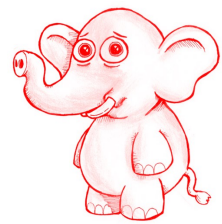


The Tusker Tribune

The Student Newspaper of Somers Middle School



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Fall 2017

Student Calibrator

The Cafeteria—a Closer Look

By Angelina Ayoubi
Tusker Tribune Staff

Rumors have had it, at SIS, that the selections at the Middle School went from cookies; to vending machines; to every sugary fruit flavored drink you could think of. Apparently, that was very true. Now that I am in SMS I am finding that kids have developed different eating habits.

I watched as the kid in front of me grabbed 2 cookies and a can of soda. The problem here wasn't the cookies, (I'm all for a little treat), the only problem here was the soda. Why? When I arrived to my table, I saw the same drink on all of my friends' trays that I had seen them buy for weeks.

Water should be our new best friend; and our number one choice of drink. Drinking too much sugar isn't healthy. Not only is it angering dentists because of the tooth decay it causes when big sugary drinks are constantly consumed, but it could affect our bodies.



In 2014, on the FOX NEWS Health website, Dr. Julie Wei stated "... when kids consume too much sugar, it can alter the balance between good and bad bacteria and weaken their immune systems." So although your children may still get frequent colds, their symptoms may be reduced if their sugar intake is reduced as well. "

Dr. Julie L. Wei is a pediatric otolaryngologist, who works and studies at the Nemours Children's Hospital in Orlando, FL.

If you ever crave a sugary drink, try diluting it half way with water, or just stick with water.

I will be joining Student Council and I will be sure to put every effort in educating my fellow students on the importance of daily water intake and reduce sugary drinks, and will seek faculty approval to enforce this throughout the school.

I hope everyone is getting used to the Middle School, and having a great year thus far! More to come, on the "Student Calibrator"!

A 'Ribbett-ing' Tale (that happens to be true)



By Olivia Biolsi
Tusker Tribune Staff

"Tuesday morning: the day after Monday, yet still so far from Friday. A day to rejoice in the name of Monday's end, A day to mourn the loss of the weekend. We all ride on this emotional roller coaster of Tuesday morning, due date of my required poetry paper. Tuesday morning."

I glanced up at my bedroom mirror. "And that concludes my poetry presentation."

I bowed at my pretend audience and raced downstairs. My parents wouldn't be home; they were probably driving my brothers to school. So I scooped up my backpack and raced out the door, my brand-new sneakers beating on the sidewalk.



Today was the fourth day of school, and I was already late.

I slowed down a block away from school, just to catch my breath. Looking around at the small houses and shabby sidewalk, I realized things were a little too quiet. Where was everybody?

A group of eighth graders were missing from the corner of the street, where they usually hung out. The basketball team usually tried to get a couple minutes of practice in before school, but I didn't hear their sneakers pounding on the asphalt.

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'Ribbeting'

Continued from Page 1

Even the screams of angry mothers trying to get their kids to school on time were missing from the daily chaos. Where was everybody?

School shocked me even more when I finally arrived. Shoving open the door to the main entrance, all that met my eyes was an empty front desk. This was too much. Something was wrong.

"HELLO? ANYBODY HOME?!"

I felt ridiculous yelling that at school, but I didn't know what to do. Suddenly a bright white light flooded the room. It shone through the window in the high ceiling, but it wasn't sunlight. It seemed so unnatural.

Only a second before it happened I realized something was *really* wrong. I dove under the receptionist's desk and covered my head with my arms as the huge window above me shattered. Glass rained down, and the white light grew so intense it was almost blinding. A big gray thing covered the hole in the ceiling, blowing the shards of glass that littered the floor in every direction. It reminded me of the kind of wind a helicopter produces, only ten times as strong.

A voice boomed. When I say *boomed*, I mean it shook the building. It was deafening even over the roar of the wind.

"OLIVIA BIOLSI," it said in a calm, eery voice. It made me feel like something was going to explode.

"YOU ARE THE LAST HUMAN ON EARTH."

Huh?

"YOU HAVE BEEN CHOSEN BY MY FELLOW EXPLORERS AND ME TO BE THE SUBJECT OF OUR EXPERIMENT. AS I SAID, WE HAVE TAKEN YOUR FELLOW EARTHLINGS AND ARE HOLDING THEM HOSTAGE ON OUR SHIP. THE ONLY WAY WE WILL RETURN THE REST OF YOUR SPECIES IS IF YOU SOLVE THIS RIDDLE AND RECITE THE ANSWER TO US AT 9:00 PM IN EARTH TIME. HERE IS YOUR RIDDLE:

*Your sky is blue, your Earth is round.
The rest of your species is nowhere to be found.
So dim as you are, we think you might like
A chance to live the rest of your life.
If you think you value your spleen,
Begin your search for something green.
Hunt for something with bulging brown lumps
Or we will drag your head to the dump.
As if our violence and clues aren't enough...*

YOUR PLANET WILL BE DESTROYED IF YOU DO NOT HAVE THE ANSWER TO OUR RIDDLE BY SUNDOWN. GOOD LUCK."

Good luck?!

I started to shout unnecessary words at the

sky, but the sky was all that was left to see. The ship had disappeared. Putting aside the almost certain thought that this was all a dream, I turned my furious attention to the riddle these aliens had presented me with.



*Green objects... brown lumps...
WHAT COULD THAT POSSIBLY BE?!*

I raced out the door. Maybe instead of thinking about the riddle, I could fly around the world in a private jet and look for inspiration. I raced to the Somers Jet Rental warehouse, which was conveniently located just around the corner. Of course, I knew how to fly a jet.

What twelve-year-old doesn't?

Once I got the darn thing in the air, I set a simple course for Egypt. Everyone knows they love the color green, those Egyptians. And almost everything that wasn't in a thousand year old tomb was brown. This would be a piece of cake.

And just like that, I touched down on Egyptian soil and excavated a standard ancient tomb. Easy work, really, compared to math class. But can you believe what I found in that tomb?

NOTHING! Maybe those tomb-raiders had swept through the place and stolen everything. I knew the type; I met one once in about 1350 B.C. My time machine malfunctioned - that's another long story.

So I climbed back in the jet, all the while watching out for that alien space ship. Why did they have to choose me for this stupid experiment? It's like saying I'm an unworthy little Earthling. I just hate it when aliens do that!

I flew down to the Amazon jungle, where *everything* is green. True, I considered Antarctica, but what fun is there in a couple glaciers? *Green with brown lumps. Maybe an old leaf.*

Searching through a forest like that can sure make a person tired. I knew I had to keep going; the sun was too close to the western hills for me to stop. But I really was exhausted...

Oh, a five-minute break by the river won't make a difference.

So I settled myself under a big tree by a stream, staring up at the sun through a kaleidoscope of leaves.

Crickets sang and chattered, a jaguar padded soundlessly a few feet away. *The Amazon would be a nice place to vacation sometime*, I thought. *Maybe after I save the humans.*

A little green frog dashed across a floating flower and under the water, sending tiny waves of ripples in every direction. *Frogs have weird eyes*, I thought as it poked its head above the water and peered up at me. *They just have those little bumps with brown circles in the middle.*

Wait.

One.

Second.

*TINY BROWN BUMPS, GREEN SKIN...
"ALIENS, HERE I COME!"*

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'Ribbetting'

Continued from Page 2

Gripping the steering wheel of the jet, knuckles white, I flew as fast as I could back to Somers. I made an admittedly sloppy landing the local hangar, plucked my prize from the backseat of the plane, and dashed back to school just as the sun ducked behind the trees.

"OLIVIA BIOLSI. WE AWAIT YOUR ANSWER AND THE RESULT OF OUR EXPERIMENT. WHAT IS IT YOU WISH TO PRESENT TO US?"

"Only the most beautiful, glorious creature in the galaxy. I can honestly say that I've been places, and have never seen anything like this before."

No emotion had sounded in the alien's voice on the speaker before, but now I heard some definite enthusiasm. The ship whirled above the shattered overhead window. The rest of Earth's population was so close! I wondered if the aliens were telling the truth. I solved the riddle, but would they return the humans or not?

"OH? YOU HAVE BROUGHT A SPECIMEN? LET US SEE."

I whipped my hand out of my pocket and thrust it towards the sky. I held none other than the frog from the Amazon, with its green, lumpy skin and brown eyes. It just had to be the answer! "Here!" I screamed, waving my arm in the air. "I have the answer to your riddle. Now will you return the humans?"

Silence.

I had never heard a silence this loud.

"OLIVIA BIOLSI..."
WHAT?



"IN RETURN FOR YOUR EFFORTS AND CONTRIBUTION TO OUR YOUTH EDUCATION PROGRAM, WE AWARD YOU WITH THE SAFE RETURN OF YOUR SPECIES."

I was the only human on the planet, but I cheered so loud I compensated for the whole seven billion of us.

"HOWEVER, THEY HAVE BEEN SEDATED THROUGHOUT THIS EVENT AND WILL BE UNABLE TO RECALL ANY OF YOUR NUMEROUS ACTS OF HEROISM. THEY WILL GO ABOUT THEIR LIVES AS IF NONE OF THIS EVER HAPPENED. UNDERSTOOD?"

"Sure." I was honestly just happy to get my family back.

"GOOD."

At that, a whitish beam of light descended from the ship, pulling the frog up and into the spacecraft. It was soon out of sight. The ship hovered there for another moment.

"WE GIVE OUR FINAL WORD OF THANKS TO YOUR CONTRIBUTION TO THE INTERGALECTIC EDUCATION PROGRAM. NOW, WE LEAVE YOU AND YOUR LIFE UNTOUCHED. GOODBYE."

A final burst of light brought Earth back to life. Somers Middle School swarmed with kids, their voices bouncing off the newly repaired overhead window. The aliens had vanished, good riddance. The world can spare one frog. After what I had been through, the simple sound of human voices was worth all the stress and lies- sorry, liberty- in the world.

The end."

"Olivia..."

"Yes?"

"Is that a true story?"

"Absolutely, Mr. Pappas. Once hundred percent."

I smiled, took a bow in front of the class, and walked back to my desk.



The UnWind Dystology



By Nick Cirillo
Tusker Tribune Staff

The Unwind Accord was signed long ago, allowing parents to sign an order that has their children ages 13-18 shipped to a harvest camp and terminated, their organs and limbs going to people who need (or want) them. This is the world of Neal Shusterman's *UnWind Dystology*.

Unwind, UnWholly, UnSouled, UnDivided. These books are some of the best I've ever read, written by an author who used to come



to our school.

These dystopian books center around Connor, a boy who escapes his unwinding, Risa, a ward of state who must "team up" with him, and Lev, a "tithe," which is a person raised to be unwound. They must learn to work together, and escape from the Juvenile Authority police, in order to stay whole, and while on the run, they will encounter friends among an Anti-Divisional Resistance and foes among those who believe unwinding does more good than evil.

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Puerto Rico's Struggle Has Just Begun

By Julia Wilkinson
Tusker Tribune Staff

There are many things that occurred at 6:15 in the morning on September 24th, 2017. You could have been getting ready for school, or your parents could have been driving off to work, but the most dangerous, yet newsworthy story that occurred that morning in Puerto Rico was something people had been expecting for days.

Hurricane Maria, attacked.

That very morning, the east coast of Puerto Rico was struck by one of the most vicious hurricanes to strike this year: Hurricane Maria.

Prior to this event, from August 25th to September 3rd 2017, Hurricane Harvey attacked Texas, with flooding of 52 inches high.

And on September 8th, Hurricane Irma struck Cuba with wind speeds of 155 miles an hour.

You may be wondering what do Hurricanes Irma and Harvey have to do with Hurricane Maria? Well, Hurricane Maria is a combination of Irma's strong winds and Harvey's massive flood. Maria is following Irma's track of hitting the Caribbean islands and either riding up the coast of Florida or actually hitting the state.



Even though Maria was a category four hurricane on the Saffir-Simpson Scale (The tool used to measure a hurricane's velocity), Maria has proven to be a vicious storm.

Maria had hit Puerto Rico that Tuesday morning, but only passed the island the following day. In that time, Maria did some pretty big damage.

Many buildings had collapsed and many houses have been destroyed. But the major disaster during Maria was the power outage. Maria was so strong that it destroyed the power lines. Reporters remark that power in Puerto Rico will take months to get back up in running.

Even though Maria has moved on from Puerto Rico, it would take a while for the damage to be repaired. Many citizens are homeless, and many others struggling for food and water. To get Puerto Rico back to the way it

was will take a while.

You can help the children and adults that got struck by Maria. You can google **Maria Relief Fund** and donate money to all citizens struggling from Maria.

Just think: While you are relaxing at home, others are working to help homeless and struggling people get their normal lives back.

UnWind

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Caught within a system of a collapsing resistance, Connor and Risa find themselves at a plane graveyard secretly harboring huge groups of AWOLs (teens escaping from unwinding), run by the mysterious Admiral. They must fight against Roland, who's scheming plots threaten to overturn the entire ADR itself, and Starkey, who leads a dangerous band of AWOLs

on a journey to violently destroy harvest camps across America.

Our protagonists will meet the puppeteers behind the industry of unwinding itself, destroy the harvest camps where kids are unwound, and even meet a young man made entirely of parts of other people, all while you'll be unable to stop turning pages.

If you love a good old action-packed read, or just love dystopian adventures, Neal Shusterman's Unwind Dystology features some of the best storytelling I've read in a long time

**The Tusker
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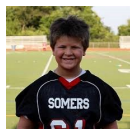
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Exciting Week on Tap For the NFL!



By Samuel Sanz
Tusker Tribune Staff

NFL Predictions: Week 4

These are four very exciting games to see this week in the NFL:

Bears vs Packers:



Aaron Rodgers does great against the burly defense of the Bears. He once had 315 yards, 6 touchdowns and a 145.83 passer rating in a game in 2014, but with the Packers

leading receiver Jordy Nelson a game-time decision. That makes this blowout a bit narrower. Prediction: Packers

Bills vs Falcons:



NFC champion Atlanta cons. With both great defenses and defenses, could be a good one. Prediction: Falcons



This again seems like a blowout, but the red-hot Bills, after beating the Broncos have another tough opponent. The



Raiders vs Broncos:

This matchup is very interesting.

Both teams have amazing offenses and defenses, but they each suffered a tough loss in week 3. The Raiders lost to



the Redskins and the Broncos to the Bills. This game will be a close one, but the game will be decided by a Quarterback. A.K.A Derek Carr. Prediction: Raiders



Chiefs vs Redskins:



Two emerging teams battle each other out. First the Chiefs and the savior of a lot of Fantasy Football teams (Including mine). Kareem Hunt has had no game with less than 20 Fantasy Points. Then



there are the Redskins and Chris Thompson, who is another Fantasy Machine with some awesome games. This will come down to passing. Who lost their two leading receivers? Not the Chiefs. Prediction: Chiefs

The National Anthem and Sports—An Analysis

By Sean Moran
Tusker Tribune Staff

Nowadays in America, there is controversy about the National Anthem playing before various NFL games, and some players taking a knee as opposed to putting their hands on their hearts. These actions were sparked by President Donald Trump's negative comments about kneeling in protest. Some people wonder why the Anthem is even played before sports games in the first place, and I wondered that as well, and what I found was surprising.

During WWI, nationalism was rampant in the US. People felt immense pride for being American. So at the 1918 World Series, the National An-



them was played. No big deal, but it started a long tradition that is still celebrated today. Here we are, 100 years later, and so much controversy has erupted due to this one song.

Some are boycotting the NFL altogether because they don't agree with the views expressed by certain players, but some are enthusiastic about the situation, saying that the players participating in the protest have the right to.

Not all players are kneeling in protest, but a noteworthy number are. Former Army Ranger Alejandro Villanueva was the only player on the Steelers to stand during the national anthem, and his jersey is the best-selling right now, so clearly, a lot of people disapprove of the actions taken by players on these teams.

What's your view?