

FALL 2020

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Pittverse

Quarterly Magazine

This Edition:
What's Inside
Pittverse

HAUNTED PITTSBURGH

BY ELISE MOTE

IRON & STEEL

BY JOSHUA WALBURN

BRITISH AMERICAN LAYOUT

BY MAX CHANEY

LIFE OF BOB BARKER

BY JOHN KRUISE

CANINE INTERVIEW

BY JOE CEPEK

A MAGAZINE WRITTEN EXCLUSIVELY BY ADULTS ON THE AUTISM SPECTRUM

About Pittverse Magazine

Pittverse Magazine is a quarterly publication that proudly represents the introspection and creativity of adults on the autism spectrum. Its goal is to educate and entertain the public while providing its writers, who are all adults on the autism spectrum, with skills applicable to future employment.

Pittverse is produced by Youth Advocate Programs (YAP), a national non-profit agency that comprises a multitude of services for families with not only individuals on the autism spectrum but also other at-risk youth and adults. Brian Kluchurosky, the director of YAP's

PA Allegheny County Adults with Autism Program, founded *Pittverse* in 2013. It began as a newsletter written by four of the adults in Kluchurosky's program.

This year, with generous funding from Edith Trees Foundation, *Pittverse* has grown from a newsletter into a magazine that commissions more than 40 adults with autism.

In each seasonal issue, readers can peruse a variety of topics through the unique perspective of its writers. Topics range from sports to restaurant reviews to local history.

On the Cover

The credit for the seasonally appropriate cover goes to our very own Delaine Swearman, who snapped a perfect pumpkin picture that our staff absolutely adores.

Don't let the deceptively traditional nature of the cover photo fool you; this issue is highly diverse and experimental. Our writers have been hard at work, dipping their toes in new and challenging genres that continue to intrigue and entertain our readers. Sit back and enjoy the Fall 2020 issue of *Pittverse!*~

Letter from the Editor

What a unprecedented year! If it could go wrong this year...it definitely did. I'm very proud of all of you for your flexibility and patience while we reinvented our magazine and our meetings. (And thank you for waiting so patiently for this issue!!)

Clocking in at a stunning 99 pages, this is our largest, most expansive issue ever. The most exciting aspect of this year, for me, has been the experimental work that we continue to see. The magazine is truly coming alive with more poems, sports articles, experimental flash fiction, and coming soon...videos! It is also our last issue of the year and I am looking forward to reading more of your cutting-edge work.

You've set a high bar—now keep it going in the winter!

Jennifer Pizzuto

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Sara Brooks - Disney Trivia

Are you a Disney Movie Fan?

Test your knowledge with these fun questions!

When Aladdin and Abu were in the Market, what did they steal?

- An orange
- Bread
- A Bracelet
- A lamp

In the Little Mermaid, how many “thingamabobs” did Ariel have?

- 20
- 10
- 30
- 87

In 101 Dalmatians, why does Cruella Deville kidnap the puppies?

- She just loves puppies
- She wants to make their fur into a coat
- She wants to sell them in a pet store
- She wants to train them to be in the circus

4. In Beauty and the Beast, Belle appeared bored and longed for something more exciting from life. What did she have a passion for?

- a) reading
- b) Baking
- c) horse back riding
- d) knitting

5. From the movie Frozen, which character in the film comes up with the phrase “I like warm hugs”

- a) Hans
- b) Anna
- c) Olaf
- d) Sven

6. From Sleeping Beauty, on what day does the film begin?

- a) On her baby dedication
- b) on Christmas
- c) On her father's inauguration
- d) on her 16th birthday

7. Complete the Lyric from Mulan "You're the saddest bunch I ever met, but you can bet, before We're through, Mister..."

- a) I You'll shoot straight and true
- b) You'll know what you have to do
- c) I'll make a woman of you
- d) I'll make a man out of you

8. From Lady and the Tramp, what kind of Dog is Lady?

- a) a cocker spaniel
- b) a pug
- c) a bloodhound
- d) a yorkie

9) From Cinderella, The Godmother told Cinderella to have fun at the ball, but she must return at which time, because this was the time the magic spells would come to an end.

- 10:00 pm
- 11:00 pm
- 12:00 am
- 1:00 am

10) From Frozen 2, Who or what was the Fifth Spirit?

- a) Anna
- b) Olaf
- c) Sven
- d) Elsa

Answers: 1 B, 2 A, 3 B, 4 A, 5 C, 6 D, 7D, 8A, 9 C, 10 D

Loss,

O the loss.

The loss of a loved one.

*Once loss comes,
there's no turning back.*

Gone.

Breaking loss comes.

Happy thoughts go.

*May happiness lead you,
when I couldn't.*

Where you go I cannot.

But know this,

I think of you,

I still love you,

and I send my prayers to you.

One prayer,

wishing you were here,

till every other wish gets drowned out.

Every sorrow,

every pain,

suffering,

suffocating,

Submerged under the deluge of pain.

Writhing.

Those achy painful moments of,

Rachel's First Day of Preschool

By: Mark Sulkin

Rachel woke up one morning in her bed. And she was very excited. Today was her first day of preschool. As soon as she got out of bed, she stretched her body. Then, she went to the kitchen to eat breakfast. Her mother made her favorite breakfast, waffles. After breakfast, Rachel brushed her teeth, washed her hands and face, combed her hair, and got dressed.

When she was finished getting ready, Rachel grabbed her backpack and lunchbox and went outside to wait for the school bus. When the bus arrived, Rachel climbed aboard, waved goodbye to her mother, and was off to preschool. On the bus, Rachel sat next to her friend Geoff. Geoff was reading a book written in Braille (. : ⠠⠠⠠).

Finally, the school bus picked up all the children and soon it arrived at preschool. The children got off the bus and went to their classroom to meet their teacher. "Good morning, class," said the teacher. "Welcome to your first day of preschool. My name is Ms. Wilson and I'm your teacher."

"Hello, Ms. Wilson," said the children.

"Let's start by going around and introducing ourselves and saying our favorite color," said Ms. Wilson.

Rachel went first and said, "My name is Rachel and my favorite color is pink."

Geoff went second and said, "My name is Geoff and my favorite color is blue, even though I can't see it. My mom says it's the color of the sky and that's why it's my favorite." As Ms. Wilson went around, she heard, "My name is CJ and my favorite color is green." "My name is Erin and my favorite color is red." Finally, everyone had a turn to say their name and favorite color.

Next, Ms. Wilson announced circle time, which meant it was time for Show-and-Tell. Rachel brought her pet hamster, Quincy. She said, "I feed Quincy two cups of food every day." Bjorn brought in a watch his grandfather gave him for his birthday. Jackie brought her pet rabbit, Marc. She said, "Marc likes to be petted and eats three cups a rabbit food every day." Erin brought in a necklace her grandmother gave her. Everyone thought it was beautiful. Show-and-Tell went on until all the children had a turn.

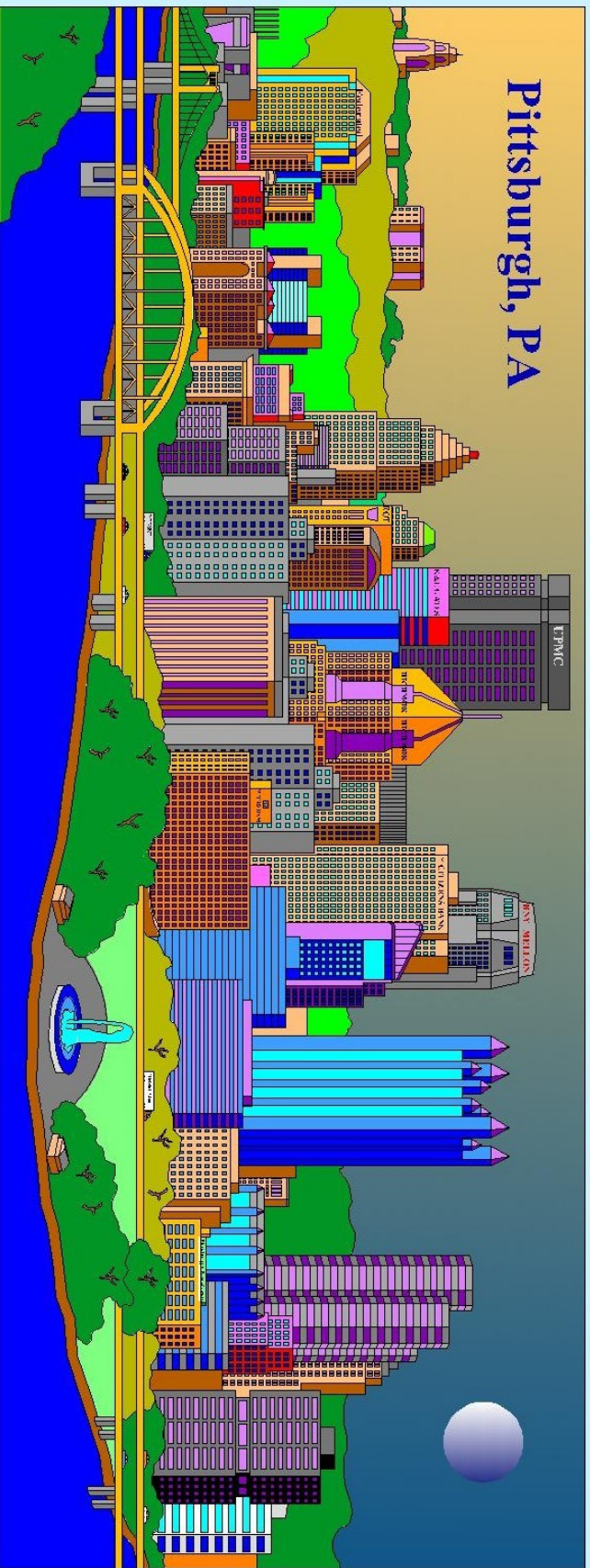
Next came Storytime. Ms. Wilson read them a story about a boy named Pieter who wouldn't do his chores. All the kids watched and listen as Ms. Wilson read them the story. When the story was over, Rachel said, "That was a nice story, Ms. Wilson. I'm glad Pieter learned his lesson about doing his chores." "I'm so happy you like it, Rachel," said Ms. Wilson. All the other children liked it too.

At noon in the cafeteria, all the kids sat down at their tables to eat their lunch. Each kid a different kind of lunch to eat. Rachel had her favorite: a honey sandwich, cheese & crackers, and pineapple juice. José had a cheese sandwich, pretzels, and apple juice. Renee had a peanut butter and jelly sandwich, celery sticks and lemonade. Al had a ham sandwich, carrot sticks, and grape juice.

When the children finished their lunch, it was time for recess, so they went outside to the playground. Rachel played on the swings with CJ and Al. They swung so high they felt like they were flying. Then, Rachel saw a tall slide. She climbed up to the top but was afraid to come down. "Don't be afraid, Rachel," called Erin. "This slide isn't scary, it's fun." Rachel had to be brave. She slid down the slide "Weeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeee!" she yelled. "You did it, Rachel," said all her friends. "You were so brave." "Thanks, everyone," said Rachel. The kids had a lot of fun on the playground.

When recess was over, it was time for the children to take a nap. They lay down on their mats and fell fast asleep. While the children slept, each of them had a dream. Rachel dreamed she was a famous movie star. Erin dreamed she was a ballerina, dancing up on a stage. Lee dreamed he was an astronaut flying through outer space in a rocket ship. Yolanda dreamed she was a princess who lived in a big beautiful castle. Ken dreamed he was a clown performing in a circus. The children dreamed happy dreams while sleeping.

Soon nap time was over and then it was Choice Time. During Choice Time, the kids chose whatever they wanted to do. Geoff, Lee and CJ read books while Erin, Tyler and Arnold played with toys. José, Renee, and Al played dress up. Cody, Howard and Sam built a castle with blocks. Rachel painted a beautiful, colorful picture of her house. Ms. Wilson saw Rachel's painting and said, "You're a great painter, Rachel." Soon, it was time to go home. The children all got up and went to their bus for the ride home. Rachel



Interesting facts about Pittsburgh

1. The city has a total of 446 bridges.
2. The Pitt Cathedral of Learning is the tallest university building in the country.
3. Heinz Ketchup Company was founded in 1869, and had an assembly line for ketchup years before Henry Ford's automobile assembly line.
4. The city is at the junction of three rivers (Allegheny, Monongahela, Ohio).
5. Michael Keaton, Jeff Goldblum, and Mr. Rogers are all from this area.

By: Mark D. Ligette

Philadelphia, PA



Interesting Facts About Philadelphia

1. The country's first daily newspaper started here in 1784.
2. The world's first computer was built here in 1946. It weighed 27 tons.
3. When the City Hall tower was completed in 1894, it was the world's third tallest building.
4. The iconic steps of the Philadelphia Museum of Art were shown in several Rocky movies.
5. Philadelphia is the country's sixth largest city, with a population of 1.6 million people.

Mark D. Lizotte

I Am Novel Coronavirus

By: Joshua Walburn

"I am Novel Coronavirus. I'm a joke to you. If I can help it, I will not infect you until it's too late. I don't know where you live and guess what, I'll find where you live. I'm plotting to take away your normal life. I know no geographic barrier, no morality, no religion and no currency. I work very efficiently with every company, laying off their employees. I require you to claim Unemployment. I transmit very rapidly. I work faster than HIV, heart disease, and the flu. If you have an underlying health condition, I'll put you at higher risk of getting complications from me. If you own a club, I will end it immediately. If you're happy to have your job, I am making sure that your employment fails. Your business' money will fall into my hands and I will bankrupt you for my own self-gain. I've wreaked havoc against all your festivities. I will make it impossible for you to attend a temple, a football game, and a museum without a struggle, without concern, and without pain. You have no cure for me. Your scientists don't have enough of the resources and I relish in their desperation. You're lucky to pretend I'm not here to infect you. Of course, until it's one of your family members. I am coronavirus. I have no interest in what's wrong or right. I derive great pleasure in your frustration. I'm fighting to take away your hope. I'm plotting to rob you of your planning, aspirations, and dreams. I'll make sure that every time you read an article, you will cry wondering 'When is this pandemic going to be over?' And the truth is, I'm winning and you are scared. You should be. I am Novel Coronavirus. You ignored me and that was a mistake."

"To Novel Coronavirus, I say I'm a mayor, scientist, business owner, doctor, nurse, and a more resilient community of frontline workers. We'll spend every waking hour trying to weaken you. We will not go back to in-person mass gatherings until you leave or get eradicated. Clinical trials and research can be stronger than you will ever anticipate; we will get away from you with our guidelines for the strength of our public health. Even if I wore a face covering and maintain a physical distance. I will keep washing my hands more and more frequently in twenty seconds each to secure everyone's health safety to continue to take precautions seriously. Coronavirus, you forget our identity. You forget the mind. You have forgotten the spirit of unity and economic backgrounds. We are the United States, United Kingdom, Russia, China, Brazil, Argentina, Mexico, European Union, Israel, Greece, India and Canada. We are the World Health Organization. We are the United Nations. We come together in spiritual unity as physically distant we are. We call on all faiths to heal the suffering. We search for clues on a potential vaccine through genomic sequencing, biochemistry, and high-speed clinical trials that you will never anticipate that works in its fastest pace. We speak the language that matters. We're increasingly more resilient to get through this together. Our capacity to follow guidelines is greater than the capacity to reject them. You are alone and we are a community of strong people. Just because you think we can't overcome this pandemic yet doesn't mean we don't have treatments for the critically ill--that is novel coronavirus' weakness. Just because you don't understand the importance of life doesn't mean that it's worse. You've brought an unwelcoming increase of infectious cases that are reported in our world and have not been properly introduced to our families, friends, medical doctors, scientists, politicians, nurses and biomedical engineers. Novel Coronavirus, if you are not scared, you should be. When you came for me, you forgot. You came for everyone. Coronavirus, it's time for you to get eradicated."

-As a distance runner myself, difficult situations make me stronger and enhance additional resilience. It also strengthens problem solving skills
. This PSA isn't meant to scare or offend anyone. It's here to explain how importantly serious this is. We're getting through this together.~~

My Time in Respite

By: Amelia Krzton

Respite care is where you live in another house and someone looks after you and makes sure you have everything that you need while earning money. I have already been in respite three times already at two places: Swissvale and Monroeville. I stayed in the house in Swissvale on McClure Avenue during the last week of April this year and also during the middle of July this year. The other house that I stayed at in Monroeville is on Monroeville Boulevard. Last week, I spent a whole week there and it was a lot of fun! I liked my roommate, Zuria, as she would sometimes help cook food and listen to fun, upbeat music. We went to the Monroeville Mall once for take-out and we also took Zuria to her doctor's appointment in Murrysville. I liked getting a good view of the city of Monroeville from the apartments. Another errand that we ran was attempting to get Zuria's laptop in Homewood, but everything was delayed a week due to the coronavirus. The first day, we went to the Penn Hills Shopping Center to shop for some new sheets, pillowcases, and quilts for my bed. While we didn't go out in the community every day, it was still fun to cook our own meals and sometimes watch TV together. One thing I didn't know was that the house had a swimming pool. Even though this isn't real, I liked the house in Monroeville because it was close to the Pittsburgh's Perfect Parties Office right next to Spectrodolce and the Holiday Inn Express and Suites. It also felt luxurious, like I was heading on vacation to the beach. I can't wait to go back there sometime in the future! But if I can't go back there, I can always go back to the house in Swissvale. After all, respite gives a person a good break from his or her family while still doing normal, everyday activities.

How Not to Regress During COVID-19

By: Nathaniel Geyer

Ever since the COVID-19 pandemic started I have been the most productive. During this time, I have two published manuscripts, two under review, a Masters of Geographical Information Systems degree, a programming certificate, and a better relationship with my family. In the past decade, I have been doing online education, so I learned how to maximize my time. I have a stable routine, which includes adapting time management skills to my current situation. I tend to start with the low laying items first that are easy to accomplish and then start the other items after they get completed unless there is a strict deadline. I am a reverse procrastinator who does not like to put things off. I tend to find that if you put things off, they never get completed or have a poor quality. I strive to do my very best with each task and learn best through trial and error and am not afraid to fail. I also aim to make as much time to assist my family as possible and do most of my work during quiet time.

Sadly, many people with autism lack time management and are procrastinators due to the lack of routine; they lack the preparation needed to not regress. I learned that when you regress, it leads to low productivity and unstable quality of life. These people tend to have a hard time bettering their lives. Therefore, I do whatever I can to get them off my back by following through their requests, rather than rebelling. Consequently, my relationship with my supporters are stronger than previous years. Although, I like to do my own thing as much as possible, another key skill is to adapt and use the situation to better myself and others. I also hope to not be a statistic and regress, so I have been adherent with my pills and still have a normal life, with a strong bond with family and friends. I also stress the importance of long-term and short-term goals that are flexible but are able to be accomplish in a timely manner. I know many autistics who have no goals and tend to regress during unstable times. I consistently remind myself not to put things off and have a positive attitude to live especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. It is up to parents and guardians to teach their autistic child these skills of trial and error, time management, and setting goals rather than constantly criticizing their deficiency. I would rather be positive than negative and do not like to be criticize and regress, but a positive attitude can give the person a better perspective.~~

Canine Interview

By: Joseph Cepek

I am pretending to interview my dog friend named April as if she were a human being. She was adopted by my mom at the Humane Society of Southwestern Pennsylvania in 2013. I have never done such a creative writing project as this particular one since I began submitting creative ideas to the *Pittverse Magazine* starting in 2014. I hope readers will enjoy the finished product printed here.



Part One

Joseph: April, do you feel comfortable with me asking you a few questions?

April: Yes, go right ahead!

J (Joseph): Do you remember where and when you were born?

A (April): I really cannot say, because of my inability to see out of my eyes for roughly two weeks after I was born.

J: Do you remember your dog parents (mother dam and father sire)?

A: Not really, because my personal memory cannot go back that very far in the past. However, I was told by one of the dog kennel workers that I was born sometime in 2009. Plus, one of the animal control officers who rescued me in the early spring of 2013 told me I was running around as a stray dog somewhere in Washington County, PA. Therefore, I am guessing that I was born somewhere in this Pennsylvania county.

J: So then, you cannot remember if you had any sibling puppy littermates?

A: Sadly, no.

J: Do you remember why you became a stray dog?

A: I would rather not talk about it at all. Plus, like I said beforehand, I cannot recall a specific reason why I found myself as a stray doggy.

J: Do you remember your first owner(s)?

A: No. I am unable to remember that particularly far back in time.

J: Did you ever have a litter of puppies earlier in your doggie life?

A: Please, Joseph, I care not to discuss whether or not I had a doggy romance life when I was a young adult dog. I am not one to personally reveal the secrets of suspected doggie love relationships, which may or may not have existed in my personal tail-wagging past.

J: Apparently, someone taught you how to have control over your jaws as a puppy (through bite inhibition training). Am I correct?

A: Yes, but I cannot recall who this special person was, unfortunately.

J: Do you generally like having dog clothes put on you?

A: Not really. I feel physically uncomfortable with these human-made clothing articles on my furry body. Yet, I will tolerate a wraparound dog coat in the winter months and my walking harness year-round.

J: Do you dream when you are asleep?

A: Oh, yes, indeed! Though I am a secretive furry girl, so I cannot vividly speak about my numerous doggie sleep fantasies, of which only dogs, that is, both individually and collectively, choose NOT to openly discuss with any member of the human race.

J: What is your favorite snacking treat(s)?

A: Anything made with natural peanut butter, beef, chicken, or turkey flavor inside of the individual treats. I really do not have a favorite brand of any delicious dog snack piece.

J: What are your favorite people foods?

A: Plain yogurt mixed with a dash of honey, carrots, apples, and chicken meat pieces. These human foods are given to me in small amounts for my personal health and overall well-being. These people foods are veterinarian-approved.

J: Do you enjoy listening to me read out loud?

A: Yes, Joseph, you read good out loud. However, you sometimes overdo it by reading out loud too awfully long and then I get bored.

J: Are you interested with burying chew treats into the ground of the backyard of where you have resided with your human family members for the past seven years?

A: No, surprisingly, I have never had any interest in engaging in this particular type of typical canine antics.

J: Do you believe that dogs like you have immortal souls and go to Heaven after physical death occurs?

A: ABSOLUTELY, YES! Heaven LITERALLY would NOT be the same without God's innocent animal creations (dogs, included) joining in on the glorious festivities FOREVER and EVER!

J: Do you believe dogs and other domestic animal companions actually can be bad?

A: No, not at all. There are only bad people out there in society for years who should NEVER EVER have any beloved and sinless animal buddies being around them under the same dwelling roof.

J: Do you believe every unwanted animal friend deserves the correct person to take the proper care of him or her?

A: When it comes to hope and possibility, yes, I adamantly believe every abused and neglected domestic animal should be placed into a loving and responsible caretaker's life no matter who he or she is or what his or her past life was like.

J: What would you say is the best approach to fight against the ongoing pet overpopulation and awful mass euthanasia crises of countless unwanted shelter animals?

A: A new pet parent should have his or her new animal buddy spayed or neutered (fixed) ASAP (as soon as possible). I was spayed right after I was adopted in 2013.

Good Dog Questions and Answers

Part Two

J: Thank you, April, for answering my personal questions to the very best of your doggie ability.

A: Joseph, I am more than pleased to have answered your interesting inquiries, which were lovingly and respectfully given to me.

This is a dog-person "co-authored" writing project, which is courtesy of the *Pittverse Magazine*.~~



Save Our US Postal Service

By Megan Cunningham

Note: This article contains political bias since it pertains to the 2020 election. But given what's going on with the Trump administration sabotaging the mail, I can't avoid it. Nonetheless, what's going on with the Postal Service shouldn't be a partisan issue.

Through rain, snow, sleet, and hail, the United States Postal Service has been an indispensable federal government program that no American can live without. Established in 1775 with Benjamin Franklin as the first US postmaster general, it's one of the few government agencies that's explicitly authorized in the US Constitution. As of 2019, the USPS employees 469, 934 career and 136, 174 non-career workers and is legally obligated to serve all Americans, especially in remote rural areas where FedEx, UPS, and DHL not venture. As the country's favorite government institution, it enjoys a 91% favorability rating.

While the days of writing letters are long gone, Americans still rely on the US Postal Service. Most of us receive and pay our bills through the mail. If we order something online, the USPS might deliver our packages. Many seniors and veterans order their meds through the mail as well. Seniors also receive their Social Security check through the mail as well. Sometimes farmers can receive their chicks through the USPS. During elections, some people send their absentee ballots through mail-in voting. And in some states, mail-in voting is how people primarily cast their ballots.

During the Covid 19 outbreak, there has been a ridiculous debate over mail-in voting since 2020 is an election year. My parents and I have voted by mail in the Pennsylvania Democratic Primary mainly because our polling place is staffed by seniors. Despite that it's a perfectly safe way to vote since the American Civil War, Donald Trump has decried that postal ballots "substantially fraudulent. Mail boxes will be robbed, ballots will be forged & even illegally printed out & fraudulently signed" despite any lack of evidence. Furthermore, as president, he and his family have also voted by mail for years. But I also know that Trump really doesn't want to lose reelection and would resort to anything to win. And I'll just leave my politics at that.

Since this summer, while the pandemic has worsened the Post Office's lingering financial and personnel issues, DeJoy has made changes resulting in widespread mail delays. While we can expect delays due to more people sheltering in place amid the Covid 19 outbreak, the USPS has experienced an increase in workload regarding package delivery and mail-in voting while at least 1% of its workforce contracted the coronavirus. Given that Covid 19 has led more to rely on the Postal Service, delays are expected. This is especially if you add in high mail volumes with low staff numbers. Not to mention, millions of dollars spent on PPE and retrofitting post offices with plexiglass and more space for social distancing. In April, postal workers asked Congress for \$75 billion during CARES Act negotiations. Yet, Trump called the USPS "a joke" and threatened to veto the bill if it included any money for the agency, which rarely asks for taxpayer money. But despite Trump's attempts to avoid giving the USPS any cash, the agency eventually made an agreement with Treasury Secretary Steve Mnuchin for a \$10 billion loan with strict terms.

In May 2020, the Postal Service Board of Governors appointed a Trump megadonor named Louis DeJoy as Postmaster General. In July, DeJoy outlined measures to cut costs, including overtime. Shifts had to start and end on time while extra delivery trips were eliminated. While over 600 sorting machines are being decommissioned, making up 10% of the service's sorting machines. Postal worker unions reported DeJoy's policies limited mail transportation, causing mail left at sorting plants for days longer than normal. While a crackdown on overtime hours meant that sorting machines are shut down before the day's work is done. As a result, mail remains undelivered across the country. Trump and the Republicans have defended DeJoy's actions are necessary to address the agency's multi-billion-dollar budget shortfall. However, Congress can easily relieve much of the USPS' financial woes by a 2006 law mandating the Postal Service to pre-fund retiree health benefits and pensions for all employees 75 years into the future, which has been a primary cause of their financial troubles. Or perhaps ensuring that

the Postal Service shouldn't be run like a business since it's supposed serve all Americans.

As a result, post offices have experienced significant backlogs while citizens faced unusual mail delays. According to a *USA Today* article, people across the country have complained not receiving their mail at the appropriate time. A Louisville man recalled not receiving mail for 6 days straight in July. A woman in rural California told a Facebook group that she hasn't received mail in a month. Another woman wrote that her rent was late in June because a mail carrier didn't pick up her mail for four days. A small business owner in Nashville has reported packages being delayed days or even weeks. Some never arrive. And as of August 8, a disabled Vietnam veteran was still waiting for his medications he ordered from the VA on July 25. While a *USA Today* reporter in New York City didn't receive absentee primary ballots until two days after the event in June. An American Postal Workers Union president in Des Moines named Mike Bates remarked how a supervisor ordered a carrier to stop his route at his scheduled shift end despite not yet finishing his deliveries. He also told USA Today that management removed the sorting machines at the Des Moines distribution center, causing a backlog at some post offices since August.

Recently, the USPS has warned that it can't guarantee all ballots sent by mail in the 2020 election will arrive in time to be counted. As election experts have advocated that ballots be mailed weeks in advance of election day. Due to the spring surge of absentee voting and documented cases of voter suppression in states like Wisconsin and Georgia during primary season, Democrats have alleged the Trump administration kneecapping the Postal Service to hamper mail-in voting. In Michigan, more than 6,400 voters didn't have their absentee ballots counted for primary elections because clerks received them after the polls closed on their primary election day, August 4. In New Jersey, a postal worker left ballots on a hallway floor in May instead of putting them in mailboxes on claims that his access key wasn't working. In April, the Postal Service identified hundreds of Wisconsin absentee ballots that never made it to voters and couldn't be counted due to postmark problems. Furthermore, Trump has admitted opposing much needed funding to the USPS because of mail-in voting. There were also sweeping lawsuits, including one alleging Postal Service changes requiring states paying first-class rates if they didn't want voters to put a stamp on their ballots, raising per ballot costs from 20 to 55 cents. Delays in mail-in voting don't just muddle election results but can disenfranchise voters and undermine democracy.

While there's no proof of a Trump-led conspiracy against the US Postal Service, Trump's open disdain for the agency and DeJoy's actions have considerably propelled it into an existential crisis. Namely, Trump's attacks on the Postal Service has politicized an institution that really shouldn't be. While DeJoy's actions have seriously disrupted what Americans greatly depend on in their day-to-day lives. But at the same time, it's never been more essential during the Coronavirus pandemic. Since it's critical in getting prescriptions to people's homes and delivering ballots to state election boards. Even large companies like Amazon can easily give their money to competing private parcel companies but would rather spend millions of dollars on a campaign ad to save the USPS. And unlike many large corporations, most Americans are perfectly fine with giving the US Postal Service a bail out. Perhaps a crisis like Covid 19 can remind the country how much we take the USPS for granted.





By: Daniel Ashkin

Different Kind of Life

By: Ginger Reynolds

I have always been a city woman. So, moving to the country was a huge difference. In the past, I was around other houses, buildings, stores, and whatever I needed. Now I'm living in the country and not much is around me. I used to have a negative outlook on living in the country, but all that has changed.

Living in the country has made me more grateful for everything I have. I have also learned so much. Deep down, I have always desired to live on a farm. Even though I don't live on a farm now, the country life is close to it. There is nature in every direction such as: hawks, cows, rabbits, butterflies, grass, trees, and even a few people. I took a few pictures of things I've seen out here, in the country and I would like to share them with you. This first one is a rabbit. There's a lot of rabbits in the country and boy, do they jump high!~~

Hail to Pitt Therapy Dogs

By: Maggie Jones

Every Tuesday at 7pm at the university of Pittsburgh's cathedral of learning in Pitt's campus in Oakland during semester's, there are special kinds of four legged friends called therapy dogs.

We know when we get tired of stressing out studying finals, tests, and homework that needs to be done for the next day. And that is when therapy dogs come in at the cathedral of learning every Tuesday from 7pm to 8pm weekly during semesters. There are a lot of dogs to pet when you need a break from homework or finals studying. The next one isn't for a while due to COVID-19.

There is an hour of cuddling and petting therapy dogs that are so cute. It really helps you calm down and think happy thoughts instead of working most of the day on homework. These dogs were trained to help in troubling situations, or a bad day working. The most important thing about this cool thing, it reassures you every thing's going to be okay. Even in hard times.

People with depression and anxiety disorders, stress, PTSD disorders, a life event that was bad that you constantly think about, and autism, the therapy dogs are there for you to comfort you in times of need. If you are home with a pet dog, or maybe a cat, make sure to give them attention because they need the love and attention too.

And when they open up again make sure you stop in the cathedral of learning on Pitt's campus on Tuesdays 7pm til 8pm during semester time. You don't have to be a Pitt student to come. The Facebook website type in therapy dogs on Tuesdays at Pitt and you will find out all the dates information and cute pictures of therapy dogs and their owners.

Hail to Pitt therapy dogs! They are our heroes at action as well as in Comforting people in time of need. Or just need a furry hug. It's truly worth coming to. And for the therapy dogs and their owners and trainers, keep up the good work that you do, and thank you for helping us see that dogs are loving helpful companions that are always faithful to its owner or trainer. God bless you and the therapy dogs

And also, my sister Stephanie Jones is my idol. She loves therapy dogs. And that was the idea to write a story on therapy dogs at Pitt. She loves all dogs too. The dogs that passed away, Buddy, Mitci and Brooke, and the two we have now, Suri and Moose.

She is a hard worker and this article is dedicated to her. I love her. She has a lot of common sense and truly cares about me and our family. She really did put a lot of effort in school all those years. And I'm proud of her so much. She has come a long way from the first time I saw her for the first time with my mother holding her 26 years ago. God bless us for many years to come. God bless my sister, and Hail to Pitt!~~

The Life and Times of Bob Barker

By: John Kruiise

Robert William Barker was born on December 12th, 1923 in Darrington, Washington. Throughout his life, he did everything from radio shows to beauty pageants to game shows, as well as serve as a Naval Cadet in WWII. After the war ended, he married his childhood sweetheart, Dorothy Jo.

In late 1956, producer Ralph Edwards heard Bob doing a radio show while driving his girls to a skating lesson and asked him if he'd be interested in hosting a show called *Truth or Consequences*. His first show was December 31st, 1956, and he did it for 16 years. The contestants would be asked a ridiculous question and if they didn't answer before "Beluah Buzzer" sounded they would have to pay the consequence. It was a huge hit on radio as well as television even before Bob began hosting. The reunions were such a popular feature on *Truth* that it inspired *This is Your Life*, also produced by Ralph.

In 1972, Mark Goodson contacted Bob about a network show. He wanted to bring *The Price is Right* back to television after it had been cancelled for eight years. The first host was Bill Cullen and consisted of people trying to come as close to the retail price of bargain merchandise without going over. It ran from 1956 to 1965 on NBC and ABC television. Other hosts included Dennis James, Tom Kennedy, and Doug Davidson. He told Bob ideas for different games to play on the show and after last minute doubts said that he'd host it.

Sure enough, in September 1972, the show was a huge hit from day one. Never in all the years they had been on CBS had they had a problem in ratings. It became known for the famous catchphrase "Come on Down!" Announcers over the years included Johnny Olson, Rod Roddy, Rich Fields, and now George Gray who actually tried out as announcer ON AIR! The show earned a total of eight daytime Emmys. International versions also were produced in countries such as England, Australia, Indonesia, Japan, Germany, and Canada (one season lasting from 1994 to 1995, and one lasting from 2011-2012). Lots of merchandise was made based on the success of *Price*. They filmed a DS spot for *Price is Right*, rigging the Plinko board with fishing wire so the box would go into the ten thousand spot. They were in the middle of a game of Plinko with Drew and taping had to be stopped temporarily so they could remove the fishing wire from the board. The mistake cost them \$30,000. Stan Blits wrote a book also called *Come on Down! Behind the Big Doors at The Price is Right*. Live stage shows were even done. People from Marc Breslow, Paul Alter, and Bart Eskander directed the show. It was Bart's own personal decision to leave the show in 2009. Random people directed before Adam Sandler (not to be confused with the one who played Happy Gilmore) got the job around 2011-2012. He's been the director and recently associate producer and still working since then.

Bob actually had women from Samoa lift him up from time to time after winning. He said "I could never visit Samoa. My feet would never touch the sand." Before she turned letters on *Wheel of Fortune*, Vanna White made it in Bidder's Row in the early 80's. She never made it on stage and played a game with Bob.

There was a documentary made in 2017 called *Perfect Bid: The Contestant That Knew Too Much*. It tells about Ted Slauson and how he knew all about the prices of items on *Price*. In 2008 Terry Kneese surprised everyone (thanks to Ted giving him advice and actually was edited out of certain shots in the episode) by giving the EXACT price of the showcase. He admitted he couldn't hear Ted (or anyone giving advice for that matter) for the game he lost at.

He said, "Just watch the show and do your homework." Ted was in the audience because

he found out that if it had been ten years since you were last on *Price* you could become eligible again. Bob Barker and Roger Dobkowitz were interviewed for *Perfect Bid*. Drew said how depressed he was because he found out Terry had the exact price of his showcase. Kathy Greco came up to Drew and he asked what was wrong. "He had the exact price of the showcase." "Had that happened before?" he asked her. "No. Not that I know of." Something like that did happen before in 1972 as Drew stated at the end of the show that day, but it was on a Dennis James Nighttime episode from that time. "I didn't think they could air it if there was a scandal." Drew said to Kevin Pollak in an interview on his talk show. Drew said also that he thought they were going to shut down the show one day.

Bob Barker hosted for 35 seasons. When he started becoming more animal rights friendly in the 80s he started to become a vegetarian and cut out meat (through example of his wife who also had stopped wearing fur coats) and would start reminding us to "Help control the pet population...Have your pet spayed or neutered" at the end of every show. Bob would also resign from both Miss USA and Miss Universe as host because he wouldn't host if models would wear fur over their swimsuits.

Other shows Bob did in his 50-year career would include *The Family Game* which was a show similar to *Newlywed Game* but with parents of children trying to match answers to various questions. Although Bob liked working with children in his career he said at a taping of *Price is Right* that he wanted to block that show from memory. He even sub hosted another Chuck Barris show called *Dream Girl of 1967*.

Bob did a show produced by Mark Goodson Productions in 1980 which wasn't a game show but a cross between *What's My Line*, *That's Incredible!*, and *Real People* called *That's My Line*. Johnny Olson was the announcer and closed with "This is Johnny Olson! I'm your announcer! That's MY line! A Mark Goodson Bill Todman Production." Bob also did The Bob Barker Fun and Games Show at full scale venues in the United States and Canada. He would select people from the audience, and they would play games based off of *Price is Right* and *Truth or Consequences* for big prizes.

He also had roles in *Something So Right*, *Bonanza*, *Happy Gilmore*, and *Spongebob Squarepants* (as the voice of Bob Barnacles of the Snail Rescue Center in Bikini Bottom) He appeared with Adam Sandler (*Happy Gilmore*) on *Night of Too Many Stars* where they mentioned providing services and schools for autistic people and got into another fight eventually.

In 1996 he and Adam won the MTV Movie Award for "Best Fight" from *Happy Gilmore*. Adam would appear on Bob Barker's 50th Year on Television special in 2007 and read him a poem. He also appeared on other game shows such as *Match Game* and with his wife on *Tattletales*.

He started the DJT foundation in memory of his mother ("Tilly" or Matilda) and his late wife. It helps people become aware to spay/neuter their pets in America and the world as well. After his retirement in June 2007, he continued to appear in various commercials and shows. He even wrote a book of his life story with Digby Diehl called *Priceless Memories* and appeared on *Price* for his 90th Birthday, April Fool's Day, and to promote his book. Bob says, to quote his book *Priceless Memories*, "Please don't picture me in my rocker staring at space doing nothing. I will do that if I have time to." He has been devoting time to DJ&T Foundation accepting checks and donations since he retired. He'd do that for most of the day and then go to a *Price* taping. An audio book of *Priceless Memories* was also produced with Bob Barker reading it. Bob Barker has had a diverse career and will be remembered for that even after he's gone.~~

Someone To Bake For... Single Male Seeking Wife

By: Nils Skudra

I'm a person who likes quotes and keeps long lists of them that I might throw into a conversation at an appropriate moment. Sometimes they are antithetical to each other like these: "It is better to be alone than in bad company" (George Washington) and "Better quarreling than lonely" (Irish proverb). For purposes of the thesis of this article, I'll go for argument's sake with the latter.

I'm allegedly not hard on the eyes (mine are sea blue). I'm well-educated with one Master's Degree behind me and the other set to be completed this year. I'm a hard worker, write and publish regularly (with a book coming out in several months), have my own money and plan on buying a condominium by December. I'm funny, kind, scrupulously honest, and always characterized as courageous and whip-smart. I'll give you the shirt off my back if you really want it and will surprise you with flowers and chocolates even if you don't. People say I have my ducks in a row. But here's the apparent rub: I'm autistic which may be substantially impairing my efforts to court and take a wife. For me this is irrelevant: I'm worthy of love and need someone to fuss over, love madly, share ruminations, and plot a life with. In short, I need someone to bake for. I know my way around a kitchen and if you crave a fig and onion galette, just say the words. I can pull off an Indian curry, balsamic-glazed salmon with a demi-glace sauce and grilled asparagus or take you to the moon and back with a home-made salsa sauce atop scratch-made chicken taquitos. I'm not short of admiration or accolades but I do lack a wife which I feel in all candor is a highly desirable thing (excuse that word) to have.

So, at the moment I'm feeling twinges of despair. I'm hearing Hank Williams' "I'm So Lonesome I could Cry" playing in the background, the same song that Elvis said was probably the saddest one he'd ever heard. I feel the gravitas of being an adult who is laboring under the compulsion that it is high time to find a partner and to thereby constitute a life which heretofore has been lacking one. This is where the publication of this article comes in: the idea that it may pay to advertise. Winston Churchill once said: "If you have an important point to make, don't try to be subtle or clever. Use a pile driver. Hit the point once. Then come back and hit it again. Then hit it a third time - a tremendous whack." That is what I am metaphorically doing here: driving the point home that it is high time to get a wife and all that's left (this is a BIG one!) is how to figure out how.

My well-meaning but lacking- in-tact cousin in Ft. Lauderdale tells me "you'll never meet someone by sitting in the house and looking at the walls." I "get" what she means: it is time to strategize. Assuredly my expensive University of California, Berkeley education should have at least prepared me to do that. Putting pen to paper is the commencement of that process. I've done my affirmations: I am enough. I deserve the woman of my dreams. So it slowly begins: I jumpstart my life with the formalized expression of this goal. Time is a-wasting - we are looking at "get up and go," words of action: don't contemplate/perseverate - instead: activate/enervate. We all know that opportunities are everywhere, and I now feel obliged to grab each of them. An invitation to a party may not produce the result of which I am desirous: meeting my intended BUT I might meet someone who could conceivably INTRODUCE me to a prospective mate - perhaps their friend, cousin, fellow employee or roommate. I call this "the door argument" - for every door that closes, another one opens. My Leipzig-born grandmother used to say it softly in German and even in the foreign tongue, the nu-

ances of the saying are not lost on me: "Für jede Tür, die sich schließt, öffnet sich eine andere."

And then there is fate. This morning on the internet I saw someone named "M. Howson's" sentiment to "take a chance ... change a 'no' to a 'yes' today." My faith, admittedly being assailable right now, however likes the positivity of that comment. Was he talking somehow to me? Is that a long-shot inference I can make? I'm not adverse to having wisdom from wherever corner it may come weigh in on my find-a-wife predicament. As the proverbial New Age wisdom would have it, one can choose to be happier. For me that includes moving from stasis to effectuated outcome. This is a moment of epiphany for me: to volitionally withdraw from defeat and reject.

In short, I'm game to take "long chances," a term one of my favorite Civil War historians (Shelby Foote used to talk about Robert E. Lee). I'm a military historian too and the search for my beloved seems to be decidedly one of the biggest engagements I will ever throw myself into. A friend tells me that it may be better to start small, keep the bar low so as not to overwhelm. What can I offer someone who may not be ready to stand under the chuppah with me quite yet? Here is where the baking angle comes in and why I joined "The Spruce Eats" Baking Facebook Group this week. I have decided to not only refine and improve my abilities in the kitchen but I will woo someone with baking skills consummately groomed under the aegis of the professionals themselves. There are several arguments as to why such a tactic may have merit. As Janet Clarkson says in her book "Pie: A Global History," "We are social animals, and we don't usually find and eat food alone, so we associate it at an emotional level with people, events and circumstances. Eventually a food becomes embedded with meaning, allowing anthropologists to ask questions like: 'So pies mean anything?'" I think Janet is right.

I have seen it written in various places that cooking is therapy, a way to combat anxiety and depression. Food MEANS something contextually - perhaps that is why pecan pie is the most requested "last dessert" on death rows. Learning to bake will therefore have a clear psychological benefit but the fruits of that labor may operate to bring someone into my ambit who may deeply value the baker as well. Wallace Stevens once said in a poem "I go by going." I will take that conceit and make it into something that sounds like "I go by baking". I take the creative energy from a new hobby and transform it into a quest for love, perhaps chocolate and pastry emboldened but an effort that has meaning beyond the pure magic of a culinary success.

I come by meanings easily as it were, they are presumptively everywhere. I see it in the flowering of the crepe myrtle tree on my block, lush with purple blossoms. A female jogger in the park, who throws a big "hi" my way although I don't know her. The astrology forecast that tells me "it is your time to shine. Put on your running shoes and go." Signs from a prescient universe? Indeterminate to be sure but one thing I can do is begin to bake, prodigiously, and see if the delicious concoctions I might produce can be the lure to draw the woman of my dreams in.

Surely there is someone out there to bake for. One of the characteristics of Asperger's Syndrome is that it imbues its host with a very intense ability to focus and to bring the products of that focus into realization. I feel that being an Aspie may actually aid in helping me to actualize a plan whose contours will be developed carefully and predicated upon reason and resolve. Somewhere out there in the known universe is a girl who is just waiting to be baked for by someone like me. Do you agree?~~

Dear Mr./Ms. High-Powered Publisher,

I'm retired from writing the metro column for the Evansville, Ind., Courier & Press.

And, for what it's worth, I have Asperger's.

But never mind that right now.

My oh my, do I have an opportunity for you.

I'm pitching a can't-miss book proposal that will net millions the world over.

And I promise to give most of my share to our grandchildren.

After I buy a villa in Cannes.

My challenge to readers is so simple, yet so compelling, that they will bust their humps to play along.

And when it's all said and done, our book will be in more homes than ceiling fans.

The hook: There are around 7 billion people in the world. Come up with seven factoids about yourself that – when considered cumulatively – sets you apart from every other soul on the planet.

Here are mine:

1. I can juggle a 16-pound bowling ball and two bean bags. (<https://vimeo.com/421801345>). Note that I practice safe shot put by juggling over the bed. Better to have a dent in the mattress than my foot. Shot-put juggling is a great way to entertain little boys. I almost always fart.
2. I have never tasted coffee.
3. I can do 100 pushups in five minutes.
4. I have interviewed members of a snake-handling church in West Virginia.
5. One of my books got a nice review in The New York Times.
6. I once jumped out of an airplane.
7. I produced a 17-minute video on an old-timer from rural Kentucky who may be the best backwards-speller on Earth. (Go to YouTube and search Norris McElmurry)

I invite you to play along, Mr./Ms. High-Powered Publisher.

Review your life's experiences. The good. The bad. The stupid.

Now pick seven that will separate you from everyone else in the world.

Maybe you traveled to Antarctica.

Or managed a base hit off Greg Maddux.

Maybe you've put a liplock on a Galapagos Island sea turtle.

Or cashed a check from Justin Timberlake.

Maybe you gargled alongside Tom Jones.

Or wrapped a python around your neck to scare the mailman.

Trust me. The list craze will spread like wildfire.

Celebrities will send me their seven.

Twenty-years-to-life inmates will send me their seven.

Shopkeepers, sushi-eaters and skydivers.

Jackhammer operators, jacks-of-all-trades and Jack Paar lookalikes.

They'll compare lists on subways, at airports, at bus stops.

No kidding. Dennis Rodman really spilled beer on you at a wrap party.

Is that a fact? You crossed the country on a skateboard.

You don't mean it. You once borrowed Lenny Bruce's biology notes.

I ask you, Mr./Ms. High-Powered Publisher. Is this not the best book proposal you've ever received? Please show your appreciation by sending a max contract at your earliest convenience. The sooner the word gets out on the lists, the sooner we'll be rolling in the dough.

Yours in best-selling prose,

Garret Mathews

Matryoshka

By: Jake Ziesche

I look in the mirror, and see myself

-Upon Reflection



I

Before me stands Boris. He's many things: a doll, a tranquil being, a male Wiccan, gentle as a dove and so much more. One must ponder the big questions. What lies beneath that mild-mannered visage? What information would be revealed if this closed book opened up? What other pieces make up the puzzle that is Boris?

II

Beyond the aura of peace, he is a dedicated actor. He wears masks onstage and off it, too. In the theatre he takes on roles of various characters. In public he exudes an air of mystery whilst showing he's one with nature. At home he exhibits a hidden side to his personality. You just might be surprised at his accomplishments.

III

Underneath he is also an artist. He always makes vivacious masterpieces. He dabbles in painting most of the time. His favorite types are tie-dye and ikebana (i.e. Japanese flower arrangements). No matter what the style, Boris's works exude passion. That goes for the kind of art that can't be conveyed on canvas, too.

IV

Believe it or not, Boris also does ballet. He's a danseur and even a regular Baryshnikov. Ballet may seem more of a girl's cup of tea, but Boris is quite the étoile himself. He follows his heart and dances with the grace of a swan. Boris has also started doing other types of dance to expand his repertoire. Boris is as colorful as his dedication to the arts.

V

In addition, he is a practitioner of yoga. It helps Boris find himself and plays a part in his serene appearance. In a world where people don't know the real him, yoga helps Boris keep his cool when others might ruffle his feathers. The ancient exercise keeps his composure in check. The young man can also take whatever comes his way. Boris always faces challenges with aplomb.

VI

At the heart we see his inner child that's innocent as a lamb. As time passes, it shall live on within him at all times. He's prone to nostalgia, a time when people wouldn't judge him based on who he is on the outside but, it gives him hope for a bright future. Boris shall think of happy thoughts and see the good in those around him. Boris may be young at heart, but he'll always have gallantry to face life's challenges. He may always be an enigma, but Boris will be special no matter what.~~

GOING TO THE OPERA: A CHAPTER IN CREED



By: Dmitry Harmon

The special night had finally come. Frederick was very excited and was feeling quite anxious. Lilith had been very generous for the night's occasion. Tonight was a night at the opera and she had ordered Frederick a suit and had him attend an appointment with a well-renown barber. At the barber Frederick liked his hair the way it was and just wanted it cleaned up. He was instead given a clean shave, even though it was not entirely necessary. Now he was waiting for the carriage with Lilith to arrive at his residence. He had on a black suit with a white button-down shirt, white vest and a black bowtie. The suit also came with a ra-

ther tall hat that Frederick was not used to wearing; in fact, Frederick rarely wore hats outside of the winter season.

He looked at himself in the mirror and thought that he looked rather silly in the outfit. He was not used to wearing such soft (and formal) clothes. He noticed his tie was crooked and was, perhaps, not tied correctly, but he was unsure as to how to bring that up to Lilith when she arrived. However, the suit was important enough to Lilith that she ordered it for him and he was intelligent enough to know that when someone spends money on something like a suit you probably would want to wear it as a courtesy. It was a chilly fall night and Frederick was starting to get cold and a little worried. Lilith mentioned that she would arrive with the carriage at six-thirty and it was now six thirty-five. *What if something had happened to the carriage? What if Lilith forgot?* The negative thoughts whirled around his head until he was distracted by an elegant carriage drawn by two horses that turned the corner and stopped right in front of him. All of the negative thoughts immediately vanished and he suddenly felt very nervous. The coachman came down and opened the door for him. Lilith had gone all out in Frederick's opinion. The carriage was in pristine condition, black on the outside but a very nice white interior. However, Frederick was a bit too distracted by Lilith to really look over the level of luxury the carriage had to offer.

She was wearing a gown that was black and matched his suit. She had on earrings that were silver with ruby gems that were set in, allowing the silver to hug it ever so slightly. She had her hair styled in a bun. Her face was made up with a powder that made it look a little brighter and her eyes were evenly done with black eyeliner but what pulled it all together was the blood-red lipstick that she was wearing. She also was wearing a white pearl necklace and had on a silver ring with a sapphire gem embedded in it.

"Good evening, Frederick." Frederick's nerves were kicking in and he didn't process that she had spoken to him.

"Huh! What?"

"I said, 'good evening' to you," responded Lilith with a smile.

"Oh yes. How do you do, I mean...good evening to you, as well." God, he felt stupid. How could he have not been paying attention.

"Well, shall we get going, then?" asked Lilith. Frederick realized he was still standing in front of the carriage and got in. He quickly patted the inside pocket of the jacket to secretly make sure he still had the tickets, got into the carriage and they were on their way.

The ride took about twenty minutes. When they got to the theater Frederick made the first move.

"Allow me." He got out of the carriage, opened the door and extended his hand to help Lilith out

of the carriage. He believed he had to offer the gentleman's approach to making sure this night was a pleasant one for Lilith. As they walked into the theater, Frederick was in awe because of its elegance. High ceilings in the lobby that must have been forty feet high. Massive chandeliers that illuminated the room with light. Red carpet placed strategically on the marble floor. Before he had time to process the rest of the interior such as furniture and wall patterns, Lilith spoke to him.

“Shall we go get a drink and something to eat and mingle with people?”

“Yes of course, I would like that very much.” Frederick now realized why Lilith wanted to come earlier than the showtime. Everyone was talking to each other, smoking and having brandies and h’orderves before the show. Frederick let Lilith guide him with her hand on his arm.

He was not used to this style of living and continued to let her guide him. She ordered him a drink for herself and him. Since he did not know much about mixed drinks other than ale and wine, he told her what flavors he liked. She told the bartender what to make for him, as for her she ordered...a glass of red wine. They surveyed the crowd and once again Fredrick realized the need for the suit. Every gentleman was wearing a suite and every lady was wearing an elegant gown. He realized this was how you dress for these occasions and that he would have looked very much out of place if he had worn his own clothes. At this point people were starting to notice Lilith. They quickly came up to her and greeted her with pleasant exchanges and she was trying her hardest to make an effort to include Frederick.

Through the course of the greetings a man came up to them.

“Lilith, how do you do?” This man was an average looking man with blond hair and looked to be in his late twenties to early thirties.

“George, how are you? I do hope you and your family are doing well?”

“Oh yes yes. They are, though I must say they do not seem to be doing as well as you. You look absolutely radiant tonight. The opulence you hold is one that should be an example of. I must say the years are still young in you. You and I should convene for lunch sometime.”

“Why thank you, George, you are looking as dashing as ever,” she replied with a smile on her face. George was the son of a very important business partner of her father’s. Frederick, on the other hand, was looking at this guy with interest.

“It saddens me to hear of Mr. Haversham. But of course, he was not in good health. I trust you will stay in good health?”

“I always try, George. I would like to introduce you to Frederick.” Frederick shook the man's hand.

“How do you do, Frederick? Are you here with Lilith tonight?”

“I am.”

“Interesting, Lilith is one of the smartest ladies I know and she has a unique personality about her that any man can fall for. I must say I grow weary of my parents' wishes to marry the Fowlers' daughter. If only I can make a change. I will speak to father about it.” He continued in this rant for a while with bits of compliments to Lilith. At times the compliments didn't seem to make sense. Things like “The moon doesn’t even have your light.” or “Only you could calm a rapid by the river.”

Finally, the bell rang, which meant the show was about to start and everyone needed to take their seats.

“That man was an interesting man. He seemed really interested in you?”

“That would be a fair assumption. I, however, do not share the same feelings for him as he does for me.”

“Oh? What interest does he have in you?”

“He is in love with me.”

“Ooooh!” Exclaimed Frederick.

“Yes, however, I do not share the same feelings with him.”

“Oh, I suppose that makes sense. Well I am thankful you agreed to come out with me to the opera. I have never done something like this. I did enjoy lunch with you the other week.”

“As did I, I am glad you asked me to the opera. This is my favorite opera.” With that they found their seats and waited for the show to start.~

HO/OO American/British Layout Build (Part One)

By: Max Chaney

Hello once again viewers, I hope you are all doing well during this time and staying safe! I have indeed been working on a HO layout recently and I plan to finish it up soon! This will be Part 1 to see part two please turn to **page 45**

Firstly: (Disclaimer) I am not responsible for any damage done to yourself, I am not responsible for any damage done to your models or layout, adult supervision may be required to build this, Hot, sharp and dangerous tools may be used (depending on how you build it) please take your time to build this—patience is key!

Step 1) The Plywood We used was cut to 53 ¼ “by 34 ¼” the original size of the layout was smaller then a 4x8 however larger than a 3x6 (Important!!! Make sure you make some spacer for the layout so the wires from the controller can be used do this step first before scenery!!! Same goes for seating the layout on a folding table which will eventually be explained in the photos)

Step 2) we cut the grass mat down to size, I accidently cut down the mat in several (not so little) Pieces that was indeed useful in the end! We glued them down with spackle which the latter came first after we cut the plywood

Step 3) we added the roads, which were built with a spackling knife then the fields which were indeed done with clump foliage, by Woodland Scenics.

We laid the track in a rough position, so we could determine where the final position would be glued down, the track is Nickel Silver. I chose Nickle Silver because the track is noncorrosive and will last longer.



The controller I chose is by TN Nomura and is 6 volts DC, the controller itself will be hooked up to a whistling train station; I will be making my own custom whistling activation track piece built from N scale track, and hooking it up! Plus adding ballast, fencing around the layout, sheep and a ERTL Trevor the Traction engine to the farm, plus Bertie Bus to the Roads along with Bulgy picking up passengers from the Station...but you will have to wait until part two for that!~~

MY TULPA



BY JORDAN WATSON

My Tulpa I - Orphan

By: Jordan Watson

My name is Conley Job. I am 7 years old. Erogrege has been my home for a very long time. It's a weird place, filled with all sorts of kids, both younger and older than me. I always see them around me in a large, blue-ish room, with lots of beds. The grown-ups who work there, always kept us on a strict schedule, having us go to various rooms within the building only once a day. Every Monday, the boys and I would clean the floors of the long, silver decorated hallways. This was mainly from the wax of these dripping candles, filled with statues of Erogrege's grandfathers, who helped make the building we live in. The priests would tell us to keep them lit until the weekends, when we would start placing new ones around the pathways given to us. On Tuesdays, we'd make the garden rooms smell of roses and calla lilies. Some of the priests didn't like that I asked them why. On Wednesdays, we'd come together for the priests to have all the boys sit in a really big circle to practice singing. I wouldn't really call it singing a song. More like we were making gibberish. Thursdays, we'd spend most of our times outside, and collect herbs for the doctors to help keep us treated if we ever get hurt on our chores. Fridays, we would be dressed in long, white sheets, to prepare having a few kids each week, to kneel before the altar of Erogrege's oldest known god, Mogga'uth. One of the kids whispered to me during the ceremony that they sneaked into the library, defining the meaning behind this ritual.

“Those songs we do on Wednesdays, they're for a reason. They say if you call upon Mogga'uth correctly, he'll give you a wish that lasts forever. If a wish is fulfilled, a chosen child will get to leave here.”

Normally, I wouldn't believe him. Luckily in my case, I was told that because of my exceptional work within my time spent here in Erogrege, I would get my time near Mogga'uth's statue. The problem with that is, the priests have been known to whip the kids who screw up the rites, even in front of the whole altar room. What they weren't aware of is that I took the time to sneak into the library during the Time of Sleep. I would read books on how to get what I've always wanted. It would require long hours of thought, visual drawing, and care for it. I had been thinking about this for nearly three years. So, when my name was called by the bishops of the altar, I would kneel before it, waiting for them to speak.

“Verbally incant the scriptures that been bestowed upon you, child. Your words await approval by our miraculous god.”

Feeling nervous, I let my face flush, then state the words in my mind.

“X'ol gath, Vel'to'dah, Teth-scol manarth. Fulg'ins, Mastrus'zefor, Wyn-Spe'eth Cri-bar!

Mar'kesh quith, Bai'ilath, Skent-yiush tal. Niur'raqual, Mygall'da, Blut'neorb Fall!”

I think long and hard about my wish. A best friend comes to life. The whole hall falls on deafening silence. It continues for about 3 minutes. I look around me to see the confusion in the other kids' eyes. That is until I heard the bishops begin to chant. I look in front of me, to see the statue of Mogga'uth's eyes light up. After another minute, they stop. The father who spoke before me, stated to me,

“Congratulations, my child. Mogga'uth has bestowed you a gift from his spacious wonders.”

That's it? But it felt as if nothing really happened. The priests then call us back to our beds, as I leave feeling empty. The hours tick by, as I lie awake in my bunk bed above the kid that told me that big lie. I look outside the window to the right on our big, blue room to see the bright night sky. My eyes begin to water up, as I sniffle into my pillow, knowing I may never get my friend. I fall to sleep from all my heavy sobbing. I then hear a faint, whisper from beneath me.

“*Psssst!* Hey...are you okay?”

I perk up from my top bed to take a quick look below me to see a fluffy, brown haired, purple eyed boy with freckles, waving up to me. I don't recognize him. He doesn't look to be part of the group of the boys that live with me. I had to rub my eyes for a moment to see if this was even real. After getting rid of the tears in my eyes, I notice to see he's gone, only to hear from next to me that same whispered voice.

“Hey there!”

I jump from my bed, grabbing at my chest, and catch myself near the side railing. He sits in a relaxed state near me.

“How come you're crying?”

“W-Who are you?!”

“Oh geez, I'm sorry! I didn't introduce myself! My name is Merry!”

Wait? Merry? That's the name of my friend I thought about in my dreams! He extends his hand to mine for a handshake. I nervously hesitate. He joyously takes it, while laughing at the same time.

“Oh, c'mon! It's just a handshake! What's yours?”

“M-My name?”

“Yeah!”

“I...I-It's Conley. Conley Job.”

“Whoa! Cool name. Sounds like one of those superhero identities. You into those at all?”

“U-Uuh, we...we don't get to do much here, outside of work for this place.”

He audibly groans a bit, as I try to tell him to keep his voice down, and slumps onto the bed.

“Not gonna lie, this place sounds boring. You *work* in a place like this? At *your* age? You should be out in the world! Exploring it! Making friends! Playing with others!”

“W-Well, there isn't anything we can do about it! We're stuck here!”

It suddenly came to me from my own statement.

“Wait.....How did *you* manage to get yourself in here?”

He raises himself up from my bed and gives me the biggest smirk he can.

“Hehe....you reeeally wanna know?”

“...Y-Yeah.”

“That doesn't sound too convincing...You reeeeeeeally really like to know?”

“Yes!”

“Reeeeeally really *really* curious to see h—“

“Okay! Tell me! I'm tired of being stuck in this place! It feels so stuffy and crummy, that it makes me want to cry until the world goes black!”

“Walk with me, Conley. I'll show you the way out...but you have to be the one to unlock it.”

My yelling wakes me from that dream. All the while, it manages to wake the other kids up. They look at me confused, annoyed and bewildered. Feeling between my fingers, a rustic, metal touch. I look at my right hand, in what appears to be dangling from my fingers, the keys to the front doors of Erogrege. But how did they get there? Well, it doesn't matter now. I'll take Merry's advice.

Without questioning it, I start walking out the hallway, including the band of children following my lead. We go through the corridors of those familiar silver hallways. The candles flicker wildly at we slowly sneak by the large door of the congregation room, knowing the priests could be asleep. Before us, lies the exit to our freedom. After seeing the scary looking locks, I take the keys, and struggle to unlock the doors. With the faces of all the boys looking towards me, it became clear, that my goal to leave for the outside world. It was to give them the same chance I'd have. After unlocking the combinations, The doors audibly open before us. What soon followed were the furious screams of the priests far behind us. The kids screamed in unison, as we bolted out the doors. We quickly funnel ourselves out. As I look behind me, I see the rushing mob of priests. After they close in on us, I hear what sounds like an audible snapping of fingers. An earthquake rumbles from underneath all our feet. The priests all tumble down like a stack of dominoes. From atop, they see the entirety of Erogrege slowly crumble from below their heads. Just like that, it becomes a rumbling, roaring scene of destruction, as it topples into a large, ever-growing pile of smoke and fire.

We all look upon the carnage in front of us. They all cheer into the night skies! Before my concern gets the better of me, Merry then pats my left shoulder.

“Wheew! That couldn't have been timed better, right Conley?”

“Merry! Y-You're real! I-I thought that you were just in m— “

“Hey, it's okay, man! We made it out in one piece! All thanks to you!”

“Y-yeah! Sure did.....So, what do we do now?”

“Whatever we want, wherever we roam. Let's take it all on. Together.”

We take one last look back at what was my past, burning to the ground, to soon walk into my future. Both me and my new friend, Merry.~

The Greatest Prank Ever Pulled



By: Megan Cunningham

Unless uniquely well-orchestrated, I'm no fan of pranks. Many run the tendency to be lame, mean-spirited, and generally not very funny. After all, practically all pranks involve people having a laugh at someone else's expense. While it's all fine and good with the occasional whoopie cushion, many can go too far, especially when it's no longer harmless fun. But there is one prank that people still take way too seriously; you'd almost think it's a work of genius as it keeps inspiring millions of imitators who almost get the same results.

Starting from the late 1970s and 1980s, a series of circles and other geometric designs of flattened crops mysteriously appeared throughout the southern English countryside. But they didn't gain mainstream attention until 1980 when a Wiltshire farmer discovered three circles in his oat field, each 60ft in diameter. UFO researchers and media immediately descended. Concentrated in fields of canola, barley, wheat, and some-

times corn from spring to fall, these crop circles have become subject to much speculation and major tourist attractions. Science magazines during the 1980s and 1990s attributed microwave radiation bending the plants. One explanation attributed them to horny hedgehogs. Many cited electric air currents, wind patterns, time travel, and even aliens.

However, these were no more than a series of hoaxes. In 1991, the British prankster team of Doug Bower and Dave Chorley admitted to making hundreds of crop circles since 1978. In fact, they even filmed themselves for the BBC showing how they did it with a wood plank, rope, and a baseball cap fitted with a wire loop helping them walk in a straight line. To stamp out the circle, one held the rope at the center while the other held the other end and rotated in a circle. By stepping carefully and working outwardly, they could create swirling patterns hiding their tracks. As years progressed, their skills improved and patterns became more complicated. Doug and Dave even delighted in the fact that paranormal researchers insisted that these patterns were far too regular, large, and elaborate to be man-made.

But why did they do it? Well, during a discussion at a bar, Bower and Chorley talked of UFO reports they thought were fabrications and mistakes. So they decided to make their own to demonstrate how gullible people are and how eager they're willing to believe in paranormal phenomena. And I dare say, their prank worked more wonderfully than they'd ever could expect.

Bower and Chorley may not be the first crop circle hoaxers. But their rock star status in the crop circle world has inspired many imitators globally. Usually when some phenomenon is exposed as a hoax, it's usually

the end of it. This was not the case with crop circles. In fact, crop circle appearances started appearing around the world with approximately 10,000 of them to date. While many can range from simple circles to intricate geometric designs and even pop culture references like the Olympic logo and an emblem of the Rebel Alliance from *Star Wars*. As Professor Richard Taylor told *Physics World*, "the pictographs they created inspired a second wave of crop artists. Far from fizzling out, crop circles have evolved into an international phenomenon, with hundreds of sophisticated pictographs now appearing annually around the globe." Though hoaxers construct



many crop circles, plenty of people construct them as advertising and art. In fact, some people even earn money for making these and England now has an annual crop circle competition. While many farmers and locals can take advantage of increased tourism from scientists, crop circle researchers, and New Agers seeking spiritual experiences as well as increased sales in bus or helicopter tours, walking tours, books, and T-shirts.

Perhaps a reason why crop circles can become mainstream is that they're very easy to prove as hoaxes. According to a 2003 UK study, researcher Jeremy Northcote found that crop circles weren't spread randomly across the landscape. They usually appeared near roads, areas of medium-to-dense populations, and cultural monuments such as Stonehenge and Avebury. Thus, they appeared in places relatively easy to access. Furthermore, evidence of any alleged non-human creation of crop circles is essentially absent, eyewitness testimony aside. While some were definitely pranks, others can be sufficiently explained as such. While cases where researchers declared crop circles "the real thing," only for the creators to confront them, sometimes even showing a demonstration. Sometimes they've even been caught. Ironically, they came clean with it after a so-called "cereologist" (advocate of paranormal crop circle explanations) named Pat Delgado examined one of their circles and declared it authentic. And when people refused to believe them, they deliberately added straight lines and squares to demonstrate that these crop circles couldn't have natural causes.



Not to mention, the Internet has many resources on crop circle creation, obviously showing these crop circle creators aren't hiding anything.

Another reason is that crop circle hoaxers usually pull their pranks at the expense of people widely regarded as acceptable targets. Namely, people who willingly ignore the obvious hoaxing evidence and keep believing in a crop circle non-human origins. These include believers in extra-terrestrials and lizard people, New Age believers, and plenty of conspiracy theorists who think the govern-

ment's hiding evidence of aliens. Not to mention, those so-called "experts" who have a vested interest as well as made tons of money from leading week-long crop circle tours at \$2,000 and writing books. But there have been mainstream media outlets that have been just as gullible. In the early 2000s, even *The Wall Street Journal* failed taking the man-made explanation seriously. Despite being an obvious hoax, it's been said that crop circles may tell more about ourselves than aliens. Or at least people's willingness to believe in the supernatural that they'll just ignore evidence to the contrary.



Some pictures courtesy of Google Images and Pinterest. Since they're based on pictures I collected for a blog post I did years ago and didn't use.

Crop circle making pictures courtesy of Crop Circle Archives and Today I Found Out.~~

Haunted Pittsburgh

By: Elise Mote

Chatham University

The Blue Lady:

According to the ghost stories passed down over the years, Woodland Hall is rumored to be a former mental hospital where the woman, a patient, dressed in blue. Students have reported to see her floating above students on the fourth floor as they wake up.



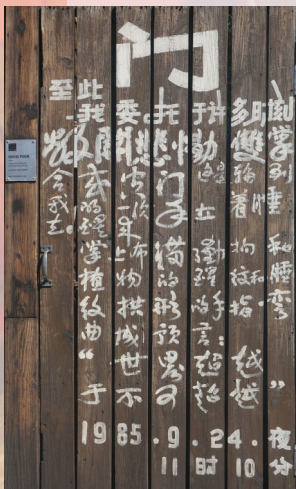
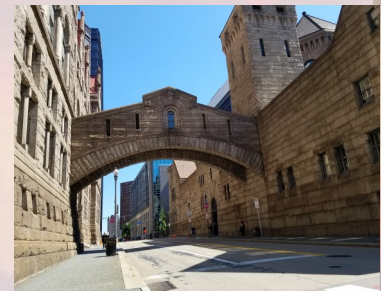
Edwin Fickes:

Fickes Hall is to be haunted by Edwin Fickes himself. Edwin has been seen walking the halls of his former home and is quite mischievous; he likes opening desks and closets.

Old Allegheny County Jail

In 1902, brothers Ed and Jack Biddle were arrested for various crimes. Some women of Pittsburgh were infatuated with the brothers including Kate Sofel. She was the wife of the warden. Kate wasn't deterred from falling in love with one of the brothers and even helped them escape. Unfortunately for the brothers, they only got to enjoy their freedom for two days as they died in a shootout in Butler two days later, thus ending the affair. She is said to shuffle papers and touch unsuspecting guards in the old jail. She isn't the only one to haunt the old jail halls.

William Culp (an inmate who had died in the jail) caused quite a fright in 1907. It was so bad that all the prisoners on death row were so terrified of what they saw that the warden took pity on them and moved "murderer's row," in a different part of the jail. That section of the jail is now used for Family Court.



House Poem

By: Elise Mote

The house's beautiful calligraphy was painted by Huang Xiang as part of the City of Asylum's program and was dedicated on November 21, 2004. Huang was the first exiled writer in the residency program. The program's goal is to help people like him to gain the freedom to publish without the fear of persecution. To learn more about the program go to <https://>

Iron and Steel Production

By: Joshua Walburn

Steel is an iron alloy with a small percentage of carbon to improve its solid strength and fracture resistance compared to iron. It can also contain smaller quantities of silicon, phosphorus, sulfur and oxygen. The content of steel ranges between 0.08% and 1.5% of carbon.

After the iron ore, coal and limestone goes into their preheating ovens such as sinter plants that agglomerate iron dust with other fine materials with high temperature, they travel into a blast furnace. The hot blast temperature can be from an approximate 900°C through 1300°C (1600°F through 2300°F) depending on the stove design and function. Temperatures of blast furnaces can be hotter much as more than 4200°F. Near their bases, 1000°C of preheated oxygen flows through nozzles. Then hot air burns the coke and maintains extremely high temperatures that are needed to reduce the ore to iron. The chemical reaction between the air and fuel generates carbon monoxide. Thermal reserve zone is one of the areas of a blast furnace. The chemistry is written like this to define its mixtures and reactions:



After the ironmaking process, steelmaking starts. Producing steel processes from iron ore and/or scrap. While a blast furnace is the first step of making steel, the production uses two methods: Basic Oxygen or Electric Arc. Oxygen converter process is where carbon-rich molten pig iron is made into steel. When lowering the content of the alloy changes the quantity of carbon makes the steel less contented with carbon. Electric arc furnaces heats charged material by means of an arc. They range from small units of an approximate one ton and up to 400 ton units used for secondary steelmaking. Energy consumption varies from 350-700 kWh/ton of steel produced. The typical EAF without oxyfuel burners uses 475 kWh/ton.

Continuous Casting happens next in the steel production where hot liquid steel is solidified into so-called a semifinished billet, bloom or slab for subsequent rolling in the finishing mills. Prior to the introduction of continuous casting in the 1950s, steel was poured into stationary molds to form iron ingots. Steel slabs is one of the semifinished products. The dimensions of them can range from Grade 50 (50,000 lbs/in²) through Grade 100 (100,000 lbs/in²). Used slag layers is formed by the addition of casting powder. The secondary zone is often called the metallurgical length, because this is where the strand solidifies and the cast structure develops. Depending on the casting speed and strand's cross section, the length can be 10-40 meters long.

In representation to the steel industry, the Steelmark was invented. The three stars on the symbol, known as 'hypocycloids' measures steel within its microscopic level indicating a diamond-like pattern of atoms found in coal, iron ore and steel scrap resembled by their colors: yellow, orange and blue. Mathematically, hypocycloids are defined as special grid curves generated by the trace of a fixed point on a small circle that rolls within a larger circle (giving parameters of $R = 4.0$, $r = 1.0$, and so $k = 4$ giving an astriod). They also lighten work, brighten leisure, and widen worlds for each employee. The Pittsburgh Steelers logo is based on the Steelmark.

As of what makes Pittsburgh known as the 'Steel City,' the productions, processes and steel mills is what dedicates to the powers of industrial heritage in the making of steel generates more resilience of enlightenment. The bridges being built to interconnect the city as well as great: steel coils, plates, sections, rods, bars, welded tube, light gauge and decking.~~

Leah and Max: Black Caves

By: Julia Fieldhammer

“Guys, we’re leaving in 45 minutes,” Leah’s mom called out from Leah’s room, where she was helping her get ready for the day. The family was going to a theme park half an hour away, called Black Caves. Last week was the grand opening and Leah’s family wanted to take a drive up and see what it was all about.

“I’m ready,” Megan said as she walked into the room. Megan was Leah’s older sister, and they also had a younger brother named Trent, but Leah’s most treasured member of the family was her service dog, Max. Max was a yellow lab with the most adorable and expressive face. Max had been with Leah for four years and Leah always knew she could count on him when she was feeling down. A couple of months ago something huge happened to Max, Leah, and her siblings. They became part of Society’s Hidden Heroes, also known as SHH. SHH was a spy organization that specialized in kids with disabilities.

“Okay, would you get Leah’s wheelchair?” asked Leah’s mom. Leah needed a wheelchair to get around because she had Cerebral Palsy.

After Megan brought the wheelchair into Leah’s room, her dad came down the stairs, with Trent following closely behind, asking if everyone was ready to go. Leah’s parents buckled her wheelchair into the car so they could get started on their drive. When they got to the park, it was so packed that Leah’s dad had to circle a bunch of times to find a good parking spot.

Trent was so excited about all the rides he wanted to go on that he couldn’t stop talking as they were walking towards security. After going through security, Leah and Max tore through the gate into the park, with Megan and Trent right behind them. After their parents caught up with the kids, they all decided on a strategy to tackle the park.

“I want to go on that ride!” Trent yelled as he pointed to a huge train caboose that was swinging back and forth.

“Okay,” their dad said, looking up at the thing with a scared look on his face. Even though he obviously wasn’t thrilled about it, Leah’s dad reluctantly took Trent on the ride while Leah and Megan left with their mom to go on some rides together.

Leah decided on a roller coaster for their first ride. Megan had to help their mom get Leah out of her wheelchair and onto the ride. They tied Max’s leash to Leah’s wheelchair so he wouldn’t go anywhere while they were on the ride. As the ride was starting, Leah could feel butterflies start to form in her stomach. The butterflies only got worse as the ride moved all around, but Leah was laughing and screaming through it all. And then, in a snap of their fingers, it was over. After they got off the ride, their mom needed a minute to recuperate, so they took a break by a bench. Just then, they all heard a scream that sounded throughout the whole park.

“What was that!” Leah exclaimed, looking around in panic.

“Probably just someone on a ride, girls,” their mom said, putting her head in her hands, trying not to throw up. “I wouldn’t worry about it.”

Leah and Megan shared a glance, not convinced the scream was nothing to worry about. At that moment, Leah’s wheelchair let out three beeps. They looked at their mom to make sure she wasn’t paying attention, and snuck out of her view, behind an ice cream stand. Once they were away from their mom, Leah pressed the little red button that was hidden in the inside of her armrest. A screen popped out of her armrest and showed the leader of their spy organization, Kim.

“Hello Leah, Max, and Megan. We have a new mission for you guys. I see you are at Black Caves park,” said Kim. “We just got word of a kidnapping that happened there.”

Leah looked at Megan. “That probably explains the scream we just heard.”

“We believe that the victims are a young girl and her father. Your mission is to investigate who took them and where they would be held within the park. I’m on my way to Black Caves and have informed the police already. You are to contact me when you get any clues or information. Good luck,” Kim said and immediately hung up.

“Okay,” Megan said. “The first step is to go find Trent.”

So Leah, Max, and Megan started walking towards the ride Trent and their dad went on, completely forgetting about their mom, who was still sitting on the bench trying to get ahold of her stomach. “Where are you guys going?” Their mom perked up.

Leah and Megan looked at each other guiltily. “Uh, we’re going to find Trent and dad,” Leah said.

“Okay,” their mom said, standing up. “I’m good now, let’s go.”

They found their dad and little brother by another ride, this one looking like a spinning duck. As soon as they all reunited, Megan tried to give the siblings a way to slip away from their parents.

“I was thinking I could take Leah and Trent on some rides so you and dad can explore by yourselves,” she put on her most responsible facial expression, trying to convince them.

“Hmm, I don’t know,” their mom said, “that makes me a little nervous.”

“Oh, come on Kate,” their dad pleaded with her. “The kids will be fine. They’ll call us if they need us.”

After many promises of safety and communication, the gang finally started on their mission, and Leah caught Trent up to speed. “Let’s stop under this tree to gather our thoughts,” Leah said. While they were talking, all of a sudden Max started barking at the tree.

“What is it boy?” Leah asked as they all started looking around trying to figure out what Max was barking at. Eventually, Trent noticed a piece of paper in the branches of the tree.

“It looks like a note,” Megan said reaching for the paper.

“What does it say?” Trent and Leah both leaned in to try and read it from where Megan was holding it.

“All it says is: ‘I got her. Meet me at the Lakeside ride.’”

“That must be a ride here,” Trent said, pulling out his map.

“It looks like we have to go that way,” Megan said, looking at the map over Trent’s shoulders and then pointing to their left.

The siblings headed off in that direction, with Max trotting alongside Leah. As they walked, Leah thought about the little girl and how scared she must be. She hoped that they would be able find her and her father before anything bad happened.

To be continued...~~

Autism and Programming

By: Nathaniel Geyer

When I was a child, I never thought about computer programmer as a strength. I was raised in a mainstream school and thought more about the sciences and art than programming. It was not until I graduated with a bachelor’s in biology in 2005 that I took my first programming course on database programming or structured query language (SQL). After that I went to graduate school and took biostatistics and epidemiology where I learned how to code using statistical analytical software (SAS). I then graduated with two terminal public health degrees. After that I got bored with just doing epidemiology that I considered going based and learn how to use R, Python, HTML, CSS, and JavaScript and found that it was an exciting and worthwhile skill. That leads to a question that many people ask as to whether persons with autism are good at programming.

A recent search using Google found that many companies including Microsoft are starting to hire autistics for programming. It is a very tedious and repetitive process that can be very boring for most individuals but a blessing for unemployed autistics. I have always been a person who wants to improve my quality of life through hard work and if programming is a strength for many, it could be a strength for me. This August I completed my Masters in Geographical Information Systems, with my final project being a usability assessment of a redesign of a web mapping tool that pulls aggregated data into a web map that could be assessable to the masses. When doing the project I was so excited about programming that I spent most of August on programming and less on writing up the results of the usability assessment. Finally, in mid-August, I finished my programming and am now writing up a manuscript to hopefully be published.

Based on this experience, I have learned that autistics can be good at programming, but there has to be a balance between programming and life. Balancing work and pleasure can be challenging for many autistics, but with help it could be accomplished. In the 21st century, I see autism as a means to an end for me and if I can do programming for a career, it can be done. However, if programming is a strength for me, it could also be a strength for other autistics.~~

Interview “Understanding My Character, LARK”

By Michelle Middlemiss

Lark is the character that I created over twenty years ago. I write her into stories that involve a mixture of characters—usually what I am interested in reading about at the time. Or maybe things going on in my life that may be difficult to handle. I may put her into a story to help me get through a stressful situation.

To help the reader understand Lark better, I “interviewed” her with questions you might have about her. That seemed like a good way for me to introduce her to the reader.

Lark has short black spiked hair and a scar on her cheek that takes the shape of a lightning bolt. Her height changes throughout her stories, depending upon her age. So you have to read a particular story to see what age she is at that time. She dresses in Goth and sometimes wears a cape like her father, Dr. Strange. Lark wears an eye patch over her left eye, which I will explain simply for now as the result from a previous injury. Lark has telepathic powers and likes to eat metal.

LARK’S INTERVIEW:

Lark, where were you born? **In the Dark Dimension.**

Where, or what is that? **It’s actually a pocket dimension not connected to earth or any planet. It’s not a full dimension. The location is everywhere and nowhere. Clea and Dr Strange are my parents. The Dark Dimension has matter, but it’s stuck. It’s a physical place; best described as a very bad acid trip. Basically little islands of matter float around in the air instead of in water. Some of the pieces are hanging upside down; literally. The flat land where you would walk is upside down and floating.**

What do you remember from there? **Not much; I was around two weeks old when I was brought to Earth. Granted, because of my Faltine blood and magic I had the body and brain of a five year old...**

Where did you get your Faltine blood and what is it? **The Faltine blood is an energy based on alien race; one that has a vast empire. My mother is half Faltine race and half Dark Dimension.**

And what kind of Magic or powers do you have? **Like my parents and the rest of my family there’s just too many to list. But the big one that helps is when you have responsibilities that it takes to find a new person to fulfill what we do; age slows down. We do age. I mean the Ancient One is just that way. Way too old to do the job if there is only one. But like no one in my family is at that point.**

Do you have any siblings and how old are they? **I’m part of a triplet set. I’m the oldest; Levi was born 24 hours later; and Lavi is the youngest of the three by 48 hours. We also have two brothers, Victor and Vance who are five years younger than us.**

How did you get the scar on your face? **The one across the eye. I got that when I was six. I don’t talk about that.**

Who are your friends? **Well, my husband Tommy and his twin brother Billy. And Billy’s soon to be husband, Teddy. I get along with Kate Bishop and Ellie. (A**

young Avenger) Though me and Cassie Long have a history, the word "friend" is different, to say the least.

Where do you now live? **Different places but at this point me and Tommy live with Luke Cage's Avengers Team. Tony is my adopted father because my parents aren't always in this dimension.**

What story is your most unsettling memory? **When I was six this thing called On-slaught seemed to kill most of the heroes of the Earth. Of course the mutants were blamed and Zero Tolerance happened. By the end of that time I got injected with the Legacy Virus and PTSD. That's all I'm willing to talk about that.**

How is the Dark Dimension different from Earth? **A lot different. My brother Levi could answer this question... My dad didn't tell me a lot. I think he didn't want to scare me cause my brother and mother still live there.**

What is your favorite past time? **When I have free time I play poker with Nick Fury, Wolverine, the Thing and sometimes Charles Xavier. Plus, the Avengers have a once a week movie night that everyone has to be at.**

Did you ever get into trouble with the Police? **One time trying to eat my Pre-school teacher's car. That led me to being home schooled. And one time for just being a mutant in the playground!**



NOTE: (Because of Lark's Faltine powers, it sometimes makes her want to eat metal. A Faltine does need regular food but enjoys consuming something that is not normally edible; and not considered food. To testify to that, Lark has been known to munch on the metal parts of Captain America's shield and Thor's hammer. Her mutant powers are an energy base and may be why she likes to eat metal. But since she ate metal long before her mutant powers kicked in, it could be because of her Faltine heritage.)

Lark, do you feel like you live in danger?
**I'm a mutant and a young Avenger.
When is my life not in danger?
That's more the question.**

That's my character, Lark. For my Pittverse articles up to this point...I wrote about Lark living with the Avengers in the Avengers Mansion where she spends most of her time.~~

Stuck in the Wrong Body

By: *Ginger C. Reynolds*

I used to be verbal all the time, but now I'm only verbal some of the time. I spend most of the time in my room. I get stared and laughed at when I go out into public so most of the time, I don't. I wear a soft-shelled helmet and walk with a cane sometimes. Having Autism definitely doesn't help my life get any easier. If anything, it makes it harder. I'm constantly misunderstood and having sensory overload meltdowns. Just because my body is of the age of a 32-year-old doesn't mean I think like an adult.

It's extremely hard. It's like I'm a toddler stuck in an adult body. Everyone I know says I'm so smart, but that doesn't mean anything to me. My favorite TV shows are *Paw Patrol* and *P.J. Masks*. I cry when I don't get my way. When I'm having a meltdown, I kick and scream. I can't sleep without my teddy and blanky. I love drinking out of sippy cups and wearing diapers.

I feel like being 32 on the outside is just like being a toddler that is stuck on the inside. Everything is different. It's like I can't be me. I can't be the toddler me. I can't fall in love or understand adult subjects. I can't drive or even live on my own. Living is much harder when you're stuck as a toddler in a 32-year-old body. Feeling like I'm in the wrong body makes me feel like I'm an outsider or an alien from another planet. When I'm so used to being and acting like a toddler, doing things an adult should is extremely hard. Spelling is hard without spell check, math is hard without remembering how to figure it out, and explaining anything to anyone is nearly impossible.

When I get frustrated, I can't verbally tell someone I'm frustrated. No, when I'm frustrated, I cuss, yell, scream, and slam things. I don't know how to tell someone I need help. Most of the time, I don't know how to tie my shoes. Instead of being able to do or say something an adult would be able to do/say, I isolate because I don't know how to cope with being different.

Being different is extremely hard because most of today's society doesn't know how to treat different people with respect. I've dealt with being different, but in negative ways, in the past. Now, I deal with being different in many ways, positive and negative. I'm learning how to handle my problems of not fitting in, in more positive ways than before. Being different is still really hard, but now I can handle it in more productive ways.

I used to strongly dislike having Autism due to being made fun of and all the frustrations that come along with having Autism. But now, I look at having Autism as being different. Having Autism is like being a puzzle piece, in my opinion. People who have Autism are just trying to fit in with the rest of the world. Even though people with Autism are different, we as human beings have more unique qualities than others, also in my opinion.

Even though I feel like a toddler stuck in an adult's body, sometimes being different than others is a good thing. Yes, having Autism is very rough sometimes, but there's good things about having Autism as well. For example: my special interest is cartoons and I have many talents. A few of my many talents are: able to bounce two basketballs at one time, hip hop dancing, and remembering dates.~~

I Need to Accept Prayer

By: Maggie K. Jones

I need to accept the things I can't change, and the things i can change,
Do the best with what I have. So I ask you, God, to help me see that I am not alone.
Help me see myself when I get angry or frustrated with my family. For they are trying to
Help me look at life in a positive and responsible perspective.

God, I need your help when

I can't see myself in the mirror and say this is me; I'm not beautiful, it's hard to see me in the mirror. For I count in this world, I am beautiful the way you, God, have made me, in your own image.

Help me to show myself in a way in how to really express myself with courage.

The courage to do the next right thing. I need to learn to have patience.

You are lost hope is gone but you must go on, move forward, fill your dreams with something of expectations. I need to live with peace in my heart to give to others in times true need and help the poor. I need to live up to my word of promise to God.

Never to give up or give in when it comes down to helping innocent people get back on there feet. Don't give up on your children or God, we all make mistakes from the choices we don't intend on doing ever. Let us learn to forgive and forget. Never to dwell in the past.

Help me to understand others.

Help me to forgive my brothers and sisters. For its hard to forgive those who trespassed you.

Give me a heart with empathy for whoever needs help, forgiveness, trust, or needs a true friend by their side in times of hardship.

Let me not have a broken heart, for I need to know I'm not alone.

Help the first responders have time to rest with peace in their hearts, and make sure they are not alone in this battle COVID-19 or ever feel they need a hug from you, God.

A supportive hand in times that are uncertain now, i also pray for the dying or deceased loved ones from COVID-19. Give them comfort and the promise of heaven in everlasting light.

Let us work together to end hate and injustice. To bring love and respect to our fellow man.

And never forget, you are all merciful God.

Amen.



California Gin

By: Nathaniel Geyer

A, K, Q, J, 10, 9, 8, 7, 6, 5, 4, 3, 2, A

Player # of decks

2 Players-1 deck

3-4 Players-2 decks

5-6 Players-3 decks

<u>Round</u>	<u>Card</u>	<u>Description</u>
1	7	2 Sets of 3's
2	8	1 set of 3's + 1 run of 4 or more
3	9	2 runs of 4 or more
4	10	3 sets of 3's
5	11	2 sets of 3's + 1 run of 4 or more
6	12	1 sets of 3's + 2 runs of 4 or more
7	12	3 runs of 4 or more (no discards) Must lay down all cards

2's are wild

Person to the right of the dealer may cut the cards

If a player throws a card the person to the left may pick up a new card with no penalty but must discard a card

If a player throws a card and another person wants it out of turn the person must pick up another card and cannot discard.

Person to lay down all cards wins the round

At the end of the seven rounds the person with the lowest score wins

2's cannot be used side-by-side in a run

If you end up using up all the cards each person counts their cards lowest person wins round

Once card is played (put down) no changes.

Cards are worth the follow points (0 points to winner)

3-9	5 Points
10, J, Q, K	10 Points
A	15 Points
2 (wild card)	20 Points

Pinochle

By: Nathaniel Geyer

A, 10, K, Q, J, 9

12 cards of each suit (48 total)

3 Players-each person plays for themselves with/without kitty (15-16 Cards)

4 Players-Partners (12 Cards)

<u>Meld Points</u>	<u>Description</u>
30	Double Pinochle 2 J Diamonds + 2 Q Spades
24	Round House 4 K + 4 Q (one of each suit)
16	A, 10, K, Q, J, 9 Trump
15	Run A, 10, K, Q, J Trump
10	4 A (one of each suit)
8	4 K (one of each suit)
6	4 Q (one of each suit)
4	4 J (one of each suit)
4	Pinochle J Diamonds and Q Spades
4	K+Q same suit trump
2	K+Q same suit not trump
1	9 Trump

Rules

If you are out of the suit you must use a trump card

If possible you must beat the cards played previously

If all players pass, bid goes to the dealer at 20 (Auction Bidding)

Last Trick	1 Point
A, 10, K	1 Point
Q, J, 9	0 Points

Suggestion

Lead Ace first

Queen if in doubt

Bidding

Minimum:

20 bid-dealer

21 bid-all other players

Lots of meld 10+ (22 bid) not playing for tricks

Four different suit of aces (25 bid)

Just a run (27 bid)



Review of *Duke*

By: Nils Skudra

In browsing through autism-themed films, I watched an 18-minute short film which I felt would be a great topic for a review. The film is entitled *Duke* and revolves around an adolescent boy with autism whose mother makes a concerted effort to obtain special education services for him due to her conviction that he can articulate his feelings and become successfully integrated into society with the necessary support. I felt that this film was a prime selection because it depicts a protagonist who would be considered lower-functioning due to his verbal impairment, and individuals with low-functioning autism are often regarded as lacking the ability to achieve independence and contribute to society, something that is commonly associated with higher-functioning adults. However, *Duke* utterly disproves this notion, and therefore it offers an important contribution to film depictions of autism.

The film opens with the title character Duke Peters (played by Robert Solomon), a 17-year-old boy with autism, standing on a beach with his eyes closed, smiling, opening his eyes and making peculiar signals with his hands. This blissful moment is then interrupted by calls from Duke's mother Brenda (played by Piercie Dalton) telling him to write his name. The scene subsequently cuts to a classroom where Duke and his mother are meeting with the school principal, who is conducting a test to determine whether Duke can successfully communicate by typing his name on an iPod. However, Duke slaps his head repeatedly and makes agitated vocalizations, prompting his mother to attempt to calm him down.

Following this examination, the principal tells Brenda that Duke has failed the test for the third time and that they cannot do anything for him. Brenda insists that Duke can articulate his feelings, handing the principal a note written by Duke in which he states very clearly that he wishes to be treated like everyone else and be seen in a new light. The principal, however, is skeptical that Duke wrote this note completely by himself, insinuating that Brenda either helped Duke or wrote it herself. Furthermore, the principal maintains that they cannot offer special education services, stating, "We can't afford to have a therapist in the room every day." This insensitivity only reinforces Brenda's determination, as she adamantly insists that she knows what Duke needs and that she will do whatever it takes, even if she has to go to court, to obtain support services for him.

The lack of special education services for Duke is a striking point that the film touches upon and which I can relate to personally, although as a person with Asperger's Syndrome I would be considered higher-functioning. When I was first diagnosed at age 10, medical professionals thought that I might have to be institutionalized since they did not fully understand what my diagnosis entailed. My mother therefore fought to secure special education services for me, and after a lengthy legal case this goal was achieved. From my personal experience, I can affirm that the availability of special education services for children with autism is highly important to their social and academic success, as it not only helped me in making my way through public school, but it also exposed me to other students with autism, some of whom were lower-functioning than me and had greater challenges in terms of verbal communication. Watching this film thus furnished new insight into how critical it is for parents to obtain special education services for children with low-functioning autism.

Following the school session, Brenda takes Duke to meet with Susan (played by Tammy Kaitz), a local therapist who has been working with Duke. Unfortunately, she cannot offer much assistance, telling Brenda that "everyone has their own way of getting there," but Brenda is insistent that Duke receives the necessary support since she will not be around forever to take care of him. The session goes awry, however, when Duke responds to the therapist by putting his hands on her head and his fingers in her hair, prompting his mother to scold him and try to stop his behavior, after which they return home. It is clear from these early scenes that Duke struggles with many of the symptoms that are characteristic of low-functioning autism, which tend to require more specialized support, thus explaining the urgency of Brenda's effort to obtain special education services for him.

When Brenda and Duke return home, she puts on some rock music for him, as he clearly finds it enjoyable and

stimulating, but his insensitive brother Brandon (played by Zack Kozlow) abruptly shuts the music off, saying that he needs to do homework. This incurs Brenda's indignation, as the music serves the purpose of calming Duke and provides a medium through which he can communicate with her on some level. The challenge of finding acceptance from his other family members is further demonstrated at the dinner table when Brenda gives Duke the honor of saying grace, which causes some uneasiness on the part of his father and siblings since Duke cannot verbally form words, but he performs the task with an affirmative moan. Following the dinner scene, a montage of footage captures the various ways in which Duke's family seeks to support his learning, including being taught through the use of word cards and a spelling boards and entering words on the iPod.

The challenges that children with autism face in gaining acceptance from their family members is a very prevalent trend, captured in numerous films and television shows. While individuals with high-functioning autism frequently struggle with this issue, it is likely even more pronounced in families of lower-functioning children due to the problems of verbal communication and the physical behaviors which parents may construe as aggressive and self-harmful. The effect that this can have on sibling relationships is equally disturbing since some neurotypical children may display insensitive or even bullying behavior toward their lower-functioning siblings. This is manifested during a subsequent scene in which Brandon tries to snatch Duke's iPod, threatening to take his cartoons away unless Duke writes his name. When Duke starts having a panicked reaction, Brenda rushes in and tells him to breathe, after which she confronts Brandon, charging that he does not respect his brother.

The toll that Duke's issues take on his family is subsequently demonstrated by his father Joseph (played by Jeff Marchelletta) who tells Brenda that he is done coping with these problems. This prompts an argument between them, with Joseph accusing Brenda of talking to Duke "like a normal teenager" in spite of the fact that, from Joseph's viewpoint, he clearly is not a normal adolescent. Furthermore, he maintains that Brenda has lost track of everyone in the house through her focus on trying to help Duke. However, the rupture of their marriage is averted when Brenda discovers that Duke has typed "I want to go to" on the iPod, and he vocalizes affirmatively when asked if he wrote this. With his mother's encouragement, he completes the sentence by typing "to the beach," prompting everyone to joyfully congratulate him on having demonstrated his ability to articulate what he wants.

The film concludes with the family having a wonderful vacation at the beach while Duke stands with his feet in the water, watching a surfer out on the ocean. With the scene of his imagination thus fulfilled, it is clear that the beach truly gives Duke the space to feel free and whole. He then types the words "I want to surf" on his iPod, which pleases his mother. The credits then feature an epilogue with footage of the real Duke, who now takes surfing lessons in Malibu, California, and a biographical description stating that he began typing after 17 years of being unable to communicate with his family, and the written messages in the film are original. Finally, the epilogue is followed by the words of John McLaughlin, the Director of Research and Analytics at ChanceLight Behavioral Health, Therapy, and Education:

"Research shows that if we give the best available special education to children with severe disabilities, those children are more likely to grow up productive, independent, and able to contribute to society."

Duke is a superbly made short film characterized by sensitive performances and a brilliant portrayal of the challenges that teens with low-functioning autism face. While most autism-themed films and television shows focus on high-functioning protagonists who are verbally articulate, this film makes a significant deviation from that trend through its focus on a lower-functioning protagonist who communicates through written text after a profound struggle that affects both his family and academic life. Furthermore, the film makes a compelling case for the importance of determined family support, which Piercey Dalton personifies in her portrayal of Brenda, so that adolescents with low-functioning autism can secure the services they need and successfully integrate into society as fully-fledged adults. By watching Duke's example, families will hopefully be inspired to go to greater lengths to provide this support for their children so that they may achieve this success.~~

People Are Crazy

By: Zach Grabowski

There is a country song I like that is sung by Billy Currington called "People Are Crazy." It is a good song and I like the rhythm and beat of the song. It is about when Billy Currington went to a bar in Ohio and he met this old man and they hung out all night. They were drinking beers, talking politics, blond red-haired chicks, old dogs, new chicks, habits they didn't kick, and were swapping "I don't cares."

They also talked about God's grace and all the hell he raised. The old man said, "God is great, beer is good, and people are crazy."

The old man also explained that he fought two wars and he has been married and divorced. They also talked about every girl they knew and what all they put them through. They were at the bar until last call at 2 A.M. They said goodbye and never talked again.

Then one sunny day after the old man died Billy saw his face on the front page of the obituary. He was a millionaire. The disadvantage of the song was that he left his fortune to some guy he barely knew instead of his kids. His kids were really mad!

Then Billy went to his grave to give thanks and pray. He left a 6-pack of beer on his grave.~~

Pittsburgh's Perfect Parties Fall Camp

By: Amelia Krzton

The coronavirus pandemic is changing society in many ways such as jobs like I have stated in another issue, as well as going back to school. Many schools have students rotating between online and in-person classes. As a result of this, Pittsburgh's Perfect Parties has decided to extend the summer day camp well into the fall. That way, when kids are not doing schoolwork, they can find some fun activities to do. The activities will be doing something different each day, whether they be simple day camp activities, activities based on monthly slumber parties for this year, Childhood Chat (the new name of the segment in which we look back at clients' best memories from past slumber parties), and another new thing that we have added was Sunday Fun-Days and staff game days. By the way, upcoming slumber parties for the fall months include Heather Chessin's Sugar Rush Sleepover on September 26, Lauren Bennett's Fear Factor Fun Sleepover on Halloween, Katie Jennis's Glow-in-the-Dark Sleepover on November 28, and Madison Dayley's All About Me Sleepover on December 26. What is even more interesting is that our remaining clients for this year's houses are nearby Goodwill at Cheswick, where I used to work, and the latter two houses are in neighboring Springdale Borough, home to Glen's Frozen Custard. To get there from the office, all you could do is take the Pennsylvania Turnpike to the Allegheny Valley exit. After all, they are just an exit behind the Pittsburgh exit near where the office is located. The best part is that we have already did some games, activities, and treats from all four of these slumber parties. Last Saturday, at Hannah's Hollywood Glitz and Glam Sleepover, it was amazing how I already knew about Who's Got Talent? and Back to the Future.~

HO/OO American/British Layout Build, Part Two

By: Max Chaney

Good Day everyone!

Well today has been a lovely day, I have just gotten the layout back in operation, the roads are painted, sanded down with multiple patches, here is how I did it....I Hope you indeed enjoy it...

Firstly: (Disclaimer) I am not responsible for any damage done to yourself, I am not responsible for any damage done to your models or layout. Adult supervision may be required to build this; hot, sharp and dangerous tools may be used (depending on how you build it). Please take your time to build this, as patience is key!

Step 5) We glued the track down with the spackle and a little bit of wood glue, I would highly recommend rail jointers here to be used... we then soldered the railway track down and we eventually used some track pins to add further strength to our project.

Step 6) We wired the layout using a battery controller by TN Nomura and a Whistling Train Station. I had just got it back from a friend and I had wanted to utilize ; we trimmed the wire (as you see to the right) side and drilled some holes in the layout so we could make the layout look a little more natural.

Step 7) We ballasted the track down using a little bit of PVA (Elmer's can be used here) and made a 50-50 mixture with water. We added a little bit of dish soap (just a few drops will work), so don't overdo it! We glued the ballast down (which was the Grey Modeling Ballast by Woodland Scenics), we let it dry overnight, and we made some homemade level crossings, which is some styrene some with wood grain cut into it making it look like real wood.

Step 8) We added some fences to the sides of the track on the inside of the set up... we drilled some small holes just the right size and we glued them in.

Step 9) We placed some trees on the layout and a little snow to it as well to give the finishing touches. I eventually added the Steam traction Engine, and Busses which now call this place home.

We eventually started to run trains and I realized I had created something very beautiful and will be enjoyed by my family every December for a very long time.

I hope you enjoy the Next Resto mod where we take a look at converting this Marx F2 into an F7 and repainting it into a locomotive from Mafia 2 the Video game which takes place in the 1940s 1950s and 1960s.

I hope you guys have a wonderful holiday season coming up!~

THE LAST DANCE

Story by Robert Hester



Scottie Pippen, Dennis Rodman, Ron Harper, Steve Kerr, Bill Wennington, Luc Longley, Toni Kukoc, John Salley, Horace Grant, B.J. Armstrong, John Paxson, Head Coach Phil Jackson, General Manager Jerry Krause, and Owner Jerry Reinsdorf. Their names are amongst the most legendary names that made up one of the most successful dynasties in all of professional sports, the Chicago Bulls NBA Basketball Championship teams of the 1990's. Between the weekends of April 19-20 and May 17, 2020, their legacies were profiled in a 10-part miniseries that aired on ESPN by the name of "The Last Dance," as part of ESPN's award-winning "30 For 30" sports documentary

series. This miniseries, which was directed by Jason Hehir, and co-produced by ESPN Films and Netflix, featured exclusive footage from a film crew that gave viewers an all-access pass during the Bulls' 1997-1998 season—the team's sixth NBA title that decade—as well as an opportunity to see interviews of many of the members who played for the Bulls during their championship runs throughout the '90s, and other NBA personalities who played against the Bulls during their championship seasons: 1990-1991, 1991-1992, 1992-1993, 1995-1996 (a season in which they won a whopping 72 games that season, the most wins in NBA history at that time), 1996-1997, and 1997-1998. The miniseries also featured cameo appearances and interviews by many familiar, non-NBA personalities; amongst them was Chicago native and the 44th President of the United States, Barack Obama, former ESPN SportsCenter anchor Andrea Kramer, sports reporter David Aldridge, musician Justin Timberlake, and actress and model, Carmen Electra. This miniseries also featured interviews with 5-time NBA Champion of the Los Angeles Lakers, Kobe Bryant, and former NBA Commissioner, David Stern. Sadly, these interviews would end up being their last sit-down, on-camera interviews before they both passed away before the miniseries first premiered in early 2020.



The main synopsis of this miniseries revolved around the career of the greatest Chicago Bull of them all, Michael Jordan. Particularly, the reason for this miniseries being named "The Last Dance" was it focused on the fact that the 1997-1998 season for the Bulls would eventually become Jordan's last season with the Bulls. And along with other Bulls who played with him, and coached him, this miniseries also featured some rare, never-before-seen pictures and video footage of Jordan, the man known by his nickname "His Airness", during his days growing up and playing basketball and other sports in his hometown of Wilmington, North Carolina, playing college basketball—and winning a National Championship—as a Tar Heel at the University of North Carolina, his early days before and after he signed a contract with Nike to endorse a shoe that bore his last name "Air Jordan"—the shoe that's regarded as the highest-selling basketball shoe in history—and as a member of the Bulls before they (and he) became the six-time NBA World Champions.



The 10-part miniseries received such positive reviews when it aired on ESPN, it aired all 10 parts on network television on Saturday nights from late May and late June of 2020 on ABC. Furthermore, this successful miniseries was made available to subscribers of Netflix in July of 2020.~~

Wheelie's Break-in

By: Rachel Williamson

Autobot Wheelie snuck into the Area 51 test lab basement where frenzy was kept in a cage. Wheelie began to think, "how am I going to sneak into the lab without being caught?" He thought hard but nothing came to his mind. Then he heard footsteps in the hallway. He gasped and hid between and under the water fountain area quietly. The guard that passed him had keys with him, jingling on his belt.

"Hummmm," thought Wheelie. The door closed after the guard went through. Wheelie started down stairs to the labs, he saw a lot of cages, and he saw Frenzy locked up. "Oh, I wish I knew what to do without being seen?" said Wheelie to himself. All of a sudden, he looked down, his hand was disappearing.

"Ahh!!" he freaked, then he had an idea! "I'll just be a second and I'll have Frenzy out just like that!!" So Wheelie snuck up and started to hassle with the lock, Frenzy woke up and to see who was there.

"Wh- who's th- there?" asked Frenzy.

"Shhh, it's me Wheelie, now shush, don't make any noise. I'm busting you out of here."

"Not a good idea. The alarm might trigger if you don't be careful with thatlittle.... thing..... right...." Beeeep!!! Beeeep!!! Beeeep!!! Wheelie opened the door. "Just get!! I'm right behind you, I'll distract them, ok?"

"Wheelie?" asked Frenzy, "just make sure you're out too, ok?"

"Ok Frenzy, now go!!"

Both ran, wheelie knocked stuff in front of the guards and ran to the other room, where he found himself a lot of weird stuff.

"Oh my" he said, "glow worms my butt. I gotta tell this to Optimas Prime and Megatron right away!! This is not good. I just wish Decepticon Reflector was with me at the moment! He could have taken the picture and had proof of this, really."

Then when Wheelie was investigating the room, a glow worm fell onto the floor from one of the operating tables. Wheelie stood still in fear. The worm didn't see him, but felt his presence but couldn't locate Wheelie, so the worm just went onto the outside world and onto attacking the world, wherever it wants.

"Ahhh!! Now I see how it works!!! They can't see me while I'm invisible, yeah, I wonder if I could slash them all? Maybe not, I have an idea...what's their top weakness?"

So Wheelie went and got onto a computer at the end of the room, and looked up their gene and stuff.

"Jua, jua, jua, hmm, hmm, hmm,mmm, hea... ok, they really like air pollution and they like water waste, hummm, ok...their weakness is...huh?...I cannot believe it...that's not on earth, hold it...that cube Jasper has, can it be? The weakness is in that cube? Or its powers?" Wheelie wondered, "is that why every time the power Jasper uses from the cube, the glow worms weakening a lot?"

While Wheelie was typing, somebody was coming up behind him. Wheelie looked behind him and freaked, "Ahhh!!!"

It was Frenzy. "Where were you?"

"Looking up facts on glow worms," Frenzy reminded Wheelie. "You're visible...."

"Huh? what? Let's just go and we'll tell Prime and Megatron what you found out about the worms."

"Kay," agreed Wheelie!!~~

My Tulpa II – Scholar

By: Jordan Watson

My name is Conley Job. I am now 18 years old. The days have been plentiful since my escape from Erogrege. Especially throughout my studies at the Daas Unified High School. It's a charter school that specializes for those that want to jump-start their careers right out of graduation. Mine is catered in automotive engineering. To grasp the understanding of how we can accelerate ourselves far beyond being bound by the rules of the road. I'm two months away from my graduation ceremony. The grades are already a surefire guarantee, and my GPA looks promising from the past few years of attendance. As I walk my way through the outdoors on the campus grounds, I notice Merry floating on down to me.

"I'm digging your stride, bestie. You taking the practice exams to get in well with Milutin Industries?"

"I'll tell you what Merry, if my results on the tests for advanced engineering doesn't get them soaring, then my thesis on hadron current energy will get them speeding like light."

Merry continues to hover over me, consistently changing his positions while hearing my banter on several resourceful means.

"You know, there *are* some other uses you could put your noggin to, and I'm not just talking your soon-to-be coin vault."

"Wait, what else do you mean by that, Merry?"

He motions his head towards my right, as I see the passerby of a large group of girls, specifically within the middle area, I see her. Enna Mason. She's part of a family of doctors that span all the way back to the 1800's. They're on a breakthrough of the century to end heart disease completely. Coincidentally, she's in the top of her class for becoming a cardiologist to help preserve her family's legacy, especially considering the fact she wants to cure her father's heart disease. She looks over to me, and smiles warmly while giving a gentle wave. Merry then playfully jabs at my arm.

"Sooo, when are we gonna start asking her to prom, Mr. Big Brains?" As I begin to fluster aloud.

"Dude, c'mon! We know that's preposterous!"

Her friends look at my reaction out of sheer mockery, calling me all sorts of things, like a babbling bitch boy, manchild, and my least favorite, a schizo-psycho. She halfheartedly tells them to stop their treatment of me, as they brush off her request. Merry just gives a crude gesture their way, while putting his arm around my shoulder.

"How about we head over to our favorite spot to talk about getting Enna to melt in your arms?"

"You mean Sefton Elementary? Of all the places, you want to go there?"

"Dude, it's been ten years since we last went. You know you love Playto-piaaaa!"

I feel the hesitation to answer to him honestly, but I can't possibly say no to his ever hilarious, jovial expressions.

"Aw what the hell, I can't say no to you, bestie."

"That's the Conley I like to hear! C'mon, we got a helluva time ahead of us!"

Upon arriving at Sefton Elementary, we revisit our old recess spot, Playtopia. It's a big playground that comes with a procession of jungle jims, monkey bars, and even a holed house that doubles for a rock climbing mountain. Merry and I enjoy it all together throughout the afternoon, right up until the sun sets over us. We stand atop of our holed mountain, staring deeply at the dusk of the whole landscape. As we keep our gaze locked at the serene scenery before us, Merry speaks up.

"Hard to believe we've known one another for almost 10 years now, right?"

"Of course. To think, we've been through so much since escaping that place. You helped me ride a bike, stand up against a couple bullies here, even coached me through every subject matter academia can dish out at me. Any reason you ask?"

".....Can you keep a promise to me?"

"...Sure. What's up?"

"Once you graduate, and you get everything you deserve..."

Merry averts his sight from the dusk, and looks into my eyes.

"...Can you promise not to forget about me?"

Bemused, I look at him with genuine concern.

"Hey now, what makes you think I ever would? Merry, you're positively the best friend I could ever have hoped to wish for! I'd practically feel ill if you were never around. In fact, I'd come so far as to say you're a sworn brother."

Merry's expression went from the course of troubled, to prominent glee in span of 10 seconds, hugging me tight.

"That's a relief to know, bestie. Then I'll happily continue to do the same for you, even upon the eventual end of time."

His embrace felt as warm as the sun setting before our eyes. Some tender moments, however, end up

much more besmirched than others. The sensation of a splitting headache rattles the back of my skull, as I top-ple down to the ground. My vision crosses in and outward, as I see a group of miscreants over top of me. One has a rusted pipe, while the others have their steel toed boots and brass knuckles. Immediately, I see the varsity jacket with a big D sprawled across the left of his chest. Flint Vincent. He's always wanted to win Enna's heart over with his dad's money. Before passing out, I faintly hear him say this.

“Keep your schizo-psycho ass away from my woman, bitch boy. Unless you want me to pry you open, and spill your guts in front of her. Put 'em to rest, boys. Make sure you pretty him up nice and good for me.”

All I can hear before blacking out entirely, is the splatter of blood, and crunching of what sounds like my ribs being busted in shattered pieces.

As I awaken from what felt like a light speed coma, the ambulance comes to wheel me into the truck, and right beside me to my left, to my utter surprise, is Enna, as she looks down upon me with sincere sadness, she holds my hand in hers, welling up in tears, and smiling in ease.

“I was so scared that they nearly killed you, Conley. Thank God someone loves you up there.”

“You're damn right, he does.”

Perplexed by his sudden bulked appearance, Merry puts his hand on my right shoulder.

“You'll recover through this, bestie. After all, she still has something to ask you...”

With what little I can see in my eyes from the swollen injuries, Enna utters words holier than the effigies of years past.

“Will you go to prom with me?”

Contesting my speech, I enunciated, “Yes.”

Weeks fly by the calendar, as I attend DU High's 20th Annual Prom. Enna is dressed beautifully in a cascade of regency purple and white sleeves. Her hair is braided in a roped crown. With my wounds still healing, She embraces me in her arms as our favorite slow dance song comes on. We serenade to each other in unison with the song, and let the lights of the auditorium change moods through their slow deluge of cool colors. I look out in the distance near the snack table beside the DJ booth, Merry takes a big swig of his punch, and gives me a wink, and a hand gesture akin to a bullseye hitting its mark. We beam into one another's eyes, and let our minds drift into each others lips.

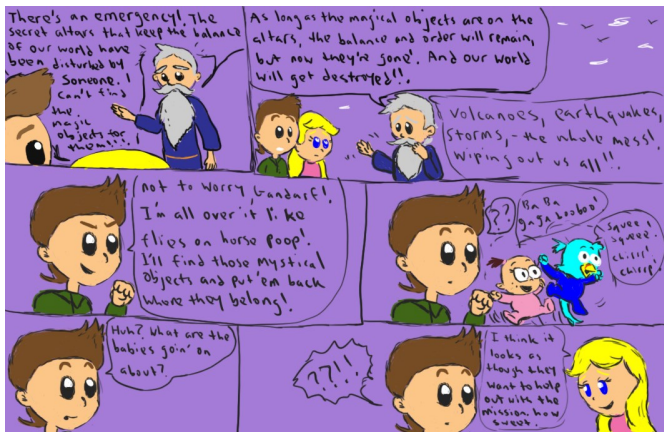
Amidst the congregation to the floor, including the people around their tables outside of the long, square dance floor, are some of Flint's cronies. They give me a small death glare before heading off, scoffing at me in the process. Some other girls that use to be part of Enna's clique were gossiping within each other's circle, giving Enna equally disheveled looks. Anyone would normally ignore these signs of displeasure, given their distaste for me being so attached to my best friend, or even their jealousy of Enna's infatuation with me. But yet...something about this didn't seem natural...Why the looks as if someone had committed grievous acts? I circle her away from the crowd, as we keep our attention to one another. We let the rest of the night fall in love with our courtship.

They say that one's high school days can make or break the rest of your life. After the graduation ceremony, we took our diplomas, and threw our caps up high into the air, taking pride in letting loose for the rest of our lives. Merry flew down in his healthy, muscular form to talk with me.

“So bestie, we graduated top of our class, await the golden ticket to fall to our laps for that dream to reality job, *and* have Enna wrapped around your finger! What's gonna be next for us?”

“Prosperity, fine health, and by all as our witnesses, a life worth remembering, Merry! By the time we retire, we'll be living up to your namesake!”

The best, is truly yet to come, my dear Merry.~~



Babies' First Adventure
By: Melissa Mozurak



How to Protect Yourself on the Internet

By: Daniel H. Ashkin

In this article, I am going to explain some very important measures that you can take online to prevent from becoming misled by untruthful advertisements. Before venturing online with the internet, it is absolutely imperative that you understand the safety rules. I am going to use the Goodwill Free Learning for most of this report.

The first step in making your computer secure is to make a very strong password. A password should not include information about you. Hackers are an expects in stealing your password. A password should include up-percase letters, symbols, and numbers. Make sure you keep your passwords in a safe place at home or in the office. Each account should contain different passwords to protect you. After using the computer, it is very critical to log out of it. Unless the person logs out of the computer, a friend or a stranger could likely steal secret information.

Before going on the internet, you need to install malware software. Bitedefender, Norton 360, and WEBROOT are excellent malware software. It is very important to run updates on your computer frequently to avoid malicious software. I highly recommend that you do not look at pretty girls on the internet. This often leads to malware and spyware on your computer. Never touch suspicious links with your mouse. This often leads to spyware on your computer.

Phishing scans are another common spasm box or in the URL Address. When you see spasm files in your inbox, it is a good idea to retype the address again. Two, you should never type out social security number and credit card number.

Shopping online is another method that people get tricked by internet by con-artists. Before you shop online, you should examine the following items carefully: One, does the website contain a green lock symbol of security? When I buy things online, a green URL address usually is safe. Two, it is very essential to perform re-search on the company reputation. Three, Can you see the address and the phone number of the company clearly?

Part 2: Ways I Have gotten Scammed through the Internet

Unfortunately, I have been victim of these terrible frauds on my computers. An imposter, who claimed he was from Microsoft Company, said that my computer had virus. A phishing scan from Best Buy Computer Geek Squad. Three, I accidentally called the wrong number for Dollar Bank.

A phony repairman technician called me from Microsoft and said, "Your computer will crash unless you buy a certain product."

Before he wanted his money, he was checking for sensitive documents such as bank accounts, social security, and records on my desktop. Unfortunately, I did not give him the money order. This is known as a phishing scan. When you see a possible phishing scan, make sure it contains a security lock symbol. In addition, retype the URL address again.

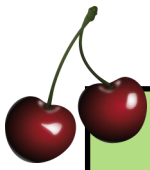
I accidentally called a fake Best Buy technician who said, "If you purchase this product for \$600.00, the special software will secure computer from hackers from gaining access to sensitive information."

Finally, I had mistakenly called a dishonest Dollar Bank representative with a foreign accent. When he was speaking to me on the telephone, the imposter told me that several individuals had hacked \$1500.00 out of my bank account. After the imposter took my money, I felt ashamed of myself. It caused me to feel depressed and anxious about myself. Working through the problem with my therapist had caused me to feel less resentful toward myself.

In order to recover my money back, he told me to buy three gift certificates from Lowes Hardware Store in an hour. Unless I had purchased three gift certificates of \$500.00 dollar each, my bank account would likely be gone in an hour. After I have gotten home from the store, I gave him the gift card numbers to him. He said, "Your money will be replaced by tonight."

After a week has gone by in the month of April 2020, I had called the Dollar Bank Account representative on the phone. When he or she answered the telephone, the representative told me that someone has hack \$1500.00 out of my banking account as a fraud. When I had spoken to the bank representative at Dollar Bank, she has told me never to give out my credit card information to any strangers. After I called the fraud phone number, his number was disconnected.

In summary, this fraud has taught me several important lessons on security. I strongly recommend that the reader always follows these guidelines in computer safety. One, never let a stranger share access to your computer information as in Microsoft scan. Two, never give your credit card number out to personal strangers on the telephone. He or she may likely draw out all your money out of your bank account. Three, don't give information to strangers unless you know their address.~~



Favorite Slumber Party Meals and Snacks

Foodie Call

By: Amelia Krzton

Today, in the evening section of the Childhood Chat, we chatted with some of our clients about their favorite things that they ate at a sleepover. The conversation was led by University of Pittsburgh junior Taylor Paulson, who enjoyed popcorn with various mix-ins when she was in the 4th grade. Then, 9th grader Hannah Mifflin shared the YouTube videos she viewed of an ice cream sundae bar at the age of 5 years old. 11th grader Sarah Ching shared her 3rd grade selfie and told us how she learned to like trail mix at that age. 7th grader Grace Luster showed off a fruit salad that she put in a non-disposable container in a wheelie bag in kindergarten. 12th grader Jennifer Preager stated how she loved eating homemade macaroni and cheese with fruit punch at her cousin's house in Swissvale five years ago. Carnegie Mellon University freshman Kayla Jennis shared s'mores that she made during her friend's camping-themed slumber party, in which she could easily stay comfy four years ago. University of Pittsburgh graduate Brooke Leesaw shared decorate-your-own cupcakes and coloring during an art-themed slumber party three years ago. Carnegie Mellon University sophomore Allison Brawner shared Chinese food take-out cartons next to her sleeping bag line in O'Hara Township two years ago. Finally, 12th grader Julia Robison shared quesadillas that she attempted to cook in the North Hills without pulling pranks on anybody last year. I bet that this article is making all of you hungry for dinner time or snack time, as I am going to go in the kitchen and make a bag of popcorn in the microwave. I could even send an accompanying picture to go with the article. Ironically, this is being written just after coming home from Vocelli's Pizza in Oakmont.~~



GF CHOCOLATE CHIP RICE KRISPY TREATS

By: Sara Brooks

Ingredients:

- 4 2/3 cups Rice Krispies Cereal
- 4 tablespoons butter
- 10 ounces marshmallows
- 3/4 cup mini chocolate chips

Stovetop Method:

- Grease a large mixing bowl with butter, or spray it with cooking spray, then pour in the 4 2/3 cups Rice Krispies Cereal.
- Begin to melt 4 tablespoons of Butter in a medium-large saucepan set over low heat.
- Add 10 ounces of marshmallows to the pan.
- You can use either mini or traditional marshmallows. I prefer the mini marshmallows, as they melt really quickly.
- Stir the marshmallows occasionally until about 3/4's of them are melted.
- Then remove the pan from the heat, and continue to stir, smashing the marshmallows, until they have all melted. This process keeps your marshmallows from getting too hot. Overheated marshmallows create hard cereal treats.
- Pour the melted marshmallows over the cereal and toss to coat.
- Let the mixture cool for 5-8 minutes until it feels cool to the touch.
- Reserve about 3 tablespoons of the mini chocolate chips for on top then toss the rest into the cereal.
- Stir until combined then spread the mixture into a well-buttered 8-inch pan.
- If you prefer, you can grease your pan using cooking spray.
- Sprinkle the reserved mini chocolate chips over top and press them into the cereal treats using the back of a rubber spatula or spoon.
- Allow the treats to cool at room temperature for at least 30 minutes.
- Remove the treats from the pan and cut into squares or rectangles.~~

Mom's Pumpkin Roll Recipe



Foodie Call

By: Zach Grabowski

For this issue's foodie call we have chosen fall foods. I wanted to share with you my mom's pumpkin roll recipe. She makes it every Thanksgiving and it is so good! I look forward to eating it every Thanksgiving!

Ingredients:

- Libby's Canned Pumpkin
- Eggs
- Sugar
- Baking Soda
- Flour
- Cinnamon
- Cream Cheese
- Powdered Sugar
- Vanilla
- Butter

Rolls:

- 3 eggs
- 1 cup sugar
- 2/3 cup pumpkin
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- 3/4 cup flour
- 1/2 teaspoon cinnamon

Recipe: Makes 5 rolls per 29 oz can

Mix the above ingredients together with an electric mixer.

Line cookie sheet with wax paper

Spray the wax paper with Pam

Spread evenly on cookie sheet

Bake for 15 minutes at 350

While the rolls are baking spread out a tee towel and sprinkle with powdered sugar

After 15 minutes take the roll out of the oven and flip cookie sheet upside on awaiting tee towel and slowly peel back the wax paper.

Roll the towel and place in the fridge to cool.

Filling

- 8 ounces cream cheese
- 1 cup powdered sugar
- 1 teaspoon of vanilla
- 2 teaspoons butter

Mix the filling ingredients together until well blended and smooth.

Remove cooled roll from refrigerator and unroll

Spread filling evenly on roll and roll back up without the towel

Sprinkle with powdered sugar and place back in the fridge.

Types of Apple Recipes By Daniel H. Ashkin Types of Apple Recipes From allrecipes



Apple Crump Pie Desserts

Making apple pie in the fall is fun activity. Today, Apple Crump Pie is a simple pie to produce at home. The summary of the directions comes from all recipes website. First, the chef must preheat oven to 400 hundred degrees in his or her oven. Before he or she spreads out five apples onto the pie shell, you must peel each of the apples into a thin slice. Next, you pour $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of and $\frac{1}{3}$ teaspoons on each of the apple slices in the pie crust. In addition, the baker needs to mix $\frac{1}{3}$ cup of sugar into the flour and the butter until the pie mixture becomes crumbly. After the flour mixture become crumbly, spoon it over the apple slices onto the pan crust. Place the pan crust into the oven for 40 minutes. In the next paragraph, I will list the ingredients for this recipe.

Canned Apple Pie Filling Desserts

1 (9 inch) deep dish pie crust
5 cups apples - peeled, cored and thinly sliced
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup white sugar
 $\frac{3}{4}$ teaspoon ground cinnamon
 $\frac{1}{3}$ cup white sugar
 $\frac{3}{4}$ cup all-purpose flour
6 tablespoons of butter

Canned Apple Pie Filling



Canned Apple Pie Filling



Apple Pie Filling



Candy Apple Pie



My Theory on "Five Nights at Freddy's: Into the Pit"

By :Michelle Middlemiss

PREFACE:

Even though the question to the mind is somewhat in the games-I will only be using the books for my ideas with this series. They are essentially the same stories. But the books give the characters their names and personalities, basically giving them life. Scott Cawthon, author/game creator, said the books are written to fill in the gaps for the game. I intend to make (suggest) theories on how he does that.

1.) What if Oswald was the son of Springtrap?

The fact that Oswald went back to 1985, he saw Springtrap kill kids. Springtrap was able to switch bodies with his father when Oswald came back to the time period, attempting to escape. Oswald was the only one to tell that he was different. I'm thinking a younger "father" from 1985, switching bodies with his older self from the 2000's.

I feel that's why Oswald could see the bunny but the others saw his father. Oswald is also the only one who survives from one of Springtrap's trap creations.

2.) What if the town tried to buy what happened at Five Nights at Freddy's?

The unnamed town mirrors Jeff's Pizza-abandoned, forgotten, really run down. None of the modern day kids know what "Jeff's Pizza" used to be or why it closed. Oswald only knows that his dad used to hang out there, but he never told Oswald the name was "Freddy Fazbears."

The Scourge of Stock Buybacks

By: Megan Cunningham

Before the Coronavirus hit the United States and the world, you'd probably think that the economy was humming along. However, we must understand that even then, there were plenty of warning signs that all was not well. For one, despite record-breaking economic gains, economic inequality exacerbated as job growth remained anemic and wages remained flat. While wage theft pervaded in practically every sector with low income workers bearing the brunt. Of course, this was due to good old-fashioned corporate greed of the 1% but that's another story. Another was companies falling to private equity vultures causing massive job loss and corporate bankruptcies. But I already covered earlier.

Even when the US economy seemed thriving, there was growing concern soaring corporate debt would make it more susceptible to an out-of-control contraction principally because US corporations have spent trillions of dollars on open-market repurchases, aka "stock buybacks." Thanks to *The Tax Cuts and Jobs Act* of 2017 bolstering corporate profits, S&P 500 companies spent a combined \$806 billion in buybacks in 2018 alone and \$370 billion in 2019's first half. When companies do these buybacks, they deprive themselves of potential reserves that could help them cope when sales and profits decline during an economic downturn, which could really come in handy during a major pandemic if you're not a supermarket, pharmacy, or Amazon. Even worse according to JPMorgan Chase, the buyback proportion their corporate bonds fund reached as high as 30% in both 2016 and 2017. While the IMF's October *Global Financial Stability Report* highlighted "debt-funded payouts" as form of financial risk-taking US companies take that "can considerably weaken a firm's credit quality."

But what are stock buybacks? Well, also known as a "share repurchase" it's when a company buys back its shares from the marketplace. Think of it as a company investing in itself or using its own cash to buy its shares. Because a company can't be its own shareholder it absorbs its bought back shares and reduces the amount of outstanding shares on the market. When this happens, each investor's relative owner stake increases on the company's earnings. Now buybacks have a potential to benefit the economy if the stock's truly undervalued and represents the best possible investment for the company. But it must meet 3 conditions:

1. The stock's trading at price to economic book value below 1, meaning that the company buys back shares for cents on the dollar.
2. The company's balance sheet and free cash flow should be strong enough to support a buyback without jeopardizing future liquidity or investment opportunities.
3. The company should have more cash than it does profitable investment opportunities.

When Oracle bought back \$8.1 billion of its stock to reduce its shares by 120 million in 2016, it had met all three conditions. Its PEBV value was 0.9 so it bought back its shares at a 10% discount rate to their zero-growth value. It had \$50 billion in excess cash on its balance sheet and \$9 billion in annual free cash flow so it had plenty of cash available. Furthermore, while you may have heard of this company in the news, it's not necessarily a household name you'd bring up in everyday conversation. Unless you work for them. So its investment opportunities were limited. Nonetheless, when it bought back its stocks, Oracle could cheaply retire its shares without comprising its ability to invest in future growth.

Unfortunately, most companies buying back their own stock aren't in Oracle's situation and weren't before the pandemic hit. If there is one thing to know about financial products in economics, you must explain it in two ways. First, what it is and how it's supposed to work. Second, how it actually works when not used in an ideal situation. Since the second may happen more often than the first. This is certainly true with stock buybacks, which aren't a good idea when it has overvalued shares, to boost earnings per share, to benefit executives, if it has to buy back with borrowed money, to fend off an acquirer, or if it can't put the money anywhere else. Even more troubling, most companies carry buybacks for reasons that have nothing to do with maximizing their value. Pressure to hit short-term earnings targets and executive compensation plans often incentivize the wrong metrics. This often pushes companies to buy back stock at its most expensive and they'd be better off

using the money for other things. Called “The Overvaluation Trap” by *The Harvard Business Review*, data shows that companies buy back their stocks during boom times and sell them during market crashes. Hardly a sound financial strategy. According to FactSet data by Andrew Birstingal, the performance of companies engaging in buybacks has been disappointing. “In the past year, companies repurchasing shares saw an excess weighted cumulative return of -1.9% relative to the benchmark, while companies not repurchasing shares saw a return of 9.8% relative to the benchmark,” he said in 2016.

Another troubling fact is that many companies have executive compensation plans incentivizing excessive share buybacks, either directly or indirectly. Since executive pay is often tied to stock compensation, top Wall Street execs have been pressured to do buybacks in order to increase their coffers. Even if it makes no strategic financial sense for their companies. But in regards to sheer executive greed, it makes perfect sense. When share prices rise, CEOs reap a bonanza so their pay value increases in what amounts to a retroactive and off-the-books raise on top of their already humongous compensation packages. As a result, the very people we rely to invest in their companies’ productive capabilities that will increase in our shared prosperity squander most of their companies’ profits for themselves. As the Academic-Industry Network’s William Lazonick told *The American Prospect*, “All of those trillions of dollars flowing out of companies are being used to build the war chests of hedge-fund activists for further buybacks or [giving them more] money to play around with on derivatives. When you connect the dots, it’s part of bigger process. This is really a long-run problem that helps to explain concentration of income at top because it’s getting made off the stock market.”

So what’s the concern about stock buybacks hurting the economy? Because the cost of buybacks doesn’t just come from overpriced stock losses but also from missed opportunities to invest in growth and innovation. In addition to plant and equipment, a company needs to invest in its employees’ knowledge and skills and needs to reward their contributions to its productivity. Investing in a company’s knowledge base fuel innovations in products and processes so it can gain and maintain an advantage over its industry’s competitors. Leveraging retained earnings with debt to finance investment in productive capabilities that might eventually result in product revenues and corporate profits can make sense.

On the other hand, taking on debt to finance buybacks is bad management since it doesn’t make any money-generating investment that can pay off the debt and remain competitive in global markets. Nor do stock buybacks make any contributions to the firm’s productive capabilities. And it’s very clear many of these companies buy back their stock on borrowed money as those in the S&P 500 spent \$150 billion in debt financing to do so. In fact, these distributions to shareholders, on top of dividends, disrupt the growth dynamic linking productivity and pay in the labor force. As Lazonick told *The American Prospect*, “The issue is what are they not doing when they do stock buybacks. What they’re not doing is keeping people employed longer, paying them more, and giving them more benefits. There’s a direct connection between the decline of those norms and the rise of buybacks and the legitimized ideology of ‘Shareholder First.’”

Furthermore, buybacks have caused a massive drain on corporate treasuries. In January 2019, 465 of the S&P 500 companies publicly listed between 2009 and 2018, spent \$4.3 trillion in buybacks over the decade and another \$3.3 trillion on dividends. That’s equivalent to 52% and 39% of net income respectively. In 2018 alone, buybacks reached an astounding 68% of net income, with another 41% absorbed in dividends. Furthermore, since the 2017 Tax Cuts and Jobs Act increased the federal deficit by \$114 billion with \$92 in corporate tax cuts on top of that \$150 billion in buyback debt financing, taxpayers shouldered 38% of the government and business debt allowing corporations do buybacks. While the corporate obsession with stock-price performance and large executive compensation packages makes households more vulnerable to boom-and-bust cycles while debt-financed buybacks reinforce financial fragility. If Americans want an economy where corporate profits result in its shared prosperity, these buyback and executive compensation binges must end.

Animal Crossing: New Horizons

The Ultimate Escape

By: Alicia Marie Farina

There's no denying it. This year in 2020 has been one of the worst years we've encountered thus far in the history of our world. The Coronavirus had broken out across the globe, protests and riots have taken affect in towns and cities, police brutality has decided to show its' ugly face, murder hornets have swarmed in this past Summer without warning, and

there's a squirrel on the loose somewhere in Colorado that has the bubonic plague. (Not to mention that the Presidential Election of 2020 is coming up this November as we speak.) All of this started sometime in February. With everybody inhabiting indoors, what were we to do? Some people take refuge in binge-watching television shows or movies, browse the internet, read, write, craft, or cook. But, doing the same thing every day can cause complete anxiety, depression, and irritability. To prevent that, people have turned to Animal Crossing.

Animal Crossing is an X-Game series from the makers of Nintendo. Surprisingly, the series has been around in the early 2000s and has been upgraded throughout the years ever since. *Animal Crossing: New Horizons* had just released on March 20th, 2020, just in time for the pandemic to reach its' peak. For those under quarantine, the game has become a platform of choice for connecting with people. This also allows players the opportunity to escape from the real world and enter a whole entirely different world totally unrelated to our own. This particular game allows players to build up their own community of greenery, civilians, buildings, and homes .You're practically playing as God in this virtual reality.

People enjoy controlling every aspect of their life, setting up their own town and taking advantage of it. Animal Crossing is an ultimate escape. We take a break from our mundane lives, get to go to an island, and build our ideal homes and landscapes. We get to spend our time fishing, and catching bugs, basically doing whatever we want. The game offers a haven and gives players a feeling of empowerment and community, particularly at a moment when many people are being told to stay home. The pacing in animal crossing is the key to its relaxing nature. You're able to learn new skills and are given a great amount of time to explore and play at your own pace. For children, being able to engage in adultlike chores, like building and decorating a house gives them power often out of reach. For young adults, it's basically the same thing.

Animal Crossing: New Horizons is tied to a real world clock and calendar, which allows your island to experience days and nights as well as seasons that you're likely to experience as of right now in the real world. This includes new and different insects and fish appearing when the time and seasons begin to change. Meaning, a minute in the game is a minute in the real world.



Following the release of the game, periodic updates have recently been added, fixing and adding new content. This includes new holiday events, new island visitors, and a painting section to the museum.

New features form the game include a Nook Phone. The phone can be used to call islanders, look up DIY recipes, collect Nook Miles, and take pictures. The phone will include more apps as the game progresses. Along with that, the player can customize their Nook





Phone's appearance through a customizable case, use the Island Designer app to terraform the player's island, create more complex custom designs through Pro Designs, and even order items from the Catalog.

Nook Miles are a form of currency (money) that the player can earn by completing tasks around their town. The Miles can also be used to pay off the player's first initial loan from Tom Nook (manager of the island and possible loan shark of the game). They can be used to pay for special items like DIY recipes, add Pro Designs to their Custom Designs Nook Phone app, and other services.

Workbenches are used by players to craft furniture, tools, and other consumables using materials gathered from bottles that wash up on the beach on their island and on mystery island tours. They're only able to use Tom Nook's crafting bench at first, but eventually the player will begin to learn recipes to create DIY benches on their own. Islanders will also teach players new DIY recipes when the player talks to them while they're crafting. Most furniture can be customized at workbenches using customization kits purchased through Nook's Cranny (the island's local convenient store). But, some furniture can only be purchased through the Nook Phone.

Players have much more freedom when customizing their island. They are able to place furniture indoors and outdoors, choose locations for housing, buildings, and other places than the Residential Services Building. Players can move buildings once placed, place bridges and ramps (stairs), and change river paths, cliffs, and fences. When eating foods such as fruits, turnips, or bamboo shoots, the players can gain energy. The energy can be used to uproot whole entire trees, which can be planted elsewhere at their current height, and destroy rocks, which will respawn the following day. Humorously, the energy not used can be disposed by using a toilet in the game if they have one.

The Resident Services is where the player can craft, buy, or sell items. Players can purchase or sell items to Timmy or Tommy (Tom Nook's employees) before Nook's Cranny is officially open for business. Tom Nook will also discuss home expansion as well as use the Nook Stop (a personalized ATM machine) where players can use the ABD to purchase merchandise and clothing from a catalog and redeem Nook Miles. Once the building is upgraded, Isabelle (Tom Nook's assistant) will handle other different services like resetting villagers to their default clothing and catchphrases, while Tom Nook continues to handle home expansion, building construction, and moving.

Dodo Airlines is where the player can go visit other players' islands or have them visit their own. It's also where the player can go on island tours and scavenge materials. To be able to go on these island tours, players will be unable to bring items that won't fit enough in their pockets, so the essentials like shovels, axes, nets, vaulting poles, and ladders are necessary. Players can also borrow tools from Wilbur (the island's pilot) in exchange for Nook Miles. It's highly possible to meet other animals throughout your island tours and invite them to move to your island and become an official citizen from that point on. Harv's Island is also available through Dodo Airlines, where the player can stage photo shoots with their villagers inside Harvey's cabin.

Animal Crossing: New Horizons is a great idea when it comes to wanting to stay away from Covid-19, politics, and murder insects and squirrels alike, so turning to a video game can be a good way to reengage without escalating your own anxiety or depressive symptoms. It's an adorable, idealized version of a life that you completely control, design, and live out the way you always wanted to. It's completely understandable that *Animal Crossing* is not for everyone. But, for those who enjoy simulator games will certainly love this. And, again since the Presidential Election will be upon us very soon, this would be a good time to pull out your Switch/Lite and continue where you left off playing *Animal Crossing: New Horizons*.~~

7 Research Methods of Biopsychology

By: Joshua Walburn

I. Contrast X-Rays

This procedure allows radiologists to evaluate non-evident structures on conventional X-ray exams.

II. Computed Tomography (CT)

A computer assisted X-ray test

An X-ray scanner is rotated 1° at a time over 180°

Computer Reconstruction

Horizontal Sections

Reveals structural abnormalities such as cortical atrophy lesions caused by strokes, trauma or concussions.

III. Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI)

A strong magnetic field causes hydrogen atoms to align in the same orientation.

When a radio frequency wave travels through the brain, atomic nuclei emits electromagnetic energy.

The MRI magnet is tuned to detect radiation emitted from hydrogen atoms.

Computer reconstructs image.

IV. Positron Emission Tomography (PET)

A positron emitting radionuclide is injected.

Positrons communicate with electrons to produce gamma waves traveling in opposite directions.

PET scanner detects photons.

Computer determines the number of photons from a particular region and a map is created to show areas of low and high activity.

V. Functional Magnetic Resonance Imaging (Functional MRI, fMRI)

Images brain hemodynamics

Advantages over PET (e.g. no injections given, structure, function, shorter imaging time, better spatial resolution, 3D images)

VI. Magnetoencephalogram (Magnetoencephalography, MEG)

MEG measures changes in magnetic fields on the scalp surface that are produced by changes in patterns in neuron activity.

Advantage over fMRI - Faster temporal resolution

Advantage over Electroencephalography (EEG) - Greater accuracy and more reliable localization due to minimal distortion of the signal.

Clinical Uses - Evaluation of epilepsy: To localize the source of epileptic brain activity, usually performed with simultaneous EEG.

VII. Transcranial Magnetic Stimulation (TMS)

TMS disrupts neuron activity by generating a magnetic field under a coil positioned near the skull.

Disruption of specific cortical locations are produced while participants engage in behavioral or cognitive tasks.

This helps researchers to assess functions of specific cortical areas.~~

My Hero

By: Ginger Reynolds

Most people when they think of the word “hero,” they think of fictional characters such as Batman or Wonder Woman. My hero is a different kind of hero. My hero is real and has taught me so much. Now you might be wondering, “Who is your hero?” The answer is simple. My hero is the one who brought me into this world. My hero is my mom.

Even though my mom is mortal and doesn’t wear a cape, she is the most heroic person in my life. My mom and I have had our differences, but we always made up in the end. When I’m scared or angry, I can go to my mom because I know she won’t judge me. My mom isn’t scared to be honest with me. I love my mom because she loves me and brought me into this world.

There have been days where I just wanted to say, “I quit.” But my mom has always been in my life. There has never been a single moment where my mom wasn’t there for me. Even when I got in trouble with the law, my mom bailed me out. My mom isn’t just my mom, she’s my best friend. She’s the reason I’m still alive.

Just because my mom is my parent, it doesn’t mean that a parent is all my mom is. A parent is there to protect you and love you. My mom does that and much more. My mom helps me calm down from an autism meltdown. My mom encourages me to think more positively. She helps me succeed in the areas where I think I’m a failure. My mom does a lot more than a fictional character can do.

Even though my mom can’t fly or have super strength, she’s my hero because she tries her best to help me even when she’s angry. I remember one time I was having the worst autism meltdown and my mom told me to pet my stuffed dog. My mom also told me to play a game on my tablet and listen to some music. Having autism is tough on the ones diagnosed with it, but it’s way harder on the ones taking care of us.

In conclusion, my mom is more than just a mom to me. My mom is my hero and I wouldn’t have it any other way. I love my mom even when I’m having meltdowns. If I didn’t have my mom in my life, my outlook on life would probably be way different. I’m extremely grateful to have my mom as not only a parent, but also a best friend and my hero.~~

My First Pittverse Release Party

By: Rachel Williamson

The day of the party, I was picked up by my worker, Lindsay. We went to the YMCA Mon Valley Pool and then we were on our way to the release party. When we got there, Lindsay and I came in and I was amused. I saw a few people I knew, and I was glad I came. When the pizza came, I got my pizza and drink, no salad (not sure why I didn’t get a salad), but...then me and Lindsay went into the stage room. I was just a little excited and nervous, but it looked cool.

When Brian came to the stage, he had a lot to introduce, then he read a story of success of another participant. After he was finished reading, everyone clapped. My favorite part was hearing my friend doing her presentation; another favorite was the banging drums to “We are Fragile.” It was so cool, and I taped it to show all my friends my trip to the *Pittverse Release Party*.

The Giving Tree

By: Maggie K. Jones

Take the things in life that you have learned and start to realize what really matters at all in our lives when we could share the what we have with others from inside our heart. We as humans don't realize what could happen if we don't go the right way in life, but also, accept that we are all not perfect, but at least try your best. And that is what God asks of each and every one of us. We give the best that we can but, we are not perfect in everything, only God is. When we go trying to do our best doing the right things in life and accept that we are not perfect, great things will happen. It doesn't take overnight for great things to happen. We work at what we do right, and try hard, but perfection is not the key. Things can go wrong too, and it's up to us to fix what we did wrong and move forward in life and to do the next right things. And making the decision to do what the next right things are in our lives takes time to achieve great things when we go the right way and go doing the right things in life. God will reward you in Heaven when you do good deeds for him.

Helping and giving of ourselves devoted time to others is a good deed that helps in a way that not only makes them happy, but you will also feel happy too doing the right thing by doing that good deed. Plus, it's doing the right thing by helping people that need help. Even when it's hard doing the right thing, you put your effort forth by going that extra mile to help. It may not be the way you planned it out; it may not be perfect like I said, but, showing that you care counts and doing that right thing also counts, giving your support counts, and showing up to help counts too. It will get the job done when you give your all but never give up accepting that we are all not perfect, but still do it anyways.

When it comes to COVID-19, people tend to assume everything is ok and just go out without a mask, not social distance themselves because they think they don't have that obligation, or they don't have too because "I'm special I won't get sick at all." They are only thinking about themselves when they do this.

You have to listen and do the right things to protect yourself and others. It is not over til they find a vaccine for COVID-19 and the local and state, elected officials say it's ok to do what you normally do. Think of all the lives lost so far to people not caring about each other not doing what we are told to do. We must stand up and do the right thing and listen to the scientists and doctors, local and state government. And do what is right for a change, use your common sense to do the right thing and wear a mask, stay home when sick, stay 6 feet away from other people in public places and when get back inside our homes, wash your hands, it takes saying the happy birthday song slowly or say the alphabet with warm water and soap, if we do all of this. Instead of thinking selfishly about yourselves and do the right things. We can slow the spread of COVID-19 and save lives at the same time until there is a vaccine.

We are giving our time by staying at home. Think, if you do what is right with common sense and stay home only if you need to go to the store to get what you really need and not take millions of it, yourselves thinking it's the end of the world, And, go home don't stay out long periods of time. And don't go in a big group of people either. Get what you truly need and come home. Things can replace themselves, but people can't if they die from COVID-19. If the severity is bad enough. That could be the outcome for most vulnerable people that are aging adults, people with illnesses like cancer or immune disorders. even I have seen on the news, even healthy people get sick not doing what you're supposed to.

The people that work in hospitals and on the front lines they are fighting in every way to help people with COVID-19, and the scientist, they are doing the best things they can to figure out how to stop the virus. We need their support by doing our part, and also, helping virtually and giving in creative ways. Look at the food banks for example, they also use CDC guidelines while helping you in these hard times. That is one way to give of your time, at home. To stop the spread COVID-19.

The giving tree is something that the Roman Catholic Churches use to help people with low income or no income, living in shelters, or on the streets homeless. During the season of Advent, which is counting down and preparing for the birth of Christ. There are four weeks and four candles used to help ourselves prepare for Christ's birth, Christmas day. The first week is purple, the second one is also purple, it symbolizes darkness before the birth of Christ. The

wicks from each light our way to the holy day when Christ was born on Christmas day. The pink candle is the third week of advent, it symbolizes hope is coming. Then the fourth week is purple. Then Christmas.

We have to give from our hearts and know the right things. So, when we get a note from the giving tree, we are asked to help someone that wants or needs something. Somebody less fortunate than us. We go buy that gift for the giving tree and put the note that you got for that request, on the gift that they asked for. Bring it back and some volunteers take the gifts that were requested by that person and deliver it to them.

Here are a list of charities and website to donate from and to give to during these hard times:

The pittsburgh community food bank

www.pittsburghfoodbank.org

The light of light missions

www.lightoflight.org

Variety the children's charity

www.varietypittsburgh.org

St. anthony's school program

www.stanthonykids.org

Pittsburgh catholic charities

www.ccpgh.org

The Children's hospital of Pittsburgh foundation.

www.givetochildrens.org



God bless our doctors and nurses on the front lines. In dedication to them and all the charities that help people. Thank you for all you do. And to governor tom wolf and his staff. Keep up the great work that you do to protect and serve this great state of Pennsylvania. and to the local government of Pittsburgh. Also thank you Mayor Bill Peduto for keeping everything safe and assuring people to do the right things during the pandemic covid-19. This is in dedication to all of you. And God bless this great nation. #we are in this together.



MY TULPA



BY JORDAN WATSON

My Tulpa III - Dealmaker

Story by: Jordan Watson; Cover Art: Karma Kitty Arts

My name is Conley Job. I am now 37 years old. My rise in prosperity has reached levels far beyond what I believed I was capable of. After 17 years of working within Milutin Industries, I helped in the foundation of the flight-based automotive. It was all thanks to my pitch to the directors on the schematics to my patented hadron current energizer. A specific part to the automaton that would give cars the possession to reach warp speeds, with the safe efficiency to stop on a dime, without the troubles of molecular destabilization. In addition to its ever-growing success, I built up the savings from the project, investing from a business loan to grow production of my own independent advanced automotive engineering venture, Barion. In addition to my financial successes, I married the love of my life, Enna. We ended up having three children together. Elaine, Logan, & Pierce Job. They all wish to grow up and become little geniuses, much like their loving parents. Enna now has her doctorate in cardiology, and has been on the breakthrough in creating a natural valve within the aorta to strengthen blood flow inside the human heart long within the early phases of a human's senior years. Her father had finally received the treatment he absolutely needed a few days ago, and is on a quick recovery to share his daughter's knowledge with the rest of his extended family, including his loving grandchildren.

Today, I am fine-tuning the carburetor engine within the latest model of the Barion Playwright, implementing a new form of energy to help balance out the energization of the quarks being siphoned into the device. Merry seamlessly wisps down in my workshop, checking up on my progress, while conversing with me.

"Honestly gotta say bestie, it's incredible how far we've come together. Seeing you improve upon your craft, making mad moolah on Barion, and seeing your family happier than the average kid at spring break getting blasted through all the heated excitement, really makes me proud to have you in my life."

"Aaaw, thank you Merry. You know, I honestly couldn't have done it without your help throughout it all. For the first time, just taking in the moment to appreciate it all, I've never felt more jubilant than where I am now. I really feel...contented."

Not even having to look in his direction, I can feel Merry's smile through the warm sensation filling my whole upper body. He glides on down to my left in a reclined position.

"So the question I have for you now is.....where do we go from here?"

I stop what I'm doing, putting a marker near the specific part I've worked on. Slightly perplexed by his statement, I turn my attention to him.

"...What do you mean?"

"Well, given we've gotten to a pret-ty big crag in your life, I want to help share with you a secret."

"...Wait, a secret?"

Merry puts his right palm outward, and takes his left hand over top of it, swirling it around to create what looks like a hole in the fabric of space and time. Within it, is a wondrous world of multifaceted colors that even a mantis shrimp would be astounded from. Communities of intelligent, like-minded individuals, able to fly without a means of transport. Agriculture that is made on a whim of a singular thought, and amplified by youthful vigor. Age is but a construct, as all beings can be seen to live forever, and never show visible signs of aging. The scenery is truly sublime, leaving me at a near loss of words. That is until Merry chimes in.

"Because of your ever-evolving mind from the day I met you, to this exact point of time, I have been able to devise a world that can only be attainable through lucid dreaming. Think about this, Conley. Ever since you opened your mind to me, I've used the time and energy you've imbued me to give you this utopia. Not just for you, but for your whole family. If you find *this* to be blissful, imagine what more could be made, if you continue to reach near Olympian stature. The results most certainly would be...an immeasurable heaven. The definitive Zion. A Eden for you all."

Merry's tone snaps me from my enraptured state. Having processed what I've bore witness to, I manage to muster my thoughts aloud to him.

"...M-Merry.....i-it's all positively alluring...It's not to say I don't find what you've shown me grateful, especially what you have done for me with this grand token of appreciation..."

I see him wrap his arm around my right shoulder, coyly filing his left hand of his pristine nails, feeling his sense of accomplishment rise.

"...B-But I simply cannot accept it."

I begin to see his face instantaneously beam from a shining smile, to a grimaced wince at my sudden bluntness.

"My happiness is here, with my loving family, my career, and especially with you, my best friend in the whole world. Ever since escaping that wretched place, I've been able to, as you said, carry on with my craft, and have a happy, loving family to support me, even until I cease to exist. If it means me staying like this forever, then there's no point in having an ever-changing perfect utopia for us."

There is an awkward silence that fills my work room for a solid 2 minutes. Merry stands idle in his position, as I begin to look upon what was once a jovial man, slowly devolve into a heated instrument, from microwave bursts of irritation, to a full, molten cauldron of unadulterated anger.

"...You're kidding me...right?"

"Merry, what's wrong?"

"I've used as much energy to expend to help make you happy, and you're telling me *this* is all you need to be satisfied?! You can't possibly think that the mortal plain you're on will keep you upbeat forever, right?!?"

"Merry, what's gotten into you?? I just told you that you all make me happy! Just that I want it to be here!"

"Then WHY don't you want to be a part of the world I've shaped in *your* ideal visage?!"

"Because it's all fantasy, Merry! The real meaning to life is finite! Which is why I'm going to leave my legacy with my children! I don't understand why you think I'd lie to you about something this frivolous!"

"Oh, but I think you ARE lying, Conley! When going through your head, I noticed you blocked some parts of it off! Care to elaborate THAT?!"

"...What on earth is that supposed to mean? What are you getting at???"

"It means YOU'RE not telling me the full truth! There's another reason you want to build this automated flying contraption, isn't there?"

"Are you *seriously* this upset that I don't want to be in your wonderland?!"

"STOP dodging the question, Conley!"

"Merry, stop this petulant behavior!"

"Then ANSWER ME, you feculent coward, what are you hiding from your best friend?!"

"THAT'S ENOUGH! I always knew you *still* had a childish demeanor about you, but this has gone TOO far, Merry! I have a family to support now! I have my own aspirations to tend to! But if I'm going to deal with THIS kind of behavior from you, then I want you away from me! Now, I have much work to finish here tonight, so leave me alone!"

".....W-What....What did you say to me, you fu--"

"I SAID LEAVE ME ALONE!"

Merry's visible enragement ignites like a volcanic eruption, searing the walls in a booming roar! As he crackles and fizzles away into a cloud of smoke, I see before me upstairs, the door is wide open, with Enna and Elaine staring at me from the open doorway.

"Honey? Is everything alright?"

"What happened, daddy?"

"Oh uum...it's fine dear, just had some issues with a part in the carburetor, is all. Daddy's fine, kiddo."

"Well, we're about ready to head to Elaine's piano recital, we'll be leaving in 10 minutes."

I take in a few small breaths and come up the stairs to get myself ready. Taking Elaine gently by her hand, and kissing Enna's cheek, I freshen up, and get one of the flying cars ready.

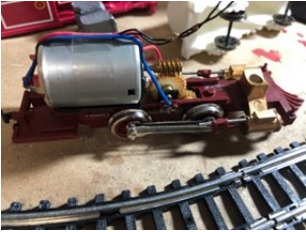
The forested trees around our home hum with the wind, as we begin departure from one of the signature Milutin Lika, a parting gift from the company I once worked for. I begin to input the settings necessary for us to make the warp drive between our home, to the city lines of Boston. The fabric of the time continuum goes into total hyper drive, as we see around us infinite passing lights around us. I take Enna's free right hand to hold closely to mine, while looking back towards my kids singing along in the car with us. In an instant, we come out of light speed, facing ourselves to the city skyline in front of us. To me, nothing could possibly be more perf-

[CRAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAASH!]

Converting a Tomy Skarloey to run on HO Track, An on30 Project by Max's Model Railway Inspired by a Roblox Unlucky Tug Live Stream

By: Max Chaney

Whilst not really being a Roblox Gamer myself I take the opportunity to model comedy, why? I enjoy it a lot, whilst not affiliated with "The Unlucky Tug" Crew at all Credit goes to him for the inspiration of this article from the Stream "Skrewing around on the Skarloey" if you post a video online of you modeling one please credit me for the build.

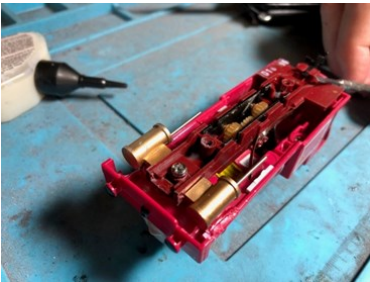


The Model used is a classic Tomy Skarloey that I used for this project, the Chassis being a Life Like Tea Kettle with Can motor and a new retrofit, eventually I'm going to replace the motor from Tamiya to be used with T.N. Nomura Track, (The track you'll want is less than 24" wide when assembled) battery controller and a terminal are included in sets. You can get the Life like (Tea kettle) models cheaply from ebay, I bought mine for \$25, however word of warning, make sure the Seller is reputable, you can check on mobile devices (Make sure it's your own!) or if you have one support your local Model Railroad Hobby Shop, it has to be the one with the Can

motor, a ring field or X-04 style motor version will not work for the conversion as the bracket for the can motor is important for lining up the Tamiya motor but takes a few weeks to ship from Japan If you're a kid or a young adult and would like to do this yourself, remember that adult supervision must be required to build the model as chemicals, sharp and hot tools will be used in the making of this model, I'm not liable for any damages to yourself, anyone around your or any surroundings even models / toys or tools I'm not responsible for Damages, do this at your own risk.



Step 1 Life Like Chassis Disassembly: the motor that I had in mind was a coreless can motor, we unscrewed the motor from the chassis, we unsoldered the wires to the motor, it's possible to do likewise with the contacts making sure to not rip the contacts off that help collect power for the locomotive, you'll have to unscrew the base and remove the wheels for dremeling the cowcatcher off so they do not become unquartered



Step 2 Body shell Preparation: this model you're going to be rebuilding is an old Tomy Skarloey to on30 which are O scale Trains on HO tracks practicing Narrow Gauge modeling, you will need 2mm triangular screwdrivers to undo the chassis from the body of the tomy model which you can get online, pliers you can get too but they are not recommended, you have to remove the cowcatcher to make this modification please note Some photos are not included of the Engine disassembly

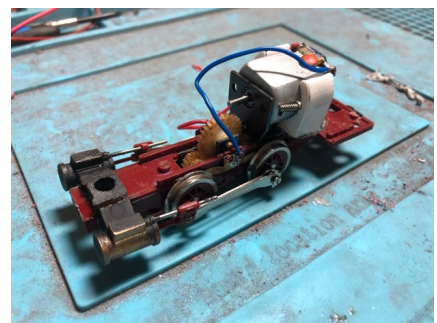
Step 3 cowcatcher removal and support: You will have to saw the cowcatcher off, the saw can be used likewise with a hand drill for the posts... the cowcatcher on the Life Like chassis, note the body will be fine when the original clips that hold the model on the back will be removed, two holes in the back will need to be opened, please note slightly larger Philips head screws May have to be bought so you can use the original posts in the back

Step 4 motor retrofit and new worm gear:

The motor is going to be from Tamiya but the one I use suggests otherwise but will be replaced, I forgot to mention you will have to save the original wires, you will have to get a gear kit from EUDAX that has the right motor mount that will be shortened allowing the body to fit once we remove the coal from the coal bunker, we will add real coal after we repaint the model back to red

The motor mount has to be superglued after its shortened on with as sparing amount of super glue, but enough to make it work the motor will sink in to the original motor mount and then you can place the gear on, if you wanted to you could add an LED with a Special LEGO brick, you'd have to sand down the headlight to make it fit

I hope you'll enjoy, Part 2 coming in the Autumn or winter when we take a look at more modifications to make this into a real on30 engine with an extended funnel and cab, plus fixed body shell, I hope you enjoyed this build, please take precautions while modifying while it is a fun hobby please note its dangerous so take care whilst doing so (the screw the on motor isn't recommended)



Preserving the Ancestral Histories of Revolutionary War Descendants

By: Nils Skudra

In the midst of the volatile social climate which has seen the spread of monument vandalism to Revolutionary War monuments, I believe it is critical that we should preserve the records of individuals who fought in the Revolutionary War so that we may continue to educate people about our nation's history. With this in mind, I decided to interview Steven Hancock and J.D. Mayo, two close friends of mine who share my deeply passionate interest in Revolutionary and Civil War history, about their Revolutionary War ancestors. Both have discussed this topic with me at length and have visited various Revolutionary and Civil War-era sites with me, and they were thrilled at the opportunity to have their ancestors' stories documented in this article.

J.D. Mayo began by elaborating upon his family's Revolutionary War ancestors. On his mother's side, his sixth-great grandfather James Gaines, Jr. served together with his father, Captain James Gaines, Sr., as a private in Captain Josiah Harper's Virginia militia regiment for approximately two years. Following the war, Gaines' family moved to North Carolina, where his father became a state representative. A fascinating thing I learned about Gaines' family was that James' mother Catherine Gaines was related to the family of U.S. president James Madison, as her father was John Madison II, the grandfather of James Madison, which would thus make her a cousin or aunt. In addition, James' father was married twice and had numerous children, and consequently he was connected to the Madison family through marriage, given that J.D.'s eighth-great grandmother was Catherine Gaines Madison, born in 1693 and married to Richard Edward Gaines of Old Rappahannock County, Virginia.

According to James Gaines, Jr.'s will, there was one African American slave named Will, but he was referred to as a "Negro" rather than a slave; he is buried together with the senior and younger Gaines in the family cemetery; and he was reportedly treated as one of the family, so J.D. believes that he was a free man of color. He remarked that the family treated their slaves well, because there is no evidence referring to them as slaves. The Gaines' cousins, on the other hand, did not own any slaves. One of these cousins was James Gaines, Sr.'s nephew, James Taylor Gaines, who served at the Battle of Guilford Courthouse as a captain and was wounded in that engagement. He came from a prominent family, born to Isabella Pendleton and a father who served in the Houses of Burgesses. J.D. stated that he had other relatives at Guilford Courthouse as well, but they were very distant family.

James Taylor Gaines served as a captain of the Culpepper County, Virginia, Minute Men (in which his cousins Henry and Nathaniel Pendleton, Jr. also served), and in the war's aftermath he served as a member of the Convention of North Carolina for the Ratification of the Constitution of the United States and of the North Carolina legislature. According to family records, "Captain James Gaines was one of the two favorite nephews of Judge Edmund Pendleton, to whom the latter left most of his property, consisting of an estate of six thousand acres of land, most of which is now in Sullivan County, Tennessee, and thirty slaves. Captain James Gaines moved in 1788 and settled upon this estate; he was twice married; firstly, in 1762, to a Miss White; and, secondly in 1766, to Elizabeth Strother, daughter of Francis and Susannah Dabney Strother and sister to his brother's wife, Susannah Strother. By the first marriage he had one daughter, Margaret Gaines who married Samuel Edgeman."

On his maternal grandfather's mother's side, J.D. had an ancestor named John David Winn who served as a private in the 3rd South Carolina Militia Regiment, led by his uncle Brigadier General Richard Winn, and became a colonel after the war. One intriguing story that J.D. shared about his Winn ancestors is that they tried to ambush Lord Cornwallis in South Carolina and were actually captured by the British, but they were released after Richard Winn told Cornwallis that the Americans would hang British officers if he and his relatives were hung. This bore a striking similarity to a scene from the 2000 film *The Patriot* in which Benjamin Martin (portrayed by Mel Gibson) tells Lord Cornwallis (portrayed by Tom Wilkinson) that if his men are hung, 18 British officers will be executed in turn. J.D. told me that Benjamin Martin is in fact loosely based on Richard Winn along with a variety of other Patriot militia commanders in the Southern theatre during the Revolutionary War.

While J.D. said he would have to do more research about the battles that his Winn ancestors fought in,

one battle that he felt quite certain they took part in was Huck's Defeat, also known as the Battle of Williamson's Plantation, South Carolina, in which British and Loyalist troops under Captain Christian Huck were defeated by Patriot militia on July 12, 1780. Coming after the disastrous American defeat at Charleston in May, this victory served to revive morale and rally backcountry farmers to the American cause. In addition, J.D. revealed that the town of Winnsboro, South Carolina, is named after the Winn family and that there is a book entitled *The Winns of Fairfield County*, which explores the lives of John Winn, William Winn, and Richard Winn.

More of J.D.'s Winn ancestors include Thomas Stonewall Winn and Hampton Winn, who were both sons of James Winn. In addition, the Revolutionary War Veterans Monument in Howard County, Missouri, lists a John Davis Winn, although he is known in the family tradition as simply John Winn. His mother was Rosamond Hampton, the aunt of Revolutionary War colonel Wade Hampton I, who was the grandfather of Confederate general Wade Hampton III in the Civil War. All of this information deeply intrigued me, and I found it really impressive that J.D.'s family history was so well-documented.

I subsequently interviewed Steven Hancock about his Revolutionary War ancestry. He told me that the only ancestor he knows of is Thomas Hemphill, who served as a captain in the North Carolina militia. Hemphill was born to James and Susannah Patton Hemphill in Pennsylvania circa 1750, but his family migrated to present-day McDowell County, North Carolina, where he married Mary Ann Mackie in 1773. During the Revolutionary War, Hemphill fought in several battles against local Loyalist, earning a captain's promotion in the North Carolina militia under Colonel Charles McDowell probably around January 1780. Among the battles he fought in was Ramsour's Mill in the vicinity of present-day Lincolnton, North Carolina in June 1780, the first Patriot victory after the British capture of Charleston. Probably the most famous battle that Hemphill fought in, however, was the Battle of Kings Mountain in October 1780, in which Patriot militia surrounded and destroyed British major Patrick Ferguson's force of Loyalist militia.

Showing me a map of the Battle of Kings Mountain, Steven indicated that the McDowell men, including Thomas Hemphill, were part of the group that charged up the mountain from roughly the southeast side. Ferguson was killed in the battle, along with much of his command, and those who survived were taken prisoner, thus resulting in a decisive Patriot victory that severely hampered Lord Cornwallis' campaign in North Carolina. Steven reflected that he had visited the Kings Mountain National Military Park a number of times, and he remembers feeling a personal connection there, but he did not realize the depth of this connection until he learned that Thomas Hemphill was a relative. He believes that Hemphill might have been at the Battle of Guilford Courthouse and that there were some Moravian ancestors in the area of Bethania, where one of them is buried, although they would not have fought in the war since they were pacifists. Following the war, Hemphill fathered 13 children before he died in May 1826, and he is buried today at the Old Siloam Cemetery near the town of Old Fort, North Carolina.

The stories that Steven Hancock and J.D. Mayo shared about their Revolutionary War ancestors were truly intriguing, and I felt that they demonstrated the degree of pride that so many North Carolinians have in their historic lineage. Given that Revolutionary monuments have also been affected by the current wave of vandalism and calls for monument removal, I feel that documenting these stories is absolutely essential for the preservation of history and for the education of the public. By studying the ancestral records of soldiers who fought in America's War of Independence, we may hopefully instill an appreciation for our history in the minds of the present generation which may be passed on to subsequent generations. While it is important to acknowledge the negative and controversial aspects of our history (as was the case with J.D.'s story of his family), maintaining an appreciation for the lessons of history will ensure that people may continue to learn those lessons.

Images Worth 1000 Words:
Dr. Russ Johnson & ICONz Associates
Q&A Conducted by Michael Kurland
Liaison: Brian Kluchurosky

What was the inspiration for ICONz?

The inspiration for the ICONz came from my clients on the Autism Spectrum. Although their ages and situations were quite different, their social difficulties were surprisingly similar.

Where did the name ICONz come from?

The name came from the idea that an “icon” can be a graphic representation of an object, idea, symbol, word or function. The “z” was a way to make the ICONz images plural.

Do you believe ICONz applies to everyone?

Yes. I think they apply to everyone because each ICONz image represents a concept (or behavior) that most people learn as children and most adults expect others to demonstrate the concepts in how they behave. Many people have told me that they believe the ICONz apply to everyone.

What have been some roadblocks, if any?

New ideas often take time to spread, and research requires time and funding to show that a new idea is worth pursuing. My business, ICONz Associates, LLC, has been fortunate in that funding for research and production of the materials has come from a variety of sources. The funding allowed us to test the effectiveness of the ICONz at different ages.

Were there any ICONz that were considered, but not used?

No. Every image reflects the kinds of social difficulties that my clients experienced.

How long was the R & D period from initial idea to implementation?

The process has occurred over 15 years. The research and training Leaders who can deliver the ICONz is ongoing.

How many lessons were actually inspired by real events?

All of the lessons and characters are based on amalgams or combinations of real events and real people. I used a “literary license” to flesh out the characters and events to make them clearer and, I hope, more interesting. The feedback we’ve gotten has been positive for the stories in the lessons, and people have told me that they can relate to the different characters.

How far do you expect the program to reach?

I’d like to see the ICONz Program used in schools and service organizations. Since the ICONz concepts are familiar to most people, I think they can be used in many settings and with children and adults.

Do you have any final words of advice for our readers?

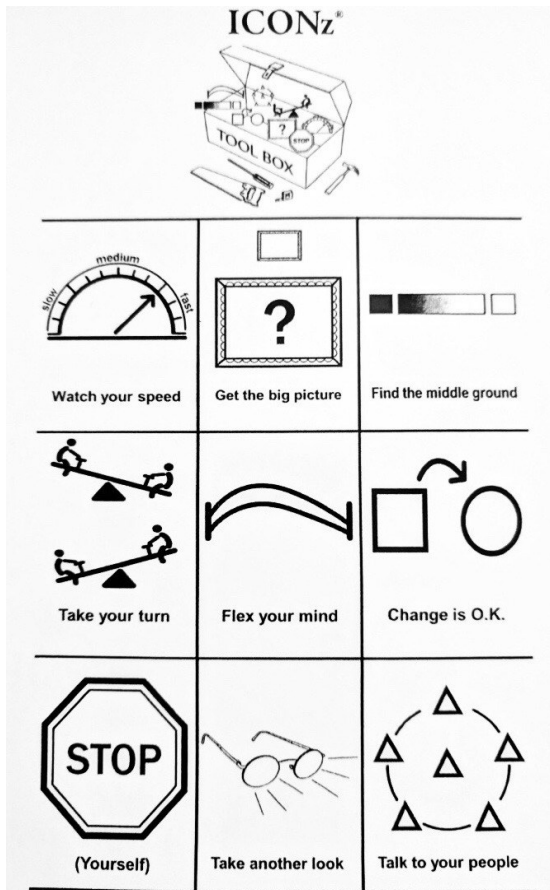
Make choices that you believe will further your long-term goals. Don't give up. Accept help from people who care about your well-being. Listen to others and learn about yourself.

Thank you for your interest in the ICONz Program.

Best Wishes,
Dr. Russ Johnson

Special Thanks:
Dr. Russ Johnson
Brian Kluchurosky
And all who have benefitted from ICONz

For more information, visit the official website at
<https://iconzassociates.com/>



ICONz Diagram



Dr. Russ Johnson

Question for You

By: Andrew Olasvicky

Have you ever had a dumb question that you asked, or maybe one with an obvious answer yet you asked it anyway? Well in my family, we find ourselves doing so all the time and pretty much every time someone says "I have a dumb question for you," someone answers "42," a reference to the series of novels by the late British author Douglas Adams, known mostly by the first book, *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*. The number which they say in the book is the answer to "the answer to the ultimate question of life, the universe, and everything" which has also appeared in my life in many random places. A few examples include the last mile marker sequence on the Adirondack Highway or Route 87 from Albany, NY through the "Adirondack Region" starting near Lake George, NY. Meaning that from last time I checked between Mile Marker 41 and 42, you would see tenth mile markers from 41.1 to 41.9 and after marker 42 they would only be seen every mile.

Another Example in terms of people include Jackie Robinson the first black man to play for the old baseball team, the Brooklyn Dodgers, who have since moved to Los Angeles, CA. One unique example includes how if you break the number 4 in 42 so that the trunk looks like a 1 with part of a 4 before it is used to represent the great city of Pittsburgh, PA the general phone area code is usually 412, and to mix Pittsburgh with baseball if you divide 42 in half you get 21, the number for late Pittsburgh Pirates baseball player "Roberto Clemente," known in Pittsburgh as "The Great One." These examples are important is because according to Mr. Adams novels, the planet Earth was made as a supercomputer to find "the ultimate question" to which the answer is 42. This being that in reference to the title statement is that 42 is like an obvious answer which is usually the answer to a dumb question. One example of a dumb question in my family is to ask me what I want for dinner if we get Chinese takeout, the obvious answer in my case being the same thing I always get, General Tso's Chicken with House Special Fried Rice. My 2 points being that first, if you look hard enough you will find the number 42 in one form or another in odd places throughout your daily life which makes life seem all the more interesting and makes you think about the old saying "Life Imitates Art" which has become more likely to be seen in the world today. Second, is that we always have dumb questions that we ask from time to time but to my way of thinking it's better to double check than to assume. So just for fun, the next time someone says to you they have a dumb question. immediately answer "42." It will make them laugh and make them think at the same time.~~

Comparing the Coronavirus to the American Revolutionary War

By: Amelia Krzton

Our country has gone through several different times of hardship. One of the hardest times that America (and other countries around the world) is dealing with right now is none other than the coronavirus. I feel like that this could alter our country's status and become a new nation that it has never become before. During the Revolutionary War, the original 13 colonies were fighting for freedom, and then our country became the most popular, wealthy nation on the planet. Now, during the coronavirus outbreak, with so many people getting unemployed, businesses shutting down, and the loss of important services, the United States may not be the wealthy country that it once was. Even more service members are dying from the coronavirus. As we all know, the Revolutionary War solved several problems that the country had back then, except for slavery, which led up to the Civil War being fought. Obviously, the only way that this pandemic will end is if a vaccine is created to cure the virus. God only knows when that will happen! The crisis is also pushing Americans to embrace new perspectives about which safeguards the country should have in place in case something of this magnitude strikes again. Also, both crises involved major workers and people who fought in the war to win the country's independence, and in this case, workers who kept hospitals and supply lines running. It is also a wide possibility that the coronavirus outbreak will inspire a new generation of doctors, nurses, and scientists. Doctors, nurses, and scientists were also a necessity not just during the Revolutionary War, but during other major wars, as well, such as the Civil War, both World Wars, and even the 9-11 terrorist attacks.~~

You Are a Human Being

By: Ginger Reynolds

When most people feel emotions, they say, "I am angry" or "I am happy." Most people when they are telling others what their gender or sexuality is say, "I am male" or "I am bisexual." Most people when they are telling others what their name is say, "I am Chris" or "I am Patty." Most people when they are telling others what their religion or spirituality is say, "I am Catholic" or "I am Christian." When most people tell others about their disorder/s or condition/s, they say, "I am Schizophrenic" or "I am Epileptic."

All people are human beings. All people experience emotions. All people have at least one gender and sexuality. All people have a religion or spirituality. Knowing all of this, nobody is their emotion. Nobody is their gender or sexuality. Nobody is their name. Nobody is their religion or spirituality. And nobody is their disorder or condition.

We as human beings know we are not our name, sexuality, or emotion. Yet, most people say they are these things. Why? In my opinion and in my experience, I say that I am these things because I don't think before I speak. I can't speak for anyone else, but myself. I felt the need to write about this topic because when you think about who you really are, what answer do you come up with?

I asked myself the same question, on the 2nd Monday in August. My answer was I know I'm human, but I don't know who I really am other than that. Not knowing who you really are is heartbreaking. Every action, every word, every behavior, every feeling I have daily doesn't define who I really am. Those are just experiences I go through. The question of, "Who am I," still make me wonder about what I'm doing with my life.

"Who are you?" "What are your life goals and dreams?" "What is your purpose in life?" "What do you desire most in your life?" These are the questions that pop in my mind every single day. My age is 32, yet I still don't know the answers. I wonder if I'll ever know the answers to these questions.

All people are human beings. We are not our gender/s. We are not our emotions. We are not our sexuality. We are not our religion or spirituality. We are not our age. We are not our name/s. We are human beings. We look forward to doing things. You are not "Schizophrenic" or "Epileptic." You are not your disorder/condition. Better yet, you are a beautiful, or handsome, human being. You worthy, useful, helpful, and loved. Remember that.

In our society some people will put you down. Some people will bully you just being different. Some people will make you feel like crap. Even when you cry for help, some people will give you the cold shoulder. I encourage everyone to keep your heads up, walk with pride, and keep going. I don't pretend to be perfect or know everything. I have been at my lowest and have had people bully me to the point where I didn't think living was worth it. I may not know what your going through, but I do know that you are worthy.

Although in our society some people will put you down, but if you're around positive thinking people, they will pick you up when you're at your lowest. I had to figure out the hard way that if I surround myself with negative thinking people, my goal at thinking positive is not going to happen. If I surround myself with positive and uplifting thinking people, my goal is more likely to be completed. Think about it. What type of people are you hanging around? Are they negative thinking people who put you down or are they positive thinking people who lift you up?~~

“A Collection of the Unlikeliest Haiku”

By: Delaine Swearman

Toilet Paper
Toilet paper is
Something you use every single day
But seldom think about.

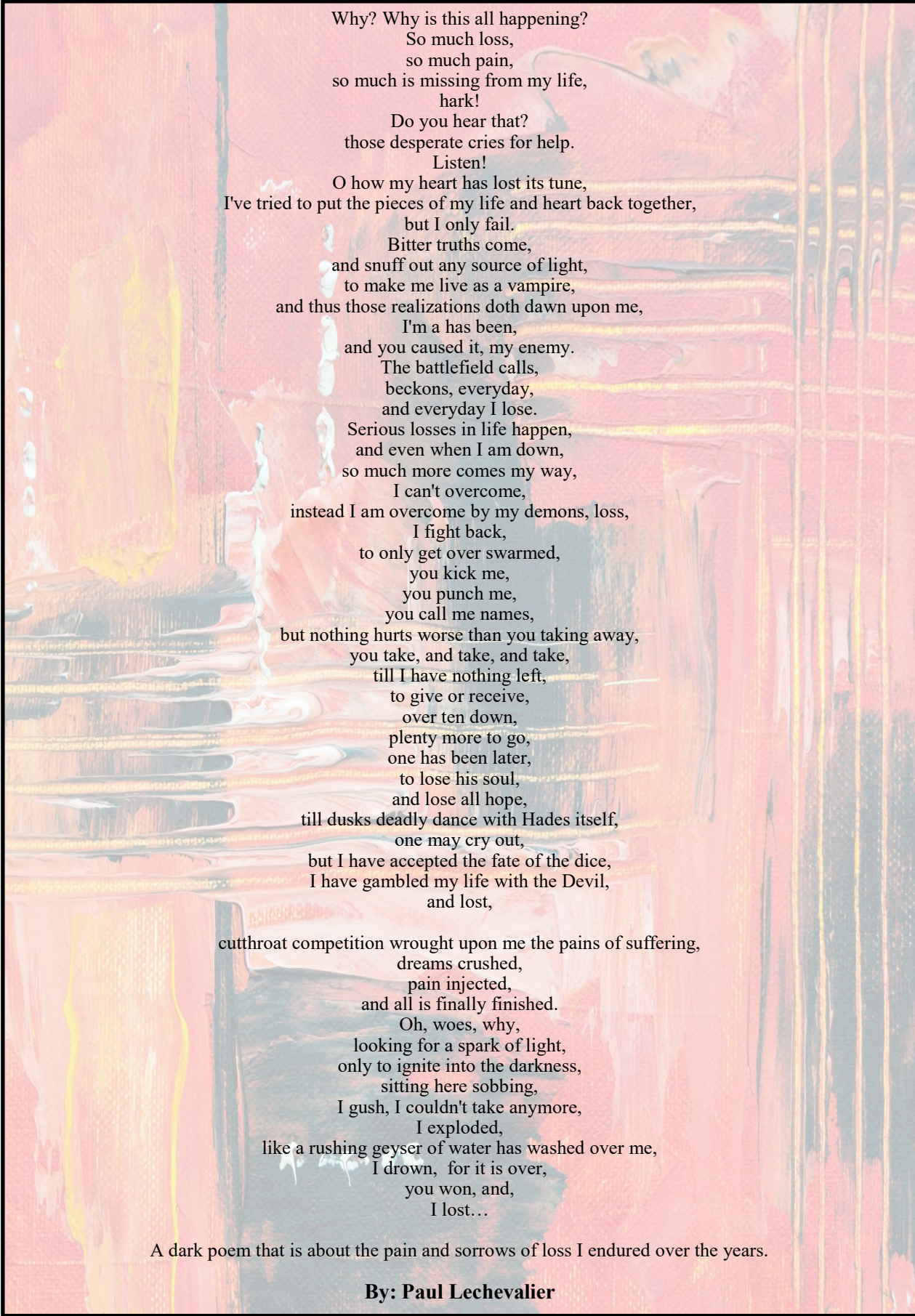
Birthday Cards
Birthday cards can hold
Funny sayings, cash or check
And the givers love.

Tomatoes
Tomatoes growing
Inside a cage are released
After they turn red.

Toenails
Toenails on my feet
They are clipped, shaped, and polished
Then I admire them.

Air Conditioning
Air Conditioning
It is a vital necessity
In the summer heat.

Flyswatters
Flyswatters can kill.
A deadly weapon in hand
I just declared war.



Why? Why is this all happening?
So much loss,
so much pain,
so much is missing from my life,
hark!
Do you hear that?
those desperate cries for help.
Listen!
O how my heart has lost its tune,
I've tried to put the pieces of my life and heart back together,
but I only fail.
Bitter truths come,
and snuff out any source of light,
to make me live as a vampire,
and thus those realizations doth dawn upon me,
I'm a has been,
and you caused it, my enemy.
The battlefield calls,
beckons, everyday,
and everyday I lose.
Serious losses in life happen,
and even when I am down,
so much more comes my way,
I can't overcome,
instead I am overcome by my demons, loss,
I fight back,
to only get over swarmed,
you kick me,
you punch me,
you call me names,
but nothing hurts worse than you taking away,
you take, and take, and take,
till I have nothing left,
to give or receive,
over ten down,
plenty more to go,
one has been later,
to lose his soul,
and lose all hope,
till dusks deadly dance with Hades itself,
one may cry out,
but I have accepted the fate of the dice,
I have gambled my life with the Devil,
and lost,

cutthroat competition wrought upon me the pains of suffering,
dreams crushed,
pain injected,
and all is finally finished.
Oh, woes, why,
looking for a spark of light,
only to ignite into the darkness,
sitting here sobbing,
I gush, I couldn't take anymore,
I exploded,
like a rushing geyser of water has washed over me,
I drown, for it is over,
you won, and,
I lost...

A dark poem that is about the pain and sorrows of loss I endured over the years.

By: Paul Lechevalier

Thought Management

By: Joseph Cepek

On Thursday, April 9, 2020, I was especially downcast about the state (of Pennsylvania) forced shutdown of the majority of public businesses such as libraries, malls, indoor museums and bowling alleys. I had previously read that it would be a temporary closure of these facilities, but I was emotionally and psychologically unprepared to personally deal with this sad crisis. As is now sadly known, the COVID-19 pandemic tragedy was behind this hard decision by Thomas Wolf, the current Pennsylvania governor.

In addition to my parents' and family dog's ongoing health issues, I was starting to feel quite overwhelmed. I even considered taking my life. However, I also realized that this rash action would NOT resolve any of my hurt feelings. Plus, this potential suicidal act would certainly have NOT ended my other family members' troubles. It would have immediately led to worsened psychological, emotional, and physical suffering for them if I had succeeded.

If I had survived the suicide attempt, I might have been voluntarily institutionalized in an inpatient psychiatric ward for an indefinite time period. Who and what I would have encountered inside such a place is anyone's best guess. Then again, if I had succeeded in taking my life, I would not have known where I would have ended up and what (plus who) I would have met up with on the other side of this earthly life.

I now know that no matter how depressed I may get due to unwanted and stressful circumstances in my life I would NEVER actually try to commit suicide. If I killed myself, I might not see my parents or our family dog named April ever again. Fearing this potential possibility prevents me from acting on any suicidal desires. Fear of Divine Retribution also factors in rightly influencing me NOT to try to take my life by my own hand as well.

It was raining early in the afternoon on the before-mentioned day. Afterwards, I took a brisk walk with my mom and our dog friend around the neighboring streets from where we reside in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. On one of the roadways, the sun came out through the clouds and it shined on the wet pavement as we walked along the road. I remember the blue sky being mixed with white clouds as the sun symbolically was representing both a visual and a spiritual sign of hope for me to NOT give up on myself. The sun was positioned in the sky ahead of our walking path, which led me to believe that it was a true moment of Divine Intervention.

This particular Divine Intervention was telling me to literally walk towards hope and a lingering possibility of things NOT ever being hopeless as long as I am physically alive. "You shall not murder," in the Holy Bible's Old Testament (Deuteronomy 5:17 and Exodus 20:13, NKJV) also guides me to NOT seriously consider suicide in the future.~~

Ocean City Maryland Vacation

By: Zach Grabowski

This summer we headed to Ocean City Maryland for vacation, like we do every year. This year was a bit different due to the COVID-19 Pandemic. We always stay at my cousin's town house when we are there which was good, because we didn't have to worry about staying in a hotel. The only bad thing was that the swimming pool in their complex was not open and the ocean water was cold. I would have preferred to swim in the swimming pool instead. We avoided the boardwalk and its beaches and headed to Assateague Island. It is located just eight miles south of Ocean City. It is part of the National and State park systems. Assateague has miles of beaches and offers camping and outdoor recreation.

There are also wild horses and ponies that wander the land at Assateague Island. These horses are feral, and you cannot pet or ride them. They often will stop in the middle of the road and stop traffic. This happened to us when we were there. A park ranger had to come to get them to move. It was pretty funny.

We were able to eat dinner out every day and we ate breakfast out one day too. We maintained social distancing when going to the restaurants by wearing masks and often had to sit at two different tables. I ate a lot of seafood with my favorite seasoning, Old Bay. Some of my favorite things that I ate included a "shrimp and crab omelet" for breakfast, a seafood burrito, a crabby melt with crab dip, and a hamburger with crab dip for lunch and dinner. I really enjoyed the crab!

We were able to enjoy a band playing outdoors at a yacht club one night while sitting on my cousin's boat. I was told that there was also a great sunset that night, as well. Unfortunately, we didn't get a chance to take the boat out but it was great sitting there and listening to the music. I enjoy going to Ocean City every year. It is one of my favorite vacations! It felt so great to get away after being quarantined in the house for what felt like forever! I can't wait to go back!~~



The Really Bad Storm

By: Rachel Williamson

I was sitting on my hammock just enjoying the day with Simon, my kitten, while I was looking at dark clouds coming towards Waynesburg. I was thinking about how much rain it would produce, then I saw a lightning bolt hit very close to me and Simon. I realized this storm was going to be a bad one, so I started to the house, the storm got closer, and severe. I held Simon close to my chest in fear. I ran into the house carrying Simon with me and went downstairs into the basement underneath the staircase and huddled him close to me to protect me and him from the terrible storm. The storm ripped and snatched everything upstairs and outside greatly. We were terrified. Simon clawed my shirt, trying to hide underneath me, I held him tightly, saying "it'll be ok, Simon."

Wind was hurling and growing, minutes had passed, and the sounds let up, we waited for a few minutes more to check to make sure the storm had completely passed. Simon and I were in some rubble, but not hurt. I held Simon for protection as I walked up the staircase upon the ground zero of what was left of the house. Not much of it was destroyed, but lots were damage. When I looked at the left at the black clouds I saw a beautiful triple rainbow over the back of the storm that passed me and Simon minutes ago!!! I kept a hold of Simon till the disaster relief came and picked me and Simon up. We stayed at Red Cross until Mom and Dad picked us up. I told them about everything that happened during the storm and the triple rainbow that Simon and I saw!!

Mom and Dad hugged me and Simon. We went to a friend's house to stay until we got our house fixed. The end? Or no??~

Frederick's Dream: A Chapter in Creed

By: Dmitry Harmon

Frederick found himself walking along the streets near the river. It was a chilly night and the moon was full. The fog was becoming very noticeable where one would be able to see clearly for about fifteen feet but the further the harder. The street lamps had the appearance that they were covered in webs by the fog. Just a hint of light coming out, but no longer shimmering bright. The buildings were very dark and all businesses were closed shut. The atmosphere was very eerie; not a soul besides himself around. He continued to walk along the river to a bridge that was quite wide and long with web like lamps from the fog whereas the end of the bridge was not visible.



Frederick decided to turn onto the bridge and walked on it for five to ten minutes and came across a T- section. It was odd, he did not remember this particular bridge to have that type of extension. In fact, none of the bridges here had one. They all went straight across the river. Curious, he decided to take that path. It seemed to take a while, perhaps fifteen minutes of walking. At times he almost turned around and went back, but it came to an end on a piece of land in the middle of the river. It wasn't a big piece of land, perhaps one hundred fifty feet in all directions with a white aura of light shimmering around the center. There were trees and bushes all around with a small clearing right in the center with a small stone structure in the middle with a door that was reflecting the moonlight giving an abnormal reflection which explained the aura of light. Flying around were what looked like several hundred maybe even close to a thousand fireflies lighting up the place. Curiously he came to the structure and smoothed it out with his hand and stepped back to look at it.

Right at that moment the door opened and a man stepped out. It was Adam. "Such a Fine Evening Frederick, is it not?" asked Adam. His voice echoed which made it sound very cold indeed.

"What are you doing here? What is this Place?"

"This is my promised land. My sanctuary, and by god, it is glorious."

Frederick was very confused. "What do you mean by that?" He was starting to feel very anxious, the kind one gets when they feel bad news is about to come out or something bad is about to happen.

"This is my domain. Although I highly doubt you will be able to understand that possibility." Frederick really didn't like the sound of that. Adam continued. *"As I said, this is my sanctuary. I have finally found my peace and love in here. My love and I will be here eternally, for she is mine."*

"I am sorry, I don't quite understand?"

"Of course you do not understand. Let me show you." Adam took his hand and pushed the door completely open. *"Darling, come on out. We have a guest today."* Frederick watched as a black silhouette figure came out of the structure. Frederick realized it was Lilith.

"Hello Frederick, what brings you here?" However, this was not the Lilith Frederick was accustomed to seeing. This Lilith was more beautiful now than she ever was. Her black hair was free from its usual bun and was so silky smooth and straight it looked like a black curtain.

Her sapphire eyes were glittering within the white aura around them. Her ruby red lips and dusky shade around her eyes were darker and more piercing than ever. But her skin almost looked like it was glowing white, whiter than the dress she was wearing and that is what gave her the breathtaking appearance that would make any man want to do her bidding. Her voice also had a very distinct echo and sharpness to it. However, this looked all wrong from Frederick's perspective and he was becoming increasingly confused.

What had happened? Didn't they have a nice time at the lunch date, didn't they have a grand time at the opera? More importantly, didn't Adam's actions at the ball show what kind of person he was? What about all the conversations they had together? Most of all, didn't she despise Adam and feel uncomfortable around him?

"What happened, Lilith? Why are you with him?"

"What does it matter to you?" She replied coldly. *"Adam takes care of me."*

"But what about the lunch, the opera, the ball?"

"Oh please, you didn't think I was interested in you, did you? A great many men have been interested in me and I have allowed them to believe I returned their feelings until I break their hearts. I have always been interested in Adam. But never...you!" Frederick was starting to feel light-headed. This made absolutely no sense. Lilith continued to plow on.

"You know I never really needed you. I am wishing I had never met you. Your clinginess is like a leech, sucks the blood right out of anyone you come across. Your silly panic attacks when you thought I was in danger. I never had an ounce of feeling for you. You repulse me, every night after reluctantly spending time with you I throw up and have to bathe myself to rid the aura of you."

At this point Adam chimed in. *"You see, you can't comprehend any of this. Oh look at him, Lilith! He is trembling, and now he has wet himself. She is mine and I cannot let you in my domain. How silly of you to think that she was interested in you. You know what you look like to me? You look like the sorrowful mutt a mother gives birth to when her body has been defiled by a stranger. Just couldn't bear to expel you from her womb and has forever been haunted by the event every time she looks at you."* Frederick now had tears coming down his face. Everything about this was wrong.

"I'm sorry, Frederick, I never meant to hurt you," mocked Lilith in a sing-song voice that did not suit her. *"I must ask you to leave me alone and never approach me again. I am Adam's and that is final."*

They immediately were engaged in a hard lock around the lips. Adam swiftly grabbed Lilith in a macabre embrace that left Frederick standing there shocked. He couldn't take it anymore and bolted out of there.

Lilith shrieked, *"GO!!! LEAVE US! AT LEAST I WILL BE RID OF YOU!!!"* Frederick didn't need to be told twice, this was too much for him. In no time he was back on the main roads, sobbing so hard, his soul shuddered. All he remembered was the grotesque image of Adam defiling Lilith, the strange land in the middle of the river, one blurry lamppost, blood pouring out of his neck and a rushing sound of an ocean wave crashing in. Then nothing.

Then almost immediately, Frederick opened his eyes and saw that he was in his bed. Sweating profusely and feeling in shambles like the world was collapsing on him.~~

Leah and Max: Black Caves, Ep 2

By: Julia Fieldhammer

It was late afternoon and Black Caves amusement park was starting to get crowded. Despite all of the kids running around and having fun with their families, Leah, Megan, Trent, and Max were on a mission. An hour or so earlier, Leah received a transmission from their organization, Society's Secret Heroes (SHH), through her wheelchair. The leader of their organization, Kim, let them know about a kidnapping that had taken place in the very same amusement park their family had gone to. Leah's service dog, Max, found a note in a tree at the beginning of their journey disclosing the location of the father and daughter who were taken.

After walking a while, the gang came across a ride that looked like it was closed. Looking at the name of the ride, Megan let her siblings know this was the ride mentioned in the note Max found. This particular ride was apparently an indoor roller coaster, and the building that it was in had all the doors and windows boarded up.

"On no," Leah said, reading the sign on the front door. "Apparently the ride has to be examined."

All of a sudden, there was a loud bang followed by a scream. "What was that?" Trent whispered.

"I don't know," Megan whispered back. She started walking around to the back of the ride, motioning for Leah, Trent, and Max to follow her. "Let's go this way." After a few minutes, however, Megan stopped short.

"What is it?" Leah asked, trying to stop herself from running her sister over with her wheelchair.

"Look," Megan whispered again, motioning into the open back door of the building. There, inside the building, was a scene that no one would ever want to see. A middle-aged man was tied up on the floor and next to him was a little girl who looked to be about 5 or 6 years old.

"This must be the father and daughter Kim was talking about."

There was another man in the building, this one wearing a white cape. The siblings heard him scream out, "Now I can finally get revenge for my family!"

"What do we do?" Leah asked, looking around in panic.

"What do you mean, what do we do?" Trent whispered frantically. "I thought you guys said Kim told us to contact her as soon as we found something!"

"We have to get in there and do something," Megan whispered, ignoring Trent's attempts to stop them.

Suddenly Leah said remembered that SHH outfitted her wheelchair with all sorts of cool gadgets. "I got it!" She exclaimed. "We can use the invisible bubble button on my wheelchair. If everyone stays close to my wheelchair, we'll all be encased in this bubble that makes us invisible. It also floats us above ground!"

"That's a great idea! This way we can get a better viewpoint without being seen." Megan crowded in close to Leah's wheelchair, making sure both Max and Trent were with them. Once she was sure everyone was close enough, Leah pressed the button and a big bubble formed around them and started to float up towards the sky.

"Okay, but once we see better what's going on in there, we're going to call Kim, right?" Trent asked nervously. He knew how headstrong his sisters were.

"I don't know how to control thing," Leah whispered with her hands in the air, completely ignoring her little brother's concerns.

"Maybe it's with your joystick," Trent suggested.

"Good idea, Trent," Leah said, grabbing the joystick and moving them into the building.

She maneuvered the gang so they were right above the man in the white cape as he started talking again. "It's time!" He yelled, holding an axe above his head.

“There’s got to be something we can do, some button we can use,” Leah said, trying to remember all the gadgets SHH hooked her up with.

Then, in true little brother fashion, Trent started trying to press random buttons, completely forgetting about his past nerves. “Oh, what’s this button do?”

“Trent, no!” Megan whisper-yelled, trying to stop him, but it was too late, Trent had already pressed the button.

The sibling looked down nervously to see what Trent had done. “You’ll pay for what happened to my family,” the white cape guy was still holding the axe, and it looked like he was about to swing it. All of a sudden, a whole bunch of rubber balls fell about of the bottom of Leah’s wheelchair. But these rubber balls weren’t just any balls, they turned out to be rubber shock balls. Any time they touched something they shocked it with a whole bunch of electricity. The shock balls were falling on top of all three of the people below the gang, but somehow were only shocking the guy with the white cape, and he fell to the floor screaming, dropping the axe as he went.

“We did it!” Trent screamed, excitedly.

“Yes, we did, and you wanted to call Kim right away,” Leah said, driving the bubble down to the floor with her joystick. She laughed when he stuck his tongue out at her and disabled the bubble.

Now on the floor in front of the white cape guy, the siblings noticed him struggling to get to his feet. “Not so fast!” A voice from the doorway screamed.

“Kim!” The three siblings exclaimed, turning around to see their boss, running into the building with the police right behind her.

“You’re going to jail,” Kim told him, as the police handcuffed his hands behind his back.

“Thank you, Kim. We’ve been trying to catch this guy for months,” one of the officers said as they led the cape guy out of the building. Kim nodded at him and turned to help the man who was still tied up, out of the ropes that were holding him.

“Well, we better go find our parents.” Megan said, trying to steer her siblings and their dog out of the building.

“Not so fast, you three. And you too, Max,” Kim said, crossing her arms. “I thought I gave you explicit orders to just do reconnaissance and report any findings to me immediately.”

“We’re sorry, Kim,” Megan said. “We really did try to, we just got caught up in the excitement of it all. And we really wanted to help.” She looked at her siblings with a grin. “Well that, and Trent just really likes to press buttons!” The three laughed, and Max let out a bark or two in agreement.

Kim shook her head but smiled. “Well we do give you guys the best of our gadgets. Just try to stick to reconnaissance next time.”

The three siblings all promised Kim to be less in on the action the next mission, as long as they don’t get carried away again. Megan then suggested they start looking for their parents, as by this time they would probably be getting worried. They barely started through the park when they practically ran into their parents.

“There you get are! We were starting to get worried,” their mom exclaimed, running over to them.

“Sorry, Mom. There was a long line at one of the rides we went on,” Megan said, trying to cover up where they really were.

“Well should we go on some rides as a family,” their mom suggested.

Trent started jumping up and down in excitement, talking all about the rides they still had to go on. The family started walking through the park, but Leah and Megan stayed behind for a minute. “You know we’re going to have to tell mom and dad at some point,” Megan said solemnly.

“Yeah I know,” said Leah, petting Max’s head. Megan was right, but Leah didn’t want to think about that right now. All she wanted to do was go on some rides and enjoy the time with her family.~

Year without an Xmas Tree

By: Renee Skudra

“It was the best of times, it was the worst of times” one of Dickens’ characters opined in his novel “A Tale of Two Cities” and for me right now the latter sentiment is unimpeachably true. As I write this on Friday, August 7th, there are globally 19,127,091 cases of the Coronavirus with 715,555 deaths. At this very moment in the United States a documented 4,888,070 are on the books with total deaths numbering approximately 160,157. In my own State of North Carolina, statistics are sobering: 2,134 deaths with 5,498 confirmed cases and 154 deaths. A virtual medical Reign of Terror is waging and the entire foot soldier populace seems immobilized in the ever-increasing din and pandemonium that has gripped our nation. It is almost impossible to do battle against an enemy that we cannot see which is seemingly well-versed in the ability to mutate and therefore create further trouble in the efforts to deflect it.

Would that this were all enough, the sum of this country’s woes. But there is inestimably more. As the U.S. sits mostly shuttered and reeling from the immediate and long-ranging effects of the health crisis, approximately 40 million people are out of work. In my family of two, we have both lost our jobs. The current rate of unemployment stands at 11.1%. According to a post on the CNN website, that although the U.S. economy has added another 1.8 million jobs in July 2020, the economy is still down 12.9 million jobs during this pandemic. For the 20th straight week, more than one million Americans have filed jobless claims even as enhanced federal employment benefits expired. For the huge number of people who don’t have sufficient savings to cover even the impending month’s rent, it must feel like they are teetering on the edge of a precipice and the odds are decidedly not in their favor that they can survive this financial downfall.

These were the things that were populating my mental landscape, filled with its pot-holes and crevices of anger and dismay, as I drove to the Lowe’s supermarket in Jamestown to do my twice-monthly curbside pickup. The anxiety, already sky high and exponentially expanding with each day’s terrifying addendum of news, suddenly increased even more as I suddenly noticed that the infamous yellow “check engine” light on my dashboard had come on, announcing a minor or major problem but nonetheless something that would have to be dealt with. I said a few choice words to my vehicle which was still moving on with an indifferent automotive air, impervious to the fact that at any moment it could possibly be finished with its Toyota Corolla life and me along with it. “I’ll deal with this latest catastrophe this afternoon” I said to no one in particular, racking up another defeat on the daily life scale, putting it in the “more money has to be shelled out” category of existence --- more money which was rapidly disappearing from the family not-working-anymore vault.

That’s when I saw the black-lettered sign in front of the white Victorian clapboard house, where it always hangs on a weather-beaten wooden post. But the message this time was different. It said: “Sorry, there are no Christmas trees this year.” As if everything hasn’t been enough since March 16th when the pandemic was officially declared (the self-same day I lost my job teaching in Guilford County schools), here now was something extra. On top of all of this, there would be no trees for the many folks assuredly desiring them. As a Sephardic Jewish woman of color whose traditions do not include the purchase of those evergreens or the celebration of that holiday, astoundingly, those words hit me like an epiphane, a cerebral tidal wave. More things that would go a-missing? What ELSE wouldn’t there be? The food and toilet paper shortages were still hitting many of us upside the head with a powerful whammy but it seemed like the lack of trees was an altogether different type of assault because of its power to affect a spiritual nerve. Not having these trees felt almost like an onslaught against religious although admittedly it wasn’t mine. This year has brought incalculable suffering and death to so many, massive job losses, food deprivation, surging crime and lawlessness and a universal accompanying anxiety and depression so great that no calculus can ever probably be devised to measure the sheet gravity and extent of that. Can’t there at least be the trees that were always there in preceding years, a welcoming beacon for those to whom they mattered?

Throw into the mix a couple of tornados and hurricanes and it feels like we have ALL been living somewhat (or possibly extremely) dangerously almost all of the time. For a native Californian such as myself, the North Carolina weather is now a part of an unremitting siege on a mentality that is becoming increasingly fragile and I daresay, unhinged. For me, as a person with an autoimmune condi-

tion, even the simple act of entering a market to buy food, do a doctor's visit or purchase gas for the car at the neighborhood station is heavy with meaning. There are moments when it is simply terrifying and I forego doing the daily errand until I can reconcile myself to the fact that if I don't at some point do these things, they simply will never get done. If I am successful at calming my nerves, I leap into the fray, hand sanitizer and gloves in hand. I take off in the yellow check-engine light car, lightning and thunder crashing around me. There is now a flash flood warning on the radio and for the moment the spectre of the pandemic recedes in the distance. As I rush into the pharmacy to pick up a prescription, wearing a mask as I always do in public, I see a great many individuals who do not and are clearly treating cavalierly our nation's continuing and worsening health crisis. The problem is that now everything feels ominous and I am at a loss as to how to dissipate that mood. I grab the Synthroid and jump into the car with moving water lurching around me, back to my home with its interminable noise of television news and its clamor of something else which is heart-breaking. But there is more: the largest copper-colored cockroach I have ever seen, possibly three inches long and two inches in diameter, waiting for me in the dining room, I who have been living in a vortex of terror for the past six months. I am even more afraid at this apparent joke played by the universe, one which knows ineffably my fear of scary bugs and this one who certainly is not afraid of me.

On this particular trip, as I am driving back to Greensboro, curbside groceries safely in tow, I remember a comment I saw on the internet by someone named Robert Wrigley who I don't know and will most likely never meet. At this moment it makes resoundingly good sense: "Somedays, all I want is no news, none of the time." That is why when I arrived back home, I said to myself: no danger today. Nothing. I took a D.H. Lawrence novel, a bag of Pepperidge Farm double-dark chocolate cookies and sat reading in my overrun-with-weeds back yard, in the shade of the beloved dogwood tree, now with orange-colored autumn-changing leaves. I unplugged the cell phone, free of its incessant ringing. Thirty minutes later I put down my book and struck an easy yoga pose, augmenting that with some mindful (some might say: mindless) meditation. I am doing fine until out of nowhere three yellow jackets buzz around my head. I can feel their fury and their intent. I leap out of my mostly unstable plastic green chair and run like the dickens into the house, out of the suddenly dangerous back yard with its bent-on-attack insect hellions. All I know is that I want a respite from this year of uninterrupted dangerous occurrences and yellow jackets can be factored into that kind of list.

When the landline rings urgently, it is my cousin David in Los Angeles, about to be deployed to Afghanistan with the rest of his Army unit. He is panting heavily and the words he utters – "I have Covid" – give new meaning to the word danger. My immediate family is now part of the raging health crisis that has brought this formidable nation to a standstill. Metaphorically we are all on our knees with vehement prayers that this too shall pass. All I can think is "God, please end this pandemic and let there be Christmas trees in Jamestown for the people that want them." I'm Jewish but I mean both the first and the latter sentiments with all my heart.~~



Happiness & Joy:
A poem about letting the imagination
be rulers of your perfect world in your mind

By: Paul Lechevalier

*Ode to the hurting, ode to the depressed!
O how I see pain, misery, and suffering!
But, in this world I am.*

*I rule; I am just.
Justice always prevails.
I am united with love and justice combined.
For like a diamond I glow.
A thousand hues.
A palette of eternity, if not more.*

*A prismatic array of colors; colors and smells.
Some the likes no one has ever seen or smelled before.
A radiant aroma can be smelled.
Smells that are all wonderful, but true.*

*All that can be enveloped shall be,
by the colors and the scents.
Enveloping me. Ensnaring others.
Capturing their attention
and rescuing me from the darkness inside.
I call out to be rescued!
Others call out; I save them back.
A two-way street, back to back.
We strike all evil in the face. Teamwork.*

*For as we keep going,
no one has a need.
No one has a desire unfulfilled.
No one left out.
No one's all alone.
A status of grandeur for everyone.
A grand feast for everyone!
No one left out.
We'll feast, and feast, and feast the days away!*

*And the nights we'll have fireworks
with colors beyond a sparkling rainbow.
All the people will gather
and celebrate the new dawn's coming,
and mourn the old dusks falling.*

*For O the bright morning star shall fall!
But the royal light of life shall rise again and bring us a new dawn.
For what more can be asked for than peace, humility, and joy aplenty? For happiness is just temporal;
but joy should last till the flames of rage, wrath, and anger be squelched.*

*And live on forever till the coming days of forevermore.
And dance the radiant skies of grace, love, and poise!
'Til the edge of eternity, maybe even never?*

*What can be said when one takes the leap of faith
and believes in his fellow human?
For when you believe, you give.
And when you give, you feel joy.
What can be thought?
When no one has poverty, riches, fame?
Perhaps even world peace?*

*For when one gives a cent,
one gains a million dollars.
And when one gains a cent,
one gives a million dollars.
What can be given when one has it all?*

*For with great riches may come corruption.
But with freedom comes great happiness and jovial times aplenty.
For in this world I am plenty.
No one needs, no one lusts or covets.
And no one dies for I am enough.
Listen! Do you hear?
Hark! Listen O harp!
Listen O lyre! For I have a song!*

*One that will soothe, not kill.
One of pleasure, not fakery.
One everyone loves and will never grow old.*

And we'll live happily ever after.

Such is life though.

Time to wake up and get back to the work; the work of the world.

*Forever and ever.
Always.
Amen.~~*

MY TULPA



BY JORDAN WATSON

My Tulpa IV - Post-Awareness

By: Jordan Watson

My name is Conley Job. I am now 66 years old. The outskirts of the mountain are part of my new surroundings. The lavish, decorative estate that is my new home is one of the few remaining things I have left. I have given my personal maid a well-deserved night off, for she is the only means of kindness that remains. My loving pit bull guard dog, Childs, stays near the lofty couch near the fireplace of my chimney upstairs, keeping his watchful eye on me, even when falling asleep. The stars are eternal tonight, glossed with the smoky trails of the small, clouded skies. I stay by the fireside, reminiscing photos of...of who was...once...my family.

H-How? How could I...how could I have not known? The...the carburetor in that...accursed vehicle from Milutin...W-was f-f-f...faulty? The h-hyper drive...was, was...was imprecise. That hit...That whole...damn hit into a hovering truck. I...I-I...I don't remember, h-h-how long, I was knocked unc-c-conscious. H-H-How...How hard...I wept.

H-Had a settlement with them...Years ago...y-years of work, and ah-all for them t-to just...T-th...Those...Those bastards! Ah-huh...A-All this money, and n-no-Nothing to bring them back to me! Ho Gods...Ho Gods, Enna! L-Logan! Elaine! P-P-P-Pierce! Dear Gods, why? WHY?! Why why why why why them?! I-It...Dammit, It should've been me! I hold the picture of more blessed times to my chest. T-The houses sounds, t-t-they clog up. I-I-I-I-I can't...I can't...can't take...the pain, in my eyes...The...t-the flow, of tears w-w-w-w-won't s-stop...

C-Chi-Childs head perks up. Wide awake is he. I-I-I hear him growl. He gets up...up from the golden sofa near me. Audibly sniffle, to only r-recover, and ask him,

“W-w-w-what's up, boy? W-w-what d-do you hear?”

He jumps from it, h-hearing the scratches made from the floor. G-Growling gets mh-more intense. I-I-g-get to my ot-other chair, and w-wa-wa-waddle out from m-my wheelchair. G-get on my walking st-stilted feet. Neh-ne-nearly slip on the hardwood. D-D-D...D-Da-damned things! C-Co-couldn't have j-j...j-just given me real bionic legs...N-n-not covered in care plan. G-ge-g...g-get back up, and st-start walking over. Childs bears his teeth. He r-runs down the stairs, frantically scratching at the floors. I-I...I yell out to him, i-in near vain,

“Where are you going off to?!”

I follow suit. Come down one of the hallways to the th-third floor. E-E-Each portrait on th-the wall, represents my children. P-P-Passing through Elaine's room. H-H-Heard she would be an elegant musician. Her piano playing always br-b-brought such joy to my ears. Frédéric Chopin's Raindrop. Ooh, such a moving melody. L-L-L-Logan. H-H-He'd be an engineer. Very mu-m-much like his old man. L-L-Looked up to me for guidance on hi-his science projects. My boy. Ho gods, my boys...P-P-pass through Pierce's room. Always f-fa-f-fascinated with linguistics. W-Wa-Wanted to help overseas companies wi-with their technological de-dee-de-departments. A-Always would sing foreign songs to Enna. Sc-Scr-Sc-Scratches heard in my bedroom. Ch...Ch-Charming curtains, wr-wrapping the tapestry. Th-The shot, o-of the moonlight outside my door.

GAAH! M-M-Mm-mm-My head! Th-The back of my he-HEAD! It stings. Wh-Wh-Where did that come from?! D-D-D-DA-DAMMIT! Wh-Wh-Who?! B-b-Ba-Bashing the side of my head, b-b-because, someone couldn't have her S-Su-such a cruel p-person! T-Th-that instant...I-I-I...I feel like, I'm back at...th-that in-INFERNAL place. G-Got...Got to get back up f-from bed. W-W-Wa-Wait f-for me, E-Enna, I-I'll be back.

Dear Gods, sc-scr-scr-scratching is m-more audible. Downstairs. M-Must go downstairs. D-Down to second floor. Th-these hallways...Wh-Why? Why a-are...are they so long and wi-winding? St-Stumbling to hear Childs running. G-Go left...th-then straight. P-Passing through bathroom and linens rooms...Scratches...T-They stop. Wait. N-N-Not...scratches now. C-C-C-Crackles. L-Li-Like bones snapping and reh-re...resnapping. A-really low, low bellowing growl. Something no-not like I've heard. I-I-I sl-slowly peek around the left corner of the hallway. Childs is tense. Gr-Growling at the darkness ahead. Growling starts to be-become overshadowed with unearthly snarls. Beside the window, on where I-I can look out front of the estate, is s-something...Oh God almighty...I st-start to catch a glimpse with a light of my candle wick. Th-The tapestry of s-some of the curtains rise from the floor it lays upon. Th-Th-T...The snapping of bones come from that...that thing...I-It's body is ma-mal-malnourished, yet visibly bubbling muscle. I-I-It-It's elongated, multi-jointed fingers pick up from the ground, popping the air within its knu-kn-knuckles. L-Lo-L-Long, spindly legs barely make it stand on its ho-horrific feet of splinter and stone. L-L-lo-Loo-Long hair, like straw, and debris, of wh-what once was fluff. But it's...i-i-i-i-it-its eyes, piercing white through the alcoves of the darkness of the hallway. I-I-It p-picks itself up, and Childs barks ferociously. I c-can feel...it's stare into my soul. L-Li-Like something...familiar...I-I hear more bone snapping, as i-it tries to point in my direction, o-o-opening it's mouth...

“...Yooouuuu...”

“...W-Wh-Who are you?”

M-M-M-Mo-Moo-More bones snap and twist around it's sickening body, and contort i-into thin extra limbs...I-Its eyes...Its eye sockets fracture outward, and it's...Christ almighty, it's mouth expands, in a sh-sh-shrill, ungodly scream!

The Rise and Fall of Jimmy Savile

By: John Kruiise

Jimmy Savile became friends with each of The Beatles during the British Invasion era of Music in the 60's and was an eccentric spinner of discs. He helped pull in big numbers for the BBC by presenting "Jim'll Fix It" and "Top of The Pops." He also raised millions of pounds in the UK for charities and good causes. He even did an information film (similar to PSAs in America) and a TV series based on it called *Clunk Click* advising the public in the UK to Clunk (shut the car door tight) and Click (buckle) the seat belt especially on the shortest car journeys. He is now revealed as a sexual predator who we now believe abused many teenage girls/older women throughout his career.

It was nearly a year after his death in 2011 that people started to speak out about what happened to them through a TV documentary called "Exposure: The Other Side of Jimmy Savile" which aired in October 2012. Esther Rantzen who was a famous BBC personality said "It was the adult world who created this mythical figure who was against criticism. Don't blame yourself." The police even had the perfect chance to arrest Savile but once again Savile was not to be denied.

James Winston Vincent Savile was born in Leeds in 1926. He was the youngest of seven children (his elder siblings were Mary, Majory, Vincent, John, Joan, and Christina) in a Roman Catholic family. His parents were Vincent Joseph Marie Savile (1886-1953), a bookmaker's clerk and insurance agent and his wife Agnes Monica Kelly (1886-1972). His paternal grandmother was Scottish.

Savile grew up during the Great Depression, and later claimed, "I was forged in the crucible of want." He described his father as "scrupulously honest, but scrupulously broke." Savile's mother believed he owed his life to the intercession of the Venerable Margaret Sinclair, a Scottish ruin, after he recovered quickly from illness, probably pneumonia, at the age of two when his mother prayed at Leeds Cathedral after picking up a pamphlet about Sinclair.

Jimmy Savile also worked in coal mines (aged 18) in which he sustained an injury and was a championship wrestler. His voice was heard on BBC Radio in 1956. In 1968, he joined Radio 1, where he presented a program called "Savile's Travels." Before he started doing *Top of The Pops*, he presented Tyne Tees Television music program, *Young at Heart*. His first *Top of The Pops* aired on the 1st of January 1964 a clip of which was seen on *Exposure* and The Beatles and "I Want to Hold Your Hand" made the top of the chart that night. His Saturday show on Radio 1 reached six million listeners.

Jim'll Fix It was a show where children would write to Jimmy Savile and have their wishes fulfilled and get something in return for it. For example, fixing a broken roller coaster at a theme park and having Tom Baker (of *Doctor Who* fame) ride with them as a surprise. They would also receive badges claiming the wishes had been fulfilled as an extra. The badges (if there were any left around homes in the UK) are now to be gathered up and burned/melted down.

A computer game called *Super Trolley* was made based on a wish to Jimmy Savile care of *Jim'll Fix It* where the now disgraced presenter is seen in the artwork on the box pushing a shopping cart. The game had you stock grocery items while making sure lost children/infants didn't cause trouble for you along the way. If you didn't get the sack, you'd be promoted to assistant manager of the supermarket.

On August 9th, 1997, Savile had undergone a heart bypass surgery in Killingbeck Hospital in Leeds, having known he needed it after four years of regular checkups. Two days before his 85th birthday, Savile was found dead in his home. He was in the hospital with pneumonia and his death wasn't suspicious. His closed satin gold coffin was put on display at the Queen's Hotel in Leeds, with the last cigar he smoked and his two "This is Your Life" books. About 4,000 people went to his funeral to pay tribute. His funeral took place at Leeds Cathedral on November 9th, 2011.

During Savile's lifetime, sporadic allegations of child abuse were made against him dating as far back as 1963 but were publicly alleged after his death. He claimed his success on *Jim'll Fix It* had been that he had disliked children, although he later admitted saying this to defunct scrutiny of his personal life. He did not own

a computer and didn't want people thinking he was downloading child pornography.

Immediately after Savile's death BBC's *Newsnight* began an investigation into reports he was a sexual abuser but was never broadcast. A documentary made by Louis Theroux in 2000 Savile was asked if he was a pedophile. He replied, "I know I'm not." In 2007, Savile was interviewed under caution by police investigation of an allegation of indecent assault in the 1970's at the now closed Duncroft Approved School for Girls near Staines, Surrey where he was a regular visitor.

Nearly a year after his death, Mark Williams-Thomas, a consultant on the original *Newsnight* investigation, revealed on *Exposure* that claims up to ten women, including one aged under 14 at the time, alleged that they had been molested or raped by Savile during the 1960's and 1970's. The announcement attracted national attention, and more claims of abuse against him accumulated. The following day, the Metropolitan Police said Child Abuse Investigation Command would assess the allegations.

Within a month of the abuse scandal emerging, many places or organizations connected to Savile were renamed or had his name removed. On October 9th, 2012, the headstone of Savile's grave would be removed, destroyed and sent to landfill. Savile's family expressed their anguish for the victims and respect for public opinion. His body is inherited in the cemetery in Scarborough, although it has been proposed that it be exhumed and cremated. Savile's estate, believed to be about 4 million pounds, was frozen by its executors, the NatWest Bank, in view of the possibility that those alleged that they have been assaulted by Savile could make claims for damages.

An authorized biography, "How about That Then?" by Allison Belemey, was published in June 2012. After the claims made against him were published, the author felt she had been "betrayed" by Savile. On the 26th of June 2014, UK Secretary of Health Jeremy Hunt delivered a public apology to the patients of the National Health Institute abused by Savile.

Richard Harrison, a long-serving psychiatric nurse at Broadmoor Hospital, said in 2012 that Savile had long been regarded by staff as "a man with severe personality disorder and a liking for children." Another nurse, Bob Allen, agreed with assessments of Savile as a psychopath, and stated, "A lot of the staff said he should be behind bars." Allen also said that he reported Savile to his supervisor for apparent improper conduct with a juvenile, but no action was taken.

After the controversy surrounding Savile started hitting the fans, more followed. Children's channel CBeebies (made for 3 to 6 year old children) got 216 viewer complaints of an episode of *Tweenies* (meant to be a spoof of *Top of The Pops* and seen on YouTube) where Max (one of the adults) mimics Savile from hair and even his dodgy laughter in a parody of the famous music countdown show. The first song he introduced was "One Finger One Thumb KEEP MOVING!" It was unintentionally run again in 2014 after his death. A BBC spokeswoman said "The 2001 episode won't be played again and we're sorry for the offense it may have caused." Not only that but the series took a 5-month hiatus from reruns. A new generation of kids continued playing along with them until 2016.

In my honest opinion, we can make sure history won't repeat itself. And I pray that if any child becoming a teen knows of anyone thinking about doing the stuff Jimmy Savile did, to tell a person who'd be willing to listen right away, like schoolteachers or a principal or even their own parents or a police officer.~~

Recordings

Ahab The Arab (1962) with Brian Poole and The Tremeloes
Note: The song would eventually be made famous by Ray Stevens.

Books

As It Happens (autobiography) 1974
Love is an Uphill Thing 1976 (paperback edition of As it Happens)
God'll Fix It - 1979

Awards

Order of The British Empire (O.B.E. was added to his name) 1972
Knight Bachelor for Charitable Services in 1990. He was knighted "Sir" Jimmy Savile by Margaret Thatcher and attempted to do so to him four times before her last year in office.
He was an honorary fellow member of Royal College of Radiologists.
He was given a "green beret" by the royal marines.~~

A Look into the Music Biopic Genre



By: Megan Cunningham

While promoting *Walk Hard: The Dewey Cox Story*, star John C. Reilly once told *Fresh Air*, “Ray Charles and Johnny Cash were different men who led different lives. But their movies are so similar.” He wasn’t alone. In fact, during an Oscars ceremony in the mid-2000s, host Chris Rock called *Walk of Line*, “Ray with white people.” To be fair, both appear to follow some kind of formula that corresponded to their actual lives. Both Ray Charles and Johnny Cash had humble beginnings in abject poverty. Both witnessed a

brother die during their childhoods. Both abused drugs and cheated on their wives during their careers. Yet, while Charles had to grapple with blindness and racism that got him banned from Georgia, Cash had to win over June Carter and face his disapproving dad.

A music biopic is essentially a biographical film about a musician, singer, or composer with their work as a central focus. They usually follow a real-life figure from their humble trauma-filled childhood, through their substance-abuse-filled adulthoods that will eventually bite them in the ass, early successes, broken marriages, and midlife comebacks. You can see this all mercilessly parodied in *Walk Hard* that critics have referenced it in their criticisms on the music biopics that came after it. Though sometimes those demons catch up to them that they tragically fizzle and die, especially if they’re murdered or have substance abuse issues. Unless we’re talking about Buddy Holly in *The Buddy Holly Story* and Ritchie Valens in *La Bamba*. In that case, it was boarding the wrong plane at the wrong time. Nonetheless, while they’ve been around since ironically the Silent Era, they have become devastatingly popular in the 2000s with the releases of *Ray* and *Walk the Line*. The last decade alone has seen a stunning crop of such gems like *Bohemian Rhapsody*, *Love & Mercy*, *Judy*, *Straight Outta Compton*, *Get on Up*, *Nowhere Boy*, and *Rocketman*. And if popular and gets good enough critical acclaim, they often received accolades like Oscars.



But why are Hollywood studios willing to make these movies about musical figures? For one, musicians, singers, and composers have loomed large in our culture and have dedicated fan bases. So even if the film about a figure sucks, a lot of the fans will turn up. Since it’s easier to market to an already established entity than something completely original, given how Hollywood likes to do sequels, prequels, reboots, retcons, and remakes, along with adaptations. After all, I’m a thirty-year-old woman who’s already seen three different guys play Spiderman and three biopics about Vincent van Gogh. Another is that music biopics are cheaper to produce since they require no big budget for visual effects, epic battle scenes, and not much CGI other than possible de-aging or recreating settings that don’t exist like the Wembley Stadium for the Live Aid concert in *Bohemian Rhapsody*. And if it’s on a classical composer, they don’t need to pay royalties.

When it comes to the music biopic subject, they must have some issues in their lives they must come to terms with. With Ray Charles, it’s drugs, trauma, blindness, women, and racism. With Johnny Cash, it’s drugs, booze, trauma, and family issues. With Freddie Mercury and Elton John, it’s their sexuality during LGBTQ-hostile times with a possible side of drugs and family issues. With Brian Wilson, it’s mental illness with the side of family issues and trusting the wrong people. With John Lennon, it’s parental abandonment. With James Brown, it’s drugs and domestic abuse. With Judy Garland, it’s drugs, booze, family issues, and the old Hollywood studio system that wrecked her. With Billie Holiday, it’s drugs and racism. And if the subject is a woman, it’s very likely choosing



the wrong men as romantic partners and career managers as with Loretta Lynn and Tina Turner. But whether they come to terms with it depends on whether they died young or lived to a ripe old age. Or they could be like Freddie Mercury who finally drops Paul and reconciles with his bandmates but will end up dying of AIDS.

However, we must acknowledge that musicians, singers, and composers led lives as diverse as anyone else. Of course, some had the kind of drama-filled lives like many music biopic subjects. But a lot led lives that were actually fairly boring and not as eventful. Sure, there were plenty of musicians, singers, and composers who abused drugs and booze,

spent childhoods in trauma-filled abject poverty, treated those close to them like crap, slept around, had issues with family who didn't respect their work, trusted the wrong people, got screwed by society, went underappreciated in their lifetimes, were in bad accidents, and died tragically young. But that's not necessarily all of them. However, when you watch these films, you get the impression that many of our greatest musicians, singers, and composers were absolute human train wrecks. Yes, we know the standard music biopic formula brings great drama and that we know many of them were really like that. Yet, sometimes we see these standard music biopic tropes where they shouldn't be. For instance, *The*



Buddy Holly Story depicts Holly's parents and pastor disapproving his music career. In reality, Holly's mom helped him write "Maybe Baby" and he regularly tithed his church. *Bohemian Rhapsody* has Freddie Mercury break up Queen and pursue a solo career. In real life, Queen never broke up and while Mercury did a couple solo albums, they were side projects. Besides, Brian May and Roger Taylor also made solo albums as well. It was more like taking a temporary break than a breakup. Nonetheless, while this music biopic with music icon as human train wreck may work with a whole variety of musicians, singers, and composers, it may not be the case with others. Take Billy Joel, for instance. Now on the surface, his life has many makings of a quality biopic I'd pay money to see, which I'm sure would be titled: *Piano Man*. Humble origins and troubled

childhood? Check. Substance abuse problems? He's got a history of dangerous drunk driving. Failed marriages? He's had three but his first was a real doozy. Family issues? He wrote a very negative song about his mother he didn't want her to know about. Mental health problems? Well, he did survive a suicide attempt. Popularity with audiences but tense relationship with critics? Oh, God, yes. Instances of trusting the wrong people? Check. However, Joel's biopic would soon get into inaccuracy territory in regard to resolving his alcoholism. In real life, he didn't really get sober until the late 2000s because he still drove cars into houses when I was in high school. But biopic Joel has to do it while he's still married to super model Christie Brinkley who'll have to successfully convince him to go to rehab so everything can be rainbows and sunshine. Even though in real life, they divorced after the *River of Dreams* album and his drinking went from bad to worse from the 1990s to the 2000s that his voice suffered. And I'm sure if such biopic came out, I could just hear my mother explaining it to mine and my sister's kids for years.

I sometimes wish once in awhile Hollywood would make music biopics like *Yankee Doodle Dandy* and *The Glenn Miller Story*. Granted, neither film is 100% accurate and have their flaws (like women not wearing 1920s and 1930s outfits in the latter film). After all, they were both made before the 1960s. But both show that Hollywood can make a perfectly good music biopic filled with both trials and tribulations without going into Dewey Cox territory. Neither are shown having impoverished trauma-filled childhoods, disapproving dads, substance abuse problems (save smoking but it doesn't destroy their lives), being all-around jerks to their colleagues and spouses, or surrounded themselves with the wrong people. Do they struggle? Of course. Cohan's cockiness temporarily drives him out of his family vaudeville act. Miller and his band had to endure countless setbacks just to get off the ground and come up with his own unique sound. But both prove that a music icon doesn't have to be a complete basket case to have an interesting story. They just have to make great music. And when it comes to movies about famous musical figures, shouldn't that be enough?

Picture courtesy of News Break, *The Guardian*, *Lincoln Journal Star*, Carrot Magazine, Ask.com, and The New Daily.~~



Why Leaves Fall from Trees

By Daniel H. Ashkin

Before leaves plunge off the tree, I am going to explain the different parts of the tree. Next, what role does photosynthesis play in keeping the leaves green? Further, how does the sun light variation cause leaves to convert their colors in the fall. Finally, what types of benefits do leaves on ground have the environment?

Deciduous trees lose their leaves during the fall. On the other hand, evergreen tree do not lose their leaves. The main parts of a tree comprise of the roots, trunk, and the crown. After a rainstorm, the roots collect the rainfall and transfer the nutrients to the trunk. Roots may likely range from 165 feet tall. The trunk supports the crown. The crown supports the branches, twigs, and the leaves of the tree. The tree bark plays a major role in keeping the insects away from the tree. The xylem plays a major role in transporting water and nutrients up through the tree by the roots and the inside the trunk. The inner bark scientific name is the Phloem. The phloem transports water, sugars, and amino acids to the different parts of the tree. Looking at the tree rings can likely tell the age and the moisture content of the whole year. A tree's rings are very short in the areas of the country that receive significant rainfall; however, when the tree rings are wider, the area of country suffers lack of rain.

Chlorophyll plays a major role in keeping the leaves green during the spring and summer months. The roots transport water into the tree. The tree leaves absorb the air and sunlight. The carbon dioxide and sunlight manufacture glucose for the nourishment of the tree. The glucose helps keeps the leaves green during the spring and the summer months. Under the leaves, the hidden color is **Carotenoid**. When we look at some pictures in Photoshop, the background layer under the animal may likely consist of a mask layers, the mask layer is the hidden color under the leaves. Some of the hidden colors are brown, yellow, orange, and red. **Anthocyanin** plays a major role in giving fruit their color. For an example, they give apples and strawberries their red color.

During the autumn, the days become shorter and cooler at night. Because of lack of sunlight and shorter days, the tree leaves are unable to manufacture as much Chlorophyll as the summer. The Carotenoid layer, under the leaves, becomes present in the leaves. Amazing, sparkling colors begin to appear like a marvelous painting from New England landscape painting.

According to the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, the best time to see the luminous leaves in Western PA is October 8 through the 15 of October. A peak fall season depends upon plentiful soil moisture throughout the spring and summer months. According to the USDA Forest Service, warm sunny days and cool nights often bring out the magnificent color display of color; Maple tree leaves often turn red. Aspen trees often turn vivid yellow in the Colorado Mountains. However, dry summers and fall may likely cause leave to fall on the ground without dazzling coloration as previous years.

Before leaves fall off the trees, the veins in the leaves block off moisture and nutrients from the tree. When the veins become clogged, the supply of food is unable to move into the leaves. As a result, the tree limbs (which hold the leaves) become very weak and feeble. During a windy fall day, the leaves start to fall onto the ground. After the leaves fall on the ground, they provide essential moisture and nutrients for the soil for the wintertime. After a person rakes the leaves, he or she can shred them into mulch. Spreading the mulch around bushes and flowers can likely reduce weeds from growing around plants. Mixing grass clippings with your leaves can provide nitrogen for your lawn. In addition, it is possible to reduce waste in landmines of leaves. However, spreading mulch around bushes and flowers can likely make your asthma worse if you are allergic to tree bark. During a cold rainy day in the wintertime, you may likely suffer a severe asthma attack. I strongly recommend that you cover your bushes and flowers with sand instead. Remove mulch around flowers so that you can breathe around the house.

Overall, the angle of sunlight plays an essential role of keeping the leaves green during the spring and summer months. When the angle of the sun becomes less during the fall, we start observing the **carotenoid layer**. Leaves stems (become clogged) as result of less nourishment going into them. The weak stems begin to fall gracefully off the tree. After the leaves fall on the ground, he or she can use it for much around their plants.--

The Magical Harry Potter World

By: Zach Grabowski

I wanted to share with you one of my favorite places while on vacation in Orlando, Florida. We went to Universal Studios, and in Universal Studio is my favorite place, "Harry Potter World." In Harry Potter World was the "Three Broomsticks Restaurant." It was my favorite place to eat. We enjoyed a delicious lunch – barbecue chicken and ribs, roasted potatoes, and vegetables. There are two other restaurants in Harry Potter World: "The Leaky Cauldron" and "Hog's Head." The best part of Harry Potter World was the butterbeer. It is a non-alcoholic beverage made with cream soda and butterscotch topping.



[This Photo](#) by Unknown Author is

There are several magical places to visit in Harry Potter World. You can board the "Hogwarts Express" at "King's Cross Station" and travel to "Hogsmeade Station". You can explore "Hogwarts Castle" and stop by the "Leaky Cauldron" or "Hog's Head" for a bite to eat and some delicious butterbeer!

They also have a "Harry Potter theme hotel" called "The Wizarding World of Harry Potter Hotel". It has rooms called "Wizard Chambers" and "Enchanting Chambers". The rooms are set in a gothic style with "Wizarding Artefacts". It was amazing! I want to go back to Harry Potter World just to drink the famous butterbeer!~~

Pittsburgh Steelers Defense Positions | By: Joshua Walburn

Defense Line: #73 Carlos Davis, #91 Stephen Tuitt, #94 Tyson Alualu, #95 Chris Wormley, #96 Isaiah Buggs, #97 Cameron Heyward.

Linebackers: #41 Robert Spillane, #48 Bud Dupree, #54 Ulysees Gilbert III, #55 Devin Bush, #56 Alex Highsmith, #90 TJ Watt, #92 Dlasunkanmi Adeniyi, #98 Vince Williams.

Cornerbacks: #20 Cameron Sutton, #22 Steven Nelson, #23 Joe Haden, #26 James Pierre, #28 Mike Hilton, #31 Justin Layne.

Safeties: #27 Marcus Allen, #33 Curtis Riley, #34 Terrell Edmunds, #37 Jordan Dangerfield, #39 Minkah Fitzpatrick.

O tis a passionate soul,
one that feels with an intensity that burns,
burns with the heat,
of a passionate love,
one that kindles our love of passions within a flare of ecstatic fires,
our souls,
intertwining,
upon a faith-built epiphany of the lovers enigma,
budding,
wooing and pining for the mystery that is enveloped around us this eve,
till dawns respite,
requited we are,
unshackled we love,
for earnest passions beyond flames of requisite kinship,
like mana from the celestials,
and manna from the heavens,
we are pleasing to each other,
like a serene water body caressing the winds ever so gently,
creating a light ripple,
so too does your love caress my suppled post hardened soul,
so, love,
like there's no tomorrow.

For: The one who has taken me

By: Paul Lechevalier

By: Jake Ziesche

Jake's Top 10: Littlest Pet Shop: A World of Our Own

10. Copycats, Copy-Dogs & Copy-Iguanas- Jade accidentally starts a fashion trend and becomes a celebrity much to her dismay and Edie's jealousy. Jade's friends try to get her out of the spotlight.

9. Pet Side Story- Edie directs a *West Side Story* parody and casts her friends in it. She discovers Carmilla Wingbat, the stagehand, has a talent for acting and decides to give Carmilla her chance to shine.

8. Hidden Treasures and Guilty Pleasures- Edie and Gavin find common ground in their love of the pirate genre. They attempt to hide it from their friends to avoid any negativity.

7. Bev Rolls With It- Bev joins a roller derby team, the Thunderclouds, and strives to help them win a game. Unfortunately, Bev pushes herself too far and increases the risk of getting injured.

6. The Eyes and Ears of Paw-Tucket- Roxie becomes a reporter for the news and looks for a story. Initially, she goes for gossip, but later decides on something more spectacular.

5. The Purr-fect Storm- The captain and crew of the LPS cruise ship are accidentally hypnotized. Bev takes charge and recruits her friends, but goes mad with power.

4. All Decked Out- The main six pets are invited to a party on the LPS cruise ship honoring a Corgi. The pets try to act fancy with mixed results.

3. Four Left Feet- Roxie accidentally blabs an embarrassing secret (i.e. Jade doesn't land on her feet). Roxie soon finds herself running every which way to keep it quiet.

2. The Couch Is Always Greener...- Roxie and Jade have a falling out and both move out of their apartment to find better roommates.

1. Paw It Forward- A sheepdog named Sherwin arrives in Paw-Tucket and gets hurt. Roxie and a reluctant Jade invite him to recover in their apartment, but Sherwin overstays his welcome.



10 Favorite Childhood Desserts



By: Joseph Cepek

1. Little Debbie® Oatmeal Pies
2. Hostess® Ho-Ho's
3. Little Debbie® Swiss Cake Rolls
4. Little Debbie® Nutty Bars
5. Hostess® Twinkies
6. Mister Donut® Vanilla Angel Donut (Doughnut, real spelling)
7. Mister Donut® Chocolate Angel Donut
8. Little Debbie® Zebra Cakes
9. Tastycake® Cream Coffee Cakes
10. Entenmann's® Glazed (Cake) Donuts



This following batch of information comes from the Mister Donut® online webpage. There also is a personal memory statement from me about having a personal liking to sweet foods, such as doughnuts.

Mister Donut® was born out of Dunkin' Donuts in 1956. Harry Winokur and his son-in-law David Slade are the restaurant chain's founders. This was in Boston, Massachusetts. Godfrey, Illinois is site of the last surviving chain store of Mister Donut®, which has the legal franchise rights to the Mister Donut® Company Name. The Vanilla Angel is a white-powdered doughnut, which has Vanilla Buttercream Icing on the inside. In contrast, the Chocolate Angel also has Vanilla powdered sugar on both sides, but it has Chocolate Buttercream Icing on the inside of it. Both sweet treats are still in existence. I have enjoyed eating white-powdered sugar doughnuts in the past, which are filled with either chocolate or vanilla buttercream icing. Since I was a boy, I always have had a "sweet tooth" as far back as I can possibly remember. This is similar to most other people, whom I have met over the past number of years.--

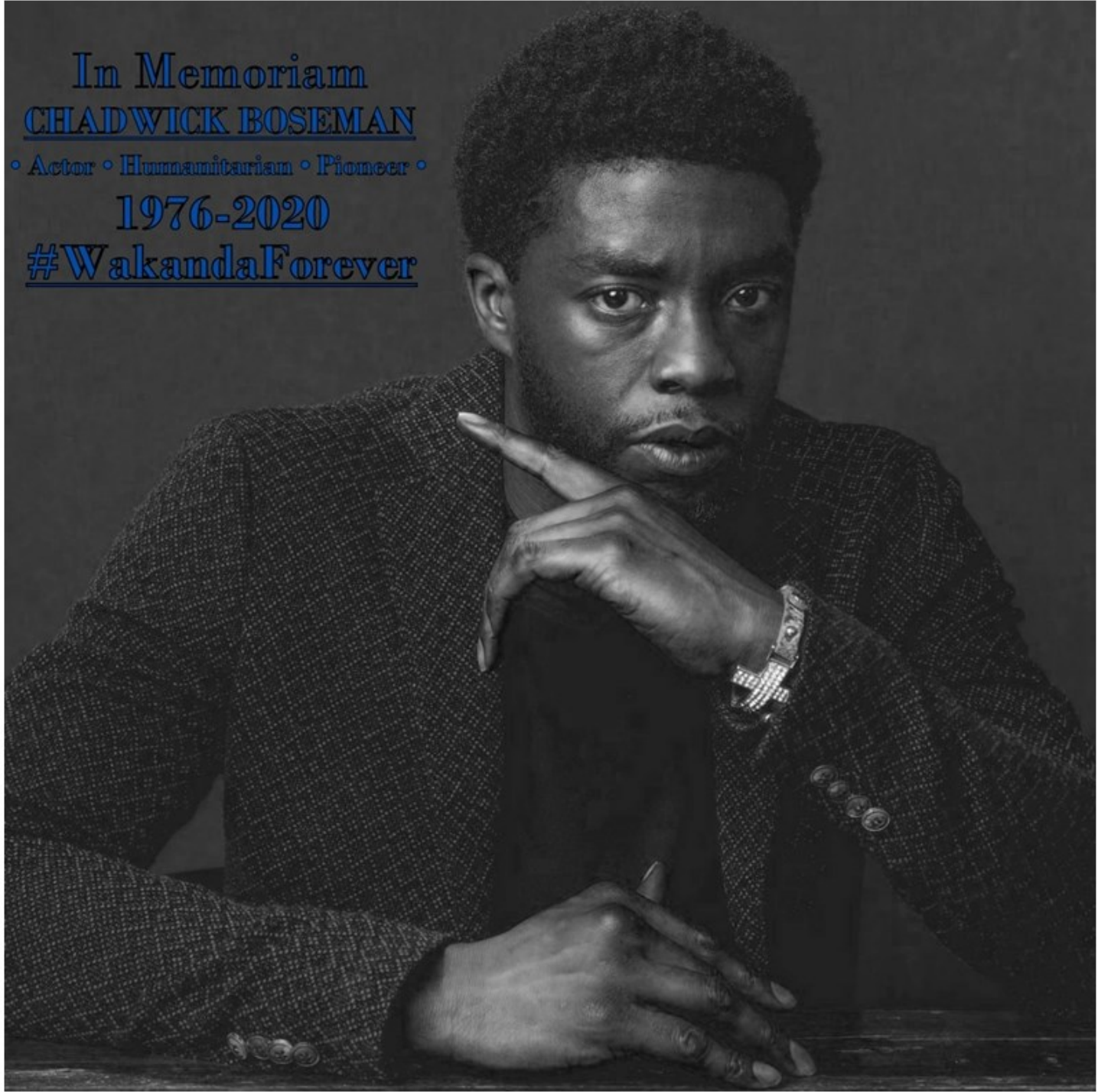
Pittsburgh Skyline



By: David Howard



Celina Pompeani
Photos by Robert Hester



In Memoriam
CHADWICK BOSEMAN

• Actor • Humanitarian • Pioneer •

1976-2020

#WakandaForever

Robert Hester

Pittverse



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Trust**

Youth Advocate Programs, Inc.

Youth Advocate Programs (YAP) currently has programs in 23 states and serves 25 major US cities as well as dozens of other urban, suburban, and rural communities. By tapping into the strengths and capabilities of the 19,000 families we serve each year, our 2,000+ YAP staff members, and the capacity of communities, YAP affects positive change.

YAP has developed unique service delivery principles that guide our work with youth and families involved in the Juvenile Justice, Child Welfare, Behavioral Health, and Education Systems. Our staff, who reside in or near the neighborhoods they serve, work non-traditional, flexible hours and are accessible 24/7. Our demonstrated ability to recruit and energize indigenous resident leaders within neighborhoods is another unique element of our success.

External evaluations of YAP confirm the validity of our approach. Our model has also been cited by several external bodies, including Annie E. Casey Foundation, as a “promising practice” in providing effective alternatives to institutional care.

Since our agency opened, YAP has experienced rapid growth. We have broadened our scope of services and increased our capacity to service more children, youth, families, and adults – including those who have not succeeded with traditional services. We continue to explore new opportunities to demonstrate our unique and effective community-based alternatives to out-of-home placements.

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Pittverse is open to submissions from writers, illustrators, photographers, poets, etc., on the Autism Spectrum.

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