

dignity:

creative expressions from
the inspiration project



Spring 2022 Volume 12

about:

The Inspiration Project is a volunteer collaboration between the University of Rochester and CP Rochester, a nonprofit organization that supports individuals with physical and developmental disabilities. During the spring of 2022, writing students from the University of Rochester met weekly on Zoom with writers from CP Rochester. Through extensive one-on-one conversations, the UR students and CP Rochester adults have produced the creative works assembled here.

acknowledgments:

This project was made possible by the hard work and generous support of many people: The participants and staff at CP Rochester, especially Tina Bennett and Kristi Powers, the students at the University of Rochester, Joanna Scott (Professor of English, University of Rochester), Erin Francisco Opalich, (Department of English, University of Rochester), Justina McCarty, Glenn Cerosaletti (Director, Rochester Center for Community Leadership, University of Rochester), Deborah Rossen-Knill (Director, Writing, Speaking, and Argument Program, University of Rochester), Jeffrey Runner (Dean of the College, University of Rochester), Sarah Mangelsdorf (President of the University of Rochester), Katherine Mannheimer (Chair, Department of English, University of Rochester). This volume's cover art is by Jeff Yarmel.

table of contents:

Introduction	4
A Day in the Life – Jeff Yarmel.....	6
Fighting for Independence – Latrice Person	10
About Family – Maria Cruz-Dillio.....	13
Russell’s Movies – Russell Hill	16
Superhero Dad – Sam Jansen	20
Chapter 10 - Light at the End of the Tunnel – Caleb Dingus	24
Henry’s Influence on Steve – Jane Gefell	28

introduction

The pieces in this year's anthology are full of joy, laughter, drama, struggle, and a whole lot of action. It seems that everyone is on the move in these stories. Characters are bicycling, driving, riding horses, zipping along in wheelchairs, fighting in wars. A special dinosaur named a Russelraptor can swim and lift cars up into the branches of tree. A superhero named The Flash can run so fast that she runs right through time, into the past and the future.

Amidst all this suspenseful action, we read about how people depend on others to help get things done. We all benefit from listening to another perspective, and the stories in this anthology demonstrate in imaginative ways how an exchange of ideas and guidance from others can help us find solutions to the problems we face. By staying open to influence and respecting the insights of others, these writers show how challenges can lead to productive connections. As Jane Gefell writes about her own birth, "Now this baby would have extra special needs for her whole life. This baby was me. My life is beautiful and a blessing for others in my life."

Special needs offer an opportunity for special collaborations. The collaborative process we use in The Inspiration Project is fluid and open, and the results aren't predictable. Each year for twelve years, students and participants from CP Rochester have conversed, asked questions, and worked together to write and edit their stories. It's a flexible process that thrives on dialogue. Sometimes there's more writing that's done, sometimes there's more editing. Always, we aim for the kind of collaborations that are respectful and productive. In the words of Latrice Person, "It's a give and take, you have to keep giving, and then things are taken, and that's how you make a beautiful story that people can learn from." We hope you learn from this year's collaborations.

– Joanna Scott

A Day in the Life

By Jeff Yarmel

In collaboration with Jenny Buckley and Zoe Miles



Helen is a 17-year-old girl in high school, living in Long Island. She has a lot of friends from school, and they all ride their three-wheel bikes together. They especially like to ride by the water and their favorite place to go is Long Beach. One time, they had a problem with Helen's bike - one of her wheels broke, leaving it with no air. The flat tire caused her bike to swerve and Helen fell

off hard into the sand. Her friends were worried, but luckily they had a cell phone and could call for help. They reached Helen's dad right away and he came with his tools to fix the problem and change out her tire.

Helen's dad, sensing the bad mood coming off Helen and the girls, thought fast

and cheerily offered, “Ice cream anybody? My treat.”

Crisis forgotten, the girls brightened up immediately at the offer. Almost in unison, they agreed to tag along, hoisting their bikes onto the rack on the back of her dad’s truck. Once their beloved three-wheelers were secured, the girls squished into the backseat four to a row. The overfull vehicle groaned and began the short drive to the local sweet shop.

Once arrived, the five girls spilled out onto the sun-warmed sidewalk chatting amongst themselves like usual, the day’s stresses seemingly forgotten. Now at Helen’s favorite beachside parlor, the girls excitedly browsed the list of flavors, overwhelmed by all of the delicious options. The sign above the counter proudly boasted:

- (1) Mint Chocolate Chip
- (2) Cookies ‘n Cream
- (3) Death by Chocolate
- (4) Rocky Road
- (5) Strawberry
- (6) Butter Pecan

The girls rushed the register and shot rapid orders at the jovial old man behind it. Helen cried, “Double scoop of mint chocolate chip, please!” amidst similar clamoring.

“Rocky Road or bust, you guys!” defended Claire to a chorus of denials.

Jess was next, claiming, “The classics are classic for a reason,” faux humbly, “strawberry’s just on a different level.”

Disgusted, Roxy scoffed, “Dream on. Everybody knows it’s Cookies ‘n cream.”

Erin, Kim, and Nikki gave the others a judgemental side glance. They clearly disagreed, but preferred actually ordering the food to proving their point. Stepping around the still arguing trio, Helen’s dad made tired, sympathetic eye contact with the cashier. It seemed to convey more than just,

“I’ll have one scoop of butter pecan please.” It said also, “I’m sorry you’re working retail” and “please don’t ask us to leave this establishment.” It was a very long look. The dad handed over the necessary bills for the purchase, then stepped to the side near a large window. He was surprised to notice that the sky had turned gray and filled with heavy clouds in the time they were inside. It had begun to rain, and already he could tell it would become a beachside thunderstorm. Worried about the girls biking home in what was clearly inclement weather, he interrupted their chatter to offer a ride. The girls, not yet ready for the fun to end, decided to go home with Helen and enjoy the sounds of the storm from there. Ice creams in hand, they piled back into the truck for the short drive to Helen’s. They stayed for two hours, until the worst of the storm had passed, then unhooked their bikes and began to pedal home.



The next morning dawned with clear blue skies, a fortunate change from the previous evening's storm. Helen woke up slowly to the sound of her father calling her and her sisters downstairs for breakfast. Despite not being a morning person, Helen was always excited to eat her father’s cooking. Her two little sisters rushed past her on the stairwell, racing madly to the breakfast table. Helen followed at a more appropriate pace, glimpsing the table already covered in breakfast classics. Her dad had

made each of them eggs the way they liked them and had squeezed fresh orange juice as a treat. On the kitchen counter sat a row of brown paper sacks each boasting one of the girls' names in bold Sharpie. Helen's mom was off to the side finishing up a last minute addition to each lunch, a small handwritten note to slip inside. Helen had been the last to arrive, so the family of five finally sat down to eat together before leaving for their respective schools. Her sisters, Rose and Nikki, babbled excitedly about the movie they were supposed to watch in school today and Helen listened quietly with a smile on her face. They would have to leave soon for Helen to get the girls to their school and still be on time to her own, but she would let them have another minute.

The clock struck seven thirty, signaling the end of breakfast. Her little sisters' elementary school was about ten minutes away and her High School five minutes past that. Hopefully, barring any issue, the girls and Helen would both make it by eight o'clock sharp. Shepherding Rose and Nikki into Helen's beloved 2009 Toyota, she bemoaned the inevitable, inexplicable stickiness that would surely infect her precious vehicle. She buckled Rose's seatbelt and secured Nikki's carseat and they were on their way.

Helen pulled into the school parking lot at a quarter 'til; the perfect amount of time to get to 1st period math with Mrs. Douskawitz. The stern math teacher did not appreciate tardiness. Helen made it just before the bell, plopping her bag and books down next to Jess and sharing a tired look. "I am literally so exhausted," Jess whispered when Mrs. Douskawitz was facing the board, "like, to my bones."

"Same," replied Helen, "I was up late last night finishing that huge History project for Mr. Douglas."

The teacher turned suddenly and both girls tried to look as studious as possible. Helen's phone buzzed conspicuously and she ignored it until the teacher turned safely back around. Unlocking her screen, she saw she had three missed texts from Kim begging her to lend her extra gym clothes. Exasperated at her forgetting for the fourth time this month, Helen agreed then powered off her phone just in time to get called on. Panicked, she looked at the board to figure out the problem they were on; then sighed in relief. They were just reviewing limits, a concept she had understood last year, and she was able to throw out the correct answer. She sagged in her seat, coming down from the adrenaline rush. Now she just had to make it to gym.

Rushing from her seat at the bell, Helen saw Kim waiting by her locker. Quickly spinning her combination, she grabbed her second just-in-case gym shorts and handed them over. Kim thanked her profusely and they both dragged themselves to the smelly locker rooms. Helen was reluctant to leave the changing area but became excited when the coach announced the day's activity: basketball. Helen loved basketball. Unlike most gym periods, this class might just be worthwhile.

Energized after getting to practice some dribbling drills and quickly becoming the star player in a close game of basketball with her gym class, Helen felt the rest of her day was over in a flash. As usual, she ended her school day right where she started it - picking up her sisters just down the street, and shuttling them all back home. Once she helped Nikki get a snack, and got Rose started on her homework, Helen washed off the long day with a refreshing shower. With her grueling history project all turned in, Helen was thrilled to have an evening of taking it easy and relaxing with her family. Trudging down the stairs in her coziest pair

of pajamas, she perked up at the smell of her mom's homemade pizza, a family favorite. In no time, the whole family had gobbled down their share, leaving barely a crumb. To top it all off, a cake baked to perfection disappeared just as quickly, with all three girls and their parents unable to resist having a slice, despite their satisfied stomachs.

Now clean and full, Helen settled in for a domestic evening watching Family Feud. Her family had made a game of trying to outguess the competitors on the screen, and got playfully competitive about it. Her parents used it as a way to sneak educational content in for Rose and her, as Nikki was long asleep by the hour it aired. Loud guessing, shouts of victory, and cries of defeat colored most evenings, and the gentle routine of it lulled her slowly off to sleep. Dozing lightly on the overstuffed couch that was older than her, she was content simply to be home.

The night passed peacefully and when Helen dreamed, it was of three-wheeled bicycles and another beautiful dawn.

The End.



Fighting for Independence

By Latrice Person

In collaboration with Konttessa Camacho and Emma Goettler



When Rosie was little before going to college, she did everything and was very independent. When she was little she used to do a lot of stuff like gymnastics, riding her bike, and being with her friends. Then she finished elementary school, middle school, and High School, and she got into college when she became 18 and she learned how to drive. Her dream since she was little was to

be a doctor, and she always played with doctor toys. She always got A's and B's in all of her classes. She dreamed of becoming a doctor and wanted to follow her dreams and always got high honor roll in high school because she wanted to accomplish her goal. So, she went to her college and took classes about being a doctor and in the

middle of her semester in college she got into an accident.

Rosie was in college and she still had her parents when she got into a car accident. She lost her ability to walk so she had to do physical therapy because in the car accident she was driving and she accidentally went off the road (it was snowing) and the car flipped over. Her brother was in the backseat of the car because they were going to get ice cream and a movie and it was icy outside, and she ran into a snowbank. Then she woke up at the hospital, and didn't know where she was at so she was kind of delirious. Her mom was surprised that she woke up because she was unconscious for a long time and she could not speak a lot at first. She would say stuff very quietly at first, and after she knew where she was at, she would talk a little bit more and after she was done speaking she realized that her legs did not work. So she said, "Oh my God, why are my legs not working?" Her mom and the doctor told her that she couldn't walk when she was trying to get off the bed.

Her arms could move but her lower half couldn't move so she was paralyzed and she had to go to the rehabilitation center to learn how to walk again. She started getting cranky because she couldn't move her legs and she did not listen to her mom and her doctor or listen to her physical therapist when they tried to give her exercises to do. When she went home she was still being moody and she was disrespectful to her mom, yelling at her mom telling her that she doesn't know anything. She gave up but she thought about not giving up. She started failing her classes and everything. She was doubting herself and her mom called her grandad and told her grandad to talk to her because her mom was kind of over it at this point. Rosie was not listening to nobody and she was not responding so her grandad told her mom to bring her down to the ranch and

that was when her grandad talked to her about how she was behaving.

Her peers and her grandad could not talk to Rosie. Rosie was in denial. She argued with her mom saying, "No, I can get up and do normal stuff." Her mom was trying to explain to her, "No! You can't do it right now, you need help with it." She worried about how she could go to school and finish and go to medical school if she couldn't walk. She needed a wake-up call. She had to talk to her mom and her dad and talk to her friends.

Rosie's mom got a hold of her friend, Daisy. They talked because her friend os like her sister because they grew up together since they were nine. So they are close, and her friend started to talk to her and say that, "if you want to become independent and get your own apartment you have to learn how to do things for yourself so you have to try to be self-sufficient. You have to listen to other people. You have to give it a try because you want to be a doctor so you have to act like an adult." They were arguing, but Rosie realized that she was telling the truth. Then she started going to the rehabilitation center and started doing the exercises to do whatever she needed to do to be self-sufficient. She learned how to cook for herself and how to walk and had to use the walker to walk a couple of steps and walk back to her chair. Daisy came to the hospital and helped her with PT and her grandad came to her house and built a ramp so she could get into the house and make it better for her to live her life and be as independent as possible.

After the rehabilitation center she goes home and her mom builds her a little apartment next to the garage with one level. Her mom doesn't know what to do with her because she isn't listening to her so her grandad steps in and says, "Well, maybe she can come visit me for like a week," and at

first she doesn't want to go but then her mom makes her. Then she talks to her grandad and her grandad encourages her not to give up and not to fail. Her mom drops her and her aid who takes care of her off at her granddad Paul's stable.

She then went to her grandad's ranch. She was a little stubborn because she did not really want to go, but her grandad talked to her and invited her to go to the rehabilitation center. He said to her that, "If you go to the rehabilitation center during the weekdays, you can come to the ranch and I will help you ride a horse and give you an aid so you can learn how to ride the horse named Moon.

Her grandad calls her physical therapist, a girl named Sarah. He tells her that he wants her to come to the ranch and teach her how to ride the horse. At first Rosie doesn't want to do the exercises so he has to be like, "If you don't do the exercises you're grounded," to get her to not give up on herself and try hard.

Then her grandad put her on a horse. At first she was scared because they had to get her out of her chair and she was a little nervous but she started to like it and she would go back on the weekends. She starts liking horses and she likes to ride. He puts her in a horse competition. She would pretend that she could walk because horses help people with disabilities that cannot walk. She wins horse competitions and she becomes successful in her life.

She changes her life and starts going back to school. But she was worried about going to college, but then she went to school and her friends didn't look at her differently. Her friends and colleagues were looking at her weirdly at first, but her real friends looked at her the same way. They encouraged her that she could still do things

and her mom didn't baby her. She would ask her mom to do something for her, like put something in the sink, and her mom said, "No, you do it yourself." So she kept trying to do these things. Her mom hired somebody to help her do her chores, grocery shopping, and other things to help her be more independent. After her parents realized she was so independent they helped her get her own apartment.

After she gets her own apartment, her mom checks on her but she was only supporting her. Rosie is very independent and does her own grocery shopping.

Her mom and her have a better relationship now and her grandad is proud of her. Rosie gets put on the dean's list because she gets good grades from talking to her grandad. And then she finishes college and she gets her master's and she works at a hospital. She realizes that it is not that bad what she went through. She lives her life being independent in her own apartment. Her friends come over to see her house and she feels so excited about her own little apartment. Her friends can't believe it, so they have a big party, like a college party. They think, "Aww, this is awesome," and she meets her boyfriend. Her boyfriend walks, but he doesn't look at her differently. Her boyfriend's name is Max. She is so excited and gets a dog. She feels proud of herself and successful and she feels confident and independent. She just loves being herself and really doesn't care what other people say.

About Family

By Maria Cruz-Dillio

In collaboration with Winifred Belk and Aditi Thakur



Chapter 1: Joshua

I love my brother Joshua but he has started to make me frustrated. When he moved far away from me, he made me sad because I wanted to have the same

relationship with him that we had when we were younger. Part of the reason Joshua and I are so close is because we are close in age and we also have very similar personalities. Joshua is 22 which makes him three years

older than I am and he is also funny, happy, and nice like me. When Joshua and I were younger, we would play together. Joshua, Alex, my second oldest brother, and I all loved sports and we would play football together. Alex was on the football team and was really good at it, and so was I. But Joshua wasn't on the football team and so he wasn't so good. But we still really enjoyed playing together regardless. I've stopped playing football since then because I don't like it anymore but I hope to see Joshua soon. Joshua is really funny, tall, and smart, but only sometimes is he smart! My mom took lots of pictures of me and Joshua that I still have on my walls. We liked to talk together about all the things that we would be doing in the future. Joshua is also a dad! He has two kids, Prince and Junior. He is a great dad but I think I am an even better aunt.

Chapter 2: Junior and Prince

My nephews' names are Junior, who is 5 years old, and Prince, who is 3. I get to spend a lot of time with them. I love being an aunt and I am the best aunt they could ever ask for! When both of them were younger, I would change and feed them. They owe me a lot! I see them every weekend but unfortunately I don't get to see Joshua as often.

Chapter 3: Alex

My second oldest brother's name is Alex. When I was a kid, I was very close to Joshua and Alex but got distanced because of family issues. Alex is funny and probably the best brother in the world. I unfortunately don't get to see him often because he lives a little far away from me. When we were younger, we would play a lot together, specifically football! He would also buy me a lot of food and we would play many games on his TV. Spending time with him makes

me happy. He currently has a job at Amazon.

Chapter 4: Alexa

Alexa is one of my sisters. I'm very close to her. We exchange presents like babydolls and fluffy blankets. We're waiting for COVID to end to visit each other again. She is my favorite sister so I hope to see her soon. I usually go over to her grandma's house to visit. She lives in Chili so she is not too far from me. She makes me laugh all the time and she is really funny.

Alexa and I also play together with her dolls.

Chapter 5: My Mom

My mother is a very kind person. She is a hard worker as well. She currently works at a daycare but we do not get to spend a lot of time with each other.

Chapter 6: Maria

My name is Maria and since I was born I have had iron deficiency anemia, bipolar disorder, ADHD, autism, and epilepsy. Before I was 2, I didn't speak and had to use sign language. When I went to the doctor they told me I needed a speech therapist. After I got the speech therapist, I began to speak and didn't always need to use sign language.

Although I like going on trips with my family, I am definitely more of a homebody. When I am at home and have free time, I watch YouTube and Netflix. My favorite show is *Heartland* which is about horses! Just like the protagonist in *Heartland*, I hope to start working on a farm with horses, too. I want to heal horses as well as learn to ride them. I also love other sports. My favorite sport is lacrosse and I played it when I was in eighth grade. I usually play defense and tackle. I played for the Gates-Chili team but now I go to Newark

High School and so I stopped playing. When I did play, I was quite good and even made a goal one time. My mom and grandma usually came to watch our games and definitely cheered the loudest.

I am also a big extrovert. I always love meeting new people. But, at the end of the day, I just want to be with the horses.

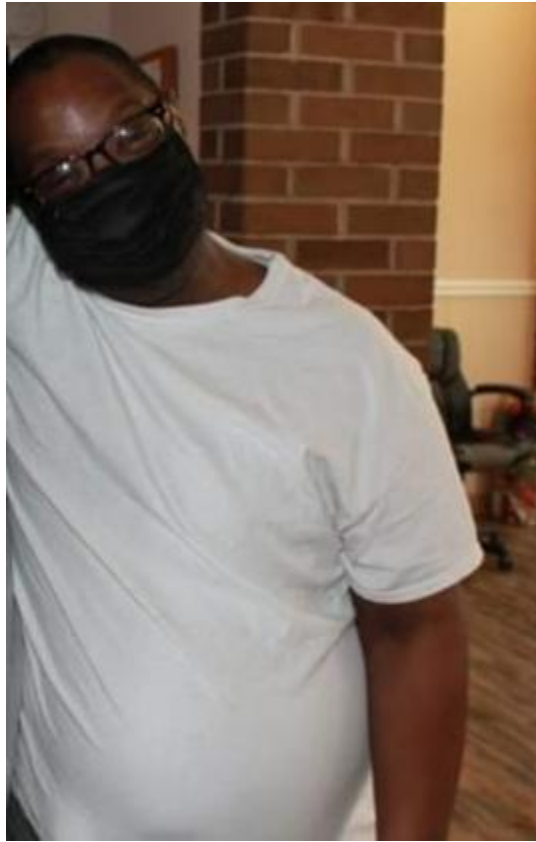
THE END.



Russell's Movies

By Russell Hill

In collaboration with Leen Khankan and Mahnoor Raza



These narratives are Russell's descriptions of the movies he's going to make.

Movie 1: Dinosaurs and Godzilla

Movie location: Outside, on a field with trees and green grass.

This movie starts with T-Rex and Brachiosaurus running around in brown, orange, and black Jurassic Park shirts. There are also sea monster dinosaurs who

live in the water. They have big teeth, almost like a shark. They are all brown dinosaurs.

There are also hunting birds, seagulls, a giant brown alligator, little crocs, and lots of other crocodiles in different sizes.

Some dinosaurs (like the T-rex) hunt for meat, and others (like the Brachiosaurus) eat trees. They don't drink soda, only water. Some are short and some are tall. They roar loudly and aggressively, and they are taller than humans. Their religion has water gods and goddesses. They only live outside, and when it rains, they

don't hide in a house. They hide under the rocks and they live in tunnels with their eggs. The dinosaurs have their own TVs and they watch Jurassic Park and Jurassic World on them.

Humans and dinosaurs are enemies, and alligators are not always friends with humans. Dinosaurs and alligators are friends.

The sky is sunny. The dinosaurs go to sleep any time of the day, and they wake up around 12.

There is a giant brown alligator who is friends with the dinosaurs. They meet in the water, which is almost as deep as an ocean. They are both wearing Jurassic Park t-shirts in orange and black. The dinosaur, a Russelraptor, knows how to swim, and the alligator lives in water.

They see each other and say, "We like the water." They then decide to eat fish and meat together. They see another dinosaur—a T-rex—who is being aggressive and decide to kill him together because it was eating cars. Now they have fish and meat, which they cook and eat.

After they're done eating, the alligator stays in the water and falls asleep while the Russelraptor gets out of the water and goes towards the trees. The dinosaurs are hiding their eight eggs in trees and grass from people who might eat them. If the dinosaur sees a human, he eats them. He puts their cars in the trees, and the humans either leave the car or they die, so there's a tree with lots of black, brown, and orange cars.

The Russelraptor, Grandpa Russelraptor, and Baby Raptor go hunting again because they're hungry. They turn the cars upside down to eat what is in them. Sometimes there are tigers that have families and children. Humans and tigers are sometimes friends. After that, the dinosaurs go back to the tunnels to sleep.

The movie is over.

Short movie: Day in the life of a baby Dino

The baby dino's name is Ratch, his color is brown, and he is the size of an apple. He has no clothes and he likes to eat meat of different kinds. He spends his days exploring. One time he was almost on a boat—he tried to catch it by running—but he missed it because he got distracted while hunting in the dark. After that, he decided to go back to hunting animals and sometimes birds. After pooping on the ground, he takes a nap. There are grown-up dinosaurs, but he never meets them.

There are dinosaur birds—Tolodactors—of all types, attacking and taking humans to eat them. All the humans are running away and one of the giant dinosaurs—a Roscoraptor—saves them because the Tolodactors are evil and want to kill humans, while the giant dinosaurs are good. They don't eat humans.

After this, a human woman brings a T-rex out to save them, but the tolodactors are long gone because they went to sleep. Most humans are also gone because they went far away.

There is a big, bad dinosaur that is locked up but becomes free. Now we have the T-rex free, and the one good dinosaur and baby dino—all Roscoraptors—start fighting the bad dinosaur. A sea monster (who lives in water) grabs the bad dinosaur and puts him in the water and kills him. The T-rex wins and roars, and all the humans who are in the hospital and who got hurt during the fight are happy.

The movie is over.

Movie 2: Godzilla 1

This movie is about Godzilla and robo dinos. The movie is set far away from

America. Godzilla is from Japan and the robo dinosaurs are from China. They're always fighting.

In this movie there is only one godzilla. His name is Godzilla and he is brown. Godzilla is taller than elephants and taller than buildings. Both Godzilla and the robo dinos are good.

Godzilla sleeps in the water. The robo dinos are on a train and some go into the water. When they go into the water, Godzilla kills them. He breathes fire, almost like dragons.

There is a train and subway station. Here, there are a lot of robo dinos who are almost as big as Godzilla (who is still taller than the robo dinos). A robo dino destroys trains and eats people because he is bad. Godzilla is sleeping in the water and wakes up. There is a baby godzilla, who is also named Godzilla and who sleeps with the father godzilla. He wakes up in the morning too and also comes out of the water. Godzilla sees the robo dinos and shoots fire to kill them, destroying the whole station. One of the robo dinos leaves and sometimes a big dinosaur goes into the water.

The robo dinos don't die. They start breathing fire too. Godzilla and the robo dinos both shoot fire at each other. A big explosion and the fire cause a big hole in the ground and a couple of robo dinos, Godzilla, and the baby godzilla all fall into the hole. There are also tall trucks in the hole and humans driving them.

Godzilla lives, he's undefeatable.

The dinos meet Godzilla and try to make peace, but Godzilla doesn't want peace. They fight and Godzilla knocks down a building. It goes up in flames.

Godzilla stops eating the dinosaurs because he only eats fish now. There's peace since Godzilla stops eating dinos.

Then, Godzilla lays eggs. 200 eggs! That's a lot of eggs!

A big robo dino lays around 500 eggs, and the pile is taller than a building. Baby dinosaurs come out and everyone is friends. There's lots of babies.

The movie is over.

Movie 3: Godzilla VS King Kong

This movie is about a godzilla and gorilla.

King Kong came from Japan. Godzilla lives in the rocks and King Kong lives in the caves. Godzilla is in the water sometimes, so that's where he meets King Kong.

King Kong always feels power from the lightning in his body because he's a lightning god! Godzilla almost throws lightning at King Kong, but King Kong catches the lightning with his hands. He puts the lightning on Godzilla.

Now, the field around them is all static. Godzilla uses fire from his mouth and aims it at King Kong. King Kong falls on the ground and Godzilla uses his tail on King Kong. King Kong isn't hurt, exactly, and he uses his lightning to get up off the ground. He calls out Godzilla.

Helicopters show up at different times and humans are in them. Godzilla burns the helicopters and King Kong uses his hand to get rid of them. They destroy the helicopters which fall and get stuck in the power lines. They are burned by the power lines.

King Kong uses the light in his brain to move the helicopters. Godzilla tries to go to the helicopter that's burning. Godzilla burns a whole building down.

Godzilla is trying to get to the humans because he almost loves them. Now, Godzilla and King Kong are fighting because Godzilla tries to save the humans. King Kong destroys buildings, people, and

train stations, too. He is a little good, a little bad.

The helicopter hits the rocks and there is an explosion.

King Kong goes into the water because he's scared; he's just trying to get away and escape. Godzilla also tries to swim away but he's not fast enough, so he walks instead.

Godzilla goes into a big tunnel where there are a lot of babies. He meets the godzilla mother and babies who are hiding in the tunnel. He wants to protect his babies.

King Kong and Godzilla walk away and disappear. King Kong goes to China and Godzilla takes his family to Japan.

The humans rebuild everything. King Kong and Godzilla go to sleep until something in the distant future wakes them up.

The movie is over.

Superhero Dad

By Sam Jansen

In collaboration with Ritu Peddinti and Olivia Alger



Two years ago, my family took a trip to Florida. The car ride down was hard, but mostly the trip was okay. We have been going to Florida for thirty years. Dad stayed back at the condo this year because he couldn't do much — he just had toe surgery and had to take medicine every two hours. At the time, he had COVID, but we didn't know it. We used to go to all the parks in

Disney World together and go swimming at the different pools. We would go shopping at the stores and watch shows at the theater, like the circus and the Blue Man Group. That time, though, we didn't go to any shows. We just went to the Disney parks and then came home and told Dad all about our day.

While we were at the beach later that night, Dad got a call from Stitch saying that he needed help. "Help! Come quick!" Dad got on his motorcycle and immediately headed to Disney Park to find Stitch. When he got there, he saw smoke coming out of the castle. He went to the castle to find Stitch. Stitch was in there trying desperately to get out, but he couldn't find a way. Dad grabbed a Green Arrow out of his case and he shot it at the wall of the castle, then entered through the window. He found Stitch and grabbed him, pulling him to safety. To get back out of the castle, Dad swung back from the window he came through. Dad dropped Stitch off safe and sound back at his beach, where he could happily surf.

Dad came back to the condo to meet us. I asked, "What have you been up to?"

"Just hanging out and relaxing," Dad said, and he put his feet up. After this, we all went back home from Florida.

After a few days of us relaxing, Dad went to the hospital. He had gotten sick on Thanksgiving, right before we left. At the hospital, Dad found out that he had COVID. He was worried about not being able to be a superhero anymore and told us that he had been undercover. We were shocked!

We asked him a lot of questions after this. We asked why he chose to be a superhero, how he managed to hide it from us, and who he saved. He saved a lot of people, and that's why he was sneaky all the time. Throughout his superhero career, he saved thirteen people. A few weeks later, on Christmas Eve, Dad passed away. Before he passed away, he told us, "You're the superheroes next. It's in our blood." We had no idea until he told us that day, and we drove ourselves crazy thinking about it. We didn't know what we were doing.

My sister would be Supergirl. She had a lot of powers. She was super strong, super fast, had lasers in her eyes, could fly,

and could see through walls. She could hear everyone's thoughts with her superhuman hearing; she was an alien from planet Super. Our parents had known the whole time; Supergirl was adopted, and she had known that she had powers as long as my dad had. I had no idea because I was the youngest.

I was The Flash. I had super speed, I could go anywhere, and I could time travel. I got struck by lightning when I was a baby, which gave me my powers. I was sixteen when my dad passed away, and we were slowly figuring out our powers. Our mom helped us train, and took us to the secret place our dad did everything. We practiced running at Disney, and I practiced time travel by going back to where my dad was buried. Supergirl practiced her powers in her own secret room. There was a secret door to enter, and I wasn't allowed to go. The door only opened if Supergirl used her eyes to enter. At the start, Supergirl and I trained alone, but we worked well together when it was time to go out to crime scenes. We wanted to use our powers for good.

The first time we worked together, a bad guy was trying to steal jewelry in the city. He was trying to steal bracelets, earrings, and rings from the Stitch store. Our phones beeped to let us know that there was a crime scene. Supergirl flew there and I ran. Supergirl used her laser powers to bring down the bad guy, and we put him in a cop car. The cops were very thankful that we helped them. We solved a lot more crimes after this. In total, we visited and helped out at 30 crime scenes.

Stitch also became a superhero after this. Because Stitch used to be friends with my dad, he wanted to help us out. The first time we met him, he told us the story of how my dad had saved him in Florida. That made us miss our dad a lot. Stitch had the same powers as Dad. We had gotten a new

costume and arrows from Stitch that looked like my dad's after he passed away.

Stitch started telling us stories of what he and Dad used to do. Stitch and Dad met in high school; Stitch, Dad, and Mom all were good friends. Stitch and Mom are still friends; he visits sometimes from his home far away. When they were in high school, the three of them used to go bowling with my Papa (my mom's dad). My dad and my Papa used to be on bowling teams back then. Stitch, Mom, and Dad used to hang out at each other's houses and went out to dinners. They were all very close.

When they were younger, Stitch and Dad went on a trip together. They went to Paris. They saw the Eiffel Tower, they went out for dinners and parties, and they had a really good time. In Paris, Stitch met a girl named Belle. Belle was blonde and really nice. In the spring, Stitch told us that he and Belle would come back to visit. Together, they had a kid named Beauty and the Beast.

Stitch told us that Dad used to love NASCAR. He had a lot of friends (all named Dave) who used to work on the tracks and he also wanted to work there. Dad really wanted to ride a NASCAR car, so he used to go watch the races. Dad used to have a bunch of NASCAR stuff in the house: books, cars, big trucks, and his favorite team car. Stitch didn't seem to like NASCAR as much as Dad.

When Stitch was telling his stories, I thought about us going to Hershey Park. My dad used to love Reese's. He loved peanut butter. He loved peanut butter pie and peanut butter ice cream.

I also thought about how we used to go camping. We used to go camping with friends, but after Grandma passed away, we bought our own camper. It was huge! It was really hard to sleep in because of the number of people in it. I used to sleep in the table seat, my sister slept on the couch, and my

parents slept in the room. It was even more cramped when we had friends with us! We also had a cat with us who was a total camper cat. His name was Oreo; Oreo is black and white, just like an Oreo cookie. Oreo was a really bad sleeper and would jump on my back at night when he couldn't sleep. I wanted to yell, "Oreo!" but I had to be quiet because everyone was sleeping.

Hearing Stitch talk about my dad made me feel sad sometimes, but it also made me feel good. It's one reason I'm making this story to help me out because I was having the roughest year ever. I had to have ankle surgery the same year because I had an extra bone growth I wasn't supposed to have. Talking about my dad has made me feel better going into this year: I'm looking for a job, I'm excited to go on this vacation to Florida, and I'm excited to finally get a break. So much has happened this past year that I think I deserve a break.

When my dad passed away, it was really hard for me; I don't know why I felt like this, because my dad and I were never super close. I think the reason it was hard was because I always wanted to prove to Dad that I could do things and that he was wrong. Back then he didn't like what I did or that I was helping my mom cook because he thought I would hurt myself. I wanted to show him that I could do a lot of things on my own, and that I could spend time with him and talk to him like my sister did. I never got much of that. I was lucky with what I got, but it was still really rough.

My mom was the last person to see my dad before he passed away, and that was really hard to deal with; some of my friends just don't get that. Everyone else in my family who passed was way different because I had gotten to see them before they passed away. With my dad, it was different - I didn't get to see him and he was my dad. I didn't think I would make it. I stopped

working, I quit my Job Coach program, and it was all just too much. Getting better and getting my ankle surgery was important to me because I knew I needed to get better. This year has still been kind of rough for me, but it's getting better. This story is helping me talk things out and figure out my life.

If I could talk to my dad right now, I'd tell him that even though it was rough sometimes, I love him still.

Chapter 10: Light at the end of the Tunnel (from the novel *Neo-Wild West*)

By Caleb Dingus
In collaboration with Steven Crowell



Part One

Date: July 4th, 2086

Location: Los Supai Village, June's Adobe

Time: 6:00 am

Introduction: One year after the Troglodyte War, June is still sheriff of Messa Oasis. Sophie has embraced her Lycan-Thorpe

heritage—her werewolf side. And Nora has become a homicide investigator for the Los Angeles California Police Department. Takashi has led a large group of rogues who defected from Mesa Springs. Luna has custody of June's other daughter and lives on a ranch with her wife.

“Sophie, are you ready for the sunrise dance?” June asks.

Sophie answers: “Yes, Mom!!!”

June: “I’m sorry we had to leave early last year because of the restoration of Mesa Oasis.”

Sophie says: “That’s ok. Oh, Mom, by the way, I have a question.”

“What is it?”

“When are Aunt Nora, Uncle Jeb, and Aunt Luna going to visit Mesa Oasis again? I miss them.”

“Let’s just worry about this first, sweetheart, before seeing them,” June replies as she braids Sophie's hair like the Native Americans did.

Sophie asks: “Mom, how did you and dad meet each other?”

“I’ll tell you one of these days, I promise, now let’s get you to that ceremony.”



A mystery woman on top of the hill is watching them using a drone.

Mystery Women: “We found them.”

Director Smith: “Good. We’re going to need all the help we can get.”

The director is in a room full of cameras talking to the mystery woman through a burner cell.

Mystery Woman replies: “Our job is to stop an all-out Civil War from happening again with both of these radical groups.”

Sargeant Frye: “We got news. The convoy outside of Seattle is being ambushed by Reaper Assassins led by Colonel Gandhi.”



Later that night, Sophie and June, along with the entire native American village, are at an all-you-can-eat buffet with food that the women of the village prepared.

June says: “Did you eat your fruits and vegetables? This is like your fifth plate of quail and your tenth plate of lamb.”

Sophie replies: “Mom, I’ll be fine.”

One of the people from the Mesa Oasis who was also at the party, named Harold, is talking to Veronica, who is of Chinese descent, and one of the women he saved during the incident in New Orleans.

Harold says: “So, Veronica, are you glad the mess with the Troglodytes is over?”

Veronica: “Yes... You’re the only father figure I had in my life, Harold. Mei has gone through so much losing both her adoptive father and her mother. That girl has been a fighter. Speaking about adoption, I put in the papers to adopt Mei.”

June mentions that Eva Belinski has been working on educating future militia members in hand-to-hand combat.

Sophie finally says she is full.

June: “Let’s get you back to the adobe.”

Back at the adobe, they hear on the radio: “Breaking News: Wild Bill’s Gang has taken over Angel Island and Alcatraz Island. The government plans on sending a rag-tag group of bounty hunters to go after them.”

Part 2: Revenge from the north

Date: May 28th, 2086

Location: Rikers Island Penal Colony

Introduction: Gabby Reyes, the daughter of Carlos Reyes, leader of the now-defunct Mongoose Assassins gang, plans a daring escape with her own gang consisting of Manny Amaro, a Brazilian National, Ernesto

Cantù, Lola Medalin, Darlene Barbarella, and Gretel Cantù.

The name of Gabby's gang is the Soho Slashers.

What, might you ask, is the reason they wanted to escape? To team up with Symbionese Liberation Wolves in an attempt to overthrow Richmond Federation governor Pamela Palin and create an autonomous state. Their main goal was to only join the group, so they could travel out west to the mountaintop lake colony to kill Daryl Tanaka, Brian Curry, Jeb Eason (who was going to be the hardest one to find), and finally Latoya Eason.

The group escaped the island by stealing the warden's yacht.



Location: Shakey's Bar, New Belfast, formally known as Maine

Introduction: Brian Curry, a former Black Panther Renegade member and pilot for the Ranger Corps, makes a lot of money, but he sure knows how to spend it on a lot of alcohol. At this rate, he should pretty much rent the room at Shakey's.

Brian: "Hey bartender, how 'bout another round of whiskey!!! Burp!!!"

Tapper, the Bartender: "You have had enough. I'm cutting you off, Mr. Curry!!!"

Brian walked out to the alleyway to smoke a toothpick when he was struck in the face with a two-by-four.

Gabby: "Hello, Mr. Curry, tell us where Daryl is!!!"

Brian sarcastically remarks: "Why do you want to know that? I haven't spoken to him in years!!!"

Manny grabbed a kendo stick and proceeded to beat Brian to near death.

Gabby: "Will you tell us now??!!!"

Brian mumbled out two words: ".....grr urg!!! I'm sorry, Huey!!!"

Ernesto began to break Brian's fingers one by one.

Gabby: "Give me the sledgehammer!!!"

Brian was beaten to death by the ruthless gang. His face was unrecognizable from the beating.



Location: Latoya's house, Compton, South California

Introduction: Latoya was having a picnic with Jeb and his cousin Roy when a van with several military-like soldiers performed a drive-by shooting, killing Roy, Latoya, and mortally wounding Jeb, who was shot in the stomach and shoulder.

June arrives on the scene with deputy Tara Tamin, who's Claudia Tamin's daughter. Also at the scene is detective Nora Li.

Steven, who was with Takashi, got the news via telegram. He and Takashi realized this wasn't an isolated incident and decided to investigate with Takashi's group despite being in NWAA.



Location: Los Angeles, New South California

The next day, Jeb Eason escaped from the hospital. How did he survive? He slowed down his heartbeat with a special pacemaker that was installed inside him. The pacemaker slowed down his heartbeat and prevented him from bleeding out. But he was still injured though. He escaped with a

maintenance man's uniform before going to the local veterinarian clinic where he held the staff at gunpoint and forced them to do surgery on his injuries. Jeb then dug up the money he had hidden in the Play Bunny Mansion that was once a stronghold for the Black Panther Renegades that was now abandoned. He then went to the local arm's dealer and bought every gun imaginable before getting a hockey mask with what was left of the money.

Jeb said: "Next stop, Angel Island."

The mystery woman calls him on the phone to tell him that State Marshall Yamamoto and Agent Cilia will be there to pick him up from the island via helicopter once he has liberated it from Wild Bill's Gang and the Symbionese Liberation Wolves.

Henry's Influence on Steve

By Jane Gefell

In collaboration with Cooper Harris and Rita Pei



There was a baby boy born on May 19, 1920. His name was Henry. He grew up in the city of Rochester, New York. He had four sisters, Rita, Milly, Aggie, and Florence, and a brother, Ed. Life went on as normal for the Gefell family members until 1944, the year when Henry was drafted for the Navy. I am sure that was sad for his parents who were Edward and Mary Gefell. Now, Henry C. got to the port to serve with

the Navy and he met his new home called the Destroyer USS Hunt DD- 674. DD-674 was the number on his destroyer.

Then later on in Henry's life he met his wife. They got married and had five boys and three girls. Henry's wife was named Rita. Rita had a brother named Frank McAlpin. Frank married his wife Gloria. They had six boys and one daughter.

Now I can tell you about their son that was born in 1969, just one year before me. This son would be a different kind of person who would march to the beat of his own drum. At a very young age, Steve McAlpin would play with military stuff like all little boys do.



Brothers Ken and Steve

Life went on for the Gefell and the McAlpin families. The Gefell family had their third baby girl. Now this baby would have extra special needs for her whole life. This baby was me. My life is beautiful and a blessing for others in my life. Also, my life would have many challenges.

Many years later, the McAlpin boy grew from playing with his brothers in the house with military toys into a man going into a real battlefield. Steve was inspired by his Uncle Henry to join the military. Steve served his country for twenty-six years. But right now, Steve is saying that he needs to go to Ukraine and help the Ukrainian people.

He has other matters to attend to right now, but when he goes, he will teach them about life and how different it is right now and how to cope with the war.

The reason I thought of writing this story is because this so-called war is foolish. There are people like Steve who are willing to put their lives on the line for someone who is in danger, so I interviewed him to write this story. It just goes to show what human beings are made of. Because Putin is another Hitler, I think that Steve is nuts but we are all nuts. Now he will make the world a different, better, and more safe place to live.



Steve

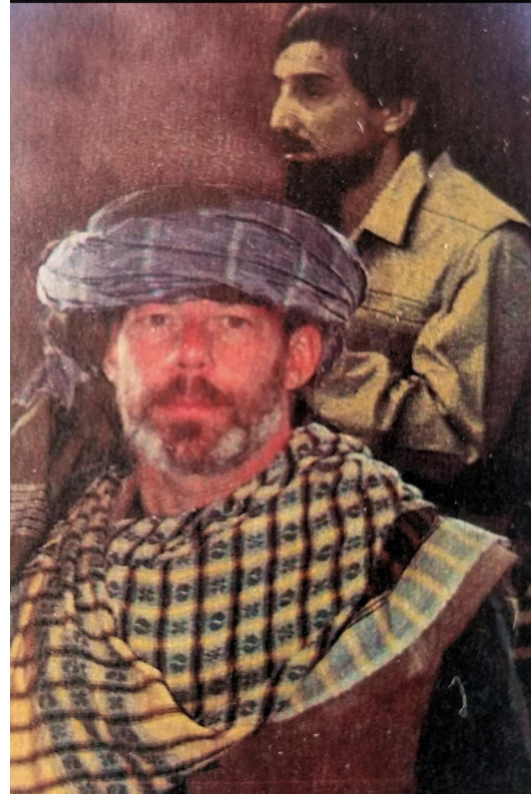
The other night as I was going back to my bedroom I thought about how I was never in a combat war, but I was born into a different kind of a war: cerebral palsy. Let me tell you something about myself: I always considered myself as handicapped because I have been able to do so much

myself. I need to explain the difference between handicapped and disabled. There was a time in my life where I was disabled when I had my left hip socket removed. Then I needed to depend upon more people to help me. That was a war for me.

Today, in my later years, I am back to where I was, handicapped, doing a lot for myself again. I have been blessed with a wonderful wheelchair that stands up and I can walk.

There are two different kinds of wars: there is the combat war where you can get really hurt and you can get killed. Now there's another type of war going on inside of ourselves no one can see... the fight only JESUS sees that is within yourself. I need to thank Jesus for giving me this knowledge that He led me to.

Nobody knows the fight that we have going on within ourselves BUT JESUS AND YOU.



Steve