

Since 1993



The Bowfin Inquirer



February 2025

How Quickly They Grow!

by Jerry Lerman (344)

When the 2020 Covid pandemic struck, one of Eve's and my favorite volunteer activities came to a screeching halt: visiting Fiesta Gardens School to help 3rd-5th graders improve their reading. Each of us had been meeting with three children for 30 minute sessions each school-day Tuesday – for over 3 years. It would no longer be safe to do that, so we had to discontinue the visits.

All was not lost, however. We were able to reach a couple of "our" children's parents and establish a time each week when we could have a reading session using 'Zoom'. The books we'd read would be accessed through Kindle downloads, or from library resources like Hoopla, then viewed together using the 'share screen' feature of Zoom.

Eve and I began these sessions with our kids within a month of the shutdown. The children, of course, have now grown well past 5th grade, and the schools are open again, so it might seem logical that these sessions are now over, but that's not the case with one of my tutees, "D", who is now an 8th grader.

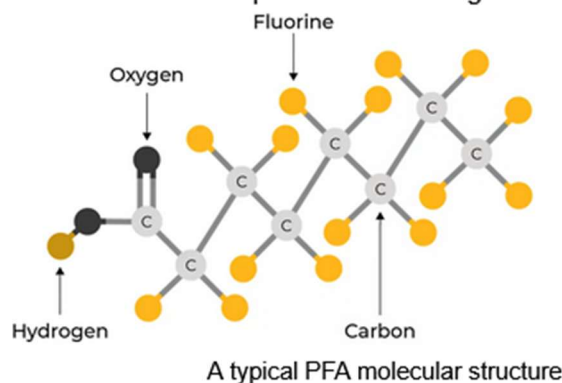
"D" was a 3rd grader when we began reading an amusing "Amelia Bedelia" book, "Unleashed," which I'd loaded on the Kindle app. Since then, we've tackled books of gradually greater complexity in both vocabulary and plot. A couple standouts were "**The Girl Who Drank the Moon**" and "**Scat**," the latter being a humorous Carl Hiaasen book for young readers about an infant panther separated from its mother.

continued on page 3

Aaron's Question Column



A chart of common products containing PFAS



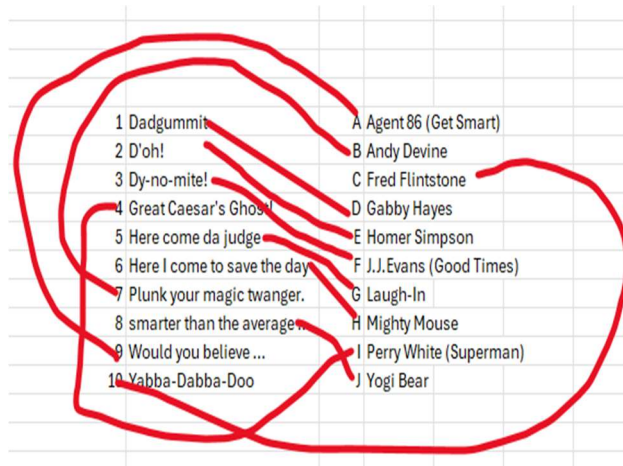
Question: There's been recent news about the presence of "forever" chemicals (PFAS) in our food and water supplies. Is this likely to be a big problem in coming years - and, if so, are there steps we can take that may improve the situation?

Aaron's Answer (A'sA): There has indeed been a lot of news about PFAs in recent years. According to studies done by major medical organizations, polyfluoroalkyl substances, or PFAs, can be found in nearly every person on Earth, everything we drink, eat, wear, even the air we breathe.

continued on page 3

Solution to Last Month's Quiz

Catch (Phrases) Catch-All



This Month's Quiz

TEAMS' MATES

Below are (1) TWELVE sports teams' names scrambled – with their letters in alphabetical order; (2) TWELVE city/state/or regional names – scrambled into smaller 'words'; and (3) SIX division or conference names – anagrammed into alphabetical order. *The teams come from professional baseball (MLB), football (NFL), basketball (NBA), or hockey (NHL).*

Match each team to its city / state /region. (e.g., 'Reds' would match to 'Cincinnati' or 'Twins' would match to 'Minnesota'.)

Then match each of the twelve teams to the division or conference in which it plays. (e.g., the Colorado Rockies and San Francisco Giants would both match to the 'West')

When done correctly, you'll find that each team has a "mate" that co-resides in the same competitive division.

Teams

- a. AADGINRSU
- b. AAEHKSSW
- c. ACEHINRRSU
- d. AHRKSS
- e. AMRS
- f. APORRST
- g. CCEILST
- h. CEKORST
- i. EGIRTS
- j. EIGNNPSU
- k. EILORS
- l. GEILRSZZ

City/State/Region

- A. At Steel
- B. Dottier
- C. Imps Hem
- D. Lend Calve
- E. Moon Dent
- F. No Racial
- G. Sees Gallon
- H. So Jeans
- I. Tight Burps
- J. To Snob
- K. Too Torn
- L. U No Host

Divisions or Conferences

- 1. AACILNTT
- 2. ACCFIIP
- 3. ACENRT
- 4. AEILMNOOPRTT
- 5. EHOSSTUW
- 6. ESTW

Significant exposure to PFAs over long durations has been found to cause health problems, such as cancer, immune system disruption, and developmental issues. However, we still lack long-term data to fully understand the full impact of these chemicals, especially since they persist in the environment and accumulate in the body. So, why is this happening?

PFAs are a large family of human-made chemicals known for their ability to repel water, oils, and stains. These chemicals are commonly found in products such as nonstick cookware, waterproof clothing, food packaging, and firefighting foam. Molecule-wise, PFAs are characterized by a long chain of carbon atoms bonded with fluorine atoms, which creates a stable structure that is highly resistant to breakdown. This unique chemical structure makes them incredibly persistent in the environment and in living organisms, earning them the nickname "forever chemicals." They do not naturally degrade and can remain in water, soil, and even in human tissues for years, leading to widespread contamination.

To reduce exposure to PFAs, some practical steps include choosing PFAs-free products when possible, such as opting for non-stick cookware that does not contain these chemicals or using natural fiber clothing instead of options that are water- and stain-resistant. Additionally, filtering tap water with carbon filters has been shown to help reduce PFAs levels. Avoiding fast food packaging, which often contains these chemicals, can also limit exposure. Finally, being cautious with products labeled as "waterproof" or "stain-resistant" and choosing alternatives can reduce the chance of bringing PFAs into your home. Unfortunately, it does not seem possible to entirely remove PFAs from our lives, but we can and should attempt to detoxify

ourselves. Reducing PFAs exposure is crucial for our health and the environment. As these chemicals persist in our ecosystems and accumulate in our bodies, it's important for us to act and raise awareness by limiting their use and advocating for stricter regulations to phase them out, to ensure a safer, cleaner future.

There have also been concerning signs showing that newborn babies contain PFAs and other persistent substances right out of the womb... I take that as a sign that perhaps, just maybe, we need to cut back on plastics and chemicals.

How Quickly They Grow from pg 1
"D" has picked out the titles she's wanted to read, often looking over shelves in the school library to find one. That's how she found a really weird one, "**The Dead Girls of Hysteria Hall**," 300+ pages covering the "lives" of the ghosts who'd been institutionalized in a mental institution.

Throughout these nearly five years of weekly sessions, D's reading and comprehension abilities have clearly grown, which is – of course - our objective. What has come as a bit of a surprise, though, is that I'm LEARNING, too! The most recent title "D" picked out, "**Allies**," is a young adult novel about the June 6, 1944, Invasion of Normandy. I thought I knew a lot about the subject prior to tackling this book, but I have been learning quite a bit more. I was most affected to learn that in Winnipeg, in 1942, the citizens staged "IF DAY," when they realistically simulated a frightening Nazi Luftwaffe and land force takeover of the city, with many citizens getting "arrested." Detainees were expected to donate money to the war cause to be set free.

Just when "D" will opt to conclude these reading sessions, I can't say, but while we're BOTH learning and having fun expanding our horizons, I'm not in any hurry!

Target Date for Next Month's Contributions:
March 15, 2025

Please reach us with your articles, news, photos,
CHILDREN'S ARTWORK or ideas at

344 Bowfin, (650 572-9153) or email us at our
email EDITOR@BOWFININQUIRER.COM *or by*
adding a NOTE on our website:
BOWFININQUIRER.COM

Coming Next to Hillbarn Theatre



**We Can't Wait To
See You This Summer!**



Peninsula Jewish Community Center
800 Foster City Blvd.
Foster City, CA 94404

Come to Camp KEFF for can't-miss activities,
awesome adventures, and fun times with friends.

Registration Now Open at campkeff.org



For more information:

Contact camps@pjcc.org or 650.378.2704

