

# The Pirate Journal

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## Beware the Momo Challenge

By Kassidy Dyer

A new challenge called the Momo Challenge is surfacing the internet to spread cyberbullying and threats to readers and viewers, eventually turning them to conflict suicide and self-harm.

The challenge targets younger ages that are impressionable, telling them not to tell their parents and to listen to what they say. They start telling the readers to follow through with little tasks and then they turn into threats and bigger tasks that involve hurting themselves. The internet isn't just for teenagers and adults anymore; these days, it's for all ages! Even second and third graders have iPhones and tablets and access to the good and bad things the internet holds.

The Momo Challenge first surfaced in 2018, but the picture has been on the internet since about 2016 from a firm that practices special effects called Link Factory in Japan. The picture is of a sculpture that has bulging eyes, pale skin, a beak-like nose, and a smile that stretches across the face. The actual name of the sculpture is titled Mother Bird. They have denied any part taken in this challenge and it was never meant to be associated with a sinister challenge.

No police reports were filed on the dangerous challenge or acted upon until February of this year—many suicides in many countries are stringing a line, boosting the popularity of the challenge. People make different phone numbers, contact people through different social apps, pop up after YouTube videos, and even in the game Minecraft. Microsoft is working to limit access, phone numbers are being shut off if associated with Momo, and apps such as the Whatsapp are trying to bring it to a stop. Many parents are taking extra steps to monitor what their kids are watching and doing on the internet by blocking pop-up ads, limiting their internet access, and supervising more in depth.

Jhareth Bloomerader says, "The challenge is pretty messed up and it makes me worried about the well-being of smaller children. I was pretty scared looking at the picture of Momo. You have to be pretty messed up to threaten and push those kinds of things on little kids."



## YouTube Implements Censorship within the Platform

By Veronica Knippling

Recently YouTube admitted to altering the algorithm on their platform pertaining to conspiracy theories. Especially the Flat-Earth Theory related videos, YouTube has been making conspiracy videos particularly hard to find. When you search "Flat-Earth debunking" the only videos that are shown are videos "debunking" the theory. Now videos that are recommended to you, or appear in your "Up Next," exclude conspiracies.

A popular YouTuber, Shane Dawson, recently has been facing a number of controversial scandals after releasing several videos focused on conspiracy theories. Dawson has been posting videos on YouTube for 12 years, and has earned over 20 million subscribers. For a long time, conspiracy theory videos have been an anticipated feature on his channel. From the Flat-Earth Theory to Chuck E. Cheese possibly reusing old pizza slices, Shane has covered it all. However, YouTube has recently started censoring videos he uploads. Dawson has managed to produce these videos despite the censorship, and has gathered a fan base large enough and dedicated enough to successfully produce.

For creators like Dawson, these videos bring in some very substantial numbers. Many YouTubers depend on videos like this to keep their following involved. Is it YouTube's right to ban these videos, or even make them harder to find or come across? Or is what we're seeing unfair, and too much involvement by the YouTube community?



## Technology at Highmore-Harrod School

By Sylvia Rodriguez

Students at Highmore-Harrod School have been privileged with technology. From smart boards to laptops, our small school has integrated the latest and greatest feats of machinery, but not without challenge.

Every student grade 7 to 12 have their own personal laptops along with faculty members. Currently, Bytespeed is the computer brand of the laptops and the system is running on Windows 10 Education. "Being able to take it home and get my work done is a big plus" said an anonymous student.

Not all students have had a positive experience. Junior Emily Semmler said, "My touchscreen no longer works and the headphone jack fell out, I've got mine repaired at least 3 times. I never did anything that caused it." When it comes to damage and mishandling of the devices, Jory Schmidt, Highmore-Harrod's school computer administrator said "What we're looking at is just normal everyday wear and tear on them, sometimes the batteries will go bad, chargers will go bad, things of that nature hinges will come loose or break."



Junior Emily Semmler works on one of the many assignments that students are required to complete using a computer.

Other complaints from students range from hot chargers to really slow processing. "My computer does not hold a charge, I have to keep it plugged it constantly or else I will lose all my work," said another student. Yearbook editor Veronica Knippling points out some of the downfalls while also showing gratitude. "I feel that we would be able to achieve more in *The Pirate Journal* with more capable laptops. They don't always hold up well for the graphic design part of journalism but I'm happy to have the opportunity to work with it."

Smartboards have been a major upgrade when it comes to teaching. High school math teacher Brent Liechti said, "I love my InFocus smartboard, I think it's better than the Promethean board because there is no projector shining in my eyes and the fact that it's a touchscreen so I don't have to use a pen." Another teacher that uses the Smartboard frequently is high school history teacher Mike Ring says "I like the TV. combo." Before, he was watched his morning news on a small CRT TV in the corner ceiling of the room; now he can watch it on the big screen.

## Taking the Pin at State

By Cheyenne Carroll

This past weekend two Miller/Highmore-Harrod wrestlers attended the South Dakota State wrestling tournament in Rapid City. Miller/Highmore-Harrod ended up placing 29<sup>th</sup> in the Class B team standings. Regan Bollweg and Blade Forman both placed top 8 in their respective brackets. Bollweg wrestled at 195 and ended up placing 6th to finish off his sophomore year. Forman wrestled at 126 and ended up 7th to end out his senior year. As a recap of his sophomore year Bollweg says, "I'm not too satisfied with my 2019 year and I am ready to make a bigger comeback in 2020."



Regan Bollweg and Blade Forman hold their region bracket signs.

## The Rise of the Biopic

By Velvet Jessen

Since the release of *Bohemian Rhapsody* biopics have exploded onto the scene, with the trailer of a new biopic, *Rocketman* about Sir Elton John, and a second about the life of the band Queen post-Freddie Mercury. Many biopics have been made starting in the late 1990s but none reaching the level of popularity as *Bohemian Rhapsody*.

*Bohemian Rhapsody* was released in November of 2018 and was a hit with almost everyone despite the critics' low ratings with one reporting it as 1 star. The picture followed the life of Freddie Mercury from his start in Queen to Live Aid, including all the ups and downs. The movie has gained success globally with a \$608.7 million at the global box office, which has also made the movie the highest grossing music biopic ever. The movie has gone on to win 31 awards and break numerous records.

*Rocketman* is a biopic that focuses on the life of Sir Elton John throughout his break-through years. The movie is highly anticipated after the success of *Bohemian Rhapsody*. *Rocketman* is set to hit theaters May 31. Biopics, which are similar to biographical movies, had been on the rise for some time with Netflix making the *Ted Bundy Tapes*, and numerous other series following criminals and looking into people's lives. With biopics introducing unique stories that the people can relate to, newer movies seem to pale next to the vivid biopic.

Biopics allow a new way to tell a story and a closer look at the people we have idolized. Sophomore Haley Husted said, "I think they're successful because people are tired of seeing the same character formulas over again just put in different plots." As biopics have risen in popularity over the year the movie industry will have to rise to the challenge of more unique storylines and leaving the formulas behind.



## Put Free Money in Your Pocket

By Kassie Hale

With the end of the year coming forward seniors are scrambling for scholarships. People in Highmore's community put these scholarships together for the youth of our community. The different scholarships that are the Hyde County Scholarships are the John Zilverberg Scholarship, Highmore-Harrod School Staff Scholarship, Luze Funeral Home Scholarship, Hyde County Scholarship Foundation, Schoenhard, Cindy Volek Memorial Scholarship, Raymond E and Delores Crane & Trammel Family, Jr Schlegel Memorial Scholarship, and the Cam Cowan Memorial Scholarship. Many of these scholarships have a due date on April 1<sup>st</sup> but not all.

Counselor Brita Bergeson said seniors can find the information on the local scholarship, when "I email out the information to the students and their parents. I also post it on our high school website." Most scholarships require your name, address, and grade point average, copy of transcript, short essay decisions, and what your future plans may be.

Senior Madison Bollweg has already received a scholarship. She won what's called the Deans Scholarship and its based off of mainly community and school involvement, GPA, and ACT scores. In addition she said, "Then went to an interview in front of a panel of judges and received more money. So the total ended up being \$70,000 for four years." Clearly, it can be worth it to apply!



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