Interviews with:

Lois Lowry: author of *The Giver* and *Number the Stars*
Leslie Przybylek: The Heinz History Center’s Curator
April Simpson: owner of Vanilla Pastry Studio
Jesse Bueno: local yoga instructor
**Prepare to expand your experience!**

*Pittverse Magazine* is a quarterly publication that proudly represents the introspection and creativity of adults on the autism spectrum. Its goal is to provide thoughtful opinion and enhanced knowledge of wide-ranging topics to the public while providing its writers, who are all adults on the autism spectrum, with skills applicable to future employment.

*Pittverse* is produced by Youth Advocate Programs (YAP), a national non-profit agency that comprises a multitude of services for families with not only individuals on the autism spectrum but also other at-risk youth and adults. Brian Kluchurosky, the director of YAP’s PA Allegheny County Adults with Autism Program, founded *Pittverse* in 2013. It began as a newsletter written by four of the adults in the YAP program. In 2015, with generous funding from Edith Trees Foundation, *Pittverse* grew from a newsletter into a magazine that commissions over twenty autistic adults.

Welcome to *The Pittverse*...

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Letter from the editor

I can’t believe I’ve been editing the Pittverse Magazine for over a year now! It’s been a joy so far, and I’m positive that in my time here I’ve learned much more from the Pittverse writers than they have from me.

When I started, I knew as much about autism as anyone off of the street, which is not too much. Now my knowledge of autism is about 20 people big. Everyone’s case is so different that I don’t think you can know everything about autism unless you know everyone with autism. I guess that’s why they call it a spectrum, right?

One of the most important things I’ve learned is that I have way more similarities with the writers than differences. We all have the same goals – to be involved in the community, to have positive relationships, and to enjoy a fulfilling life. Their “autistic” characteristics aren’t so foreign either. Who has never had trouble getting their ideas across to someone? Who has never felt overwhelmed in a room full of people?

April is Autism Awareness Month. With one percent of our population holding a diagnosis, it’s almost certain that you’re going to meet a person with autism. They might be the barista making your coffee, the gentleman taking your bags at the airport, a client at your workplace, or your new neighbor down the street.

Adults with autism just want to be treated with respect, consideration, and a little bit of patience by the rest of the community.

I hope that just by reading our magazine, the city of Pittsburgh gets to know each of these amazing adults and understand autism a little bit better, just as I have in my time at Youth Advocate Programs and Adult Services.

Happy Reading,

Renee Fisher, Pittverse Editor
I dabbled with yoga, taking classes here and there, for many years of my adult life. But four years ago, I met Jesse Bueno, and never stopped coming back to his class. I sometimes take other classes for variety, but Jesse's is my main class. And looking back, it's amazing to see how far I've come in the past four years. Since it was Jesse who made such a difference, I met up with him to learn more about him and what it's like to teach yoga.

Jesse has been teaching yoga since 2008, first in Los Angeles, and then privately and at various studios in Pittsburgh. He had no idea that he would eventually become a yoga teacher, however, when he walked into what he thought was an aerobics class seven or eight years earlier. As fate would have it, the schedule had been changed to yoga, and Jesse stayed for the class. Jesse says he immediately felt a sense of calm and knew he liked it when he left that first class.

Prior to teaching, Jesse studied in Los Angeles and took workshops in the different styles, or lineages, of yoga. When asked what lineage Jesse teaches, he says, "I consider myself a mutt. I take a little from each." He primarily teaches a Hatha, or slow moving type that focuses on alignment of the body, but also Vinyasa which is a more continuous movement of the body with the breath. Astanga, which I have recently tried, is another intense type of yoga where your body is always flowing as you move through a repetitive sequence of physically challenging postures, easily working up a sweat during class.

All lineages of yoga are similar in that you move the body through a series of postures and pay attention to breathing properly. The postures are named in an old Indian language called Sanskrit and are named for things like animals or something in nature that they resemble. We often translate the Sanscrit to English and many people only know the English names of the postures. When asked if he has any favorite postures, Jesse says he really likes "triangle" and "bird of paradise." And he's personally working on the postures that involve flexibility, twisting, and binding as well as being able to do a handstand away from a wall.
At the end of class, the instructor and class sit cross-legged, hands in prayer position, facing each another, with the instructor first bowing and saying "namaste" and then the students bowing and replying "Namaste." This closing is translated to "the light in me bows to the light in you."

Jesse says his favorite part of teaching yoga is seeing all the personalities of his students. They invigorate him. And he says, "If I can change one person through yoga, that would mean the whole world to me."

Yoga does have the potential to change people. Jesse describes yoga as a journey. It can allow you to open up to yourself, leading to better mental health. It relaxes you, which can help with being able to tolerate the stresses of everyday life and helps with sleep. Of course there are lots of physical benefits as well, such as improved balance and strength and greater flexibility. "Really," Jesse says, "yoga is pretty much good for everything."

The hard part is being content where you are right now and being able to quiet the mind. It's being in the moment and turning off what's going on outside. So it doesn't matter if you can reach to your toes or your knees, it matters if you can be okay with however far you can stretch, and concentrate on reaching for your toes or your knees instead of thinking about what made you angry earlier that day or what's for dinner or what time it is.

If you just want to see what yoga looks like, are hesitant to give it a try, or are brand new and want to get familiar with the names of the poses, home videos are an option. However, it's really best to take a class with an instructor because he or she is available to make body adjustments or suggest modifications and remind you to breathe properly.

You might already be practicing yoga regularly or feel ready to jump right in and join a traditional yoga studio, such as Yoga Flow, one of the places where Jesse teaches. That's great, just keep in mind that this type of environment is not for everyone. There are lots of other options as well. Yoga is offered all over the city at local libraries, churches, community centers, gyms, parks, and hospitals. Jesse says, "Yoga is very personal. Everyone has their own preferences. Try all different styles and even different teachers and find what works for you."

-NAMASTE-
I chose to interview Ariella Wiener, PPG Aquarist, due to her expertise on sharks. I personally enjoy sharks. My favorite is the great white shark because it is the supreme predator of the ocean. I spoke with Ariella via email and asked her some questions that I found to be particularly interesting about great whites and about sharks in general.

Jon: Why are there no great white sharks held in captivity?

Ariella: There have been great white sharks in captivity at the Monterey Bay Aquarium in California. There have been juveniles, and they have only been kept at their facility for a short time before being tagged and rereleased back into the wild. Between 2004-2011 they have exhibited five great white sharks for short periods of time. Typically great whites do not do well in a captive environment. Because they do not do well in captivity, aquariums do not try to house them.

Jon: What does a typical diet of a great white shark consist of?

Ariella: Great white sharks have a very diverse diet. They feed on bony fishes, sharks, rays, seals, dolphins and porpoises, sea birds, carrion, squid, octopi, crabs and whales.

Jon: What made you want to work with sharks and other marine life?

Ariella: I have loved the ocean since I was a young child. This was only magnified when I became a certified scuba diver and then when I became a dive instructor. After working for years as a scuba instructor, I knew that I wanted to work more closely with marine life.

Jon: What is your favorite thing about your job?

Ariella: I love that each day at my job is busy, fast paced, and always different. I especially cherish the unique interactions I get to have with the sharks. I love their training sessions as well as getting to scuba dive with them.

Jon: What is the reproduction cycle of a great white shark like?

Ariella: Great white sharks are oviparous. They lay eggs which hatch into larvae that are planktonic. After hatching, the larvae will feed on fish and continue to grow. When they are large enough, they will reach the surface and feed on small fish. As they grow, they will continue to feed on larger and larger prey until they reach adulthood.
Ariella: Great white sharks are ovoviviparous. This means that they give birth to live young, however, instead of the young being nourished by a placenta, they are nourished by a yoke sac. Once the neonates have absorbed the yoke sac they will consume other ova (eggs) produced by the mother (oophagy).

Jon: What is the most interesting aspect of your work?

Ariella: The most interesting part of my work is observing the behaviors of the animals in my care as well as their interactions with each other.

Jon: What do you find most interesting about great whites?

Ariella: I find shark migration to be particularly interesting.

Jon: Are there certain species of large sharks that can survive in captivity?

Ariella: The largest shark is the whale shark. This shark is very docile and has been referred to as the gentle giant of the ocean. The whale shark is approximately 30 feet in size, and rarely they have been seen to be 36 feet. There are four of them on exhibit at the Georgia Aquarium in Atlanta, Georgia.

Jon: Should people be fearful of great white sharks?

Ariella: People should not be fearful of sharks. Humans are much more dangerous to sharks than they are to us. Humans kill on average 100 million sharks each year. Sharks on average only kill 11 people on the entire planet annually, and only an average of 60 negative encounters with sharks have been reported to the international shark attack file. It is important to remember when we go into the ocean that we are entering the sharks home as well as the home of all marine organisms; we need to be respectful of that. Marine organisms and sharks all serve a purpose and their existence is important to keeping our planet healthy.

When you hear about people being "attacked" by a shark it is usually a case of mistaken identity. What this means is that the shark thought that the person was something else (like something they would normally eat). Once the shark takes a bite they realize that person isn't a seal or another item of food and swim off.

I hope that everyone learned something new about sharks from my interview with Ariella. I know that I did. I really enjoyed speaking with her and hope to interview her about other marine animals in the future.
The lovely lady who I interviewed was April Simpson, the owner of Vanilla Pastry Studio. April has a nickname. She is called the Sugar Fairy, and her workers are all called sugar fairies too. They are all female workers. You should call April the Sugar Queen.

Vanilla Pastry Studio is located on 1130 South Braddock in Regent Square. It is a very great place to eat many different kinds of pastries ranging from cookies, brownies, cupcakes, cakes, and so many more. This place might be small, but they have a lot to offer when it comes to making delicious pastries. Whenever you walk in, you'll see a beautiful row of cupcakes lined up in front behind the counter, plus it smells very fresh.

They specialize in cupcakes, lollipops, whimsical custom cakes, wedding cakes, and dessert tables, oh so yummy in everyone's tummies. They have been open for ten strong years running and hopefully more to come.

They have a phone number which is 412-242-9820, an email of sweets@vanillapastry.com, and they are on facebook.com. There's many ways to get in touch with Vanilla Pastry Studios or just April Simpson herself.

Vanilla Pastry Studio was voted best cupcakes in Pittsburgh two years in a row: 2011 and 2012. I loved their cupcakes whenever I tried their pastry goods for the first time a year ago, and I came back again.

The prices are very reasonable and the workers are friendly. It's funny but good that there is a bathroom in their bakery. Some other bakeries don't even have bathrooms out in the open for customers although along with pastries they serve coffee, tea and other drinks.

Vanilla Pastry Studio has great online ratings. Zomato.com (previously Urbanspoon) gave them 3.4 stars based on 300 votes. Amazing Wed-
April: Matcha Tea powder cake.

How many wedding cakes do you sell per year?

April: We sell 52 to 100 wedding cakes, but we do more cupcake towers because they are so cute.

What would you say are Vanilla Pastry Studio’s goals for 2016?

We are selling ice cream now. We partnered with Millie’s, and it’s their 10th birthday this year.

What makes Vanilla Pastry Studio’s pastries better than the competitors?

We make everything from scratch. We really use good healthy ingredients.

Do you plan on expanding to other locations around the Pittsburgh area?

No, we don’t plan on expanding.

What advice would you give to other folks who want to become bakers?

You have to love it. It’s a lot of hard work and it’s fun. You should never quit if you really, really want it.

What’s your favorite type of pastry?

Mango passion fruit cake, German chocolate cake, and Bourbon cake. They are all made into cupcakes.

The interview went very well; April is an excellent person and baker.

She said her most challenging question to answer was how many wedding cakes does she make per year, because there was some math involved!

I hope others plan on visiting this delicious place. I sure plan on going back again.
The book *The Giver* has always meant something powerful to me; especially when at times I saw governments going too much toward science and away from myth and history. Lois Lowry’s book, *The Giver*, is a good example of this. No matter how hard you try to get rid of art, it will come back.

*The Giver* looks at what might happen if, as a people, we let fear take over. The government even takes over the climate, causing it to be sunny all the time because rain and snow are too inconvenient for travel when there are schedules to keep. This is not the worst part of the new community, although there are no causes or religion, and the children who are viewed as not good enough are killed.

No one knows that the children or elderly are killed when they are too much trouble; they just think they are sent somewhere else. What must be the most troubling fact for the reader is that at 11 years old, children are forced to grow up.

Even though the chief Elder at the Ceremony of Twelve says that the “new twelve” are still children; the fact that they are forced into adult work at such a young age says otherwise. Children as young as three are disciplined for the smallest infractions.

I wrote to Lois Lowry in December of this year and asked her my first four interview questions.

Michelle: Why did you wait so long to write *The Giver* sequels? Was it because of fans asking questions (about Jonas)? Or were they already planned out to be written?

Lowry: I hadn’t planned to write sequels, Michelle. But several years later I began a book with a main character who appeared in my imagination…a young girl with a crippled leg. At the same time, I was continuing to receive zillions of letters and emails from readers asking about Jonas. So I realized I could connect the two books, and that one became *Gathering Blue*. After I had done that one, I myself began to wonder about those characters and so eventually the final two books were written. Of all of them in
the quartet, *Son* is my favorite.

Michelle: Were only the four with the lighter eyes the ones with “The Gift?”

Lowry: In the first book, the eyes are mentioned; and indeed those with light eyes are the ones who have special gifts. By the last book, *Son*, it is clear what Gabe’s gift is. But if I remember correctly (I haven’t re-read them lately) I didn’t continue mentioning the eyes after the first book.

Michelle: Will we ever have a book that shows the community changing (like in the movie) or is *Son* the final book?

Lowry: *Son* is the final book. I think we can assume that the original community is changed...there is mention of that in *Messenger*, when Jonas receives the books from his previous community. So I don’t think there is much more to be explored.

Michelle: What got you started writing more serious books for young adults, like, *Number the Stars*?

Lowry: Actually, Michelle, my very first book for young readers…*A Summer To Die*…was a serious book; and another, *Autumn Street*, was not only a serious book, but remains my favorite of all the books I have written.

A few weeks later I wrote back and asked if she could answer two more questions. Guess what? She emailed me back the answers in about 10 minutes later!

Michelle: What makes *Son* your favorite out of the four *Giver* series books?

Lowry: I always have a closer connection to female protagonists, for obvious reasons. And in this case…I particularly related to Claire, because I, too, had lost a son. Her connection to her lost child resonated with me.

Michelle: Were you okay with the differences between your book *The Giver* and the movie, especially with Asher and Fiona’s jobs being changed?

Lowry: Yes, I could see why they needed to make those changes, for plot reasons in the film. Other things I had more trouble with. I wished that they had been able to set the film on a river, because the river is an important element in the succeeding books. But a movie is never the same as a book. I understood that from the beginning.

Much thanks to Lois Lowry for providing incredible incite into her life’s work and to contributing to our magazine!
On a recent trip to the Westend Library I interviewed their library services manager, Maria Joseph. I had 12 questions to ask Maria for the interview. After the interview, I took a picture of Maria and some other historic pictures. It is a small library. The library looked old at one time but now it has been modernized.

Bryan: What are the main benefits of going to the library?

Maria: A library offers lots of free material to anyone who has a library card, like books, DVDs, comics, music, CDs, video games, and computers. Another thing that most folks don't think about is there is a sense of community, and you can meet up with friends that they know or make new friends by just hanging out in the library or attending programs. There's lots of learning that happens in the library from whichever books they're reading or from going on the computer.

Bryan: Why is it important for communities to have libraries?

Maria: They're a place where people can come to share ideas and communicate amongst each other. Libraries are important for healthier communities. It adds vibrancy, and it's a safe place. A lot of young kids come to the library in the late afternoon to learn more.

Bryan: What kinds of special programs does the library offer?

Maria: There is a little learners story time and family play shop. The kids get to play with toys; again, this is another learning opportunity for the kids. Kids club is for kids who come to the library after school; they get to play on iPads or do craft projects. Teen time is where the teens work with a team librarian where they either do homework help, make craft projects, or listen to special presenters who talk to the teens about what life might be like after high school. Then for adults who are out of school we have programs that are varied from book club to a history club. We started a coffee and conversation club where they just have a coffee and share stories and work on any sort of creative project they are working on. Sometimes we have authors come in or some food programming. There are a wide variety of things that interest many people.

Bryan: How long has the Westend Library been around in Pittsburgh?

Maria: The Westend library branch has been here ever since 1899. (Wow!!) The historic plaque is on the front of the Westend Library. This library is one of the 18 locations of the Carnegie libraries. It was one of the first branches; we had Oakland, Lawrenceville, and then the Westend branch. In this very library, the story goes we had the very first story time for kids ever in the whole country and possibly in the world.

Bryan: How has modern technology affected the library usage?

Maria: We can find information for people a lot faster with the internet on the computer. It made the librarians life busier than people coming in for assistance on how to use computers: people come in every day applying for jobs, filling out forms online. A lot of people thought that computers would be the death of libraries but it never really happened. The library offers free gal which is a free app, which you can download five free songs for you to keep on your device, which is really cool. Hoopa is the overdrive the library uses. The
physical shape of the library is changing. The library doesn’t have as many books on the shelves, like back in the old days. The library uses an online catalog versus the old way was all papered up shelves, columns, and indexes of many books. The library’s circulation system is on Sierra; it’s the program they use for everything.

Bryan: What age groups do you see most often at the library?

Maria: That's a good question. We see all age groups, but most often we see young kids up to teens as our biggest users.

Bryan: What do you enjoy most of being a librarian?

Maria: I enjoy working with people and love meeting new people every day.

Bryan: What's the average time most people spend at the library?

Maria: It depends on what they are coming in for. If they are coming in for books or materials, they normally don't spend any more than ten minutes. If they’re coming in to use the computers, they will be on them for a good hour; that's average. There's normally a set time on the computers but the librarians give more time if you’re job searching or applying for jobs.

Bryan: What does a typical day look like for a librarian?

Maria: We open, we check things and answer folk's questions. I work excessively at the Westend library branch. All the librarians are involved with test groups throughout the system. Sometimes the librarians will go to local schools and do story time for the young kids. I’ve also done outreach with the veterans and county jail.

Bryan: What is your favorite book of all time?

Maria: The Little House series of books, which I’ve read from childhood.

Bryan: What was your least favorite book?

Maria: There's been more then I care to admit. I couldn't really say but I don’t regret any books that I’ve read.

Bryan: Is there anything else our readers should know about the library?

Maria: You can rent out 50 books at one time, and you will be allowed to have them for three weeks. If you want to rent out movies, you're allowed to rent out five at a time for one week. There is no limit to CDs you can download to free gal. For those folks into video games you can rent out five at a time for three weeks. The game CDs are for PS3, X box 1, WiiU, PSP and 3ds that are both handheld systems. There is no limit to how many audio books you can get from the library. The audio books are free to keep from the libraries overdrive system. The max items you can rent out from the library varies. It can be five movies and 45 books or any other combo that equals up to fifty.

You can return what you rented from one library and drop it off at another library. If you want a library card, it's easy, all you have to do is show your ID and current living address and fill out a form. There's no money involved except if you want to print out something at the library, it costs a little bit.

You will be surprised at what you can do at the libraries. Libraries are very resourceful places to obtain information from. I do encourage the readers from the Pittverse Magazines and other readers alike to come in and check out the library. For more information about this library and many others visit their website at carnegieliibrary.org.
On March 4th 2016, I sat down with the Heinz History's Center's curator of history, Leslie Przybylek, to learn more about Heinz History Center and her role as curator.

Leslie told me that she's worked at Heinz for three years, starting in January of 2013. However, she started in the field in 1994. That would make it 20 years. Her favorite part of her job is reaching out to people in Pittsburgh for items that the center might need. She especially likes to meet people in their homes and hear their stories.

Although Leslie told me she likes many eras of history, the time between 1870-1920 is especially interesting because of the kinds of technologies dramatically changed like electricity, cars, and airplanes.

As the curator of history, Leslie's job is working with the temporary exhibits, like the World War II exhibit that recently closed. Her favorite exhibit was the innovators exhibit that has historical pieces that Pittsburgh used to shaped people's lives around the world.

I asked Leslie how the History Center receives the items that are on display. She told me some of the items are on loan. There is a staff member who takes calls to people who might have a particular object the Heinz History Center wants. Also, people call them when they have an object of interest.

If you've even been to the Heinz History Center, you know there's a tank parked outside the building. Leslie said the tank is there in connection with World War II. It had to do with the fact there were factories in Pittsburgh that made different pieces of the tank. She said the exhibit showed how people living in Pittsburgh and Western Pennsylvania at the time contributed to the war effort. The armor plating and little pieces of equipment were made from factories in the area.

I also asked Leslie why there was a goalpost outside the History Center. She said the goalpost is a part of Pittsburgh history. Sports are a huge topic and some museums really don't deal with it. The goalpost has taken the personality of the city.

The Heinz History Center also has a trolley inside the building. I've always wondered how they got it inside. Leslie said she was not there at the time they brought the trolley in, but they might have brought the trolley through a set big double doors that could have been open at that time. She knew there was restoration done to the trolley. She said the Heinz History Center was a building where freight cars would come in.

With so many items at the Heinz History Center, I asked Leslie how they keep them from becoming damaged. Leslie told me that when something is brought to the museum, it's how it is stored that it makes a difference. They put things that need to be protected in boxes with foam and pads. They put some items in display cases. People are frustrated with the display cases because they want to get up close and the case is in the way,
but that's kind of the point. As for the tank outside, people can get close but the center used signs that read: DO NOT CLIMB!

One of Pittsburgh's most famous figures is Fred Rogers. I asked Leslie if he ever visited the Heinz History Center. She said she did not know the answer because didn’t work there. She said it was possible while they were working on the Mister Rogers Neighborhood exhibit that he helped with it. The puppets and their buildings such as X the Owl’s tree King Friday’s castle are there.

One of my favorite parts of the Heinz History Center is the Sports Museum. I asked Leslie, "What are the small things in the Sports Museum that people might overlook?" There are many displays that are not related to well-known pieces of Pittsburgh sports history, but she did talk about the big exhibits like the Pittsburgh Pirates and the Steelers, and she said they were talking about expanding the hockey section. They show pieces from Del Miller, a harness racer from the area, swimming champions, there is a big case for climbing. There are even pieces from high school sports and golfers.

Leslie told me about the Heinz History Center's new temporary TOYS exhibit, which will be on display until May 31, 2016. The exhibit displays a lot of toys from the 50s, 60s, and 70s. They have vintage one-one toys like Barbie and a lot of games. There is a section that has pinball machines and video games. Some, Leslie said, came from a Minnesota history center. I asked about showing the 80s and 90s toys, and she said they might show them at some point.

The last question I had for Leslie is if the Heinz History Center has anything that helps to raise awareness of autism. Leslie said there was not anything at the History Center that was autism specific, but they could look into it in the future. If there are professors at Pitt or there is someone who is working in robotics at CMU or one of the hospitals, they could add to the exhibits.

Talking to Leslie was a nice time. I learned a lot about the secrets behind the History Center.
I interviewed April Artz, a counselor at Squirrel Hill Psychological Services, about how to keep relationships going. At her job, she helps people with autism with any problems they might have. She also helps them to find employment. She's been doing this for a while, and she enjoys helping out people with autism.

In my opinion, there's a lot that goes into a relationship to keep it going. You have to be there for each other. You've got to remember each other's birthdays, anniversaries, etc. There are a lot of ups and downs in a relationship. For example, there could be a lot of arguments, but there could be a lot of good memories that you want to think about all the time like helping each other out, loving one another, and getting along with both families. It's important to be positive to each other to keep the relationship going.

If you're in a relationship, that's great, but if not there's a lot of ways to make it happen. First, introduce yourself to someone. Next, exchange numbers and email addresses to stay in touch. Then, one day call or email each other to spend some time with each other. Finally, get to know each other's families. If they like you, it's a good chance both of you will be in a relationship. If not, go elsewhere and keep trying.

Don't give up hope because there's someone out there for you. Always give it your best effort. Don't give up on something good like this. You might have to wait a long time, but it'll pay off in the long run.

April said there's a lot that goes into a relationship. You have to be there for each other. Sometimes you or your significant other may forget special occasions, but it's important to remember these important times in your life so nothing goes wrong. You definitely don't want to end the relationship this way at all.

April said communication is the key in all relationships. Some people don't give out their numbers, so how can you communicate? It's
important to get each other's numbers from the start.

The key points to an ongoing relationship is the person themselves, communication, and being there for one another. Another thing to remember is relationships are quite tricky in many ways. Remembering that a lot goes into one is another key point. It's good to talk about your disagreements and come up with a solution to the problem. You can also go to couples therapy to find out what can help out certain situations. You may have to go more than one time.

My interview with April gave me a lot of insight about relationships for people with autism.

As a footnote, here’s some more information about the services offered at Squirrel Hill Psychology, where April works.

If you need assistance in finding a job, schedule an appointment and go to their offices at 5743 Bartlett St.

While I was there for my interview, a thought occurred to me that I can go there and get help getting another job with their assistance. They are experts of what to do for those of us who have autism.

They have children programs too. April helps families cope with children in families with autism and has counsellor services to help out with this. Plus she helps parents understand their kids' problems better.

Now for the job placement services. There are four things you need to qualify. They are a resume, location, diagnosis of autism, and time. Then they look for employment choices for you and then they choose a job. When they find a job they go over the job responsibilities and what the company expects of you. Finally you go for a job interview for the job. I recommend this agency for counsellor services and job placement if you have autism. April is very friendly to everyone.
Blended Families
Interview with Relationship Resolutions’ Matthew Esch

by Mark Sulkin

This article I’m writing is about blended families. From the time I was born I lived with my mom and dad. We were a very happy family. We all lived together for many years. We lived in a house in Penn Hills.

Two years later, my dad met Melissa. She had twin sons, Riley and Ross who didn’t have a dad. On August 9, 2015, we moved to a new house in Swisshelm Park. It was just like on the Brady Bunch. Our new house had me, my dad, Melissa, Riley, Ross, Smokey the dog, and the cats, Possum and Augie.

In November 2015, Smokey passed away. In the same month, we adopted a 7-year-old dog named Lilly from my friend Mary Jean. Lilly joined our blended family and made us whole.

A blended family is when two families become one whole family. It was a new experience for me. I never had brothers and I had to learn to share my stuff and take turns doing things like showers and chores. I’m still learning how to do that. Melissa has become my stepmother and she is helping me grow up and be ready for my future.

It’s really great to have such a big family. We do many fun things together. It does get pretty crowded when we celebrate birthdays and holidays, but they’re more fun. I love my blended family with all my heart. Who knows, maybe they’ll make a TV show about us.

I wanted to learn more about other blended families like mine, so I reached out to Relationship Resolutions, a local counseling center. I had a chance to ask some questions to Matthew Esch, who is one of their marriage and family therapists. Check out what he had to say about how living in a blended family.

Mark: What is a blended family?

Matthew: Quite simply—a blended family is one where one of the parents remarries after a divorce or death. If either of the new spouses have children from their past relationships, these children become step-siblings (brothers and sisters) to one another, and the "new" parent is referred to as a "step-" parent (such as stepfather and stepmother). Most readers may be familiar with the term "stepmother" as lots of fairy tales and the Disney movies based on these often make stepmothers out to be the "bad guys," and rather unfairly to the really good ones out there.

Mark: What do you think people would want to know about blended families?

Matthew: Seeing that our society has changed a lot since the 1900s, especially, when it comes to how we look at gender roles (meaning, what's so-called "men's work" verses "women's work"), one of the things that comes with this is that we have a set of laws and court procedures for people who don't want to be married to each other to separate. This is a very complicated process, and there’s a lot of details to work out, which is why sometimes going through this can be very hard on everyone involved. Sometimes after that, the now divorced people find new people they would like to live with, and sometimes the rest of the family is "along for the ride."

While the "traditional" family is one that most people can kind of understand, the newly formed family of remarried or simply divorced people living with their new partners doesn't come with a "rule book". Who does what, what rules are in the new homes, who has what space, are just some of the areas that people have to figure out, and not everyone thinks to do that.

Mark: How do blended families share holidays or special times? Can it be difficult for these blended families?

Matthew: Great question! Holidays are hard for original families, sometimes, with all of the preparations, cooking, cleaning, decorating, traveling, perhaps... and some families have bad memories with some of their holidays being ruined by things like arguments, fights, or sometimes with some people who might be struggling with substance abuse with alcohol or drugs, this makes what is supposed to be a happy, family time into an ugly memory. Those things can certainly lead to divorces, and can be hard to put behind you. When we're talking about blended families, sometimes one side of the blended family may have stuff like that in their history, and this can be hard for the others to understand why these step-people are so upset at a happy time, and vice ver-
rules and roles! Family A has one set of rules, Family B has another. When Families A and B blend together, sometimes these rules aren't the same, and this can be quite confusing. For example, if Family A has a bedtime for kids at 8:30 p.m., and Family B lets the kids stay up until 10 p.m., the kids from Family B will feel it's totally not fair that they have to go to bed so early!

Mark: What would you consider a traditional family by today’s standards? Does a traditional family exist anymore?

Matthew: I define a "traditional family" as one where there is a man and woman married and living together, with or without kids. Sure that model still exists, and isn't going anywhere, anytime soon. What has happened recently with the progression of civil rights movement to include those who are gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgender better in our society, legally any two consenting adults may marry one another, legally. Some religious traditions speak against this citing their traditions, teachings, and dogma, and I feel that there is a place in our society for all of us to live as we wish, and love whom we wish.

Mark: Is it difficult for children in a blended family to get along with new siblings?

Matthew: Sometimes, yes. Conflict amongst the kids was part of my earlier answer about families arguing, and sometimes this can be very stressful, and cause a lot of hurt feelings. It can vary depending on the ages of the kids, how many kids, boys or girls, oldest or youngest or middle kids. There's as many possible rea-

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The Steel City Icebergs:
Pittsburgh’s Special Hockey Team
by Michael Perret

My article is about my special hockey team and my assistant hockey coach. My special hockey team’s name is called “Steel City Icebergs.” My assistant coach’s name is Mark Nous.

Mark Nous started coaching the special hockey team in 2009. He has been coaching the Icebergs for six years. The special hockey team has been around for six years as well. Mark Nous definitely enjoys coaching the special hockey team. He had to go to a USA Hockey Training. Mark Nous coached other hockey teams in the Washington D.C. area and that was what inspired him to become a special hockey coach. Mark Nous played college hockey for three years and played for the University of Pittsburgh Johnstown.

I have been playing ice hockey under my assistant hockey coach Mark Nous for almost three years. I enjoy playing ice hockey for the Steel City Icebergs a lot. I also enjoy going to my hockey tournaments as well. My hockey coach Mark Nous is the best hockey coach that I have ever had a chance to play for.

In my two years of playing ice hockey, I’m still learning how to stop on my hockey skates.

To conclude this article, I would like all the readers to learn that playing ice hockey and learning to ice skate and learning to stop on hockey skates takes a lot of practice. It also takes patience and hard work. I also want the readers to know that ice hockey is a lot of fun and exercise. Ice hockey takes a lot of pride and effort to become a good hockey player.

I also want the readers to know that ice skating on hockey skates takes a lot of balance and shifting your weight from side to side. Ice hockey also takes a lot of passing and shooting skills of a hockey puck. It took me at least three weeks to finally get used to ice skating on hockey skates. It also took me a while to pass and shoot a hockey puck into a hockey goal. I would also like the readers to learn that playing ice hockey also takes a lot of hand and eye coordination and team and very hard work if a lot of people want to be a great hockey player and to be successful at ice hockey.
I chose to write about Joah Susan Hackett and autism coordination.

A long time ago, Joah looked for an autism coordinator for her son, Daniel. He was accepted into the PA Adult Autism Waiver Program. So his service coordinator travelled to her Mr. Lebanon house from Johnstown, PA.

The service coordinator mentioned they were looking for someone to work in Western PA.

Joah had the required education and background so she accepted the position, and her first client was "yours truly," Richard Martin Campbell.

And to sum it up, Joah and I learned plenty together.

She loves her job. But her greatest accomplishment was finding me a home on Eileen Drive in the North Hills. I've lived there almost three years and I'm still happy.

And now, Joah works for her own agency, and I'm happier for her than ever before!

I sat down and asked Joah some questions about her career.

Why do you work as an Autism Supports Coordinator?

I became a Supports Coordinator (SC) 6 years ago when my son, Dan, was accepted into the PA Adult Autism Waiver program. His SC travelled to our house from Johnstown, PA and mentioned that they were looking for someone to work in the Pittsburgh area. I had the required education and background, so I accepted the position. And my first participant that I met was you, Richard!

How long have you had this job?

I have been an SC for 6 plus years now.

Does your job give you satisfaction?

I have had various jobs in my lifetime, and I have to say that this job gives me the most satisfaction of all. I have the honor of working with a very special population of people (those with ASD). I have met so many great families and dedicated colleagues. I have the privilege of watching participants in the Adult Autism Waiver grow personally and improve the quality of their lives.

Where did you get your education?

I graduated from Slippery Rock University with a degree in Elementary Education. I taught 2nd grade and then preschool for several years at a school where my children attended.

What are some of the things that you do for your job?

My responsibilities as an SC include meeting with participants and their families, ensuring that the participant is receiving the services he/she has requested, and reporting to the state of PA regarding the services given and the progress made.

Does your job make you get frustrated?

As with any job, there are days when I get frustrated, but for the most part, this is a job that I love doing!

What is the greatest accomplishment you have achieved in your job?

There have been many, but I think the most satisfying accomplishment was finding one of my participants a better place to live. After about 3 years of searching I was able to find an agency who purchased a home in a quiet North Hills neighborhood. He is still living there and is very happy!

Why did you start your own company?

After working as an SC for several years, I thought I would give it a try and start an agency. I have always wanted to have my own business!
Deacon Fred Eckhardt of St. Bernard’s Parish of Mt. Lebanon and Dormont has long been on a crusade of sorts to make the church accessible to those who are disabled, some in more ways than one. Sitting down with him on a Monday afternoon in January, I had the opportunity to speak with him about this mission (no pun intended). Here are the questions I asked as well as the answers that he gave to me.

What inspired this “crusade” for those who are disabled?

There’s always been a concern regarding accessibility to St. Bernard’s facilities primarily due to its location. Even legislature wants to make sure everyone has access.

Was there any personal motivation?

My 47-year old nephew has been diagnosed with multiple forms of disability, both mental and physical.

How much progress do you estimate has been made so far?

It started with new seating arrangements for Masses and has continued with new instructions for Eucharistic ministers to go to those who have mobility issues.

But we still have a ways to go.

Was being with the Mt. Lebanon Volunteer Fire Dept. part of your inspiration

It definitely was a similar service and a great learning experience.

How long have you been a Deacon?

I was ordained in June of 2011, so almost five years.

Is there any way that we at Pittverse can help?

Possibly just by spreading the word about my “crusade” through this upcoming issue.

Any words of wisdom to conclude with?

Just remember that “All humans are created equal” and that “Being different isn’t bad.”

Wise words from a very wise man. For Deacon Fred Eckhardt, his crusade isn't over yet. As long as people are open-minded and willing to look past others’ differences and/or disabilities, there are always possibilities.

Special Thanks:

Father David Bonnar, Pastor of St. Bernard’s Parish

Deacon Fred Eckhardt & Family

And the Entire St. Bernard’s Community
Trisha McCuen: The Link to the Outside World

by Thomas Skidmore

Trisha McCuen is a Therapeutic Staff Support-Community Inclusion Staff for the service provider Autism Education and Research Institute (AERI). Her job is primarily aiding clients access to entering the outside world, as well as discussing behavioral and emotional concerns either regarding external factors or internal triggers.

A 2012 graduate of University North Carolina, Trisha has been with the company’s other offshoot Family Behavioral Resources since September 2012, and joined AERI in late 2014.

On a personal level, my working relationship with Trisha commenced in September 2015, when she was added as a back-up/replacement for my other CI specialist who was preparing for maternity leave. In my opinion, Trisha’s means of usage is of a more analytical viewpoint (given her university background), identifying behavioral patterns and motivations.

“I have a clinical approach under the guidance of the BSS, and I like to start by achieving a good rapport with the clients,” she says of her means. “Once the rapport is established, we work together in order to achieve the client’s set goals.”

It is also her duties to ensure emotional/physical well being, by encouraging healthy behaviors and lifestyle choices, such as peer interaction.

Her interests are varied and diverse, including rock climbing, camping, hiking, canoeing/kayaking, reading, and yoga. Her hidden talent is crocheting, making primarily scarves but her next crochet project is a blanket. Her tastes in reading include biographies, general fiction, and books relating to psychology. In addition, Trisha also enjoys board games and card games such as Yahtzee and blackjack.

Trisha’s tastes in food run to the more exotic such as sushi, yet she enjoys sampling all sorts of food. She prefers eating at home as well as preparing her own types of meals. She’s also very health-conscious yet is not above a good sweet dessert once in a while.

Trisha is keen to respect to respects viewpoints not necessarily in conjuncture with her own. Largely she avoids potentially combative topics such as politics, religion, etc. She’s quick to learn new things.

“They love my job, really enjoy it,” she states when asked about her job. “It challenges my perspective, and I really enjoy working with autistic people because for me, it’s like unlocking a code, or solving a puzzle.”
Interview with a Local Teacher

by Sara Brooks

Have you ever had a favorite teacher in school you looked up to? I know I have had quite a few teachers who I really enjoyed having throughout my school years. Teachers are very important because they help their students learn about many different things. They help build a child's foundation for their future and beyond. They seem to have such great patience and are always willing to push their students to succeed. Teachers have been around for years and they continue to teach children everywhere. There are many different kinds of teachers, and they each have their own way of doing it with their students. Luckily, I have had a lot of good experiences with my teachers in school and I even have quite a few friends who are teachers.

One of my friends' names is Samantha Odorisio. I have known her since the seventh grade, and we have been friends ever since. I sat down and asked her a few questions about her teaching career. Samantha reported, "I teach first grade and I have been a teacher for six years." Samantha stated, "My favorite part of my job is when my students actually understand what I teach them and they get it!" Since she told me a little about her favorite part of her job, I was interested in knowing what her least favorite part of her job is. She reported, "I guess the least favorite part of my job would be the misconception of teachers. Which means many people who are not teachers don't understand exactly what it is like to be a teacher."

I then asked Samantha her favorite subject to teach and she told me that she enjoyed teaching reading the most. I continued to ask her about her job and how she got started out teaching. I asked her where she went to school to get her degree. Samantha answered, "I went to Carlow University for my undergraduate degree, and then for graduate school I went to Duquesne University." Samantha and I talked about how she has been liking her job and what she plans on doing to move further with her career. She told me that she plans to be a better teacher, to continue to learn about teaching, and to visit the Ron Clark Academy. "RCA is a demonstration school - a place where visiting educators engage in a vibrant professional development experience by observing best practices in action before participating in hands-on workshops." (ronclarkacademy.com)

We then started to talk about some funny memories that she has had with her students. One of the funny stories she told me about was when one of her students tried gluing another student to a chair. I couldn't help but to laugh. Then on April Fool's Day, she stated, "I cut out brown 'E's and tell my students that I made brownie's for them. They hear brownies and they get so excited! Then when they see the paper brown 'e's, they get so mad for a second and then have fun tricking other people!"

Overall, it seems like the life of a teacher can be very busy yet very rewarding and fun at times. I enjoyed interviewing my friend and it was fun to learn more about her career as a teacher. Teaching and education go way back in time and it is interesting how it has evolved. If you'd like to read more on the history I found some great information on this website: www.pbs.org/onlyateacher/timeline.html
Mr. B.I.G.

Master Of Drive-In Classic Sci-Fi, Fantasy and Horror Films.

by David O’Rorey

I had the opportunity to interview Bert I. Gordon at the most recent Monsterbash Octoberfest. It was a nice to chat with such a talented movie producer; he was a delight to talk with.

Bert I. Gordon is known to many fans as Mr. B.I.G. because most of his sci fi movies were about giant creatures. Everyday normal insects and animals are magnified to giant size from radiation or other radioactive materials. Mr. B.I.G. became a producer and director. He also dabbled in special effects techniques he invented by himself like split screen, rear projection, and blue screen techniques. He usually used the actual insects and animals on films.

Mr. B.I.G. was at the height of the 50s Atomic Sci-Fi Drive-In Craze. One sci-fi thriller cult classic was Beginning Of The End, released in 1957 Starring Peter Graves and Peggie Castle. The film is about scientists who are experimenting with radioactive foods to make fruits and veggies bigger. Some grasshoppers accidentally get into the food and eat it which makes them grow into 50 foot monsters that have an appetite for human flesh. Eventually they attack the city of Chicago, but are finally stopped.

Mr. B.I.G.’s first movie was King Dinosaur released in 1955. Most of his movies were filmed on location and sets.

Mr. B.I.G. grew up as a child living in the movie theaters, and at 9 years old his aunt gave him a 16mm movie camera. He used it to make movies with kids around the neighborhood. He loved cinema and movie making, which is what got him into the movie business.

At 93 years of age he is still active in the cinema. His last movie was in 2015, Secrets Of A Psychopath, which he directed and executive produced. He also had made some other sci fi and fantasy films that weren’t about giant creatures.

One such movie was Attack Of The Puppet People released in 1958 a.k.a. The Fantastic Puppet People. It is about a lonely old doll maker that has a machine to shrink people with. It was sort of a spin-off of the 1957 Universal Sci-Fi Classic The Incredible Shrinking Man, which came out a year before. However, Puppet People was released by American International Pictures and had a lower budget. Mr. B.I.G. also produced and directed the fantasy classic The Magic Sword (1962) which had Basil Rathbone in it, the old time star of many films.

Bert I. Gordon was named Mr. B.I.G. affectionately by Forrest J. Ackerman, the editor and publisher of the magazine Famous Monster Of Filmland.

Mr. B.I.G. also did some Drive-In Sci-Fi Classics in the 70s that were recently released on Blu-Ray by Shout! Factory’s Scream Factory Line. The films The Food Of The Gods, released in 1976 by A.I.P., and Empire Of The Ants released in 1977 by A.I.P., are loosely based on the stories by H.G. Wells of the same names.

It was an honor to talk to Mr. B.I.G. and learn how his classic sci fi films came to life. I recommend that everyone checks out his groundbreaking films.
Imagine that two congregations and other neighborhoods come together to a community dinner at church. They get to know each other and learn their stories.

Saint Mark’s Evangelical Lutheran Church, located in Brookline, started Community 341. The person I interviewed is my pastor, Christina Hough. She has been a pastor at Saint Mark’s for six years.

MJ: Can you describe Community 341?

Pastor Chris: Community 341 is a new church development or worshipping community designed for people to meet people where they are and in all of their needs. We proclaim of God’s love for all people through the act of service and worship.

MJ: Can you describe your main job position at Community 341?

Pastor Chris: I’m the mission developer lead worship feed our neighbor spiritual, physically, emotionally, and live out of the gospel.

MJ: What do you like the most about Community 341?

Pastor Chris: I like meeting people and learning their stories, love walking with them hearing about god, like showing people of who god is and power of god’s love.

MJ: Do you work with another church in Community 341?

Pastor Chris: We partner with Brookline Boulevard United Presbyterian Church and Saint Mark’s Lutheran Church.

MJ: How long has Community 341 served at Saint Mark’s?

Pastor Chris: It grew out of the ministries together and independently and we began officially together for Community 341 in 2015.

If anyone from other neighborhoods want to come for a community dinner to get to know each other and learn their stories are welcome at Saint Mark’s Lutheran Church to show god’s love and worship. It’s every Wednesday night, and begins from 5:30 pm to 6:30 pm. The address is 933 Brookline Boulevard, Pgh, PA, 15226.
Believe in Yourself for the Sake of Faith

by Nature f.f. Aura

To understand the way people feel is to also share the notion of knowing how you feel as well. As all people get the idea of being better than everyone else it just came to the point where problems started to rise and fall than rise again. I know it is difficult to understand a person's feelings on what they know or don't know but that is what makes us human. We all make mistakes, but we have to be honorable enough to admit to them. We also have to accept the way knowledge is spread through different structures that we have learned through the ages of different bloodlines. Some inventions of the past had to be improved for the sake of protecting us today, and those "improvements" can be for better or for worse.

But even though bad or good ideas through this particular function of normal human behavior seems non-vital to any surviving cost. We can still learn from its mistakes and its failures and make something positive out of it. For example- except saying war is a good thing. Why not say instead that peace can be accepted through all cultures. Instead of guns, why not pronounce hugs to everything that can get the chance to love. Instead of causing a war in any form, why can't we just say to the people- look you're different and we are different as well, but can't we set aside our differences and help one another to build a better tomorrow with love and care and make a more peaceful future for much more generations to come. What I'm saying to you is this. We should have love for each other because it is the key to our future.

Your friend and guardian of earth, Nature Forbidden Forest Aura.

"Make haste to love! Make haste to trust! Make haste to give! To guidance come! Come ye for harmony! To behold the Star of Day! Come here for kindliness. for ease! Come here for amity and peace! Come and cast down your weapons of wrath, till unity is won!"

-Abdu'l-Baha
Seizures can affect one’s life throughout their lifespan in various ways. A seizure is a change in the brain’s electrical activity. It can be very dangerous to one’s health. However, the scary thing is that some seizures can occur without symptoms while others can cause dramatic symptoms and health issues. Symptoms can be very mild to very severe. When a mild seizure occurs, it is still important to recognize and seek assistance. Seizures can lead to injuries or extreme medical difficulties. Some of many symptoms to recognize prior or during a seizure are as follows: abnormal behaviors, anxiety, depression, headaches, sleepiness, staring spells, fainting, muscle contractions, muscle spasms, and many more.

I personally have experience many seizures throughout my lifetime since I was a child. Some in which were mild, and I was unaware at first that I was experiencing a seizure. I would wake up from my sleep and be left with an excruciating headache. In other cases, when seizures were extreme, I would be rushed to the hospital. Seizures have become a part of my life. They are not known to be curable, however, in situations they can be partially treated with specific medications to help prevent them. In my situation, medication does help; it is also important to monitor my diet due to my diabetes as well. Certain foods can trigger seizures in my case due to diabetes and I regularly have to monitor my food and beverage intake.

I think it is important for society to be educated about recognizing seizures symptoms because they could help someone experiencing a seizure. If someone is having a seizure, the most important thing you can do to help is to assure that the person is laying on their side. Putting something soft underneath their head to protect from injuries. Also assuring that the individual does not bite down on their tongue. This also is very important because it could cause blood loss and harm the individual if bitten down hard enough. After going through those steps, then call or locate emergency personnel.

As explained, seizures can be very life threatening and severe. As a person who experiences seizures, I feel it is my job to educate others on how serious and important it is to be knowledgeable of this disorder.
In the entire animal world, meaning both wild and domesticated alike, including dearly beloved pet companion animals such as dogs, cats, bunny rabbits, and turtles, plus all plants, stars, moons, planets, quasars, clouds, galaxies, suns, solar systems, and countless other living creatures, beings, and entities throughout this vast entire Universe of ours, are completely innocent and free from the temptations of demonic spirits!

HALT is an abbreviated term which stands for a Christian Self-Help Technique for engaging in daily spiritual warfare with evil and satanic forces, who are constantly threatening to disrupt human beings’ daily walk with Our Savior, whom is The Lord Jesus Christ!

H stands for, please, do not get too hungry. A stands for, please, do not get too angry. L stands for, please, do not get too lonely. T stands for, please, do not get too tired.

Salvation was perfectly won by Jesus Christ, at the Calvary Cross, some 2,000 years ago, however, this does not prevent satanic spirits from potentially attacking our individual daily testimonies before Jesus Christ, because we are not in Heaven yet.

Either until Jesus Christ Our Savior, returns to the Earth, while we are all still physically alive, or if He calls our individual names home beforehand, as is Biblically prophesied, we will have to individually engage in doing daily battle with these horrific invisible foes. They, meaning Satan and the demons, are forever fallen angels, who, on their own individual divine-ordained created free wills, as is similar to Adam and Eve, whom are all of humanity’s original parents, meaning both Jew and Gentile alike, including myself, deliberately rebelled against Our Creator in Heaven, where sin began. They wanted to be more powerful than Our Creator, so Our Creator, in perfect divine judgement, permanently threw all of them out of Heaven into Hades, or Hell. Lucifer, now Satan, was the most beautiful archangel, or head angel, that our creator created at the time. It was his sinful and vain pride that lead to him forever falling from Heaven, along with a third of our creator’s other angels, who personally chose to side with Lucifer, who are forever known as demons.

They will never ever be reinstated by our creator.

Jesus Christ will destroy of them, someday, as is Biblically prophesied!

We could only imagine what the world would wonderfully be like had Lucifer, the former third of Heaven’s other angels, then afterwards, Adam and Eve, would have always obeyed our creator!

The Lord Jesus Christ is the perfect divine deity representative of all of his heavenly father’s creations of living creatures, beings, and entities both on the Earth and throughout this vast entire Universe!

Innocent wild and domestic animals, including dearly beloved family pet animal companion baby angels, yes, indeed, literally and truly so, are totally exempt from spiritual warfare with evil spirits, including plants, and many other creatures, beings, and entities on the Earth and in the vast Universe, because they do not have an individual free will, and, thus, have no personal darksides, at all, unlike us humans and the angels, both fallen and unfallen alike.
The Beauty of a Butterfly

by Delaine Swearman, M.J. Devine, and Sara Brooks

Butterflies can't see their own wings, but everyone else can see their beauty. We are all butterflies."

As people with autism, we frequently feel like we're missing out on something that's obvious to everyone else. This can be very frustrating and confusing in everyday situations. We feel defective when it happens.

But here, among our Pittverse colleagues, we are all butterflies. No one is defective; we obviously just can't see our own beautiful wings.

However, we are great at pointing out the beauty, talents, and worth of others. Our writing for the magazine demonstrates just that.

We've compiled the best qualities of each member of our group so each of us have the chance to "see the beauty of our own wings."

MJ: Outgoing, calming, friendly, happy, easy to talk to, giving.

Sara: Friendly, happy, persistent, accepting, outgoing, adventurous.

Delaine: Interesting, wonderful, fun, outgoing, calming, creative, friendly.

By Mark Kent via Flickr Creative Commons
An Open Letter to Port Authority

by Richard Campbell and Kenneth Miller

We are writing to "Pittsburghers for Public Transit" to improve service in the Observatory Hill Section and the Marshall-Shadeland Area of Brighton Heights on routes of "Port Authority."

8 - Perrysville and 17 - Shadeland

We are writing to request that "Port Authority" have it seven days a week: weekdays, Saturdays, Sundays, and major holidays.

On 8 Perrysville And expanded service on the 17-Shadeland 7 days a week.

On the same days.

And on the same schedules.

We, Kenneth Miller and Richard Campbell, depend entirely on "Port Authority."

We couldn't survive without "Port Authority" and neither could 240,000 daily commuters every day. Hopefully routes such as 2-Mount Royal and 4-Troy Hill and have Saturday and Sunday service, too, restored.

Because more than ever we need Port Authority! Honest!

Watch Mark Brentley's Pittsburgh Propaganda Alert on PCTV21 Free Speech TV Comcast 21 and Version 47 on Tuesdays at 2pm. The show, airing in March 2016, features interviews with people like myself (Kenneth Miller) and Carl Redwood about newspapers and housing and the 18th Annual Summit Against Racism.

Mark Brentley’s answering service can be reached 24 hours day. Need experienced advice about the Pittsburgh Federation of Teachers contract and the search for a new school superintendent? Call 412-734-1594, speak clearly, and leave a return number.
Not too long ago, I moved out of my parents’ house into my own apartment. I do not think it was that scary my first night. Hickory Hills is the name of the apartment complex and it is located across from Pine Creek Plaza. I work and shop at the Pine Creek Giant Eagle, where I clean four days a week. Summer is my favorite time of the year. In the summer I swim at the Hickory Hills pool. I learned that taking out the trash at night is a bad idea. The reason is the Raccoons. I take a flashlight when it’s dark or when I’m walking to Target. Some of the places I can walk to are Target, Walgreens and PNC Bank and I hope to learn how to use the bus in the future. I think the keys to survival while living alone are: turn off the lights, turn off all power surges, turn off the stove, close windows and blinds, turn off faucets, and lock the door.

Growing up autistic wasn’t easy. I always had trouble fitting in. School was a challenge because I had no friends. The thing I hate about autism is my memory problem. I always felt my dad hated me. The "reason" is that I always found things that would make him mad. The medications were a pain. One medicine got me kicked out of day camp. My family thinks I’ve gotten better with age. I think my parents are proud of the way I turned out. I no longer think my dad hated me and only wanted what was best for me.

I am asking people to send in news articles about the autism spectrum for the writers of our magazine to consider and share with one another. We all do care a lot about how the spectrum and our services are presented in the media and understood in the legislative and educational arenas.

The whole point of the documentary Brian is working on is to help us with this. I appreciate that a lot.

A bulletin board at our office that displays print articles about the spectrum for the Pittverse writers would help a lot. There is an emotion attached to pinning something up in a public space.

Please send print articles about autism to:
Youth Advocate Programs
26 Terminal Way
Pittsburgh, PA 15219
The Best Lenten Fish in Pittsburgh

Eat N Park

by Michael Levenson

I experienced my fish sandwich for Lent at Eat N Park in Squirrel Hill. It was a large golden crisply breaded and fried piece of cod on a large hoagie bun. I ate it with mayonnaise and a side of broccoli. I would describe this sandwich as tasty and very filling. I will be sure to order this delicious sandwich again in the future!

St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Church

by Bryan Lippert

This lovely church is located at 330 3rd ave Carnegie PA, 15106 amazingly you can call the number 412-276-1011-ext 220 and place an order. Luckily for me I was the first to get there, I placed my order around 11am. For $8.00 I got the fried fish dinner with fries, coleslaw, and roll with butter plus a side of tartar sauce and ketchup. A nice elderly lady took my order the inside of the church looks very big and nice hopefully the fish too. The fish was fairly good, no grease on it, then I got really creative and made a coleslaw sandwich with my bun. They also had hot and cold tea, coffee, and water. I would recommend others to come here the food was okay and the people were nice.
I remember people asking me what love is, and I would respond with a question such as "Are you asking what love is or how do I view love?" Often times they are referring to how I view love. I personally find love to be a very interesting concept and how people perceive it to be. Some people I know view love as just a physical attraction however I view it as deeper and more emotional than that.

Love starts with a chemical in the brain that makes you feel a certain way towards an individual. It is kind of like watching a new season of your favorite TV show or playing a brand new video game; in this case it is an individual whom you really enjoy being around and find yourself wanting to spend more time with them. You also find yourself spending more time than normal thinking about the special individual and when you think of the person often times I personally find myself picturing their facial features. I am sure that is probably the case with most people.

But what is love to me, and how do I know I am in love? For me love is when I have very deep feelings for someone to the point where I may have trouble staying focused on certain tasks such as work or practicing my instruments. Love is taking great care to acknowledge how the individual will feel in certain situations and when certain things are said and how they could be perceived. Love is willing to listen even when the topic might not be what you want to talk about at the moment. Love is not being afraid to say I am sorry, or to tell your partner that something they did or said bothered you. But most important love is the willingness to be able to make certain and often necessary sacrifices.

Once I have established that the romantic feelings are deep and true I perceive the girl who is in my deepest interest deeper than other girls. Often times if I am in a social setting with the girl I will attempt to make efforts in engaging conversations with the girl. Often I will find myself stealing glances and sometimes even staring at her and then quickly turning away when she catches my eye. In most cases I find myself staring at her because there is nothing else or anyone else I really want to look at.

In this case the reasoning behind it is she simply has an aura around her and her face just seems to glow. In the case of talking to her, I found that when making random phone calls, her voice is just as appealing as seeing her in person. These kinds of physical attractions are another way I can tell I am in love.

When I am in love how would I maybe show that I truly am in love with my partner.

When I truly in love with someone often times I will go out of my way to try include them in things I do like going to events with people. This goes back to wanting to spend as much time with them as possible and boredom would not even be a possibility. I would show that I love them by maintaining appropriate physical contact with the individual. Things like holding their hand, or allowing them to hold on to my arm. In addition if I had not seen them for an extended period of time say the variable is a week, I would make sure to just hug them till they felt that they understood how much I missed them and spending time with them that week. If I am truly in love with them I would always try to take their phone calls. Most likely I would want to spend each evening talking to them over the phone before going to bed. This could include texting them, but I personally would feel more obligated to talk to them through a phone call.

If I am truly in love with them, I would go out of my way to help them in times of tough struggles or if they felt down about something, and if they felt threatened by something, I would always make sure to drop whatever it is I am doing and try to make it possible to meet them so they felt safe.

At a certain point hopefully the girl will have the same feelings towards me. I have experienced what I would call signs. The ones I have experienced in the past was getting an over extended hug, Meaning they would hold on to

What Love Is To Me

by Dmitry Harmon
me exponentially longer than the two to three seconds long. Sometimes the girl will end the hug and then decide to pull me back in. Another aspect that could be a sign is if they peck (kiss) me gently on the cheek or neck. Often times this will be done in an unexpected fashion. This has different types of variables. First it will be done fairly quickly, they most likely will do it when you are least expecting it, and they will do it if others may be preoccupied with other things therefor allowing the girl to sneak one in.

Other signs are, as I discussed earlier, in regards to I feel and act when I like a girl, they may do similar things. I personally do not view a girl calling me via phone as a sure sign unless they do it early in the morning or late into the evening, or both and it would have to be done on a consistent frequency.

Often times I find that I see people who are in love and are always kissing and hugging but most times several months, say six months later they are no longer together. I find the people who end up staying in a relationship for years do not do those kinds of things in public; you can just tell they care so much for each other because they are talking.

I am of the opinion that love at first sight very rarely happens. It takes time to develop very strong feelings for someone. Often times you will date several different people in your life before you start to develop strong feelings towards someone. It may take several dating opportunities before you find the right person who makes you feel deeply attached to them, and it is that person who completes the other half of you and you complete the other half of them. In conclusion when someone feels that they have someone whom completes them and vice versa, it seems appropriate to propose and let them know that you want to do nothing but spend the rest of your life with them.
Making Miniatures with Max
Constructing a Railroad Bridge

by Max Chaney

Making Miniatures with Max is a small project I'm working on to help people make small models on a small scale for a cheap price. Some projects won't be as cheap as others. Last time, I promised I would make a railroad bridge in n scale. And here it is!

This project is recommended for an adult because of the sharp equipment such as the wire cutters that it would be too dangerous for a child to handle. If a child wants to do this project, adult supervision is recommended. Here are the symbols on who can do this, for the adult** for the child *

But it’s kind of small, but it will grow in the future, check it out later on the website for more making miniatures with Max!

Okay let’s get building!

Things needed and things to use:
- Hot glue sticks and hot glue gun
- Popsicle sticks, you will need about 4 and extras
- Toothpicks, you will need a small jar of them
- Wire cutters (very dangerous if misused I learned that the hard way) you will need an adult for this
- A big box

Step One

Step 1) Grab your first three Popsicle sticks and cut the ends off. You don’t have to do this but it looks much cleaner you will need the wire cutter. **

Step Two

Step 2) Grab the fourth Popsicle sticks and cut it into third-- you will need the wire cutter. **

Step Three

Step 3) Glue the pieces together as shown in the picture. This way, it will give the model support.*
Step 4) Grab 14 toothpicks and cut the very ends off of them in the box… you have to work carefully so the ends don’t go flying. Be careful!**

Steps 5) Take two toothpicks and glue them in an X position; this will be part of the support beam and let it dry. *

Step 6) Glue two more toothpicks to the support beam it should look like this symbol {X}

*Step 7) Glue toothpicks on the bottom and the top .The completed structure should look like this picture.*

Step 8) Take the hot glue gun and glue the support beam and glue them to the middle of the popsicle sticks. They must be lengthwise on the ends like so.

Who to allow to paint or stain:

If you were to let a kid do this project for school or for fun paint it brown.

But if this was for an adult’s model railroad I would recommend staining it mahogany or any other stains such as oak if you’ll like… but I would not recommend this for children, because of the toxic chemicals and it would stain one’s clothing if misused.

The Completed Bridge
When the Western Pennsylvania Model Railroad Museum offered diorama classes, I was hooked. I had to join!

The diorama I chose to make is an abandoned railway track with a path through the valley. I love abandoned railways. They make me think that there is a story about them: stories of old trains and maybe... haunted ghost trains.

My layout features a fallen tree, rusty rails, and a path. It also features a bridge, a stream, and a hill.

I will continue to add elements to it, including a scrap-filled gondola with rusty wheels. It will also feature a small old hut and eerie lights, basically a haunted hut. I will describe these in a future article. This photo shows what I have so far.

This was one of the most complicated classes I’ve ever taken, but it was a lot of fun! I would recommend this for anyone who wants to make something inexpensive and beautiful! And I would say, yes, it is art!

The cost for this class is $50 to $60. If you love making things for a train display, this is pretty inexpensive. It is certainly not bad for a class that teaches you really cool techniques and good skills for model railroading.

The whole experience was a lot of fun. Teachers will guide you and help you as you make your diorama. At the same time, it is really your own project; you can make pretty much whatever you want. You don’t have to make it like the teacher’s project, and you don’t have to make it like your classmates, although you can if you want.

One last thing: you have to sign up in the winter because the classes are in the early spring. They only do one of these diorama classes per year. They offer classes for other aspects of model railroading,
The year 2015 was great for movies and music. There were many memorable movies, some classic reboots like Star Wars, Mad Max, and Jurassic World, and some original showstoppers like The Revenant, The Martian, and Room. There was also a wide range of songs on the radio, with relative newcomers like Ed Sheeran and The Weekend taking on living legends like Adele and Carrie Underwood. With the awards season well underway, here is a look at what the Pittverse writers thought were the best in movies and music of 2015.

Taking the gold for best movie of 2015 was perhaps Leo’s greatest role yet, The Revenant.

Close behind, taking the silver, were two huge box office smash-hits, Star Wars: The Force Awakens and Matt Damon’s The Martian. Rounding out the top three, earning the bronze for 2015 were Jurassic World and Trainwreck. Other movies mentioned as favorites for 2015 include Spector, Creed, Brooklyn, Room, 50 Shades of Grey, and The Big Short.

The year 2015 was a big year for Leonardo DiCaprio, where he took home the gold for best actor with the vast majority of the votes. Next in line for best actor, and each earning the silver, were actors Matt Damon and Bradley Cooper. There were so many other nominations for best actor, each earning one vote, and they include Daniel Craig, Sylvester Stallone, Arnold Schwarzenegger, Jake Gyllenhaal, Eddie Redmayne, Chevy Chase, George Clooney, Mark Wahlberg, and Michael Fassbender.

For best actress, there was one, very clear winner, Jennifer Lawrence, taking the gold and nearly fifty percent of the votes. The only other actress to receive more than one vote was Brie Larson, for her role in Room, gaining her the silver. Other actresses that received one vote include Cate Blanchett, Charlize Theron, Amy Schumer, Salma Hayek, Melissa McCarthy, Megan Fox, Amy Adams, Kate Winslet, and Saoirse Ronan.

Another topic in film that the Pittverse group wanted to include was animated films. There were only three films that received votes in this category, with one receiving about 90 percent of the votes. The gold medal winner was Inside Out, a fan favorite for 2015. The other two movies that will share the silver medal are The Peanuts Movie and Minions.

Finally, in the realm of music, there was one singer that returned to the recording studio after a few years and dominated the votes. Adele overwhelmingly received the gold medal for best singer of 2015 with her record setting song “Hello.” Taking home the silver was another woman who has had a lot of success over the years, Lady Gaga. Singers that each received one vote each include Carrie Underwood, The Weekend, Sam Smith, Luke Bryan, John Legend, and Beyoncé. Some older singers also received a vote with some diehard fans, including The Who and Bobby Brown.

Favorite song of 2015 was the closest category of the list, with gold, silver, and bronze separated by only one or two votes. The gold award for 2015 was Adele’s mega hit that dominated the charts, “Hello.” Silver award was shared by Specter’s theme song, “Writing on the Wall” and Ed Sheeran’s “Thinking Out Loud.” Taking home the bronze medal were Walk the Moon’s “Shut Up and Dance” and the smash hit, “See You Again.” Other songs earning at least one vote included “Earned It,” “When We Were Young,” “I Can’t Feel my Face,” “My Generation,” “Strip it Down,” “Eye of the Tiger,” “ and “Formation.”

This article was created by surveys from The Media Men group of the Pittverse. Writers including Richard Campbell, Kyle Walter, Randy Mullner, Jon Bik, and Mark Sulkin.
Review of Star Wars Episode Seven

by Kyle Walter

Star Wars Episode Seven is set 30 years after Episode 6 Return of the Jedi. The plot is Luke Skywalker has gone missing and Leia, Han, Chewbacca, R2, C3PO, and the rest of the characters are all trying to locate him. George Lucas reported that only R2D2 and C3PO would be in all nine. All the original actors, Mark Hamil, Carrie Fisher, Anthony Danieals, Peter Mayhew, Harrison Ford, and Kenny Baker have reprised their roles. It is the second one to have the PG13 rating. It is the longest Star Wars out of Episode 1—6. There are two changes they made. The first one is C3PO has a red arm, and the second one is they redesigned the Storm Troopers. I think Disney should have left the Storm Troopers in their original Episode 4, 5, 6 form. They should have left C3PO’S arm alone. They changed his right arm to red. I think the changes were bad. I think that some things are meant to be left untouched.
On January 10, 2016, rock music legend David Bowie died of complications from cancer, four days after his 69th birthday. He was surrounded by his wife, supermodel Iman, his son Duncan, and daughter Lexi. The news was truly a sudden blow to the music industry and the world at large.

From the very start till the very end of his life, Bowie always marched to the beat of his own drum, bucking old trends and creating new ones. Perhaps his most idiosyncratic character was the space rocker Ziggy Stardust, with his bright orange-red hair, shaved eyebrows, skin-tight outfits, and androgynous makeup. Though the Ziggy persona lasted approximately one year, it proved highly influential for other musicians, as well as so-called outcasts and misfits. Clearly Bowie was one to speak to all classes of people.

In addition to his music, he was adept at stage and film acting, starting with his title role in the 1976 science fiction film The Man Who Fell to Earth (based on Walter Tevis’ 1963 Hugo-nominated novel), and his Tony-nominated performance in the minimalist adaptation of The Elephant Man (where he used only movement and gestures, eschewing heavy make-up and uncomfortable costumes). But the most popular film role, albeit on a cult-classic level, was as the Goblin King Jareth in the 1986 Jim Henson-directed fantasy Labyrinth. He’s often cited this as one of his personal favorite film roles.

Not content with pushing creative trends and boundaries, Bowie liked to espouse often-absurd or tongue-in-cheek remarks regarding his private life, sometimes to the detriment of his career. But he was always ready to strive forward, as each decade brought great comebacks and successes. However, the one consistent factor that kept him grounded was the devotion he had to his family, particularly his son Duncan. It was David who encouraged Duncan to pursue film, and thanks to his dad’s support Duncan has had success. He was very devoted to his wife Iman and daughter Lexi, often stepping away from the music scene for sometimes years at a stretch just so Lexi could have a good home life.

David Bowie may be gone from the physical realm, but the music and films he made, as well as his unusual chameleon-like ability to create whatever he thought of, cannot be minimized or discounted. To do so would be a great disservice to both Mr. Bowie in particular, and the larger world in general.
Our son Joey is the only human child we ever had. We believe he is a nice and considerate young man that we have tried our best to raise over the last 38 years now! He has told us, even daily, that he has appreciated everything we have attempted to do and say to help him, though not always perfect, understandably, throughout his life until now!

How wonderful!

We did not know, even Joey did not, that he was born with an Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), until he was a grown man in his twenties over a decade ago. Due to the lack of knowledge about high-functioning autism (HFA), Joey was unable to receive the necessary interventions early in his life that could have greatly benefitted him like children largely receive today. We certainly do NOT blame the medical and psychiatric communities for this because we literally remember there was, unfortunately, limited understanding of Joey’s condition when he was growing up in the 1980’s and 1990’s. As we all individually remember reading about, there was no evidence that autism is caused by childhood vaccinations. Joey received all of his vaccinations as a young boy. Most of us remember getting them as school children.

We also recall Joey having behavioral symptoms of ADHD (Attention-Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder), as a youngster, especially from the ages of 3 to 8. Sadly, so much so, that he was put, against our best wishes, by a school administrator, into Special Needs Support Education classes with children, both younger and older than him, who most of them, tragically, had behavioral and psychological problems far worse than Joey’s.

As a tragic result of this, he was a victim of bullying. This caused us, eventually, to have to pull him out of his high school after the first semester of ninth grade. We decided to enroll him, with Joey’s approval, in a private Roman Catholic high school for three semesters. Unfortunately, it cost about $3,300 in tuition money that we fully paid while having to pay school district taxes, as required by state of PA and township laws, at the same time. As it turned out, it was, sadly, a huge chunk out of our finances, at the time, meaning, a little over twenty years ago, in 1993 and 1994.

Fortunately, however, Joey was able to return to his home school district high school and graduate with honors, despite all of his emotional health problems. This was, awfully, brought on by in-school bullying for a number of years before that, and also, ongoing battles with OCD (Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder), and depression-related issues!

That was in 1996.

We believe Joey, and he has told us too, many times, over the ensuing years since then, that he was glad to finish high school and be able to get through all he went through back then. This, we all literally believe, was through Christ and Father God’s and The Holy Spirit’s Perfect Divine Intervention, daily!!!

AMEN!!!

Joey does NOT blame FATHER GOD, JESUS, and THE HOLY SPIRIT (The Supernatural 3 DIVINE TRIUNE TRINITY GOD-HEAD Members), at all, from a Divine Deity Standpoint, because he has told us so several times!!!

AMEN!!!

Joey does NOT blame us, as his parents, at all, as well!

AMEN!!!

We believe this to be wonderfully GOOD!

AMEN!!!

Our innocent pets are never ever to blame, neither, yes indeed, literally and truly so, yes indeed!

It is always okay for all of you, also, too, yes, indeed, literally and truly so, innocent furry tail wagging pet animal angels, wonderfully!!!

AMEN!!!

On a positive note, however, he was able to receive successful therapy back in 2009 for his OCD-related daily struggles. From 2004 to 2009, he was in a regressive state. Meaning, he was afraid to go outside of the home, especially on his own. Joey was also afraid of inanimate objects such as telephones, nails, screws, tacks, paper-
clips, sewing pins, and many other sharp-ended metal pieces. This was because he abnormally feared that he would put them in someone else’s drinking cans or cups. He also feared that he would threaten somebody over the telephone, while talking to another person in an angry state of mind. He was also phobic-minded, in the sense that he was constantly verbally saying something offensive to others and/or was worried that he touched another person inappropriately or exposed himself in public. However, he later self-educated himself, along with our assistance, plus his outpatient therapists, at the time, about the nature of OCD. OCD, by a literal definition, is a neurological brain disorder. Joey read different books about the condition from the local libraries that he checked out on his PA Access Library Card. Joey now knows these above largely illegal actions were not possible for him to commit, because he always maintained enough self-control in order to not act on any of these above described actions, even verbally. This is because he too has always been aware of the negative consequences of both saying and doing these things. This is no matter how angry or depressed he gets.

Joey was also able to complete an autism-related Cognitive-Emotional Therapy program back in 2011.

Very Good, indeed!

AMEN!!!

Joey liked to volunteer as an aide at a local library and he also still does chores around the house for us. He also willingly likes to assist in taking care of our female Chocolate Labrador Retriever, named April currently! We always taught him to have a good work ethic. He had both paid and volunteer jobs in food service and retail store occupations in the past, but they were not for him as he related to us. He hopes to obtain another part-time volunteer job someday.

Joey never gives up hope and neither will we!

AMEN!!!

We still struggle financially like, sadly, most people do in these tough economic times, but we always believe there is hope!

AMEN!!!

With Christ and God’s and The Holy Spirit’s Divine Help, through prayer and Bible verse reading, we, along with Joey, and our wonderfully Dearly innocent and beloved pets wonderfully and perfectly, in the end, all individually look forward to a better Tomorrow, both Now and Forever!!!

AMEN, LORD JESUS!!!”

P.S.

May CHRIST and GOD and the Holy Spirit always also bless you, JOEY, and all of our innocent and dearly beloved pets, and us always and forever true!!!

AMEN!!!

Sincerely Written With Unconditional LOVE (Literally) For Our Son Joey, and our innocent and Dearly beloved pets, yes indeed, literally and truly so, as well, wonderfully,

From,

JJC and SGC

Our family’s innocent and dearly beloved pets, yes, indeed, literally and truly so, as well, wonderfully, are forever and ever perfectly secure, as are all wild animals in nature!!!

In JESUS’S perfect name,

yes, indeed,

literally and truly so,

AMEN!!!
J.R.R. Tolkien: The True Lord

JOHN RONALD REUEL TOLKIEN (January 2, 1892 -- September 2, 1973) was a South African-born British author and poet whose best known and widely celebrated contribution to fantasy literature was the sprawling tales of Middle Earth, starting with The Hobbit and culminating with the epic saga The Lord of the Rings. In addition to his writing, he was Professor of Philology and Literature at Pembroke College, and taught at Cambridge University.

Born in the South African region of Orange Free State, Tolkien moved to England as a young child and ended up serving in the British Army at the onset of World War I, ostensibly as an ambulance driver. During his military service, he began writing small tales to amuse himself in order to pass away the long, boring nights. Little did he know that these stories would be the spark to a great and long-distinguished career.

Leaving the army in 1917-18, Tolkien resumed his studies and within a few short years, he earned a spot as assistant professor at Pembroke College. He later married and had four children, one of whom, son Christopher (born in 1924), is currently executor of the Tolkien literary estate. J.R.R. never fully forgot the early stories he’d written during the Great War, and so he opted to revisit them, turning one of them into a bedtime story to amuse his young children. This one tale was to be widely known as The Hobbit, which first saw general publication in 1938.

As most fans know, The Hobbit tells the story of one humble character, namely Bilbo Baggins, and his encounter with universal destiny, though he does manage to bumble his way around. It also delved into the history of the realm now known as Middle Earth, and this delving into myth and history would prove to be of great significance to Tolkien.

After several years of delays and rewrites to the follow-up (no doubt caused by the inferno that was World War II), in 1954 he unleashed the first part of the grand saga The Lord of the Rings, titled The Fellowship of the Ring. It was soon followed by 1955’s The Two Towers, and The Return of the King in 1956.

Unlike The Hobbit, which was written more or less for children, this story encompassed all of the facets of history, poetry, and myth, infused with Tolkien’s consistent Christian faith (he was a lifelong member of the Anglican Church of England). His fellow British authors praised the saga, including his life-long friend C.S. Lewis (who used Tolkien as a model for the science fiction hero Dr. Ranson in his Space Trilogy).

Over time the works of J.R.R. Tolkien steadily grew in popularity, and early attempts to film the story stalled for various reasons, though the 1970s animated cartoons were to be the closest until 2001, when the first film of the Lord of the Rings trilogy hit the screens to great triumph, earning widespread acclaim and numerous Oscars (including Best Picture for 2003’s The Return of the King).

Since his death in 1973, J.R.R. Tolkien’s popularity has never wavered. He might have had his detractors (notably science fiction/fantasy scribe Michael Moorcock [who admits to exaggerating that dislike]) but the influences and the inspirations he left cannot and must not be discounted, lest we do ourselves a great disservice as readers . . . and as human beings.
Ever since the Pittsburgh Penguins won the Stanley Cup in 2009, I have loved hockey. Ironically, I have been a fan of these Mighty Ducks movies. In my opinion the first movie wasn't as good as the second and third movie.

The Movie has a NHL cameo appearances of iconic hockey players including Wayne Gretzky, Cam Neely, Luc Robitaille, and Paul Carriyla.

In the movie, the coach of the Ducks, Gordon Bombay (Emilio Estevez), was pulled over for drunk driving and sentenced to community service by coaching hockey. He befriends Charlie Conway (Joshua Jackson) who is named team captain for the District 5 hockey team. The team name changed to the "Ducks" after Bombay's employer, Ducksworth. The team started to win and eventually made it to the playoffs. That's when the team adds ex-Hawk Adam Banks because he lives in District 5. The coach for the Hawks happens to be Coach Bombay's old pewee hockey coach, Jack Rielly. The Ducks end up winning.

There are two more movies which have good morals. There are funny actors playing laughable characters. I think Dave Averman (Matt Doherty) is "The Clown" of the team. Russ Taylor (Kenan Thompson) is famous for his "Knuckle Puck." Fulton Reed (Elden Henson) and Dean Portman (Aaron Lohr) are funny as the "Bash Brothers". I also think that Julie Gaffney (Colombe Jacobsen-Derstine) plays a good goaltender; she's like Marc Andre Fleury in a woman's body! She has a good reason to called "The Cat."

In the third movie, there are some laughable characters on the Eden Hall Varsity Team. There is Coach Ted Orion (Jeffrey Nordling). The team hated him in the beginning but they respected him in the end.

Here is a look how much money each movie made:

**The mighty Ducks: Box Office Revenue: $50,752,337** Released: October 2, 1992

**D2: The Mighty Ducks: Box Office Revenue $45,604,207,** Released: March 25, 1994


I love these movies because they are about never giving up, even under pressure of others.

"No brakes. No limit. Just Ducks."
Hello, my name is Kevin. I went to Katharine Dean Til- lotson High School. I have also taken a few classes at CCAC. I would like to go back to school for aviation tech, computer programming, software development, or to learn to build computers.

Currently, I am working full time at Pittsburgh International Airport as a baggage handler. I've been working there for 14 years. I live with my mother, father, sister, and nephew. I'm an uncle, and my 6-year-old nephew hangs out with me a lot.

My hobbies include going on trips, particularly to Orlando, Florida. I love Disney World and have been two years in a row. I also like to do brain training exercises on my iPad. I would like to do more flight training and would like to get a pilots license. (Editor’s note: You can read more about Kevin training to get his pilot license in our Spring 2015 issue).

My most interesting experience would be going to Disney World in 2014. I planned the entire trip by myself including the flight, reservations, and Disney World itinerary. I had a really good time and stayed 7 days and 6 nights. I got pictures with some of the characters including Mickey Mouse, Minnie Mouse, Goofy, and Chip & Dale. My favorite ride was Soarin’ at Epcot. Soarin’ is a simulator ride that feels like you are parasailing. The ride was really exciting and I went on it about five or six times. The other ride I liked a lot was It’s a Small World in Magic Kingdom. The ride is a boat ride that takes you through different cultures. You can take photos during the ride, and I liked the music that played. I went on this ride about three or four times.

The first quality I value in myself is being helpful. When I'm at work on Saturday and Sunday I help out one of my coworkers. While he's taking luggage bins up to ticket counter, I take care of the bags.

I value this quality because sometimes when you need help other people will offer to help. I try to help other people to reciprocate when others help me. Being helpful makes you a nice person.

The second quality I value in myself is being friendly. When I'm at work I try to be friendly to my coworkers and have good relationships with them. I say hi to my coworkers when I start shifts as well.

I value this quality of being a friendly person because when you are friendly to other people, they are friendly to you. Being friendly is another good quality that makes you a good person.

In summary, my name is Kevin, I’ve lived in Pittsburgh with my family all of my life, I love taking trips to Disney World in Florida, and I try to be a good person.
Along With Books, Other Media Is Good For Kids

by Michelle Middlemiss

The two series of books, *Percy Jackson and the Olympians* and *The Lost Heroes* by Rick Riordan prove what qualities are needed to be a true hero, just like in the Pokémon games and Marvel comics. These games and comics are just like any novel and can help kids stay interested in reading even with the distractions of the TV. Parents should encourage their children to play games like Pokémon that have them reading, rather than just saying it’s childish.

Joseph Campbell was a very learned man who worked with literature. He started stringing myths together such as Buddhism, Judaism, and Christianity. He realized the links rather than the differences. From those similarities, he made an outline of what makes a child read a book and what forms a moral basis for the child. His important theory was that if a child doesn’t have a society that will read to him/her that includes myth and violence, then that child will turn to violence. If one thinks they are protecting a child by sheltering their reading, in reality one is harming the child. In the true version of the old fairy tales, canon shows that there existed much violence. For example, in King Arthur, there were swords and chivalry. Kids would learn that there is a time for violent acts such as defending yourself or others. If kids don’t have that, they are more likely to use violence more haphazardly. Campbell is most known for his philosophy in literature that is known as the “Hero’s Journey,” which is divided into stages. *The Hero With 1,000 Faces* talks about the hero’s journey and the tablet is used in the Marvel comics. Campbell wished to prove that if treated right by society, troubled kids could become heroes. They will stay away from drugs and stay on the right path. Kids could rise above and be magnificent. Being different is okay and sometimes being different is the only way to change the world. In the 1970s there was a movement to prevent child violence by taking away anything violent. It meant trying to censor and butcher the old stories, myths and rhymes and changing them into “something nicer.” The movement tried to make everything “cute” and “cuddly” without the reality, such as in the Care Bear stories.

Comics have been gaining more respect over the years but more can be done. For example along with the normal English book, a graphic novel could be added to the classroom. After all, comics have helped kids keep reading and have earned that respect. Graphic novels get kids closer to reading novels because of the way they are formatted. They have intelligent storylines; they often use ancient mythology and not everything is funny. Marvel comics have many noteworthy themes such as family and hope. Family is shown in all its forms. For example, the X-Men are a group of heroes that only rarely get beat and that’s when a villain is smart enough to target their need to trust each other.

The Avengers are another group of heroes that it takes strikes at their sense of family to bring them to their near end. Magneto’s family is a very good example of this bonding for a family. Magneto’s view of his child Wanda at times mirrors that of the gods in the Percy Jackson books. He has used them but hidden things from them at times. But such times as when Wanda went a little crazy in the *House of M* comics and made more than 98 percent of the mutants into humans, Magneto still went looking for his daughter when he learned she was in danger. Only wanting to find a way to save her, he was willing to risk an uneasy alliance with the X-Men. In *The Children’s Crusade Avengers Comic*, Magneto meets up with his grandsons and tells them, “My only desire is to secure the safety and well-being of my daughter.”

Marvel and *Percy Jackson* also show how difficult it is for parents to let their kids choose their own way. Allowing their children to read the books they like might give them a glimpse of what their parents may be going through. In *The Dark Avengers Comic* kids read what Ares is confiding to Nick.

“Why my son?” asked Ares. Nick told him, “He’s an amazing kid

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with amazing powers. In the short time I’ve known him, you should see what he’s accomplished. But he needs training so I came to him. The potential for him... it’s... I don’t even have the words to describe it.”

“But I don’t know how to raise him. I don’t know how to talk to him. I don’t know what to talk about. My father and his father before him... that is what I know. I want him to see this world differently than I have been taught.”

In Percy’s *Lost Hero* book, Juno confesses to her stepson Jason, how family and children are important to her. “I thought you hated heroes?” The goddess gave him a dry smile. “I have that reputation. But if you want the truth, Jason, I often envy the other gods heir mortal children. You demigods can span both worlds. I think this helps your godly parents, ...even Jupiter, curse him...to understand the mortal world better than I.”

Hope is important in the comic world because no matter how dark things become there is always a chance that things will find a way to work out. After surviving a very difficult quest in *The Lost Hero*, Leo becomes Senior Cabin Leader, a huge honor. Before this, his brothers and sisters had all felt cursed and helpless for over a year. “All his cabin mates smiled at him, and Leo could almost feel their cabin’s curse breaking, their sense of hopelessness melting away.” Another example in the same book occurs when Jason is thinking to himself about how he was feeling so lost and in a hopeless situation. He begins to get his hope back.

“He was still terrified, but something had changed. He no longer felt alone. He had friends now and a home to fight for. He even had a patron goddess looking out for him, which had to count for something, even if she seemed a little untrustworthy.”

There are many important reasons that the Pokémon games can benefit the child’s path towards reading a novel. Pokémon not only helps kids want to read but it helps with their spelling since at the beginning of the game, the player has to name his character and the Pokémon he chooses remains with him throughout the game. The games open a new large vocabulary for kids to learn. Pokémon is also beneficial to improving math skills because the player has to make sure that he/she levels up. Plus, in *Mystery Dungeon*, there are things called I.Q. points. The higher the Pokémon’s I.Q. the more advantages the player has. Pokémon does not make it easy for players if their Pokémon are on a lower level. Pokémon are cute little characters and that help kids want to continue playing the game especially after their frustration of leveling up is over. It encourages kids to read and presents a strong incentive to read making an opening to reading novels. Kids are basically reading a whole novel when they read Pokémon strategy books which can be over 500 pages long.

In the *Pokémon Mystery Dungeon* game, the player plays as a human who is turned into a Pokémon, or pocket monster. The goal of the game is to discover why you’ve been turned into a monster. Unlike a lot of games, Pokémon does not have their characters talking. The player must be able to read to move the game along. Pokémon does not make it so that a player can move along quickly through the dialogue, but because the story line is well written, it doesn’t slow things down.

The Marvel Comics and Pokémon games are like normal novels such as the Percy Jackson series. They should be viewed by parents with more respect. Kids are reading for hours at a time to obtain important information to help them control their game strategy. In all aspects, kids have been able and ready to read longer books because of their reading of comics and playing games. The proof comes from kids using these different types of media that make up a kid’s world today. They make reading novels a much easier transition. Teachers can choose books that involve more danger because kids saw this in Pokémon. Then the books can in turn help kids through their own problems. If parents encourage their children to pick up a role playing game like Pokémon, it can be used as an important tool and prepare a bridge towards reading novels.
Lark sat in the back seat of the cop car; once again she was out after curfew. Tony Stark had called the cops when she had not returned from the park and he had been afraid she had been kidnapped. The two officers had found Lark hidden in a bush after a Sentinel attack. Luckily she had been able to hide before anything happened to her. Though she wasn’t actually in trouble she was just being taken home. But just being in a cop car drove Lark nuts. The threats from the cops were bad enough to make her want to beat down the door. Being a ten year old mutant in New York, New York, she learned to not quite trust humans.

Trusting human cops was twice as hard to do. Lark’s adopted father Tony had taught her that cops were the good guys, even if it didn’t seem like they could be at times. And if a cop treated her wrongly, she should tell Uncle Matt, who was a lawyer. Matt wasn’t really Lark’s uncle, but had been part of her life long before she or her siblings could remember. Matt always bought her toys and whatnots for her to play with and was also teaching her to protect herself when she got into trouble. With the way Lark’s life had been going for her, she needed all the help she could get. Lark tried as hard as she could to stay out of trouble, but the more she tried, the more that didn’t work. Tony had begun to call her Trouble, using her old nickname to explain her behavior. He wondered if the years since her captivity affected her more than most, even though Lark didn’t talk much about that time.

So Lark started to be brought home in the back of a cop car more and more. Every time she tried to do as much damage to the car as possible. Tony had decided to have her visit with Xavier twice a week even though Nick Fury was looking for a doctor who was not a mutant to see if Lark would open up. She had spent a year with all humans and that helped her through the pain. It seemed that she was worried about opening up to other mutants. Almost like her time with Zero Tolerance had made her unlikely to just trust mutants; like trusting the others of her kind could get you on the wrong side of the bars. Because of this, the...
she no longer begged to visit Xavier’s school any more. Before, she would constantly beg Tony to visit other mutants her own age.

Lark was now too scared to even mention her gifts; too scared to end up in a car like this. She knew she would not be escorted home but be taken to some unknown dark hole where there was nothing but the screams of other mutants down the hall. That was what Lark thought the first time that afternoon when she saw the Sentinel coming down from the sky. She had just enough time to get to the bush where the officers had found her. Actually she had been lucky that she hadn’t blown the Sentinels to ash or she would have become weaker than she already was. That wouldn’t have been good right then, with everything else that was going on. The darkness in Lark’s left eye was proof of all the torture the little girl had gone through. Her right eye still was blue, but there was a shadow with a dark center that marked all the pain.

Lark jumped up from her nightmare; the heart monitor that she was hooked up to pulled her back down to the bed. She rubbed her head to feel the bandage around it. She also saw that her chest had been wrapped tightly with bandages. There was blood on them almost seeping through. She would need them changed soon. The ten year old knew she hadn’t been injured in the Sentinel attack so fear gripped her. Had she had an attack of her illness? Lark didn’t want to know how bad the attack had been since she had to have been fixed up like this.

“Easy, Lark, don’t squirm so much or you’ll pull out the stitches.” Lark looked over to see who said that. It was a man in about his twenties with long blonde hair. He was leaning a little bit on his walking stick. Lark knew Dr. Blake just as long as she had known Matt.

“Where’s Daddy?” Lark asked, not sensing Tony anywhere in the mansion much less at her bedside.

“He had to take care of something. He left me and Jarvis to look after you. He should be back from D.C. sometime tonight.” Doctor Blake’s voice had the tone he got when he thought Tony was jumping into something.

“How many did he take with him?” Lark knew that she would not get a straight answer. But if she asked Dr. Blake she could put the pieces together.

“He took the whole team except for Thor. Iron Man’s not happy that the Sentinels are still around.”

“Um, Dr. Blake I’ve known that Dad’s been Iron Man since I was six. I’ve also known that you’re Thor; you can drop the act.”

“Lark, there are reasons why I don’t…”

“I know; to keep your I.D. a secret. I just don’t have the strength right now to think too much,” Lark said knowing that too much speaking in the third person would cause her head to hurt too much. As it was, it already felt like she was fighting a major migraine.

Being a telepath, Lark was well acquainted with the head splitting pain that accompanied the over use of her powers. At this moment she had a different kind of head pain. It came from the fact she had no idea how she was doing physically.

“Lark you need to know that the chip in your heart had given out after the police had brought you home.” Dr. Blake put a hand on Lark’s shoulder. “Tony had to make you a heart like his. I’m very sorry about this.”

Lark closed her eyes; she might only be a ten year old but she knew enough. If she had not been born half Faltine, she would be dead by now. If the Sentinels had not attacked the park she had been at, the attack might not have been so bad. She now knew why the Avengers had taken off before making sure she had been okay. Tony’s anger at seeing his daughter like this…the others must have gone to keep Tony from doing anything too rash. Though at this point Lark didn’t see the advantage in holding back, not after everything she had been through. Even after Zero Tolerance had been torn apart and Nick had taken the leaders into custody, it seemed that the U.S. was still determined to keep the Sentinel project in working order.

Now it seemed that the shock of seeing one of those damn robots had sent her heart over the edge. So once a day she would have to recharge her electric heart. Tony got his electric heart after a piece of shrapnel was lodged in his chest. Lark was only ten and the chip in her heart resulted from that self-important Sentinel Bastion who had injected her with the Legacy Virus. The virus had destroyed what it could over the year
she had been stuck on Genosha. That year Nick Fury and Nathan Summers (Cable) had done their best to nurse Lark back to health. It had been two months after she had gone back to living with the Avengers that Tony had found a way to make a chip in her heart. Now even that had failed; Lark would have to watch herself much closer.

Lark wondered if her adopted father would make a suit of armor for her. Not as fancy as Iron Man’s but able to work with her mutant abilities. If it helped her to start fighting back, this might even open her father’s eyes and maybe he would let her have some classes at Xavier’s. She didn’t like going to Xavier’s, not because she didn’t trust mutants, though she had let people think that was why. It was easier than saying the real reason, which was that she knew if the school was once again attacked she couldn’t have helped. Lark had felt that way until Cable had helped Fury get her off Genosha. She never wanted to feel that kind of helplessness ever again.

Lark felt her body try to go to sleep even though she knew that she had just woken up. Dr. Blake raised an eyebrow at the monitor. It seemed to him that whenever Lark fought to do something the electric powers got her body to move the molecules around much faster.

“Stop fighting it, Sparky. You need rest, plus the pain killers make even Steve sleepy.” Hearing Dr. Blake calling her by her old nickname, Lark let herself drop off to sleep.

Dr. Blake watched as Lark’s vital signs became stable again. He actually let out a sigh of relief; Lark had a nasty habit of blowing up medical devices. At least Lark had stopped eating metal after Tony found a way to make chew toys for her out of vibranium when need be. She might still need to eat metal but at least she had stopped going after Thor’s hammer and Captain America’s shield. When she had been three years old, Lark broke into Tony’s Armory and actually ate one of Iron Man’s suits. Tony would keep that quiet because this was a three year old who was able to break into a place none of their enemies could get in. If they knew that Lark could get in…

Dr. Blake knew only too well that Lark had been kidnapped many times with the Avengers saving her. That’s why Lark had a chip in her head, put there so Tony could lock her powers and teleport her safely back to the Avengers Mansion. That way no one could use Lark. The teleport devise used her magic, thanks to Thor and Lark’s blood father Dr. Strange. So Lark could not be intercepted unless Tony changed the coordinates. Even when Tony had been controlled by Kang, Lark had been safe. That terrorist Kang always did say that Lark was going to be needed. The older Kang wanted her dead and had the misguided thought that killing Lark would somehow stop this unknown event from happening. Thor, though not trusting Kang, had heard the truth in his words. Lark would one day cause an event that would only happen if she were born or cause the event to happen differently.

Thor, being god of Thunder could tell that much. Lark was an unknown more than any of her other siblings. Not because of what she could be, but the question of what event she would affect. Kang could not say what that would be. Just that he knew it was about to happen by looking into Lark’s blue eyes. Even Cable and Rachael Summers seemed to think that Lark needed more training. Those from the future didn’t have any more answers. Yes. Lark would follow in her father’s footsteps, but any of her siblings would be able to do that.

It would be five years later for that question to be answered with the birth of her twin boys. Or more to the point, what the boys’ DNA would prove.
"Mommy?"
"Yes Bobby?"
"What is daddy doing?"
"Daddy is working very hard so we can eat, Bobby."
"What time is he coming home?"
"Soon, Bobby."
"How long exactly?"
"He will come home when you are asleep. I will make sure he comes and gives you a goodnight kiss, ok?"

"Does he always give me a goodnight kiss?"
"Yes, your daddy loves you very much, and do you know who else loves you very much?"
"Who?"
"Me! I love you. You’re my angel." She walks over and kisses Bobby.

"Come on, Bobby I need to give you a bath and then we can watch that show you really like on TV and then it is time for bed. You have a very big day tomorrow."
"I know, Mommy. It is my birthday tomorrow."
"Do you know how old you will be, Bobby?"
"I will beeeeee............. 5 years old."

"That’s right Bobby, we are so proud of you! You have come a long way since last year."
"I already know that mommy."
"All right, come on. Lets go take that bath so you smell like strawberries so I can eat you."
"You’re joking, mommy."
"Yes I am."

"Mommy, how was the Doctor’s?"
"Bobby, mommy needs to talk to you for a minute ok?"
"Ok."
"The doctors say Mommy is a little bit sick, but they think I will be ok soon."
"I don't want you to be sick, Mommy. Last time you were sick you were in bed all day."
"I know that Bobby. That is why they gave me some medicine so I can get aalll better."
"Oh good."

"Bobby?"
"Yes mommy?"
"What have I told you about eating with your mouth open?"
"To not do it?"
"That’s right. what else has Mommy told you not to do?"

"Don't talk with my mouth full."
"See you already know this. Let’s try to practice it, ok? We are at a friend’s house and we don't want to be rude, Right?"
"Yeah, sorry, Mommy, Hey, I am going to go play catch with daddy."
"Ok, I will come get you when it is time for dessert and fireworks.......... Bobby did you hear me?"

"Yeah, ok mommy."
"All right Bobby you can go play catch with Daddy."

"Mommy are you ok?"
"Mommy is not feeling so good today."
"Why, Mommy?"
"Mommy is really sick today."
"I don't like seeing you sick, I love you mommy."
"I know, I don't like being sick either. I don't get to spend much time with you." She sniffles.

"Mommy are you ok?"
"Of course Bobby, Mommy just has a nose allergy."
"Mommy?"
"Yes Bobby?"
"Daddy told Grandma that you have been sick for a long time."
"Bobby?"
"Yes, Mommy?"
"What have I told you about eavesdropping?"
"It is rude."
"Thank you."

September 27, 2010
"Bobby, Mommy needs to talk to you. It is very important."
"What is it mommy?"
"Mommy found out she will have to stay in the hospital for a day."
"Are you having surgery?"
"Kind of, the doctor wants to look at my brain."
"Why?"
"Mommy does not know that answer yet."
"Oh ok. I love you mommy." He runs over and hugs her.

October 30, 2010
"Bobby can you turn down the TV? Mommy has a really bad headache."
"Why?"
"Bobby?"
"Yes?"
"When mommy asks you something and gives you a reason what are you supposed to say?"
"Um...."
"Yes......."
"Yes...... I don't know?
"Yes Mom...."
"Yes Mommy?"
"Thank you."

November 15, 2010
Bobby is laying on top of his mother while she holds him.
"Mommy?"
"Yes Bobby?"
"What color are fish?"
"It depends on what kind of fish."
"What about goldfish?"
"I would say they are gold but have a nice orange to them." She smiles at him.
"What about cats?"
"Hmmm."
"I said, what about cats?"
Her arm falls away to the side of the couch, and her head turns slightly with her eyes closed.
"Mommy?"
"Mommy?"
"Mommy get up."
"Mommy, stop joking, I know you are faking it."
"Mommy?"
"Daddy?"
"What is it Bobby? Daddy is trying to work from home today."
"Mommy is not getting up,"
The Father walks over and checks the mother's pulse.
"Come with me Bobby." He picks up his son and carries him over to the phone as Bobby watches him dial 911.
October 23, 1945

To my dearest Itzhak:

My love the war is finally over. I want to rejoice but I am thinking of the day that I lost you.

Oh how I remember the grief of losing you and how I thought I wasn't going to make it but as you always told me behind the barb wire fence, "keep your head high and strong, I know there isn't a god right now, and we fear that we will be next for the following selection but just show how strong you really are and every-thing will be ok and we will re-joice together in the comfort of each other's arms in the streets again." I always looked forward to the day where we can live to-gether and have the very strong connection that we both survived Auschwitz and unfortunately that has been dashed. I by some mira-cle have escaped the madness that was supposed to be our undying love but turned into a Hell on earth by a fanatical evil ruler. One of the hardest things for me is being able to cope knowing that I will never get to see your round face, or your bear eyes, or your grin from when we were kids and you fell off the swing and lost a tooth. I will never get to hear your voice again and I fear I will forget what it sounded like by a replacement of screaming in my ears "SCHNELL" and "SCHNELLER DU DRECKIGER JUDEN" and one of the worst "Wollen Sie 25 Schläge zu empfangen für mich zu trotzen? Jude!!!!" I wish you were here with me now to help me get rid of the nightmares. Of the ones reoccurring is the nightmare of Doctor Josef Mengele whistling tunes when he was happy to have found a set of twins because he took pleasure in studying them. I want it to go away and I feel that you would be the only one to help make it go away.

I am in the process of testifying against the beautiful beast Irma Grese. I have had to talk about things I just want to forget and I wish I had you by my side holding my hand. I had to talk about things that happened after you were gone. I remember the two dogs she always had with her, they looked so hungry. Rumor has it she half-starved them and it result-
ed in a more frightening appearance by them when they were eyeing prisoners in a hungry maniacal look. I was asked about a girl who was never heard from again when she accidently dropped bricks and Irma happened to be walking by and caught the accident. I will never talk about what the outcome was due to it being so horrific. I wish you were there to comfort me then. All I remember is what the girl looked like after Irma was done with her.

I doubt I will ever find love. Despite you saying on that fateful day when I lost you "This is it for me I am sorry, But I am sure you will find someone great that will make you happy and you make happy." I don't know how you were able to stand so courageously when you knew what was in store for you all I remember is the door closing and never seeing you again. I don't know how I managed to get through the last year of the war. But by some miracle I was saved. It frustrated me when other prisoners were stating at the end, "There is finally a god!" I am thinking "What God??? My Lover is gone from this world. My life is over, I have nothing, and the Germans have accomplished what they wanted to do to me. Take everything Dear from me. My Parents, siblings, and now Lover." I really hate the Germans now, and I hope every one of them pays for what they did to us.

I must live my life as god would have intended it as if the Germans never did what they did. I feel you would not want to see me in the afterlife if I ended things for myself right now. Till then I wish you the best.

Sincerest and loving wishes,

Helga
AFTER a few days in this otherwise timeless Realm, we decided to take our leave. The only problem: what to do with Leslie, the giant amoeboid to whom we’d grown somewhat attached. We couldn’t just abandon him to an unending exile with no outside contact what-so-ever.

For a few — well, actually, several minutes — we mulled the idea over and over in our minds. Then not to my unfortunate surprise, Marlena made up our minds for us.

“Hey, Tony, let’s take Leslie with us!”

I turned round to her in utter anger.

“Have you gone daft, girl?! How can we take along a giant amoeba?!! My power isn’t that limitless, you know.”

Somehow or other, Leslie managed to sense this.

“Well, I think I may have a plan. EYAAAAHHHH!!” With that, Leslie had, weirdly enough, actually reduced his size down to that of a balloon.

Now our conundrum was solved.

“Shall we all go?” he asked.

In the recesses of my mind, I was still in a state of uninhibited shock and awe!

“Surely you just did the impossible?!”

“Yeah, that’s right. And don’t call me Shirley.”

Not wanting to fall victim to any more of these rather outmoded and outdated puns, I put forth my will-power and thus set off. Try to imagine this rather madcap trio of myself, Marlena, and Leslie the Amoeboid Comic. Oh well, no one said that friendship had to be logical, right?

In an instant, the stars resumed their swiftness as our velocity once more increased to now more than twelve times the speed of light. Worlds beyond worlds opened up, and times beyond times came and went like a summer breeze. In our little force-field screen-sphere, we three carried on a mundane yet happy conversation.

Naturally, Marlena asked another of her rather inane questions.

“What did you do for entertainment?”

Leslie mulled about this for only a millisecond.

“Well, I sub-divide myself on occasion, and then I re-form back to one form just to break up the monotony of the whole damn thing. Believe me, cutie, it’s no picnic. Oh, speaking of which, you got a box of grub handy? I’m starved.”

I creased my forehead, trying to come up with a somewhat viable solution to that.

Then…of course. It hit me a bit on the sudden side of it all.

“Why don’t we head back to The Last Refuge and get some nourishment to go? I’m sure we can all agree to that, surely.”

“Sounds good. And stop calling us Shirley,” replied Leslie. I fell for it once more, much to my immediate chagrin.

And so, again, I put forth my will-power and set our course back to the Realm of the Time Beyond Time, that rather drab existence we’d left long times gone. But then again, that’s the beauty of time-space travel, I suppose.

Only we emphatically didn’t know what was lying in wait for us.

To be continued...
Top 10 David Bowie Songs

by Thomas Skidmore

1. “Space Oddity” originally from 1969’s *Man of Words, Man of Music*; re-released as *Space Oddity* in 1972
2. “Fame” (co-written with John Lennon) from *Young Americans*, released 1975
3. “Let’s Dance” from *Let’s Dance*, released 1983
4. “Station to Station” from *Scary Monsters*, released 1980
5. “Rebel, Rebel” from *Diamond Dogs*, released 1974
6. “Lazarus” (his final song) from *Blackstar*, released 2015
7. “Blue Jean” from *Tonight*, released 1984
8. “The Little Drummer Boy/Peace on Earth” (duet with Bing Crosby), released 1977
10. “Young Americans” from *Young Americans*, released 1975

Top 10 Comedians

by Kyle Walter

1. Lewis Black
2. Bill Engvall
3. Ron White
4. Larry the Cable Guy
5. Jeff Foxworthy
6. Chris Rock
7. Bob Saget
8. Ralphie May
9. George Carlin
10. Robin Williams

Top 10 Movies

by Kyle Walter

1. *Star Wars Episode VII The Force Awakens*
2. *Spectre*
3. *T5 Terminator Genisys*
4. *Mission Impossible 5 Rouge Nation*
5. *Ted 2*
6. *Hitman 47*
7. *Pixels*
8. *San Andras*
9. *Antman*
10. *Avengers Age of Ultron*
Pittsburgh’s Top 10 Pastry Shops

by Bryan Lippert

1. Bartram House Bakery (Southside)
2612 East Carson Street Pittsburgh PA, 15203

2. Vanilla Pastry Studio (Regent Square)
1130 South Braddock Ave Pittsburgh PA, 15218

3. Gluuteny Bakery (Squirrel Hill)
1923 Murray Ave Pittsburgh PA, 15217

4. Mancini’s Bakery (Downtown)
438 Market Street Pittsburgh PA, 15222

5. Au Bon Pain (Downtown plus other locations)
120 Fifth Ave #210, Pittsburgh, PA 15222

6. La Gourmandine (Lawerenceville)
4605 Butler Street Pittsburgh PA, 15201

7. Lincoln Bakery (Bellevue)
543 Lincoln Ave Bellevue PA, 15202

8. Grand View Bakery (Mt.Washington)
225 Shiloh Street Pittsburgh PA, 15211

9. Potomac Bakery (Dormont)
1419 Potomac Ave Pittsburgh PA, 15216

10. Prantl’s Bakery (Shadyside)
5525 Walnut Street Pittsburgh PA, 15232

Top 10 Transformers
by Jon Bik

1. Optimus Prime
2. Ironhide
3. Ratchet
4. Jetfire

5. Sentinel Prime
6. Megatron
7. Brawl
8. Scourge
9. Starscream
10. Jetstorn

Top 10 DC Universe Villains
by Michael Kurland

1. Lex Luthor
2. Darkseid
3. The Joker
4. Doomsday
5. Trigon
6. General Zod
7. Bane
8. Ra’s Al Ghul
9. Deathstroke
10. Brainiac

Honorable Mentions: Ares, Harley Quinn, Two-Face, Metallo, Deadshot, Poison Ivy, Scarecrow, Killer Croc, Sinestro, Solomon Grundy

via flickr
Top 10 Gluten Free Desserts
by Sara Brooks
1. Brownies
2. Cupcakes
3. Chocolate Chips Cookies
4. Double Chocolate Cookies
5. Chocolate Cake
6. Sugar Cookies
7. Snickerdoodle Cookies
8. Pumpkin Cookies
9. Cheesecake
10. Chocolate Cake

Top 10 Bachelorettes from Ben’s Season
by Sara Brooks
1. Amanda
2. Amber
3. Becca
4. Lauren B.
5. JoJo
6. Jackie
7. Leah
8. Rachel
9. Samantha
10. Lauren H.

Top 10 Steelers
by Sean Gannon
1. #7 Ben Roethlisberger Pittsburgh Steelers (2004-present)
3. #12 Terry Bradshaw Pittsburgh Steelers (1970-1983)
4. #83 Heath Miller (Pittsburgh Steelers 2005-present)
5. #75 “Mean” Joe Greene (Pittsburgh Steelers 1968-1981)
8. #86 Hines Ward (Pittsburgh Steelers 1998-2011)
Youth Advocate Programs (YAP) currently has programs in 17 states and serves 25 major US cities as well as dozens of other urban, suburban, and rural communities. By tapping into the strengths and capabilities of the 10,000 families we serve each year, our 2,000+ YAP staff members, and the capacity of communities, YAP affects positive change.

YAP has developed unique service delivery principles that guide our work with youth and families involved in the Juvenile Justice, Child Welfare, Behavioral Health, and Education systems. Our staff, who reside in or near the neighborhoods they serve, work non-traditional, flexible hours and are accessible 24/7. Our demonstrated ability to recruit and energize indigenous resident leaders within neighborhoods is another unique element of our success.

External evaluations of YAP confirm the validity of our approach. Our model has also been cited by several external bodies, including the Annie E. Casey Foundation, as a “promising practice” in providing effective alternatives to institutional care.

Since our agency opened, YAP has experienced rapid growth. We have broadened our scope of services and increased our capacity to service more children, youth, families, and adults—including those who have not succeeded with traditional services. We continue to explore new opportunities to demonstrate our unique and effective community-based alternatives to out-of-home placements.

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