



# THE VOYAGER

JANUARY 2021



## A NOTE FROM THE NEWSPAPER STAFF

BACK TO SCHOOL!

THIS ISSUE IS LOADED WITH NEW STORIES, FROM TIK TOK TO PUBLIC SPEAKING TIPS! PLEASE READ THE ENTIRE ISSUE TO FIND OUT!

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*On the front cover: Objects in mirror may appear more beautiful than they seem.*

*Taken by Angela Duszkiwicz*

## **WHAT MAKES TIK TOK SO INTERESTING?**

**BY MEEKA VARDI**

You have a big test tomorrow so, naturally, you thought it might be a good idea to dust off your textbook and get to studying. About five minutes into your revision, a notification pops up on your phone - it is from Tik Tok. You are compelled to reach over and grab your phone, almost instinctively, and start scrolling through the app. You then look at the clock and realize you have just spent nearly an hour on Tik Tok. Sound familiar? Unfortunately, this is the reality for many people. Tik Tok has become so immensely popular that teenagers, in a sense of herd mentality, are drawn to it, wanting to fit in.

The app works like a game, a game that is molded to fit your personality perfectly using a complicated algorithm. This algorithm notices what videos you look at, at what time, and for how long, along with many other factors. This ensures that it will provide videos for you to keep you interested, to keep you glued to your phone.

The videos are also very short, tending to the shorter attention span of today's generation, composed of mostly teenagers and young adults. The term often used to describe this constant need for more information is a rabbit hole. A term derived from Alice's Adventures in Wonderland, "going down a rabbit hole" means to get stuck in a loop, a cycle that is very difficult to get out of.

As with all things in life, this is about balance. Spend your time wisely on things you care about vs. things that will temporarily captivate your attention. Would you want to look back at your life when you are much older and just remember swiping through nonsense? I did not think so.



## **MAKING SPEECHES AND PRESENTATIONS**

**BETTER BY ARYAN THAKOR**

Let us be frank in saying that we have all sat in boring presentations staring at the presenter or yearning that the performance was pleasant, right? Yet, we do the same thing when we are presenting. Humanity has created software like PowerPoint that should be helping us, but why isn't it? David Phillips has an excellent answer for you, "100,000 years ago we started developing our language and transferred knowledge through storytelling, 33 years ago PowerPoint came out, so which one do you think our brain is mostly adapted to?" I think we all know the answer. He does not tell people to stop using PowerPoint, but he instructs us to use it as an aid instead of the focus. We should be encouraged to incorporate a story, and the reasons are scientifically proven.

When listening to stories, various hormones are released. One of them is Dopamine, which enhances focus, motivation, and memory. A few ways to induce it is to build up suspense and have a cliffhanger. Another one of them is Oxytocin, which causes generosity, builds trust, and causes bonding. To get higher levels of Oxytocin in your audience, you build empathy in your storytelling. Lastly, one of those hormones is Endorphin, which creates a positive feeling in the body and reduces the perception of distress. To get the aspired results, you make people laugh. The three hormones are what you want, but you should also know what to avoid. They are Cortisol and Adrenaline, which can make the audience intolerant, irritable, and uncreative. To avoid the consequences, aim to increase Dopamine, Oxytocin, and Endorphin.

The idea of PowerPoint is fantastic, but we are not correctly applying it. One mistake is we keep the titles as the largest, so your audience will first look at it rather than the essential information. Another mistake is that the background is made bright, so your audience

will focus on the most useless part of the presentation. To fix this, modify the background to black, now people will see what you show them. Next, do not have more than one idea per slide since your audience will be distracted by the next point. Lastly, everybody thinks about how many bullets you should have per slide. To figure this out, do a test and lay a couple of marbles on a table. Tell somebody to lay a random amount of marbles from 1 to 10 on a table and try to count them. The number of marbles you can figure in less than a second is your answer.

We went through the technical and speaking part of a presentation together, but there is one aspect left regarding your values. When presenting do not market yourself, because most of the time, the audience does not care about you. If somebody asks you a question, do not tell them to buy your book. What you want to do is tell them the answer because that is why they are there. Lastly, if you are worried about storytelling, listen to what Phillips says, “Everybody is a good storyteller from birth, the only problem is that you do not believe it.” To wrap it up, all humans are amazing presenters, all we have to do to display it is be natural, be a human.

## ***FIRST COVID VACCINE BY SIDDHI PATEL***

COVID-19 has been the focus of many individuals with many people wondering, “when will the vaccine come out?”. Well, it is finally here. The Food and Drug Administration has authorized and cleared the pathway for Americans to begin receiving the vaccine. The vaccine was developed by Pfizer and its German partner BioNTech, which appears to be safe and highly effective according to the FDA. It was developed faster than any previously approved vaccine in the United States due to demand and recent technologies. Dr. Anthony Fauci, director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases agreed that the speed of vaccine

development was almost unbelievable. Obviously, due to circumstances, about 2.9 million frontline healthcare workers and nursing home residents are expected to receive the vaccine in the first few days. With this said, as time goes by, more and more people will be vaccinated in America. How did it start? Pfizer and BioNTech initiated a late-stage clinical trial in July with half of the people getting the vaccine and the other half with a placebo of saltwater. This would show if the vaccine protects against the virus or not. So far, about 95 participants out of nearly 44,000 have gotten sick with the virus. After the early analysis by an independent board, it suggests that the vaccine is over 90 percent effective. However, this data was ‘blinded’, meaning no one except the board knows if the individuals who got sick had gotten the vaccine or the placebo. With this said, it is safe to assume that very few numbers of people had gotten the vaccine. This is a good result with the fact that the F.D.A. had set a bar of 50 percent effectiveness for vaccine makers who wanted to submit their candidates for emergency authorization. So far Pfizer and BioNTech have reported no serious safety concerns from their vaccine. During distribution, the Centers for Disease Control and the F.D.A. will monitor them to make sure there’s no evidence of even rarer safety issues.

Do you feel that this vaccine is safe? Will it be able to beat the virus? If you get the chance, will you take the vaccine?

## ***THE RISING POWER OF COMMUNIST CHINA BY ARNAV KHANA***

In 2017, Chinese president Xi Jinping announced his plan for “the great rejuvenation of the Chinese Nation” by 2049. His plan for achieving this “great rejuvenation” includes attaining international economic supremacy, revising international order, and achieving a “world class military”. In the past three years, China has made great strides in

achieving its goal, even surpassing the United States in multiple modernisation areas.

Perhaps the most frightening matter is the growth of China's military. China now has the world's largest Navy, surpassing even the United States. The People's Republic of China (PRC) now possesses around 350 ships and submarines compared to the United States Navy's battle force of 295 ships and submarines. China's navy is also actively expanding its number of nuclear submarines. The PRC now has around 1250 ground launched ballistic missiles (GLBM) and ground launched ballistic cruise missiles (GLCM). The ranges of their GLBMs and GLCMs range between 500 and 5500 km. The United States only has one GLBM and no GLCMs. On top of this, our only GLBM has a range of only 70 to 300 km. Furthermore, China is developing new Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles which will significantly improve their nuclear capable missile forces. The PRC has also rapidly increased the capability of its integrated air defense systems, now possessing one of the world's largest forces of air - defense systems. The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) is reorganizing their military to be better prepared for joint operations and overall combat readiness. China plans to use its new, powerful military to take a more active role in advancing its overseas footprint. The CCP believes that the PRC's growing global presence will help create a "favorable" international environment for Chinese rejuvenation. For example, China is already planning for the creation of additional military logistic bases in regions such as Thailand, Indonesia, Pakistan and the United Arab Emirates. Such a network of bases could potentially interfere with American military operations. Even more disturbing, the CCP views all of its security alliances and partnerships with the United States, especially in the Indo Pacific Region, as destabilizing and against China's interests. With all this being said, there are still shortcomings in the PRC. CCP leaders are acutely aware of these shortcomings and are working diligently to correct them.

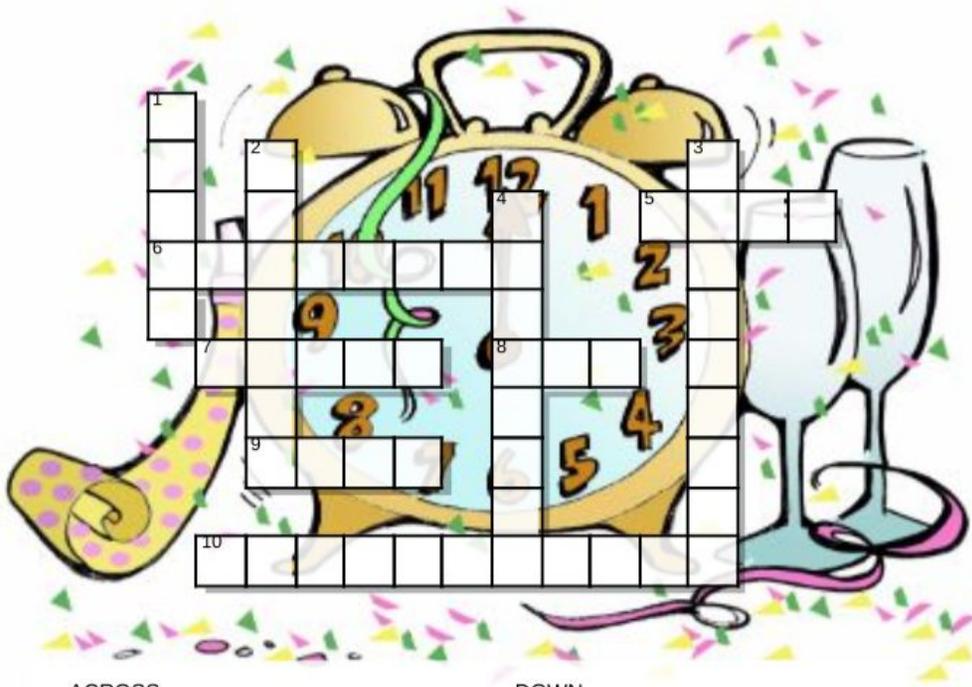
Aside from the military, China is also taking actions to dominate the world economically. The CCP has created initiatives, such as the Made in China 2025, which aims at using state owned enterprises and government subsidies in order to increase its dominance of Global high tech manufacturing with their overall aim being to surpass western technology prowess. Their initiative unfairly favored China's domestic enterprises at the expense of foreign participants in China's markets. There have been multiple efforts to help increase American self sufficiency in order to combat this plan, but there's still a long way to go. Perhaps the Covid - 19 crisis served as one of the largest indicators of the U.S.'s dependence on China. During the early stages of this crisis, the United States, along with many other countries, possessed a massive anti-biotic shortage. 80 % of the world's raw ingredients to produce antibiotics come from China. Thus, many countries ended up purchasing ingredients for antibiotics from China which allowed them to economically benefit from this virus. All China has to do is shut its doors on exports on core components to make our medicine and our health care system decimate. Our reliance on China and the CCP's continued efforts to strategically increase domestic manufacturing in important industries only serves to help the PRC attain their goal of economic supremacy of the world.

The status of the United States as the world's greatest superpower has remained unchallenged for decades. Now our dominance is being challenged by an authoritarian state with no regard for human rights. We must support American made goods and support maintaining our current defense spending, and our generation must work to promote American self sufficiency. If not, we will risk our posterity learning about the United States being the second most powerful nation -- second next to China.



# CROSSWORD

## JANUARY



### ACROSS

- 5 Measured in seconds, minutes, hours, days...
- 6 Small pieces of colored paper thrown at parties
- 7 An event to celebrate something
- 8 Not old
- 9 12 months or 365 days
- 10 Many people make these for the New Year, end up not keeping them

### DOWN

- 1 Device to tell time
- 2 First month of the year
- 3 These explode to make a display of light and noise
- 4 12 o'clock at night

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