The Badger Pause

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Agricultural armageddon

by Anna Carlson, BP Staff Editor

The ground grows harder with frost, vines wither, leaves curl into themselves against the biting teeth of late autumn's air, and daylight slowly leaks out of Earth's atmosphere. Winter peeks around the corner. Harvest time has come and gone; the pumpkins have been picked, the corn gathered, and the soybeans brought in. Farms wait, barricaded against the coming snow like bears settling in for hibernation, biding their time until the frost melts from the Earth and it is planting time again. Waiting for the farmer to stoop in his weathered fields, rub the dirt between his fingers, and allow his mind to begin to race: where to plant the peas, when the tomatoes will need to be suckered, which nutrients he needs to build up his soil, how to combat the insects that will infest his fields, when he'll bale his first cutting of hay, whether his irrigation system will survive another dry summer.



A local farm hunkers down for a long winter beside fallow fields and snow covered apple trees, waiting patiently for spring.

These are the questions that have circled through humans' minds for roughly 12,000 years. Known as the Neolithic Revolution, the transition from gatherer to farmer was ushered in by the domestication of livestock – cattle, goats, sheep, and pigs – which transformed humans from hunters to herders (National Geographic).Humans stopped following their prey across the land, instead constructing permanent settlements, managing their herds and flocks, and cultivating plants. Agriculture has allowed humanity to develop and grow into the species it is today. And like people, agriculture toohas shifted and diversified in order to keep up with the new demands that the growing global population poses.

The dilemma that arises, however, is that agriculture hasn't been able to do that. In 2013 the world's population was measured at 7.125 billion people, but according to the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), of these billions of people, nearly one in eight suffer from chronic undernourishment. This translates to roughly 870 million people enduring the hardships of hunger. Disheartening at this size, the depressing number of undernourished people is destined to grow. It is estimated that by 2050, the world population will reach nine billion. If the methods used in agriculture today are unable to effectively feed today's populace, how can they possibly cope with an increase of nearly two billion? The answer is they can't.

Continued on page 3.

A crash course on winter driving

by Lauren Peterson, BP Staff Writer, & Christin Dornback, BP Staff Editor

Ice, ice, baby. Or more specifically, black ice, ice, baby.

Black ice, snowy nights, and months of low temperatures are soon to be upon us, and while that can be intimidating for new and old drivers alike, never fear! The Badger Pause's lovely and dependable staff drivers have compiled some tips and tricks on how to stay smart, stay safe, and most importantly, stay alive during the dreaded winter driving season.

You want to **prepare your car before the first snow storm of the year.** Be sure to look at the mechanics of your vehicle before winter approaches. Check your spark plugs, battery life, lights, and wipers, for example. Along with these things, remember to invest in snow tires before the first winter storm for better traction on icy roads. Also, be sure to have a spare tire in the back as well as a jack.

Now, in case these precautions weren't enough, or if you get trapped in your car in the middle of the winter, **don't fret.** We have put together a list of items to keep in a survival kit. **A winter survival kit should contain items to keep you warm such as gloves, a hat, scarf, jacket, or even a blanket.**



Photo courtesy of www.survival-supply.com

A surivival kit such as this may mean the difference between life and death.

Also, items to assist you if in trouble include **a basic tools kit, flash light, jumper cables, flares, an ice scraper/brush, and road salt to help you out of an icy situation.** It helps to have a light snack or water handy because you never know how long you may be trapped. And most importantly, in this day and age - keep a backup cell phone charger as well. It's important to have a charged phone handy for both entertainment and emergency calls.

So, when you and your vehicle are prepared to face the elements, put your game face and your seat belt on, and remember to stay calm, no matter what. First things first: **warm up your car beforehand**. This will make for a warmer and more comfortable ride; when you let your car and engine warm up, it'll be ready for your journey. Even though throwing on your coat and boots and hopping outside into the nasty weather may seem to be a tough task, so is driving while shivering maniacally. Additionally, **be sure to wipe off snow from the windows, mirrors, and hood.**

After your car is warmed up, **make sure to give yourself extra time to get to your destination.** If you're trying to get to a place that is usually 15 minutes away in the non-snowy months, leave 5-10 minutes earlier to ensure you are punctual.

Continued on page 2.

Seniors, are you feeling stressed, or nah? Page 4!

Jump on the motivation train: move your caboose! Page 5!

#TurkTeam It's time for Thanksgiving! Page 6!

Are buildings getting smarter?

by Erin Wiggins, BP Staff Writer

When someone says "Smart Buildings", what do you think of? Do you think about houses that can do your homework for you? Do you think of doctors' offices that will take your temperature while you're waiting for your appointment? Or do you think of the Disney Channel original movie Smart House?

Well, in 2014 you're not far off. We probably shouldn't expect our houses to tutor us in math anytime soon, but more and more buildings are becoming smarter. Now what do I mean by "smarter"? I'm not talking about getting-a-36-on-the-ACT smart, that's for sure, but what I am talking about is efficiency. Buildings are being made more and more often to suit the people using them.

The new phenomena of Smart Buildings are able to track the way we live. They can tell what time we usually wake up, when we get home from school or work, whether to turn on the heating and air conditioning, or to turn the lights off if we forget. They can even notify us if maintenance is needed or when the rent is due. But the best factor of Smart Buildings: energy conservation and efficiency. Many Smart Buildings offer windows that shade based on the sun's position and store energy from the sun during the day to power the lights at night. How cool is that?

According to Dell, "Smart building management systems can reduce a building's carbon emissions and costs through, for example, integrated heating, ventilation and air conditioning systems that use sensors to respond to changes in outside temperature. They may shut off air conditioning when the weather cools or heating when the temperature rises. Such systems can reduce power consumption by 30 percent or more."

So, with all these great technological advances in housing, what's the downside? The outward cost of switching a regular building over to a smart building is pretty pricey. The good news though: you can make that money back within a few years from the savings a Smart Building would provide from electricity conservation. This means it's inevitable that we'll start seeing Smart Buildings popping up everywhere – get ready.



Photo courtesy of www.futureagenda.org

These plans for a smart building may be a premonition of the future.

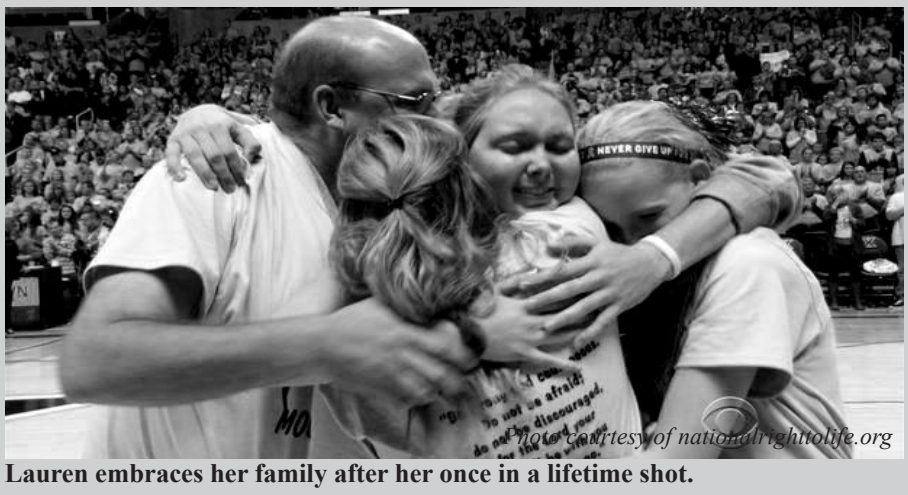
Layups for Lauren

by Melissa Braun, BP Staff Writer

Lauren Hill is a girl determined to live out her dream rather than be defined by her diagnosis. Hill is a freshman attending Mount St. Joseph College. Her biggest dream in life was to be able to play in a women's college basketball game and after inspiring so many, her story and dream game premiered on ESPN.

In October of 2013, shortly after Hill's eighteenth birthday, she was diagnosed with diffuse intrinsic pontine glioma (DIPG), an inoperable form of brain cancer. At best, Hill was given two years left to live. Hill and her family were completely blindsided by this diagnosis; Hill said she thought it was just a mere concussion. In September of this year, the doctors told Hill she had only months to live and would most likely not make it to the New Year.

This disease, which most commonly affects children, causes the rapid growth of a brain tumor. Less than 10 percent of those diagnosed with DIPG live for longer than two years. Hill's disease causes her be more sensitive to light and sound, to be pained with severe dizziness, and to lose feeling and movement on her right side. Due to this she wears headphones and sunglasses when practicing basketball. Hill had to start working with her nondominant hand because of her condition, but that hasn't stopped her.


Photo Courtesy of nationalrighttolife.org

Lauren embraces her family after her once in a lifetime shot.

When speaking with Glenn Beck, on TheBlaze, Hill explains she is not fighting this disease just for herself but for all the other children battling pediatric cancer just like Hill.

Her dream came true when the NCAA agreed to allow local Hiram College to move their game day forward to Sunday, November 2nd for Hill, in hopes that she would still be healthy enough to be able to fulfill her lifelong dream. Incredibly, within the first seventeen seconds of the completely sold-out game, the freshman scored a basket on a left-handed layup. The crowd went wild, tears were shed, and all of her teammates poured onto the court, all for the girl in the jersey number 22.

After the layup, she sat on the bench for most of the remaining game. The crowd chanted until Lauren was put back in the game to make the last shot. Once again Hill scored but this time it was even more amazing because she used her right hand to make that layup, the side of her body that has begun to lose feeling.

After the game, which ended with Mount St. Joseph beating Hiram 60-55, Hill was quoted saying, from ESPN, "I never thought I would play on a college court, put my feet on the court and feel the vibration of the crowd… This game has been amazing, and everything that happened today was amazing." Hill likes to look at this game as not her last, but rather her first. Hill, still inspiring and incredible, created the Layup4Lauren challenge where you spin around five times then try to shoot a layup with your non-dominant hand to help raise money for cancer awareness.

Hill can truly inspire us all, to live out our days and not dwell on the bad things in life, but always try to turn towards the good. Focus on the bigger picture in life, striving for your dream and do what makes you happy. Even as her time on Earth dwindles down, she still continues to do what she loves, as much of it as she can do, which teaches us to enjoy each moment while it's here.

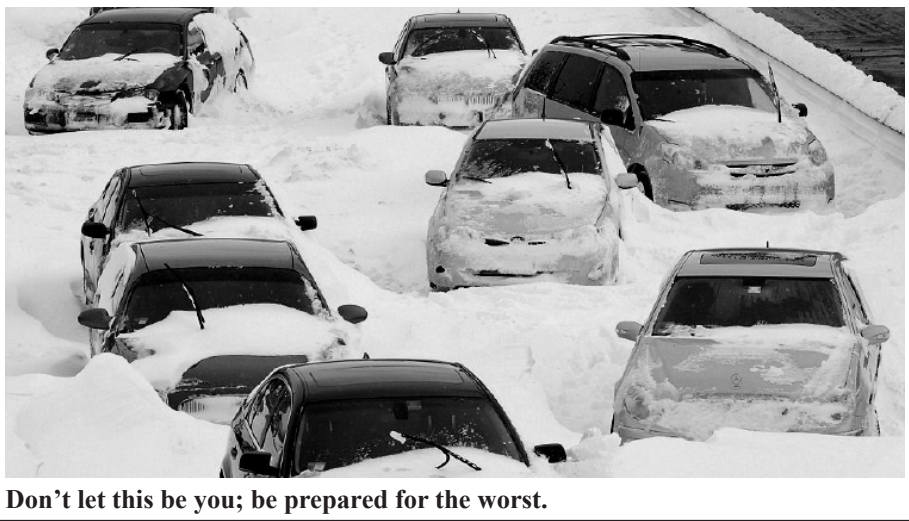
Winter driving continued from front page...

When you finally make it onto the roads, check yourself before you wreck yourself. (Literally.) **Don't let your gas gauge dip below half or a quarter of a tank**. You never know when you'll need gas and driving on empty is hazardous as is. Coming from a girl who ran out of gas on her way to school last winter, this tip should be followed religiously.

Let's be honest, when the weather outside is frightful, so is your driving. To all Ohioans, get your act together. If you passed your driving test, you can pass through the winter as long as you don't drive like a buffoon or baboon. When it comes to speed, **don't drive too fast or too slow.** It's not summer, so don't act like it. Don't go whipping down a road speeding because chances are that'll be the last thing you do. And **do not put the pedal to the metal and throw all of your weight down on the gas pedal. Accelerate in a responsible fashion** so you and everyone on the roads will be safe. Your RPMs will go up, but chances are you won't do anything but cause a problem. On the other hand, it's fantastic to be cautious, yes, but there's a fine line between cautious and irritating and unnecessary. For instance, if we could push your car faster than you're going, you're going too slow. **Put on your hazards if you don't feel comfortable driving a reasonable speed. Additionally, do not use cruise control – it's just not a grand idea.**

Next thing to pay attention to is braking. Braking can be tricky in winter when snow, ice, speed, and bad judgment affects you. Your Drivers Ed teacher should've gone over this with you, but nonetheless, **don't be a dummy when it comes to braking. Allow time to slow down, and stay calm and cognizant throughout it all. Brake early, and don't slam on the brakes. If you start to slide, don't panic**. Panicking, overcorrecting, and jerking the wheel leads to accidents. After you slide, take a few seconds to recollect yourself before continuing on your way. If you're freaked out, pull over into a parking lot or driveway until you are able to drive without the anxiety levels of everyone before finals.

The main thing to remember when it comes to driving is be as cool as it is outside. If you are calm, aware, and paying attention, you will find yourself safely navigating the streets this winter.



Don't let this be you; be prepared for the worst.

The levy: what now?

by Samantha Hargis, BP Staff Writer

Results from November elections have brought Berkshire Local Schools and the community bad news. The Berkshire Schools levy, which consisted of creating a new income tax to bring money towards a new school sports complex, along with the elimination of pay to play, has failed.

Although the levy failed, it may get another chance. With some alterations and more thought put into the levy, it could pass in the next election.



What does the future hold for Berkshire as we head into the red?

Many families and students cannot afford the sports pay-to-play or fees resulting in the Berkshire sport programs struggling. In addition to athletics at Berkshire, the school is already in distress with the budgets already put in place concerning academics, due to the lack of money donated or funds from taxes. Academics also have a huge cost on the students and Berkshire staff along with the other programs.

The small but mighty school has thrived and survived, but without support from the community the school system will not be able to attract families and kids. Without students and staff coming into the Berkshire School district and with no one new moving here, the kids as well as the school system, will suffer.

When a school faces trouble, it depends upon the community to help avoid further cut backs or consolidation. Sadly some schools around Berkshire have experienced such difficulties. The lack of big businesses in the area makes it harder for schools to find the tax funds and corporate backing they need. As a result the schools, like Berkshire, put levies on the ballot. In order to keep the school strong and fit for the children of the community, Berkshire needs support. The school may have a small population, but considering the district is home to residents from Burton, Claridon and Troy, a local school is necessary. Berkshire is hoping to keep up with fundraisers and events but the failure of the levy proves to have been a big setback in the Berkshire Local School District.

"Maximizing each students potential as an individual and as a responsible citizen."

Tis the season for giving

by Alex Sanda, BP Staff Writer

The start of the holiday season is upon us and it's time to help the less fortunate. While you're enjoying your warm, cozy home with your families, remember this: there are others who don't have those luxuries. Even taking a few hours out of your schedule to assist organizations in volunteering can make a world of a difference to someone in need. If your schedule is too busy to dedicate time for volunteering, you can always donate. Berkshire's Interact club and student council are the easiest ways to get involved.

Interact hosted the blanket drive in November, has started planning bell-ringing in December, has been holding fall clean-up days since October, and will be having pancake breakfasts every weekend in March. The blanket drive went well with Berkshire high school students bringing in new or used blankets to help the homeless. Students signed up to volunteer their time to go to the yards of the elderly and rake leaves, trim plants, and pull weeds. President of the club, sophomore Cori Rockefeller, says that the experience was "fulfilling and it felt great to help someone out, who also appreciated the work."



Interact reminds Berkshire students to give to the blanket drive.

Interact does fall clean-up every year and invites all the students to participate. Sign up next year if you get a chance (There's also spring clean-up, by the way! Basically the same as fall clean-up, just a different season). Since it isn't December yet, remember that you'll have a chance to sign up for the Salvation Army bell-ringing, where students volunteer to stand outside of the Middlefield Wal-Mart in the freezing cold weather and ring a bell for an hour (It's more enjoyable than it sounds). The experience is extremely rewarding, especially when you see how happy the donors are to see young people selflessly volunteering. The club also visits nursing homes around Christmas time to sing carols and talk with the residents. After the holiday season, Interacts begins their busy spring season in March. Members of the club volunteer to serve food every weekend at the pancake breakfasts. The students generally say that this is the most fun they have all year; they're able to spend time with their friends while helping out the school.

Student council holds their toy drive yearly. Berkshire students are asked to bring in toys for the less fortunate families in Geauga County. During November and December, bring toys to the library to help make every family's Christmas a good one. You also have the chance to give at their yearly Christmas parties, where members have lots of fun filling stockings using the presents that the attendees bring for the occassion. The socks full of joy are later donated to the Geauga County Food Cupboard. Student council is always welcoming new members, so feel free to go to the meetings they hold to help out!

Agriculture continued from front page...

Pedro Sanchez, the director of the Tropical Agriculture and Rural Environment Program at Columbia University, explained that in order to just maintain the level of undernourished people in the future, an additional 900 million hectares (a hectare is 10,000 square meters) would need to be cleared and utilized. Not only would deforestation of this scale wreak havoc on other species and the Earth, there just isn't that much land available. Today, there are 4.3 billion hectares being used for agricultural purposes and at best, only about 100 million hectares could be added to that in the future (Scientific American).

Another problem? The 4.3 billion hectares that are being cultivated today are shrinking. As the climate changes, temperatures and sea levels rise. That climbing salt water seeps into rice paddies in Asia which, considering rice is only mildly tolerant of salinity, means that rice yields are destined to drop. According to the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), rice yields will be reduced between 10 and 15 percent with prices climbing between 32 and 37 percent by the fateful year of 2050.

Dr. Ronald Cantrell, the Director General of The International Rice Research Institute (IRRI), presented the fact that "Almost two thirds of the world's population depends on rice for food." A drop in production and a climb in prices would only contribute to the growth of world undernourishment.

Yet it isn't just the shifting climate that is killing farming land; sometimes it is the farmers themselves and the methods they employ.Much of the produce that is widely growntakes advantage of the fertility of the earth, using up nutrients and resources, leaving none for upcoming growing seasons. Certain crops demand specific nutrients from the soil in order to survive and yield. For example, corn requires high amounts of nitrogen which means that as it is growing, it is stripping this nutrient from the Earth. After years of growing corn on the same plot of land, the soil becomes depleted and can no longer support new crops.

Coinciding with this stripping of nutrients is the exhaustion of land induced by the meat, dairy, and egg industries.According to research conducted by the Smithsonian Magazine, "on a calorie-to-calorie basis, potatoes, wheat and rice require two to six time less resources to produce than pork, chicken, eggs or dairy." Now take into account that beef requires even more resources than these other protein categories, needing 28 times more land, six times more fertilizer and 11 times more water. Not only does beef production put more stress on the land and devour more precious resources, but it also emits up to five times more greenhouse gases than the other industries.

And greenhouse gases increase the global temperature, which in turn melts ice caps, causing the ocean levels to rise, which then forces salt water to seep into rice paddies, effectively harming the food source of nearly two-thirds of the world's population.

All of these problems that the world faces are interconnected. A growing population, shrinking farmable land, resource selfish industries, impending famines, and a warming planet all link together to make the year 2050 seem doomed to be a bleak one. Not all of these problems can be solved, many cannot be solved easily, and a few have solutions that are difficult to accept.



The effects of small livestock producers are less severe than those of large corporations.

One solution presented to resolve multiple issues is the genetic engineering of crops. Because there isn't enough land available for conversion into the farming acreage needed to keep up with the growing world population, it is widely agreed upon that the yield of crops needs to be increased. Rather than plant more, farmers need better producing plants. Tying into the problem of lack of land, is the continued destruction of existing farming land. Through the process of genetic engineering, it is believed scientists could not only increase productivity of organisms but could also alter the organisms in such a way as to help them survive in a changed environment. For example, if scientists could alter the rice plant to enable it to endure higher salinity, the increased salt content of rice paddies would not be a disastrous occurrence.

Although a plausible answer to the question of how yields can be increased, genetic engineering offers problems of its own. Many people are wary of the tinkering that must be done with the genome in order to genetically alter an organism and because genetic engineering is still a relatively young field, little is known about the long term effects that such alterations could have. This results in a widespread distrust of the science.

A simpler solution to the problem of low yields could potentially be helped through the method of crop rotation. Rather than raising the same crops on the same plot of land year after year, it is more beneficial to allow the land a chance to rest and recuperate through the use of cover crops and crop rotation. Cover crops include buckwheat, soybeans, barley, and sorghum among others. These plants restore soil health and increase the depleted nutrients that are needed for the plot of land to once again host demanding crops like corn.

Another debated and largely questioned solution to some of the issues presented by the methods of agriculture practice today is the replacement of animal protein with insects. This proposal causes many individuals living in Western cultures to shudder; insects are actually a viable replacement for eggs, dairy, and meat. According to National Geographic, "small grasshoppers rank up there with lean ground beef in protein content, with less fat per gram". While supplying a healthier form of protein, insects are also much more efficient in converting plants into protein and release lower greenhouse gas emissions.

In a world that hosts over seven billion humans, the resources needed to support such a large (and still growing) population have become severely strained. Food may appear to be plentiful, but in reality people all around the globe are struggling to keep from starving. As the world changes, so too must the methods utilized in agriculture; adaptation to the shifting times is the only way to fend off an Armageddon famine in the future.

Stress strangles seniors

by Zak Martinjako, BP Staff Writer

Senior year is a time of excitement and change, the light at the end of the educational tunnel. The previous twelve years of schooling all lead up to this moment. As middle schoolers, we all looked up in awe those awesome seniors; they were so mature and cool to our little thirteen year old minds.

Now, at long last, we're here. Yet for many of us, what once seemed so splendorous has revealed itself to be something entirely different. Underneath the guise of excitement and glamour lies a painful reality. Like a mugger in dark alley, there's an enemy lurking in senior year just waiting to launch a surprise attack. That enemy is STRESS.

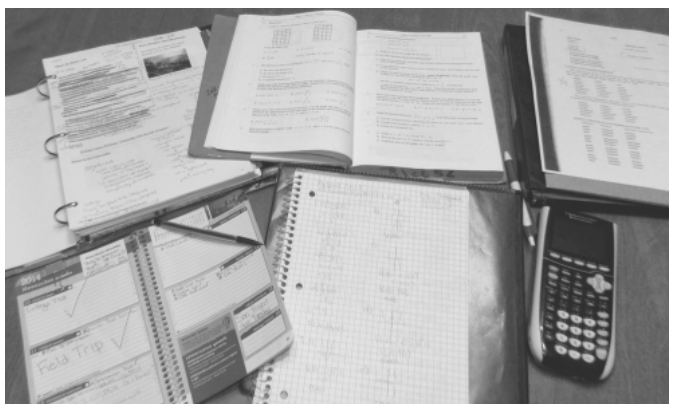
Many seniors plan to attend college after high school. It's no secret that the college application process can be taxing; after all, many of our parents and all of our teachers had to go through it as well. Applications are very involved, normally taking multiple hours to complete to satisfaction. Questions have to be answered, personal information has to be entered, essays must be written, letters of recommendation need to be requested, test scores and transcripts must be sent. Plus, there may be additional requirements, depending on the school.

There's more to the application than all that, however. Seniors have the monumental task of deciding which school they want to attend, when previously they never had much of a choice. There's hundreds upon hundreds of schools across the U.S. to choose from, so it can be a hard choice. Plus, there is a plethora of other factors to consider as well.

The most major of said factors is the financial expenses associated with each school. There's no way to sugar coat it; college is expensive, so expensive that many families can't actually afford it. So students have to rely on student loans and, well, we've all heard the horror stories of paying those off. In attempt to avoid as much of that foreboding debt as possible, seniors will often apply for scholarships. There's a mountain's worth of scholarships available, of types too numerous to list. On the other hand, applying for scholarships can often times be a hassle, coming with many of the same requirements that college applications boast, and a myriad of essays. Hello, doubled workload! And of course, this is all on top of the required school work.

Then, of course, there is the dreaded question, "What do you want to do with the rest of your life?" It's a heavy thing to ask, indeed, except everyone asks it to the point where it feels as though it should be the easiest question in the world to answer. Yes, because it's so easy to decide what you're going to devote your life (and not to mention your first few decades of income) to.

For the most part, the days of the dreams we had when we were nine are long gone. Sure, there's plenty of seniors who know what they want to do, and that's awesome. But we can't be pressured into making this decision; it will not end well. Whether it be wasted time (and money) in college, or a life working a job we despise, making the wrong decision can have long lasting consequences.



Some seniors find themselves with an overwhelming homework load which adds to their stress.

Hey parents, this is where you come in! We all get that you have our best interests in mind. Everyone wants to see their children succeed and have an awesome life with an awesome, high paying job. Sometimes, though, your attempts to help end up driving your kids up the wall. If your senior isn't sure about what they want to do with their life, asking them that dreaded question and telling them "you have to start making decisions" everyday isn't going to help them. Additionally, you really shouldn't try to choose our college for us. Though you probably know your kid very well, the only one who is capable of choosing the right school is them. Be supportive; help your kid when they're stressed out. Don't be the cause of the stress.

All you stressed seniors may be wondering how you can alleviate your anxieties. Unfortunately, there's no surefire way to get rid of stress. However, here are some tips that other seniors will swear by. Prioritize, choose your battles and finish the work that absolutely needs to be done, and leave less urgent work for later. Being proactive will ensure that your work gets done.

If that tried and true cliché isn't working out for you, try slowing down and unwinding. Take everything a day at a time. You may find that focusing only on the now will help your anxieties dissipate. Unless you've got a deadline staring you right in the eyes, don't be afraid to do a little goofing off (too much of anything is a bad thing, so take breaks from all those applications). Go on the Internet and just find funny pictures and videos for a while. Or, if you're in dire need of emotional release, there's nothing wrong with crying it out. Tears can be an effective means of washing away your stress. Some seniors also claim that curling up in Hull's room can be quite therapeutic as well (no names mentioned!).

So seniors, when you're facing the onslaught of questioning relatives this holiday season, remember to channel that stress (and remind your family that it's your life)!

Choosing the right career for you

by Abby Carlson, BP Staff Writer

As toddlers, we were told that the sky's the limit when it comes to our future jobs, with the exception of astronauts, of course. At the age of seven, we thought being a teacher or a vet would be the greatest time in the world; as we got older, we decided to become marine biologists and zoologists. But as the years continued to pass, and we learned that some of these jobs don't hold an abundance of money in the future, we decided to pursue occupations such as lawyers, doctors, and engineers.

When choosing what you want to do for the rest of your life, you shouldn't have to worry about how others feel or think. If you want to become a mechanic, plumber, or construction worker, don't let anyone, or their opinions, stand in your way. Those dreams are just as big and incredible as becoming a doctor or lawyer. You shouldn't feel pressured into acquiring a job that makes hundreds of thousands of dollars a year, because in reality, those jobs take years and years to land, and cost almost double in education what they will give you in return. According to AboutEducation, in 2012, the debt of students who graduated from a public medical school was 160,000 dollars and 190,000 dollars for those who attended private schools. That's an enormous amount of money to have to pay back just because you felt you had to follow the expectations of your family, friends and society. To all the parents out there: We know you want us to do well and go far in life, to achieve our dreams, but isn't it okay if our dreams are to become an electrician instead of a medical assistant? If that's truly what we love, shouldn't we choose happiness over wealth?

"Should you really choose your future job based on the income?"

Following a dream and choosing a career is about what is going to make you happy, not your grandparents, aunts, uncles, or anyone but yourself. It's okay to not be able to afford a two week vacation each year. Besides, wouldn't it be better to enjoy every day at work, doing the thing you love, rather than having to escape your day-to-day life just to put a smile on your face? And since when did the 'dream big' expectations become centered on income or the benefits a job provides? Because our education systems are designed to keep our capitalist economy growing, our curriculum generally discourages the more enjoyable careers.

Security and income are both nice and pleasant perks to have, but only if you enjoy your job. The value of a dream shouldn't be dictated by what others think, or how big the number is on the check you receive each month in the mail; it should be based on your passion for a career, and your love of the profession.



Merry Motivation

by Gwen Losasso, BP Staff Writer

With the temperatures falling and the holiday season quickly approaching, we often find ourselves making excuses for, or simply not doing, anything to keep ourselves healthy and active. It doesn't help that many of us are beginning our days when it's dark in the morning, and not returning home until after darkness falls again in the evening. But for those determined to be determined during the cold months, here are some easy ways to stay motivated and active this holiday season:

Find a workout buddy. This may sound cheesy, but it really does help. Use your friends to help keep you motivated, and in return you can motivate them as well. It's easy to cancel on yourself because you don't feel like being active, but if someone else is counting on you, you're less likely to disappoint. Exercising with another person can also help push you further; resulting in a more satisfying and generally better workout.

Photo courtesy of urban-athletes.co.uk



Be proactive. Wear a coat outside, get your sleep, and take your vitamins. No one likes being sick, or generally feeling awful. If you're healthy and your immune system is ready to take on the world, then you will feel like you can to.

Try something new. Variety is the spice of life people, and this can be applied to your workout routines as well. You don't have to do the same thing every week or every day. Even a new time of day for your daily exercise could be just what you need. Look up new workout routines, try a new running route, or maybe even join that kick boxing class you've always wanted to try.

Embrace the snow. Don't you remember how much fun you had sledding when you were younger? Go find your old sled in the garage and show it some fresh snow. Remember old times, and continue the fun with a snowball fight or some quality fort building. Exploring trails and the beautiful country side via cross-country skis or snowshoes is always great fun as well.

Look snazzy. It's actually proven that people are more mentally and physically motivated when they are dressed up. Buy a new dress and wear those heels, or try a new tie tying technique and wear some classy khakis. Chances are you'll look great and feel great too.

Photo courtesy of www.newforest.gov.uk/



Witness these penguins in their natural habitat heading to the gym...

Join a gym. Whatever type of physical activity you're most into, exercise centers have something for you. Joining a local gym or the YMCA is not only a great option to stay indoors and out of the cold, but it could be just what you need to keep yourself motivated and in shape this winter.

But first, let me talk about selfies

by Christin Dornback, BP Staff Editor

Get those iPhones ready, and prepare to fight. Ever since the expedited rise of social media, there have been two sides going to war over one major conflict: the Selfie.



Sophomore Kylie Scott, snaps a superb Selfie.

Journalists, adults, your aunt, fellow peers, and so many more are hating and mocking the pictures that today's youth post.

According to articles such as "'Selfie Addiction' Is No Laughing Matter, Psychiatrists Say," via The Huffington Post, psychologists and health professionals have determined that the obsession with selfies has actually increased narcissism and mental illnesses including Body Dysmorphic Disorder, Obsessive Compulsive Disorder, and depression. As health professionals frown upon the Selfie, a number of adults are vociferously complaining about the self-righteous, self-obsessed, narcissistic character of the present generation as well. Additionally, fellow teens and twenty-somethings join the put-down of the Selfie culture, while ignoring more pressing matters like, you know, droids being used to kill civilians overseas, universities becoming total-profit institutions, and the lack of fundamental human rights in current legislation. Because, well, loathing duck faces is more urgent.

Whether you're Selfie Royalty or Selfie Roaster, you can easily picture some social media user muttering "Wow, attention seeker much? She's so full of herself," as he or she passes their phone, which is open to their Instagram feed, to others surrounding them who look and agree in unison. Yet when your grandma posts a glorious Selfie on Facebook showing off her hip, new, and marvelous perm, you don't see her facing retaliation for being self-centered. Your estranged aunt doesn't comment "Mom, you're so full of yourself." Her friends don't text each other screen shots attached to comments like "Did you see what Karen just posted? Like she's trying to show off." Maybe older folks take hypocrisy to a new level when it comes to photo taking and all those fancy-schmancy technological gadgets, but seriously – why do youth primarily take the cake on the Selfie hate?

Narcissism, self-obsession, and happiness depending on how many "likes" you get on your latest Selfie is not healthy, in any way. No matter how you try to swing that argument, it's just not going to win. This reliance on immediate gratification through social media and peer response is detrimental and has a negative effect on overall health, as stated by health officials.

But before we bash the Selfie Queens and Kings of Instagram, Facebook, Twitter avis, and Snapchat stories, perhaps we can step back and get down to the basics of photo capturing and caption claiming, and why Selfies should be approached in a new way. Let's show the Selfie a little love – or at least a little "like".

Forget the negatives for one second and remember that in this life, people's confidence gets shot down, slammed on the ground and kicked in the gut because they are too this or too that, not enough this and not enough that. It's a lose-lose condition in the world of appearance and body positivity. If confidence was a fruit, it'd be a banana. It'd get bruised, and we'd call it ugly.

If a person feels pleased about their image that day and want to show the world, let them. Everyone has those days where they walk out the door thinking "Man, I feel fantastic. It is a fantastic day! Shout out to life because I'm living it." That positivity spreads to their friends, family, and everyone they interact with. While on other days, any little bump on the chin feels like a gurgling volcano, and they feel like they're drowning in disapproval for themselves. Those days, to say the least, are not as fantastic, and likewise, the negativity just brings everyone down. Good days, good moods, and good people need to be appreciated.

When you think about it, Selfies and photos, in their most primal state, are simply declarations of living. Imagine if we didn't put so much emphasis or importance on the Selfie. If you strip down the Selfie to its core, you'll see it's simply not worth wasting energy over; it's not worth getting conflicted about. It's just a combination of light waves reflecting and being captured by a camera lens. It's just a picture of right here, right now.

Youth of today should be encouraged to shamelessly love what the world has to offer right now. There's nothing wrong about finding pleasures in the commodities of today. Our parents had Polaroids and really bad hair cuts; we have Wi-Fi and the ability to take twenty Selfies within thirty seconds on any occasion. (However, I am hopeful that our generation can work together to be known for something more significant than the notorious duck-faced Selfie.) So, go for it. Love Selfies. Love posting Selfies. Love how incredibly easy capturing the beautiful moments of our life is for us because if you love this life, life will love you back.

To me, Selfies are an expression of the now, of self-love and confidence. Perhaps instead of cursing Selfies, a society more tolerant and promoting of self-love and self-expression should rise up out of this war on Selfies. As kids, we were taught to be humble and not conceited. When we mix that mindset with the significant drop of confidence that comes with puberty, we're at a serious low point when it comes to self-love. If we teach ourselves to value each other as a whole, and value ourselves as a whole, we'd be unstoppable.

The author Marianne Williamson once wrote that "We ask ourselves, who am I to be brilliant, gorgeous, talented, fabulous? Actually, who are you not to be? …Your playing small doesn't serve the world. There's nothing enlightened about shrinking so that other people won't feel insecure around you. We are all meant to shine…And as we let our own light shine, we unconsciously give other people permission to do the same. As we're liberated from our own fear, our presence automatically liberates others."

There's all this shame in our society for liking ourselves, being confident in our abilities, talents, and actions, and even appearance. Yet there's also shame associated with self-loathing and being displeased with ourselves. We need to learn to find the balance between feeling broken and worthless and over-the-top narcissism. Wherever self-love is taught, we should all be there learning. Maybe some people can't learn to appreciate the uniqueness and beauty of themselves through the lens of the camera, but some may, and who are we to despise and discourage that?

So on the next #SelfieSunday (or #SelfieAnyDayOfTheWeek), ask yourself if you are posting a selfie for the pure, unadulterated joy of sharing your life while promoting confidence, and love, or if you are doing so solely for 12 or 238 likes – to prop yourself up and push others down?

Next time, think about it as your thumb hovers over your screen.

If Instagram had no "like" option, would you still click "Share"?

Time warp: Thanksgiving traditions

by Abbie Maschek, BP Staff Writer


Photo courtesy of photovide.com

Paraders wave to the adoring crowd at the famous Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade.

When the word "Thanksgiving" leaps into my mind, I can smell the comforting scents of the turkey baking to perfection in the oven, my mother's homemade pies cooling on the countertop, and stuffing cooking on the stove. Thanksgiving is such a special time of the year. For most people, it means that members of their immediate as well as extended family come together to share a grand meal, and recognizing everything that they're thankful for.

The Thanksgiving traditions that take place in my family have a special place in my heart; I couldn't imagine treating that day like any other ordinary day. The kitchen becomes slightly crowded as generations come together to cook an unforgettable meal. Old family recipes come to life slice by slice sometimes with new ones being created in the process. For those that aren't gifted in the kitchen department, other Thanksgiving traditions are also taking place. The television is playing the famous Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade.Watching the larger-than-life floats waltz down Main Street is one of my favorite things to do. Once the Thanksgiving feast is prepared, each dish is lined up on the countertop and served buffet style.

As everyone makes their way to their seat, we pause as each person shares what they have been thankful for throughout the past year. My dad started this tradition long before I can remember. He has never failed to be the first one to mention that we have to do it, despite some relatives that don't enjoy the tradition, as some of my family members tend to get embarrassed and hope that he will magically forget about it. Sadly, much to their disappointment, he has yet to forget. As each person reflects on the past year, some shed tears, while some look back in joy and are thankful for the place they are currently at. Everyone from my ninety-two year old grandmother to my two year old nephew gets a chance to share what they are thankful for. For me this has always been a bittersweet time; hearing what each person as an individual is thankful for really gets to me. After our time of giving thanks, we bless our meal.

Growing up in a Christian household, this has always been the most natural thing to do, especially at a time such as Thanksgiving. After we pray over our food, we all dig in and enjoy a great meal together. After the dishes have been licked clean, a variety of homemade pies with cool-whip and a sweet cup of coffee become available for dessert. For the rest of the day, the ladies sit together at the table planning out their Black Friday schedules. The men go outside and play football, yet some opt to sit on the couch and enjoy the game from a nice and cozy house. This time of the year is a great time for us all to engage in our own family traditions and maybe begin some new ones.

As this once a year holiday draws near, I am reminded of Thanksgiving's past as well as Thanksgiving's future. I look forward to seeing my extended family and enjoying a tasty meal with them. Let's not forget the meaning behind this delicious holiday. I believe that we should express our thankfulness each day out of the year, but on Thanksgiving, we should make a point to share with our families how thankful we are. Let's make this Thanksgiving the best one yet, put away your cell phones and spend time being extra thankful with the ones you love most.


Photo courtesy of pillsbury.com

How to flavor boost Turkey Day classics

by Clare Lynn, BP Staff Writer

Each year millions of Americans partake in their annual of feast of turkey, mashed potatoes, and cranberries. Most families continually re-use the same traditional recipes each year and sure, grandma's recipes are tried and true, but it's time to bring some new flavor to dinner tables around the nation. Here are some easy recipes to liven up everyone's favorite turkey dinner.

First is a fresh and citrusy take on the classic cranberry sauce.

Cranberry Orange Relish

Ingredients:

1 navel orange
1 (12-oz) bag fresh cranberries
1/2 cup sugar
1/8 teaspoon cinnamon

Preparation:

1. Finely grate 2 teaspoons zest from orange.
2. Cut away and discard peel and pith from orange, then cut sections free from membranes.
3. Pulse cranberries with zest, orange sections, sugar, and cinnamon in a food processor until finely chopped.
4. Chill, covered, at least 2 hours to allow flavors to develop.

Second, here's a decadent whipped cream to cover your pumpkin pie with.

Caramel-Apple Cream Topping

Ingredients:

1 cup whipping cream
1/4 cup caramel topping
1 tablespoon packed brown sugar
1/2 teaspoon apple pie spice
Additional caramel ice cream topping, if desired

Preparation:

1. In large bowl, beat whipping cream with electric mixer on medium speed for about 1 minute or until cream begins to thicken, then mix on high speed until soft peaks form.
2. Gradually beat in additional ingredients, scraping bowl once, until blended and stiff peaks form.
3. Refrigerate until ready to serve.

Last but not least, we have a delicious, sweet, and savory twist on the hearty staple stuffing.

Sausage & Apple Stuffing

Ingredients:

16 -ounce bag stuffing cubes
6 tablespoons unsalted butter, plus more for greasing the pan and topping
1 pound fresh sage sausage, casing removed
1 medium onion, chopped
2 cooking apples, such as Granny Smith or Golden Delicious, peeled, cored, and chopped
1 to 2 ribs celery with leaves, chopped
1/2 teaspoon kosher salt
3 cups chicken broth, homemade or low-sodium canned
1/4 cup chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley
1/2 cup walnut pieces, toasted
2 eggs, beaten

Preparation:

1. Preheat oven to 325 degrees.
2. Put the stuffing cubes in a large bowl and set aside.
3. Butter a 3-quart casserole dish.
4. Melt 2 tablespoons of butter in a large skillet over medium-high heat.
5. Add the sausage and break up with a wooden spoon. Cook the sausage until it loses most of its pink color, but not so much that it's dry, (about 5 minutes).
6. Add the sausage and pan drippings to the stuffing cubes.
7. Melt the remaining butter in the pan and add the onion, apple, celery, and salt. Cook until the vegetables get soft.
8. Add the broth and parsley to the pan, and bring to a boil.
9. Pour the vegetable mixture over the stuffing cubes and toss until evenly moistened.
10. Mix in the walnuts and eggs.
11. Loosely pack the dressing in the prepared pan, and cook uncovered until the top forms a crust, which takes about 40 minutes.
12. Drizzle about 2 tablespoons of turkey pan drippings or melted butter over the top and cook until the top is crisp and golden for about 20 minutes more.
13. Serve immediately while warm.

Ask me 'bout my beard

by Lauren Peterson, BP Staff Writer

Welcome to November, where a large part of the male community lets go of their razors and hygiene to grow out their facial hair for an entire month. People all over the world have heard of and participate in No Shave November, but not a lot of people realize that it actually serves a real purpose. And no, it's not to show off facial hair growing skills. No Shave November is meant to raise awareness for men's health and prostate and testicular cancer.

No Shave November is not just an event, it is an organization founded in 2009 that encourages participants to donate the money that they would otherwise spend on grooming to the American Cancer Society. Similarly, Movember is an organization in Australia that was started in 2003 for the same cause. Although, Movember is a mustache movement whereas No Shave November is a movement focusing on all of facial hair, they both have the same goal: to raise awareness for prostate cancer and testicular cancer.

Speaking of facial hair, senior badgers David Pelletier and Adam Thompson planned to participate in No Shave November. Thompson had some knowledge of No Shave November's purpose, however both stated that their understanding of No Shave November was simply limited to the rules of the movement. The rules state that you let your facial hair grow out for the entire month of November. "[I] thought it was just a goofy thing someone started" said Pelletier. Both were fairly surprised when they found out that No Shave November has an actual purpose. Pelletier and Thompson pledged to donate at least $5 to $10 to the American Cancer Society at the end of the month. Spread the word and join the movement!



Senior Adam Thompson ponders the meaning of No Shave November while flaunting his majestic beard.

Chritsmas comes early

by Katie Moses, BP Staff Writer

It's almost that time of year again – no, I don't mean Thanksgiving, I mean Christmas. The stores have started with their holiday sales and cheery adverts, but not everyone is dreaming of a white Christmas quite yet. Those who are (myself included), however, will be delighted to see that almost everywhere you shop has already stocked up on holiday décor and gifts.



Photo courtesy of quenchnot.wordpress.com

Presents scattered beneath a tree is a sight many love to see each holiday season.

Many companies skip the Thanksgiving holiday completely and immediately turn their advertisements to sleighs and mistletoe. Michael's has aisles and aisles made up of entirely Christmas décor which has been on display since before Halloween! Check Walmart's website and you'll see their Top 100 Gifts, and how to "Celebrate the season with spectacular savings". John Lewis, an extremely popular English designer, has already created their new Christmas advert: Monty the Penguin. Is it such a bad thing that Christmas comes earlier each year?

If you're already listening to Christmas music, chances are you're already feeling warm, fuzzy and charitable. Getting us into the spirit earlier means opening our hearts (and pockets) to the less fortunate sooner and longer.

'Tis the season for food shelters to run low on supplies after all. For those of us visiting with family, however, an earlier Christmas might also mean a more stressful one. The holiday is hard enough on most people as families expect so much and some are asking for that one oh-so-very-special gift, meanwhile the whole month, you're trying to come up with enough money for cards alone. There's also that obligation to show up at Grandma's or Aunt Nellie's or wherever and be social with family and friends. If I can open gifts in my pajamas, I should be able to go to Christmas parties in my pajamas; they did it in The Polar Express. Not to mention at said Christmas parties, there are always those certain members of the family there who want to know why you haven't applied for college, what career path you plan on taking, or why you aren't exactly like them. Don't they remember being young and clueless when it came to their future? Besides, that is just another stressor to add on top of the mountain of stress we all feel during the holiday season.

Christmas in November isn't for everyone, but it has its ups if we turn our focus on the positives. Maybe we don't have a lot of money to spend on gifts for our parents and friends, but with a few dollars we can buy cans of food and other supplies for the needy. If you're feeling charitable, see Mrs. Arnold in the library about the toy drive for kids who aren't lucky enough to find a lot under their tree when Christmas does roll around. Berkshire students have a chance to make a child's day and keep our hearts warm this winter.

Throwback TV

by Lexi Sell, BP Staff Writer

It seems that if you're a current high school student, you will stop in your tracks to watch one of your favorite childhood television marathons. Anything from *Lizzie McGuire* to *Even Stevens* is worthy of a night in with your friends and a bowl of popcorn. Well, I'm about to open a Pandora's Box of childhood memories, from your all-time favorite shows to the episodes that may have changed your life.

Let's start with my favorite: *Lizzie McGuire*. Not only did Hilary Duff's character express a crazy style of bedazzled do-rags, unembellished jeans, and crimped hair, but she left a warm place in the hearts of kids growing up in the 2000's. If you've ever been forced to wear an ugly unicorn sweater your grandma bought you and it just happened to be picture day, Lizzie has experienced advice for that. Plus, who can forget when Aaron Carter was a heart throb or when Lizzie and Miranda got to be in Aaron Carter's holiday music video.

Remember the adorable dork, Gordo? Unfortunately, his and Lizzie's television romance never amounted to anything more off screen, but we all love to wish that the two best friends ended up together. Even now, everybody can admit that they wanted to have an animated avatar of themselves after watching the first episode. We all loved Lizzie McGuire's cartoon alter ego, always adding an extra comedic flare to the truth.

If you've avoided taking a trip down memory lane, Nickelodeon surely has a TV series that will take you back. While the name Miranda Cosgrove might be recognizable to some of the younger children who watch *iCarly*, older teens remember her as the annoying, devious but relatable, sister from *Drake & Josh*.



Photo courtesy of teen.com

Lizzie McGuire dons the infamous unicorn sweater on picture day.

If you're the type of teenager who knows "a boy named Phil and his family on vacation from the 22nd century", you know I'm talking about *Phil of the Future*. Or if your first rap was composed of Orlando Brown's rhymes in the *That's so Raven* theme song, or you can't forget Raven's signature catch phrases, you got to experience some of the best years kids' TV had to offer. If you don't know what I'm talking about, you've got some watching to do!

Drake Bell and Josh Peck made their ways into everyone's hearts quickly through their strong brotherly bond and numerous phrases such as "HUG ME, BROTHA!" By this point I'm sure you're aware of how much Josh loved Oprah; he had a life size cut out of her in his room! A little peculiar, but you have to respect his admiration for her; she is amazing. Drake and Josh were loved so much because they were total opposites, and had hilarious personalities, outrageous bets, and junk food and video game withdrawals. At the end of each episode you had laughed yourself to tears. If you're ever hopelessly in need of a *Drake and Josh* moment, head straight to Netflix because the seasons can be found there.

Last, but certainly not least, I can't forget to talk about *That's so Raven*. I don't know if it was her weird friends or the ridiculous face she made when she saw into the future, but I was hooked from the first episode. So, let's cover the story line: Raven Baxter was a teenager who had brief psychic visions of the near future, which sounds really cool. What kid wouldn't want a supernatural power? For Raven, this power got her in some hot water in pretty much every episode. Trying to make these visions either come true or not almost always resulted in trouble and entertaining situations. Raven has trademarked a few memorable expressions such as "Ya nasty" and "Oh, snap and we can all hear her saying them.

While Lizzie McGuire was a trendsetter, Raven took fashion to a whole new level. Sometimes, she would dress up like a totally different person. Remember a few unforgettable costumes: a male plumber, a dancer from Boyz n Motion and a one toothed baby. Raven was one of those characters we could always relate to whether it was regarding her crush on Devon Carter or her obnoxious but infectious personality. We all have a little Raven in us; she always taught a lesson and, even if we missed it, the show was funny and she was without question one of a kind.

Hopefully by now, you have been transported to a time when you were a kid sitting in your living room, watching Disney or Nickelodeon and not having a worry in the world. Overall, if you remember each show I talked about, you probably lived a pretty great childhood because *Lizzie McGuire, Drake & Josh* and *That's so Raven* are three of the best televisions shows from our generation.

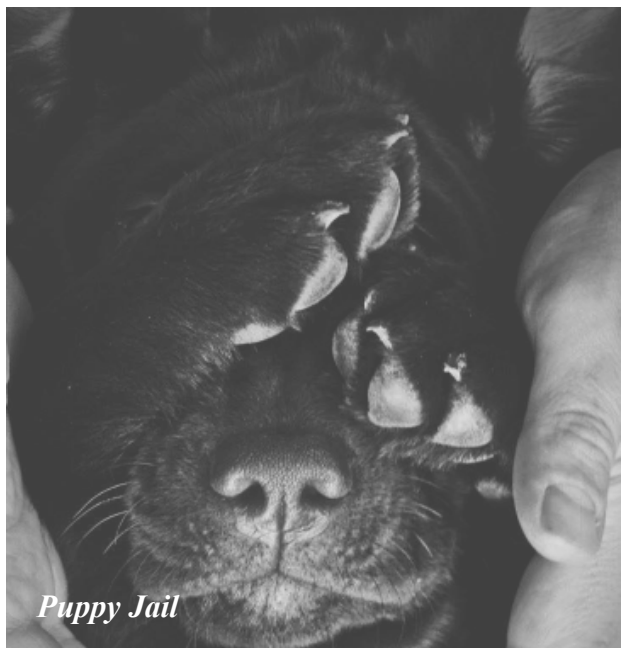
Anonymously Creative

A Reason

Whether you believe the hands of god created you,
Or the hands of the universe created you,
You were crafted for a reason.
And to think anything less of yourself
Than magnificent, is a crime.
And the next time you're lying on the bathroom floor
Hating every fiber of your being,
Think about the designer who stitched
Those very fibers together.
They know they fashioned you with beauty;
They know that every fiber they sowed,
They sowed with love.
They see the stars
In you eyes
Because they put them there.
Someone will connect your constellations; be patient.
You were crafted for a reason.
Go find it.

Imperfection

Curled lashes
Flaw covering foundation
Bright, candy-red lips
Hidden in her bathroom
Rubbing fingertips
A desperate mouse
Rain blurring the windowpane
Dark air pressing
Plucked brows furled into thin thunderheads
From these clouds, teardrops
Healthy blush of cheeks, erased
Hiding imperfection



Puppy Jail

I Shan't Compare You to a Summer Day

I shan't compare you to a summer day,
more aptly with the spring do you equate.
Your beauty shall just broaden, not belay;
balmy such that I can't delineate.
Though storms may muddle your radiant shine,
and gusts may chill the blessed warmth of yours,
you only ever become more divine,
as nature, in its due course, swiftly soars.
Finely into summer you shall parade,
a time marked by universal joy,
Next into fall, but not to be decayed,
for still lingers your glamour, never coy.
Even in deadly winter, you're pristine,
despite faults, adoration made cryst'lline

Recovery

Though it may not seem true,
I can say without a doubt
That we are all recovering

Whether we just had a bad night
Forgot some homework
Lost a loved one
Or perhaps just don't feel all there
You cannot tell me
That you are not recovering

The undeniable fact of life
Is that at one point we will all feel empty
Abandoned, maybe even downright deplorable
Some of us staring death in the face,
Ready to accept it's downcast on us
And it is in these times
That we need to recover

We are always on lookout
For those paradises on the horizon
Like diminutive islands that pass our sea vessels
Waiting to be discovered, but never to be inhabited
For all we can do is wait for those bursts of sunshine
As we continue in our voyages in this vast sea of ours
In a purgatory between what we are given
And what we desire
And so, we continue recovering.

Share your own piece of written creativity by participating in the Story Contest in the Chagrin Valley Times, Solon Times, and the Geauga Courier!

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Story Contest

Everyone has a story to tell. It may be based on family history or just an imaginative tale. We want to read your stories, and so the Chagrin Valley Times, Solon Times and Geauga Courier are launching a writing contest for adults and children of all ages. Winning stories will be published in the Dec. 25 and Dec. 26 print editions and the Chagrin Valley Today website. Please keep entries to 500 words or less.

Submit stories to editor@chagrinvalleytimes.com with subject line "Story Contest." Include your name, address and phone number for verification purposes. Mail entries to: Chagrin Valley Times Story Contest, P.O. Box 150, Chagrin Falls, OH 44022. Deadline is Dec. 4.