

Preparing the Plaintiff: Mock Trial Takes the Stand

BY WILL STORBECK

As the first quarter comes to an end, the Mock Trial program starts their preparation for their first competitions of the year. Last year was a learning experience for the team, with the Mount Michael Mock Trial program being revived after 5 years. Although every member was new to Mock Trial, the teams did see some success. Now, with the proper experience, the team has higher expectations for their second season.

The Nebraska Mock Trial Committee releases a fictional court case that every team must learn. This case includes a description of the events, witness statements, and items that can be used as evidence. The teams must learn the entirety of the case from both the perspective of the defense and the prosecution. Each team consists of 6 to 9 students, and the roles include: 3 attorneys, 3 witnesses, and 1 timekeeper.

Mock Trial is a valuable club at Mount Michael because it is extremely helpful to students that are either planning or interested in pursuing law as a future career path. Its realistic portrayal of a courtroom setting helps show students what being a lawyer or prosecutor is like. In addition to this, it also is a great way to develop public speaking skills, because individuals are required to memorize and recite certain details of the case.

Mount Michael has 3 teams competing in the competition this year: one team of all seniors, one of primarily juniors, and an underclassmen team consisting of a mixture of freshman and sophomores. Each team has a slightly different approach to their interpretation of the case, but this leads to a valuable exchange of different ideas and perspectives that mutually benefit each other's understanding of the case material.

Both the senior and the junior teams have experience from competitions last year. This experience gives the team a huge advantage that it did not have last year.

In addition to the returning members of the junior and senior teams, there are also some new additions to each team as well. "Mock Trial has been great so far, I've gotten spend time with friends and learn how the court system works," Eli Walters '25 said. The addition of new members to the program is vital to its success. With more people on each team, it is easier for them to understand and specialize in their individual roles.

The teams have been rigorously preparing these last couple of months, trying to get ready for competition with other schools. The preparation process began back in August and has been finalized in October. This long process consists of the memorization of witness statements, question writing by the lawyers, and finally practice trials within the team.

With the last stages of preparation complete, the next step is competition with the other high schools in Nebraska. Although the competition will be tough, the team likes their chances of having a successful season.



Ready for Battle The Mock Trial team poses outside of the Douglas County Courthouse before the first competition. The teams performed very well in the opening round of trial.

Capturing Hearts: Two Adorable Animals Hit the World Stage

BY EASTON CROUSE

Adorable animals paved the way for the foundation of the internet. Pictures and videos of cats started a trend of endearing pets making their way to the news. This unstoppable craze started with "Grumpy Cat," who started his own fandom from the cat's famous grumpy face, and is now captivated by two new critters: Moo Deng and Pesto.

Moo Deng is an adorable 2-month-old pygmy hippo that resides in Thailand. The diva became famous from a simple Facebook post. Her fame continued due to her "welcome-to-the-world" videos, which showed the baby animal figuring out how to walk and interact with her family. Moo Deng is most notably famous on TikTok with videos of her rolling around and attempting to bite a zookeeper.

Also, the TikTok audience has fallen in love with Moo Deng through several edits and videos being published. This audience has also created merchandise for Moo Deng, such as shirts, pajamas, and even posters with her face on them.

Moo Deng translates to "bouncy pork" in Thai. Moo Deng also is a type of Thai meatball, which is equally as fitting for the little hippo who is chubby and round like an Italian meatball. Moo Deng's playful antics made her such an internet sensation.



Graphic by Easton Crouse

Because Moo Deng is now an A-Lister, the zoo has had a packed audience every day since. The hippo even made an appearance on Saturday Night Live, played by comedian Bowen Yang. However, Moo Deng's title is being challenged by an Australian.

Pesto, an unusually large king penguin at the Melbourne Zoo, has found his way to fame. Born at just 7-ounces, he quickly became large, now weighing an astounding 50 pounds. His thick build has led him to be such a lovable creature.

Pesto has a fluffy brown coat as if he resembles a cotton ball. Just as Moo Deng, Pesto is the biggest attraction at his zoo, drawing thousands to see his fluffy coat. One of the people that has recently become obsessed with Pesto is the famous singer, Katy Perry.

After his claim to fame, Pesto was aptly given names by social media. A few include "absolute unit" and "linebacker." With his tremendous size comes his appetite. Pesto's diet consists of about 30 fish a day, which is way more than any other penguin in Melbourne.

Pesto and Moo Deng have also been compared to Godzilla and King Kong from the movies because of their "battle" for the cutest animal. The two have created their "teams" where the two sides disagree on which is better. BuzzFeed even stated in their headline, "You're Either Like Pesto Or Moo Deng, But You Can't Be Both..."

Starting on a New Note: Choir Welcomes New Set of Singers

BY WILL MCTAGGART

Mount Michael has always been known for its academics and its athletics, but something that does not have as much notoriety has been the Mount Michael Choir. Last year the Mount Michael Choir only consisted of seniors, but this year it has been more diverse with a collection of freshman, sophomores, juniors, and seniors led by music teacher Ms. Emily Nolan. Nolan joined The Mount Michael faculty in 2022, and she takes pride in her choir. Mount Michael Choir has experienced much change as the students have graduated.

Nolan only started teaching choir when she came to The Mount, but

she has loved every second of her teaching. However, it comes with challenges. Nolan explained, "Every year the ensemble changes so we need to make sure we are comfortable singing together." Every year the choir needs to retune their sound and stay comfortable together.

In her class they practice working on that ensemble. Her class usually starts with solfege which is Do Re Mi etc. Nolan said, "Singing is like a muscle, so it is important to be constantly working and strengthening that muscle." When asked what her class' favorite song Nolan replied "One Tin Soldier" by Dennis Lambert and Brian Potter. Nolan

said, "They really enjoy singing this because it's fun and easy like a campfire song."

As the year progresses Nolan wants to challenge her choir with more difficult and challenging songs that include union and harmony, but for right now as her choir is still very new they are still working on basic songs as they continue to develop as the year progresses.

On September 30, the Mount Michael choir took their first expedition to UNK to collaborate with other schools in a choir festival. Nolan said "My kids worked hard and sang all day to compete well. I am proud of all who sang."



Pitch Perfect Eason Jia '28, Laeth Sykora '28, Peter Trautman '26, Brady Quinlivan '26, Jack Burke '27, and Luke Bittner '26 pose for a team photo before their choir festival. The team travelled to the University of Nebraska Kearny for the event. Photo courtesy of Ms. Emily Nolan.