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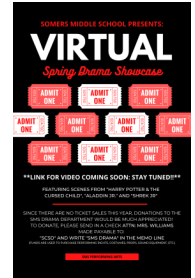
Spring 2021



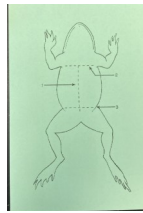
SMS Performing Arts Department proudly presents our 2021 Virtual Spring Drama Showcase. This year has been unlike any other but that didn't stop us from putting together a Drama Club performance for you!

We'd love to invite you to this year's virtual showcase, featuring selected scenes from shows you love like "Harry Potter and the Cursed Child", "Aladdin Jr.", and "Shrek Jr."

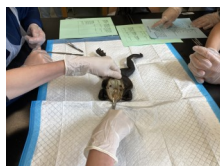
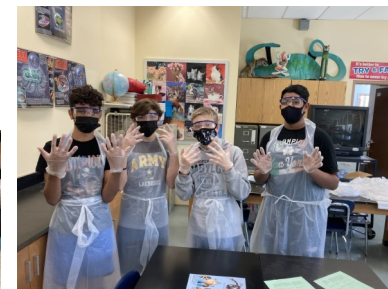
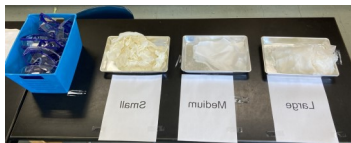
Video premiere coming soon...Stay tuned for next week's Tusker Tribune to hear more about how our production was made and to view our performance!



7th Grade Frog Dissection: A 'Cut' Above the Rest!



Mr. Wilbert's and Mrs. Manko's 7th grade science classes "leaped" into the frog dissection unit this week!



What is Happening in the Upcoming NBA Play-in Tournament?



By Benji Cutler
Tusker Tribune Staff

LeBron James, Draymond Green, Luka Dončić and Dallas Mavericks owner Mark Cuban all have problems with this new NBA Play-in Tournament?

The LA Lakers and the Golden State Warriors have a chance of missing the Playoffs because of this? What are the pros and cons of the tournament, how does it work, and who will likely be participating for the 7 and 8 seeds in the Playoffs from May 18th to the 21st?

First of all, to take a step back, the NBA Play-in Tournament will decide the 7 and 8 seeds in each conference to begin the NBA Playoffs. The 7-10 seeds in each conference will participate. The 7 and 8 seeds will face off for the 7 seed, and the 9 and 10 seeds will battle it out to play the loser of the 7 and 8 seed game. The loser of that game will be eliminated, and the loser of the 7 and 8 seed game will play the winner of the 9 and 10 seed game to determine the 8 seeds in each conference.

As of May 11, the Boston Celtics (7 seed), Charlotte Hornets (8 seed), Indiana Pacers (9 seed), and the Washington Wizards (10 seed) would be participating in the Eastern Conference tournament. In the Western Conference, it would be the Los Angeles Lakers (7 seed), Golden State Warriors (8 seed), Memphis Grizzlies (9 seed), and San Antonio Spurs (10 seed) participating. There is a slim chance that these standings will stay the same by May 18th, but as of now, these are the 8 teams potentially participating.

Like I said earlier, some big names had some opinions on this new way of determining the bottom 2 seeds for each conference. That may or may not be because their teams will be playing in it, but you never know. On May 3, LeBron said, "Whoever came up with that s*** needs to be fired". Cuban also told ESPN, "The worst part of this approach is that it doubles the stress of the compressed schedule." I agree with that completely, because every game matters in a tight schedule this season for those middle of the pack seeds that are fighting for a good

spot in the tournament or Playoffs.

To add to that, Luka Dončić's opinion on the Play-in Tournament is, "You play 72 games to get in the playoffs, then maybe you lose two in a row and you're out of the playoffs. I don't see the point of that." This is a very strong opinion by a top player and voice in the league which I could totally agree with.

However, I thought I would never say this, but I think Draymond Green is 100 percent correct with his opinion on the tournament. On Monday night, when he was asked on where he is with the tournament and how it's going to be ran, he responded by saying, "No, I don't give a damn

about the play-in tournament. I care about the game, we want to win the game and compete in the playoffs, but I don't give a damn about this play-in tournament. It is what it is." I think all players should have this type of mindset. Don't worry about it right now, just focus on winning the games because nothing is going to change this season.

Once the season is over, then you can argue to change the format of the tournament or argue to have it gone next season. Especially because the National Basketball Players Association (NBPA), ran by the players, have such an important role in commissioner Adam Silver's decisions.

To summarize, there are many ways you can go with this tournament and whether you think it's good, bad, they did it right or wrong, etc. However, you have to remember that this isn't permanent. This layout is like a test run for the NBA, and if it's successful, it may become permanent. If it fails, then these upcoming battles for the Playoffs could be the end of the road for the Play-in Tournament, or at least how it will be ran this season. Like I said, the players' opinions come before the media and mostly everyone else when it comes to the NBA.

If you want to tune into these hopefully intense Play-in Tournament games from Tuesday, May 18th through Friday, the 21st, you can watch either on TNT or ESPN depending on the game at 7:30 PM and 10:00 PM EST. Don't think this is the end of the season, however, because we still have an entire Playoffs waiting for us, and I can guarantee that it will be entertaining!



On April 17th, I became a Bat Mitzvah...



**By Emma Gordon
Tusker Tribune Staff**

Whether or not you're Jewish, you've probably heard of a B'nei mitzvah.

Whether you've had one, or are going to have one, or went to one, you've probably at this point at least heard of the words "B'nei Mitzvah".

A B'nei Mitzvah (Bar Mitzvah for boys, Bat Mitzvah for girls) is a Jewish celebration that you have when you're 13 (sometimes 12) that celebrates you growing up and becoming an adult in the Jewish religion. During a B'nei Mitzvah, the Bar/Bat Mitzvah goes up on a stage-like area in the temple called a "Bima" and leads part or all of the service in front of their family and friends.

Leading the service (at least for me) includes chanting Hebrew Prayers, reading Hebrew from the Torah, and reading some English also. Afterwards, you give a speech and have a candle-lighting ceremony, which is where you have about twelve people come up to light candles in a candle holder, and you light the last one.

And then, of course, there's a party; where you do the Hora, get lifted up in a chair and party like there's no tomorrow! However, due to COVID, lately, B'nei Mitzvahs have had to be a little different this past year... with some people rescheduling theirs, some having no party and only a few people at the temple, and some even doing it from their dining rooms!

I ended up having mine on April 17th, exactly 6 months after the original date due to COVID... And even though COVID definitely made my Bat Mitzvah different than I expected, I wouldn't have had it any other way. A lot happened during this process, so let's begin with-

PHASE ONE: *The Preparation*

There are A LOT of things to do to prepare for a B'nei Mitzvah; it's not just learning Hebrew (although that does make up a majority of the process). I had to go to a lot of stores to find a dress, then to get it fitted. We had to make sure all the tiny details were just right; the candy bowls we used for the candy bar at the end had to be just the right size. And we had to make sure that everyone had access to the Zoom link and/or could get to the restaurant for the dinner after.

For the actual "learning the Hebrew part" though, it was actually really fun. Every Monday,

I really looked forward to meeting up with my Rabbi on Zoom to practice; and later to practice in the temple itself. It really made me feel proud of being Jewish and excited to run the service.

There is definitely WAY more to the preparing and planning part, but if I fully wrote everything that happened, then we would be here for a while.

Next—PHASE TWO: *The Service*

The morning of the service, I got my hair done, got on my big poofy dress, and took a LOT of pictures. Finally, after a 45-minute drive where I wasn't allowed to touch or lean on anything, we got to the temple...so we could take more pictures with my cousins. And then an hour later, my friends had shown up, I ate a bite of a sandwich for lunch (I was going to have a huge dinner anyway!) and the service began.

My temple has two different synagogues; a huge one that could possibly fit the whole school, and a smaller one. Considering that we had about fifteen people there, we did it in the smaller one.

For the service itself, I can't even put into words how great it was to be up there. I felt super happy to finally be up there doing my service, and my mom even said that I was completely beaming the entire time.

During the service, I read a portion from the Torah, which is a big scroll that's filled with Hebrew. The thing about the Torah though... is that there's no vowels in it. So, say you saw the word "ct", and it was supposed to be "cut"; but how would you know that when you first see it? It could be "cat", or "coat", or anything. So, that's why you really have to memorize your Torah portion and work hard on it. Also, you need to learn a certain melody to it as well—which I found it easier to do once I learned the melody.

At the end, you give a speech where you talk about your Mitzvah (good deed) Project, what your Torah Portion means to you, what your Haftarah Portion means, and who helped you along the way to becoming a Bat Mitzvah.

Then, your parents say a speech; where their main goal of it is to make the B'nei Mitzvah feel good about themselves, and to embarrass them as well with stories from their childhood that show what kind of person they are. And then after the service, of course there's...



Continued on Page 4

Bat mitzvah

From Page 3

PHASE THREE: *The Zoom-Party*

So... due to COVID, most of my guests at my Bat Mitzvah had to be on Zoom. So, we decided to do a Zoom party afterwards!

The Zoom party included a candle-lighting service (where I called up about twelve different family/friend members or groups to light a candle, and then I lit the last one), a Kahoot about me, a montage about me with photos of me growing up, and the Hora.

The Hora was just me and my family and cousins; and at first, I was just going to sit in a chair as they did the Hora around me in the Temple. But as you may know, at a B'nei Mitzvah, the B'nei Mitzvah usually gets lifted up in a chair. Which is what my uncle decided to make happen without warning, causing me to nearly fall out of the chair...

But then of course, there is still more to my Bat Mitzvah. So next up is...

PHASE FOUR: *The Dinner-"Party"*

After the service, we all gathered at a restaurant called "Traditions", where we went to the tent outside. "We" including everyone in-person at the service, and some of the people who were on the Zoom. There was a photo-booth there, music, and some games outside of the tent. And a LOT of food, of course...

Oh, and a candy bar . . .

Overall, my friends and I danced the night away and had a lot of fun just hanging out and dancing (and of course singing along). Oh, and I also pied my dad in the face with whipped cream...

But, even with COVID making my Bat Mitzvah much smaller than I originally hoped, I still had a blast with my friends—and like I said before—wouldn't have had it any other way.

Which brings us to the final phase...

PHASE FIVE: *The Aftermath*

Aside from the mountains of homework that I had to make-up afterwards, everything was actually great after my Bat Mitzvah. I ended up getting a lot of gifts -one of them being a Jewish star necklace that I wear nearly every day!

My friends and I, of course, have matching sweat-shirts and t-shirts from it—which are by the way SUPER comfortable. And I have a lot of leftover masks with my logo on it; that I wear everyday now because they're the only masks I find comfortable.

Overall, my Bat Mitzvah was a 100/10 success, and I really enjoyed it! Now if you excuse me... I have some Thank You Cards to write.



No Such Thing as a Day Off for Shoes



By Emily DeJesus
Tusker Tribune Staff

Editor's Note: Emily's article is in response to the prompt, "Describe a Day in the Life of a Shoe".

My human isn't perfect; she is so clumsy and NEVER watches where she steps.

My human trips and falls and twirls all over the place, but it hurts me a lot. That's ok, because that's a day in the life as a shoe.

On the bright side, I have days where I go on walks and run with no problem. But the worst is when I go to my human's cousin's house. Her smelly little cousins always tries my human's shoes on, so that means she tries me on. It's so weird with her small feet trying to fit me.

I love the day where my human cleans me. I feel clean and mostly loved. It's hard being a shoe cause I know one day, I won't fit my human and one day I go off to the dump. But for right now, I will enjoy the walks, the runs, the clumsiness and the twirls.

That's a day in the life as a shoe.



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.

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

Website:

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

Check Under the Bed for THIS Easter Bunny



By Sam Seagrist
Tusker Tribune Staff

Editor's Note: Sam's article is in response to the prompt, "Make Me Scared of the Easter Bunny."

The Easter bunny is a fun little guy who brings candy around to the good kids, but there's a darker side in a different world.



The Easter bunny has white fur usually, but his one is all black and not able to be seen in the dark.

The only thing you can see of this bunny is its white razor sharp teeth. His eyes are all black too,

so you can't see those either. Its diet consist of kids and some adults. It lives in the forest but it travels very fast to your basement. Then the stairs. Then the hallway. Then your room. Then under your bed until you need to go to the bathroom in the middle of the night.

Then it reaches out and grabs you and . . .

My Thoughts on A Lot of Different Topics!



By Jazlyn DeJesus
Tusker Tribune Staff

Hi, my name is Jazlyn and I'm in my late 70's and I hate kids these days!

They're always so loud and, on their phone; they don't know how to have fun with nature. All they do is go on this app called Tiktok and it's so annoying and they're always dancing on my property. I hate it here!



When I was in middle school one day, my teacher was absent, and I wondered why—well it was because he was ASLEEP. That's right—ASLEEP! Like he had the audacity to not be present because he wants to sleep. Like obviously, I want to sleep, too, but

you don't see me being absent!

I am a shoe. I hate when my owner doesn't wear socks when he places his foot in me. This is so annoying! I also hate when he walks in puddles when it rains.

One time, I went to see the Easter bunny and I caught him eating lunch, but he was eating fried bunny with rice and he told me to never tell a soul!

My left hand has acrylic nails on right now I have a lot of lines on my hand and I'm very tan. If I had a choice, I would choose a rewind button because I would love to relive my life.

A Rewind Button Allows Do-Overs

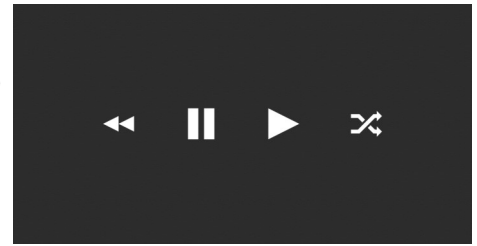


By Emily Mladenovic
Tusker Tribune Staff

Editor's Note: Emily's article is in response to the prompt, "Which would I choose—a rewind button or a pause button for my life?"

If I had to choose whether to get a rewind button or a pause button, I would choose a rewind button. I would choose a rewind button because then I could go back and change something that I wanted to happen differently.

For example, if I had a test that I wasn't ready for, I could go back in time and study longer for it. If



I wanted a situation not to happen, then I could go back and not say something or just prevent it.

If I picked the pause button, then all I could do is just think I wouldn't be able to change anything. It would be good to think about things over without interruptions, but you couldn't do a lot of things with that.

The rewind button could stop a situation from happening or help me with that situation. Also, if I got a rewind button, I could go back to the past and see another family's member if they died or moved away.



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