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Dear Friends of All Ages:

It was quite an honor to be invited to write a guest editorial for Skipping Stones, my favorite magazine. For the first issue of the new school year, Arun, the editor, asked me to write to you. I think he picked me because I have been a teacher and involved in schools for a long time.

Some of you may have moved this summer, gone on a vacation trip, or just stayed at home relaxing. Others may have been in school during the summer. But I imagine everyone reading this letter has experienced some kind of change in his or her life recently. And if not, you will soon be in a new class with a new teacher and new friends to discover.

Everyone experiences change, and it can be wonderful and exciting, or it can be scary and uncomfortable. Meeting the challenges of change can help us discover new abilities and qualities in ourselves that we never knew we had. Even if we didn’t expect or want the change, it can turn out to be a chance to learn new things about ourselves or new ways to live in the world.

Recently I have been experiencing a lot of change in my life. I am moving to a new town and a new school, to teach in a different way than I have before. All this moving and changing has made me think about what stays the same when changes happen. What can we carry with us to make sure we are OK and that we survive, even thrive, when things around us are different than we expected or hoped?

For me, one answer is my values. I can hold onto my values, my beliefs, and my trust in myself and other people. I can know that I am in control of how I respond to situations I face. If someone hurts or disappoints me, it does not change who I am as a person. My response to that disappointment is what defines who I am. I can hold on to my belief in myself and strive to be the best person I can be, even when I am confused, angry or sad.

If I am in a situation, like a new school or a new town, or even a new class with a teacher I didn’t want, I can make the most of the situation by being positive and looking for the lessons that I can learn and the good I can find. I have faith that I’ll always find good people wherever I go, because I always have. One question that I ask myself is, “What can I learn from this?” And, more importantly, “How can I make this situation better for myself and for others?” No matter what my age or circumstances, asking myself these two questions will always help make any change into an opportunity for learning, satisfaction, and even wonderful surprises.

This summer I have learned several important lessons: There is no predicting what is going to happen to us in this life. Every day is a surprise. But I can carry with me my faith in myself and in the good in other people. I can treat myself and others with kindness and respect. And I can remain open to the experiences that life brings me. If I do these things, I know that I can face anything that comes. And so can you.

Good luck with all of your changes this year!

—Mary Drew, ESL teacher, Woodburn, Oregon
On Drugs

I would like to write about a problem I worry about: Why do many teenagers use drugs? Has anybody ever thought about it?

I think some teenagers use drugs because their lives are boring. Some children have problems with their parents and want to forget them with narcotics. Some people just want to try drugs but then can’t stop using them. Some boys and girls want to prove something to others. But I don’t understand these people—they’re damaging their lives, and we must stop this.

Our lives are within our own hands and we can change them. Let’s do it. We have such interesting things to do like music, books, sports, talking with friends, and going for walks. We can make interesting lives for ourselves.

I ask all teenagers: say no to drugs!
—Valentina Ivanova, 15, Visaginas, Lithuania

From Hawai’i

My name is Jeri Chun. I am 13 years old and attend a school named Punahou, in Hawai’i. I am three-quarters Japanese and one-quarter Korean. However, I do not know any of my Korean relatives. I feel more like a full Japanese person. I believe that I am Buddhist, although my dad is Christian. I attend a church named Haleiwa Shingon Mission. Shingon is a sect of Buddhism.

I also take a martial art that is derived from Japanese sword fencing. It is kendo. This is what inspired my writing. Just looking at my teachers of kendo sometimes makes me think of how real samurai must have looked like in early Japan. Most of them are from Japan and come from a long line of excellent kendoists or maybe even famous samurais. My uncle started me in this art. He is very good himself, but is still learning and improving just like our senseis. When you do kendo, you have to do it with your heart and pretend that you are in a life and death situation. I will continue to do kendo for as long as my body can physically handle it.

—Jerilynn T. Chun, 13, Hawai’i (see pp 20-31)

Russian Holidays

I used to live in Russia; know a lot of Russian Holidays that we don’t celebrate here in America. I can tell about a few of them.

One of the holidays is on March 8, when we celebrate the day of all women. We give gifts to the mothers, grandmothers, sisters, and girls that we know. Even aunts get presents. On December 23, we celebrate a day of all men and also the end of the World War. On this day we give presents to brothers, fathers, grandfathers, uncles and boys we know. On December 31, we celebrate the New year. We always have a big table of food and we celebrate at midnight. The presents are given in the early morning of January 1st.

—Irina Zuvodisker, 13, Bexley, Ohio

An Outlet and an Opportunity

We feel it is important to tell you a little bit about our school and the writers entering their work (pp.11-12). We are a treatment center for troubled girls, ages 12 through 17. To protect the girls’ confidentiality we are not allowed to use their last names. All these girls have dealt with issues such as abandonment, neglect, and physical, sexual, and emotional abuse. In addition, a lot of our girls are burdened with learning disabilities and with disorders inflicted on them through their birth mothers using drugs while pregnant. They have ended up at Rosemont School in the hopes of getting the therapy, medical attention, and the large holes in their academics filled, in order to give them a fighting-chance of succeeding in their lives.

Thank you for giving our students this opportunity to show what they have to offer through the knowledge they’ve acquired through unbelievable challenges in their young lives. This has been a critical turning point. Many tears have flowed in the process of writing and sharing with each other. This contest has been an outlet for them to feel for the first time that they are worthwhile, talented, contributing human beings.

—Lori Jensen and Susanna Lemmel, teachers, Rosemont School, Portland, Oregon. Also see page 5.

Your Letters

On Drugs

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—Jerilynn T. Chun, 13, Hawai’i (see pp 20-31)
**I Wonder**

Sometimes I wonder...
When I sit back and watch you mess up,
And I don’t tell you to stop,
Am I doing the right thing?

Sometimes I wonder...
When you ask for my advice,
Do you want the truth, or
do you want me to tell you what you want to hear?

Sometimes I wonder...
When you lie to me
And I forgive you,
Are you learning your lesson?

Sometimes I wonder...
Are you ever going to change,
Or am I always going to have to wonder?

—Stacy Orosz, grade 8, Rockford, Michigan

**Changes**

I used to think that the world was going to hate me
mostly because I hated the world.
I used to think that I was ugly
because that’s what I was told.

I used to think that I could never make it
but I did.
Now I know the world loves me
because God created it.
Now I know that I am beautiful
because for the first time, I can see it.

—Laurie S., 15, Portland, Oregon. She writes:
“I wrote this poem after being placed in three treatment
programs. Up until that time I hadn’t faced the damage
I had been subjected to through abuse. I had so much
hate inside of me; I couldn’t let go of it. I realized quick-
ly through my writing that I have a lot to offer people,
but I need to help myself first. After working with my
teachers on my writing, and getting smiles and positive
recognition from my peers, I am letting go of hate.”

**All It Takes Is a Smile**

Sometimes the most cherished gifts we can give
are the ones we can’t buy. There is a saying that a
person can live a month off a compliment. This is
worthy of consideration in our day-to-day lives.

Often, it doesn’t even take as much as a compli-
ment; just a warm smile, wave, or friendly hello
can brighten someone’s day. In fact, both of you
will be rewarded by the deed in one way or another.
The person receiving the kind gesture will feel more
important, like someone cares about him or her and
how he or she is feeling. In turn, the person giving
will experience a sense of accomplishment, for he or
she has brightened someone’s day. You see, there are
no negative repercussions to this act. Only uplift-
ing feelings are gained by all. Plus, all of this comes
at absolutely no cost. In fact, it may be one of the
most valuable things in life. No price can be put on
happiness; it is priceless. So the next time you see
someone who needs cheering, give that person the
most precious gift you possibly can: a simple smile.

—Amanda Burk, 14, Gibsonia, Pennsylvania

**Be Me**

Let’s switch places
I want you to know
what I am, who I am
because you don’t seem to understand.
Here, jump into my head
come on into my heart
know what I think
experience what I feel
see, believe, know,
cry, sigh, and laugh,
then you’ll understand
what I am, who I am.

—Grace You, grade 11, Chinese-American,
Clarkstown High, New City, New York
My world was el barrio
from my house at the end of the
dead end street
to the corner
the place where cars raced by
amidst the noxious bustle of the city
My world was huevos pericos,
scrambled eggs Abuelita made every morning,
spankings for my naughty cousin
Watching cartoon Cantinflas on tio’s lap
when I wasn’t white
My world was the vacant lot
where we used to frolic
My first paper airplane
with the neighborhood boys
Popeye in Spanish
Roosters crowing in the early morning
gray of the city Bogota
I am the orphan
the mother longs to touch
the faraway land
Colombia calls to me
with a solemn siren-song
Wistfully across borders
she sings
Her sweet voice
makes me want to bear
the quakes of the bomb on the corner
face the men in worn-out boots
and slouching fatigues
She makes me want to defy their
cowardly guns
and melt their timid bullets
I am stronger
than their bolted fears
I am wiser
than their smooth black lies
I am larger
than their snarling injustice
I rake my bloody fingers
down my face
tearing away the skin
that stifles the soul within
my tears dilute the blood
that pours from my raw insides
Despite the agony
I am smiling
Colombia
misty mountain tears
and barking dogs
cilantro soup (changua)
and familia
my big family
under the bursting roof
of our two-story home
Santa’s jolly face
spray painted on the wall outside
perennial greetings from Papa Noel
whose red-nosed grin is fading.

—Janiva Cifuentes-Hiss, 17.
Hija de las Estrellas: Child of the Stars

The ocean purrs against the sand and the moon hovers strangely in the blue sky feeling awkward and out of place yet pleased at the feel of her languid azure bed I gaze into her swiftly darkening mirror and see my face in her pearly beauty Smiling at the pleasant incongruity among fields of trembling clouds Her smooth icy face is troubled with questions She wonders inwardly who she could be Who could she be in a world that sees too much and not enough? As she whispers, The sun is my father, the night my mother And neither is more powerful or more meek For they reign in turns making the earth her blush under their rays of love and tranquility And though outside the star is pale, she hides her soul behind a mask of porcelain For that is all they see because they are so far away How can they see not that she is dark beneath layers of skin? How can they see not that Hispanic blood runs warmly through her veins And gurgles beneath her eyes of sea-stone light while whirlpools of chocolate brown swirl beneath? Again she whispers clumsily, yet purring the words that spill so naturally off her tangled tongue,

Y suspira suavemente
Así suspira el viento
Así suspira mi alma
Y la sangre Colombiana canta en mi cuerpo
Como los pájaros cantan en las ramas de los arboles.
Y como puedo cantar
cuando todo el mundo ve que soy blanca
Y si pudiera pelar esta piel podrian ver que adentro soy cafe
debajo de estos ojos azules hay ojos de chocolate
Mira, mira. Acércate
Oye el murmuro de mi sangre
Oye que canta con orgullo
Oyeme — que soy la hija del sol y de la noche
que soy la hija-estrella

Entiende que yo me amo y me odio a la misma vez
Trata de entender que duele ser la hija de dos mundos
Y que diciendo esto estoy rasguñada y desnuda
And I understand that when I tell you this I am raw and naked under your condescending eyes
You can never understand, unless you’re one of us
One of us daughters or sons of day and night
Who are twilight children
Straddling two cultures... two worlds
And realizing that it was love that made us who we are
Love that created twilight children, not knowing their suffering
Love that I have to make myself believe in when I feel
I belong to no world but the twilight world
Love that I will never quite understand
Love that made me a part of two worlds
Never quite belonging to either one
But you can’t see, and never will unless you are an offspring of day and night, like me.
For we will wander and wonder in the moments where night touches day... In a silent kiss and father sinks into the ocean while mother floats into the sky

No puedes ver, hasta las estrellas más brillantes se esconden detrás de las nubes a veces también?

Can’t you see that even the brightest stars can be hidden by the clouds sometimes, too?

—Janiva Cifuentes-Hiss, 17, Olympia, Washington.
Janiva writes, “My poetry is inspired by my emotions about being bi-racial. Sometimes it seems that straddling two cultures is a challenge, especially because my outward appearance betrays half of my racial identity, but I realize that I have been doubly blessed by being able to relate to, and understand two cultures.

My activities include chess, salsa and merengue, tennis, snowboarding, various clubs, and community service. In the future I hope to write and publish novels, become a dentist, and return to Columbia to give free dental care to impoverished people.
Surrounded
If someone were to ask me about my early years, I would only have to say one word, love, because kisses planted on cheeks and arms enfolded in hugs outnumbered the discipline and tears and whether we were dancing in circles or racing down the beach during a cookout, being together as a loving family was what mattered.
—Christina Jeffery, 15

Marion
I see you holding out your weak hand to me, covered in veins like rivers crisscrossing a dry landscape, and grasping your frail bones, I gaze into your eyes, still rapturous and sparkling, like the ocean you hold so dear, and I see that your legs that are confined to a wheelchair and are no longer able to take you dancing at night, but your now uncombed, snowy hair does nothing to dim the shining beauty of your radiant smile showing me the constant love you have always held within you.
—Christina Jeffery, 15, homeschooled, Barrow, Alaska. She writes, “Right now during the summer, we are experiencing a time of 24-hour sunlight. The whaling season has just come to an end, and now the Inupiat community is gearing up for Nalukataq, the celebration of a successful whaling season.”

Our Journey
We’ve been living here forever, beneath the stars above, children of the same creation. We’ve been given sustenance to share what’s natural, our duty, we understand, returns a life of love. We give thanks for birds of beauty, who spread their wings and sing, and for thunders, who wake up the earth in spring. Sisters of the planet world, forest trees, stand firm and tall, the Spirit of flowing waters, purest medicine of all. We greet each other in our minds, our voices singing song, acknowledging we’re part of what belongs.

When the syrup from the maple brings the winter’s end, we give thanks for where we’ve come from and know where we have been.
—Mike Reszler, 16, Ashland, Wisconsin. Mike is a member of the Bad River Band of the Lake Superior Tribe of Chippewa. His Indian name is Sching Wak (Big White Pine). He lives on the reservation with his maternal grandparents. The inspiration for Journey came when he was in the woods one Spring day. He writes, “I have three sisters, all younger. My hobbies include reading, writing, and playing golf. I also like learning about our Tribal government. A dream of mine is to one day become Tribal Chairperson for my reservation.”
Racism: A Learned Disease

When my sister was three or four years old, she attended a daycare where my mom worked. I enjoyed going with my mom to pick her up every day. As I filled out her time card and gathered her belongings, I had fun pretending to be her mother. I saw all of the children playing together and smiled as I watched the boys play with the girls’ toys and the girls play with the boys’ toys. They played without paying attention to each other’s skin color or race. No arguments involving religion were heard either. They were just children playing and having fun. It struck me that I noticed and paid attention to their differences while they did not.

Racism is something we learn as we grow up. If we study history from one point of view, and live in a world where we interact with those only the same as ourselves, then our world views will be tainted and prejudiced will be these teachings. Until I moved to South Carolina, I had never been in a class with a non-Caucasion, non-Jewish student. As open as I am to the dignity of all living things, I found it difficult to adapt to my new surroundings. I know that because of our limited experiences, we are all racists. Racism is not limited to evil people. Racism is found in ignorance. We do not recognize that we are children of the same God, entitled to equal dignity. While we discuss racism in young and adult circles, those of us who are interested in love for humanity always point to someone else as being the problem. However, as my father likes to quote from some character named Pogo, “We have met the enemy and he is us.” So, having addressed the problem, I would like to offer a path that will hopefully lead to a solution. Ultimately, our goal must be to get to know each other better. As we learn more about one another, we will learn to better respect those qualities in each of us that are worthy of such respect.

We need to challenge ourselves to expand our limiting boundaries. We can start by participating in our community’s efforts along these lines. Whether it is dining with someone of a different ethnicity with the hope of opening a dialogue, joining in discussion groups to talk about the issues that divide us, or just taking a lesson from our children, blind to each other’s differences, we need to start somewhere. We should start by becoming more aware of our surroundings. If we paid more attention to the shape of the flower petals that we see very day, the spider’s web, or even the natural order that keeps our world working, we would find it easier to accept everything living within it. It must begin with you and me.

—Corrine Nicole Kline, 14, Florence, South Carolina. Cory writes, “As part of my religion, I am committed to Tikkun Olam. I participate in many different projects to help repair my local world, but this is only one town. The world is made of many towns like Florence. My vision for tomorrow is that this world will at least try to understand the need to grow together. Many people hope for immediate peace. The dream cannot become real, though, if we do not do the work for peace. If people have to work towards peace, they’ll have to learn about each other and themselves. My dream is that one day, we can look at each other without prejudice and without fear. I hope to see the day when our world is whole and we, as brothers and sisters—are one. One day, we will be there.
A White Blanket

Slowly, the mist creeps
Cold and damp
like a single breath
barely touching your neck,
but touching enough to make you
shudder.
Its icy fingers
waiting
to wrap themselves around you,
blinding you in its blanket of white
and smothering you in its silence.
Hiding in the dark hollows
and shutting everyone out,
it can only stay a little while longer.
For when the sun comes up,
it will no longer exist.

—Stephanie Craft, age 14

All I Really Needed

I asked the trees to comfort me;
They merely swayed in the breeze,
Wise creatures of the woods.
I asked the trees to advise me;
They whispered among themselves,
Things only they could comprehend.
I asked the trees to listen,
And that is just what they did.

—Amanda Burk, age 14

The Tree

I sit up high
In a mass of green branches
Whipping violently around me.
I look around
And see a small bug take shelter
Where the branch meets the trunk.
The sky turns a dark grayish-green;
There is going to be a storm.
Pitter-pat, pitter-pat,
The rain begins to fall
And droplets roll off the leaves
To dampen the earth.
I jump down from my tree with the raindrops
And I sprint like a deer
Into my warm, cozy house.
I look out the window,
And see the lonely tree
Waving its branches saying,
"Where is she?"

—Samantha Brady, age 14, writes, "The idea for writing The Tree came to me as I was sitting up in the old tree behind my house. It was a beautiful day and I went there to think when all of a sudden it began to rain. I ran inside and wrote about my experience. I hope that I will grow up to be a successful psychologist or a special education teacher and try to make the world a better place without violence and war. All the loving people I know are my inspirations in my life, and are my reasons for writing beautifully and trying to make the world a better place."

Dr. Susan Frantz, Pine-Richland Middle School English teacher, shares:

"Each one of us has a voice that needs to be heard. What we have to say is important, therefore, we need to find the best way to express our thoughts.

"I begin each school year by sharing this belief and I work with students as the year progresses to develop confidence in expressing and sharing their opinions, general thoughts, and outlooks both in oral and written expression. I know my students have a wealth of experience from which others can learn, and the power to influence or delight an audience with their words. When they are shown how to collect and shape their thoughts, and then how to direct them to a given audience, the students begin to realize they are powerful communicators."
Waiting

“Welcome to the train station”
Was the first thing I heard
When my mom took me for a ride
Daddy dressed me up like an old rag doll
Sissy looked like a princess
We sat around for hours
When the big old train showed up
My mom hopped on and told me to go play
until she got back
My sister and I waited for her
But she never came back
Never
Daddy left with the men in blue
With the guns and the silver bracelets
He said that he would always remember
Me and my sister
For a while we waited for him to show
But just like mommy he never did
No matter how much I wished he would
Soon the station manager came and told us we should go
A little while later a train showed up with a nice little family on board
They said we could stay with them
When my sister said we had nowhere to go
My sister hopped in the little train
But I still waited
Just like a good little girl.

—I Jessi M. writes, “I started writing when I realized that I couldn’t talk to anyone about my past or my fears. I find myself writing when I am sad or upset about something, but never when I am happy. I use writing as a way to escape the life that has been placed on me. I never thought I would tell anyone, but now I am willing to tell the world about who I am and what I have been through.

“At this time my interests are few but they keep me out of trouble. I enjoy writing and art. I also spend a lot of my time playing music and sharing my feelings and dreams with my friends.”

I was sitting at the table playing with my favorite doll when my foster mother got the call that there was a woman who wanted to be my mom forever.

All I could think was, “Who would want me?”

I didn’t feel any different. I don’t think I would have been happy anywhere; I lost trust in happiness a long time ago.

When my new mom started hitting us, we realized that she had an anger problem. At 12, I was left alone with her when my sister ran away from home after being kicked out of school.

I went from being an honor roll student to not being a student at all. I was expelled when I was 13. I went to the hospital’s psych ward for attempted suicide. I was released to a group home for young women, followed by another trip to the hospital for the same reason as before. Then there were four treatment centers and another foster home.

When I got kicked out of the foster home, I went to downtown Portland to live with some other kids. I got pregnant at the age of 14 when I was forced to have sex with someone I hardly knew.

On October 9, 1999, two months pregnant, I was arrested. The police officer swung me into the car. This terminated my pregnancy. On October 27, 1999 I was brought to Rosemont School for girls, a locked down residential treatment center.

Now I am 15 and, with lots of treatment, I have made some changes for the better. I am reading and writing all the time. My mother is getting me a flute and I am continuing my music lessons. While I have been here I have learned that my mother has problems just like I do, but she is overcoming them. She has done a lot for me and I want to give her credit for those things. She is someone I look up to now and I hope to have a relationship with her, even though I want to find my biological father.

I think that there can be more hope for kids in my situation if the people who are able to help are made aware of the pain and trouble that has been placed on them. Please get to know someone and try to help instead of judge them. You may have the opportunity to change a life.

—I Jessi M., 15, Rosemont School, Portland, Oregon
I’ll tell you a story. No, that could be quite boring. So instead, step into your time machine and relive my past.

I’m minding my own business looking down on the baseball field. I’m thinking of what position I want: definitely catcher.

All of a sudden flashing pain sears through my head, moving down my neck. Face-first, I land on the pitcher’s mound. Rolling over I look up at an older boy I don’t know.

“Get away from here,” he snaps, bringing his backpack down, knocking the wind out of me. “You sick freak!” I roll out of the way as his bag comes down again.

Not knowing where the courage comes from, I stand to face the boy.

“What’s your problem?” My voice comes out strong and angry.

“You are a pervert!”

My knees give out as I start to cry. Life becomes a blur, a boxing movie set in fast forward. Fists flying, I connect with somebody’s chest. A glimmer of hope rises as I realize there’s a chance for me to walk away. That disappears when somebody’s hand comes down on my back in a karate-chop motion. Landing face-first I cry out in pain.

“Brian! Ricky!” My teacher, Ms. Evans comes running up beside us. “What do you think you’re doing?” Ms. Evans helps me up and takes me to her white Toyota car.

“Do you want me to drive you home?” Her voice seems softer than usual.

“Actually, I don’t really want to go home like this. If my parents saw me, they would have a million questions that I can’t answer.”

Ms. Evans puts an arm around my shoulder and offers to take me out for hot chocolate.

“Ms. Evans, why were they hitting me? Does it have anything to do with me liking girls more than boys?”

“Maybe. Some people just don’t know how to accept people who are different than they are.”

I rack my brain trying to think of how to ask Ms. Evans if I’m gay. “How does someone know if she’s gay?” I ask.

“Well, it’s not as easy as just knowing. It has a lot to do with your feelings inside.” Ms. Evans’ voice sounds comforting.

I start thinking of my feelings toward girls and boys.

“What would happen if I were gay? Would I be considered bad?”

“I can’t say exactly, Brittany. You might lead a difficult life. Not everybody will accept you.”

“I don’t like being different! Ms. Evans, I think I’m gay, I like girls the way boys do.” Ms. Evans gives me a sympathetic look and offers to take me home.

“Brittany, I don’t think hot chocolate is best. I’m taking you home so you can talk this over with your parents.”

I pull down the visor to look at my reflection in the mirror. Ugh, I think. I can’t go home, my parents would flip!

“I can’t. What happens if my parents are ashamed of who I might be? Will they still love me? I’m scared, I just don’t know how to talk to my parents.”

“Brittany, I’m taking you home. If you need to talk, I’m here.”

Feeling alone and confused, I ride in silence.

“Ms. Evans?” I want to tell her how much it means to me that she’s here for me, but I can’t. “You won’t tell them...will you?”

“That’s not my job. When you want to tell them, you will.”

Only two weeks passed before I found the courage to tell my parents. As parents do, they said all the right things, but that didn’t make me feel right. My armor had started to crack. At school the crack became a hole that enveloped me into a world of self-hate. The taunting and the beatings had yet to stop and I was willing to risk anything to get away from them. I started skipping school and trying different drugs to escape from my peers. I thought that if I ran away from
home, my problems would vanish, my parents might not be ashamed of their household, and they could live their lives. I wanted to be 'cured.'

Up until that day, when I first got beaten up for being a gay, I had been an excellent student and my parents seemed proud of me. Since then, I've lived on the streets, in two group homes, and treatment centers. Being a lesbian isn't a choice for me, it's a fragment that makes up the whole me. People should be able to stand up and be proud of themselves. We should be judged only by what we do. Choices are what we make every day, not what we find within ourselves.

—Brittany P., 15, Portland, Oregon, writes, "I am a sassy, charmingly dangerous, compassionate, down-to-earth (but not stuck there), intelligent, 15-year-old female. I have always enjoyed writing. I also enjoy sports, competing in pool tournaments, skateboarding, working with computers, drawing, and taking walks at night by myself.

"I could never have accomplished the work that I did without the nagging, but helpful, voice of my teacher, Lori. I want to thank her and all my peers here at Rosemont for being there throughout the days when I was grumpy and unmotivated. I also thank Skipping Stones for publishing my story so the rest of the world can listen to my thoughts and feelings."

DRY REFLECTIONS

velvet green
carpets the wet dirt heavy with rain and a deep, rocky scent
clear, clean water
gushes over the riverbed with thunderous cascades
showers of mist
it is a vibrant
tangled
living web
which we shred into dry, dying bits.
careless footprints snap and burn the forests
flame spreads like a beacon of warning
we are transforming this earth
unaware our touch kills
we are spinning our own web
of synthetic silk,
sticky and deadly

—Amanda Marusich, 16, Eugene, Oregon

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Cultural Awareness Committee of Capital High School

“We believe that people of all races deserve not only equality, but recognition. It is our goal to share the cultures and diversity of our heritage with the school and community.”

Since its foundation in 1999, the Cultural Awareness Committe (C.A.C.) of Capital High School in Olympia, Washington, has increased awareness, acceptance and celebration of diversity through a wide range of culturally relevant activities. It originated as a small group that helped organize the 1999 MLK, Jr. assembly, and officially became a school club on May 19, 1999. It rapidly progressed from being purely reactive to being proactive and making a difference in the school and community. Currently there are 31 active members.

The C.A.C. instituted the first-ever Cultural Awareness Week at C.H.S. in 1999 to celebrate diversity and raise awareness about different cultures in our school. The C.A.C. put together ethnic clothing displays in front of the school office and painted posters with quotations relating to diversity, acceptance, and the struggles of overcoming racism. Student speakers went into classrooms and shared their culture with students through personal stories, food, and ethnic regalia.

Our members coordinated multicultural speakers, a poetry reading, and led a student forum to discuss issues of ethnicity and diversity.

The C.A.C. has benefitted the school and community by working towards its mission of recognizing and celebrating cultural diversity. It has provided a way for students and staff to learn about each other, discovering not only their own roots, but learning about others as well. Most importantly, as we learn about the diversity that makes us all unique, we also discover just how connected we are. I recall the amazing experience of our first Cultural Awareness Week. As I listened to cultural poetry and discussion of my peers, I was awed by their wisdom as well as the many emotions we all have in common.

We hope to instill in our school and community that the pursuit of greater cultural awareness is one of the most fascinating and rewarding journeys on which one can embark.

—Excerpted from information sent by Javina Cifuentes-Hiss, 17, one of the founding members.

Photos: Student organizers and some of the visitors to the C.A.C.'s display table at a multicultural event.
Abbey Forbes (age 9, Port Deposit, Maryland), drew a picture of a clean, healthy pond and sent copies to three major National Parks in the U.S. to be displayed for all to see and be reminded of the importance of keeping our water clean.

I See the World as a place where...
Love can bloom in the most unexpected places, or be cut down like a flower; There is always one last chance to make things better. A breath of fresh air or a tiny leaf is something to be thankful for; We know what it means to be swept away; Time seems to travel slowly, but when we take the time to blink, fifty years will fly by; In the end, it is not the days that we remember, but the moments; Everyone is the key to someone else's soul.

—Breize Keeley, 13, Chicago, Illinois

Equality, Justice and NonViolence
The key of peace and of living happily is justice. And justice means to live in equality. We do not have the right to destroy the lives of others. We should not discriminate against others, or exert oppression on the lives of others. All of us should ask ourselves, "If this were to happen to me, if I were discriminated against or violated, what would I feel like?"

We, the teenagers, should think more about how to make the world full of joy and how to bring justice in our hearts because we are the future of this world.

—Alva Xheka, 16, Tirana, Albania

Peer Mediation Program
When I attended Longfellow Elementary School several years ago, I was part of the peer mediation program. Although many of the conflicts that we encountered were trivial, we did manage to solve some hateful playground problems. We also learned a helpful approach to handling a conflict. These simple steps can be applied anywhere.

1. Ignore. The peer mediation program recommended that students simply not respond to hateful comments or actions directed towards them. This holds true everywhere. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and his followers practiced nonviolent resistance, and they learned to successfully ignore racial slurs and other comments.

2. Move away. In simple terms, this means to walk quietly away to another place if the problem persists. Today, we can do the same by moving into more peaceful areas of our lives, and persuading others to move into a nonviolent world also.

3. Talk friendly. Use friendly terms when making a point or working for a cause. By displaying the message in a nice way, people will not be offended or angered and we can begin to turn the world into a peaceful and nonviolent environment.

4. Talk firmly. At times it is difficult to persuade others into listening to a cause, and this step ensures that attention will be gained. Present facts and details in a firm but clear tone. This will alert others that the cause is important and demands attention and respect.

5. Get adult help. This merely refers to attracting the attention of higher public officials and authorities to the cause. Once their support has been gained, it is easier to receive even more supporters for peace and nonviolence.

A peaceful and nonviolent world can and will exist if we take the initiative and make it happen through hard work, respect for all people, love for everything on earth, and a smile to share. Now is the time to make a difference.

—Emily Funderburk, 17, Bushwood, Maryland
Dear Readers,

I am writing to you immediately after the close of a very intense, week-long writer’s workshop in which I participated. I feel exhilarated and just a bit exhausted.

Before leaving for the workshop I read the Honor Award submissions several times over. I add my appreciation for your submissions and am touched by the depth of your personal experiences. Clearly, many of you have discovered that journaling—writing down your feelings and struggles—contributes to relieving personal pains of loneliness and despair. Congratulations.

Yet beyond self-help is our need to receive love and kindness from others. Many schools are fortunate to make this possible by the use of mentoring programs. Typically, each student meets with a mentor, an adult community volunteer, weekly for one class period. Mentors choose to give support and assistance to individual students, and consequently, student-mentor relationships are warm and positive. I recall one 7th grader confiding in me: “I can see the teacher’s smiling face and whole body tighten up when she sees me coming down the hall. I got an “F” in everything on my report card. What’s the use? I threw it in the river.”

Around this same time, the custodian had an old vacuum cleaner in the basement to be discarded. The student and I went down during one of our mentoring sessions together and he fixed it. It was amazing to watch him take motors and clocks apart and then put them back together. When I brought him models, he could put even the most complicated ones together without looking at the instructions. He never missed school on “mentoring days.” If your school does not have a mentoring program, ask your principal to set it in motion.

Interestingly, in times of political persecution, such as under the Nazi regime, or in times of slavery, certain individuals arise to the aid of those being persecuted. Upon research and investigation, it has been found that many of those who step forward to help, often at personal risk, have themselves experienced a significant relationship in their youth with a person who showed them compassion and loving kindness.

The very gift which is needed by people more than any other is one of which we are all capable: the gift of love, support, encouragement and friendship.

It is in such giving that we have the opportunity to change another person’s life! There is no greater gift to give, and inside each of us is that potential gift to offer the world.

—Alberto Canales, 19, Iowa Park, Texas

Send your questions or comments to:
Dear Hanna c/o Skipping Stones
P.O. Box 3939, Eugene, OR 97403

In peace,
The Empty Table

Dwelling on the past is not my style. I usually don’t worry about things that have passed me by. Lost opportunities, chances, and events bother me for awhile, and then I move on. But right now, there is one thing I would change if I could. An old acquaintance of mine, Louis, died two months ago, and I wish I had acted differently the last time I saw him.

While eating breakfast and studying for a science test, I looked over my shoulder and noticed Lou sitting at the other lunch table by himself. I had known him for a long time, since fourth grade at the day camp in the park. We were always friendly and got along well; he used to have a huge crush on my sister. Over the years I saw him now and then, and I realized that he had been born with some sort of disease. I found out later that it was a genetic immuno-deficiency disease that made him alarmingly susceptible to viruses and illnesses. Lou had missed most of the previous school year.

The last time I saw him, he didn’t look bad, except he had no hair (from chemotherapy, I guess). Lou had been through a lot, but I thought he was finally stable. I remember seeing him at a senior dance, and thinking that it was nice to have him back.

So I sat there, looking at Lou. I had an urge to go over and ask how he was doing, to eat breakfast with him. But I didn’t. Maybe tomorrow, I thought. He rose quite slowly, with effort and sadly shook his head.

"A lucky child are you to have so many friends," he said.

"But think of what you’re saying. There is so much you don’t know. A friend is not just someone to whom you say hello. A friend raises your spirits high from darkness and despair. When all your other so-called friends have helped to put you there. A true friend is an ally who can’t be moved or bought. A voice to keep your name alive when others have forgot. But most of all a friend has a heart, a strong and sturdy wall. For from the hearts of friends there comes the greatest love of all!

So think about what I’ve spoken, for every word is true. And answer once again, my child—how many friends have you?"

—Taroon Amin, CSHN, New City, New York

How Many Friends Have You?

As quiet as can be sits a little frog waiting for a bee SNAP!

—Grace Rose Kaplowitz, age 4, Dexter, Oregon

Rainbows

Little droplets of pure delight
Fall from the sky like candlelight.
And when the shining sun they meet, Pessimistic thoughts they will delete.

—Cory Lay, Greendale High School, Wisconsin.
From an early age Maasai children begin sharing the daily chores and learning about adult responsibilities. Young girls are often seen cooking and caring for the infants, while boys spend much of the day alone, herding their family’s goats through the surrounding countryside. Girls are married around the age of 14 to 16. They do not date before marriage and have no say in the selection of their husbands, usually twice their age. After negotiations, a male suitor will pay the girl’s family a dowry of livestock and handicrafts, whereupon they will wed.

Legend has it that East Africa possesses an ancient tribe so fierce and so revered that outsiders dare not penetrate their territorial boundaries. They are said to be tall and slender, their dark bodies cloaked in the color of blood. Armed with long, razor-sharp spears, every living thing in their path recoils in terror, fleeing for its life. Not even the mighty lion perseveres when matched against a people of such primal dominance—they are the Maasai!

Over the past few years my husband and I have made several trips to Kenya, East Africa, in search of the Maasai. We wanted to learn how these people live, what their traditional customs are, what they value, and most importantly, what their lives were like in the past, and what their lives will be like in the future.

What we found was a warm and gracious people who invited us into their home and their world. We were welcomed into their society and even given Maasai names—mine is Nysyrien, and my husband’s is Kimunyak. They became our family! We have learned a great deal more than we ever intended, and some of it is hard to accept. Western pressures now threaten to undermine the Maasai’s semi-nomadic culture, which until recently had remained largely unchanged for thousands of years.

The Maasai are a semi-nomadic people with a population of about 300,000, whose territory extends from southern Kenya deep into northern Tanzania. They live in small communities called bomas. A typical boma includes livestock pens and several homes known as manyattas, each standing approximately five feet in
Despite the Maasai’s efforts to hold onto the past, their grip is slipping. As the government takes more and more of their land, they are being forced into smaller living quarters. Left with so little, it is becoming a daily struggle to continue their semi-nomadic ways, forcing children to choose school over marriage and moranism. It is hard to say how long the Maasai will be able to hold back the tides of change, but one thing is certain—they’ll soon face a profoundly new world.

—Tina Wright, Port Orange, Florida

height, and containing no electricity or running water. They are constructed from a wood frame made of tree branches and covered in a mixture of mud and animal dung that dries in the sun, hardening like concrete. Maasai rarely kill their animals for food, and when one is sacrificed, it is for a high honor such as a ceremonial rite or marriage. Water is scarce in Maasailand, so its people rarely drink it, opting instead for a mixture of milk and blood which they derive from their animals. Designated areas called boreholes pump water into troughs for livestock to drink and for women to collect for cooking.

Maasai men pass through many stages in life before finally attaining the coveted status of elder. The most significant and anticipated status is that of warrior, or moran. During this time, young men, 12 to 20, leave their families, band together in large groups, and roam the bush for about eight years learning survival skills.

Moranism is marked by an elaborate ceremony in which the young men are circumcised, signifying their passage into manhood. Moran are very concerned with their looks, enhancing them by growing long hair, braiding it, and painting the locks with a blood-red mixture of earth and animal urine called ocher. When they exit this stage and pass into elderhood, their hair will be shaved off by their mothers, marking the end of the maternal bond.

A Maasai man’s wealth is gauged by the number of livestock he owns. Their livestock consists of goats, cattle, donkeys, and occasionally camels. Elderhood is marked by the acquisition of livestock, wives, and children. At this point the only thing left to achieve is the status of head elder. Accomplishing this means great wealth, many wives and children, and high respect. Only a privileged few attain this status. When a head elder dies, his body is left in the center of the boma as an offering to the earth from which he first came. The site is then abandoned.
The Aloha Spirit

When I decided to take a year’s leave from my teacher/librarian job in Colorado, I never imagined the impact to my life that eight months of living in Hawai‘i would bring.

Hawai‘i is like a foreign country instead of the southernmost state in the United States. It’s the fourth smallest state, after Connecticut, Rhode Island, and Delaware. The eight major islands constitute 6,450 square miles of land, a small collection of lands right in the middle of the expansive Pacific Ocean. Hawai‘i is vulnerable to all the elements: rain, hurricanes, tidal waves, and the ongoing threat of the eruption of the volcanoes that created the islands in the first place.

It is an intriguing place! Nowhere else on earth can you find such a kaleidoscopic mixture of people: Hawaiians, Filipinos, Chinese, Japanese, Caucasians (haole), Portuguese, Samoans, Koreans, Puerto Ricans, African-Americans, Native Americans, Vietnamese. Hawai‘i is the most racially integrated state in the U.S. The racial relations in Hawai‘i are far from perfect, but Hawai‘i does point the way to a future in which all people can live side by side with respect and dignity.

The culture in Hawai‘i is as diverse as the people who make it up. There is an intensity in the life here along with the casual lifestyle. People have intentionally come to live in Hawai‘i for the quality of life it offers. There is a spirit about the people—the aloha spirit. I have grown to love the people, the culture, the land and this spirit. It is the Hawaiian legacy of aloha that remains immortal. Aloha creates this special elusive quality of Hawai‘i.

—Marsie Martien, Kapoho, Hawai‘i

1. Nana Yeary writes in Change We Must, “Aloha spirit is the coordination of mind and heart...it’s written within the individual. It brings you down to yourself. You must think and emote good feelings toward others.” The illustration above shows what Aloha means to the author.

This issue contains Part I of a special feature on Hawai‘i. We invite all people of Hawai‘i or of Hawaiian origin to contribute their experiences and views. We would especially like to publish articles with Native Hawaiian perspectives in an upcoming issue.

—Editors
In an reenactment of the Boston Tea Party, scores of Native Hawaiians came together on July 4, 2000 to throw ti-leaf leis into Massachusetts’ Boston Harbor. The famous American revolt of December 1773 was a protest against British colonialism; its reenactment by Native Hawaiians, however, embodied Hawaiian unity and self-determination.

The Office of Hawaiian Affairs and community organizations are working together with members of the Hawaiian Congressional delegation on a draft bill which, if passed, would make the United States assist Hawaiians in obtaining sovereignty, declare Hawaiians as indigenous, and recognize their right to self-determination. Several meetings are scheduled with minority caucuses in Texas, California, Washington, and in the Hawaiian Islands to gain support for the bill.

The proposed Akaka Bill, in the U.S. Congress, will enable Native Hawaiians to deal with Hawaiian issues with their own sovereign office and task force. There are two models under discussion for a possible future Hawaiian nation: One is the nation within a nation model which would make the political status of Native Hawaiians comparable to that of Native Americans and Alaskans. There is conflict, however, within the Native Hawaiian community as some feel that this model likens them to Native Americans and as a result lessens their independence from the U.S. and denies them their right to self-determination. The second proposed model would make Hawai'i an independent nation and return sovereignty and land to Native Hawaiians.

In the recent Rice v/s Cayetano decision, the U.S. Supreme Court declared that all races may vote in the Office of Hawaiian Affairs elections. The OHA was created for and is run by Native Hawaiians, and voting rights have so far been the sole privilege of those with Native Hawaiian ancestry. Following this court decision, attorney H. William Burgess plans to challenge the constitutionality of the state law that denies him the right to run for office in the OHA.

The Ala Kahaki, an important historical trail on the Big Island of Hawai'i, may become a National Historic trail. In ancient times, this pathway for 120,000 people and 600 communities was called Ala Loa, or Long Trail. Hawaiian Senators Daniel Akaka and Daniel Inouye are working to get a bill passed to switch the trail from the state and local government’s hands to the federal government’s.

The Hawai'i Scientific Drilling program is a six-year plan to dig into Hawai'i’s volcanoes to learn more about them. Scientists have found that Mauna Loa, one of Hawai'i’s volcanoes, is sinking at a faster rate than it is being restored by new lava flows.

Kaulana e ka holo a Hokule'a: (Famous are the voyages of Hokule'a). The Hokule'a, a traditional Polynesian canoe, celebrated its 25th anniversary this year. The canoe took an 8-month, 9000-mile journey to all of the islands in Polynesia and returned home to Molokai. It retraced the ancient Polynesians’ routes and migrations to the Pacific Islands.

A Distant Paradise: Palmyra Atoll, with 600 acres of land and 15,000 acres of coral reef, is the only undeveloped wet atoll in the world. With an $8 million appropriation from the U.S. government, and help from the Nature Conservancy, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service hopes to run it as a national refuge with limited public use. It is located about 1,000 miles south of Hawai'i.

Twenty-two Asian Pacific Americans, 12 from Hawai'i, were finally recognized this June for their admirable bravery in World War II. President Clinton awarded them with the prestigious Medal of Honor. Ten of the 22 were killed in the war and only seven, five from Hawai'i, are alive to receive this great honor for them.

Native Hawaiians can now own a home with a zero-interest loan, thanks to Habitat for Humanity and the Office of Hawaiian Affairs, who funded the first model home in Moloka'i. Habitat for Humanity is a self-help program for low-income families.

In Hanalei Bay, Kauai, maritime researchers have discovered a valuable piece of history. Diving offshore, they found the 84-year-old hull, sternpost and parts of the rudder of the United States’s first “pleasure yacht.” It was later owned by Hawaiian King Kamehameha II and renamed Ha‘aheo O Hawai‘i, or Pride of Hawai‘i.

Sources: Ka Wai Ola O OHA, the newspaper of the Office of Hawaiian Affairs; website: www.oha.org Honolulu Star-Bulletin; website: starbulletin.com
Nyla Ching-Fujii: A Hawaiian Storyteller

Nyla Ching-Fujii may have been born a natural talent, but it was her mother who started her on a bright path to stardom. As the only daughter in a family of boys, she says with a smile, “My mother wanted me to grow up to be a lady.” Between the ages of six and ten, Nyla was already learning ballet, singing in a church choir, dancing the hula, and playing the piano and the ukulele (Hawaiian guitar). Her many skills not only reflect her wide array of talents, but also hint at her multicultural background. Nyla is Native Hawaiian, Chinese, Japanese, and Korean. She grew up in Kapahulu, on the island of Oahu.

Nyla’s love and enthusiasm for telling stories began at a young age. At about 11, Nyla was telling stories in Sunday School. Later, she performed primarily Asian and Pacific tales written by local authors. She has been a professional storyteller for about thirty-five years. Today, she wears her lei po’o, Hawaiian for head lei, made up of leaves and kukui nuts, and a rich purple kihei or long sheet of material traditionally made from kapa or tapa, the bark from the Wauke tree or paper mulberry tree. Her outfit, composed of Western cloth and silkcreened with Hawaiian design motifs, beautifully brings together traditional Hawaiian culture and contemporary Western influence, and symbolizes the multiculturalism she brings to her stories.

Nyla first shares with her audience the historical and genealogical background of Native Hawaiians. The Lapita people of Southeast Asia arrived in Tonga and Samoa at around 1500 BCE. From 200 BCE to 300 CE, Polynesians from Tonga and Samoa journeyed to Raiatea (also known as Tahiti), Rapanui (Easter Island), and Aotearoa (New Zealand). Then, in 1200 CE, Polynesians from Raiatea sailed to Havaiki (or Hawai’i). They are the ancestors of the Hawaiian people. Nyla has collected hundreds of stories about her Polynesian ancestors which were passed down by her family and friends, or obtained from her extensive research.

Nyla’s stories are fun and interactive. One of the more popular stories she tells is about the demi-god Maui who attempts to unite all of the Hawaiian islands with his magic fish hook made up of his tutu’s, or grandmother’s, jawbone. She draws her audience into the story by making them paddle as if they were on Maui’s canoe.

While Nyla’s stories are entertaining and fascinating, they are also educational. Storytelling to Nyla is a “chance to share about Hawai’i and Hawaiian literature.” Her greatest challenge is telling stories to people on the mainland since so “little of Hawai’i is taught [there].” Nyla’s solution? “Tell stories! Tell stories! Tell stories!”

But what does storytelling have to do with being Native Hawaiian? Oral literature, traditionally the primary form of communication, remains an important part of Hawaiians’ history. In ancient times, storytellers were men who were divided into different classes. One such class was the official storytellers, such as the court storyteller who was only allowed to conduct business with a visiting chief or kahuna if he accurately recited his own, his chief’s, and the visiting chief’s genealogy. Native Hawaiians’ oral tradition was so important that an old Hawaiian proverb states, “Life and death [were] in the power of the tongue.” Nyla would belong to the village storyteller class. They remembered and recited stories for the villagers’ entertainment.
Nyla wants her stories to build bridges, not create barriers. This is why Nyla refrains from telling her stories solely in the Native Hawaiian language. For her, the stories she shares with the audience “are less of an ethnic activity and more of a human act.” Folk stories have a remarkable ability to transcend race and culture. According to Nyla, “Race and culture are small things layered over [our] basic human needs.” The audience’s ability to understand and relate to her stories are a reminder of how alike we all are. And while stories unite people by reminding them of similar experiences and feelings, they also celebrate people’s differences.

These differences were not always celebrated. Prevailing stereotypes that Hawaiians were lazy kept Nyla silent about her own heritage as a child. But the world has come a long way from a time when being Hawaiian was a source of shame. Today, she looks at her daughter and sees a woman who she tells me “is proud to be Hawaiian.” Miraculously, “in one generation, it became wonderful to be part Native Hawaiian.” As a result, Nyla has hopes for the future, both for her daughter and for future generations. With great conviction and passion, Nyla says, “I would like to see children retain the best of who [they] are, keep [their] heritage, languages, and cultures alive, keep what makes us uniquely beautiful alive...and to define [us] as one human race.”

—Brandi-Ann Tanaka, student intern, from Hawai‘i

Help Yourself
A folktale from Hawai‘i

This folktale was originally told by Mary Pukui in her collection called Tales of the Menehune. It illustrates the importance Hawaiians placed on hospitality and sharing.

The trail between Hilo on the Big Island of Hawai‘i and the Puna District was long, dry, and hot. Keoha, the old canoe-maker, had been walking on the trail for a long time. He was feeling tired and hungry. He had left Hilo early in the cool morning hours before the sun rose, hoping to finish his business and get home by late evening. But he was old and the trail was long. It was already in the middle of the hot afternoon and he still had a long way to go before reaching Hilo and home. As he walked, he saw a fisherman mending his nets along the shore.

“Aloha,” he called. The fisherman returned the greeting, and as was the custom, asked Keoha if he would like to take a break in his walk to rest and refresh himself.

“Yes, thank you,” said Keoha. “I was getting faint from hunger and thirst. A small sip of coconut water would be so good.”

“Coconuts,” laughed the fisherman. “Yes, I have plenty of those! Come along; it is not far from here.” Gratefully, Keoha followed the fisherman down a long side trail that led to the beach. He was getting hungrier and thirstier and by now felt quite faint. Still, the thought of those coconuts—a cool sip of coconut water, fresh from the shell, and a tiny bit of the oil-rich meat—was so good. They walked for a long time, the fisherman ahead, laughing to himself. Finally they reached the fisherman’s village.

Nearby was a grove of coconut trees, heavily laden with fruit as the fisherman had said. Pointing to the tallest tree in the midst of the grove, the fisherman turned to Keoha.

“Here are the coconuts. Help yourself!” Still laughing at the cruel joke he had just pulled on the old canoe-maker, the fisherman ran down the
trail back to his nets.

Keoha was so weary that he sat on the ground and began to weep. Perhaps in his youth he could have climbed the trees and harvested the coconuts, but now he was old and not used to the hot dry plains of Puna. He longed for the cool, rain-washed hills of his home in Hilo.

As he sat on the ground trying to gather enough strength to return the way he had come, several young children came up the trail. Having caught some fish, they were returning to the village happily chatting about their good day. When they noticed the tired and hungry canoe-maker, they quickly made a fire and cleaned and roasted their fish. Two of the young boys climbed the coconut trees and harvested the coconuts. Ramming a sharp stick into the ground and then husking the coconut over the stick, they poked open the eyes of the shell and gave it to Keoha to drink. The juice was sweet and cool. With a sharp stone, the young boys split the shell of the coconut at its seams and scraped out the soft, rich, white meat of the young coconut and slipped it onto a plate made of leaves next to the freshly roasted fish.

The children sat with Keoha, making sure he drank all the sweet coconut juice and ate every bit of the fish and coconut meat. With tears of joy replacing his tears of despair, Keoha looked at the children who sat smiling encouragingly at him.

“Oh, children,” he cried, “you have saved me!” He told them about the fisherman’s trick.

“We know him,” the children said. “He is selfish and mean—sometimes he plays cruel jokes on the people of village. And he never shares his catch.”

“Some day,” said Keoha, “there will come a time when that fisherman must learn a lesson!” He thanked the children, promising them that if ever they were in Hilo, he would treat them to such a feast as they had never eaten before.

Several months later, the same fisherman walked into Keoha’s village looking for a canoe-builder. He was led to the workshop of Keoha, the oldest and best of the canoe-makers. Not recognizing the old man, the fisherman told Keoha that his fishing canoe had been smashed beyond repair in a storm and that he needed a new one right away.

“How about that one?” he asked, pointing to a completed canoe in the shed.

“Ah, no...,” paused Keoha thoughtfully, “that canoe is already spoken for. But I have many canoes in my upland worksite. Come, I will show you.”

Taking water and food for the both of them, Keoha led the Puna fisherman on a long hike up into the cool mountain forests. The trail was long, with many switchbacks, and so steep in places that they had to hang on to rocks and sturdy bushes along the route. Grumbling, the fisherman said, “How long is this going to take? It is so cold and—ugh!—wet up here.”

In response, Keoha said little. “Soon, soon. We are almost there.” Finally, after taking a break for food and water, they reached the high mountain forests where the tall, straight koa trees grew. The fine-grained, dark red and golden colored wood made the finest canoes.

“Here we are.” Keoha pointed to the tallest and most magnificent of the growing trees, and said, “Here is your canoe—help yourself!”

—Retold by Nyla Ching Fujii, a professional storyteller and librarian. She lives in Aiea, Hawai‘i.

**Hawaiian Humor**

A Hawaiian, a Japanese and a Portuguese were living in the same house. They had only one bowl of stew left in the house. One of them suggested that the person with the best dream would win the stew. So they went to sleep and the next day the Hawaiian guy said that last night he dreamt that there was a big luau all for him. There was laulau, poi, lomi salmon, kahlua pig and haupia. The Japanese guy said, “I had the best dream. I dreamt there was a big business dinner. There was sushi, sashimi, and big bowls of rice. They both looked at the Portuguese guy. Finally, the Hawaiian guy asked him, “So, what did you dream?” He said, “I dreamed you guys were both so full that you offered me the stew.”

—retold by Brandi-Ann Tanaka
I am a yonsei, a fourth generation Japanese-American. My family has lived in Hawai‘i for four generations, each one moving further away from our Japanese heritage. As time has passed, my great-grandparents’ Japanese culture and traditions have gradually dissolved into day to day local Hawaiian life. Today, distanced from both cultures, I constantly struggle with my identity as a Japanese-American. The one thing I cling to is my family’s history in Hawai‘i. I derive my strength and sense of self from their stories of hard work, diligence, struggles, and sacrifices.

Ichitaro Hori, my father’s great-grandfather was the first to come to Hawai‘i. He was born in Oko, near Hiroshima, on 3 January 1899. His parents immigrated to Hawai‘i in 1915, leaving 16-year-old Ichitaro behind. Two years later, he followed them to Oahu with dreams of success and opportunity. Ichitaro’s first job was on the Kahuku Sugar Plantation in Oahu. Like many other plantation workers, Ichitaro believed some day he’d return to Japan, with money in hand. But in reality, most workers never went back.

Working in the plantations was hard. Laborers wore gloves and protective gear to cut the huge sugar cane stalks. With the harsh sun beating down their backs, and lunas (supervisors) barking out commands, life in the sugar plantations was barely tolerable. Yet Ichitaro had plans for a better life and would not allow the reality of plantation life to destroy his dreams. He took night courses at the YMCA to learn plumbing, while he worked on the plantation during the day. Because of his untiring determination and hard work, my great-grandfather was one of the first few Japanese to earn the title Master Plumber. He was able to open up his own plumbing store a few years later.

By the mid-1930’s, Ichitaro had saved a large sum of money from his plumbing business to send to a bank in Japan. This money, he hoped, would enable him to be financially secure when he returned to his home country. However, monies sent between the United States and Japan were confiscated by the U.S. government during the World War II. Because my great-grandfather was Japanese, the war had a tremendous impact on his future. The American government took away his money and ordered him to close his shop. Fortunately though, his plumbing skills were valuable to the U.S. since the majority of plumbers were Caucasian men who were active in the war. In light of the American government’s uncertainty over where the Japanese-American loyalty lay during the war, it was a great honor for Ichitaro to be given a position in the army. In addition, he was one of only a few Japanese immigrants to obtain work away from the heat, tedium and harsh conditions of the plantations. He owned a house separate from the plantation camps where most immigrants lived and worked, and his own car.

Like Ichitaro, my mother’s father started out as a plantation worker. Wakamatsu Iwamoto, my grandfather, a nisei, (second generation Japanese-American) was born on the island of Kauai on 1 January 1914. Wakamatsu, means “young pine.” (On New Year’s Day a young pine, kadomatsu, is decorated in Japanese homes, as a sign of good luck.) To help his family, Wakamatsu quit school after the 8th grade and began working at age 14. He worked for a plantation company on Kauai for many years, retiring at age 62.

Wakamatsu married Natsue Konishi on 18 October 1941. Their marriage was arranged according to traditional Japanese practice by
Wakamatsu working on a sugar plantation

Wakamatsu’s father and Natsue’s mother. At 16, Natsue was already sought out by Wakamatsu’s father as a potential mate for his son, who was 22. He wanted Natsue to marry his son because the two families were related through another marriage—Wakamatsu’s sister was married to Natsue’s grandfather’s half-brother. Also, the Japanese people in Hawai‘i thought that it was important to marry within their *ken*, or prefecture (where families came from) in Japan, in order to maintain a bond in the local community. Natsue was from both the same *ken* and the same family as Wakamatsu, and so was a perfect fit in his father’s eyes. Natsue’s mother was hesitant to allow her daughter to get married at such an early age, but Wakamatsu’s father was insistent, worrying that if he waited too long she might find someone else. They were married three years later.

Laborers on the plantation were often underpaid, so Wakamatsu worked three separate shifts to provide for his family. My mother and aunts recall that while they were not rich, they always had enough. My grandparents raised chickens and fished for food. Natsue’s father, who sold vegetables in the camps, brought her some every Sunday. My mother and her siblings looked forward to the special occasions when they could drink soda pop. This was a time when they felt safe and surrounded by friends.

Each camp was segregated according to ethnicity. Being part of a tight, closed, and primarily Japanese community had its advantages for both the plantation company and its workers. It benefitted the immigrants because they felt comfortable associating with people of similar backgrounds and cultures. They participated in church activities and gathered on Friday nights at the main hall to watch movies. Poor wages and harsh work conditions further unified the Japanese. Meanwhile, plantation owners saw this segregation as a way to prevent workers of different ethnicities from coming together to form unions. However, they weren’t prepared for the power, strength, and comradeship the Japanese had developed within the plantation camps.

In the late 1940s, Wakamatsu participated in strikes sponsored by the ILWU (International Longshoremen’s and Warehousemen’s Union). ILWU members of the Japanese community gathered in the soup hall, helping one another through uncertain and tough times. Families and friends supported one another in their efforts. Their struggles paid off. The ILWU succeeded in raising wages and my grandfather went back to work.

A lot has changed in two generations. My aunt remembers how the black smoke from the smokestacks of the plantation mill dirtied her father’s hands, face, and clothing. The grandfather I knew enjoyed singing karaoke, playing gateball, helping the local Buddhist church, and dancing the *Bon Odori* at the *O-Bon* festival. The man I remember loved telling jokes, was generous, kind-hearted, and willing to help anybody. Wakamatsu Iwamoto was an extremely hard worker who never complained. Since he never spoke about it, my mother and her sisters know little about his work life. While he struggled for several years at the plantation, he was able to enjoy living in Hawai‘i and appreciate its rich culture for many years afterward.

Unknowingly, Wakamatsu Iwamoto gave me a gift of love and respect for my culture. At the same time, Ichitaro Hori’s story taught me that perseverance, a dream, and courage can give rise to unlimited possibility. Both are an inspiration to me. I am very thankful for their hard work, determination, and small victories. For this reason, at a time when culture and heritage are being lost, forgotten, and misplaced in the mix of modern society, I am proud of being Japanese-American.

—Brandi-Ann Tanaka, Pearl City, Hawai‘i
If you’re in a hurry, it’s obviously plate lunch time. This is a Hawaiian institution: two scoops of hot white rice, a scoop of macaroni or potato salad, and an entrée. Here’s where it gets good. A vast choice is yours: hamburger steak with brown gravy and fried onions, pork chops in mushroom sauce, chicken long rice (bean threads, or cellophane noodles to mainlanders), shrimp curry, Filipino-style pork and peas, vegetable or meat lasagna, teriyaki mahimahi, meatloaf and gravy, roast pork, oyster sauce or shoyu chicken, baked spaghetti, cheese and chicken enchiladas, chili, roast turkey with stuffing, imitation crab egg foo yong, beef stew, oxtail soup, pork or chicken adobo (a Filipino-style dish with vinegar, ginger, and spices), nishime (a Japanese stew with kelp and taro, and sometimes chicken or pork), tripe stewed with tomato sauce, onions, and carrots... the list can be continued.

But it’s almost time for dinner, and my time and words are running out. Perhaps you should come visit us, and we’ll continue our discussion over a big bowl of piping hot saimin noodles. While we eat, we can plan how you can visit around the world without leaving the state.

Bon appetit and aloha!
—Alan Lee Sun Choy Young, Hilo, Hawai‘i

Hawaiian Holidays and Festivals!

Late January—early February: The Chinese New Year is celebrated with family and community.

February: Merrie Monarch Hula Festival

March 3: Girls’ Day with many displays Japanese dolls
March 26: Prince Kuhio Day celebrates the first Hawaiian delegate to the U.S. Congress.

May 1: Lei Day is the Hawaiian version of May Day and celebrates Hawai‘i’s beautiful flowers.

June 11: King Kamehameha Day honors the first king to rule over all the Hawaiian Islands.

June, July & August: The O-Bon Festivals are a Japanese tradition honoring the spirits of the dead.

August 21: Admissions Day Hawai‘i becomes the 50th U.S. State in 1959.

August or September: Asian Moon (harvest) Festival

September & October: The Aloha Festivals celebrate the history, music and dance of Hawai‘i.
The Rebirth of Hula

"Hula is the language of the heart and therefore the heartbeat of the Hawaiian."

—David Lalamea Kalakaua (King of Hawaii 1874-1891)

I was the kid in hula class who dreamed of going to Hollywood with my Americanized hula routine. I wanted to be in Elvis pictures where he did Hawaiian-style rock hula moves. I learned hula not through classes where we mimicked the hulas performed for tourists, but through Hollywood movies! As a part-Polynesian girl, this was all I grew up knowing about hula.

Hula is the indigenous dance of Hawai‘i. The original Polynesians who migrated to the islands developed it. There are many versions of its origins in our legends and mythology. In pre-European times, the hula existed to reaffirm belief and trust in Hawaiian values. Because the Hawaiians had no written language, hula was the transmitter of history and genealogy. It communicated truths that transcended time and space; the sacred unfolding of creation. The ancient hula chants tell many stories and the dancers expressed those chants with movement and gestures. It was thought that the gods of Hawai‘i created the dance and then taught it to mortals.

When the American missionaries arrived on Hawaiian shores in the early 19th century, they denounced the hula as a heathen practice. “Pagans!” they shouted. Hula declined and its teachers and practitioners went underground. When King Kalakawa became the first elected monarch in 1874, Hawai‘i experienced a rebirth in Hawaiian art and culture. Known as the Merrie Monarch, he encouraged the hula. Upon his death, Queen Liliuokalani was given authority over the islands. She loved her people and the hula; but was overthrown in 1893 by the American military and Hawai‘i was annexed. Since then, the hula became a source of entertainment for foreigners. No longer sacred, it was watered down as an attraction. Hollywood movies and television portrayed this dance as frivolous fare, without meaning and emotion.

Thanks to a vital Hawaiian renaissance that surfaced in the 70s, hula is again an integral part of Hawaiian pride and identity. Young people learn the hula and in that process learn about their history, heritage and values. The Merrie Monarch Festival, which is known as the olympics of Hula, is the most well-known hula competition. Every year in Hilo, Hawai‘i, male and female dancers compete in two different categories: The ancient (hula kahiko), and the modern (hula anana). There are many other lesser-known competitions on the islands and abroad. Criteria for winning includes precision, hand gestures, posture, grooming and authenticity. The costumes must be true to the song or chant and time.

In more recent years, a resurgence of arts and crafts, religion, fishing, canoeing and traditional farming has spilled into the consciousness of Hawaiians. Today, young people learn the hula and through it understand their culture, values and connection to the land. It encourages discipline and poise, cooperation and respect. Though hula has its roots in Hawai‘i, people all over the world share and experience it.

This is hula, the soul of our past, present and future. We do not dance for Hollywood anymore. We dance with God and all of creation to identify with the depth of emotion, the shared love for the land and the drama of life.

Decoding Local Language:

**Pidgin Words & Phrases**

In the nineteenth century, immigrants, Natives, and Caucasians had to find a way to communicate with one another on the Hawaiian plantations. A mix of bits and pieces of different languages were used, forming what is known as Pidgin English. It is still used in Hawai‘i today.

Note: (H) denotes it comes from Hawaiian; (J) from Japanese, and (E) from English.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English Word</th>
<th>Pidgin Word</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>chicken skin</td>
<td>goose bumps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>talk story</td>
<td>talk with friends</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kau kau (H)</td>
<td>meal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ono (H)</td>
<td>delicious</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cruise</td>
<td>go/hang out with friends</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>holo holo (H)</td>
<td>go somewhere to hang out with friends or family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>slippas (E)</td>
<td>flip flops</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>grind</td>
<td>eat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bumbye</td>
<td>later</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>go for broke</td>
<td>do something with every thing you have</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>howzit brah?</td>
<td>what's up? how are you doing?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>go bocha (E&amp;J)</td>
<td>take a shower</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>haole (H)</td>
<td>Caucasian or foreigner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>all pau (E&amp;H)</td>
<td>all finished</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Growing Up Local

Many people probably think that growing up in Hawai‘i is a lot different from growing up on the mainland because they think we live in grass shacks, without cars, electricity, or television. All of those people are way off because we do have all of these things in Hawai‘i. But even if things are similar to how it may be in the rest of our country, they are also very different.

First of all, growing up in Hawai‘i is different because no matter where you are, you are always close to a beach. We know how to swim because we spend so much time at the beach and it’s a safety precaution.

On the mainland, lots of people go skiing and snowboarding. Since there is no snow in Hawai‘i, only a few people know how to ski or snowboard. Instead, we go surfing and boogie boarding. We aren’t able to have snowball fights, go sledding, or make snow angels, but we can build some pretty neat sand castles!

There aren’t any big lakes or rivers in Hawai‘i, so we have to swim and fish at the beach. However, we do get catfish from man-made reservoirs every once in a while.

Hawai‘i’s climate is very different from the mainland because it is fairly consistent throughout the year. We are able to play outside and wear T-shirts and shorts all year round. We need not worry about heat waves or blizzards.

Another difference between growing up in Hawai‘i and growing up in the mainland is that Hawai‘i has many ethnicities. People go to school with, work with, and live next to people of all different races. This mixture of ethnic backgrounds causes people to accept the differences of others. We get to experience things from different cultures. We might watch a lion dance for Chinese New Year, dance at a Japanese O-Bon festival, or attend a luau for a baby’s first birthday.

Along with the multiethnic traditions, we have food from different cultures. We are surrounded by foods with a variety of different tastes and textures. The foods are also part of our cultural traditions. We may eat mochi (rice flour dumplings) for good luck, and noodles for long life.

All in all, growing up in Hawai‘i is a lot different from growing up in the mainland. Each place is special, but for me, Hawai‘i no ka oe, Hawai‘i is the best!

—Ross Horii, Japanese-American, grade 7, Mililani, Oahu, Hawai‘i
A Quiz on Hawai‘i

How much do you really know about Hawai‘i? You have probably heard about its year-round tropical weather, breathtaking waterfalls, beautiful rainbows, and captivating volcanoes. But did you know that there are also extreme conditions such as hail, hot deserts, and heavy rainfall in the islands? Each island is unique. Do you know about the Native Hawaiian people and their struggles for sovereignty? Or, that Asians, not Native Hawaiians, make up the majority in Hawai‘i because of its history as a plantation economy? Take a moment, and test your knowledge of the Hawaiian islands, its people, and its history.

1. Name the eight major Hawaiian Islands that make up the state of Hawai‘i.
2. In what year did Hawai‘i become a state? 1945 1950 1959 1965
3. Which is closest to the Hawai‘i’s population? 500,000 1 million 2 million 5 million
4. Who was the last Hawaiian Queen? What major historical event made her the last queen?
5. Of the following, which was not brought to the Hawaiian islands by the Polynesians? sweet potato bread fruit banana sugar cane
6. Native Hawaiians did not practice the concept of private property. Their system of land distribution was based on *ahupua‘a*, or pieces of land that reached from the mountains to the ocean. These segments of land were controlled by the chiefs, or *(ali‘i)*. What events led up to making today’s Hawai‘i a place of private land ownership?
7. When did the first Westerners arrive in Hawai‘i?
8. Describe what these native words mean: *aloha*, *kahuna*, *ohana*, *aina*, *keiki*, *kapu*, *maka‘ainana*
9. Compared to any other group in the islands, the Native Hawaiians have the shortest life expectancy. What factors do you think contribute to this?
10. In what ways is the experience of the Native Hawaiians similar to that of the Native Americans?
11. In what cultural activities and beliefs were the Native Hawaiians prevented from participating after the missionaries came to the islands?
12. What are the official languages of the state of Hawai‘i?

**Answers:**
1. O‘ahu, Kaua‘i, Moloka‘i, Lāna‘i, Ki‘i, Maui, Kaho‘olawe, Niihau
2. Hawai‘i was admitted as the 50th State in 1959.
3. The population of Hawai‘i is close to 1.25 million.
4. Kamehameha I was the last Hawaiian Queen due to the Kingdom's overthrow by the U.S. in January 1893.
5. A majority of Native Hawaiians was dispossessed by the sale of sugar plantation owners and business interests.
6. When the Hawaiian monarchy was overthrown, the system of communal land use that had supported the sugar cane was not brought to the islands by Polynesians.
7. The First Westerners arrived in 1778.
8. *Aloha*: love, goodwill, regard; *kahuna*: priest; *ohana*: family; *aina*: land; *keiki*: kids; *kapu*: keep out
9. Social and economic reasons (e.g. health, education, self-esteem and self-respect, low-wage jobs).
10. Hawaiians and English are the two official languages of the state.
11. They were prevented from participating in the *kuleana* (traditional native language, worshiping, etc.)
12. Hawaiians and English are the two official languages of the state.
Princess Ka'iulani: *Hope of a Nation, Heart of a People* by Sharon Linnea (*Eerdmans Books*). A captivating narration of the trials and tribulations of a famous, beloved Hawaiian princess. The tremendous impact she had on her home and her people is captured in this unforgettable book. Grades 5 to 11.

Small Kid Time Hawai'i edited by Eric Chock (*Bamboo Ridge Press*). A remarkable anthology of poetry written entirely by children ranging from elementary through high school exploring a variety of themes, including friendship, family, romance, identity, death, and of course, growing up in Hawai'i. Also by the same publisher, *Growing Up Local*, a comprehensive anthology of poetry and prose from both known and emerging local Hawaiian writers. Grades 4 and up. (Reviewed by Mayumi Shimose Avery)

Maui: *The Mischief Maker* by Dietrich Varez, edited by Lilikala Kame'eleiwa (*Bishop Museum Press*). A Hawaiian version of a traditional Polynesian folk-tale about the famous troublemaker, Maui, and his exciting adventures, which begin before his birth and continue until his death. Grades 4 and up.

When Silver Needles Swam by James Rumford (*Manoa Press*). As Hawai'i is annexed to the U.S. in 1898, Tutu (grandmother) uses her beautiful Hawaiian quilts to teach her grandchildren the importance of remembering their heritage. In English & Hawaiian. For grades 4 and up.

Nene by Marion Coste, illustr Cissy Gray (*Univ. of Hawai'i Press; uppress.hawaii.edu*). A detailed depiction of the life of the Hawai'i State bird, the nene. Like *Kolea: The Story of the Pacific Golden Plover*, also by Ms. Coste, it provides valuable information about a rare bird, its habitat, and food, which will educate and enlighten its readers. Grades 3 and up.

Under the Blood-Red Sun by Graham Salisbury (*Delacorte*). Tomi, a 13 year-old Japanese-American boy, thought he was no different from any other kid in the neighborhood, until the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor and Tomi's father was placed in an internment camp on the mainland. Now Tomi faces prejudice from neighbors who suspect he is the enemy. Winner of Hawai'i's Nene Award. Grades 5 and up.

The Water of Kane, and Other Legends of the Hawaiian Islands, *Tales of the Menehune*, and Hawai'i Island Legends: Piko, Pele and others are three collections of stories compiled by Mary Kawena Puku'i and retold by Caroline Curtis (*Kamehameha Schools Press; www.ksbe.edu*). Treasure chests of meaningful and enjoyable authentic tales from different islands in old Hawai'i, legends that have been passed down over the centuries. These stories help us understand old Hawai'i and the Native Hawaiian people and their cultures. Grades 4 and up.

My Name is Loa by Dorothea N. Buckingham, illustr. Snowden Hodges (*Island Heritage Publishing*). A part-factual, part-fictional, heart-wrenching story of a Hawaiian boy's experience as a 16 year-old, leaving his family to live in Kalaupapa, on the island of Moloka'i, a place where those diagnosed with leprosy were taken and forced to live. Grades 5 to 11.

Hawaiian Folk Tales compiled by T. G. Thrum (*Mutual Publishing*). A great collection of intriguing Native legends that attempt to preserve Hawaiian folklore. The collection gives us a good sense of Native culture and beliefs. Ages 12 to adult.

Hawai'i: *The Pacific State* by Ann Rayson and Helen Bauer (*Bess Press; www.besspress.com*). An updated resource that contains historical facts, cultural information and a chapter on today's Hawai'i. Teacher's guide is also available. Grades 4 to 11.

David Kalakaua by Ruby Hasegawa Lowe, illustr. Robin Yoko Racoma (*Kamehameha Schools Press*). A biography of one of Hawai'i's most beloved, talented and influential monarchs, David Kalakaua, a musician, songwriter, traveller, inventor, author, and Hawai'i's last reigning King. Grades 4 to 9.

Fables from the Sea by Leslie Ann Hayashi, illustr. Kathleen Wong Bishop (*Univ. of Hawai'i Press*). Children of all ages will delight in these captivating stories of creatures from tropical waters. Grades 2–6.

Student Atlas of Hawai'i (*Bess Press*). A 48-page, kid-friendly, comprehensive resource for ages 8 to 12 encouraging the study of geography in the schools.

By Wind, By Wave: *An introduction to Hawai'i's Natural History* by David Eyre (*Bess Press*). An in-depth look at the natural history of the islands, from prehistoric time to the present day. Focuses on 17 animal species to study ecology. Ages 9 to adult.

Note: Many of these books can also be ordered through Native Books of Hawai'i; www.nativebooks.com
**The Old Picture**

An old picture sits beside me while I write this poem. A young family is what I see, on their way to starting a new home. From the shores of Sweden to America, the land of the free. I am thankful for these people who started out a good life for me. Great-great grandparents who lived in the past, old ancestors—now gone. Though I look very much like them, they gave me something else. They gave me a gift that will last, a special picture from the past. Something I’ll have forever, an heirloom to keep. The picture will pass on with love to families I’ll never know. Evidence that stays even though it’s old, a link to the past and a story to be told. Maybe someday I’ll have a picture of my own family to show.

—Courtney Lannon, 13, Rockford, Michigan

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**The Red Leaves of Summer**

Crickets creak, like someone walking on an old wooden floor. A half moon, partly covered by stray clouds, is now a crescent, shining a faint silver light, giving the feeling of glowing silence to everything, making the vacant trees somewhat luminous. A summer wind blows through red September leaves, creating the sound of waves hitting the shoreline, moving forward in time until the scent of sand perfumes its cold air. The nocturnal sky is a woven blanket, only allowing a few spots of light, the stars, to enter this atmosphere of cool warmth.

—Patrick Gan, 15, New City, New York

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**How I Long for the Country Air**

The hard sidewalk under my feet, the sound of metal monsters roaring by, screaming, spewing forth gaseous gray clouds of smelly, lethal exhaust, the faint rustling inside of houses. I pass by silently, not making a sound, my thoughts of nothing in particular. How I long for country air. But the only thing that I see that reminds me of the country is a lone snake, coiled proudly on his imitation rock, as if there is no hate and greed in his world—no worries, not metal monsters, or houses with sleeping people...oh, how I long for the country!

—Jesse Voight, 14, Cottage Grove, Oregon

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**Red-Tailed Hawk**

With green-gold eyes and shrill, sharp call, he soars on copper wings. With feathers that ride the wind as swift as flames, he grasps with sword-like talons and curved chisel beak. With light, scaled legs he perches, head held high. With strong, striped wings, feathers of ocre and feathers of bronze he is hawk, lord of the wind.

—Danny Wildish, homeschooler, 8, Eugene, Oregon
Come Back Thirsty
A Pennsylvania Dutch Folktale

Once upon a time, in Lebanon County, there lived a farmer who needed a farmhand. Three young men came by asking for the job. The farmer spoke to them one at a time.

"Vut's yur name?" asked the farmer.
"Duckless," said the young man.
"Vell, Duckless," the farmer asked, "do ya no haa to rite a horce?"
"Led me see, wunst," suggested the farmer. "Rite this horce to where the fence ain't."
Douglas saddled and rode the horse well.
The farmer continued, "Haf ya evah milkt a kah?"
"Yess, I haf," answered the young man proudly. He sat right down on the milking stool and filled a bucket.
"Nice chop," said the farmer. "Ya didn't spritz yurself none."
"Vun more kvestion," continued the farmer. "Fur haa long ken ya make the field plahd with a pebble in yur shew?"
Douglas answered, "All day!"
"Ach, nah," said the farmer, "I can't hyer ya nohaw."
"It furhoodles me so," said Douglas. "W fur not?"
The farmer answered, "Sumsing tells me ya chust ain't right fur da chop."
The farmer asked the second young man, "Vut's yur name?"
"Runnult," said the young man.
"Vell, Runnult," said the farmer, "Ken ya catch a rutchy pick?" The farmer pointed to a runaway runt.
"Yess, I ken," answered Ronald, and he easily shoveled the grain into a nearby wheelbarrow.
"Ach! Yur a parful man," said the farmer, "but I haf vun more kvestion. Fur haa long ken ya make the field plahd with a pebble in yur shew?"
Ronald answered, "Oh, haf a day or so!"
"Ach, nah," said the farmer, "I can't hyer ya nohaw."
"It furhoodles me so," said Ronald. "W hyer not?"
The farmer answered, "Sumsing tells me ya chust ain't rite fur da chop."
The farmer asked the third young man, "Vut's yur name?"
"Chun," said the young man.
"Vel, Chunny," asked then farmer, "Ken ya throw the horse over the fence some hay?"
"Yess, I ken," answered John. He picked up the pitchfork and neatly fed the horse.
The farmer continued, "Nah, I'd like ya to fetch some ecks wunst. You daresent break none."
"No proplum," answered John.
John gathered all of the eggs in the hen house.
"Vun more kvestion," said the farmer, "Fur haa long ken ya make the field plahd with a pebble in yur shew?"
John answered, "Not lonk! If a pebble gets in my shew, I take it rite aht!"
The farmer hired that young man right there on the spot.
"Come back Thirsty," he said. "Yur hyert."

—Susette Wolfe, Newmanstown, Pennsylvania.
**Sweden**

Johanna Emilie Persson, girl, 15  
Blyglangsugen 4, S-3029  
Halmstad, Halland, Sweden  
Int: singing, music, parties

Sofia Ingmarsson, girl, 16  
Ektunav. 27  
58933 Linkoping, Sweden  
Int: piano, dance, music, US penpals

**Students in BELIZE want pen pals!**  
Write c/o Sacred Heart Middle School,  
San Ignacio, Cayo, Belize, C.A.

- Améd, boy, 7 (Int: football, basketball, reading)  
- Ada Briceno, girl, 8 (Int: softball, catch, hide and seek)  
- Estellita Cambranes, girl, 8 (Int: reading, TV, playing ball)  
- Sonia Guy, girl, 8 (Int: dancing, swimming)  
- Vanessa Herrera, girl, 8  
  (Int: baseball, playing in the park, hide and seek)  
- Ivan Lobos, boy, 8 (Int: basketball, showing visitors Belize)  
- Amy Clarice Martinez, girl, 8 (Int: bike racing)  
- Vanessa Obando, girl, 8 (Int: reading, games)  
- Diane Onellie, girl, 8 (Int: computers, playing, bike riding)  
- Yadira Perez, girl, 8 (Int: softball, songs, dancing)

- Sasha Arely Vargas, girl, 8 (Int: music, dancing)  
- Gerardo Adana, boy, 9 (Int: baseball, basketball, drawing pictures)  
- Joanna Elvra Balan, girl, 9 (Int: riding bikes)  
- Cindy Cain, girl, 9 (Int: basketball, dancing, music)  
- Otto Coleman, boy, 9 (Int: soccer, basketball, football)

- Christina Fay Garcia, girl, 9 (Int: girl penpals, dancing)  
- Nisa Gonzalez, girl, 9 (Int: baseball, reading story books)  
- David Hegar, boy, 9 (Int: football, baseball, basketball)  
- Zheng Chen Liu, boy, 9 (Int: football, going to school, horse riding)  
- Kerry Lucero, girl, 9 (Int: basketball, softball, football)  
- Veronica Manzanero, girl, 9 (Int: dance, studying)  
- Rafael Ramirez, boy, 9 (Int: football, swimming, riding bikes)  
- John Tillett, boy, 9 (Int: football, riding bike, basketball)  
- Lizzette Tut, girl, 9 (Int: basketball, softball, football)  
- Adrian Williams, boy, 9 (Int: football, swimming, dancing)  
- Lawrence, boy, 10 (Int: football, basketball, baseball)  
- Eric Guzman, boy, 10 (Int: football, riding bikes)  
- Jorge Manzanero, boy, 10 (Int: bikes, football). Send them letters at school.
A Guide for Parents & Teachers

Watch Out for Bias in Videos

We expect lively, challenging, and heated discussions when we review the many entries for the Skipping Stones Honor Awards. Our discussions this year prompted us to write this article about educational videos.

Two videos which we reviewed (Ruby Bridges and Miracle at Midnight, both produced by Disney Educational) were impressive productions featuring recognizable actors—a significant amount of resources were spent to present stories and issues of equality and justice.

On closer look, we noted that these videos actually had components which could support the very hierarchies which have held back or discouraged multiculturalism for centuries—hierarchies that give some groups more recognition, resources and power than others.

Some particular examples from these two videos:

Promotion of people at the top of traditional hierarchies. Both videos have main characters who are members of groups at the top of hierarchies. These heroes have powerful, leadership roles, make important decisions, and make benevolent interventions to rescue people in groups with less power.

The main character in the Miracle at Midnight is a white, male, Christian physician who organizes a resistance; the skill and contribution of the Jewish community is ignored. In Ruby Bridges, another white male physician, is featured as a key to establishing the mental health of an African-American child, while the skill and contribution of her African-American parents and community in dealing with racism is shown as inadequate.

These two videos follow in the traditions of books which have commendable parts but still show some bias towards the dominant culture. For example, materials about U.S. abolitionists have featured white people, when in reality, most abolitionists were African-Americans.

Judgments assure hierarchical placement. Stereotypes, distortions, and oversimplifications can be used to promote judging people and groups. For instance, in Ruby Bridges, the teacher explains to Ruby that the people in the North fought the Civil War against racism. In reality however, there were many less altruistic economic and political reasons for the war. Not all people in the North opposed slavery, and not all people in the South supported slavery. In real life, we cannot so quickly judge who is a “bad guy” or a “good guy” as in these videos.

An example of stereotype promotion is where Ruby’s African-American father cannot escort Ruby to school because the white male authorities cannot depend on his staying non-violent or non-confrontational. He is also shown weakening under societal and family pressures, less capable than the white male professionals and officials who always are able to handle the situation.

Use of hierarchical control tactics. For centuries, hierarchical leaders have used violence to keep people in lower ranks, and to build wealth and power. Excessive violence (as used in Miracle at Midnight) is not appropriate in educational videos as it only serves negatively.

When selecting materials for the classroom, it is useful to consider the cultural backgrounds and qualifications of authors and illustrators, producers and publishers. Even with good intentions, people who work within the confines of established organizations may support and perpetuate the common principles and rules of hierarchies.

Consider videos such as It’s Elementary, Women of Hope, and Trees, Toilets and Transformations that make non-hierarchical presentations. They avoid violence and quick conclusions; they present the true voices of the subjects.

If we decide to use material, even though it promotes stereotypes and/or hierarchies because it has other good qualities (which Ruby Bridges and Miracle at Midnight do have), then we can set aside sufficient class time for discussion about bias, stereotype, authenticity, tokenism and omissions. For example, we can augment these videos with discussions of the contributions of the Jewish or the African-American communities.

It is our hope that we can see beyond hype and drama. Previewing a video prior to class presentation and noting any bias will allow us to decide where to pause (or fast forward) to provide timely discussions.

—Charlotte Behm, educator and board member

Resources for Anti-Bias Education

1. Multicultural Voices by Frances Ann Day (Heinemann).
2. Through Indian Eyes by B. Slapin and Seale (Oyate).

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