

The Thinker

Issue 3

65th Session

June 27, 2025



Fourth of July Marks 249 Years for U.S.

By Lucas C.

July 4th, also known as Independence Day, celebrates the day that the original 13 colonies signed the Declaration of Independence, explaining the Second Continental Congress' July 2 decision to declare independence from Britain.

This year marks 249 years since the original signing of the Declaration.

July 4 is celebrated every year with fireworks and is a national holiday celebrated with food, festivals and, most commonly, fireworks.

According to Wallethub, a

website that provides information on credit and finances, Americans spend about \$8.9 billion on food, decorations and fireworks on the annual celebration.

Popular foods vary by region, but Southern Living magazine said some of their most popular recipes include baked beans, potato salad, deviled eggs and fruit cobblers.

Fireworks are a major part of Fourth of July celebrations for many, but they are also one of the largest causes of injury around the holiday. Only 10% of fireworks set off every July 4 are set off professionally. According to the U.S. Consumer Product

Safety Commission, firework-related injuries caused 14,700 people to seek emergency room care in 2024, a 52% increase over 2023.

Even sparklers caused an estimated 1,700 emergency room treatments in 2024, the CPSC said.

Fireworks are also a fire risk. In 2022, fireworks were related to more than 31,000 fires across the country, including 3,504 structure fires, 887 vehicle fires, 26,492 outside fires, and 418 unclassified fires, according to the National Fire Protection Association.

Fun Fourth Facts

Thomas Jefferson and John Adams both signed the Declaration of Independence and later served as presidents of the United States.

Both of them also died on the same day: July 4, 1826, the 50th anniversary of the Declaration.

James Monroe, another Founding Father who served as president, died on July 4, 1831.

The only U.S. president born on Independence Day was Calvin Coolidge, who was born on July 4, 1872.

Nintendo Releases Switch 2 Console

By Kathy Barrios

Just before the summer session, Nintendo released a new home console.

This console, which retails for \$449.99, is the direct successor to the original Switch and shares many features, but it also has significant improvements.

The Switch 2 has a larger and more powerful display than the Switch. It also contains a more powerful processor that allows it to run games that the original Switch could not.

The Switch 2 has double the amount of storage of the original Switch, allowing players to be able to store even more games on the console.

The Switch 2 joycons also allow for mouse-style movement, something the original joycons could not do.

The biggest difference that the Switch 2 has is the Game Share and Game Chat features. These two features allow users to share games and to chat with each other through the console while playing games.

The Switch 2 is backwards compatible with games from the original console, which means that players are not losing out on any of their most-loved games by switching to the newer console.

The Switch 2 also retains save data from the original Switch, so players don't have to restart games when they switch to the new console. Players can play all their beloved games at a better visual frame rate.

Overall, the Switch 2 is a great addition to the Nintendo console franchise, and I would certainly recommend getting one.

Businesses are Back

By Henry C.

Giftie businesses have resumed this year.

During the Program, Gifties have sources of income primarily from grades and jobs, but a third source can be student-run businesses. These businesses can offer a wide range of services or goods.

At the end of week three of the program, some businesses are already selling their goods and services. These businesses are in addition to the Senior Store, which sells snacks and serves as a fundraiser for the Senior class.

Maddy W. has a hair tinsel business, in which she weaves tinsel into your hair. Henry C. takes commissions for cardboard armaments and other crafts, and Madelyn W. sells drawings and portraits of Gifties.

Businesses are advertised by signs on the board next to the dorm front desk.

Past businesses have involved providing services like doing laundry or even getting custom mixed drinks at the cafeteria, according to archived issues of The Thinker.

The process for creating and conducting business is built into the GPGC government.

Gifties do need to have a business license to start a business. Unlicensed businesses can result in a \$10 ticket confiscated earnings.

To get a business license, Gifties must ask the Secretary for an application.

The proposed business owner must fill out the business name, purpose, and staff (if any).

Once approved, GPGC director Josh Brown said there are no specific operating regulations, although he said that at one time there was legislation that required students to maintain a certain GPA to continue operations.

Do Gifties Dream of Blue Sheep?

By Elizabeth B.

Dreams are normal parts of the human experience, so, that raises the question: What do Gifties dream about?

Dreams are products of our brain when we sleep, potentially caused by your brain trying to build memory, process information from the day or it could simply be incidental brain activity.

"Dreams are mental imagery or activity that occur when you sleep," behavioral sleep medicine expert Michelle Drerup, PsyD, DBSM told the Cleveland Clinic.

According to the Cleveland Clinic, dreams can occur during any stage of sleep, but your most vivid dreams typically occur in rapid eye movement sleep, or REM sleep. That's the period of sleep when your brain is highly active, your eyes move rapidly behind your closed eyes and you have temporary loss of muscle tone.

A common theme in dreams is memories or things people often encounter in their real life, but sometimes it includes media they engage with.

Giftie Tori L. said she often has nightmares. They usually

include some kind of monster and a recurring character named Rook.

Henry C. said he has had a dream about Jörmungandr, a monstrous snake that wraps around the world from Norse mythology, coming out of Lake Charles and attacking Louisiana. In Henry's dream, Jörmungandr had arms, a sword, and the head of Toothless from *How To Train Your Dragon*.

Abram Miller said he dreams mostly about people he's met in real life, and Lucas C. said he once dreamed about being in the show *Wild Kratts*.

Barbara Klein Ph.D., Ed.D., writing for Psychology Today, said the more gifted people are intellectually, the more intense and passionate their thoughts and feelings may be. That intensity can translate into experiencing dreams with more intensity.

Although there is no hard scientific evidence, many gifted people seem to have more vivid dreams, or at least remember them more clearly.

In conclusion, no, Gifties do not dream of blue sheep, but they do have some interesting dreams nonetheless!

Dinosaur of the Week

By Elizabeth B.

Gallimimus bullatus

This large theropod lived 70 million years ago in the late Cretaceous period in Mongolia.

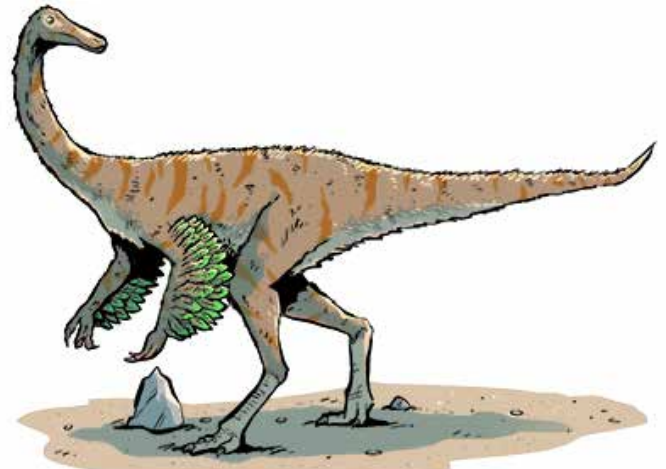
Gallimimus means "chicken mimic," referring to the similarity in vertebrae between the two.

This dinosaur is also a case of convergent evolution, similar to the Ginsu shark from last week, sharing many features with modern-day ostriches and filling a similar evolutionary niche.

They are estimated to have reached heights of

around 6.5 to 9.8 feet and been some of the fastest of all dinosaurs, being theorized to be able to run at speeds of 29 mph or more, according to the UK Natural History Museum.

Though there has been much debate over the diet of Gallimimus it may have filter fed, eaten the eggs of other dinosaurs, or it may have swallowed stones to help digest vegetation like other ornithomimids, according to research database EBSCO.



Critical Thinking: Gym for the Brain



Each week follows a particular theme, and students work in teams to solve challenges and puzzles. The pictures are scenes from Puzzle Week (during Week 2) and LEGO week (during this week). The model, left, is a free build of the Boston Tea Party. Photos courtesy Robert Markstrom and Christa Bell.

Bepuzzlement Answers

Logic Puzzle Answer
"In what direction do you live?" If they are from the city of lies, they will lie and point to the city of truth, and someone from the city of truth will point the same way.

Riddle Answers
A deck of cards
Beauty. Beauty is in the eye of the bee-holder.

Weekly Book Review

How to Train Your Dragon

By Lucas C.

Every time I read the last four books in this series I cry and then go into depression for a week because it drains me of emotions.

For this week's review, we're going to talk about the first six in the *How to Train Your Dragon* series by Cressida Cowell.

Most people have probably heard of *How to Train Your Dragon* from the show and movies. I pity all the poor souls who have not gazed upon this masterpiece.

How to Train Your Dragon is the saga of unlikely Viking hero Hiccup Horrendus Haddock the Third and how he saves both Vikings and dragons from extinction.

Across all 12 books in the series you see the story arcs of all the characters including Hiccup, Fishlegs, Snotlout, and Furious the dragon.

Every book in the *How to Train Your Dragon* series is connected in an overarching story that all comes together in the last three books. All of the books in the series have a story that does very well at building up the stakes and makes you worry for Hiccup and his crew.

The dragons are also very cool just like from the show, but one negative from the books is that because they are books there are fewer dragons, but in my opinion they have some much

better dragons.

Sea dragon Gigantus Maximus is one of the largest Dragons in the series. It is the size of five blue whales. The Monstrous Strangulator is a massive eel/octopus/dragon creature that lives in Wild Dragon Cliff and has been living there for hundreds of years.

Book one does an amazing job at building the world and setting the tone for the next couple of books. This book shows how Hiccup, who is the chief's son, is different from the other Viking children.

Hiccup is resourceful even though he isn't physically strong. The book also has good foreshadowing to the future of the series and makes you feel the power of dragons and the fear the Vikings must have had.

Book two introduces two of the most important characters of the series, Alvin the treacherous and Grimbeard the Ghastly. Grimbeard the Ghastly is Hiccup's great grandfather. He is dead, but his impacts on the world are massive. Everything in this series has happened because of what he did, and he in my opinion is one of the most interesting people in the book.

Alvin the Treacherous is the main villain of the series. What makes him so different and fun to read about is he becomes more evil in every book. His physical appearance also changes to

mirror what's happening with the character. He becomes more malformed as his hate for Hiccup consumes him.

Book three introduces Camakazi, one of my favorite characters. She is daughter of the Bog Burglar tribe's chief. The Bog Burglar tribe must beat Alvin the Treacherous and an army of Romans who hope to steal every dragon in the barbarian archipelago.

Book four shows us the Doom Fang and just how much dragons hate humans. The Doom Fang is a massive sea dragon that has been trapping the Hysteries, a Viking tribe, and Hiccup must get to the island to get the vegetable-that-must-not-be-named to save Fishlegs.

Book five is a masterpiece and shows Hiccup's bravery as he sails to the island of the Lavalouts. In this book, Alvin the Treacherous tries to use the volcano to make an army of nearly a million exterminator

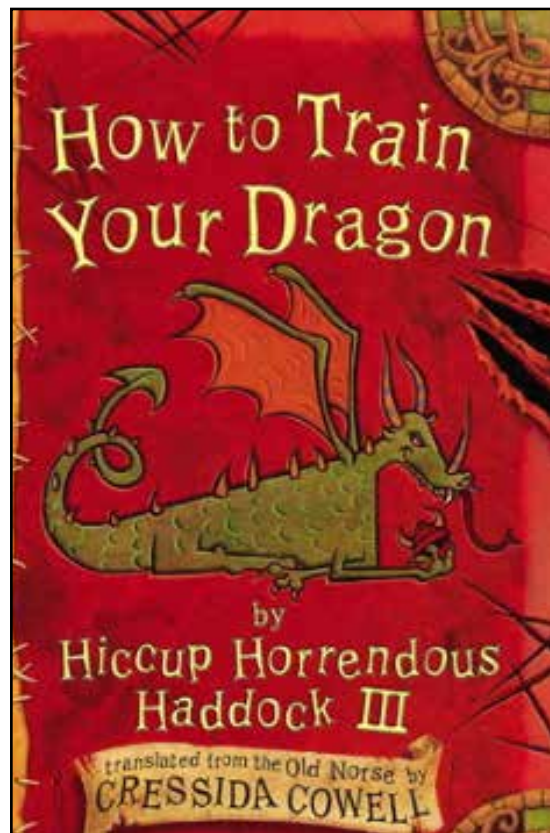


Photo from Wikipedia

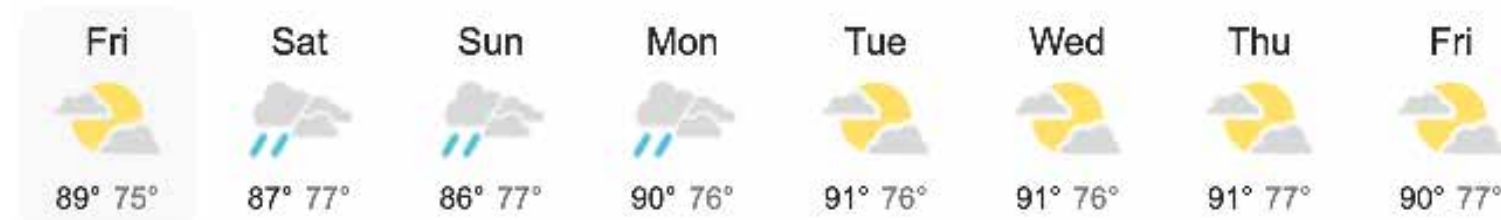
Cover of the first edition of *How to Train Your Dragon*

dragons to destroy the barbarian archipelago. While this is going on, Hiccup tries to save the world by using the fire stone, an item Stoic the Vast stole from the Lavalouts so he could marry Vallarama, Hiccup's mother.

Book six is the worst book in the series and is just kind of filler but is still enjoyable to read. It introduces the Hairy Scary Librarian, a minor villain who comes back later in the series. It also introduces Stormfly, Camicazi's dragon. This book is just mid and you could honestly skip it.

Part 2 Coming soon...

Weekly Weather Forecast



Art Prompts

By Elizabeth B. and Henry C.
(Don't forget to submit your work to *Miles to Go*!)

Saturday

Planets

Sunday

Black Hole

Monday

UFO

Tuesday

Alien

Wednesday

Astronaut

Thursday

Rocket

Friday

Space

Seen and Heard

"There's no way you peaked in a My Chemical Romance shirt."
-Elizabeth B.

"Moo... MOO!!!!" -Juan G.

"Are you gaslighting me?! There's nothing there!" -Jonah C., taking a colorblind test

"It's so cute! I wanna touch it."
-Lucas C.

"What if I called YOU a crayon eater!"
-Jessica Markstrom

"The secrets of my butt water."
-Madelyn W.

"Aahan, you're moving my fingers in ways they don't move."
-Henry C.

"I lack an esophagus." -Sir Jack

"The green one! The green one!"
-Emery H. to a blindfolded person during a Critical Thinking challenge

"Me and Cow get a Juan after the play." -Lucas C.

"The plot of the Odyssey is just Odysseus realizing he's a furry." -Tori T.

"We know that's a lie. Woof woof." -Mrs. Elayne Gabbert

"Goober is me. Goober is Madelyn. Goober is Mr. Brown. Goober is you. Goober is everything. Goober is." -Amelia L.

"Don't get me started on those guys, I might say something I would regret."
-Mr. Brown

Bepuzzlement

By Henry C.

Riddles

What has 13 hearts but no other organs?

If I am holding a bee, what do I have in my eye?

Logic Puzzle

You are at a fork in a road, with one road leading to the city of truth (where everyone tells the truth) and the other to the city of lies, (where everybody lies). There is a person standing at the fork of the road who is from one of the two cities, but you do not know which. What one question do you ask to find the city of truth?

Miles to Go is coming!
Send your cover art submissions to
milestogo@gpgc.org.

Word of the Week

By Henry C.

Magnilloquent

mag·nil·o·quent

using high-flown or bombastic language.

"Big word" -Juan G.

"Magnolia on a quent" -Emery H.

"You can say big words" -Abram Miller

"Means you're frickin' awesome" -Maddy W.

"Having a magnetic personality" -Robert Markstrom

Want to Write for The Thinker?

All Gifties and staff are welcome to submit articles to The Thinker. Deadlines are Wednesdays. Submit articles to thethinker@gpgc.org.

Editorial Staff:

Elizabeth B.
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