



The Highland Times

Spring 2024

A message from Highland Center:

Welcome to the Spring 2024 edition of The Highland Times! As we embrace the season of renewal, we're excited to share important dates, inspiring stories, and engaging activities that showcase our vibrant community.

Join us in celebrating Earth Day, honoring our diverse traditions, and cheering on the Bellevue Bears basketball team. From heartfelt poems and book reviews to personal achievements and creative crafts, this issue is packed with contributions that inspire and connect us.

Thank you for being a part of our wonderful community. Together, we make Highland Center a place where everyone feels at home.

In this issue:

Dates to remember
Can you spot
Spotlight On
Book review-1
Poem Corner-1
Riddle me this
Kraken experience
Being me
Podcast review
Fitness BINGO
Workzone
Wordsearch
Craft
Downtown park
Advocacy day
Recipes
Dance pictures
Booke review-2
Movie review
Poem corner-2
Meet the team
Answer key

Dates to remember:

APRIL

- 1st: April Fools Day
- 9th: End of Ramadan
- 13th: Plant Appreciation Day
- 22nd: Earth Day
- 30th: Passover ends

MAY

- 4th: Star Wars Day
- 5th: Cinco de Mayo
- 10th: Barn Dance @ HCC
- 12th: Mother's Day
- 27th: Memorial Day-HCC Closed

JUNE

- 3rd: Summer Registration Opens
(Bellevue Residents)
- 8th: Summer Registration Opens
(Everyone)
- 16th: Father's Day
- 19th: Juneteenth-HCC Closed
- 20th: Summer Solstice

Can you spot?

Let's celebrate Earth Day! The symbol below reminds us all to help the planet by reusing, recycling, and reducing waste. By doing these things, we can all make the world a cleaner place.

How many can you find?

(Answer on last page)



May 12th: National Limerick Day

At Highland,
where joys are well spun,
Kim, Mary, and Jenn make it fun.
With wisdom and glee,
Art, BINGO, and spree,
It's a second home for everyone!

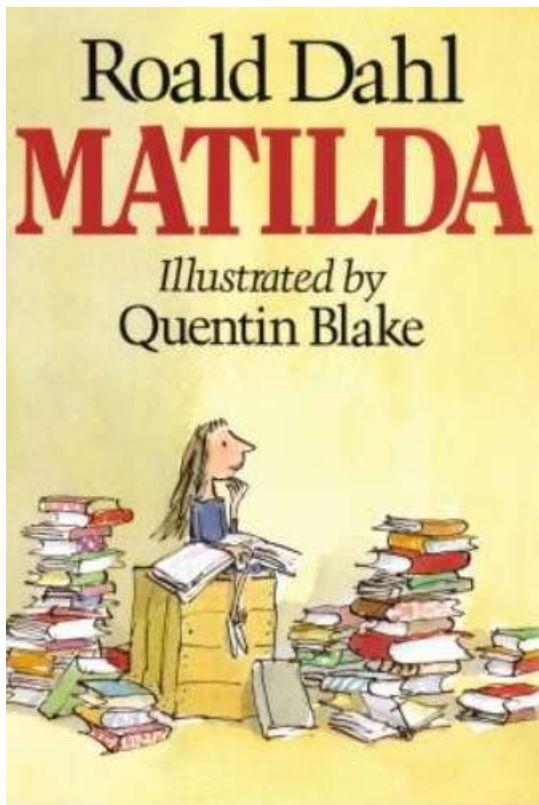
Spotlight on: Basketball

Our beloved basketball squad, the Bellevue Bears, has made a triumphant comeback following a lengthy hiatus due to the pandemic. They participated in a Special Olympics tournament, securing a commendable 4th place. We're thrilled to have the team back and delighted to witness everyone back in action! Highland hosts team sports programs on Tuesday and Thursday evenings.



Book Review

By Anna Angrisano



I absolutely adore Matilda because it tells the story of a young girl who is constantly told no, and yet in her own way, gets revenge on the nasty grown-ups in her life with the help of her teacher, Ms. Honey, and her classmates. This story shows that no matter how small or big you are, everyone has the right to be treated with respect and loved for who they are. It also shows that with some determination and hard work, you can achieve anything you put your mind to.



Poem Corner

By Kevin Wu

Roses are red
Violets are blue
Daffodils are beautiful & bright
And so are you!

Riddle Me This

By: Tony Intonti

1. What kind of wood is very famous?
2. What is always at the end of rainbow?
3. What do firefighters put in their soup?

(Answers on last page)

Kraken Game Experience

By Kevin Wu

This is a picture of me, my mom, and my friend Aubrey at a Kraken game against the big bad Boston Bruins. We sat in section 25, row Z, seats 9, 10, and 11. We all had a great time. The national anthem was sung beautifully and perfectly without any mistakes. The game was well played and exciting to watch. There were a lot of great moments in the game.



There were also a lot of penalties in the game. The final score was 4-3 Kraken. The Kraken beat the Bruins in a shootout.

Being Me

By Nikki Fox

When I was a baby, my feet were pigeon-toed. I had to wear a cast on each leg. I had this special baby stroller then. When it was time for the cast to come off, the doctor told my parents to put the left shoe on the right and vice versa.

I always have a lot of energy. I have never been officially diagnosed with attention deficit disorder, so I was not prescribed any medication.

From the fifth grade to the ninth grade, ages 10 to 14, I really thought I must have some sort of developmental disability. I was not diagnosed with anything, really. I came to realize I am slow, like developmentally delayed.

See, in late elementary to my junior high (middle school), I went to good public schools. They did have a huge enrollment of 1,000-2,000 students in the entire school. The schools were so huge, too. I was intimidated by the students and the atmosphere of school and all it had to offer at those ages and grades.

Once I would get on the school bus and spend all day at school, I would walk hunched over. I would walk in little steps. I would not talk to anybody. I was very shy in preschool through, like, the fourth grade. I was not walking in that terrible position a whole lot. Teachers and students were wondering how I was getting to class on time and to the bus on time.

Well, in middle school, the vice-principal called my mom up to the school to witness my behavior firsthand. My mom was very shocked and saddened by what she saw!! My mom, the vice-principal, some other educators, and Los Angeles Unified School District officials were deciding what would be best for me. Some educators said I should continue with another public school for middle and high school. They wanted me to just work at being comfortable in school. They wanted me to improve my behavior and walk faster and talk more!! My mom and dad wanted me to go to a much smaller special school. Some educators thought a smaller special school would be better for me, too.

So, my mom and dad sometimes had to go to a special hearing with the school district in court. After a long while, they finally got the funding for me to go to a special school!! The name of the school was Switzer Center, now called Switzer

continued

Learning Center. The educators in the school district did recommend a special education program at a public or private school. I did start going to testing at Switzer. My mom, my dad, and I had an interview with Dr. Janet Switzer. We also talked to her assistant, Dr. Judith Borck. I saw a counselor there before I officially started school there.

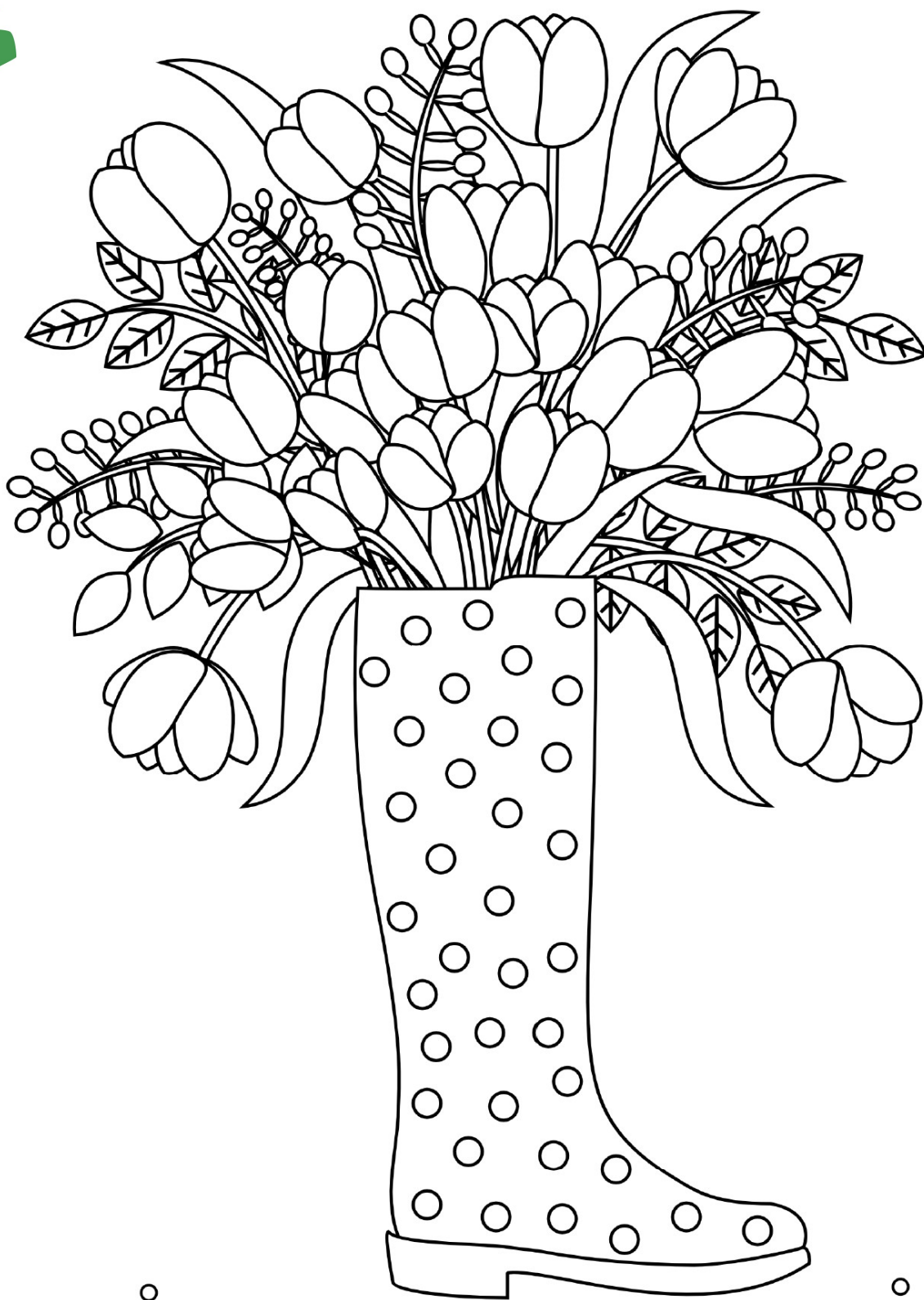
I was one of seven students in my homeroom class. I started to feel not extremely nervous at that school!! My walking faster and talking improved while at that school!! I did not feel scared or intimidated by a smaller school and fewer students!!

All throughout my childhood and teens, I always felt more comfortable at home. After being with childhood friends and family, I would get unbelievably bad and obnoxious behavior, like talking in baby talk and doing animal imitations. I would often hit people or throw stuff at them to make them angry at me. I would get into trouble for that, too. I would have to say sorry to the other person or people right away!! I thought I could seem disabled, slow, or developmentally delayed around those times, too!!

I was diagnosed with obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD) in 1993. I have always had signs of Autism, like a permanent stare at things and people and bad, awkward social skills. I was never officially diagnosed with Autism or any condition on the Spectrum.

I always found it unbelievably valuable to be a strong advocate for myself at work and other places! It gives me a sense of inclusion. It also makes me learn more about different disabilities and conditions.

I have read stories and watched TV shows and movies about famous people with disabilities and conditions. I have read about specific organizations and YouTube shows about people with other disabilities and medical conditions. I am always amazed and very star-struck by the people I have read about! I think they have gone through a lot in their life. I feel enormously proud of them! I feel immensely proud of myself when I accomplish something special!



♥ *Hello Spring!* ♥

Homemade
GIFTS MADE EASY

Podcast Review

By: Megan Williams

One thing I enjoy in my spare time is podcasts. Recently I came across one called Startalk and it's fascinating! If you love space, you are sure to love this one! It's hosted by astrophysicist Neil deGrasse Tyson, whom I'm a huge fan of. I highly recommend reading his books as well!! Happy Listening!



We value your thoughts and opinions.

SPRING

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O

Clean your room, vacuum, or dust	Play balloon volleyball	Use a reusable water bottle	Stream a fitness video	Drink water at every meal
Try yoga	Eat a serving of vegetables in dinner	Try a new healthy recipe	Do chair exercises for 10 minutes	Practice Mindfulness
Do an exercise around the neighborhood	Have fruit for desert	Free Space	Exercise in place during commercials	East some protein after exercise
Have a dance party	Write down what you ate and drink	Instead of salt, try a new herb or spice	Dance to your favorite music for 10 minutes	Make a healthy snack to share
Try a recipe from another country	Eat breakfast	Visit a park	Stretch for 5 minutes before bedtime	Reduce food waste and eat leftoveres

Score a BINGO and get a certificate!!



Let us know that you got a BINGO, get a certificate, and your name will be featured in the next Highland Times!

You can notify us:

- In Person
- HCC@BellevueWA.gov
- (425) 452-7686

Pictures are awesome, but not required!

Workzone

By Tara O'Rourke

How did you get this job?

My job coach found me my first job at Microsoft Advanta in the café, but that building closed down in January 2023 because it was a leased building and Microsoft did not renew the lease. I kept telling my job coach if anything opened up on the Redmond campus to keep me posted and sure enough, last November 2023, I had an interview to work in one of the newest and biggest food halls, and a few days later I got the offer letter. I was hired back by Compass.



Tara with coworker-Mason P

How long have you been there?

I have been in this new building, Food Hall 4, since January 2024. I started with Compass Group in April 2014, almost ten years ago.

What are you responsible for?

A few tasks I do are putting together pizza boxes, which I am super fast at; it took me one day to learn. I refill the condiments. My favorite is mobile orders. People can order ahead on their phones, and at each food station, it will have a number, for example, "101m," which stands for mobile orders, and I bring that mobile order to the mobile order



Tara cleaning

continued

pickup station. I also refill napkins, polish silverware, restock silverware, clean tables, collect dirty dishes, and collect receipts.

What is the work environment and overall atmosphere?

The work environment is amazing. If you like it to be busy and the time to go by fast, this is a great place. I have seen a few people in this building that were at the building I was at before. I enjoy working here a lot. I have four other supported employees that I work with. Some of you know Mason; he's one of the other supported employees. It's good to see familiar faces from around town.

Have you had any challenges?

I have not really had any challenges lately. If I do, I typically ask my job coach when I see her or talk to her, or my coworkers, or my managers, or my mom.

Any new learning opportunities?

I have had the opportunity to learn how to do mobile orders and prepare pizza boxes.

Any achievements or milestones?

Being back at work is a big achievement because I missed working last year. I enjoy getting a paycheck and saving for things like Disney Plus.



Tara with coworker Chloe



Tara folding boxes



SPRING WORDSEARCH



J V Q J G H F R L R G S N L A D Y B U G
R O P E K X Q S R A A T N W Y B Y U B K
I E I Q C B C H A H O L A X B U A M E M
B N I D I I V O L J T F P O M T S B E A
U I Y V H D L W L V J R B K A T Z R B R
Z H D X C U V E I O U Q E O L E Y E Y C
Z S O N A C U R P T R B Y V G R B L E H
I N H G V K U S R K N F P Y O F L L N Q
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G S W E N I O K T J L E P L M Y C W H S
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R Y D L P B E N C U O N G A A Y I I Z T
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W O B N I A R F B G I O F U D S N Y P Q
E P J E X R F L A C W E R P B X E T J S
D K N M U T E R N K D P N Y B F Y J Q R
V U U D Y U D M A P R I L T E L G I P E

WORD LIST

APRIL
BUNNY
BUTTERFLY
BUZZING
CALF
CATERPILLAR
CHICK
CLOVER

COLORFUL
DRAGONFLY
DUCKLING
EASTER
EGG
FLOWERS
FOAL
HATCHLING

HONEYBEE
LADYBUG
LAMB
MARCH
MAY
MEADOW
NEST

NEW LIFE
PIGLET
RAINBOW
SHOWERS
SUNSHINE
UMBRELLA



Happy Mother's Day! Wishing
you a day filled with love, joy,
and all the special moments you
deserve. Thank you for
everything you do!

FAIR
PLAY
FOR
EVERYONE

HOPE YOU HAVE
A FANTASTIC
DAY

CELEBRATING
ALL THAT YOU
DO. ENJOY
YOUR SPECIAL
DAY!

Accessible Amenities at Downtown Park

The Inspiration Playground features various climbing structures for all ages and abilities, including a whimsical twisted vine climber and a bridge-connected "Roots and Rock" climbing wall. There are plenty of swing options: wheelchair-accessible saucer-style and adaptive swing seats, tot-and-parent swings, and even benches suspended on swing chains for caregivers.

Additional accessible amenities include:

- Bouncers and egg-chair-style spinners
- A four-person, wheelchair-friendly see-saw
- A ramp-accessible glider for a gently swaying ride
- Gigantic musical instruments
- A hillside slide



The fantastical twisted Wisdom Tree at the playground's center

A natural play area and splash zone with water features, boulders, and a waterfall provide extra fun. Equipment accommodates children with physical, vision, and hearing disabilities.



Breaking Barriers: Celebrating Advocacy for People with Disabilities

By Michele Appell

Advocacy Days, part of The Arc's Advocacy Partnership Project, engage individuals with intellectual/developmental disabilities, their families, and service providers in the legislative process. These events provide opportunities for them to influence policy and budget decisions affecting their services and support.

IMPORTANT

It is important because it gives us a chance for people to hear our point of view and that people with disabilities should have the same rights as others. Advocacy Days are sponsored by the ARC of Washington State. We deserve same pay and to get more funds for programs and job coaching to help people be successful on their job and able to find and keep employment to work with supervisors on finding suitable jobs for people with disabilities and make connections through work and other organizations.

ISSUES DISCUSSED

We sometimes write a speech and or contact the Legislatures for an appointment to speak with them in Olympia, WA

PREPARE

We talk to our leaders in Aktion Club and SODA at meetings and Legislatures at the Capitol of Washington



continued

WHO

I got to speak in front of everyone in 2019 about my job and what is important to me to be able to work and be successful in my job and community for people with disabilities.

MEDIA

They had photographers and video of people talking about what Advocacy meant to us.

CHALLENGES

Sometimes transportation. We usually go as a group, and I need time off work. Knowing what to say is a challenge for some people. It was a challenge during Covid-19 where things were done differently. We had to do Advocacy Day online which was not as easy to do but we somehow did it to the best of our ability to still get the point across.

ACTION!

You can help make things better by knowing about Advocacy Day, and having your own voice either in person in Olympia or spreading the word of how important it is for these bills to pass and for people with disabilities rights by phone, letter, or other ways to help with this important matter so we can all live a happy productive life in our community.

Contact ARC of King County to find out how to get involved.



Mixed Berries

By Kevin Wu

Ingredients

1. Blackberries
2. Blueberries

It is a easy, healthy nutritious snack that a lot of people enjoy.



Remember to wash the berries before you eat them

Berry Smoothie Blast

By Anna Angrisano

Ingredients

- ¼ cup frozen berries
- 3-5oz of Chobani zero sugar yogurt
- 2 packets of sweetener of choice (I use Splenda)
- 4 cups of water
 1. Place all the ingredients in a blender
 2. Place lid on blender
 3. Blend all ingredients together
 4. Pour into a glass, add a straw, and enjoy

Keto Milkshake

By Anna Angrisano

Ingredients

- 1 ½ cups of any sugar free ice cream flavor
- 4 ice cubes
- 4 oz of milk of choice (I used Darigold Fit Milk 2%)
 1. Put all ingredients in blender
 2. Place lid on blender
 3. Blend all ingredients together
 4. Pour into cup, add a straw, and enjoy

BARN DANCE

\$10 Bellevue residents | **\$12** Non-Bellevue residents
Parents/Caregivers Free | Admission includes dinner

Friday, May 10 | 6-8:30 p.m.

Highland Community Center
14224 NE Bel-Red Rd

This class is adapted and designed for individuals with intellectual disabilities. Saddle up for a night of toe-tapping tunes, lively rhythms, and good ol' country charm – where memories are made, and the spirit of the night invites you to twirl and sway in the warmth of community and laughter!

Remember to register! Course #4132
register.BellevueWA.gov

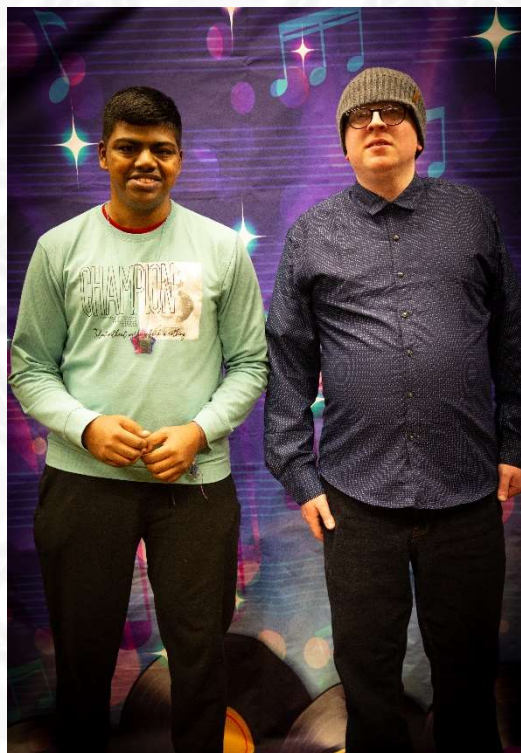
For more information call 425-452-7686
or email hcc@bellevuewa.gov

This dance is facilitated for teens and adults with intellectual disabilities.
Ages 16 and up.



For alternate formats, interpreters, or reasonable modification requests please phone at least 48 hours in advance 425-452-7686 (voice) or email hcc@bellevuewa.gov. For complaints regarding modifications, contact the City of Bellevue ADA, Title VI, and Equal Opportunity Officer at ADATitleVI@bellevuewa.gov.

PCS-4-7472



Thank
you for
coming
to our
Decades
Dance.

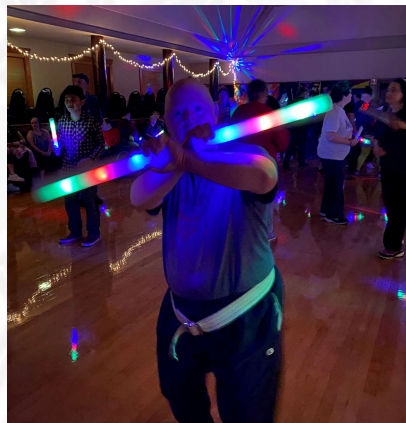
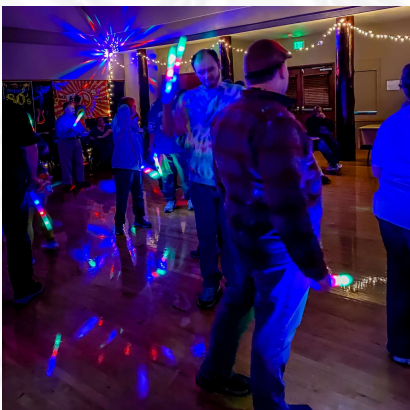


We
hope
you
enjoyed
the
event!



02-23-24





Book Review

By: Nikki Fox

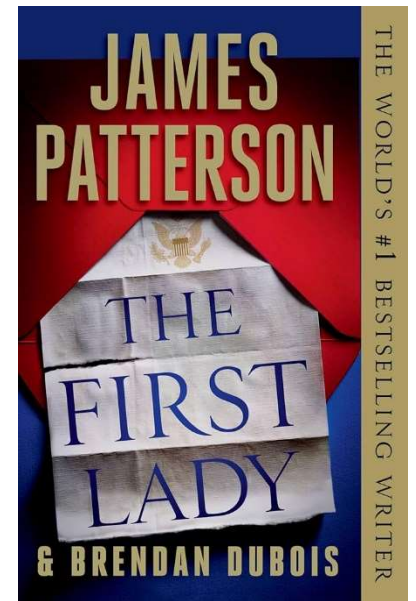
The book I'm going to report on is the book The First Lady by James Patterson and Brendan Dubois.

I should say it was quite a lot of action going on throughout the book!!

The main characters of this book are the President of the United States, Harrison Tucker, and his Cabinet. In most of the book, President Tucker and his Cabinet go to political meetings and political social gatherings in the U.S. and around the world.

There are a couple of misunderstandings around the world as they go on the trip. The First Lady ends up going missing!!

Also, a woman in the President's Cabinet goes to a political social gathering and gets poisoned. She ends up being in a coma for a while. There is a carjacking at the end of the book, too.

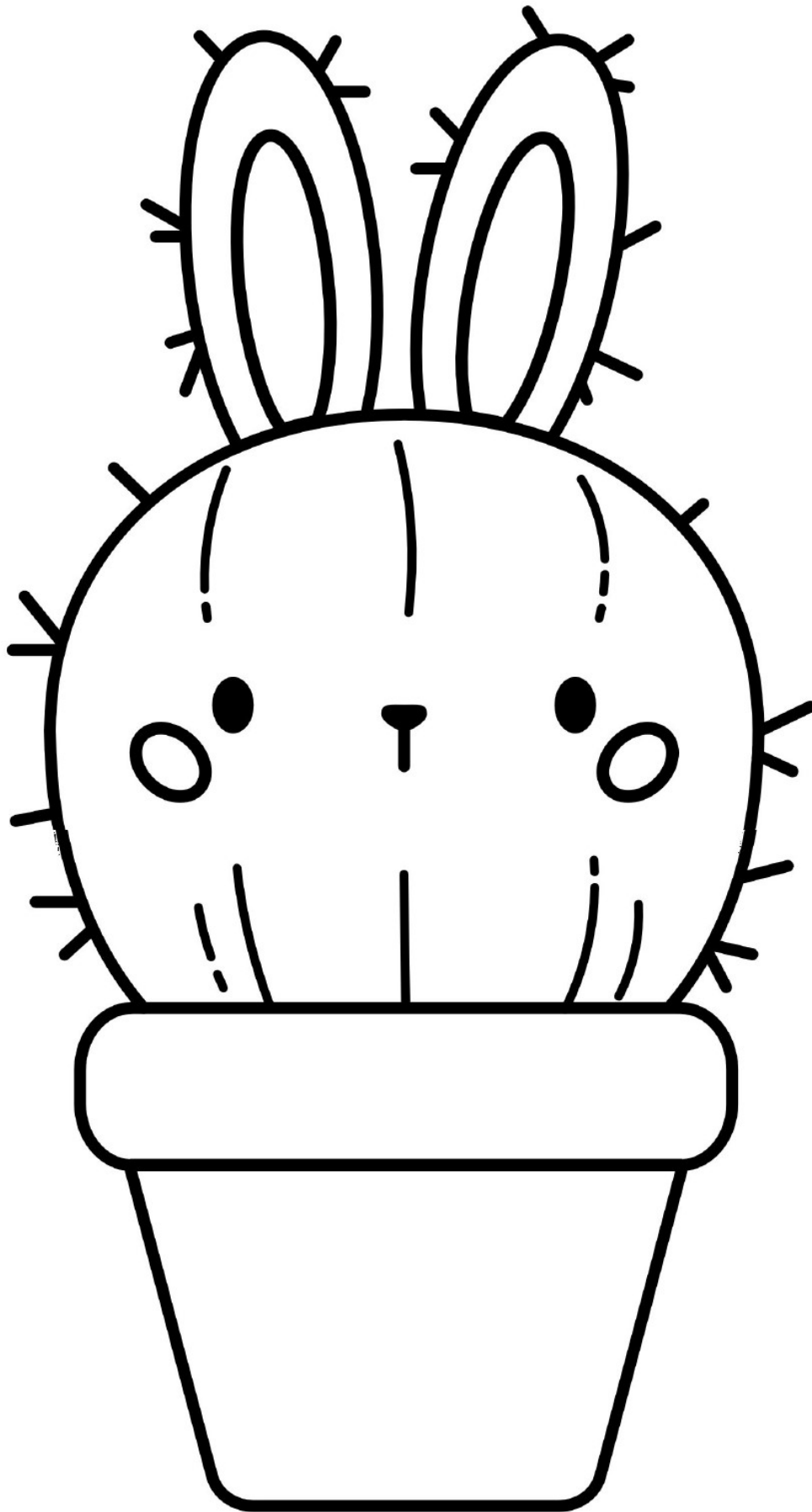


Movie Review

By: Kevin Wu

The movie I am doing the movie review for is a movie called Jumanji featuring Robin Williams as Alan Parrish, one of the main characters in the movie. Some of the things I liked about the movie were the different colors throughout the movie and the different levels in the game that took place throughout the movie. I also enjoyed seeing a familiar actor, Robin Williams, in the movie since I really like watching him in movies. The sights and sounds in the movie made it feel like the movie was actually real. I also liked seeing all the different characters throughout the movie and the different levels in the game, such as the stampede level where a lot of animals came charging out, destroying everything in their path.





Poem Corner

By Anna Angrisano

My Lifelong Bond with Horses

Horses have always played a huge role in my life since I was about 9 ½. So many horses have touched my heart in so many ways and taught me so much about life and how to get through the hard times and the good. For me, being friends with a horse is easier than trusting a human, especially when you've had people in your life who you were supposed to be able to rely on but didn't care about you. That's one reason why horses came to save me—they were always my saving grace.

One of the best horses in the world who loved me unconditionally was a sweet-tempered quarter horse named Beezer, or as I called him, BB. When I first moved into the house that my parents and I live in here in Fall City, I met Beezer. Beezer was only 14 years old when I met him, and I was 27 years old. Beezer was owned by my neighborhood/family friend Erin, who is still a mentor to me to this day. When Beezer was alive, my neighbor Laurie would take me on a different trail ride each year for my birthday, and Beezer was the horse I would always ride because he took such good care of me.

One year, we went down to the Snoqualmie River to let our horses get a drink of water. Well, let's just say Beezer had other ideas. Beezer took me in the river and started splashing me with water by pawing at the water with his front hoof. It was a hot September day, so this felt good, and I really enjoyed this as I was laughing my head off. Laurie, on the other hand, was

continued

panicking because she thought BB was going to roll with me on his back, but I knew BB wouldn't do that as he knew I was still on his back. I remember Laurie yelling at me to get his head up and bring him out of the river, and I was trying to, but BB was stronger than me. So Laurie came rushing into the river on her horse Huston and was able to somehow drag Beezer back onto the beach. Once on the beach, Laurie just looked at me and said, "Are you done giving me a heart attack?" All I could do was try not to smile as I said, "Sorry, I didn't mean to let BB do that." Then I remember Laurie and I burst out laughing.



Sadly, at the beginning of November 2020, Beezer started developing a long string of sinus infections which ended up leading to nose cancer, causing him to be in pain and very uncomfortable. So, in November of 2020, Erin made the very difficult decision to put Beezer down. Beezer was my very best friend, and I felt my heart shatter the day the vet put him down. So, this poem is in loving memory of Beezer and all the love he gave me.

Meet the Newsletter Team



Anna

Hi everyone, my name is Anna. You may have had classes with me, whether in person or virtual. I have worked at the Lake Hills Library for almost 20 years now as a Library Page. I love to cook with my momma and work out at the gym with my daddy. I love dogs and cats; I've been riding horses since I was 9 ½ years old. I'm currently working with a new trainer at a new barn. I love to read and write my own stories, color, and draw. I love to be sassy and dance to country and Disney music, and my favorite Disney movie is Beauty and the Beast.



Megan

Hello, I am Megan, and I live here in Bellevue. I have a younger brother who works in the physical therapy field. He's married to a great lady named Jessica, and they have two girls, who I am a proud auntie to. I have been a participant at Highland Center for many years, and I enjoy making new friends. Please do not hesitate to say "Hello" if you see me! I work in Woodinville at TJ Maxx. I enjoy reading, board games, and socializing.



Michele

I am involved with Bridge Ministry, Aktion Club, Friendship Adventures, SODA, and of course with Highland Center. I have worked for DCHS (Department of Community Health Services) King County since 2018. In my free time, I enjoy our cats, being with friends and family, and doing word and number puzzles. I also enjoy Comic-Con, meeting famous actors and authors, seeing people dressed up, and looking at the booths.



Tony

Tony Intonti likes the color blue, enjoys "Law & Order," and is a BIG collector of Disney ornaments. Tony has been in many plays at the Bellevue Youth Theater, and his favorite fairy tale is Alice in Wonderland.



Kevin

I am caring and very considerate of others around me and take their thoughts and comments into consideration. I am very honest and trustworthy, which is a quality that I am very proud of because if you are not honest, sometimes people won't believe you. I have gone to Bellevue College and discovered that it helped me become who I am today. I am involved in country dancing and have been doing it for over five years. I have also been working at Walgreens for over six years. I have been an active member and volunteer at Woodland Park Zoo for over three years now.



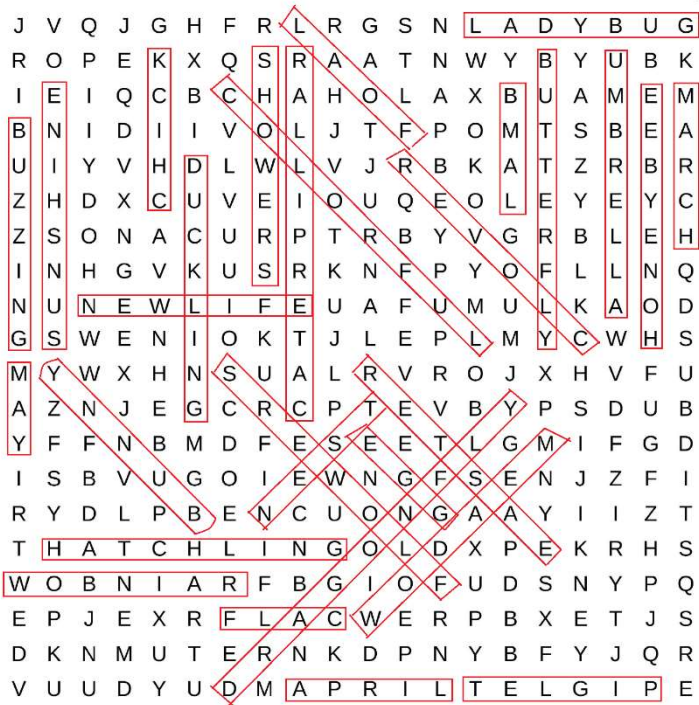
Nikki

Nikki is a student at Bellevue College. She worked at McDonald's in Eastgate for 30 years but is currently working at Target. Nikki is the Vice President of Aktion Club and an active participant in Bellevue Youth Theater and Special Olympics. In Nikki's spare time, she loves to dance and do all kinds of crafts.



Tara

My name is Tara O'Rourke. I enjoy spending time with friends and family, spending time with my dog Toby, and working out every day at the gym doing cardio and strength training. I like my job; I am proud to be working at Microsoft in food service. I have been with Compass Group for about nine years now. Volunteering for camp on Vashon Island and attending the Camp Out for people 21 and older makes me happy. I love having FaceTime calls with my nephew and making him smile. I also really enjoy doing activities with Friendship Adventures and taking classes at Highland Center.



Riddle Me This-Answer Key

1. Hollywood
2. w
3. firecrackers

Can you spot?-Answer Key

Found on pages:

4, 5, 8, 11, 14, 14, 19, 26, 29

There are two on page 14

9

Your Feedback Matters!

- ❁ What did you enjoy most about this newsletter?
- ❁ Have you completed a BINGO?
- ❁ Tried out our latest craft?
- ❁ Had fun with the wordsearch?
- ❁ We'd love to hear from you! Share your experiences – pictures are great but not necessary.

Your input helps us improve!

✉ Email us at
HCC@BellevueWA.gov or

📬 write to us at
PO Box 90012
Bellevue, WA 98009