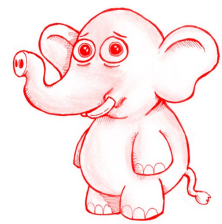


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Winter 2017



Merry Christmas



Homeward Bound—A Holiday Epic



By Olivia Biolsi
Tusker Tribune Staff

The plane rattled a little. I never quite gotten used to that, even after hundreds of flights like these.

No. I've never had a flight like this.

Never before have I been this worried about traveling. Boarding the plane, my one big thought was: *My heart is so heavy it will crash this plane.*

Homeward bound!

Five years ago, nothing was like this. I was 17, going on 18. My mom was a teacher. Not to brag, but years of nagging and motivation made me, well... perfect. I was captain of my field hockey team, I led the All-County band I played in with my saxophone, I got A's in every subject, I did ten community service hours a week at the local shelter. My mom, who raised me all by herself, was really proud. But that made her so, so overprotective!

The better I became, the more rules she dreamed up. It was like she was scared that I would fail my SATs if I didn't come home every day by 6:00 PM. Or that I would wind up living in her basement for the rest of my life if I chewed gum in the house. Or that I would die if I ate a stupid piece of candy!

It was really annoying to have to live with that and be perfect for three months. When my 18th birthday rolled around, I was getting really excited that I would finally be an adult and that I wouldn't have to live by all of my mom's rules any

more. But when I proposed this idea to my mother, she said: "ANGELINA, YOU LIVE UNDER MY ROOF. YOU WILL ABIDE BY MY RULES!"

And it made me *mad*. So mad that I packed my stuff, threw a dart at my world map, and booked a flight to Mexico City, where the dart had landed. I know. I was so *stupid*!

The next day I got in my car (which, like everything else, I owned as I had paid for it myself) and headed to the airport. As I slammed the door behind me, I left a note on the kitchen table addressed to Maria (my mom's name). It read:

*Maria-
Didn't like all
YOUR RULES.
I'm going away
- won't be back.*

*From Angelina
That started
my new life. I barely
kept in touch with the
people I used to know.
I never spoke to or
heard from my mom*

again. When people asked me where I came from, I told them I grew up in a corner of the world I would never see again.

When I got tired of one country, I got a new job in another one. I never put down roots in any of the 12 countries I lived in, and there were hardly any planning. It was actually really fun for a while. I met new people. I made some really great friends who I still know today. I tried new things and worked a thousand jobs. Though I did live in the country and rural areas, I mostly stayed in the cities. I woke up every morning with an adrenaline rush and the urge to *do* something. It was nice; being active like that. So it was fun.

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Homeward Bound

Continued from page 1

But after a few years, I realized that I could hardly remember my past. Memories that I had been sure I could never lose – my mom's face, my house, my school – they were fading. My head was crammed with five years of new things, and it didn't leave room for boring stuff that I wanted to forget when I left home.

Home.

I had been everywhere, but the one place I called home was the only place I didn't want to be. Now I wanted to be there!

My current home when I had this realization was in Madrid, Spain. A whole ocean away from my mom's house, in a little town in New York called Somers. As abruptly as I had come, I got on a plane to New York City. I planned (something I didn't do very often) to stay with a friend I knew until I figured out what I would say to my mom.

After leaving her with a 14-word note on the back of a grocery list and running off to a bunch of other foreign countries, there wasn't much to say!

But the minute I stepped off that plane, I realized that I wouldn't let one more memory slip away from me. I got in a cab and made a beeline to my mom's house. Inside my head, thoughts were bouncing off the walls of my brain and ricocheting everywhere. I still hadn't thought of anything to say.

What if she turns me away?

Will she want to see me?

Of course she won't! Leave now!

I should at least try to make peace!

She doesn't want you here.

I took a very deep breath. "Just try."

Slowly, cautiously, I made my way to the door. Nothing had changed. The crunching of the old gravel walkway was one of the memories I'd forgotten, but that and a thousand other things came flooding back to me when I rang the doorbell. I felt like a balloon ready to burst as I waited for the door to open.

But it didn't.

And still didn't.

"Mom?" I called tentatively. "Mom, it's me, Angie!"

Nothing.

I was ready to wait there for the rest of the

day, but just as I turned to sit down, the door creaked. "Are you Angelina Burning?"

"Yes! Mom-" But as I whirled around, my heart dropped a few miles deeper into my chest.

A lady I had never seen before was standing there, holding the door open. She frowned at me, like she was sizing me up.

Another deep breath: "is Maria Burning here? I'm her daughter."

The lady's crisp face melted into something a little softer, like she was approaching a wounded animal. "Oh, honey. I'm so sorry. Maria Burning died three months ago."

And that brings me to the end of my story. The woman who answered the door told me my mom had talked about me as she died. She said her exact words were, *Angelina Burning is my daughter. If you find her, tell her I'm so sorry. If she wants to hear it, she should know that I forgive her, too.*

I cried a lot. The night I found out my mom no longer existed, I sat on the doorstep and watched the clouds change shape. Tears ran down my face the whole time. My mom remembered me. I had almost forgotten her. She died saying sorry, but I was the one that should have been apologizing.

The only thing keeping me from fading away into depression was the fact that she

had said she had forgiven me.

She forgave me.

EPILOGUE

Eventually, my life regained its color. I lived in Somers for a little while; caught up with friends I had when I was really young. Most of them thought I had disappeared off the face of the Earth, but it was nice to see them again.

One of the people I met was someone I knew from high school. He was really nice. Kind. Soon I felt like I could tell him anything, and I told him all about my past. When I was 26, we got married. Everyone I knew came; from every corner of the world I had been. Two years later, I had a little baby girl. Named Maria.

We lived happily ever after. I was really and truly happy when I was living in the present or planning the future. However, my past remained. Hanging at the back of my head for the rest of my life was the thought that made me truly happy over everything there was to be sad about in my past.

My mother forgave me.



How to Ditch Post-Holiday Blues!



**By Juliana Spano
Tusker Tribune Staff**

We all get them, after the holidays are over. No more outdoor decorations or fun and cheery holiday clothes.

It's okay to get the post-holiday blues but are there any ways to avoid them? The answer is YES, and I'm here to share with you a few easy tips to brighten your life after the holidays.

First, this may seem stupid but think about how the season will come again next year



and that warm weather or something exciting awaits.

Adding onto that, look for something to look forward to! It will instantly make you want to get through the next few days or so.

Next, distract yourself, whether it's with schoolwork or painting or really anything. Just try to get your mind off the holidays.

Lastly, get outside, fresh air makes everyone feel better and it will show you how

beautiful the world is even after the holiday season. Try those three things and you will be saying "bye, bye" to the post-holiday blues.

This Clown Tale is Not Funny!



**By Max Harkins
Tusker Tribune Staff**

In October, everyone was obsessed with clowns. They were all pretending to be afraid of them and trying to become that "cool" kid. Well, unfortunately, I had a dream that triggered fear of clowns.

I was in school, late at night with Evan Carway. We had a dare to do the 24 hour challenge. We brought two flashlights each, spare batteries, a lockpicking set, phone chargers, and money (for the vending machine, of course).

We camped out in the gym locker room and stayed there until 6 o'clock. We then crept along the hallways and checked to make sure that there were no custodians around. Apparently they all left.



We then silently ran into the cafeteria, rigged the vending machines, then went to an old hallway that we found in Mr. Devito's tech room. We walked along the thin corridor and found an old classroom, apparently owned Mr. Roberts.

We walked in with our flashlights on and jumped as the door banged shut, locking us in. We nervously explored the room, then finding a huge poster of a clown. We also found a small photo of a clown, and presumably, a picture of Mr. Roberts with it.

We backed away slowly and bumped into something. We turned around and found us face to face with the clown that was in front of the blank poster. We turned and ran in horror, banging on the locked door as we awaited our nightmare to finish us off.

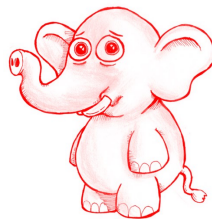
I then woke up. Now you can see my reason of being terrified of clowns.

The Tusker Tribune is published online and is featured weekly on the Somers Middle School Website. It is entirely student-written by 6th, 7th and 8th grade students from

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The Outsiders by S.E. Hinton



**By Olivia Biolsi
Tusker Tribune Staff**

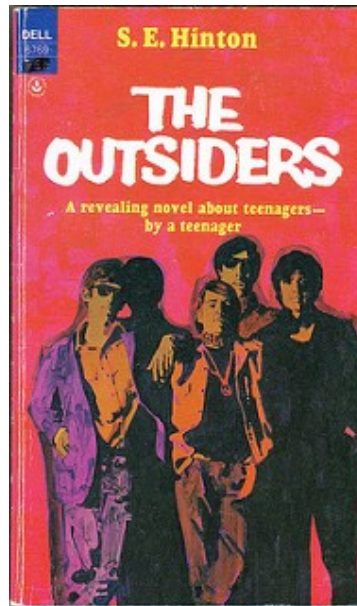
In 1965, 15-year old S.E. Hinton sat down at her kitchen table and began drafting the award-winning book The Outsiders.

It definitely deserves the attention it's gotten! It goes like this: 14-year-old Ponyboy Curtis lives in a town divided into two groups—the Socs and the Greasers. People in the Socs' gang are high class, with money and popularity and everything the Greasers are jealous of—along with a strong opinion that they're better than everybody else.

The Greasers, on the other hand, have hardly any money and often resort to theft, smoking, drinking, and fighting the Socs to make themselves feel better.

Ponyboy happens to be a Greaser, and while one would think that automatically classifies him and his friends as bad people, that's not the case at all. In fact, Ponyboy makes out very well in school – a future track star, honor roll, etc.

Pony's parents are dead, so he lives with his two supportive brothers and a group of really good friends who are also Greasers. But, like the rest of their social class, Ponyboy and his gang get caught up in fights with the Socs.



Pony happens to be there when Johnny, one of his gang mates, (who was actually attacked by Socs a few months before and has been scared of his own shadow ever since) takes things a little too far. Unsure of what to do as newly classified juvenile delinquents, he and Johnny go to their friend Dally, who is quite the criminal himself, for help. Then the real fun begins...

Written in a time period when real-life teenage issues were not really something to write about, *The Outsiders* captures the views of a made-up boy in a real world. A dramatic, thrilling voice rings throughout the whole story, urging you to read on.

This wild ride of a book takes you right back to 1965 where you can watch the whole thing unfold. Given the choice, I'd read this book a thousand times before putting it down. Five stars, and, of course, my compliments to the chef!

Be sure to stock up with plenty of good books for the holidays! Here are a few suggestions:

- *Flowers for Algernon* by Daniel Keyes
- *The Phantom Tollbooth* by Norton Juster
- *A Wrinkle in Time* by Madeleine L'Engle
- *Charlotte Sometimes* by Penelope Farmer
- *Notes from the Midnight Driver* by Jordan Sonnenblick

Home is the Place to Be



**By Abigail Searles
Tusker Tribune Staff**

Home is where I feel safe. It is where I can feel loved. Where no one judges me. Where I have my quiet place. I will never leave my home.

My parents will always be there for me. There is no one I love more than my mom and dad. They help me through hard times, they push me to do great things and they made me who I am today.



My siblings. We may get in fights but I will always love them. They tell me wrong from right and good from evil. They are my best friends and I could not have wished for a better family.

My bedroom. My safe place. My castle. My getaway, from the crazy outside world. I may share it but it is still mine. My bed, my clothes, my room.

I love my house. I will always feel safe, and nothing can change that. Nothing.

The Story Behind Chanukah



**By Noah Volkman
Tusker Tribune Staff**

As the holiday season is here, I wanted to share a little bit about Chanukah as I celebrated it and got some pretty cool gifts:

Date: December 12, 2017-December 20, 2017.

History behind the holiday: Jews all around the world celebrate Chanukah, or the Festival of Lights, for two reasons.

One reason Chanukah is celebrated is for the victory of the Maccabees. Judah Maccabee, a Jewish man from thousands of years ago, and his small army of farmers, had to fight in a war against the Romans who had large, powerful weapons. The Maccabees miraculously won!

The second reason for celebration is for the



oil. After the Romans destroyed the First Temple, a few months later the Jews had come back to pray on Shabbat. They didn't have light switches back then, and it was getting dark out, so they couldn't see very well. The rabbi suggested they find oil and light a candle. So they went around the dark, damaged Temple in search of oil. They eventually found a little, just enough

for one night. So they gave it a shot, and it worked.

But the next day, they worried that the oil was burned away. But it wasn't. Neither was it the next six nights, hence the Festival of Lights. The oil is also why we eat fried food like latkes (potato pancakes) and sufganyot (jelly doughnuts).

Have a happy holiday and a relaxing and/or fun break!

Lundqvist's Improvement Sparks Rangers



**By Matt Tavares
Tusker Tribune Staff**

The King is back!!!! Finally! Hank is starting to play. The goaltender in the world's most famous arena is finally starting to play well.

Henrik Lundqvist, the goaltender for the New York Rangers is playing much better than he did at the beginning of the season. Lundqvist is 17-8-2 with a goal against average of 2.59 and a save percentage of .920.

Though Hank is picking up his game, it doesn't mean he will play like this forever. He can be very scary sometimes.

I think if he continues to play well with this tremendous confidence, then he might be able to win his first cup with the Rangers. Let's go Rangers!



This Flu Season Could Be the Toughest Yet



**By Andrew Fusco
Tusker Tribune Staff**

This year is expected to be the worst for flu. There are many different flu types and they keep changing.

People should get a vaccine but it only prevents between 1 to 4 types depending on the flu vaccine. It is possible to die from the flu but isn't common, as about 36,000 people die from it a year.

You can die because flu causes inflammation the lungs which get so inflamed that it becomes impossible for oxygen to flow through. Symptoms include a high-grade fever up to 104 degrees Fahrenheit, chills and shakes,



extreme tiredness, aches, cough/sore throat, and vomiting or stomach pain.

The NSH (National Health Service) states that 2017 will be the worst year for flu and hospitals will have a hard time as flu levels are predicted to be high. The best medication to fight the flu is Tamiflu. It is a medication you take by mouth but will only work in the first 2-3 days you start to feel

the symptoms.

As someone who had the flu, this works well, as I was only sick at home for a week. I do recommend that you get flu vaccine as it has been updated and is the best way to prevent the flu.