THE BUCKEYE

May 2012

Cover Art:
Russell McGinn

Scholastics Gold Key Award
And Junior School Art Purchase Award

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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.

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He saw them from his window. They were on their knees before what was once a living person but was no longer recognizable as anything other than a pile of guts and bones. The sound of the ripping flesh was enough to make any man puke out his own guts. There were a few loud cracks as they occasionally snapped the bones to suck out the sweet marrow.

The three creatures eating away at the body were horrific sights themselves. They, like their meal, were once happy living people, but had been transformed by the disease into something completely different. One, chewing on a foot which had detached from its owner, looked like a man. He was wearing a tattered T-shirt and ripped up shorts; however, their original colors had been lost and were now a dark blood red. The next had on a hospital robe and was happily stuffing itself with flesh and intestines. It seemed to be a woman, but her hair had become hard and crusty from dried blood. The last of the three was completely naked except for some dinosaur boxer briefs. The left side of his face had been ripped off, and his stomach had literally exploded from eating too much, leaving his guts swaying across his waist. He was sharing his meal with the woman in the hospital robe, eating away at their victim’s belly.

It was morning as the sun was peeking over the horizon. The man in the window sat and watched the former humans eating the flesh. He began to think back to how this all started. It began as a few weird stories on the news. Then four days later, whole cities in Europe were in panic over a strange epidemic. The next day all international airports had been closed. People talked about some disease taking over the mind and turning its victim into a crazy cannibal. The word ZOMBIE was even used a few times. There was no cure. People became hysterical, and stores were ransacked for supplies. The man remembered his neighbors leaving in cars overflowing with as much as possible. “We’re going to the country,” they all said, “until things calm down.” Everyone was trying to get away, but they didn’t know there was nowhere to go. It was amazing how fast this disease had destroyed the world. The day the airports were closed, the man’s wife left a note saying she went to get some supplies while he was at work. The man waited all night by his window till he could no longer keep his eyes open. It had been a week since she left the note, and the man still waited by the window.

He thought of the body being eaten in the street. That previous night as he was looking out his window, the man heard a scream. He searched for its source, but it was pitch black outside with no electricity to power any lights. When the noise came closer to the house, he could make out the shape of a woman and several other figures behind her. She was limping away from a moaning mob that was desperately trying to grab her like loving fans after a movie star. She took a moment to look back and tripped off the sidewalk. She hit the pavement with a thud and screamed in anguish. Her left ankle seemed to be misshapen in a strange contortion, and something was poking out the side. She tried to get back up as the figures behind her got closer, but she let out another cry and fell to the ground again. She tried to crawl away from the crowd, dragging her feet behind and crying out in pain every inch. Tears were in her eyes, and within seconds they were upon her, ripping at her flesh. The man turned away, unable to watch. The unfortunate woman wept, moaned, and screamed as they tore her apart. After about thirty minutes there was silence,
and the man finally looked back. Four figures crowded around the body leaving no room for the others, who must have found some other meal. The man knew he could no longer go to sleep and was somehow stuck in a trance watching the atrocity continue.

As morning came, one of the figures left the body when it heard a strange noise. The man in the window still couldn’t take his eyes away from body. In the distance he saw a few diseased figures wandering on the street towards his house. The first was wearing khaki pants stained with blood and a white button-down shirt that had been ripped apart. His stomach and arms were bloodied and torn. The one behind him was a woman. Her arms were also covered in dried blood and large cuts. They both must have put up a fight but were overwhelmed in the end. The woman’s face was very pale, but she showed signs of youth and beauty. Then the man gasped and doubled over, throwing up all over the floor. That zombie was his wife. He sat down against the wall crying and banging his head with his fists. “No, no, no!” he mumbled through his tears. He’d always had hope that she had made it out alive when she left, but his hopes had been shattered. He felt like someone had hit him in the stomach with a baseball bat and was pulling his heart out of his throat. He continued to despair for a while and then stormed out of his house with his handgun. Tears streaming down his face, the man pointed his weapon towards the feasting zombies in the street and pulled the trigger. He hit the hospital woman in the back. The force of the bullet knocked her to the ground, but she got right back up and faced the man. In sync the other two turned towards him. Their eyes were yellow from the disease and their skin pale white in the places not covered in dirt or blood. They had unhealed cuts and gashes all over their bodies. The man shot the woman in the chest again right through her heart, but all it did was slow her down. He began to shoot wildly in panic at the approaching undead. A lucky shot hit the woman in the head, and she fell down motionless. The other two were still hungrily coming towards him. The man aimed at the one in boxers and opened fire. He shot it in the chest a few times until hitting it in its right eye, knocking it to the ground. “The head!” he said unknowingly out loud.

He raised his weapon again towards last of the three by the body and noticed movement all around him. He took a quick glance in every direction to see zombies approaching from everywhere. The noise from his gun had attracted them in anticipation of a fresh meal. He shot the zombie in the tattered shirt and shorts in the head then felt something grasping his arm. He lashed out pushing away the man in khakis he had seen on the street, and shot him twice in the head. He then turned and aimed at the nearest approaching undead. He put the sights of his gun right between its eyes and pulled the trigger. The gun made a pitiful click. He tried again, but the same noise ensued. The man pulled out the gun’s magazine and found he was out of bullets. He hopelessly dropped it and turned to the enemy before him. He desperately kicked it away but found two more grabbing at his back. The man jumped forward away from the hungry creatures. He looked around and saw he was completely surrounded. There were twenty or thirty zombies all around him.

He saw a small opening and ran for it. One if them managed to jump in his way knocking the man over and falling on top of him. The man tried to push it off, but another came upon him. Soon all of them were crowding around him, trying to get a taste of his flesh. They clawed at his face, and he felt them ripping at his stomach for his intestines. One was biting off one of his big toes. He felt another setting its teeth into his neck and pulling away. The man screamed in excruciating pain. He took a last glance at his killers and saw a familiar face. “Rose....” he said in a whisper smothered by groaning figures. The man closed his eyes and died.
Russell McGinn
Scholastics Silver Key
Art Award

Jack Carey
Me, Myself, and I

by Matt Remke

I do not understand

Why others would force upon me

Their own unique ideas

Of what they wish me to be

I really don’t get them

I find myself fine the way I am

Everything I choose they condemn

If I am happy with what I do

What is the purpose of

Remolding my ideas to make them new

Of course others are often wrong

And I know myself better than they

For I am, in my own way, strong

I can make my own decisions

I need no outside influence

I will make my own future visions

Just a little nudge on the shoulder

Because I like the way I see myself

And beauty is in the eye of the beholder
The boys all go to greet their grandfathers
Waiting to express their deep love for their elders
They hug with the fervor shown only between true friends
And shaking hands to show their respect for one another
They both share stories of youthful adventures
Explaining how they are so much alike

But one boy sits somberly
Not waiting for a family elder
Not greeting with emphatic gestures
Or a loving embrace
But remembering the sad days spent at the hospice
Dreading the inevitable phenomenon

But as the others reminisce on the good times spent
Together and the good times to come
The boy sits basking in the memories that he spent with
his grandfather
Of the Friday nights spent sleeping over
Or the long boat rides on the lake

Some see only the negative in the past
While the true man sees the commendable

Grandfather
by Brinton Hoover

Benton Dodd
Baseball: a game played with a ball and a bat
Over 160 years of swings, catches, strikes, and balls
The unbelievable plays, the enjoyment, the anticipation
A nine-inning battle between two clubs.

The game that has been a part of my life for ten years
Thousands of swings, catches, and baseballs
The memories: double plays, first homerun, the championships
The pain: the bruises, the scratches, the broken bones, the losses
The adrenaline and excitement
The camaraderie
The thrill or anger of “Strike three!”
The trip to Cooperstown, the controversial calls, and the autographed baseballs
The anxiety of the last inning, the rally caps
The reasons why we love this game.
The rain can be a quiet drizzle on that lazy fall afternoon
Or the pounding spring shower that fills plants with life
The rain is that rapping, tapping on your door
The maker of puddles for you to splash
and it takes the blame for why you are late to work
The rain is like politics; it is controversial
Some people enjoy it; some people don’t
The rain is that salvation for a farm in a drought
Or it is yet another dreary day in your town
The rain calms and fills life in some
Others get agitated and frustrated
To me the rain is in nature’s cycle
And since we can’t control it, enjoy the rain

Will Norton
A long black wall
Starting small, growing steep
Filled with countless names
Carved in rows of stone
A monument to those lost
Those who gave their lives as cost
Deeper and deeper the walk
Deeper and deeper and over my head
Filled with sounds of dying and despair
Filled with horror, filled with dread
Will this conflict ever end
Will this fighting stop
Will peace be found
It seems like never
But there is light at the end of the tunnel
Up and up and out of the trench
Out of the place of blood and tears
Thomas and his dad woke up at 11:00 p.m. to pack their daypacks. Thomas decided to pack a knife, three lights, batteries, a lighter, some matches, three Gatorades, Cliff bars, and finally his Camelbak. Thomas was prepared for anything; but really he was only prepared for a strenuous hike, not a life-changing experience.

Thomas had been backpacking and hiking since he was around nine months old when his dad took him caving in a baby backpack. Thomas was too young to remember it, but from what his dad told him, he hit Thomas’s head on the cave walls a couple of times and also almost ran out the battery power on the only light they had. Thomas and his dad have had numerous experiences like this one. As if it were his birthright, Thomas loved the outdoors. Thomas had also taken advantage of everything nature has to offer. He had surfed in the ocean, kayaked bone crushing rapids, climbed 100-foot high cliffs, spelunked tight caverns, and snowboarded snowy slopes. The newest one was to be conquering a 14,505-foot peak.

Now back to the story. Thomas and his dad had trained for this day. They had been camping in the surrounding area and doing day hikes up other high elevation peaks. His dad told him that the hike had over 12,000 feet of vertical change in 21 miles. This was going to be the longest, most strenuous hike he had ever accomplished. Thomas had seen the great, snow-covered peak earlier in that year during the winter which happened to have a record for snowfall. Thomas had a good feeling they would be trudging through glaciers.

They put their gloves, ice axes, crampons, and packs in the back of their truck. After a near silent forty-five minute ride, Thomas and his dad were at an elevation of 8,600 feet. They were at the trailhead. They were probably in the third group to get on the trailhead. A sudden thought flashed through Thomas’s head: bears! Black bears are a big problem around the Sierra Nevada area, especially during the time he and his dad were there in July. Ironically enough, they heard later from some other hikers that a bear mauled a car earlier that night. Although he thought of this, he just kept going. After three miles, his legs were burning. They still were not above the tree line and were still in the dead of night. Suddenly, Thomas heard a branch crack. He whipped around and saw a pair of green eyes. He was frozen in fear. Then, his dad started laughing and said it was just a mountain goat. They saw many pairs of eyes the rest of the way in the dark.

Thomas and his dad passed the first of the two base camps on the trail. They did not stay in them because they were day hiking. Then came the rocks. This next section of trail required hiking up massive limestone inclines with stacked rocks to indicate the direction of the trail. They finally were above the tree line. At the end of this section, Thomas and his dad encountered their first glacier. The setup of this obstacle was a cliff on both sides of the trail and a glacier cutting straight through the middle. The glacier would not have been there if the area had not received as much snow as it had the previous winter. Thomas and his dad were determined to get through it, so they trudged through the knee-deep snow in the middle of July! Crazy! After this they kept on continued on page 12
hiking. Once they reached the second camp at the altitude of 12,000 feet, the alpine glow began to cast its gentle comforting light on them. At this camp they passed the groups that were in front of them resting. Then came the hardest part, 99 switchbacks. Thomas could faintly make out the giant talus slope with a thin line running across it, the trail. He started up the first switchback and slipped and fell. There were thin patches of ice covering most of the switchbacks. On the way up sunlight reached them and warmed them. On the final switchback, they had to cross a cirque. A challenge awaited in the form of a glacier cutting the side of the trail they were on from the high elevation plateau. With his trekking poles dug deep into the snow, he slowly sidestepped for 20 yards. His lungs were burning, his legs were cramping, and his mouth was dry when they reached trail crest.

The trail crest marked the beginning of the 13,000-foot plateau cut into pieces by needle-like 14,000-foot spines. Once again the trail became rocky and steep. When they reached the top of the plateau, they found the trail to be 1,000 feet down on the left side with a sheer 2,000-foot cliff on the right side. Once he stooped over the 2,000-foot drop, and a gust of wind from the valley almost blew him over. Thomas could start making out the summit house from two miles away and knew he was almost there. Every step he took tested him. Thomas and his dad were running dangerously low on water and had no place to fill their bottles. The altitude made it for them hard to breathe and caused fatigue like Thomas had never before experienced.

When they reached the last needle, they met the final glacier in their way. Although this was not a big glacier, it was the hardest to travel across because of the altitude. After this challenge, they met a steep slope that led up to the summit plateau, a gradual slope that led to the summit. Thomas had been thinking of giving up by this time. He had reached a point of mental and physical exhaustion and did not believe he could take another step. His dad told him to look up, and he saw the small smokestack of the summit house.

Suddenly, Thomas started sprinting for the summit. His heart was beating faster, and adrenaline ran through his blood. Tears sprang to his eyes. He had made it. He was overcome with pride for the feat he had accomplished. Until that moment, he had not believed that he could do it. Thomas experienced profound feelings of joy, responsibility, and self-confidence. He looked around at the amazing sights now in his view. In one direction he could see the desert and the lowest point in the U.S. If he looked down, he could see Iceberg Lake, which as the name implies contained icebergs. He could also see the tiny glint of the cars in the parking lot where they started hiking many hours before in the dark of night. Finally, if he looked behind his vantage point, he could see many other snow-covered peaks, none higher than the one he was standing on presently. When his dad caught up, they sat down for a snack and perused the many summit markers. After the snack he signed his name in the summit register and put under the comments, “I made it!” Thomas and his dad could only savor their success for a little over half an hour because of the long descent that lay ahead. So after they signed the summit register, they started back down the trail.

The day was a phenomenal one for Thomas. He did not change externally that day, save a twisted ankle, blisters, and a couple of bruises. Internally, he experienced the profound change from boy to young man. He had gained the knowledge that his mind and body were capable of overcoming adversity and accomplishing extraordinary feats. Thomas had learned the great reward that comes with great effort.
The year is 2073; humans have destroyed not only the earth but also themselves. The air is so heavily polluted that I have never seen its real color. It is always the same color: black. I heard it once was blue, but there are few people who are living now to verify that assertion. Countries are constantly waging war with one another; no one is safe. A country's power depends upon its resources, and right now, Uzbekistan is in charge because of its magnitude of gold. We as Americans want that to change. My name is Eric Boe and this is the story of how Plutus 1 saved the world.

“Take-off in t-minus 10, 9, 8, 7, 6 t-minus 5, 4, 3, 2, 1 we have lift-off.” The experience of lift-off was incredible. The G-forces pushed my face down like it was attached to the ground, but I was being propelled upwards. The earth began to shrink beneath me, the people now unnoticeable, and buildings looked like ants. I flashed back to when all of this happened.

“Your mission is simple: Retrieve the pulladium in order to save our earth,” Dr. Wilder had said.

Pulladium was a mixture of valladium and plutonium that can be used as an energy source. One deciliter of pulladium could power the entire earth for 100,000,000 years. There was one catch; the only known place where pulladium existed was on Mars. A group of six people, including me, were chosen to go and retrieve the pulladium. This group was comprised of Nicole Stott, Andrew Feuster, Michael Fossum, Jeanette Eps, Ronald Garrard, and me.

Each one of us was chosen specifically. I was the captain, Ronald was my first-in-command, Jeanette was the navigator, Andrew was the Mars expert, Nicole was the recorder of the mission and doctor, and Michael was specifically chosen to handle the pulladium.

We were told the mission was top-secret, and not even our families were to know the true reason we would be gone. Luckily for me, my family members lived all over the country so they would not know I was gone. The night before lift-off, I got very nervous knowing that the fate of the world was resting on my shoulders. Many scenarios went through my head and made me sick to my stomach. If we failed, all of mankind could perish.

I must have hit my head on lift-off because the next thing I knew there was a dull pain in my forehead, and we were drifting through space. I caught my first glimpses of the barren wasteland Earth had become. I flew the ship out of Earth's gravitational pull, put it into auto-pilot, and went to the back of the ship. The plan was for everyone to go into hyper-sleep or sleeping in a machine that kept us asleep until we needed to land on Mars. We would not need food, water, or anything else; the machine put it into our bodies while we were sleeping. As soon as the hyper-sleep machine door closed, I instantly fell into the most restful sleep ever.

*                        *                     *                      *                     *                         *                        *

I woke up in what felt like seconds, but I knew it had been one and a half months. I longed for more of that sleep, but I knew the machine would not work again until it was time to return to Earth. I emerged from the unit and noticed that all of the other units were empty. Everyone was sitting in their chairs waiting for me. The only person that was actually doing what they were supposed to was Ronald.

“What are you waiting for, get to work!” I commanded. With that, everyone started working
Plutus 1
by Drew Powell

feverishly. I looked up from the control panel and saw the magnificent planet Mars. The dull red color reminded me of a rusted pipe. As we began our descent, Ronald prepared the landing gear, Michael gathered his gear to retrieve the pulladium, and Andrew began giving us instructions.

“Mars’ terrain can be very rocky and you can easily trip. You better watch where you step because you don’t want to turn an ankle or hurt any other part of your body.”

Every one of us put our space suits on over our normal clothes and stepped onto Mars. The coordinates of the ship were eighty degrees West and forty-seven degrees South. The coordinates of the pulladium were seventy-nine degrees West and forty-eight degrees South, so we walked for a few minutes until we reached the spot where the pulladium was supposed to be and stopped. Michael began unpacking his gear and digging for the pulladium. He put a mini-driller into the ground that dug a hole to the core of Mars. The pulladium was going to be very hot so Michael put on a pair of very thick gloves and waited. A silvery liquid began spitting up through the hole in the ground, and Michael quickly put a vial under the stream of pulladium exiting the ground. Very suddenly, the liquid stopped, and we began the walk back to the ship. Everything happened so quickly that I barely know how it happened, but Michael tripped and spilled the pulladium. A large boom happened, and the last thing I heard before I blacked out was the voice of Dr. Wilder in my head saying, “Be careful with the pulladium, it’s very explosive.”

*                        *                     *                      *                     *                         *                        *

When I came to, there were five unmoving bodies near where I lay. I knew that I had to check their pulses and take care of them until they woke up as well. I tried to sit up, but there was a terrible pain in my ribs that forced me to stay unmoving on the ground. I lay there for at least thirty minutes before Michael came to and was able to help me to the ship. As I was being helped back to the ship, I noticed there was a tiny crack in the ground and there was the same silver liquid from earlier bubbling up through. Michael instantly set me down and grabbed his vial to catch the liquid. This time there were no mistakes, and the pulladium was safely stored in the ship. When everyone came to, I maneuvered the ship out of Mars’ gravitational pull and then went into hyper-sleep.

Everyone woke up at the exact same time this time, and we landed back on the desolate Earth. Pulladium was introduced to the world, and it worked magnificently. The mission was a success. Every member of the crew received medals for their work on Plutus 1. Pulladium was used not only as an energy source but also was used to help clean up the sky, and it returned to the color it rightfully was-blue. I am now retired, and I spend most of my time telling stories to my grandkids or just staring at the sky.
Bronson Bell
Scholastics Gold Key
Art Award

Alvin Zhang
“Send it!” my spotter whispered to me. A gentle squeeze and 150 grains of powder ignite, sending a 7.62 millimeter lead arrow piercing air and the sound-barrier alike, creating a trail of empty space behind it as it spun through the air. A few split-seconds later, a nice and resounding “ding” made my exhausted heart, full of the pain from the previous weeks of labor, lift almost out of my throat and constrict my breath as I backed off of the scope. I stood up and immediately was congratulated by both the instructors and the remnants of my class that had survived the vigorous training.

“Congratulations, to everyone, I am proud to say that you are all now United States Army Snipers!” the head “honcho” shouted.

Following the outstanding news, was a yell that I will always remember. All of my friends, who have dragged their feet through this mess, lifted their arms, tired from thousands of push-ups, towards the sky and unto each other.

“You made it William!” they blasted through the ruckus. By the end of the day, I probably heard that phrase a million times.

The “honcho” shouted again, “OK. OK. Everyone listen up. I want all y’all into your barracks immediately. We’ll get all you new Snipers assigned your new unit.”

“Come here Georgie,” I told him, “Come on over here, I want to listen to you tell my sweet Caroline that you can now put a bullet through a man’s head.”

“Shut it, Will, your Caroline happens to be my girlfriend, and you will never, ever call her ‘my sweet Caroline.’”

“Oh come on! She’s pretty fine by me!”

“One more word and I’m gonna put that bullet through your head!”

“OK. OK.”

Eighteen new snipers lumbered to their bunks where, if I am correct, they slept for 15 hours! No one knew what would come when we were assigned their unit. But right then, everything was alright.

“Target! Fifth-story window! Left!” George mumbled to me in a concerned voice. “650 meters, wind pattern- 15 mph east to west. Two mills up, three left. Spotter ready!” The crosshairs lined up right where they should be. “Shooter ready!” I tried not to think about the young Afghan I was about to kill. You try to keep your head straight and your mind full.

“Send it,” George whispered.

A moment of hesitation is unacceptable. So all I did was open my other eye and just pull that trigger like I had never shot before. “Solid hit, he ain’t getting up!” I pulled the bolt back and slammed it forward. “Alright, let’s pack it and hack it!” I tried not to move suddenly. If you do, you’re gonna end up with split open head. I guess you wouldn’t have to worry about your thoughts anymore. We collected what few items we had out, put them back into the rucksack, and stealthily crept down the hallway and back to the squad on the first floor.

“Bagged ‘em!” George proudly said to the whole squad. “You know, sooner or later you guys might need to handle your own mess.”

The whole squad laughed. “Yeah right. Just wait until you got 50 of them Zip’s crawlin’ up

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and down on you. See what your little bolt-action can do then!”

“I’m sure it would work better than your little ‘spray and pray’ guns.”

Georgie jumped into the Humvee outside.

“Hey, Will! You know what this place needs?”

“What? Same as last time, attractive women and democracy?”

“No. Although that would still be acceptable. It needs grass!”

“We’re gonna start are grass business?”

“Well, look at this place! I lived in Florida all my life. I have felt sand since I was born. And I’ll tell you this, this stuff ain’t sand, it’s rocks.”

I chuckled a little. “Well. You work on your grass. I’m gonna go and sleep.”

We began to drive back to base. The long, and especially hot, trip made it almost impossible to rest. My M24 sat in the back. I looked at it as if it were a friend who had saved my life. I loved that gun, and in fact it had saved my life, on several occasions too. When we finally arrived, we got new orders as soon as our feet hit the hot “rocks.”

Two weeks later, we were up in some mountain in some remote godforsaken area where only us and the Taliban slept. Georgie and I had been sent on a stealth mission to take out some guy named Al-Habir. He was some Taliban leader who had been in hiding for months. We were dropped off two “klicks” south of his cave hideout. We had full ghillie suits adapted for the mountains. We couldn’t talk. We couldn’t sleep. We could only move a few meters in a hour. We dragged our bodies across terrain that was barely passable on foot, let alone crawling. I had to drag a huge “.50 cal” up that mountain too. George and I were almost not aware of the other. We could not look at our familiar friend’s face. Enemy patrols were everywhere. After four days of dragging and dragging and dragging all of our gear and our own tired bodies, we reached our “hide” 1000 meters out from the entrance to the cave.

“Hey,” he whispered as quiet as he could.

“What?” I replied.

“Let’s tag ‘em and bag ‘em.”

He smiled at me. I will never forget that smile. It was the last time he looked at me. We set up all of our equipment, quietly. The rifle was pointed straight at that cave. Georgie pulled out his huge spotting scope. We were ready.

“I got eyes on the bad guy. 1000 meters out, next to the three Taliban with the RPG. Got ‘em?”

“Yeah, that’s him alright.”

“Put him 4 mils high, 4 left. We’re gonna max out that scope on the “barrett”

“OK. I’m all lined up on him.”

“Send it.”

I hesitated.

“Send it!” he repeated.

My heart pounded and pounded until my chest was sore. That second or so of hesitation felt like a whole year. I fired. The shot went right towards him, but it veered off course when the wind picked up and landed right above him. He dove to the ground and was soon rushed into the cave. I felt horrible. My whole body shivered with fear, but I was motionless. I stayed on the scope,

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THE BUCKEYE

Crosshairs
by Devon Rundberg

watching my failure progress. I only caught a glimpse of the enemy’s scope. The glint reflected at me, blinding me temporarily. I heard a shot, and I turned to my side as George twisted and fell back. “George!” An eruption of gunfire prevented me from helping my best friend, who was now turning from side-to-side screaming. I had to move or I was next. It was the hardest decision of my life, stay with my friend and die or run and live. I had no choice.

I yelled at George, “I’ll be back Georgie, you stay right there!” I ran, leaving the gun behind. I stumbled and fell and jumped and clawed my way down the mountain. I drew my sidearm, a revolver that I brought with me from my farm in Connecticut. I turned for a second to return fire. I saw the glint again and then a flash. It was so fast. Bam. Zip. Blop. And it’s there. It felt like a train just rammed my thigh. I pivoted on the other leg and fell to the ground. I screamed, yelled, and cursed the heavens for this. I looked down at my leg. It was completely red, and blood was shooting out like a water gun. I stood up as a grenade exploded next to me, sending me into the air. I landed at least five yards away. Several fragments had cut up my chest. I was by now crying out to the world, wondering “why me?”

All I knew was to just pull. Pull myself until I reach those green hills in Connecticut. Pull until my hands can’t pull anymore. I pulled what was left of that proud sniper down that mountain, with gunfire everywhere. I pulled my red body towards an abandoned town at the bottom of the hill that I had just realized was there. Once the ground leveled out, I tried to stand. As I put pressure on my leg, I felt another sledgehammer blow. This one hit right below my shoulder. I looked at the wound, already red. I turned forward and fell to the ground, unconscious. I don’t know how long I blacked out, maybe a few hours. I woke up to find myself stripped of all my gear. I had barely any clothes on. “They must have thought I was dead!” I thought to myself. I once again rose to my feet. It was dark by now. I looked down at my leg and then at my shoulder, neither was bleeding anymore. I stumbled forward; the shacks around me were lifeless and empty.

I rounded a corner and there he was. George was lying there, naked, with a two Taliban soldiers searching through his gear beside him. I don’t know what took hold of me. I ignored the pain of my leg and sprinted towards them. I tackled the first one and relentlessly punched his face. The other Taliban swung around with his AK pointed right at me. I lunged towards him. His gun fired up into the air as he fell down. Again I hit his face as hard as I could. I caught a look at George’s knife on his belt beside him. I reached for it, whipped it out, and stabbed the man in the neck. I suddenly felt the butt of a rifle slam against my back. I turned to see the rifle hit my cheek. My mouth strained from the pain, but I got up and stabbed him multiple times. He descended to the ground and was motionless. My legs gave out from the pain, and I landed at George’s feet. He was clearly dead from the gunshot wound, and the Taliban took him down there to search his and my gear. Seeing his corpse, picked through and naked, was too much for me to bear. I couldn’t see him like this.

I picked up his body and walked for hours to our planned extraction point. There was a helicopter there waiting for me. The flight back was emotionally painful; I couldn’t realize that old Georgie was dead. But now I had to face the fact. Every night I remember my good friend George, the man who accompanied me through training and through the toughest situations anyone could ever face. And every night I picture my days as a sniper. And the crosshairs of the scope will always be burned into my eyes.
Doctors were running everywhere. I could hear people screaming with pain, and I looked at my bloody shoulder. Then I blacked out. A couple hours later I woke up, and I saw a doctor pulling a musket ball out of my shoulder. “Man you’re lucky to be alive, kid,” said the doctor. My head was spinning, and I tried to speak, but I threw up. Suddenly everyone was scrambling to their feet, and I looked up, and General George Washington was walking right toward me. I blacked out again.

Some doctor poured water on me, and I woke up instantly. I saw General Washington beside me with a scowl on his face. “You got a lot of explaining to do, son. I couldn’t help but notice your British pistol beside your bed. I think we better start with your name.”

I was wide-eyed, and I could not think what to do. Finally, I said, “It’s Jona Wild, sir.”

Washington said, “You better start at the beginning.”

I said, “Sir, it all started back home in the woods of Pennsylvania. My whole family was asleep, except for me. I was lying in my bed trying to fall asleep. My younger brother, Jack, was snoring beside me. Everything was peaceful on that nice spring evening. But in less than ten minutes that all changed.

I heard hooves pounding the ground outside and people yelling. I looked outside and I saw a squad of Redcoats with torches. The next thing I knew I heard windows breaking, and the door busted down. My mother and father were on the first floor, and they came out of their rooms crying for mercy. All they got were bullets to the head. The British were coming up the stairs, and I looked over and saw Jack wide awake. I pointed at him and then the open window in our room. He understood and quietly got out the window and hopped on the old apple tree branch that was outside the window. The Brits must have found my sisters’ room because I heard screams and then more gun shots. There was nothing I could do. I hopped out of my window and out on the tree. I saw Jack at the top. I climbed up to him. We watched the redcoats take our possessions and burn the house. Jack and I started crying.

We saw one of the Redcoats patrolling the house. I suddenly got a plan, and I whispered it to Jack. Jack climbed down and stopped right over the soldier. I climbed down on the other side of the tree, so the soldier would not see me right away, and I walked right in front of the British soldier and screamed, ‘Boo!’ The soldier jumped back and pointed his flint lock pistol right at me. The soldier said, ‘On your knees!’ Out of the corner of his mouth, he muttered, ‘Stupid kid.’ The soldier cocked his pistol and right before he pulled the trigger, Jack jumped down and landed right on the soldier’s back. Jack bit and hit the soldier, and in all of the commotion, the soldier dropped his pistol. I picked it up and turned to Jack and the soldier. Then I kicked the crummy Redcoat in the groin. Jack jumped off, and the solider screamed. I pointed the pistol at him and shot him in the heart.

“Jack, we gotta go.” I took the soldier’s ammo and his powder horn and bolted to the hunting shed at the back corner of my family’s property. Panting, I said, “I hope we got away before the rest of the British squad heard the shot.”

Jack finally spoke and said, “Yeah, I hope so too. We got to go to the forest and run away.” I agreed. Jack got his hunting gear and his rifle. I took the British pistol. It was dawn before Jack and I stopped. We settled in a huge oak tree. We chose that tree

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because it was right next to a creek, and we did not want to make a shelter. Plus, it would be easy
to clean up if the Redcoats were chasing us. We were resting in the tree, and my stomach growled.
I did not realize how hungry I was. I looked at Jack's face, and it was gaunt.

"Man we need something to eat," I said to Jack.

Jack said, "Yeah, we need to go hunting. I bet it would be okay to only shoot once since were
so far into the woods." Without another word he climbed down the tree.

I knew he was going to be okay because he and I knew the woods very well. Plus, even
though I don't like to admit it, he is a better shot by far especially with the rifle. In less than an
hour, Jack was dragging a buck to the tree. I hopped down from the tree with a hungry face.

I always carried some flint and steel in my hunting jacket, so building a fire was easy. I built
it out of dead sticks, so there would be little smoke. Once I had the cooked meat in my system, I felt
slightly better. We put the fire out and got back into the tree.

Hatred had been searing through me all night, but finally I had time to let it out. I was crying
and screaming in that tree for at least half an hour. Finally I stopped. After a while of thinking, I
said, "We have to get revenge."

Jack nodded, then said, "I think the closest road is about three hours from here. I bet there
is going to be a lot of Redcoat convoys coming through there."

"Well, what are we waiting for?" I said. I put some meat in my pocket and gathered my gun,
its ammo, and my powder horn. I took a good long drink from the creek before we started out.

We reached the road at the middle of the day and set up on both sides of the road. I was on
the left, and Jack was on the right. It wasn't long before a Redcoat convoy was coming down the
road. I was supposed to take the first shot, so I loaded my pistol and aimed at the officer on the
horse. I pulled the trigger and nailed him in the chest. All of the attention was pointed at me, and
Jack had enough time to pull off a quick shot before one of the Redcoats fired at me. Jack's shot
gave Jack enough time to jump out of his tree and run away.

Our plan was for both of us to pull off one shot and then run. The first part of our plan
worked, but the second half of the plan did not go exactly right. Once Jack shot, I had enough time
to get down because all of the Redcoats' attention was now at Jack. Now Jack was pinned down by
the Redcoats. I frantically loaded another bullet and shot at the crowd of Redcoats. That gave Jack
enough time to jump out of his tree and run away.

Our meeting place was that huge tree by the creek. I had a harder way to get back because
our meeting point was on the other side of the road. So that meant I had to cross the road farther
down to get to the tree. Jack was already there when I got back.

"Well, that was a close one," Jack said.

"Yeah," I plopped down on the ground and fell asleep.

We would go to that road every day and pick off the Redcoats one by one. We were getting
cocky and less aware. At the same time the British started to guard the road more heavily.
Sometimes Jack and I would shoot three or four times each and escape by the skin of our teeth.
Then one day the Redcoats did something they had never done. They got off the road and started
patrolling the woods. Of course Jack and I didn't know that.

So I woke up one day and I heard some voices. I looked over and saw some men in red. I
tapped Jack quietly and put my hand on his mouth, so he wouldn't talk. But the Redcoats saw us

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anyway. I pulled Jack to his feet and took my pistol and ran as fast as I could. Jack was wide awake now and was running too. Shots were being fired behind us.

“Split up!” I yelled. I went to the right, and Jack went to the left. But just as I was about to turn, I felt a bullet dig into my shoulder. I kept running anyway. Adrenaline was pumping through me. The Redcoats must have pursued Jack because I looked over my shoulder and no one was chasing me. I loaded my pistol and started to walk, but something didn’t feel right.

I saw group of men with rifles running at me, and I shot at them. Thankfully I missed them because I didn’t realize that they were Colonials. I shot at them because I thought they were Redcoats. Right when I stopped to reload again, I suddenly felt the pain of the musket ball in my shoulder. I blacked out.

“I guess I should have felt the bullet earlier, but I didn’t. I woke up in this hospital and here I am now.”

General Washington stood by my bed and said, “Well, Jona, I guess I owe you an apology. I thought you were a British spy, or something like that. I truly am sorry. What you and your brother did was very brave and patriotic. Stay here as long as you need.”

“Thank you, sir. I appreciate it,” I said.

From the entrance of the hospital, there was a lot of commotion and on a make-shift stretcher there was a boy with a bullet wound in his leg. Washington said, “Looks like our men found your brother.”

I heard a doctor say, “He is going to be okay. The bullet went straight through his leg.”

Washington sighed and said, “That’s the best news I have heard all day, to tell you the truth. This war is bloody and terrible.” He walked away with a grim look on his face. I never saw General George Washington again.
My Chair
by Will Peters

Always there to comfort me,

Around when I need it most

Soothing relaxation provided for free,

Yet it finds no reason to boast

It is like the clouds, soothing and sweet,

And doesn’t mind when I prop up my feet

It rarely moves or changes, making it hard to miss,

But in its presence, nothing but bliss

I’ve had exciting victories and disappointing losses with it,

But it doesn’t seem to mind a bit

It hugs and warms me like a mother grizzly bear,

I simply love my big, red chair.

Matthew Dobson

T. Whitton
When I was a child,
I built two golden towers.
I thought they would never fall,
Could never fall.

I felt safe in them,
High above the men below.
And I thought that I was bigger
And they were small.

But one day, the wind blew hard
Too fast and too hard
And the towers that would never fall
Could never fall,
They stood no more.

The towers fell, swift and slow
And as they hit the ground
I realized that nothing never falls
And something seldom stays.

But the same wind that blew
My towers to the ground
Blew down my door
That led to my mind.
It stood no more.

Jesse Turner
Scholastics Silver Key Art Award
The Inevitable Death

by Jack Carey

Down by the juncture of hope and despair,
Thin, pale, and haggard survivors struggle there.
As hordes of the dead overrun their defenses,
The soldiers try so hard to hang to their senses...

I get up and grab a gun; I’m on the run,
Six shots left, one miss and I’m done.
The moans of the living dead grow louder,
The world’s a mess of blood and black powder.

The dead surround us; I can hear them closing in,
Their mouths pulled back in a sick and bloody grin.
My footsteps clang through the metal corridor,
My sweaty hands slam against the locked door.

I step back and shoot the lock, I’m still in shock,
My final seconds tick away like a clock.
Five shots left, and I’ll need every one,
It’s my time to do what’s been left undone.

Into a corpse I run; I can’t succumb,
A bullet to the head from a 44 Magnum.
The shell hits the floor with a hollow sound,
The dead keep coming like a savage Hellhound.

Up the stairs I go, the grim truth I know,
Four shots remaining, I can’t waste one – no.
I break down another door; it hits the floor,
The dead keep gaining, but I can’t be sure.

I ran into a trap; my strength sapped,
Three shots went off, and three bodies snapped.
One shot left to escape inevitable death,
I swivel around and I take a deep breath.

My final shot rings, a kiss of death it brings,
The pain stings, but my feet have wings.
Time stops, and the black sky crashes,
As I watch my legacy fade to ashes.

I fall into the hands of the sick,
I pull the trigger... Click.
Reality weighs on me like a brick,
I press the detonator... Click.

Down by the juncture of hope and despair,
Thin, pale, and haggard survivors struggled there.
An explosion rocks the heavens above,
Destroying a world of thoughts never thought of.
They are as deep brown as mahogany wood
polished nicely and as a result they are
more than what they show
what they represent in my eyes and
many others
stitched with care to last
a curved black heel giving a slight
incline; the pattern upon them is traditional
yet electric; enough to set them apart
although they are regal
they are also rough as a bucking bronco; rugged enough
to withstand nature’s unruly path
as my skin calluses they are slightly worn down
They were a gift.

In the eyes of many they
represent way more than a few stitches.
They represent a bond I have
with kin, a tradition.
They reflect on all who were raised by “Southern Grace.”
They represent a hard-working man living off the land, the smell
of early spring.
They represent us. They represent U.S. But to some,
they were just a gift,
Just a pair of cowboy boots.

Holland Lund
The Back of My Door

by Robert Dedman

Expressing oneself is done by many in many different ways
   The one that changes as I evolve
       Is the back side of my door
It has held all of my creative ideas since I first discovered tape
   My many ideas that are good enough to be seen
       By me and only me
       Every Single Day
   For the snobby front side of my door is for
       The ones to whom a flag of a hockey team will suffice
Dig deeper and you will find my door phases – none of which is
   Ever done twice
Pictures I’ve drawn, favorite songs along with their lyrics,
   Posters of Pokemon etcetera
Currently two inspiring running quotes said by my role model Pre
   Yet at most times it has been empty
       For no reason other than my being lazy
But I will not see laziness, I will see a door
   (but one that means much more)
       It is a blank canvas and
       I’ll never run out of paint

The Rain

by Riley Steanson

The tiny droplets from the sky
   Fall softly on the ground
They try to wet what is dry
   Causing the dirt to become a mud mound
Though they do not try that hard
   They can hit you in the eye

The rain dance is very special
   To someone younger than I
To watch the dance is different
   Than a traditional rain dance
       It tastes like nothing
Yet tastes like everything

Bryce Ardisson
I’m a Poet
by Matt Remke

I’m a poet and I didn’t know it
My rhymes are brilliant, tried and true
I can make a rhyme anytime
I can pull a poem out of the blue
I make puns just for fun

It is certainly no debut
I can rhyme words like a wizard
These rhymes are brilliant not make-do
Doubts standstill once faced with my skill
This rhyming talent is a great virtue
Oh enough, you have not seen my bluff
I cannot rhyme at all
But I certainly fooled you

Childhood
by Jackson Maradik

A vacant tire swing sways.
the wind, its mother, rocking gently with delight
the One who fulfilled its purpose
is all but just a memory
The tire swing waits
but does not receive
and knows
that time is gone.

Manifold miles away
the One
missing the freedom of floating
longs for a ride
just one more time.
The Ballad of the Runaway Knowledge

by Ben Gauldin

Don’t you hate when your brain goes dead,
When all night you studied, but it escapes your head.
It seems like all of it stayed in bed.
Then the time comes and you begin to dread.

It’s happened to me dozens and dozens of times,
But the one I remember that I cannot boast
Was when my brain felt like a pot of roast.
On the test that mattered the most.

I woke up early feeling on top of the mound,
Who knew that later that I would feel so close to the dusty ground.
As I continued my so-far marvelous day,
When I got to school, the day began to stray.

As I walked up the stairway I tripped on a stair,
I went tumbling with all of my homework which scattered to here and there.
I picked the papers up furiously
I picked up most, but I had to hurry. All classes start at 7:30.

When I fell all the studying must have popped out.
Though my day had gone its downhill way I wasn’t going to pout.
I was here in class and there was nothing to fear,
And then I began to doubt

The teacher gave me the poetry test and I looked down.
I picked up my pencil and begun to frown.
To my surprise as I searched in my head,
And I found all of the information had fled.

My test looked up and smiled at me and knew it had won.
Not a single idea came to me not a rhyme or a pun.
That’s when I saw it out of the corner of my eye
There was my knowledge sitting on the floor, and I knew the test was mine.

I wrestled my knowledge up and down the classroom,
It must have been a sight to see.
I pinned it down and without a frown and the victor was me.
I put the knowledge back where it should be.

I eased through the test and knew I won the quest.
And I got a 93.
My Dad’s Old Baseball

by D’On Coofer

It’s round like a tennis ball
it’s hard like a rock
over time its yellow might be mistaken for crayon
it has many many red threads that were
wound up as tight as the pitcher wound up to throw a fastball
Many people just see the outside of this baseball
but I see
the outside and THE INSIDE.

My dad’s old baseball
I see the inside which holds
memories, feelings, and his life
when I see this baseball
I don’t just see threads or the yellow on it,
I see the times my daddy and I played catch in the yard.
I see the hard time that he went through with his disease

When I see this baseball
It’s almost like watching a vivid movie on his life
Whenever I go to my room and see that ball
My tears sometimes start to pour like golf balls at a golfing range
most people see the outermost of objects,
but I see the innermost and greatness of objects
Many people just see the outside of this baseball
but I see
the outside and THE INSIDE.

Priorities

by Jack Hornsby

He shoots, he scores, the points he pours
Nobody can guess what else he has here in store
Would you look at that, behind-the-back
Basketball is his favorite game, for which he has a knack.

There he goes again, a swish at the very end
The still growing kid can play better than all the men
His skills are magical, hardly even imaginable
The kid is plain incredible.

But when all is done these skills are worth none in the long run
When there’s no basketball, what has he won
For there are more important things than games and championship rings
So branch out and spread your wings, and try many new and interesting things.

Mark Floyd
Books

by Rush Gorney

Letters constant throughout an extensive sea
They persuade me to keep reading
Chapter after chapter after chapter
‘Till the book comes to an end
Where the letters stop and the sea moves on

Until the next book,
Where the letters will continue to impel
Past this sea where it will again start its journey
In the near future.

I open a book
And find myself exposed to new environments:
A dark forest of no return,
A sleepy southern town,
Or a wardrobe leading to a magical world.

A book stops as if I was just awakened
From a breathtaking dream
I’m secluded from a make-believe world
And knocked straight back into reality.

Arrowheads

by Matthew Dobson

Light or dark and large or slender,
They sit in four gleaming glass cases,
Sharp or dull and rocky or smooth,
What used to be owned by the Indians,
Lies in my room,
They were once launched into the air,
And soared like a bird,
Now they lay in normal cases in my room,
Not to see action anytime soon,
They bring the thought of action and war,
Just sitting there,
The thought of them having been thrown through bodies,
Just brings the spooks,
Even though they just lay there,
Their appearance tells the truth
Every year, the trampoline sits in the backyard
Covered by pollen in the spring, leaves in the summer and fall, and snow in the winter
The trampoline itself has a black surface with gray netting, smudges and footprints of
Friends and neighbors enjoying the feeling of jumping higher than they ever could on the ground
The basketball goal hangs over the net leaving a great shadow
Dents and scratches cover the backboard of people
Acting like NBA All-Stars doing all types of dunks
As years pass, many people enjoy ricocheting off the tarp and
Submerging the ball through the basketball net,
But the feeling that I enjoy is the peace of mind
As I lay on the black sheet of the trampoline at night,
Looking at the stars in the sky as I too get older and
Soon get too old for a trampoline.
Sam Davis represented Montgomery Bell Academy’s ideal of being a gentleman, scholar, and athlete, sacrificing himself for the things he believed in. Sam Davis surrendered his life for the Confederacy and did not betray his friends, his people, and his nation. He kept his word, did not fail his instructor’s assignments, followed his mother’s teachings, and was a moral man. Sam Davis has been a great model for everyone, reflecting MBA’s teachings of perseverance and integrity.

Sam Davis left his home to attend Western Military Institute, a forerunner of MBA in Nashville, Tennessee. He joined a local militia group known as the “Rutherford Rifles” and fought under the command of Robert E. Lee, before reporting to Confederate General Braxton Bragg. In the autumn of 1862, Sam Davis joined a company of cavalry known as “Coleman’s Scouts,” commanded by Henry B. Shaw, alias Captain Coleman. Coleman’s Scouts were assigned to gather information of Federal troop movements in Tennessee, mostly Union General Grenville Dodge’s division, who considered the scouts to be spies.

After a short mid-November visit with his family, Sam returned to his duty and obtained important Union battle plans to be given to General Bragg. On November 20, 1863, near Minor Hill in Giles County, federal soldiers captured Sam Davis by dressing in Confederate uniforms and telling Davis that they were conscripting. Sam said that he was already a Confederate soldier and showed his pass, so the Union soldiers brought him to their commanding officer, and after a thorough search, found the Union papers.

After Sam’s capture, he was taken to Pulaski and imprisoned in jail until the court charged Sam with being a courier and a spy for the Confederacy. General Dodge was convinced there was a traitor that was one of his own officers who had given Sam Davis his army’s battle plans, so he pressured Sam to identify the spy. Sam refused to give any information, so the military court convicted Sam Davis on both charges and sentenced him to hang. General Dodge offered Sam Davis a last chance at the gallows to avoid death if he would tell who the man was that had supplied information to him, but still Davis refused. At the time of his death, Sam Davis stated these lasts words, “I would rather die a thousand deaths than betray a friend or be false to duty.” Sam Davis was finally hanged on November 27, 1863.

Sam Davis’ goal of maintaining honor and integrity was higher than his goal to live. He was so forthright and honest that even General Dodge later sent ten dollars to help build Sam’s statue at the Tennessee State Capitol. Davis’ moral of being trustworthy and loyal to his friends never diminished, even at the gallows. Though offered a chance of freedom by giving up his Confederate companions, he refused. Sam could not imagine it, betraying everything he believed in just to live an unbearable life of a traitor, so he never broke his promise and kept his word and trust.
Sam Davis was a man of true honor and integrity. The story of Sam Davis can be best described as life-changing. The type of person that will give up his life for the freedom of the citizens of his country has true character, just like the young men here at Montgomery Bell Academy. Davis portrays the school motto, “Gentlemen, Scholar, Athlete” as best as anyone can. Davis had the qualities that every young man dreams of having. Self-sacrifice is a very important characteristic of Sam, and not only did he display it, but he showed the true meaning of it. Sam’s courage and bravery are one of the many reasons why America is what it is today. Sam Davis’ story reveals the qualities of a great man who loved his country.

Sam Davis grew up as a man of pride and dignity. Sam became a soldier from Smyrna, Tennessee, a private in the First Tennessee Infantry, after attending the Western Military Institute. Davis was later a scout under Confederate Captain E. Coleman and was sent on many dangerous missions. Sam always assured a completed mission because he was one of the best privates with some of the best qualifications. More importantly, Davis finished his tasks because of his love for his country. The biggest task of Davis’ job was to gather information about Union forces that were traveling from Middle Tennessee to Chattanooga, Tennessee. On November 19, 1863, Davis spent the night at Campbells, the home of Bob English. The next day, Davis was carrying important documents to Confederate General Braxton Bragg at Chattanooga when two Union soldiers wearing Confederate uniforms approached him. Actually being Union soldiers, they took Davis to their head commanding officer, Union General Grenville Dodge. All of the soldiers searched through Davis’ belongings and found the papers. Later, the soldiers took Davis to Pulaski, Tennessee and imprisoned him in jail on the northwest corner of the square. Davis was sent to a military court, where it was decided that he would be hanged until dead. General Grenville Dodge offered Davis a choice of freedom if he would tell Dodge his source for the information. Davis replied, “I would rather die a thousand deaths before I betray a friend.” On November 27, 1863, at the age of 21, Davis rode in a wagon seated upon his own coffin from the Giles County Jail to a hill in east Pulaski. There, Davis died a man of true heart and loyalty.

Sam Davis was not afraid to stand up for what he believed. Sam did not only stand up for a few friends, but for his country. Davis gave a true demonstration of what it is to be a gentleman. Sam Davis was the type of person that the young men at Montgomery Bell Academy look up to as a role model. He had the characteristics that every student of MBA strives to have. Sam Davis showed the world that to be able to give up your life for your country, all you need is a strong love for others.
Ryan Carpenter
Scholastics Gold Key Award