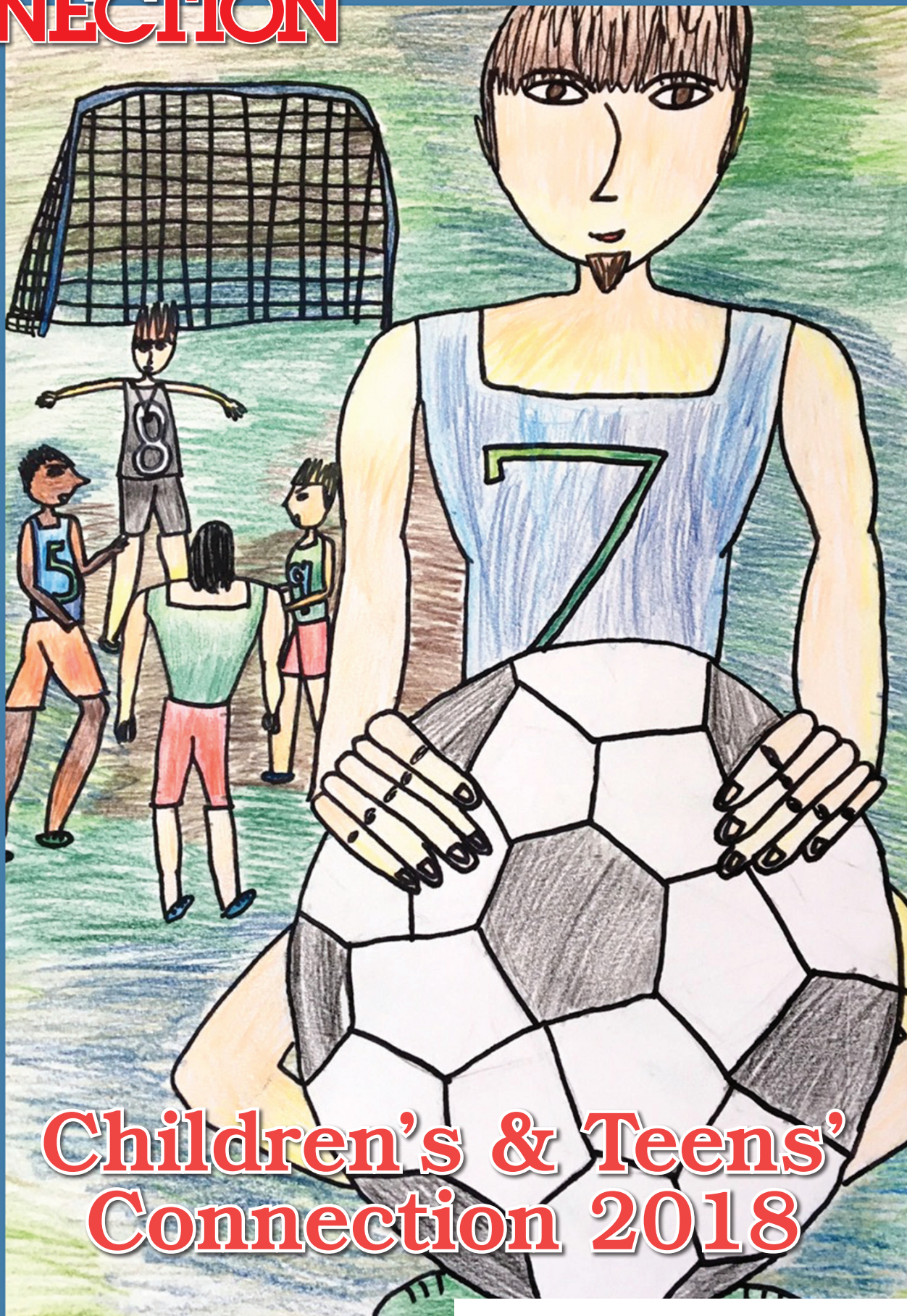


# Great Falls CONNECTION



## Children's & Teens' Connection 2018

Jenny Wang, 10,  
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## POETRY CORNER

### Think

Inhale, Exhale  
Breathe in, Breathe Out  
Think

Close Your Eyes  
Remember Your Past  
See your Future  
Think

Think About your Decisions  
Learn From Your Mistakes  
Think

Remember Your Hopes  
Live Your Dreams  
Love What is Around You  
Think

Fear The Rage  
Hear The Thunder  
Just remember to  
Think

Be Calm  
Stay Focused  
Think

Everyone Is Different  
Everyone Has Their Own Path  
Be You  
Think

Be Positive  
Be Unique  
Shine, be a star  
Think

Believe In Yourself  
You Will Try  
You Will Succeed

Open Your Eyes  
Look Around You  
No one is the Same  
Inhale, Exhale  
Breathe In  
Breathe Out  
Think

— SOPHIA BEELAND, 13,  
OF GREAT FALLS  
COOPER MIDDLE SCHOOL,  
GRADE 8

### Pantry

The toxic seduction  
You continue to lure me  
Drooling the heaven behind  
I am hypnotized  
Destined to regret  
I go again  
Only to meet with beans and grains  
Confused, I turn  
To the victory claim of Mom  
"Help yourself"

— CHAIWOON YOO, 16,  
MCLEAN  
GRADE 11,  
THE MADEIRA SCHOOL



# CHILDREN'S & TEENS'



**Holiday Inspiration, Pastel by Sara Dethero, 12, Great Falls, Grade 7 at Cooper Middle School.**



**By Amalya Sharma, Grade 1, Great Falls Elementary**

## Welcome

Dear Readers:

This week, the Great Falls 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 & Teens' Issue.

The response as always was enormous. While we were unable to publish every piece we received, we did our best to put together a paper with a fair sampling of the submitted stories, poems, drawings, paintings, photographs and other works of art.

We appreciate the extra effort made by school staff to gather the materials during their busy time leading up to the holidays. We'd also like to encourage both schools and parents to mark their 2019 calendars for early December, the deadline for submissions for next year's Children's & Teens'

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.

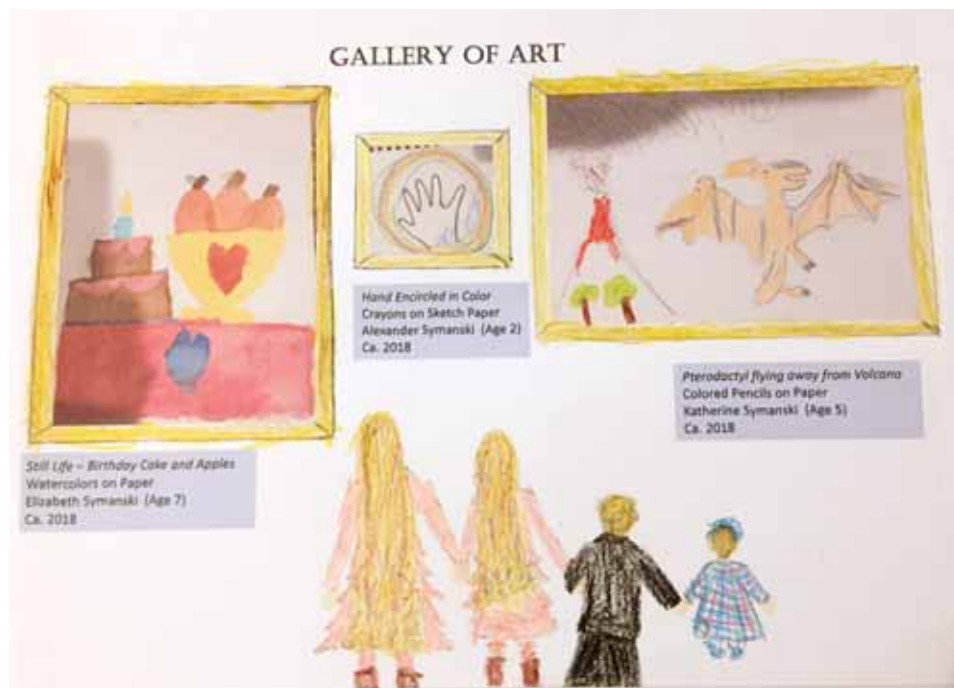
The children's issue is only a part of our year-round commitment to cover education and our local schools. As always, the Connection welcomes letters to the editor, story ideas, calendar listings and notices of local events from our readers. Photos and other submissions about special events at schools are especially welcome for our weekly schools pages.

Our preferred method for material is e-mail, which should be sent to [greatfalls@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:greatfalls@connectionnewspapers.com), but you can reach us by mail at 1606 King Street, Alexandria, VA 22314 or call 703-778-9414 with any questions.

— EDITOR KEMAL KURSPAHIC



**By Jenny Wang, 10, Forestville Elementary**



**"Art within Art" by homeschoolers Elizabeth Symanski, 8, Grade 3 and Katherine Symanski, 6, Grade 1, of Great Falls.**

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**By Charles Kwaw, from Great Falls, Kindergarten, Colvin Run Elementary.**






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## CHILDREN'S & TEENS'

### GREAT FALLS ELEMENTARY

Submissions from art teacher  
Caitlin Giroux's students

By Dylan  
Macleod,  
Grade 2



By Jake Coblentz, Grade 3



By Zara Mufti, Grade 3

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# CHILDREN'S & TEENS'

## COLVIN RUN ELEMENTARY

Artwork submitted by Art Teachers  
Lauren Grimm and Rachel Wiseman.

By Ella DeGraaf,  
Great Falls,  
Grade 4 - square



By Amy Key, Great Falls, Grade 6



By Rowan Marashlian, Great Falls, Grade 1



By Benjamin  
Moser,  
Kindergarten,  
from Vienna

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The Thompson Team wants to thank all their clients, business partners, and cooperating agents for making this a successful year. Make your 2019 move a success for you and your friends by calling us for a personal consultation about buying or selling your home or investment property.

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## CHILDREN'S & TEENS'

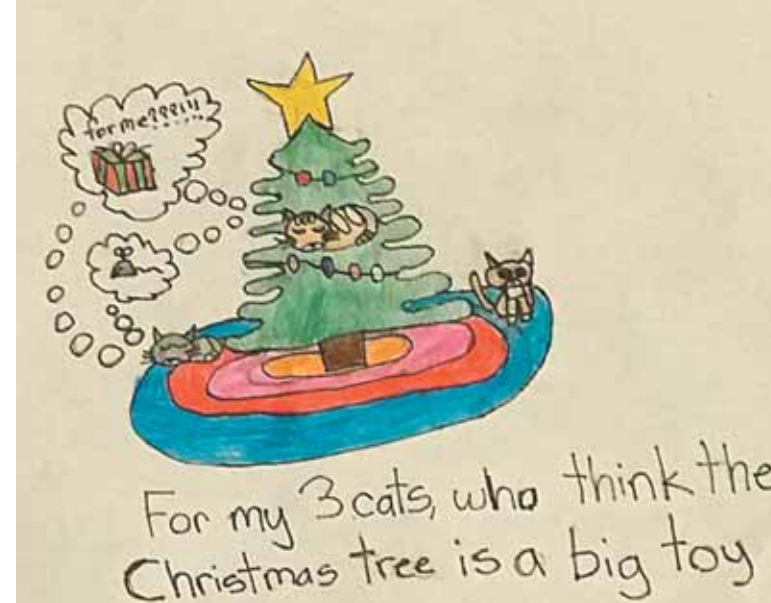
### MORE ARTWORK FROM GREAT FALLS



**Gardening with Family in our Backyard by Olivia Harrington, 9, Grade 4, Great Falls Elementary**



**Family is Love by Regan Harrington, 7, Grade 2, Great Falls Elementary**



**Melanie Wordne, Great Falls, Grade 3, Colvin Run Elementary**

### COOPER MIDDLE SCHOOL *From the students of Lindsay Bovenzi*



PHOTO BY REGINA MAZA, 13, GREAT FALLS, GRADE 8

**I am so thankful for my dog. My dog Sherlock helps me get through difficult situations and always lifts my spirits.**



PHOTO BY RYAN SAWTARI, 13, GREAT FALLS, GRADE 8

**I am very thankful for my dog Ceaser. He has brought so much joy into my family and my life.**



PHOTO BY LILA CAHILL, 13, GREAT FALLS, GRADE 8

**I am thankful for Duke because he is playful and he always knows how to make me feel better.**

### What is the greatest gift you can give this holiday season?

Some people make lists for presents they want to receive during the holidays.

Others buy gifts themselves, and a few might ask ahead of time for

a certain present. What really is the greatest gift someone could receive though?

The best gift I could ever receive, is someone's friendship and love.

If I find someone who is willing and ready to be by my side no matter what.

Someone who finds time for me and who I can be myself with. A

person's time and energy are limited, and to be given an important part to play in someone's life would be amazing.

We all take from society. It is a

mere fact, and it's whether we give back that counts. The best gift I've ever received is someone's time, patience, and true friendship, and I hope someday I will be able to

give that to someone else as well.

— REBECCA WEXLER, 13,  
OF GREAT FALLS,  
GRADE 8

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**Re: Dr. Kathryn Sowerwine**

Dermatology & Allergy Specialists of Virginia  
1800 Town Center Dr. Suite 415, Reston VA 20190  
1715 N. George Mason Dr. Suite 105, Arlington VA 22205

Dear Patient:

For professional reasons, I have decided to close my Allergy & Immunology portion of practice at Dermatology & Allergy Specialists of Virginia. Thus, I will no longer be able to provide your medical care. The last day I will see patients is January 31, 2019. I will be available for emergency care and scheduled appointments until the closing date.

We are happy to notify you that Dr. Daneshvar will be taking over the Allergy portion of the practice at his offices. Dr. Daneshvar is board certified in Allergy, Asthma and Immunology as well as Internal Medicine. He is the president of the Allergy and Asthma Care Center and has been in practice for more than 25 years. We are glad to offer our loyal allergy, asthma and immunology patients a provider who is highly regarded in the medical community.

Dr. Daneshvar of Allergy & Asthma Care Center provides exemplary care to both pediatrics and adult populations suffering with immunology, asthma and allergy concerns. Dr. Daneshvar is continuing care initiated by this office and looks forward to this opportunity to continue in your care and wellbeing. He has office locations in Reston, Leesburg and Alexandria is accepting new patients at this time. His website and telephone number can be found below.

Your health and well-being are of utmost importance to me and my staff at Dermatology & Allergy Specialists of Virginia. I encourage you to choose another provider as soon as possible to ensure uninterrupted care. For your convenience, I am including contact information for the Virginia Hospital Center, Reston Hospital patient referral line and websites as well as the American College and the American Academy of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology websites and telephone numbers.

PLEASE CHECK YOUR INSURANCE COMPANY FOR PROVIDERS COVERED WITHIN YOUR NETWORK AND REGION.

If you have a medical emergency, please dial 911 or go to the nearest emergency department.

As a reminder, your health records are confidential. A copy of your records can be released to you or your new provider with your written permission. To obtain an electronic copy of your medical records at no charge please access your patient portal at [www.dermspecialistsva.ema.md](http://www.dermspecialistsva.ema.md) Please complete the records release form and return it in the self-addressed stamped envelope and the fee, if requesting physical paper records, of c50 per page for the first 50 pages then c75 per page after that. Postage and a \$10.00 handling fee will be charged to the patient.

Thank you for trusting me with your healthcare needs. It has been a pleasure to provide your care, and I wish you the best in the future.

Sincerely,

*Dr. Kathryn Sowerwine*

Dr. Daneshvar; Allergy & Asthma Care Center: Reston; 703-709-7736 Alexandria; 703-931-2164

Leesburg; 703-777-1411

<http://www.allergyandasthmacarecenterpc.com/>

Virginia Hospital Center: 703-558-5000

<https://www.virginiahospitalcenter.com/doctors/default.aspx>

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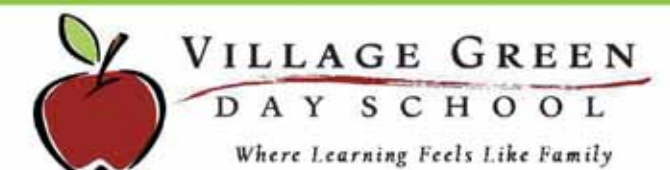
<https://restonhospital.com/physicians/>

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**Wednesday, January 16, 2019**  
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**Presentation begins at 7 p.m.**  
 Inclement Weather Date: Tuesday, January 22, 2019

Dranesville Elementary School  
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**Find out** about plans to restrict right turns during weekday peak morning traffic hours from southbound Algonkian Parkway to westbound Thomas Avenue to reduce congestion and improve safety and operations.

**Stop by** between 6:30 p.m. and 8:30 p.m. to view displays and learn more about the project. A presentation will begin at 7 p.m. Project staff will be available to answer your questions.

**Review** project information at the VDOT project website ([www.virginiadot.org/projects](http://www.virginiadot.org/projects)), at the information meeting, or during business hours at VDOT's Northern Virginia District Office at 4975 Alliance Drive in Fairfax. Please call ahead at 703-259-2388 or TTY/TDD 711 to ensure appropriate personnel are available to answer your questions.

**Give your written comments** at the meeting, or submit them by **January 28, 2019** to Mr. Thomas Folse, P.E., Virginia Department of Transportation, 4975 Alliance Drive, Fairfax, VA 22030 or email [meetingcomments@VDOT.virginia.gov](mailto:meetingcomments@VDOT.virginia.gov). Please reference "Thomas Avenue Cut-Through Analysis" in the subject line.

VDOT ensures nondiscrimination and equal employment in all programs and activities in accordance with Title VI and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. If you need more information or special assistance for persons with disabilities or limited English proficiency, contact Thomas Folse at 703-259-2388.

## CHILDREN'S & TEENS'

### Silly Cheer

Christmas time is here  
 Here comes Rudolph the reindeer  
 Our school is all clear  
 And, presents will soon appear  
 Who knows I may have a new toy spear or head gear

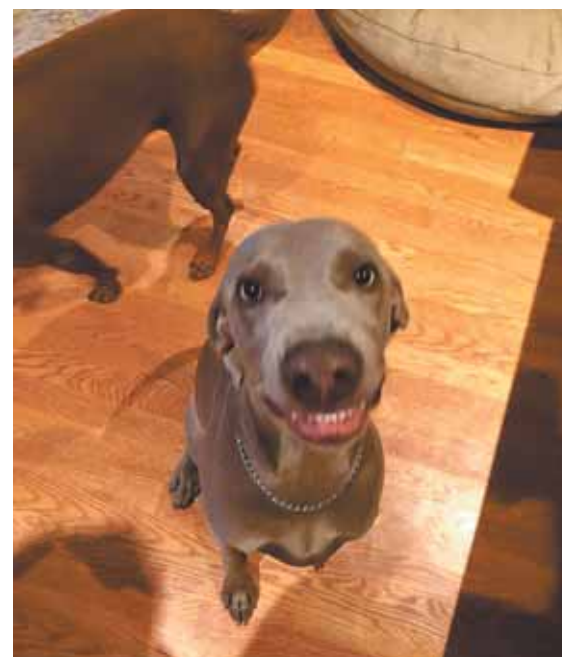
Snow is falling here  
 It has filled my inner ear  
 And, Costco is out of beer  
 The roads are finally getting clear

My favorite book is by William Shakespeare  
 But, I would rather volunteer  
 And, I will not be a railroad engineer  
 I may try the political sphere like Vladimir  
 What I will do as a grownup is still unclear

Anyhow, we are almost done with this year  
 Hope you have a better next year!  
 And, make some new year resolutions that you can adhere.

— SIDH JADDU, 9

GRADE 4, FORESTVILLE ELEMENTARY



**Weimaraner by Olivander Dethero (Ollie), 2, of Great Falls.**



### Inspired by the Holidays

**Acro Wire Sculpture by  
Martina Dethero, 10,  
Great Falls, Grade 5 at  
Great Falls Elementary.**

## Technology: Our Biggest Blessing, or Our Biggest Curse? Why the Technology that Drives Generation Z is Our Greatest Challenge

As Generation Z, we are the first generation to grow up in a technology-driven world, with technology becoming both our greatest strength and our greatest challenge. Among the benefits of this in today's world is that Generation Z's all-encompassing exposure to technology allows us to judge whether a source is real or "fake" better than any other generation so far.

However, our reliance on technology for everything from homework to friendship leaves us vulnerable to online predators assaulting us through the keyboards on our computers and the apps on

our phones. We need to be aware not only of faulty sites, but also of social media, apps, and unknown players seeking you out in your favorite games.

Adding to the technological drama for Generation Z is that many of the popular web browsers sell your personal data to advertisers looking to target you with appealing ads. Sound harmless? It may not be as innocent as it seems. Search engines sell your name, favorite sites, and can even geolocate you when you access the web, something most middle schoolers have never even considered.

This escalates as hackers intercept your data, and ad companies reconstruct where you like to go and when you will be there. Facing these challenges head-on is the next step in solving our problem. It is up to us, Generation Z, to make the Internet a safer place for everyone who uses it, and we will need to do this through further developing our greatest strength, technology.

— PEYTON WALCOTT, 12,  
OF GREAT FALLS

GRADE 7 AT COOPER MIDDLE  
SCHOOL IN SARA KAHR'S CLASS.



## CHILDREN'S & TEENS'



By Jason Wang, 8, Forestville Elementary

### SIBLINGS' ARTWORK

By Jason Wang,  
8, Forestville  
Elementary



By Jenny  
Wang, 10,  
Forestville  
Elementary

## The Challenges of Riding

"Come on Catie! It's your turn on Lola!"

I mounted the graceful brown-and-white mare, adjusting the reins in my hands. The three instructors at my camp switched their gaze between me and the other kid on Peabody, a larger male horse. I didn't know what his name was, but that didn't matter. I was focused on trying a canter for the first time today. But I didn't know I was being reckless.

I had seen the girl before me, a girl named Chloe, trot Lola. Lola wasn't like the other horses I had ridden at this camp. Lola wasn't like Curly-Whirly, she wasn't like Tumble, or Cookie or Howie. Not even like Watson, who honestly could be a pain in the butt sometimes. Lola was *fast*, and a pain (especially to groom and tack up.) She raised her hooves high when she trotted. She strided around the ring with grace. But what I didn't know is that she was jumpy. Really jumpy.

I clicked Lola on, and I steered her around the barrels at a walk, listening to the instructors' instructions. Lola had a fast, smooth pace. Easy to control. But when I steered

her around a corner, heard my instructor telling me to trot her, I felt a wrenching feeling in my gut. I pushed it down and squeezed Lola on the sides slightly. She trotted and bucked slightly. I let out a yelp of surprise, and that's when everything went wrong.

Lola jumped at the noise I made, then started galloping. Fast.

I couldn't hear myself screaming. I didn't know I was only making it worse.

Eventually, I was bucked into the fence, landing on the sandy ground on my back with a thud. The instructors caught Lola. The sky swirled above, and I heard the pounding of boots on the ground as the instructors ran towards me. But then I did something I never thought I would that day. I cried. I cried from fear and from embarrassment. Sobs so deep it shook my whole chest. And I couldn't stop.

Eventually, the wounds on my side from hitting the fence disappeared. But I have a mental scar that will never fade. But a lesson I learned is that if you've never fallen off of a horse, you've never actually ridden.

To the people who say horseback riding isn't a real sport, that it takes no talent at all: let me ask you, have you ever had a teammate that was ten times your size? Have you ever done a synchronized dance with something that could crush you in an instant? A mistake in volleyball could cost you a point, but a mistake in horseback riding could cost you a life.

But there are definitely rewards. For me, the ability to ride is a blessing. I love to do it! I go to the summer camp in the summer, but the horse I ride here in Virginia is my best friend. I'm not embarrassed to say that my best friend is a horse named Bob! He's a much better friend than most of the humans I know.

So, if you want to do horseback riding, you've got to be strong. Not just physically, mentally too. You've got to have the courage to get back in the saddle, and be prepared to make a new best friend.

— CATHERINE (CATIE)  
ARDEN MORTON, 12,  
MCLEAN

GRADE 7, COOPER MIDDLE  
SCHOOL, LINDSAY BOVENZI'S CLASS

## Here's What's Happening at MCC!

### Closing Notice



### New Year's Day

MCC and The Old Firehouse will be closed on Tuesday, Jan. 1, and will reopen at 9 a.m. on Wednesday, Jan. 2.

## The Old Firehouse WINTER BREAK TRIPS



**Snow Tubing & Ice Skating**  
Wednesday, Jan. 2, 8 a.m.-6 p.m.  
\$60/\$50 MCC district residents



**Laser Tag & Indoor Paintball**  
Thursday, Jan. 3, 8 a.m.-6 p.m.  
\$60/\$50 MCC district residents



**Upscale Bowling & Movie**  
Friday, Jan. 4, 8 a.m.-6 p.m.  
\$65/\$55 MCC district residents

## MCC is Newly Renovated We're Showing Off!



**Community  
Open House**  
Saturday, Jan. 5  
11 a.m.-2 p.m.  
Free admission.

### Presented by The Alden



**Martin Luther King Jr. Day  
Celebration, "Liner Notes"**  
Sunday, Jan. 20, 2 p.m.  
\$25/\$15 MCC district residents



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An expert is someone who knows  
some of the worst mistakes that can  
be made in his subject and how to  
avoid them.

-Werner Heisenberg

#### Announcements

## CHILDREN'S & TEENS'

### Bald Lettuce Head

Hello! Someone asked me "would you rather become completely bald or grow lettuce on your head?" My answer is I would grow lettuce on my head. Why?

First, when you're lazy to cook, you can eat your own head-grown lettuce. Step # 1 – pull some fresh lettuce off your head. Step # 2 – wash and place the lettuce in a bowl. Step # 3 – drizzle some ranch on it. YUM! There you have it – your delicious and refreshing salad!!

Did you know that Romans, Egyptians and Greeks were among the first civili-

zations to grow and eat lettuce? Also, the name *lettuce* in English and *Lactuca* in Latin come from the word *lactis*, the Latin word for milk, because the juice of the lettuce plant looks like milk. The white milky thing inside the lettuce helps people with insomnia. Rock-a-bye baby in the lettuce top, when the wind blows the lettuce will fall.

"No more slaves!" said Abraham Lincoln. Yep, my favorite president is Abe Lincoln. He used to wear a foot-long hat in which he stored all his important

documents. Between the layers of your lettuce head, you can store your money and, maybe, your cell phone just like Abe! Get it!

Lastly, if you are lost in a desert, your lettuce head will be a cap to protect you from all the UV from the sun.

There, my bald friends I hope I persuaded you to grow lettuce on your head.

— SIDH JADDU, 9

GRADE 4,  
FORESTVILLE ELEMENTARY

### The Clock

The clock  
The clock  
Never agrees with me  
It tells me I'm late  
It tells me it's morning  
It tells me to hurry  
It tells me to be patient

It tells me to wait  
It tells me to sleep  
It tells me to wake up  
It tells me to think  
It tells me to eat  
The clock  
Answers many questions

That can be grouped into one:  
When?

— ASHLEY CHON, 12.

VIENNA  
GRADE 6,  
COLVIN RUN ELEMENTARY

### COOPER MIDDLE SCHOOL

From students of Lindsay Bovenzi

### What to be Thankful For

Now that Thanksgiving is rolling around the corner, it's time to start intensely thinking about what I am thankful for. There's such a long list of yearly no-brainers: my family, friends, home, education, laughter, love. This 2018, though, I'm taking my thoughts in a different direction.

In October, my dog, Nina, passed away. Nina had been part of the family for as long as I'd been alive. She was more of the shy type, sometimes making her appear unfriendly. But I know that underneath the shell of growling and hiding in her closet, Nina was sweet and always wanted to be loved.

Naturally, her death impacted my family deeply. On the night she died, we were all tears and puffy red eyes, but something that really propelled my sadness was the thought that she would never be around to go to the park again, to be petted again, to take baths again.

The experience itself – that is something that I should be thankful for. Many times when we're thankful, we jump to the conclusion that what we're thankful for has to be for something that we currently have.

Having that experience taken away was not fun, but now I can see things from a different view. It taught me a lesson – to always make the most of your time here with your pets, loved ones, friends, and even enemies.

Nina was the best pet I could've asked for and the best way to symbolize what to be thankful for.

— OLIVIA LIU, 12.  
MCLEAN,  
GRADE 7

### The Greatest Challenge?

What are the issues of today? What about tomorrow? I think that the problems of the future are going to be much larger. I think that the problems of the future will act on a global scale, and potentially permanently alter the Earth.

Is it real? Yes! Heat-related events, such as coral die-offs are becoming more

and more frequent, and glaciers and icecaps are melting.

Are humans responsible? The answer is we are probably at least partially responsible. The fact that carbon dioxide is a potent greenhouse gas, and the fact that natural global temperature fluctuations aren't usually fast enough to show the warming we see today makes it likely that humanity is at least partially responsible.

I think that allowing this warming to continue is ridiculous – why should future generations have to deal with a problem that they didn't make much of? That should seem unjust to everybody.

One solution is conservation. We need to use more efficient appliances, cars, etc. A common misconception is that conservation means discomfort. That is untrue: an increase in efficiency, can easily give the same (or better) performance for less energy. Conservation even lowers costs on your energy bill, to the point where the savings can pay for the upgrade (eventually). I think that conservation isn't enough on its own, but it definitely is a good first step.

— KIRAN DONNELLY, 12.  
MCLEAN,  
GRADE 7

### What the Holidays are Really About

The holidays are really about being happy. Whether it's having fun with the people you love or getting to decorate a tree, do whatever makes you feel content.

Most people spend their days stressed at work or school and don't have the time to simply enjoy life. When it's the holidays, people get to take a break, visit family, donate to charity, give gifts, and celebrate their religion. What really makes the holidays so magical is that anybody can take part in it. People with many different ages, countries, religions, and ethnicities can celebrate it.

I remember when I was little thinking that the holidays were just about shopping, gifts and the birth of Jesus. Maybe for some, it is just about that, and that's not a bad thing.

For me, it's about visiting some of my relatives that I don't get to see often. It's always so memorable and I get so depressed when we have to leave them because the holidays are over. This year,

I'm going to a wedding, and I already know it is going to be such an exciting experience.

If you're stressing out about making the holidays perfect, just remember that perfect doesn't mean happy. It's one of the only times of the year you really get to celebrate yourself and traditions. Tell strangers on the street Merry Christmas, Happy Hanukkah, Happy Kwanzaa, or just simple a "Happy holidays!" Make sure you give yourself and others around you an amazing holiday.

— ESHA BANERJEE, 12.  
MCLEAN,  
GRADE 7

### The Holy Month

Ramadan. That is one special tradition that my family celebrates, and the whole Muslim community. I really enjoy this month. It is a month that is full of love and care between people, even if they are strangers. In this month, Muslims must fast, pray, and give out food or water to the less fortunate who don't have these things. We are expected to spread out kindness. That is why Ramadan is also known for many family gatherings.

In Ramadan, we fast from dawn till sunset. When the Maghrib prayer, the sunset prayer, is called upon, then we know we could eat. During the day, my mom cooks our iftar, or breakfast, which is the meal we break our fast to. I always feel so hungry. When the Maghrib prayer is called upon, I run to the table and eat instantly, before anyone even breaks their fast. I look really funny, though.

When we are done eating, I run to the desserts' table. Eastern sweets are very popular in Ramadan for many families. The thing I eat the most is Basbousa, which is very delicious. When I finish eating Basbousa, I don't eat again, but I go watch Arabic TV series. Mostly every Ramadan, especially in Egypt, actors make a lot of TV series for families to watch together. There are usually many options and genres to choose from.

Ramadan is annual and comes only for one month. I always wait for it to come around to enjoy the festivities it brings.

— JASMINE AHMED AMIN, 13.  
MCLEAN,  
GRADE 8

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Volcano

Dark sky  
Steaming earth  
Shaking ground  
The fury of nature

Earth went mad  
Spitting lava  
Throwing rocks  
Burning everything

It feels like  
The end  
But also  
The start

From ash grows hope  
From loss buds life  
End is beginning of new  
The law of nature

— YEONHO NAM, 17, McLEAN  
GRADE II, LANGLEY HIGH SCHOOL,  
ANNA COHEN'S CLASS

Forever Friends

Sometimes we have bad days  
And bite and scratch and cry  
And sometimes we have good days  
Where we hug and laugh together  
And sometimes we don't talk  
For days and weeks and months,  
But one thing never changes:

We are forever friends

— OLIVIA PARK, 11, McLEAN,  
GRADE 6, CHURCHILL ROAD ELEMENTARY

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better is  
expected.  
**-Thomas Fuller**

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Back to  
Abnormal



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

Now that the drama of the last five weeks – and the last three columns – is mostly over, life can return to its previous/usual ebb and flow of cancer highs and lows.

For the moment, what I don't know: the effect on my "Adam's Apple" tumor (as I will call it) of the aggressive, every-three-week-infusion-schedule I've been on since early October, is definitely not hurting. Though I am under no delusions about what my next CT scan might show, I also have no confusion as to the road ahead: stay positive and remain engaged and live life with the least amount of focus and conversation on the dominating fact that I was diagnosed with an incurable form of cancer: non-small cell lung cancer, stage IV, almost 10 years ago. A diagnosis which came with a "13 month to two year" prognosis.

By most accounts, I shouldn't be writing this column – or doing anything else for that matter. I should be somewhere else – doing absolutely nothing, so far as we know, anyway. And I don't mean lying on a chaise lounge somewhere soaking in the local culture as I try not to sunburn in the midday sun. I mean... well, I presume you know what I mean.

But here I am, alive and reasonably well; not boasting, just saying.

Because, as amazingly fortunate as I am to still be anywhere nearly 10 years post diagnosis, there's a part of me that believes not so much in what I've done to support my chemotherapy/conventional treatment (non-Western alternatives) as in thinking I've fallen through some crack somewhere and have been forgotten by whatever reaper is sowing these things.

Granted, he/she/it has a lot of work to do and an incredibly long list to get through; still, as the centuries have confirmed, eventually, everyone's die is cast.

Having survived so long when so few of the thousands of similarly diagnosed cancer patients have not, certainly gives this one pause. But the pause passes quickly and is taken over by positivity; as in I must remain positive about the negative and not allow any semblance of "woeing" about me or moaning and groaning about what I'm able to do or disabled and unable to do. Never!

I have been given the gift of life and I see no point in looking that gift-horse in its mouth. It is my job, if it could even be characterized as such, to keep my head down and keep moving forward, figuratively speaking. There is no point in thinking backwards or wondering who, what, where, when and how. The point is the future, not the past.

Unlike the country music song by Tim McGraw, "Live Like You Were Dying," I don't want to live like I'm dying. I want to live like I'm living. A living which takes into account the good, bad and the indifferent.

If I stray from what I perceive to be my usual path, I will know that I'm doing so for a reason: cancer.

And since I never want to reinforce a negative, let alone give it room to roam, I will continue to try and take it all in stride and be grateful along the way for the life I've been granted and try not to weaken in my resolve to not let others be adversely affected or diminished by my situation.

I pretty much do whatever I want to do anyway. Though there are many things I can't do (particularly, bending), there are still many activities I am able to enjoy.

To quote Spock from Star Trek: "The good of the many outweigh the good of the few." A bit of a stretch I know, but I hope you get the association.

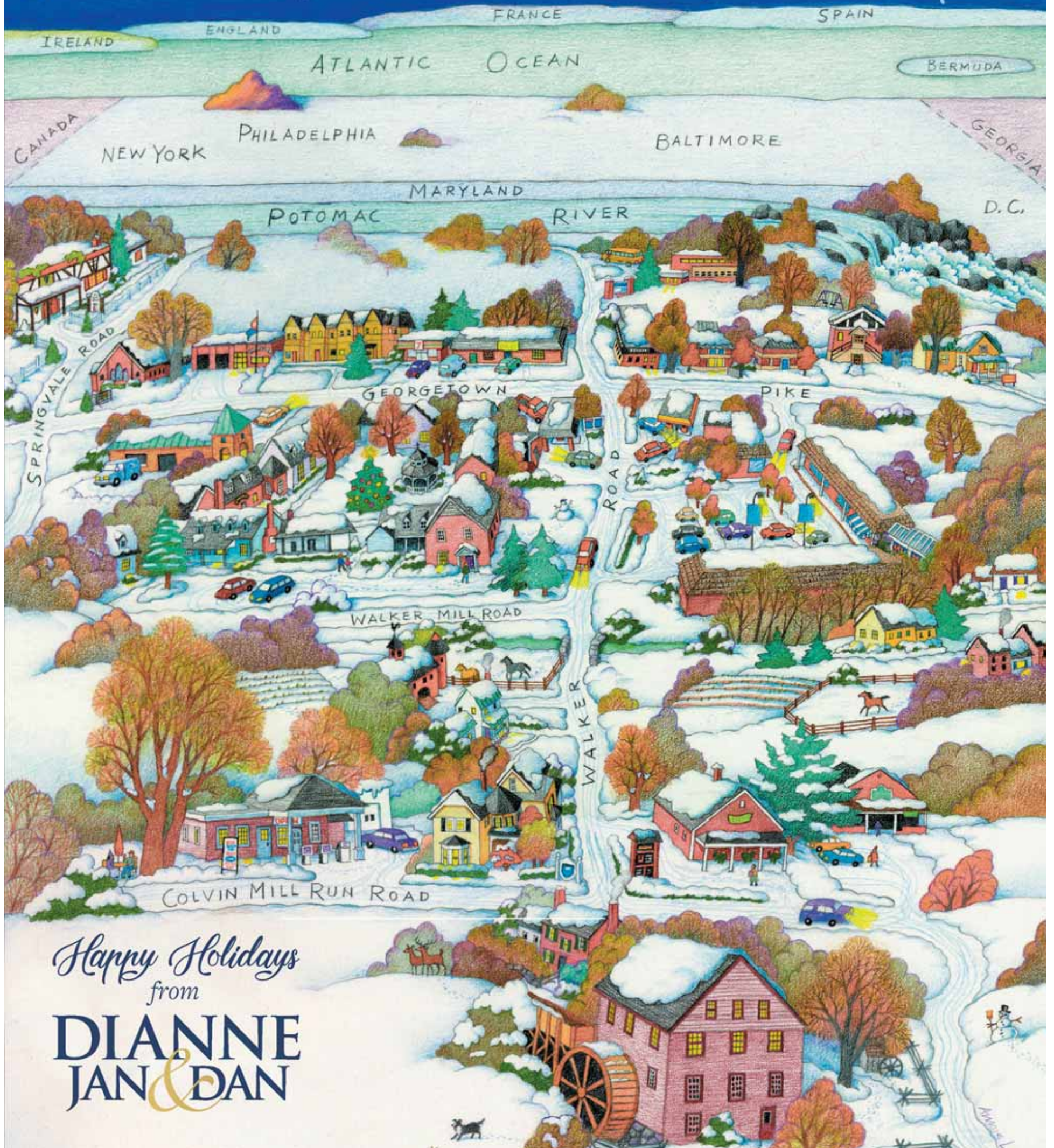
For me to survive the ordeal of cancer requires taking the emotion out of it. The highs and lows must become evens. And the levels and test results which occasionally have become odds, merely moments in time and subject to change.

If I am to finish this race, time cannot be of the essence, time must be what I make of it.

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



# GREAT FALLS



*Happy Holidays*  
from  
**DIANNE  
JAN & DAN**