



Maya's vertical jump tops 1.7 inches

Maya's leaping inability has attracted interest from the U.S. Lowjumping Development Team.

"She very nearly doesn't leave the ground at all," one scout remarked. "You can't teach that."

When not honing her lowjumping technique, Maya plays soccer for the Mighty Dolphin Lightning Strikers, which her father coaches. Should this merged team merge with another merged team, it will have eight names.

Maya, a third grader at Lowry Elementary, also horseback rides and takes art and piano lessons. She considered taking up golf, but had second thoughts when, whenever she addressed the ball, her paternal grandfather suddenly appeared and bopped her on the head with a stick.



Maya, lowjumping

Maya, with Lily, also tried scuba in the pool at Denver Divers. Though bubbles soon rose over Lily, none surfaced above Maya. When she emerged moments later, Maya explained, "I thought this was all just an elaborate mouth guard."

Backpack festooned with Rainbow Loom hesitant to tell girls that Rainbow Loom is passé.



Beacon on Vine

Seeking to capture a larger segment of the young-moron demographic, The Holiday Beacon will henceforth be presented as a series of six-second loops on Vine.

CAROL EMBRACES, DISCARDS LIFE OF EASE

Carol took immediately to Chateau Royal d'Amboise.

"I'm staying," she announced. "Sorry?" Todd asked.

"I'm staying. Here. I like the tapestries. The views. See ya."

She bounced slightly on the 400-year-old mattress in the queen's quarters.

As Todd and the girls suspected, she returned within a couple of days. Carol couldn't get along without them, after all.

"The multi-course meals grew tedious, and I longed to once again drive across town to the rink at 5 a.m.," Carol said. "But mostly I missed Target."



Carol at home in Amboise, France

Girls enjoy semi-private Mona Lisa viewing



Oscar protests executive action on Peanut immigration

Oscar decried the Neffs' unilateral decision to acquire a small, furry mammal as "an unprecedented abuse of executive power." When reminded of the facts surrounding his own adoption, the dog responded, "I was a midsize, furry mammal."



Peanut, granted asylum in November



Maya lobbied for her own horse, but settled for a hamster. This was akin to asking for a \$10,000 raise and accepting a Starbucks gift card.

Girls delay gluten-freedom



Lily and Maya have postponed their transition to medically unnecessary gluten-free living until they finish their giant pretzels, which is expected sometime in 2037.



Lily Weighs Career in Contortionism

Though Lily is just a sixth grader at Roscoe C. Hill Middle School, her guidance counselor has suggested factoring her extreme physical flexibility into her career deliberations.

“Contortionists generally work in warm physical environments, which is good,” Lily said. “Of course, repeatedly squeezing myself into a Plexiglas box the size of a microwave oven could become tiresome.”

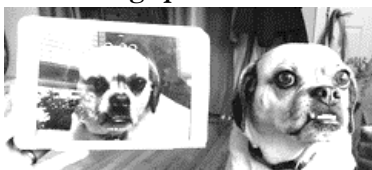
And so she continues to figure skate, which also puts a premium on twisting oneself into improbable configurations. To this end, Lily awakens at 4:30 a.m. four days a week to truck across town to the Edge of the World Ice Arena, and does so with apparent enthusiasm. The Roscoe C. Hill people have themselves contorted to accommodate her late post-skating arrivals.



Among Lily's 2014 accomplishments included discovering the elusive Sasquatch.

**REMEMBER
THE NEEDIEST!**

Girls lose grip on third dimension



The girls' iPad, Kindle, smartphone and flat-screen TV time has eroded their depth-perceptive abilities. The problem first manifested at the dinner table: when asked to pass a shared dish or condiment, Lily and Maya merely lifted and then returned the requested item to its original position. Their father instituted remedial "Pet the 3D Puggle" training, as yet with little effect.



Two days a week, Lily's mother drops her and her father picks her up. He uses this time to bone up on what's hot in the pop music scene. Lily recently explained, for example, that Ariana Grande's "Problem" was "so fifth grade."

"Where would you put 'Gangnam Style' on this whole spectrum?" Todd asked.

"You'd be considered a dork to listen to it."

"To 'Gangnam Style.'"
"Yeah."

"How about the new U2 album?"

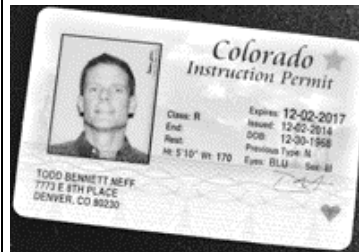
"Nobody's heard of it."
"Nobody?"

"No," Lily said, who then returned to her texting.

Todd gets learner's permit

Todd received his Colorado instruction permit 30 years after receiving Michigan learner's permit. With the permit, he was, the DMV lady said, allowed to drive with an adult age 21 or older in the front seat.

This was all the result of a goof documented in detail at <http://bit.ly/1Em43gM>.



Otherwise, Todd still writes for a living and for a not-living, the former for a big hospital, a university, and others. Among the more interesting 2014 stories involved buying and smoking marijuana called Ogre (<http://on.mash.to/MUvZiZ>).

He is wrapping up a potboiler of a novel and has a memoir on the hard drive, but who doesn't?

**The Front Range Diet™
is toats cool**

Maya banishes all fathers



Beacon available online

To mark the Beacon's 15th and final issue, the publisher has posted the complete oeuvre online at toddneff.com/beacon. "We hope to soon pollute it with Vibrant in-text ads," said Maya Neff, Beacon Media's key grip and chief marketing officer.

TRAVEL REPORT

The Neffs made their first family trip to Europe in July-August, splitting time with great old friends in France and Germany. Family Pflanz hosted in Paris and the Loire Valley; the Machas took the reins on a jaunt through southern Germany before handing the Neff-baton off to the Volzes, who hosted an enormous housewarming/Hello Ami party. Among the highlights included the world-famous Chateau de Valmer, Dinkelsbühler espresso, and watching French, American and German kids play on their electronic devices in close proximity to one another.



Girls, art consultant Phileas Pflanz demonstrate their exquisite taste in the Rodin Museum garden.

Todd visited Dearborn for his parents' 50th wedding anniversary party and to dust off his 1977 Schwinn Sting-Ray. Other jaunts included Fountain Hills, where the Neffs converged for Thanksgiving; and South Padre Island, where the girls looked in vain for sandcastles constructed two years prior.

