

NEW IPSWICH

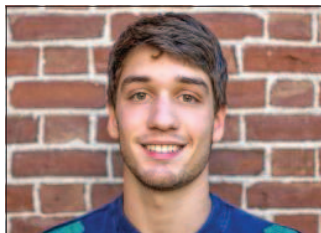
# The great escape



STAFF PHOTO BY BRANDON LATHAM

**Boynton Middle School and Highbridge Hill Elementary School Destination Imagination teams fundraised for their trip to globals with a barbecue and student-made escape room on Saturday. Above: Annie and Carly Pelkey check the mirror for clues. They found one.**

How one reporter made it out of New Ipswich alive



**BRANDON LATHAM**  
Reporter

I was walking around the yard sale in the Mascenic Regional High School gym when a young man got my atten-

tion and said, "I heard you wanted to see the inside of the escape room."

Cameron Smith, the Boynton Middle School student who invited me in, and Sydney Letters made the escape room as part of a fundraiser for the Destination Imagination team after they went to a professional escape room themselves. I had never been to one and had no clue what to expect.

Clues is what I should have expected, a whole bunch of them. The underlit room was filled with askew artwork, detailed paperwork and more than enough coded writing.

For my part, I mostly ob-

served as Annie and Carly Pelkie made their way through the room's carefully constructed puzzles. I checked the map for ways to catch up to their detective work, peeked behind a crooked canvas and tried my darndest to work through the coded message. I thought maybe it was a simple reverse alphabet or sequence replacement code, but I was wrong, and we did not solve it until Carly discovered the cipher.

"SIMCO will pay for not following through on their deal," it said.

The objective was to create a potion to dewater a terror movement backed by a

U.S. senator. The Pelkies did it with 36 seconds to spare.

The elaborate set up helped raise money to send Boynton and Highbridge Hill Destination Imagination teams to Tennessee for the Global Championship.

Cameron said it took four hours to build earlier in the week and about seven minutes to reset in between each round.

In a mere seven minutes, they reset 25 minutes of challenge bumbling through technology old and new, camouflaged flash cards and hidden compartments. That's almost as impressive as those of us who escaped the escape room.