

Beat the Drum

February 2008



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Cover Art: "Drip" by Rita Mulford

Editors' Note: Most of the contributing artists/authors for the first issue attend Midland High School because the student editors are based there. Students from all middle and high schools in Midland County are encouraged to submit for future issues and also to indicate their interest in joining the Board of Editors.

CONTRIBUTING AUTHORS/ARTISTS

Katie Grunder is a proud freshman at Midland High and hopes others think of her as the writer of "stories that'll be the best dang things you'll ever put into your brain," in her own words. Some other things she enjoys besides writing are reading, singing, theatre, new movies, and watching hockey players getting scrappy on the ice. She one day hopes to be an English or Humanities teacher as a backup job for her writing career.

Kelly Barker is currently a freshman at Midland High. She has been writing poetry and lyrics since 6th grade. Kelly is mainly interested in music and is currently in the High School Women's Choir at the MCFTA, school choir, and is taking guitar lessons. Kelly hopes to one day be a well-known musician.

Hannah Frye lives in Lee's Summit, Missouri (she previously lived in Midland, Michigan) and is a freshman at Lee's Summit West High School. She plays the cello, composes music, and loves to participate in her school's drama program. While she has not written anything recently because of tight schedules and exhaustion, writing comes naturally to Hannah and she enjoys doing it when she has the chance.

Since we were little kids, **Rita Mulford** and I have been amazing friends. When she met Oedipus, she was a changed woman. He influenced her in every way. No one had done that before. That's how I knew they were meant for each other. Here's to their achieving their goal of becoming world-renowned artists. Wait a minute,

that's a bit *too* far into the future. Let's try again. Rita is a great artist and an ardent environmentalist. She one day hopes to get married to a guy named Oedi— er, I mean, become a famous artist. [Biographical note composed by JW]

Kiara Anderson is currently a 9th grader at Midland High School. She has enjoyed writing since the moment it was introduced to her. She also enjoys swimming, art, reading, snowboarding, and spending time with friends. Eventually, she hopes to become a successful author and artist.

Shelby Baker is a freshman at Midland High. She loves to dance just about anything. Tap, ballet, ballroom; you name it, she can probably dance it. She also knows almost every musical that's ever been on Broadway, sings in the HSWC, writes, and hangs out with friends when the rare x-amount of free time comes along. She someday wants to be a world-renowned Broadway performer.

Ever since meeting her now best friend, **Julia Willison** has become an environmentalist and a keeper of the peace. When not wondering about the strange ways of human beings, Julia is doing gymnastics through the Midland High gymnastics team. She has been a good artist since the beginning. Her scribbles as a baby were put in the Smithsonian (okay, maybe not, but it sounds nice, doesn't it?). But she has decided not to use her art skills in life and hopes to major in forensic anthropology and flute at Michigan State University.

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BEAT THE DRUM

Trapped in Revolution: Part 1

By Katie Grunder

My name is Emily Thompson, and if you care not for stories that seem too awesome in scope to be real, skip this story immediately. *Now*. Still there? Good. I knew you weren't quite as ignorant as the others.

This story is a story that takes you back to a time of great peril, bravery, courage, and adventure. It is not for the faint of heart, nor is it for elementary school boys who still think girls carry the cursed cooties disease. It is about my brother, Peter, and me on a journey of all time that not many children of the twenty-first century get to take. We journeyed through the American Revolution.

But I get too far ahead of myself. I must start where it all began.

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East Boston High School. I had high expectations for it at first; after all, anything is better in weather than the trickster-ish climate of Michigan. We had only been there for a couple of weeks, but even that was enough time for the students of East Boston to make our lives a living hell.

My parents were business partners— in fact, they were the presidents of a rather successful corporation— and were always on the road, and Pete and I were always dragged along. So here we were in Boston, living in an old house on Beacon Hill, and Pete was currently taking it very hard— literally.

Pete was thrown against the brick wall of the school by none other than the school bully, Ricky Gully. This guy was all muscle; his plain white T-shirt looked like it would split at the

Desperate

By Kelly Barker

Passion in disguise,
Hate in her eyes.
What does she have to lose?
...Everything.
Searching for something to hold
her close.
Dying for something that won't
fail her.
No music to play,
Left with nothing to say.
With shadow preceding,
No more happy meetings.

seams if he grew any larger. His hair was dyed black, replacing the blood red that still showed at the roots. His jeans were far too baggy to be held up by a men's belt alone, so a rope was knotted around the pants in place of a belt. And unlike the stereotypical bully of Hollywood, Ricky was smart. He might actually have a passing grade if he cared. But no, the only thing that satisfied him was belittling fellow students, namely my brother, who just happened to skip the ninth grade because he was too smart for his own good.

Peter recovered quickly from the wall and went into a very kung-fu-like stance, crouched low to the ground, arms outstretched and palms caged from the outside by maliciously curled fingers.

Today's the day, he told me on the bus.

For? I replied.

Ricky to get his sordid butt kicked by someone. Me.

Pete, you can't be serious.

I am! I'm tired of being kicked around by every last bully this world has to offer! It's time that I ended it.

Pete, violence only breeds more violence.

Not today. And since when did you decide to become Yoda?

I was going to be kicking myself for this, and I knew it. Pete was stubborn. He would never sway from his opinion. He was going to show Ricky who was boss if it killed him. And it just might've.

If the principal hadn't opened a window on the second floor.

Principal Hartford stuck his shiny bald head out of the window, his face scrunched up in anger, and shouted in his booming voice, "Mr. Gully! I thought we had already discussed the topic of pacifism on the school grounds!"

"We may have. What's it to you, señor?"

Ricky's mastery of the Spanish language got Mr. Hartford even angrier. His head disappeared and we heard the stomp of his size seventeen feet coming down the stairs.

That was all the time that Pete needed to gain the upper hand. Like lightning, he zipped behind Ricky and pinched a nerve on his neck. With a cry of agony, Ricky slowly crumpled to the ground, but not before Pete got a wedge in. Pete looked to me, triumph in his big brown eyes. He ran toward me and grabbed my arm, pulling me toward the bus.

We went into the bus at the last second, just before the doors closed. It was dead silent, except for the grumble of the bus engine, and every eye was on us. Then the kids erupted into cheers. We walked down the aisle, Pete wearing a dopey grin on his face as people gave him high fives and slaps on the back. "Good show, Pete!" "Bravo, good man! Bravo!" "Dude, that was sweet!" "Hip-hip- hooray!"

We settled for an empty seat in the back. "You know what, Pete?" I said. "I'm actually proud of you! You took out the bully!"

"I know. I'm just awesome that way."

I gave Pete a wry smile. "Just remember to keep your day job, buddy."

We laughed and joined the unofficial festivities on the bus.

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When we got off the bus on Beacon Hill, we were greeted by the warm atmosphere of the community. It looked like a scene from a colonial era movie: brick sidewalks, wrought iron gates, brick houses, gas lamps on every corner of every narrow street. Ah, the antediluvian neighborhood often made me think that I was back in colonial Boston, then I remembered that I had a four page essay due on Monday that I hadn't even started on and my thoughts shifted to that.

Pete and I walked four houses or so down Rollins Place and went through the gate to the blue painted door. We opened the door and went inside into the spacious house that we now called ours. "Tessie?" Pete called out.

"Over here!" Tessie replied from the kitchen.

We went into the kitchen to find Tessie mixing up some batter in a glass bowl. She had the red bandanna that she always wore wrapped around her head like Rosie the Riveter. "Hey, you guys!" she greeted us with a smile.

"What're you making, Tessie?" I asked, taking a seat on a barstool at the counter.

"I'm making applesauce muffins for a snack. And when we're done with our munching, I'll take you guys to see that American Revolution movie you've dying to see for a week, eh?" she replied.

"Nobody's coming home 'till nine o'clock, huh?" Peter said pessimistically. It was like this every night, no matter where we went, even if we were living in the middle of the Sahara Desert. Neither Mom nor Dad would be coming home until late at night, when they would be too spent from work to even notice that they had kids.

"Au contraire, Pete, or should I say 'our resident Shaolin monk?'" she replied mischievously. Oh, no. Tessie knew about the fight! I glanced at Peter. His face was pale with fear. I turned back to Tessie, who was wearing a smirk on her tanned face.

"You aren't going to tell Mom and Dad, are you?" Peter asked sheepishly.

Tessie stopped stirring the batter and put a fist on her hip. "Peter Seamus Thompson. Have you ever known me to do such a traitorous act when I am one hundred percent with you?"

I let out a sigh of relief. "So, how bad did you beat that punk?" Tessie asked Pete. Did I ever mention that Tessie was the coolest housemaid there ever was? As Tessie poured the batter into the muffin tin, I let the corners of my mouth turn up. Maybe things would be okay after all. Maybe Peter and I might enjoy Boston. Lord knew that Pete was now the most respected kid in school for the little fiasco at school. And hey, I was about to eat some of the best muffins on the planet.

For us, all and all, it was a great day.

To be continued...

Quote of the Month:

"The flute is the show-off of the wind section, the big shot: Jean-Pierre Rampal, James Galway--both millionaires (how many millionaire bassoonists can you name real fast?). Well, that's fine. Everybody knows it's the hardest, blowing across a tiny hole with your head tilted all your life; it's like soloing on a pop bottle. The problem with the flute is that it vibrates your brain, and you start wearing big white caftans and smocks and eat roots and berries. You become a pantheist and sit in meadows, and you believe that all is one and God is everything--God is a column of air vibrating--and you know that's not right."

—Garrison Keillor

Music's Spell

A Poem by Hannah Frye

Small wisps of sound
Slowly start to float down.
They dance and twirl
Until they seem only a whirl.
And then they combine,
Forming a song I call mine,
Creating a strange thing
That's powerful and haunting.
My fingers struggle to take hold
But they dance away leaving me cold.
I'm forced only to listen,
The sadness makes my cheeks glisten.
If only I could have this!
That on my cheek left a kiss,
But I must be satisfied
To let the music come alive.
But soon I'm caught in the flurry,
All thoughts fly away in a hurry.
Soon my hands release their hold.
The music is at first strong and bold,
Then it gradually turns soft and slow.
Once again its volume starts to grow,
Up and down like a wave it flows,
It's so full of life it somehow glows.

My head starts to spin
It's impossible to keep it all in.
It sings out with all its heart,
Yet this is only a small part,
Of the many enchanting melodies
Where there's no end of possibilities.
Soon it releases me from its gentle
caress
And all I can do is collapse in a mess.
The sounds of Heaven have ended!
After hearing it how will I be mended?
Then I faintly hear a hint of music,
Harmonies of the best acoustics.
Then I know it will stay,
Here beside me all the way.

Crossfire

By Kiara Anderson

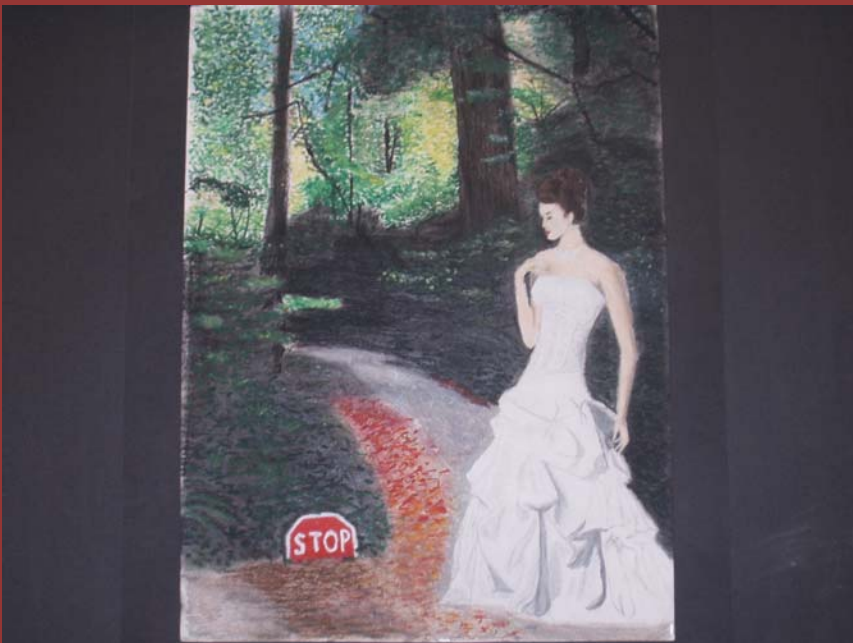
Kitana and Remion gave each other a reassuring look as they faced the crowd of men. Behind the two dragons lay a motionless third, his shining black head in a small pool of blood, staining the white stone he lay on. Kitana's mind rewound as she remembered back to what had started this all, the same thing they thought had ended it.
"WHAT?!" These two mere

children, given the power I have searched for my entire life?! They do not deserve this power! They shall not live with this endowment or they shall not live at all!" Kitana closed her eyes as she remembered the now motionless dragon's anger with her and her brother. The twins had seen his lust, his want for their power. He wanted so badly to live like dragons had and where dragons had before humans came. He wanted to live in the beautiful land, the rightful land of dragons. Seeing this, the twins fled across Coth, out of the bleak, white, mountains of Sinali, city of dragons, and into the shining gold of Tinobi, city of humans. The two had run through shimmering forests, rushing streams, and vast, golden fields and flowerbeds. They had run for days, using every last bit of their inhuman strength. They kept running until they reached humans, and there they collapsed.

Among the humans they lived for five years. They blended in perfectly, using their special gift to keep their identities concealed. That had not lasted, though. Five years from disguising themselves as humans, their disguise started wearing off. Their hair grew a streak of brilliant color; and their eyes began to once more change color with mood, each color almost glowing while the pupil took the shape of an almond.

The two fled once more, sleeping under the comfort of the thick forest. Kitana remembered this well. She had tried to keep some memory of human land and this was by far the most beautiful. The trunks of the trees were a deep copper, similar to the soft grass. Each leaf shone its own special gold, yet they all fit together perfectly. The effect of a light breeze was breathtaking. The leaves sparkled and shimmered, spreading light every which way. Oh, how she wished she were still there, tiny golden flowers comforting her with their sweet scent, the crickets singing their wonderful melody around her feet, secure in the knowledge that no one was there to decide that she did not belong. There was so much more comfort in the forest than the mountains.

"Stop" by Rita Mulford



The next morning, the twins reached the mountains. Kitana distinctly remembered the look on Remion's face as she mentioned flying. They both grew excited, yet fearful, as they let go of their disguises. Preparing to fly, the two closed their eyes, only to snap them open seconds later, each iris glowing brighter than ever. Great, scaly, wings had sprouted from their backs, their fingernails turned to claws, and skin to scales. Once their feet were off the ground, the twins were able to soar through the mountains, having no trouble with obstacles.

In a mere hour, they had been able to reach Sinali. Vaguely familiar stone ground greeted them. Its cool touch reminded them of the life they had left only five years ago. The twins began to take in their surrounding but were soon interrupted by a deep laugh. Turning to face its wielder, the two cringed. Large red eyes surrounded by a dark, muscular body met their gaze. A terrible smile exposed hundreds of

Grandpa

By Kiara Anderson

The sun winks at you through the trees as you put on your old worn boots. I watch you through the window, grinning with glee and imagine the sweet little fruits waiting to be picked by your weathered hand.

Too excited to wait, I slip out after you and as I approach, you smile and stand.

The sky reflects our delight, shimmering a brilliant blue.

In the bright light, you spy a berry hanging from the bough.

Delicately you pluck it from the bush and hand it to me.

My young self smiles at you just as I smile now

Yet I wonder how a simple berry could hold such a memory.

I close my eyes and savor the sweetness, not only of

a freshly picked raspberry, but of a grandfather's love.

razor-sharp teeth. A voice soon followed, "I see you've come back to turn yourself in." The smile widened and the dragon lunged. Diving out of the way, Remion heard a bang and felt something whiz by his head. The twins watched in horror as the dragon between them hit the ground. His limp body bounced one time but soon hit the ground for the final time with a sickening thud.

Opening her eyes, Kitana brought herself back to reality, trying to shed that memory from her mind, though a constant reminder lay right behind her. Blankly staring forward, Kitana took in what lay ahead. A crowd of a couple hundred men stood staring in half anger, half horror at the twin dragons. A large trail of mud was spread out behind them, giving away their direct path from Tinobi. Most of the men held guns but they were all pointed down. Turning once more to steal a glance at Remion, Kitana heard him whisper something. "Humans and dragons may hold their differences but we can make this right. Besides, we are both human and dragon. We can settle this." Looking ahead once more, Kitana's heart skipped a beat: their guns were raised. "No, Remion," she uttered, "it appears we are neither."

The Macaroni War

A Parody of the Second World War

By Shelby Baker

Life was peaceful on the glacier. The penguins that lived there together got along perfectly; no one ever even called each other names. The days were happy and cold.

Then one day a penguin named Dave said to his friends, "You know, those Dwarf penguins eat more than their fair share of the fish. If we don't do something, we Macaroni penguins will all be wiped out!"

Gasping, his friends could not believe what they had heard! "We must get rid of them!" They shouted, "We must get rid of the Dwarf penguins!"

Dave rallied his family and friends, and they all joined in the cry, "Dwarf

From The Board of Editors

Hello, Ladies and Gentlemen. This is the Board speaking (sort of), the Board that has spent a good, long period of time creating this "magazine," of sorts, for you. Thank us later, because we have very important business to discuss!

Firstly, we wish to address to you the need for your writing and art. We want to publish YOUR stuff. Our stuff will only last for so long. Anybody in 6th – 9th grade from any school can submit. We have an application on page 8 if you want to send your pieces by snail mail, BUT we prefer that you email it to us at grunderke@mps.k12.mi.us. There are more details for all to see on page 8 as well, so check that out, please. Thank you.

Secondly, in case you haven't noticed, *Beat the Drum* has no logo to set it apart from other literary magazines. So, we are proud to announce our Logo Contest! Our only rules are that the submitted logos are school-appropriate and that, if sent by snail mail, they fit onto a single, standard size (8.5 in. x 11 in.) sheet of paper. Other than that, just have fun with it!

Thirdly, we want some feedback from you, the reader. We don't care what it is you've got to say — well, except for hate mail; we care if you send *that*. Send us some ideas, feedback on the featured pieces, and anything that will generally improve the magazine. It will be much appreciated and might be featured in a future issue of *Beat the Drum*!

Much Love,

The Board of Editors.

BEAT THE DRUM IS SPONSORED BY CREATIVE SPIRIT CENTER, WITH FUNDING FROM THE MIDLAND COUNTY YOUTH ACTION COUNCIL (MCYAC) OF THE MIDLAND AREA COMMUNITY FOUNDATION.



penguins will starve us all! Get rid of the Dwarfs!”

Things were looking pretty grim for the poor Dwarf penguins.

Dave had been thinking to himself, *How can I get an army of Macaroni penguins eager to fight the Dwarf penguins?* As this thought was running through his head, he was passing by a playground where some little penguins were playing. There was a little Dwarf penguin swinging on the ice swings, when suddenly he was shoved off the swing by two young Macaroni penguins. “Get off the swings!” said one.

“You Dwarfs already hog all the fish. now you want to hog the ice swings too!” jeered the other one angrily.

“Why are you guys picking on me?” asked the little Dwarf, close to tears.

“Because you are a Dwarf!” the two Macaronis cackled.

They took over the ice swings, and sent the Dwarf away crying.

The little Dwarf stopped right in front of Dave and said, “Please Sir, they won’t let me swing on the ice swings.”

Dave paused for a second; he could tell that the children were watching him. “You’re a Dwarf. You’re not worthy of getting to swing on the ice swings,” Dave said as he pushed the little Dwarf to the ground.

Dave walked over to the two young Macaroni penguins, “Boys, how would you and your friends like to help me get rid of all the Dwarf penguins?”

“Could we, Sir?” asked one.

“That would be wonderful!” said the other.

I knew they would see it my way, Dave sneered inside.

Dave’s ranks grew. No one dared defy him, for the punishment was death.

They called themselves the Macguins (short for macaroni penguins). The Macguins rounded up the Dwarf penguins and forced them to work as slaves. But, sometimes the Macguins killed the Dwarfs, fed them to seals, drowned them, or pecked them to death.

Very soon, word of these tortures got to a glacier about ten miles away. This glacier was home to the Emperor penguins. When the leader of the Emperors, King Frank, heard what the Macguins were doing to the Dwarf penguins, he was infuriated. “How dare they?” he shrieked, banging his fist on his throne. “How dare they torture their brothers and sisters! We are all penguins, all one species. No matter if we are different breeds or not, we are one species!”

King Frank called his royal troops to assemble. “The Macaroni penguins are badly abusing the Dwarf penguins,” he informed his troops. “I am afraid that the only thing that can stop this vile abuse is war.”

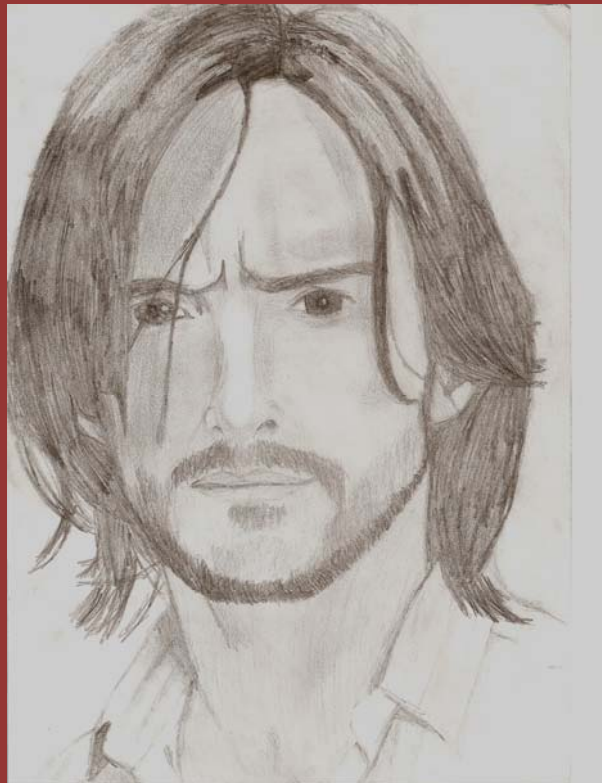
The Emperor penguin soldiers were

stunned by this news. *How could the Macaronis do this to the poor Dwarfs?* They wondered. But confusion was not the only feeling. The Emperors also experienced great surges of anger and fury. Everyone agreed; what was needed was war.

That night, if you were to gaze out at the water, you would see large penguins. The penguins were a star, signifying freedom. They were the Emperors, coming to free the Dwarfs.

It was only five days until the Absolutely Largest Liege in Every Situation, or Allies, reached the coast of Normaldees, Pants. They called this historic day B-day (standing for Big day).

The series of events that followed were stains upon penguin history. The war became known as The Macaroni War, the most violent ever in history for the penguin race. The war ended when Dave purposely dove into leopard seal infested waters. This caused the victory of the Allies, and the freedom of the Dwarfs.



“Hugh”

By Julia Willison

CONTRIBUTE! *BEAT THE DRUM* depends solely on reader submissions, so send us your art, whether that is artistic photography, stories, poetry, scripts, paintings, drawings, anything that can be printed! You can get your stuff to us either through e-mail (grunderke@mps.k12.mi.us), which we greatly prefer, or use this application to send it to us through snail mail. Remember, only 6th – 9th graders are allowed to submit and that all pieces must be school appropriate!

Name: _____

School: _____

Grade: _____ **Date of Submission:** _____

School/English Teacher: _____

Type of Submitted Work (short story, poem, painting, etc.): _____

Title of Submitted Work: _____

Staple this form to the back of your work (out of sight, please, so that we can scan pieces if we need to!) and send it to this address:

BEAT THE DRUM
c/o Creative Spirit Center
1517 Bayliss Street
Midland, MI 48640

PLEASE regard these guidelines for submissions, as well:

- 1) Grammar, spelling and punctuation should be publication ready.
- 2) Attach short biography to the piece with this form, typed or legibly handwritten. See the first page for examples.
- 3) The editors will use their discretion with questionable language.
- 4) The editors' priority is to provide a publishing opportunity for as many students as possible. Lengthy submissions may be accepted if space permits, to run over more than one issue.

Thanks!
The Board of Editors