



Artist Name: Ellie Zhao
Age: 7
Grade: 2nd Grade
School: Great Falls Elementary

Children's & Teens' Connection 2022

DECEMBER 14-20, 2022

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CHILDREN'S AND TEENS' CONNECTION

TEACHER: MRS. BOVENZI

Writing from Cooper Middle School

The World that Could be

HASAN RASHID
GRADE 7, 13 YEARS OLD
GREAT FALLS, VA

Have you ever thought about what you would do if you had the power to change the world? Would you end hunger? Cure cancer? Send humans to explore the universe? I'd do something different. I'd make us get along.

The world my generation will inherit is divided beyond belief. Rich, poor, east, west, political party. Just about every problem in the world stems from that stubborn part of human nature that refuses to allow us to work together. What if we could get along? Is it outrageous to want to see the world united? That naive?

More than ever, people fear the future. It's a tragedy that, every day, hundreds of thousands wake up and wonder if they will eat. Nuclear weapons and climate change could end humanity tomorrow, and it's all because no country wants to give up an inch of foreign policy ground. Burning cars and hailstorms of bullets should not be something anyone should deal with, and yet that sight is what's plastered over screens every day of the week. How much consideration is given to skeletal children and families torn apart? It varies.

Maybe I'm just impatient. Change is gradual, after all. And, of course, this is "just how the world works." But I want to do something! Anything! It's maddening to just sit and watch. People say, fairly often, that "the world is a cruel place." This is true. Does it have to be? Should our generation settle for that? The individual isn't responsible for the injustice of the world - that's a silly thought. But I refuse to believe unity is impossible, and I refuse to believe that the voice of the young is powerless. Surely, we must be able to do better. We have to do better.

The Red Bell

KATIE YOUNG
14, 8TH GRADE
GREAT FALLS

A smell filled the air, a smell so aromatic, a smell so delightfully grand, it filled up the house and into my small blue room. This smell was the food my grandmother made, I could feel my excitement waiting to hear it. The bell, the big red one, sat right at the entrance of the kitchen. She would ring it, reminding me to come down and indulge in my favorite meal.

It was a basic meal, not too complicated, it consisted of Longanisa, egg, and rice. The sweet Filipino sausage complemented the salty eggs and rice, and all of it went together quite nicely. After the meal was finished she and I would watch her favorite show.

She would yell at the old TV when it went static. I was always the one to fix the loose cords. I always remembered "The red cords with the red, the yellow with the yellow."

She would call me a genius when I would fix it, though I wasn't much of one, it made me feel brighter, brighter than a star.

It was quite a hassle at the time because the TV was pretty much older than me, but I knew that this time I spent with my grandmother was priceless. As the clock struck 11:30, my sadness started to sink in, and my grandmother grabbed her maroon bag and told me it was time for her to go.

I cried and wept, "oh please don't go." But, she always told me "I love you so, and I'll always be within your heart." Though my grandmother no longer visits as much, I can still feel that same warm feeling whenever I hear that big red bell.

Friendship Frenzy

KATE WALSH
13, 7TH GRADE
MCLEAN

As soon as I stepped into Cooper Middle School, I shuffled amongst the bustling, loud, croc wearing teenagers that I had to spend the next two years of my life with. Walking into the 7th grade gym, I stepped over multiple rowdy kids to try and get to my friend. I sighed, thinking about how different it was from the elementary school I had known for the past 7 years. And how it would never be the same.

In these first few months of school, I have kept excellent grades, been successful in the school play, and even made some new friends. However I have an issue that has been holding me back from total happiness. That issue being the fact that I have found "Having friends" isn't enough in middle school.

In Elementary school, it was easier to maintain healthy friendships, as well as have a bigger social circle filled with one main friend group. As middle school has begun, social life has shaped a hefty problem for me. In 6th grade I had developed a sturdy friend group with about 7 people.

Although I am still friends with most of those kids, our friend group has mostly grown distant. Don't get me wrong, I still love all of the friends I had made in elementary school, but it is hard to support all of those friendships in a much larger school.

The hardest aspect of it all is, while being friends with everyone in some friend groups I would like to be a part of, I still haven't explicitly joined them yet. To anybody that may relate to these experiences, know there are always people that know what you are going through. Real friends will help you get past these tough social issues. You are not alone.

Trying To Run

JAH-IA VANG
13 AND 8TH GRADE
VIENNA

Do you like math? Younger me would've been disgusted just by the word. Growing up, math was always the subject that I de-

SEE COOPER MIDDLE SCHOOL, PAGE 5
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CHILDREN'S AND TEENS' CONNECTION



Ellie Zhao, 7, 2nd grade, Great Falls



Isabel Mallory 2nd grade, Great Falls

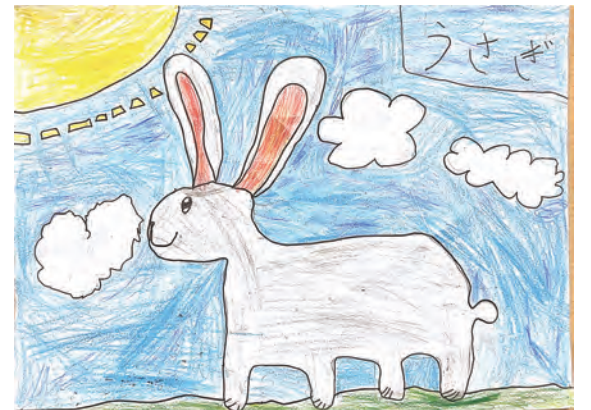
Great Falls Elementary, 2nd Grade



Zac Sung, 7, 2nd grade, Great Falls.



Sachi Potluri, 7, 2nd grade, Vienna



Annabelle Wendelken, 7, 2nd grade, Great Falls



Phoebe Yamada, 7, 2nd grade, Vienna

Triangle Santa

IMAGES FROM STUDENTS IN JOYCE SMOCK'S KINDERGARTEN



Walker Brown



Wyatt Richardson



Wesley Jenkins



Lynn Kham



Addy

CHILDREN'S AND TEENS' CONNECTION



Ian Kim, Poem

Longfellow MS, 7th Grade
McLean

Wind

Take me far
Far away from
The sigh
The pain
The sorrow

Take me away
Far away from
The tornados
The earthquakes
The wildfires

Take me away
Far away from
From the monarchy of Taliban
The streets of Iran
The battlefields of Ukraine

Wind
Blow me to a place
Where all equality blooms
Where harmony sings
Where love shines
Blow me like the wind
Far
Far away

In 30 Years ...

Angela Wong, 10 years old, Forestville Elementary, Great Falls, Va.



Title of Art:

"Remembering The Lone Cypress and Pebble Beach, CA"

Names:
Elizabeth Symanski,
Age: 12, Grade: 7

Katherine Symanski,
Age: 10, Grade: 4

Alexander Symanski,
Age: 6, Grade: Kindergarten

Victoria Grace Symanski,
Age: 4, Grade: Pre-K

Town of Residence:
Great Falls, VA
School: Homeschool

Teachers:
Andréa and James Symanski

TEACHER: MRS. BOVENZI

Writing from Cooper Middle School

FROM PAGE 2

tested the most. Numbers and scribbles all over my papers, yet nothing made sense. So I thought, why try if I'm going to fail anyways?

Constantly I felt hopeless walking into the classroom, dragging my feet against the shiny porcelain-white floor. In middle school, the social comparison of people academically, struck me. I started to regard how far ahead the rest of the world seemed. Envious as I was, it made sense. It's impossible to run alongside everyone else if I walk the whole time.

Though, rather than giving up entirely, I knew that I couldn't fall behind anymore. This time, I pushed myself to do things that elementary me would never even think of doing. Being the one kid who didn't understand always made me feel culpable. It felt like there was something erroneous with me. Asking questions invariably seemed unbearably shameful.

Even with how uneasy I felt inside, nothing would change if I didn't try. Every class I picked myself up and forced myself to ask at least one question when I didn't understand. Soon enough, it became a subconscious habit. With reassurance that I could get help, each assignment began to seem less overwhelming. Math seemed less scary. It felt like I could do anything, if I just tried to run.

Change

Changing is bitter, but after a while, it can be really sweet

MAGDALENA BRENNER
13 - 8TH GRADE
MCLEAN

I still remember that day, I don't think I will ever forget it. I have realized not many people have been through the same, especially people my age. I'm not saying it's bad, but it's not exactly ideal. You may be wondering, what happened to you? Well, I moved to another country.

July 24, 2022. That was the day. My parents called me and my sisters, they said they had a present for us. We went downstairs and they gave us a present. A photo album. An empty photo album. After that, I heard my mom's voice say-

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ing we would collect lots of memories there, especially since we are moving.

My eyes immediately filled with tears. What was I going to do? My friends, my family, my school, my house, everything. I felt like I had lost everything. I cried all day that day, I didn't like the idea of starting a new life.

The worst part was leaving my house. The day we had to leave was the worst day of my life. I had lived in the same house since I was 5. It was my home, all of my best memories were created there. I really don't know how my parents managed to get me out of the house.

All the airplane ride, I cried. My aunt gave me a small picture of us, I still keep it inside my phone case. Everywhere I go, I take it with me.

But now I live here, in McLean, and life is not as bad as I believed it would be. I have lived here for almost 3 months now, and I have made some really awesome friends. Life has taught me that change can be really difficult, but eventually, it can be for good.

The Day
I Followed
My Heart

SONIA CUPALA
12 (7TH GRADE)
VIENNA, VA

Have you ever thought about what you want to be when you grow up? Do you want to be paid a lot? Do you want to do something that you've always wanted to do?

On a rainy, somber Saturday morning in 5th grade, I lay on my teal duvet with red and pink butterflies, leaning against matching pillows. It was 10am, and I didn't feel like getting out of bed. I reached over to grab my book. I was about to start reading the first Keeper of the Lost Cities novel. The cover had a brown haired blue eyed boy and a blonde haired brown eyed girl standing on a fancy lamp post. I open the paperback to the first page. I make it through the first chapter and close the book. Sighing once again, I placed the book back on the white nightstand.

Around 8pm the next night, I grabbed my white notebook with golden butterflies and a purple mechanical pencil. I tapped the eraser of the pencil against the lined page of the notebook. At the top, I scrib-

SEE COOPER MIDDLE SCHOOL,
PAGE 7



Public Notice

Updated weight limits on Virginia bridges and culverts

In accord with state and federal law, the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) has imposed new or changed existing weight restrictions and installed new signage indicating the updated weight restrictions on the following bridges and culverts (structures) in Virginia within the last 30 days.

FRANKLIN	7795	220	V H GOODE HWY/RTE 220	BR. OF BIG CHESTNUT CREEK	11/28/2022
MONTGOMERY	12112	11	ROANOKE RD NBL/RTE 11	BR. SOUTH FORK ROANOKE RIVER	11/28/2022
ROANOKE	15031	632	CRESCENT BLVD/RTE 632	BR BACK CREEK	11/28/2022
DINWIDDIE	5909	1	BOYDTON PLANK SBL	STONY CREEK	11/23/2022
HANOVER	9501	626	ELMONT RD	STONY RUN CREEK	11/21/2022
HANOVER	9478	606	OLD CHURCH RD	MATADEQUIN CREEK	11/21/2022
MECKLENBURG	11848	4	BUGGS ISLAND RD	ALLENS CREEK	11/21/2022
FRANKLIN	7931	722	BEULAH RD /RTE 722	LITTLE DOE RUN	11/21/2022
FLOYD	7513	221	FLOYD HWY/RTE 221 N.	BR. OF LICK FORK	11/18/2022
FRANKLIN	7746	40	FRANKLIN ST /RTE 40	RENNET BAG CREEK	11/18/2022
BEDFORD	2770	654	FELDSPAR RD/RTE 654	NS RAILWAY	11/17/2022
BEDFORD	2816	691	SHEPERDS ST RD/RTE 691	WOLF CREEK	11/17/2022
CARROLL	4530	52	POPULAR CAMP RD/RTE 52	STREAM	11/17/2022
ROANOKE	15070	677	WILLOW BR RD/RTE 677	BR BACK CREEK	11/17/2022
MECKLENBURG	11984	640	E. ORGANSVILLE RD	PECKERWOOD BRANCH	11/16/2022
CARROLL	4529	52	POPULAR CAMP RD/RTE 52	BRANCH SHORTS CREEK	11/16/2022
CRAIG	5510	617	RTE 617	WRIGHTS BRANCH	11/16/2022
FRANKLIN	8026	961	HEDGEWOOD RD/RTE 961	LITTLE CREEK	11/16/2022
FRANKLIN	7972	767	PRILLIMAN SWCH/RTE 767	BRANCH OF TOWN CREEK	11/16/2022
FRANKLIN	8031	1605	WHSPRNG CK RD/RTE 1605	MAGGODEE CREEK	11/16/2022
WASHINGTON	18988	604	MILL CREEK RD	MILL CREEK	11/15/2022
MECKLENBURG	11981	636	BRIDGE RD	MEHERRIN RIVER	11/15/2022
MECKLENBURG	12004	662	WIGHTMAN RD	BUCKHORN CREEK	11/15/2022
NEW KENT	12738	629	BOULEVARD RD	JONES RUN	11/15/2022
BEDFORD	2819	692	COOL SPRINGS RD/RTE 692	CAMP CREEK	11/15/2022
BEDFORD	2879	746	DICKERSON MILL RD/RTE 746	WOLF CREEK	11/15/2022
BEDFORD	2830	698	VILLAMONT RD /RTE 698	BR. SOUTH FORK GOOSE CR.	11/15/2022
CARROLL	4609	100	SYLVATUS HGWY/RTE 100	ROCK CREEK	11/14/2022
ROANOKE	15104	758	CARSON RD/RTE 758	BR. GLADE CREEK	11/14/2022
ROANOKE	14980	609	E. RURITAN RD/RTE 609	BR. GLADE CREEK	11/10/2022
ROANOKE	15109	777	FT LEWIS CHURCH RD/RTE 777	STYPES BRANCH	11/10/2022
BEDFORD	2713	628	BISHOPS CR RD/RTE 628	BACK CREEK	11/4/2022
BEDFORD	2730	639	HURRICANE DR /RTE 639	BR. OF OSLIN CREEK	11/4/2022
PULASKI	14592	658	DELTON RD/RTE 658	BR. OF NEW RIVER	11/4/2022
PULASKI	14535	605	LITTLE RIVER DAM RD/RTE 605	CLYBOARD BRANCH	11/4/2022
PULASKI	14580	648	SNIDER LANE/RTE 648	BR. OF PEAK CREEK	11/4/2022
FRANKLIN	7869	641	CALLAWAY RD/RTE 641	BLACKWATER RIVER	11/3/2022
FRANKLIN	7951	739	GAP GATE RD/RTE 739	GREEN CREEK	11/3/2022
FRANKLIN	8011	865	TIMBER LINE RD/RTE 865	NICHOLAS CREEK	11/3/2022
MONTGOMERY	12333	726	GOLD RUSH RD/RTE 726	BRUSH CREEK	11/3/2022
MONTGOMERY	12286	657	MERRIMAC RD/RTE 657	STROUBLES CREEK	11/3/2022
MONTGOMERY	12315	708	NORRIS RUN RD/RTE 708	NORRIS RUN	11/3/2022
MONTGOMERY	12301	675	SPLIT RAIL RD/RTE 675	COOKS BRANCH	11/3/2022
PATRICK	13365	687	MICROFILM ROAD/RTE 687	BLACKBERRY CREEK	11/3/2022
PATRICK	13273	623	UNION BRIDGE	SMITH RIVER	11/3/2022
CULPEPER	5578	15	REMINGTON RD	RAPPAHANNOCK RIVER	11/2/2022
BEDFORD	2861	731	CHESTNUT FORK RD/RTE 731	BR. DIFFICULT RUN CREEK	11/2/2022
BEDFORD	2680	607	MTN VIEW ROAD/RTE 607	GLOVE CREEK	11/2/2022
FLOYD	7590	705	BEAVER CRK RD/RTE 705	BEAVER CREEK	11/2/2022
PATRICK	13276	626	ABRAM PENN HWY/RTE 626	N. MAYO RIVER	11/2/2022
PATRICK	13293	635	GOBLINTOWN CRK/RTE 635	GOBLINTOWN CREEK	11/2/2022
PATRICK	13252	610	HELMS RD/RTE 610	BRANCH DAN RIVER	11/2/2022
WISE	19343	83	CLINTWOOD HWY	POUND RIVER	11/1/2022
WISE	19495	1135	LITTLE LEAGUE RD	TOM'S CREEK	11/1/2022
BEDFORD	2829	698	VILLAMONT RD/RTE 698	S. FORK GOOSE CREEK	11/1/2022
CARROLL	4527	52	POPULAR CAMP RD/RTE 52	SHORTS CREEK	11/1/2022
CARROLL	4528	52	POPULAR CAMP RD/RTE 52	SHORTS CREEK	11/1/2022
FRANKLIN	7922	715	CHESTNUT MTN RD/RTE 715	BIG CHESTNUT CREEK	11/1/2022
FRANKLIN	7936	731	DUGWELL RD/RTE 731	BUCK RUN	11/1/2022
FRANKLIN	7848	629	HATCHETT RD/RTE 629	HATCHETTS CREEK	11/1/2022
GILES	8502	730	EGGLESTON RD/RTE 730	CATTLE PASS	11/1/2022
GILES	8495	724	OLD WOLF CR RD/RTE 724	BR. WOLF CREEK	11/1/2022

The list above is not a comprehensive list of all structures with weight restrictions in the Commonwealth, but shows only structures that have new or changed weight restrictions within the last 30 days. The list contains only basic structure identification and location information and the date the new or changed weight restriction and signage became effective.

For a full listing of all bridge and culvert weight restrictions with detailed information about specific structures, including location data and actual weight limits, visit <https://www.virginiadot.org> and navigate to Info Center/Trucking Resources. This page references a posted structures report and a GIS map tool that contain detailed information about restricted structures in Virginia. To receive email notifications regarding new or updated weight restrictions for structures statewide, complete the sign-up form on the web page.

Notices regarding bridges and culverts with new or updated weight restrictions are published monthly by VDOT. For additional information or questions, please contact haulingpermits@vdot.virginia.gov.

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CHILDREN'S AND TEENS' CONNECTION



Ryan Thiessen Age: 9 Grade: 3rd School: Colvin Run Elementary, Vienna
Teacher: Lauren Grimm Town of Residence: Vienna



William Wang Age: 10 Grade: 4th School: Colvin Run Elementary, Vienna
Teacher: Rachel Wiseman Town of Residence: Great Falls

Colvin Run Elementary



Riddhima Verma Age: 11 Grade: 6th
School: Colvin Run Elementary, Vienna
Teacher: Lauren Grimm
Town of Residence: Great Falls



Bethsy Manrique-Pinell Age: 12 Grade: 6th School: Colvin Run Elementary, Vienna
Teacher: Lauren Grimm Town of Residence: Great Falls



Noah Park Age: 12 Grade: 6th
School: Colvin Run Elementary, Vienna
Teacher: Lauren Grimm
Town of Residence: Great Falls



Xanakee Vang Age: 11 Grade: 5th School: Colvin Run Elementary, Vienna
Teacher: Lauren Grimm Town of Residence: Vienna

Writing from Cooper Middle School

FROM PAGE 5

ble 'Sweetie Pie Honey Bun'. Then, I drew a girl in a stained apron, standing next to a girl in a ballet outfit.

Afterschool the next day, I got my black Samsung Chromebook laptop, opened Google Drive and made a new document. I titled the document 'Sweetie Pie Honey Bun Ideas'. I typed 'characters' at the top of the document in Arial 12 font. I named the normal girl Annika DeVaren, and the ballerina Amber Jones. I created another document, and named it 'Sweetie Pie Honey Bun'.

The next three days, I wrote a nine page story about Amber and Tony moving from Paris to NYC, and how her neighbors, Annika and Alec meet and become friends. When I finished, I wrote 'Happy 44th Birthday Mommy' at the bottom.

On Friday, I gave my mom the story since it's her birthday. She read through it, and she told me she loved it. Since then, I've created many stories for my parents' birthdays and for Mothers and Fathers day and I know that I'm destined to write.

My First 100% On a Test

AYLA ASNER
12, 7TH GRADE
GREAT FALL VIRGINIA

I was taken to the library for our math test, and I was quite nervous. Today was the day of our unit test. As soon as I was handed my math test, I went to work. I finished and thought to myself, "I probably did so poorly." Some of those questions were extremely difficult. I completed a word search with my friends, then we headed back to the classroom for recess. That day's recess was indoors. I talked with friends and played Uno the whole time. I'm not great at Uno, so I lost most of the rounds. After that, we went to lunch. I refused to eat much, which was normal for me. I am never very hungry during lunch.

The next time I had math, we received our tests back. I figured my teacher would hand me the test face down because of how terrible I believed I did, but when I received the test, I noticed that it was marked with a 100%! It even had a smiley face drawn in the cor-

ner! My eagerness to return home and tell my parents how well I did was unrivaled. The bus ride was so long and humid. My legs were sticking to the burning seat. I finally got home with a massive smile on my face and showed my parents the test. They were so proud! Particularly since math was not my strongest subject in elementary school. I would never think math would be one of my best subjects in middle school. Remember, even if you are less strong at a subject, it is always important to try your best, even if you don't do amazing.

Super Duper Looper

AUDREY KELLY
13 YEARS OLD, 8TH GRADE
MCLEAN VIRGINIA

Have you ever felt the exhilarating rush of adrenaline as you dive down tall drops and get whipped around with your hands up in the air? If you have never been on a roller coaster, you are definitely missing out. My name is Audrey and I love fast speeds and cheering sounds of people having the time of their lives.

The first roller coaster that I remember going on was the Super Duper Looper at Hershey Park, Pennsylvania. I was so scared as I waited in line for the coaster with my mom. The wait for the ride was pretty short but when I stepped onto the platform it felt like forever.

I saw the carts filled with people go by over and over again until it was my turn. I cautiously stepped over my mom's seat and sat down on the hot, sweaty, plastic seat. My mom got settled in and we pulled down the seatbelt. It clicked until it was holding us down for dear life. Then, the operator came and checked the belts.

And we were off. The heavy chains pulled us up to the top of the hill and I saw the entire park from my cart. The cart began to roll down the drop as I held my breath as my clammy hands clutched my moms. We free fell for about 5 seconds, it was the best feeling in the world.

I swung back and forth as we whooshed around the bends and loops with my hands up in the air. The breeze on my face felt amazing and relaxing. But then the ride was over. I was so glad to have that experience with my mom. I looked

over at her with a smile on my face and she looked right back at me.

"How I honored my late mother with Joy Jars"

JERRON HOFFMAN
MCLEAN
MRS. BOVENZI, COOPER MIDDLE SCHOOL

I was very excited because I was just a few months away from my 13th birthday. I was preparing for my Bar Mitzvah since I turned 12. I was practicing prayers and 3 parts of a Torah portion so I could do them on the bima. The Bar Mitzvah was scheduled to be on the Saturday night after my birthday.

I was looking for a charity to support for my Mitzvah project. While thinking about it, I decided I was going to do something connected with cancer to honor my mom. I knew how hard it was to fight cancer because of my mom, so I wanted to help kids that were

SEE COOPER MIDDLE SCHOOL, PAGE 15

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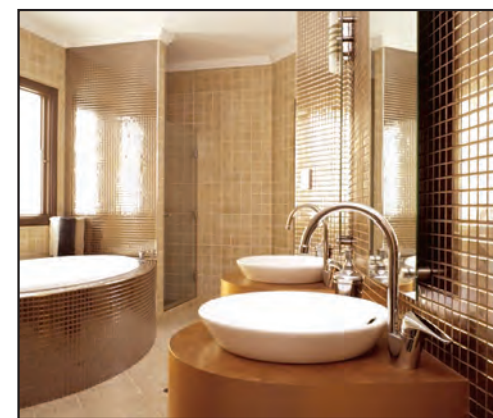
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CHILDREN'S AND TEENS' CONNECTION



By Andrew Teng,
Oakton Elementary School,
Grade 6
“A Glance of Our Future”
Colored Pencils
Teacher: Yanshun Sui

Artist statement: This is what I think the world will look like 25 years later. I want to express that we are capable of a lot of things in 25 years. We're smart. We all are. Let's make the most out of it like developing rockets and caring for the environment. We can do it.



Name: Zac Lee
Age: 9
Grade: 4th Grade
School: Kent Gardens
Elementary School
Town of Residence:
McLean
Teacher Name: Zhai's
Art Studio
Artwork Title: Lazy
Afternoon In the Jungle



Artwork Title: Legendary Dragon



Artwork Title: Sea Turtle Escape

Student: Ryan Chun
Age: 16
Grade: Sophomore, 10th Grade
Town of Residence: Vienna

Teacher: Linda Oliva
School: McLean High School
Town Of School: McLean

Woman vs. Man

*Woman is the only creature who refuses to be what she is
She misinterprets all the differences
And misconceptualizes her pain*

*Judge a woman by her questions rather than by her answers
She phrases all sorrows
And prods life into conflict*

*Woman only likes to count her troubles; she doesn't calculate
her happiness
She denies all the accusations
And she defies the past*

*A dog is a woman's best friend
Nothing is left; emptiness in itself
The inequity of woman*

— RYAN CHUN, 16, MCLEAN HIGH SCHOOL



By Carson Fast, McLean,VA, Age 15, McLean High School, 9th grade
Art teacher: Yanshun Sui @Yan's art studio, Vienna, VA



Drawing by Anthony Huang, 10 years old, 4th grader in
Louise Archer Elementary School in Vienna.



Love for the Ocean

Name: Zoe Lee, Age: 10, Grade: 5th Grade, School: Kent Gardens Elementary School
Town of Residence: McLean, Teacher Name: Zhai's Art Studio



Take a Bite of Fall



One Slide of Sweetness



Student Name:
Marissa Lin
Age: 12
Grade: 7
Town of residence:
Vienna
Kilmer Middle School
Yan's Art Studio
Teacher Name:
Yanshun Sui

Bo Ruei Chen
12 years old, 7th Grade
Thoreau Middle School
Art Teacher: Yanshun Sui



Name: Alexander Yu, Age: 14, Grade: 9th, Town: Oakton
School: Oakton High School, Teacher: Vilbas,
Town of Residence: Fair Oaks



Name: Anthony Yu, Age: 11, Grade: 6th, Town: Fairfax
School: Navy Elementary School, Teacher: Cohen
Town of Residence: Fair Oaks

CHILDREN'S AND TEENS' CONNECTION



By Madeleine Ahrens, Age 15, Grade 9, James Madison High School, Vienna VA



My name is Avenelle Orndorff, I'm a 17 year old senior at James Madison High School in Vienna, Virginia. My submission is an acrylic painting on canvas.



Evelyn Kim, Age 14, Grade 9, Vienna, Virginia
James Madison High School
Teacher: Sydney Carr

BULLETIN BOARD

Submit civic/community announcements at Connection-Newspapers.com/Calendar. Photos and artwork welcome. Deadline is Thursday at noon, at least two weeks before the event.

ADOPT A WARRIOR FAMILY FOR CHRISTMAS

So many of our Military families today find themselves in financial crisis, now more than ever. This will be especially true during this Holiday Season. To give back, Able Forces Foundation (AFF) is once again sponsoring the Adopt-A-Warrior Family Christmas program. As in years past, Able Forces Foundation will adopt families from each of the five Military Service branches. All adopted families are identified by military Advocates on military bases or military Recovery programs in the Washington, DC Metro area. These families have been vetted and referred to AFF. Based on need, financial support will ensure each family will have:

- A Christmas Tree
- Complete Christmas Dinner (for up to 8)
- Stocking Stuffers
- the ability to provide up to 5 gifts per child 100% of all donations go directly to support this program.

There are no administrative or overhead fees taken out of donations. All donations contributed between Oct. 25 and Christmas will go directly to support this program. If you can help, go to: www.ableforces.org/adopt to make a contribution.

SHEPHERD'S CENTER SEEKS VOLUNTEER DRIVERS

Shepherd's Center of McLean-Arlington-Falls Church (SCMAFC), an all-volunteer organization, is seeking additional volunteers to support its mission of providing free transportation to seniors for medical and dental appointments or run errands to grocery stores and pharmacies.

The Center is an all-volunteer non-profit organization [501(c)(3)] that has been operating since 2006.

The total number of rides provided in 2022 is expected to exceed 2,500, but to fully respond to recent increases in the number of requests, there is a need for more volunteers to join the current team of 60 volunteer drivers. For volunteers there is no minimum commitment. Volunteers are free to choose how often and when they drive.

For detailed information or to apply, visit the Center's website <https://scmafc.org/volunteer> or call (703) 506-2199 and leave a message.

SUPPORT GROUPS

Haven of Northern Virginia Support Group. 703-941-7000, www.havenofnova.org or havenofnova@verizon.net.

CHILDREN'S AND TEENS' CONNECTION



Red ties

Answers

A curious little girl
Looking around
Wanting to find the answers
Why do we need to breathe?
How do we use our brains?
So many questions
So much curiosity
But they say no
Pressing her down
Pushing her in a small box
She has to fit in their little space
Her curiosity fades away
Her mind numbs away
No more searching
No more questioning
One less bright mind in the world

— LAUREN KIM, SIXTH GRADE,
CHURCHILL ROAD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL,
MCLEAN.



Fictional
vs. Reality

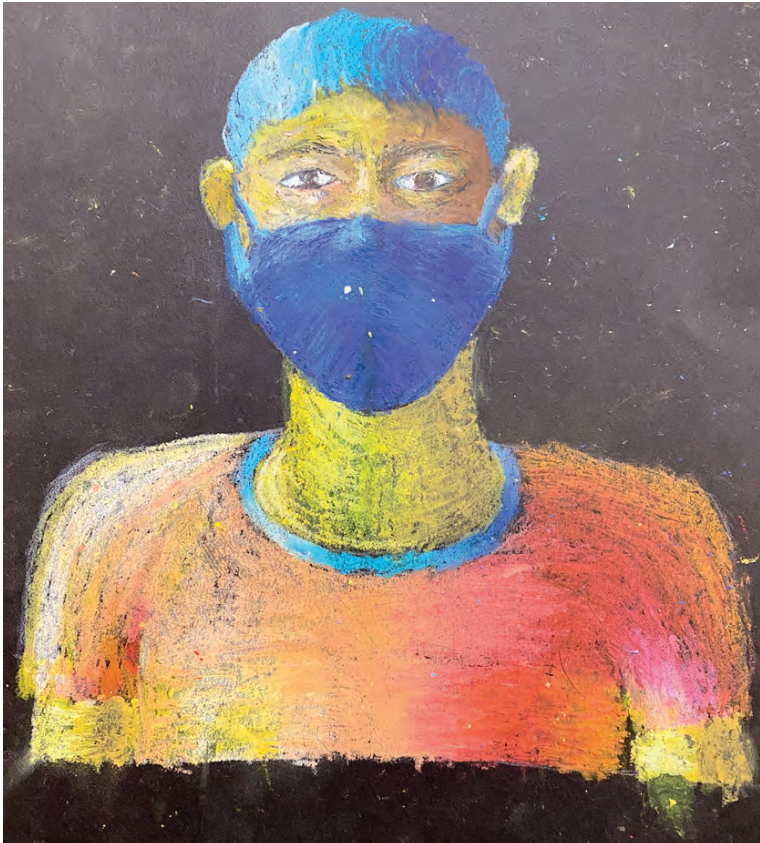
Colin Boam, 18,
Grade 12,
James Madison High
School, Vienna

The first piece is titled
“Red ties” and the sec-
ond piece is titled “Fic-
tional vs. Reality”.

My name is Colin
Boam, I’m 18, residing
in Vienna, in grade 12
at James Madison High
School, part of FCPS in
Vienna, VA. My teacher
is Mr. Dunn, the digital
arts teacher at JMHS.



Joseph Li
Age 12, Grade: 7th grade
School name: Kilmer Middle School
Teacher Yanshun Sui
Town of residence: Vienna



CHILDREN'S AND TEENS' CONNECTION



Wolf By Kyler Liang



Future World by Kyler Liang



Breakfast by Kyler Liang

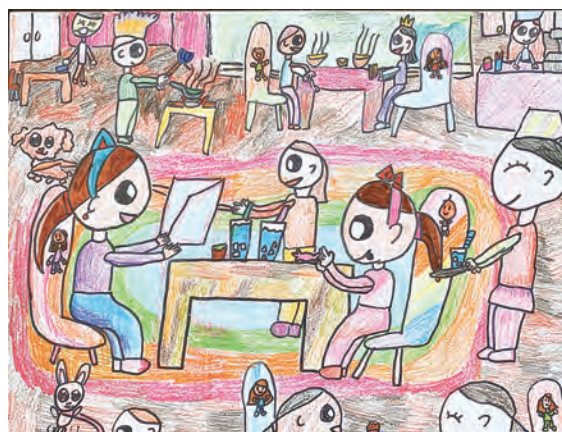


Lamp by Rylee Liang

STUDENT: RYLEE LIANG
AGE: 9, GRADE: 4TH
TOWN OF RESIDENCE: MCLEAN
SCHOOL: YAN'S ART STUDIO
(VIENNA, VA)



Bunny, by Rylee Liang



Restaurant, by Rylee Liang



Space, by Rylee Liang



"Save the Frogs," by Rylee Liang



NANMA HARIDAS,

14 YEARS OLD, 9TH GRADE, VIENNA VA, JAMES MADISON HIGH SCHOOL,
BRANDY CARTER, ART TEACHER

POEM

Wind

Take me far
Far away from
The sigh
The pain
The sorrow

Take me away
Far away from
The tornados
The earthquakes
The wildfires

Take me away
From the monarchy of Taliban
The streets of Iran
The battlefields of Ukraine

Wind
Blow me to a place
Where all equality blooms
Where harmony sings
Where love shines
Blow me like the wind
Far
Far away

IAN KIM,
LONGFELLOW MS, 7TH GRADE
MCLEAN

CALENDAR

HUNTERS WOODS AT RAILS

EDGE WINTER EVENTS

Wednesday evenings from 4-6 p.m.
Dec. 21 -- Welcome Party (New residents) and Karaoke
Dec. 28 -- Cooking Demo with Chef
RSVP required. RSVP to HWTEMarketing@IntegraCare.com or call 703-429-1130.

DEC. 16 THRU FEB. 12

Winter Lantern Festival will debut a spectacular holiday light adventure at the Lerner Town Square, 8025 Galleria Drive in Tysons starting Dec. 16 through Feb. 12. Winter Lantern Festival will feature over 10,000-LED Chinese-inspired artisan lanterns, along with live performances and on-site food vendors. Guests will wander through a wonderland of light that includes Chinese myths, legends, and zodiacs. In addition, they will view handmade lanterns encompassing a world of ice, including displays of mammoths, polar bears, and penguins. There will also be interactive light swings, see-saws, and tunnels. Be prepared to indulge your friends, family, and yourself in photo opportunities. Hours are Fridays to Sundays from 5-10 p.m. Visit www.winterlanternfestival.com.

SATURDAY/DEC. 17

NVMR Train Station Open House. 1-5 p.m. At Vienna Train Station, 231 Dominion Road, NE, Vienna. Stop by the Historic Vienna Train Station where you can see and hear



The Barter Players present "Frosty" on Monday, Dec. 19, 2023 at the McLean Community Center.

HO scale model trolleys and trains including Thomas and some of his friends on display and in operation. Great family fun and activity for the young and young-at-heart. Hosted by the Northern Virginia Model Railroaders. See www.nvmr.org.

SATURDAY/DEC. 17

Wreaths Across America. 12 p.m. At Chestnut Grove Cemetery, 831 Dranesville Road, Herndon. The Town of Herndon, in partnership with the Herndon Woman's Club, will join Wreaths Across America to honor more than 920 veterans who have been laid to rest at Chestnut

Grove Cemetery. Officially established in 1872, Herndon's Chestnut Grove Cemetery is the final resting place of veterans dating back as far as the War of 1812. Those who are unable to attend the wreath laying can sponsor a wreath for \$15. Checks can be made payable to the Herndon Woman's Club and sent to P.O. Box 231, Herndon, VA 20172. Donations can also be accepted online at www.wreathsafteramerica.org/VA0143P

SUNDAY/DEC. 18

Virginia Chamber Orchestra. 2 p.m. At McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. Northern



The Winter Lantern Festival will be held Dec. 16 Thru Feb. 12, 2023 in Tysons Corner.

Virginia's own Virginia Chamber Orchestra has been called "one of the most interesting orchestras in the metropolitan area" by The Washington Post. Celebrate the holidays with festive orchestral sounds.

MONDAY/DEC. 19

The Barter Players: "Frosty." 4 p.m. At McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. A young orphan named Billy discovers magic in a stolen hat, and when he places the hat on a snowman's head, that snowman comes to life! Can Frosty help Billy find his real family in time for Christmas? Join

them on a thrilling quest through New York City as they discover that the real magic of the season is love.

MONDAY/DEC. 19

"Joy to the World." 7 p.m. At Capital One Hall, 7750 Capital One Tower Road, Tysons. Come see GDC's dancers perform in some wonderful holiday favorites choreographed by GDC Artistic Director, Shu-Chen Cuff. This wonderful show will also feature Celtic Woman Star, Alex Sharpe, New York Times Best Selling Author, Jason F. Wright, The Washington DC Temple Choir, and The Boyle School of Irish Dance. Come join us to share in the holiday joy!

FRIDAY/DEC. 30

Celtic Band IONA. 1 p.m. and 2:15 p.m. At Sully Historic Site, 3650 Historic Sully Way, Chantilly. Come hear one of the top-rated pan-Celtic groups in the world as they treat audiences to a selection of traditional Celtic tunes, as well as song and dance music arranged in their signature style for vocals. Call 703-437-1794.

NOW THRU DEC. 31

Crafts for Kids. 10 a.m. to 12 noon. At Reston Art Gallery and Studios, 11400 Washington Plaza W at Lake Anne, Reston. Free, themed art projects for children (with guardian) are offered at Reston Art Gallery and Studios every Saturday from 10 a.m. until 12 p.m. Visit the website: www.restonartgallery.com

HOLIDAY ENTERTAINMENT 2022

THROUGH DEC 23

"Snow Maiden." At Syntetic Theater, 1800 S. Bell St, Arlington. In a frozen forest, a lonely boy builds a girl from snow. When she mysteriously comes to life, mischief, laughter, and enchantment abound. But what will happen when the ice begins to melt? Told through dazzling movement, dance, and acrobatics, Snow Maiden is a magical tale of hope, friendship and the transformative power of dreams. Based on the beloved folktale Snegurochka, Snow Maiden is a holiday treat for friends and fans of all ages.

THROUGH DEC. 31

Home for the Holidays Art Show. At Arts Herndon, 750 Center Street, Herndon. Works by local artists on display the entire month of December. Visit www.artsherndon.org. Call 703-956-6590.

THROUGH DEC. 17

The PARC at Tysons Holiday Market. Fridays and Saturdays. Celebrate the holiday season with local makers, crafters, and artisans from the Fairfax County area! Visit the holiday market at The PARC at Tysons on the first three Fridays and Saturdays of December for a pop-up shop of local artisans and small businesses offering holiday-inspired goods. The PARC will be transformed into a festive indoors and outdoors winter village, featuring a local holiday market and (free!) snowtastic activities for the whole family to enjoy! Food and beverages can be purchased onsite from local businesses as well.

THROUGH DEC. 18

Holiday Market. At 2704 Mount Vernon Ave., Alexandria. Del Ray Artisans 27th Annual Holiday Market offers unique handmade fine arts and crafts from local artists. Choose from wall art, pottery, photography, jewelry, glass, and much more! Plus 2023 wall calendars to support Del Ray Artisans nonprofit. Free admission. Market is the first three weekends in December (Dec 2-4, Dec 9-11, Dec 16-18). Different artists each weekend! Open Fridays

www.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM



The Fairfax Symphony Orchestra and Fairfax Ballet present "The Nutcracker" on Dec. 17-18, 2022, at GMU Center for the Arts in Fairfax.

6-9 p.m., Saturdays & Sundays 11 a.m.-6 p.m. Details: delrayartisans.org/holiday-market

DEC. 10-18

"The Perfect Christmas List." At Richard J. Ernst Theater, NOVA Annandale Campus. Encore Theatrical Arts Project (ETAP) presents a glamorous and dazzling holiday musical that features 30 performers, creative choreography, elaborate sets, stunning costumes, and 20 musical numbers. Show dates: Saturday, Dec. 10 at 12 p.m., 4 p.m., 7:30 p.m.; Sunday, Dec. 11 at 12 p.m., 4 p.m.; Friday, December 16th at 7:30 p.m.; Saturday, December 17th at 12 p.m., 4 p.m., 7:30 p.m.; Sunday, December 18th at 12 p.m., 4 p.m. Visit www.ensemble-tap.org

THURSDAY/DEC. 15

When Christmas Hurts. 7-8 p.m. At St. John's Lutheran Church, 5952 Franconia Road, Alexandria. This is a service designed for all who may be experiencing this holiday season with hurt, grief, or sadness. All are welcome to attend in-person or virtually on Facebook Live. Visit the website: www.sjlc.com

FRIDAY/DEC. 16

Appalachian Bluegrass Christmas. 7-9:30 p.m. Music and readings with Shoestring Theatre, Arts Herndon, 750 Center Street, Herndon. Visit artsherndon.org. Tickets \$10. Call 703-956-6590.

SATURDAY/DEC. 17

Open for the Arts – Holiday Open House. 10 a.m.-6 p.m. Children's activities with A Thousand Stories, Herndon Books Arts Herndon, 750 Center Street, Herndon. Visit artsherndon.org. Call 703-956-6590.

SATURDAY/DEC. 17

Wreaths Across America. Noon. Volunteer wreath laying ceremony honoring veterans. At Chestnut Grove Cemetery, 831 Dranesville Road, Herndon. Visit herndonwomensclub.org. Call 703-435-3480

DEC. 17-18

"The Nutcracker." 4 p.m. At GMU Center for the Arts, Fairfax. Presented by Fairfax Symphony Orchestra and Fairfax Ballet. The FSO production of Tchaikovsky's The Nutcracker features



Take a Holiday Candlelight Tour of Mount Vernon Estate Dec. 18.

live, musical accompaniment by a full orchestra, together with dancers on stage.

SUNDAY/DEC. 18

Holiday Candlelight Tour. At Mount Vernon Estate, Mount Vernon. Experience the holidays like George and Martha Washington. Meet Mrs. Washington and 18th-century Mount Vernon residents during a 45-minute candlelit estate tour, see the themed Christmas trees, and shop for holiday gifts.

SUNDAY/DEC. 18

Home for the Holidays with the Treble Clefs. 5-7 p.m. Join the Treble Clefs and Friends. Includes refreshments and a special visitor. At Arts Herndon, 750 Center Street, Herndon. Visit artsherndon.org or call 703-956-6590.

SATURDAY/DEC. 31

New Year's Eve Golf Tournament. 10 a.m. Shotgun start. Annual four-person scramble. Entry fee includes green fee, cart fee, range balls and prizes. Entry deadline December 26. At Herndon Centennial Golf Course, 909 Ferndale Avenue, Herndon. Cost is \$80 per player. Call 703-471-5769 or visit herdongolf.com.

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HOLIDAY Santas Needed to Take on a Mission

Holiday gifts for children of wounded vets needed.

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

It has been said that Bob Nelson has a Santa resemblance but without a white beard. He is letting people know that there are families still on this year's "Wounded Veteran Family Christmas Gift Wish List" who have not been adopted by their own Santa yet, and the number is growing.

Nelson is working with the Elizabeth Dole Foundation to identify military families in need with children.

I realize the holidays get a bit hectic once December rolls around, but we could still use your help," Nelson says.

Nelson's business website, Bob Nelson Team Real Estate, <https://www.bobnelson-team.com/xmas-gift-wish-list/> tells the ages of the children in the families as well as their location. Nelson requests a minimum donation of \$150 per child. Individuals, families, and businesses are welcome to become Santa to one or more Wounded Veteran families.

Chris Melnick is the president/owner of Double Eagle Title, headquartered in McLean. Gina Clough, his partner, founded the company and is the chief operating officer. According to Melnick, Nelson spearheads the distribution of gifts to the wounded veterans' families. The children's presents come from community members and businesses like theirs.

After visiting Nelson's website, the "Santas" identify the family or families in need and send Nelson an email at Santa@bobnelson-team.com. Nelson provides the contact information for the Wounded Vets families, including phone numbers, postal addresses, and email addresses. He encourages those getting the presents to reach out to the contact person to learn more about the family's requests and add a human touch.

CHILDREN'S AND TEENS' CONNECTION

Writing from Cooper Middle School

FROM PAGE 7

TEACHER: MRS. BOVENZI

currently suffering. I found a charity called the Jessie Rees Foundation. The foundation was created after Jesse Rees passed away from brain cancer when she was only 12 years old, the same age I was when I started preparing for my Bar Mitzvah. Jessie Rees wanted to help kids with cancer just like I did, and she started when she stuffed brown bags with old toys. Her father realized that Jesse Rees wanted to help kids with cancer. He and Jesse came up with the idea of Joy Jars. Jesse made Joy Jars often before she passed away. I honored my mom and Jesse

WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM



MERCIA HOBSON/THE CONNECTION

**Gifts needed under the Christmas trees
of U.S. military wounded veterans for
their young children and teens.**

Gary McKeown is the owner of the Great Falls Creamery. "We gift from my family to theirs," he says. How they do it differs from year to year.

Sometimes the McKeown family wires the parents money to buy the gifts, and other times they give the presents in person. That's always a big deal.

"For a lot of the veterans, it helps to be able to talk about it. Sometimes they've got other struggles, like with the VA being a big bureaucracy. Sometimes it's hard to fight through that procedure to get them the needed services," McKeown says.

Martha Rees of the City of Fairfax says she is pleased to support our wounded veterans in recognition of the commitment and sacrifice they and their families made. She does so in honor of her father. "Col. Marvin Rees was a career Army officer who was wounded in Korea," Rees says.

According to Melnick, Nelson does the work. "He's an amazing man for his gifts of charity, specifically anything involving the military of the United States of America ... He takes on the mission of Santa Claus for the children of military families."

Rees by doing Joy Jars just like how Jesse Rees would've wanted to.

My mom had been diagnosed with cancer when I was only 7 years old. She fought the cancer for every single moment and she never ever gave up no matter what, just like Jesse Rees. In October 2019, we thought that the cancer was gone, but it grew back. My mom sadly passed away in March 2021. I am happy that I could honor my mom's memory with my Joy Jars project. Hopefully, more kids with cancer will be encouraged to fight, just like my mom did.

BUSINESS DIRECTORY

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CENTREVIEW

Thank you to the hundreds of supporters who helped to keep all your Connection Newspapers alive throughout Alexandria, Fairfax County, Arlington County and Potomac, Md. along with affiliated websites and digital media. Now we need help again in 2022.

Each local newspaper's mission aspires to provide greater community service, and we do know that our communities are better off if we continue to publish. Last year's financial support from readers and supporters like you bridged the shortfall before Federal PPP funding arrived, and both made our survival possible. We now await a decision for a grant from Rebuild Virginia in early February that we hope will help us in 2022 and beyond. But we need help to survive the first quarter, always a brutal time for cash flow in weekly newspapers. Thank you.

Please, help save these historical papers.

All gifts will be used to fund our printed newspapers and websites and to meet obligations to our loyal and patient employees, writers, contractors and suppliers.

The ongoing pandemic continues to crush many newspapers across the country, and our newspapers continue to be at risk. The Northern Virginia area's best read and most trusted source for community news includes the Alexandria Gazette Packet, Mount Vernon Gazette and all Connection Newspapers in the metropolitan region.

The pandemic has hit small businesses hard, which in turn has reduced advertising revenue that keeps these local newspapers alive to provide hyper local news to residents. It feels like no small miracle to be looking forward into 2022.

The pandemic has been a bear, financially and otherwise. Revenue plummeted at the beginning in 2020. Some beloved advertisers have stayed the course supporting us throughout, and many more have done what they can. In the fall of 2021 we saw the return of some advertising for events and Grand Openings, but now ominous clouds the horizon in so many ways. Revenue still remains short of expenses despite our greatly curtailed costs.

Connection Newspapers has been offering these local newspapers to residents for over 200 years. Countless residents have grown up with these papers covering significant moments in the lives of family and children, news, community events, school activities, and even pictures of your dogs and cats. Internet news and large national newspapers cannot provide the local connection or historical connection that local papers like Connection Newspapers and the Alexandria Gazette Packet provide. If your child, dog, mother, father, neighborhood, school has been featured, you understand the value of local community newspapers.

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Twenty-Five Years Later



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

I submitted my first column for publication in early Dec. 2009 after having been hired for an advertising sales position 10 months earlier. Previously, I had been in the insurance business for almost 20 years. I always had a writing urge beginning with a story I wrote in first grade about the day I was born, to a Junior High School experience I had writing a last will and testament-type of compilation for the graduating ninth-graders (myself included) to a series of sports columns for my High School newspaper (the Denebola) and finally to a nearly two-year stint writing a column for the "diamondback," the weekly college newspaper for The University of Maryland. Upon graduation, I submitted writing samples around town and was offered a job at a local paper in Prince Georges County. However, upon my acceptance and return from Massachusetts to fill the position, I was devastated to learn the position had vanished due to weak advertising sales (little did I realize how much of a precursor that difficulty would turn out to be) which caused the publisher to reduce the number of pages it printed and with that page reduction went my column.

My columns written then were a preview to what my columns would become years later. The major difference between then and now, other than age, wisdom, and experience, were the curse words, in college anyway. They came naturally to me then and appeared regularly in my content. The editor never censored me. These columns were not spewing hate or anything, more about a college undergraduate trying to navigate the demands and challenges of college life.

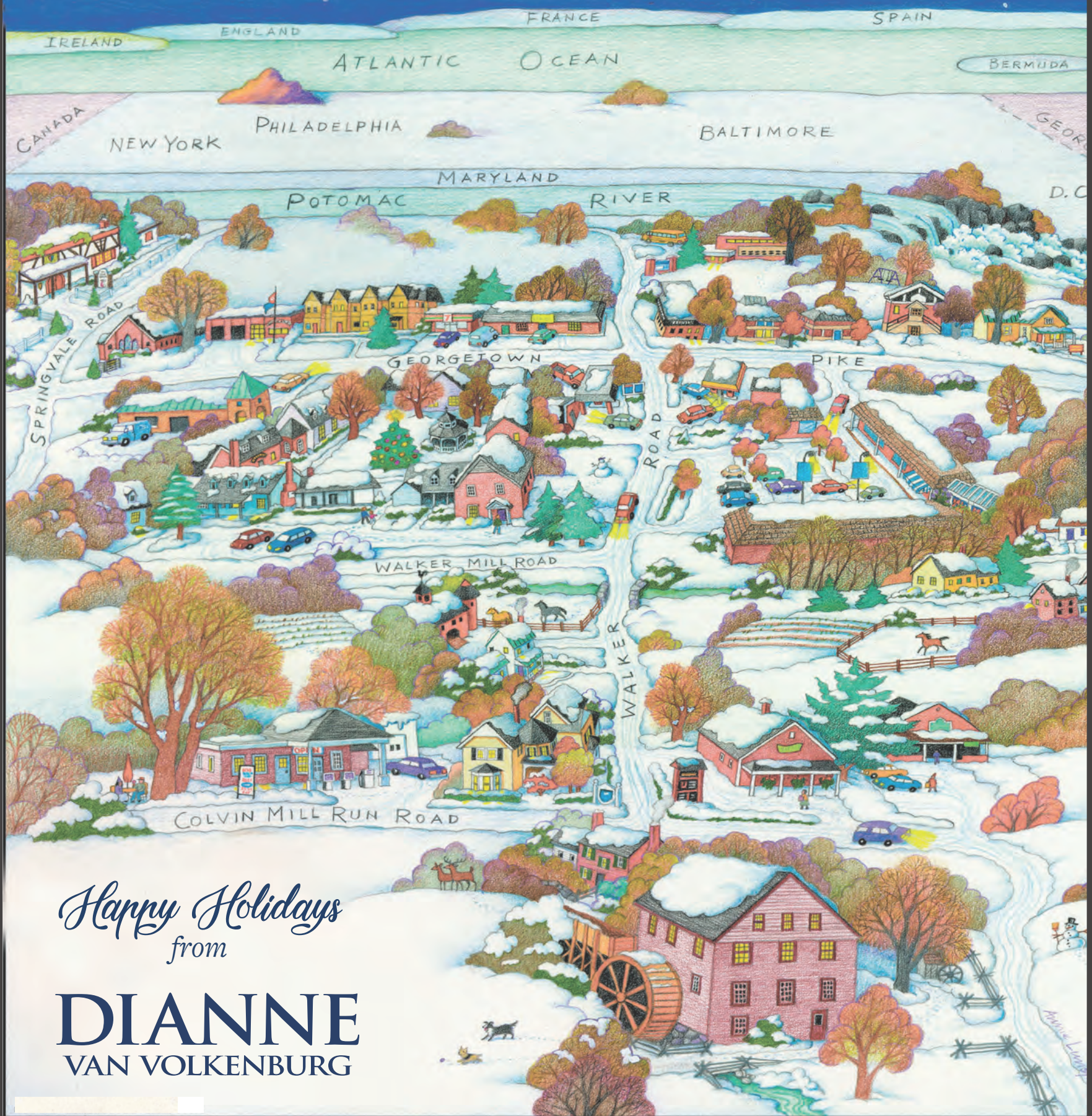
Substance/content-wise, my columns are similar to what they were about then: "Everything in general about nothing in particular." There wasn't much information in my columns. Nor do I suppose there was much journalistic substance to what/how I write either. Nevertheless, I developed my own style which continues to this day. In addition to commenting on the minutiae in life we all must endure; I try to work through the trivialities of the day with a wink and a nod to the hope that what doesn't kill us, makes us stronger. As an example: I handwrite these columns with no fatigue in my arm. And for a man of my age/experience, being able to do anything non-stop for an hour is worth mentioning.

Seriously though, this writing thing must be in my DNA. I don't have to think too much about what I'm doing (it shows, right?). I'm able to, as my brother once said: "Churn out the drive!" without much further ado. And I thank our Editor-in-Chief Mary Kimm for giving me the space/opportunity to explore my passion every week; it was her idea to add a picture.

In my writing career at Connection Newspapers (which was the avocation to my full-time advertising sales vocation), I have won multiple writing awards from the various Press Associations that make up the "DMV," (Maryland, Washington, DC, and Delaware) for my weekly editorial columns. Unfortunately, I've never received a literary call-up to the Majors, so to speak. Occasionally I had a column appear in other print media, but the overwhelming exposure came in The Connection. And though I may have toiled in relative obscurity as a result, I loved being able to express myself so personally. As I have so often said, it's not so important that it's me writing about it, rather it's important that it's being written about. Write on.

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

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