THE BUCKEYE
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Contents

Prose and Poetry

Henry Moxley 3
Ryan Carpenter 7, 24
Matt Remke 9
Michael Milam 10
Jackson Wooten 11
Cameron Travis 12
Richard Scherrer 13, 27
Devon Rundberg 16, 26
Richard Thornton 19
Jess Darnell 21, 25
Nicholas Heim 22
Conner Huff 25
Drew Gordon 28
David Gaw 29
Nick Dreher 30
Benjamin Graves 31
William Hall 32

Artwork, continued

Michael Lacey 19
Jack Sunday 19
Nathan Sharp 19, 28
Jacob Lothers 20
Jesse Turner 20, 24
Turner Smith 23
Josh Rickerman 21
Ryan Barrick 21
Stephen Ray 22, 24
Wesley Tseng 22, 27
Ross Bradshaw 25
Graham Nash 25
Tracey Mathis 26
Kendal Frantz 26
Ryan Carpenter 27
Matthew Robbins 27
Devon O’Donnell 29
Bill Leftwich 29
Bronson Ingram 31
Chris Estes 32

Artwork

John Triplett cover
Jamie Payne 2
Trice McCullar 4, 28
Alec Giammalvo 5
Drew Gordon 5
David Bright 6
Luke Cianciollo 7
Josh Rickerman 8, 14, 28
Michael Mappes 8, 30
Sam Bellet 9
Luke Barrick 9, 11
Matt Miccioli 10
Derrick Tucker 10, 14
Tobi Kehinde 11
George Hunt 11
Will Emerson 13, 30
Daniel Maynard 15, 23
Bronson Bell 15

Jamie Payne
The year is 2050. This world is crumbling beneath my feet. It is up to the last of their kind to rebuild the real world so that this disaster will never happen again.

My story starts with my brother Owen Davis, the famous creator of the game called System Jump. I am also a computer programmer but I only work on websites for various companies. System Jump was the number one PC game on all the lists. Owen hated the world. Playing video games was his way to escape it all. One day we were talking on the phone, and he asked what if you could go into a virtual world and never have to leave, just be there for eternity living a life of complete bliss. I told him he was crazy if he thought anything like that would exist. The next day he announced the sequel to his game was coming out—System Jump: Escape from Reality. The game was a huge hit. I called him to congratulate him, but he wouldn’t answer. He didn’t call any one after the game came out. After a day or two I went over to check on him. I found him on the floor dead.

Many months went by but they couldn’t find a cause for his death. Then one day in the news it said that 60 people dropped dead for no reason. The article said they thought it was a new strain of disease. Day by day the death toll increased. The world was in a panic. Then I got a call…..from my dead brother.

“Mark, if you’re getting this message come to my house, find the computer and start playing my game. What you will experience is beyond this world.”

I drove immediately to his house. I opened the door and found the place desolate as ever. Normally if I got a call like that I would dismiss it as a prank but when you get a call from your dead brother you immediately start to wonder about things. His desktop was on and System Jump: Escape from Reality was playing. The screen said Start Jump and I hit Yes. What I experienced next I still can’t believe to this day.

The world disappeared around me, and I was in some sort of hallway of computer code. Slowly, buildings appeared and before I knew it I was in some sort of digital city. I looked around in amazement to try to find some clue of where I was. I saw a billboard that said Welcome to Jump City. There were gun stores, magic stores: sword stores, shield stores, name a type of store and it’s there. It was everything that a video game could ever have.

A group of strangers came out of nowhere and grabbed me.

“The boss wants to see you,” they said.

They took me down a winding path until we reached a huge black building. We took an elevator up to the top floor and into a pitch black room. All of a sudden lights flared up and I was blinded.

“Hello Mark,” a voice said.

“Who are you?” I asked.

“What? You can’t even recognize your brother? It’s only been 6 months.” My eyes adjusted and I saw Owen standing there.

“Where are we?”

“You haven’t guessed. We’re in my game System Jump: Escape from Reality. I designed this game to transport someone’s consciousness into this computer game.”

“Then all those deaths weren’t a virus.”

“Yep, they were just joining my game system.”

“But what about the people who didn’t join the game? How did they get here?”

continued on page 4
“I hacked the Internet and got them here. Eventually the whole world will be here. No more questions—I will explain how the world works around here. The world works around this computer system. I can change things here by just rewriting the code. That’s why I brought you here. You’re the only one who can help me with this. I need your skills as a computer programmer. I can’t manage this world alone. Well, what do you say? Will you help me?”

“What you’ve created is incredible. I accept.”

“Great, your access code is 1000110. Just say it to access the mainframe. The first thing you need to do is to modify the residential area. Not everyone wants to fight monsters. Some just want to live their lives in luxury. We need to design some new buildings. If there are any problems just ask Jarvis. So get to it.”

“Wait,” I started to say. Then the room disappeared and appeared in a cleared part of town. What I was supposed to do I didn’t know. I didn’t know who the heck Jarvis was. So I decided to try out the code my brother gave me.

“Access code: 1000110 activate program.”

“Command acknowledged, welcome Mark,” a computerized voice said out of nowhere. Suddenly screens appeared in front of me and a keyboard flashed on the screen. “My name is Jarvis, I am the computer entity your brother created to aid you.”

“Um, Jarvis, could tell me what exactly I’m supposed to do here?”

“That’s simple, all you need to do is write the code for some luxury suite for some of the game members. The design is all up to you. Just think the code and I will write it.”

I had nothing to lose so I thought up a program that would build a huge movie theater and Jarvis entered continued on page 5

Trice McCullar--Scholastics Gold Key Award
it in the computer. Slowly, line of code, by line of code, the building appeared. Sweet, all I had to do was think the code of an object and it would appear in front of me. I could get used to this. Within minutes I had created an entire block of suites and other entertainment sources.

Day after day went by and it looked like things couldn’t get any better but I started to notice some things. For one my brother didn’t give me full access but that’s to be expected. The second was a little bit more worrying. Every time someone caused an uproar they were taken to my brother for punishment. They would show up a few days later totally changed. It wasn’t humanly possibly for a person to change that quickly and they were acting almost as it they were reprogrammed.

I decided that I should look into the matter but that information was restricted from my access. But there wasn’t any program I can’t hack. I decided that Jarvis was created not only to help me but help keep an eye on me. So I reprogrammed him to serve only me. Then I hacked the mainframe to give me unlimited access to the system and prevent anyone from booting me from the system. When all the preparations were complete I looked into the history of the system and at first found nothing of interest. Then I found a file hidden behind all the history. What I found spelled the end of humanity as we know it.

My brother was reprogramming the minds of everyone who caused trouble in the game. He knew that since humans were imperfect he would have to make them perfect. He was manipulating the minds of everyone here.

“So you know.” I spun around and saw my brother standing there. “I didn’t want it to come to this but it looks like I have to reprogram you. I was immediately notified when you accessed that file.”

“Why Owen? Why would you do this?”

“The world is imperfect and I’m perfecting it. Now don’t resist.” Arcs of code attacked me. I erected a barrier just in time. I couldn’t combat my brother. He programmed video games and knew how to create code for all kinds of battle. Me, I only created updates for already existing programs. I looked for an outlet out of the

continued on page 6
system. No good. My brother prevented all outlets to any locations. Wait, what about the mainframe? It had to be open for him to combat me. I immediately teleported to the mainframe. I appeared in a void where only code existed. I had only a few moments to end it all. My only option was to destroy the Internet, the source of this cursed game.

“It’s over now Mark.” My brother was standing behind me. “You have nowhere to run.”
“Who said I was going to run?”
“Wait, what you are doing? Stop it you fool—you’ll kill us all!” He screamed as I punched in the code to terminate the Internet. The world started to disappear. I watched as everything my brother created faded to nothingness. “Nooo!!” My brother screamed as he disintegrated.

I smiled. It was all over and I would enjoy the last few moments of my life in the computer, in bliss. The year is 2050. The digital world is crumbling beneath my feet. It is up to the last of their kind to rebuild the real world so that this world will never come into existence again.
I’ve been living by the creek my whole life. Whenever I was there, time seemed to stop. It provided my mama and me all the food and water we would ever need. Although I never had any friends as a kid, I still had company. The woods and the mountains were my company. The creek’s cold hands would massage my back on a hot summer day and the trees would be my lookin’ post. I was very satisfied with this life. The first change to this beloved sanctuary came, I believe, one early morning in 1923 when a whole caravan of automobiles came stirrin’ up a brown cloud of dust with ‘em. They drove over to town and got out of the cars in an orderly fashion almost lookin’ like penguins. The men went straight to our town hall and talked with our mayor ‘til half past twelve. When they were done, the mayor kindly escorted them out of the town hall. He opened the door and frowned at the awaiting spectators outside. I was soon to see the thing that I feared the most.

Soon after in the year of 1937, many workers started pouring in to town. It was glutted with workers from all four corners of the world. At first the town was at peace with the workers, and then a rumor spread like wild fire that they were going to build a highway straight through our town. At first we were stunned with this revelation. We could not fathom what it would offer or take from us. Then there was protest: the town became a boiling pot, and havoc ensued. Some of the families moved away farther into the frontier. The workers started to cut down the beloved forests that we had always known as our homeland. Soon the workers started to lay a boiling black liquid that seeped in to the soil and destroyed the existence of any roots that had been there before. At this point I started to think about this devastating change. “Is there any good...
to come from this event?” I carefully thought. The years passed. In 1940 the workers trudged across my clear creek bringing up the mud and turning the pristine water into a smoky brown mudhole. As they kept pushing through the woods, cutting down trees like snapping toothpicks, they never knew what they were destroying. My childhood playground was decimated.

By 1946 the 97 mile highway was completed and the first motorcars were traveling on it. A few miles away a group of city folks were settin’ up an inn for the travelers. It was a large lodge with a sign that had a brown bear on it. By 1947 a strip mall was created across the road from town. It had a supermarket stockpiled with greasy unhealthy food and stale bread. That got my mind working, “Are these city folk too lazy to find their own food?” Even though all this change had happened to the area surrounding my house, it remained undisturbed. As if on cue, a motorcar came rumbling up the road to my house. A man in a suit got out of the car and clambered up the old creaky wooden steps to my front door. I kindly welcomed the man and asked him to sit down. He apparently was a business man. He had a large red nose and pointy ears with a tuft of brown hair sticking out of his top hat. The man started to speak in a monotonous low voice. He droned on and on for about 20 minutes ‘til he pulled out a couple yellow papers with a solid black line on the bottom. When I saw the line, I gulped and thought, “Oh no what does he want? What does he want?!” I gained enough courage to read through the paper. Some city folk wanted to build a resort on my property. I was stunned by this. Why would people want this land, my land? What could they get out of it? The resort visitors would never know what lay underneath their beds. I felt like time had stopped. I had the illusion that I was in a safe, choosing which childhood memories to keep and which to store away forever. I came back into the real world and just started to shred the papers. I yelled at the man to get out and stay out. That was the last time I ever talked to a business man.

Now, present day, I tell my story in the mountains, tucked away from the big Pacific coast city that was once the town of my boyhood. Although my dwelling place hasn’t changed the whole area around me has transformed. I still go by my old creek. Although it has been starved of water for 20 years, I still admire what this place used to be. By closing my eyes I can erase the changes and visualize the crystal clear water cascading down the mountainside.
An Eagle’s Feather
by Matt Remke

Look at the weightless eagle’s feather
How it floats on a breeze to the ground
How it glides on a late midsummer wind
Back to Terra Firma without a sound

How a number of these feathers
Can support a bird of prey
So that the bird might live and thrive
Off the breezy sky that day

But if I had a multitude of eagle feathers
I would fly away somewhere
I would travel across the continents
And flit away without a care

I would fly until it is my time to go
Unhindered by time and space
Then I would let go of my worldly possessions
And vanish into heaven without a trace

-- Scholastics Silver Key Award

Sam Bellet
The paintings of which I can see
Are very brilliant and bright.
They’re blue like oceans and green like trees
Red like apples and yellow like bees.
Expressions of anger, sadness, and glee
They show how passionate people can be.

The paintings of which I can see
Show scenes of color and light.
The portals to worlds of other dimensions
Are made by artists without much pretension
Just trying to make their voice and views heard
Over the rumble of everyday words.
I Cannot Think of Words

By Jackson Wooten

I cannot think of words to write
As I create a poem for school tonight
Like a road block on the interstate
The words in my head have to wait
A whole hour it took just to write that line
Waiting for the light bulb in my head to shine

I sit here thinking as time passes by
What words to use to make this poem rhyme
I stare at the wall searching for words
And outside I hear the chirping of birds
Every letter I put down is a huge success
And as I finish this poem, I’m filled with happiness

Third Place Poetry

Luke Barrick

Tobi Kehinde

George Hunt
Creepin’ Geese
by Cameron Travis

The sun was just risin’, bright and early
I stood there watchin’, holdin’ my coffee
But then somethin’ strange caught my eye
It was a huge shadow dancin’ in the sky
Then my eyes grew wide, wide with glee!
For out in the field, was a huge flock of geese!

So I grabbed the 20, my uncle the 12
My little cousin took his 410 off the shelves
We hopped in the truck, and stirred it from its sleep
The truck went rumblin’, rattlin’, but nobody said a peep
We moved slowly, and got as close as we could
Then we loaded our guns, I slipped on my boots,’cause I knew we would
Be crouchin’ and crawlin’, and trudgin’ through mud
We stayed in the canal, then my uncle said “Bud”
He gestured me over, and I peeked over the side
And there sat, not 30 yards away, not even tryin’ to hide
Several thousands of geese, playin in the grass
One of them even made a close pass!

They sat there majestically, not knowing of our attack
So I drew a bead, right on a big one’s back
My uncle gave the word, and we both squeezed
Our shots punctured the quiet, with greatest ease
The birds took to the sky, their flapping wings
Made a deafening noise, but worst yet, they began to sing
They sing the same song they’ve sung for years
They sing to warn others, and they sing their cheers
Because not a single one was slain
We searched and searched, but all in vain
For just feathers were all that had remained

Will Emerson
12
It was a bleak, freezing, and gloomy day, the stereotypical funeral day, and the pallbearers were grim as they carried the deceased across the damp grass to the Anglican minister, who abruptly cleared his throat and began his speech about the intriguing life of Admiral Scott Willis:

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“Admiral Willis was born in 1710, in Southampton, and he was the son of a fishmonger. He was a smart and clever boy, and if he had not chosen to be a sailor, most certainly he would have been a wit. He was shrewd, astute, brave, and courageous, with no large amount of hubris, either. He chanced upon sailing the seas, and this was a fact after he graduated from The Royal Navy Academy in 1732. He took to a small ship, which he dubbed “The Glorya” and picked a small crew numbered fourteen, and sailed to Haiti and the Dominican Republic, where he traded weaponry, beads, and the sort for sugarcane and rum.

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“And at this point”, said the minister, raising his head to stare with a cocked eyebrow at the morose crowd through his bifocals, “Admiral Willis met Captain Tiroga. Captain Tiroga was as evil as pirates get, looting towns, raiding villages, plundering galleons. There is a very twisted stereotype about pirates” the minister said. “In modern literature they are portrayed as men of cleverness and wit, bravery and courage. But Hark! Not so!” he shouted. “Pirates are cowardly and theiving, and men of pettiness and ignorance! They are about as virtuous as Caligula on a bad day! The pirate-catchers are the ones who are righteous and courageous!” And then, the minister, after catching his breath, continued his speech, “It happened three years after Admiral Willis had begun to trade in the tropics. He was sailing toward the Dominican Republic when the lookout on the Glorya cried, ‘The devil’s flag!’ The devil’s flag, as you all know, is a pirate flag, Captain Tiroga’s flag to be exact. It is midnight black, with outline of a crimson devil with a cerulean sea-trident, and impaled on the azure sea-trident was a pallid skeleton. Underneath the pictures on the flag was a credo that all men on The Speed Devil (Captain Tiroga’s ship) endorse: ‘All who trespass this junk, a fatal err they did make!’ Admiral Willis, seeing the flag, was preparing to load the cannons when an explosion rocked the ship. ‘We’ve been hit!’ cried Flapjack James, the Glorya’s cook, ‘Best fer us to turn around.’ ‘To turn around would be fatal folly,’ said Admiral Willis grimly, ‘Load the cannons with grapeshot, full speed ahead, mast up, flank left!’ he yelled as the crew was set to work rigging masts and loading artillery. Admiral Willis confined himself to his quarters, and, using a sextant, found that if The Glorya could trap The Speed Devil between two sea cliffs whose “teeth” jutted out like a lion’s maw, the pirates’ big galleon would be a sitting duck to the Glorya. Admiral Willis could annihilate the most infamous pirate in history! His crew jumped at the chance, and soon the Glorya was zooming toward The Speed Devil like lightening. As they got closer and closer, the Glorya attempted to fire, but the results were disastrous, with the ship misfiring like a sneezing elephant. Seizing the moment, the pirates boarded the Glorya, and a violent fight began. The battle was ferocious. The wanton and reckless pirates charged at Admiral Willis’s organized and mild-mannered crew. Shots rang in the Admiral’s ears as he saw Flapjack James draw his pistol on Captain

continued on page 14
THE BUCKEYE

Devil’s Flag
by Richard Scherrer

Tiroga. The Captain cackled evilly and charged with a scimitar at James. James desperately tried to load the pistol, but failed to do it fast enough. The Captain sliced at James ferociously. His head landed with a sickening thud. All of this happened in a matter of seconds, but to the Admiral it seemed like hours. Unlike the pirates, the Admiral was skilled at analyzing opponents. He was making careful observations of the Captain, ‘Hmm… he is dangerous at close combat, but if I could create a diversion, our sharpshooter Ferdinand Miller would have a clear shot at him.’ Signaling to Miller, the Admiral, with a pistol in each hand, shot wildly at Captain Tiroga while screaming war whoops at the top of his lungs. Miller steadied the musket in his grasp, and aimed at his target.”

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“Now you see I have proved my point,” the minister asserted, “For no pirate would be as brave as Admiral Willis, charging into battle to let others have a chance to survive. Anyhow, I shall continue the story, so as to finish with a satisfying ending.” “Captain Tiroga lashed out at the Admiral, slicing his shoulder and his thigh with his scimitar. At this point Miller fired. The musket’s deadly aim was true, and Captain Tiroga was bleeding badly. On the other side of the ship, the well-organized crew members easily beat the unprepared buccaneers. Tiroga saw all of this as he lay kneeling before the Admiral. ‘You know I could kill you,’ said the Admiral, ‘But instead I will send you away with something worse than death-shame. I will send you to a prison, where I will give you a pardon, and all of the criminals will talk about the coward of a man you are.’ And that is exactly what Admiral Scott Willis did.”

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“A wonderful story,” said the minister, “A wonderful story.” “Now the real question is: ‘Pirates- cheerful buccaneers or cowardly crooks?’” “That question is for you to answer.”

Derrick Tucker

Josh Rickerman
Daniel Maynard--Scholastics Gold Key Award

Bronson Bell
As light peered in through the front of my landing vessel I could feel in my bones that this battle would be a nightmare on earth. The cold steel landing ramp opened to reveal a battlefield of horror and desperation filled with bomb craters and flames. Many other marines from the U.S. Tenth Army lay spread out on the sandy beachhead. “You, soldier, hey!” a nearby sergeant blasted towards me, “Get out of that boat before you get hit by a mortar”. I grasped my semi-automatic M1 Garand and stepped off into an environment few men should ever see. The beach was littered with all sorts of items including ammunition boxes, guns, and even new experimental amphibious tanks floundering offshore on the coral reef. The Japanese troops garrisoned on Okinawa would fight until they could do so no longer. At first the Japanese held their fire and didn’t let loose a single round while our men landed. “Snap out of it, man!” yelled my commanding officer, Colonel Frederick Joseph. “Yes, sir!” I called back as I slammed into the sand where most other men waited for commands. “Are we in the right place George?” He looked at me impatiently, awaiting my response. “Um, one second sir.” I reached into my rucksack and pulled out a small map of the islands of Okinawa. “Okay I think we’re right where we’re supposed to be sir,” I answered. “Good! Now go tell Private John to call in for commands!” I looked over to see the frightened private cowering in the sand with his sub-machine gun in his wet lap. “Hey
John!” I screamed, “John!” He was scared to hear his name called out among thousands of marines. “Ya, oh, I mean yes sir!” John called back. “Get on the radio and call for orders!” He turned to his radio and listened carefully. I crawled back to my position and overheard our orders through the screams of young soldiers. “Alpha 2-7 Bravo move to sector Charlie 5-0-1-9, over.” Private John looked up. We all knew what Charlie 5-0-1-9 was. It was the Japanese defenses.

“Private John, what is the word from command!” Colonel Fred shouted, “They said to move up, sir!” All the marines in our area looked up with a terrified expression. Many of the young men began to cry. “Alright, second platoon, take the right flank and use those craters for cover! Put as many rounds down range as you can! My guys follow me and stay down!” The Colonel lunged over the sand wall and was quickly followed by several anxious marines. I was almost trampled by marines hurrying to get to cover. We all spread out in a line. We could easily see the Japanese bunkers and their occupants. Hundreds of marines ran back and forth from bomb craters and downed logs using them as cover to protect themselves. By the time the first shot rang out most marines were about halfway up the beach. A marine near me took the first round to the chest. Blood spat back in a red mist. He was dead before he heard the shot fired. That’s when all hell broke loose. The whole island flashed with white as their weapons sent lead into our boys. Nearly everyone in the first column of marines was gunned down in the first few seconds. I fell backwards as a mortar round hit a few feet in front of me. The soldier standing in front of me took the shrapnel and the explosion. I looked up to see his body falling on me. His entire upper body had not a bit of skin remaining and I saw his eyes roll back in his head. Terrified, I leaped to another hole. I was pushed and shoved as over 20 marines fought for cover behind the crater. I raised my rifle and squeezed off a few rounds before having to return to the crater once more. Bullets hit inches from my face and puffed up huge chunks of a blood-drenched mixture of sand, blood, water, and bullets. A marine next to me carried a 30. caliber Browning machine gun. “Somebody help me set this up!” He cried in agony as I could tell he had been shot. “Got it!” I answered eager to send some lead back at the Japanese. I unfolded the tripod and mounted the cold, wet, steel firearm on it’s mount. “You start shootin’ and I’ll feed you some ammo!” My fire burst at the closest bunker. I could see the bullets impacting the heavy logs guarding its occupants. I stopped firing and handed my rifle to the marine beside me feeding me ammo. “I’ll get it from here! You start shooting too!” I didn’t realize it until my ammunition belt ran out that he had been killed. I turned to look at his bloody figure. He had been shot through the head. I returned to the iron sights of his machine gun and returned bullets at the defending troops. Not long after that a low rumble emerged out of the cries of the dead and dying. I looked over my shoulder to see friendly tanks rolling past the craters. The surviving marines yelled a wild shout and followed behind the armored tracks. I cheered to myself and looked to recover my rifle. I saw it at the neck of the dead marine and picked it up to fire. I squeezed the trigger but nothing happened. I thought it fired as I saw smoke coming from the weapon. I looked closely at the side and saw a smoking hole through the barrel. A bullet had gone completely through it. Since I had no other weapon, I picked up the ammo for the Browning and the weapon itself (which weighed a considerable amount) and followed behind the tanks. Not long after the tanks arrived we captured the beachhead. As my tank rumbled past I stopped to look around. Ships were floating offshore firing artillery at the defenses. Dead bodies filled the landscape and aroused a horrid stench of burnt flesh. I made a simple sigh of relief as I saw the old Colonel barking orders at our men. Private John sat shivering from blood being splashed upon him. I joined them and we held the rear while our men pushed on.

Days later we were reassigned to watch over the Shuri Line. The Shuri Line was a heavily fortified position on southern Okinawa which housed the remaining Japanese defenders. Every night we slept in a filthy foxhole covered in blood and mud praying that the enemy wouldn’t slit our throats. Everyday we would lose one or two guys from the infamous “Bonzai” charges the suicidal enemy made. I awoke to a marine looking for the next day and continued on page 18
I reached over to my machine gun. I grunted as I lifted the 30 lb weapon into my machine gun nest hidden in the brush. I looked around seeing our platoon spread out in trees and in camouflaged bunkers. “Shhhhh,” The Colonel whispered, “Look straight ahead.” I turned my head to find a Japanese battalion marching forward unaware of our presence. “Fire on my command,” Colonel Fred said. I aimed down the barrel of my gun and targeted the leading trooper. “Fire!” he shouted while firing off several rounds. The deafening sound of bullets hitting flesh made my ears ache in pain. I tightened my fist and opened fire. The 30 Caliber rounds struck their targets in the chest. The troops fell left and right, falling to our overwhelming firepower. They soon realized where we were and returned fire. Their rounds struck many men next to me, including Colonel Frederick. He screeched in pain before falling to the dirt. I quickly became the Japanese’s priority target due to my machine gun. A bullet struck me in the helmet. I fell back thinking I was seeing the last glimpse of life. All grew quiet as the rest of our squad was quickly eliminated. I removed my helmet to find that the bullet had bounced off my helmet and into the marine who woke me up. He clinched a 12-guage that I soon took from his body. “This might get interesting,” I said to myself. I raised my head to see the Japanese only yards away from my position. I turned to see Private John grasping his Thompson Sub-machine gun tightly. He cried silently as he looked side to side at his fallen friends. “Private, look at me!” I whispered, “You’re not going to die, just stay with me buddy!” He nodded in tears. As I moved out of my bunker I saw a small number of U.S. soldiers still alive and waiting. I signaled to them to fire on my command. I could hear the leaves crackling as a Japanese foot soldier rounded the corner of my position. He turned and was shocked to see me blast a shotgun shell in his chest. His body flew back and hit another soldier. He turned to see me and he to got the same treatment as the last one. The other marines stood up and charged. These horrid moments were the last I saw in the field of combat. I turned to face the Japanese and popped a few rounds before they screeched their dreadful war cry, “Bonzai!”

They instantly fixed their bayonets and charged. They outnumbered us a hundred to one. I killed a few of them before I was tackled by a soldier with a knife in his hand. He was about to stab me when Private John came over and kicked him in the face. He screamed as he beat the trooper mercilessly with the butt of his rifle. He killed the Japanese soldier with a blow to the head. He turned to me and smiled a grim smile before I saw a shining rod emerge from his stomach. His eyes were bulging and his mouth wide open with shock and disbelief. He looked down at his chest, the bayonet sticking out of his ribcage. He looked at me, mouth still open, and closed his eyes while falling to the ground. “Noo!” I screamed as I turned to see three soldiers with bayonets on their rifles staring back at me. I threw my shotgun at one, knocking him over. I drew my knife and lunged for another. He quickly stabbed me in the thigh with his bayonet. I cried and slit his throat with a fatal swipe. The other two soldiers faced me. I threw my knife, killing one. I turned to encounter the final soldier. He was frightened by my ferocity. He tackled me and punched me in the face several times. I grasped the bayonet in my thigh, pulling it out in adrenaline dulled pain. I thrust it into his neck. He looked at me and fell. I lay there on the dirt, bleeding to death. That’s when another squad of marines arrived. One of them saw me and in a few days I was back in Hawaii. This time with no friends, no family, no one to trust. I sat in a hospital clenching a newspaper given to me by a nurse. I opened it to the front page and in bold letters is said these hopeful words, “Victory in the Pacific!”
As Reginald heard everything grow silent and still in the house, he knew it was time for the scavenging to begin. His nightly routine had begun three weeks ago when he found a passage to the garbage can through the passages in the walls of the house. He had decided not to tell the rest of his clan about his secret entrance, so there would be no one to interfere with his nightly feasts. The Thornton family, who inhabited the lovely, little house, included a father named Gif, a mother named Anna, a sister named Anna Russell, and three brothers named Cole, John, and Richard. John was Reginald’s favorite of the family because he often threw away large portions of his meals much to the distress of his mother. She would say, “John, starving children in Africa would kill for that great food that you are throwing away.”

The rest of the family always ate everything that was served them, leaving little for the tiny mouse. As Reginald thrust his head out of the crevice, he smelled the hideous stink of his own dung. The night before last he had eaten something sweet and brown that had a wrapper around it that said “Hershey’s” on it. Reginald had no idea what the substance was, but it had given him diarrhea. He tried to forget the hideous feeling of that stomach ache, as he contemplated what his next meal would be. As he poked his nose into the darkness, Reginald remembered what his mother had told him. When he was young, Reginald’s mother would always tell him to watch out for the three enemies: humans, cats, and mousetraps. She said humans were great monsters who trampled innocent mice with their humongous feet. Cats were worse. They would catch a mouse, play with and humiliate it, and then eat it very slowly. Worst of all were the traps that inflicted excruciating pain on a mouse. On the end of these traps would be a bit of cheese, or peanut butter, which were delightful treats for usually starving mice. When the mouse began to nibble on the substance, a metal bar would snap down like a rubber band being let go after it has been stretched. The crashing metal shaft would break the poor mouse’s neck sometimes cutting off the animal’s head. Blood would spew everywhere, and the mouse would lie dead.

continued on page 20
to the world because he gave in to the temptation of a tasty morsel. Images of these horrendous scenes ran through Reginald’s mind as he scampered towards the plastic garbage can.

When he arrived, Reginald beheld a masterpiece consisting of half-eaten biscuits, bits of potatoes, green beans, half a banana, yogurt, and some type of meat. Reginald ferociously plunged in and filled his stomach with the wonderful treats. He stuffed his mouth for ten minutes until his stomach was on the brink of exploding. Reginald crawled back down the metal lining to the trash can and sauntered towards his escape hole. Suddenly a wafting aroma met his nose. Reginald had not experienced this smell for many years. He remembered it vividly as the smell of peanut butter, which was the most coveted delight of all mice. He scampered towards the alluring substance. As he was about to dig in, his mother’s warning about the excruciating pain dished out by a mousetrap flooded over him like the wave of a tsunami. He was on the edge. Should he listen to his mother’s words or follow his stomach? Reginald began to turn around but once again a whiff of peanut butter met his nose. He was overcome with passionate desire. This temptation was something Reginald could not resist. Cautiously he nibbled a little bit of peanut butter. Nothing happened. Then a few more nibbles. Nothing happened. He realized that this was not a trap. With exuberant joy, he plunged into the heavenly treat. Reginald heard the metal bar snap. His life flashed before him. He thought of his mother’s warning, and the rest of his clan. Then his mind went blank. Little Reginald lay unmoving in a pool of his own blood. His head was connected to his body by only a thin piece of skin which looked as if it might break any second.

His surrendering to temptation had killed him. Everyone has been or will be tempted at one time or another. Even Jesus was tempted by the Devil. The way a person deals with temptation is what defines him. When a man stands strong against temptation, he becomes more equipped to handle it again. When someone continually gives in to temptation it becomes easier and easier to compromise his morals. In a literal sense, those who give in will perish. Those who stand strong and say “No” to evil will survive.
Rain

by Jess Darnell

As the sun goes down,
The tears come down
Of angels up above.
Through the cloudy eyes of those
Who’ve lost their longed-for love.

Slippery roads and ribbiting toads
Are brought to life today.
Through water and wind
With I and my friend
We search for the time to play.

The clouds are traveling overhead
On this, this dreary day.
For it has come this time, this night, to wash our
sins away.
The weather works it magic ways
Like a wizard in the olden days.

These drops are quick-
Nimble they are-
Cleaning the stress away.
Among these things are water and wind
These clouds are here to stay.
A boy no one could have mistook,
With a dark look and sprightly eyes
He was like the devil in disguise.

But one day when the waves were great,
His Fathers ship met its fate,
But the boy was saved, and swept away,
To a place very far away.

The place was called Neverland,
Where you never grow old,
And where he made friends,
Fantastical and Unknown,
But that all changed when the boy named Peter came.

Peter was everything James was not,
Bright blue eyes and social skills,
A boy James would easily kill,
But James knew better,
He had been taught what was right,
But the first strife was inevitable between the two,
For Peter had something James had, too.

Peter was fierce and brave and tall,
But James had a dark side, seen by all.
Peter wanted James crave of power,
And James wanted the fairy, Peter’s flower of power.
For the fairy, named Tinker Bell, changed everything,
Her very thought made him cower,
She taught the Lost Boys how to befriend one another
And brought them close to each other.

But one night, when darkness fell,
James unleashed violence and hell
He brought the natives to aid him in the inevitable brawl,
And this was a battle, swords and all,
And James stole Tink,
Oh revenge is sweet,
And made himself fly.  

continued on page 23
James, the Boy Captain Hook

by Nicholas Heim

He soared like a bird, free,
With himself in the sky.
And he looked back at the Island, now a dot in his eye.

James was gone,
His time on the island
Had come to an end.
Something that Peter
Could not comprehend.
Why would you leave a place Where you never grow old?
The answer,
Peter didn’t know!

And that is the tale of the boy James, a peeve.
But this is just the beginning,
Do not be deceived….

Trice McCullar

Daniel Maynard
Judgement Day

by Ryan Carpenter

Is that bum on the bench truly bad
or is he really only truly sad
Is that priest wholly good
An angel only because he should
Is that doctor true to his word
Does he listen to his patients, are they heard
Is that governor worthy of respect
Or is that too much to expect
Is that bus driver who passes by to decide
Who is good and who is wise
like a judge who presides
over the opening and closing of the cold, steel gates
with their barking mouths of hate
Does good or evil tip the scale
Or is this judgement made at will

Stephen Ray--Scholastics Gold Key Award
It’s 1920 Again

by Jess Darnell

It’s Roaring.
It’s Wild.
It’s Modern.

From vinyl records to motor cars,
Everything’s in place.
From bobby cuts to big cigars,
Just Put on a Happy Face.

It’s Scandalous
It’s Glamorous
It’s Everything in Between.

From Flappers
To Jazz
To Skirts ‘bove the knee.
From Dappers
To Spatz
To great company.

There’s something I can’t contain.
I’ll shout it aboard the train.
I’ll yell it abroad.
I’ll tell all my kin.
I’ll shout from Utah to Lake Michigan.
It’s the 1920s again!

A Tree’s Funeral

by Conner Huff

Up the wooden beast
Around the waist tie the bond
To the ground it must go
Upon the beast the metal teeth will feast

Down, Down! It goes
Its arms driven like stakes into the ground
Release the hounds
On the bones their jaws will close

The beast has fallen
The hounds will feast
The bones piled high
His reign of terror downfallen.
The Buckeye

Kendal Frantz

There he lay
His body spread out across the hay
Blood pouring out his chest
Why won’t he die with us like the rest

No, he fought
His leadership should be sought
He stood his ground
He made not a sound,
Of the pain he felt all around

I was next to him
Holding his hand
Looking into his eyes
What could I do to cause revenge to them

My friends all still fighting
Unaware of my dreadful sighting
Of my Sergeant bleeding
Not asking for assistance or pleading

I tried hard to not fall apart
I tried to do all I could
I tried to give him hope
And piece together my broken heart

Now that it’s over and I look back
I used to cry
But now I hold my head up high
To be the last one to hold in my arms
The Heart of a Hero

The Heart of a Hero

by Devon Rundberg

Tracey Mathis

Kendal Frantz
Idyll of a Falcon

by Richard Scherrer

Nothing is more captivating
Than a falcon in stately flight
Diving and then reinstating
Itself to its former dizzying height

He, streaked with brown and whitish feathers
Glides o’er u with kingly ease
Flies o’er fields in any weather
Floating on the western breeze

Some men talk of jets
And how they are dignified
But to see real cadets
The falcons have flown

Matthew Robbins

Ryan Carpenter

Wesley Tseng
Bow to the Spears
(Based on the tens of thousands killed by Vlad the Impaler)

by Drew Gordon

As the shining sun set that day,
The warm light’s glow beginning to sway,
The cell gates opened with a flourish.
The guards spent no time informing us we were about to perish.

Through the dusk we walked briskly
Picturing our deaths grimly and sadistically.
Finding things to cherish now
Before making the inevitable bow.
Suddenly, in our view,
Many stakes out of the ground grew.

Screams were heard, blood was splattered.
Facing the pain, that was the only thing that mattered.
There was the man of truth, the man of greed,
The man of violence whom no one was to succeed.
His grotesque teeth grinned, his rubies glittered,
And after seeing him, my pain was embittered.

With an evil gleam in his eye, he nodded to me.
I was prepared, I was ready, it was my time you see.
The guards grabbed my hands and hoisted me up,
And Vlad was waiting eagerly, raising his blood cup.
I fussed and I struggled; I writhed in pain.

Soon I realized it was all in vain.
And as I was thrust on top of the pole,
Thus ended my body…my life…my soul.
Once a beautiful ship glistened in the light
A shining star she was at night
No other ships could stand a fight
But she didn’t know her unfortunate plight

The Edmund Fitzgerald was her name
And Detroit was her aim
Rolling down Superior she came
It would provide a serious maim

Packed with iron ore up to the brim
Her fate became poorly grim
Cause when that November gale struck in the dim
The sailors couldn’t even call out a hymn

That winter tempest, it struck with might
And ignited a fright
For when those seamen saw its height
They knew they couldn’t put up a fight

Their distress call was heard to late
So all the sailors could do was wait
As the mighty storm swallowed them up like bait
It carried her down with her heavy freight

Let those who died not be in vain
And let their remembrance never wane
For 29 men died in pain
Their bravery at no time will be forgotten down the drains
Untitled

by Nick Dreher

Someone once asked me,
What is courage?
Is it something we can be
Or is it merely wordage?

Is it something you buy
Or can it be taught?
Do we get it after we die
Or can it be caught?

Courage is when you know you’re licked
You know before you begin
When the chances are strict
But you begin with a grim grin

You don’t do it for glory
Not to be put on kids walls
Nor to be the star of a story
But when the moment calls

It is when there’s no hope
The odds are slim
The only thing to do is grope
But you find a way win

But now I know
Why people try
For with it you have no foe
And have no fear to die!
Sam Davis Essay Contest Winner
by Benjamin Graves

Sam Davis was a legend throughout the Confederacy, and many considered him a hero. Three noble attributes of Sam Davis’ character that highlight his heroism are loyalty, devotion and courage. Through the loyalty, devotion and courage he demonstrated during his military action, including his arrest, trial and execution, Davis placed a memorable mark on history.

Sam Davis was born and raised on an average farm in Smyrna, Tennessee where he learned horsemanship and skills that later aided him in his service. He enlisted in the army at age 19 and attended the Western Military Institute, the forerunner of Montgomery Bell Academy. Davis was an extremely devoted private assigned to the First Tennessee Infantry and later an elite scout under Captain Coleman. Coleman’s Scouts were entrusted with very dangerous duty and gathered information about the Union forces moving from Middle Tennessee toward Chattanooga. Their job was to keep the lines of communication open. Though hearing that many scouts may never return from this duty, the courageous and loyal Davis carried on with the orders. It was on November 19, 1863, while carrying the important information to Confederate General Braxton Bragg that Davis was caught and arrested by soldiers of the Seventh Cavalry and led to Pulaski, Tennessee. Davis told them that he was a Confederate soldier and showed them his pass. He was led to the commanding officer who took his gun. Davis was searched and papers were found in the sole of his boot and under his saddle.

Sam was court-marshaled and condemned to death by hanging. Union General Grenville Dodge offered Davis his freedom if he would reveal the source of his information. Davis replied, “If I had a thousand lives, I would give them all before I betray a friend or the confidence of my informer.” This reaction from Davis exemplified the loyalty he felt toward his fellow comrades. On November 27, 1863, Sam Davis was hanged at the age of 21. Davis never showed remorse or fear during his execution. Dying at this young age was a tragedy yet demonstrated the bravery and courage he is remembered for.

The heroism of Sam Davis places a memorable mark on our history, especially right here at Montgomery Bell Academy where he attended the Western Military Institute from 1860-1861, a forerunner of MBA. Sam Davis and Montgomery Bell Academy, both representing the highest standards of loyalty and devotion, are similar in many respects. A young man at Montgomery Bell Academy, thorough loyalty, devotion, bravery, and courage, fights the battlefield of academics and athletics daily just as the example Sam Davis set forth. As “gentlemen, scholars, and athletes”, the young men of Montgomery Bell Academy can only hope to one day leave a mark on history in the same positive way Sam Davis did.

Bronson Ingram
Sam Davis has to this day been remembered as a gentleman. A true gentleman has been said to be someone who values others over themselves. Sam Davis had the courage, honor, and integrity to die for what he believed was right. He vowed not to betray his friend or his country even if it cost him his life. Sam has remained a model for all gentlemen today. He was courageous, selfless, honorable, and looked to others’ needs before his own.

Sam Davis attended the Western Military Institute (the forerunner to Montgomery Bell Academy) when at the age of 19 he enrolled in the Confederate Army. Davis was hand-picked to become one of an elite group of Confederate scouts. In November 1863, Sam was entrusted with secret documents to be delivered to Confederate General Braxton Bragg, but on Thursday November 19, Sam Davis was captured by Union Jayhawkers. He was searched, and the secret documents were found. Davis was investigated by Union General Grenville Dodge, and asked to explain where he got the information. Davis refused to give this information, so the General told Sam he would be tried in a military court and determined if he would keep his life. Sam said, “I know that I have to die, but I will not tell you where I got the information, and there is no power on earth that can make me tell. You are doing your duty as a soldier, and I am doing mine. If I have to die, I do so feeling that I am doing my duty to God and my country.” Davis was repeatedly asked to reveal his sources of information, and if he did so, he would be released free of all charges. He never provided the information, so Sam was sentenced to death by hanging on November 27. Upon that day, he was told again that if he revealed from whom he received the intelligence, he would be set free. Sam said, “I would rather die a thousand deaths than betray a friend or my country.” That morning, Sam Davis was hanged. But when Sam died, he did not die as a young Confederate boy, he died as a man with incredible courage, integrity, and honor, who would, and still should be a role model for all people.

Because he gave his life for someone else, Sam Davis is remembered as a true gentleman today. His integrity, honor, and strength of character distinguish him as a man that looks not to himself, but to others. Sam’s actions mirror the first word in MBA’s motto: Gentleman. He gave the ultimate sacrifice—his life. Davis valued another’s life over his, therefore bringing honor to his and to his country.

Chris Estes
The Buckeye is a magazine of writing and art from seventh and eighth grade classes at Montgomery Bell Academy. The title was inspired by the buckeye tree that stood in the grove on the north end of campus. It was once a familiar gathering place for both faculty and students.

Trees of MBA Collaborative Painting
Robertson Fowler, Steve Wood, Kang Huh, Jack Sonday, Braxton Blackwell, Bill Leftwich, Jackson McCaskill, and Devon O'Donnell