

The Thinker

Issue 4

66th Session

July 10, 2026



GPGC Students Travel to Camp Coushatta



Photo courtesy of GPGC

Madelyn W. and Amelia L.
practice spear throwing at Camp Coushatta

By Kathleen Barrios

Governor's Program students went to Allen Parish, Louisiana, June 30 to visit Camp Coushatta, a program run by the youth of Louisiana's Coushatta Tribe on Tuesdays and Thursdays in June.

At Camp Coushatta, children ages 12-17 in the tribe run stations teaching others about their culture. There were a total of 20 stations for students to learn from.

Stations included archery and tomahawk and spear throwing.

Students also participated in the Storymaking Station where they learned different Native American writing symbols and were able to tell a story of their own using these symbols on armbands/headbands. Students also had the chance to make jewelry and get their faces painted, as well as learn about the Kousatti language. Students also learned about the tradition of building huts out of palmettos to live in.

At a drum-making station, students learned how the

Coushatta tribe made their drums, what different drums were for, and listened to traditional drum music.

To end the program, the Coushatta tribe youth performed cultural dances and songs for attendees to see and even participate in.

After the performance, David Sickey, the chairman of the Coushatta Tribe introduced himself and taught a little more in-depth about different things they learned in the stations earlier in the day.

Gifties Earn Income Through Businesses

By Stella D.

Gifties have multiple ways to earn income over the summer, one of which is businesses.

Gifties can start businesses either alone or with friends. The businesses can be sales or services, but they must be products or services that Gifties can create with materials procured at the program or with their salaries.

A new business that started recently is the Bus Boys. Freshmen Cruz W. and AJ T.

provide a service where they pick up plates and refill drinks.

"[Businesses] can be annoying at times, but it lets you earn money," Cruz said. "There's good parts and bad parts, but I think it's worth it."

To start a business, Gifties must go to the Secretary, Grad Lydee F., and describe their business. The Secretary determines whether the idea duplicates an existing business and whether it will work.

The Secretary then gives the Giftie a business form, which

the Giftie must then fill out and return to the Secretary to get their signature.

Once the form is signed, the business is officially started, allowing customers and service. Gifties can put up business posters on the bulletin board at the desk to promote a business.

Some of the other businesses this year include Art for Life, where Arya makes art commissions, Janitorial Services, where Gifties will help clean dorms, and Henry's Cardboard Crafts, which offers cardboard



Photo Courtesy of GPGC

Henry C. with a sample of his business offerings.

Bilbo Baggins' B'day Tradition Continues

By Emma M.

Gifties will celebrate Bilbo Baggins' birthday tonight - a tradition that has continued for nearly 50 years.

Every Giftie, except for new Gifties, knows about the Bilbo Baggins Birthday Party.

The tradition started in 1976 when Giftie and then-counselor Tony Kushner wanted to do the world's largest bedtime story

for the Guinness Book of World Records, said coordinator of housing Kathy Barrios, who is also a former Giftie.

During the party, Gifties celebrate with cookie cake and milk. After singing "Happy Birthday," the lights go off and the reading begins.

Gifties take turns reading J.R.R. Tolkein's "The Hobbit" out loud by flashlight. The reader wears a special hat and can read

as long as he or she wishes. Reading order goes by seniority from Fifth years to First years.

Even though the original

party never set a world record, the tradition of celebrating Bilbo Baggins' birthday every fifth Friday of the GPGC continues.



Photo courtesy of GPGC

The official GPGC copy of J.R.R. Tolkein's The Hobbit

Gifties Relaxed with Friends, Games, Travel for Fourth of July Holiday

By Arav P.

On the Fourth of July break, most Gifties spent time with friends and family, played games and enjoyed fireworks.

Movies, concerts and hanging out with friends were popular pastimes. Kenneth B. went to a hotel and watched "Men in Black, the first one." Amelia L. said she watched "The Lord of the Rings" movies.

Saradha J., Eleanor H., Tori L. and Patrick M. all said they hung out with their friends. GPGC President AJ G. went to the Houston Symphony.

Jude Y. said she just stayed in her room, but she did come out to watch fireworks. Emma M. said

she just stayed home and chilled.

Arav P., Emery H., Keerat S. and Patrick M. shot off fireworks but did so safely. Andrew B. blew up a fish with some water dynamite.

Juan G. and Cruz W. continued watching the World Cup.

Other Gifties were more productive during the holiday weekend. Henry C. played Super Smash Bros so he could get better to defeat the people in the program. Lucas C. said he did some type of work, and Madelyn W. and Juan read for their homework.

Madelyn W., Saradha J. and Aahan C. said they slept excessively during their time off.

AJ T. said he scrolled on Tiktok and ate mozzarella sticks.

Video games and Dungeons and Dragons were common choices. Jonah C. played Tiny Tina Wonderlands, Arav P. was on Roblox and Geometry Dash Lite, and Stella D. got Animal Crossing for Nintendo Switch 1.

Water activities worked for hot weather. Emery H. went tubing. Stella D. and Arav P. also spent time at the pool.

Alanna J.G. and Arya J.G. spent the U.S.'s birthday in Panama.

Week 6 Brings Rain, Heat

By Emma M.

Gifties need to remember to bring a rain jacket and umbrella this week.

Week 6's weather appears to be rainy, with scattered to isolated thunderstorms predicted throughout the week.

When it's not raining, it will be hot with the high being an average of 92 degrees Fahrenheit and the low being an average of 77 degrees Fahrenheit.

The humidity will be a bit high on Sunday, Monday, and Tuesday so it might feel warmer than it is.

Unfortunately, the wind isn't very high to cool us down much.

Book Review: Amari and the Night Brothers

By Lucas J. C.

B. B. Alston's "Amari and the Night Brothers" is the first book in the Supernatural Investigations series, following 13 year old Amari Peters, who lives in a low-income apartment in Atlanta, Georgia, with her mom.

She is struggling with the loss of her brother, Quinton Peter, who mysteriously disappeared six months ago and hasn't contacted them since after Amari's expulsion on the last day of school.

Amari goes home and finds an email for Quinton for a delivery, and she clicks on the email, which says a package has been delivered.

When she opens the package, she gets a message from her brother Quinton revealing that magic is real and run by a ministry called the Bureau of Supernatural Affairs, a secret organization that manages magical creatures, and that he worked there. She learns he is now sponsoring her to join.

Once Amari enters the Bureau of Supernatural Affairs and is

given her magic in the initiation ceremony, she finds out she is 100% magical, making her a dangerous criminal called a Magician, people who declared war and tried to conquer the magical world. She learns her brother worked as a Bureau enforcer and disappeared with his partner, Maria Van Helsing, after trapping the most dangerous magician, Raoul Moreau, the last remaining night brother in the world.

The story continues with Amari forming an alliance with Dylan Van Helsing, who is a magician hiding as a normal supernatural citizen. The tension grows as the magicians slowly destroy the location of the Bureau with hybrids, ten foot tall humanoid creatures with the head and body parts of deadly animals.

The story reaches its concussion with Dylan betraying Amari to help his master, Raoul Moreau, revive his brother by sacrificing Amari.

Alston said in a 2021 interview he came up with the idea of Amari and the Night Brothers because he couldn't

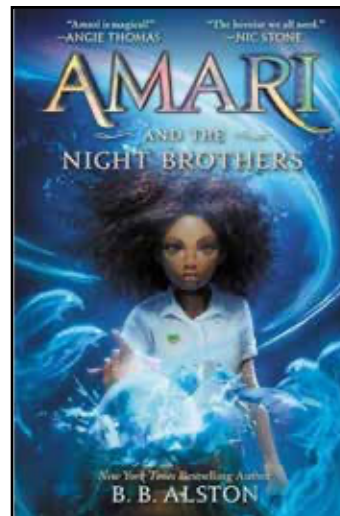


Photo from amazon.com

find fantasy stories featuring Black kids when he was growing up. He hopes to spread the message that even if you look different, or feel different, whatever the reason, your uniqueness needn't only be a source of fear and insecurity.

Amari experiences racism, prejudice, and classism in every step of her journey from her original school, where she is hated by her classmates for being poor and black, to the magical community, where she faces hate

Bepuzzlement Answers

Riddle Answers
Answer: An echo
Answer: A Hatchet
Logic Puzzle Answer
Answer: Cave A contains a Dragon, Cave B contains nothing, and Cave C contains Gold

as a sole magician. Amari grows and changes throughout the story, slowly overcoming these challenges.

In conclusion, this novel is a great story that shows succeeding against overwhelming odds and will certainly be an enjoyable read.

Eight Remain in World Cup Bracket

By Cruz W.

After the 2026 FIFA World Cup Round of 16, only France, Spain, England, Argentina, Belgium, Norway, Morocco, and Switzerland are still competing for the World Cup Title.

The tournament, which started with 48 teams in June, has had a lot of good games so far. Once the knockout stage started, every match became win or go home. Some teams that people expected to win are still playing,

while others have already been knocked out. Every game has mattered because one mistake can end a team's chance to win the World Cup.

The Round of 32 had a lot of close matches. Brazil beat Japan 2-1 to move on, and France beat Sweden 3-0. England won 2-1 against DR Congo, and Spain beat Austria 3-0. Argentina also stayed alive after beating Cape Verde 3-2. Colombia won a close game against Ghana 1-0 and advanced to the next round.

The Round of 16 had even more close games. Morocco beat Canada 3-0, France beat Paraguay 1-0, and Norway upset Brazil 2-1. England beat Mexico 3-2, Spain beat Portugal 1-0, and Belgium beat the United States 4-1. Argentina beat Egypt 3-2 to earn a spot in the quarterfinals.

One team that stood out to me was Colombia. After beating Ghana in the Round of 32, they played Switzerland in the Round of 16. The game ended 0-0 after regular time and extra

time, so it went to penalty kicks. Switzerland won the shootout 4-3, which ended Colombia's World Cup run. Even though they lost, Colombia showed they could compete with strong teams and made it farther than many expected.

So far, the World Cup bracket has had a lot of close games and a few surprises. I think the rest of the bracket will have even better games as teams keep fighting for the World Cup.

Animal of the Week

By AJ T.

The aye-aye, also known as the *Daubentonia madagascariensis*, is a long-fingered lemur with rodent teeth that is native to Madagascar.

The aye-aye is the world's largest nocturnal primate, according to Wikipedia. It is characterized by its unusual method of finding food. The aye-aye taps on trees and listens for echoes that signal hollows inside them, which are often infested by grubs. It then gnaws holes into the wood using its forward-slanting incisors and inserts its long, narrow middle finger, which it uses to pull the grubs out.

The aye-aye is part of the

Daubentoniidae family. It is classified as endangered by the International Union for Conservation of Nature. A second species very closely related to the aye-aye is the *Daubentonia Robusta*, which is also known as the giant aye-aye. These animals have become extinct within the last 1000 years, but they are known from fossils in southwestern, southern, and southeastern Madagascar.

A fully grown aye-aye is typically about two feet long, with a tail longer than its body. Young aye-ayes are typically silver colored on their front, and they have a stripe down their back. Once they mature they get a thick coat and more than one color fur.



Photo from lemur.duke.edu

Dish of the Week

By Aahan C.

Khichdi

Khichdi is one of India's oldest dishes, with records dating back over 2,000 years. Made from rice and lentils, it has been eaten for generations because it is simple, healthy, and filling. While India has no official national dish, many people consider khichdi an unofficial symbol of the country's food culture. During the 2017 World Food India event, then Food Processing Minister Harsimrat Kaur Badal said, "Khichdi symbolises India's great culture of unity in diversity."

Different parts of India have their own versions of khichdi. Gujarat is known for sweet and savory khichdi, Bengal often adds vegetables, and South India has a similar dish called pongal. These regional styles show how one simple meal has become a favorite across India.



Photo courtesy of GreenBowlzSoul.com

Opinion: Odysseus is NOT a Rogue

By Lucas C.

Since last year, when I watched EPIC: the Musical, there has been a question that has haunted me endlessly.

In Humanities, I argued my point, during meals I talked to my table mates, and I even talked to the counselors. Yet no matter how much I asked, there was no answer to my query, except in my diploma, claiming that Odysseus was a rogue (He's not).

So today, I will answer the year-old question that has been plaguing me since I watched EPIC: the Musical: "What D&D class is Odysseus?"

One thing you must know is what a D&D class, or Dungeons & Dragons class, is. A D&D class is just what the player is; if there is a fighter, a cleric, or a barbarian, etc., this determines

how you might roleplay them and also where and how they got their power. There are 13 main classes: Artificer, Barbarian, Bard, Cleric, Druid, Fighter, Monk, Paladin, Ranger, Rogue, Sorcerer, Warlock, and Wizard.

The second thing you must know is who Odysseus is and what his feats are. Odysseus uses his brain to solve his problems instead of his strength or magic.

This can be seen with the Trojan Horse where he used it to sneak into Troy and where he tricked Polyphemus before stabbing him in the eye with a sharpened log. One thing that Odysseus hasn't relied on, though, is magic, and that alone eliminates the classes of Wizard, Artificer, Bard, and Sorcerer.

He also hasn't gotten power from gods through worship or an otherworldly being, eliminating

Warlock and Cleric.

Barbarian is eliminated as it focuses on pure strength and Raging, and Monk because it focuses on martial arts, with both of these arts going against how Odysseus tends to fight.

This leaves the classes of Fighter, Ranger, and Rogue. These are all fighting martial classes, with Odysseus filling all categories.

As a Fighter, Odysseus is extremely skilled and has led troops in war, rallied them, and fought with the goddess Circe, but he could also be a Rogue, as he can be sneaky, and somewhat assassin-like. He can be a Ranger because he was able to shoot a bow through the eye of 12 axes while also being able to identify monsters and their weaknesses very quickly; he knew what cows were Apollo's,

what Polyphemus's weakness was, and how to beat Scylla and Charybdis.

When weighing all of this, it leads to the conclusion that Odysseus' D&D class is a Hunter Ranger multiclassed as a Battle Master Fighter. I put him as a Ranger over a Rogue because he can be sneaky, which also falls under what Rogues do, but he uses a Ranger's weapon, a bow, and he's the Hunter subclass because their main ability is knowing what weaknesses a monster has and exploiting those just as Odysseus does. He multiclassed as a fighter to explain his skill with a sword and subclassed as a battle master because they specialize in helping their allies, in battle giving them extra movement.

At long last, the search for Odysseus' D&D class ends.

Opinion: Fanta and Yogurt Not an Unusual Combo

By Saradha J.

As written in Seen and Heard in the third issue of The Thinker this session, I, Saradha J., was sighted mixing Fanta Strawberry and vanilla yogurt.

Although this may sound like a strange combination, dishes exist that contain mixtures similar to the one I created.

Put simply, Fanta Strawberry (or any soda) can be simplified to a carbonated beverage with high amounts of concentrated sugar and flavoring, and vanilla yogurt can be broken down into a processed milk product with similar quantities of sugar. With these generalized definitions, this combination of products applies to a far larger range of drinks and dishes than it may have seemed.

For example, a majority of flavored yogurt found in stores is manufactured with the same

ingredients. Often, it contains artificial fruit flavorings, high levels of sugar, and yogurt.

Somewhat less similar is a float, which functions on the same basis. Soda is combined with ice cream, another chilled dairy product, to create a palatable dish.

In the Indian drink known as mango lassi, mango juice and yogurt are combined to create a sweet drink commonly consumed during the summer. The components of this mixture are also very similar to what I used. Soda is comparable to juice in that soda contains artificial flavorings that replicate the flavors found in juice.

The appearance of the mixture may be unnerving at first, understandably so, but the flavor is very similar to commonly consumed dishes.

Dinosaur of the Week

By Henry C.

Deinocheirus mirificus

Deinocheirus is famous for the fact that, until recently, the only information we had about it came from a pair of 8-foot-long clawed arms. Deinocheirus mirificus translates roughly to "Terrible hands that look peculiar," referring to its massive arms.

The arms were found in 1965 inside a seven-million-year-old rock of southern Mongolia, and for a long time, no more bones were found. Paleontologists began to suspect it was a massive type of long-necked, beaked, bipedal dinosaur known as ornithomimosaurs.

The mystery was solved when two different skeletons of the same species were found in different quarries near the original, revealing that Deinocheirus was 16 feet tall and 36 feet long, which

meant it towered over local tyrannosaur, Tarbosaurus, and was the largest theropod to ever live.

The new skeleton also had small rocks in its stomach believed to be gastroliths, or small stones swallowed by herbivores to break down food, revealing that Deinocheirus was most likely a plant-eater.

The spinal bones of the creature sported long, flat neural plates. The dinosaur has a fin, much like a spinosaurus, something no other ornithomimosaurs had.

The Deniocheirus continues to be a mystery to the paleontologists who investigate it, and many questions about it are still unanswered, but it remains an interesting specimen due to its strange physiology and confusing traits.

Magic: The Gathering Packs Explained

By Patrick M.

When buying Magic products, it can be confusing to figure out what makes each product or pack different from another one.

Wizards of the Coast, the parent company of Magic, sells a dozen different products related to Magic. These products include Collector Boosters, Play Boosters, Jumpstart Boosters, Draft Night Bundles, Bundle Boxes, Beginner Boxes, Scene Boxes, Starter Kit Boxes, Pre-Con Standard Decks, and Pre-Release Packs. There are also different types of cards, such as regular cards that are nothing special, foils that are shiny, and special cards that can be alternate or special art versions of a card.

Starting off with the different Booster or 'Pack' types, there are Collector Boosters, Play Boosters, and Jumpstart Boosters.

Play Boosters are the typical packs that people buy and have 14 cards in them. Each pack has six to seven common cards, three to four uncommon cards,

one 'wild card' of any rarity, one mythic or rare, one regular foil of any rarity, and one land.

Collector Boosters, purchased mainly by those who want to collect all of the cards in a given set, have 15 cards in each pack. These packs consist of five regular foil common cards, four regular foil uncommon cards, one regular foil basic land card, two regular foil rare or mythic cards, two special cards, and one special rare or mythic card.

Jumpstart Boosters are packs people buy if they want cards that synergize together or if they want to start playing magic. These packs have 20 cards of an assorted theme, eight of those cards are land, along with one to two rare or mythic cards. The other cards are not a pre-determined rarity because the packs focus more on playability and synergy than randomness and expanding a collection.

Next, there are different 'Box' or 'Bundle' types, defined by the fact that they come in a box or are a bunch of different things put together in a single product.

Draft Night Bundles are boxes with 12 Play Boosters in them made for four people to open up and take turns picking cards that they want to use to make an impromptu deck out of. These four people can then play a couple of games using their new decks to compete for the included Collector Booster that comes in the box.

Bundle Boxes are boxes people buy to get a few accessories and a bunch of packs so they can either collect a set or to use in their decks. These boxes contain nine play boosters, 10 regular foil land cards, an alternate art card, a themed 20 sided die, and a life spindown counter.

Beginner Boxes are boxes made for someone to buy so they can learn how to play magic with a friend. These boxes contain ten 20-card decks made to shuffle two together, two reference cards, one reference guide booklet, two "How to Play" guides, two game board play mats, and two spindown life counters.

Starter Kit Boxes are boxes a

person would buy to teach magic to a friend because they come with two pre-made standard decks. These two 60-card decks have a set theme and have one mythic and three rares per deck for a total of two mythics and six rares.

Pre-Release Packs are deck-sized boxes that come with a deck box, counters, six Play Booster packs, one regular foil promo card, and one 20-sided die.

Scene Boxes are boxes that allow someone to get six cards that when put together make a scene. A person would buy this product to collect and display cards that they own. This box comes with six borderless foil cards that connect to make a scene, a paper display easel, six borderless art cards that make a scene, and three Play Boosters.

Finally, there are Pre-Cons or pre-consorted decks. These Pre-Cons are ready-made decks a person can buy instead of making a deck themselves.

Knowing the difference between these products can help make purchase decisions easier.

Epic Shifts *The Odyssey* for Modern Audiences

By Lucas C.

"EPIC: the Musical" is a viral, sung-through concept musical by Jorge Rivera-Herrans that adapts Homer's "Odyssey" into an online musical.

Its story is split into 40 songs in total. Act I is 20 songs divided into five sagas (Troy, Cyclops, Ocean, Circe, and Underworld). Act II is 20 songs divided into four sagas (Thunder, Wisdom, Vengeance, and Ithaca).

The thing that made "EPIC: the Musical" so unique was how it was made entirely online. This has made "EPIC: the Musical" extremely accessible, letting anyone join the fanbase or learn about it extremely easily

creating stronger bonds within the fanbase, as everyone is consuming the same media and experiencing it together.

Fans of "EPIC" have also expanded into other popular forms of media. Hundreds of animatics have been created to accompany the songs of "EPIC," allowing fans to engage with the way characters look and act along with other visual elements.

In a 2025 interview with Jorge Rivera-Herrans and Julia Lee Harter, Rivera-Herrans said he was originally in a pre-med track at Notre Dame and worked in music as a hobby.

As time passed, he thought about music more than classes. Eventually, he quit school

without telling his parents, and by 2019, he had finished writing his first musical.

Rivera-Herrans then said he wanted to do something that had fight scenes and love and lust and battles. When he told his friends, they asked if he was adapting *The Odyssey*. Rivera-Herrans initially said no, but he changed his mind as he saw "The Odyssey" fit what he wanted. It had an addictive sense of progression with many different characters, iconic characters and lots of fighting.

The original idea for "EPIC: the Musical" was different from today's finished musical. The original entire story of "EPIC: the Musical" hoped to condense

"The Iliad" in Act One and then "The Odyssey" in Act Two, but the finished version just focused on "The Odyssey."

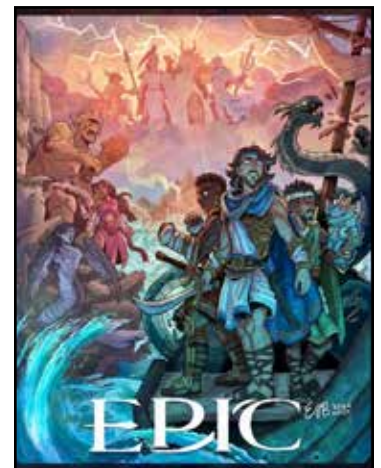


Photo courtesy of @ethanillustrations on Instagram

Seen and Heard

"In my perfect Switzerland, there will be no crimes."

- Henry C.

Juan G.: "All I hear are screams, every time I dare to close my eyes. I no-"

Lucas C.: "Average apartment in New York City"

"Let's SkadoodleDoosh, people."

- Lucas C.

"I'M GONNA GO VIRALLL!"

- Cruz W.

"Now I won't have the power of Jack Frost through my scalp."

- Jonah C.

"You teleport now?"

-Patrick M.

Henry C.: "England! England! England!"

AJ G.: "Henry, it's 4th of July weekend, I don't want to hear it!"

"Mom, he's proposing! Yes, of course I'm going to say No!"

- Madelyn W.

Henry C. to Juan G.: "What are you going to wear under that?"

Madelyn W.: "Nuthin'"

"Do I look like leatherface?" (while wearing a Joe mask)

- AJ T.

"Four guys digging around in a trashcan"

- Elliot Engquist

"I just saw Indian feet!"

- Patrick M.

"OH NO, Squidward is getting eaten by a shark!"

- AJ T.

Joseph Loyola: "If I had to stack two pregnant women, that's how I'd do it"

Brandon LaFleur: "Belly to belly?!"

AJ T.: "Hey, Arav, Look! Gullible is written on the ceiling."

Arav P.: (Looks up) "Huh, Where? I don't see it."

"Let me count."

- Eleanor H.

"W mold edit."

-AJ T.

"Jeff Bezos, I've never depended upon you more"

- Lucas C.

"...Time to lift that bench all by myself!"

- Patrick M.

Seen

Henry C. enters his room, sees Lucas C. sitting inside on top of Juan G.'s mobility scooter, and asks "How long have you been in there?"

Bepuzzlement

By Henry C.

Riddles

I cannot talk, but I always reply when spoken to. What am I?

What has a back, shoulder, head, eye, beard, and toe, but can't move or think and has never been alive?

Logic Puzzle

There are three caves, labeled A, B, and C.

One cave contains gold, one contains a dragon, and one is empty. All of the Caves have signs above them. Only the cave containing gold bears a true sign above it.

The signs are as follows: Cave A says "Cave C is empty," Cave B says "The dragon is in this cave," and cave C says "The middle cave is empty."

What's in each cave?

Art Prompts

By Lucas J. C.

Weekly theme:
Life on alien planes

Saturday
Life on a tidally locked planet

Sunday
Life on an ocean world

Monday
Life on a gas-giant's moon

Tuesday

Life on a planet heated by a pulsar

Wednesday

Life on a planet perfect for life

Thursday

Life on a rogue planet

Friday

Life on a gas giant

Jokes of the Week

By AJ T. and Emma M.

What do you call a pig that does karate? "A pork chop."

Why was the Bee so cold?
"Because it was in between the AC"

Editorial Staff:

Lucas C.
Aahan C.
Henry C.
Stella D.
Saradha J.
Emma M.
Patrick M.
Arav. P.
AJ T.
Cruz W.

