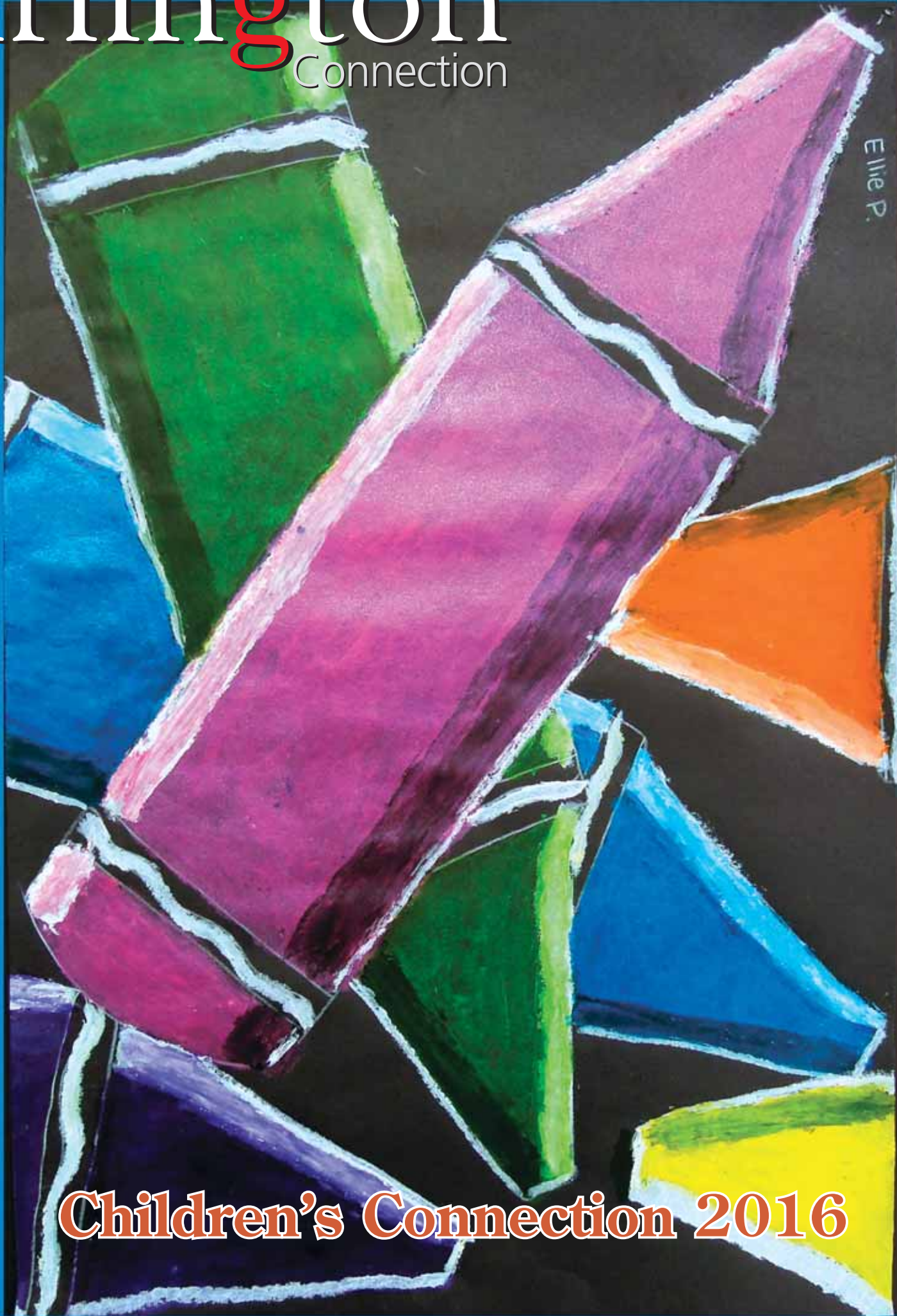




# The Arlington Connection



Ellie P.

## Children's Connection 2016

Ellie Price, 5th grade,  
Unusual Proportion Crayons,  
Nottingham Elementary School.



LONG BRANCH ELEMENTARY



Gloria Fosso Tchana, 5th grade



Brayan Perez Camacho, kindergarten



Eyuel Berhanu, 5th grade



Chloe  
McCann,  
5th grade



Charlotte  
Thomas,  
5th grade



Lila Derr,  
5th grade



Mara Enkhbat, 3rd grade



Anthony Guzman Iraheta, pre-kindergarten



Hannah Nilame, 3rd grade



Johnny Vance, 3rd grade

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# NOTTINGHAM ELEMENTARY



Abby Freeman, 3rd grade, Landscape



Anna Labovskaya, 3rd grade, Landscape



Duc Phi, 1st grade, Fall Tree



Michael Chistolini, Kindergarten, Stained Glass Window



Lily Seymour, 1st grade, Fall Tree



Anthony Mina, Kindergarten, Stained Glass Window



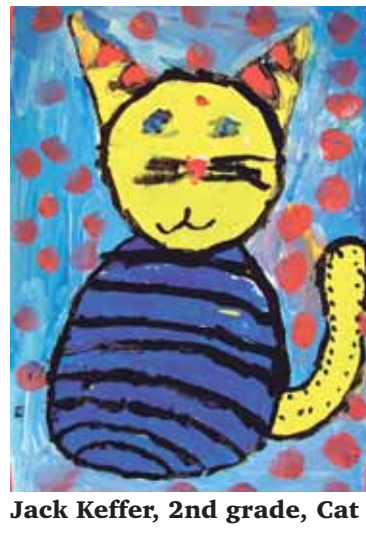
Ajay Allman, 4th grade, Self-Portrait



Sophie Neumann, 5th grade, Unusual Proportion Crayons



Isabella Griffin, 2nd grade, Cat



Jack Keffer, 2nd grade, Cat



Lola Gomez, 4th grade, Self-Portrait

## Welcome

Dear Readers:

This week, the Arlington Connection turns over its pages to the youth and students.

We asked principals and teachers from area schools to encourage students to contribute their words, pictures and photos for our annual Children's Issue.

The response as always was enormous. While we were unable to publish every piece we received, we did our best to put together a paper with a fair sampling of the submitted stories, poems, drawings, paintings, photographs and other works of art. 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 2017 calendars for early December, the deadline for submissions for next year's Children's Connection. Please keep us in mind as your children continue to create spectacular works of art and inspiring pieces of writing in the coming year.

The children's issue is only a part of our year-round commitment to cover education

and our local schools. As always, the Connection welcomes letters to the editor, story ideas, calendar listings and notices of local events from our readers. Photos and other submissions about special events at schools are especially welcome for our weekly schools pages.

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

— EDITOR STEVEN MAUREN

## The Arlington Children's Connection

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# CARLIN SPRINGS ELEMENTARY



**Nancy Salome Cipriano, grade 1 — Landscape (Liquid Watercolor)**



**Donald Sagardia Dominguez, grade 1 — Landscape (Liquid Watercolor)**



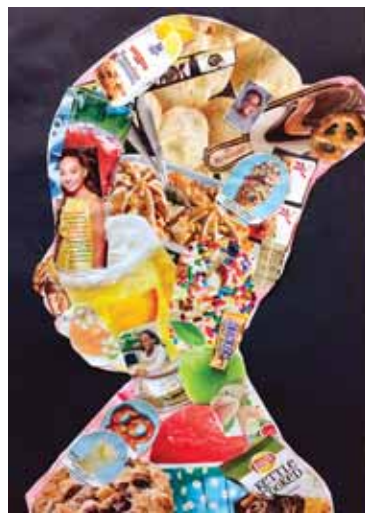
**Franklin Ramirez Medrano, Kindergarten**



**Melanie Alvarez, grade 4 — Sunflower (Collage)**



**Sara Berhane, grade 3 — Leaves (Mixed Media)**



**Rebecca Tekle, grade 5 — Silhouette (Collage)**



**Jonathan Lewis, grade 3 — Bearden (Collage)**



**Rossybelle Cordova Jaldin, Kindergarten**



**Elizabeth Escobar Nina, Montessori — Broadway Boogie Woogie (Mixed Media)**



**Ashlee Cruz Castillo, grade 4 — Crows over the Wheat Field (Metal Repousse')**



**Juan Diego Becerra-Centeno, grade 4 — Starry Night (Mixed Media)**



## CARLIN SPRINGS ELEMENTARY



Aviel  
Gaitan,  
1st  
grade

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# KENMORE MIDDLE SCHOOL

## The Goddess of Our Solar System

In the deep, dark abyss that is outer space, a star is born. Not just any star, our sun. It shines bright for billions of years and planets gravitate towards it. It's bright, warming, and seeing its breathtaking beauty bring smiles to our faces. Its captivating light pulls us in and hugs us. Its welcoming warmth kisses our skin. Staring at it blinds us and sometimes the burning heat can bite us. Without it we'd be lost in the darkness with no way out. I am the sun always shining brightly and beautifully. The goddess of our solar system.

I shine bright without trying and and people seem to take a liking towards me. I'm a hot ball of fire that will burn so you can't get close. Some people say I'm mean but really I'm just distant. I may be far out but without a doubt people notice me. I'm majestic and royal like the Egyptian Sun God, Ra. I may act superior but really I'm not much different than anyone else. My warmth motivates people which is why I seem to be a natural-born leader.

I burn in the summer, feeling bright as ever. The power I feel is overwhelming. In the winter the brightness I have seemed to diminish. The burning dwindles. My heart has a burning rage to it that runs and never settles. My soul is a fiery inferno. I am the goddess of our solar system. The sun burns incessantly in me.

— RA'NYA TAYLOR, GRADE 8

## Hidden Joy

With a yellow that rivals the brightness of the sun, it is the little face of joy in a meadow of shallow beauty. Not the showy rose with thorns just out of sight, waiting to pierce an unsuspecting person, but an honest, imperfect bloom. The blinding smile is hidden just beneath the surface, shining light onto the others around it. Carefully transplanted, this flower will wilt, turn its face to the shadows and memories of home, then bloom again more glorious than ever, with its face to the sun. I am not the lilac, intoxicating people with its fragrant blossoms. I am a dandelion.

Just as I am a plain old flower to those who do not give more than a glance, people are more than what they seem. Though I am a flower at heart, sometimes the part of me that is a weed pokes its head through my petals of grins and jokes. The flower loses its luster for a moment, hitting a sister or hurling a rude comment. "I'm so sorry!" I stammer sincerely. But the weed bides its time and knows exactly when to come out of its dormant state. It knows where it hurts most for those people the flower keeps close to her heart.

Once she is firmly planted in her new home, with her tendrils of roots growing by the day, this bloom will send seeds of influence, thought, and laughter floating on the whispering breeze into the hearts of the other people around her. The blossom will always be trying to conquer the meadow that is her life and the people in it. I am a dandelion, always wrestling and trying to pull out the weed that is so much, but at the same time, not a part of me.

— REGAN CHRISTENSEN, GRADE 8

## In Place

I am the ground littered with bright, green leaves. I surround an area I call my own with long, outstretched arms keeping it dark and safe. There are so many things to reveal, yet so little time to show what lies beneath. My dark olive ceiling, with speckled sunlight breaking through, reveals a sapling, brimming with the anticipation of young climbers. I am a forest.

Inside malicious echoes of thoughts resound, bouncing from branch to branch; small critters quiver in the hollow trunks. The constant, gentle winds rustle the leaves to reassure the creatures that the grey clouds won't bring too much of a flood. Crooked trees stand their ground, their cold, winding roots anchor together what they call home. The cold streams flicker with life, lapping at the banks. Though I'm quiet and patient like a fox, my voice reverberates through the forest like the chirping of a cricket.

My walls tower like skyscrapers with broad, tough bark that act as barriers to shield any threat to my well-being. Some manage to find a weak spot

in my barricade, so they wander in. Instead of obstructing any sunshine through my leaves, driving them away, I offer them my scarlet berries and comforting shade from my tall trees. I gift them with my tranquility. But there's always that distressing noise, like a deadly buzzsaw, making itself wanting to be known. Along with the morphing, omnipresent thoughts, one grasps my attention: No matter how gentle the leaves rustle, it cannot brush that voice away. It's simple for them to light one match and burn everything you love. Sometimes we're all terrified of change; we stay in place because we don't want to lose our lives. We'll learn to forge our own paths, down in the forest.

— BRIANNA GUERRA, GRADE 8

## The Celestial Star

I am the rift that cracks the light into the sky. I am the father that tells the Man In the Moon "it's time for him to go to bed." And I am the pitcher that pours yellow drops of sunlight onto the surface of the Earth. I am the knitter of light that spins a ball of sun and sends its rays of sunny yarn throughout the world for all to see. My presence reveals an illuminating star that scintillates our world. I am the Sunrise.

I am the harbinger of a new day.

I am the guardian that watches over the vast horizon. I am a light that illuminates the moon with light. I am the fellow star that tells constellations to reveal themselves to man. I am the knowledge that determines the birth signs of all. I am the elder that has lived forever. I am the great-grandfather who's 4.5 billion years old. Yet I am a mortal star destined to die in 5 billion years. But for now I am the seraphim's orb who brings God's light onto Earth. I am the sun.

I am a celestial star that enters the sky in the morning. I am an emitter of light whose rays love to dance on the white, fluffy clouds. "I love watching the sunrise illuminate the clouds in the sky," I tell my parents. I am a weaver who knits the clouds together. I am a source that man uses for energy. I am the light who goes away during winter and the rain. I am a ball of plasma that helps to pass the cycle of seasons. I am the warmth that all will soon enjoy. And I am the hearth whose fire all of humanity seeks. Greetings. I am the Sunrise

— MAC NOWALK, GRADE 8

## Comprehensive

The time has come for the photo to be revamped. Fingers moving, typing faster than life, my screen blares with tools. The cut tool is used to splice every even slice of the photo with the sound of clicks ... The stylus is moving and erasing the undos and redos of my multiple mistakes ... The lighting of the perfect zones and the shadows of the unseen picture ... typing of the board and sliding of the trustful mouse who has both been with me for the decades. The layers of artificial color covers my screen with unknown purposes alone. Finally the photo is done. Now comes the final task before it goes on its way ... the pushing of buttons make the sound of the whirling jets and the silent sound of the ink splatter over the canvas. Now the rush of completion runs through me. I'm that editor who took photos in the cold breeze mountains. I'm the editor who learns through the sounds of nature. The editor who learned through the multiple layers of life.

The world doesn't always recognizes my labor. Without me, it's like a cake without icing. I'm the entire project: I'm the cover, I'm the body, and I'm the pages. Behind the scenes less attention helps you focus on what really matters.

My skills are the knife of the chef, the board of a cook and the axe of a lumberjack. Inside my tool box are the essentials required for perfected product. I can deploy them across many media in any field. I'm as sharp as a machete, as precise as a surgeon, and as skilled as a civil engineer. Hail artist, I am the editor.

— QIDE BAA, GRADE 8

## Unfelled Tree

In the middle of the field stands a magnificent tree with arms outstretched.

As lonely as he seems, he has been around longer than any other creature in the wooded area. He who holds these individual branches holds what I have felt and known and cared for in my short life



Chiarra Wilson



Tim Naff



Ash McMahon

... He seems to hold the keys of time ...His stature is mighty, his roots run deep into the ground, and his bark is withered like an ancient man who has experienced eternity. The fruits of this body have been dropped for myriad animals who feast and are spawned as tiny seedlings, little kids, around my perimeter. Birds have been born in the lengths of my branches. In my lifetime my bark purified more gasses for the people for whom I give life. Insects have been nurtured by my bark and given a haven. As strong and as mighty in stature and in nature, I am an oak tree.

I am tall and far reaching, I provide protection for my brothers and parents. My hard work has paid off in the time I am alive. The sun is harsh and burning rays are blocked by my branches and leaves. I am always tending those under my pow-



Regan Christensen



Lillian Watson



Brianna Guerra

erful arms. I put my brother to bed and as tired as I am, I do it for the love of my brother. I am like a father when my dad can't be there. I pour milk and make supper when he asks. I do everybody's laundry and throw out the trash. I provide the strength, never worry, I have strong roots to provide the needed strength.

These traits help me in life because it shows a reliable entity who is hardworking, and also has the stamina to handle pressure. Even though I get tired, I am a dedicated soul who quietly towers above the fray.

— ALEJANDRO ORTIZ, GRADE 8

SEE KENMORE, PAGE 7



# KENMORE MIDDLE SCHOOL

## WRITING

FROM PAGE 6

### A Dance Destroying The Darkness

Burning from the pits of the Underworld, yet a gift of the Gods themselves, I swirl around the darkness, destroying it with my piercing stare. When it admits defeat, I die down once again, letting the glow of my embers soothe the people into a sleepy lull of calm. Sometimes, I am a harsh reality that burns the fantasies out of your skull. I'm not always there, but when I am, be wary; I am both and friend and a foe. I am fire.

My silence is a warning of looming dark times. An obtrusive hand will be injured by my plain, heated hate, but a gentle one will be welcomed into my warm embrace. Sometimes, I am spread far and wide by the gusts of a chilling windstorm. I remember when I was but a spark, I needed constant stoking: "You can do it. Build your own dreams, and make them come true," my elders would say. A spark was nurtured into a burgeoning fire; a raging, twisting flame of excitement.

Flames like my own are ignited often, but most burn out before they can become crackling bonfires that light up the dark. Every lick could be the last flare. I can never know when the windstorm will put me out instead of spreading my wildfire; I can never know when a sudden rain will reduce me to a smoldering mess. I try to fuel my flames for as long as I can, but eventually, there will be a limit. One day, I'll be pushed past the limit; one day, the flame will go out forever, leaving only glowing golden embers as memories of a simple legacy whose intensity illuminated its world.

— SOPHIA MCMAHAN,  
GRADE 8

### Driven Force

My thoughts move with such velocity that spectators only see blurred lights where they used to be, like a car accelerating at unimaginable speeds. It's loud and bright in my mind; each synapse a powerfully-lit street that, in early hours, is far from abandoned. I am a clutter of dreams, living in both the smallest corners of my mind and the larger, more prominent areas. I am angry and busy. I am New York City.

My anger is a taxi's honk: abrupt. I am a motivated person, and like a New Yorker, I get annoyed when people are in my way. For example, last year, I had difficulties with my group in a project. An internal clock counts down, and once



Quynh Tran

my patience is tried, I explode: "You will not be the reason I fail!" I yell, standing to enforce that I mean business. Finally we finish, but much like angry, abrupt New Yorkers, I don't win any popularity points. And just like those New Yorkers, I don't care. My temper is quick and direct, and sometimes spontaneous, cutting through my seemingly happy and calm demeanor. Inside me there is a drive that will claw through anything to get what it wants.

Just as New York is the city that never sleeps, I never stop planning. My thoughts are loud enough to consume me, like New York, from the roars of strong opinions to the blast of an idea. When I believe my brain has finally run dry, it ignites again with questions or answers. I talk endlessly about ideas or projects, and just as the excitement in NYC never ends, neither does my constant flow of thoughts. I am New York, a passionate, driven force filled with hope, dreams, and really loud noises.

— JULIA VAN LARE, GRADE 8

### Unusual Atmosphere

I breeze past everyone quietly, without them even noticing. I calm people, filling them with thoughts of laughter and happiness. However, some days I can be the opposite, leaving people down; howling up a storm of thoughts they wished to leave behind. I can also be fierce if I need to; a strong gust of wind meant to knock anyone off their feet and send them flying. I am understood as many entities, but mostly I am

a calm, laughter-spreading feeling that circulates through the school and my world. I am the wind.

As my parents know, I have overcome many obstacles before, pushing harder and harder against such barriers, until they come down. I have gone through the easiest of times, which breeze by, and the hardest of conflicts, which stand strong and

tough and wired to keep me from my goals. "You know," my friends share with me, "you seem to be that one person who tries to make everyone laugh, and if you can't, you don't care; you just keep on trying until you can make everyone else happy." Just like the breeze trying to push and squirm through the holes in an old, red brick wall, I try to share my cheerfulness with anyone, no matter how I'm thought of.

Nowadays, I still float around, but more conscious of how I flow than before. Sometimes, the wind can be pleasing, but can be irritating at times when it blows too hard or too sporadically. I can easily find myself in awkward situations, going where I shouldn't go with people, like when the wind convinces you to go inside to avoid it. I have to avoid these situations as I zoom around the school, trying to share the joyfulness I have with everyone.

— BENJAMIN JACOBS,  
GRADE 8

### The Drifter

I am the mystery figure you never get to know. I am the seeker looking for

SEE KENMORE, PAGE 8

**Paint, Build, Create!**

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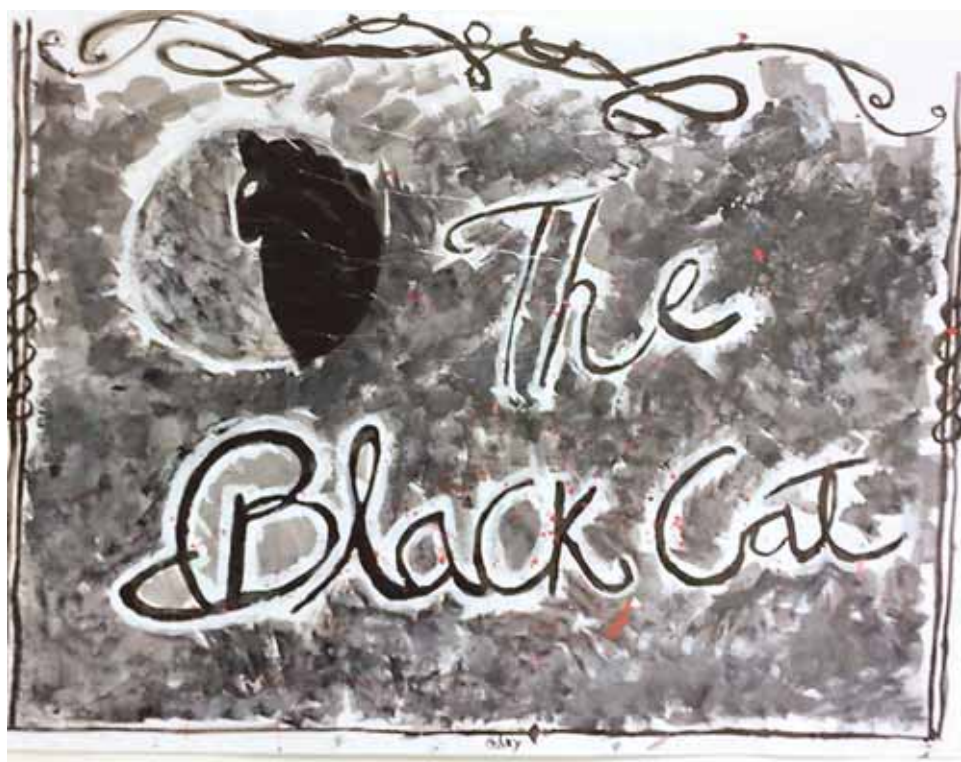
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# KENMORE MIDDLE SCHOOL



Shushantika Barua

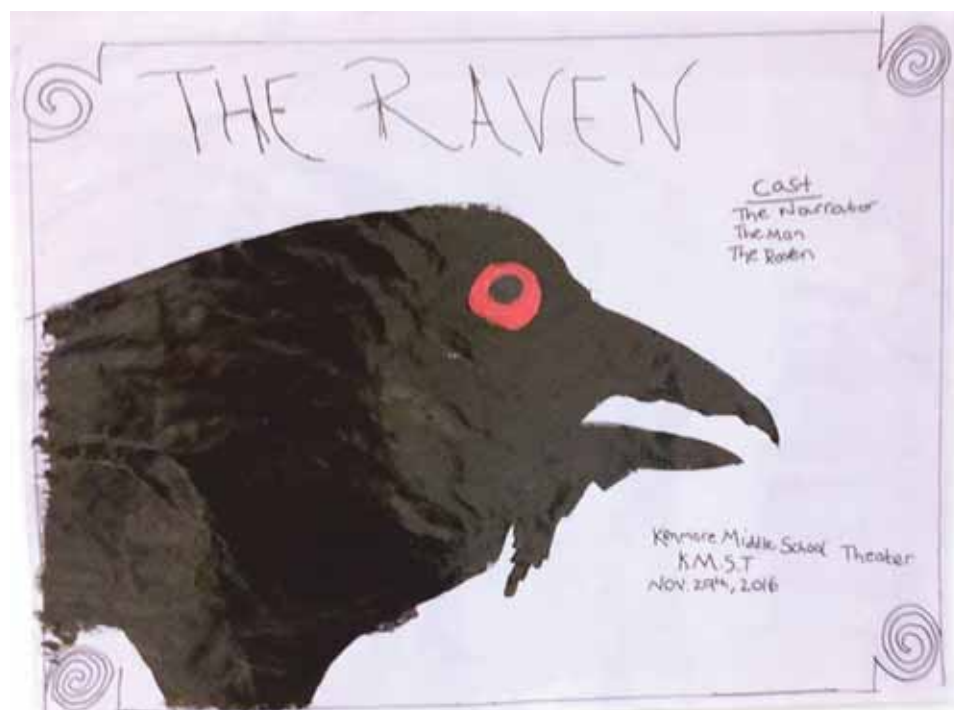
Gabi Juarez



Nolan Fuss



Miles Jordan



Belen Tesfaye

Hairmon Solomon



## WRITING

FROM PAGE 7

adventure, never settled on one thing. I drift around for a purpose to fulfil. My feet like foxes, scampering around as they please, hopping trains and running miles. I'm often restless because of my many travels and journeys but still, I venture on. My head a vortex, spinning and swirling rapidly. I am the wanderer.

Like the wind I am never in one single place. My arms are like a cold breeze and my legs like a thunder storm. My words can be soft like the falling leaves or as treacherous as a sandstorm. I often get lost in the path of life, searching for meaning on it. I'm too close to those I'm close to and not close enough to the ones I'm not. Attachment to me is a fire that can not be ignited. The unlit fire does not have enough time to spark into something amazing. This blaze will never ignite and will forever lost in my collection of unlit fires.

Like the red moon, my stillness is rare. Even when I try to stay in one place, I can't help but crash down hill like an avalanche. There are times when there is nothing to seek, but in those times I always find something to go after. "Never let others decide your path," my father often tells me. I've realized after a while that there will always be another secret to uncover our another mountain to climb. Always a new journey to embark on. I have come to terms with what I am. Never still, always forward ... the Wanderer.

— CARSON RUTH, GRADE 8

## Graceful

In the early morning, the deer dances across the forest floor. It is a young deer, a fawn. As a song bird whistles, the fawn freezes. If you are watching it you see how lovely and graceful the tiny creature is. It hears a crack in nearby brush and gracefully bounds away. Its long legs disappear on its last "grand jete" into the coming dawn. She leaves traces of ballet steps and wide, wondering eyes in my mind. I am a fawn.

Sometimes I get shy when I am around people I don't know. Most times I would much rather be outside or dancing. A fawn is a very elegant animal, jumping fences and running. Many people tell me, "Oh, Emma; you are really graceful." It is because I dance. Running is also something we have in common. The fawn's long ears are very sensitive and can hear the most slightest sounds. They hear the thumping of people's feet far away and the near sounds of berries being dropped.

I am a fawn. I don't leap and twirl down the hall. Fawns are careful animals. They don't like a lot of attention. Quietly darting from human view, we occasionally see some friends and quietly walk with them. At a young age fawns are playful and perky. As they get older it will get more mature. They have more responsibility and thoughtfulness. They lose some of the silliness. They still leaping over streams and racing friends but fawns also turn into deer. But you are still graceful for the rest of your life. I am a fawn.

— EMMA WEAVER, GRADE 8

## Bricloeur

Thirsty for knowledge, I eagerly absorb the quips, sound bites, and musings of these inspiring and talented YouTubers. I process the information, learn from it, and teach it. This cycle — the ebb and flow of data — quenches my thirst. Homemade props: wagons, wigs and wilderness; my imagination teleports me through time. I capture it all on video. Screens, colored lights ... I connect with old friends on a virtual battlefield. Pass on the diagonal — the queen moves in for the kill. Dodging defenders, I set up the shot. The knight evades capture. The soccer field is a chess board. Shoot, score, checkmate! I am green but my interests and ambitions are many. I am a Renaissance Man.

I pioneer new ideas. I pencil tap and beat box. I cook, play soccer, basketball, football, and chess. Video games, board games, HGTV, Dr. Phil, Dr. K, political debates — like them all. A single day in this Renaissance Man's life is full of fun, challenge, and discover. One Texas winter day, my friends and I were on the trampoline. Mid-jump, I noticed something flopping around on the ground. A baby blackbird was distressed under the leaves. We took

SEE KENMORE, PAGE 9



# KENMORE MIDDLE SCHOOL



Malka Khan

## WRITING

FROM PAGE 8

him in, cared for him, and perched him on the Xbox. We studied him, researched him, then set him free. His name was Colton. To this day, he is one of my many spirit animals.

I am never bored. Opportunities to engage the world are everywhere. The internet is my portal; the camera lens both captures and fuels my appetite for information. I don't waste a minute. (I may not always do what I am supposed to do, but my mind is always on.) Lights, camera, action: Think, react, build, create. I am a Renaissance Man, always creating and in motion.

— KENDALL HARTMAN, GRADE 8

## A Floating Bloom

The delicate lily bud rests upon the tender green plate. It floats atop the water with exquisite beauty, looking as if the gentle, lapping ripples could knock it over. But, the lily is harder than you would think. The water lily withstands the



Wilber Zelaya

daily traffic of frogs hopping about the pond, dragonflies that land on its pad, and water moccasins that streak through the pond. The lily takes the stamping in stride. Like a water lily, I deal with the toughness of life everyday, but take it in stride. I am a water lily.

When something new comes up, like a new leaf shooting out of the water to sunlight, I accept it like a lily pad accepts a new leaf in its vascular bundles. When I was little, my parents told me I was going to be an older sister. "Really?" I exclaimed, "Can I play with her?" I asked excitedly. I welcomed the newest member of our family with amity.

As a person, I want to make the world a better place. A water lily contributes to its environment by providing shade to all of the underwater organisms and a landing pad on top of the water and all manner of pond life. I wish to make sure all walks of life have a safe refuge when they need one. Waves and tides can influence where I go, but my rhizomes ground me. I am a water lily.

— LILY WATSON, GRADE 8

SEE KENMORE, PAGE 13



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BEFORE



# YORKTOWN HIGH SCHOOL



Ethan McKelvain



Annmarie Earley, 10th grade — Summer at the Smithsonian Zoo



Kelly Kilby, 12th grade — The Drop



Elizabeth Powers, 10th grade — Monarch



Elizabeth Kelafant, 12th grade — Book Worm



Joseph Myers, 11th grade — Neapolitan



Jack Durham, 11th grade



Beyla Richman, 10th grade — Floating Along

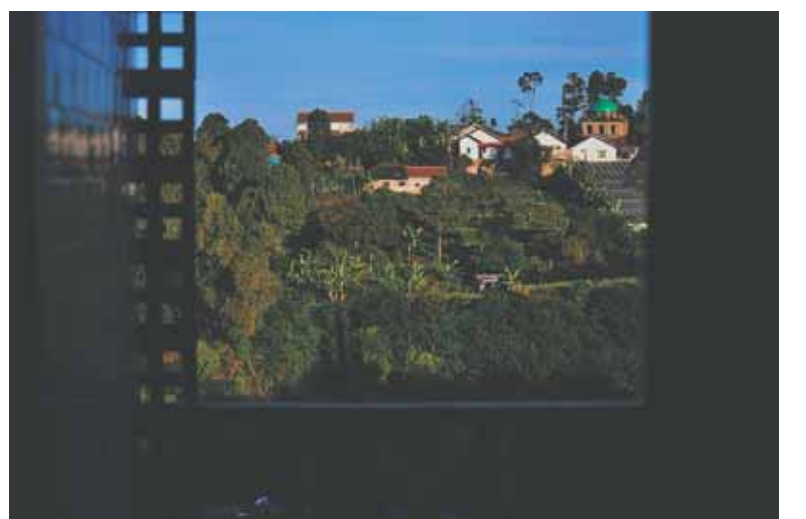
Bryanna  
Lansing,  
12th grade  
— Kite



Adam Attallah, 12th grade



Carson Wood, 11th grade



Nadya Syazsa, 11th grade



Sloane  
Gartner,  
12th  
grade



Austen Mulieri, 11th grade



Adam Attallah, 12th grade



# YORKTOWN HIGH SCHOOL



**Bilguun-Erdene Mendsaikhan, Ceramics 3, grade 12**



**Caris Weilenmann, Ceramics 2, grade 11**



**Sydney Nassetta, AP Ceramics, grade 12**



**Mark Love, AP Ceramics, grade 12**



**Georgie Greenhaus, AP Ceramics, grade 12**



**Laura Crawford, AP Ceramics, grade 12**



**Tammy Trinh, Ceramics 3, grade 12**



# KENMORE

FROM PAGE 9

## The Bronze Giant

A forgotten giant rests in the sea, covered in bronze, shaken down from the upset of power. What once used to be a reminder of power, the thousand-foot giant loomed above the world. Thousands of shattered pieces slumber in the down in the watery depths. What once used to be a sheen warm glow emanating from the metallic bronze now an icy cold glare from each broken piece. The whole world was below him, ships sailed under his colossal legs, he was power. I am the Colossus of Rhodes.

What was a once great giant is now buried thousands of feet under the Earth adds to the rocky bottom. The massive figure in the sea shows a chilling after-image of the human race. Fish now swim through the rough metal smoothed down by bone-crushing currents. This forgone hero is now an icy shape indescribable from a common rock, waiting for rescue. Slimy algae and rough oysters infused on the giant; they cling to the power it once held. The giant may have fallen but his greatness will never entirely erode and, one day it will ascend again.

The colossus is just a symbol of power, truly making people think he is a god. Now, as I sit at a desk, I wonder if I will ever obtain power like that. Thousands of feet above the world, no human could ever bring him down. But with that, the Earth shook and rough plates collide and danced together, creating destruction in their wake. And with that the Colossus fell, only for it to get back up again. And it will continue getting back up every morning to ascend higher than the day before.

— QUINN SCHROEDER,  
GRADE 8

## Shrouded

Every problem that I'm going through bends my mind, casting a shadow to torture me. Letting go of problems and to surrender completely to our innermost selves and to gain a deeper understanding of our subconscious is not easy in the life of a teenaged girl. Unexpected things happen, falling all at once like rocks falling down a mountain. We all have realize the possibility misfortune and the cruel slings of unexpected tragedy. We should be prepared, and we have to be flexible. I have suffered and continue to experience the pain of almost unspeakable sadness. I am a weeping willow watching over the river, all alone.

Life hits hard, like a comet coming down from space. Wind blows so slow sometimes you can't even feel it, like time passing by. My dad left me all alone next to a river, and I don't where to look or go. Not knowing why he left this big world, haunts me. Memories return like a boomerang. Leaving me was his choice; he made a mistake.

People leave, nobody sticks by when you need them. Sometimes I feel like I don't belong in this world, that I shouldn't exist anymore, I should be extinct like a dinosaur. I'm all alone like a weeping willow, people surround me, but they are invisible to me. I don't wanna be here anymore, there's too many things going on, that I would just want to crush like crushing leaving from the ground. Anxiety isn't simple; my anxiety has anxieties. Anxiety also freezes everything. Depression leads to fake smiling, laughing, and saying "I'm fine." all the time, and I'm not. A weeping willow's silence is just another way to show pain. I'm a weeping willow.

— DALILA MARTINEZ,  
GRADE 8



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The holiday season is a great time to share the joys of togetherness and tradition. But for families whose aging relatives are showing signs of decline, the holidays can also be stressful and even, sad.

If you notice that a senior family member seems more overwhelmed than overjoyed during the holidays, then use this opportunity to pay close attention to signs of concern, such as depression or confusion. While family is all together, talk among yourselves to consider the benefits of assisted living at The Kensington, such as:

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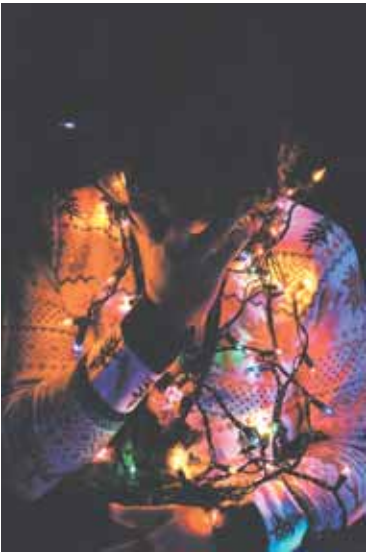
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# YORKTOWN HIGH SCHOOL



**Parker Christian, 12th grade — Light Me Up**



**Carson Wood, 11th grade**



**Lily Corey, 11th grade**



**Guyen Enkh, 10th grade**



**Elizabeth Kelafant, 12th grade — Sinking**



# WESTMINSTER SCHOOL

## Noisy Giants

In the night  
I hear a bark  
I see the rain  
Pouring down  
I see a rapid flash  
I hear a rattle  
During the stormy night

When the night  
Rages with anger  
Stomping with giants  
Create the thunder  
Millions of their torches  
Shine  
During the stormy night

When the night  
Rages with anger  
Raindrops splatter  
Like a pot  
Filled with water  
Wind destructs  
The innocent trees  
During the stormy night

— TAMSIN CROOK,  
3<sup>RD</sup> GRADE

## The Night Sky

Stars  
Hot, round  
Shining, glowing, spinning  
There are billions of stars  
Space

— GAVIN GOLDSTEIN,  
2<sup>ND</sup> GRADE

## Nature's Parade

Nature's patterns are like a piece of art  
The autumn leaves sing with the breeze  
The brushing leaves are the maraccas  
The grass, the strings of the violins  
Create an orchestra of peaceful music  
The forest trees, sopranos, altos, form the opera  
The rain, the tap dancers' parade  
Thunder claps like cymbals from a giant's hands  
Monarch butterfly wings whistle like flutes  
The life cycle of the orchestra

— ANAHIT HARUTYUNYAN,  
3<sup>RD</sup> GRADE

## A Snowy Season

Winter  
Snow blanket  
Freezing, soft piles  
Cold, windy, happy, joyous  
White

— CHARLOTTE REYNOLDS,  
1<sup>ST</sup> GRADE

## Haunting Shadows

A reaching hand out of the shadows  
Brings you back in  
To memories you tried to forget  
And to reality.  
You face the hard concrete ground  
In the shadows, knowing, just knowing, somehow  
That you will never, ever be unscarred  
You will never see the world as you once did  
With those eyes  
Now struck with the sights  
Of hardship  
Of poverty  
And of loss and death.  
They change something in you that you didn't know  
Even so, you try to block them out  
But they will always be your haunting shadows  
And you will have them forever

— ALLISON JOE, 6<sup>TH</sup> GRADE

## Swaying Trees

How the branches  
Dim the sunlight  
Of a million stars  
The swaying trees  
Tickle my feet  
Their branches,  
Like a fountain  
Droopy, hanging  
Feeling shame,  
Quite sad  
But not exactly

— SYDNEY LE, 3<sup>RD</sup> GRADE

## Feelings Are The Frosting

You get angry  
Fierce fire shooting flames  
Feels like the incense you left burning  
Dry ice letting out smoke  
A sharp jagged table corner  
Disgusting sour syrup

That is all okay

You can be sad  
No one should be staring  
The peppery bite of the sun  
Is let out on your neck  
Fluffy snow in your snow pants  
Giving you a chill

That is all okay

You can be happy  
A nice, gentle, bright smile  
Flowers blooming  
On an orange yellow day  
You feel happy and that is okay

— LAILAH ABDUL KHAALIQ,  
3<sup>RD</sup> GRADE

## Pitch As Coal

A dark heart that has turned into pitch coal  
Life is lost, hope is lost too  
Pitch black is a box  
Sharp stings of knives  
Pricking flesh  
Time is dreary  
A crow's eye, the dead line  
Comes at once  
Like when a tsunami crashes over a city  
It is a skin of hope  
Broken in two  
Death is the sting of a king cobra's poison  
It is the ticking of a stopwatch  
Hades himself in disguise  
There is a small bit of hope in death  
Yes, leaping forward to a new beginning  
It is time to set your new wings to the sky and say,  
"I believe  
In hope."

— NASIM ABDUL KHAALIQ,  
4<sup>TH</sup> GRADE

## Wonder

It used to be said  
That often in error  
But never in doubt  
Now their doubts have grown  
They have grown as big as all outdoors  
Born as a bubble of space  
Young light is released  
Glowing sheets and tendrils  
Yet nobody knows  
Nobody knows

— SOPHIA GURALNIK,  
4<sup>TH</sup> GRADE

## Two Types of Planes

Of roars and whistles  
Or feather-like bristles  
We all would choose the new

Enchanting melody  
Or ghost-like cacophony  
Our past models are no longer valid

For business and Human's transportation  
Or rhythmic sensation  
We forget about the past

The types of planes that scrape the skies  
Or the gentle Cardinal with immense black eyes  
Sweet soft chirps that fill your ears  
Clanging thunder is what he hears

He created two types of Planes  
The straight-path crashers  
And the fluttering beauties standing the test of time

We all would choose the new  
— LIAM MACHABEE,  
7<sup>TH</sup> GRADE

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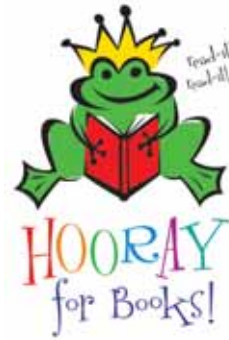
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# YORKTOWN HIGH SCHOOL



Sofia Scott, 12th grade



Alexander Ahn, 12th grade



Lana Schlesinger, 12th grade



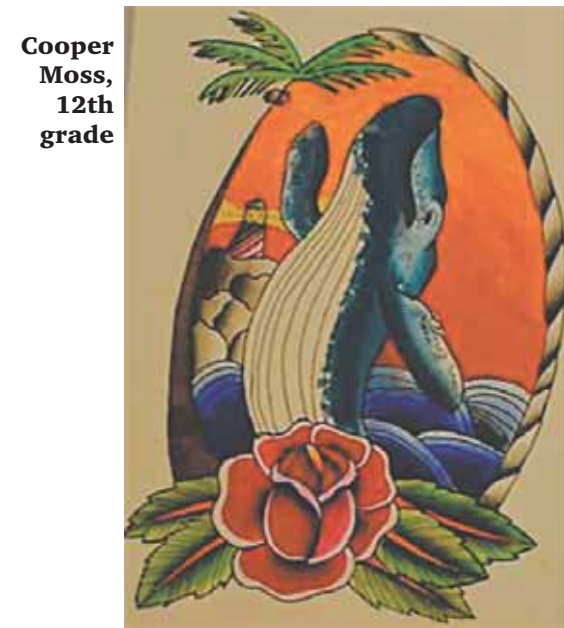
Emma Pivetta, 12th grade



Elizabeth Noe — Cosmic Revival



Rachel Jacobson, 12th grade



Cooper Moss, 12th grade



Julia Sachs, 12th grade



Jake Gonzalez, 12th grade



Will Clough, 10th grade — Williamsburg Leo Club. The Leo's were making cards to send to their friends in this random act of kindness.



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Sebastian Linscott, Kindergarten



Mariana Garcia-Acosta, Kindergarten



Charlotte Evans, grade 6



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## Seldom Wrong But This Time I'm Write

By KENNETH B. LOURIE



Because of the change in some of our publication deadlines for December, I have had to write multiple columns weeks in advance, somewhat unusual for me. Typically, I write my column five days before publication, so time-wise, I'm fairly current and emotionally present as well. Writing ahead, as December dead-lines (it's nothing new. I've been managing to accommodate these deadlines for years) is still a bit off-putting. Though I want to think ahead and live like I have a future; as a cancer patient, it's difficult not to live in the present. Thinking, feeling, projecting ahead, seems presumptuous almost.

This is not to imply that I have to somehow presume a future and write about cancer subjects — or not, which have not yet happened. Hardly. My columns are rarely time-sensitive or date-specific. Still, my columns are generally better written when I'm writing from current feelings, facts, circumstances, etc. And though many of the feelings, facts and circumstances relating to my condition don't exactly change on a daily, weekly or even monthly basis (thank God!), surprisingly, my reaction to them sometimes does. Moreover, writing multiple columns at one time also forces me to pile onto myself emotionally the effects of my disease. Which, if you must know, I'd rather not do. In fact, if there's any way I can not think about my situation, that's a 'way' I'd like to be.

Not that I moan and groan or woe is me about my age 54-and-half-terminal-diagnosis, as those who know me or have regularly read my columns likewise know; but sometimes I'd prefer not to have my hand forced. And even though reading or hearing about other people who have been diagnosed with lung cancer, or who have succumbed to its ravages, doesn't bother me — too much, really (I've matured); occasionally, I'd rather be blissfully ignorant.

Although I readily admit that being ignorant too long concerning my disease is hardly penny-wise but it is most definitely pound-foolish. The trick is, somehow not getting consumed by one's circumstances and maintaining an optimistic point of view. And since I'm a funny guy (though not really fun), I am able to humor myself — and others, so these less-than-ideal circumstances under which I attempt to thrive are not overwhelming, except when forced to confront my demons and focus on myself when newspaper deadlines are advanced and jumbled and I'm having to write four columns in two weeks instead of writing one column in one week.

Though it's not exactly trouble, it is to quote Jerry Seinfeld from a long-ago Seinfeld episode, "something." 'Something' I could likely live without, but 'something' unfortunately I must live with, every December. But I'm a "big boy," as my father used to tell me, with "broad shoulders" (figuratively speaking to my ability to handle the load), so I'll manage. In fact, in another paragraph, I will have completed the task and the presumptive weight of it will be off my 'broad shoulders.'

Now I can relax a little bit, exactly what one (especially this one with cancer) needs. Between the holidays and advanced deadlines, the column-writing and the ad-selling; I'm living and learning with my ever-evolving circumstances (further from the beginning or closer to the end; I never know).

Nevertheless, I am extremely happy to have been there and finished doing it yet again. I hope to see you all back here next year. Happy Holidays!

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

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### OBITUARY

**Johnson, Richard Lee, 88**, of Radnor, PA, formerly of Vienna, VA. Beloved husband of Anne Chapman (nee Hungerford) Johnson, Father of Anne Johnson Graf (Chappy) (Bayard H.) of Strafford, PA and Jessie Edwards Johnson of Purcellville, VA. Also survived by five grandchildren and his sister Lois Johnson Held of Milwaukee, WI. Funeral service will be at St. John's Episcopal Church, McLean, VA on Wednesday, December 28th at noon. In lieu of flowers contributions in his name may be made to St. John's Church Memorial Fund, St. John's Episcopal Church, 671 5 Georgetown Pike, Post Office Box 457, McLean, VA 221 01-0457.

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I believe the future is only the past again, entered through another gate.  
-Arthur Wing Pinero

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-Dagobert Runes

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- Paver, Flagstone, Brick, any style you choose
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*All work Guaranteed*

## TILE/MARBLE

## TILE/MARBLE

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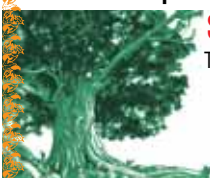
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## TREE SERVICE

## TREE SERVICE

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### Summer Cleanup...

Tree removal, topping & pruning,  
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Early 2017  
**NOW  
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## Announcing Group Interviews for The Kensington Falls Church

**Interview at our Information Center**

**on any Thursday from**

**December 15 until January 5 • 11am & 4pm**

**1212 West Broad Street, Falls Church, VA**

**H**ave you been searching for an organization with heart? Where you can make a difference in many lives? Where you can grow professionally and personally? Kensington Senior Living has been built upon two key values: a Love for Seniors and a Spirit to Serve. We are looking for individuals who share these values and would like to join our team in Falls Church, where we will love and care for our residents as we do our own families.

**Now hiring qualified full-time (starting at 30 hours/week) and part-time team members**

*(Health and dental insurances, life insurance, paid time off and paid holidays for full-time positions. One free meal per day. 401k plan for team members who wish to contribute.)*

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Care Supervisors (CNAs)  
Licensed Professional Nurses (LPNs)  
Wellness Nurses (LPNs and RNs)  
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Concierges  
Dining Coordinators  
Cooks

Prep Cooks  
Utility Staff  
Servers  
Maintenance Assistant  
Housekeepers  
Porters  
Drivers  
Laundry Attendants



**THE KENSINGTON**

*An Assisted Living Community*

**FALLS CHURCH**

**703.992.9868**

[www.TheKensingtonFallsChurch.com](http://www.TheKensingtonFallsChurch.com)

**Information Center:**

**1212 West Broad Street, Falls Church, VA 22046**

**For immediate consideration or more details,  
email [FallsChurchCareers@KensingtonSL.com](mailto:FallsChurchCareers@KensingtonSL.com)  
or call 703-992-9868.**







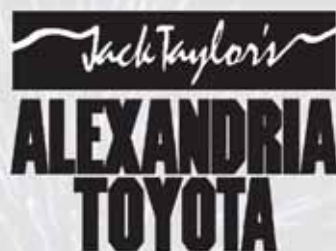
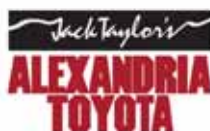
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<p>TOYOTA GENUINE SERVICE</p> <p><b>BRAKE SPECIAL</b></p> <p><b>\$99<sup>95</sup></b></p> <p><small>INCLUDES: Install Genuine Toyota front brake pads, inspect front &amp; rear rotors &amp; drums, check tire condition and inspect all hardware. TCMC pads only. MACHINE ROTORS AN ADDITIONAL \$199.95.</small></p> <p><small>DOES NOT APPLY TO ALL VEHICLES PLEASE SEE SERVICE ADVISOR FOR DETAILS. NOT VALID WITH ANY OTHER OFFER OR COUPON. TOYOTA VEHICLES ONLY. COUPON MUST BE PRESENTED AT TIME OF WRITE-UP. VALID ONLY AT ALEXANDRIA TOYOTA. TAX AND SHOP SUPPLIES ADDITIONAL. OFFER EXPIRES 1/31/17.</small></p>	<p>TOYOTA GENUINE SERVICE</p> <p><b>\$29<sup>95</sup> LUBE, OIL &amp; FILTER SERVICE SPECIAL</b></p> <p><small>NON-SYNTHETIC</small> <b>\$49<sup>95</sup></b> <small>SYNTHETIC</small></p> <p><small>INCLUDES: Change oil (up to 5 qts.), install Genuine Toyota oil filter, inspect &amp; adjust all fluid levels and complimentary multi-point inspection with print out.</small></p> <p><small>NOT VALID WITH ANY OTHER OFFER OR COUPON. TOYOTA VEHICLES ONLY. COUPON MUST BE PRESENTED AT TIME OF WRITE-UP. VALID ONLY AT ALEXANDRIA TOYOTA. TAX AND SHOP SUPPLIES ADDITIONAL. OFFER EXPIRES 1/31/17.</small></p>	<p>TOYOTA GENUINE SERVICE</p> <p><b>COMPLIMENTARY 15 MINUTE ALIGNMENT CHECK</b></p> <p><small>NOT VALID WITH ANY OTHER OFFER. TOYOTA VEHICLES ONLY. COUPON MUST BE PRESENTED AT TIME OF WRITE-UP. VALID ONLY AT ALEXANDRIA TOYOTA. GOOD THRU 1/31/17.</small></p>	<p>TOYOTA GENUINE SERVICE</p> <p><b>30,000 MILES FACTORY RECOMMENDED SERVICE</b></p> <p><b>\$159<sup>95</sup></b></p> <p><small>Synthetic \$10 More</small></p> <p><small>INCLUDES: Change engine oil &amp; filter (up to 5 qts.), rotate tires, inspect wear and adjust pressure, measure brake pad thickness &amp; rotor runout, replace cabin air filter (if equipped), replace engine air filter, reset maintenance reminder light (if applicable) and multi-point vehicle inspection.</small></p> <p><small>NOT VALID WITH ANY OTHER OFFER OR COUPON. TOYOTA VEHICLES ONLY. COUPON MUST BE PRESENTED AT TIME OF WRITE-UP. VALID ONLY AT ALEXANDRIA TOYOTA. TAX AND SHOP SUPPLIES ADDITIONAL. OFFER EXPIRES 1/31/17.</small></p>
<p>TOYOTA GENUINE SERVICE</p> <p><b>15% OFF ANY ACCESSORIES</b></p> <p>• Apparel • Window visors • I-pad adaptors • • All weather floor mats • Toyota bedliners •</p> <p><small>NOT VALID WITH ANY OTHER OFFER OR COUPON. TOYOTA VEHICLES ONLY. COUPON MUST BE PRESENTED AT TIME OF WRITE-UP. VALID ONLY AT ALEXANDRIA TOYOTA. TAX AND SHOP SUPPLIES ADDITIONAL. OFFER EXPIRES 1/31/17.</small></p>	<p><b>Jack Taylor's ALEXANDRIA TOYOTA</b></p>		<p>TOYOTA GENUINE SERVICE</p> <p><b>10% OFF OVER THE COUNTER PARTS</b></p> <p><small>NOT VALID WITH ANY OTHER OFFER OR COUPON. TOYOTA VEHICLES ONLY. COUPON MUST BE PRESENTED AT TIME OF WRITE-UP. VALID ONLY AT ALEXANDRIA TOYOTA. TAX AND SHOP SUPPLIES ADDITIONAL. OFFER EXPIRES 1/31/17.</small></p>

CALL FOR AN APPOINTMENT AT **703-684-0710** OR SCHEDULE ONLINE AT **ALEXANDRIATOYOTA.COM**

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