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Being Cool to Your School—Spirit Week 2025



**By Sofia Mendoza
and Natalie Chery
Tusker Tribune Staff**

Last Thursday was the Somers Middle School pep rally, a major part of Spirit Week!

Every grade was able to dress in a certain color because of the Spirit Week Theme color wars: sixth graders wore blue, seventh graders wore pink, and eighth graders wore white.

Other themes for the week were pajama day, hobby day, and twin day!

Being able to see all the people wearing their unique outfits for each theme was so fun and exhilarating and we hope to share the same feelings with you once you see the joyous and chaotic photos taken at that moment.

The games that were played at the pep rally were Human Hungry Hungry Hippos, where two partners try and collect as many balls as they could using laundry baskets, the Pizza Box Challenge where you try and knock out other players pizza boxes while balancing your own, Volleyball, where it was teachers verse students, Musical Chairs, and the Three-Legged Race.

The Three-Legged Race, Hungry Hungry Hippos and Volleyball were all played in the gym while the other games were played in the auditorium.

Congratulations to all the winners of the games and to all the participants. Thank you so much, Student Council, for helping Spirit Week and the Pep Rally come together.



VFW Patriot's Pen Writing Contest



**By Olivia Pelhank
Tusker Tribune Staff**

This is a second essay Olivia wrote for the Daughters of the American Revolution writing contest about Our Voice in American Democracy. It starts with an explanation of the Veterans of Foreign Wars as an introduction to her essay.

Who are the VFW?

VFW stands for Veterans of Foreign Wars. A veteran is anyone who has served in the U.S. Armed Forces – the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines, Space Force or Coast Guard. When they completed their service, they received what is called an “Honorable Discharge”. Some of our veterans were stationed in other countries and have been in combat. Twenty-six of our presidents were military veterans. Somers has a group of veterans who invite us to think about and write about a topic each fall as we approach Veterans Day on November 11.

My Voice In America's Democracy

There are many people in the world who have made changes. And not just adults. Kids, too, have changed the world for the better. When people think about their Voice in America's Democracy, they think of voting. But really, you can be any age to start making changes or be involved. I represent America's future. My voice is heard.

Jaylen Arnold has changed the world by trying to put an end to bullying. He has helped



many students, and he started at the young age of eight years old. He made a change in the world, without having to vote. His voice was heard.

My voice can be heard, and I can make a difference just like Jaylen Arnolds. At a young age, I researched a lot about plastic being thrown into the ocean. I have informed others and made presentations about how plastic negatively affects the ocean. I didn't do anything extreme, but I made a difference.

Another topic I love to research about is other countries' rights, freedoms, and privileges. Not all countries have the same freedoms as we Americans do. I like to keep informed about issues not only in America but all around the world.

I am curious about what is happening in our country, and I am eager to learn more. I might not be able to vote but I represent America's future, and when I am 18, I will register to vote. Even though that is 6 years away, I can still make changes and petition local leaders.

A quote I love is, “learn about the past, enjoy the present, and prepare for the future.” This is one of my favorite quotes because I think it's important to learn about stuff in the past but be able to embrace the present. In the future, I will be able to vote. But in the present, my voice can still be heard in America's democracy.

To wrap up, I may be a kid, but I am important to America's democracy. I can make a difference to America; in the future, and in the present. My voice is heard.

Japanese Schools, Dopamine and Art in the Olympics



**By Marina Curry
Tusker Tribune Staff**

Brilliant School Rules
Marina attended school in Japan before moving to Somers.

In Japanese schools, there are a lot of rules. One is that until you are in second grade, you must wear a bright yellow hat so that drivers passing by can see you.

You might be thinking, “Why would they need a hat when they're going to be on a bus?” Well, the thing is, most kids do not ride school buses. There are no school buses in Japan unless you go to a private school. So from first grade to sixth grade, we walk to school. Most people where I lived in Japan did not have cars.



In Japan, we also have we have this type of ribbon on your backpack. The ribbons are in different colors depending where you live, so if something were to happen, officials would know where to search based on the ribbon you have on your backpack. I think it is a brilliant Idea just for safety.

Dopamine

Dopamine is a chemical that's released

when you do something that makes you feel good. Because of that, you want to repeat doing that thing over and over. That could be good unless it's something having to do with a bad habit. Then it could be bad for you.



Dopamine is essential in the brain's wiring system. It can bring excitement and positive feelings when you need them.

Art in the Olympics

Did you know Olympic medals were once awarded for masterpieces instead of muscle?

At the 1924 Olympics in Paris, artists competed just like athletes, presenting works in painting, sculpture, architecture, literatures, and music, all inspired by sport. Judges crowned winners with gold, silver and bronze medals, just like in athletic events. The painting category saw 193 entries alone!



This unique blend of creativity and competition continued until 1948, making the Olympics a true collaboration of both physical and artistic achievement. Imagine a world where art and sports share the podium!

Lilo and Stitch Movie is Worth Seeing



By Allison Posadas
Tusker Tribune Staff

I saw the new Lilo & Stitch movie on May 24th and today I am going to be talking about how the movie was like.

From the very start, it had the same sweet, bittersweet heart the original had. Lilo still feels like the same misunderstood, lovable, stubborn little girl who just wants to belong. And Stitch...



well he is chaotic, funny and weird, but the love he has for Lilo, and her family is so powerful. It felt so real.

There was one scheme that completely broke me, which was when Stitch was getting on the

spaceship, and he turned back to say goodbye. He didn't even have to speak. The way he looked at them, like they were his whole world, was enough. You could feel how much it hurt him to leave. I almost cried due to that scene, just watching the silent moment of love and hesitation. And that's what love looks like when there aren't enough words.

And then what really got me was when Nani, *Lilo's older sister* stepped in and saved Stitch. She didn't have to; she had already lost so much. But she did it anyway. That's what love looks like too. And I left the movie theater with a full heart.



Spotify Sets the Standard for Music Streaming



By Allison Posadas
Tusker Tribune Staff

Today I am going to tell you how Spotify was created.

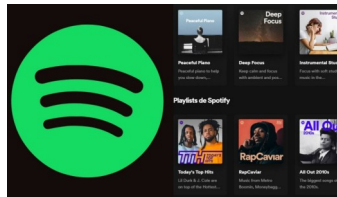
In 2006, two Swedish entrepreneurs, Daniel Eck and Martin Larenson, embarked on a mission to change the way the world experienced music. Frustrated by the growing piracy problem in the music industry, they envisioned Spotify. A legal and user-friendly streaming platform, their idea was simple yet revolutionary. Provide instant access to a vast library of music anytime, anywhere.

Working from a small office in Stockholm, Eck and Larenson developed a streaming service

that combined convenience with high quality audio. They negotiated with record labels to secure a large catalog of music, offering a free ad supported service alongside a premium subscription model.

In 2008, Spotify was launched in Europe to widespread acclaim. Its intuitive interface and vast music selection quickly attracted millions of users. Spotify's success paved the way for a shift in the music industry, emphasizing streaming over traditional sales and downloads.

Today, Spotify is synonymous with online music streaming, boasting millions for songs, podcasts, and a global userbase. Its inception and growth reflect a transformation in music consumption driven by innovation, collaboration and a commitment to user experience.



The 'People's Car' Would be Fun to Drive



By Allison Posadas
Tusker Tribune Staff

Have you ever wondered about the history of the Volkswagen Beetle car?

Well, if you have today, I am going to be talking about it.

The Volkswagen Beetle was created by Ferdinand Porsche during the period of Nazi Germany. This Beetle gained global popularity in the 1950s as a symbol of reliability and affordability appealing to young people seeking an alternative to mainstream cars.

Over the years this Beetle had changes and updates, but its basic shape and rear engine layout remained consistent. The first version of the beetle



was in production for 65 years. Fun fact: the Volkswagen beetle has four seats but only two doors. Yeah, you're going to have to get into the back row somehow.

The Volkswagen Beetle is also one of my dream cars. Why, you may ask? Well, here is why. First off, the Volkswagen beetle comes in many colors, and the color I want is a beige looking color which I think looks cool. I also want a Volkswagen Beetle because some Volkswagen Beetles are convertibles, which would be great for the summer.

That's all the reasons why I want a Volkswagen beetle. Yes, it may not be too many reasons, but personally I like the look of the car.

Bat/Bar Mitzvah Symbolizes Adulthood in the Jewish Faith



**By Elizabeth Alonzo Javier
Tusker Tribune Staff**

What is a Bat Mitzvah? Let's find out! A Bat Mitzvah is a significant coming-of-age ceremony in Judaism for girls, occurring when they turn 12 years old.

The term "Bat Mitzvah" translates to "daughter of commandment" in Hebrew. I never knew that! It signifies that the girl is now responsible for her own actions and is obligated to observe the commandments of Jewish law.



During the ceremony, she is often called to the Torah to recite a portion,

marking her formal acceptance into the Jewish community. This event is not only a religious milestone but also a celebration of Jewish women's empowerment and their roles within the community. Jewish coming of age ritual for girls!



A Bar Mitzvah is typically celebrated when a boy turns 13 years old, while a Bat Mitzvah is usually held when a girl turns 12 or 13 years old. The term "Bar Mitzvah" means "son of the commandments."

A Little Bit of History About Color



**By Elizabeth Alonzo Javier
Tusker Tribune Staff**

What's the history of colors? Let's dive into the fascinating world of color theory and explore a little bit of its rich history.

This journey will talk a little about color theory and how it influenced art, design and culture, especially in the 19th century. By the end, you'll have a better understanding of how color theory has evolved and why it's so important in our daily lives.

Color theory is the study of how colors mix, match, and contrast with each other. It's a science



and art that has been around for centuries, influencing everything from painting and fashion to interior design and digital media. I think that's pretty fascinating.

But where did it all begin? The 19th century was a golden age for color theory. Artists and scientists alike were exploring new ideas about color. One of the most influential figures from this period is Michel Eugène Chevreul.

One good example of color theory is how it was used by Impressionist painters. Their work was all about using complementary colors to create vibrant, luminous effects. Which is why I find art very interesting!

Band is a Really Cool Activity



**By Allison Posadas
Tusker Tribune Staff**

Are you interested in doing something cool? Well, I have a good idea—join band!

I participate in band and I play the clarinet, (if you're wondering). Being in band has affected my life in many ways. For example, I've felt calmer, it fosters teamwork, communication, and it develops valuable life skills, and provides a platform for creative expression and social connection.



If you are interested in music, band is great for you! As a part of a band, members will get to play all sorts of music styles and will likely get some music theory, and music history thrown in from time to time with the conductor's instruction.

The fact that mu-

sic can help people relax and de stress (I can agree it's true—I've been so relaxed) really helps a lot.

This is about your own experience. How often do you listen to music to unwind from a busy day or to drift off to sleep? Studies have shown that playing an instrument can lower cortisol levels, which can lead to a decrease in anxiety levels.

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Jellyfish Play an Important Role in the Ocean's Ecosystem

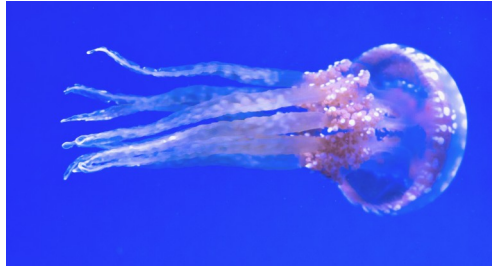


**By Allison Posadas
Tusker Tribune Staff**

Jellyfish, also known as jellies, are fascinating marine animals found in oceans worldwide. They are not actually fish but belong to a group called *cnidarians*.

Jellyfish have a bell-shaped body made of a gelatinous substance. This bell, or medusa, helps them move through the water by pulsating. They possess long, stinging tentacles that contain nematocysts, tiny structures at which venom injects to capture prey.

Jellyfish have a unique life cycle, starting as polyps attached to the seabed. They then develop into the medusa form, capable of reproduc-



tion. They reproduce asexually, releasing eggs and sperm into the water, leading to the formation of larvae. Jellyfish play a vital role in the marine ecosystem. They are both predators and prey contributing to the old web. Their populations can fluctuate significantly, sometimes leading to jellyfish blooms, which can

have both positive and negative effects on other marine life.

Jellyfish are remarkable creatures because of their unique characteristics and an important role in the ocean's delicate balance. Their simple yet fascinating existence makes them a captivating subject for study.

Facts About The Bearded Seal



**By Allison Posadas
Tusker Tribune Staff**

The bearded seal is a fascinating marine mammal found in the Arctic and sub-Arctic regions. These seals can easily be identified by their prominent whiskers, or vibrissae, which give them their name. These aren't just to show; they're crucial for finding food on the ocean floor.

Bearded seals are relatively large, reaching lengths up to 2.4 meters which is 8 feet and weighing up to 400 kilograms which is 880 pounds! Their bodies are streamlined for efficient swimming in cold waters. They possess a thick layer of blubber for insulation against



freezing temperatures and a dark grey or brown coat that provides camouflage against the rocky seabed. Their powerful flippers help them navigate icy waters and dig into the seafloor for prey.

Bearded seals are bottom feeders, meaning they primarily hunt on the ocean floor. Their specialized vibrissae sense the vibrations of their prey buried in the sediment. They mainly consume invertebrates like clams, worms, and crustaceans, using their strong jaws and teeth to crack open shells. Their diet varies depending on the region and available food sources.

Unicorn Myth May Have Originated from the Narwhal



**By Allison Posadas
Tusker Tribune Staff**

The narwhal (*Monodon Monoceros*) is a truly enigmatic creature of the Arctic Ocean, instantly recognizable by its single, prominent tusk.

This impressive, spiraled tooth, which can reach lengths of up to 10 feet, has captivated humans for centuries, leading to myths and legends surrounding this elusive marine mammal.

Beyond its striking appearance, the narwhal possesses a complex social structure and plays a crucial role in the Arctic ecosystem. Nar-



whals are medium sized whales, typically reaching lengths of 13 to 16 feet. Their smooth, grayish-white skin provides excellent camouflage in the icy waters they inhabit. Beneath the skin lies a thick layer of blubber, essential for insulation in the frigid Arctic environment.

The males are easily identifiable by their unique tusk, which is actually a left incisor tooth. While the function of the tusk remains partially mysterious, recent research suggests it may play a role in sensing changes in water pressure, aiding navigation and communication. Females lack this prominent tusk.

The Great White Shark is a Powerful Predator



**By Allison Posadas
Tusker Tribune Staff**
The Great

White shark is one of the ocean's most powerful predators. These magnificent features are found in coastal surface water across the globe, and they play a crucial role in maintaining. Their size and hunting prowess make them apex predators, meaning they are at the top of the food chain.

Great White sharks are easily recognizable by their large size powerful bodies, and distinctive grey coloring. They can grow to over 20

feet long and weigh several tons. Their bodies are streamlined for speed and efficiency in the water.



Their powerful jaws are equipped with rows of sharp, triangular teeth, perfectly designed for catching and tearing prey.

Keen sense, including an excellent sense of smell and electroreception (detecting electrical fields), helps them locate prey even in dark or murky waters. Great white sharks are ambush predators. They

rely on stealth and surprise to capture their prey. Using their exceptional sense, they locate seals, sea lions, and other marine mammals.

Lots to Learn About Axolotls



**By Allison Posadas
Tusker Tribune Staff**

Axolotls are one of my favorite animals. An axolotl is a type of salamander that is up to 30cm long. Did you know axolotls can regenerate lost limbs and organs? Yeah, I didn't either but if you did that's amazing!

Axolotls can stay young throughout their lives which I didn't know. That's insane! As well as gills, axolotls have also developed lungs. They are of the few features in earth that use gills and

lungs to breathe. Here are some random interesting fun facts about these fascinating creatures!



- Did you know axolotls vary in color from brown to pink to green!? (I honestly thought they were just pink)
- Axolotls have webbed feet and a long tail to aid with swimming.
- Axolotls have a varied diet. They eat anything from worms to molluscs to every small fish and insect.

That's all for now. I hope you have loved all of my studies so far!

And I hope you learned a lot from my studies.

Thank India and England for Giving Us Badminton



**By Elizabeth Alonzo Javier
Tusker Tribune Staff**

When was badminton officially a sport, you may be asking? Well let's talk about this sports history!

Badminton was on its journey to becoming an Olympic sport, which lasted several decades. The game was originated in India and England. Badminton was not officially recognized as an Olympic sport until the 1992 Olympic Games in Barcelona. Before that, it had been a demonstration sport at the 1972 Munich Olympics.

The year 1893 marked a significant step in standardizing the rules and regulations of sport. The first All England Open Badminton Championships,

considered the world's first badminton tournament, were held in 1899.

Badminton can be traced to the mid-1800s, where it was created by British military officers stationed in British India. It was originally called "battledore."



Here are some key rules of badminton:

- First to 21 points wins—a game is won by the first player or team to reach 21 points.
- Must be two points clear—unless the score reaches 29-29, the winner must win by a margin of two points.
- Only hit the shuttle once: Each side can hit the shuttlecock only once before it crosses the net.
- No touching the net: players cannot touch the net with their racket or

body during the game.

- Serve from the short service line.

Education in the Past Was Nothing Like it is Today



**By Allison Posadas
Tusker Tribune Staff**

The educational landscape has undergone a dramatic transformation. In the past, schooling was characterized by a rigid and authoritarian structure. Teachers wielded significant authority, and discipline, including corporal punishment in many parts of the world, was often strict.

The primary teaching method relied heavily on rote learning, demanding memorization and recitation of facts. Technological advancements were virtually absent, learning primarily relied on textbooks, often outdated and worn, chalkboard,



and direct instruction lectures from the teacher with minimal student interaction or questioning. The emphasis was on absorbing information rather than understanding concepts.

Class sizes were considerably larger than today's, often exceeding 30 students, resulting in limited individualized attention. The curriculum focused heavily on fundamental subjects like reading, writing, arithmetic, and history with minimal specialized subjects or extracurricular activities.

While standardized testing may have existed, it lacked the prevalence and high stakes nature of modern assessments. Educational resources were scarce, reflecting the economic realities of the time.

Schooling Today is Vital for Your Goals Tomorrow



**By Allison Posadas
Tusker Tribune Staff**

Why is school important?

Well school is important for lots of reasons! First off, it helps you learn stuff. You learn reading, writing, and math which are like the building blocks for everything else. Knowing these things helps you understand the world around you and solve problems.

School also teaches you about history, science, and maybe world language, opening your mind to new ideas and different ways of thinking. It's not just about book smarts, though. Schools



are also a great place to make friends and learn how to work with other people. You learn teamwork in group projects and how to work with other people. You learn teamwork in group projects and how to handle different personalities in class. You'll use these skills your whole life, whether you're working on a project at your job or planning something with your friends.

Finally, school teaches you responsibility. You must show up on which is the hardest for me lol, do your homework on time, and follow the rules. These all are important life skills that will help you be successful in the future.

The Gold Rush of 1849 Changed the Face of the Country



**By Allison Posadas
Tusker Tribune Staff**

The California Gold Rush, beginning in 1848, irrevocably transformed the American West. The discovery of gold at Sutters Mill sparked a mass migration, attracting hundreds of thousands from across the United States and around the globe, all lured by the promise of striking it rich.

This influx of people fundamentally reshaped the demographic, economic, and political landscape of California and the nation. The rush itself was a chaotic and often brutal affair. While some prospectors did find fortune, the vast majority experienced hardship and disappointment. The initial excitement gave way to harsh reality of



backbreaking labor, disease, and competition for scarce resources.

Boomtowns sprang up overnight, characterized by lawlessness, inflated prices, and a volatile social order. San Francisco, initially a small settlement, exploded into a major city, fueled by the influx of gold seekers and the businesses that catered to them.

Beyond the immediate impact on California, the Gold Rush had far-reaching consequences. It accelerated the westward expansion of the United States, fueling territorial disputes and hastening the displacement of Native American population increase led to California's admission to the Union as a free state in 1850, further intensifying the already strained sectional tensions that would eventually culminate in the Civil War.

Depression Doesn't Have to Be Faced Alone



**By Elizabeth Alonzo Javier
Tusker Tribune Staff**

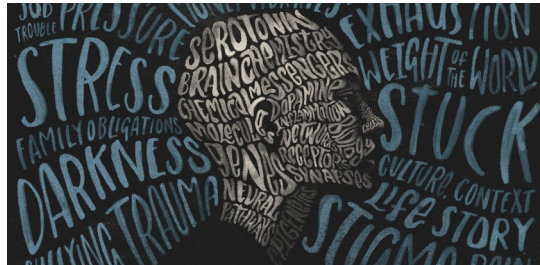
What is depression and how can it be cured?

In 2015, about 3 million teens ages 12 to 17 had at least one major depressive episode in the past year. Women are twice as likely to suffer from depression than men. Over 15 million American adults, around 6.7 percent of the U.S. population age 18 and older, suffer from depression each year. Crazy right? This can affect approximately 1.5 percent of the U.S. population age 18 and older each year.

Persistent depressive disorder, or PDD, (formerly called dysthymia) is a form of depres-

sion that usually continues for at least two years. (about 3.3 million American adults) Depression is a big deal. Clinical depression is a serious condition that causes those who suffer from it to withdraw from loved ones, take dangerous risks or even start conflicts with others. It requires treatment to manage and overcome.

There's no cure for depression, but you still have plenty of options for treatment, all of which can improve your symptoms and minimize their impact on your daily life. At SMS, you have your teachers or other trusted adults, guidance counselors, and Student Assistance Counselor Mrs. Casey.



Marian Discusses Importance of Being Bilingual

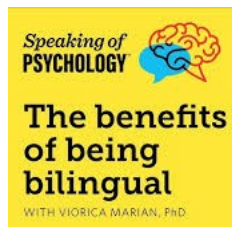


**By Elizabeth Alonzo Javier
Tusker Tribune Staff**

More than half the world's population speaks more than one language.

Viorica Marian, PhD, of Northwestern University, talks about why speaking multiple languages may have far-reaching cognitive benefits, how the bilingual brain processes language, and how the languages we speak shape the way we think and perceive the world. You can go to the American Psychological Association to check out more information!

Let's talk about the expert on bilinguals.



Viorica Marian, PhD, is a psycholinguist, cognitive scientist, psychologist, and writer known for her research on language, bilingualism, and multilingualism. She is the Ralph and Jean Sundin endowed professor of communication sciences and disorders, and professor of psychology at Northwestern University, and is the principal investigator of the Northwestern Bilingualism and Psycholinguistics Research Laboratory.

Her most recent book is The Power of Language: How the Codes We Use to Think, Speak and Live Transform Our Minds. It can really help you see the importance of being bilingual.

Reading Opens Up a Whole New World



**By Elizabeth Alonzo Javier
Tusker Tribune Staff**

Why is reading books so important? Books are important for several reasons: They strengthen your brain.

They increase your ability to empathize. They reduce stress. They build your vocabulary. They allow you to explore new worlds and learn from different perspectives. They improve critical thinking skills. They contain the knowledge of our past, civilizations, and cultures.

For me, I have a specific kind of book that I will read if it hooks me, like a certain genre. Books can be catalysts for change in the world. They often reflect societal realities and can serve as ways to encourage social change, inspiring movements and

altering perceptions,

There are also mental health benefits.

Reading can significantly reduce stress levels, with studies showing that just six minutes of reading can lower stress by two-thirds. Additionally, readers are less likely to suffer from depression.

Reading also helps with cultural preservation: Literature helps preserve cultural identities and traditions, allowing societies to maintain their heritage while adapting to change.

Finally, reading can help shape values and norms. Books influence societal values and norms, shaping how individuals perceive the world and interact with others. Everyone should read at least two to three books on topics that interest them each month.

