

# MINUTIAE KIDS



BACK TO SCHOOL 2013

**BACK TO SCHOOL ALREADY!?!?!?** No more summer is for sure a bummer, but it's time to get cool with some righteously whammy stuff that Minutiæ Kids has jam-packed for you in this issue. First, we've got a lot of **Cool Stuff Happening Around Town** (page 2) for you to check out. After that, take a look at **The Modern Kid** (page 4) for stories that our team picked out just for you! We've got a real neat **Connect the Dots** (page 11) that'll really make you think. Next up are **The Second Thought Corner** (page 12) and **Your Questions** (page 13) that are sure to make you go WHOAW! See when kids just like you go to sleep in **Bedtimes Across the World** (page 14). Plus find out what to do with a long weekend in **2160 Minutes in... Your Own Home** (page 16). Finally, those geniuses at the Minutiæ Kids Test Labs have got their picks for the best **Fall Ball** (page 20). All that, plus our Secret Instructionless Minutiæ Kids Word Search, in this awesome issue of **Minutiæ Kids**!

## **MINUTIÆ KIDS - BACK TO SCHOOL 2013**

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## WELCOME BACK!



Zoom! Hey hey hey, gang, this is Preston Martinez from NextPlay. While you may not know our name, you for sure know what we do. We've

been making playground equipment since 1975 when we were the Centennial Polymer Caustic Corporation in Dover, and we've been laying down rubber and setting up swing sets ever since, probably even at your school (if your district has a contract with us). We recently bought Minutiæ Publishing and, more importantly, the coolest mag around: **Minutiæ Kids**. We got super excited about putting out a really cool zine for kids just like you, and we wanted access to Minutiæ Publishing's extensive global distribution network so that we could transport the raw materials that make up our play equipment all over the world!

Now, we'd like to tell you about some of the super cool playground equipment we've made. First, we're taking the monkey bars to an entirely new level. These new NextPlay UltraSensitive monkey bars step up the challenge. Not only do you have to use your upper body strength to get across, you can't make a sound while doing it! Only the sneakiest kids will make it through undetected, and that's the most fun, right?

Next is our NextPlay Ceiling Set. See how long you can stay pinned against a ceiling without falling. The longer you stay up, the sneakier you are. And being sneaky is fun!

Plus, you can try climbing up into a ceiling, like if you were in an elevator and had to sneak up above it. Double sneaks, here.

And maybe you're not the kind of kid who wants to be climbing all the time. No sweat (right? right?) There's the NextPlay Cipher machine where you get to have fun decoding messages on a replica of a 1941 German Enigma, because that's the most fun, right? And maybe you'll be so good at decoding messages that some recruiters from NextPlay will come to your school and ask if you want to be a part of the NextPlay Summer Sneakers camp. It's a super fun invite-only cool camp somewhere in the Blue Ridge mountains where it's like recess everyday. Uh, super cool? Yeah. Fun? That's the most fun, right?

So make sure to spend your recess time trying out these cool NextPlay playground toys because you might be lucky enough to score a fun summer sneaking around learning from former Israeli Mossad and the new dog from Seal Team Six. Because that's the most fun, right? ♦

# NEXTPlay

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## COOL STUFF GOING ON

### SCHOOL

**U.S. History Class:** This week we're learning about the Revolutionary War. (8am, Mr. Barnes' classroom)

**Barrel Factory Field Trip:** Get your permission slips signed by your parents and your lunches sacked because the entire 7th grade is taking a trip to the city barrel factory. Learn how to make barrels, learn what goes in barrels, and hey, just learn what barrels are. Maybe you'll decide you want to one day pursue a profession in the barrel industry. It's long hours and low pay, but in this town, the barrel-makers ("coopers" as they're known in the biz) make the rules. (September 5th, Buses leave school at 8:30am, \$5 for juice and afternoon snack)

**Hallway Patrol Meeting:** It's the most illustrious position in school – the hallway safety patrol. And now it is time for the yearly gathering of the patrols. Meet the new recruits, bid farewell to recent graduates, and see the sashes torn from the shoulders of those that have failed in their patrol duties and disgraced the ancient code. After all that, Vice Principal Petrano is going to throw one heck of a pizza party. (September 10th, 3:30pm, School Cafeteria)

**Weekend Detention:** Well, here we all are - the brain, the jock, the criminal, the popular girl, the weirdo, the illusionist, the herpetologist, shoe girl, Blind Ronny, ancient Tim and Scorpion. And we're all supposed to spend the next few hours in this library, thinking about whatever it is Principal Peters

says we did wrong. Well, Principal Peters, maybe we're more than these pre-conceived labels you have put on us. Like the jock? Maybe he likes making chairs. And the popular girl? Maybe she's really a duck. Not everything fits into your perfect little box, man. (September 20th, 8am, School Library)

### SPORTING EVENTS

**Little League Baseball:** It's the Bear Cubs versus the Stallions in a rematch of last year's epic showdown. And Jimmy is just going to be standing in the outfield, not paying attention to anything. He's going to twirl around, drop his glove, maybe start singing to himself or something. Whatever he does, he definitely won't be paying attention to the game even if a fly ball is coming right at him. What is with that kid? And why won't his folks just let him take those tap classes like he wants? (September 20th, 10am, Marksdale Field)

**Horse:** Rudy, Clay, Juan, Nicko, Brad, Sterling, and Johnny will all be playing a game of Horse. Rudy is the best, but Juan has been practicing a lot lately and could be a real challenge for Rudy. If Juan wins, Rudy will never hear the end of it. They'll be using Nicko's MacGregor X35WC basketball [reviewed by Minutiae Kids Labs in last month's issue]. (September 12th, 4pm, Clay's Drive-way)

**Butts Up:** If it's adult swim time, then everyone heads out into the pool's parking lot to play. There are several rules, but what



matters is that at some point, you have to go up to the wall and another player tries to throw a tennis ball up your butt. That's just how they play it in this town. Everyone gets a ball up their butt eventually. Mayor Graybone still has three tennis balls in his butt from when he played twenty years ago. (September 4th, 11:45am, Echo Ridge Pool)

**Tag:** It's tag. They tag you, you tag them, someone touches Debra's boob, Debra gets mad and goes home, someone calls that person who touched her boob a pervert, everyone leaves, and the game is ruined. Why do we go through this tired charade week after week? (September 10th, 12pm, School Athletic Field)

## HANGS

**Smoking:** Phil says he's going to show everyone how to smoke on Wednesday afternoon in the woods behind the school. According to Phil, he smokes all the time and loves it. He is going to steal a cigar from his stepdad and we'll all smoke together. Just act like you do it all the time too. (September 9th, 3:45pm, Wooded Area Behind the School)

**Video Games:** Nelson, Lloyd's older brother, is going to let Lloyd come over and play Diablo III on his Playstation. Nelson has his own apartment on the east side and is awesome. He's got a van, a girlfriend named Elle, and his own pet snake. Lloyd's mom won't let him have a snake but at least he'll get to pet Nelson's. (September 16th, 6pm, 1344 Apple Blvd., Apt. B)

**The Mall:** The whole school is headed to Shreve Mall on Friday afternoon. They'll walk around, go in a couple stores, sit around the food court, and possibly go to a movie at the AMC 16. Maybe Robert will be there. That'd be pretty great if he was. But he probably won't. Robert's always at home, with his nose in some book, worried about his grades and SATs. You have to live sometime, Robert. Alison won't wait forever. (September 28th, 4pm, 100 Shreve Mall Avenue)

**Losing of the Virginity:** Ted Keene is finally going to lose it. After a year and a half of dating, Kimberly O'Brien has finally given him the go ahead. He's going over to her house on Thursday afternoon and they are going to do it. The wild mambo. The horizontal hustle. The twisty tustle. The forbidden flamenco. The clumsy tango. The naked shimmy. The dirty, um, dance? Anyway, the rest of the kids put in a hidden camera and are going to live stream the whole thing to the entire school, just to make sure it happens. (September 12th, 6pm, 7434 Walnut St.)

## THE REST

**Pizza Party:** It's Mr. Connor's last day at school so we're putting down "To Kill a Mockingbird" and ordering a bunch of cheese pizzas from Papa Johns. The powers-that-be might not have liked Mr. Connor's sitting-on-the-desk teaching style, but his students will never forget him. Especially because he gave each of us a cardboard cutout of himself. (September 20th, 11am, Mr. Connor's classroom) ♦

## THE MODERN KIDS

### THE PRINCIPAL THAT'S COOL AT SCHOOL!

School principals? YUCK! "No thanks," say millions of kids, who would rather not eat ice cream for a whole summer than have to spend one minute in the principal's office. But there is one town, Pasco, Washington, where the kids not only love their principal -- in some cases, he's their best friend.

If all that mushy talk makes you want to toss up your chicken nuggets, consider this: the kids at Ellen Ochoa Middle School get to choose what they want for lunch. EVERY DAY! They also get to pick which sports to play for gym class, like dodgeball or whirly bump. No more President's Physical Fitness Challenge for these kids -- thanks Mr. Nelbond!

Since becoming principal at Ellen Ochoa Middle School in 2009, Mr. Nelbond (or should we say "Rad Randy", as he likes to have the kids call him) has worked hard to put the COOL back in sChOOL. "The first thing I did was install a bunch of free soda machines," says Principal Nelbond. "I thought, 'Hey, these kids like sodas just as much as I do, so let's give it to 'em!'" That sure does sound cool, but we were still pretty skeptical, since most kids would rather admit to liking iCarly than trusting a princiDULL. So we asked a few kids what they really thought.

"Mr. Nelbond is alright," says sixth grader Lystra Monico. Woah! Really?! "He

sometimes comes on the loud speaker and tells everyone that it's backwards time, so we all have to walk around backwards and try to talk backwards and stuff. It's awesome because on days like that we don't get homework, because when class ends it's actually the beginning of class in backwards time, so we didn't learn anything new."

Dennis Lee, a seventh grader, agrees. "Normally, I'd rather get a swirly from Mike Bugle than listen to what a principal has to say, but Rad Randy is different." Oh yeah, what does he do? Wear goofy suits with tear-away sleeves and spray paint his car with all sorts of funny sayings from throughout the year? "Yeah, that's exactly what he does. Sometimes he just writes PLEASE LOVE ME with a bunch of exclamation points. And other times, he comes into the cafeteria and pours a plate of fried chicken down his pants!" We here at Minutiae Kids are still laughing ourselves silly over that one.

Mr. Nelbond has been known to really bond with the kids too: "My parents were pretty absent when I was younger, so I grew up watching a lot of Captain Kangaroo and Fred Penner's Place by myself. They taught me how to be silly, but no one ever taught me how to be myself." Uh, bummer alert!

Although sometimes, even the Principal's antics can get to be too much. "He has a pogo stick," says teenager Rian Downing, "which is cool, but sometimes it just sort of gets in the way. It's like, it's kind of funny, but sometimes I just want to walk to class."

Thankfully, Principal Nelbond's shattered family has led to a successful career as both a teacher and administrator in the Pacific Northwest. Before coming to Ellen Ochoa Middle School, Mr. Nelbond worked at summer camps, children's hospitals and head-start schools for years, honing his craft as a jokester.

"You pick up things along the way," he says. "I used to go home and cry in my apartment a lot, but then I would go into the cancer wing of the children's hospital, where all of these poor kids were suffering, and I would just cry some more. That would really freak them out, unless I did something silly beforehand, like pretend to fall over a wet floor sign. So I was able to channel my own emotions into the work I love to do for the children."

And have there ever been any times when that didn't work? "Sure," says Principal Nelbond. "I did a couple of weeks in an inner-city high school near Seattle, and it's a different world at that grade level. The kids here, they love when I declare it Teacher Is The Student Day, but in Seattle there was a riot. I got pushed into a locker and left for an entire weekend. It was... it was a dark time." And with a single tear forming, Principal Nelbond pulls out a clown nose, squeaks it, and bursts into sobbing laughter. Zoinks!

So the next time you think you'd rather sit on a whoopee cushion every day in homeroom than have to hang out with your principal, know that out in Washington state, there is an entire school where kids might just be doing both — and loving it. ♦

## **THE COOLEST CANDY IN** **THE WORLD**

Karen Walton didn't start off wanting to conquer the candy business. Since she moved from her parents' Minneapolis home in 1986, Ms. Walton has worked as a nurse, a car mechanic, a baseball umpire, an opera singer, a shoe cobbler, a bounty hunter, an advice columnist, a Madonna impersonator and a tattoo artist, amongst other professions. But now, at age 43, she's the owner and "chief candy cooker" of Sweet Teeth, an artisanal candy store in Brooklyn, New York that the popular girl website Jezebel4Kids recently called "the hippest, tastiest dessert destination in the city." Now, every morning, throngs of parents and other adults line up outside Sweet Teeth's 53rd Street storefront to try Ms. Walton's latest sugary concoction.

"Candy was just something I sort stumbled into," Ms. Walton says as she sits in the breakfast nook of her Park Slope apartment. "I always used to make homemade candy for myself [because I don't have children]. I never thought about selling it. Then one day, the actor Charlie Hunnam — whom I was dating at the time — suggested I start selling it. And I decided I'd give it a shot."

Seemingly inspired by the "cronut" — which is a combination donut and croissant — Ms. Walton decided to make her reputation on cooking up "mash-ups" of famous store-bought candies. Shortly after opening her store, she debuted the "Twinx." A combination of a Twix candy bar and a Twinkie, the Twinx had the soft, cakey outside of a

Twinkie wrapped around the chocolate, caramel and candy biscuit of a Twix. It was an instant sensation with New Yorkers and soon crowds were lining up for a taste of all the sweet, sweet Twinx. After two whirlwind weeks, a Twinx industry started to spring up, with knockoff Twinx bars being sold in second-tier candy shops around the city, while “legitimate” Twinx bars were being resold for hundreds of dollars on Craigslist.

In an episode of his popular MTV reality show, *Spinning The Mix*, DJ Dado (who, despite being presumed dead, still executive produces the third season) had his DJ apprentices compete to see who could get from Dado’s Upper East Side loft to Sweet Teeth and back with a Twinx the fastest. At the end of the episode, the apprentices composed a dance mix to celebrate the sweet flavors. The improvised dance mix bolted to the top of the iTunes charts 24 hours later. DJ Dado’s record label, Never Truly Gone Records, donated all of the proceeds to tsunami relief.

With the success of the Twinx, Ms. Walton – who once worked for \$7 an hour as a giraffe washer at the Charlotte Zoo – was thrust to the forefront of the New York culinary scene. She followed it up with a series of other mash-up candies. There was the Jizzlers (a combination of Juicy Fruit and Twizzlers), Terds (taffy and Nerds candies), Cunts (cinnamon flavored Runts), Big League Mounds (Big League Chewing Gum and Mounds), Sperms (spearmint Gummy Worms), the Jolly Rocks Off (Jolly Ranchers, Pop Rocks, and the bug spray Off), and the infamous Milky Asses (Milky Way candy

bars with molasses). Sweet Teeth’s customer base ate the whole thing up... literally.

However, this overnight success was followed by an under-morning of litigation when, in June of this year, the Mars Corporation, which owns the Twix brand, and Apollo Global Management, the private equity firm that controls the Twinkie brand, filed a lawsuit against Ms. Walton. The suit accused Sweet Teeth of copyright infringement and Ms. Walton was forced to settle out of court. While she was allowed to continue selling the Twinx candies, she was forced to change the name to the unwieldy “Karen Walton’s Cake Caramel Candy Sticks.” Meanwhile, Mars and Apollo Global are expected to announce that they will be manufacturing and nationally distributing their own Twinx-style candy snacks. Very soon, this once hip, Brooklyn-based sweet treat will be available in every gas station and vending machine from Orlando to Omaha, the top two cities for candy consumption in America.

And if that was not enough, Ms. Walton and Sweet Teeth have come under fire from numerous civil rights organizations for the name “Twinx,” which has been found to be incredibly offensive by virtually everyone.

But if these hurdles are troubling Ms. Walton, she isn’t showing it. “Look, I don’t get stressed about this stuff,” she says. “If this candy business doesn’t work out, I’ll just go back to repairing hats, or wrangling snake necklaces, or driving a school bus, or being a tax attorney, or whatever else I did before. I enjoy life like I enjoy candy – never settling down.” ♦

# **THE COOLEST FALL**

## **ELECTION GUIDE**

*Whuddup, home skilletts? New school year means new buds (and duds) on the student council. We've got the scoop on who's runnin' (and who's bummin') this time around.*

### **TREASURER**

#### **Alicia Travestpot (9th Grade)**

Aside from the standard promises of perfect attendance and budget responsibility, Alicia says that she's the one to help make every dollar work for students. "I believe my classes on the advanced math track will help me balance the budget and thusly provide more funding for a blowout at the end of the school year come June." June!? We gotta wait all the way until then? We'll see if the kid voters can wait that long...

#### **Gavin Clackster (9th Grade)**

This is Gavin's second time in ninth grade, which the Clackster says all adds up to experience. Even with a built-in nickname that is sure to energize the voters, Gavin promises that he's gonna make sure every student council dollar is spent wisely. "The salvia stuff is in the past," says Clackster, "and giving me the opportunity to manage the large student council budget is just the responsibility I need to not relapse again." Here's hoping all that experience means a big win.

### **SECRETARY**

#### **Mostavia Beligra (11th Grade)**

In only her second year at the school, Mostavia Beligra says that she's the one to take minutes and schedule the meetings for student council, and don't we know it! All those signs and posters around her family's convenience store makes it all more clear that Mostavia wants this win. "She is smart, confident, and has excellent penmanship," says her father, Mr. Beligra, who has been handing out free ice creams to sweeten her daughter's chances. But will Mostavia's quiet voice hurt her come debate time? Rumors are that she barely made a sound during her final English presentation last year. She might have to belt it out or break the bank to grab this seat.

#### **Troydent (9th Grade\*)**

Troydent, the late transfer-student last year from South Dakota, is already a school celebrity. Word is his simple country wisdom has dazzled many at summer parties, while his ever present helmet-like baseball cap keeps an air of mystery around the boy. "I'm hella good at scrawlin'" says the boy of undetermined age as he skips rocks in the old Sears parking lot. It might be his notoriety and his love of speaking to the masses that has Troydent scrawlin' all year long at student council meetings.





## **VICE PRESIDENT**

### **McKenna Joyce Bradley (12th Grade)**

Will this be big win number four for MJB? Having wowed the students three years ago grabbing the vice presidential seat as a freshman, she's continued to bring a sense of stability to the student council. "My experience and service to the student council has not only defined me in high school, but it's who I've become." But will voters be able to recognize all the hard work that MJB has done in the past years at the Breezy Ice Cream Social 2010, the Avengers Homecoming Spectacular 2012, the Spookiest Halloween Bash Ever 2010, the President's Day Parade 2011, the Spookiest Halloween Bash Ever 2011, the Iced Out Winter Dance 2010, the Valentine's Day Mixer 2013, or the Spookiest Halloween Bash Ever 2012 to snag the seat for her senior year?

### **Gabriella Destina Fernando Santiago (9th Grade)**

Could history repeat itself this year with newcomer Gabriella Destina Fernando Santiago unseating a senior for the Vice President's seat? Rumor has it that this Latina ruled middle school as not only president of her student council, but was prom AND homecoming queen, and is looking to continue her reign. "What this school needs is some new ideas. If business as usual means three years of the same tired Halloween party, then it's time for a change," says the hopeful challenger surrounded by a crowd of underclassmen at the summer's end of the

year party at Cory Pachinco's house because Cory has a pool and his mom was in Vermont with her new husband.

## **PRESIDENT**

### **Asher Rothstein (12th Grade)**

Hoping to make the jump from Secretary to President this year with two years of student council service under his belt, is Asher Rothstein. While many remember Rothstein from his freshman and sophomore years as the quiet, reserved student, it was the seemingly embarrassing moment when Rothstein was "debriefed" in the locker room last October that led his transformation from wannabe to wanna-do! "Dude, what I am focused on is making this senior year the biggest, most awesomest time. Vote for me and I promise that the party won't ever stop." Rothstein, now armed with confidence, a provisional driver's license, and his older brother's used Nissan, is ready to take senior year by storm and lead the student council into the year 2014.

### **Lucy Markley (12th Grade)**

Could it be that Markley's late entrance into the race was fueled by the messy past that she and Rothstein share? All past romances (or duh-mances) aside, Markley has been speaking of her ambitions to take the president's seat ever since she and Rothstein had their big split at the prom last year. While Markley keeps on throwing fireballs Rothstein's way, photos on the hip new photo sharing network Goebbels reveal that

Markley and Rothstein have had at least one in-person meet up over the summer that ended with Rothstein crying. "I want nothing to do with that liar," says Markley. "We kissed at the start of the school year, then he became super popular, and then I thought we had gotten to know each other when he ruined everything at prom!" Rumors point to failed reconciliation initiated by Rothstein, with Markley being too hurt to take him back. One can only imagine the giant cloud of broken hearts and teen hormones that will be swirling around this election. Is there a giant blow-up at the debates or on election day in our future? Only time will tell.

### Geef Bostafiano (10th Grade)

It's that kid who says he can levitate stuff, but who has seen him do it? No one, except for science teacher Mr. Pachinco who had a nervous breakdown in the cafeteria last March so who knows what to believe. ♦



**TOO MUCH SCHOOL?**

Bring a valid student ID during a school day and get in for **HALF OFF**, plus get a free Prince Dudley crown!

Offer Good at Burgerland, Burgerland World, Burgerland Shanghai, and Burgerland Dubai.

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**Burger Land**

## **BREAKING IT DOWN:** **THE COOLEST** **EXPLANATION OF UNITED STATES VOTING RIGHTS**

Hey kids! It's your cool friend Mark Pit-  
ters here for another installment of **Breaking It Down**, the monthly column where I "straight talk" about cool issues affecting our nation. This week, I'm going to give you the "real dish" on voting rights issues currently going on at the state level, including voter ID laws, anti-discriminatory policies within governmental practices and the federal response to such a patchwork legislative landscape. But first, a "dope" primer on the **Voting Rights Act of 1965**!

Now, this isn't your *Dad's* old national legislation. No way! The Voting Rights Act of 1965 was a landmark bill meant to curb discriminatory practices at voting booths against African Americans and other minorities, all in response to the Civil Rights Act of 1957 and the fallout state response in traditionally non-segregated areas of the country. These Jim Crow laws — sounds like the name of some crazy old bird to me — did much to suppress the African American vote in the southern United States. Not cool!

Then, in early 1965, President Lyndon B. Johnson (I mean, WHO?!?!?) was forced to act on behalf of underrepresented citizens, after a racially motivated attack by state troopers in Alabama led to the incarceration and hospitalization of dozens of African American protesters during a voting-rights march.

Eventually, in a rare joint session of Congress, the President (who was a total nerd, BTW) forced legislation upon a divided chamber that pushed through sweeping rights amendments for previously disenfranchised margins of social strata. Talk about the nerd beating up the bully! (In this case, the bully is generations of in-born racial tensions and a caustic social hierarchy that forced African Americans to accept a lower caste in American society, while the rich White elites profited off of their labor).

Once the Voting Rights Act of 1965 passed, in a tense standoff between died-in-the-wool Republican state representatives and their liberal Northeast counterparts, it became clear: no one could discriminate against voters monetarily, racially, or based on any other criteria beyond pure citizenship, even if they're lame. President Johnson (who totally had you-know-whats of steel by this point) instructed Attorney General Nicholas Katzenbach to begin dismantling the states' legislative capacity to continue to disarm the rights of a free and voting populace.

### ***How rad!***

Except, maybe it's more of a bummer after all. Last month, the U.S. Supreme Court, in a bitterly split 5-4 decision with Chief Justice John G. Roberts providing the majority conservative opinion, just seriously "harshed the mellows" of a number of provisions of the Voting Acts Rights, stating (in summation) that a key particular within the bill's language defining its oversight capacity on previously discriminatory states was no longer constitutional, based on the use of

outdated platform metrics that lack the ability to properly quantify today's new racial segregation boundaries, regardless of state or regional lines. Doesn't that sound whack?!

Thanks to the new moral and fiduciary ambiguities, many Republican-held states are pushing to enact quick-trigger voting registration amendments that could severely limit the ability of underprivileged, underserved and underrepresented groups — which tend to ideologically skew along Democratic lines, considering their personal barriers to the low-tax, high income lifestyle espoused by other, more prominent factions of the Republican party (hawks, Tea Partiers, the neo-Con anti-progressive sabretooths, et al.) — from being properly represented at the polls come election day.

Texas, North Carolina and a number of other similarly minded folks are hoping to infringe on these oft-trampled peoples' rights even further, with new voter ID laws that would heavily regulate the pre-voting process to exclude the extremely rural and impoverished who lack access to basic civic functionalities from being able to gain the proper paperwork necessitated in such a way as to make voting all but obsolete. As a punishment previously reserved only for felons, denying the rights of pro-functioning citizens to vote in generalized federal, state and local elections is not only an affront, it's a dangerous precedent for the future of our already-divisive party politic lines. With no middle ground left to stand on, it seems that the underrepresented will, once again, be left to fend for themselves. **BUMMER!** ♦

# CONNECT THE DOTS!

Go grab a pencil (or a pen if you're very brave) and connect the dots to reveal an image of an important part of American history!



# THE SECOND THOUGHT CORNER

I was recently enjoying some sweet tea and watching my nephews play underneath the weeping willow here on my 34 acres in rural Georgia, when it all harkened back to a more simpler time that some of you kids may not remember. And I was thinking, how can we get back to that time? How can we get America back to when food didn't come with an ingredient list a mile long and the only thing our baseball players were juicing was oranges for their morning oats? Well, I figured it out.

You see, if every school in America would shorten its school day by 8 minutes, compounded monthly, we could easily start funneling the reminder overflow discretionary budgetary earmarks to more than 3,000 charities that without such funding would, and I checked the math, never be the most understated noble professions to ever walk this fine mist in the hot Southern summer sun and, lest we forget, never once before have such an amount of times been considered before finally settling in to sink like the lure that catches the catfish, but has never gotten wet. Now, I may be getting old, but that just seems like it makes sense.

Or, consider that we have in our midst more than half a million unclaimed notices that, without further investigation, would go on for at least three more election cycles that might not ever cease without a watchful eye by a certain government organization that

doesn't call itself by the name given to it but instead there are four other sub-contractors that never even enter the building, let alone check the mail for dust that may collect when we don't find a suitable replacement for the bridges, roads and train tracks that once dotted this blessed land and will continue to until there is a vote (in triplicate) to designate every other house a historical landmark that, without esteem, could be noticed by a slouching dog or a winking frog that hops from pad to pad but never without keeping an eye on the traversing falls from the old footpaths of the South to the new paths of the Pacific Northwest. Can't say I ever did, really.

Sounds like we all need to get back to a time when a Brown Betty was just brown sugar and sweet Georgia peaches, and none of this high fructose-wooktose-bumbletoast nonsense that I, even with a monocle of an idea, can't begin to wrap my mind around how the global industrial food complex was able to, and this is something that cannot be disputed, was ever known to be the ninth most important figure in the daily work day of half of this nation's underprivileged and overunionized truck haulers who, let's face it, ain't ever been more than a drip on a cat's ear, let alone a financial driver (pun well intended, sir) of our nation's faith, fortune and dinner tables.

And that's your **Second Thought**. ♦



## YOUR QUESTIONS

*Susan Alan-Wenswick is a prolific Life Specialist, working in the metro Miami area. She has written several books, including most recently From Rollerskates to Rollers.*

**I recently moved to a new school and am having a hard time fitting in.**

Becoming part of a community can feel difficult, but it's not impossible. Instead of trying to find out where you fit in, find out who you fit in with. It may not always be the most popular kids. Finding good friends and people you can trust is more important than being noticed.

**Ever since I started going to parties, my mom has been on my case! Everyone makes fun of me for having to check in with her every hour. How do I stop her?**

You know, mother-daughter relationships are always tough. For example, about a year and a half ago, my daughter Samantha came home from the Calming Meadows facility, started up again with her friend Derek and promptly moved out. And then three weeks ago she shows up on my doorstep. Derek is out of the picture because she finally decided to take control of her life, and we've started to patch things up. The lesson here, kiddo, is your mom is always your mom, and the sooner you learn it, the sooner you'll learn to love it.

**So, things are good with you and your daughter now?**

Better than ever. She's even started taking classes at the junior college, which I am pitching in half for. (Making deals is an important part of parenting)

**Weird, because I saw her and Derek last night driving around in his new Jetta.**

I-- well-- I find that extremely difficult to-- the circumstances and the lies alone would... Oh, here she comes now. Honey, you would NOT believe the insane questions I am receiving about you, and Derek... and a Jetta. What does "nothing" mean? Does that mean it's real? Can you look at me? Look at me please! What's in your backpack for junior college, huh? What's in here-- Nothing... no books. no papers. Leaflets for Derek's DJ night at Spooker's in Hialeah?! Oh, Samantha, why are you doing this? Why? Why?

**I've got a total nerd of a little brother who won't leave me alone when my friends come over and play video games. How do I tell him to just scram?**

Don't ever push your family away, even when it seems like they've ignored your love and everything you've done for them, financially and medically. Just know that you've given your daughter a kidney and so much more, and there will come a time when she truly hits rock bottom, and that's when you can reprogram her. And have her — your family — fall in love with you. ♦



# Nighty Night

## Kids' Bedtimes Across the World!



### Portland

When the biodynamic rooster stops clucking



### Los Angeles

Low tide or when Nickelodeon becomes Nick at Nite



### Havana

Can't sleep because of constant trumpet blasts to signify a new guest at an all night fiesta.



### New York City

No one wants to sleep because of the constant high of knowing they are in the greatest city ever to grace Mother Gaia's face.



### St. John's

Kevin has two bedtimes. Dad lets him stay up later, but that's when he's out with Christina.



### London

When Big Ben gets rewound.



### Rio de Janeiro

Whenever the little tanning indicator pops out from their tailbone, they know it's time to sleep.



### Patagonia

Who can sleep? I feel awake for the first time. I can't believe I've spent my entire life in Bethesda and now... I don't know, Mom, I might never go to college. This is too real.



# 2160 MINUTES IN... YOUR OWN HOME!

It's always nice to take one small family vacation right before school starts. You can hang out by the water and listen to your iPod, or go up to the mountains and send a million Goebbelgrams to your friends. That's what vacations are all about. Except this time... your parents forgot you at home!

Since you got mad at your dad and started sleeping in the attic to get away from them for a while, your parents totally forgot to wake you up and left on that weekend trip to the lake without you. Now you've got the whole place to yourself! You can watch rated R movies like *Laturkey: Cleveland's Angriest Cop*, eat all the ice cream in the freezer and prank call the drugstore. It's going to be a great weekend!

## FRIDAY

11:30 A.M.

### WAKE & BAKE

Yawn like you're still tired even though almost half the day is over, while you climb down from the attic and start to make your way to the kitchen. Pour half a box of Cinnamon Toast Crunch (\$3.29, *General Mills*) into a mixing bowl, open the fridge and discover that there's no milk. Yell out for your mom like always, but instead of her annoy-

ing voice there's only silence. Yell again. Eventually huff and walk upstairs, checking every room as you go and discovering that your parents must have left without you for the weekend. Awesome!!

Immediately turn on the oven and pull out a bag of Tater Tots (\$2.79, *Ore-Ida*), throw them onto a pan. Pull them out just before the recommended time, so some of the tots are warm and some are still ice cold in the middle, but who cares! You're free!

**8 P.M.**

### **GROGGY, FOGGY**

Emerge from your snack coma to realize that eight hours have gone by. Peel yourself off your parents' Ikea Ektorp Cover 2+2 sectional sofa (\$459, *Ikea*) and go hit the bathroom for a whizz. After all, you've been drinking a lot of soda.

Once you're back in the living room, notice that it's almost totally dark out, and a fog has descended on the neighborhood. Every house on your block is empty, because everyone's gone to the lake for the weekend - except you! Let the feeling of that power wash over you, and use it as motivation to play video games on your parents' big screen TV for two and a half hours straight.

**10:30 P.M.**

### **THE ONE WHO KNOCKS**

After hearing a knock on the front door, make a dive for the remote to turn off the Panasonic Viera 50" Class ST60 Plasma HDTV (\$1000, *Panasonic*) in the the master bedroom. It could be your dumb aunt who heard you got left behind and is coming over to make you eat vegetables and read books all weekend. No thanks Aunt Millie!

Crawl over to the JELD-WEN Premium Series Double Hung Windows (\$759, *Lowe's*) and peek out to find a stubby man in a Navy Three-Hole ski mask (\$10.99, *Modells.com*) rolled up to his forehead, checking for signs of possible entry. Duck down before he spots you, then listen closely: there's another rustling, this time from the back door. Scam-

per silently to the back and find a tall, goofy-faced burglar wearing the same rolled-up ski mask, trying to pick the lock on your back door. It's going to be a long weekend.

**10:32 P.M.**

### **VOICE YOUR DISPLEASURE**

Run upstairs and grab your brother's old toy voice modulator with built-in microphone (\$7.76, *punchbowl.com*). You're going to have to put that gory cop movie from earlier to good use. Run back downstairs and set up behind the couch. Click on the device and start quoting the most tough-sounding lines from the movie you can remember. "Get back, you scumbags, or I'll pump you so full of lead you won't be able to walk through a metal detector at the airport anymore!" is a good one to start with.

Check for their reactions. If the intruders seem frightened off, consider this a job well done. But they won't be, so you'll have to go with Plan B. In the meantime, toss out a few more gems from the film, like "I hate your face, Laturkey, and I'm not afraid to punch it!"





## SATURDAY

1:21 A.M.

### WAKEY WAKEY, EGGS & BREAKY

Jolt awake from your position on the living room floor, surrounded by tacks turned prickly-side up. You fell asleep at your post, and now the sound of shattering glass can be heard from the den. Luckily, you planned for this, and put down a thick layer of egg whites (\$3.19, *Better'n Eggs, Vons*) under every window. Listen closely for the inevitable slip, crash and swear word. Think for a second 'wouldn't it be funny if it were Aunt Millie?!' Hahahaha. But it's not. It's a burglar.

1:23 A.M.

### iPAD THE STATS

Grab the iPad your parents got you for your birthday and cue up an FPSRussia YouTube video (*free, youtube.com/FPSRussia*). Anything with lots of heavy machine gun fire will work, just make sure the bullets come loud, fast and often. With your Bluetooth supported Sonos PLAY:5 wireless music system (\$399, *Sonos.com*) you can push the sound of rapid gunfire throughout the entire house -- wirelessly! That should keep the thugs at bay for now. But there's always tomorrow.

4:45 P.M.

### BACK TO THE 'BOOK

A full day, and no word from the attackers. Maybe they've decided to attack all the other empty houses on your block instead. Update your Facebook (*free\*, Facebook.com*)

with funny emojis and posts about how dumb the robbers are, and how they couldn't even get past your simple diversions.

Unfortunately, the bad guys can read all of these posts, because they're using the Who Snoopd? app (\$2.99, *Apple iTunes App Store*) to peek in on your conversations. Now they're mad, and they're coming back.

6:45 P.M.

### SPORTS STAND OUTS

Slide into Kristofer's Sports Haus (2317 N. Gage Ave.; 314-667-9810) just before it closes, then pretend to look at the jerseys way in the back. Once old man Kristofer has locked up for the night, corral all of the cardboard cutouts of famous athletes you can carry. Fold them down and slip them, one by one, under the front door. Then precariously climb up the hat rack wall to the open window above, slip out and onto the roof. Scale down the back wall, run around to the front and collect the waiting cardboard cutouts. You're going to need them.

## SUNDAY

12:18 A.M.

### PUT YOUR BACK INTO IT

Guess who's back? The tall one with the goofy face and the chubby short one. And they have some mean looks on their face. Luckily, you've rigged up all of the cardboard cutouts to a series of strings and pulled your dad's Lithonia OFL floodlights (\$52, *lightingdirect.com*) off the garage for a little backlighting. Cue up the Katy Perry and set

those cutouts to dance! The confused burglars won't stay away for long, but it's a start.

**5 A.M.**

### **A CLOSE SHAVE**

Since you couldn't sleep, try using your dad's razor and Brut aftershave (\$13.85 / two-pack, CVS). OWWWEEEEEEEE!!!

**7 A.M.**

### **A POWERFUL ENDING**

The intruders are back for one last run at your family's goods. If you've stocked up properly, your house should be outfitted with booby traps that will foil, embarrass and seriously injure them, all to great comedic effect. Let's get to work!

First, take your Black & Decker Smart 40 Volt car charger (\$99, Walmart) and hook it up to the back door. With that much amperage, the bad guys are sure to get a big jolt. But they won't be knocked out cold, so you'll need to modify your dad's Falcon Safety flare gun (\$22.99, *falconsafety.com*) to shoot a buckshot round of bb's once they make their way inside.

While the wounded burglars recover, scamper upstairs and underneath the Rosle Kitchen Blowtorch (\$62.00, *Brookstone.com*) that you rigged to fire when you pull a series of strings. For effect, turn on Ride of the Valkyries (*Wagner, public domain*) and let it play through the house. Once the burglars hit the staircase, toss down some live eels (*free, any river*) to slow their ascent, then pull the

strings just in time to singe their stupid faces. This is going great!

**7:11 A.M.**

### **FIRST, YOU MUST CONCENTRATE**

Uh oh, spoke too soon. The ruddy faces of the evil burglars stood up easily to the blowtorch and now they're right behind you. Luckily, you stole a giant bag of old oranges (*behind the Vons*) and dumped them out on the floor as you run, making the burglars slip and fall everywhere. Once they're down, move in for the final act of justice. Lift up and callously drop your parents' GE 24,000 BTU Home Air Conditioner (\$699, Home Depot) on their heads. While they're knocked out, use the 50 foot Grainger S-Video out cable (\$14.30, *Grainger.com*) that you got from behind the TV and tie them up good. Consider calling the police from your UnidenD1364 cordless phone (\$29.99, *RadioShack*), but instead call Beefer, who owns Beefer's Junk Yard, to come take these guys away.

**4:00 P.M.**

### **A TALE TO TELL**

Your parents walk in to find you watching Laturkey 2: Rise of A Bad Cop in their bedroom, and immediately get sent to bed without supper. Try to explain your crazy weekend, but they are having none of it. Later, when your parents finish putting everything away, they'll find a single cardboard cutout of Charles Barkley tucked behind the couch. ♦

# THE MINUTIAE KIDS TEST LABS

## BALLS FOR FALL

The eggheads over at the Minutiæ Kids Test Labs have been, let's face it, having a ball this entire summer getting ready to review the best balls to kick, throw, squish and play with this fall. They've gone through a whole heap of them and below are the winners. Sorry if your favorite ball didn't make the cut, but these spheres will bring cheers, not jeers, to every boy and girl.

### GENERAL BALL PLAY

#### **Dunlop Pro Series**

For when you want to throw a ball after school or play fetch with Fido, there's the classic Dunlop Pro Series. A needle-felt cloth outer shell coupled with Dunlop's HD technology helps to keep this ball bouncing far past Minutiæ Kids Labs test of 20,000 bounces. While other brands in recent years have played with color schemes, the green felt with white rubber lines model is reliable and recognizable. With this ball, everyone on the playground will know you're cool, but not flashy; classic, but not old; distinguished, but not beyond reach.

### SOCCER BALL

#### **Wilson Civitanova**

You'll remember that the 2012 Civitanova won our most recent Soccer Ball Shoot-out (March, 2012), and we've gotten our hands (and cleats) on the 2013 model. It's still a clear winner. Aside from the striking graphics that help to find the ball after a long hot day, the fused panel construction and latex bladder create an appealing give to the ball for those long kicks down the field. Plus, the composite leather cover and Wilson FYbrid panel construction means minimal water and moisture uptake. If somehow your 2012 Civitanova is already worn out (and we doubt it is), this FIFA and NFHS approved soccer ball is a great upgrade from last year's model.

## FOUR SQUARE

### Baden Dodgeball

While conducting research for Four Square balls, we were as much surprised as delighted to find that the top ball being used at summer camps and school playgrounds was none other than a ball made for dodgeball! Once you stop reeling, the specs speak for themselves. A 2-ply rubber cover envelops the eight-and-a-half inch composition rubber core. But take a closer look at that cross hatching rubber cover and you'll see careful detail that goes beyond the aesthetic to create a ball with enough grip, but not too much that you're charged with a stickies/holdies penalty.

## BOUNCY BALL

### Dongguan Ruichen Rubber & Hardware Factory Bouncing Ball

What started with the Sky Ball now continues with the Dongguan Ruichen Rubber & Hardware Factory Bouncing Ball from Dongguan, Guangdong, China. A polybutadiene rubber ball in a variety colors makes this a highly appealing (and bouncing) bouncy ball. And while not a classic material, mixing in silicone, nitrile rubber, and EPDM means a firmer grip without compromising squish. Using a flange connection that promises not to split the balls ranging from 11mm to 50mm, we were able to get the ball up to 60 feet using our testing machines. While difficult to procure in stores, an order minimum of 3,000 means you'll be the most popular

kid not just in your town, but the whole county.

## NOVELTY

### Wenzhou Success Group "Lucky Sonny" Beach Ball

A common pitfall amongst beach balls is a difficult, malfunctioning, or faulty air hole. That was where the Wenzhou Success Group started with the Lucky Sonny brand beach ball. A diminutive 4 inch package expands to a full 32-inch bundle of fun available in a multitude of colors. Not only does the ball stick to the EN 71 standard, making it safe for sale in the EU, but a phthalate-free construction gives peace of mind to your parents. (Once they hear about the lack of phthalates, they might even get one for themselves!). Finally, other balls stick with only three layers of polyvinyl chloride, but the Lucky Sonny does three additional layers for a total of six! We're sorry to see beach season go, but we might keep one of these inflated balls around the Minutiæ Kids Labs test facilities because they're so darn fun. ♦

*\*No under under 29 was involved in the testing of these products. They simply wouldn't be able to appreciate them.*





# SUMMER'S NOT OVER YET!



KitKat Soda is an idea that one of the kids of an executive here at Nestle had, and we threw a lot of time and money at it because this kid has had a tough life with his dad not always being there and at one point they sent him to military school, so that messed him up, and he was a really nice kid when his dad would bring him around the office on parent-teacher conference days and when they couldn't find a sitter. So, yeah, it's a fizzy, chocolate, nutty soda with about 650 grams of sugar, but please give it a chance because we don't want to be witness to the inevitable shouting match that happens when this kid and dad finally have at it.