

Art Portfolio

Mary Wolters

2024-25 Artist of the Year

Conestoga High School

The Spoke

About me

I've always found myself drawn to art since my childhood days of Crayola and Playdoh but never could have imagined I would find so much inspiration for it from my high school newspaper, The Spoke. I joined the course in my freshman year, certainly not expecting the tight deadlines and stress that came along with it. However, with the support of my friends and senior editors, I didn't give up and continued writing my articles each month. Outside of The Spoke, I continued drawing and taking art classes to develop my ability to draw people and perspective, not thinking the two of them would ever collide.

In my sophomore year, I became a Cartoonist for the Opinion section at the request of a senior editor. I worked with a writer every cycle to illustrate a cartoon for their article by sending them drafts and getting feedback before creating the final version. I quickly found that cartooning was a whole new experience, as I critically read each article to decipher the core message and brainstormed ways to show that to a viewer. This helped me develop my skill of representing abstract ideas with symbols or graphics. Even though I later joined the Editorial Board, I never stopped cartooning. This year, I won First Place in the state for Editorial Cartooning in the Pennsylvania Student Press Association Finals, and the Superior Award in Editorial Cartooning for the Journalism Education Association National Student Media Contest. Competing in cartooning competitions with time limits challenged me to work quickly and never stop drawing, as every second counts.

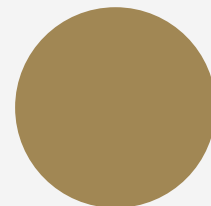
As you will see throughout my portfolio of cartoons, there has been clear growth and development in the themes and symbolism in my work. Depending on the article, I utilize a distinct style to reflect the tone and topic of the piece. I always reread the Opinion article multiple times before sketching an idea, which I believe has led to my success in both cartooning and competitions. No matter where I go in the future, I know I will always take the lessons I learned from this enriching and fulfilling experience.



We need more representation in film

This cartoon was created for an opinion piece discussing the necessity of characters of color in popular media and culture, particularly in response to Black actress Halle Bailey starring as Ariel in Disney's 2023 live-action remake of the Little Mermaid. For this illustration, I decided to use a more realistic style and portray several acclaimed actors of color, such as 2023 Oscar winner Ke Huy Quan and 2014 Billboard Icon winner Jennifer Lopez, on a sparkly gold backdrop to symbolize their success. I wanted to visualize the beauty of having a diverse range of talents and cultures in Hollywood.



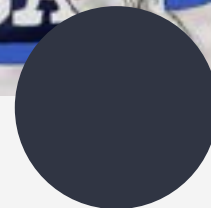
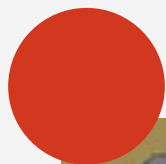


Our Olympic athletes deserve better

This illustration was designed for a sports opinion piece on the handling of the 2024 Paris Olympics, specifically regarding the poor treatment of the Olympic athletes. The author focused in on several aspects, which I represented with three competitors on the bottom: the uncooked meat served to the athletes, the lack of air conditioning in the athlete rooms during the summer, and specifically Italian swimmer Thomas Ceccon struggling with inadequate sleep and drinking a cup of coffee to recuperate.

I also utilized color to contrast the spectrum of sustainability concerns, with the glamorous gold left side symbolizing the flashy spectacle of the Olympics with the infamous breakdancer Raygun and the large monuments, and the dejected blue end with the Olympic village and its compact houses.





Till discipline do us part

This cartoon was created for an opinion story on restorative justice and the writer's experience with disciplinary action taken by his school's administration, specifically when he felt that he got a lighter punishment than his classmate due to negligence by the teacher in charge of his detention. The article served as an apology letter to that classmate and a hope

that more schools would utilize restorative justice practices in their measures against school bullying and harassment. Initially, I drew the writer as himself in the illustration but decided to remove any identity from the two connecting to show that, like the writer wrote, anyone can be in those shoes and take action to reconcile differences and repair connections if possible.



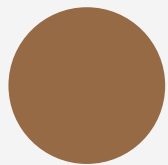


Interstellar Review



This cartoon was drawn for a review of *Interstellar* as it was re-released to movies for its 10th anniversary. I decided to utilize a more realistic and detailed art style to communicate the maturity of the movie and the pressure felt by pilot Joseph Cooper, shown in the spaceship. By contrasting his daughter Murph Cooper's memory floating near him with the darkness of space all around, I conveyed the writer's belief that *Interstellar* represents humanity's strength to keep fighting for what they hold dear to their hearts.







Against the TikTok ban

This cartoon was drawn for an article written against the 2025 TikTok ban, criticizing the Trump administration's focus on only user data collected by TikTok while ignoring the vast amounts of information collected by other massive companies like Facebook and YouTube. I enjoyed highlighting the contrast between the shadowy actions of these businesses under the cover of the plain beige background. I decided to use a more simple and lighthearted art style to show the brevity of the controversy, as the information coming from the Congress Chamber building shown on the left was very chaotic and disorganized to outside perspectives.



