

Strange news from around the world

By SARAH COLBERT

Weird things happen every day that do not get picked up by the mainstream news media. Here is a compilation of a few recent oddities.

1. **D**isappointed guests discovered that a few of the animals at a zoo in China's Henan Province were imposters. The "lion" was actually a Tibetan Mastiff, a type of domestic dog. Domestic dogs were also found in the "wolf" exhibit,

a highway building project because of the expected impact on not only the environment, but also on the ancient elves that supposedly occupy the region. Concern is especially high because the land where the road is to be constructed is the alleged site of an elf church.

4. A Miami resident, Fernando Cagnet Aguilera captured a four foot alligator and attempted to trade it for alcohol at a Florida



The Henan Province Zoo's "Lion."

Courtesy of news.nationalgeographic.com

and a white fox was labeled "leopard." The zoo is now temporarily closed.

2. A woman found a human foot inside a shoe on Peck Lake Beach on Jupiter Island, Florida. Authorities are investigating but have found no other human remains.

3. An Icelandic group, called "Friends of the Lava," has partnered with environmentalists to urge the Supreme Court to ban

convenience store. Aguilera could be sentenced up to six months in jail and a \$500 fine for his crime.

5. 3D Systems, a three-dimensional printer company, declared its arrangement with Hershey Company to create a 3-D printer that produces chocolate and other edible goods.

(Information compiled from cnn.com, nbc.com, pbs.org, and news.nationalgeographic.com)

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Sochi Olympics full of controversy

gay-rights activity remains. Last July, Russian President Vladimir Putin signed a law to ban pro-gay "propaganda" that could be available to minors. Many activists view this law as a restriction on any public expression of gay-rights.

For the past weeks, Coca-Cola and McDonald's, two major sponsors of the Olympics, have been targeted by social media campaigns held by gay-rights supporters. Several activists plan to travel to Sochi to protest the law. They hope to team up with athletes who are participating in the games.

In an open letter to some of the biggest Olympic sponsors, forty human rights and gay rights groups from the United States, Western Europe, and Russia urge these companies to run ads promoting equality for lesbians, gay, bisexuals, and transgender people.

"LGBT people must not

be targeted with violence or deprived of their ability to advocate for their own equality. As all eyes turn toward Sochi, we ask you to stand with us," the letter states.

Russia has also received multiple terror threats from multiple groups. In one investigation, Russian police are on the hunt for a suspect who is allegedly the widow of a member of an extremist militant group from Russia.

Despite the multiple threats, Russian president Vladimir Putin insists the Sochi Olympics will be safe.

"We will try to make certain that the security measures are not intrusive or too conspicuous, so they are not too noticeable for the athletes, the Olympics' guests or journalists," Putin says, according to CNN. "But at the same time, we will do our utmost to ensure that they are effective."

Junior Senator proposes change to Amstud credits

By BETTY LIU

Recently, the Academic Affairs Committee of Student Government has brought up the issue of possibly revaluing American Studies.

Early last December, Junior Senator, Guy Blanc raised the question on the NCSSM Classes of 2014 and 2015 Facebook page. As it is, American Studies is valued at five points, as it is a 300 level class.

Through the comments on the page, it is seen that many students believe that American Studies, typically referred to as "Amstud" is one of the most difficult classes taken during junior year at NCSSM, so the credit earned should reflect the degree of difficulty and be raised to 6 points, the same value given by an AP class or a 400 level class.

In early January, Blanc met with Elizabeth Moose, Dean of Humanities, to discuss the possibility of raising American Studies to a 6.0 class. It is likely American Studies will not change in point value, but it is possible that the number of credits for the class will change.

As it stands, American Studies is a three-trimester class and is worth 6 credits, two core English, two core History, and two core elective. As it is 6 credits, therefore it counts a lot on a student's transcript.

There is a chance that the number of credits earned in American Studies will decrease, possibly to 4 credits, but students would still be required to take the

three trimesters of American Studies.

American Studies was once a two-trimester class that met for double blocks. Recently, it was changed so it would meet for one block a day for three trimesters.

In an interview, Moose mentioned that the issue is part of a larger discussion of NCSSM graduation requirements. The issue has been discussed by the Humanities Department at NCSSM, the Dean's group, the Faculty Senate, as well as the Instructional Council.

Ms. Moose continued to say that Geoff Coltrane, Director of Instructional Research and Engagement, has done an analysis on the impact a change in credits would have on student's GPA's and the data is currently being reviewed by Faculty Senate and the Dean's group. Moose says that she is committed to collaborating with the members of these groups to make a fair and reasonable decision that is in the best interests of the students.

There is a mixed response from the student body about changing the credit. Some students are glad that American Studies could count for less.

One student remarked "It would be nice because a bad grade in Amstud wouldn't have so much impact on our transcript."

As some students are struggling with American Studies, this is the main reason some juniors are supportive of such a change. However,

others feel that it would be unfair to make the class count for less.

When asked, Junior Gavin Riley said "Given the amount of work we are given in Amstud, it would be unfair to have it count for less credit."

Along with discussing possible changes in the amount of credit awarded for American Studies, there is a discussion within the faculty about the possibility of adding an Engineering and Technology requirement to the graduation requirements.

When asked, students also showed a mixed response with regards to the addition of an Engineering and Technology requirement. Some students are all for the change, such as Junior Carly McKenna. "That would be fine," she said.

McKenna went on to say that she enjoyed engineering and thought it would make sense for NCSSM to have that requirement, due to the school's strong base in STEM fields. Other students are less supportive of the proposed change such as Junior Cora Bright who said she was not a fan of Engineering.

Though these changes are being discussed, nothing is certain yet. Blanc continued to say that if either change was going to be considered more seriously, he would take a poll to gauge student support. He ends with saying "Although neither of these issues would affect our graduation, we should still try to make our school a better place for those after us."

The Mystery of Edwin Drood!



Photo by Zihui Yang

For the Winter Musical, the Promethean Players put on the musical: *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*. Based on an unfinished novel by Charles Dickens set in London in 1892, *The Mystery of Edwin Drood* allows the audience to pick from over 300 possible endings. The Promethean Players put on three showings to much audience acclaim.