WILD CROSSINGS

Roads are dangerous for wildlife. People are building pathways to help animals cross.

A deer travels through Great Sand Dunes National Park, in Colorado.
THE BRIEF

U.S.

BAGS BANNED

By Brian S. McGrath

New York State has banned single-use plastic bags. The new law went into effect on March 1. New York is one of several states to forbid stores from handing out plastic bags at checkout. California was the first. Many cities and counties in the United States already have similar laws.

Andrew Cuomo is New York’s governor. He proposed the ban last year. “For far too long, these bags have blighted our environment and clogged our waterways,” he said.

Officials say the ban will change people’s shopping habits. Until now, New Yorkers used 23 billion plastic bags each year. The bags are harmful to birds and marine animals. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency says some communities spend $1 million each year cleaning up litter. Much of it is grocery bags.

Businesses could pay up to $500 each time for breaking the law. Paper bags are allowed. But they may cost shoppers 5¢ each.

New York State leaders say people should keep reusable bags in their car or backpack. Small purchases may not need a bag at all.

Stop and Think!

WHY might news about a law in one state be of interest to people across the country? Could such a story influence other states to pass a similar law? Why or why not?

ENTERTAINMENT

CELEBRATING KIDS

By Allison Singer

On February 24, TIME for Kids and Nickelodeon announced the first-ever Kid of the Year television special. The hour-long show will air on Nickelodeon and CBS in December. It will feature five outstanding young leaders who are making a positive difference in their community. One of them will be named the TIME Kid of the Year.

Trevor Noah will be the show’s host. He’s a comedian and an author. Noah says the TV special “celebrates everything that makes young people amazing, and gives them a platform to have their voices heard.”

Do you know someone who should be the TIME Kid of the Year? We’ll be asking readers for their nominations soon. Keep an eye out for details in an upcoming issue.
FOR THE RECORD

$70 MILLION

is how much SONIC THE HEDGEHOG earned in four days when it opened on Presidents’ Day weekend. This was the best opening weekend in the U.S. for a film inspired by a video game.

$1 1/2 BILLION

was the price tag for DREAM ISLAND, Russia’s first modern theme park. It opened on February 29, in Moscow, Russia’s capital. The large indoor park has folk dancers, robotic dinosaurs, and a carousel.

“IN ZULU, HER NAME MEANS ‘BEAUTIFUL ONE,’”

JENNIFER CHAPMAN, of the San Diego Zoo, told Good Morning America on February 28. She was referring to a baby hippo born at the zoo on February 8. Her name, Amahle (a-mah-shay), was chosen in an online poll.

DATA DEEP DIVE

Some animals migrate when the seasons change. In a recent study, scientists tracked which of the world’s land mammals migrate the farthest. Here are the results.

- **CARIBOU** (Alaska, U.S.A.; Northwest Territories and Yukon, Canada) — 839 miles
- **REINDEER** (Taymyr Peninsula, Russia) — 746 miles
- **GRAY WOLF** (Northwest Territories, Canada) — 631 miles
- **MULE DEER** (Wyoming, U.S.A.) — 480 miles
- **TIBETAN ANTELOPE** (Tibet) — 435 miles

*Distances in miles rounded to the nearest whole number.

FROM TOP: WAYNE R. BILENDUKE—GETTY IMAGES; SERGEY KRASNOSHCHOKOV—GETTY IMAGES; ANDY SKILLEN PHOTOGRAPHY/GETTY IMAGES; KEITH SZAFRANSKI—GETTY IMAGES; VIEWSTOCK/GETTY IMAGES. SOURCE: SCIENTIFIC REPORTS
People are building roadway crossings to protect animals from vehicles.

Patty Garvey-Darda loves pikas. They are small mammals related to rabbits. “I think they are about the cutest animals alive,” she told *TIME for Kids*. Garvey-Darda is a wildlife biologist.

She works for the United States Forest Service. She wants to protect pikas and other creatures from a common threat: vehicles. The Federal Highway Administration says more than a million roadway accidents involving animals happen in the U.S. each year. These collisions hurt wildlife and people.

One solution to this problem? Wildlife crossings. In the U.S. and around the world, bridges and underpasses are being built to help animals safely cross roads.

**GLOBAL SOLUTION**
Banff National Park in Alberta, Canada, has some of the most successful wildlife crossings. Completed in 2014, these include 38 underpasses and six overpasses, or bridges. They prevent the park’s animals from being hit while crossing the Trans-Canada Highway, which bisects the park. Parks Canada says the crossing system has reduced collisions with wildlife by more than 80%.

People study the Banff crossings as a guide for new construction projects, Rob Ament says. He works for the Western Transportation Institute at Montana State University. Ament notes...
Banff’s “high quality of design.” This includes fencing to direct animals away from roads.

Ament is using his expertise on wildlife crossings for a project in Assam, India. One of the state’s highways is on the border of Kaziranga National Park. “Animals leave the park to go up a dry hill during monsoon season,” Ament says. “That means they have to cross the highway.” Plans are in the works for a safe pathway beneath it.

**UNDER CONSTRUCTION**
Wildlife crossings have been built in several U.S. states, including Arizona, Utah, and Wyoming. In Washington State, Garvey-Darda is part of a major project. She’s helping to design a set of about 20 wildlife crossings. “Banff has been the best model for us,” she says. Washington’s crossings are being built along a 15-mile stretch of Interstate 90 (I-90). That’s a long highway. This section of I-90 bisects the Cascade mountain range. It has disrupted the migration of animals in the area.

All 20 crossings are expected to be completed by 2029. So far, six underpasses and one overpass have been built. Garvey-Darda says these crossings have made a difference. “We now have close to 5,000 deer and elk going through the undercrossings,” she says. “All of these animals were potential accidents.”

This spring, Washington locals can plant vegetation on the I-90 overpass. Garvey-Darda says the plants will encourage animals, including her beloved pika, to use the crossings. “It’s important to be proactive,” she says, “and not wait until a species is endangered.”

—By Rebecca Mordechai
Teaching kids a traditional art form is preserving an ancient culture.

Welcome to the state of Oaxaca (wa-ha-ka), Mexico. Here, you’ll find the vibrant town of San Martín Tilcajete. The town is rooted in ancient Zapotec culture. The Zapotec people have been living in the area for thousands of years.

Look around, and you’ll spot wooden animal carvings. These figures are called tonas. Creating them is a Zapotec tradition. The craft has been passed down from generation to generation.

But slowly, Zapotec culture is fading. Young people are leaving Oaxaca to find work in larger cities. Fewer people have the knowledge and skills needed to make tonas.

One group hopes to change that. It’s called Jacobo y María Angeles. It teaches kids as young as 5 how to make tonas. Itzel Zuñiga works there. She spoke to TIME for Kids through an interpreter. “We’re trying to preserve the local Oaxacan culture,” she says.

CARVING OUT HISTORY

The carvings take time and skill to create. They are made of soft wood from copal trees that grow in the area. The wood must be left out to dry for months before it can be carved into the shape of an animal. Tonas represent the Zapotec belief that each person is born with a spirit animal that acts as a protector.

Decorating a toña can be a long process. Each figure tells its own story using tiny glyphs painted on the carving. “Every glyph you see represents an idea,” Zuñiga says. “It all means something for Zapotec culture.”

Kids gather at Jacobo y María Angeles to learn from expert teachers. In workshops, the kids are taught about copal trees, and they learn to “see” an animal in a piece of wood. Then they get a toña to decorate. Many of the colors they use are made of natural ingredients, such as pomegranate, cactus, and corn.

Some of these students might become expert teachers one day. Those who do will teach the next generation the Zapotec art of making tonas.

—By Rebecca Katzman

COLORFUL CARVINGS Siblings Dulce María and Luis Fernando of San Martín Tilcajete, in Oaxaca, Mexico, paint Zapotec tonas.
Author Jason Reynolds was recently named National Ambassador for Young People’s Literature by the Library of Congress. He spoke with TFK Kid Reporter Jack Doane.

1. What's your goal as National Ambassador?
   My goal is to visit small towns and encourage young people to share their stories. Stories aren't just in books. Our lives are books in themselves. All of our stories are valuable.

2. You visit schools often. Why is that important to you?
   My job is to show kids that the person who wrote these books is a regular person, a person with fears and desires and joy, just like them.

3. What's it like to write a novel?
   The truth is, it’s difficult. You can’t really master it. You just do the best you can, and make it as clear as possible. You try to make something beautiful with the words you know.

4. You write especially for young people? Why?
   Who else is there to write for? I want to write about how interesting and resilient young people are.

5. What makes fiction so powerful for young people?
   Fiction takes you into the lives of others. They might be suffering or being treated unfairly. And you learn to care about those people. That’s an amazing thing.

6. The boys in your novels show their emotions. Why is that?
   I grew up in a neighborhood where boys couldn’t seem scared or sensitive. But boys can be all these things. I want to show them that it’s okay to have a range of emotions.

7. Why is diversity important in books?
   America is a diverse country. It’s got people from all over the world, living all kinds of lives. That’s the beauty of our country. Why not have that beauty shown in our literature?

8. You publish books frequently. How do you do it?
   I work six or seven hours every day. My mom worked for 50 years and never got an opportunity like this. So I never take it for granted.
**SPELLBOUND**

In *Onward*, brothers Ian and Barley Lightfoot use magic to try to bring back their dad. He died when they were young. But their spell brings back only half of him—his legs and feet. Perplexed, the brothers look for another spell so they can make him whole. Along the way, they meet Corey. She’s a manticore, a winged creature with the body of a lion and the tail of a scorpion.

Actress **OCTAVIA SPENCER** voices Corey in the animated film. She told TFK Kid Reporter Alexis Bumah that her character has lost some of her powers. But Ian and Barley motivate her to embark on one more magical quest. “I think kids can really identify with that,” Spencer says. “How many of us are just regular everyday people who get to do something adventurous and fun?” The movie is in theaters now.

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**FIGHTING FOR CHANGE**

Jennifer Keelan-Chaffins has a disorder called cerebral palsy. She uses a wheelchair. As a child, it was hard for her to do simple things like eat lunch with her friends in school, because there were no wheelchair ramps in the cafeteria.

When she was 8, Jennifer set aside her wheelchair and climbed the steps of the United States Capitol on her hands and knees. Her actions sent a message: Pass the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Lawmakers listened. Today, the ADA makes public spaces accessible to people with disabilities.

*All the Way to the Top* is Keelan-Chaffins’s story. “Jennifer had the power to inspire and to change the world,” author **ANNETTE BAY PIMENTEL** told TFK. “I hope readers take away that they can make a difference and make a change.”

—By Karena Phan