

McLean  
**CONNECTION**

Skiing Fun by Valerie Li, of McLean,  
grade 5, Haycock Elementary School.

# Children's Connection 2014

DECEMBER 31, 2014 - JANUARY 6, 2015

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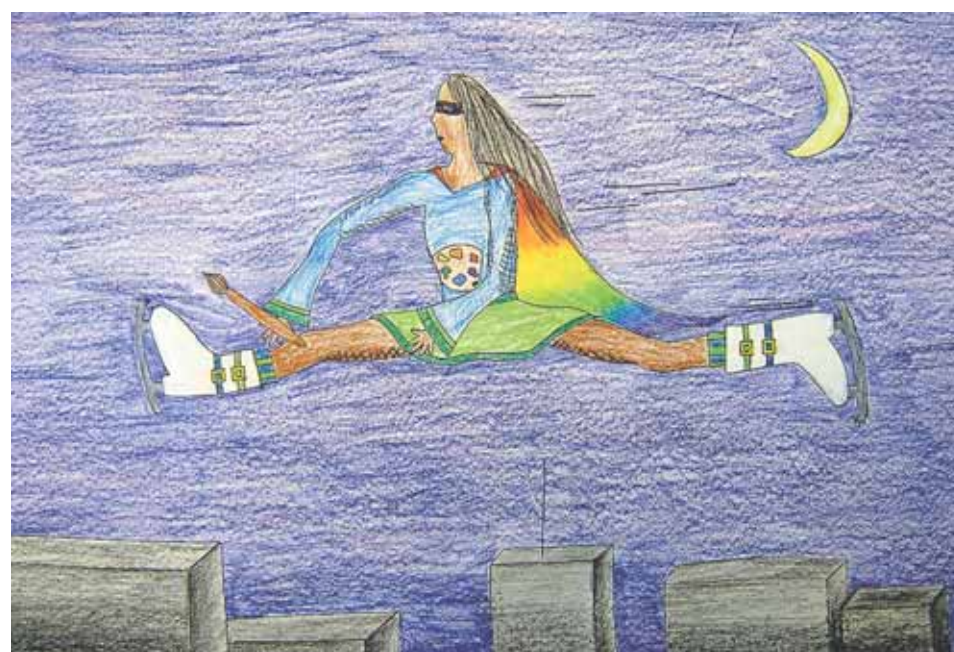


# CHILDREN'S CONNECTION

MCLEAN CONNECTION EDITOR  
KEMAL KURSPAHIC  
703-778-9414 OR  
MCLEAN@CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM



By Tamar Shrier, grade 5, The McLean School.



By Kathryn Kim, grade 6, Spring Hill Elementary.

## Welcome

Dear Readers:

This week, the McLean 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 2015 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 school pages.

Our preferred method for material is e-mail, which should be sent to [north@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:north@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



By Ayesha Javaid, McLean.



Nathan A. Pearce, kindergarten, Kent Gardens Elementary School.



By Hannah Everette, grade 4, Chesterbrook Elementary.





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By Oscar Bubel of McLean.



By Willa Habrel of McLean.



By Aurian Malhotra, grade 6,  
Spring Hill Elementary.

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## CHILDREN'S CONNECTION

By Haley Riggins, grade 4,  
Chesterbrook Elementary.



By Claire Touse, grade 3,  
Chesterbrook Elementary.



## Flower

By NADIA JO, 13, OF McLEAN

Creating smiles  
Even in the darkest corner,  
The vivid colors and aromatic scents  
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Whether rooted to the ground or  
Cut for a bouquet,  
Its beauty creates wonders.  
Every hue is washed on its petals,  
Intricately arranged in a maze.  
Though its life is short  
Its charm is infinite.

## Last Dance

By NADIA JO, 13, OF McLEAN

It's their last dance.  
The limelight is brighter  
The stage is bigger  
The audience is larger.  
The light envelops their bodies  
Shooting currents through every inch  
It's impossible not to dance.  
They are not graceful.  
Their moves are not choreographed.  
They are  
Agitated,  
Unrehearsed,  
And terrified.  
Yes, their six legs tremble in anguish.  
Their skin is scorched by the sunlight through the lens.  
The audience giggles.  
They enjoy burning ants.

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## CHILDREN'S CONNECTION



Drawings by  
Victoria Cho, of  
Great Falls, grade 9,  
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CHILDREN'S  
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By Zosia Henryson-Gibbs,  
grade 1, Spring Hill El-  
ementary.



SPRING HILL ART GALLERY

By Grace Araya, grade 1,  
Spring Hill Elementary.



By Brandon Liao, grade 6, Spring Hill Elementary.



By John Bradshaw, grade 6, Spring Hill Elementary.



By Claire Chang, grade 4,  
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By Cate Poliquin, grade 6,  
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## POETRY CORNER

### Dilemma

BY JIN YOUNG CHOI,  
GRADE 11, MCLEAN HIGH SCHOOL

Oh words,  
Why do you do this?  
You give nightmares,  
You cause distress,  
You hurt people,  
Emotionally, mentally, physically  
Triple threat, nevertheless  
People must know you,  
Memorize you,  
Study you,  
Scrutinize you,  
Oh words,  
Why do you do this?  
When you crush one's heart,  
Is it worth to know you?  
You, a mass-destructive weapon,  
But socially accepted,  
You befuddle me,  
You keep me up all night,  
You drive me insane,  
Irritably, miserably, hopelessly  
Oh words, you the most powerful weapon,  
That has inspired and tormented humanity.  
What would the world be without you?

### Breakfast

BY MIN KYUNG LEE,  
GRADE 10, MCLEAN HIGH SCHOOL

It's a gift  
From a tiny, delightful room  
Where all the magic happens  
With a grit of a knife, chop!  
With a heat of a toast, pop!  
With a crack of an egg, drop!  
It's a joy  
With all your loved ones  
Who make each day better.

### I wonder

BY MIN KYUNG LEE,  
GRADE 10, MCLEAN HIGH SCHOOL

I wonder  
How things change  
Like the leaves that turn bright  
And the winds that freeze cold  
I wonder  
Why things happen  
Like the rains that fall  
And the stars that sparkle  
I wonder  
When things come  
Like the holidays we celebrate  
And school days that we dread  
I wonder  
What will make things better  
Like the smiles of children that shine  
And joyful songs of birds that lighten the world  
I still wonder  
Imagine, believe, and dream  
and I am not afraid to ask.

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By Trudy, grade 8, Our Lady of Good Counsel.

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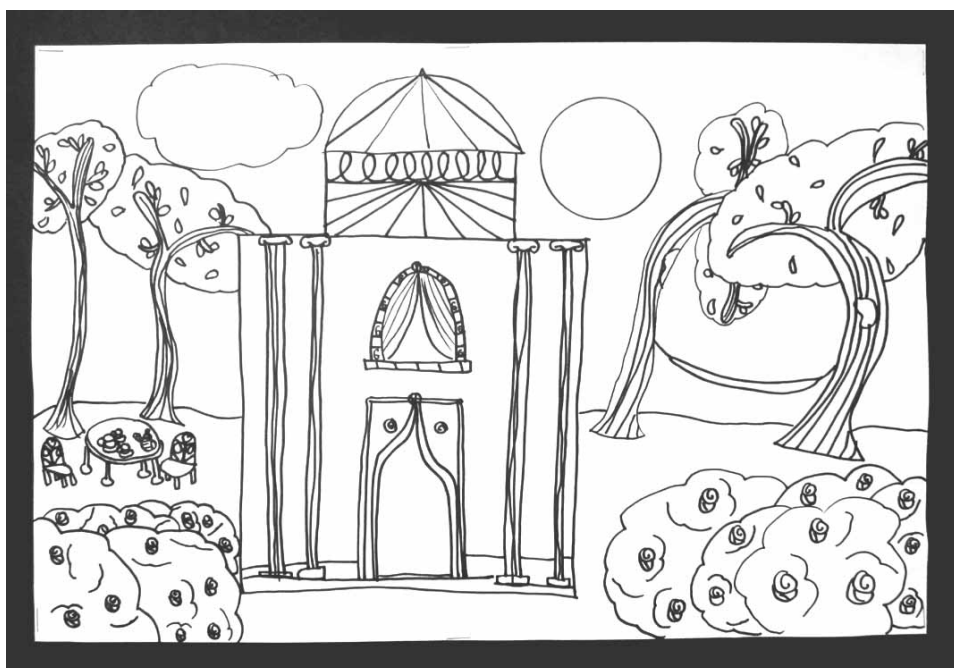
KENT GARDENS ELEMENTARY ART GALLERY



By Masaki Nakamizo, grade 1, Kent Gardens Elementary.



By Seyeon Park, grade 1, Kent Gardens Elementary.



By Kayla Park, grade 3, Kent Gardens Elementary.



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# CHILDREN'S CONNECTION

## Sights

BY EMILIE KIM  
GRADE 5, CHURCHILL ROAD ELEMENTARY

It was a winter night, bone-chilly and the ground was covered with milky white snow. A wavy, steep slope awaits the people who were going to go sledding or skiing the next day. At ten o'clock p.m., any five year old kid would be fast asleep, but not me. I was going to go animal watching with my father. My stomach was filled with butterflies and they seemed to kick my stomach very harshly. My heart was thudding with an unusually fast pace. As I was wide awake, I waited as my father was coming in my room. We were going to go animal watching.

As my father and I stepped out into the moonlight, the grass crunched and made beautiful, ruffling sounds. I stared at the moon for a few seconds. Enchanted by its radiant light, I stepped forward. The moon was magnificent and mysterious to me as I moved closer and closer. The stars seemed to dance around me as I glanced away from the moon. My misery had suddenly vanished. It was replaced with hope. I think it is from the amazing moon and stars. Then, I remembered why I was outside with my father. As a frightening cloud had stolen my moon, I sprinted across my yard and I leaped into my father's awaiting arms after a quick glance at the shining moon and stars.

I grasped my dad's navy blue shirt and I ran to our small, but pretty, stone pond. I gasped as I saw that the moon was on the pond.

My father said reassuringly, "It is just the moon's reflection on the pond. The water acts like a mirror."

I understood, and I went toward the pond. I was silent as a shadow as I scurried across the lawn. Then,

a gust of wind blew me off course, and it took away my courage as it flew past me. I ran with all my might to my father.

He asked, "Are you okay?"

I nodded silently and we continued our sightseeing for animals.

My father and I were filled with joy as we saw some animals as we walked away from our quiet house. There were raccoons and squirrels along our sight. I heard a low hoot and I knew that we were not alone in the darkness that gave me goosebumps. As we walked for miles it seemed, I dug my heels into the soft, amber-brown mud and my father was concerned. We were about to enter the woods.

The woods is a terrible nightmare, and darkness surrounds you in that creepy place. I froze and I whispered that I would never go in that place. My father noticed that and he said that we weren't going into the woods. As my father was checking the time, I tumbled down a hill and I was terrified. I shut my big golden brown eyes, and as soon as I landed, my eyes slowly blinked and then I opened my eyes out of curiosity. I stared at the place I had landed on. My father had followed me and started scolding me. I shushed him and we both stared at the place I had fallen. It was beautiful with a snow covered slope that was filled with trees that were the color of an emeralds. The part I liked best was that there were so many animals in my sight.

That was the most amazing thing that has happened to me. I enjoy being around animals and even when I was really young I loved to pet and see many different animals. I always loved to sit down, and stare at birds or squirrels. This was an experience that brought me closer to animals.

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## CHILDREN'S CONNECTION

### Q&A

**Q: If you could give your parents any gift that didn't cost any money what would it be?**

A: It would be a handmade gift like a project from art class or maybe I can learn to make cool Rainbow Loom shape or a bracelet I can give because I am really good with those things.

**Q: What are you looking forward to in the upcoming year?**

A: Writing a 5 paragraph essay. We were supposed to write 5 paragraphs of something you feel strongly about. When I looked at the format of the essay, it looked easy to me. And I also think it will be fun. So that's why I look forward to it.

**Q: What do you want to be when you grow up?**

A: I really want to be the world's best soccer player. These are some reasons why. First, if you are really good, the club owner will pay you a lot of money. Second, my league (Great Falls soccer) is probably the worst in the All Stars group. So If I train harder, that

hard training might help me be the best.

**Q: What makes a good friend?**

A: I guess to be compassionate and always being nice like sharing and helping you when you are hurt or stuck on a question. And a good friend should not tease or hurt you by hitting you in some way.

**Q: What is the best gift**

**you've ever given?**

A: I am not sure because I haven't gave that many gifts. I remember giving gifts to Santa last year. Technically I put on a place where Santa would pass by. I also remember giving cards to my mom on Mother's Day. I think the best gift I've given to somebody was to Santa Claus.

— YOUNGMIN HONG,  
GRADE 4, CHURCHILL ROAD  
ELEMENTARY

### Thoughts of December

Decorating Christmas trees  
Enormous piles of snow  
Christmas cookies and candy canes  
Extra hot cocoa  
Mistletoe hanging down  
Bells jingling all around  
Elves working through the night  
Reindeer pulling Santa's sleigh out of sight.

— SASHA SCHRATWIESER,  
GRADE 3, CHURCHILL ROAD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

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Special Thanks to The Connection Newspapers

### The Storm

BY CATE POLIQUIN,  
SPRING HILL ELEMENTARY

In 2008 there was a huge snowstorm in McLean. The snow measured up to be as high as 2 ft. tall. Playing in the snow the next morning was super fun but, staying up through the night turned out to be super scary for my family.

My family was having a nice time watching the snowfall, and listening to Christmas music. The fire was so warm, but we used up a lot of wood. I watched as the piles of snow grow bigger and bigger.

Soon my dad became worried. We had used up most of our wood! Then one of the worst things happened, the power went out. My dad soon became super worried, because all we had to eat was cereal and cold food.

As time passed by, the house became colder and colder. Then my parents hopes came true, the power came back on! The next morning my sister and I played in the snow all day. Now my family knows to be prepared for a snowstorm.



## CHILDREN'S CONNECTION



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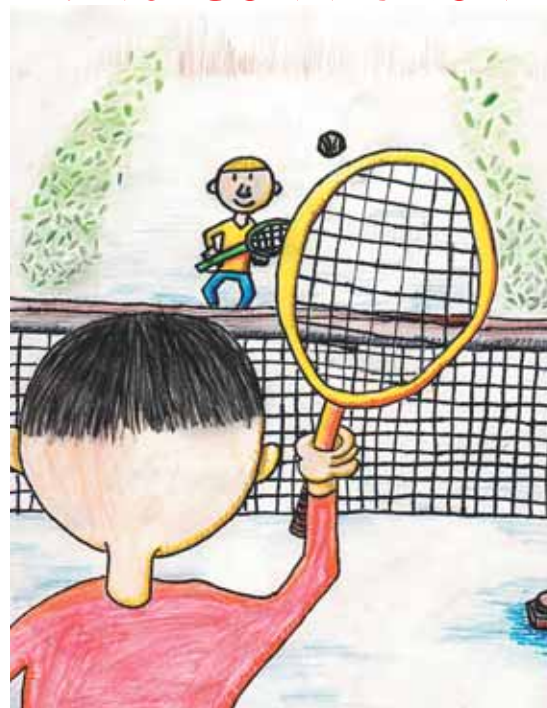
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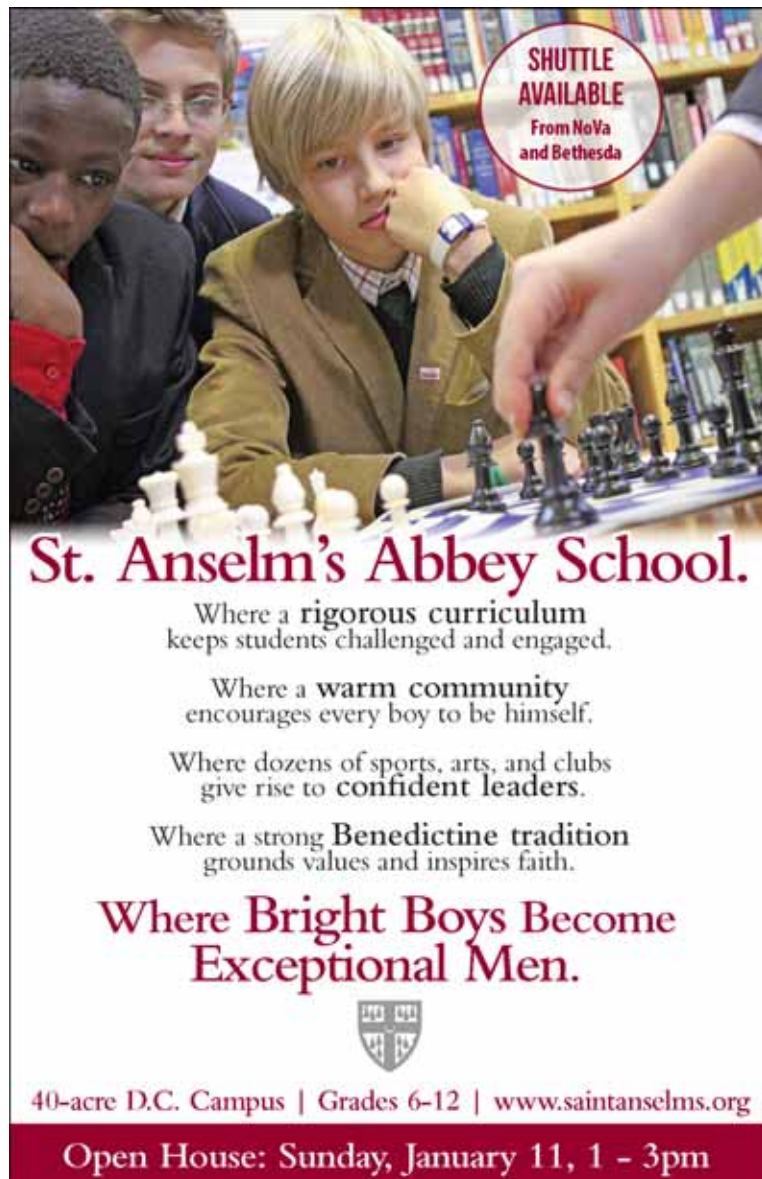
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By Michael Hanchao Wang,  
grade 3, Churchill Road  
Elementary School,  
McLean.



"Bruce" by Maddie Rizzo,  
16, McLean.



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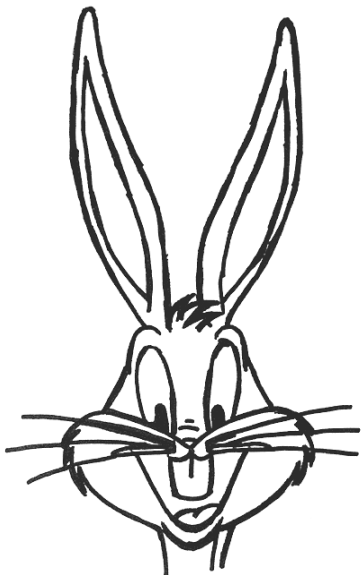
**Open House: Sunday, January 11, 1 - 3pm**



By Claire  
Chang, grade  
4, Spring Hill  
Elementary.



## CHILDREN'S CONNECTION



By Jack Crippen, grade 4,  
Churchill Road Elementary.



First grade students at Churchill Road Elementary visit Mount Vernon Plantation as part of their study of General George Washington. Clara Aikman drew a picture of herself and her friend Emily New in front of Mount Vernon.



"I am thankful for my mommy" by Jaina Fitzpatrick, kindergarten, Churchill Road Elementary.

By Michaela A. Pearce, grade 3, Churchill Road Elementary School.



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# Level Best



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

If I wanted to rationalize the benefit of delaying my heretofore every-three-week chemotherapy infusion from three weeks to four and now on to five, possibly six – and that's dependent on improved results from a second/maybe even third retest upcoming (this retest a bit more involved than drawing blood) – I would say it's only fitting that I should have a break/brake; after all, it is the holiday season when all good things; yada, yada, yada. If only it were that simple.

But simple is the last thing that a cancer patient's life can be characterized as being; whether they have been "prognosed" as "terminal" as I was, or are at the beginning (diagnosis), middle (under treatment and surviving under circumstances too numerous and varied to list) or end of their cancer-affected life. And so for me to expect smooth sailing at any time during this process is totally and entirely unreasonable – and mostly, I haven't. I'm just lucky to be in a boat with a few provisions still left in it. Ergo, this column is not a complaint, just an update, as the previous few columns had sort of led you regular readers on a bit of a walk in my shoes, although one likely without the neuropathy nearly six years of non-stop chemotherapy can exact. Still, I am mostly upright, up and about and able to handle any and all activities, especially those relating to daily living. However, right now I worry that after two consecutive three-week-interval, pre-chemotherapy lab results specifically measuring my creatinine levels (which reflects kidney function), and a second retest as well, all indicated too high/abnormal (a first-time occurrence), thereby preventing my regularly scheduled Alimta infusions – twice – if I have indeed crossed the Rubicon, so to speak. Obviously, it serves no particular purpose for me to invoke history, especially history with which I have very little familiarity. However, if some of what I've read concerning this historical event is true – the event's significance notwithstanding, it has partially led to the creation-and-then-acceptance of a word/s/phrase's figurative meaning – then I sure hope my die has not been cast.

But who knows, really? And even though this cancer stuff is all very personal – and my circumstances are unique to me as a cancer patient – I try not to take it personally, if that makes any sense? Somehow, I try to minimize the negative effect of any of it, mentally, that is. As concerns me and my treatments (starts, stops and fits), it has always been about what happens next. Until there's no more next, there's always what's next. Now I have a third round of lab work next week and a 24-hour creatinine clearance collection in the interim to measure my levels as accurately as possible to help determine what happens next. Hopefully, levels will reduce, and more of the same treatment which has resulted in my unexpectedly long life expectancy and most recent "shrinkage," can continue. But of course, there are no guarantees either. Oh, there is one: this process is excruciating.

Nevertheless, somehow the patient (or at least this patient) has to be patient and life has to be lived. Otherwise the cancer wins. And to quote Brian Dennehy, a/k/a Sheriff Cobb, from the movie "Silverado," completely out of context: "We can't be having any of that now, can we?"

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

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# CHILDREN'S CONNECTION

## Desire

BY EMILY S., GRADE 7,

OUR LADY OF GOOD COUNSEL SCHOOL

The aching desires of the few,  
include the necessities for me and you,  
but the vast majority want the new,  
they want the luxury and they lust,  
because they must,  
they need the future in the past,  
they need products that must last,  
for as long as they want them to.  
What happened to this world, what must we do?  
release the greed,  
make a creed,  
and find the greatness in giving and not wanting,  
loving not taunting,  
and fulfill the deserved desires of peace, nourishment, and fair  
treatment for others,  
for the fathers, children, brothers, sisters, and mothers.

## The Substance of Life

SYLESH S., GRADE 8,

OUR LADY OF GOOD COUNSEL SCHOOL

Time, the substance of life  
Appears to be rife  
But passes by  
In a blink of an eye  
Each moment that we waste  
Is forever erased  
Every second well-spent  
Will make us content  
Life is a dream  
In which time reigns supreme  
Make the best use of time  
Make each moment sublime

## Time

BEN M., GRADE 8,

OUR LADY OF GOOD COUNSEL SCHOOL

They say time is never ending,  
but is that really true  
they say the end is impending,  
like the damp morning dew  
But have you a clue  
what's coming for you  
a hurricane of sadness  
a whirlpool of despair  
unnecessary illness  
even though it isn't fair  
but maybe life is just unfinished business,  
and happiness is just around the chair.

## "A Fleeting Glance at the Past"

SOPIA F., GRADE 8,

OUR LADY OF GOOD COUNSEL SCHOOL

When one finds oneself longing for a certain time,  
Remember that the time we have now is ephemeral,  
And even though it's an uphill climb,  
The here and now must be treated like an emerald.  
In the words of Penn,  
"Time is what we want most, but what we use the worst"  
So remember now and then,  
To remind yourselves that time can't be reversed.  
And though now we may trudge along,  
Recall dear cohorts,  
That though the days are long,  
The years are short.

## Tattoos

BY JULIA K., GRADE 8, OUR LADY OF GOOD COUNSEL

All the ink  
that covers my body  
are all the stories



By Dave, grade 3, Our Lady of Good Counsel

I could never tell  
Secrets I always kept  
Every confession I never made  
Tons of memories  
made into drawings  
will stay with me forever  
All the things that have hit me so hard  
Are now visible  
You look at me and you might judge  
But I am covered  
With the stories of my life

## Paper

BY TOMMY F., GRADE 7,

OUR LADY OF GOOD COUNSEL SCHOOL

It looks like a magic carpet floating in the wind  
paper is a tree that was once skinned  
It was recently the stem of a tree  
there are two sides of paper, not three  
and as you may overlook this piece of art  
it has lots of history and the idea is smart  
In China paper was made out of bamboo  
and that's about it, as I think it through  
It started as papyrus in Egypt  
they were smart and strategic  
papyrus was a good-sized plant  
but not used by Ulysses S. Grant  
Ulysses S. Grant used something else, I think  
maybe he used parchment, pens, and ink  
But now it's just paper and a ballpoint pen  
paper is pushed to its limits by men  
So paper could be a very useful thing  
so don't overlook it as you overlook string

## Nature

BY DONALD W., GRADE 7,

OUR LADY OF GOOD COUNSEL SCHOOL

The crisp wind blows,  
The ocean's limits no one knows,  
The fields of grass,  
Green with grace,  
Nature fills all,  
Earth and Space,  
The clouds,  
A wisp of white,  
They're in the air,  
Until night,  
The sky the sky,  
Filled at night,  
With gleaming stars,  
That shine so bright,  
Until day,  
We wait in fright,  
The sun has risen,  
It beholds such light,  
It shines all day,  
With all its might,  
Until it goes down,  
Out of sight



***\*THANK YOU\* for a GREAT year!***  
***Wishing you a healthy & happy 2015!***



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 #1 Total Volume    #1 Total Transactions  
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**HAPPY NEW YEAR!**