



The Comet Newsletter

November 2019

The Story of a War Hero-Turned-Teacher

Last October, the Maryland chapter of the Students Partner with Veterans Club gathered once again to interview Mr. Clarke, a veteran and teacher with many stories to tell. Here, two club members share parts of the interview that they found especially moving.



A retired lieutenant colonel from the Air Force, Mr. Gregory Clarke once flew government officials such as Al Gore and Dick Chaney all around the world to areas of operation. Early on, he expressed interest in the military, but only discovered flying when he applied for an open pilot spot. After a startling 9/11 experience where he was called to fly back from a relaxing vacation, Mr. Clarke decided that he had to stay in the military. Eventually, he moved back to Maryland and applied for a teaching position in HCPSS.

With his high-stakes job, Mr. Clarke had no shortage of inspiring stories to recall. He recounted the time he and his colleagues had to deliver four planes gas in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean, risking his own plane's fuel in the process. "Everyone works as a team," he said. "It's how you get things done."

Mr. Clarke also told us how his stint in flying taught him the love for being an instructor. "At first, I wanted to fight, not fly," he told us reminiscently. "After teaching, I realized that I like getting people to their goals."

- Naomi Ling

Mr. Clarke finally summarized the wonderful interview with a short message to students. He wanted everyone to understand that “the military is a good career. It’s not all about war and war-making. The military was created to protect our Constitution, and not only that but it can provide camaraderie and help open doors to numerous career options. Best of all, the job lets you travel all around the world.”

- Shruti Vadlakonda

Travel

Out of all the trails that I’ve hiked, the early morning sunrises that I’ve woken up to see, and all the ice cream parlors that I’ve eaten from, I truly experienced the best of the best in Maine. My family and I embarked on somewhat of a long trip up to Bar Harbor, Maine. After 10 long hours in the car, we settled down in our small but cozy Airbnb. In the evening, and early morning, we drove up to Cadillac Mountain and watched the beautiful sunset and sunrise. The skies were a stunning rainbow ombre, and I never knew sunsets could be that good-looking. During the day, we hiked trails upon trails. Some of them were relaxing walks around stunning lakes, while others consisted of clinging on to iron rails and trying not to fall off. Although I enjoyed all of the amazing trails, Beehive Trail is definitely one worth remembering. We hiked up steep hills, walked across iron ladders, and ended our trail walking halfway around a lovely blue lake. Spending time in the town of Bar Harbor was also one of my favorite parts of my trip. All of the unique little shops and all of the delicious restaurants to eat at truly upped the game. Spending some time in Maine was a wonderful experience, and I hope I get the chance to go once more.



- Alyssa Ma

Photography

#1: Rainbow Tomatoes



Multicolored tomatoes from my grandpa's garden

#2: Nature's Portrait



A millipede on a rock

#3: Camo Lichen



Spots on a rock on a mountain

#4: Save the Natural Art!



A box turtle in its shell

- Lincoln Tripp

Foodie Fun

A Brutal Reasoning

In the next year, a show called “Meat the Family” is planned to be released, and the topic of this reality show is supposed to resolve a frequent debate. How can families eat meat every day but still cuddle with their beloved pets? This show gives either a lamb, pig, calf, or a chicken to four different families. The family cares for the animal as their own, but at the end of the show, they must decide between slaughtering their pet or going vegetarian. Though this path of action is quite morbid, the point of the show is to portray what animals have to go through before they land on your plate. Maybe it's time to start thinking about what we put in our mouths. After all, aren't animals worth just as much as us?

- Lydia You

Could Pizza Hut's Round Boxes be the Future of Pizza Delivery?

If you've recently ordered pizza from Pizza Hut, you probably know that most locations have stepped up their game with some fancy circular containers. But why exactly did they replace the humble cardboard ones, and are the new ones really that much of an improvement?

Pizza Hut claims that one of the biggest things about the new container is the added convenience. To start, the compact white containers make storing leftovers in the fridge a lot less strenuous. If you've ever tried to jam a bulky, brown box into your refrigerator or trash can, you know what I mean. Plus, the smaller containers allow Pizza Hut locations to fit more containers on the shelves



without having to restock. Apart from that, the ridges on the bottom and the grooves on top make it easy to stack multiple boxes together without worrying about the pizza turning into a greasy mess.

Better yet, the pie chain also claims that the sustainably harvested plant fiber containers are also designed to improve the taste of your pizza. The grooves and holes at the bottom

collect any grease that may drip from the pizza crust, allowing the pizza to stay warm and soft without being soggy and greasy. Also, there are vents on the bottom, which allow steam to rise and drift out of the box instead of falling back down on the pizza. The latch closure on the top also closes it much tighter than the generic brown boxes. Is all of this true? We don't know, as the Pizza Hut near the Clarksville Commons hasn't switched to the new ones yet. Until then, stay tuned to see the new widgets yourself!

- Emily Zhang

What's Happening?

Redistricting Updates

The redistricting in Howard County has become such a big issue that it has reached the state legislature. Recent state laws have been proposed because of the issues that came up during the redistricting process. Realtors are now required to clearly state that the public schools that the children are districted to are not definite, and redistricting is always a possibility. This law makes it so that the resident completely understands their school zoning situation. This includes the walkers at schools, as the Board has decided to include walkers into redistricting plans. This means that even students who live close enough to walk to the nearby school may have to go to a school much farther away in order to balance out the population at each school. Our community has been so vocal about the whole situation that four more public hearings were scheduled after the originally planned hearings. The public hearings have officially ended and the Board of Education will now be moving onto public work sessions, where people can come to watch the BoE work to make a decision, but cannot make comments or voice their own personal opinions. The sessions are currently scheduled for October 28th, October 30th, November 5th, November 12th, November 14th, and November 18th. The Board will now make the decision to accept, reject, or alter the Superintendent's plan, and their final decision will be announced on November 21st.

Student Government Association

The campaigns for SGA officially kicked off in late October, and in the next weeks, candidates will give speeches in preparation for the upcoming voting day on November 8th. Schoolwide voting will be for the executive board, which includes

President, Vice President, secretary, and historian. Each grade will also vote for their own delegates. Are you voting for anyone in particular?

Breast Cancer Awareness

As most of you may know, October was Breast Cancer Awareness Month. It was so great to see so many people throughout the school wearing pink to support the fight for breast cancer on Pink Day. We even made lots of donations to help cancer research (great job CMS!). However, during all of the fun of Pink Day, a lot of us tend to forget just how serious this illness is. Fighting cancer is one of the hardest things to do, so here's a little shoutout to all of the survivors out there.

Thanksgiving

The leaves are finally changing color and fall is in full swing. With Halloween over, it's almost time for the holiday season starting off with our beloved turkey day. As much as we dislike admitting it, Thanksgiving is not all about food and shopping. I know, this is starting to get repetitive and cheesy, but Thanksgiving really is about taking some time off to make some quality memories with your favorite people. It's easy to lose sight of why we have the holiday in the first place (especially when all you can smell is the glorious scent of mashed potatoes and gravy). Remember to use some of your time off to truly think about and appreciate all of the people you have in your life.

- Livia Zhao, Naomi Ling

Reflecting on Outdoor Education

As most of you know, 6th graders recently had their Outdoor Ed trip! We all had a blast, and these are some of the amazing experiences we had.

We arrived at NorthBay, and got to know each other a bit. We went into our cabins for the first time, and immediately claimed our beds. Many students found that the top bunks were slightly chillier than the bottom bunks, but the bottom bunks were better for making forts. (No one really slept after bedtime.)

- Alexandra Ni

Book Nook

The Outsiders Review

The Outsiders by S. E. Hinton is a short, captivating novel about a young 14-year-old boy named Ponyboy. For Ponyboy's entire life he had learned that where he lived there were two groups: **socs**, young men on the rich side of town, and **greasers**, who like him were young men on the poor side of town. One day, a fight breaks out between the two groups, and the socs badly injure Ponyboy. But Ponyboy's friend Johnny, in an act of defense, kills one of the socs. From then on, Johnny and Ponyboy are on the run to avoid being accused of murder. Read the story to find out what happens to Johnny and Ponyboy.

- Shruti Vadlakonda

A Praise for Spoken Word Poetry

Have you ever heard something like music but with no tune, something like harmony with no song? When you think of poetry, do you think of Poe, or Shakespeare, or Frost? When you think of poetry, do you think of complex sentences and high level writing? According to Sarah Kay, spoken word poetry are words that do not just sit on your paper - they demand to be spoken. And spoken word poets themselves are more than writers; they are public speakers, masters of the way words hang in the air and ring in your ears. Ever since last year I stumbled upon spoken word poetry and there was something about it that made me keep coming back for more, the way it can be aggressive, questioning society and its choices, or soft and kind like a lullaby, wishing you infinite dreams. So with this, I encourage you to explore different areas in literature, because there are more than books alone.

-Estelle Chen

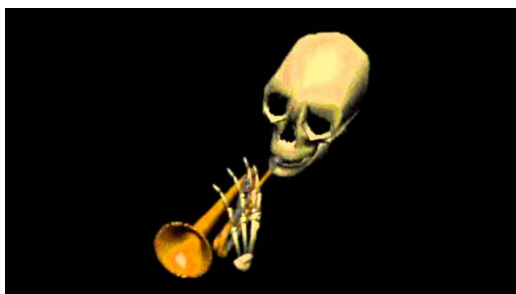
Meme Review

The Spooktober Duo



1. *The Frustrated Skeleton*

This first image comes from the film, *Scooby Doo Meets The Boo Brothers*. The meme started as a reaction to when someone is extremely angry at another's opinion/post. It was uploaded from the movie in 2010 by Youtuber @ander0072originalv2 and since then was spread incredibly quick; however, only resurfacing during the Halloween season.



2. *Skull Trumpet*

The second skeleton meme of this year is the Skull Trumpet, otherwise known as "Doot Doot". The meme surfaced as an animation in 1995, but only gained traction later in 2011. Though many consider it to be a dead meme as well, Spooktober gives meme-makers a valid excuse to use it again.

- Estelle Chen

2020 Census Corner

Trivia about the Census

1. When was the first Census taken?
 - a. 1810
 - b. 1790
 - c. 1795
 - d. 1800

2. Who contributed the most to the Census?
 - a. Thomas Jefferson
 - b. George Washington
 - c. Abraham Lincoln
 - d. Benjamin Franklin
3. Which state was the most populated state during the first Census?
 - a. New York
 - b. California
 - c. Maryland
 - d. Virginia
4. Which city was the most populated city in the latest Census?
 - a. Washington DC
 - b. Los Angeles
 - c. New York
 - d. Chicago
5. Which state was the most populated state during the 2010 Census?
 - a. New York
 - b. California
 - c. Maryland
 - d. Virginia

Answer Key

1. B 2. A 3. D 4. C 5. B

- Amanda Wang

Sources

Could Pizza Hut's Round Boxes be the Future of Pizza Delivery?

- <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/voraciously/wp/2019/10/22/the-pizza-box-hasnt-evolved-in-decades-but-now-pizza-hut-is-trying-out-a-new-round-design/>

2020 Census Corner

- https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States_Census#History

About Us

Hey! The Comet Team consists of sixteen middle schoolers who enjoy writing, editing, and journalism. Contact us at thecometnewsletter@gmail.com; we would love to hear feedback!

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