



# The Comet Newsletter

February 2020

## The Future of Food

According to The American Museum of Natural History, “By 2050, there will likely be nine billion people to feed, and our planet is already under stress. Agriculture is a leading threat to rivers, lakes, and coastal environments, and up to 40 percent of all cropland worldwide is experiencing soil erosion, reduced fertility, or overgrazing. As our climate changes, so will the ways we grow our food. Fortunately, many people are working on ways to produce more healthy and delicious food while sustaining the environment.” As time goes on, the food we eat will evolve. This is portrayed in the *Future of Food* class that Mr. Farmer conducts at CMS. I was asked to sit in at one of their classes, and it was fascinating.



The class was trying out different types of foods that are likely to become alternatives to the foods we eat right now. These foods include several different types of milk, such as soy, coconut, almond, pea, oat, and even hemp milk. The class also taste-tested meatless varieties of typical Dunkin’ Donuts breakfast sandwiches. However, the part most people were excited for, was the bugs. There were chocolate-covered crickets, seasoned crickets, and granola made from cricket flour to taste test.



Perhaps the most interesting part was comparing the difference between foods and their different varieties/supplements. For example, the students tried 2% milk and pasture-raised milk. When asked, the students found the pasture-raised milk more in resemblance to cream, and the 2% milk to be more watery. Not only that, when trying the regular Dunkin' Donuts sandwich and the meatless option, more students preferred the meat variety, saying that the meatless option tasted like spices and had a "weird consistency." Though the taste is different, based off of appearance the two sandwiches look relatively similar. In fact, at first it was even hard to tell which was meatless and which had meat!

As for the bugs, for most people trying them out reported quite a roller coaster of experiences. Starting out with the cricket flour granola, when you first eat it, it tastes rather good and quite similar to regular granola. However, several people noticed an unpleasant aftertaste. Then people tried the crickets marinated with garlic and spices. Many people, such as Mr. Farmer, thought they tasted just like spicy popcorn. In contrast, some people couldn't stand the taste of them. Finally, as for the chocolate-covered crickets, those seemed to be a crowd favorite! They tasted just like chocolate, and you could barely tell that you were eating crickets.



Mrs. Ceglia was kind enough to let us taste test this food in her room at school, so of course we wanted to hear what she thought of this exciting activity! When asked, Mrs. Ceglia said that she thought this activity was a great way to connect what students are learning, and that it was interesting.

Certainly, this was a great introduction to the future of food, as we can already see food evolving. Before, we would only hear of eating bugs in cartoon shows, but nowadays there is an entire market for it! Our foods are evolving, and they will only continue to change in the future.

- Lily Peng

## What's Happening?

### CMS Spelling Bee

On January 23rd, we had our annual CMS Spelling Bee. Congratulations to everyone who participated, especially Charan Bala and Athena Devashish - our winner and runner-up this year! Keep up the hard work and best of luck at the Howard County Spelling Bee. We're rooting for you!

### Duo Day

Last month, our school had its Duo Day! Everyone looked absolutely amazing. From ginormous groups to spray-on hair color, the creativity was out of this world. We can't wait to see what students do next year!

### School Closings

In February, there will be two school closings. One of them is for the special primary election on February 4th and the other will be on February 17th for President's Day. What are your plans for these days off?

### Flu Season

As many of you have already heard, there have been outbreaks of the coronavirus in Wuhan, China. Although there have been many horror stories of people who have been infected, this virus actually has the same symptoms as a common cold and the reactions vary greatly from individual to individual. According to local doctor, Tony Wang, this virus could very likely reach our area due to the virus's tendency to stay dormant and not show symptoms until two weeks after the person has been infected. Because of the popularity of traveling to and from China for the Lunar New Year, the risk of spreading is even greater. There are also other viruses that could be passed from person to person. Since most people tend to stay indoors during cold seasons, the likelihood of getting sick increases during this period of time.



Fortunately, there are plenty of simple ways to keep yourself protected from sickness. Even simple health habits can greatly reduce the risk. Remember to avoid close contact with people who are infected, wash your hands, and remind others to cover their cough and sneeze. Avoid touching your eyes, mouth, nose, or open wounds, as germs could easily pass through into your body. If you are sick, stay home so you don't pass it on to others. This way, you can almost guarantee you and the people around you won't get sick. Stay healthy, everyone!

- Livia Zhao

## Travel

### What I Liked About Puerto Rico

I'm sorry to hear about the recent earthquake in Puerto Rico, and I hope the residents are okay. Fortunately, our trip was before the earthquake. Some of the attractions listed may be temporarily closed, or be in bad shape, but most of them should be fine. *Just a disclaimer.*

#### **#4: El Yunque Rainforest**

I liked the views on the drive-through road in El Yunque, the only tropical rainforest in the US. The view-stops in the road can let you see for miles. There are also a lot of cool plants and waterfalls along with a hiking route, but I didn't take it.

#### **#3: Historical Old San Juan**

Old San Juan is a large group of buildings/ castles from as early as the 16<sup>th</sup> century. There is a lot of history to Old San Juan, and I can't explain it all, so either Google it or actually go there and read the sign/guide things. I liked the castle and the view of the ocean from the castle a lot. I recommend going there in the winter, because even though there is a lot of wind in Old San Juan, it's still really hot there, and in Puerto Rico in general. Imagine going there in the summer!

#### **#2: Bioluminescent Bay**

There are a few Bioluminescent Bays in the area of Puerto Rico, but I only went to one. The one I went to isn't as bright as the others (or so I've heard), but it was still pretty cool. The one I went to was this one in Fajardo. We went in the evening

and first kayaked through a narrow canal into a lagoon. The canal itself was also kind of cool -- because of the darkness at night, the sky is a gray color and if you



look up you can see all these black shapes sticking out (trees, bushes, dragons, I don't know). The kayaks all have a light on the front and back that makes the kayak visible. Without the lights, everything is pitch black. With the surroundings and lights, it looks almost magical, like fantasy. When you actually get to the lagoon, you can move your hand around in the water, and there are these tiny little glowing dots that kind of follow it around. It's super cool. There was a tarp the tour guides gave us to cover our kayaks with, and it made the experience like ten times

better. The glowing dots became a lot more obvious.

### **#1: Flamenco Beach**

Flamenco Beach is a beach on the island Culebra. To get to Culebra, you need to first book a ferry from the main island there (one uncertainty about the ferry is that it may be canceled depending on the weather. We had to go two days after the scheduled time. It's still worth it though). When arriving at Flamenco Beach, the first things I noticed were the sand and water. The sand is super thin and soft, almost white in color. The



water is a beautiful light greenish-blue, and crystal clear. The waves are much larger and more forceful than the wimpy little ripples that are so-called "waves" that we get in the States. If you decide to take a walk, the view is amazing. With the sun shining on the water, the green, plant-covered mountains in the distance, and the beautiful sand and sky, it's picture-perfect. Just writing about it makes me sentimental. Maybe it's because I'm listening to music. I'm not sure.

Welp, that concludes my part of the newsletter, guys. I'm gonna write about the food in Puerto Rico next time. See you then.

- Siyuan Dai



## Sports Time

### Football

February is a huge month for the football world. The Super Bowl took place on the 2nd, and the Chiefs defeated the 49ers. It was a very exciting game, and Patrick Mahomes was the MVP! In the NBA, Zion Williamson of the Pelicans is starting to play again after having surgery. In 18 minutes, he scored 22 points, 7 rebounds and 3 assists. For his first season in the league, that is amazing.



- Justin Blackman

### The Loss of a Legend

Last month, the world mourned the loss of Kobe Bryant, a superstar in the game of basketball. Eight other civilians - including Bryant's 13-year-old daughter, who was also a star in the making - were lost in the devastating incident. Throughout his all-too-short career, Bryant played for the Los Angeles Lakers, winning five NBA titles and establishing himself as one of the game's all-time greats. As we grapple with the fact that the Kobe Bryant is actually gone, it seems appropriate to say that a little part of all of us is gone as well.

- Naomi Ling

## Paw Patrol

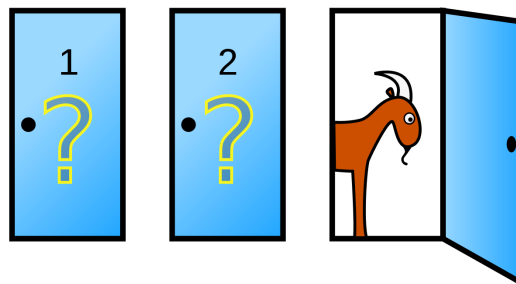
*Home of all things Paw and Patrol.*

### The Monty Hall Problem

In 1963, there was a game show called *Let's Make a Deal*, created by Stefan Hatos and Monty Hall. *Let's Make a Deal* was a game show in which the host, Mr. Hall, would randomly choose an audience member to participate in games. In one of

the games, the trader would be given an object and asked if they want to trade the given object for an unknown, mysterious prize.

Observing the format and set up of the game show, Steve Selvin, a professor at UC Berkeley introduced the Monty Hall Problem as we know it today. There are three doors, behind two are goats and behind one is a car. Let's call them doors 1, 2 and 3, and let's say you choose door 1. I, the host, would open door 2 to reveal a goat, then I would give you the option to stay with door 1, or to move to door 3.



If you eliminate one of the goat-doors, the car is 50/50 between door 1 and 3, right?

Actually, you know more information than you think. So let's think this through.

What situations could happen after we choose door 1? Obviously door 1 has either a goat or a car, so let's go down one of those 2 paths. If door 1 has a goat, and I open door 2 to reveal another goat, door 3 has the car. If door 1 has the car, and I open door 2 to reveal another goat, door 3 also has a goat. The first situation described happens two times more than the second situation, 2/3rds of the time. Therefore 2/3rds of the time, door 3 will have the car.

Now if you didn't get that, we can size things up. Let's say we now have 100 doors, and only 1 has the car. If you choose door 54, the chances of it having the car is 1%. If I then open all doors except door 54 and door 36, door 36 has the other 99%. It's important to remember that the percent of the original door you chose having the car *does not* change when I open other doors. If we apply that to the original problem, it makes it easy to see why we should switch.

John Allen Paulos, a mathematician at Temple University of Pennsylvania, said, "Even after playing the game many times, which would afford ample opportunity to observe that switching doubles the chances of winning, most people in a recent study switched only 2/3 of the time. Pigeons did better. After a few tries, the birds learn to switch every time."

- Estelle Chen

## Sources

### The Future of Food

- [Future of Food | AMNH](#)

### What's Happening?

- [Healthy Habits to Help Prevent Flu](#)
- [School System Calendar](#)
- [Kobe Bryant - Death, Daughter & Wife](#)

### The Monty Hall Problem

- [The math problem that stumped thousands of mansplainers](#)
- [Let's make a deal: Revisiting the Monty Hall problem](#)
- [The Monty Hall problem \(video\)](#)
- [Monty Hall Problem - Numberphile](#)
- [The Monty Hall Problem \(video\)](#)

## About Us

Hey! The Comet team consists of seventeen middle schoolers who are passionate about writing, editing, and the arts. Contact us at [thecometnewsletter@gmail.com](mailto:thecometnewsletter@gmail.com); we would love to hear feedback!

- Naomi Ling, editor and writer (8th)
- Lily Peng, writer and photographer (8th)
- Shruti Vadlakonda, writer and photographer (8th)
- Kylie Stuart, writer and email manager (8th)
- Alyssa Ma, writer (8th)
- Justin Blackman, writer (8th)
- Estelle Chen, writer (7th)
- Livia Zhao, writer (8th)
- Lydia You, writer (7th)
- Julia Goldenberg, writer (6th)
- Siyuan Dai, writer (6th)
- Patrick Deng, writer (7th)
- Alexandra Ni, writer (6th)
- Emily Zhang, writer (6th)



- Amanda Wang, writer (6th)
- Sitara Chakkamadathil, writer (7th)
- Lincoln Tripp, photographer (6th)
- Ms. Brothman, Teacher Sponsor