

What a fun walk we had last Friday! I was with the high school, so I don't know how the JHS did, but I'm sure you had fun, too. I was on my bicycle. It felt like I cycled a long way, but I don't think I did. It's all uphill¹ on the way to Shikotsuko. You don't realize it when you are walking slowly, but when you are cycling you can feel it. I wonder if I will be cycling next year. I do like to walk. Anyway, what a great day. The weather was nice, the company was nice, and the snacks you all gave me were wonderful. I think I probably gained weight!

Something You Didn't Know (The Olympics)

1. The Olympics began as a religious festival² in ancient Greece in 776BC. In 393AD, when Christianity took hold, it was banned for being a pagan³ festival. It started again in 1896.
2. The first Olympic games of modern times was held in Greece.
3. When countries enter the Olympic stadium for the opening ceremony, Greece is always the first country and the host nation (in this case, Japan) always goes last.
4. 10,500 athletes from 206 countries will take part in this year's games.
5. London is the only city to host the Olympic Games three times: 1908, 1948 and 2012.
6. "Gold" medals are not really made of gold. They are made of silver and coated with gold. The last solid gold medals were given out at the 1912 Olympics.



Last week's answer:

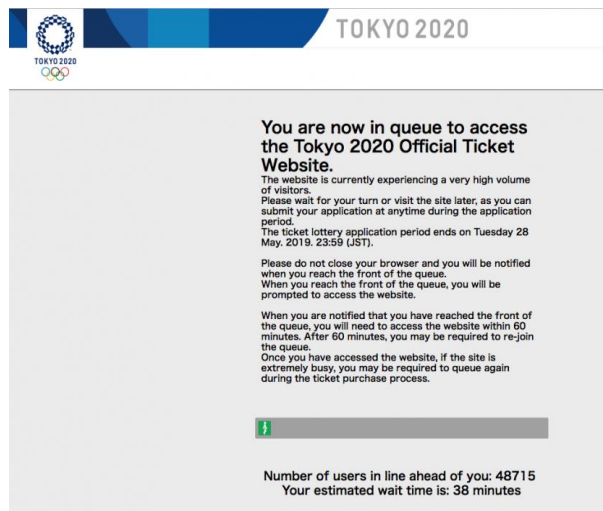


Announcements

3rd grade students have their English camp this Wed-Fri. It sounds like a lot of fun.

Lottery Tickets Go On Sale

Last Friday, while we were doing our long walk, the 2020 lottery tickets went on sale. The tickets are being sold until May 28th. As expected⁴, there was a huge rush of people logging on to the official⁵ Olympic website to try and buy the tickets. The automated⁶ webpage tells you that you will have to wait your turn and it tells you how many people are in front of you in the line. At one point there were 180,000 people waiting to buy tickets.



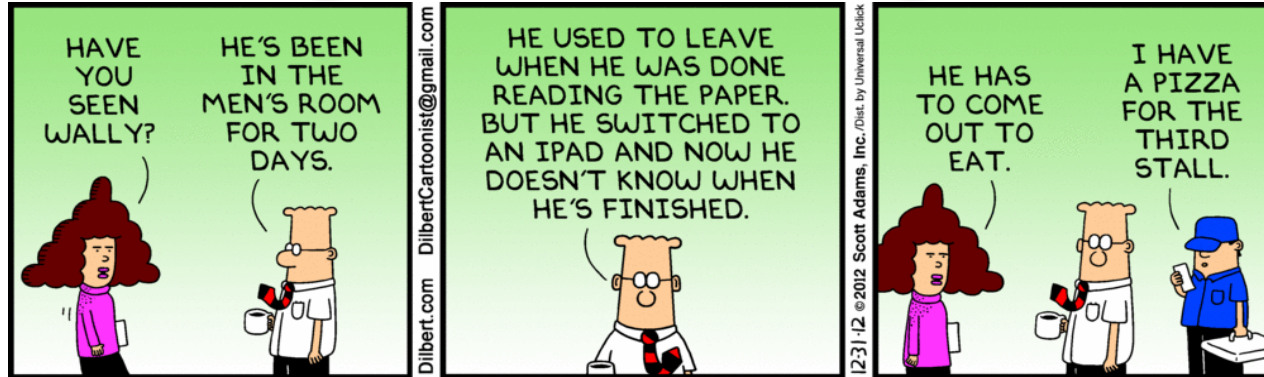
Altogether, 7.8 million tickets are going on sale. Many tickets will be sold abroad as well. The prices for the tickets obviously vary⁷ depending on⁸ the event and the seat. The most expensive tickets are for the opening and closing ceremonies, the men's basketball final, and the 100m final. Some people will buy tickets and then try to resell them, but scalping⁹ tickets at higher prices has become illegal and you could be fined up to 1 million yen.

My wife is planning on buying tickets, but I don't know what she wants to see. My daughter and I will be out of the country, in Mexico. Ha ha. The sale of tickets should raise close to \$1 billion. However, the whole Olympics is slated to¹⁰ cost above \$20 billion, so that is not a big help. The rest of the money is coming from our tax. Yeah. Did you wonder why the sales tax is going up? Well, now you know.



- 1.Uphill 上がり坂で 2.Religious festival 宗教的な祭り 3.Pagan 異教徒 4.As expected 予想通り 5.Official 公式 6.Automated 自動 7.Vary 違ってくる 8.Depend on によって 9.Scalp 高値で転売する 10.Slated to ~する予定である

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Strange World Records

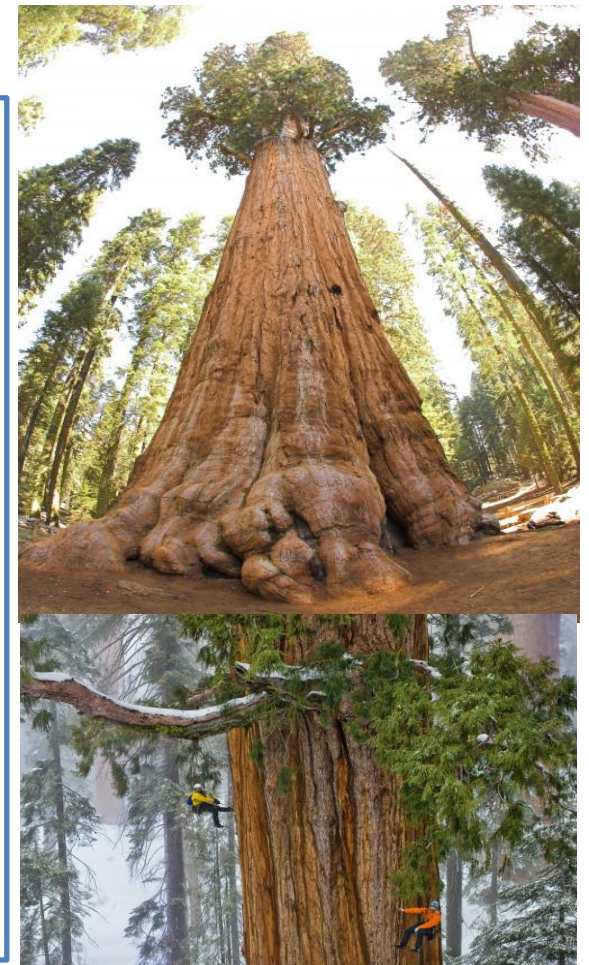
My daughter was learning how to somersault¹ properly the other day. Can you? How many times? The world record for the longest continuous somersaulting distance is 19.6km. Do you remember the walk you did last Friday to Shokotsuko and Jozankei? That was 20km. Ashrita Furman, the man with the record, somersaulted as far as you walked! And you said you were tired. Next year, I think some of us should try. I will buy an ice cream for whoever manages to go the whole 20km!



Don't cry because it's over,
smile because it happened.

★ Something Big ★

There is a tree called the Sequoiadendron giganteum, or giant sequoia. It is also known as the giant redwood. This tree is the largest tree in the world. They mostly grow on the slopes² of the Sierra Nevada mountains in California. On average, they grow to be about 80m tall and they can live for almost 3,000 years. The largest specimen³ currently alive is 87.3m high. That is approximately⁴ the same height as a 30 story⁵ building!! Some redwoods in the past may have grown even taller. These trees are so strong that they can even withstand forest fires. Their bark⁶ is so thick that a burning forest hardly hurts them. However, as strong as they are, they are not immune to⁷ everything, and humans are slowly destroying them.



★ Something You Probably Didn't Know ★

The first collapsible⁸ umbrella was invented in 21AD in China, but there are records, but no proof, that it may have been invented thousands of years earlier. The word "umbrella" comes from the Latin "umbella" (a flat-topped round flower) or "umbra" (shade). People are constantly trying to improve on the umbrella design and the US patent office⁹ receives about 3,000 patent ideas a year for new umbrella designs. It is surprising that so many things can be improved with such a simple product.



New words: 1.Somersault 前転 2.Slope 坂 3.Specimen 標本 4.Approximately 大体
5.Story 階 6.Bark 木の皮 7.Immune to ~に対して免疫がある 8.Collapsible 折りたためる
9.US patent office 米国特許商標局