



The Tusker Tribune

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SOMERS MIDDLE SCHOOL NEWSPAPER

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Winter 2024

Community Projects Are Moving Forward



**By Lauren Crispino
Tusker Tribune Staff**

The community projects that SMS 8th graders are doing are progressing greatly. From campaigns to training camps, many 8th graders are preparing to make a huge difference. Here are some overviews of community projects, and the process that we are doing to make it happen.

Have you ever seen unjust discrimination? Ableism? Have you ever felt like nobody saw what you were seeing? Well, I am doing my community project as a campaign for disability awareness. There will be posters, a tri fold, and bracelets to remind students and teachers



to treat everyone with respect.

We are all lucky to get school supplies, but in some areas, students aren't so lucky. Allison Giron Ruiz, Maria Berwa and Hana Kamenickova are helping to stop that. They are doing their project on getting school supplies for low-income areas in Colombia. To do this, they are planning on making a bake sale to get sufficient funds and they will send the money to organizations to distribute the supplies.

Driving down Somers, getting to an intersection, and there are no stop signs. Stop signs help stop accidents and make everyone in our town safe.

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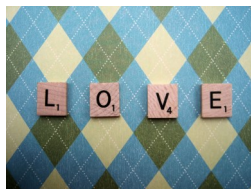
What is Love?



**By Sofia Mendoza
Tusker Tribune Staff**

Have you ever been in love before or experienced love before? Chances are that you have, many times in fact. But to understand what I mean; you first must know the answer to the question- what is Love?

Love is an intense feeling of deep affection. It is a great interest and pleasure in someone or something. It is like the word adoration or fondness, and it is the opposite of hate and envy. There is a wide range of strong and positive emotions that



encompass the many different types of love.

One of the first types of love that we first experience in life is family love. This type of love from family members is unconditional and extremely important for an individual's mental health and development. It is the love that a parent feels for their child or the love that a child has for his or her parent. Even if the parent or the child may make many mistakes, they have a tight lifelong bond of longing to help and support each other.

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Enjoying Winter at Mount Snow



**By Gianna Peanamanda
Tusker Tribune Staff**

I have a house up in Vermont. It is so fun to go up there and go skiing on weekends. My family, friends, and I ski in Mount Snow Vermont.

Our friends have a house up there as well, about 5-10 minutes away from ours. You may think skiing is just riding down a hill, but it is so much more than that. Sometimes you are cold, sometimes you are hot, and sometimes you are exactly right!

I love skiing because it lets the breeze go in your face while you are just cruising down the



mountain. On Mount Snow, there are a bunch of different trails, but one part of the mountain is called Carinthia. It has a bunch of tricks and rails. I learned to do a few but I still cannot do all of them. Some of them are very tricky.

I think you should go ski or snowboard at Mount Snow Vermont because there are so many fun things to do there. It's not just a giant mountain with a bunch of trails. There are also three lodges there for you to hang out in and buy some food if you get tired of skiing/snowboarding. I hope I have encouraged you to go to Vermont!

Update on Recess at SMS



**By Logan Ticker
Tusker Tribune Staff**

Editor's Note: This is an update to a story on recess that ran in last week's Tusker Tribune.

Recess. Something everybody looks forward to after a long morning learning.

According to SMS principal Mrs. Mangone, SMS is one of the few schools that offers recess in the area.

After the December break, many kids were questioning why there was a period of about a week after the holiday break when students of SMS could not go outside for recess. After a short interview with Mrs. Mangone, I was informed that the ground was wet and damp and while a truck was making deliveries, it damaged the field where kids play at recess by driving across it and leaving deep



tire marks in the ground. So SMS didn't want kids to get injured playing on the rough field.

On other occasions when we cannot go outside, the reason is that there are state and local regulations that decide whether or not if schools go outside for recess. For example, if the temperature outside feels like 20 degrees or below, recess is held indoors. It is also the same for rain or if the outside is not fit to play.

Additionally, kids complain about the short supply of equipment like soccer, basketball, and footballs. Unfortunately, many balls get lost in the wetlands, even though the school purchases 60-80 balls each year for recess.

A solution to this is to put up netting or fencing to prevent the loss of recess equipment. What do you think about this?

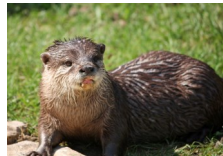
Take the 'Otter-tunity' to Learn About Otters



**By Sofia Mendoza
Tusker Tribune Staff**

Otters are aquatic mammals that live in the family called *Mustelidae*s. *Mustelidae*s also include weasels, ferrets, badgers, and wolverines. They are known for being playful and cute animals.

Otters have short little legs, a strong neck, and a long flat tail that helps them swim swiftly through the water. Their diet includes fish, crayfish, and crabs which means they are carnivores. Some otters such as the Eurasian otter, eat frogs and salamanders. The Asian otters are small and do not have claws, so they eat snails, other mol-



lusks and other crustaceans. They also eat frogs. They rarely eat fish, unlike the other two species. They usually weigh from 6.6 lbs./ 3 kg all the way to 57 lbs./ 26 kg. Otters are usually in the water but when they travel on land, they usually can cover up to 18 miles in one day and they can reach speeds of about 15 mph/24 kph. Lastly, there are 11 different types of otters, and they live in Asia, North and South America, Europe, and Africa. They live in freshwater ecosystems that contain the food that they need to survive.

I hope you learned a lot about otters and continue to research them if you are interested in these cheerful creatures.

Community Projects

From Page 1

Giovanna Arena and Shrileikha Shanthan are doing their project on this issue. Convincing town officials to increase stop signs at high traffic intersections, by using accident history in our town will increase stop signs, and decrease accidents, helping the safety of our town.

These 8th graders have been taking the process to complete their community project in their Advisory class. By using packets to hold information, research, and plans, we all take Wednesday mornings to document this. The students get placed with advisors, who guide them along the way of the project. The wonderful advisors at SMS can help them gather sources and motivate students to do their project. At the end of the year, there will be a tour in the library where everyone, parents, all teachers and any students will be able to tour our community projects.

That's all for today, and we hope this gets incoming 8th graders to think about their community project for next year.

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Special thanks to Mrs. Manko for the cool Leap Day photo!



High Overnight Winds Lead to Power Outage in Somers



By Lauren Crispino
Tusker Tribune Staff

On February 28th, many houses in the Somers area lost power. The lights flickered, then BOOM! Off. The clocks got stuck in place, flashing their lights on and off. And due to the high winds, many places lost power. It's easy to say that a lot of tablets and phones were left uncharged....

So, what caused this power outage? After a warmer day, it got colder. The wind sped up, and from my guess, it knocked down a power line or knocked it out of place. There is not yet an estimate of how many houses lost power, but from the people I talked to, at least four families I know lost power.

Generators flicked on as well, and made it easier to get ready, get homework done and charge devices. But for those houses without generators, this was a big issue.



Charging personally was the biggest concern for me, even though I have a generator. It wasn't my phone that was an issue, it was my school tablet. See, in some of my classes as an 8th grader, an uncharged tablet is counted as a strike; three strikes, and you have a detention. I was worried that I was on my third strike, and that my tablet would not charge, but luckily the generator was enough.

Unlike some other houses in the area, my house lost power at around 10:30 pm, when I was already lying in bed. The only way I even knew the power was out because my older brother came into my room and told me. While this was very unexpected, it did not seem like an issue because of how late it occurred. Hopefully no damage was done in the area, and to my knowledge none was. If anyone has any more information, feel free to write about it yourself!

Six Cool Facts About Sloths



By Sofia Mendoza
Tusker Tribune Staff

Sloths are about three times stronger than an average human. Sloths can hang upwards using only one arm. From the moment they are born, they have the ability to hold their entire body weight. They have 30% less muscle mass, too. They can also spend lengthy periods of time without losing energy.

Sloths cannot see well and are blind in the daylight. Even though they have bad eyesight; they make up for it with their amazing sense of smell. They cannot see well because of a rare disease called Rod Monochromacy, which means they do not have cone cells in their eyes.

It takes 30 days (about 4 and a half weeks) for a sloth to digest a leaf. It takes a long time for a sloth to digest anything at all because they have the lowest mammal metabolic rate. They have large stomachs that are full four chambered stomach permanently.

With the topic of food on mind, did you know they can starve to death even while having a full stomach? They do not have the ability to control their body temperature due to saving energy.

If it gets too cold, the microbes in their stomachs can die, meaning the poor sloth can't digest any leaves.

Nobody knows how old they can really live for. The oldest known sloth is in her 50's but since nobody has ever followed a sloth to where it lives, we do not know how old they could really live up to.

Without these amazing sloths, there would be no avocados. The ground sloth (which is now extinct) were the only mammals that had digestive systems large enough to be able to eat the whole pit. They ate the avocado and then the waste from them made trees everywhere.



For Leap Day Thursday, Mrs. Manko hid numbered tiny toy frogs around the school. The goal was to find a frog with the number "29" on it. 7th grader Ella Barron was the lucky winner and received a \$10 gift card to Bobo's Café.

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:

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

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Tusker Tribune Website:

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What to Look Forward to In March



By Julianna Ferretti
Tusker Tribune Staff

With winter break of 2024 over, we will not have another break for about three weeks, but there are other days off and half days you could be looking forward to.

For example, today, March 1, students (not teachers) have a day off due to a professional learning day. This is good because you can ease into school after a week off with only a four-day week. And the next professional development day is the 13th of March.



Students have a half day of school. You could use this day to get work done, hang out with friends, relax and so much more.

And with Easter so early this year, our Spring Break begins Friday, March 29! So we have a long weekend leading into a week off.

In March, we only have **two full weeks** of school. The other weeks are broken up by half or full staff development or break days. And after that, it is spring break!

My First Cruise was Memorable

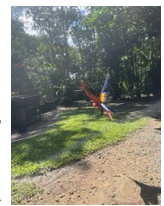


By Allison Cardillo
Tusker Tribune Staff

Have you ever been on a cruise? I highly recommend it! Over February vacation, I went on my first cruise, and I guarantee it won't be my last. The boat was huge, with so many different activities to keep



my top choice with grenadine and extra cherries of course. All food and dessert are also included, and you can eat whatever you want whenever you want. There's a buffet with tons of different options and then a special restaurant to make a reservation but you can have



everyone busy. There are two different kids' clubs and teen clubs separated by age. Special activities and games are offered in each club. There is air hockey, painting, multiple pools and hot tubs.

My package included all the drinks you wanted so pina coladas were

three entrees if you want. How crazy is that? The ship is huge, so thank goodness a lot of walking is involved. Depending on where you are, excursions are a must. I had a monkey on my head, held four beautiful parrots and swam with dolphins. It was a once-in-a-lifetime experience. Start looking into the cruise that is right for you!

Say 'Cheese'! (Or Say 'Raclette')



By Noah Samuel
Tusker Tribune Staff

You might have heard about a few types of cheeses, like American, parmesan, or cheddar, but there are many cheeses with wacky names that you might not have heard about. They include Tête de Moine, Timberdoodle, and Ticklemore. But those are just a few in over 2,000 cheeses around the world! Here is a little backstory on one cheese that is important to our family, Raclette.

History

Raclette first came about in the Alps of Switzerland. There was a tradition of melting cheese and putting it on bread or boiled potatoes. In the German-speaking part of Switzerland, it was known as *Bratchäs* or *Bratkäse*, meaning roasted cheese. Cow herders would carry cheese with them when they were moving their cows in the mountains. In the evening, the cheese would be melted by a fire and then scraped onto bread to eat.

This dish was associated with the Swiss canton of Valais since 1574, and the French term



raclette was used for this food since 1875. Raclette is typically served with boiled potatoes, pickled onions, and pickles. It is also served with black tea.

Tradition

This dish is important in my family's traditions. Every year in winter, my family either hosts or goes to our Swiss friends' house to eat raclette. We put a slice of the cheese in a small hand pan and put it onto an electric raclette melter. Meanwhile, the onions and mushrooms are roasting on the griddle above.

When the raclette is ready, we scrape it out onto the boiled potatoes and enjoy it with some roasted onions and pickles. This is an important tradition because it signifies the end of a long winter and the coming of spring, which is why we do it around the end of February to the beginning of March.

So now you know the brief history of raclette cheese, and how my family enjoys this dish every year. And you do not have to travel far to enjoy this dish. You can just go to Bryant Park Holiday Market in NYC.

My Vacation at Rocking Horse Ranch



**By Gemma Krissoff
Tusker Tribune Staff**

Recently, my family and I went on vacation to a place called Rocking Horse Ranch. We would be staying there for three days and two nights. None of us had been there before, but we heard good things about it.

The Drive

At around 11:00 A.M., my mom drove me and my brother to my aunt's house. After 40 minutes of driving, we arrived. My brother, James, and I hung out with our cousin, Sam, for a while before our aunt, Anne, drove us to Rocking Horse Ranch. My mom and my grandmother wouldn't be coming with us. Before we got in the car, Anne got us Prime and sandwiches. The car ride to Rocking Horse Ranch from my aunt's house took around an hour. We all listened to Hamilton as Anne drove.

Our Arrival + Day 1 of Vacation

When we arrived at Rocking Horse Ranch, we had to be checked in at the front desk. Then we could go to our room. The sections of rooms at R.H.R. (Rocking Horse Ranch) are named after three western states: Arizona, Oklahoma, and Texas. The rest of the hotel has a western theme as well. So, my family and I had room 240 Arizona.

After we put our luggage away, James, Sam, and I went to the indoor pool and Anne stayed in the hotel room. At R.H.R., there are three outdoor pools, an outdoor hot tub, and an indoor pool. In winter, only the indoor pool and the hot tub are open. The other pools are only open during summer. There are also four major waterslides, three outdoor and one indoor, and four smaller ones. There was also a little kid's play area with two small waterslides, pool toys, and extremely shallow water.

After we swam in the pool, we went sledding on a big hill. You could also go skiing, but my family and I didn't know how to, so we stuck to sledding. One of the wonderful things about sledding at R.H.R. is that there's an escalator that takes you up the hill, so you don't have to walk. Anne went with us, which I was happy about because usually Anne just watches us do an activity instead of doing it.

The first time I went, I was not prepared for how fast the sled would go. It was a blow-up sled shaped like a donut, so it spun around a lot and went fast. I screamed my head off. After that, I got used to it and went more until we were all tired and had to go.



After that, we rested in the hotel room until dinner. It had been an exciting day. We got to the dining room to eat dinner at around 7:15

P.M. The dining room was ginormous!

After we sat down at one of the tables, a waiter came and gave us menus. I chose macaroni and cheese. You could also get drinks such as sodas, lemonade, water, enhanced water (water that tasted slightly different than regular water), types of juices, and chocolate and regular milk. I enjoyed mixing different drinks. The food and drinks were amazing. For dessert, there was soft serve ice cream in chocolate, vanilla, and mix. You could also get some kinds of cakes.

After dinner and dessert, we watched some TV in the hotel room and went to a gameshow like Family Feud. I personally didn't find it very interesting, but for the question "What should your child not bring home from school?" I answered, "a dead body" which was quite funny to me. Before we knew it, the show was over. We lost, which didn't surprise us. After that we headed back to our room to go to bed.

At 4:44 A.M., I woke up from a dream. In the dream, I was at school, in French class, but I was playing a video game on the Smart Board. I was editing the video game account. I joined the game, but I think it was a horror game because I got scared. I was so scared that afterwards, I had trouble falling asleep again. Looking back, it was funny, though.

Day 2

There was not much to do in the morning, so I just stayed in bed until breakfast. At breakfast, there was a serve yourself buffet, and it was delicious. I got one piece of French toast, a pancake, and some fruit.

That day, I did the two activities from yesterday, sledding and swimming. I also went to the hot tub that day, and it felt nice. But I also went horseback riding for the first time. I was scared and excited at the same time; I had never been horseback riding before.

Honestly, I didn't like it that much. I think that is mostly because my horse just hated me for some reason; he always bumped into the other horses and simply attacked another horse at the end of the ride. The next day, Sam got the same horse, but that time, the horse, Coyote, was great! Other than that, horseback riding was fun, but after a while, it got boring and cold.

To warm up after horseback riding, we went to a hot chocolate place. You just serve yourself, and the hot chocolate was amazing. Speaking of food and drink, let me tell you about lunch. It was a lot like breakfast, there was a buffet with a ton of delicious food.



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Love

From Page 1

You desire the other person's approval and affection. It is the type of love that you have between siblings, even though you may argue with your siblings at times, you know that during an important moment in your life, they always have your back. It is the type of love you have for grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins. Where it makes you happy to spend time together even though you may not see each other every day.

Another type of love is the love you may have for your friends. True friendships are chosen family. The people who you picked and who picked you as a person to have fun with, trust and share true feelings with, while making life-long memories with.

Self-love is the type of love that you have for yourself. You should love yourself and appreciate yourself. Respecting and taking care of your body is a form of self-love. Finding time to relax, eat healthy food, do some exercise, or a skincare routine, are all ways you are showing yourself love. Self-love is not being prideful or putting others down, but rather it should be about building your self-esteem humbly and about growing confidence in yourself.

Another type of love is the love of God, or for God. This of course depends on your type of religion or belief. Because some people are atheist, which means a person who disbelieves or lacks belief in the existence of God or gods, not everyone in the world may experience this type of love. Nonetheless, it is a type of unconditional eternal love.

Romantic love may mean different things to different people. But it combines shared intimacy, passion, and commitment to another person and to a lasting relationship. It is the type of love seen between two people. Another type of special love that does not include human beings is the type of love



for an animal or a pet that you may have. It is a close bond that you have formed with another living creature. It is important to show your pets love by taking care of them, feeding them, and spending some quality time with them. Your pet may also grow to love you too.

There is also love for special people in your life who are not related to you but rather that you look up to. This could be a specific teacher, coach, mentor, or famous idol who you really admire. These are the people you may seek advice from or respect greatly, because you find them to be intelligent and good people. You might like how this person helped you grow as an individual and will miss them once you change grade level or school as you get older.

And finally, the least beneficial type of love but a love that nonetheless still exists is the love for things. This is the type of love that you have for an object or multiple objects. It could be that you love your favorite blanket, stuffed animal, or collectible. It could be a favorite book or your favorite types of pens or food. We usually tend to use the word love a lot with objects because we can't imagine our lives without them as they may bring great comfort or happiness into our lives. I say this type of love is the least beneficial because material things don't tend to last long, can get lost or broken, but can also get replaced. They are things that we think we need in our lives, but the truth is that we really don't need them to survive, and they can easily be replaced.

Love as you can see can mean a lot of different things, depending on what or who you are loving. It is important to tell and show the people (or pets) you love most that you care about them all year long, so that they can be reminded just how much you mean to them. During this month of February, I hope everyone is able to receive and share some love from the special people (or pets) in your lives.

Rocking Horse

From Page 5

Another activity I did that day was ice skating. I was a bit worried about ice skating because I once had ice skating classes that ended in disaster. That is a different story, though. Ice skating was fun.

We ended the day with dinner, dessert, and seeing a professional illusionist do magic tricks. After all that, we got some well needed rest.

Day 3 – our last day at R.H.R.

On our last day, we did sledding, horseback riding, ice skating, and swimming. While at the pool, I jumped in the pool, but I didn't realize I was jumping into the shallow end, so I scraped my knee

on the bottom of the pool. I told the lifeguard, and he got a medic. Afterwards, I watched some TV in the hotel room.

Before leaving, we visited the gift shop and bought some things. Sam and James got toy handcuffs, but they were surprisingly strong. I got a drawstring bag filled with pretty gems.

Nothing much happened during the car ride home. Anne put on an audiobook, and that was pretty much it.

After a very long car ride, we finally arrived home. It felt great to be back after so long, and while I was gone, my mom started painting the walls of my room. I would totally recommend having a vacation at R.H.R. It was super fun. Thank you for reading.

Good Books That Have Been Banned and Challenged



By Gemma Krissoff
and Julie Genovesi
Tusker Tribune Staff

"Banning books gives us silence when we need speech. It closes our ears when we need to listen. It makes us blind when we need sight."

-Stephen Chbosky

"Lock up your libraries if you like; but there is no gate, no lock, no bolt that you can set upon the freedom of my mind."

— Virginia Woolf

Books are being challenged and banned across the globe, 24/7. Whether the reason for being banned is LBGTQIAP+ characters, "witchcraft," or "being a bad influence on kids," book banning is unacceptable and needs to be stopped. Today, we will show you some books that have been challenged or banned in other places, why they were banned, and why you should read banned books.

Books are not meant to be banned. People, especially children, should get to read with freedom, and not have a limit to **what** they learn from the beautiful works of literature.

Lily and Dunkin by Donna Gephart

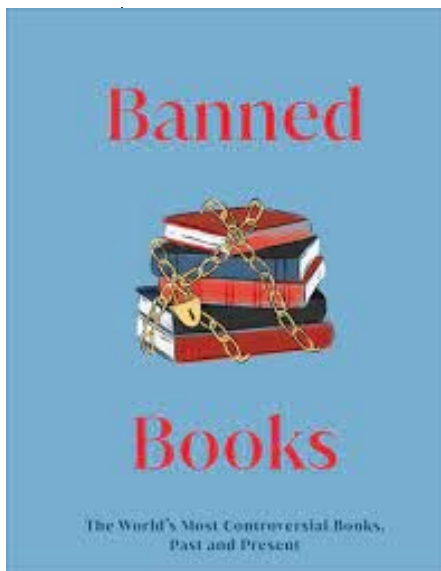
I read this book, and it is one of my personal favorites. I was honestly expecting it to be banned, though. This book is about a transgender girl who is insecure about being bullied and a boy with bipolar disorder.

According to slj.com, "Those who objected to the book said it had 'inappropriate sexual material in it.'" That is not true, Lily only said she wanted to be a girl, but she had a boy's body. Other parents say that they should be notified before their kids get books about topics like gender identity and mental illness. But if you let your kid run off to the section of books you don't think they should be

reading with no supervision whatsoever, then that's just bad parenting if you ask me.

People have also been challenging Lily and Dunkin because Dunkin stopped taking his bipolar disorder medication, which is a bad influence on kids. But Dunkin ended up in a mental health facility for that reason, so I doubt any kids will try copying Dunkin anytime soon, unless they are stupid.

Also, if all the



characters in books were perfect role models with no flaws, then it would be boring in my opinion.

To Night Owl from Dogfish by Holly Goldberg Sloan and Meg Wolitzer

This is another book that I read and enjoyed. It is about two girls who meet because their dads start dating. They also get sent to the same summer camp so they can bond. I would recommend this book to anyone who likes The Parent Trap, because both the book and the movie have similar themes. Again, I am not surprised this book has been banned because any book with LBGTQIAP+ characters has most likely been challenged.

According to Campbelllawobsever.com, Wilkes County Schools used to have a competition called Battle of the Books, where students would read books and be quizzed on them, for 25 years. Despite the competition's long history, it was discontinued because some parents did not like that two characters in To Night Owl from Dogfish, a book in the competition, were gay.

Not only has Wilkes County Schools banned To Night Owl from Dogfish, but they have banned many other books, too, including: The Parker Inheritance, the Shape of Thunder, a Place at the Table, Clean Getaway, and Sal and Gabi Break the Universe. After reading about each banned book, I personally did not find anything wrong with them. In fact, I might read them. They seem interesting.

From the Mixed up Files of Mrs. Basil E. Frankweiler by E. L. Konigsburg

I read this book, and it is awesome. I see no reason for it to be banned. It is about a girl who runs away with her brother to a museum and tries to solve a mystery there. It is amazing, but I guess people have reasons to ban it.

It's probably the parents who decided that the schools should ban this book. Some people think that this book would teach kids to lie and run away from their parents. Also, it may include stealing, cheating, and hiding in a closed museum. I think that if parents don't want their kids reading this book, they can prevent it, but a whole school, that's taking it too far.

Even if this book includes these things, it should be the child and parents of that child who compromise what they can and can't read. Parents may be afraid that people may follow the character, but no child would run to a museum unless they had a good reason to, and even if they did, they would probably get the issue resolved before even thinking about running away. This book, and other similar ones will not be a bad influence on children.

Continued on Page 8



Harriet Tubman Never Stopped Fighting for Equality



By Noah Samuel
Tusker Tribune Staff

February is

Black History Month, and as the month ends, I wanted to spotlight one person who was very important to our American history, Harriet Tubman.

She helped tons of people escape slavery, and she helped our country by being in the Civil War effort itself. Tubman fought to abolish slavery and for woman's rights her whole life long.

Upbringing

Harriet Tubman was born into slavery as Araminta "Minty" Ross in Dorchester County, Maryland in March 1822. At a very young age, Tubman was injured by a heavy metal weight that hit her head because of an overseer's bad aim. He had intended to hit another slave but ended up hitting Tubman instead. She suffered from dizziness and hypersomnia, as well as many vivid dreams and visions which she perceived as premonitions from God. Her Methodist upbringing, combined with her strange visions made her *very* religious.



Occupation

Tubman escaped slavery to Philadelphia in 1849 and returned to Maryland to free her relatives soon after. Slowly, she brought all her relatives out of slavery and helped dozens more people unrelated to her escape the plantations. When the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850 was passed, Tubman started to bring her escapees to Canada, and helped them find a job. She was called "Moses" for this reason, because she helped them escape to the "Promised Land," which was Canada.

When the Civil War started, Tubman was a cook and nurse in the Union Army, but was later promoted to an armed scout/spy. Her guidance of the raid at Combee Ferry – which freed over 700 people – gives her the credit to the being the first woman to lead an armed military operation in the US.

Harriet Tubman retired in Auburn, NY, on a family property she purchased to take care of her aging parents. Tubman was a large icon in the abolition of slavery and the woman's suffrage movement. Without her, and many other people, our world would not be the same as it is today.

Banned Books

From Page 7

If they are a good person, they would learn to read, but not follow the decisions of characters, after all, they would realize the difference between a real person, and a fictional character.

The Harry Potter Series by J.K. Rowling

The Harry Potter series is a favorite of so many people. You may be really surprised to hear that in some places it's banned, but yes, sadly, it is. You have probably read or heard about the Harry Potter series, but just as a recap; Harry Potter is a wizard, he goes to Hogwarts, the wizard school, there is an evil snake man, the snake man is immortal, everyone will die unless Harry saves the day. Abra Cadabra. The end. You get it. I don't think it should be banned, but some others think differently.

Why is Harry Potter banned? I asked myself that same question when I was writing this. Well, Harry Potter was banned because it had magic in it. People don't want kids to have imaginations, so they banned it. Meanwhile, they are telling those same kids to use their imaginations. Also, people are banning the series because it includes witchcraft, which is not approved of in some religions. Parents and others also think that it is too scary for some young children. I read the books in first grade, and they didn't seem nearly as

frightening as some other books that I read. Parents should be the ones who decide what their child is reading. If it is not accepted in their religion, that shouldn't prevent other kids from reading it.

Harry Potter should not be banned. That's it. If people find it scary, stop reading. But being scared is a life lesson. If you never had any extreme emotions, your life wouldn't be interesting. If kids find books interesting, they should read them. If it is about religion, a single child should not be the reason a book, or entire series, should not be available to others. People should have freedom. Reading can open another door, to another place, and bring forth another adventure. Banning books is closing that door and shoving aside that opportunity.

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Brie Is Part of My Family's New Year Tradition



By Noah Samuel
Tusker Tribune Staff

There are many cheeses in the world, over 2,000 of them. And another cheese that is very important to my family is brie. This is a soft cheese that is creamy and easy to bite into, and it has a rind that is almost equally as soft.

It is very easy to eat, so when you heat it up you can't tell the difference between the cheese and the rind itself. This cheese is also very susceptible to flavor and texture changes, depending on the conditions of the making and storage.

About

Brie is a soft cheese made from cow milk. The taste of the cheese can vary greatly depending on how the cheese is manufactured. The longer you let the cheese sit before you eat it can also alter the taste. A general rule is that the longer you let brie



sit, the rind will start to turn black and crumble, making it *brie noir*, or "black brie."

Traditions

My family eats brie on New Year's Eve, as dinner right before the ball drops. The way we make brie in my house is we chop Granny Smith apples into small pieces, slice the brie into chunks, and put them both in a large dish. We then add raisins and craisins over the brie and pour crushed cashews. And to top it off, we pour red wine over the dish, and sprinkle some cinnamon. We then bake the whole thing in the oven for about 20 minutes at 400 °F. When it is done, we let the brie cool for about 2 minutes, and then scoop the brie onto crackers and eat it.

So now you know one way to eat baked brie, and a little bit about the types of cheeses and how their flavor and taste can change depending on various conditions. How about you try baked brie with your family?

Michelle Obama Sets Her Own Path



By Vivian Hernandez
Tusker Tribune Staff

Many of us know Michelle Obama as the wife of Barack Obama, but how many of us know who she is as a person and what she has done?

Michelle LaVaughn Robinson was born on January 17, 1964. She was born in DeYoung Illinois, on January 17, 1964. Her parents' names are Frasier Robinson III and Marian Shields. Michelle grew up in Chicago's South Shore neighborhood with her older brother Craig. Some information about Craig Malcom Robinson is that he is now an executive director of the Nation Association of Basketball Coaches.

Both Craig and Michelle attended public Chicago schools but later on in elementary school, Michelle got into gifted classes. Michelle graduated in 1981 as class salutatorian (the student with the highest-grade point average) from Whitney Young High School. Michelle followed her brother and went to Princeton University in New Jersey and graduated as cum laude (a student who has a GPA between 3.5-3.7) in 1985. Michelle earned her Bachelor of Arts Degree, which majored in sociology with a minor in African American Studies, which informed her Senior Thesis "Princeton-Educated Blacks and the Black Community."

In the year 1988, Michelle received her law degree from Harvard Law School. After her graduation, she was hired by the Chicago corporate-law firm of Sidley and Austin in 1993. Just the year before, in 1992, Michelle Robinson married Barack Obama at Chicago's Trinity United Church of Christ. After their marriage they have 2 daughters



whose names are Malia and Natasha. In the year 1996, Michelle Obama accepted the position of Associate Dean of Students at the University of Chicago. Soon after, in 2002, Michelle Obama became the University of Chicago Hospital's director of Community Affairs and Community Relations in 2005. Just three years later, Michelle Obama was introduced by her brother Craig

at a Democratic Nation Convention where she delivered an address to the Convention. Fast forward to the election of President Barack Obama, Michelle Obama didn't need an invitation to work, she got straight to work. During her husband's presidency she launched multiple innovations, such as the **Reach Higher** initiative, which encouraged all American students to aspire to education beyond high school, through training programs, community college, or university.

Expanding her educational goals to the international level, the **Let Girls Learn** program collected resources from the US Department of State, US Agency of International Development, Peace Corps, Millennium Challenge Corporation, and US President's Emergency Fund for AIDS Relief to empower young girls across the world to secure a quality education.

Those are just two examples of innovations that Michelle Obama has. She has many more innovations which help many people around the world. Michelle Obama has inspired many women around the world with her work and many women aspire to be just like her. She is a perfect example of an open-minded person who cares about other people's well-being.

Sports to the Max: 2023 New England Patriots' Season Review



**By Max Nevsky
Tusker Tribune Staff**

Going into the 2023 season, the Patriots had just finished their 2022 season with an 8-9 record under Bill Belichick in his 23rd season as Patriots Head Coach/General Manager. The Patriots failed to improve upon their 10-7 record and playoff appearance in 2021 due to the 2nd year slump that Quarterback Mac Jones suffered.

After 2021, Offensive Coordinator Josh McDaniels left to become the Head Coach of the Raiders. In turn, Jones went from throwing 3800 yards and 22 touchdowns in 2021 to 3000 yards and 14 touchdowns in 2022 with Matt Patricia as his new offensive coordinator. Patricia was fired after the 2022 season and the Patriots hired former Texans Head Coach Bill O'Brien as new Offensive Coordinator.

In the 2023 NFL Draft, the Patriots most notably drafted Oregon CB Christian Gonzalez. The Patriots' most notable offseason additions were Chiefs Wide Receiver Juju Smith Schuster, Dolphins Tight End Mike Gesicki, and Cowboys Running Back Ezekiel Elliott.

Week One was at home against the defending NFC Champion Eagles. The Patriots lost 25-20 and dropped to 0-1 with the loss. Mac Jones tossed for 300 yards and 3 touchdowns in one of his only good games of the season.

Week Two was at home on Sunday Night Football against the 1-0 Dolphins. The Patriots lost 24-17 and dropped to 0-2 on the season.

Week Three was on the road against the 1-1 Jets. The Patriots won their first game of the season in a defensive battle 15-10. The Patriots improved to 1-2 with the win.

Week Four was on the road against the 2-1 Cowboys. The Patriots got destroyed 38-3. Mac Jones got benched for Bailey Zappe late in the game. The loss dropped the Patriots to 1-3.

Week Five was at home against the 2-2 Saints. The Patriots got shutout 34-0 in yet another blowout loss. Mac Jones was again benched for backup QB Bailey Zappe in the game. The Patriots got shut out for the first time since 2016 with the loss. The loss dropped the Patriots to 1-4.

Week Six was on the road against the 2-3 Raiders and former Offensive Coordinator Josh McDaniels. The Patriots lost 21-17. The loss dropped the Patriots to 1-5 for the first time since 1995. Josh McDaniels improved his record to 3-0 against Belichick as he also beat him in the 2022 season.

Week Seven was at home against the 4-2 Bills. The Patriots beat the Bills 29-25. Mac Jones led the game winning drive with two minutes left in the 4th quarter and had his best game of the season, throwing 270 yards and two touchdowns. The

win improved the Patriots to 2-5.

Week Eight was on the road against the 5-2 Dolphins. The Patriots lost 31-17 and dropped to 2-6 on the season. They got swept by the Dolphins on the year for the first time since 2021.

Week Nine was at home against the 3-5 Commanders. Washington took a 20-17 lead late in the 4th quarter and were driving until Mac Jones threw a game losing interception to Commanders Defensive Back Quan Martin that bounced off Juju Smith Schuster's hands. It was the Patriots' first loss to Washington since 2003 and their first home loss to them since 1996. The loss dropped the Patriots to 2-7.



Week 10 was at home (the game was played in Germany) against the 4-5 Colts. The Patriots lost 10-6 in a defensive battle. Mac Jones was benched for backup QB Bailey Zappe for the 3rd time this season. The loss dropped the Patriots to 2-8 as they headed into their bye week.

Week 12 was on the road against the 3-8 Giants. Mac Jones started the game but was benched for the 4th time this season for Bailey Zappe. Despite the terrible performances, the Patriots were driving late in the game attempting to send the game in overtime at 10-10, thanks to six sacks by the always solid Patriots Defense. Rookie Chad Ryland attempted the 35-yard field goal but missed it, allowing the Giants to win. The Patriots lost 10-7 in the defensive battle and went to 2-9 with the loss.

Week 13 was at home against the 4-7 Chargers. Bailey Zappe was named the starter for the rest of the season and started the game. The Patriots offense played terribly yet again and got shutout for the second time this season and for the second time at home this season with the 6-0 loss. The loss dropped the Patriots to 2-10, thus failing to improve upon the 8-9 record from 2022. It was also the team's first double digit loss season since 2000, the first year under Belichick. With the loss, the Patriots became the first team since the 1938 Cardinals to hold their opponents to 10 or fewer points for 3 straight games and lose all of them.

Week 14 was on the road against the 7-5 Steelers on Thursday Night Football. The Patriots jumped out of the gate leading 21-3. Zappe threw for 240 yards and three touchdowns as the Patriots won 21-18 with the upset win and improved to 3-10 on the season.

Week 15 was at home against the 8-5 Chiefs. The Patriots lost 27-17 despite sacking Patrick Mahomes three times and intercepting him two times. The loss dropped the Patriots to 3-11.

Week 16 was on Christmas Eve on the road against the 7-7 Broncos. Bailey Zappe helped lead the Patriots to a game winning drive that culminated in game winning 56-yard field goal by rookie Kicker Chad Ryland.

Continued on Page 11

Patriots

From Page 10

The Patriots won 26-23 and improved to 4-11 and it would be the last win of the season and of Bill Belichick's coaching tenure.

Week 17 was on the road against the 9-6 Bills on New Years Eve. The Patriots lost 27-21. Bailey Zappe threw for 200 yards, three interceptions, and took three sacks. The loss dropped the Patriots to 4-12.

Week 18 was at home against the 6-10 Jets in snowy New England. In a sloppy game for both teams, the Patriots lost 17-3 in Bill Belichick's last game as Patriots Head Coach. Bailey Zappe threw for 90 yards, threw two interceptions, and took seven sacks as the Jets broke a 15-game losing streak to the Patriots that dated back to 2015. The loss dropped the Patriots to 4-13, the worst record in the AFC.

Four days after the end of the regular season, on 1/11/24, Bill Belichick and the Patriots mutually agreed to part ways. Belichick had been the Head Coach since 2000 and his record speaks for itself. He won 266 of a possible 387 games (266-121 record and a .687 winning percentage) in the regular season. He won 17 division titles and made the playoffs 18 times. The Patriots made nine Super Bowl appearances and won six of them from 2001 to 2018. Belichick also has a 30-12 playoff record and holds the NFL record for playoff wins at 31 (one with the Browns in 1994 against the Patriots). He also appeared in 13 AFC Championship Games and won nine of them. He is easily the best Patriots Head Coach in their 63-year history and is widely considered to be the best NFL Head Coach of all time by many, but at the very least is in the top 3.

After Belichick's departure, Inside Linebackers Coach Jerod Mayo was named as the team's new head coach. Mayo joined the Patriots in 2019 as Linebackers Coach after an eight-year stint as a Linebacker. As a player, Mayo made two Pro Bowls, 1 All Pro, was named Defensive Rookie of the Year in 2009, and he led the NFL in combined and solo tackles in 2010. Offensive Coordinator Bill O'Brien left to become the Head Coach of the Boston College Eagles in College Football. To replace him, the Patriots hired former Browns Offensive Coordinator and Former NFL Quarterback Alex Van Pelt to replace him. Van Pelt helped the Browns to 2 playoff appearances in his 4 years there from 2020-2023. Defensive Line Coach Demarcus Convington was promoted to Defensive Coordinator.

Overall, the Patriots were terrible because of the offense. They finished the season scoring only 236 points for an average of 13.9 per game, which was 31st in the league and tied with the Carolina Panthers (who went 2-15) for fewest points scored this season. The QB duo of Mac Jones and Bailey Zappe was also terrible, as the two combined for 3400 yards, 16 touchdowns and 21 inter-

ceptions. Mac Jones threw for 2100 yards, 10 touchdowns and 12 interceptions in 11 games/starts while taking 22 sacks and got benched four times throughout the season. He did lead a game winning drive and a 4th quarter comeback. Backup QB Bailey Zappe threw 1300 yards, six touchdowns and nine interceptions in 10 games and six starts while taking 25 sacks. He also had a game winning drive. The teams finished 22nd in pass attempts, 28th in passing yards, 27th in passing touchdowns, and 30th interceptions thrown. On the ground, the Patriots finished 26th in attempts, yards and rushing touchdowns.



Some of the Patriots' only offensive contributors were RB1 Ezekiel Elliot, who recorded 1000 scrimmage yards and five total touchdowns, RB2 Rhamondre Stevenson who recorded 900 yards and three total touchdowns, WR Demario Douglas who caught 50 passes and led the team in yards with 560 while TE Hunter Henry caught 42 passes for 420 yards and a team leading 6 touchdowns. WR Kendrick Bourne recorded 37 catches for 400 yards and four touchdowns in eight games before ending his season by tearing his ACL. I wonder how much better the team would have been if he had played all 17 games.

The defense did all they could with the league's worst scoring offense. They finished 15th in points allowed. They were 15th in pass attempts faced, 11th in passing yards allowed and fourth in touchdowns allowed. They faced the 9th most rush attempts but allowed the fourth fewest rushing yards and the 11th fewest rushing touchdowns. The Patriots intercepted 10 passes and recorded 36 sacks. Kyle Dugger, Jahlani Tavai, and Jabrill Peppers each led the team in interceptions with two apiece. Third year defensive tackle Christian Barmore helped anchor the middle and recorded a team leading 8.5 sacks. Dugger, Tavai, and LB Ja'Whaun Bentley all recorded 100 plus tackles. On Special Teams, Rookie Kicker Chad Ryland hit 16 of 25 field goals (64%) and were 24 of 25 on extra points (96%). Ryland's field goal percentage was the worst in the league this season among qualified kickers.

The Patriots have the third overall pick in this year's draft, and given Mac Jones' terrible season and play regression since his 2021 Rookie Year, the Patriots would be very inclined to draft a Quarterback. Backup Quarterback Bailey Zappe will not be kept on the team as well. The Bears still have Justin Fields so I do not see why they would draft a QB. Given the Commanders 4-13 finish and bad QB play from Sam Howell, the Commanders under a new regime will draft a QB. The top 5 prospects going into this year's draft are Caleb Williams, Drake Maye, Jayden Daniels, Michael Penix Jr, and Bo Nix. At the very least, there will be 3 of these amazing quarterback's still on the board when it is time for the Pats to make them pick this draft. We will see what the Pats do in April.

[Tusker Tribune Foods Presentation.pdf](#)

Click on the link above for a cool presentations on various kinds of popular foods, written in PowerPoint presentation form by Ila Schoenberg

STAR Students: February 2024

Grade 6:



Laura Resnick



Brock Spears

Grade 8



Maxim Nevsky



Anthony Melillo

A STAR award stands for STudents who Are Role models. The students pictured here were caught doing something that deserves the STAR recognition for the month—from common courtesy, to helping another student or staff member, to standing up for someone or cheering them up!

Try These Outside Activities

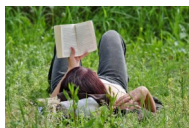


By Gianna Penamanda
Tusker Tribune Staff

There are many different things to do outside but here are the best things to do in my opinion. One thing to do is play a sport. You could play basketball, soccer, tennis, volleyball, softball, baseball, football, and many more sports.

You could get chalk and do sidewalk chalk. A fun thing you could do with chalk is draw anything you want and then see how long your drawing lasts outside. Another thing you could do outside is play a game with somebody. For example, you could play tag, hide, and sneak, man hunt, red light-green light, and many more games.

You could also make up your own game to play, which in my experience is fun. Another thing you could do outside is go for a walk or run. You could listen to music or a podcast while you go on a walk or run. Still another activity you could do outside is bird watch. You could point out many different birds or find any birds that migrated to New York. Collecting interesting rocks is a great way to pass the time.



While not for everyone, but you could go outside to find a shady spot under a tree and read a book and enjoy nature. I know some people might prefer to be inside rather than outside, but it is good to take a break and enjoy the outdoors sometimes.



8th Graders Tackle ‘The War to End all Wars’



By Ava Schmidberger
Tusker Tribune Staff

In 8th grade social studies we have been learning about World War One. Here's a summary of what you should know...

World War I, also known as the Great War, had a HUGE impact on America. When the war began in 1914, the United States initially stayed neutral. However, the conflict escalated and Germany's actions threatened American interests.

These included unrestricted submarine warfare and the Zimmerman Note, which was a secret proposal to ally Germany and Mexico against the U.S. if the U.S. entered the war. Based on these and other factors, the U.S. entered the war in 1917.

America's involvement in WWI brought about major changes at home and abroad. In America, the government implemented rules to mobilize the economy and society for war. Citizens supported the war effort through rationing food, buying Liberty Bonds, and participating in propaganda campaigns.



This Photo by Unknown Author

Over four million American soldiers served in WWI, fighting in major battles. The war introduced new technologies and tactics, such as trench warfare, machine guns, and chemical weapons, leading to significant casualties and hardships for soldiers.

America's participation in WWI also marked its part as a global power. President Woodrow Wilson played a key role in shaping the post-war world, advocating for his Fourteen

Points and the establishment of the League of Nations (which came before the United Nations) to promote peace and international cooperation.

