



Red River Valley Farm

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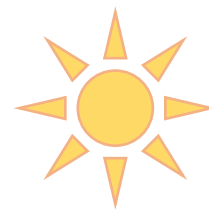
Editor: Elizabeth H.

My name is Elizabeth, and I am 14 years old.

I am in 8th grade. I *love* writing! Besides writing awesome stuff for Cover Story, I also like to write longer stories. My favorite author (at the moment) is J. R. R. Tolkien.

I also enjoy music. I play piano, guitar, and violin (somewhat —because I taught myself). I have written a song or two, and I play my guitar in our church’s tiny youth band (just me and a pianist!).

Needless to say, I live on a farm in the Red River Valley in North Dakota. We mostly grow corn and soybeans, but we also have a few animals: a very sweet dog, ten adorable cats, two crazy brothers, and last year we had three pigs.



Otis and the Deer

One day, Dad, my brothers, and my grandpa were working on a combine in Grandpa Lynn's shop. It was a nice day, so they had the garage door open. Dad happened to glance up and see something. "Look!" he called, "There's a deer over there!" Before the others in the shop even had a chance to look up, Otis, my grandparents' dog, spotted the deer. He took off after it, barking like mad. How dare this creature enter his territory! Of course, the deer didn't want to sit around and have a fight with this barking beast, so it took off across the field.

"Otis, get back here!" Grandpa Lynn shouted, but Otis wasn't listening. There was a four-wheeler parked just outside the shop, so Grandpa Lynn leapt on, started it, and tore off after his dog. He sped across the yard as quickly as possible, not even slowing when he reached the dike. He flew over it at full speed, going airborne, but the dog and the deer were going even faster. Dad later said that the deer was probably going 60 miles per hour, but Otis was keeping up just fine—in fact, he was nipping right at the heels of that deer!

Back at the shop, Dad and my brothers were laughing loudly. "Come on," Dad chuckled. He motioned to his pickup, which was also parked nearby. "Get in!" As they piled in, Dad started the engine and whipped the truck out onto the road. They drove along the road bordering the field, watching the mad chase.

As they passed the house, they saw my grandma come out. I don't know whether she had spotted Otis running off through one of her windows, or if the sudden sounds of unusually loud revving had drawn her attention, but there she was on the porch. As the pickup flew past, she jumped onto the golf cart and followed the pursuit. She was so worried that her beloved baby would run off and never come back that she forgot to put on her shoes!

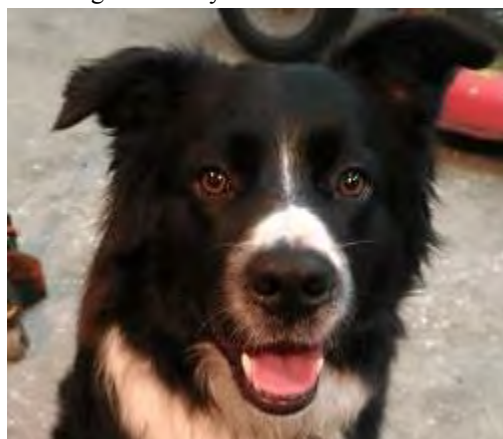
Back in the field, the frantic deer spotted the neighbor's tree line—aha! There it could escape! It darted into the presumed safe haven, and Otis jumped in after it. The deer, with its long legs, easily jumped over tall weeds and fallen branches, but the dog soon lost sight of the deer in the tangle.

When the deer jumped into the neighbors' tree line with Otis in pursuit, Dad stopped his pickup

to watch for where the two would emerge. To his surprise, three forms came out of the trees: the deer, and two dogs—both belonging to the neighbors. Where was Otis?

"Otis!" Grandpa hollered, one final time. The dog finally emerged from the trees, tail between his legs. Had he been naughty again? Then he perked up his ears. That was the sound of the golf cart! And there it was on the road! He ran over and jumped onto the seat as Grandma pulled up. He wagged his tail. He loved going for rides.

"Bad dog!" Grandma exclaimed. She bopped him on the nose, then changed her mind and hugged him. Grandpa wasn't very happy either. Dad and my brothers, however, looked on as the neighbors' dogs chased the deer out of their yard, then turned back and lay down on the front step. The terrified deer, however, was still running across another field, and is probably still running to this day.



Two Acrostics

High above the fields he soars
And nothing escapes his attentive eye
When he spots his prey, he tucks up and stoops
Keen on a delicious meal.

Spring comes, and we plant soybeans.
Obediently they sprout up green,
Yet they are still to be full-grown.
Beans form in fuzzy pods,
Ever growing thicker, taller.
About comes the combine, sucking them up.
Now the field is bare,
Silently awaiting a new year.

Dear Editor,

My grandma ordered your magazine for me, but I don't like it. She says it is educational, but I don't think so. I think you write with lots of mistakes all the time.

You have all your information wrong. You talked about giant tractors in your last issue and there was a picture, but you have to be lying! Tractors can't have twelve wheels. I know because I saw it in a book. They can only have four. I bet you photoshopped the picture to look impressive.

It's also boring. I don't want to hear about farming and stuff in the country! That's for boring adults to read. I want to hear about interesting things! Why don't you write about dogs and cats? They are much cuter than tractors.

I am going to stop getting this magazine if you don't talk about dogs and cats. You should call the magazine A Fluffy World: The Cutest Animals. If you take my advice you will make more money.

Your wise and intelligent advisor,
Victoria S. Shrineburgson

Limerick—Finalist in "Rib-tickling

Limericks" Contest

There was a young lady named Elise
To the country she moved for some peace.
Near some cows, she was found
Trampled down to the ground
I hope she is resting in peace.

Dear Victoria,

I am sorry to hear that you don't enjoy reading Red River Farm. The team here does try to write articles that our readers will enjoy. We also have a crew of proofreaders who find most of the errors or typos. We will be sure to search extra well for any mistakes in the following editions, but sometimes typos do slip by.

On the issue of tractors and their wheels, you are partially correct. Some do have four tires, and pictures of those are perhaps more common. However, there are others that have more. If you would like to see them in real life for yourself, you could ask your parents to take you to a tractor dealership. They often have tractors and combines on display outside. We didn't Photoshop any pictures for our magazine's publicity, as you will see. I am glad that you are brave enough to speak about what you strongly believe, though!

I am sorry to say that we can't change the theme or title of our magazine. We have many subscribers who enjoy reading about country life. However, we have included a story about a dog in this edition (on page 3) that you might enjoy reading. We will also consider more articles about other animals. We hope that you won't cancel your subscription.

If you would like to read more about cats and dogs, you might want to try the local library. I'm sure one of the librarians would love to find you a book you will enjoy.

Sincerely,
Elizabeth H.

Dear Editor,

My name is Timmy, and I am 10 years old! I absolutely LOVE your magazine!!! Every time it's my turn for Show-and-Tell, I bring in the latest issue! In fact, you have inspired me to start my own magazine about living in the city!

Unfortunately, however, I have a confession to make! I have done something terribly awful, and I didn't even realize it!!!! LAST MONTH, I COPIED EVERY SINGLE PAGE OF YOUR MAGAZINE AND DISTRIBUTED THE COPIES TO EVERYONE I KNOW!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!! I was just so excited, because I want all my friends to enjoy your magazine too!!! I didn't realize there were copyright laws until my teacher called me to her desk, showed me the copy I gave her, and explained about the said laws!!! I was shocked!!!!!! In fact, I swooned and fell face first into her lap!!! (It was kind of embarrassing.)

In order to fix my mistake, I have enclosed all the money I have! Is it enough to pay for any losses you may have suffered? If not, I will quit school, find a full-time job, and hopefully make enough money to pay you back!

Once again, I am SUPER sorry!!!!!!!!!!!!!! You can sue me, or do whatever you want; my life is in your hands!

With A LOT of regret,

Timmy P. John



Dear Timmy,

Thank you for being so honest about your mistake. I can tell that you feel very sorry. Don't feel bad; your mistake won't hurt our magazine.

No, we won't be pressing charges against you. In fact, we are also returning the money you sent us. I suggest saving it in your piggy bank. Also, I wouldn't advise quitting school and getting a job at your age... you have to be at least sixteen years old for someone to hire you.

Thank you for being such a devoted subscriber! It's always great to hear from our readers.

Your idea to start your own magazine is wonderful. I'm sure you have a great imagination that produces wonderful articles! I will give you a little tip, writer-to-writer: you probably won't want to end all your sentences with exclamation points.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth H.

Math Puzzles

You have a 155-acre field of corn. If your crop yields 175 bushels per acre, how many bushels of corn will you harvest?

If you can sell your corn for \$3.50 per bushel, how much money would you gross?

*Won first place in "Pack a Punch" contest [Letters to the editor].

Two Haiku

The Barn

The old wooden barn
Rattles in a gust of wind
But it still stands strong.

* Won 2nd in Haiku contest

The Floodwaters

The snow is melting;
It forms a rushing flood that
Sweeps across the land.



Water and Ice

Donald looked out of his living room window at the water in the yard. The house was surrounded by melting snow and three feet of frigid water. The Red River was flowing north right through the yard—it had swelled out for miles.

It was spring of 1997. There had been 117 inches of snow that winter, and news teams were predicting a spring flood. Donald hadn't been worried, because the yard flooded a little every year. He and his father, Lynn, were living on a farm just outside of Argusville.

Power lines had fallen down, and soon the interstates had been closed due to flooding. After calling into town to tell the company he worked for that he wouldn't be able to come to work for the next few days, Donald and his father got out their generator. It ran on gas, of which they had a large tank. However, they soon realized that they would have to unplug many appliances and turn off lights in the house to save electricity.

For the next week, they were stranded. There was plenty of food, so Donald and Lynn had no reason to go anywhere. They didn't need to put sandbags around their house, because it was on a rise. They spent their time pushing snow with their dozer so that the floodwaters could run through the ditches. In the evenings, they watched the news to find out what was going on in other towns.

In Fargo, others weren't as fortunate as they were. On April 18, the Red River rose to 40 feet! Although people were filling thousands upon thousands of sandbags and stacking them against the floodwaters, many people had to evacuate their homes. Some were caught off guard, and had to be rescued by National Guard soldiers who had been sent to help the

people. Even worse: a fire had started in the flooded town of Grand Forks, and the firetrucks weren't able to get to the burning buildings because of the water. Many houses were destroyed.

When Donald and Lynn's family and friends heard that they were stranded, they called every day to check on them. They said that they were all right, and not to worry. They didn't need anything.

One day, while Lynn was pushing snow in the ditch, he felt the machine jerk. He looked down to see that one of the tracks had derailed. He and Donald pulled the dozer into the front yard with another tractor to fix it. They had to wade through the freezing water while they put the track back on, but it was soon fixed.

After a crazy week of water, the Red River began to shrink back to its normal size. The rushing waters had swept dirt around in rippled shapes, and broken tree branches were scattered everywhere. However, nothing in Donald and Lynn's yard had been damaged by the water. Everything had been coated in ice. Their neighbors' experiences had been about the same.

Farming went on as usual that year. The flood had been so early that it hadn't delayed planting, but there were a few dead trees that had been swept into the fields by the waters. They had to be removed.

Donald and Lynn were lucky to survive the flood with few damages. Many others hadn't been so fortunate.

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The Terrors of Being the Chauffer

It's a nice and sunny day, and I am driving down to the Farm—what we call Grandpa's yard. Yes, I am driving (I have my permit) and Dad and my two brothers are also along. Only a few minutes after we have started, IT begins.

"Daddy, what are we going to do today?" Joshua asks. A conversation starts about the combine and whatever it is that is broken. My brothers' idea of a conversation is loudly stating one's opinion whether or not anyone else is listening. In order for their voices to be better heard, they scoot forward on their seats so that they are just as far forward as Dad and I are in the front seats. They aren't buckled in, as they have convinced themselves that everyone in our family is a great driver and therefore won't crash. I am fairly good at ignoring them, so I just drive on, mostly tuning them out.

"Dad, turn up the radio!" Kyler exclaims, so it's turned up and a man loudly explains why we should use their crop insurance. Then it switches to the markets. Everyone hushes to listen.

In the welcome moment of silence, I ask Dad, "Should I take the highway or the gravel road?"

"QUIET!" Two shrill voices exclaim from the backseat. Joshua leans over the seats to turn the volume way up.

I roll my eyes and look at Dad. "Which way?" As the boys loudly protest from the backseat and try to turn up the volume some more, Dad silently makes a hand gesture. I can never tell what his hand gestures mean (partly because I have to keep my eyes on the road) but I pick the gravel route because it's shorter.

"CORN UP TEN CENTS," the announcer states.

"Yes!" The boys cheer from the backseat. You'd think they were listening to a football game.

"SOYBEANS DOWN A QUARTER."

"Aww, come on!" Kyler groans, then explains for the millionth time how if one price goes down, others can go down as well.

After the announcer finishes reporting the prices, the boys switch the radio to 'classic rock' and hold a loud and energetic dance party in the backseat. They even sing the words; at least, what they think the words are.

"Be quiet!" I finally shout. But the boys just ignore me and rock on. As I come to an intersection, three voices say at once, "Slow down!"

"I am," I huff. Soon there are three new drivers telling me what to do. As Kyler explains how I am going too slow and how *he* goes 45 mph (he's not even supposed to be driving) I get really annoyed. I slam on the brakes, turn around in my seat and glare at them.

"What?" Kyler asks. I really do think he didn't know why I was mad at him. I roll my eyes, turn around again and continue driving.

Meanwhile the boys get more and more rowdy. Dad just looks out the window, oblivious to the chaos inside the vehicle. I try not to get distracted...

A pothole suddenly appears and I barely swerve around it. *Whew! Where did that come from?* Then I turn a corner to see that someone made hay bales from the grass along the road—and now they're in the way. As I swerve around them (driving half in the ditch) Kyler loudly wonders why I can't go any faster. So, I try to speed up... but watch out for that hay bale.

A honking sound on the right draws my attention. I look, and there is Mario driving his racecar—just like in the videogame! He waves and takes off.

I groan as the road turns into a giant racetrack. I try to ignore the other racers speeding past. *This is just my imagination*, I tell myself. *Wham!* I hit a banana and the pickup goes sliding! Okay, so it is real...

"Watch where you're going," Dad mumbles.

I continue to drive on the racetrack, carefully avoiding obstacles and trying to ignore the distractions in the backseat. Driving has never been as perilous as it is now!

Fifteen minutes later, we roll safely into grandpa's yard. I survived the terrors of being the driver—but the pickup didn't. All that was left was the chassis.

The Lawn: A Cinquain

I
Liked mowing;
Then I realized
We have a rather
Big yard.

Amanda and her Aunt Karen

Amanda pedaled into Aunt Karen's driveway at full speed. Even though it was a mile ride down the country road to her aunt's house, she didn't feel tired. After all, she came over pretty much every day. She was ready for some fun!

Amanda slid her bicycle to a stop near the front door. As a cloud of dust wafted by and gravel rolled to a stop at her feet, she hopped off and left the bike laying near the door. Then she burst inside. "Aunt Karen!" she called loudly. "I'm here today! Where are you?"

"I'm in the living room," a voice called. Amanda skipped into the living room to see most of the furniture covered in laundry. Her aunt sat in the middle of it all, next to a basket full of sheets. It looked like she had just finished washing 20 loads.

"Hi Auntie!" Amanda bounced in place, full of excited energy. "Can we bake some cookies? I feel like peanut butter chocolate chip!"

"Oh, hello there Amanda." Aunt Karen slowly stood up. She stretched her back. "I'm kind of in the middle of folding laundry at the moment. Why don't you sit down on that chair over there, and we can talk while I finish up?"

Amanda looked at the mounds of clothes on the couch. She wondered if there was even anything still in her aunt's closet. It would take forever for her aunt to finish!

She sighed and plopped down in the chair indicated. "I really want to start the cookies. Can't you finish it later?" she asked.

"Well, I suppose so..." Aunt Karen looked regretfully at the laundry basket as Amanda pulled her into the kitchen. "You wanted to make peanut butter chocolate chip, right?" Aunt Karen walked over to her recipe shelf.

"Yes!" Amanda answered.

Her aunt found the recipe, and soon they were happily mixing the dough. At least, Amanda was happy, but Aunt Karen kept glancing at her unfinished laundry. Amanda didn't notice, as she was too busy talking about her day at school.

"Mmm, they smell really good!" Amanda exclaimed, after the cookies had been in the oven for a few minutes. She squatted down in front of the oven. "How long until they're ready?"

"Fifteen minutes," Aunt Karen replied, looking at the recipe.

"I want to do an art project now," Amanda decided. Soon the table was covered with craft supplies, and Amanda was having a ball with glue and sequins. The whole time, Aunt Karen was eyeing the impending mess.

At 5:00, Amanda pulled out of Aunt Karen's driveway on her bicycle. She had had so much fun today. She loved spending time with Aunt Karen, because she always made her feel happy. She thought she might even be Karen's favorite niece, although of course Aunt Karen wouldn't say so out loud.

The next day, after school, Amanda raced back to Aunt Karen's. When she reached her aunt's house, she was panting hard. She stopped to lean up against the side of the house. After a few deep breaths, she realized that she could hear her aunt's faint voice talking to someone.

"But why didn't he use tomato cages?" her aunt asked. There was a pause before her aunt said, "Well, I suppose that's true." Then she laughed.

She must be on the phone, Amanda thought.

"Doesn't Fleet Farm sell chicken wire? Why don't you tell him to check it out?" Another pause, then "Well, I think I should be going now. My niece Amanda likes to come over here after school and play around. Yesterday we emptied all the cupboard to make cookies!" Aunt Karen laughed. "She makes it kind of hard to get anything done around here. Well, I really need to finish the grocery list before she shows up." There was a moment of silence before she said, "You too. Goodbye!"

Amanda bit her lip. She hadn't meant to eavesdrop. She turned to go in the door, then stopped. Aunt Karen had said she really needed to finish the grocery list... maybe she should wait a few minutes before going in.

Amanda sat down against the side of the house and picked a dandelion to fiddle with. She had never thought about how Aunt Karen felt about her coming over every day. She had just assumed that she didn't mind. What if she didn't like it? Maybe she didn't want Amanda to come over. She frowned. Amanda wanted so much to be her aunt's favorite.

After Amanda thought Aunt Karen had had enough time to make five long grocery lists, she went

in. She paid special attention to Aunt Karen's face as she said, "Hi Auntie!"

Aunt Karen smiled. "Hello, Amanda. What do you want to do today?"

Amanda wondered if Aunt Karen's smile was sincere. She decided to be extra polite today. "Can we play checkers, please?" she asked.

"Sure," Aunt Karen said. "I'll get it from the game closet."

A few minutes later, the checkerboard was set up on the dining room table. Amanda had fun hopping the checkers around the board. After winning the first two games, however, she thought Aunt Karen looked tired. Amanda decided to let Aunt Karen win the next one. That would make Aunt Karen happy, and then she would like her more.

After purposely moving her red piece in front of Aunt Karen's black one, Amanda waited for Aunt Karen to jump it and take it off the board. Instead, she just moved a different piece.

All through the game, Amanda played all the worst moves that she could think up. Aunt Karen never seemed to notice. At the end of the game, Amanda burst out laughing and explained what she had been doing. It was so funny, that Amanda insisted that they pull out every game Aunt Karen owned so that she could try to lose.

At 5:00, Amanda ran out to her bicycle and hopped on. She was a little disappointed because Aunt Karen had said there wasn't enough time to play Monopoly. Amanda had insisted that it would take less time, because she was trying to lose, but Aunt Karen had insisted.

As Amanda pulled out onto the road, she thought she saw Aunt Karen standing in the office (where the game closet was) and shaking her head. There were two large piles of games on a chair, and Amanda wondered if she should have stayed to help put them away. But then she remembered that she was already late to get home.

It's all right, Amanda told herself. I wouldn't be able to reach the shelf anyway.

That night, while she was lying in bed, Amanda couldn't stop thinking about the phone conversation she'd heard that day. Was Aunt Karen happy when she was around? Amanda tossed and

turned for a while. *This is why you shouldn't eavesdrop!* she scolded herself.

She remembered how she had left a mess of the games. Then she thought about the baking project she had got her aunt into. Maybe she should let her aunt choose what to do, in case she didn't want to do something else. Amanda hadn't realized that Aunt Karen needed to go shopping when they started the cookies.

The next day, when Aunt Karen said, "Now, what should we do today?" Amanda hesitated.

"Well, would you rather watch me climb trees, or should we draw stuff inside?"

"You can pick," Aunt Karen said with a smile.

"No, it's okay, you can decide," Amanda insisted.

"I don't mind what we do," Aunt Karen replied.

Amanda frowned. She didn't want Aunt Karen to get into a big project if she didn't want to, but Amanda wasn't sure what activities might make a mess. She decided to pick tree-climbing to end this awkward conversation. Besides, you didn't have to get out anything. "Let's go outside and climb trees, then," Amanda decided.

"Wait, you want me to come with?" Aunt Karen asked.

"Well, yeah, I need someone to help me into the trees," Amanda explained.

"Oh," Aunt Karen replied.

Aunt Karen had some great climbing trees in her backyard. Amanda wanted to climb each of them, so they started at the end of the row.

"Auntie, help me up!" Amanda cried when they got to the first tree. Aunt Karen gave her a boost, and Amanda hoisted herself up onto the first branch.

For the rest of the day, Amanda climbed trees. In an oak tree at the end of the driveway, she climbed very high.

"Wow, I can see everything in your yard from up here!" Amanda exclaimed. Then she realized something. "Um, how do I get down?"

"Put your right foot in that hole in the tree," Aunt Karen called up. Amanda did, and soon she was down again. But Aunt Karen looked a little bored just standing around in the yard.



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In a different tree, one of the branches broke. It was an older tree that was dying anyway, but now Amanda was stuck in the tree—the branch that had broken was the only way down.

Aunt Karen sighed and ran off to get a ladder. Amanda giggled nervously. Then Aunt Karen returned with the ladder and helped her climb down.

That evening, Amanda couldn't fall asleep again. She was so worried that Aunt Karen didn't like her, but she couldn't understand why. Every day she felt more and more like a nuisance. First, she had made a mess of the kitchen, then she left all the games out, and now she got stuck in a tree.

What could she do to make her aunt like her more? Amanda felt guilty. She thought Aunt Karen seemed annoyed the entire time they were outside. Amanda decided to do something nice for her aunt tomorrow. Something like cleaning up a mess, instead of making one.

The next afternoon, as Amanda biked into the yard, she kept an eye out for something that needed to be done. As she scanned the yard, she caught sight of her aunt's garden shed. The door was a bit ajar, and a rake or two had spilled out.

Aunt Karen needs someone to organize her garden shed, Amanda thought. I'll do that for her toady, and she'll be so pleased!

Amanda leaned her bike against the porch railing, then ran inside.

"Hi Aunt Karen," she said as she walked in.

"Hello, Amanda," Aunt Karen replied. She was at the sink, washing a large pot and about ten dozen glass jars. "As you can see, I'm washing all these dishes. I'm going to do a lot of canning tomorrow.

Amanda hoped she wouldn't ask her to help. She hated washing dishes, and she really wanted to get to the garden shed.

"I'm sorry, but I can't do anything with you until at least 4:30," Aunt Karen apologized. "Do you want to do something by yourself? I can spare a few minutes to put in a movie or get out some markers."

"That's okay," Amanda replied. "I think I'll go outside and play with the cats."

"All right, have fun," Aunt Karen said.

Amanda ran back outside. She was glad that the garden shed wouldn't be in sight from the kitchen window.

When she spotted Tom, one of her aunt's cats, sharpening its claws on a tree, she ran over and patted him once or twice. That way, she wouldn't be lying when she said she was going to play with them.

Then Amanda ran to the garden shed. As she pulled open the door, three buckets and a trowel fell out. She sighed, but she didn't mind the big job. She enjoyed organizing things.

She began to pull everything out. Fifteen minutes into the job, Amanda was getting ready to pull a metal apparatus off a beam. She seized part of it and lifted it off the beam. Just as she was pulling it down, part of it bent in a weird way. It suddenly got much heavier than Amanda expected and crashed to the floor. Two to three sparks flew as it collided with some sort of metal plate leaning up against the wall.

Bang! Amanda jumped at the loud noise. It wasn't just the noise of the implement falling to the floor. It was much louder. There was a blinding flash, a wave of heat, and then the smell of smoke and gasoline filled the shed.

Amanda stumbled out and turned to see a gas can tipped over on the floor, and a fire burning the puddle of gasoline. She gasped, then ran to the house.

"AUNT KAREN!" she screamed as soon as she was inside. "THE GARDEN SHED IS ON FIRE!"

Her aunt wasted no time. She ran to the door and shoved on her boots with sudsy hands. She ran out onto the porch—then stopped and ran back inside. She appeared again with a large fire extinguisher.

Amanda followed Aunt Karen to the shed just in time to watch her blast the fire extinguisher onto the flames. The fire went out.

Amanda burst into tears.

"It's all right, the fire is out," Aunt Karen put down the extinguisher and went over to hug Amanda. "That must have been scary."

Amanda could only nod.

"Why are all the garden tools out? What were you doing in there?" Aunt Karen asked.

"I was trying to clean out the garden shed for you," Amanda sobbed. "It was going to be a surprise, but—" She stopped and hugged her aunt tightly. Then

she sniffed and wiped her eyes. "What happened?" she finally asked. "Why did the fire start?"

"I'm not sure." Aunt Karen released her and walked over to the shed. "It looks like there was a leak in the gas can. The seeder fell off the hook up there, made some sparks against this metal panel, and then the leaking gas caught on fire."

"There was a really big bang," Amanda sniffed.

"The gas can must have blown up," Aunt Karen said. She hugged Amanda again. "It's all right, nothing was really damaged. Almost everything was outside. That's good anyway. Are you all right?"

Amanda nodded. "I'm really sorry," she cried. "I didn't mean to set your shed on fire!"

"It was an accident," her aunt assured her. "I'm not upset." But Amanda wasn't convinced. She only nodded.

Amanda helped her aunt get out the garden hose. They soaked the entire inside of the shed to make sure the fire couldn't start again, then Amanda used a squeegee to remove any remaining gas while her aunt carried off the ruined gas can.

Amanda decided to go home early that day. She felt terrible.

That night, Amanda decided not to go over to her aunt's house anymore. All she ever did was cause trouble. She felt sad, because she loved her aunt, but Aunt Karen probably thought she was a nuisance. All she ever did was make messes!

For the next week, Amanda stayed at home after school. She was usually bored and sad, but she didn't want to be trouble for her aunt.

Her mother noticed that she was gloomy, and asked Amanda what was wrong.

"I don't know," she said. "I just feel bad about making the fire in Auntie's shed." She had told her mother about what had happened when she got home.

"I'm sure Aunt Karen forgave you," her mother said.

"I know." Amanda picked at the carpet with her toes. "I just don't feel like going over there."

A week later, however, was the Thanksgiving party. Aunt Karen was going to host it in her big yard

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on Saturday. That morning, Amanda's mother came over with Amanda. She was going to help Aunt Karen with the cooking.

Amanda decided to play with the cats. Aunt Karen waved at Amanda through the kitchen window as she walked past the kitchen window to the cat shed.

After cuddling and playing with the cats for an hour, Amanda heard a car pull into the driveway. *Who is that?* she wondered. *It's way too early for the other guests to be arriving.*

A young lady jumped out of the driver's seat and walked up to the front door. She knocked, and Aunt Karen opened the door a few seconds later. Her face lit up.

"Paige!" she exclaimed. She hugged the lady. "It's nice to see you!"

"It's nice to see you too, Aunt Karen," the lady replied. "I came over early to help with the preparations."

"Well, you came just in the nick of time. Megan and I are both in the kitchen now, but there is a lot of coking to do, and we haven't even started with the tables and chairs." Aunt Karen hugged her again. "You are so thoughtful! Please, come inside."

"What do you want me to start with?" the lady named Paige asked. She walked in the door, and Aunt Karen closed it behind her.

That must be my cousin Paige, Amanda thought. It had been years since she'd last seen her. She was in college now, and had moved to Iowa. *Aunt Karen looked happy to see her,* Amanda thought. *I wish she was happy to see me.* She sighed. Why did

Aunt Karen seen so happy to see Paige? Was it just because she missed her?

At 1:00, the yard was full of family members, and Amanda was having a great time. Thanksgiving dinner was eaten outside, and it was delicious. In the evening, they played yard games like beanbag and horseshoe toss. Her Grandpa Richard even got a game of baseball going in the backyard. The whole time, Amanda saw Paige helping her aunt with everything.

That evening, Amanda went home with a full belly, and a big smile. The Thanksgiving celebration had been fun, but during dinner she had realized why Aunt Karen was so happy when Paige arrived, and how Amanda could make Aunt Karen feel the same way about her.

The next day was Sunday, and after church Amanda had to stay home and do her weekly chores. But on Monday, after school, she biked over to her aunt's house again.

Monday was Aunt Karen's laundry day, so Amanda found her in the living room surrounded by linens again.

"Hello Amanda," Aunt Karen said. "I'm glad you came over today. I haven't gotten to talk to you for more than a week! I was so busy at the party on Saturday." She stood up to hug Amanda.

"Hi Auntie," Amanda said with a smile. She hugged her aunt back.

"What do you want to do today?" Aunt Karen asked.

Amanda hesitated. "I want to help you," she said. "I can hang shirts on hangers, or something."

Aunt Karen looked surprised. "Really?" she asked. "You don't want to do something fun?"

Amanda shook her head. "I can help you today," she replied, with a shrug.

Aunt Karen smiled. "That's very nice of you," she said.

Soon Amanda was helping with the laundry. She actually had fun just talking to her aunt, and they got a lot of work done that day.

At 5:00, Amanda put on her bike helmet and got ready to go home. She felt surprisingly happy. She really had enjoyed her day. After she hugged her aunt good-bye, she walked her bike to the driveway. As she

turned and waved, her aunt smiled at her. This time, Amanda was sure her smile was genuine.

When the Red Snow Came: A Ballad

In the summer, on a day full of sun
Charlotte moved to the country.
'Twould be good for her to get some fresh air;
She coughed and sneezed much, from an allergy.

The country isn't so clean, she realized.
She was constantly sweeping the floor.
She sneezed harder and she could not sleep.
She coughed out, "I can't take much more!"

But much more did come, at harvest.
For corn dust floats easily in the air.
The corn dust was soon loosed; and the ground—
Coated with red flecks everywhere!

When Charlotte's friends from New York came to visit
They knocked thrice, got no answer, entered the door.
They found her with a wet mop and bucket
And their friend had fainted onto the floor!

With water they revived her; she sat up.
After she used her inhaler she said,
"I can't survive here: there's so much dust!
This peculiar red snow will render me dead!"

Her friends aided her in getting to the car.
And they took off at once, going nowhere specific.
After making quick plans, and buying a new home,
Charlotte was quite happy in a houseboat in the Pacific.

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Chance to get
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dangerous
Wasps and
Hornets once
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Free Verse Poem

As I stand on the wooden fence I look out over the pen.
It is vacant; no more do our pigs play there.
They are gone, away, not present.
I see the dried mud, the brown leaves, the feeder,
Which is empty.
The gate is open, and the ramp leads up and out;
Ending abruptly in midair, into nothingness.
All is quiet, and I am alone.

The Worst (And Coldest) Day of My Life

Last weekend, I traveled to the Ultimate Snow Castle, just outside of Fargo, ND. In town, it was a gorgeously sunny day, and I set out using instructions from the North American Traveler's Pot of Gold—a book I found at a garage sale. I was soon traveling happily along I94, expecting to make my destination before lunchtime.

I was wrong. A snowstorm suddenly blew up, and I could hardly see the road! I squinted at every road sign I spotted, and finally saw one for the Argusville exit. I turned—and found myself wedged in a snowbank. Luckily, a man saw my bright blue car and was able to pull me out.

I took the exit off the interstate and continued on the highway. By now, it was a real North Dakota blizzard—a total white-out! I crept along in my tiny car, trying to figure out where the road ended and where all the drifts were.

Suddenly, I heard a honk and loud siren behind me. A police car! I tried to stop, but I somehow ended up sliding to a stop in a snowbank. The squad car stopped just behind me. He listed off a bunch of laws I had supposedly violated, including not stopping when he turned on his siren and having burnt-out lights (I later discovered they had only been covered with snow).

I drove away with an \$800 fine and a scowl. I found the place where I was supposed to turn: the big red barn was unmistakable, even in all the snow. I turned onto the gravel road, which hadn't even been

plowed. At the first snowbank my little car got stuck. It was useless to even try to dig it out; the rest of the road was sure to have more drifts.

I walked back to the farm with the barn. The kindly old man there let me borrow his pickup—a giant truck with tracks instead of wheels, a snowplow, and mufflers as big as a semi's. The engine roared like a race car when the man started it for me. I went off again in my borrowed monster truck, and had no trouble plowing through the two- and three-foot drifts.

I didn't know where to turn, but soon I realized that I had gone miles too far. I turned around and drove slower, keeping my eyes peeled for a house that looked almost like a gingerbread house, according to the traveler's book. I saw it and pulled into the parking lot, which was full—of snowbanks, that is. I turned around again to find somewhere on the side of the road where I could park. I thought I found a place, but it turned out to be a ditch. The giant truck sank in the snow up to middle of the door, and even the tracks were useless in trying to get it out.

I burrowed out of the truck and began to walk to the snow castle. I hadn't brought any snow pants—so much for that gorgeous day. By the time I got to the snow castle, it was dark, and I was half frozen. When I appeared at the front door, the lady inside thought I was a living snowman. I brushed some of the snow off myself, convinced her I was really human, then asked about the snow castle. I was invited inside—but it wasn't any warmer than outside. The lady handed me a cup of hot chocolate. Ahhh... that would be good! I set it down on a snow ledge and took off my snow-coated gloves so I could warm my hands. When I turned around, the hot cup had melted a hole in the snow, and was disappearing from view! I made a grab for it, just as it cooled and the melted snow froze around it.

I must admit, the snow castle was pretty cool (although it was more of a cabin than a castle), but when it was closing time and the lady asked me to leave, I was aghast! How on earth would I get home with two lost and stuck vehicles?

Dear Martha,

Last weekend I slept over at my friend's house in the country. We had a pork roast for supper and bacon for breakfast. It was super-delicious! My friend said it was because the meat was from the Berkshire pigs that they raised themselves. So, I have a question: why does home-grown meat taste so much better than what you can buy in a store?

With curiosity,
Emily Kilmer

Dear Emily,

It is true that home-grown usually tastes better than store-bought. This is true for almost everything. It all started with chicken...

During World War II, people began to buy more chicken, because red meat was rationed. When the war was over, a man named Howard Pierce planned a contest called The Chicken of Tomorrow, because he wanted people to continue buying chicken. He worked for a large grocery chain, and wanted chicken that was cheap and quick to raise. Soon many farmers were breeding chickens like this. There was only one problem: the meat didn't taste as good. It was cheap though, so no one really did anything about it. Also, the feed that the chickens ate wasn't very good. People figured out how to make it healthier, but even today, the taste is bland, and that causes chicken meat to be bland. Chicken feed usually consists of dried seeds like corn and millet.

Later on, the process of finding quick, cheap meat was repeated with other animals, like pigs. That is one reason store-bought isn't as good.

Another interesting fact is that Berkshire pigs are more delicious than other breeds. It is just the way they are. In fact, kings and queens usually preferred Berkshire meat over other pork.

Sincerely,
Martha

If you enjoy reading *Red River Valley Farm Magazine*, you might also enjoy our blog! Here is a post from October 17, 2019:

Blog Post

Here are some good fall decorating tips:

Pumpkins make a great centerpiece for a display on the front porch. Start with one in the middle, then arrange five gourds around it. If you want a display that is larger, place three pumpkins in the middle; a large pumpkin between two smaller ones. A good decorating tip is to place similar things in odd numbers. Also remember to keep displays somewhat symmetrical; keep size and color in mind.

You can also decorate with hay bales. Arrange two bales at an angle, and place another on top. Then arrange pumpkins and gourds around and on top of them. I suggest placing them in threes on top, and a group of five in front.

Decorating with dried cornstalks also looks great. If you are growing corn in a garden, leave the stalks standing until they are brown and dry. Then cut them off at the bottom, tie them in small bundles with twine, and arrange them on fence posts or behind larger fall displays. You can also decorate with scarecrows.

Remember that produce can go bad after sitting out too long, so when pumpkins and gourds start getting mushy, it's time to throw them out.



"When I Meet the President"

Everyone in the small town of Derik thought Marvin Jones was a little silly. He wasn't outright crazy—he was generally pleasant and nice to be around—but for as long as anyone could remember, Mr. Jones was convinced he would one day meet the president.

One warm fall day, at a community gathering, Mrs. Fletcher decided to speak up.

"I think we need to do something about Mr. Jones," she said.

"Lots of people have tried to stop his silly thoughts," Mrs. Lyson commented. "But they never succeed. Why does it matter what he thinks?"

"I know," Mrs. Fletcher replied. "But this time I really mean it. I am going to make plans to get that thought out of his mind, and then actually *do* what I planned. And it does matter! Every time he or his wife gets anything nice, he packs it up for storage! Mrs. Jones says there are a lot of things she wants to wear, but he won't let her. Also, if the wrong person finds out about Mr. Jones, he could spread the rumor that the people of Derik are fools!"

"I'll help you," piped up Ms. Ruby. One by one, the other ladies agreed. "But how will we stop him?" Ms. Ruby continued.

"I say we should start by going to him and convincing him to forget about it," Mrs. Carny commented. "Surely he will listen to reason! It seems like a good first step."

"Yes," said Mrs. Fletcher. "I will go now." She immediately turned and marched off, determined as the rain.

"Howdy, ma'am," Mr. Jones said, as soon as he saw Mrs. Fletcher coming.

"Mr. Jones," Mrs. Fletcher said calmly, "I've come to say that I think it is very silly of you to save up nice clothes and the like for meeting the president. It is a waste of nice things that will never be used!"

"Aw, shucks, see." Mr. Jones sighed, as though he'd heard the comment a thousand times. "How do you know I will never meet the president? It would be a pity to receive such a nice invitation and not be properly dressed! We wouldn't want the president to think the people of Derik are poor, threadbare beggars, would we?"

"Goodness, no!" Mrs. Fletcher exclaimed. It certainly wouldn't do to have the president think anything less of Derik than the town deserved. After a moment of silence, she turned and left. She couldn't think of anything else to say.

"How did it go?" Ms. Ruby asked eagerly. "What did he say?"

"I don't know how it went," Mrs. Fletcher said slowly. She felt confused and a little disconcerted. She felt like old Mr. Jones had just changed her mind for her. What had just happened?

The other ladies just looked at her for a moment. Then Mrs. Howard said, "I believe it is time for a plan B."

Plan B was initiated next Thursday in Mr. Jones' house. A group of four ladies, led by Mrs. Howard and including Mrs. Fletcher arrived early in the morning.

"Howdy," Mr. Jones said as he opened the door. When he saw who was at his door, he said, "Why, what's all this about, see?"

"We have decided to do a favor for you Mr. Jones," Mrs. Howard said eagerly. "It's such a nice day that we would like to help Mrs. Jones spring clean this house!" The other ladies all nodded enthusiastically.

"Well..." Mr. Jones began. He had a hunch what they were planning, but he couldn't refuse (he knew it was pointless to say that it was fall) so he opened the door and let the ladies in. "Now, before you take apart the whole house, there are some things I want separate." He proceeded to list things on certain shelves and in drawers, and chests full of items that were to be saved for 'when the president comes to visit.'

This made the ladies' job easier. They had really come to try to convince Mr. Jones to take things like these out of storage. Soon furniture had been moved, drawers and cabinets gaped open, and dust swirled in the sunlight. Mr. Jones watched the procedure with a frown.

"Why Mr. Jones!" Ms. Ruby exclaimed. "You aren't saving this nice suit for the president, are you?"

"Yes, indeed I am," Mr. Jones said coldly. "If you would just leave my things in their boxes, I will deal with them myself."

"But you would look dashing as a peacock in this!" Ms. Ruby exclaimed. "You should really wear

this to James and Charlotte's wedding! You might never wear it if you keep it in here." Before he could protest, she tucked it in the top drawer of his dresser.

"Mr. Jones," Mrs. Howard called from the kitchen, "I didn't know you had a jar of Mrs. Dawson's famous gingerbread and peach preserves! These are simply *delicious*!"

"Yes, well, I'm saving it," Mr. Jones called back. He sighed to himself and scratched his head as the ladies tried to convince him to put to use the items he had saved so long. Finally, he stalked over to the door. "I'm going on a walk," he called out to the women. "Remember what I want kept in storage, see!" Then, without further talk, he left.

The ladies were left with a messy house. What they didn't have was a man to argue with about his things. It's very hard to have an argument with someone who isn't there. The ladies had no choice but to keep the indicated items in storage (and finish cleaning the house).

As Mrs. Fletcher was walking home, she shook her head. *This is not working*, she thought. *He somehow always manages to evade our plans to change his mind! I need to think of something better, or this town could become a place of ridicule!*

No ideas came to Mrs. Fletcher all week, but on Wednesday, she received a visitor.

"Hello ma'am, I'm Ms. Catherine from the North Dakota News Item," the young lady said with a smile. "May I talk with you for a few minutes?"

"Why of course, do come in," Mrs. Fletcher said eagerly. She was excited that a news reporter from the state capital was here in her own house to talk to her!

After offering tea and cookies to her guest, Mrs. Fletcher started some chit-chat about what was happening in town. Mr. Jones's silly ideas about the president seemed to interest Ms. Catherine the most. The news reporter laughed, and asked a few questions. Apparently, she was only looking for story ideas. After a nice talk, she stood up, thanked Mrs. Fletcher for the cookies and article ideas, and left.

A week later, Mrs. Fletcher received a phone call. "Is this Mrs. Fletcher?" the deep voice asked.

"Yes, but who is this?" Mrs. Fletcher replied.

"I'm Mr. Brawn, secretary for the president. As we were passing through town, Mr. President saw an article in a magazine about a man who wanted to meet him. He was amused by the story, and decided he

wanted to meet this man. Mostly for the sake of publicity, I think. We enquired at the magazine's headquarters, but they didn't have the man's contact information. They *did* have your number, so that's why I am calling."

Mrs. Fletcher was so shocked; she could hardly contribute to the conversation. She was able to give the man Mr. Jones's phone number; then she hung up.

Mr. Jones was ecstatic when he received the call about the visit. A date was set for the dinner he was to host. He began to pull out the dusty boxes he had saved for this event.

Many people were excited. Mrs. Fletcher was not. Hadn't she just spent time trying to get rid of this notion? Now he would say, "I told you so!"

The visit happened the next Saturday. Everywhere in town streamers fluttered and flags waved. Everyone was dressed in their best clothes. Mrs. Fletcher sulkily followed their example. There was one short speech for the public, then the private dinner with Mr. Jones and his wife. The president came and went in the course of only a few hours.

A few days later, when all the excitement was over, Mrs. Fletcher ran into Mr. Jones in the post office. "I told you so, see," Mr. Jones said. Mrs. Fletcher just sighed. "I must admit though," he continued, as he paid for some stamps, "that it wasn't all I expected. The president really wasn't that talkative. He didn't really like the food, or the decorations, or the talk, see. He looked rather bored the whole time. It was a bit disappointing."

"Well, at least everything is over now," Mrs. Fletcher sighed. "You can use everything you've saved."

"Well, I wouldn't say that, see?" Mr. Jones replied. "Elections will be in another month, and then we might have a new president! What if *he* comes to visit, see?" With a grin, he left the post office.

Mrs. Fletcher couldn't think of anything to say. It wasn't over after all. *I guess I should just mind my own business*, she sighed.

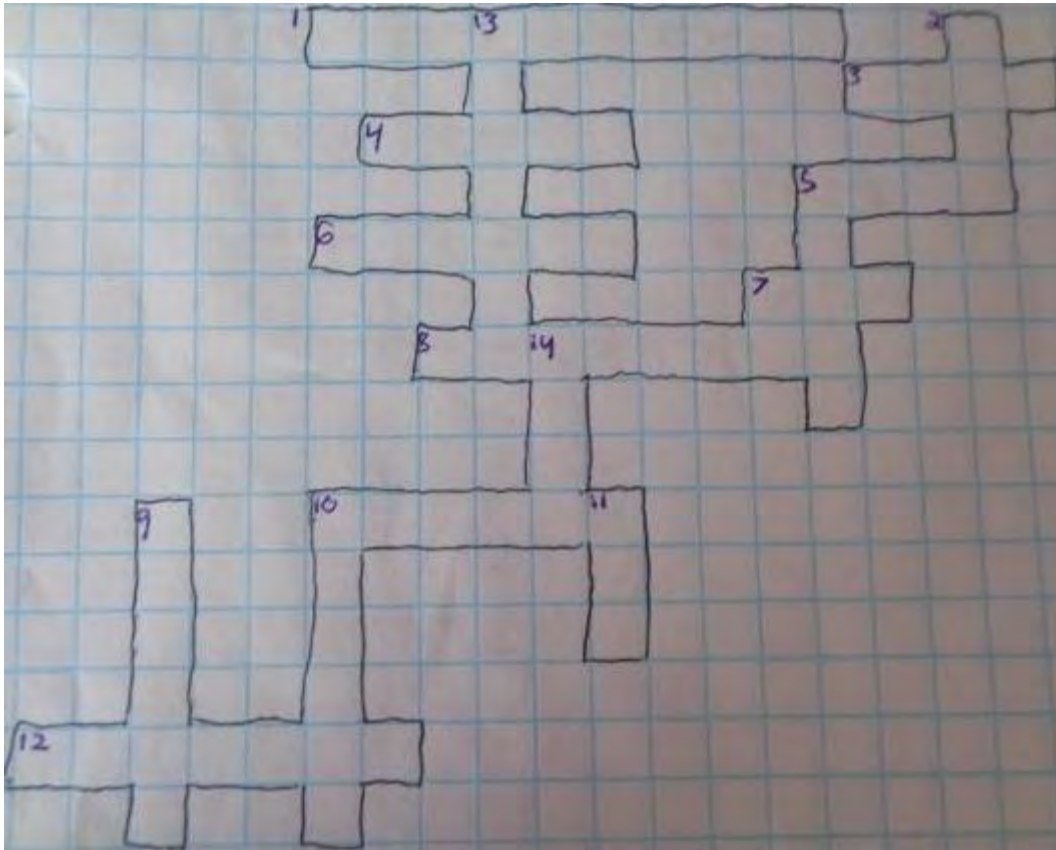
Senryu

Store; man looks confused

"Can I help you find something?"

"Yes; where is my wife?"

Crossword Puzzle



Across

1. Something spread on fields to make crops grow better
3. Where animals live
4. The color of Red River Valley dirt
5. What farmers do to the soil before planting
6. The season crops don't grow
7. ___ bales
8. Where grain is stored
10. The season crops grow in
12. The machine farmers harvest with



Down

2. What crops do during summer
5. When you put seeds into the soil, you ____ them.
7. Another way to say "hello"
9. The season farmers harvest in
10. Planting season
11. The stereotypical color of barns
13. It pulls the planter
14. A unit to measure land



Crops and Livestock Word Search

N	Q	Z	D	P	B	E	R	O	B	E	E	S
F	A	G	S	I	C	S	C	Y	Q	A	E	H
P	F	S	U	G	A	R	B	E	E	T	S	P
C	O	R	N	V	T	D	R	N	L	P	O	Y
E	M	A	F	T	T	D	O	B	S	O	X	I
W	G	P	L	M	L	Q	X	A	L	T	B	A
U	K	F	O	J	E	T	I	R	C	A	E	B
C	R	J	W	A	H	Y	B	L	V	T	A	J
U	W	H	E	A	T	M	K	E	H	O	N	H
L	B	T	R	S	X	S	E	Y	X	E	S	O
N	W	D	S	N	I	H	G	N	Z	S	Z	R
I	M	F	O	V	P	O	U	L	T	R	Y	S
F	L	A	X	P	C	V	S	G	F	O	L	E

Barley

Bees

Cattle

Corn

Flax

Horse

Oats

Pigs

Potatoes

Poultry

Soybeans

Sugar beets

Sunflowers

Wheat



Credits:

All articles written by Elizabeth.

Pretty much everything graded edited by Mom.

Mom gave me a bit of advice about illustrations.

Pictures from various places, as stated below:

Pexels.com: on pages 5, 7, 9, 11, 15, 16, 18, 20, the barn on page 6, and the bottom two on 19

Elizabeth: on page 1, 22, the bottom of 6, and the top of page 19

Bing: on page 14

My mom: on pages 2 and 10

My grandma: page 3

Thank You's:

First, I guess I should thank my Mom first for getting this course for me and for how wonderful of a homeschool teacher she is

Thanks to Mr. S for creating this course—it's awesome!

Thanks to Dad for reading what I write and saying it's great (whether it is or not), and for letting me interview him.

Thanks to my brothers for not bugging me while I write—most of the time—and for being funny (and annoying) enough to write an article about.

Thanks to the dog Otis for capturing my grandparent's love—then freaking them out by running off after a deer.

Thanks to wasps and hornets for never appearing during winter and spring.

Thanks to bees for not being hornets or wasps and being cute instead.

Thanks to my friends for tolerating me e-mailing them tons of REALLY LONG stuff I've written—and occasionally, even reading it.

Thanks to our pigs for being cute, making great models for pictures, and ultimately tasting really good!

Thanks to anyone who read my entire magazine.

Thanks to anyone I missed who contributed to my magazine.

And thanks to anyone reading this who wants to be thanked.

Most of these stories were made up, except for the ones on pages 3 and 6. The article on page 7 is kind of true... All of the ads and their websites and phone numbers are pretend. DO NOT call the numbers and if you do, DO NOT tell the person on the other end where you got the number from.

