

Children's Connection 2010



Christmas Time,
by Brian Burns, Senior,
Oakton High School

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Best Wishes For The Holidays



PHOTO BY LOUISE KRAFFT

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CHILDREN'S CONNECTION 2010

VIENNA/OAKTON CONNECTION EDITOR
KEMAL KURSPAHC
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Tracing the Past, by Isabel Yun, 12th Grade, Oakton High School



Boy Playing Violin, by Colin Pohlman, 7th grade, Thoreau Middle School

Welcome

Dear Readers:

This week, the Vienna 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.

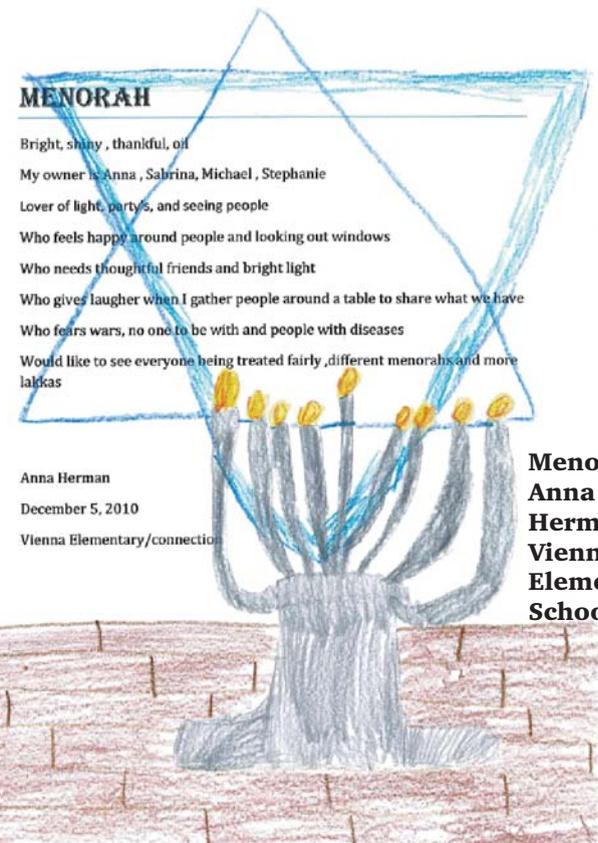
We appreciate the extra effort made by school staff to gather the materials during their busy time leading up to the holidays. We'd also like to encourage both schools and parents to mark their 2011 calendars for early December, the deadline for submissions for next year's Children's Connection. Please

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 vienna@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



MENORAH

Bright, shiny, thankful, old
My owner is Anna, Sabrina, Michael, Stephanie
Lover of light, parties, and seeing people
Who feels happy around people and looking out windows
Who needs thoughtful friends and bright light
Who gives laughter when I gather people around a table to share what we have
Who fears wars, no one to be with and people with diseases
Would like to see everyone being treated fairly, different menorahs and more
lalkas

Anna Herman
December 5, 2010
Vienna Elementary/connection

**Menorah, by
Anna
Herman,
Vienna
Elementary
School**



By Kate Taylor, Grade 5, Wolftrap Elementary School



By Zack Marshall, Waples Mill Elementary School

CHILDREN'S CONNECTION

POETRY CORNER

A selection of poems from the 3rd grade students at the Flint Hill Lower School.

Wii

The wii is white like snow.
The button on top
Turning red and green.
Its favorite food is CDs,
Sometimes it doesn't like some CDs
and it spits them out.
Its best friends are the Wii remotes!

— AL-MOHSIN AL-HUSSAIN

A Christmas Tree

A Christmas tree
Smelling like fresh air
On a wintery, frosty day
Waiting patiently to get lit.
A Christmas tree
Feeling disappointed
Because dolls were perched on its branches
And humungous circle ornaments hanging on its limbs.
Ornaments with
Green stripes,
Red stripes
And golden sparkly stripes.
Finally the Christmas tree is lit
A Christmas tree was
Happy,
Stunning,
And bright!

— ALINA BAUER

The sky

I always look at the sky
In the day.
Sun shimmering in the
blue topaz sky.
Surrounding it are pearl white cotton balls
in shapes like an elephant.
I hear wind
Then rain.
I wonder if the rain drops
Are god's tears.
I look at the sky for a second time.
Now I see sapphire blue sky
Stars flying in the dark
I wonder if they are my
Ancestors watching over me.

— ANDREAS KAMALI

The Paperclip

The tiny,
Flexible,
Paperclip
Disappears,
Then reappears,
To capture its prey.

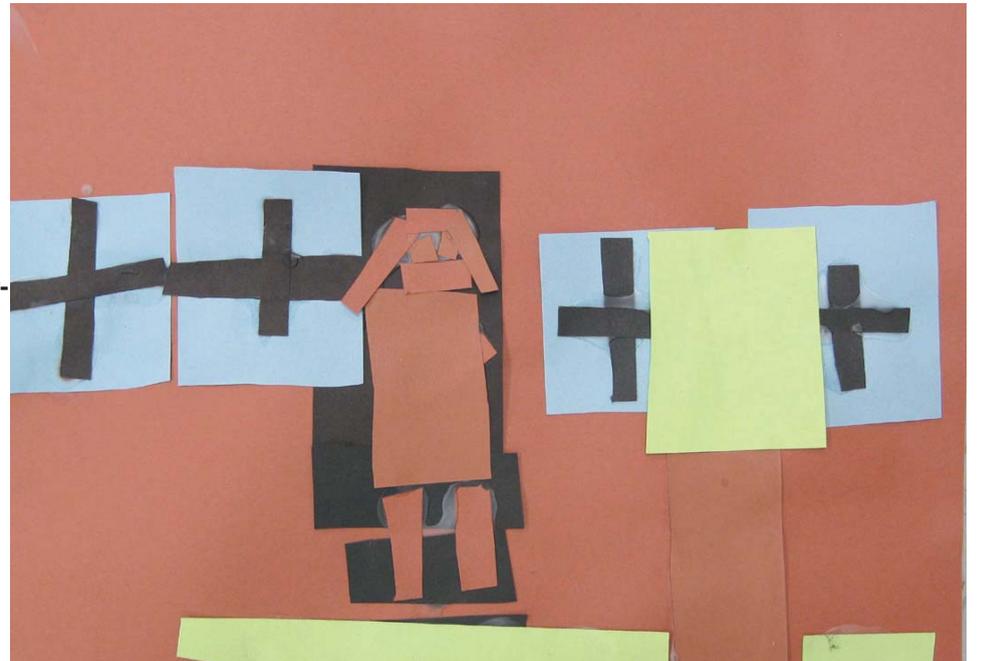
— IAN McDUFFIE

SEE POETRY, PAGE 5



By Alexia Lee, 4th Grade, Vienna Elementary School

Mom's Home,
by Faisal Al-Fehaid, Kinder-
garten,
Westbriar
Elementary
School



By Kiley Moriarty,
Grade 5,
Wolftrap
Elementary
School

CHILDREN'S CONNECTION

FLINT HILL SCHOOL

Reflections from Flint Hill School 4th graders.

Being Grateful

With Every Breath
I feel gratitude
The natural minerals below my feet
A free nation for thee
We all have a revision or two
Nobody's perfect
We hate crime
So criminals go to jail
Life isn't to ignite a forest
Just breathe and relax
And think for a minute
We should be grateful

— RYE McMILLEN

Metaphors

I glanced up and I saw clouds as fluffy as pillows. Around me the wind whistled softly. I skipped over by the tree at the entrance of FHS and it is like a giant lollipop, I wish I could eat it. I stroll over by the Miller House, in my mind the Miller House looks like a giant doll house.

— MARDY KRAMER

My Summer Trip

My summer trip was very exciting. I went to the Niagara Falls and had a blast! First we had to get to the hotel, The Great Wolf Lodge. When we got there we went to the water park. Me and my brother saw it and were eager to get in and ride. But the bad part was that the lines were long but it was still fun. The next day we went to the falls. We went on a helicopter for ten minutes over the falls and it was almost the coolest thing I ever did. My mom was scared so she did not like it. Then we went on a ferry in the mist of the falls. Finally we went under the falls, the water was going so fast that it hurt but it was still fun. After that we went back to the water park. It is one of my favorite water parks. There are conveyer belts that shoot you really fast, you even go in air! That night we went back to the falls to see it light up with many colors. The next morning we had to leave. It was a very exciting trip and I will not forget the site of the falls in the helicopter with the rainbow in the mist.

— CONNOR BATH

POETRY CORNER

FROM PAGE 4

Hurley The Dog

My sister's dog Hurley
Is fluffy and little.
He is as black as
The night sky
With a sprinkle of brown.
Friendly
Always licking my face.
Sniffing everything.
Fiesty
When playing with his toys.
My sister's dog Hurley

— JAMES SHUMWAY

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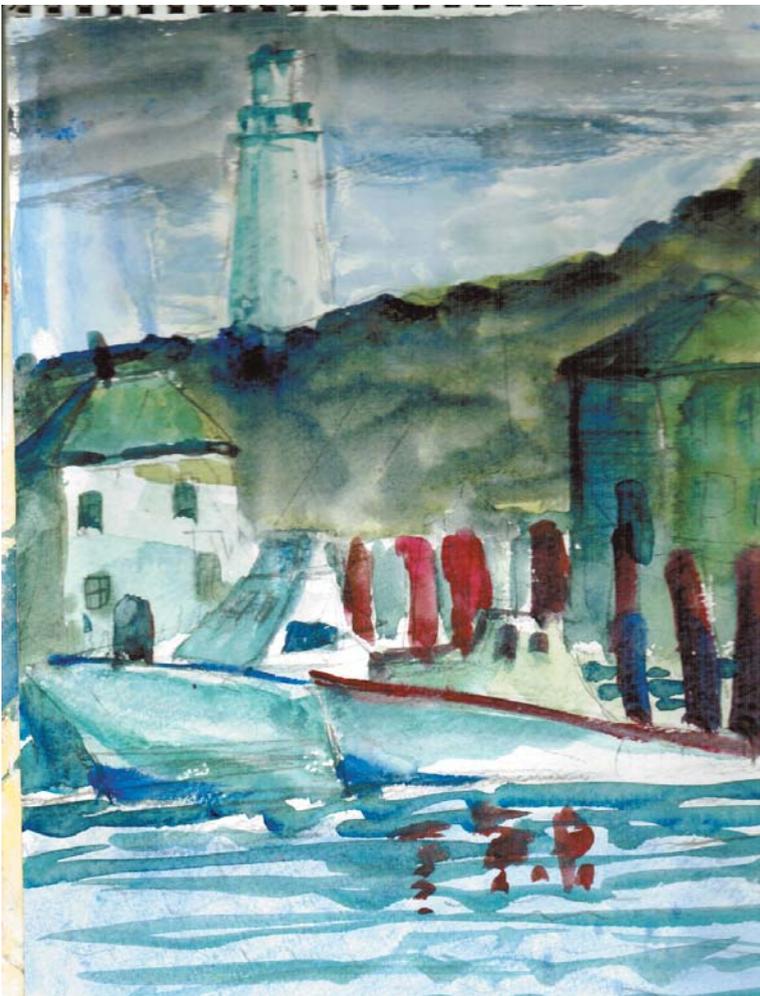


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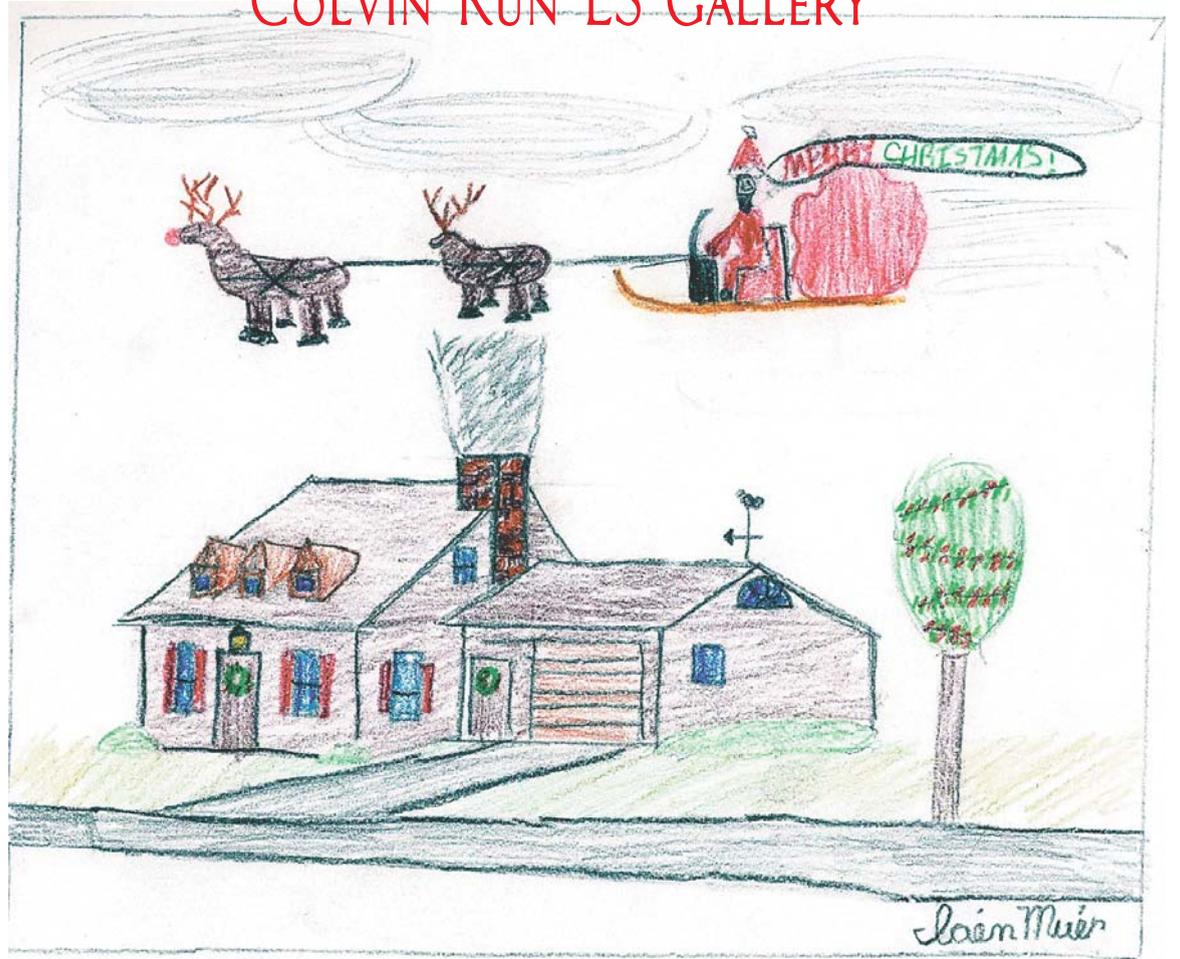
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Watercolor, by Ayush,
Colvin Run ES, 5th Grade



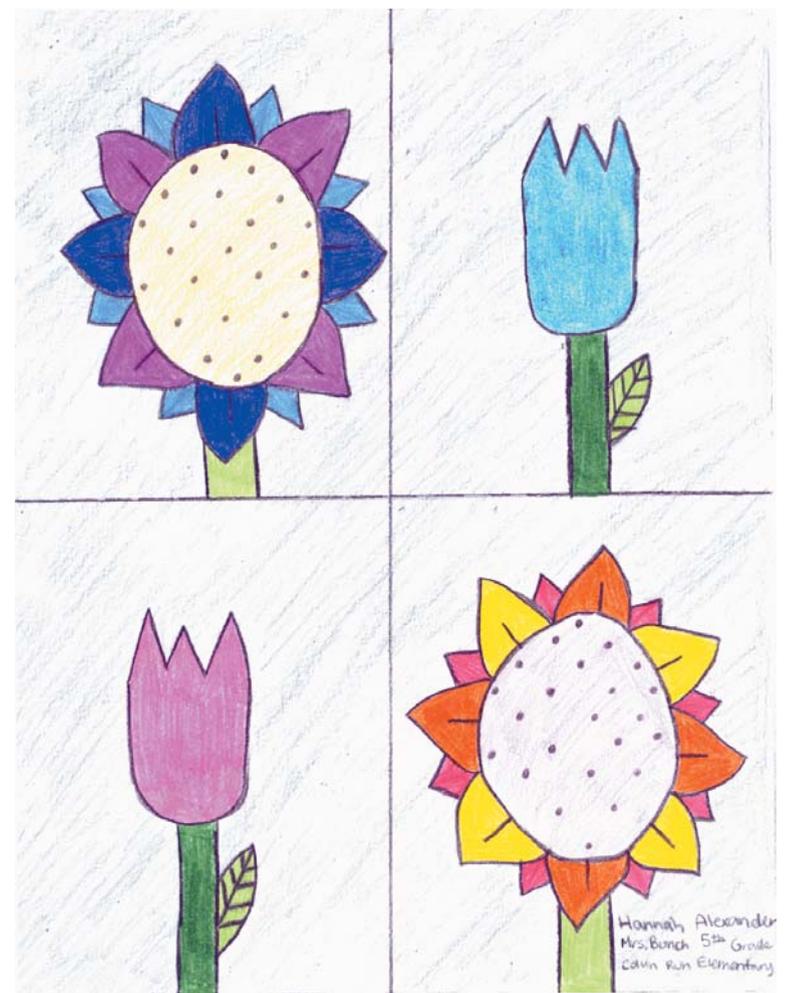
Merry Christmas, by Iain,
Colvin Run ES, 5th Grade



Fantastic Feathers, Tina C,
Colvin Run ES, 5th Grade



A Girl, Renee, Colvin Run ES, 5th Grade



Flowers, Hannah Alexander,
Colvin Run ES, 5th Grade

Watercolor II,
by Ayush,
Colvin Run ES,
5th Grade



CHILDREN'S CONNECTION

Reflections from Charlene Blake's 5th grade class at Freedom Hill Elementary.

Priceless Gift

If I gave my mom or dad a present for no cost what would it be? It would be a nice warm hug. That is the best present to your parent because they love you and would take a hug from you in a heartbeat. It is better than some high-tech gadget or a piece of jewelry. A hug to your mom and dad is priceless. And, if they would choose to return it, I would gladly accept it. No questions asked.

— BOMAN RASKIN

If I could give my parents any gift that didn't cost any money, it would be honesty. I want to give this gift because I have sometimes lied for the sake of my sister. Honesty is needed in everyone's life as you need all the pieces to make a model. Honesty is the warm gooiness in your heart. Everyone has honesty and so do I. It comes from your heart and it means a lot.

You can't live without honesty. If you say lies all the time, you will become mean and greedy like the Grinch who 'tried' to steal Christmas. He found out that you must be honest and you must believe. Honesty brings you higher in your grades. It's not just what you say but it also affects your actions and manners. It is very important in the essentials of life. You will have a caring heart if you have honesty, but without honesty your heart will become small and unpleasant.

You don't think anybody can see your heart. I think I should let you know, they can! They can see it by your actions. Your unpleasantness will be shown if you aren't honest. This is why my honesty is a good gift for my parents.

— THARUN NANDAKUMAR

Winter

In winter the snow blows and prances in the air. Water drops gently from the sky. Breezes run through your shirt while your feet crunch in the snow. Snow goes inside your fluffy clothes. Many different types of snowflakes drop by.

Deer gallop back to their cozy warm homes. Birds tweet and fly away. Warm fires are made when furious heaters are switched on. Smoke comes out your chimney.

Children are outside making snowmen and hopping in the cold,

By Rachel Williams, 12th grade, Oakton High School



white snow. Christmas trees are decorating everybody's house with beautiful ornaments. Santa Claus is laughing up in the sky.

Kids wait for their gifts and open them in a flash. Laughter spreads in the air. Music runs around. Winter is an unforgettable season. Winter is spectacular.

— SHREYA JAIN

My Favorite Animal

My favorite animal is a horse. I like horses a lot because I feel that someday, somehow they ruled the world! During the summer, I go to a horse camp. At the horse camp, you get assigned a horse. My horse's name was Sudz. Sudz slobbered as much as a waterfall hitting the ground. Sudz and I got awarded the best trotter. Sudz is a racecar when he trots. I like to smell the smell of the hay when I walk in the barn! I hope I can go back next year!!

— RACHEL PAVEL

My favorite animal is like a lion, but is a dog. They are amazing! Most dogs are nice and playful. You can play with them and pet them. Petting them is the best part about them if their fur is soft. Playing fetch or Frisbee with them is fun, too, and watching them do amazing tricks!

I'm allergic to only dogs that shed. They make me sneeze. Dogs that don't shed don't make me sneeze. My whole life I have always loved dogs. If I ever go over to my neighbor or friend's house I am usually just playing with the dog.

My favorite dog is a golden re-

triever. The best part about this dog is that it is active, cute, nice and fun to play with. It is the best out of all the other dogs. To me, feeding a dog is the worst part, but the most important part. I can't stand the smell of the dog food. After all, I think all dogs are amazing!

PATRICK HALLIGAN

Snowflakes

Natalie traveled across the park on a cold eve, hugging herself while her feet stomped on light snow, feeling the frostiness sink into her old, worn out boots. She listened to her staggering. Thump. Thump. Natalie skidded to a halt to check her watch. 7:55. Now she sprinted, checking her watch every now and then. The thick shrubbery of the forest towered over her as she passed. 7:57. Natalie dashed even faster now, the field in the distance. 7:59. Natalie ran on to the field, arms outstretched. 8.

Little diamonds poured down from the sky. They were as shiny as shooting stars. They were silver butterflies when they flew down from the sky. Each was one of a kind. Snowflakes drifted into her hand like a falling leaf. She absorbed her surroundings, hoping to keep them in her memory. Whoosh. Whoosh. The wind was like a tornado, taking her favorite hat with it, her hair whipping across her face, obscuring her vision. This was late December, hitting her with blasts of cold. The scene was so strong and still so delicate. The memory was as beautiful as a Mozart composition. It was all coming back to her, this wonderful memory. "Snowflakes," she whispered.

— TANAKA MUVAVARIRWA

When I Grow Up

I want to become an NBA player when I grow up. I want to play for the Washington Wizards. When I first get drafted in 2022, I will play well or win my NBA "Rookie Award." In my first season, I will lead my team to the play-offs and try my best to win the team a title so the whole team can be proud, too.

I will help my team to become better. When we make it to the play-offs, we are going to win the title so every single fan of the NBA will be proud. I want to become like John Wall, one of the famous Wizards.

And Wizards got to draft a number 1 pick in the NBA draft, trade someone from another team so we can be better or sign free agents. Wizards are going to sign a contract with me for 1 year or 5 years. Then, I will sign another contract 6 years. Finally, I will retire. I will play for 17 seasons, win 5 championships, and win a place in the "Hall of Fame."

— TOBIT M. ANTONY

What Makes a Good Friend?

A friend is not someone who uses you or gets mad at you for no rea-

SEE REFLECTIONS, PAGE 13

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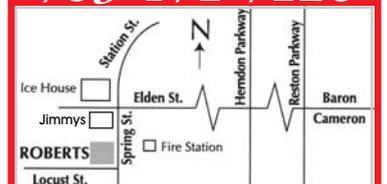
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CHILDREN'S CONNECTION

Visiting Tai Shan in China

Vienna student films a day with the U.S.-born panda.

BY ALYSSA MERSKI

Perhaps like most teenagers, I am usually content to spend my summer vacation reading at the beach or touring those famous museums in Paris or Rome. But this past summer, I wanted to experience more adventure than a usual summer would offer before returning to the gauntlet of standardized tests and college applications. So I opted to spend my last summer as a Holton student visiting China and helping create a documentary on Tai Shan, the adorable U.S.-born panda who now resides at the Bifengxia Panda Breeding Base in Ya'an near Chengdu, the capital of Sichuan Province. With the help of China's national television service, CCTV, the plan was for my brother and me to film a day with Tai Shan, working alongside his trainers to prepare his meals and feed him his nearly exclusive diet of bamboo. But, as fate would have it, our children's documentary took an unexpectedly harrowing turn.

My summer adventure took shape with the first news reports that it was time for Tai Shan to leave his D.C. home. To the dismay of his many smitten American fans, after nearly five years at the Washington National Zoo, Tai

Shan, the Chinese name for "peaceful mountain," left his original home on Feb. 4, 2010 to join over eighty other pandas participating in the Base's panda breeding program. After all the news coverage surrounding the event, I thought it would be fun to document for China's television viewers how much American children appreciated China's generosity in sharing its pandas with us. Never having been in close contact with a panda, I also looked forward to caring for Tai Shan in his new home. The producers at CCTV also welcomed the opportunity to show Tai Shan enjoying a visit with his American friends in a documentary for their billion-plus audience of panda lovers. Now all we needed was Tai Shan's cooperation.

After spending hours researching the habits and habitats of giant pandas and paying a visit to Tai Shan's parents, Mei Xiang and Tian Tian, who still reside at the National Zoo, I felt that my brother and I were fully prepared to become at least temporary panda trainers. So when we arrived early on the morning of August 2nd to greet Tai Shan, who like most pandas rises at dawn to begin consuming bundles of bamboo, we were anxious to practice our feeding techniques. Excited to finally be

in Ya'an, which hosts the largest captive panda population in the world, my brother and I relished the chance to see all the baby pandas and then feed Tai Shan his special arrow bamboo shoots while greeting him in both Chinese and English.

But this tranquil tableau was apparently not meant to last. Before I knew what was drawing my arm toward Tai Shan's cage, I was stunned by the sharp pain that shot through my right bicep. Amazingly, Tai Shan, perhaps in a playful gesture, used his paw to reach several feet outside the cage, grabbing hold of my sleeve and pulling me close enough to permit him to bite through the overalls, leaving a puncture wound, bloody scratch and seven inch long bruise. Shocked, I screamed and writhed in pain, as the CCTV crew and trainers pleaded with Tai Shan to release his vise-like grip. Almost instantly, Tai Shan retreated back into his cage, ending the "panda-monium."

In hindsight, no one was really at fault. Tai Shan, animated by the visit of his American friends, simply did what bears often do. I was also careful to keep a proper distance and follow all the trainer's directions. But Murphy's Law ruled that day. After taking our doctor's advice and receiving a



Red Panda, by Brian Burns, Senior, Oakton High School

series of four rabies vaccinations, I am doing well and looking forward to a less adventuresome senior year. But I will never forget what I learned firsthand during my internship and confirmed in my post-trip research – giant pandas

are ninety-nine percent herbivore and, unfortunately, one percent carnivore!

Alyssa Merski, 17, of Vienna, is a senior at the Holton-Arms School in Bethesda, Md.

The B.F.F.s

BY ALEXI HAMILTON
FLINT HILL SCHOOL/2ND GRADE

When I am feeling blue, you make the sun shine for me that day.

When you hold my hand and tell me it's okay.

You are the best B.F.F. I could ever have.

Fall

—DANIEL BROWN,
FLINT HILL SCHOOL, 2ND GRADE

Red leaves, yellow leaves, orange and brown.

All the rough branches all around.

All the leaves falling to the ground.

With out making a sound.

I love fall!

Leaves, Leaves, Leaves

BY KYLE FRANK, 8
FLINT HILL SCHOOL

Red leaves,
yellow leaves,
and orange leaves
falling down.
Some are crunchy
and some are soft
and some are even stiff.
All falling down with
the wind,
all on the ground,
softly going down.
So many
leaves are falling
down.
I wonder
how many are on the ground.

My Mom

BY LUKE MCCLOREY, 4TH GRADE
OUR LADY OF GOOD COUNSEL, SCHOOL

My mom is great,
she's never late.
She's always fine,
and always kind.
My mom is great,
she's never late.
I like her style,
she's like the Nile.
She always flows,
and always goes.
She saves us all,
won't let us fall.
I love you mom,
I love you!

CHILDREN'S CONNECTION

Cloud Mountain Adventure

BY BELLA, GRADE 5
MARSHALL ROAD ELEMENTARY

As I walked by the silent creek I was thinking, 'what would I find this time?' Last time I found a fossil of a rock and the time before that I found a key from the civil war. I was too busy thinking I did not see the mossy log that lay before me. I'm pretty sure you know what happened. If not, I tripped. When I got back up, I saw a rickety old bridge. After a while, I crossed. On the other side I came to a stone path. I followed that too. Five minutes later, I reached the legendary 'Cloud Mountains.'

As I climbed I figured I found my discovery of the week. Finally I reached a ledge that was as high as I wanted to go. Of course I wanted to go above the clouds. But I was a little scared. The ledge I found had an overhanging roof and a medium sized rock to sit on. As I sat on the rock, I smelled my favorite smell and saw something incredible.

As the crisp winter scent of the Cloud Mountains flew through my nostrils, I was looking at the valley below. I've never realized how colorful the valley of the Cloud Mountains was. From my perch on the ledge, I saw different color greens, from the forest to the blue of the violets and silent rapids of the creek. Then I realized how late it was and started home. The End.



Ice Skating, by Ngan Ngo, 8th grade, Thoreau Middle School

The Best Day Of The Year

BY ANJALI SARDANA
3RD GRADE
LOUISE ARCHER ELEMENTARY

The sky is dark gray

The air bitterly cold

The trees are glistening white

Snowflakes falling in a steady beat

I am covered head to toe

Joyfully dancing in the snow

The wind blowing sharp in my face

It's the best day of the year

Christmas!

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THIS IS "TAMMY"



D.O.B. Sept. 22, 2009. Beagle Mix, spayed female, 30 lbs. Tammy's story will break your heart. She was picked up by animal control as a stray with a belly full of puppies. When no one came to claim her, she gave birth to 4 adorable puppies. The shelter staff fell in love with her but knew they couldn't keep her for the required time while the pups grew to an age when they could be adopted out. The plea came to us for help with this wonderful little girl and her pups. It's now time for Tammy to have her chance to find a forever home. She's a beautiful girl with a coat of brown, black

and white. She's only a year old and medium size. She would be a wonderful companion to someone who will give her a little extra TLC and show her how to trust again. She is shy; however, she has no aggression and truly needs and wants some love. Please make room in your heart for this deserving mom. Attributes: Looking for a special home!



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Sido Forever

BY NEVEEN SHAWISH
THOREAU MIDDLE SCHOOL

The sun was bright, and the weather felt hot as they lowered my grandfather's casket into the earth. So many people crowded around, more people that I didn't know than I actually did know. If you asked anyone there that wasn't a part of the family how they knew my grandfather, they would all respond with, "Your grandfather helped me come to this country," or "He always helped me out with anything I needed. What a great man."

As they finished putting my Sido in his resting place, I thought about all the memories that we shared, and about how much I was going to miss him, seeing him, saying hi to him, seeing his smile, hearing his husky voice, and hearing his stories and memories that he'd repeat more than once. Even though

he was gone, and I wouldn't be able to see him, or hug him ever again, didn't mean I had to forget the great man who I called my Sido. He would always be in my heart and my mind forever, and I knew he'd be watching me from where ever he was in heaven. One of his good friends shouted this as my grandpa was being buried, "Mohammad El-Khatib, the great man that he was, came in this world and like all of us has to leave it. With everything he had, he goes back to the earth, and back to God, with nothing but his good deeds and sins. Everything you have now won't matter in the afterlife. The only thing that will matter is the good deeds you did, and the sins that you did."

Whenever I think about Too Too's words (the man who spoke the small speech), I think about the smile that my Sido had on his face when he went back to the earth, and that makes me smile, too.

Avo (Grandpa)

BY ISABELLA MOUTINHO
4TH GRADE
VIENNA ELEMENTARY

The last time I saw Avo he was wearing a white striped shirt. It seems as though he always wore it. I remember his long face and white hair. Then he was gone. Just like that. I was so sad.

When we drove down to Connecticut my cousin Carla called us. She was putting a speech together and she needed everybody's memories. I said as my memory "I remember going on the roof of his house with him. It made me feel like anything and everything was possible."

When we went to his funeral everyone was crying, especially me. Almost everyone

went up to say things about him. I didn't go up. I think the person that was most sad was Tia Liza. I think that's because she lived with him.

Then as I drive by his house today I see all his grapevines ruined and the place looks horrible. It is like watching memories fade away. I remember that my Avo loved wine, he had it with everything. But, one day he was told that he needed to eat more cereal. Then, one day my dad came in and saw Avo with a glass of wine. My dad said "shouldn't you be eating cereal?" "I am. The wine is in my cereal".

He lived for 90 years. At the end of the funeral we got a CD with pictures of him. Even though he didn't talk much, I still loved him.

THOREAU MIDDLE SCHOOL



Girls' Band,
by Ellen
Blackburn,
7th grade,
Thoreau
Middle School



Boy Playing Guitar, by Mimi Shang, 8th grade, Thoreau Middle School



Untitled, by Emma Johnson, 8th grade, Thoreau Middle School

My Grandma

BY ANNA NEASE
THOREAU MIDDLE SCHOOL

When you're younger, you always dream of what you want to be. What makes the decision a whole lot easier is when you have a role model. My role model would have to be my grandma. She has been through the hardest things like surgery and poverty, but for her there is always a light at the end of her tunnel.

My grandma has always been by my side helping with homework, decoding difficult words, and even just talking with me. If you talk to her for even a couple of minutes, you'll want to know everything about her. She has the gentlest heart, and I hope I will too.

Her manners are excellent, when mine might need some improvement...but she will always be there to correct me. Her amazing baking skill will amaze you. The succulent aroma of her famous cakes and cookies will leave you speechless. She is the one who inspired me to start my own cupcake business, it never started but we had an incredible time making them.

All in all, my grandma is the most amazing person I have ever met. She is only human and has probably made some mistakes, but that's only human. All of those mistakes have paid off in the end. At the end of the day my grandma is family and the best grandma ever. So now when I'm at home in my bed thinking about what to be, I'll think about my grandma.



Coming to America, by Joeoun Lim, 4th Grade, Westbriar Elementary School



A Cat, By Alexis Zebhideh, 7th grade, Thoreau Middle School

Without a Script

BY VALERIE SWEENEY
THOREAU MIDDLE SCHOOL

I was very interested in improvisation. Acting without a script, being spontaneous, sounds like an interesting experience. So as day two of drama camp began, our teacher, Strauther, called something out that caught my attention.

"Anyone who would be interested in improv, raise your hand!" he said sonorously.

I immediately made my decision.

The room resembled a sea of hands. Almost everyone had their hands up. Right then the decision was made. The whole class would now perform improv.

Day two passed by as quickly as a gust of wind. Improv turned out to be fun, especially with an open mind. It was a great challenge, though. I often stumbled on words, or I was drawn to a blank. I smiled when I made anyone laugh, because in improv, laughter is like a trophy. I felt like I was on top of the world.

Day three and four passed

by as we prepared for our final performance. I realized I was getting more confident and fluent. My friends congratulated me even if I messed up. I felt like a real performer, and the world was my stage.

The showcase finally came. Strauther announced my name. I danced on to the stage. Many eyes appeared on me as I was about to perform, but I would not let that slow me down. My nerves flew out of my body. I let my emotions and creativity out on to the stage. The audience cheered, laughed, and seemed to love it. When the performance came to an end, which came quicker than I thought, I took a bow.

We had a quick after-party, and we said our final goodbyes. Even though I only knew most of these people for a week, I felt really close to them.

My passion eventually led me to the improv theatre sports auditions at Thoreau Middle School. When I made it, I was very thrilled. I hope one day I can become an actress. But for now, I have to start small, and with a lot of dedication and hard work!

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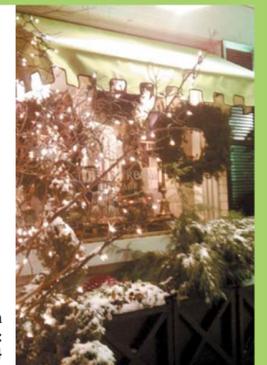


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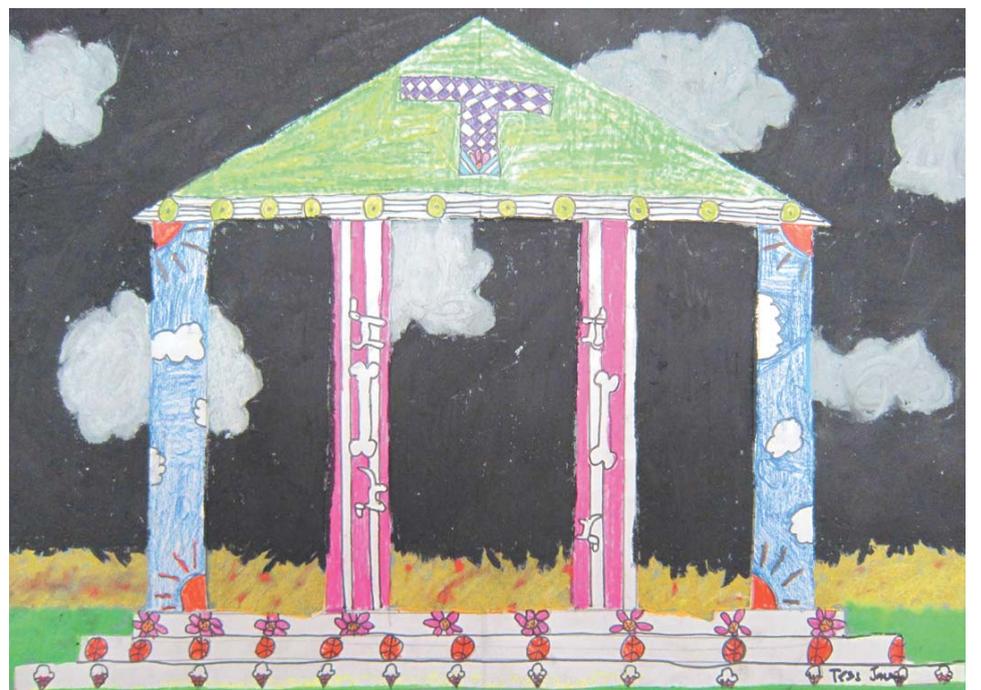
Join us for live tweets at VolunteerFFX.



By Ari McGlynn, Kindergarten. Waples Mill Elementary School



By Rebeca Ortiz, Grade 1, Waples Mill Elementary School



By Tess Jones,
Grade 5,
Waples Mill
Elementary
School

REFLECTIONS

FROM PAGE 7

son. If a friend is mad at you and says, "I'm not your friend anymore," they aren't a true friend. A friend is not a person who tries to show off. It is a person who doesn't tell your secrets to anyone. A friend would never betray you. A true friend is a person who would never come to you and tell you, "I'm not your friend anymore." A friend is a person who will never, ever be mean to you.

Best friends are people who are really nice to you and are the most honest people you have ever known in your life. Friends are people who are always there for you and really helpful. Friends are the people who you really want to play with because you trust them. Some other things that make a good friend is that you know they are there for you no matter what. That is what a nice friend would do for you. Friends can be funny, nice, helpful, kind, and more. These are some things that make a good friend!

— EMILY SORTO-ARGUETA

Field Trip

In fourth grade, our class had a field trip! We went to Jamestown! We brought a lot of stuff like phones, iPods and cameras. We all went on a bus that had mini TV. It wasn't a regular bus. It was way better!

We went to the museum. We found famous people like Pocahontas and Queen Elizabeth. We saw the real Declaration of Independence! I was so excited! Then we saw the teepees of the colonists. We went inside the teepees. We saw a lot of chickens. Almost everything had real skin from animals. Later, we went back to eat. I ate with my teacher Miss Petruzzellis and my friends.

Finally we went to the glass house. There was a man who was making the glass. He made it with fire, water, and tools. When he was done, he made the glass into a vase. Then we went back to school. Everyone was so happy! I will never forget our fourth grade field trip!

— ANDREA GONZALEZ



Dragons' Reading Club,
By Ellen Blackburn, 7th grade,
Thoreau Middle School

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My Answer to Cancer



By **KENNETH B. LOURIE**

Oddly enough — or not, since receiving my original stage IV lung cancer terminal-type diagnosis/prognosis on Feb. 27, 2009, I have not felt compelled or motivated in the least, beyond my immediate circle of family and friends, to seek out other lung cancer patients/survivors for support, for reassurance, for advice or for any kind of group and/or individual therapy. Perhaps I will live to regret it (wouldn't that be the ultimate irony), but I haven't really felt the urge to purge myself of whatever mental toxins I was/am internalizing. I was — and am, still managing. In addition, I've not been interested in joining or attending any kind of lung cancer awareness group or participating in any type of lung cancer out-reach activity.

My thinking has been — and still is, that I don't want to immerse myself in the cancer culture. Maybe I'm pretending that I'm not a member of this group (whose membership is not the least bit desirable)? Maybe I'm afraid of what relationships I may start or what relationships I may see end badly? Perhaps I'm worried that a connection and commitment to similarly diagnosed people will somehow weigh on me and adversely affect my own relative/comparative good health? Seeing sicker, weaker people might make me feel sicker, weaker; that scares me. I want (need, probably) to be surrounded by positivity. I don't want (need presumably) to expend any energy overcoming negative people, places and things that might challenge the positive mental attitude that is key to fighting this insidious disease. Nor do I think that my presence will energize anybody to do anything. I'm not so self-absorbed or educated to believe that something I say or do — with respect to this whole lung cancer trip, is going to help another individual rise to some previously unattainable height. I have to help myself, first and foremost, don't I? I'm having enough trouble fighting my own battles.

The longer I'm a cancer survivor — outliving my original prognosis (13 months to two years), the more difficult it becomes to care about others as much as I care about myself; every day could be my last. As such, I need to protect myself from the slings and arrows of the outrageous misfortune that has befallen so many others. It's difficult enough to mentally maintain my own disposition that when I have considered joining/participating in some cancer-type activity (5K walk, parade, seminar, support-type group, etc.), I've balked at doing so, fearful of the risk to my own psyche — meaning the weakening of the mental resolve which has enabled me to live the life I have over the past 22 months. I don't trust myself to hold up under the collective catharsis of so much pain and suffering.

At the end of the day (heck, at the beginning of the day, too; and every minute in between), this whole cancer battle is about self-preservation — or perceived self-preservation. I'm not embarrassed to admit that I'm afraid of being around other cancer patients who are terminal. I'm extremely sensitive and aware of my surroundings; I can't presume there won't be an emotional toll on me. Moreover, all I have going for me is my sense of good humor, positive attitude and belief in what I'm doing: diet changes, vitamins, alkaline water, apple cider vinegar, baking soda, pureed asparagus, probiotics, exercise, etc. I can't risk immersion, or even exposure to a cancer culture that might threaten — or question my pursuits and the reasons for them. I have to consider the consequences of my actions, especially now, and mind my own business — in my opinion.

I'm probably wrong living in this sort of semi isolation, but it's my life and I'm trying to live it the best way I can — most things considered.

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

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21 Announcements

LEGAL NOTICE
AT&T Mobility is proposing to install new wireless telecommunications antennas on an existing building located at 2110 Washington Blvd., Arlington, VA. The new facility will consist of adding three panel antennas (one per sector) to existing rooftop mounts at 62 feet above ground level. Support equipment will be placed on an existing rooftop equipment pad. Any interested party wishing to submit comments regarding the potential effects the proposed facility may have on any historic property may do so by sending such comments to: Project 61107459-SF c/o EBI Consulting, 6876 Susquehanna Trail South, York, PA 17403, or via telephone at 781-273-2500.

21 Announcements

LEGAL NOTICE
AT&T intends to file an application for the collocation of new antennas on the building located at 1900 Columbia Pike, Arlington, Virginia. AT&T is publishing this notice in accordance with Federal regulation 37CFR1.1301 et seq, the National Environmental Policy Act and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation 36 CFR 800. The project referenced as "Court House" will consist of the collocation of antennas on the roof of the building. In addition, conduit will be run from the equipment shelter to the antennas. Parties interested in submitting comments or questions regarding any potential effects of the proposed facility on Historic Properties may do so in writing by contacting Carol Blitz, AT&T, at 7150 Standard Drive, Hanover, Maryland 21076 or c/o theresa.scarlato@atcassociates.com

21 Announcements

LEGAL NOTICE
AT&T Mobility, LLC is proposing to modify a wireless telecommunications facility on a building located at 1415 N. Oak St., Arlington, VA. The proposed modification consists of adding three antennas (one per sector) at a height of 73.4 feet on the rooftop. Two antennas will be mounted behind an existing screen wall, and one will be on an existing chimney. Any interested party wishing to submit comments regarding the potential effects the proposed facility may have on any historic property may do so by sending such comments to: Project 61108009-MAT c/o EBI Consulting, 6876 Susquehanna Trail South, York, PA, 17403, or via telephone at (781) 273-2500.

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AT&T intends to file an application for the collocation of new antennas on the building located at 2001 North Adams Street, Arlington, Virginia. AT&T is publishing this notice in accordance with Federal regulation 37CFR1.1301 et seq, the National Environmental Policy Act and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation 36 CFR 800. The project referenced as "Fort Strong" will consist of the collocation of new antennas onto existing antenna mounts. In addition, new conduit will be run from the antennas to the existing flex bay. Parties interested in submitting comments or questions regarding any potential effects of the proposed facility on Historic Properties may do so in writing by contacting Carol Blitz, AT&T, at 7150 Standard Drive, Hanover, Maryland 21076 or c/o theresa.scarlato@atcassociates.com

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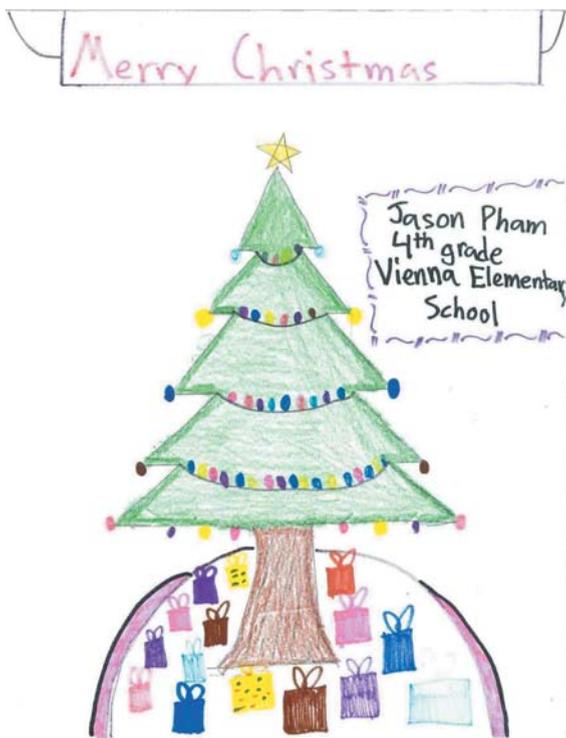
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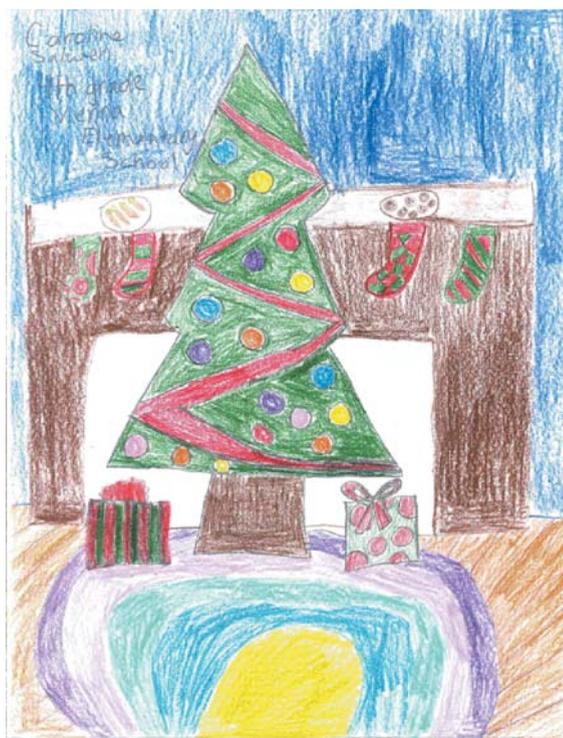
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VIENNA ELEMENTARY SCHOOL



By Jason Pham, 4th Grade, Vienna Elementary School



By Peyman Owrang, 4th Grade, Vienna Elementary School

Being a Diplomat

BY GABRIELLA BURGIN/4TH GRADE
VIENNA ELEMENTARY

Since I was born I've been a little diplomat. A diplomat is a person who serves their country by moving to different places around the world. I have traveled over 30 times out of the USA. Some of the places I've been to are Germany, Croatia, Armenia, Bosnia, Slovenia, Estonia and many more.

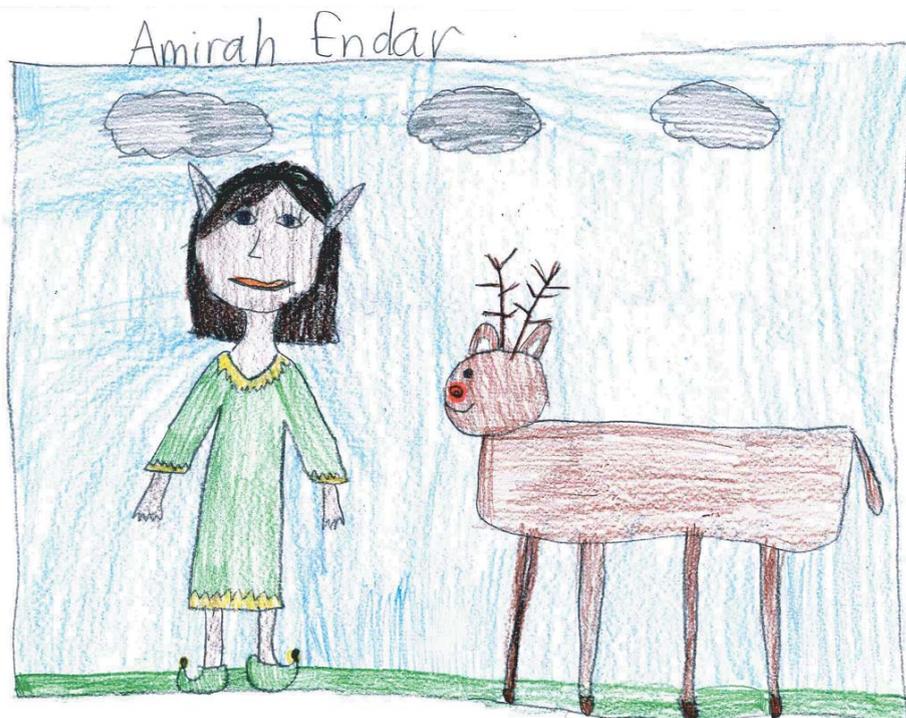
Every two years I and my family travel somewhere out of the USA because that's what my mom and dad's job is. It is fun but you have to get used to the time difference. Getting used to the time difference

is pretty hard, but it's worth it. The past two years I and my family were living in Bosnia and Herzegovina. I met new people and new friends.

When you travel somewhere new you are like a super star. You get a house that is 7 levels and you get to go places for free and you don't have to pay to go to school. It's so cool!

My favorite thing about traveling is probably meeting new people. While I was in Bosnia and Herzegovina, I met over 30 new people. They are mine and my family's friends.

When you move to a new place you have to get used to living in a new house, new place, new continent, but I still love traveling.



By Amirah Endar, 4th Grade, Vienna Elementary School

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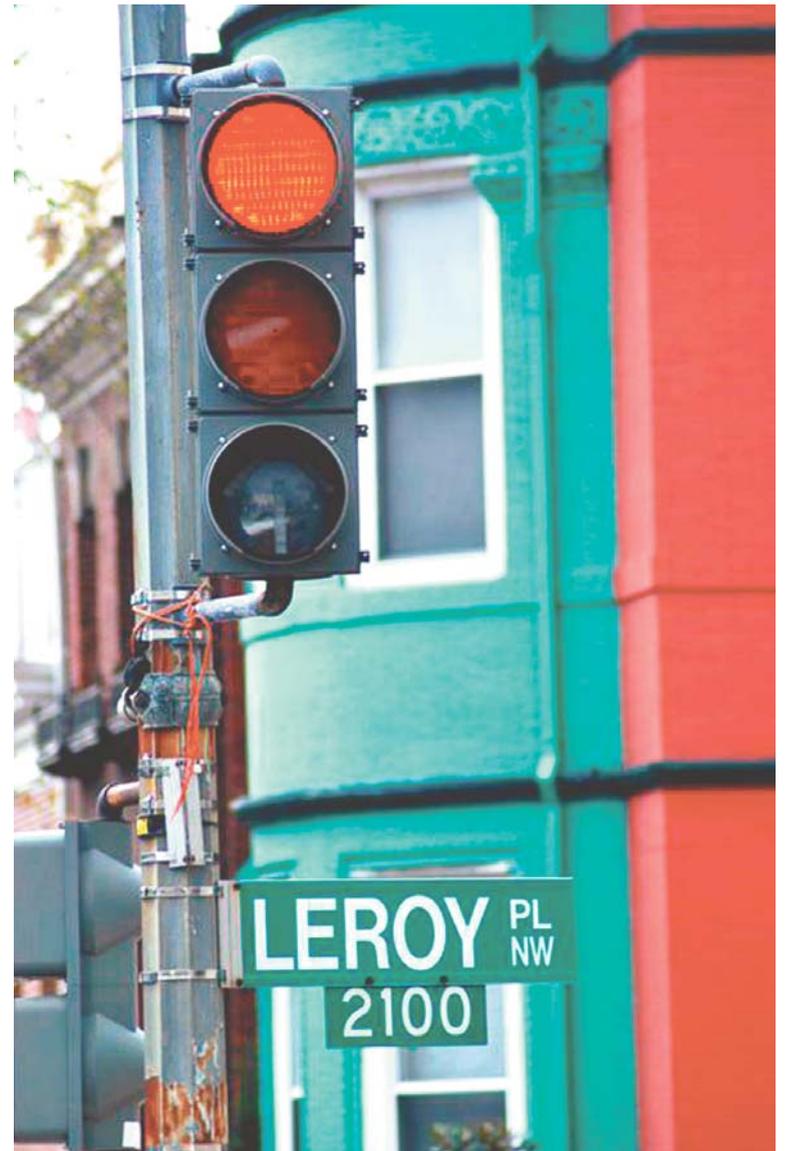


Be Part of The Pet Connection in February

Send Your Photos & Stories Now to vienna@connectionnewspapers.com
Be sure to include your name, address and phone number, and identify all people and pets in photos. Submission deadline is January 20.

OAKTON HIGH GALLERY

Blue One, by Isabel Yun, 12th Grade, Oakton High School



City, by Brian Burns, Senior, Oakton High School



Metro, by Madeline Heckman, 12th grade, Oakton High School



Untitled, by Madeline Heckman, 12th grade, Oakton High School



Untitled, by Deanna Easley, Oakton High School



By Gretchen Dick, 12th Grade, Oakton High School

CHILDREN'S CONNECTION

MARSHALL ROAD ELEMENTARY

By Alex,
Marshall Road
Elementary

Pompeii

Life and Farming
Pompeii was a major trading center on the coast of southern Italy that attracted many cultures including Greeks and Egyptians. People moved to the area around 500 B.C. The land around Pompeii was fertile because of ash in the soil from nearby Mount Vesuvius. The land provided everything the people needed to survive. The people of Pompeii grew wheat, barley, olives, grapes, and other vegetables. They also raised cattle, pigs, sheep, goat, and poultry. Pompeians enjoyed entertainment and food very much, if they could afford it. Many dishes used an expensive cooking sauce called garum (rotten fish guts). Rich people had houses with gardens, beautiful wall paintings and banquet halls where guests would eat. Most wealthy people had slaves whose duties included fetching water, cooking, serving food, entertaining, and teaching the children. The poor people lived in cramped one-room apartments that were always in danger of collapsing.

Words to know
- peristyle n. - a colonnade surrounding a building or an open space.
- atrium n. - a courtyard with a small pool.
- poultry n. - a cooked bird.
- garum n. - cooking sauce made of rotten fish guts.

Did You Know?
Rome crushed the Pompeians and took the town over in 80 B.C. The city might have been named Pompeii before the Romans came - no one is certain.

Disaster!
On the morning of August 24, A.D. 79, wells around Pompeii dried up, dogs howled, and the birds stopped singing. There were tremors and suddenly Mt. Vesuvius exploded. After 30 minutes, ash fell like snow, blocking the sun. Roofs began to collapse and most people left the city. But some people stayed in houses for safety or returned to get possessions. Those who didn't leave choked on toxic gases and were buried in ash. Pompeii was not seen again until the 1600s.

By Alex
Grade 5
Marshall Road Elementary

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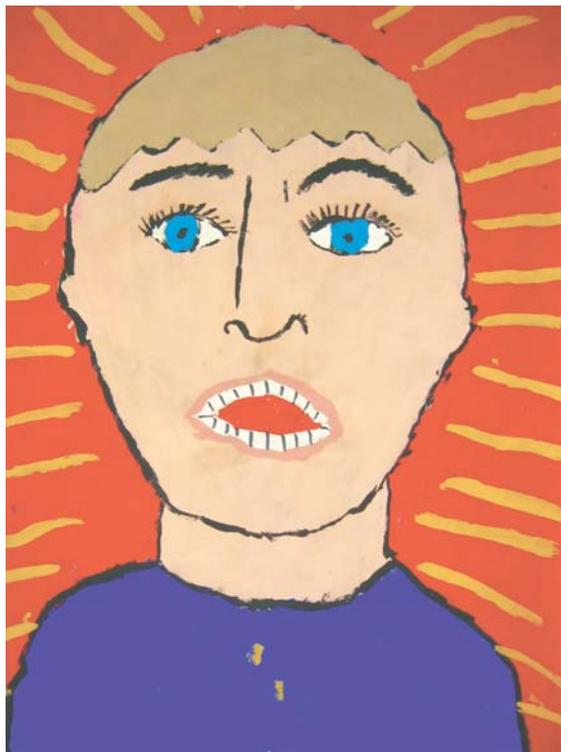
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Fri., May 6 9 AM



By Abby, Marshall Road Elementary



By Joshua, Marshall Road Elementary

Fury

I am anger, crushing forgiveness
With my fiery fist.
I am a sea of rage,
Swallowing up ripples of happiness.
I am a thundercloud,
Throwing down lightning bolts of fury,
And a cyclone,
Stirring up whirlpools of fear.

BY KATHLEEN ASCRIZZI
7TH GRADE, KILMER MIDDLE SCHOOL

Red

Love, passion-
What could be more perfect?
A blaring fire engine,
Racing furiously to save precious lives.
Your lucky rabbit's foot,
A token, to guard you from a terrible day.
Red is your best friend,
Sometimes sweet, sometimes sour,
Sometimes betraying you and leaving you alone
With the rest of the rainbow.
Red is as spicy as a jalapeno pepper,
Giving you a burning sensation,
Eventually quenched
By your thirst for another color.

By EMMA GUO
7TH GRADE, KILMER MIDDLE SCHOOL

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CHILDREN'S CONNECTION

Holidays

BY LARA KOEBKE
THOREAU MIDDLE SCHOOL

New Years is like a new beginning,
Like extra credit on a failed test.
Valentine's Day is a day for love,
Warm and nice like a hot cup of cocoa.
St. Patrick's Day is for being merry,
Dancing around with no cares at all.
Easter is a mix, happy and solemn,
Almost like the flowers that bloom.
Mother's Day is especially for moms, of course,
Loving and thankful like its namesake.
Father's Day is a day for our dads,
Happy and joyful, nice and loving.
The Fourth of July is especially spirited,
Exploding like the firecrackers we see that night.
Labor Day is peaceful, a break,
From the life we always live.
Halloween is a time to be frightfully scary,
The only night we can dress up with no objection.
Thanksgiving is packed with family,
Like the turkey packed with its stuffing.
Christmas is for being caring and gentle
like the snow,
Even to people we don't like at all.
And every year, it starts all over again,
The big circle of holidays.
Always having a fresh start with New Years,
And a beautiful ending at Christmas.
Always repeating forever.

If I Could Fly

BY UDVAL BATBAYAR
THOREAU MIDDLE SCHOOL

I wish to feel the warm breeze of a summer day brushing
against my cheek,
Blowing my hair everywhere
I would see the birds floating with me in the sea of
clouds
Smell the scent of wind mixed with the oak trees below
Hearing nothing but whispery "Whoosh" in my ears
I lay in bed now thinking, hoping, wishing, that I could
fly
Dreaming of tasting clean, fresh air on my tongue
Looking down and seeing the everyday life of people
skittering around like tiny ants
While I have the moment of my life
They have yet to seize the great opportunity that they're
missing
What would it be like if the whole world wishes to fly?
Would that power of hope be enough to make the
impossible become possible?
I've yet to know
Right now, all I can think about is spreading out my legs,
My arms,
And relaxing
Thinking of nothing but my body,
The clouds,
And the tingling sensation of the sun resting over my
face
When it snows, I'd stick out my tongue and have
snowflakes melt like icicles in my mouth
The feeling of sweet coldness sleeping in my taste buds
I'll watch the round earth as if it were a giant snow globe
The people looking out at me, pointing,
Amazed
I'd also watch my other snow globes
Saturn, with its rings of glory
Mars, the fiery red one
Venus, bright as a light bulb
And of course the Moon, leaving my name encrusted into
rock so I would become a part of history
Oh how ecstatic I would be,
If only I could really feel the lively sensation of flying



By Alex, Our Lady of Good Counsel Parish and School



By Mariah,
Our Lady of Good Counsel Parish
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CHILDREN'S CONNECTION

A Christmas Tree's Story

They just chopped me down for no reason at all. I really expect more from those hairy guys. I mean come on. I am getting dragged and set up where all these other trees are. There is this big black space with white lines. And big moving things are driving around. Finally, a man with a mustache comes over and drags me to his moving thing. Now I am in his warm structure. They are putting these heavy glass things on me. They are going upstairs, and a guy with a red coat and red hat

came through the hole over wood. He is putting boxes under me. Now the man and his family come down and open the boxes. There are things inside like books and toys. And they are singing songs like "Jingle Bells." Now they are taking the heavy things off me. And they are dragging me outside and a big truck is picking me up and bringing me to a dump where I live happily ever after.

—ABI SCHLECHTY,
4TH GRADE, VIENNA ELEMENTARY

The Best Dog

Sunny is the best dog in the world. I love her so much. She can play tug of war and she can't be beat. She is fun, loving, and she takes my bed at night, but I still love her. She will be six on Dec. 30, 2010. When I'm upset she takes her nose and lifts my hand and makes me pet her. That is how she makes me feel much happier. She is so funny on the rug. I think she is going to roll over, but she is not so good at it and it looks weird.

We have a pond in our backyard and she loves it! When she is happy she loves to get in it. Then I have to dry her off and give her a bath. Although she loves the pond, she hates getting a bath. She makes me get all wet, but I still hug her. That's my dog!

—KATIE FOWLER,
4TH GRADE, VIENNA ELEMENTARY



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