

# CONNECTION McLean ♦ Vienna and Oakton



Artist Name: Evelyn Kim  
Age: 14  
Grade: 9  
Town of Residence: Vienna, Virginia  
School: James Madison High School

## Children's & Teens' Connection 2022

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PHOTO VIA MCLEAN VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT

Santa makes the rounds McLean-style.

# Here Comes Santa to the Streets of McLean

**Antique fire truck vehicle of choice.**

BY MERCIA HOBSON  
THE CONNECTION

The McLean Volunteer Fire Department's Santa Runs aboard its antique Pirsch fire engine continue through Dec. 17/. Santa usually begins his rounds in downtown McLean around 6 p.m., and the older fellow can last only until about 8 p.m. All that Ho, ho, hoing is exhausting. To see Santa's schedule, use the Santa Tracker at <https://www.mc->

[leanvfd.org/santa/](https://www.mcleanvfd.org/santa/).

Santa makes every effort to be timely, but weather and equipment may limit his ability. Santa's fire engine cannot visit every street nor enter cul-de-sacs.

Santa's schedule shows him on Dec. 14, the Pimmit Hills area; Dec. 15, the Franklin Park area; Dec. 16: the Langley area; and Dec. 17, the Timberly, McLean Hunt areas.

Donations to the McLean Volunteer Fire Department are greatly appreciated. They enable the department to purchase lifesaving equipment and keep Santa's snowless sleigh in top condition. To donate, go to <https://www.mcleanvfd.org>. For more information, go to <http://www.mcleanvfd.org/santa-on-the-antique-fire-engine/>.

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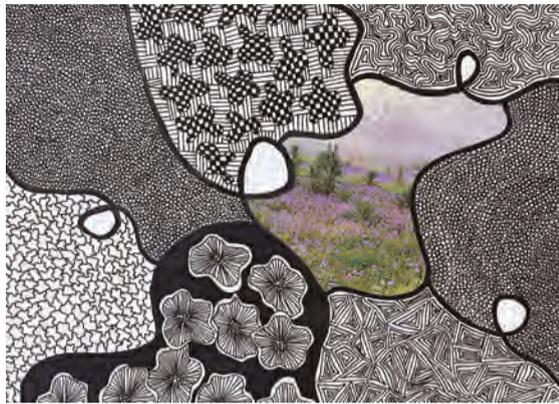
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# CHILDREN'S AND TEENS' CONNECTION

## James Madison High School

TEACHER: MARIELLE MARIANO,  
ART THERAPIST/ART TEACHER



Annelise Hood, 17 y/o, 12th grade,  
residence: McLean



Mary Bjornstadt, 18 y/o, 12th grade, residence: Vienna



Mary Catherine Callender, 14y/o, 9th grade, residence: Vienna



Emory Neuman 17 y/o, 12th grade, residence: Vienna



Ariel Baylon 18 y/o, 12th grade, residence: Vienna



Bruno Hendon 16 y/o, 10th grade, residence: Vienna



Neela Sweeney 14 y/o, 9th grade, residence: Vienna



Yoonbin Hana Cho, 15 y/o, 10th  
grade, residence: Vienna



Anthony Simms 17 y/o, 10th  
grade, residence: Vienna



Niamh Rohling 14 y/o, 9th grade, residence McLean



Toby Flores 16 y/o, 10th grade,  
residence: Vienna

## CHILDREN'S AND TEENS' CONNECTION

# Timber Lane Elementary School

SHARON BAUMGARTNER, ART SPECIALIST



Isabela Gonzales Garcia – 1st grade



Ethan Upton – 1st grade



Danny Martinez – 1st grade



Luis Espinoza-Leiva – 2nd grade



Arnoldo Garcia Montoya – 6th grade



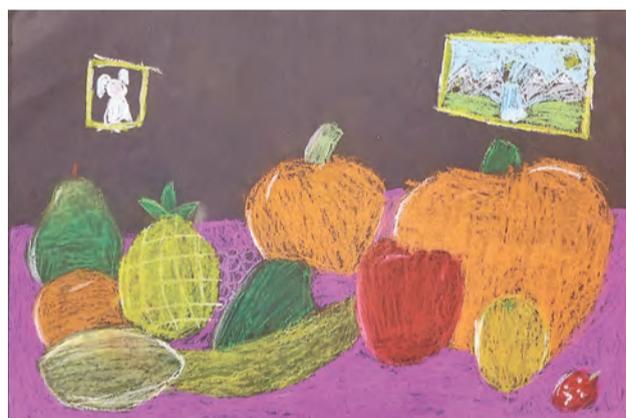
Melody Smith – 3rd grade



Dulce Chiquej Caal – 2nd grade



Evie Michels – 6th grade



Ricardo Reyes Mejia – 5th grade



Liam Yave-Adrian – 4th grade

## Writing from Cooper Middle School

TEACHER: MRS. BOVENZI

### The World that Could be

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

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

make us get along.

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

More than ever, people fear the future. It's a tragedy that, every day, hundreds of thousands wake up and wonder if they will eat. Nu-

clear weapons and climate change could end humanity tomorrow, and it's all because no country wants to give up an inch of foreign policy ground. Burning cars and hailstorms of bullets should not be something anyone should deal with, and yet that sight is what's plastered over screens every day of the week. How much consideration is given to skeletal children and families torn apart? It varies.

Maybe I'm just impatient. Change is gradual, after all. And,

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

### The Red Bell

KATIE YOUNG  
14, 8TH GRADE  
GREAT FALLS

A smell filled the air, a smell so aromatic, a smell so delightfully grand, it filled up the house and into my small blue room. This smell was the food my grandmother made, I could

SEE COOPER MIDDLE SCHOOL,  
PAGE 5

# CHILDREN'S AND TEENS' CONNECTION

FROM PAGE 4

feel my excitement waiting to hear it. The bell, the big red one, sat right at the entrance of the kitchen. She would ring it, reminding me to come down and indulge in my favorite meal.

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

She would yell at the old TV when it went static. I was always the one to fix the loose cords. I always remembered "The red cords with the red, the yellow with the yellow." She would call me a genius when I would fix it, though I wasn't much of one, it made me feel brighter, brighter than a star.

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

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

## Friendship Frenzy

KATE WALSH  
13, 7TH GRADE  
MCLEAN

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

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

In Elementary school, it was easier to maintain healthy friendships, as well as have a bigger social circle filled with one main

friend group. As middle school has begun, social life has shaped a hefty problem for me. In 6th grade I had developed a sturdy friend group with about 7 people.

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

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

## Trying To Run

JAH-IA VANG  
13 AND 8TH GRADE  
VIENNA

Do you like math? Younger me would've been disgusted just by the word. Growing up, math was always the subject that I detested the most. Numbers and scribbles all over my papers, yet nothing made sense. So I thought, why try if I'm going to fail anyways?

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

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

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

SEE COOPER MIDDLE SCHOOL.  
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## Public Notice

### Updated weight limits on Virginia bridges and culverts

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

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

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

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

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

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# CHILDREN'S AND TEENS' CONNECTION



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



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



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

## Colvin Run Elementary



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



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

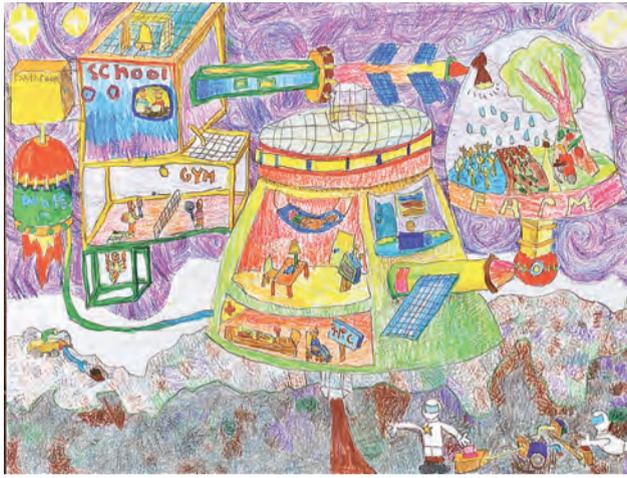


Xanakee Vang Age: 11 Grade: 5th School: Colvin Run Elementary, Vienna  
Teacher: Lauren Grimm Town of Residence: Vienna

# CHILDREN'S AND TEENS' CONNECTION



Wolf By Kyler Liang

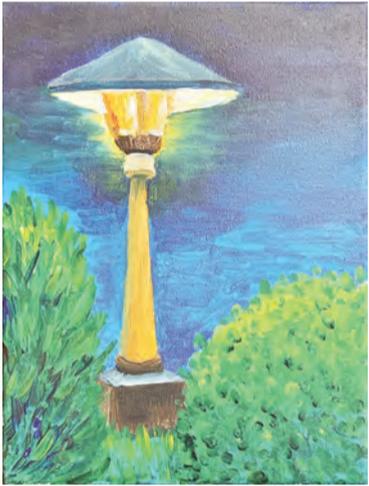


Future World by Kyler Liang

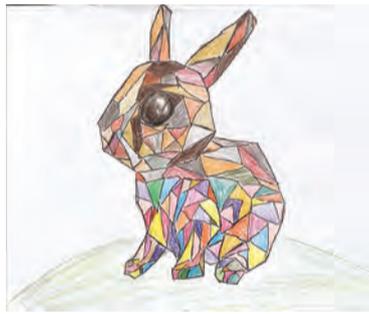


Breakfast by Kyler Liang

STUDENT: KYLER LIANG  
AGE: 11, GRADE: 6TH  
TOWN OF RESIDENCE: MCLEAN  
SCHOOL: YAN'S ART STUDIO (VIENNA, VA)



Lamp by Rylee Liang



Bunny, by Rylee Liang

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



Restaurant, by Rylee Liang



Space, by Rylee Liang



"Save the Frogs," by Rylee Liang



NANMA HARIDAS,

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

## POEM

### Wind

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

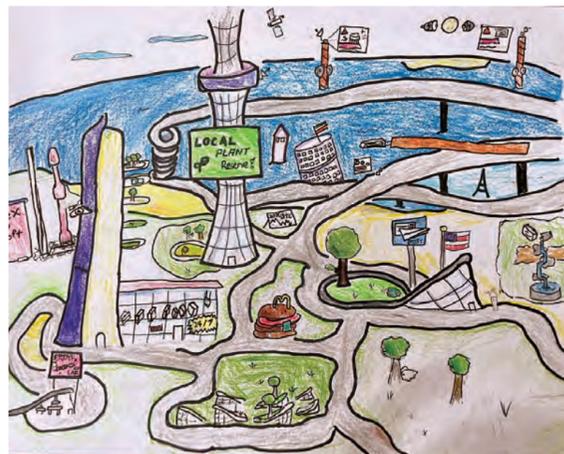
Take me away  
Far away from  
The tornados  
The earthquakes  
The wildfires

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

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

IAN KIM,  
LONGFELLOW MS, 7TH GRADE  
MCLEAN

# CHILDREN'S AND TEENS' CONNECTION



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

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



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



Artwork Title: Legendary Dragon



Artwork Title: Sea Turtle Escape

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

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

## Woman vs. Man

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

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

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

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

— RYAN CHUN, 16, McLEAN HIGH SCHOOL



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



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



Love for the Ocean

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



Take a Bite of Fall

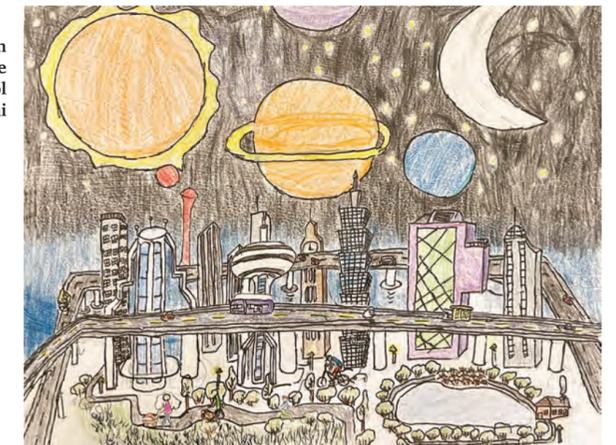


One Slide of Sweetness



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

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



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



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

# CHILDREN'S AND TEENS' CONNECTION



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



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



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

## Writing from Cooper Middle School

FROM PAGE 5

TEACHER: MRS. BOVENZI

### Change

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

MAGDALENA BRENNER  
13 - 8TH GRADE  
MCLEAN

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

July 24, 2022. That was the day. My parents called me and my sisters, they said they had a present for us. We went downstairs and they gave us a present. A photo album. An empty photo album.

After that, I heard my mom's voice saying we would collect lots of memories there, especially since we are moving.

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

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

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

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

# CHILDREN'S AND TEENS' CONNECTION



Red ties

## Answers

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

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



Fictional vs. Reality

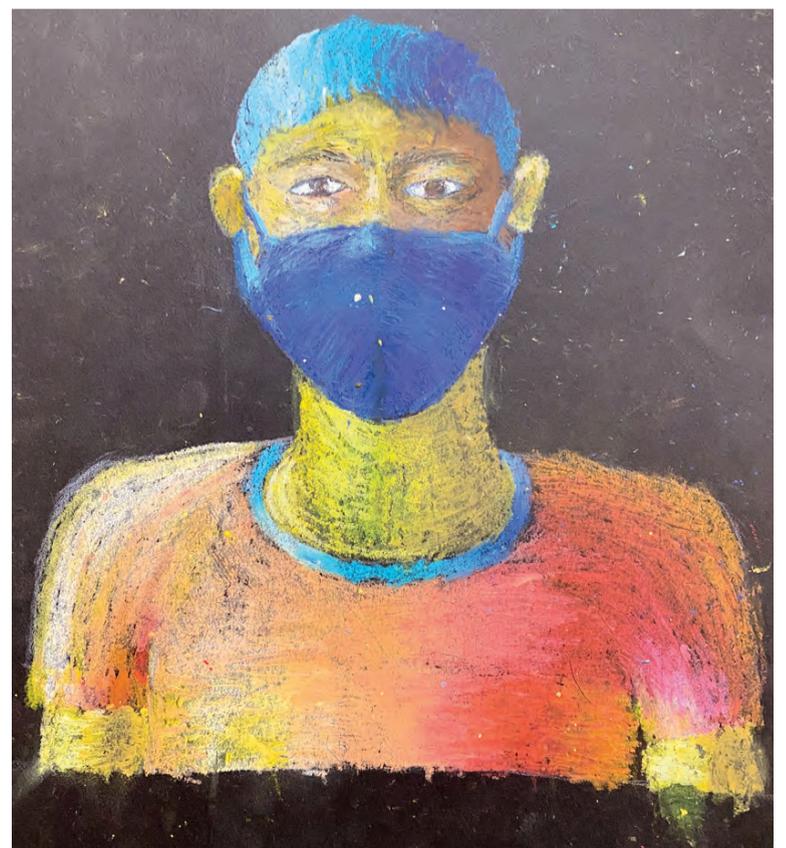
Colin Boam, 18,  
 Grade 12,  
 James Madison High  
 School, Vienna

The first piece is titled  
 "Red ties" and the second  
 piece is titled "Fic-  
 tional vs. Reality".

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



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



# FOOTBALL

PHOTOS BY WILL PALENSCAR



Madison Quarterback Mac Lewis #16 looks downfield for a receiver in state championship game.



Madison's Angelo Jreige #1 and teammate Alex Carlson #24 shake hands after a Jreige touchdown run.

## Madison's Season Leads to Championship Game

BY WILL PALENSCAR

**T**he Madison Warhawks (11-3) battled the Freedom-Woodbridge Eagles (14-0) for the Virginia Class 6 Football State Championship on Dec. 10 at SB Ballard Stadium on the campus of Old Dominion University in Norfolk, VA.

Madison advanced to the final after winning playoff games over Washington Liberty, Yorktown, Centreville and Fairfax. Freedom-Woodbridge advanced to the game after beating Garfield, John Champe, Patriot and Western Branch.

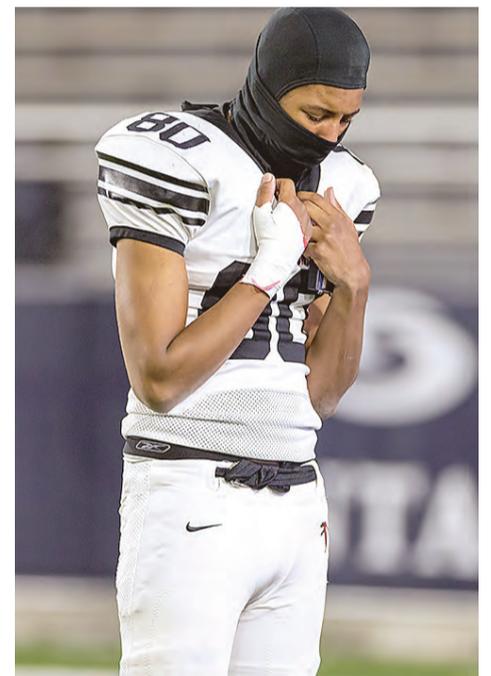
The Warhawks Ian Kenny intercepted Freedom-Woodbridge QB Tristan Evans in

the 2nd quarter, stopping an Eagle drive. Madison put points on the board with 9:02 to play in the 2nd quarter when Warhawk QB Mac Lewis would score on a 1 yard rushing touchdown. Mac Lewis also scored on a 30 yard touchdown run in the 3rd quarter with 7:36 . After an offsides on Freedom - Woodbridge, Madison opted for and was successful on a 2 point conversion run by Angelo Jreige the score was now 28-14, Freedom- Woodbridge.

Madison Head coach Justin Counts was quick to give credit to Freedom - Woodbridge after the game and also credited his team for never giving up. With the 48-14 win Freedom wins the school's first state championship.



Mac Lewis #16 calls for snap with running back Angelo Jreige #1 in backfield



Darren Knicely stands on the field showing emotion after Madison lost the Virginia Class 6 State Championship.



Madison Mac Lewis #16 runs the ball for Madison.



Angelo Jreige #1 runs the ball while behind a Teddy Lewis block.

# CALENDAR

## HUNTERS WOODS AT RAILS EDGE WINTER EVENTS

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

## DEC. 16 THRU FEB. 12

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

## SATURDAY/DEC. 17

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



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

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

## SATURDAY/DEC. 17

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

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

## SUNDAY/DEC. 18

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



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

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

## MONDAY/DEC. 19

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

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

## MONDAY/DEC. 19

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

## FRIDAY/DEC. 30

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

## NOW THRU DEC. 31

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

## HOLIDAY ENTERTAINMENT 2022

### THROUGH DEC 23

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

### THROUGH DEC. 31

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

### THROUGH DEC. 17

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

### THROUGH DEC. 18

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



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

6-9 p.m., Saturdays & Sundays 11 a.m.-6 p.m. Details: [delrayartisans.org/holiday-market](http://delrayartisans.org/holiday-market)

### DEC. 10-18

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

### THURSDAY/DEC. 15

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

### FRIDAY/DEC. 16

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

### SATURDAY/DEC. 17

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

### SATURDAY/DEC. 17

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

### DEC. 17-18

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



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

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

### SUNDAY/DEC. 18

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

### SUNDAY/DEC. 18

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

### SATURDAY/DEC. 31

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

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# HOLIDAY Santas Needed to Take on a Mission

**Holiday gifts for children of wounded vets needed.**

BY MERCIA HOBSON  
THE CONNECTION

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

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

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

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

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

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



MERCIA HOBSON/THE CONNECTION

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

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

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

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

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

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

DC Metro area. These families have been vetted and referred to AFF. Based on need, financial support will ensure each family will have: • A Christmas Tree • Complete Christmas Dinner (for up to 8) • Stocking Stuffers • the ability to provide up to 5 gifts per child 100% of all donations go directly to support this program. There are no administrative or overhead fees taken out of donations. All donations contributed between Oct. 25 and Christmas will go directly to support this program. If you can help, go to: [www.ableforces.org/](http://www.ableforces.org/) adopt to make a contribution.

## BULLETIN BOARD

Submit civic/community announcements at [ConnectionNewspapers.com/Calendar](http://ConnectionNewspapers.com/Calendar). Photos and artwork welcome. Deadline is Thursday at noon, at least two weeks before the event.

### ADOPT A WARRIOR FAMILY FOR CHRISTMAS

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

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

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

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

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

Visit [connectionnewspapers.com](http://connectionnewspapers.com) or <https://www.gofundme.com/help-keep-your-newspaper-printing>

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## Twenty-Five Years Later



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

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

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

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

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

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

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



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