



The Tusker Tribune

149

NEWSPAPER CLUB



TUSKER TRIBUNE

SOMERS MIDDLE SCHOOL NEWSPAPER

Issue Number 5

<https://www.somersschools.org/Page/11489>

Fall 2023

Medication Take Back Day This Weekend



**By Hannah Williams
Tusker Tribune Staff**

Medication Takeback Day takes place Saturday, October 21st at the Somers Police Department from 9am-1pm.

More specifically, it is Somers Police Department, 100 Primrose St. (Route 139). This event is held to collect unused or expired medicine in your homes. You can also bring E-cigarettes, vapes, and sharps, too. Also, if you decide to attend this occasion, do not forget to bring a non-perishable item to donate to St. Lukes.



Medication Takeback Day helps lower the risk of prescription drug misuse and accidental overdoses. It also reduces contamination of ground water and other environmental risks. The medication that you bring will be safely discarded. If you want more information on Medication Takeback Day, you could email Mrs. Casey, who runs the Y2Y club (Youth to Youth), at ACasey@somersschools.org.

You may also contact Kathy Cucchiarella, kcucchiarella@somersschools.org. At least consider coming to this event. You would be doing a good thing for our community and environment!

Spirit Week is NEXT WEEK—October 23-27



**By Max Weinfeld
Tusker Tribune Staff**

Why is Spirit Week so important?

Spirit Week is an incredibly important tradition in schools! It is a time when everyone comes together to show their school spirit and celebrate their community. Spirit Week promotes a sense of acceptance. During Spirit Week, students get to show their creativity and individuality through various themed activities—such as dressing up, pajama day, or crazy hair day. This allows students to express themselves and have fun while doing so. It's a chance to break free and embrace your unique traits.

Also, Spirit Week encourages friendly competition and events like pep rallies, talent shows and more. These activities bring the school together,



er, creating a large loving community while everyone's in their school spirit time.

Students encourage and cheer on their classmates, support each other and celebrate themselves. Spirit Week is a time to make many connections with people you might not have before and build connections. Spirit Week provides an opportunity to understand better and learn more about teamwork and sportsmanship.

In conclusion, Spirit Week is a fun week that expresses who you are on the inside and outside. It plays a crucial role in creating a positive school culture and making people feel a sense of belonging. In honor of our Spirit Week, let's embrace the spirit and come together as a community and make this Spirit Week an unforgettable experience.

The Process of Spirit Week!



**By Lauren Crispino
Tusker Tribune Staff**

As a lot of you may know, spirit week is next week! It is so exciting to show some school spirit in such fun ways. Here are the days for spirit week:



- **Monday: Pajama day**
- **Tuesday: Tuesday: Adam Sandler day (dress like Adam Sandler)**

- **Wednesday: Rhyme without reason: Get with someone and dress up as a rhyme, for example "Wild west and princess"**
- **Thursday- Celebrity Day (Dress up as your favorite celebrity)**
- **Friday- Neon Day and pep rally!**

But how was this all planned? Well, the stu-



dent council worked tirelessly to create some of these ideas. With the help of the high school student council president and vice presidents and some of the high school's spirit week ideas, we made a total of eight ideas, the ones above making the final cut for Spirit Week.

To decide which ones were making it to spirit week, we put out a schoolwide survey (created by me and Madame Hauser) with all the Ideas and sent it out to you!

Lastly, I highly encourage everyone to participate in spirit week! It was a ton of work to plan and overall is such a creative way to show your school spirit! Also, it is really fun! We hope you join us with celebrating Spirit Week!



Unity Day Word Find!

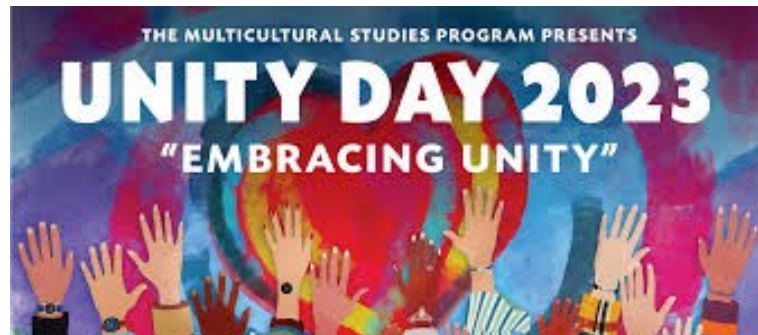


By Ava Schmidberger
Tusker Tribune Staff

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Words to Find:

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 UNITY DAY ACCEPTANCE OCTOBER
 KIDNESS SUPPORT WEDNESDAY



Unity Day at SMS Was a Huge Success



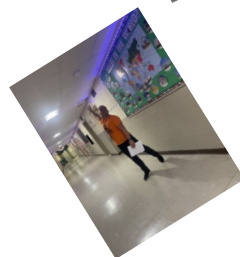
**By Allison Cardillo
Tusker Tribune Staff**

The goal of Unity Day is to bring together all community members young and old across the nation and spread the message that bullying is not acceptable.

All students deserve to be safe in school, online and in the community.

Why orange, you ask? Orange is an autumn color that is associated with safety. Orange is also a warm and inviting color.

Unity Day isn't only celebrated in the U.S. Every year on October 31st India observes Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel's birth anniversary by Unity Day, also known as Rashtriya Ekta Diwas. Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel was popularly called the Iron Man of India because of his great efforts and contributions to India's freedom movement and political integration.



More Unity Day Page 4

Unity Day is About Making Smiles



**By Juliana Cacsire
Tusker Tribune Staff**

Unity Day is a day to share kindness, be nice, maybe give someone something. Make someone happy. I think this day is all about sharing kindness, just doing one small thing can change someone's day by a lot.

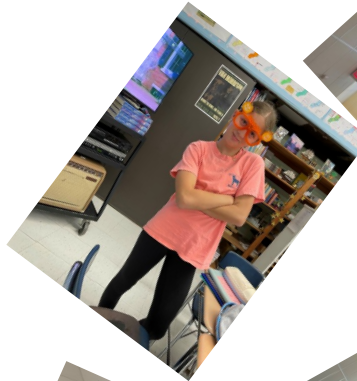
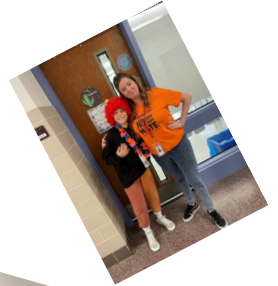
For me, putting a smile on my face is the best, even if I am mad at you, I will always forgive you if you give me kindness. Showing your respect and kindness to others can really make them think about how nice it is to feel welcomed.

If someone is ever being mean to you, just know that their actions do not have to be yours. I think everyone is nice or kind in some way. There can be a lot of drama because it is middle school, but just you being kind or nice can make a huge difference.

It may seem like being nice or kind is useless but trust me, making someone laugh or smile can really not only make them happy, but you, too. I think that being kind will get back to you. If you are being mean, then I wouldn't want to be around you, but being nice to others will make them so happy and laugh. They say laughter is the best medicine. They really do mean it because it really can help. That even the smallest little joke can fix someone's feelings or just make them smile.



**Photos by Allison
Cardillo and
Juliana
Cacsire.**



In Real Life, the 'Tusker' is an Incredible Animal



By Max Weinfeld
Tusker Tribune Staff

Elephants are wild.

Elephants are incredible creatures!

They are the largest land animals on earth and have many fun and interesting qualities.

Elephants are known for their big size and huge trunks, which they use for many purposes like drinking water, grabbing food and communicating with each other.



Did you know that elephants are highly intelligent and have crazy memory skills? They can remember where they drank water last and can even recognize other elephants they haven't seen in years!

Elephants are also very social animals that live in large family groups called herds. They have crazy communication skills and show their emotions.

Unfortunately, elephants have encountered many challenges due to their habitat loss and many other things. After reading the following, you can see that elephants are very strongly passionate animals that have gone through a lot and always fight through. That is why I think Somers, our town, can represent an elephant as our mascot.

These animals are a very popular choice for schools. These creatures symbolize strength, intelligence, and loyalty. Due to their large size and distinctive features, elephants capture attention and leave a lasting impression. Elephants are a loving animal and so is our town!



A Way to Enjoy Taylor Swift Without the Usual Concert Hassle



By Sofia Mendoza
Tusker Tribune Staff

This past Friday, October 13, the Taylor Swift movie in the Los Angeles concert was released.

The Eras Tour movie is opening new and existing ways to watch concerts. If you cannot make it to a concert or it is too expensive, then you can watch it as a movie from a theater.



The experiences that you can have are unique. The Eras Tour movie is a three-and-a-half-hour movie where you can dance and sing along in the theater, unlike in a regular movie theater where you sit quietly. This is a history making tour that sold out in days.

You can wear and trade Taylor Swift friendship bracelets. And it is full of excitement and amazing stunts and performances for every song. If you like Taylor Swift, then I encourage you to watch this movie. Even if you are not super big Swiftie, you can still enjoy it.

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Somers Middle School
250 Route 202
Somers, NY, USA.

Any SMS student is eligible to write stories. If interested, please e-mail Advisor Dean Pappas at:

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Tusker Tribune Website:

<https://www.somersschools.org/Page/11489>



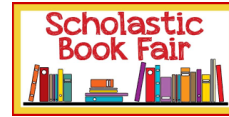
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Essay Contest Builds Excitement for Next Week's Book Fair

The SMS PTA Scholastic Book Fair will be held in the SMS Library next week, from Monday, October 23 to Friday, October 27.

To build excitement for the fair, SMS Library Media Specialist Megan O'Connor organized a Book Fair essay contest. Students submitted essays in a competition where one winner from each grade will be awarded a \$20 gift certificate to the

book fair. Pages 6-12 of this week's Tusker Tribune features the contest entries. Stories in the contest have this icon next to them:



The Love for Pumpkin Spice Lattes



**By Simone Hennigen
Tusker Tribune Staff**

Starbucks. What a wonderful place full of magic and wonders. From the Pink drink to Chai

Lattes.

But you know what overcomes them all? Pumpkin Spice Lattes. What a creamy delight and the taste and aroma of pumpkin filling the air! The warm taste on my tastebuds as they scream in delight.

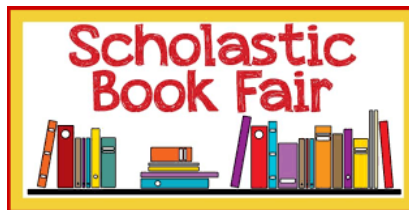
All around the world, people line up at Starbucks just to get a taste of this drink. In my opinion, I think we should just skip Halloween altogether and just have gallons upon gallons of pumpkin spice lattes. That would just be heaven. But unfortunately, that does not happen. But that is okay because I am being a pumpkin spice latte for Halloween. My friends say I have an unhealthy addiction, but I say that I just have good taste in drinks.

I ate breakfast, Nutella on toast and a banana. I rush because I want to ask my mom if I can have Starbucks this morning. She says no. I sulk as I make my way to the bus stop. Then I noticed something. Today is different. There is no scent of pumpkin filling the air, no chilly breeze that chills you just right.

And it is dead silent.

The bus never comes. I run back home with the agility of a deer. I never run without tripping. I was scared.

When I arrive home, my footsteps echo along the floorboards. The only thing I could hear was Fox News faintly playing in the background. I



jogged to the living room to see if anyone was home. Then I remembered that my mom and dad were both at work. The only reason why I remember this is because my mom said they were picking up Pumpkin Spice Lattes on their way there.

On the news I see a reporter with an uncomfortable and nervous smile. Then a picture of a tiny blob in the sky is shown on the screen. Then the nervous reporter is put back on the screen. The next few sentences that he says comes out of his mouth but I can barely process them.

Let me explain it in three words. Aliens. Invade. Earth.

I was absolutely and utterly flabbergasted.

I ran into my room and slammed the door. I went under the covers of my bed, like that could help me. I cried for a little bit and then some more. Then I pulled myself together. I dried my tears and went to the garage. I pulled up the door and got my bike out. I rode as fast as my tiny legs could carry me into town.

By the time my legs gave out, I was 20 blocks away. Then 10. From where, you might be wondering. My happy place. Starbucks. But I stop short as I lay my eyes on the scene in front of me.

Hundreds and hundreds of tall cyborg-like things with small beady eyes and hairy bodies cast their eyes upon me. Aliens! All of them had Pumpkin

Spice Lattes in their long and hairy

hands. Then realization washes over me.

They didn't come here for us; they came here for ALL of the Pumpkin Spice Lattes!

THE END

An Autumn Blog

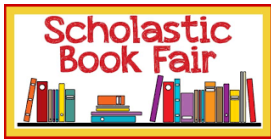


**By Ava Parkin
Tusker Tribune Staff**

Writer's note: this is not really what I did, all these events are fictional. Ava wrote her essay using the words "pumpkin", "cinnamon" and "leaves".

Hi guys!

Welcome to my blog! I'm going to give you my favorite fall morning routine.



So first I will go to my local coffee shop. Just a normal Starbucks, and since the leaves on my favorite tree were already turning this

beautiful reddish/brown color, I decided to order a pumpkin spice latte and it was so good.

After I got home, I decided to start decorating my house for this beautiful fall season. I got the decorative leaf garland and put it on my windowsill along with my fake pumpkins. On my counter I placed this lovely scented candle called maple leaves. It just smelled like syrup and cinnamon.

All I did for the rest of the day was sleep and binge watch "Outer Banks", but my favorite thing I did was get all cozy, Door Dash some Panera Bread Autumn Squash Soup, and sit on my porch reading, and journaling.

Well guys I hope you enjoyed today's blog. See you tomorrow!!! <3



A Post-Game Haunting



**By Jon Lantz
Tusker Tribune Staff**

"Let's go boys!" My football team says. We are winning 18-0 against Yorktown. I have all three touchdowns and one interception.

It's halftime and I am super excited because this is the championship game.

After we won the game, the whole team went trick-or-treating together. After everyone went home and got changed into their costume, we met up in a good neighborhood and started the fun.

Finally, a haunted house, my favorite part of trick-or-treating. Colin and I go in alone and Colin gets lost.

Continued on Page 3



Halloween Lost



**By Camila Sacoto Quinteros
Tusker Tribune Staff**

October 31, 2020. I can NEVER forget that day. Never. That day was one of my favorite days of the year, but little did I know it was also one of the saddest days in my life because I lost someone incredibly special that day. I lost the funniest, most caring, special person I know, my great Grandma.

I really miss her a lot. I know that every day it rains, she is here with me. I enjoy sitting on my desk and staring out the window up to the sky, watching the rain in varied sizes falling onto the ground. I really miss my great grandma, but she is always caring for me. Although she is gone now, I am still strong for my family.

On Halloween Day, we thought we were going to get a lot of candy, so we got ready. My mom was pregnant with my baby brother, and my two-year-old brother was a dinosaur, and I was a vampire. We went out to see if we could get candy, but there was no candy. We were all very upset because there was no candy. So, we went back home, and because we got no candy, my mom thought of going to buy candy.

When we were about to head out, we got a call from my grandma. We didn't know why she was calling, but we all knew my great grandma was in the hospital because she had COVID 19, but we didn't really know how she was.

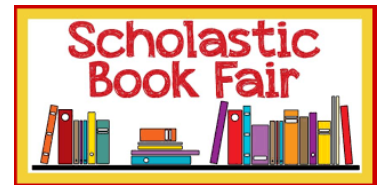
My mom answered the phone and all we heard was screaming and crying. My mom tried to ask my grandma what was going on. My grandma couldn't speak. We were all worried. We didn't know what was going on, but finally, my grandma spoke and said that my great grandma was going to die. My mom and I broke into tears and my stepdad was taking care of my two brothers.

My mom was devastated and so was I. We hugged each other. We were trying to make my grandma calm down so she could breathe better. We helped my grandma calm down and she said the hospital was calling her again, so my grandma hung up to answer the hospital. She called us back after six minutes. She was screaming and crying again. Before we knew it, she said my great grandma was gone.

Tears. Again.

We were all crying now. No one could calm us down. After that call I went to my room to hide because I didn't want anybody to see me cry. That night I went to bed early. I wanted to sleep but instead I started crying. My mom heard, so she came to my room and told me how amazing my great grandma was and that helped me feel a little bit better. But I was still sad. My mom helped me fall asleep. The next day we called my grandma to see how she was doing, she was good but still very sad. Since then, I still feel sad, but I know she cares about me, and she takes good care of me from the sky.

We all go through tough times sometimes very hard times, but God does not give us anything that we can't handle.



The Pumpkin



By Tara Goodwin
Tusker Tribune Staff

Hi, my name is Lyla, and I was a victim of The Pumpkin.

"What are you guys being for Halloween?" yells Cami from the other table.

"I am going as a werewolf, what about you?" Lyla replies in a low toned voice. She is shy and has a lot of close friends, but it never seemed to her that she has enough. When will school be over? All I want to do is go to the pumpkin festival with my family.

"Mom I'm home!" Lyla yells at the top of her lungs.

"She went to the store to buy candy," Riley, Lyla's younger sister, says in a jolly voice.

"Why are you so happy?" Lyla replies.

"It's Halloween! why wouldn't I be happy?"

I walk slowly to the pantry to get some candy. Yes, king sized Snickers, Mom should have used these. I walk slowly upstairs to get my werewolf costume and makeup on. I heard the car pull in the garage.

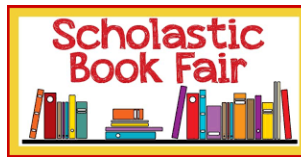
"Lyla and Riley, I am home! Girls we are leaving in 5 minutes to go to the pumpkin patch."

On our way to the pumpkin festival, we picked up Cami from her house. "Mommy will Daddy be there this time?"

"No Honey."

My Dad has not been here since the 4th of July. He divorced my mom a year ago, all because of his stupid work. I wish he never divorced my mom.

"Hi, Miss Reid!" Cami says in an excited



way."

"Hi Cami, ready to go the pumpkin fair?" "Of course, Miss Reid," Cami replied.

We arrived 10 minutes early for the pumpkin festival. There were floats, trick or treat stations, rides, and lastly the

pumpkin maze, the greatest event of all. It starts at 10:00 PM at night.

Thankfully, Cami is here so she can lead the way through the maze. Finally, the gates open. The crisp autumn air hits me and it flows through my body like nothing in the world mattered. Except something did. The



pumpkin maze. It is currently 9:58 and the pumpkin maze is about to start. 5. 4. 3. 2. 1. We ran to enter the pumpkin maze. We turn left, then right. We meet another group. They seem cool. But that is not the point. We need to win. We need to get out first. If we do not, we lose. I do not want to be a loser.

We sat for a minute because we were so tired. We get up and look around. Then I see it. There it was thing that almost killed me. We run and run until we meet a dead end. Our fate is against us. There it goes running to Cami. POOF! Just like that, she is gone.

I ran away like never. I make it out without my best friend. It all happened too fast. I knew it was going to be dangerous, but I did not think that dangerous.

A week later. Nothing is ever the same without Cami. No joyful hugs, no laughter, no fun. It is just simply not the same. I always wanted to be like Cami. But now there is no such thing as Cami.

Post Game Haunting

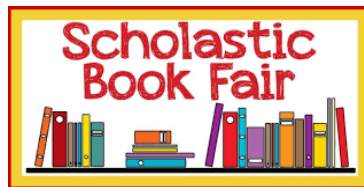
From Page 2
I call him for five minutes straight, hearing no answer, I go deeper into the haunted house looking for my friend. I continue calling him when I hear a scream. I sprint towards the house when I see Colin on the ground motionless. But then...Colin jumps up at me, scaring me to death. It was all a prank!



By Leila Herrera
Tusker Tribune Staff

Writer's Note: This story was written using the words "Halloween", "pumpkin spice latte", and "scary movies".

June always enjoyed a good scary movie. Especially on Halloween night. Her brother, mom, and dad had already left to go trick or treating a couple of hours ago. June had just recently turned 16 and decided that she was too old to go trick or treating anymore.



There she sat on the couch, her long wavy blonde hair falling perfectly onto her tee shirt and shorts unsuspecting of the horrors that would occur that night. She was watching one of her favorite movies. "Halloween", perfect for tonight. She was enjoying her favorite drink—the pumpkin spice latte. She was trying to have as much as possible before it was out of season.

"KATHUNK!" She jumped, looked around and assumed it was from the movie and didn't pay much attention to it.

The Little Doll

Continued on Page 5

The Little Doll

From Page 4

"CLACK!"

She paused the movie and listened. Nothing. She slowly unpaused the movie and continued watching on edge.

"BAM!" She shot up and looked around the house. "Hello? Mom? Dad? Are you back?" No answer.

Eventually, she went back to the living room, to find a small well-dressed doll sitting on the small round table in their living room. The doll had a serious expression. She was wearing black shoes, a white dress, long black hair that went down to her waist and a pretty red bow to top it off.

Huh. How did I not notice that Halloween decoration before? she thought to herself. The doll blinked as if to say "hello". June did a double take, *I didn't just see that, she told herself. It was in my imagination, that's all.*



She crept over to the couch, not taking her eyes off the doll. She, without taking her eyes off the doll reached for the remote control and continued to watch her movie but not without looking at the doll every few minutes. When the movie was over, she was already half asleep. "Hm?" *Oh, guess the movie finished.*

Forgetting about the doll, she walked up the stairs. Brushed her teeth, and went inside her room, only to close the door and see the doll sitting with her hands in her lap, grinning

from ear to ear. This snapped June awake. She quickly raced to her dresser to get her pocketknife from her Girl Scouts meeting the other day. The doll kept its eyes locked on to June.

Finally, the doll spoke in a voice that made June's skin crawl. "You really think that you'll be able to even cut me with that knife? Hahahahaha. Humans never fail to amaze me how stupid they are." The doll lunged towards June.

June narrowly dodges the doll's attack, sprinting downstairs, dropping the knife. But it was too late to go back. June dashes into the coat closet. She crouched down, covering her mouth, so the doll doesn't hear her heavy breathing. The doll, being so short and light, jumps down the stairs with nothing but a tap, with each landing. The doll opens the closet door "Found you." it said with a grin. "I've been stuck in this body for far too long and now it's your turn."

"HEL-" silence.

"June? Hello, we're back!" June's mom shouts as she closes the door. "June?" Her mom stopped. "Who are you?" she said to the little girl standing in their kitchen.

"Oh, I'm nobody," she said as she skipped out." Before the mom had time to question who it was, her husband called her "Honey? Did you get a new Halloween decoration?" her father said while holding a doll with long wavy hair, shorts, a tee shirt, and a horrified expression to top it all off...

The Fallout

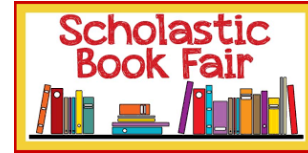
By Bobby Jarrett
Tusker Tribune Staff



1. It was a chilly October morning in Novosibirsk, Russia, close to the new millennia, and yet flying cars still did not exist.

The leaves were starting to shrivel, and you thought about how few trees were left in the world. It saddens the soul to think about. As you step into work, you think about why you did not go to law school instead. At least you were seeing the start of new militia technology and even building some of it yourself.

As you step into the power plant, you get stopped by your district manager.



"Hey Isaac, sorry about this, but we couldn't approve your break for Halloween,"

he said in an apologetic but insincere tone. "You didn't put in enough hours this week."

You sigh and say, "Sir, 76 hours isn't enough a week?"

He looks at you irritated and says, "No, it is not. New policy saying all head engineers and lower need to put in 90 hours a week."

You sigh and head off to your workstation. As you are walking, you pass by a cement room with a large glass window for viewers and inside, a man in full black Tier 7 Plasma Armor is testing a weird rifle looking object. You think nothing of it and start walking again.

After about a minute, you hear a massive explosion in the distance and suddenly, a beam bursts through the wall and then hits a new model of Radioactive Bomb. This bomb is a prototype called the M.O.B, a bomb, which is still in testing and is supposed to hold an overdose of gas—gas that is believed to be fatal if exploded. You were the first to die, or so you thought you would.

It had been two years since the incident. You were the son of the district manager of Nuclear & Radioactive Testing. He was holding a lot of classified information you knew. You knew what the MZ Virus was. MZ Virus infected everyone over the age of 23. All the humans with the virus were deformed flesh-eating monsters that have adapted weird, horrific traits, like poison spit, claws, or echolocation. You get the gist of it, weird. All of Russia had been infected, according to the broadcasts.

Continued on Page 6

Better 'Latte' Than Never

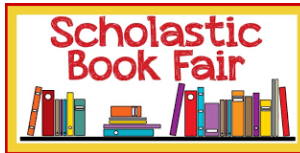


By Sophia Bernardi
Tusker Tribune Staff

This story was written using the words "pumpkin spice latte", "zombies", "Starbucks".

Every fall day after school, I go to Starbucks with my friends. They have so many delicious drinks! There is a drink for everyone! My friends always try new drinks. I always get the same one: pumpkin spice latte.

Why don't we just skip Halloween and just drink pumpkin spice lattes? Latte-ween? Anyone? They think it is an unhealthy addiction, I say it is the best drink in the world. And it is. But maybe too good.



The Wicked Good Latte

In a land far, far way, hidden in the deep dark forest, there is a factory that makes all of Starbucks' drinks so good. This year they need to up their game because Dunkin' Donuts stole their recipe and are making their own latte!

In the very back of the ingredients cabinet there is an odd bottle with "delicious elixir" written on it. The workers in the factory take the bottle and pour it into their pumpkin spice latte. When they try it, it is the best thing they have ever tasted. Magical. Divine. They instantly make more of the liquid and send it to every Starbucks location on earth!

Continued on Page 7

The Fallout

From Page 5

You were part of the Red Hoods, the best and biggest gang from Smolensk to Naukan. There were 47 members. The new world in a gang consists of supply raids, skirmishes with other gangs, and mutated run-ins. Sure, you liked the vintage show "Walking Dead" and liked Dystopian Games like "Dying Light Aftermath," but you DID NOT WANT TO LIVE IN ONE!

Oh, how did you know how the virus started? Well, when the incident happened, the Power Plants were the first to feel its effects. So, your dad was a mutant, (yes traumatic indeed, oh wait, no, you hated him because he was a no-good drunk) so the first thing you did was ransack your house like a lot of other kids.

It so happens, while ransacking his home office, you found a folder and opened it, and the first page was covered by a big red **CLASSIFIED** stamp, so you were admittedly curious and found some notes about something called the Mutation Overdose Bomb. A bioweapon capable of mutating life, including plants. Made you think of a vintage game series called "Fallout"

Batteries were now about as important as gold in the early 1900s, being the only power source besides oil, which was severely depleted, and most survivors did not even know how to drive.

It was a foggy morning in October. The only people awake were the 1st Battalion of Red Hood Fighters, and you, the head engineer. The leader of the battalion walked up to you and handed you a cup of hot chocolate.

"Thanks Elie," you say in groggy tone as you were sipping the hot cocoa.

He looks at you and says, in a much less groggy tone, but still groggy, "You're welcome. Oh, we also need you to make some fortifications to the compound today. Some mutated rams made a couple dents in the metal."

"Again? This is the 3rd time this month. I will get to it."



You walk over to the wall and start looking for the dents. *I forgot to ask him where the dent was*, you think, irritated, knowing how big the compound is. You eventually find the bump and, using a couple tools, fix the dents and add a couple sheets of scrap metal which there was a plethora of. Suddenly you hear screams, growls, and yelps, the yelps of your brother.

"Joseph?!" you yell in a frantic tone, whilst adrenaline is pumping through your veins, and you start running faster than you ever have. When you get to the screams, you find two corpses. They aren't your brother's. You see him hobbling in a corner while Jane, the gang's head medic, is trying to comfort him. One of the corpses was human but the second one is not fully human. It had massive claws and no eyes and one massive horn and spores and boils and pink, odd skin with an arrow straight where an eye should be. It was a mutant.

The first corpse was so torn and mutilated you could not tell who it was. You walk over to Elie and point at the corpse and ask, "Who was it?"

He looks at you, a tear running down his cheek, "It was Jake," he said, nearly sobbing.

Jake was Elie's twin brother, and leader of the second battalion. It will be a tragic loss to the gang.

You, as head engineer, yell to the other engineers to fix the breach in the wall the mutant broke caused to get in the compound. It took until nightfall with everyone mourning the loss of Jake.

The next morning, you go to the watch tower where the archers keep watch (hence the name "watch tower".) As you look upon the stars with some midnight tea, you watched the sky until morning. As you watch the slowly brightening horizon, you notice movement down near the alleys. Nobody went to the alleys. That is when it happened. The savage mutants of all species and traits start pouring into the streets. This was the end.

THE end

Better Latte Than Never

From Page 6

I was watching TV when I heard a Starbucks ad. I rush over wondering what it's about. "NEW PUMPKIN SPICE LATTE! COME ORDER YOURS NOW!"

The large flashing letters read. "Dad, can we please go to Starbucks? They made a new drink!" I plead.

My dad thinks for a moment and then caves in. "OK, but we have to be quick," he says.

"Yes!" I cheer.

We hop in the car and drive. It feels like forever. I could practically feel a clock ticking inside of me. Tic, Tok, Tic, Tok. We finally pulled up to Starbucks after what feels like an eternity. When we get out of the car, my heart shatters. There is a horde of pumpkin spice zombies!

"Pumpkin spice!" they moan. "We need pumpkin spice!" they groan.

Everyone in the Starbucks who drank a pumpkin spice latte turned into a zombie! I dash to the back of the café where all the ingredients are. There is a huge canister full of a liquid with "delicious elixir" written on it. I go to take a closer look and realize it says, "Dangerous elixir—DO NOT CONSUME!"

Then, in the smallest font that humans can see, it says "if consumed splash water over the consumer's body." *How is that going to help?* I wonder. *Can't hurt to try,* I tell myself while shrugging.

I run over to the faucet, praying that this will work. I get a bucket of water and run to the zombies, not realizing how heavy a bucket of water was until now. When I get there, I throw the bucket of water at the zombies. They start smoking and melting just like a movie I had seen not too long ago. After all the smoke fades away, I realize there are no zombies left, only humans!

My heart beams with joy. I feel like it is my birthday and every other holiday mixed into one moment. I saved Halloween! Time for a celebratory pumpkin spice latte! From Dunkin Donuts though.

So, I walk down the street to Dunkin Donuts and order a pumpkin spice latte. I take a long deserving sip from the drink. Then I see something, my heart stops. A bottle with "delicious elixir" written on it. Oh no.



The Falloween



By Colin Evers
Tusker Tribune Staff

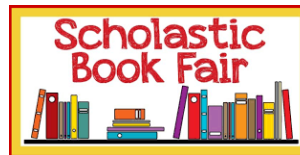
Writer's Note: This story was written using the words "fall", "Halloween", and "football".

32 to 32, October 31st, 6:25pm, 4th quarter, 13 seconds on the clock...

"Dean Klatsky drops back in the pocket, Colin Evers goes out for a pass, Dean Klatsky throws as far as he can and Colin Evers jumps up in the end zone and he catches the ball."

"TOUCHDOWN! Somers wins it all!"

Colin and Dean went trick or treating that night.



They invited their friend, Mike over to go trick or treating with them.

Colin, Dean and Mike went to the public bathrooms because Colin and Dean had to go to the bathroom. Mike didn't need to go so he waited outside.

While Colin and Dean were in the bathroom, Mike saw something. Within a blink, he was on the ground dripping blood.

The next morning, Colin and Dean noticed Mike went missing. Colin and Dean went out searching from where they last saw him at the bathroom. They couldn't find him anywhere. They went back home because they had no luck finding Mike.

"Crackle"

"What was that?" Dean said.

"It's in the bush!" Colin said.

Dean and Colin slowly went to the bush.

"BOOOO!" Mike said.

Colin and Dean were terrified. "You scared us! We thought you were lost or dead."

All of a sudden, Mike said, "What if I'm not Mike?"

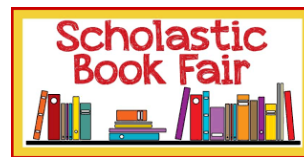


Quest for the Gem of Power



By Julie Genovesi
Tusker Tribune Staff

Once upon a time there was a fox named Mia, the princess of the magic forest. She had a friend that was a tree. The tree had a friend named Rock. The tree was the most powerful tree, and Rock, the most powerful rock; many were after them, so it was surprising that they were still alive.



Mia, Tree, and Rock, all became instant friends. They were inseparable. One day the evil tiger Crush came to Mia's home and stole the gem of power from Mia's den. Mia was going to become queen the next year so her parents chose her to go on the mission to find the gem, and restore it to the ancient chasm. If she did not, chaos would take over the magic forest. Tree and Rock volunteered to come with her.

Continued on Page 8

Quest for the Gem of Power

From Page 7

They had to climb mountains, swim through lakes, and go over many obstacles to get to Crush's home and hideout, but they did it.

When they were out of the Great Lake, they came across another like Mia, an animal, a snake, except, the snake had no head. With no head, he talked through the ugly rattle on his tail. The snake gave them a riddle, they had to answer the riddle before they could move on through the forest. If they answered incorrectly, the snake would drown them. The riddle was; "In the forest, our forest, there are 30 wolves, and twenty chickens. How many did not?"

Tree, Rock, and Mia were very confused. "Ten, obviously," said a mysterious animal out of nowhere. It was a baby lioness.

"Correct," said the snake. "You may come through."

Mia had seen the lioness before while her den was traveling. "How in the world did you get that right?" asked Mia.

"Twenty ate chickens, like chewed up and swallowed them not like, the number twenty-eight," They continued their journey.

"Why are we even on this journey?" asked the lioness. "By the way, I'm Lyana."

"Oh, we are going to find the gem of power, and restore it to Mia's chasm so that chaos does not take over," said Rock. While thinking about how hard the mission was, it was surprising how calmly he explained it.

"Oh," said Lyana quietly, almost whispering, "Chaos has already taken over inside me. My family abandoned me when I had just been born, I now have to hunt for myself and keep myself warm at night."

"That is so very sad," said Tree. "Rock and I—our families also abandoned us. My mother got taken away, and so did Rock's. My mother and father got cut down by nasty, raw monkeys—Humans. Rock's parents got cleared out to make space for them to walk through our forest, littering in it, scaring our relatives into their trees—torturing us."

Soon, the four friends were at the destination where they would make the worst sacrifice in their life. because they came upon the trio. The trio was the group of fighters whom everyone feared, Bessie the ferocious badger, Fungus the poison dart

frog who could poison anyone with her eyes (because he had no mouth), and Barkle, the bunny with no back legs or ears. These disabilities helped them; it made Barkle a smaller target. Fungus let other animals look useless, but he could poison them through his eyes. Bessie was the leader of the trio. Bessie was a ghost, or at least a floating badger, so he could skip over any ground obstacles and only birds would be able to go to his height because he flew. The friends knew that the trio was nothing compared to what they had ever been up against.

But when they saw the trio, they were not there to fight. The trio wanted something that Mia would never give up: Tree and Rock.

"Give the Tree and Rock over." "No way," said Mia. Suddenly Bessie was coming towards them at full speed.

"Okay" said Tree and Rock at the same time. Tree and Rock walked away with the trio.

"No!" cried Mia. She was stuck to the ground, her feet, the roots of a normal tree, holding her to the ground, Tree was not like that.

He could move wherever he wanted, and he decided to go with them, her enemies. The friends that betrayed her. But no matter how many things they did wrong (and that was a LOT) they would still be her best friends.

As Lyana and Mia continued through the woods, it got darker and darker with every step they took. Eventually, they made it to Crush's cave. As they came up to it, Mia shouted towards the cave, "Crush, thief, enemy, king of evil, I am Mia; princes of the magic forest and I command you to bring the gem of power out to us. If you do not, we will come in."

"Go away," shouted Crush. "You ain't gettin' that gem o' power today."

"Okay," said Mia. "Then we will come get it ourselves." When they got into his home, Crush said, "Take it. It is useless." So, Mia and Lyana went outside and used it to transport themselves to Mia's den.

When they got back, Mia's parents threw a huge party for her. They invited everyone from the magic forest except the villains. The trio came and returned Tree and Rock though, so the four friends played and laughed together and told stories from their journey to the other animals there. And they lived happily ever after. The End.



A Thanksgiving Tale



By Ruby McDowell
Tusker Tribune Staff

Writer's Note: This story was written using the words "leaves", "chilly", "turkey", and "Thanksgiving".

"It's A lot. It's too itchy!" my little sister screeched. "Can't I just wear my unicorn dress?" Her unicorn dress, for reference, was not a pretty rainbow dress. It was a nightgown with a unicorn on it.

"Not a chance." My mom pulled the first dress we tried on of the hook: a maroon corduroy dress with flowers at the neckline. "Thanksgiving is a special time. We need to show respect."

"My unicorn dress is special!" Good point, Niia.

"I know, but this is what's happening," my mom said back. "You have a choice: Gray turtleneck or maroon corduroy dress."

Niia made a "hmpfh" sound and plopped herself on the floor of the dressing room. "Corduroy dress, I guess."

"Good choice."

We packed up camp and headed to the register. Forty dollars for a dress she will wear once. At least mom got what she wanted for once. Once we got in the car, Niia pulled out her iPad and started playing a Rainbow Unicorn dress up game™. Her dark braids swished as she swung her head after making her fashionista unicorn happy.

"Mom, can we go to Starbucks?" I asked.

"Sorry girls, we can't stop anymore if we want to make it to Grandma's in time," she said, obviously a little disappointed, too. "Niia's fashion excursion put us off track a little."

"OK," I said.

Niia returned to playing her game, and I popped my earbuds in and stared out the window. The vibrant colors of the leaves blurred as we whizzed down the highway. The only outlier was the silver bannister protecting the forest. It was at the very least an hour. My playlist had ended. I opened my heavy eyelids and peaked out the window. It was no longer a sea of colors. It was two college aged boys playing wiffleball, a raging fire in a stone pit and two bored 9-year-olds battling with sticks. We were at grandma's house.

Niia stood up, and consequently spilled her goldfish. I opened the door and got hit by the refreshingly chilly air of the northeast. I took a

slow, peaceful walk around the car, taking in the quiet for a moment until we stepped inside, to the world of differing politics and barking dogs.

I walked around the car, patience renewed, and picked up Niia. I brushed the goldfish crumbs off the front of her dress and smoothed her hair out of her eyes. "Are you ready to try Great Aunt

Marjorie's pumpkin pie?" I asked her. Marjorie had been in a feud with the family since we had Niia, so she had never tried it.

"YEAH!" She also had never had pumpkin pie before. I set her down and rang the doorbell and was instantly greeted by a horde of Labrador

Retrievers. Grandma Marcie hobbled to the door to greet us. She was about 102 years old and everyone on the block called her grandma. She walked with a cane but organized the first Berrybrook Ladies with canes 5K.

Niia rushed into the playroom for Lego battles with the cousins. My mom gave Grandma Marcie what should have been a bone crushing hug, but she came out of it fine. I grabbed a mug and filled it up with cider from the pot warming on the kitchen stove and put on my jacket and went outside for appetizers.

Aunt Mabel was famous for her warm artichoke dip and Uncle Bob made mean meatball skewers. I laughed and caught up on the latest old people gossip. Did you know that Veronica from down the street was 87 and still walked a mile daily?

"Hey, Kira!" Henrietta was 40, single, childless and nobody knows how she got into the family. I liked her, though. "How's school going?" she asked, a mug of cider in her hand.

"Good!" I said through a mouthful of artichoke dip. "How's your National Geographic gig going?"

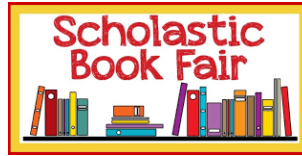
"It's good. I'm getting to see a lot of Europe and Asia."

"That's so cool!" I responded back, full of enthusiasm.

Appetizers were done and everyone was settled on the couch watching a cheesy hallmark movie, when Uncle Dan yelled from the kitchen "Turkey's ready!"

Everyone proceeded to the dining room for the 10th annual turkey carving contest!

Continued on Page 10



The Spooky Scary Haunted Family



**By Olivia Volpe
Tusker Tribune Staff**

Once upon a time, there was a fairly normal family, or so they thought. A week before the most anticipated event of the year, Halloween, it was October 24.

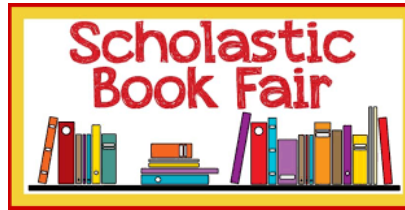
In order to find as many Halloween decorations as they could, they were searching through every store in the town mall. There was one store that was expensive, but it had the best decorations, so they bought a lot from it.

As we were driving home, I asked my parents, "Can I go trick-or-treating with my friends this year instead of you guys for once?"

The look on my mom's face was devastating. I could see I had hurt my mom's feelings. Every year since I could remember, I would always go trick-or-treating with my parents and my family. But since we lived on a farm with horses and cows, we didn't walk, we rode our horses. We all had our own horses. My horse was Willow. I loved her so much. So, this year it's going to be the first time going trick-or-treating without her. And that's going to be new.

It's two days away from Halloween. And I can't wait to get dressed in my costume and go trick-or-treating.

I wake up on Halloween day, and I would normally hear my parents blending their smoothie, to wake me up, but today I wake up by myself at 7:30, not 6. I jump out of bed and race downstairs.



No one. No sound. Nothing. I run back upstairs into my parent's room and no one's there. I freeze at the sight of blood dripping on the carpet. Then I hear it.

I scream at the top of my lungs, and race out of the room and into my bedroom and lock the door. I take my desk chair and fling it at my door as a barrier. I grab a key from my favorite book and race to my window. I climb out of the window and into my secret tree house. I unlock the door to the inside and put down the blinds.

For a few moments, I stand there as quietly as I possibly can. Then, then I think to myself, *that must have been the creepy headless horsemen from the movie I watched just before I went to sleep last night.* I climb to the house next door, my best friend since forever.

I tell her everything that has happened, and she races to her mom, and she calls the police. I explain everything to them. The

search party is heading out around my neighborhood, as I watch from my friend's house. It's Halloween and we do go trick-or-treating, but only for 20 minutes.

I go to sleep at her house, crying myself to sleep, missing my whole family. When I wake up, I feel like I hear her my parent's voices, and I race downstairs, and they're there. I see them, I start crying, they hug me tight.

They said they don't remember anything that happened yesterday. And the mystery will never be solved.

Thanksgiving From Page 9

I smiled as I walked to the den-converted to dining room. Niia appeared right at my side. Once everyone had settled into their seats, Uncle Bob and Uncle Dan stood up and put their carving knives in position.

"3-2-1... GO!" yelled Niia. Everyone laughed as Bob and Dan started carving. Perfect slices of turkey fell from Uncle Bob's knife. Wonky chunks of goodness fell from Uncle Dan's. We laughed and cheered as they worked at the turkeys. Niia swung her little feet. It felt so good to be together with the entire family.

After the turkey carving was done, everyone stood up to make their plates. Niia was a little too short to serve herself, but I took all of her requests dutifully. She would learn some lessons tonight, like drumsticks are delicious for the first few bites, but annoying for the rest, and the home-made cranberry sauce is so much better than the canned one.

Once everyone's plates were properly stuffed, we sat down, once more. Everyone dug in, then consequently reached for the gravy, because amid getting all the delicious food, everyone had forgotten it! Everyone laughed as the gravy was passed around the table.

It's so funny how at a big dinner, everyone acts formal for the first 5-10 minutes. Then everything goes haywire. The napkin rings are forts for Lego people. The gravy container is now more valuable than gold. People are talking about setting up a wall punching club. The overpriced children's dresses are now painted with cranberry sauce and ketchup.

"So, who are you voting for in the next election?" one of the many uncles asks.

"No, No, No!" Niia shouts back. Everyone laughs and the conversation turns another corner back to recipe and embarrassing story sharing.

This weekend is going to be much better with Niia here.

The Spooky Halloween



By Keziah Ferry
Tusker Tribune Staff

It once was trick or treat night when everyone was dressed as vampires, bats, and even Franksteins, witches, skeletons, ghosts, even kids dressed as pumpkins. Anything you could think of. They were all celebrating the spookiest day of the year. Halloween.

I love Halloween. I love candy. I love costumes. Being scared, and I also love to hang out with friends! What's not to love?

I always did love Halloween, until... the Halloween of 2023. So why you ask? Let me tell you...

After hours of trick or treating, house to house, bags bulging with candy, I come across this old house on Main Street, not many decorations, many REAL spider webs, and an old lady in the window. She looks nice. It's a spooky house. No one went near, just walked by it (freakishly fast).

I knock on the door, not expecting what's going to happen next, I wait.

The old lady from the window opens the door. Then she says, "I'm sorry dear, I did not get any candy, no one comes here every year, I wonder why."

"OK. Thank you though, Happy Halloween!" I say getting ready to leave.

"Oh, don't go, I've got some sweet hot cocoa, no one to share it with. Would you care to join me dear, you must be tired from getting all the candy."

She was right, but mom said, "Don't listen to strangers."

However, this lady is trusted because she was an elder, right? I think



"Sure, why not!" I say, walking in. "OK, right this way dear." she says.

I go into the living room, she points me towards the rocking chair, and I sit. I was a little scared because of the creaky floors and the door, but see, I proved mom wrong. It's fine.

"I will go make that cocoa. You can read a book from there."

I grab a book. That one looks boring. I grab another. Boring. Then I see a antique one from it says 1801 Witch Spells. I get excited. I go to grab it and it doesn't come. Soon I hear a louder creak.

THE FLOOR IS OPENING, A TRAP DOOR! Ew! Lots of spider webs, and is that a COCKROCH? Too fast to tell.

I yell, "AHH! HELP!"

Then a loud bang. I hit the ground. OW! and... Where am I? I turn the corner of the old basement and. And. And.

IS THAT THE OLD LADY? AS A WITCH!?

I knew I should have listened to mom! The old lady who invited me into the house is dressed as an old witch. What do I do?

The lady then says, "You are the PERFECT Ingredient for my potion!" She cackles. She grabs me and pulls me close to the cauldron.

I scream. "HELP!!!"

She then stops and pulls me away. She then pulls her skin off her face...

Wait no... A MASK?! WAIT... MOM?! "WHY DID YOU DO THAT" I ask.

"To teach you a lesson, never go with strangers, OK?" she says.

"O. K." I speak.

A Letter to Autumn



By Hannah Jeon
Tusker Tribune Staff

Writer's Note: This story was written using the words "painting" "ending", and "gratitude".

Fall is a Painting:

Dear Autumn,
No season can compare to you.
A painting of passion,
Stains of smooth ruby wine,
Sprinkles of scattered marigolds,
Sparkles of shining amber.
Swirls of color decorate the canvas,
Yielding to the resilient gradient
Of a lion's mane.
Shimmers of striking color
Fracture the tranquil landscape
As they chase the rays of the sun,
Embracing the welcoming sky.

Fall is an Ending:

Dear Autumn,



No season can compare to you.

A whisper of snow
That tickle the leaves

As they dance to the ground,
Blanketing the cool grass.
Frost that paints the battered windows
Hugging the barren maples
That nod their heads
With the murmur of the breeze.
Summer drifts off to sleep
As Winter rushes in
Like a gust of wind.
Autumn,
A sigh of wilting summer petals,
A chorus of lonely chatter,
A promise of chilly dawns,
All embodying
Nature's last farewell.

Fall means Gratitude:

Dear Autumn,

No season can compare to you,
A time of gratitude,

Of thankfulness,
For the sagging orchards,
Abundant with
savory fruit
For steaming apple cider donuts,
Freshly baked
pies,
Piping hot cider,
All submerging the market stalls.
Thick aromas fill the open space.
Cinnamon and nutmeg spices,
Sticky, melting caramel,
Smoking hickory wood.
Autumn,
A collection of memories to be made,
A symphony of children's laughter,
A blessing of hope.
Autumn.

