

The Mirror

New Paltz Middle School Newspaper

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The Mirror Short Story Writing Event - Results

by Willow Swan

Stories entered for the short story writing event. Thank you to all who participated. Stories have been edited for grammar, spelling, etc.

The Costume

Written by Hudson Powell

Chapter One

“Please mom!” begged Ian O’Connor. “No sweetie, it’s too expensive, and if your sister saw that she would freak out.” Miss O’Connor refused. Ian had begged his mother to take him shopping for weeks and now she wouldn’t even let him get the costume he wanted. Ian let out a frustrated sigh as him and his mother left the store to go check the thrift shop for costumes. On their way to the thrift shop Ian’s mother asked, “How about we get you a nice cold soda before we get you your costume?” trying to cheer him up. It didn’t work, but Ian knew he couldn’t turn down a soda, so he replied with a mumbled “Okay.” As Ian slurped down his soda he saw a costume outside 22 Chestnut Drive and yelled “Pull over!” and his mom did. He ran up to the costume, and realized that it wasn’t as scary as it looked from a distance, and Ian couldn’t even tell what it was. From the way Ian saw it, the costume looked like a vampire, jester, zombie, spirit, werewolf, but his mom was already talking with the creepy old man selling it “I’ll take it!” said Miss O’Connor. “Are you sure? There’s no turning back, and it especially is not all fun and games,” warned the creepy old man. Ian was trying to pull his mom away from the creepy old man when Ian froze, and wondered what the old man meant by “It isn’t all fun and games”. Ian was brought back into reality by his mother yelling, “C’mon Ian, we gotta go home!” Ian hurled the costume into the car as his mom drove away. Ian fell asleep and woke up in a dark room filled with all sorts of creepy creatures. He let out a blood-curdling scream. Ian soon realized that all the creatures are... costumes. Ian ran through the door in the creepy dark room, hoping it would bring him outside, but he wound up in the same room. Ian collapses to the floor in fear and confusion when he hears footsteps from behind him. Ian slowly turned his head around when he saw the costume he bought from the creepy old man, and then everything went dark.

Chapter Two

Ian woke up in his car with his mom yelling at him to get out of the car, and to bring the costume with him. It took Ian a minute to get up and realize it was a nightmare, and then he sighed in relief and hopped out of the car. Ian dragged the costume inside the house and his sister (Cathy) screamed “AAAAH! Ian, the costume is too scary!” “It’s not that scary,” Ian tried to convince her. “Just think of it as a green guy with fangs that’s a jester.” Ian couldn’t think of a better word to calm her down. Ian ignored her response and went into his room to play on his Radio Shack computer to play the Oregon trail. “Dinner!” Ian’s mom yelled. Ian stumbled out of his room and slumped down in a chair “What’s for dinner?” Ian asked his mom. “Canned beans and macaroni, go get your sister and father.” Ian jumped out of his chair and knocked on his sister’s door, then walked down to his father’s workshop. Thankfully the door wasn’t locked, but it usually was because Mr. O’Connor fixes and makes dolls, and he claims Cathy and Ian make too much ruckus. Ian opened the door and saw his father... dead on the floor.

Chapter Three

Ian panicked and ran over to his father’s dead body and then “BOO!!!” Mr. O’Connor scared Ian. “What the heck Dad!” Ian said in fear and frustration. Ian mumbled “Dinner time” and stomped upstairs. During dinner Mr. O’Connor asked Ian if he could wear his costume, and Ian, still being upset about when his father scared him, Ian didn’t reply. “Ian, I’m sorry for scaring you, but I want to be sure I’m getting my money’s worth out of that costume.” Ian went into his room with no reply and put on the costume, then stormed out into the living room so he could show his dad the costume. “It looks great!” Mr. O’Connor exclaimed. Ian went into his room and took off the mask, and he could have sworn it looked like the nostrils of the mask were breathing. Just then Ian realized Cathy wasn’t at dinner. Ian quickly ran out into the kitchen to inform his mom “Mom, where’s Cathy?” “Probably went to Amy’s house, you know how she hates macaroni.” Ian didn’t think anything else of it, and he went to bed. At about 3:00 AM, Ian heard rummaging in his closet, so he went to check it out, and he couldn’t believe what he saw.

Chapter Four

Ian saw his sister on the floor of his closet crying, and he asked her if she was okay. “No... I’m not, your costume came and shoved me in here, I’m so hungry.” Ian didn’t believe her “Yeah, yeah, very scary, go to bed!” Cathy ran into her room scared, and Ian thought about if what Cathy said was true, but then he figured it was just a prank. Ian went to bed and woke up in a creepy torture room, that had him chained to a wall, and every 3 minutes or so the torture machine stretched, but Ian couldn’t tell the exact time, because his watch didn’t show numbers in whatever reality he was in... it showed symbols. Ian almost got his wrist loose when he felt unimaginable pain coursing through his body... Then it went dark once again. Ian woke up and realized he had

another nightmare. He looked around his room, hoping the whole rest of yesterday was a nightmare, but it wasn't. Ian jumped out of bed and kept looking over his shoulder, and was very paranoid. He didn't see his family anywhere around the house. He went downstairs to see if his dad was there, but all that was there was... The costume. Ian screamed and his scream alerted the costume, then he found himself in the same room from his dreams. Ian ran from the costume, but eventually he got tired, and it led to him getting dragged into the torture room from his nightmare. Ian got his whole body free, because he had done this before. Ian jumped out a window and felt shards of glass sink into his skin and screamed in pain. Ian found himself trapped inside... a creepy old man. Ian had no control over what he was doing, but from what he could see, he was giving a costume to a little kid, and the last words he ever heard were "Are you sure? There's no turning back, and it especially is not all fun and games."

The End

In the House

Written by Julian Montero

This tale comes from a "call" that was made a long while ago by a child by the name of Redacted (who has chosen to be removed from the report) who called the "police" to his home over a home invasion. This is what he told us when we interviewed him. My parents and sister were going to run some errands and come back with dinner. They asked me if I wanted to come. I said no, they said ok, and then left. I went upstairs and began playing some games with my online friends. A couple hours passed and my family was still not home yet. It began to rain, which stinks, but what could I do? Minutes pass then it starts thundering outside and the rain hits my window. I see a light pass the window. I look out there and realize it's nighttime. Then out of the corner of my ear I hear the front door open, I got to the hallway right before the stairs and called down to my mom, dad, and sister. No response; I call out again and I hear my sister's voice. She called me downstairs saying she has a surprise for me. Although I was excited to see my family back home, my sister's voice wasn't right. It sounded off-tone and unfamiliar and I had this weird feeling in my stomach. I called to my sister to come upstairs. She just called back saying come downstairs - I have a surprise for you! I stood silent for a second in worry. The kitchen light turned on. The only thing illuminated was a tiny bit of the bottom of the stairs, but not enough to see down the stairs. My sister calls again repeating the same thing, this time from the bottom of the stairs. She brings her hand up waving toward herself as if telling me to come to her. I ask her to come into the light and she just walks away saying the same thing. Now in distress, I walk back to my room and barricade the door as well as locking it. As soon as I do, there is a bang on my door and I ask "Who's there?". My sister's response is once more saying "Open this door". She starts banging the door harder and faster, screaming "open the door" over and over. At this point I call the police. I tell them a home invasion is going on in my house. They say they're on their way and when I hung up the banging stopped, so I assumed she must have fled when she heard me call. Then behind me I

heard something hit my window. I walked over to it and looked out the window. I saw my family standing outside holding hands all looking up at me in the window smiling with their heads tilted. They remained there until the police sirens rang which is when I turned away from the window and quickly turned back and they were gone. The police arrived, my parents got home and saw me get questioned by the police and asked me what happened. They still don't believe me. But to this day I still don't know who or what that was.

My Review on Atlantis Resort's Aquaventure Waterpark

by Willow Swan

Over spring break I had the unique opportunity to go to Atlantis Resort in Nassau, Bahamas. Although Atlantis has many different things to see, such as beautiful beaches and amenities inside the hotel, I specifically got to experience their Aquaventure Waterpark. Here I am going to be reviewing all of the slides and attractions in the waterpark. I hope you find these reviews helpful if you ever decide to go to Atlantis.

Mayan Temple Slides



Full view of The Leap of Faith

The Leap of Faith

The Leap of Faith is the headliner ride at the Aquaventure Waterpark. The duration of this ride is only about 5 seconds long, but it still continues to terrify people from around the world. The Leap of Faith is basically a 60-foot near vertical drop that sends you into a pool of sharks (you are in a clear tube). My opinion on this ride is that it's basically a giant psychout session because people are expecting it to be super scary, since it's a giant vertical drop into a shark pool. All the hype makes people way more scared of it than they actually should be, and many people chicken out at the top. Reality is, this ride is only 5 seconds long and not that scary at all. Don't get me wrong, this slide is very fun and a no-miss attraction. This was my favorite ride I went on at Atlantis.

AND for any fans of the Amazing Race (the best show ever created on earth) they have to ride the version of Leap of Faith in Dubai in season 15, episode 6! Watch the Amazing Race on Prime Video! *



The Challenger

View from the bottom of The Challenger

The Challenger is a racing slide where two people can race side by side and see their race times at the end when they splash into a pool. These slides are almost identical to the Leap of Faith, but there is a bump in the middle of the slide and they aren't as vertical as the Leap of Faith. This slide is usually used as a warm up for Leap of Faith if people are intimidated by it. Overall, I think with the short duration of this ride and overall simplicity, it can be skipped. However, if you have extra time or want to race one of your family members, this is a good choice.



The Jungle Slide

The jungle slide twisting and turning through plants

The Jungle Slide is a short body slide that twists and turns through trees and plants. This attraction is middling in duration, and not as intense as some of the other slides at the park. This ride also has a super long line in the middle of the day, which is surprising for a non-headliner ride. In conclusion, this slide is a great choice for younger kids, or if you have extra time at the end of the day. **IMPORTANT:** Don't wait in a super long line for this, it's not worth it. Come back another time or skip entirely.



The Serpent Slide

The clear tube at the end of the slide that goes through a shark pool

The Serpent Slide is the only tube slide (where you have to sit in an inner tube) in the Mayan Tower and, in my opinion, a no-miss. This slide is twisty and in the dark for most of the ride, until the end, where you move slowly through a clear tube in a pool filled with sharks. This is the same pool that the Leap of Faith slide goes through, but you are moving so fast in the Leap of Faith you can't enjoy seeing the marine life. Overall, this is a very enjoyable slide and the first ride you should ride when you enter the park.

Power Tower



The Abyss

The pool with fishtanks at the bottom of The Abyss

The Abyss is the only slide that does not require an inner tube in the Power Tower, and it is unique in many more ways than that, as well. There is not a lot of advertising for this ride, and it is 100% in the dark the entire time, meaning you pretty much have no idea what to expect, so I'll tell you. This ride is basically the Leap of Faith, in the dark. However, it's much less intimidating than the Leap of Faith, because you can't see the ride from the line. You go down the drop, there's a long stretch of water splashing in your face, and then you splash down in a pool. The pool at the end is the best part of the ride, because of the fish tanks filled with prehistoric fish. And, this ride

rarely has long wait times because of the short duration. NOTE - If you are not planning on riding The Abyss, still take the walk to the top of the Power Tower to see the great view of the Caribbean waters.



The Drop

The queue for The Drop before you head into the darkness

The Drop is one of the three water rollercoasters at Atlantis, and is in the first level of the Power Tower, along with its sister slide, The Falls. The Drop begins with a (of course) drop through darkness, and then some repetitive twists and turns. This (and

other) water rollercoasters are super fun, but I feel the need to mention some disclaimers (they apply to all the water rollercoasters).

1- If you are riding in a single person tube, the tube WILL spin! If you do not want to spin while riding, make sure you ride in a two-person tube with someone else.

2- These rides can have the potential to hurt you BADLY if you don't keep your back and legs up.



The Falls

The view of the caribbean from the first hill of The Falls

The Falls is extremely similar to its sister slide, The Drop, but one of the only differences is that this slide usually has slightly shorter lines because its location is farther away from the exit than The Drop's. The same disclaimers apply to this slide as to The Drop and The Surge. I like this slide better than The Drop because it is outside most of the time, rather than in the dark, so you can enjoy the scenery of the Caribbean.



The Surge

The incredible view from the start of The Surge from the top of the Power Tower

The Surge is a water rollercoaster just like The Drop and The Falls, but this slide is different on many levels.

- The Surge starts at the top level of the Power Tower like The Abyss, unlike the Drop and Falls which start on the middle level.
- This slide is more intimidating too; it starts with a big drop that scares a lot of people.
- After the ride is over, you get spit out into a rapids river section with waterfalls and swiftly moving waters, which is like another half of the ride itself.

Lines for this slide can be long, but I think this is a no-miss attraction.

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*Thanks for reading my review on Atlantis Resort's Aquaventure waterpark! If you decide to visit, I hope you consult this guide!*

## Stop Seaworld!

*by the Mirror Staff*

Seaworld. The name rings fun.

But a terrible truth? Seaworld is no fun for the creatures living there. Read more in Sonia Levy's article *The Truth About Aquariums*, right in this issue of the Mirror. Her article also includes related reading to learn more about the terrible lives of animals in aquariums.

One of the worst places for sea creatures is the famous Seaworld. Do you want to help the animals who live in this horrible place? Sign this petition: [Petition · Help Shut Down SeaWorld · Change.org](#)



Students of New Paltz Middle School, we at the Mirror ask you to open your hearts and help get the above petition to 75,000 signatures! The animals of Seaworld thank you!

Sources: The animals that are suffering don't care about sources.

(But also check Sonia Levy's article for sources, since we actually do need them.)

## Country Music Recommendations From Willem Weston

*by Lauren Jameson*

**“Personally, country music is the best music ever made”**

Willem Weston, a 10th grade country music enthusiast, shared his recommendations for country music for the average listener.

According to Willem, older country music is better than the newer releases. He recommends Johnny Cash, Willie Nelson, and Hank Williams for older releases, however he also recommends more recent artists such as Toby Keith, Chris Stapelton and Walker Hayes. Willem specifically recommends Walker Hayes if you like “fun music”, such as songs, “AA”, “Fancy Like” and “You Broke Up With Me”.



Willem Weston, interviewee

Willem recommends Willie Nelson since it “helps keep (you) out of a depressed mood” he recommends the songs “Whiskey River” and “Can I Sleep In Your Arms” by this artist.

Although, out of all of the older-country recommendations, Willem states that most songs by Johnny Cash are recommendable.

Regarding newer music, he says, “If I have to listen to newer ones, it is normally Walker Hayes or Chris Stapelton, Toby Keith- he did a song with Willie Nelson which is “Whiskey For My Men, Beer For My Horses”

# Salted Caramel Poke Cupcakes with Cream Cheese Frosting

by Noah Solano

*Partly adapted from Simply Perfect Vanilla Cupcakes by Sally's Baking Addiction*

This recipe is delicious - the caramel mixes perfectly with the sweet vanilla and the tangy cream cheese. I recently made these cupcakes for some friends, and they were loved by all. If you don't want to do the work of baking the cupcakes from scratch, you can use a mix and just add the caramel and the frosting.

## Ingredients

### *Cupcakes:*

1 and 3/4 cups flour  
3/4 teaspoon baking powder  
1/4 teaspoon baking soda  
1/8 teaspoon salt  
1/2 cup salted butter, softened to room temperature  
1 cup granulated sugar  
3 large egg whites, at room temperature  
2 1/2 teaspoons pure vanilla extract

1/2 cup whole milk at room temperature  
1/2 cup full-fat sour cream at room temperature  
1 jar caramel sauce

### *Frosting:*

8 oz or 1 block of cream cheese (softened)  
1 stick of butter (softened)  
Powdered sugar to taste  
About 1 teaspoon of vanilla extract

1. Preheat the oven to 350°F. Line a 12-cup muffin pan with cupcake liners.
2. Whisk the flour, baking powder, baking soda, and salt together.
3. Beat the butter until smooth and creamy. Add the sugar and beat until creamed together. Scrape down the sides and up the bottom of the bowl with a rubber spatula as needed.
4. Add the egg whites and vanilla extract. Beat until combined, then beat in the sour cream. Scrape down the sides and up the bottom of the bowl as needed.
5. Add the dry ingredients until just incorporated. Next, slowly pour in the milk and whisk until combined. Do not over-mix. You may need to whisk a lot to make sure there are no lumps at the bottom of the bowl. The batter will be slightly thick.
6. Pour/spoon the batter into the liners – don't fill too much so they don't overflow while baking. Bake for 19-22 minutes, or until a toothpick inserted in the center comes out clean. Allow the cupcakes to cool completely before frosting.

7. While the cupcakes are cooling, start the frosting by combining the cream cheese and the butter with a fork. Then dump in some powdered sugar (however much you think is best, though I typically use about 2 cups). Combine with a whisk. Put in the vanilla extract and whisk. Now, taste the frosting. If it tastes good to you, leave it. If not, add more sugar (if you think it's not sweet enough) or more vanilla (if you can't taste the vanilla).
8. Microwave the caramel sauce until a little thicker than syrup (about 10 seconds).
9. Once the cupcakes are *completely* cooled, poke the back of a wooden spoon into the center of a cupcake. Spin the spoon a few times and then carefully remove it. Fill the indent with about one spoonful of caramel sauce. Repeat on the remaining eleven cupcakes.
10. Once you have filled all the cupcakes, frost them! Then eat, share, and enjoy!

Sources: [Sally's Baking Addiction](#), Chelsea Farley and her recipe book

## **Cryptids and where to find them**

*by Julian Montero*

A cryptid, for those who do not know, is a creature or monster that has not been caught on camera or confirmed to exist but has been seen by some and shared as stories like bigfoot. To begin, we'll talk about a more known cryptid called the mothman. His location is West Virginia, also known as the cryptid capital of the world, named because of all the tales that have been told there.

The mothman is a very known creature in West Virginia and the world even so much to get a movie and an appearance in a game: Fallout 76. His origin is nothing but mystery. No one has been able to figure out a clear origin, but the theories are that it was an escaped government experiment. His first sighting was on November 12th 1966. Allegedly, 5 grave diggers saw a human-like thing soaring above them. Three days later, two couples spotted a white winged creature standing in front of their headlights. When questioned, they mentioned it was like no monster on tv. They also described it as having red fiery eyes .

The next sighting is likely the most known of the bunch and the most impactful. On December 15th 1967, the Silver Bridge in Point Pleasant, West Virginia collapsed, killing 46 people. The strangest part of that situation is that some people mentioned seeing a winged man-like creature hanging around the bridge just minutes before the collapse, which left locals to believe the mothman was a sign of disaster; some called him the harbinger of doom. From that day forward, the town of Point Pleasant has used the mothman somewhat as a tourist attraction with a statue and everything like a pizza shaped like a moth, but the question still is unanswered: is he real or just a money trap?

Sources:

<https://theportalist.com/mothman-sightings> for the sightings

## Marvel phase five rumored and confirmed projects

*by James O'Sullivan*

Rumored projects: X Men, Nova, Thunderbolts, Shang Chi 2, World War Hulk

**X men:** The X Men are one of marvel's most famous superhero teams. This team is based on people who are called mutants. Mutants have powers. Most mutants use their powers for good and follow their leader Professor Xavier or Professor X for short.

**Shang Chi 2:** Shang Chi and the legends of the ten rings already came out. This will be the follow up project if this rumored project actually happens we might see Shang Chi join the avengers or maybe another team in this rumored movie.

**Thunderbolts:** The Thunderbolts in the comics are made up of imprisoned supervillains who go on missions for the government, usually for their freedom or lighter sentences.

**World War Hulk:** World War Hulk will be the next civil war. Marvel fans think, we are not really sure what will happen in the movie, but we think that Hulk will be the villain if this movie does come out.

**Nova:** We have already seen the Nova Corps in Marvel's Guardian of the Galaxy and this would be based off of the Nova Corps. We Marvel fans are not sure what will happen in the movie, but I think you should read the comics on this character because he is one of my favorites.

Confirmed: Captain America 4, Deadpool 3, Fantastic 4, Blade

**Blade:** Blade is a vampire he already has been in the tv screen before and we hope to see him in the MCU maybe even working with Morbius, Moon knight, or the person at the first post credit scene in Eternals that would be awesome.

**Fantastic 4:** The Fantastic 4 are Marvel's first superhero team. They work with the Silver Surfer and some of their villains are Doctor Doom and Galactus. These are really cool superheroes and I think you should check them out for yourself.

**Deadpool 3:** This movie would just be the follow up movie to the Deadpool series and it might be a really good movie.

**Captain America 4:** This movie will be focused on the new Captain America Sam Wilson and Bucky Barnes. This MCU hero will be the first to have a tv series and a film and we can't wait till this movie comes out on the big screen.

Sources: Screenrant.com

## 5 reasons why writing a fantasy book is harder than you think

*by Charlie Gorosh*

Writing a book is extremely complicated, more complicated than one might think. Here are some of the ways it might be more complicated (and fun) than you would originally think.

One, world building. World building is equally as difficult as it is fun. First you need a name for your world, names for your kingdoms/governments and the names for the religions that you might want to put into your world to make it seem extra realistic. For the religious aspect you need what they believe, and how it will affect the plot of your book. For the kingdom/government you need a name, what religions they believe in, the leader, and if their a dystopia or not. Also if you want you can make a map of your world. All of this takes time and effort which when it comes to motivation and your daily life it's very hard to come by.

Two, creating characters. The creation of characters for a book can be rather difficult due to the fact that usually you will have multiple characters, each with their own personality traits and flaws. You also have to design the look of the characters and what they're wearing. I would personally recommend having a sketch of your characters, because it makes it easier to imagine them in the scenarios you put them into in your book.

Last but not least, three, actually writing the book. Writing the book can be a challenge for multiple reasons because confidence, also known as not feeling like the

book/chapters are long enough. Or not feeling like you have enough of a plot to make a whole story. One of the other reasons could be lack of motivation or finding a new prompt that you like more.

Even after all of this, writing a fantasy book, or any book in general is extremely fun and I would recommend it to any one who has a lot of free time and loves writing. But if you wish to publish your book that's a whole nother story.

## One of the most important organisms

*by Bennett Sheeley*

Most people think that trees make all of the air but that is not true! Scientists estimate that 50-80% of the oxygen production on Earth comes from the ocean. How is this? Prochlorococcus and other ocean phytoplankton are the reason.

That does not mean trees are pointless; they collect 50 pounds of carbon a year and are a big part of the environment. So are plankton! They are important for the food chain because they feed most of the sea. They feed fish and the fish feed more and so on.

The bad news: The trash in the sea is killing them but you can help by going to [Team Seas](#) or picking up trash. Remember that if you take a breath, it was from plankton.

### Dromaeosauridae

*by Emmett DeGrassi*

#### What is Dromaeosauridae?

Dromaeosauridae (also known as Deinonychosauria) is a clade of paravian dinosaurs, all of them were carnivorous, most Dromaeosauridae contain a unique sickle claw on their feet and were non--avian dinosaurs.



#### Utahraptor

Utahraptor were a part of the Dromaeosauridae clade and lived in North America, (specifically in Utah) during the early Cretaceous period (129.4 MYA - 122.46 MYA). Utahraptor could reach up to 4.9 feet at a mature age and could reach a length of 16 – 23 ft. when fully grown and could weigh from 660 to 2,200 pounds when at adulthood.



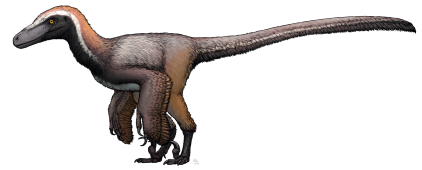
## Deinonychus

Deinonychus were a part of the Dromaeosauridae clade and lived in North America during the early Cretaceous period (125 MYA - 100.5 MYA). Deinonychus could reach up to 11 feet when at a mature age and could reach a length of 8 feet and could weigh up to 160 – 220 pounds when at a mature age.



## Pyroraptor

Pyroraptor, were a part of the Dromaeosauridae clade and lived in France during the late Cretaceous period (70.6 MYA). Pyroraptor could reach up to 8 feet when at a mature age and could reach a length of 8 feet and could weigh around 77 pounds when at a mature age.



## Dromaeosauridae

Overall, Dromaeosauridae were a very interesting clade of dinosaurs that had sickle claws, and (most of them) lived in the Cretaceous period.

Have a good summer!

A quick note, I hope that all of my readers will have a wonderful summer, see you next year

Signing out for now  
-Emmett DeGrassi

**Don't miss it!!**

**Special Supplement to this issue available here:**

**[Zoe's Anime Series](#)**

To the fabulous Mirror Staff of 2021-2022,

You have all been amazing, creative, interesting, and passionate writers. I am very proud of all of you, the work that you have done, and the results of your hard work and dedication. Hope to see you all again next year. ♡~Ms. O'Malley~