A Tale of Two Koreas

by Jessie Song

One of the most important issues in the world today is the conflict between South and North Korea. What is happening in the two Koreas, and how have they been affected by history?

In August 2015, there were two explosions near the border of the two Koreas involving mines which had been installed by North Korea. Because of this, two South Korean soldiers lost their legs, and the conflict between the two Koreas is now at its peak. According to ft.com, “The North did not admit responsibility in Tuesday’s conflict, although it expressed “regret” for the incident.” South Korea considered this situation as “the provocation of North” and decided to restart propaganda broadcasts aimed at North Korea.

These propaganda broadcasts contain weather forecasts, world news, details about reality in North Korea, K-pop, South Korean drama, and other entertainment. However, the reality of North Korea’s political issues is conveyed very softly. North Korea is very sensitive about this broadcasting because it obviously reveals the gap in life between the two Koreas. This is a reason why North Korea has acted more offensively towards South Korea.

North Korea also relays its own propaganda broadcasts to South Korea. The content is mainly about how the communism of North Korea and Kim Jong-un are successful. However, since the technology of North Korea is not as good as South Korea’s, the content is less likely to reach South Korean citizens.

What led to the current situation? Throughout history, the two Koreas have gone through periods of good relations and bad relations. In 1945, Korea was divided into two separate countries, South and North Korea, by the United States and the Soviet Union. Three years later, in 1948, South and North Korea established their own governments, completing the division. On June 25th, 1950, North Korea invaded South Korea, triggering the Korean War. On July 27th, 1953, South and North Korea called a truce and established a cease-fire region called the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) between them. Tensions have run high ever since.

In the late 1990s, North Korea ambushed South Korea, and both Koreas deployed spies across their borders who are still active now. In the 2000s, after a summit between South Korean President Kim-Dae-Jung and North Korean Leader Kim-Jung-Il, the two Koreas became friendlier to each other. Also, South Korea sent humanitarian aid to North Korea, contributing to improved relations.

However, North Korea continued investing money into military power, including nuclear weapons. After Kim Jong-un took over as the leader of North Korea in December 2011, relations between the two Koreas again deteriorated, leading to the recurrence of propaganda broadcasting in 2015.
In the four years I have been here, Webb has changed a lot. Some of the changes have been good, and some of them have been bad. The biggest change I have noticed is the growing distrust and tension between the student body and administration. The change manifests itself in many ways: in complaints about the dress code, the dining hall, and about the school itself. As the administration continues to impose more restrictions on students and the morale of the student body decreases, one question begs to be asked: Is the school listening to us?

The faculty and administration at our school take pride in our openness and honesty. The small size of our school and our honor code both contribute to this sense of community and closeness. Mr. Broadhead always takes great pains to emphasize that “[his] door is always open” for all students. Despite this, there is a growing disconnect between the students and the administration. The reason behind this is the administration makes decisions without the input of the student body.

Take the example of the school’s dress code. For over a year now, there has been conflict over almost every aspect of the dress code, from skirt length to male earrings to reduction of polo days. It seems however, that as much as students protest, there is never any change in our favor (except for one week of no-shave November). Almost all decisions made on the dress code resulted in stricter rules and harsher enforcements (for example, the decrease in number of polo days). All of these policies were made without student input. Unlike the past year, there is no dress code council this year, and because of that, no serious attempt has been made by the school to understand why we are so frustrated.

The issue is not just limited to the dress code. The administration also fails to deal with issues students are the most passionate about. In last quarter’s Oracle, there was an article written about the busing problem in Murfreesboro. The response from administration? Nothing. I interviewed members of the administration about this problem, asking what would be done. While the reasoning behind the inaction was logical (lack of financing), it made no sense that the school did not attempt to reach out to students and parents to try to solve the problem. Essentially, the administration made a decision about an issue without contacting the parents and students who would be affected.

This is not to say the administration does not make attempts to communicate with the student body. This school is already more open to discussion than most private and public schools. Members of the administration allow students to approach them with questions and comments about how the school is run. While writing this article, Mr. McRady and Mr. Broadhead both took time to listen to my questions and answer them the best they could.

After speaking with them, I realized that they do want the best for us students. Everyone in the administration has to make difficult decisions, and not every choice will be popular. While interviewing Mr. Quinn to ask him how he felt about the situation, he replied, “The very act of providing a decision is an act of cleavage. The community can divide on opposite answers to the question or unite behind that decision.”

All of these points are valid, but if the administration wants to make this school one of the preeminent private schools in the South, there should be more of an effort to incorporate students into the decision making process. Host forums to listen to students’ complaints. Send out questionnaires. Call parents. Talk to students in leadership positions. The student body at Webb is willing to work with the administration. So please, listen.
Fight for Joy
By Lucas C. Wiesemann

Teasing hurts. Most people don’t realize that joking with a friend can make that friend feel bad. If people would stop teasing and start giving compliments, the world would be a happier place. Compliments promote happiness, not insecurity. What an alternative!

Bullying is unwanted, currently or potentially repeated aggressive behavior involving a power imbalance. However, the schoolyard bullying of the previous generation differs greatly from modern bullying. In the old days, boys experienced being pushed and shoved while being taunted with insults, and girls were plagued with declarations of their imperfections. Today, bullying is far more damaging and replaces physical bullying with persistent, unrelenting teasing. Many consider teasing harmless jokes, but teasing can have serious repercussions. When teasing occurs often in a person’s life, it is hard to shrug off the insecurities brought by so-called “jokes.”

The typical response to excessive teasing, if not depression, is conformity. Often children forget the importance of being themselves. They instead participate in the acts that once hurt them, blending into their surroundings and thinking their own opinions are less important. They begin to do what the other kids do instead of what they are passionate about. Consequently, most people who do the bullying were first victims of bullying themselves. Teasing can also lead to social anxiety disorders as victims of childhood teasing look back on that time with shame.

Though friendly teasing is sometimes okay, there is a better alternative. Compliments are the perfect way to brighten someone’s day. Research shows how a simple compliment gives the recipient feelings of happiness, excitement, and a heightened sense of well-being. These simple words can even help our health by reducing headaches and keeping blood pressure down.

The most exciting benefit of compliments is the chain reaction of kindness it creates. Compliments make people feel more upbeat, and their increased good mood leads them to compliment others. Simply saying someone’s hair looks nice or that you liked their presentation in class can start a revolution of happiness that spreads across your community.

Keep these things in mind next time you get the urge to poke fun at someone. Think about how those words could affect that person. The next time you are about to point out someone’s flaws, give them a compliment instead, and start a wave of joy through your community.
Electronic learning, as simple as it sounds, is an enigma for many. As electronics gradually insert themselves into our education, a sharp divide occurs between those who believe it supplements our work and those who think it’s absolutely useless and cannot replace the physical classroom. I’m not a true member of the latter category, but I do not believe electronic programs should become the primary instrument of instruction. However, casting them out entirely is a blatant refusal to keep up with the ever-changing times, so allowing them to occupy a supportive role is warranted.

The most logical reason why more and more assignments are being posted online is convenience. This should not be surprising, since it’s hard to argue with convenience. However, this quality comes at the cost of face-to-face interaction between student and teacher, which does matter, believe it or not.

And then there’s the shoddy quality of most online academic resources, which is often made clear by technical difficulties, such as pages failing to load for seemingly no reason. Plus, there’s a myriad of problems with the way the programs often treat the student. If you try and complete a homework assignment online that’s auto-graded by the software, answers are usually case-sensitive, which means that you will miss the question unless you type the answer in exactly how it wants you to, often with little explanation of why you missed it. This can be especially frustrating with foreign languages, as you will often need to type whole sentences without making a single error, be it accents, spelling, etc., or risk the entire thing being counted wrong. Significant figures in long science problems can also cause annoyance.

But making mistakes is part of learning, you say. Most certainly, but the software I have experienced usually gives you a limited amount of attempts to get it right. This can stress the student, especially if the error is not made clear. And then there’s the issue of software failing the right answer.

But it’s so convenient! Alas, that’s why we put up with this stuff. Perhaps I’ve drawn the short end of the stick when it comes to seeing technical problems with these things. And as aforementioned, it can help. But things like extra help and classroom discussion tend to help me much more. But what’s broken can be fixed, and these issues may disappear as we grow more acclimated to educational technology and iron out the bugs. Until then, I’ll stick to the old-fashioned way, thanks.
Rising Junior Gets Excited About College Mail

By Andrew Cooper

A rising Webb junior was reported to have “felt special” after receiving her first letters from selective colleges.

“I know I’m a good student and everything, but I didn’t know that all these colleges would fight over me like this!” she exclaimed as she reorganized her small stack of mail from the nation’s top universities.

“I was initially considering some big state universities near home, but I guess I was being too conservative. Now that I know that all the Ivy League colleges want me, it’s going to be a hard decision choosing between Harvard, Yale, and Princeton, not to mention the University of Chicago, which sends me something every day.”

She did admit to having one reservation. “The only qualm I had was the cost, which is $610 for applying to all eight Ivy Leagues. But then I realized, if I am guaranteed to get into all of them, then it’s worth it. ”

Before the interview ended, the junior relayed her plans for the future: “After I graduate with a double major from the Ivy League of my choice and go to med school, I plan on ending world hunger.”

Senior Privileges

By Andrew Cooper

One of the few benefits of being a senior at The Webb School includes receiving “Senior Privileges.” However, this year, the seniors received only two out of the ten privileges that they asked for. In my opinion, they should stop complaining and appreciate the privileges they already have.

With some students stating that “it is not even a privilege,” the senior table in the lunchroom is very undervalued. “What those students don’t know,” claimed a Webb authority, “is that that table was made from African mahogany. I’m pretty sure it’s an endangered wood species, or at least it sounds like it would be. Those spoiled rotten brats are sitting on a piece of history right there.”

Another benefit is the Senior Room. “Nothing wakes me up in the morning better than breathing in the Senior Room’s dust bunnies and cat hair,” one senior stated. “Also, the extreme temperature gets my blood flowing. That room is better than caffeine.”

Perhaps the most overlooked senior privilege is that seniors do not have to take second semester exams. “We figure that if they’ve made it this far, we may as well let them keep a small shred of sanity by easing their loads when it matters the least,” said an easygoing administrator. “After all, it would look bad if Webb were known for turning out young people who are messed up for the rest of their lives.”

Given all these privileges, there is no reason why we would need a harmful privilege of wearing our polos on Wednesdays, and there is certainly no place for men expressing themselves with earrings or long hair. This is The Webb School in Bell Buckle, not The Webb School in California.

On Fighting and How It Works

By Connor “Anders” Anderson

Since time immemorial, men have fought amongst themselves over just about everything-- money, land, food, power, honor, religion, race, bragging rights, idiotic Facebook comments, bus seats, and boredom. But in more recent times, it seems that the bouts of fisticuffs once used to solve our problems have become increasingly rare. According to our sources high up in the student body hierarchy, “This sucks.”

Recently, many petitions have been sent to our ever most benevolent Honor Council, asking for a change of methods. “I don’t think that our current system is working out,” said an anonymous faculty member in our sports program. “I’d rather prove a student guilty by beating them up, like we used to do.”

The Honor Council has always been about just that: honor. Is there no more honorable way to solve disputes than a swift punch in the stomach? “Just look at the progress and the wonders it did for medieval European kingdoms,” said a faculty member in our history department when asked if the old ways of chivalry and pugilism would work for our school. “This is definitely the way to go for us. Just look at modern examples. It’s working right now for our own country in foreign lands, just as it has in the past.” Our reporter then mentioned the Cold War, at which point our source became quieter.

But it’s not only the faculty who supports this measure. “I’ll fight those nerds,” a local nerd told our reporter. Whether he was serious or not, his argument can only make sense. I speak for all of us here at the Oracle and the entire student body when I say we should immediately reenact this ancient tradition in our school for our benefit and integrity. And if anyone disagrees, I will fight them.
I didn’t want to like it. I didn’t expect to even make it through the first song. Even as a music fan who prides herself in giving everything a shot at being incorporated into her Spotify playlists, it was almost agonizing to even look at the album when it first dropped a couple weeks ago. To be quite honest, I wanted to listen to it enough just to extrapolate reasons to dislike it, analyze the lyrics for bad writing, or be able to disregard the production as over-blown or auto-tuned.

But folks, here it is. The day has come. I listened to Justin Bieber’s Purpose, on purpose, and I liked it.

Actually, I really really liked it.

Pop music comes in all shapes and sizes and even has countless subgenres all in itself. Some of it, everyone can agree on (the Beatles, for example, though they can easily fit into every genre, not simply pop); some of it, we love unabashedly (I definitely still blast Hannah Montana when I’m having a bad day); some of it we love only socially (I really enjoy Drake when hanging with friends); some of it we love secretly (thank you, Spotify private sessions, for guarding my guilty pleasures which typically consist of me repeating Wrecking Ball for 12 hours straight—yes, that happened). But whatever way you look at it, pop music is inherently divisive. By even calling it “pop,” not only are you likening it to the sugary soda drink, which is essentially what that is in music form, you’re placing it on a shiny pedestal that is simply perfect for music snobs to throw their rotten fruit at.

I confess that I am one of those music snobs. I used to pride myself for not knowing any Top 40 hits and being clueless about what artists were “popular.” The music I listened to was underground, classic, or non-mainstream. My favorite artists weren’t even worth mentioning to you plebeians of the indie-rock culture—because you probably hadn’t heard of them. I was, and still continue to be, a music snob. But it’s something that I genuinely am trying to kick out of my system. Because pop music is “pop” for a reason, and it’s not just because it’s sugary and addictive. For something to be popular, it has to be doing something right, right? So what if they lyrics aren’t Bob Dylan! The production is great!! And so, I have come to accept that allowing myself to enjoy more pop music will not send me to hipster hell, and maybe I even enjoy a little Drake and Nick Jonas and Jason Derulo and Miley.

That being said, Justin Bieber has always represented to me the absolute antithesis of my music tastes. I always made fun of his hair, his high voice, his songs, his clothes. I rolled my eyes and gagged when my friends faked making out with their JB posters. I still would, of course, but only because that’s ridiculous, but not because I hate his music.

The song that did it for me was “Love Yourself.” If you’re looking for a reason to become a Belieber, that’s the one. Well, really, it’s the dichotomy of “Love Yourself” and “Where Are Ü Now.” The latter’s lyrics aren’t bad, and the production is honestly just fun. But Love Yourself. Honestly. Holy moly.

It’s the last thing I would have expected from the guy. Not only is the production perfectly minimal, the song itself is just really freakin’ good. Go listen to it. Then keep reading.

The chorus, of course, is the best:

Cause if you like the way you look that much
Then baby, you should love yourself
And if you think that I’m still holding on to something
You should go and love yourself

What a wonderful way to tell someone to screw off. You used me and manipulated me and belittled me, and you know what? Go love yourself. Go love yourself, because I don’t have time for you, and you shouldn’t waste time on me. Love yourself, because then maybe you won’t be so hateful to others. How unexpected. How completely opposite of the typical pop slant of “you suck and I hate you and I’m going to go party and screw a load of other people to get over you and did I mention you’re the worst!!!!!”

And of course, I can’t really credit Bieber himself with writing the song on his own. Benjamin Levin (Benny Blanco, aka the guy behind literally every major pop song of the past eight years, starting with “I Kissed a Girl” and even producing one of my favorite albums ever, Ryn Weaver’s The Fool) co-wrote and produced “Love Yourself,” along with Ed Sheeran who, in my opinion, might be one of the best pop lyric writers of our age. And considering the fact that Justin Bieber isn’t really known for his lyrical prowess (every song he’s ever cut, except one on Journals, I believe, has multiple co-writers attached), I’d bet this brilliant chorus here is largely the work of Sheeran.
A Treatise on Eyebrows  By Meredith Miller

According to knowyourmeme.com, the term “on fleek” was coined in 2014 on Vine. For those of you who have been living under a rock for the last year, “on fleek” is a term that is (usually) used to describe very nice eyebrows.

But what really defines a nice eyebrow? Does a nice eyebrow have to be bolder than Internet Explorer when it asks to be your default browser? Does it have to be sharp enough to slice a man in half? More structured than Angelina Jolie’s cheekbones? But more importantly, when did having good eyebrows become so important?

There once was a simpler time when no one cared about their eyebrows, and they ran rampant across the faces of our good American Citizens. But oh, how the tables have turned. Eyebrows are so important now to almost everyone I know.

But why? Taking care of eyebrows is hard and painful, and, above all, annoying—but we still do it. Even though these two strips of hair are so small, their shape can change someone’s appearance completely. The cleaner they are, the more elegant and refined someone looks, and the wilder they are, the more uncaring a person looks.

Eyebrows express emotion, and some even reflect a person’s personality, or at least I think so. But more importantly, people take care of their eyebrows because they want to. And, you know, no matter how much you hate the idea of eyebrow-grooming, the thing about eyebrows is: they really grow on you.

Six Word Stories  

By Siree McRady

1. Dreamcatchers protect you from bad dreams.
2. Isn’t school about learning, not grades?
3. Crying isn’t a sign of weakness.
4. Be proud of who you are.
5. Why are most songs about love?
6. I wish that I could fly.

One Other Thought…

People often ignore the meaning of common aphorisms. For example, “Better to have loved and lost, than never to have loved at all,” “Before you judge a man, you should walk a mile in his shoes,” and, “A journey of a thousand miles must begin with a single step.” These phrases, strung together, become background noise. In literature, the most important lines that contain a deep message are often repeated. Maybe this is why we keep hearing the same old quotes and phrases over and over again. Even though hearing these words has become repetitive, people should still listen for the truths.

Chapel-time Sudoku  

By Andrew Cooper

6  
2 4  
5 1 3 4 
6 4 5 7 
9 1 2  
9 2 4 7 9 
3 8 1 9
A Tale of Two Koreas (Continued from Page 1)

Separated families now feel even more pressure to meet with each other. It has been almost 70 years since they were forced into separation. Most of the separated family members are very old, and there is not a lot of time left for them. People are crying out to let them reunite, regardless of the poor relations between South and North Korea.

The United States of America is also involved in the Korean issue. The “Mutual Defense Treaty between the Republic of Korea and the United States of America” was passed August 8th, 1953, and is still in effect. After Moscow and Washington failed to agree on a way forward with the two Koreas, the United Nations declared in 1948 the Republic of Korea (ROK), with its capital in Seoul, the only legitimate government on the peninsula. The Soviets rejected that assertion, and in 1950, the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK) invaded South Korea, triggering the Korean War.

Today, America still assists South Korea militarily. When North Korea became belligerent towards South Korea, South Korea and the United States started the initiatives Key Resolve, Foal Eagle, and Ulchi Freedom Guardian. However, it is controversial throughout South Korea about whether America’s involvement is a good idea since American soldiers staying in Korea have stirred up trouble at times. There have been reports of fights breaking out between soldiers and civilians and of arrests of soldiers who raped women.

Also, South Korean citizens were sometimes exposed to potential harm by the American military. Specifically, in May 2015, America accidentally sent living *Bacillus Anthracis*, or anthrax bacteria, to a South Korean army base. *Bacillus Anthracis* is potentially more lethal than a hydrogen bomb. It was sent from Utah to Osan, Korea, by a private mail company. According to the website Aljazeera, “the Osan base - where the bacteria was sent - was only about 60km from the capital, Seoul.”

The issue whether to allow American forces to remain in South Korea has therefore become controversial. Some people say that it is important for South Korea to have autonomy in managing its own defense without any foreign assistance, while others say that receiving help from America prevents further conflicts between the two Koreas, especially considering North Korea’s nuclear capabilities.

Military tension has simmered between the two Koreas for seventy years. The time has come to resolve this painful conflict.

UnBelieber (Continued from Page 6)

Nevertheless, the very fact that Bieber would even *do* a song like this just astonishes me. The production is minimal throughout the song, forcing you to listen to the lyrics, which are vulnerable and honest, and I dare say even Bieber’s voice isn’t that obnoxious. Nothing about this song is trying to be more than it should– not the words, not the production, and not his singing. And I respect that immensely.

The rest of *Purpose* is full of really great pop tracks, like “Sorry” and the Bieber/Halsey collaboration “The Feeling.” The swishy-haired, high-voiced youth seems to be growing up (I mean, what???? He’s 21???). I never thought I would ever consider myself a Justin Bieber fan. But this album, and really track 5, is the first thing that’s ever made me think of converting, music snobbery aside.

Only time will tell, as the number of repeats on my Spotify climbs to almost embarrassing heights, if Justin Bieber will carve out a home in my music shelves for good. But as for now, I’m at 4 straight hours of “Love Yourself,” and I’m turning off Spotify’s private session.