

2008 Liars Contest

First place — Justin Wood of Morgantown

Second place — David Yaussy of Charleston

Third place — Gary Buchanan of Annamoriah

Youth Award: Noah Lepp of Charleston



First Place: Biggest Liar Justin Wood

Justin Wood, Morgantown [1st place] "West Virginia Studies"

I am a liar. It's taken a long time to admit that and come to grips with that, but now I'm okay with that. I've accepted the fact that I am a liar. It's part of who I am. I wasn't always a liar though. It wasn't until 8th grade that I became a liar.

I made a good friend named Ray, and Ray introduced me to this whole world of lying. It was in our 8th-grade West Virginia Studies class. It started with fibs, but what they say about fibs is true — fibs is a gateway lie that leads to bigger and harder lies. Soon we were lying left and right.

This class was taught by a wonderful teacher named Miss Doompah. She was a wonderful lady, but she wasn't quite qualified to teach West Virginia Studies.

So we would start telling her little lies. We started out simple enough. We would tell her that Marshall University was actually founded as a clown college by John Marshall, the first man to invent the pogo stick.

We told her that we had played basketball with Jerry West and the Mothman. (By the way, me and Jerry West beat Ray and the Mothman two out of three times).

We told her that the dodo was the original state bird of West Virginia until the wild and wonderful West Virginia dodo went extinct, and they made it the cardinal.

We told her that Abraham Lincoln was not going to make West Virginia a state until he realized he needed to keep Tudor's Biscuit World out of the hands of the Confederates.

We told her the one lie that I almost regret telling her: The two men who appear on our West Virginia state flag don't actually represent farming and mining. No, they are symbolic of this grand, global conspiracy that has hidden the Holy Grail deep underneath the ground in West Virginia, and it now rests right below the gold dome of our capitol.

The kicker about telling Miss Doompah these lies was that she believed them so full-heartedly. She would whip out her white-out and correct her teacher's edition of her book with our lies. She would teach the classes after us the lies that we told her. We were pretty proud of ourselves.

It was great fun, but we started to grow up and stopped thinking about Miss Doompah. Eventually, Ray moved away. I was heartbroken, but I continued to lie without him. I stood strong. I graduated high school uneventfully, and went up to college in Morgantown to get my master's degree in lying at WVU. No, actually it's executive MBA at WVU.

I hadn't thought about Miss Doompah in years, until the day Ray called me. He was distressed. He was like, "Justin, you have to save the gold dome." I said, "Ray, what are you talking about?"

He told me that after Miss Doompah retired, she came up with a great plan to fund any project in West Virginia. She'd been going across the state from Charleston to Clarksburg, from Fairmont to Fairfax, to anywhere. From Frazier's Bottom to Fort Ashby, she was everywhere. And she was selling this plan, this plan to get the Holy Grail. She even got a bill through the West Virginia Legislature that called for the demolition of our capitol, to dig and get the Holy Grail to bring untold riches to the state.

The legislature was so excited to bring untold riches to the state without mountaintop removal, new taxes, or gambling that they passed it immediately. And it was already going to be signed by the governor. Ray said that I only had hours until the ceremony, and my good friend Joe Manchin was going to sign this bill into law. The wrecking balls were already parked outside.

I knew I had to do something. So I jumped into my lie-mobile and started heading down I-79. Now, in hindsight, I do realize that I just could've made a phone call. It would've been safer, and I could've saved on gas. But, no, I was in the moment.

I finally made it into the capitol, and I got up to the ceremony. I jumped on the stage, and I said, "Stop! You can't do this!" And everybody fell silent. Joe looked at me, with Miss Doompah at his side, ready for her bill to be signed into law. Hundreds of thousands of people had shown up for this bill-signing ceremony. They were all excited to get to the Holy Grail. And I thought, "I'm going to have to do the right thing. I might have to tell the truth."

Gasp! So I thought about it, and I looked up and I said, "You guys can't do this. This lady is crazy! She makes up all kinds of stuff. She told me how she played basketball with the Mothman, how the dodo used to be the state bird, and how Abraham Lincoln loved Tudor's Biscuit World. You can't listen to a word she says."

And Joe stood up and said, "Oh, my gosh! Oh no!" And he tore that bill in half, and he shook my hand and said, "Thank you, Justin. Thank you for saving our state yet again."

We all had a good laugh about how close we came to actually listening to a teacher. So, that's how I saved the secret of the Holy Grail stashed here in West... No, wait! That is how I learned that no matter how much trouble a lie gets you into, lying will get you out of it.



Second Place: Bigger Liar David Yaussey

Gary Buchanan, Annamoriah [3rd place] "Go West"

My name's Gary Buckhanan. I guess I should tell you a few things about this story. If it seems like at any time that you think I'm making up this story as I go along, that's only because I'm making up the story as I go along.

When I graduated from high school, I wasn't much different from kids who graduate from high school today. I just wanted someone to give me a job where I could make a lot of money and I wouldn't have to do much work. But I found out those state jobs are hard to come by.

So I had to decide some way to make a living. I'd always enjoyed working with plants and propagating and grafting, so I came up with the idea that I'm going to cross a pine tree with an apple. And instead of having fruit, it would have lumber. So if you needed a two-by-four, you'd just go out in your backyard and pull one off the tree. I was going to call it Plankintosh. Well, that didn't turn out too good. So I decided I'd probably have to

try to think about some of the things I learned in high school, and maybe that would help me.

Someone famous once said, "Go west, young man." So I decided to go out west. I packed up a few things, and I went out west. What struck me most was that the most they had out west was nothing. Everywhere you looked, no matter where you looked, was more and more nothing. The place was plumb full of it.

I decided what that place needed was some trees. So this time, I decided to cross a redwood with a cactus. And guess what? It worked! Pretty soon, I had dozens of seedlings to plant. I went around the desert planting all these seedlings. When I finished, something happened to me that happens to all West Virginians when they leave the state for a little while. Something started tugging me back. So I knew it was time to go back to the Mountain State. So I packed up my stuff, and I came back. And I went to work for a timbering company.

About two years later, I got a call from the United States Secretary of the Interior, and he said he understood I was the one responsible for all those new trees out west. And I said, "Yeah, yeah that's me, all right." I was thinking they were going to give me some kind of award. He said, "Well, we'd really appreciate it if you'd go out there and get rid of those trees. All the people that live out there are complaining because they can't see the nothing for the trees."

So I got a crew from our timbering company together, and we went out west. I said, "Well, boys, we got to get rid of these trees." To our surprise, those trees had grown to about 40 feet tall in two years. So we get out a chain saw and go over to cut off one of the trees, and it didn't fall over. You see, what happened when I crossed that redwood with a cactus, instead of having limbs, these trees had these big thorns that stuck out on all sides. So when I cut it off, instead of falling over, it just sort of leaned.

So I asked the crew if anyone else had an idea about how to get rid of these trees. They said, "Why don't we just burn 'em?" I said, "That sounds like a good idea." So we tried to burn those trees, and they would not burn. Later I learned that in the two years since I planted those trees, that area had gone through two seasons of incredibly dry rain. The rain was so dry, in fact, that it dried out those trees so bad that they would not burn.

So one of the other crew members said, "Why don't we just blast 'em out?" I thought, finally a good idea. So we went around and dug a little hole in the bottom of all those trees, and put in a charge, got back and hooked them all together, and set 'em off.

BOOM! You know that probably would have worked if any of us had any experience with explosives whatsoever. But since we hadn't, when that explosion went off, all those trees shot straight up into the air completely out of sight. We were all standing around, looking around to see if we could figure out where those trees was, thinking, "Man, we can't have anymore bad luck."

And we were right. We actually had some good luck. See, at exactly the same time that we set off that charge, a flock of ducks were flying over. And the force of that explosion was so strong that it completely cleaned and roasted those ducks. And they just fell out of the air. So we're all standing there looking up, and all of a sudden we were able to catch a couple of roasted ducks. Since it was getting late in the day, we decided we just might as well eat our roasted duck and turn in.

When we got up the next morning, you know what we found? All those trees, they came back down. But they came point down, like huge arrows. When they came back down to the ground, they completely buried themselves in the holes we blasted them out of. So when we got up the next morning, all we had to do was smooth off the dirt a little bit, and it looked just like it did when we came out there.

So then we packed up our stuff, came back to Almost Heaven, and we never went out west again.



Youth Liar Noah Lepp

Noah Lepp, Charleston [Youth Award] "Jack and the Bovine"

This story is a Jack in the Beanstalk version all about cows that I made up all by myself.

Once Jack and his mama were very happy, but they were very poor, so they were going to trade their last bag of beans for something to eat. So Jack got the beans and headed down to the marketplace, when he saw a farmer.

The farmer said, "I'll trade you these cows if you give me those beans."

Jack said, "That's ridiculous. Why would I trade these perfectly good beans for those lousy cows?"

The farmer said, "Because they're magic cows."

Jack said, "Why didn't you say so in the first place?"

So he got the cows and went on home. When Jack's mama saw the cows, she said, "Jack, what in the world were you thinking? Those are cows, not food. We needed

food."

Now, Jack's mama was about as bright as a three-watt light bulb, which hadn't been invented in Jack's time, so that wasn't very bright at all.

She picked up the cows, went inside, and threw the cows out the window. And overnight the cows grew into a big vine – a bovine, of course. Let me describe what the bovine looked like for a second. It was white with black spots and had horns instead of branches.

Jack's mama, when she saw the vine, said, "Jack, look what you've done."

Then Jack started climbing up the bovine, and with every step he took, milk squirted out. And Jack's mama said, "Now here we are starving to death, and our garden is drowning in milk."

When Jack got to the top, he saw a giant cow farm, and across it golden cow pies were scattered. So he picked up the cow pies, put them in a bag, and went on down.

When Jack's mama saw the pies, she said, "Jack, I sure like pies, but if we tried to eat those, I bet they would break our teeth out."

So he climbed back up, Jack did, and saw a cow giving birth to a golden calf. So he got the golden calf and went back down. And when Jack's mama saw the calf, she said, "Lordy Jack, don't you know that if we do anything with that calf God will give us 10 more commandments?"

So Jack climbed back up, and when he got to the top, he heard beautiful music. Entranced, he started walking towards it. And when he got in the barn, he saw a bull tooting his own horn. Now you might be tempted to think that this was a bull horn, but it was a full-fledged trombone, which Jack realized minus the "rom" was a t-bone.

So he got the trombone. When the giant cow farmer realized the music had stopped, he woke up, and said, "Fee-fi-fo-foy. I smell me a stinky boy."

The giant started chasing Jack, and Jack started playing the trombone. With every toot he did, t-bone steaks fell out. So he got back down to the bottom of the bovine, and they burned the bovine so the giant cow farmer couldn't get down.

Then Jack said to his mama, "Look, Mama. Food!"

She said, "You can't eat horns, Jack. What were you thinking?"

Jack said, "Watch this." He started playing it, and with every toot, t-bone steaks came out. And as far as I know, Jack and his mama are still cooking out every single night.