

The Tusker Tribune

The Student Newspaper of Somers Middle School



Set Clocks
Ahead One
Hour This
Weekend!



Issue Number 23

<http://somersschools.org/domain/995>

Winter 2017

“Uranium” (Chapter 8)

A NaNoWriMo Story



By Nitin Seshadri
Tusker Tribune Staff Writer

Editor's Note: Somers Middle School Eighth Graders have been writing novels during the school year for the NaNoWriMo program. The name is short for National Novel Writing Month. Nitin Seshadri, a Tusker Tribune Staffer, will be presenting his NaNoWriMo entry chapter by chapter in the Tusker Tribune. Chapter 8 of his novel, “Uranium”, appears today.

Andrew woke up in a pitch-black room on a cold, hard surface. He was probably lying down on a table or a bed, because he could tell he was elevated from the linoleum-like floor.

This was surely not the hospital room where he went to bed in last afternoon after eating lunch. Andrew could hear the faint hum and whine of a motor. He tried to get up, but he was held back by some rough straps that went across his arms and legs and burned his skin. *Where was he?*

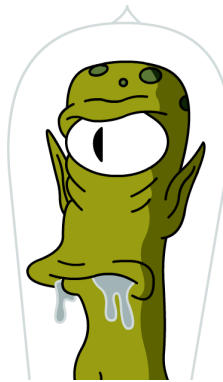
Just then, blinding white lights turned on. Andrew tried to shield his eyes, but the lights were so bright, he could see them through his eyelids. Thankfully, the lights turned off. A door creaked open. A weird, green blobby creature emerged from the door. It looked like a giant hunk of Jello. It walked over to the table where Andrew was lying and craned its long, flabby neck down in an effort to make eye contact with Andrew. It seemed to be chewing on some kind of ham or chicken leg, its teeth making contact with the bone on every bite.

"You, human, what is your name?" it hissed. "Oh yeah, just because it's the standard in alien communication, I'm going to say we come in peace. The usual deal and stuff. So tell me who you are now. Please."

"Andrew..." Andrew said.

"Well, well. You Earthlings are very interesting specimens. And you are very tasty,

too." it replied. Then it hit Andrew. The nurses were aliens, this *thing* was an alien, and they were eating humans for food. And the thing he was chewing on...it was most likely human meat! Andrew was disgusted and scared to death at the same time.



"So, you found out our secret? That we have been eating you Earthlings for food?" the creature asked.

"Yes," Andrew stuttered.

"Don't worry, kid, we won't eat you," it laughed. "That's for the Cannibals. We're the good guys. The Woks."

Andrew chuckled. *What a funny name!* he thought.

"Since we try not to kill sentient beings, we only eat the meat of dead humans and animals. That joke scared you good. By the way, this is ham, not human meat"—the Wok smacked his lips—"A delicacy on our home planet

but surprisingly abundant here. Anyway, back to the topic. You will be safe with us. You see, that "hospital" where we rescued you and your—what's the word?—twin sister from was a Cannibal camp. They must have imprisoned you there because they didn't want you to become suspicious," the alien explained.

"Why do they want to eat us?"

"On our home planet, there is this specific breed of—what's a good word to explain?—goat."

Andrew laughed. "Goat? Why would they come here just for a goat?"

"I know, right? The Cannibals have a more primitive digestive system than ours. So they can only eat the goat. From my spies, I have learned that human meat tastes exactly like alien goat. The goats ran out on our home planet, so those Cannibals—that's why they got their name—decided to travel to other planets to try to find species that tasted as good as their precious goat. I swear, those cannibals Humans are the first ones they have found."

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Tech Talk: The Nintendo Switch



By Nick Cirillo
Tusker Tribune Staff
Writer

Last Friday, March 3rd, the newest innovation in gaming technology was released: The Nintendo Switch. Following the commercial failure of the Wii U, the Switch is new and different from the old console, having a key feature never before seen in a console: The ability to play **any game, anytime, anywhere, or on your TV**. Here are the key features of the Switch as compared to the Wii U:

1. The Switch can play any compatible game on your TV, or, on the go, by removing the console from the dock. The Wii U can only play portable games within a few feet of the main unit and TV.
2. The Switch can connect with up to 8 other Switch consoles, **with 2 Joy-Con controllers each** while the Wii U could support one



Gamepad and several Wiimotes or 3DS consoles as controllers.

3. The Switch will have a higher resolution than the Wii U, and will have much better battery life.
4. Speaking of battery, while the Wii U uses a proprietary (company-exclusive) charging stand while the Switch uses a universal USB-C cable, which is used in many smartphones and tablets today.
5. The Wii U, which did not do well, lacked games from outside Nintendo - The Switch has over 100 planned games confirmed including 60+ indie games from other developers.
6. The Switch will feature games like Skyrim: Special Edition and a new Call of Duty, and successors to Wii U games, like Mario Kart 8: Deluxe, The Legend of Zelda: Breath of the Wild, and Splatoon 2.

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Uranium

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"How did you get spies in there?"

"We look exactly

like those goddamn Cannibals," the alien said. "Just that we can eat almost anything except grass and we are slightly more opaque. And we are a slightly different shade of green. Lucky for us, the Cannibals are way too dumb to notice the difference, so we can infiltrate them easily. All we need to do is to find a way to kill them off so that they don't eat you humans up."

"Yeah, I get the deal. So, really. Where am I?"

"You're on a spaceship orbiting Earth. My baby, the *Laccolith*. Safe from any Cannibals, thank you."

"So you're the captain?"

"Yes. Captain Paul Wok at your service." The Wok made an army salute as best as he



could with his blobby hands.

"Bonus points for trying the army salute. Anyways, where is Andrea?"

"Oh, your sister?" the alien said.

"Andrea!" he hollered. "Your brother has finally woken up!"

Andrea walked in.

"Andrew?" she said. There was a big purple lump where she had hit her head on the wall the day before. The alien released the restraint straps that Andrew was bound by to the table, and Andrew got up and give Andrea a friendly slap on the back.

"Ouch!" she said. "Well, whatever. We're back together again. So where's Derek?" she

asked.

Everyone looked at each other expecting to find an answer.

"You didn't rescue him?" Andrea asked to the alien.

"We couldn't. Time was running out. It was almost daytime. However, we were able to implant some knowledge in his brain that told him when and how to escape. He should be at a safe distance from the Cannibals by now. I hope."



Love's Incomparability

By Jaewon Yeo
Tusker Tribune Staff Writer



Love,
Flowing as a river, greatly as a water,
Powerful as thunder, bright
like lightning,
Pure as snow, beautiful as

diamond,
Mysterious as night, happy as
day.

Love,
Expressed in many ways,
Words that show kindness
Music that show hope
Actions that show care.

Love,
Radiating like the sun,
To some or to many.
Maybe in the secure walls at home,
Or in school where friends are
Outside where the sun shines,
Or where ever there is dark.

Love,
Shown to people who care,
Your loving mother and father



And your annoying siblings the same.
Your faithful dogs or to your silent cats,
Or maybe to your talkative birds or to a gerbil or
hamster.

Love,
The thing that keeps people in a tight
bond,
Whether they are the best of friends,
Or the worst of enemies,
They are close to you,
No matter how many.

Love,
Something one could not express,
A great force built in everyone,

To humans and animals alike.

Love,
Different emotion than others,
One that is different to everyone in the world.
It is something that all living animals have,
No matter what way it is,
Or how it is shown,
Or to who it is shown to,

Love,
Something with no limits.

Switch

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The Wii U has ended production, and no new games are being released, so look to the Switch for rumored games like a new Pokémon, maybe a new Super Smash Bros., and possible ports from competitors Xbox and PlayStation.

The Switch looks promising, cutting down on the number of accounts needed, and adding an inexpensive online service with Virtual Console, and with the new Joy-Con controllers, several mobile apps, and great games, the Nintendo Switch is sure to be a success.



SPORTS UPDATE



By Eli Yates
Tusker Tribune Staff Writer

It took almost 19 seasons for Dirk Nowitzki to join the 30,000 point club. On Tuesday night, the Dallas Mavericks were playing the Los Angeles Lakers. Going into the game, Dirk was 20 points shy. At 10 minutes 58 seconds into the second quarter Dirk hit a baseline jumper over Larry Nance Jr. He is the 6th player to reach the 30,000 point club.



Also on Tuesday, Oklahoma City Thunder point guard Russel Westbrook had a career high of 58 points against the Portland Trail Blazers. But OKC still lost, 126-121.

OKC coach Billy Donovan told ESPN, "I thought he played an unbelievable game tonight". Russel Westbrook also told ESPN, "Just missed 'em, made 'em all game, missed that one".

The Fall of

NICKELODEON®

By Sara Vala
Tusker Tribune Staff Writer

Ah Nickelodeon. When this network comes to your mind, what do you think?

Well, a long time ago, around the late 1990s early 2000s, people would often think of *Spongebob*, *Danny Phantom*, *Fairly Odd Parents*, *Invader Zim*, *Rugrats*, *Hey Arnold*, and *Rocko's Modern Life*, to name a few. These were amazing cartoons, with excellent animation, and three dimensional characters.

But today, many kids would think about the stupid cartoons, like modern *Spongebob*/*Fairly Odd Parents*, *Pig Goat, Banana, Cricket, Sanjay and Craig*, *Breadwinners*, and a whole bunch of nonsense.

These cartoons have literally gone down the drain, and it shows. With sitcoms on the rise, and *Spongebob* running on an endless loop, it seems like there is no hope in redeeming itself. But what caused the fall of this great network? Well, you're about to find out.

Back in the 1990's, Nickelodeon was on the rise. It was pumping out brand new cartoons like *Rugrats*, *Hey Arnold*, *Rocko's Modern Life*, *Ren and Stimpy*, *Cat Dog*, and *Spongebob*. There were also a few sitcoms like *All That*, *Clarissa Explains It All*, *Legends of the Hidden Temple*, and *The Adventures of Pete and Pete*. It seemed as if Nickelodeon was dominating televisions around the globe. It was a gift that kept on giving.

A major milestone for Nick was in 1999, when their new cartoon, *Spongebob* aired for the first time. It was a major hit among young viewers.

And now, we come to the 2000s. Ah the 21st century. It was a new century, full of new ideas. In 2001, Nick struck gold when it first launched *Fairly Odd Parents*. Like *Spongebob*, it was also a major swing and hit. The creator of *Fairly Odd Parents*, Butch Hartman, was asked

to create another cartoon, and in 2004, *Danny Phantom* was released to the public.

Now don't get me wrong, I'm not huge fan of Butch Hartman's work. But when I first saw *Danny Phantom*, I almost passed out. Basically, it's about a 14-year-old boy named Danny Fenton, and he gets these cool ghost powers. Sure, it may not have a good summary, but it's has so much more to offer. It seemed as if these characters had life. And it was a cartoon where many teens or tweens can relate to. Minus the half-ghost part.

And along with *Danny Phantom*, there were many more amazing shows, like *Invader Zim*, *My Life As A Teenage Robot*, *Jimmy Neutron*, and many more.

There were also a few great sitcoms, like *Drake and Josh*, and *Ned's Declassified*. I feel that this was Nickelodeon at the peak of their success.

But in the late 2000s, everything changed. Beloved cartoons were being canceled, like *Danny Phantom*, *Invader Zim*, *Rugrats*, *Chalk Zone*, *Ren and Stimpy*, *My Life As A Teenage Robot*, and so many more. And those good sitcoms, were also coming to an end. Only two survived that crisis. *Fairly Odd Parents* and *Spongebob* survived the cartoon apocalypse, but it turns out, they're one of the reasons Nickelodeon has fallen.

See, when you have a cartoon going on and on, it gets worse and worse. And those two shows were forced to feel the

wrath of continuation.

As those old cartoons were canceled, they had to be replaced by other stuff. So instead, we got shows like *Breadwinners*, *Sanjay and Craig*, *Mr. Meaty*, *Planet Sheen* and so many horrible ones. However, I didn't mention one bad cartoon, because that show is the perfect example where Nick really screwed up.

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Behind Bars—A Prison Drama



By Hunter Duffy
Tusker Tribune Staff Writer
Editor's Note: Chapter 1 of this series was published in the 11/23/16 issue of the Tusker Tribune. This is chapter 2.

Officer Cane wasn't back till the next morning. I barely slept and I knew it wasn't because of the bed. He thinks I helped them get out. Why would I help people who were so mean to me? Maybe he thought it was an act. That we all were friends. If it's an act, it's them hiding how much they hate me. I know I must sound crazy. Ever since I got here I've been extremely paranoid.

"Well your plan worked, are you happy?" he said.

I shook my head but apparently I wasn't convincing.



"I see your frown on the outside but I know you're smiling on the inside," he added.

"I'm not" I replied "Why would I be happy to be alone in a jail cell?"

"Then why'd you do it?" he yelled "Maybe you should be moved to a different cell" He opened the door and picked up the handcuffs. We walked down the hall and we stopped at a smaller cell. "Figured you'd be more comfortable in a single cell"

I looked at my new cell number: #716. Why did it look so familiar? Then it hit me. 761-671-716. I needed to get a phone.

"Can I make my call now?" I asked.

"Sure I've got nothing better to do." He walked me to the phone and let

me sit down.

I dialed the number and waited for an answer.

"Who is this?" I asked when someone picked up.

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NICKELODEON

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Back in 2007, Nick was offered to two shows. And they had the choice of one of those shows. *Adventure Time* or *Fanboy and Chum Chum*. And guess what the brilliant network chose? Yup. *Fanboy and Chum Chum*. This was the perfect decision for the network. Because who cares about *Adventure Time*? Well, about 3 million people per episode do.

And Nick continues to make horrible decisions. We kept getting bad cartoons, but what was also bad, were the sitcoms. Our beloved sitcoms were canceled, and replaced by those that are as interesting as a watching grass grow. Heck, even watching grass grow is more interesting than the new sitcoms.

We have shows like *Bella and the Bulldogs*, *Nicky, Ricky, Dicky, and Dawn*, *Henry Danger*, *Fred The Show*, *The Thundermans*, and more mindless shows. The jokes aren't funny, the characters act like hyperactive people with the intelligence of a rock, and those laugh tracks! You're only supposed to have a laugh track when you say something funny. Instead, it's on an endless loop of forced laughs, that plays after every single line. It just gets dull.

I loved Nickelodeon before they brought

out these bad shows. As a person, I really don't like to watch cartoons, because usually, they aren't good anymore. I'll always return to Hulu to watch *Invader Zim*, and *Danny Phantom*, but not to the actual network. But from what I've heard, there is an actual good cartoon call *The Loud House*, which is slowly helping Nick restore its good name. But because of the lack of advertising, some good shows aren't being shown.

But these days, it seems like all this network cares about, is money. We have so many sitcoms, because it's cheaper to produce than cartoons. It's putting their network to shame. And it seems as if its two competitors, Disney and Cartoon Network are now on the rise. Nick is failing, and it's all because of their bad decisions.

So, there are three ways Nickelodeon can restore its good name. Cancel all bad shows and sitcoms. Cancel shows that have been running for a while. And bring back the old cartoons that people actually liked.

I really hope that one day, Nickelodeon will bring back *Danny Phantom*, because that is my favorite show as of today. But for now, we wait, and we hope, that just one day, the network would come to their senses, and put an effort into rising again.



Behind Bars

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"It's Mikey, about time you called. Your folks are worried like crazy. Where are you?" a boy said. He sounded like he was my age.

"Who am I?" I asked

"Maggie what's going on, you're making me worried!" Mikey said.

I wasn't sure what to say just found out my name was Maggie and I knew someone named Mikey.

"I'm in jail." I replied.

"Where is the jail?" he asked.

"I don't know."

My call time was up but the words were still repeating in my head. *Who was Mikey? Where was he? Where was I? Is he the reason I'm here?*

Those and a million other questions were circling in my head and I didn't know the answer to any.



The mess hall was empty. It was just me and my tray of slop. I started to hum a song. I wasn't sure at the time what it was called but I knew it

was one of my favorites. Before I knew it I was singing out loud and thankful I was the only one there.

After dinner I headed back to my cell and continued singing. Then a dollar bill flew in from

outside and I heard someone say "Not bad for a jail bird."

I looked through the bars of the window and saw a man about my age with a smirk on his face.

"When you said you were in jail at first I thought you were kidding." It was Mikey the man I spoke to on the phone.

"What are you doing here?" I asked him. I was still holding on to the dollar in case he decided to leave me behind.

"Well when you told me you were in jail I couldn't just leave you," he said. I still didn't know if I should trust him. I remembered the question I had asked myself earlier. *Was he the reason I was in jail? Why would he be here if he wasn't?*

"Are you gonna say something or just stare at me? Mom and dad have been worried sick about you, why didn't you call earlier?" He was my brother. I have an answer to one of my questions, but there are still a lot more.

"Why am I here?" I asked. I was hoping maybe unlike Officer Cane, he could give me an answer.

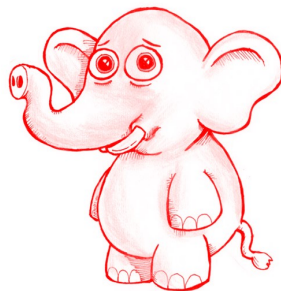
"Aren't I supposed to ask you that?" he replied nervously. "You're the one behind bars? I'll come through the front and see you in a few minutes"

He started to walk away and I was once again alone. It was a good thing I put the dollar under my mattress because Mikey didn't come back.



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The Tusker Tribune is published online and is featured weekly on the Somers Middle School Website. It is entirely student-written by 6th, 7th and 8th grade students from

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