



# THE VOYAGER

DECEMBER 2021



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A NOTE FROM  
THE  
NEWSPAPER  
STAFF  
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THE HOLIDAY SEASON  
IS HERE!

AS ALWAYS THERE IS A  
WIDE ARRAY OF ISSUES  
IN THIS MUST READ  
EDITION OF THE  
VOYAGER!!

## ***IN THIS ISSUE....***

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*On the front cover: Apple picking at Stony Hill Farms by  
Sophia Potesta-Oliva*

# **SEAGULLS LOVE THEMSELVES TOO, SO WHY SHOULDN'T HUMANITY** BY PARIDHI BHARDWAJ

I had this amazing opportunity to read the fable *Jonathan Livingston Seagull* and it delivered profound life lessons. I thought its message was timeless and worth repeating. It was first published in book-form in 1970 and now it's 2021 and the impact that it leaves on the reader justifies the power of words. The one quote that really touched my heart was, "You have the freedom to be yourself, your true self, here and now, and nothing can stand in your way."

This statement by Jonathan to Maynard Gull helps him to fly. "How do you expect us to fly as you fly?" asked his flock. "You are special and gifted and divine, above other birds. The only difference is that they have begun to understand what they really are and have begun to practice it" said Jonathan. I think being able to be ourselves is freedom and only that will help us to expand our wings in the sky of opportunities.

How free are we all to be ourselves; in everything we do and all our interactions with others, are we expressing ourselves freely? If not, then why? We all sometimes mold ourselves in front of others just to get in their group. Do we sometimes not show our real self just because we think that certain elements of our personality are not likable? So, instead of boldly owning who we are and proudly sharing our creative expression of self, we pretend to be someone that we are not.

Jonathan Livingston is the metaphoric image for the person seeking out what he is called to do, and being ready to pay whatever price it takes. He discovered that for those who dare to dream, even the sky is not the limit.

Everyone said to Vincent van Gogh, "You can't be a great painter, you only have one ear". Do you know what he said? "I can't hear you". We need to learn how to be self-confident with our abilities because that is something that leads us to success, not listening to our critics and thus doubting ourselves. As said by Lalah Deliah, "She remembered who she was and the game changed".

We all are Jonathan in some way or other. For example, at a time

when everyone else strove to fit in, I strove to stand out. The more different I felt from the others, the more different I wanted to be. I am quite sure whenever we try to be ourselves, the environment suddenly changes and we all are confident in our actions.

We know very well who we are and we don't have to let anybody hold us down. Reach for the stars, don't hide yourself in regret, just love yourself, let people see the real imperfect, flawed, quirky, weird, beautiful, and magical person that there is within us all. And always remember, no one is like us and that is our super power.

The almighty has set us all free, we just need to hold on to our freedom and never be imprisoned by being something other than ourselves. We all are rare and we need to recognize that.

The freedom to be our true self is a gift only we can give to ourselves. But once we do, no one can take it away.

To conclude, Richard Bach's *Jonathan Livingston Seagull* depicts how even a seagull can fall in love with each and every cell of itself. If Jonathan can do it, so can humanity!

## **AMERICAN CIVICS TEST BY SIDDHI PATEL**

The American Civics Test -- or more commonly known as the Citizenship test -- is a part of naturalization, the legal act or process by which a non-citizen of a country may acquire citizenship or naturalization of that country. It is an examination that all immigrants must pass to gain United States citizenship. The test is prepared in English and is given orally. The outline of the examination is that a United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) Officer will ask the applicant up to 10 of the 100 civics questions. The applicant must answer 6 out of 10 questions correctly and obtain a 60% or higher to pass the civics portion of the naturalization test. The answers to select questions may differ based on elections and other events.

This test has been controversial because of differences in opinions about how hard the test should be for immigrants. That is what

led to the examination changing during the Trump administration. The test was made much harder and critics say it was to particularly target English learners trying to come to the United States. It was decided that the simple geography questions would be eliminated so it was harder to score better. On the other hand, they included more nuanced questions and topics such as states' rights and the Vietnam War, where complex phrasing could trip up applicants who do not consider them carefully. There were also some questions that were said to have "only one answer". An example is "Why did the United States enter the Vietnam War?" had one answer that was considered correct: "to stop the spread of Communism". The test did not take account of any of the strong, passionate protests or the huge death toll stemming from the war. Adding on, applicants were to answer double the questions during the examination. The Trump version of the civics test included 128 questions, compared to 100 in the previous test. The applicants are required to answer 12 out of 20 questions correctly compared to the 6 out of 10.

However, striking back was the Biden Administration at the beginning of 2021 who strongly disagreed with this format of the test. This led to the USCIS announcing that it will scrap former President Trump's revised naturalization civics test that critics called overly complex and unnecessary. With that, starting on March 1, 2021, USCIS restored the previous 2008 version of the civics test, which assesses a citizenship applicant's knowledge of U.S. history and government and is administered during the interview. This meant that applicants who filed their naturalization applications on or after December 1, 2020, but before March 1, 2021, with a citizenship interview scheduled before April 19, 2021, were able to choose to take the 2008 test or the 2020 test.

## ***CRYPTO MAKES THE WORLD GO ROUND BY UMASOFIA SRIVASTAVA***

I'm sure we've all heard the quote, "Money makes the world go round." Even if it is a societal construct, we rely on money to meet our basic needs: food, shelter, and in privileged society, education. I asked a few people what they pictured when they heard the word "money", and

nearly all of them thought of paper money and coins. However, with the world shifting to a more technology driven mindset, what if tangible currency is made obsolete, and is instead replaced with an online version? Online currency, or as its officially known, crypto currency, can be used to purchase goods and services much like physical money. It was first introduced in 2009, by the group or individual known as Satoshi Nakamoto. Created in the wake of the 2008 financial crisis, crypto provided a way for people to independently control funds and any additional fees or restrictions one would normally face when relying on companies, banks, or governments. Since then, the appeal of digital currencies like Bitcoin, Dogecoin, and SHIBA INU - to name a few - have only grown, which is owed to their nearly impenetrable security and increasing valuability that transactions with paper money cannot measure up to.

The reason crypto is so secure is because it operates through a system called Blockchain, which keeps track of transactions made with online currency by spreading them throughout multiple computers, just like the internet. Having a decentralized operating system makes it harder for hackers to trace payments, since they'd have to access more than one server in order to commit fraud. Some cryptos even have additional security, such as Bitcoin and Ethereum who have public servers. One might think being public makes the system more vulnerable since it means that anyone with a computer and an internet connection can participate. On the contrary, public currencies are virtually untraceable since a larger amount of people are logged onto a network, meaning that there are enough moderators to check one another's work and spot irregularities. The value placed on certain crypto currencies is similar to how the stock market functions, in that they both gain value if the demand for them is higher than their supply, which is also impacted by the fact that different types of cryptos have varying guidelines and limitations. There are 3 main versions of crypto: Bitcoin, Altcoin, and Tokens. Also known as the original crypto currency, Bitcoin has two distinguishing qualities, one being that it is capped after 21 million, meaning no further amounts of Bitcoin can be mined. Mining is the process by which new Bitcoins are entered into circulation. Having a capped currency allows Bitcoin to be used as a store-of-value investment tool; an asset that retains its worth and can be

put aside and recovered to use at a later time. Its second unique characteristic is that Bitcoin uses a Proof of Work mining system which is essentially a network of 'miners' that run the Bitcoin blockchain by way of computer calculations. Although this process requires huge amounts of energy consumption to fuel computational power, it allows the value of the computing power to attach itself to Bitcoins transactional system, thus assigning value. Alt coin, or 'alternative coin' is very similar to Bitcoin, minus a few minor differences. Firstly, Alt coins can potentially be uncapped and usually have faster transaction systems, both of which alter the blockchain of the crypto itself. While some forms of Alt coin use the same Proof-of-Work system that Bitcoin does, some opt to replace miners with validators which requires less energy and resources; this is called a Proof-of-Stake system. Finally, Alt coin can be utilized in the making of smart contracts which allows trusted transactions between anonymous parties, eliminating third party involvement and subsequently decreasing processing time. Smart contracts are important investments because they can be used as properties, stock, and gas. Tokens differ from the previous two, in that they use the smart contracts that were previously mentioned as the actual value of their currency. They do not have a blockchain, and instead operate on decentralized applications (dApps). Tokens do not undergo the same mining process as Bitcoin and some versions of Bitcoin, which makes them not representative of any tangible investments. Instead, they can be used to purchase items within dApps and can be put towards discounted fees and voting fees, similar to how fiat currency is not backed by commodities like gold or silver. Crypto's supply and demand is also affected by other variables such as making smart contracts, and crypto in general is mainstream by way of more businesses beginning to accept crypto. Additionally, if the crypto monetary system employs faster transactions and lower fees, as well as an increased demand for crypto as a store of value investment, the overall demand of crypto currency will increase.

As mentioned previously, crypto's supply and demand is very similar to the stock market, but that's not the only characteristic they share. Like the Dow Jones, online currency is extremely volatile. While the demand and type of coin influence crypto's overall value, so does the opinion of the media. Take the most recently released crypto known as SHIBA INU.

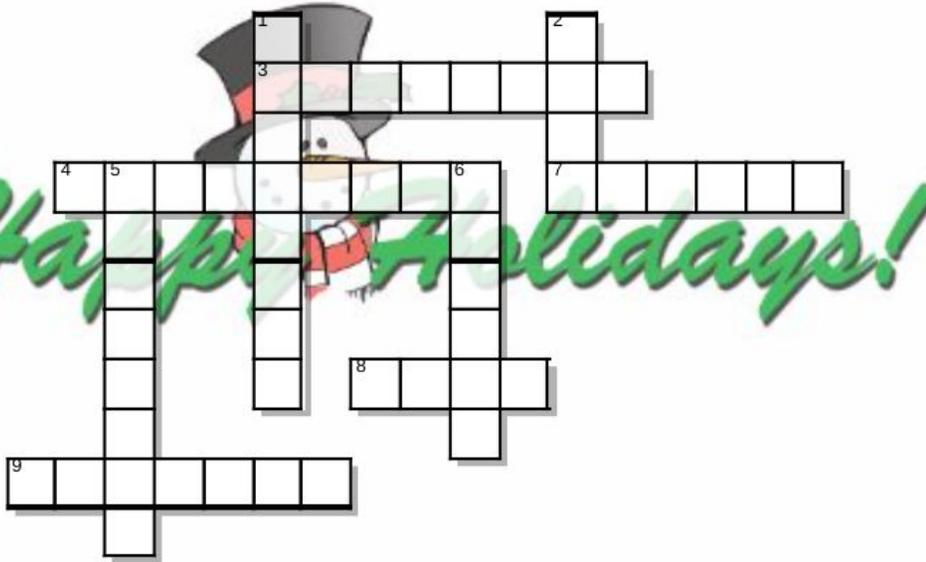
Created in August, it has quickly become a worldwide sensation. It has also been classified as a 'pump and dump' scheme, which is a form of security fraud which involves artificial inflation of stock through misleading statements in the stocks favor, allowing to sell cheaply purchased stock at an unfair price. People who make an ungodly amount of money due to crypto upswings often make headlines, but there are equally as many people losing everything during the downswings. The catch with crypto is that if one does end up losing everything, by way of gambling or overspending, no bank will offer you a loan, or replace funds in the case of hacking.

It has been 12 years since the implementation of crypto currency, and it's popularity has only snowballed. Other inventions such as the iPhone, Tesla, and even the refrigerator, were all created by improving upon something that already exists. While crypto may not be perfect, it could very well be the next financial advancement, having the potential to stabilize inflation in the market. Can crypto make the world go round by replacing paper money and satiating society's need for material objects, or is it simply just a facade to justify insider trading and other types of fraud?



# CROSSWORD

## DECEMBER



### ACROSS

- 3 Decoration hung on a Christmas tree
- 4 December 25
- 7 Christmas decoration formed by intertwining material into a ring shape
- 8 This plant is displayed during Christmastime
- 9 Holiday that celebrates African-American heritage and culture

### DOWN

- 1 A new season begins on the winter \_\_\_\_\_
- 2 Precipitation in the form of ice crystals
- 5 The Jewish "festival of lights"
- 6 Tool used to remove snow

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GO VIKES!!!!