



and Oakton
Vienna
CONNECTION

Children's Connection 2012

Miranda Harris, James Madison High
School, 12th grade, computer graphics

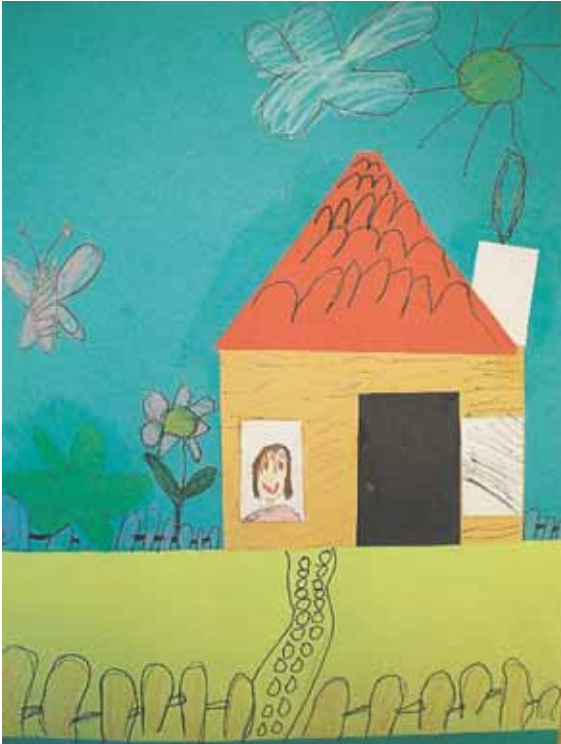
DECEMBER 26, 2012 - JANUARY 1, 2013

ONLINE AT WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

CHILDREN'S CONNECTION 2012

WAPLES MILL ELEMENTARY ART GALLERY

Artwork submitted by H.Sarina Haris, art specialist.



My House, by Audrey D.Yang, Kindergarten



Butterfly, by Daniel Lee, Second grade



My Family, by Lily Drummond, First grade



Contour Shoes,
by Alex El-Naggar,
fifth grade



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CHILDREN'S CONNECTION 2012



By Ishmeet Singh, 12, Seventh grade, Thoreau Middle School

Welcome

Dear Readers:

This week, the Vienna and Oakton 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 vienna@connectionnewspapers.com, but you can reach us by mail at 1606 King Street, Alexandria, VA 22314 or call 703-778-9414 with any questions.

EDITOR KEMAL KURSPAHIC



Cameron Rouse, James Madison High School, 12th grade, painting



By Victoria Choi, 18, 12th grade, Marshall High



By Fiona Kluge, Third grade, Waples Mill Elementary



By Cara, Third grade, Our Lady of Good Counsel Catholic Church and School

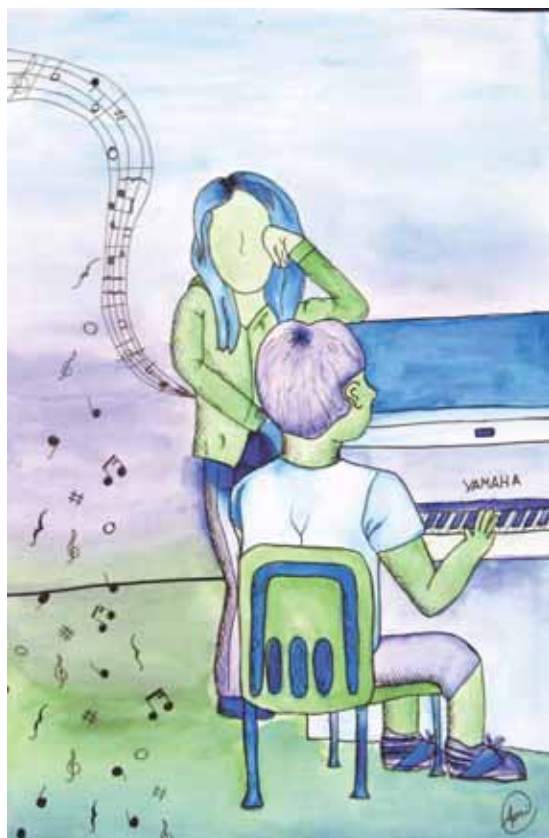
CHILDREN'S CONNECTION 2012

THOREAU MIDDLE
ART GALLERY
Submitted by Art Teacher
Michele Physioc.

By Andrew Keehan,
13, Eighth grader



By Alison Maillet, 14, Eighth grader



By April Clark, 12, Seventh grader



By Carly Rogers, 12, Seventh grader



By Kelly Jackson, 13, Seventh grader



By Cindy Lee, 13, Seventh grader



By Allison Sciuto, 12, Seventh grader

CHILDREN'S CONNECTION 2012



**Lauve Gladstone,
James Madison
High, 12th grade,
computer graphics**

POETS' CORNER

Leaving the Ground

BY EMILY CALHOUN
EIGHTH GRADE/KILMER MIDDLE SCHOOL

My wings ruffle, opening wide and full
The breeze tickles my face, leaving it calm and cool
The skyscrapers that are spread out before me
Beckon and coax me to jump and be free
But yet I cannot leave this nest and fly
The world is too scary and bright and I am too shy
It is all so tempting to dance above the clouds
But I am forever hidden with this dark, thick shroud
One day I know, I will have the courage to take flight
But for now, I am stuck on the runway with no wind in sight

Think Green

BY JORDAN McMILLEN
FIFTH GRADE/FLINT HILL SCHOOL

I hear the rich family
from the shack next door.
I see the mice
scurry around
looking for scraps.
A dim light
from the kitchen
behind me,
shines down on my straw bed.
The world is a wasteland
just because
we have been reckless.
WHOA!!
I wake up
sweating buckets.
I feel
I have a sudden urge
to do something...
Green!

Winter Storm

BY SHAAZIA AHMED, 13
EIGHTH GRADE/ KILMER MIDDLE

Tree branches are hanging low to the ground
Pushed down by the ice cold hands of white snow
The footprints of kids who ran all around
Even under the trees that hung so low
And still the snow fell so steady and fast

Covering the now quiet and empty street
It fell without stopping while the night passed
Until it was a white blanket tucked neat
All the kids ran outside in their warm clothes,
and some shivering snowmen began to form
They stayed out all day and many had froze
but they didn't care they loved winter storms
the snow outside was a beautiful sight
I really loved it with all of my might

Dusk

BY TESS BRADY
FIFTH GRADE/LOUISE ARCHER ES

Dusk is a full book,
Filled with what you did that day.
Starting with your alarm,
Like a firefly's blinking light.
Ending with snoring,
Like a stampeding elephant.
Going to school,
And riding the bus,
Like it is in rhythm.
Having practice,
Like it is everything in my life.
Then playing a game,
Like we have to win.
Everyone's story is a snowflake,
They are all different.
You can choose your own story,
With your mind
Dusk is a full book,
With your discoveries from that day.

A Winter Day

BY ANJALI SARDANA, 10
FIFTH GRADE/LOUISE ARCHER ELEMENTARY

My hair is billowing in the wind
Newspapers dancing doing the tango,
Snow is falling like a feather dropped from heaven
Cradled gently to the ground.
I walk past the frozen lake thick enough to skate on.
I see birds flying high in the sky then landing on the frozen lake
Flailing about like amateur skaters.
Old man's hat galloping away in the wind,
As excited children make snowmen and women.
Slowly the sun comes out melting these treasures away.

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CREATIVE WRITING

The Labrador

BY ELLIE MADISON SOCHER, 12.
SEVENTH GRADE/THOREAU MIDDLE

Up and out of his crate, slowly walking,
Stretching across the room.
Into the bedroom to wake his owner.
Once woken, he asks for a quick groom.
Sprints to his dish, then gobbles down his food,
Spots a squirrel outside all alone.
Darts outside to chase it,
But only finds his dirty bone.
He scavengers the yard for squirrels,
After finding squirrels no more,
As loud as a New York Street,
He barks at the door.
Searching all day for excitement,
He is left only with his toy stuffed animal.
He chews it so ecstatically,
You might mistake him as a cannibal.
After another long day passes,
His fur shines like the sun as he lays.
Falling asleep.
Only to wait for the next day.

Worst Thing That Happened to Me

BY DANIEL GERKE, 14.
EIGHTH GRADE/KILMER MIDDLE

The worst thing that has ever happened to me was when I broke my wrist in basketball practice. My team was two weeks away from the playoffs, and I ended up missing the last two regular season games, as well as our one playoff game, which we lost. I broke my wrist by getting caught off my feet and when I came down, I braced my fall with my wrist. This was tough to deal with, considering I had never broken a bone before, and I felt like I was letting the team down. This also made my life a little bit tougher because I couldn't do some everyday things with the brace on. I didn't even think that I broke it because I didn't know what the pain was like for a broken bone. Those six weeks with the cast on my wrist were the toughest of my life.

A White Christmas

BY EMILY COURSON, 12.
SEVENTH GRADE/THOREAU MIDDLE

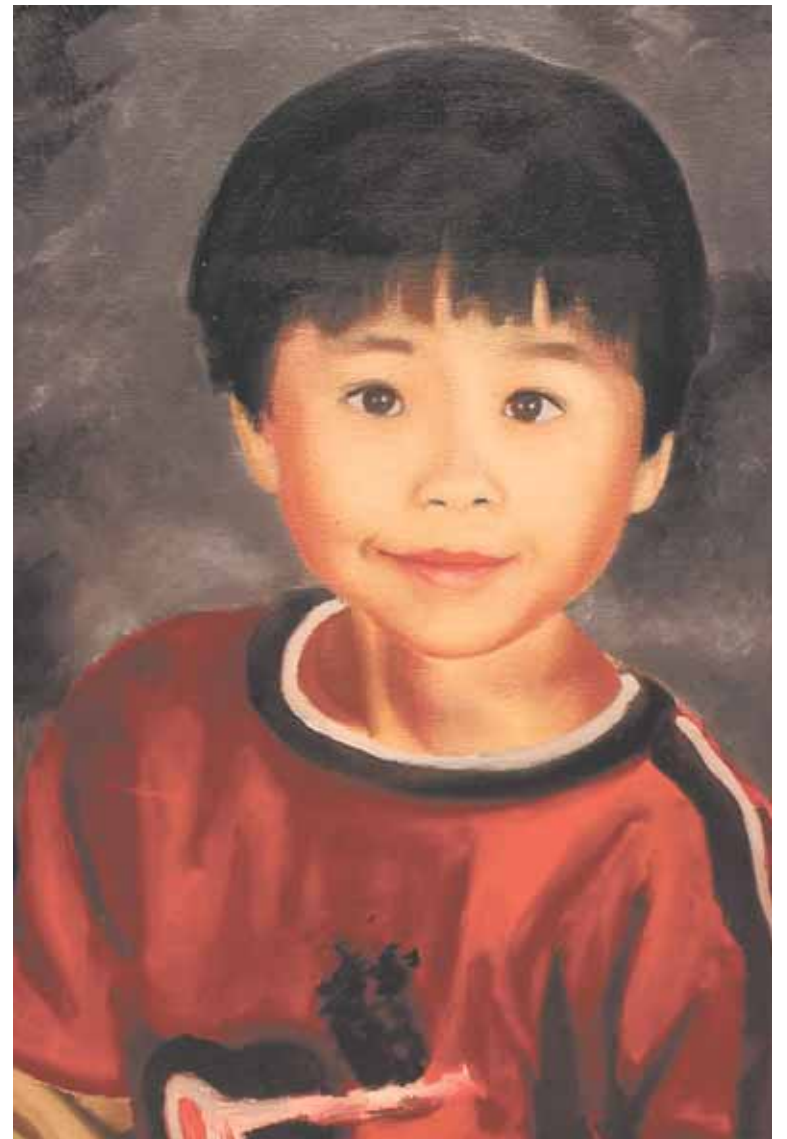
The snow has fallen, its Christmas morning. When we wake up the tree is lit, and snow has fallen. It's my first white Christmas. When we open our gifts our faces light up we have received what we wanted. It's a marvelous day to be passed down for ages, through life times. The snow will soon melt as we know too well, so we enjoy it. The small icicles are dripping. You can hear the drip, drop, drip if you listen strongly. As the day ends we wish it will come again, a white Christmas.

Why I am Supportive of Video Games

BY TIMOTHY CHAN
EIGHTH GRADE/ KILMER MIDDLE

I don't understand why most parents are against kids playing video games. It has been proven that playing video games can boost people's creativity and hand-eye coordination. It slows down the effects of aging and makes the brain think. One study even said that when people play video games they don't feel much pain because it takes their mind off it.

Adults emphasize that children should spend a lot of time reading.



By Elaine Zeng, 12, Sixth grade, Colvin Run Elementary

I don't complain because I love reading. However, I still prefer video games over books. Sure, reading a book can take you to imaginary places, but why do that when you can be in that world virtually through video games? Plus, in the video game you can enjoy the freedom of being in control. In a book you can't manage how a character does something. In addition, it is not always true that books have better plots than video games. In my opinion, Kingdom Hearts' storyline is better and far more emotional than Harry Potter's.

Above all other reasons, playing a video game is just simply fun, whether it's conquering Bowser in Mario or winning first place at a race in Gran Turismo. There's always the pride of defeating an enemy or beating the storyline. Playing with friends and family at a multiplayer or party game can make unforgettable memories. I truly believe that playing video games is a great experience, and that everyone should find their inner gamer. It doesn't matter if it's a strategy game or Pac-Man, anyone can enjoy their share of man's greatest invention- video games.

What is one thing that you would change about school?

LAWRENCE WANG,
12, SEVENTH GRADE, KILMER MIDDLE

If I could change one thing about school, I would have a class that teaches how to learn. Nowadays, if kids could learn how to learn, they would do much better in school. This class could teach how to take notes, how to read effectively, how to plan ahead, and much more. This way, kids can actually enjoy school more because they know how to learn.

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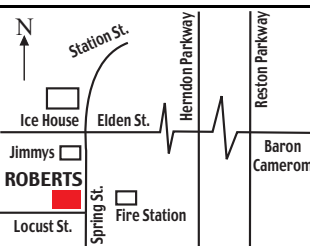
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CHILDREN'S CONNECTION 2012

WRITING SAMPLES FROM LOUISE ARCHER

Submitted by the third grade teacher Natacha Moore.

The best gift I ever got was my mom and dad because they take care of me, love me and they're loyal. The special thing about them is they are the best parents ever!

— SOPHIA LAUBNER, 8

I'm mostly looking forward to Christmas because I love to see the smile on people's faces. Like the time I gave my little brother a toy dinosaur. He was so happy and when I saw the smile on his face it made me feel all warm inside. It made me feel like giving everyone a present.

— MEG BORROWMAN, 9

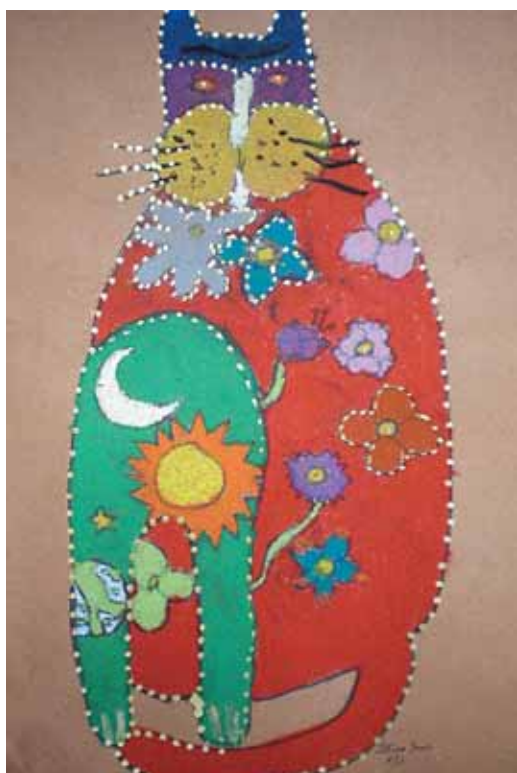
I want to add double recess to school, half days on Thursdays, extra math on Tuesdays and Wednesdays, extra PE and a lot more music. I want less social studies and double the school hours. I want more science and 30 more minutes of lunch and library three times a week. That's how I would change school.

— BENJI FREDERICK, 8

The best gift I have ever received was a foosball table, because I really wanted one. The master at foosball in my family is my dad. He played in college every day, and to this day I still have the foosball table.

— JT LANDWEHR, 9

The best gift that I have ever received was my dog. I love her because she loves me, just like families do. Some people say that bull dogs are ugly, but I don't argue. I just say if you bug my dog,



Fantastic Cat, by Selina Sun, second grade, Waples Mill Elementary

bow colored with lots of details. It would have all of our favorite colors on it. They reason why I would do this is because it would make them feel love by me and remind them of me when they look inside.

— ELLA STIVISON-MORAN, 8

Sometimes I have problems reading and sometimes I have problems in math. I love reading and I love school because it makes you good at math and science. When I grow up I want to be a teacher. If I want to be a teacher I know I have to read a lot. I want to be a teacher because I will learn a lot. My favorite food is pizza, pasta and apples. Eating well will help me to run fast and big.

— ANGEL RAMIREZ, 8

The best thing that I ever received was my family, my sisters, my brother, my mom, my dad and my dog because they complete my life. Without them I'm nothing.

— EMILY ROMERO, 8

she's not going to like it. I let her lick my face as much as she wants. I don't mind because she loves me. My sister hides from her. She is scared of germs. I don't care, she's my dog. I'm a dog lover.

— MARY YACURA, 8

If I could give my parents any gift in the world that didn't cost any money it would be an animal. It would be an animal made of clay because my mom and dad love animals. I would color red and yellow.

— DHYLAN HENRY, 9

If I could give my parents a present that didn't cost any money it would be a treasure box that had a picture of my family. I would also include a note saying how great they are, because it is true, they are the greatest parents ever! I would have hearts and smiley faces on it, and it would be rain-

The worst thing that ever happened to me was when I broke my arm. When I broke my arm it was during the summer. I had to miss the amusement park. I wanted to cry. I had to stay at the hospital for 12 hours.

— SAM DEGGES, 9

What is my favorite animal? Well, I really like all animals because they are all so nice and different, like with fur, feathers and things like that. I like dogs and geckos because they are awesome and creative and they both are cool looking.

— AUBREY LUNGER, 8

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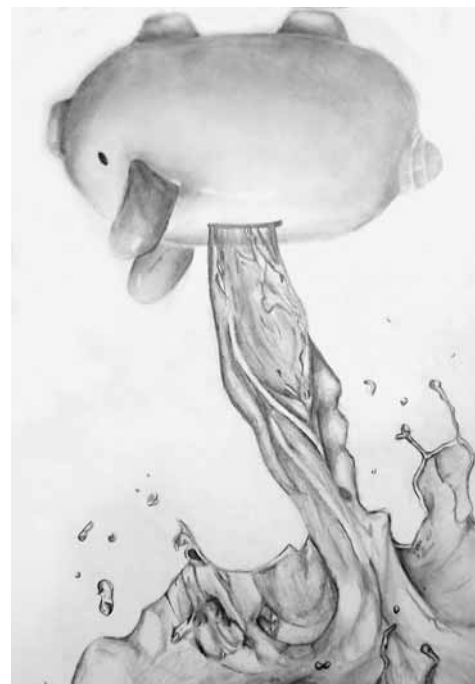
CHILDREN'S CONNECTION 2012



Sunhong Park, 16,11th grade, Marshall High

MARSHALL HIGH ART GALLERY

Artwork from Marshall High students submitted by Nicole Walter, art teacher, Fine & Performing Arts Department chair.



Sandy Hoang, 17, 12th grade, Marshall High



Pari Sheth, 17, 12th grade, Marshall High



Alexandra Sandlin, 17, 12th grade, Marshall High

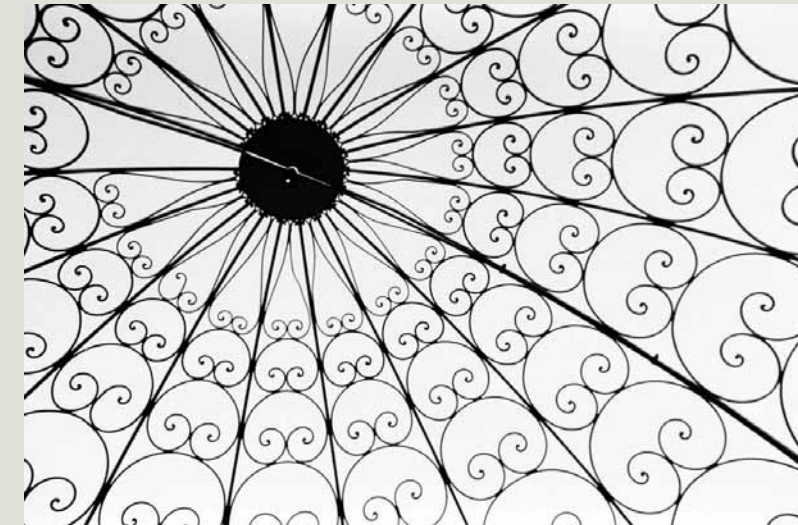


Hannah Mahach, 15, 10th grade, Marshall High

MADISON HIGH ART GALLERY



Natalie Kelm, 12th grade, photography



Thomas Brownell, 12th grade, photography



Kyra Bell, 12th grade, 3D Studio Art



Laura Stange, 12th grade, 3D Studio Art 1



Sue Park, 11th grade, 3D Studio Art 1



Hailey Stafford, 12th grade, 3D Studio Art 2



Amy Groome, 12th grade, drawing



Carolina Ratcliff, 12th grade, painting



Allison Moody, 12th grade, painting

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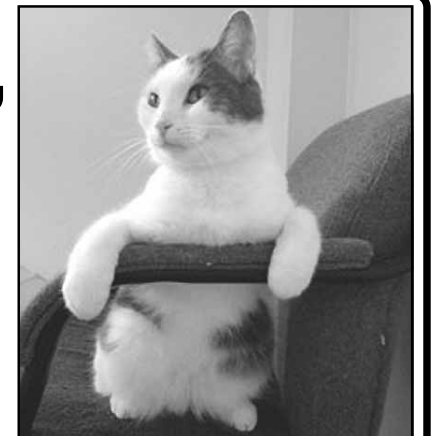
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THE CONNECTION
NEWSPAPERS

CHILDREN'S CONNECTION 2012

POETRY CORNER

Submitted by Cynthia Iannone, The Language Arts teacher at Our Lady of Good Counsel Catholic Church and School

The Best Gift

The best gift I rode was a bicycle
The best gift I played with was a basketball
The best gift I ate was a popsicle
The best gift I saw was the nature of Alaska
The best gift I've lived in is my house
The best gift I was born into was a family that cares
The best gift I hang with is my friends
The best gift I've received was love

— KIRSTEN, SEVENTH GRADE

The Sea of Life

Life is like the ocean;
filled with roaring waves.
Any careless motion
Could simply throw your life away.
Every word you speak matters.
You can speak wisely, or not care.
I wouldn't choose the latter,
But you can try it, if you dare.

The sea is filled with danger,
Just like the world we know.
Even now it's getting stranger,
And it will forever so.
Every single thought,
Of every single day,
From these we learn a lot,
In many different ways.
Some days you may be on top of the world,
Some days you may be scared.
But in life's ocean, you're not the only pearl,
So you'd best be prepared.

—LANI, EIGHTH GRADE

A Poem

One small crystal from the sky
Fell upon my head as if to try
To tell me winter is very near
Many more snowflakes will soon be here.
One small icicle is hanging down low
With drips of water beginning to flow
The sound of the dripping made me look outside
Where millions of snowflakes were flying by.
One small flame from the fire
Lighted the way towards my heart's desire.

The thought of Christmas made me cheer.
I can't wait 'till Christmas! It's almost here!

—LILY, SEVENTH GRADE

Football

Tie up those black and white cleats,
Pull on those wide receiver gloves,
Strap up your team helmet,
And play the game that you love.
Feel the rush of the game,
Hear words of the crowd,
Shout your name,
Stand up,
Be proud.
Make that tackle,
Get that sack,
Put some fear,
In that Quarterback.
Play them hard,
Play them fast,
And pray to God,
It's not your last.
Fight them hard,
Tooth and nail,
Be the star,
Refuse to fail.

—DOMENIC, EIGHTH GRADE



Ella, Third grade, Our Lady of Good Counsel



Bailey, Sixth grade, Our Lady of Good Counsel

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THE CONNECTION
NEWSPAPERS

CHILDREN'S CONNECTION 2012

VIENNA ELEMENTARY WRITING SAMPLES

Submitted by the third grade teacher Cheryl Allen.

My favorite animal is a polar bear because white looks good on a bear and it's about 10 feet tall. It lives in cold areas. There's a book called Grizzly Bears Vs. Polar Bears and grizzly bear wins. My second favorite animal is a lion because orange is my favorite color. It's really soft.

— TANNER DAVIS, 8

I like friends who are always there for me. I like a friend who always plays and talks to me. I have a friend list. I like friends who hang out with me. I like friends who have a twinkle in their eyes. I love friends who have a great smile. And I love friends who have a great sense of humor (that means funny)!

— ARYA RAGHAVAN, 9

The gift that I would give my parents that does not cost money would be a book that I made all by myself. It will be all about my special family...where they were born, how many years they were married, and so on and so on. And that is what I would get my parents.

— DANIA ALBARGHOUTHI, 9

I'm looking forward to Christmas 2012 because this Christmas, I'll get a cool Lego set, so next Christmas, I'll have a cardboard box that I'll put the Legos together to go inside and when Santa Claus comes, there's gonna be 3 buttons on it and 3 statements above them.

They will be:

(Button 1) Press here Santa! (For picture!)

(Button 2) Now press this one. (For note).

(Button 3) Now for fun, this one. (For train).

— JACK D. PHILIPP, 8

What makes a good parent is a parent who loves you and gets you good presents. Also, a good parent doesn't make you their servant. And if they are trustworthy, that's good. Like if you let them have a piece of candy—trust me, it's bad if they take too much. Also, a good parent likes to play video games.

—CIARAN SULLIVAN, 9

When I grow up I want to be a football player because I throw and kick and catch footballs very well. It doesn't seem like I'm gonna be a good football player, but I actually practice every day at home. And this is why I want to be a football player when I grow up!

— AIDAN MCINERNEY, 8

I want to be a veterinarian because I like to work with pets. I'd get to help them get better when they are sick. I'd like to be successful so I can make pets feel better.

— JACLYN KING, 8

The best gift I have ever gotten was my three lizards because they were my very first pets of my very own. They were also my very first pet that I could hold and play with. But mostly, because now, when I walk into my room, I have someone to talk to. The best gift I have ever gotten was my three lizards: Spike, Razor, and Dakota.

— KAI HORNE MCCLOSKEY, 9



By Emily Shambaugh, 13, Eighth grade, Thoreau Middle.



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Field of Flowers, by Auden Mink, in Mrs. West's kindergarten class at St. Marks Catholic School in Vienna.



The Last Supper, by Michael Turner, in the Evangelist Program in Mrs. Garcia's class at St. Marks Catholic School in Vienna. This student is currently in seventh grade but did this artwork in fourth grade.



By Malyia Kelley, Eighth grade, St. Marks Catholic School in Vienna.

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First grade**



**Ben,
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To feel special,
To have everyone curtsy or bow when I
floated by.
I collected little figurines of my favorite
princesses,
Jasmine, Belle, Snow White, Ariel,
Aurora, even Prince Charming!
They went with me everywhere,
In a little pink pouch,
That hung around my 4-year-old wrist.
Then, for Christmas,
I got a dress.
It wasn't an ordinary dress,
But a glittery yellow dress,
Just like my favorite princess,
Belle from Beauty and the Beast.
I was so excited,
My mom did my hair,
And I put on the dress,
And placed a plastic tiara on my curly
head.
We took pictures,
And laughed,
And played games,
And finished opening the presents.
Nothing ever beat that dress.
Sometimes I wonder
What happened
To that naïve little girl
Who believed,
That with the wave of a wand
She would become
A princess.

—ANNA RAMIREZ

What Would I Change About School?

I could think of many far-fetched and
imaginative changes I would make in
school, but the most practical one would
be start times. Nobody really wants to wake
up at 5:30 a.m. to catch a bus at 6:30 a.m.,
especially kids. Kids should be able to en-
joy their childhoods and "stress free" lives.
Pretty soon they'll be adults, and they will
have to wake up early and start having
worries about insurance and mortgages.
School should start at 10 a.m. and end at 3
p.m. Then we can have a balanced time of
work, play, and pursuing hobbies and
dreams.

—MEENAKSHI BALAN

Final Countdown

Wooden floor shining from its brand new
shield of wax
Orange leather smacking against the
ground
Over and
Over and
Over
The defense charging at me in a furious
mob

Crossover
Spin move
Behind the back
Out in the open
Only one defender between me and the
basket
I am soaring down the court
The game nearing its end
Three...
Crossing the three-point line, the crowd
roaring
Two...
Majestically, I leap off the ground
The defender thrusting his hands up, de-
termined not to lose
One...
The ball rolling off my hand, floating to-
ward the basket
Beep!
The buzzer roars, and...
Swish!

—IAIN MUIR

Giving and Thanks

The gift, to my parents that I would give
Is a meld of happiness, pleasure, joy,
A blend of all things above and below,
Memories of good times,
To be fused together
In the gift of simple contentment.
In return nothing is needed other than a
simple
Thanks.

—CAMERON SMITH

Hello, Friend!

After a long day of rushing around, my
first day of middle school was finally over!
I couldn't wait to get home and tell my par-
ents all about it. I was lost in my thoughts
as I got off the bus. Suddenly, a girl popped
out from behind me and said, "Hey, do you
want to walk home together? I live down
your street."

"Sure, why not?" I replied. For some rea-
son, we started talking like we were close
friends. I learned that she lived only five
houses away from me. It didn't take long to
realize that we were getting along quite
well. I knew that it was going to be a good
year because of my first day friend!

—ASHLEY LIN

Memories of a Grandma

Even in a hospital bed,
She'd smile when she saw me.
She loved to get my school pictures.
She didn't live to the next one.
I got that Monday.
She died on Sunday.
And while I didn't know her that well,
I just wish she could've lived
A day longer,
To get my school picture.

—AYLA TAFFEL



Kelly Park, James Madison High, 12th grade, photography

Revolution

Mother of morning
Father of night
Speaker of soul
Caller of fright
Have you seen
All I have done?
And did you view
What has begun?
Come to me now
See me stand strong.
Watch me succeed
Hear, now,
My song.

—HELEN ROADES

The Leaves of Life

They look too vibrant,
Too lively,
But the second I look away,
They fall.
And one day,
I'll look out,
It'll all be over.
All of them,
Gone.
Swept away.
Maybe it was the wind,
Or maybe,
They just lost the strength to keep hold-
ing on.
But in the back of my mind,
I know they'll be back,
And next time,
Those leaves will hold on tighter than
ever.

—DAISY NG

Safety on the Road

There's always a reason behind traffic,
whether it's construction or dead cars. How-
ever, the most frequent, unfortunately, is car
crashes. But think about this: would you
rather be stuck in traffic for five minutes,
or be the person who actually crashed? Af-
ter all, traffic jams happen because they
prevent you from moving or rushing

through dangerous roads and other situa-
tions, so they're really helping you. My opin-
ion about traffic is that, though the jams
can be frustrating, they're sometimes the
best protection we can get on the road!

—BENJAMIN LIU

The Greatest Sport

In the upcoming year, I am looking for-
ward to a lot of things. The thing I am ex-
cited about the most is entering high school.
The only reason I'm excited about high
school is freshmen football. Football is the
greatest thing that has ever happened to me,
because it makes me feel alive when I'm
playing it. I play the position of wide re-
ceiver and sometimes running back, and I
can't possibly be any happier than when I
am playing. High school football is defi-
nitely what I am looking forward to in the
2013 year!

—MOHAMMAD BADEEB

Where I'm From

I'm from the mid-1900s
I'm from Legos, electric trains, and hula
hoops
I'm from football, tag, and King and
Mountain in the cul-de-sac
From collecting stamps and playing on the
CB radio
I'm from the groups 38 special, Bruce
Springsteen, and Squeeze
From Ronald Reagan and Chuck Norris
I'm from Jawbreakers, Hershey's, Pixie
Sticks
and Caramel
From "Soap" and "Happy Days"
I'm from James and the Giant Peach
and who could forget Encyclopedia
Brown
From "Can you dig it?"
"Where's the beef?"
And "Eat my shorts!"
I'm from a dream of being an arctic ex-
plorer
A future from the mid-1900s

—HALEY LOBSENZ

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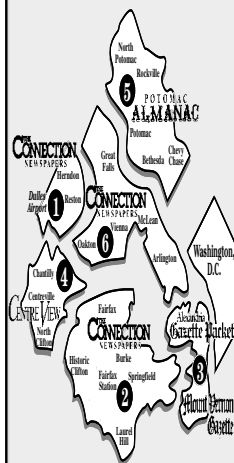
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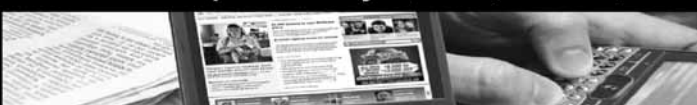
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What Am I Thinking?



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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