



Ice melts, lily adapts



“Sometimes you just go with the flow, no pun intended,” said Lily, when the Edge Ice Arena’s north rink melted, forcing figure skaters to adapt. If they didn’t, after all, their parents wouldn’t have the opportunity to drive them all the way across town for an extracurricular activity.

Good news was, her scuba equipment was nearly as expensive as her skating gear, Lily noted.

“Plus, this will be much more practical as sea levels rise with global warming,” she said.

Lily, now a seventh-grader at Hill Middle School, intended to take wood shop, where she envisioned crafting an exquisite, practical cutting board. Instead, her father forced her to take a useless STEM elective, where they sequenced DNA to predict their fingerprint patterns, dissected gross sheep brains, and learned how bioforensic experts can determine time of death based on corpse temperature.

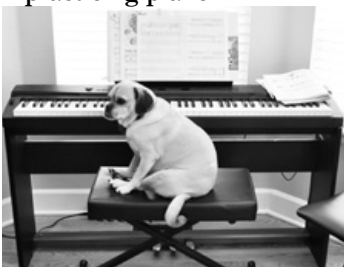
“Bo-ring,” Lily said.

Given her sudden lack of cold in her day-to-day, Lily’s parents sprang for a snow-



bed, where she can be found relaxing after school on evenings when she’s not busy in the water at the Edge Scuba Arena.

Oscar practices piano without whining about practicing piano



Maya takes up yardfishing



Maya joined the Lowry Yardfishing Club. “It delivers all the challenge and strategy of water-fishing, but without the fishy mess,” she explained.

Beacon on Spotify

Beacon Chief Marketing Officer Lily Neff described the move as “inno-radical,” saying the publication’s relative lack of audio would be addressed after generous royalties flowed in.

AMURICA: LOVE IT OR LEAVE IT, CAROL SAYS

Carol tried jingoism on for size before realizing it didn’t quite fit her soft-spoken, politically nuanced nature.

“When I ranted about the need for border walls and mass deportations during staff meetings, my colleagues seemed surprised,” she said. “Especially the ones from India.”

She ultimately donated her Make America Great Again hat to an ARC store in an Hispanic part of town.

Carol now manages an IT team at Johns Manville, which affords her an office for luxuriant afternoon naps.



Carol, right, with unidentified yahoo

Useful book buried amid ‘Potter’



Todd’s purchase for Lily of Jared Diamond’s classic “Guns, Germs and Steel” suffocated unread under J.K. Rowling’s spell.

Maya pencils in career choice



Maya’s face-on-cake triggers pilgrim deluge

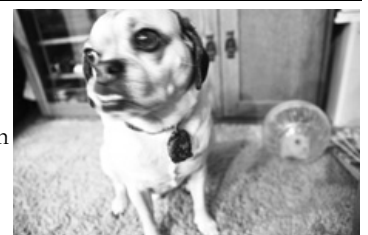


Visitors finally left upon the rumored appearance of St. Augustine on a frozen pizza in Des Moines.

Peanut tires of constant upstaging by Oscar

In multiple comment cards, Peanut has expressed frustration with his lodging circumstances.

“What’s with the wolf-spawn?” read one. Another: “Let me out of this ball, please.” And: “How about something besides water (hint: frappuccino)?”



His hosts’ insistence on diurnal living was a consistent theme: “Yo hominids, get %&*# up!”

Maya takes equestrian skills to new heights

Maya's prehistoric-camel riding skills have blossomed during her time at The Pleistocene Urban Farm at Stapleton. In addition to the *camelops*, Maya enjoys steering diminutive *mesohippus* about the pole barn, though she is always careful as these spook easily when the saber-toothed rabbits skitter nearby.

Now a fourth grader at Lowry Elementary, Maya recently bombed out of an inter-school spelling bee on the word "schadenfreude," which elicited *Frust* from her father, who marked the 30th anniversary of his 1985-1986 German exchange year. Maya claims to have been distracted by a boy crinkling a potato-chip bag, causing her to forget an "e."

Maya played soccer for the



Swarm of Bees, which her coach-father unilaterally rechristened to foster team unity and subtly advocate for a high-pressure defensive approach.

To jump-start her failed bodybuilding program, Maya took up SandFit, in which often goonlike participants alternate between diverse, brutal exercises with one common denominator: sand.



Maya's bodybuilding program fails



Maya amid a SandFit workout

**REMEMBER
THE NEEDIEST!**

Oscar achieves complete symmetry

Oscar achieved complete symmetry below the family's long-suffering ginkgo tree, at which point he ascended and, after a brief ascension, returned to his mortal-coil canine form.

"I prefer my 'sunny spot' on the rug at the front door, as my human refers to it, from which I can defend the household from nefarious passersby," Oscar said. "And I missed my daily Greenie."



Todd sees future

Todd continues to play soccer against younger opponents and his better judgement, as well as write things for a major hospital system and for the occasional university and government-lab gig. He is learning Spanish in five-minute increments via an app, Duolingo, which seems to lower his fluency ranking the more he studies.



Todd received a premonition of his future self via a clairvoyant moment of Maya's, and can look forward to a future of rounded features, curly hair and erratic wrinkling.

The Front Range Diet™ contains negative carbs.

Cousins establish classic power structure



Beacon available online

To mark the Beacon's 16th and final issue, the publisher has posted the complete oeuvre online at toddniff.com/beacon.

TRAVEL REPORT

The Neffs traveled to Del Mar, Calif. in July to meet their old friends the Machas, who had made the short trip from L.A. They all realized why San Diego real estate prices are stratospheric.



The Machas and Neffs in Del Mar

Besides a pleasant July outing with Carol's folks to Steamboat Springs, Colo., the family's main excursions were to Todd's parents' home in Fountain Hills, Arizona, where they engaged in TopGolf and go-kart racing and



Champion go-karters in AZ took in sunsets nothing short of ridiculous.

Todd and Maya spent a great weekend camping with neighbors among the moose in Grand Lake, Colo., which Carol and Lily missed due to a skating conflict; Carol and Lily made up for this by visiting Kansas City, Mo. for a figure skating competition.

