

*Children's Connection 2009*

**Heather Ferguson  
Herndon  
High School**

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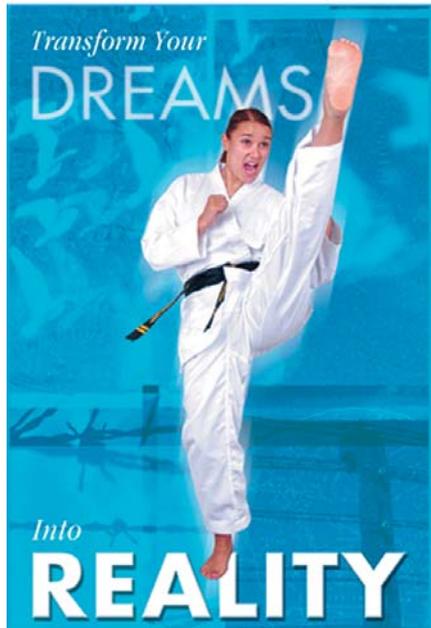
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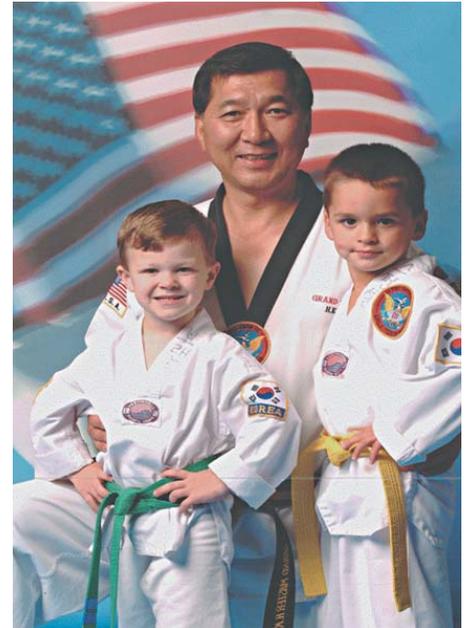


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# CHILDREN'S CONNECTION 2009



Jenna Gettler, Herndon Middle School



Elli Imel, 5th grade, Crossfield Elementary School

## Welcome

Dear Readers:

This week, the Oak Hill and Herndon 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.

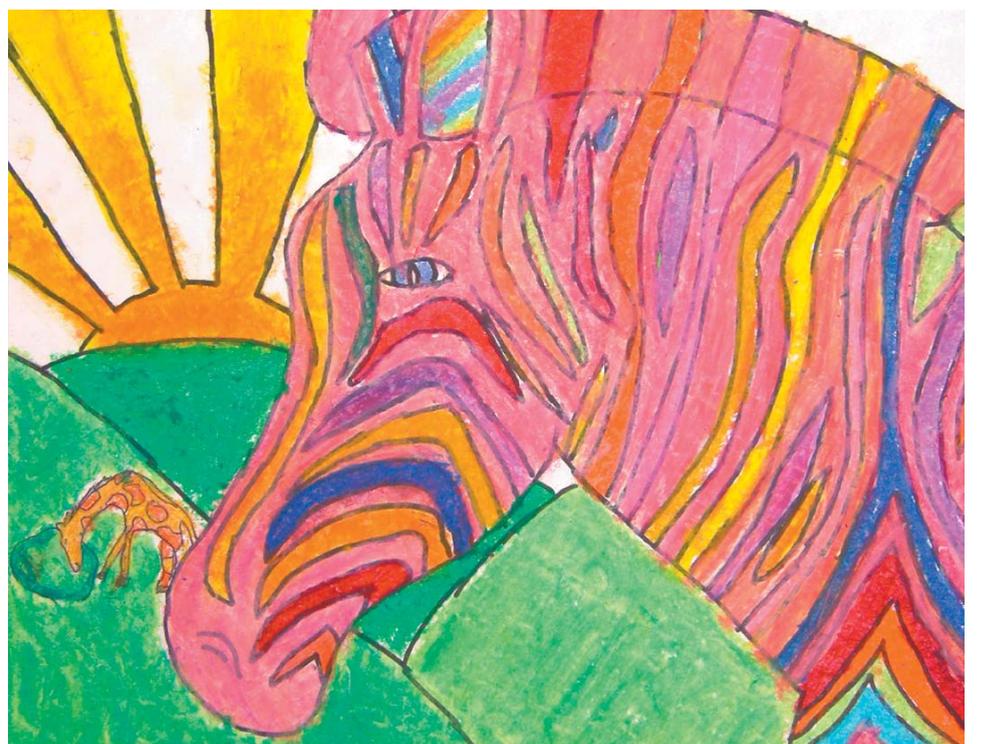
We appreciate the extra effort made by school staff to gather the materials during their busy time leading up to the holidays. We'd also like to encourage both schools and parents to mark their 2010 calendars for early December, the deadline for submissions for next year's Children's Connection.

Please keep us in mind as your children continue to create spectacular works of art and inspiring pieces of writing in the coming year.

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

Our preferred method for material is e-mail, which should be sent to [herndon@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:herndon@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 KURSPAHC



Lila Dubishar, 6<sup>th</sup> Grade, Dranesville Elementary School



Akshaj Kammari, 1<sup>st</sup> Grade, Lutie Lewis Coates ES

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



Mary Katherine McManus, 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade, Fox Mill ES

# A Class to Open My Eyes

NIKETA HURTEAU  
HERNDON HIGH SCHOOL

The most significant event of my life in 2009 would be when I had to join Ms. Mac's Developing Literacies class. When I first received the letter that stated I had to join the summer program, I was the complete opposite of thrilled! I didn't want to spend my whole summer in that class; I thought it would be a waste of my time. I pleaded with my parents not to make me join the class, but they simply refused.

They both said it would help benefit my study habits. It was decided; I had to join the class. The day when the program started, I was reluctant on getting up out of bed and going. They obviously threatened me that they would take my privileges away (typical parents). So, I reluctantly agreed to cooperate. As soon as my dad dropped me off, I was already dreading the day. I could imagine everything: four hours, sitting in a small, crowded classroom, surrounded by a bunch of horrible people with an intimidating teacher. Of course, I was just overreacting and being dramatic. I suppose, I just wanted to think pessimistically. The truth is that it wasn't really that bad.

The teacher's name was Ms. McDermott. She seemed nice, but I could tell that she was a strict and firm woman.

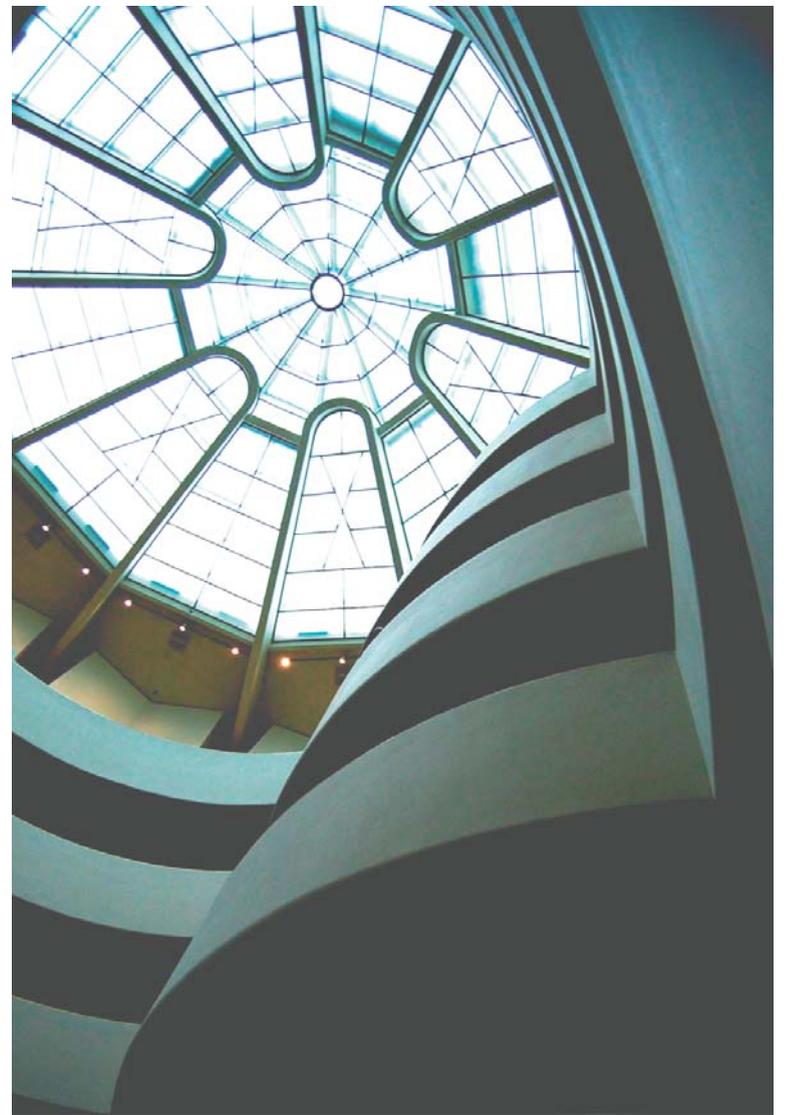
She specifically warned us that she was a no-nonsense person and she didn't tolerate any mischief. So, she highly suggested we remain cautious and do as we're told. I decided to heed her advice. I usually get along with most of my teachers, so I figured I wouldn't have any problems with Ms. Mac as long as I was obedient. The good thing was that a couple of my friends were in the class, too. Ms. Mac informed us a bit about her life; she grew up in Jamaica and lived in a strict household where she was expected to abide by all of the rules.

The first day, we had to read a book called "The Seven Habits of Highly Effective Teens." The author, Sean Covey, wrote this book because it was very hard for him to cope with being an adolescent. In the book, Covey describes the advantages and challenges of being in the middle of childhood and adulthood. I personally enjoyed the book. However, a lot of my classmates felt reading the book was tedious and that it was a nuisance. I realized that they were not acknowledging that they could benefit from reading this book. Covey is very empathetic towards

the kids who are severely struggling with their adolescence, primarily because he distinctly remembers all the obstacles he had to cope with when he was a teenager. This book, I believe, also promotes having endurance. I think he's trying to indicate a message that tells the teens to have endurance. Otherwise, they can become impatient and will not be capable to cope and tolerate anything, and that will become an immense affect on their adulthood. This book motivated me to be a better student in school, to care more about my overall academic performance in school, and to also become a productive teen.

In a short amount of time, I began to improve my overall opinion on school; I didn't take it for granted anymore and I acknowledged the potential I have, which allows me to succeed. I am also trying to compensate for my performance last year in school by getting good grades and accurately studying for tests and quizzes.

I've realized that if I want to succeed in school and in everything I do, I have to put a lot of effort in and not rely or depend on anybody, but myself. I am the key to my future and I have to open the door myself. I have to work to the full extent.



Amanda Sullivan, 12<sup>th</sup> Grade, Herndon High School

# True Challenges

BY MAYRA ALAS ROMERO  
HERNDON HIGH SCHOOL

Everybody has challenges at least once in their life time, or at least if they live for a good period of time. Now days the people getting the harder challenges are the teenagers, because they have more temptations in school or out in the streets. The main three challenges that they're going through are drugs, gangs, and jobless. If we don't help the ones in need, in this case the teenagers, not only they are going to be the ones affected because they do drugs and they are joining gangs, also the people surrounding them are going to be affected.

When it comes to making decisions, doing drugs is one of the worst decisions person could ever make. Drugs can be a very dangerous thing to do, because they can kill everybody that does them, or if they have a little bit more luck they will just get sick or probably some dead organs. Many people do drugs because some of their friends do them or maybe because they feel lonely and they need a

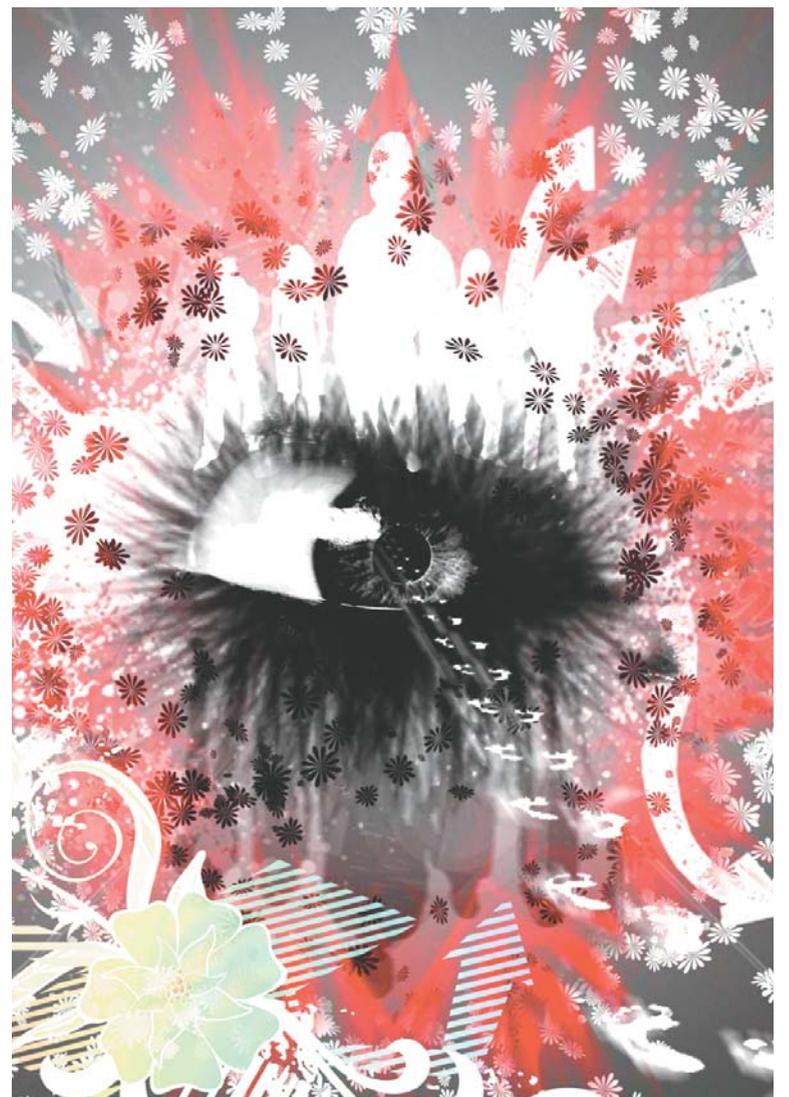
"friend," maybe not one that you can but one that can put a smile on your face. No matter what somebody is going through they should never do drugs, because they can get addicted and if they do it will be hard for them to stop, but they need to stop thinking in a selfish way and think about the ones that love them, the ones that are feeling all the pain. The only way that drugs can help you is by killing you faster from the inside out, but drugs are not a solution for happiness or solving your problems.

In the time we are living right now people cannot walk out in the streets in peace, because gangs are everywhere and people have the fear that a gang member will come and kill them. Most of the time teens join gangs because they think that they are going to gain more power over people, or maybe because they have problems and they don't know what to do. Another reason why teens join gangs is because some of their friends are in gangs and they think that if they don't join one as well that their "friends" are going to stop talking

to them. Gangs as well as drugs are a very dangerous decision to make and they can lead you to get out of a gang is only if they're dead.

The economy now is very bad, and a lot of people are losing their jobs, and that affects everybody. If somebody in the family doesn't have a job there's a good probability that they aren't going to eat well for a good period of time. If somebody is jobless is like if they are ill, because joblessness can make anybody fall in a big depression especially if they haven't had a job over a year. Being jobless can force anyone to make the wrong decision, for example they can start doing drugs or probably commit suicide, and that will make a big impact on the lives of the ones they love the most. The solution to not making the wrong decisions is to be patient and be looking at newspaper articles, and that way anybody can find a job much faster.

In conclusion, everybody at  
SEE REFLECTIONS, PAGE 20



Francisco Calvo, 12<sup>th</sup> Grade, Herndon High School

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**Craig Benson, 4<sup>th</sup> Grade, Crossfield ES**

## The Worst Thing That Ever Happened to Me

The worst thing that has ever happened to me was the time that I broke my arms. It happened at my brother's soccer game. I was in kindergarten and was on the playground next to it. There was another parent watching us play when I fell off the monkey-bars. She went to get my mom because I wasn't crying much. (Surprisingly.) Then my mom took me to the emergency room and they gave me an x-ray. I had to have surgery and pins in my arm to help it heal. Then six months later I broke the other arm.

— TRENT PILCHER,  
SIXTH GRADE

## What Are You Most Looking Forward to In the 2010?

What I hope there is in the year 2010 is a cloaking device that temporarily makes you undetectable

## FLORIS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

to the human eye so that the wearer (me) could sneak past someone (my parents) unnoticed as long as they are quiet.

The great uses for this (fantasy at least for now) technology would be a safer camouflage for soldiers and would let police apprehend armed criminals with less casualties (and let me sneak more dessert).

— JOSEPH BIRMINGHAM,  
SIXTH GRADE

## What Makes A Good Friend

To me a good friend is a friend that trusts and cares about you even if you make a mistake. I always trust my friends and help them when they make mistakes and I expect that they do the same. I do not want a friend to just laugh at me when I do something wrong, encourage me to do something bad (smoking, etc.), or say bad things about me behind my back. I want them to defend me and

cheer me up. Friends always do the best they can for each other especially when they are hurt and discouraged.

— EMMA COOPER,  
SIXTH GRADE

## What Do You Want To Be When You Grow Up?

When I grow up, I would like to be some sort of doctor or surgeon. Being a doctor would mean helping the community by giving vaccinations, annual check-ups, and making sure that everything is just fine for the patient. Knowing that you just had a successful surgery on someone's arm or rehabilitating someone's heart with the blink of an eye makes a person feel phenomenal. If I perfect either one of my desired professions, I will be able to keep the world's population seven billion strong!

— PATRICIA GROARKE,  
SIXTH GRADE

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9th- 10:00 am to 12 noon  
14th- 9:45 am & 1:45 pm  
19th- 9:45 am & 1:45 pm  
22nd- 9:45 am & 1:45 pm  
25th- 9:45 am & 1:45 pm

**Kindergarten Information Session**  
January 12th - 10 AM

# CHILDREN'S CONNECTION

## Haiku

Poems written by  
Motoko Daiten's  
Japanese  
Immersion 4<sup>th</sup>  
graders at  
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The color white  
Falling from the sky  
It's snow

— ALYSSA RAYLE

Smiley faces  
Flowers are colorful  
Flowers are pretty

— LAUREN YARNALL



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# DRANESVILLE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

## The Adventures of a Pet Rock

**H**i, I'm the president of Rocky Town. Oh I'm sorry I didn't introduce myself. Hi, my name is Kate. My owner is Kelly. Her favorite food is a cheese burger and her favorite drink is usually lemonade with a hint of lime. And her favorite snack is rock candy.

One day, the pet rock got lost at the park while they were playing. When Kelly realized the rock was missing, she started to cry because that was the only friend she had. While Kelly was crying, the rock was visiting the whole entire world.

When the rock got to El Salvador, she realized she was in Kelly's dad's country. Kate was scared with-

out Kelly's supervising. When the pet rock woke up, she didn't know that she was sailing on a boat. She passed Brazil and got some fruit. She went to Mexico and got a vegetable with juicy stuff in it. Kate was going to have a big day. While Kate was seeing the world, Kelly didn't go to school because she felt too depressed. When the boat stopped in Virginia, she went on a bus.

When Kelly was walking down the sidewalk, she tripped over something. It was KATE. She was so happy she started to cry. Kelly said, "I'll never lose you again." And she kept that promise forever.

— KELLY AGUIRRE ZELAYA, 3RD GRADE

## Lily

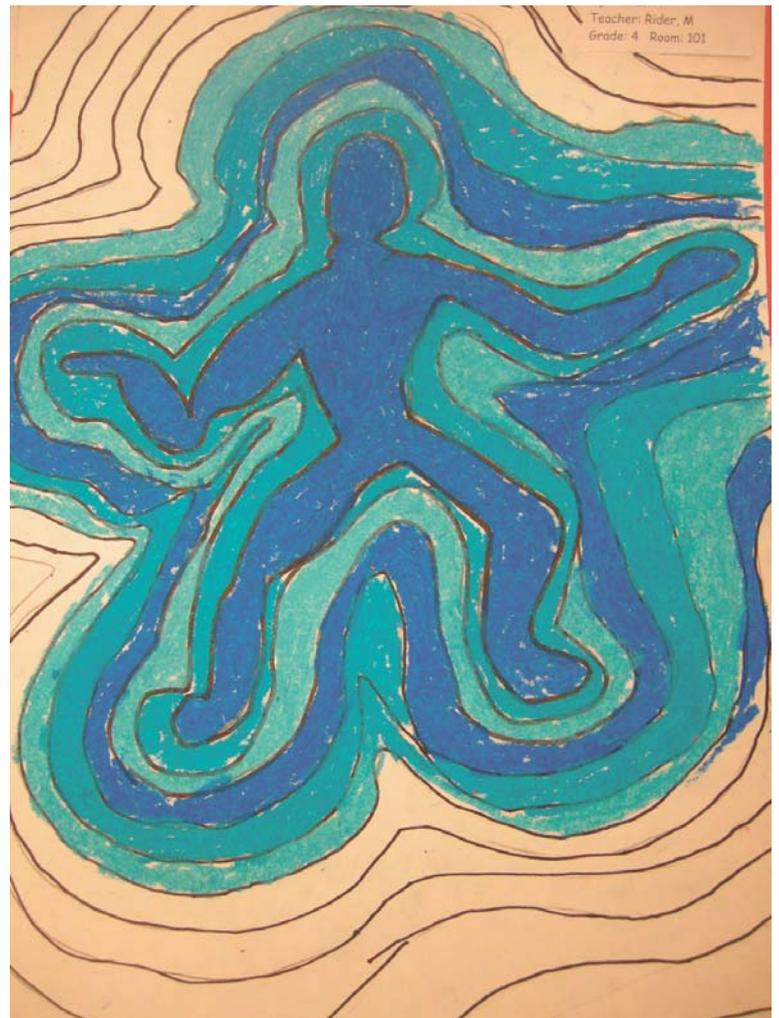
**H**i my name is Lily and I am a pet rock! My friend's name is Rocky, and he is really nice. Now I am gonna say something about a rock's life.

It's BORING BORING BORING BORING BORING BORING BORING BORING!!!! However, I got lucky because a teacher picked me up one day and put me in a bag. I was scared that I was gonna have to do homework forever! But what I did do was get taken out of the bag and put down on a table with a bunch of other rocks.

A few days later, I was picked up by a girl and painted. About a week later I got different colors painted on me. I also got two googly eyes and a cotenball nose glued on. Later I was put on a desk [that's when I made my friend, Rocky].

Guess what? The girl painted a house for me! Isn't that nice? But sadly I lost an eye, and Rocky lost both of his eyes! But the girl said, "It's O.K. you and Rocky can go to the Pet Rock Hospital". That brought our hopes up. Time to say bye. Bye!

— ROSE BAILEY, 3<sup>RD</sup> GRADE



Syed Rizvi, 4th Grade, Dranesville Elementary School

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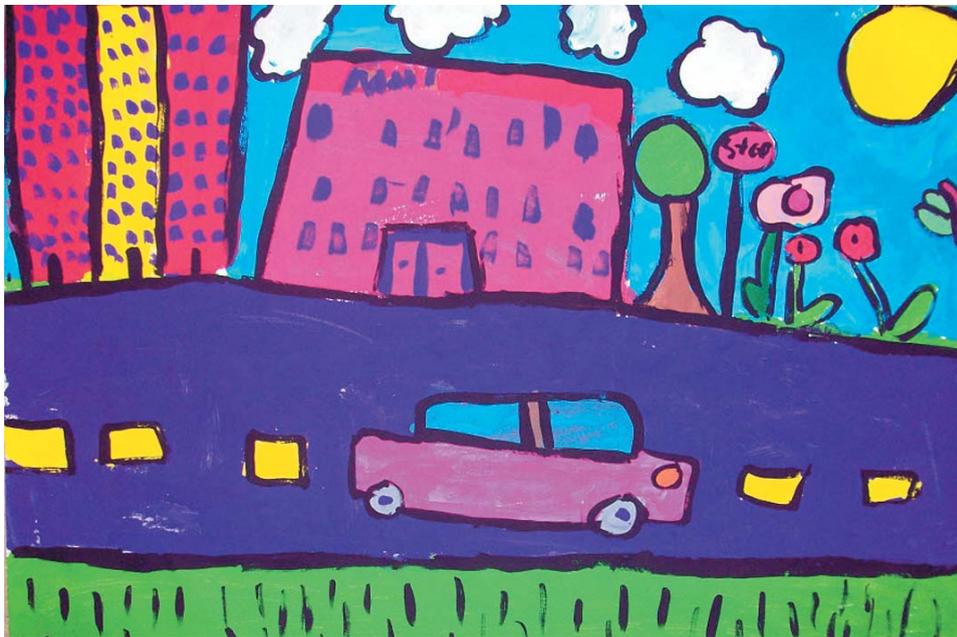


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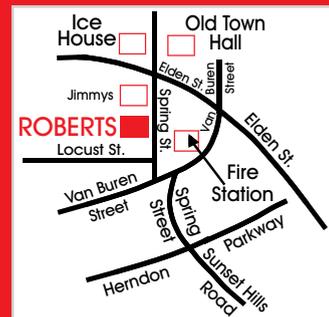
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Nataly Valle Miranda, 1<sup>st</sup> Grade, Lutie Lewis Coates ES

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**Being Thankful**

Responses from Zeina Hamad's  
3rd grade class at Hutchison  
Elementary School

**Ricky Bonilla**

I am thankful for having a home because without a home I would be on the street in the freezing cold so it does not matter if your house is not perfect. Be thankful for having parents because without parents you would not be here and there are many different things in life to do. Be thankful for being healthy and not sick. Being thankful means to be happy for different things.

**Ibrahim El-Yaouti**

To be thankful means to be grateful for who you are. I am thankful for having parents, because if I did not have parents I would not be born. I am thankful for having clothes, because if I did not have clothes I would be cold. I am thankful for having a home, because if I did not have a home I would freeze to death.

**Jaden Snead**

I am thankful for my family because without my sisters and my dad and mom my life would be boring and helpless. I am thankful for my life and my grades, because if I don't then my life will be harder. I am thankful for my food, house, and clothes. If I didn't have any food I will die. If I didn't have a house I will freeze to death. To be thankful means when you give thanks for the way you feel.

**Connor Beach**

I am thankful for my pets because they're soft and cuddly and fun to play with. I am thankful for the world because it has air for the people that live on it. I am thankful for friends because they help people. To be thankful means to help other people that need help.

# First Day at Herndon Middle

BY EMILY MALYSKA

**D**ing, ding, ding! “Ugh,” I sighed as I turned off my alarm clock. To day was the first day of seventh grade. I had to wake up at 6:30 a.m. to catch a bus that came at 7 a.m. This year I am a new, hip, and totally awesome Luke not a boring, nerdy, and weird Luke.

“Lucas, are you awake yet?” I heard my mom say from the bottom of the staircase.

I thought I’d try out being cool with my mom so I said, “Yeah, mom. Sure, I am.”

“Excuse me Lucas try again,” she said very sternly.

“I mean, “Yes mom”” I replied.

As I heard my mom walk down the stairs, I started to put on my clothes. I have a whole new look this year. Instead of wearing khakis and a collared shirt, I’m wearing blue jeans and a graphic t-shirt. I just hope that both of my parents, especially my mom, approve.

Before I went downstairs to eat breakfast I checked my clock and it was 6:45 .am. When I walked into the kitchen, mom was making me fresh-squeezed orange juice, and a bagel with cream

cheese. My older brother, Micah, was sitting at the table drinking a big glass of chocolate milk and three pancakes. When my mom looked from her cooking she said, “Oh Luke don’t you look very nice today.” Thank goodness she liked my outfit, because of that today is going to be the best day ever.

I ate my delicious breakfast and headed upstairs to brush my teeth. When I got done with that I grabbed my backpack and laced up my black and red DC skating shoes. I opened the door and headed towards the bus stop. As I walked down the front steps my Micah pushed me and tried to make me lose my balance but I regained it at the last moment. I could hear Micah laughing all the way to the bus stop.

When I got to the bus stop, I only had about two minutes to freak about going to Herndon Middle School. When the bus pulled up I took one final look at my outfit to make sure it was awesome looking and stepped on the bus.

As I walked down the aisle to find a seat to sit at, my mom came running up alongside the bus trying to signal the bus driver to stop. I prayed he wouldn’t, but of course he did stop. He opened the door and without an explanation to the

bus driver, she started up the aisle to find Micah or me.

“Lucas, honey, you forgot the new lunch box I bought for you,” she said as she lifted up a metal superman lunch box. I wanted to reply that I purposely forgot because cool seventh graders don’t carry lunch boxes, but I bite tongue instead. So with a brave face, I grabbed the lunch box and watched as she walked off the bus. Everyone was still laughing as the bus pulled away and headed to the school. I think I just might be popular for the first time in my whole life, and I am so not happy about it.

When we got to the school, I couldn’t open my locker. I went up to a teacher in the hallway and told her my problem.

“Okay you need to go to the main office,” she replied. I thanked her and went to the office.

When I got into the office there was a lady at the front desk, so I approached her.

“Hi, my name is Luke and I was wondering if you could help me with my locker because it won’t open,” I told her.

“Okay, well can you show me where your locker is then,” she replied.



Megan Messa, Herndon Middle School

So she followed me out of the office and towards my locker. Everyone, but me were in first period. When we got to my locker she asked for my combination, so I gave it to her. When she tried to unlock my locker it didn’t work for her either. She told me to stay where I was so she could check something in the office, so off she went. When she came back she asked for my locker number.

“Um, A110,” I told her.

“Well,” she replied, “This is

locker number A111.”

So feeling stupid, I moved over on locker to A110 and sure enough it worked. I told her thank you and got my books and binders that I would need for my morning classes. The lady at the front desk gave me a pass to go to algebra.

When I got into my algebra class it was already half over. I decided to sit in the back. It was very hard to follow along. It was just too much to handle in the morning.

SEE FIRST DAY, PAGE 15

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Rasha Yousifauni, 10<sup>th</sup> Grade



Ashley Morse, 12<sup>th</sup> Grade

# The Most Valuable Lesson

By: ROSIE BROCK  
COOPER MIDDLE SCHOOL,  
8<sup>th</sup> GRADE

Sometimes the contrast between my old life and my new life seems so foreign, almost like a distant dream-fading from my memory before it even has time to completely register. My whole childhood was a sheltered one, hidden away from all the garbage that makes the "real world" such a harsh reality. Growing up under the hot Florida sun, I spent my time swimming and playing make-believe with my friends. My small private school was almost like a slightly dysfunctional but still loving family, close-knit and familiar since birth. Of course my life wasn't perfect, but somehow throughout my entire early childhood I maintained a complete innocence.

However, all this changed when I was 13, a sixth grader who was half finished with her first year of middle school. It all started when I read a letter (which was supposed to remain secret) and found some startling news. At the end of the school year, my family and I would be moving away from everything I knew and loved, to Northern Virginia.

The summer was an array of moving vans and goodbyes. Once in Virginia, the rest of the break

sped by like a blur. Finally it was the first day of school, basically the most nerve-wracking day of my life. My stomach was filled with butterflies and my palms were sweaty, a mixture of fear and excitement ran through me. The first month was hard, I'm not going to lie - I'd gone from about twenty kids in a grade to two-hundred teenagers. Having been so innocent my whole life, the reality of this new situation was rather shocking at times. The language, "bad kids," and just being new to the area threw me off balance. At home everyone was under pressure, looking for jobs, and dealing anxiety, thinking that maybe this move wasn't for the best.

As my first year of living in Virginia drew to a close, I felt slightly changed as a person.

That little girl from Florida just wasn't here anymore, someone else... older and less naïve, had taken her place. The year had taught me so much, about how family sticks together, friendships, and something even more important. I realized that as I had been trying to live my life, I was actually trying to control every single aspect of it. Everything had to be perfect or I couldn't deal with it. I had to look perfect, get perfect grades, and overall, never mess up. I was so afraid of looking stupid that I guarded myself from people.

Since being shy is already one of personality traits, I can't afford to be extremely guarded.

Over the summer I started to get frustrated with myself, tired of trying to fit in with the crowd and always get everything right. The more pressure I put on myself, the more miserable I became. Don't get me wrong - I had a relatively fun summer, but in the back of my mind there was always that little voice putting me down.

Eight grade began, and I could feel the pressure building each day. Balancing schoolwork and my social life was a challenge. If I felt ugly or just depressed, I skipped school. This whole pattern was beginning to run my life, and frankly I started to become my own worst enemy. One morning I woke up, looked in the mirror and decided that I was through with living my life like this. Everything just suddenly seemed so much simpler; I realized that everyone - from supermodels to civilians, have flaws. Once I learned to accept myself for who I am, other problems didn't seem like such a big deal. It sounds somewhat cliché, but the most valuable lesson I've learned so far is to "Let it be." You just have to let the little things go, relax, and move on. No longer is that critical voice in my head running my life, instead I control my destiny.

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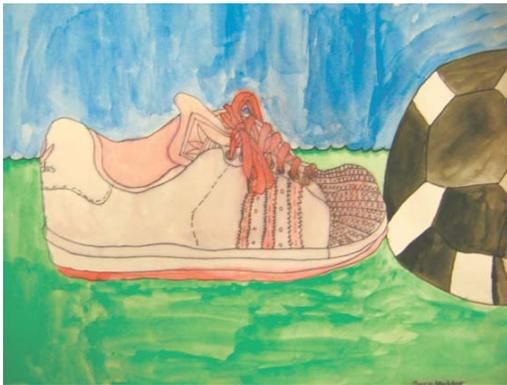
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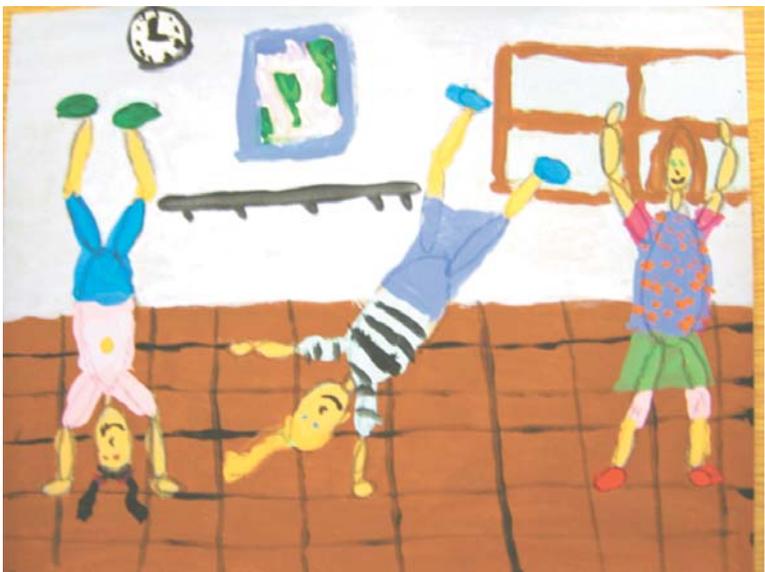


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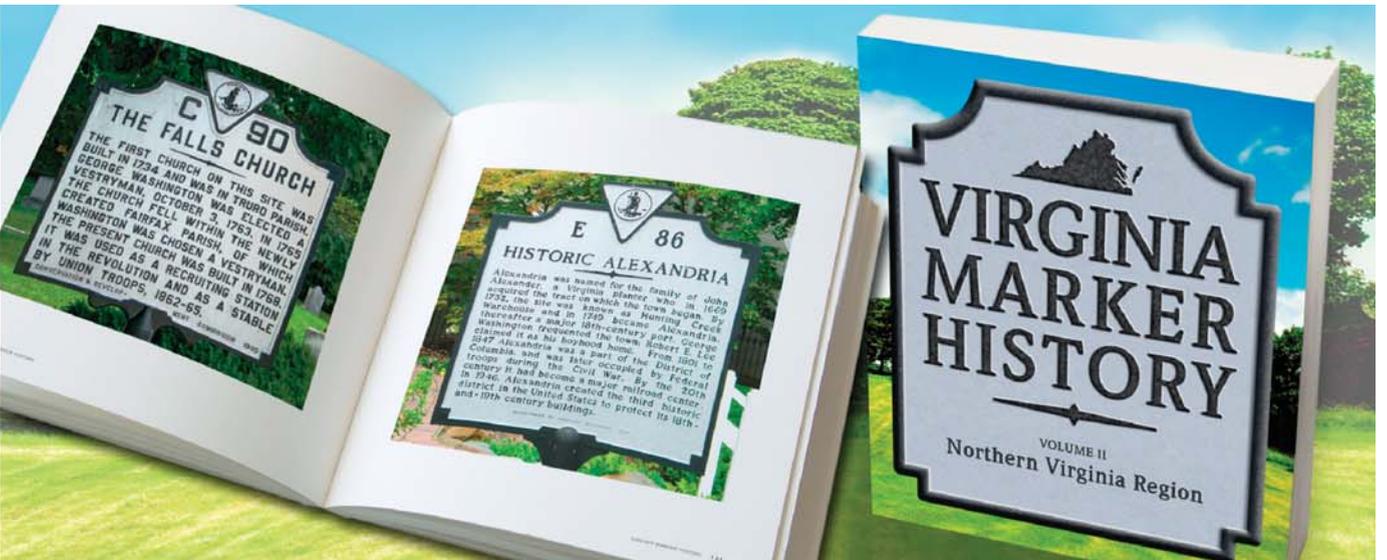
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# First Day at New School

FROM PAGE 11

The teacher gave us a packet that was twelve pages long, and she expected them all to be down tomorrow. Finally what seemed like forever, the bell finally rang. I grabbed my stuff and looked my schedule. It said that I had to go to gym. Great, I thought to myself, I have absolutely no idea where's that. So I just tried to blend in with the big mob of people and followed the person in front of me.

Finally I saw big letters on the far wall that said 'gym.' So I was so happy and relieved that I had finally found the gym. When I walked into the gym the bell rang. I had no idea if I was late or not. The gym teacher didn't say anything and neither did I. My gym teacher took role and then put us in squads. I was in squad seven. The teacher gave us uniforms that what I thought our parents had secretly paid for. When he dismissed the boys and the girls to the locker room, I walked behind all the boys not knowing where the locker rooms where. When I got into the locker room, it was so awkward to change in front of other people. But I sucked it up and hey at least my locker opened this time.

When I walked out of the locker room I felt so stupid. My gym shirt was super long and my gym shorts were so small, the waistband was making it very hard to breath. We played basketball, or, well, I at least tried to, but I am not very athletic.

When the gym teacher told us to all go change, I was so happy. When the bell rang I went to third period. When I walked into the Home Ec room I noticed it was very nice and seemed less boring then all my other classes. In Home Ec we are going to start sewing. Great, I thought to myself, the most boring thing to do I am going to be doing it first. When the

bell rang I went to my right locker this time and grabbed my back up money that I would use in emergencies.

So I headed towards the cafeteria. I found an empty table to sit at. Some other kids I didn't know sat down to. I didn't know them so I just kept to myself. When the teachers dismissed my table to go get lunch, I had no idea what was for lunch. All the food looked inedible, so I got out of line and headed towards my table and waited to be dismissed. When the teachers finally dismissed us from lunch, I headed towards my locker to grab my books for fourth period.

When I got into the science room, the teacher told us we were going to talk about atoms. I just spaced out, but at the end of the speech she told us we were going to have quiz on it in three days. When the bell rang I walked to history. When I got into the history we were talking about the Civil War. This I knew something about.

Finally it was last period and I had band. It was going to be awesome because we have an awesome teacher. I play the tube and she said that the school had extra so at least I didn't have to carry it around. When I went into the band room we were told the rules and that's all. So that was the worst band class I have ever had. When the bell rang I headed towards my locker to go home.

When I got on the bus I went to the seat were I sat this morning and went to sleep. When the bus dropped me off at the bus stop, Micah pushed me out of the way and ran home. I walked very slowly to the house. When I got into the house my mom was waiting for me at the door. She said, "How was your day?" I must have given her a look because she said, "Was it really that bad?"

"Mom," I said, "If only you knew what I went through today."

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## CHILDREN'S CONNECTION

# Happy Halloween

BY ROBERT BECK  
HERNDON MIDDLE SCHOOL

One day a fourteen year old boy named John Carlson was working outside in the yard. John was from a poor family and had to do yard work for his neighbors to make extra money for his family. John was pulling weeds for Mrs. Thomas in the back yard.

While he was working he came upon a weed that wouldn't come up. He used clippers, a shovel, an axe and a hoe but it wouldn't come up. Finally he braced his legs up against a tree and started pulling. Then, wham out it popped!

Then John hears a strange sound he leans in to look and see what's making that sound. He sees a black hole that sucks him in but is able to grab a branch and holds on for dear life. His hands start to slip from the branch and he falls into the black hole and it closes up. John wakes up in a field not knowing what happened. His watch is broken so he doesn't know what time it is. He doesn't even know what his own name is.

He gets up and starts walking down the road near the field that he woke up in.

John is walking down the road when he sees some tanks coming down the road heading the opposite direction. He figures that if there are tanks that are going that way there has to be a city or something there. He gets in front of the tank and then they stop the hatch opens and a man in an army uniform came out.

Suddenly he remembers who he is and what happened.

The man says, "What are you doing in the middle of the road in the middle of nowhere." John asks if he can have a ride to wherever they are going so he can get home. The colonel asks where he lives and he answers that he lives in "Los Angeles California." The colonel looks dumbfounded he said there is no such place as "Los Angeles California." John asks where he is, the colonel says that they're in San Francisco, Louisiana.

John asks what year it is. The colonel says its 4089. John follows the colonel in the San Francisco, Louisiana. He gets a job as a gardener until he can figure out a way



Julie Kasuilis,  
Herndon Middle School

to get back to his own year. He is planting some flowers and pulling some weeds in Mrs. Thomas back yard. When he hears that same strange sound that he heard before he looks and there is another black hole and this time he just jumps in with no struggle at all. This time he wakes up and remembers exactly what happened but when he looks he sees horses and buggies everywhere. He goes up to a man on the side of the road getting in to a buggy and asks

what year it is. The man answers and says its "1845." John is really scared and doesn't know what to do and how to get home. He goes to look for another one of those black holes. He finds one in the back yard of an old woman. He jumps in hoping to get to the future.

This time when John wakes up after the transportation there are flying cars everywhere so he's happy. John starts walking around the city so he can find a scientist

to see if he knows anything about time travel. John walks in to a building and finds a man by the name of Theodore Thomas. Thomas is a scientist who says that he has mastered time travel. Thomas asks what year he wants to go back to and John answers 2009. Dr. Thomas sends John back to his own time and John wakes up in Mrs. Thomas back yard. Mrs. Thomas comes out and asks why the work isn't done. John just gets up and gets back to work.



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## Family

BY KATHRYN VAN DE HOUTEN  
8TH GRADE/HOME SCHOoled

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They're the people who will share in your sorrow and happiness,

They only put their best foot forward, and never give you any less.

They're the ones who will forgive you, no matter what you do,

And they're best defined as the people who will always love you.

# CHILDREN'S CONNECTION

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Boys and girls planting soy.  
I found a dollar, that was luck,  
but it was only a buck!

Girls bragging,  
Others nagging.  
A group of girls were singing,  
Others were dancing!  
Kids playing football in the warm sun.  
Everyone is having so much fun!  
The bell has rang!!  
Everybody says dang!

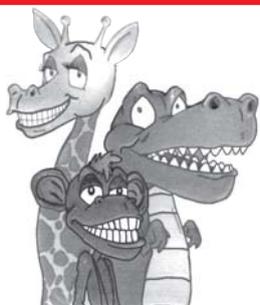
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## CHILDREN'S CONNECTION

### Language

BY HANNAH KWON  
HERNDON HIGH SCHOOL/JUNIOR

Language was not something that came with us as we were born into this world over two million years ago. It did not slip out from our lips as we crawled upon the shore from the dark depths of man's original cesspool; it wasn't born in us, but bred into our evolution. Like sowing seeds, or herding sheep, it was a tool that we slowly became dependant on to get the better of those less willing to adapt. Language bloomed and became a revered trade item, passed through the world from mouth to mouth along the routes of empires and kingdoms. Countless times, words have been recycled through our greedy throats, striving in vain to express what is felt within.

From survival came a desire to speak, a want to be heard, to know that we have a voice, to assure our place in this world. There came an addiction to hear ourselves speak, that has woven its way into our very core of living. But how far do we go to make ourselves known in the ear of the world? Are we willing to smother truth to hold ourselves up? To be loved? To be us?

*"History is a set of lies agreed upon."* — Napoleon Bonaparte

It seems as though this is the case. To better ourselves, our image, we bend even the most sacred of writings, history, to our desire to be loved and known. And what better way is there than the manipulation of something so relied upon, something taken for fact without question. Children lap it up like milk from their mother, knowing nothing of the slight poison that might be laced into its thick flow of long winded speeches of pointless political terms and long narratives of battles supposedly won and lost, that give it a sweet smell and lulls us slowly into a thoughtless sleep of tolerance.

*"Political language has to consist largely of euphemism, question begging and sheer cloudy vagueness."*  
— George Orwell

Ah, but without these fine words, so much like cheap silk and velvet, what could a lie hide under? There would be nothing but truth left for the audience to hear, and something so "wanted" by the people would set their world on



Hannah Kwon

fire, a paradox that is a drug that keeps this reality in something close to sanity. The smoke and mirrors begin to show their strings and pulleys as the fancy wording is lifted and examined closely. But why ruin the show? Why not let them do as they please?

Lies spin lovely webs of intricacy and deceit, but even a spider can get caught in its own web. The harm in such ruses can only be seen after the chaos has been initiated. If they underestimate the power of such information, it will overwhelm them, and corrupt even the most pure intentions. Language, so easily bent, bends us in return and bend us 'til we break.

*"I will simply take the position that the spoken word, like the written word, amounts to a nonsensical arrangement of sounds or letters without a consensus that assigns 'meaning'. And building from the meanings of what we hear, we order reality."* — Phyllis Reynolds Naylor

We define our reality; yet we allow others to fool, to take, to make us believe what they think is right. What they think is truth. As quickly as we discover that language helps us define who we are, we hand it over to those who do nothing but speak more eloquently, and more slyly. But why? Do we really think that someone else but our self can know what we think? Can we really be told what is best for us by someone who is not us? Why do we let others walk all over us, so to speak, in hurtful words and theories taken as laws? Language can label a race, label a sex, label an individual; yet those who are what they are never really have any say in what they are. Only outsiders.

But then, it seems to be that the only way to know ourselves is to compare us to others; knowing the

difference between us and them, you and me, is taking note of the differences. Language has taken that primitive technique and enhanced its ability to separate and define us from them tenfold. Adjectives, pronouns, and prepositions, all with countless examples, take defining and the meaning of humans and their surroundings to a level unknown to the basic "You are you, and I am me" separation that is sewn into our Reptilian brains. This level night as well have magical properties; raising nations, turning people upon one another, and uniting them in a cause; we each have our own term for good and bad. Words so vague and flimsy oddly have the most influence in our universe.

*"We Chinese can't sing 'land where our fathers died.'" She argued with me about politics, while I meant because of curses."* — Maxine Kingston

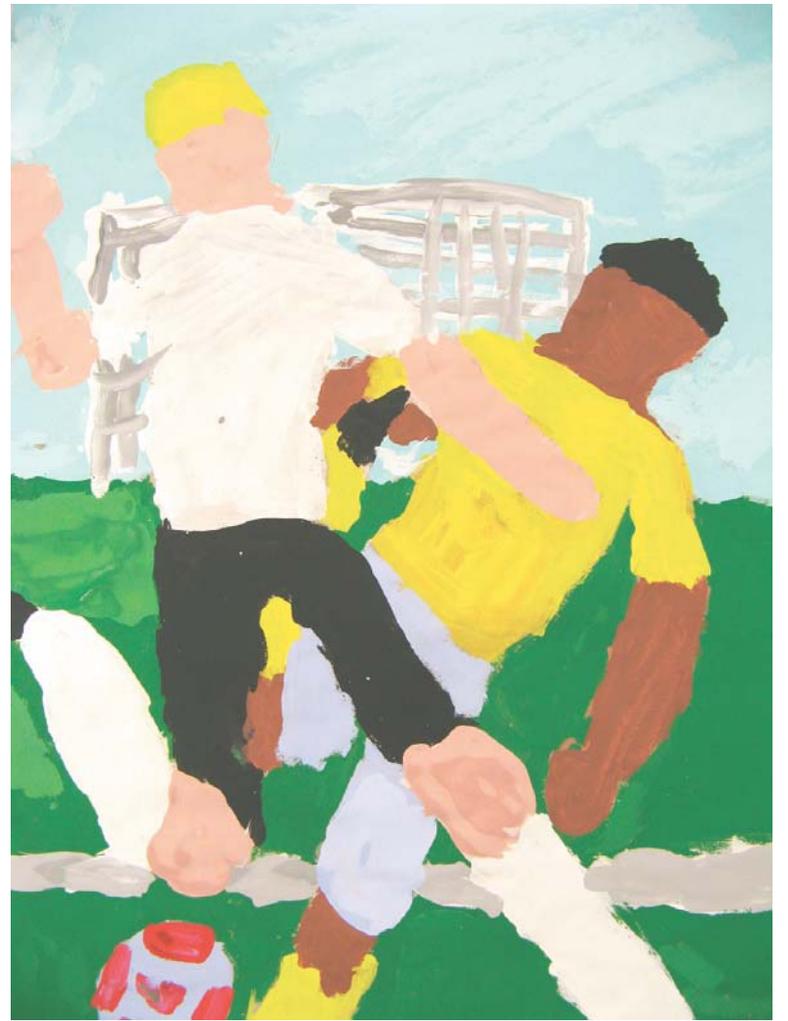
As there are a millions things in this world, there are a million more meanings for each and every one of them. What we choose to call the dominant meaning of the object or thought or action is our own choice. But we still choose to bow our heads in habit and take what others say as fact; with justifications like divine right and government authority, we never question, never think of the possibility of another meaning, or another definition for that one out of a million.

It comes down to this: what matters more to us? Truth? Or the justification of our individual existence? In reality, no one likes the truth; we like our lies and façades that we make up to compensate for our stained and animal souls. But it's all changeable; language is man's for the making. What the consequences are, are not of languages fault, but of our own. Quite Freudian, isn't it?

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Bryan Silver, 4<sup>th</sup> Grade



Hope Knudson 4<sup>th</sup> Grade



Johnson Ezidinma, 5<sup>th</sup> grade



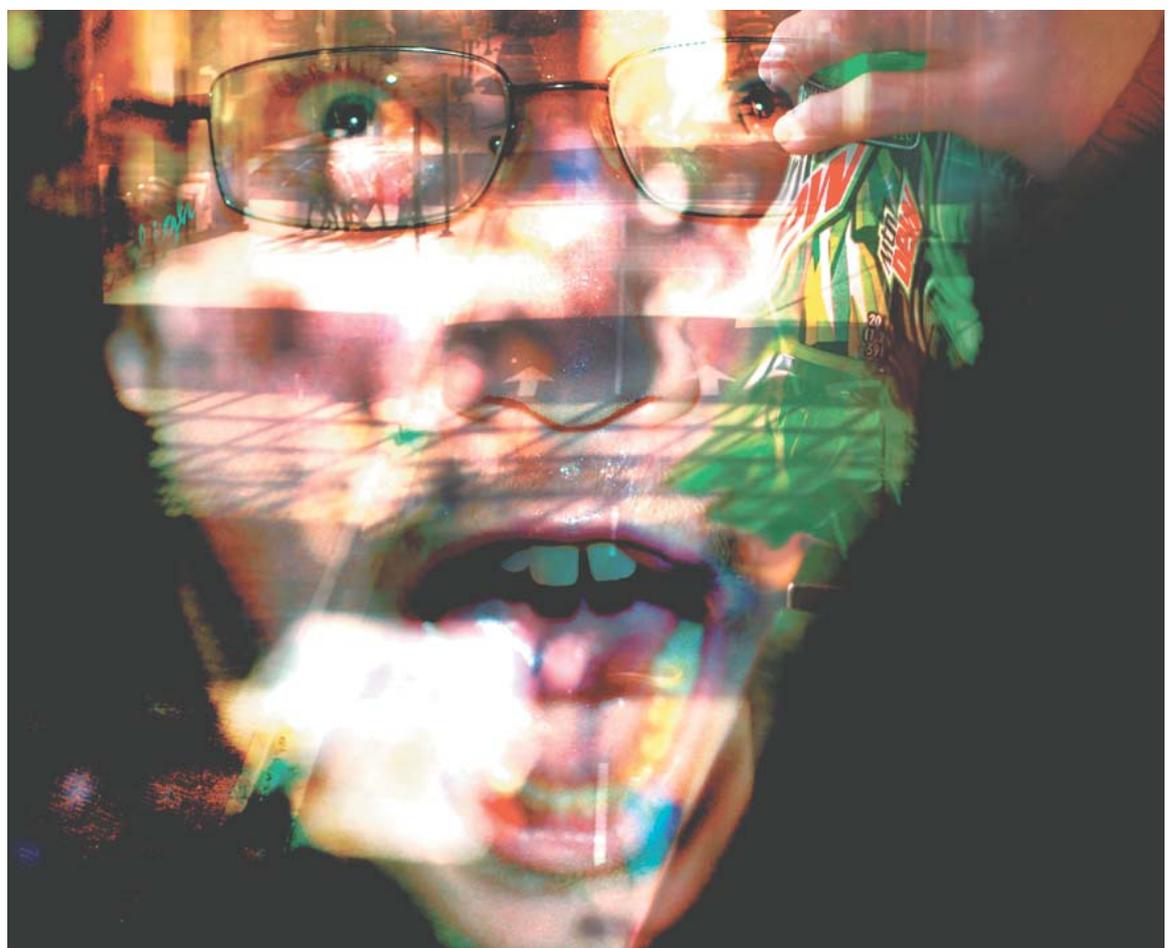

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Alex Brock, 11<sup>th</sup> Grade, Herndon High School

## Reflections from Herndon High

FROM PAGE 4

some point in their lives they will go through a challenge. The three main challenges people are going through right now are

drugs, gangs, and jobless. People in these days are not very understandable with others especially with teens, because they think that they're the ones that cause all the bad situations that everything is

going through right now. If we really want to make a difference in the lives of this people we need to work together and try our best to find a solution so we can help the ones in needs.

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## Cousins to a Concert

JENNIFER DIAZ ALVAREZ  
HERNDON HIGH SCHOOL

I was so excited when I saw the news that Wisin y Yandel was coming to Fairfax at the Patriot Center; I enjoyed Oct. 1st when I finally went to see them. This day was the best day of my life, it will always be in my heart and in my mind. I will never forget this day! Wisin y Yandel's concert was a great experience for me: my wish came true. I never thought I was going to get what I wanted so badly, but I did!

My parents took my cousin and me to the concert about an hour early to avoid the traffic, but we still got caught in heavy traffic. It seemed that everyone was going to the Patriot Center. There was a long line of cars waiting to go in the concert and people were even parked in the store's parking lot because there was no more parking lots. Luckily we didn't have to park because my parents only went to go drop us off.

In the concert we were waiting for the concert to begin it felt like a billion years past by it took

forever for them to start. While I was waiting, I bought a shirt, which was my prized possession. It had the tour locations and their name on the back, in white letters on a black shirt. On the front of the shirt it had their names "Wisin y Yandel" and their picture in the front they looked so cute they also have their autographs on their picture I bought this shirt while I was waiting for the concert to start.

Finally they started singing and the best thing about the concert is that they have a big screen and you see them even closer. The pictures come out perfectly if you take a picture off of the big screen. In the middle of the concert they threw a necklace my favorite of the two singers was Yandel and he was the one that threw a necklace and I caught I was so excited I started yelling I immediately put it over my head around my neck. 'Oh my goodness' this was the best day ever! I was screaming like crazy when I caught his necklace on the necklace: it had the group's initial W and Y, and was a good quality necklace.

The whole place was shak-

ing the pictures came out blurry because my hands were shaking because I was so excited. I was dancing like the whole time and so was my cousin. I was dancing and taking pictures at the same time the whole place was so crowded there were more than 5,000 persons in the whole stadium.

I started yelling really loudly. It was so loud and the whole stadium was shaking because people were dancing I couldn't believe my own eyes that they were hotter in person than on television.

I took lots of pictures. They threw a necklace and I caught I was so excited. I started yelling when I caught it. This day was the best day of my life I will never forget this day.

This concert has made my life change so much they put a smile on my face. I really enjoyed the concert. Going to this concert was what I always wanted in all my life and they finally came true I'm so happy I can't believe my wishes actually came true. I will never forget this special day.

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PHOTO BY GABRIELLE PIJACA

Sara Monian and Katherine Gallo work on their bill project during Civics class. This is one of Cooper Middle School's 8th graders biggest project of the year.



PHOTO BY MATT ANDERSON

John Etherton, Garret Snare, Jordan Jopez, Luke Kohli, Andrew Wong, Palavi Prayaga, Tory Robinson, Nicole Ravas work on their English in the Cooper Library, which is a central part of students' learning at Cooper.

## Cooper Life in Pictures



PHOTO BY LIZZIE SCHOTT

Soren Mohayheyh and Hayley Murnan demonstrate teamwork in art class and how 'amazing things can be made when you try hard.'



PHOTO BY MARY LONG

Amanda Lund, an eight grader at Cooper Middle School, begins writing a message on the chalkboard in Mrs. Baber's drama class. Although the chalkboard's really meant for writing down homework, Cooper students love to write on the board just for fun and leave goofy notes to their friends.



PHOTO BY AMIRAH AHMAD

Steven Hintz and Senorita Della Gatta work together to answer Steven's question. Cooper Middle School students and teachers work together to overcome problems with wise solutions on a daily basis.

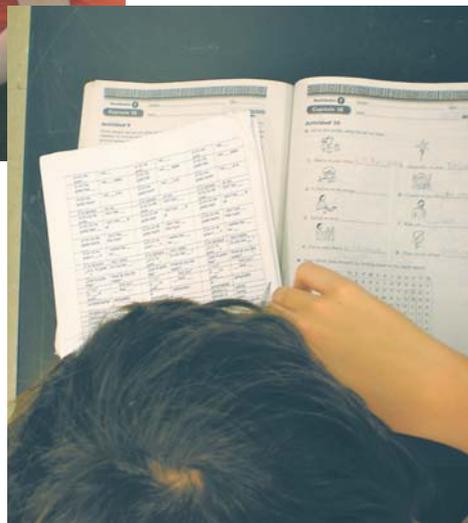


PHOTO BY KYLE KIRKPATRICK

Clay Olsen completes his Spanish and science homework in QST.

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# Oil's Well That Reads Well



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

In the pantheon of things (subjects) with which I have absolutely no knowledge (and even less interest) are cars and more specifically – and especially, their repairs. The head of a pin would likely provide sufficient space for that knowledge. So when something as routinely simple as an "Oil" light illuminates on my car's dashboard, my immediate reaction/assessment is "Oh...! Now what do I do?" What little I do know to do, reactive though it may be (as opposed to proactive as it should be), is to consult the owner's manual provided by the dealer/manufacturer. However, since there are 352 pages in that manual, I'm not instinctively able (even though oil begins with the letter "o") to seek and find the answer to my question. That question being, as simply as my limited knowledge can determine is, "What kind of oil do I put in my car's engine?"

Knowing what information I wanted though, did not assist me in finding it as I flipped through the hundreds of color-coded and headline/categorized pages/sections, so I went to the back of the manual, the glossary of terms if you will, to see if the very specification information for which I was looking was somehow identified. Sure enough, it was. Oh boy, was it!

The terms are listed alphabetically so I scanned/flipped the pages until I found the grouping for the letter "O." And there, to my nearly uncontrollable joy, I found the exact answer I was looking for. And found it in such Kenny-level English that I thought it worth mentioning and focusing on as fodder for this week's column. Reading the listings under "Oil," from top to bottom I read, "Oil Changing;" "Identification Symbol;" and then the *pièce de résistance* and the choice I could not actually resist – or believe my eyes – which enabled me to find the answer to my oil question, was printed the following: "What kind of oil do I put in my engine?" Can you believe that? A manual written just for me, and a category/answer to my question that was so perfectly suited to its owner's minuscule level – and total lack – of knowledge, that it prevented even a "Bozo" like me from clowning-up this much-needed repair/replenishment. You can't imagine (although maybe you can) the sheer joy and relief I experienced, when after stressing-up the usual anxiety brought on by these kinds of car-related conundrums (the appearance of an "idiot" light; aptly named), and then holding this voluminous owner's manual in my hands as well with a simple answer apparently not in the offing, that I was able to, in relatively short order, find the answer and find it so obviously stated that, my usual mental anguish concerning this mechanical mishmash was completely eliminated.

When I saw in the owner's manual that the section/page that I needed to get to was in fact the exact question to which I was desperately seeking a simple – and quick – answer, I busted out laughing and said, "Finally, a manual that I can understand." Simple pleasures for a simple person. Now that's what I'm talking about!

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

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## 21 Announcements

## 21 Announcements

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Clearwire Wireless Broadband, an FCC-licensed wireless provider in the State of Virginia, is proposing the installation of telecommunications equipment on an existing lattice utility tower at W & OD Trail and Grace Street, Herndon, Fairfax County, Virginia 20170. The proposed development will include a 9' x 13' lease area for equipment. Members of the public interested in submitting comments on the possible effects of the proposed project on historic properties included in or eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places may send their comments to Alex Bos, Rescom Environmental Corp., P.O. Box 6225, Traverse City, MI 49696 or call 1.231.947.4454. Project Reference #: 0910133

## 21 Announcements

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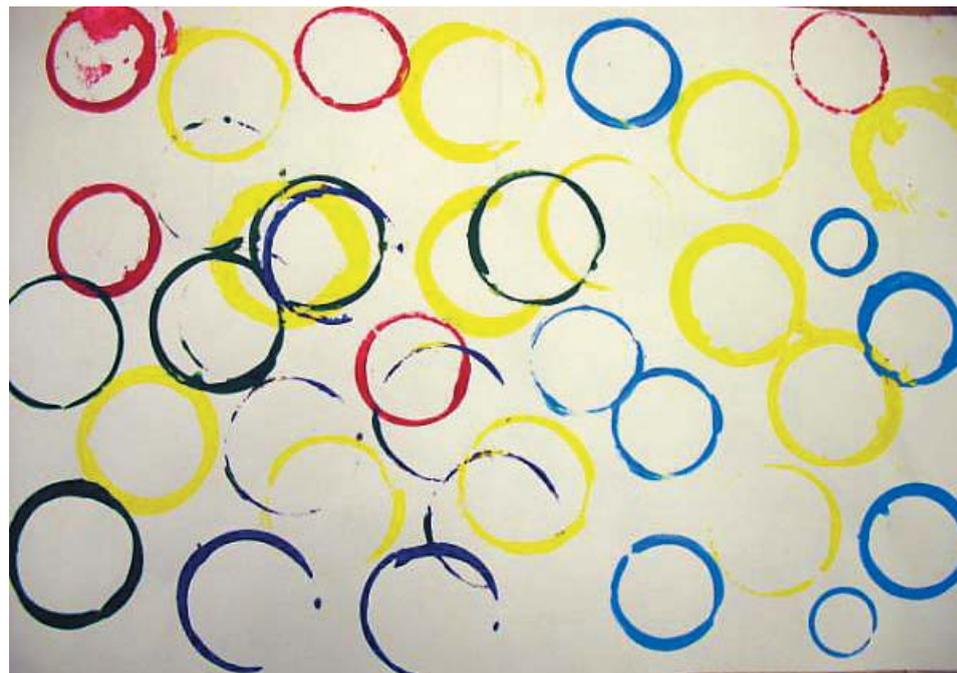
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