

Middle Schools create a supportive environment to reach all adolescent learners. Students at Titusville Middle School celebrate learning achievements AND nurture their "inner authors" through...

MIDDLE MATTERS

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The America I Believe In

by: *Destiny Grazier-White*



Over the course of five centuries, America has greatly evolved. From Columbus to the 2016 presidential candidates, our country has changed and made itself better with the help from those in and around it. Our country has done many things, such as Nikola Tesla, who created the basic design for a radio, an object that we still use today. Although our country is not perfect, as we have wars with neighboring countries and those more distant, it is still one of the more utopian countries at this time.

The America I believe in will no doubt get better. In only forty-three years we have gone from a fourteen inch cell phone to a six inch smartphone that you can not only call on, but you can text,

get a variety of games, look things up instantaneously, and so much more. If we can accomplish that much in such a short amount of time, the amount of things we can do in a longer span of time with technology rapidly being more preeminent, who knows where the cell phone will be in the future.

Humanity wise I have no doubt that we will be more grateful for those around us as well as what we receive. I also believe that we, as not only a country but as a nation, will become more collective and generous to those around us. As a nation we are not always grateful for things that we have, and often times we think we have it the worst. However, I'm in no way saying someone has it worse

than you; I'm only saying we don't realize that we all have it rough. It may not be in the same way as the woman in the cubicle next to you or the man you saw on the street, but everyone has bad days, and some days are no doubt worse than others where it's hard to roll out of bed and put a smile on your face. If we become more generous to everyone, these days will vanish, or at least become more bearable.

Just imagine what we can achieve in the next 500 years. At that point people will have different theories, different thoughts and different ideas. The America I believe in will be better, safer, and more advanced than what we are now, and that statement will always fill me with posterous hope.

Professional Bull Riders

by: *Rachel Jackson*

For my thirteenth birthday we went to Youngstown, Ohio for The Professional Bull Riders (PBR) Real Time Pain Relief Velocity Tour. The PBR has the highest ranked bull riders and bulls. They are normally on CBS when they have an invitational or some event that is important. The guys in Ohio were lower ranked guys, but they still did great. The introduction to the show was about six minutes long; they had pyrotechnics and had a girl sing the National Anthem. They also introduced the bull riders and bullfighters, the entertainer (clown), and the bulls. I got so excited that I was crying and hitting my sister. I was shaking with excitement so bad that I got asked multiple times to calm down!

It was like a dream because I always wanted to go see the PBR live and not on T.V. and it really happened! They started to buck bulls. It WAS AMAZING! I couldn't believe it! The guys would stay on and would not give up. At the normal Rodeo we go to, some of the guys fall off even before the bull starts to buck. One of the bull rider's bulls fell on him, and he still hung on with his hand still up in the air. He was very brave man and really strong because he just walked away like nothing even happened. Some of the guys didn't even know they had a bull to ride until a day before the show. The guys were from all different places, too, like Mexico,

Australia, the Carolinas, and only around two guys were from Ohio.

The bullfighters are the guys who save lives of many people. Their job is very important because if a rider were to get hung up (to get your bull rope tangled and twisted to where you can't get your hand out), they risk their lives to help the bull rider get out and to safety with their swift moves and acts of kindness and bravery. The bullfighters I saw were Reese Mitchell and Cody Webster. They were amazing and so quick to help with anyone who needed it. I think that those men are some of the bravest guys I have ever seen. Normally they have three guys on the one I watch on T.V. and they do great, but just with two they still did phenomenal. They fight big powerful bulls, and let me tell you, they were something else! The bulls were big, mean, and very energetic. When you see a bull blow up out of the chute gate opens, it is the most amazing and interesting thing to see.

The stock contractors (the guys who buy and care for the bulls) are really passionate; you can tell by looking at the bulls and seeing how they buck and act in the arena. You know the stock contractor is good and the bulls are excited and having the right amount of feed and the right amount of nutrition in their freed if a bull of theirs bucks hard and knocks the rider off fast. Some of them are mean after they buck off a rid-

er; that is because they shock the bull with electricity. That may sound like they are just hurting the animal for fun, but it doesn't hurt the bulls. They are one-ton animals with a lot of muscle. They really are cool creatures. If the bull turns around in the chute, sits down in the chute, or falls down in the arena, the bull rider gets a re-ride because half of the riders score is depending on the bulls to do a good job. It wouldn't be fair to have the rider have a bad score because the bull fell down in the arena because the bull rider can't do anything to stop that.

The rider and the bull are basically a team. When there is something bad going on or if there is nothing happening, there is always something to lighten the mood...the funny man. For instance, the night I was there it was Matt Merrit. He was hilarious! It was great he made the night great and made the show flow easier than it would if he wasn't there. He would pick on the announcers, telling them to dance. It was really cool! He interacted with the crowd, too, when he sang song with us. He danced around the arena telling jokes and playing air guitar. You can definitely say he was the funny man of the night. Overall, I had a great time at the Professional Bull Riders Real Time Pain Relief Velocity Tour in Youngstown, Ohio. It was an amazing birthday gift, and I hope to go again.

Toke - Argumentative Essay

by: *Chris MacDonald*

"Honor is life because without honor one might as well be dead." This quote means that for the Vikings, honor is everything. A true Viking would rather be dead than to break an oath or thought to be untrustworthy. Honor is everything. Honor is everything for every Viking unless your name is Toke. As a Viking, Toke is a disgrace. He breaks oaths, murders his family, and does not deserve the honor of Valhalla. He deserves nothing but to be executed and serve in the cold halls of Hel.

The Thing should execute Toke because he is an oath breaker. At Halfdan's longhouse, where his newly owned estate is, Harald tells Halfdan that there are enemies surrounding the longhouse. So they ready up for the battle of their lives and Harald says he will give up the women and children of the enemies' leader (Toke) gives them an oath to keep the women and children safe. Toke says, "You have my oath..." so the women and children get out of the longhouse and go with the enemies. After the oath is made to the gods, suddenly Toke says, "Kill them all! There can be none alive to tell this tale!" and all

war breaks loose. Battle and bloodshed spread across the longhouse and in the village and Toke's men kill everyone except one, Halfdan. Toke even killed a ten-year old boy by throwing a spear in the boy's back. Toke broke a promise to the gods and should be executed.

Toke should be executed because he murders his family. Toke has been know for a lot of crimes, but most of them have been against his family. Toke is a berserk and since he is a berserk, he is CRAZY! Toke raped Astrid, attempted to rape Derdriu and raided a longhouse leaving Harald and others to dust. Along on that line, Toke lied that he was the son of Hrorik and he said that Halfdan was an enemy to the village. Most Vikings don't go against their family. Toke has hatred toward Harald, Halfdan, and Hrorik and has a blood feud with them. Toke is mindless toward others other than himself and should be executed.

Admittedly, the other side believes that Toke shouldn't be executed. They believe that Toke was a great Viking warrior for his people. The other side thinks that Toke did what Vikings do like raid, plunder,

steal booty, and take revenge. They say that they would rather say that Toke should have an estate instead of a slave having an estate. However, Toke has gone too far with his Viking skills and should be Executed! Toke is disgraceful toward his people and doesn't deserve to go to Valhalla. Toke is using his skills against his own people and tearing his village apart. Toke raided against his own foster brothers in the longhouse and killed Harald's men in the longhouse as well. For the crimes that Toke committed against the Vikings, Toke shouldn't have an estate because he committed crimes against his own people. The Thing should come upon agreement and should execute Toke.

Viking warriors would die for honor in the quote, "Honor is life, because without honor one may as well be dead." Vikings want honor to go to Valhalla. Toke only wants honor over his selfishness. Toke wants to be living with Hel in eternal darkness. Toke would rather be rich than to be known as a great warrior to his people. Toke shouldn't go to Valhalla and the Thing should come upon agreement to make arrangements to execute Toke.

Artists' Corner

Artwork below was submitted by Titusville Middle School teacher, Jessica Salapek. Eighth grade students studied Op Artists from the 60's and then practiced making their own. The picture below was created by Emily Ward.

