

Potomac ALMANAC

"Blue Mood,"
by Elizabeth Khovayko, 15,
grade 10,
Churchill High School

Children's Almanac 2014

Liza
Khovayko

CHILDREN'S ALMANAC

Welcome

Dear Readers: This week, the Potomac Almanac 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. Because of the response, we will continue to publish more artwork and writings throughout January.

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 Almanac. 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 Almanac 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 almanac@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

HOOVER MIDDLE

My Great-Aunt's Christmas Story

After the long car ride, I felt a joyous mood overtake me. I knew it was going to be a great Christmas when we pulled into my grandparent's driveway. The outdoor lights were blinking on and off; the reindeer sled was positioned right in the middle of the front lawn; and, the pine cone wreath my mom had made when she was in Girl Scouts, was hanging on the door. As I walked in the house, the smell of prime rib, freshly baked rolls and mouth-watering chocolate chip cookies made me smile. I headed for the living room where the rest of my family was deeply engaged in a cheerful conversation and Christmas songs were playing. When they saw me, I was bombarded by greetings, hugs, kisses on the cheek, and hot chocolate.

In the sea of relatives, I found my way to my great-aunt, who I had not seen since last Christmas. I sat down next to her and smelled her ever so familiar perfume cascade over me. Every time I see my great-aunt, there is never a dull moment. She told me about her trip to France, how she cannot believe the price of groceries, and how she planned to plant deep red tulips in her garden next season. And as we were talking, I knew she was going to tell me "the story." I knew she would work the story into our conversation. I love hearing it even though I hear it every year.

As she began, I noticed that the room got quiet. She started with the familiar,

"When I was a little girl..." You know, when elderly people always start out a story that way, you instantly know it is going to be good. She continued on to explain that at a Christmas gathering when she was young, her Dad had invited an immigrant man who had arrived from China, without his family. She said when it was time to open the presents, he was so amused at the abundance of gifts that he laughed with joy as each present was opened. She said that the best part was when her father gave a gift to the Chinese man. The man was so surprised and grateful that he refused the gift; but, her father insisted that he open it. As he opened the gift of fine Chinese tea, the man cried. My great-aunt said that at first she was very surprised and shocked. She had never seen anyone cry over a gift. But she quickly realized that he was crying because he was happy, not sad. She closed the story by saying that it made her realize that by giving, you get more joy than receiving. I cozied up to my great-aunt, took a sip of the hot chocolate and knew that at last, I was finally home for the holidays. Christmas is all about family and friends.

— KELLY WHALEN

Untitled

We are sitting on our deck
Around our circle table
The sun is sinking
The sky is full of rainbows
Our stomach hurts, from too much food.
But still we want more
For all of us
We went to play in the sinking sun light

Leaving gramps and adults alone
Birds can't understand loneliness
Flying across the sky while singing their songs

They start chatting
They start laughing.
The moon is rising
And I missed it
The night that is full
Full of foods and songs
I missed it,
Missed it deeply

— SABRINA LI, GRADE 6

Thanksgiving

I get a plate from the table,
And fill it up with mashed potatoes,
Cranberry sauce and Jell-O,
Made by my grandparents who do so much for us,
But this dinner is hosted by my uncle and aunt in their large house,
Large enough to hold us all:
My parents,
Myself,
My siblings,
All nine of my cousins,
My grandparents,
Three aunts and three uncles,
All of us eating, enjoying ourselves, joking about how
The car didn't stop because the driver had a heart attack,
But rather a red light,
Or how the turkey crossed the road
Because scavengers wanted Thanksgiving dinner,
Making everyone laugh,
SEE HOOVER MIDDLE. PAGE 4

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Newspaper of **Potomac**
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**1606 King Street
Alexandria, Virginia 22314**

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by Local Media Connection LLC**

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MDDC Press Association

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Graphics and Design

HOOVER MIDDLE

FROM PAGE 2

So the only sad thing is leaving this house,
After dinner,
After a dessert of pie,
After playing in the basement with everyone else,
When we get on our shoes,
Open the door,
And leave,
When we get in our car,
And drive away.

— NATHAN VARNER, GRADE 6

Thanksgiving

Sitting at the kids table,
Having a snack with syrup (maple)
Adults playing games in the den,
I hope this night will never end.
That turkey looks so good and yummy,
When I'm done I'll have a full tummy.
I just want a bite of pumpkin pie,
Or I will definitely die.
Bagels, turkey, lots of food
What food shall I ever choose?
After dinner, it's PlayStation time
Pop in Call of Duty and play till nine.
Once it's nine it's football time,
The player's catch is so divine
Little cousins playing with toys,
There is only one, and he's a boy.
Everyone is to tired and sad,
And a little bit mad
Because
Now it is time to go home,
This is a Thanksgiving poem.

— ETHAN MORAN, GRADE 6

Holiday Dinner for the Mezgers

We're sitting at the table,
careful not to touch
piles of delicious food
until it's all ready,
as the banquet starts,
and we dig in,
and clink our glasses
for a toast of celebration,
I poke at the food
picky as always,
while my sister howls
about the "yucky" sausage,
but we all laugh,
used to this routine,
knowing it wouldn't be Christmas
without it.

— VENICE MEZGER

A Magical Christmas

The goose, golden-brown,
Cooked just right,
Creates a wonderful aroma,
The smell of Christmas.

Twinkling lights from the tree,
Shine down on the presents,
My little brother excited,
I am too.

The cold, bitter snow,
Bites my frozen ears,
As we jump in the cold,
The joy of Christmas.

The jingle of bells,
The sound of my brother,
Devouring the food,
Makes me smile.

As I bite into the goose,
The flavor explodes in my mouth,
A salty sweet taste,
Of Christmas.

The warmth of being together,
Of playing in the snow,



Sabrina Lee, grade 6

The fun of celebration,
The magic of Christmas.
— RACHEL LIU, GRADE 6

Christmas Morning

We're all around the Christmas tree,
The Kids with their Hot Chocolate,
The Adults with their Warm Brewed Coffee,
All of us cuddled Together in Blankets.
It's Snowing Outside while the Kids yell "Can we? Can we?"
But it's too late!
They've turned into Monsters!
As I eat my S'mores...
They tear their Beautifully Wrapped Presents apart.
I just sit there grinning,
Wishing Time could stop right here
Because after all...
We'll all miss the Happiest Time of the Year.

— LUCY LIN, GRADE 6

'The Christmas Dinner'

We were sitting
at a table
in the aged dining room
The holiday aroma in the air
The table was filled with delicious food
"sniff, sniff"
Yummy they all thought
As I inhaled all the meals flavors
We were shining with joy...
Of too much delicious food
As I started the prayer
we all thought...
If there wasn't this day?
Thank you for?
I am grateful for?
What would happen to me if ?
My family is my everything
We happily said,
"Amen"
But what if we missed this day?
— KLIO PAEZ

A Good Friend

One day I was eating lunch and I forgot my retainer case, so not thinking so much I wrapped my retainer in a napkin. My lunch was delicious. I had a tuna fish sandwich with lettuce. About a half hour later I was finished with lunch and cleaning up. I threw all my trash into the trash bin, but the worst part was that I threw the napkin with the retainer in it away too! Forty-five minutes later I realized there was no retainer in my mouth! Frantically I looked for it around

me; it was nowhere to be seen! I told my friend next to me that I had thrown my retainer away, not thinking she would do anything about it. An hour later my friend came to me with my retainer! She had searched through the dirty trash can for my retainer! I have an amazing friend!

—CHARLOTTE COOPER,
GRADE 6

Christmas Poem

We are all sitting around the tree
Waiting intensely for my parents to finish breakfast
So that we can get opening
"We will be there in a second!"
It happens every year
And every year
And every year it gets even more intense
"What is in this one?"
"I think I know what is in that one!"
Then finally they come with a camera
And we start to open one by one
One at a time

— AUDREY HOUTON

Holiday Dinner

I am sitting at the table
My plate full of food
Turkey here
Stuffing here
And potatoes right there
Green beans at the edge
And of course
Cranberry sauce on the side
— MAYA LEIB

Holiday Dinner

We're in the kitchen
We're in a rush
Almost impossible
To cook so much
"Grab the pepper!"
"Toss the salt!"
In a hurry
To get the food done
I can smell it
I can see it
I can feel it
The holidays are upon us.
— TEJ THAMBI

Thanksgiving Dinner

We're sitting around the table ready to eat,
Except for baby Gus who's already asleep,
On the table cranberries, turkey and

more,
We've never had this much ever before,
We all have fun, and joke around,
Like nobody else is in this town,
Once we're all done and ready for pie,
We eat it all and say goodbye!
— CLAIRE KIM

WHOOSH!

That is the sound of the wind
It is slowly picking me up
I want to call out to someone
What's the point though?
No one is going to hear me
The breeze feels nice
It's hitting my bare shoulders
I get goosebumps
I glance down
I can see my house from here
It makes me sad
I look up
I see the clear sky
It makes me mad
But it's time to say goodbye!
— ASHFIHA RAHMAN

Holiday dinner

At the table
As we sit
Eating our delicious dinner
Of turkey and sweet mashed potatoes
We all spoke of our gratefulness
But I said the most,
"There are many things
I'm grateful for
But the most important thing
Would have to be the people
I love and care for."
We all cheered with
Our glasses of apple cider
(While my brothers were sleeping
Off upstairs in their beds)
If this holiday,
Of Thanksgiving, never
Would have come to exist
We would all miss
This grateful time each year!
— AMY EISENBERG

Old man, with child.

I see, with soft brown eyes,
An old man with a child,
Walking down the road,
Going nowhere,
Yet everywhere.

The child bounces,
Like a new born mouse,
Feisty,
Joyful.

The child giggles,
Snorts,
With glee,
He thinks the world is his.

The child,
His eyes darting back and forth,
Taking in the new worlds,
Only known to him.

The child, filled with innocence,
Free,
Unburdened,
The image of youth itself.

The old man,
His back, bent crooked with
Memories,
Bears the weight of a thousand years.

His eyes, which have seen too much,
Are sad and lonely,
Like a dark moon on a still lake,
Filled with wisdom.

He hobbles along
His feet dragging across the ground,
That he walked so long ago.

SEE HOOVER MIDDLE, PAGE 16

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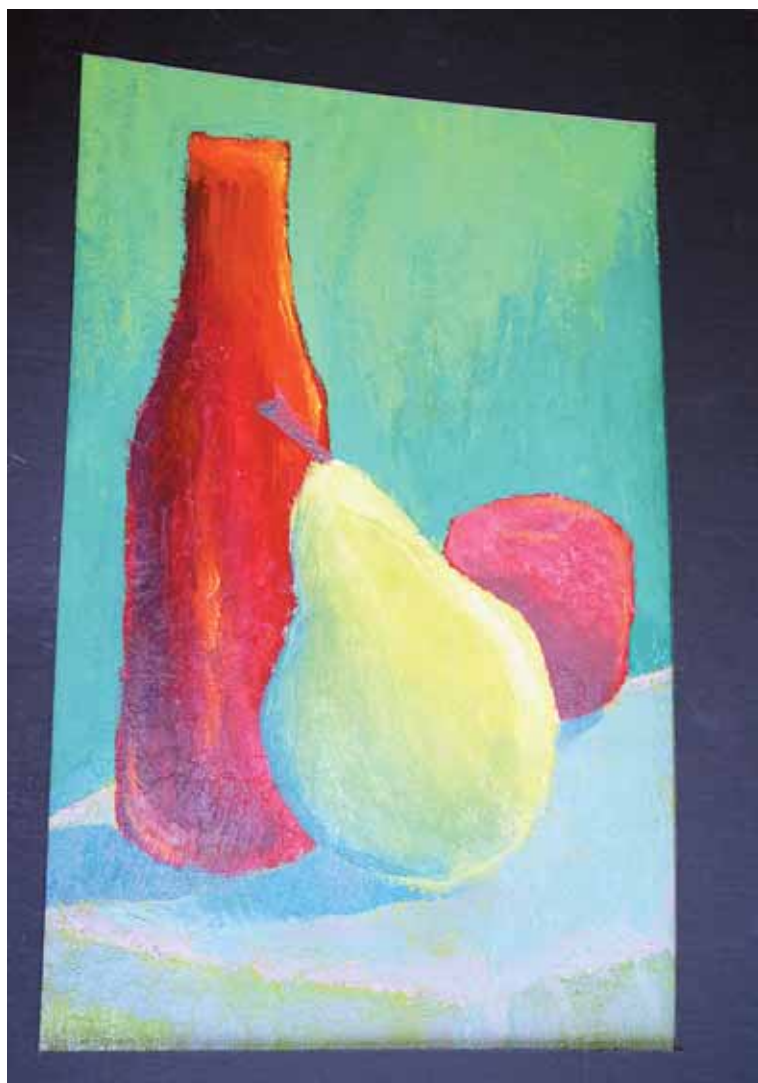
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A Dog Asks

A dog asks, "What is chocolate?"
How could I answer the dog?
I guess for him, it is a bite of the forbidden fruit
Or a golden spindle that will send him into a forever slumber
But I guess it could be the feeling of melting, in one moment, melting into pure sunshine
Or the feeling of silk dancing through your veins
But I guess it is the most perfect kind of defeat, to just take one bite
Or the comfort of an unconditional lover
And now it seems, it is taste buds igniting at the glimpse of nirvana

— CARLY KABELAC,
GRADE 12

"Still Life,"
by Elizabeth
Khovayko,
15, grade 10





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POTOMAC ELEMENTARY



"One of the Last Monarchs" by Christopher Lindsay, 8, grade 3



"Waiting for a Letter" by Alexander Lindsay, grade 5

THE WOODS ACADEMY



Abigail Maloney, grade 6



Aidan Nickerson, grade 6



Alessandra Chiaramonte



Daniela Gonzalez Sanchez, kindergarten



Alex Thal-Larsen, grade 6

Kendall Wright, grade 6



Kendall '14



Natalie Pierce, grade 6



Jaden Davis, grade 1

BULLIS SCHOOL

Christmas

Decorating pines
With sparkling lights
A big shining star on top
Reaching for the sky,
Sun and moon

Bustling malls
Filled with people ready to spend
All they have -
Listening to Jingle Bells
Blasting loudly from big black speakers,
In every store

Rolling the dough -
The comfortable aroma of baking
Making you feel at home -
Decorated Red and Green cookies

Relatives traveling
From all around the world,
Playing board games,
Gathering for the delicious meals -
Altogether

Opening terrific toys
Wrapped in snowflakes on the wonderful red -
The smell of festive candles -
Red bows on green wreaths
Decorate the doors

Eating crispy goose to the bone -
Landing on the white outside -
Feeling Wonderfully Happy-
While decorating the beautiful, fresh smelling
pines -
Merry Christmas!

— JULIAN CHRISTENSEN

What Makes A Good Friend?

A good friend is someone who is always there for you. A good friend is someone who makes you feel happy when you feel sad. A good friend is someone who you trust. A good friend is someone who stands up for you. A good friend is someone who has your back no matter what. A good friend is someone who makes you feel happy. A good friend never lies to you no matter what or how bad it is. A good friend helps you when you need help.

— SAMANTHA PEPPER, 8, GRADE 3

What Makes A Good Friend?

A good friend is someone who is kind and loyal, friendly and smart. Someone who knows you so well that they know if you are sad or mad or happy. A good friend knows when you want to do something fun. They know if you are being bullied and they stand up to the bully for you. A good friend is never mean to you or anybody.

— NOOR MANESH, 9, GRADE 3



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GENEVA DAY SCHOOL



Easel Painting, "Owl,"
Claire Nesbitt, 2



Easel Painting, _Shawn
Woo, 2



Free Painting with Glitter,
Solomon Sergeyko, 2



3D Snowman, by Niara
Gupta, 3



Q-tips + Shaving Cream
Art, by Syrus Farid, 3



Mosaic Art, August Halbe, 2



Pine Cone Print, Noah Pike, 2



Finger Painting, by Khloe Pachano, 3



Table and Chairs with flowers,
by Vida Amjadi, 4



Turtles, by Ella Civan, 4



Foam Shape Creations, "Train," by
Shou Iimi, 4



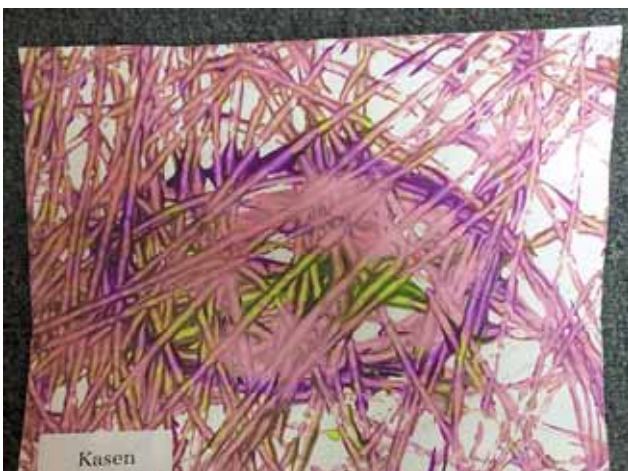
Painted Tree Etching, by Leo Fan, 4



Shape Designs w
Shape-Stamp + Ink
Pads, by Kyle Chun, 4



Family Portrait, by Sarah Bullis, 5,
kindergarten



Marble Painting, by Kasen Wassef, 3



Roller Painting, by Julianne Asser, 3



Roller Painting, by Taylor Coates, 3

GENEVA DAY SCHOOL



Nature Sculptures, by Stephen Coz-Lizama, 4



Leaf Prints in Modeling Clay, by Elias Farnan, 4



Lego Print Corn Cob, by Erin Bullis, 4



Lego Print Corn Cobs, by Riho Yokogawa, 4



Rubber Shape Creation, "Train" by Sadie Adams, 4



"Snowman" by Vida Amjadi, 4



Landscape, by Kenji Kirby, 5, kindergarten



Roman Wall Painting, "Volcano," by Soraya Farid, 5, kindergarten



Self Portrait, by Izabella Garcia-Torray, 5, kindergarten

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Ellie Dadgar, grade 4



Emilia H., grade 9



Danny O'Donnell, grade 3



Erin Gould, grade 8



Alexander Hallas, grade 2



Alyssa Warring, grade 3



Claire Bankeroff, grade 5



Jahan Hosseini, grade 6



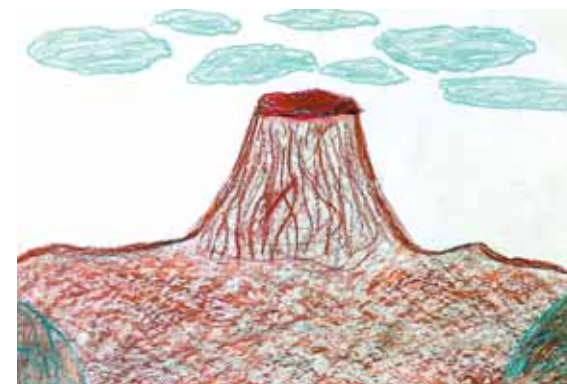
James Giuli, grade 4



Ian Willis, grade 4



John Langston, grade 2



Lane Brickman, grade 4



Eliana Durell, grade 5



Christian Princler, grade 8



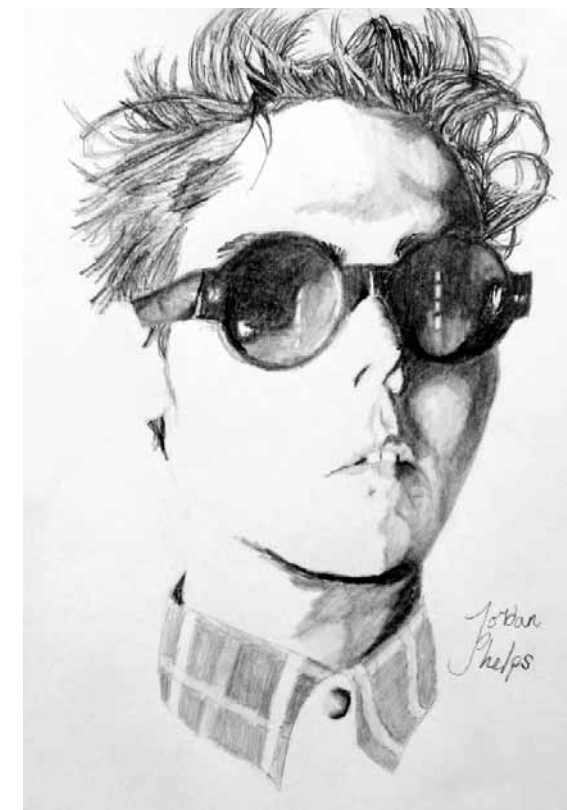
Daniel Ticktin, grade 6



Danny Labaree, grade 3



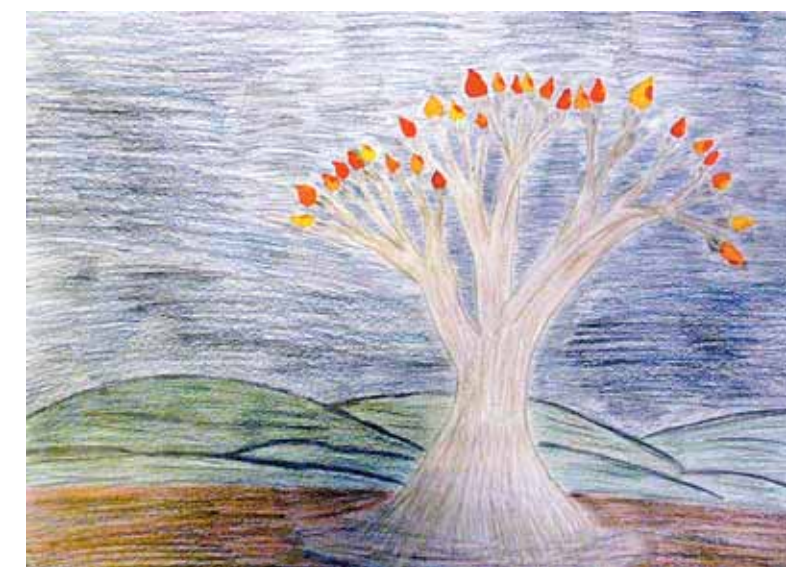
Gina Geraghty, grade 4



Jordan Phelps, grade 9



Alexandra Mann Grade 6



Emily Hafken, grade 8



Maggie Taishoff, grade 7



Kendall Thomas, grade 7



Lindsay Fienberg, grade 5



Danny O'Donnell, grade 3



Jacon Balaban, kindergarten



Mark Berger, grade 8

LET'S TALK Real Estate



by Michael Matese

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It doesn't get much more cost effective than solar heat. It's more economical than electricity, propane or oil and some states even offer sales tax exemptions, income tax credits and property tax exemptions or deductions. The size of your house, local covenants and heating needs are factors in choosing the size of your heating system, and a professional in solar heat panel installations will be your best source of information. Take into consideration your local climate, the type and efficiency of the collector to determine how much heat the system can provide. It's usually most economical to design an active system to provide 40%-80% of the home's needs and a well designed and insulated home that incorporates passive solar heating techniques will use a smaller heating system, needing less supplemental heat. Once installed, maintenance is essential and an average system will require between 8-16 hours of upkeep a year. Don't forget to make certain your homeowner's policy covers the upgrade. Most are already automatically covered, but it's essential to ascertain what your insurance provider's policy is regarding it.

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Jessica Baskett, grade 9



Maddy Shapiro, grade 5



Mark Berger, grade 8



Pretty Ocheni, grade 12



Peter Coccaro, grade 6



Porter EganFrei, grade 6



Ryan Hartinger Grade 4



Maya Martin-Cubbage, grade 3



Nick Pintucci, grade 10



Mark Berger, grade 8



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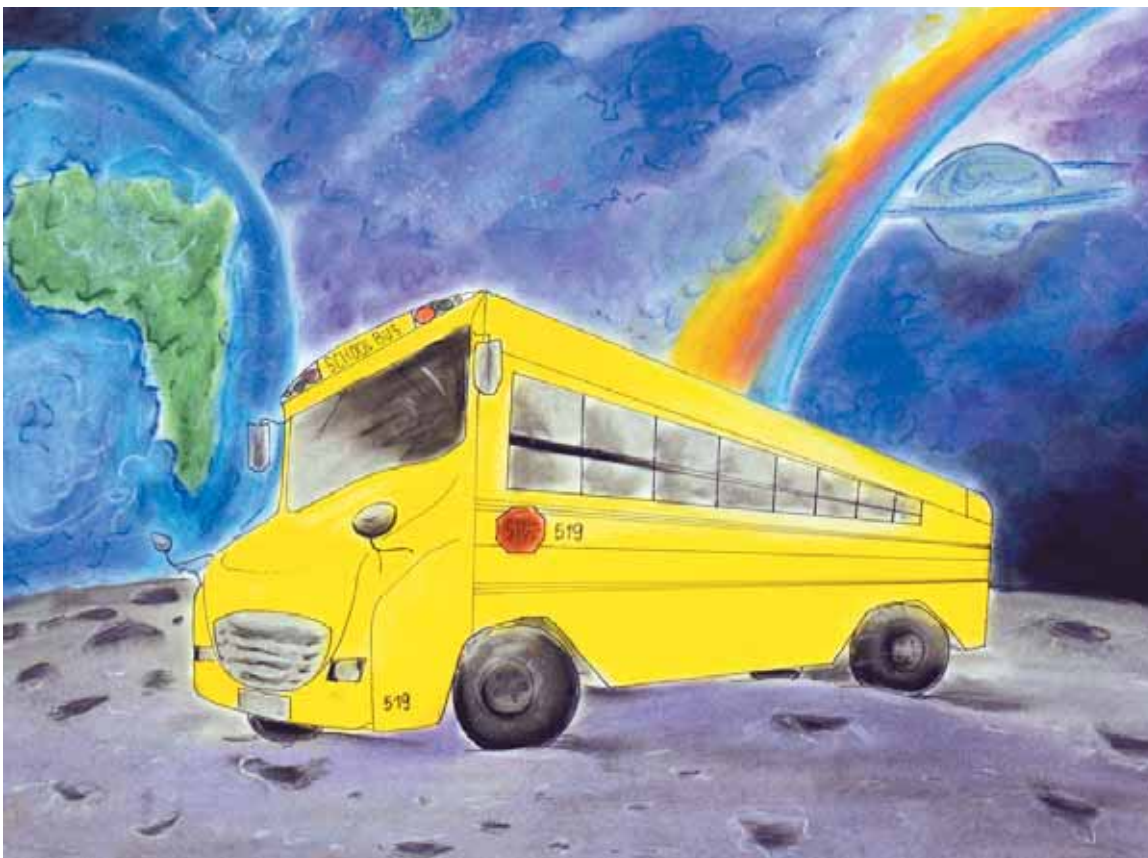
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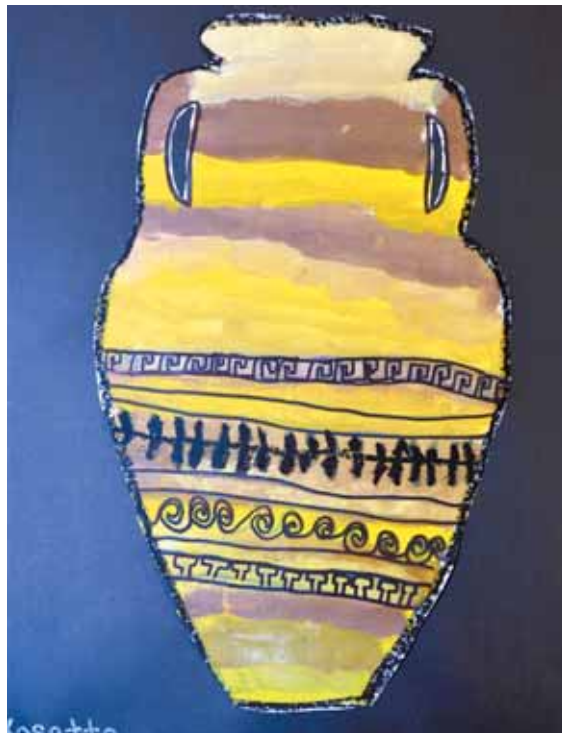
ST. ANDREW'S EPISCOPAL SCHOOL



"Magnetic Schoolbus," Lisa Leitner, 14, grade 9



Untitled black and white contour drawing in pen, by Katie Olin, 13, grade 8



"Greek Vase," by Kosette Koons-Perdikis, 7, grade 2

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January 21, 2015

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NORWOOD SCHOOL



Zeze, kindergarten



Tahlia, grade 2



Ryan, grade 5

Haiku

Trees are almost bare
Creeks different warm colors
Flying bird in sky
— COLETTE, GRADE 2

Leaves turning colors
Trees are swaying through the wind
Wearing long sleeve shirts
— MICHAEL, GRADE 2

Red leaves are drifting
In blustery autumn air
Orange reflections
— CAITLIN, GRADE 2

River drifts away
Green leaves change their old costumes
Wind blows in my face
— MEGAN, GRADE 2

Cool wind pushes trees
Cold water streams through rivers
Birds fly through the air
— CAMERON, GRADE 2

Ways to Describe Nature

A flock of birds
Are floating in the sky
There is a tree
As brown as light milk chocolate
Clouds as white as
Yummy vanilla ice cream
Colorful leaves fall down like it's
Raining leaves
By the sun's straight rays
— MELINA, GRADE 2

A Japanese Maple

The wind whistles in my ear
Above me leaves fall
Like angels
There are magical leaves
Red orange yellow and a little bit of green
When I look up above me I see
A flock of cool white birds
— REBECCA, GRADE 2

Colors Swirling Everywhere

Rainbows dressed in colorful suits
So tantalizing, twisting
So colorful wonders of leaves
The leaves how beautiful!
Like fire in the sky!
Tons and tons of color to see
Fall means: Look Out!
Cold is on its way!
— CHRIS, GRADE 2

“Sometimes Foolish, but not a Fool”

The last words I heard my Dad say to my Mom as I fell asleep last Friday were, “Don't you think this is foolish? He was up at 3:15 a.m. to go birding last Sunday and not home until 9:30 p.m. He has been up late all week too.” At 5:30 a.m. Saturday morning my Mom greets me with, “Isn't it foolish to be going out in the pitch black and pouring rain?” She continues, “Your sisters' soccer games are cancelled and their school's 80th anniversary activities have been moved inside because of the stormy conditions.”

SEE NORWOOD, PAGE 18

WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM



Riley, grade 5



Liam, grade 7



Jacob, Grade 2



Navya, grade 3



Injoo, grade 5



Fionnuala, kindergarten



Laney, grade 1



Jessica, grade 6

Kit, grade 8



Helen, grade 4



Jack H., grade 5



Olivia, grade 3

NORWOOD SCHOOL



Vivian, grade 4



Reade, grade 7



Nick, grade 7



Tali and Sara Lisa, grade 5



Stephanie, grade 8



Sara, kindergarten



Olivia, kindergarten

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HOOVER MIDDLE

FROM PAGE 4

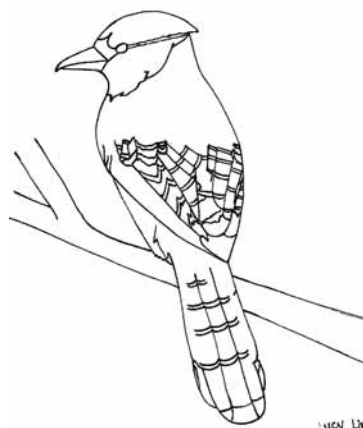
His face smiles,
The corners barely perking
Peeking up over the wrinkles
That ripple across his face.

His heart, beats faint in his chest
Padding out rhythms of
Life.

And do I seem to be the only one
whom
Knows the relations
Between youth and old age
Life and death.

It all just becomes so obvious
For all that is needed
Is an old man with a child
Going nowhere,
Yet everywhere.

— TSACH MACKEY



Lucy Lin, grade 6, line drawing

Christmas Dinner

Right now we're at the table
Contented with our food
Never thought we could be so full
Big as the bright white moon
All of us together
Eating sweet potatoes and marshmallows
Enjoying the delicious smell
Laughing to someone's jokes
Loving each other's company
Glad to be a family

— KATE KELLY

It's getting colder
And the year
Is getting older
The grass is frosted over
Sparkling white
But the sun is coming out
So I see the light
Christmas is near
With presents,
Happiness and cheer
Hopefully some snow
Will come here
Oh, how I love December

— CATHERINE KUTSON

Christmas

All of us,
sitting around
the table
we use
year after year,
the scent of
the food washes
through my nose,
green beans, Beef Wellington, corn,
mashed potatoes, pasta, salmon,
We laugh from
each other's jokes
and stories from
times ago that
our Nana
tells us,
and we smile
from ear to ear,
we do not want it
to end
for we know,
we will have to
wait for next year.

— ROHAN F. WEDAM

December

I walk outside

Storm

I am caught in a heavy storm. My entire family and I are floating in a box cruising a fast pace through Potomac, Maryland — almost like a tour, but you cannot enjoy the view considering the door to your house is right behind you. The winds are strong and heavy, and the rain is in every direction. I remember to count and make sure everyone even my dog is there, and luckily everyone is. There are about twenty-seven feet of rain piled up and the winds are streaming us through the streets. I think to myself — this is the worst storm yet.

— BROOKE GLICKMAN

Tsunami

I was walking down my street like I normally did, but I turned around to the beach and saw the tide pull back. I knew it was a tsunami. I tried to tell everyone it was a tsunami, but no one would listen to me. I started to run, 1, the waves grew bigger and bigger. 2, the waves started to crash down on our steep street. 3, I was swept away, and the only thing holding me up was a slick piece of wood. Everyone was running and

screaming, and all the kids had the look of fear in their eyes. The water started to cover the trees, houses, and buildings. I knew I wouldn't be saved, and this would be my last breath, and my head went under the water.

— TANVI NAVILE

Chanukah

It's the first night of Chanukah! My Bubby (Yiddish word for grandmother) and my Zadie (Yiddish word for grandfather) were at my house. My family and I were saying the prayer before you light the menorah. My mom lit the Shamash (the middle candle of the menorah) and we lit the first candle. Then, we all sat at the table and ate latkes and applesauce. There was also sour cream, but I don't like sour cream that much! After we all eat, we play with the dreidel. I always get gimmel! That means I win all of the gelt! But sadly my dad and my sister both get nun that means none! I know that Chanukah is just a festival and not meant for gifts, but I feel so lucky to be able to have parents that will get me gifts! I found this box. It had a gift tag with my name on it. Then I opened my present, I had gotten the present I really wanted! It was a scooter. Both my Bubby and Zadie and my parents got it for me. I was so happy to receive it! Chanukah was the best time ever! I wonder what else I will get the rest of the seven nights!

— CARLY SHEER

The Hill

I am climbing a hill. I feel the rocks under my palms. I see blood coming from my hands. All I am thinking of is giving up, but I can't. Some people, including friends, are waiting for me to give them food and supplies, while others are chasing me. I am helping but my government thinks that what I do is wrong. The people up there are starving and crying. They are trying to find freedom.

I push another time and get five more meters up. I am about 10,000 meters above sea level and if I fall I will be dead. The people chasing me are getting closer. I have to get some speed. I think about all these people sad and alone and I find some energy for the final 30 meters.

My hands touch the top of the hill, and people are screaming and shouting for me. I get my balance and start to get my feet on the hill when something grabs it. I am going to die! They've got me! Their strong hard arms are pulling me and I fall...

I wake up and see I was sweating. It was just a dream. I take a look at myself

SEE HOOVER MIDDLE, PAGE 17

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HOOVER MIDDLE

FROM PAGE 16

and see the blood. It is not sweat; it is dark red blood. No, no, no, no, no, no. It was real. I look around and see someone smiling and holding a knife. He starts toward me. I am paralyzed. It is only when the mysterious man takes his weapon out of his pocket that I punch him and go toward the door. He grabs me and gets in my way, but I have had way enough training to know how to get out. I do everything I can and when I stop he is lying unconscious.

Of course, he is still alive. I open the door when I see guardians fighting the people I always helped: my friends. My best friend grabs my arm, pulls me, and scream run. I don't look back and rush through the woods. I run for days, months maybe— but I remember one thing. When I stopped I was safe, with my friends, and all was peaceful.

— THALIE DAUMAS

Christmas Dinner

Beep! Goes the clock on Christmas morning,

Mom and Dad snoring, but I'm wide awake,

I jump up to get my brother, and together we rush downstairs,

Oh! There he is! It's Mr. Claus, but as soon as he was there, he winked and disappeared!

Boing! goes the bed as I woke my parents but for some reason they were angry at me! It doesn't matter though; I rushed them up and ran downstairs,

To a cluster of presents under the tree.

I sat in awe, but my older brother dove right in! I laughed and joined in, but then, I realized the dog had presents too!

I had to go get her then!

She trotted up to the tree and wagged her tail,

I gave her a present and she ripped the wrapping, out squeaked a toy, squeak squeak squeak

Oh dear, I can't hear myself think anymore

Mom's in the kitchen, I'm outside with my mittens, until she calls me indoors for dinner

We sit down and pray, thanking the Lord for good days and get ready to enjoy the feast.

There was smoked honey ham, delicious and grand

And mac-n-cheese, golden brown,

With all of this food in front of me,

you know I just had to gulp it down!

There were leafy green collard greens,

Not that I ate any!

And Yams yummy and sweet, and I mustn't forget the hot toasty rolls puffed up and filled with yeast.

And if even one person was missing,

Christmas wouldn't be the same for me.

— MEREDYTH DANIELS

Saving Jupiter

I lived on a mountain 100ft in the air. It was beautiful, always a nice wind breeze and the smell of flowers. We had a ladder down from the mountain for when we needed to go somewhere. My family was my step mom, dad, sister and my puppy Jupiter. Did I mention that we lived next to a volcano? The scientist said it would never erupt, so I wasn't scared. My family was away for the weekend and it was just Jupiter and I. I was going to my friend's house, so I said goodbye to Jupiter and slid down the ladder.

About two minutes later I felt the ground shaking and a loud "Boom." The volcano had erupted. I had to go get Jupiter. I ran to the ladder, but it had

fallen because of the shaking. The only way up was to climb the mountain. I started to climb but instantly my foot slipped. This wasn't going to be easy.

I started again and managed to get my foot up this time. I was getting the hang of it, but it got harder as the rocks got smaller. I heard him whining and I was not going to give up now! I shouted to let him know I was coming so he seemed to calm down a little bit. I did not know where the lava was and I was hoping it was not near. I kept going despite the ache in my leg.

I was finally at the top. I looked and saw that the lava was very close to the house but, I had a little bit more time. I broke through the door and little Jupiter was waiting right there for me! I grabbed the emergency ladder and threw it down the hole. I slid down with Jupiter in one arm and the other climbing down fast. We reached the bottom and I ran to go get to safety.

— MAXWELL KESSLER

The Worst Storm Ever

This is the worst storm in the history of storms! It's not only a tornado, but there's dust storms, hailstorms and a thunderstorm. Not to mention there's a blizzard! I was just sitting in my house then I hear a loud BOOM, it startled me so I went to look outside. Then, I see dust everywhere, rain coming down like crazy, but most frightening of all the F5 tornado! I run down to the basement and turn on the TV, but of course the power goes out right at that moment. Luckily, I brought down a flashlight! After the power went out, I started to

text my friends, but of course my phone dies. So, I ran upstairs to get my iPad and a home phone. They are both charged! I called my family and friends to tell them I am all right and to see how they are doing.

Next, I look on my iPad for the latest news and the weather report. Nothing, there is nothing there! I started to get really mad because now I have nothing to do but to worry about what is going to happen to me, my house, my family and my friends. This is the worst day ever. And the worst storm ever. Then, the storm stops. No more hail, no more rain, no more tornado and no more snow! The best of all, there was no destruction! I couldn't believe it! My family and friends got together to celebrate and to eat dinner. This is now the best day ever!

— SAMMI MERVIS

Parade

The swift wind, and cerulean sky, are all part of this wonderful day. The crowd is as loud as a flock of gulls, and the world around me is filled with balloons, and streamers with an iridescent glow. I glance down at the ground 20 feet below. It feels like I'm on a giant skyscraper on top of the world, where I can see everyone around me. Just seeing all the smiles on everyone's faces makes me so proud and confident with myself. It makes me want to think back to the whole reason this is happening to me; the reason I feel high on top of the world.

It was about two weeks ago or so when it all started. I remember from the beginning to the very end of that day. That very morning when I slipped on my

suit and pants, and got ready for work at the studio, I was missing my keys. I scurried through the drawer to find my keys, when I noticed some old papers from when I was younger. The scrappy old papers were very old ideas for inventions I thought I could make. They were all old and useless inventions like new types of batteries, robot toys, and new ways to use electricity that had already been invented.

I found the keys and was about to shut the drawer when I noticed a very old paper. One paper about flying cars that used solar power. I knew that there were already flying cars invented, but not solar powered ones. I studied the paper for a moment, but then realized that I would be late for work. I grabbed the paper and quickly went into the car and I was off.

After work, I went to the post office to deliver mail to my son in college. As I was walking out of the door of the post office, I reached into my pocket to take out my keys, when I felt a crumpled paper in it. I remembered that it was that paper of the invention. Then I thought for a moment, and ran back into the post office and asked the man to give it to the Tesla car company. After that I went back to the car and continued on my day. I didn't think the invention would make a change so I ignored it for the next few days.

About a week later when I was carrying on with my week, I went to the mailbox to pick up mail. I scurried through the mail. There was Washington Post magazine, National Geographic magazine, a few bills, and some mail that my son wrote back to me. Then I walked back home. I read through every mail and was about to leave the house for some groceries when I noticed some

mail underneath a magazine. I tore the envelope and started reading:

Dear Terrance Scott,

Recently, we have appealed to your diagram of a flying car using solar power energy. We have acquiesced to your brilliant idea and have decided to start out on this idea. With your permission, we will start on this idea, and will permit you a contract of 5% percent of the money provided from the car,

Do You Accept?

Sincerely,

Tesla

I thought about it for a moment, and my decision changed my life forever.

Dream Big

Hope

Be Yourself

Make The World Proud

— NAVIN DURBHAKULA, 11

My Bacteria Transformation

Last night I was just a eleven year old woman and now.. I'm a small bacteria! I can hardly see myself in the mirror. In health class, we learned about washing our hands and getting rid of.. me and other bacteria. Should I be disgusted by myself? Should I wash myself? I don't know anymore... What would my parents say? What would my friends say? Will they even know it's me? NO! THEY WON'T! THEY'LL JUST BE DISGUSTED! One day a girl, another day a bacteria, what kind of life am I living?

— LUCY LIN



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The McLean Connection
The Great Falls Connection

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.

FROM PAGE 14

As my Mom resigns to the fact that I would go birding in the rain, she says, "Be sure to wear your wellingtons." I reply that my waterproof hiking boots will work fine. Then she asks, "Do you want some granola bars and a water bottle?" I reply, "I don't need them. We'll be back by 10. Noon at the latest." Then she says, "Remember your hat and gloves." I answer, "It's the beginning of October. I don't need a hat and gloves." Our windshield wipers swish back and forth in the torrential downpour as we wait in a blanket of darkness outside the entrance of American Plant Food Company to meet my friend. I run swiftly to his car.

We drive off to Hains Point where I quickly become drenched walking around the point. I look like a drowned river rat. I was foolish not to wear my wellingtons. My "waterproof" hiking boots are soaking wet. My fingers feel numb in the frigid bitter cold. I was foolish not to bring my hat and gloves.

The wind howls over the river. The clouds thicken. The rain pours. Flocks of Forster's terns are flying by, but no mega-rarities are present. "What do you say we head up the Anacostia River and try Kenilworth Park?" my friend asks. I say, "Yes" as I hear my Dad say, "Foolish." By now it's almost one o'clock. My stomach rumbles. I was foolish not to bring those granola bars and a water bottle.

At Kenilworth, we find American avocets, which are very rare in the D.C. area. They look very ruffled and miserable, but we are ecstatic. This is the result of going on a "foolish" birding trip. Finally, my friend drops me off at my house ... at 3 p.m.

The next weekend, we are back in Cape May, New Jersey. I am with my mom and a few high school friends. During the car ride we practice identifying the 56 species of North American warblers by their one-second-long call notes and flight calls. Often the distinction is, "The yellow-rumped warbler makes a call that sounds like thick, but this one makes a thlick, but with the l slurred in." I have trouble with these types of calls. While still a few minutes away from Higbee Beach in Cape May, I get a message on a text alert system for Cape May birding called kee-kee-ker. It reads, "Intergalactic fallout after last night's rain and good winds for migrants." We arrive to find a stunning vermilion flycatcher, which should be thousands of miles away. The flycatcher is calmly hawking insects, oblivious to the massive hoards of birders staring

at it, including many of the famous field guide authors. I am slightly surprised that it was not scared away by the sound of so many two or three feet long cameras taking pictures.

Despite some of my very foolish decisions, I am not a fool. Just remember that storms do bring rare birds ...

— Patrick N., grade 7

Snaily

"A snail!" I shouted. I jumped up and ran around my yard picked up sticks, leaves, grass, mulch, and petals and built a hut just the right size for a snail. I added the leaves, twigs and flower petals. I built the house as fast as I could while still making it neat.

"The snail is coming out of its shell," said my mom. I ran over to look. The brownish-yellow shell was slightly moving and a slimy grayish-brown body started to slither out. It was a snail.

I scooted the snail onto a leaf, and moved him into the hut. When I did, he dove to the far back of his shell. I waited a while, watching the shell slightly moving then I saw a long thin body swirl out of the shell.

That night I curled up in my bed and thought about my new pet snail.

The next day I went to school. At lunch I talked to my friends about -

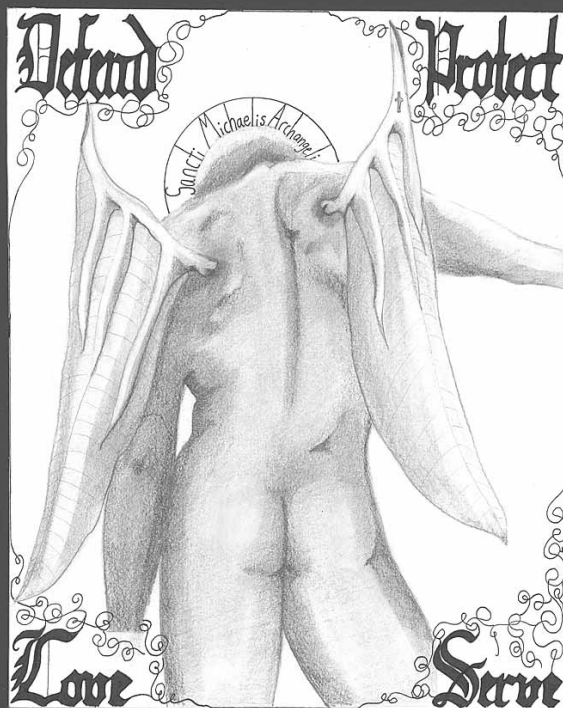
WAIT, WAIT, WAIT a minute, this story isn't about school! It's about my pet snail. After school, when I got home I checked on Snaily. He was on the ceiling of his hut.

"WOOF! WOOF! WOOF!" something barked.

I looked in the direction of the barking. My neighbor had been walking her dog Pavlov, when she saw us in our yard; she came over to talk us. While my neighbor and mom were talking, Pavlov came over to the hut and stuck her nose in it. She stole a woodchip and knocked the hut down. I knew that the reason that Pavlov was knocking down Snaily's hut was because she smelled Snaily. Quickly, I cupped my right hand over him to protect him. My neighbor pulled Pavlov away from where the hut once stood. They had finished their walk and headed home. I looked at what was left of the hut. Not much, but I used what was left and rebuilt the hut. I put Snaily in. By that time it was almost time for bed.

The next day was Saturday, so I slept in late. At SEE NORWOOD, PAGE 19

THE HEIGHTS SCHOOL



"St Michael's,"
by John
McClore,
grade 10

NORWOOD SCHOOL



Sydney, grade 7



Ryden, kindergarten



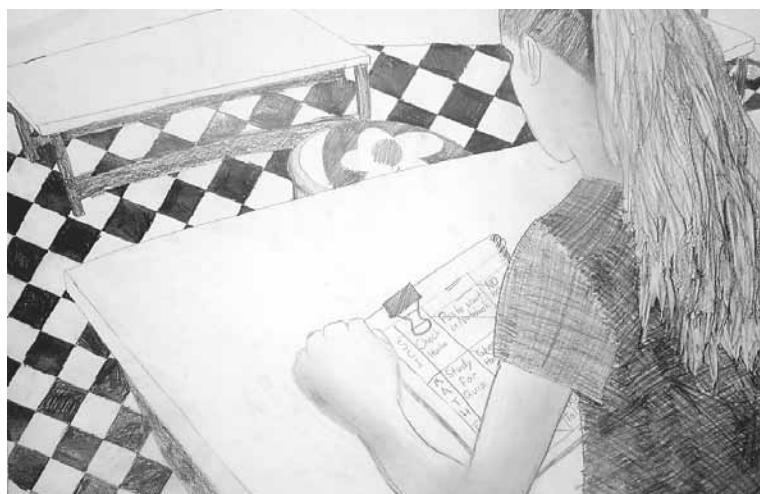
Patrick, grade 7



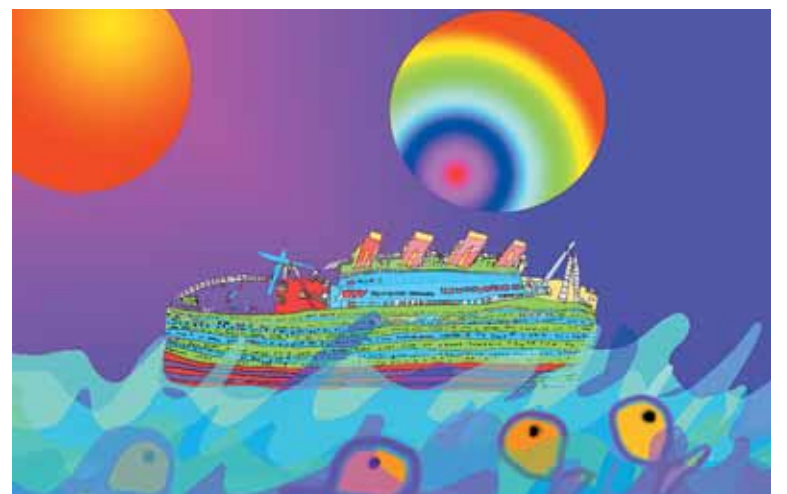
Nikrad, grade 7



Jillian, grade 8



Lauren, grade 8



Madeleine, grade 5

NORWOOD SCHOOL WRITING

FROM PAGE 18
about 9:00 a.m., I ran outside to see Snaily. I didn't see him anywhere. I looked on the wall. He wasn't there. I looked on the floor. He wasn't there. I looked on the roof. He wasn't anywhere to be seen. Then, I saw the slight slippery trail of slime. It led to the porch. I followed it. I don't think you need to ask, but the reason I followed it was because it was snail slime, well, I think it was. What else could it be? It was coming out of the hole in the wall of the hut that was just big enough for Snaily to slip out of.

Any way, I followed the slime trail.

When I got to the end of the trail, who do you think I saw sitting there? Snaily, of course. I watched for a little while watching Snaily slowly squirm across the pavement. Then, I thought of a great idea. I put on my gardening gloves; I picked up a leaf, walked back to Snaily. set him down on the greenest leaf in my garden, and left him to explore.

— KYLIE, GRADE 4

Splash!

"Cameron, please don't move another inch!" I yelled at my three-year-old

brother. He was about to step right into the dirty and disgusting duck pond at the hiking place in Washington State. I watched in horror as his tiny legs started to slip of the rock he was standing on. It was almost as if it was in slow motion, my mom reaching out to catch him, my dad putting his hand over his mouth and me running. The best thing to watch though was my brother's long torso entering the water at rocket speed. Coming back to normal speed Splash!

My mom immediately reached into the water and tried to pull Cameron out of the water, but she accidentally dropped

him back in. She tried again and got him a little bit farther out than before, but still, his slippery slimy hands, from the dirty pond water, made her grip lessen. The next time she tried pulling him out by his hands, quickly and this time his belly came on to land! Then she pulled holding under his armpits, and slowly, his lower body emerged out of the slimy, gooey and algae filled duck pond!

His Curious George baseball shirt was covered in green, slimy algae. "Ewwwww!" I said and covered my nose so I wouldn't smell the dirty water he had just fallen into.

My brother's face looked as if he had

swallowed one of those super-duper sour candies labeled "toxic" or "war-head" or even "toxic warhead." He was so shocked. He just stood there for a little while as if he was mesmerized by something amazing and brilliant, but soon enough, his face started to pucker up and he started to whimper.

After that, he literally threw a fit. We had had to drag him back through the forest to our car. *Well that sure ended our day quickly*, I thought. And it sure did, because after that, the rest of that day was pretty low key, and I wasn't going to complain after that experience!

— LUCAS, GRADE 4



Nathan, kindergarten



Jillian, grade 8



Colette, grade 2

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