Watercolor Portrait, by Celine Gorkowski, grade 8, Thoreau Middle School, Art Teacher Michele Physioc.
The Raspberry Pi

Over summer break, I got a Raspberry Pi. I found it an awesome tool, and here’s why.

The Raspberry Pi is a computer chip with many ports that allow you to access and use many programming interfaces to create applications, hack things, and even create a cool mod for an application.

But first, you will need to assemble it. You can simply buy a kit and follow instructions from raspberrypi.org’s help area. Check out the video section of it. You will be all set in less than an hour. Now let’s get to programming on it.

An example of this would be writing this code in a Python 3 shell for Minecraft Pi (A version of minecraft specifically for Raspberry Pi):

```python
>>> from mcpi import Minecraft
>>> mc = Minecraft.create()
>>> x, y, z = mc.player.getPos()
>>> mc.player.setPos(x, y + 200, z)
```

This code has the power to teleport you 200 blocks above your current position in-game! There is even a command that you can do to spawn in TNT that explodes when broken!

The best part is that you don’t have any limits as to what you can do! You could open a franchise that creates apps using Raspberry Pi’s or even upgrade Minecraft Pi to make it as good as the full version of minecraft!

—Neel Sharma, Grade 6, Louise Archer Elementary
Welcome

Dear Readers:

This week, the Vienna/Oakton 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 2017 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 school 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 Kurspahic

“A Family Trip,” by Angela Yan, 7, Yanshun’s art studio, Grade 2, Oakton Elementary School, Oakton.

“Friends,” by Eva Huang, of Vienna, 5, Kindergarten, Laurel Ridge Elementary in Fairfax, Teacher: Ms. Jacqueline Patterson.

“A Sunny Morning,” by Emma Huang, of Vienna, 5, Kindergarten, Laurel Ridge Elementary in Fairfax, Teacher: Ms. Lorna Cordero.

“Watercolor Music,” by Katelin Dow, Grade 8, Thoreau Middle School, Art Teacher Michele Physioc.

“Friends,” by Eva Huang, of Vienna, 5, Kindergarten, Laurel Ridge Elementary in Fairfax, Teacher: Ms. Jacqueline Patterson.
Children’s Connection

Watching fireworks with friends, by Marissa Lin, age 6, Grade 1, Freedom Hill Elementary, Vienna.

Poetry Corner

There Is Nothing

It’s as shapeless as a cloud
White wisps with no true form
It can have no meaning
Or all the meaning we give it

The soul within us
Intrigued by the small things
Moved on a whim
Taking flight above the cotton beds

The freedom to go anywhere
But with no direction
Roaming the skies
Until it reaches the end

While the sun is setting
Tucked under its satin blanket
It seems as if there is nothing
But from nothing comes everything

— Ryan Mai, of Oakton, Grade 7, Westminster School

Summer in the Woods

The willow tree screams in silence as the woodpecker
Pecked, pecked, pecked
The fish glide along the water like tiny torpedoes
Passing the tree as if they don’t care
The flower strokes the butterfly as it collects the yellow pollen
Soriting it for lunch
The fish spray a light mist
As the kind willow trees create a tunnel for me to walk through
The rain pounds on the plants, punishing them for taking their water
The curious animals gather close to see this ruckus

— Arti Marzban, of Dunn Loring, Grade 3, Westminster School

Merry Christmas

By Jonathan Kong, age 11.

Christmas is coming, spreading new holiday cheer,
Happily, we enjoy this time of the year,
Reaching out to everyone’s heart,
It’s definitely the gifts, for a start,
Still, Christmas isn’t only about a toy,
This is also a time to enjoy,
Make someone else happy today,
Add some fun, now what else can I say,
Swell, have a Merry Christmas

Grade 6, Louise Archer Elementary, Vienna, Teacher: Ms. Sahai.

By Jeffrey Li, age 9, Flint Hill Elementary School.

“Family Portrait” by Ethan Forbes, age 4 of Vienna.

By Maylee Batucan, age 5, of Vienna, Birthday: Feb. 21, Grade: kindergarten, home schooled, Teacher: Yan Shun Sui.

By Natalie Bernier, age 6, of Vienna, Grade 1, Yan’s Art Studio, Fairfax, Teacher: Yan Shun Sui.
“How To Quickly Get Rid Of Knee Pain Without Surgery Or Medication!”
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“In Our Backyard,” by Valerie Li, 12, Longfellow Middle School.

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**Children’s Connection**

By Cynthia Yuxin Huang, age 10, of Oakton, Grade 5, Sunrise Valley Elementary in Reston, teacher: Mr. Ian Kidder.

**Pink and Yellow Flower**, by Ava Kang, of Vienna, age 13, Grade 7, Congressional School, Falls Church, Art Teacher: Mrs. Rula Brock.

**Blue Bird in a Tree**, by Crystal Xia, age 12, Grade 8, Congressional School, Falls Church, Art Teacher: Mrs. Rula Brock.

By Vivian Yu, Grade 5, Oakton Elementary School, Teacher: Yanshun Sui.

**Paredes Gallery**

Abigail Paredes, 14, of Great Falls, attends Dominion High School in Sterling.

“Room with a View,” by Abigail Paredes.
Children's Connection

By Eythan Huang. Grade 2, Flint Hill Elementary.

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Children’s Connection
Thoreau Middle Art Gallery

Artwork submitted by Thoreau Middle School Art Teacher Michele Physioc.

Watercolor Music, by Katie Rodgers, Grade 7.

Watercolor Music, by Sydney McCarthy, Grade 8.

Bridge in Winter, by Riley Stevens, Grade 8.

Balancing the Holidays, by Savannah Le Tendre, Grade 7.

Holiday Fun, by Lauren Richardson, Grade 7.

Sleigh Ride, by Corinne Church, Grade 7.

Peaceful Snowman, by Tami Nguyen, Grade 8.

Santa’s Workshop, by Tran Vo, Grade 8.

Snowman, by Sydney McCarthy, Grade 8.

Watercolor Portrait, by Celine Gorkowski, Grade 8.

Watercolor Music, by Daniel Jacobson, Grade 7.

Watercolor Music, by Nora Galvin, Grade 8.

Watercolor Music, by Katie Rodgers, Grade 7.

Watercolor Music, by Daniel Jacobson, Grade 7.

Watercolor Music, by Nora Galvin, Grade 8.

Watercolor Music, by Mati Turunen, Grade 7.

Watercolor Music, by Daniel Jacobson, Grade 7.

Watercolor Music, by Nora Galvin, Grade 8.

Watercolor Music, by Katelin Dow, Grade 8.

Peaceful Snowman, by Tami Nguyen, Grade 8.

Watercolor Portrait, by Celine Gorkowski, Grade 8.

Watercolor Portrait, by Celine Gorkowski, Grade 8.

Watercolor Portrait, by Celine Gorkowski, Grade 8.

Watercolor Portrait, by Celine Gorkowski, Grade 8.

Watercolor Music, by Sydney McCarthy, Grade 8.

Watercolor Music, by Sydney McCarthy, Grade 8.
Artwork submitted by Sandy Pugh, Art Instructor.

By Alexis Woosley Anderson, Grade 2.

By Chloe Xie, Grade 3.

By Ponteha Aryavand of Great Falls, Kindergarten.

By - from left - Ellena Suh, Grade 2; Cayden McCusker of Great Falls, Grade 2; and Claire Nitowski, Grade 2.

By Rocco Zhang, Grade 4.

By Rhys Frischling of Great Falls, Grade 3.

By Morgan Frederick of Great Falls, Grade 5.

By Sanika Kale of Great Falls, Grade 5.

By Ellie Wen, Grade 2.

By Molly Samburg, of Vienna, Grade 1.
“Gifts to Give”

By fifth graders in Katy Curran’s class at Hutchison Elementary in Herndon.

If I could give my mom a gift I’d give a helpful thing, a hug or a nicest card and a love candy and if we could go to Vietnam to have fun and at home finding the notes.
—Andy Nguyen

If I could give a free gift to my mom and dad it will be a card, it will be shiny. Inside the card says I love you. Mom gave me a kiss in the head. We’ll all be happy.
—Bryan Rivera-Aguilera

If I can give a gift to my mom with no money it’s going to be Spanish song to make her feel the best mom in world.
—Jose Hernandez

I will give you a hug because you have been really nice to me and you have never talked behind my back and I trust her because I have been best friend since second grade and I have never heard that someone says to me that she is talking behind my back or she said something mean and I love her like a sister.
—Nancy Parada-Rodriguez

My Mom and I would like to give her a card it would say I love you song. I’m so happy she is the best Mom in the world. Her food is best in the world.
ES - I love you Mom
—Leslie Portillo

Dear mom, I love you because you do all the work in the house and you care about me and our family, that’s why I love you.
—Patrick Castillo

My friends are my family. It will be a hug, a card of love and a stuffed animal. I will give a stuffed animal that I have because it will make her or him feel great. And I will give her or him help them if they need help. And I will give them a big kiss and a big hug, all day long love.
—Sandy Arana-Tome

I will give my mom a hug and a kiss so she is happy and give her a lot of hugs.
—Santiago Panozo

If I could give a gift to my dad it would be a handmade ship, because he likes ships.
—Umair Bhatt
Odyssey of the Mind

By Mulan Pan

I’m sure many of you have heard of it, and some of you might even be in Odyssey of the Mind competition, but for those who aren’t, I wanted to give you an insider’s view of what it’s all about. I’ve been participating in Odyssey of the Mind, which I will refer to as OotM, since fourth grade, and I absolutely love it! It’s a great enrichment activity for me, and it helps me relax and have fun with friends.

When I first started out, our team chose the balsa wood problem. In this problem, we had to build a structure that could support the most weight possible. It could only be made of balsa wood and glue and could weigh no more than fifteen grams. The amount of weight held translated into points. This part of the problem took the most time and effort, where we experimented with many different designs. Every week, teammates would bring in their newly made structure, and we would carefully load weights onto it until it smashed. After we recorded the weight held, we would then analyze it to figure out how it broke so we could improve the design. Guess how much weight our final structure held? Over five hundred pounds!

While trying to build a balsa wood structure, we were presented a long-term problem. We had to come up with a solution to the problem, which had to incorporate the structure, and turn the solution into an eight-minute skit. The judges would decide how creative and effective our solution was and award us points. They would also look at our handmade props, costumes, and other things along those lines, and award us Style points for those.

The Spontaneous part must be my favorite. We were presented a problem, and we had no clue beforehand what it would be. They gave us a limited amount of time to solve it, so we had to think on our feet, getting our creative juices really flowing. An example of a problem would be, “What was the best thing since sliced bread?”, in which each member would give a different response. The more creative responses our team gave, the more points we would get.

Last March, our team got first place in Regional Competition. It was the best day of my life! I must admit, we weren’t the best sports about it though. They gave us a limited amount of time to solve it, so we had to think on our feet, getting our creative juices really flowing. An example of a problem would be, “What was the best thing since sliced bread?”, in which each member would give a different response. The more creative responses our team gave, the more points we would get.

Last March, our team got first place in Regional Competition. It was the best day of my life! I must admit, we weren’t the best sports about it though. We kept jumping around, screaming, “We won! We won!” , the shining gold medal bouncing on our chest. Later in April, we attended the State Competition, where we got third place! This year, our team is determined to get to the World Competition (and maybe even win!).

Overall, OotM is a great sport for the mind. You get to make new friends, exercise creativity, and crush your rivals in the competition. You also learn how to cooperate with your teammates. OotM allowed me to delve deeper into my strengths, as well as find new ones. Although I’ve only been participating in this event for two years, I have no trouble saying that it’s become my favorite part of my after-school life.

Mulan Pan, 12, is a sixth grader at Forestville Elementary School. Teachers: Ms. Conner, Ms. Donlon, and Ms. Kroog.
Children's Connection

Cunningham Park Elementary

Artwork submitted by Alice Bredin-Karney, Art Specialist at Cunningham Park Elementary.

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Children's Connection
Cunningham Park Elementary

By Lizzie Britt, age 8, Grade 2, Cunningham Park Elementary School, Vienna.

By Jenna Jumaili, age 10 Grade 4, Cunningham Park Elementary School, Vienna.

By Matthew MothElementary School, age 7, Grade 1, Cunningham Park Elementary School, Vienna.

By Savannah Vernon, age 10, Grade 4, Cunningham Park Elementary School, Vienna.

By Lizzie Britt, age 8, Grade 2, Cunningham Park Elementary School, Vienna.
I'm Write

By KENNETH B. LOURIE

Because of the change in some of our publication deadlines for December, I have had to write multiple columns weeks in advance, something unusual for me. Typically, I write my column five days before publication, so time-wise, I'm fairly current and emotionally present as well. Writing ahead, as December deadline (it's nothing new. I've been managing to accommodate these deadlines for years) is still a bit off-putting. Though I want to think ahead and live like I have a future, as a cancer patient, it's difficult not to live in the present. Thinking, feeling, projecting ahead, seems presumptuous almost.

This is not to imply that I have to somehow presume a future and write about cancer subjects — or not, which have not yet happened. My columns are rarely time-sensitive or date-specific. Still, my columns are generally better written when I'm writing from current feelings, facts, circumstances, etc. And though many of the feelings, facts and circumstances relating to my condition don't exactly change on a daily, weekly or even monthly basis (thank God!), surprisingly, my reaction to them sometimes does. Moreover, writing multiple columns at one time also forces me to pile onto myself emotionally the effects of my disease. Which, if you must know, I'd rather not do. In fact, if there's any way I can't think about my situation, that's a 'way' I'd like to be.

Not that I moan and groan or woe is me endlessly. Although I readily admit that being ignorant too long concerning my disease is hardly blissfully ignorant. In fact, in another paragraph, I will have written great (figuratively speaking of course) as those who know me or have regularly read my columns likewise know; but sometimes I'd prefer not to have my hand forced. And even though reading or hearing about other people who have been diagnosed with lung cancer, or who have succumbed to its ravages, doesn't bother me — too much, really (I've matured), occasionally, I'd rather be blissfully ignorant.

Although I readily admit that being ignorant too long concerning my disease is hardly penny-wise but it is most definitely pound-foolish. The trick is, somehow not getting consumed by one's circumstances and maintaining an optimistic point of view. And since I'm a funny guy (though not really funny), I can and do have fun with my circumstances and others, so there are less-than-ideal circumstances under which I attempt to thrive are not overwhelming, except when forced to confront my demons and focus on myself when newspaper deadlines are advanced and jumbled and I'm having to write four columns in two weeks instead of writing one column in one week.

Though it's not exactly trouble, it is to quote Jerry Seinfeld from a long-ago episode, "something." "Something" I could likely live without, but 'something' unfortunately I must live with, every December. But I'm a "big boy," as my father used to tell me, with "broad shoulders." I can fight back (figuratively speaking) to my ability to handle the load, so I'll manage. In fact, in another paragraph, I will have completed the task and the presumptive weight of it will be off my 'broad shoulders.'

Now I can relax a little bit, exactly what one (especially this one with cancer) needs. Between the holidays and advanced deadlines, the column-writing and the ad-selling; I'm living and learning with my ever-evolving circumstances (further from the beginning or closer to the end, I never know). Nevertheless, I am extremely happy to have been there and finished doing it yet again. I hope to see you all back here next year. Happy Holidays!

Kenyi Lourie is an Advertising Representative for The Potomac Almanac & The Connection Newspapers.
If tomorrow were never to come, it would not be worth living today.

-Dagobert Runes
Reston’s 4th Annual Camp Expo is Bigger & Better Than Ever!

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