



The Tusker Tribune



SOMERS MIDDLE SCHOOL NEWSPAPER

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Welcome Back!



By Thomas Mauro
Tusker Tribune Staff

Everyone, except for 8th graders and e-learners, came back into school full time today.

This a huge first step to getting life back to “normal.” Hopefully, this leads to other steps to be taken in the future. This is a huge thing for Somers.

With all the good happening, let us think about how stressful this is for the teachers. They now must control a whole class, making sure everyone social distances.

Let’s make their jobs easier and just social distance properly. This a big step forward and let’s not take it for granted.



A classroom set up with assigned seating and individual barriers, as more and more kids come back to full-time in-person learning.

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Editor’s Note: Welcome to the second of several “culture and heritage” issues, where our writers tell us about their ancestry and traditions they and their families follow. Enjoy reading about different countries and back-grounds!

Trip to Italy Made My Heritage Real for Me



By Matthew Giudice
Tusker Tribune Staff

Some of my family is from Italy. My last name is kind of an Italian name.

A lot of people have been to Italy in my family. Italy is a very fun place to be for a vacation. There is great food and Italy looks really nice.



I have only been to Italy once. My favorite part of that vacation was the food—they had really great pasta and seafood. My favorite dish was octopus with mashed potatoes. We went to Rome, Capri, and Venice. I liked the Coliseum and Rome’s history, but Rome itself was way too hot and wasn’t the nicest looking. Capri was my favorite. The hotel was great. It had a delicious restaurant at the hotel right next to the pool, and it was a wonderful looking city. Venice was a cool city. It was the prettiest looking city out of all three and the food was great. But that’s it.

Overall Italy was the best vacation ever and I would love to go there again.



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

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Italian Culture and Food Highlights of My Heritage



By Sofia Calandrucci
Tusker Tribune Staff

My family and ancestors originate from Naples, and Colibri in Italy. The meaning of "Calandrucci" comes from the time when historically, surnames evolved as a way to sort people into groups—by occupation, place of origin, clan affiliation, patronage, parentage, adoption, and even physical characteristics (like red hair). However, I'm not sure which of these applies to my last name. Many of the



modern surnames in the dictionary can be traced back to Britain and Ireland.

I have gone to Italy two times. My favorite place is either Sorrento or Santa Margherita.

I do not speak Italian, but maybe in the future, I will learn. My parents don't speak it, either, but my grandpa is fluent in the dialect on my mom's side and my grandma knows a little.

My favorite traditions include almost every Sunday we go to either my aunt's, my grandma's, or people come to my house and we have pasta with tomato sauce with meatballs, sausage and sometimes ribs. I'm proud of being Italian because of the food, people and culture.

Italy's Food and Culture Are Amazing



By Mia Sessa
Tusker Tribune Staff

I am a mix of things, but I am mostly Italian.

My grandmother was born in Brooklyn but her family is from Italy. Her maiden name, Napolitano, comes from Naples, Italy. My last name comes from Caserta, Italy.



I have not been to Italy, but I would like to add that my other grandmother was born in Puerto Rico, so I am 25 percent Puerto Rican, and I have been there.

A tradition that my mom likes to follow is having spaghetti and meatballs every Sunday. It doesn't always happen but she tries to. I'm very proud of my heritage. The food is delicious and Italy is beautiful.

Family is Focus of my Irish/Italian Background



By Tim Monahan
Tusker Tribune Staff

My family has Italian and Irish heritage. My last name is Irish because my dad's side of the family is Irish.

I have never been out of the country and I would like to go to either Ireland or Italy some day. I would like to visit a tropical place somewhere.



My family does not speak either Gaelic or Italian, but I am learning Italian right now as my

world language class. I have big Italian meals with my family, including grandparents and cousins. Also, I have Irish meals some nights and especially on St Patrick's day.

I like my heritage because of the delicious food and seeing family, close or distant.



Hope to Visit Guatemala After The Pandemic



By Anelise Bobadilla
Tusker Tribune Staff

The countries that my family originates from are Guatemala and Dominican Republic.

My mom is from the Dominican Republic and my dad is from Guatemala. My great grandparents and grandparents, who are still alive today, were born in the D.R.



When my family and I went to Guatemala, I was about eight months old, but my dad told me that it is a beautiful place.

After this pandemic is over, I would really like to visit Guatemala again, so I can remember it.

Most people who meet me don't think that I am fully Hispanic, but I am. My sister and I were both raised speaking Spanish and we still speak it today.



We visit our family almost every year just to be with each other. My family is very close, and I am very thankful for that because some people don't have that. I am also proud that I have an amazing family who loves me and I love them.



One of Our Traditions is Climbing a Mountain



**By Peter Brennan
Tusker Tribune Staff**

My family originates in County Mayo, Ireland in a small town called Charlestown. My first name means "Rock", my last name's meaning is "Brave" from the name, "Brennan".

The language spoken in Ireland is called Gaelic I know a few words, but not a lot. I do plan on learning more of the language; it's just taking me

a while because it is a hard language to learn and not a lot of people speak it anymore, so there wouldn't be a point. But it would still just be fun to learn.

One of my favorite traditions is St. Patrick's Day because we would go into the city and go to the parade. But since COVID, it's been cancelled. But we still got together with our cousins and had a good time.

Another tradition we do is usually once a year, we climb a mountain called Croagh

Patrick, which is in Mayo, and it is named after the patron Saint of Ireland, St. Patrick.

The harp is the symbol of the nation. A lot of people think the Shamrock is the symbol, but it's actually a harp.



'Tompkins' Doesn't Sound Italian



**By Kayla Tompkins
Tusker Tribune Staff**

If you saw my name, you wouldn't be able to tell I am either Italian or German. You can't tell because my mom's family is mostly Italian and my dad's mom and mom's dad are German. But I have my dad's last name and his dad is 75% Italian,

but grew up on a farm and so did his parents, so they weren't immigrants or anything.

I have never been to either one of the countries, but would like to someday. I kind of speak Italian and know some words in German, but my great grandma and aunt can speak mostly fluent Italian.

Favorite traditions are mostly holidays because on Christmas

and Sundays, we eat pasta and meatballs with sauce, but on Christmas, my grandma, my great grandma, and I make homemade manicotti, meatballs, and sauce.

On Thanksgiving and Christmas, my mom's aunt will give my grandpa marzipan—a German gelatin candy from Germany, and it's nice to see him happy.

What makes me proud about my heritage is being Italian because it's such a fun eventful culture, and a lot of my favorite celebrities are from Italy and are Italian.



Proud of Colombian And Guatemalan Roots



**By Randy Contreras-Valencia
Tusker Tribune Staff**

To start off, my parents are not from the same country—are we clear on that? My dad is from a small country called Guatemala; my mom was born in a country in South America called Colombia.

By the way, my last name has nothing to do with this. Also I have been to Colombia and Guatemala three times each. My favorite place in Guatemala is Tikal. For those of you don't know, Tikal was built a long time ago when Mayans existed.

In Colombia, my favorite place was climbing one of the highest mountains in Colombia. Both countries speak Spanish. In school, I talk in English, but at home, I talk in Spanish except if I'm talking to my sister.

My favorite tradition to celebrate is Christmas. Now I know what you're thinking. You're probably saying, "Randy but everyone celebrates Christmas." First of all, you're wrong—not everybody celebrates Christmas, but that's not the point. The point is that when I went to celebrate Christmas in Guatemala with my family, I realized that when I went into people's houses, there were no presents under the tree. Instead, I saw decorations of Jesus. Everybody in Guatemala is Christian.

Also, when I went outside, I saw fireworks. In Guatemala, there are these things that they sell called "Cuetes". They are basically fireworks that you can set off on your own. There are some big Cuetes and some small Cuetes. I've tried it and there very fun to use. It's fun talking about my culture.



Everything You'd Want to Know About Guyana and Trinidad and Tobago



By Devin Lukee
Tusker Tribune Staff

My dad is from Guyana, and my mom is from Trinidad & Tobago

My first name means "King of Devas". I've only been to Guyana once. I do speak Guyanese—it's basically broken English.

In Trinidad & Tobago, they Celebrate Carnival and in Guyana, they Celebrate Mashramani, often abbreviated to "Mash". It's an annual festival that celebrates Guyana becoming a Republic in 1970. The festival is usually held on February 23.



What makes me proud of my heritage is how rich the countries are. In Guyana, the country is broken up into five different races--Indians, Africans, Amerindians, Europeans and Chinese. The longest river in Guyana is the Essequibo River, the river is 630 miles long. Guyana Means "Lands of Water".

The food also represents culture, such as cook up rice, which is a blend of peas, rice, meat, and coconut milk. Cook up is a highly customizable dish with many variations using different types of beans, peas, and meat.

In Trinidad And Tobago, there is doubles, which is a combination of two fried split pea flatbread, with chick-peas, and potato curry in between. It goes well with pepper sauce, and tamarind sauce. Also, one of



the hottest chilies in the world is native to Trinidad and Tobago.

Guyana is the only English-speaking country in South America. In Guyana's population, 36% of residents are of African descent, and half of the people are of East Indian origin. The country gained fame in the world in the wrong way when Jim Jones, the religious cult leader, and his 900 supporters committed suicide in Guyana in 1978.

The national motto of Guyana is "One People, One Nation, One Destiny." Guyana gained its independence in 1966. The longest river in Guyana is the Essequibo River, which is 627 miles long. This is 1/4th the size of the Mississippi River.



List of Favorite Italian Foods Is Very Long



By Hudson Ruby
Tusker Tribune Staff

My family is originally from Italy. I am sure that my name has no meaning (Hudson Ruby). I don't hear any Italian in that.

I have never been to Italy, but I would like to go sometime. I do not speak the language of Italian, but it would be fun to learn it someday. It's the same with my parents—they do not speak Italian, and neither do my grandparents.

However, some of my favorite traditions of being Italian is the food. I love Italian food. My favorites are pasta sauce, meat sauce, tomato sauce, pizza, pasta, Italian bread, rigatoni, meat balls, turkey meatballs, mozzarella cheese, parmesan cheese, chicken parmesan, garlic bread, salami, pepperoni, prosciutto, and basil.

Something that makes me proud of my heritage is our cooking ability. People in Italy are really good chefs and they could make almost anything that is so good.

I also love hearing the Italian accent.



Being Cuban and Irish is A Good Blend



By Tristan Iglesias
Tusker Tribune Staff

My family comes from Cuba and Ireland, as did their ancestors.

My last name is Iglesias, which is a Spanish name and in English, it means "church", so my English name is Tristan Church.

I have not visited either Cuba or Ireland but I have always wanted to because I'm Irish and Cuban. And that's where my family comes from.



I can speak a little bit of Spanish and my dad speaks Spanish, and I want to learn more, since most of my dad's side of the family speaks the language.

When I celebrate holidays, I have special foods like empanadas and Irish soda bread. Empanadas are Cuban food and Irish soda bread is Irish food.

I am proud of being Cuban because Cubans are known to be full of life, love to celebrate and cooking good food.



Puerto Rico and El Salvador Are My Roots



By Jazlyn DeJesus
Tusker Tribune Staff

My family is from El Salvador and Puerto Rico. My last name does not mean anything, but in my family, almost all the females have the middle name Angelica because my Tia, who is 87, is very respected in the family, so the family named all the females "Angelica" or used the middle name "Angelica".

I have never been to El Salvador because I don't have a passport, but I have been to Puerto Rico a few times. When I go to Puerto Rico, I love going to the pink sand beach.

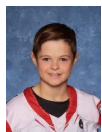


I do speak Spanish but I don't consider it my first language. It's a first language for my mom and for the rest of the family.

In my family, we all celebrate our birthdays together. Every time it's someone's birthday, we throw a huge party no matter what. And my grandma always makes Pupusas.

I love the food from both sides of my family—Puerto Rican and Salvadoran.

Family's Journey Went from Ireland, to New York, To Scarsdale, to Somers



By Chris Curry
Tusker Tribune Staff

We're Irish and Italian. In this country, members of my family also from Cali, Florida and from Los Angeles.



My family celebrates every holiday ever year, but we don't really have any real religious traditions.

When we do celebrate holidays, we go to church, and

we also say grace.

Historically, most of my family comes from Ireland. They came to New York City, and then grew up in Scarsdale, which is a really nice community.

Currently, we live in Somers. My dad's father played NFL football for the Chicago Bears, and we all love to play golf.



My German/Jewish Heritage Is Very Meaningful



By Noah Hechler
Tusker Tribune Staff

My parents are from Long Island. My dad's dad grew up in Germany so I guess that is where I originate from.

My name does not mean anything—it is just a normal name that's not really anything special. I have never been to Germany but it would be a fun thing to do.



I don't speak German and I don't think I plan to learn it.

We celebrate the traditional Jewish holidays and they are all special. I also know that my great grandfather played soccer for the German national team.

I am proud of my heritage and faith because not that many people are Jewish, and I like being Jewish because I am pretty different.

Another fact I know is that my great grandmother survived the Holocaust and that is just an amazing thing because not many people stayed



Appreciating Russian and English Ancestry



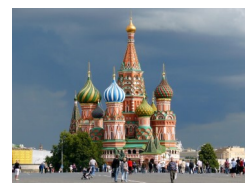
By Jordan Millar
Tusker Tribune Staff

My ancestors originated from the continent of Europe. I was told most were from Russia.

My mom's great grandparents were from Russia. They then moved to the United States.

I was named after my mother's grandfather, Joseph. I do not believe it holds any other meaning. My grandfather on my father's side is from England. He moved to the United States in the 1970s.

When I was 6 months old, my parents took



me to London, England, where I was able to meet a lot of family on my dad's side. I have never been to Russia but have seen pictures and would like to visit one day.

My parents, grandparents and brother all speak English.

Some traditions in my family are that we celebrate Christmas and Chanukah every December, as well as most other holidays. I am very proud to have a combination of heritages in my family. From seeing pictures of Russia, Moscow in particular, and I find the buildings to be very interesting to look at because they are a lot different from the U.S.

