

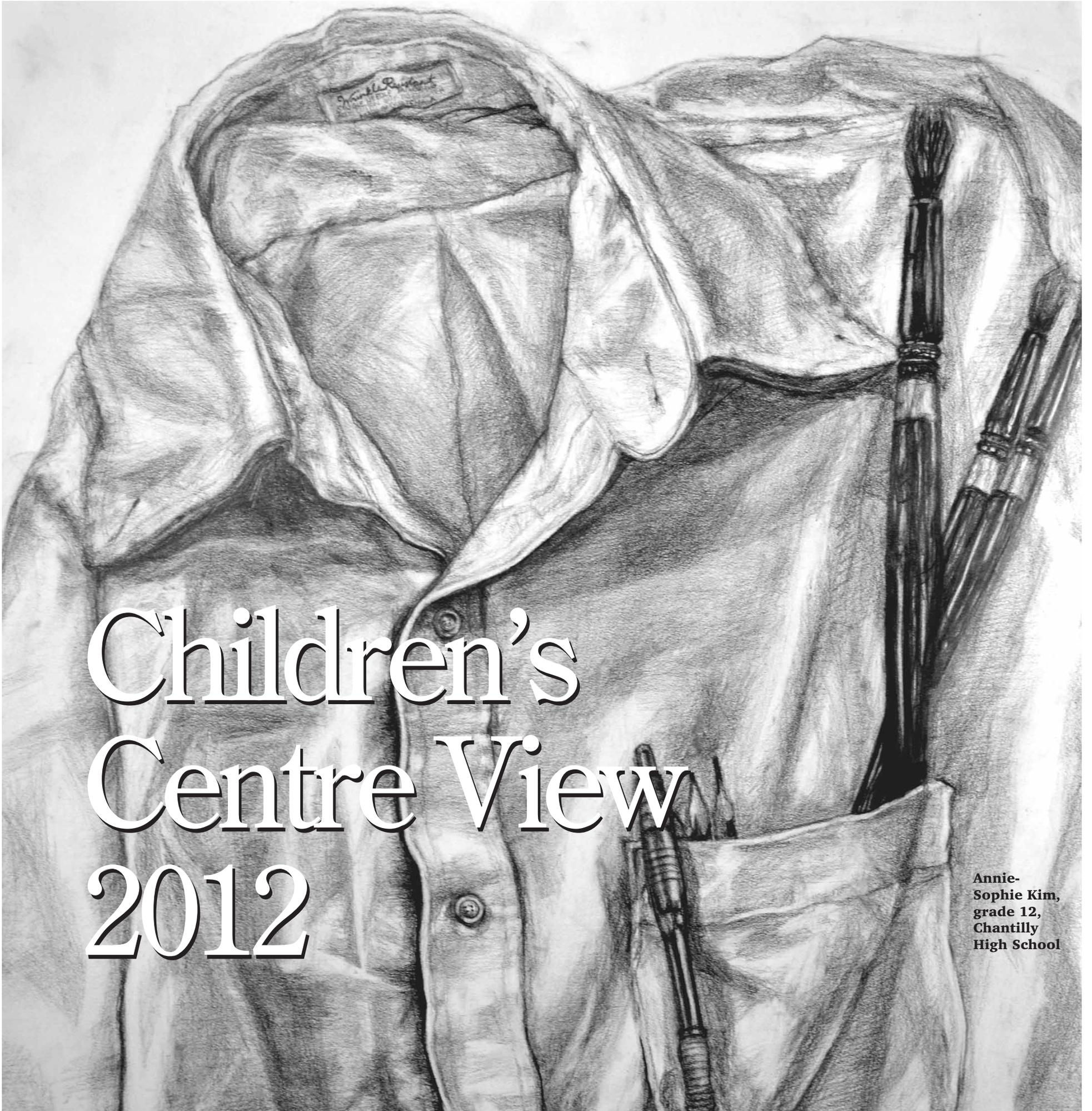
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NORTHERN EDITION

DECEMBER 27 - JANUARY 2, 2012

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Annie-
Sophie Kim,
grade 12,
Chantilly
High School

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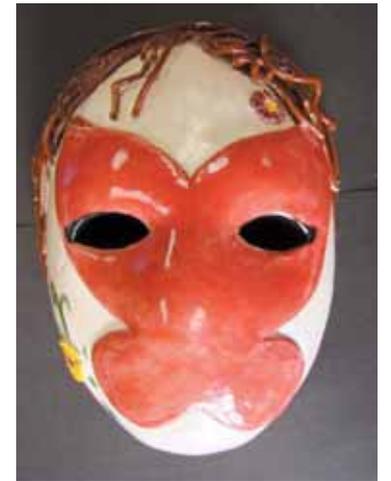
FRANKLIN MIDDLE SCHOOL



Helen Shi, grade 7



Samantha Agüero, grade 7



Katerina Bagatska, grade 7

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Lata Goudel, grade 8

WRITINGS

Just Me

My mind is a maze, a mental puzzle that tests all forms of knowledge.

My imagination is undrawn scenery, surrounds me, yet, no one else can see it.

My hair is like a horse's mane, long and thick.

My creativity is a pillow, stuffed with a thousand feathers, waiting, wanting, to burst at the seams.

My taste in music is like a teenager's room, chaotic and messy.

My eyes are chocolate; they hold a warm dark brown color.

My knowledge is a rose bush, constantly growing; the thorns, my sarcasm.

My hands are instruments, used to create something beautiful, a true artist's tool.

My feet are like a guide, taking me where I need to go, even if I don't yet know the destination.

My fingers are like a biography; they tell the story of my life, and they represent the obstacles I've overcome.

— TATIANA GUEL, GRADE 8

Kennebunkport, Maine

Boing! A lobster buoy sounds in the distance.

Plop! A fish flops in the ocean. Sizzle! A burger is flipped on a grill. Crunch! Crunch! Gravel under people's walking feet.

Splash! Children play in the water. Crack! Crackle! A bonfire roars to life. Woof! Woof! A dog chases a stick thrown into the surf.

Whoosh! Waves crash on the beach. Put! Put! A boat engine roars to life/ Yell, Shout! A fisherman tries to sell today's catch.

Reel! Reel! A fishing rod has landed striped bass.

Sigh! A man relaxes, looking over the ocean.

Crash! Crash! The tide slowly rolls out.

Plunk! A lobster trap hits the water. Eek! Eek! A seagull announces his catch.

— MATTHEW CORGNATI, GRADE 7



Silhouette

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Janice Chen, grade 8



Callie Harry, grade 7



Jade Chen, grade 8



Emma Hierholzer, grade 8



Yesong Song, grade 8

SEE WRITINGS, PAGE 7

CHILDREN'S CENTRE VIEW 2012

Welcome

Dear Readers:

This week, the Centre View 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 2013 calendars for early December, the deadline for submissions for next year's Children's Centre View. 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 Centre View 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 centreview@connectionnewspapers.com, but you can reach us by mail at 1606 King Street, Alexandria, VA 22314 or call 703-778-9415 with any questions.

— EDITOR STEVEN MAUREN



Sun Kim, grade 12, Chantilly High School



Janice Chen, grade 8, Franklin Middle, School



Sania Mahmood, grade 6, Greenbriar East Elementary School, Reaction - Self Portrait



If someone were to ask me what my favorite animal was, I'd have to think about that for a while. I love many animals, such as dogs, tigers, leopards, and peacocks (both normal and albino). But by far, my favorite is the cheetah. The tiny cubs' faces are round and fluffy with innocence. And the speed of the cheetah, once grown, is not to be matched by any animal but the head-diving falcon.

— **Vaishnavi Visveswaran, age 11, grade 6, Greenbriar West Elementary School**

GREENBRIAR EAST ELEMENTARY



Heejin Jang, grade 4
Memories and Milestones Accordion Book



Chearin Oh, grade 6
Evoactive Memory Collage



Addison Andreas, grade 2
Community Event Self Portrait



Brendan Riddle, grade 3
Cultural mask



Smayan Sangoju,
Kindergarten
Dream House



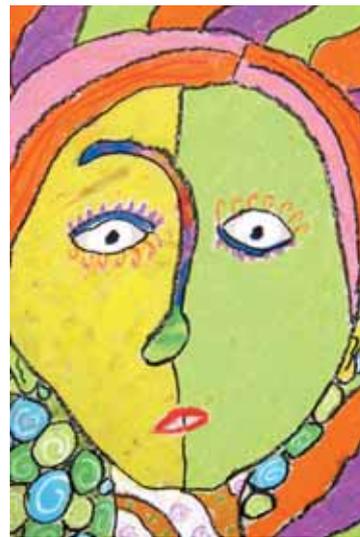
Deena Amriui, grade 1
Self portrait



Skyler Stables,
Kindergarten
Collage self portrait



Aiden Sahm, grade 4
Coil vessel



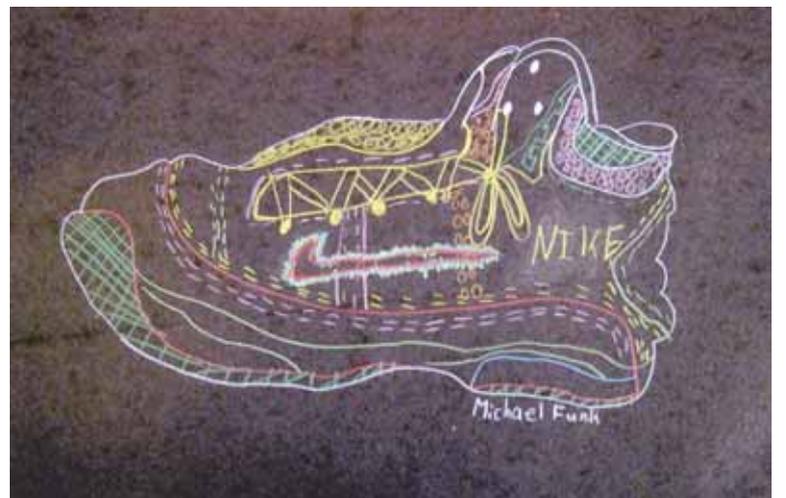
Sarah Katherine Hugo,
grade 5
Abstract Face



Noah Galbis-Doucette,
grade 2
Double portrait



Morrison Stout, grade 1
Tree for My Family



Michael Funk, grade 6
Contour line shoe

ROCKY RUN MIDDLE

Daniel

There once was a boy named Daniel,
Who owned a Cocker Spaniel.
But Dan tripped on his head,
And lied on the floor very dead.
All of this was real.

— LUCY JIN LI, 12, GRADE 7
MRS. WETZEL'S ENGLISH CLASS

From Trepidation to Triumph

The church is huge, with rose windows casting multi-colored lights onto the floor. The ceiling must be at least 50 feet up, slanted into a V, and a gold chandelier hangs from the center. There are aisles and aisles of empty cushioned benches ready to be filled by other competitors in the duet festival. Frankly, the church is intimidating.

The heels of my shoes gently click against the wood floor as I walk in. My skirt swishes around my ankles. I find a place behind the judges' chairs and sit down. Then gradually, more people file in and start talking to one another. The judges rise. They take a roll call, and then call the first name. The soft murmur of voices decreases, and then the first two players step up.

Faith and I are fifth to play. The four playing before us become one in my ears. I can't tell one from the other, and all I can think is music. The two pieces we will play hum and buzz like flies in my ears. They are pestering me. I know I will do well, but at the same time I wonder what will happen if I press a

wrong key, or if I play too loudly. How well must we play in order to get third place? Or maybe second? I doubted we could get first; this was a very competitive event, with 14-year olds competing. I'm 11.

Finally, it is our turn. We get up, walk to the judges, give them our music, and bow together. We are on track so far. My palms are sweating, and my fingers are trembling. I try to keep a positive attitude, but it fails. I doubt we are going to do well. But I put on a happy face, and smile at Faith. She smiles back, and suddenly, I knew I was wrong. We were going to do great.

We sit down on the cold black bench in front of the piano. I wipe my sweaty palms on my skirt. I definitely cannot afford for my fingers to slip. I raise my hands to the keys, and count to four just loud enough so that Faith could hear, and then we begin to play. The melody rings in my ears, vibrating my eardrums. Our fingers fly over the keys — literally, and a story of longing, grateful sadness, and wistful joy wafts through the air. Were the judges liking this? I had to see. So I risk a quick look in their direction, and I am surprised to see their heads bobbing up and down in beat to the music! We move onto the second piece. This one, the finale from the Carnival of the Animals is much more lively and happy than the other one. As I play, I listen to the music and can almost imagine little animal crackers dancing in a circle, or animals in a zoo going wild and producing an almost melodic cacophony, with all of the different noises clashing against each other. We finish, get up, bow, and unsteadily totter to our seats again. I could barely even hold the

music sheets; my hands were shaking so much.

The judges have made their decisions on paper. A lady walks to the front of the room holding these papers, and she announces the winners. I cross my fingers so hard they went numb. She calls third place first, and following that are two names. The recipients cross to the front of the room to receive their ribbons. Then second place is called, and then comes our names. Faith Lam and Maggie Kirtley. She turned toward us, and mid-rotation she stops, rereads the paper, and then apologizes. We were not second place. First place was called. I held my breath. Were we first place? We had to be. Then the lady turns back to us with a smile on her face, and announces "First place is Maggie Kirtley and Faith Lam!" She hands us both big flashy blue ribbons, and then thanks everyone for participating.

This is why I love music and the piano. I work hard, and try to actually feel the music coursing through my veins and changing me somehow. I work hard, and this hard work pays off. All of this year in 2012, I have not been to one event where I have not won anything. Music can be almost anything, in any form. It can express millions of differing feelings and emotions, and can replicate love, fear, happiness, or depression. When I play the piano, I feel all-powerful, like I am controlling a little city that will do anything for me. Playing the piano has changed my perspective on all things, whether attractive or ugly, exasperating or pleasing, nice or unpleasant. Music brings more beauty into life.

— MAGGIE KIRTLEY, 11, GRADE 7

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Giraffes Can't Dance in Mixed Media
Sarah Romero, 8, grade 3, Chantilly



Self Portrait in Pencil
Carl Baumann, 13, grade 8, Chantilly



Giraffes Can't Dance in Mixed Media
Finn Heyburn, 8, grade 3, Chantilly



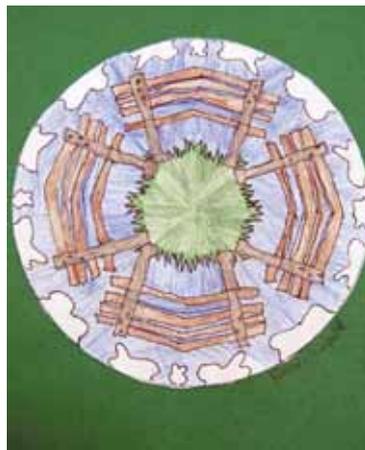
Dot Painting in Acrylic
Lisa Nguyen, 13, grade 8, Chantilly



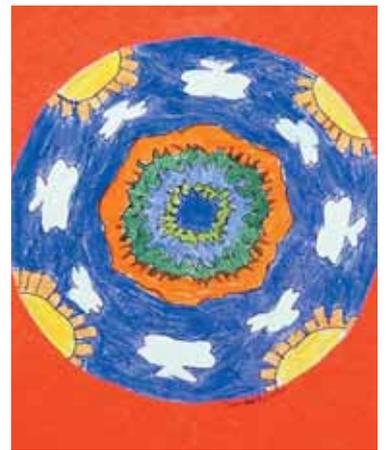
Rainbow Fish in Wax Resist
Mateo Zuleta, 6, grade 1, Fairfax



Halloween Horse in Marker
Briana Arevalo, 10, grade 5, Chantilly



Radial Design in Colored Pencil
Kieran Rickard, 11, grade 6, Chantilly



Radial Design in Colored Pencil
Sheridan McCluer, 11, grade 6, Chantilly

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FRANKLIN MIDDLE SCHOOL

WRITINGS

FROM PAGE 2

Smack! Smack! Smack! We can only imagine what the horrifying sounds could be, some terribly gruesome.

All becomes still, then BOO! They've got you! Sigh ... My heartbeat slows when the tour guide leads us toward the exit.

Another Creak! and with the turn of a doorknob we're engulfed in sunlight.

Hahaha! We laugh as we see the amused teens walk out of rooms with face makeup and rubber knives.

Vroom, vroom! The car starts and we drive away, watching the next group of people being led into the mysterious home ...

— SARAH MORRIS, GRADE 7



Callie Harry, grade 7



Viviana Terrones, grade 7

Our Tree

The beautiful branches tickle my knees
As I swing back and forth under our tree
On that small wooden swing that your daddy made

Brings back memories that fill me with pain

I think of the time I found our tree
We skipped around it, dancing with glee
We were taught to carve our names with some sharp kitchen knives

For the tree would be there 'till the end of our lives

I think of the time your daddy made us this swing
He said it was a seat for the kings and the queens
That swing was always our look-out tower
Or our tea-party table decorated in flowers

I think of the time we said goodbye
The final hug that made us cry
The picture of that day still sits on my shelf
The only photo of when I was myself

I think of the time I sat here in the rain
And listened to the birds calling out your name

I hugged your old, worn blanket close to my chest
And prayed for something happy to happen, next
For you to move back, and stay close to me
And we could live here together, under our tree

— JENNA SCHWARTZMAN, GRADE 8

The Heart of the Grove

The heart of the grove: clear, silver dew resting upon lush green leaves;

Timid squirrels chattering from within the trees;
White lilies shining in bright sunlight;
Butterflies hovering over a crystal pond;
The tweets of robins;
Crinkly bark;
Crimson red apples hanging from rough branches;
Azure grapes dangling over a rugged brick wall;
Docent deer dancing through dense foliage;
Old barley;
Clover littering the ground like patches of emerald;
Toads croaking from within dense, murky water;
A vivid rainbow stretching across the sparkling sky;
The rich scent of dirt and roses drifting through the wind;
Silence.

— ALEX WANG, GRADE 7

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GREENBRIAR WEST ELEMENTARY

WRITINGS

Looking Forward

In this upcoming year, I am looking forward to entering into middle school! I am told that it is going to be a big change. My brother tells me that Rocky Run is a great school. The gym is well equipped. You get to move around the school freely when you go to your next class. There is a larger variety of food at lunch. The classes are tougher, and the teachers are stricter. I will also have the privilege of owning my very own locker!

— RAPHAEL SCHREIBER, 11, GRADE 6, MR. SMITH

Are You a Good Friend?

Have you ever wondered if you were a good friend? Well I am here to tell you what makes a good friend. A good friend needs to be helpful to you. They should back you up when you need them to. And they should be a person to lean on when you need it. These are the qualities of a good friend.

— OM BHAVSAR, GRADE 6

My Favorite Animal

When people are asked what their favorite animal is, most think of a dog, or a cat. I think of a fish. Why? Most people would say a fish is the most boring animal. You can't pet it, you can't play with it, the most you can do is feed it. But I think a fish is the most interesting animal. Fish can live underwater without coming up for air. They come in different sizes and colors, each unique to help them survive. They may not be cute, but they sure are a whole lot more interesting.

— LILIA QIAN, 11, GRADE 6, MR. SMITH

My Opinion About FLL

This is the first time that I have joined an FLL team. FLL stands for First Lego League. I was really happy and excited to build and use very complex Lego pieces to build and program robots that actually move! I think that the way the whole FLL setup is very good. I think that they have to make the research idea a little bit more specific and a bit harder. All the other ideas of making a robot do missions is good and a lot of fun! I enjoyed "The FLL Experience."

— VASANTH MATHIVANAN, GRADE 6

Save the Iberian Lynx

The Iberian Lynx, the animal that came back from extinction. I say they have to be saved, because there are as little as 220 left in the wild, and only a handful left in captivity! Sadly, they're being illegally hunted to extinction. They're a truly marvelous species, and a rare sight. Besides all that, some of its postures can be freakishly human-like.

— TAYLOR TAMBURRI, 11, GRADE 6, MS. JOHNSON

SEE WRITINGS, PAGE 9



Brook Lyttle, grade 1
Family Celebration, painting



Rachel Briggs, grade 4
Gesture drawing



Taylor Tamburri, grade 6
Self portrait, drawing



Cristen Huynh, grade 6
Self portrait, drawing



Sean Kim, grade 2
Friends, drawing



Jessica Chen, grade 1
Family Portrait, drawing



Leona Kim, grade 1
Family Portrait, drawing



Calvin Kuo, 12, grade 6, Ms. Johnson

"My favorite thing to play with are my Lego bricks. Using a combination of my many pieces, I can use my creativity to build many things. I have built many things: cars, airships, and even motorized vehicles! On occasion, I play Lego with my sister. I first played with Lego when I was 3 years old, and I have played with them since."



Ryan Kang, grade 3
Birthday, cut paper collage



Eric Whang, grade 3
Christmas, cut paper collage



Rachel Chae, grade 2
Friends, drawing



Shreya Mallamula, grade 6
Fall Still Life



Maire Obnial, grade 5
Fall still life drawing



Elijah Araque, grade 5
Fall still life drawing



Kiran Ganesan, 11, grade 6, Mr. Smith
"This picture was one I took in Niagara Falls, on the border of New York and Canada. It is one of the best pictures I have ever taken. The photo was taken on a popular sightseeing boat, called The Maid of the Mist, because of how close it gets to where the water crashes against the rocks at the bottom of the falls, spewing up mist. This is one of my favorites because I feel it expresses the beauty of Niagara Falls very well."



Lucas Mew, grade 4
Tennis Player, wire sculpture



Benjamin French, grade 4
Soccer Player, wire sculpture



Arjun Nachiappan, 11, grade 6, Mr. Smith
"As you can see, I've drawn a picture of a panda. I chose this animal by just not its adorable face, but that it is my school animal! We, the children who go to Greenbriar West, have the same terrific skills as a panda. I like pandas because they are very fluffy and unique in many different ways. As you know, pandas are the best animals!"

WRITINGS

FROM PAGE 8

Looking Forward

Something that many of my fellow 6th graders and I are really looking forward to — is graduating from elementary school and going to 7th grade in middle school. Many 6th graders have friends or know people who are in 7th or 8th grade already. They have probably heard many great things about middle school, because I definitely have. By the end of 6th grade many of us will have gotten used to being the oldest in school and when you're in middle school a lot will change. So we will enjoy this last year and have some more fun in middle school!

— VIRAAJ DHAWAN, 11, GRADE 6, MR. SMITH

It's Not Always Black and White

I played a game
Of chess last week.
My opponent's king
I did seek.

He moved his pawn,
I moved mine too.
He moved his knight
Up one across two.

The room was tense
As we battled it out
Across black and white squares
Each filled with doubt.

If I move this piece here
What will he do?
Will he capture my queen?
I searched for a clue.

I studied the pieces
And with one last look
Captured his bishop
Using my rook.

My opponent came back
And captured my knight.
The pieces they flew
Off the board left and right.

We were exhausted
My opponent and I
After three hours
We were in a tie.

A stalemate, a draw
No one had won.
But that was ok
'Cause we still had fun.

— DIEGO GUTIERREZ, GRADE 6, MR. SMITH

Future Baseball Player

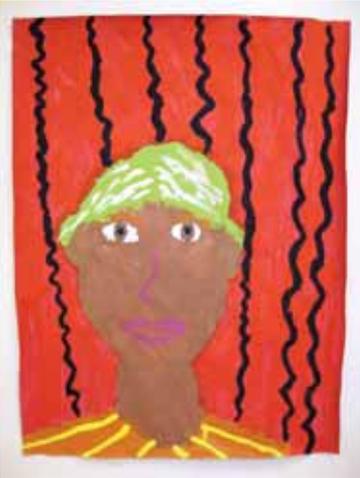
When I grow up, I want to be a baseball player. I don't follow the herd and just play the popular sports like basketball and football. No, I do what I want to do, and that is the sport of baseball.

I love the beautiful whistle of the ball and the crack of the bat. I love the feeling of the ball pounding the leather of my mitt as I rob the hitter of a sure base hit. Most of all, I love the roar of the crowd as a walk-off hit ends the game, while the loyal fans bounce up and down in the bleachers.

— MATTHEW LICHTBLAU

SEE WRITINGS, PAGE 11

WILLOW SPRINGS ELEMENTARY



Isaiah De Lisa, grade 3



Katya Kosolapova, grade 3



Janice Kwack, grade 3



Isabelle Deadman, grade 6



Cassidy Watts, grade 3



Sarah Mendoza, grade 3



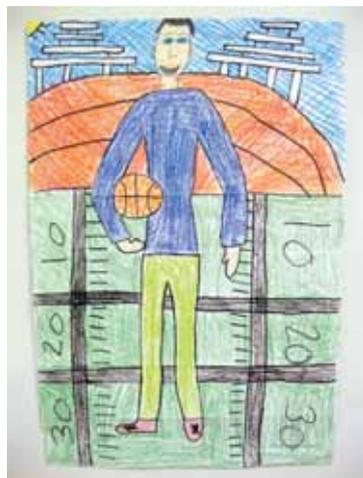
Junho Lee, grade 3



Sarah Weide, grade 6



Melissa Akay, grade 4



Jonny Heslep, grade 4



Sam Littman, grade 4



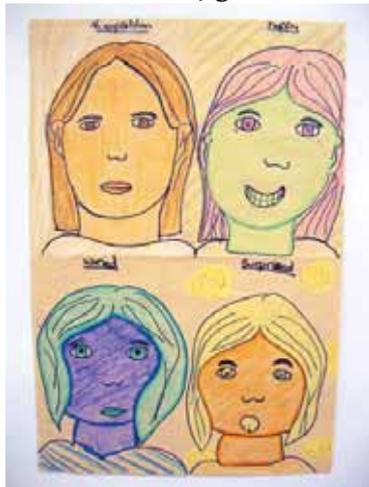
Marissa Yee, grade 6



Kai Keo, grade 2



Emma Geiszler, grade 6



Rowan Clark, grade 3



Alexandra Sierra Garcia, grade 2



Seyeong Kwon, grade 2



Avery Crocker, grade 2



Anjana Mohan, grade 3



Philip Everard, grade 3

FROM PAGE 9

If You Could Give Any Gift That Didn't Cost Any Money What Would That Gift Be?

If I could give my parents any gift that didn't cost money, I would give my parents a money (\$) printer as a gift. With the money printer, my parents could buy anything they wanted like a new car or a new house. They wouldn't have to work because they would have enough money to pay for their wants like mortgage, food, and water. I would like to give them the money printer on their 25th anniversary as a surprise gift. I love my parents so much I would give them the money printer instead of keeping it for myself.

— JOSEPH LEE

My Favorite School Year

I had more fun in fifth grade than any other school year. I enjoyed our spelling tests. We had to choose from a list of hard words. We took those words and remembered them by their definitions. I also enjoyed learning about cells. We made diagrams of cells using only food.

I was sharing a table with my best friends. When we had parties; we would decide whether we would stay inside and watch movies or go outside to have an extra-long recess. There were a few bad moments too. My teacher left for almost the entire last quarter of school.

— BHARATHI MATHIVANAN, GRADE 6

What Makes a Good Friend?

There are many reasons that will make a good friend but I think that there is one big reason. That reason is if your friend tries to copy you or go there own way. If your friend tries to copy you, that means that he/she thinks that they will be "uncool" for some reason. If your friend goes their own way and if you like it, the person is a good friend. This does not only work with friends but also with co-workers, and other people.

— PRITHVI KINARIWALA, II, GRADE 6, MR. SMITH

What Is the Best Present You've Ever Gotten?

Well my favorite is my i-Pod touch that I got for my birthday. I really wanted it because all my friends had one. I also liked it because the things you could do on that device were extraordinary. My last reason to like this device is because it is from the company Apple. Most of the time I would play games or I would just listen to music. Out of all the presents I have gotten in my whole life this is the best one I have gotten so far. I hope to get a lot more amazing presents.

— PRADITH SANTAPUR, GRADE 6, MR. SMITH

Jog and Nog

It was Christmas time in Lorgle City, and Jog and Nog were wondering what they should get their friends for Christmas. Suddenly, Santa Claus' sleigh crashed through their roof in a ball of fire. Santa gave them a magical box and told them it was evil and must be destroyed in an explosion of great power. In destroying the box they had an epic adventure that included lasers, narwhals, and evil elves. But that's a story for another day. On this mystical journey, they learned that the true meaning of Christmas is spending time with your family.

— MARTY ROGER

Toucan

My favorite animal is the toucan. The toucan is known for its oversized and extremely colorful bill. The toucan's hollow bill is 19 centimeters long, making it a handy tool for obtaining food. Forest fruits make up 95 percent of the toucan's diet. As a mating ritual, toucans would even have a fruit toss! Now that would be loads of fun! Toucans live in an astounding habitat, the canopy layer of tropical rainforests. They keep up a noisy racket of vocalization. Full of fascinating characteristics, the toucan is therefore, my favorite animal.

— SHAWIN VITSUPAKORN, II, GRADE 6, MS. JOHNSON



A Good Friend

A good friend
Helps you up when you fall down,
And is willing to fall with you
In the process

A good friend
Doesn't let you do stupid things
Alone

A good friend
Wipes away your tears,
And keeps the tissues for next time
To remind you how you got hurt
Last time

A good friend
Is someone you can trust,
And the first person to call

A good friend
Is not someone who'll get you in trouble,
But someone who'll get in trouble
With you

A good friend
Is someone you'll remember
A good friend
Is in your heart

— EKIN ATAY, AGE 12, GRADE 6, MS. JOHNSON

Remembering

I remember years ago,
Everything was funny

No one cared what would show,
Just do your own thing

Playing with the true you,
All the sails unfurled

Dancing, laughing in the rain
No cares in the world

You stayed yourself through and through,
Not caring what'd go on

Not realizing all we had,
Would someday be all gone

Now I know that life is short,
So make these moments count

Cause when the years go by and by,
I won't regret this now

— SARA S. PARK

Need More Sleep

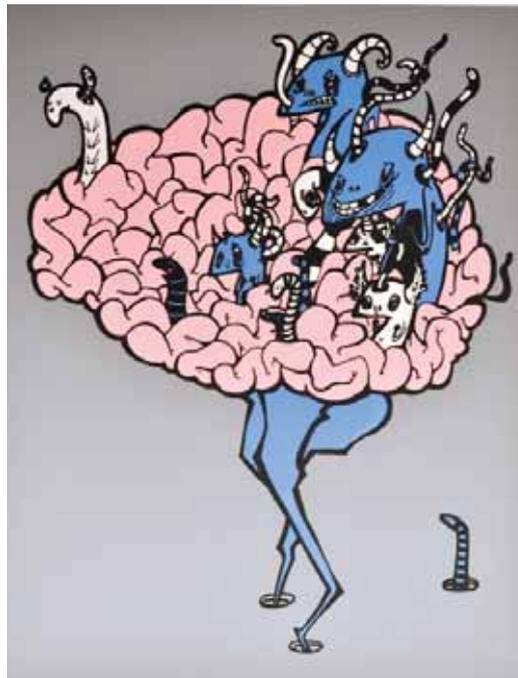
Waking up and feeling so ever tired, you climb out of bed at six in the morning only getting 5-6 hours of sleep. High schoolers go to sleep very late at night and wake up for the bus and even most full grown adults have at least eight hours of sleep but these high schoolers work really hard and not getting the rest they need is not good for their health. Getting the right amount of sleep boosts the attendance of the students and the participation would be much greater. I think they should change the school times for the poor high schoolers.

— ROBERT WANG, 12, GRADE 6, MS. JOHNSON

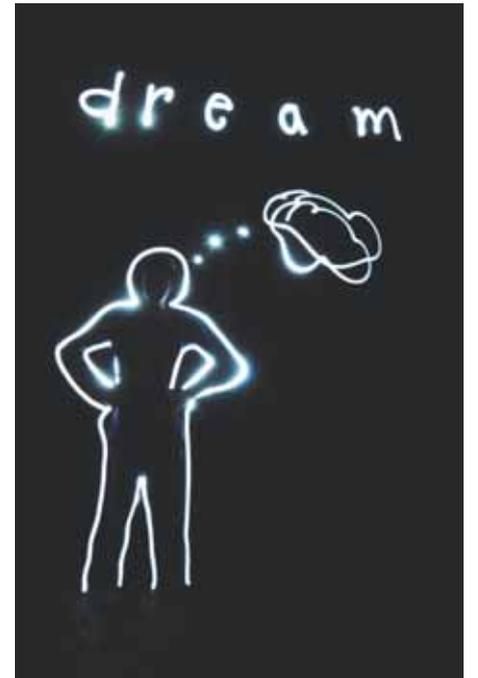
CHANTILLY HIGH SCHOOL



Kim Shifflett, grade 11



Yewon Kwon, grade 12



Amber Smith, grade 12

WRITINGS

My Dream To Be a Doctor

I want to be a medical doctor when I grow up because I want to help people feel better when they are ill. Doctors work in a hospital or at clinics, and they use different medical tools to treat their patients. Doctors are trusted by their clients, who have complete faith in them. They trust them to make things better. They are really trustworthy, and are well respected in their community. This is my dream for when I grow up.

— TANISHK GOVIL, 7. GRADE 2,
NAVY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

My Pencil

My pencil, my very exquisite friend,
Our strong friendship will never end.
You are the key to my creative imagination,
And the master of my creation.

My pencil, the hardworking tool,
I shall sharpen you often, every day in school.
With your brilliantly smooth and glossy lead,
I can jot down and organize the wild thoughts in my head!

My pencil, my (don't tell eraser) favorite assistant
You help me get through writer's block, you're so consistent!
Helpful in tests and quizzes too, you help me get a perfect score,
You are so effective and valuable; my hands don't even get sore!

My pencil, you are unquestionably the one,
It is just sooo much fun,
To write and write 'till the day is done,
Until the new one has begun!
My pencil
— ISHIKA GOVIL, 11. GRADE 6,
HUNTERS WOODS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

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What Am I Thinking?



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

What I think I feel. What I'm afraid to think I feel. Moreover, is what I feel symptomatic of what I'm afraid to feel? Is it the cancer doing what cancer so often does: create pain and suffering? Or is it simply an older age than I've ever been: middle age, manifesting itself with all the associated mental, physical and emotional adjustments that come along with living longer than you ever have? Unfortunately, the timing of all of it couldn't be more problematic in my determining whether any pain or discomfort I feel is symptomatic of a cancer on the move or characteristic of an age whose effects I'm only beginning to understand.

The underlying and complicating factor to my constant self-assessment is that I don't want to think any of the physical effects I feel are the cancer. I want to believe they're middle age. As a result of this continual denial, I neglect to admit that what I think I feel is potentially cancer-significant and presume instead that it's just another day in middle-age paradise (alive and reasonably well; not terminal) – it's befuddling, sort of. Am I being incredibly stupid, stubborn and irresponsible with respect to not acknowledging certain symptoms that might be e-mail-worthy to my oncologist or, have I found the key to living with cancer: not making too much of anything?

I feel this because I worry that once I open that door, I'm likely going through to the other side – and likely not coming back. As my father jokingly asserted about his car: "If I don't take it to the dealership, they can't find anything wrong with it." The related advisory concerning life and health that I've often heard is: once you're admitted to the hospital, you're not coming out – alive. It's a slippery slope between the fear and loathing (with attribution to Hunter S. Thompson) of being sick and lying in a hospital bed versus what the medical professionals don't know not being able to hurt me. (I know, I might as well be Judy Garland in "The Wizard of Oz" clicking my heels together three times: I don't have cancer. I don't have cancer. I don't have cancer.)

But the fact that I'm still alive and not just beating the life-expectancy odds I was given, but smashing them to smithereens, is a kind of reinforcer to "what I feel" and "what I'm afraid to think I feel." Having survived for as long as I have might just be blind luck or inherited DNA doing what I had no reason or expectation to believe it could: enable me to survive the stage IV non-small cell lung cancer with which I was originally diagnosed and live beyond the "13-month to two-year prognosis" that went along with it. Or, however, why ever I'm doing what I'm doing, or not doing what I'm not doing or not admitting what is likely symptomatic – or not; all this confusion, juxtaposing and double-negative rationalizing might somehow make a positive.

I realize this haphazard approach is hardly a strategy, but perhaps it is and has been so far, a means not to my end. And considering that I haven't reached that end as yet, maybe the means are justified? No one knows for sure, and that's what I'm counting on. It's too late to stop now; heck, why would I? See you next week.

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

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