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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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During my recent visit to India, I spent a week at Anandwan, a community in central India. Its founder, Baba Amte, 89, is one of my role models because he has given new life to more than 10,000 leprosy patients and disabled children.

Baba started as a lawyer but soon became involved in local government. He was challenged by someone to do the job of a street and sewer cleaner for a month to understand why their demand for a pay raise was justified. He accepted the challenge. It required him to start work at 4 a.m. every day.

One such morning, Baba came across a deformed leprosy patient fallen helplessly in a gutter. Baba was fear-stricken and ran away from the site, but he later decided to confront his fears. He returned and took it upon himself to care for the man.

Over the next 20 years, Baba established many projects and communities for leprosy patients that provided home, work, wages, medical care and social networks for the outcasts. At the time, leprosy was feared by many the way AIDS is feared today.

Anandwan, home to some 2,000 people, uses sustainable agriculture; drylands irrigation; decentralization; and cottage industries like weaving, printing, shoe making and metal works that produce essentials and an income for the residents. It gives them a feeling of self-respect.

Baba's organization also serves blind and disabled children, indigenous people and unemployed rural youth. It offers them homes, education, training, employment opportunities and health care. The front and back covers and pages 18-19 show selected creations of Anandwan's students.

Baba involves people from outside and welcomes international cooperation. He has been honored with many national and international awards. As I joined Baba and his wife, Taee, on one of their daily walks along the many dirt roads of Anandwan, he remarked, "A smile from a blind or disabled child gives me more pleasure than any of the prizes that I have received. Their smiles take away all my tiredness... I am rich in gratitude."

As we walked past one of the irrigation tanks built to capture the rainwater, Baba's son, Vikas, explained their purpose—to slow the flow of rainwater in order to recharge groundwater, reduce soil erosion and provide irrigation during the dry season.

Among the many nature-friendly techniques they use are planting trees, creating wetlands and habitats, composting, reusing plastic, and employing biogas. Biogas plants use organic and human waste created in the community to produce methane gas for cooking, thus reducing the need for scarce fuelwood.

Anandwan and its sister communities have built scores of new buildings and homes with easy-to-use, low-cost construction techniques that reduce the use of iron, cement, lumber and traditional bricks (which use a lot of soil and fuel in their manufacture and transportation). These homes are affordable, comfortable, ecological and energy-efficient.

Baba has no regrets in life. He has worked tirelessly for over 60 years. He lives with chronic back pain and a heart condition, yet he has led nationwide political, social and environmental campaigns. For example, Baba's "Knit India" project took him and his followers on bicycles throughout India. He wanted to engage the people in a national dialogue to bring unity to a diverse and fragmented Indian society which was marred by social and political unrest.

In the 1990s, Baba and Medha Patkar led a struggle to save hundreds of thousands of indigenous people and small farmers of the Narmada River Valley from being displaced by the large dams being built. They brought the issues of ethics and environmental damage caused by big dam construction to the forefront. Baba and Medha were honored with the Right Livelihood Award for their leadership.

Baba wants to see us work together to improve life for all, regardless of religion, with no discrimination or prejudice toward anyone. His message is to look at the whole picture: to use an integrated approach to problem solving, to know the true value of things not just their market price. Happiness is a continuous, creative activity!
**Editor's Mailbag**

**Thank You from Georgia, Asia**

Thank you very much for the books and magazines that you sent for our school. They are both wonderful and beautiful.

We have set up an English library at school. We will use the books in our English Club and in our classes. Even teachers from nearby village schools come to check out the books and magazines.

—Inga Kubetsia, student, Senaki School #1, and Christine Burnside, Peace Corps, Senaki, Georgia.

**War**

The time is coming and soon
When we will have to either hide in a hole
Senseless and unaware
Or get up and fight for what we believe in
A time when people will think only of
Conquering each other
And life will be of no importance.
If you do not know
And I do not know
How can we be prepared?
I believe it is important to stand up
For what you believe in, even in the midst of
A million people who don’t.

—Anna Scott-Hinkle, 14, Springfield H.S., Oregon.

**The Best Type of Job**

Do you know what the best type of job is? It’s not a farmer, not a banker, not a painter, not a skater, not a reporter, not a builder, not a singer, or a baker. The best job you can do is to be a dreamer. A dreamer has the will to do whatever they want. Their freedom reaches farther than any other. A dreamer has the privacy to know their own way of life and to keep secrets to themselves.

When I entered the city of dreamers, I knew that no artist could paint the city of dreamers. The city I was in, I call “the town of choices.” That’s why when I grow up, I’m going to be a dreamer.

—Justin Cospito, 9, Tacoma, Washington.

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**Skipping Stones**

*Skipping stones* are common, ordinary rocks shaped flat and smoothed by the joy and pain of life. They are the stories of our lives scattered all about, just waiting to be told.

This magazine is about appreciating our common wisdom, gathering it together and throwing it out to dance across our collective consciousness in widening circles of beautiful ripples.

*Skipping Stones* is about letting a magazine write itself, which takes extraordinary dedication and work. It’s got something to do with readers having ownership, listening to and respecting each other, eager to share their stories as letters, articles, projects and art.

As you start on the way, the way appears.
When you cease to be, real being comes.

—Ron Marson, board member, Canby, Oregon.

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**The Gun**

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—Tyrone Goins, highschooler, Hamden, Conn.
I believe education comes in three parts: the intellectual, the social and the emotional. The intellectual comes with classrooms, books and lectures. But the social and emotional belong not only in the classroom, but also the hallways, the lunchrooms, and after-school activities. Why aren’t educators, parents and legislators scrambling to nurture all three components?

When I attend school, I know something is wrong. I constantly hear what is many people’s identity used as a derogatory term. There isn’t a hallway I pass through, a classroom I learn in, a club I participate in that I don’t hear somebody saying, “That’s so gay,” or “He’s such a fag.” I don’t hear, “Man, that’s so black!” or white, or Hispanic, or Asian American in my classroom. Why do I have to hear that something is gay?

The fact that a group of people is reduced to negative slang terms enrages me. I don’t want my friends to be in the closet because of what other people are saying.

Beyond the injustices I feel for the gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender (GLBT) community and their supporters, I am angry with my teachers and administration. I am angry that they tolerate the behavior students display and, in many cases, perpetuate it by cursing with derogatory terms and not addressing the issue at hand.

Last year, my friends and I began the Gay-Straight Alliance (GSA) at our school. We started with a lot of incredible goals for our organization to serve as an informational, support and fundraising group. We ran into a lot of obstacles. Our administration had many concerns. Would the club be promoting sex? Would students care? It became a case of having to justify ourselves. At one point, we were approached by a substantiated rumor that a parent was going to pull his child out of our school if we established the GSA. I wasn’t comfortable with it, but we had to move forward because our vision was too important to abandon.

Now we are supporting GLBT students through social functions. We fight prejudice and stereotypes through awareness programs throughout the school year. This year, we plan on speaking to our administration and legislators about fighting apathy, prejudice and tolerance of behaviors that should not be tolerated.

If there is something wrong at your school, be motivated to cause the change and see change. Even if nothing seems to be wrong, question everything and then improve it. Don’t think that anything is too petty, that students won’t respond, that you won’t be successful. In the end, words hurt, and it will affect somebody’s life. No person that has ever lived on this earth deserves that.

—Jinny Jang, 11th grade, Gaithersburg, Maryland.

Deadly Sports

“Ohhh, that wrestler is going to be out for a long, long time!” Sports like fake wrestling are becoming more and more violent every year, even though we supposedly got away from sports that led to death many years ago. A couple thousand years ago, gladiators fought to the death against other gladiators or sometimes animals. People cheered at the death of others. Today kids are getting seriously injured; crowds want to see violence, and we are leading back to the sport of gladiators.

Fake wrestling and boxing are great examples of violent sports. In boxing, people watch two fighters beat each other up until one of them gets knocked out. At the beginning, wrestling was just simple pins, holds, kicks and punches, but now it has gotten so rough that people have been seriously injured, and someone has actually died.

Kids are watching these sports on television and actually trying them at home. Many kids have been hurt, some even seriously. Kids are making wrestlers and boxers their role models and trying to do the things that they do. They don’t see it as being dangerous so much as fun. They don’t understand the possible consequences. Kids are getting injured trying these sports at home untrained and unsupervised. Sports are getting too violent, and people are getting too aggressive.

—Alex Czarnopys, 7th grade, Rockford, Michigan.
Dancing

The smoke swirls all around us, enchanting us, ensnaring our senses, making us shiver in the cool Montana air. All around us the drums are pounding, and the native chants are rising into the night sky. I sit on the ground hugging my knees and peering over my blue jeans at the ornate costumes flying by. The people resemble birds with their great feathered wings and graceful motions. Their toes seem to flutter over the earth without even touching it.

The 20 of us in my group sit mesmerized. We are here as part of a community service program on the Northern Cheyenne reservation in Montana, and we are some of the only white people at the pow wow. It seems to me that despite our enthusiasm to soak up the atmosphere, we radiate blandness simply by being dressed in jeans and tennis shoes. We look strangely out of place in front of the colorful backdrop of the Native Americans in their beaded headdresses and moccasins.

As the night gets colder, they continue to dance in endless circles and diamond patterns, enjoying the fun and celebration, forgetting for the moment about their normal lives back home. Many of them will travel back to their homes the next day and have clothes to clean, work to do, racism to deal with and alcoholism to fight. But for now they just dance, and when I look closely I can see an expression of determination etched into the lines on their faces and can imagine a mantra that is perhaps running through some of their minds. It says, “We have struggled in the past—it is true. But it is the 21st century, and we are strong. Our people are strong. We will keep on surviving.”

To our left, an old Cheyenne woman stands up. The lines around her eyes and mouth crinkle as she begins to tell a story to a group of young children who stare at her with reverence and respect. She speaks in her native tongue, so I cannot follow the story, but the wisdom churning in her voice is enough to make me realize that there are some things in life that should truly be appreciated—things that cannot be suppressed or squelched by oppression and subjugation—things which survive against the odds with unrelenting persistence. The Native American culture, so beautifully thriving in front of my eyes, is just that.

Above us the vast Montana sky gazes down at the same plains where years ago blood and tears stained the grass. The stars burn with a fierceness I have never seen before. They seem to whisper encouragement to the dancers, still weaving paths through the brisk night air. They say, “We are sorry—you have struggled. But you are strong. Your people are strong. You have survived. You will keep on surviving.”

—Sara Schneider, 11th grade, Stamford, Conn.
Season of Great-Grandmother

It is over. She is gone. I won’t hear her voice or her laughter, or even her scolding when I have gone too far in teasing my little brother. Life is going to be so different now.

Great-Grandmother was the elder in our Nez Percé home and saw to it that the fire was banked each night and the curtains pulled. She always seemed strong. I can feel her hands now as we stand by the kitchen door, and she brushes my hair.

She taught me so many important things. Even though we have grocery stores, she always set up a small canvas tepee in our yard for drying and smoking meat and fish. She would cut the meat into strips and hang it over poles inside the tepee over a smoldering fire. It would be there for at least a day. Her kitchen was never without mouth-watering dried meat for the eating, or for taking to special occasions like birthdays or wakes.

A second tepee was where she preserved food. She did much of her canning on the stove in the house, but she still preserved many things in the old way. One of her foods that I never got a taste for was made of moss. You know the black moss that you see on Ponderosa trees? She would make a hook, pull the moss down and place it into sacks. Then she would bring it home and bake it in an earth oven. After she would bake it, she would grind it with a stone pestle on a rock, the old way. Then she would put it in coiled baskets she had made for storage.

"Just add a little water and some sugar and call it black soup!" I can still hear her say.

I did not like black soup, I told her.

She told me sometimes people had no choice. When she was small, and the camas roots had not yet come in the spring, and the supplies of dried meat were finished, and the berries were far from ripe, there was nothing else. Then you didn’t turn your nose up at any food—not even black soup! Great-Grandmother had so much wisdom.

Great-Grandmother loved to tell about when she was a child, and she went with her family to Weippe Prairie to gather the camas roots, couse, and wild carrots and to pick serviceberries, currants and chokecherries. Those were happy times that were a combination of picnics, family reunions and camp-outs. They would stay for weeks gathering the wild crops that would be their food for winter.

And of all the wild food that she could harvest, she told me that she liked the bitterroot the best. It might be easy to miss, for its leaves grow on a short stalk, and as they begin to shrivel and die, little flower buds appear and unfold in the morning sun. By July the flowers are gone and only the root remains. Then, it is only the keenest gatherers who can find and dig out the roots for boiling or drying and grinding. Great-Grandmother loved their pungent taste.

"It is said," she told me once, "that there was a woman of the Flathead tribe who sat on the bank of the Red Willow River, weeping and singing a song for her hungry children. The sun heard her cries and sent a bird to comfort her. The bird told her that for every tear that fell a flower would grow. Each flower would have petals as white as her hair, and the root of each flower would be as bitter as her sorrow but as nourishing as a mother’s love. And this flower, named bitterroot, became a most important part of the Nez Percé diet."

At her wake, so many relatives and friends came. We were sad, but we all knew that Great-Grandmother had an understanding with the creator and that she was at peace. They brought deer and elk meat, cakes and fry bread and fruit pies to share. Just before the memorial ended I slipped a soft buckskin pouch of bitterroot into her casket; it was my gift. She would appreciate that, I know.

—Virginia Rankin, educator, Moskow, Idaho.
When you think of visiting a zoo, what do you think of? Giraffes, zebras, tigers, seals, polar bears?

The Navajo Nation Zoological and Botanical Park doesn’t have any of those animals and probably never will. The zoo is home only to animals and plants found on the Navajo Indian Reservation. It is the only tribally operated zoo in the United States, according to zookeeper Loline Hathaway.

The Navajo Nation Zoo was started in 1962 by the Tribal Museum as an exhibit for the annual Navajo Nation Fair. At the close of the fair, officials found that the bear “borrowed” from New Mexico Game and Fish had actually been donated to the tribe.

Today, over 130 animals live in the zoo. There are 34 kinds of wild animals, including wolves, coyotes, cougars, bears and bobcats. The zoo is also home to domestic animals found on the reservation, such as sheep, goats, ducks, chickens and a pony.

Some of the animals have special significance in the Navajo clan system. The clan system consists of about 60 groups. The Navajo are considered related to everyone in their own clan (they take their mother’s clan as their own) as well as their father’s clan. The porcupine is the guardian of the Mud Clan People, Hashtlishni. The black bear is the guardian of the Towering House Clan, Kinyaa’anii. Cougars are considered the guardians of the One-Walks-Around Clan.

Some of the animals have other significance in the Navajo culture. According to the Navajo creation story, the turkey was the last to leave the flooding waters. The turkey brought important crop seeds to the Navajo. In this same story, the badger dug the hole to the next world so that the Diné (Navajo) could escape the floods.

The zoo also has medicinal and edible plants on display and several traditional buildings. The crib-log hogan is the traditional six-or eight-sided Navajo home. It always faces east to greet the rising sun. The shade house, or chaha’oh, is a shaded area outdoors. The forked stick hogan is constructed of three forked poles covered with logs, brush and mud. A sweat lodge is also at the zoo. The lodge is traditionally used for cleansing and purification.

The Navajo Nation Zoological and Botanical Park is located in Window Rock, Arizona. The zoo is currently funded by donations and a small budget from the Navajo Tribe. If you’re ever in the Southwest, be sure to visit the zoo and learn more about the animals of the region and the largest Native American tribe in the U.S.

—Jane Mouttet, Window Rock, Arizona.

Did You Know?
- Black bears are the most sacred animal to the Navajo people.
- Coyote is a trickster in many Navajo stories.
- Most of the animals in the zoo could not survive in the wild because they have either been injured or are used to people.
Can you imagine spending your birthday in a swamp? When I lived in Trinidad, I celebrated my 10th birthday exploring the Caroni Swamp. My aunt knew I was interested in birds, and she arranged a tour of the Caroni Bird Sanctuary to grant me my wish. I could not wait to see Trinidad's national bird, the scarlet ibis, in its natural habitat. Happy and excited, I strapped on my life vest, climbed into the narrow, wooden river boat and began my adventure.

There was an eeriness as our boat approached a cluster of mangrove trees. The large stilt roots of the 50-ft. trees looked like giant fingers plunging into the water, waiting to grab us as we drifted by. Sunlight occasionally penetrated the thick canopy of leaves, and the flashes of light revealed exotic flowers, bamboo clusters, mud crabs, and tree boas. It was like watching a slide show.

We spent the next hour walking on a trail that separated two bodies of water. On the left was a freshwater marsh, busy with different kinds of ducks. On the right was a brackish marsh, occupied by rails, crakes and bitterns. I spied through my binoculars hoping to find my favorite bird. We had been at the swamp a long time and had seen many rare and beautiful creatures and plants but not a single scarlet ibis. I wondered if they were feeding at another part of the swamp. Perhaps the guide had taken us down the wrong path. I felt disappointed and sad.

The trail veered left leading us to a shallow lake. Thick flocks of snowy egrets and herons waded gracefully through the water like ballerinas on stage. Though these birds were beautiful, I grew impatient watching them. I was about to give up hope when in between the white bodies, red ones gradually came into view. It was amazing. The egrets and herons casually made their way to the shore revealing hundreds of scarlet ibises and their brown babies. As we watched them make their way through the mud and marsh on long, stilt-like legs, my aunt asked how they managed to stay so balanced while moving through the swampland. I had read a book on swamp birds, and I was proud to tell everyone I knew the answer. Scarlet ibises have webbed feet, allowing them to stay balanced in unsteady terrain. The middle claw is long and hook-like, so the birds can grip onto rocks and roots. The guide explained that the bird uses its long, curved beak to feed on crabs, oysters, mollusks, fish, shrimp and aquatic insects found on the roots of the red mangrove. The red found in these creatures and in the mangrove is called carotene and causes the birds feathers to turn bright red.

At 3:45 everyone returned to the boats for the last part of the tour. We anchored in the widest channel of the swamp and eagerly awaited what the guides called “the show.” My heart thumped in my chest. Flapping and rustling noises came from deep within the bushes. A faint high-pitched cry echoed throughout the swamp as the birds took to the sky. The sight made me shiver.

The birds’ flight began at 4:00 p.m. and continued after sunset. Huge v-shapes of snowy egrets and herons flew above us and made their way to the mangrove trees where they settled in the lower branches. Next was the scarlet ibis. Hundreds of streamlined bodies glided across the orange sky then settled in the top branches of the mangrove trees. When the flocks roosted, the mangroves looked like decorated Christmas trees with splatches of red and white against the dark, green leaves. No one spoke. There were only gasps of awe and the clicking of camera shutters. The scarlet ibis flocks continued to fly overhead as we returned to the main dock. Besides the boats gliding through the water, the swamp was still. As the sun slowly sank into the horizon, I felt like I was floating under a scarlet sky gazing at my favorite birds soaring above me.

—Daniella Barsotti, Calgary, Alberta, Canada.
A long time ago in the faraway village of Arman there lived an old crone who was not at all well-liked. This old crone had a very, very long nose, and she poked her long nose into everyone's affairs.

Around the village she went day after day carrying tales. Sometimes she would add or change a little here and there to make the tale more interesting.

"Go home and tend to your own business!" the villagers cried. "Keep your long nose to yourself!"

The old crone would only cackle and go on her way, poking her nose everywhere.

They called her names like Mrs. Pry-nose and Old Lady Scuttlebutt, but it made no difference. She continued to put her long nose into their affairs and carry tales.

The villagers grew more and more irritated at the old crone.

At last, God decided something must be done. She must be taught a lesson.

One day He gave her a long sack and said, "Keep this sack for me until I ask for its return, but do not open it. For if you put your nose in something that does not concern you, you must suffer the consequences."

"I would not dream of opening the sack," the long-nosed woman declared. "Not for anything would I disobey you."

But God was no sooner gone than she began to worry herself about the contents of the sack.

"What harm could there be in opening it just a little bit for a peek?" she asked herself.

"But, no, no," she said. "I cannot break a promise to God."

On she went toward her little hut at the edge of the village. The sack grew heavy and the old woman sat down to rest.

"Oh dear! I wish I knew what was in this sack," she moaned.

She shook the sack and squeezed it with both hands.

"I can't stand it!" she cried at last. "I must take just a little peek."

She loosened the string around the top of the sack ever so little and put her nose close to the tiny opening. At once, from out of the sack came hundreds and hundreds of insects! Gnats, mosquitoes, beetles and ants, scampering and flying in all directions.

"Oh, no!" the old crone exclaimed. "Oh, no! What have I done?"

Suddenly, God's voice called out, "You have disobeyed my command, and you must suffer the consequences."

Immediately, the old woman was turned into a bird. A bird with a long beak—a woodpecker!

"Not until you have gathered up all the insects and put them back in the sack will you return to your human form," said God.

To this day, even though she spends most of her time gathering insects in hopes of refilling the sack, she is still a woodpecker—with a very long beak.

—Romanian folktale retold by Bonnie Highsmith Taylor, Lebanon, Oregon. (See Folk Tales of All Nature by F.H. Lee). Art by Nina Forsberg.
If you want a bird for a pet there are some pets that aren’t really safe to have. Only pets that are circled and crossed out are ones you can’t have when you own a bird.

Cats and birds just aren’t friends. It’s dangerous to leave a bird alone with a cat.

Why is the cat about to eat the bird?

Answer: Cats have an instinct to eat birds because they are carnivores.

This is how birds get to know a person, by chewing their hair. If the bird doesn’t remember you, it will have to chew on your hair.

Why is it important for the bird to remember you?

Answer: It is important for the bird to remember you so it isn’t afraid.

It is important for you to rub your bird’s neck and head. The massage makes the bird feel happy and loved.

Bird’s claws are one of the most important parts of their bodies. You have to have them clipped by a veterinarian.

Why does a bird need short claws?

Answer: So the claws won’t break off.

If you put two kinds of birds in the same cage they might bite each other. If they are the same kind of bird, they’ll probably play with each other.

Make sure you feed your bird 20 percent seed and 80 percent fruit and vegetables. Feed it well so it can be healthy and live a long, happy life.

Birds depend on people for a happy life. Be sure to care for your bird responsibly.

— Text and illustrations by Jamie Michelle Hansen, 9, Phoenix, Arizona.

Jamie’s cockatiel, Peanut, has been an inspiration to her. As the primary caregiver to Peanut, Jamie has gained information for this guide. Peanut has given Jamie much joy, friendship and a respect for living creatures.
The BIRD HEALTH BOARD GAME

How to play: Photocopy this page and cut out the game pieces and question cards. Use a pencil and paper clip to spin a number of spaces to move.

- Land on a bird: draw a question card and answer to move ahead two spaces.
- Land on a cat: move back two spaces.
- Land on the bridge: take the short cut.

What pets are safe to own if you have a bird?
Who should clip your bird's claws?
Why shouldn't you leave a bird alone with a cat?
What pets are safe to own if you have a bird?
Why is it important to pet the bird on the neck and head?

Why does a bird need short claws?
Why is it important for the bird to remember you?
What should you feed your bird?
How Nature Speaks
I sat at the edge of a stream,
Where civilization turns to nature.
I sat where the wind whispers
a question,
and the tall grass answers.
I sat where the birds speak,
and the sky
listens with intense blue.
I sat where the stones are silent,
but not because they can’t speak.
I sat where the seeds
cling to your clothes,
in hopes of laying their home
somewhere nearby.
I sat where the waters run deep,
cool,
and clear with the endless
knowledge
that comes with age.
And I pondered
how Nature speaks.

—Chandra Smith, 17, Saskatchewan, Canada. “I’ve immersed myself in the outside during spring many times and have come up with countless inspirations staring into the water that runs near our house.”

Undercover
Wind funnels
Water color
Pillowed place
Relieved
From all shade
Of a banyan tree.

—Joanna Higareda, 13, Los Angeles, CA.

Winter Day
On a winter day
The snow glistened on the ground
Like a shining star
That had fallen with no sound
On a frigid winter day.

—Jared Keck, 12, Versailles, IN.

Outsider
Torn by the wind’s expectation,
This winter day,
You sway alone
Strayed far
From beneath elders’ branches
You clasp gnarled fingers
To a gray sky, waiting
For spring’s sun
To open their darkness
Into sweet buds
You are unfolding
White skin,
White feelings
Brown leaves of habits
Not yet shaken—
Growing past them
For on the day of sun
You’ll change your rough coat
For colour
The day the sun comes,
Your glory comes, too
In new buds bursting
With life to dance
Like fairies
In your waiting palms
For you sway
Where elders’ branches
Never shelter you
From your chance to shine
The first green in spring.

—Emma Kempe, 16, Thunder Bay, Canada.

Secret Garden
There is a place inside
my heart
Where the grass
is green
And the apples
are ripe.
The beautiful songs
are clear.
The distant skies
are blue.
This place is also
inside of you.

—Julia Fox, 11, NYC, NY.

Nature Poetry
Vol. 15 no. 2
Skipping Stones
Page 13
What can I, as a 13 year old, do to keep us from going to war? I feel so helpless! —D.H.

Dear D.H.: No one is helpless! A 15-year-old boy in my neighborhood, Estaban Camacho, made a drawing of a dove of peace in order to make a lawn sign to give to his grandmother. The dove is safely holding up and carrying planet Earth. The words “NO WAR” help convey the message. As soon as the lawn sign appeared, neighbors eagerly requested duplicates for their yards. There are now 1,000 in print, and they are selling like hot cakes for $5.00 or less, however much people can afford. The money received is used to promote peace. The signs are board. Many of the signs have been of many people of all different cultures. Helen Caldicott, Abraham Lincoln, Chief Dan George, Nelson Mandela, Mahatma Gandhi, Martin Luther King, César Chávez, Dorothy Day... the list is endless. And from each one we experience new inspiration into peace possibilities we had not imagined.

Everybody loves listening to stories. Learning some peace stories to tell at home, at school, for a birthday present, wherever—is always a gift. I have told stories from each of the following books: Peace Tales by Margaret Read Macdonald (Linnet); Spinning Tales, Weaving Hope: Stories of Peace, Justice and the Environment (New Society Publishers) and Stories for Telling by William R. White (Augsburg).

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

In Peace,
Fools, Fish and Fun

April Fool’s Day wasn’t always something to joke about. Though there is no definitive answer as to its origins, some historians believe that it may have come about in France as a result of a calendar change which, for many people, was no laughing matter.

Until the 16th century, the French celebrated New Year in the spring with an 8-day festival that began on March 25 and ended April 1, when people exchanged gifts. Then, in the mid-1560s, King Charles IX proclaimed that the New Year would no longer be celebrated on March 25, but would move to January 1.

This change, however, was not welcome by all. Some people refused to give up the spring custom they loved and continued to celebrate the New Year on April 1. They were labeled “April fools” and were often sent on “fools’ errands” or were made the butt of practical jokes.

As other countries began to observe January 1 as the New Year, following the introduction of the Gregorian calendar by Pope Gregory, in 1582, the tradition of prank-playing on the first day of April spread throughout Europe, and was later introduced to the American colonies.

Today, it is a fun-filled day where salt-filled sugar bowls rule, and people are kept on their toes, for anyone could be the next fool!

Fooling Facts

The French call the fool the poisson d’avril and try to pin a paper poisson, or fish, on someone’s back without getting caught.

In England, tricks can be played only in the morning. If a trick is played on you, you are a “noodle.”

In Scotland, April Fool’s Day is 48 hours long, and you are called an “April gowk,” which is another name for a cuckoo bird.

In Portugal, April Fool’s Day is celebrated on the Sunday and Monday before Lent. The traditional trick there is to throw flour at your friends.

Mexico observes April Fool’s Day on December 28. Originally, the day was a sad reminder of the slaughter of innocent children by King Herod of Judea. It eventually evolved into a lighter commemoration involving pranks and trickery.

One of the most famous April Fool hoaxes was a British documentary that showed Italian farmers harvesting long strips of spaghetti from “spaghetti trees.”

For more information, check out:
www.computingcorner.com/holidays/aprilfool/aprilfool.htm
www.decujus.com/calendriers/calendrier1.html

—Anne Renaud, Westmount, Quebec, Canada. Art by Anne Geuss.

Perennial March

I am the flower soldier, marching over hill and through valley color en masse. Our war is silent. Our weapons are soft petals and sweet fragrance. We are living flags, emblematic of life. Look at our numbers fill the countryside, on a spring campaign. You may see our numbers to hold ground in desert wastes or fight among the cracks of urban decay without a shot without a bomb without a death. In our peaceful stand we disarm. Our victory is made and hearts are won.

—Miguel Salazar, 19, Iowa Park, Texas.
Ukrainian Easter

Easter is the feast of Christ’s resurrection. It is celebrated according to the lunar calendar on the first Sunday after the first spring full moon. The Orthodox and Greek Catholic Churches use the Julian calendar, so Easter in Ukraine does not coincide with Easter in the countries with other Christian churches. It is on a Sunday between the 4th of April and the 28th of May.

In Ukraine, Easter has been celebrated over a long period of history and has many rich traditions. The week before Easter is called the White or Pure Week.

During this time, an effort is made to finish all field work before Thursday. On the evening of Pure Thursday, the Passion Service is performed. The people then return home with lighted candles.

The last Sunday before Easter is called Willow Sunday. On this day, willow branches are blessed in the church. The people tap each other with these branches, in hopes they will be as tall as the willow, as heathy as the water and as rich as the earth.

Easter begins with the matins and high mass during which the pasky, rysanky and krashanky are blessed in the church. Butter, cheese, roast suckling, and little napkins containing poppy seeds and other provisions are also blessed. After the matins the people exchange Easter greetings. People offer each other krashanky and then hurry home with their baskets of blessed food. Easter is a feast of joy and gladness for the people. Many people celebrate this holiday, and it has been proclaimed a national holiday in Ukraine.

—Melnik Aleksey, grade 8, Sevastopol, Ukraine.

A Sea of New People

Coming to a new land,
Leaving old and welcoming new,
Sailing along the sea, rocking side to side.
I hope all is worth it,
For tomorrow, I will sleep on land,
Touched many times by the question,
Is this choice the right one?
Am I holding this decision close to my heart?

Finally, the large boat halts!
While all my questions keep moving,
Into a wave of excited, confused
people of the new land.
As I move through the crowd,
Many unfriendly faces surround me.
Finally, someone greets me from a distance.
Although the language is unknown,
I recognize my name.
As I follow him through the crowd, people stare,
With horse and buggy,
we go to a strange house.

People inside the house stare
like those at the dock.
I feel like I am at the zoo.
People stare like I am an animal.
I walk into a small room;
the tall man calls it a bedroom.
Finally, a woman who speaks my language tells me,
My family will soon be here! I am joyous!
I was left behind when they came to America,
And now I can rejoin them.

Here I see people individually,
as different as flowers.
Here I am free! I can give my gifts to others.
Here I will see many colorful people.
All these different people,
rocking now on the same boat, in the same sea,
For we are a country.

—Mia Nardi-Huffman,
Italian American, 10,
Norwalk, Connecticut.
"Writing makes me feel
as if I'm in a whole
different world."
In Search of a Better Life

When I was three, my parents decided that we were going to move to the USA. I don't remember exactly what happened or how it happened; all I know is the story my parents have told me. My parents had to leave behind everything that they knew in Mexico. They had lived there all their lives, and they left friends and family. This was all for a better life, so that my sister and I would be able to have everything that they never had.

Some people think that it is easy to start all over again, but it is not. When we first got to New York my mom worked as a babysitter. She had to watch seven kids at once. When my sister and I were older she went to work cleaning house. She worked for many hours at a time. My dad had to work from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., then go back to work from 6 p.m. to 11 p.m. It was hard, and my parents were not the only ones who had that problem. Many new Americans go through this. My mom's best friend worked at a dry cleaners and was paid very little.

Our first Christmas in the USA, my parents did not have enough money to get us presents. You never think that people you know or that you yourself could live through tough times like that. But when you have been through it, you think about helping others, giving a helping hand whenever anyone needs it.

Hard work is not the only thing that people who come from different countries have to face. New Americans have to leave friends and family and go somewhere where they can't speak the same language as everyone else. They also have to face discrimination. Sometimes they have to live in a small house with a lot of people just so they will have food to put on the table. They work countless hours for little money. They suffer, not knowing how their families are doing back home.

Now my parents have great jobs, and we are moving into our own house. We just bought a new car. Thanks to all the work they did, my sister and I will have a better future. Now I know that you can't take things for granted. I know what it is like to have nothing. You need to be grateful for everything that you have and be happy about everything, whether it is only a little house or a big mansion. You never know when it will all go away.

—Jessica Ramirez, 14, New York, New York.

Philippines

My homeland: mangos and coconut trees, where the smell of fresh sweet bread would crawl through my window and wake me up, where palm leaves scatter on the floor like marbles on a hill.

Where you drink soda through a straw out of a bag, and sit down in the heat.

Where you run in stone-covered streets, your sandals flapping against your heel.

Green lizards race up and down the ceiling, green and yellow speckles of paint on the wall.

The smell of the honey sugar bananas sold on the street corner.

And bulls would eat the tall grass in the marsh next to your house, gentle bulls.

I grew up in a land without:

TV's computers, fresh milk.

My homeland had powdered milk; coconut scraps floating gently in juice like culture dancers on bamboo sticks.

Leaves crumbled in the summer heat, but the eye of the storm would bring rain, awakening people's sorrow.

In a bamboo hut I sat for hours, wind and green grass touching my bare feet.

Or I lay in water watching the foreign birds sing their song on a burned oak.

Kids laughed; Snorting pigs were my lullaby, falling asleep in the cool weather that I'd waited for all day.

While people dreamt of America, mosquito bites itching their skin.

—Andrew So, 15, New City, New York.
These watercolor paintings and colored pencil drawings come from the School for Deaf and Disabled children at Anandwan. It is a free rural boarding school that offers educational opportunities to disadvantaged children.

The two art teachers at this school showed me over a hundred creations of their students in various grades, and I selected the paintings that best demonstrated the daily life and culture of central India. Captions are also in Marathi, the native language of these students.

Shree Ganesha "अंगिर सिद्धिविजयी"
Lord Ganesha, the elephant-headed god, is worshipped as the obstacle remover. To begin any task, people first invoke Ganesha so that the project will be successful.

Most Indian homes have an altar or a puja room. Puja consists of lighting lamps and incense sticks, offering flowers and reciting mantras, chants or devotional songs. Children often pray to Saraswati, the goddess of knowledge before class.

Meditating, spending hours in prayer or worship and giving up comforts is common for sadhus, monks and priests. Groups of people walk and sing bhajans, devotional songs, on the many holy days (back cover).

Music "संगीत"
Classical music and devotional songs are an important part of most festive occasions. Most Indian music is made up of string instruments like sitar, sarod, tanpura, mrudangam, tabla (a pair of drums played with fingers and palm), harmonium (a small accordion-piano), clay pots, flute and wind instruments as well as bells, chimes and voice. Hindi movie songs have also become an integral part of everyday life and celebrations in India.

Election Campaign "निर्बहार राष्ट्रीय"
India is the largest democracy in the world by population. It is a parliamentary system where the prime minister is elected by the party with a majority of seats in the national parliament in New Delhi. There are many political parties that contest the national and state elections, and a much larger percentage of voters turn out than the percentage of Americans who vote. Political campaigns are short-lived but intense—with political rallies, speeches, and door-to-door canvassing.

by Yajuvendra Devgade
by Jagendra Devgade
Women
Opportunities for women in urban areas are improving. It is common to see women in technical careers and managerial positions. Women study architecture, science, computers, business administration and more. The working women in India often perform dual or triple roles since they are also home-makers and mothers. Village women usually do chores like cooking, collecting fuel, bathing children, working in the fields and carrying water from the public well. Rural girls and women lack the opportunities and facilities to pursue careers, and often marry young. Parents feel an obligation to arrange their daughters’ marriages, and feel relief when their matchmaking duties are complete.

Queen Ahilyabai Holkar of Indore
by Sunita Digdevtulwar, grade 3

What if We Run Out of Fuel? - वैशाली आवधे
Animals have long been the backbone of transportation and agriculture in India. The nation also depends on fuel: coal, oil, biofuels, nuclear energy and hydroelectric power. While firewood is scarce due to deforestation, the tropical climate makes solar technology more practical.

Celebrations
Indian life is infused with countless festivals and celebrations. As a pluralistic society, the nation observes not only Hindu festivals like Holi, Shivrathri, Raksha Bandhan and Ganesh Puja but also other religious holidays like Christmas, Id, Guru Nanak Purnima and Mahavir Jayanti. There are also national holidays like Republic Day (Jan. 26), Labor Day (May 1), Independence Day (Aug. 15), and Children’s Day (Nov. 14).

Diwali or Deepawali is a five-day festival of lights, celebrated in autumn. It is also a harvest festival. Each day has a different theme. One day focuses on cows and agricultural animals. They are bathed, decorated, fed, worshipped and paraded.

Lakshmi Puja is central to Diwali. People light rows of earthen oil lamps to brighten up the night and worship Lakshmi, the goddess of wealth. It is also the new year for businesses. Diwali marks the climax of a month-long celebration of the Divine Mother that begins with Navarathri and Dussera. Many schools have vacation during this festive period.
La Leyenda del Lago

Little waves of blue water lapped against the wooden dock. Green lily pads opened their petals in the sun. Anna and her grandfather sat on the dock and looked at their fishing poles.

"Abuelo, estoy aburrida," said Anna. Grandfather, I'm bored.

"¿Quieres tomar un paseo en la canoa? Puedo remarte por todas partes del lago." Do you want to take a ride in the canoe? I can row you all over the lake. Anna and her grandfather climbed inside the canoe, and Grandfather took the paddles.

"¿Qué es eso en el cielo?" asked Anna.

"Es un quebrantahuesos. Construye su nido de palos arriba de nosotros en los árboles." It's an osprey. It builds its nest of sticks high above us in the trees.

"¿Come pesces?" Does it eat fish?

"Sí, es un pescador como nosotros." Yes, it is a fisherman like us, Grandfather said.

"Va a comer nuestros peces." It is going to eat our fish.

"No, Anna. Es un lago grande con muchos peces." It's a large lake with lots of fish.

"¿Qué es esa?" What is that?

"Esa es una barcaza. No puede moverse rápido como los otros barcos." That's a barge. It can't move fast like the other boats.

"¿Mucha gente anda en las barcazas?" Do a lot of people ride in barges? asked Anna.

"A veces. También llevan otras cosas, como vacas u oro." Sometimes. They also carry other things, too, like cows or gold.

"¿Oro?" Gold?

"Sí, de una historia vieja de este lago. Fue una leyenda." Yes, I once heard an old story about this lake. It was a legend.

"Por favor, cuéntame, abuelo." Please tell me, Grandfather.

Erin Jo Richey, 17, Medford, Oregon.

Erin writes, "The legend of the lake was first told to me when I was a child on one of my family's trips to Loon Lake near Reedsport, Oregon."
Slowly my eyes opened. The first thing I saw was a lacy doily of frost veiling my window. I could hear the wind howling around the house battering the old building with its ferocious icy power. A slow smile spread across my face. I was going for a walk.

I hauled myself out of bed and hurried to dress in the early morning cold. On went long johns, jeans, wool socks, and an off-white sweater laced with Aran knitting. I padded downstairs and left an untidily scrawled note on the door:

Mom,
I went for a walk.
Be back in time for breakfast.
Ali

I stuffed my feet into my boots, shrugged into my coat, and grabbed my hat and mismatched mittens.

As I walked out the door, the wind rushed toward me from the northwest and snatched my breath into the air, where it hung, a small puff of warm, white smoke. I crossed the front yard and began a slow descent of the ice-covered steps that led down the cliff to the shore. The crusty snow crunched and cracked under my feet. As I reached the last step, I slipped on the thick sheet of ice that covered the last few stone stairs to the rocky beach. Laughing and rubbing my back simultaneously, I picked myself up and began walking along the shore. A light mist curled up from the bay—sea smoke. The wind whipped the water into white caps, the sheep of the sea, herded bleating into shore by the fierce howling hounds of the wind. I thought of the huge waves that pounded continuously against the southern end of the island, at the mouth of the bay. They had always seemed like horses to me; wild white ones forever pulling a rolling blue chariot into the jagged shale cliffs.

The cackling of the wheeling seabirds interrupted my thoughts. Perennial scavengers, they always managed to find unfortunate mussels or crabs to take on a terrible ride; first soaring high with their quarry, then dropping it on the rocks, where it cracked immediately open, leaving the soft juicy flesh exposed. The gulls swooped down and devoured their prey, squawking among themselves, arguing who should get the best share.

A puff of wind hurried me along, as if urging me to take in all the beauty of the wintry shore. I turned to face the sea, and a grayish brown head popped out of the water and stared at me for a few seconds with large, liquid brown eyes. A seal. Smiling, I pictured the face of my youngest sister, whose dark brown eyes had earned her the nickname, Seal. Funny, I thought; it was low tide and the seals should have been sunning themselves on the rocks. Then I remembered the wind. It was so strong and so cold that it was blowing the water off the shore and back into the channel. The bitter cold was urging me to turn homeward, where I knew that a heap of pancakes drowned in syrup would be waiting for me on the worn kitchen table next to the woodstove.

I ignored the temperature, and tucking my chin into the collar of my coat, walked south toward the boatyard. I ducked under a dock and realized that I was walking below the tide line. The pilings were covered with frozen snow, and a brittle rope was tied to one of them. The other end of the rope was tied to a beached wooden dinghy whose prow was encrusted in icicles that caught the sunlight, giving the illusion of lights strung around the small, dilapidated craft. I heard a distant mechanical hummin...
boat, and I waved as I watched it plow its way across the tossing sea.

I continued on my way, my thoughts beginning to be dominated by my stomach and images of steaming mugs of tea and hot chocolate. I knew my mother, annoyed with my habitual seaside wanderings, would be waiting for me with a perplexed and impatient smile. Reluctantly, I turned homeward.

As I picked my way among the snow-capped rocks, the many sounds of the seashore filled my ears and intertwined like the cables knit into my sweater. I heard the bell buoys tolling, the seabirds squawking, the waves caressing the shore, the humming of the fishing boat, and the melancholy howling of the wind. As they met my ears, they became a rich tapestry of intoxicating sounds, the true song of the sirens and mermaids and the tune to which the selkies dance.

—Alison Glassie, 16, Jamestown, Rhode Island.

The Standards of Living

The park that we were charged with cleaning was bordered by a residential area; a giant, glistening cliff face; and one of those fashionable walls separating the highway from the houses. The Oregon Department of Transportation, ODOT, had left us a sheaf of yellow trash bags and some arm-length tongs. We were warned that the park was commonly home to transients, and that we should not be surprised to find hypodermic needles and other drug paraphernalia.

Our catch was disappointing at first. The novelty of Budweiser 40s and moist, dissolving cigarette packs soon wore off. Soon we stumbled upon a piece of metal twisted slightly out of its rectangular shape. Having disentangled it from the ivy, we began a debate about its name. A few were in favor of making it a microwave, but the TV ultimately won out. Being of the days before light plastics, the TV face proved no easy cargo.

Although my bag was not full, I had to leave the woods entirely and set the bag down among the growing mound.

We found buckets, shoes, a bowling ball, the skeleton of a mattress, three or four twisted bicycles, tires of various diameters, and a host of shopping carts—some of which lacked wheels and had to be dragged like corpses.

I moved on to work along the roadside. All of this trash had been chucked out of the windows of cars and off the backs of pickups: fast food bags filled with wrappers, unused condiments, napkins, and straws; bottles of cheap beer and malt liquor; the odd shoe, boot, or glove; the contents of ashtrays. I tried to work patiently, lovingly, but found my mood turning to one of servile self-denial, not unlike that of a mother picking up after her children.

To the occupants inside the cars, the roadside must have appeared a great distance away, a place easily forgotten, made illusory by interposing glass, one of an infinity of American shoulders serving no greater end than that of a receptacle for spent products. I began to appreciate the ivy’s wisdom in closing over and hiding the trash, as if out of shame.

At the end of the day, we emerged from the woods, burdened down by erstwhile trees and the fast pace of technology. An ODOT truck was waiting for us. It was a small truck, but it had yard-high walls around its bed, which were completely filled with our junk. The load was headed to a landfill “where it belonged.” In the course of a few days, the standards of living of our small group would reproduce that truckload, with the blind and carefree confidence of those who might never again see it driven away.

—Kenneth Champeon now lives in Rayong, Thailand.
Poetry Page

The Water

The water could set you free
With a breeze inside your soul
Letting the feeling and the passion go
The water is my friend
My friend is the water I run to it when I need it
It helps me feel
And helps me do the right things
The water is my angel and soul
That has been sent down for me
The water is everything between death and life
The water is my love in sight
The water sinks down a deep hole in my life
Just letting it all go without any fright
'Cause I talk to the water every night in my dreams
Just thinking of it makes me want to drop to my knees
'Cause the water is my love that tells me
My life and my future
Now I'm here with my water living and floating together
Just the two of us together.

—Ariana Casablanca, 12, New York, NY. “I live in Hell’s Kitchen, where all the fun and adventure begins. I write plays about life, future, health — everything you could think of. I like to sing; I like to dance; I like music of all types. I’m Puerto Rican, 100 percent! What inspires me the most is my life because I’m going through plenty of changes and plenty of adventures.”

Rain

When the sky breaks open,
Like fine china—cracks and splinters,
When its tiny pieces fall,
Blessing me with their sweet chill,
I am inspired.

In the midst of a downpour,
In the fury of the wind,
That whips and rolls and tumbles about,
Like boiling water,
Then can I write.

My pen moves more easily when the ground streams,
My mind moves more swiftly when the sky erupts,
My lips open, part, break into a smile more often,
When there are raindrops for them to catch.

—Amanda Sengstacken, 17, Congers, New York.

Tiger Lily

The rain will visit
Only to coax from the ground
The shy tiger lily.

—Amelia Mango, 13, Gibsonia, Penn.

The Look of Beauty

I wish I could capture it
The beauty of the water
The trees
The waves
A photographer’s sense of beauty
Nestled
In the face
Of a thirteen year old.

—Virginia Tice, 13, Oakland, California.

Raindrops on the Window

Raindrop on the pane, alone.
Where to go, it does not know.
Quivering, shivering, it hesitates.
“Go on,” the wind breathes. “Go! Don’t wait.”
The drop: it stirs, it squirms, and then,
Dribbles downward with a journey to end.

Timid, moving bit by bit.
Downward the raindrop slides.
When a second drop falls upon the glass,
The two brothers happen to collide.

Two tiny droplets, united as one,
Larger, surer, emboldened,
Trickle downward, seeking their fate,
Be it doom or fortune.

The clouds go from gray to black.
The breeze becomes a howl.
Raindrops join the ranks by scores,
Surging to a swell!

Raindrop on the pane, alone.
Facing a journey, but afraid to go.
Joining others that helped it see,
That it can reach its destiny.

—Alice Yu, 13, Gibsonia, Pennsylvania.
Preserving the Toe Worm

One day a gigantic thunderstorm came through the city of Chicago, Illinois. It shook the trees, soaked the basement and turned off our electricity. Mom and Dad were busy cleaning up the inside of the house, while my brothers, sisters and I were to clean up the debris on the outside of the house.

I knew that if the rain ruined my new gym shoes I would be in big trouble. So I didn’t put on my shoes. As I walked around the back yard picking up branches, I spotted a helpless little worm struggling to keep afloat in the old wheelbarrow. I looked around the garden, and there were hundreds of worms everywhere. A few of them were dead, but many were still barely alive. Some were small and some were very large. I cringed at the thought of stepping on any of them. They looked so helpless. The question kept pounding in my head, “Do I pick up the worm and save it, or do I let it drown in the water? What good are worms anyway?” I thought.

As I stood staring at the little worm, I remembered what my science teacher in fifth grade had taught me. Worms wiggle and tickle and keep the earth clean. There are all sorts of different types of worms. They travel without hands, and they hear without ears. They see without eyes and smell without noses. One worm called the red tiger worm thrives in horse manure. Other worms called red wigglers feed on rabbit debris. Angler worms are good for fishing with, while compost worms decompose organic matter by moving back and forth through the soil. Earthworms are the best because they make clay soils drain quickly, or they can make sandy soils drain more slowly. An earthworm is made up of nitrogen, nitrate, magnesium and calcium. It almost sounds like something we should add to our daily diet.

Some earthworms lay eggs, while others form cocoons. Most of their eggs are either yellow or brown. Baby worms hatch in two to three weeks. During winter, worms feed off of the leaves that fall to the ground. They chew off a microscopic amount and carry their food underground for storage.

During my fourth grade science class I did a study on worms. The earthworm has five hearts and only one digestive tract. Its head is called anterior and its tail is posterior. I couldn’t tell the difference between its head and its tail. A fully grown earthworm consists of 120 to 150 attached segments. Even though its skin is smooth and looks bald, it does have very tiny hairs called satae. The earthworm does not have any teeth, but its mouth is big enough to carry a leaf. The earthworm’s favorite diet is plants and decayed animals. Each worm has both male and female organs for reproduction. The reproductive organs are in the middle of the worm between the whitish band call the clitellum. When two worms come together the eggs are passed to each other and form a cocoon for the baby worms.

Mom says you can put compost on top of your garden during the winter months, and the worms will multiply. Worms help break down nutrients and form air pockets in the soil, so the roots of your plants grow better. Earthworms dig burrows into the soil about four feet deep.

One worm called the red tiger worm thrives in horse manure. Other worms called red wigglers feed on rabbit debris. Angler worms are good for fishing with, while compost worms decompose organic matter by moving back and forth through the soil. Earthworms are the best because they make clay soils drain quickly, or they can make sandy soils drain more slowly. An earthworm is made up of nitrogen, nitrate, magnesium and calcium. It almost sounds like something we should add to our daily diet.

With careful consideration, I picked up the little critter and placed it between my toes. I gritted my teeth and shut my eyes. Slowly my toe worm inched its way from the top of my little toe over to my big toe. Although its skin was very smooth, it took me a long time to get over the fear that welled up inside of me. I thought to myself, “This must be a toe worm because it is now between my toes.” As it made its way down the back side of my foot, I realized that all it wanted to do was return to the earth and continue the work it was created to do.

Someday you may want to be an ecologist, environmentalist or just a caring person. Without worms, farmers wouldn’t be able to grow crops. Be gentle with the little worms; they take pride in what they do, and they do it very well.

Backwoods Life

At my house, we do not stay up very late. We do not watch TV, or spend hours glued to a computer screen. It has probably been a few months since I’ve heard the ching of a toaster or the annoying beep of a microwave after it pops my popcorn. In fact, the only sounds you’ll ever hear around my house are the sounds of chickens crowing, my brother and I bickering, the geese, or occasionally the coyotes singing their hearts out under the dazzling starlight. It is amazing how quiet and calm things become when you lack electricity and spend your days hidden like a secret, miles into the woods. It makes you realize how chaotic and impatient the ant farm of life can be, and how wonderful and peaceful nature is.

The summer I learned to live without electricity, pavement and nothing but my family in a tree house (as we’ve fondly come to call it) marked the beginning of many astounding discoveries for me. First, I discovered that living without electricity was not very hard; it was actually quite fun. I also discovered the magic and power in nature, an inspiring experience I will never forget. Lastly, I realized the love, support and comfort of having your family become your best friends. It is a bond not to be broken. I would never have found such treasures if it had not been for starting anew, and electrically abstinent.

My creative, tenacious mother certainly aimed for the old style of living when it came to finessing her house. Its character seeps from the walls and floor, screaming its story of a life created with love, talent and amazing imagination. The house is tucked safely away, sunken deep into the belly of the forest and digested into the trees. The treehouse that replaced my suburban environment did not offer much for your average teenager. However, it certainly was a new and challenging adventure. I had been there already a few times, briefly, and I assumed I knew what I was getting into. I expected the small fridge space, feeding the animals, and was fully prepared for absolute isolation.

However, few weeks into my new adventure, I was slapped in the face with the realization that I needed to learn how to live all over again. The old-fashioned tools, lanterns, routines and daily habits of the family were all a part of the puzzle that I struggled to piece together. The crude machines used in everyday life were puzzling and frustrating, but interesting. For instance, I was rummaging through the tool shed one morning looking for a shovel. The dim light pulled color from any familiar shapes; my fingers meandered around, confirming all that my eyes were unsure of. Finally, they landed upon something in a dark corner that resembled a shovel handle. I drew the shovel into the light and, to my disappointment, realized that it wasn’t a shovel at all. There was no spade at the end of this handle. Instead, there was a tool that resembled a jagged row of sharks’ teeth staggered along each side of a 2” wide by 12” long metal pallet. At the time I was somewhat irritated with my seemingly never-ending ignorance of tools. I later found out that it was a weed whacker, fully functioning (despite its obvious age). I swallowed my frustration and took the knowledge in stride. I weed whacked that yard until it was completely whacked naked! It was delightfully fun, giving me such a proud feeling that I had accomplished something that day. Who needs electricity when every day another discovery is waiting for me outside?

The glimmer of the new adventure began to fade, however, and I became more accustomed to the house and its tools. I found myself missing things from time to time; a toaster, microwave, vacuum, washer/dryer, and definitely the instant and magical luminescence of flicking on a light switch. I never seemed to miss however TV, computers or videogames. Possibly I never came to miss electronic entertainment because being outside was much more interesting than anything else. Being outside I was able to absorb energy radiating from the movement of the forest around me, which gave me an amazing feeling of peace and purpose. Outside, alone with nothing but the trees and myself, I never felt more alive.
There is absolutely no lack of nature around my house. In fact, no lack of magic either. It was only yesterday my mother and I were having a bubbly conversation alongside our shed under a few shady oak saplings. Suddenly our conversation came to a halt; our breath caught in our throats, and our mouths hung open with astonishment. She landed only a few small feet away, her beautiful feathers danced with flecks of light cast down from the leaves above. Her entrance hadn’t been subtle, but very friendly. The partridge stretched her feathered body up, and she held us with her confident gaze. I almost expected her to say, “Hello, what are you ladies up to?” It was as if she had wanted to join in on the conversation too, her little partridge sounds her attempt to communicate. After a few minutes she flew off, leaving my mother and me both grateful and excited. The visit from the partridge was such a gift; our attitudes were great through the rest of the day. Many people never get the privilege of seeing such a sight. Thankfully, we live right in the heart of the magic and witness endless accounts.

The partridge is only one strand of the ropes that ended up tying our family together. My mom, brother, Dave and I are like four peas in a pod. When you live with three other people and are as far as we are out in the hills, you tend to learn everybody’s secrets and become quite equal. Sure, we argue sometimes, but with the calm spell the forest cast over all of us, we forgive and forget. We’re all in the same boat. It’s very important to keep your family as close as you can; you never know when they’ll be all you have left. I’ve learned to always ask, say please, and pay for my own gas. We have all developed ways to get along. Being in the forest has stilled tempers and put us all at ease with ourselves. I believe that being at ease with yourself makes it much easier to be at ease with others.

It has been a long, interesting journey that I hope never ends. If you asked me to move back to suburbia I would probably refuse—toaster or not! Recalling the chaos and the feeling of being simply another number sends shivers down my spine. For now, the woods provide enough excitement for me. Someday if I leave and have to start anew, I know I will never forget the proud mom my partridge, the weed whacker, the coyotes, the crickets, the geese or the chickens. I will especially remember those sleepy mornings, waking to the dry warmth and smell of the woodstove as Mom rustles coals and feeds it a breakfast of pine and oak which brings it to life. It is a comforting smell that permeates the quilts on my bed and clings to my clothing long after I forget that it’s there. I wouldn’t choose any other way to live, and now I can see that electricity is for sissies.

—Corrie Ryder, 16, Parsonsfield, Maine, writes, “I used to live in New Hampshire with my father. I have a very good relationship with both of my parents. My mother moved into the “tree house” a year before I decided to move in. I’ve now lived there six months.”
My Life as a Tree

I was once the most marvelous tree in the forest. I began as a small seed no bigger than a pebble, determined to be the largest redwood in the whole world. I carefully rooted myself deep into the soft, nutritious earth. I grew steadily upwards, and the sun warmed me all over.

Before long I had a fabulous set of needles, the perfect shade of dark green. One winter there were a series of rainstorms that drenched the ground. The extra water helped me grow taller. Soon I was the largest tree around!

People from all over the world came to see me. Me! My dream had come true. Those were the happiest days of my life. Then I heard some people talking about making me even more spectacular so that more people would come to see me. My needles quivered with excitement.

A week later a bunch of men came with sharp, metal things. They called them saws. As they drew closer, I grew nervous. When they cut me it hurt! I tried to run, but I was rooted to the spot. Sap ran down my trunk. Two hours later, I had a huge hole in my once beautiful trunk. I started to cry. Who would want to see me now?

One of the men drove his pickup truck right through me. Everyone cheered. Could this be why they wanted to put a hole in me?

The following day a lot of cars drove through me, with the people inside oohing and aahing. I began feeling better until I noticed a large camper. It was too big to fit. When it drove through me, it scraped the top of the large hole. I cried out in pain, but no one seemed to care.

I was sad for a long time and refused to drink any water. My needles began to dry out and turn brown. I no longer felt cheered by the long lines of cars. They didn't care about me. They came to see the tree that they could drive through.

As time passed, vines choked my limbs. Smaller trees caught up with my great height and crowded me. People stopped coming. Winter robbed me of my dried out needles. I was completely bare.

Finally some people came back to visit. It was the men with the saw. They talked about how it was too bad I wasn’t doing well and that they’d have to cut me down.

As they were about to start, a man yelled, “Wait!” The men lowered the blade. I listened to their conversation and learned that I now belonged to this man.

The man, whose name was John, was very nice to me. He hooked up a hose and coaxed me into drinking the water. As I gulped it down, I forgot about everything. John came and visited me every day. He gave me plenty of water and told me how great I was. Each day I grew stronger and even got my needles back.

One day John didn’t come. I grew worried. The next day he again didn’t come. Was he sick? Finally, a familiar pickup truck arrived. It wasn’t John though. It was the men with saws! Why were they here? Couldn’t they see that I was a healthy redwood tree thanks to John? Speaking of John, where was he?

When John finally showed up, I was relieved. John would tell them. He started talking rapidly, and then I heard the truth. John owned a furniture store. The only reason he had saved me was because he wanted to turn me into first-class furniture with velvet seats, carved legs and arm rests.

John had deceived me! I didn’t have much time to think about it because one of the men shouted, “Timber!” and I fell to the ground hard.

“It was about time for him to go,” I heard someone say. I didn’t even feel the pain.

“Be careful with him!” I heard John shout. “He’s worth a bundle.” I was sadder than ever.

The men loaded me onto the logging truck and took me to the mill. After I was cut into smaller pieces, I was taken to John’s workroom. John carved up most of me for furniture and made some fine paper with my leftover scraps.

He sold me to a family. They weren’t as bad as I thought they’d be. At least they appreciated high-quality redwood. After only four months with them, their house caught on fire, and almost everything was destroyed. The only thing left of me now are these sheets of paper.

—Nicole Lynn Martin, 16, Reno, Nevada.
Riding Pegasus

My father often gave my mother blue paper roses that grew, he said, in a magic garden. The folks in our small Greek village knew him as the one who was "down to earth." I cherished his great imagination and spirit of wonder.

During World War II we lived on Skopelos, an island in the Aegean Sea. I had four close friends: Spyros who could squeeze his body through any little hole and swim like a fish; Vangelina, an olive-skinned, almond-eyed girl who is still my best friend to this day; Nikos who was tough and made fun of everyone; and Irene, a plump, curly haired blonde who always lagged behind but never gave up.

One special morning, my dad suggested we explore the caves at the far end of the island. Armed only with a flashlight and pocket knife, he led our eager group on a new adventure. We'd camped and fished with my father before, but that day promised to be special. We walked barefoot on the long strip of beach. Our toes sank in the coolness of the wet sand. We didn’t collect shells.

We started to climb the rocks on the mountainside. Cicadas sang in the summer stillness. We approached the mouth of a cave half hidden behind silver olive branches.

We followed my father inside. Spyros followed close behind him, eager to show his agility. Vangelina and I followed, giggling in nervous anticipation. Nikos teased Irene for her slowness.

"You should’ve stayed home to help your mother cook bean soup."

Irene laughed, and the cave echoed with her cheerfulness.

Dad’s flashlight pointed left. We made a sharp turn. He tapped the rock with the blade of his knife, listening for a hollow sound.

"Nothing here," he said. "Spyros, look for an opening large enough for us."

Spyros had already found it. "I see light up ahead. Hurry!"

One by one we crawled through. An eerie silence enveloped us. Moisture dampened our clothes and skin. I climbed upward following Vangelina. The entry widened. I smelled sea air.

Bright sunlight reflected off a marble paved floor. Tall columns, some half broken, encircled the area. An ancient kingdom forgotten by time glistened brilliant white.

Spyros climbed inside a bathtub-like structure. Vangelina shouted, "I found a doll. Look!"

She held up a little statue of a maiden whose marble white gown, although broken in areas, still clung gracefully to her figure. Her hair in perfectly sculpted curls crowned her beautiful face.

"I will call her Daphne!" Vangelina shouted.

I envied my friend for her precious find.

I walked away to hide my feelings. At a far corner of the paved area hidden behind olive branches, appeared the statue of a beautiful white horse with wings. One wing had broken off. His eyes were worn by time.

I climbed on his back and threw my arms around his neck. My bare feet pushed his belly.

"Fly!" I shouted, "Fly!"

The beautiful horse was Pegasus, the winged horse of the Greek myths. The spirits of Greek demigods and heroes surrounded us. The past became one with the present. We were children of the ancient ones who had built this kingdom.

Many years later, married and living in the United States, I returned to the island for a visit. My friends now had children of their own. Vangelina embraced me tearfully.

"Do you still have the small statue?"

"No," She smiled, "a foreign-looking ship came to the island with all kinds of equipment. They camped on the hill of Pegasus. No one from our village was ever allowed to go there again. They took your horse with them, and Daphne disappeared from my house, stolen."

My cherished past contrasted sharply with the present. Father’s youthful spirit and Mother’s laughter were long gone. Yet for a few hours I had lived the splendor of ancient Greece and ridden the Pegasus.

—Elianda Barnes, Greek American, Palm Coast, FL.
Grandpa’s Goats

"Grandpa, do I have to help with those goats again? Why can’t we go to town?" Effie asked.

"Efthoxia, while you are here you will respect me as you would your father," Grandpa said in his gruff voice.

Effie picked up the milk pail and followed him out. She didn’t know why her parents had to travel to Europe anyway. Now she was stuck out in the country with goats and grapevines and grandparents she hardly knew. Grandma kept cooking strange Greek foods, and it seemed as if every time Effie asked a question, Grandpa thought she was being disrespectful. Sometimes she wished she could have a normal family instead of being half Greek.

When they got to the goat shed, Effie set down the pail and began giving hay to each of the three does. The first two ate eagerly, but Athena wouldn’t get up. Effie went into the stall. In the corner next to Athena, something moved.

"Grandpa!" Effie shouted. "Athena has a baby."

Grandpa came running to the goat’s side. "She’s going to have another one," he said. He sat down in the straw.

"They have two?" Effie asked.

"Yes, sometimes more. Once on Samos, one of my does had three kids. But goats and grapevines grew better there...It was so beautiful."

"Why did you leave then?"

"Our family farm couldn’t support all of us too well. Sit down, child."

Effie looked at the straw, then squatted down with her back against the wall. Straw didn’t look like something you should sit in. "How old were you when you came over here?" she asked.

"Seventeen. I kept hearing about this America. They said if you worked hard, there was a good life to be had. I wanted to marry and start a family, but I wanted more for my family than what we had on Samos."

Athena strained. Suddenly, there were the kid’s head and forelegs. Effie stared; she had never seen anything being born before. Athena made a little noise, and there was the baby. "Oh, Grandpa," Effie said. She forgot where she was and sat down right next to the tiny goat. Athena licked the kid clean, but made no attempt to rise.

Grandpa felt the goat’s side and stomach. "She’s going to have another, Effie. We’ll just sit and wait."

After a few minutes of gazing at the two kids, Effie spoke. "Were you scared when you left Samos?"

"Not scared, but sad. I knew it wasn’t likely that I would ever see my mother and father again. I’d never see my beautiful hills and the sea again. But I wanted my sons and daughters to go to school. Look at me; I can barely read, but your father graduated from high school. And you, you will go to college. That’s why I came here."

Grandpa drew in a deep breath.

"How did you get here, on a plane?"

"No, child. That was 1914. There weren’t any planes coming to America. From the time I was 16, I worked on the fishing boats. I saved every penny. " He stopped and breathed deeply again.

"I finally had enough to come over on a ship," Grandpa added. "I can’t believe that was 50 years ago. Now my sons and grandchildren belong here. They are real Americans. It was worth it."

Effie thought about a 16-year-old boy work-
ing hard on a fishing boat to make a better life for children and grandchildren who weren’t even born. Now Grandpa seemed brave. And something else too, Effie thought. Noble. He seemed a little noble.

Athena strained again, and out came another little head. Effie noticed Grandpa was breathing hard. “Are you tired, Grandpa?”

“Just old.” He tried to laugh, but began coughing instead.

The third kid was in the straw. Athena stood up and nuzzled it. Grandpa started to speak, but stopped and gasped for air. Suddenly, he clutched his left arm and slumped to the floor.

“Grandma!” Effie screamed. She raced out of the goat shed to the arbor where Grandma was picking grape leaves for supper. “Grandma!”

An ambulance arrived and took Grandpa to the hospital in town. When Grandma and Effie got there, a nurse told them a doctor would be out to talk to them as soon as they knew how Grandpa was doing. The nurse showed them to a waiting room.

Grandma sat with her hands covering her face. Effie felt she should say something, but she didn’t know what. After what seemed like a long time she said, “Grandpa told me about Samos and how he worked on fishing boats to save money to come here.”

Grandma looked up. “He has never regretted his choice, but he has never stopped longing for that island. Those goats and his grapevines are what keep him going.” She hesitated. “What will I do without him, Effie?”

Before Effie could say anything, a doctor came into the room. He took Grandma’s arm and said, “Your husband has suffered a mild heart attack. He’ll be alright, but we need to keep him here a few days. Then he’ll be on medication, and he should rest for several weeks. You may see him now.”

Effie followed Grandma into the room. Grandpa was awake, but he couldn’t talk because there was a tube in his mouth. He had a worried look on his face, and it seemed to Effie he was trying to communicate something to them.

Then she knew what it was. “Don’t worry, Grandpa. I’ll take care of your goats. I’ll take extra good care of Athena and her babies.”

Grandpa’s eyes brightened. Effie smiled and squeezed his hand.

—Anna Nicholas, 51, Shell Rock, Iowa. Both of Anna’s grandfathers came from Samos, Greece. Illustrations by Anna’s mom, Virginia Nicholas.
World Peace, Personal Peace: Daisaku Ikeda, a recipient of the UN Peace Medal, is an educator and spiritual leader. Ikeda suggests ways to deter terrorist attacks while helping many people live better and feel better. He suggests the firm and united stance of the international community, fighting against poverty and hatred, supporting post-conflict reconstruction, and having an interactive and interdependent way of life, with confidence, hope and happiness for all.

Wildlife Affected by Global Warming: Two studies in the journal *Nature* indicate that a one-degree temperature increase during the last century has been causing major changes for wildlife. Various species, from songbirds to butterflies, are migrating further north, and the traditional signs of spring, including flowering or egg hatching, are happening much earlier. The effects on wildlife vary. Early bird hatching could mean two clutches a year rather than one, while some species are too sensitive to adapt to the temperature changes. These studies indicate the widespread responses to temperature increases.

(Foreign News Network, Wildlines Reports)

Fuel Economy: An average 2003 model car runs 20.8 miles per gallon (mpg). That’s much lower than the 22.1 mpg set 15 years ago. In spite of new technology that allows more efficient cars, as well as very efficient hybrids, increasing sport utility vehicle sales have caused average fuel economy to decline steadily for the last 15 years.

(Wildlines Report #44, Trevor@serconline.org)

**Skipping Stones Editor Receives the 2002 Writer Award:** The Writer Awards celebrate and recognize writers who, through their work, contribute to the community of writers, bring about changes in the publishing field, or use their writing to make a difference by informing inspiring and motivating others. A panel of six judges reviewed more than 300 nominations and selected our editor, Arun N. Toké along with well-known writers Madeleine L’Engle, Judith Ortiz Cofer, Donna Seaman, Jason Shinder, and the New York Times for its Portraits of Grief series.

**Solar Power in New South Wales, Australia**

In 2006 Australia plans to complete a 3,300-foot tall solar tower in the Australian Outback. It could provide enough electricity for 200,000 homes and reduce greenhouse gases by more than 700,000 tons. The proposed structure will have a width similar in size to a football field and will stand in the centre of a huge glass roof spanning 7 km (4.3 miles). The sun will heat the air under the glass roof, and as it rises an updraft will be created in the tower, allowing air to be sucked through 32 turbines, generating power. Many countries that have intense sunlight could follow in Australia’s footsteps by using solar energy as a power source. Individuals can utilize solar power at home with solar water heaters and solar ovens.

(Source: Hindu Press International, see below)

**Herbs Lead to Longevity:** Mudda Moopan doesn’t know how old he is. What he does know is that he has married 23 times, fathered too many children to remember, and has met both the first president of India and the latest, and he still feels young. Moopan is the Adivasi King of the Karumbha tribe, Kerala, India. He is an authority in tribal medicine, and locals estimate his age at over 120. Moopan claims the secret to his longevity lies in a paste made of 10 rare medicinal herbs that he takes three times daily, He won’t reveal what the herbs are, but scientists say he can identify more than 1,000 rare medicinal plants.


**Poets Against the War:** The White House postponed a poetry symposium set for Feb. 12th, after some of the poets invited said they hoped to use the event to protest American military action in Iraq. Sam Hamill, one of the poets who was invited, sent an e-mail message to poets and friends asking them to send him anti-war poems or statements against military action. He has received over 12,000 responses, including numerous submissions from some of the nation’s most well-known poets. The poems and statements are being compiled into an antiwar anthology.

(Contact: www.poetsagainstthewar.org)
The Other Side by Jacqueline Woodson, Illust. E.B. Lewis (Putnam). Clover always wondered why a fence separates the black side of town from the white side. When a white girl from the other side begins to sit on the fence, Clover begins to question why they are forbidden to cross it. One day Clover approaches her and a new friendship begins. Ages 8 and up. ISBN: 0-399-23116-1.

Yellow-Eye by David Spillman and Mark Wilson (Interlink). The population of yellow-eye fish is becoming scarce, and the white Australian scientists are trying to determine why. The answer lies with the indigenous Impatjara elders, but to save the species both the scientists and the aborigines need to learn to communicate with each other and work together. Ages 7-12. ISBN: 1-56656-410-7.

Welcome to the River of Grass by Jane Yolen, Illust. Laura Regan (Putnam). What may look like a smooth, silent carpet of flowing grass is actually a world teeming with life. Yolen uses poetry and vivid imagery to present the life cycle and peaceful beauty of the Everglades. Regan’s illustrations bring life to the many animals, insects and plants that inhabit this diverse environment. Ages 6-9. ISBN: 0-399-23221-4.


The Deliverance of Dancing Bears by Elizabeth Stanley (Kane/Miller). A brown bear is captured, tortured and made to dance for crowds at the market. She survives only on her dreams of freedom. Finally she is rescued by a kind man who provides her with a taste of freedom and gives the townspeople a lesson in the complexities of good and evil and the power of each person’s actions. Ages 6–12. ISBN: 1-929132-41-7.


Oceans: An Activity Guide for Ages 6 to 9 by Nancy F. Castalodo (Chicago Review). Did you know that a group of jellyfish is called a smack? Do you know how to tell if a shell is right or lefthanded? Oceans is full of fun facts like these and also activities to teach kids more about the deep blue sea. ISBN: 1-55652-443-9.


Mighty Times: The Legacy of Rosa Parks. 40-mins. (www.teachingtolerance.org). Mighty Times is more than the story of Rosa Parks. This documentary also introduces new heroes as it presents the civil rights movement for today’s students. The film and a teacher’s guide is free to schools. For middle and upper grades.


A Symphony of Whales by Steve Schuch, Illust. Peter Sylvada (Voyager). In the darkness of Arctic winters, Glashka hears the voices of the whales. The elders say communication with whales is a gift that has been disappearing from the native people. One day Glashka discovers thousands of whales trapped in an ice-covered channel, and she gathers her village together to help set them free. Inspired by a true story. Ages 6–9. ISBN: 0-15-216548-7.
Inclusive Classrooms

Last night, I heard a presentation by Esther Stutzman, an elder in the Kalapuya tribe of Oregon. Esther described the challenges faced by Indian students because Indian values, ways of knowing, communicating and learning are very different from what many Indian students find in their public education.

On the way home, I was telling my friends how much I could relate to her stories because I felt the same way as a woman studying engineering. The way of approaching a subject, the communication style and the priorities that were championed as "true" were so different from my way of relating to the world—collaborative, holistic, humanistic and nature-inclusive.

Today, when I went by the Skipping Stones office, Arun showed me a document produced by NAME, the National Association for Multicultural Education. Since it is my favorite educational organization, I took a look.

Probably most of you who read Skipping Stones are aware that multicultural education means far more than celebrating a holiday or two or putting a few posters on the wall. Now, NAME has developed guidelines to help us in our efforts to create an inclusive, effective educational environment at our schools.

I've abbreviated the guidelines here. For the entire document, see the NAME website below.

Criteria for Evaluating State Curriculum Standards

Curriculum standards must outline classroom practices that help educators impart knowledge, skills and dispositions necessary for individuals to participate fully and meaningfully in our multiethnic and multiracial society.

1. Inclusiveness
   - Represent the broad range of experiences and communities that make up the nation. Diversity of race, class, language, gender, age, sexual orientation, physical appearance, ability or disability, national origin, ethnicity, religious belief or lack thereof
   - Acknowledge the ways multicultural experiences contribute to the knowledge base and value systems
   - Promote understanding of the interdependence and reciprocity of groups

2. Guidelines on Diverse Perspectives
   - Represent multiple constituencies and points of view, including competing constructions
   - Encourage students to consider their roots
   - Facilitate independent, contextual, critical thinking

3. Accommodating Alternative Cultural / Social Constructions of Knowledge
   - Recognize alternative cultural constructions
   - Appreciate the differences in traditional ways of knowing, paradigms, logic
   - Evaluate causes and effects of traditional and alternative belief systems

4. Self-Knowledge
   - Investigate students' own cultural and ethnic identities, examine origins & consequences of attitudes and behaviors toward other groups
   - Recognize that identity is based on multiple factors

5. Social Justice
   - Emphasize the constitutional rights and responsibilities of all
   - Prepare students to think globally and act locally
   - Provide opportunities to evaluate the results of decisions and actions
   - Promote social action—engaged, active and responsible citizenry

—Charlotte Behm, educator, Springfield, Oregon.

Note: The 13th Annual International Conference of NAME will take place Nov. 5 – 9, 2003, in Seattle, Washington. For more information about the Criteria for Evaluating State Curriculum Standards and the conference, contact: name@nameorg.org or visit their website at www.nameorg.org.
The Hope Club of international friendship is looking for pen pals ages 11–17. Write in English or German to: Larissa Platonova, teacher
M-D Molodyozhny 49A /43
247400 Svetlogorisk
The Gomel Region, BELARUS

Elise Carroll, girl, 10
cybunnyheaven@smileyface.com
North Carolina, USA
Int: dancing, soccer, computer games.

Shiela Muzhamba, girl, 15
2783 Ruregero Road
Dzivaresekwa 2
Harare, ZIMBABWE
Int: writes books and stories.

Masimba M. Chikukwa, boy, 16
42 Mvumba R.D.
PO Mufakose
Harare, ZIMBABWE
Int: karate, reading, radio, TV.

Leila Crestani, girl, 13
367 Blythe
Riverside IL, 60546
Int: reading, ice skating, acting, family history.

Mushroom $s$ $g$ $w$ (u-Io-que)

Traditional Cherokee Pepper Pot Soup
1 lb. boneless deer or beef
2 qts. water
2 big onions, cut in quarters
2 ripe tomatoes, sliced and seeded
1 large sweet bell pepper, sliced and seeded
1 cup fresh okra
1/2 cup diced potatoes
1/2 cup sliced carrots
1/2 cup corn kernels
1/4 cup chopped celery
Salt and pepper to taste

Fill a pot with 2 quarts of water. Add the meat and onions, then cover until it comes to a boil. Turn the heat to low, and let it cook for three hours. Then add everything else and let it cook another hour and a half. Season it with the salt and pepper. Serves 6.

—Recipe and words by Dale Smart, Cherokee mother, Lodi, California.
The Grass Dancer

A small pueblo once stood nestled below the mountains of Taos, New Mexico. Learning the dances of their ancestors was an important part of the day for the children that lived there. To be chosen to dance in the pueblo ceremonies was an honor, so the children practiced very hard. One boy named John dreamed of being a rain dancer. He knew if chosen for this dance, he would bring great rains and bountiful crops to the pueblo. John could not hide his disappointment when his grandfather told him he was to be the grass dancer that year.

“But Grandfather, I don’t want to be a grass dancer,” said John. “It is not important.”

“Every dance is important to the life of the pueblo,” his grandfather replied.

“What does it matter if I dance or not?” he thought. He threatened not to dance, but at every ceremony John dutifully danced the grass dance. The next year, John was chosen to be a rain dancer. His little brother was chosen as the grass dancer. His little brother was chosen as the grass dancer.

“John, why do I have to be the grass dancer? I want to be a rain dancer,” complained Little Brother.

“Grandpa says that every dance is important,” replied John.

“Why is it so important?” asked Little Brother.

“Just do as you’re told, and one day you’ll get to be a rain dancer.”

“I just won’t dance,” said Little Brother as he walked away in a huff.

The night of the first big performance arrived. The dancers waited for the grass dancer to begin the ceremony, but John’s little brother was nowhere to be found. Finally, the dancers could wait no longer. They tried to dance but tripped and fell over the thick blades of grass. The dancers gave up, and the ceremony was finished. After that, the pueblo began to suffer. The rain did not fall; the crops did not grow, and the pueblo had very little food. In desperation, the people of the pueblo turned to John’s grandfather.

“Grandfather, I will talk to my little brother,” offered John.

Grandfather studied John for a moment, then nodded his head in approval. John walked to the edge of the river where Little Brother sat.

“Little Brother, I know you don’t think the grass dance is important,” began John.

“It’s a dance created to give little kids something to do. I want to be an important dancer. I want to be a buffalo dancer or a rain dancer,” said Little Brother with a pout.

“I used to feel the same way you do. Because of you, I now know different. The grass dance is the first and most important dance of all. The grass dancer goes first to stamp down the tall grasses so the other dancers can perform. Without the grass dancer, there can be no other dances, and our pueblo will suffer. You did not dance. Look at the pueblo now.”

Little Brother did not say a word.

“It is your decision,” said John walking away. Little Brother remained at the river thinking.

That night the people of the pueblo gathered to watch the ceremony. Finally, Little Brother walked up to the fire adjusting his costume. John smiled, and Grandfather began to play the music.

As Little Brother started to dance, he put all of his heart into each step. Everyone knew it was the most beautiful version of the grass dance they had ever seen. Soon, the pueblo began to thrive again. Little Brother was given the privilege of teaching the grass dance to the other children. He made sure that each and every grass dancer knew just how important to the village she or he was.

—Shawna Farwell, Cherokee heritage, Peralta, New Mexico. Shawna was inspired by watching the Concha family performing traditional Navajo dances in Taos, New Mexico.
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