

# Pilot urges Bangor students to consider future in science, tech

BY NICK MCCREA  
OF THE BDN STAFF

Before Barrington Irving spoke Wednesday to an auditorium full of Bangor middle schoolers, students were asked whether they had any interest in pursuing a career in science, technology, engineering or math (STEM) related fields when they grow up.

A smattering of hands -- perhaps 1-in-20 -- went up.

After he spoke, the same question was repeated. About half the students raised their hands.

"This is huge, making students aware, conscious of the opportunities available to them in STEM," Irving said.

Irving, who in 2007 became the first African-American pilot to circumnavigate the globe on a solo flight, shared his story with middle school students from James F. Doughty and William S. Cohen schools in Bangor on Wednesday.

Irving, 31, also was the youngest pilot to make

his trip around the world at the time. His former record as the youngest pilot to accomplish the feat has been bested by a few fliers since, most recently in 2014 by a 19-year-old Massachusetts Institute of Technology student.

Several of those pilots have cited Barrington's accomplishment as inspiring them to learn to fly and try to reach that lofty goal themselves.

He's delivered a similar message, promoting STEM education, to more than 15,000 students across the United States as part of the Dream to Soar program, sponsored by Mitsubishi Heavy Industries America Inc.

Irving, who was born in Jamaica and raised in a rough neighborhood in South Florida, thought he would grow up to be a football player. He earned a scholarship to the University of Florida, but he turned it down in order to pursue aviation after meeting Capt. Gary Robinson, an African-American pilot who would become Irving's mentor.

Irving went on to found Experience Aviation, a nonprofit that aims to help at-risk minority youth prepare for aviation careers. Inspiration, the plane he flew around the world, was built by some of those teenagers using more than \$300,000 in donated parts.

Irving works with Flying Classroom, described as a "global STEM learning adventure" in which he flies around the world, landing to go on learning expeditions. It has taken him to the Amazon to search for venomous snakes used to research new medications, and Oregon, where Nike is working on technology that would allow people to 3-D print their shoes and wear them without ever having to visit a store. The process uses materials such as plastics instead of ink to create shoes.

He shared those adventures with the students at Cohen school, with the goal of showing them what things they could work on and develop in STEM careers.



PHOTO COURTESY BARRINGTON IRVING  
Barrington Irving poses with Inspiration, the plane he flew around the world in 2007, in this file photo. Irving urged students in Bangor to consider STEM fields during a speech he gave on Wednesday, Sept. 23.

Irving told the students, to their amazement, that some NFL players already are wearing 3-D-printed cleats to test the durability of the materials used to make them.

In 2012, Bangor High School launched a STEM Academy, a program that

allows students to engross themselves in STEM research and projects while working toward their diploma. It also involves students in University of Maine mentorship and research while still in high school.

After the presentation, one of the students in the

room raised their hand and asked, "Would you let us build you a plane?"

"That's up to your superintendent," Irving said, nodding to Bangor school Superintendent Betsy Webb in the front row. "You have to believe in the potential of young people."

# PTC performs Johnny Cash musical at Charleston prison

BY NOK-NOI RICKER  
OF THE BDN STAFF

Nearly 100 inmates at the Charleston Correctional Facility and Mountain View Youth Development Center filed into the medium-security prison's gym on Thursday, creating a scene reminiscent of when Johnny Cash recorded his live "At Folsom Prison" record in 1968 in California.

"He went there because he wanted to provide the inmates with hope," Andrew Crowe, one of four performers who portray the country music legend in Penobscot Theatre Company's "Ring of Fire: The Music of Johnny Cash," said as the group drove north toward the

prison campus. "He had a big heart for people on the inside. Johnny wanted to send a message that they're not forgotten and they're cared for."

"It's compassion for the underdog," piped in fellow musician Ira Kramer.

"We want them to know they are not nailed down to their current situation," Jeremy Sevelovitz added.

"It doesn't take a lot to change a person's life," Galen Smith said from the backseat of the passenger van.

Crowe, Kramer, Sevelovitz, Smith and actress Ashley Lewis went to the Charleston prison to perform Cash's music, hoping to inspire inmates to

do more with their lives. Each actor depicted a different time in the singer's life, and Lewis handled the roles of his mother and second wife, June Carter Cash, during the hour-long performance.

They opened with "Country Boy" and included "Ring of Fire" and "Folsom Prison Blues" in the 16 songs, ending with "A Boy Named Sue." They also did a modified version of "I've Been Everywhere" using Maine community names and encouraging the inmates to yell out when their hometowns were heard. That song drew a response from the inmates, who started to loosen up a little, some tapping their feet to the music and oth-

ers slapping their knees to the rhythm of the music.

"You're worth something" is the message Lewis said she hopes the inmates got from the performance. "That their lives are going to expand beyond this space."

Cash, who used drugs and had brushes with the law, reached new audiences after the "At Folsom Prison" record was released. He sang about prisons but never served hard time, and Lewis and others in the group believe, that's because he found music.

"How many times did it give me the way out of a dark place," she said.

Kramer said he can associate with each and

every inmate because he's put himself into situations in his life that could have resulted in jail time.

With different decisions, "I could be where they are," he said.

The performers greeted the inmates as they entered the gymnasium and made it a point to say goodbye and shake hands with as many inmates as possible as they filed out of the gym.

"I've been here three and a half years, and I've never smiled this much," one inmate in the new Young Male Offender Program at the Mountain View Youth center said to Kramer.

He responded, "Thanks man. Keep that with you."

The "Ring of Fire: The Music of Johnny Cash" continues at the Penobscot Theatre in Bangor through Oct. 3. To purchase tickets, call the Penobscot Theatre Company at 942-3333 or visit penobscottheatre.org.

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**TheWeekly**



BDN PHOTO BY NOK-NOI RICKER  
Inmates at the Charleston Correctional Facility and Mountain View Youth Development Center's new Young Adult Male Offenders program were treated Thursday to a performance of Penobscot Theatre Company's "Ring of Fire: The Music of Johnny Cash."

## Broadway Rocks Bangor concert set for Gracie Theatre at Husson University

Fresh off their hit concert in downtown Bangor this past summer, a new group of local performers are ready to strut their stuff at the Gracie Theatre. With ear popping vocals and head banging guitar riffs, you will

never think of Broadway musicals the same.

A full evening of Broadway showtunes, with a rock and pop edge. Hear songs written for the stage by the music artists you love: Green Day ("American Idiot"), Queen ("We Will Rock You"), Elton John ("Aida"), and Billy Joel ("Movin' Out"); and favorites from such beloved musicals as "Rent," "Hair" and "The Rocky

Horror Picture Show."

Featuring local theater favorites Brianne Beck, Ira Kramer, Heather Libby and Dominick Varney, and backed by Phil Burns (piano), Josh Kovach (guitar), Thomas Libby (drums) and Caleb Sweet (bass).

Tickets are \$15 at the door, or can be reserved by calling 207-941-7888. For more information, visit gracietheatre.com.

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CALENDAR

**Pages in Time**

A look back at stories and snippets from past issues of the Bangor Daily News.

**The Weekly**

**When you just can't wait for what you'll do next, you can do anything!**

At Girl Scouts, girls are always counting down to the next adventure they'll go on together. Maybe it's artistic. Maybe it's an experiment. Maybe it's getting outside or helping the community.

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The block features a purple banner with white text at the top. Below it is a photograph of a group of young girls, some wearing Girl Scout uniforms, smiling and looking upwards. The Girl Scouts logo is visible in the bottom right corner of the photo.

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