



**OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF THE STATE'S
2013 ESSAY CONTEST
WINNERS**

Congressional District 1

1st Place

**Charter Oak International Academy, West Hartford
Fatima Rodriguez**

Connecticut's "Word" Savior

Do you know what the word "statuesque" means? Well, if you don't - where would you look? That's right, in the dictionary. Who do you have to thank for this amazing book? It's Connecticut's own Noah Webster. Let me tell you his story.

Noah had two brothers and two sisters! Out of all his siblings he was the only one that went to "elementary school." When he finally realized that he loved to learn, a big question popped in Noah's mind! Can I continue school and become a lawyer?

Noah's father had a different plan for Noah's future. They were on different pages. His father wanted him to be a farmer or a weaver. For a young man to become a lawyer in the 1770s, he had to go to more school, and become a lawyer's apprentice. Doing this cost a lot of money. Noah's father said "no." You might be blue for Noah, but don't worry. This is what caused him to create his first invention. Let's go back a little. After the rejection, Noah changed careers to become a teacher! Close your eyes and imagine that you're in a class that has about fifty to sixty kids! You see kids from age four to sixteen! Finally, imagine teaching there! That's right. Noah taught in a one-room schoolhouse in the West Division (West Hartford). Noah saw that the school had poor textbooks. So, he invented the *Blue Back Speller*, and it was used all over Connecticut! Noah believed that America needed American textbooks, and that they shouldn't rely on the English words. So, his *Speller* Americanized the words. Schools in Connecticut and other parts of the country used it for one-hundred years! The *Speller* sold one-hundred thousand copies, but Noah got only a little of the money!

When Noah realized that he wasn't getting any money, he invented the copyright law to protect the *Speller*. Like a mama bear protecting her cubs! Noah had to get the copyright law passed, but he didn't want to have to get it approved in each state. So, he tried to get a federal law passed. Only some men were chosen to go to the Constitutional Convention, but Noah wasn't popular - so he wasn't one of them. He didn't care, so he went to the Convention anyway. Noah got what he wanted. He had the copyright passed as a national law in 1790. The copyright protected writing for fourteen years. The copyright still helps us today, because it protects someone's work and ideas!

After inventing the *Speller* and the copyright, Noah invented the popular dictionary! As he saw the need for the other inventions, he also saw the need for an American dictionary. Noah wrote every single word and syllable by hand! Wow, that must have been tiring! The first book had seventy thousand words. Today's dictionary has around two-hundred twenty-five thousand words. These days, it's not written by hand. (Good Grief!) Today people use dictionaries every day! A dictionary will always be there when you need it - to correct your mistakes and to teach you something new! After Noah died, the Merriam brothers bought the copyright to the dictionary. It was called the "Merriam-Webster" dictionary. Today, whoever uses the *Webster* dictionary must put Noah's name somewhere in the book.

Imagine the world without the *Speller*, copyright, or the dictionary! Or better yet, imagine the world without Noah Webster! I admire the risks and actions Noah took. I hope one day the whole world will realize it as well. Till then, Noah Webster will stay in the hearts of us curious thinkers.

2nd Place

**Mary Louise Aiken Elementary School, West Hartford
Zan Huang**

3rd Place

**Phillip R. Smith Elementary School, South Windsor
Sara Wills**

Honorable Mention

**Highland Park School, Manchester
Katherine Miner**

Honorable Mention

**Charter Oak International Academy, West Hartford
Jankris Bondoc**

Congressional District 2

1st Place

***Nathan Hale-Ray Middle School, East Haddam
Jasmine Ziobron***

Robert Jarvik, raised in Stamford, CT, was a brilliant inventor who changed the lives of millions. As a young boy, Jarvik was interested in both medicine and mechanics. Jarvik graduated from Syracuse University and was leaning towards an art career until his father developed heart disease. To try and help his father, he earned a master's degree in medical engineering from New York University. Afterwards, he was admitted to the University of Utah's medical school. Once he had completed two years of study, he was hired by Willem Johan Kolff who produced the first dialysis machine and was working on artificial organs such as the heart. Jarvik joined the University of Utah's artificial organs program in 1971. Kolff assigned Jarvik to design a functional artificial heart that was problem free unlike Clifford Kwan's, which only lasted 10 days on a lab animal and had many problems. This is how the Jarvik-7 has come to be.

The Jarvik-7 is a very complex device. It has 2 pumps like the hearts ventricles. Each ventricle pushes blood from the inlet valve to the outlet valve. The ventricles are powered by air, which pulses through the air chambers at rates of 40 to 120 beats per minute. There is a large external system attached to the patients left side, which powers the Jarvik-7. The old model was sometimes as large as a standard household refrigerator, but on wheels so the patients are mobile. The system had a rechargeable battery backup in case of power failure. The doctor could pump rate, pumping pressure, and other important functions through the console. The Jarvik-7 was attached to the atria by cuffs made of Dacron felt. There are lines made of polyurethane tubing coming out of the air chamber. To ensure stability and encourage tissue growth, the lines were covered with velour-covered Stalastic where they came out of the skin. In December of 1982, Barney Clarke, the first patient ever to receive the Jarvik-7, had a successful implant and lived with the artificial device for 112 days.

Many people are in need of heart transplants, but the supply of healthy hearts is low. Processed foods and fast food chains are a leading cause of this problem. The artificial heart can replace a badly diseased heart and can save the lives of those who suffer heart disease. Some reasons to receive an artificial heart include heart attacks, viral infections or blood clots. Heart attacks are mainly caused by a buildup of fat or cholesterol called plaque. The buildup can cause the flow of blood cells carrying oxygen to the heart muscle to become reduced or completely stop. This causes the heart muscle to shut down because no oxygen is reaching it to help make it function. Viral Infections mainly cause inflammation of the heart valves, which will cause complications with the blood flow through the heart. Lastly, blood clots are also a big cause of heart failure. Blood clots will cause a jam in the veins through your body and can also stop the oxygen-carrying red blood cells from reaching the heart and giving it the oxygen it requires to function. These heart problems can be cured by a treatment prescribed by a doctor, but if the hearts condition does not improve, then an artificial heart will be transplanted inside of the patient.

In conclusion, the artificial heart is a very important invention. It helps people who have developed heart problems live longer while doctors search for a healthy heart donor. Without this invention, many more deaths would occur because of heart failure in people across the globe. The Jarvik-7, built in 1976, has changed the lives of many people, starting with Barney Clarke. This breakthrough, discovered decades ago, will hopefully be improved more to continue to improve peoples' health. This invention has affected many lives just in Connecticut.

2nd Place

***North Stonington Elementary, North Stonington
Quentin Karam***

3rd Place

***North Stonington Elementary, North Stonington
Nate Hopkins***

Honorable Mention

***North Stonington Elementary School, North Stonington
Scott Pion***

Honorable Mention

***North Stonington Elementary, North Stonington
Ian Spracklin***

1st Place

*Bradley School, Derby
Natalia Wyszowski*

An important invention from Connecticut, our beloved home state, is the American Dictionary of the English Language, invented and written by Noah Webster. It was first published in 1828 after eighteen years of hard work. This invention has significantly affected the history of our state because before we only had access to the British-English dictionary. If it weren't for Noah Webster, we'd still be spelling "theatre", not "theater", and "colour" instead of "color", even "musick" instead of "music". He also added words such as "skunk" and "squash". Noah Webster was born in West Hartford, Connecticut on October 16, 1758. Now there are museums and exhibits for people of all ages to explore and discover. The most famous is Noah Webster House in West Hartford. Summer camps are even available for children to attend and learn from. Every child and adult is able to look up words in the brilliant dictionary that is written in our very own language. Because of this, Noah is known as the "Father of American Education", and we are his home state, so we're sort of famous.

The impact of this invention is still felt today because Americans can learn to speak and spell the same way, regardless of which part of the country they live in. Every generation has access to it, and always will have. The dictionary defines our language, and who we are. People become smarter when they use it. My class uses it on a regular basis, especially for book reports, writing assignments, and every time we stumble across words we don't know while reading. The dictionary is always within reach in my house. I personally find the dictionary a great aid with countless purposes. Without the dictionary, so much would be different, and we'd still be using British-English. The history of the dictionary is so intense, and it has permanently helped mold the future of Connecticut, and all of our beautiful country. We are one nation, so we should speak one language. This invention is often taken for granted~ something I often see~ yet it did so much for us. It is thought of as an ordinary, everyday object, but it plays such an essential role in our lives, and our forefather's too. Because of it, finding out the correct American-English spellings of words is only a hand reach away. In fact, I wouldn't be able to write this at all without the dictionary's assistance! Now there are even online American-English dictionaries available for our use just a "click" and a "tap" away. All of this comes from Connecticut! The writing of dictionary also inspired many well known books that can be obtained at your local library or bookstore. So next time you see an American-English dictionary, just stop for a moment and think. Think about this marvelous invention, and the position it plays in our lives.

2nd Place

*Bradley School, Derby
Alexis Enjem*

3rd Place

*Middlefield Memorial School, Middlefield
Kerry Turecek*

Honorable Mention

*Helen Street School, Hamden
Alyssa Alfano*

Honorable Mention

*Memorial Middle School, Bristol
Cameron Nielsen*

Congressional District 4

1st Place

**Columbus Magnet School, Norwalk
Luka Diedrich-Gashi**

ESPN

A global cable television network born in Connecticut

ESPN - the sports channel of all sports channels began in Bristol, Connecticut. ESPN is a well known global television network, broadcasting live with professional and college level sporting events like baseball, basketball, football and many, many more sports. The Network, only called ESP back then, was founded in 1978. Prior to its invention, sports news received only a small amount of airtime on major networks like NBC, CBS or ABC and that time was limited to cover popular pro sports, college teams and games were hardly mentioned. ESPN changed all of this forever.

The people we have to thank for this glorious invention are Bill Rasmussen, his son Scott Rasmussen and Ed Eagan an insurance agent. They began to brainstorm their idea of starting a television station dedicated to just sports to be viewed only in Connecticut. After a lot of meetings with several networks they were informed of a satellite technology which could be used to transmit their sports station nationally instead of only locally. On July 14, 1978 the Entertainment and Sports Programming Network (ESPN) was incorporated.

After the launch of ESPN many sports fans were very happy because there was finally one station that showed sports at every hour of the day. Before getting to the point of making the sports fans happy the new founded network faced many challenges. They needed to find more people that were interested in investing their money into ESPN, especially since bills needed to be paid. They were also looking for sponsors and most importantly they needed to come up with sports programs to show on their network. To fill 8,760 hours a year of mostly sports programming was not an easy task but Bill and his partners were not discouraged.

Many people (mostly men) name ESPN as their absolute favorite channel. They spend countless hours in front of the tube, wearing their team's jersey, cheering on their favorite players and screaming at the referee. I cannot imagine life without this great sports channel. I think this network is a great invention because it does not only show the most popular teams and games but also features sports on a non-professional level. ESPN gave college sports a bigger audience than they could ever have imagined possible.

Over the years ESPN has developed a reputation as the best network for reliable and current sports information. Today, ESPN is broadcast 24 hours a day in 16 languages in more than 200 countries and shows 65 varieties of sports. Without the great following and support of sports fans all around the world ESPN would not be the global network it is today. Thanks to ESPN I watch sports all the time, mostly basketball and football. You can always learn something by watching your favorite team or player. I often take the ball outside after the game and try out some of the new moves. Watching sports in my house on the weekend can also become a family event. My mom and I love watching football together and my dad and I go crazy watching soccer. It gets very heated and exciting sometimes but it sure is a lot of fun.

The Network has certainly stayed true to Bill Rasmussen's words, "ESPN will stay laser-focused on their mission: To serve sports! Anytime. Anywhere."

2nd Place

**Stratfield Elementary School, Fairfield
Owen Kenny**

3rd Place

**Columbus Magnet School, Norwalk
Emma Paul**

Honorable Mention

**Interdistrict Discovery Magnet School, Bridgeport
Sarah Buttress**

Honorable Mention

**Interdistrict Discovery Magnet School, Bridgeport
Alan Tran**

Congressional District 5

1st Place

*Har-Bur Middle School, Burlington
Morgan Sokol*

Vulcanized Rubber

I find that an important invention that impacted us in history and today is vulcanized rubber. You may be asking what vulcanized rubber is. Well, it is a very strong rubber. When you use the vulcanization process, you're making rubber hard to break. Before the process occurs, the plain rubber is weak; it becomes soft and sticky like glue when exposed to heat. It was not a good product to use. Many people were working on a way to prevent rubber from easily melting. Charles Goodyear was one of the first people to come up with a way for rubber to stay solid and not melt so easily. He created the vulcanization process, which turns normal rubber into vulcanized rubber. If you add a certain type of material to the rubber such as sulfur, it will become hard and won't melt as easy as before. Now the rubber is called vulcanized rubber.

Now that you know what vulcanized rubber is, I can say how it impacted history. Although it didn't help much in 1839, (that's when it was invented) it did have a huge impact in the late 1800's and early 20th century. It wasn't used when it was created only because people didn't understand its importance. When Charles Goodyear came up with his invention, most people thought he was lying or it was just another one of his special experiments that turns out wrong. They should have believed him but they didn't, so they didn't learn about this non-melting rubber.

In the late 1800's, vulcanized rubber helped because it was used in many things such as hockey pucks. At that time people used square disks usually made out of wood for their hockey pucks. As you can figure out, these types of pucks didn't slide as easily across the playing surface as vulcanized rubber pucks would. When people finally found out about the vulcanization process, they used it for pucks. It slid over the ice in ice hockey much better. People started to realize this type of material was strong and sturdy; they began to use it for other things. They used vulcanized rubber for the tires on the first cars. If they had used normal rubber from the time before vulcanized rubber, their cars wouldn't have been able to move. This is because in the summer, their tires would melt before they got anywhere. In the winter, they'd be a bad product to use also. Although the old rubber would become hard in cold weather, it would also become fragile which would not be good if it was used as a tire, it might just break and then you'd be in a sticky situation! In 1855, the first soccer ball was invented and it was made out of vulcanized rubber. No other than Charles Goodyear himself made this ball. Before this invention, people kicked around anything to play soccer such as wooden balls; this would hurt your toes. Then in the early 1900's, people started to use vulcanized rubber bowling balls. So as you can see vulcanized rubber had a huge impact in history.

Vulcanized rubber was really useful in history and it's used in many more things today. Just like in the past it is used in car tires, soccer balls, and bowling balls. Some new examples of the wide variety are shoe soles, hoses, saxophone mouthpieces, and car bumpers. It is important to use vulcanized rubber for these things for many reasons. With shoe soles it is important to use this special rubber because it is waterproof. If it wasn't waterproof, your feet may get wet if it's a rainy or snowy day. This would be a big problem because your feet will most likely become cold when they're wet and then in extreme cases, you might get frostbite. Frostbite is very painful and not good for the areas of the body infected, in this case your feet. If you use plastic soles they may get a hole, which will cause your feet to be cold. Vulcanized rubber is more durable. The problem with the hose is similar to the shoe sole one. If you don't use vulcanized rubber, you might get a hole in your hose and then water will leak out. Vulcanized rubber is used in saxophone mouthpieces and is very strong. Almost no other material is used for this job so no matter what you have to use it; I would use it even if I had a choice. It would be hard to break, and with all that hard blowing, I'm sure any other type of mouthpiece would crack. The final thing on my list that is made out of vulcanized rubber is a car bumper. Most car bumpers are made of certain types of plastic but vulcanized rubber is used in it. Although the whole bumper isn't vulcanized rubber, parts of it are and that makes the bumper a little more flexible and durable.

Now you can see how vulcanized rubber has had a huge effect on the history, present, and most-likely future of Connecticut, the United States of America, and the whole world. It was a great invention by Charles Goodyear. The ironic thing is Goodyear Tires has no connection to Charles Goodyear. The person that came up with the company name was probably inspired by the creative inventor and wanted to pay credit, that's how awesome he and his invention are.

2nd Place

*Torrington TAG/East School, Torrington
David Chmielewski*

3rd Place

*Stadley Rough Elementary School, Danbury
Liam Dineen-Herzog*

Honorable Mention

*Morris Street School, Danbury
Lesly Ochoa*

Honorable Mention

*Gainfield Elementary School, Southbury
Gabby Christina*