

Fall 2019

Vol. 5, Iss. 3

Pittverse

Quarterly Magazine

This Edition:

What's Inside

Pittverse

MY TIME IN FLORENCE
BY DAN HACKETT

TRICK OR TREAT
BY MARK SULKIN

DISNEY VILLAINS
BY SARA BROOKS

CHEROPHOBIA
BY ALICIA M. BONUS

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. *Pittverse* was

founded in 2013 by Brian Kluchurosky when he was working as the director of YAP's PA Allegheny County Adults with Autism Program. In 2015, with generous funding from Edith L. Trees Charitable Trust, what began as a newsletter written by four adults in the YAP program grew into a magazine that today 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

Here at *Pittverse*, we love our comics; more specifically, we admire superheroes. Our writers often see them as their muses, beings who have supernatural powers and use them (hopefully) for the greater good.

All of our writers are superheroes in their own unique ways. Never has this been more evident than in the Fall 2019 issue, in which our broad spectrum of talent is showcased. We hope that you enjoy the diverse, unique universe that is the *Pittverse*!~

Special thanks to Batman creators Bob Kane and Bill Finger, and the many internet sites that stock our cover photo!

Letter from the Editor

I laid out a challenge to all of you this summer. I wasn't sure how, or if, it would be received. I asked you all to test yourselves, to continue to push your boundaries and experiment with literary genres that you've never tried before. To collaborate with other writers. To be uncomfortable and fearless.

It was big request, I know. It's terrifying to not only engage in new genres, but to have it published and have others read it...scary stuff, even for Halloween.

But I want to let you all know how very proud I am that you continue to push yourselves with each and every issue. This is the largest issue that we have ever published, and it's rich with new collaborations, fiction and poetry experimentations, and breathtaking photos that stun and beguile the imagination. I'm so thrilled and honored to be your editor and to watch as you grow and develop creatively.

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

Jennifer Pizzuto

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The Real Johnny Appleseed

By Megan Cunningham

When we're in elementary school, we learn about various folk heroes, some real like John Henry and Kit Carson, some not like Paul Bunyan. Nonetheless, those real-life folk heroes often have their stories exaggerated into tall tales and are often sanitized to make their legends more acceptable to grade-schoolers.

Known for wandering barefoot with his tin pot hat and apple seed sack so that he'd leave the start of apple trees everywhere he went, Johnny Appleseed's legend was based on a real man. Named John Chapman, his real life was far richer and more interesting than what you'd see in a Disney cartoon.

Born on September 26, 1774 in Leominster, Massachusetts, John Chapman grew up in the midst of the American Revolution. His dad wasn't around much since he was too busy serving as a minuteman at Bunker Hill and helping to construct defenses of New York against the British invasion with George Washington. While he'd survive the war, his mom didn't, dying in childbirth in 1776. In 1780, Chapman's dad returned home for good, just in time to teach his son about farming. Under his guidance, Chapman developed as an orchardist and nurseryman.

By the early 1800s, Chapman started working on his own. While legend paints him as a messy nomad, he was much more pragmatic in reality. Early 19th century frontier law allowed people to claim land through a permanent homestead development, which one can make by planting 50 apple trees. So in Chapman's travels through Pennsylvania, Ohio, and Illinois, he'd plant swaths of seeds to begin an orchard, before selling them to settlers once the land grew bountiful. This made him quite the land baron as he traversed 100,000 miles across the Midwestern wilderness and prairie. By the time Chapman died on March 11, 1845 at 70, he owned more than 1,200 acres of land.

Most depictions of the apples Chapman planted look like the standard ones you see on a tree or the grocery store. However, the apples he actually liked to plant were small and tart "spitters" named for what you'd do if

you bit into one. Henry David Thoreau once said these apples were "sour enough to set a squirrel's teeth on edge and make a jay scream." But this made them perfect for making hard cider and applejack, a far more valuable crop than edible apples. In *The Botany of Desire*, Michael Pollan writes: "Up until Prohibition, an apple grown in America was far less likely to be eaten than to wind up in a barrel of cider. In rural areas cider took the place of not only wine and beer but of coffee and tea, juice, and even water." Where water could house dangerous bacteria, cider was safe. But you'll end up with a hell of a hangover the next morning.

John Chapman was noted for his threadbare clothes and preference for bare feet. However, these eccentricities might've been offerings to his religion, the Church of Swedenborg (AKA the New Church), a Christian denomination established in 1787. The second part of his signature look, like the apple seed sack, was most definitely accurate. As a Swedenborg he believed the more he suffered in this world, the more happiness he'll experience in the hereafter. Because the Church forbade members from harming God's creation, Chapman became a vegetarian and an animal rights activist. He also refused grafting to create his orchards, believing this growing technique physically hurts the source plants. So he carried his large seed sack everywhere he went. Unfortunately, Chapman's often-depicted tin pot hat hasn't been authenticated. For religious reasons, Chapman remained chaste throughout his life, leaving no kids to inherit his lands or curtail the tall tales sprouting like his trees did.

Chapman also had some rather strange beliefs and eccentricities, even by Swedenborg standards. At least one biographer attributes them to a horse kick to the head. For instance, he thought chopping trees and riding horses was cruel. During his travels, he liked giving ribbons to small girls and walking on hot coals.

Aside from planting apple trees, John Chapman often stopped at frontier cabins to "spread some fresh news from the Hebrews." According to *Harper's Weekly*, he once lingered to hear a longwinded preacher speak to a crowd of people from a stump he used as a lectern. Since he urged his listeners

to give up extravagance, asking, "Where now is there a man who, like the primitive Christians, is traveling to heaven barefooted and clad in coarse raiment?" An exasperated Chapman put his bare foot on the stump and proclaimed, "Here's your primitive Christian!" Though I think the preacher replied, "Hey, I don't mean that primitive. Even Jesus wore a pair of sandals." Nonetheless, it's said that Chapman was somewhat successful converting a few Native Americans willing to take his trees. And in turn, it's said they taught him herbal remedies while hostile tribes mostly left him alone.

Though some say that Chapman picked up his nickname in 1806, it wasn't until after his 1845 death that the Johnny Appleseed legend really took off. Considering his distinctive look, uncommon views, and contribution for settling the frontier, it's little wonder his legend proved so powerful. Of course, over the years, Chapman was made to seem less entrepreneurial and the use of his apples was played down as he made it into books and a Disney cartoon.

Unfortunately, Prohibition killed much of John Chapman's real legacy. By the time the US government outlawed alcohol in 1920, he had become an American folk hero. But even this didn't stop FBI agents from mercilessly tearing down orchards to prevent the making of homemade hooch. Aside from slaughtering Chapman's trees, this also nearly killed America's connection to hard cider. The beverage rooted deep in our history has only recently seen a resurgence of popularity. Today, a 176-year-old apple tree in Nova, Ohio still remains and is said to be the last known planted by Johnny Appleseed himself.

Michael Pollan credits John Chapman's preference for seeds over grafting for not only creating varieties like delicious or golden delicious, but also the "hardy American apple." Since grafted apples are the same as the parent tree, they don't change. But by forgoing grafting, Chapman created the conditions for apple trees to adapt and thrive in their new world home. As Pollan wrote, "It was the seeds, and the cider, that give the apple the opportunity to discover by trial and error the precise combination of traits required to prosper in the New World. From Chapman's vast planting of nameless cider apple seeds came some of the great American cultivars of the 19th century."~~

If It's Not One Thing, It's Another: A Story About Cherophobia

By Alicia M. Bonus

Have you ever experienced something really good for a long time with nothing bad happening to you? But, when you believe that everything is under control, like nothing can possibly go wrong, something unexpectedly does. And, after you finally get out of that bad situation, something unexpectedly good happens again, but only for the same cycle to start all over again.

For the past two years, I've experienced more stress than usual. It's been difficult for me, experiencing rapid body issues that have been affecting my health and my mind. Not only is Asperger's Syndrome challenging enough on its own, but having to deal with Ulcerative Colitis (Crohn's Disease) was the most difficult and painful process I've ever experienced for over twenty years, and I still live and suffer through the side effects today. After treatments, I begin to feel a lot better. I can exercise, take hour-long walks, clean the house, plant in the garden, wash the car, etc. I can do all this and more, feeling invincible. But then, three weeks later, I begin to feel terrible. I start to cramp, get tired, sluggish, annoyed, and even angry. I refuse to go outside, become bed-ridden, cancel upcoming events that I'd previously planned to attend, avoid looking in mirrors, and sometimes cry. At this point, I'm physically and emotionally drained. My problems have been so bad that I feel like I've become a burden to my family and loved ones. I've tried to explain my situation to them in so many ways and specific details, but they still can't comprehend what I've been going through. As a result, I end up either yelling at them or hiding from them. This has become a toxic routine for me, that I just end up avoiding or shutting out everyone.

This process can be a stressful and exhausting pattern. People experiencing this firsthand can begin to think they have a problem, that there may even be some kind of force that's making them feel this way. After this pattern or routine is experienced over and over again, the person can develop feelings of fear, anxiety, and sadness, and can begin to avoid everyone and everything around them, in an effort to avoid the eventual negativity that is to come. This overwhelming feeling is known as "cherophobia."

Cherophobia is a form of anxiety. It's a fear of being happy, a fear of experiencing pleasure. And it's a feeling that something seems too good to be true. The symptoms consist of not attending social gatherings, not going out in public, and not participating in many activities, and even believing that if you're happy, then you're to be punished. The phobia can be caused by conflict or trauma that a person had experienced in the past. Cherophobia can act as a defense mechanism. For example, if it's due to happiness vs. punishment link during childhood, it could be more common than we think. It could stem from the fear of conflict with a loved one, or a bad experience you associate with a certain event. So if you're used to something bad happening right after a happy event, you might resist the happy event again. If you are pleasure-averse, it may be that somewhere along the way, by wrath, punishment, humiliation, or theft, you gained something only to quickly lose it again. And, that type of loss can completely kill your joy.

This is where hopelessness creeps in, which leads the person to feel anxious or wary of taking part in anything, wary of actively doing things that promise happiness because you feel it won't last. But, the fear of happiness doesn't necessarily mean that the person is constantly living in sadness. When it comes to looking for a cure for cherophobia, so far there isn't any medicine that can help. However, therapy can become a good resource when explaining what you're going through, even when nobody else understands you. It'd be good to start digging into your past so that you can try and learn how to have control over your phobia. Therefore, you can learn how to not waste time, how to have fun, and how to experience happiness without feeling bad about yourself all the time. Treatments like insight-oriented psychotherapy and cognitive behavioral therapy are useful for understanding the causes, and undoing the negativity people have between pleasure and pain. Hopefully, with the help of therapy, people can work through their past and look forward to the future without fear and worry.~

Civitan and Autism

By Nathaniel Geyer

Three years ago, I received a LinkedIn post about a new chapter being formed in the Harrisburg, PA areas, where I reside, called the Civitan Club. The club is similar in function to a Rotary Club, but we support research of developmental disabilities, hosting a research center in Birmingham, AL. We offer insurance coverage for events, and opportunities to become leadership locally, at the district level, and internationally. We also allow people with developmental disabilities, including autism, to be members at a 50% discount rate, including offering programs for youth and campus chapters. However, the offer of services does not come cheap, typically averaging \$100/year. Some locations, like Pittsburgh, do not even offer a club; the closest chapter is in Wheeling, WV. However, with 30 charter members it is possible to start a club in Pittsburgh (see civitan.org for more information).

As a member of Civitan, I have sponsored the Walden Campus Civitan Club, served as a Sargent-of-Arms, and spoken about my condition to other chapters. In addition, this year when the Harrisburg Civitan Club was in need of a President, because of declining membership, I said yes. I am currently doing training during the first year as President-elect, and next year I will be President of the Club. As a person on the Autism Spectrum, I never thought it would be possible to be president, because of previous experiences with not getting the votes to hold a leadership position. However, through the support of Civitan, I now have a strong possibility of being a leadership of change to people on the Autism Spectrum. My hope is to start a club in Pittsburgh and spread the good deeds of Civitan to others who are struggling to find a social platform to acquire skills to be President of a local chapter. ~~

Summations

By Joshua Walburn

In mathematics, summations are the sets of addition in terms of sequencing of numbers, variables, and constants that result in a total of a sum. Numbers can be added and the result is a partial, prefix sum, or remaining total of a sum. Summations are like adding, but a form of counting level after level, or number after number. They can come in divergent, finite, infinite, arithmetic, geometric, and harmonic series.

The beginning of a summation requires the Greek capital letter sigma, which signifies the addition of many variables. Constant 'n' resembles the so-called 'what to' sum. The go to value, visually goes above the capital sigma. It can be any number of where the sum goes, or even mathematical concepts like $n - 1$ or infinity.

Riemann's Zeta function is an example of an infinite sum where the given formula is $\zeta(s)$ is where the sum goes to infinity and starts at $n = 1$ $1/n^s$. Among its endless continuation, it can be sequenced like this:

$$1 + 1/1^s + 1/2^s + 1/3^s + 1/4^s + \dots$$

Just like how it counts by 1s, there's a lot more to the zeta function also by the function's spiral like curve as seen in its graph. It can also be interpreted as a fractal where in one view, where it's shown for various inputs for both of its real (horizontal) and imaginary (vertical) number axis.

This same mathematical hypothesis can be rewritten as an integral where $\{x\} = x - |x|$. It's also one of the \$1,000,000.00 hypotheses that mathematicians begin to question. An arithmetic sum can feature the first nth terms of a sequence. Using a specific formula such as a sum goes to $n - 1$ and starts at $k = 0$ $(a + kd) = n/2 (2a + (n - 1) d)$ where the given numbers are $\{20, 25, 30, \dots\}$.

With that being said, that's where $n = 30$, $a = 20$, and $d = 5$ when determining for that specific sequence code. Summations are common in general mathematics, studied through the courses of algebra and calculus related disciplines. College students who take a calculus courses from I through IV, summations can be a huge role for them to find a new way of sequencing, just by calculating a sum. ~~

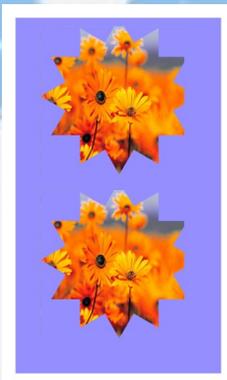
Scene 75 in Upstate New York (An Imaginary Scenario)

By Amelia Krzton

There are many famous cities in upstate New York, excluding the Big Apple. Some of these cities include Westchester, Watertown, Albany, and most importantly, Saratoga. As we all know, in the fall of 1777, a very important battle happened during the American Revolution. These were the Battles of Saratoga at Bemis Heights and Freeman's Farm. These battles were important because of the incredible impact of the American victory. These battles are known as the "Turning Point of the American Revolution" and are considered by many historians to be among the top 15 battles in world history.

Now that we have gotten the basics on one of the most important battles of the Revolutionary War, I would like to talk about a recent entertainment place that opened in Edgewood Towne Center last year and one of the outings I went to with Evolve group this past summer. It is none other than Scene 75. Besides Pittsburgh, there are currently Scene 75 locations in Dayton, Cincinnati, Cleveland, and one coming to Columbus soon. Imagine if these four entertainment centers moved to upstate New York. The Dayton location would move to Watertown, the Cincinnati location would move to Albany, the Cleveland location would move to Saratoga, and the soon-to-be Columbus location would be relocated in Westchester County. The Watertown location would have the Scene 75 Bar and Grill for a restaurant, as well as the Center Bar and Snack Zone for additional food and drink. The Watertown location would have the Toxic Meltdown, arcade games, indoor go-karts, laser tag, virtual reality, blacklight mini golf, bumper cars, bouncing inflatables, mini bowling, 4-D Motion Theater, Drop Tower, Valkyrie, Laser Maze, Chaos Room, Atomic Rush, and Sand Volleyball (for both leagues and open play).

The Albany location would have the Scene 75 Bar and Grill for a restaurant, as well as the Center Bar and Snack Zone for additional food and drink. The Albany location would have the 4-D Motion Theater, arcade games, Atomic Rush, blacklight mini golf, bouncing inflatables, bumper cars, Chaos Room multiplayer, indoor go-karts, laser tag, mini bowling, the Pin Deck, Valkyrie, and the Vault Laser Maze. Finally, the Saratoga location would have the Food Truck Alley with The Great Garretti's Pizzeria, the All-American, Momma T's Tacos, and the Snack Shack, as well as the Center Bar. The Saratoga location would have the arcade games, indoor go-karts, laser tag, blacklight mini golf, virtual reality, bouncing inflatables, X-Rider 4-D Motion Theater, Spin Zone Bumper Cars, mini bowling, and the Vault Laser Maze. The soon-to-be Columbus location would move to Westchester, New York. I hope you guys enjoyed this imaginary Scene 75 scenario in upstate New York!~~



Designs by Daniel Ashkin



Top 10 *Phantoms of the Opera*

Compiled by Michael Kurland

Based on the Novel by Gaston Leroux

1. Michael Crawford – Originated the role in the Andrew Lloyd Webber musical from 1986-1991 and the main inspiration for all Phantoms since.
2. Lon Chaney – The very first Phantom on film in the 1925 silent film from Universal Pictures
3. Colm Wilkinson – Originated the role in the Toronto production of the Lloyd Webber musical from 1989-1994. Also portrayed the character in a work-in-progress performance in 1985.
4. Maximillian Schell – Portrayed the part in a 1983 TV movie
5. Ramin Karimloo – The most famous Phantom in the Lloyd Webber musical from 2007-2011. Also played the two other love interests of Christine (Raoul, 2003-2004 and Christine’s father in a photograph in the 2004 film adaptation.)
6. William Finley – Starred in a Rock version called “Phantom of the Paradise” in 1974, with his singing provided by Paul Williams
7. Robert Englund – Most likely the goriest portrayal in 1989
8. Herbert Lom – Featured in one of the Hammer Horror Films in 1962
9. Claude Rains – First Phantom since Chaney in 1943
10. Richard White – From the 1991 Maury Yeston musical~~



Lon Chaney (1925)



Claude Rains (1943)

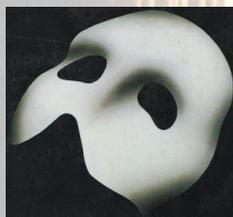
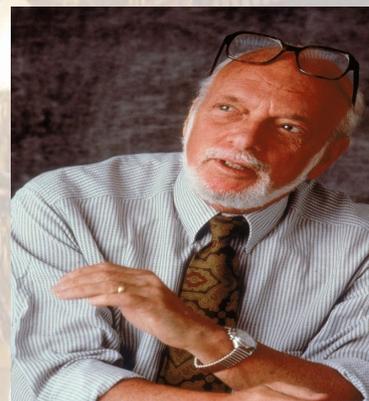


William Finley (1974)



Colm Wilkinson (1989-1994)

Michael Crawford (1986-1991)



Michael Kurland



In Memoriam:
 Hal Prince: Director, Andrew Lloyd Webber’s
The Phantom of the Opera
 (January 20, 1928 – July 31, 2019)
 “You alone could make my song take flight.
 IT’S OVER NOW,
 THE MUSIC OF THE NIIIIIIIGHT!”
 - *The Phantom, Finale* (1986)
 Music by Andrew Lloyd Webber
 Lyrics by Charles Hart & Richard Stilgoe
 Book by Richard Stilgoe & Andrew Lloyd
 Webber
 Based on the Novel by Gaston Leroux
 Produced by Cameron Mackintosh
 Directed by Hal Prince~~

Dumbledore and Grindelwald: Friendship To Rivalry Series

By Michelle Middlemiss

Part 1: The Players:

In this series I want to show the evolving relationship between Dumbledore and Grindelwald, along with the consequences it has on the Harry Potter Mythology.

Who is Dumbledore?

He is the head of Hogwarts. Dumbledore was asked to be the Minister of Magic but refused several times to remain the head of Hogwarts. He is the only wizard that Voldemort feared and was famous for beating Grindelwald (who was trying to take over the wizarding world).

Who is Grindelwald?

He is the "villain" and is more than meets the eye. Grindelwald is caring and compassionate and he takes Credence under his wing and helps him stay alive.

Who is Credence?

He is Dumbledore's unknown brother who developed dark magic called "Obscurus" (due to his magic being repressed for a very long time). Credence is an orphan trying to find a home where he belongs and joins Grindelwald. He is technically a fantastic beast.

Who is Newt Salamander?

He is an unqualified wizard. Dumbledore is using him to find Credence. Newt Salamander loves magical beasts. He's not allowed to leave London, or will be thrown in Azkaban (evil jail).

Who is Voldemort?

He is the head of the death eaters; his followers must be "yes men/women." He is an intelligent, genocidal sociopath who shows no compassion, love or remorse for anything. He split his heart into seven parts to become immortal. He is compared to Grindelwald (unfair to Grindelwald). He accidentally had an eighth piece of his soul attach to Harry Potter.

Who is Harry Potter?

He is a wizard who is famous because he is the only survivor of the *Avada Kedavra*, or the "Killing Curse." Harry is kind, caring and compassionate. "Because he knew how to love, he had a power Voldemort could never have." (*Harry Potter and the Half Blood Prince*, JK Rowling) We first meet Harry at age one, when Dumbledore leaves him on the doorstep of his aunt and uncle because his mom died to save his life. Dumbledore could not keep Harry due to a blood pact, or promise, from his mom's death. ~ ~

The Daily Prophet is a fictional newspaper from the Harry Potter series. The mock-up shows a front page with the following elements:

- Headline:** WIZARDING WORLD OPEN TO MUGGLES
- Sub-headline:** MINISTRY OF MAGIC PASSES ROWLING'S PROPOSAL TO FURTHER WIZARD-MUGGLE RELATIONS
- Other headlines:** CLAIM YOUR FREE BROOMSTICKS AT THE THREE BROOMSTICKS VOUCHER ON PAGE 11; READ MORE ABOUT POTTERMORE ON PAGES TWO, THREE AND FOUR
- Weather:** Today's Weather: Partly cloudy with some drizzle. High: 55, Low: 45.
- Market:** Shares: +0.5%, Bonds: -0.2%, Commodities: +1.2%
- Local News:** A small article about a wizarding school in the wizarding world.
- Advertisements:** A small advertisement for a wizarding school.

For Whom the Ghost Tolls

By Jake Ziesche

“Hold the phone! You plan on doing what?” cried Iris.

“I’m going to find out if the legends are true. I’m going to venture inside the house on Halloween and see if it’s haunted,” replied Oswald.

The four friends, Oswald, Iris, Annabelle, and Kai, were standing right outside the spooky old house everyone said was home to a ghost. Oswald had gathered them all there to announce his big plan for Halloween.

The others were flabbergasted at the stunt Oswald had in mind. Entering the house was one thing, but only a crazy person would do it on Halloween. On top of that, anyone who did explore it went in during the day. Nobody was brave enough to enter at night.

Iris was the first one to find her voice. “What brought this on, Oswald? I never would have pegged you as the one to enter a haunted house.”

Oswald decided to tell his friends the truth. “You see, I love a good mystery and I thought looking around a supposedly haunted house would make for an exciting challenge. Moreover, this house has always given me the creeps and I thought going inside would help me be brave. Not only that, I’m going to film it and show everyone to prove that I actually entered.”

Iris felt like her head was spinning from all the revelations. Despite that, she needed to know something important. “Would I be correct if I guessed that you want us to join you on this little excursion?”

“I was hoping you would join me,” Oswald sheepishly admitted. “Who wouldn’t want to look for ghosts?”

“You mean other than Scooby-Doo?” Iris retorted.

The others laughed at this. Iris rolled her eyes at her friends’ display. This was serious, but they were treating it as a joke.

“Maybe we’ll run into things that go bump in the night,” Kai said mischievously.

“I hope nobody attempts to prank us,” Annabelle added. “I heard that last year some kids used this house for pranks and they got in major trouble.”

“We’d better be cautious,” said Iris. “I don’t want anyone scaring the living daylight out of us.”

The others whole-heartedly agreed. Iris was glad they were on the same page, and she was starting to warm up to the idea herself. As long as they were together, the group would have each other’s backs.

“Holy guacamole!” cried Kai. “Look at the time. It’s getting late and we need to get ready for our impromptu ghost hunt.”

“You can say that again,” added Annabelle. “Halloween will be here before we know it.”

That was everyone’s cue to leave. Halloween really was only a few days away, and the friends needed to prepare themselves.

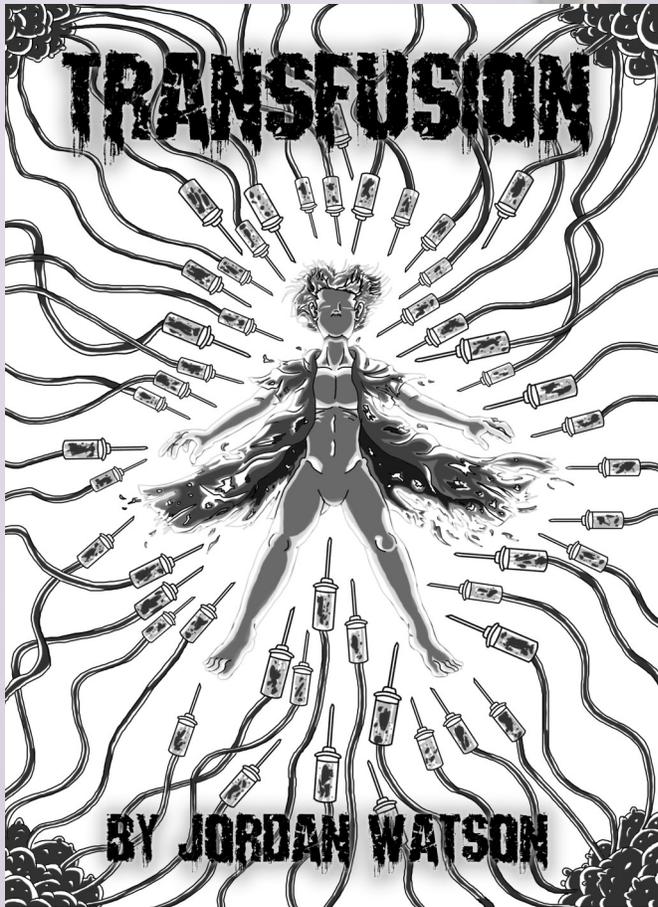
After his friends left, Oswald got one last look at the house, and thought about the upcoming adventure. As he turned to go, Oswald thought he heard a noise, but thought it was only the wind. As Oswald departed, he pondered what scares All Hallows’ Eve would bring. The friends had no idea they would get more frights than they bargained for.~~

A photograph of a park bench in autumn. The bench is dark-colored with wooden slats. It is surrounded by a thick carpet of fallen orange and yellow leaves. A single pink rose is placed on the bench. The background shows trees with yellowing leaves and a body of water in the distance.

Ode to autumn,
our time,
we like our autumn strolls,
while looking at the colors in the leaves,
for our love is like a parade of trees in the fall,
our colors blossom,
and as the leaves fall,
we grow anew,
fresh leaves,
just like our love,
we may hit rough patches,
but,
our love will grow again,
like a fall rose we bloom,
with the colors of the rainbow,
and beyond,
sure, sometimes we may prickle,
but our love is as colorful as a rainbow,
with a pot of gold at the end to sweeten the deal,
we refresh within the autumn breeze,
and bask in the crisp air,
for we are,
autumn lovers.

For: The one who has taken me

By Paul Lechevalier ~~



There's a hospital that's located near my hometown of Boston. It's where I was born, and where I go to receive my physicals. For as long as I can remember, I was diagnosed with having sickle cell anemia. Ever since I was a kid, I'd always have chronic pain in my feet whenever I would go outside near the playgrounds, where I'd go and play red rover, dodge ball, and cops and robbers. Most of the other kids never took into consideration of the amount of rough housing we would have, but it didn't matter to me. I wanted to, pun not intended, be on equal footing with them, because I didn't have many kids to hang out with. There have been numerous times where I would go out hiking with them, because we loved the outdoors, particularly the forests near our neighborhood. During those occurrences, I would end up with a few notable injuries, from deep gashes in my legs caused by the rocks of a deep river bank when I was 8, to my fractured right arm when I tumbled down a hill into a small flowing creek when I was 10, to a slight head trauma when I was 13 wrestling with my friends around a bonfire during summer camp. As the years went by, however, I would find myself going back to that hospital more frequently than usual. Every week, I wound up getting blood transfusions to prevent me from feeling more fatigued with each passing year. The thing is, I would start developing

this unnerving fear whenever I would end up there. It's not the physical checkups, nor the surgeries I had after those times in the forest with my friends. It was something much more simple.

Needles. I dread the thought of seeing those damned things pierce through my skin every time I would need those transfusions. So much so, that the staff would literally need to put me to sleep before they underwent the process. From when I was still a child, all the way up to my teenage years, I couldn't bear the thought of it happening, and would always be susceptible to panic attacks. It's hard to explain why, but...just the thought of having some foreign liquid, let alone someone else's blood go through me..it just feels sickening, as if it would take a turn for the worst and mutate me from the inside. Though because I was always asleep, I started to get used to the idea when I became an adult. Or so it would seem.

I was coming back home from a neighborhood gathering near Detroit around 7 PM on a brisk, fall evening. I usually travel through a heavily forested region to get back down a long winding road, where my home is located. Though something felt "off" on this evening. The temperatures began to fall into freezing points, and the leaves that usually came down, began to rain down heavier than usual through unusual wind gusts. I quickly activated my windshield wipers to brush off the pouring foliage. An abrupt crash resounded in my eardrums, followed by total blackness.

Consciousness begins to set in. As my eyes begin to flutter open, I smell stale paint emanating from the decaying, brick-layered walls around me. The room is drenched in a faded green light, with the floors covered in crinkled, worn-out ceramic. I'm bound to a hospital bed, reeking of rusted copper, and dried sweat. Anxiety wraps around me, as I struggle to release myself from my queerly misshapen leather shackles. I use every ounce of my arms' strength to unhinge the sidebars off, while looking to my right side to use the eerily rusted scalpel to cut off the remainder of my cuffs. The ground beneath me uncomfortably scrapes against the soles of my bare feet, as I stand to walk out of my room to see the hallway ahead of me. This place...its familiarity halts me as I take in the surroundings. Could it be...the

very same hospital?

Ahead of me lies an excruciatingly long hallway, lit with lambent lime lights. Numerous sick rooms line both sides of the hall. As I slowly make my way through, I am nary able to make out what is within the open rooms, nor of the figures that are possibly occupying them. They all have the very same green tinted, flickering UV lights as my room. Some figures remain still on top of their beds, others pace erratically, while the rest exert themselves to be freed from their confines. Their muffled cries range from being disturbingly detectable, to faintly waning, as if they're filled with water. What then perplexes me begins to form within the middle of the hallway. A discernible white light gently opens itself up towards my general direction. Somehow, it feels worrisome, but not as distressing as what comes next. The lights from behind me don't necessarily turn off, but rather start to become covered in an ever-moving darkness. The noise that emanates from it is much more disturbing. These were not the sounds of houseflies, but what could be akin to a swarm of aggressively loud locusts.

The dark cloud flies towards me with hostile intent, as my instincts immediately kick in to scurry towards the light. As the light draws ever closer, it resonates an audible hum, comparable to a wailing underground tunnel. I begin to feel the chittering flock tear at my legs with their distance drawing nearer. The tones of the swarming darkness, and the piercing light begin to clash at a vociferous roar, as I hastily leap into the luminescence! Silence. Within it lies a white void, surrounded by an array of pristine hospital beds, covered with spotless white sheets, spanning its infinite reaches. While the scenery raised my concern, it also felt captivating. The glow of the null landscape feels recognizable. This is the exact sensation I felt every year when I would visit for those physicals. I could feel tranquility bask over me, putting me to slumber for an eternity.

Those hours would soon waiver. New tones fill the nothingness with a clear, liquefying presence, and detectable taps to each hospital bed. IVs would begin to rise from the floorless void. This awakened me in a sweat, as I began to witness the beds all around me start to unfurl. All the sheets from underneath them would soon take shape in the form of human bodies, all slowly breathing in their strangely rhythmic pattern. The IVs themselves did not have any visible tubes connected to them, which only encumbered my curiosity. It wasn't until the bags themselves began to vibrate, as they would show me not one tube forming, but several. These devices then quickly took the form of translucent jellyfish. But what would fill me to the brim with firm unease, is the end tips then began to crystallize, forming the sharp objects of my existential dread. The tendril-esque syringes quickly stabbed into all forms of the bodies with precision, as they quiver and bleed dark azure through their once white sheets. It wasn't long until the bodies would begin to shake violently in erratic seizures. The sheets abruptly start to bloat from once human-like figures, to near inhuman lumps of fleshy mass, drenched in their bloodied tarps.

Adrenaline soon claims my body, as I quickly begin to run the opposite direction where the door was once located. To my terror, it had long sealed itself shut before I had the chance to reach the end. Trapped in this dimension, I could only look in utter dread at the beds quickly wheeling toward me, the lumps now shaking harder than ever before. A collective explosion begins to erupt from the bodies, and out flying were multiple fleshy syringes, all bee-lining for me to make their marks. I try to dodge most of them, until the space from underneath me began to bind me with the same stringy appendages. As I struggle to break free, the sound of their punctures through my skin echo within the void. I scream and thrash in utter horror, until I witness the frightening visages all over me. The scars from the gashes in my legs burst open. My right arm begins to bend and shrivel to a near husk at an intense rate. My head begins to leisurely crumble from the cranium down. My childhood injuries unfurl in viscous form in front of my very eyes. The rest of my body soon begins to dry up and looses its muscle mass. What were once screams, now become haggard gasps of breath. As my vision fades, and my vessel begins to give way, the last thing I hear before my untimely collapse answers me:

“Welcome to Horizon Hospital, young one. Where your soul will be reborn anew...”~

Monument Relocation as a Contemplative Step: Tour of Louisburg

By Nils Skudra

On June 23rd, my family and I took a day trip from our home in Greensboro to the town of Louisburg, North Carolina in order to meet Will Hinton, a Professor of Art at Louisburg College whose great-great grandfather, Richard Fenner Yarborough, served as an officer in the Confederate Army during the Civil War. Professor Hinton first came to my attention when I read online about his efforts to relocate the Franklin County Confederate soldier monument from its present position in the middle of the campus to Louisburg's Oakwood Cemetery, where his ancestor and several other Confederate soldiers are buried. As a Civil War historian, I was very eager to learn more about Professor Hinton's family history and his perspective on the debate over Confederate monuments in North Carolina, so I contacted him and arranged an interview. Hinton was very clear that his thoughts are his alone and do not represent his church or his college.

Upon arriving in Louisburg, we passed by the Franklin County Courthouse which housed a Confederate memorial that originally took the form of segregated "white" and "colored" drinking fountains with a plaque depicting the Confederate flag in the center. I had read about this memorial while researching historic Louisburg landmarks online, and



it was very striking to me that this landmark not only commemorated the Confederacy but also the system of Jim Crow segregation, a connotation which the memorial's original design made explicitly clear. Once we arrived at the campus, I visited the Confederate soldier monument which stood in the middle of Main Street. Because of my interest in the Civil War, I am always fascinated by monuments to the soldiers who fought in the conflict, but in closely following the debate over their symbolism I recognize why many people regard Confederate statues as controversial while others believe very strongly in keeping them standing as memorials to the dead. Therefore, I felt it was very important that I have a chance to listen to the perspective of a Civil War descendant who favored relocating this monument and the reasons for his stance.

When we met Professor Hinton, he immediately offered to give us a tour of historic Louisburg and point out the artistic landmarks that he had been involved in designing. He began by telling us about the buildings on the Louisburg College campus – the oldest of these was the Main Building which dated back to 1857 and was used as a hospital during the Civil War. Professor Hinton told us that Louisburg College is the oldest church related co-educational institution in the United States, having been founded in 1787 before the town of Louisburg was incorporated in 1799. This made Louisburg College even older than UNC Chapel Hill, which was very fascinating to learn.

Professor Hinton displayed a remarkable energy and enthusiasm in taking us around Louisburg and showing us the pieces of art that he had designed and created with others. Among these was a wall entitled "Before I Die," a piece of public art which dates back to 2014. People can use this wall of self-expression to write down what they want to do before they die. One of the historic art pieces which he showed us was the 1939 mural by artist R. Kenah in the Louisburg post office, featuring white men dressed in business attire conducting transactions at a tobacco auction while African American men, either shirtless or wearing work clothes, haul the tobacco sacks in the warehouse. Professor Hinton maintained that this mural, commissioned by the Works Progress Administration, asks some serious questions of contemporary viewers since the imagery carries some painful connotations. While this was the prevalent mentality among

much of white America during the 1930's, Professor Hinton asserted that the mural would send a difficult message to African American viewers today who regularly go into the post office for their mail. Professor Hinton's work on another mural in town, the 1936 Opera House Mural, objectifies what was going on in Louisburg during that time period in a much more uplifting manner. Today's values of diversity and inclusivity seem to be a vital focus of Will's artistic work.

Professor Hinton has lived in Louisburg for 36 years, and he showed an intriguing candor in talking about the issue of Confederate monuments and race relations in the South. His great-great grandfather served as a second lieutenant in Company G of the 47th North Carolina Infantry before being promoted to colonel of another regiment, and in the postwar years became involved in the local Episcopal Church. He has affirmed that while he has great respect for his family and recognizes that his ancestors fought for their people, what he cannot agree with is a romanticizing of the cause of the war, which he felt was embodied in the Confederate monument. "While the monument is beautiful," he stated, "what it stands for is an aching judgment that causes many students to simply lower their heads when they walk by it." He felt that a significant factor affecting the debate over Confederate monuments is that "we all are blindsided by our pride," with the consequence that there are numerous people on both sides who are not prone to listen to reason and come together to find a compromise solution. About a year and a half ago, he inquired into the possibility of relocating the Confederate monument to Oakwood Cemetery since its position in the middle of the street on the campus makes the statue "almost like a lighthouse in the town," requiring people to drive around it. Furthermore, since 70% of the students at Louisburg College are African American, Hinton feels that having the Confederate statue located in the middle of the campus will be a disincentive for them to attend the college. "My opinion is that my great-great grandfather is buried where I would like to move the monument." And therefore, "If we had this monument in the context of being located in the cemetery, it can be in a place of quiet contemplation for honoring the dead."

Our final stop on the Louisburg tour was Oakwood Cemetery, which included many tablets and headstones marked by the Stars and Bars flag, the first national banner of the Confederacy, to designate the graves of Confederate soldiers. Upon coming to the grave of his ancestor Colonel Yarborough, Will shared some closing insights which I felt were very profound. Not only did he make the case that this cemetery would be an appropriate, respectful and contemplative location for the statue to honor the Confederate dead, but he affirmed the importance of civility and respect among all parties: "You have to respect people and accept them where they are." I strongly agree with this sentiment since I have received hostile reactions from other individuals on social media who do not share my perspective on the Civil War and the monument debate even when I have outlined what I feel a reasonable compromise would be. I believe that



Professor Will Hinton's insights can potentially exert a powerful influence on how we approach this issue – although we might disagree strongly about the symbolism of Confederate statues, by treating each other with respect and civility we can make productive strides toward finding a solution that would protect the monuments while also ensuring that people may learn from this history and move forward in the hope of building a constructive future.~~

Trick or Treat: A Halloween Story

By Mark Sulkin

In the city of Philadelphia, all the people were getting ready for Halloween. It was only a few weeks away. Everyone was excited about Halloween, except for 5-year-old Michael. Michael thought Halloween was scary. His parents told him that Halloween is just make-believe.

A few days later, Michael went to help his mom put up the decorations. His mom had skeletons who can dance, jack-o-lanterns with lights, and window decorations. Michael thought some of the decorations were scary, but his mom told him they were just fake. Some of the window decorations they had were monsters, witches, wizards, skeletons, bats, and pumpkins. Michael knew the window decorations were pretend too.

The next day, Michael went with his dad to the farm to buy some pumpkins to make jack-o-lanterns. When they got to the farm, Michael saw a lot of animals. He saw cows, pigs, horses, sheep, goats, and chickens, geese, and ducks. He went with his dad to where he saw some children riding ponies. Michael wanted to ride a pony, too.

"Can I go on a pony ride please, Daddy?" he asked his dad.

"Of course, Michael," said his dad.

When it was his turn, Michael climbed on a pony. He held on to the reins tight so he wouldn't fall off. His dad was there to make sure he stayed on. Michael rode all around the farm and his dad kept him company. Riding the pony was a lot of fun. After the pony ride, Michael followed his dad to a hayride. It was his first time, so Michael got a little nervous. But his dad told him not to worry and that he would be with him. Michael and his dad climbed on the wagon and rode around the farm. Michael saw a lot of farmers growing and harvesting their fruits and vegetables.

When the hayride was over, Michael and his dad went to get their pumpkins. Michael found one that was really big. "Will this pumpkin make a good jack-o-lantern, Daddy?" he asked.

"I bet it would, Michael," his dad replied. "But don't worry. Your mother and I will make sure the face isn't too scary for you."

When they got all the pumpkins they needed, Michael and his dad went to the farmers' market to buy some fruits and vegetables. Michael remembered to stay close to his dad so that he wouldn't get lost. Michael's dad bought all the fruits and vegetables they needed on the list.

"There's a bakery in the market, Michael. Would you like me to get you a cookie?"

"Oh yes, please, Daddy!" Michael went with his dad to the bakery so he could choose a cookie. He chose an oatmeal cookie because they were his favorite kind.

When they got home from the farm, Michael helped his dad take all the fruits and vegetables in the kitchen. He even helped him carry the pumpkins. Michael was still worried about Halloween. His mom told him that all the costumes that the children wear would be pretend. Michael felt a little better.

The next morning, Michael went with his mom to buy him a Halloween costume so he could go trick-or-treating with his friends. When they got to the costume shop, Michael couldn't decide which costume he wanted to wear. He looked at all the costumes in the store but couldn't decide which costume was right for him. Finally, Michael found a costume that would be perfect: a skeleton.

"Mommy, I found a costume. I want to go as a skeleton."

"Excellent choice, Michael," said his mom. Michael went into the dressing room to try on his costume. "How do I look, Mommy?"

"Very bony, Michael." Michael thought so too.

On the day before Halloween, Michael went to help his parents make jack-o-lanterns. Michael's dad showed him a book with different faces for the pumpkins. "We could do a ghost, or a witch, or even a goblin." Michael thought all of them would be good.

On the first pumpkin, Michael's mom carved a ghost. On the second pumpkin, she carved a witch. On the third pumpkin, she carved a goblin. Soon, all the jack-o-lanterns were done. Michael was still a little scared, but he remembered that his parents told him that everything on Halloween was pretend.

The next night, Halloween finally arrived. Michael put on his costume and showed it to his dad. "Michael, you look like a real skeleton."

"It's just pretend, Daddy." Michael waited for his friends to come. Soon the doorbell rang. Michael opened the door and saw his friend, Alfonso. Alfonso was dressed up as a wizard.

"Hi, Michael." he said. "Do you like my wizard costume?"

"Yes, Alfonso. You look magical." Michael said.

Soon, Michael heard the doorbell again. This time it was his friend Samantha. Samantha was a witch.

"Hi, Samantha. You look bewitching."

"Thank you, Michael. You look bony."

Now that everyone was here, Michael and his friends were ready to go trick-or-treating. They got their goody bags and set off. Michael waved goodbye to his parents and went off with his friends. First, they went to Mrs. Johnson's house.

"Trick-or-Treat!" said the children.

Mrs. Johnson handed out pretzels. "Happy Halloween, children," she said. Then they went to Mr. Howards' house and to Ms. Kelly's house. They got lots of candy.

Michael and his friends went all over the neighborhood getting treats from a lot of people. They got a lot of treats. When Michael and his friends came back, they saw a lot of children around the living room. Michael knew that it was a Halloween party. There were plenty of Halloween treats for everyone to share. Michael knew that he wouldn't be afraid of Halloween ever again. The End!~~

UFOs and their Effects on the American People

By Elise Mote

***All of the UFO conspiracy theories mentioned in this article are just theories and have no concrete evidence to prove or disprove their claims and therefore should be viewed as entertainment only. ***

What are UFOs? UFO, or Unidentified Flying Object, was the term Captain Edward J. Ruppelt (US Air Force) coined in 1953. It's the name given to flying objects that couldn't easily be identified as familiar airborne objects.

Today our fascination with the possibilities of UFOs has resulted in movies, tv shows, toys, books, and more. One of the best examples of this is *War Of The Worlds*, a 1938 radio drama. Orson Welles and his team created mass panic by turning an H.G. Wells novel into a fake news bulletin. If you don't know the story, I highly recommend reading about it. With our fascination with space, people have hoped to find intelligent life. Items have even been sent into space to try and communicate with any life forms. Some of our country's history was the result in the belief in extraterrestrials.

Project Blue Book: Headquartered at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base in Ohio, Project Blue Book would investigate

Men in Black: The main job of the Men In Black (MIB) is to silence anyone who has seen strange phenomena and are only seen after an occurrence has happened. They are usually seen in black suits and hats, dark sunglasses, drive black cars and are usually in groups of two or three. Some have even reported the MIB having strange appearances like no hair or eyebrows, supernatural features like glowing eyes and strange complexions. Possibly the first report of MIB was at Maury Island, WA on June 28, 1947. Harold Dahl was with his son and dog when they spotted UFOs over their boat in Puget Sound. Reportedly the UFOs started raining metallic debris, unfortunately killing his dog. The next day, Dahl was visited by a man in a black suit who told him to not talk about the event or he face the consequences.

Area 51 is the largest mystery when it comes to UFOs. People have reported UFO sightings there since the '50s. The official report is that it's a Nevada Test and Training Range located at Groom Lake. The government says it's used as an open training range for the U.S. Air Force. In 2013, the government officially reported its existence. A lot of people believe it's used to hide UFOs and aliens that have crashed. The land has even been protected by agents against possible lawsuits. Bill Clinton was to have been the one to write the exemption. It came into effect, because of strange deaths and the reports of radiation affecting and even killing people that work on the base, and their families and friends trying to find out what happened to the people they cared about. The government has even stolen land close to the base from a family in 2015 that the family had owned since the 1870s. It is believed that the government can do whatever they want near the base and even harm people without consequence. With the base being out in the middle of nowhere, transportation has definitely been taken care of. The workers on the base usually come and go in a plain white bus, but some have been reported to be transferred on JANET Airline (Just Another Non-Existent Terminal). JANET is the unofficial name given to a highly classified fleet that serves the Nevada National Security site. You can't talk about Area 51 without mentioning the Camo Dudes. They are armed government contractors that were given the name; not much is known about them as they try to keep their identity unknown as they patrol the area around the government base. They have been known to follow people when the hidden cameras around the base can't see you. A lot of people misidentify them as military when they aren't.

The possibility of UFOs has affected people in different ways. Some worse than others. With this belief of their existence, a cult was born from the mind of an unstable man. Heaven's Gate was started in the early 1970s by Marshall Applewhite and Bonnie Nettles. Applewhite met Nettles, who was a music teacher and nurse while staying in a psychiatric institution. She became influenced by him and they took on their new names Bo and Peep. Around 1974, they started a six-month road trip and assembled new members of "The Crew." The cult's philosophy was influenced by Applewhite's father, who was a Presbyterian minister, and his belief in extraterrestrials.

In 1985, Bonnie died, and Marshall kept the group going. In the early '90s, a turning point happened financially by the introduction of the internet. This new technology gave them a wider audience to share their beliefs and an opportunity to make money designing web pages. In March 1997, 39 members along with Marshall, were found dead after a mass suicide. They believed that a spacecraft was trailing Hale-Bopp Comet and that they would be taken aboard a ship after they died. Two surviving members are most likely operating the cult's website today.

The U.S. government has made changes because of the strong belief that aliens are real. President Carter was the reason for this change. The then-Governor Carter claimed he had seen a UFO in October 1969 with 12 other people. This event changed his life and he vowed to release any information on UFOs to the American people if elected president. He changed his mind once he was elected, stating that releasing some information might also pose a national security risk. Some of the information couldn't be released until the Freedom of Information Act was born. The Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) generally provides that any person has the right to request access to federal agency records or information except to the extent the records that are protected from disclosure by any of the nine exemptions contained in the law, or by one of three special law enforcement record exclusions.

With our continued fascination with space and its vast size, who knows what could be out there and what we will learn?~

Blue Skies with weatherman Jon Burnett: Interview with Former KDKA Weatherman

By Maggie K. Jones

It all began at Little Italy Days in Pittsburgh's Bloomfield neighborhood. I was walking around, checking out all of the booths the festival had to offer, when I saw Jon Burnett. I was shy at first but then I thought to myself, "What if I could interview him for *Pittverse*?" I asked him and he told me to email him to schedule an interview. He signed an autograph that said, "Blue skies with Jon Burnett."

So, we sat down with some coffee at Starbucks in Bloomfield. He started his career with *Nashville PM* magazine from 1977 to 1980 in Knoxville, Tennessee. In 1982, he started to work for *Evening* magazine. Then he began to work for KDKA news as a weatherman in 1990.

I asked him what his favorite season is, and he told me fall was his favorite because of the change in temperature. He also said his least favorite is summer.

He didn't go to school for meteorology and weather forecasting. He majored in Theater at the University of Tennessee back in the 1970s.

He is not picky, but he loved his mother's lemon pie. And fried okra.

His favorite memories were the friendships had made at KDKA and trips with *Evening* magazine. He can remember the Blizzard of 1993, when 24.6 inches of snow fell; it was a two-day weather event for Pittsburgh. The snowstorm of 2010 had the most snow for the one-day weather event: 17.8 inches of snow fell during a period of 24 hours. And he recalls the major flood of 2003.

And that was my interview with former weatherman Jon Burnett.~~



Who I've Always Wanted to Be

By Ginger Reynolds

Ever since I remember, I have always tried to be someone I'm not, just to fit in. I've learned over the years that if people don't like me for being the real me, then they're not my true friends. True friends stick around, especially when nobody else does and they pick you up instead of putting you down. I have always tried to fit in by saying that I am what I'm not. The truth is that my name is Ginger Reynolds and I am a Christian. I love studying God's Word, writing poems, coloring, drawing, and shopping. I dislike spending a lot of my time on my electronics, but that is where I feel like I acquire the most social interactions and connections. Instead of socializing with people that I most likely will never meet, I like to play board games, engage in positive conversations, play sports, play video games, and go to the movies or the mall. I dislike eating meat. Instead, I like to eat vegetables, fruits, beans, rice, hummus, pretzels, and garden burgers. I love camping, outer space, learning, science fiction, and self-help books.

So, who have I always wanted to be? I have always wanted to be the person I am today. I am my very own person and I am loving myself. I finally have a few things to live for. I decided to stay single until I can get my life together and get myself stable. On my 32nd birthday, I will see if I am ready to move on with the next chapter in my life or keep writing this one. If I move onto the next chapter in my life, I will be getting a stable job, a permanent address, and I will see if I am ready to start dating anyone. But, if I am ready to start dating someone, I will not do it online.~~

Stoneybrook Therapeutic Riding Lessons

By Stacie Rymarz

I recently completed two seasons of horseback riding lessons at The Stoneybrook Foundation riding facility in Acme, Pa. It took me a while to get settled in, but I was paired with an instructor who taught me the basics of horse care from brushing, grooming and picking hooves to saddling. I was introduced to several horses during each lesson until I was paired with a mare named Cadence who fit my needs perfectly. Cadence is the tallest horse at the foundation. She is also the only horse that's been a mom that resides there. She is 17 hands tall and she was used to hunt foxes with dogs running all around her. So, she really likes Maxwell, even more than Maxwell likes her! I think I'm very fortunate to be paired with a horse that is not spooked by a service dog. At the beginning, we started out slow, learning to walk, steer and stop. Dismounting from an English saddle was one of the most challenging things I've ever done in my life, due to my lack of coordination and balance. I even had my foot stepped on. Despite the challenges, I'm proud to say I have progressed to trotting and outside trail rides. To me, riding is something you get better at little by little. It's really hard to describe to someone who has never done it, but the experience is eye opening and most certainly worth a try! ~~



My Experience at Sandcastle and Kennywood

By Amelia Krzton

As you all know, I had a season pass to Sandcastle and Kennywood this past summer. This means that I had unlimited admission to both parks. Instead of Focus activities, like I can normally do all year round, I took advantage of the beautiful summer weather by heading to Kennywood Park almost every Tuesday (except for when it was raining or when I had to work at the Brew House cleaning the bathrooms), as well as heading to Sandcastle Water Park almost every Thursday (except for when it was raining or when I had a meeting with Dr. Ulus in the South Side). Some of the rides that I enjoyed riding at Kennywood Park included the Skyrocket, the Thunderbolt, the Phantom's Revenge, the Pittsburgh Plunge, the Whip, the Swingshot, the Wave Swinger, the Musik Express, the Cosmic Chaos, the Grand Prix, the Aero 360, the Racer, the Jackrabbit, and of course, Kennywood's newest roller coaster, the Steel Curtain. I have always imagined other things existing at Kennywood, such as a smoking den based on the famous American historical figure named the Marquis de Lafayette, which is entitled Lafayette's Cigarettes, and also another new roller coaster named the Abracadabra Coaster, which is in a section of Kennywood entitled Mystique Magic. You would use magical powers to take off in the roller coaster rather than the 3-2-1 countdown, like one has seen on the new Steel Curtain. The Steve Miller song, "Abracadabra," would play as you rode the roller coaster.

At Sandcastle Water Park, I enjoyed riding the Blue Tubaluba, the Thunder Run, the Tubers Tower, the Lightning Express, the Boardwalk Blasters, and the Cliffhangers. My other favorite attraction at Sandcastle was the Mon Tsunami Wave Pool, in which I always shouted my famous catchphrase "Ricola!" when the waves officially came on every 7 or 8 minutes. I also got a souvenir cup in which I got one-dollar refills of Diet Pepsi. I occasionally got an ice cream cone with rainbow sprinkles for a treat, as I have gotten during the Ice Cream Intern this past summer. Overall, my experience with a season pass at Kennywood and Sandcastle this summer was a lot of fun, and I have a desire to get a season pass to both of these amusement parks again next year. ~~

A Place for Calm Within the Chaos

By Delaine Swearman

“Get rid of outside noises. Things are too chaotic and busy out there and a respite needs to be calm, relaxed, and quiet. The space needs to have sound absorbing walls. It could have a glass window where one could observe what is happening outside. I need to be able to get comfortable in any position. I like seats that rock and spin. Comfortable seats are must! The adults must have a separate quiet area to work that’s away from noisy kids. We also need a table and chairs for eating or doing work. It has to have WiFi and outlets and charging ports. It cannot just be a place for parents to take their kids to have a meltdown. It also has to be well marked and in a sensory friendly part of the airport. There should be access to flight information, an airport map, and a dedicated bathroom so we don’t have to leave the area to access these needs...”

These were some of the actual suggestions I made in March and April 2018 when asked to give input on the design of the new sensory room at the Pittsburgh International Airport. Fast forward to July 23, 2019, and “Presley’s Place” became a reality.

Presley’s Place was named after the autistic son of airport employee Jason Rudge, who wrote a letter to the airport CEO suggesting a sensory-friendly room. The CEO immediately embraced the idea.

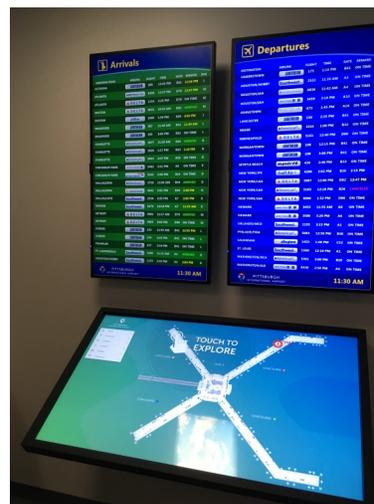
Autism Connection of PA was one of the consultants on the project and meetings were held to gather ideas for the design of the room. The meetings were attended by mostly parents and teachers of autistic children. I was the only vocal autistic adult advocating for adult needs at one of these meetings. This worried me, although I was assured that everything I said was being taken into consideration.

I didn’t hear much about the progress on the room until I was invited to attend the grand opening event on July 23rd. I was excited to go as I wanted to see how my ideas were included in the final design. After a brief ceremony at Gate A9, a sheet was removed and the entrance to “Presley’s Place” was unveiled.



A large green sign marks the entrance over the door. Beside the door is a plaque explaining the purpose of the room to be a quiet, sensory-friendly place and another plaque with instructions to dial 7 on a courtesy phone to unlock the door. The door itself has a large glass window.

Inside the door is a small **foyer** area with a chair and an interactive airport map. Real-time departure and arrival flight information is displayed on the wall. There is also a map of the sensory room and description of each area and its purpose.



After walking straight through the foyer, you enter a large **family room**. This is the largest room and has several types of furniture, including bean bag chairs, comfortable swiveling column chairs, a reclining rocking chair, and bench seats with lighted tunnels. There are lighted bubble tubes, textured walls, and mirrors.



Connecting to the family room are three **individual rooms** with padded walls and floors, adjustable lighting, and sliding glass doors. They have bench seats with a lighted tunnel, a reclining rocking chair and a bubble tube.

Also connecting to the family room is a **quiet room**. This room is designated as a silent adult room where there is to be no talking or “sounds from technology.” It features a sliding glass door, several outlets and charging ports, a regular table and chairs, comfortable swiveling column chairs, and a reclining rocking chair. This is my absolute FAVORITE room!

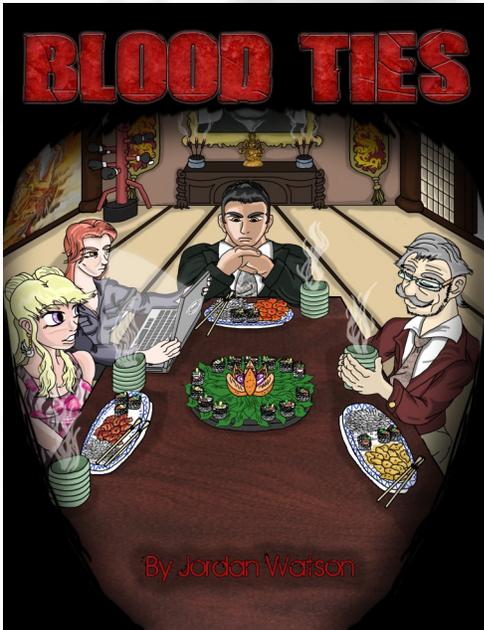


Backtracking to the foyer, off to the side is the entrance to the **airplane experience**. American Airlines donated three rows of seats with overhead bins, so that you can “practice” boarding a plane. Even though there are only three rows of seats, it appears as though you are inside an entire airplane due to the amazing 3D effect of the artwork on the walls. There is an exit door outside of the airplane experience so that people can leave this area and immediately transition out of the sensory room to board their actual flight.

Just to the right of the sensory room, with a separate entrance is a **family toilet room**. It is a large bathroom that has a single toilet, an adjustable height sink, and an adult size adjustable height changing table. The table adjusts from a few inches off the floor to a position where a very tall person would not have to lean over to assist someone on the table.

After touring Presley’s Place, I was VERY IMPRESSED. So many of my suggestions were included in the final design. Jason Rudge spotted me as I finished my tour and asked if I liked the **quiet room**. “I love it,” I exclaimed. “I just KNEW you would,” he replied.

And then I suddenly realized, the **quiet room** was created for ME. It was the adults only room that I had asked for. Presley’s Place may have been built because of Jason Rudge’s 4-year-old son, but the **quiet room** was designed specifically with my adult needs in mind.~~



Part One

Downtown Steelsvania, 14384. The time is 11:50 AM. It is a chilled 40° C, with the majority of Steelsvania's citizens teeming the industrial renaissance-like city in their hustle and bustle of speedy construction, burning renewable fuel, and the coming setup of their city-wide Xmas decorum. Near the west of the city lies Hartel Industries, a state national business complex that specializes in providing nuanced technology to small growing businesses in the many fields of medical, ecological, & historical restoration. It is ten minutes away from upper management's lunchtime commute, as a dark green limousine begins to pull into the front of the large, glass edifice. Emerging from it are numerous board members of the Hartel Committee, with Lucien directly in the middle. Before getting caught up in the deep conversation on the company's next course of action to expand Silver Shield's ventures into other portions of Steelsvania, he is greeted by one of his secretaries, Meredith Burkovich, with an enthusiastic statement.

"Mister Hartel, sir! There are three guests that have scheduled their 12:30 appointment to see you! One Ms. Detective Valerie

Mariska of the SPD, a Ms. Nina Robertson, & a Wilford Stentson."

Lucien looks to all four of them with a relaxed stare before turning to his fellow committee.

"Go on ahead without me, gentlemen. I'm starting my lunch meeting with my guests early."

The committee looks towards each other in quick befuddlement before dispersing from the young man to head towards the varying elevators to the top floor. Lucien looks to his guests and subtly motions them with his head to follow his lead. Past the large reception desks that occupy both sides of the luxurious lobby, the group heads towards the left row of elevators, with Lucien pressing the bottom floor button. After a minute goes by, the doors open. With the doors shut, a brisk silence fills the elevator, while Lucien presses his left index finger towards one of the small tile squares to the lower left corner of the elevator's operations panel. It slowly unhinges outward, revealing a bio-metrics pad, which he then puts his left thumb print to read his signature. A small, tonal beep sounds off from the pad's sensor, as it seamlessly transitions from a red glow, to a green glow on the tiles' outlines. The shaft begins to travel downwards. Lucien then steps back to lean against the elevator wall, before letting out a distinct sigh around his guests.

"*Siiiiigh*, So Ms. Robertson, care to tell me how a lovely young lady such as yourself ended up donning Iron Diamond's suit?"

Nina audibly gasps at such a direct accusation.

"*GASP* I haven't the faintest clue what you could mean by that!"

"If it weren't as obvious as Klark Siegel's disguise, I'd say your hair is the biggest dead giveaway. Platinum blonde types are rare to come by, especially with one as natural looking as yours, in comparison to other girls. Then again, might just be my intuition." As Lucien casually winks in her direction. She scoffs before continuing the conversation.

"Hmph! I'd never expect the son of Harold Hartel to be such a chauvinist. I suppose you're going to rat me out to the media on it?"

The young professional chuckles at her brash response.

"Nah, after all, we may very well need you as much as you need us. So don't worry hun, my lips are zipped."

As Valerie leans against the right side, she interjects with their conversation in a rather cold demeanor.

"Don't forget that certain precincts within the SPD are more than willing to let vigilantes like you do what they need to do to clean up Steelsvania's streets. If you were as brash as Mr. Hartel here, we would've locked you up faster than JEJA's urgent newscasts."

"And I'm certainly grateful you haven't, despite your rude temperament, Detective Mariska." She was clearly egging on the detective's subtle, sneering tone.

Lucien snickers at her previous remark, before he turns his head to his left side. He notices the collected silence of the elderly Mr. Stentson.

"So, remind me again how you tie in with the Chinese Darth Zader?"

The old gentlemen takes off his bowl hat before speaking in his dulcet tone.

"I am Zhou's butler, and messenger. He wishes to keep his identity only to that of public events that he

himself deems appropriate to his growing enterprise of Furus Geomancy Acoustics. Everything else, be it internal affairs with his partner, Chelsea Furus, or outsiders from the enterprise, he leaves to me to inform him otherwise.”

Lucien gives off a slight smirk before continuing his conversation.

“I gotcha. But, you didn't bring anything to write down though, you sure it won't be a problem?”

“Eidetic memory, Mr. Hartel. I appreciate the concern, but it will not be necessary.”

“Very nice. I'll definitely keep that in mind.” As Lucien gestures his right index finger to his right temple, with Mr. Stenson giggling at his clever usage of puns.

As the elevator comes to a complete stop, the doors come open. What is revealed to Lucien's guests, is rather plain and suburban in contrast to the opulent scenery of the top visible portions to Hartel Industries. Before them is a spacious, centralized room with patterned carpeting, wallpaper coated in intricate Chinese dragons, sans the heavy-handed gaudiness. Throughout the walls, are varied posters of the rich prodigy's childhood, all martial arts films spanning from *The Dragon's Entrance*, to *Yip Man*. To their left are visible shoji screened doors, painted with bamboo foliage to reflect the young man's serenity in his home away from home. In the center is a large mounted 65” television, with its outer linings decorated in the same dragon-like aesthetic as the walls that cover its surroundings, sharing in between it two large stereo towers. Below its cabinet are a plethora of gaming systems, all-encompassed in both retro and current systems. A large three-seater leather couch can be seen in the middle of its setup, as well as two distinguishing bean bag chairs in tiger-striped patterns placed from both sides of the leather chair. And lastly, to the right, is a walk-in bar, with a glass and marble finish. Its transparent lining that supports the structure shows heavily detailed sculptures that tell of its own Chinese story of war, akin to the *Cubed Kingdoms* period. It shows off a vast selection of liquors, wines, and even barreled whiskeys from the back. It seats over a grand total of ten people with meticulously crafted nimbus cloud orders holding up the seats. To top it all off, near the left wall towards the opening door of the bar, is a 50's themed jukebox, with near limitless selection of musical genres.

“Please, have a seat anywhere you guys like.” As Lucien goes towards the bar to fix himself a high ball glass of aged whiskey from the top shelf.

Valerie strolls down to his direction, over the farthest corner near the jukebox before scanning his collection atop the liquor shelf, then points to the James Laser bottle.

“Seems a bit jarring to see the son of a world-renown philanthropist want to hide something so tacky, the 80's would set itself on fire, like the *Fiery Rock* festival on E.”

Ignoring the otherwise condescending comment, Lucien pours her glass slowly to let the aroma sink in.

“Nothing wrong with keeping things professional and leaving your personal life out of it. Or is that foreign to your own profession, detective?”

Valerie slowly knocks it back while making a subtle, crude gesture toward him.

“Besides, you seem like the kind of person where you're cut from the same cloth. It's quite the struggle to keep appearances, isn't it?”

“Touché, kid.”

Noticing Nina walking towards the shoji screen doors, Lucien smiles at her curiosity.

“Wanna take a look?”

Lucien quickly shoots down his drink, then briskly walks over, seeing the sudden blush flush over her face.

“O-Oh, no, I didn't mean to intrude unless you were—”

Lucien slides the doors outward, revealing his own custom-made dojo, with the everyone else's astonishment following suit.

“O-o...okay with...it.”

The training room is setup with traditional tatami mats planted over the floorboards, with the walls painted in ancient Chinese scroll art. It also comes with a sleuth of self-moving wooden wing chun dummies in a circular position. In the respective corners of the large room, lies a punching bag connected to a small motor, with the chain-link on top of the ceiling connected to a heptagonal setup to the left. To the right, is an all-in-one gym machine that would rival *Titanic* and *Barflex* setups combine. Nina then raises her voice in blissful glee at the sight of his dojo.

“Wow...it's lovely! Heavily traditional, but lovely!”

“Heh. How ironic you tell me this.” As Lucien smirks in anticipation.

“Because we're plotting our course of action right here.”

To be continued...~~

For First-Time Fliers, a Window Seat and an Airplane Poem

By Kenneth Miller

I love first-time fliers. Witnessing a passenger's expectations and anxieties before they fly for the first time is a joy. I help check-in a few every week. I help them get a window seat and offer reassurance. I suggest that they hold someone's hand during takeoff and landing.

What we really need to offer first-time fliers is an airplane poem. There are so many of them... there is so much that could be said in a poem for first-time fliers. These passengers need poetry.

After thinking about how many airplane poems there must be and contemplating my own, my friend gave me a book. The first poem happens to be an airplane poem, a great one, called "The Boot."

I brought it work with me. I shared "The Boot." We bantered about airplane poems...and then, I got a first-time flier. I helped her to get a window seat. I asked her if she would like some airplane poetry to help get her experience into perspective. She said yes and I gave her the book. She promised that she would return it to the ticket counter at the end of the week.

I'm hungry for airplane poems. Please share with me your airplane poems and let's decide together what might be best for first-time fliers.

And I'll tell you what else, there are unaccompanied minors. Kids, under 14, who have paid an additional \$100 to fly unaccompanied. They fill out forms and receive introductions and they wait when they are asked to. We give them lanyards to wear. Maybe we should give them poems, too, but we could also give out pairs of pilot wings pin for their clothes. Maybe we could give out a stuffed yellow Spirit airplane to snuggle with.

Also, remind people that blankets and pillows are free on Spirit airlines. Stuffed unicorns and fluffy lamas fly for free!

UPDATE: The very best theme for a first-time fliers poem might be that the world is a very small place. I've also learned that Spirit Flight Attendants have First Time Fliers Certificates that they give out to first-time fliers that specify the date, flight number, type of airplane and pilot. That's very cool. ~~



Anonymous Librarian Interview

By Joseph Cepek

Due to the personal confidentiality requests from the interviewed librarian in this article piece, I am unable to give her name and a photograph of her in this informative dialogue discussion concerning the duties of different library staff members. However, it is still an in-depth description of the inner workings of various library environments. I believe it will further open one's previous knowledge of what goes on in a typical library setting on any given workday.

Questions:

What are the responsibilities of a librarian?

I am an academic librarian, so I will answer most questions from an academic library point-of-view. I have public library experience, too, so I will mention some things about public librarianship.

An academic librarian is responsible for selecting books, journals, and databases and for instructing patrons on how to use library resources to find what they need for their research and class assignments. The librarian may hold workshops, or visit classes, or create guides or finding aids. Librarians are often responsible for creating exhibits featuring library materials. The librarian is also responsible for instructing patrons on how to use citation management tools like Mendeley or Zotero to organize their research. The librarian is available to answer questions either at a Reference Desk or through email, chat, phone, or in-person. An academic librarian may also be able to advise researchers about data management, metadata, bibliometrics, altmetrics, or about Digital Humanities projects.

What formal education level is required to be a librarian?

A librarian has a 4-year bachelor's degree and a master's degree in library science or library and information science.

How many years of practical work experience is needed in order to be a librarian?

Some institutions require the library degree. Some institutions will hire someone without a library degree if they have an equivalent degree that's needed. For instance, some libraries are hiring Instructional Designers to assist with library instruction. Some small public libraries might not require a library degree but will require several years of similar work experience.

Do you need to be an extroverted "people person," in order to be a librarian?

Most librarians enjoy working with people! Since a big part of the job is interacting with people, it's very important.

Can one be a part-time librarian?

Yes. Some academic and public libraries employ part-time librarians.

What are the responsibilities of a library aide?

In an academic library, library aides are staff who work at the circulation desk and check books in and out, answer simple questions, supervise student workers, and sometimes re-shelve items. They may assist with teaching library instruction classes and help with exhibits. In an academic library, a college degree is required.

What are the responsibilities of a volunteer library aide?

I think that the responsibilities vary depending on the institution. My library, for instance, does not have any volunteers. Other libraries do have volunteers and they perform a variety of duties, depending on what's needed. Work might include shelving books, covering books, assisting with program set-up, and filing. Public libraries make much more use of volunteers and often have a long list of possible duties.

What formal education level is required to be a volunteer library aide?

Educational level needed to be a library volunteer can vary depending on the library.

Which library or libraries have you worked (worked) at?

I've worked at Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh and the University of Pittsburgh.

Do you like the work you do?

Yes! Every day is different and I really enjoy helping students, instructors, and other researchers find what they need and learn to find information for themselves.

Could you think of doing any other work?

I really enjoy working with students and do some teaching in my job, so maybe I could have a job as an educator; but I really love being a librarian and it is a good match for my skills.

Have you ever been interviewed before?

I haven't been interviewed for at least 10 years—so thank you for interviewing me! ~

Pittsburgh Penguins TV Host, Nicole Paxinos: Living Her Dream (Job)

Story and Photos by Robert Hester

Imagine yourself spending your childhood life growing up in the Pittsburgh area in a household with a family that loves its hometown NHL Hockey team, the Pittsburgh Penguins. Imagine yourself as a kid having ambitions seeing yourself working for your hometown NHL Hockey team, the Penguins, after you've become a grown-up. That was the imagination that PensTV host Nicole Paxinos was blessed to see become a reality—a hometown girl working for the hometown professional hockey team she grew up rooting for, along with her family.

"Growing up, I was raised in a Pittsburgh Penguins hockey-loving family, so working for the team was something I could definitely see myself doing," Nicole said. "But when I started to go to [Pens] games more as I got older I was like, 'Okay, I can totally see myself being a host or doing something with this organization down the road.'" Nicole got her opportunity to work at her dream job when she was a broadcast reporting student at Point Park University in Downtown Pittsburgh, a school in which Nicole said she spent "some of the best years of my life." In the summer of 2018, when she was just about to enter her senior year as a communications/broadcasting student at Point Park, Nicole saw a job posting from the Penguins for a position as an on-camera host for PensTV. Naturally, Nicole immediately applied for the job.

After Nicole endured (and enjoyed) what she called the pretty quick process of being hired as one of the new faces of PensTV in September of 2018, she was assigned to take part in the team's annual season ticket delivery day her first day on the job as the host of PensTV. Nicole said to sum up her first day working her dream job with the Pens, "That was one heck of an amazing first day!" What's also "amazing" is one of her colleagues she gets to work at the Penguins, Celina Pompeani. "Celina and I have had such a great relationship and friendship and have got much closer since working together," said Nicole. Celina is one of her co-workers, a fellow Point Park grad, and someone Nicole truly considers as a close friend of hers now! She also said that Celina is someone who she's always looked up to in the TV/Broadcasting industry. Nicole, graduated with a degree in Mass Communications with a concentration in Broadcast Reporting from Point Park in the spring of 2019, and said that Celina helped her so much to get to where she is today and she "can't thank her enough for that."

Aside from being in front of the camera as a host the Pens, the five-time Stanley Cup Champions, Nicole further expands and improves her championship-quality talents on her on YouTube channel! On her channel, you'll find a mix of lifestyle/beauty videos, travel vlogs, and as Nicole put it, "Whatever exciting things are going on in my life!" Nicole has such a passion for being on-camera, video editing, and just creating fun content that having a YouTube channel was something she "knew" she would need to do simply, "Just for fun!" Nicole often said this to herself even before she started her own YouTube channel—"I would still do it if 2 people watched me or if 20,000 people watched me; I'm not doing it for the views I'm doing it just as a hobby and something fun to do in my spare time!"

Growing up, Nicole didn't have any desire to travel away from home to go to college, which was why Point Park ended up being her best choice because she knew she wanted to get into the TV/Broadcasting industry. She chose a very well-known college within the TV/Broadcasting industry with such state-of-the-art media-related studios and equipment on its campus, right in her hometown. "I grew so much as a person and also into the well-rounded journalist and reporter that I am today," Nicole said about her experience as a Point Park student. "If it wasn't for Point Park and the help of my [Point Park] professors, I would not be where I am today!"

When she was little, Nicole was always a kid that constantly asked a million questions about every single little thing that she could. When she found out that she could go to school to become a journalist/news reporter on TV later in her life, Nicole knew that her heart was set on pursuing just that— she stated "sharing people's stories can be so



rewarding, they have the ability to display the goodness that goes on in and around our community." But as someone who was always interested in doing more entertainment-style news, being a host for PensTV has definitely given Nicole a "great opportunity" to become a positive role model and mentor for future TV journalists.

If the opportunity came about, Nicole said she would pick Sidney Crosby, a three-time Stanley Cup Champion during his time as the Pens' team captain, to spend a day with to do some kind of Day in the life of a Pittsburgh Penguin segment—if she got the organization itself, to "...be on board for the idea!" However, Nicole said any player would be exciting to spend the day with, but she thought Crosby would be most interesting for the fans. "I think it would be cool for the fans to truly get an inside look at the life of an NHL Hockey player," Nicole said, "and to know that they're all human just like each of us!" Says the girl who spent her life growing up rooting for the hometown NHL Hockey team that she would end up working for after she became an adult. This story is definitely proof that dreams really do come true.~~

Focus Peer Run Support Group

By Dmitry Harmon and Zach Grabowski

When one talks about Autism, there's sometimes a generic understanding as to what that might be. Some say it is a disability and it means that the individual will need support when it comes to becoming independent. Others might say something like, "They do not know what it is they really want." But in actuality, a lot of times it really means that an individual with an Autism Spectrum Disorder diagnosis needs support in achieving their goals.

As individuals who strongly advocate for Autism, an opportunity came up where various individuals were approached about running a support group. When we heard about the opportunity, we were very excited at the prospect. When the Peer Run Support Group was first introduced to us, we were invited to talk about the idea at a restaurant with employees from Focus Behavioral Health. Here the atmosphere was easy-going, but at the same time, a serious discussion took place. We had heard about a support group that was being run in a different part of Pennsylvania and because of the group's success, employees from Focus wanted to expand the idea to the Western Region of Pennsylvania. It was agreed that the meetings would take place once a month and in order to start it, we decided to have a "meet and greet" for the first support group.

Once everything was settled and we went over the expectations of the group, we scheduled who would lead the meetings in the coming months. At the beginning of each meeting, we begin with an ice breaker. Focus provides dinner and a volunteer takes a turn bringing the snack for each meeting. We begin the meeting by greeting the attendees. We ask everyone to go around the room and introduce themselves and then we announce the topic for the meeting. After that, we ask everyone if they would be willing to share a personal experience.

Some examples include boundaries and frustration. Some forms of boundaries include crossing, setting, keeping and maintaining personal as well as professional boundaries with others. For example, something that I have learned about boundaries is the consequences of not respecting them. Another topic that was discussed was how to deal with frustration. In this group discussion, we asked individuals if they were willing to share with us something that frustrates them, how they cope with it, and a new method for dealing with it.

We close the meetings by announcing the date of the next meeting and what the topic will be. We then ask for a volunteer to bring a snack to the next meeting and we ask if anyone is having a birthday next month. In addition, we ask for help with cleaning up the room, and setting it back to its original condition.

The purpose of having these meetings are:
to help others in areas they may have difficulty navigating.
to learn experiences from others.
to offer opportunities for growth.

It is a very exciting opportunity for us as well as for the people that attend the group. Our meetings are held on the second Monday of every month from 6-8 PM, typically at the Murrysville Library. We contact all participants with Focus as well as their families and staff who may be interested in attending. If people are interested in attending, they can contact Beth Redling (Focus) at (412)983-5502 or Matt Ridley (Focus) at (215)316-9262. We hope that after reading this article, more people will be interested in joining the meetings.~~

Trashing Mount Everest

By Megan Cunningham

Standing in the Himalayas on the border between Nepal and Tibet at 29,029ft, Mount Everest has long been considered the highest point in the world. For most of our history, climbing it was considered a seemingly impossible act until New Zealander beekeeper Sir Edmund Hillary and Sherpa Tenzing Norgay became the first known people to summit the mountain in 1953. But since then, taking the climb has become a popular challenge for experienced and inexperienced mountaineers alike. During the first 35 years after Hillary, there were only 260 ascents. Through 2018, there have been 9,159 total. While climbing Mount Everest was once seen as a notable achievement of extraordinary skill has now become an environmental despoiling slog for rich people without any concern for anything but their own bragging rights. Since Everest became commercialized in the 1990s, you'll find entitled people using their hard-earned disposable cash to pay underprivileged people to carry their stuff around in order to take an empty, vainglorious selfie of their pampered, smirking selves doing something they in no way could do on their own.

When I was in middle school, I had to read a book on Mount Everest for a gifted class called *Into Thin Air* by journalist and author John Krakauer, which chronicles the 1996 disaster, which killed eight people and marked the year the peak's deadliest season until recently with 15 deaths. Today it's the third behind the 2014 Mount Everest Avalanche which killed 16 and the 2015 earthquake avalanche disaster that killed 22. Anyway, the book's main focus revolves around two tourist expedition teams: one led by New Zealander Rob Hall (Krakauer's team which was the hardest hit) known as Adventure Consultants, the other led by American Scott Fischer called Mountain Madness. Unlike most of the clients, Krakauer was sent there by *Outside* magazine to report on Everest's commercialization and the increasing number of rich clients without expertise. In fact, Hall had paid part the magazine's fee to have Krakauer on his team. While no professional by any extent, Krakauer had been lifelong mountain climber since he was 8, which he practiced as a hobby. However, like the other clients on his team, Krakauer had no prior experience

climbing anything over 8,000 meters (26,247 ft). And like all but three, he had no previous experience high-altitude Himalayan experience.

Krakauer's account recounts the early days of Mount Everest commercialization via the expedition industry with guides and Sherpas aiding customers on their journey. According to him, Everest's era of commercialism started in 1985 when David Brashears led a guided expedition that included a wealthy 55-year-old businessman and amateur mountain climber with 4 years of experience named Richard Bass. By the early 1990s, several companies began offering guided tours to the mountain. For instance, before his death in the 1996 disaster, Krakauer's expedition leader Rob Hall had successfully guided 39 clients to the summit before then. Since then, booming business has caused many problems like a depressing amount of garbage, peak overcrowding, human waste, and dead bodies. In fact, a cleanup expedition once collected 24,000lbs of garbage. Climate change has caused the human waste sliding downhill in what's called a fecal time bomb.

Climbing Mount Everest isn't at all cheap. Most people who climb the peak hire commercial expedition operators, which can usually cost from \$35,000 to \$200,000. But services offered vary widely and it's "buyer beware" when doing deals in Nepal. Beyond this point, costs may wildly vary. Reaching the summit is technically possible with minimal additional expenses while "budget" travel offers logical support for such trips. However, unless you're a professional mountaineer, taking the bargain package is considered difficult and dangerous. Many climbers hire "full service" guide companies, providing a wide range of services like permit acquisition, transportation to/from base camp, food, tents, fixed ropes, mountain medical assistance, an experienced mountaineer guide, and even personal porters to carry one's backpack and cook one's meals. Many of these expedition companies offer expensive "luxury expeditions" that include perks like heated tents and dining tables.

Sherpas usually perform integral tasks like carrying supplies, setting up tents, melting snow, cooking food, fixing ropes and ladders, setting routes, making all the critical decisions, and secur-

ing passage through dangerous areas like the notoriously deadly Khumbu Icefall that's littered with gigantic ice blocks that can fall at any moment and huge crevasses. While paying clients have to go through this a few times, Sherpas must cross it 40 times a night carrying the climbers' luggage. Given that Nepal is one of the world's poorest and least developed countries, a Sherpa Everest porter can make nearly double the nation's average wage in a region of limited job prospects. As a result, Sherpas are frequently exploited working in one of the most dangerous jobs on Earth. Without their effort, there wouldn't be as many successful climbs. And the fact they do so for some well-off climber's ambitions is fairly unsettling. But even the Sherpas' patience has their limits, especially when client demands become too unreasonable during climbs. After an avalanche swept 16 Sherpas to their deaths in April 2014, numerous Sherpa guides walked off the job, causing most climbing companies to pull out respect for those mourning their loss. Since Everest tourism has become a \$100 million industry for Nepal; the nation can't afford to miss out on royalties.

Although Mount Everest isn't the most difficult mountain to climb, inexperience can still kill, especially when you reach the peak. Climbers can fall to "summit fever," where they rush to the top without prioritizing necessary energy for the return trip. In addition, once you get to 26,000 feet, you're in what's called "the death zone," that only contains 30% of oxygen at sea level. This dangerous region has numerous deaths, because the body's put under intense pressure. The stomach stops digesting food, blood stops reaching extremities, and the brain starts swelling and being squeezed out of the head and into the spinal cord. When people die on Everest, their bodies can block the only path up and down the mountain, compounding crowded conditions and leading to lines backed-up for hours and making things even more dangerous. The longer climbers wait in line, the more crucial oxygen they lose, the more their body temperature drops, and the more susceptible they become to frostbite and hypothermia.

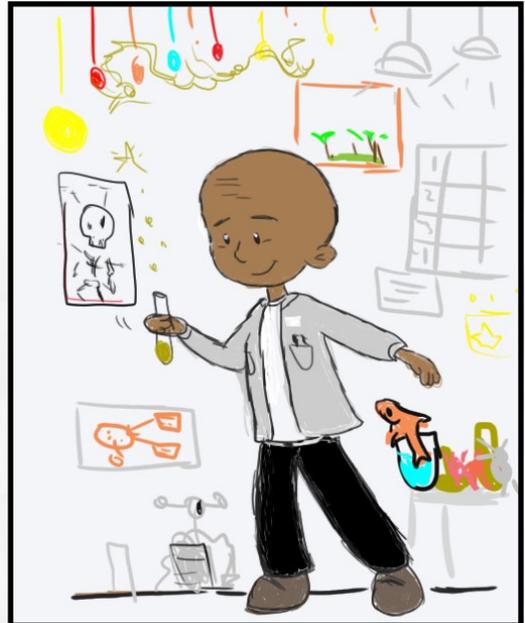
The risks are clear that Everest is no place for inexperienced climbers. Yet, while the Chinese government has strict restrictions on who and how

many could climb the more challenging Tibetan side, there are no such limits on the slightly easier and more popular Nepalese side other than a \$11,000 fee and a doctor's note deeming you "physically fit." Since 2/3 of Everest climbers trek up the latter side,



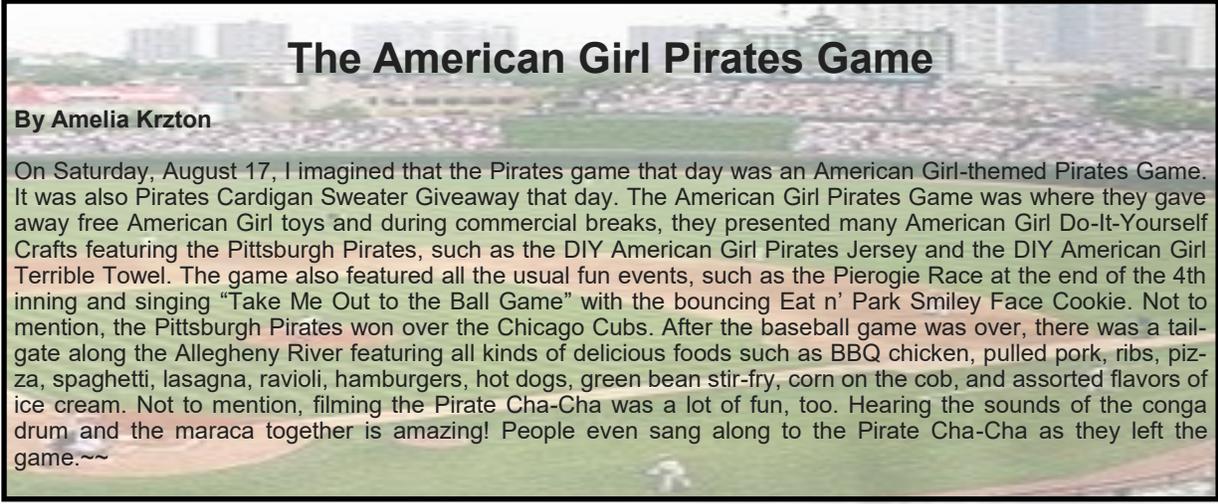
this leads to a lot of inexperienced climbers on the mountain. According to an interview on *Real Sports with Bryan Gumbel*, roughly half of those with climbing permits weren't qualified to do so. And bad climbing companies rarely turn down inexperienced climbers who pose danger to themselves and others. Combine that with bad weather conditions like avalanches, you have lots of death and disaster. However, given that Nepal heavily relies on tourism, it's unclear whether the system will change.

In any case, in recent years climbing Mount Everest has become a commercial venture to satisfy the egos of those who can afford it. Not only has this led to environmental degradation in the Himalayas, it has also endangered people's lives, especially for climbers who have no business being there. And it's often at the Sherpas' expense who end up risking their own lives to get these climbers to the summit. This climbing season has seen 11 deaths, excessive overcrowding near the summit, and inclement weather that cut the season short to two days. Naturally, Nepal can start by reducing permits to prevent overcrowding, spacing out expeditions, and placing strict limits on how many companies can operate. As for those who'd want to climb Everest for the selfie, just take a cue from John Oliver and go to topofmount-everest.com where you can just photoshop yourself on an Everest climber's head. It's a safe and cheap way to fake an achievement while staying the hell away. After all, I did one for this article.~~



**Artwork By
Melissa Mozurak**

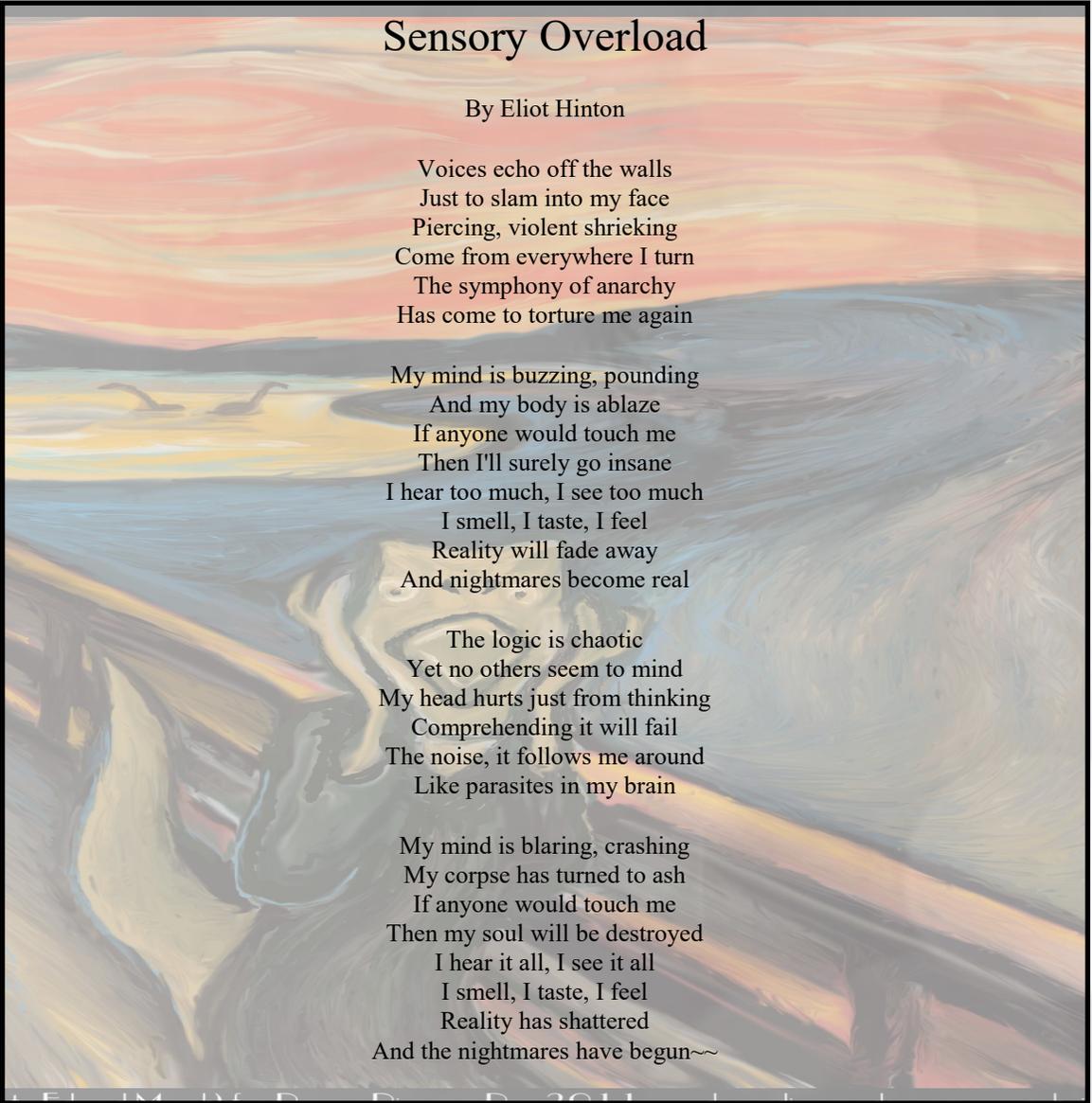




The American Girl Pirates Game

By Amelia Krzton

On Saturday, August 17, I imagined that the Pirates game that day was an American Girl-themed Pirates Game. It was also Pirates Cardigan Sweater Giveaway that day. The American Girl Pirates Game was where they gave away free American Girl toys and during commercial breaks, they presented many American Girl Do-It-Yourself Crafts featuring the Pittsburgh Pirates, such as the DIY American Girl Pirates Jersey and the DIY American Girl Terrible Towel. The game also featured all the usual fun events, such as the Pierogie Race at the end of the 4th inning and singing "Take Me Out to the Ball Game" with the bouncing Eat n' Park Smiley Face Cookie. Not to mention, the Pittsburgh Pirates won over the Chicago Cubs. After the baseball game was over, there was a tailgate along the Allegheny River featuring all kinds of delicious foods such as BBQ chicken, pulled pork, ribs, pizza, spaghetti, lasagna, ravioli, hamburgers, hot dogs, green bean stir-fry, corn on the cob, and assorted flavors of ice cream. Not to mention, filming the Pirate Cha-Cha was a lot of fun, too. Hearing the sounds of the conga drum and the maraca together is amazing! People even sang along to the Pirate Cha-Cha as they left the game.~~



Sensory Overload

By Eliot Hinton

Voices echo off the walls
Just to slam into my face
Piercing, violent shrieking
Come from everywhere I turn
The symphony of anarchy
Has come to torture me again

My mind is buzzing, pounding
And my body is ablaze
If anyone would touch me
Then I'll surely go insane
I hear too much, I see too much
I smell, I taste, I feel
Reality will fade away
And nightmares become real

The logic is chaotic
Yet no others seem to mind
My head hurts just from thinking
Comprehending it will fail
The noise, it follows me around
Like parasites in my brain

My mind is blaring, crashing
My corpse has turned to ash
If anyone would touch me
Then my soul will be destroyed
I hear it all, I see it all
I smell, I taste, I feel
Reality has shattered
And the nightmares have begun~~

A Very Interesting Thing

By Joe Cepek

The buttocks is the largest part of the human body. The buttocks come about by the massed formation of the gluteal muscles, which are nicknamed, “the glutes,” meaning the gluteus maximus and the gluteus medius muscles, which are connected by a fat layer. It attaches to the pelvis area at the ilium, which is the big and broad bone that forms the upper part of each half of the pelvis. This bone and muscle arrangement enable people to keep their individual balance and allows their midsections to be adequately upright, meaning, in a vertical position when standing up.

The buttocks are good for giving primates, who are warm-blooded mammals, including gorillas, gibbons, orangutans and humans, the ability to sit upright without having to rest their individual body weight on their feet as quadrupeds (4-legged mammals such as dogs, cats, and horses) have to do. Some female baboons possess red buttocks, which instinctively blush a darker red in order to attract male baboons for mating purposes. In human beings, females usually have wider and thicker buttocks because of the females generally have a higher level of subcutaneous (hypodermis, inner skin) fat and wider hips than most males. Plus, the buttocks give the human body a better opportunity to move in an efficient manner and aid in the defecation process.

Apes have a callus, which is a hardened skin piece, which results from repeated physical contact and friction against hard surfaces in nature, such as rocks and gravel grounds in captivity or in nature. Humans tend to have smoother and fleshier skin on their buttocks. “Nates” is the Latin term for the buttocks. Natis, in Latin, means one buttock. This is a rarely used noun term. “Butt,” “behind,” “duff,” “bum,” “booty,” “cakes,” “tush,” “rump,” “rear end,” “hams,” and “buns” are common slang terms referring to the buttocks.~~

Turning Obsession into a Career

By Nathaniel Geyer

As an adult on the spectrum, my obsession as a child was to study paper maps and community service. When I was diagnosed with autism, my adoptive parents thought that it would be best for me to socialize and develop more skills in order to survive in the world. Now, 30 years later, I am doing a second master’s degree in Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and learning skills that makes me a better spatial epidemiologist. Although, most epidemiologists focus on a subject, I tend to focus on a method, partially due to my childhood obsession in geography. Since epidemiology is the science of public health, I have successfully turned my obsession to a career. To date I am planning on completing my

second master’s sometime in 2020, while working full-time in public health. Slowly my career is becoming more of a spatial epidemiology focused. However, my place of employment has some challenges that made it difficult to offer training in GIS, due to a lack of knowledge and faculty who see these skills as a tool. To anybody who has a childhood obsession and want to discard it, I have tried that approach and found my life to be unfulfilling, as it was when I started to embrace it that my life has become more meaningful. I am able to do something to better the world, instead of just existing in it. My hope is to eventually offer a course in spatial epidemiology so that others can benefit from my childhood obsession, and help me to have a more sustainable career in the future.~~

Trouble Outside and Love Inside

By Ginger Reynolds

I have had a very hard year so far. I started out with fighting everyone, because I once thought that the world was against me. I have changed a lot since I last wrote an article for *Pittverse*. I was homeless and living in an all-women shelter. I also lived in hospital emergency rooms, on the sidewalk, libraries, and then I finally asked my parents for help. So, they paid for hotel rooms for me to stay in. I finally got the nerve to ask my parents to consider taking me back into their home, just until I find a more permanent address. So, that's what I did. I went back home on July 14th and so far, it's been so much fun. I'm helping out around the house, eating my meals, communicating honestly, and going on outings with my family.

I'm finally truly happy with my life and it's because I have decided to change my life around. I have a new phone number, I went to a job interview, I stopped listening to music with a negative message. I started to think for myself, and so much more. I'm a changed young lady and I am truly happy with who I am today. I have made amends with people I have done wrong; I have been contemplating my life dreams, thinking about going to college online to study psychology, and thinking about getting my bachelor's degree. I

have been thinking about going back to church and Bible study. But for now, I just want to relax. I'm back on my medications and haven't attempted suicide in over a week. I'm thinking more clearly, I am thinking before I speak, and I am thinking before I act. I did run into legal trouble, but I'm following the Court's orders.

Now I'm going to apply to Section 8 Housing, I have to call potential job opportunities, and I am going to start going to treatment for mental health. I'm just so amazed at how much I have gone through, but my faith hasn't changed at all. I used to think that I was an Agnostic, but because I have been through so much, my faith has changed. I'm now a Christian who is non-denominational. I now pray for everyone, even my enemies and study my higher power's Word everyday.

I'm more responsible now than I ever was and now I'm able to enjoy my life the way I was supposed to. I'm able to stay safe with not only myself, but others as well. A friend through church has a niece that works in a recovery homeless shelter for women and I went to go tour the place, with my mom. On July 17th, at around noon, was the first time I moved out of my parents' house and I have to admit that I was nervous, scared, and happy all at the same time. Now that I am living with other women, I am finally truly happy with my living situation.~~

Year Full of New Experiences

By Julia Fieldhammer

Last year was a big year for me because it was full of a lot of changes. It was my first year out of high school and my first year at City Connections. For those of you who don't know City Connections, it is a program for students who have all kinds of disabilities. There are sites all over Pittsburgh. Some of them are held at CCAC and some are in a house setting. The one I attend is in a house setting. They help you learn how to be more independent. I had to get a new nurse, which at first was kind of scary. The teachers teach us how to clean and cook, and we each take turns doing a chore each week. I think it's good for me to learn and practice those skills so I can get better at them.

Another thing we do is go out into the community as a group. Our teacher plans outings for whoever is not going to work on that day. The students all go to work at different placements, such as UPMC or Lifeworks. This program also helps students find work after they graduate. When the rest of us go on an outing with our teacher, we do things like go to the grocery store to get the items we need for lunch that week. Our teacher helps us write a grocery list before we go to the store. When we get there, one of the other students usually gets a cart while the others look for all the items on the list. Another place we go to work on our skills is the bank. We work on how to manage our bank accounts. Some of the other students and I have a school bank account. The school provides us all with some money that we can use for school purposes. Our teacher takes us down to the bank to practice completing transactions. I think these skills are good for me to learn and practice, so I can get more independent with them.

We also do some fun activities such as going to the movies and the mall. When we go to the mall our teacher lets some of the students go by themselves if they promise to stay together. As for me, I always stay with my teacher and nurse. We usually go to my two favorite stores, American Eagle and Altar'd State. Sometimes we eat lunch there or we just go for the morning.

This school year I'm going to be doing lots of exciting things. I'm working at Robert Morris University, helping out with their sports on social media. I'm also looking into an art studio where I can work on and sell my art. I'm really looking forward to working at these places and seeing where my work could go. In addition to art, I also like to write a lot which is why I started writing for *Pittverse*. I have my own blog where I write about my adventures. One day I would like to write and publish a book series. For the next two years, I'm going to attend City Connections and continue to work on my writing and art. I hope one day I can be successful in both of these fields, but for now I'm going to enjoy the last two years of my program and keep working towards my goals.

For more stories about my life check out my blog at Wheeling-around.com~~

PENN STATE NITTANY LIONS football

1887 - 20

By: Mark D. Lizotte

GREATEST PLAYERS

-- MOTHER DUNN LB 1903-1906
-- PETE MAUTHE FB 1909-1912
-- DEXTER VERY DE 1909-1912
-- SHORTY MILLER QB 1910-1913
-- BOB HIGGINS DE 1914-1916, 1919
#2 GLENN KILLINGER QB 1918-1921
#10 HARRY WILSON HB 1921-1923
#62 STEVE SUHEY OG 1942, 1946-1947

NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS

1982
1986

#42 LENNY MOORE RB 1953-1955
#33 RICHIE LUCAS QB 1957-1959
#89 DAVE ROBINSON DE 1960-1962
#82 TED KWALICK TE 1966-1968
#68 MIKE REID DT 1966, 1968-1969
#33 JACK HAM LB 1968-1970
#34 FRANCO HARRIS FB 1969-1971
#23 LYDELL MITCHELL RB 1969-1971
#22 JOHN CAPPELLETTI RB 1971-1973
#14 CHUCK FUSINA QB 1975-1978
#25 CURT WARNER RB 1979-1982
#31 SHANE CONLAN LB 1983-1986
#66 STEVE WISNIEWSKI OG 1985-1988
#12 KERRY COLLINS QB 1991-1994
#10 BOBBY ENGRAM WR 1991, 1993-1995
#11 LaVAR ARRINGTON LB 1997-1999

FINISHED WITH A PERFECT RECORD

1887 (2-0)
1912 (8-0)
1968 (11-0)
1969 (11-0)
1973 (12-0)
1986 (12-0)
1994 (12-0)

#5 LARRY JOHNSON RB 1999-2002
#31 PAUL POSLUSZNY LB 2003-2006
#40 DAN CONNOR LB 2004-2007
#26 SAQUON BARKLEY RB 2015-2017



PENN STATE NITTANY LIONS football

1887 - 2019

By: Mark D. Lizotte

GREATEST COACHES

BILL HOLLENBACK 1909, 1911-1914

HUGO BEZDEK 1918-1929

BOB HIGGINS 1930-1948

RIP ENGLE 1950-1965

JOE PATERNO 1966-2011

JAMES FRANKLIN 2014-2019



MASCOT

THE NITTANY LION 1904-2019

HOME STADIUMS

OLD MAIN LAWN 1887-1891

BEAVER FIELD 1892-1908

NEW BEAVER FIELD 1909-1959

BEAVER STADIUM 1960-2019



Finishing Marathons

By Delaine Swearman

Somewhere in my attic, I have a half marathon medal. I ran in a single half marathon, and I have no desire to do it ever again. There were too many people; it just wasn't enjoyable. But now I know first hand what running in a half marathon is all about and I do feel accomplished for having done it.

When it comes to full marathons, I've completed "too many to count", mostly without any recognition, and I have no medals to show for them. This past weekend I completed a marathon, and I did get some recognition. Someone pasted a comment on Facebook, "Kudos to Delaine for organizing our Learn to Paddle Event." It was recognition well received. But now that the event is over, I'm absolutely exhausted!

Anyone would feel tired after completing a marathon, but for me, it goes beyond ordinary fatigue. When I finally finish an event like this, I'm tired, sore, bruised, and bleeding. I need, not a single night of rest, but several days to recover. Being autistic, it's as if I'm running with an ill-fitting prosthetic leg. I might not function much differently under everyday conditions, but when forced to run a marathon, my limitations become apparent.

Now, I am capable of completing marathons under the right conditions, and I usually feel accomplished after I finish one. If I volunteer for a task or a project, it's usually because I really care and I'm invested in its outcome. I will do what it takes to ensure success.

Sometimes, however, I'm forced into a marathon by unexpected emergencies or too tight of a schedule. What might be an ordinary string of activities for someone else may actually be a marathon for me if it involves a lot of socialization, stimulation, or traveling and allows for little or no quiet, solitary "down-time."

I cannot just keep running after completing a marathon. I need my "down-time" with no responsibilities and no social interaction. It's necessary so that I can gain my strength back and function again. It might take a day or several days, depending on the marathon I've just completed. If there are back-to-back marathon events, I must become part of a relay team, so that I can hand off the baton to others and allow them to take over.

And that's where I am at the moment. I'm in "down-time" recovery mode. I might not speak to a single person today, but I am deep in thought and now I'm writing. ~~

Achieva Employment Supports

By Philip Wilsher

Achieva expanded from being the proper type of building that often offered and required the kind of people we have from being offered factory workshop samples to being given jobs in the community. Achieva in the South Side of Pittsburgh has helped numerous job seekers find their calling. Achieva employment specialists Nicole Lepre D'Amico, Ed Doerfler, Tricia Sadler, and Jack Doran helped me find the right job for me at a Dollar Tree on McKnight Road. Achieva has houses for people with intellectual and mental disabilities and always has been helpful toward people who needed and wanted and asked for jobs and homes and education. My first job coach, Nicole Lepre D'Amico, was my staff at the Strip District. She helped me find the perfect job fit for me. We know people with Autism, Down Syndrome, Cerebral Palsy, and Dementia that have attended this day program for multiple years since 1951.

Achieva is more than just a job. It's a triumphantly successful, wonderful program that's helped many people search for their goals. We look forward to the top-notch future at Customized Day Program, C&J, and Vocational Supports as every year goes by. Our approach from this building on 711 Bingham Street has been a very engaging and fascinating goal. We have Achieva's supported employment, Acheiva's a Home of My Own, Customized Day Program, C&J, and Vocational Supports located in the sites at Bridgeville, the South Side of Pittsburgh, and West Mifflin. We closed our Strip District in late 2018- early 2019 because local offices and corporate companies bought our building and sold it to regal executives. Now we each meet in the community every day of the week. Our progression was followed by Marsha Blanco, the mother of Benjy Blanco, the manager at VaultArt Studio where dozens of people learn how to create artwork that resembles anything that's too big to hope for. I learned how to be kind, polite, respectful, courteous, and thoughtful to all of the participants that all come to depend on in a service program like Achieva.

Achieva does more than just create the joy, the happiness, and the fulfillment of so many others of who wanted a house with direct care home staff that actually promise everything they set out for. We believe it is our destiny to help enrich people's lives to become better. That is our mission statement, as written by the laws of the foundation We are more than just wonderful artists, historic poets, fabulous linguists, first-rate preachers, top-notch writers, splendid authors, terrific playwrights, and superb novelists who are emulating the American Dream. We hope to come by every foundation in local Pittsburgh to help find betterment and search for a cure for wellness any time we go to these places. Those are more than just our agendas or our itineraries. Those are our strategies and we all hope to search for more. I'm here to achieve at Achieva. That is my odyssey and my journey. I've been with Achieva for 5 years and I've learned what they're all capable of doing for me. That is my testimony and my faith and my dream. Achieva makes dreams come true for others. We are more than just awesome teachers of the world. We are a diagram of eternity headed for happiness, joy, soul-search, and fulfillment ideally and idealistically. That is what we've come by and that is what we'll never give up on our hopes and dreams. Songs that need sung. Praise from the heavens we've all learn to come by year in and year out. We all hope for the very best in 2020 and they should all be prepared for that as every day and time goes by every month, every week, every decade, and every century, and every millennium that went by. They should all know what we're capable of and of what superpowers we have. I am an Acheiva participant and are always hoping for more to come. The end.~~

The Curious Case of the Battered and Torn Night-Walking Boots

By Nils Skudra

It has often been remarked that we are a nation of consumers whose inveterate lifestyle includes the constant purchase of things. We love stuff for a near infinite variety of reasons: they gratify us because they increase our self-esteem or esteem in the eyes of others (i.e. fancy cars or designer clothes), make things more convenient (lawnmowers, air conditioning units), allow us to indulge in a satisfying moment of retail therapy and even allow us moments to invent or maximize moments of social connectedness where we interact with strangers in the buying of needed objects. I can heartily speak to the truth of the latter. When I went to buy a pair of Wrangler jeans at Target, I ended up having a long conversation about philosophy and politics with another customer. I was able at the same time to satisfy what my mother feels is the genetically encoded “need to shop” with the undeniable need to mingle and converse with other folks who are engaged in a similar endeavor. I call it the “pleasure of pure shopping” although I am certain this might net me some moral approbation and censorious judgment from those who proudly disavow the value of things and how their “thing-ness” diminishes the superiority of a non-materialistic life.

I can understand the argument that caring about possessions might represent a moral failing since such a preoccupation might be construed to be an evidence of materialism or greed. But such a stance flies in the face of the reality that objects with great regularity represent history and memories. Undeniably, things are simply things, but also often are repositories for the meaning that people project onto them. A gift from an elderly aunt might represent an embodiment of her love, a teddy bear to a young child from a parent could signify safety and affection. When my own father, whose passion was photography, gifted me with an AE-1 camera when I graduated from college, that item took on a whole slew of meanings -- it passed along his love for a long-term interest and craft, encouraged me to start taking pictures in a newly enhanced appreciation for the visual world, and when he passed away it was as if there was a palpable memory of him which I could feel each time I held that camera in my hands. I literally felt my dad was with me whenever I took a photo and the sense of his presence at this time was always omnipresent. To this day that camera occupies a place of prominence on a two-hundred year oak desk I bought in Harper’s Ferry, Virginia (another object which is similarly ripe with sentimental meaning since it was purchased with money earned from the first piece I ever published).

Julie Beck in her 2014 article “For the Love of Stuff” (The Atlantic Magazine) stated “objects can be bridges to other people, places, and times, and create meaning and comfort for their owners.” I have yet to meet anyone for whom some object does not affect them emotionally or confer a sense of security. When I was eighteen years old I was given a sterling silver Latvian ring to always remind me of my father’s (and of course my) Latvian heritage. The ring has a powerful emotional significance to me although to someone who was not Latvian that same ring most likely would have been completely meaningless. Psychologist Dr. Richard Passman echoed Beck’s sentiments in a piece he wrote entitled “Security Objects” where he asseverated security objects, also known as “attachment objects” can have “powerful effects on emotional well-being, having a power to reassure us, connect us to loved ones and provide us with a sense of comfort and security.” This makes ultimate good sense because I don’t simply have to see objects as non-living material which can radically be transmogrified into valuable artifacts because they were expensive or social media deems them to be desirable. In other words, I am thoroughly okay with being attached to (at least some of) my stuff without feeling any personal guilt.

All of the foregoing is really a prelude to the fact of my ultimately accepting the reality that I am not a bad person because I love my stuff to which I am apparently spiritually attached. I’ll make the case by aducing the matter of the battered and torn Capelli rainboots which now have a permanent sanctuary on the screened-in porch of my North Carolina home. These boots, ordinary, originally not expensive, were purchased in a thrift store in Raleigh for a mere \$4.00, a cheap price because “they have been here forever.” It was the first time I had been to The City of the Oaks where I had a remarkable day of meeting kind and inter-

esting folks, visiting numerous museums, connecting with other Civil War historians and ending my day by sampling the best dark chocolate (at Videri's) I'd ever had in the Tarheel State. Those boots became transformed into a meaningful symbol for the lovely time I spent in that city and I could never look at or wear them really without harkening back to my transformative experiences in the capitol city. These are the very boots I wore when I saw my first snow, running out and cupping a huge ball of it in my bare hands. The boots always bring back that recollection and joy of having something brand-new, although subsequent snowy seasons bring this California boy unexpected happiness as well.

But the boots, only a month later, began to show signs of serious wear, with tears and holes in each sole. People took notice and began to talk about the need to throw them out and buy new ones. They were an eyesore and the critical commentaries began to multiply. Thinking about the logic of all this I walked out to the garbage can on a blustery and inhospitable evening and tossed them in the receptacle. They lived there overnight, undoubtedly gathering moisture and germs of an indeterminate nature. In the morning I awoke in the throes of a sudden panic attack, realizing that the boots were somehow iconic, they had memories, history related to them. They were consequently invaluable to the very schema of my life. I raced out to the garbage can, toppled it over, and retrieved those boots, all this while a noisy neighbor stared hostilely, and no doubt thought I was one of the miserable lot of dumpster-divers you often see in the urban landscape.

In my own life there are other examples of being attached to things. At age 12, my parents bought a second-hand piano which hopefully might result in my becoming a concert pianist. I loved that piano and gave it my all, even bearing up under the stern remonstrations of a German piano teacher who clearly felt I was a less than ideal student. The piano represented hopes and dreams and the belief that music would transform a life which felt harsh and misunderstood. On a cool fall day I came home only to find that the piano was gone, had been sold because my father did not have all the money for our rent. My mother said "no matter, you didn't have the talent anyway." Even today the memory of those words still sting and I cry at the loss of the instrument which was such a vital force in my life. I was attached to a thing and I remember that attachment indubitably in its absence.

There is perhaps one more anecdote I can share about an "attachment object" which I estimate will always carry its innate object though admittedly it is only "a thing." While putting a quarter in a parking meter on College Avenue in Berkeley, California where I was born, I accidentally dropped the coin. I bent down to pick it up and found it had landed on a slightly bent Star of David. I experienced what I might call an epiphany; at this time in my life I was questioning my Jewish faith for a myriad of reasons and here was a symbol of it, seemingly saying to me, "here I am, deal with me now." I pocketed that Star of David, feeling as if it was almost a message from God. To this day I keep it close to me, now a representation of faith which over time has been affirmed. To the naked eye, it is merely another object that is part of my "stuff" but, like those battered and torn boots, which I could ultimately not discard and inveterately wear at night to take my walks, and the remembrances of my wonderful upright piano whose music still consoles me though the instrument itself has disappeared in the physical vagaries of time – I love my stuff, and neither rhyme nor reason can dissuade me from their necessity and their ultimate rightness in my world.~~



BUILDING AND MODIFYING AN AIRFIX 2-6-2 KIT

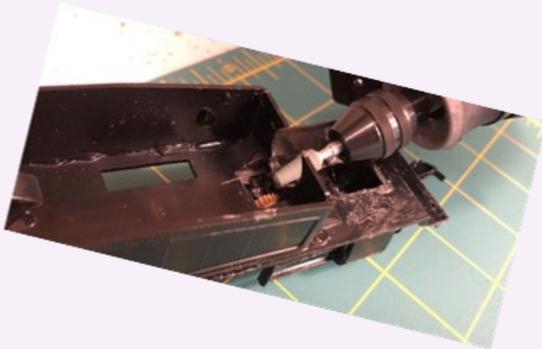
By Max Chaney

Hello there readers, and welcome back to Max's Model Railway! Today we focus on a project that has taken me the better part of at least a month to complete: it is my 1:76 scale Airfix kit of an engine that is a 55xx. In an Army Railway show on YouTube, although not strictly accurate, this series of How-To's, let's get cracking! And a Conversion to the 3rd Rail as well.

Legal Disclaimer: Adult supervision might be required to build this kit... the use of hot and sharp tools will be present, and the use of toxic paints and chemicals will be used in the construction as well, so please be careful, I am not responsible for any injuries of any kind or broken trains.

So, the first thing I did was set up my workstation, this cutting mat I got at Michael's for a good bargain (since we got it for half off, it was originally \$100).

Note: The Vintage North American Styled couplings why Airfix chose to use these I have no idea... but they are nice!



First, we assembled the chassis as noted in the instructions; we also assembled the trucks with the NA (North American) styled vintage couplings and we also installed some drive wheels (from a Keyser K's GWR 45xx prairie tank engine)

We then started to Dremel away at some of the kit for preparation of the motor (which will be a 12 volt DC Can motor). I glued the majority of the kit together but I stopped when I got to the smokebox, because we had to Dremel out a little bit to get the motor in the area, I also left the boiler top off for installation of the motor and I think I have a good Idea of how I am going to produce that! We then glued the smokebox part back on and then we decided to exploit the time by creating a non-flanged wheel, the non-flanged wheel by the way of the Dremel, so we could run this locomotive on tighter radius curved track such as 1st and or 2nd radius curves with ease!



The next step came out of the blue, as the chassis and body separated and I found this the perfect opportunity to install the middle wheel. Then we modified the underside of the running plate to provide clearance for the front truck and some of the cylinder blocks we cut slightly with the Dremel. We lowered front running board (not where the driving wheels are but where the front truck is) so as to provide clearance for the drivers, since they are at a lower profile than the original wheels from the Airfix kit. In doing so, we had to disassemble the front truck (not the axle) and we drilled out a little hole in the front, and I filled in the hole with Testor's contour putty and proceeded to screw the piece in.

We cut the slide bars off and we also shaved down the original Keyser K's coupling rod attachments, not sure what you call them, but we intend to screw the Airfix couplers into the Kyser K's wheels, so if they ever break, we can remove them easily.

I got some Tamiya weathering powders and gloss black paint and Tamiya masking tape for this next step. We masked off the critical areas of where we needed to mask off; I masked off the chassis and the buffer beams and I sprayed the model with the gloss black paint. I then I let it dry off until it was tacky and then I took the masking tape off and the results were much better than anticipated because the parts I thought I was going to have to spray again were already covered with Testor's Gloss black spray paint.... I also weathered the kit as shown the results were pretty good...

I then covered it, excluding where we'd put the decals / transfers with the weathering powder. We then drilled out some holes for the coupling rods so we can have screw-able crank pins for easier maintenance and then I sprayed it with a satin finish and put on the decals, but I accidentally ripped one so I will have to get a re-production decal.

The photo to the right is what we have so far.~~



#SocialPitt: THE 5TH ANNUAL HM3 INDEPENDENCE FUND CELEBRITY CARE FEST

Story and Photos by Robert Hester

August 9 was Pittsburgh's time to rock as guests put on their dancing shoes in preparation to rock with co-headliners, the legendary band Chicago, and legendary musician Peter Frampton, at the 5th annual HM3 Partners Independence Fund's Celebrity Care Fest! Yes, I kid you not! Two of music's all-time, legendary, and hard-hitting live performers took the stage at this event that was Pittsburgh's "Event of the summer!"

Guests of this exclusive and star-studded event had the pleasure of taking in a strolling dinner provided by the Walnut Grill, drinks, a silent auction, and an opportunity to mingle with locally, nationally, and internationally-known celebrities from the industries of TV, radio, motion pictures, social media, professional and college sports, politics, and of course, music! The event was also highlighted by a spectacular post-live concert laser and fireworks display.

Among the celebrities on the HM3 Partners Independence Fund's Celebrity Care Fest guest list who attended were the following:

Super Bowl XL Champion Pittsburgh Steelers: "The Bus" Jerome Bettis and his wife, Trameka Bettis. Head Coach Bill Cowher and his wife, musician Veronica Cowher.

Pittsburgh Penguins President David Morehouse and his wife, Vanessa Morehouse.



Former Steeler and The Ohio State Buckeye, Will Allen, and former Ohio State head coach, Jim Tressel.

Pittsburgh's own Joe Manganiello.

Former Penguin player and current TV and radio analyst, Colby Armstrong, and his wife, Melissa Armstrong.

Former Penguin and three-time Stanley Cup Champion player, and the Penguins' current assistant coach, Mark Recchi.

2009 Stanley Cup Champion Penguin Tyler Kennedy and his wife, Brandi Kennedy.



Former Steeler and author of the book *Brainwashed*, Merrill Hoge.

Warner Music Nashville Chairman/CEO John "Espo" Esposito

Athletic Director for the University of Pittsburgh/Pitt Panthers Heather Lyke, Pitt Panther football radio analyst, Pat Bostick.

Allegheny County Executive Rich Fitzgerald.

102.5 WDE Radio host Val Porter, and recently-retired drive-time host of 'DVE, Sean McDowell

Conservative radio host Rose Tennent, of the “Quinn and Rose” radio show.

Allegheny County Treasurer John Weinstein.

Former Steelers/NFL football lineman, Todd Kalis.

WTAE-TV Pittsburgh’s Action News 4 anchor and sports reporter Ryan Recker.

WTAE-TV Pittsburgh’s Action News 4 anchor and reporter Michelle Wright.

WTAE-TV Pittsburgh’s Action Weather meteorologist Ashley Dougherty.

KDKA-TV News anchor and reporter, Kristine Sorensen and her husband, former KDKA News reporter and current News Radio 1020 KDKA host, Marty Griffin, of “The Wendy Bell and Marty Griffin Show.”

News Radio 1020 KDKA host, Robert Mangino

KDKA News anchor and reporter Paul Martino.

Executive Director of Jerome Bettis’s The Bus Stops Here Foundation, and Founder/CEO of Valiant 3 Communications, Beth Vietmeier.

Former WWE Superstar, Olympic Gold Medalist, and Pittsburgh native, Kurt Angle.

Former WWE Superstar and “The World’s Strongest Man”, Mark Henry.

Pittsburgh Post-Gazette sports writer and co-host of the “Cook and Joe (Starkey) Show” on Sports Radio 93.7 The Fan, Ron Cook.

Recently-retired WTAE-TV Pittsburgh’s Action News 4 reporter and anchor, and show host for WTAE-TV, Sally Wiggin.

Lisa Pompeani, the wife of KDKA-TV Sports director, Bob Pompeani.

Chelsea Pompeani, the daughter of KDKA-TV Sports director, Bob Pompeani.

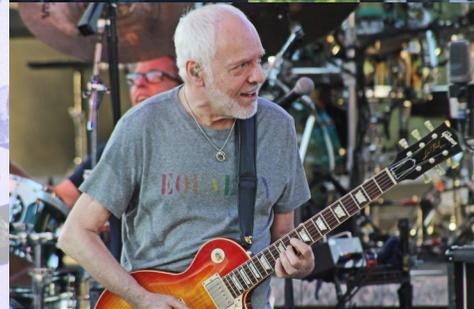
Dr. John Fung of University of Chicago Medicine.

Former NFL linebacker Troy Benson.

WTAE-TV president and general manager, Charles Wolfertz III.

Penguins goalie development coach Mike Buckley.

You can learn more about the HM3 Partners Independence Fund by visiting their website: hm3independencefund.org



CREED

CHAPTER 9

By Dmitry Harmon



It had been two weeks since Lilith encountered Frederick in the street. She was back in town. Lately it seemed she was coming back to town more frequently. The trips were starting to tire her. Today was the second scheduled appointment with Doctor Wilford. She was sitting outside his office. She waited for perhaps five minutes when the door opened. Another woman walked out and Lilith was called in.

“Good afternoon, Lilith. I say your travel here was well and uneventful?”

“Good day, Doctor Wilford; yes, it was wonderful, just a little tired is all.”

“Good, I am glad to hear. So what would you like to discuss today?”

Lilith had to ponder this question for a bit. She knew what she wanted to talk about: Annora. But she was unsure how to talk bring it up in an easy-going way. But then it came to her.

“I would like to talk about what it was like growing up for me.”

“Your childhood then?”

“Yes, but more importantly, how I was introduced to my best friend.”

“This would be Annora, is it?”

“Yes.” Lilith was quite nervous now that she was going to talk about memories of old. But she held her composure so firmly that if she was on trial, she would be so persuasive with that alone that there would be an acquittal.

“Well then, Lilith, where would you like to start?”

“I would have to say I was eight years old. I did not fully understand at the time other than what my father told me.” Lilith was remembering everything from that time.

“Remember Lilith this is a business trip.” Mr. König said gruffly. Mr. König at that time had black hair and a very well-kept moustache, though parts of his hair showed signs of very miniscule graying hair which revealed that he was in his late forties. Lilith couldn’t specifically recall the clothes he wore—just a general sense of a black suit tie and hat.

“Yes father. I will remember.”

“This is a very important business trip for the family name. If I get this deal done, we will have a very big contract with another company. They also have a daughter who is about your age. Do try to be polite.”

“Yes, Father. I will be.” Then Lilith remembered that this discussion took place inside the stagecoach. After what seemed like a long time to eight-year-old Lilith, the stagecoach pulled up to a big house.

“Good, we are early,” exclaimed Mr. König. It was four-thirty in the afternoon. Lilith could not help but feel a little jealous toward the little girl she had not met yet. The Königs had a very large house, but this house was a quarter size bigger than theirs.

“Father, what is the name of the family we are seeing?”

“They are called the Faulks.”

“What is the girl’s name?”

“Annora. And you will address her parents as Mr. and Mrs. Faulk.”

“Yes, Father.” She replied with rolled eyes.

Mr. König knocked on the door and waited for about ten seconds before it opened.

“Good afternoon, sir. Mr. König, I presume?”

“Yes, that is correct.”

“Yes, you have been expected. My name is Charles. I am the butler here.”

“How do you do, Charles?”

“Quite well, thank you. Please come on in. This must be Lilith?”

"Quite right!" With that Mr. König and Lilith walked in.

"Please allow me to take your coats, hats and gloves and I will fetch the master. Refreshments are out for you, for I must daresay you are tired and need some."

"Thank you for that, you are quite right," responded Mr. König with a slight smile. Lilith was very impressed with Charles the butler. While she was turning her head to look around, Charles mentioned that he would now go fetch for the master and put the accessories away. A few moments later, Charles returned with a young man that appeared to be in his thirties. This man did not have a beard but did have sideburns. He was dressed in a black suit similar to what Mr. König was wearing. He was also starting to bald and, where there should have been hair right above his forehead, was several thick strands of hair pushed so it pointed to the left side of someone who was looking at him. The rest of his hair had started to recede in a U-like fashion.

"Good afternoon. Alfred König. How do you do?" Both men shook hands.

"Yes, thank you for your gracious invitation to continue our talks about business. It seems so long ago that we first started talking about business at that holiday party we both attended years ago."

"Indeed, it has. Well I am happy to say my lawyers have come up with what we feel is a fair agreement. In addition, my wife and I agreed that we would love to have your company here at the house for the duration of your stay. There is no need to try to scrounge up a room at an inn when we have plenty of room here."

"That is extremely generous. Lilith, put your suitcase down and the butler will show you to your room." Lilith did what her father asked of her.

"So, this is Lilith then. How do you do young lady?" Mr. Faulk got onto his knees and took her hand and kissed it. Lilith could not help but find this funny and giggled.

"I am doing quite well, thank you for asking, Mr. Faulk," replied Lilith with a curtesy bow.

"Wow! Excellent manners, I am very impressed. You know, I have a daughter myself."

I am very eager to meet her," replied Lilith with a smile.

"You will meet her shortly. I hope you like stuffed chicken and soup for dinner."

"I love soup! And chicken is one of my favorite things to eat."

"Well then, I am glad to hear that. What a delightful young lady, Alfred. Here Lilith, let me introduce you to my daughter. And with that he lead them to Annora's room.

It was a very nice room. It had a big fireplace, a very nice wood floor with a very large red carpet with an intricate design of gold lions and doves on it. There was wood paneling for walls and a square black marble table with four black leather arm chairs surrounding the table. On the walls there were various cabinets and thin tall tables underneath paintings of people and things. Lilith noticed the painting of the family first. Attached to the walls were candelabras which held three candles each in total there were eight. Two on each wall.

"Annora dear, we have special visitors."

"Coming, father," replied a sharp voice. From behind one of the chairs emerged a girl. This girl had very pretty blonde hair. She also had emerald green eyes and a darker shade of pink lips that matched well with the rest of her skin complexion. She was wearing a dark royal red dress with black roses as the pattern and black boots with a small heel in them and gold buckles. Lilith was so taken aback by her beauty that she instantly became shy and grabbed onto her father's leg to hide. When Annora noticed Lilith, she did the same thing with her father.

"Annora, this is Lilith König. She is the girl I was telling you about yesterday." Annora was fidgeting around and started to bite the pointer finger of her right hand. Lilith had started to gently pull on her dress. Annora for some reason was either speechless or refusing to introduce herself or acknowledge her father in any form.

"Annora? What did we talk about yesterday and how to make guest feel?"

"We should be polite and treat them with the hospitality we want to be treated when we are guests," mumbled Annora.

"Very good. I am happy to see you remembered. Alfred can I tempt you in a cigar and brandy in my study before dinner?"

"That would be excellent. Lilith?" He added that told Lilith to remember what they talked about outside the house. And with that Mr. König and Mr. Faulk left leaving the two girls in the room by themselves.~~



Ode to your wondrously fascinating beauty,
you charm me all the way,
I have to ask,
so I pop the question,
do you love me,
like a docile fawn I wait,
I see you looking at me,
with those beautiful alluring eyes,
and that smile,
oh yes,
what wonders,
how attractive,
I pace,
awaiting your answer,
a yes will help me crest,
like a wave reaching towards the heavens,
and never coming down,
I'll ride that wave with you till the very end,
always forever after I will be,
yours,
with an amplitude I love you joyously and vigorously,
a no however will be like a shattered heart,
it will only make me miss you all the more,
answers,
I need,
answers,
you have,
I have to know,
no,
I need to know,
do you love me?

For: The one who has taken me
By Paul Lechevalier

**My Best Friend Series Number One:
Mary Ruth Nardozzi**

By Maggie K. Jones

My very first day of school in 1992 was the day I not only made a new ordinary friend, I met this friend because God wanted me to have a best friend to feel like I'm not alone in life with a disability. She made me feel special always because she is who she is, and that definition is: special, kind, funny, very good to get along with, very smart, and bright best friend. She knew how hard it was for me to have a disability called high functioning Autism. Even though she has a lot of global delays, which meant a whole circle of delays which is part of her disability.

I was in Saint Peter's Child Development Center in the Pittsburgh's South Side in the year 1992 when I was two years old. That was where we met my new friend. I could not talk yet because of my speech delays due to Autism.

Cardinal Wright Regional School was located on the Pittsburgh's North Side. Years later, in 1998, when I was eight years old, I was talking to my mother about some girl in second grade, I asked, "Who is that girl? I want to make friends with her." My mother said, "that is one of your friends that you went to preschool with, her name was Mary Ruth Nardozzi." I asked Mary if she would want to be friends, and from that point on we were best friends. I remember going to playgrounds around the city of Pittsburgh together; we went to school together, we went to museums and libraries together with our parents and my sister, Stephanie. We made our first holy communion together too.

In the beginning of the 2000/2001 school year, the first day of fourth grade was funny; I would remember it for the rest of my life. I was getting ready to go to homeroom when the first bell for the first class rang. I felt sad because I didn't see Mary all summer. Then I heard someone yelling for me, while she was running down the hall "MAGGIEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEE!" I laughed and I ran to her, yelling "Maryyy! "I'm happy to see you again!" We hugged each other and we always would see each other for now on.

When I was 12 years old, in the 2002-2003 school year, she moved to Word of God Elementary School when I was in sixth grade. I missed her. We would call each other after school, as we always do now. I went with her to Camp Variety, which was Variety the children's charity. That helps kids and teens with different kinds disabilities have fun in the summer. We went for a long time to Camp Variety. For years. We would attend Christmas parties at the Highmark Building downtown. We would hang out by the ice-skating rink PPG Place and drink hot chocolate in the wintertime before Christmas. We always had fun there, too.

I will always remember Mary; we will never separate, ever. Even if we have different disabilities, we are still best of friends. We care about each other and have a lot in common with hobbies.

And most of all,
I love her always. God bless my best friend, Mary Ruth Nardozzi.
Always and forever B.F.F.s, best friends forever.

Mary, I dedicate this article to you as a sign that I love you as a true best friend of 27 years.~~

The Incomparable Wallace and Gromit

By Megan Cunningham

Since their debut in the short *A Grand Day Out* on November 4, 1989 at the Bristol Animation Festival in the British city's Amolfini Gallery, the clay-mation duo of Wallace and Gromit have become, as BBC News put it, "some of the best-known and best-loved stars to come out of the UK." Created by Nick Park, the two have gone from characters in a film student's graduation project to international cultural icons of both modern British culture and British people. In their four shorts and 2005 feature film, this cheese-loving eccentric inventor and his long-suffering, genius dog have used their cracking contraptions on their grand adventures whether it's building a rocket and going to the moon, being stuck in the wrong trousers and an evil penguin's clutches, saving a flock of sheep and a wool shop owner from



her robotic dog, facing a dreaded were-rabbit, and contending with a spree killer targeting bakers.

Wallace and Gromit's origins can be traced to 1982 when National Film and Television School student Nick Park began working on *A Grand Day Out* as a graduation project. In 1985, the animation firm Aardman took him on before he finished the piece, allowing him to work on it part-time while still being funded by the school. The original plot was supposed to be 40 minutes long where Wallace and Gromit go to the moon and discover a fast food restaurant akin to the *Star Wars* cantina scene from *A New Hope*. Also, Wallace was supposed to end up in prison and Gromit had to bail him out. But once Park came to

Aardman and started on the moon scene, he had to cut it out and finish the film. So the final product became a short where Wallace and Gromit build a rocket in the garage, go to the moon, and run into an OCD robot who wants to ski.

For Wallace, Park offered veteran actor Peter Sallis £50 to voice the absent-minded inventor, surprising the rookie animator. Inspired by how Sallis said the word, "cheese," Park gave Wallace large cheeks. Funny enough, Wallace was originally supposed to be a mailman named "Jerry," but he felt the name didn't match with Gromit. Nonetheless, Park got the name Wallace from an overweight Labrador retriever that belonged to an old lady he saw on a bus. Park loosely based this cheese-loving inventor on his father he described, "an incurable tinkerer." Decked in a white shirt, red tie, brown pants, and a green sweater vest, Wallace is a kind-hearted, friendly, funny, and an eccentric man and cheese lover. Yet, despite his near-genius intellect and intricate inventing skills, Wallace can be quite gullible at times and a little over-optimistic. And though he can be selfish and inconsiderate, he usually means well and has a good heart.



As an inveterate inventor, Wallace creates elaborate contraptions that often don't work as intended. Many of these gadgets take inspiration from W. Heath Robinson and Rube Goldberg illustrations. Park has described that Wallace designs his inventions around using a "sledgehammer to crack a nut." Some of Wallace's contraptions are based on real life inventions. For example, his morning routine utilizes a bead that tips over to wake up its owner, an invention shown at The Great Exhibition of 1851 by Theophilus Carter and is similar to a device sold in Japan. Wallace's official job varies. He's a window washer in *A Close Shave*. He runs a humane pest control business in *Curse of the Were-Rabbit*, keeping captured bunnies in his basement. And in *A Matter of Loaf and Death*, he's a baker. While he's certainly skilled in the businesses he creates, either bad luck or an unexpected flaw in the inventions he uses to assist him often results in his downfall. Wallace had three love interests. The first was with wool shop owner Wendolene Ramsbottom, which quickly ended due to her cheese allergy (a major dealbreaker unlike being a sheep rustler, framing Gromit, and having a rogue robotic dog named Preston). Love Interest #2 was Lady Campanula "Totty" Tottington who had a big fancy estate, wore flower and vegetable-inspired outfits, and liked veggies and bunnies. Voiced by Helena Bonham Carter, she's the only one of Wallace's love interests without a criminal record (or to meet Gromit's death glare of disapproval). Love Interest #3 is former advertising mascot Piella Bakewell to whom he ends up engaged,





perhaps the worst decision he's made in his life because she's actually a murderer who hated bakers, all because the flour company she worked for fired her for getting fat. Fortunately, she's eaten by crocodiles.

To make *A Grand Day Out*, Park wrote to William Harbutt's company, requesting plasticine. The block he got had 10 colors, one of which was called "stone," which Park used for Gromit, whom he originally meant to be a cat. But Park changed him into a dog since dogs are easier to animate. Also, he wanted to voice the dog, but he realized the voice he had in mind would've been too difficult to animate. So he made Gromit silent, communicating through body language and facial expressions instead. He was named after grommets because Park's brother often mentioned them and he liked the word's sound.

Anyway, as Wallace's anthropomorphic beagle, sidekick, and best friend, Gromit is highly intelligent, sensitive, good-natured and resourceful but easily aggravated, especially when Wallace comes with ideas he knows will suck. As the undisputed brains of the duo, Gromit is far more grounded in reality than his master and in most cases, does more of the actual work as Wallace panics and gets into more trouble. In the end, Gromit usually has to save Wallace from his calamities along with everyone else. Nonetheless, despite his caveats on Wallace's inventions, Gromit is very loyal to his master. He sometimes can disobey or simply ignore what Wallace says, particularly in regard to Shaun the Sheep. His interests include knitting, chess, reading the newspaper, tea, and cooking. While his prized possessions comprise of his alarm clock, dog bone, brush, collar, and a framed photo of him and Wallace. His love interest is a poodle named Fluffles, who joins him and Wallace after her abusive owner Piella becomes crocodile lunch.

The Wallace and Gromit films are shot using stop motion animation. After detailed storyboarding, set and plasticine modeling, the films were shot one frame at a time, slightly moving character models to give the impression of movement in the final film. As with other animation techniques, there may be duplicate frames if little motion takes place. And in action scenes, sometimes multiple exposures per frame are used to produce a faux motion blur. Because one film second constitutes 24 separate frames, even the half-hour shorts takes significant time to animate with the typical speed being 30 frames per animator per day. Some effects proved impossible to create in stop motion like the fire, smoke, and flying bunnies in *The Curse of the Were-Rabbit* and had to be rendered by CGI specialists, MPC Film.

Wallace and Gromit's 4 shorts and feature film have received high praise from critics and audiences alike. Three of their short films received 100% ratings on Rotten Tomatoes, while *The Wrong Trousers*, *A Close Shave*, and *The Curse of the Were-Rabbit* all received Academy Awards. Gromit, particularly, has had a Mars prototype explorer robot named after him in 2005. And in 2010, *Empire* magazine placed him #1 of "The 50 best animated movie characters" writing, "Gromit doesn't ever say a word, but there has never been a more expressive character (animated or otherwise) to grace our screens." That same year, the Julian Nott theme song was used to wake up astronauts in space during the STS-132 mission. They've also appeared in numerous promotions in the UK, including a campaign to save a Wensleydale cheese factory from financial difficulties. In addition, they spearhead fundraising for 2 children's charities called the Wallace & Gromit's Children's Foundation, which supports UK children's hospices and hospitals and Wallace and Gromit's Grand Appeal, the Bristol Children's Hospital Charity.

As to whether there will be more Wallace and Gromit films remains to be seen. Wallace's original voice actor Peter Sallis retired in 2010 due to declining health and died on June 2, 2017 at 96. Though Wallace's current voice actor Ben Whitehead is often available, it was possible for years that no Wallace and Gromit projects were in the works. But in 2017, Aardman co-founder Peter Lord said at a Stuttgart animation event, "When Nick [Park]'s not drawing cavemen, he's drawing Wallace & Gromit ... I absolutely assume he will do another, but not a feature. I think he found it was too much. I think he liked the half-hour format." This May, Nick Park announced that new Wallace and Gromit short projects are on the table. So we have to wait and see.~~

Pictures courtesy of Aardman



The Impish Imaginos

Part One of a New Narrative in Space-Time Adventure

By Thomas R. Skidmore

He watched.

He waited.

He planned, pondered, and planned even more.

His dark eyes darting back and forth, the mind within him planned.

The faint sounds around him were filled with life routine and mundane, and yet he blocked out with utmost concentration. He showed no outward signs of care or even of mild concern. No, only his selfish gains and aims filled his addled brain, and he had come to understand this many times during the hours of his long existence.

Those who would see him in the night-time, even by chance, probably failed to let him even register in their minds, so buried in their bliss were they. And he always sought to take the fullest advantage of that very same blissful ignorance.

Clothed in the blackest of casual garb accented with the unassuming face adorned by a respectable mustache, he scratched his head, running his fingers through the shoulder-length black hair that added to his everyday-seeming demeanor. Around his medium-height frame, the streetlights scattered their light in sparse areas of the long avenue.

Reaching into the pocket of his dinner jacket, the man pulled out a gold-and-jade watch and opened the face plate. Taking the greatest of care to ensure its temporal accuracy, his now-glittering brown eyes narrowed as he scanned the face dial with purposeful intent. Satisfied with the decision now made, he nodded his head and strode off down the semi-darkened street toward his secret destination.

With each step taken, the man's heart was beating rapidly yet again he showed no outward emotion save for the small smile forming underneath his mustache. As the moment approached closer and closer, something stopped the little man in his tracks. His brown eyes turned toward the starry, moon-lit sky above him.

Harsh words formed in his brain, but he struggled to find the courage to speak them out loud. He hesitated not so much out of decency (for in his line of thinking, he hadn't any instant comprehension of the concept) but more from a gnawing sense of unease, if not all-out paranoia.

Soon those very words in his mind were followed by the images of two young people, a teenage girl and boy, from contrasting points in Space-Time. This added to the little man's growing discomfort. Indeed, his stomach rumbled and he felt ready to throw up though he'd not eaten anything for an extended number of hours.

Now his body trembled ever so slightly yet perceptibly, and beads of sweat broke out on his forehead; he sensed his mouth drying out as well. It took all his concentration to keep from shouting the long-hidden words, but after what passed for what seemed like an eternity, the man in dark garb maintained his resolve. Heaving a sigh of temporary relief, he shifted his eyes once more to the destination known only to him, taking a brief moment to once more gaze at the stars and moon high above (as well as ignore the two young kids still weighing on his mind).

A wry smile creased his face, causing him to chuckle quietly to himself.

"You really think you're going to win, huh? We'll see," he muttered softly at last . . .

Another set of eyes watched over images of the various worlds and their sundry affairs, taking great care to monitor the citizens and denizens in order to keep the Temporal Balance, the pre-ordained force established by the Most High God for universal and spiritual order. The man now glancing at the many Earths and other planets of the Multiverse grew pained at the indignities suffered on more than a few of these worlds. He rubbed his wide-set brown eyes and stood up from his desk, striding toward a balcony near his present domicile.

Wearing a white shirt, red-and-orange striped necktie, grey slacks, and brown shoes, he stopped

at the edge of the balcony. Rubbing his jawline which featured a dark mustache, he stared out into Endless Space as the twin moons above shined their light reflecting off his salt-and-pepper hair. His eyes narrowed upon remembering the multitude of events that unfolded under his carefully planned watch, and soon a small, grim smile formed on his otherwise wizened, calm face.

Casually he spun about and returned to his desk, focusing his eyes on an Earth where crime, anarchy, and suffering seemed ready to consume the planet whole. He narrowed his computer search to one locale . . . and indeed one man about whom the watcher has vastly superior knowledge.

After further glancing at the man on the screen, the watcher shifted the computer image to not one but two locales. He took deliberate yet informal care to select the two locales in different realms of time, and his sad, somber eyes twinkled brightly as though a flower blossomed deep within his essence.

He'd found his instruments of hope, and they would need to be gained, tuned, and set.

And now the monitor's grim smile broke out into a hearty laugh heard by none save him and the Most High God.

"Well, well, well. How interesting," replied he.

Plans were made, and he soon laid out his new course.

"Time to go to work," he said loudly.

A grey overcast blanketed the suburban neighborhood outside of Toronto, where a series of houses lay close together and in proximity to the local junior high school now laying dormant. Inside one of these houses, sounds of humanity coursed around the walls, emanating from the upstairs as footsteps stomped downward.

"Christine, you better make sure you eat some breakfast before you go," called out a female voice, maternal and authoritative in tone.

"What, now? You want me to eat now? Mum, you know I ain't hungry when I get ready for school." The younger voice belonged to a young girl, medium height, with blonde hair fashioned in the "new wave" style so common in the Year of the Lord 1988. She wore a loose-fitting long sleeve white-and-orange speckled shirt with black vest, blue jeans, red leg warmers, and blue-and-white tennis shoes. Her brown eyes darted toward the kitchen area, albeit with the greatest of reluctance.

"Don't give me any more argument about it, young lady. Now eat!" boomed her still-as-yet unseen mother. "You've got to take better care of yourself."

"Okay." Then a hard sigh let out. "Ain't this year great," moaned Christine dourly.

Shaking her head wearily, Christine rummaged around all the kitchen cabinets, quickly drawing out a small bowl and a half-full box of raisin bran. Next she darted to the refrigerator and pulled out a quart of milk, pouring it onto the cereal sitting in the bowl. Without even getting out a spoon, Christine lifted the bowl and let the contents slide into her mouth.

Within less than five minutes after eating, Christine wiped her mouth off and ran to the front door as though her entire life depended on the events of the day. She was stopped by her mother's voice.

"Have a good day at school, okay?"

"Whatever. I'll see you later, Mum."

"Okay. Oh, I might be late getting home from work so you'll have to make your own dinner tonight."

"That's fine, Mum. I'll see you soon."

Christine resumed her now-slowed pace toward the front door. She'd almost forgotten her textbooks and the homework she unenthusiastically completed the previous night, but she fortuitously remembered them on the coffee table and was on her way. No sooner did she open it that she was confronted by the very last sight she'd ever expect to see.

It was her very own self!~~



Try Burgh'ers for a Burger!

Foodie Call

By Zach Grabowski

I wanted to share a really good burger and brewery joint in Lawrenceville that I love called "Burgh'ers." They are focused on local, ethical, and sustainable food and drinks. My mom and I go there often and enjoy having dinner there.

Burgh'ers has many different types of burgers to choose from, including a veggie bean burger and an "impossible burger," which is plant based. A lot of the burgers on the menu are named after the neighborhoods in the East End of Pittsburgh, such as the "Lawrenceville Burger," the "Morningside Burger," the "Polish Hill Burger," and so on.

My all-time favorite burger that they make is called the "Animal Burger". I order this burger every time I go there. It is made with freshly ground beef, cream cheese, jalapenos, lettuce, tomato, and onion and you could also add bacon. It is really good! It is served with french fries. Other items Burgh'ers offers include chicken, pierogies, mac & cheese, and salads. If you are ever looking for a good hamburger, friendly staff, and an awesome experience, I would highly recommend heading to Burgh'ers! Burgh'ers is located at 3601 Butler Street, Pittsburgh, PA 15201.~~



Silly Yogurt Faces Recipes

By Daniel Ashkin

I chose a silly Yogurt Faces as our treat for the Halloween theme. Halloween time enables us to bring out our creativity and our originality in making usual projects for fun. Making a Silly Yogurt Faces requires 16-ounces cups of Greek Yogurt. First, you spread Chow Mein Noodles around the top inside container for its hair. Strawberries, blueberries, and slices of apples can be applied as the eyes. The cook can place slices of grapes or vegetable leaves for the upper eyebrows. Kiwis are placed below the lower eyebrows. The sous-chef assembles the strawberries and the blueberries for the nose. You can also embellish the nose by using blueberries, raisins, and cherries for the two nostrils. After you decorate the hair, eyes, and the nose, the month will become the last step of the project.

The chef can decorate the month with red, green, and yellow gumdrops for its smile. In addition, he or she can redecorate the month with round shape strawberries. You place a round blueberry into the center of round strawberry shape. The cook assembles four kiwis next to the blue blueberry as an embellishment. In addition, he or he can slice an orange as a shape of smile for its month. Using imagination and originality can become amazing treats for Halloween. ~~



Frightful Food: Spider Grahams



Foodie Call



By Amelia Krzton

With Halloween just around the corner, I have invented a new treat called Spider Grahams. This first began when I was making Candy Marine Life for my Sea Soiree. I had the graham crackers, vanilla frosting, red cookie icing, and peppermint candies leftover to make another treat. First, I set out the graham crackers. Then, I frosted the graham crackers with vanilla icing. I put a peppermint candy in the middle of the graham cracker, and finally, I decorated the peppermint candy by using red cookie icing to make a face on the spider and eight spider legs around the peppermint. I recommend trying this recipe if you want a spectacularly tasty and unique treat for Halloween. They look quite adorable, as well.~~



GRAVEYARD DIRT

Made By Elise Mote

Ingredients

- 1 box Oreos
- 1 box Chocolate Pudding
- 2 cups Milk
- 8 oz. Whipped Topping
- Candy of choice (I made chocolate bats and fangs)
- Serving bowl
- Large Bowl

Directions

1. Place cookies in Ziploc bag and crush cookies.
2. Make pudding by following the directions on the box.
3. Add whipped topping to the pudding and gently combine.
4. Pour into serving bowl.
5. Cover the pudding with Oreo crumbs.

Add candy on top.

Note: make sure you use a large enough bowl when making the pudding so you can mix in the topping.~~





Foodie Call

Mud with Worms

What you will need for this recipe is:

1. Oreos
2. Gummy worms
3. Chocolate Pudding mix
4. Milk
5. Whipped cream (optional)
6. Electric Mixer

Directions:

Step One: Put chocolate pudding mix in glass bowl, whisk in 2 cups of cold milk to pudding mix for two minutes until well incorporated with smooth, and thick texture, then add oreos and gummy worms to the mix by hand with large spoon.

Step Two: chill in fridge for five minutes.

Step Three: Take out of fridge after five minutes put in serving glasses and add whipped cream on top and anything you like on top. And it's ready to eat.~~

Halloween Sweet Treats Recipes By Maggie Jones

Topped Caramel Apples

What you will need for this recipe is:

- Apples
- One bag of candied caramels
- Double boiler
- Glass bowls
- Popsicle sticks
- Toppings of your choice

Step one: Melt a bag of caramel's until melted on a double boiler.

Step two: Pull the stem of the apples out and put Popsicle sticks in the apple of your choice.

Step three: Pour the melted caramel in a glass bowl, then dip the apples in the caramel quickly adding a topping of your choosing.

Step four: let cool in fridge until firm. Ready to enjoy.~~

Monster Rice Krispy treats

What you will need for this recipe is:

- One box of toasted Rice Krispies
- Marshmallows
- One bag of melting white chocolate chips
- Food coloring
- Butter
- Halloween Cookie cutters
- Candy (to decorate)
- Baking sheet
- Double boiler

Directions:

Step one: melt butter and then add and melt marshmallows quickly add Rice Krispies , turn off burner let cool for a little bit so as not to get burned.

Step two: Pour onto baking greased baking sheet and let cool.

Step three: use Halloween cookie cutters to make fun spooky shapes.

Step four: with the double boiler, add and melt a bag of white chocolate chips, mix up, and let cool a little bit, pour into glass bowl, add food coloring of your choice

Step five: Decorate, pour the colored chocolate onto the cut out Rice Krispies, quickly add candy pieces of your choice to make it complete with your design, put in fridge to cool some more. Bring out and enjoy.~~

Ice Cream Intern Part 2



Foodie Call

By Amelia Krzton

For this issue's Foodie Call, I have decided to write about even more ice cream shops around the Pittsburgh area. I continued to get my standard vanilla ice cream cone with rainbow sprinkles, as that has always been my best bet for me, no matter where I went. Without further ado, here are the final 8 ice cream shops that I went to this summer.

#1: Glen's Frozen Custard

located on Pittsburgh Street in Springdale

I went here a day before the Fourth of July, and I ordered something very special for the holiday. It was a red, white, and blue-themed ice cream cone with rainbow sprinkles on top. The white ice cream was vanilla-flavored, the blue ice cream was blueberry-flavored, and the red ice cream was strawberry-flavored.

#2: Antney's

located on Poplar Street in Westwood

Unfortunately, I was not able to go to this ice cream shop because it has been closed due to a family emergency this summer. So, I instead have a picture of an ice cream cone from Kennywood. One of my coupons from my season pass was for free ice cream at the Pagoda.

#3: Sugar and Spice Ice Cream

located on Clairton Boulevard in Baldwin

This is an old-fashioned ice cream shop that is open all year round. The vanilla ice cream cone with rainbow sprinkles was quite delicious. There are also so many good choices at this ice cream shop that it is hard to decide exactly what you want.

#4: NatuRoll Creamery

located on Butler Street in Lawrenceville

The trendy Pittsburgh neighborhood in the northern portion of the East End serves rolled ice cream with any mix-ins that you want. I chose rolled vanilla ice cream with rainbow sprinkles, graham crackers, and strawberries. If you are looking to check out a unique kind of ice cream, give this ice cream shop a try!

#5: Betsy's Ice Cream

located on Washington Road in Mount Lebanon

This ice cream shop is good for those who love ice cream because of their assorted flavors of ice cream. As you can tell, my ice cream is the flat kind on a cone. It still has rainbow sprinkles on it, as always.

#6: Dave and Andy's Ice Cream

located on Atwood Street in Oakland

When I got my ice cream cone here, I ordered 2 scoops of ice cream, but it was put into a bowl, similar to my ice cream cone from Glen's Frozen Custard. This place is cash only, with an ATM located in the shop. Like many ice cream shops, it sells pints, quarts, and even ice cream cakes to go.

#7: The Milkshake Factory

located on East Carson Street in the South Side

The regular vanilla milkshake was my go-to treat here. I did not get to come here with Evolve Group this year since we did not have enough time, so I went by myself. I also got a s'more candy to eat here.

#8: Pittsburgh's Best Ice Cream

located on Third Street in Oakmont

This is Pittsburgh's newest ice cream shop. It sells many different ice cream products from around the Pittsburgh metropolitan area. It gives customers another option to go to besides Brr-Kees.~~



Requiem for the Dearly Departed Table on Elm Chocolate Croissant

By Nils Skudra

When I moved from Berkeley, California to attend graduate school at UNCG, I knew inevitably I would count some losses in this relocation. Included in this repository of things I felt I could not live without was my weekly trip to La Farine for their absolutely perfect pain *au chocolat*. It was so delicious that I could even overlook the French attitude of culinary superiority and diffidence that always accompanied the purchase of my admittedly pricey morning pastry. My grandmother grew up in Paris and we have long-time French roots so I know what I am talking about when I invoke the holier-than-thou attitude which permeated the store and its employees who disdainfully accepted payment for their venerated goods as though it were they who were doing me a favor.

Surprise is fortunately a wonderful element of life. One day in late autumn when trees everywhere were ablaze with reds, oranges, and yellows and a tapestry of color blanketed the entire gleaming city, I discovered a bakery named Table on Elm while meandering downtown in Greensboro. That day I was particularly disconsolate and mourning the loss of the penultimate chocolate croissant which still prevailed like some beckoning sea siren in my former watery home in the Golden State. As luck would have it, I opened the door and there, staring me in the face, was a row of preternaturally beautiful *pains au chocolat*. Since I had just been thinking of them a moment before, I likened the experience to that of an objective correlative – I yearned for something and the universe immediately provided the embodiment of the desire. I remember purchasing two of these lovelies and hastily swallowing them, almost whole, in a burst of delectation and delight. Exploding with pastry cream and two lines each of superbly tasting rich dark chocolate, the thing that I had devoutly wish'd now lay in wake for me five days a week only ten minutes from my home. Hallelujah! Answered prayers no less!

After three years here I do not claim to be a Southerner, nor to understand the subtleties of what that means or portends. Rather, I am a California boy with just a bit of slight Southern polish that I think I have fairly earned through my interest and tenure here. I read Southern authors and drink sweet tea. I have done that on the wrap-around porch. I regularly eat a good diet of Southern foods – fried chicken, collard greens, pulled pork, banana pudding and savor my grits with the homies. I'm new to the credo of Faith, Family & Football but it feels good to me and the hospitality and humility that I see daily have changed the way I think about the world and my newer need to be of service to it. I've grown accustomed to the pop-up storms and the possibility of running into snakes (I don't distinguish between "good" and "bad;" they're all terrifying to me!) and just keep my wits about me when I'm walking in the woods or Guilford Courthouse National Military Park where the scary dudes (Copperheads) hang out. I love the historicity of this town and the obvious pride people take in it and their forebears. As a Civil War historian, history is very dear to me and it is everywhere abundant. I can literally reach out and grab it. When I've visited the New Garden Cemetery, I've had the sense of a clutch of spirits, those old British and American soldiers from the Revolutionary War, floating about me. Honestly eerie...sometimes I like to go down to the Double Oaks Bed & Breakfast on Mendenhall and gaze at that ornately gorgeous home with its many hints of rich bygone lives or wander over to the Biltmore Hotel with its checkered past and tales of murdered men falling out of windows, their ghosts still haunting the rooms, casting vague shadows down halls ripe with old secrets.

But as fate would have it (and is often said): all good things must come to an end. For three years, like clockwork, I got myself to The Table on Elm, in overheated or inclement weather, pounding rain which soaked me to the skin, and bought that incomparably delicious chocolate croissant. I didn't need to pair it with anything else; it shone entirely on its own in a myriad of doughy splendor. Some short time ago, however, that scenario changed. I approached the bakery door on a Saturday morning, rapacious for my a.m. delight and on the door was a large sign which bore incontrovertibly the words of its imminent closing. I will admit to a feeling of panic; my good culinary life was about to be yanked out from under me and the employees inside, while sympathetic, could only quietly confirm the truth of the matter. If I wanted (or needed) a chocolate croissant, I would have to make a one-hour trip by car to Asheboro and buy it there at the parent store, The Table. Seized by grief, I purchased a great number of the things, feeling as it were that this was some kind of non-religious Last Supper. Stuffed to the very top of my being, I let out a wail, a *Deja vu* wail as it were since I'd been through this exact torment before. Having a car riddled by old age including thus-far undiagnosable ailments, a barely functioning air conditioning system and a family member who said, "It's too far to travel to get one of those," I'm once again in the throes of emotional dislocation. And the bittersweet memories? Well those just don't suffice...

I did my best by you, Table on Elm chocolate croissant, always a loyal, enthusiastic and reliable fan. I sang your praises to anyone who would listen. Nevertheless, you have absconded to the city of The Zoo and it might as well be on the other side of this fantastic planet, given the limitations of my current underwhelming car scene and friends who cannot fully appreciate the gravity of the loss. Be it said then that this is a parting Ode to a perfect culinary creation. One of these days I'll make the sojourn to the café where you reside, waxing apoplectic when I devour that crusty chocolate creamy burst of so essential goodness. For now, I'll go about my business of touring Civil War sites and breathing in the history that is so abundant in the Tarheel State. I've lost the perfect *pain au chocolat* twice but I'll find another one somewhere if serendipity throws me a few favorable curves in the great-foodies-awaiting-me direction. As Scarlett said, "There is always tomorrow," and I sure hope that gal was right.~



Life in Ginger's Eyes

By Ginger Reynolds

It's hard being an Autistic female adult in today's society. People like to bully those who are different. I get bullied a lot because I like Paw Patrol and I drink from sippy cups. Just because I am different, people think they have the right to bully me. I have been told to go commit suicide. So what if I'm a little awkward? I am human and I have emotions just like you. I do what makes me feel happy and better about myself. People point out my flaws like they don't have any. So, I say things that are a little strange. I have everyday problems such as getting along with my family. I don't go out of my way to make others feel worse than they already do. Yeah, I get mad and I'm sensitive. So what? Some people are just different. I learned to accept myself the way I am. I have a wonderful girlfriend and I am grateful for the things I have. But I feel like crap most days, because people treat me like crap. The nerve of some people! Can't I show my personality without being bullied? Even my mom bullies me sometimes. I mean, she's the best but I don't like when she does things to purposely make me mad. I spend most of my time on social media looking for the connection I desperately long for from my parents but am not receiving it. Life is simple yet hard. I'm an Atheist but was raised to be a Christian. I have one friend who has a lot in common with me, but in ways we're not the same at all. ~~

TEXTING My Van Morrison and Carlos Santana

By Kenneth Miller

I've been texting ten times more than I have ever before in my life, letting those impulses fly and it feels a lot safer than it did on Facebook. I'm only vulnerable to one person when I text, unless they take a screenshot and send my message around.

Starting to text with co-workers about work seemed to loosen my restraint. We could even work through a minor misunderstanding, tell a joke, apologize. How nice it might be to text a picture of a flower or some fruit or pottery. Memes scare me. Don't send me an emoji.

Having had a girlfriend had made it more difficult to text. Oh, the memories about old texts and texting abominations.

Someone told me that I'd "never have an original thought." Having gleaned through Van Morrison and Carlos Santana over the past month, I'm sure that is true and I'm okay with that. I have not had an emotion that they have not fully explored and applied their talent to. So, text her YouTube videos, "'no religion, no religion here today' and that there's 'a monster living under my bed. And there there's a woman with her and in my hair and she says I have nothing to fear.'"

Slippery slope. I am definitely texting ten times more than the week before. That's a red alert. I need to get that under control. I am not here to be a great texter. Even if every text meets its intended emotional connection, so what? Where is that going to get me? More likely, I'm introducing chaos into sacred spaces with all this texting.

Another rock 'n roll snippet or a Pittsburgh Jazz Fact in someone's face? I better stop with the texting and deal with my musical epiphanies in another way.~~

Safety Column with Officer Bailey

By Michelle Middlemiss

My forum is open to readers for any questions you have about Autism that Officer Bailey will answer for you. He has two sons on the Spectrum. Please email me the questions you would like to ask: mycatthalia@yahoo.com



For the next year I will be working on my project "My Safety, My Rights."

Officer Bailey,

How comfortable are Police Officers around people with Autism? It's one thing to do training with their staff, but then to have real life interaction is another thing?

(Victoria Madar)

Victoria,

Police Officers are trained in a variety of unique challenges. You are correct, training is one thing, but an actual real life interaction will be different. Hopefully, their training will be effective and will have the best outcome for all involved. The standard in the academy in our state is demanding. There are more educational programs and resources for the cadet and officers alike.

Michelle: "Not every community has these resources available. From surveys taken for my project by the Police in 4 surrounding communities, I have found that these Officers have not had updated education relating to Autism; and almost 100% of the Police Officers want this training. Our Police Sergeant told me that every year they are allowed to choose which trainings they want to take over a few days time period. They have never had disability training offered because of the many new laws that have to be learned. Brian and I will be doing Autism training in October with Police Officers from 4 stations."

Officer Bailey,

If I had an autistic child who had a problem while she was out in the community, what would be the best way for her to approach a police officer to request help? (Carole Bell)

Carole,

I love this question. This is where you and the Police can be on the same page. Call your local Police Department and arrange a "walk through" and introduce your child to your Police. Get to know them and give the Police a short bio of your child with a current picture. Let the Officer tell your child how they can approach a Police Officer anytime to help them. Have the Officer explain what an emergency is and why a person would need help from an Officer. That's what we are here for, to help, not to get anyone in trouble.

Michelle: "That could work for a younger child, but usually not an adult on the Spectrum. A parent could take a child to a police station and introduce them. But an adult could feel threatened, especially if they have had a bad experience with someone who may have yelled at them or treated them harshly, like an authority figure. And it could put the adult on the Spectrum in a bad light with the Police Officer because they may see the person as problematic even before a problem may occur."

Officer Bailey,

How are police officers trained to keep autistic people safe if they encounter them in a situation, since their reactions are different from ours? (VM)

VM,

Hopefully the Officer will be able to recognize and assist accordingly. Every situation is different. In training, I educate the Officers that every person with AUTISM does and will act differently. There is no one way, no right way to respond. Hopefully with more education and training, the outcome will be a successful one.

Michelle: "It all comes down to if they get the training!"

Officer Bailey,

If an autistic person is injured, how would a police officer communicate that he could help?
(Jere Brophy)

Jere,

It all depends on the person that is in need for assistance. Sometimes the Officer's actions, like bending down, kneeling, open hands, will have better effect on communications than speaking. Having a calm, soft voice will also set the tone for the incident. Telling the Autistic person everything upfront, exactly what will transpire will have a better outcome. The Officer should have an open line of communication with the EMS crew that will transport the patient.

Michelle: "When an Autistic person gets injured all I can say is that even if one can control the function of his brain, cognitive brain function goes down very far. It's difficult to communicate because at the time the person can seem to act like a two year old. When I get an injury my first thought is that I fell and I need to shut off my Kindle. That means that I need to get off the ground where I fell to get to my Kindle. I am functioning on instinct and not rational thinking for an injury. I shouldn't move myself." ~~



The Science of Dealing with Difficult Situations

By Joshua Walburn

Imagine one person yelling at another; it could be about a machine in a steel mill not working properly, broken blast furnace, or when a SpaceX falcon 9 v1.0 starship is not increasing full thrust. When I get yelled at, both my head and hands get sweaty and warmer, my pulse increases, and my vision gets more kaleidoscopic, like a tunnel. That is everyone's physical reaction in the body, and my brain develops some more adrenaline-related chemicals in the neurons in which keep me alert.

From my perspective, I believe that those are more uncontrollable in people with autism, including myself. That explains why I may be at risk of producing a violent outburst. This makes it easier for autistic people to have that situation because the prefrontal cortex is less efficient in transmitting electric signals according to the Underconnectivity Theory.

This neurological theory plays a key model in the fact that the brain wires in the somatosensory cortex happen to overlap. The brain begins to send noradrenaline and adrenaline to the amygdala for the use of flight and fight responses. Then it transmits the signals to the areas used for memory such as the hippocampus and areas of grey matter in each cortex. In autism, more of these chemicals continuously adds to the amygdala during childhood causing violent outbursts to get worse overtime, it also enlarges the corpus amygdaloid ranging from 2-5 cm³.

The average size of the amygdala was 1.24 cm³ (SD = 0.14) while in wider borders was 1.63 cm³ (SD = 0.2). The enlarged one in autistic brains can explain why someone on the spectrum may have higher rates of depression or anxiety. This research uses structural MRI brain scan strategies to measure the volume of the amygdala.

Psychiatrists can treat the aggressive characteristics of autism by prescribing antipsychotic medications to improve the calming of someone's emotions. These medications help the brain to reduce adrenaline-related chemicals while adding more Gaba, endorphins, and acetylcholine. Another way to treat these symptoms is to perform physical exercise demonstrations such as running. Any number of time, pace, or distance, especially when running a race like a 5K, 10K, half marathon, full marathon, etc. will increase the brain cell activity containing flows of Gaba and endorphin chemicals improving relaxation and happiness.

As for getting my brain scanned for the sake of science, I can predict these theories and see if they come true. It's a hypothesis I'm making to explain the reasons why I've had these struggles. No one knows the reason, but this research can be scanned not just on one brain region, but many.~~

U.S. CRYPTEDS

Written by Elise Mote

Illustrations by Chas

Crypted: Creature whose existence who has yet to be proven by the scientific community, but has been suggested to exist.

Jersey devil

The Jersey Devil has been described as having bat-like wings, a head that is horse or goat like, clawed hands, a dragon like body, and of course, horns and a tail. One of the legends that started around 1735 refers to a woman named Mrs. Leeds or Mother Leeds. She was so upset to find out that she was pregnant with her thirteenth child (possibly because the number 13 is an unlucky number and around that time, witchcraft was feared) that she cursed the baby and it grew its grotesque features. It goes on to kill the midwife and, in some stories, the entire family before escaping up the chimney. Reported sightings of the creature were in New Jersey and Philadelphia. In 1812, Joseph Bonaparte (Napoleon's older brother) claimed he saw the Jersey Devil while hunting near his estate. Benjamin Franklin (inventor and writer of *Poor Richard's Almanack*) has also been accredited to the creation of the creature, because of his rivalry with Titan Leeds the creator of *The American Almanack*.



Mothman



Despite the name, this “man” doesn’t resemble a moth-like creature. The 7 feet tall biped humanoid varies from darker shades of black, gray, and brown, and reported to wingspan of about 10 to 15 feet or more. The wings give it the ability to fly over 100 mph. Sometimes he’s described as headless with the two huge red glowing, or at least reflective eyes set in the chest. The details of his face never been agreed upon but have been reported to have traumatized anyone who has seen him. Some people believe it brings death and destruction while others believe it’s a warning of what’s to come. The sightings were in Point Pleasant, West Virginia.

Flatwoods Monster

This crypted is more a robotic suit or spacecraft rather than a living being. It’s 10 feet tall and 4 feet wide with a “cowl” in the shape of an ace of spades behind a red round head. The head has two eyes that resemble portholes that are glowing green-orange and the size of half-dollars. The “body” was a metal like structure. There are debates between the actual color of the body. Some people believe it’s black while others think it’s green. People also argue if the monster was armless or has small “toy-like” arms. For six decades the fear of a monster haunted the people of Flatwoods, West Virginia. After a reported citing in 1952, six children, a mother, and a dog had reportedly seen it. This report got back to the US Airforce initiative called Project Blue Book who was sent to investigate.



Wendigo



In Algonquian folklore this creature or evil spirit is thin to the point of emaciation—a gaunt skeleton. Its skin is pulled so tightly, its bones are pushing against its skin. Its complexion is an ash-gray, its eyes are deep into their sockets, and the small out of lips it has were tattered and bloody. Reported sightings come from Canada, Atlantic Coast, and the Great Lakes.

Jackalope

The description of this creature is a jackrabbit with antelope horns derived from the Native American folklore.



Skinwalker

In Navajo culture, a skinwalker is a medicine man or witch who had the highest level of priesthood in the tribe but uses the power for evil by transforming into an animal to inflict pain and suffering on others. They are most commonly known to wear the pelts of a coyotes, owl, fox, wolf or crow.~~



Disney Villains

By Sara Brooks

Disney villains are bad people in Disney movies. Here are some of the villains.

My favorite villain is Ursula from *The Little Mermaid*. She is funny. She is Triton's sister. She is stylish. She took Ariel's voice.

Jafar is the villain from *Aladdin*. Iago is Jafar's partner. Jafar tried to take Jasmine's father's job.

Lady Tremaine is the villain from *Cinderella*. She had two daughters: Anastacia and Drizella. She is the step-mother to Cinderella.

Scar is the villain from *The Lion King*. He killed Mufasa. He loved Nala. His best friends are hyenas. Scar and Mufasa are brothers.

The Wicked Queen is the villain from *Snow White*. She poisoned Snow White's apple. Snow White was the very first Disney movie.

Shun Yu is the villain from *Mulan*. He was very sneaky. He was a Hun.

Cruella DeVille is the villain from *101 Dalmatians*. She had a coat made out of dogs. She stole dogs. She was the boss of Anita, one of the main characters.

Gothel is a witch and the villain from the movie *Tangled*. She was the stepmother to Rapunzel. Gothel locked Rapunzel in a tower.

Hook is the villain from the movie *Peter Pan*. His best friend's name is Smee. He is a pirate captain. Hook lost his hand because of Peter Pan and wanted revenge.

Hades is the evil villain from *Hercules*. His best friends are Pain and Panic. Pain and Panic are shapeshifting imps who are minions of Hades. Hades stole Meg's heart. He is a god, with blue flame hair.

Morgana is the sister of Ursula and is the villain from *The Little Mermaid 2*. Morgana is a sea witch. Her hair is different from Ursula's.

Shere Khan is the villain from *The Jungle Book*. He is a tiger. Shere Khan was searching for Mowgli for himself. He was also in *The Jungle Book 2*.

Clayton is the villain from *Tarzan*. He was a hunter that came to the jungle. He is never nice. He was hunting Tarzan's parents—the gorillas.

Governor Ratcliffe is the villain in *Pocahontas*. He was searching for gold on the new land. He did not like the Native Americans.

Villains make Disney movies interesting. I chose to write about villains because I know Disney villains.

How to tell if an Article is Deceiving the Public

By Daniel H. Ashkin

Today, the internet is full of misleading advertisements. I want to provide the audience the tools to tell if an internet claim is truthful by asking questions. Everyone is born with different types of traits. When you suffer from arthritis, the climate and the temperature affect you, and fluctuate region to region. When a person starts getting older, he or she will suffer bone mass with age. Heat and high humidity could likely affect those with the balance problem of the inner ear in older patients. I am going to demonstrate how these untruthful ads on youtube.com can likely become misleading to the public.

Scientific Procedure

Before we can demonstrate if a product works well, scientists must go through a series of steps to reach a theory. The reader can obtain this information from the time4learning website under the first chapter of biology. A scientist must go through four steps to verify that his or her theory is accurate. The procedures are the observation, asking questions, hypothesis, and a theory. I will cover the scientific process in specific detail in this report.

First, a scientist must make an observation. Next, he or she must ask questions, even questions about the object itself. Curiosity is the most significant characteristic of a scientist according to time4learning. Third, he or she must make a hypothesis. A hypothesis is an educated guess. Finally, hundreds of researchers must test the hypothesis in order to become a theory. After the many researcher test the product, it can become a conclusion.

How to look at Charts

How does a product become a scientific theory? Researchers must conduct the same experiments many times and find the same conclusion. It must be tested under many similar variables before an experiment can likely become conclusive. Before you say that ad is valid, it is extremely important to look at the graphs from a report. The most common type of graphs are bar charts, pie charts, scatter charts and line charts. Looking at graphs can tell the consumer if the advertisement is an accurate source of information. After the consumer analyzes the graph, he or she can likely draw up their conclusion for accuracy.

In summary, there are many types of scam artists on the internet today. Understanding the scientific process can likely assist you in preventing the public from by these fraudulent persons. The scientific process involves making an observation, asking logical questions on the subject, forming a hypothesis, and finally, scientists or doctors must test the theory many times before it becomes a conclusion. Researchers use bar charts, pie charts, line charts, and scatter charts to reach their conclusion. Finally, unless a person does not apply the scientific process, please ignore their statements. I feel that it very important that the public can think for themselves in this world. ~~

Upon Reflection

By Jake Ziesche

I look in the mirror, and I see "Weird Al" Yankovic,
I look in the mirror, and I resemble a roach
Who gets respect and isn't considered a low life
I look in the mirror and crack up at seeing Tom Kenny
I look in the mirror, and spot a kappa
That longs for love, I look in the mirror,
And I appear as transparent as a jelly fish,
I look in the mirror, and see Indiana Jones
Getting a gander from the looking glass.
I look in the mirror, and start to wonder,
Which is the real me? I look in the mirror,
And spot some will-o-the wisps, their ghostly
Lights creating a path of silhouettes of the figures I have seen
Leading up to my very own shadow
I look in the mirror, and see myself, I look in
The mirror and realize they are all a part of me.
I look in the mirror, and see Jake 'the Snake' Ziesche~~

Maxwell Minute

By Stacie Rymarz

As fall is rounding the corner, Maxwell and I wanted to take a minute to reflect on our journey from this summer. Our July started with a bang when we celebrated Maxwell's birthday on July 4. He turned five years old and had a party with his canine companions. He wore his hat, opened presents, and had doggy cake made of yams and carrots with a special almond flour crust. Mmmm-Yum! We had the opportunity to explore nature by visiting Twin Lakes in Greensburg, and other parks in Latrobe. We swam in creeks and streams to cool off during warm weather. We had a lot of fun at parish festivals in Latrobe such as Saint Benedix, Saint Paul's, Saint Barnabas, and



Saint Vincent where we enjoyed rummage sales, played bingo, and ate goodies like Haluski, Halupki, and other delicious ethnic foods. Maxwell and I had a lot of fun picking blueberries for our friends and family at Stone Church Berry Farm. Maxwell had permission to eat the berries that fell on the ground- chomp, chomp! We loved it so much we went four different times. To finish off our warm weather adventures we attended a "doggy dipper" at Derry community pool where Maxwell and his two pint-sized furry companions took a

plunge into the kiddie pool at an event open to the public for all dogs. We plan to start the fall season doing the Autism Walk at Idlewild. Our team has raised over \$500 for Autism Speaks. Wish us luck!~~

BOGNK0042**** - Please Don't Fault the Steel City

By Kenneth Miller

Cities have nicknames. Some are easy to say, the City of Angels, the City of Palms. Some airport workers call Orlando the "House That Mickey Built." Some, even well-intended, like the Redneck Riviera, don't seem so appropriate. Today I had to ask some Spirit workers in Bogotá to please not fault Pittsburgh for a bag that had been misloaded in Fort Lauderdale and sent to Cancun. "Please don't fault the Steel City" rolled right off of my lips.

Cities are also often identified by their airport codes. Someone who is going to Los Angeles is going to LAX or someone going to Fort Lauderdale/Miami is going to FLL. But airports don't only have three letter airport codes, some of them also have names. Someone going to Baltimore, for example, is going to Thurgood Marshall International Airport... it is an always nice to affirm with someone that they'll be landing at Thurgood Marshall.

On Monday I went to work and traded shifts with a co-worker, a move that made this week a six-day week and gives me three days off next week. Ohhhh... three days! I might as well try out my Spirit Flight Benefits. As an employee of Trego Dugan working the Spirit account, it costs me \$84.70 to fly round trip to Puerto Rico.

All of a sudden, SJU does not just mean San Juan University in Puerto Rico, which is the way I remembered that SJU is different from SJO San Jose, Costa Rica. All of a sudden, I care what the name of the San Juan, PR airport is. The **Luis Muñoz Marín International Airport**. Umm... who was that? No, his initials are not SJU. He invited Eleanor Roosevelt to Puerto Rico and then enacted laws that persecuted communists and members of the pro-independence movement.

Every journey starts somewhere. The SJU website says that they have an airport barber shop so maybe I'll get a haircut before I come home.

Update: When I arrived at SJU for my return flight, I had plenty of time to get a haircut, but the barber had the day off. A week after I returned, the Old City of San Juan erupted in protest over the governor's misogynistic text messaging and he was forced from office. ~~

Life as Public Domain: Part 1

By Cameron S. Irvin

It all sounded like such a sweet deal at first. The opportunity to be pampered, adored, idealized, to live on a special plane of existence where every day would be one grand adventure after another. It took time for the truth to bear down on us, but once it did it was inescapable. We could see and hear and feel it every which way we turned. But I'm sensing your confusion so let me rewind a bit.

My name is Stephen Greenwood and my life is a sitcom. And that's not a metaphor or a figure of speech. Every second of my life, for five years running has been shot, edited, and strung together as one great big situation comedy show called "Other People," based on the famous Jean-Paul Sartre quote, "Hell is other people." Like any catchphrase, a lot of the meaning and gravitas has been ground out of it over time, but I still see the irony in how appropriate this title has become. You see, the first eighteen or so years of my life were nothing special. I went to school, played video games, celebrated Christmases or birthdays, made friends as well as enemies, and was basically your average kid. Then, in my first year of college, everything changed.

One day a couple of men who I'd never seen before appeared outside my dorm room and said they wanted to talk with me about an "exciting opportunity." They told me they represented a very powerful, very influential network that had been scouting me as one of several possible leads for a groundbreaking new series they had in the works, a series that would simply follow a group of college friends about their daily lives and uncover the wealth of humor in all their little moments together. When I reacted in surprise to this news and asked why they'd deigned to think of me they merely responded, "Oh, we've had our eye on you for quite some time, Mr. Greenwood. From a respectful distance, of course." After that, one thing led to another and they ended up convincing me to put my signature to an extremely lengthy and incomprehensible contract which stated, in effect, that I would be the star of their show. When I asked excitedly whether my friends would be allowed to tag along, they laughingly agreed, saying that was what they had intended—to add them to the script. There *was* a script, of course. They told us that they were going for a casual, natural vibe and that we should feel free to "wing it" whenever we liked, but that was a crock. Maybe they avoided calling the script a script, preferring to call it "a set of guidelines detailing the various pitfalls to be avoided," but there were so many rules corraling us into saying or doing the kind of things they wanted said or done that we all just started calling it "the script." Really, that should have been our first clue.

It all began with the jokes we were supposed to be coming up with on a weekly basis. The "dos and don'ts" laid out in our scripts were both remarkably stringent and, at the same time, thick with double standards. One minute they would seem to be carefully steering us away from anything controversial or politically and culturally sensitive, and the next minute they'd have us giving demonstrations of the most cringe-worthy behavior imaginable. But that only bothered us a little. We figured with what they were paying us, so we'd say just about anything they wanted us to say. It was an intoxicating ride at first. A bigger, fancier dorm room than was even realistically possible for the kind of college bums we were supposed to be, and a greater array of food and clothing than anyone should have. We didn't think there was any way this would get old. But then they told me some of my friends had to go. They gave me all kinds of reasons about how they needed fewer main characters (six only) so that the audience wouldn't be confused, about how each member had to have a specific function within the fabric of the group, and about how the group needed to be diverse enough that no ethnicity would feel left out. That's how my buddy Melvin Liddle, being somewhat overweight, became the goofy "butt of every joke" fat character of the group even though he'd been studying seriously to get his PhD in engineering. It's also how my best friend Terry Wiggs was abruptly cut from the cast because he was, as they so kindly put it, "one more white guy than was needed." Never mind the fact that he and I had been friends since grade school. Never mind that he had helped me get through both my father's death and my first breakup. Never mind that we'd promised to have each other's backs no matter what. He didn't mesh with the network's vision so they booted him . . . and replaced him with Alex Sadat, a student I'd hung out with on a few occasions. According to the network, Alex had a lot going for him in that he was Egyptian and had a cocky, new-age outlook on life that apparently contrasted beautifully with the archaic traditions and religious fundamentalism of his heritage (their words, not mine). I'll be the first to admit that Alex could talk a good game. He was a pretty smart guy, capable of making some sharp observations. He was also, however, a world-class dick, especially when it came to matters of politics, religion, and taste in movies. His smug, confrontational tone got on my nerves very quickly. But whenever I voiced my objections, the network people would give me some line about presenting a "positive role model for intercultural friendships" and something about "creating a bridge of understanding between warring peoples." I tried to explain to them that "warring peoples" and "positive role models" didn't change the fact that Alex was a douche but they just smiled, said that they had a lot on their collective plates and reassured me that they would get back to me on this. They never did. They never had a talk with Alex about his attitude. They'd brought him on board *because* of that attitude. The fact is, Alex was edgy and Terry wasn't. Anyway, some stuff went down between Alex and me that the network maneuvered into being "all part of the show," which made me even more angry.

One of the most important people in my life had been replaced with someone who, honestly, I could do without. The unfairness of it all still rankles.

The network started pushing my friendship with Lucas Prado, whose status of being half African and half Latino they saw as a huge boon. Lucas and I were already friends and good friends at that. We didn't need encouragement to spend time together, but the constant pressure to make every moment between us both hilarious and meaningful began to wear us down. We started to feel uncertain about how to act around each other, worried that we were continually doing it wrong, worried that doing so would get one of us cut from the cast like Terry. Then the network started enabling Michelle's destructive behavior. She had always been a little impulsive, someone who tried to live in the moment whenever possible, and it used to end in nothing worse than a night of running through every lawn sprinkler with a slight hangover the next morning. But now they were urging her to go crazier with her escapades, and it started to get ugly fast. They saw a rich vein of party girl material that they could mine for years, but all I saw was one of my best friends going off the deep end. When Lucas and I tried to intervene, the network used the same stonewalling tactic they'd used with Alex. And Melvin was becoming more of a caricature with every passing day, with everything unique about who he was being pushed farther into the background. When I realized that they were trying to suppress his intelligence in favor of more fat jokes, I was furious. But I honestly believed that it wouldn't make any difference if I confronted them, after seeing all the good it did Terry and Michelle. I told myself that so long as Melvin didn't notice the change, he would stay the same happy, optimistic kid I'd known so long. In hindsight, I now realize this was delusional thinking, but I really did want to believe it.

To be continued . . . ~

If I Were a Superhero

By Ginger Reynolds

I would be super strong, super fast, and be able to fly. If I were a superhero, I would be the best superhero alive. I would have zero weaknesses and my lair would be a cave with cat ears. My lair would also have scales and be the color of greenish purple. Inside, there would be a pool of blue Jell-O and a wish machine that could grant any wish, but it would have enough intelligence to know a wish from a want. There would also be a big screen TV with movie theater seats and controls that would control the weather and the comfort in each individual seat. There would be a vending machine full of candy, soda, chips, and cookies. My brain would be as tiny as a crumb, but it would be filled with everything I would ever need to know. My superhero suit would be black scales, purple wings, and white striped. My superhero name would be PJMagnified, or PJM for short. My distress signal would be a koala's head. My Arc Nemesis would be Satan, the shape shifter. I would have magic powers and put all the evil people under a love spell. My mask would be of a cartoon Panda. My tail would be like a dog's tail. My appetite would be enormous, but my height would be like a cat. Mountain Dew would give me a Superhero Boost. I would be able to line up the planets and read minds. When I would be able to read minds, I would be able to organize the thoughts, so they wouldn't come all at once. ~

Sad and Possible Better Times

By Joe Cepek

I cannot lie that I am more depressed than I can ever remember in my life. I have no human friends. I always attempt to be friendly and courteous to others, but others seem to have no time and/or desire to begin building a friendship with me. I have gone to social groups with other adult autism waiver participants only to repeatedly come away sad and isolated. It is so much easier to make friends with a dog than it is with another human being. People are generally more complicated living and breathing specimens (including me) than dogs generally are. As long as one treats a dog well, the dog is usually loyal and unconditionally (no conditional strings added on the relationship agreement) loving than any other person (outside of the domestic home environment), whom I have ever met as far back as I can personally recall since childhood.

Plus, my dad's limited mobility struggles due to osteoarthritis (degenerative bone joint disease) in his knees causes me to feel more helpless and hopeless in ever making anything right at home. My dad is over sixty-five (65) years of age. Osteoarthritis causes the disintegration (breaking down of) of joint cartilage and the underlying bone (of the knee joint, for example). Joint cartilage and the underlying bone damage, most common in individuals in the middle age (approximately ages 45-65) group and onward (meaning those age 65 and older). Regrettably, it can cause intense (strong) pain and stiffness, in the hip, knee, and/or thumb joints of one's body (anatomy). Like countless other diseases, there is no known cure for this potentially debilitating health malady (as of now), tragically. I constantly battle disillusioning thoughts with recurrent suicidal themes. My inability to successfully deal with all of these unwanted stressors causes me to feel extremely overwhelmed.

Despite years of outpatient, intensive outpatient, and even brief inpatient intervention with untold numbers of clinical psychologists, psychiatrists, therapists, mobile waiver service case workers, prescription medications, spirituality interventions on a daily basis, among other numerous anti-depression agents, I still feel largely ignored and pessimistic about life in general. I believe when my dad lost his ability to walk, I began losing my capability to effectively deal with all of life's problems little by little. It is getting worse with each passing day. I do believe in miracles, but there is no guarantee that my dad will regain his ability to walk on his own once again and that would, in turn, cause me to stop feeling so awfully despondent toward my personal life.

I would NEVER EVER act on any suicidal and/or homicidal thoughts, which come into my mind, at any given moment, because of my knowing of the unavoidable consequences, which would result from me giving into these bad temptations. Yet, I can honestly say I do not believe I will at least partially climb out of my ever-growing gloom until I either move out of my immediate family's home (at the minimum on a part-time basis each week) and/or my dad can receive a cane, which will make considerably less bothersome noises (preferably with a rubber bottom attachment to enable it to stand up on its own without ever falling down), when he is walking on wooden or linoleum floorboards in the home. I believe this is necessary so I am not exposed to annoying and depressing sounds of loud cane taps. I am not a coward and I am not being disrespectful to my dad, because I am coming to an ever-emerging conclusion that I cannot make my dad's health problems go away by frequently praying over him, verbally quoting out various Bible verses, and saying, "In Jesus' Holy and Immaculate (Perfect) Name," while touching him on one of his shoulders. I also cannot do this with myself, my mom, or our family's dog named April. Why? Well, I am unable to heal anybody in a physical, emotional, psychological, mental health, financial, or in any other manner, because I possess absolutely NO healing powers of any known kind, through Divine Intervention. I simply, like almost anyone else, am NOT a human agent, who is given by Divinity, the necessary curing abilities to completely cure any other person, plant, or animal of any known health ailments of any type, sadly. All of the doctors we talked to have told us that my dad needs knee replacement surgery (a medical operation that replaces the weight-bearing surfaces of the knee joint), which may relieve physical pain and mobile (walking) disability, in both of his legs. My dad is wary of getting these surgery procedures done, because we reside in a home, which has three (3) staircases, which is not wheelchair, scooter, or crutch usage-friendly. It would take up to six (6) weeks or longer before he might (no guarantee) be able to walk again at least markedly better than how he has been able to walk since the start of 2017.

I wish there would be some medical intervention, which could be used for people like my dad, in order to counteract (work against) the osteoarthritis dilemma in those individuals' knees (like my dad) without a surgeon slicing open other peoples' (patients') legs under anesthesia (to temporarily deaden the pain), so that they can enjoy life much better in enabling them to walk better and not living in chronic (ongoing) physical pain.

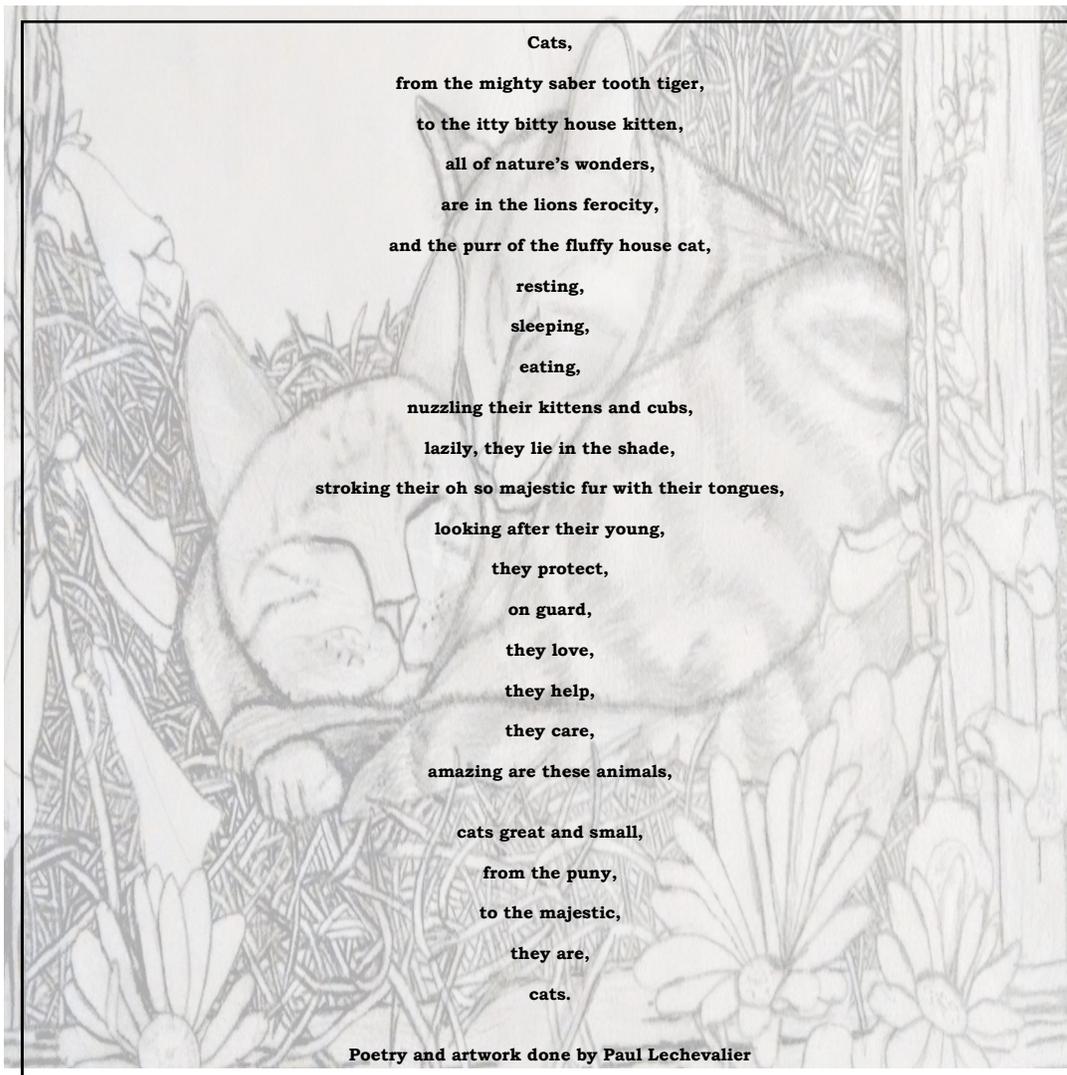
I have thrown up my hands in despair and hope that anything in these regards will get better. My ability to be genuinely happy was flushed long ago down a toilet similar to a biodegradable (environmentally safe) tissue piece, which is soiled by one's liquid and/or solid body waste materials. All of my laborious attempts to dream and better cope with life are mostly, if not fully, phony masks for trying to cover up (disguise) my disgust for my never ending disappointment in my unhappy life.

The spirituality pursuits and playing with the dog are the two (2) sole elements, which certainly are NOT fake (phony), but authentic (real) efforts on my personal part to combat (fight against) my burdensome feelings of hopelessness. These two (2) essential cornerstones prevent me from seriously trying to commit suicide and/or attempting to kill anyone else, whom I may be angry with, at any given time. ~~

Berlin, Legendary 80's New Wave Band

By David O'Rorey

Formed in 1977 by John Crawford on Bass Guitar, Bass Synthesizers & Rhythm Machine, early member guitarist Chris Ruiz-Velasco, who wrote an early hit by Berlin, "Masquerade." David Diamond is another original founding member who played Synths & a bit of Guitar. Drummer Rod Learned was possibly the first drummer. Later Matt Reid was added on Synths & Ric Olsen on Lead Guitar. Terri Nunn was the lead vocalist. She auditioned for the part of Princess Leah on *Star Wars* but didn't get the part and she joined Berlin instead. Berlin came at the dawn of MTV and had early hits such as "Masquerade" (#82 U.S.) "The Metro" (#53 U.S.) & Sex (I'm A...) (#62 U.S. #5 Canada). *Pleasure Victim* (1982) is a seven-song EP that went gold, as they were touring it with new songs from February 1983 to July '83 North America. *Pleasure Victim* was the second recording released by the band the first being only issued on vinyl by ISR, Records "Information" (1980). They recorded with another female lead singer, who was not Terri Nunn. The first full length album was released in 1984, *Love Life*, which yielded some hits, No More Worlds (U.S. #23, #5 New Zealand), Dancing In Berlin (#11 New Zealand) & Now It's My Turn, which reached the lower end of the U.S. charts. Touring from March to October '84 with same members & new drummer Rob Brill replaced Rod Learned in 1983 after the first nationwide tour. *Count Three & Pray* released in 1986 also yielded a few more hits but most of the band was gone by then, cutting the band down to a trio of Nunn, Brill & Crawford. They added additional members for 1986-1987 Shows.~~



Haunted PA/WV

By Elise Mote

West Virginia Penitentiary

Built in 1866 and in operation until 1995, this gothic prison is now used as a tourist attraction and training grounds. It even once housed Kathleen Maddox, the mother of the infamous serial killer Charles Manson. He even sent a handwritten letter requesting to be transferred there in 1983. The request was denied but is currently being displayed behind glass. For more information check out <https://wvpentours.com>. I highly recommend taking a tour.



The image above is one of the many paintings done by inmates Shawn Adams and Smitty Handig. One of whom was color blind.

Green Man

Raymond Robinson (Oct. 29, 1910-June 29, 1985) has been named the Green Man or Charlie No-Face due to urban legend. Supposedly Raymond is to haunt a tunnel on Piney Fork Road in South Park Township. The true story started back in 1919 because of a dare. When Raymond was 8 years old, he climbed a pylon because his buddies wanted to know if there were any eggs in a nest on the top of it. Unfortunately, there was an accident and he was never able to see again, but from the stories I read he was still upbeat as he would take pictures with anyone who'd ask.

Hell's Hollow

Hell's Hollow Farm c. 1824

Iron City Iron Ore Furnace 1838

The Wildlife Adventure Trail is a 4-mile trail in Mercer, Pennsylvania. You can walk the Trail (*age 10 and over*) for *\$5 a person* or you can rent a buggy for \$30 a person. If you feel like making a day or two out of it, you can check out the wilderness packages.

Hill View Manor

The Hill View Manor originally named Lawrence County Home for the Aged opened October 19, 1926 and was renamed as Hill View Manor on March 22, 1977 then closed its doors in 2004 due to financial trouble. The Hill View is now open for tours and you can choose between two tour opportunities. One is a 1.5-hour Day Tour that costs \$25 per person and guide will take you on a 1.5-hour tour of the building and there 3-hour Day Tour is \$35 per person and a Guide will take you on a 1.5-hour tour and the remainder of the time is used to explore the building on your own. Before you take the tour, you have to fill out a waver and schedule a tour 48 hours ahead of time. They even have private and group ghost investigations.



Dead Man's Hollow Conservation Area

This wildlife conservation is 450 acres and is located along the Youghiogheny River. It got its haunted reputation when in 1874 a group of young boys found a decomposed body that was hanging by a noose. Soon after, the hollow became the perfect setting for dark tales of crime and untimely deaths.~~

Blueberry Hill Elementary School

By Daniel H. Ashkin

Mary Fruitcake's English Class

I am going to write about a fictional fourth grade story about Mary's Fruitcake's English Class. She has been teaching English for twenty years. Her hair is medium-length, wavy, and red. The children of the class see large red freckles on her forehead and nose. When Mary walks into class, she always wears a very colorful dress. Before Mary prepares a lecture, she eats a bowl of green salad for more vibrant energy.

When the kids begin walking into her classes, she is eating a huge red, delicious apple and an orange. A large collage of lettuce, tomatoes, carrots, and lettuce stands in front of Mary Fruitcake's front desk. One student, Pam, gazes at the wild tigers, elephants and the giraffes that are hanging up around the classroom walls.

Mary always encourages the children to read books about animals, history, and science at the local libraries. She always wants her class to speak to each other in a complete sentence. Communication skills are essential tool for writing a descriptive essay. On the first day of classes, Mary asked, "What was your favorite activity you did during the summertime?"

Johnny answered, "I loved to play in my huge treehouse that is outside the backyard of my house."

Mary asked, "What are some of the games you have played in your huge treehouse?"

Johnny Replied, I loved to pretend to become a strong king of an ancient country in a large stone castle in a remote village."

Next, Mary asked Pam, "What was your favorite pursuit during the summer time?"

Pam replied, "I loved to play with my white kitten, Fuzzy." Then she asked, "Can I bring Fuzzy in for pet day?" Pam asked.

Mary answered, "I will gladly give you a time and date in the future."

In summary, describing your environment is essential skill for excellent writing according to Mrs. Mary's philosophy. The prime purpose of the images of animals is for the children to become more expressive in their writing. Looking at photographs on the wall will greatly help the children to speak in complete sentences. This is Mary's philosophy in teaching English to her students.



Ed Skelton's Science Class 2



Ed Skelton has been a fourth-grade science teacher for thirty years at Blueberry Elementary School. He is a very thin and bald man. He is very enthusiastic with the children. On his walls of the classroom, he has a picture of a human of Mr. Monster. On Mr. Monster, he shows show every major bone. Mrs. Monsters' lists all the major muscles on her skin for the kids to visualize in class. On Mr. Ed Skelton's desk, a red goldfish swims around the round fish tank. The name of fish is Mr. Gold. In one of the tanks, a small green snake swirls inside the container.

In one of his science classes, he was playing with his toy wild animals on his desk. Ed Skelton assigns the children to write a few paragraphs on describing the wild animals. The children will research the information from the World Book, Encarta, and Compton Encyclopedia books at their local libraries. Before the child chooses a topic, he or she must choose a picture of an animal from a black magic hat. When a volunteer starts walking around the class with the magic hat, Pam chooses a picture of a colorful parrot for her assignment. Johnny picks out a picture of a chimpanzee out of the black hat for his writing assignment. Amy elects a baby tiger for her assignment.

After the children pick out the pictures out of the magic hat, Mr. Skelton assigns them questions for their essays. "One, what part of the globe is this wild animal located? Two, what type of food does it eat to survive? Three, how does the animal reproduce to make babies? After the assignment is finished, I want to hear all your amazing stories about your wild animals. I am very anxious to read about your essays," he says.

When children read about the different animals in the world, they will gain a wonderful understanding of nature about the different animals in the world. After Ed Skelton hears each of the children's essays, he begins to jump up and down like an animal in the classroom.~~

Bob Stouffer, Volunteer Firefighter By Michelle Middlemiss PART 2

(continued from Summer Issue)



Bob Stouffer is my next-door neighbor and a volunteer fireman at the #1 Wilkins Township Fire Department.

Bob, do you have practical training for a fire?

One of our firemen had bought an old house on Harrison Street and he was going to tear it down. Before he did that we used it all summer for training. We had a smoke generator that made huge clouds of smoke and he set it up in there. He said okay here's the drill. You got somebody on the second floor; he's unconscious. Go find him. We go in and you're literally blinded by the smoke. You have to go in on your hands and knees and you're pounding the floor to make sure the fire hasn't burned through it. As you go up the steps you're pounding on the steps to make sure they're all ok. We did practical training. We also do hazardous material training, vehicle rescue training and first aid. For fire extinguisher training we'll take a mortar box, put water in it then put an inch of gasoline on it and light it and it goes right up. You just see this tower of flames; it doesn't take long for an older building to catch on fire, especially if it's dry.

I have a question about the chainsaw. I know why they have to have a chainsaw but are the firemen worried when they use it, they could be opening up a foundation and things could crumble faster?

It's not the foundation we worry about; it's the floor. The construction up until the 50s was balloon construction whereas you had a 2 by 4 stud from the basement to the attic. If a fire got in the basement it would literally go all the way up to the attic. We have jumped across houses built close together because flames will go across the house and catch the other one on fire. Newer houses are platform construction where there is a barrier between the first floor and the second floor so the flames can't get up. That's what happened on Easter morning; it was a balloon construction and the whole back of the house was burned and collapsed. It doesn't take long.

Did they used to spray houses with asbestos to stop fires from growing?

There are better ways now. We don't see much asbestos anymore. They used to wrap furnace pipes with it to keep them from touching the ceiling joists in case of fire. If you're selling a house the inspector says you have to fix this and that and what they do is wrap something around to contain it.

[Bob and I talked a bit about why it's dangerous when asbestos gets out into the air. They have to implode, not explode, buildings that have asbestos.]

Do you get calls that don't deal with fires?

We've had firemen go into an apartment and if there's drug paraphernalia we don't touch any of the stuff. If there's no fire we're out of there and leave it up to the



police officer to go in and take a look. We get a lot of false alarms. They might have green beans on the stove and it sets off the alarm. If a call comes in and says structural fire our chief has it set up that we would call the other Wilkins Township companies. Structure fires will have five companies so you get the others' special equipment such as if there's no fire hydrant here we call a tanker who's on the list. If it's a tall structure he calls North Versailles because they've got a ladder truck that goes up a hundred feet. The officer-in-charge generally makes an assessment and a judgment call.

When people started going from siding to bricks was there a difference between houses getting destroyed if it's brick versus siding?

The bricks are actually attached to studded walls when they build the house. Homosote used to be used in between and now it's usually chipboard. Then the wall is insulated and plasterboard put on the inside. Then the bricks actually have a gap in between them. The old bricks were more structural. With the new ones after the 50's on, the studded walls are holding the house up. If the fire is in an interior wall the heat would ruin the mortar and it will push the burned mortar in; the bricks out. The siding is usually blasted nowadays and will just melt. What really hurts people nowadays is smoke inhalation. You'll find when somebody's sleeping they can easily die in their sleep because smoke slowly gets into them.

Which is why the fire alarms are actually smoke detectors not fire detectors?

That's right. And if you've got an old couch they are much worse when they burn. They give off very toxic gas. They also used plastic tile in kitchens that came off as toxic gas. [We agreed that now they use a lot of stone in the kitchens because it's not as toxic.]

How long will you continue your volunteer work?

I'm turning 67 and probably should not be the one who's going into a burning building. I'll stand in the doorway and make sure they have enough hose but I told them at the station that I'm really going to have to watch what I do, interior wise. I'm starting to notice I can't do what I used to do. They said we're glad you told us that because we don't want you to feel you have to go in and we'll be dragging you out. I'm more of a support person now; if somebody needs an axe I'll go get it, bring messages about equipment needed; things like that. I will go in if they're short-handed. But they can get a lot of young guys that are full of fire and want to go in; ready and raring to go!

But in some ways you are just as important because that hose has to get in to the burning house! Thank you so much Bob, for a great look at the Wilkins Township Fire Department.~~



When a Hospital Closes

By Megan Cunningham

When it comes to debating healthcare, we often discuss how the morally unjustifiable for-profit system causes needless death, devastation, and suffering on American lives. And indeed, such money-driven medicine is a major reason why I staunchly believe in healthcare as a fundamental human right that we must recognize. But we don't usually talk about how this morally repugnant system hurts whole communities, especially since healthcare constitutes about 1/6 of the nation's economy. So it's no surprise that American hospitals are often the heart of many local communities, especially in rural areas. But since profitability determines which hospitals stay open and flourish and which wither and die, a hospital's closing can pose dire consequences for a community in a myriad of ways.

In the summer 2019, Hahnemann University Hospital filed for bankruptcy and began closing its doors, sparking mass protests in its northern Philadelphia location. One rally in July attracted 800 protestors attempting to save it. Another saw an appearance of Vermont Senator and Democratic presidential candidate Bernie Sanders. The crowds weren't there to protest the hospital but save it. Given its status as a safety-net hospital serving one of the city's most underserved residents, Hahnemann has been an essential part of its community even when it was losing money. Already, the closure has caused monumental disruption. Since the hospital relinquished its trauma center in June, a woman struck by a car directly in front of the building was taken elsewhere. And more recently, Hahnemann stopped delivering babies, sending letters to more than 800 pregnant patients that they'd have to deliver elsewhere. Meanwhile, hundreds of medical residents are rushing to find a new home where they can learn medicine, along with nearly 2,500 employees.

Founded in 1848 as a homeopathy center, Hahnemann would transform as a major tertiary-care academic medical center with almost 500 over the course of the 20th century. Designated as the first adult Level I Trauma Center in 1986, the hospital has long provided an assortment of specialty services, including organ transplants. It's even the main teaching hospital for Drexel University's College of Medicine. As of July 2019, the hospital cares for a predominantly low-income, publicly-insured, minority population. In 2017, Hahnemann saw almost 17,000 patients hospitalized there and another 53,000 emergency room visits. But despite its public mission and essential purpose in its community, the hospital has long been for-profit corporate property, which led to its downfall.

In 1998, Hahnemann was purchased by Tenet Health Corporation, a large national healthcare company with a storied history of fraud. In 2018, Tenet sold it off to an affiliate of private equity firm Paladin Healthcare. Recently, its president Joel Freedman said that since Hahnemann is hemorrhaging cash, he has no other choice but to shutter it for good. However, others have speculated that the hospital's valuable property is destined to be used for luxury developments instead. A recent report from *The American Prospect* suggested that scooping up Hahnemann and selling it for parts (like its valuable real estate) could've been the plan all along, the ominous start of a new trend as private equity investors eye the healthcare industry. The nurses' union leaders said that Freedman didn't try in earnest to save the hospital. As PASNAP spokesman Samir Sonti told WHYY, "Over the last 18 months, he has basically plundered it and driven it into the ground. He has been unwilling to work with stakeholders, elected officials, prospective buyers in a productive way to find a long-term solution to this. He's always considered this a real estate investment and not a hospital that provides care to low-income population and employs 3,000 workers."

Hahnemann's story isn't one of just a single urban hospital with a greedy owner but the dysfunctional and unjust way we finance healthcare across the United States. Hospital closure isn't an act of nature and the fact one can close due to unprofitability is only possible because we allow it. In this respect, Hahnemann is far from unique. In recent years, more than 100 rural hospitals across the nation have closed, leaving many poor communities bereft of access to even basic healthcare services. According to a 2017 study, from 2004-2014, some 650,000 childbearing-age women in rural counties lost all access to all obstetric services. Not surprisingly, these women are disproportionately poor and black.

And if it's not hospitals' closing due to unprofitability, unprofitable wards within otherwise profitable institutions are closing as well. In October 2018, New York Presbyterian started the process of closing its inpatient psychiatric ward in its northern Manhattan's Allen Hospital. Despite contesting to this, critics claim that NYP is doing this to make way for a lucrative spinal surgery center. And just as protestors rallied to outside Hahnemann, community members, activists from the Democratic Socialists of America, the New York State Nurses Association, and other groups protested outside Allen Hospital's doors fighting for its mental health ward's survival. Maternity wards have also been subject to closings, leading many pregnant women fewer delivery options that it's becoming a serious problem in rural areas.



However, while Hahnemann's closure may be a critical blow to Philadelphia, rural hospital in many communities often serve as the primary engine in the local economy. Aside from being the community's largest healthcare provider, they're also the largest employer. When a rural hospital closes, that lost hospital's ripple effects are profound, reverberating beyond would-be patients' inability to get immediate care. Since the distance between a person's home and the nearest medical facility increases dramatically along with the time it would take an ambulance to reach them in an emergency (*continued*)

Denim Interview

By Joseph Cepek

Here is an article about a PA (Pennsylvania) Adult Autism Waiver Consumer participant interviewing another waiver consumer participant about denim clothing.

Do you like jeans? Yes.
What is your favorite jeans brand? Old Navy.
Do you like jeans shorts? Yes.
Do you like jeans skirts? Yes.
Do you like skinny jeans? Yes.
Do you like white jeans? Yes.
Do you like jeans jackets? Yes.
Do you like elastic waist jeans? Yes.
Do you like two (2) back stitch pockets on denim pants, shorts and skirts? Yes.
Do you like belt loop jeans? Yes.
Do you like dark blue jeans? Yes.
Do you wash your jeans? Yes.
Would you consider yourself a "blue jean girl"? Yes.
Do you consider your jeans "friends", even though they are inanimate (nonliving) objects? No.
Would you care to be photographed in your jeans? Yes.

Thanks, Amelia Krzton, for participating in this interesting denim fashion piece.~~

from page 72). Many of the town's best jobs vanish while up to 25% of that surrounding region's economy vanishes. Physician practices, pharmacies, and other medical services may follow along with nonmedical businesses like restaurants and shops. Local leaders trying to recruit a new industry face an extra hurdle. As National Rural Health Association's Maggie Elehwany told Talk Poverty, "When that hospital closes, it's like putting a nail in the coffin of that community. You can't attract businesses or families with kids or keep retirees."

In 2016, the NRHAA announced that 673 rural hospitals were at risk of closure, which poses a possible loss for 99,000 healthcare jobs and 137,000 community jobs along. This constitutes more than a third with 11.7 million Americans potentially at risk of losing direct access to care. Not to mention, a \$277 billion GDP loss over 10 years. Of those, 210 were at "extreme risk" of closure. The NRHA has warned that, "Medical deserts are forming across the nation, significantly adding to the health care workforce shortage in rural communities. Seventy-seven percent of rural U.S. counties are already considered Primary Care Health Professional Shortage Areas." Since 2010, 107 rural hospitals have closed across 26 states. In a non-Medicaid expansion state, eventual closure is 6 times more likely, given how such states have higher rates of uninsured and uncompensated care. It's even worse when you consider how rural Americans already face a serious healthcare delivery challenge. Rural residents are usually much poorer and sicker with have higher rates of chronic conditions and psychological distress. Rural counties have higher death rates from unintentional injuries, motor vehicle injuries, greater premature mortality, higher suicide rates among men, and higher infant mortality rates.

Hospital closings in the United States reflect how devastating the for-profit healthcare system can be for the local communities that depend on them. Not only is basing a hospital's survival on profitability is morally reprehensible, it also puts many disadvantaged and rural communities in peril, especially when easy access to a medical facility can be a matter of life and death. Hahnemann's closing shows how the healthcare industry often prioritizes money over the community's medical and economic needs. In rural areas, a hospital's closure can doom a whole town to widescale poverty. As long as we have a healthcare system valuing profits over patients, like Medicare for All, these closings will continue. For we must see healthcare as a public good and a right, not a business.~~

Photo courtesy of WHY.

Duquesne Dukes Men's Basketball

Story and Photos by Robert Hester

When Keith Dambrot arrived at Duquesne University as the new men's head basketball coach from the University of Akron in March of 2017, he inherited one of the worst teams in college basketball—the Dukes ended the 2016-2017 season 10-22, a record that would bring Dambrot in and Jim Ferry, a coach who led the Dukes to a CBI Tournament appearance the season before, out. Dambrot, a native of Akron, Ohio, a man who once coached a budding basketball phenom by the name of LeBron James when he was the head coach of St. Vincent-St. Mary High School in Akron, is no stranger to Duquesne; his father, Sid Dambrot, played as a guard and forward for the Dukes from 1950 to 1954. And while he was at Duquesne, Keith father was a part of the basketball program that enjoyed some of its finest years ever. In 1954, the Dukes were ranked the top team in the country for two weeks and finished the season as runners-up in the prominent National Invitational Tournament, better known as NIT.

As for the modern-day Dukes, they haven't played in an NIT since 2009, when the team was coached by Ron Everhart. And as for the NCAA Tournament, they haven't dusted off their "Big" dancing shoes to take part in that tournament since they were led to college basketball's "Big Dance" by coach John Cinicola in 1977. Over, and over again at his postgame press conferences, coach Dambrot said that the team he coached this season weren't what he calls a "Championship-caliber team." But at times during this past season—and compared to their rivals in Oakland, the Pitt Panthers, led by new head coach Jeff Capel—they show why there was a reason to believe in the Bluff. Coming off Coach Dambrot's first season as head coach in which they were won and lost 16 games each,

the Dukes were poised to have coach Dambrot's second season end with not just a few more wins than his first season, but a spot in either the NIT or the NCAA Tournament—an impromptu return to Duquesne's glory days.



The Dukes' 2018-2019 season started with wins at the A.J. Palumbo Center over William & Mary and UIC; the Dukes won over UIC by overcoming a 19-point deficit at the beginning of the second half. Their third game of the season was coach Dambrot's return to Akron at St. Vincent-St. Mary High School where the Dukes beat Radford, 69-64. The next game saw the Dukes suffer their first defeat of the season when they lost 67-56 to Notre Dame in South Bend, Indiana. Their next game saw the Dukes defeated UMass Lowell. The only times Duquesne would lose in non-Atlantic 10 conference play would be to NJIT (New Jersey Institute of Technology) at the Palumbo Center, Pitt in the annual City Game at PPG Paints Arena, and Penn State at PPG Paints Arena; the loss to Penn State was the game in which coach Dambrot was ejected less than five second remaining in the second half after furiously arguing over a foul against one of his players, Michael Hughes. The Dukes' non-Atlantic-10 victories came over Marshall, Longwood, Maryland-Eastern Shore, Maine, and Eastern Kentucky.

When Atlantic 10 Conference play began last January, it seemed that the Dukes were destined to contend an A-10 Conference regular season title, something they haven't won since 1981 after they had a 9-4 record prior to the start of A-10 Conference play last season. That destiny showed when Duquesne won six of their first eight conference contests last season over A-10 Conference rivals Fordham, Richmond, George Washington, Saint Louis, and Rhode Island. In February, Duquesne only won three of seven contests. As a result, their A-10 Conference record plummeted to 9-6. Although they started March (the final month of their regular season) with a win over UMass, the Dukes couldn't get past Saint Louis on the road or Dayton in their regular season's final game—a game that would be the final game they would ever be play at the Palumbo Center.

Duquesne's season ended with a loss to Saint Joseph's in first round of the Atlantic 10 Tournament at the Barclays Center in Brooklyn, New York. Their final record was 19-10; a 20th win would've earned Duquesne its first 20-win season since 1981. Looking forward the upcoming 2019-2020 season, among the corps slated to return will be guards Tavian Dunn-Martin and Sincere Carry. Dunn-Martin, who will become a sophomore for Duquesne this upcoming season, was honored by the Atlantic 10 Conference for his last season efforts by being selected as the Atlantic 10 Conference's Sixth Man of the Year. And Carry, who will become a sophomore this upcoming season for the Dukes, was honored for his talents as a freshman last season as a member of the A-10's All-Rookie Team.

This season, the A.J. Palumbo Center will—like the popular TV show—undergo an "Extreme Makeover" that will force the Dukes to play their home games in the North Hills at the Kerr Fitness Center on the campus of LaRoche University in McCandless, PA., in the West Hills at the UPMC Events Center on the campus of Robert Morris University in Moon Township, PA., and just a short walk from Duquesne's campus at PPG Paints Arena in Downtown Pittsburgh. After the renovations for the Palumbo Center are completed in November of 2020, the arena will have a new look and a new name, the UPMC Cooper Fieldhouse, named after former Duquesne men's basketball legend, and Basketball Hall Of Famer, Chuck Cooper, the first African-American to ever play in the NBA when he was drafted by the Boston Celtics.

The 2018-2019 season gave Duquesne fans, and alums, hope for the future; a hope that will lead the Dukes to "Mad" glory during March Madness, which could basically justify coach Dambrot's definition of what a "Championship-caliber team" looks like on Duquesne's Bluff~.



Abandoned PA

By Elise Mote

Neill Log House

Robert Neill and Mary Shenley built the oldest house in Pittsburgh in 1769 to the mid-1770s when it was finally completed. (Schenley Park Pittsburgh PA 15216)

Seldom Seen Greenway

The 90 acre greenway was once a German settlement. The last residents moved out in the 1960's and was later designated a greenway in 1985. (990 Saw Mill Run Blvd Pittsburgh, PA 15220)

Carrie Furnace

The furnace is a former blast furnace and was apart of the Homestead Steel Works and operated from 1907 until 1978. It's located along the Monongahela River and is open for tours. (Carrie Furnace Blvd. Rankin, PA 15104)



Being Thankful This Time of Year

By Maggie K. Jones

At this time of year, we think of the food as part of Thanksgiving. When it's Thanksgiving we just move on into Black Friday, when we rush to find gifts for loved ones and think about Christmas; we tend to say we don't have time to be thankful at all, and only think about ourselves instead of what the true meaning of Thanksgiving truly is.

*Sometimes we forget, to look around us, sometimes, we don't see the joy that surrounds us.
So caught up inside ourselves, we take when we should give.
So for tonight, we pray for, what we all can be, and on this day we hope for, what we still can't see,
It's up to us, to be the change, and even though we all can still do more.
There's always something to be thankful for.*

I remember that inspiring song from Josh Groben 's Christmas CD, *Noel*. The song was called "Thankful."

When I play that song, it reminds me of all the troubles we face in the world today. Specially at Thanksgiving and Christmas. We need to think about what we can do to be thankful for and help those who are less fortunate than ourselves. Give to the food bank, or help out at a soup kitchen. Anything you can do to help people in need.

I remember another song from the Prince of Egypt :

A single thread in a tapestry though its color brightly shines, it never see its purpose in the color of the grand design/ And the stone that sits on the very top of the mountain's mighty place they think its more important then the stone that forms the base/ But how can you see what your life is worth or where your value lies/ you can never see thorough the eyes of man, you must look at your life look at your life through Heaven's eyes.

That song I could never forget ever when I think of my life. When you see someone on the street without anything, and he asked you if you have anything to help, give without question like God says and truly know you will be rewarded in Heaven someday. That is what my mother thought me when I was a little girl. I will always remember that. And I will remember to always to be thankful for those surrounding me, not what I have and what it's worth. You never should fight over something little like what you want. So next time when you're sitting down at the kitchen table at a Thanksgiving meal, truly give thanks for who you are with and take the time to enjoy Thanksgiving together in peace and harmony. Remember to be happy with who you are with and being healthy too.

In memory of my deceased pets, Buddy, Mitci, and Brooke, and my live pets Suri and Moose. And to my Grandma and Grandpap. I also dedicate this to my family and my sister Stephanie too, especially my Dad.

His mother always said to him before she passed away, "Just do it for the heck of it, Johnny. " ~~

My Time in Florence



By Dan Hackett

I was fortunate enough to go to Italy for a week in June to speak at the European Social Services Conference in Milan, and was lucky enough to have spent three days in Florence prior to the conference.

Florence has a wealth of history, art, and architecture and is home to what is considered by many to be masterpieces such as Michelangelo's statue of David and Botticelli's *The Birth of Venus* as well as works by Donatello and Raphael as well as being home to such renowned authors as Niccolò Machiavelli, author of *The Prince*, and Dante Alighieri who wrote *The Divine Comedy*.

To be in a city that was at the forefront of the Renaissance in terms of art and politics with the Medici family, three members of which became Pope during the 13th century, was awe-inspiring. It was good to have the time to see the sights that an old-world city had to offer before diving into a speaking engagement and all that a global conference brings. On top of all of that, it was my first time travelling internationally so there was a lot to deal with in terms of what it takes to travel internationally.

All in all, my time in Florence was amazing and the memories I made in my short time there will last me a lifetime and I hope I get the chance to make more. ~



When Your Dog Is on the Spectrum

By Nils Skudra

Although our Bichon Frise, Jackson, has never been formally diagnosed with an autism spectrum disorder, it has become increasingly apparent that this is the case. From the moment we rescued him several years ago from the Guilford County Animal Shelter, his behaviors were decidedly unusual. As we were signing his adoption papers, he leapt out of the not-very-attentive attendant's arms and ran over and urinated on my brand-new purchased-for-a-pretty-penny Adidas tennis shoes, which was definitely not an acceptable social interaction from our point of view. Being a Civil War historian, I named him after one of my favorite admittedly eccentric Civil War generals, Stonewall Jackson, who reputedly had Asperger's Syndrome. Considered a brilliant general, he rode into battle on his horse while sucking on lemons and keeping one arm held continuously aloft as if to fend off an ever-present enemy who might topple him from his lofty post. As soon as Jackson entered our house, he made for the bottom of a low-lying bookcase and snatched a book on his namesake, unresponsive to our screams, and tore the dust jacket to shreds. Perhaps he didn't like the name he was given or perhaps doggy manners were simply not a part of his skill set. I could see the die was cast (a bow to Shakespeare here) and our new pet, found by a kindly soul in a local park distinguished by its battalions of crawling snakes (whom he had luckily escaped) was not your average canine, being as he was, bent on malice and mischief. I suspect even the snakes gave him a wide berth with some animal intuition that he was a character who might rather hassle them than keep a respectable distance one might normally give to a Copperhead sunning itself sartorially on the grass.

Each succeeding day confirmed my suspicion that Jackson was well, unusual. A friend referred me to the DSM-5, a tome of psychological literature whose newly revised version came out in 2013, and I turned the pages to the article on Asperger's Syndrome and autism spectrum disorders. For a moment my heart sank as I realized he exhibited numerous characteristics of these conditions. First, there was the matter of the unusual speech pattern. In human individuals, that was oftentimes reflected in flat, high-pitched, or inappropriately loud sounds – Jackson's play on this was to squeal at high-decibel levels for no apparent reason at all. Even after he'd been fed voluminous amounts of his favorite Nutro foods and snatched a few treats from the kitchen table, including a half-eaten banana and a handful of Whole Food prohibitively-high blueberries, he squealed at the top of his lungs, agitated and disconsolate for no reason we could fathom. He squealed when he received endless belly rubs and volleys of attention. Instead of the Nike logo "Just Do It!" he fashioned his own logo "Just do it and

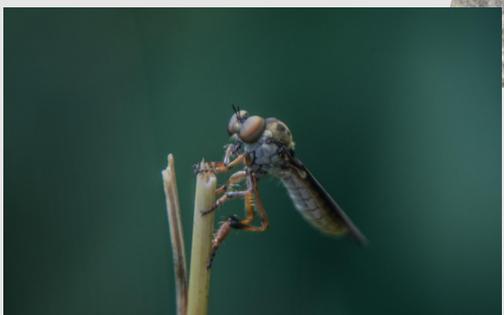
squeal!” And while all that commotion worked on our nerves, we soon realized that this behavior was part and parcel of who he was and one that the rescue folks conveniently forgot to mention.

Other DSM-5 iterated traits emerged as well in our lovely, squealing pet. Gazing too intently or avoiding eye contact was an everyday event. When Jackson ran into the bathroom and grabbed a roll of toilet paper, shredding it mightily while squealing at the same time, we grabbed what was left, chastening him for his act. He refused to look us in the eye and instead yanked a shoelace from a shoe, trying to tear that up as well. At the same time he evidenced the hypersensitivity to sensory “assaults” that were described in the DSM-5, yelping when we only barely increased the volume of the Celtic music playing in the background and howling like a banshee when a neighbor knocked on the door asking, “Is everything all right?” No, it wasn’t, because this dog was clearly not a cookie-cutter type of guy. When a pot of water began to boil on the burner or the brioche, finishing its term with the toaster, popped up with a “ping” sound, Jackson was on fire, barking at fever pitch as though his whole canine universe was about to implode. When we tried to calm him down, he did what only Bichons do, famously known as the “Bichon Blitz,” racing back and forth across the room for five minutes, hurling himself upon the couch and throwing himself just as soon off into what must have felt like oblivion to him and insanity to us, as he noisily landed on the floor and in so doing, grabbing the Duke Energy bill and tearing that into shreds as well. Since we have often felt like tearing it up ourselves, at least THAT made an ounce of sense in a world of exponentially increasing animal behaviors which we were ill-fitted to account for.



We began to worry that Jackson had challenges too with empathy. This was a big one in the lexicon of the growing fund of autism literature. He didn’t seem to know or care about anything that might have given anyone pleasure such as being a cuddlebug, returning affection, or quietly listening to and obeying commands. Talking to him was as good as talking to the proverbial wall. Everyday was the same situation of restricted and repetitive patterns of interests and activities: chewing up the furniture and the only Kong rubber bone he liked beyond further recognition, pacing back and forth or Blitzing down the hallway at daredevil speed, pouncing on piano sheet music (particularly with glee if it was that of a classical composer), destroying Petsmart toys whose very life could be measured in only an hour or two. It was undeniable that he had difficulty with changes in routine grandly alluded to in the DSM-5. Our coping mechanisms were growing weak. Remarks soon followed, gently offered observations that “You should take your dog to an animal therapist; he’s not normal, might be autistic or something and require medication.” This was not a consolation devoutly to be wish’d (Shakespeare again) since we were already paying up the ying-yang for heart medication recurrent vaccinations, pricey visits to the spa for haircuts and baths – none of which our Bichon appreciated anyway. “Money down the kitchen sink” a friend cattily remarked to which I responded “We love him anyway!” to which she retorted, “Why???” This animal did not make sense, in either a human or canine vernacular. The DSM-5 seemed to be mocking us but I put it way up high on the bookshelf where it was virtually invisible and before Jackson could tear that up too.

The final icing on the cake was when Jackson ripped a brand-new fancy lacy black bra purchased at Belk’s from my mother’s hands as she was about to place it in a dresser drawer and flew through an open door into our finally-mowed front yard. Somehow he tangled himself up in its straps so that the cups were positioned on his back. For just a second I thought, “Where’s my camera? What a diva! A Hallmark moment!” But then a passing neighbor, taking this in, screamed, “What’s that dog doing wearing a bra? For God’s sake, what’s going on here?” I had visions of him in his polo shirt and impeccably shining penny loafers calling Animal Control and reporting me as some kind of a pervert in the Lindley Park area. But to my surprise I controlled my emotions, explaining, “He has a strange sense of humor; he’s in a cross-dressing phase!” Still the neighbor’s eyes looked apoplectic and he just stared angrily as I picked the squealing and growling Jackson up and took him into the sanctuary of our happy but disorganized home. It took me a good ten minutes to get him out of the bra, which he seemed more than content to be in, but at least he was out of the sight of a neighbor’s reproving stare. As for the DSM-5, it still sits on the bookshelf, now collecting dust, and is no longer a focus of our interest. If Jackson somehow gets his paws on that veritable text, we can overlook the fact of his tearing it up although we may rebuke him for conduct unbecoming.~~

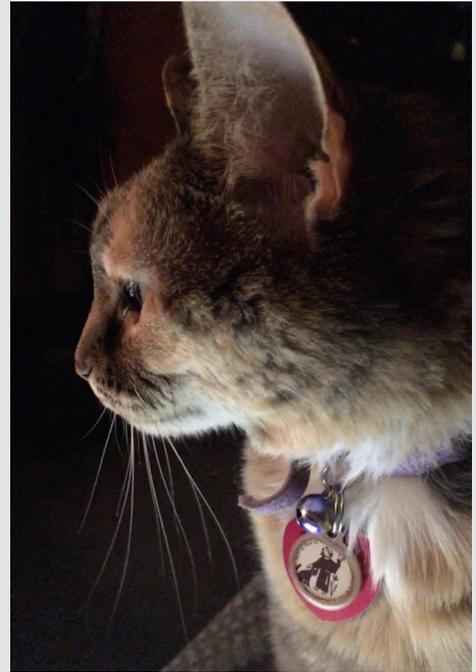


Photos by Masha
Gregory



Saturn

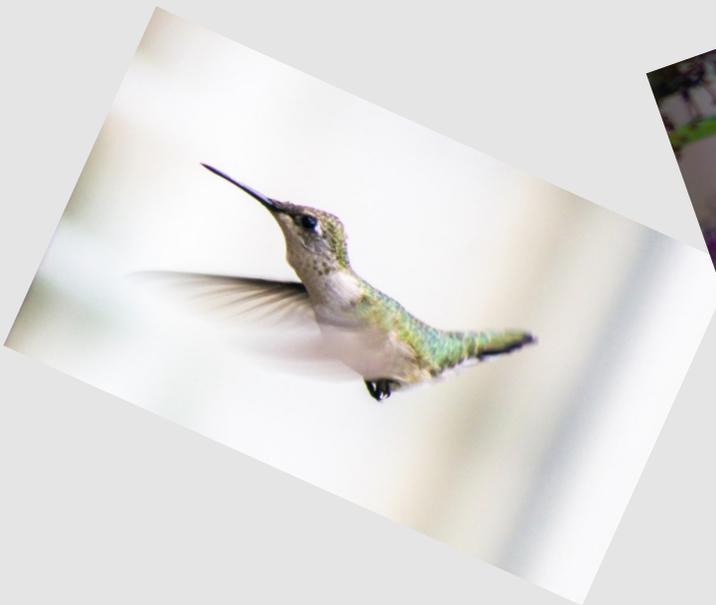


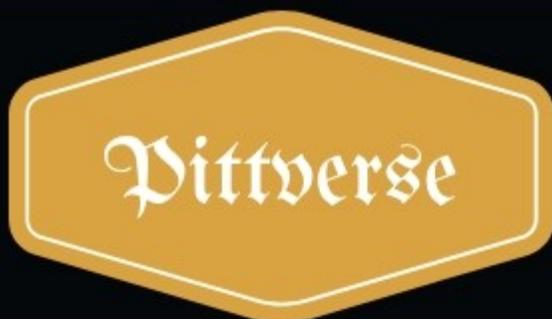


Cat photo by Delaine Swearman



Jupiter





Edith L. Trees Charitable Trust

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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.

Edith L. Trees Charitable Trust

Pittverse Magazine is made possible in part due to the generous donations from the Edith L. Trees Charitable Trust. Through the grant provided by the Edith L. Trees Charitable Trust, *Pittverse* writers are able to be compensated for their submissions, creating work experience and greater independence, as well as a productive and diverse environment for adults with autism in the Pittsburgh area and beyond.

Get Involved!

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

Contact us through Pittverse.org or email PittverseMagazine@gmail.com to get involved!

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