

In the waiting room

By Caylee Fleury

SPAULDING HIGH SCHOOL, GRADE 12

In most waiting rooms, there are huge messy stacks of magazines, old toys for impatient children and sometimes a TV hooked up high in a corner. All are supposed to keep us busy and entertained while waiting for the nurse to call our name. While sitting in the waiting room, I notice that most of us don't use these simple sources of entertainment. Instead, we observe. We often glance, or even awkwardly stare, at one another. The people who find staring rude do their fair share of glancing around too. It's not new to us, but a common action. Observing other people is natural and a way of learning about one another.

As I wait, I see an elderly couple slowly walk in. They seem like they have been together since high school, about to celebrate their 50th anniversary. Once settled into their seats, the observing begins. The elderly woman takes a glance at me, then at the woman at the front desk, while the husband seems to be in his own world.

Next is a middle-aged woman who hurries in, as if running late. But she ends up having to wait for a while. She immediately looks around the room, first at the elderly couple, then at me. Then she starts rummaging through the magazines. I try to look through a magazine and immediately get bored. All I read about is tips for looking beautiful and how to drop 8 pounds in 5 days. I begin watching TV, but five minutes of ESPN and I am done. Being in a waiting room for ten minutes feels like an hour. Next a dad and little boy walk in. The dad looks stressed and the boy seems quiet and already bored.

I notice that once people start a conversation, everybody else eavesdrops. It's rude but so hard to resist. The elderly couple talks about what they are going to have for lunch, and the little boy tries to read a book, asking his dad what every other word is. I begin to get impatient. Observing can get boring and you begin to see the same people repeat the same actions or gestures. I then hear a door open and close. The nurse comes out and calls my name. I get out of my seat and head toward her. As I walk I have that feeling that someone is watching me. I'm not surprised, because that's what happens in a waiting room.

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DEADLINE NEAR!

Applications are due APRIL 1 to attend Champlain College's Young Writers' Conference, May 29-31. Great program. For more go to: Champlain.edu/Young-Writers-Conference.html

The story of how prejudice came to be

By Kay Bushman

U-32 MIDDLE SCHOOL, GRADE 7

Once, a very long time ago, Mother Nature and Father Time came to walk among man. In those times, many things were different, but some things were the same. People could speak to animals and they could speak to us. They never worried about the color of a man's skin, or whether he celebrated the same holidays as they did. And, most importantly, the world was a happy, peaceful place.

One day, as Father Time and Mother Nature were enjoying a walk in the beautiful spring sunshine, a man came up to them. He told them his name was Prejudice. He was a pleasant-looking man, but Father Time and Mother Nature soon found that his heart was greedy.

"Mother Nature," said Prejudice, "you not only have to make the sun get up in the morning and make the skies cry when the earth's plants are dying, you must also rule the animals. Wouldn't you like to be relieved of that obligation? I would be willing to rule them for you. I would be just and wise, as you are."

But Mother Nature replied, "I would never let another rule the animals, even if they were to show me that they were the wisest person to ever walk the earth." She laughed. "No, I would never give up my friendship with creatures, young Prejudice! I shall always enjoy talking with my animal friends!"

Prejudice was angered by Mother Nature's words, but he was also cunning, so he hid his displeasure. Instead, he turned to Father Time.

"Father Time," he began, "you not only

GREEN, LUCK

NORTHFIELD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL fifth graders submitted these as part of YWP's Vermont Writes Day II.

I've never seen such a brilliant shade of green. But the lousy brown is winning the war. I will only be happy when green strikes again. — Chase Ellis

Green jacket
Remember St. Patrick's Day
Exciting
Extraordinary
Not something to forget
— Izzy Jones

Luck makes me feel wonderful
Understanding luck is confusing
Cool
Kooky
Yielding to my thoughts
— Mallory Dutil

have to put the sun to bed at night and keep the earth turning, but you also must distribute equal amounts of peace on earth and goodwill toward men. Let me take those responsibilities off your shoulders. I will make sure every man is treated equally. I would never make any reason for hue and cry."

"My dear Prejudice," said Father Time with twinkling eyes, "I would never give up those responsibilities to even the most reasonable person. I enjoy nothing more than watching the happiness of mankind. That is something I would never give away."

He smiled kindly at Prejudice, and then he and Mother Nature continued on their walk.

Prejudice watched them disappear down the path. He was not at all happy that he had been denied the responsibilities he had requested, for he thought himself superior to all other men. He decided he should get revenge and so he went deep into the forest, where no creature, animal or mortal, dares to dwell. There he made a large vat of babbling potion.

Emerging again into the sunlight, Prejudice took a walk through the country. Each time he came to an animal, he said slyly, "My animal friend, you must try this wonderful drink! It will make you fly higher than you have ever flown, swim faster than you have ever swum and run faster than you have ever run!"

The animals all agreed to try a sip, but as soon as they swallowed the potion they could no longer speak to Prejudice. Instead they spoke in strange sounds that only they could understand.

Prejudice walked for a day and a night dispensing his babbling potion. At last, the tonic had been tasted by every animal in the land. They could no longer understand anyone but their own kind.

But Prejudice was not yet finished. Next he went to a field of sunflowers, and took every seed out of the center of every flower. As the seeds touched his hand, they turned from

Earth spinning

By Danielle Petrie

BARRE TOWN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, GRADE 4

How did the earth start to spin, you ask? Well, in the beginning of time a man was born who was 1,000 stories high. Every day the man grew 10 times bigger. By the time he stopped growing, he could jump to every planet, even the sun.

One day the man noticed that the sun was always in the sky and there was nothing else to see. A few hours later he came up with the idea that he would jump on another planet and start spinning the earth. "Brilliant!" So he did. Then he jumped back on earth. Now it was dark! As the earth spun the sun came up. "That's better," said the man. That's how the earth started to spin and it will never stop.

How stars were made

By Olivia Ziter

BARRE TOWN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, GRADE 4

Once there were two gods, the God of Light and the God of Darkness. The God of Light said, "Light is more important than darkness. Light helps people see!"

"But darkness is used for horrible souls to hide!" said the God of Darkness.

The God of Light said, "So you want to help criminals!"

"And you don't?" said the deep, dark God.

Then, at the same time, they threw meteorors at each other. The God of Light threw a fire meteor. The God of Darkness threw a blank, black meteor. The meteors smashed sending glitter into the sky. "Wow!" said the two gods at the same time.

"Well, I guess . . ." said the God of Light speechless.

"Our powers are both for good," said the God of Darkness, finishing the God of Light's sentence.

"I guess . . ." repeated the God of Light.

"We should just get along," they said at the same time. And so they did.

green to black.

Prejudice put the sunflower seeds in a satchel, which he now keeps with him wherever he goes. When he sees too much happiness in the world, he plants a seed of prejudice in a mind and watches happily as it grows into something terrible. He loves to watch the animals fight their losing battle against the humans.

Because of Prejudice, the world is no longer such a happy place. Father Time and Mother Nature must now watch as humans hunt animals to extinction and put them in cages to goggle at. They spend their days growing hope in the hearts of their people to try to fight Prejudice's evil. Will Prejudice ever be driven away?