence of government monitoring of political rallies and places of worship, like mosques. Objectors to this spyware claim that it severely compromises civil liberties, may restrict free speech, and unfairly targets innocent people.



NEWS

London Patient Might be the Second Person to be Cured of HIV

By: Paula Musial

A second patient infected with HIV-1, is believed to have been effectively cured of the virus, a case study finds. Since the beginning of the HIV epidemic about 35 million have died of causes related to the virus that weakens the immune system. The most common treatment for the viral infection is antiretroviral therapy, which suppresses the virus and HIV patients have to deal with their whole life. Now, scientists may have found a cure.

The first patient cured, the "London patient", a male resident of the UK choosing to remain anonymous, was diagnosed with the viral infection in 2003 and began treatment for the virus in 2012. He later was diagnosed with cancer of the lymphatic system and in 2016 he underwent a stem cell transplant, while remaining on antiretroviral therapy for another 16 months.

He then disrupted his treatment to test, if he truly was getting cured of HIV-1 and has now been in remission for 18 months, therefore being the second patient worldwide to be believed to be cured of the virus.

Nearly 12 years ago the "Berlin patient," Timothy Ray Brown, had been similarly cured of HIV. He used antiretroviral therapy and was diagnosed with leukemia, which he fought through two bone marrow transplants. After that, Brown was considered cured of HIV-1, as the viral infection remained undetectable.

The lead author of the study, Ravindra Gupta, stated that this method offers new possibilities for new treatments such as gene therapy, and even though it might not be suited for every patient, it still gives the scientists hope for the search of a cure.



The Black Hole is Real!

By: Sarah Finklestein

On Wednesday, April 10th, the Event Horizon Telescope observatories, scattered all over the Earth, obtained the first image of a black hole that is 55 million light years away.

From observatories on the top of the volcanoes in Hawaii and Mexico, the mountains in Arizona and the Spanish Sierra, in the Chilean Atacama Desert, and in Antarctica, a collection of around 200 international scientists collaborated together to synch the eight Event Horizon Telescopes. To achieve this wonder, these scientists needed to sync their telescopes up with extreme precision using astrophysics, mathematics, and the world's best telecommunication systems. Sheperd S. Doleman, the Director of Event Horizon Telescope project of the Center for Astrophysics, Harvard & Smithsonian, boasted, "We have achieved something presumed to be impossible just a generation ago." Doleman concluded, "Breakthroughs in technology, connections between the world's best radio observatories, and innovative algorithms all came together to open an entirely new window on black holes and the event horizon." Black holes are incredibly dense celestial objects with enormous masses compacted into such a small size that it creates a gravitational field from which not even light can escape. The presence of these objects affects their environment in extreme ways; warping spacetime, super-heating any surrounding material, and transmitting radiation. Black holes have proven extremely difficult to photograph. Yet, this is exactly what the scientists have achieved. The EHT team photographed a black hole at the core of a Galaxy known as Messier 87 near the Virgo galaxy cluster. This black hole is 55 million light-years from Earth and it has a mass 6.5 billion times that of the Sun. Worldwide coordination and teamwork, science, math and technology combined to achieve this goal.

Doleman believes that this is only the start for black hole research. This photograph is the first piece of legitimate evidence confirming black holes existing. Most evidence is indirect and based off of theories and laws of physics. "With more images like this, we can better understand the black holes that lie at the centers of galaxies. We can better understand how our theories of gravity work in the most extreme of conditions. And know, it's possible another image of a black hole might be coming in the future." The Event Horizon team also tried to take a shot of the black hole at the center of our own galaxy, called Sagittarius A*. Working together, we can achieve the impossible and continue to explore our vast and intriguing universe. Exploring and documenting rare celestial occurrences, like black holes, is the first step.

180,000 Bees Living on Notre Dame's Roof Survived the Fire

By: Paula Musial

The bees living on top of Notre Dame survived the devastating fire that broke out in the cathedral loved by many all around the world.

On Monday April 15 2019, the Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris caught fire and burned for several hours. The 850-year-old symbol of Catholicism in France's capital was engulfed in flames until early Tuesday morning, when firefighters finally gained control of the fire, after it destroyed the cathedral's iconic spire and roof.

Luckily, the three beehives on its roof on the first floor, just below the rose window, were not affected by the flames, as they are located 30 meters below the spreading of the flames on the main roof. If the beehives would have been engulfed in flames, it could have had fatal consequences, as the wax inside would have melted and all the bees would have been stuck together.

Although it is very likely, that the hives were filled with smoke, this circumstance does not affect the animals. "Bees don't have lungs like us", stated their beekeeper Nicolas Geant, therefore the smoke doesn't impact them as it would with humans. Geant, even though heartbroken about the tragedy of the cathedral, is very relieved that his bees are still out and about.

Notre Dame has housed the three beehives since 2013, each one consisting of about 60,000 bees.



NEWS

1.4 Million Students Participate in Global Climate Strike

By: Paula Musial

On Friday, May 24th, students from over 130 countries walked out of school to participate in the second global climate strike.

The global climate strike is part of the Fridays for Future movement, which was started in August 2018 by the then 15 year old Greta Thunberg. Inspired by the Parkland students that organized the March for Our Lives, she decided to skip school to sit in front of the Swedish parliament holding a sign that read "Skolstrejk for klimatet" ("school strike for climate"). The ninth grader then proclaimed to continue striking every Friday until Sweden would align with the Paris Agreement, an agreement to limit the increase of the global average temperature to 1.5 °C.

Since then several different countries held weekly school strikes to spread awareness about the climate crisis. May 24th marked the second global school strike (the first one was on March 15th) and included students from 131 countries all over the world, the ones with the highest amounts of participants being the U.S. (223 strikes), the UK (159 strikes), Sweden (133 strikes), Italy (161), Germany (220 strikes) and Canada (99 strikes).



Taiwan Legalizes Same-Sex Marriage

By: Sarah Finklestein

On Friday, May 17th, Taiwan became the first place in Asia to legalize same-sex marriage in a vote by Parliament, which passed 66 to 27.

Thousands of Taiwanese Gay rights supporters assembled outside parliament in the capital, Taipei. Supporters of the law shouted "First in Asia!" in heavy rain, after it was announced the article was passed. However, this law did not come easy. Taiwan's civil code stated that marriage was only between a man and women. Within recent years, gay rights supporters filed requests for the Constitutional Court to create a ruling on the legitimacy of this law.

It was not until 2017, that the government ruled that this law was unconstitutional and gave lawmakers a two-year deadline to create a solution. Legislators passed the law only a week before the deadline, despite the public being sharply divided. Taiwan's president, Tsai Ing-wen, who advocates for marriage equality, tweeted after the vote: "We took a big step towards true equality, and made Taiwan a better country."

Despite the festivities around this historic event, Taiwan has been lashing out at China's media for taking credit on the decision to legalize same-sex marriage. Chinese media has posted, "Local lawmakers in Taiwan, China, have legalized same-sex marriage in a first for Asia,"

Taiwanese officials were outraged by the claim due to the fact that the new law came from the Taiwanese government, not China's. In fact, China has been censoring all LGBT-related content on social media and the internet and that same-sex marriage has not been legalized in China.

This bill is a start towards equal rights in Asia, but is not there yet; there are limitations on same-sex couples adopting. Although the law is not perfect, it is seen as an example for the rest of the region.



Reviews

Avengers: Endgame

By: Trevor Ellick

*****Disclaimer: NO ENDGAME SPOILERS, BUT THERE ARE INFINITY WAR SPOILERS!**

Avengers: Endgame is the culmination of a decade of blockbuster filmmaking, the result of years of work from thousands of people. It is designed to be the ultimate blockbuster; a movie with a dozen subplots colliding and familiar faces from over 20 other movies.

It's really nothing like any movie that's come before it, existing not just to acknowledge or exploit the fans of this series, but to reward their love and patience. The blunt thing you probably want to know most: It's hard to see serious Marvel fans walking away from this disappointed. It checks all the boxes, even ticking off a few ones that fans won't expect to be on the list. It's a satisfying end to a chapter of blockbuster history that will be hard to top. In terms of sheer entertainment value, it's on the higher end of the Marvel spectrum. *Endgame* is a film that elevates its most iconic heroes to the legendary status they deserve and provides a few legitimate thrills along the way.

The main joy of this film is in how incredibly its narrative unfolds. *Infinity War*, another hyped up spectacle of a Marvel film, ended with Thanos finally getting all of the six Infinity Stones and then using them to wipe out half of existence, including beloved heroes like Black Panther, Star-Lord, and Spider-Man. *Avengers: Endgame* picks up a few weeks after "The Snap," as the remaining heroes try to pick up the pieces and figure out if there's a way to reverse Thanos' destruction.

Immediately, *Endgame* is a more focused piece than *Infinity War* by virtue of having a tighter, smaller cast. It's a more patient, focused film, even its plot draws in storylines from a dozen other Marvel films. Whereas *Infinity War* often felt bloated, *Endgame* allows some of the more iconic characters in the history of the Marvel universe a chance to be as heroic and cunning as we all want them to be. This, in turn, allows space for some of the best acting in the franchise, particularly from Chris Evans and Robert Downey Jr. I realized while watching *Endgame* that they have turned Captain America and Iron Man into something larger than life for a generation. Almost all people within this generation remember their first movie being an Iron Man film in which the rich billionaire saves the city and wins the girl in almost always dramatic fashion. The most satisfying aspect of *Endgame* is in how much it provides the Marvel's two most popular heroes the story they deserve instead of just drowning them in a sea of cameos by lesser characters from other movies otherwise known as the Black Panthers of the World. In a way it puts them on the pedestal they deserve and in turn it becomes an ode to the entire Marvel Universe.

What works best about the script for *Endgame* is that the fan, for arguably the first time, comes to a time of looking back and rejoice instead of merely trying to set the table for something to come. This film incorporates elements of what fans know and love about the MCU, recalling character beats, origins, and the plots of movies like *Iron Man*, *Guardians of the Galaxy*, and *Captain America*.

Call it cheesy but one of my biggest issues with these films, especially *Infinity War*, has been a sense that they're merely commercials for movies yet to be made. Sure, Marvel will go on, but this movie has a finality and depth given to it by the Marvel history that the others have lacked.

Of course, it needs to work as just a movie too. The middle hour is as purely enjoyable as Marvel has ever been, but there are times when I wished I could sense a human touch below the incredibly-polished, carefully-planned surface. In the long build-up first hour, I longed for one of the pauses about the seriousness of the situation to lead to something that felt spontaneous or an acting decision that didn't feel like it had been run through a committee. Every single aspect of *Endgame* has been foreshadowed for years by other films and now finally it was making its mark and finally was on its way to the finish line.

It is a masterpiece and a finale to an outstanding product that left fans excited for years, and while it wasn't flawless, the goal of the movie seemed to really be about rewarding commitment, fandom, and expectations. Whatever its flaws, *Endgame* does all of that, and with a sincere admiration for the fans who have made this universe a true cultural phenomenon. The stakes are high and the conclusions actually feel like they are directed toward what the fans would like to see. It's a cultural event for the ages, the kind of thing that evolves film criticism to become a shared experience with fans around the world.

So now the only thing left to speculate is how Marvel intends to follow this up. The Avengers are no more but there's still space left to captivate a cooperative and supportive audience. Let's just hope, with Stan Lee in a better place, Marvel finds a way to continue his legacy and add to an already unbelievable franchise.



Sports

Goodbye, Kristaps

By: Trever Ellick

Kristaps Porzingis was once the star of a young Knicks franchise on the up and up waiting for their time to enter the title scene. This was until Porzingis went down with a torn ACL leaving him heartbroken and unable to compete in the NBA all star game. This eventually led to a Knicks rebuild as the franchise traded Carmelo Anthony to the Thunder. This move was the beginning of a new era in Knicks basketball. The new look Porzingis-less Knicks proceeded to go 10-41 without the superstar and this didn't sit well with the Porzingis camp. Seeing no future within the franchise, the all-star and member of the 2016 all rookie team was fed up and requested a trade. This led to his being moved to the Mavericks.



The trade package included Dennis Smith, Wesley Matthews, and Deandre Jordan and two future first round selections for Courtney Lee, Tim Hardaway, Trey Burke, along with Porzingis himself. This trade paired future Hall of famer Dirk Nowitzki with prodigy Kristaps Porzingis to form what some are calling the "European exchange". This trade has been widely regarded, but many disagree on the outcome. Here are the pros and cons of the decision that shocked the basketball world.

PROS: By trading Porzingis and shedding Hardaway Jr. and Lee's salaries, the New York Knicks will have up to \$74.6 million available in cap space for the 2019 offseason. This means they now have the money to sign one of the bigger free agents including Durant, Kyrie Irving, and Kemba Walker.

There are many All-Stars to choose from, all of whom can impact the Knicks for years to come and put them in playoff position. Of course, Porzingis was seen as one of those players, but he is no longer available and thus the Knicks must move on. Also, before this trade, the Knicks did not have enough money to offer Durant a \$38 million max deal. Now they do, officially making this a destination for the two-time NBA champion in free agency, pending his departure from the Golden State Warriors. It's an incredible number that puts this organization in prime position to make a big splash in free agency.

Another pro is trading someone that did not want to stay. This has been a trend in the NBA with top players expressing unhappiness in their respective situations and seeking out. Paul George did this with the Indiana Pacers, Kawhi Leonard with the San Antonio Spurs, and Kyrie Irving with the Cleveland Cavaliers. This placed the New York Knicks in the same position of teams before them. Porzingis playing next season and beyond would have been terrific for the Knicks, aligning with a top draft pick and whoever signs in free agency. Now, New York has a broader focus for the 2019 offseason, when they can acquire players that want to play at Madison Square Garden and work with Knox, Robinson and the remaining talent. It potentially creates a more positive environment, although trading the team's superstar isn't exactly the best for their team.

CONS: The New York Knicks only had Porzingis available for two-and-a-half seasons, last playing as a 22-year-old. It was hardly enough time to see what he could contribute, especially after just 48 games as the leading man in 2017-18, followed by the torn ACL. So another con of this trade is



the Knicks never saw Porzingis' potential. Beyond that, the Knicks were unable to witness the 7-foot-3 Latvian's continued growth as a star and what he could have brought to New York basketball. Before the ACL, Porzingis averaged 22.7 points and 6.6 rebounds per game in 2017-18. It was just tapping into his potential, with higher totals possible down the line. Who knows, maybe he could have matched Dirk Nowitzki, who averaged 26.6 points per game or higher for consecutive seasons. Instead, the Knicks will be left with "What if?" especially if Porzingis plays upon arrival in Dallas. That would make this gut-wrenching and frustrating for Knicks fans, for however long he stays in the NBA.

Everything changed for the Knicks on Thursday, Jan. 31. Whatever is next, after this groundbreaking trade, will be interesting to see. The New York Knicks can sign two players to max contracts in free agency. That's clear. What's not, however, is how the Knicks will sell All-Stars seeking a new destination this offseason. As of this trade, the Knicks have a 10-40 record, the NBA's worst mark in years since the Vancouver Grizzlies. Porzingis was their best player. Now, he's gone, and there's no top name to take the crown the likes of Melo and Ewing left. Basically, the Knicks can sell the players on the city and whichever young talent sticks around from 2018-19 (Dennis Smith Jr) and whoever they select in the 2019 NBA Draft, depending if that pick sticks with the organization after July 1 (Anthony Davis?).

If the Knicks choose first in the draft, Zion Williamson's upside offers a selling point for free agents, even as an 18-year-old that never played an NBA game. After that, questions exist from the roster's top to bottom with no real depth at any position. Can the Knicks persuade someone enough to make this franchise their team and take them to the promised land? LeBron James had that with the Los Angeles Lakers, so New York must seek someone with those interests, such as Durant but even that's no guarantee. The Knicks are going all in on free agency and that could lead to colossal failure or a championship New York fans have been waiting for since Ewing.

Should Fans Be Allowed to Distract Opposing Teams?

By: Sabrina Ingrisano

Isn't sportsmanship a part of being a good athlete? Should the fans be a part of the game? Is distracting the opposing team against the rules? How much can the home team fans distract the away team and it still be considered fair?

Arizona State has a method called the "Curtain of Distraction", two students pull apart a black curtain and inside is something to distract the player of the opposing team during a free throw. Inside could be twerking farm animals, a shirtless guitarist, kissing unicorns, or an old lady yelling at you to get off her lawn. This action has led to Arizona State having an extra one to two point lead at home games, according to the New York Times.

To the home teams, this is a very clever idea because you have your school supporting you, cheering for your team. When you have a "Curtain Of Distraction", your team has the advantage which could lead to your team having the extra one or two points and winning the game.

This doesn't just happen in basketball, it happens in all sports. Tom Brady, the quarterback of the New England Patriots, was up against the Kansas City Chiefs during the AFC championships. According to Complex, "After the Chief's overtime loss to the New England Patriots, a local Kansas City television reported that a mysterious green laser was flashed in the eyes of the Patriots' quarterback. This prompted the Chiefs to review their personal film to help the NFL identify the person(s) responsible."

It also states, "This is not the first time NFL fans have used high-powered lasers to distract the opposing team's players... According to several sources, the light when shined directly at an unsuspecting person could cause irreversible eye damage." If you are a fan pointing a laser at an athlete's eye during a game, the player could lose his eyesight and won't be able to play ever again.

When you're an athlete on the visiting team and are taking the free throw and you start seeing a shark attack or the return of Elvis, the distraction could cause the player to mess up the shot and prevent them from winning the game, moving ahead in the playoffs or winning a championship.

It may seem like it's all in good fun helping your team win, but when you look back at the situation, interfering with the natural flow of the game with a "Curtain of Distraction" or a laser compromises the safety of players (and possibly fans) and could end a sport professional's career.

At the end of it all, how good does it really feel to win a game that wasn't fair to both teams?

Get Rid of Ties in the NFL

By: Matthew Page

A game between the Pittsburgh Steelers and Cleveland Browns in week one of the 2018 NFL season was reaching its ending. The Browns had scored a touchdown to tie the game inside the two minute warning and the game needed an overtime, which was recently changed from 15 to 10 minutes. The teams exchanged scoreless drives throughout the period, including a missed field goal for each team that could've won the game. After the Browns missed their last minute field goal, the game officially went down as a rare tie. The following week the Minnesota Vikings and Green Bay Packers tied their game at Lambeau Field.

This was the first pair of tied game since the Bengals and Redskins met up in London during week 8 of the 2016 season, and the first pair under the 10 minute overtime format. The result was a mixed conversation on whether 10 minute overtimes can result in more ties. The idea of ties to end a game, albeit a rare occurrence, is not ethical enough in a league of wins and losses, and the NFL should look for new overtime rules from other leagues or internal solutions to end the trend of ties.

If the NFL eventually desires to change the overtime format, it could look at its NCAA counterpart for ideas. To start overtime a coin toss is done to determine who gets the first possession of the period starting on the offensive 25 yard line. Both teams will have the chance to score a field goal or a touchdown, with the coin toss winner going first. The game ends once a period of both teams on offense is over and there is a leader. If there is a touchdown, field goal, or no score by each team, the game will continue until a period ends with a leader. Also, there is no game clock other than a play clock, meaning players can take their time between plays. These rules can increase the thrill of the game with exchanged scores throughout the overtime and a higher scoring ballgame overall than a game that ends in regulation. A prime example of this thinking was a 2018 game with LSU and Texas A&M, which ended regulation 31-31, ending after 7 overtimes with a 74-72 A&M victory. As a result, taking up similar rules can increase scoring and lead to more exciting games and an extra session that will leave fans on the edge of their seats.

Although the NFL made this change due to player safety, there are other methods the league could use to avoid ties and keep players in mind. For example, the NFL could move back to a 15 minute period of overtime, but you could put extended breaks between regulation and the first kick of OT, or the league could split the extra session into 7:30 halves and between halves provide an opportunity for the players to catch their breath.



In the NFL's defense, today's overtime is a fair format that is safe and easy to understand. The use of 10 minutes is great for the players because if teams have an upcoming short week, or are playing on Sunday and Thursday, it can prevent players from getting hurt or being fully worn out in the next game. Also, the idea of less time could lead to more aggressive, exciting play styles that could make overtimes better for fans to watch. In a league of player safety, this could be a solution to wearing players out on short weeks. In addition, this trend may prove to be a fluke and games will end before the ten minutes run out. However, if the trend of recent ties continues, the NFL could always find external solutions such as taking up a college football overtime format, or creating a completely new one from scratch that can increase the chance of having a winner and loser and provide means of player safety. As a result, there should not be any ties in the NFL, and if ties continue to appear in the NFL should look to the NCAA for idea to change overtime or develop a new system that provides enjoyment to watch and player safety.