

Basketball by Caitlin Houston, age 9, 4th Grade, Greenbriar West Elementary School.



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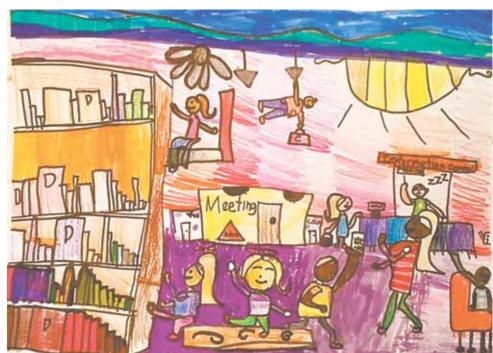
CHILDREN'S & TEENS' CONNECTION



By Daniel Jeon, 5th Grade, Greenbriar East Elementary



Landscape Painting by Nola Murphy, 5th Grade, Brookfield Elementary School



By Olivia Joy Shen, age 8, 3rd Grade, Ms. Mangas, Poplar Tree Elementary School



By Sophia Wang, age 8, 2nd Grade, Lees Corner Elementary School

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Welcome

Dear Readers:

This week, the Chantilly 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 re-

sponse, we will continue to publish more artwork and writings in 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 2018 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 schools pages.

Our preferred method for material is e-mail, which should be sent to chantilly@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

GREENBRIAR EAST ELEMENTARY SCHOOL



By Alanis Tiea, 5th Grade



By Willis Stanley, age 6, 1st Grade, Mrs. Brewer's class

Submitted by Hillary Seward,

art teacher

4th Grade





By Kate McKeown, 5th Grade



By Casey Yoon, 1st Grade



By Sharon Jeon, 3rd Grade



By Suhyeon (Ellie) Park, Kindergar-

CHANTILLY HIGH SCHOOL

Lady on the Train

Dear lady on the train,

You are draped in the ocean, it folds over you in billowing, but pressed, layers. Your eyes sit soft and welcoming but focused. You are content. While everyone else on the train is plugging in their frayed phone chargers, furiously typing emails to incompetent coworkers, incessantly checking snapchat for passing filters, you sit looking straight ahead. Your leathered thumb runs absently over the smooth cover of your Bible. I have so many questions for you but cannot seem to find the courage to pry open my mouth.

When did you start believing?

Frankly, I have always believed, there was never a doubt in my poofy, curl infested head. I tried to pinpoint it, the first time I believed, as I do all things. I like to know the exact time and place something starts. I like certainty. It frightens me that within my own life I lack the ability to be ab solutely sure of what has taken place. I pretended like it was Mr. Chambers' sermon from one sticky summer evening, like a man with a face that drooped like a wet painting had changed my life. That was a lie. His words were just laced together more beautifully than our pastor normally cared to. I thought I was okay with those eloquent sentences cascading off the walls in the moment I first believed, I thought it set the scene, made the story perfect. What a shame it is that we are not the sole authors of our lives, that we cannot make moments all we want them to be.

Why do you believe? Were you raised like this? Is it just routine? Did you find it?

Sometimes I fear no one truly believes, that they're doing it just because their parents did or merely as a facade they want the world to see. My grandfather is the one who placed this tiny thought on the bookshelf of my mind. He dropped God like a scalding hot pan after Grammy died. He no longer spent his Saturday at the church yard sale chuckling over newborns, no longer kept three thoroughly annotated Bibles in every room of his house, no longer sang quite as loud in church. He is the moon and my grandmother the sun, he was only able to shine through her. Once her light petered out, he was left dark and with him all those he had inspired were too cast in shadow.

Do you ever question it?

I believe in God. I do. Sometimes I wonder though. Maybe it's where I grew up. In Northern Virginia, people are very much alienated from religion. One of my dearest friends is an atheist. My best friend is agnostic. However, even just writing this seems unusual because I don't see them within those terms. I never think about them in respect to their religion, I think of them as my friends. I wonder if people think of me in regards to my religion.

Do you love?

I understand that you love God. I am not sure exactly what sect you are from and therefore if you are allowed to be in love with anyone else. Are you allowed? If you are or aren't, did you? Do you? I can't imagine not. Of course, I am not quite sure I know the exact parameters of love but I have certainly felt it for my family, for my friends, for those I want to be more than friends. Love and I are like neighbors, we have shared a few laughs over childhood stories and can exchange smiles as we pass each other in the canned goods aisle at the grocery. but we aren't quite comfortable enough to talk about our deepest darkest secrets. Not yet anyway.

Where are you going?

I hope something tragic has not happened, that you are not going home to bury your dearest cousin beneath the soil or to pray over a member of your church who is gravely ill. Maybe you are going to see a show, to spend a night within the seats of a glowing auditorium watching the gifts that God granted unto other people. Maybe you are going to spread the efforts of your worn, calloused hands onto more of the needing population. I wonder how many souls you have touched, how many lives you have changed.

Do you notice me?

I know you are focused on things higher than a

teenage girl with a black, checkered skirt and too much blush on. However, do you see me? I feel so small, so insignificant. Hopefully, you don't see me and feel the immediate need to pray for me. I hope I am not that far gone. Can you tell I believe in God? Can you tell I am so incredibly unsure of myself that I can't even meet your eyes for fear of judgement? I am not saying I think you are a judgmental person, far from it, I suppose you are one of the least I will ever encounter. Your eyes hold kindness, they are like little rivers gurgling with nurturing and understanding.

Do you doubt yourself?

You are so beautiful. I hope you know that. I admire your commitment, too, so few people possess the ability to do something they truly believe in. You have mustered up the strength to dedicate your life to one thing, taken a one-way ticket out of self-absorption.

I don't know what else to say, what questions to sk. You are getting off the train now, gathering one bag and your Bible. I am not ready, I haven't said all I intended to, I haven't said anything at all. Um, goodbye! Have a nice day, a nice life.

Sincerely, The girl on the train

By Caroline Woodson

12th Grade, Chantilly High School www.ConnectionNewspapers.com

Westfield High School

Shadows

 \boldsymbol{S} weeping across the room Hovering under my feet Anchored to the form Dividing dark from light Over the ground it stretches Without any thought or mind Staying long after my soul is gone

BY SARAH HARVEY 10th Grade

Grey

In the world of grey Everyone was grey Their eyes. Their hair Their lips and their nose From the clothes they bought To the car they drove Everything was Grey

In the world of grey There were no differences Everyone was the same There was no war Or hate Or discrimination Everything was Grey

In the world of grey You couldn't be blue When you were sad Or pink and red When in love Or a glowing yellow When happy

Montessori of Chantilly

From students in Ms. Stacy's Kindergarten class



By Arianna Singh, age 5



By Ryan Kim, age 6

Everything was

In the world of grey Even their blood Is grey Even their art Is grey Even their tears Are grey Even their screams Are grey Everything is Grey

In the world of grey Everyone Was Grey

By Sarah Harvey 10th Grade

Shadow (ABC Poem)

Abandoning the shadows position Betraying the one he followed Cut at the seams Disappearing into the night Escape its dark home Freedom almost at its fingertips Going to find a better life Happiness to be found somewhere Isolation holding the shadow Just wanting a chance Kicked around all day Laid down on the ground Maybe one day Not today though One day the owner will forgive the shadow



By Ryan Gao, age 5



By Larissa Pollock, age 5

Possibly Quite doubt it though Right now the shadow has no way of escaping Sunlight creates it Till night falls Under the stars it lays Very curious about the world around it Wondering what more there is Xaerning its place in life for so long Yawning at everyday that goes by Zacrete job all in all

By Paige Jefferson Creative Writing, Period I, Mrs. Taylor

the Power of a child's mind

polka dot polkadot go fetch im the mind of a child Me and the kids next door rule this land one day we will leave this land and shall not return some will and will be mocked for it grownup exist here but few do not many return but who who do know the mind of a child is more stronger than the eye can see know polkadot go fetch

By Manolo J. Mota-Flores

11th Grade

Dreamful

She closed her eyes and began to dream She dreamt of a life without food scarcity She pictured quiet hills and not starving faces Wondering if they even existed She opened her eyes and took a sigh Once again she created a fairytale lie She went to do her chores And hurried because she wanted to dream more It didn't matter if rest lasted for a short while Because her mind was quite adjustable She finished her chores and felt calm Finally all the work had been done She went to her spot on the floor and laid down

Happy she could dream for a while now But suddenly her mother rushed in She told her something bad has happened Her father had fallen down during his work And is now no more in existence Her mother and her cried much They wept their unlucky fate Now the girl hates to sleep Because nobody likes impossible dreams Her humble house got smaller And she herself got thinner Now she wakes up in the early morning Slowly doing her chores Because dreams are for hopeful people And the dreamful old girl is no more Instead she is a quiet angel Who owns a broken soul Living in poverty is never easy Just ask this young girl

By Husbana Noor 9th Grade

THOMAS JEFFERSON HS

Christmas Spirit

Forget war Forget terrorism Forget hatred For just one day

Remember peace Remember harmony Remember love For a better day

Be a friend For someone lonely Be the superman For someone hurt Be the santa For someone depressed For Christmas Day

By Kevin Son

CHANTILLY, AGE 14, 9TH GRADE





By Jonathan Hu, 5th Grade



By Potomac Stuckey, 6th Grade



By Julia Pollard, 3rd Grade



By Esra Aydin, 4th Grade

I believe that people should do something about

Climate Change. If we let Climate Change be, then

the average temperature will increase by 2 degrees

in 100 years. While that may not sound like much,

that's roughly 10x faster than how fast the ice age

heated up! If everyone in the U.S biked one day of

the week instead of driving it would help deter cli-

mate change. If everyone did a small change then



By Angela Berzi, 2nd Grade



By Jelani Ferril, 2nd Grade



By Joel Kim, 4th Grade



By Lainey Kimbrell, 4th Grade

ROCKY RUN MIDDLE SCHOOL

More Sleep for Teens

Teenagers need between 9 and 9.5 hours of

BY TURNER APPLEGATE Age 14

Left Turn at Rocky Run Middle School

Many vehicles have been observed making a left turn into the Rocky Run parking lot from Poplar Tree Road. Police officers usually distribute tickets to those drivers if they observe this illegal turn. This policy should be abolished because the drivers usually do not see the sign. If the policy is for safety matters, then a traffic guard could be placed in this area. However, I think that removing the no left turn policy on Poplar Tree Road into Rocky Run Middle School will make it more convenient for parents to drop off their kids, and for teachers to enter the parking lot.

BY AMMAR ALI

School Times

Schools should start at a later time in middle school because kids have many assignments and activities and barely get enough sleep. Middle school kids are too busy and need more time to sleep. Sleep has been shown to give kids better test scores so more sleep will affect people's grades in a positive way. The majority of kids in middle school also have after school activities and take time to do homework. If schools can change their start time then kids can get at least 8 hours of sleep every night, test scores and grades will rise.

By Zakaria Abdulmajeed

North Korea Fires **Nuclear Missile** Over Japan

It was unnecessary and threatening for North Korea to launch a nuclear missile over Japan, let alone manufacture such a powerful weapon. All evidence of this was caught by the cameras over Hokkaido, Japan, America should order China to place an embargo on Japan as China is North Korea's greatest ally, but if that does not happen and North Korea launches a ballistic missile at South Korea, Japan, or Guam or any other ally of the USA then I think the U.N. will be forced to retaliate against North Korea. I believe this is an important issue because North Korea possesses weapons that are capable of attacking our allies and territories and our governments should try to stop it as soon as they possibly can.

By Connor Flynn

Age 13

sleep. According to the National Sleep Foundation only 15 percent of teens are getting the recommended amount of sleep. One reason teens aren't getting enough sleep is because of the amount of homework they get and the early school hours. On days that I have a lot of homework I end up staying up until 2 a.m., I know I'm not the only one. Another reason teens don't get enough sleep is because of their biological clocks, which in teens make them want to go to bed later and wake up later. This can all affect how the students do in school. The School Board should change the middle school hours so that teens in Chantilly can get more sleep.

Should Money Bring Privileges?

LiAngelo Ball and two other UCLA basketball players got arrested for shoplifting from three different stores and only served two days of house arrest in China. I believe LiAngelo and the two other players should have to serve a sentence in jail. LiAngelo especially since he is a more privileged individual. They stole multiple designer brand sunglasses worth about \$750 and were caught on camera. What should be done is that the UCLA players should serve 1-2 years of jail time in China, serve a 1 season suspension from NCAA sports, and have to pay a \$2,000 USD fine. This is one instance out of many in which money brought individuals privilege. Now, my question to you to think about is; should money bring privileges?

By Eric Fernandez AGE 14

Homeowners Association Opinion

I believe that homeowner associations are useless and too powerful. According to dc.curbed.com the monthly cost of an Homeowner Associations membership can be from \$250 to \$331 monthly. The Homeowner Association can take your home for late fees. They can dictate what you put in your yard or what work you do to your house. Home-owner associations should be an option to attach to an house not be something that has to always be. They should have less restrictions and not be as powerful. I believe that the Homeowner Associations is too powerful and should be changed for

> BY MICHAEL TRESS Age 13

BY STEVEN MEDINETS

it would add up to be a big change.

Defeating Climate

Change

Can I Close the Door?

My mom wants me to keep my door open while I am doing homework so she can make sure I am doing my homework and not playing xbox or on my phone. I get why she wants me to keep it open but sometimes the noise from the laundry machine or the TV downstairs starts to distract me from doing my homework. I think that my mom should let me be able to close my door and do homework for a week and if my grades fall then she will rest her case, but if I am able to turn in all my work then I can start to close my door.

BY UPILE AKRIDGE

Age 14

CHANTILLY HIGH SCHOOL

Young Love

In all honesty he wasn't very attractive.

He had brown hair, chocolate mixed with something sweeter, and the ends were spiky and clustered. His eyes were what really drew me in: the intense shade of green reminded me of green apple Dum Dums, and paired so wonderfully with his skin.

No, I take it back, it was the skin that entranced me.

He was white, making his whole self a rebellious idea: my mother was always warning me about speaking to those "not in our culture." Moreover he was not a delicate, porcelain, bland boy at all. He was all tan and flushed, not with delicate pink, but with the strong red of blood. I would see that color pooling up in his cheeks constantly: when he ran, when he laughed, even when he smiled. It made him look alive, wild in a way.

But he was almost always dirty, always up to things that he shouldn't have been. In the neighborhood we lived in that was almost a given, especially with the boys; perhaps I should've been more forgiving of it. My mother drilled it into me though, that just because we lived in a bad place didn't mean bad behavior was excused, and so whenever he made a mistake my fondness for him only intensified my scrutiny, rather than softening it.

I, of course, was not at all graceful or lovely. I was chubby, my dark locks were chopped into a strangely short bob my mother had insisted on, and I had a particularly bad habit of saying exactly what I thought at exactly the wrong time. Though I was sure it was useless, I couldn't resist being fascinated. He was in my first grade class, and I recall observing him at the table next to mine, drawing, gluing, doing whatever it is that passes for learning at that young of an age. He lived incredibly close, in the burgundy apart-

ment buildings across the "gate," a single chain strung between two rusty posts.

I think his sister was a drug dealer. I saw her a couple times, handing out suspicious packages with strange looking substances inside. There was one particular night, when my sister and I came home from Walmart at about 11 in the evening and saw her stuffing some sort of package behind a tree. She took off as soon as she saw us, but the image of her hasilty hiding something was burned into my mind. After that I saw her only in passing, from a great distance, as my own sister had determined I was going nowhere near that type of hard, steel edged person.

His sister had red hair, and I remember being so very jealous until I saw that it was dying, and looked stiff to the touch. Not at all real and not at all like Ariel's. She was porcelain, but a sickly kind, all dead winter soil and dirty snow, ghoullike. I often worried he'd turn out like her, so I took special care to note the signs of whatever "disease" she had and look for the similarities in him.

On hot summer days, when the air was too thick to be bothered to play in, my best friend and I would sit down at the end of the street, right on the curb, and laze about. There we'd settle, the matte yellow paint of the curb behind our knees, sluggish, bored, and wilting in the heat. From our perch we'd have a perfect view of the neighborhood and, secretly important to me, a perfect view of him walking home or running around the park.

It was on one such day that my secret admiration of him became obvious to my friend, and painfully clear to him.

There we were, drooping along the sidewalk, a new type of summer weed: first graders. Clad in loose white cotton dresses, mine covered with pink candy apples and hers with polka dots, I

like to imagine we looked like forgotten flower petals, abandoned on a rather filthy street cor-

And he passed by us, marching home, his hair a birds nest, his clothes far too big for him, and his hands covered in filth as he clutched a giant wooden stick he and his little gang were admiring. What I'd thought were subtle glances towards him caught my friend's eye, and in a heartbeat she understood. She has always been the more clever one of our pair. My wide-eyed, almost starstruck look towards the boy covered in grime was impossible to misinterpret: normally I hated dirt, and there I was, unable to look away from it.

My friend slammed her elbow into my rib cage, and kept slamming it, jostling me violently with her elbow, and starting to tease. "Look it's him. Looook, it's him! You love him? You love him. Oh my GOD, you love him!"

I responded to her stupidity with fierce whispers and as stern an expression as I could muster. She kept giggling like a loon, and I wanted to die.

He saw us, right then at the worst possible time, and he waved hello. He called out to me, and I could see his feet make a miniscule shift in direction; he was coming towards me.

It wasn't as though my feelings were completely unrequited, although perhaps he didn't quite realize how deeply my first-grader "love" for him ran. His eyes would get a little shinier when they saw me, his smile just a hint bigger.

That day he looked happier than ever, probably due to his long day of running wild through the woods with his friends, who were also walking over to us. I'd spoken to him before, countless times. But all of a sudden I was nervous as hell, a bunch of kamikaze bees slamming themselves against my chest, into my heart. I

was terrified my friend would give me away: she looked almost high with giddiness at having discovered my secret. So I made a rash decision.

I got up, turned, and ran, all the way up the street back home.

Everyone called after me, both him and his friends, my own companion. Anxiety drove me forward, though, white fabric and pink apples flying around my vision. The ground felt rough and craggy, and for some reason I could feel each individual stone like a miniature stab. I pushed through the pain. It wasn't until I finally burst through my cherry red front door and collapsed on the sofa, that I truly felt the stinging in the area near my toes. It built up, a rising heat pooling in the soles. Slowly, I brought one foot off the ground, and reached a delicate, tentative hand down to touch. My fingers felt something wet and sticky. I raised my hand in front of my face and saw a pool of sap-like blood drenching

I realized then my mistake: I'd left behind my shoes.

All the way back down the street, I'd left at least six people thinking I was insane, more importantly I'd left him thinking I was insane. I had run away with no shoes. And then stepped on what I assume was a broken beer bottle and cut up my feet. I was silent for a few moments, observing with a morbid fascination the way the vibrant color of red contrasted against my skin. I noted wryly that it was almost the color his cheeks got when he was embarrassed. The color I was sure my own cheeks would be the next time I saw him. Then I sucked in a deep breath and began screaming for my mother.

Love hurts.

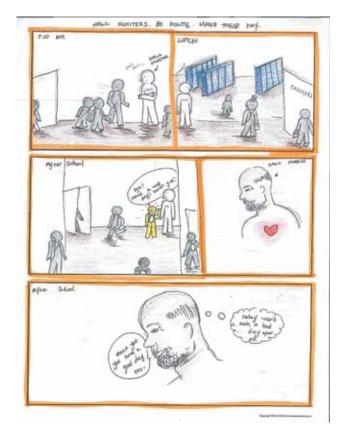
By Amna Rashid

11th Grade, Chantilly High School



School Heroes

School Heroes: Using the concept of honoring the hard workers in our school as Jarrett J. Krosoczka did in his Lunch Lady series, the students created cartoons to honor those at Rocky Run Middle School.



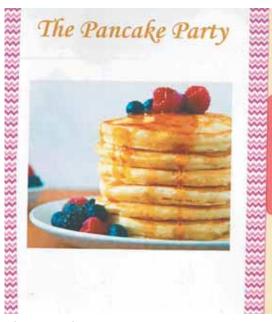
Everyday Hero: Hall Monitor by Josephine Syu, age 12, 7th Grade, Ms. Basl's Creative Writing Class



Everyday Hero: Custodian by Shruthika Suddala, age 12, 7th Grade, Ms. Basl's Creative Writing Class



Everyday Hero: Bus Driver by Larkin Kelley, age 14, 8th Grade, Ms. Basl's Creative Writing Class Larkin Kelly, age 14, 8th Grade, Ms. Basl's Creative Writing Class



The Pancake Party Cover

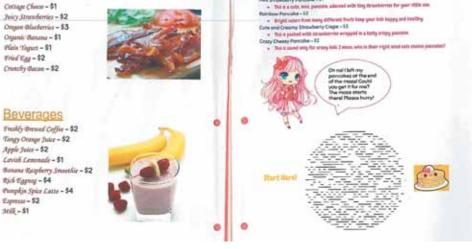


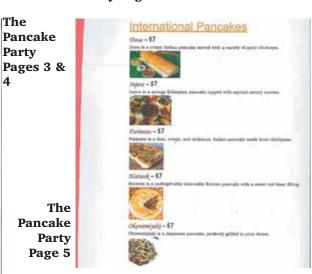
The Pancake Party text

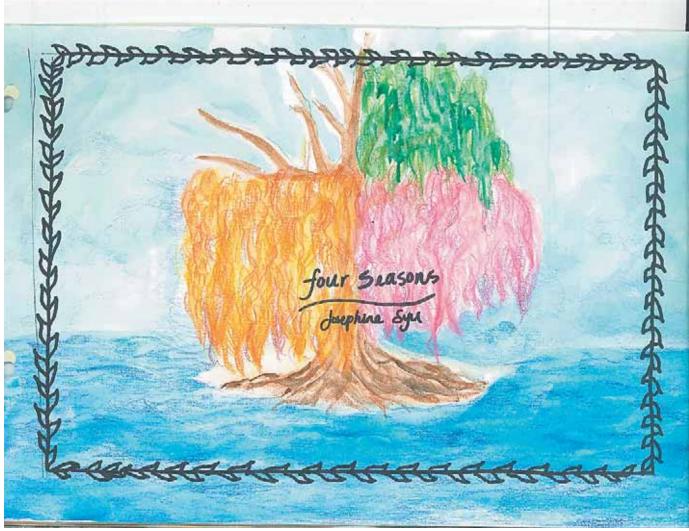


The Pancake Party Page 2









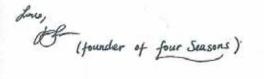
Four Seasons Cover

Four Seasons

Menu Magic Submis**sions**: Using sensory details and creative layouts to design a restaurant

Four Seasons: Josephine Syu, age 12, 7th Grade, Ms. Basl's Creative **Writing Class**

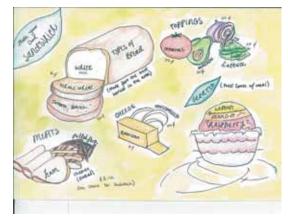
Many people have favorite foods that are (usually) meant for singular Seasons such as watermelons, ples, hot chocolate, tea, scores, gelato, etc. It disappoints and many others when seasons roll over and away along with their favoritie foods four seasons (a restaurant whene you can eat all your favoritie foods any day of the year) was the nesult of my hunger and longing for seasonal foods. This restaurent has been a cure to many people's sorrows and has never failed to satisfy a customer. We hope you enjoy our warm/nefreshing foods!



1218 Show Fall Drive, Springtime Springs, my 0521



Four Seasons Page 3



Four Seasons Page 4



Four Seasons Page 5



Four Seasons Back Cover

Sculptures



Free Form Stocking Sculptures by Lina L. & E.V.



Sculptures by Ella & Free Form Sculptures by Haley R. I.S. & Trina L.

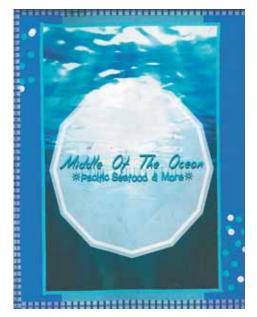
Four Seasons Page 2



Middle of the Ocean

Menu Magic Submissions: Using sensory details and creative layouts to design a restaurant menu.

Middle of the Ocean by Neha Mehta, age 13, grade 8, Clifton and Margaret Lipkina, age 14, grade 8, Fairfax, Ms. Basl's Creative Writing Class



Middle of the Ocean Cover



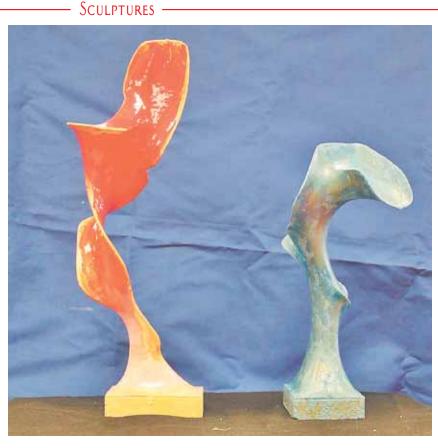
Middle of the Ocean Page 1-2



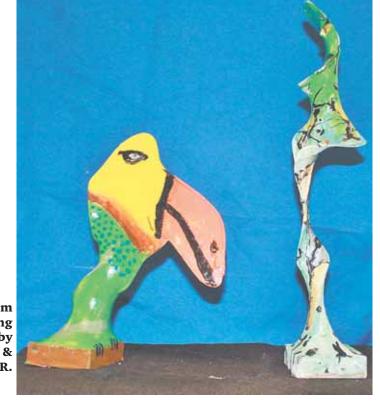
Middle of the Ocean Pages 3 & 4



Middle of the Ocean Pages 5 & 6



Free Form Stocking Sculptures by Priya P. & Kat H.



Free Form Stocking Sculptures by Sanjana S. & Samantha R.

COLIN POWELL ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

My Dream Job

Being a teacher has always been my dream job. Teachers have endless possibilities. I can imagine myself in a classroom teaching students not only about history but about their future. I love to learn and the best way I can see myself using that love is to share it with young minds. Being a teacher has many jobs put together. One of the biggest roles is to be a trainer, not the type to do pushups or run, but the ones who help students create goals and accomplish them. I would love to be a teacher!

By Lauren Kim
Age II, 6th Grade, Mr.
Buschenfeldt

In Winter!

In winter I see the pretty white snowflakes swirl in the air then softly fall to the ground.

In winter I taste the cool peppermint flavor of a candy cane swirl all around my mouth then I wash it down with the warm taste of hot cocoa

In winter I touch the wrapping paper and the pretty bows on shiny packages.

In winter I hear the sounds of families coming together to share the joy of the season.

In winter I smell the warm, delightful smell of sugar cookies baking in the toasty oven.

This is what I see, taste, touch, hear, and smell in winter!

By Raelyn Stump Age II, 6th Grade, Tara Carlson's Class

The Race

On a bright, balmy summer day there was a race held at Colin Powell ES. Ten mins until the next race, I heard the speaker yell. That message got me more edgy. I was at the edge of the seat.

"Why are you trembling?" asked my friend. "You are so prepared."

"You think!"

"Well, yeah!"

The next race will be starting in less than 5 mins. Racers come to the platform. We heard the speaker say.

"I guess I have to go."

"Good luck and I will be at the finish line ready to congrat you for winning."

"Thanks."

But somehow I had bad feeling about this race.

When I reached the platform. I saw the others players stretching www.ConnectionNewspapers.com

out. Then the one with the blue hair tie and red shorts came up to me and said "I am going to win."

"I replied saying, 'in your dreams."

We all became silent when we heard the speaker saying "racers get to you positions."

3 ... 2 ... 1 ... GO

I ran with full speed. I looked back and saw the rest of the racers back of me. Thud. Thud. My heart was beating, faster than the sound of light. I was scared, "could I make it or not" a few more steps then I can cross the line. But I guess my legs had other plans. I slipped and fell down, hard. As I closed my eyes, I could see the racer who said she could win, cross the line. I told myself to get back up. But my body didn't listen to my command. But then I was jolted awake by the sudden ringing of my alarm clock.

Then I realised it was only a dream. But my back was hurting. Then I got a text from my friend saying "how are you? Does your back still hurt? I know you are really sad you didn't win. You can try again next year." Then I dropped my phone because I was astonished. Did my dream come

true?

By Nandita Sugasi 6th grade, Mrs. Carlson

Thunderstorm

On a cold, stormy night, the lightning strikes and then a split second later, it rains. The lights in my house start to flicker on and off. The wind outside goes swish and swoosh. The leaves on the trees are dancing as they make their way to the floor. When I look outside the window, I see a gray long blanket with some big gray cotton balls as clouds. I hear thunder as loud as a lion. When I open the window, I smell the crisp soil and grass. I close my eyes and imagine the stormy Earth back to the peaceful Earth. Then a gust of wind goes up my face, almost knocking me down. My eyes shoot open as I see the horrendous thunderstorm still there. I run upstairs and pull my blanket over my face, telling myself to sleep. I hope that the Earth will be back to normal tomorrow.

As I finally close my eyes, I am jolted awake by the sudden ringing of my alarm clock. I run over to my parents room to go and snuggle in bed with them but it

was empty. I notice that the ceiling was leaking. I rush downstairs, and I see that there is a huge puddle in my house. I look outside the window and it is flooding! I scream "mom, dad." I don't hear a reply. So I go out the door and glance around. I start to shiver. Out of the corner of my eyes, I see my mom, dad, and brother helping my neighbors, standing in water that is knee-high. When can the world turn back to normal?

By Nandita Sugasi 6th grade, Mrs. Carlson

Eraser

I am an eraser
I like doing pacers.

You erase me all the way, I hate it all day.

It's like the pencil is my enemy He stares at me like I am crazy!

You erase, erase, and erase, While I pace, pace, and pace.

But wait a sec ... I am not done

I like erasing words on paper Cause I am an eraser!

> By Nandita Sugasi 6th grade, Mrs. Carlson

Fall

As I perch upon a grand oak tree like a mother bird on her nest, strings of thoughts chug through my brain like a clamoring train. I sit and gaze some more at the perfectly precise grass when I decide to pluck one miniscule thought out of my impossibly crowded mind.

"What will it be," I ponder. I searched and excavated my mind like an archaeologist and my thoughts were the fossils when I stumbled upon the most spectacular of thoughts: fall. It may seem utterly promiscuous to investigate such a thought but unlike a young evolving tree, I couldn't be swayed.

I focused hard and I focused well in my grand oak tree and that is when I began to think.

Fall is such a wonderfully whim

SEE COLIN POWELL, PAGE 15



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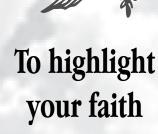
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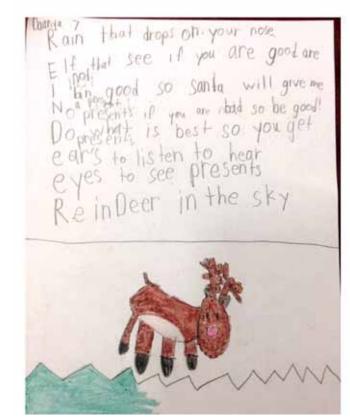
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POETRY & PICTURES -

From the Poetry Workshop of Anita R. Mohan, Chantilly Regional Library.

Reindeer - An acrostic poem with illustration by Daanya Ashraf Ali, age 7, Fairfax, Virginia



Reindeer - An acrostic poem with illustration by Daanya Ashraf Ali, age 7, Fairfax.



A Christmas Tree by Claire Sim, age 7, Chantilly.

Mountain View High School

"Voice for the Voiceless"

I should be glad to have a voice My thoughts they can be heard. I should be glad to have a voice The ability of forming words.

I should be glad to have a voice Since out there some have none. Their cry for help is all ignored They die one after one.

I should be glad to have a voice And make the people listen, To make them change of what is wrong And do better for a difference.

I give my voiceless peers my hand Their eyes are filled with fear. I, with my voice, will raise awareness The people need to hear.

I should be glad to have a voice And let their thoughts be heard. What they can't say themselves for all My mouth says word for word.

BY DUC MY AGE 20, GRADE 12

"Shower"

Hot and steamy, a burning against my neck streaming W n my back, the way d Pattering onto my feet. The running water like the ticking of a clock giving me time Time to think, time to ponder, Time for aloneness. Am I alone? Surrounded by ghosts of steam; Ascending they are; The blurry view unreal; Enveloped in the warmth, I am dazed; I am gone.

By Duc My Age 20, Grade 12

Frozen Waffles

I hate how some items at the grocery store can be discontinued. It would be interesting to take a poll and see how many people have been upset by the absence of a good item that used to be a staple in their weekly grocery list.

My grandma shops at a commissary in Fort Riley, Kansas to save money. She goes every Thursday at 9 a.m. When I visit her, I tag along and I have tagged along with her quite a few times.

I love frozen waffles. I love microwaving them or putting them in the toaster. There was this one brand I only ever got at my grandma's house and they were so fantastic and huge. They came in a plastic blue bag; it was about the size of these laptops really. There were four waffles in this one big square and about 8 big squares. You're supposed to break a few off the square and only eat one or two, but when I went to my grandma's house I always ate a whole square for breakfast.

These fantastic waffles have been discontinued for quite some time now, but I miss them so much. That is a lot of love for just some frozen waffles, isn't it? I'm sure though that if anyone else had tried these www.ConnectionNewspapers.com

waffles they would get it. I know my brother gets it. This summer when visiting my grandma we went to the commissary like we used to, and I picked up a box of Eggo brand toaster waffles. They're fine and they taste good but they just aren't the same.

It is Thursday at eight in the morning; there's a knock on the flimsy basement bedroom door. My grandma walks in asking if I'm going to be ready. This is quite honestly not how I prefer to wake up, especially in the midst of summer. I open my eyes and look at my grandma, I manage to say is, "Yeah."

She smiles, I think, and shuts the door again. It's cloudy outside from what I can tell from the window, so leaving the cold basement shouldn't be too bad knowing it won't be an inferno upstairs in the windowed walls of the kitchen. The room I have a large and there is plenty of space to do nothing.

I get out of bed fully dressed as the night before I had snuck out to hang out with my half-brother who lives in town. This is sort of common; it's also the reason why I typically sleep in till two in the afternoon. Unless of course it is a Monday or a Thursday, like today. It was also Sunday last week, but I'm not really a big fan of organized religion. I can't exactly tell my grandparents that though. They brush it off as just me being a lazy teenager.

I make my way to the connected bathroom and I check myself in the mirror, I look exhausted but that's typical. My toothbrush is then assaulted by my grimy teeth, then put back into the holder. Oh, there's also a sauna in the bathroom connected to the basement room I'm staying in, but it is and most likely always will be infested by spiders. I ignore the sauna and I also ignore the feeling that something might be hiding in there amongst the spiders watching me. Leaving the bathroom, I almost trip over my Chucks. I pull them on and grab my wallet.

I slowly make my way up the stairs and into the foggy glow of the living world where two very special people have already had their coffee and breakfast. I'm greeted every morning with some personalized salutation. Today my grandpa says "Good morning Madam Blueberry!" to which I reply something along the lines of "Good morning grandpa." It wasn't until I left Kansas did I realize Madam Blueberry is a Veggie tales reference.

I make my way to the pantry which smells like dog food for obvious reason. There's also a toilet in the pantry area, as well as the laundry machines and a sink which I've had to wash my shoes in on many occasions. Anyway, no one uses the pantry toilet. I dig around for my array of tea's and find the box I'm looking for. I take it out and place a bag in a mug that's white with purple lettering "Kansas State." I don't have my tea kettle here, so I microwave some water and pour it over the tea.

I've just had a sip of tea when my grandma bustles into the kitchen suggesting I put my tea in a thermos. For some reason I don't like using thermoses, so I ended up not replying until I've chugged down a good amount of peppermint tea. The visual I get when remembering this is not pretty. I put the cup down and turn to my grandma, "I'm ready to go."

Writing this out I feel like my grandparents must have thought I was a super odd kid, and this was just this summer. Anyway, my grandma asks if I wanted to eat anything for breakfast, which, I did not want to eat breakfast. I said no. I opened up the front door and the door harp did the thing it always does, it doesn't sound like a harp it's just very pleasant. I can't really describe it in a way that would do the door harp a justice.

Once we are all out in the musty garage covered in sharp tools and broken kites my grandma shuts

SEE MOUNTAIN VIEW, PAGE 14









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MOUNTAIN VIEW HIGH SCHOOL

From Page 13

the door and presses the garage door button. Now, I want to say my grandma drives an old boat from the '70s, like an Oldsmobile, however, she drives a 2013 Jeep Grand Cherokee. I have to squeeze between the side of the garage covered in camping gear that'll probably never be used again by my grandpa at least.

I get comfortable in the car and my grandpa pulls out of the garage and turns on the absolute worst radio station. The station is called K-Love and it's a Christian pop station. Christian pop songs make me want to go back to bed.

The drive to the commissary is sort of a longer drive. We go through a few small towns on the way there. One particular town has been caught up in a lot of meth usage so they put up a fuchsia sign with big yellow letters and a pocket watch that reads 'Meth Watch.' I love that sign. So we drive past this little town of Ogden, the place is littered with thrift shops and buildings filled with so much junk you can't tell if it's a thrift shop or not.

Past Ogden, we get to Fort Riley. I had to get a picture ID to get onto the base. The picture honestly looks quite awful. I pull the ID out of my wallet and give it to my grandma to give to the military officer, post man, or whatever. He looks it over and looks at me and then hands them back. We drive into the base.

Fort Riley is a pretty neat place. Military bases are always neat to me. I'm completely antiwar and the aspect of being around tons of men and women who have been overseas and killed other people is unsettling, but these people are super kind. We pull up to the commissary now next to a PX which I have no idea when they put that up there. Anyway, my grandma asks me to pick up the grocery bags and we exit the jeep.

It's incredibly hot out as usual; this dry Kansas heat that makes you burn to a crisp instead of melt in a puddle. Once we get through the doors of the commissary, my grandma leaves me to go pee. Sort of like my mom, both of them can't go 20 minutes without having to pee. I make sure to put that on my list of "what happens to you if you decide to have a child." Unsettling.

I roam around a display of new cereals and Chex mix. Nothing too promising. My grandma appears so I ditch the mix.

We have a long grocery list and I would be lying if I said I didn't want to see if I could write out everything we bought on this particular day. First we got

fruit for the week. I try and stay healthy most of the time so having fruit around as well as some hummus and pita chips is always a good idea. This week I pick out a bag of apricots and a few white peaches. I have pretty much free reign of the store, my grandma lets me get anything so when I don't pick out a ton of unhealthy foods she is impressed.

When my brother came home from his time in Kansas he had gained 20 pounds; I'm not even joking. This horrified me. My grandma occasionally asks me to get something in an aisle back that we forgot. I go and get it; this time it is pickles.

After a good 30 minutes of following the list we arrive at the beverage aisle. This is where the store has the Red Bull. More specific to me, the sugar free Red Bull. I go to grab the biggest can they have which is pretty big. My grandma then gives me the look I only get in this aisle and says "You already never sleep at night, that can't be healthy for you. Maybe go down a size?" I sigh "Yeah, okay. You're right." I grab a smaller sugar free Red Bull.

Every week I am allowed 1 Red Bull. One week I slept in and missed going to the store and my grandma still bought me a sugar free Red Bull. It is times like that which remind me how much I love my grandma.

The next aisle is the frozen food section, I get pretty melancholy in this aisle once we pass the frozen peas and are met with an array of frozen breakfast items. The waffles are not there. I miss them. My grandma has no idea how much I miss those waffles. I grab the Homestyle Eggo waffles. They're great, I know this. But they are not fantastic.

Next aisle. This trip is not over. The refrigerated butter substitutes and cheese aisle is also where the Pillsbury rolls are. This reminds me of orange rolls. They're cinnamon rolls Pillsbury used to make and it had a tube of orange glaze to frost them with. My grandma knows I love these and that I was under the impression they were discontinued. She zooms over and picks up a tube of Pillsbury orange rolls. I choke back tears. Holy s***. These rolls are so bomb. Obviously we get them.

On the way home the Christian pop station plays on, but I am less salty about it because now the car is filled with the conversation I'm having with my grandma. Yes, we are talking s*** on other members of the family. No I don't have anything against these people, but my grandma loves gossip so I engage because we had a great time at the commissary.

By Irene Richards
Age 17, Grade 12

Westfield High School



By Lola Mcgavely, 9th grade

Pretty, Pretty People

I see pretty women in pretty houses in pretty lands with all pretty people.

They are embraced with warm fabric and vibrant strands of silk.

Engrossed by the eyes of the unfair and unfit, captivated by the way their hair coruscates with the morning sunlight.

The way their voices are synthetically smooth and subtle, the grace of their movements, the enchanting abilities that they yield with ease.

But what renders them perplexed, is that I'm pretty.

Rasp, hoarse, yet the voice is humble and wise. A concoction of a spontaneous combustion that spills words before imploding.

these chemicals mix inside me.
It bends their ankles backwards, on how an ugly

It bends their ankles backwards, on how an ugly could be pretty.

Now, ugly has become the new pretty.

By Georgia Gary

9th grade

COLIN POWELL

From Page 11

sical season if you don't see it through the bashfully tinted lenses of a sweltering summer lover. The way the stiff statue like trees relinquish all worry and stray from their routine lives in the calm serene wind.

The feeling of the cold icy chill in the air having contact with your innocent skin sending a spine tingling freeze to resonate throughout your body. I sit and stare perched upon my grand oak tree the next day and wonder, "what else is there?"

I gaze and gaze at the shimmering gold and maroon tinted horizon, trying to focus and think but came to no avail. I am about to leap off my grand oak tree and saunter with a desolate and downcast countenance when a small leaf of crimson fiery hues lands in my lap.

I pause, then begin to think.

Previously, my mind had simply been a fogged up windshield doused by pattering droplets of water, but that leaf, in the light of the rain, became the windshield wiper to make everything crystal clear. As if my mind was the track and my thoughts the runners, ideas began whirring past the fin-

This little leaf, although so small, reminded me of the days my mom and I would bake crisp sweet apple pie. I could practically smell the warm enlightening scent of cinnamon saturated apple wafting through the backyard.

The hearty and flakey crust, each layer another experience of joy and warmth. I marveled at how this little leaf opened the door to such fond memories, evoke such

As another soft breeze brushes by my face, it makes the hairs lying delicately on the front of my forehead bob up and down like ballerinas but that fall nutcracker is short lived. I turn my head slightly and notice the ruby red cranberries shine regally through their entrapment of dark tangled branches and curled up leaves of mystery. The breath of life echoes from everything in the backyard. The rugged bark of the trees, the luster of the royal cranberries, even the whistle of the breeze that produces yet another performance in the rustling silky and emerald

Everything has a life, a purpose, and they are all anticipating the harsh winter to

They are all ready to silence their song of life and lay dormant while dreaming of the cycle of seasons yet again. All waiting for fall to return to their resting souls. The majesty of fall is unlike no other and never ceases to amaze me.

The consistent flow of warmth coursing through my veins. The flood of jubilant memories crashing in my brain like a twinkling shore at high tide.

Most of all, I love my grand oak tree. The grand oak tree that I perch on like a mother bird on her nest.

The grand oak tree that I gaze, focus, and think from. The grand oak tree that has made me love fall most of all.

BY RITHA M. IGOUT



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"Cansir"



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

Though I want to treat the disease - and my having been diagnosed with the disease, with respect, I don't want to treat it with the utmost reverence. I mean, it's not the Pope.

It's an affliction, not an affection. Certainly not one worth embracing anyway. But definitely one which needs engaging.

Treating and living with lung cancer shouldn't be a vertical-type, up or down, either-or set of options. There should be more integration with non-Western, holistic and alternative approaches rather than, as has been my experience: you're on your own; and your oncologist, generally speaking - or potentially legally-liable from speaking, knows/say less about it than you the patient.

I've tried to straddle this line going on nearly nine years now. Adhering to the conventional wisdom/treatment didn't seem like enough. Perhaps hearing the extremely grim prognosis that I received on Feb. 27, 2009: "13 months to two years," affected my thinking. Perhaps hearing the equally grim likelihood – statistically referencing, of living beyond five years (low single digit percentage); heck, even living beyond two years, might have given me pause as to what course of treatment: chemotherapy, I was starting and why. But what did I know? I had just been blindsided and then bewildered as to why and how I was going to live the rest of my life.

Yet here I sit, nine-years old, so to speak. Some days I believe my amazing good fortune has to do with the treatment and care I've received from my oncologist and staff at the Infusion Center. Other days, I think it has to do with some of the alternatives I've assimilated into my life. Though I can't honestly include exercise in that life, I have modified my diet somewhat and most definitely can mention vitamins, supplements, alkaline water and apple cider vinegar, among a few others; along with a positive attitude with mostly good humor, as important elements. It hasn't been easy, but it has been me. Meaning, I am proud of how I've managed a bad situation and so far, not made it worse.

Though I am somewhat unique, statistically measuring, in how long I've survived (however, I'm not exactly 108-year old Paul Edgecomb/Tom Hanks from the movie "The Green Mile"), I don't know that the varied steps I've taken and the humor and attitude with which I've put one foot in front of the other are likewise unique.

Of the many patients/survivors I've met along this way, many, if not all, have exhibited similar good humor and more of a can-do attitude quite frankly, than I. I've always been happy to make their acquaintance and eager to hear their stories, as they have been interested in hearing mine. Although cancer is not exactly catchy, I've found that, in speaking/ sharing with fellow cancer survivors, what goes around comes around. And what 'that' is that is going around is, to invoke The Beach Boys: "Good Vibrations," and that is catchy and healthy too!

When I was first diagnosed - and caught up in my own circumstances, I was not interested - too much, in interacting with other lung cancer patients/survivors. I was more concerned with my own fragile emotional state and was afraid that exposing myself to more bad news: other "terminal" lung cancer patients' stories would weaken my resolve.

I don't recall how many months or years it was before I realized how wrong I had been. Weaken? My involvement with fellow lung cancer patient/survivors has only strengthened my resolve. Has that openness and appreciation for my fellow lung cancer patient extended my life? I'd like to think it has.

But if it hasn't, I guess the jokes on cancer. And that's a laugh with which we can all live.

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

BROOKFIELD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL



Self-portrait by Giada Weatherup, 3rd Grade



Self-portrait by Aalok Ghimire, 3rd grade

Submitted by Rachel Samsky, art teacher



Clay Monkey by Jireth Guerra Escobar, 5th Grade



Gingerbread House by Danny Truong, 4th Grade



Landscape Painting by Preston Garling, 5th Grade