

The Arlington Connection

Sophia Radday, 10, grade 5,
Drew Elementary School

Children's Connection 2012

DECEMBER 26, 2012 - JANUARY 1, 2013

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BISHOP O'CONNELL HIGH SCHOOL

ARTWORK FROM BRYN BEARY'S ART CLASSES.



Caroline Nelson



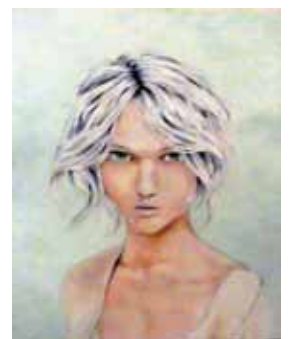
Ginny Bender



Brandon Doyle



Devin Nihill



Jihyum Lim



Jihyum Lim



Serina Wei



Thomas Raines



Mary Kathryn
Bothwell



Andrea Nguyen



Jordan Schilling



Sarah Torrez

CHILDREN'S CONNECTION 2012

ARLINGTON CONNECTION
EDITOR STEVEN MAUREN
703-778-9415 OR
ARLINGTON@CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

Welcome

Dear Readers:

This week, the Arlington Connection turns over its pages to the youth and students. We asked principals and teachers from area schools to encourage students to contribute their words, pictures and photos for our annual Children's Issue.

The response as always was enormous. While we were unable to publish every piece we received, we did our best to put together a paper with a fair sampling of the submitted stories, poems, drawings, paintings, photographs and other works of art.

We appreciate the extra effort made by school staff to gather the materials during their busy time leading up to the holidays. We'd also like to encourage both schools and parents to mark their 2013 calendars for early December, the deadline for submissions for next year's Children's Connection. Please keep us in mind as your children continue to create spectacular works of art and inspiring pieces of writing in the coming year.

The children's issue is only a part of our year-round commitment to cover education and our local schools. As always, the Connection welcomes letters to the editor, story ideas, calendar listings and notices of local events from our readers. Photos and other submissions about special events at schools are especially welcome for our weekly schools pages.

Our preferred method for material is e-mail, which should be sent to arlington@connectionnewspapers.com, but you can reach us by mail at 1606 King Street, Alexandria, VA 22314 or call 703-778-9415 with any questions.

— EDITOR STEVEN MAUREN



"Bald Eagle," Charles Williams, 9, grade 4, Campbell Elementary School



Maline Nelson, 10, grade 5, Drew Elementary School



Catherine Donahue, grade 4, Virginia Landscape, Nottingham Elementary School

CAMPBELL ELEMENTARY SCHOOL



“Crab,” Nolan Fuss, 9, grade 4



“My School and Playground,” Kamran Ahmad, 6, grade 1



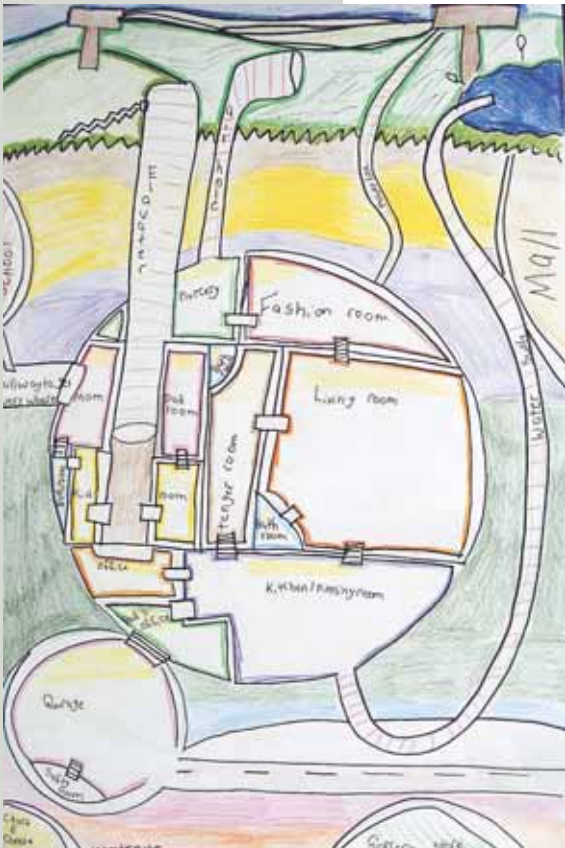
“My School and Playground,” Alexis Krug, 5, Kindergarten



“Shapes,” Dyana Torres Hernandez, 4, PreK



“Underground Home,” Alya Lawindo, 10, grade 5



“Underground Home,” Katherine Lis, 10, grade 5

WRITINGS FROM CAMPBELL ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Morocco

The language in Morocco is different from English and the Arabic writing is different from the U.S.A. The continent Morocco is in is Africa. Africa is hot and Morocco is hot too. There is rice with chicken in Morocco and there is a yellow tiny stuff. There are animals in Morocco too.

— AYMANE ASKARI, 6, GRADE 1, MS. NURMI

clothes. My aunt is also important to me because she gives me pillows and other things that she makes. I also love my brother because when I am sad, he says, “Don’t be sad Jackie.” He is the best brother even though we are sometimes mad at each other. We are still brother and sister. Family is so important to me and I love my family!

— JACKIE MONDRAGON, 11, GRADE 4, MRS. GALE

My Family

My family is very valuable to me. Each member is very precious. I love my dad because he buys us things we enjoy playing. My mom is important to me because she makes us food and buys us

My Family

I like being with my family because I like going out on trips with them. I also like helping my little brothers with their homework and with their reading. I also enjoy going out with my mom because

SEE WRITINGS, PAGE 13

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SWANSON MIDDLE SCHOOL

Where I'm From

I am from the smooth bed
from the hospital wrapped
in cloud-like towels.
I'm from the soul of my sister,
who is the passion I live for.
I am from the snacks on the counter
that remind me
of all my mom has worked for.
I am from the sky
like an eagle soaring
and looking down buildings.
I am from the blur of
the TV when there's a storm.
I am from the cross walk
where the cars zoom by and honk.
There's a couch in the living
room smelling like the fresh peaches
of a tree.

That is where I'm from.

— STEVEN VASQUEZ-MENDEZ,
GRADE 6

Forbidden Love

Footsteps left on the sand a soft im-
print, hazy around the edges.
The foaming water snapping angrily
at the entwined imprints.
Reaching out and snatching the only
clue they'd been here, the salt
leaving a tang as sharp as forbidden
love. Their feelings, a magnetic
field pulled toward one another. A
engagement ring nearing her finger,
pulled away by enemy arms. Cold
metal on their wrists instead of soft
gold.

Foreboding bars instead of the light
lavender of the nursery.

— GRACE COGLEY, GRADE 6

Ode to a Paintbrush

Oh dear paintbrush,
what masterpieces
will you create
for me today?
A beautiful meadow,
with a brown fuzzy rabbit?
A powerful thunderstorm,
rocking a ship
side to side?
Maybe covering
the wall,
with your magnificent hues.
Or even a bit of pottery,
needing a few touch ups.
Your every hair
is a magic wand.
The breathtaking
pinks and royal purples
that you gently
stroke on the page
warm my heart.
Whether a lovely
sunset orange,
bursting
from your tips,
or a glorious
silk blue
that can cool
my mind,
I am grateful.
Grateful for the happy
sad, and confused
feelings you express,
no artist can ...
No.
Nobody,
can live without you.
Oh dear paintbrush,
what masterpieces
will you create
for me
today?

— SABRINA SHUSTER, GRADE 6

Ode to Mother

Mother,
you are the one who loves
and cares for me.
You are the cookie to my sweet tooth.
You love me
24-7-365.

Mother,
you are the one who makes my bed
and cooks for me.
Mother,
you are my everything!

Mother,
you are the most beautiful rose
in the royal garden.
You shine like the sun.
Mother,
you feel like a blanket
all warm and snuggly.

Mother,
you smell like a fresh picked daisy,
giving off a wonderful aroma.

Mother,
when I am hurt,
you rush to my aid.
Like a mother bear
protecting her cub.

Mother,
if anything bad were to happen to me,
you would be the one coming to my
rescue.

Mother,
on the terrible day,
in the near future,
when I must leave you to go to col-
lege.

SEE SWANSON, PAGE 10



The cover is black and red on white and 11 1/4" W x 10 3/8" H.
Open, the calendar is 11 1/4" W x 20 7/8" H. All illustrations
are in black and white and may be viewed on the website.

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13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21 M.L. King Day	22	23	24	25	26
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THE CONNECTION
NEWSPAPERS

DREW ELEMENTARY SCHOOL



Georgia Gibbon, 9, grade 4



Jared Patron, 10, grade 5



Brianna Kenealy, 10, grade 4



Lynn Loftus, 9, grade 4



Raisel David, 9, grade 4



Renee Whiffen, 9, grade 4



Justice Stewart, 10, grade 5



Sofia Abela, 9, grade 4

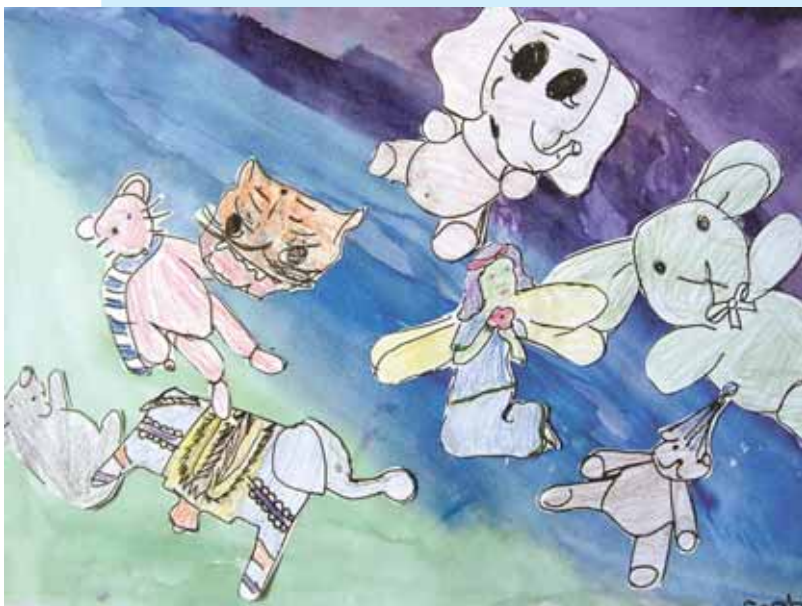
DREW ELEMENTARY SCHOOL



Anna Ingram,
10, grade 5



Mack Bell,
10, grade 5



Sophie Gamboa,
9, grade 4



Micaela Toro, 9, grade 4





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WRITINGS

Stone

I have been here since the beginning.
I am stone.

I saw the first of the jellyfish.
I am stone.

I experienced the first spined creature.
I am stone.

I viewed the first amphibians to crawl the land.
I am stone.

I sat as a velociraptor fought his prey.
I am stone.

I watched as Pangaea broke apart, forming continents.
I am stone.

I endured as the first rat sat on me.
I am stone.

I was tortured as I watched the last of the dinosaurs burn.
I am stone.

I was a bed for Lucy, one of the first humans.
I am stone.

I was used to make the first spear.
I am stone.

I saw the first gun.
I am stone.

I was a part of the Underground Railroad.
I am stone.

I saw the first Smartphone.
I am stone.

From mountain to boulder to rock to pebble to sand, I have seen it all.
Because I am stone.

— JACK NELSON, GRADE 5

Snow White And the Hunter

The queen asked her son, the hunter, to find Snow White, kill her, and take out her heart.

“OK, I’m off to find Snow White,” replied the hunter.

The hunter was walking in a deep dark forest and it was getting late. The forest was full of bats. You could see the bats’ eyes looking around. You could hear them tearing at your clothes. The hunter did not get a good night’s sleep. When he woke up from his nightmarish sleep, he felt grouchy. Then when he was fully awake, he set off at a fast pace, deeper into the forest. After an hour of walking, he came to a clearing. There, standing before him, was the prettiest girl he had ever met. She had bright blue eyes, short black curly hair, with a red headband to hold the hair out of her face, and pale skin that was soft to the touch. He loved her the minute he saw her.



Emily Stuart, grade 5, Self-portrait



Will Bernhardt, grade 4, Powhatan Portrait



Arissona Winn, Kindergarten, Fall Landscape



Jack Roosa, grade 1, Autumn Tree



Elizabeth Rosenblatt, grade 3, Penguins



Thor Koomey, grade 4, Virginia Landscape



Lauren Fisher, grade 2, Native Americans Watching the Sunset



Morgan Dailey, grade 4, Powhatan Portrait



Max Penella, grade 5, Self-portrait



Fletcher Tait, grade 3, Imaginary Animals



Will Ives, Kindergarten, Self-portrait



Noah Robinson, grade 2, Autumn Leaf

“Hello, call me the hunter,” said the hunter in his manly voice.

“Hello, my name is Snow White,” said Snow White daintily.

“No!” the hunter yelled, as he started sobbing, not so manly anymore.

“Why are you crying? There is no need to cry,” Snow White said anxiously.

“I ... I came here to kill a girl named Snow White and your name is Snow White. So go, run, run away,” sobbed the hunter. Snow White ran; she ran for all she was worth.

After a while, the hunter was ready to find the queen and tell her that he was not up for the job. The only answer he got was, “I don’t care, kill her anyway.” So, as he set off into the forest, he started thinking of a plan. He could not kill a pig and take its heart out because the queen would notice that it was a pig’s heart. Wait a minute; he could ask a witch to make the pig’s heart, or any animal’s heart, look like Snow White’s heart. Since he was in a forest with lots of bats, he decided to kill a bat and take its heart out. That was much easier than he expected.

Now all he had to do was find a witch, and that was the hard part. He had not been walking that long when he heard footsteps behind him. Every time he stopped, they stopped. It gave him the creeps. He slowly turned around, and out of the corner of his eye he could see the wicked witch of the west. He had to be brave if he wanted to save Snow White.

He bravely walked up to the witch. “Will you help me with my evil plan?”

“What do you mean? I am all about evil plans!” exclaimed the wicked witch.

“OK, I was wondering if you would make this bat’s heart look like Snow White’s heart,” explained the hunter.

“Of course, because you are going to trick the queen into thinking that Snow White is dead,” replied the wicked witch of the west. “OK, give me the heart.”

“My, that was easy,” muttered the hunter. The hunter ran all the way home because he was really excited and scared about turning his mother into a bat. When he went into the house he screamed, “Mother, Mother! I did it!” It worked; his mother came running into the room, snatched the heart out of his hand and accidentally turned herself into a bat. He ran out of the house and into the forest to find Snow White.

When he found Snow White, he asked her to marry him. She would have to marry him after all he had done for her to keep her from dying. She said she could not because she was already married. The hunter lived sadly ever after!

— MARION LoPRESTI, GRADE 5

Aquarium

This story takes place in Florida. My grandma’s friend wanted to take James and me to the aquarium. When we got there, it looked like a big warehouse. When we walked in, it felt like I was in the big bubbly blue. There was a sheet of glass that looked like the water.

Then we went to see the dolphins. There were two dolphins. Each dolphin was found on the beach in Mexico. Then James and I went to the next room. It had beautiful jel

SEE CONTINUED, PAGE 14

SWANSON MIDDLE SCHOOL

FROM PAGE 5

Even though I'll be all grown up,
Mother
I will always be your little girl.

Mother,
whether you are near,
or far far away,

I will always love you!
— NATHALIE SAULNIER, GRADE 6

A Painter's Paradise

Oh, Clay Cafe, when I walk in your
welcoming doors,
the lovely aroma of freshly made pot-
tery and open paint bottles fill my heart
with excitement.

I walk around.
It is a forest of pottery.
So many things to choose from.
Should I paint a pot or a lion?
I choose the fierce and mighty lion.

Now, to pick the paints.
I choose blood red, neon orange,
lemon yellow, and earthy brown.

As I walk joyfully back to my seat
gripping the lion,
all I can do is imagine how beautiful
my beast will be.

I sit down slowly and carefully,
as not to disturb the other painters.
My beast is watching me.

I watch the paint pour out.
It looks like Niagara Falls.

I paint carefully.
I first paint the face,
then the mane,
soon my masterpiece will be done.
Next I paint the body,
And finally, the legs and tail.
Now, my fierce and mighty beast is
done.

Soon I will be back to the aroma of
pottery and paints.
To delicately painting my newest crea-
tion.
— NATHALIE SAULNIER, GRADE 6

Where I'm From

I'm from the dirty dishes
and soggy diapers,
from Old McDonald and
Little Miss.Muffett

From the small, comforting
Crib, to the
monthly balloons,
sent by my dad

The 'Stop Screamings'
and 'Go to sleeps'
The shrieks and fear
quickly spreading of
9-11

I am from
yummy Pupusas
every bite filled
with juicy meat
and cheese filled
with love and care

'What comes around,
Comes back around'
to 'If you love something
set it free if
it loves you
it'll come back'

The 'it's all rights'
to the
'it'll be fines'

From the gun,
put right on

my beloved fathers'
head, my shrieks,
my yelps, my mother
crying

Bringing back memories,
from the good times
and the
bad times.
I am from those
moments:
an addition to a
new generation.

— ASHLEY ROMERO, GRADE 6

Ode to Sun

Oh Sun,
I am here
to look into your
rich buttery light
that gives
a golden sheen
to the fresh green grass
bordering my home.
I am here
to tell you that when you
hide behind
puffy white clouds
on fabulous afternoons,
an ugly frown comes upon
the world's face.
I am here
to inform you
that on cold, dark
winter mornings
your cheerful,
bright smile
spreads across
the worlds like
butter spreading
along a warm
piece of toast.
I am here
to let out a long sigh
because your warmth
is even warmer
than my luscious
knit scarf.
Oh Sun,
the moon and stars
will never compare
to you.

Your light leads
the wrong people
down the right path,
and turns bad days,
into good days.
And, my beauty,
when the day arrives
for your lights to go down,
I will wrap you
in a bundle of love,
a cheerful hug
and yell:
My Savior, My Sun.
— MADELIN MYERS, GRADE 6

Ode to the Turtle

O, Turtle
with your patient
peacefulness.
Your slow, steady
pace.
Your camouflaged
shell,
protecting you
from predators.
Your many species
endangered,
some dying
out,
from bitter smelling pollution,
dangerous predators,
or even just human beings.
Does it matter
who?
Still, dying
out.
Yet,
you are strong,
able to live in every climate.
From the hottest desert
to under the sea,

the turtle is there!
Triumphant,
at all
times.

But you're delicate too,
as if your shell
could shatter like glass
with the slightest
touch.
You have mastered
the two most abundant things on
Earth:
Earth
and
Sea.

O, Turtle!
Some with jaws strong
enough to bite
off my hand,
Others mild
herbivores.
All, disappearing.
Like a glass vase,
the species of turtles
so delicate
it might
shatter.
— LIAM THOMPSON, GRADE 6

Ode to My Fountain Pen

My fountain pen is flawless.
She is smooth and red.
It's as if she were an apple,
a perfect apple.
A perfectly crisp,
perfectly juicy,
red,

plump
apple.
How could I be
capricious
when she
is by my side?
She is
the apple
of my eye.

My fountain pen is flawless.
She writes
as if she were a river,
a river of our memories.
Memories flow out of her,
her perfectly
pointed
silver
nib.
Her nib is splattered
with memories,
deep blue memories.

My fountain pen is flawless;
she is the apple of my eye,
the current in my river.
My fountain pen is flawless.
— CHARLOTTE HOWARD, GRADE 6

Ode to Halloween

Halloween,
I like the way you
give us freedom.
I love that you give
us the right
to stay up late.
You let us have a good time
at midnight,
when it's dark,
pitch black,
and we are
trick
or
treating.
I love the way
you give us
the pursuit of happiness,
to go outside
when it is dark outside.

I wish you were in every season,
every month,

ABINGDON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL



Sophia Varn, 3

The Hurricane Comes

The
Hurricane comes
A sprinting cheetah
Fast,
Furious,
Fierce
It stays
Scavenging,
Destroying
Everything in
Its path
All you can do is
Wait helplessly
Until it
Slowly
Lurks
To the next
Target

— JULIA SONN, 10, GRADE 4

Volcano

The tears streaming down
Your face
Like lava flowing
Freely
The anger
Building up
Inside you
Like smoke
Rising
Hurtful words
Thrown back
And forth
Like ash flying
The tension between
Two
Can be
Rock-solid,
Like a
Volcano

— JULIA SONN, 10, GRADE 4

every year,
every day.
I hope you come soon,
like fast soon.
I don't care,
if you only come
once a year
(on october thirty-first)
I love you,
you deserve
to be a real
holiday -

not a fake holiday.

I love you so much.
for being fake,
you
are so cool
that I can't
describe you
at all.
you are hard
to describe.
You
are the kit
in a Kit Kat.

The best thing
is that we
get to dress up.
I love the way you,
let us dress up in anything
we want,
like a demon.
We can be
what we want to be
when we grow up

or what we want to be
today (the present)
a mythical creature or an animal.

Aftercostumes comes candy.
you let us go around taking
candy from people -
sometimes without asking
them to get some.
I love when you give us chocolate,
and you give us a bunch of sweets
to eat,
and you let us scare
a lot of people!

I think it is a shame
that some people don't
celebrate you.
You bring the fun
in the night.
Everyone should love
you.
You're the best holiday
in the world.
Well, I think you're the best.
you are the best
in my world.
if you were
a human,
I would hug you so much
you could not breath. Sorry
if you die but you're awesome
you give candy to every one
you're like Santa as a holiday
and that gives out a lot of candy
to every one.

— JORDAN GORMES-EBERT,
GRADE 6

LONG BRANCH ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Color and Shape Collage artwork from Art Teacher Hillary Sloate's VPI students (preschool) at Long Branch ES.



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Snowman on sled.
Allie, grade 4



Snowman witch. Ella, grade 4



Snowman with black hat . Max,
grade 4



Snowman with pipe. Zach, grade 4



**Snowman with
sombrero.**
Kendall, grade 4



Green trees .
Lucy, grade 8



Black trees.
Bobi, grade 8



Purple trees.
Sophia,
grade 8



Blue trees.
Caroline J.,
grade 8

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"The Pilgrims were friends with the Indians."
Siofra Zanol, 5, Kindergarten

WRITINGS

FROM PAGE 4

she buys me the things I need and she also takes care of me and my brothers. My dad takes me places and buys things for me and for this I love him too. Family is something I will never forget. I am so happy to have my family.

— ALEXIS MEDINA, 11, GRADE 4,
MRS. GALE

My Best Friend

My best friend is a good friend because he is nice and helpful. He is fun. He is reliable because if I get hurt he tells my mom or dad. He is nice because he would be willing to play with me if I don't have anybody to play with. He is also fun because he plays soccer. I have a lot of fun with him. He is helpful because when the soccer ball goes into the bushes in my backyard, he helps me get it by moving the bushes out of the way. I am lucky to have a good friend!

— EUAN BELL, 7, GRADE 2, MR.
SCHOENHERR

My Family

I'm happy for my family because they help me with my homework. My family also loves me for who I am. They love me for who I am because they don't want me to change my personality. I am happy for my family because they treat me like an angel.

— ELIZABETH MARQUEZ
HERNANDEZ, 7, GRADE 2, MR.
SCHOENHERR

The Gecko, the Raccoon, and the Cheetah

One day gecko was going for a walk when he was pounced on by cheetah.

"Happy birthday," said cheetah. "Actually, it's raccoon's birthday," said gecko. "Really," said cheetah. "I should go and find him."

"I'm going to his house right now and you're invited to the party," said gecko. "Come on." So they went to raccoon's house. When they got there, raccoon was hanging a piñata. "You're early," said raccoon.

"We will have a great party except I got all these notes saying the other animals couldn't come."

"Don't worry, we will still have a good party," said gecko and cheetah, and they did. It was the best party ever!

— RUBEN TOMPKINS, 7, GRADE 2,
MR. SCHOENHERR

My Favorite Trip

My favorite trip was when I went to New Orleans. When I got there I went to the aquarium. I got to see sharks. On the ceiling there was glass that you could see through and there were sea animals and lots of pretty coral. I took lots of pictures and I got to feed the stingrays and touch them. It was a really fun trip.

— SOPHIE WHITEHEAD-THOMAS,
7, GRADE 2, MR. SCHOENHERR

I Like to Play

I like to play with my family a lot. I like to play Junior Scrabble with my mom and dad, my cousins, uncles, and aunts. I sometimes play on my Leap Pad. I think that Leap Pad is more fun than Junior Scrabble.

I play outside with my dad too. My mom likes hockey so I play that with my mom and another thing I do with my dad is I go biking. I also go to a playground called Patrick Henry Playground. I like to play a lot.

— IAN WHYTE, 7, GRADE 2,
MR. SCHOENHERR

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Keya Sikotra, grade 1, Wild Thing

FROM PAGE 9

lyfish bobbing in the water. Then we saw baby sea turtles floating at the top of the water. It all happened at once.

The funniest part was when the manatees bumped into the glass and little bubbles floated to the top. Then we saw some fish. The biggest one was the tiger shark and the smallest one was the blue moon.

Then James and I got to touch a shark. It was a baby and its skin felt like sand paper. It was a Bamboo shark and it was a foot long. James and I got to touch the tip of the nose and the tail and the bottom of the mouth.

I love fish and how they shimmer in the light and give me those little fishy faces.

I am amazed at all the fish that live in the sea. I love going to aquariums to see the colorful, gleaming fish. When I get older, I want to work in an aquarium.

— JENA KNAACK, GRADE 5

Hawaii

If I could write about anything I would write about when I went to Hawaii. Hawaii is beautiful and filled with pretty wonders — animals, the cool

breeze, the sparkling ocean, the glaring sun, the palm trees swaying in the breeze, and the wonderful rainbow next to the bright sun in the clear blue sky with the white puffy clouds the color of a bunny's tail.

When I went to Hawaii, I stayed in Maui. The first hotel we went to had nine pools! Also there was a small waterfall falling into one of the pools.

In Hawaii they had delicious tasting juices and great fresh cut mango and pineapple. The food was unique. When we were scuba diving, my parents witnessed a Hawaiian Monk Seal. We also saw many other ocean creatures such as turtles, rainbow colored fish, eels, and many other animals. We also went to a Luau. At the Luau we ate wonderful foods.

In Hawaii, my family and I drove up a volcano and touched a cloud. That might sound weird but the volcano hadn't erupted for a really long time. It wasn't active. The white cloud felt misty like a wet fan blowing on me. A cloud might sound soft and look soft and puffy, but it felt like a cool mist. Hawaii is warm with a cool breeze.

Many days I wish I was in Hawaii, the beautiful, rainbow state.

— ELLA GUSTAFSON, GRADE 4

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21 Announcements

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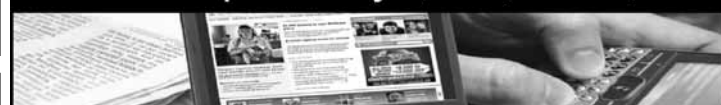
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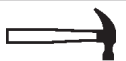
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What Am I Thinking?



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

What I think I feel. What I'm afraid to think I feel. Moreover, is what I feel symptomatic of what I'm afraid to feel? Is it the cancer doing what cancer so often does: create pain and suffering? Or is it simply an older age than I've ever been: middle age, manifesting itself with all the associated mental, physical and emotional adjustments that come along with living longer than you ever have? Unfortunately, the timing of all of it couldn't be more problematic in my determining whether any pain or discomfort I feel is symptomatic of a cancer on the move or characteristic of an age whose effects I'm only beginning to understand.

The underlying and complicating factor to my constant self-assessment is that I don't want to think any of the physical effects I feel are the cancer. I want to believe they're middle age. As a result of this continual denial, I neglect to admit that what I think I feel is potentially cancer-significant and presume instead that it's just another day in middle-age paradise (alive and reasonably well; not terminal) – it's befuddling, sort of. Am I being incredibly stupid, stubborn and irresponsible with respect to not acknowledging certain symptoms that might be e-mail-worthy to my oncologist or, have I found the key to living with cancer: not making too much of anything?

I feel this because I worry that once I open that door, I'm likely going through to the other side – and likely not coming back. As my father jokingly asserted about his car: "If I don't take it to the dealership, they can't find anything wrong with it." The related advisory concerning life and health that I've often heard is: once you're admitted to the hospital, you're not coming out – alive. It's a slippery slope between the fear and loathing (with attribution to Hunter S. Thompson) of being sick and lying in a hospital bed versus what the medical professionals don't know not being able to hurt me. (I know, I might as well be Judy Garland in "The Wizard of Oz" clicking my heels together three times: I don't have cancer. I don't have cancer. I don't have cancer.)

But the fact that I'm still alive and not just beating the life-expectancy odds I was given, but smashing them to smithereens, is a kind of reinforcer to "what I feel" and "what I'm afraid to think I feel." Having survived for as long as I have might just be blind luck or inherited DNA doing what I had no reason or expectation to believe it could: enable me to survive the stage IV non-small cell lung cancer with which I was originally diagnosed and live beyond the "13-month to two-year prognosis" that went along with it. Or, however, why ever I'm doing what I'm doing, or not doing what I'm not doing or not admitting what is likely symptomatic – or not; all this confusion, juxtaposing and double-negative rationalizing might somehow make a positive.

I realize this haphazard approach is hardly a strategy, but perhaps it is and has been so far, a means not to my end. And considering that I haven't reached that end as yet, maybe the means are justified? No one knows for sure, and that's what I'm counting on. It's too late to stop now; heck, why would I? See you next week.

Kenny Lourie is an Advertising Representative for The Potomac Almanac & The Connection Newspapers.

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