

# ALICORN

## CRMS



## *Alicorn Staff*

|                  |                    |
|------------------|--------------------|
| Tessa Borden     | Heidi Maedl        |
| Juliet Conklin   | Peebs Ness         |
| Bailey Elliott   | Dani Sabbagh       |
| Madelynn Elliott | Rae Sieburg        |
| Annie Lincoln    | Isabella Vuittonet |
| Maddie Lincoln   | Lily Zablocki      |

Advisor: Ms. Wojcik



**Halloween Art  
Contest Winner**

*By Lila Yadav*

*Cover created by Alana Smith*

# THE ALICORN

CALKINS ROAD MIDDLE SCHOOL

CREATIVE ARTS MAGAZINE

2025-2026

## Table of Contents

|                                   |       |
|-----------------------------------|-------|
| Two sentence horror stories ..... | 4-5   |
| Spooky short stories.....         | 6-16  |
| Halloween poems.....              | 17    |
| Magic potions.....                | 18-19 |
| Thanksgiving short stories.....   | 20-23 |
| Winter animals & haikus.....      | 24-29 |
| <i>Alicorn</i> Interviews.....    | 30-33 |
| Teacher memories.....             | 34-37 |
| 8th grader memories.....          | 38    |
| Short stories.....                | 40-45 |
| Fun facts.....                    | 46    |



*By Maddie Lincoln*

# Two Sentence Horror Stories

I stepped cautiously onto the moonlight-dimmed beach, just like the note had told me. And then I heard the voice: “We know what you’re hiding.” - **Ava McFall**

There is someone following me. When I turn around, there’s nothing but a shadow.- **Edwin Xu**

I clamped my hand over my mouth, crying as I prayed they wouldn’t find me. My parents were right when they told me not to transfer to an American school.—**Clementine Merrill**

I had always felt insecure, like someone was watching me. Then one day, a prick in my back and everything went black. —**Addison Coyles**

I lived around children my entire life, so I’m used to screaming. But ever since I moved next to that cemetery it became much more common.—**Henry Grower**

Don’t touch the key, or you will regret it. We won’t warn you again. —**Eoin Devaney**

The funeral was extremely hard to get through. I don’t know whether it was the scratching I heard from inside the coffin or the bloodstain on my hand that hasn’t washed off for three days.—**Freya Madsen**



**By Juliet Conklin**

Hello, are you reading this? It was fun watching you sleep at 3:14 A.M.—**Nathaniel Cox**

I heard my name being called from a voice that sounded like my wife who had been dead for a year. I heard that person open the door and next thing I knew, I was in heaven.—**Sunny Raman**

I heard the scream of a steam whistle last night. I live next to a scrapyard, and the tracks are an hour from my house.—**Eddie Popp**

I feel cold and damp lying here. I've been lying here for 300 years.—**Charlie Kay**

My friend isn't talking. I wonder if she can breathe under all that dirt.—**Vera Wight**

My daughter came in to say goodnight to me with a smile that reached so big and wide. That's the last thing I saw before the cold, scaly fingers crawled around my neck.—**Helena Ricotta**



**By Ellie Paulis**

## **Spooky Story Contest Winner**

## *Burn*

*By Heidi Maedl*

It was your average fall day in Salem, Massachusetts; the fire red leaves were falling from the soon to be bare trees, with leaves piled up on the sidewalk. Emmy and her friend Cathy were planning to go on a haunted hayride for the first time. "I'm SO excited!" Cathy said. "Me too!" said Emmy. She was actually terrified of going into the well-known haunted woods. But she didn't want to show Cathy she was a wimp. Maybe she would make an excuse, like she was feeling sick after school and couldn't come or something. "No," she thought to herself, "I'll be brave."

Little did Emmy know this would be her last time being brave.

After school, Cathy's mom drove her and Emmy to the forest next to where the old pilgrim houses were. "You know they used to burn witches in these woods," Cathy's mom said. "Oooo! Spooky!" said Cathy. "Now the hayride will really be haunted!" Great. That's just what Emmy needed to hear.

As Cathy and Emmy boarded the hay filled wagon, Emmy heard a whisper from the woods. "~~We~~ are not gone...~~We~~ are waiting..." A chill went up her spine. Maybe she was just imagining things, right?

The wagon started with a lurch, and they began their expedition through the haunted woods. "This is so exciting!" Cathy squealed. The hayride began with some mediocre Halloween decorations. "Maybe this won't be so scary after all," Emmy thought. But then she heard it again, the whisper. "~~The last we saw was fire...Soon thy shall suffer the same fate...~~" The whisper sounded closer this time making Emmy look around in fear. She looked for Cathy, who was missing. "Cathy?" asked Emmy. She looked for anyone, but everyone else was missing too. All that was left was ashes. And Cathy's necklace, which she never took off.

Suddenly, she turned and saw a figure burning bright red and orange, her body immersed in flames. Emmy screamed and jumped off the back of the wagon, her body trembling as she saw her hands cut open by the trail. The monster was right behind her, staring at her with bright red eyes.

"~~GOODBYE!~~" the figure exclaimed in delight as she engulfed Emmy in flames. ~~The End.~~

# Monsters

**By Fiona McCarthy**

"Amara hurry up!" my friend Winnie shouts from the other side of the door.

"Coming!" I yell back. I try to hurry but it's not easy when you're trying to put your Halloween costume on that's at least three years old. "How does it look? Just as awful as last year?" I say with sarcasm as I stare down at the mysterious stains and rips on my old witch costume.

"Umm, it looks... interesting?" Winnie says. I can see a smirk forming across her face that I know will turn into uncontrollable laughter in about two seconds. "You really need to get a new costume. I don't think a costume from third grade cuts it anymore." I nodded approvingly.

"Winnie, time to go home!" my mom shouts at her from downstairs.

"See you later!" she says as she sprints down the stairs.

I shut my door and inspect the costume some more and find a huge rip in the back. "MOM!" I scream.

She runs upstairs. "Are you ok!?" I nodded, accidentally ripping the costume even more. My mom sighs, "You need a new costume. We can go to the store but clean your room first."

"Ok Mom." I start pulling out things from under my bed. I gasp. I make out dark red glowing eyes and teeth sharper than knives looking back at me. I try to scream but I can't speak or move. Whatever it is crawls towards me revealing long nails that click on the wood of my bedroom floor. Then suddenly it disappears.

"Are you ready Amara?" my mom says from downstairs.

"Coming!" *Was that real?* I think. I run downstairs, hop in the car, and decide it couldn't have been. We get to the store, and I pick out this gorgeous angel costume the has sequins and gems. "Wow," I whisper. My mom and I check out and go home.

I am so excited to wear my costume tomorrow and show it to Winnie. I wonder if it will glow in the moonlight as well. I turn off the lights and bury myself in blankets.

Suddenly the creature emerges again. I look it straight in its face and say, "I know you're not real."

It lunges at me, and I scream. It swallows me up and now I am in a dark place. I can't explain it but when paramedics come to check my body, they say, "She's gone."

Now, sometimes I can hear the outside world and my mom crying at my bedside. And I hear the click of my nails on the wooden floor and notice a faint glow of red that seems to be coming from my eyes.

But that's ok because I like the dark that seems to enclose me under Winnie's bed.

# UNTITLED: A SPOOKY STORY

*By Nikhil Dhakal*

One night, my three friends and I decided to go camping during the middle of the night. I tried to tell them it was a bad idea, but they brushed me off and we went anyway. When we arrived, it was pitch black and cold, so we decided to make a fire. We each got jobs assigned to us. I got the firewood with my friend Jake, and Chase tried to find a good spot to set up camp with Parker. When we got back, we made the fire and cooked some chicken. Jake thanked me for bringing the chicken, but I did not. I thought Chase did, but Chase thought Parker brought it, and Parker thought Bob brought it. We were all very confused but thought nothing of it. The fire was about to go out, so we all went to get more wood for the fire. When we got back, Bob was missing. We waited for him at the camp and after five minutes Spencer came telling us that he could not find Bob. But something about his voice sounded off. After that, I tried to go to the bathroom, but I could not stop thinking about Spencer. When I got back, the only person that was awake was Spencer. He told me that we should go to sleep and so we did. Then the next morning we all packed up. Tim told me that it wasn't so bad, and I agreed that it was a little bit of fun. When we went back to the car, we couldn't fit in. That's when I realized, we came with four. I tried to run but they were already caught up. They started to play with my lifeless body until it was nothing but bone. Don't ask how I am narrating this story if I am dead. Magic.



*By Kai Totin*

# Undead: A Short Story Excerpt

*By Sasha Huang*

My footsteps echo off the wall of a metal hallway. My walk is perfect, measured, and precise. No one could present a better projection of authority than me. I stop in front of the door and check my watch. She is late, as usual. This is why I dislike working with Thessa. She is messy, quiet and shy, the opposite of precise. A tiny part of me likes how she makes me feel superior, does that make me cruel? No.

“Hello,” a voice speaks to me from the shadows of the empty corridor. I despise how easily she can sneak up on people. “Sorry I’m late, there was something I had to take care of first.” As always, her voice is small and devoid of any manners. Anybody else would immediately greet me with respect and adoration in their voice. After all, I am High General, reporting only to the Governor.

“Show yourself, or I will have you convicted for insubordination,” I stand tall, back straight, projecting authority. “Do you understand?” She must, because in an instant Thessa Cirell is standing beside me, her gray eyes look anywhere but mine.

“What’s the job?” She asks. Noticing my frown she adds, “Your Superiority will certainly have an answer.”

I sigh. “Someone has been stealing oxygen rations from the lower bays. The Governor has his best detectives on the case. They will brief us and then we will make the arrests. Understood?” Thessa nods in agreement. I knock on the door in front of us.

“Personally, I’m not sure why I wasn’t paired up with someone with more experience with weapons,” I add. Thessa’s face hardens for a second. Just then, the door slides open and we slip inside. The room is illuminated with a yellow light. Comfortable couches surround a table where the detectives should be. Instead, I see a thick coating of red. Confused, I touch it. The texture is very rubbery and looks slightly reflective.

“It’s not blood,” I turn back to tell a scared looking Thessa. She nods and points behind me.

“Then would you mind explaining what that is?” I turn around and let out a very childlike scream. I shuffle backwards, my mind void of all the control I just had.

A decaying, dirty...Something is walking into the room. Its eyes are dead; it’s skin bloody and pale. A revolting smell fills the room; the smell of something rotten. Lifting a candle, in a horrible breach of protocol, it sets the rubbery substance on fire. The smoke smells sweet, almost

Continued on page 10

## ***Undead continued***

nauseating. A moment before the smoke reaches Thessa and I, I realize what it is. Never taking my eyes off the dead thing in the middle of the room, I grope behind me, one hand raising the collar of my shirt, searching for the door. A woosh of air signals the door opening. Thessa pulls me through the doorframe, quickly shutting the door behind us.

I sink to the floor, my mind flashing images of the scene. That...that *thing* is dead. It's unnatural. I'm so absorbed in my thoughts, I almost miss Thessa speaking.

"...someone needs to report back to the Governor. Surely you can do it?" She says and looks at me. I get up quickly and brush myself off. I clear my throat. I am back in control.

"Of course, I can manage that simple task." Has she heard nothing of my incredible conquests? "Next time we work together, you will be on time." Thessa gives one quick nod and walks off, down the hallway. I steel myself to meet the Governor and walk down the opposite direction.

I stop at the end of the hallway and open the control panel for this section. I quickly shut off the controls for any exits out of that horrific room, locking in whatever is in the room. Feeling lighter already, I [signal](#) two soldiers walking past.

"Yes General?" The taller one asks, face devoid of emotion. He has been trained well. "Did we do something wrong?" I shake my head.

"Watch the exits of F10. Understand?" He nods, just as I knew he would. The soldier next to him speaks.

"But ma'am, we were told to report elsewhere," she says. I turn to her and glare.

"Ordered? By whom? To where? To do what? Answer me." I watch her squirm. Finally, she talks.

"Doctor Vorn, ma'am. He told us that he was acting on the order of Captain Lare. We are to go to the lower bay H and check the oxygen rations," She looks at her comrade who hesitantly nods.

"That's true, ma'am," he says. I slowly look at both of them.

"Ignore those orders. Do what I just told you. Do you understand?" They nod. "And tell Captain Lair that if he doesn't train his soldiers to ignore all other orders when I speak to them, I will have his skin on my wall," The soldiers scurry off like mice to follow my meticulous orders.

After passing through the E and D bays, I finally arrive at the Governor's quarters. I knock sharply on the door. A uniformed recruit opens the door and says,

"Come in. The Governor has been expecting you," After a moment she adds, "High General." I nod and briskly walk into the room. There lounges the man with all the power, eating meat off a platter.

**Continued on page 11**

## ***Undead continued—final section***

“You wanted to see me, General?” The Governor asks. I nod.

“In private, if you don’t mind,” I glance indiscreetly at the new recruits littering the room. With a twirl of his hand, they scamper away. Oh, to wave such power shamelessly and ignorantly. No pun intended.

“Continue,” comes the command. “Surely you have other things to do than bother me and scatter my recruits. After all, you are now High General, though still a teenager,” I nod again.

“Sir, I attended the briefing, as you ordered, at 9:00 today. Upon arrival, I was greeted by a monstrous sight. The room was covered in a red, rubbery substance. Then Thessa Cirell pointed out to me what looked like... a human, sir,” I take a deep breath. “Only it appeared to be long dead and decaying. A rotten smell emanated from its persona, and it set the rubbery substance on fire. The smoke from the fire smelled sweet. I believe the substance was the exact material that you, sir, has been creating with your private team of scientists. I shut off all the exits to the room and sent fully qualified soldiers to watch over the room. I came straight here. It is my impression that Doctor Hale Vorn is attempting to sabotage your plans, in revenge for his ejection from your court of advisors,” I end and tilt my chin up. I have told him all I can.

The Governor appears to be deep in thought. He nods slowly, “It is very possible. The Doctor left my small court of scientists long ago, in disgrace to boot. I wouldn’t put it past him to try to sabotage me. You will interrogate and arrest him, if necessary. Please send notice if you come across my detectives, I haven’t seen them since I told them about the briefing, and from what it sounds like, they never appeared. Do you understand your orders?”

“Yes, sir,” I reply. I turn to leave, but the Governor speaks once more.

“Make sure to send a fire crew to the room before it burns down the entire bay. Alright?” My cheeks burn with shame; I didn’t even think of doing that. I nod and quickly step out of the room.

In the fresh, though metallic air of the hallway, I detect the hint of smoke. Before I can stop a young soldier to fetch the fire crew, one races past me, shouting for water to be brought. With all that set, I begin my trek towards the laboratories. You would think that scientists, held in even more awe than soldiers, would have laboratories farther away from the common folk, on the C bay at least, if not B. Of course, to do that, they would have to move the soldiers. And we don’t like to be moved. However, since the scientists are on the H bay, that is where I’m headed. Among the stench of the poor and rotting, the common folk. Doctor Hale Vorn... he will come clean before I’m through with him.



*By Ramona Anderson*

# ***Untitled: A Spooky Story***

***By Rae Sieburg***

If you have not been able to sleep due to a sound that makes you question your safety, you can understand how Ella Enderson felt during a sleepover with her best friend, Sara Danes. She had been startled awake by a loud noise she couldn't quite make out. Ella glanced at Sara's bed about to wake her, when she realized Sara wasn't there. There was another loud noise, and this time Ella could make it out to be a scraping or dragging noise. She laid back down, hoping it to be nothing, when there was another noise, and Ella threw herself from her makeshift bed and into the hallway. "Hello?" She called out, she scanned the hallway thinking it to be empty, but as she looked closer, she noticed a pair of red, glowing eyes. "Ahh!" She screamed. "Ella, it's just me," said the voice. "OH! Sara, it's you. Sorry, I just got frightened." Sara's hand reached out and grabbed Ella's wrist her nails digging into the skin. "OW! Sara! What was that for!" Sara ignored the question and pulled Ella toward a window and used her nails to break the glass. "Ahhhh! What are you doing!" Sara's eyes flashed red as she took hold of Ella's waist and pushed her into the open hole. Ella tripped Sara and let out a loud scream for help, but no one heard her. "Sara STOP! You're scaring me!", tears of pain and uncertainty were streaming down Ella's face. Light was beginning to seep into the room, and Sara's red eyes flickered as she successfully pushed Ella out the window to her doom! Ella let out a blood curdling scream as the sun began to rise into the morning lit sky. Sara's eyes flickered twice and then turned their normal brown color. "NO! What have I done!" Sara collapsed onto the floor and began to sob.



***By Ning Ning Wu***

# Angela

**By Bailey Elliott**

Tick      Tock      Tick      Tock      Tick      Tock      Tick      Tock

This is the sound of the haunted grandfather clock that scared me as a kid. Come with me as I tell you the story of my aunt Angela.

This story starts back when I was just thirteen years old. I was down in Long Island visiting my estranged aunt who had found her husband dead in their bed and ever since that day we hadn't heard from her. Until now. Just a week ago I got a w from someone I had never heard of, but she claimed to be my Aunt Angela that I had never met before. My parents insisted on my own to visit her to spend "quality family time" with her whatever that means. So, I had no choice really so I obliged that leads us back to Long Island. When I first got to my aunts house it looked normal..... at least from the outside it did. As I stepped foot in that house, I knew I wasn't leaving anytime soon.

## A few minutes of contemplating my life later.....

When I walked into that house, I knew something wasn't right. The ceiling is more like a life size spider web. It was covered and there were holes everywhere in the ceiling, the floors the walls everywhere.... (Pro tip if you ever go to live with your aunt sure, she has a toilet without a hole in it) Anyway my first question was where can she possibly sleep? Answer: on the floor. I eat on the floor. This lady lived on the floor. Apparently once Uncle Fred passed away, she lost everything, so she searched everywhere, hence the holes. And I guess she lost her most prized possession, her grandfather clock. I thought nothing of this weird havoc and just decided to go to sleep and deal with this predicament in the morning. Little did poor innocent this old me know that was the last time I would ever sleep without a few lifetimes of therapy. In the middle of my first night, I w

Tick      Tock      Tick      Tock      Tick      Tock      Tick      Tock

And when I got to the clock, there lay my dead uncle, but something wasn't right, he wasn't dead at all.

He was standing there staring at me and screaming RUN! ANGELA IS COMING FOR YOU LIKE SHE DID TO ME. RUN RUN! PLEASE DON'T LET HER....And then he collapsed dead on the very hole filled floor.

# ***Haunted Halloween***

***By Divya Bhole***

My friend and I were going trick-or-treating when we came to this black, dark, scary house. We didn't know whether we should ring the doorbell for candy or not. It was a huge house so we thought the people might be rich and have very good candy. So, we went up and rang the doorbell.

A voice messaged us "Open the door if you dare, it is open but beware. There is a black cat ready to take off your hat, but make sure you take off your shoes and put them on the mat. Look for our candy, it is hidden inside but there are consequences so have your friend handy. Now it is not too late to leave but when you step you might decide your choice was naïve." We decided it was better just to get candy from other houses, then we realized it was probably just a Halloween prank. After all Halloween is supposed to be scary. We opened the door and once we stepped foot inside, we could not leave. But we thought it could be fun, so we counted to three and stepped inside. BAM! The door shut clicked and we were locked in.

There was a piece of candy on the table with a label on it that said, "EAT ME." I opened the piece of candy and broke it in half and then we each ate half. The black cat came and took my hat, and we took our shoes off and I remembered to put them on the mat.

"Hello, is anyone home?" I called out. No answer. My friend and I looked around and we saw arrows on the ground, so we decided to follow them. As we were walking we noticed a door that lead to the outside of the house, I went off track to try and open the door. It opened! It was then we realized there was another door which was made of glass! The door was locked shut.

"Come on let's go explore some more maybe there will be a window we can climb out of," I said. I expected her to say "okay" or something of the sorts but instead there was no answer.

I searched the whole house terrified then I heard a horrible voice ringing in my head, "have your friend handy" I opened the door we found earlier and stepped back and rammed into the glass door. It hurt and glass scattered everywhere. I ran outside. I searched the street in search of my friend, but she was not found.

I had ran home and rang the doorbell about a million times. My mom answered. She asked me "where were you?" I was so confused.

"Trick or treating," I replied.

"Alone?" asked my friend who appeared behind my mom. Now I was really confused she saw the look on my face and explained. "I was in the bathroom painting my face white to match my costume and you said you would wait outside. When I came out you were gone.

"No," I disagreed. "You came out and went trick or treating with me."

"She has been here the whole time with me," replied my mom.

I started to wonder *who was I with this whole time? And how did they come out of my house?!*

# **The Turf Monster**

***By Anika Sambhus***

“Alright team! Bring it in!” Coach Lydia yelled. “Good work today!” It was 6:30 on a Thursday night. Field hockey practice had just ended, and everyone was packing up. Priya took a sip of water, then slid her field hockey stick back into her bag.

“Hurry up, Priya!” Priya’s friend Jenny yelled.

“Gimme a second!” Priya replied.

“I just have to ask Coach Lydia about something.” Priya ran over to her coach. “Hey coach! I was just wondering when our next tournament is?”

“October 26<sup>th</sup>,” her Coach replied. “Are you coming?”

“Of course!” Priya replied.

“Alright, I’ll see you there!”

Priya walked to her bag; but suddenly- it went all black, and she collapsed to the ground. When Priya woke up next, she found herself next to a huge maze. She got up and looked around. There were spiderwebs everywhere, and the grass on the ground was gray. She walked around and found a little cat on the ground. She crouched down next to it.

“Are you okay, little guy?” Priya asked.

Suddenly, the cat’s head jerked up, and its eyes rolled into the back of its head. Priya jumped back in horror. The cat started talking in a hoarse and raspy voice:

“The only way back.... it's the maze!” It said, then fell lifelessly to the ground.

Priya got up and turned back to the maze. “If the only way out is the maze,” Priya whispered. “I’m gonna have to go through it.” She walked into the maze and kept walking straight. Suddenly, she saw a shadow in the corner of her eyes. She turned around quickly, but she saw nothing there.

“I’m probably just seeing things,” Priya whispered, trying to reassure herself. She kept walking and saw the shadow again. Except now, it wasn’t a shadow. It was a monster. Priya ran. She ran, and she ran, until she was out of breath, and there it was again. Sharp teeth, slime dripping off its back, claws as sharp as knives. She slid back behind the corner. Priya could feel the monster’s breath on her back, his growls in her ears, its slime dripping on her shoulders. So, she ran some more. She ran until finally, she saw light coming from around the corner, just to find a light, and a dead end. She looked around behind her, and she saw the monster. Then, everything went black.

“Priya! Priya! Are you awake?!” Jenny yelled, shaking Priya’s shoulders.

“Yeah, I’m awake,” She replied. She was back on the turf, but how?

**WAS IT ALL HER IMAGINATION?**

## *Halloween poem: The Creep*

**By Peebs Ness**

He stalked me  
He watched me  
Always behind me  
Like he had a plan  
I sat alone on the bench  
Heart beating, scared  
What to do?  
I heard him whisper.  
“The deed will be done.”  
Dead soon.  
I turned.  
Knife to my back.  
Gone now  
Because of the creep...



**By Ellie Paulis**

ELLIE  
PAULIS | 6th  
GRADE

## **The Man**

**By: Maddie Lincoln**

I hid in my closet, praying the man wouldn't find me.  
Brains out of his head; the sight would blind me.  
The smell of blood, lingering on his breath,  
I could swear he would cause my ultimate death.  
As I tell this story, he is tracking me down.  
Threatening to bury me 6 feet underground.  
He has found me, so remember me, please, do not lie,  
Remember me please, for I have died.

# What Kind of Spell

## HAPPY POTION

*By: Peebs Ness*

This happy potion causes you or anyone you use it on to be happy for a whole day. Please remember this can be used for good and bad purposes. Be good please.... It stills hurts!!!! Mhahahahah!

Happy potion warning: If specimen does not use potion properly then they will be sad permanently and stuck in a world of pain and will not stop giggling.

Just drink the potion and say, "Happiness come to me!" When casted correctly this will give you happiness for a day.

Happy Potion Ingredients list:

A pure tear of joy,  
A piece of an Alicorn's hair,  
Moon dust,  
A scale of a mermaid,  
A dragon flame,  
A shark's fin.



*By Heidi Maedl*

# Would You Create?

## A Potion for Inspiration: By Morrigan Trilady

*By Tessa Borden*

When I was a kid, my parents would take my sisters and I to the wild moors of England every summer. It was my happy place, and I looked forward to our trip every year. One year my mother sent me out to gather ingredients for a spell. I ended up picking up too much heather and not wanting to waste it, my sisters and I created this recipe. Hope it makes your life just a little more magical!

- Morrigan Tri

You need:

- . Two toads worth of wild heather
- . Five dollops of maiden's blush
- . Pencil shavings from a writer's pencil
- . A just right amount of Water
- . Burned pages of a diary; stained with tears
- . A pinch of controversy

Mix all of the ingredients together into a rusted bucket on a summer afternoon in the woods. Then, pour it into a vile. Whenever you are in a creative runt, just take a sip! The ideas will come in no time!

**Warning:** Do NOT drink it all at once, this leads to hallucinations of the 4<sup>th</sup> degree, dizziness, a Deus Ex Machina, and/ or a collection of animals surrounding you, Disney princess style. Trust me, it is Not fun.



*By Tessa Borden*

# Reunited: A Thanksgiving Story

*By Peebs Ness*

It was the week before Thanksgiving break, and everyone was so excited to be going home next week. But mostly me. I hadn't seen my family for years. Attending a college in New York was the hardest decision I ever made. Especially, when your family lives in Seattle. Growing up I was always a smart kid; I loved school and my family. It was in high school when things started to change. I was still the same kid, but my family was different. It's a long story but it ended in divorce. I didn't take it well so when I found out I got into my dream school at NYU I just left. I wanted to get as far away as possible. I always assumed I would go home for breaks. But, I was too busy or maybe I just didn't want to go back. But my schedule finally cleared. I walked into the commons and sat down next to my friend Mia.

"Are you excited for the break?!" I asked excitedly.

"Yeah," she said, "but what about you? Things didn't end well when you were last with your family."

"I know, but I want to go home; I am ready now. Besides staying on campus every year without my bestie is the worst!"

"Hah, I knew you needed me!" Mia chuckled a few times and stopped. "Now for more serious matters," Mia said impersonating her dad. He always said that when he wanted to change the conversation. "I have an improvisation test three day before the big break."

I groaned "I have to take that too! But it will be worth it cause I get to go on my first break ever."

It was finally the big day. I had packed my luggage and was ready to go. The announcement for my flight came and I ran to my plane. I found my seat and sat down. Quickly people started to sit down, and the flight attendants came by. I got myself a bag of cookies, after all it would be a long trip. I pulled out my phone and texted Mom I was coming home, and I would see her tomorrow. I plugged in my headphones and put on a movie.

It was a long flight, but I finally got there. Back in Seattle once more. I walked off the plane and smelled that fresh Seattle air. I picked up my phone called an Uber and sat on the bench. I had waited a little then the car came. I hopped in and my driver drove me home.

**Continued on page 21**

I got out of the car and stared at my house. I walked up the driveway and felt like a kid again. This was going to be perfect. I stepped onto the porch and rang the doorbell with my suitcases in hand. Then the door swung open and out stepped Ma.

"Ma!" I shouted, "I missed you!"

Ma and I hugged, and she led me inside. She took me up to my room and was talking gleefully about everything that had happened.

"Oh, and I should have told you this earlier but" Ma was just about to tell me something important when the door opened.

"Honey I am home," the voice said. I froze, I knew that voice, it was Dad.

"Oh, honey I am so sorry I didn't tell you earlier, me and your dad got re-married. You were just so busy becoming a famous actor we didn't tell you."

*Well so much for my perfect break*, I thought. Dad was here **that** was going to be a doozy. I sat down. I realized it was my fault I was so busy, heck I wouldn't even go to the wedding if I were invited. Dad left us all those years ago and I don't forgive or forget that. I sat down at the table for dinner. I was about to what reunited the spark. When Mom started to speak. "We met at the deli," Ma said before I could ask anything. *The deli!!!* I thought. What wonderful perfect place to fall in love and you didn't even tell your daughter. "In June," Ma continued. *Oh great*, I thought six whole months back. "I met your father again and well we dated a few months and we got re-married."

"Wait, how many months," I asked curiously.

But then I got an answer from the person I didn't want one from.

"Two months," Dad said. I froze. To make the situation even worse they dated 2 months. 2 months! I was shocked. Didn't Ma remember how he left us?!

Ma kicked me under the table. "He's trying honey," she whispered.

I stared at Ma "not a little kid anymore Ma," I said loudly and proudly. Ma turned away from me.

"Anyway, that is the story and honey people can change."

"Yeah, but not him," I whispered underneath my breath. Ma kicked me again. I don't know why but it felt like the dinner dad left. Everyone silent and Ma trying to make conversation so she wouldn't cry. But in this situation, I was Ma trying not to cry. I did the most childish thing I have ever done. I left the table and went to bed. Thanksgiving was tomorrow and I had nothing to be thankful for.

A few hours passed by and I heard the door creak open. The sound scared me like a horror movie during a death scene. I jumped out of bed like a rabbit. I expected it to be Ma coming to talk to me about dinner. But it wasn't. It was Dad. I flipped the light switch and stared at his face.

Continued on page 22

"What are you doing here?" I know I was a little rude, but I couldn't help myself.

"Just checking up on you," Dad said.

"No," I said, "what are you doing in my life again?"

"I married your Ma what else would I be doing here," Dad asked.

"I don't know what you're doing here. I wish you weren't here if anything."

Dad sat down. "You want to know about the biggest mistake of my life?"

"What?" I asked.

"Leaving you," Dad said. I watched him; he was trying not to cry. "I never should have done that. Never."

I clearly didn't have Dad's strength because the second he said that I cried. I cried like rain during a thunderstorm. Yeah, that hard.

"Dad," I whispered. "I needed you in my life. I missed you horribly. It was hard because Ma would leave the room to cry a lot and I would cry all alone. It took a few months for us to recover. I know I made it worse by leaving but people deal with sadness differently. I needed my Dad to help me in life. I needed him to be there when I got into NYU."

"Darling, I love you." Dad wrapped his arms around me and he finally broke down; he started crying hard. I hugged Dad back.

"Dad," I whispered softly. "We both made a lot of mistakes. But we fixed them. Because do you want to know the biggest mistake I ever made?"

"What?"

"Not forgiving you sooner." Dad hugged me.

"I love you, I love you, I love you." Dad repeated it over and over again. And I loved him too.

.....  
It was Thanksgiving afternoon, and everyone gathered around the table.

"Let us start by saying what we are grateful for. I can start us off," Ma said. "I am grateful to be reunited with my husband."

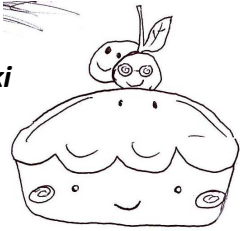
"I am grateful to back where I belong," Dad said.

I stared at Dad. "I am grateful to be reunited with my family. And I am grateful to say I have a Dad. No, no I meant a Pa." I picked up my phone. Ma was about to kick me when I held it up. "And look my schedule just cleared up."

"You are coming back?" Ma said eagerly.

"Yes, nothing is better than being reunited with my family." I smiled. "Happy Thanksgiving."

By Lily  
Zablocki



# The Pumpkin Pie

By: *Maddie Lincoln*

My life, as a mere pie, has easily been a sad one. No one has ever taken me home, and today's the evening of Thanksgiving. I will not be picked this year. Or any year. I will be left in this stupid store until I become an old, rotten, pumpkin pie!

"EGGHHH!" I scream in agony. Well, not exactly a scream, but a pie version of a scream. The chocolate pie, in the section next to me, asks me why my screams of agony are escaping my mouth.

"Oh, I have not been picked this year for Thanksgiving. I will never be picked, ever! Oh, I could just cry." I told him the sad story of how my fate is already sealed as a pie to stay on the shelf.

"You have cried for your whole life," the chocolate pie said. "You've only been here for a little less than a year, and every holiday, you've cried. Fourth of July, Halloween, National Pie Day, etcetera. Plus, you haven't even been here as long as the other pies! Hank, the apple pie has been here just about his whole life. He's getting Piementia by now! Forgetting who he is and where he is."

Conveniently, we heard Hank's voice coming from across the aisle. "Who am I? Where am I?" He chants repeatedly.

But what is this? As Hank chants, I hear gentle footsteps clomping through the store. *Step, step, step, step.* A young man! He looks at all the pumpkin pies, looking for the best. I make myself look like the award-winning pie that I am. Something unthinkable happens. He picks me up! Goodbye, pastries galore! I will be on the table this Thanksgiving!

As the man puts me in his car, I look out the window. Long plants and houses go by in a fast blur. I never thought this day would come! You really never know when you will be picked. Quickly, we arrive at the man's home. He grabs me, and I try to memorize everything I see as he walks into his house. Warm environment, long table, people gathered around it. There are some remains of some sort of meat.

"All right everyone, I picked up a pumpkin pie for us!" The young man says. I try to look like the best pumpkin pie I could possibly be. He sets me down, next to the other deserts. I can feel that all the different deserts envy my beauty; I am the star of this show.

A young boy reaches out for a desert on the table. He... I can't be seeing this right. He *chops up* the pie next to me! He... what? He takes a bite out of it! Oh no... will I be eaten at this dinner? I didn't know that! I look up, and, oh dear- I see a knife coming at me, ready to chop me up. Help! Help! He-



**Winter Art  
Contest Winner**

*By Stella Quagliata*

In the treetops high  
In dens dressed with pine needles  
Birds and squirrels sleep

***By Merit Malachowsky***



***By Rithvika Thirumal***

The white polar bears.  
large and ominous pawprints.  
No one will come near.

***By Sophie Linehan***

# Winter Animal Haikus

*By Peebs Ness*

## Wolf

Howls in the moonlight  
Echoes through the cold dark woods  
A pack's long call

## Arctic hare

A white coat hides the hare,  
In the snow he lies hidden frozen,  
Forests with willows bare

## Husky

Cute paws, soft, and warm,  
Talking of winter and what comes  
Lead the pack dear dog

## Fox

The fox waits, stalking,  
His red fur against the snow  
A hunter's keen eye

**Winter Writing  
Contest Winner**



*By Rae Sieburg*



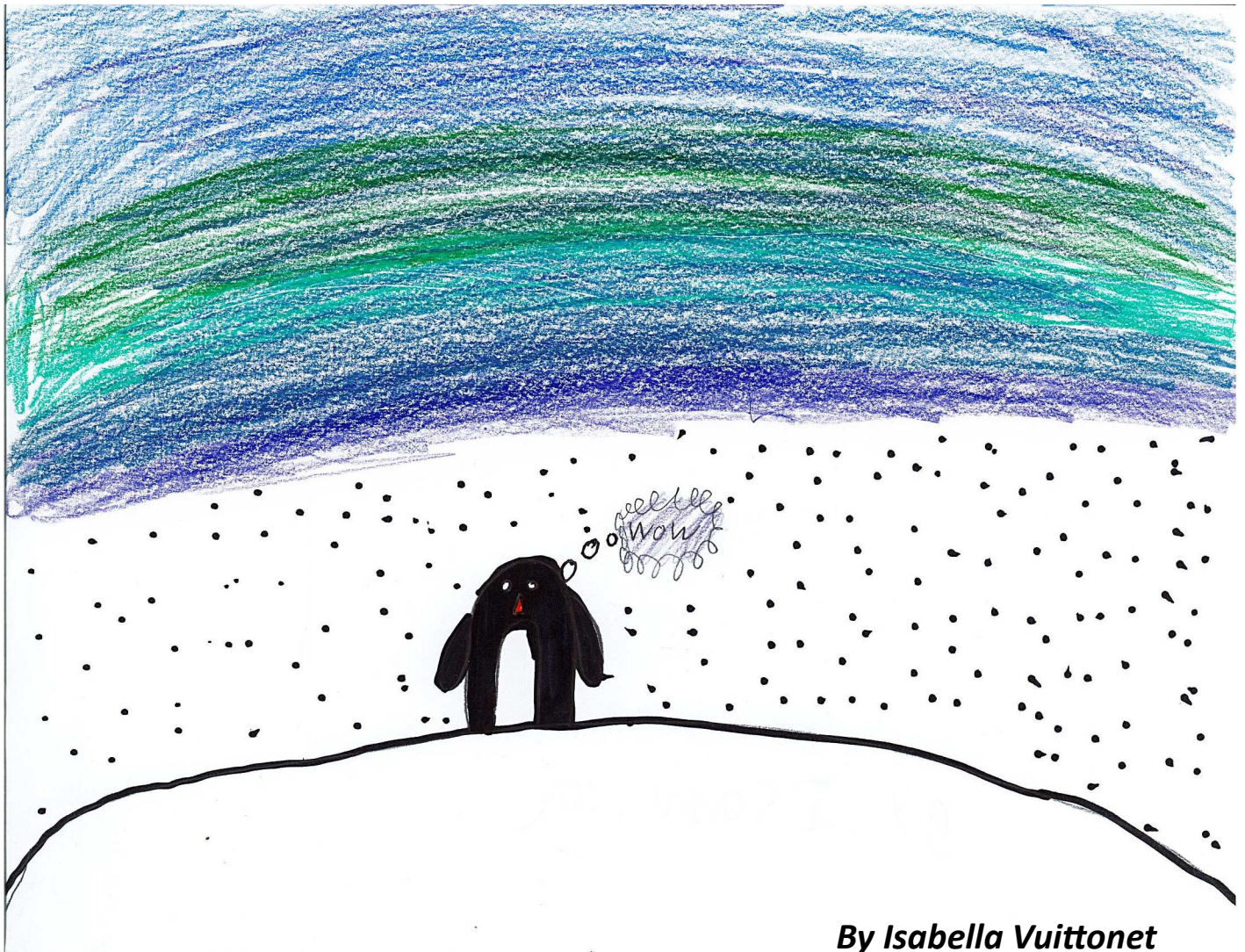
*By Rae Sieburg*

## The Penguin

*By Maddie Lincoln*

Sporting tuxedos,  
Belly sliding down icebergs,  
A raft of penguins!

*By Emily Owens*



*By Isabella Vuittonet*

# ALICORN INTERVIEWS

## Green Team Learning Specialist: Mrs. Nicodemus

*By Isabella Vuittonet*

**Q: What will you miss?**

A: The team and the kids.

**Q: What are you planning to do when you retire?**

A: Move to Greenville, find walking trails, see the Grandkids, live in warmer weather, see more family and do more party planning.

**Q: Will you visit?**

A: Yes, if I am in Rochester.

**Q: What are you going to do more often now that you're retired?**

A: Travel and spend more time with family

**Q: What do you like about CRMS?**

A: The spirit, the team and working with littler kids

**Q: What advice do you give future students?**

A: It's OK if something is hard, be positive, and it's about how you learn, do homework, manage time, and have fun.

**Q: What did you like about this year at CRMS?**

A: Having my own room and a smaller number of kids.

**Q: What was fun in your classes this year?**

A: The fun part about my classes was the holiday parties and the arts and crafts.

**Q: Will you wear bling every day even if you're retired?**

A: Yes

**Q: How high do you think the spirit is at CRMS?**

A: Very high

*The Alicorn would like to congratulate Mrs. Nicodemus on her retirement.*



***By Hannah Byas***

# ALICORN INTERVIEWS

## Red Team Math Teacher: Mrs. Morey

*By Madelynn Elliott*

**Q: What year did you start working at CRMS?**

A: I've been working in Pittsford for 28 years, but at CRMS since it opened.

**Q: How many years have you taught in your career?**

A: 33

**Q: What is the biggest change you've seen while working here?**

A: There's been a lot more technology and resources to help students.

**Q: What is your favorite memory of CRMS?**

A: I don't have a favorite memory, but I have always enjoyed watching students learn and understand what I'm teaching, seeing their smiles after getting a good grade. Seeing their hard work pay off.

**Q: What is one message would you like your students to hear?**

A: You only fail if you fail to try.

**Q: What are you planning to do after retirement?**

A: Subbing definitely, volunteer at Lollypop Farm, basically anything to do with dogs. Walk my dog, Riley, more, go traveling and see my family.

**Q: Is there anything else you'd like to have in the interview?**

A: hope that my former students know that I always cared about their learning and I hope they succeed.

*The Alicorn* would like to congratulate Mrs. Morey on her retirement.



*By Rae Sieburg*

# ALICORN INTERVIEWS

## Green Team Math Teacher: Miss Inzana

*By Maddie Lincoln & Peebs Ness*

To celebrate the retirement of Miss Inzana the Alicorn decided to interview her. Miss Inzana is a 6<sup>th</sup> math teacher for green team. She teaches math 6 and honors math.

**Q: What is your favorite memory?**

A: "There have been a lot of memorable moments in my teaching career. It's difficult to choose just one. However, one that was particularly memorable was a few years back when I received an email that a student of mine nominated me for the *My Teacher Rocks* award. The email was accompanied by a very detailed and thoughtful note from one of my students who shared why she felt I was a candidate for this award. I was so touched by her kindness. This past fall, I ran into that very same student working at Pittsford Dairy. She is now a senior at Sutherland High School. I shared with her that I never forgot how heartwarming it was to receive the award she nominated me for. She also remembered writing it and said that she was so glad that I had been chosen. She shared that she is pursuing college in the fall while working a couple of part time jobs. I was so pleased to tell her how proud I was of her! It made me feel like I had contributed to her success in a small way."

**Q: How many years have you been teaching?**

A: "I have taught 31 years."

**A: Have you taught any other subjects than math?**

"Yes, I have taught grades 3 through 6. I have taught all core subjects, but when I first came to the middle school, I taught math and social studies on the *silver* team."

**Q: Have you ever taught at a different school district?**

A: "Yes, when I first started teaching, I taught in the Churchville Chili school district."

**Q: What is your favorite memory from this year?**

A: "I loved it when a student surprised me with an M&M blanket this year. It was a very thoughtful and sweet surprise. Any M&M themed gifts are memorable and make me so happy."

**Q: When you started teaching, did you think you would like it?**

A: "In my first year of teaching and on the first day of school a senior teacher came to my classroom and said I am going to give you some advice: never smile at the students, or they won't behave! I couldn't believe what I was hearing from her and I didn't believe it! I made sure to smile that day and from then on. It works for me."

**Q: What got you interested in supervising the yearbook club?**

A: "That's a good question. The person who used to advise with me, Mrs. Morchower-Palumbos, first asked me to co-advise the club, and it turned out that I loved advising it, so I'm glad she asked."

**Q: Who was the biggest influence on your career/helping you find yourself?**

A: "When I was in 3<sup>rd</sup> grade, I admired my teacher Mrs. Diamond, she really inspired me to teach. She made learning fun and she helped me when I needed it. She made an effort to get to know me."

**Q: Many people who have had you know you love M&M's, but we are wondering what your favorite flavor of M&M's is?**

A: "My all-time favorite flavor is caramel, but it is a tough choice."

**Q: What is your favorite math skill?**

A: "My favorite lessons are topics that are new to 6<sup>th</sup> graders. I love teaching proportions, ratios, and rates, to my students each year."

**Q: What do you consider a fun fact about yourself?**

A: "A fun fact about myself is that I have a fear of frogs jumping on me, I know it's an irrational fear, but I'm still a little afraid of them being near me."

**Q: Do you have any jobs/ volunteer opportunities you are planning to pursue?**

A: "Well nothing specific yet, but I hope to come back and sub."

**Q: Are you still planning to live in Rochester?**

A: "Yes, for quite some time, yes."

**Q: Do you have any big trips planned in your retirement?**

A: "Yes, I have a wonderful trip to visit Italy planned for the fall."

**Q: Do you have any other big plans for retirement?**

A: "Yes, I would like to continue learning Italian and spend a lot of time in my gardens. I want to try to re-learn to play the saxophone, read lots, and make fitness one of my priorities."

**Q: Do you have anything else you would like to tell us?**

A: "I have always felt grateful to work in this district and with such amazing students. The students make teaching worth it. There hasn't been a day when I haven't felt heart-warmed by something that a student said or did."

To conclude, we wish Miss Inzana a very happy retirement! We are sending her good luck and lots of love. *The Alicorn* would like to thank Miss Inzana for all her years of work at CRMS! We are truly grateful for all the years she has been an outstanding teacher.



## Celebrating 20 Years at CRMS:

### Faculty & staff reflect on their favorite memories

**Mrs. Trenkler:** One of my favorite memories is going to an Escape Room with Adventure Club. It was fun to interact with students in a way that I don't normally get to and to observe them working together to figure out the clues to solve the mystery.

**Mrs. Hayward:** Some of my favorite memories at CRMS are the times when faculty and staff came together to create music videos for our students. They were always full of laughter and school spirit. I'll never forget the video where the principal and assistant principal jumped into the pool in their suits! The songs were catchy and the lyrics still pop into my head from time to time. Moments like that are what make CRMS such a special place, and I'm proud to say I'm a "Midnight for Life!"

**Mrs. Warchol:** One of my favorite memories at CRMS was when the staff did a scavenger hunt around the school! Every month we get together after school to have a meeting as a faculty. One time we got to team up with each other and follow prompts that led us to different spaces around the school. If I remember correctly, we even had to take pictures of the group when we went to those different locations. We can be really competitive when we all come together and there are prizes involved. The best part of the scavenger hunt was when some of the teachers jumped into the pool with all of their clothes on, because it was worth a lot of extra bonus points. I can still hear the sloshing and squeaking of shoes filled with water, as faculty walked down the hall back to the commons.

**Mrs. Coughlin:** Nineteen years ago, I came to Calkins from Park Road Elementary. Mrs. Smith had been telling me for years that I should come to the middle school. I kept saying that I didn't think I would like it. I was wrong about that! One of the highlights of that year was on the first Friday afternoon when Mr. Dougherty-Herman rolled out his boom box/speaker cart, and the whole sixth grade had a dance party. I was surprised and amazed at the fun that we all had dancing down the hallway as the students left for the weekend. I loved middle school! Thanks to Mrs. Smith, I found my place!

**Ms. Wojcik:** It's hard to pick a favorite memory from twenty years of teaching here at CRMS but one of my favorites was from a field trip to the Genesee Country Museum. We toured the museum in the morning and we were heading to the barn where we were going to be eating lunch. There were many groups of students merging together onto one path and they asked if they could run to a hill that was just ahead. We said they could and a ton of students took off running for a big hill in the middle of the area. They laid down and immediately began rolling down the hill. They were having so much fun and their happiness was contagious. It was such a fun day of being outside, being together and enjoying the simple things.

**Mrs. Bonadio:** My first year at Calkins I was new to everything—6th grade, the building, the curriculum, the rhythms of the day, and the staff who all seemed to know exactly where they were going at all times. For the first few weeks, I survived on smiles and sticky notes. Nothing, however, could have prepared me for the first time I went to make copies.

I asked another 6th grade teacher where the copy machine was.

“Oh!” she said cheerfully. “Just take the elevator to the basement.” I paused. I’m sorry—the basement? She said it so casually. I nodded as if this were perfectly normal. The elevator doors slid open with dramatic slowness, like they were reconsidering whether I was emotionally prepared for what lay beneath the building. I stepped inside.

The ride down felt longer than a single floor should feel. When the doors opened, I was not prepared. The basement was enormous. And then the smell hit me. It was a powerful wave of cleaning supplies mixed with old books—like a library and a janitor’s closet had merged and decided to haunt the place together.

It was very quiet.

Too quiet.

A strange thought crept into my mind: If I screamed down here... would anyone hear me? I looked back at the elevator. What if the power went out? Would I be stuck? Was there a staircase? Why didn’t I ask more follow-up questions? I squared my shoulders and headed toward the copier.

As I approached, I noticed a sign taped to it, “MC Jammer”. I laughed out loud. Maybe this basement wasn’t a horror movie set after all. Maybe it was just... quirky.

Then I looked down.

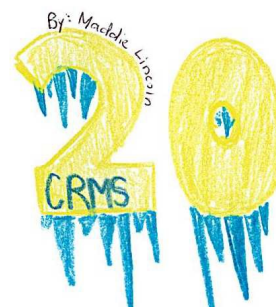
And froze.

Sticking out from underneath the copier were two bony, plastic skeleton legs. They were positioned exactly like the Wicked Witch of the West after Dorothy’s house landed on her in *The Wizard of Oz*—just the lower half visible, as if the rest of her had been flattened by office equipment.

I inhaled sharply. Then it clicked. I laughed—full, uncontrollable laughter that echoed across the basement. Two things became crystal clear in that moment. One: someone in this building had a truly excellent sense of humor. And two: this was going to be the building for me. And just like that, I wasn’t quite so new anymore.



**By Izzy Vuittonet & Juliet Conklin**



**By Maddie Lincoln**

**Mrs. Butler:** My favorite memory was when Mrs. Segar and I took a group of our students to the Special Olympics in the spring of 2019. Our students were very excited to participate in the events of the day; they all worked really hard and everyone had a great time. I will never forget one student in particular: Guillermo Martinez. He signed up to run a distance race, and we were all there cheering him on. When the starting gun went off, Guillermo took off like a bolt of lightning. He tore around that track and left everyone in his dust! Guillermo was the kind of kid that was always moving, but Mrs. Segar and I had no idea he was such a great runner!! Guillermo won all of his races that day. All day long, people crowded around him, congratulating him on his victories. His parents were in the stands, beaming with pride. Guillermo went on to have successful varsity careers on the cross country, Nordic skiing, and track and field teams throughout high school. Sadly, the fall after he graduated from high school, Guillermo was involved in a terrible car accident and lost his life. Mrs. Segar and I, and all of the other teachers that knew him from that time, were absolutely heartbroken. I will never forget his goofy smile, his never-ending energy, and the way he blew us all away at that first Special Olympics.

**Mrs. Inzana:** There are so many favorite memories from my time here at Calkins that it's difficult to narrow them down to just one. I feel fortunate to have played a small role in capturing many of these moments through our school yearbook each year, helping preserve memories that students can look back on in the years ahead. One tradition I always look forward to is the fun students and staff have dressing up for Student Council spirit days—80s Day might have been one of the best! The energy during Spirit Week is always contagious and gives everyone a boost of excitement heading into the week before break. Many of my favorite memories also come from the events that bring our school community together: the fun trends students introduce each year (like the enthusiastic “siiiix-seeeven”), the teacher dunk tank fundraiser, first-day-of-school assemblies and shows, and our daytime musical and cultural arts events. The list could go on, but the moments that stand out most are the ones filled with joy—when students and adults are laughing, celebrating, and truly enjoying being part of our school community.

**Mr. Falzoi:** One of my favorite CRMS memories involves Mr. Walker, a February contest, and the very real possibility of freezing in the courtyard overnight. The contest was real, and the consequences were clear: we'd be camping out in the middle of the school. What the students didn't know was that I happened to own a very large Civil War-era reenactment tent—complete with a woodburning stove. Thanks to some unseasonably warm weather, a cozy tent, and an honest to goodness campfire in the courtyard, we slept comfortably through the night. It turned out to be the warmest overnight “punishment” imaginable—and easily the best dare I ever lost.

**Mrs. McPherson:** I have so many memories from my time at Calkins Road Middle School. Some involve kids, some involve my colleagues, and the best ones involve both! Years and years ago, we had a day of celebration where the whole school learned the same dance moves from some Garth Fagan dancers. If you don't know, Garth Fagan is a world-famous choreographer who lives and works in Rochester. His choreography is very distinctive and easily identifiable. After we learned the moves in small groups, the whole school, adults and kids alike, went to the soccer field and danced all at the same time. It was chaotic and probably not the prettiest, but it was fun and uniting. I love teaching at CRMS.

**Mrs. Bylund:** Dramatic silhouetted giraffes cross the stage and you hear "Nants ingonyama bagithi Ba-ba." Ever since my oldest child entered Calkins Road Middle School in 6<sup>th</sup> grade and crossed the stage as a giraffe in Lion King Jr. in 2017, the sixth grade musicals have become one of my favorite things about Calkins Road! I love how they jump right into the shows early in the fall, and new friendships are forged with kids from Mendon Center, Allens Creek, and Jefferson Road. Every year now as a teacher at CRMS I look forward to the sixth-grade musical and cheer on each of my students. I love seeing a different side of each of them distinct from the classroom persona. I love seeing the budding thespians, dancers, and singers—those who are seasoned performers to first timers. The sixth grade show brings students together as they get a chance to shine on the Calkins Road stage for the first time.

**Mrs. Brady:** The school spirit at CRMS is nothing short of electric. Pep rally day took that energy to an entirely new level, especially as a member of the Maroon Team. When we packed into Mrs. Nesbitt's room for the Rock Paper Scissors competition, you could taste the excitement in the air. Faces painted and dressed head to toe in maroon, we turned the room into a roaring wave of pride and anticipation. The cheers, laughter, and nonstop energy made it feel like we were stepping into a championship showdown - not just a simple game. When the final contestants went head to head, Henry Grower emerged victorious, letting out a triumphant roar that echoed through the room and sealed the moment in my memory. Just when it seemed like the day couldn't top itself, Henry did it *again* in the gymnasium, clinching another win and leading the Maroon Team to claim the Spirit Trophy for the second year in a row. From start to finish, it was an unforgettable day bursting with pride, excitement, and true CRMS spirit.

**Mr. Jones:** My father, Mike Jones, was the first Head Custodian at Calkins Road Middle School, a position he held until retirement from PCSD. Previously, he had been the Head Custodian at Pittsford Middle School (now BRMS). When the opportunity came up to serve on the planning team for the "new" school, (now CRMS), my dad jumped in. Happily retired for many years now, he still looks back with pride, knowing that he played a role in the development of the earliest plans for our school. As it turned out, he was also the very first district employee to have an office here at CRMS! He was working here full time every day during the later part of the construction process, cleaning up after the construction workers – well before the principals, teachers, or any other staff members moved in! My dad has SO many stories about this building and tells (nearly) every one of them with a grin. He loved his time here, and I think of him every day as I walk through the halls.

**Madam Marafioti:** This particular year I had a student named Josh Gagnier who came with us on the Quebec trip. Every year we would visit the Beaufré coast and tour this huge basilica which was named "St. Anne de Beaufré." The story about the origin of the church was that there were fisherman on the St. Lawrence in a terrible storm who prayed to St. Anne to save them. They promised they would build a basilica in her honor if she would deliver them from the storm. The fishermen were saved and so they built this tiny church in honor of the saint they believed saved them. My student, Josh Gagnier, told me that his Great Great...Grandpa Louis Gagné (spelled like this at the time) helped build the original church in the mid 17th century. When we visited, sure enough, there was a plaque on a tiny replica of the original church behind the current basilica with his Great Grandfather's name engraved on it. I was able to get a picture of him in front of his Great Grandpa's plaque. It was a really cool moment of connection across lands, cultures and generations!

## ***Looking Back: 8th Graders Reflect on their Time at Calkins Road Middle School***

**Annie Lincoln:** One of my favorite eighth grade memories was running on the Cross Country team. I loved spending time with my cross-country team, if it was practicing or at a meet. Whether it was running at practice, cheering at meets, or braiding hair during sports study hall, everyone on the team was so close and always there for each other. If someone on the team was down or having a bad meet, everyone on the team would cheer extra loud. It didn't matter if you were the first or the last place runner (or anywhere in between) everyone would cheer you on like you were setting a world record. I learned so much on Cross-country about hard work and how it can pay off. I learned about the importance of a team, especially on Cross-country where the first place runner's points matter, but so does someone's points who's farther behind in the meet. Everyone was truly so sweet and supportive; being on cross-country will forever be one of my favorite memories from Calkins.

**Kepler Piper:** I do a few extracurricular activities here at Calkins. I do Odyssey of The Mind and track and field, and I have done cross country this year and in 7<sup>th</sup> grade. The teams are great, especially my Odyssey of The Mind team. Most everyone is very inclusive, supportive, and generally just good people, and I have thoroughly enjoyed each of these activities. And the coaches are wonderful people, and they work hard to keep these activities going.

**May Folwell:** These couple years I have been in this school I have had a lot of highlights. But the best ones have to be modified basketball. I made a bunch of memories with the team, plus I grew in the sport I love to play. And that's all because the amazing coach I had, thanks to my coach and all the people who made this happen for me.

**Charlotte Birnbaum:** My favorite memory was during the winter close to Christmas time in 7<sup>th</sup> grade. My friends at my lunch table wanted to do Secret Santa. One of my friends said, "Wait we shouldn't call it Secret Santa. Charlotte is Jewish. We should include her too." Everyone agreed. We called it "Hanumas" and we combined Hanukkah and Christmas to get Hanumas. Now for the past two years we don't say it's Christmas or Hanukkah time anymore. We always say Hanumas and play Secret Santa every year. This made our table have a stronger friendship and made everyone feel included too just by combining two holiday names to make one.

**Avery Hamilton:** My favorite memory was when my friends and I saw how no one was wearing their toes out and would always wear open toed shoes with socks. So my lunch table and I decided to try and start a trend with open toed shoes and not wearing any socks. I think the biggest thing was how people thought they would get made fun of but it's just a friendly reminder that you are beautiful no matter what!!!

**Ayleen Guo:** The hours spent were always worth it in the end. The coarse paper was rough in my hands, the sharp and chemical smell of the craft glue in front of me, with the earthy airy smell of more of the stacks of paper, all square shaped, maybe not the neatest, but it was better than the full mess it had been. I had done that for 2 years straight, improving and improving even if I was already better than a lot of people there, or according to what they said. I may have not been able to make some sort of difference in my final year, but for 2 years, being able to make a difference in the valentine's day sales-was the best thing I could ask for.

## ***Looking Back: 8th Graders Reflect on their Time at Calkins Road Middle School***

**Olivia Kuzniarek:** Many of my most favorite memories happened in 8th grade. Whether it was a day 1 or day 2, playing a school sport or even just lunch, we would always laugh and run around the school (even if we were told not to). I smile when I think about making the most hysterical jokes with friends at the back table. Middle school has taught me about the harsh reality that some people just don't last in your life. I have learned that you should surround yourself with people you love and that are kind. We will be in 9<sup>th</sup> grade next year and each person will slowly choose their path to their life. Therefore, it's important that we all enjoy the time we have together while it lasts.

**Tessa Borden:** I have made many different memories at Calkins, but here is one of my favorites. To set the scene, I was in Latin class learning derivatives when one particular word on the list caught my attention. Uxorious (Adj) "When one is besotted with one's own wife to the point of foolishness." What a wonderful word, I thought to myself. (Apparently, it's derogatory, but I find that silly.) When I got home that day, I told my father about it, and uxorious became a bit of a joke. A few days later I received an assignment in English class. We had to write a letter of recommendation for ourselves if we wanted to participate in Honours English the next year at the High School. When I told my dad about it, he bet me a 100-dollar donation if I could naturally fit uxorious into my letter. I took the bet. After about two hours of writing (and keyboard smashing), I won the bet. Earlier that year we had done research on present day issues and charities that helped with them. I learned about MMIW and the charity Not Our Native Daughters. It was there that the donation I had won ended up. It was a really lovely full circle moment that wouldn't have been possible without English class. And with my father's slightly odd sense of humor, and I guess my odd sense of humor? As they say, "the Apple doesn't fall far from the tree." Anyways, Thanks Mr. Burritt, your lengthy assignments brought some joy to my life.



***By Juliet Conklin & Izzy Vuittonet***

## ***The Swim Race: A Short Story***

***By Annabelle and Madeline Lincoln***

***Edited by Ellie Gianattassio***

The heat was choking that afternoon as I lay by the pool in the shade of the potted palm tree watching my older brother, Peter, jumping in the pool and splashing around with all his friends. I watched enviously as they enjoyed the cold, refreshing water while I sat and watched, getting hotter and more bored by the minute. I stared at the white, pillared walls of the pool wishing I could swim too, just like Peter and all his friends. However, I knew just like always, whenever a woman went in the pool, the guard would yank her out immediately, and say women were not supposed to swim, for it was very improper. I didn't care about improper; I was just hot and wanted to be able to have fun just like Peter and his other friends.

"Margot, time to go!" Peter hollered from over by the pool towels.

I gathered up my belongings and walked out of the stone gate to the pool with Peter.

"I'm sorry that you can't swim, Margot." Apologized Peter.

"It's ok Peter," I said, "It's not your fault."

"I know Margot, but it needs to change. Meet me at the Nickelodeon tonight, I have something I want to show you."

"Ok, Peter" I responded, baffled on what this thing could be, "See you tonight."

At the Nickelodeon that night Peter and I both went to a film, it was about a women named Gertrude Ederle. About a month ago Gertrude had swum the English Channel successfully, beating the best man to swim it by two entire hours!

As Peter and I walked out the movies people scoffed, "no women can swim!" They exclaimed. Peter whispered to me, "they'll see. Gertrude Ederle first, but soon women all over the world will take a stand."

On the way home me and Peter took a detour to the pool.

"Margot, I'm going to start teaching you to swim, but you mustn't tell anyone, we could in terrible trouble."

"Alright, Peter. Thank you," I replied, heart pounding.

The thrill of walking through the stone pillars today and knowing I would be swimming too was exhilarating. I looked at the moon beams from the sky falling onto the palm trees and felt hope for the future.

The water was cold when I walked through the stairs, but I didn't mind. I was finally learning to swim!

"Now kick your legs!" Peter instructed, as I held on with my hands to the wall, holding my breath with my head under the water. The water seemed to be shimmering.

On the way home, I thanked Peter for teaching me to swim, and then went to bed, feeling euphoric, like never before.

Every night after that for the next two weeks me and Peter went to the pool. He coached me on breathing techniques, different swim strokes and styles, one night we even played water polo!

The first time I beat Peter in a race was on the 21<sup>st</sup> of July. Peter cheered and hugged me, and we continued racing for the next few lessons.

One night, we had just finished racing when the large, stone gate to the pool opened. I held my breath, but it just turned out to be Peter's friend Jacob.

"Hello Jacob!" said Peter, cheerfully.

**Continued on page 41**

Jacob's face went dark as he saw me in the pool with Peter.

What are you doing?" Jacob asked, unsurely.

"I'm teaching Margot how to swim," replied Peter, "Please don't tell anyone. She deserves to swim just as much as me and you, she shouldn't have to give up just because she's a woman."

Jacob looked unsure.

"Please Jacob, I could get in really big trouble." Peter pleaded.

Jacob gave a nod and walked out silently, face conflicted.

The next night when me and Peter arrived at the pool Jacob, his father, the pool owner, and a security guard stood by the water as we opened the gate to enter.

"What has been happening here?" The pool owner, Mr. Warner, asked.

"Please," Peter begged, "Let us stay, Margot shouldn't have to stop swimming just because she's a woman! It's not fair!"

The security guard just pointed to the door, and I hung my head and walked out.

"How could you?" exclaimed Peter to Jacob and his father.

"Wait!" Said Jacob, "Peter, Margot, wait!"

"What is it," replied Peter angrily.

"Is there any way that at least Peter can stay, Mr. Warner?" Asked Jacob.

Mr. Warners yellow, cigar-stained teeth glinted in the moonlight.

"How's this?" asked Mr. Warner, "If Margot can beat Jacob in a race, you both stay and every other woman in the club can swim in the pool." He smirked, "however, if Margot loses, she must clean the pool with Peter every day after the guests leave until the end of the swimming season."

"Deal." Peter said.

My thoughts spiraled as I thought about the race tomorrow morning; everyone knew Jacob was the strongest swimmer around. I didn't have a chance. I felt hopeless as I tossed and turned, trying to sleep.

I got ready for the swim match that morning, braiding back my hair, putting on my swimsuit, nerves chattering. When I arrived at the pool, it seemed like the whole [swim](#) club was there. I was so nervous I could feel my legs shaking. Jacob was there looking unshaken by the crowd, or the pressure; probably already planning his victory against me. I climbed onto the diving platform and listened to Mr. Warner, cigar in mouth, yell, "on your marks!"

I prepared to dive into the pool.

"Go!"

I dived.

I could hear the cheers and screams of the crowd. I kicked my legs and pumped my arms just like Peter had taught me. I looked up on a breath and saw Jacob, just barely ahead of me. I heard Peter yell, "Go Margot! You can beat him!"

I propelled myself through the water. I reached the wall and I won!

Everyone cheered, Peter loudest of all. I was so happy! I had won the race! I could swim in the pool now, and so could everyone else! I heard the cheers of my name coming from the crowd.

Continued on page 42

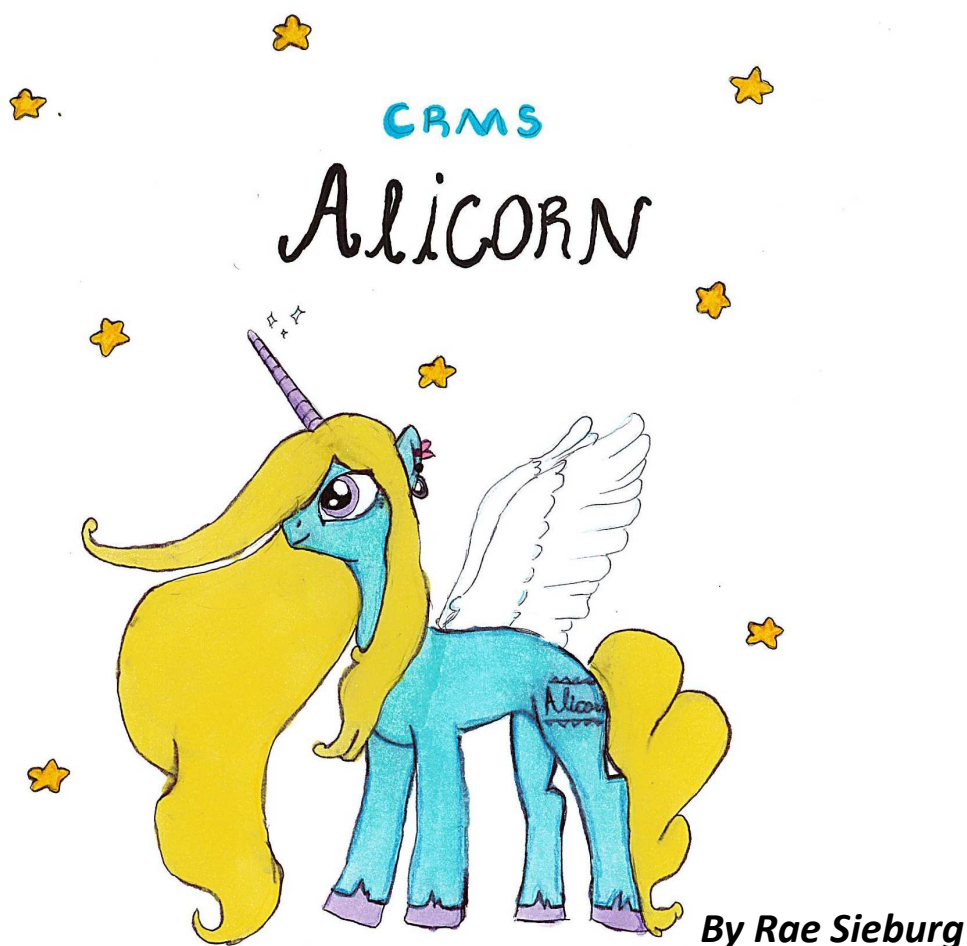
## ***The Swim Race continued***

That night I was so excited I could barely breathe! After I had won the swim race all the women had jumped into the pool. Mr. Werner was furious, I could almost see his cigar smoke coming out of his ears. Afterwards, me and Peter had gone to Nickelodeon again and watched the Gertrude Ederle movie. This time I was not only filled with hope, but pride, for I was like Gertrude Ederle too, making waves for women all around the world.

---

### **Gertrude Ederle**

Gertrude Ederle was born in 1905 in New York City. She competed in the 1924 Paris Olympics and won a gold and 2 bronzes. Between the years of 1921 and 1925, Gertrude held 29 national and world amateur swimming awards, 7 of which were set in 1922 on one afternoon at Brighton Beach in New York. However, one of Gertrude's achievements widely regarded as her most impressive is being the first woman ever to swim the English channel, and destroying the former men's record for swimming the English channel, beating it by 2 entire hours, while swimming an extra 14 miles because she lost her way in the shallows without a boat to guide her. She later went on to become a swimming instructor for deaf children as her hearing was permanently altered by her record-setting swim. Ederle was inducted into the international swimming hall of fame in 1965 as well as the women sports hall of fame in 1980 for her achievements and trailblazing for women in sports.



# **The Escape**

*By Peebs Ness*

"You shouldn't have said that," I told August angrily.

"Welp," he said with a dumb grin on his face. As if he couldn't understand the situation.

"I don't want to die, August!" I screamed at him, "Never say that again, please!"

"Haley," he said with softness in his eyes, "I am sorry."

"Well, you better thank God that no one heard you," I whispered a bit calmer than before.

He smiled at me. I wish he knew the only reason I wanted him to stop talking was I wanted more days with him. He could have been killed, and for me not shutting him up no less. I checked the room for anything that could hear us. Praying nothing could.

"Haley," he whispered in my ear, "we have to leave." If I know my brother, which I do, he timed that perfectly with the train blaring by. I nodded back at him. They could hear my words but never see my face. My brother was right in every way possible, we had to leave Kingland.

"Want to get some bread for dinner?" I said winking to imply my devious intentions.

"Sure," August said, "I would love to."

August and I ran down the stairs and out the door. As we ran through the village, we avoided the government officials. We reached the center of the whole village. The King's Land mall. Filled with shops and lots and lots of government officials. My brother and I trembled as we walked through, trying our very hardest not to break one of the stupid laws.

As we walked, I heard a man speak, "What do you think you are doing," he said gruffly.

"Getting bread," I replied sweetly, "for our mother, of course."

"Move along, but I will be watching you," the man replied with the gruff voice.

To avoid being suspicious we entered the bakery. The warm smell of bread came over us. I turned to my brother and grabbed his hand. I took him to the back door, opened it swiftly and ran out. My brother almost screamed, because at this point I was practically dragging his body. But he zipped his lips. Just like the science we suffered throughout the years. I led my brother through the gates out of the village, no regret, mother would make it one day or not but what mattered is I survived. With every step I feel myself watching suffering.

I looked up in the sky, "Why just me, God, why just me and him?" The other suffering brought me to tears but, I could rid of the pain, right, God, just why?

I stopped. I almost hit the gate. "The final door," I whispered as I took my bobby pin out of my hair. "Let it be," I whispered finally as I opened the gate. My brother took and brushed the dust off his pants. I held his hand as we walked out into the moonlight.

# Ayshe and Oya

By Tessa Borden

Ayshe was poised, beautiful, and intelligent. She was the daughter of Ahmed Pasha, the King Maker. Everyone said someday she would wed a foreign noble and give birth to kings of her own. I was the polar opposite of Ayshe. Stiff, homely, and naive. Yet of all the girls in court, even the Sultan's own daughters, she chose me to be her friend. I was shocked, shocked!

She approached me first in the courtyard of the palace. My father had a meeting there, and I was dragged along to wait awkwardly until he was finished. I paced laps around the rose bushes, peered at my reflection in a puddle, and counted ants in a row, before ultimately sitting down on a marble bench and resining myself to boredom. I looked down at the skirt of my kaftan, picking at a loose thread.

Suddenly from above me I heard a soft voice. "Merhaba! I am Ayshe Hatun. Who are you?"

I jumped up, startled. "Oh! Merhaba-, I am Oya Hatun. My father is Fatih Pasha, his meeting is just finishing up, so you don't need to worry about me."

Ayshe wrinkled her nose at that. "I hoped you could stay for longer. You seem interesting."

I laughed at that, but Ayshe was serious. That's one thing I've learned after all this time being her friend. Ayshe is *always* serious. Even about silly things like whether lokum or baklava is the better sweet. Ayshe says its baklava, I know it's lokum. Despite her interesting opinions on desserts, Ayshe and I became best friends. Ayshe and Oya people joked. One could not exist without the other.

I found that I lived my days to be close to her. If I said something that made her laugh, I was sure I could live on that feeling of joy alone for the rest of my days. If I found her upset over something, it felt as if my heart would shatter, just from seeing her sad. The thing that baffled me and brought me such gayness, in equal measure, was that Ayshe felt the same. I wouldn't have believed it if she hadn't told [me](#) herself.

We were sitting in the haremlik in my home, sipping on kefir (I had a small bowl of lokum as well.) Suddenly, Ayshe stood. I thought she was going to criticize my sweet choice. Instead, she looked at me, really looked at me, and said, "Oya, you are my favorite person in the world." Then she sat back down. I laughed, "Oh

Canim, what a thing to say!" I should have said "I love you too." Ayshe stood back up defiantly.

"I am serious!" One thing I've learned about Ayshe over the years is that she is *always* serious.

After her declaration, I did indeed tell her I loved her. She hugged me tight.

**"Out of this world" short story contest winner**

# Sky High

***By Eoin Devaney***

I fly out of bed and run through my bedroom to my closet. I grab my jacket and jump out of my room into the hallway. I sweep through the magenta carpeted hallway and into the kitchen. I slide through the kitchen doorway and land in front of the cook as I pop a waffle into my beak and grab a bag of sunflower seeds my grandpops grabbed me from a trash can on his great adventure. I've saved it for 4 years to this day, my very own adventure.

I run to my Pops bedroom, and yell "Pops!" lifting off the marble flooring I flap my wings into the sky and dive on top of him. He doesn't wake. I jump around on top of the mattress. He doesn't wake. I decide to slap his beak until he wakes up, but after 15 seconds I get bored and decide to simply rip his covers up and turn the lights on.

"Quaxwell! Stop it now!" he says whilst dreadingly opening his eyes, "I know you want me to send you off and give you a map and-"

"I'm gonna go on an adventure! Yay, yay, yay!" I scream. Today the king of the pigeons, Quaxo, was to give his son-ME!- Quaxwell, the great pigeon, the 3<sup>rd</sup> permission to go on an adventure. (All comas included in my legal name.)

"Calm down Quax!" He shouts over me, "Let me get my crown." I hop up and down and motion my wings towards the exit, "And my imperial robes!"

"No one cares dad! Send me off or I'm gonna literally die, DIE, die, DIE!" I scream and shout.

"Okay, Okay. Let's head to the door." I flap my wings and move like the thunder out the door, I am supersonic, I am- "Slow down or you'll crash!" Pops motions me to slow down. I drop my wings reluctantly and glide smoothly to the palace exit. My pops trails behind me and reaches the door 30 endless seconds later. He glides up out of breath and commands the guard eagles to open the door. I run out onto the cloud and breath in the fresh air.

"Ahhhh, nothing like fresh air!" My dad sighs with comfort, "Anyways... I hereby grant my son, Quaxwell, the great pigeon, the 3<sup>rd</sup> permission to go on his own adventure down to Central Park, on the grounds that he brings back plentiful bounties burgled from those miserable humans who disgustingly waste their scraps." He motions me away, and I run off the cloud and jump off, cloud fluff trailing behind me like toilet paper stuck to me. This is it! I sail through the sky like Zeus with the clouds trailing behind me. I descend until I reach it. NYC! I see trash in the trash cans, muck on the sidewalks, and food in carts. I swirl through, eyes beaming, but my jacket falls off as I come into central park, and a cold wind swirls through my veins, I hear owls spreading warnings to leave and question why until I see them. Bird hunters! I spread my wings and fly out, spreading my wings into the sky, but I remember my task. I grab a pretzel from a booth and fly back into the sky.

# Fun Facts

*By Bailey Elliott*

1. A cloud weighs around a million tonnes. (tonnes= 2,205lbs)
2. Your brain is constantly eating itself. This process is called phagocytosis where cells envelop and consume smaller cells or molecules to remove them from the system. Don't worry! Phagocytosis isn't harmful!
3. Mars isn't actually round. Unlike any other rocky planet in the Solar System. Mars is actually shaped like a rugby ball!
4. There're are no such things as zero-calorie foods. Even low-calorie foods, such as celery and watercress, contain more energy than your body needs to process them.
5. You can actually die laughing. And a number of people have, typically due to intense laughter causing a heart attack or suffocation. Comedy shows should come with a warning.
6. Snails have teeth. Between 1,000 and 12,000 teeth, to be precise they aren't like ours, though, so don't be thinking about snails with ridiculous toothy grins. You'll find the snail's tiny 'teeth' all over its file-like tongue.

Source: [www.doriddles.com](http://www.doriddles.com)



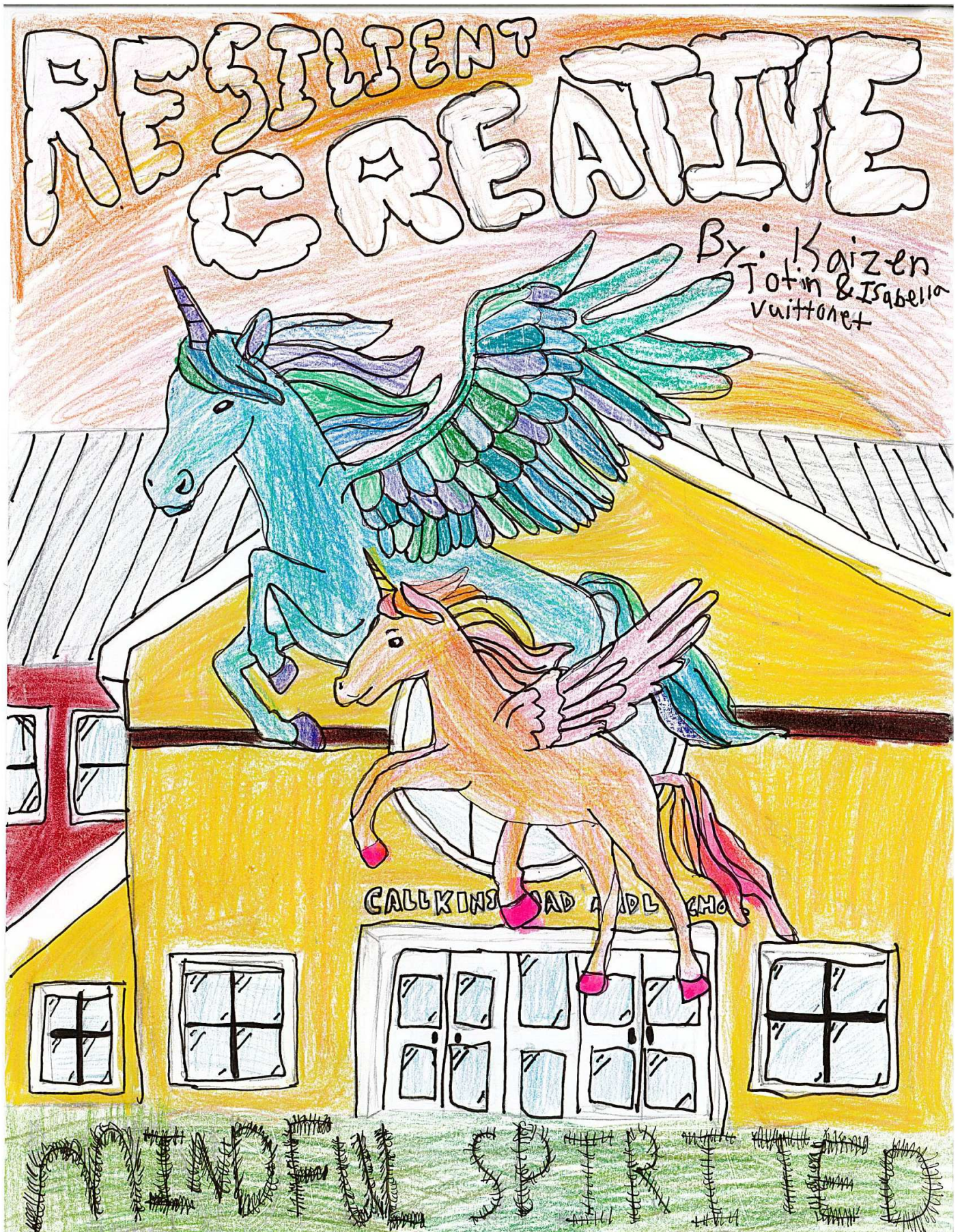
*By Sarah Beth Miller*



*By Henry Friedman*



*By Sasha Huang*



*This page's art created by Kaizen Toten & Isabella Vuittonet.*

*Back cover created by Madelynn Elliott*

# ALICORN

2025-2026

