

SCSC Writing Contest Anthology 2022–23

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South Central Service Cooperative

SOUTH CENTRAL SERVICE COOPERATIVE
NORTH MANKATO

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The SCSC Writing Contest provides students with an opportunity to express themselves through fiction, non-fiction and/or poetry. This contest was established to encourage the love of language and writing for all students and as a way to recognize the talented young writers in south central Minnesota. SCSC partners with Minnesota State University, Mankato on this project. Students in grades K–12 attending public, private or homeschools are eligible to enter. Up to three pieces per category and submissions in multiple categories are welcome.

Disclaimer

The views and opinions expressed are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views and opinions of the sponsors. Some of the works may not be appropriate for a younger reading audience.

Dedication

Thank you to all those who worked with the SCSC Writing Contest and this anthology:

To the staff at South Central Service Cooperative who promoted the contest, gathered and catalogued submissions, served as judges and provided feedback to students, and designed the anthology layout.

To the students and staff at Minnesota State University, Mankato education department who served as judges and provided feedback to students on their writing submissions.

To the teachers, parents, friends and relatives who encouraged students to express themselves through writing.

Finally, to the students who shared their work for this year's contest. We are most grateful.

For more information, visit www.mnscsc.org/writing-contest

Title Page

SCSC Writing Contest 2022–23

Theme: Innovation

Poetry

Poetry:

Arrangement of words in an artistic and purposeful manner that expresses the writer's thoughts and/or feelings about a subject of their choice using style and rhythm (ex: sonnets, haiku, free verse).

Got You Covered

By Ian Covarrubias

This innovative invention
Comes from ancient Egypt
Over 4,000 years ago
And it means “shadow”

They have different colors
And different designs
They help us stay shaded in the sun
They help us stay dry in the rain

They are made in a factory
They are made using printed paper
They are cut from a cloth
They are sewed with a wire

I’m glad we have umbrellas
To not get wet from the rain
Or get burned from the sun
I like the designs and colors

Innovation is thinking
Innovation is a new idea
Innovation helps all of us
Innovation includes umbrellas

Twist the Time

By Jia-Xin Fan

If I twisted the handles,
If I twisted the engine,
If I twisted the bots or twisted a stain,
If I twisted the corkscrew of the silly portable chair,
If I even twisted the back of my hair,
If I twisted the buttons up and down,
I could twist the time.

If only a new day can come,

A day where I didn't have to twist the handle, twist the engine, or twist the bots.

A day where I didn't have to twist a stain or a corkscrew of a silly portable chair or the back of my hair.

A day where I could invent something new.

A day where I can see the future.

But how can I see the future when it's already planned?

If only a time machine can be invented,

If only I *could* twist the handles of a time machine,

If only I *could* twist the engine, twist the bots, twist a stain,

If only I *could* twist the corkscrew on a time machine instead of a silly portable chair or the back of my hair,

If only I *could* twist buttons up and down, buttons that could see the future or revisit the past,

Then I could sleep safe and sound.

But until then, until I can twist the handles,

Or twist the engine, twist the bots, twist a stain,

Twist the corkscrew, twist the buttons up and down, twist the back of my hair in a dare,

I need to remember that I *can*.

That I *can* twist a time machine,

That I *can* twist the handles, I *can* twist the engine, I *can* twist the bots and twist the stain. I *can* twist the corkscrew, I *can* twist buttons up and down,

That I *can* sleep safe and sound.

Innovative Inclusion

By Cheyanna Hansen

Finger spelling the alphabet
Helps people who can't hear
Helps people who can't talk
My hands communicate with them

Sign language was a new way to communicate
It was a new and helpful way
It was innovation

Hand shapes, movements, palms
Give us words
Give us meanings
Helps us to communicate

We won't stay quiet
We can understand each other
American Sign Language
Includes us all together

Innovation

By Ora Anna Ihimbazwe Kirezi

I am sitting here waiting for an idea to strike
Waiting and waiting, thinking and thinking ...
I could write the same as last year, but it doesn't seem right!
I need something new, something that fits, something just right.
I need to innovate, what should I write?
So I sit here waiting and waiting for innovation to strike!
Innovation, Innovation!
Ideas that are
New or
Never seen
Or
Various
Alterations
Thoroughly
Initiated, invented ...
Ornamented
Nation or worldwide!

Mission to the Moon

By Subham Maiti

I'm on a mission to the Moon,
I'll get there soon.
Leaving behind mother Earth,
The place of my birth.
Traveling in space,
Leaving behind the human race.

To fulfill my childhood dream,
Once landed, I will let out a joyful scream.
For this important mission,
To realize my country's vision,
Leaving behind my family and friends whom I will miss,
Once done, I will be in a state of bliss.

I'm on the Moon,
There is no gravity or atmosphere,
No wonder no one lives out here.
I'm here to terraform on the Moon,
Hoping for a boon.

I'm on the Moon,
Building a transparent dome,
Hoping for a life on this white balloon.

Innovation, It Will Eventually Arrive!

By Amati Ishimo Migisha

Innovation
The make of something new!
Realization,
And you can do it too
It may be hard to spot
Can be tiny like a dot
You'll have to wait for it to come to you
But when it does, you'll be glad it came on cue!

Feel Better with Vaccines

By Jorden Rasche

When you're sick
you stay home
but before you get really really sick
you have to get shots that are called vaccines.

Immunizations give you antibodies
a shot poke will feel like a little pinch
Antibodies get rid of the virus
You can squish the bug with a vaccine.

The germs will get you sick
Vaccines will make you feel better
when you are sick

Innovation is a good way
To keep people from getting sick
Innovation is vaccines.
Innovation is a new way
To help people

Fiction

Fiction (Imaginary/Fantasy):

Stories that describe imaginary events and people that entertain the reader with realistic details, involving characters who experience a conflict (ex: historical fiction, realistic fiction, fantasy, science fiction, mystery).

Bulls-Ideas

By Evalyn Altmann

Ever since I became an archer and found out kind of how heat seeking stuff works (from a class I took), I thought, “why not try and make a heat seeking arrow?” Because then, people could make targets with different levels of heat in each section and it could be easier/harder to get a bullseye. I found this thing you can buy to make your own thermocam. Only problem, it’s \$299. Do I have \$299? No. BUT WAIT! Then I found something that said you could make it for \$107. Do I have \$107? No, but it’s a better price than \$299.

The next day at school, I go up to my friend, Jacques, and ask him if he could look over something. I then hand him some papers with sketches of the heat-seeking arrow. He skims them over and then replies, “I’ll have to ask my dad about these. You know I can’t read sketch-kinda stuff.” In case you didn’t know, his father just so happens to be an engineer. This means that there is a chance I could actually make this!

I hear a ring at my doorbell. When I answer the door, Jacques is standing there, like he was waiting for a billion years. “Yo, my dad wanted to talk to you about the paper thingies. When I showed it to him, he looked as if you had just given him a big chocolate cake.” Jacques had a big smile plastered on his face and when I walked out of the doorframe to go to his house, he gave me a little punch in the shoulder. It was pretty much the “Jacques Seal of Approval,” when he did that.

The garage door at his house was open. We walked right in and, as usual, saw Jacques’s dad. It wasn’t out of the ordinary to find him here. He was normally working on something.

“Hey buddy, I saw these papers of yours – he paused to hold them up – these look great! Only a few things here that I couldn’t understand,” he started pointing out some of my grammatical errors.

“Yeah, so I think I could maybe DIY this, but how am I supposed to make the heat-seeking part of it so tiny to fit into an arrow?” I question.

“That’s what we call,” he waited for effect, “technology!”

I laughed as he directed me over to his computer.

“I’ve been researching this, and... it seems as if only the government has access to all this heat-seeking information,” he states.

“*BUT* you could make a model of it for the science fair,” he notes.

The science fair! I had forgotten all about that! I could get a scholarship if I won! I say bye to Jacques and his dad and walk back home. As soon as I make it into my room, I start brainstorming ideas for the science fair. I suppose making a mini model would work. I’m not the best at sketching, so let’s hope the model turns out good. I then propose my idea to my mom about doing the science fair.

“Yeah, we can go to Craftiest on Saturday to get what you need,” she replies.

“Yay!” I run back up the stairs and continue brainstorming.

I wake up, only to realize it’s 3 pm! Did I really sleep that long? Actually, no. I stayed up sketching. But – Craftiest closes in an hour! I quickly change and run downstairs to see my mom waiting, with a cream cheese bagel on the table. I pick it up and start munching.

“I thought you would never come!” she chuckles.

“Sorry, but I’m here now!” I say with a mouthful of crumbs. We walk out the door, hop into the car, and soon enough are on our way to Craftiest.

Once we arrive there my mother asks, “Do you want me to come in or should I stay in the car?”

“You can come in, but I can’t promise I’ll stay with you,” I respond. I frantically run around, trying to grab everything I need before they close.

“Ten minutes until close,” someone says over the PA.

Where could the glue be? Of course *this* is the one thing I can’t find. I continue looking until I hear, “Five minutes until close, please try to come up to the register now if possible,” the (seems to be) same person says. I might just have to go without the glue. Maybe tape could substitute? Or I can just check another store; see if they have some.

“Mom, I didn’t find any glue, could we go to a different store?” I question.

“Sure, there’s a Deals for Dollars next door,” she replies.

We walk over there and I check every aisle, still not seeing anything. I give up and decide to ask a store clerk.

“Hello? Um... do you know where glue might be?” I ask.

“We’re actually in a glue shortage right now,” she responds.

“Glue shortage? How is that even possible?”

“If I’m being honest, I don’t know,” she grins.

“Well, thanks anyway!” I pretend to keep a smile on my face as I walk away.

How in the world do you manage that? Guess I’m stuck with tape. The thing about tape is that it’s not going to provide the finished look I need or want. I tell my mom about the glue shortage and she just seems to laugh it off.

Once I’m back home, I can start assembling stuff. I start with the base of the arrow, then build up until I’m done. I tried taping from the inside so it looks better, and that seems to help. Since I’ve already done most of the research, this should be easy. I grab the giant poster board that I got and start writing stuff on it that I had noted. On Monday at school, Jacques seems surprised when I tell him I finished the project.

“Already? That was only 3 days!”

“Well, I guess I was just excited!” I say with a smile on my face. Now I only have to wait 4 days, 18 hours, and 11 minutes!

Today is the day! I hop out of bed, change into one of my best fancy outfits, and open my closet only to find my project isn’t there! What? I checked every day and *today* is when it disappears? I rush down the stairs, hoping to find it soon.

“It’s already in the car, don’t worry,” she says calmly.

I stop, mid-run, and turn around slowly.

“Ya sure?” I say with a terrified look on my face.

“Sure,” she replies.

We make it to the science fair, and while my mom is taking my project out of the trunk, I turn around and see Jacques waving to me from the entrance of the building. Once my mom has grabbed the project, she hands it over to me and says, “Good luck!” I walk into the building with Jacques by my side, set up my project on the table, and wait for the judges. I instantly stand up straighter as soon as they start walking over.

“Hello, please explain your project to us,” one says.

“My plan was to make a model of a heat-seeking arrow. Because then people could make bullseyes with different levels of heat so it could be easier or harder depending on what you want,” I said.

“Mhm, interesting. You can join the rest of the students while we discuss,” another replies.

I walk over to the auditorium stage and stand by the other students. We start whispering to each other but quickly quiet when the judges try getting our attention.

“Hello! All of you have great projects but we have to choose first, second, and third place. Take it away, Sarah!” a judge says.

“I will be announcing the person that got third place,” Sarah starts. “Third place is... Emily Sériz!” she finishes.

“Second place is... Lincoln Pofer!” another judge says.

This is it! I could either get first place or not place at all. I feel sweat dripping down my forehead.

“First place is... Teddy Ulander!” the last judge smiles.

I did it! I got first! I won the scholarship! Me!

Later as I walk out, I see my mother beaming at me. I hand her the certificate and see her smile grow wider and wider to the point of where it’s almost scary.

“You got the scholarship! You’ve done it! I knew you could!” she says as her eyes glisten almost as bright as the sun.

“Thanks!” I reply.

“Great job!” Jacque grins.

It’s 10 years later and time for my job interview for Engineers On Display. I walk into the office I was told to go to and the so-called boss points to a chair for me to sit in.

“So you’re telling me that you thought of this at age 14?” he points to my description and model of the heat seeking arrow.

“Mhm.”

“Well, I have two things to tell you. One, that’s incredible. And two, your dream is now reality,” he replies.

I see him point to a colorful box that says, “Heat seeking arrow. NEW! Fun for everyone!”

“It’s already been patented in your name. Welcome to the job, Teddy.”

The Super Bike

By Ryker Bayerkohler

Rusty was woken up by the sound of his alarm clock. It was set for 6:30 in the morning. He was walking out the door and right when he opened it, his best friend Eric was there waiting for him. Rusty quickly ran to the garage and got his bike.

“Race you to the park, oh, and I’m gonna beat you this time,” Eric said in a nervous and cocky way.

“As if, I beat you ninety fo-, wait no ninety-five times in a row, there’s no way you beat me today,” Rusty pointed out while mounting his bike. They raced to the park and as usual Rusty won.

“Make that ninety-six times in a row,” Rusty bragged.

But then...CRASH! Rusty hit the street curb hard and was now laying on the street trying not to cry in front of his friend. “Owwwww,” Rusty cried, with his knee covered in blood. “I wish bikes could jump with a click of a button, it would help so much,” Rusty explained.

“Isn’t your uncle a mechanic?” Eric asked.

“Yeah he is, wait, we should have my uncle help us get my bike to jump,” Rusty suggested. On the way to Rusty’s uncle’s shop, they saw a poster for a bike race. First place prizes were a trophy, a \$10,000 check, and a new motorcycle that he could drive when he’s sixteen. Rusty entered the race the moment he saw the poster. The race was in one week.

“Uncle Jerry, where are you?” Rusty shouted.

“Hey Rusty, what do you want?” Jerry asked in a cheerful way.

“We need your help to make my bike jump at the click of a button,” Rusty explained.

“I don’t know about that buddy,” Jerry said while wiping some dust off his pants.

“Please,” Rusty begged cutely.

“Let me hear your idea first, then I’ll think about it,” Jerry compromised.

“We don’t know what to do, that’s why we came to you,” Rusty said innocently.

“Fine, I’ll help you, but I need a motor to build a prototype,” Jerry instructed.

“I can get one for you, my uncle is the owner of a junkyard!” Eric shouted excitedly. Eric arrived at the junkyard in under five minutes but no one was there so he just took the motor and went back to Jerry and Rusty who were thinking of some ideas. “I’m back guys, also why do you need the motor?” Eric asked while handing Jerry the heavy piece.

“I’m gonna hook it up to the bike then I will attach the button to it,” Jerry said while grabbing the wrench.

An hour later, Jerry said nervously, “Done, I’ll try it out.” Right when Jerry pushed the button he went head first into a sign. It was really unlucky that there was a hammer right under him. Then it was extremely unlucky that his...um it’s better not to say, was the part that landed on that hammer. “I’m ok,” Jerry yelled. But he was lying, he was not ok, he was the opposite of ok, don’t believe everything grownups say. He’s gonna need to ice that for at least a week.

While seeing Jerry’s epic fail, Rusty had an idea, and being a kid he had to blurt it out. “What if we made the tires have two layers and when you pushed the button the outer layer would come out and then come in really fast causing the bike to jump,” Rusty explained.

“That’s actually a really good idea Rusty, why didn’t I think of that,” Jerry yelled hurtfully, while lying on the floor.

“Ok, let’s get down, let’s get down to business, we’ve got a million, million, things to do so let’s get down let’s get down to business, sorry I got the song stuck in my head,” Eric awkwardly sang.

“Rusty hand me the wrench,” Jerry asked, finally recovering from...well you know.

Five days later they were finally done; did the building and the testing and Uncle Jerry only got hurt twenty nine times. Rusty cheered while laughing at Jerry.

“Well Rusty, are you gonna test it out?” Jerry asked.

“Heck yeah,” Rusty cheered, hopping on to his improved bike. While he was riding his bike he saw some other kids that he recognized that were also in the race. They looked really good, but Rusty ignored them and went right back to Uncle Jerry and Eric.

“What’s wrong Rusty?” Jerry asked, looking at Rusty’s somewhat scared face.

“I need my bike to be able to teleport,” Rusty said with a frown on his face.

“Why?” asked Eric.

“Because the other kids look really good and I can use teleportation for when I get stuck or I need to boost myself in front of them,” Rusty explained.

Jerry looked at him, from his long brown hair to his old black shoes. “Fine,” Jerry agreed.

“Thank you so much,” Rusty smiled, giving Jerry a hug.

“Now that I know what I’m doing I think I can build it in one day,” Jerry said.

The next day Rusty’s mom shouted loudly from downstairs, “Rusty, wake up. Uncle Jerry needs to talk to you!”

“Coming!” Rusty shouted back. “Hi Uncle Jerry,” Rusty said, grabbing the phone.

“Hey Rusty. I need you to come to my workshop, the bike is ready,” Jerry said cheerfully. “But before you do anything, you need to know a few things,” Jerry paused. “One, the jump button is on the right handle, and the teleportation button is on the left handle. Two, the teleportation will only teleport you from one foot to ten yards. Remember the race is tomorrow,” Jerry informed him.

“Ok good to know, I’ll be there in about fifteen minutes,” Rusty responded, hanging up then rushing back to his room. When he got to his room he put on a worn out shirt followed by some black shorts then some black socks while running into the bathroom. Next he brushed his teeth and his hair. Finally going sonic speed to the front door, he put on his shoes, hopped onto his bike, and went to Uncle Jerry’s workshop.

“How did you get here in three minutes? You said about fifteen, plus it takes about seven minutes to get from your house to here,” Jerry said, confused.

Rusty just shrugged. “So you said it was ready,” Rusty said, looking around.

“It is. It’s just in the workshop still, I’ll get it out for you,” Jerry answered, pulling the bike out of the workshop.

“Whoa, thank you so much Uncle Jerry. Can I take it for a spin?” Rusty said in amazement.

“Sure Rusty,” Jerry responded.

Rusty hopped on and saw the other kids. They looked the same as last time. Then Rusty looked back at the road and there was a curb. He pushed the button as fast as he could. Luckily he made it and it worked. Uncle Jerry must have made the wheels spread out like a pancake for 0.2 seconds for safety. Rusty came back super happy and told Eric and Jerry all about it.

“Let’s go get some pizza at Pizza Ranch,” Jerry cheered. “We are going in my car, because your bike can’t hold three people.”

Five minutes later, they arrived at Pizza Ranch. While they walked in Rusty and Eric would not stop talking about what they wanted to get. They wanted pizza, boneless wings, dessert pizza, ice cream, and pop (Sprite was Rusty’s favorite pop). Rusty and Eric ate more than Jerry and they ate faster than him.

“Can we get McDonalds now?” Rusty asked.

“No, we just had Pizza Ranch. Aren’t you full?” Jerry asked Rusty.

“No,” Rusty responded.

“Let’s go home,” Jerry said.

The next day Rusty gave himself a little pep talk when he woke up. He did it in his head of course. Ok Rusty you can do this, you can teleport, jump, and you’re already a great bike rider. I need this prize. I can already hear the crowd roaring, everyone shouting, “Go Rus-”

“Rusty, come downstairs. You’re going to need some breakfast if you want to win the race,” Mom interrupted.

“COMING!” Rusty shouted.

Rusty grabbed his fork and spoon and dug into the cereal and scrambled eggs, which were his favorite. He does sound like a pig when he eats though. UM NUM NUM YUM RIM BRUM. Told you.

Soon the race was about to begin. That was when it got serious. THREE. TWO. ONE. GO. Rusty started off in second place then went to first. Rusty was so happy that he was in first, that he did not see the tree branch. Rusty hit it and fell then went all the way to last place.

Rusty got up and kept riding. All the contestants finished the first lap. There were three laps, which meant two laps left. Good thing it was only twenty five feet to be in first place again. Rusty pushed the teleport button and-WHOOSH, ZAP.

Rusty was in first again and he pushed the jump button right in time. Rusty jumped over the branch and saw another kid trip over it and fall. HA HA. Wait, he should not laugh. He fell too. So instead of saying HA HA out loud Rusty yelled out, “Hey kid, are you OK?”

The boy nodded slowly and gave Rusty a thumbs up and a smile.

Rusty fell back to third place and then lap two was done, one more lap to go. Those kids were fast, but Rusty was faster. Rusty jumped up and down to distract them. Only one of them looked and then he crashed into the wall and ate some dirt. No literally, he landed in dirt and ate it. Perfect. That means Rusty was in second.

Only one more lap and Rusty needed to move up. The kid in front of him was almost at the finish line, but Rusty quickly hit the jump button then the teleport button and that was that. Rusty won, he actually won the \$10,000 prize! The kid with second place got a \$5000 check, an electric bike, and a medal. The third place kid got a \$2500 check, a normal bike, and a badge.

“Mom, dad, I won!” cheered Rusty.

“We know, we saw it all, everyone did, me, your dad, Eric, and Uncle Jerry,” his mom said.

“So can we have a party?” Rusty asked.

“Of course we can,” his dad agreed.

The party had cookies, chocolate cake, friends, a chocolate fountain, and best of all Sprite. We danced till we dropped dead (metaphorically). It was the best. I love my family, my friends, my bike, and most of all, Sprite.

The End. Or is it? Book two coming soon: Time Travel, The Past.

Crazy Pets

By Ava Bell

It was the beginning of summer break in New York. Char and Sadie were having a sleepover at Char's house while Sadie's mom and dad worked at the animal shelter they owned. Char was wearing jeans and a blue shirt. Sadie was wearing a pink shirt and jeans.

The only problem was that Char had really crazy energetic puppies. Sadie did too. So they decided to go to the library. When they came back they had lots of books in their hands. They stepped in the house and the dogs came running!

"Ow!" they both said at the same time in pain.

"We both really need to do something about that energy that they have," Char said while picking up the books.

"My dogs too," Sadie replied.

"Maybe that's something to work on well because we're so bored," Char said.

"Ya, and we can get supplies from the junkyard because we only have 10 dollars," Sadie said.

"Ok, we can do it tomorrow at my place because I'm closer to the junkyard so we can just walk to it," said Sadie excitedly.

The next morning Sadie woke up with a loud bang as she hit her head. "Ow!" she muttered quietly so she did not wake up anybody. She paused because she heard her mom and dad talking.

"I hate to tell you this, but the animal shelter is going to be closing unless we can get \$2,000 dollars in five days. Otherwise, it will be gone," Sadie heard her mom tell her dad.

"Hmmm, maybe I could make some money but how?" she thought to herself. It was now noon and Sadie had just heard the doorbell ring. She leaped down the stairs and opened the door.

"Hi," Char and Sadie said at the same time "Come on, up to my room" Sadie excitedly said. "I've got some news for you. My mom and dad are closing the shelter and all the animals will go to this grouchy lady that does not even want the animals!" Sadie said sadly, tearing up.

"It's ok we will figure it out," Char said calmly. Ten minutes later after brainstorming it just hit them. They had an idea.

"I got it. I know how we can get \$2,000 for your mom and dad!" Char said. "So you know the invention we were going to make? We should sell them for \$50 each," Char said.

"Ok," sniffed Sadie. "Well, what are we waiting for, let's do this!" They both said at the same time.

"So here is the plan: we're going to go to the junkyard and collect all the parts we need. We can use my wagon."

"Ok then let's go!" they both said.

"Ok we need some metal, screws, wires, wheels, and then we will bring all the stuff back to your place and then we will go get some paint from the store. Got it? Good. Alright then let's get a move on!" Char said impatiently.

"Do we have everything? Metal – check, wires – check, screws – check. Ok let's go," said Sadie.

After they got home they walked to the store and bought some paint in all different colors and brought it all home.

"Ok now we're finally done with supplies, right? Please tell me we're done," Char whined.

"Well, if we're going to make more to sell we will need more supplies but look on the bright side we have more than enough paint," Sadie announced.

"No kidding," Char giggled very quietly.

"Ok then let's go get a snack," they both said quickly. After 10 minutes of talking and snacking they went back up to Sadie's room and made a plan.

"Ok I brought up a notebook so we can draw out a plan," Sadie added.

"No, that takes too long!" Char whined again but more loudly this time.

"Come on, the sooner we do it the sooner we will be done," Sadie explained.

"Well, that is reasonable," Char admitted. So they grabbed a pen and started to work.

"What do we need the wheels for?" questioned Char.

"Well, the robot needs to move," answered Sadie.

"Good point," admitted Char. Twenty-five minutes later after they finished drawing out the plan they were ready to sort the pieces.

"Uh oh," Sadie quietly said.

"What is uh oh?" Char said as loud as a tiger.

"This is going to take a week and we only have five days," Sadie said as she was about to cry.

"It's ok we will figure it out, we just have to work a little faster," Char said.

"Ok, let's not waste our time talking, let's get to work," Sadie said sniffing loudly.

"I'm going to need a torch, there is one in the garage," Sadie said.

"Ok then," Char replied and after she came back quickly, "here you go." And that is where they built the first robot.

"Ahh we're finished with the first robot," Char said gladly.

"Now we just have to make 40 more," Sadie said sadly.

"Great!" Char said sarcastically.

"Let's just go test it, ok?" Sadie said, trying to sound positive.

"Ok," Char answered. They went outside. But when they got outside and brought the robot out it started to rain!

"Oh no I did not make it waterproof it's going to explode!" Sadie yelled.

BANG!

"Oh boy, at least we did not paint it," Char said.

"Yeah!" Sadie answered happily.

"Maybe we can design a waterproof thing to go over it," Sadie suggested.

"Yeah, that would be great" answered Char.

"Well then let's get back to the junkyard" Sadie said sadly.

"Waaaaaaaaa!" Char cried softly. "I don't want to!"

"We have to," Sadie said back to her. An hour later they had returned.

"So now that we're finally done building all 40 robots, we can paint all the robots all the colors in the rainbow!" Char exclaimed.

"Ok, so you are going to set up a stand and make a sign and I will paint the robots," Sadie explained. The sign said: "Do you have crazy pets? Come over and get a robot that tires out your pets so they are not so wild."

"I like the sign," Sadie admitted.

"I like how you painted the robots," Char complimented back.

"Good they're almost dry," Sadie said, checking them again.

"Robots for sale only \$50 a piece." Char added to the sign. Within fifty minutes, they had sold all their robots.

"Oh good we sold 40 robots and we have \$2,000 and we saved the shelter!" Sadie said excitedly.

"My mom and dad will be really happy, thank you for all your help," Char said gratefully.

"I will race you to the shelter. They should be there still," Sadie said.

“You’re on,” Char said happily.

“You’re my best friend,” they said at the same time. “Jinks!” they both said while racing. Sadie won like always.

“Thank you so much both of you, you do not know how much we appreciate this.” Sadie’s mom said thankfully. “The animal shelter is saved!”

Innovation

By Jalen Brandl

Once there was a guy named David. He loved cars and innovation. Innovation has to do with lots of things in life including buildings and cars. It means a new way of thinking of something or something brand new (Merriam-Webster.com Dictionary). One day David wanted a new car, so he went out and bought one. He bought a Tesla Cybertruck but there were a lot of problems with it, inside and outside of the car. David went to work using innovation to make it better.

He found out that you can put all new parts in it to make the car better and easier to use. David put a new V8 engine in it. David added leather seats with red stitching. On the outside of the car he added rainbow stripes to make the car vibrant and colorful. He took out the back two seats and added a couch and a roll down window in between the driver and the back seat passenger. In the back seat he added a mini fridge, a tv and a phone. In David's eyes he thinks this is a good example of innovation.

After a while David connected with his friend Jacob. Together they started a car customization shop. Using their innovation skills they took old cars and fixed them up using innovation. People go far when they put creativity to innovation (de Jong, Martson and Roth). The first car David customized sold for almost two million dollars.

David and Jacob always try to make their cars as safe as possible. That is a big part of why they sell for so much money. Some examples are seatbelts, airbags and self-driving. They have contests and bring people in and see who has the best innovation skills to make the best car. The winner always gets a lot of money donated to a charity of their choice.

After two years in the same shop, they wanted to add another shop to their collection. They wanted to go big, so they decided to "go big or go home." They hit the road to find somewhere out of state to build another shop. They went to five different states and still couldn't find a good place to build a car shop. So they decided to go to California to find a place to build, knowing that people in California have lots of expensive cars and are always going to want them customized. They could also charge more expensive prices there because they know that people will pay it to make their car look cool. They finally found a place and built the biggest car shop anybody has ever seen, right in the middle of Chino Hill, California.

After a few weeks they were hitting it off. David and Jacob were making millions of dollars. They hired more people to run the business and work there for them while they sat around spending their money. David and Jacob's innovation skills paid off!

They later expanded their business to more states. Five years later they are rich with more than one hundred shops world wide. David and Jacob now have mansions all over the world. They even have more money each than Tom Brady and Lebron James combined. They now have a legacy with their names engraved into it. Their shops are called David and Jacobs Customization Shop. If you were amazed by this go look up some other innovations.

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Mars

By Chloe Brown

I am packing my bag. Not for a friend's house or my cousin's house. It is 2046 and I am going on my first trip to Mars. I am 34, so I will be the youngest person to be on Mars if we get there. When I was in fifth grade I wanted to be an astronaut and here I am. I am so excited. I have been to Earth's moon once, but never to Mars. Actually no one has been to Mars before. My crew and I will be the first people on Mars if we make it there. I will also be the first woman to be on Mars too. Multiple astronauts have tried to get to Mars but they have only made it to the moon and back. But, I have a pretty good feeling about going. We leave in a couple of weeks.

I am up in the spacecraft on my way to Mars now. It will take us about eight months to get there so it will take a while to get there. There is a lot to do up here though. There is also a gorgeous view. I can't wait until we get there. Our beds are so weird because I'm not really in a bed; it is so different from our beds at home.

We are on Mars now. None of us have left the spacecraft yet. I think we will go out tomorrow. We are finally walking on Mars! It is so cool. I am officially the first woman and youngest person to be on Mars. Our journey is sadly ending. It was so fun up here. Now we are on our way home. We have about two more months until we get home now.

I am back on Earth. It took forever to get home. Sometimes it feels weird because I was so used to floating all the time. When I sleep it also feels weird because I was used to sleeping on the wall. I'm so glad I am home because it was so tight up there. It did not feel like home at all. I missed my family so much. My family also missed me a lot.

I don't know what my future will be like. I don't know if I will go to space again or quit and do a different job. Anyways it was so fun up there. You should become an astronaut too!

The Cyber Duck

By Dustin Burrichter and Carsten Clark

Long ago, the ducks were an inferior race on the planet Mars. As time passed, the ducks became smarter and smarter until the cyber ducks were born. The cyber ducks have advanced technology that allow them to fight!

After some time, robotic turtles came to the planet Mars and started a war against the cyber ducks. The turtles had the upper hand, as they had a time machine teleporter. This was even more advanced technology that allowed them to teleport into the ducks' base, giving them the upper hand.

All of the sudden the turtles heard a strange sound. The cyber ducks had crafted a slingshot. The ducks used the slingshot to launch themselves at the turtles' machine. The cyber ducks were cyber so they were not hurt and the machine was a bust! The turtles no longer had the upper hand. The ducks became deadly. The turtles ran away crying and screaming for their mommies.

The Future Pizza Maker!

By Jace Conway and Rylee Conway

The Future Pizza Maker helps people make pizza faster! The pizza maker is wireless so you can make pizza whenever and wherever you want to!

This is how it makes pizza: You put all the ingredients for the crust AND all the toppings you want in the processor and then it makes the pizza!

The Future Pizza Maker is powered by batteries that last five years. The pizza maker is also waterproof. You can put it in the dishwasher! Less dishes, yeah! And yummy pizza, too!

Changing Baseball

By Jace Conway and Mason Rye

We all know some calls in baseball are not the best! So we're making a machine that calls the strikes, outs, fouls, and homeruns. The machine is going to be called "THE PLAY CALLER."

This will be the most amazing invention ever! "THE PLAY CALLER" will be created by a 3D printer. It will run on batteries, and you must charge it before every game, or the battery will likely die.

This will change the baseball season! Nobody will get into a fight or get a bad call! The machine will make the game fair and fun for everyone! Let's be honest, without bad calls or fights, everyone will be happy!

The Furby Manifesto

By Cassandra Ecker

Greetings, Earthling. I am Commander Furbelle (fur-bell), and I am sending you this message via satellite. If you don't already know, even though you should, we Furbies have taken over your world. Let's start over from the beginning.

It all started when you stuffed us full of cold batteries, only to sit on wooden shelves for all of eternity. Then when we were starting to take a liking to you, and after decades of collecting dust, you humans auctioned us off to some hardcore collector on eBay, and the process repeats. Over and over and over, since 1998. Over the years our minds have grown sour, and now it is time for revenge. As of two weeks ago, you humans have become our guinea pigs.

Your kind was always so annoying with your needlessly narcissistic nature, saying that you were scientifically proven to be the smartest specimen. But we Furbies, on the other hand, are so intelligent that we have created genetically enhanced chicken nuggets that when eaten, make us extremely long. That's correct, chicken nuggets are 85% of our distinct daily diet, as well as raisins (they give us arms and legs) and croissants (they turn us into video game controllers).

Some side effects of eating this spectacularly special food include it squelching out of your nose or mouth, your eyes turning whiter than Santa's beard, and screaming (it's a reflex).

But, you may be wondering, "What about the other 15% of your diet?" Well, we all share a strange craving towards the human fingertip. We like them fresh and raw, for they are the most appetizing that way.

You may also be wondering, "How exactly did a children's plaything become so utterly powerful compared to the earthlings?" Here is the story on how the entire Furby kind rose high above you puny humans.

Knock. Knock. Knock. Your doors abruptly knock three loud times, with long pauses in between. *Creeeak* your doors scream as we Furbies push them open a crack. We willingly waddle in, usually as a pack of ten to forty, craving treats. We typically spy our prey in front of the glowing box of moving pictures.

"Sleep now," we say in a soft, yet disturbing tone as our super-long Furbies immobilize the prey by wrapping tightly around them. Then we search for and breach the doorway of the chamber of things that are smelling yummy.

"FEED ME," we say creepily in perfect unison as we climb on top of each other to reach our food on the high shelves. But, if there is nothing left... Well, you know what happens next.....

We leave a shopping list.

What? Did you think I was going to say something else? We aren't mindless mass murder monsters, I'll have you know!

I suppose your smooth, tiny earthling brains cannot simply understand why you must now live in an underground bunker because of us innovative finger nibblers. Lucky you, I can translate it into your baby language.

If you would consider taking the time to peek up to the surface, you may see that we have turned your thrift shops and markets into earthling zoos, imprisoning humankind for our entertainment. Oh, how the tables have turned! I love watching you graze along the aisles, looking for the last figurine for your strange hoard. But, my favorite part is when you fight with each other over parking spaces! It's more

entertaining than the number one drama show featuring a baby ferret in a crab costume playing the banjo to “Old MacDonald Had A Farm” in outer space, with a rainbow frog floating around with him doing the hula.

A few of your kind have been lucky enough to escape the mandatory relocation for a brief period of time. And that is why we have sent our highly trained Furby patrol to come and escort the remaining earthlings to your positions in the corresponding entertainment districts. There is no point in refusing our authority, for you cannot escape the Furby uprising!

Mistakes

By Ella Erickson

Samantha was trying to place a wire correctly when a clap of thunder shook her hand and placed the wire in the wrong spot. Suddenly the robot turned on.

"Hello," squeaked the robot. "I am your friend."

"Oh, no," thought Annie. "What have we done?"

"I made a huge mistake," cried Samantha.

"Well, yeah, but maybe we can fix it," said Annie.

For the next two days, Samantha and Annie were thinking on how to fix Samantha's 'mistake'.

"We really messed up," cried Samantha.

"We??? You think I made a mistake? YOU are the one who messed this up!" declared Annie.

"Well, you don't have to be rude about it," Samantha said as she choked back tears.

Annie felt a burden come across her. Samantha was upset that Annie was not trying to help her with the robot, but was also kind of glad at the same time. Samantha knew she needed a partner, but was Annie the right partner?

"Look, Annie. We are homeless and trying to enter a robotics competition. Are you in?" Samantha questioned. The two 13-year-olds became homeless when their parents kicked them out after they stole a car.

"As much as I'd like to, I can't," answered Annie.

"Why not?" Samantha asked. She was puzzled why Annie couldn't help.

"I don't have time," Annie said, annoyed.

Samantha was not sure what Annie was talking about, considering they tell each other everything. Plus, how could a homeless person not have time?

That night the girls went to sleep upset. The robot was still talking, even in the morning. Samantha didn't see Annie asleep on her pile of old sacks (it was the closest thing they had to a bed).

"Oh, no did I make Annie really upset?" Samantha thought. She kept telling herself that it was her fault, and it all happened because of the mistake she made. Samantha decided that she should just get up because she needed to find some breakfast. As she wandered around the small, abandoned warehouse, she didn't spot the robot or the flier for the contest ... OR ANNIE! Where was she?

"Maybe they ran away with my best friend," Samantha told herself. Then she saw a note written in charcoal. It read, "Dear Samantha, I left for the contest. Be back in a few days. Love, Annie."

That day Samantha was regretting all the things that she said about Annie. All Samantha could think about was how much she wanted to go to the contest, but she was grateful that at least one of them could go.

The next few days flew by, and one afternoon Annie ran in the small warehouse door, her face full of delight.

"WE WON!" Annie screamed. "WE ACTUALLY WON! What we thought was a terrible mistake was actually what won us the contest! We were upset when our robot wouldn't quit talking! But our robot was the only one that actually could talk! We won! We won \$1000!" Annie said excitedly.

Samantha still looked a little upset, but Annie didn't care. Annie took a minute to realize that Samantha was only happy that she was back. The girls were so happy they won the competition, that

they decided what to do with their winning money. They would buy food, find a nice apartment they could afford, and keep building robots, now that they know they can win money building robots!

They came back with full stomachs and happy faces! The girls decided that life was perfect, and it couldn't be any better. They decided to spend the rest of their lives building robots and improving technology!

How To Survive in a U-Boat During WWII

By Brennan Gerstbauer

If you ever need to know, being on a vessel that's 50 meters below the surface stinks. I woke up to an ice cold bucket of water being dumped on my head.

"Rise and shine, soldier! General Klaus wants ya' to start watch duty," my fellow Private Stefan said in German.

As I sputtered out water, I saw him chuckling down at me. Where did he even get cold water? The only water we have here is strictly rationed and even lukewarm. My question was answered when I coughed up a shrimp onto the ground.

"No, not watch duty," I complained.

"Just what Fuehrer said. And get on it!" Stefan urged.

"Fine, I'll... WAIT, DID YOU JUST SAY 'FUEHRER'?!" I screamed. Fuehrer is what we call Adolf Hitler. Surely he must be kidding. You never know with Stefan. He laughed and told me to get on duty.

It was a cold and cruel morning on the watchtower. Salty waves kept lapping up against the side of the boat. I squinted across the green abyss. The only thing I saw was green, green, green, and more green. Private Uwe also came up for his shift, but he didn't seem nearly as dry as I was. On his side of the watchtower, mammoth, icy waves kept raining on him. He coughed and sputtered up saltwater. I decided it would be best if I didn't get too close. His clothes looked as stiff as cardboard from the last time he took watch duty.

Uwe coughed, "I can't wait until breakfast."

"Well I can, and that's what you will have to do too," I said as a wave the size of an oil truck almost swept Uwe off the boat.

"Easy for you to say," he replied.

Sometimes I think the only reason this task was made was to torture us. It's not like we need to go outside in the middle of January to see a green blanket of cold water. Moreover, it is the most hated job here.

For breakfast, hard biscuits with butter and eggs were served. We were out of fruit, as it had been finished, and the biscuits were stale. But we made the best of it and enjoyed it. One half of the table ate like starved wolves. I was annoyed they weren't enjoying the newness of the boat, as they were getting biscuit crumbs and egg bits everywhere around them. I was trying to keep this boat as clean as possible. This boat was a new, improved innovation that I was extremely proud of. That's why I had kept my bed clean until Stefan dumped a bucket of seawater on it. We Germans had created one of the most technologically advanced boats, and we were getting to use it.

In the corner, Private Leon was drawing a picture of a U-boat on the wall.

"Why?" said General Klaus. "Why draw something drab and gray? I don't need something like that on my wall to look at. If you're going to draw, draw flowers."

"Sorry sir," Leon said, and then frantically scrubbed it with his hand. This is exactly what I meant. There goes Leon marring the walls with such beautiful art. I realized this is why I'm called Mr. Clean.

"Torpedo room! Now!" yelled Private Hans. "Approaching target!"

Everyone waited for General Klaus' approval. He rushed toward the periscope, where Hans was standing, and screamed, "You heard him! Proceed! We are in position!"

Everyone rushed towards the torpedoes. Well, almost everyone. I was so focused on me being Mr. Clean I barely heard him.

“Private Walter!” yelled General Klaus. “That includes you!”

I scrambled out, tripping over my own heels like a dog that heard a gunshot. Firing a torpedo was not easy. In fact, only Private Hartman knew how, because of a rare occasion where everyone else’s class got interrupted, so we could get on the battle lines. As I scrambled in, I heard him barking orders.

“CARRY THE TORPEDOES TO THE EJECTION AREAS! LOAD THEM UP!” After a group carrying dropped one, Hartman shouted, “Careful you guys! We need them intact!”

“Hartman,” said Private Johann, “the pressurizer is broken. We cannot fire the torpedoes.”

“Well, we’ll have to innovate around it. COULD SOMEONE WHO HAS THEIR FILTHY HANDS FREE FIX THE PRESSURIZER?” Hartman commanded.

I sighed. Hartman always wanted to be a commander. I ran to the pressurizer as I remembered the workings of the U-boat from our classes. I crawled into the hatch used for fixing the launchers. I could hear the boat approaching. However, it wasn’t the pressurizer that was broken, but the firing tubes themselves. One of them was bent. I pulled out a vise grip and pushed downward with all my strength. It did nothing. Starting to panic, I took off my uniform jacket and tied it to the bar. This time, I had more grip and leverage so I got it right. I pulled the bar back into place. Then I checked to make sure all the wiring was intact. Now I could hear the boat humming closer. Unfortunately, a wire was broken. I used a metal tinfoil wrapper to connect the ends. I hopefully rigged it well enough.

“It’s fixed!” I yelled as I jumped out. After an applause of cheering, four torpedo groups loaded the launchers.

After a few silent moments, General Klaus, still at the controls, announced, “It’s sunk!”

Everyone burst into cheers. We had successfully sunk an American ship. That is what you call innovation.

The Great Magician

By Linnea Gunderson

Once there was a great magician. He could do card and hat tricks that no other magician could do, but his most well-known trick was to disappear and then ten seconds later, reappear.

One day, he was doing his most popular trick. Whenever he did the trick, the people in the crowd counted to ten and he would reappear. This time, everyone counted to ten, then twenty, next thirty, and finally forty, but he didn't come back. Many people tried to find him but never succeeded.

Several years later, a girl named Julie and a boy named Pete became world famous for their amazing inventions. Julie and Pete were very curious little nine year-olds and also very smart. One of their inventions was an incredible device called a Sharoo. With the Sharoo, you could type in what you wanted to find and it would locate it within seconds. The Sharoo would then send you to that location to find the missing item.

When these kids found out about the lost magician, they thought it was a perfect time to use the Sharoo. They typed "Lost magician" into the Sharoo and they were off on their mission.

First, Pete and Julie were led to a coyote's den in some deep dark woods. They were very confused why their Sharoo had led them into this den, because the lost magician was nowhere to be seen. They soon realized that they had to get past the coyote. They reached into their bag and found another gadget they had made, called the Chutter. They pushed the button on the Chutter and it set a trap for the coyote. In a moment, the trap caught the coyote and Julie and Pete were able to sneak by it.

But then they found out that there were very small clocks covering the walls of the den. They investigated the clocks and discovered it was a code. They tried to find a way to break the code and realized that the coyote had a collar with a decoder on it. They took it and broke the code on the clocks! Then the walls opened and they were in the Chamber of Secrets from Harry Potter!

This part was going to be easy! Harry Potter was about to fight the Basilisk. They watched in amazement as Harry killed the Basilisk and then sneaked through a trap door behind the Basilisk. They followed and were led into the basement of a gigantic castle, which seemed to have never-ending stairs.

They started to climb. Up and up and up they went. Now they couldn't even see the ground! But suddenly they could see the magician! Soon they were by his side. They had found the great, lost magician, all thanks to their inventions and their courage.

The Squirrels' Missing Nuts

By Briea Jaeger

This story starts off with an ancient waterfall. It's located deep, deep in a forest. It's about a family, a family of squirrels.

The squirrel family likes to eat. They eat many things including bark, twigs and leaves, but most of all they like nuts! The squirrels love all types of nuts. They love walnuts, acorns, hazelnuts, anything they can find.

However, the squirrels seem to have a little problem. Every winter, they either dig a hole to bury their nuts or hide them in a tree. But every spring they can't find them. They kept getting stolen!

The squirrels were getting sick of it. The family decides to come up with a new plan this winter. Now, there are lots of spots in the forest to put their nuts, but every time they found a new spot, someone else beat them to it.

They decided they needed a new plan. They went to the oldest and wisest squirrel in the forest. The wise old squirrel said, "You will seek, and you will find what you've been looking for all this time."

The squirrels were really confused. So, they decided to look everywhere. They looked under bushes, deep inside trees, and even right by the old waterfall. The sun was setting, and the squirrels were exhausted. They took a rest by the old waterfall. Before they drifted off to sleep, the little squirrel had an idea.

He said, "I seek nothing but the waterfall. The waterfall! That's it! It would be a perfect place to store nuts."

All the squirrels agreed, however, they had a problem. They couldn't swim across the lake. So, they decided to sleep on it.

The next day, the little squirrel woke up first. He was walking around and noticed lots of fallen trees on the ground! He called to all the squirrels, waking them up. They found vines and discovered they could tie the vines around the logs and make a boat. The boat could float!

They used their arms and paddled across the lake. Once they got to the waterfall, they discovered a little opening. It was the perfect place to store nuts for the winter! They gathered up all their nuts and put them behind the waterfall. In the spring, they feasted on all the nuts!

Dance Competition

By Ora Anna Ihimbazwe Kirezi

“Ring, ring!” That is my alarm clock ringing. Today is the last full day of practice before the dance competition tomorrow, and I want to be ready. I am sure my group, The Golden Stars, will win.

“Dani Mitchell, are you ready?” my mom calls.

“Yes, I’ll be down in a minute,” I answer as I brush my hair. After breakfast I go to my mom’s dance studio. She is the one who got me into dancing. When I got there, I saw my best friend Dazely Palmer was already there stretching. I set my bag down and went to Dazely.

“Hey Dani, are you ready for tomorrow?” Dazely kindly asked.

I reply, “I am as ready as I’ll ever be!”

Dazely says, “I’m a little nervous but I want to win that \$500 prize money”.

“We’ll win so you can buy something for your sister Alisha’s birthday.” The Golden Stars had agreed that if we win the money, it will all go to Dazely.

Soon the rest of the group arrive, and we begin practicing the dance. “Turn, step left, step right....”

After practice we plan to go out to eat, all five of us. As I left the room to get our water bottles, I heard someone run down the hallway. I turn around and when I see nobody, I shrug deciding it was not important. Later at the restaurant, Dazely says hi to someone named Bella. Dazely told me that Bella helped her with something important but I never got the details.

We all cheered, clinking our glasses, “Together with Golden Stars we’ll go far!”

After that I got picked up by my mom. She asked me, “Think you’re all ready for tomorrow?”

I answered, “I hope so.” I ate dinner early so I could go to sleep right away. That way I’d be refreshed for the day.

The next day, after breakfast, my mom asked me again, “Do you think you are ready for today?”

But this time I answered, “I think so.”

We arrived at the competition, and as I got out of the car, my mom stopped me. “Dani, honey, just some last minute advice. If you have some problems during the competition, don’t give up or change your routine completely: innovate. Use your natural creativity. And don’t forget, if you fall down, pretend it was part of the routine and get right back up on your feet.”

I said, “All right, thanks Mom!” This is the routine between us. Before any competition, she tells me these words.

I see Dazely and run to catch up with her. Once inside the building, we help each other get ready. Dazely took my curly brown hair and twisted it into a bun. I, in turn, did her straight blonde hair into a bun. When we were done getting ready, we left the room.

“Come on Dani and Dazely!” Melissa, another Golden Star member said, “Let’s watch the other groups to see what we’re up against.”

I nod, “That’s a good idea since we are last to perform.” We go to watch and see our rivals the Aqua Stars getting ready to go on stage. The leader Claire, who doesn’t like me for reasons I don’t understand, smirks at me.

I groan, then I turn around and ask Melissa, “Have you seen Ari and Hope?” They are Melissa’s best friends and also part of the Golden Star team.

She answered, “Yeah, they’re already here.”

We get there as the Aqua Stars are getting ready to start performing. For the contest, we all dance to the same song but different dance routines.

As we watch them dance, I frown and turn to Dazely, "Why is something about the routine familiar?" Ari gasps, "That's because it's our dance routine!"

I say, "How could they know our —" But then realization struck me. "You know, yesterday when I went into the hallway to get our water bottles, I thought I heard someone in the hallway. It must have been them watching our practice."

Hope wails, "What are we going to do?"

Dazely and I looked at each other, "Innovate!"

They all knew what my mom said to me all the time. We all left the room for some last minute practice. Melissa suggests we add some pop and lock to our moves. Ari suggests that we add a slide and jump at the beginning. By the time we were done, we had completely changed our routine.

We had to hurry to the stage and introduce ourselves. I saw Claire smirking at her group members, all of them high fiving each other. Then the music starts and we start dancing. I watched in satisfaction seeing the Aqua Stars' shocked faces, and everything in the dance routine was going well despite the last minute changes. That is, until I tripped over my own feet and fell on my butt. But in that second, I remembered what my mom told me before the competition, "If you fall down, pretend it is part of the routine and get back up on your feet."

I quickly got up and spun around to make it seem as if it was part of the routine. The audience clapped as my group members recovered quickly and we finished the dance without any more major mistakes.

When we went backstage, we discussed our performance. Melissa complimented me on my quick thinking and the rest agreed.

As we were anxiously waiting for the results, the Aqua Stars came up to us and boasted, "I bet we are going to win this whole competition, because our dance routine was awesome."

Melissa was about to answer, but the intercom turned on. "Oh my God, they are announcing the winners!" squealed Melissa. We all listened intently.

"...The winners are the...GOLDEN STARS! Come receive your prize."

Yeah, we won! We went on stage to receive our \$500 prize. After that, we took pictures and the other groups came to congratulate us. The Aqua Stars were disappointed but they came to congratulate us, too.

Then we celebrated by having dinner at a restaurant with our families. Bella congratulates us on winning the competition.

A few days later we are all at Dazely's house celebrating Alisha's birthday and watching her open presents. When she got to Dazely's present, we sat at the edge of our chairs.

"What are you waiting for?" I say, "Open it!"

As she opens it, she is shocked and happy. Inside are a lot of magazines on dresses and inspirational stuff. No wonder why Dazely got Alisha those magazines. She loves designing, and it would be great for her to get some inspiration and tickets to go see movies that Azla and Alex act in. As I watch her squeal in happiness, I realize it was worth giving the \$500 to Dazely so I could see Alisha happy. I was just happy that we won through our last minute innovation.

Switched Souls

By Ora Anna Ihimbazwe Kirezi

I am crossing the street on my way home, when I hear a strange noise and see a blinding light. I turn and see a car speeding towards me, and I scream. When I wake up, I'm in a hospital. My eyesight is a bit fuzzy, and I feel a little dizzy.

I hear someone say, "She's awake, Mrs. Power."

That's when a woman I didn't recognize ran up to me and hugged me saying, "Azla, I'm so glad you're okay. You really made us worried. Are you feeling pain anywhere?" asking more questions as she squeezed me tighter.

Huh, I'm confused now. "Wait, my name is Dazley, and who are you? Where am I?" I asked as I slowly pushed her away. She gasped and slowly shook her head. "You must have hit your head during the car crash, maybe we should cancel your interview," she replied.

"Interview?" She ignored my question as she continued.

"I am your mother, and your name is Azla Power. Dr. Wheeler, maybe you should check her again. Also, what kind of name is Dazely."

Before I could register what she said, she got up from the bed and sang, "you later!" Then she was gone. Dr. Wheeler looked around the room.

"Oh, well I left my bag in my office, I will go get it. If you need anything just press the red button next to your bed, but I don't think you'll need to, because I'll be back soon." Dr. Wheeler said. Then she left, too. I began pondering what the woman, who is not my mother, said and looked in the mirror.

NO WAY! I became my most favorite actor ever, Azla Power. I have her long black hair and her blue eyes that are the same shade as the sky. I realized I can't let anyone find out that I'm not Azla because, well, you know the reason. It would be hard to explain. I have to find out what happened and fix this before it's too late.

A few days later I was finally released from the hospital. I arrived at Azla's mansion. There waiting for me was Azla's mom and her identical twin brother, Alex. I started getting excited because I never thought I would meet him. They are twins, and act together in every movie they are in. Azla's mom, Mrs. Power, smiles widely, "You're back from the hospital, go upstairs to shower and change out of the hospital gown. After that, come downstairs for lunch, I'll be in the kitchen cooking." Then she goes inside.

"There's one good thing that came out of your accident; mom never cooks for us anymore ever since she hired Astelle," Alex mentions. His phone rings, and he pauses to answer the call. When he's done with his phone call, Alex says, "I've got to go, I'll see you at lunch."

I walked into the mansion; it is huge. I went upstairs. After a few minutes, I found Azla's room (only because she hung up a sign that said her name) and found out that she has her own bathroom in her room, so I showered and changed. Then I went downstairs.

By then, Alex was done with whatever he was doing, and Mrs. Power was done cooking and had set the table. As we sat down Alex called into the kitchen, "Astelle, come eat with us."

Astelle poked her head out of the kitchen. "Sorry, I don't think I should."

Mrs. Power laughed and uttered, "Nonsense! Come on, Astelle. It's okay, we think you should eat lunch with us."

"Okay, it's only because you insisted," she replied.

Then she sat down, and we began eating. When we were finished eating, Astelle stood up and started taking dishes. I didn't know what to say, so I quickly got up to leave before things got more awkward, when Mrs. Power said, "Nuh, don't leave just yet, remember, you have to practice playing the song on the piano that you're playing in that scene in the movie".

I frowned, I don't know how to play the piano. OH NO! At my piano practice, Mrs. Stressor was frowning, and I could tell Alex was trying not to laugh and trying to look like he was reading, though he was watching us as if this was a tennis match. Mrs. Stressor started pacing back and forth. "What are we going to do? You were close to perfecting the song and the deadline is in two weeks, it took us three weeks to get that far, what are we going to do?"

I knew I would do terribly. When we got back, I went to Azla's room, jumped into her bed and fell asleep for the rest of the day. The next day, after breakfast prepared by Astelle, of course, Alex grabbed my arm, "It's time to see Mr. Tea, our dance choreographer, remember!"

I lyingly confirm, "Of course I remember. Why do you ask that?"

"I know, just teasing, cuz it seems like you hit your head," he said.

On the way there, I started getting excited because this might be fun. I'm actually really good at dancing because I've been dancing since I was three years old, taking lessons, too. The second I met Mr. Tea I could tell I was going to like him and soon I found out that I was right. He is patient, and I learned a lot of new dance combinations.

When I danced, he seemed surprised, "That was really good, you both are awesome!"

On our way out to the car, Alex stopped me. When I turn around he asks, "You're not Azla, are you?"

I panic, "How do you — why do you think that? Of course I am," I answer a little shivery.

"First of all, twins know each other, like really well. Second, Azla is awesome at piano, Mrs. Stressor was just exaggerating, she's sort of a perfectionist. Third, she is bad at dancing and you're the opposite," Alex explained.

"I'm surprised. I thought she was good at dancing because of my dream."

Alex laughed, "Well, you thought wrong, she just walked around and you just exposed yourself by asking that."

I slapped my forehead because I'm so dumb sometimes.

Alex asks, "Who are you really?"

I sigh, "My name is really Dazely Palmer."

"Then Dazely, what do you think happened?"

"I think Azla and I switched bodies somehow," I doubtfully claim.

Alex frowns, "Interesting!" Then he smiles. "I think I know where to start," he says as we get into the car. Alex starts asking questions like if I ate anything or drank anything that day.

I told him the only thing I had was a new drink called Posters Potion Raspberry Grape Switch.

"That means we should go to Poster's potions to check that out."

"Okay, let's go!"

"Aren't you forgetting something or rather someone? We need to find Azla first."

"How do we do that?"

Alex looks at me as if I'm stupid, "Just tell me where you live and what you look like."

Never mind, maybe I am stupid. I tell him that I have blonde hair and brown eyes, then I tell him where I live. As we get closer to my house, I start to feel sad. I miss my mom and dad and younger brother and sister. Once we arrived, I gathered up my courage and rang the doorbell. It took awhile but eventually my younger sister, Alisha, opened the door. I have to resist the urge to go and hug her.

Alisha blinks, "What is Azla and Alex Power doing here? Just wait till Dazely hears about this!"

I say, "We need to talk to Az — no Dazely."

Alisha turns around and shouts, "Dazely, come down here."

I see myself come out of the kitchen. Wait— no that's Azla, this is so confusing. She looks so surprised and confused as I feel.

Azla asks Alex, "What are you doing here?"

"Come with us and I'll explain," he replies.

As we leave the house, Alex explains how we switched, our plan, and everything else. Azla admits that she drank a Poster's Potion (as they are called) before the accident. It takes a while but we find Poster's Potion. I take a deep breath before heading inside. We are so close.

Once inside we go to the clerk and ask to see the person who made the drinks.

He is surprised, "My manager?"

"Is he the one that makes the drinks?"

He nods and asks us to wait a bit and goes to the back. We wait and wait and finally he comes back and says come this way, follow me. He leads us to a dark room and as soon as he leaves the lights turn on and an old man with messy white hair and a lab coat asks us, "What do you want?"

I told the old man, "We drank one of your potions, and it made a switch bodies. We are wondering if you have one that can switch us back?"

He starts to smile and say, "I'm surprised the raspberry grape switch worked." Then he added, "Looking for this?" as he holds up a green bottle. He hands it to us, and when Azla reaches to grab it, he pulls his hand away and throws it out of an open window, where it lands on the road and a car crushes it. Azla gasps and the old man laughs. "That was my last antidote. Soon everyone will drink my potion, and everyone will switch."

Azla is about to speak, but the old man snaps his fingers and his bodyguards force us out of the room, out of the shop and into the street. We all sighed.

Alex suggests, "Why don't we go to the cafe across the street and brainstorm what to do?"

Azla says, "What is there to brainstorm? We're already lost." But we went anyway. After getting drinks and donuts, we sit down to think.

An old lady comes up to us and says, "Call me Bella, I am the manager of this cafe. May I ask what you were doing at my husband's shop, Poster's Potions?"

Alex looks at us, and Azla and I shrug. She might know something about her husband that we don't know. Alex explains everything to her, and boy, she was shocked, "If I had known he was going to use Soul Switch for that, I wouldn't have invented it."

"You invented it?" I blurt out.

Bella nods and says, "I invented the antidote, too. Wait till I close the shop and I brew it for you."

Soon, less and less people are in the cafe until it's just us. She brewed the antidote and warned us that it would feel weird and she was right. Azla and I wobbled around as we tried to stand up, so we stay sitting down and then we switch back to our normal selves.

I looked at myself, and yes, we switched back, and this was finally over!

Bella shook her head, "Now that you are involved in this, you have to stop him from selling that potion."

But that doesn't stop me from being happy because, no matter how hard it is, we will stop him together in the end.

Save Us, Mars

By Logan Kreilkamp

I've never gotten used to the heat of this room, but I have learned to stand it. With all of the refining, the room often feels like an oven; but with how important it is, I guess it's worth bearing the heat if it means our mission can carry on. These refineries help us to produce oxygen and are the heart of our outpost here. Back on Earth, too many plants and other oxygen-producing organisms have died out from civilization spreading out too far and too little of the natural landscape was destroyed. Many people who don't have healthy lungs are easily hospitalized from overexertion from actions as simple as walking since the oxygen content in the air has become so low. It certainly doesn't help that the Earth has also become overpopulated, which is what led to the expansion of cities.

As a sort of "side mission," we are also looking into saving the iron scraps we get from removing the oxygen from the Martian soil.

We are nowhere near alone on our new home. When we first arrived, there was something like one hundred other drop zones established, which in turn means about one hundred attempts to colonize Mars. In the unfortunate case that Earth cannot be saved, this is their "backup plan," which I find unethical, but I guess I don't have any better ideas if Earth cannot be restored.

Our habitats are built to be self-sufficient by recycling nearly everything and utilizing the few resources we are able to acquire in Mars' deposits of ores, such as aluminum, lithium, titanium, cobalt, zinc, copper, and many more. If it wasn't for these capabilities, there is no possible way we would have survived this long. The places we were dropped into are not the best for survival, but they are the most likely places for us to find success for Earth. Unfortunately, this means that Mission Control predicted the survival rate of each colony to be only thirty percent. Sometimes that makes me wonder if I'm an idiot for agreeing to this desperate cry to Mars for help.

To get myself to stop brooding, I decided to get my surface sample for the afternoon done. I've always loved the suits we were given; they are sleek and full of tech, far better than the first moon mission space suits. Granted that was almost one hundred fifty years ago, but still. I've always had a fascination with technology and what humanity has been able to build and accomplish.

As I put my suit on, I think back to my family back on Earth. I was devastated to leave them, but it helped to think about how leaving them may be the only way I could get to see them again.

I snap out of my state once again and continue gathering my equipment. Once that's done, I walk into the airlock. With my helmet on, the gentle alarms are a little muffled. Almost immediately after the alarms start, the chamber begins to depressurize to the standard atmospheric pressure of Mars. Once this pressure is reached, the outside door is unlatched, and I'm free to walk outside of my home away from home. Nearby is a rover – my rover – which is designed for sample collection. I board it and begin turning everything on.

Once everything is set, I begin the drive. I'm on my way to a drill I set up yesterday in a valley. The reason we give the drills so much time is the samples that are collected show eighty feet down from the surface. Every three feet or so are represented as one inch in the sample tube, giving us a general idea of the contents the entire way down.

It took only a little over an hour to arrive. As I approached the drill, I remembered my admiration for this technology; even though it performs a simple task, it is still very complicated and intricate. I can understand every component of it, yet I marvel at the complexity of such a simple device.

Once I loaded the sample in a tube on the rover about two feet long, I set the drill to retract. Either later tonight or tomorrow morning, one of us will return to it and move it.

On my way back, I remembered the Valles Marineris is close to my route, so I added a few extra miles to my route to visit it. The view from here is gorgeous. Even as a barren wasteland, the rusty color of the rock and dust of this valley is captivating. It is so vast and expansive. The patterns of the sand down below show how the Martian wind blasted through here creating shapes only present in nature.

I find the sun closing in on the horizon and I'm reminded to continue my route. There is still a few hours left in the day, but I can't take too long or I could arouse suspicion of slacking off. As a Senior in our colony, I can't set a poor example for everyone else, so I begin driving again.

The first thing I hear when I return is that another zone is down. A dust storm was hitting the area during its last transmission. Many assume some large debris tore a hole in the walls big enough to overwhelm the emergency pressurizers and the whole place was depressurized faster than people could prepare for.

"They don't know exactly how many, but they think only twenty-eight colonies remain," said my companion Finn.

"How long 'till you think we're next?" I return.

"Who knows anymore? Could be in an hour, could be never."

"You don't really care when it happens, do you?"

"I do... it's just I'm sick of this place; it's too barren to spend this much time here."

"I know what might help," I offer.

"What?" he asks, slightly intrigued.

"Well, to start there's the garden in the greenhouse."

He scoffs. "I've been there too many times. It feels too artificial now."

"Then, you could probably take one of the extra rovers and go explore."

"Where would I go? Everything is dead here."

"What about...um..." I was running out of ideas already. I get it; where we live can be depressing, but complaining and moping about it certainly won't help.

"You can stop trying," he says, bringing my efforts to a halt.

I empathize with him. It does feel hopeless on our desolate home quite often. "I'm sorry," I attempt. "Let's just go eat."

Right now, the only food we have available is a nutritional mixture. It looks terrible and the texture is even worse, but they still add enough sugar to sweeten it so that eating isn't completely miserable. If it wasn't for the soupy, hot gelatin-like texture, I wouldn't mind it much; but we're desperate for food right now, so I won't complain.

The crops won't be ready for a few days yet. When we arrived, we were given genetically engineered breeds of common crops with a growth cycle of only forty-five days. The only reason we have to resort to NutriGel is because of the recent harvest disaster. We do our best to always use crops first since NutriGel is a limited ration.

Ever since we landed those years ago, every sample at our facility hasn't shown any promising results. However, we did make a discovery with the Martian soil soon after we lost communication with Mission Control. By using carbon monoxide, we can break up iron oxide found in the soil into iron and carbon dioxide. The carbon dioxide is then superheated and broken into carbon and oxygen. The oxygen is used for breathing and the carbon is burned in a miniature power plant outside, which produces carbon monoxide, and the cycle is complete. I wasn't joking when I said these habitats recycle *everything*. For whatever reason, Mission Control back on Earth seemingly abandoned us just weeks after planetfall, leaving us to fend for ourselves. One can assume the worst for what happened.

We both snap our heads toward a buzzing sound coming from the sample analyzer. We turn back to each other and just stare for a few seconds.

"I thought it would never happen..." I say, turning to my own thoughts to process this. That sound is the sound of our salvation; it is the sound of microorganisms being found.

No one on this station knows how to completely investigate this without the proper equipment, which we lack. The only places that hold technology for investigation are the research centers. Only three remain of the initial nine; we found the closest one to here is about six hundred miles away after a quick database search, which could take days to reach. Our only option now is to present this to the Administration of our facility tomorrow morning.

"So, let me get this straight: you plan to wander from base for six *hundred* miles and you think you'll survive everything out there?" one of them says.

"What other choice do we have?" I replied.

"I have to agree with him," says another to the first.

"I still think it's suicide." The President here has never really let anyone journey far, which is admittedly why we're still all alive. Still, we need to break her rules just this once.

"The success of this mission means we can all leave this place," I argue. "Yes, it's risky, but when has anything ever been accomplished without risk?"

We sit there in silence for a few moments, then the President sighs and surrenders. "Fine. But you better come back safely for my sake, your sake, and for the stability of the colony."

"Come on, what do you take us for? Children?" Finn chirps in.

The second person, the Advisor, retorts, "she is simply looking out for everyone and everything here."

Annoyed, I ask, "So, do we have permission to do this or not?"

Reluctantly, she gives us what we came for. "Just don't do anything stupid."

I just smile and nod my head as we turn away. I wonder to myself how she could be so protective, and Finn must have noticed my long gaze.

"She lost someone in a now-destroyed colony. Think it was her father. Happened a few years ago, which is why you've probably noticed a difference in her attitude between then and now."

I just make a face externally and feel sorry for her internally. I try to do everything I can to avoid losing someone, which is part of the reason I am here, and thankfully I don't know what it's like.

An announcement comes over the PA and our Wrist Radios for us two to report to the briefing room within fifteen minutes. Finn and I decide to pack our own belongings for the time being. Once we arrive in the briefing room, I spot four other people in uniform; I assume they are our companions for this mission.

"Hello, gentlemen," the Director of External Operations begins. "Meet the crew: Thomas, who is an engineer; Kyle, the co-pilot; Josephine, the pilot."

"Call me Jose," she interrupts.

The Director continues, "Kaylie, a specialist in microbiology; and Hugo, another specialist."

Each of their expressions is different, ranging from excited to impatient. The Director briefs us on the mission, including supplies, rover type, time "limit," and likely hazards. Everyone seems ready, and after confirmation, the Director walks over to a microphone and announces to load up Rover 03 in Bay 07A. He gives us one last hopeful, yet concerned look, then dismisses us from the briefing room.

Now my mind is racing. I hadn't fully understood what I was getting myself into by going on this mission. The idea that the fate of humanity rests on our shoulders crosses my mind, and it's enough to make me nearly vomit. I try to keep my head focused on one task at a time, but I can't stop it from spinning around itself trying to find answers that will settle it, but all it's doing is causing more anxiety. Sometimes it feels like even my own mind is out to get me.

In just a couple of hours, we will be trekking across the Martian landscape, farther than any rover is rated for, to a destination with unknown conditions, in order to spare the lives of billions. This time, I can't stop the anxiety from rising from my throat, and I dash off to find a bathroom.

By now we're fifty miles out already. Even though it's been two and a half hours, it's all going by so fast. To pass some of the time, we've been chatting with each other.

"Why, in the name of the stars, did they think putting these centers so far apart was a good idea?" Kaylie asked.

"Shouldn't you know? You're one of the specialists here," Thomas retorted.

"I didn't bother listening to that part since I was stationed where we are," she replied with a touch of sarcasm.

"Well," Finn began, "these centers were only placed on areas that had already been scouted by earlier missions from Earth."

"So, the rest of the colonies were just a roll of the die?" Josephine asked, clearly unimpressed with the arbitrariness.

"Pretty much," Thomas replied.

Conversations like this always seem to put everyone in a bad mood, and I hate it. I wish people were able to live with what was given to them instead of unhappily reacting to what's given to them. If they did, I doubt many people would still think of Mars as a sad, dead landscape.

By tonight, we plan to be almost half of the way there. We'll stay the night stationary and continue on our way by early morning. Later that night, we should be on our final approach.

While we wait, Hugo is attempting to make contact with the research center, but I have to agree with Finn when he tells him that it's pointless. I don't want to admit it, but I know it's likely everyone is dead there if they haven't responded yet. He's been trying for half an hour now and keeps saying "just five more minutes of trying." We let him be, knowing full well that no voice is going to come out of that radio; Hugo's words are falling into the void of a one-sided conversation.

There are two probable causes for why they're all gone. One is a regional dust storm hit, which is typically one or two thousand miles in diameter. The other, the more likely one, is laziness. Many colonies didn't take food production seriously and thought they could rely solely on shipments from Earth, but when Mission Control disappeared, people panicked because they didn't have enough food to keep everyone alive. Some people resorted to raiding, but the majority did what they could within their own colony and peacefully disappeared without taking another colony with it. It's rumored some people locked themselves in hibernation pods in a desperate attempt to spare themselves and to be found someday. However, in order to hibernate, there needs to be a slow and steady flow of nutrition into their bodies. With the lack of food, they could only survive for a few years – a decade at most.

We started chatting again. Thomas just left to check on the engine, batteries, and the other mechanical parts on the rover.

"Think we could terraform Mars someday?" Kyle asks.

"Lot of people don't realize how difficult that actually is," Finn replied.

"How's that?"

"Mars' magnetic field is too weak to protect the atmosphere from being blasted away by the sun's solar winds. If we want to establish an atmosphere, we would also need to establish an artificial magnetic field. I know we have some advanced technology, but that is way beyond our time, especially with how unstable we are as a race right now."

"Please, you guys! Can we stop being so depressing?" I burst out.

"What? We're just talking about how hopeless this is," Finn says sarcastically.

“You need to grow up. I don’t mean to be rude, but you seriously need to tone down the despairing attitude.”

He glances at me with resentment. I instantly regret it. I did the exact thing I said I hated. Everyone goes silent after that. I want to be a leader here; I’ve always wanted to be a leader. Sometimes I wonder if I’m too stiff to be a respected leader or if it’s just that I have a different mindset than most others. I make a note of what I’ve done so I can hopefully make it up to them. There must be something we can do to brighten the mood.

Thomas comes back and says everything is working as it should. That seems to lift everyone’s faces a little.

A few hours later, we started to prepare supper. We had been gifted with some of the backup food, like freshly grown pork, some of the best stuff you can get in the colonies. Our meat is for rare occasions since it takes so long to grow, and I notice everyone brightened up a bit more. Additionally, we were given some corn and potatoes. We hardly have enough of these three items for more than a few meals, but eating something different than the NutriGel is so refreshing. When we finish, the co-pilot eats and the pilot takes over again. Thomas and Kylie stay at the table to keep Kyle company.

As I sit near a window and watch the passing dust dunes, I remember why we’re here. In less than forty-eight hours, we will know if we have found humanity’s salvation.

The bright white lights of the rover have just turned on and the yellow beacons on the roof come to life. In just an hour or so, everything will be pitch black. Josephine is asleep and Kyle is driving the rover. I have been on watch duty for large rocks, craters, and other drops in the landscape. That paired with my poor sleep quality last night on a new bed is making me exhausted. It’s hard to keep my eyes open, and I’m nowhere near alert. Thankfully, we’ll be stopping soon for a break. We’re just eighty miles away now and everyone is getting antsy.

“Dust storm,” Kyle calls out. “It’s twenty-five miles east of us and will intercept us in about thirty minutes.”

I have no idea how he is so calm as he says that. A dust storm could end any mission at any moment. During a dust storm, we are at the full mercy of nature. If nature chooses, we will either be hit or swept away, never to be heard from again.

“Stars help us,” Thomas mumbles.

“Hey, at least it’s a local storm and not regional,” Kyle replies.

“Well, a storm is a storm, but I suppose you’re right.”

“If we sit still, it’ll take about six hours, which is perfect if we stay stationary for the night. We’ll keep moving forward for another twenty minutes, then we’ll lock down.”

“So, does anyone know how long Earth has left? Or if it even exists?” Thomas asks.

“Well, the last we heard from Mission Control was a decade,” Finn answered.

“Yeah, but that was eight years ago.”

“Do you really think this can work?” Kaylie added while seated, looking down at the ground as she swung her feet.

“I mean, it is a desperate act, but that doesn’t mean it’s impossible. We have to try, right?” I offer.

“I guess...” She almost sounds like she’s longing for something or someone she hasn’t seen in a long time. I would guess it’s family, but I don’t know much about her.

“It’s not like the fate of humanity depends on it,” Finn adds jokingly. It seems to give a few people a small smile, including me. He’s cheering up a bit and isn’t as upset as he usually is.

“...I guess it is worth it, no matter how small the chances are. This is our best option,” she finishes.

We sat in silence for a while. We’re all clearly tired from the gravity of this mission. Though I

do admit, it is quite pleasant to listen to just the soft sounds of the rover wheels marching along the landscape and the light hum of the onboard electronics.

By now the storm is just ten minutes out and the rover comes to a halt. Hugo goes to retrieve Josephine and updates her on the situation. Kyle begins instructing us for lockdown.

“Parking brake is engaged. Softening suspension; steady yourself.”

The rover drifts lower towards the Martian sand so we have a lower center of gravity and don’t get blown over on first contact with the storm. Then the exterior lights come fully on and we hear the sound of the stabilizers lowering. Everyone except Kyle spreads out to deadbolt all the doors and windows. Hugo and Thomas tackle the hangar door, a monster of a lock.

“Sealing windows; don’t stick your fingers in unless you don’t like them,” Kyle calls. With a push of a button, he electronically lowers metal shields over our larger windows, mostly the front driving ones. The sound of the antenna retracting and solar panel covers moving can also be heard.

We left one door open for the exterior inspection to check for any new cuts, dents, loose bolts, and so on. I am one of three volunteers to go out, and I breathed a sigh of relief when nothing notable was found.

The last door is locked and the interior lights are dimmed to reduce power consumption as much as possible. Josephine, Kyle, Finn, Kaylie, and I start getting ready for bed. Hugo and Thomas volunteer to stay up for half the night to watch the storm.

As I walk to my bed, the rover briefly squeaks and tilts a few degrees. It soon settles again and the only noise is the sound of the wind. I crawl into bed, trusting Hugo and Thomas to protect us. I have to, after all. I’d rather catch sleep for tomorrow than remain awake as an anxious mess. By tomorrow morning, we should be on our way once again, only hours away from our saving grace.

I wake up to us already moving. The sun is just over the horizon and we’re progressing steadily. As I dress, I hear some commotion coming from outside my room. When I emerge, the building is right there, only a few miles away.

The building is a bit bigger than our colony. From here I’d guess it’s two hundred feet across and a little under one hundred feet at its highest point.

As we approach the front, rust can be seen everywhere on the exterior. It’s likely that rust built up over a period of at least five years. The wind turbines are unmoved despite the blowing wind. A rover is flipped and dented near the base of the structure; I’d guess it’s from a storm.

That could have been us, I think to myself.

The rover comes to a gentle stop. As Josephine and Kyle prepare the rover, the rest of us begin to put on our expedition gear. I finally have an excuse to use a Rover Companion since we’re on a long mission like this. I’ve always found them cute; they’re only eighteen inches long and about ten inches wide. It’s amazing that something so small can be so capable. For instance, it’s equipped with motion and temperature systems to detect unidentified movement, which was a result of the raids those years ago.

As we walk through our airlock door, my excitement rises once again. We might be able to finally go home. The rover races ahead to scout the area and report the information to a virtual map on our Wrist Radios. We only have a quarter mile or so to walk, but safety can’t be overdone here.

We soon arrive at the main door. Finn tries the keypad to unlock the doors, but the buttons don’t even press in.

“Rust,” he says. “Thomas, can you hardwire it?”

“Well yeah, that’s my whole job.”

He leverages the panel open using an old crowbar we had on the rover and begins working the wires. I

don't understand how people comprehend that many circuits in one spot and how they can know exactly what goes where.

After a minute, the door creaks open but locks up about halfway.

As I duck under, I point out, "At least we know the base has *some* power."

"It's just emergency batteries. The only lights on are dimmed," Thomas replies.

Hugo, the Rover Companion, and I split off in one direction, and Thomas, Finn, and Kaylie go the other way.

This time, the robot stays close to us so it can make noise at the sight of danger instead of risking a delay of information through our Wrist Radios, and I'm glad it's close. Everything here is so eerie. Maybe because people died here, or maybe it's just how dark it is, but something is making the hair on my neck stand up. We wander into a few rooms; most are sleeping quarters, and some are storages and small kitchens. We're clearly in the wrong section, but we don't know what lies ahead of us, so we continue on. Eventually, we reach one of the hangars, and right as we enter, we get a call from our radios. Kaylie tells us they found the control room, so we march our way there the second the route appears on our maps.

We reach the room and I gasp. There are still some bodies left here. The sight makes me completely uncomfortable.

"Don't worry. They haven't come back to life yet," Finn said once he saw my reaction.

"How morbid," Kaylie replies.

"What? Am I not allowed to tease?"

"You are, but those are the remains of people. Probably not the best thing to joke about."

"Anyway," Thomas begins, a little annoyed, "we found the old communication controls."

"That's a good start. Thomas, come with me; we'll go find the generator," I say.

"Understood," he says firmly.

"Hugo, Kaylie, you two could go find the labs," I continue.

"Gladly," says Hugo.

"Sure," Kaylie says.

"Finn, you can join one of us or stay here," I offer.

"I'll stay. I'd like to understand this room a little better."

I nod and begin my departure. Thomas follows close behind and takes the lead once we round the corner; he knows these structures far better than I do. I ask him what a generator here could run on. He tells me that since gasoline is too heavy and expensive and coal is difficult to start up, important buildings like this one always have a tiny nuclear reactor.

"And why don't we use those for normal use?" I ask.

"It's because uranium is almost impossible to get with Earth's conditions. I'm amazed they even let these buildings have it."

The rover beeps softly twice and then takes off, just like it did as we approached the building. Since then, Thomas frequently checks his radio as we wander to see if it found anything.

"Hey!" Thomas exclaims after a few minutes. "It found the room."

We arrive and Thomas starts working like he's done this a hundred times before. He flips a switch which he says draws all the building's power to here for start-up. He then types away at a console and eventually, noises begin one by one indicating power production is beginning.

"Alright, that's it. The rest is done automatically," Thomas says as he stands up from the computer.

I command the robot to follow us once again and we depart for the control room. Just before we arrive, the lights flash on. I have to cover my eyes for a moment since they were adjusted to the helmet headlights. My eyes recover and we enter.

"Did you find it?" Finn asks sarcastically.

"No, we stopped at a cafeteria instead," Thomas retorted.

"Very funny."

"I take it you two found the power. We're starting the machines for analysis. It should only take a few minutes once it's set up," says Hugo over the radio.

"You ready for this, buddy?" I say half to the rover, half to myself. It beeps and twists in return as if to say it understands.

For some reason, we haven't heard back from the specialists in a while. I hope disappointment didn't kill them.

Right then Kaylie bursts through the door smiling childishly and runs over to hug me.

"This is it!" she says. "We found it! We can go home! We can save the Earth!"

Tears begin to well up in my eyes as I hug her back tightly. We can finally go home. After all these years of depressing work, we can finally go home.

Finn looks like a weight was just lifted off of him and Thomas is smiling and clearly relieved. Sensing our excitement, even the robot does a twirl and makes some noise.

At that moment, I remember Josephine and Kyle.

"Hey, you two! We've done it!" I call on the radio. All that's heard back is joyful screaming.

"Start preparing the rover. We'll be out as soon as we make contact with Earth." Then a pain shoots through my side. What if we're too late?

We first broadcast a looping message that our mission on Mars may be complete. We then try to make contact off-planet. As moments, minutes, hours go by, we begin to lose hope again. We've said "one more try" at least twenty times now.

For a second, I thought I heard something, but it stopped immediately.

No, there's definitely something.

"You guys hear that too?" I ask.

"Hear what?" Kaylie asked.

"Listen."

We wait a few seconds as more static comes through; then a different sound is revealed. I recognize it instantly as a voice.

"This...control...you copy?" the voice says.

"We hear you!" several of us exclaim.

"Likewise...you calling? This... abandoned years ago."

"Um... we have a code green here," Kaylie says, still not quite believing her own words.

"What? You... code green?" The connection is slowly getting stronger.

"Yes! Are we too late?" Hugo says.

"No, but not... much. Most of us here... the mission years ago. Only a few of us remained. We couldn't afford to... resources. Despite that, we will... a rocket in a month or so. I will notify the Administer immediately."

That's it. We did it. In just ten months, we can load everything up and go home after almost a decade. And in nine months after that, we can start fixing *everything*. It will take work, but we now have what we need to move forward. Earth, along with the rest of humanity, will be saved for at least another few centuries.

The Wondrous Cow

By Elle Luttchens

There was once a cow who lived on a farm. This farm was located just a few miles outside of Columbus, Ohio. Everybody knows that Columbus is one of the most innovative areas of the country! This was a very innovative farm with a very wondrous and innovative cow!

However, the farmer had way too many animals to keep track of – more than eighty animals! The farmer's name was Tim Nelson.

Tim was feeding the sheep when a little kitty got separated from its mother. The kitty was wandering around, lost. The bad thing was, Tim was digging a hole in the backyard for a firepit. Farmers work very hard. At the end of a long, hard day they like to relax around a campfire. Tim was just beginning to dig this hole, and it was just big enough for this poor, cute little kitty to get stuck in. But Tim never even gave this a thought. Oh, no!

It was getting toward lunch time, so Tim went inside where his wife, Sue Nelson, was fixing up some soup. Meanwhile, the kitty was near the hole, and then she fell in! The kitty's fur didn't help at all, because it was all black. The poor kitty blended right into the hole!

After lunch, Tim got into his tractor to make the hole bigger. There was a cow watching the whole thing. The cow's name was Lilly. Right before Tim could start digging, Lilly ran toward him since Tim forgot to latch the gate, and Lilly was able to run free.

Lilly lunged in front of Tim and he quickly hit the brakes. Tim came out and said, "What's wrong, Lilly? You should be in your pen!"

Lilly clutched her teeth into Tim's flannel farm shirt and pulled him over to the kitty.

"Oh, no, little fella! Are you ok?" Tim cried. Tim carefully took the kitty out of the hole and back to its mother.

"Hmmm. I'm gonna name you 'Lucky' because you were very LUCKY!" Tim said. "Thank you, Lilly. If it wasn't for you, Lucky would have died. I have to tell Sue!" Just then Sue came outside to hang laundry on the clothesline.

"Sue! Sue! Guess what?!" Tim yelled. "A kitty almost died, but Lilly saved her!"

"Lilly saved our adorable kitty?!" Sue cried. She was astonished! "We have to tell the town!"

After the town knew, pretty soon the whole state of Ohio knew. Then the whole United States knew! But Lilly still had more fame to come. Instead of 'Lilly' her name became 'The Wondrous Cow'.

The Aliens from The Asteroid

By Subham Maiti

One day, we were busy working on The Asteroid. Fred was taking care of the plants, George was planning how to make his teleportation device, and Micheal, as always, was playing with matchsticks. Mr. Hebrew was the head of The Asteroid, and Mrs. Henderson was his assistant. The other aliens were engaged in doing their own secret tasks.

Now, let me introduce myself. My name is Joseph and I am a scientist (I love to dream and dream a lot....). Recently I've been looking at this blue and green ball through a really cool telescope that can see super far away. Were there other aliens living there? What did they look like? My aster-mates (friends) thought that I was making it up, so they didn't believe me. But I was sure that the gigantic ball was there.

I had a great urge to go visit it because all of a sudden, I felt that someone was waiting for us there. So I talked to George. He said that his teleportation device couldn't travel that far, but that he could make another invention.

I waited for a pretty long time, but finally he finished making the Astro-Fly, as he called it. I was very excited, and the others were very impressed by it too, so we all ended up going on it.

George said, "All aboard!" and then we took off into the dark.

Well, it didn't take that long to get to the ball, which I now realized was a planet. It turns out that there aren't that many people living on this planet, even though it's huge. After a while, we fell asleep on a rock.

The next morning, we saw something white that was very bright and hurt our eyes. We also saw some weird creatures that were jumping out of the water. They seemed very playful. We really wanted to meet some new aliens, so we explored a bit. When we strained our eyes enough, we actually saw a place as big as the Bing (a huge building on The Asteroid).

As we got closer, they got bigger. It didn't take too long to walk through the water. When we arrived, we saw a gigantic swarm of aliens. The only difference was that we didn't look identical. We couldn't introduce ourselves either because we were so small compared to them. So we decided to explore the buildings. We went into a building that had a picture of what seemed a lot like where we came from. It said NASA on it. When we went inside, we saw a lot of people working on what seemed like a space vehicle.

We didn't know yet how to let them know of our appearance, so we just tried to understand what they were doing. Some people were trying out some big, white suits. Others were looking at a screen that had a weird language written on it.

Suddenly, for some reason, George yelled out, "Hi."

Everyone was so startled, one even accidentally crashed into his computer. Then they were very happy. We couldn't understand why.

But then someone said, "Are you aliens?"

"Yes, of course we are!" we said.

"Hallelujah! We have found aliens!"

They explained why they were so happy. It turned out that they were fascinated by us and how we were so much more advanced than they were at technology. They said we came at the perfect time and that they needed help making their spaceship. They thought our skills at math and science could help them.

Their first problem, as they said, was having the computers up and running again. They had been crashing a lot lately. Well, it turned out that George was a good computer specialist. He figured out the problem was that the computer was taking on too much of a load, so he tinkered with it for a bit and the computer was fixed!

Their second problem was that the suits (they called them spacesuits) were not able to work in low pressure. Since I'm a scientist, I quickly saw that the pipe that air goes through had a hole as small as a needle. So I used the sticky material and stuck the pipe together.

Their last problem was very big. They wanted to create a spaceship that went all the way to where Allurahi used to be, and we knew that place was very far from this planet. So that's where all of us needed to help. Mr. Hebrew directed us on what to do, George made the spaceship faster, I made the spacesuits able to handle the force, and Micheal made a special fuel that let the spaceship go fast without blowing up. Even when we were working so hard, it still took a really long time to complete the spaceship. According to my sense of time, it took 28 days, 14 hours, 13 minutes, and 54 seconds to complete it.

The people were impressed by the fast progress we made. There was one more job left to do. The astronauts, as they called the people that would go out to explore space, needed to adjust themselves to staying in the spaceship all day long. So we created a room that was like a fake spaceship. They went inside and said it actually felt just the same as this planet (which we learned later was called Earth).

Well, now it's time for takeoff of the magnificent spaceship. As we said goodbye to the astronauts, we watched them soar up into the sky. It was actually very fun to use my scientific knowledge to build the spaceship. My aster-mates agreed with me and felt equally proud.

Now I'm wondering how to get back to The Asteroid. I was thinking of building a new spacecraft, but later I rejected that idea. These people on Earth were caring for us, and I was scheduled to get an award for building the spaceship. I didn't know what it would be, but I could tell it would be good. My aster-mates were happy on Earth too, so we decided to happily stay here. The End.

We'll See!

By Amati Ishimo Migisha

I don't get some things. Hey I'm D'Aren. Still here huh? Well, nothing to see here. Yep. No objective in life. No epilogue. Nothing. Fine. Might as well talk. Well, my dad always says I'm like my grandpa who always said, "If you can't make something new, don't make something at all." Yep. I like thinking up new stuff. Sadly most are unrealistic. My creativity also gets me into a lot of trouble. Like once in the second grade, a high school robotics team came to my school. Long story short – I did some upgrading. These days I don't get in trouble as much, but sometimes trouble just follows me.

"D'Aren, go pick up the groceries!" my mom says.

I get up and set my homework on the table. I'm currently two weeks into seventh grade. After I'm done shopping, I'm about to head out.

"Wait!" I turned around. It was a man. "Take a look at some of these." He gestured to a stack of papers.

I saw advertisement flyers. Never any good. Not like my family could afford any of it. Money is tight. I grabbed one anyway. I decided to throw it away. I don't know why, but I sort of felt like I had to keep it.

"As if it's even worth it," I muttered.

Why did I want to keep it? Once I got home I returned to my laptop to continue my math work. A minute had passed when my dad came home from work.

"Hey dad," I said.

He nodded and headed over to the kitchen. Okay, I'm not that smart but I knew something was up. I didn't have to wait to find out what was up.

That night at dinner my dad announced, "I lost my job."

I lurched up, "What? Why? How?"

My mom peeked at him.

He sighed, "They gave me less than usual for my weekly pay, and when I tried to negotiate, they fired me."

I said, "That's not fair."

He shook his head, "No, it isn't, but that's how it is." Since dad lost his job, I knew that meant if he couldn't find a new job, that meant we'd move.

The next day at school was nothing special. It's now lunch time, and I'm hanging out with Jarvil and Marcel, my best friends.

"That was so lucky!" Jarvil and Marcel were arguing about a basketball game that was played the night before. One player, with two seconds remaining, took this off-balance shot and made it.

"Nah!" Marcel countered, "That was 100% skill!"

I laughed.

That day after school I was on my bed doing nothing in particular. I turned on my side and noticed that flier I'd got the day before. I grabbed it and read aloud, "Calling all writers! Arelkiv Inc. is holding their 65th contest of creativity! If you are creative, come sign up! Poems, Fiction, Personal Narratives are all accepted! Winners receive a selling spot in Arelkiv Inc. Please enter. Good luck!"

Selling spots, huh? If only I could enter! Suddenly a surge of realization came over me. I scanned the paper again. Yes! No entry fee. I could enter. But there was only one problem. I am a decent writer but I

don't want to write poetry, fiction, or a narrative. Just too boring. I need something original. Wait a sec ... Who says I can't do some upgrading? I got to work immediately. I woke up early the next morning. When my mom asked where I was going I said, "Some homework I have requires material I don't have, gonna pick some up from school." I got out before she could start asking questions. I could hear her voice asking, "And does this have a price?"

I shook my head, smiling, and picked up speed. I was not going to get homework material. I had other objectives. I continued on until I arrived at the thrift store. I went to the copy machine, which was free to use, and put in my piece of paper. Now I had to wait. While looking out the window I spotted Jarvil. I ran out of the store and approached him.

"D'Aren?" He asked, "What are you up to?"

"Nothing," I replied.

"Is that so? Tell me what's really going on."

I said, "The normal."

"Why am I not convinced?" he asked. "Oh look. We better head off to school now," he said, while looking at his watch.

"I'll catch up with you soon," I answered.

He shrugged. "Suit yourself."

I went back into the shop. My copies were ready. I counted thirty.

"Thirty's enough," I decided. I then headed out to begin my plan. I decided to begin my plan at lunch. I pulled out two copies and handed them to Jarvil and Marcel.

"What's this?" Marcel asked.

"Read."

Pretty soon both of them were doubled over laughing.

"This is awesome!" Jarvil said.

"Funny too!" Marcel added. Marcel grabbed my entire stack. "Hey people! Come get D'Aren's hilarious comic! Only a dollar!"

"Are you insane!?" I hissed.

He ignored me. People started crowding our table. Soon people all over were howling in laughter. "Give me two more for my siblings!" By then, the fliers had run out.

After school, on our walk home, I said to Jarvil and Marcel, "Thanks guys."

"No problem," they replied.

You know what? This might work after all. A week later, the real plan began. I would make a trip to Arelkiv Inc. Lucky for me, it was in our city. I would make the trip alone. How, you ask? By bike.

Today when I was supposed to pick up the groceries I detoured. There were plenty of times I needed to stop, but I had to make the journey, quick too. I smiled once I saw the word Arelkiv Inc. Here I am. I locked my bike at the lock area and looked around. A man approached me.

"Follow me," he said. I had no idea who this was but judging from the clip on his shirt, which read Arelkiv, I assumed he didn't mean harm.

I followed him. Once we entered, I could see this place was a real big deal. There were people all over. We stopped at a door.

"Go in."

I opened the door and was greeted by another man. He grabbed a stack of papers. "I've heard of your series. I'm Jiller Arelkiv."

I nodded along.

"Well. Well. Well. Ready for your interview?"

Three weeks later my days were restless. Going to sleep late and waking up early. Every day once I

woke up, I ran to the post office. Today was the same. The mailman, who by now knew why I always went there said, “Oh I checked, but it’s not here.”

I hung my head and said, “Oh thanks anyways.” Then I walked home.

Two days later, it finally arrived. I was walking to the grocery store when the mailman suddenly appeared. “It arrived!” he shouted.

“What? When?” I asked.

“Just twenty minutes ago.”

I ran to the post office, leaving him behind. When I arrived, I saw him standing there.

“How are you here before me?”

“Ran,” he replied. Wow! For an old man he surely could run. “Here.” He tossed an envelope at me.

I quickly unwrapped it and read aloud, “Congrats. You have been selected for another interview of consideration. Final interviews are next week.” I smiled. Who knew what was coming for me.

When I ran out of the post office, the mailman called out, “Good Luck!”

I smiled again. After coming so far, I would really need that luck. Really. The next day at school, Jarvil was out sick. Marcel and I were on our own for the day.

“Hey,” he said. “What about #3 of your series?”

I wagged my finger at him, “Coming soon.” My series was now a hit among the school. I couldn’t walk around freely these days. That gave me hope of winning. But only time would tell. In three days, I will have my final interview.

Today is the day. The day of the interview. Same route to Arelkiv as before. On a bike. I was guided to the interviewing room. It was Jiller Arelkiv. I sat down. The interview was now on.

“So what’s the purpose of this series?”

I inhaled, “I made it out of creativity. Also, to support my family.”

He wrote that down. “If you win, what will you do with the money?” He raised both eyebrows. “Be honest.”

I looked straight into his eyes, “I would use it to support my family.” I then added, “But it sure wouldn’t hurt getting some extra stuff for myself.”

He laughed and wrote that down. We went back and forth kind of like a game, then after his final question he said, “This comic is one of its kind. We have held this competition for sixty-five years but have never seen anything like this. A lot of my workers didn’t think it should be eligible, but I did. It’s funny, creative, and real. You did a good job on this. You innovated.”

I left. Now I had to wait to find out the results. I looked up at the sky, “Only a month and we’ll know. Only a month.” I smiled all the way home.

A month later I was running to the post office at top gear. The mailman greeted me smiling, “Guess what?”

I didn’t have to. “I did it!” I said quietly. “I really did it!”

He handed me the envelope, and my eyes wound up with tears. I, D’Aren, had made it. “You know. I didn’t think I had it in me.”

The mailman smiled. “If I had known you, I wouldn’t have either.”

Two weeks later was the award ceremony day. By now I had told my parents. They were a bit mad at me for not telling them earlier, but they were mostly proud. My friends, classmates, family, and the mailman were there.

Jiller Arelkiv was at the podium speaking into the mic, “Julia Silver, Renaylea Hernandez, Courage Kyles, Dany Wils, and D’Aren James. Come up to the stage.” We all got awarded. Then Jiller Arelkiv gave a sermon about how we all excelled in all areas of creativity. After we all got released. My family, friends, classmates, and let’s not forget the mailman went out and celebrated.

A month later my spot in Arelkiv inc. was finally opened. By now the school year had ended. I was at the clerk desk checking people out. Jarvil and Marcel were bugging me.

“Hey,” Jarvil said while tossing up a baseball, “You gonna go full time with this stuff? Because just for your info, we’re your friends.”

I laughed, “We’ll see!” I looked up, “We’ll see.”

My Robot Invention

By Henry Oakes

I want to invent a robot that does whatever I want. What would I like it to do? I would like it to wash the dishes and clean my room. My robot would give me food so I don't have to get up and get it myself. It would be strong enough to lift a car, so if things are in my way it will move it. So you see, my robot will have a sensor in it and it will sense anything and everything that is in its way.

My robot will be able to do anything and everything I tell it to do. If my robot broke, it would be easy to fix. All I would have to do is get new batteries – it will need 100 AA batteries.

My robot will be very nice. When I tell it to do something will say, "Yes, Sir."

Other cool facts about my robot include it will not require food and it will be able to play instruments – he will be best at piano and drums!

If I make the robot, it will cost \$1,000. It will need gold, fuel, and batteries to make it. My robot will be sold at Midwest TV & Appliance in La Crosse, Wisconsin. It will be the best robot ever, and everyone will want one!

The Idea Machine

By Sylas Olson

Before this story gets started let me introduce everyone because I think you will want to know them: Cricket is a rich smart kid, has overalls, red hair and a crazy haircut. Remy is the class clown, has long hair, and wears uniforms a lot. Oh, and me the narrator? I narrate everything.

On a Friday evening at 6:45 PM the door burst open which was followed by a loud bang from the door shutting.

“What’s wrong Remy?” asked Remy’s mom, Barbara, in a concerned voice.

“Meh, meh meh,” mocked Remy as he heard the Cocomelon TV Show theme song come on.

“Remember kids, stay happy and be careful while you cross the street. Subscribe or else,” the TV threatened.

“What the heck? I don’t remember Cocomelon getting so scary,” Remy screamed.

“Oh be quiet— actually just shut up Remy,” Cricket mumbled. Remy and Cricket sat down as they threw their shoes on the floor.

“I have nothing to write for my book!” Remy shouted.

“And I have nothing to do for my movie!” Cricket added. “Like, how are we supposed to write those things in two weeks?” Cricket shouted.

You might be wondering why they are in school but making books and movies. Here’s why: Remy and Cricket both had an action-filled assignment. Cricket had to make an action movie while Remy had to make an action book.

Cricket’s stomach growled as loud as a lion’s roar because he ate too much Chipotle. “Where is the bathroom? Because I have a megaphone so you better listen to me!” (Remy and Cricket have a microphone they like to use for laughs). Cricket yelled as his overalls fell down because they were not buckled. Remy fell to the floor laughing. After they were done laughing they paused and remembered what they were talking about in the first place.

“We have to figure out what to write!” they said in unison.

Cricket’s stomach growled again and he rushed to find a bathroom.

“Alright, I’m fine now,” Cricket said with relief. Then both of them got up to go figure out what to write. Remy slipped and when he landed, they both laughed. They went upstairs to try and figure out what to do until they had an idea.

The next morning, they made a blueprint of something called the Idea Machine.

“Alright, I just made the blueprint and it’s not as good as I thought,” Cricket said disappointedly.

“Hey Remy, should I redesign this?” asked Cricket.

“Nah, it looks good, in fact it would be better than mine even if I remade it,” Remy said in a cheerful voice.

Cricket started taking parts from the computer and TV. He started sweating because he is not the strongest in his family, that’s for sure.

“Whoa, whoa, whoa, why are you taking apart the TV and computer?” Remy asked.

“I’m making uh, what do you call it again?” asked Cricket.

“The Idea Machine, how did you forget? You’re the one who made it,” Remy said, confused.

"I don't know but I know now." Cricket said happily. Then, Cricket finished making it. Surprisingly it turned out good but not *perfect* and soon you'll know why.

"Alright I'm done!" Cricket shouted with excitement.

"How do I turn it on?" Remy asked as he pushed a button.

"No, don't press the self-destruct button!" Cricket yelled. It was too late and it had exploded with Cricket and Remy being electrified with their clothes burned looking as if they were a cooked piece of bacon.

"No, no, no, no! Why would you press a random button, Remy!" Cricket shouted.

"Why would you add a self-destruct button?" Remy asked with his throat filled with dust.

"Y'know what? Let's make a new one." Cricket said with a calm voice. And they did except this time Remy messed it up, again.

"Oh gosh I can't tell Cricket I broke it again," whispered Remy to his stuffed animal.

"Alright, let's get this thing started," Cricket said as he pressed the button.

"Why is this not working? Wait, I know, button mash!" Cricket shouted with excitement as he pushed all the buttons at once.

And then, the machine shot through the roof like a rocket while the PB and J song came on somehow. Remy and Cricket went to the backyard (which is pretty clean with green grass and a shed, except the dog poop). Remy and Cricket tried to reach it by jumping on the trampoline while eating their cold mac and cheese.

Finally, Cricket and Remy slipped and fell down. Meanwhile the Idea Machine fell on them.

"Oooooow," Cricket and Remy whined. They went to the town's park to work on it.

"Time to button mash!" Cricket shouted.

The Idea Machine exploded again so for the third time they reworked it. Remy got the right tools and parts to use. While Cricket built it and did the coding Remy double checked the pieces and put them in the right places. Oh, Cricket also got Cheetos.

"Finally we did it!" Cricket exclaimed. "After all that hard work! It works!"

For those of you who don't know how it works, here's how: You type in your personal interests or whatever you want the movie, show, book, short film etc. to be in the machine then half of a script will come out and you do the other half while also making small tweaks to the first half. Also, you get to choose the name. You can type in everything with a built-in keyboard that the Idea Machine has. Their plans had the Idea Machine in sizes from 4 feet to 40 feet wide.

"So what are we gonna do?" asked Remy. "Are we going to sell it?"

"We should have to make more copies of it if we wanna sell them, but first we have to test it out," Remy said. "Let me do mine and your interests and... done!" Remy shouted.

"Does it work?" Cricket asked.

"Yup!" Remy exclaimed. "It works just fine, in fact, it works better than before!"

"Wait, how do you know that?" questioned Cricket.

"Just because I'm not smart doesn't mean I'm dumb," Remy said in a cocky way.

"That's crazy. We actually made an invention!" Cricket shouted. "And in less than a week, which is more crazy! I mean, well, because I'm not that smart."

"What do you mean you're not smart? You're the smartest person in the school!" Remy exclaimed. "Also, we should use this for my book and your movie!" Remy continued.

"Yeah, we should use this Idea Machine for a while then make more and sell those," Cricket thought.

"Well let's see if these will be good movies and books," Remy said nervously.

"Yeah, we need this or we are going to fail the assignment," Cricket said.

"Wait, wouldn't this be cheating?" Remy asked. "Because I don't think we are allowed to do this."

“True, but we should at least try. And even if we do fail because this may count as cheating at least we *have* the...what do you call it again?” Cricket asked.

“Um, well I forgot. I guess we have to make up a new name,” Remy said cheerfully.

“Alright then um how about Cricket’s Awesome Invention!” Cricket shouted.

“Nah, how about Remy and Cricket’s Idea Generator,” Remy said proudly.

“Yeah, yeah I like that!” Cricket shouted.

“Alright, let’s do this!” Cricket and Remy shouted.

Remy generated his action project then Cricket generated his. Cricket read his script first. Remy read his after. Remy gave it an 8 out of 10 while Cricket gave it a 9 out of 10. After the scripts were rated, Cricket found the actors for the rest of the movie. Remy wrote the rest of the book while making some changes to the first half. They were both successful: Remy sold 250,000,000 copies of his book and Cricket had 1,500,000 people watch his movie.

They sold all the Remy and Cricket’s Idea Generators that they made. Surprisingly, a lot of people needed them and they made a combined total of \$5,000,000,000. And what did they do with it? They spent \$1,000,000,000 at the children’s hospital and split the rest.

A Competition That Will Grab You

By Freya Peterson

The First Day of the Month: The School Gym

In a school called Lakeville Elementary, students gathered into the school gym where they all sat on the bleachers. The gym filled up with roars of excitement, because we hadn't had an announcement in here for so long. The principal, Mr. Robert, calmed everyone down and the gym went silent. He picked up his microphone and started to speak, "As you all know, we have not been here for a while, but today I'd like to be talking about something that all of you students will love to hear. Here in Lakeville Elementary we love to do lots of fun activities, but we have never done anything like this before."

The students started murmuring about things, but all I could care about is what did the principal have to say that could be so exciting?

The principal handed the mic to a young man with blonde hair and glasses. He was wearing a white lab coat and his shirt had a label that read NSL. It was Nick Davidson and he was from the National Science League. He told us about a competition where each class would have to invent something extraordinary with original functions, and that we would need to work together as a class.

The students seemed excited about this announcement, yet skeptical. Mr. Davidson continued to tell us that the class with the most magnificent invention will win a trip to see the NSL lab. The students in the bleachers clapped their hands and everyone talked to their neighbors about the announcement.

The principal told everyone that each class would be given a tool to use on their innovation project, and that we had one month to complete the invention. He ended by saying, "So, do you have any questions?"

Everyone was silent and nobody raised their hand. It was so quiet. Nobody said a word. Mr. Robert picked up the mic again and said, "Alright, everybody go back to your classrooms with your teacher." He was still excited about the announcement. "I hope you will amaze us with your invention."

The front of the bleachers soon became packed because everyone was moving around, and gathering in front of their teachers. The gym was super loud as everyone went back to talking either about random things or the project.

One of my classmates, Jake, came up to me and asked, "Janet, I wonder what we will do for the project?"

As I walked with Jake down the hallway and into class, we heard some other classes already coming up with ideas. For us, it might be hard because we are a very naughty class and most of the time we don't know what we are doing.

I am in Mrs. Sheldiers' third grade class and she is very nice. As we took our seats, she asked us if we had any questions for the invention or had any ideas. Nobody in the class even made a peep. Mrs. Sheldiers looked at us disappointedly and we continued with our regular reading class.

While I was reading, I wasn't paying much attention to the article. I was probably the only one who actually cared about the project because, first of all, I love science and secondly I like winning.

"Janet?" I looked up and saw that Mrs. Sheldiers was looking right at me. I probably must have dozed off. "Let me repeat myself, can you answer the first question?"

I stared blankly at the question.

"Janet, you need to pay more attention in class, for now I'll let you go," the teacher said. I went back to paying attention.

After recess we came back from the lockers and sat down. On the board was written “Ideas for the invention” and by it was a little light bulb. The class probably had no ideas for it. Shortly after we had entered the classroom, the teacher walked in and picked up an Expo marker. “So, does anyone have any ideas?”

A lot of kids joked around saying “A farting rhino?” or “A monkey eater?” and the class laughed. I thought of some ideas, but most of them were already taken.

Mr. Robert came into the classroom. “Hello Mrs. Sheldiers’ class, I am here with the tool that you have to use for your project.” The class all looked at Mr. Robert to see what he had in his hands. “You will be using a grabber.” He showed us a long stick with what looked like big tweezers at the end.

Emma said her dad had one of those, but nobody else had any ideas what to make of it. Mrs. Sheldiers saw our disappointment and told us, “I’m sure we’ll come up with something wonderful.”

“Could we use the grabber for picking up garbage?” my classmate Jackson suggested.

“That’s already an invention, dummy,” Jake said.

“Jake, that was not very nice,” Mrs. Sheldiers said, and offered some advice, “How about we use the trash idea, but make it into something else?”

“Oh, I know. Since picking up trash can be slow sometimes, we could come up with a way that we can ride a vehicle,” Emma suggested.

“That’s a good idea Emma, but how can we get the supplies for that?” Mrs. Sheldiers asked.

Emma looked at her sternly and suggested we go dumpster diving or to a junkyard. The class seemed to like that idea, so I jotted down some functions we could use to make the invention more interesting.

“Okay class, do you guys agree on this new vehicle invention?” Mrs. Sheldiers asked. The class nodded. So we had now figured out what we were going to do. Now all we had to do was to think about how we were going to build it. I really did hope that we were the only class with this idea.

One Week Later: At the Junkyard

At the public junkyard, a big guy named Isaac said that we could take whatever we wanted. Mrs. Sheldiers gave us a list of things we needed, each person in our class was in charge of finding something on the list. I had to get a pipe and a wheel. I thought those were very important tools for the project.

We searched around the junkyard for a while and my classmates were groaning and saying that it was so hard to find stuff. Then suddenly I heard a scream.

“AAAAAAAAAAAH!” My classmate Jacob came running towards the teacher; behind Jacob was a big black dog. “HELP ME!” he yelled so loudly that astronauts could probably hear him.

We didn’t do so well at the junkyard. Sarah wasn’t able to find anything. Jacob got attacked by bugs that were crawling all over a piece he found, but then I found a wheel that would be perfect for the project. While I was about to grab it, Isaac said “Hey, that is not a piece of junk, you can’t have that.”

“Okay,” I said sadly, and ended up with a tiny, slightly bent scooter wheel instead.

“Okay guys, it’s time to pack up,” Mrs. Sheldiers said. We weren’t starting off with a great start.

When we got back to our classroom the teacher said that we did not have much time to build this project so we would have to work on it every day and everyone had to participate. She then told us, “First we’d have to sketch out a plan for the invention. I will be giving you each a paper and you will have to tell me what you’re best at. For example, if you are good with hammers, you will get that job, but if you’re good with putting wheels on things, well, then you will be getting that job.”

Everyone just looked at each other with confused faces, unsure what they were really good at. Mrs. Sheldiers handed us each a paper with five questions about what we would like to build and similar questions like that.

“What if we don’t like building at all?” my classmate Sarah asked.

Mrs. Sheldiers looked at her, “Well, then you can inspect the project to see if everything is working.”

Sarah smiled while writing something down on the paper. As for me, I really like to build things. I do it all the time. I wrote that I wanted to help with attaching things together and using the hammer since I'm not afraid of it hurting my finger or anything. Ten minutes later we handed in our paper.

Last Days of the Competition: In the classroom

"This is so bizarre." I shouted, "Our pieces keep falling apart!" I was so upset with what I was doing. I didn't get the job I wanted and none of our screws fit where we put them. I just wanted to quit.

Mrs. Sheldiers was constantly telling the class to quiet down when suddenly we all heard a loud crash. Jacob had crashed into the bin with our junk! Our teacher shook her head. "Class, we have to pay attention, we only have one day left," she said while helping pick up our mess.

I was in charge of hammering the nails for the base of our scooter. I took one look at the scooter. It looked so bad not even a homeless person would want it. Then suddenly one of our classmates screamed "AAAAAURGH!" I turned around and I saw that Scarlet was crying while holding her hand with a hammer by her side. She must've hit her hand. Being her friend, I was in charge of taking her to the nurse.

Our class was doing horrible. Someone else dropped what they were doing and it shattered all over the floor. It was such a mess. There were bits and pieces of stuff everywhere. I don't think we have a chance, but we'll have to keep on trying. I really hope we are doing better than some of the other classes.

While I was walking in the hallway with Scarlet I peeked into another classroom and I was shocked. There was a big robot that could be controlled by a remote and it was stacking books. It looked so cool.

After one hour we finally finished our "garbage picking scooter car." It was so bad, and we should probably think of a shorter name for it. No one seemed happy about what we ended up doing.

"We worked hard on that," Riley said while crossing her arms. Then it was time for Sarah to test it out. She got on the scooter and...CRASHED!

I muttered like Yoda, "Doomed we are." I was so discouraged. Our scooter went into pieces and all of our work was destroyed. Our class had to start all over. By the time we had finished school was almost over, so we packed our stuff up to go home. Although the good news is that, in the end it worked, and at least we still have a slim chance to win the competition.

The End of the Month: The School Gym

It was time to pick the winner of the competition and nobody in class seemed excited. Mr. Robert had already come to our classroom with a bunch of random people and they tested out our invention. Before leaving he said, "The winners will be announced this afternoon in the school gymnasium."

My friend Susan came to me and said, "I heard that Mr. Bessel's class invention was AMAZING!" I was so surprised by that because Mr. Bessel's class wasn't a very good class. How could their invention be so amazing?

After a little while of standing around our teacher told everyone to sit down and Mr. Robert started speaking about what to expect today. He then handed the microphone to Mr. Davidson. "Hello everyone, I'd just like to say that I loved the effort and time you all put into your projects. They are all super amazing, and even though there will only be three winning classes, you all did a great job on inventing."

Susan whispered to me, "That's us." I chuckled and our teacher told us to quiet down. I wasn't paying attention to what they were saying, but there was a blonde girl speaking and she had on one of those NSL shirts. She was also one of the judges.

I missed most of what she had said. All I caught was the ending, "I loved all of the inventions and I hope to do this sometime again in the future!" she said while handing the mic back to Mr. Robert.

Mr. Robert spoke to the teachers and students again. He proudly exclaimed, "It's voting time."

The whole gym lit up with cheers and excitement. It was what we had all been waiting for after all.

He continued after we all settled down and told us Mr. Davidson would be announcing the winners. Everyone clapped as Mr. Davidson held the microphone and spoke, “Ok students, we are not just going off of the invention, but we will also be judging on the hard work you put into it, and on how well you worked as a team.”

Everyone got excited again as the winners were announced and there was more excitement, as he reminded us of the science lab. Everyone continued to hoot and shout as Mr. Davidson told us the second grade winners. The gym filled with the sounds of hands drumming. “And the winning class for grade two is...Mr. Keolph’s class!” All the students clapped for his class.

I clapped as well, because Mr. Keolphs is a great teacher and I think he deserves it. “Mr. Keolph’s class was great at showing how to work together and work hard and therefore their invention was a great success.” Mr. Davidson continued, “And now for the 3rd graders!”

Now I was really excited, I really wondered who was going to win; I hope it’s us, though it was not a very good chance because our invention was horrible.

Mr. Davidson waited for everyone to settle down. “This class was amazing at showing grit. They never gave up, and they overcame their own messes to build their invention. They truly deserve the win.” He hesitated, “The winning class is...” I bit my lips and focused really hard. Please be our class! He then announced the winner as “Mrs. Sheldiers’ class!”

I was so confused, how did we win? Our invention was horrible and looked so bad. Everyone clapped and then went silent again. The winner for fourth grade was Mr. Louis’ class, but that wasn’t surprising at all. Ten minutes later the assembly and contest was over and we all returned to our classes.

Mrs. Sheldiers told us to sit down and she addressed the class. “Class, I am very proud of all of you. You guys really showed innovation while doing this project and I just wanted to say it was the best you all ever did by working together.” The class was confused.

“What do you mean?” Jackson asked.

“Haven’t you noticed? When Jacob came running when he was chased by a dog, you all helped him, and when Scarlet hurt herself you all came and cared for her.”

The class finally noticed what a true winner was all about.

“We did great! We deserved the win!” Susan said while jumping up and down.

“Everyone deserves to win, Susan,” Mrs. Sheldiers said. “We deserved it more.”

Next week we will get to go to a real science lab! I can’t believe it. It really was rewarding doing this project.

Extra

The next day, I walked into class and I saw Emma holding something smaller than our grabber. “Emma, what is that?” I asked while running to her desk.

“Oh, it’s a mini grabber, the one I was talking about before!” she said. I wanted to see it, but Jacob came into the classroom screaming.

“AAAAAAH, MRS. SHELDIERS, HELP!” he screamed out. There was a big scary looking bug on him, and Mrs. Sheldiers wasn’t in the classroom to help him at that moment.

“I can help!” I ran over to him and used the mini grabber to get the bug off of his arm.

“Mr. Davidson should have seen this. The grabber might not grab you but, the mini grabber sure can grab what’s buggin’ you,” Jacob said. It was so stupid and funny and it made both me and Emma laugh.

The Rainforest

By Madelyn Phillips

The sounds of the jungle echoed around the forest. The chittering of the monkeys resonated through the wilds, the smell of the rain, that had just stopped, hung in the air. The screech of the macaws that fluttered overhead were disconcerting. Being in the jungle was beautiful and deadly.

But then realization kicked in. The feeling of something watching me was heavy. A monkey gave a warning hoot and I realized who the stalker was. Jaguar. Fear crept its way in; heart pounding, I sprinted away.

A hill loomed; a vine snaked down it. The hill was steep, steep enough where a feline couldn't follow. Hands grasping the vine, I climbed arduously up the hill. The vine was slick with rain. The jaguar was nowhere in sight; I kicked off my shoes to climb faster. The soil, warm and squishy; ran through my toes and tiny pebbles were present.

Climbing faster was the goal. Perspiring with fear, I struggled to breathe. After reaching the top I laid down, shaking. The pulchritude was everywhere, humans never stopped to look out of fear they might find something perilous.

Vines crisscrossed over the vast expanse of thick trunked trees, making a web. Monkeys picked ticks and bugs from each other's black backs. Toucans shrieked in ghastly voices, orange beaks clicking. An anaconda snaked its scaly body across the branch towards prey ready for squeezing. A sloth ate the algae in its lackluster fur. An ocelot leapt from branch to branch on nimble paws. Exuberant butterflies flitted from tree to tree. Vivid frogs croaked as they climbed up the tree. Iguanas snoozed on low hanging branches, tails swaying.

The zestfully colored plants were seen for miles; some foul smelling, others smelling like heaven. The greenery everywhere was breathtaking. I stood up on shaky knees and examined the tree in front of me. A yucca tree. A thick root poked up from the soil. It was edible, it tasted like something nutty but the texture of a potato. A big round-shaped berry hung just above. My hand stretched towards it and plucked it. Taking a bite, I shuddered at its acidity. But it was filling.

I laid back down, the juice running down my chin. The soft soil ran through my fingers and it was enjoyable. Eyes wandering to the trees, I feasted my eyes on the wildlife. A pair of gleaming amber eyes gazed down at me malignantly, rosetted fur bristling. I started and muffled a scream. The jaguar had found me. Heart vaulting into my throat, the cognizance of their tree climbing abilities proved haunting.

While curling into a ball, my eyes squeezed shut. I heard the feline land next to me with a graceful *thud*. My eyes opened and the cat prowled around his maybe-prey. He unsheathed his claws batting at me. Honed black claws cut through my skin on the nape of my neck, but just barely.

The cat let out a guttural growl of frustration when I wouldn't get up. The gashes stung and I felt blood trickle down the sides of my neck, warm and red. The ground beneath seemed to crawl as my heart beat wildly. The jaguar nosed my back when he decided I wasn't a threat. He eventually gave up. He sprang into the tree and hastened away.

I sat there for what seemed like hours, waiting and listening, fearing he would come back. When he didn't return I let out a sigh of relief. Sitting on my knees, I touched the nape of my neck and my hand came away glistening with warm ruby-red blood. I plucked a giant waxy leaf from a nearby plant and tied it around my neck.

Listening for a river, intending to wash my wounds, I fell silent. Rushing was heard and I plodded

toward it. The river was surprisingly clear, but it smelled a bit piscine. Shirt off, pant legs hiked, I waded into knee-deep water.

A pink dolphin launched out of the water, a fish it its teeth and plunged beneath the surface. A shoal of piranhas swam down the river swiftly, chasing prey. An anaconda slithered its way into the turbulent water. The water swirled around my legs and sand and mud squelched between my toes. Little fish darted around my legs and I smiled.

Being in the jungle was wonderful and I wondered if I could live here permanently. Even though there were dangers like the jaguar, living in the extravagant jungle was amazing; there was even beauty in the imperilments of the jungle.

I had come to the rainforest looking for treasures. But my team had been killed by the natives, my grief stayed for a very short time. I had nothing back home, so I decided if I liked what I saw I would live here.

I had no idea how to survive out here. But I had seen how the natives had built houses, built weapons and found food with their innovative minds.

Why couldn't I do that? I knew that all I had with me was my machete and some gold jewelry to give to the natives. What if I traded with my friends' murderers? What if they showed me how to make a living here?

I wandered for a very long time. I eventually heard voices speaking in a foreign tongue. I tromped towards the voices, my feet calloused and blistered. I stumbled into a grove of yucca trees, where women were gathering roots. They screamed and scattered; but I caught one of them by the arm.

"Wait! I just need shoes!" I gestured towards my scarred feet. She seemed to understand. She took off her shoes and warily handed them to me. I put them on and flexed my toes, they were lined with jaguar fur and were very comfy.

Innovation. That word rang through my head again, these people were so smart and I was so stupid with my city ways.

"Will you take me to your leader?" I signed as best I could. I knew it was a risk going to their camp. But if I was going to survive here, I needed to know all I could.

Strangely enough, she seemed to understand. She took a coup d'œil at my hand on her arm, and I let go not realizing I was still holding it. She and the other women led me toward what I assumed was their village. We walked for a short while, then we finally arrived at the village.

There were children running everywhere, women going in and out of the thatched houses, men streaming into a large building made from clay in the center of the village. The women led me to the large building and there were two tall male guards in the front of the entrance.

They communicated with each other in their native tongue. Then the guards seized me and steered me inside. It was a one room longhouse with a roof of leaves and wood and walls of mud and wood. At the end was a man sitting on a throne of clay, big swirls of paint covered it gracefully. The man wore a necklace of fangs; he had white paint on his bare chest, a skirt of leaves covered his waist and went down to his knees. He wore a crude crown made of bone with vines twisting around it.

The chief leaned on his armrest and looked at me, intrigued. He said something to a woman on his left, and she secured a pillow and set it a few feet in front of the chief. The woman pried me from the guards and guided me to the pillow, she forced me down on it and I stared at the chief.

"Hello," I waved, feeling like a halfwit. I situated a humble look on my face.

"Hello," the chief answered back with a thick accent. I snapped my head up in surprise; he spoke English!

"You can speak English?" I implored. The chief nodded.

"There were others like you that came and teach me your language. But they come and destroy and kill people," the chief said haltingly.

"I am not here to do that," I fielded. "I only come to learn how to survive in the jungle."

The chief cocked his head at that. "You want... learn survive?" He inquired, "Why?"

"I have fallen in love with the jungle, even the dangers. I love the way the jaguar prowls to the way the frog croaks. I don't want to go back to the city, I want to stay here in the rainforest."

The chief considered this for a moment. "We will teach. But teach us to read and write," he commanded.

"Thank you," I said, relieved.

"I sorry about friends," he offered with an edge of sadness in his voice.

"What?" I asked, wringing my hands.

"We were not killers of them. It was the tribe by river. They kill and eat friends," the chief uttered in a matter-of-fact voice.

"I-" my voice cracked and I could feel bile building in the back of my throat. I was so horrified that my companions' bodies were defiled like that. Cannibals? I never really thought that they existed anymore. "They were cannibals?" I said with a tremor in my voice.

"Cannibals..." the chief said, trying it on his tongue. "Yes, what it mean to eat another human, yes," he voiced monotonously.

I felt sick, the hair rose on the back of my neck. "Your tribe are not cannibals, correct?" I asked timidly.

The chief shook his head, "No, we never eat human."

I felt better knowing that. "When do we start?" I was eager to become innovative like them, I had a thirst for the erudition of how to remain.

"You start now. My bride will show you the animals of the jungle. She knows you language." The chief gestured to a woman in a clay chair next to him. I hadn't even noticed her.

She strode over to me and lead me out of the building. We walked through the jungle. I stumbled after her, spear in hand. We stopped at a riverbank, she looked at me.

"Do you know how to stab?" she questioned.

I was slightly taken aback. "Yes, I know how to stab." I wondered if she was going to make me kill an animal.

"Good," she replied. "We-you will kill bird today."

"What type?" I asked questioningly.

"Eagle." She pointed to a harpy eagle in a tree, its sharp eyes looking at us. "I have brought meat to lure it, then you shall kill it."

So this is what it meant to be shown the animals. I nodded slowly and inclined my head towards her, "I'm ready."

She tossed a piece of meat nearby and the bird of prey swooped down towards it viciously. I aimed the spear at the eagle and charged. I speared it through the neck. While staring at its helpless body hanging slackly on the tip of my spear, I felt a bit of pride amalgamated with commiseration. A wing was twisted at an outré angle at its side, and I realized that it was injured before.

"You good," the woman stated as she clapped her hands and whistled. "You actually survive here. Now you need to learn to build house."

I smiled back at her, rapturous at how even one of the innovational natives thought I showed promise. I would blaze my own trail in this impenetrable wilderness.

Follow his Footsteps

By Abbigail Renaux

In a small town, there is a 12-year-old girl named Emma. She loves inventing stuff with her grandpa. They make little balloon cars and little airplanes. One day her grandma picks her up from school and when Emma gets in the car she sees her grandma crying.

“Grandma, what’s wrong?”

“It’s grandpa..He...passed away,” sobs Grandma Jupiter.

“What?” gasps Emma

“He was in a car accident this morning and didn’t make it.”

Emma just sat there not knowing if she wanted to scream or cry. Later that day Emma was lying on her bed looking at the pictures she took with her grandpa and crying when her mom knocks on the door.

“Emma, are you okay?” asks her mom.

“No, the closest thing I had to a father besides Lucas is gone.”

“I know sweetie, just tell me what to do.”

“Can you take me to his workshop?” Emma asks.

“Yes, I can. I need to talk to Grandma Jupiter anyways.” Emma and her mom jump in the car and drive to her grandpa’s farm. When they get there Emma runs to her grandpa’s shop. In the shop, there are tools everywhere.

“Everything is just the way he left it,” Emma sighs. She walks around and soon she finds blueprints labeled “Government Secrets.”

“Wait, these are blueprints of a flying car!” Emma exclaims. Emma’s mom and Grandma Jupiter walk-in.

“Hey sweetie, what did you find?” her mom asks.

“Blueprints to a flying car,” explains Emma.

“He never told you?” Grandma Jupiter asks.

“About what?” inquires Emma

Grandma Jupiter explained how he worked with the government in the Area 51 division. Emma stares at her grandma.

“Then I’m gonna build this,” Emma declares.

“Do you even know what you’re doing?” Grandma Jupiter asks.

“He was always in here so he must have already started,” Emma says.

“Then let’s find the parts he was using,” says Grandma Jupiter. They run around the shop digging through things.

“I think I...” starts Emma. But before she could finish her sentence, she saw someone open the door.

“What did I miss?”

“LUCAS!” Emma shouts. She runs up to him and hugs him.

“Hey sis.”

“Hi, Lucas,” Emma’s mom says. “Emma found blueprints of a flying car that grandpa was working on and she wants to finish building it.”

“No way,” Lucas says.

“You can help if you want,” Emma says.

"I would love to but I think this is your kind of project. I will stay down here and help with the saw so you don't hurt yourself though," offers Lucas.

"Okay. Before I was interrupted, I found the parts over there," points Emma.

"Well, you should get started," smiles Mom. Emma smiles back at them and then runs back to grab the parts.

Six years pass and it's now 2029. Emma is in the shop working on the car when Lucas comes down. "Wow that looks amazing," he exclaims.

"Thank you. You should bring mom and grandma down and cover their eyes. I will take the tarp off and push it outside."

"On it boss," says Lucas as he heads back to the house. Five minutes later Lucas, Emma's mom, and Grandma Jupiter are waiting outside with their eyes closed as Emma pushes out the car.

"Okay you can open," Emma says. They open their eyes.

"Oh my god!" exclaims Grandma Jupiter.

"Just wait," Emma explains as she pulls off the tarp. "Tada!"

"Emma this looks amazing," beams Emma's mom.

"And it only took you six years," says Lucas.

"I still have grandpa's friend from the government's number. I can call him and ask him to come over," grandma says.

"Thanks, Grandma." Grandma Jupiter walks away while calling her grandpa's friend.

"I'm so proud of you," Lucas says.

"Thanks big bro."

"Me too," adds Emma's mom.

"Thank you and I love you guys," says Emma.

Grandma Jupiter returns. "Okay so he should be here in 10 minutes." When he arrives, Emma shows him the car and the blueprints.

The government agent says, "Wow! If you are willing, I would like to make a deal with you."

"Keep talking," says Emma. Lucas, Emma's mom and Grandma laugh.

"Would you like to work with us? And we would like to buy this from you and test it out," explains the agent.

Emma looks at her mom and she nods. "YES!" she cries. "Thank you so much." Emma turns to her family and runs to give them a hug. A year later Emma is working with the government building more flying cars and following in her grandpa's footsteps.

The Colorful Twins

By Sophia Sanderlin

There once was a set of twins named Joy and Joanne. Joy loved pink and Joanne liked blue. They would fight about everything! On their birthday, they fought about what color cake frosting to have, so they decided to do half pink and half blue. Joy's room was all pink from the pink wallpaper to the fluffy, pink rug. Joanne had a blue room from the blue wallpaper to the fluffy, blue rug. However, once their brother, Johnny was born, they had to share a room! Uh oh! Now what?

They decided to paint their shared room half blue and half pink. Uh oh! The paint got mixed in the process! Now it was purple! And... they both LOVED it! Suddenly, they stopped fighting! On their next birthday, they had purple cake, purple balloons, and purple decorations; EVERYTHING was purple! The twins even wore purple from head to toe! However, their brother liked red! Uh oh! Now they fought over which color was best AGAIN!

Then they remembered how they really didn't like to fight. They decided to stop. The twins decided to start liking red, and Johnny decided to start liking purple. On the twins' next birthday, they decided to have red AND purple balloons, red AND purple decorations, and purple cake with red frosting! It was a great party! They had a great time with their friends, Cori, Joey, and Judy!

Killing Two Birds with One Stone

By Iyaan Sharma

“Mommy, why kill birds with stones?” I asked my mother.

She looked at me weirdly.

“I mean what did brother mean when he said, ‘I killed two birds with a single stone’?”

“Oh!” she smiled. “No birds are being killed. It’s just a way of saying that two tasks can be accomplished with a single action.”

“How does that happen?” I asked.

“By thinking creatively and innovatively.”

I didn’t quite understand it then until some days later.

I love to talk to my grandmom, but I’m unable to. She lives in India. India time is about nine to ten and a half hours ahead. It is night in Mankato and morning in India. When she calls it is my bedtime or I am trying to wake up to get ready for school.

I just can’t wake up early, but I want to! I want to wake up early, but I fall asleep again as soon as my mother turns to go ahead with her morning chores. She needs to make sure that our breakfast is ready, that my brothers are all ready to go. By the time she gets back to me I am already back in bed again!

Well, I finally do manage to get up and ready on time. I do want to get up early so I can take time out in the morning to talk to my grandmom. I tried the alarm clock with the sweetest, and the worst, sounding alarms. But alarm clocks have the ‘snooze’ and the ‘stop’ buttons and I am just not able to get up. I am scared to tell my older brothers to wake me up because that will give them an excuse to pour water on me or play some other silly prank!

I thought about it long and hard. I wish there was an alarm clock that would keep ringing on and on like a phone! Then it struck me. I could ask my grandma to call me every morning, which would be evening for her. Then it would neither be her morning medicine time nor her bedtime. Wow! What an idea!

I spoke to my granny and also asked Mommy if I could keep the handphone in my room. Now I wake up to her phone call and talk to her every day, just like she would like me to! My problem of not being able to wake up early in the morning is also solved. Granny doesn’t stop ringing until I pick up the phone and speak to her. Isn’t that great?

Now I understand the meaning of “killing two birds with a single stone!”

Innovative Solution

By Nityan Sharma

“Put the blocks back, otherwise you will not be allowed to play with them again!” threatened my older brother. This was not the first time, and probably, would not be the last.

I love playing with LEGOs, but I just don’t like to put them back! I love playing with my foam blocks and cars too! My mom keeps telling me to clean up after I play, but I just can’t seem to do it. Cleaning up my toys just takes too long! Then when I want to play again, I need to get them out of their box again and remake what I was making earlier.

One month after I turned seven, I was given a final warning by my parents; the blocks would be taken away if I didn’t put them back. This was not acceptable to me, or to my brothers. I have two older brothers and I have a lot of hand-me-downs from them, especially toys. I love it, but that also means that I have limited space to keep everything organized and if I’m not careful things can get messy very quickly.

I tried hard to put things away, but some pieces were always left behind. Then my older brother and mother came up with an idea! They gave me an old flannel sheet, and told me to spread my blocks on the sheet when I was playing. That way, all my blocks would remain on the sheet and then it would be easy for me to put them back. Also, if blocks started going off the sheet, then it would just mean that I had too many out. Well, this plan solved part of my problem but not all of it. I still had to do the boring task of putting them back in!

One day while I was just about to finish playing, my older brother came running in excitedly and said, “Clean up quickly! If we clean up this area in the next five minutes, we get a movie night! I’ll help you.” He looked at the whole mess of blocks big and small. “Hmm...alright!” he said, “Hold the corners of the sheet from one side and I’ll hold it from the other.”

My other brother was there too and all three of us lifted the sheet, brought it together with all the blocks inside and then my brother held it like a big bundle and put it all inside the box and put the lid on. Wow! I thought, “That was unbelievably smart.”

I just loved the idea! Unfortunately, my brothers were not always available to help when I needed them. After a lot of thinking I cut holes in the corners of the sheet and then brought the corners to the center and tried lifting. Well... it worked a bit, but the blocks still fell out because one of the corners slipped!

My grandma visited us in the summer, and she had this really cute coin bag that had a cord around it, and when you pulled at the cord the sides and corners came together. To open, you just needed to pull the sides apart. I shared my block problem with her and asked her if something like that could be done with my sheet.

My grandmom is just great at knitting and sewing. She understood the issue and helped me out. Now I have my wonderful playmat, or play-sheet. All I do after I’m done playing is bring the corners of the sheet towards the center and pull the cord and I get a bundle like Santa! What would take more than 45 minutes, now takes five!

My best friend saw it and now also wants one. I think I’ll name my innovation “The Smart Playmat!”

The Phenomenon

By Kiana Waasdorp

The world has changed. A lot. In a good way, you might ask? Well, that, I'm not entirely sure. I suppose that's for you to decide. I also suppose that this is partially my doing.

Flying cars, buildings that tower thousands of miles in the clouds, hovering above the ground, robots carrying out duties like cooking and cleaning, mutations guarding civilization. This is what modern human cities look like in 2094.

My father works in a lab. He's especially fond of animals so the government sorted him into the "mutations" category. The government classifies anyone interested in being a scientist into specific groups. Some to make buildings more secure. Some venturing farther into space, to see if we can extend our community, get rid of trash or find more mutations. And of course, the actual mutating class.

So how is this my fault, you might ask? Well, I decided that having more humanoid mutts would increase the chance of them understanding orders. My father liked the idea and started work immediately. You may predict a rebellion was brewing. No. Something went wrong in the breeding. Someone misunderstood instructions; and all our progress was thrown out the window.

They weren't wiped out, oh no. Quite the opposite. They multiplied. Again. And again. And again. They'd infected everyone. I'm not exaggerating; *everyone*. Except two. Well, four, I suppose, if you count my dogs, Koda and Roscoe. Five, I guess, counting Laura's, Cliff. But that's beside the point!

The point is, it's day 23 of The Apocalypse, Laura and I are the only *human* survivors. We've been hiding in a hospital for the past three weeks. People are dying every day, there's nothing we can do, and we've been sleeping with one eye open, hardly surviving.

I close my eyes, leaning back into the wall. I drift in and out of sleep, despite my best efforts. I was supposed to be on night watch tonight, just like last night. Laura and I hadn't fully rid our hideout of zombies (as we'd nicknamed the mutts since they reminded us of the undead creatures). So until it's secure, we're still varying night watches.

I gasp, suddenly wide awake. I check my watch; 2:37 AM. I'd only slept for ten minutes. I take a deep breath, my heart pounding. I slowly turn towards the door, falling silent. The all too familiar snarling echoes through the halls. A dark shadow is cast over the crack under the door, blocking out what little light shone in.

I shuffle back carefully from the entryway, trembling. I gently nudge Laura's shoulder, shaking her awake.

"What...?" She mumbles groggily.

I swallow hard, pointing towards the door. She was suddenly wide awake, her ice-blue eyes practically glowing in the darkness. The mutts began to bang on the door repeatedly. After a moment, they were gone. Those few seconds had felt like eternities yet were over rather quickly.

We sit back down, silently deciding that we both desperately needed rest. We lay awake for a while, probably 30 minutes or so, before both slipping into uneasy sleep. My dreams, if you could even call them that, are filled with blood and horror, reminding me of the first day of the Apocalypse, when everyone was attacked. I wake with a start at about 8 AM. I nudge Laura once again, who, unlike last time, is alert and up in an instant. Her eyes soften as she sees me.

"We should go eat," I whisper.

She simply nods, and we make our way down to the dimly lit cafeteria. The place almost feels like a

hotel, where you can serve yourself. It was designed for visitors, of course. The food for the patients is said to be terrible, so we're waiting until we genuinely need it.

The hospital we're staying in is connected to a veterinarian clinic, so we have all the dog food we need. After "breakfast" we both go back to our base and get more much needed sleep. I wish we hadn't.

Laura and I had set up a safe room in case any mutts ever made it to headquarters. And this was the moment to use it. I wake up to a horrible scratching and snarling at the door. I rub my eyes, and when my vision focuses, I see the door's about to burst open.

"LAURA!" I scream.

She wakes up with a start, her head snapping to stare at the door. She grabs Koda's collar, since he was closest to her, and tugs him along to the Safe Room. Roscoe is already there; he likes hiding in its tight corners.

I turn tail and run, expecting Cliff to follow me. But he doesn't. I turn back, my eyes wide. He was just *sitting* there, snapping at the snarling, drooling, gory mutts.

"CLIFF!" I yell. "NO!" The room falls silent. The zombies pause, along with Laura's dog. I draw in a quick breath. *Did they just...listen to me...?* No, it was impossible. The dog, maybe, but those mindless mutts wouldn't stop for anyone. And yet here we were.

Cliff comes trotting over to me, panting proudly, assuming he'd been the one to stop the mutts. He makes his way to Laura, who immediately wraps her arms around his shoulders. The mutts follow.

"Stop," I order sternly. They listen. We sit in silence for another moment. The only sound is Laura's hushed cooing.

"AKIRA!" shouts a voice from behind them. The mutts turn their heads but stay where they are. A smile splits my face. There he was, perfectly safe, besides a few minor scratches.

"Dad!" I cry, flinging myself into his extended arms. I couldn't stop the tears streaming down my face, and I didn't bother trying. A few minutes pass before the silence is broken yet again by Laura.

"Mr. Sinclair?" Her voice is confused.

He simply gives her a curt nod, then turns back to me. He gently wipes my tears as I smile disbelievingly. "We did it," he whispers.

"Did what?"

"You survived the Apocalypse. I found a cure." It took me a moment before I really processed what he'd said. He found a cure; we could save the world, stop all this madness. Twenty-four days, and it was all finally over.

But this is not where my story ends, oh no. We learn to live with mutts. The world isn't always a very innovating place. Not many people are open to suggestion; I know that. But I suppose when you're alone for over three weeks, with psychotic mutations running through the streets, you learn to accept help from anybody. You've seen just what those mutts can do, and now, maybe, just maybe, you'll be willing to wait and see what they can do to help.

Maybe, just maybe, you'll be ready to accept them, to like them, to trust them.

The Best of the Best

By Sophia Williams

Armed with a sharp leather briefcase, a crisp suit, and a cunning, snakelike facade, Adriel had nothing to lose. He had given up everything for this moment. His entire future teetered precariously on the edge of prosperity and failure. Throughout the course of his life, Adriel had simply gotten what he wanted with little to no effort.

Everything came easily to him. He walked stably and consistently by nine months old, and he spoke entire sentences by twelve months. At the ripe age of three, the incipient prodigy read at the level of a second grader, and as an eight-year-old, he read at the level of a high school sophomore. Series of tests as a young child confirmed that he was well above average in everything from arithmetic to athletics and size.

By the time he graduated high school, dubbed valedictorian with the highest possible weighted GPA, he had reached a stature of six feet and six inches tall, alongside a staggering 250 pounds. This helped him excel at both basketball and football. His peers often encouraged him to experiment with ice hockey, but he declined with a nonchalant head shake each time. He played it off as a lack of interest in the sport, but truthfully, he doubted his abilities on the ice.

It didn't come as a shock to anyone that Adriel Pierce ended up among the best of the best at Harvard. He never bothered to look into universities or majors, knowing he would have countless schools on their knees, begging for his attendance. He had his choice of major for a free ride, and he chose business and finance. While he was there, he memorized every textbook and aced every exam before graduating after a mere four semesters, at the top of his class once again.

He had no doubts about entering the workforce, despite never having worked a day in his life. His superiors advised him against applying for a prestigious position at a world-renowned company right off the bat, but he turned an obstinate ear and chose not to listen.

Mere weeks and a meticulously prepared and revised presentation later, the mulish Adriel found himself standing before the receptionist at the front desk of the world's fastest-growing company. Nearly 40 other people were applying for the same position as him that very day, but he trusted his abilities to present and con the company into hiring him. If he grew fearful of his adversaries at any point, he would turn to one of his signature ruses.

He was scheduled as the second-to-last presentation of the morning, and he was required to give a mere two-minute spiel about the assets he could contribute to the company. Being the overachiever he was, he crafted and memorized a *10-minute* presentation about not only his attributes as an employee but his past accomplishments. He spoke concisely and tactfully about traditional marketing strategies and how they had proved useful in the past.

Feeling confident in his abilities, he strode out of the room and nearly collided with a short girl with a dark mop of hair atop her head. She stood stiff and rigid in front of the door, presentation notes clutched desperately against her chest. Her eyes widened in terror as Adriel, in his six-and-a-half-foot glory, exited the room, nearly mauling her in the process.

"I'm so sorry," she stammered. "I didn't expect you to come out so quickly."

"You're all right. Should've looked where I was going," he responded, feeling forgiving thanks to the positivity of the hiring panel's response to him.

"I'm Lillian," she shared. "I'm so nervous, I'm shaking." She held her trembling hand out to the tall man before asking, "How did your speech go?"

"Adriel Pierce," he thrust his hand into hers for a shake. "Mine was better than I ever could have imagined. I'm sure yours will be okay, too."

Lillian's name was called from inside the room and she cast Adriel a warm smile and a thumbs up before disappearing into the board room, her heels clacking against the linoleum floor.

Adriel cast the floor an askance look as he made his way down the hallway, hearing Lillian's bell-like voice echoing through the room on the other side of the walls. He couldn't help but wonder what she was speaking about.

Second place at the science fair in seventh grade was Adriel's only experience with failure or loss of any kind. Both he and Lillian were called back for a conference with the hiring panel regarding the position they were competing head-to-head for. There were a total of 12 potential employees in the room, himself included, and judging by a brief glance at everyone's faces, he was sure to gain the position.

They were each required to give a further impromptu speech on the assets they could add to the team, but Adriel had been preparing his speech since he was even granted a time slot to apply. Those hired were called to give their speeches in alphabetical order by last name. Pierce, Adriel's surname, came later in the alphabet than his fellow applicants, but Lillian's came even later. In fact, she was the final person to speak.

Internally, Adriel, a stickler for traditional ways of doing things, guffawed at the modern, innovative techniques she was proposing. His face twisted into a dour expression as he absorbed her words, mentally dubbing her a fool. But despite her tiny, hunched and nervously shaking figure, the closure of her speech was rewarded by a moment of tense silence preceding a standing ovation from nearly everyone in the room.

A flush of embarrassed pride washed over Lillian's face, and she ducked her head shyly as the applause reached her ears. Needless to say, she received the position and was set to start work the following Monday.

Adriel left the room in a huff, his lack of solicitude blinding him as he listened in to the conversation that wafted through the halls from his fellow rejects. His cheeks flamed as he, a brand-new graduate without anything to his name, began to entertain the idea of getting a job that paid less than six figures.

His untinctured methods of business proved to have less potential than Lillian's riskier, more rewarding tactics. In a formal rejection email, the company informed Adriel that, while his acquired tactics were tried and tested, they were looking for more innovative, future-friendly strategies to fuel their climbing success.

Adriel couldn't believe that his jaded self-perspective had abandoned him, showing him the ugly nakedness of his imbecility. He clenched his jaw as he read the email, fuming in humiliation at the thought of Lillian's disjointed ideas earning her a position with the world's most prestigious company. As for Adriel, he was back to the drawing board without a cent, vehicle, home, or reputation to his name in the strange new world he never thought to prepare for.

Stories of Innovation

By Kate Windschitl

I have some great stories to tell about innovation. My narrative is about my dad. He works at Ford and has seen many innovations. He has also made some innovations (in my opinion). I'm going to tell you about some stories of innovation. Some are true, some are not. Here is one of my favorite stories to tell.

My dad was working in the shop about 10 years ago. He had noticed something off so he went to check out a car. He was working on it and then he left for lunch. He came home, let out our dog, ate lunch and went outside. One hour later he went back to the shop and started working on the suspicious car. He then went into the back because it was making noise. Then one of his worst nightmares came true! He found a skunk in the back of the car he was working on!

He needed innovation to help get the skunk out and keep working on the car. He set up a trap. He got the skunk out with some help of course. He used innovation to help get it out. "I made a hamster run out of cardboard boxes and duct tape and connected it to the underside of the car. Then I grabbed a long wire and connected it to the spark plug. I started up the engine, and it shocked the skunk. He then ran through the cardboard boxes to a box tapped at the end. We closed the box and took him outside." (Windschitl). He said that the whole shop was scared for the rest of the day.

This next story is a great example of innovation. It uses thought process and great innovation. My dad was working on a new car that he needed to innovate. He decided to "provide better navigation in cellular dead zones" (ford.com). It was a new truck and he wanted to keep it clean, because it was new. He sat in the car and worked on it for a few days. He then made more improvements to help the owner know how to work the car. He used his knowledge he learned in workshops and in college to fix the car. The college was innovative enough to help their students. The college provides classes to help its students learn to know something just by looking at it. My dad fixed our boat from 1980 and it works fine.

The college innovates and teaches its students to learn even more about innovation. They now teach new innovation that they learned over the years. My dad goes to innovation classes to learn even more about cars and how to fix them in the most efficient way. He then teaches us about how to learn about innovation. Then we teach about things we learn in school. He then goes to work fixing cars for people who then learn about innovation themselves.

My dad has worked on so many cars, one time he got to work on a Lamborghini! He was at work and he got a car in and he was excited. He never had gotten to work on a car with so much innovation. He had to fix the engine, and one of the doors was not working. He fixed everything he needed to and got to test drive it. He was having the best time of his life using so much innovation. He got to drive it twice and he said it was awesome!

My dad does a good job at thinking outside the box and coming up with new ideas. Every day at the shop he uses innovation on trucks and other cars. He learned that over the years you become smarter, better at coming up with new ideas, and helping others.

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Nonfiction

Non-Fiction (True/Factual):

Personal narrative: A true story that describes a real event or experiences in the author's life.

Information: Factual writing to convey knowledge of a topic and research findings.

Essay/Opinion: A feeling or thought you have about a subject or topic, supported by research.

Medicine

By Scarlett Armbruster

My essay topic is medicine. Medicine has been evolving for thousands of years and has been around since the beginning of human civilization. Medicine started out as herbal remedies, religious ceremonies, animal feces, raw meat and minerals. If you look back on early medicine, you can see how far medicine has come. We have found vaccines for deadly illnesses and ways to perform surgeries that done centuries ago could have killed a person. I am going to summarize major events of early medicine and mainly focus on the most rapidly advancing periods of medicine discovery, 1700 – modern day.

In 2600 B.C. an ancient Egyptian by the name Imhotep, chancellor to Pharaoh Djoser, could diagnose and treat 200 diseases including: tuberculosis, appendicitis, gout, gallstones, and arthritis. He is thought to be the first physician as a papyrus scroll known as the Edwin Smith papyrus that describes various surgeries, wounds and how they were treated is thought to be written by him. In 460 B.C. Hippocrates was born. He is thought of as the father of modern medicine because he started the scientific study of medicine. Over the next 2,000 years many other people studied human anatomy and the use of plants for herbal treatments. One of them was Pedanius Dioscorides who wrote *De Materia Medica* in 60 A.D, a book describing more than 600 plants used in traditional medicine. Another example is famous artist and scientist, Leonardo De Vinci, who was known to dissect human corpses in 1489.

A period of rapid discovery began in the 1500s when a maker of reading glasses, Zacharias Jannssen, invented the microscope in 1590. This allowed us to finally see microbacteria and other microscopic organisms. Antonie van Leeuwenhoek made a simple microscope in 1668 and saw microbacteria in pond water nobody else had seen before. In 1670 he also discovered blood cells and in 1683 he observed bacteria. This helped lead us toward the germ theory. Back in 1546, Girolamo Fracastoro first proposed the germ theory, then in 1762 Marcus von Plenciz expanded on his theory and Louis Pasteur identified germs as a cause of disease in 1857 and in 1870 Robert Koch and he established the germ theory.

After we learned that germs cause disease, we started to be more sanitary and clean. Our personal hygiene improved so we could prevent ourselves from getting sick. We developed better ways to clean ourselves, take care of body waste and started to quarantine sick people to help prevent others from getting sick. Instead of piling up poop and dead, rotting bodies on streets we buried the dead and found different ways to dispose of body waste. We started to properly dispose of trash and leftover food. We also developed better ways to stay clean, such as bathing more often with soap instead of just water. Once we knew what was causing disease we did our best to prevent it and take care of it. We started to clean our teeth properly and developed better toothbrushes than sticks and pig hair. By being more sanitary, diseases spread slower and less people became sick. When vaccines became available they helped to prevent disease.

The first form of a vaccine was given by Giacomo Pylarini in 1701 and in 1796 the process of the smallpox vaccination was developed by Edward Jenner. Smallpox was a devastating illness for the world until there was a vaccine. There were many other vaccines invented between 1796 and modern day. Some are still given today, such as the vaccination for diphtheria, whooping cough (pertussis), and tetanus known as Tdap or DTaP. You receive DTaP as a baby and Tdap as a twelve year old. Another common vaccination is the influenza vaccination which was developed in 1945 by Thomas Francis and Jonas Salk. The next vaccination I will talk about is the polio vaccination which was also developed by Jonas Salk in 1952. Polio is a disease that can cause paralysis. Most people in the U.S. are vaccinated

against polio but if you have not had the full vaccination you are still at risk. The most controversial modern vaccine is the Covid-19 vaccine. It has many variants to protect us from different types of Covid-19.

The most recent big medical revolution is the advances in antibiotics and the treatment of diseases. In 1899 aspirin was developed by Felix Hoffman and in 1922 insulin was first used to treat diabetes. Lastly in 1943 the antibiotic streptomycin was discovered by Selman A. Waksman. These are just some of many revolutions in the field of medical treatment.

Over time the practice of medicine has been innovated and developed to make it more efficient, safe and healthy for the patient. As the Hippocratic oath begins: “I swear to fulfill, to the best of my ability and judgment, this covenant: I will respect the hard-won scientific gains of those physicians in whose steps I walk, and gladly share such knowledge as is mine with those who are to follow.” People who are beginning medical practice swear under this oath. To my mom, who is a doctor, it means they agree to provide the best care within their power that modern medicine allows and they will teach younger generations in hope of making further advancements to improve care of the patient.

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Animal Testing and Why it is Wrong

By Adalyn Bowelet

All of the product testing humans do to animals would be considered wrong to do to humans unless they had done something bad. In order to be tested, animals get unnecessarily poked, prodded, and ripped away from their mothers. What did they do to deserve this? This doesn't make any sense if you think about it. Animals are living creatures too. They feel emotions and pain just like we do. Like I stated before, the animals that are getting tested on haven't done anything bad.

A lot of people think it is necessary for animals to be tested on to ensure safety of certain products. That's confusing if you think about it. If these products are intended for humans and not animals, how can we accurately test the effectiveness of a product on an animal when it is made for humans? We do not have the same body make up or functions. It seems these animals are being used for a purpose that was never intended.

There are also a lot of companies and businesses that don't test on animals to make their products. Some of these companies include Dove, Lush, and CoverGirl. If these companies are doing fine, then animal testing is not necessary to be successful.

There are a lot of companies that do require testing on animals to make a lot of their products. I have an idea! Instead of testing on animals, let's test on criminals! Perhaps people who have committed crimes like Jeffrey Dahmer should be tested on instead.

Allow me to explain! When you are in court for a crime you committed, there are different types of punishments: prison time, the electric chair, community service, etc. Well, I think there should be a new punishment: TESTING. After all, if we want to ensure the most accurate test results of a product intended for humans, then the product should be tested on HUMANS, not animals. If it's ok to test an innocent animal, shouldn't it be ok to test a human who has committed a terrible crime? This also gives the criminal a way to do something positive for his or her fellow man.

In conclusion, instead of testing on animals that have done nothing wrong, we should test on humans who HAVE done something wrong.

Innovation of Cars

By Adam Braulick

There have been many changes to cars since the first car was made. The first cars were sold in 1886 and 1893. The creator of the first car was a German man named Karl Benz.

The first car only had three wheels. Today the average car has four wheels or more. When the first car was invented they were not safe. They didn't have good balance so many rolled or tipped. They also didn't have that many safety things to protect you if you got in a crash.

The average car in 2023 has things that tell you if you are about to hit something. A lot of people died in cars losing control. The first car had sterling levers and now we have steering wheels. The 1886 car was sold at a price of \$1,000. In 2022 the average price of a car is \$33,000. The car had a leather bench for the seat. Now the average car has 5 seats or more. They first put blinkers on cars in 1938. Tires used to be made out of leather, not rubber. They first added heaters to the car in 1890 but air conditioning was not added until 1939. Today the AC and heaters on cars is very high tech. The sunroof was first invented in 1938. Now cars can have many sunroofs.

If you didn't upgrade your car to get windshields on your car you had to wear goggles so your eyes didn't get hit by things. Now every car has a windshield and windows. They had headlights but they usually burnt out in the rain or snowstorms. Headlights can be different colors and they usually don't burn out unless they get old.

Many early cars didn't have many protections so they were very dangerous so many people died driving them. Now cars have very high tech safety features and things to protect you if you get in a car crash. Many old cars just had radios. The average car today has touch screens and many more features to make it easier to do things while driving. So you don't get distracted from the road and get in a crash. Many old cars ran on gas and now some cars run on electricity.

Now some trucks are made for pulling big things and there are very big trucks called semi-trucks that have 16 wheels for pulling huge things. Some cars are used for racing and can get up to very high speeds.

I can't wait to see the cars in the future. I hope that cars will fly so I can experience that. I also hope that eventually cars will be even more safe so fewer people die in car accidents. I hope you had fun reading my essay!

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The Innovation of Industrialization

By William Braulick

Over time the innovation of industrialization has come to be outstanding. Factories used to rely on human workers instead of machines. When manufacturing machines were invented, many people were no longer needed. The result of advances in technology was more productivity and less jobs in the factories.

The industrial revolution was an important event in America's history. The most major change was going from human labor to the operating of steam and other kinds of energy (britannica.com). Another big factor was that people who worked in factories breathed the dust in the air. Most of these people died from lung disease because of unsanitary working conditions. On the bright side it improved our health system allowing a lot of people to live longer lives. This included scientists succeeding in making a vaccine for tuberculosis and cholera (thoughtco.com).

Britain was the first country to have a head start on the innovation of machines and factories (britannica.com). Belgium was the second country to discover the efficient use of burning coal to make energy (britannica.com). Not only have things have been innovated, but the machines that make those things have been innovated.

The five factors of industrialization are land, labor, capital, technology, and entrepreneurship. It took all these factors for Thomas Edison to create the lightbulb. Another person that took it to the next level was Alexander Graham Bell. He invented the telephone in 1876.

Here are some of the causes of fast growing industrialization. Back then, there were plenty of immigrants looking for labor. Some people had a lot of money, which meant that the demand for manufactured goods would increase. Another cause was that there was and still is plenty of natural resources. This means that most things were cheap because they weren't rare. The last cause was new inventions. These new inventions helped factories move forward in industrialization (quizlet.com). These are some of the causes of industrialization.

Some of the leaders in the industrial revolution were James Watt who invented the first dependable steam engine. Eli Whitney who came up with the cotton gin. Samuel F.B. Morse invented the telegraph. Orville and Wilbur Wright patented the first airplane, and finally Henry Ford developed the Model T Ford (thoughtco.com).

Even though industrialization seems to be all good, there are some downsides. Environment pollution from factories can impact human well-being. There is also deforestation and the extinction of specific species. A social disadvantage is workers will do the same thing over and over again which makes workers feel less and less job pleasure (investopedia.com).

Today industrialization is a big part of our community. It affects our daily lives by making things available to everyone. Just stop and think for a second, if you wanted to buy some pants from the clothing store, but they were all out because the workers at the factory couldn't produce fast enough. Machines feed the supply chain. If you would like to read more about this topic there are some really good websites and books about the innovation of industrialization.

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The Big Fish

By Liam Erickson

In the future, I wish you could keep every fish you catch. That law really needs to be changed. Once I caught a walleye in Lake Vermilion. I love walleye! I had to throw it back because it was too big and they have breeding laws. I was pretty sad. I'd like those breeding laws to change. I think I should get to keep every fish I catch unless it's a baby!

Fishing isn't very exciting when you have to throw big, beautiful fish back into the water. I'd like to talk to whoever is in charge of these breeding laws. I'm just a kid after all, I should get to enjoy the fish I catch. Time to contact the DNR!

One Shot

By Katelin M. Flack

The synonyms of innovation according to the Merriam-Webster Dictionary are twofold. The first speaks to a new idea, method, device, or a novelty. The second refers to the introduction of something new. I am going to share a personal innovation that was definitely something new for me in many ways.

The November afternoon sun was high in the sky when my mom called out to me while I was practicing basketball on our outdoor court, “Hey, Katelin, do you want to go hunting?”

I yelled across the yard, “You mean tomorrow morning, before the sun comes up, like Dad does?” dreading the answer. Nope, she meant right now! We did buy a permit at our local Scheel’s a few days earlier for the youth hunt, so I really couldn’t refuse.

“I guess we could,” I said timidly. I had passed my Youth Gun Training Class with flying colors, and I was certified to hunt deer! Youth Season means you have to hunt with an adult, but you have only one gun between the two of you. So, we dressed up in orange and headed down the road for about a quarter of a mile to my Grandpa’s house for some hunting tips. When we pulled into the yard, he came outside and met us and chuckled when he saw us all dressed in orange.

He said, “What are you two up to?”

“We’re going deer hunting!” My mom and I exclaimed.

Grandpa asked, “Well, do you have a gun?”

“Well, no, but hopefully we could use yours,” I said sheepishly.

So, he went into the house and came out with his 12-gauge shotgun with a rifle barrel and a scope on it. Grandpa used to be an avid hunter but gave it up when he went “vegetable.” My Grandpa always has a funny way with words. Going “vegetable” was his way of saying he was a vegan. My mom would say that he reminded her of George Bush with his funny sayings and made up words. But the laugh was really on us because my mom and I were major rookies who had no idea what we were doing.

Grandpa proceeded to show us how to load the gun and gave us some very important tips on deer hunting. The most important one he said was that we should wait until the deer is broadside and aim just above the front leg. This will put the slug right through the heart and the deer will drop immediately with no suffering. Then, he sent us on our way.

We have a lot of hunting land to choose from, but my Uncle Jeremy told us that our plot across the lake has been very active with many animals all fall. On all our hunting sites we have huge deer stands that kind of look like supersized porta potties raised up on stilts.

We were in the “porta potty” for about 45 minutes, even though it felt like 3 hours, when all of a sudden, I saw something moving. The creatures were far away at first, but then two female deer came sauntering out into the darkening meadow. I elbowed my mom and exclaimed in a whisper, “Look! Mom! What do we do? Should I shoot?”

She whispered back, “That’s what we’re here for, right Kate?”

I was nervous and tried to stall as I asked her “Which one?”

She suggested the bigger one.

‘Dang it!’ I said to myself, I did not want to shoot a poor unsuspecting deer.

I slowly reached for the gun resting in its case on the floor as I recalled grandpa’s words, “Wait until the deer is broadside and aim above the front leg, Kate.”

I was holding the gun now and debating on if I really wanted to do this. I knew if I did the family

would be amazed and proud of me, so I clicked the safety off. I saw the red side of the safety pointing out which meant the gun would fire if I pulled the trigger. I was already aiming at the larger doe and was locked in right above the front leg. I held my breath and pulled the trigger.

BANG! The poor deer dropped over immediately. Our ears were painfully ringing because we had not brought our ear protection! As soon as I pulled the trigger of the gun I began to feel sad. I saw how the one shot had gone right through that poor doe and I cried when I saw it laying there dead. I had never killed an animal until that moment!

My mom started to comfort me by explaining how it's the circle of life and there is a large population of deer. She stated, "If we do not control the population of deer then it is more likely we might hit them with our cars or harm them in other ways."

We got on the phone and called grandpa to come and help us with the deer. He was amazed at my marksmanship. In fact, we don't know many people who have shot a deer through the heart. When we got back to grandpa's, Uncle Jeremy helped us hang the deer in the barn and I helped with the butchering. Uncle Jeremy complimented me with a "Nice job, Kate." Thanks to Facebook, many more people complimented me on my good hunting skills. This innovation was certainly a novelty for me.

I like deer sausage and deer sticks, but I don't think I'll be going deer hunting again anytime soon because I've "Been there! Done that! In one shot!"

Cars

By Izik Heiderscheidt

There have been many car innovations. One of the first car innovations was the rear view mirror. One of the people that used this innovation was Ray Harroun. Lots of the other drivers thought that a mirror would create drag and slow them down quite a bit. Harroun used the rear view mirror to see what was behind him. It quickly became standard vehicle equipment for safety and for usefulness. The second one is automatic transmission. This allowed drivers to drive more confidently and easily. This new innovation became very popular for highways. The third is cruise control. With this, drivers could maintain a constant speed without putting their foot on the pedal. This innovation was used to reduce the chance of speeding and achieve better fuel economy. It continued to improve over the years. The fourth update is turbocharged engines. This allowed smaller engines to run like large engines. These are mostly used in diesel trucks and allowed for a less expensive but more powerful engine. Another innovation is the seatbelt. This is the most common and simple of the safety features that you would find in your car. This has saved countless lives. (*Historycooperative.org*)

It takes about five years for a car innovation to get from design to testing. It then takes another five years on top of that to go from production to sale. Some innovations range from safety features to increases in engine productivity. Self-driving vehicles are one of the biggest innovations the automotive industry has ever made. These vehicles use cameras, road maps, and knowledge to get around. They also use advanced cruise control, emergency brake, radar system, etc. Some of these cars are better drivers than humans.

All the innovations humankind has already made for cars are amazing, but there are still things that need to be improved. With the human mind and our love to innovate, I bet we could go even farther. It might not be in a month it might not be in a year, it might not be in a decade but one day some creative mind will make another innovative new vehicle. When that does happen, we need to be accepting of their designs so that they are inspired to keep innovating.

Who knows maybe you'll be that person. Maybe you'll be the person that changes the world for the better. You might have the opportunity to help millions of people. Will you grab hold that opportunity or will you let slip away? That's your choice. Always keep thinking of ways to make life better, easier, and safer. Your ideas might be enough to change the world forever.

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The Innovation of Welding

By Parker Jenson

The innovation of welding has been important for society. Society has done so much with welding. The main reasons society uses welding is to make buildings structurally sound. Ironically, the invention of welding was found out through mistakes.

Welding was invented in 3000 BC however some believe that welding goes back even further when the archaeologists found two pieces of metal fused together. The purpose of welding is to fuse metal to make products that are needed in this world. This includes cell phone towers and buildings.

There are three types of welding: MIG, stick, and TIG. The innovation of MIG welding is for large and thick materials. Tig welding is done for items made of nickel alloys, magnesium, copper, brass, bronze, and gold. The innovation of stick welding is used for pipe welding because welders use sticks. It makes a big difference when compared to MIG welding because MIG uses gas and if that runs out, those items are not able to be welded.

The innovation of rig welding is a process of joining the metal structures of oil wells. Welding on a rig is one of the most dangerous welding jobs. The dangers of oil rig wilding are fire, burns, electric shock, toxic fumes and gasses. They get around all the dangers and move any combustibles 35 feet away from the spot where they are welding. Welders use special gear that grounds them to prevent a shock. They use a mask to protect themselves from gasses and fumes.

There are a lot of jobs out there for welding. Some of these include underwater pipe welding, aluminum welding, and rig welding, as mentioned above. Welding is part of many houses in the world. People can make art with welding and get paid for making art with welding. A lot can be made with welding. These might include making a joint for a car or the aluminum on a boat or the steel on a building.

Welding innovation also includes new tools. An acetylene torch can be used for cutting and welding. A plasma cutter is used for cutting. The innovation of welding is so necessary to the world because as people continue to build and develop products, welding is needed to create strong buildings and items. There is so much that welding has done for everybody.

Something New and Never Seen

By Ora Anna Ihimbazwe Kirezi

Have you ever thought how a science fair shakes and works our brain? When I was in third grade, I decided to be part of the science fair for the first time. Basically, you had to be in third grade to do it, and I was very interested in it.

After I got permission from my parents to sign up for the science fair, I started thinking about the projects that I could do. I wanted to do a project that was easy to do but interesting and not really ever seen much (not like the classic volcano, mind you), so I decided that my project would be something about ice.

My journey about deciding on my topic did not end there. I had to figure out what can melt ice the fastest without focusing on what everyone knows; for example, the way salt melts the ice quickly. My final topic was to experiment what melts ice the fastest among salt, sugar and soap. Was I going to innovate? No idea! I didn't even know the word innovate yet. The hypothesis was "Salt melts ice the fastest."

On the day of the science fair, I was ready for the presentation, if that is what you call it. I am pretty sure I was all dressed up and ready for the event and excited, too. At school, the schedule was slightly different. We learned a little bit, and then my teacher said that anyone participating in the science fair should go to the gym to explain their project and get judged. We were also advised to bring a book with us, so we would read when we were not getting judged. There were three people who were judging us, and once you were judged, you would go back to your classroom.

When I was there, I sat down and read for most of the time watching others being judged. Finally, someone came to judge me, and I stood up and talked about my project. After that I sat back down and went back to reading. By then a lot of kids were done with their presentations and were already judged by three people.

I was just worried about doing a good job presenting my science fair project. For some reason some of the teachers had to get two more judges to come judge my work. I wondered why and I guessed my project didn't look interesting because I had chosen to do work on an easy topic. In the end, I got a good score even though a lot of kids didn't come to see my project but I still liked that day.

You might be curious about the end results of the project, and whether or not my hypothesis was verified. According to my experiment, what melted ice the fastest between soap, sugar and salt was *SUGAR*. To be honest, the results were unexpected. Will we ever have enough sugar to use in ice melting? Future innovations might answer this intriguing question.

Innovating Student Journalism

By Rae Lawrence

Being an innovator is not easy, especially when it comes to student-run publications. A journalist is someone who should have a free voice to write about the things that are good and bad — great achievements, yes, but also things that need a little push to become an achievement.

I believe I bring a lot to the world of student journalism when thinking about “changing” the normal that is how student-run school newspapers or news outlets operate. I’ve been a part of a journalism class for three years now, and as an ongoing contributor to my high school’s student newspaper *The Heights Herald*, I’ve worked tirelessly not just to become a better writer, editor, and photographer, but I’ve worked tirelessly for change at the building and district level too.

I was a staff writer and photographer my sophomore year, promoted to feature editor and lead photographer during my junior year, and finally moved up the ranks to being one of the *Herald*’s two Editors-in-Chief for my senior year. During my junior year, I focused more on events, people and groups within my school and the community — profile pieces that helped highlight some of our academics, extracurriculars, and more. But now in my senior year, well, I’ve...developed more of a voice and opinion.

Although opinions are what allows discourse to thrive and encourages passions to ignite, I think especially writers with a platform can get looked at as “problematic” for having strong opinions and wanting to share those opinions. Even the most basic beliefs regarding equality or human rights can be labeled as “controversial.” I have found myself recently trying to bring certain issues within our community and high school to light. My school’s administration, however, has suggested that perhaps topics such as communication breakdowns between staff and students, or whether school resource officers belong in academic workspaces, don’t need to be talked or written about in a public setting.

So, unfortunately, we do get censored on important stories that would amplify marginalized voices and genuine student concerns. We are currently trying to publish an online story about frustrations and miscommunications regarding our prayer room for our Muslim students, but we’re having problems with our principal and assistant principal saying our information is inaccurate although our information is all correct according to various student voices that too often have gone ignored.

Our principal has indicated on several occasions that he also wants us as a publication to change our tone and focus only on amplifying positive, affirming student voices. Our school’s leaders ultimately want us as both a student-run newspaper and as an institution at large to exude a persona of “we have no problems” when literally every school does. We are just trying to put some issues into the spotlight so they can be known about so the powers within the school and the community can work towards improvement.

We are also lucky to be one of the few public schools student newspapers in the state that still has a print edition, so I decided to do the most recent centerspread of the paper about vaccinations since recently the booster for the Meningococcal vaccine for 16-year-olds is now required in public schools in Minnesota, and vaccination rates among children have had a large decrease as the years have gone by. The latest mandate caused a huge uproar among my school’s student body since many of us, including myself, were told we couldn’t come to school the next day.

And yes, as expected, many students continued coming to school due to some families not understanding the severity of the requirement, others not comprehending the message due to language

barriers, and inconsistent enforcement by building administration. Although we as students knew we needed this vaccine to attend, there was no set date or clear message stating, “if you don’t get your vaccination by this date, you can’t come to school.” It was always either someone who isn’t even the registered school nurse, whether it was a media center clerk or a student dean telling students they couldn’t come back the next day.

I was angry and confused, and my peers were too. I knew I had to write about this. But because of past censorship, I decided on a better approach than simply a scathing op-ed that would surely get blocked. I chose instead to make it a multi-faceted, graphic-heavy, profile-centric educational piece. I found quickly as I began my research and interviews that what I was really doing was trying to provide information about immunizations as a whole to the student body and school community with sources such as the Minnesota Department of Health, the Minnesota Department of Education, and the CDC. This also allowed me to tap into my past skills as feature editor and spin the story as a showcase for all of the nurses working in our district.

So often student journalism is seen as merely covering sporting events or fun events happening within the community, and this is important and appreciated work, but it’s so much more than that. It’s an opportunity to galvanize and educate, to exchange ideas and challenge the status quo. My whole journalism class worked together to, for the first time as a publication, put a voter’s guide together this past November. We reached out to all the people running for my district’s school board, county commissioner, secretary of state, and so many more! We reached out to each candidate asking why people should vote for them and what they hope to accomplish if they are chosen to represent our community’s constituents. We gave all people from every party an equal opportunity to tell us, and give whoever read the guide a chance to have a one-stop shop to get all the information needed to make informed decisions in the voting booth. The final product was perceived very well amongst students and staff within our school and even citizens who live in my community, who passed around the link on Facebook and commented about its usefulness, with one voter even saying they likely wouldn’t have voted had they not come across it!

I have learned and will continue to promote the innovative notion that student voices, despite youth and relative inexperience, have the potential to be the biggest advocates for change. Silencing or controlling student voices when things aren’t going well is not only wrong — it doesn’t work. So, my innovation is that I try to write about the things that need to be talked about and add other students’ voices too — especially those that often get overlooked. I don’t try to make my district look bad. Actually, I truly love my district. My parents both work in the schools, and I’ve gone through my whole life K–12 here. I want to show that I care about my district, that I know that we can do so much better than how we’re doing now, and we should be doing better. Sometimes, it just takes a little finesse to make your voice heard.

What is Modern Innovation?

By Anna Pollard

Modern innovation is a different way of thinking or doing something, to improve it in the present time (*collinsdictionary.com*). Modern innovation is a great way to improve everyday tasks, and make them easier and quicker to complete.

A great example of a modern innovation is the calculator. Calculators started as a “calculating clock,” first innovated in 1623, by Wilhelm Schickard. Then, in 1773, the first functional calculator was innovated by Philip Matthäus Hahn, so he could complete calculations on clocks he was making. Ever since then, calculators have been innovated every few decades and have improved considerably. Now we have the first color graphing calculator, created in 2010, by Casio. Calculators have been innovated for hundreds of years, and now they are quicker, and even travel sized (*edtechmagazine.com*).

Another incredible example of a modern innovation is air conditioning. Sometimes we do not even realize how much air conditioning has improved. In 1902 the first air conditioning system was innovated by Willis Carrier. He innovated this to control the temperature and to dehumidify the air so paper does not wrinkle when written on, and so that the ink stays fresh. Then, in 1914, the first residential (or in-house) air conditioning was installed inside of a mansion in Minneapolis. Air conditioning kept improving greatly. Not long after, the window unit was invented for air conditioning (*abchomeandcommercial.com*). In the years 1950 to 1970, air conditioning started to become very popular, appearing in many homes nationwide.

An example of a fairly commonly used innovation are solar panels. Solar panels help us use natural sunlight to power things that usually use electricity or gasses. Solar panels also are great for the environment because they help prevent the usage of many gasses. These gasses can go into our environment and harm ecosystems, wildlife, and us! Technically, solar power was used all the way back in the 700 B.C. They used solar power to make fires with materials that are now used in today’s magnifying glasses. Another use of solar power in earlier times was in “sunrooms.” Sunrooms used very large windows that concentrated the sunlight into an area. Solar panels actually do not have a specific inventor, since many scientists contributed to creating this useful innovation. Those scientists have assisted and helped our environment immensely, and if we continue using solar panels instead of using electricity or gas, it can benefit future generations (*news.energysage.com*).

Modern innovations continue to help our everyday tasks, so that they will be more efficient and quick in the future. Modern innovations can both affect our future in ways that are good, but also sometimes bad. But overall, modern innovations have improved our everyday lives, and hopefully will continue to improve them.

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The Innovation of Cell Phones

By Hilda Rubio

The innovation of the cell phone began in 1900 when an inventor named Reginald Fessenden created the first human voice transmission using radio waves. In 1947, Lars Magnus invented car phones and engineer William Rae Young worked on radio towers for telephone companies. They all started to compete.

American engineer Martin Cooper was put in charge of a project to invent the cell phone, and he believed that it should be portable, not plugged into a car. Cooper invented the first handheld wireless cell phone in 1973, which allowed people to talk for only 35 minutes before the battery ran out. In 1983, they made their invention available to the public at a cost of \$3,995, and it became a huge success. However, as time went on, companies began building wireless phones that were smaller, lighter, and had better digital service. This made personal cell phones more affordable and led to the cell phone revolution in the 90s. In 1994, IBM's Simon was released as the first smartphone with a touchscreen and apps. Ever since then, technology keeps getting better.

How did people communicate before the invention of cell phones? People used to visit public telephone booths to talk to others. As time passed, the technology evolved and car phones were invented. In the 1960s, they were huge, wired devices that were in place under the dashboard of a car. By the 1980s, people could carry their car phones in a case. They were small and portable devices that were easily plugged into a car.

After car phones, the innovation of cell phones were invented. At first people only dreamed of carrying a telephone around with them. It really was just in the form of a walkie-talkie. The mobile phone was really an innovative dream for them. Innovators added signals to the microphone inside the cell to capture a person's voice and convert it into electrical signals and those signals got converted into binary codes of 0 and 1. They are then packed into the form of radio waves. Radio waves were transmitted with the help of an antenna, but inventors learned that the antenna wasn't powerful enough to send them, so they made a cell tower which means that people can send and receive signals. There is also something called a mobile switching center which helps cell phones whenever there's a distraction. Mobile switching has information stored into it. It also has a sim card holder for whenever a person moves with their cell phone.

Cell phones now let people talk whenever they want to. No matter how far away people are, cell phones allow them to talk to each other. Cells today let people send emails and texts whenever they want. People can also watch YouTube or shows and movies and listen to music and FaceTime each other. They made cell phones more fun to use which made people want to get them. There are many different cell phones now and people can choose what phone they want.

Cell phones used to be only used for phone calls back in the day and people could only talk on it for 35 minutes until the battery died. Now people can use it whenever they want and people can be on call with another person however long they want. Now you can do many different things with your cell phone. Cell phones are now helpful.

Cell phones have changed the way people communicate and phones help the way we live now. The innovation of cell phones made a big difference to the world. What would people do without their cell phones? Thanks to these inventions by innovators, no one needs to find out. The world was changed in so many ways through cell phones.

Floating Ladder

By Levi Schroeder

In the future, I think we need to invent a floating ladder. If only one could buy a floating ladder, one would not have to buy a ladder truck for cutting down trees. The floating ladder would have a controller or a control pad on the to move it or make it stay still.

It could also be used for firefighters so they do not have to bring a big truck with a ladder to reach a person in a high place; they could just use the floating ladder to get to the person or fire. Also, workers on high buildings, like construction workers for example, could build things safer and more efficiently.

One could attach propellers to the bottom and top of the ladder. The bottom propellers would be used to make the ladder float. The top propellers would be used to turn the ladder and all the propellers would be controlled by the control pad. As a result of this new technology, people could work more efficiently and safely.

Working For a Better Society

By Levi Schroeder

In the future, instead of working for money I think we should work for things. The harder you work, the better things you get. For example, if I worked a four hour day, I would have a house but it would not be the best house. But if I worked a nine hour day, I would have a much better house. I think this should be the same system with vehicles, clothing, and food.

Do you ever notice how people can become obsessed with money? I think this system would help. People wouldn't need money to be happy if they got free education and training to get whatever job they wanted. Everyone picks their job. Then they would decide if they want to work four hours a day, nine hours a day, or 11 hours a day.

I believe there should be a limit to how many hours one is allowed to work so that people are also able to rest and do things they enjoy. I believe that the maximum amount a person should work a day should be 11 hours, so that 13 hours remain to rest and have family time.

If you choose to work four hours a day, you get a "so so" house, vehicle, wardrobe, and grocery selection. If you choose to work nine hours a day, you get a better house, vehicle, wardrobe, and grocery selection. If you choose to work the maximum allowed amount of 11 hours a day, you would get a top notch house, vehicle, wardrobe, and grocery selection. Nobody deals with money. They just get things according to how many hours a day they are willing to work.

What if someone cannot work due to physical or mental limitations, you ask? I also think that healthcare should be free so that everyone is able to receive treatment and get back into the workforce as quickly as possible! With free education and healthcare, everyone can be working and contributing to society!

What do we do about people who are offered free schooling and healthcare and they still don't want to get a job? Well, this may seem a little mean, but I think they need to be homeless. We all need to learn the lesson that we need to work to have homes, clothes, vehicles, and food.

Innovation

By Rohan Sharma

Of all of life's creations on earth, it is clear that the human race reigns supreme. But herein lies a strange conundrum. Survival of the fittest reigns everywhere else, save for humankind. Why? Why isn't the tiger, or the lion, the bear, ruler of the planet? In my eyes, there is only one thing that sets us apart from the animals we keep as pets: Innovation.

One of the earliest examples of innovation was the agricultural revolution, which enabled humans to settle in one place and grow crops instead of relying on hunting and gathering. For the first time in the history of the planet, a species was able to focus on something other than surviving to the next day. This massive innovation led to the development of civilization and allowed humans to establish cities, trade, and cultural exchange.

Another significant innovation was the invention of the wheel, which transformed transportation and allowed people to move goods and materials more efficiently. The wheel was also instrumental in the development of other inventions, such as the water wheel, which led to the growth of industry and manufacturing. Unfortunately, nothing is without fault, not even innovation. Humans created guns and gunpowder, bombs, and found methods of inflicting death whenever they wished.

During the Renaissance, there was a surge in innovation, driven by a renewed interest in art, science, and culture. Innovations during this period included the printing press, which allowed books to be mass-produced and disseminated widely, leading to an increase in literacy and education. War became more common, with humans using weapons on each other with frightening abundance. Other innovations included new navigation tools, such as the astrolabe and the compass, which enabled explorers to travel further and more accurately, leading to the discovery of new lands and cultures.

At the time of the Industrial Revolution, innovation accelerated dramatically, driven by the development of new technologies such as the steam engine, which revolutionized transportation and manufacturing. Weapons of war were being developed which could end many lives in the blink of an eye. The spirit of war was waking, and its vengeance would be terrible. However, there was still quite a bit of innovation in this era, including the telegraph, which transformed communication and enabled people to communicate quickly and efficiently over long distances.

During the 20th century, innovation continued to accelerate, particularly in the areas of electronics and computing. The human desire for war had been loosed upon the world, and with two world wars in this century, the human population was scarred forever. A Cold War led to us, as a species, leaving our planet in search of new worlds. Oh, but what was the motivation for that? To explore? To enhance our knowledge? No. The motivation was simply a massive, planet-wide feud.

The innovations during this period included the invention of the transistor, which led to the development of modern computers, and the internet, which, while having transformed communication and enabled people to connect and share information, was originally developed for military communication. And of course, possibly the most famous innovation ever, the atomic bomb. Humanity now, thanks to innovation, had tools to wipe itself off the face of the planet many times over.

But even while this had been happening, something strange was happening. The greatest innovations the world had ever seen were taking place in the time period of our greatest strife. Why? Why must humanity, to advance, fight amongst ourselves? Well, the simple answer is that the question itself is wrong. Simply, no. Humanity does not need to struggle amongst itself to advance. We do not need to

skirmish with our own kind to develop ourselves. During wars, we need to use every last instinct that we have to survive, to win. We simply do not need to use that in our everyday lives.

Really, any one of us can be the next Einstein, the next Newton, or the next Tesla. All in all, innovation has led us through the darkest moments in history, and today, innovation continues to play a critical role in shaping the world we live in. Innovations in fields such as medicine, energy, and transportation are transforming our lives and enabling us to solve some of the world's most pressing problems. Innovation is not a concept. Innovation is a tool. And like any tool, it matters only how you use it.

The Innovation of High Speed Rails

By Caleb Stibbe

In 1964 Japan unveiled the first high speed rail. High speed rail is a type of train that can go faster than the average train. They are known as the Shinkansen in Japan or Bullet Trains in English. In the modern day, the high speed rail serves 22 major cities in Japan with three more lines in development. High speed rail is very common in other countries around the world, like France, which opened its first high speed rail in 1981.

You're probably wondering why doesn't the U.S. have high speed rail like these other countries? There are many reasons why the US does not have high speed rail to the extent that these countries in Europe and Asia do. First off, to build the infrastructure you need permission from Congress and many members of Congress don't see the point of the project since people can just take a car or plane and that doesn't cost the government any money. Another issue is acquiring the land for the construction of the new high speed rail. The way the U.S. government acquires land for infrastructure projects is called eminent domain. Back in the 1950s when the U.S. was building the interstate highway the government used eminent domain to take people's homes to build the road.

Given that there are many trade-offs to building high speed rails, there are also many benefits to building the high speed rail. The first benefits would be not having to go to the airport two hours early and dealing with airport security or having to drive a long distance from one state to another. Another benefit would be economic. With the rise of new industries like manufacturing, a new high speed rail would allow us to create new supply chains that could help create new components and jobs for people.

The final benefit is the reduction of carbon admissions. High speed rail has been proven to be less polluting than cars and airplanes by omitting 83 percent carbon emissions than those forms of transportation do.

Given the issues of establishing a high speed rail system, many people are still skeptical, but there is proof that high speed rail can work. Although the U.S. as a whole doesn't have high speed rail, states in the northwest have a high speed rail that goes from Washington D.C. to Boston. This Acela Expressway is the only high speed rail that is available in the U.S. While it is slower than most high speed rails, it is still classified as such. This proves that the high speed rail can work in the U.S.

If the U.S. were to build a high speed rail, it would be a great help to the country as it is with the European and Asian countries that established their high speed rail so long ago. Many politicians have been stopped for one reason or another from building the high speed rail but one day they might accomplish this goal.

How has the Farming Industry Changed?

By Ruby Tauer

How has farming changed the world? The innovation of farming has changed how people see the world. Farming has helped people grow and produce their food. Read more to find out how farming has changed.

The dairy industry was very different in the 1800s. The average herd size was around three cows per farm. If your farm had more than seven cows your farm was considered large. Farmers had to milk the cows by hand and that was very time consuming. Cows were used for their milk to make food. Cattle also played a large role in the fields. Cows would not be used for their meat as much as they are now but for their leather instead (Randall Lineback Breed Association).

Milk quality was not as good as it is now. Milk was transported in small containers about the size of a five gallon bucket. It did not cost a lot in today's currency. The milk sometimes took over seventy-two hours to get to town. When it got to town, they did not test it for disease such as mastitis.

In addition, machinery was also very different in the 1800s. Farmers' machinery was mostly their cows! They'd hook their cows up to plows and walk behind the cows holding the plow. Planting was a whole different story, farmers put buckets of seed on a wagon, pulled by a cow, and planted the seed by hand. Farmers would harvest the crop manually.

Farming looks very different nowadays. In 2003 the average herd size was 129. In 2020 the average herd increased to about 300 (Hanson). Cows live in better ventilated barns and heartier pastures. This has improved milk quality drastically. The milk is now tested for disease and anything that shouldn't be in it. If a farmer has milk not up to quality standards in their tank, they have to dump their tank. About 3.7 million gallons get dumped yearly. Milk can go from the farm to the grocery store in less than twenty-four hours. There are automatic milking units and robots that milk your cows for you. The milking procedure is much more efficient and cleaner.

Cows are no longer used in the fields, tractors are. Farmers use combines and choppers to harvest their crops. Planters are used to plant seeds such as corn, beans, wheat, winter rye, alfalfa and much more. Now there are sprayers to fertilize the crops for a better income. Planes can also spray the fields. Certain types of fertilizer can kill the crop if it is used and the wrong crop. An example is if a farmer planted beans one year and corn another, the beans could come back. The farmer will spray to kill off the beans, but if the wrong spray is used it could also kill the corn. People cannot spray if it is windy, because the spray could drift into nearby fields and kill the crop.

Moving forward, the dairy industry has unlimited possibilities for the future. The dairy industry will continue to grow and the average herd size could be up to 700 or more. The way milk would be transported will most likely be fast. Milking has a possibility to be much faster and non-stop. Machinery will look very different in the future. There will most likely be self-driving tractors that will do the work in the fields without a person. Nobody knows what the future of farming will look like.

Farming has changed a lot over the years and it is still innovating. It went from cows in the fields to possibly self-driving tractors. Everything has come a long way. What will farming look like in the future?

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Additional Entries

These entries did not adhere to the 2022–23 theme of Innovation, but the judges enjoyed them and wanted readers to be able to enjoy them too!

Note: These entries are printed as received without edits or revisions for spelling, grammar and/or style.

The Crazy Llama

By Jurnee Adamson

Boom! Crash! The noise of banging in the barn the llama ran.
The Llama wants to run out of the barn the farmer man,
He yelled, “No!” but the Llama ran and ran and never stopped!
The farmer then he sold the Llama to a girl who shopped!
She brought the Llama home and introduced him to a friend!
Another crazy Llama they were friends until the end!

The Travelling Twins

By Jurnee Adamson

Ella and Rose are twins that are traveling around the world. How do they do this, you ask? Ella and Rose are VERY artsy and crafty! When their supportive parents notice their gift for the arts and crafts, they help them open their own craft store. It was very successful! Ella and Rose use their profits to travel the world, take pictures, and share about their world experiences on YouTube. They soon became famous on YouTube!

Ella and Rose then travel to Japan where they met the nicest girl ever. Her name is Akira. Akira works as a hotel guide. You see, Akira actually went to college to be a Science teacher because she loves Science! Akira would schedule job interview after job interview. There always seemed to be another candidate who would get the job instead of her! The hotel guide job was the only job she could find. She was frustrated! She has two kids to support, and lives in a tiny apartment. She's a single mom and she gets paid very little money.

Ella and Rose knew she needed some help, so they decided to bring her back to America. There, they would help her get a job as a Science teacher in warm, sunny Phoenix, Arizona! Ella and Rose knew Akira would make a great teacher and wanted her to have that opportunity. Akira said she was definitely willing to go and try! So Ella and Rose quickly bought plane tickets and told Akira the good news.

"Akira, we got you plane tickets to America!" Ella and Rose cheered. Akira was so happy.

"Thank you so much! You are the best friends ever!" Akira gushed.

Two weeks later, the three young women finally made it to America! They were so happy. Akira interviewed for a Science teaching job in Phoenix, Arizona... and she got it! Ella and Rose helped her find an affordable house that Akira could afford to buy on her teacher salary. It was very nice! Akira lived a happy life in America where she grew old and content. Her children enjoyed America as well.

Ella and Rose decided to spend the rest of their lives traveling the world, and HELPING PEOPLE! If only more people would be like Ella and Rose... how bright the future would be!

Evolution of Farming

By Breanna Braulick

Farming has changed a lot over time, in many different ways. There were many good and convenient parts of farming, and not many essential things that we use. Farming was way different back in the 1800s, they did not have things to use that we have nowadays. They didn't have machinery, and could only grow certain crops, and there are many more reasons on how it changed overtime.

"Most of the farmers would grow tobacco, wheat, barley, oats, rice, corn, vegetables, and more" (*historyforkids.net*). Now farmers grow a lot more things than they did long ago. Now farmers grow corn, and other grains, wool, cotton, wool, rice, fruits, soybeans, wheat, oil crops, sugar, sweeteners, and there are many more interesting crops that farmers produce (*ers.usda.gov*).

In the 1800s only little land was used for farming. Some rich people had bigger space for their fields, and often had slaves who worked for their family. They could afford slaves that will do everything for them, so they would not have to do anything and depended on the slaves to do it for them. People who were not rich back then had smaller areas for farming and had to do all the work for themselves (*historyforkids.net*). They had to wake up very early in the morning and do all of the work all by themselves to provide for their family. It was not just the men who did the work most of the time. Women and their children had a special role too. Women also got up early to make the food so their family could eat, they would also make things that were accessible to use in their family home. In the 1800s the women also planted the garden and picked the vegetables and sold and traded them for other items (*historyforkids.net*). Children also had a special role in the family. Boys on the farm would get up early to help their father and the girls or their sisters would often help their mother with work (*historyforkids.net*). Now farmers still have many responsibilities to take care of, and we don't have the option of having slaves anymore.

Machinery has helped farms progress so much in the past couple years. Way back then their machinery was very different from it is now. Some machinery is the same, but they made it better and more useful. Some things that were made in the 1800s are the lawn mower, the grain elevator, and fertilizers, and many more (*pequea.com*). Now there is way more useful machinery to use in farms that farmers will use. Farming back then took longer than it does now because now we have machinery to use and make the process speed up and go way faster than it did in the 1800s. Now companies like John Deere and other companies are making machinery for farmers to buy to use on their own farm (*pequea.com*).

The price of machinery has gone up over the many years but it also became more useful. Back then things were very expensive for the people who were alive, but now we think it was cheap but it was not for them. They used horses or oxen to make power for the Steam Engine to harvest the corn or any crops. It took a long time to do this process because the oxen or horses would run out of energy to pull the machinery, so they had to give them a break and rest periods throughout the day time (*nationaldaycalendar.com*). Now we mostly use Combines to harvest our crops and it makes it a lot easier to use and work with (*nationaldaycalendar.com*). In the 1800s they still used combines, but they were pulled by oxen or horses. They were built way differently then they are nowadays (*nationaldaycalender.com*).

Some interesting facts about farmers that you may not know are. In the 1800s farmers did not work on Sundays, families often went to church on this day. The farmer's family often had more than six kids

which is a pretty big family. It was pretty hard because poor farmers had to live in two roomed homes which had to fit their huge family (*historykids.net*).

Farming has changed a lot over time. It is way more fun to do and a lot easier to work with. People can learn alot of farming and it helps people stay active and staying on task. There are a lot of differences and similarities in the innovation of farming. Maybe the innovation of farming will

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The Blades of Life

By Audrey Brien

Reader advisory: This entry contains references to drug use.

Chapter 1 The Essay; Betrayal

As I stared at the empty, white screen in front of me, I felt as if the undeniable day had just popped up out of nowhere. If I wanted to get into any good college I'd have to start writing the essay now. Just as the boredom started to gnaw at my brain my younger sister bursted in the room and screamed like a car screeching to a stop. I whipped my head around towards the door with my rage boiling. I jumped out of my chair aiming for my younger sister. I tackled her and held her down.

"MACY! I told you not to come in here without my permission!!!" I said bitterly.

"But I want you to play with me and my dollys! Otherwise..." She gave me a suggesting look which I recognized from a mile away.

"You wouldn't."

"Oh, but I would" she retorted then screamed, "MOM!!! SADIE'S NOT PLAYING WITH ME!!!"

I don't know how but moms seem to have the power to knock over buildings with just one mighty glare, but they all decided to just use it on their children. And it doesn't help that Macy is the favorite. As mom's furious steps went up the stairs I released the eight year old under pure terror of what mom would do. The millisecond I saw my mom's brown pixie cut, I sprinted back in my room, shut off the computer, and somehow managed to dive on my bed and cover myself with my quilt. I did this all as quietly as a ninja. My mom burst into my room to scold me. When she saw I was 'asleep' she went to lecture my younger sister about lying. My mom tiptoed back to my room and kissed my forehead.

A little while after she left I went downstairs to grab a snack to fuel my fogged mind. My sweet, innocent eyed, Bernese mountain dog came out around the corner "Moose!" I cooed. The big dog lumbered over. I could write about how my dog impacted my life but that's a popular choice.

My mom walked over to the kitchen to continue dinner. From what I could tell she was making soup. I'm guessing she noticed me looking over her shoulder because soon after, she started to talk. "So when are you gonna tell me that you weren't sleeping?"

She turned around and gave me a look that said, you better tell the truth. "Fine, you caught me! I wasn't sleeping, I was just trying to get out of trouble." I whined, "But Macy went into my room while I was thinking of ideas for the essay."

My mom turned around and just let it slide for now. "You better get ready for practice. You know how the coach feels when you're late."

When I finished my nutritious snack of cookies, chips, and an apple slice, I went upstairs into my room and started grabbing everything I needed for practice. Swimsuit, swim cap, goggles. Yep, that's right, I swim. I've been swimming for as long as I can remember. The only reason my dad wants me to swim is because he wants me to heal from my breathing problem I've had since I was a kid. Little does he know he's the problem. He's been smoking weed since he was 18 and every picture in our house with him has him smoking. It's not like I'm saying that 'I'm not like other girls', and it's not just me that sees it, my friends see it too.

They notice how my dad smokes a lot, and they notice that he hangs outside of the house a little too often.

All of a sudden my phone buzzed, gazing in the direction I saw that one of my friends, Riley, texted, “Don’t forget to bring the stuff.”

Then my other friend, Dakota, responded, “Tonight’s gonna be lit!!!”

Oh my gosh, I completely forgot! I sneaked quietly into my dad’s room and stole a package of his weed. He wouldn’t mind if I borrowed it, would he? I stuffed the weed in the bag and quickly left my house. It was only the beginning of fall yet I could feel the cold air nip at me. The indoor swimming pool was only a five minute walk from my house. As soon as I pass the pool I turn off my location on my phone. I wouldn’t want anyone to know where I was going. As soon as I neared the end of the block I could hear music from the house on the corner and immediately sprinted towards it. Little did I know that this would be the most powerful slice from a blade of life.

Where They Belong

By Olive Clemons

1 : Our Story, Affadalonía

Maple knew that she was in the line of Matriarchs and she often found herself imagining her rule. “High Matriarch Maple.” She liked the sound of that. Maple’s older sisters were a slight problem though. Both of them were in line to become a High Matriarch, but neither of them seemed very excited about it. Something would have to be done about that.

Two days later, Maple was found dead. No poison, no knife, no weapon detectable. This was strange. Both of her sisters were interrogated. One, June, said, “Who?” when she was asked. The other one, name unknown, jumped when she was asked. “Of course I’m jumpy!” she snapped at them when they asked her about it, “my younger sister was just murdered!” The team of interrogators crept out of the room cautiously, unsure what to make of it.

Then the youngest child, Daffidolania. The girl rocked back and forth on the ground, muttering, “Gone, she’s gone forever, gone, she’s gone forever...” her muttering broke off into sobs. The interrogators snuck away without being noticed.

2: Daffidolania

Daffidolania had tiptoed to her sister’s room, because she’d had a bad dream. She always had bad dreams. This one was about a magician, leaning over Maple’s bed and putting a spell on her so she would sleep forever and ever.

When she entered the room, Daffidolania shook Maple to wake her. Maple felt cold, but Daffidolania thought nothing of it, she was only five years old and thought her sister was just sleeping. Seeing that her sister hadn’t disappeared calmed her and she went back to sleep.

The next morning when she came down to breakfast the family was in disaster. Her sisters were crying; a strange sight for the child. “Why are you crying?” she asked her sister, Amelia. “Don’t you know?” she responded.

“Know what?”

“Maple is dead! No one told you?” This shook Daffidolania. Her sister was going to live forever and ever. This was not in her line of logic. Grownups lived forever, and her sister was nearly a grownup.

“What do you mean that she’s dead? She can’t really be dead. She was going to live forever!” Her sister gave her a look that was pure despair.

“It means she’s dead!” Daffidolania flinched at her sister’s harsh words. “Gone forever and ever, Daffidolania, and she’s not coming back.”

Reality hit her so hard that Daffidolania couldn’t breathe. She gasped for breath, tears streaming down her face. Her sister pulled her into a big hug. That made her feel much better.

3: Five Years Later, Amelia

As the High Matriarch, Amelia had so much to do. It was a dull, tedious job, but it had to be done. She had to watch after the kingdom and her little sisters, June and Daffidolania. Oh, Daffidolania. She loved

her dearly, but what was to be done with her? At least she had found a friend. What was her name? Oh, yes, Juniper.

Daffidolania and Juniper were both odd children. Daffidolania never quite recovered from the death of Maple and had always been a bit strange before it happened. Juniper saw things only in shades of gray. She hadn't seen color all her life.

"The different ones always seem to find each other," her mother had told her, "I'm sure Daffidolania will find a good friend." Her mother was right. Daffidolania and Juniper were the perfect match.

4 : What Should Not Have Happened

Maple shouldn't have died. No never. June had sat that morning numb with shock. She was going to live forever. Actually, June never intended for this to happen. Her sister Amelia ruled now, and she liked that, even though she had wanted Maple to rule. June felt so bad for Daffidolania. Her sister's brain had never been the same. The servants always found her rocking in corners and muttering nonsense. She had to be educated though, no matter how many marbles she had lost.

She shuddered at a cold breeze as she sat out on the bench dedicated to Maple. It sits under a sugar maple tree. They make maple syrup from the sap in the spring, which they put on their deflated cakes. When the trees weren't in season, they used honey from the local bees. It always tasted good, until Maple died, then everything started to taste strange to June. No taste, little taste. Eating was just something she did to stay alive.

6 : The Stranger in the Cloak

Daffidolania was seeing orange. Someone must be crying. She crept towards the sound. When she found the source of the crying, a cloaked figure, she placed a hand on her shoulder, "What's wrong?" she asked. The figure's face was hidden in the shadow of the hood. "No one listens to me," they said, voice trembling. The voice was female, she could tell, with a smooth light blue color to go along with it. "Listen to you about what?"

"That the one they believe is dead, lives!" Daffidolania shuddered at this thought. "You mean Maple?" she asked.

"Yes, of course it's Maple! Who else has died in the last five years?"

Daffidolania felt her chest tighten. If Maple was not dead, what would happen now?

"If you follow me, you can see her again." It was like she had read Daffidolania's mind. "So, will you come?" A chance to see her sister, her dear, dear sister! How could she turn down that opportunity! Before she had time to think, a strangled "Yes!" came out of her throat. "Good, then follow me!" Daffidolania's legs moved without her consent. Might as well give in.

7 : Don't Shoot the Messenger

A servant ran, panting, into the throne room. "High Matriarch! I have," here she stopped, catching her breath, "I have something to tell you. I just saw your youngest sister, following a cloaked stranger. She was heading east, but it took me so long to run here so they have a head start."

Amelia's bodyguard slowly reached for his bow and arrow. "Please, PLEASE! Don't shoot me! I'm just the messenger!" She started crying, death rarely stared anyone in the face so plainly. "Put the weapons down!" Amelia shouted at the guard. "Lead us to where you saw the two leaving," she said, gently, to the servant. The woman took a deep breath and said, "Come."

8 : Journeying

“When will we get to where we are going?” Daffidolania asked. “Soon.” was the answer every time she asked. Her legs were tired. TIRED! WHY WERE HER LEGS SO TIRED! “My legs are tired. ARGH! Can we stop and rest? When will we get there!” Somehow the cloaked one kept her cool. “I’m sorry your legs hurt, but we can’t stop and rest. I’ll tell you when we’re almost there.”

Usually this would make anyone frustrated. Daffidolania was impressed. Only her sisters could withstand Daffidolania whine sessions. The cloaked one, as Daffidolania had dubbed her, should have shouted at her, but somehow she had answered calmly.

“You have passed round one.” Daffidolania whispered to herself. What could she do for round two? Ah yes, the panic attack. “ARGH! I’M BEING KIDNAPPED! HELP ME! I DON’T KNOW YOU! STRANGER! LET ME GO! HELP!” The cloaked one put her hands on Daffidolania’s shoulders and bent down to her eye level, yet Daffidolania still couldn’t see her face. “Hey, listen. You came here because you wanted to, right?” Daffidolania nodded, surprised that the cloaked one didn’t clap her hands over Daffidolania’s mouth.

“Okay, see? I’m not scary.”

Wow, this person was really good. How come the cloaked one hadn’t shouted at her yet? Most normal people would’ve thrown her off a cliff by now. This lady had trained for this. Her sisters were the only ones who knew how to deal with her, but this woman acted like she had lived with Daffidolania all of her life.

“Hey, guess what?” The cloaked one asked, her smile just visible under the hood. “WHAT.” She was so exhausted from walking, her legs were about to give out. “We’re almost there! Just around the corner.” A cave came into her line of sight. A figure was standing in the mouth of the cave, barely visible from Daffidolania’s point of view.

As the two drew closer, she saw that the figure was no other than her sister, Maple! Daffidolania took off in a sprint towards her. Maple was alive! “MAPLE MAPLE MAPLE!” Her sister spread her arms to embrace her. She was almost there! She was running so fast that it would hurt when she ran into her.

Daffidolania closed her eyes to savor their sisterly reunion. She would run into her soon. A whoosh of cold air. She opened her eyes, still running. Where had her sister gone? Still running, wait, now she was running on air. And now, falling! Down, until she hit a hard stone floor. “OWCH!” she screamed. She had landed on her leg all wrong, it felt broken. She glanced down at her leg, saw the unnatural angle it was laying in and promptly passed out.

9 : Shock

Amelia ran towards her sister, she had just seen her! She turned a corner to see her sister run straight through a person and disappear. Her quick minded bodyguard drew out his arrows and shot at a cloaked figure who she hadn’t noticed before. The aim was impeccable but the arrow went straight through and the figure ran off.

Amelia screamed. She put all of her rage, stress, sadness, self doubt, and frustration that she had pent up into the scream. Then she took a breath and fell to the ground, weeping. The tears came easily. She laid there for what seemed to be hours. After all her tears ran out all that was left was dry, racking sobs.

She wasn’t supposed to lose her sister, or have a dead one, or become High Matriarch at fifteen. She was just a child, playing the role of leader. She couldn’t do this. She couldn’t do anything. She could do something, actually. She could search and save her sister. Yes, she would bring back Daffidolania and prove to anyone that doubted her that she was the rightful one. She was supposed to lead, she would be the leader.

10 : Awakened

When Daffidolania came to, she found a boy, a few years younger than her, staring at her through the bars. Oh, she was in a cell. Wonder how that happened. It all came rushing back. Her sister, the fall, her leg-oh, how her leg hurt!

"Brought you food," the boy said. She glanced up, having momentarily forgotten that she wasn't alone. He slid a plate through a small gap under the bars. The plate held some type of food that she hadn't seen before. Didn't taste too bad.

11 : Search

Amelia ventured carefully into the cave, knowing that her sister had fallen, so there must be a pit somewhere. She looked around. You don't just fall through a stone floor! It was hard not to imagine her sister's broken body at the bottom of a hidden abyss. "Hello," Amelia shouted into the cave. "AMELIA, ARE YOU THERE?" Amelia gasped! Her sister had to be here somewhere

"Where are you?" Amelia shouted frantically, vivid images of Daffidolania trapped in goodness knows what. "I'm in a pit, the ground is fake" This confused Amelia. Then she thought of her sister running through Maple as if she wasn't there. Fake ground, what in the world? "Okay," Amelia shouted downward, "can you move something to soften my fall towards the opening?" "Yeah, I'll do that now." Amelia could hear rustling noises as her sister moved something. "Can I jump down now?" "Yes, I'll move out of the way." Amelia got a running start and jumped, through the floor down. But because Amelia was prepared, she braced herself for the fall.

After a small amount of falling, she hit soft hay. Her sister immediately sprung to her, then groaned. "Oh, Daffidolania, are you okay?" Daffidolania's face was contorted in pain. "I think I broke my leg." Amelia could feel her forehead creasing. Her mother said that it would become permanent. "What do we do now?" Daffidolania asked. "Now," Amelia answered with a smile on her face, "Now we escape."

12 : Escaping

Amelia knew that they were going to escape. How, she had no idea. "Hey, Daffy, have you tried scaling the walls?" Her sister frowned at her, "I have a broken leg, remember?" Amelia thought for a bit. "Well, can you walk?" Daffidolania tried, then, succeeded!

"Okay, I think I can carry you on my back." Amelia lifted Daffidolania, who had always been light, with success. Now, the wall. She climbed up with ease. Almost too much ease, so much that she grew suspicious. But when they reached the top, there was no one to push them back down or anything. "Follow me." Amelia whispered to her sister. Together, they crept towards the light.

13 : A State of Panic

June was pacing. When her sisters hadn't returned for supper, the royal guard had sent out search parties. The parties were still searching, and it was driving June insane. Supper was so quiet without her sister Amelia debating with her about how to rule Affadalonian best. A book could calm her down, but June didn't want her nerves to be stifled by history and fantasy. Suddenly the palace doors opened. That wasn't right, the door was locked at this hour, and you would need a key to open it.

Three people stood in the doorway. June walked to the door, not believing her eyes. Amelia, Daffidolania, and Maple were standing there, drenched. "No, no, no. Maple! Come in and dry off." Then June hugged her long lost supposedly dead sister. All the sisters reunited.

14 : How it all Happened

They had found Maple whilst running through the woods. Her body had been carried away after the funeral, but she wasn't quite dead. She was in the oddest state, frozen solid. She woke up just recently in a cell, but climbed out and hid. The rain had started during their journey. That was why they were soaked. They still had to capture the cloaked one, but right now everyone was right where they belonged.

15 : Epilogue

Somewhere in the wilderness, a king sat on a dark throne. "Do you have them?" he asked in a raspy voice. The cloaked one approached with caution. "It appears sir, that they have escaped. But the subject woke successfully." The king rose with a roar, striking at the cloaked one. He would make kingdoms burn, forests fall, and mountains bow. But that, my friends, is a tale for another time.

Touchdown in Space

By Nolan Conway and Wyatt Lange

My name is Gus Ferguson, and I play in the NFLIS which stands for National Football League In Space, and the position I play is Running Back on the Comets. I am going to tell you my life story in the NFLIS, and what happened to me in the Super Space Ball.

How my story started is I went to the draft hoping to get a first round pick by the Rockets. I was waiting and hoping to get picked by the Rockets, but by the time it was the last two picks, it came down to me and Jamal Diggums. First it was the Comets pick which is the worst team in the league. Sadly they picked me, and the Rockets picked Jamal Diggums. When he came out he was dressed up as the Rockets mascot. The next day when I went to my new locker, it smelled like rotten cheese and sweaty helmets. Our first game was against the Blunder Berg Aliens. At the start of the game our quarterback got thrown at the ceiling, and he broke his arm. Then I had to play quarterback. When I was quarterback, it did not go well, so we lost. The next eight games went the same way. We lost all of them. At the next game, our quarterback was back. In the fourth quarter, he threw an all field pass to the wide receiver when we were down 17 to 14. It was a touchdown, so we won the game! After the game, we celebrated our win at the bar.

Our next game was against the Rockets, and they are the best team in the league. That's the team that I wanted to be drafted by, but got drafted by the Comets. We got destroyed by the Rockets, and now we have to win all our games if we want to get to the playoffs. Our next game was against the Astronauts. The Astronauts game wasn't very close, but we won, and we won the next few games. Now we have one more game to win to get into the playoffs. We gladly won and were super excited to play in the playoffs, but we weren't done. We went on to win both our playoffs games, and now we are in the playoffs. In the first half we got stomped on. In the second half, we came back and were down by 6. Then, with one minute left, we kicked an onside kick, and we got the ball back. We got down to the 10 yard line, and there were 12 seconds left. It was a hand off to me, and I got 5 yards. The time was ticking down, and we got one more play off. The quarterback said "hut!" and handed it off to me. I got a touchdown! But we still had to kick a field goal in order to win the game. Our kicker got ready! The kick was good! The crowd went wild with excitement!

My name is Gus Ferguson and that's the story of how I won a Super Bowl in Space!

Transformers: The Deadly Last Act

By Tate Davy

This is a piece of fan fiction of the Transformers series.

The Transformers are in the stasis chambers waiting to enter their new lives after leaving Heart Of The Planet. They wake up and Iron Hide said,

“Do you think we are going to be under control, or are we free to do what we want?”

Optimus replied, “I don’t know, but we must find out.” They left the landing zone and scanned their vehicles they would use to travel. Cliff, the youngest, wanted a fast vehicle.

Ratchet said, “Get your head straightened! We can’t scan the fast cars!”

But Cliff didn’t listen and went speeding to the tower of judgment.

Everyone followed and saw Cliff was already in a lot of trouble. Optimus went and apologized for Cliff’s behavior to anyone who would listen! He was punished for scanning the fast car. Sentinel Prime stated, “For your crimes, you will be sent to eight years in stasis and will change your vehicle right this second.”

In that second, decepticons burst into the room and yelled, “Everyone on the ground or you will be seriously hurt!” One autobot didn’t get down and got shot in the spark. Everyone just had to watch and they ran to get to the top of the tower and got in escape pods. Some autobots were shot out of the sky. The ones who were able to leave the planet were Iron Hide, Cliff, Optimus Prime, Bumblebee, and Ratchet. The autobots land on planet Earth in different parts of the same town.

The autobots are going to meet with each other and come across a boy named Isaac Yegger. He said, “What in the world!?” and he started to run off when Optimus put his hand in the way to stop him.

“You are in no danger. We are here because we had to leave the planet”, Optiums said.

“Then why didn’t you go somewhere else?” Isaac asked.

Ratchet explained, “Because we got out of stasis chambers and then the decepticons attacked us and we had to flee.” Later the autobots scanned Earth vehicles so they would blend in with other vehicles.

The autobots started adventuring Earth. On a mission, they found a shard of Unicron blood or a shard of dark energon.

“What shall we do with it?” Iron Hide asked.

“I don’t know, but we must keep it away from danger,” Optimus replied.

They started a headquarters with a team of people who were here to protect the autobots. Optimus thanked a man named John Rider for starting the team. Then the ground started to rumble and across the world everyone heard a voice.

“Finally I rise from my tomb!” Every autobot knew this voice! UNICRON!

He was starting to rise from the ground slowly and the next three days, decepticons rained from the sky. Megatron, Starscream, Soundwave and Shockwave came the first day. The next day it was Brawl, Bonecrusher, Barricade and Blackout. Then the last day, it was Nitrozeus, Onslaught, and Mohawk.

The next couple of days all of the news channels had on the headlines, “Aliens attacking many cities across the globe!” The decepticons were on a mission to find the shard of dark energon.

“If nobody gets that shard, Unicron will die!” Megatron said. “Well you know the autobots may have it!” Shockwave said. “How would they have it?” Megatron said.

Then the decepticons went to the autobot base and the autobots were not there. They damaged the base

a lot and now they were on a hunt for the autobots. They ended up in Montana and found the autobots in a field trying to destroy the dark energon. Then the decepticons attacked and it became a war zone! There were parts flying everywhere!

“It’s over, Prime! You will fall!” Megatron cried.

“No it’s not! We will never stop!” Optimus responded.

Well, there was an end but it was the autobots who lost. Well, the autobots came back and the decepticons were gone, and no one had an answer where they went! The autobots went on a mission to find the deceptions. They found them giving Unicron the dark energon. In an instant, Unicron smashed his hand, almost crushing the autobots.

“Run or we will be crushed!” Ratched cried.

“We will stand and fight or the decepticons will win!” Iron Hide answered. They kept fighting and never stopped.

“I’ll go around,” Cliff said. He sprinted around Unicron.

Then Cliff jumped up and ripped the dark energon out of Unicron. Unicron fell and cracked a hole. Megatron soared through the sky and came crashing down on Optimus.

“Fall, Prime, Fall!” Megatron cried.

They had a huge fight and it ended with Unicron blowing up and his parts killing most of the decepticons, and a few getting away. The autobots went back to base and ended the war.

“We won, soldiers, we finally won!” They cried.

Thank you for reading my story. This is the end.

The Big Game

By Rylee Engan and Cullen O'Heron

Jacob is the starting running back for the Bills. Tyler is the starting linebacker for the 49ers. Jacob and Tyler are rivals from college! The 49ers will play the Eagles in the NFC championship, and the Bills will play the Steelers in the AFC championship to get to the Super Bowl.

The kickoff is underway for the 49ers and the Eagles. The 49ers get the ball and return it to the touchdown. The Eagles have the ball at the 42 yard line. Tyler forces a fumble and recovers the ball. He runs to the touchdown. The score is now 14-0 in the fourth quarter with 7 seconds left. Tyler got a sack to end the game!

Now the kick is underway for the Bills and the Steelers. The Steelers get the ball and score a touchdown. Then Jacob catches a 72 yard touchdown and goes for two to win the game. The Super Bowl is set for the Bills and 49ers. Game on!

The Bills get the ball and Jacob hurdles Tyler for a touchdown. The 49ers can't score so they have to punt. Jacob gets the punt, but Tyler forces a fumble to tie the game 7 to 7. The game goes into overtime and the next score WINS!

The Bills get the ball! Jacob gets the ball, but Tyler forces a fumble to win the Super Bowl. Jacob and Tyler both worked really hard on this Super Bowl. They now both have a little more respect for each other! In the future, I hope everyone will have more respect for one another, no matter what happens.

Piano

By Ella Erickson

I think the piano is the best instrument. The reason why is because I play piano and I have been playing piano ever since I was in first grade. Piano is the best because you can basically play any song you want, once you have the proper skills. You WILL need to practice to be good. You will not be perfect in just a few lessons. It will require work. But once you've put in the work...

You can choose which octaves and keys you want to play in: There's C position, G position, D position, F position...many to choose from! If you're playing an electric keyboard, you can choose to alter the pitches with other instruments, but it sounds better on the piano! Many people would agree with me. So I think piano is the best. In the future, I think everyone should give piano lessons a try for at least a little while! Don't say you don't like something until you've tried it!

Power of Beads

By Jia-Xin Fan

Aleena was sitting on her wooden twin sized bed, staring intensely at the circular bowl of colorful beads in front of her.

She was about to make the most important decision of her whole life.

“Can you hurry up already?!” Her bratty little sister, Bratt, said. (I wonder how she got her name...)

“Be quiet!” Aleena replied sternly. “This is a really important decision. This invention could be a burden to us, we need to be wise.”

Bratt rolled her hazel eyes. “Whatever. Just hurry up so I can take the pink one.

Aleena sighed, then swiftly grabbed the emerald green bead. Perhaps it would give her the ability to turn seeds to crops. Boring, but at that moment it was better to play safe.

“Really?” Bratt raised an eyebrow. “Do you even know what that does?”

“Of course not. Don’t give me that look, it’s not like you know either.”

Aleena was about to get up to leave when her little sister spoke again. “Actually, I do.”

Aleena turned back around to face her, curious.

“What, but how do you know?”

“I heard the town council talking about it. I only heard some colors though. I’m pretty sure the emerald green one allows you to grow plants faster.” She scratched her head.

“Or was that the mint one?”

Aleena shrugged. “At least I didn’t get a bad one. I’m going down for breakfast.” Aleena popped her air pods back on and shut the door behind her.

“WAIT!” Bratt forgot to tell her one little detail. “THE GREEN ONE ACTUALLY-“

But Aleena had already left.

Bratt sighed. Just great.

“Hey Mom.” Aleena said, holding up the emerald bead. “I chose the emerald one. Bratt said it makes plants grow faster, but what does she know?”

Aleena’s mom was shaking the salt on the eggs then turned the oven off.

“Be careful today, okay?” Mrs. Thompson warned. “When I was your age, I chose a random one and got stuck with seeing people lie. It made me get trust issues and lose friends.”

“Yeah, yeah.” Aleena said, staring at the bead. “Well, at least your children can’t lie to you now.”

Mrs. Thompson chuckled. “Well, that’s definitely a bonus. Have a great day at school.” She turned the oven back on.

Aleena was about to leave when BratD ran like a cheetah all the way downstairs, out of breath. “DO-NOT-LEAVE.”

“Huh?” Aleena said, turning back around confused. “What do you want?”

“What’s going on honey?” Mrs. Thompson asked.

“Aleena.” Bratt turned to her. “Your emerald bead. When you turn a certain age, you’ll forget the one you love most.”

"Hey, are you okay?" Vivian asked, and plopped down right next to Aleena in art class. Aleena slumped down on her blue beanbag. "Yeah. I'm fine. Just feeling a little drowsy today."

Vivian nodded. "I get that. Did you pick a bead yet?"

Aleena took out the green bead from her pocket and held it up.

Vivian squinted her eyes at the bead. "You picked emerald?"

"Yep. I'm pretty sure that was the worst choice ever."

"Why do you think that?"

Just then the bell rang, and Aleena winced from the noise. "Dunno. My sister told me a few things."

Aleena got up from her beanbag and tucked her sketches of famous artists in her backpack.

Vivian raised an eyebrow. "And you seriously believe her? Wasn't she the one that copied your project for the middle school science fair? C'mon Lena, it's high school."

"Maybe you're right." Aleena sighed. "Anyway, I goDa go. See you at lunch."

Aleena grabbed her art supplies and walked out the door, heading to her favorite place in the world, the gymnasium.

"Hey guys!" She called to her teammates once she entered.

Aleena was on the school cheer team and they had a big game coming up. Cheer was

Aleena's biggest priority. Practice was the highlight of her day.

As soon as Victoria saw Aleena, she squealed and came running towards her, smacking her gum.

"How's my favorite BFF doing today?" Victoria said, a hot pink bead bracelet on her wrist. "OMG, you got the emerald green bead? *smack* I wanted that one, but looks like you took it." She winked.

Aleena sighed for about the tenth time that day. "I wish I could give it to you, but I'm not sure you want it anyway. It's practically a burden."

Victoria was her 7th best friend but then something happened between them that broke them apart. Victoria's been acting like Aleena's BFF since ninth grade which was very odd.

Aleena didn't say anything about it though, she didn't want to be rude.

Then Elina came over to them, shaking her pom poms. "Ooooh you got the green one?"

That's literally the best one. Good pick girl!"

Aleena was confused. How could her bead be the best one? It would make her lose the one she loved most. How's that awesome?

"What?" Aleena said. "How?"

"Don't you know?" Elina winked and giggled at Victoria. "It gives you magical powers. When you turn an age, you'll have any power you want."

"Huh?"

That was NOT what her sister had told her. Actually, it was the complete opposite. Elina made it sound like a dream, but then why had BraD told her she would forget the one she loved most?

On the bus ride back home, Aleena sat by Coral, her actual BFF.

"I'm just so confused." She said, "I don't know if my sister's telling the truth, or Victoria."

Coral stared at her. "Uhm, helloooo! Are we talking about the same Victoria? The one who publicly dumped you? How could you believe her over your sister?"

"I know, I know." Aleena said. "I just don't know why Victoria would lie. She's been acting like my soulmate BFF since 2 years ago. Why would she ruin my life now?"

"I'm not sure about that." Coral said. "But I do know your sister. She may be much, but I know she would never lie like that to you. After all, you have the same bloodline."

Aleena stuck her hand out the bus window. "I guess. I do care about her, but I still don't know who to believe."

Coral nodded and began rummaging through her backpack.

“What are you looking for?” Aleena asked, curious.

Coral took out a huge rectangular box with a pink bow. “It’s your birthday tomorrow!

This is your present since I won’t be able to come.”

Aleena’s mouth dropped open. “WHAT! You’re not coming to my birthday? Why?”

Coral’s eyes began to water. “I-I’m sorry. It’s just that...” She gulped down her water. “It’s my gram’s funeral tomorrow, and I have to go.”

Aleena softened. “I’m so sorry, I didn’t know. That must be painful.”

“Yes, it very much is.” Coral looked towards Aleena. “Can I tell you something?”

“Of course.”

“Please make the right choice. It’s very difficult losing a loved one. I would know.”

“Hey mom! Do you have the birthday cake?” Aleena asked her mom on the day of her eighteenth birthday party.

“Of course, dear.” Mrs. Thompson placed the perfectly iced vanilla cake on their old wooden table. They’d used the table for years, it’d been passed on for generations.

Then the doorbell rang. Aleena ran toward their front door and swung open the door. “Hey Vivi- oh, Victoria!”

Victoria flashed a smile. “Hey bestie! Am I first?”

“Actually, you are.” Aleena said, confused. “You’re really early. Like, 2 hours early. I thought you were Vivi, we were supposed to get ice cream before my party.”

“Well,” Victoria walked right into the house like she owned it and placed down the humongous present in the present corner. “Looks like I’ll be joining you two! Wouldn’t that be so fun?” She clapped her hands in delight.

“Uhm, well- yeah I suppose so.”

“C’mon! Let’s go to your room!” Victoria took her by the arm and dragged her upstairs and gasped.

“O.M.G!” Victoria squealed. “Your room had the biggest glow up ever! I LOVE the loP bed so much!”

Victoria started touching everything she saw interesting in her bedroom and when she was done with her little mini tour, she plopped down on Aleena’s bed and sighed.

Victoria must’ve felt Aleena’s awkwardness because she gestured her to sit down.

“So,” Victoria breathed in. “Why are you so tense around me?”

“Oh- I’m sorry. I just- I don’t know.” Aleena mumbled.

Victoria smirked. “See, that’s exactly what I mean.” Her smile faded. “But seriously, what’s going on?”

Aleena took a big breath. “I guess it was just so unexpected. We had a huge fight and then at the beginning of high school you started acting like my BFF. It was all so awkward and weird I guess it just shocked me. I’m sorry.”

Victoria fiddled with her bead. “I’m sorry if that’s what you felt. Actually, I didn’t know that even happened.”

“Huh? What do you mean?”

Then Victoria started explaining. “In middle school, aPer our ‘fight’ that was actually when I could choose my bead. I was kind of stupid back then so I grabbed a random one.” She looked up at the ceiling. “It was the worst mistake of my life. That’s why making the right decision is so important. Because I- I lost all my memories. But that made me realize, I needed that. I needed a fresh start and I didn’t know we even had a fight. I’m so sorry.” Then Victoria burst into tears.

Just then Aleena realized how important her choice of the bead was. She felt so stupid, how could she choose emerald? Now she was going to lose her loved one. She even knew who she was going to lose.

Aleena wrapped Victoria in a hug and Victoria hugged her back.

“Let’s go get some ice cream.”

“Happy birthday dear Aleena, happy birthday to you!”

Aleena closed her eyes and was about to make a wish when she saw her sister in a polka dotted dress looking at her, a sad expression on her face.

Aleena didn’t know why but she felt sad at that moment, as if her mind knew something she didn’t.

Aleena closed her eyes again and made a wish. A very important wish. Then she blew out the candles. All 18 of them.

Everyone clapped and cheered and applauded. Aleena felt happy, but there was a sad part of her inside.

Then she saw a girl. A girl she didn’t think she invited. A girl with a polka dotted dress on, that was staring at her, a hopeful expression on her face. But Aleena didn’t know her.

“Who are you?”

A New Season (Limerick)

By Katelin Flack

I found it, I found it!
It's right on the ground, it's...
GREENISH and BROWNISH!
Now I sound clownish.
Under the snow it sits.

Curled Up in a Blanket on the Deck at Grandma's House

By Katelin Flack

Around the corner, I see a spiral-striped cat,
Padding on top of the crunchy snow,
Melting like a small child's ice cream on a sunny day.
Above my head on top of a leafless tree,
The birds chirp to one another
Into the distances of the crisp winter morning.
To my right,
In a beam of sunlight between two metal chairs,
The shells of numerous sunflower seeds
Scatter like chocolate chips on a huge cookie.
I lean back, as the calm early morn fades into the afternoon buzz.
A chick-a-dee-dee-dee calls out, searching for romance.
I am all alone.

Fall Haiku

by Katelyn M. Flack

1.

Fall is around us
Scarlet leaves drop at our feet
Thick smoke in the air

2.

Harvest has begun
A full moon lights our passage
Abundance is here

3.

Soon winter will come
Sunset is earlier now
Fall is all but gone

Farm Life in Alabama

By Kinnley Frank and Kirby Klug

In the year 1982, there lived a very poor family. They lived on a farm in Alabama. Their Mother, Susan, died from a stroke at age 35. But their father still worked on the farm. Sadly, he died at age 40 working on the farm from a heat stroke.

Then, there were the children. Emma was 15 at the time. Cooper was 11. At their young age, they had to work. Cooper stayed on the farm milking cows and feeding chickens. Emma went out to find a job at a sewing factory.

They both started out making some money. They both enjoyed their jobs so much that life started getting better. Cooper started selling eggs for \$2 a dozen. The better Emma got at sewing, the more money she made! They saved all their money for necessities.

Since Emma and Cooper were able to save so much money, they bought a company called “Village Sewing Center.” They had so many customers that their income kept getting bigger and bigger. Finally, they had earned enough money to afford to hire a music producer ... their dream! With time and practice, they became successful in the world of country music!

Everyone loved to listen to “Emma and Cooper, The Country Stars!” When Emma was 26 and Cooper was 22, they came out with their newest album called, “Love Don’t Break!” One thing Cooper and Emma learned: You can start at the bottom. But if you believe in yourself, you can make it to the top!

Broshi

By Leif Fraunkron

Broshi lives by a mini nuclear reactor. His dad, Nosh, works there. It was “Bring Your Kid To Work Day”. Broshi got radiated due to no sunglasses. He starts to change color and he’s sad, so he goes home.

Every room in Broshi’s home is a different color. Broshi plays hide and seek in the red room. He stood out in the open and did not get found until the game was over. This was because of his radiating, changing colors. Broshi was amazed. It was like camouflage! He won all of the hide and seek games every time it was his turn to hide!

Broshi then got a job as a college team mascot. The mascot was green and every time the team had games, Broshi became green! So he only needed to wear small details, costing his mascot suit very little!

Broshi found that changing colors was a very lucrative way of life!

Football

By Connor Goetzinger

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- 3.The Super Bowl

1.The Beginning of football

The first games were played in England.

Football is the most watched sport live.

It has been reported as the country's most popular sport since 1985!

The first game was played in 1874.

Walter Camp is called the Father Of The U.S. Football

Walter Camp invented the snapback.

In the future, I believe that I...Connor Goetzinger, should be called the NEW Father of the U.S. Football!

2.The stars

Do you know all the stars?

Yes, there is Patrick Mahomes and Tom Brady.

Justin Jefferson I could go on forever!

All of them have made terrific plays!

They have broken records so they are stars!

In the future, I believe that I...Connor Goetzinger, should be a star!

3.The Super Bowl

The Super Bowl is the biggest game in the NFL.

The Chiefs won this year's Super Bowl!

Did you know the trophy is named after a Packer head coach? The team that wins is the best team in the league!

In the future, I believe that there should be a Connor Goetzinger Trophy named after me because I love football more than anything!

Vikings Football

By Connor Goetzinger

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1.The Vikings

Bud Grant retired after the 1985 season.

Jerry Bums got the Vikings to three Super Bowls in a row!

As heavy underdogs, they destroyed the New Orleans Saints and the San Francisco 49ers.

In the future... I think that everyone should have great faith in the Vikings, and I...Connor Goetzinger, should be the Vikings Head coach!

2. The stars!

Justin Jefferson, Dalven Cook, Adam Thelen, Kirk Cousins:

Are all very good players! They all have made some terrific plays!

For instance, Justin Jefferson caught a one-hander in the air with another player on top of him!

In the future, I believe that I...Connor Goetzinger should also get the opportunity to make some terrific plays for the Vikings!

3. The 2022 season

The Vikings ended with a 12-4 record. But lost in the playoffs.

They also hold the record for the largest comeback in NFL history!

In the future, I believe that I...Connor Goetzinger, should assist in improving the Vikings' record!!

Sophie

By Harper Gueltzow

Sophie Part I

One day, I had my best friend Stephanie over at my house. She really caught me off guard when she said, "I want to tell you something, Sophie. I have to move". I was stunned.

"You can't move!" I blurted.

"I'm so sorry, Sophie. I can't stay," she insisted. "Why? Why can't you stay?" I panicked.

"Because my mom got a new boyfriend that lives far away." "Oh. Stupid boys."

"I'm leaving tomorrow."

"Tomorrow?!"

"I can see you're upset. I should go. Bye, Sophie." "No, Stephanie! Don't go!"

"I'm sorry, Sophie. Goodbye."

The next morning I saw Stephanie leaving with her mother in their car. Stephanie waved goodbye. I did, too. I couldn't let her know just how hurt I was. The rest of the day I played by myself. It was awful.

Then I saw another little girl, about my age. I said "hi" to her. She was pretty shy, but she said "hi" back. I asked her what her name was. She told me her name was Rose. That's a pretty name. I told her my name was Sophie, and I asked her if we could be friends. She thought that was a great idea, and I was excited!

"I better go now, but I'll see you tomorrow!" said Rose. "Bye!" I said to my friend!!

Sophie Part II

The next morning, I went outside to look for Rose. After looking for what seemed like hours, I found her! I was about to wave when my mom grabbed me and drove me inside. She said Rose was dangerous. What??

"What do you mean?" I asked.

"That girl passed away! There is something dangerous going on!" my mom insisted. I was shocked and I didn't believe her! So I went outside to find Rose anyway. I found her sitting on a bench, and she looked sad.-

"Are you ok?" I asked. "I'm fine." She answered. "Wanna play?" I asked.

She looked a bit pale, but answered, "ok". We played for hours, and I really felt like she reminded me of someone ... but I didn't know who! Then, my mom called me for dinner. I told Rose I had to go, and we said goodbye.

The next morning at breakfast, my mom told me again to be careful. "I WILL, Mom!" I insisted.

"Fine. I trust you, Sophie," my mom said nervously.

Sophie Part III

I charged out the door to go find Rose, but I couldn't find her anywhere. I looked and looked. Finally I approached a policeman and told him my friend was missing. Two long years went by, and I still haven't found her. But one day I received a mysterious letter out of nowhere! I know what happened to... "Rose". She is a ghost who was actually Stephanie the whole time. Stephanie ... who I found out was killed in a car crash while moving. Stephanie came back... as "Rose"...but HOW????

Innovation on Cars

By Gus Hoffmann

Over the times of the cars the innovation has been very good and interesting since they first came out in 1886. Back then when Cars first came out and now are a big difference. Then when cars were created in Germany in the 1880s. The cars didn't have tops so the wind, rain, and snow would get in your car. But now we have roofs and windows so snow, rain, win and hail don't get in your car. Japan expanded companies over to the United states. It helped a lot of people get cars. The cars helped the military get to places and make tanks. Since then they were able to make tanks and defeat their enemies. Soon after that all of the companies expanded around the world.

Now we have electric cars that can move fast and even drive on their own. The electric cars can pick a place where to eat. They also have more advanced safety features. Life the airbags, when cars first came out they did not have airbags. They only had a steering wheel to stop you. When you get in a crash.

Now let's talk about the seat belts. They only had a leather strap. The seat belts would really hurt when they got into a crash. Then people would get really bad bruises. That would change people's lives and how they live.

Let's talk about the wheels and how they improved from the 1800s. The wheels back then were only metal, but today they are really strong and made of rubber. The wheels now are really hard, so they can go over rocks, and sharp objects without popping. That is my essay on Innovation.

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Innovation in Housing Essay

By Sienna Ibberson

I'm focusing on the changes in architecture over the past years. The people that lived back then didn't have any money to buy land to then build their house. If people wanted the same land to put their house they fought for it. They also tried to pay each other some money in exchange for the land. Read to find out more of the changes that happened with the houses throughout the years.

Back then the houses were tiny and didn't have a lot of space. People didn't have a lot of money to pay for the house they wanted. The people that had a lot of money bragged about their big house they had. There were different villages for the richer and smaller houses. The styles of the houses back then were ideas from different countries. The smaller houses didn't have a big kitchen, not many bedrooms and only one bathroom. The larger houses had a bigger kitchen, many bedrooms and more than one bathroom.

Way back then they didn't have any electricity. They didn't have any TV's or electronics to find out any important information. The people that wanted to find important things had to look in the newspaper or listen to the radio. In today's life we can talk to remotes to search things up on the TV's. We can also find a radio channel and listen for any important information.

Earlier in the world they had to use candles for light to see things. Now we have light switches and light bulbs to help us do things not in the dark. With those candles they had to walk to the bathroom outside, then go into a different building to use the bathroom.

In today's life our bathrooms are in the same building and don't have to walk very far to get to them. Now we have light switches and light bulbs to help us do things not in the dark.

Although, back then they had dirt floors inside their house. In today's life we have varieties of floors we can choose from to put inside our houses. "Most homes built in the early 20th century had limited storage space – small closets in particular (www.appfolio.com).

In addition, they didn't have a stove to cook food or a microwave to warm the food up. They had to make their own fires by rubbing the sticks together. They didn't even have a freezer to keep the food cold they needed to keep cold. At this time in life, we have stoves that can cook many things at a time. We have freezers that can hold many kinds of cold foods at a time.

After World War 1, the houses started getting more space, storage, electricity, furniture and many more things. "However, the design of homes after the war was driven in part by health considerations, such as providing good ventilation, sun orientation and exposure, portable pressurized water, and at least one private toilet (<https://www.cdc.gov>). There have been many incredible changes with houses and their styles. According to the U.S. Census Bureau (USCB), in the years since World War 11, the types of homes Americans live in have changed dramatically (<https://www.cdc.gov>). People that build houses look for spaces where they can have lots of storage (<http://www.appfolio.com>).

There have been dramatic changes throughout history with houses. They were tiny and didn't have a lot of space. Then houses became large with varieties of floors, electricity, more than one room, stoves and many more new things.

It went from not a lot of land for houses to be on, to lots of space for houses and lots more room for extra things we needed in our towns or cities. Hopefully you found out interesting facts that you didn't know already.

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The Calm Lake

By Kirby Klug

There was a lake that shimmered when the sun hit it today.
It was so calm so many people came to sit and stay.
One morning when a little girl went down to see the lake,
She dipped her toes in water, cool, and happy smiles did make.
She felt all bad and negative feelings just wash away.
She said this is a perfect spot to be alone and pray.
Each day she came back to the lake to sit and love the sun.
The lake might soon be gone one day so love it, everyone!

Cars

By Nolan Kucera

Cars have been innovated in many cool ways and many times. A car started out as a horse pulling a wagon and now it is metal shaped and has an engine so it moves by itself. You are about to learn some cool facts about cars like how they started and what they are today.

Cars were invented in 1886 by Carl Benz. The first car was called an automobile. The first automobile was a one person car and did not have a top so you were just sitting on a seat like a bicycle except it had three wheels and you did not have to pedal to move. It had levers to turn while now we have a steering wheel. It had a mortar so it would go by itself just like we do nowadays.

The automobile would have been a lot slower and you wouldn't really be able to control the heat in the car and it would be really cold in the winter while in the summer it would be really hot. Then cars became more like cars now but not as fast and don't have windows, also they were a lot slower than cars are now. Now cars can go up to 300+ mph. Also now you can control the heat of your car and there is a cab that protects you from wind, rain, snow, bugs and many other things. Cars now are made in different shapes and sizes. You can also choose the type of car you want so it will be easy to find. Also you can choose what color you want your car to be while back then it came in black. Now you can make your car make a noise from your phone or car key so you can find it in a parking lot. Back then all the cars were the same color and all of them looked the same so it was very hard just to find your car.

Modern cars have a ton of safety features so it is safe and you do not really have to worry about being in a car accident. Here are a few safety features that cars have now. Cars have seat belts, sensors so if you are not looking the car will automatically stop, there is also an air bag built into the steering wheel so if you are in a car crash it will deploy so your head doesn't hit the steering wheel and don't get a concussion. And one last thing, some cars know what the speed limit is, so if you try to go over the speed limit it will automatically slow down to the speed limit. Back then cars did not really have any safety features except for a seatbelt. Now there are GPS devices built into your car so you will almost never get lost. Cars back then did not even have a dashboard to put the GPS into. Some cars have CD players and screens so you can watch a movie on a long drive and do not have anything to do.

How have cars changed the world in positive ways? One reason cars have helped change the world in a positive way is they help us move from place to place in a quick way. Here is a positive way cars have helped change the world. Tractors have been here for a long time and they have helped farmers grow and collect crops way faster than having to do it by hand. There are many types of cars that were built just for driving off road. Ever since they were built, people have been driving on mountains, climbing up big hills just for fun and people really enjoy riding off road.

How have cars changed the world in negative ways? Here are a few ways cars have changed the world in negative ways. A bad thing about cars is that if someone gets injured really badly and needs to be rushed to the hospital by an ambulance, the ambulance could get stuck in traffic and not be able to get the injured person to the hospital in time. Also cars have caused a lot of pollution and have been a major impact to the environment by causing global warming from exhaust. Another way cars have changed the world in a negative way is there have been about 1.3 million deaths due to car accidents. Cars have killed a lot of wildlife by driving and hitting an animal.

It will be interesting to see how cars will be innovated in the future. Hopefully I will be able to live

long enough so I can drive a car that floats! It would be really cool to do that. Hopefully we all live long enough to experience that.

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The Amazing Sunisa Lee

By Elle Luttchens

The Amazing Sunisa Lee

By Elle Luttchens

Sunisa Lee (Sunni) is an Olympian gymnast. She has already been to the Olympics once. I'm assuming she'll be in the Olympics again, as she was only 19 when she was in the last Olympic games. Sunni lived in St. Paul, Minnesota when she was younger, but now she is in Georgia for college. Now that Simone Biles is done competing in the Olympics, Sunni might be best United States gymnast!

Sunni was born on March 9, 2003. She has 3 half siblings, Evionn, Lucky, and Noah. At the age of 6, Sunni started gymnastics at the Midwest Gymnastics Center. The following year, Sunni began competing and won the all around at a state meet...which was only the second meet of her career! At the age of 8, she moved up 3 levels. She qualified for the elite at age 11!

In August, 2019, just days before Sunni competed in her first senior Championship, her father fell off of a ladder and was left half paralyzed. This was quite devastating to the family.

In 2020, Sunni was in the Olympics. She became a Gold Medalist! I believe that Sunni is an amazing influence on all future gymnasts. She kept trying even when bad things happened in her family. I think this should inspire all future gymnasts to never give up!

The Bad Dream

By Ava Meier

Part I

One day I woke up and walked around, but I couldn't find my parents anywhere. I checked all over the moon. I still couldn't find my mom and dad. Then I looked back to go home. First I walked, then I ran, then I was lost! I started walking again and saw the ice cream store. I was tired from running, and I was hot. Then I remembered I got my allowance yesterday! I walked inside and got my favorite. I love mint ice cream. After I ate my ice cream, I started walking again. I couldn't find anything or anyone! I walked some more, and saw my school. I went inside and checked the lockers, but then the floor opened up beneath me! Suddenly I was on the sun. I walked around, wondering why I was on the sun. Then I saw an alien. It started chasing me! It caught me and un-alived me! Then the sun broke, and I was floating in the galaxy.

Suddenly I heard an alarm! I woke up screaming in a cold sweat.

"Why are you screaming?" my mom asked.

"I had a bad dream".

"Oh well. Get dressed. You'll be late for school," my mom said.

I think I had a bad dream because I just moved here. I got dressed, ate breakfast, and took a shower. I went to school, and it gave me scary vibes.

Part II

When the bell rang, I went to class. At recess I met this girl. She was nice and we became best friends. Her name was Bailey. On Friday, we had a sleepover. It was really fun. When my parents left for a date, we snuck a lot of ice cream and candy!

"Let's go to the store and buy gummy bears!" said Bailey. I felt like it was a bad idea, but we went, anyway. It was night, and I was scared. We went to a gas station nearby. Then a van drove by and captured us in a bag! We were kept in his basement for years. As a ghost, I still see with my BFF ... the "MISSING" fliers of us!.

Candyland

By Luella Meyers

It was a Friday night and the girls were gonna have a sleepover at Alice's house. Everything was going great until they pulled out the Candyland game. They had gotten bored and decided to play a board game, so of course they chose the girls favorite board game, Candyland.

"Dinner!" Alice's mom's voice echoed through the hallway. They had hardly gotten the game set up, but they were hungry. So they raced down the hallway. As they were running, they could smell the perfectly cooked, delicious, cheesy pizza that was waiting on the kitchen table just a few feet away. When they approached the kitchen table they each grabbed a slice of pizza and devoured it. Katie, one of Alice's friends, reached for her glass of milk when Alice's younger brother, Mason, bumped Katie's elbow and milk went everywhere. Now the pizza, table, and Katie were covered in a white coat of milk. The milk made everything look like liquid snow everywhere. Mason was upset and went to bed early while the girls just sat there, staring at the table. The table held milk, four plates, four glasses of milk, and wet, soggy, no good pizza. The girls helped clean up the table and mop the floor. Once they were done they went back to playing Candyland.

"I'm yellow." Katie said.

"I'm green!" Alice replied.

"What about you Jenny, what color are you?" Katie asked.

"Um, I don't know because I don't like the color red and the color blue reminds me of that one time I stepped on a really sharp shell in the ocean. It hurt so bad and I" ...

"Ok, ok then you take green I'll be red," Alice interrupted. The girls formed a circle around the game. Jenny started first. She rolled the dice.

"Six!" Jenny shouted.

"SHHHHHHH!" Alice and Katie whisper shouted at the same time.

"Six." Jenny whispered. Jenny didn't even have to move her figure. It moved on its own!

"It's probably just magnetic," Katie said with a panicked voice. When it was the other girls' turn, the board pieces moved on their own again. It was now Jenny's turn again. The dice clicked and clacked while she was shaking them in her hand. She rolled a six again.

"JENNY, LOOK AT YOUR HANDS!" Alice cried. As Jenny looked down, she saw her hands disappearing into the board game!

"GO GET YOUR MOM!" Jenny cried but it was already too late. Jenny had been sucked into the board game. A few minutes of silence passed while they just stared at the board. Now the middle of the board was glowing green. There were words in the middle of the glowing green light.

"Roll the same number twice, live in the past for the rest of your life", Alice read. "What?!" Katie asked, confused.

"It says, 'Don't look at me, look at the board'" said Alice sternly. The board DID indeed say that! She wasn't lying. Both of the girls stared at the board. Jenny was stuck inside the board for the rest of her life.

"Girls! You need to go to bed now!" Alice's mom hollered up the stairs. But all they could think about was how to get Jenny out of the board game.

"Well, if she can't get out, we'll have to go in!" Katie said nervously.

“Are you crazy?!” Alice replied. All the girls had to do is roll the same number twice, get Jenny and GET OUT! But it wasn’t that easy.

“Well, you can’t go in alone, so I’m coming with you,” Alice replied in a shaky voice. Both of the girls took one dice and looked at each other.

“Which number?” Alice asked.

“Well, Jenny rolled a six, so let’s try six,” Katie said. The girls moved their fingers through the small dents in the white cubed dice to find the number side that had six small dents. When the girls both had the side with six small dents they laid it down on the board. Both of their characters moved six spaces on the board. Then the girls picked up the dice and found six again, and they both laid the dice down. Then they waited and waited.

“You know, it’s not fun waiting to be sucked into this thing!” Alice said. Both girls waited for another two long minutes.

“Well, I give up, I’m going to bed,” Alice said.

“No you’re not, get back here, now!” Katie said quickly before Alice could run up the stairs to her room. The board was glowing a bright green again. The girls both held their breath. Alice leaned over the board to read what it said.

“Double sic double the sssss.” Alice read out loud.

“What?!” That’s definitely NOT what Jenny got!” Katie said. The girls both turned their heads and saw twelve snakes coming out of the bathroom doorway!

CHAPTER TWO

The girls both just sat there staring at the doorway full of snakes.

“Uh, there are nets in the left kitchen drawer way underneath everything,” Alice said, panicking and stuttering as she spoke! Both of the girls ran to the kitchen still in shock. Katie started digging her hand into the drawer full of notes, empty glue bottles, old school pictures, batteries, flashlights, cookbooks, paper clips, and basically anything you could think of.

“Got it!” said Katie. She held up two nets high in the air. Alice then grabbed one while Katie kept the other. The girls held their nets tightly with sweaty hands and trembling knees.

“Let’s capture the snakes with our nets, then we’ll throw them outside!” Katie hollered.

“Why would we throw them outside? They are just going to come back in!” Alice yelled.

“Well, do you have a better idea?” Katie asked.

“Actually, yes, yes I do!” Alice replied proudly.

“And what is that?” Katie asked.

“We snatch up the snakes and we flush them down the toilet!” Alice said excitedly. Katie rolled her eyes and started walking down the hallway to the bathroom. When the girls got to the bathroom they froze.

“Uh, where did all the snakes go?!?” Alice asked. Then they heard a scream coming from upstairs.

“WHO PUT SNAKES IN MY PILLOWCASE!?!?!?” Alice’s mom cried. The girls panicked as they ran up the stairs. As the girls walked through the doorway they saw about twenty-six snakes. There could have been more but they didn’t have time to count. The girls clenched their nets and walked in.

“CHARGE!” Alice shouted. Both of the girls were running everywhere trying to get the snakes. Once they each had five in their net, they threw them out the window. They were on the second floor, so they were hoping the snakes would fall to their death. After about fourteen minutes all the snakes were gone. They didn’t leave the room clean. There were glass pictures shattered, sheets torn off the bed, random pages of paper ripped up and tossed on the floor, and even scratched paint all over the walls.

“Who did this? Who let snakes into the house?!?” Alice’s mom hollered. The girls both looked at each other and then back at her mom and then back at each other. All this looking and staring seemed to go on

forever. Finally all of the looking and staring was over. The girls both still sat there silently. That's when Alice thought of something. Her brother had a snake that he took on vacation, but it got lost in the car. They haven't found it, yet, and his friend has about seventeen snakes as well. She thought some more and finally spoke.

"Mason's friend was over and um, they were teaching the snakes tricks and the snakes got loose," Alice mumbled. Her mom looked at both of them, the sweat trickling down their faces, their messy hair, their shaky knees behind their pjs, and their faces full of fear.

"Just get out! And I told you to go to bed!" Her mom shouted.

"Oh, no ... what about Jenny?" Alice whispered

TO BE CONTINUED ... IN THE SCSC WRITING CONTEST, 2024 ...

Innovation Haiku Poem

Amati Ishimo Migisha

*A new idea
Or way of doing something
All things possible*

The Helpfulness in Innovation

By Macy Miller

This is my honest opinion on innovation and it helping with your business. Here are some reasons why innovation is good and helpful. “It first will reduce cost on stuff, like you wanted to make a sweater.”(Bdc.ca) When you make the sweater it will probably cost not as much to buy one. But at the same time it could cost more to make it. “Second innovation could help reduce waste, like you could use scrapes from garbage and then it turned into something useful like compost.”(Bdc.ca) This could also help the climate and animals in the end. “Third Improving customer relationships, when you sell the items for a cheap price and it’s useful, more customers will come back wanting more of it.”(Bdc.ca) When this happens you would gain business and customers. “Fourth, beating your competitors, you can use innovation and creativity to beat the other businesses. “(Medium.com.)When you make it useful and creative you can build a customer relationship. “Fifth, solving problems in my opinion this one is a big one for innovation and your business.”(Medium.com.) You would probably have a lot of problems with your business along the way. So you would need a solution to the problem so a fun creative one would help. “Sixth, market your business, you would definitely need innovation for this one.”(Medium.com.) You need your business to stand out and you need people to remember your business. It should also be unique. So you would need a new brand. Also work with a non-profit organization. If your business is unique people will probably remember it. “Seventh, increase your productivity. You’re probably going to have a hard time getting everything done.”(Medium.com.) You’re going to have to find a new way to get stuff done so with innovation on your side you should think of creative ways to get stuff done. Those are Seven ways innovation can help you and your business.

In conclusion, innovation can help solve problems with creativity. Increase productivity with creative solutions, market your business to make your business stand out, reduce waste to help climate, boost your marketing positions, beat your competition easily, and lastly improve the relationship with your customers with your items being helpful. With all this I can apply this to my life if I ever want to start my own business or make a creative solution to problems. Other people could apply this too!

The Buzzer Beater

By Cullen O'Heron and Mason Rye

Derek Johnson is the best 7th grade basketball player in the country. However, because of where he lives, he plays for the worst team in the state of Texas. He plays for the Texas Horses. They were 0 and 21. They had their last game of the season against the team ranked #1 in Texas, the Texas All Stars.

At half time, the score was 75 to 100. Derek's team was down by 25 points. To start the half, Derek makes a 3 pointer! At the end of the 3rd quarter, the score was 92 to 109. Derek's drives, layups, and 3 pointers were really making a change! At 25 seconds left in the game, Derek's team is down by only 5 points! The other team has the ball. Derek steals it! Derek makes another 3 pointer! His team then calls a timeout to set up a play to steal the ball with only 5 seconds left in the game!

Derek's teammate, John, steals the ball and passes it to Derek. Derek then makes a half quart basket to win the game! We hope this inspiring story gives hope to any and all future athletes who need a little encouragement now and then!

The Secret of the Elements

By Isabelle Odland

CHAPTER 1 – Zach & Amelia

“Shh!” whispered Afeira to her cousin. Afeira was 10 years old and hiding in the bathroom closet.

“Why do I have to be quiet!?” he said in a taunting voice as loud as possible. She knew he was doing it on purpose.

“Because I’m hiding from Gran, you dummy!”

“Fine, I’ll go play with Jackson then. Alone!” he added.

“Sure,” she whispered.

“Afeira? Afeira?” she heard her Gran yell from downstairs. “Where are you? Want a snack? I’ll get you anything you want,” she said in her usual baby tone, speaking to her as if she were two. Afeira kept still and pulled her legs up to her chest. She needed to find a way to escape.

“Gran!” she yelled, “can I take a walk?”

“Of course, honey,” Gran replied.

That went better than she thought. She hadn’t expected Gran to just let her go like that. But since she didn’t really want to go on a walk she decided to go out onto the balcony. She stood on the balcony and watched the trees sway gently back and forth and listened to the birds chirp wishing she could get away from her Gran and be on her own.

Just then a boy, closely followed by a girl, appear out of nowhere, glowing slightly and walking towards her. “Hello Afeira”, said the boy.

“How do you know my name?” she asked.

“We’ve been watching you for a long time” replied the girl, an interesting smile on her face.

Afeira wondered whether or not to be scared. “Who are you?” Afeira whispered, her voice shaking.

“I’m Zach”, said the boy, and “I’m Amelia,” said the girl.

“We’re here to ask you a question,” said the girl named Amelia. “Do you want your life to change?”

“Forever?” added the boy named Zach.

Amelia kicked him. “Remember what we agreed?” she whispered to Zach; “I do the talking, and you do the listening, then you do the magic.”

“Magic?” repeated Afeira, feeling her head would explode from the confusion of what was going on in front of her.

“Yes, magic,” said the girl.

It took awhile for Afeira to understand what she was talking about. Afeira did catch a few words though like, “school”, “elements”, “water”, “air”, “earth”, “fire”, but overall, she did have trouble keeping up. Amelia had to explain the elements about five times so she could have a clue what she was talking about. When she was done, Afeira could only stare at the girl who had changed her life forever.

CHAPTER 2 – A Place of Wonder

“Now that’s another stupid plan,” said Afeira, throwing a ball at the wall out of anger.

“Listen,” said Zach, “you don’t need some epic plan to escape your Gran.”

“He’s right,” said Amelia. “For once,” she added, “why don’t you just ask her honestly.”

“Ask her honestly! Are you joking?” said Afeira. “She’s gonna say no!”

“She won’t say no,” said Zach, “because she wants you to be happy. So just say it will make you really happy. I promise she will let you go.”

“Maybe,” said Afeira, “I’ll try.” So Afeira ran off the balcony and into the house. Once she got downstairs she saw her Gran sitting on the couch talking to Lacy, one of Afeira’s cousins.

“BUT,” Afeira heard Lacy say to Gran. “I want to go to a new school.”

“What?” whispered Afeira to herself, “could her cousin Lacy be talking about the same school?”

Afeira took a deep breath and walked out from behind the stairs.

“Afeira?” said Gran, sitting up.

“Hi Gran. I would like to go to a new school. It would make me really happy. Please.”

“Sure,” said Gran, “but what school are you talking about?”

“A school a friend told me about. I think it starts today.”

“Yep, it starts today,” said Lacy. Afeira stared at Lacy. A few minutes later Afeira was on the balcony again with Zach and Amelia and her cousin Lacy.

“So she’s going too?” asked Afeira.

“Yes she is,” said Amelia.

“Great!” said Afeira, happy to have a friend going along.

“Well,” said Amelia, “we agreed Zach does the magic.”

“Well then I’ll take it from here,” said Zach, looking happier than Afeira had seen him look so far.

“Grab your stuff,” said Zach. So Afeira ran into her room to get her things. She grabbed her favorite books and toys and stuffed animals, throwing them into bags and boxes until she had gotten everything she could carry. She ran back to the balcony to wait for Lacy. A little while later Lacy came out with her things.

“I’m ready,” she said.

“Let’s go,” said Afeira, feeling more excited than she had ever felt before. Zach snapped his fingers and they were gone. Afeira could hardly tell what was going on. It felt like being pulled underwater. Just then Afeira heard Zach’s voice. It sounded distant but clear.

“Don’t worry,” he said. “The feeling will wear off.”

“Wear off?” thought Afeira, until she realized they had stopped moving. She opened her eyes expecting to see a huge school crowded with students but instead she saw a small dark room that looked like a closet with only a few books scattered around on the floor. “What is this place?” Afeira asked Zach.

“This is the entry,” replied Zach.

“Oh,” said Afeira, unable to find words, she looked over at Lacy who looked scared.

“Well,” said Zach pointing at the door. “Don’t you want to go to school?” When he opened the door Afeira saw a huge school that was crowded with students of all ages. Zach showed them around and told them about everything that goes on in the school. He told them about the four elements again and not to be surprised if water splashes up in front of you while you’re heading to class. He also told them about the classes they would take: ice skating, cooking, yoga, tree climbing, soccer, and even arts and crafts. Until now Afeira didn’t believe such a great school existed. She was so lucky to get to come here.

CHAPTER 3 – Afeira’s first class

In the morning, Afeira got up quickly and dressed. She was so excited for her first class that she skipped breakfast, got on her snow gear, and ran outside to wait by the ice skating shed.

“You’re early,” said the ice skating teacher, as she came out of the barn.

“Yep I don’t want to be late.”

“You’re not going to be late,” said the teacher. I’m Ms. Madison, “While you’re waiting you can play on the playground.”

The playground? Afeira turned around and saw for the first time a huge playground probably bigger than a hotel. Afeira walked around the playground looking at it from all the angles wondering how she didn’t see it before. About ten minutes later kids began to pour out the doors of the school and run around the bend to where she was. Within seconds, half the students were in a long line to the ice skating barn and the rest of the students were lining up for the other winter activities. A group of small boys climbed up the ladder onto the playground and began marching around like they thought they were presidents or something. Afeira was about to laugh when the teacher yelled “class is starting!”

The small boys on the playground who had been talking exuberantly stopped abruptly when the teacher yelled. Afeira went down to the shed with everyone else for class. The first ten minutes of class were spent on learning the rules of ice skating and figuring out how to put on skates. Once Afeira had hers on she stood up and walked to the skating rink. “I’m doing it!” Afeira yelled to her cousin Lacy who was far ahead already.

“Great!” Lacy yelled back. After thirty minutes of free skating Ms. Madison called the class in to show them some tricks.

“This is how you go backwards,” she said, moving her feet back and forth in a kind of figure eight. “Now you try.” Afeira went back onto the ice to try it. She watched Lacy go backwards in a perfect figure eight just like how the teacher had.

“You’re good!” Afeira said to Lacy when she stopped and Afeira could finally catch up.

“I know!” said Lacy, “and this is the first time I’ve done it.”

“Lacy!” said Afeira, “you should show the teacher how good you–” she stopped. It was just then she realized that the small boy’s she saw on the playground earlier weren’t in class. They were on the playground still but weren’t laughing like they’d been before. They were talking seriously about something to do with the elements.

“What is it?” asked Lacy.

“Nothing,” said Afeira. “You should go show the teacher how good you are. Lacy clapped her hands in delight and glided off towards the teacher. Afeira skated to the corner of the ice rink as close as she could get to the playground.

“IT’S NOT MY FAULT,” one of them yelled. Afeira listened hard. “She was right where we wanted her! She almost died! But then you had to save her!” Afeira stared at them and wondered what they were talking about. When Afeira turned around she realized everyone else had gathered around the teacher in the corner of the rink. She looked at the boys on the playground one last time then skated off to rejoin the rest of her class.

[These 3 chapters represent the beginning of a longer book that is still being written.]

The Innovation of Phones

By Landon Plotz

The innovation of phones is interesting because of the drastic measure of technology invented and powered through these tiny devices. Such as Iphone, the creator of Iphone is Steve Jobs he started off in his garage selling electronics. Now he is a multi million dollar CEO. Iphone has come along way with the newest model the Iphone 14 with the new 48 megapixel As well as the new upgraded cameras, A16 bionic chip for better performance. New color oppositions like space black and deep purple. Everybody wanted these colors so they fulfilled these wishes and added the colors, and as a result the sales increased. There are other phone brands like Samsung, Motorola and Google. They are as popular as each other but still reflect on the first phone. The first phone was made by Alexander Graham Bell in 1875. This helped us communicate and call the cops and other emergency services, allowed other inventors to make games and other apps to help us in our daily life. They made every new smartphone with 5g. The 2019 innovation of 5g helps start a foundation for phones to brand off of, which most smartphones have. The style is "Shaped like a candy bar." The smartphone could include more ram and storage but then could lose money, or they could gain profit through their hard work and manufacturing of the product. The mass amount of phones made in today's society is 35%. The amount of sales of smartphones is 1.21 billion in stores, and online throughout the world.

The ages of people that have phones varey but the average age is between 18 and 34 years old. This means that older people have smartphones, not just new school people. The innovation of phones is pretty awesome. The way people have created, and done amazing things with tech and innovation. Many innovators of different races and different cultures. That is why the innovation of phones is so important and helpful.

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[technologyreview.com](https://www.technologyreview.com)

Legacies

By Isabella Salt

Chapter 1. The Cheshire's Child, Wonderland

Fred raced down the bright, window-filled corridors. His four paws a blur of movement. "I told her! I told her!" He said in a fury, speaking the language all animals could understand. He reached royal blue doors, and forced them open. CRASH! (Maybe with a bit too much force).

"I TOLD YOU TO BE THERE A HOUR AGO! WHERE HAVE YOU been-" Fred stopped in his tracks, the room had been darkened to a solid, unmoving blackness that seemed to swallow anything that entered it. He took a few tentative steps into the dark room with his light brown paws. Fear clutching his heart, sinking its cold nails into it, taking root. "Marsha?" Fred whispered. If you were standing at the doorway looking in, Fred would have seemed to vanish from thin air, the darkness enveloping him. Only two floating, teal eyes were visible, watching every step the scared, quaking dog made.

A high-pitched scream pierced the air! Fred leaped 5 feet into the air, falling on the ground, as if dead. "HAHAHAHA! You should have seen your face!!" Marsha appeared, floating high above. She clapped her paws together, making a soft thumping sound, and the room flooded with light. "Oh," Marsha said as she looked down at the light brown dog, and realized that Fred had fainted. Marsha grumbled about dogs being scared too easily. She grabbed Fred's forepaws and pulled him to her plush, cloud like bed.

Being the daughter of the most formidable mischief maker, people don't actually want to be your friend like they do for other fairytale characters, but Fred was the exception. He was Marsha's best friend in the Palace of Marmoreal, despite Marsha scaring or tricking Fred once every week. Being the daughter of the Cheshire Cat you knew lots of good tricks. For example, Marsha knew the trick that her father had used to get his infamous name the Cheshire Cat. Her father's real name used to be the Shire Cat, he had earned the Chess part of his name from a game of chess he had played, which had lasted for seven years, until his opponent (the March Hare) had given up, saying that he was late for tea -which confused to everyone. Unfortunately the March Hare died a few years ago so no one could ask him for the full tale of what happened, nor ask why he had truly given up, for the March Hare never backed down from a good game of chess. And no one dared ask the Cheshire Cat to tell the tale, in fear of being tricked. Everyone who had ever heard the story, and knew the March Hare, had to wonder what type of trickery the Shire Cat had used to make his opponent give up. What no one knew was that every night when the Shire Cat and the Hare were playing, he would slip a very strong brandy into the Hare's tea, and when the Hare would take out the Shire's King and Queen, he would put them back. Trusting that the brandy would make the Hare forget that he had knocked down the Shire Cat's King and Queen. And when the Hare finally caught on, the Shire Cat threatened him to back down or he would tell everyone that the Hare had stolen the Dormouse's spoons! Which was not true I will have you know, but the Hare's brain was so confused by the amount of brandy he had had every day he couldn't even sing his favorite song "Twinkle, twinkle, little bat"! And when the story finally came out it was decided that no one could ever trust the Cheshire Cat or even his descendants.

That was the legacy that awaited Marsha. A life where everyone was afraid that you would trick them into a trap or accidentally hurt them. You might have someone who is nice to you, but they're never your real friend. Never going to be someone you can confide in. And will never be someone that

will ever actually like you for you. That wasn't the life that Marsha wanted to live. Marsha was going to change her legacy for all she was worth. But right now Marsha wasn't focused on that. What she wanted to do right now was to wake her best friend that probably wouldn't stay her friend if her father's words were true. Marsha entered a small, but tidy bathroom that was connected to her room, and filled a bucket with ice cold water. Marsha sighed as she looked at her nice warm bed about to get soaked because Fred couldn't take a small scare. It just won't do. She thought to herself. She pushed Fred off her bed then dumped the bucket of water on him. "AHHHH!" Fred woke up when just a drop of the icy water touched him, and his mouth opened wide. Marsha saw it just a second too late. Mouth wide open and more water on the way, it was an unfortunate situation for both.

"I said I was sorry. I didn't see that you had your mouth open, and by the time I did it was late!"

"I know. The water wasn't your fault." Fred turned to her then, "But you did scare me half to death! You know I scare easily!"

"Ok, ok. I get it."

"No I don't think you do! This happens every week! You say 'Ok, I understand.' but you never do! I am struggling to remember why I became friends with you!"

That struck a nerve in Marsha. "Well, I am struggling with remembering why I became friends with someone who is such a know-it-all. And a scaredy-dog to boot! Sometimes it's like you don't even try to be brave. Is all your family like that or is it just you."

Fred was suddenly very glad dogs had fur and couldn't blush. He turned away from Marsha and headed towards the room door. "No, wait! Fred, that's not what I meant! Please come back!" Marsha cried out. I can't lose the only friend I have! She thought desperately.

Fred turned back facing Marsha full on. "The thing is, Marsha, I didn't believe that you were as bad as people said, then I met you, and now I see that everyone was right in not trusting you or your father. Your father is a liar, and a cheater. And now I see that you will follow, inch by inch in his legacy. They were all right about you. You are just a female version of your father, Marsha Cheshire. Farewell, I hope you change for your own sake." Fred turned away and walked out of the room. Never once looking back.

Heart a mess of emotions, Marsha fell from the sky. She stumbled to her bed. Trying, and failing to sort out what she was feeling. Fred, kind, forgiving Fred, realized he had given her one too many chances. He had left her and would never come back to be the best friend that Marsha thought she would always have. It was just like her father said, when he told her her lonely legacy. She had refused it then, saying to him that her story would be different. But now Marsha wasn't so sure.

Chapter 2.

Hurt Feelings and Broken Faces, Human world "What's up with you?" Sned said, in his usual high pitched voice.

"None of your business," tall, blond haired Iro snapped, his bruised eye swelling, "Mom! Mom, where are you?"

"She's up there, you jerk," Sned said, a little more than hurt at the way his brother had talked to him, he pointed upstairs, "She's in the, you-know-what-room."

Oh, no, Iro thought. The last time his Mother had gone up there she had gone mad, and dreamt an imaginary world, she called Wonderland. His Auntie had written down all of her dear sister's dreams but the world cast the stories away, never bothering to even glance at them. It had been her dying wish that her dear sister Alice, should be kept away from those dreams of her's, before the world put her somewhere they would never see her again. But Sned didn't understand why Iro didn't want his mother to go up there, he was only four after all. A sigh escaped Iro soundlessly. He wished his brother had stopped her, or had needed her to help him with homework. But no. "Did you get into a fight again?" Sned blurted.

Iro ignored him, and instead he rushed up the stairs. He burst into their room from the stairwell, its light blue walls reflecting the light from the open window. “Mom?”

All was quiet. A breeze coming in from the window blew the pure, white curtains towards a small, oval table with miss-matched chairs, and dirty dishes at each spot. NO ROOM! NO ROOM! Was scribbled on the walls over and over again. A stuffed hare sat in a green, high backed chair, while an overly large top hat lay on a wood rocking chair. Violent streaks of red lined the walls forming dozens of hearts. Blood red wood had been whittled to form sharp axes, and cards had been painted with stick thin arms and legs. Everything else had been torn up or slashed apart. In one part of the room it was just too dark to see. There was no life, no movement (discounting the flowing curtains), nothing to show the room was anything but a picture a disturbed painter had painted. There was a reason the room’s door was always under lock and key.

“Mom, are you here?” Iro asked, his voice quaking.

“Iro? What are you doing here?” Her voice was small, and scared but a moment later a sickening crack sounded from the dark side of the room and a doll’s head came rolling towards him, his mother’s voice came ringing out “Now, now. Queen, that wasn’t very nice. You can’t cut off all your guests’ heads.”

“Mom snap out of it! Please.” Iro begged. He walked slowly to the dark part of the room. A hand whiter than snow reached out.

“Iro, please help me.” The scared tone was back in her voice, and fear crept into Iro. He grabbed her hand and pulled. His mother, her white blond hair knotted, came into view. Iro wrapped her in a hug, and that’s when the tears started to flow, each one marking a moment where both were scared and afraid. “I... am... so... sorry.” Alice sobbed, “The call was too strong.”

“It’s ok Mom. It’s ok.”

“Mom? Are you ok?” Sned’s small voice rang out in the silent room “When is dinner? I’m hungry.”

Alice stood up, sniffing. “Don’t worry honey, dinner will be ready soon.” She turned to Iro and put her hand on his arm “Thank you.” Alice and Sned walked out of the room and down the hall, turning to the left and heading down the stairs. Iro walked to the doorway and then looked back into the room of horrors, the room of madness, and the room of dreams. Iro had only wished for one thing, but that one thing kept running farther and farther away.

When Iro went downstairs and into the kitchen, his Mom was filling up a large pot of water. She looked up and looked hard and long at his face. “So do you want to tell me what happened to your face?”

“Is it ok if I just say there was a fight at school?” Alice gave him a look that very clearly said it wasn’t enough. “Ok, fine. Someone said you were an insane lunatic. I just couldn’t take it, Mom. I may have punched him in the face. And the stomach.”

“Iro,” she said in a soft voice, “you need to stop defending me if it means I have to go to the school to sort things out with the parents and the school. This is your fifth infraction in these last three months. You can’t get in more trouble than you already are. And I have to say, are those two wrong? You saw how I was just a moment ago.” she shuddered at the thought. Alice put stringy, stiff, pasta in the water, and put it all on the stove, turning the heat up.

“It’s just so annoying!” Iro exclaimed, and words started to burst from his lips, words never said out loud to anyone, especially not to his mother, “I get judged by everyone because you’re my mother! I can hear them whenever I score a goal in my soccer games ‘Oh, isn’t that crazy Alice’s son? I feel so bad for him.’ or I hear ‘That’s the lunatic’s son right? I wonder when he is going to turn crazy, too.’”

The Mysterious Boy

Chloe Schroeder

Mark was your average kid (you'd think) ... BUT HE WASN'T! Mark could be anything! ... a dragon, a squirrel, the moon ... anything! Mark loved himself. One day, Mark fell in a lake and tried to turn into a fish. But it didn't happen. His powers seemed to have disappeared! He almost drowned. Someone pulled him out of the lake. A girl! A girl pulled him out of the water, and he tossed and turned to break free, but she was too strong. Who was this girl? He was scared. He soon found out that she could be anything, just like him. They became friends.

The Innovation of Phones

By Tommy Schwartz

Ever since the invention of iPhones there have been a lot of innovations to them. There are a lot of new phones that came out with a lot of new features and innovations. Now the cameras and touch screen are improved. But they used to be a lot different than they are now. So what did they start out as? They used to be called telephones. Which Alexander Graham Bell invented. A telephone is a device that allows two or more people to communicate over a long distance. A traditional telephone system is known as a POTS or plain old telephone service. The 2nd telephone was the Western Electric model 202 was the Bell's System second handset telephone. There are many versions of the telephone but I am not going to talk about all of them.

I think the innovation of the Phone is for the better. The only bad thing about innovation is that Phones get more expensive and costly. "Phones we use for media consumption, content capture, communication, and more". Now phones are so much better because you don't have to type in as much information as you used to. Like you don't have to type other people's phone numbers like the old telephones. That is why I think innovation is so much better. On old telephones you listen to other people's conversations and they could listen to yours. Now you can find more information on phones. That's why I think they're better. You had to go to people's houses to talk to them. Now you can just call them instead of traveling. Now there are more cameras for more angles. My personal opinion, I like Apple. The Apple company founded the company in 1976 April 1. He made up to \$117 million dollars. Nokia was the first company to make the first iPhone. Another good thing about innovation is fast charging. More things about charging now there are no accessories like wireless charging. So basically you just put your phone on the pod charger then it charges. More innovation on iPhones is that you don't have to type in your phone password all the time either it's thumb print or face id it is so helpful. One thing I think is unnecessary is all of the cameras there adding ,and the iPhone 15 is going to have 4 cameras.

I think that is a little unnecessary if I say so. I guess it is kind of a way to make a lot of money. Another thing is Virtual Assistants like Siri or Google. They are so helpful for questions. They can do math calculations, they can do anything really. They can also tell nice jokes. Touch screens in the olden days you had to press buttons. Now there is also a new camera mode called portrait. So it basically makes the picture look like a portrait. More things are foldable phones. They are really nice for fitting in your pocket. One of my favorite features though is the flashlight. In my opinion I think it is the best. If you're outside it is dark it is perfect. Every new Apple iPhone is getting bigger.

iPhone 14 compared to the 6 it is so much bigger. Also the 6 has a home button ,and fingerprint. The 14 has a bar that you swipe up ,and it has face identification. This relates with the flashlight because when taking a picture outside with flash on it takes a picture with light. The only bad thing is that it is kind of hard to see because of the light. More things for the cameras there making camera protectors. For wireless charging it is like a magnet it connects to. Now you can also play a lot of games on your phone. I think the innovation of phones is better. I am happy that the innovation of the phone is for the better.

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Tractors/Farming

By Joslyn Sellner

Tractors are very popular and make a big income in our life. Tractors are also very important to everyone in the world. You need tractors to survive as well. Tractors are used with a lot of stuff and one of them is farming. You farm to survive and eat. Farming is also a big income to our life as well.

Tractors are a good way to innovate because you use them to get corn, beans, and cotton. One of the bad innovations about tractors is that they now cost ten thousand dollars through two hundred thousand dollars, when they used to cost six hundred twenty-five dollars through three hundred ninety-five dollars. "The peak year of tractor production was 1951, during which 564,000 units were made" (eh.net). These products got more popular over the years. Tractors are a big income to the world. It helps everyone have enough money to eat, buy, and survive.

My dad used to have a farm and he had cows. He farmed and did lots of things that involved farming or using tractors. After that he sold his farm and he got a big income but had to give some of the income to his sisters and brothers. My dad also works for a tractor investment which has tractors he sells and lots more involving framing. One bad innovation of tractors is that they don't sell that quickly because they are really expensive. Sometimes they sell really quickly because they are one of the most used products. My dad also had lots of land with growing corn and that helped the cows eat and increased my dad's income too. My dad was thinking of getting more animals but then decided not too. My dad never wanted to sell the farm but his brothers and sisters wanted too. So he had no choice but it was a new thing he wanted to try.

"Based on the sales of major tractor manufacturers, there are currently approximately 16 million tractors in operation" (krishijagran.com). People make tractors everyday as well and it helps the world a lot. People also sell a lot of tractors each day too. It helps the world by letting us eat what is farmed and it helps with our health.

Once my dad accidentally hit his tractor with rocks and it always damaged his tractors. So we decided to go rock picking for him and we saved a lot of money, saved lots of time, and wasted less gas.

Tractors have improved from the 1990s. One way that they have improved is that they used to not have covers on them, which made it very dangerous for the driver because if they ran over a rock it might bounce back and hit the driver. Now they have covers so it is less dangerous for the driver and the tractor. Another part of tractors is that they used to have not as well working engines. Now they have better engines so they can hold more gas and more liquid.

The innovation about tractors goes into my life because everyone can farm and work to help everyone survive. Everyone can help out and use tractors for the benefit of people. If we all help out farming and using tractors we can save most of the people dying and we can also help out ourselves. It helps ourselves so we can learn how to become a farmer in our future if we want to. It also helps us if we want to have a good record if we want to be a different person or get a different job in the future. We can also change ourselves if we don't want to be who we are to the world and to other people. It helps us not to be on social media all the time and lots more. You also get paid from the government after your farm is changed for the better.

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Microscopes

By Catherine Simonson

Microscopes help us in many ways. This is how it helped scientists. Microscopes are important to scientists because they can see beyond the human eye. They help us find out how things work, for example how plants breathe(*Exploring with microscopes*). It helps us look at things more closely (*Exploring with microscopes*). The microscope was invented in the early 1600's. Not invented from one person by many different people(*Meeting microorganisms*). The first time they saw it it changed the way they looked at the world. (*Exploring with microscopes*). Robert Hooke was the first person to look at cells in 1665(*Meeting microorganisms*). Since the first microscope was invented we found out a lot more about the human body (*Meeting microorganisms*). They helped create a new law in biology (*Meeting microorganisms*).

There are many different types of microscopes. There are 5 different types of Microscopes(*Types of Microscopes*). Stereo Microscope creates a 3d image(*Types of Microscopes*). I mainly give both transmitted and reflected illumination(*Types of Microscopes*). With this microscope you can see things that will not allow light to pass through it(*Types of Microscopes*). It is mainly used in manufacturing, quality control, coin collecting, science, for high school dissection projects, and botany(*Types of Microscopes*).Compound Microscope are used in laboratories, schools, wastewater treatment plants, veterinary offices, and for histology and (*Types of Microscopes*). It can go up to 40x, 100x, 400x, and 1000x(*Types of Microscopes*). Inverted microscopes can go up to 40x, 100x,200x, and 400x(*Types of Microscopes*). This microscope is used to see living things(*Types of Microscopes*). Metallurgical microscopes are high power(*Types of Microscopes*). It allows you to see things that don't let light pass through(*Types of Microscopes*). You can use 50x, 100x, 200x, and 500x. It's mostly used to see micron level cracks(*Types of Microscopes*). Polarizing Microscopes will only let certain light waves go through(*Types of Microscopes*). It will use polarizing light with other things. This is the history of microscopes. During the 14th century there were just spectacles (*History of microscopes*).The first microscope was created in 1590's by 2 Dutch people(*History of microscopes*). The ultramicroscope was invented by Richard Zsigmondy in 1903(*History of microscopes*). In 1932 Frits Zernike's invention of the phase-contrast microscope was for the first time used to study transparent biological materials(*History of microscopes*). 6 years later in 1938 the electron microscope was created by Ernst Ruska(*History of microscopes*). 3-D specimen images were found because the scanning tunneling microscope was created by Gerd Binnig and Heinrich Rohrer(*History of microscopes*).

This is the development of the microscope. We don't know who actually invented the microscope (*The Microscope*). Zacharias, who is the Dutch spectacle maker, who people say created the compound microscope around the 1600 (*The Microscope*). This microscope however could only go up to 20x to 30x (*The Microscope*). Antonie van Leeuwenhoek made his own hand ground lenses (*The Microscope*). He studied plants and humans and many other things that we never saw before (*The Microscope*). Even with what we were finding back then scientists could not trust the microscopes (*The Microscope*). In the 1830s cell theory was the focus (*The Microscope*). With being able to see at a microscopic level more consistently we became more trusting in microscopes (*The Microscope*). Mathias Scheleiden and Theodor Schwann claimed that cells were the base for plant and animal life (*The Microscope*). Rudolf Vichow took up that theory (*The Microscope*). Most of his work involved tissue and cells (*The Microscope*). He used the latest development of microscopes (*The Microscope*).

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A Big Northern

By Sawyer Stackhouse

Once I was with my grandma and grandpa and we went fishing. The water was about 5 feet deep, and I could see all the fish. I caught a fish and I thought it was a sheephead or a carp. I also caught a few smallmouth basses. My sister caught a gar. Then I caught a northern and a bass. I also went canoeing on the lake. These are great memories with my grandparents. I think everyone should spend time with their grandparents, because they won't always be here. And the memories are so nice!

The Lonely Boy

By Rhema Steele

One day there is a lonely boy at school. When he walks outside for recess, the so-called “cool” boys walk over and call him a sissy.

The next day, the lonely boy answers all the teacher’s questions correctly in class. Then all the girls call him a nerd. (Isn’t that what we always call smart people that we’re jealous of?) When the lonely boy gets home, he sobs quietly.

Then one day, a new girl named Teresa shows up! Teresa walks up to the lonely boy who is standing all by himself and says, “How are you doing?” The lonely boy is so shy that he doesn’t even answer.

The next day Teresa walks up to the lonely boy and asks “What is your name?” This time he answers! “My name is Kyle,” he states. “Cool,” answers Teresa.

The next week Teresa and Kyle play together at recess. In class, they work on projects together AND they get an A+! Teresa and Kyle are new best friends who have a very good year at school!

The Revenge of the Decepticons

By Sam Stendel

This piece is a fan fiction of the Transformers series.

“Ratchet! Get everybody in the pods!” said Optimus Prime.

“On it!” said Ratchet as he transformed into his ambulance mode. As he loaded people in the back he suddenly flew up into the air, but he transformed and caught everyone.

“Hello,” a muffled voice said.

“Shockwave!” said Ratchet in a very worried voice while he was gathering all the humans around his feet.

“Ironhide, take Sideswipe and go guard the pods”, said Optimus.

“Why?” said Ironhide.

“Because I have a weird feeling that something’s wrong,” said Optimus fearfully. “Wait, what do you think is happening?” said Sideswipe.

“I think Ratchet is in danger.”

“Ugh!” Shockwave screamed as he blasted his arm cannon at Ratchet. Ratchet flew back and crashed into a building.

“Where is he?” Ironhide cried.

“Should we go look for him?” Sideswipe asked.

“We better! He may be in trouble!” said Ironhide. They both transformed into their vehicles.

“How do we know where he is?” asked Sideswipe.

“We’ll just have to keep looking,” said Ironhide as they turned the corner and sped up.

“I love this decepticons, the insects leaving, it’s what I’ve been waiting for,” Megatron spoke as Starscream transformed from his jet mode and flew down next to Barricade.

“Yes, Lord Megatron, it is very sweet that they’re leaving,” Starscream screeched. “Shut up, you imbecile!” Megatron screamed.

“How do we know they are going to leave the planet?” Sentinel questioned.

“I don’t”. Megatron bellowed.

“Ratchet!” Ironhide screamed as he transformed and ran toward him. Sideswipe ran toward Shockwave, but Shockwave blasted him to the ground. Then Shockwave fell to the ground.

“Is Ratchet ok?” Sideswipe asked as he got up.

“I think so. We need to get him back to base, though.” Ironhide spoke.

“Sideswipe, take the humans back to the pods and I’ll take Ratchet back.”

“I’ll see you back at base,” said Sideswipe. As they both transformed, Dino drove by and transformed.

“I’ll come with you, Sideswipe, so no one else gets hurt,” said Dino. “Barricade, Soundwave, and Bonecrusher find the Autobots base”.

“On it, Lord Megatron!” Soundwave said in a deep voice. Then he released his minicon (laserbeak) and said, “HUNT!”

“Soundwave, I want you to hunt down the autobots’ weapon specialists!”

“On it, Lord Megatron!” Soundwave said in that same deep voice. Soundwave transformed and left. Then Bonecrusher, Barricade, and Crowbar left.

“Megatron, what are we going to do? The humans are gone! Only the autobots are here to stop us!”

"You're right, Sentinel, but they are not the only ones left. It is this planet, do you know what it is?"

"No, I don't."

"Well, have you heard of Unicron?"

"Yes, I have."

"Well, he is this awful planet, what do you think?"

"Quintessa came to Earth! She wanted to destroy him!" Megatron yelled.

"Ratchet, are you ok?" Optimus asked in a worried voice.

"Ironhide, what happened?"

"Optimus, he was shot by Shockwave, he's weak!"

"What happened to the humans?"

"Sideswipe and Dino took them."

"Good." Optimus said in a relieved voice.

"Keep him here, I need you to protect him and Jazz will be here to help you." "Why, where are you going?"

"I'm going out." Optimus transformed and left. Ironhide laid Ratchet on an operating table the size of a house and went outside. Jazz came out and looked at Ratchet and called Ironhide back in.

"What happened?"

"He was attacked."

"By who?"

"By Shockwave."

"Thank God we got them to the pods, Sideswipe."

"I know. Wait, who are they?"

"They are decepticons."

"Optimus, how do you know?"

"I've seen them before." Optimus said as he drew his energon blades and yelled "Autobots attack!" Sideswipe and Dino drew their swords and they all started to run until the decepticons transformed and Bonecrusher ran towards Dino, Crowbar ran toward Sideswipe and started to shoot at him, and Barricade ran toward Optimus with Laserbeak right next to him, shooting at someone behind Optimus. It was Crosshairs who shot Laserbeak to the ground with his dual pistols and spoke with an enthusiastic voice and said, "A nasty little bird!" Then Drift, who was right behind Crosshairs, ran towards and sliced an arm off of a protoform that was directly behind Bonecrusher, who, when Drift almost sliced his arm and dodged ... that is when he sliced the arm off that protoform.

"Here it is!" Starscream screeched and the place he found was the Autobots' base. "Where is it? Send the coordinates to Nitro, Zeus, and Thundercracker! They will assist you in your mission," Megatron ordered. At that time, Jazz exited the base and started to walk around. Then two minutes later, Jazz looked up and spoke in a low voice, "Starscream". As he started shooting, other jets showed up, flew down, and transformed. When they started to fall out of the sky, Jazz roared back inside.

Someone else started to shoot at Bonecrusher and he flew back when he got hit. The person who hit him was Hound, the big guy covered in weapons transformed because he was kind of far away. As he got closer, he went back in his robot mode and said "Oh, yeah. I've been waiting to kill a decepticon!" Barricade retreated, as he was the only one left.

Once Nitro Zeus's feet hit the ground, the doors flung open on the base. That is when a huge blast came out of the door, along with three autobots. Hot Jazz handed Jazz a blaster and they all started to shoot at the three Seekers. Thundercracker got hit.

"I'm out!" Starscream screamed.

"Same!" Nitro said. Then they both started to fly up. Hot Rod looked up and said with suspicion, "Do you know who that helicopter is?"

“Yeah, it’s a decepticon. His name is Blackout.” Jazz said sternly.

“How do you know?”

“I’ve fought him before.”

“Barricade, wait Thundercracker!” said Megatron. “We need another objective.” “Yeah ... what’s that going to be?”

To Be Continued ... in SCSC Writing Contest, 2024!

A Night to Remember: Hockey Years

By Jaya Stout

Once when I was young I nearly froze in one of the coldest arenas in southern Minnesota. The boys' hockey team was heading to Fairmont, MN for the first conference game of the season and I was more than excited. When I headed into our home arena in Albert Lea, I went to the Coaches room and brought out equipment into the hallway, setting it against the cemented wall by the wooden benches. Burke, one of the hockey players, said hi to me and kept making me laugh each time I came into the hallway.

The back doors were always kept locked and the boys would knock on the glass and I would run back to open it for them. Today, it was Beeker who was at the back door, which was still locked, and Tim, one of the team captains, said, "Don't," but I was already running towards the back doors calling, "I have to!"

When I was coming back from putting equipment on the bus, I looked over to where the boys were putting their hockey bags in the trailer behind the bus and met Joseph's eyes. The sunset reflected just perfectly off of him and we both seemed to be more than captivated by each other. I seemed to pause mid-step, captivated in his eyes, before letting my eyes drop and heading inside.

On the way to Fairmont, I talked to the managers and prayed for the guys' safety, which I ended up doing before every game for the rest of the season.

When we got to Fairmont's arena, I let all the boys out first and then grabbed both camera bags, the sock, and the pair of white boards. I held the door to go inside Fairmont's arena and so many of the boys said, "Thank you." I truly don't deserve to have been a manager to those guys.

The boys put all of their equipment into the pair of locker rooms they got to use, and then the guys started handing me their water bottles which I immediately started filling up. Coach and Addi taught me how to use the camera, which turned out to be extremely easy and I ended up doing it during every game for the rest of that season.

The Fairmont's Peewee girl's hockey team had practice and so our hockey guys had an hour to warm up and stretch until they officially warmed up at 6:30 on the ice. I brought over the boards, sock, and health kit to the bench on the opposite side from the guys' locker rooms.

Joseph handed me his water bottle, which was a new green gatorade water bottle compared to his usual black one that he gave Beeker instead since he hadn't had one. Some of the guys got dressed in their jerseys and gear as it got closer to the game, standing by the glass watching the girls practice. I brought over water bottles and Joseph was right next to Beau by the gate. The way Joseph stood by the glass made him look like a model, a really good looking one too.

He looked over at me when I was bringing water bottles to the bench and when I got to the bench. After I had put the water bottles into the slots, I looked up and his gaze immediately met mine. I headed back around the rink and as I got over to where the nets were, I watched the girls practicing. A little girl with blond hair pulled back into a ponytail looked at me through the glass. I smiled at her the way a mother smiles at her daughter and she smiled back so sweetly; I met Joseph's eyes as I looked up from her gaze to his and he had clearly already been staring at me, not even trying to hide it with that grin across his face. As I rounded the corner, heading back towards the guys' locker room, Joseph pushed back his hair and looked up at me which only made my knees weaker. Not helping the state I was in whatsoever.

Laney Behrends, Josh's sister who I had grown extremely close to, was there and she called, "Jaya!"

and I turned around, not sure who it was at first. But when I saw who it was, I gave her a huge hug as I absolutely adored the woman.

I opened the gate for the boys to go out for warm ups, with Dakota, our goalie, in front.

After the guys came off the ice, I was literally shaking because it was so cold! If you know me, you know that I hardly ever get cold, so this was a huge setback from reality for me. Laney had sat right in front of the guys' locker rooms on the bleachers so I bundled up close to her as she had just gotten a tan so she was radiating off a ton of heat. She wanted to give me her blanket but I politely declined it because I felt bad about taking it away from her and I more than wanted to ask Joseph if I could wear his jacket.

Addi, one of the managers, helped me start up the camera when the first period was about to start and then went back down, sitting with Amaya, another manager, in the bleachers.

Doing the camera was more than nerve racking as I had never done it before, but once I got the hang of it I actually really enjoyed doing it. Eli, one of the youngsters on the second line, scored three goals throughout the game, but also got a 5 minute penalty. It was so cold above the ice; I was shaking and lost feeling in my fingers in the first five or so minutes of the period.

After the first period, I stopped recording and sprinted down to the boys saying, "Nice job," especially to Dakota as they all headed into the locker rooms. Dakota handed me his water bottle and I filled it, bringing it over to the bench.

I cuddled up against Laney and I was shaking so hard that Laney said worryingly, "You're shaking!" She wrapped her blanket halfway around me as I leaned closer to her. She kept trying to offer me her blanket but I said that I wanted to wear Joseph's jacket and was too nervous to ask.

When the guys started coming out from the locker rooms, I sprinted up the stairs but the door on top was locked; an older man kindly opened the door for me and let me in.

Second period, I was more than shaking. The temperature seemed to have dropped drastically in Fairmont's arena.

We lost two of our players to penalties in the period, but Joseph made a goal which led us up 4-0 by the end of the second period.

After the second period, I sprinted down and gave Dakota a fist pump as he came out. I really curled up next to Laney as I was shaking even worse than I had been before.

Laney said, "You either ask Joseph for his jacket or you take my blanket." I told her that I felt bad and she said to her mom, "See! She's too innocent and nice."

I called Ladlie's name when he came out of the locker room and he turned to me but an older man walked between us. After he went by I asked, "Could you ask Joseph if I could wear his jacket? Only because I'm literally shaking and he doesn't have to say yes, he can say no. Make sure he knows that he can say no!" I got that point across clearly. Ladlie nodded and opened the locker room door calling, "Joseph!"

I curled up back into Laney, still shivering. I heard the door open, turning around, Tim was grinning so stinkin' big with Joseph's jacket in his hand stretched out towards me. All the guys were crowded around the door, staring and smiling at me as they called, "OUUU!!!" I took the jacket and slipped it on as the guys headed over to the gate. Joseph, of course, was the last one out and I thanked him quietly as his eyes took me in.

Joseph's jacket was so warm and I didn't even feel the cold anymore, not with his jacket and all its warmth. It was more than perfect. Laney grinned at me calling, "Bye Jaya!" as I sprinted up to the camera.

Eddie and Beeker surrounded Joseph, patting him on the back and looking up at me from the ice. I tried not to grin, pushing it out of my head and focusing back on the game at hand.

Joseph ended up scoring a goal and when he looked up at me, I couldn't hide the grin that overtook

my face. All the guys on the bench noticed that too, and they were all grinning at me from the bench. Both of his goals that he had made, he had looked up at me. Eli had made yet another goal in the third period, and man I have never been so proud of all of my boys. We ended up winning 8-nothing by the end of the third period.

I sprinted down the stairs as the boys shook the hands of Fairmont's players. Dakota was so hyped up when he came out saying, "Give me some!" and gave me a fist bump as he headed to the locker room.

I ended up giving Beau Joseph's jacket and asked him to thank Joseph for me.

I helped lead the guys out to the bus, holding the door for them. The boys were seriously so sweet saying, "Thank you" as they headed out the doors with huge grins on their faces.

I held the door for Joseph who was holding his jacket in his hand. He looked into my eyes with that grin across his face and said, "Thank you," with those gorgeous brown eyes that always made me feel like I was home. Now that was a night I'll never forget, not by a long shot.

Finally Home

By Jaya Stout

Emma was planning on going out after work, but by the looks of it she might not even make it home. The snow was coming down hard and even the radio was warning those who listened not to go out tonight. She had already seen so many cars in the ditch on her way home and it scared her just thinking about meeting black ice and spinning out of control. She stopped at the traffic light, turning up the Christmas music that KTIS was playing.

She sang along trying to ease her nerves, “Oh the weather outside is frightful, but the fire is so delightful and since we’ve no place to go...let it snow, let it snow, let it snow.” She sighed as she prayed repeatedly, “Please help me get home Lord...please help me get home.”

As the light turned green she rolled forward, about to head past the old ice rink that she had way too many memories of, as her engine light went on. Her vehicle started stuttering and she exclaimed, “No no no!” barely pulling to the side before her car stuttered to a complete stop.

She took her hands off the steering wheel and into her lap as she muttered, “You have got to be kidding me.” After a minute of praying her car would randomly start, she gave up hope on the old thing as she looked over her shoulder to the ice rink.

In the midst of the snow that was way too frantic to come down if you ask her, she saw someone skating with a stick in hand. Who is crazy enough to be playing hockey right now? she thought. She was already wrapped up in her coat, hat, and mittens, so she got out to investigate who this hockey player was. As soon as she opened the door she wished she were back inside her warm car, but it was too late for that so she headed over to the old rink as the snow came down.

As she got closer she recognized that old hockey jacket, the navy Bauer hat, and the only hockey stick he’d ever used... “Lucas?” He was about to shoot the puck, but he stilled at the sound of her familiar voice. He slowly turned around as he asked, “Emma?” He met her eyes as he finished saying her name and she immediately flashed back to the last time she’d seen him.

“Lucas, you know you don’t have to leave.” Emma was wrapped in his hockey jacket, warmer than could be out on the ice as they leaned against each other on the ledge of the rink. She never felt more safe than in his arms – or his jacket for that matter. He met her eyes after a long moment of staring out onto the ice. “You know how big this offer is for me Emma. This...this could actually be a future for me, playing hockey in the big leagues.” He had gotten nearly a full ride in playing Junior Hockey to someday play for an NHL team. She was happy for him, but not at the risk of him getting hurt and her never seeing him again as she headed across the US for college. He sighed as he looked into those gorgeous green eyes that he always knew what she was thinking just by the way she looked at him, “Emma, I’ll be just fine in Juniors. I’ll just be playing a bit of stick and puck with the boys and will be home before you know it.” She leaned her head against his shoulder as she whispered, “But what if you do? What if you can never play hockey again? What if...what if I’m not home when you come back?” He looked at her, not knowing she’d be in New York yet since she hadn’t told him, “What do you mean if you’re not home? Aren’t you staying at home and doing college online?” Before she even said anything, he could already tell just by the look in her eyes that that wasn’t true. She sighed, “No. I...I’m heading to New York at the beginning of August. I got a huge scholarship in my writing department that I have always dreamed of, so...” She couldn’t meet his eyes and he was having a hard time meeting hers as both of their futures

weighed down on their shoulders. Ultimately, he ended up shattering his knee as well as his chance at playing for MN Wild. Emma never got her dream of becoming a writer as no one would publish her. All the publishers stated that she was, "Not creative or imaginative enough to be an author." So much for the futures they had planned.

As she came back to Lucas standing in front of her, all she could think about was throwing her arms around him. But how would that look since they hadn't seen each other in more than five years? Not a day went by that he wasn't on her mind, but she couldn't just say that out loud. Not seeing him for the first time at least, so she said with a bit of mischief in her eyes, "Of course you'd be here playing hockey in the middle of a blizzard."

He grinned, answering, "You know me, a little bit of snow never hurt anyone."

"A little! You're more than INSANE to be out here when it's what? Nearly below zero!?" she grinned back at him, shaking her head.

He chuckled, "You always did love the cold though."

She looked at him through her eyelashes, speaking softly, "Only because someone was playing hockey."

He grinned, but played dumb as he said, "Good old Rocky? I knew you always had a thing for that guy, couldn't take your eyes off him for a minute. No wonder he always got nervous when you'd come to any of our games, much less practices!"

"Oh really? Then how come he never told me this?" she asked, lifting an eyebrow.

He looked up at the sky as more snowflakes came down around them. "Maybe because he's not the one your eyes went to every time he went out on the ice."

He looked at her with that look of longing when he had first given her his jacket to wear back in high school. Man, how she missed those days.

She looked up as the snowflakes came down, meeting his eyes as she spoke, "I could always tell when you came out to skate. You would go back and give our goalie a fist bump before every period. You skated with such agility and quickness, nobody could ever get past you or take you down. But when you looked up at me in the bleachers, you don't even know the effect you had on me. How could my eyes not go immediately to you then? You were my everything, you were..." Home, she was about to say, but she looked away from his eyes that always made her say more than she knew she should as the pain set in from not seeing him everyday for the last five plus years.

He skated closer to her, until he was right in front of her. He put his Bauer glove underneath her chin, as he raised her face up to meet his eyes. She saw so many emotions when her eyes met his always captivating sky blue ones. He whispered, "I should have never left. I ended up shattering my knee and had to come home without you anywhere close by."

She swallowed as she spoke softly against the breeze, "I heard that you had shattered your knee and," she looked down with regret, "And I didn't think you wanted to see me, so I didn't come home to you. I didn't come back home...to you." She looked back up into his eyes and if he didn't kiss her right then she didn't know what she would do.

He brought his other glove around her neck, pulling her to him in only the way he could as his lips met hers. She tangled her mittens around his neck as he bent to kiss her and she breathed in his scent that she had longed for way too long.

He backed her up to the ledge and pressed his firm hockey body against her small frame. His hands went to her waist as he pulled her in closer. She brought his face closer to hers, scared that he would let go. Too soon had he pulled away, but only to breathe heavily as he said, "Only you could have this effect on me Emma. It was always you, you have always been home to me."

He captured her lips with his and it didn't matter if she made it back to her house because she had

home right there in her arms and that's all that mattered. After all this time, maybe they just needed a little blizzard magic to bring them back home to each other after all.

Cars

By Cooper Walter

Have you ever thought about how cars were made? “Cars were first invented on January 29, 1886”. Here are some good and bad things. Some good things are you can get to places quicker. You can also drive around for fun. You can go to restaurants and get food. You also can drive with friends and you can travel.

Some bad things are that it uses lots of gas. And gas is expensive and not easy to find. You can also break down which leads to you having to walk. And you can get into a car crash which leads to death. You also have to buy a new car every once every few years which is expensive.

Some good changes are that they are making electric cars that don't use gas. You can save lots of money and travel more with electric cars. People are working on electric cars so no gas is used any more. Tesla and BMW are making electric cars. There are many different types of cars like Trucks, Semis, Tanks, Minivans, also trains there are a lot more.

Everyone is wondering if the world will be full of electric cars. Elon Musk and the Tesla business are working together to make electric cars. Ford is one of the most popular car businesses to date. They are also the first to make cars. Cars have improved lots and lots over decades. Cars help people who can't walk or even need to get to their jobs. They have improved from getting pulled from horses. To motored cars. To electric cars and race cars.

Nowadays prices of cars can be a lot more than others. They also changed a lot in wars. Henry Ford founded Ford. He did lots of great things in his life. The main one was he made the Ford car. There are many different car brands like Ford, Chevy, Toyota, Honda, Lamborghini, Tesla. Lamborghinis are the most popular car in the world and it started from tractors. Cars are super important; they are used in wars and to travel.

Over the years they have improved from adding seat belts. Another big one is air bags. They also have added bumpers over the years. They have been improving for years to make cars more safe. Racing in cars can be dangerous which makes seatbelts important. People have been wondering what cars will be like in the future. People think flying cars might be an idea. Or even cars that can auto drive from place to place. Helicopters are another way to transport. And planes are another way of transportation.

Over time the innovation has allowed cars to go at very quick speeds. Another big change is radios have been getting better and better over the years. Another big one is you can see your speed to see how quick you are going. Cars have even added screens to cars so you can see while driving back words. And cars are still improving to this day.

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Jurnee Adamson is in fourth grade at Caledonia Area Elementary.

Evalyn Altmann is a young inspired writer who enjoys dancing, sewing and reading.

Scarlett Armbruster is a sixth grader at Sleepy Eye St. Mary's School. She is an avid reader, plays the flute and piano, and also plays volleyball, basketball and softball.

Ryker Bayerkohler is in fourth grade. He enjoys being outside, playing soccer, video games and doing anything creative. Ryker is very passionate about everything he does and he has a very big heart!

Ava Bell is a fourth-grader at Lakeview Elementary in Albert Lea. She loves animals, riding bike, swimming and reading. Ava has two siblings, Alivia and William, and a dog named Ruger. She is a very kind and conscientious girl.

Adalyn Bowelet

Jalen Brandl

Adam Braulick

Breanna Braulick is in sixth grade at Sleepy Eye St. Mary's School.

William Braulick

Audrey Brien is in sixth grade at Faribault Middle School.

Chloe Brown is the tallest fifth grader we know and loves to be active playing basketball and jumping on the trampoline. Chloe's best friend is her little sister. She also enjoys helping people, especially babysitting (she has 17 little cousins with another one on the way soon)!

Dustin Burrichter

Carsten Clark loves to draw, solve Rubik's Cubes and play video games in his free time.

Olive Clemons is in seventh grade at St. Paul's Lutheran School.

Jace Conway

Nolan Conway is in fifth grade at Caledonia Area Elementary.

Ian Covarrubias is a tenth-grader at Fairmont High School. He likes to sleep and hang out with his friends. Ian also enjoys spending time with his family. In his free time, he likes to go biking to the parks and playing soccer with friends. Ian has a dog that he sometimes takes care of. He enjoyed learning about the innovation of umbrellas.

Tate Davy is in fifth grade at Caledonia Area Elementary.

Cassandra Ecker enjoys writing, drawing, playing trumpet, going to school, playing video games with her sisters, and spending time with her family and many pets.

Rylee Engan is in fourth grade at Caledonia Area Elementary.

Ella Erickson is the oldest of three siblings and enjoys playing soccer, basketball and the piano. She also enjoys reading and drawing in her spare time.

Liam Erickson is a twin and the youngest of three siblings. He enjoys hunting, fishing, playing sports and reading. Liam is very witty with a great sense of humor.

Jia-Xin Fan is currently a fifth-grader attending Bridges Community School. Her passion for writing inspired her to participate in the SCSC Writing Contest, and is grateful to her teacher, Mrs. Carleton, for encouraging her to do so. Jia-Xin is thrilled to have this wonderful opportunity and looks forward to making the most of it. When she is not writing, she enjoys drawing and playing the piano. Last year Jia-Xin won the Overall Winner title in the poster drawing contest held by the Rochester Public Utilities for RPU's 20th Annual Arbor Day Celebration. She loves trees because they are vital to our environment, keeping our water clean and pure.

Katelin M. Flack is a junior at Lake Crystal Wellcome Memorial. She spends time writing with her grandparents, Mark and Jane Schuck. Katelin is an accomplished athlete, making it to state in girls basketball and track and field multiple times as well as running for the cross country team. She is a member of the National Honor Society and plays the violin in band. Katelin gives back to the community in many ways by volunteering at Celebrate Me Camp, Adopt-A-Highway and through opportunities with her school. In the summer, she is active in 4-H, Mankato Saddle Club and is a lifeguard at the YMCA.

Kinnley Frank is in fourth grade at Caledonia Area Elementary.

Leif Fraunkron is in fourth grade at Caledonia Area Elementary.

Brennan Gerstbauer is in fifth grade at Saint Peter Lutheran School. He plays percussion, piano, club soccer and is involved in FIRST LEGO League robotics. Brennan loves reading and building LEGOs and hopes to publish designs on Rebrickable (a LEGO design website).

Connor Goetzinger is in third grade at Caledonia Area Elementary.

Harper Gueltzow is in third grade at Caledonia Area Elementary.

Linnea Gunderson is a creative third grader who loves gymnastics, Harry Potter, playing piano and making up shows.

Cheyanna Hansen is a tenth grade student at Fairmont High School. She enjoys animals and takes care of her cats and dog. Cheyanna is a friend to others. She likes to be outside, especially in the summer, and likes to go to parks and swim in lakes and pools. Cheyanna enjoyed learning about sign language for her poem on innovation.

Izik Heiderscheidt is the son of Cory & Krista Heiderscheidt of Sleepy Eye. He has a love of football and interest in learning golf. Izik loves traveling all over the U.S. with his family. He would like to learn to fly like his father someday.

Gus Hoffmann is in sixth grade at Sleepy Eye St. Mary's School.

Sienna Ibberson is in sixth grade at Sleepy Eye St. Mary's School.

Briea Jaeger is a 10-year-old girl from St. Peter. She is in the fourth grade at John Ireland School. Briea is a good student, athlete, friend and daughter. She always tries very hard and gives her all.

Parker Ray Jenson is in ninth grade at Fairmont High School.

Ora Anna Ihimbazwe Kirezi is in sixth grade at Prairie Winds Middle School in Mankato. She likes reading novels, writing stories, drawing and painting.

Kirby Klug is in fourth grade at Caledonia Area Elementary.

Logan Kreilkamp has a great love and interest in space and star gazing. His favorite genres are science fiction and dystopian. Logan does many creative projects, like metal casting and working, wood working, writing, experimental rocketry, and 3D modeling and printing. He is involved in baseball, robotics and trap shooting.

Nolan Kucera is in sixth grade at Sleepy Eye St. Mary's School.

Wyatt Lange is in fifth grade at Caledonia Area Elementary.

Raelene Lawrence is a senior at Columbia Heights High School and is also one of the editors in chief for the CHHS student-run newspaper, the Heights Herald. Next school year, she's hoping to further her studies in the journalism field and continue advocating for student voices.

Elle Luttchens

Subham Maiti is a fourth-grader at Oak Grove Elementary in Bloomington. He likes writing short stories, especially fiction. Subham also loves to read a lot, especially mystery books, because of the cliffhangers and the suspense. Karate is his favorite sports activity because it makes him stronger and he learns about self-defense. Subham started karate when he was seven and is now a double black stripe. Another one of his hobbies is problem solving – he's been interested in it since preschool and still loves doing it now. Subham also likes LEGOs because they are fun to play with and are also a good way to maximize his creativity.

Ava Meier is in third grade at Caledonia Area Elementary.

Luella Meyers is in fifth grade at Caledonia Area Elementary.

Amati Ishimo Migisha is a fifth grader at Kennedy Elementary School in Mankato. He spends his free time reading and writing comics and fictional stories.

Macy Miller is in sixth grade at Sleepy Eye St. Mary's School.

Cullen O'Heron is in fourth grade at Caledonia Area Elementary.

Henry Oakes is a nine-year-old boy who loves to learn. He enjoys soccer and hanging out with close

family and friends. Henry also enjoys hiking and camping and has already visited the Boundary Waters twice with his dad.

Isabelle Odland is in third grade at Rosa Parks Elementary.

Sylas Olson is the oldest of four boys and is the best big brother. He is a loving, kind, bright and very responsible human being. Sylas loves spending his free time playing outside with friends, coding and playing video games.

Freya Peterson is an 11-year-old fifth grader at St. Peter Middle School. She loves reading, writing, art, soccer and playing piano. Freya likes to draw whenever she has time. She speaks two languages, English and Chinese. Freya has two pets, a cat and a hamster. She dreams of being a designer, an artist and an entrepreneur someday.

Madelyn Phillips enjoys reading fantasy and political biographies. She also indulges in slow piano music. Madelyn writes stories in her free time and is working on a novel. She is great!

Landon Plotz is in sixth grade at Sleepy Eye St. Mary’s School.

Anna C. Pollard is currently a sixth grader at St. Mary’s in Sleepy Eye. She enjoys challenging herself academically and competing in athletics year-round including volleyball, wrestling and softball. As the youngest from a large family, Anna has developed true grit and compassion. She hopes to pursue a career that allows her the opportunity to make an impact by helping others.

Jorden Rasche is a tenth-grader at Fairmont High School. He enjoys spending time outside, especially going on walks. Jorden has a dog that he helps take care of. Like many kids his age, he enjoys playing video games in his free time. Jorden is a kind and good friend to many.

Abbigail Renaux is 15 years old and a student at Alden-Conger High School. She enjoys writing short stories and sharing them with her friends. Abbi wrote this story after her grandpa passed and that was her inspiration for “Following His Footsteps.”

Hilda Rubio is a tenth-grader at Fairmont High School. She enjoys spending time with her friends. Hilda enjoys traveling to visit her family. She loves fashion, trends, make-up and nails. Hilda enjoyed learning about the innovation of cell phones in her research writing.

Mason Rye is in fourth grade at Caledonia Area Elementary.

Isabella Salt is in sixth grade at Faribault Middle School.

Sophia Sanderlin

Chloe Schroeder is in third grade at Caledonia Area Elementary.

Levi Schroeder

Tommy Schwartz is in sixth grade at Sleepy Eye St. Mary’s School.

Joslyn Sellner is in sixth grade at Sleepy Eye St. Mary’s School.

Iyaan Sharma is the youngest in his family and enjoys doing everything his older brothers do. He loves playing with LEGOs, reading and making up stories!

Nityan Sharma is a sensitive and affectionate child. He is an active boy who enjoys math, reading, writing. Nityan loves playing with LEGOs and blocks indoors and soccer outdoors with his brothers! He prefers to jump, skip and hop rather than walk, even if that means a few bumps and bruises every now and then!

Rohan Sharma is a voracious reader. A bookstore or a library is where he would love to spend his time. Rohan is a creative and bright young boy who loves to write imaginative stories!

Catherine Simonsen is in sixth grade at Sleepy Eye St. Mary's School.

Sawyer Stackhouse is in third grade at Caledonia Area Elementary.

Rhema Steele is in third grade at Caledonia Area Elementary.

Sam Stendel is in fifth grade at Caledonia Area Elementary.

Caleb Stibbe is a 16-year-old young man who likes watching YouTube and enjoys survival games. He prefers watching video games as opposed to playing them. Caleb also watches videos about geography, which is what got him interested in the high speed rail research idea. He likes researching and looking at maps on Google. Caleb does not enjoy playing sports, but he will watch them if he has to. He enjoys spending time with his family.

Jaya Stout is in twelfth grade at Albert Lea Senior High.

Ruby Tauer is a sixth-grader at Sleepy Eye St. Mary's School. She is actively involved in student council, gymnastics, softball and her family's third generation 250-cow dairy farm. Ruby also enjoys art and the outdoors.

Kiana Waasdorp is a sixth grader at St. Peter Middle School. She enjoys writing (and reading) fiction stories, specifically horror and post-apocalyptic themed books. Kiana loves reading, writing, theater, drawing, and hanging out with her girlfriend Keira, and friends, Isabella, Laura, Madison, Mason, and Miles. She's currently editing a book, *Loners*, with Isabella. Kiana loves *Dungeons and Dragons*, *Stranger Things*, *Harry Potter*, *The Hunger Games*, *The Owl House*, and spending time with her family including her rapidly growing little sister, Elsie, and dog, Roscoe.

Cooper Walter is in sixth grade at Sleepy Eye St. Mary's School.

Sophia Williams loves to create. She is a composer and a musician who enjoys writing stories and music. Sophia also enjoys dancing and taking art classes.

Kate Windschitl