



GHOSTWRITERS

2020

C'mon. Turn the page. We dare you. What are you, chicken?

The Anniston Star received nearly 500 entries in our 31st annual Halloween story contest for kids. The winning stories appear inside, followed by a gallery of spooky drawings.

Photo by Bill Wilson/The Anniston Star

Ghoulies and ghosties and long-legged beasties

Every year, The Anniston Star receives hundreds of entries in its annual Ghostwriters contest, and I love reading the stories. So what are kids scared of this year?



Lisa Davis

Homeland Insecurity

In "The Ghost of Emma" by Zainatu Sesay, age 10, of The Donoho School, a young girl who dies of COVID haunts the doctor who turned off her ventilator because, as he said, "You are going to die anyway and there is nothing I can do about it."

2020 is going to haunt us all for a very long time. Thankfully, not all the kids' ghost stories were that grim.

This year's tales included the usual assortment of dark woods and haunted houses, creepy dolls and killer clowns. There were evil teachers and evil principals.

Kidnappers and serial killers. Murder hornets and Nazis.

Here are some of my favorite moments from among the nearly 500 stories:

Best title: "The Night of the Living Homework" by Iradessa Williams, age 10, White Plains Elementary.

Best opening line: "There was once a guy that ate people for a living," from "The Night the Streets Became Red" by Connor Bannister, age 12, of Williams Intermediate School.

Best setting: In "The Last Nail" by Sam Wakefield, age 13, of the Donoho School, customers go into a nail salon, but they don't come out.

Best sound effects: "Drip, drip, drip, drip, drip." From a story by Paisley Freckman, age 9, of The Donoho School.

Best musical prop: A piano that plays haunting melodies — literally — in "The Piano" by Mason Lee, age 10, of Williams Intermediate School.

Best non-musical prop: In "Written Disasters" by Haley Hartwell, age 13, of the Donoho School, a boy finds a mysterious pen and discovers that, if he

writes down the names of the kids who bully him, they immediately die gruesome deaths.

Best accidental summoning: In "The Cake with Hatred" by Christopher Perkins, age 12, of The Donoho School, a mom unwittingly unleashes a demon when she decorates her son's birthday cake with a red star that turns out to be a pentagram.

Best clown alternative: In a story by Lake Hill, age 11, of Williams Intermediate School, a family is menaced by a creepy garden gnome.

Scariest villain: In "The Crazy Kid" by Jaxon Ralph, age 11, of Williams Intermediate School, the killer is an evil dentist ... with a big drill ...

Best-named villain: A murderer video game character comes to life in "The Legend of Tomato Head" by Hunter Hartwell, age 10, of the Donoho School.

Creepiest villain: In "The Tall Watching Man," by Bailey Haynes, age 8, of Coosa Valley Elementary School, the title character is just that: A tall man who creeps into children's rooms at night and just stands there, watching them

sleep.

Scariest monster: In "Never Kill Spiders" by Olivia Green, age 9, of Ohatchee Elementary School, two girls are hunted by a 10-foot-long spider. Nope nope nope nope nope.

Even scarier monster: In "Haunted House" by Rylee Smith, age 9, of White Plains Elementary, two girls are hunted by a 200,000-foot-tall spider.

Tastiest monster: In "A Doughy Situation" by Landon Craycraft, age 14, of Alexandria High School, the monster is a scientist who accidentally turns himself into a giant jelly doughnut.

Best mutant: In "Bloody Monkeys" by Matthew Roper, age 11, of Williams Intermediate School, some monkeys drink toxic water, steal a bunch of AK-47s and start shooting people.

Worst monster: In "The Missing Friend" by Sophee Tuiolosego, age 10, of Ohatchee Elementary, the monster is a zombie unicorn. That's just not right.

Biggest misdirect: In "One Halloween Night" by Mia Busby, age 13, of White Plains Middle

School, a boy and girl follow a trail of red stuff through the halls of a creepy old hotel, only to discover it was made by a cute puppy who had found a peanut butter and strawberry jelly sandwich.

Ickiest title: "The Lice Zombies" by Rylan Harmon, age 12, of Williams Intermediate School. No. Just no.

Best song: In "The Evil Easter Bunny" by Leigh Ann Shute, age 10, of Williams Intermediate School, the Easter Bunny hops along and sings this song: "Here comes the Easter Bunny / Axing all the parents / I can hippy hoppy / Bloodshed's on its way!" Good luck getting that out of your head now.

Killer last line: In "A Clowny Night" by Dacarri Bedford, age 11, of Williams Intermediate School, a boy steals a clown's red nose. The evil clown catches the boy and exclaims, "If you don't give me my nose, I'll just have to take yours!"

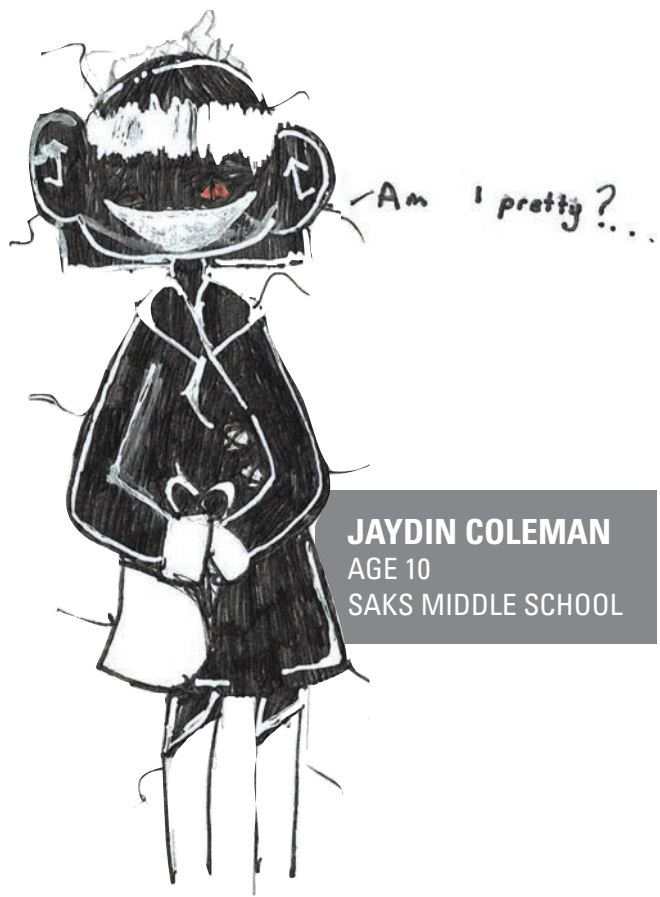
Lisa Davis is Features Editor of The Anniston Star. Contact her at 256-235-3555 or ldavis@annistonstar.com

Our regular weekend columnists will return next week.



ADAM SALAME
AGE 14
THE DONOHO SCHOOL

Check out these art submissions from our Ghostwriters!



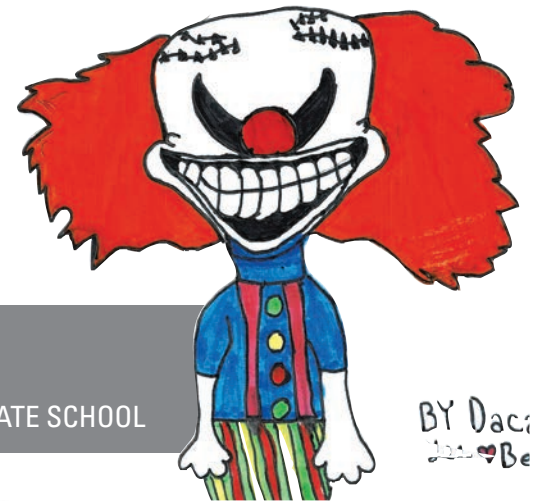
JAYDIN COLEMAN
AGE 10
SAKS MIDDLE SCHOOL



MARIE SOPHIA KAPLAN
AGE 11
WILLIAMS INTERMEDIATE SCHOOL

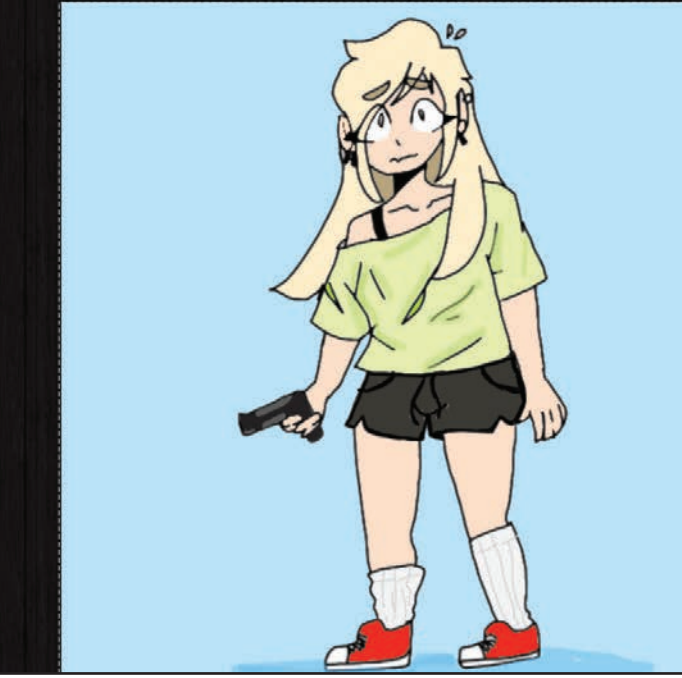


LANDON WALLACE
AGE 12
WILLIAMS INTERMEDIATE SCHOOL

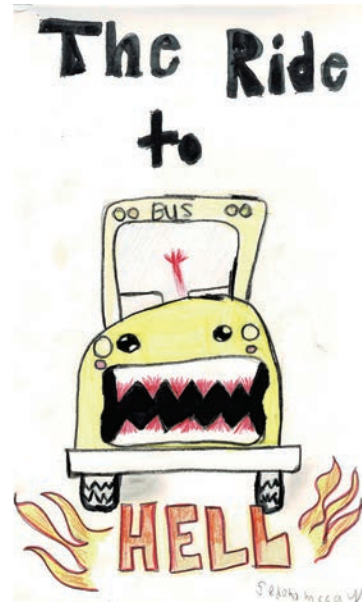


DACARRI BEDFORD
AGE 11
WILLIAMS INTERMEDIATE SCHOOL

BY Dac
Be



CALLEE TAYLOR
AGE 12
THE DONOHO SCHOOL



SEDONA MCCAY
AGE 11, WILLIAMS
INTERMEDIATE SCHOOL



JULIAN GILMORE
AGE 5
OXFORD ELEMENTARY