



# The Tusker Tribune

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NEWSPAPER CLUB  
TUSKER TRIBUNE

## SOMERS MIDDLE SCHOOL NEWSPAPER

Issue Number 16

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

Winter 2024

### Martin Luther King Sought to Unite



**By Sofia Mendoza  
Tusker Tribune Staff**

Martin Luther King Jr was born on January 15<sup>th</sup>, 1929, in Atlanta Georgia. He worked as a Baptist minister, activist, and a political philosopher. He led many marches including marches for the right to be able to vote, labor rights and many others.

His most famous speech was the "I Have a Dream" speech. This speech was held on August 28<sup>th</sup>, 1963. About 250,000 people attended his speech at the Lincon memorial that day. MLK wanted about 100,000 people to attend the speech but instead, about twice that amount showed up.

Another very famous thing that Martin Luther king did was lead the Montgomery Bus Boycott. When Rosa Parks was arrested on December 1<sup>st</sup>, 1955 because she wouldn't sit in the back of a bus, that led to the Montgomery Bus Boycott. This boycott lasted 13 months and it ended with the Supreme Court saying that segregated buses were no longer allowed. Throughout the

13 months, many people of all rases were refusing to take the buses, which led to many bus compans losing money.

Martin Luther King was assassinated by James Earl Ray on April 4<sup>th</sup> of 1968. He was only 39 years old. He was shot on the balcony of a second story room of the Lorraine Motel in Memphis, Tennessee at approximately 6:01 PM and from there was rushed to St Joseph's Hospital and later died at 7:05 pm.

Martin Luther king's life was an inspiration to many people around the globe. In his life, he married Coretta Scott and had four children. He also won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1964.

Today, we celebrate MLK Day to honor and respect all that Martin Luther King did for equality in nonviolent ways, and for what he did to improve all communities and have racial equality. Martin Luther King's granddaughter, Yolanda Renee King, is MLK's only granddaughter. She is a civil rights activist and wrote the book called We Deam a World: Carrying the Light from my Grandparents: Martin Luther King, Jr. and Coretta Scott King.



### Drama Club Means 'Commitment'



**By Olivia Pelhank  
Tusker Tribune Staff**

Drama Club is underrated. Yes, half of 6<sup>th</sup> 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade girls and boys do it. But people don't understand the huge sacrifice it is.

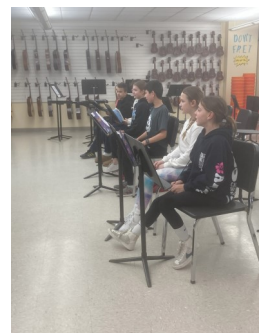


When people think of Drama Club, they think of a club that practices every once in a while, and does a few shows. But it's much more than that. Drama Club is about 2-3 meetings a week, and one of the longest clubs in the school. You stay until 4:30 instead of 4:00, like most of the other clubs. And the January schedule is



PACKED! I mean it! There are 14 meetings in January and only 31 days of January. A bit more than four weeks. Every week is five school days. So, about 20 school days in January. 14 of which have Drama Club.

The kids work so hard! And it really pays off! They sacrifice other clubs and sports for it when I could never! And though I'm in 6<sup>th</sup> grade and so I haven't seen any shows yet, I bet the shows look so good every year! I don't know about you, but I can't wait to see what awesome show they are going to put on this year!



## The Rise of a New 'Great'



**By Noah Samuel  
Tusker Tribune Staff**

Connor Bedard was born on July 17<sup>th</sup>, 2005. He grew up in North Vancouver, British Columbia, in Canada. He is an 18-year-old center on the Chicago Blackhawks, in the NHL.

On his 18<sup>th</sup> birthday, Bedard signed a three-year contract with the Hawks, and made his NHL debut on October 10<sup>th</sup>.

Many people – including me – think of Bedard as one of the greatest prospects of his time, as



the rookie's speed, acceleration, and agility continue to amaze. His high hockey IQ helps him a ton when it comes to creating and making plays. He has great skill in all areas, including lacrosse-style Michigans, and his signature toe-drag release shot.

There is no doubt that Bedard will continue to score and rack up points. He might not be at the top this year, but he is not too far from it. Bedard was awarded Rookie of the Month in November, and many more awards should be coming soon for him.

## New Plan Seeks to Increase New York City's Tree Canopy



**By Ava Schmidberger  
Tusker Tribune Staff**

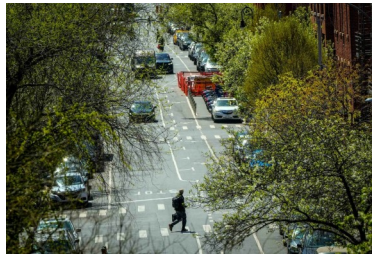
Trees play a crucial role in cooling urban areas, offering a way for cities to adapt to the challenges of climate change.

While climate change has occurred over extended periods and could be natural, the current climate change is largely created by human activities, such as the burning of fossil fuels and deforestation.

22% of New York City is covered by tree canopies. These create the shaded areas of NYC. In October 2023, the New York City Council passed a resolution aiming for a 30 percent canopy cover in the city by 2035.

Researchers are identifying suitable locations for new trees and determining the most appropriate tree species for planting. Alexander Kobald, a researcher at Cornell University, emphasizes the importance of not only increasing tree numbers but also selecting the right tree for each specific location.

The expansion of the city's tree canopy of



fers year-round benefits, leading to improved health, mood, and focus for individuals. The presence of trees lessens the urban heat island effect, where areas with fewer trees experience higher temperatures due to heat absorption by buildings and roads. Larger trees, such as a 30-inch oak compared to a 3-inch tree, can capture significantly more pollutants from the air. Urban environments present unique challenges, requiring creative strategies to address issues like pet urine and road salt that can impact tree growth.

To support the efforts of organizations, the New York City Council has implemented new urban forestry laws, mandating the creation of a comprehensive urban forest plan updated every decade. This plan emphasizes the need to maintain tree health. Larger trees, such as a 30-inch oak compared to a 3-inch tree, can capture significantly more pollutants from the air. Urban environments present unique challenges, requiring creative strategies to address issues like pet urine and road salt that can impact tree growth.

## South Indian Festival Celebrates a Clean Start



**By Noah Samuel  
Tusker Tribune Staff**

Everyone knows that we had a day off from school for MLK Day. But what most people don't know is that there was another celebration on that same day, January 15<sup>th</sup>. That South Indian holiday is called Pongal, and you are going to learn all about it – and the food named for it.

Pongal is a four-day Hindu festival celebrated in mid-January, and is the beginning of the harvest season, mainly for rice. The festival is started by people discarding old belongings, and welcoming new ones. People clean their houses and light a bonfire with their discarded belongings.

The second day is the part I like the most – the day for food. On this day, everyone eats a spe-



cial dish named "Pongal." It is made with newly harvested rice, jaggery (unrefined cane sugar), and milk. Clarified butter, raisins, cardamom powder, and cashews are added. The dish is cooked outdoors and is let to boil and overflow, as a symbol of prosperity.

The third day is a celebration of cattle – cows and bulls are covered in garlands and worshipped through prayer. These animals play a key role for traditional agricultural purposes, and according to the Hindu religion, they are holy.

The last day is for family reunions and for going places together. People visit their relatives and/or friends, and many also do activities for fun. This is a time filled with traditional music, dance, and cultural/religious practices. But there is one thing that anyone can enjoy – the food!



## Origins of Hot Chocolate



**By Noah Samuel  
Tusker Tribune Staff**

You've probably drank a cup of hot chocolate on a chilly winter day. But did you know that that drink dates back over 2,000 years? Read on to learn more about the history of hot chocolate.

### The Mayans Started It

Hot chocolate dates to the Ancient Mayans, around 500 BCE. They would drink ground-up cocoa beans mixed with chili peppers and cornmeal in water, as well as a few other ingredients, and would pour the drink between two cups until a foam developed. This was mostly for drinking cold.

### It Came to Spain

In the 1500's, the Spanish explorer/conquistador Hernán Cortés brought the chocolate drink ingredients to Europe. It was still bitter-tasting and cold, but was adopted by the court of King Charles V. It was then that the drink was served without the chili peppers and warm plus sweetened. The Spanish were very protective about their drink though, and it was more than a hun-

dred years before news of the drink spread across the continent.

### The English Spin

In the 1700's, hot chocolate hit London. There, chocolate houses (like today's coffee shops) became popular, despite chocolate being an expensive treat. the president of the Royal College of Physicians, Hans Sloane, brought a hot chocolate recipe with milk from Jamaica, and thus, the English started to add milk to their hot chocolate, and as a result, it was enjoyed as a beverage after dinner.

### Hot Chocolate Today

Up until the 19<sup>th</sup> century, hot chocolate was also used as a treatment for liver and stomach disease. But it didn't stop evolving there. At about the same time as London, Holland invented cocoa powder, a faster way to mix chocolate with milk of water. In 1876, people started mixing cocoa butter with sugar to make the milk chocolate we know today.

So now I hope you've learned something about the history of hot chocolate. There are also places to get different varieties of hot cocoa. How about you try one?



## Plenty of Ways to Help Your Community



**By Gianna Peanamanda  
Tusker Tribune Staff**

Around this time of year, students/kids need hours for certain events such as their confirmation, or for NJHS. Here are some suggestions to help fulfill those hours.

- One way to help your school community is to write a story for Mr. Pappas to help you get hours for NJHS. 150–200-word story equals 1 service hour. 200–300-word story equals 2 service hours. More than 300 words equals 3 service hours. You may write a story about anything that interests you!
- One way to help your school community is to volunteer at the Somers Library. At the library, you can:
  - Tidy bookshelves
  - Put together craft kits

- Shred papers
  - Working events
  - Write teen book reviews
- To learn more, you can go to [somerslibrary.org](http://somerslibrary.org) and click on the **Teen Section**



for more information.

- Another way you can help your community is to help distribute food at the Feeding Westchester Mobile Food Distribution. This takes place one Wednesday a month outside the Jefferson Valley Mall.

I hope this has helped you and that you are not just doing this to help you get hours. You are also doing this because it makes you feel good and joyful because you are helping the community!

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**The Tusker Tribune** is the online Somers Middle School Student Newspaper. It is published weekly (except during school vacations) on the Somers Middle School Website. It is entirely student-written by 6th, 7th and 8th grade students from:

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

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

## Girls' Wrestling is Taking Off!



**By Laurel Knapp  
Tusker Tribune Staff**

When I say wrestling, the first thing that comes to mind might be people slamming each other on the floor, hurting each other, body slamming each other, and people fighting.



But that is not the type of wrestling I am talking about. I am talking about 3 2-minute periods of trying to get the other person on their back, so they cannot move, or in other words: a pin. I am talking about people trying to use the other person's weight and momentum against the other person. I am talking about an emotional combat sport that can teach you so much as a person.

For a long time, this wonderful sport was only for boys. But in modern times, girls' wrestling has taken off and is becoming more popular. Some major milestones for girls' wrestling were when the



first major college team formed at Iowa just this year, when it became an official high school sport in New York this year, and when in 2004, it became an Olympic sport. I currently wrestle at Somers Kids Wrestling Club. It is for kids in 1<sup>st</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> grade, and after that, in 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade, you can sign up for modified.

If you would like to try wrestling, you can sign up for these clubs or there are other ones in the area. Wrestling can teach you so much as a person. The main thing it teaches you is that you must be tough when things are not going too well, and that you must work hard for something you want. When you are on the bottom, you must work to get back on top. When you put hours into practice and work extremely hard, it shows. Especially in wrestling, it feels good to win because the only way to win is to work hard.



## Sports to the Max: 2023 Atlanta Falcons Season Review



**By Max Nevsky  
Tusker Tribune Staff**

Going into this season, the Falcons had just come off their 2<sup>nd</sup> straight 7-10 season under Head Coach Arthur Smith and General Manager Terry Fontenot in 2022.

In the 2022 offseason, the Falcons signed Marcus Mariota and drafted Quarterback Desmond Ridder. After 2022, Mariota was released. Ridder was made the starter and the team signed Washington Commanders QB Taylor Heinicke.

In the Draft, the Falcons selected Texas running back Bijan Robinson 8<sup>th</sup> overall. To put it lightly, the Falcons season was a roller coaster.

The Falcons started out the season well, with two straight home wins against the Carolina Panthers and Green Bay Packers. Then followed two road losses to good teams such as the Detroit Lions and Jacksonville Jaguars.

The next two games were a win against the Houston Texans at home and a loss to the Washington Commanders at home. A last second win off a field goal against the Tampa Bay Buccaneers put the Falcons at 4-3. The Falcons would then lose their next three games to drop them to 4-6. After their bye week, the Falcons won two straight games against the struggling New Orleans Saints and New York Jets teams to keep their season alive.

The next week was a home loss to the Buccaneers off a last second touchdown pass, and a game winning field goal kicked by the 1-12 Panthers in Charlotte to put the Falcons in a desperate spot at 6-8. They returned home the next week against the In-



dianapolis Colts and blew them out. They were now 7-8, needing to win their next two games to win the division. This would be the last win the Falcons would have this season. They lost two road games against the Bears and the Saints in blow out fashion, committing seven turnovers and scoring a combined 34 points in two games they needed to win.

After a 3<sup>rd</sup> straight 7-10 season, Arthur Smith was fired on 1/8/2024. This Falcon Team has some holes that they need to fill if they want to return to relevancy. The QB room is young and inexperienced. Desmond Ridder has shown flashes but has also played terribly at times. Taylor Heinicke is at best a journeyman backup who can also show flashes for teams in need of a spark, as shown with his time in

Washington. Drake London is their only reliable wide receiver. Atlanta will need to find him a worthy WR2 to take attention away from London.

The Falcons have a solid TE duo of Kyle Pitts and Jonnu Smith. The two combined for over 100 catches, 1200 and six touchdowns. Pitts, being a first round pick, needs to prove to the Falcons that he is consistent enough for them for a second contract with the team, or he might find himself out of Atlanta soon.

Bijan Robinson ran for almost 1000 yards, had 1500 total scrimmage yards and 8 total touchdowns in his rookie season. RB2 Tyler Allgeier accounted for almost 900 scrimmage yards and five touchdowns, giving the Falcons another solid offensive duo.

*Continued on Page 5*



## A School Without Power



**By Noah Samuel  
Tusker Tribune Staff**

Last Wednesday, January 10<sup>th</sup>, our school lost its electricity. The outage happened during the second period and lasted until midway through the third (Course 4).

Luckily, we have backup generators at our school, so most of the main hallways had light. The sun streaming through the windows also helped in terms of lighting.

During the outage, many people were in the auditorium for club photos. The fact that they were standing in almost complete darkness had to be nerve-racking. A few other rooms didn't have light during the power cut, like the band room, which I was in. My course 4 class,



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Room 228, was better with light.

Because of this incident, club pictures had to be postponed until February 7<sup>th</sup>. Assistant Principal Mr. DiCintio later went around the building and informed us students and staff that the cause of the power outage was a transformer fire, and that the problem would be resolved within the next hour.

Thankfully, our power was restored towards the end of the third period, with the outage lasting for about 45 minutes. However, the lights off had a sense of calm, and my class left the lights off for the rest of the period.

## Could We Coexist With Dinosaurs?



**By Cole Dolan  
Tusker Tribune Staff**

We all know dinosaurs as the ferocious scary massive thing that once ruled the earth and then went extinct from a huge asteroid that wiped all of the dinosaurs to extinction. And some people would wonder what would happen if they were on earth today.

According to dino-walk.com, "If dinosaurs still existed, the population of the earth would be reduced. The dinosaurs would probably cut it in half, especially if humans could no longer survive with them. However, the number of hu-



mans and plants and animals would be reduced." We cannot forget about birds who are technically dinosaurs. Most birds do not

attack so we can coexist, but if there were the dinosaurs that lived over 65 million years ago, we could never co-exist.

Although this really would not be possible, we can only imagine what earth would be like to co-exist with dinosaurs. All we can do is imagine it through their fossils.

## Falcons

*From Page 4*

Cordarrelle Patterson is all but lost in the Falcons backfield and I expect Atlanta to move on from the surprise success story of 2021 this offseason given how little he is used.

Atlanta's defense has been a surprise this year, finishing 18<sup>th</sup> in points per game after being 23<sup>rd</sup> last year. They gave up the eighth fewest passing yards on the seventh most pass attempts. The defense was highlighted by offseason signing of Jessie Bates who recorded six interceptions, 11 pass deflections, three forced fumbles, and 132 combined tackles. AJ Terrel also had 11 pass deflections, tying the team lead for PDS.

The Falcons only recorded eight total interceptions this year and had only 42 sacks. Calais Campbell was a solid addition recording 6.5 sacks, but he will retire soon. Bud Dupree, with six sacks, is 30 and getting up there in age. Second year Outside Linebacker Arnold Ebiketie had six sacks which is promising.

Another thing going for the Falcons is the linebacker duo of Kaden Ellis and Nathan Landman. Ellis had 122 tackles and four sacks and Landman had one interception, two sacks and 110 tackles.

In the draft, I believe that the Falcons should draft some wide receivers, safeties, and interior defensive linemen. Give Desmond Ridder one or two more years to prove he is the guy at QB or draft someone else. They have the 8<sup>th</sup> overall pick in the First Round. Good Luck Dirty Birds!