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Skipping Stones is a nonprofit children’s magazine that encourages cooperation, creativity and celebration of cultural and linguistic diversity. We explore stewardship of the ecological and social webs that nurture us. We offer a unique forum for communication among children from different lands and backgrounds. Skipping Stones expands horizons in a playful, creative way. We seek suggestions, submissions, subscriptions and support.

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Can you name a system that works on the sun's energy? It's perfectly designed, and, for all practical purposes, made to last forever.

Your answer? The Earth, of course. Our planet works beautifully with just the incoming solar energy. The biosphere; the great oceans; the incredible diversity of the plant and animal kingdoms; and the various ecosystems, such as rainforests, tundras and deserts, all work in perfect harmony. Truly, it can't be dismissed as an accident. It appears to be the work of a superb scientist, architect or designer—of a creator worthy of our praise for a perfect system design.

It is so perfect that there is no such thing as waste in the natural world. Everything is a resource; all products and by-products are useful. Invisible agents are always at work as producers, decomposers, pollinators, cleansers, etc. There are no wages, bills, taxes, "cash pay offs" or other monetary stimuli in nature. Each species does what it needs to, and what's good for it is also good for the system as a whole.

When a species overuses the resources or cannot live within the means available, it must adapt or become extinct. This applies to humans as well, for we are an integral part of the system. As a species, we're not above natural laws.

True, we have learned a lot from nature. Many of our human systems try to imitate or excel natural processes. The problem is that we learn just bits and pieces and think we know it all. We then try to apply these bits to our advantage without considering what's good for others, the community, the country, nature or the planet.

For example, our transportation networks are not energy efficient. Many cities are difficult to get around without a car. People feel that owning cars makes them independent, rich or "cool." We tend to justify the "need" to own personal cars rather than reducing our need for them by riding bikes or the bus.

Homes, agriculture and industry also have tons of wasteful practices. Energy analysts like Amory Lovins and Brian O'Leary have shown beyond any doubt that there is a tremendous waste of resources. Wise resource use means not only efficiency but also investigating to see if the desired goals could have been met better some other way. A good design looks at all the aspects and long-term costs—economic, social, cultural and environmental.

In the last century, we have used up most of the fossil fuels that took nature over a million years to create. It is amazing to see that a gallon of gasoline, which comes from thousands of miles away and goes through much refining, is sold in the U.S. for less than a gallon of milk produced locally. Surely, we're missing big parts of the equation, like the costs of creating fossil fuels and of pollution-related losses.

We won't be able to extract the natural resources forever. Even though there will always be some coal, oil and gas left underground, after a while, it will take much more energy to find, extract and refine them. Furthermore, as we "use up" natural resources, we are degrading our ecosystems, and bringing them closer to a breakdown point.

Greed and fear actually reduce the chances of survival for all species. For example, the U.S. Navy's proposed high-powered "Low-Frequency Active Sonar System" to detect enemy submarines in the oceans. Whales and dolphins depend on their sensitive hearing. A deaf whale is a dead whale. Noise from the LFA system will interfere with vital biological activities of marine mammals, like migration and communication. Natural Resources Defense Council scientists fear that long-term exposure to LFA could push entire populations into extinction.

Wasting wealth and resources on military and weapons of mass destruction will not make any nation more secure! Paths to lasting peace and sustainable lifestyles are not paved with greed, material possessions and powerful weapons but with virtues like generosity, understanding, compassion and love. We do need some basic things to live on, and there is plenty on the planet for all of our true needs!
Growing Up in Belize

After the 11th of September, I realized I’ve been sitting on top of perfect examples of poverty, ignorance, greed and hopelessness—the food of terrorism. Television didn’t exist in Belize until 1983. Since then, an entire generation of young men has grown up with images of life in America while surrounded by the exact opposite. Here, there are few books, magazines or matching bed sheets. The only people with fancy cars are drug dealers. Unemployment isn’t temporary; it’s a way of life. Roads aren’t paved. Houses are not neat and tidy. Used diapers litter yards — food for the dogs and chickens.

Young men in Latin America live in an entirely different world from those in North America, yet most of them are not overcome by our differences. They don’t become terrorists. They laugh. They love each other. They eat beans and fish, not french fries and hamburgers. They want to imitate their fathers. They love their country. Their parents expound values that are common to most cultures. Many of them have hope. Many of them want to stay as they are.

To a young man from the U.S., that’s a concept difficult to imagine. How could a boy want to grow up to be a fisherman? What kind of skill is that for the 21st century? In North America, where slabs of fish come wrapped in cellophane on a plastic foam tray, few people know how to find, let alone catch, haul in, clean and filet a fish. Perhaps then, it’s one of the greatest skills of all. We, in North America, have a way of belittling those who don’t aspire to our same goals. Anyone can fish, we snort. Yes, anyone can fish, but, as they say here, not everyone can catch.

In this tiny Central American country, following Sept. 11th, people are still shaking. Children and parents are worried. Not because terrorists might attack Belize. Not because this is a nation of terrorists. Far from it. “No shirt, no shoes, no problem,” is a national slogan. They worry because the attacks might change their way of life. Their’s is not the American way. It’s not life “as seen on TV.” Clearly here, people understand that TV is entertainment, not life. Life here is understanding the dangers of the ocean, the currents, the tides, the wind. Gas is for fishing boats, not cars. Life here is raising chickens in your yard for a delicious, home-grown dinner. Life here is knowing how to fish to feed your family and others. It’s an incredibly important skill. Belizians don’t want to change. They don’t want to be like North Americans.

To a person from North America, it may seem that many young men here are consumed with envy—destined to become terrorists. Many here are poor, but compared to what? Because they don’t have a cars? They have no need for a car. Ignorant? Here, a person is considered stupid if s/he is unable to navigate using only the stars—without a compass. Many feel rich. Wise. Confident. Eager to share their fish and chickens. Hopeful that their lives won’t change. How could a boy not want to grow up to be a fisherman?

—Julie Duppstadt, originally from Vermont, mother of two boys, lives in Belize, Central America. “Fish” by Sabine Wiebinghaus-Timm, Bouleurs, France.

Thanks from Costa Rica

Thank you so much for your recent donation to the San Martin Library Project in Paso Canoas, Costa Rica. We are so grateful! The books are beautiful—such treasures for the kids. It was very motivating for the community to see the library become a reality. The back issues of the magazine are wonderful teaching tools. I am enjoying incorporating them into the classroom, and the kids love the artwork, pictures and recipes from all over. The magazine is a true celebration of culture, a window for building bridges between today’s youth.

—Maegan Hoeffel is a Peace Corps volunteer in Paso Canoas, Costa Rica.
**Creed**

I believe in the color red. I believe my dreams are the stories I still can’t enact with open eyes. I believe a morning without words can bring me peace, and I believe in peace most of the time. I believe sunset is more romantic than sunrise, but sunrise can make me catch my breath.

I believe in Aphrodite and that Olympus is still waiting to be found. I believe I'm a finder of things, and I believe in holding on. I believe as hard as holding on is, letting go sometimes takes more strength. I believe in letting go and moving onward, upward, skyward. I believe in sky, in the blue, in the height.

I believe in peppermint and in snow. They both give me chills, and I believe I should listen to that.

I believe in being the first to say hello, and in asking for names. I believe in names and their meanings. My name means “protector of the sea” for a reason.

I believe music and scent make me recall those I’d almost forgotten. I believe in forgetting and in the soft sighing of memory. I believe my actions return to me threefold, fivefold, twentyfold, and someday the ones I’ve hurt and saved will all come back to me.

I believe in returning borrowed things, sometimes. I believe in sometimes. The only constancy is change, and I believe in change.

I believe a conversation over coffee with a friend is all I ever need. I believe we all need more than we’d like to admit, and everyone needs to hear someone loves them.

I believe there is power everywhere. It’s in crying and laughter and the rush I feel after I run. I believe strength is the only power I want, and I believe I have found it.

—Meredith Kaffel, 18, Short Hills, New Jersey.

**On Character and Conduct**

I once saw a sign that said, “Character is what you have when no one is looking.” How true this is for a lot of people. When the “weird” kid at school drops his books, people know they should help, but choose not to because they don’t want to be seen with an “uncool” person. Yet if no one was around for a mile radius, except you and the kid, you would have no problem helping him. But times that call for good character happen the most when others are around. What are you going to do then?

—Julie Buck, 14, Gibsonia, Pennsylvania.

**I Irritate Me**

When posed with the question, “What irritates you?” most people my age give similar answers. Some say their teachers; others say their annoying little brothers. After thinking about this question for a while, I have finally arrived at an answer. The truth is I irritate me.

All of my irritations can be directed back to me. When I am angry with my teacher for giving me a bad grade, I know it’s my fault for not studying enough. When I get into fights with my friends over stupid things, I usually could have done something to prevent it. I have a difficult time saying when I am wrong. Even if I know I’m wrong, I still try to find a scapegoat or blame my failures on someone else. Since I can’t accept my failures, I am unable to learn from these mistakes. That irritates me.

—Ian Roth, 15, New City, New York.

**They Just Don’t Understand**

They don’t understand what it’s like, to be a kid these days.

They don’t think we’re under stress, or that we need people.

When we cry, they brush it off and say, “They’re just going through a phase.”

Well, we’re not going through a phase, We’re people just like you.

And you know how you need support? Sometimes we need it too.

Adults think it’s so easy, but they just don’t understand.

We push them away, but all we need, is to hold somebody’s hand.

We may be kids, but we do have lives, Lives that are not always easy to stand.

So the next time you think, “It’s just a phase,” Please try to understand.

—Elizabeth Gonzalez, Grand Prairie, Texas.

**Q:** What goes up and never comes down?

What table has no legs?

—Ian Roth, 14, Gibsonia, Pennsylvania.

**A:** Age, a time table.

—Edward Owusu, Ghana
Sam Resurrection

...A girl connects with her heritage

On Memorial Day 1997, ten-year-old Samantha Shelby was helping tend the graves of her Salish Indian ancestors. She did not complain; her parents had taught her the importance of honoring elders. Besides, the cemetery, located on the Flathead Indian Reservation, was an impressive place. Flanked by the Rocky Mountains, crowned by the huge Montana sky, the landscape invited solitude and contemplation.

Samantha wandered into an old, overgrown part of the cemetery, and something caught her eye. It was a plain, wooden cross, half hidden beneath a tangle of wild lilacs and knapweed. The hand-carved inscription was almost worn away. “I felt sorry for whoever was buried there,” Samantha said, “so I started pulling weeds and cleaning up the area.”

As she studied the faded letters on the cross, she sensed something familiar about them. “I could just read ‘Sam’ and then ‘R...e...s...’”

But it was enough to stir the memory of an old legend, one she had heard from her grandfather and other tribal elders. Samantha realized that she was looking at the burial place of “Sam Resurrection.”

She knew the story behind the name. Her grandfather had told her how Sam Kaltomee died as a child, more than a hundred years ago. He said Sam leapt triumphantly back to life before his mother had finished sewing his burial leggings. Sam was given a new Salish name meaning, “He rose from the ground.” Missionaries translated it, “Resurrection.”

Samantha knew little else about the man called Resurrection, but she vowed to learn more. Meanwhile she spent all her allowance on flowers for his grave.

Samantha’s research didn’t start at the library. “There’s this guy called ‘Big Tom,’” she said. “He hangs out at the store all the time. I told him I was looking for information, and he spread the word around town.”

Thanks to Big Tom and others, Samantha soon learned the story of Sam’s life.

He was born in 1857. At that time most of his tribe still lived in their sacred homeland, the Bitterroot Valley, and survived according to the old ways—digging bitterroot and camas, gathering berries and hunting buffalo.

As Sam grew up, he saw many changes. The buffalo vanished from his valley and were replaced by a flood of European settlers. The government wanted the Bitterroot Salish to move to a reservation up north.

The Salish didn’t want to move. Their chief, Charlo, declared, “My heart belongs in this valley. I will never leave it.” But in the

Samantha is wearing a buckskin dress made by her great-great aunt. It’s decorated with paint, beads and elk teeth.


Skipping Stones

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1890's, Charlo’s people were forced out of their homeland by soldiers.

The Salish left the valley with heavy hearts. Some wept as they began their long trek. Some sang a funeral song called “The Day of Death.”

The Salish were promised a better life on the reservation, but they feared the worst. Chief Charlo told the government, “I do not want the land you promise. I do not believe your promises. All I want is ground enough for my grave.”

It wasn’t long before Charlo’s fears became reality. A law was passed allowing whites to claim homesteads on the Flathead Indian Reservation.

Faced with such betrayal, some Salish people lost hope, but not Sam Resurrection. He decided to fight to save his tribe’s land.

Sam couldn’t read or write, so he asked friends to help him draft letters to important politicians, including the president. He asked these men to honor the treaties they had made with the Salish. Sam tirelessly gathered signatures for petitions.

In 1908, Sam journeyed thousands of miles to Washington, D.C. to see President Theodore Roosevelt. It’s believed that he reached the capital mainly by walking.

Roosevelt wouldn’t listen to Sam nor would the other politicians. Newspapers mocked his efforts and told cruel lies about him. When he visited some attorneys, seeking legal help for his cause, they called him a drunk and threw him in jail.

In the end, Sam couldn’t save his people’s land. Within a few years, homesteaders had claimed more than half the reservation.

Though he lost one battle, Sam never surrendered. He devoted the rest of his life to the pursuit of justice. His efforts taught those around him about the values of perseverance and hope. Today, the Montana Salish are still driven by those ideals. They are working hard to buy their reservation back, a few acres at a time.

The more Samantha learned about Sam’s life, the more determined she was to keep his memory alive. She formed a plan.

She put donation cans in local businesses. After telling some reporters about her idea, she began receiving cards and contributions from across the state.

Samantha visited the tribal council, seeking help with her plan. Her entire sixth grade class tagged along to support her.

Throughout it all, she continued to save every dime of her allowance. It took nearly three years, but she finally saved enough.

On Memorial Day 2000, a small crowd applauded as a brand-new headstone, designed by Samantha herself, was installed in front of the old wooden cross. A tribal elder led the group through a ceremony, and they sang the honor song for Sam Resurrection.

A few months later, we are sitting in the kitchen at Samantha’s house, looking at some of the cards and letters she received.

“Look at this,” Samantha’s father opens a card inscribed in neat, old-fashioned cursive: I can spare very little, but you have my best wishes. You have restored my faith in young people.

It enclosed two dollars.

Samantha’s mother sighs. “I really wonder what drew Sammy to that grave,” she says. “I almost feel like he was calling to her, like this is something she was meant to do.”

A silence follows. Some things are too mysterious for words.

—Dana Fitz Gale, Missoula, Montana.

Photos of Samantha by Neil and Deeda Adams.

Below: Samantha and the headstone she designed and purchased for Sam Resurrection. Sam’s Salish name is inscribed beneath his picture. The original wooden cross still stands behind the new headstone.
It was my first day at Henderson Elementary. It was also my first time going to a school with white girls. Before school started, the principal told me two things: do not speak Navajo in school, and do not make trouble. You see, the whole idea of my going to this new school was to make me forget my culture, to make me act like a white girl, a bilaghana. Of course, my family and I had thought it was a stupid idea. It would never work, but the government had decided. There was nothing we could do about it. So there I was standing in front of the class of all white girls. The teacher had asked me to introduce myself. I wasn’t used to speaking English, but I could speak it pretty well.

“My name is Shondiin Benally. I am from the Toh-ahéé-glini clan and born for the Bitahni clan.” A bunch of girls in the corner started giggling. I didn’t know why. All I had done was introduce myself in the traditional Navajo way.

“What are you talking about?” one girl asked.

The teacher cleared her throat. “What she means is her name is Shondiin. She will be joining us this year. Now, please take your seat.” She gave me a look of warning as I walked to my seat.

Finally the morning classes were over, and it was time for lunch. I got in the lunch line and was handed a bowl of stew and a cup of water. I found an empty table and sat down to eat my lunch.

“Hey, what do you think you’re doing?” I looked up from my bowl to see three girls headed toward me. “That’s our table!” a tall, slender girl named Allison said.

“I didn’t see anyone sitting here,” I said, as I stood up. A short, red-headed girl reached for my lunch.

“Olivia, don’t,” said Elizabeth, the third girl.

“Elizabeth, she is taking our lunch table! You don’t want to lose this table to a red-skin, do you?” Allison asked. “Do it Olivia!” She smiled an evil smile. Olivia pushed my lunch off the table. The stew and the water splashed on the floor, and the cup and bowl went flying.

“We’re sitting here,” Olivia glared at me.

“What is going on here?” the principal was headed toward us.

“This girl just spilled Olivia’s lunch all over the floor!” Allison lied as she pointed to my lunch.

“I thought I told you not to make trouble, Shondiin. Go to my office now!” She pointed toward the lunch room exit.

“But I–,” I started to say.

“I said now!” The principal yelled at me before she turned to the girls and said, “I’m so sorry, girls. Olivia, why don’t you get in the lunch line again.” She smiled at them before following me to her office.

I was so tired. I had been scrubbing the lunch room floor and the bathroom floors for two hours. School was over, but my punishment for “making trouble” was to scrub the floors. I looked up at the clock in the lunch room and saw that my time was up. I put down my bucket of soapy water and my dirty rag, picked up my book bag and ran out of the school.

Hot tears streamed down my face as I started to walk home. It wasn’t fair. I got in trouble for being picked on because I was different from everyone else at school, I thought, as I walked the two miles to my aunt’s house. Since my family was still down on the reservation in Biclabito, New Mexico, my aunt who lived in Farmington let me stay with her while I went to school. I walked in the door, and there was my aunt pacing back and forth.

“Haadiish nahnnah nátáá?” (Where have you been?) she asked me.

“I had to scrub the lunch room floor and the bathroom floors at school. Some girls got me in trouble today.” I put my bag down on the floor.

“I don’t know why they made you go to that silly bilaghana school anyway!” Then she forgot how worried she was and went to the next room to get Kayenta, my little cousin. I sat down on my blankets and looked around the small, two-room
house. I watched my aunt hold Kayenta in one arm and fix dinner with the other arm. Her hair was a mess. She was not old, but her skin was wrinkled. She was trying so hard to be the best mother and aunt that she didn’t have time to care for herself. Her husband had left her right after Kayenta was born. She was always so busy trying to take care of the baby and keep a job, and now she had me to worry about. I felt so bad for her.

“You go sit down, and I’ll take care of dinner tonight,” I told her as I went into the kitchen. My aunt smiled at me. “Aheheé (thanks), Shondiin,” she said as she patted my shoulder. “Nizhoni shf.” (You are a good girl.)

It is a Navajo tradition that every morning you run to the east to greet the rising sun. In Biclabito I would run to the east every morning. So here I decided to wake up at 5:30 every morning and run before I went to school. This morning, as I was running, I passed some white girls’ houses. As I passed one of the houses, I saw a girl’s face in a window watching me. I quickly looked down at my feet and kept running.

After the first few mornings of running before school, I decided not to do it anymore. I just couldn’t get myself to get out of bed. After thinking about the tradition, I realized that it was stupid to run a few miles to the sun on freezing mornings. School wasn’t going well either. In class I had to sit behind Allison. Every time the teacher turned around, Allison would whisper something mean to me and make a face. I pretended not to notice because I knew I would get in trouble if I said anything, but it was really hard. Whenever I passed her and her two friends in the hall, she would make snotty remarks.

“Uh-oh, girls, red-skin alert!” She and Olivia would start laughing hysterically. But Elizabeth wouldn’t do anything; Elizabeth was different. She didn’t join in their jokes. Sometimes she looked like she might even feel sorry for me. One day at school Elizabeth talked to me.

“Why have you stopped running in the mornings?” she asked. “I don’t mean to be rude, but I’d seen you running, and then I noticed you had stopped,” Elizabeth added.

I shook my head. “It’s a stupid Navajo tradition to run to the east every morning,” I told her as I turned and left.

I guess I felt ashamed of being Navajo, and I was sick of the girls making fun of me because I was Navajo. School went on with me being picked on and getting in trouble for nothing.

One day I came home from school late again because I was accused of copying Allison’s arithmetic test, which I didn’t do and would never do. When I came home my aunt asked me what had happened at school.

“I was accused of copying a test, and the girls were teasing me,” I told her as I looked at my feet. “How could they do that to you?” she asked. “Shondiin, don’t you listen to those bilaghanas! Don’t ever forget who you are; be proud of who you are. Do you understand?” My aunt took a hold of my shoulders, and I quickly looked up at her. “Remember, we are Diné, Navajo.”

“We are Diné,” I repeated as I nodded and smiled. “Who cares what those silly bilaghanas think. I am Diné.” My aunt smiled and hugged me.

The next morning I heard a knock on the door. To my surprise it was Elizabeth. “Are you going to run to the east?” she asked. I slowly nodded and smiled. “May I join you?”

“Of course,” I answered.

At lunch Elizabeth found me at a table. “May I sit here?” she asked.

“Sure,” I said as I moved my bag from the chair next to me.

When Allison and Olivia came, Allison gasped. “What are you doing, Elizabeth?”

Elizabeth shrugged. “Eating lunch with my friend. Would you care to join us?” Allison slowly laughed and shook her head.

“Please join us,” I said softly as I looked down at my lunch. Allison looked at me in surprise. Finally she pretended to look around.

“Well, since there’s nowhere else to sit, I guess we’ll sit here,” Allison said as she and Olivia sat down, and we ate lunch together.

—Teale Orme, Navajo, 13, Salt Lake City, Utah. Her teacher writes, “Teale often enriches her class at Rowland Hall-St. Mark’s School with her understanding of Navajo culture.”
Opossum’s Bare Tail

Opossum was once very proud of his tail. It was long and covered with thick, black fur. He spent hours cleaning and brushing it. He even made up songs about how beautiful it was.

Sometimes he would walk holding his tail up in the air like a flag. Other times it fell behind him like a long, silky train.

His tail was also very useful. When Opossum slept he could tuck it underneath him, and it would make a soft, snuggly bed. Or, in colder weather, he could fold it over his body like a blanket to keep warm.

Rabbit envied Opossum’s tail. He once had a long, bushy tail himself, but during a fight with Bear, most of his tail was lost. All that remained was a short, fluffy tuft. Since Opossum was always showing off his tail, Rabbit got angry and decided to play a trick on him.

The animals sometimes held a council, and Rabbit, because of his speed, delivered the invitations. There was feasting and dancing at the councils, and that gave Rabbit an idea for his prank.

When Rabbit arrived to tell Opossum about the meeting, he was busy doing his favorite thing, combing his tail.

“I've come to invite you to the council tomorrow,” said Rabbit. “Will you come?”

“I'll come if you give me a special seat,” replied Opossum. “My tail is so beautiful that I should sit where everyone can admire it.”

Rabbit was upset at Opossum’s arrogance, but he hid his anger. “Of course, Opossum. I'll see to it you have the best seat of all! I'll even send someone to groom your tail for the dance!” Opossum was very excited.

Rabbit went to see Cricket, the barber, and asked him for a favor. The next morning Cricket knocked on Opossum’s door and told him he had been asked by Rabbit to prepare his tail for the council that evening. Opossum stretched out his tail, and Cricket began to comb it gently.

“I'm going to wrap this golden cord around your tail as I comb it,” Cricket said, “so that it will be nice and smooth for the dance tonight.”

Cricket’s brushing felt so soothing that Opossum fell asleep and didn’t wake up until Cricket was finished. The cord completely covered Opossum’s tail.

“I'll keep it covered until the very last moment,” thought Opossum. “The others will be so jealous when I reveal my gorgeous tail.”

That evening, Opossum went to the council and was led to his seat by Rabbit. When it was time for dancing, Opossum stood up. He took the cord off his tail and stepped onto the dance floor.

“Look at my beautiful tail!” he sang as he danced in the middle of the floor.

The audience began to yell. Some of the animals began to applaud. Opossum continued dancing and singing loudly. “See how my tail shines in the firelight,” he sang.

Again everyone shouted, and again Opossum continued dancing.

“My tail is the most stunning, the most...” Opossum began, but the animals screeched so loudly that Opossum stopped to look at them. They were all laughing. Some were leaning on their neighbor’s shoulders; others were rolling around on the ground; most were pointing at Opossum’s tail.

Opossum looked down and saw that his once thick, beautiful tail was now completely bald. While pretending to comb it, that sneaky cricket had cut off every single hair!

Opossum was so shocked that he rolled over onto his back, just as opossums still do when they are taken by surprise.

—Dale Smart, “ge-da-li-yv-i,” Cherokee, Lodi, California. Dale has been retelling traditional Cherokee tales, including this one, to his son.
A Klamath Indian Grandmother Recalls

A long time ago our rivers and land used to be so beautiful. The creeks ran fast down the mountains, looking clear and silky. The waterfalls rushed hard and fast, hitting sharp rocks down below, whirling around into pretty blue pools of water. Fish jumped in and out of the clear lakes. Sometimes the deer would come out of the forest, crossing the green meadows, looking ever so carefully, so that they would not be seen by hunters. They would come to the edge of the bank to get some fresh, cold water down their dry, thirsty throats. The birds whistled and chirped so cheerfully you could hear their sounds echoing throughout the forest. The long, green grass swayed back and forth in the meadow.

I used to go horseback riding with my brother and sister in the mornings down through the meadow and the forest to the beautiful pond. We would watch and listen to the waterfall roaring loudly. We would jump in the clear, blue pond and swim most of the day. Our horses would eat the green grass and drink the fresh water.

I am grown up now. I see the pond full of old tires, garbage and animal bones. It looks like a dump! I think we should keep our land green and beautiful and our water clean and clear.

—Harriet Kirk, grandmother, Eugene, OR.

Waterfall

This is a two-person poem. Each reader chooses a column, and both parts are read simultaneously.

Waterfall
rushing water
splashing
tumbling
mist on your face
a rainbow arches
capturing your heart

Waterfall
swirling rapids
falling
spraying
mist on your arms
through the mist
capturing your mind

—Ryan Schleiden, 14, and Alexandra Conlon, 13, Pine-Richland Middle Sch., Gibsonia, Pennsylvania.

Western Winds

Mother Earth, can you hear me through the clicking of your brown beads against your heavy chest and the scraping of the old mano y metate? I am small, like the crumbs in the lap of your Navajo blanket and quiet but I am ready—like the Indian frybread baking between the stones, and I am listening can you hear me, Mother Earth?

i have seen the way you pull back your black hair and some gray streaks, into your big silver clip, the turquoise stones are small like me; i counted twelve of them i have watched you scrub away the dust from between your toes long after the sun has fallen behind the hills the long, sharp grasses still swaying and whispering Mother Earth, what do they say? how does the sun wilt like a flower, and then grow again the next morning like a fresh seed?

i know your stories, sung deep in your secret voices like the creases in your palms, rubbed smooth with oils of the earth i know your eyes, black and stern but forgiving like the thick straw your skin I know too red, like the clumps of earth in the shade brown, like the fraying strings of your old wrap my skin is the same color, newer and a little rounder Mother Earth, can you hear me?

i hear you

—Rebecca Lewis, 17, Denver, Colorado.

Family

We made an enchanted circle As we sat around the table, Troubles and dark shadows crossed not that line And thoughts and emotions became stable.

Our laughter, as we talked and told stories, Was medicine to a sick heart; It was so good, being together again, We had been so long apart.

—Ruth Amsden, 16, Bath, Maine.
This might seem funny to you, but I lived in a bat house. Not a real bat house like the ones built for bats—but the house I lived in when I was a baby was filled with bats!

When I was born, we lived in the Bear Paw Mountains in a log cabin that was built in 1920. It had lots of holes and cracks in it. My dad used to say, “If it’s windy outside, it will be windy inside.” Guess what? The bats found the holes and cracks and moved in.

The cracks in our house were not very big, but somehow those bats squeezed through. Bats come in all shapes and sizes. I’ve seen bats in a zoo that were the size of a small dog with a wingspan of six feet. And there are bats as small as a bumblebee with a wingspan of six and a half inches.

The first time we saw a bat in our house was when Uncle Elbert was visiting. We were all getting ready for bed on an August night when we heard a scream upstairs. My dad got out two tennis racquets, and he and Uncle Elbert stood in the hallway trying to swat the bat.

You’ve heard the expression, “blind as a bat.” Well, bats are not actually blind; they use echolocation. That’s kind of like radar. The bats make noises that bounce off objects in front of them, so they know what’s all around them. That was why it was so hard to hit them with the tennis racquets.

We also found that even though they like darkness, they also seem to be attracted to light. One night, my mom had a night-light on in her bedroom while she was nursing my little sister. The door was closed tight, but somehow a sneaky bat squeezed under the crack between the door and the floor and started flying around the room. Mom screamed, and Dad got the tennis racquet.

Some people actually like having bats around because they eat insects. They build bat houses for the bats to sleep in. Some bats eat fruit, and some even suck blood from animals. But our bats were not vampire bats. Our bats just ate insects, which was good because we had lots of bugs around our house.

The problem was, it seemed we had bats everywhere. They were starting to drive us batty! They thought our house was their house. One time we could see a bat through the window of our wood stove. He must have flown down the chimney and ended up in the stove. It was a good thing there was no fire.

We would really never see the bats during the day because bats are nocturnal, which means they are only active at night. But at nighttime we could see them flying around our house.

One day my dad said he’d had enough of bats, even though they were eating all the mosquitoes. He thought he had discovered the hole in the house where they were coming into our attic.

So one day, he set up a ladder next to the bat hole. When it started to get dark, all the bats flew out of the house. When he thought they were all out, he plugged the hole, thinking he had outsmarted them and solved our bat problem.

But as you can probably guess, that didn’t work. We just had to get used to sharing our house with bats—and the bats had to get used to sharing their house with us!

—Zach Heskett, 12, Kalispell, Montana.

The Dragon
The dragon flies with silent wings,
As it glides along.
The terror that this myth should bring,
Is ruined by its song.
So sweet be the melody,
That rings for all to hear,
Falling deeply into a trance,
When it reaches ears.
So green the scales
On dragon males,
That shimmer throughout the flight.
The dragon flies with silent wings,
On this quiet, darkened night.

—Nichole Hunt, 5th gr, Houston ES, Gilbert, Arizona.
Start a New Hobby: *Become a birder!*

I bet you can guess what a birder is! It’s someone who searches for and likes to study birds. Whether you live in the city, country or suburbs, birds fly through your daily life, and it’s easy to forget they are wild animals—just as wild as wolves and beavers.

Did you know that there are millions of bird watchers in North America? There are more than 900 species of birds in N. America.

**What do you need to study birds?**

A simple field guide and a pair of binoculars. When using binoculars, make sure the eyepieces are aligned to fit the distance between your eyes. Next adjust the focus. The trick is to stare at what you want to look at without moving your head or eyes. It will take some practice before you have mastered the trick, but it will help eliminate any frustration you may have with binoculars.

**How to Identify Birds**

The first thing to look for is the size of the bird. Next, what is its shape? Begin at the head or bill and work backward. Does the bird have stripes on its head? A line over its eye? Is there a special color on its face or head? Is the bill thin and short? Warblers have short, thin bills. Thrashers and mockingbirds have long, thin bills, usually down-curved. Wings often provide a key description. Then look at its tail. Is it short or long, rounded or forked, dark or light? Does it wag its tail or bob?

**Bird Feeders**

Bird feeders will attract birds so you can see them up close. The most common feeders are elevated; they sit on poles or hang from branches. Hanging feeders are easier to protect from squirrels.

The most common birdseed is black oil sunflower seed, which is available in most supermarkets and feed stores. Other choices are: striped sunflower, sunflower hearts, peanut hearts, millet, thistle seed and cracked corn.

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**Birds**

Thousands upon thousands
Of little black spots
Fluttering around aimlessly
Chirping loudly enough
To wake the lazy mutt
Sleeping under the golden tree.
Their wings flapping
Sound like a strong, strong wind.
Their chirps
Are like a million shrill whistles.
They are a beautiful sight
As they flutter into the horizon
Until they’re nowhere to be seen.

—Samantha Brady, 15, Gibsonia, Penn.

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**Birdbaths**

Birdbaths attract birds because they need water to drink and bathe in. It not only helps maintain their feathers but also reduces mites and other parasites. The water should be shallow, less than three inches deep. Moving water is also attractive to birds.

**Birdhouses**

Making your own birdhouse can be complicated but fun. Books on how to build one can be found in your local library. Cavity-nesting species that typically use birdhouses are chickadees and wrens. If you have an open yard, you may attract bluebirds and swallows too.

Bird watching can be shared with others, no matter how young or old. It is a hobby that brings you outdoors to observe nature’s ways. Every time I see a bird, I feel closer to God, who makes all creatures large and small.

The Kiwi Bird

I am genus *Apertyx*. Put simply, I’m a kiwi bird. My species is about eight million years old. I’m about the size of a hen. I look sort of like a mix between a hedgehog and an anteater with wings.

I have thick hair-like feathers all over my body, but I never wash them. I don’t go near water. I get my water from my food. I don’t have a tail, but I do have a long beak which is one-third the size of my body. I am nocturnal, but at night I can only see about six feet ahead of me.

I only live on one island, New Zealand. I am considered their mascot. Even so, only a few New Zealanders have seen my family.

I have two wings, but I cannot fly. My wings have the same type of feathers as the rest of my body, but they are thinner. They are also spread a little farther apart and are very stiff.

I am an endangered species. I have been heard of worldwide because in 1906 a large shoe polish company called Kiwi Shoe Polish made polish from kiwi birds. They sold it all over the world. This cut our population down greatly.

Now I’ll tell you about our eggs. We may only be the size of hens, but we lay eggs the size of ostrich eggs! There are one or two eggs to a litter. They take about 80 days to hatch. Each egg weighs about 20 percent of the mother bird’s weight. Eighty percent of the eggs hatch. Sixty percent of the egg is made of yoke in contrast to the chicken egg that is only 40 percent yoke.

We stay chicks for four to six months. The next nine months are a very hard time for us. We are very vulnerable and often eaten. Ninety percent of us die during this time.

Our population is also low because we have a lot of enemies. Our main ones are opossums, stoats, ferrets, feral cats, pigs and dogs.

My favorite foods are earthworms, spiders, other insects and fallen fruits. Sometimes I’ll eat eels and frogs.

There are six types of kiwi birds. The three most closely related are the Little Spotted Kiwi, the Great Spotted Kiwi and the Brown Kiwi. The others are the Okarito Kiwi, the Haast Tokoeka Kiwi and the Southern Tokoeka.

I have a very unique feature, nostrils at the end of my beak. I’m the only known bird that actually sniffs out my food.

We mate for life. We live in pairs for up to 30 years, which is longer than many marriages last!

Another reason we are low in population is that when people were first starting to live in New Zealand we were collected. We were caught and put into zoos, museums and even private collections. The European settlers found us “quite unusual.” When cars and motorcycles were invented, we were often hit by them. Our habitat was destroyed to make way for houses, roads, shops and other things. We also got stuck in opossum traps.

Speaking of habitats, we have a variety of homes. We live in homes that are made naturally or made by us. Sometimes we can make our homes in natural holes, for instance, in hollow logs or under the roots of a tree. If we are really picky (and there’s nothing in our price-range) we dig our own holes. The male usually does this.

Kiwi birds are endangered. There are fewer than 100,000 of us left. There may even be as few as 20,000. This is sad because we are very special birds. Did you know that we can run a lot faster than the average human can?

Thank you very much for listening to my story. Hopefully the kiwi bird will be a survivor.

—Kendra Hart, 12, Kansas City, Missouri.

Illustrations on pages 14-15 by Mariel Degley.
"Why are those kids making that sing-song noise out there?" I asked James and Grace, the kids in my house.

“Oh, don’t you know,” they replied. "They’re calling the ‘eassils’ out from the ground."

“Calling termites? They won’t reply!” I said. "Why are they doing it anyway? It’s maddeningly monotonous. Come on, let’s go look."

We slipped into our flip-flops as we went out the door, then craned our necks over the wall. A circle of kids were kneeling on hands and knees, heads touching, over a crack in the dry, hard-packed earth, repeating the “song” for all their worth.

The sing-song ritual happens in South India. Actually, I found out later that termites don’t respond to such calling. My friend, Ejji, in Chennai, says it’s a myth. What really happens is this: At the end of the long, hot, dry season, the first of the monsoon season’s rains come. Thousands of termites that have been hiding from the heat come up out of the ground complete with wings. They fly away to find their mates, so they can return to begin a new colony.

Ejji says the only way to encourage them to come out sooner is to build a fire and smoke them out. But kids still love calling them! When termites come up naturally, kids trap them in an old cloth. Their wings drop off, and then they take them home to fry and eat! The termites can be stored for a month or more after frying.

Who wants to eat termites? People all over the world eat a variety of insects, such as grasshoppers, cicadas, crickets, caterpillars, snails and mealworms.

Australian aborigines have a favorite food called “witchetty grubs,” the caterpillars of giant moths. Witchetty grubs are even being served in some Australian restaurants!

In Papua New Guinea, where my sister lived for a decade, the sago palms are home to the sago grub. These are a savored food after they are broiled or roasted over an open fire.

You’ve probably heard about the great delicacy of the French—snails. Many Asian and African countries also practice entomophagy, the eating of insects.

It’s an old, old practice. In the Bible, way back in the time of Moses, God gave the Israelites a list of foods which are clean and healthy to eat. Locusts, beetles and grasshoppers were all included.

The ancient Greeks and Romans were connoisseurs of entomophagy. Both rich and poor people ate insects, but only the very rich could afford to fatten up stag beetle larvae. They were fed on wine and bran for months before being feasted on by the royal family at a grand banquet.

If you’re saying “yuck,” all that shows is that you didn’t eat creepy crawlies as a kid. Our eating habits develop as we grow up. We accept what we are familiar with and reject anything different. We think that anything unfamiliar can’t be right or good or tasty.

But think about it—insects are not eaten just by people who can’t afford better dishes. There are restaurants in Washington, D.C., which serve stir-fried mealworms and caterpillar crunch! Professor Tom Turpin of Purdue University enjoys “Chocolate Chirpy Chips.” These cookies contain roasted crickets, minus the wings and legs, ground and added to the dough.

Here is maybe the most important fact about entomophagy: nutrition-wise, insects are low in cholesterol, high in vitamins and have more protein than fish, chicken, beef or pork. Also, many insects are cleaner than other creatures. Lobsters and crabs, for example, eat all kinds of rotting material because they are scavengers, but most insects eat only green plants. They are real organic food!

—Ruth Tozer, Matthews Settlement, New Brunswick, Canada.
**Age**

There you are
taking your first step
towards your first kiss
leading to your first heartbeat.

You are 18
scared but excited,
confined but free,
lost but found.
You wonder about the future.

You are then 30
searching for that someone
that special someone
to spend your life with
And the next thing you know...

You are 60
alone and living in an old folks home
playing bridge on Thursdays,
and bowling every Friday.
You wonder
What happened?

—Mary Nguyen,
Squamish, Washington.

**A Stranger**

I once met a stranger
Who couldn’t seem to place himself,
And when I approached him
He disappeared but found a friend nearby.
You were that friend
And I was that stranger.
So when I found you,
I found myself.

—Anita Mahadik,
Elmhurst, New York.

**THE MOON SAILOR**

**God’s Time Line**

**FATHER TIME**

He sails on the
path of the Milky Way,
Throwing his net
to the stars.

A lullaby does he sing,
of planets forgotten.
But in his soul,
another song sings.
The song of life,
and love.

Upon his world,
a spell is said,
and planets
live again.

—Helen Plamp,
17, Superior,
Wisconsin.

Precious and
Deadly
Healer of all
pains and wounds
Destroyer of all
things
Withers anything slowly
Brings swift death to everything
It runs the world
The greatest power of all.

—Jeffrey Chin, Elmhurst, NY.

**Time**

Interesting

What makes the world go ’round?
How many seconds does it take
to jump and come back to the ground?
What’s up there in outer space?
This is what’s so neat about this place,
Everything’s special about this land,
Down to the very last grain of sand.

—Amber Polizzi, 11, Ft. Leavenworth, KS.

Silence that deafens,
in a house with no doors.
A dreamless sleep,
in a world which is numb,
where one can only see,
but not touch.

A clock with no batteries
where time does not pass.
The sun with no spark
becomes the moon with no smile.
A photograph without memories,
soil without roots.

—Vibu Varghesse, 17, Congers, NY.
My Calling

Calm is not a trait I live for
Energy and movement
A mouse on a wheel
Running in circles
And squeaking
In despair
Relax, little mouse, slow down
I express myself through something different
It opens up to me
And comes to take a bite
Out of my life
But I instead
Swallow it whole
I do not simply stand there
While you stare
I leap and I hop
I wrap myself
In the red velvet curtains
I dance my words
Not expecting much from you
But just having fun
Enjoying myself
To the fullest
Life, I will not let you
Take away my energy
I will continue
With no quest
I realized what I am
To do in this world
Look at me
Listen to me
I can sing
I can play
I can perform
All of these wonderful things
Concealed on a wooden floor
Surrounded by plastic chairs
Ecstasies
All on one stage.

—Virginia Tice, 14, Oakland, California.

Dreams

My dreams might be so silly,
To travel far and wide,
To learn other cultures,
New and old.
I want to be a teacher,
And teach our younger generations,
To read and write.
I want to write,
Stories and poetry,
About the dreams of children,
Who make me think of me.
But above all, Those dreams you think so silly,
And laugh at,
Are a right.
A right you cannot take from me,
Even with a prison key.
Chain me down,
Lock me up,
My mind will always be free,
And as long as my mind is free,
I have the right to be me.

—Jessica Sutton, 17, Hickory Creek, Texas.

Life Will Go On

My sister closes her eyes,
as she lays on the hospital bed.
Her time has now come,
all too fast and too soon.
A drunk driver totaled her life,
as he swerved out of control.
But life will go on.
A silent wind blows over the open field,
blowing the leaves away from her grave.
And with my eyes full of tears,
I lay down on the soft earth and cry,
as I remember her life.
But life will go on.
Life will go on,
even though the sad times may last
as long as life endures.
But we must go on.
Surely life will go on
as long as I endure.
Life will go on,
for a death cannot end a life.
It can only alter it.

—Laura Jochetz, 14, Plano, Texas.

Hawaii

Coconut palm trees on the beach,
Watching the sunsets that could never be reached.
Sandy beaches, waves breaking on shore,
Hawaii known as paradise
is about a whole lot more.
Being with your families, roasting Kalua pigs,
Over the fire of an imu that our fathers sweat to dig.
Hiking up the mountains on the trails of Koke’e
Make sure not to get car sick over on the way.
Hawaiian hula dancers, swaying side to side.
Calling out your name, the locals never hide.
It’s all about the love we share
Here, on the islands, we truly care!

—Latoya Lazaro, Kekaha, Hawaii.

 Skipping Stones

Vol. 14 no. 2
Growing up, I attended both public and private schools. I spent most of my grade school years at the Eugene Waldorf School, and my first two high school years were spent at the local public school. People often ask me what the differences were, and if I liked one better than the other. I can certainly name the differences, but choosing one over the other is a much harder task.

I attended the Waldorf School for 10 years. There are over 700 Waldorf Schools worldwide. Rudolf Steiner started them in Germany. He based the curriculum on anthroposophy, the study of man. There is a lot of art incorporated into the classes, with an aim to create a natural transition from play to work.

Reading is not taught in the classroom until second and third grade. The theory behind this is to allow children to develop hand-eye coordination first. This is done through creative activity, such as knitting, painting, or movement to sound and words (eurhythm). The children who are eager to read can begin to learn at home, and many do. But those children who are not ready are given that extra time. By the eighth grade, I no longer had to worry about the academic transition; Waldorf students are caught up with any other student at that grade level. Instead I had to adjust to the everyday details such as lockers, letter grades and scantrons. The first time a teacher handed me a scantron I had no idea what to do with it. We were asked to do a survey of our science background. I kept looking at my neighbor to see if I was doing it right. He probably thought I was so weird trying to cheat on a personal survey!

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I chose to study in the International High School (IHS) program at South Eugene High School, which offered smaller classes and a different cur-
sick by worrying about straight A's. At Waldorf, the teachers knew each one of us well, so they didn’t use grades to mark our progress. When it all comes down to it, grades mean very little as long as you’ve learned. No one in my class had any trouble getting into the college of their choice. Some were even accepted on scholarship.

The only trouble I had in college was choosing a major course of study. I wanted to learn everything. Perhaps that is why I chose to study art. It’s important to explore all subjects and perspectives. Art allows for that and, in fact, encourages variety and fresh points of view. In art there are no right or wrong answers. Each experience in life brings a new perspective. Now, looking back on my academic life, I can appreciate all the transitions and adaptations I made. People often ask me what I want to do with my art, insinuating the question, “What are you going to do with your life?” I answer, “As much as I possibly can.”

—Laurel Loughran, recently graduated from UO, Eugene. She regularly contributes her art to Skipping Stones.
The Eagle
Floating in the flat air
he combs the jungle
spread before him, a map.
The eagle reads
and counts the contours
that swallow the shivery rat,
or panicking lizard.
His learned eyes brush
and sift the chaff of life
hidden in still contours.
The eagle reads his map with
cautioned eyes,
eyes that turn over a new leaf
to fan jungle nerves
with blazing claws.
Look, the eagle, spread before
empty skies.
His ways are thus,
roaming the sky
reading the jungle
and royal in motioned grace,
while hearts swell and wither
with the flap of mighty wings.
—Le-Roy Pedzisayi, 14, Harare, Zimbabwe. “I am a Shona. We consult traditional doctors when we are sick or when someone dies mysteriously. We also believe in appeasing the spirits of the dead. The spirits of our ancestors keep us from harm. We believe that there is a God whom we call Mwari. We pray to our ancestors, Mudzimu, to communicate with God.”

A Balance
Water flows over the cliff,
Glittering as it pounds the rocks below.
Purifying, changing.

Flame rises around the tree,
Shimmering as it licks at the air.
Consuming, changing.

Flame destroys water:
Boils it.

Water destroys flame:
Drowns it.
—Ria Bond, 16, St. Maries, Idaho.

Jellyfish
I am very light and thin.
I have many different colors on my body.
And if you touch me the wrong way,
I will hurt you.
_Te voy a picar._

I feel like jelly.
I have no face, or expressions.
I live in salt water.
I don’t look like anything you have ever seen
_No me veo como nada que hayas visto jamás._

If you take me out of water
I would dry out.
_Me voy a secar._

I am a jellyfish.
_Soy una medusa._

—Morgan Powell, 12, Gardena, California.

Flower Power
Sunflowers are not just any old ordinary flower,
They give me power to climb a huge tower.
Once I reach the top,
I would smell a beautiful sunflower.

Lillies are very sweet,
I can’t say they can be beat
by any fragrance used in bath or shower.

When I see a rose, it tickles me.
I spray them with a hose
or place them between my toes.
Ouch! What a prick!" Daisies make me lazy and crazy
One day I came home,
my daisies were gone
So I couldn’t act crazy or lazy.
—Darnisha Tannehill, 11, Alexandria, Louisiana.

EXTENDED DEADLINE!
The 2002 Youth Honor Awards are now due by 20 June.
**Pleiades**

The night is my sole companion,  
the darkness is my every comfort.  
Every star in the sky is a tear I have shed,  
and the moon’s light comes from my frozen breath.  
This is a place of sorrow and joy.  
Beauty swirls in the midst of death.

The crystal-like song of the Seven Sisters  
fills my ears and my heart with joy.  
I laugh with joy as Orion chases them across the sky,  
while the dipper pours wine,  
and the great bear dances with the queen.  
I dream the night away.

Suddenly the lion roars, and Draco spouts  
the pinkish-orange flame of morning at our eyes.

As the others vanish one by one to their light-covered beds,  
I remain awake, wishing every night could be this way.

—Ashley Esther, 14, Rockford, Michigan.

"The girl dreams about being in the sky with her favorite constellations. Pleiades, also known as the Seven Sisters, is her favorite. In Greek mythology, the sisters are chased by Orion, who was a great pursuer of women."

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**Chrysalis**

Two flowers transformed my garden.  
Two flowers that never shed their chrysalises before.  
Thyme and forget-me-nots.  
The way was perilous and hard.

—Jane Warren, 11, Westwood, Massachusetts.

"Chrysalis is about two flowers in my garden that pollinated together and formed their own breed, just like people from different races can marry."

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**Seasons**

In winter snowflakes gently tumble  
While frost slowly covers the cold ground  
Tiny snow sprites do beautiful snow waltzes  
That sometimes turn into violent blizzards.

Lovely spring bouquets make a fragrant breeze  
Dainty butterflies flutter gracefully in the air  
Beautiful ribbons are twisted around a tall May pole  
While woodland nymphs peek carefully around trees.

When summer is here the lilacs bloom  
Girls make flower garlands to dance with  
Little fairies flitter around peaceful meadows  
Enjoying the long, lazy summer afternoons.

Summer gradually becomes autumn  
Gentle storms blow sweet melodious songs  
Colorful leaves frolic playfully around town  
The most beautiful leaves do a pas de deux in the sky.

—Jessica Liu, 9, Sandy, Utah.
A Moment Frozen in Time

Treading silently over the carpet of pine needles, I creep softly through the woods. I can smell the clean, fresh scent of the recent rains in the breeze caressing my cheek, As the sun reaches down through the leaves to draw shifting patterns on the forest floor. Nearby, birds warble softly to each other, fish splash in the gurgling brook, Squirrels whistle and screech as they scold me... And then I see her. My first deer. A young doe drinking quietly from the brook, bronze except for the belly and chin. As the wind blows my scent away from her, pine needles underfoot muffle my footsteps. I raise the rifle. As I turn off the safety, the doe hears the click and turns.

I take aim, tense myself, and then stop. She is looking at me through her dark liquid eyes. Ocean-deep, they gaze at me until I find myself lost within them. Unable to move or think, I can only stare. For a second that lasts an eternity, we stand facing each other. The woods are silent; nothing is moving. It is a moment frozen in time. Then, without warning, she breaks the gaze and bounds away gracefully, silent as a spirit. I catch a glimpse of the white underside of her tail before she disappears into the trees. I leave the gun on the forest floor and go home.

—Alice Yu, 12, Gibsonia, Pennsylvania.

Trees

Standing here
Victims of some silent holocaust
Reach upward
Groping for the unpassionate sky
Losing hope
Yet they stay for ages eternal
Stripped soulless
Still they cry out against their fate
Trembling giants
Cowering strength that yet guides the world
Role models
Mother Nature should be so kind

Nothing lives
Everything eventually falls from Her grace
Losing battle
Strength is merely a facade
Dying world
Will you remember those fallen before you?
The trees.

—Susan Marlin, 15, Flint, Michigan. “This poem came to me one day in a burst of anger, when everything looked especially dark and gloomy. I decided to propose another view on the age-old assumption that trees are a symbol of strength.”
The Rev. Elizabeth Ketcham of the Wy’east Unitarian Universalist Church, Portland, Oregon, shared the following story in her sermon:

A grandfather was talking to his grandson about the September 11th tragedy. The grandfather said, “I feel as if I have two wolves fighting in my heart. One wolf is the vengeful, angry, violent one. The other wolf is the loving, compassionate one.”

The grandson asked him, “Which wolf will win the fight in your heart?”

The grandfather answered, “The one I feed.”

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The Day I Woke Up!

Have you ever felt like something was just not right with you or that you were a little different? At times I used to feel that way. You see my family is very special. My mother is a beautiful woman with brown skin, dark hair and ebony eyes. My father has light skin, dark blond hair and gorgeous, green eyes.

As I started to get older, I would notice “the look.” First they look at me and smile. Then they take a quick glance at my mother, then turn again to look at my father. Then they check his ring finger to see if he really is the father of that girl with the light green eyes. Those were the moments when I felt a little weird. What were they looking for? What did they see? Why were they always looking at me?

One day the answer came. They are looking, but they don’t see. They could look for years and still not understand. They would never see how special I am. They will never know the joy of coming from two parents who love each other the way mine do.

That was the day I woke up and realized that I am not strange, not even a little weird but special. I am a blend of wisdom, strength and love. It takes wisdom to look beyond our differences; it takes strength to bring those differences together, and it takes love to keep it that way.

—Charmayne Rozenek, Erie, Penn. “I have been married for 13 years. We are an inter-racial couple, with a six-year-old son who is wonderful. We have overcome many challenges, different views and opinions, and we have only grown stronger for it.”

Are You Jealous of Me?

Are you jealous of me because my complexion is real dark? If that is what you see when you look at me, it’s not worth looking. Are you jealous of me because I am bigger than you? Are you jealous of me because I have a better attitude? Are you jealous of me because I know how to handle things? Does my style offend you? Does it come as a surprise that I have a glowing light right in the middle of my eyes? Does my education upset you and knock you around? Does my personality stump you deep in the ground? I am proud of who I am and my complexion. I am proud of where I stand and keep going in the right direction. I am proud of my glasses and dark-skinned face. I am proud of who I am and never want to be replaced. You may pick at me and call me names like “four-eyed beast,” “charcoal,” “wavyhead” and more. But at least I know where I stand and what I’m reaching for. I am proud of who I am, and I thank the Lord.

—Jessica Youmans, Gr. 5, Allendale, So. Carolina.

Hazard Pay

Because Daddy worked where there was radiation, toxic chemicals and genetically engineered organisms, his family clung to him as he departed for work. “It’s okay, sweetheart, I’ll be alright,” he said as he released his wife’s grip on him. Bending down to his little daughter, “I’ll be back, baby, let go of Daddy’s leg. You must realize that the radiation from the check-out counter is harmless, and the toxic chemicals are all in containers on the gardening shelf. And the organisms in the yogurt are perfectly safe.” With his family reassured, the box-boy at the supermarket went off to work.

—Roger Coleman, Laguna Niguel, California.
I want to share a remarkable and unforgettable story—with a surprising ending.

A group of pilgrims crossed the desert in a camel caravan to reach the holy city. After days of hot travel, they saw clouds of dust being raised by an approaching caravan. They headed toward a large sand dune and pitched camp at its base. The other caravan, which was actually a band of robbers, stopped at the dune’s opposite side. At sunset the leaders of each group climbed the sand dune in order to determine who was camped on the opposite side, friend or foe.

The pilgrims waited prayerfully until their leader descended from the dune’s summit. His face was visibly aglow in reverence and awe. Finally, he began to share what had transpired:

“Not in a temple, not in the holy city, but in the desert, I met the holiest man, a stranger whose name I do not know. We knew nothing of each other’s languages, so I drew a circle in the sand, showing that we are all one humanity. In response, he drew a line through the circle showing the two parts, the earthly and the spiritual world. With my finger outstretched, I made a sweeping motion, stressing that there is only one God. He brought forth an onion from his pocket to illustrate that there are many layers of spiritual insight. I wanted to let him know that I deeply understood. So, hardly knowing what I was doing, I ate the onion in gratitude.

I reached into my pocket and was thrilled to find an egg. I offered it to him as a symbol of unity, yolk and white, united in the shell, the shell which is God. He was too humble to touch the egg. Rather, he held my gaze for a long time and then retreated. Never have I met such a holy man!”

Meanwhile, on the other side of the hill, the leader of the robbers came running down his side of the dune. Nervous and agitated, he shouted to his men, “Comrades! Hear this! We must retreat immediately! I met their leader at the top of the dune. He drew a circle in the sand to show that we are surrounded. I drew a line through the middle of the circle to show him that we could easily cut them in half. He raised his hand, pointing a single finger, telling me that he could take us all on by himself. So I held out an onion and showed him the bitter tears of death and defeat he had chosen. And do you know what he did? He ATE it! He then held up an egg to show how fragile our position is. Quickly, we must retreat in the greatest of haste!”

The pilgrim, who was engaged in a spiritual quest, interpreted the encounter from his religious perspective. On the other hand, the leader of the gang of robbers interpreted the same events as a show of each side’s strength to determine who would win a physical confrontation.

This story has helped me understand that we tend not to see things as they are, but rather we see them as we are.

In Peace,

Illustrations by Laurel Loughran

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

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Learning a foreign language is much more than learning the grammar and a few phrases. Every culture has its own way of looking at the world. People not only speak different languages but behave differently as well.

Body language is different everywhere. This might make you feel uncomfortable when talking to a foreigner, without your knowing why. Latin people tend to stand close and touch you slightly while talking, but this is not considered acceptable by North Americans. A direct look is considered appropriate by Arabs, Southern Europeans and Latin Americans. On the other hand, Asians and Northern Europeans avoid direct eye contact. In China a quick sticking out of your tongue shows you feel upset, but in the U.S. sticking out your tongue shows you don’t have manners.

Also, eating in a foreign country can be difficult at the beginning. If you visit Italy, Spain, France or Latin America your breakfast will consist of coffee, milk, croissants, toast, butter and marmalade, and you’ll have supper late in the evening. In Korean restaurants you may be served dog meat. In French restaurants a variety of cheeses will be brought to your table after the meal.

So, to enjoy life in another culture and make the most of it, it is wise to learn the basics of that culture and language before going there. How?

1. Take some classes to understand the basic grammar of the language and share the goofy feeling of producing unfamiliar sounds and not knowing what to say.

2. Play educational games on the computer. Have fun while being tutored by cyber characters, and best of all, nobody laughs at your mistakes.

3. Never try to translate into your native language. When you don’t understand something, look for more information, talk to somebody, look at pictures. Always associate the situation with the suitable words for the occasion. To greet a friend in Spanish one says, “hola,” but when greeting a teacher it is more appropriate to say “buenos días.”

4. Don’t worry about advanced grammar. Mastery will come with time. Get your message across with gestures and point at things when you don’t know what to call them.

5. Practice dialogues with someone and record them. Then, listen to yourself and discover which are your weaknesses.

6. Surf the net to find websites where you can chat with native speakers. Take classes online and find songs and texts written in the foreign language. Songs are great because certain phrases are repeated over and over, so they are easily remembered.

7. Meet foreign students through your local exchange programs. Maybe you’ll even have a foreign guest at home or in your school. This will be a great opportunity to practice the foreign language and make everlasting friends.

As you master the foreign language and are aware that people have different life perspectives in different parts of the world, you are ready for an enjoyable intercultural experience that will touch you deeply.

—Monica Di Santi, ESL teacher and translator, Quilpué, Chile.

A Few Online Resources

- www.spanishschool.com (one-on-one Spanish lessons)
- www.musicapaedia.com (Spanish through songs)
- www.studyspanish.com (online tutorials for beginners)
- www.french-kiss.ca (fun and easy way to learn French)
- www.tlwcm.com (French and Spanish software & cassettes)
- www.frenchcreations.com (French through music)
- www.educorock.com (French & Spanish songs and videos)
- www.amy.hi-ho.ne.jp/masashi/index2.html (Kana and the basics of Japanese grammar)
- sp.cis.iwate-u.ac.jp/sp/lesson/j/doc/japanese.html (Spoken Japanese)
- www.langexpress.com (Spanish, French, German, Italian & Japanese flashcards)
- www.italianlanguagelessons.com (spoken Italian)
- www.hebrewworld.com (multimedia Hebrew/Jewish prayers)
- www.davka.com/cgi-bin/category.cgi?category=5 (Hebrew)
- www.oideas-gael.com (Irish language and culture)
What's in a Name?

Seventh grade students from Cambodia who are studying English as a Second Language in Oronoco, Minnesota, share the meanings of their names...

My name, Kao, has two different meanings. The meaning my parents chose is sabertooth. I feel great about my name because it is my Hmong name. It says who I am to my family and my culture.

—Kao Xiong

My name, Sitha, means flower in Khmer. My parents gave me that name because they thought I looked like a flower when I was born. Nobody else in my family has this name.

I feel good about my name because no other kids that I know have the same name. I also like it because it was given to me by my parents. It's a unique name.

—Sitha Mam

I don't know what Kosal means, but I know that Sal means "what is left.” My mom and dad agreed to name me that. I have an American name, Peter, and a Cambodian name, Kosal. I do not want to change my name. I like it the way it is.

—Peter Kosal Van

Hmong Games

One of the games we play in Hmong culture is a rock game. The players throw a rock up in the air and pick up other rocks on the ground. Players try to pick up as many rocks as they can and catch the rock that was thrown before it hits the ground.

Another game, ball tossing, is a very important part of celebrations such as the Hmong New Year (celebrated in December). This is a game where a man and woman get together and toss a ball. During the ball tossing, they talk to each other about themselves or sing a song. Younger kids can do this too. The only problem is that you can't ball toss with a person of the same last name as you because ball tossing can lead to an engagement if the people like each other. Hmong people must marry outside of their family.

—Kao Xiong, grade 7, Oronoco, Minnesota
The Other Side of

Here in the U.S. we often hear the melodious sounds of Spanish in stores, schools and neighborhoods, but most of us only see this side of Mexican migration. How does migration affect villages on the other side of the border?

In the southern state of Oaxaca, Mexico, nearly everyone has family members or friends who have gone to work allá, in the U.S., el Norte. The kinds of jobs they find include picking fruit, spraying pesticide, landscaping, roofing, dish washing and cooking. The family members they leave behind worry about them during their dangerous, and sometimes deadly, trek across the desert borderlands to avoid la migra, the immigration officers.

While I taught English in Oaxaca for two years, I noticed that people spoke of their loved ones allá sometimes with pride, sometimes with fear and sometimes with deep sadness. Families’ opinions about migration are mixed. On one hand, they enjoy receiving gifts like camcorders, sneakers and baseball caps. And, more importantly, the money sent helps them buy food and pay bills. But this financial help often comes at the cost of breaking up families.

My friend, Baruc, who grew up in Yolotepec, a village in the mountains of Oaxaca, is the only one of his brothers who has not gone to work in the U.S. His younger brother, José Luis, left as a 16-year-old for Chicago, where he worked in a pizza restaurant. He returned seven years later, decked out in a Chicago Bulls T-shirt and armed with a basic English vocabulary—mainly consisting of words like “mushrooms, extra cheese, no onions.” It was hard to learn English allá, he says, because his co-workers spoke Spanish most of the time.

Baruc’s oldest brother, Gerardo, has been gone for 10 years, with his last visit six years ago. Although his 12-year-old son, Idael, appreciates the gifts his father sends, his Uncle Baruc is more like a father to him.

Mexican Migration

Baruc, Idael, Maria and I take a walk along Yolotepec’s dusty roads after a fun morning of picking pitayas, thorny cactus fruits with sweet insides. As we weave around turkeys and chickens, I ask Idael if he will ever migrate to the U.S.

He shyly shakes his head. “No, I won’t go to work allá because I don’t want to leave my family behind. Maybe I’ll go as a tourist,” he adds. But to get a tourist visa you need to have a well-paying job and a large savings account, both of which are nearly impossible to obtain here in Yolotepec, where jobs in agriculture and construction pay only $5 a day.

Twirling her finger around her long braid, Maria softly announces that she too would like to stay in her tierra, her homeland. She misses her two older brothers who work in Chicago. I’ve noticed that she seems comfortable here in Yolotepec and is amazingly skilled at climbing ladders to carefully pluck pitayas from tall cacti. Yolotepec has a deserted feel, and as we walk, we pass only occasional old man leading donkeys or goats. We visit Enedina, a midwife, who tells us wistfully, “There aren’t any babies here anymore, hardly any children.” Her fingers nimbly weave a palm hat as she sighs, “Everyone has left for la ciudad or el Norte.”

Baruc is proud of his brother, José Luís, who has decided to stay in Yolotepec. After seven years of sending and saving money from Chicago, he wants to settle in his village. He has become engaged to the nurse of the local clinic and is now running a small corner store and planting his fields. Later that day, as we eat juicy pitayas in the shade, José Luís takes a break, leaving his two oxen standing in the field. He sits on a rock next to us, his Chicago Bulls T-shirt damp with sweat. Fanning himself with a palm hat, he comments that his new life here will be as tough as dish washing in Chicago, only in a different way. But at least here he will be with his family, in his tierra.

—Laura Resau, teacher, Fort Collins, Colorado.
Amy could not believe she was sitting on the beach in Mexico listening to the hypnotic waves break peacefully against the shore. Amy had convinced her father she was capable of driving her old van across the border to attend the juried art festival. It was late afternoon, and she was enjoying her relaxation time before the busy weekend. The two suntanned boys nearby were digging a big hole. The sand spraying upwards reminded Amy of two Labrador puppies. A tray of fruit balancing on the vendor’s head looked tempting. Cups of luscious pineapple, mango and kiwi. So many things to sketch. Amy decided to sketch the cartoon-like building along the boardwalk. It was leaning a little to the left, a wild-colored building with three floors. On the first floor was a busy cafe. Loud music played in the background. The distinctive thud of the bass drum pounded constantly, while a very bored busboy threw dishes into a tub.

Amy’s drawing was complete. She looked up and noticed a woman who was obviously out of place among the scantily-clad tourists. A black shawl fell across the side of the woman’s face. Amy could see the woman was heading toward the abandoned hole the two boys had dug. She leaped off her towel and ran to warn the woman. The old woman was startled by Amy’s rescue attempt. The awkward moment had Amy looking over the woman’s head instead of at her deformed face.

There was something familiar about the woman’s eyes, haunting in a sense. Amy shrugged and proceeded to fill in the hole, sliding the cold, wet sand with her feet. Amy watched the mysterious woman until she was just a dot on the landscape.

Amy went back to her hotel. She telephoned her father and assured him she was fine. The art festival was being held in the plaza. Amy would have to be there early the next morning to set up her tent.

A surprise waited for her when she opened her van. “EEEEEEERK!” Amy screeched. A group of cockroaches was enjoying the burrito Amy had left on the dashboard.

Amy crossed her fingers and hoped her van would start. On the third try it started, sounding like playing cards clipped to a bicycle spoke. The tent went up easily, and Amy hung her
paintings salon style, one above the other. The last detail was putting the banner up—big, red letters reading “Quemada,” Amy’s last name. Amy and her parents moved from Mexico when she was a baby. She loved hearing stories about her family’s past in Mexico. Her father gave her a few photographs. One of a small girl in a white, silk dress. No one knew who the child in the photograph was. Amy would often study the photograph and wonder.

Crowds were pouring into the plaza, enjoying the aisles of colorful art displays. Amy was pleased; she had sold her drawing of the leaning building.

Standing across the row of tents was the old woman in the black shawl. The woman was staring at Amy’s banner. “Why are you so curious about my last name?” Amy asked. The woman trembled as she told the story about her uncle Valenzuela’s firecracker stand. The woman explained that long ago the stand caught on fire. Fireworks exploded everywhere. No one knew she was trapped inside the stand. Afterward, when uncle Valenzuela would walk through the village, the people would whisper, “Aqui viene Quemada.” (Here comes the burnt one.) The nickname continued for future generations.

Amy had heard this story but never believed it to be true. She was told a child died in that fire.

The woman said she was given away because of her deformed face.

The woman pulled a picture from her bag, the same picture Amy had wondered about for years. She was the little girl in the white, silk dress.

After spending several hours catching up on family history, Amy painted the woman’s portrait without her burn marks. The painting was so stunning, it was accepted by a very prestigious gallery. Amy enjoyed her success as a painter. She was able to trade in her old van for a newer model that allowed her to travel to many art festivals.

Long after the woman passed away, Amy would think about her words, “Seek the corazón first; the rest will fall into place.” The woman’s heart inspired the award-winning painting. Amy will never forget her wise words and the firecracker stand that was her family’s humble beginnings.

—Maureen Quemada, Ruidoso, New Mexico.
More art by Maureen on the back cover.
I tighten the lid on my soft drink. A chilly wind moves through my light denim jacket. It seems too late in May for it to be cold like this, even though it’s nearly 10 p.m. I lean back to look at the million tiny stars. I am able to point out the big dipper by myself for the first time. It makes me wish I could remember the names of some other constellations. Then my attention is drawn away. The fireworks will be starting soon.

“How long?” I lean forward to ask my sister. She tells me that there’s only about a minute. I sit back.

Little voices begin to call out from a nearby blanket, “Ten...nine...eight...”

The sky lights up at the cry of “one.” I feel like I should congratulate them on their perfect timing. My sister and I jump up, grabbing each other’s hands, and run toward the cliff before us.

As the orange and silver bombs burst, a humongous flock of birds rush at us from every direction. They are nearly blocking out the fireworks.

“Come back. Sit down,” my mother calls.

I move backward without looking away from the sparkles appearing like speeding constellations. The birds continue their constant migration over and around us as I feel the damp grass beneath me.

I can’t help thinking of how, for as long as I can remember, we have had the tradition of coming to the island. In fact, just an hour ago, my mother told me that she brought me here when I was only a few days old. Through all those years I’ve never seen the birds making such a ruckus about the fireworks. It’s something different.

I can faintly pick up the tune of music playing on Parliament Hill across the river. Flashes continue to illuminate the sky.

I begin to think of all the other changes happening on the island. Years ago my family would stretch out on our blanket closer to the water, to the right of the trees, path and totem pole. At first the only sign I saw of others on the island was the tee-pees that have since been taken down. They had about as much cultural significance to most visitors as the bridge, a picture of a time gone by and a symbol of change.

I remember in other years seeing inhabitants of the area holding signs that read, “Please stay off our sacred land.” Patrons of the Victoria Day celebration were asked to leave. I remember I was afraid. Why? Thinking back I can’t say for sure.

I can see the fence now from the corner of my eye. It is on a spot that once was bare, except for a few trees. It first appeared several years ago, surrounding a small area. Over the years the fence grew taller and wider until it blocked off most of the part of the island we commonly visited.

Since then fewer people have made the short journey here—my family and only one or two others this year. I can only assume that they are feeling cheated out of their rightful place on the island. The people behind the fence must feel the same way. I wasn’t a very big fan of sharing when I was little, but I wish it would happen here. I can’t help but sympathize with both sides. We all hold the same fear of what might exist on either side of the fence. Maybe we all have a good reason.

I think of how I felt when we arrived earlier tonight. We were reluctant to get out of the car at first, seeing how much the fence had grown and seeing mostly darkness to its left. We were afraid.

My mother had pointed out the blue SUV a few parking spaces to our right. My father matter-of-factly stated that it must belong to another family of celebrators because “The Indians do not drive cars.”

Only when we saw dancing sparklers belonging to other visitors did we lose this feeling and come out from behind our shield.

It bothers me that my father said that. He doesn’t really know about them. I continue watching the fireworks. I wonder if he is afraid.

The fireworks explode larger and larger on top of each other in the grand finale. I see a small firework shoot from the far side of the fence. One of those who built the wall has emerged from behind it to join peacefully in our celebration. I guess they’re not as scared as I expected them to be. If they don’t feel afraid then why should we? I’m not anymore.

—Emily Cumming, 15, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada.
Airport Headaches
Arriving at Mumbai Airport,
My head splitting from:
  hunger.
  customs.
  baggage claim.
Of course our bags were the last to arrive.
Jumbling in a crowd where
voices scream and yell
in Bengali, Hindi and Marathi.
Babies squall.
Ceiling fans and brats whine.
  My mom barks,
  “Watch our luggage!”
I wish I could yell back at her,
or stomp away.
Sweat pours off my forehead,
Everyone gives my shorts a dirty look.
I glare back at them.
It makes me feel just like I do
when Texans stare at my sari.
My dry throat wants a Coke.
  Even water will do.
Porters scramble toward us.
I flop down on the luggage
and wish I were home.
But when my mother
  pivots,
  smiles,
  and hugs nanaji and naniji,
I realize she is home.
Suddenly my headache evaporates.
No longer exhausted, I jump up and squeal,
  “Hi, Grandpa and Grandma!”
—Gazal Tuparia, Indian American, 18, Houston, TX.

A Letter from Zimbabwe
Va Mugabe murume pane varime, munhu pane vanwe yanhu. That was for those of you who do not understand Shona. Why can’t you learn Shona, the language of Zimbabwe, but you can learn English, French, Chinese and so forth? Shona is my native language, but I am trying to improve my writing in English. As they say, people learn from their mistakes, and he who doesn’t want to be taught is nothing but a fool.

I would like to share my views about my people and country since I love them both. I do hope you learn more and enjoy my letter as much as I enjoy your magazine.

Zimbabwe, my homeland, has a heritage filled with sorrow and joy. Like many others, Zimbabweans had to fight for what they thought was right—fight, not with hands or guns, but with the heart, soul and mind. When I think of fighting, I think of our great leader, President Gabriel Robert Mugabe. To me he is a hero, a great spirit who fights for what is right and stands up for his beliefs, dreams, hopes and country. He tries to make right what is wrong and return the peace and beauty that was once here. Most of all, he tries to regain our heritage, or what is left of it. People are throwing our culture in the bushes and taking other people's cultures. I say shame on these people. Be proud that you have a leader who cares. Remember not to judge our president by what you hear about him. As they say, don’t judge a book by its cover.

People say wonder is like a common language that everyone speaks but no one understands. I say wonder is just the easiest path when one’s hopes and dreams seem hard. Why not work hard and reap what you have sowed rather than just sitting down and imagining cabbages and other crops growing in your plot? Stop wondering; get that brain of yours working and those hands moving! Make it happen; make it real!

—Shiela Muzhamba, 15, Harare, Zimbabwe.

"Hare and Tortoise" Hare represents a good thinker, wise but lazy. Tortoise represents those who are small but can take care of themselves, wise but slow. These are two animals used in my country's stories.
—Shiela Muzhamba, 15, Zimbabwe
Olympic Spring Clean: To prepare for the 2008 Olympics in Beijing, China wants to improve air quality in the city. Cleaning the air will not be easy, but several strategies are in play. First, they plan to cut emissions from vehicles by switching to cleaner fuels. Beijing’s 60,000 taxis will be converted to natural gas from petroleum. Secondly, more trees will be planted each year so that by the Olympics, half of Beijing will be covered by trees. Forty-two percent of Beijing’s 1,000 square miles already has tree cover. The city plans to create green beltways on each side of the 10 main highways, five rivers and railroads. China used to plant seedlings. Now the trees are being raised in greenhouses and nurseries and are set out as 20-foot-high saplings.

Global Response is a letter-writing network for environmental activism. At the request of indigenous, environmental and human rights organizations around the world, the group develops “actions” that bring attention to specific, urgent threats to the environment. They invite us to write letters to individuals in the corporations and governments who have the power and responsibility to prevent environmental destruction. Their Young Environmentalist’s Actions and Eco-Club Actions educate and motivate school students to be active Earth stewards and global citizens. For instance, the current newsletter features an action to protect Kenya’s forests. Teachers’ Kits are available. www.globalresponse.org.

Rideau Canal Skateway: Every year from December through February, the Rideau Canal which stretches through Ottawa, Canada’s capital city, freezes over and transforms itself into the Rideau Canal Skateway, the world’s longest skating rink! With staff working around the clock to maintain its ice surface, the skateway offers five miles of uninterrupted skating surface, the equivalent of 20 Olympic-sized skating rinks. Heated shelters, skate and sled rentals, skate sharpening services, rest areas and food concessions are set up along the banks of the skateway to welcome the more than one million skaters who take to the ice each winter season. Many Ottawa residents use the skateway to commute to work or school. Skaters with internet access can log on to the skateway’s website to get a daily reading of weather and ice conditions. You can even see the skateway thanks to the website’s Canal Cam, which provides an updated visual image every 10 seconds.

The skateway plays a particularly important role during the first three weeks in February when it becomes the focal point for Ottawa’s annual winter festival, Winterlude. At that time, activities on the skateway include bed races, hot air balloons, snowshoeing and figure skating shows. The festival also features world-class ice and snow sculpting competitions where professional and amateur carvers from around the world come and put their talent to the test. Kids also have the opportunity to participate in snow sculpting workshops where they learn to make their favorite animals out of snow, with the help of professional sculptors.

For more information on the Rideau Canal and summer activities, visit: www.rideauinfo.com/canal/ or www.parcsCanada.gc.ca/parks/ontario/rideau_canal/rideau_canal_e.htm

—Anne Renaud, Montréal, Québec, Canada.

Amazing Amazon: The remodeled Amazon Park public swimming pool in Eugene, Oregon, is not just a great place to swim on a hot summer day. Not only does it offer four diverse pools and several watersides, it saves energy with a large bank of solar hot water heaters. The swimming pools have wheelchair ramps, and the shower/changing rooms offer maximum comfort and choices for families and people with different heights and privacy needs. Although it is not as ecological as some of the European swimming ponds, which use non-chlorine, aquatic plants as filters, it is still a good example of incorporating diversity!
On the Trail Made of Dawn: Native American Creation Stories, retold by M.L. Webster (Linnet). Magical stories about the beginning of time from various Native American groups, feature characters such as Beaver, Raven and Mother Earth. Each story includes a description of the tribe it came from. Inuit, Makah and Cherokee are just a few of the 13 groups represented. All ages. ISBN: 0-208-02497-2.

Buddhism for Beginners by Thubten Chodron (Snow Lion). A Buddhist nun explains the fundamentals of the Buddhist path in a direct and engaging manner. This question-and-answer style book covers areas, such as, the Buddha, meditation, karma, emotions and prayer. Foreword by His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama. Ages 12 and up. ISBN: 1-55939-153-7.

Osceola: Memories of a Sharecropper’s Daughter Ed. Alan Govenar, Illust. Shane Evans (Hyperion). Alan Govenar interviewed Osceola Mays over the course of 15 years and compiled the fascinating stories from her youth into this book. Born in 1909, Mays, the granddaughter of slaves, talks of her experiences with racism, family and school while growing up in eastern Texas. Beautiful artwork accompanies each story. All ages. ISBN: 0-786-80407-6.


Walking the World in Wonder: A Children’s Herbal by Ellen Evert Hopman, Photos by Steven Foster (Healing Arts). This beginner’s field guide is prefaced with a history of seasonal celebrations. Plants are arranged by season and presented with respect to the balance of nature. Each bold photograph of a plant is accompanied by a page of description and information on its edible or medicinal values. Ages 5 to 10. ISBN: 0-89281-878-6.

Tears of Joy by Barbara Behm, Illust. Ellen Anderson (Wayword). This is the story of Carly, a girl who is abused by her father. This book doesn’t shy away from a serious topic, and it is wonderfully illustrated. The story can help parents and teachers tell young children what to do if child abuse occurs. Ages 5 to 10. ISBN: 0-9669647-0-5.

The Shape of Betts Meadow: A Wetlands Story by Meghan N. Sayres, Illust. Joanne Friar (Millbrook). In this true story, Dr. Gunnar Holmquist and his mother, Lavinia, purchase Betts Meadow. They recreate a wetland that used to be there a hundred years ago. We see that each one of us can make a difference in the world. Ages 5 to 8. ISBN: 0-7613-2115-2.


For Parents

Are You Lowering Your Child’s Self-Esteem—Accidently?

In his new book, How to Build Rock Solid Kids, (ISBN: 0-9703577-0-2) karate master Keith Hafner encourages parents to take a more active role in building the self-esteem of their children. He reveals how parents may, without knowing it, be lowering the self-esteem of their children. He lists seven areas where key mistakes can be made:

- Setting unreasonable expectations for a child’s performance, without providing adequate coaching or instruction to him or her.
- Comparing one child with another. Sometimes parents fail to recognize that all children will exhibit differences in intellect, talents and skills.
- Regularly reminding children of past failures. “Instead,” says Hafner, “parents should be guardians of the positive memories and experiences and constantly reinforce those experiences.”
- Failing to reward approximations of success. Kids need to receive positive feedback for incremental improvements, not just for complete victories.
- Giving too much responsibility for decision making too early in a child’s development. Older kids, even teenagers, continue to need the coaching and advice of their experienced parents.
- Allowing a couch potato lifestyle. Not every kid is good at sports. All kids, however, need to be physically active in order to find a high level of self-esteem. Kids who aren’t comfortable in team sports often find their place in individual non-competitive sports, like swimming, jogging, or martial arts.
- Lastly, many parents fail to paint a bright future for their children. In order for a child to have a high level of self-esteem, he or she must have a strong sense of positive expectation.

Hafner adds, “Many parents feel unqualified to build the self-esteem of their children; they are not sure how to begin. Self-esteem skills, however, can be taught by virtually any parent. For generations, these self-esteem building skills have been handed down by parents to children. Parents will find their efforts well rewarded when they see the self-esteem of their children begin to rise!”

Twelve Foundation Stones that Build Rock-Solid Kids

1. Physical Fitness: jump-start fitness efforts
2. Self-control: self-managing ones actions
3. Focus: pay attention; block out distractions
4. Respect: who to respect and why
5. Confidence: self-empowerment
6. Spiritual Development: developing a relationship with God
7. Honesty: trust building; emotional honesty
8. Courage: moving outside the comfort zone
9. Contribution: the joy of giving
10. Positive Outlook: a bright future
11. Responsibility: handling responsibility

From How to Build Rock Solid Kids by Keith Hafner, 214 S. Main St., Ann Arbor, MI 48104 USA.

What is a Watershed?

It’s a little building where water is stored. Ha ha ha. Okay, not funny. A watershed is actually an area of land that catches precipitation (snow, rain, etc.) and drains or seeps into a swamp, creek, river, lake or ocean.

A watershed can be as big as all the land that drains into the Atlantic Ocean or as small as a meadow that drains into a pond. In addition to water, watersheds are made up of many different things. You and your neighbors, farms and cities, houses and factories, video stores, taco stands, the weather, etc.

All these things are interrelated. One part affects all the rest. Also, watersheds ignore human-made borders. They cross property lines and city, state and national boundaries.

So managing a watershed means looking at more than one part. The big picture—how all the parts work together—must be seen. And managing a watershed takes people from more than one city, state or nation. It takes a team.

Watersheds link people, land and water—and, more and more, the scientists and others who are working to improve our environment.

—K. Knebusch, Twig Walkingstick, Columbus, OH
A Guide For Parents & Teachers

The concept of a “bee school” enlivened the imaginations of my third grade science students and began their investigations into the world of honeybees.

I choose to use bees and often ants because these insects also teach us about living in successful communities. Building a sense of community is one of our school’s goals. Using insect models in science classes provides a great opportunity to understand community responsibility. I also use insects because a “girls’ stereotype” is to be afraid of these creatures. With real-life encounters, our girls come to a greater understanding of insects and their role in our world’s ecosystems. Young children are keen observers of the nature around them. Studying insects provides an interesting way for children to experience science concepts and skills in a manner filled with “play.”

Insects in my classroom are used throughout the year in a number of ways. Plastic life-like models and puppets are always available for the students to explore on a daily basis. The dragonflies and bees always need wings to be re-glued as the children try to simulate the flight of these creatures. Plays about insect behavior are enacted with the insect puppets, a favorite being the mosquito.

In organized thematic studies, insects are not just used to teach science concepts. Writing about ants or bees also teaches concepts in language arts and social studies. In third grade social studies classes, we begin to understand about the making of communities. The use of ants and bees gives us a deeper understanding of community responsibility. I am often able to combine our study of insects with art and music education programs as the students express their science learning in fanciful, creative ways. The students use their new information to move into the realms of poetry writing, listening to music, such as “The Flight of the Bumblebee,” and creating costumes with proboscises and accurately-designed wings, which they have seen on bees under the microscope.

Using insects enlivens our science program with real experiences through the use of ant observation communities on each child’s desk. Also, field trips to apiaries and examining dead bees helps students experience the exciting and fun world of science.

When student learnings are prepared and shared with younger students they learn not only about sharing in a community, but the concepts are reviewed and learned more thoroughly. Insects help provide an avenue where critical thinking is encouraged, the community is studied in microcosm, and individual student’s strengths are addressed by providing opportunities in a variety of learning styles.

BEE STUDY LESSON PLAN

Objective: To gain an overview of bee anatomy, roles in pollination, and the complex bee society.

Bee Research and Activities:

• As a group, gather facts about honeybees including anatomy, community structure of the hive, behavior, and commercial products.
• Have each student select a topic and complete an individual bee report.
• Locate a working beehive in your neighborhood (fruit stores and museums are good places to look) and observe behavior first hand.
• Set up a bee research station in the classroom, which includes a microscope, dead bees to look at, photographs of bees, scientifically-prepared bee models, diagrams of bee dances, books, etc.
• Introduce students to bee products. Bring in samples of honey, honeybutter, honeycomb, beeswax, etc.
• Make a “bubble hive” using drop cloths, packaging tape and yellow plastic transparent sheets for hexagon shapes. If a box fan is placed in the hive’s opening, the drop cloths will inflate like a large pillow.
• Create an area for children wearing flower headbands where student “bees” can search for nectar.
• Create a bee school area where the “bee dance” can be demonstrated and taught.
• Make a bee costume for each child using yellow and black construction paper, pipe cleaner antennae and straws taped to the nose as proboscises.
• Have a role play with each child as a queen, drone or worker bee—baby feeder, fanner, dance instructor, nectar gatherer, etc. Some children can wear flower headbands and act as flowers. Some can be beekeepers who explain the behavior in and around the hive.

—Ruth Young, teacher, Carrolton School, Miami, FL.

EXTENDED DEADLINE!

The 2002 Youth Honor Awards are now due by June 20! We invite original writing and art on: World Wide Web of Nature: Technology and the Web of Life; and http://hip or hype? The Internet and Multicultural Issues. The ten winners will be featured in the Sept.—Oct. 2002 issue.

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Skipping Stones

Page 35
Art by Maureen Quemada, Ruidoso, New Mexico

Also see pages 28 – 29.

Skipping Stones
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