

Summer 2019

Vol. 5, Iss. 2

Pittverse

Quarterly Magazine



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Pittverse

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About Pittverse Magazine

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

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

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

With generous funding from Edith Trees Foundation, *Pittverse* has grown from a newsletter into a magazine that, this year, 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

Mark Lizotte earns the honor of creating our cover art for the Summer 2019 issue. Mark's peers resoundingly voted for his intricate and immensely detailed AutoCAD reproduction of the Pittsburgh skyline. Mark is a talented artist who regularly contributes his AutoCAD interpretations of famous Pittsburgh buildings and landmarks. He has created several pieces for this issue, as well.

Grab a cool glass of lemonade and prepare for the summer spectacular that is *Pittverse*!

Letter from the Editor

From nail-biting, action-laced fiction...to edge-of-your-seat suspense...and edgy, in-your-face opinions and reviews...the Summer 2019 issue of *Pittverse* has it all! This issue is as diverse as the Autism Spectrum itself, perfectly epitomizing the expansive, versatile talent that our fantastic writers have showcased.

Let's keep the momentum going. Enjoy the summer, and be ready to bring back your a-game in the fall. I challenge each of you to step even further out of your respective comfort zones to collaborate with other writers...especially those with whom you have never worked before. Working with new partners and personalities tests and expands your talent, abilities, and perspective.

Let's take *Pittverse* to the next level!

Jennifer Pizzuto

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Far Side of the Mountain

By Daniel Ashkin

Jean Craighead George wrote 100 books for children and young teens. George's best fictions books were *Julia of The Wolves* and *Far side of the Mountain*. She wanted children and young teens to experience the freedom of nature. When children are with animals, they can be freed from the tension of everyday life. George wanted to show children and young teens the importance of taking care of the environment through her fiction books. In George's writings, animals are main characters of the book.

Jean Craighead George wrote the second sequence of the book *On the Far Side of the Mountain*. From reading the fiction novel, she will give analysis of Alice Gibley's character through her philosophy of independence with animals. A few of these ideas include how the post-industrial society takes away the sounds of nature through Alice senses in the book. Alice runs away to feel safe and protected with animals as friends. Sam must rely on the visual sights, smells, and sounds to find Alice in the woods.

The author uses the fictional character of Alice Gibley to express many unpleasant side effects of technology through the character of Alice. For an example, washing machines, televisions, and radios take us away from hearing the pleasant sounds of nature. Writing a journal enables Sam to measure the progress of each day's chores. In the diary, he writes about helping his father in preparing the land throughout the winter to plant the crops. Furthermore, she explains Alice's relationship with the birds and the wildlife in her book. In addition, the author discusses special holidays such as Thanksgiving and Christmas with fictional characters of the Gridley's family. Before Alice gets lost in the woods, she uses her hands to draw houses and objects with her brother Sam.

When Alice wanders away from her family, she begins to experience the freedom and the independence from the pressure of modern technology. Sam and Bando must rely on the visual sights, smells, and the sounds to find Alice in the woods. When the friends look for Alice, George gives many fantastic visual descriptions of the clouds, sun, valley, forest, and the trees throughout the story. They search for the smells of pigs, horses, and deer as a clue for finding her. When the friends camp overnight, they can hear the frogs singing and the birds chirping as a remembrance of Alice at home.

After the friends find Alice in a tree, they learn many important lessons about life. One, safety and the security of the family play a vital role in life. Because many people are chatting on the internet, I feel that a non-industrial society will make it easier for people to communicate their love and affection better than today.

Like the story, walking into the woods is helping me to clear my mind from everyday pressures. Looking at the trees and the hillsides enable me to visualize the beauty of nature as described in the story of *On the Far Side of the Mountain*. ~~



YouTube: A Visual Aid

By Alicia M. Bonus

Being educated is a high requirement and is profitable for survival. Without it, we would be lost. In order to educate those who seek to learn and understand how we live and create new and different things, people will use visual aids as one of many techniques that have been used in many cultures, sciences, lifestyles, and skills throughout the years. Visual aids can be defined as another use of education.

When coping with a difficult subject in elementary school, such as math and science, my mother would draw and make figures and shapes on a small chalk board, create flash cards, and even use toys, plants, marbles and pebbles to experiment with when she was showing me how numbers were placed and how minerals were formed. My mother was so good at teaching me that other parents and faculty would mistake her as being a teacher herself. Visual aids help audiences understand and remember information. They hold a variety of items, handouts, slides, models, objects, and videos. Visual aids reinforce the main message being carried out by the person teaching by helping to increase the audience interest. Most people learn better when using visual aids, because the audience will understand and remember what the educator has said at a later time.

The best resource for learning how to learn sufficiently is YouTube. It's a video sharing website where people record, edit, and create their own videos and place them on the internet for others to watch. Today, education is now closely related to YouTube. It's also a place where people share their ideas and creations so that others can learn and experience the same passion and joy their creators embrace. The visuals shared on a YouTube channel can affect the minds of people watching. This type of learning can be comfortable, easy, and not stressful. And, if people don't understand the lesson that's being represented to them, they can always re-watch the video over and over again until they understand the subject.

With digital videos continuing to gain popularity, it seems understandable that YouTube assists in becoming an exceptional visual aid for those who seek information and a whole set of learning possibilities. The use of short videos allows the audience more processing and memory recall when the brain gathers up information. The videos shown on YouTube increase knowledge retention, since they can be stopped, replayed, and viewed as many times as needed.

When I started working with UV resin jewelry, along with creating, painting and gluing scrapbook canvas, I began my projects when exploring YouTube in hopes of finding a relaxing hobby and making a little bit of money on the side. I found a YouTube channel by *C Channel Art & Study DIY Crafts Handmade*, who conducted a tremendous amount of projects related to using UV resin. Another YouTube channel, *Gabrielle Pollacco*, has inspired me to create my own works of scrapbooking when it comes to conducting mixed media art canvas. With the help of these two YouTube channels, I was able to sell half of my artwork to local vendor shows as well as create my own business. *Kimdao*, another YouTube channel, travels back and forth to and from Japan, South Korea, and Australia to work and share makeup, skincare, and fashion to her viewers. She helps her viewers understand the importance of cleanliness, especially when it comes to cleaning your face, which has helped impact my life physically and emotionally. And last, *Bad Actors: Writers With Microphones* is an audio literary magazine that focuses on publishing stories that are imaginative and entertaining. This is the first channel to accept two of my pieces of writing that are now being read as an audio story for all to hear. And, this is also the first channel that inspired me to write for different publishing companies and magazines.

Visual aids can be used in many different ways and techniques, whether people may learn from flash cards, television, internet, or anything that allows the person to gain the right amount of knowledge. It really all depends on what works best for the audience and how they decide to process their information and what to do with it. ~~

The Dogwood Tree and Me

By Nils Skudra

On an ordinary day in June, 2016, we made a sudden decision to leave our beloved northern California for the beckoning call of a graduate school admission at the University of North Carolina, Greensboro. In the words of a country western song, I was going to “follow the dream, not the money” and become a certified Civil War historian in the land where that history actually had meaning. We gave up our long-term jobs, left our significant and insignificant others, sold the trusty but aging 2002 Subaru Outback for a song, packed up our earthly goods and drove almost 3,000 miles in stultifying heat to see if the wish that I had actually made upon a star would come true and transform me into an academician par excellence in the field of American history.

On July 31st we parked our Toyota in front of a tan ranch style house circa 1954 in Lindley Park. In front of that home sat a tree, the like of which I had never seen but subsequently learned was a dogwood tree. Its limbs stuck out at jaunty angles and its leaves were unabashedly and uniformly green in color. It seems to confer a certain grandeur on the unexceptional looking place, positioned precisely back from the front steps in a decidedly calculated manner with red bricks in a semi-circle around its base. In the grandiose architecture of several interlocking branches sat a bright red bird with a partially black face whose head rose upward, culminating in a point. I stood there and the strangest thought came to me: I remembered seeing a cartoon called “The Point” in which everything and every character was pointed and this creature balancing on a limb seemed to be a character straight out of this mostly forgotten film. Some people may say this is not true, but we locked eyes and I greeted him with a “hello to you” and he chirped right back as if to return the salutation. A neighbor later told me I had seen a cardinal, the State Bird of North Carolina. I like to think he was the first soul who welcomed me to my new home and that dogwood tree silently supported the effort.

When I eventually got around to calling friends in Berkeley to tell people about what things were transpiring, I always mentioned the dogwood tree which now, occupying a place of importance in my transcontinental imagination, was emblematic of the Tarheel State. I sent photos of the tree in various stages of light and shadow. I explained how the tree was a sheltering place for all kinds of birds, particularly a mated pair of cardinals and the uneasy truce that squirrels, who also claimed its territory, endured with their feathered friends. Around the tree’s perimeter, I daily laid wild birdseed which also brought rabbits and chipmunks within its fold. I put my desk by the window so that while writing, I could watch that dogwood tree and its dominion over the grounds and importance to the creatures who lived within its reach. Several people told me that the dogwood was “a nothing special” tree but for me it signified a world of things: a transcendental moment where I finally completed an article, looking at it while penning my verse. I received a phone call saying that the piece was to be published – while I was outside, looking at its leaves which wondrously had begun changing to cream edged with purple. I can record important life moments that happened when I was outside with the dogwood or even if it were simply in my purview: a notification that I had passed my comprehensive exams for my Master’s Degree, a fledgling conversation which later grew into a relationship, the delivery by a neighbor of my beloved Bichon Frise, Jackson, who had run out of the house, touching ground on a nearby yard and returning to promptly and cavalierly urinate against that tree.



The more I looked at that old dogwood tree the more my curiosity grew. I took the easy route and checked out what Wikipedia had to say and scribbled down some facts about its being one of the most common trees in North Carolina, found in all parts of the State. I opened the Merriam-Webster dictionary and learned that the word “dogwood” was evidently first used in 1617 and legend had it that if one boiled the tree’s bark, you could treat dogs with mange successfully with the resulting liquid. Some further research advised that the blossom of the dogwood tree (*cornus florida*) had been designated as the official State flower in

1941. I wasn't the only one taken by this natural phenomenon: dogwood festivals are held in five North Carolina counties and in 1982 Fayetteville (that place with the best fried turkey sandwich I've ever eaten in my life) started referring to itself as "the City of Dogwoods." Folk wisdom has it that people here know it is not really spring until the dogwoods bloom, showy and beautiful, pink, yellow, white or red blossoms shooting their incalculable beauty into the world in a pure moment of splendor and pomp.

The tree in front of my home did indeed undergo its amazing transformation the first week of that month, not more than five days after my March 27th birthday and all the hoopla that accompanied it with the Civil War decorated cake and the fifty people who noisily celebrated with me at a community church. The buds of the tree were in evidence and then suddenly just a day or two later the blossoms were myriad and covering its host with innumerable lovely flowers. I took what seemed to be unending photos of the dogwood tree and expanded my range to include taking pictures of every one I could find. I was consumed with the mission of documenting each tree's random and perfect beauty and although Greensboro was the initial starting point, I ran around the State recording images for posterity. However, the UNCG fellow was not entirely correct – three weeks later the flowers on my personal tree had fallen off, with scarce a thought or notice, covering the ground with their luminous entrails. Other dogwood trees in my neighborhood followed in quick succession and I almost cried when I saw one of the most beautiful trees (in front of the office of West Market Veterinarians) had virtually shed its enormous bounty of white flowers in the altogether on the lawn where my Bichon Frise so often played. Apparently "keep(ing) their blooms for a while" was but a matter of weeks and then the ephemeral loveliness of it all dissipated, leaving a tree with green leaves but barren of the wondrous colors that had descended on it for their short lives.

When the blossoms had all fallen off mine and all the other dogwoods, a little bit of my heart had broken too. But the miracle of my dogwood somehow persisted: though it was now barren of its flowers, its annual changing of the guard was still tied irrevocably to memorable events in my life. A darkening sky suddenly unleashed a volley of rain just as I was going out to water the base of the tree; it was almost as if the heavens themselves were saying "don't worry about that, we've got this covered." I gently touched a limb in easy reach, now bare of flowers, and realized its beauty was not decreased because the blooms were gone. I recited the Hebrew word "dayenu" which translates into the words "it would have been enough" and realized my dogwood tree, in any of its transformations, is simply always enough.~



Limited Options

By Joseph Ceppek

I like to record voice messages from a personal voice recorder, yet I cannot get paid for these recordings because I am reading copywritten material from other people, that is, from library books, including a current New King James Translation Bible, from the Shaler North Hills Library, in Glenshaw, PA. There are copyright infringement laws, which forbid anybody to profit from others' published literary works without first obtaining their verbal and/or written permission to proceed in the work. I could read all of the books in any library, including in the one in Glenshaw, PA and it would not result in my receiving a paycheck for all of my reading efforts due to these laws. It also will not lead me to earn college credits towards a certificate, a diploma or a degree from any accredited community college, university or liberal arts college.

Will I honestly be able to listen to over one thousand (1,000) voice recordings all over again? No! This is because I do not have the time to do so like many others. Plus, there is no reward for me to do so anyway, as is before-mentioned. It then comes down to simply feeding into my obsessive-compulsive tendencies to keep doing this activity when I now know more than ever that I will not gain any good awards, which I truly desire.

Yes, it is nice for me to hear my voice reading words in sentence form, yet I have to discipline myself to remember that I cannot do too much of it, because I will feel disillusioned and disappointed when it constantly becomes apparent I am doing this activity with absolutely no guarantee of gaining any known advancement financially, vocationally and academic progression-wise.

I am setting myself up for continual sadness and depressing defeat. Albert Einstein (1879-1955) is quoted as saying, "Insanity is doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results." I personally believe Einstein was right when he is said to have uttered this very truthful statement of simple practicality. I am not a genius like him, but I can certainly see why he said this wise bit of advice to anybody, including me.

I am a sane person, but I am definitely acting insane if I keep obsessively recording hundreds and hundreds of personal voice recordings and futilely expecting to earn any of the above named elusive awards for doing this increasingly obsessive-compulsive endeavor. It is okay to record a few things that I read, but not hundreds of these audible messages. Given that I am not a speed reader like many others, I could not re-listen to all of these recordings anyway, let alone read every book in any local library like SNHL (Shaler North Hills Library).



This article is illustrating how an individual with an OCD (Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder) struggles with an excessive devotion to a hobby and how he eventually realizes he must curtail engaging in it too much due to his having worsened depression and anxiety problems when he repeatedly understands he cannot get ahead in life financially, paid job-wise and formal education-wise by doing this nice-but-increasingly-turned-obsessive action on a daily basis.

This is especially true when I have to take my prescription medicines on time, eat meals on time, do household chores, going to medical outpatient appointments on time and going to bed at a normal time. It is an educational awareness piece for me and others who endure OCD on both a diagnosed and an undiagnosed basis.~~

Community Options

By Michael Perret

I interviewed Ms. Vernell for Community Options. Her mom inspired her to work for the Community Options. Ms. Vernell originally applied for a job at Community Options as a Senior Direct Support Professional, Program Manager, and then got promoted to a Medication Trainer. Ms. Vernell went to CCAC Boyce Campus for college and graduated in 2013 with an Associate's Degree of Biology and Nursing. Ms. Vernell has been working for Community Options for three years. She loves her job as a Medication Trainer.

Community Options is a company that helps people with disabilities. They provide group homes, employment opportunities, and also have special events that take place. Community Options has many offices, state and county-wide. One of the Community Options offices is located on the South Side of Pittsburgh. As a national agency, Community Options provides employment and housing. Community Options was first incorporated on February 9, 1989 to develop housing and employment for people with severe disabilities. Community Options has been around for 30 years and is still going. Community Options was headquartered in Princeton, New Jersey in 1989, and has a mission to support people with disabilities with housing and employment opportunities. The officers, management, and staff have many years of experience in providing community-based residential and employment support to people with developmental and intellectual disabilities such as Autism Spectrum Disorder, Cerebral Palsy, Down Syndrome, and physical disabilities. The staff at Community Options has been doing a great job of helping individuals with these types of disabilities.

Community Options is a great organization that definitely helps people with disabilities to gain and keep employment. Community Options is also a great organization that also helps with housing for people with autism. The staff at Community Options are very friendly to work with and very helpful, as well.~~

Achieva Vocational Supports

By Philip Wilsher

The story started in August 2014 when I met the program managers of CDP, Lisa Kerrighen and Ray Giles, who were very nice people and also program specialist, Jessica Briggs. She became a manager there, then moved to Indiana, then returned to become a manager at Vocational Supports and was promoted to manager at Regis. Brady Scheib was my official program specialist then, and Ed Reno became my program specialist before he transferred and became a supports coordinator. Sadie Minick was mine for a while after Brady became an employment specialist. When Sadie left, Sally Schachner was hired by Ray Giles, Jessica Briggs, and Becky Chambers. After that, Samantha Burton and Sally Schachner were the program specialists, and Ray Giles and Jessica Briggs left. Then the manager, Marte Novak, became the plant manager for Customized Day Program and Vocational Supports and Samantha Burton was hired as assistant program manager after Algeron Johnson became one of the program specialists before he got a job at Seton Hill University where he excelled. Then Linda Coopey became the assistant program specialist who helped Rebecca Moon, Samantha Boyle, and Caitlyn Fry. Linda does Algeron's job also, as she replaced him. Now Philip Wilsher is very great at what he does at his job also at Dollar Tree. I am very great at my job and am always trying to get better.~~

Space-Time

By Joshua Walburn

In astrophysics and cosmology, space-time is any mathematical model that fuses three dimensions of space and the one-dimension time into a four-dimensional continuum. Space-time is infinite, but it can also be in 2D or 3D regions. They can be used to visualize and learn about the relativistic events that can occur when and where observers can perceive.

The coordinates of a space-time diagram feature a line drawn from photons from A and B originating at the same event while object C is slower than the speed of light. It's also drawn from both coordinates in time and space. Photons travel at light speed, at a slope of +1 in their world lines, others explain that every meter of a photon at either left or right requires to be measured in an approximate 3.3-time nanoseconds.

There are two signs of conventions in understanding of relativity language and literature:

$$s^2 = (ct)^2 - x^2 - y^2 - z^2 \text{ and } s^2 = -(ct)^2 + x^2 + y^2 + z^2$$

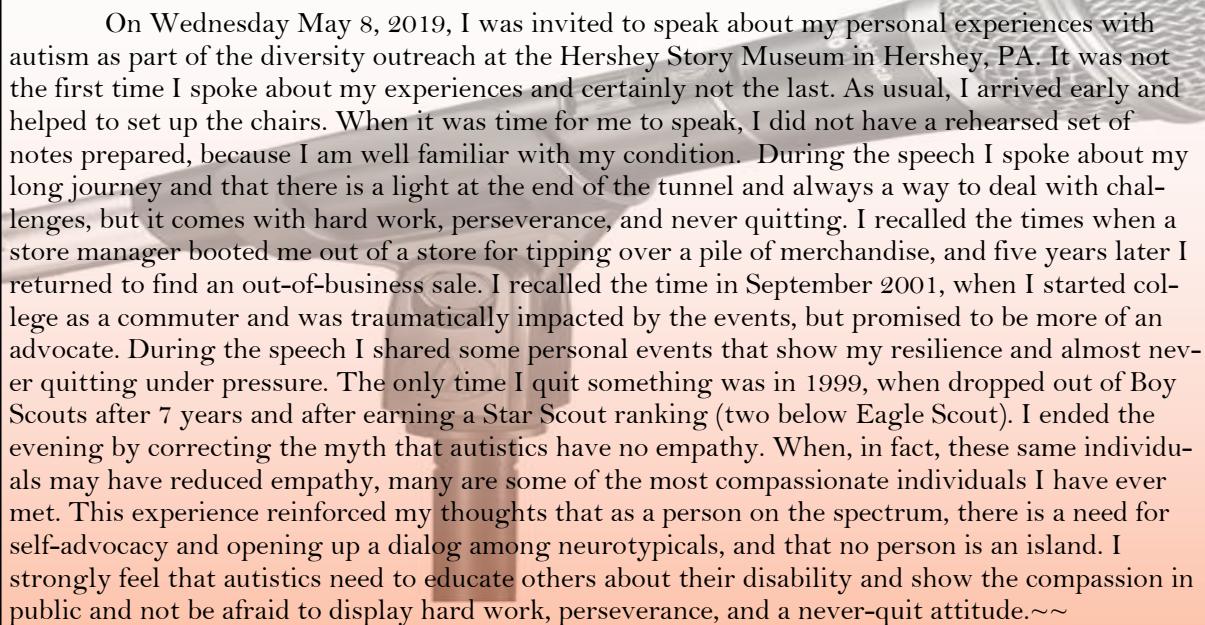
They're associated with the metric signatures: (+---) and (++--). A minor set of variations that places the time coordinate last that first. They're both widely calculated in many ways for this particular field of study. Researchers and Mathematicians call this method nomenclature.

There's no gravity in space, but when and where a star or planet touches the right place in space, it distorts the space-time around it, creating curvature. Black holes and neutron stars have higher numbers of distortion in these regions.

Space-time from my perspective explains the theory of an infinite set of universes that have equal numbers of distance in all multi-dimensional directions that go on forever without stopping, especially beyond the interstellar events that occur and other coordinate models that are related to space-time.~~

Speaking About Autism

By Nathaniel Geyer



On Wednesday May 8, 2019, I was invited to speak about my personal experiences with autism as part of the diversity outreach at the Hershey Story Museum in Hershey, PA. It was not the first time I spoke about my experiences and certainly not the last. As usual, I arrived early and helped to set up the chairs. When it was time for me to speak, I did not have a rehearsed set of notes prepared, because I am well familiar with my condition. During the speech I spoke about my long journey and that there is a light at the end of the tunnel and always a way to deal with challenges, but it comes with hard work, perseverance, and never quitting. I recalled the times when a store manager booted me out of a store for tipping over a pile of merchandise, and five years later I returned to find an out-of-business sale. I recalled the time in September 2001, when I started college as a commuter and was traumatically impacted by the events, but promised to be more of an advocate. During the speech I shared some personal events that show my resilience and almost never quitting under pressure. The only time I quit something was in 1999, when dropped out of Boy Scouts after 7 years and after earning a Star Scout ranking (two below Eagle Scout). I ended the evening by correcting the myth that autistics have no empathy. When, in fact, these same individuals may have reduced empathy, many are some of the most compassionate individuals I have ever met. This experience reinforced my thoughts that as a person on the spectrum, there is a need for self-advocacy and opening up a dialog among neurotypicals, and that no person is an island. I strongly feel that autistics need to educate others about their disability and show the compassion in public and not be afraid to display hard work, perseverance, and a never-quit attitude.~~

The Spirit of Earth Day

By Zach Grabowski

My mom and I recently attended the Ecolution Fashion Show at the Fairmont Hotel in Downtown Pittsburgh. It is a yearly celebration of Earth Day . This year's theme was "Rebirth." Local designers dressed models in recycled and reused materials. We were invited guests of Media Personality, Natalie Bencivenga, (Pittsburgh Post-Gazette's SEEN Editor and Digitally Syndicated AskNatalie Advice Columnist), whom I had recently interviewed.

We enjoyed hors d'oeuvres and had a cocktail before the show. There was a "flower wall" made of recycled Post Gazette newspapers that was used for photos.



My mom described the "fashion" as the models danced and walked their way down the runway. There was a dress made of recycled phone books and telephone cord and another made of Giant Eagle blue bags! I even got to meet one of the models.

I had the good luck of meeting Giselle Fetterman (wife of Lieutenant Governor John Fetterman) at the fashion show. Giselle owns the Free Store in Braddock where donated goods are redistributed throughout the community. Talk about reuse and recycling! There are so many simple ways we can help save our planet, from using energy-efficient light bulbs, to conserving water, to recycling, and to turning newspapers into fashion. We really enjoyed the show!~~

Etta Cox and Al Dowe

By Richard Campbell

ON FRIDAY, MARCH 9TH OF THIS YEAR, I HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO SEE AND HEAR THE GREAT TROMBONIST AND VOCALIST EXTRORDANAIRE, AL DOWE AND ETTA COX AT THE SEWICKLEY SWEETWATER ARTS AND RECREATION CENTER. AND, BELIEVE ME, TROMBONIST AL DOWE AND VOCALIST, ETTA COX DIDN'T DISAPPOINT. NOT ONE BIT. I ENJOYED THE SHOW FROM START TO FINISH!!! IT REALLY WAS THAT GOOD. AND AFTER THE SHOW, I HAD MY PICTURE TAKEN WITH TROMBONIST AL DOWE AND VOCALIST ETTA COX!!! THEY WERE REALLY WONDERFUL AND BEAUTIFUL PEOPLE. AND LIKE JESSICA LEE AND NELSON HARRISON, WHOM I'D SEEN JUST OVER TWO MONTHS EARLIER AT THE RIVERS CLUB IN DOWNTOWN PITTSBURGH, AL DOWE AND ETTA COX, TOO, WILL ALWAYS AND FOREVER BE IN MY HEART AS "PITTSBURGH JAZZ ENTERTAINERS GALORE!!!!" MAY GOD ALWAYS BE WITH TROMBONIST AL DOWE AND WITH VOCALIST ETTA COX FOREVER.~~



A Right to Healthcare

By Megan Cunningham

There is no question, we need healthcare to live our lives. Given that we're mere mortals, we will all experience something requiring immediate medical attention in our lives. That human frailty demands that we guarantee healthcare as a public good and a human right so the most marginalized segments of our society live lives with dignity.

Without our health we can't live, let alone with dignity. As an American, I staunchly believe I'm entitled to it simply by virtue of my humanity and so does everyone else. And if I need medical attention, I expect to receive treatment without getting an outrageous bill. To me, healthcare is a public good that shouldn't be earned, bought, or deserved. In fact, it shouldn't matter whether you're an American citizen, whether you work, whether your workplace offers health benefits, or how much money you make.

Unfortunately, the United States is perhaps the only developed country that doesn't see it that way. Rather, our healthcare system is designed to deny, not support, a right to health with a for-profit business model that can discriminate against those who can't afford good health insurance. And even those who do have insurance still struggle to pay their premiums, deductibles, co-pays, and out-of-pocket costs to treatment. It is no wonder that most bankruptcies and crowdfunding petitions pertain to medical bills. Yet, by codifying a system allowing huge corporate profits on healthcare as a commodity, our society has actually impeded our civil right to healthcare while our government doesn't do much to protect it. And while the Affordable Care Act has done a great deal of good in expanding healthcare access for millions of people, millions still remain uninsured, healthcare prices still soar, and people still needlessly die.

Even worse, since Donald Trump assumed the presidency, the Republicans have bolstered their efforts to undermine the ACA. Since I have coverage through Medicaid, I was deeply worried about what Trump would do to healthcare—and I was right. Despite assuring supporters that he'd make sure Americans have health insurance, Trump has attempted to implement an agenda that does the opposite. He's backed legislation, regulations, and lawsuits making it more difficult for sick people to get health insurance, allowed insurance companies to discriminate against patients with preexisting conditions, and kick millions of Americans off Medicaid. In 2017, Republicans tried repealing the ACA and replacing it with a plan that could've thrown millions of Americans off of their insurance. When the House passed the American Healthcare Act, which would've reopened the door for insurers to charge sick people higher premiums, and stop covering the ACA's Essential Health Benefits, a requirement making sure insurance plans cover more of the basics. Fortunately, congressional Republicans failed and Obamacare survived.

However, the Trump administration didn't stop there. It then rolled out new regulations expected to drive up premiums for sicker Americans. He's widened the availability of skimpy "short-term" plans that don't have to cover prescription drugs, maternity benefits, or people with preexisting conditions. While he's let state Medicaid programs require beneficiaries to work, a move that's led thousands of Arkansans to lose coverage. Most recently, Trump's Justice Department filed a legal brief, arguing that a judge should find the ACA unconstitutional, which would turn health insurance markets back into the Wild West and eliminate Medicaid coverage for millions of Americans. At least one estimate finds that full repeal could cost 20 million Americans their healthcare coverage.

I am well aware that Republicans have opposed the Affordable Care Act and universal healthcare in general for a long time. Even before Trump was sworn in, Congressional Republicans voted on bills to repeal Obamacare dozens of times. But once Trump became president, the threat to healthcare access for

Americans has drastically increased. Yet, despite the fact that the Trump Administration and the Republican Party want to return to pre-Obamacare status quo, most Americans do not. They may not be passionate about the Affordable Care Act but in times like these, they're glad to have it. Furthermore, most Americans like the idea of making sure sick people have access to healthcare and that it's the government's responsibility to guarantee that, which has consistently been a top issue in elections. Yet, too many people on the right see the idea of universal healthcare as akin to a big government takeover or "Socialism." But so what? What's wrong with Socialism? People pay for stuff in our society all the time like roads, police, fire department, national parks, public education, and more. Why can't it be the same with healthcare? After all, other countries do it and they're mostly satisfied with their healthcare system. Still, you have to wonder what's going on in these Republicans' minds when they craft a vote on these healthcare plans that are as cruel as they're unpopular.

In a country with some of the best medical research, technology, and practitioners, people shouldn't have to die for lack of healthcare. A system providing only insurance can't possibly meet standards for human rights like universal access. Furthermore, there is no equity in a system that profits on human suffering and denial of a fundamental human right. We don't need access to an insurance office but a medical office. Besides, health insurance is just a financial arrangement that has nothing to do with physical and mental health. Worse yet, it makes our right to healthcare contingent upon our financial abilities. Human rights aren't commodities. Whereas the transition from right to commodity lies at the heart of a system perverting a right into an opportunity for corporate profit at the expense of those suffering the most. For health insurance companies make money by denying claims for care while still collecting premiums. When we use our insurance policy to get care, they lose money. They have shareholders expecting to see big profits. And in order to preserve that, health insurance is available to those who can afford it, violating Americans' civil right to healthcare.

In order to demand the government to institute a truly universal healthcare system, we must demand our right to health. No longer should we put up with high medical bills, premiums, deductibles, co-pays, and other healthcare costs. We are patients deserving of healthcare as our civil right and we must assert that, not to just politicians but also to our communities, families, doctors, hospitals, neighbors, and everyone else. If we're denied care for any reason or receive an outrageously high medical bill, we must make a fuss about it. And if expecting single-payer healthcare from our medical establishment means breaking the law, so be it. After all, the for-profit healthcare system is unjust and has no right to exist anyway. If we want our government to recognize healthcare as a right, we must take the responsibility and act together to contribute making it available to each of us and ensure that every American can exercise this right.

Furthermore, we must demand government to bring its defense of human rights home to protect and serve the people it represents, claiming health as a right for ourselves and future generations. My stand advocating for a universal single-payer system may not be popular in my neck of the woods. I know it will be highly controversial since it involves enacting big changes to the established medical order. But it's a hill I'm willing to die on because I'm sick of being worried about my Medicaid access being politicized and seen as undeserving since I don't have a regular job. And as long as a for-profit healthcare system exists there will always be someone who can take your healthcare away from you and thus, depriving you of any kind of right to life or humanity you'd have. Nonetheless, I refuse to accept the healthcare system as it is and vow to expect the people in my life to see my access to healthcare as nothing less than a guaranteed civil right the government must protect. I expect everyone else to do the same.~~

This is an opinion piece and does not necessarily represent the views of Pittverse Magazine

Eevee (from Pokémon), "The Unofficial Mascot of Autism"

By Michelle Middlemiss

Eevee is a Pokémon which is a little monster that follows its trainer and lives in a Poke Ball. Eevee is an "it," meaning it could be a girl or a boy. Eevee looks like a little fox, white and brown. If it's "shiny" it's all silver/white. Only a very small amount of Eevee is born silver.

The Encyclopedia of Pokémon is called the Pokedex. They call this Pokémon "Eevee Evolution" because it has eight forms of evolution at this point. If you put two Flareon Pokémons in a daycare and as long as they're breed-able, you won't get a Flareon egg. But you'll get an Eevee egg. A Flareon is one of the Eevee evolutions. Eevee always remains Eevee, no matter what the evolved form. "Eevee Evolutions Eevee" evolves around environmental conditions. Autistic people adapt to the outside world while remaining who they are, just like a little Eevee does.

There is a spectrum of the many types of Eevee. It has triggers that make it evolve. They just need to be given the stone for Fire Stone to evolve into Flareon, Thunder Stone to Jolteon, and Water Stone into Vaporeon. These are the three basic Eevee evolutions. They appear when they are given a standard stone. As with autism, it would be given a standard test and it would be very apparent. The person would be very easy to diagnose as having autism.

There are specific times to evolve. Friendship between Eevee and its trainer evolves at night to Umbreon (Dark type). Friendship during the day between Eevee and its trainer evolves to Espeon (Psychic).

In the last three Eevee evolutions with Sylveon, Leafeon and Glaceon, it takes more time. Instead of two steps needed to evolve, it takes a willingness to target it. It's like how a psychologist needs to find out what the cognitive disorder really is, such as an autism diagnosis. Or if someone is diagnosed on the spectrum but has been misdiagnosed before this. The evolution of Pokémon takes a little more time to fully be evolved and reach its full potential.

Leafeon evolves close to moss-covered rock. Glaceon evolves near ice-covered rock. Affection for the trainer and fairy type move evolves Sylveon. There is unlocked potential when a Pokémon evolves. It gains certain powers that change the way it grows, but always starts as Eevee. It presents a blank slate.

What this paper talks about is not the like or dislike of Eevee but more of a comparison of how easy/hard it is to diagnose the autism spectrum. I'm not comparing people to this either; it's more of a journey to get the diagnosis.~~



Skidmore's SF Spotlight: The Obscure Masters

Erle Stanley Gardner: Worlds Outside the Courtroom

By Thomas Skidmore

ERLE STANLEY GARDNER (July 17, 1889--March 11, 1970) is best known as the creator of the popular lawyer detective hero Perry Mason, who became the subject of books, movies, and the famous long-running TV series (all based on Gardner's own successful legal career).

What isn't known about the illustrious Mr. Gardner is that prior to 1933 (the year the first Perry Mason book was released), he wrote several popular science fantasy stories that can be seen as a spiritual ancestor to the modern comic books and even TV shows like The X-Files. Erle's first major science fiction story, "The Human Zero," (a murder-mystery tale utilizing the earliest description of teleportation) was published in Argosy All-Story starting in early 1928 and was an instant hit.

Another such story, "Rain Magic," deals with a massive worldwide flood caused by melting polar ice caps and can be seen as a prediction of global warming. Still more fantastic is Gardner's tale "A Year in a Day," where both the detective hero and the master criminal use super-speed and temporal dilation in an action-packed chase story; this eerily foretold the dawning of such super-speedsters as The Flash and Quicksilver.

"The Sky's the Limit," perhaps Erle's most popular science fiction story is a whimsical space opera saga wherein the heroes find themselves on an unwanted voyage into outer space, and the ramifications such a "star trek" would bring to the travelers.

After completing two more stories in late 1932, Gardner abandoned science fiction to focus on more conventional stories, culminating in the debut of Perry Mason a year later. He remained devoted to his lawyer hero until his death in early 1970, but rarely talked about his science fiction tales. Indeed, those very tales were forgotten until 1981, when all of Erle's SF stories were collected as *The Human Zero: The Science Fiction Stories of Erle Stanley Gardner* (a rather rare and expensive find).

Will Erle Stanley Gardner's science fiction be reissued and enjoyed?

Only time will deliver a verdict that even Perry Mason can't anticipate...~

The History of the Fourth of July

By Amelia Krzton

We all celebrate the Fourth of July every year in many different ways. Some people like to watch a parade, host a cookout, or watch fireworks. But, do you guys know why we celebrate the Fourth of July, and why it is so important?

It all started back in the 18th century when the original thirteen colonies were under Great Britain's rule. King George III was a mean ruler who did not let any of the residents in the colonies do what they wanted to do. This is what caused the American Revolution to happen. During the American Revolution, the Declaration of Independence was signed on July 4, 1776. This took place by a bunch of delegates from the Continental Congress in Independence Hall in Philadelphia, such as Benjamin Franklin, John Adams, John Hancock, Richard Henry Lee, Samuel Adams, and Edward Rutledge. As we all know, John Hancock made his signature extra big so everyone could see it. When the annual holiday first began, citizens would celebrate by hosting "shows, games, sports, guns, bells, bonfires, and illuminations." This was a phrase that was written by John Adams in the Declaration of Independence. The Patriots supported independence from Great Britain, while the Loyalists

opposed independence from Great Britain. The Patriots even pulled down a statue of King George III to oppose Great Britain's rule.

Now, people understand why celebrating the Fourth of July is so important. It goes back to a very important time in American history. On the American flag, there are 50 stars on the blue square for 50 states and 13 red and white stripes for the original 13 colonies. The home video *Schoolhouse Rock: America Rock* explains these concepts through 10 different songs: "No More Kings," "Fireworks," "The Shot Heard 'Round the World," "The Preamble," "Elbow Room," "The Great American Melting Pot," "Mother Necessity," "Suffrin' Till Suffrage," "I'm Just a Bill," and "Three-Ring Government." So, whenever people celebrate the Fourth of July this year, they can think of all the important events that happened in American history. ~



Adapting to Changing Environments Reflection

By Nathaniel Geyer

On the last Wednesday of each month, I typically go to my adults with autism support group in the Greater Harrisburg Area. This group has grown from a handful of older adults to younger autistics who are going through similar challenges. One such example is adapting to changing environments.

Last week I was driving west on the Pennsylvania Turnpike to my autism meeting when a trailer tire got dislodged going eastbound. It crossed the median and that tire hit my headlight, causing my car to go to the repair shop and I missed the autism meeting. That tire might have been a wakeup call that you need to adapt to a changing environment. Had I not been aware and quickly reacted to the tire, there was a good chance that it would have hit my windshield and killed me. However, I am fortunate to have survived this unexpected event with the optimism that I could handle a changing environment.

As a person with autism spectrum disorder, it has not been easy dealing with the temporary inconvenience of being at the wrong place at the wrong time. However, in one perspective this was a wakeup call that I need to go with the flow and not against it.

Had I not gone with the flow and adapted I would be forced to pay for the damage without insurance or support from the other party. Instead, I reported it to the insurance without hesitation and was added to the police report as a second vehicle impacted by this event. In addition, my auto insurance paid for most of the damages without impacting my deductible. The only thing I had to do was to speak up, take my car to the repair shop, and use this issue to highlight the importance of adapting to a new environment.

A word of advice for younger adults with autism is to know when to speak up and doing whatever you can to adapt to different environments with grace and no hostility. It is also important to use your lives to volunteer, work, and impact society in positive ways, to better the environment rather than having the environment dictate how to react and conform.

Although I missed the autism meeting it was a good lesson in life to go with the flow and use negative experiences to better society and promote positive social change in different ways. Plus, how many people can you find that were hit by a tire and survived?~

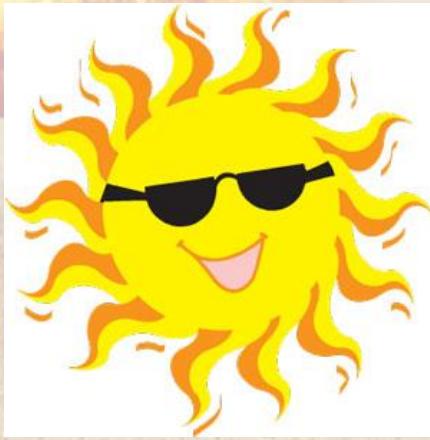
Splashing In Summer

By Julia Fieldhammer

It's the summertime and school is over, everyone is just relaxing and enjoying the nice weather. Summer is probably my favorite season! I love to be outside as much as possible. The outdoors makes me feel refreshed and alive. One of my favorite things to do in the summer is to go to the pool. I love to swim; when I'm in the pool I feel free from my disability. The water holds me up without having to count on someone else. I also like to hang out with my friends a lot. We like to have bonfires in my backyard. It's fun to sit around and talk about what teenagers talk about. Sometimes we go on my trampoline, it gets crazy with all my friends on there, they bounce me around. Occasionally just my two girlfriends will come over and we will have a girls' night. I really like to hang out with all of my gang, too.

One of my favorite weeks of the summer is when I go to camp at the Woodlands. The Woodlands is a place for people with special needs to go hang out and do different activities. There are many camps; each camp lasts for a week. I attend music camp. In music camp there are three groups and three classes to attend. The classes are Band, Chorus, and Music Appreciation. We rotate to all the classes with a lunch break in between. Although I like all the classes, my favorite class is Band. In Band we can try all the different instruments. The teacher picks about four or five different songs for us to perform at the concert at the end of the week. All of our friends and family can come to the concert to see what we have been working on. The second class is Chorus class where we pick some songs to preform at the concert. Some people get to sing solos while the rest of us sing in a group. Music Appreciation is the last class my group goes to after we have lunch. In this class we learn about a lot of famous musicians and listen to their work. The camp gets different musical performances to come in and play for us. The Friday of that week is our show and the campers all wear the same shirts. Someone announces all our names as we walk on stage and take a bow. All the campers take turns going to the front of the stage doing different acts. The past two years I have had my poems turned into songs with help from one of the instructors. The instructor who teaches the Chorus class sings my song and the announcer introduces me as the writer. I love being up on stage in front of everyone. I get to introduce my song with my Dynavox and give a little speech. It feels amazing to have people hear my thoughts and words. After the show, everyone takes pictures. My family and I go to get ice cream to celebrate.

I really enjoy all of my summer activities. Summer is a time of rest and relaxation; it also can be a time to do fun activities you don't have time for in the school year such as go on vacation and hang out with friends. Summer gives me a happy feeling, like I'm floating on a cloud. I love being able to do so many fun things in the summer with my friends and family. ~



CREED, CHAPTER 7

By Dmitry Harmon

It was late at night and Adam was facing the open gates of the cemetery where Annora was buried. It was an odd night considering, as spring was reaching an end and the hot temperatures of summer were making their way to the capital. On this night, cool temperatures lingered in the air. If one would have to estimate, one might say it was in the forties.

As Adam walked through the gate, he felt very elated. It was as if he had some sort of supernatural power of changing things in his manner for Adam enjoyed cool weather. He started walking the pathway that divided various plots with a sense of entitlement...a slow but confident walk. Awareness in full swing. He knew the way; he was heading to Annora's tomb. As he started to get closer and things started to get damp within the grass there was a low level of foggy mist that eventually started to curl up as if it was a ghostly form of grass growing within the mist.

As he got closer, the mist began to get deeper and deeper. By the time he reached the crypt the mist was several inches above his waist. On this cool evening the moon was hanging in a manner that offered a foreboding picture. Casting the gravestones and the crypts in a cruel fashion where the souls that laid there, trapped in limbo with no escape. And Adam was the keeper wearing all black, suite cloak and a top hat whilst the moon reflected off his pale grey eyes. It was this feeling that excited Adam and he was taking it all up to his heart's content.

At last he was standing in front of the crypt of Annora Faulk. He at long last was able to have his very own personal conversation with the woman he had a burning desire for despite her being dead.

"I know you had the same desire for me. Who could resist the temptations of vast wealth and looks that would make any girl swoon at my presence?" Adam had so many thoughts going on in his head, the excitement was so high it was no longer oozing out. It was overflowing. Oh how he hoped for the gates of the crypt to open up for him. He brought with him six candles.

"Although I must confess, I have met a young woman at the gathering for family and friends after the funeral services. She is an absolutely breathtaking beauty that I must insist on making her mine!" At this point the gate of the crypt started to rattle.

"Her name is Lilith. Lilith König." With these words the gates stopped rattling.

"It looks like you have something you want to tell me," he said with a sneer. "Oh well...I guess you can't."

At this the gate started to rattle uncontrollably for roughly ten seconds. This caused Adam to panic and a slight twinge of fear crept into his mindset. But just as quickly as the gate rattle began, it stopped.

"I guess...." At this point the tomb started to erupt with a foggy mist with a tinge of ghostly green. Adam stood rooted in disbelief about what he was witnessing. The tree leaves started to rustle and then everything was quiet. A figure floated out of the crypt. It was Annora. Adam was speechless. He stumbled back and fell on his bottom on top of a gravestone.

"Hello, Adam." Annora spoke to him. This was a most unique event. This could not really be Annora. Annora was dead. The figure was pale white with black around her eyes. If one looked at her from a distance one would mistakenly believe that only the whites of her eyes were there. However, Ad-



am saw the slight tinge of eyelashes; they were the same eyes he had always looked at when speaking to her. Just like her eyes, her lips were a severe dark color of evergreen, but from a distance, one would mistake the color for black. Her hair was different as well--it was jet black and was more astounding than it had been while she had been alive. For when she was alive, it was golden blonde. The dress she was wearing was pure white and it was the green aura that made her more beautiful than Adam could possibly imagine.

But It was her voice that was mesmerizing Adam at the moment. It was a sharp voice of coldness and cruelty with an effect of reverb echo that faded in very quickly and faded out very quickly with each sentence. "What brings you here?"

"Annora, my beloved..." Adam was still in disbelief and the excitement was at an all-time high. God was good to him to grant him a conversation with the undead, especially the specter of Annora. "I was hoping to see you; my wish has been granted."

"You do realize I am not a part of the living anymore?" She was staring down at him. Adam was trying to get himself back up but his brain had been robbed of the ability to move.

"You are more beautiful than when you were living."

"Do not mock The dead! I am gone now, but my spirit lingers on for a singular purpose."

"Please, what is that purpose?"

"That is only for me to know."

"I must know!" Adam's entitlement was starting to kick in. "You were taken away from me." At this Annora had a very sad look on her face and in this small instance her voice became more gentle.

"With great sorrow, I must tell you that we were never meant to be."

"What do you mean by that? Surely you are in a better place." The specter of Annora's face became very hard and cold.

"Does it look like I am in a better place? Have I been granted the wings of an angel? But that is beside the point."

"Then what are you here for?" Spat out Adam. This conversation was not going well at all; much to his chagrin, this was a conversation he had no control over.

"Stay...away...from.... Lilith."

"Why should I? I deserve her as she deserves me." Adam was starting to get angry.

"You are not worthy of her. Now that I have passed to the land of the undead I have seen your soul and the things you have done."

"Oh?? What kinds of things have you seen me do? Please, pray tell." Adam was enraged.

"I have seen you steal what was not yours through other people. I have seen you hurt people. I have seen you mock people for your own pleasure. Such a man is not worthy of her beauty and generous nature. You are not worthy, nor have you earned her. Stay! Away! From! Her!"

"What you might have heard about me is only conjecture...wild accusations to tarnish my name. I have never so much as touched a hair on anyone's head. Please listen to me." At this point he got up and started to walk toward Annora. Adam then tried to embrace her as he had done many times in the past. Annora's hair stood on end. It was the most terrifying sight any man could see. Her beauty was no longer the beauty of an incredible phenomenon. Instead, it was replaced with the beauty of fury and coldness. Her face turned slightly gaunt, eyes rolled up to reveal only the whites in her eyes and she let out a high-pitched shriek,

"STAY AWAY FROM LILITH!!!" With that she abruptly pulled back into the crypt with her finger pointed straight at Adam and vanished.

Adam had fallen back again and all the mist was gone. The green aura had vanished and the cemetery looked dry and withered. The moon had even vanished to the point where the gravestones and crypts were only distinguishable of black silhouettes. He quickly got back up and was furious at his botched attempt to talk to the specter and kicked the gravestone to the side of him. With this act very suddenly another specter of an old decaying man who looked as if he been beaten to death with a crowbar shot up and got into his face and shrieked.

"GET OUT!!!" His jaw looked broken and his tongue was flapping in a macabre manner.

Adam felt pain and woke up in his own bedroom and realized he had fallen out of his bed.~~

Maxwell Minute

The story about my service dog

By Stacie Rymarz

Many people's superheroes are six feet tall, draped in fancy capes and wear elaborate costumes. My superhero has four feet, black fur, slobbers, and wears a red vest. My superhero is not a fictional character – he's real! His name is Maxwell. He is an English Labrador Retriever. He is my service dog, and my best friend.

Maxwell and I have been a team for two and a half years. I had found myself in a place where I was struggling to leave the house, and had only a small group of family that I felt comfortable communicating with. My family and I talked about the option of getting a service dog. We located a provider, then began the year-long process of finding a good match and further training to meet my specific needs. I had to go through a matching process where I met multiple dogs – a chocolate lab, a doodle, a black labradoodle, a white labradoodle and then Maxwell. He chose me. He came up to me and put his head on my lap and our relationship has continued to grow ever since.

Below are some common questions I can help answer for you about service dogs:

What is a service dog? According to U.S. law, a service dog is defined as a dog that is individually trained to do work or perform tasks for people with disabilities.

Where are service animals allowed? Under the ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act), state and local governments, businesses, and nonprofit organizations that serve the public generally must allow service animals to accompany people with disabilities in all areas of the facility where the public is normally allowed to go.

Does a service animal have to be under control? Yes. Under ADA, service animals must be harnessed, leashed, or tethered, unless these devices interfere with the service animal's work or the individual's disability prevents using these devices. In that case, the individual must maintain control of the animal through voice, signal, or other effective controls.

How do I know for sure it's a real service dog? When it is not obvious what service an animal provides, only limited inquiries are allowed. Staff may ask 2 questions: (1) is the dog a service animal required because of a disability, and (2) what work or task has the dog been trained to perform. Staff cannot ask about the person's disability, require medical documentation, require a special identification card or training documentation for

the dog, or ask that the dog demonstrate its ability to perform the work or task.

It may not seem like much – but with the help of my superhero Maxwell, I am now able to participate in daily activities such as going to the grocery store, talking to neighbors, going to the mall, and even traveling! We actually just got back from visiting my mom in Florida – we both flew on Spirit Airlines out of Latrobe, PA. So... I guess my superhero does fly!~



Landside Baggage Matrix at PIT

By Kenneth Miller

The Landside Baggage Matrix at PIT has been in operation since the airport was first opened on October 1, 1992. Everyday this system of conveyor belts and optical scanners moves the checked baggage from the ticket counter check in to the baggage room where it is taken by the ramp agents to the airplanes.

There are eight miles of conveyor belt that make up the four segments of the Matrix. Because there are no more ticket counters operating across from Southwest and American, and since there are no more curbside baggage checks, less than 70% of the Matrix is running today. That 70% is essential to the check-in process. When the conveyor belt stops during a check-in, notify the supervisor and call the county engineers immediately. They are on top of it. They are committed to keeping this matrix working and helping us get our bags sorted and down into the bag room quickly.

We can help ensure the smooth operation of the Matrix by placing the bags hard-side up, wheels forward, with the tags trailing. Proper spacing is critical. When in doubt, use a tub. Send golf clubs, tools and boxes to the Transportation Security Administration personnel at the oversize counter. Remember, the most important job of an airline agent is to refuse hazardous material.

Allegheny County Chief Executive Rich Fitzgerald and PIT Chief Executive Officer Christina Cassotis recently announced a new 1.1-billion-dollar landside terminal planned for 2024. They are going to pay for it with the revenue that has been collected from fracking the land here at PIT, airlines are going to pay for it through our leases at the gates, and the county is going to float some bonds. Fitzgerald says the taxpayers are not going to pay for any of it. The Matrix that moves baggage through the landside terminal is a critical part of all airport designs. Not too big. Not too small. Move the baggage quickly. We want to keep Pittsburgh's reputation as a place where baggage does not get lost or damaged. We are going to be using this old matrix until we get a new one. The SPIRIT ticket counter wants to extend a big thank you to everyone who makes the Matrix work so well, especially Josh from Aviation Safeguards and our coworkers in the bag room who work for Trego Dugan.~~

Runner of Steel: Pittsburgh Marathon

By Joshua Walburn

On May 5th 2019, I've finally accomplished another goal: running the Pittsburgh Half Marathon. On the day before the race, I'd attended a race expo at the David L. Lawrence Convention Center. The expo explains the reason why you're running and more than hundreds of booths on display show the sponsoring companies of the marathon such as charities. It's also a part of this annual event during the marathon.

What is the Pittsburgh Marathon? Like other 26.2 mile races, the Dick's Sporting Goods Pittsburgh Marathon is held usually on every first Sunday of May. Its first announcement was on October 3, 1984, sponsored by US Steel and PNC Bank. I ran the half-marathon for Autism Connection of Pennsylvania and raised over the maximum amount of the money that each charity runner is recommended to raise.

Running longer distances is a huge intellectual and physical challenge. If anyone feels that their emotions are uncontrollable, I hope that their individuals are receiving the opportunity to perform active exercises such as marathon training, and track and field. They'll gain confidence, self-esteem, and the ability to find employment.

I also completed the Steel Challenge, and my time was 2:28:09 (2 hours, 28 minutes, and 9 seconds) with an eleven minute per mile pace. I begin to realize that the wider curves of running support the distance of the total run. Mine was 13.39 miles.

My experience of the half marathon was absolutely incredible. I was able to run the entire race without stopping and raising awareness about autism while running. I have finally become a true runner of steel!~~

Local Athlete

By: Garret Mathews

Our local newspaper ran a piece about an autistic collegiate who excels in the steeplechase, a 3,000-meter run interspersed with 28 hurdles and seven water jumps. The guy is so good he lines up 20 yards behind his teammates for practice trots so he'll have some semblance of competition.

The young man, the story noted, tried soccer, but had to give the game up because he didn't want anyone else on the team to kick the ball. He eventually settled on distance-running because it best suited his intense preparation and drive for perfection. The article made me think about which sports Aspies might be good at and which ones they might want to avoid.

I've had enough experience at a variety of physical activities to have an informed opinion. In high school, I wrestled for two years, played football for three years and started my junior and senior years on the baseball team.

As an adult, I played golf and tennis. I've toed the starting line at more than a dozen road races and completed two marathons. A few weeks after my 55th birthday, I competed in the bench-press event of a powerlifting tournament. I realize men and women on the autism spectrum have widely different strengths and weaknesses when it comes to athletics. And I realize I am certainly no expert on the subject, just a has-been of a player.

With disclaimers aside, here goes.

The sport Aspies would struggle with the most, I believe, is baseball. I was terrified of failure—specifically, striking out—because I didn't want the coach and fans to be mad at me. After every at-bat, I desperately recalculated my hitting average and on-base percentage. I just knew if those marks dropped far enough I would be summarily removed from the game. Often I was so absorbed by the long division I didn't pay attention to my defensive responsibilities.

Baseball, I believe, has too much down time for AS folks. Too much time to think. Hitters have 30 or more minutes between at-bats. That's an eternity to worry about your stance or your swing or trying to guess the opposing hurler's sequence of pitches the next time you come to the plate. While wrestling is an individual sport and grapplers are center stage for all to evaluate, I never experienced undue amounts of anxiety on the mat. I wasn't waiting for something to happen and could get lost in the moment.

Football was the same way. You didn't think, you just did. And with 21 other persons on the field, I never felt everyone was staring at me.

While I put constant pressure on myself to set personal bests, distance-running was a comfortable sport for me. It was just a matter of putting one foot ahead of the other until I could see the finish line. No thinking, just the single-minded focus Aspies are famous for.

Golf was a bad choice. I would hit the ball—usually sideways—and stew for the time it took to find the thing in the brush. Then, with my imagined gallery of hundreds looking on, I would hit another sucky shot. And so on until the 18th hole when I would smack a fairway wood 220 yards to within inches of the cup and be persuaded to give the game another chance.

I was better at tennis, but never able to relax and enjoy the sport. I didn't have confidence in my serve or my backhand and was intimidated when I went against someone who had a more expensive racquet. This guy beat me 6–0, 6–0 in the first round of a tournament. When I asked for pointers, he carefully placed his expensive racquet inside its expensive case and suggested I take up ping-pong.

The bench-press event was the absolute worst. I worried for eight weeks prior to the competition that I would do something stupid like drop the weight or suffer an embarrassing shoulder injury and never be able to type again. I did OK (attaining my goal of 225 pounds), but felt really stupid in the presence of several dozen behemoths who could hoist that weight like it was an egg roll. They also had great grunts, and I was too timid to offer even a warble. But don't be discouraged, Aspies. You won't strike out, the coach won't remove you from the game, and you won't need a backhand.

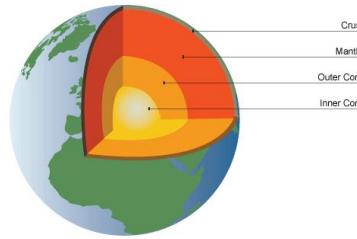
A good grunt will come your way. Just maintain focus.~~

The Different Layers of Earth & the Rock Cycle

By Daniel H. Ashkin

First, I am going to explain the five layers in the Earth. Next, I am going to define the three types of rocks in the Rock Cycle. The three different layers are Sedimentary, Igneous, and Metaphoric Rocks. After explaining the Rock Cycle, I will demonstrate several different examples and the types of rocks use in our industrial society.

The Earth consists of five layers under the land. The first part of the level is the Outer Crust. The Crust is 70 kilometers below the surface. Below the crust is the Mantle. The Mantle is 3000 km deep in width. The lithosphere lies between the crust and the mantle of the Earth. The plates of the Earth moves very slowly. When you study geology in school, the Earth is consists of many faults lines that fit like a jigsaw puzzle. Fitting the Jigsaw together will likely assist you in understanding how the continents develop.



The Ring of Fire stretches three continents. The landmasses include western North America, South America, and island of Japan. When you live around the area of Ring of Fire, you can expect many major earthquakes in the regions. The outer core is comprised of iron and nickel. The temperature is 4400 to 5000 degrees C. The outer core plays an important role in creating the magnetic field around the Earth. In addition, the outer core protects us from solar flares reaching the Earth surface from the sun. Finally, the inner core is solid. The temperature of the inner core is 5000 C. It is as hot as the sun.

Next, I am going to describe the three cycles of the Rock Cycle. Sedimentary rocks are compress together like a heterogeneous mixture. The most common types of sedimentary rocks are clay, silk, and pebbles. Weathering, wind, waves, can break down these types of rocks near the seashore to produce sand on the beach. I read a book called Rocks and Fossils. The authors are of the books are Authors B. Bussbey III, Robert R. Coenraids, and Paul wills, and David Wills. This book points out many types of illustrations of sedimentary, igneous, and metaphoric rocks. For an example, you can find sandstone at the Grand Canyon in the state of Arizona. In addition, scientist had found fossils at Zion National Park in the state of Utah.

The second kind of rocks in the Rock Cycle is igneous rocks. After a volcano, the lava pours onto the mountainside side to the basin of the sea. When the magna starts to harden, it develops into igneous rocks along the mountainside. Geologists will likely find Andesite rocks in the of Mt. Fuji in country of Japan and the mountains of Indonesia. Tourists can likely discovery Basalt rocks on the surface side of the Hawaii hillsides.

Intrusive rocks are second type of igneous rocks. When the magna sinks deep into the Earth surface, it is described as Intrusive rocks. Obsidian is an excellent example of Intrusive rocks. The ancient people used this type of rock to make beautiful pieces of jewelry and ornaments. Other types of Intrusive rocks are olivine, silicate, and chert, which can likely be found below the surface of the Earth. Reading a geology book at the library is an excellent technique to learn about these types of sedimentary rocks in detail.

The third type of rock in the Rock Cycle is the metamorphic rock. Metamorphic rocks are developing from high heat and pressure inside the Earth's crust. Slate, gneiss, and marble are the most common types of metamorphic rocks that you can likely find around the modern house. For an instance, construction workers use pieces of slate for the roofing and the flooring material in the households. Gneiss is use for the front of the gravestones and the flooring of the home. Kitchen and bathroom counters are comprised of shiny, polish marble tops In addition, and a fireplace is form from marble.

In summary, the Rock Cycle plays a very important role in our daily life. Sedimentary rocks may likely include shells, clay, sandstone, and pebbles near the seashore. The two categories of igneous rocks consist of Extrusive and Intrusive. When you walk around a modern house, write down a list of the things that are compose of Metaphoric rocks such as the floor and the countertop. Most importantly, the outer core of the Earth plays a major role in protecting us from the magnetic field and the dangerous solar wind from striking the earth's atmosphere.~~





Notre-Dame

By Elise Mote

I was very lucky to have visited Paris in 2008 with my family. It is definitely one of the most beautiful cities in the world. One of my favorite places to see was Notre-Dame.

Norte-Dame de Paris, or Our Lady of Paris, was dedicated to the Virgin Mary and is probably one of the most beloved Catholic churches. Unfortunately, on April 15, 2019, the cathedral broke out into flames. Around 6:20 PM and until around 9:30 AM the next day, the French firefighters announced that after nine hours of battling the flames they were able to put it out. The cathedral's construction began in 1163 during the reign of King Louis VII was completed in 1345. This Parisian treasure was even the backdrop of the world-famous *Hunchback of Notre Dame* by Victor Hugo. In the novel, Hugo wrote, "The greatest products of architecture are less the works of individuals than of society; rather the offspring of a nation's effort, than the inspired flash of a man of genius..." I will never forget the memories I made and wish nothing but the best for the people of Paris as they recover from this tragedy.~~

Return of the Summer Evolve Group

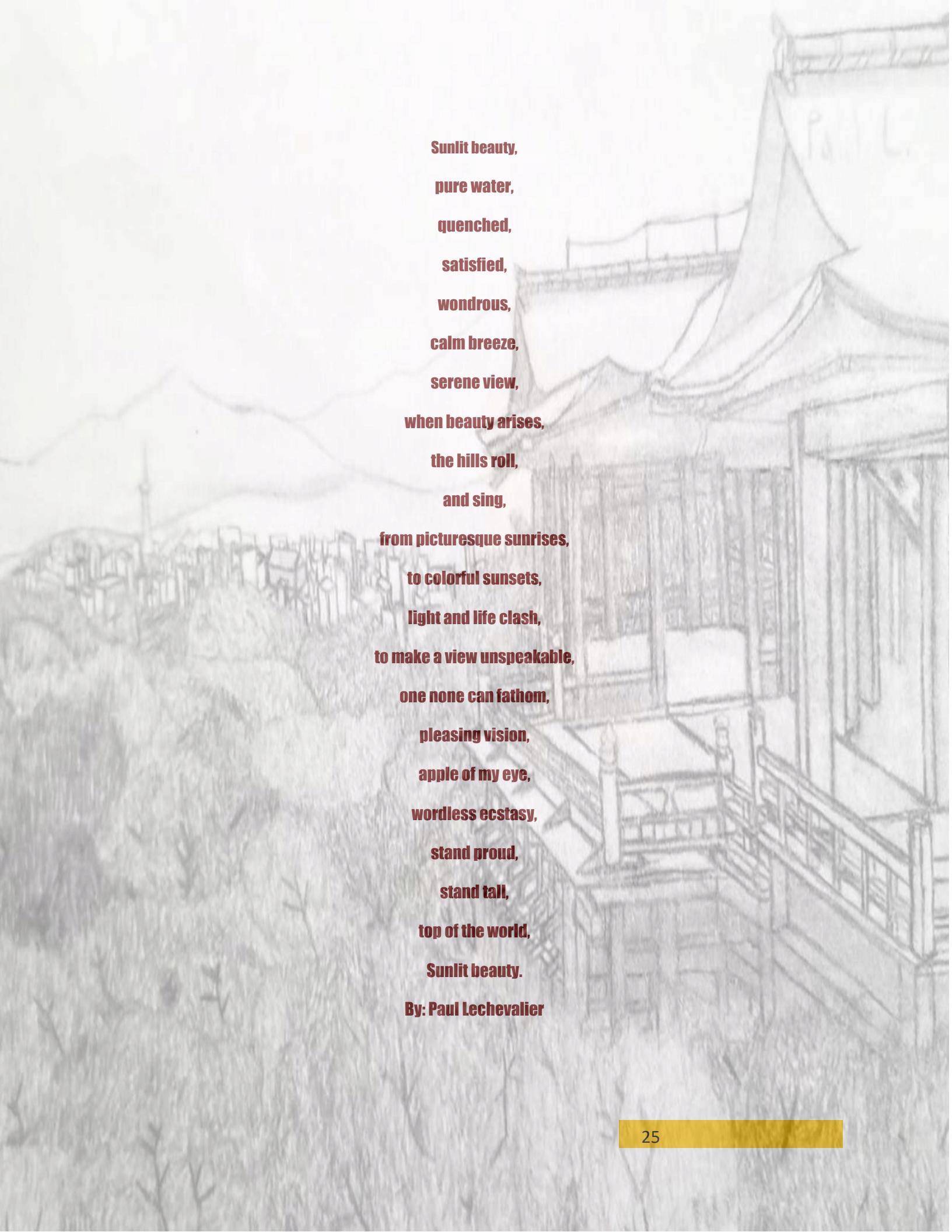
By Amelia Krzton

Evolve Group for the summer began on May 20. I can't wait to go to all the different places that we talked about this summer. The outings include Trivia Night at Hough's in Greenfield, going to Eides Comic Book Store and the Cat Cafe in the Strip District, seeing Lucius at the Three Rivers Arts Festival, going to Scene 75 and Games n' At, playing disc golf in Schenley Park, seeing the new *Spider-Man* movie, riding down the Incline in Mount Washington, and bowling at Arsenal Lanes. Since we are only doing 10 weeks of group this summer, I plan to include the monthly weekend outings with Shane and Elana.

Not to mention, I am also writing songs for the Evolve Group. Let the Games Begin is already up on YouTube. All of the songs in general that I wrote about are in the style of Latin pop and electro funk. "We Can Do It" is for Trivia Night at Hough's. "Alley Cat Lane" is for Eides Comic Book Store and the Cat Cafe, "Festival" is for the Three Rivers Arts Festival," Los Juegos de Pittsburgh: Part 1" is for Scene 75, "Los Juegos de Pittsburgh: Part 2" is for Games n' At, and The Flying Disc is for disc golf at Schenley Park. I will also be doing dances in addition to songs later in the semester, and for my other social group, the Meetup

group with Autism Connection, as well.

The other songs I will be performing when I host my monthly slumber parties at Elana's house include Multiple Masterpieces for Abigail's Paint Party (which is now postponed to June 1), States and Wonders for Samantha's Around-the-World Extravaganza on June 22, and Carnival Games for Hannah's Stars and Stripes Carnival on July 13. I chose Latin pop for the new album since there are more people at Evolve group this year than last year. Some auxiliary percussion instruments include claves and cowbell, depending on the style of the song.~~



Sunlit beauty,
pure water,
quenched,
satisfied,
wondrous,
calm breeze,
serene view,
when beauty arises,
the hills roll,
and sing,
from picturesque sunrises,
to colorful sunsets,
light and life clash,
to make a view unspeakable,
one none can fathom,
pleasing vision,
apple of my eye,
wordless ecstasy,
stand proud,
stand tall,
top of the world,
Sunlit beauty.

By: Paul Lechevalier



A Lot of This and That

By Kevin Hart

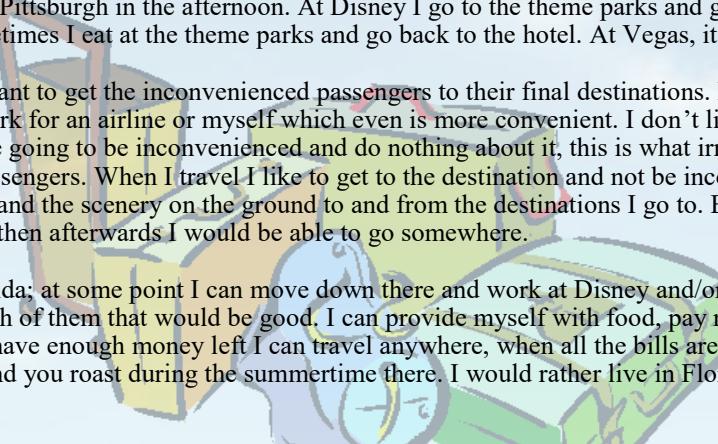
At work I'm the baggage handler at the airport. I get all the bags and tubs to the airlines on time so that passengers can make their flights. Sometimes I get caught off guard when bags come down the belt because I'm usually on the iPad doing something, then I get bags to one of six belts here in the bag room. I sometimes hallucinate down in the bag room because of the fumes that are all over the bag room. At times the airlines leave their tugs running and we breathe in all the fumes from the tugs. Ideally all the baggage handlers will take all the bags that come down the belt and take them to the corresponding belts so the airlines see that we have improved with getting the bags to them on time so we're closer to getting paid vacation. I usually take tubs up to the ticket counters at 16:30 and at 19:00 so the daylight person will not have to do this first thing in the morning.

During the summer rush I can't have the radio with me because I'll get distracted and some baggage will miss flights, so that's why I leave the radio on the desk and get baggage to the belts. This way I can go fast and get all the bags to the belts on time, with the little time to spare I can listen to the radio before more baggage comes down, so if they call me in that little time I can get what it is and bring it downstairs to the proper belt. If there's nothing I continue to deal with the baggage until they all have come down. Always at the end of the shift I'm usually tired and want to go home just to repeat it over and over again, it's like a chain reaction five days in a row but I'm usually am use to it by now...I've been doing this for seventeen years. I sometimes clean up after Sir Mess-A-Lot because he thinks we're a maid service and this company isn't a cleaning company; I'm going to leave all the mess there and see if he cleans up the mess before it gets worse.

When I'm not at work I usually waste money instead of saving it, which doesn't help me out in any way when I have bills to pay. I have a credit card which I usually forget I have, this isn't helping my credit score at all and I need to get back to making more payments to it so my credit score goes back up. I need to start to think about the things I need for the apartment and write a list of what I need. Most of my money will go to the apartment for upkeep and keeping it clean and organized, in the long run this will help me out to know where everything is. I need to invest in those companies stocks instead of buying all the junk food. I'll save money when I invest instead of wasting money that this will work in the long run.

I do enjoy the traveling I do. The places I go to are Washington D.C, Orlando/Disney, and Las Vegas. I go to a travel agent to book my vacation and start making payments to it. I usually have doctor appointments, counselor appointment, and appointments for editing my rough drafts for final drafts. The counselor appointments are to help me when I have a lot of problems at home and work and the counselor helps me with many answers to my problems I have. His name is David and I go to him every two weeks in Southside. I get paid four times a year for the articles I submit and I now have to put them into checking account. In Washington D.C I'm usually there overnight and come back the next day. I go to the air and space museum, eat at the mall, and have to get to Union Station to get the Megabus back to Pittsburgh in the afternoon. At Disney I go to the theme parks and go on some rides then go to another park. Sometimes I eat at the theme parks and go back to the hotel. At Vegas, it varies.

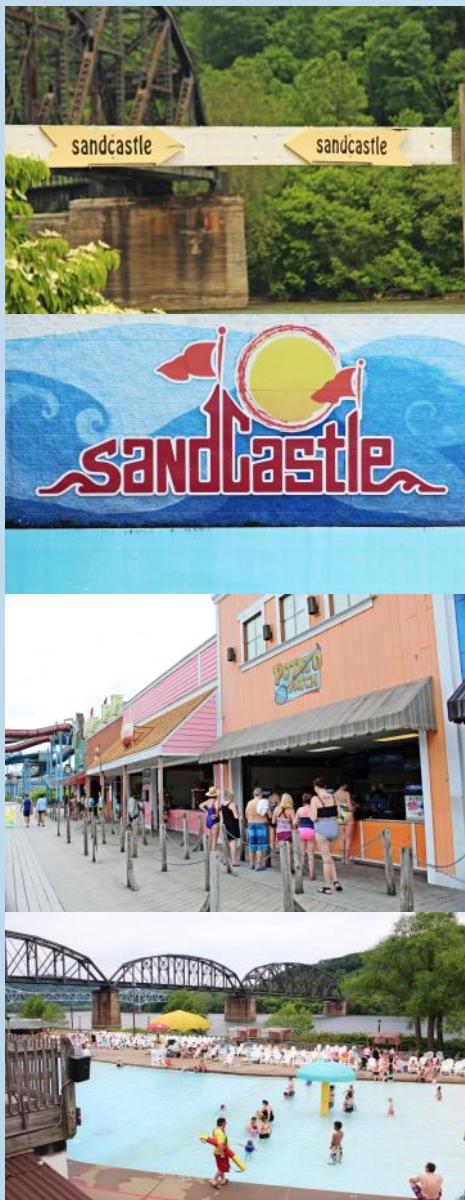
When I become a pilot because I want to get the inconvenienced passengers to their final destinations. Plus I can fly to wherever I want to, either work for an airline or myself which even is more convenient. I don't like it when airlines tell passengers that they are going to be inconvenienced and do nothing about it, this is what irritates me very much when they do this to passengers. When I travel I like to get to the destination and not be inconvenienced either. I enjoy the flight and the scenery on the ground to and from the destinations I go to. But for the next two years I got to start saving then afterwards I would be able to go somewhere.



I enjoy the warmer weather in Florida; at some point I can move down there and work at Disney and/or Orlando international airport. If I can do both of them that would be good. I can provide myself with food, pay rent/mortgage, clothing, and more. If I have enough money left I can travel anywhere, when all the bills are paid. I know that Florida has hurricanes and you roast during the summertime there. I would rather live in Florida in the Orlando/Disney area.

We all have different mindsets. Some of them are good and some are bad. If it's bad, you'll have a lot of consequences and you'll get penalized for wrong-doings. Plus it won't help out your situation in life. So the solutions to this epidemic is get counseling, going to the doctor to talk about the problems you have and get medication for it, stop, pause, and think of what would happen if you are having these problems and stop yourself before you do wrong things. If it's good, nothing bad will happen, this is the way you want to be, free of consequences and penalties, everyone would think of you of a good person and can be good reference for personal and for employment. You'll have friends to help you out with anything and at times will ask you to help them out. If you want to go far in life being on the good side is the way to be. Some people take advantage of you when you do this, just don't let happen to you. A reminder to just be yourself in the good way.~~~

Living for the First Day of Summer at Sandcastle



Story and Photos by Robert Hester

At 11:05AM on Saturday, May 25th, 2019, the voice of Sandcastle Water Park announced over the loudspeakers outside its entrance gates that its first day of operation for the 2019 season was underway. Not soon after their season-opening announcement was made, the music of Sirius XM's Pop Rocks Channel blared over the loudspeakers inside one of the Pittsburgh area's popular summer (no pun intended) "hot" spots.

Sandcastle first became a popular summer hotspot when it opened in the summer of 1989. It's located near the Glenwood Bridge in West Homestead, Pennsylvania—just a short drive, or walk, from The Waterfront in Homestead, and just ten minutes southeast of Downtown Pittsburgh. Sandcastle is a lot like another popular summertime hotspot south of Downtown Pittsburgh, and just a short drive away from Sandcastle: Kennywood. It's a place built for fun and excitement for patrons of all ages. While Kennywood is known for its several roller coasters and thrill rides, Sandcastle is known for its several pools and waterslides. Their popular attraction is their biggest, the Mon Tsunami, a wave pool similar to the wave pools at Allegheny County-owned parks such as Boyce Park in Monroeville, South Park in South Park Township, and Settler's Cabin in Robinson Township—and a short drive from Pittsburgh International Airport.

The Mon Tsunami, which first opened at the start of the 1999 season, is almost as big as the aforementioned pools Allegheny County-owned parks. But the thing that stands out from the crowd in terms of the Mon Tsunami is that it's at Sandcastle, where you have a wide variety of other "wet" attractions to choose from. The choices of other "wet" attractions you can enjoy during your "Day-cation" at Sandcastle are the Blue Tubaluba, Tuber's Tower, Cliffhangers and Boardwalk Blasters, Dragon's Den and the Lightning Express waterslides; the Tad Pool and Wet Willie's Water Works, which are part of the kids' area of Sandcastle, and the Lazy River, a quarter of a mile-long gentle current floating pool—which has been a popular attraction since Sandcastle's grand opening-season in '89.

Sandcastle, like other popular summer attractions in the greater Pittsburgh area are as known for their food choices as they are their ride choices. Sure, there's the usual hot dogs and corn dogs, hamburgers, pizza, Potato Patch Fries (yes, the same Potato Patch Fries served at Kennywood), popcorn, ice cream, Dippin' Dots, soft drinks, water, and even Rita's Italian Ice to choose from at "The Boardwalk," which is located in the middle of the water park. But there are also other places for you to choose from, appetite satisfying-wise, all over the water park; like shaved ice from Lil' Kahuna's, and breadsticks and various snacks from Sharky's Snack Shack, which are both located near in front of the large Mon Tsunami wave pool. And you can even enjoy a beer (yes, beer—if you're over 21 years of age and have a valid form of identification, of course!) at the Sandbar, located in front of the smaller Mushroom Pool.

If you want to spend a day at Sandcastle this summer, you can do so with a slide-all-day pass, which can be purchased at the gate upon entry to the park, or in advance at their website: sandcastlewaterpark.com But if spending one day at Sandcastle doesn't do you or your family and friends justice, you can purchase a pass, or passes, for the 2019 season at Sandcastle, or at Sandcastle's aforementioned website. And if you really want to take in the Sandcastle experience for a birthday party, an anniversary, or any other special occasion, that's what their Cabana and Party Room rentals are for.

Whenever you're at Sandcastle, you're a part of a summertime experience unlike no other in the greater Pittsburgh area; you're also a part of a summertime tradition. Although this summertime tradition has been around for only 30 years Sandcastle, like other summer and non-summer hotspots in the greater Pittsburgh area, has its own place amongst the most popular and legendary names to ever have been built on Steel City soil. And speaking of which, who knew that a part of the country known for its hot, blue-collar industries can also be home to a cool, multicolor-collar waterpark! It's that reason alone that puts the words "live" and "Summer" in Sandcastle's slogan: Live for Summer!~

Gettysburg's Tragic Death Toll

By Joseph Cepk

Nobody knows exactly how many people died during and in the month or so after the battle, at Gettysburg, PA. Updated estimates, based upon the findings, of battle paleontologists, who have found the skeletal remains of approximately 1,500 Confederate soldiers. During the 1870-1873 battlefield exhumation process, 3,320 Confederate soldiers' skeletal remains were removed from their field graves. They were shipped to be buried (reinterred) in military and private cemeteries, which are located in the ex-Confederate states such as Virginia, Georgia, and Alabama.



Battlefield historians have discovered the remains of about seven Confederate soldiers, who were mistakenly buried in the Soldiers' National Cemetery. On November 19, 1863, Abraham Lincoln, the 16th President of the USA, dedicated the cemetery with his speech for the battle's Union dead only. The nation was still at war, and those who died in Gettysburg while attempting to destroy the Union of States, were not supposed to be included in the cemetery's original burial intentions.

It is believed around 9,000 soldiers died, in Gettysburg, PA. This is about the most accurate fatality estimate, according to updated Gettysburg researchers. In round death toll numbers, this means roughly 4,500 Union and 4,500 Confederate soldiers died during and shortly after the horrific battle. This means the armed violence had ended, in both the fields, around Gettysburg, PA., as well as within the town's numerous streets. Surprisingly, and sadly, a 20-year-old woman named Mary Virginia Wade was the only Gettysburg civilian to be killed during the battle.

Tragically, about 5,000 horses died during and after the July 1-3, 1863 battle. More horses and people died in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania between July 1 to 8, 1863, than in any other place in the USA, before or since. This is in terms of both equine and human military combat fatalities. Of the approximately 160,000 soldiers who are believed to have been engaged during the three-day battle, which was the largest and deadliest one ever fought in the Northwestern Hemisphere, roughly one out of every four of them would lie dead or wounded in the nightmarish aftermath of the battle. It is even believed women disguised as men fought and/or died in the Gettysburg battle. This was believed to have been the case on both sides. All of the soldiers wore wool pants, frock coats, shirts, and hats, so body odors and overall hygiene was probably very poor, especially with 80-degree-plus air temperatures during all three days of the Gettysburg battle.~~

This was documented in the surviving combatants' and surviving Gettysburg civilians' diary entries.

Research References:

Explore America's National Parks-The Battle of Gettysburg-Gettysburg National Military Park-Gettysburg, PA. (D. Scott Hartwig)

Gettysburg-The Final (Last) Invasion (Allen Guelzo)
U.S. Civil War Website





Photos by
Masha Gregory





The Word of The Kinship

By Jordan Watson

One may not be absolute.
Nor one can be considered a messiah.
But my word can help.
You cannot let darkness swallow you. Because the light, as dim as it maybe, won't allow it.
You cannot let your enemies bring you to the bottom. Because your trials to success are what keeps you on top.

You cannot let others' threats keep you hidden. Because you can reveal yourself in ways they never could.

If you're larger than life, see that your heart can grow the same size.
If you're loud and proud, don't be afraid to speak soft and wisely to the timid.
If you reach for the stars, help those still getting off the ground.
If you steel yourself, forge others so you can be mended ever stronger.

You have the craft. But only if you work at it.
You have the gift. But only if you work up to it.
You have a fire. But only if you kindle it.
You can make it. Because even I am still trying.
You can win. Because I too have learned from loss.
You can be the embodiment of life. Because even death will be surprised at your vigor.
You can conquer it all. Because learning from defeat shan't kill you.

Love anyone, for they will return their adoration tenfold.
No one of you are nothing. Only you have the tenacity to be something.

So go forth and be who you can and want to be.
Be remembered for the person you always wanted to grow up and be.
Be the person others strive to accomplish.

You can become unique.
You can become original.
You can become.

I hope to see you to it, my fellow kin. ~~



BUILDING AND MODIFYING AN AIRFIX 2-6-2 KIT

By Max Chaney

Hello there readers, and welcome back to Max's Model Railway, when 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 was briefly seen in a Thomas & Friends parody video, although not strictly accurate, this (hopefully two part) series of How-To's... Let's get cracking!



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 Michaels for a good bargin (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 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 glue 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!

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 of, 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 then 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 (excluding where we'd put the decals / transfers with the weathering power, then we 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, luckily that is really easy to get as Dapol makes them now, and most of the Airfix Railway kits in General, you can get them from "Hatton's Model Railway" and "eBay...." ~~



La Pucelle de Feu Trailer

By Sarah Lehman

Jeanne (V/O): In the year of Our Lord 1431, I died, burned at the stake by those who deemed me a heretic.

(Shot of Jeanne closing her eyes as she is burned at the stake.)

Jeanne (V/O): One year later, I came back.

(Shot of Jeanne awakening in a field. She looks around, shock and confusion in her eyes.)

Jeanne: How is this possible?

Jeanne (V/O): Not only that, but I had been transformed--by whom or what, I still do not know.

(Shot of Jeanne watching an injury close up in seconds. Shot of Jeanne's arm bursting into flame, causing the man grabbing it to cry out in pain.)

Jeanne (V/O): In the end, I decided it did not matter from whence my powers came. All that mattered was how I used them. And I decided to use them to continue serving the Lord.

(Clip of Jeanne's travels throughout the years, ending at a small cafe in New York.)

Jeanne (V/O): It was not until the year of Our Lord 1940 that I reemerged. Upon hearing that the Axis had invaded France, I joined forces with a band of mystery men to free my homeland.

(Shot of Jeanne flying above a battlefield, wielding a sword of flame. Other super-powered fighters are seen on both sides. Shot of Jeanne diving from a plane, igniting her body as she falls before soaring toward the Normandy beach.)

Jeanne (V/O): And so my journey into the life of a new kind of heroine began.

(Clip of Jeanne battling various super-criminals. At the end, there is a close-up shot of her turning toward the camera.)

Jeanne (V/O): I am the Maid of Fire. And this is my story.

(Title card comes up.)~

O how forbidden our requited love makes,
jealous are our enemies,
blow for blow they try to sink us,
lower than a sinking ship,

but,
we waltz,
we dance,
we laugh,
though,

even one gaze averted,
feels like eternity's poison,
for this love we cannot have,
thus you'll see me feel eternally poisoned,
and sorrowing,

and tenderly grasp my hand,

and wrap your warm lips upon my poison smudged mouth,
and remove the poison from my lips,

but,
it's too late,

I'm asleep,
consumed by the poison,
thus sheathed upon your heart,
is that sad painful dagger of despair,
shall show the dark red blood of agony and loneliness,
the dagger shall be bleating, "nay,
I shan't let you see your love,
your Romeo again,
your cherished best friend,"

and the poison shall bellow,
"you shan't be enveloped in your Juliet's undying love,
for she has a Paris,
and you have nothing,"
but together,
we know,
we are lovers,
anyone who tries to stop us,
shall be left in the dust,
for we are,
Romeo and Juliet,

but,
this forbidden love,
it's filled to the brim with despairs and woes,

for we are,

By Paul Lechevalier

Romeo and Juliet...

Bob Stouffer, Volunteer Firefighter

By Michelle Middlemiss

PART 1

Bob Stouffer is my next door neighbor. He worked for Westinghouse for many years and retired to become a volunteer fireman at the #1 Wilkins Township Fire Department.

Bob, when did you decide that you wanted to be a fireman?

I was a fireman back in the early seventies in my hometown; it was sort of the thing to do. I got married, moved here, didn't know anybody, went to night school, had a full-time job and I didn't have the time. When I retired I used to hear the fire whistle go off and it would go off a second time, which means no one showed up for the fire. So I thought now I've got the time and I've got some training; maybe I can help them out so that was my initial thought of why I should join the Fire Department.

When you say the second time, do you mean the second buzz?

Yes, and if no one calls 911 Response Center and says we're responding, they hit it a second time. It buzzes every five minutes and after the fourth time, if they don't hit it anymore, they call another company. On Saturday at noon they test the siren but recently they had trouble with repairing it. That's why you haven't heard that whistle. My wife hated that whistle.

Finally, finally! My autism hated it too! Does the fire department give any training in rescuing someone with autism?

I don't believe we do but you could probably register that information with a 911 call center. It could be relayed to the fire company to tell us that someone needed special assistance. We do get called out for community assistance like if someone is too heavy or it's too difficult to get them out of a house, they can ask for extra strength and extra hands to get them down the steps. We do have to get first aid training. The Fire Department wants to start something called quick response where we would have people on duty and if first responders need assistance, they will page us. We have five people trained and want to train a couple more just so that we can provide assistance to paramedics.

Do you use asbestos gloves?

Our gloves are not asbestos; they're leather with a thermal lining and fire resistant, not fireproof. And they're \$80 a pair. They need to be maneuverable. You can wear them out if you're wearing gloves when connecting the hose. If they're wet they get hot; you can burn your hands from the steam. Anything you wear can eventually burn; we don't have anything that is actually fireproof. If firemen are not using the hoses in a proper way and they create steam, it gets tremendously hotter than boiling water. You can get a really bad burn from that.

Do you carry oxygen with you?

No. You don't want to be breathing straight oxygen because that can make you hyperventilate and you get light headed and could pass out.

So what keeps you alive can kill you in an instant!!

That's correct. We have compressed air in a self contained breathing apparatus. You have a bar on your back on a harness with the tank. Everybody gets their own face piece. After 20 minutes, the alarm connected to it goes off. You have about another 15-20 minutes to be completely out of the building while you are still breathing air. Bigger guys working hard use the air up faster. You'll hear people in there working and the bells start to ding and you're looking around to see if someone's in trouble. The next crew is going to be sent in.



So that's why there's more than one Fire Department called to a fire?

Definitely, because there are occasions where we pull out with only two or three guys on the truck and that's not nearly enough to fight a fire. The firemen can't be in there for that long. They need to take turns. Also I weigh 155 lb and wear 50 lb of gear and you're working in a hot environment and you're overheating because you're sweating. The gear keeps the heat out

but it also keeps it in. At the fire on Easter morning, there were probably 8-10 companies there. We were fortunate because we had three on my truck; the other truck was full with six. After 20 to 30 minutes of heavy, extreme work, you need to get R&R. A tent is set up and you get food and just sit there. They take your temperature, blood pressure and make sure you're okay. Meanwhile it's the other crew's turn to go in. You also have a rapid intervention team so if a floor falls on somebody these guys go in and rescue you. If "May Day" comes across the radio they're on it. A commander on the fire scene controls how many guys are called in and if more companies are needed.

I have a question about fire hydrants. I'm only seeing one or two on our street. Are you able to hook more than one hose up to a hydrant?

We carry 1400 feet of hose; West Wilmerding carries 2000 feet. Each company is a different type. We're an engine company with pumps to hook to the hydrants that send water to the firefighters. The company over on Greensburg Pike is a ladder company; their job is to put the ladders up and also ventilate the house that is full of smoke and if you can't see they set up fans to get the smoke out. It takes 20 minutes to set up fans.

Does that take away 20 minutes from saving a person's life?

No. If we get a call, the officer in command wants to know right up front if there's anybody in the structure. If there is, the most important thing is to rescue them, and the police are very helpful. A lot of times the police are there first and they'll say there's nobody home or there are two cats inside or a dog, whatever.

What if the fire has inflated and the firemen have trouble getting in? Can small hoses be used as temporary help?

Little hoses would be practically useless. We have 4' lines and a tremendous amount of water. The first goal is to knock the fire down. I've been in a burning building—you go in and you're blind. You can't see a thing. We have infrared cameras where we scan the room and we can see where the hot spots are, like if your couch catches on fire or something is burning on the stove. You will actually see a heat signature glowing on the black and white image. If I were to shine it on your face, your face would glow because of the heat in your body. We had a call on Gilmore Acres. Somebody had a huge space heater with three extensions plugged into the wall and it overheated. We had to see how far up the wall the flames went. Modern firefighting is amazing; there's a tool for that. When I was younger, we'd just be sucking in smoke.

Hope you didn't get knocked out!!

Exactly. We were very well trained. I needed 188 hours of training before I was allowed to go into a burning building. It took my whole summer just getting that training. When you join the volunteer company, they give you a year to get your certification. We'll be hosting for all the new firefighters this year up at our station. There will be a Saturday and Sunday and for 6-8 hours they will do book learning skills: how to run a chainsaw, how to put on air breathing gear, how to throw a ladder and go through a window. You get the theory and the practice so that when you go to a fire, you're very well trained. I joined here on a Thursday, and Monday morning at 9 am there is me and one other guy, Jerry. We had a call to Penn Center. I had no idea where anything was on the truck. Since then I've had all kinds of training. We meet every Thursday night and practice attaching to a hydrant or putting ladders up.

PART 2 continued in the FALL Issue...~~





Winghart's Burger & Whiskey Bar

Foodie Call By Zach Grabowski

For the *Pittverse* Summer issue's Foodie Call, the group decided on Winghart's. I went for lunch at their downtown location in Market Square where I enjoyed a hamburger called the "I Don't Care, Whatever" Burger and a side of fries. The burger came with bacon, cheddar cheese, pepper jack cheese, crumbled bleu cheese, caramelized onions, sriracha sauce, pepperoncinis, and jalapenos. I enjoyed my food - the burger was spicy, just the way I like it.

I went to Winghart's with a staff person and she described the restaurant to me as clean. The service was good. The waitress was courteous and friendly, and the food came in a timely manner.

My staff person described the bathroom as not being clean. I experienced an issue with the automatic soap dispenser when I couldn't get any soap to come out while trying to wash my hands.

Although I thought my meal was high in price for a hamburger, fries, and a drink, I would recommend Winghart's to others. Winghart's has two other locations: South Side and Greensburg.~~

Foodie Call: The Ice Cream Intern Part 1

By Amelia Krzton

For this issue's Foodie Call, since it is summertime and I am excited about getting a hot summer this year, I have decided to try various ice cream shops from all around town. Before I state all the ice cream shops that I have gone to and where I plan to go this summer, I would like to mention my favorite type of ice cream to get and my standard ice cream that I will almost always order no matter where I go. It is the vanilla ice cream cone with rainbow sprinkles on top. I consider this the healthiest option, as sundaes with mix-in toppings are not always healthy. Without further ado, here are the first eight ice cream shops that I plan to go to this summer:

#1: Mercurio's Pizza and Gelato, Walnut Street in Shadyside

I went here with my mom and her friend for dinner. I had a cup of vanilla bean gelato, and it was delicious. Not to mention the lasagna pizza that I ate for dinner was yummy, as well.



#2: Klavon's Ice Cream Parlor, Penn Avenue in the Strip District

I went here last Friday after dinner at That's Amore in Lawrenceville, and it was also the pizza restaurant's birthday. I ordered a regular vanilla ice cream cone in a cake cone with rainbow sprinkles. Klavon's also serves sugar-free vanilla ice cream to nutrition-conscious customers.



Other places I plan to get ice cream this summer include Millie's Homemade Ice Cream located on South Highland Avenue in Shadyside, Gus and YiaYia's located in Allegheny Commons Park West on the North Side, Remember When Ice Cream located on Chartiers Avenue in Windgap, Leona's Ice Cream Sandwiches located on Penn Avenue in Wilkinsburg, Page Dairy Mart on East Carson Street in the South Side, and Stickler's Popsicles located on Evergreen Avenue in Millvale. Stay tuned for part 2 of the Ice Cream Intern during the fall issue! ~~



"Summer Desserts" By Masha Gregory

"Gus & Ya-Ya's"
By Amerlia Krzton

Burgers and summer food comprise the theme for Foodie Call in our Summer, 2019 issue! Our writers took the assignment seriously and sojourned to Winghart's Burger and Whiskey Bar to enjoy some American-style, summery restaurant food.

Clockwise from left to right: De-laine Swearman, Bryan Lippert, Kenneth Miller, Daniel Ashkin.

Photo by Jennifer Pizzuto





River House Café : A Trip to the New Eating Norm

Foodie Call

By Thomas R. Skidmore

Located in Charleroi, the River House Café is a specialized kind of eating establishment, mostly serving Italian cuisine, as well as more high-class fare like filet mignon. It's a nearly hour-long drive from Pittsburgh but the dishes are worth the trip.

The regular menu prices can go from \$11 up to \$30 for various entrees, but for the early meal lovers, a reasonably-priced lunch menu is offered. For those whose appetites run toward a good pie, there's also an all-you-can-eat pizza buffet (with breadsticks and salad to match) for only \$8.99. Unlike most pizza and Italian restaurants in existence, the pizzas at the River House Café are fresh and made to order (meaning they don't sit out for long periods of time). The restaurant takes great satisfaction in maintaining fresh, home-made food.

Also available on the lunch menu are specialty salads and sandwich/soup combos, featuring steak and chicken-based salads as well as fish tacos, gyros, and hoagies. For my money, I recommend the fresh pizza buffet.

Is the long ride worth the experience?

One word: absolutely.

The River House Café is located at 506 McKean Ave., Charleroi, PA.~~

Why are Kosher Burgers Delicious?

By Daniel H. Ashkin

I am going to write a short article on why kosher burgers taste better than non-kosher burgers. I am going to describe the process of how meat becomes kosher for a Jew to buy at a supermarket. After the cows are gathering into the barn or the butcher place, a trained rabbi kills each of the cows by the technique known as Shekinah. When the specialized rabbi kills the cow, he only cuts the animal once to ensure that it does not suffer any type of pain. Under the Jewish Law, the butcher or rabbi is only permitted to kill one animal of a time. Furthermore, he is prohibited from slashing out the veins blood vessels, throat, and the heart of the animal with the knife.

When I am buying kosher meat, the meat is pure from any type of disease from cross-contamination. After buying the ground beef, I will make the hamburgers onto the frying pan in my apartment. Before I am cooking the hamburgers, I may likely boil a few small potatoes in a large pot of boiling water for dinner. I pour the hamburgers, ground beef, and the breadcrumbs into a mixing bowl. Next, I mix the beef with the breadcrumbs to ensure that the patties turn out as a whole hamburger in the pan. Before I put the patties into the pan, I spread olive oil spray onto it. I boil each side of the hamburger patties for about 5 to 10 minutes on medium high. After the hamburger is finished on the grill, I lay them onto the buns. Before I eat the hamburger, I put lettuce and tomatoes on top of the meat. Before I eat the hamburgers, I may heat up mix vegetables in the microwave.

In summary, I encourage that non-Jews try buying kosher meat at a general supermarket. ~



Tokyo Treat Box

By Elise Mote

In March, I ordered a subscription box called Tokyo Treat. The subscription box has two options: there is the classic which includes free shipping, 12 full-size items including four popular Japanese snacks, four share packs, two Dagashi, one DIY Japanese candy kit, one kinosei snack, and one Japanese candy guidebook. The premium crate pretty much has the same things except you get 17 full-size items that include a drink, party pack, and an anime snack along with everything else in the classic box. Each box is different each month, all based on different themes. For example, in the April box I got their Easter surprise box. You can also start earning streaks by subscribing to the box. These points can be redeemed for different things listed on their website.

Even though Easter is more of a “Western” holiday like Halloween, they are becoming popular. The booklet I received was covered with Easter and spring designs. In the booklet there was a snack menu of everything that was in the box except for the Sakura cola that replaced another drink and a translation of the names with a short description of each item. Mine came with a DIY snack kit along with directions on how to put it together. On their Discover Japan page it tells you a little bit on how to Japan celebrates Easter and it also has themed words translated into Japanese. Some of the words include bunny (usagi), egg (tamago), spring (hard), and holiday(kyuuujitsu).

Some of the items I tried were their Easter banana Kit-Kat, Sakura Cola (Cherry Blossom Cola) ...it kind of tasted like a flowery perfume, but I definitely liked it and it had a light pink color. I also had in my box Calbee Garlic Edamame Potato Chips. They were definitely not my favorite. They were supposed to taste like edamame and garlic but I’m honestly not sure what it was actually supposed to taste like as I’ve never tried edamame before. The Furuta Egg chocolate was probably one of my favorites. It was a plastic yellow egg-shaped container that can be decorated with stickers or a pen and was filled with chocolate pieces in the candy shell almost tasting exactly like M&Ms. I definitely wish I had more of them. There were two that I definitely wasn’t that fond of. One of them was Calbee Kappa Shrimp four-pack. When you open the package it honestly smells like fish food. It had one of the strongest smells, but surprisingly the taste was as not as strong like I was expecting. Even my dog was a little taken back by the taste and smell and he eats just about everything! He walked backwards away from it. We had a lot of laughs over that!

Then there was one of the most puzzling snacks I’ve ever tried...the Dragon Bar. This snack was based off an online game called “Puzzle and Dragons.” After some research (because unfortunately the description in the booklet wasn’t very clear on what it was that I was supposed to be eating), I found out it was supposed to taste like ginger ale. I could actually tell it was supposed to taste sweet but as soon as I took a bite, I was overcome with what I can only describe as a sour, citrusy flavor. The first words out of my mouth when I took a bite were, “Wow! I don’t think I’ve ever tasted anything like that.” I’m not quite sure if my tongue was supposed to feel like pop rocks where exploding in my mouth or not.

I have to say though the best part was doing this with my family over Easter. I definitely would suggest this to anybody who loves to try new things and hopefully use it as a bonding experience with your family and friends. You never know what you might get or what memories you might make!~

The Absurdity of Anti-Vaxxers

By Megan Cunningham

Despite that measles was declared eliminated in the United States during the year 2000 thanks to a safe and effective vaccine, it's now making a comeback and at a 20-year high. So far, 2019 has seen about 700 cases of this highly contagious and deadly disease in 22 states in the country. More than 500 of these cases were in people who hadn't been vaccinated. On Monday April 15, 2019, the World Health Organization reported that measles cases in this year's first quarter were up 300% over the same period in 2018. So, what has changed?

In recent years, the "anti-vaxxer" movement has flooded social media platforms with misinformation questioning vaccination safety. Articles, videos, and posts replete with conspiracy theories, hoaxes, and pseudoscience have gone viral. These can consist of baseless theories that vaccines can cause conditions from autism to fictional ones like "vaccine overload." Not to mention, the false idea that physicians are part of a coverup to protect pharmaceutical profits. Fueled by resentment of state power and compulsory vaccination mandates, anti-vaxxers have increasingly politically organized with a vocal online presence. Some organized efforts appear to have raised considerable funding like Robert F. Kennedy Jr.'s Children's Health Defense and Jenny McCarthy's Operation Rescue. On the internet, vaccine skeptic communities often use Facebook for deploying harassment campaigns, attacking public health officials and others supporting vaccine use policies. Nonetheless, such media has persuaded many people to make healthcare decisions based on provocative, frightening, and false content that puts their children and their communities at risk. Thanks to them, non-medical vaccine exemptions are growing at a troubling rate in states allowing it. This year, at least 20 states have introduced anti-vax legislation.

Now, as an outbreak of measles inflicts Allegheny County and Temple University grapples with a scourge of mumps, Pennsylvania's worst General Assemblyman Daryl Metcalfe has authored a bill called the "Informed Consent Protection Act" that "would prohibit pediatric denials of care and other forms of discrimination by health care practitioners, health care facilities, insurance companies and child protective service agencies, against patients, or parents and guardians of patients, that personally decide to delay or decline a vaccination." In addition, it prevents doctors from making these parents sign a liability waiver acknowledging that the child could either catch or spread an illness. And in turn, the bill also blocks health insurers from penalizing doctors due to low immunization rates as well as forbids doctors from accepting bonuses or incentives from insurance or drug companies for getting patients immunized. To further make his point, Metcalfe called in some anti-vaccination academics and surrounded himself with dozens of parents and their presumably unvaccinated children supporting his completely and ridiculously irresponsible proposal.

As someone on the Autism Spectrum and a college history major, I have a major issue with anti-vaxxers. I may only have a layman's understanding on how vaccines work. But I do know very well that the diseases we have vaccines for are as contagious as they are deadly. Outbreaks of measles, rubella, polio, diphtheria, and other vaccine-preventable diseases often spread like wildfire and killed hundreds of people, particularly children. If not, then leave them permanently disabled like FDR after a bout a polio during the 1920s. Before Jonas Salk discovered the polio vaccine, whole communities would shut down if a single kid was diagnosed with the disease. Nobody wanted to risk their child getting paralyzed and put in an iron lung or die. Furthermore, many of these diseases are so deadly that they shaped history. Balto became famous because he was lead dog on the last sled team transporting serum after a diphtheria epidemic broke out in Nome, Alaska during a very bad winter in the 1920s. If the serum run didn't succeed, a bunch of kids would've perished, which the Balto cartoon film perfectly illustrates by featuring a harrowing scene depicting a carpenter making child-size coffins. Not to mention, the claim that "vaccines cause autism" is based on a fraudulent study during the 1990s featured in *The Lancet* which was later retracted as junk sci-

ence, continuously and completely debunked, and resulted in the author losing his medical license. Autism has a strong genetic basis, meaning that those diagnosed are born with it. Besides, I find it particularly disturbing that parents would rather have a child die of a communicable vaccine-preventable disease than be diagnosed with autism.

Nonetheless, since I don't have any kids myself, I try not to advise how parents should raise their kids. However, when parents are confronted with the question on whether or not to vaccinate their child shortly after they're born, I would say, "F**k yes, vaccinate your kid. Are you f**king nuts?" I may make exceptions in the case of medical and religious reasons (particularly if they're Amish). And I understand the parents who don't vaccinate their kids if that option isn't available or can't afford medical care. However, I do not give a pass to parents who delay or decide not to vaccinate their kids due to philosophical and political reasons, who consist of most anti-vaxxers who reject the entire medical and scientific community's assessment that vaccines are safe and effective. Lower vaccination rates make preventable outbreaks of these deadly diseases all but inevitable. Those refusing to vaccinate their children not only put their kids at risk, but also make others who come into contact with them vulnerable as well. And there are good scientifically sound reasons why compulsory vaccination mandates exist in school districts and doctor's offices. Aside from training immune systems to prevent life-threatening diseases, vaccines facilitate herd immunity protecting individuals who *can't* be vaccinated, like babies and those with weak immune systems. But in order for that to kick in, a community must have a vaccination rate of at least 95%. Anything lower than that can result in a public health emergency. Like everything else in life, vaccines may carry their own risks, but those risks are nothing compared to an unvaccinated life.

If you're a parent choosing to ignore actual science and not have your kid vaccinated, that's your choice. But if a doctor doesn't want you in their practice, it's because they don't want to expose other patients to your bad decisions. Bringing an unvaccinated kid into a doctor's office can infect others, particularly babies and children with weakened immune systems. Go into any pediatrician's office and you'll find that most of those kids in the waiting room are under the age of 3. In addition, you'll find plenty of sick children, too, including some with communicable diseases. After all, I most likely got chicken pox in a doctor's office at two years old. To be fair, there wasn't a vaccine for chicken pox at the time as there is now. But I can understand why some doctors might want to avoid a measles outbreak in their waiting rooms.

But what about doctors and insurance companies profiting from vaccination to drive profits? Actually, despite the epically messed up US healthcare system that unjustly discriminates against the poor and violates civil rights, doctors and insurers don't profit from vaccines in any way. In fact, some insurance companies pay vaccine costs so they won't pay more later if a patient gets sick. A 2009 study found that one out of three doctors *lose* money giving vaccines, while pharmaceutical companies only spend 1.5% of their money on vaccines. And only five companies make 80% of vaccines due to problems in vaccine supply and very labor intensive manufacture. But that hasn't stopped anti-vaxxers from spouting Big Pharma conspiracy theories on the internet, which have no basis in reality.

Anyway, this year the World Health Organization has listed "vaccine hesitancy" among their Top 10 threats to global health. Anti-vaxxers have been a consistently reported factor in the recent outbreaks whether due to safety fears, complacency about infectious disease, or difficulty accessing vaccinations. Vaccines have saved hundreds of thousands of lives as well as prevented millions of hospitalizations over the years. In the age of the internet, there is plenty of confusing information online about vaccines for kids. But you're a parent wanting to know what's true and what's not about vaccinations and how to keep children healthy, they can at least consult their family doctor or pediatrician.~~

The Value of a Friend as Mentor

By Nils Skudra

Over the course of my life, I have found that having a close mentor is extremely valuable since a mentor is an individual that I can confide in and who offers important lessons. During the two and a half years that I have lived in North Carolina, I feel that I have cultivated a very close mentor-based relationship with my friend Steven Hancock, who shares my passionate interest in the American Civil War. I first connected with Steven through social media nine years ago while I was still living in California. I was browsing through a Facebook page on a Civil War film project that was in development when I found a comment from Steven on one of the featured photos. I struck up a conversation with him about the topic, and we quickly became Facebook friends who would regularly correspond about Civil War history.



Through my online communication with Steven, I learned that he had a host of ancestors who served in the Confederate Army during the Civil War and that, according to his family, is very distantly related to William Shakespeare. I was very intrigued by this information since I had a fervent interest in meeting people with Civil War family backgrounds. Since California did not really experience any military engagements during the Civil War, I could not expect to have much luck in meeting many Californians with that background. Therefore, in my conversations with Steven, I displayed much enthusiasm for learning about his Confederate ancestors (none of whom owned slaves), his opinions on what they fought for, and his perspectives about various aspects of Civil War history. He pointedly affirmed that he had respect for his Confederate ancestors – while they served a secessionist republic which was committed to the preservation of slavery, the issue itself did not factor into his ancestors' motivation for fighting since they fought, rather, in defense of their homes and hearths, which Steven felt was true of most Confederate soldiers.

While I thoroughly enjoyed communicating with Steven online about Civil War history, it seemed highly unlikely that we would ever meet in person since I lived on the West Coast while he lived on the East Coast. But then, I received word from UNC Greensboro that I had been accepted to their Master of Arts program in History, and Steven happened to live near Greensboro. As he put it in his own words, "I first started conversing with Nils on Facebook, when we were following a Civil War film project that was in development. When he moved to North Carolina from California, it happened to be in my neck of the woods, so we were able to get together, and start talking."

Since meeting Steven in person, I have had the opportunity to take a number of trips with him to various cities and historic sites in North Carolina and Virginia. Visiting Appomattox was especially astonishing for me since this never would have seemed likely had I stayed in California. In addition, since I have read much about the surrender at Appomattox and seen it portrayed in various films and documentaries, it felt very powerful to actually walk the grounds where the Confederate Army of Northern Virginia laid down its arms and to step inside the reconstruction of the McLean House (which included some of the original foundation) where Lee and Grant held a meeting that would produce the beginning of the end of America's bloodiest conflict.

While our mutual interest in the Civil War has been a central tenet of our friendship, I also feel that my connection with Steven has furnished me with a very close mentor. He is very knowledgeable about the topic and shares his perspectives openly, not only with respect to the Civil War but also the history of early Christianity, another subject that holds my interest. In addition, Steven is a man of profound faith, and he has offered many glowing insights on the power of forgiveness, following one's dreams, and treating relationships as sacred. Furthermore, he embodies the religious notion of being of service, and he constantly seems to help people, including myself. For his part, Steven has said of me: "Nils is a very intelligent young man, but what really impresses me is that he is always asking relevant questions about historical topics. He's always wanting to learn more and understand our history better. To me, that is one of the true natures of a historian: Always seeking further answers and knowledge, to help us better understand who we are, and where we've come from, and how to better our future." ~~



An Interview with my 4-year-old Niece

By Delaine Swearman

A few years ago, I interviewed my then 3-year-old nephew to get his perspective on the world. I thought it would be interesting to ask similar questions to my now 4-year-old niece, Abby.

Question: What is your full name?

Abby: Abigail ***** *****

Abby correctly said her full name, but for privacy reasons, it is not being printed.

Question: Can you spell your first name?

Abby: A-B-B-Y

Question: Can you spell your middle name?

Abby: (shrugs)

Question: How old are you?

Abby: 4

Question: What can 4-year-olds do that 3-year-olds cannot do?

Abby: Somersaults and hop on one foot.

Question: Where do you live?

Abby: ***** ***** Road.

Abby stated the correct street and city of her address.

Question: Do you know what state you live in?

Abby: No

Question: What is your favorite color?

Abby: Pink and red, blue and purple.

Question: What is your favorite food?

Abby: Pancakes and waffles.

Question: What food do you hate?

Abby: Watermelon.

Question: What are your favorite toys?

Abby: My stuffies.

Abby calls her stuffed animals "stuffies."

Question: What is your favorite thing about preschool?

Abby: To paint.

Question: What is your favorite animal?

Abby: A unicorn.

Question: What is the name of your new kitty?

Abby: Suzy.

Question: What is your favorite thing about Suzy?

Abby: She is soft. Other kitties like Alfred don't have the right texture of fur.

Alfred is her grandmother's kitty.

Question: What makes you feel happy?

Abby: Seeing a rainbow.

Question: What makes you feel sad?

Abby: When I fall.

Question: What are you afraid of?

Abby: A cave, because it's dark. One time I went on a boat ride in a cave.

Question: What do you want to be when you grow

up?

Abby: A helper in mommy's library.

Abby's mother works as a part-time school librarian.

Question: What is Mommy's job?

Abby: To work.

Question: What is Daddy's job?

Abby: To work.

Question: Do you know how old Mommy is?

Abby: I have no idea. Ask her.

Question: What do you like about your brother?

Abby: Playing pretend with him.

Question: What do you like about being a sister?

Abby: Girls like princesses.

Question: What is the difference between girls and boys?

Abby: Girls have long hair and boys have short hair.

Question: What is a dream?

Abby: A wish. When you want something that you don't have.

Question: If you had lots of money and could get anything you wanted, what would you get?

Abby: A machine that makes rainbow stickers to put on the wall.

My interview with 4-year-old Abby was a completely different experience than interviewing her brother at age 3. Abby gave me her full attention for the entire interview, so I could "write a story" about her.

I originally experimented with asking her some more open-ended questions and just got shrugs, so I did have to rephrase the questions to get specific answers. But once she understood the question, Abby answered it thoughtfully. I was surprised, however, that Abby didn't know her state of residence. It was also funny that both she and my nephew gave the same answer, "to work" when asked what their parent's job was.

It was interesting to compare the two interviews and it be interesting to see how Abby's ideas and tastes change as she gets older. Perhaps I will have to do a follow up interview in the future!~~



CURRENT PITTSBURGH STADIUMS

By Mark D. Lizotte

Illustrated on AutoCAD

Continued from Spring 2019 issue (Vol 5, Issue 1, pages 6-8)

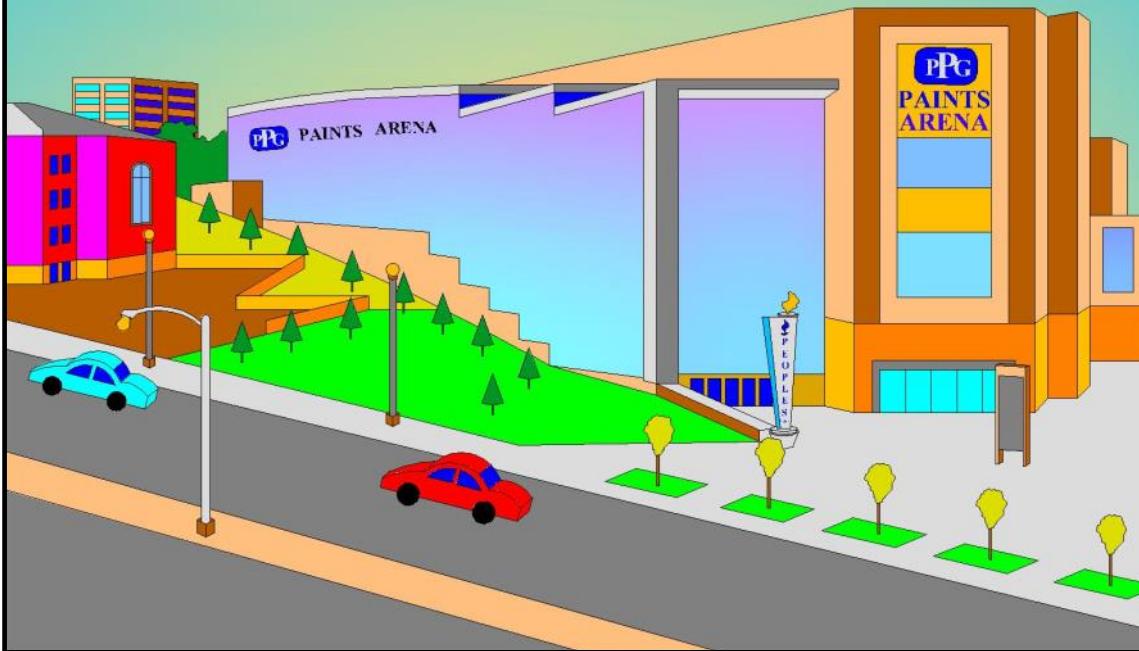
Beaver Stadium (1960-Present) This stadium is actually located in the middle of the state at Penn State main campus. Many people consider Penn State to be a local team because there are five campus locations in this region. The stadium has a capacity of about 106,000 people.

Consol Energy Center / PPG Paints Arena (2010-Present) The Pittsburgh Penguins play NHL hockey here. There is also a “City Game” held here every year between Pitt basketball and Duquesne basketball. The stadium’s first event was a Paul McCartney concert. The 2013 film Grudge Match had a climatic fight scene here. The stadium has a capacity of 19,000 people.

Highmark Stadium (2013-Present) The Pittsburgh Riverhounds Soccer Club plays here. It is located at Station Square along the Monongahela River. The Steve Miller Band played the stadium’s first live concert in 2015. The stadium has a capacity of about 5,000 people. ~



Consol Energy Center / PPG Paints Arena 2010 - Present



Highmark Stadium 2013 - Present



Creed

Chapter 8

By Dmitry Harmon

Adam slowly crawled off the floor and proceeded to stand up. He had another splitting headache.

God, I must have gotten drunk last night, thought Adam. He recalled drinking a considerable amount of absinthe. Then he remembered his dream. Adam could not help but feel a bit of fear. It was a rare occurrence for Adam to have a dream. Most of the time he experienced blackness or nothingness when he slept. It was the type of nothingness that many wondered if one saw when they were dead. But of course, Adam kept that to himself. He did not want people to think of him as weak or unable to cope with things.

As Adam got dressed, he felt the urge to pay a visit to Annora's tomb. Then he suddenly remembered that he had asked Travers to do something for him. For the life of him, he could not remember what it was. He could not believe this blunder of memory lapse. Adam thought about his slight predicament. He could not allow Travers to sniff any form of weakness. Perhaps it was time to gamble. Adam rarely gambled with these types of things. He felt it was too dangerous and it made his opponent stronger and gave him control. Everything Adam did was accomplished in a meticulous fashion; advanced preparation was very important to him. But then the solution came to him after several minutes of thinking about it. It probably would have come quicker if his head was clear and not drunk with aches and pains. All he had to do was wait for Travers to tell him the deed was done.

Adam glanced at his pocket watch and saw it was almost noon. He had not realized how late it was. He quickly rushed out of his lavish apartment and went to the Greynights Tavern to sought out Travers. He opened the door and found Travers busy working. Adam was quite confused. Travers worked for *him*...when did Travers ever hold down a job?

"TRAVERS!" Adam barked, startling Travers.

"Huh? Who is it?"

"It is I, Adam. What are you doing here? Doing work? I usually see you just hanging around here."

"Oh Adam, what a surprise to see you." Travers laughed nervously.

"Well? What are you doing here?"

"I was offered a job as a cook and to do some odd cleaning here and there."

"Oh, you are a cook now, are you?" Adam replied, mockingly.

"Yeah, I cook food for people."

"But you work for me. Or have you forgotten that?"

"No, of course not, I have not forgotten that."

"You had better not. Remember the deal we had? You work for me and I would not go to the constable to discuss that you've stolen from me."

"No, of course not! I am at your service."

"Good! Glad to hear. I would like you to go fetch me some food from the kitchen, as I have not eaten anything today and then we are going for a walk. I brought this basket. Oh, and do make sure you swipe a nice bottle of wine from the basement, or wherever they are kept."

"But I am not supposed to be doing that here! The nice man has given me a job." Ad-



am gave a threatening look that deflated Travers. “Alright! I will make a deal with you, Travers. Do this for me I will forget you obtained a second job, despite you working for me. I am sure we can come to a reasonable agreement that will benefit me and ensure your safety at the job” Travers might have been dimwitted and had the look of someone that constantly was spacing out but he definitely understood what Adam was saying .

“Oh... alright, I will go fetch that for you now.”

“Excellent. Here is the basket for the food. Lock up and meet me out front. We are going to the cemetery.” Adam then left through the front door and waited about ten minutes. Travers came out and locked the door. The walk to the cemetery took about twenty minutes.

“What are we doing in the cemetery,” asked Travers.

“We are going to pay our last respects to a woman that I adored.”

“We are? Is it someone you knew?”

Adam shook his head in disbelief. *Of course it is someone I knew, you bloody idiot.*

Why would I go to the marker of someone I do not know, he thought.

“Yes, Travers we are. We are going to make a proper toast, a sendoff, if you will.” They had reached the Annora’s tomb. It was an interesting sight. There were various leaves on the ground but the trees near the tomb were emitting just enough sunlight that the tomb had rays of sun pouring over it to create a sense of awe and respect to the individual that lay inside the tomb.

Adam then ordered Travers to serve him food and wine and mocked him for being a cook, saying that he ought to just serve people. Adam deliberately did not share any of the food or wine with Travers. (If the reader must know, there was Shepard’s Pie with various vegetables and bread.) But for Adam, the food was not the real reason why he was here.

“Right! Let us get started. Annora, I bid you farewell and hope you have moved on pleasantly to the afterlife. For it is, though you walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil blah blah blah and so on and so forth. Right. Travers, now let us talk about your new job for me.”

“New job?” Replied Travers hesitantly.

“Yes, what part of that did you not understand?”

“I understand. I just don’t know what it is.”

“That is because I have not told you what it is, you idiot. Now listen, there is a girl I discovered. She is very pretty, and I want her.”

“New girl?” At this point Adam started to smack Travers on the sides of the face rapidly to ensure his authority on the matter.

“Listen here! I am going to make her mine. You understand? Your job is to find her and learn about what she likes to do. What she likes to wear, what kind of things she likes in regard to personal effects.”

“You mean follow her?” Travers felt this was a lot to be asked of him. He hadn’t the faintest idea who this person is and even if he did, he was not sure how he would locate her.

“I want you to document these things. I don’t care how you do it. Just do it.”

“Wouldn’t I need a name sir?”

“Her name is Lilith. Lilith König.” Adam felt elated. He felt that Travers was going to be extremely beneficial to him and would enable him to succeed in this. Adam, however, did feel that this was a long shot; he knew, though, that one needs to take long shots in order to be successful. Moreover, if Travers succeeded in this, more intricate plans could be carried out. “Go! Get out of here, you are starting to bother me now.”

“Yes sir, I am sorry, sir!!” And with that, Travers scampered off. Adam then finished his picnic, urinated on a gravestone and made his way to his main factory.~~

Geoffrey, the Baby Hippo

By Mark Sulkin

Once upon a time, in the continent of Africa, there was a baby hippo named Geoffrey. One morning, Geoffrey woke up excited because today was a special day. It was his birthday. He went to the bathroom, washed his face, brushed his teeth, and then got dressed all ready for his party.

"Happy birthday to me!" he shouted. When Geoffrey went downstairs, there wasn't anyone there. "Hey, where is everybody?" he wondered. His mom and dad weren't there. Geoffrey went to see his friend Zenon the zebra, but Zenon wasn't home. He went to see his friend Khloe the leopard, but Khloe wasn't home either. He went to see his best friend Rowland the rhino, but Rowland wasn't home. He went to see his friend Leslie the lion, but Leslie wasn't home, either. Finally, he went to see his friend Kenji the elephant, but Kenji definitely wasn't home. No matter how much he searched, Geoffrey couldn't find any of his friends and family, so he went sadly for a walk around Eastern Africa.

Meanwhile, back at the house, Geoffrey's mother said, "All clear. Now we can start getting ready for Geoffrey's surprise party." Geoffrey's friends and family worked together to get ready for his party. His parents decorated the living room. His grandparents baked him a delicious chocolate cake. They mixed the ingredients together to make the cake batter and then they put it in the oven to bake. When the cake was done, they put on chocolate icing and decorated it with lots of pictures. His aunts, uncles, and cousins wrapped presents and stacked them up. His brothers and sisters set up games to play like Pin the Tail on the Donkey, Limbo Musical Chairs, and a piñata. Geoffrey's aunts, uncles and cousins, had finished stacking all the presents. His brothers and sisters had finished setting up all the party games. And his parents were done decorating the living room. It took a while but finally, they were ready for the party.

By then, Geoffrey had finished his walk and was on his way home feeling sad. "I can't believe everyone forgot my birthday," he thought. When Geoffrey got home, opened the front door and walked inside; the living room was dark. Suddenly the lights came on and everyone jumped up and yelled, "Surprise! Happy birthday, Geoffrey!"

Geoffrey couldn't believe his eyes. "You *did* remember my birthday!" he said.

"We'd never forget your birthday, Geoffrey," said Zenon.

"We just wanted to give a big surprise," added Khloe.

Everyone was ready to start the party. First, they played Pin the Tail on the Donkey. Geoffrey was the first in line. His mom put a blindfold over his eyes so he couldn't see. Then his dad spun him around three times. Geoffrey moved very slowly and soon he put the tail in the right spot on the donkey. Next, it was piñata time. Everyone took turns hitting it with the stick, but no one was able to break the piñata. Finally, it was Geoffrey's turn. He kept hitting the piñata until all the goodies fell out. Then, everyone grabbed as much candy and toys as they could.

After the piñata, it was time for Musical Chairs. The music played and everyone walked around the chairs in a circle, then when it stopped, everyone had to find a seat. If someone couldn't find a seat, they're out. Geoffrey's birthday luck showed when he was the last one to get a seat. Lastly, they all enjoyed a great game of Limbo. Everyone had to see how low they could duck under the bar. It was very difficult, but everyone tried their best.

After the games, everyone gathered around as Geoffrey opened his presents. Zenon gave him a pogo stick. Khloe gave him a robot. Rowland gave him a train. Leslie gave him a sailboat to play with in his bathtub. Kenji gave him a kite to fly on a windy day. His grandparents gave him a firetruck. Geoffrey loved all of his presents. Now it was time for the cake. Geoffrey loved the chocolate cake his grandparents baked for him. Everyone sang Happy Birthday to Geoffrey and he blew out all his candles. It was the best birthday Geoffrey ever had.

THE END!~~



American Girl: A Year of Slumber Parties Review, Part Two

By Amelia Krzton

Here are four more slumber party themes for May, June, July, and August that I hope you will like. My imaginary friends from the Pittsburgh neighborhood of Point Breeze, Jill, Hannah, Samantha, and Abigail, will host these parties. Apparently, Abigail, the oldest Mifflin sister, will host the first slumber party of the summer session. The party that she will host in May is a Paint Party. The invitations are made out of a palette made of white paper with splashes of watercolor paint and party details in the center. Decorations will include Pops of Color. The snack will be Paintbrush Pretzels. The drink will be Artist's Inspiration. The craft will be Art in Small Spaces. The dessert will be Cookie Canvases. The game will be Multiple Masterpieces. The favor will be Color Buckets, and the next morning, we will host an Art Show. This will all happen before she plans a potential graduation party on June 14. Samantha will host the Around-the-World Extravaganza in June. Decorations will include a Wish Map and Hot-Air Balloon Lanterns. The snack and drink will be In-Flight Snacks. The two crafts are Mini Suitcase Memory Boxes and Eiffel Tower Wafers, which will also be our dessert. The two games will be All-State Challenge and Wonders of the World. The favor will be Luggage Tags, and the next morning, we will have an Eat-Your-Way-Around-the-USA Breakfast, featuring different breakfast foods from around the country. The slumber party that Jill will host in August will be a Sea Soiree, and Hannah will host the Stars and Stripes Carnival in July. Stay tuned for details on these upcoming parties!

By the way, I know that this is not related to American Girl, but Abigail graduated from Shady Side Academy on May 31, 2019. She also plans to attend Chatham University in the fall. Good luck on all of your future studies, Abigail! I am also sure that these 4 girls will have fun hosting their monthly slumber parties this summer!~~

My Disney Vacation

By Kevin Hart

Sunday: I got to Disney late morning and checked in. The room was not ready yet, so I went to the theme parks (Magic Kingdom and EPCOT). I rode the People Mover and Carousel of Progress. At 14:30 went back to the hotel to see if the room was ready but it still wasn't, so they booked me in another room. I ate dinner at the hotel and then I relaxed and slept.

Monday: I ate breakfast at the hotel. I went to EPCOT's Living the Land (slow moving boat ride). Then I walked around to Test Track, then I had to leave. Took the monorail to Magic Kingdom and rode It's a Small World and Carousel of Progress. After a while, I went back to the hotel room. I ate dinner at the hotel.

Tuesday: I ate breakfast at hotel. After I ate, I took a bus to Disney Springs to see a movie in Dolby Cinema. I took the bus back to the hotel to get to the EPCOT bus. At 13:00 went to the Disney Vacation Club to follow up on any changes that occurred here (e.g., the price). I took the van back to EPCOT and went on Space Ship Earth and ate at the Garden Grill located in the Land Building. After I was done eating, I took the bus back to the hotel.

Wednesday: I ate breakfast at the hotel. Afterward I took the bus to EPCOT to get Disney character pictures and signatures. I ate at the Garden Grill for dinner that night. I went on Space Ship Earth. Then I took the bus back to the hotel.

Thursday: I ate breakfast at the hotel. I took the bus to Magic Kingdom. I got another Disney character signature and picture. I went on Buzz Light Year Space Spin. I ate dinner at one of the restaurants at the entrance of the park at 15:30 and while I was there I got tired. After I ate, I took the bus back to the hotel to rest.

Friday: I went to Disney Springs to the movie theater to watch two movies. The first one was dine-in theater and I ate there for lunch. When the first movie was done, I stayed at the movie theater for the second movie which was in the evening. I took the bus back to the hotel.

Saturday: I checked out of hotel, checked in my bag to go back home, I got to the airport and got home 1hr 10min late, I had to work the next day. I would go back again.~~

Forbidden Image

By Joseph Cepek

I am a fake art mural character who never lived and died. I was never a real person. I do not have a real body and a real soul. I was created by the nineteenth (19th) century Austrian-born artist named Louis Kurz (1833-1921). Mr. Kurz created a painting of the Battle of Gettysburg, which depicts the Confederate infantry being thrown back by Union infantry on July 3, 1863. I have a made-up name because the artist, who was a Union Civil War veteran, did not name any of the visual human and horse (equine) figurines in his artistry creation.

Due to the *Pittverse Magazine* having specific rules about NOT depicting any historical art images of violent armed struggles of the past, which shows dead and dying horse and human combatants, I CAN-NOT reveal myself in the magazine.

I realize some people may cringe and be aghast upon seeing the now (as of 2019) one hundred and 135-year-old battle mural that I was put into by Mr. Kurz, so I am unable to be seen inside of any of the pages of this magazine. However, I am located in the lower left hand corner of the 1884 painting.

As mentioned beforehand, I am NOT an actual person with a wool Union artilleryman's uniform on and a thick dark brown mustache and wavy light brown hair. My fake height is 5'6" tall and I weigh one 160 pounds. I am an unmarried white man from New Castle, Pennsylvania. I am a German American of no particular Christian faith affiliation, who never joined any church congregation, because I never publicly declared myself a Christian, even though I believe Jesus Christ is God in the form of His Son.

This is similar to the actual truth concerning Abraham Lincoln (1809-1865), who was the sixteenth American President. Yet, I do NOT have a real birth and death date like Mr. Lincoln. Odd as it may seem, but some early 21st century high functioning autistic freelance magazine writer got creative and fictionally made up for me a fake name, residence, height, weight, race, gender, nationality, and religious background as if I were a real human being. This is despite me never being a baby, a toddler, or an older child. I always am destined to be a mystery fake art person in this good censorship-minded magazine in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

I want to personally thank both the smart magazine writer and the magazine's editor, for NOT visually revealing me in such a terribly macabre painting of the bloody 1863 battle in Southcentral Pennsylvania, which literally turned out to be the largest and deadliest human-made catastrophe before or since then in the United States of America.

References:

[Gettysburg Battle Paintings Website](#)
[Louis Kurz Website](#)
[Abraham Lincoln Website](#)
[Lincoln's Battle with God:
A President's Struggle with God and
What It Meant for America,
By Stephen Mansfield~~](#)



Rana: The Legend of Shadow Lake (1981) a.k.a. Croaked: Frog Monster From Hell imdb.com film comments (July 24th 2005)

Bill Rebane's Creature from The Black Lagoon homage Sci-Fi-Horror-Thriller Z-Grade Cult Classic!

By David O'Rorey

This film was a lot better than I thought. It was pretty much a throwback to *Creature from The Black Lagoon*, except half man, half frog and he had a weapon, and also guarded gold treasures. This is an excellent throwback tribute to Jack Arnold's Sci-Fi Classic; the monster suit isn't as good as in *Lagoon*, but Rana was done with a lot lower of a budget than Jack Arnold's *Lagoon*. I finally saw this movie when I bid and won on eBay. My mom purchased it; was a VHS, used in good condition—I got it for Christmas, 2005. I enjoyed pretty much every second down to the needle. It was pretty bloody, which is one reason that I really liked it. It was bloodier than *Lagoon* but not as scary. It was good for the budget it had. The Frog Man likes the younger girl, the one that was swimming around in the lake in the one-piece pink swimsuit. Rana got her in the end after Kelly's father was killed. Kelly and the female paleontologist's young niece were there and that is when Rana broke in and attacked them. He took her over his shoulder; this is a lot like in *Lagoon* when The Gillman takes Julia Adams off the boat and dives back into the lagoon with her. By the way, I will be getting the DVD release of it from Troma, under its a.k.a. title is *Croaked: Frog Monster From Hell*. I got it and was very disappointed because it ran only 89 mins. I also have the old Burbank VHS, which ran about 93 mins. It was stupid because Troma originally distributed the film; why they cut out three or four minutes for the DVD release makes no sense. I doubt there will ever be another more commercial DVD, this being such an obscure 70's monster flick. Along with Rebane's other 70's Sci-Fi efforts, including *The Giant Spider Invasion* from 1975. That just got a 2009 2-Disc DVD deluxe treatment. That one seems to get the most attention, which is a shame because his 1977 Sci-Fi effort, *The Alpha Incident*, was doubled-billed with *Star Wars* at the theaters back in 1977 as the second feature. Rebane stated in the commentary on the new *Spider Invasion* DVD that he didn't know if *Alpha* or his 1987 horror slasher effort, *Blood Harvest* got the bigger share of the pie. He never did get the money for *Spider Invasion*'s theatrical gross, nor its enduring cult status as a mainstream, drive-in Sci-Fi Classic. Rana is one of my favorites of the 70's, though. So I gave it a 6 but *Octaman* '72 and *Zaat* '72 are better; they got an 8 for their type.~~

Low-Budget Filmmaker Bill Rebane's First Film, *Monster A - Go Go*, originally titled, *Terror at Halfday*

By David O'Rorey

Bill Rebane Came from Germany and settled in Chicago late 50's/early 60's. He worked at WGN Television and made a few Dance Short Subject Films for American International Pictures (A.I.P.) Dance Craze (Early 60's) & Twist Craze '62. Bill raised money in 1962 for a feature motion picture. A serious Science-Fiction Film to be titled *Terror at Halfday*. He was offered a union crew, which was bad at that time because they told you what to do with no leeway. Bill had 6 hours of shooting time per day under union rules. Shooting feature films in Chicago was considered strange and you were looked upon as a total oddity. This was the first feature film shot in Chicago, ever. Using a union crew doesn't not help in low-budget filmmaking either. He had six hours of set up and two hours of shooting time under union rules, including rehearsing. Additional cash was raised, and some was given to the union. The cast consisted of seasoned pros, Peter Thompson and June Travis. Bill had the help of the fire department and the civil defense department. Some of the streets in Chicago were blocked off; this could never happen today. The budget was way over, and the film could not be finished. Some of the picture was screened for the Allied Theater of Illinois and they said if you finish the picture and do it right, you have a very playable science-fiction picture. It would be booked in as many theaters in the state as could be.

It was a sure-fire deal as Bill stated on the audio commentary for the 2010 Collector's Edition DVD of *Monster A - Go Go* released in 1965 as a Co-Feature to a Herschell Gordon Lewis Film. So instead of letting the film sit in some basement and letting it rot, Bill made a distribution deal with Lewis. He shot a few scenes, added some narration, and tied it together, re-titling it *Monster A - Go Go*. Some of this info also comes from the video interview with Director Bill Rebane, moderated by Fan Corey J. Udler. Bill didn't know the film was re-titled to *Monster A - Go Go* as he was always looking for *Terror at Halfday*. Bill said why would anyone want to see a film that doesn't fit together and has some bad acting, plus some unnecessary narration. Cult Film Historian Joe Rubin moderates the commentary on the DVD. He states that Bill's film is the first about someone going into space and coming back as a giant bombarded with radiation that attacks and kills people. But this was not the first; the first was a Hammer Production that was directed by the great Val Guest, a really good British Science Fiction Film Director of the 50's to the 70's. The first man who went into space and came back as a monster was "The Quatermass Xperiment," released in The U.K. in 1955 was the first but was titled "The Creeping Unknown" in the USA. It was released also re-cut in 1956 as well. Quatermass the man slowly transforms into a monster. *Monster A - Go Go* has 8-Foot Tall Henry Hite with a burned face from radiation. Henry came from a Vaudeville Act Hite, Stanley & Low. Bill worked as a film trainee in Hamburg, Germany. Adalbert Baltes, his film mentor, invented the Circular Motion Picture Process called "The Cinerarium," which Bill obtained legal rights to for the rest of the world.~~

Safety Column with Officer Bailey

By Michelle Middlemiss

**My forum is open for questions that Officer Bailey will answer for you. Please email me the questions you would like to ask him to:
mycatthalia@yahoo.com**

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

I am privileged to have received a national fellowship from SARTAC
(Self Advocacy Resource Technical Assistance Center)

as a self advocate for Autism to work with my community and local Police Officers.

Officer Bailey,

"In training law enforcement professionals about ASD (Autism Spectrum Disorder), I would want to know what type of training and support would be helpful?" (Nina Wall)

Nina,

When training Officers, I like to start off with the basics. I speak about explaining the characteristics, or behaviors that are common with a person who has ASD. Also with stimulations and meltdowns, which are different than a tantrum. I make sure they have a better understanding if they are called to an incident with a person who has ASD.

Michelle: "Which is a very good thing that Officer Bailey does, because when I talked to the police, they have almost no training at all with autism. I am hoping to go into this forum with my fellowship project. Also, I compare a meltdown to a two-year-old's tantrum only in the way it appears to look the same. But the reasons are completely different. In a meltdown we are trying to figure out what's going on."

Officer Bailey,

"Have you ever used police or therapy dogs to help with situations involving a suspect with autism?" (Meg Scheib)

Meg,

I have never personally used or known any Officers using a police dog on an incident with a person who has ASD. Therapy dogs are a great resource to have and should not be confused with emotional support animals.

Michelle: "Maybe that could be looked into. Emotional support dogs would be a benefit to working with the police and other first responders when working with a person with ASD. They could make a situation more stable and calm."

Officer Bailey,

"Your officers are called to a scene where there is someone on the autism spectrum. What training are the officers receiving in order to recognize someone on the spectrum and then dealing with that person's needs in a police situation? Especially if this person may be a witness to a possible crime?" (Steph Adams)

Steph,

I hope that the Officers have received some type of training. I really emphasize about training in the police academies. Starting at the cadet level, they will receive a baseline and that training will carry them from cadet to police officer for their whole career. It's very important to give plenty of space and time to an-

swer questions and/or make a statement. The officer should explain everything to the person with ASD up front. They need to make sure the person with ASD understands what is going on. If they don't, the officer should be asking a family member or caregiver for assistance. To build a personal relationship, the officer should stay in contact with the victim/witness throughout the entire incident.

Michelle: "What about the officers that are already out there who haven't had updated training about autism? The police officer needs to realize that the autistic person is not completely disrespecting them. It just takes the person with ASD longer to realize what the officer is doing and what's happening around him. The family member or caregiver may not always be with the person at the time. It could be very helpful for both sides if a knowledgeable person could be called onto the scene. A neutral consultant who could help both the police and the person on the spectrum. They could provide useful information; helpful to both sides and keep things from getting out of hand."

Officer Bailey,

"What are some of the best steps to take if you have ASD to make sure local emergency personnel are familiar with ASD? How can we get the word out about behavioral supports training for first responders? Like the ASERT resource bundles?" (Lynn)

Lynn,

The best way is to speak with your local police, EMS and fire department and let them get to know you and get to know them as well. Ask them if they have received any type of training on AUTISM. Also your voice will have a deep impact for your first responders. Let them know important things about ASD. Direct your first responders in where they can obtain resource for your area.

Michelle: "I did that. That is why I chose my fellowship project! I hope to make some changes!"~~



The Fraud of Fyre

By Megan Cunningham



One of the biggest events in the summer is the music festival where people all over the country get their tickets and flock to see a bunch of bands with weird names perform in an outdoor venue over a few days. Audience members sleep in tents, take their meals, and use outhouses. Now when you imagine a music festival, you probably imagine an idealized version of Woodstock. However, if you see the documentary on the 1960s music festival, the concert doesn't seem as great as mainstream history wants us to remember it.

Don't get me wrong, the acts are decent, but the facility conditions bear a striking resemblance to a refugee camp...and in a way, it kind of was. But at least the concert promoters weren't selling luxury accommodations and the bad conditions were caused by overcrowding more than anything. Besides, most of the originally scheduled performers were there. This isn't the case with the infamous Fyre Festival.

The Fyre Festival was founded and organized by CEO Bill McFarland of Fyre Media Inc and rapper Ja Rule with the intent of promoting the company's Fyre App for booking musical talent. Advertised as a "luxury music festival," it was scheduled for the weekends of April 28-30 and May 5-7, 2017 on the Bahaman island of Great Exuma. In a January promo video full of frolicking models, the Fyre Festival promised, "the best in food, art, music and adventure / once owned by Pablo Escobar / on the boundaries of the impossible / Fyre is an experience and festival / A quest / to push beyond those boundaries." Its website stated, "You'll be flown roundtrip on a custom, VIP configured Boeing 737 aircraft between Miami International Airport and Exuma International Airport on Great Exuma. Guests will be staying in modern, eco-friendly, geodesic domes. ... Unplug from the everyday and ignite your flame in the Exumas." Acts scheduled to perform were Major Lazer and Blink-182 along with a DJ "who specializes in producing '70s and '80s rock remixes for clients that include Middle Eastern and European royalty," according to *The Wall Street Journal*.

Not surprisingly, ticket prices were steep since the Fyre Festival was to be "the cultural event of the decade." In January, *The Los Angeles Times* reported that passes, (including accommodations and chartered flights from Miami) ranged from \$1,595 to \$399,995, which also included dinner with a performer. Although prices varied widely, accommodation for tickets could be as little as \$500 to \$1,500, while VIP packages for \$12,000 that included airfare and luxury tent accommodation. On the US mainland, 5,000 tickets had been sold. To build buzz, the organizers had celebrities tweet and Instagram about the festival. On Instagram, celebrity promoters included Kardashian family socialite Kendall Jenner along with other niche actresses and media personalities. To kick off the festival's promotional campaign on December 12, 2016, Jenner and other influencers simultaneously posted on their Instagram feeds an image of orange square with a stylized logo and flames. Clicking the logo opened a promotional video showing Bella Hadid and other models from her agency running around a tropical beach. Text with the video promised, "an immersive music festival ... two transformative weekends ... on the boundaries of the impossible."

The island footage used with the models for the promotional material was all shot on Norman's Cay, the former private island of Carlos Lehder Rivas, a kingpin of the Medellin Cartel founded by Pablo Escobar. However, in early 2017, McFarland violated contractual terms on his lease with the current owners when a festival promotional video was released on social media advertising Norman's Cay as "once owned by Pablo Escobar" (who never owned an island). The owners immediately canceled the arrangement so McFarland had to use a Great Exuma development at Roker Point, that was just north of a Sandals resort. But even as workers prepared Roker Point for the festival, promotional materials kept claiming the festival would be held on a remote private island Escobar once owned. In fact, organizers kept promoting the festival despite knowing full well how outrageously un-



derequipped and potentially dangerous for attendees.

Anyway, at 6:20 am on a downpouring April 27, 2017, the ticketholders began arriving to the festival, finding the site in disarray. Since preparations were a such a mess, initial arrivals were brought to an “impromptu beach party” at a beachside restaurant, where they were plied with alcohol and kept waiting around for 6 hours. But when later arrivals were brought to the site, the festival’s true state became apparent. Festival-goers were dropped off at the production bungalow where McFarland and his team were based so they could be registered. But after hours of long lines, the process broke down and turned into a free-for-all as people rushed to claim their own tents. Once festival goer from Raleigh told NPR, “It looked like a disaster relief area,” claiming cars and trucks drove around as shipping containers littered the area.



Around nightfall, a group of local musicians took the stage and played for a few hours, the only act to perform at the event because McFarland and Ja Rule personally reached out to performers and celebrities in advance and warned them not to attend. Early the next morning, it was announced the festival would be postponed and that attendees would be returned to Miami as soon as possible. Reports of various problems emerged, including guest baggage mishandling or theft, scattered disaster relief tents with dirt floors, some with soaking wet mattresses, lack of various housing assignments causing guests leaving with no place to sleep, an unfinished gravel lot, a lack of medical personnel or event staff, no cell phone or internet service, port-a-potties, no running water, inadequate and sub-par food (including cheese sandwiches served in foam containers), and heavy-handed security. Even worse, organizers instructed attendees to upload their funds onto a wristband for use at the festival instead of actual money and cash. As a result, festival goers couldn’t pay for local transportation like buses or taxis that only accept only cash. Many attendees were reportedly stranded after a Bahaman government order barring any more planes from landing, cancelled flights to and from the island.

The first flight to Miami boarded at 1:30 am on April 28, but issues with its manifest led to hours of delay that it was canceled after sunrise. This left passengers locked in at the Great Exuma Airport terminal without food, water, or air conditioning. One passenger recalled at least one person passing out and needing hospitalization. The flight eventually left Exuma that morning while more flights departed from there throughout the day.

Naturally, like a lot of ripped off rich people do, the Fyre Festival organizers are currently subject to eight class action lawsuits, one seeking more than \$100 million in damages. Each lawsuit accuses the organizers of defrauding ticket buyers. On June 30, 2017, the US District Attorney for the Southern District of New York charged McFarland with one count of wire fraud to defraud investors. In March 2018, McFarland pled guilty to that and defrauding a ticket vendor. On October 11, 2018, McFarland was sentenced to six years in prison and ordered to forfeit \$26 million. As for Ja Rule, well, let’s say his involvement in the Fyre Festival is

all what everyone will remember him for. In early 2019, Hulu and Netflix released documentaries like *Fyre Fraud* and *Fyre: The Greatest Party that Never Happened*.

Apparently, it’s one thing to scam a bunch of rich young people into buying some useless product like a pet rock. But it’s quite an impressive and ghastly feat to get hundreds of festivalgoers stranded in squalor in the Bahamas for a weekend expecting an amazing experience that didn’t happen and instead turned out being a disaster. At first you might think McFarland and Ja Rule were in over their heads. However, we must keep in mind that Billy McFarland was a professional grifter even before scamming festival attendees out of millions. Before his infamous Fyre Festival was his company Magnises, where he swindled investors into backing his glorified fraternity. Nonetheless, while McFarland sits in a federal prison, he’s recently revealed that he plans launching another iteration of Fyre Fest. Though I think the 27-year-old con artist might want to reconsider.~~



BLOOD TIES: CHAPTER V

By Jordan Watson

The West Bound Bridge. What was once known as a lengthy, but speedy drive for all of Steelsvania, now has its inbound end severely congested with nearly half a mile-long trail, heaped of automobile collisions. Its mid-section engulfed in flames. The combination of waning groans and awe-stricken gasps of its commuters fill the brisk, evening air. They look upon the moonlit sky from out of their cars, towards the masked defender, who recently had shot down the bridge's aerial aggressor in a mixture of leer and confusion. Though it is not long until some from the crowd begin to cheer on this mysterious being. As he begins his descent on solid ground, Zhou scans the scene of the flaming, smoked-inducing wreckage for his injured comrade. He speaks to himself softly in a peculiar feminine voice.

"Good. He seems to be holding himself toge—"

Zhou covers the portion of his gas mask where his mouth would be in shock, realizing that something must be remedied fast. Luckily, with enough distance from both Lucien and himself, he takes the opportunity to use a portion of his chi to cover over his throat, masking his questionable vocal chords. Lucien struggles to stand, straining his voice, while chuckling in relief of their current situation.

"Heh. Well what do ya know? Didn't realize you qualified as one of those X Fighters as well."

Lucien tries to raise his left hand for a thumbs up, only to slightly lose his footing, with Zhou coming in to catch him from slipping onto the concrete.

"Heh, heh, damn. This robo-buzzard really knocked the wind out of me."

He looks towards his masked ally, wiping the blood dripping from his mouth.

"Thank you for your help. You really didn't have to, but it's appreciated nonetheless."

"It's the least I could do." Zhou speaks in his low-toned voice. "They forced my hand, and I will find my center in order to get what's mine back."

"*Cough! Cough, cough!* Now that's interesting. Hope you didn't blast him too hard, since he's likely the key to helping us find who we're looking for."

Zhou looks beyond an opening to the inbound lane behind them, seeing flashing red and blue lights, accompanied by a blaring siren coming in fast towards their direction.

"Looks like we might not get that chance."

Screeching through the opening, the police car abruptly stops adjacent in front of both the martial duo. Valerie swiftly vacates the vehicle, vexed by the fiery scene of the near mountain of wreckage set before her. Examining the surroundings, she sees the unconscious body of Mach, quickly looking back to the two keeping each other's support to stand.

"Normally, if I were the rest of the SPD, I'd have jumped to conclusions believing you two to be the perps that started this hellish sh*t-show, then proceed to have all three of you coming in for the rigorous stereotypical interrogation."

"That obvious, huh? *cough cough*" As Lucien hocks up blood from his lower lip to spit onto the pavement. The detective exasperates a disaffected sigh before continuing.

"However, because I'm the first to be on the scene, I'm obligated to notify the rest of my precinct to haul ass, questioning the witnesses of the events that transpired as to why the West Bound Bridge looks like the result of an early Halloween publicity stunt. If I were you, I'd get moving."

Lucien's halfhearted joyful expression instantly sours, as he begins to raise his voice.

"I am NOT leaving until I get this dude to tell me where my qua—"

"What this will resort to if you choose to not cooperate to my 'friendly suggestion,' is that I 'accidentally trip you.' then cuff you to take your green selves back to the station! I personally couldn't care less what type of mettle you did to this guy, nor what you think you can do with me. But if there's one



thing most collected people would do in your case, is listen to the authorities. And unless you wanna play cat and mouse with us for the rest of your lives, I doubt you're in any position to talk back to me on the matter."

Lucien looks down upon the ground in a grimace, his right fist clenched in frustration. Valerie then proceeds to finish her statement.

"We're perfectly aware of the developments to this situation, and we're working all shifts of the day to track down these culprits. What *you two* need to do, is lay low. I can almost guarantee you, someone might take advantage of this situation, and smear you guys in a completely different light. Especially with *those* get-ups. Just take my word for this, got it?"

As she turns towards her vehicle to radio into her precinct, Zhou attempts to ease his heated mind in his low toned voice.

"She has a point. As it stands right now, she has the advantage on her side to get this wretch to talk. If they're lucky, they'll help the both of us in finding what we're looking for."

"Dammit, you don't get it! I need to find my quarry, and fast! They aren't going to be able to get it in time!"

"And we will! We just need to allow this to blossom into a substantial lead for us!"

Zhou then leans in to whisper into Lucien's ear. "Listen. We've already got the locations, so if push comes to shove, we can try and cooperate with her to lighten the burden on us. We need to regroup and re-think as to where we stand. But charging headfirst without a viable strategy will make both of our situations worse."

Lucien takes a moment to contemplate while look upon the detective, then back towards Zhou. After a strained sigh, he then feels a half-hearted reassurance in his words.

"Normally I wouldn't take advice from someone straight out of an underground performance of Shen Yun. But I do appreciate your efforts in helping take out some of these freaks. Alright. We'll do it your way."

Valerie slightly turns her head behind the two while on the car radio in the midst of contacting her unit.

"Hm. Besides, the last thing we need is for your dad to be involved in this mess. And he's already got a lot on his financial plate to deal with. In the meantime, disappear. The media is already gonna come down hard on us, so let us handle the hardened questions."

As communications start coming in at rapid-fire succession, Valerie goes straight back to her radio. Lucien darts his vision in her direction, piercing her with a look of disdain. Completely aware of the situation, his thoughts wander to what his father would do if events were to intensify more than what already has transpired. Zhou signals him to climb on his back to leverage his injuries, then takes to the moonlit skies, flying away with him in tow.

"Why did you help a stranger like me? Someone who damn near got you pelted with holes?" As Lucien asks in a somewhat bleak tone.

Zhou tilts his head towards his weary ally.

"Because I have something at stake here, too. Call it a case of clairvoyance, but you and I seem to be fighting for the same thing."

"That so, huh? I'd say this was more freak occurrence, but that works too, I guess. Thanks."

Lucien gazes longingly over the sorcerer's shoulder to behold Downtown Steelsvania's brightly lit splendor, contemplating carefully before choosing his next words.

"So... about that regrouping and rethinking strategy of yours...since you were able to put a dent into these guys' operations, what say you join me where I live tomorrow afternoon, and we can discuss where to go from there?"

"Stubborn and straight to the point, aren't we?" states the masked being.

"So, you're in?"

"Huí zhèyàng ma (Will it so)."

Meanwhile, with the SPD and ambulances converging in the West Bound Bridge's smoldering barrier of automobiles and smoke, someone hides amidst the crowd, recording all of the events that have befallen the victims. He gives a wide grin before vanishing into the teeming masses of media reporters and authoritarians.

To be continued...~

I Asked Natalie

By Zach Grabowski

I had the pleasure of meeting and interviewing Media Personality Natalie Bencivenga, Pittsburgh Post-Gazette's SEEN Editor and Digitally Syndicated AskNatalie Advice Columnist. Natalie's journey to becoming a columnist was, as she put it, "serendipitous." Natalie earned her undergraduate degree in biology and philosophy and was accepted into medical school but decided to go in a different direction. For five years, she ran her own Webzine, an online magazine that dealt with relationships. A co-worker had mentioned that a degree in social work would make her more credible. She took his advice and earned her master's degree in social work and is currently a licensed therapist. She is familiar with autism and has worked with kids on the spectrum. Another co-worker from her Webzine days who is now working at the Post-Gazette told her about a job opportunity as a columnist and she went for it. Her philosophy is, "When new opportunities are offered to you, go for it and see what happens."

As a SEEN Editor Natalie attends a variety of parties and galas throughout the city where she highlights everything from environmental issues to charities to the city's newest "hot spots." She explained that "meeting, interacting with others, and supporting good causes is the most rewarding part" of her job. She tries to bring not only what the event is about to her audience, but what the actual cause is and how people can get involved. She finds value in bringing people together and unifying them through the work in her column.

Each season is packed with events, especially in the spring and fall. Some of her favorite events include the Heinz History Center dance party, the Opera Gala in the Spring and the Pittsburgh Park Conservancy Hat Luncheon. Another great event is "Repair the World" in East Liberty. It's a low-cost event that focuses on educational or environmental justice.

One of Natalie's passions is environmental issues. We discussed the impact plastic straws have on wildlife. She told me one way to advocate against the use of plastic straws is to ask restaurants not to serve drinks with them. There are alternatives, such as using paper. Natalie also told me about a store located in Braddock that Giselle Fetterman (wife of Lieutenant Governor John Fetterman), founded called the "Free Store." Donated items are distributed throughout the community for free. It cuts down on waste, giving items a whole new life. You can check out the Free Store at www.freestore15104.org.

As a SEEN Columnist, Natalie also does a web show that was nominated for a Mid-Atlantic Emmy called "Setting the SEEN". The show highlights different things that are going on around town. She, along with her co-host, Sarah, go into the communities and video fun things that are happening in the Pittsburgh area.

Natalie's Advice Column "AskNatalie" is syndicated - she takes on questions from all over the country. She also has a podcast called "Broadcast Podcast" that's about amplifying women's voices.

Natalie has also worked as a freelance writer for the Huffington Post, some women's online magazines, such as "Cosmo Girl", and a couple of other publications. She did ghost writing, where she wrote for other people. A ghost writer is a person who writes for other people, doesn't get credit for it, but does get paid well.

When I asked Natalie what the most challenging part of being a journalist is, she shared that "staying objective can be hard. Sometimes people can respond in an offensive or antagonistic manner. You have to be careful to keep your thoughts and opinions to yourself." She also finds writing on command to be another challenge - "sometimes you're not inspired, but you still have to try to keep

things fresh and interesting. As a journalist, you have to have thick skin and be able to accept criticism". She believes that the most important part of being a journalist is being curious and interested in humanity.

One of the things Natalie doesn't like about her job is not being able to cover everything she would like to because there is only so much time in a day. It makes her feel bad to turn people down, so she started an "online only" segment of SEEN called "SEEN in the City," where she highlights all the small events that she can't personally attend.

The most rewarding part of Natalie's job is getting to help others and being able to highlight so many non-profit organizations that otherwise wouldn't be seen. She makes sure she gives some "love" to small organizations because she remembers how hard it was when she worked at non-profits.

When I asked Natalie if she would still work as a columnist if she hit the lottery, she said that she would probably start her own publication that would focus on diverse and inclusive talent and would make it a space for all writers to share their voices and do investigative work that they find to be important. She also said she would hire me to write for her paper and that I would be her first hire!

The best piece of advice Natalie has received was "when you don't have all the answers to a question you're asked in your column, write your piece and if you can't get a hold of the person, keep it appropriately vague. If you don't quite know the amount of people who were at an event, you say around 400 people. It saves you from getting in trouble."

The best piece of advice that Natalie gives, especially to women, is that "It's better to ask for forgiveness than permission. If you ask for permission, you'll never get anything done. Do it, then ask for forgiveness." The other piece is "It's always better to ask than to wonder." Other words of advice include "Never burn a bridge. Smile and be polite. When interviewing, it is always important to ask an age, even if you don't print it. Have people say and spell their names and find out what part of the city they are from."

Some of the funniest moments in Natalie's career have been when she has interacted with animals. She does a lot of work with the Pittsburgh Zoo. She talked about doing an interview once and a giraffe, who was obsessed with her, kept licking her head throughout the interview. "The giraffe was the biggest photo bomber."

Another funny experience happened while doing an interview on a sanctuary farm called "Hope Haven," when a goat who was amused with her wouldn't leave her alone - it kept pushing her down the hill!~



Skidmore's Rock Review

'The Secret' Revealed

By Thomas R. Skidmore

The Secret is the latest and newest album from legendary progressive rock producer/arranger/musician/composer Alan Parsons. It's the first record he's done in fifteen years, and this time Alan has a wide range of famous guest musicians, as he crafts a concept album covering themes of magic, some religion, and mysticism.

We open the album with a very innovative interpretation of Paul Dukas' 1897 suite "The Sorcerer's Apprentice" (best known for starring Mickey Mouse as seen in the 1940 animated classic *Fantasia*). Here Alan teams up with superstar prog-rock guitar wizard Steve Hackett, formerly of Genesis fame, and the duo takes us on a journey not even Disney could foresee. Hackett's own guitar sorcery drive the track to a fun ending reminiscent of Mickey's own humorous shenanigans.

Track two is sung by pop rock favorite Jason Mraz. It's called "Show Me a Miracle," and the singer croons out a well-executed rock song flavored with superb guitars and a smooth, mellow saxophone solo. The lyrics are a plea to God to show His wonders to the everyman. After this is Parsons himself doing lead vocals on track three, "As Lights Fall." Now a popular video on YouTube, in this song Parsons sings a very poignant, autobiographical tale of his rise to rock prominence as well as a tribute to his old friend, the late Eric Woolfson (with whom Alan formed the successful Alan Parsons Project).

Now we arrive at the fourth song called "One World Symphony" with vocals by young singer Todd Cooper, who delivers the lyrics in a monotonical, almost robotic voice which works well, as this is a science fiction-based tale about pleading for humanity to join as one to save the world from destruction (as told in the Bible). There's a quote from science fiction legend Arthur C. Clarke read by Parsons himself that adds to the futuristic tone of the track.

"Sometimes" (track five) is a tender, heartfelt ballad sung by Foreigner frontman Lou Gramm. Lou's voice is as strong as it was during his heyday in the late 1970s and the 1980s, yet he delivers mellow lyrics about not being afraid to find love and purpose in our complex, uncertain world.

The sixth track is "Soiree Fantastique," a mystical composition dealing with finding one's own personal sanctuary through love, as well as wading the waves of perpetual doubt to reach the certainty of the place we call "home," be it in church, in connection with others, or just in lone prayers.

"Fly to Me" is the seventh song on the album. It's a folk rock-inspired track about escaping the mundane nature of our own lives and reaching out to touch the heavens and the stars. With vocals by singer Mark Mikel, the words are soothing and true to the heart of all who venture to listen. There's a soaring guitar solo as well as lilting strings elevating the song to great heights.

Now we come to "Requiem," a heavy, smooth jazz-derived song that wouldn't be out of place in an old episode of *Peter Gunn*. Here, Todd Cooper does a mix of Dean Martin and Frank Sinatra in singing a tale of unrequited love in a futuristic film noir setting (think *Blade Runner* meets *Peter Gunn*), with powerful horns augmented by a roaring guitar riff.

"Years of Glory" is a track that weaves the tale of a dying man looking back on his life and the anticipation of a new journey ahead of him. The protagonist is content with how life turned out for him, and he asks the listener to share in his voyage. After this is "The Limelight Fades Away," a song with sonically driven 80s-style music dealing with the idea that fame, however great it may seem in the briefest of moments, is very fleeting though we try very hard to maintain that very fame some of us crave more than others.

Closing the CD is "I Can't Get There from Here," taken from the film *5-25-77*. Sung by Jared Mahone and with guitars by long-time Parsons collaborator Ian Bairnson, it's a whimsical yet hopeful tale of following your dreams yet keeping grounded in the everyday life so many of us seem to detest at times. There's a theme of going through hesitation and doubt, but the main concept is that if Mankind doesn't take that step, he stands forever at square one and wonders why he's stuck.

The Secret is waiting to be discovered.

All you must do is open the lock . . . ~

Once there was a man,
who lived in a cabin with his lover,
one night they sat out in the porch swing out by the back,
they marveled at the serene picturesque sight before them,
the scene worth a thousand words,

the lake,
there,
the swans land,
caressing upon those moonlit tides,
casting a ripple or two upon the serene stilled waters,
floating upon those fresh,
cool,

crisp waters with which erode the sands around the pier closest to their cabin,
their cabin in the woods,
a warm fire upon the hearth,
billowing a steady stream of smoke up above the chimney,
into the night,
as they cozy up to the soothing crackle of the logs burning,

cuddling,
with a mug of hot tea with a little sliver of honey,
they kiss,
while under the nightly skies,
and full moon,
then the swans call out,
echoing through the trees and beyond,
those tall pines,
towering over the rocks,
out by the lake,
with full leaves on the branches,
and pinecones barely hanging on,

then,
they looked out the window to see a gathering of fireflies,
glowing their luminescent greenish yellow,
those happy colors,
all this they see and realize,
they're sharing it with the ones they truly love,
each other,
then they said,
“Goodnight, my love.”

By Paul Lechevalier

Max's Story

By Garret Mathews

There's this (mostly) cheerful guy named Max, who has Asperger's. He'd like to go on a date with the (always) overwhelmed Victoria, who also has Asperger's.

Finally, Max summons the courage to make the call. A miracle happens and Victoria is interested. They agree to meet for lunch at the only place he feels comfortable -- the break room of the McDonald's where Max works in the drive-through.

Will they hit it off, or just sit around and eat fries?

That's the premise of "Make Me A Perfect (Asperger's) Match," my two-act play that was produced for the first time earlier this year in Indianapolis.

It's mostly a comedy but earns an "R" rating for one flashback scene when Max recalls verbal and physical abuse suffered as a child at the hands of his late father, who never accepted his son's diagnosis.

The play is loosely based on some folks on the autism spectrum I've met since 2016 when I learned I have Asperger's. Here are opening pages:

ACT 1, Scene 1 – Inside Max's living room.

MAX sits nervously on a chair. HE wears nerdy clothes and a rubber wristband. On the adjoining table is a cell phone, the sports section of the newspaper, a hand towel and a stack of white index cards. MAX arranges and rearranges these items to make sure they are in perfect order. MAX bites off a fingernail and carefully puts it on the arm of his chair.

MAX, looking at his watch: 6:56. Four minutes until I ring her up. I want to go on a date. Deep breath. I don't want to go on a date. Deep breath. What to do.

MAX picks up the index cards.

MAX: Note to self. Trust the cards. They'll get me through it. *Beat.* Maybe.

MAX picks up the cards and reads the one on top.

MAX: Conversational topics, icebreakers. I have dry hands. Do you have dry hands? *MAX puts this card at the bottom of the stack and reads the next one.* **MAX:** Will the two Koreas ever unite, or will there always be a demilitarized zone? *MAX puts this card at the bottom of the stack and reads the next one.* **MAX:** Conversational topic if she is having her menstrual cycle? I had cramps once in gym class, and, boy, did that hurt. *MAX puts this card at the bottom of the stack and reads the next one.* **MAX:** Conversational topic if she is losing interest. I'm just not myself today. I expect my goldfish to die at any moment.

Still holding the index cards, MAX reaches for the hand towel and wipes perspiration from his forehead.

MAX: I'm as ready as I'm ever going to be. *When HE finishes wiping the sweat, HE carefully places the hand towel exactly where it was on the table.*

MAX, to himself in doubting fashion: Female companionship... I don't know. Maybe I should stick to what I'm good at...being alone.

Suddenly MAX takes a leap forward. This signals the intervention of MAX's confident ALTER EGO.

ALTER EGO, in strong voice: This is your Alter Ego speaking. Buck up. Ask Victoria out.

Leap backward. This signals the return of doubting MAX.

MAX, in weak voice: I don't know what to say.

Leap forward. This signals the return of MAX's confident ALTER EGO.

ALTER EGO, in strong voice: You work the drive-through at McDonald's. You talk to people all the time. "Whatcha craving for today?" *Beat.* "Wanna try an egg white delight?" *Beat.* "Sorry, but we don't take American Express." You've got this. Piece of cake.

Leap backward. This signals the return of doubting MAX.

MAX, in weak voice: It's different with girls.

Leap forward. Return of confident ALTER EGO.

ALTER EGO, in strong voice: Nonsense. You and Victoria are members of the same online matchmaker service, Love, Asperger's Style. You're an Aspie. She's an Aspie. You asked to be paired up. She asked to be paired up. Go for it.

MAX, timidly: She won't like me.

Leap forward. Return of confident ALTER EGO.

ALTER EGO, in strong voice: Yes, she will.

Leap backward. Return of doubting MAX.

MAX, timidly: No, she won't.

Leap forward. Return of confident ALTER EGO.

ALTER EGO, in strong voice: Look. The computer did its thing. Victoria's name came up on your radar and your profile came up on hers. You remember filling out the questionnaire. Are you scared of the dark? Do you have zero common sense? Do you try to make a friend, but give up because it feels like there's a layer of Plexiglass between the two of you? Our main man Max answered yes, yes and yes, did he not?

Leap backward. Return of doubting MAX.

MAX nods timidly.

Leap forward. Return of confident ALTER EGO.

ALTER EGO: Victoria filled out the same form. Need a night light? Check. Have the common sense of a farm animal? Check. Have no friends? Check. It's a match made in heaven. Beat. Or at least Central Indiana.

While I wanted to entertain the audience with "Perfect Match," I also sought to enlighten them about Asperger's. I invited experts on autism to participate in talk-backs at the conclusion of each show. Cast members discussed how they prepared for their roles, and I fielded a few questions about the structure of the play. I'd love to see "Perfect Match" staged in other venues. To that end, I had several DVDs prepared of one of our performances. If your theatrical group is interested, I'll be happy to send a DVD (as long as supplies hold up) and/or a full script. There is no charge. If you'd like for me to attend a show (and if the drive isn't too far), I'll be happy to come. You can learn more about me by checking out my legacy website, www.pluggerpublishing.com ~~

Making Do

By Nils Skudra

I trust that like any neurotypical individual, people on the autism spectrum like myself are also vulnerable to constant advertising campaigns which urge us to buy new products and services. The word “upgrade” seems to be a rather recent linguistic invention, but it is one that appears in virtually every avenue of life and inspires everyone to be a consummate consumer and a “have” rather than a “have not.” It is difficult to avoid falling into the trap consequently of impulse buying. Some folks even consider this “shopping therapy” and give it a kind of legitimization all of which fuels an ever-increasing need to “keep up with the Joneses” and buy the latest and the greatest that are out there. My own family plays into this “upgrade” game: my mother drives a 2002 Toyota Corolla with 110,000 miles on it, but she regularly feels the urge to “get something newer and better” – despite the fact that the vehicle is working just fine. Her anxiety is increased by well-meaning friends’ commentaries that “maybe it is time to buy a new car” and heightened even more when new automobiles start appearing in the driveways of our neighbors. She still has the Toyota but daydreams of a time when a new Subaru appears in her life.

There is something about the logic of all of this that disturbs me. Perhaps it is the old axiom “if it’s not broken, don’t fix it” that has such a positive valence for me. The reality is that upgrading is expensive and as a graduate student struggling to pay for tuition and books, money is simply not plentiful. I have had to change my focus to what I characterize as “making do” – instead of going out for a Japanese lunch, I opt for a peanut butter and jelly sandwich at home (no shortage of these culinary items here). Admittedly, I’d rather have chicken teriyaki and sushi but a necessary budget demands otherwise. Instead of going to see a film at the theatre, I head over to the library and select a few choice movies. Although I’d love to take a vacation (preferably on the exotic side), I take a bus to the local museum, arboretum or attend a no-cost lecture or concert in town. Every Wednesday in my town there is a community dinner which is free to everyone and I do this as a regular gig. I have made numerous friends at this event, some of whom are neurodiverse, and find my spirit is revitalized and social acumen increased. I take advantage of an opportunity such as this one which does not demand a monetary expenditure and find that there are so many other intrinsic benefits that issue from attending it including sharing camaraderie and the benefits of enjoying a common meal, always gratefully with others.

The idea of “making do” is multi-factorial, or, panoramic, if you will. It can be adapted to all kinds of circumstances. Essentially the idea is to use what one has on hand whether or not there are difficult times, financial or otherwise. Stated another way, this is the notion of living within your means. No matter how much you want to see the musical “Hamilton,” if you can’t afford to readily let go of the \$500.00 necessary to purchase a ticket, you shift your intellectual gears into finding an entertainment that doesn’t exact a costly price – perhaps borrowing a video from a friend (if you’re unable to get to a library). Since I am an ardent theatre buff, live theatre is an important part of my emotional diet. I can’t afford tickets for a Broadway show or even for local productions in my city, but I have found a way to “make do” – I usher several times a month for Triad Stage in Greensboro (where I live) and occasionally at other shows as well. In exchange for ushering, I get to see the show for free and often secure first row seats. I am grateful for the gift of a free show and very happy to help out in any way the

theatre company needs, whether it is handing out playbills, escorting theatergoers to their seats, or cleaning up after the show.

My idea of “making do” continually expands and at its heart it includes the idea of minimalism – a theory which has as one of its goals the notion of living with less. I rarely go to shopping malls because I know I might be tempted to indulge in a bout of impulse buying for something I probably don’t desperately need. Instead I borrow or trade items and services as much as possible. Rather than buy a game of Scrabble, I ask a friend if he or she would lend it to me. When an opportunity to be an extra in a Civil War-themed movie presented itself, I enthusiastically accepted the part – despite the fact that there was no remuneration (but a pizza and Coca-Cola lunch). I “made do” with what opportunities I am presented and give a silent “thank you” to the universe at large. Implicit in the act of “making do” (at least for me) is incorporating a practice of gratitude. I am grateful for what I have even if it isn’t as new or desirable as what someone else may possess and that gratitude seems to make for a happier and more emotionally expansive life. Along with the idea of “making do”, I am working on having a more simple life, free of so many gratuitous items. Do I really need the 1,000 plus books I own or the more than 50 t-shirts I’ve come by one way or another. Slowly, I am letting go of things that I realize are actually superfluous. It is admittedly a process but still one on which I am gaining ground.

I have a methodology which works for me and gives me intellectual pleasure as well. I re-use and recycle. When my clothes are torn, a friend repairs a seam, replaces a button or sews up a small hole. I return the favor by preparing a dinner or some vegan chocolate mousse (which always elicits rave reviews). I cook with what I have in my house. I frequent the food pantry at my university and score many “necessaries” and sometimes engage in bartering a meal for which I exchange a tutoring lesson. I rely on old appliances, cameras that still work but might not have the “bells and whistles” and cooler new features of new products on the market. In my mind as long as the camera works, the function trumps a newer novelty. I seldom buy new clothes and if I truly require something, I visit my local Goodwill on a “student discount” day. I reign in my spending on a daily basis and have found it possible to save a little bit of money too – what I call “mad money” for when I absolutely have to have a special moment that even “making do” cannot create.

Although I sometimes am tempted to change things up, particularly in my home environment, I satisfy the urge by merely re-arranging furniture, art hangings on the wall. I have inherited a goodly number of blankets and throws from relatives and friends and recently opted to finally place some of those on a living room couch and chairs. The room looks different and the charm of “newness” is a satisfying one. The idea of “making do” is something I urge everyone in my personal universe to adopt. When my mother recently showed me a pair of her newly ripped rainboots and a cell phone holder that was coming undone, I told her “use it ‘til they lose it.” That statement must have had a veritable impact – neither of those items has disappeared and been replaced by new merchandise. She has saved a bit of hard-earned cash (from her job as a substitute public school teacher) which might be utilized for a truly necessary thing.

In summation, I would argue that “making do” does not equate with “doing without.” It is nothing less than a paradigm shift in thinking – that more is not necessarily better and that living more simply has innumerable benefits including lessening the clutter which often drives most of us crazy. Being grateful for the things I have has made me happier and much less susceptible to the advertising schemes and frenzy that it is otherwise so easy to fall victim to. When I see the next generation of laptops being advertised for sale, I place myself into a framework of intentionality and say “the one I have right now works just fine.” In short, “making do” gets me through and I imagine my carbon footprint on the planet is lighter, too. “Making do” can work for you, too.~~

The Curious Case of Theranos

By: Megan Cunningham

There is always a tendency to jump on the next big thing, especially in regard to the latest breakthrough in technology. People tend to get excited about the next mechanism that will improve our lives in the future and will latch onto it. But sometimes the promise of a technological miracle can be too good to be true.



In 2003, 19-year-old Stanford University student Elizabeth Holmes founded Theranos. This was supposed to be a tech company promising to revolutionize the healthcare industry through a patch-worn drug delivery system and later a desktop-printer-size blood testing device called Edison that could deliver an array of diagnoses with a single finger prick. By 2015, the startup had racked up a \$9 billion valuation while Holmes was featured on business magazine covers and top executive lists. She had won the trust of corporations like Walgreens and Safeway, world leaders like Henry Kissinger and Former Secretary of Defense Jim Mattis.

However, Theranos failed to produce a viable working product as well as deceived investors, regulators, and partners for years...until it collapsed in a sea of lawsuits and federal charges in 2018. Years of investigations have revealed the truth behind this scam, uncovering the utilization of dangerous health practices and misleading data, you have to wonder how Holmes kept this charade for so many years.

Of course, Theranos' stated mission was indeed a noble one. After all, people don't like the uncomfortable needlework normally used in traditional blood tests. Theranos promised to replace this with a minimally invasive process that would make this aspect, quick, painless, and inexpensive. In turn, this would make people more likely to seek necessary care and may potentially decrease mortality rates. To pitch her idea, Holmes told the story of her uncle dying of cancer to enhance an inspiring message about saving the ones we love. With a sales pitch like this, it's easy to see how Holmes reeled in wealthy investors like media mogul Rupert Murdoch and board members like former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger. These backers were an all-star roster giving Theranos a façade of respectability even as the walls closed in.

Despite her wide never-blinking eyes, her obsession with her idol Steve Jobs, and possibly faux husky voice, Holmes was propelled to the relentlessly competitive tech industry's forefront through her often-overstated charisma. In a 2014 *New Yorker* profile, Kissinger spoke of Holmes' "ethereal quality." Another distinguished board member former Secretary of Defense William J. Perry lauded her "big heart." Employees were particularly susceptible to her charms, too. Whistleblower Tyler Schultz recalled "Elizabeth had this way of locking you in, and when she was talking to you, she made you feel like you were the most important person in her world right now and you were so important to achieving this vision that you were dedicated to."

However, beneath Holmes' capacity to charm the pants off of investors, board members, employees, and even the media, was a scam at work. Theranos infamously kept FDA regulators at arm's length through submitting testing results from other laboratories, not its own machines that never received approval. Blood drawn from unsuspecting patients was in tubes, sent to Theranos labs, and run on standard third-party equipment. Edison couldn't accurately detect enough molecules in blood samples to provide accurate readouts.

Theranos' tests also failed at least a third of all internal quality control checks. But that didn't stop Holmes from directing staff to the Theranos testing machines in locations where blood testing was done ahead of tours through these areas.

But the secrecy also extended inward. From the very beginning, there was constant employee turnover and divisions sequestered from one another instead of working in unison. Another whistleblower, Erika Cheung recalled the "barriers" set up in the office lab, preventing workers from seeing the devices they were allegedly creating. In addition,



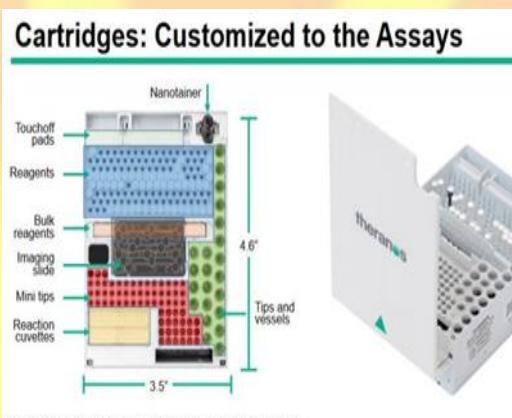
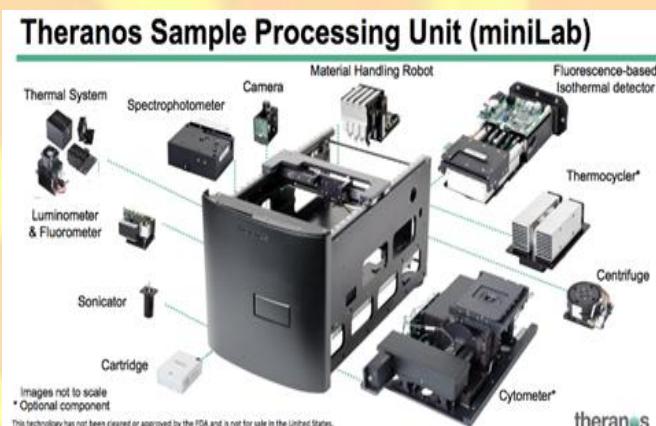
Holmes and her boyfriend Theranos president and COO Sunny Balwari carefully policed the company to keep dissenters in line. Former Jobs right-hand man Avie Tevanian was pressured to resign after questioning the many failed processes. And prior to quitting, Schultz emailed Holmes about his concerns only for Balwari to send a threatening, insulting reply. Whenever employees suspected the device wasn't working, the results faked, and patients' lives put at risk, they were fired, often escorted off the premises that very day by security personnel. Furthermore, Holmes compelled employees to sign severe nondisclosure agreements, in which any violation would trigger a ruining lawsuit.



In addition, despite the fact Theranos was worth \$9 billion in 2015, Holmes made various false claims to her investors. First, they claimed that their own machines did the blood testing despite evidence. Second, it wrote two clinical studies with pharma logos to make investors think that pharmaceutical companies wrote them. Third, the company claimed its machines were deployed on military helicopters and used on the battlefield when its only relationship with the Department of Defense only constituted 3 contracts paying \$300,000. Fourth, Holmes claimed that Theranos' growth was due to existing contracts when outside investment mostly drove it. Furthermore, its \$108 million revenue was actually \$100,000 which seems decent. Unless the company you're running is worth \$9 billion. Fifth, though she reported thriving relationships with Walgreens and Safeway, Holmes knew that implementation of their agreement was stalled. Since pharmacy executives were concerned with Theranos' performance. And finally, while Theranos claimed it expected to make \$1 billion by 2015, all factors contributing to its target were falling short.

During Theranos' final months, Holmes kept displaying a relentlessly positive person, which secured late stage funding but also conveyed a distorted reality at the office. According to a 2019 *Vanity Fair* article, Holmes would approach employees who've just testified before the Securities and Exchange Commission and engage them as if nothing's amiss. Symbolizing her (probably misplaced) optimism, she adopted a Siberian husky puppy named Balto. Even after Theranos dissolved and Holmes got indicted on 11 counts of fraud to which she pleaded not guilty, she still believed in her heroic vision. When approached to appear in a documentary about her rise and fall, *The Inventor: Out for Blood in Silicon Valley*, she told producers she was in the process of getting more funding and suggested they come back when things were rolling again.

Nonetheless, what baffles me about the Theranos case is how Elizabeth Holmes could pull off this scam so massive and for so long. Even if she is a charismatic liar, the notion she dropped out of Stanford after attending 2 semesters of chemical engineering classes to invent some groundbreaking medical technology should've been a giant red flag. Though I don't doubt that Holmes is an exceptionally intelligent woman, 2 semesters of chemical engineering aren't enough for someone to create revolutionary medical device. One needs years of training for that. In addition, Theranos advertised a miracle medical device but had to conceal their activities with an appalling lack of transparency and outright lies. Why many of these investors didn't take the time to do a single background check on Holmes and her company is a mystery. Or how it tried to control its employees. Nonetheless, the saga of Theranos is one demonstrating how easy it is to fall for a scam despite all the signs. ~~



Unknown Mystery

By Joe Cepk

An unnamed adulteress is about to be stoned to death by self-righteous Jewish religious leaders who have continually locked horns with Jesus of Nazareth over many of the Jewish religious laws and synagogue ritual regulations as is documented in countless New Testament Scripture Verse references in the Gospels according to Saints Mark, Matthew, Luke and John.

However, for time's sake and giving other writers space in this magazine edition, I will focus on the story of the woman caught in adultery in the eighth (8th) chapter in John's Gospel (Good News) account.

It begins with these two (2) Scripture Verses.

"When Jesus had raised Himself up and saw no one but the woman, He said to her, "Woman, where are those accusers of yours? Has no one condemned you?"

"She said, "No one, Lord."

"Neither do I condemn you; go and sin no more."

John 8:10 and 11

NKJV

New King James Version

New Testament

Amen!!!

+++

However, we do NOT know if the unknown accused adulteress, who is recorded in John the Apostle's New Testament Gospel account actually repented of her alleged sins of adultery and was saved of her supposed sinful lifestyle, even though Jesus gave her an act of literal Divine Clemency (Pardonning).

It would be nice if she did reject her alleged lifestyle of moral depravity, but the Holy Bible does not tell us whether or not she quit being a prostitute.

I like to believe she listened to Jesus' Loving Words of Pardon and started living a life if imperfect yet more morally acceptable living on a daily basis for the rest of her earthly days. I would not like to think that she did not repent and died while still living in her alleged debauched lifestyle.

I would like to think she is in Heaven, yet I and nobody else can prove beyond a shadow of any known doubt that she is there.

I would not like to entertain the horrid idea that she is in hell. However, despite this possibly awful reality, I cannot do and/or say anything to change her eternal destiny if she is in hell. I cannot pray her or anyone else who may be in hell out of this dreadful place of endless torment.

I want to always believe that I will meet her someday if she did repent of her alleged immoral living almost two thousand (2,000) years ago, but I am unable to believe that this will be a future certainty. I also am not afraid to admit of my many imperfections, but I believe Jesus forgave me of my sins and knows that I am incapable of being exactly like Him right now. Unconditional love and grace are the two (2) essential ingredients that lead me to believe Jesus will never condemn me for being imperfect.

I prayed to Jesus to come into my flawed life recently and I believe He has answered my genuine salvation prayer. I realize not everyone will agree with my Christian faith views, but this is okay. I do not expect everybody to fully agree with my theological reasonings. ~~

Bill Rebane's The Giant Spider Invasion (1975)

By: David O'Rorey

This was a good one, you'll love it when one of the giant spiders from another dimension, the giant queen spider, devours greedy greasy farmer Dan Kester (Played by Actor Robert Easton) by sucking him up inside her maw, an opening under its fangs. It has some remembered actors and scenes. Starring Steve Brodie Pro 1940's-1980's Actor as Dr. J.R. Vance from NASA. Skipper from "Gilligan's Island" Alan Hal Jr. playing Sheriff Jones. The Leading Lady was 1940's and after actress, Glamour Icon Barbara Hale, who was famous for playing Dela Street on *The Perry Mason Show*. She plays Dr. Jenny Langer, one of the people that help put at end to these alien arachnids. There's also Leslie Parrish (Real Name: Marjorie Hellen), a 50's-70's actress and Cheesecake pin-up model. There are some good attack scenes with the spiders. Considering the effects used now, these were good for their time, considering the \$300,000 budget; it did not get any money for better effects, and remember, it's a low-budget B-Grade picture. It isn't going to have the effects of the A-pictures. Giant, life-sized built puppet-like spiders were used instead of real enlarged spiders with blue screen or Stop-Motion Animation. I don't want to give too much away; it is one of my favorite 70's drive-in Sci-Fi films grossing over 24 Million, ending up in the Top 50 grossing films of 1975.

It opened in Dallas in October of '75. The Dallas Newspaper put together a nice large-sized comic on the film. A small reproduction was included with the 2002 Retromedia DVD and 2015 VCI Entertainment Blu-Ray and DVD Discs. The 2015 release is packed with extras, except a commentary track from the producer and director Bill Rebane himself. I have those, plus a release that was pulled out of circulation quickly because Rebane couldn't get the rights from Retromedia, which Rebane went to court over. There was a 2008 Synergy Entertainment and MVD Visual Deluxe Version 2-Disc DVD's which included nice bonus features, plus an unrated Director's Cut of the film. It does include a commentary with Bill Rebane on the first disc with the movie, among other things. 2005 also saw Academy Of Video Arts Releasing a 2-Disc DVD-R Set Limited Order on Rebane's website. I bought that because it has a different commentary with Rebane moderated by fan Corey J. Udler. It includes the theatrical version of the film and some different bonus features, other than the other releases. Plus, it was personally autographed by Bill Rebane himself. I think it was like \$25-30, which was about the same price as the 2015 Release. Love this fil—check it out!~~

Ten Years as a Public Figure in Pittsburgh on the Autism Spectrum

By Robert Hester

On a beautiful summer day in mid-July of 2009, I roamed the halls of Community Day School in Pittsburgh's Squirrel Hill neighborhood during a lunch break as part of a day as a member of the annual Summer Computing Workshop, a workshop to help people with special needs (mine is Autism), that started eight years earlier at Carnegie-Mellon University by CMU grad Ms. Mary Hart—when I, unexpectedly, received a free internet-ready computer from a janitor who worked at the school. That weekend, I built my own page on MySpace (remember THAT page?!), and my journey in social media with Robert Hester Entertainment, Robert Hester Photography, and Fashion RHP—as well as my journey in sharing my blogging, writing and photography talents to the world—were born. Looking back on my ten years in the world of social media, I wish someone would have told me before when I first joined the social media world that having social media pages to get your name as a photographer, blogger and writer further out there locally, is a little less of a blessing than it is a burden.

My first love is, and always will be, photography. And the professional photographers in my beloved hometown of Pittsburgh are like the professional athletes that call home this City of Champions; there's a lot of talented men and women in this field that provide one championship-quality performance after another every time they display their shots on this "field" of play. For photographers like me, that thought alone is as much intimidating as it's inspiring, being a photographer who's been diagnosed with Autism since the age of 2. However, as KDKA-TV reporter Amy Wadas best put it in her promo in her story about this publication that first aired in July, 2017, "Just because you have a disability (Autism) doesn't mean you can't contribute to society."

I can honestly say that thanks to my photography, writing and blogging "contributions" to the Pittsburgh area and beyond, in spite of my Autism, not only I've been able to build a positive and loving legacy throughout the last ten years, I've also been blessed to have built relationships with a lot of public figures in the Pittsburgh area. Yes, I've been blessed to have built relationships with some public figures who are well-known TV and radio personalities, bloggers, vloggers, photographers, singers, models, fashion designers, MUA's (Make-Up Artists), business people and other connections in the Pittsburgh area that have played such positive and valuable roles in helping me become a public figure in my own right.

But there were times within the last decade that I felt the need to just quit because I haven't shared my gifts with more people than the ones who already knew me personally. And the relationships I've built with these public figures weren't enough in terms of me not receiving more publicity, opportunities, and even wealth that goes with being just a public figure, let alone a public figure with Autism, instead of being a well-known public figure with Autism—at least in the Pittsburgh area. At times, I occasionally asked myself, why did God bless me with these talents when very few people know about them? Is it because I have Autism? Or is it because there are too many people who live here who have talents that get a lot of publicity who get short-changed despite of having Autism?

Then I was reminded of something that was once said (or in this case, preached) by one of my favorite public figures, Pastor Joel Osteen, about celebrating the things that you have, and not worrying about the things that you don't have. In that context, I have a lot to celebrate. I can go on and on about me celebrating the places I've visited, the people I've met, the opportunities that have come my way, and positive impact I've made on the region that I've been blessed to have called home all of my life—not bad for someone who has accomplished the aforementioned over the course of the last decade despite being on the Autism Spectrum! The story I've told now is a self-explanation of the first ten years of my journey as a public figure, as well as a confidence-builder for writing the next ten. No matter where my journey takes me between now and the summer of 2029, I'll always remember the summer of 2009 as the year I first entered the spectrum of being in the public eye in spite of being on the Autism spectrum, and the years I've spent building a legacy ever since. So, I can say as a (you guessed it!) public figure with confidence, and Autism... BRING ON THE NEXT 10 YEARS OF MY JOURNEY!!!

Robert Hester Entertainment and Fashion RHP's social media pages are:
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fashionrhp.tumblr.com
Facebook: Robert Hester Entertainment and Fashion RHP
Twitter and Instagram: @hestertainment and @fashionrhp
Robert Hester Photography's Page: roberthstr3.wix.com/rhphotography~



O how I care,
care about your love,
but I'm in a mare,
I'm not like a dove,
romance I feel,
only to fail,
I dig in my heel,
and fall to the ground like hail,
affixed to your radiance I fail,
speechlessly loving every second of your lovely gaze upon the one who needs it most,
stuttering and stumbling I fall,
feeling like I need to be a ghost,
hiding from my failures,
humbly I beg pardon,
to not even need the direct measures,
for you have made me unharden,
heart and all,
with just those two words,
stand tall,
non condemning you are forward,
saying I love you,
when I feel the same,
I love you more vivid than the brightest hue,
and after saying I don't feel so lame,
for what is love but,
love.

For: The one who has taken me

By Paul Lechevalier~~

IN MEMORIAM

PETER MAYHEW

By Thomas R. Skidmore

On April 30, 2019, fans of the Star Wars saga were saddened to learn of the untimely passing of long-time SW stalwart Peter Mayhew, the 7' 3" actor best known as the heroic character, Chewbacca the Wookie. He was 74 years old and died of a heart attack after years of declining health.

Born in England on May 19, 1944, Peter's massive height was the result of a mild glandular disorder, and not true gigantism. He said that he never had the "big head" when asked about the cause of his large stature. Prior to his acting career, Mayhew worked as a hospital orderly in the radiology department of King's College Hospital in London and in fact, kept working his day job even after he was cast as the iconic Chewbacca for Star Wars in late 1975 and early 1976. He also appeared in 1977's Sinbad and the Eye of the Tiger.

With Star Wars a certified hit after its landmark 1977 release, Peter was able to go on to great success in and out of the Chewbacca role, but felt very close to his signature part. As Chewie, Peter often visited sick children in hospitals in both the UK and the USA. He attributes Chewie's gentle nature to being an extension of his own soft-spoken, good-natured demeanor.

In keeping with his beliefs in the Christian faith, Peter gave his unwavering support to Wounded Warriors and various children's charities. He also found time to write two children's books based on his experiences dealing with his unusually massive height.

Over the years, Peter continued his Star Wars association, including a humorous 1978 appearance on The Muppet Show (where he did a soft-shoe dance number as Chewie), but his physical health declined gradually. Soon after his final appearance as Chewie in Star Wars: The Force Awakens Peter was forced to pass the torch of Chewie to a younger actor but remained committed to the spirit of the beloved Wookie.

Peter was a devoted family man, and in time became a naturalized US citizen, taking up home in his beloved adopted home state of Texas. In 2013, he underwent a massive double-knee replacement but was mostly confined to a wheelchair prior to filming The Force Awakens. In line with his Christian faith, Peter met noted cleric (and longtime Star Wars fan) Brother Roderick and discussed his life, career, and his charitable nature.

After further declining health that led to his retirement, Peter William Mayhew died from a heart attack at his home in Boyd, Texas, surrounded by his family and friends. He was weeks short of his 75th birthday.

May God bless you with His force of goodness, Chewie . . . ~





Summer Photo Collection
(Photos By Delaine Swearman
and Robert Hester)

Pittverse



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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, the 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
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