

# Skipping Stones

An Award Winning Multicultural Magazine

Vol. 20, No. 3

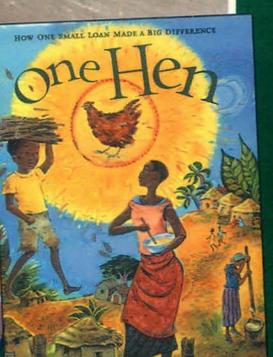
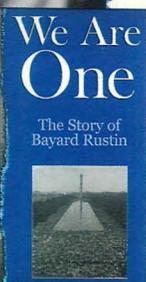
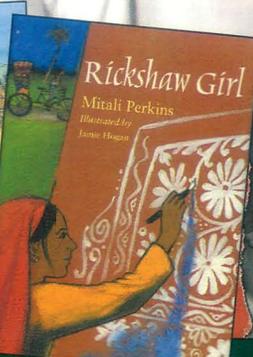
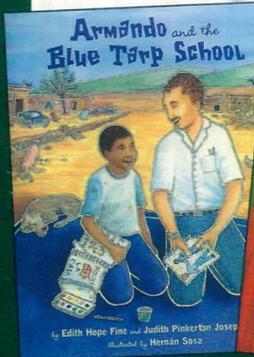
May - Aug. 2008

U.S.: \$5; CAN.: \$5



Costa Rican Schools  
Women Leaders  
Swiss Alps

2008 Book Awards



# Skipping Stones

Vol. 20 no. 3

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## About *Skipping Stones*:

*Skipping Stones* is a non-profit 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 forum for communication among children from different lands and backgrounds. *Skipping Stones* expands horizons in a playful, creative way. We seek your suggestions, submissions, subscriptions and support.

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## Things to Do This Summer

## From the Editor

Yesterday, the temperature soared to 80°F. My son, Shyam, and I took advantage of the warm day and went kayaking on Coyote Creek, on the outskirts of Eugene. As we paddled in the wooded area, we watched hundreds of geese flying around the wetlands in their beautiful V formations. We even saw some folks sunbathing and swimming in the chilly water!

Yes, summer is just around the corner. How do you plan to spend your summer months?

Many families go camping and hiking and spend time outdoors, away from TV, computers, cell-phones and other technological gadgets that keep us hooked to the clock. Acadia, Banff, Jasper, Grand Canyon, Rocky Mountains, Smokies, Yellowstone and various Atlantic or Pacific beaches are some popular destinations. But you'll find dozens of lesser-known, yet equally beautiful, natural places not too far from your city.

When getting away is not an option, going on day hikes or even evening visits to local parks can give us a dose of nature experiences to cherish. I enjoy late afternoon hikes or swims during summer months.

While many folks think of gardening as a chore, my son actually enjoys spending a few hours in the garden whacking those weeds, until his friends show up for a good time with their water guns, that is.

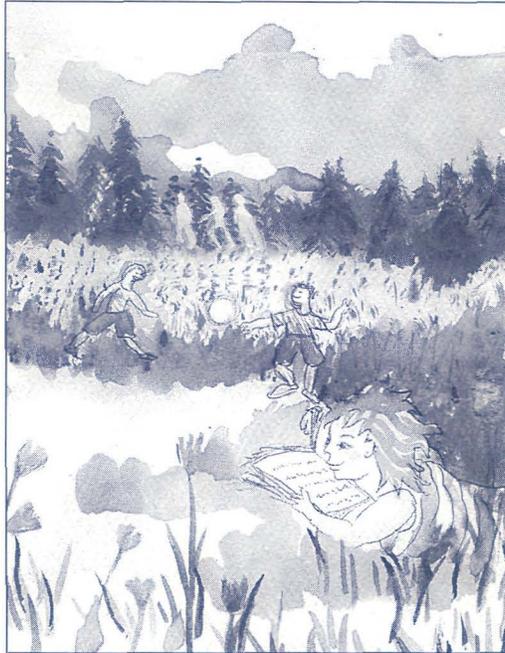
In many neighborhoods and communities, potlucks and backyard picnics are the things to do on those long lazy summer evenings. And, there are always fresh, farm-stand or garden-picked vegetables for salads and sautéed dishes in those meals. Late summer meals include fresh fruits, melons or berry pies for desserts.

Summer also means more time with siblings and friends, to have play dates and sleepovers. How do you make the most of your time together? Playing board games, or outdoor activities like ball games, hopscotch, or just hanging out? Afterwards, do you like to have a quiet time, think about what's on your mind, or take on a project that you've been meaning to finish?

Being in close proximity with friends and family can sometimes result in getting on each other's nerves. How do you resolve conflicts that occur? They can arise for many reasons—we have different expectations, experiences, behavior patterns, values, and of course, misunderstandings. Conflicts become the norm if we don't know how to address disagreements with others in a compassionate way. When a friend uses words that hurt your feelings, a good thing to do would be to suggest that s/he might use some other words (instead of launching an offensive attack on him or her in retaliation). Learning to communicate our needs in a compassionate, nonviolent manner with friends and family could be another item on our summer agenda. By responding in a non-threatening way, most of our *would-be* "conflicts" can be resolved before they get out of hand. We might discover that our days are more enjoyable when we are compassionate!

Reading books is another activity that we can engage in, especially when there are no homework hassles or pop-quiz pressures. Books give us wings; we can take a journey to faraway lands. For this reason, we always include our Annual Book Awards in the summer issue. This year, we have suggested 25 great books for your enjoyment—from picture books to chapter books, from biographies to novels to short stories, there is something for all ages! They are truly educational and exceptional. (See pages 4 & 5 for our recommendations). Visit your public or school library to check out some of these recently-published books. Then dive into them when you can this summer!

As always, we are anxious to hear from you—send something special for the upcoming youth honor awards, due June 25. Tell us about your summer experiences. What's on your mind? Write a letter to the editor. And, most of all, have a great summer!

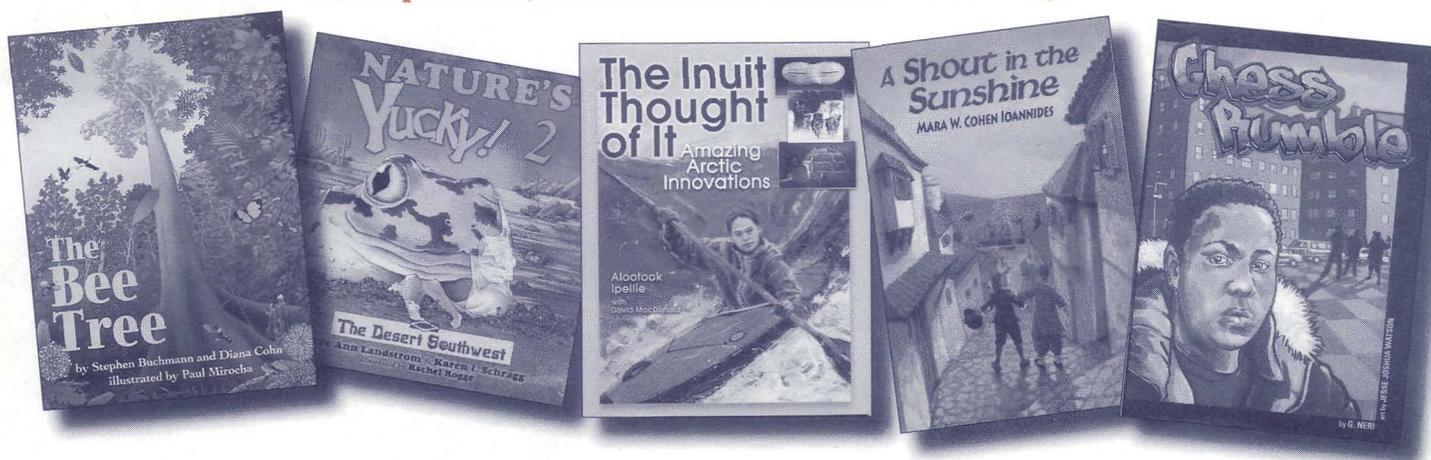


Art by Paula Gregovich

*Arum*

# The 2008 Skipping Stones Honor Awards!

Exceptional, Educational and Entertaining Books



These 26 outstanding books and teaching resources encourage an understanding of the world's diverse cultures, as well as nature and ecological richness. They promote cooperation, nonviolence, respect for differing viewpoints and close relationships in human societies.

## Multicultural and International Books

**One City, Two Brothers** by Chris Smith, illustr. Aurelia Fronty (*Barefoot Books*). Picture Book. ISBN: 978-1-84686-042-3

**When the Shadbush Blooms** by Carla Messinger with Susan Katz, illustr. David Kanietakeron Fadden. (*Tricycle*). Picture Book. ISBN: 978-1-58246-192-2

**Armando and the Blue Tarp School** by Edith Hope Fine and Judith Pinkerton Josephson, Illustr. Hernán Sosa. (*Lee & Low*). Picture Book. ISBN: 978-1-58430-278-0

**I Remember Abuelito: A Day of the Dead Story/ Yo Recuerdo a Abuelito: Un Cuento del Día de los Muertos** by Janice Levy, illustr. Loretta Lopez (*Albert Whitman*). Picture Book. ISBN: 978-0-8075-3516-5

**The Best Eid Ever** by Asma Mobin-Uddin, illustr. Laura Jacobsen (*Boyd's Mills*). Picture Book. ISBN: 978-1-59078-431-0

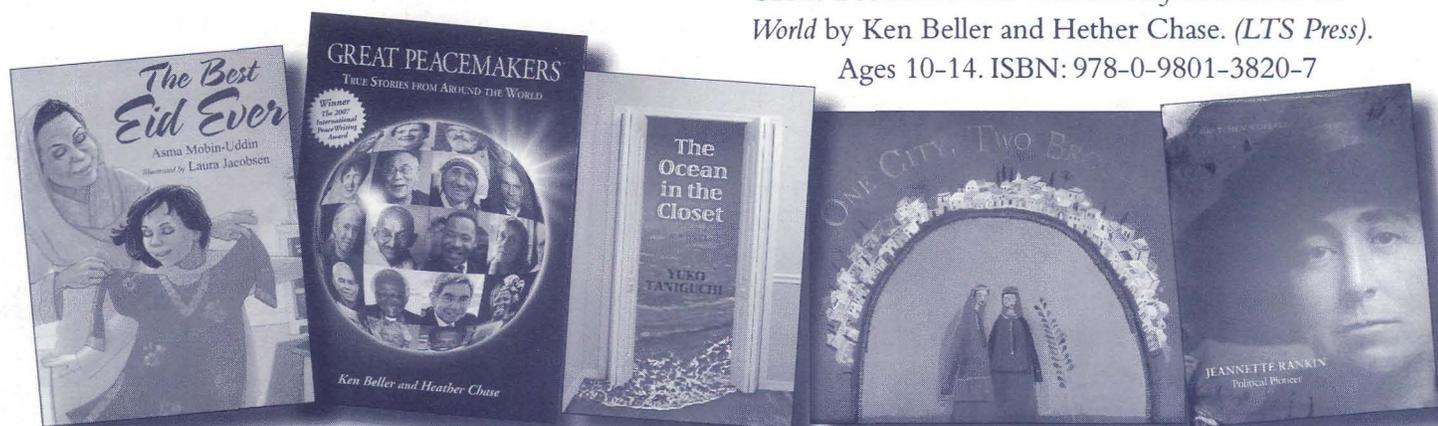
**Romina's Rangoli** by Malathi Michelle Iyengar, Illustr. Jennifer Wanardi (*Shen's Books*). Picture Book. ISBN: 978-1-885008-32-9

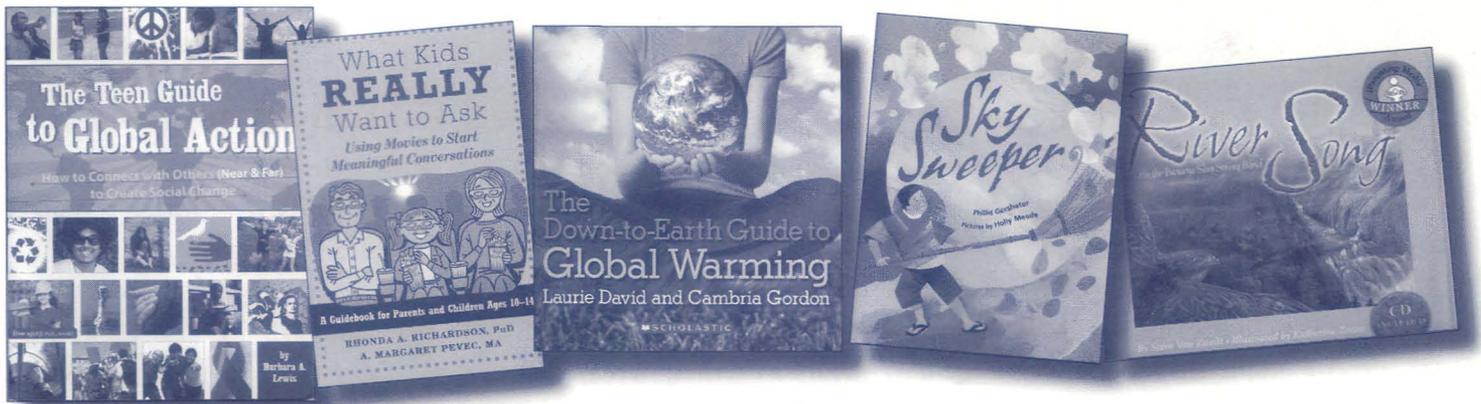
**Sky Sweeper** by Phillis Gershator, illustr. Holly Meade (*F.S.G.*). Picture Book. ISBN: 978-0-374-37007-7

**One Hen** by Katie Smith Milway, Illustr. Eugenie Fernandes (*Kids Can Press*). Picture Book. Ages 7-10. ISBN: 978-1-55453-028-1

**Rickshaw Girl** by Mitali Perkins, illustr. Jamie Hogan (*Charlesbridge*). Ages 9-12. ISBN: 978-1-58089-308-4

**Great Peacemakers: True Stories from Around the World** by Ken Beller and Hether Chase. (*LTS Press*). Ages 10-14. ISBN: 978-0-9801-3820-7





## Multicultural & International Books, contd.

**We are One: The Story of Bayard Rustin** by Larry Dan Brimmer (*Calkins Creek*). Ages 10-15. ISBN: 978-1-59078-498-3

**Chess Rumble** by G. Neri, illustr. Jesse Joshua Watson (*Lee & Low*). Ages 11-15. ISBN: 978-1-58430-279-7

**Jeannette Rankin: Political Pioneer** a biography by Gretchen Woelfle (*Calkins Creek*). Ages 11-17. ISBN: 978-1-59078-437-2

**Tasting the Sky: A Palestinian Childhood**, a memoir by Ibtisam Barakat (*Farrar, Straus & Giroux*). Ages 11-15. ISBN: 978-0374-35733-7

**The Teen Guide to Global Action: How to Connect With Others to Create Social Change** by Barbara A. Lewis (*Free Spirit*). Ages 12-17. ISBN: 978-1-57542-266-4

**A Shout in the Sunshine** a novel by Mara W. Cohen Ioannides (*Jewish Publication Society*). Ages 12-17. ISBN: 978-0-8276-0838-2

**Windows into My World: Latino Youth Write their Lives**, ed. by Sarah Cortez. (*Piñata Books*). Ages 13-18. ISBN: 978-1-55885-482-6

**The Ocean in the Closet**, a debut novel by Yuko Taniguchi (*Coffee House*). Ages 15 to adults. ISBN: 978-1-56689-194-3

## Nature & Ecology Books

**Nature's Yucky! 2: The Desert Southwest** by Lee Ann Landstrom & Karen I. Schragg, illustr. Rachel Rogge (*Mountain Press*). ISBN: 978-0-87842-529-7

**River Song with the Banana Slug String Band** by Steve Van Zandt, illustr. Katherine Zecca. (*Dawn Publications*). Picture Book. ISBN: 978-1-58469-093-1

**The Bee Tree** by Stephen Buchmann and Diana Cohn, illustr. Paul Mirocha (*Cinco Puntos Press*). Picture Book. ISBN: 978-0-938317-98-2

**The Inuit Thought of It: Amazing Arctic Innovations** by Alootook Ipellie with David MacDonald (*Annick Press*). Ages 9-12. ISBN 13: 978-1-55451-087-0

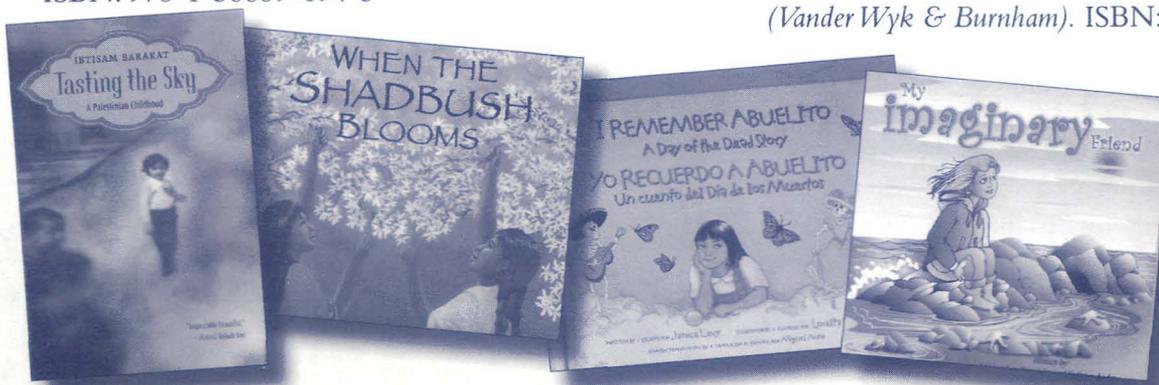
**The Down-To-Earth Guide to Global Warming** by Laurie David and Cambria Gordon (*Orchard Books*). Ages 8-13. ISBN: 978-0-439-02494-5

## Teaching and Parenting Resources

**2008 World Diversity Calendar** (*Orison Publishers*). This interfaith, multilingual calendar belongs on every classroom wall! ISBN: 978-0-9763800-5-4.

**What Kids Really Want to Ask: A Guidebook for Parents and Children Ages 10 -14** by Rhonda A. Richardson, Ph.D. and A. Margaret Pevec, M.A. (*Vander Wyk & Burnham*). ISBN: 978-1-889242-31-6

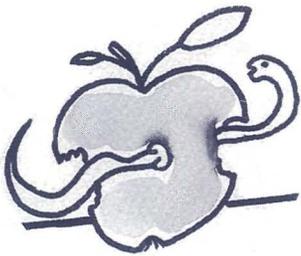
**My Imaginary Friend** by Shirley Ann Povondra and Kathryn Andrew. (*Llumina*). For parents and educators to read with children. ISBN: 978-1-59526-669-9



## What's On Your Mind?

### The Apple and the Worm

The birds no longer sing their song in the summertime. The freight trains shake the buildings and the cement-covered streets. The roses and flowers that had once blossomed along the streets have been reduced to weeds. The elderly man who once only dreamed of wealth and industrialization has achieved it. Yet he looks sorrowful. In fact, he is sorrowful. As the day turns to night, the lights that line the once-cobblestone streets begin to flicker until they finally glow brightly. The streets are now illuminated, the dust has finally settled. The city lights look like diamonds on black velvet  
—conflict diamonds.



There once was an apple. A bite was taken from the apple. Bacterial colonies began to form on the exposed core. More bites, more bacteria, and the apple became more and more foul. At the end, only the core remained uneaten. At this point, the apple was thrown away. I am neither an environmentalist, nor a humanitarian; however, this I know: *Though the apple is only rotting now, it is not too far from being obsolete.*

The apple is a lost hope. The worm that crawls through it is invisible, but has an insatiable appetite and its relentless desire to devour that which is pure will lead to its demise. Perhaps some day its stomach will reach its full capacity and it will cease to exist.

To squash the worm would be to squash the apple as well. This is my dilemma, or rather ours. Should we wait for the worm to reach the poisonous seeds of the apple and die? Should we suffer the stench of the rotten apple or the grotesque appearance of the worm?

Let me describe this worm for you. Its body is made up of six billion rings. It is parasitic in nature and feeds on the apple in which it lives. How very great the folly of this worm! Imagine a creature which feeds only for itself, caring only for the needs of itself. How covetous, taking all of the apple. Alas! Its greed leads to its own demise. A most curious way to end a meal!

—Noel Ejaz, 15, Florida.

### Self Confidence

I admire people with a lot of self-confidence. People who don't get flustered by a mean comment or ugly stare are the people I always notice. They stand apart from everyone else. They carry themselves well, with their heads held high and standing tall. I admire them because they don't need to gossip, tease or tear others down to make themselves feel better. They don't need television, magazines, designer clothing, movie stars and models, or peers to tell them what is "in" or "popular." To them, the way they already are is cool. It doesn't matter who is telling them they aren't cool enough or not up to date with the latest fashions.

If others don't like how you are, that's their problem, not yours. People who gossip are the ones who are not secure with themselves and are searching for a way to make up for it. They think tearing others down will make them look weak, and themselves strong.

I look up to self-confident people. They are real and genuine. It is a wonderful trait to have.

—Kristen Fajt, 13, Pennsylvania.

### Children Are Our Future

Children are our future. They will lead us to many things that we were not able to accomplish. They will take us to higher standards of the world. They already have. You were or are one of those children of the future. It's now our time, and we will fly. We will soar across the world and change it.

We need the support and encouragement of our elders. Some have given us that, others have not. I hope that you will be the one that boosts us up and makes us shine and be the saviors of the world. We need love, care and support. Without it, we will never fulfill our true potential.

Most of the time we all say that we want to be adults; we want to drive, be on our own, and we want to do things better than adults. But we still need adults' help to complete these hard or even easy tasks. We will get the things we deserve in the future!

The next time you talk to a child, be inspirational. I am one of those children.

—Traci Maxwell, 12, Pennsylvania.

## ✧ This I Believe ✧

During the early part of November, I visited Chicago with a group of people from my church. We were participating in a service project in the inner city. Many of these included homeless people. I saw them on the street with all their belongings in a bag that they had to lug everywhere. This gave me a big feeling of guilt because I remembered driving through my friends' neighborhood and looking at the enormous houses and feeling jealous even though I already had a perfectly good house to live in. It is a moment like this that makes me appreciate all the things I have, like a home and a family. It was then that I realized that all this time I had been taking these things for granted.

During the mission trip, I had the pleasure of working in two soup kitchens. These kitchens made and distributed food to homeless people. As I watched the people take trays full of food, I realized that this is probably the only meal they get in a day. They didn't care whether they liked the food or whether it tasted good. They took the food graciously and didn't throw any of it away. I then thought back to all the times when I wouldn't eat a vegetable or something my mom or dad made for dinner that night because I didn't like it. I thought back to all the times I would throw my lunch tray away still half-full because I wasn't hungry. The homeless people made me realize all the food I took for granted everyday, and all the meals that my mom made that I hadn't really appreciated.

Now, ever since November 6th, the day I returned from the trip, I have tried to live everyday with these things in mind. I try to appreciate everything that I have, and I work hard to not take the things I have or receive for granted. I try to live my life like this because I realize not everyone is as fortunate as we are. ✧

—Matt Clark, 13, Pennsylvania.

**Did You Know That?** *Antarctica holds the record for the coldest temperature ever observed, but even it isn't immune to the effects of global warming. A chunk of ice seven times the size of Manhattan fell off from the Wilkins Ice Shelf this February. These kinds of collapses are rare but are occurring more and more often, said David Vaughan of the British Antarctic Survey. The piece that fell may spell doom for the rest of the ice shelf and more may fall soon.*



## Making A Difference!

People who make a difference are special in many ways. They help make lives better everyday. Making a difference is as simple as helping around your house. It does not have to be anything out of the ordinary to be recognized. The simplest acts go just as far as any other act. Sometimes just saying "hi" to someone or holding the door for them can make their day. Simple acts can lift peoples' spirits because they know that someone cares enough to do a small act of kindness from their heart. You don't have to spend hours doing hard labor to make a difference; just those easy, simple acts. Many people make a difference everyday and do not even know that they are making an impact on the world. It is those selfless acts that make the real difference.

**Some Easy Ways to Help Others:** Clean your room • Visit the elderly • Mow the lawn • Shovel snow or help in the garden • Comfort someone who needs it • Say hello to a stranger • Help without being asked • Make dinner for someone • Do your own laundry.

—Shannon Hiles, 13, Pennsylvania.

### Acknowledgements

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**Winner, the National Association for Multicultural Education, EdPress, Writer, NewsStand Resources, Parent's Choice & EEA Awards.**



# Health Rocks!

## \* Darker Greens for Salads

When making a salad, choose darker greens. Romaine lettuce has much more beta carotene, folacin and vitamin C than iceberg lettuce. Spinach, arugula and chicory are also nutritious for salads.

## \* Unprocessed and Wholesome Foods

Some of the most nutritious foods are often low in cost. Check your local grocery store for potatoes, carrots, bananas and dried beans—the types of foods nutritionists recommend we eat. Another bonus is that these foods tend to come with minimal packaging, which benefits the environment.

## \* Vitamin C

Vitamin C is an important nutrient to take daily because it may help prevent cancer and other diseases. Some of the best sources for vitamin C are oranges, blackberries, tomatoes, broccoli, cantaloupe, peppers and strawberries. Another way to get enough vitamin C is to start your day off with a glass of fresh orange juice; store-bought juice will have the recommended daily amount of vitamin C.

If you use vitamin C wafers, divide the dose in half and take it twice a day. This keeps the vitamin level in your body high all day long since it only stays in your system for about 12 hours. If you take chewable tablets, brush your teeth or rinse your mouth out afterwards because vitamin C tablets will make your mouth acidic enough to dissolve tooth enamel.

## \* More about Juice

Drinking vegetable juice is good for you, but won't replace eating whole, fresh veggies. Vegetable juice has a lot of vitamins and minerals—nearly half the recommended vitamin C and beta carotene—but little fiber. Prune juice is also rich in potassium and iron.

Do read the labels on juice containers to make sure that it is 100% juice. Items labelled "Juice Blend" or "Juice Beverage" are likely to contain more sugar and water than actual juice. Also, beware of natural sodas with added fruit juices, as they tend to be high in calories and low in nutrients.

## Tips for Better Health!



## \* Why Beta Carotene?

Carotenoids, like beta carotene, may play a role in preventing cancer. Carrots and cantaloupe are rich in beta carotene, as are dark leafy greens like spinach and collard greens.

## \* Top Ten Nutrition All-Stars:

Broccoli, kale, cantaloupe, carrots, mangoes, pumpkins, red bell peppers, spinach, strawberries and sweet potatoes are healthy choices for intake.

## \* Tea Please

Drinking hot tea can do more than warm you up on a cold day! Tea has enough fluoride to help prevent tooth decay. It's also rich in polyphenols, which act as antioxidants.

## \* Careful with Meat

Charred grilled meats are cooked over high heat, causing fat to drip onto the heating element. This can cause potentially cancer-causing chemicals to be deposited on the meat by rising smoke.

## \* Keep Food Bacteria-Free

Always wash your hands before preparing a meal. Food should never sit at room temperature for long periods of time. Food needs to be reheated to 165 °F. to kill any bacteria that might be in it.

Counters and cutting boards that come in contact with uncooked meat need to be disinfected in order to prevent the spread of salmonella. Soap and water will do the trick, but it might be a good idea to use paper towels since a sponge can harbor the germs and spread them later. \*

*Information excerpted from **Wellness Made Easy: 365 Tips for Better Health** (University of California Berkeley Wellness Letter, 1999).*

## Running, My Hobby

Running has always been a sport that hasn't gotten much attention. Rarely anyone except parents comes to cross country or track meets. Running is often overshadowed by more popular sports, such as football and basketball. That has always been the case, but we runners have learned to deal with and even enjoy the lack of attention given to us and our sport.

Two things that recently happened in the running world should have gotten more attention than they did. While football and baseball seasons were raging on with fans glued to their TVs, the world record for the marathon was broken. The new record is 2 hours, 4 minutes, 26 seconds and was set by Haile Gebreselassie, a world-class distance runner. Very few people have heard of Gebreselassie, a top notch Ethiopian distance runner. If you examine his finish time, about 125 minutes, and divide it by 26.2, you end up with him running each mile in a little over 4:45 minutes. Let me re-emphasize that: 26 miles at a 4:45 pace! *That makes the fast kid at your school running a sub-six-minute mile look like a turtle.*

Also recently, the Chicago Marathon, one of the five biggest marathons in the world, was cancelled midway through because the temperature soared into the 90s, leading to a shortage of water and Gatorade. This was a landmark event. In all of the marathon's 30 years, these kinds of temperatures and the cancellation of the race on-site had never before happened. Still, our local newspaper decided not to cover what happened. Even my teacher, one of the biggest sports buffs around, missed this happening.

Yes, running is not a popular sport to watch. I'm not here to complain about the lack of attention given to runners. But when amazing events happen or records are broken in any sport, they deserve news coverage and the world's acknowledgement.

I first picked up running as a supplement to my newfound sport of road cycling. But now, it's the other way around; cycling is my supplement to running. It's partly because running takes less time. With homework and other extracurricular activities, that's paramount. Running is also simpler—not the act of running itself, but you don't need to plan intricate routes to run, like in cycling. Running means much



more to me than cycling.

I might have picked up cycling first, but running is what I go back to. I can vividly remember running in a few road races, cross country meets, and some just on sidewalks. I don't have fond memories of biking because I usually bike by myself and because my cycling adventures always seem to turn out the

same way: noisy cars whizzing past me, my eyes glued to the road in front of me, and perhaps just happening to see other area cyclists. Cycling is less universal than running, and the experiences are less diverse.

Running has also impacted me much more than cycling; I run a lot more often than I bike. All of the experiences I've had while running have really shaped me for the better. I feel that now I reach more goals, give more effort in challenges, stick with things longer and have a more balanced lifestyle, all because of running. Running has also helped me deal with competition, which I previously have not handled well. In short, I have gained a lot from running.

The sheer pleasure from reaching goals in running trumps goals reached in cycling. In running, everyone is basically on the same playing field; it all comes down to your mental and physical endurance, your guts. You get to admire and appreciate the pros who run 26 back-to-back-sub-five-minute miles. In cycling, however, a lot of the discussion is not about training or motivation, but about gear. I could safely say someone not as healthy as I am could go faster than me on a lighter, more expensive bike. Feats in cycling don't seem as impressive or notable once you learn they were done on a \$3000 bike. Compared to cycling, running is bare bones; the fitter competitor wins 99% of the time.

I enjoy the feeling of "just being out there," whether it be riding a bike or running. But, if I had to choose one over the other, I would definitely choose running. Running has changed me as a person and introduced me to novel experiences! \*

—Max Zhou, 13, Chinese American, Indiana.

I was so excited I skipped all the way to school that September morning in Taipei, Taiwan looking forward to meeting my first grade teacher and my classmates. Then, just before 8 o'clock, a tall woman took her place on the wooden platform. "Good morning, children! My name is Miss Lai!" she announced.

My teacher! My eyes lit up with joy as I followed her every move as Miss Lai handed out a new beautiful book, a workbook, and a payment notice to each student. "You know that paying tuition for your education is the duty of everyone here. Do not forget to give the notice to your parents and pay the tuition on time!" she emphasized.

How I loved school as I eagerly studied the new words on the big blackboard. Then on the third day, Miss Lai hurried into the classroom and exclaimed, "Please, come up to pay your tuition!" Most of my classmates walked to the front to pay. Then Miss Lai asked anyone who hadn't paid yet to come to the front. My heart began to hammer as I joined the others who stood in a row in front of the whole class. Miss Lai walked toward the first student and said, "Stretch out your hand!" Pop! She hit my classmate's hand with a rattan, and then she came towards me. As I felt the pain on my palm, I choked back tears.

The next morning, I expected my father to give me the tuition, but he kept silent, and I was afraid to ask him for it. Somehow I sensed that he didn't have it. Week after week as the semester went by, the teacher asked for tuition and punished those who hadn't paid. As pain seared through my arm again and again, my heart felt like it was being torn into shreds. My joy in attending school had changed to dread.

I kept to myself. I had no friends and I didn't even want to talk to anyone. I felt nobody liked me, and nobody cared. I couldn't wait to grow up so that I wouldn't have to go to school anymore. Every day seemed like torture; loneliness nagged at my heart and everything seemed so hopeless.

After summer vacation, I didn't look forward to school. When our new teacher, Miss Hung, came into the classroom, I didn't even want to look at her. After roll call, she handed out texts and workbooks as well as payment notice. My heart felt like a log was sitting on

it. I would have to endure another terrible school year.

I handed the payment notice to my father when he arrived home. As before, he said nothing. My fear welled up again at the thought of the punishment and humiliation I would have to endure.

Miss Hung also collected tuition, but she did not punish anyone who hadn't paid. I became more and more anxious, wondering why she never asked and how she would punish me later on.

Two weeks later, when Miss Hung looked at my workbook, I could hardly trust my ears. "Sherry did a good job with her homework. Neat and tidy! I can see that she studies hard!" she announced loudly as she showed my workbook to everyone. I was bashful, but felt a little proud also. When she asked me to help hand out workbooks each day, joy started to creep into my heart once again. I felt relieved and a little more confident. It seemed like she had forgotten about it or maybe she understood my situation at home.

My classmates now came to me to ask help with homework. They all wanted to be my friends. I began to feel better about myself, like I was worth something after all.

When Miss Hung asked me to become a group leader in class, my confidence soared. From that time on, I was determined to always work hard at school, and my smile reflected the joy in my heart.

When the school year was over, I was looking forward to Miss Hung's class again, but she didn't return to teach. Where is she, I wondered with deep disappointment. However, no one knew where she now was. Yet from that time I knew that if God had sent this caring teacher to restore my self-image and my joy in attending school, he would help me through anything. \*

—Sherry Chen. As told to Ingrid Shelton, Washington.

Sherry Chen lives grew up in Taiwan and still resides there. Even elementary school students were required to pay tuition, and those not able were punished. However, fortunately many kind teachers treated children from poor families the same as those able to pay tuition. After Sherry's self-confidence was restored, she enjoyed school so much that she went on to study to become a businesswoman. Today, she spreads cheer and joy to everyone she meets and works with.

## Bicycle Riding in China

Practically everyone in China used a bicycle to get to work back in 1966. The streets were always crowded with them, and I'd watch them pedaling away through the windows of the bus that I always took to school. I was a teacher, and it took so much time waiting for the buses that I decided to buy a bicycle and learn to ride it.

Practicing on a friend's bike, I quickly learned to keep my balance and manage the pedals, so I bought a bike in a shop near the school.

The first few times I rode, three other teachers rode their bicycles with me so that I'd be safe. One rode on my left, one on my right and a third was behind. I practiced for about half an hour and wasn't afraid. I felt that I could manage it quite nicely, but one of them always insisted on riding with me on my way home.

A day came when I felt that I didn't need anyone to protect me. I thought I could do it alone and was happy that I'd save an hour a day if I learned to ride quickly.

At first, I rode very slowly. A week later I saw a policeman wave his hand when I came to an intersection. I had intended to turn left to get off the crowded main street and onto a less-traveled side street. I didn't understand what he wanted, so I stopped at once.

He seemed very angry, as he pointed his finger at me, but I didn't know what I had done wrong. In trying to figure it out, I turned around to see what was behind me and saw a bus with heads popped out of each window. I was holding up traffic, and the people were yelling that I was a hazard. I heard one of them shout, "You must not want to be alive."

I realized I had made a mistake. When he waved, he had wanted me to make the turn quickly. I shouldn't have stopped. It was lucky that I didn't cause an accident, and when the policeman came over to me, I didn't listen to what he was yelling, but immediately said over and over, "I'm sorry... I'm sorry..."

He was very angry as he shouted, "Don't you know how to ride a bicycle? It can be very dangerous!"

"Yes, I know; it's my fault. I just learned to ride

and am so sorry." I waited for him to punish me, as I could tell from his attitude that he didn't think I was sincere in my apology. He must have thought I'd change my attitude if my boss found out, for he asked where I worked. I gave him my school's name and address and could see that he immediately thought I must be an honest person, as our school was quite famous in that area.

"All right," he said. "You can go. But be careful!"

I heaved a sigh of relief, thanked him and rode on.

From the very beginning, my husband had not been in favor of me riding a bike, so when I told him what had happened, he strongly advised me not to ride. But I didn't act on it right away. Bicycling to work was such a good way of saving time!

I rode for two more months and then the decision was made for me. My nephew needed transportation to get back and forth to school and was saving his money to buy a bike. I felt sorry for him and told him he could borrow mine. I thought I'd get it back, but after a while he loaned the bicycle to a friend who was going on a trip. But he never returned to Shanghai.

After that, I didn't have a bicycle and I never rode again. \*

—Peichen Chen, scientist, Oregon. Illustration by her granddaughter, Christine Liu, 13, Oregon.

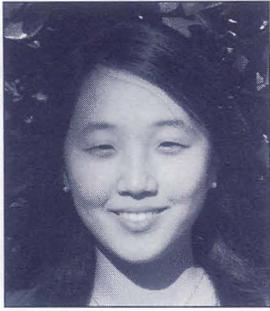


### Twenty Inspirational Women & Men

*Who are your top twenty women and male role models of the 20th Century? For example, do any of these women and men rank high in your mind?:*

Oprah Winfrey • Ruth Ginsburg • Aung San Suu Kyi • Shakira Mubarak • Indira Gandhi • Mother Teresa • Evo Morales • Dalai Lama • Mandela • Wangaari Mathai • Dr. King • Cesar Chavez • Nancy Pelosi

*With your help, we'll create an Honor Roll of 20 global people who have helped shape our future. No matter where you live on the planet, tell us who your role model is. How do they inspire you? Send your favorite names by Oct. 25!*



## A Girl With Four Nationalities

**My name is Kyung Eun Kim** and I am from South Korea. I'm only sixteen years old but I have traveled around the world. I was a typical Korean girl

who was shy until I was about eleven, when our family moved to China because of my dad's business. We lived in China for six years, and my experience of living there dramatically changed my life.

When we moved to China, I was overwhelmed by the new environment. I felt intimidated by the new school life. To make friends at the new school, and just to "survive," I had to learn to start conversations with people at school. My personality changed gradually, and I became one of the most outgoing and "leaderly" people. Since I went to a Chinese school that had students from all over the world, I was able to experience the different cultures of many students. My best friend was from Puerto Rico, and because of her, I started to be interested in America.

Meanwhile, my dad had to move again, this time to Japan. So I went to Japan each summer to visit him and also attended a Japanese language school. One day I was thinking of what I wanted to be in the future, and I decided to become an international lawyer in America. I thought I'd go to a high school in America so I can attend an American college. So here I am, finally in America to make my dream come true.

Thanks to my parents and the environment that I grew up in, now I am quadri-lingual: I speak Korean, Japanese, Chinese and English; I am competent in all four languages.

The funny thing is that I become a completely different person when I speak each language. My tone changes, my facial expression changes, and my thoughts change. Most of all, I change. When I am speaking Korean, I notice that most of the time I sound very colloquial and girly. When I am speaking Japanese, I become extremely polite and my voice tone goes up at least two octaves. When I am speaking Chinese, the volume of my voice goes

up a lot. When I am speaking English, I become very serious. Subconsciously I try to use the most advanced vocabulary that I can.

I was still a very small kid when I learned them all by communicating with "native-speakers." I somehow naturally act just like the native speakers when they were talking to me in their first language. Many people envy my international background and my ability to speak four languages. However, there was a time when this bewildered me and made me very depressed because I did not know where I belonged.

I was born in Korea but I spent my teenage years in China so most of my friends were in China. They were mostly foreigners and we all had plans to spend our futures in our own countries, so we knew that we would be separated sooner or later. This was tragic to me because my friends were everything to me since I have no siblings. I liked American culture better than Korean culture and this made me feel ashamed of myself. I worried that people would think that I didn't love my own country. I missed my dad so much when I was in China and I missed my mom terribly when I was in Japan, so I always possessed some type of loneliness and isolation deep inside my heart.

However, I overcame these worries because I realized that I have the power to influence all four countries by using my linguistic talent. When I look back, it was so ridiculous for me to suffer from over-thinking and not knowing where I belong. I belong to myself. Our nationality is a very important factor. However it is not as crucial to me as the fact that I belong to myself first. I am a happy, multinational girl possessing great ambition for the future.\*

— *Kyung Eun "Daisy" Kim, 16, Ohio. Daisy adds:*

*"Since I have lived in several different countries and have experienced different cultures, I am very interested in languages and the law those countries have. Therefore, trying to maintain and not forget all the languages I have learned is important. However, family is important to me more than anything else. I think family is the best blessing God has given us... My dream is to become an international lawyer."*

# Summer's Coming! Ask Nana Jean about Swimming

Summer is coming and with it, opportunities to swim and play in the water. Nana Jean hopes you are safe near water, and that you will learn to swim if you have not learned already.

Amazingly, some people, because of their experiences, have questions about African Americans and swimming.

*I have never seen an African-American in my neighborhood pool or on the Olympic Swimming Team. Can black people swim?*

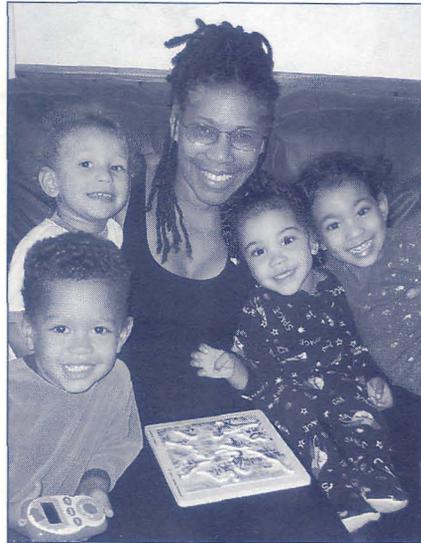
If you live somewhere that is highly segregated you may not have seen someone of African descent swim, so I understand that you may wonder if black people can swim! Read on the questions and answers below to help you understand why some blacks do and some don't.

*Isn't swimming like most things? That is, race has little to do with ability?*

Yes, some African Americans can swim very well. Someone I knew laughed when I asked him if he could swim. He said, "Are you serious? .... Not only can I swim, I was a certified lifeguard at the age of 18 and have saved several individuals from drowning."

*Does where you live make a difference on whether you learn to swim?*

An African American woman told me, "In Inglewood, where I grew up, there were no pools in which to swim, no golf courses or tennis courts. Only basketball and track fields. I learned when I was 30 years old." Another black friend told me, "I can swim; my brother was a junior lifeguard at the closest YMCA. It took us forever to walk to the pool in the summer because our poor neighborhood did not have backyard swimming pools or adequate funding for public facilities with pools. Even today, the parents of poor children do not have the disposable income necessary to pay for private swimming lessons."



*What are other reasons people do not learn to swim?*

My own mother, who is 83, never learned to swim. In her childhood, public pools had "Whites Only" signs.

Also, some religions require women to be covered well in public. However, there are companies that make swim suits that cover the whole body.

*Shouldn't everyone learn to swim?*

I think so. Some high schools or colleges require students to learn to swim. One person told me, "Yes, I can swim, but only because it was a requirement of my undergraduate degree. All undergraduates had to enroll and pass a swimming course."

*Nana Jean, can you swim?*

Swimming was a requirement in my high school and that's when I really learned to swim. The African-American girls, who usually had their hair straightened in those days, dreaded having the class first period. Just a little bit of water and we would have a bad hair day. I remember putting a thick layer of hair oil under the edge of my swimming cap in order to keep the water out and my straightened hair straight. I think some of us said we were beginning swimmers even if we were better than that just because then we would not have to put our heads under the water as much. But you had to pass the swimming test, or you had to take the class again. A lot of girls became better swimmers during the last week of class. So I would say that at the age of 15, I could sort of swim, but my hair couldn't!

Now, I wear my hair in locks and I really like to swim. I have swum across a lake, I have taken part in a triathlon (swimming, biking and running) and I have jumped into water with ice in it and swum a very short distance. Refreshing!!

*How about you, the reader? Can you swim?*

*—Prof. Jean Moule, Oregon*

## Poetry Page

### Swing

About a green course  
With my clubs at hand  
For I play a game  
Of high demand  
Despite the others  
On the course  
Along I go  
With a swing of high force  
Up it goes to the green  
“COME ON! GO IN,” I scream!  
—J. Alexandra Brachocki, 12, Pennsylvania.



### Mind of Wit and Rhyme

A poem needs composing, the magic is now  
Alone it cannot be done.  
We need those of quick wit,  
The ones who can write.  
What we're doing is not a nonsensical fight,  
The art of war is not needed here.  
Deep thinking writers are what's required.  
Scientists and mathematicians are too literal,  
The concepts of that beyond reality  
are what we want.  
Equations of astronomical magnitude  
are not needed here.  
But those who can intertwine the  
fabric of time in a single word.  
are required.  
Warning: The erratic loss of inspiration  
is an expected occurrence.

—Marco Dumancas, 13, Filipino, Florida. Marco adds:  
“I hold intellect supported by ethics of the highest importance.  
Where would we be if everyone committed improper and irreverent acts coupled with ignorance?”



### The Summer Days

As I walked down the street  
on a brisk summer day,  
I realized all the nature  
that is coming my way.  
The maple trees sway,  
and the bumblebees buzz  
as they go on their way.  
Yes, this all excites me,  
it really really does!  
All because I took  
ten seconds out of my day  
to realize what  
Mother Nature does.

—McDarragh Minnock, 14, Pennsylvania.

### The Tree

It swings with the waltz of the gust  
Whistling with a rusty noise  
Like a mouse in the shadows of the darkness  
The tree comes to flourish with leaves so green  
It sounds you to sleep  
As it makes our world  
a healthier and fresher planet  
—Rebecca Antonaccio, 13, Connecticut.

### The Watermelon Seed

When I was a child,  
I followed the footsteps  
of older siblings.  
We were always told  
that an entire watermelon  
would grow in our stomach  
if we ate the seeds.  
Now I know the truth  
about the miraculous  
watermelon seed.  
I will now tell this  
silly tale to all my  
relatives,  
neighbors,  
or a complete stranger.  
—McDarragh Minnock, 14, Pennsylvania.

## \* **Fields** \*

*"It was all she knew, it was all she did, it was all she loved."*

She stepped out onto the field. The lines on the grass and the ball were new concepts to her. She had no skill, no technique, but then again, none of the other players had any either. The soccer game consisted of 22 players running after the ball in a herd and trying to be the lucky one to kick the ball into the square net. Her father stood and cheered. It was from that day on that her father was the loud one in the crowd. She happened to be the lucky player to score the goal. As the ball rolled into the net, the girl's eyes got hungry.

She stepped out onto the field. The game had become something important to her. She was learning to love it. While the other players quit, she worked harder. It was hard to explain why, but it was something she felt she could do. She was one of the better players on her team. She finally found her position, the leading center forward. That was the player going for the glory. She was the one going for the goal.

She stepped onto the field. The game was now one of the most important things to her. She was great at it. Her team made her captain and she was the best player on the team. She was the type that came early to practice and left late. She was the one on the field giving it her all, the one who everyone praised, and because of that she began to forget that there were other players on the team. The game had become her life. All she wanted now was to play and be the best. It was hard for her to explain why it was so important to her. It was impossible for others to understand the passion, drive and hunger she had for the game.

She stepped out onto the field. The college of her choice had given her a full scholarship just to play the game she loved. She was the only freshman to start on the team. She loved the feeling that she had to prove herself. It made her break her limitations. She had become a team player there. She was no longer only interested in her game, but in her teammates also. She was the one on the field pushing her team to play better. Soon she was the most valuable player on the team,

not only for the goals she scored or the foot skills she had, but because she had the work ethic, the drive and the passion for the game that inspired her teammates and made them want to be like her.

She stepped out onto the field. She was now representing her country and living the dream she had had for so long. She had made her whole life revolve around the one thing she loved. She was the one to score the goal that moved her team to the finals. It was during that game that the sweeper took her out in the box. It allowed her team to score the penalty kick that won them the gold, but it tore her ACL. She was no longer allowed to play. The game had been her life. It was all she knew; it was all she did; it was all she loved.

She stepped out onto the field for the last time, the same field she had started on, the one where she left all her blood, sweat and tears. She was wearing her gold medal, but her dreams were gone. Her old life was gone and now she was left to find a new one. She had to find something to do with her life that wasn't soccer, even though she had no clue what life was without it. \*

—Kirsten Curtis, from Puerto Rico, is a high school student in Ohio.



### **Try Again**

On a soft grassy field,  
On a bright cool fall day,  
At mid-morning,  
Sprinting like the wind,  
Dribbling the ball so fast it blurs,  
My jersey whipping in the wind,  
On a breakaway,  
I shoot!  
Saved by the goalie,  
I lower my head, then lift it up again,  
I feel the wind in my face,  
Urging me to try again,  
I feel better and get ready to do it all over again!

—Amy Paterline, 13, Pennsylvania.

## What About The Animals?

*“America has not led but fled on the issue of global warming.”*

—Sen. John Kerry

**Global** temperatures are expected to continue to rise as carbon dioxide, methane, nitrous oxide and other greenhouse gases are added to the atmosphere.

Some observed changes include shrinking of glaciers, thawing of permafrost, later freezing, earlier break-up of ice on rivers and lakes, lengthening of growing seasons, shifts in plant and animal ranging and earlier flowering of plants and trees. Global warming has already taken a toll on Earth and will continue to do so.

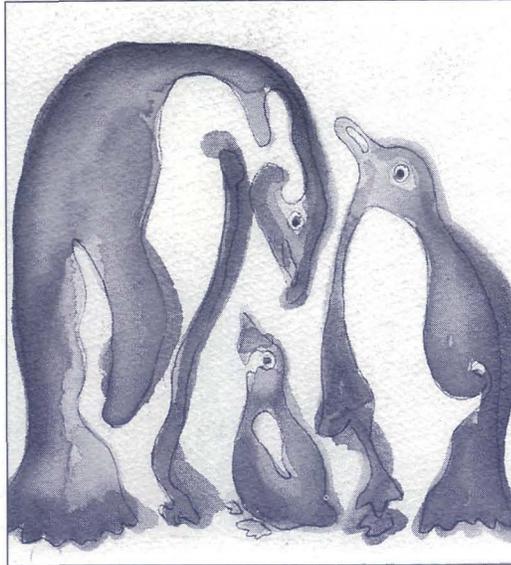
Scientists warn that rising Arctic temperatures may cause nearly all of the summer sea ice, that the polar bears depend on for survival, to vanish by 2040. Polar bears are already suffering; birth rates are falling, fewer cubs survive and more and more bears are drowning. More than 25% of the world's polar bear population has already declined; further global warming could drive this beloved animal to extinction by the end of this century!

“Birds are laying eggs earlier than usual, plants are flowering earlier and mammals are breaking hibernation sooner,” said Terry L. Root, a senior fellow at Stanford's Institute for International Studies. Scientists have also observed that 65 British bird species are laying their eggs, in general, nearly nine days earlier than 35 years ago.

Penguins are also a victim of global warming's tight grip. Up to 200 species of penguins are in big trouble. Emperor Penguins breeding pairs in western Antarctic Peninsula have decreased sizably.

At least 70 species of frogs have also gone extinct due to climate change.

Oxygen levels in the waters of the Baltic sea have dropped due to increasing temperatures over the past 50 years at a rate that has reduced fish populations. To add to that, fish need more oxygen in warmer waters.



“In ten years all important animal life in the sea will be extinct. Large areas of coast-line will have to be evacuated because of the stench of dead fish,” concludes Paul Ehrlich.

So, hopefully next time you are about to throw your cigarette out of the car window or throw away recyclable matter, remember the polar bears that will soon be treading water in the Arctic ocean, and all of the other animals suffering because of our mistakes. \*

—Terrell McLendon, 14, Texas.  
Terrell adds, “...what a huge impact global warming is [having] on Earth. I have always been into helping the Earth and I always recycle and try to pick up trash around town. I just hope I can someday make a change in society.”



### Action Alert

*“Virtually every day there is news about climate change impacts on the oceans, from whale deaths due to lack of food, to potential coral destruction from increased ocean acidity, to the disappearance of cold water species because of warming ocean temperatures.”*

—www.Oceana.org

Unfortunately, when it comes to enacting a comprehensive global warming legislation, the U.S. Government has dragged its feet for far too long.

We encourage you to express your views to your representatives in Washington, D.C., in your state capital, and to all candidates running for political offices from your region. You might also write to your local newspaper editors. By sending your letters, you show them that global warming is one of the major issues on your minds and that you need a guarantee that the government will tackle global warming issues *now*. We must make global warming a priority in 2008!

—editors.

## To Bee or Not to be: Mass Disappearance of Bats and Bees!

A few weeks ago, I was sitting in my room when a bee flew into my window screen. As an animal lover, I was happy about my visitor's company, especially because this was the first bee I had seen in months, after the cold winter months. I closed the blinds and went to sleep. The next day, I noticed that the bee was still in the same spot. I thought it was strange. A week went by, and the bee was still there. It was dead.

As it turns out, bees are dying by the millions, leaving their hives, never to return again. The trend began in 2006 and seems to be increasing, spreading to different continents. Almost one third of honeybees in the United States have already died.

In 2007 in Albany, New York, something similar began to occur to yet another species: bats. Bats hibernate every winter. Last year, thousands of bats did not make it to spring. They either starved in their caves, or froze to death by going out when temperatures were still too cold to survive. This year this trend is continuing and further spreading to other Northeastern states: Vermont, Massachusetts and Virginia.

We don't know what are the reasons, but both bats and bees are suffering from weaker immune systems. As for bats, their deaths seem to be associated with "White Nose Syndrome," a white fungus that has been found in almost all affected bats. Scientists don't know whether the fungus can be transmitted to humans, or if humans are to blame for spreading it to the bats. They are also not sure if the syndrome is the cause, or a symptom of another disease. Sick or dead bats have also been found with depleted fat stores, which is why they either starve to death, or they wake up hungry and fly out into the cold looking for food. Fat stores normally last throughout the hibernation cycle.



As for bees, their mass disappearance is called Colony Collapse Disorder (CCD), which could be caused by a virus, called "Israeli Acute Paralysis Virus." Affected bees become disoriented when they fly away from

the hive to find nectar. Usually, bees create an energy path, up to seven kilometers long, which they follow back home. Unable to find their way back, they freeze to death, or they become prey to other diseases, since the virus affects their immune systems. Pesticides and genetically modified organisms (GMOs) also affect bees' health.

Bats and Bees are extremely important, not only for their own lives' value, but for humans too. Their disappearance could lead to food shortages, since they are both crucial to farming. Bats are predators. Every night, they eat up to 1,200 insects that threaten both crops and humans. Honeybees are responsible for pollinating almost one third of our food supply, including almonds, carrots, cucumber, broccoli, onions, avocados, cherries, blueberries, and apples. They also help pollinate rainforest trees, and of course, make honey, which is delicious and helps heal cuts, burns, and ulcers.

Bees are very important in some cultures. For example, Muslims believe that a river of honey flows in heaven. Alberto Taxo, an Ecuadorian indigenous leader and shaman, warns that:

*"There would be very dangerous effects on all creatures if bees were harmed in any way. Bees provide physical as well as spiritual protection, which would be greatly diminished. Disasters, disharmony, disequilibrium, and diseases could come upon people. Bees represent solar power, because they contain the energy of the Sun, and they have accepted the mission of helping the planet."*

*—Michelle Andujar, originally from Colombia, S.A., is a Journalism student at the University of Oregon.*

***"Every night, bats eat up to 1,200 insects... Honeybees are responsible for pollinating almost one-third of our food supply."***

## Japanese Tea Garden

A soft breeze  
Gently rustles the grass  
Beneath me  
The elegant waves  
Gracefully sway to and fro  
And I watch  
The amazing scene  
Unfold before me

I listen  
Amazed at the sound  
Of nothing

Then  
The soft pitter-patter  
Of small waterfalls  
Reaches my ears  
And I see  
Tiny water striders  
Struggling to stay afloat

Many sheltering banzai trees  
Along with Japanese pines  
Stand over the small pool  
Withstanding all weather  
Clinging to the stone  
Like an infant  
To its mother

And on that stone  
Smooth moss grows  
Hiding in small crevasses  
Peeking out at me  
Meekly whispering  
I cannot understand  
Their quiet language  
And my eyes  
Once again wander

A glint catches my eye  
And another  
Assorted coins  
Of those who wished for more  
And with those coins  
Lie fallen leaves  
Both doomed

To never again feel  
The crisp morning air  
Or the warm summer afternoons

But then  
The joyful songs  
Of countless birds  
Resonates through  
Blissfully singing  
Without a care in the world  
Brightening everyone around  
them  
Completely transfixed  
In themselves

And above all this  
Stands guard a strong pagoda  
Seeing in all directions  
Keeping this tranquility safe  
A dog guarding its bone  
I see this and wonder  
Why is the world so loud?  
Why is there war?  
Questions that will never be  
answered  
But I can ignore my mind for now  
Instead I can relax  
And watch  
This amazing scene  
Unfold before me

—Jonathan Nieman, gr. 6, California.

## CULTURAL COLLAGE

### Obon

Our ancestors return from the dead.  
We make all kind of foods  
like dango and tempura.  
We take seven vegetables  
and make an eggplant horse.  
All go on the altar.  
Dad puts a tissue  
on a glass cup in front of the door  
then lights the tissue.  
Dad opens the door  
and our ancestors enter our home.  
We light senko for them  
then we pray.  
All of us eat.

—Garrison Nakamura, grade 4, Hawaii

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## Skipping Stones Stew

### Dyno-Dad

In the garage lifting weights  
On the way to work out  
At my cheerleading competitions  
With my family eating dinner  
By the couch watching television  
Beside the bed putting clothes away  
Up on the roof hanging lights  
Over the stove cooking dinner  
Is your dad as great as mine?

—Rachel O'Connor, 13, Pennsylvania.

### Stealing Stools

Usually when you're little, when you really want something, you don't always realize you have to pay for it, or that you can't just take things without asking.

When I was about two or three, there was this red, yellow, blue and white stool at my grandma's house that I was in love with. This wasn't just any old stool, it was also a chair. Every time I came over to her house, I would sit or stand on it. Then, one day I wanted it so bad that I threw a white sheet over my body and grabbed the stool and sneaked outside. But as I was walking away with it, I heard my grandma say, "Now what is this white thing walking outside, is it a ghost?"

I threw the sheet off and said, "No, Grandma, it's Sydney!" That's how I got caught! My mom wouldn't let me borrow it either. But that's not the end of my story.

Last year, I came home from school and walked in my room, and I found that the stool sitting right on my bed with a note from my grandma saying, "I love you, this time you didn't have to steal it. Love, Grandma."

To me, it is much more than a stool; it reminds me of how much Grandma loves me and how she will always be with me no matter where she is. I'll always keep that stool and I will always love my Grandma.

—Sydney Schroeder, 16, Washington.



## My Life in Nine Short Acts

- I. I'm carried onto the stage. My first play!  
Both the stage and the cast are wonderful,  
And there are many different things to see!  
I'm ready to start!
- II. I crawl onto the stage. A new scene!  
I smile through an almost toothless mouth as  
I cause mischief.  
I want attention!
- III. I skip onto the stage.  
The world is bright!  
I'm overjoyed!  
I am a Queen in an enchanted land!
- IV. I slump on the stage,  
I'm no match for them.  
They're the better actors,  
And I just don't fit in.
- V. I meander onto the stage, everyone waits for me.  
My makeup and hair are perfect,  
And I'm the prettiest!  
I forget my lines suddenly,  
I stayed up late at a cast party and didn't study.
- VI. I casually walk onto the stage,  
I project my lines confidently,  
For I have studied,  
And I am ready!
- VII. I hustle onto stage,  
This is very serious.  
I *have* to say my lines perfectly,  
And I'm so stressed out!
- VIII. I stroll onto stage,  
What a wonderful play!  
There's no other place I want to be,  
I just want to be on stage.
- IX. Alas, the play has come to its end.  
To some, I may have been a role model.  
To others, I may have been a joy.  
But to me, I'm just an actress  
Who left the stage gracefully.



—Danielle C. Comito, 12, European-American, 4th generation Californian.

# DEAR HANNA

“My mother told me that she needs to be away for a weekend in June. She suggested I fix dinner for my dad and me one night, and I might ask my dad to take us out to eat one evening. My question is: *What can we talk about through two dinners? I talk to kids, and he talks about his work.*” —Annie, 14.

Dear Annie, the dinner that you will fix at home may provide you the perfect opportunity for you to interview your father. Do you have place mats or a tablecloth and a flower to decorate the table? When you have put dinner on the plates, inform your father that dinner is served and that he is going to be interviewed during dinner. You can ask him all kinds of questions like these:

- What is the best vacation you have ever been on?
- Do you have a favorite movie? A favorite book?
- What kind of presents do you enjoy receiving?
- What was your favorite subject in school?
- Is there something that makes you unhappy or sad?
- How did you decide to name me Annie? Did you consider other names?
- Which subjects can you help me with when I go to high school?
- What do you like about your job? What don't you like about it?
- What do you do that gives you joy?

You can take the conversation in all sorts of directions after the “interview.” *Here are some ideas:*

\* Can we go to my favorite restaurant tomorrow night? I'd like you to ask me questions at dinner tomorrow night. It's okay if you ask me the same questions I asked you tonight.

\* Keep in mind that it may prove to be special for you to have time alone with just one of your parents. You may want to discuss TV watching as it relates to your school work. For example: “It would help me in government class if we would listen to candidates running for president, and then discuss who would serve our country best. Can we do that?”

\* You may want to bring up an idea about family gift giving: “I have heard that another family discusses what one big Christmas present the family might buy that everyone in the family agrees upon. Our family might want to buy a hot tub. Then we could each have one night of the week when we could invite our friends to use the hot tub. What do you think of that idea, Dad?”

You may think of a great variety of topics that can be discussed regarding family decision making. You could end the evening with your dad cheerfully: “I am going to make a welcome home card for mom and put it under her pillow. Will you promise not to tell her, please? Dad would you like to wash the dishes, since I did the cooking?”

Send your questions or comments to:

**Dear Hanna** c/o *Skipping Stones*

P. O. Box 3939, Eugene, OR 97403



*Illustrated by Mari Mizobe, Oregon*

*In Peace,*

*Hanna*

## The Sticky, Hot Summer Day

*A sister shares her sense of loss as her brother is sent to fight the war in Iraq*

Danielle walked down her driveway as the sun beamed down on her smiling face. As she looked through the mail, she glanced up at her brother's going-away party decorations. Boy, will she miss him! Sure, they fought and argued, but who doesn't? The guests would be arriving soon. She had better hurry inside and put on her new party dress.

Danielle twirled and spun around in her room in her new dress. The sun shown through the windows as it reflected off the sequins. The pink flower print looked so pretty on the clean white fabric. She could hear her brother in the room next to her. He was moving around a lot, looking for things, putting things away, and spraying on the last bit of cologne. This would be the last dinner she would have with him. He was going to protect our country and go fight the war in Iraq.

The aunts and uncles had arrived already, then the grandparents. The cool air in the house felt good after being in the hot dampness outside. Danielle's mother was serving appetizers as Danielle slowly made her way downstairs. Everyone came to greet her. Her light brown hair bounced on her shoulders as she moved from person to person. Then her brother came down the stairs. Everyone was so excited to see him. They were all going to miss him dearly. He would be leaving tomorrow morning. Soon dinner was ready. They all sat down—Chris, her brother, at the head of the table. The table outside wasn't very long, so they were all cramped together in the sticky, hot weather. The cool drinks felt good on Danielle's hot throat. The tasty hamburger dunked in ketchup filled her up quickly.

The night was soon over. The guests left, and she and her mom were left cleaning up. They did their cleaning almost in silence. They were probably thinking the same thing: "I hope he doesn't get hurt." Danielle quietly went to bed, but she hardly slept. She didn't want her brother to leave. But that was being selfish; this was her brother's dream. He had wanted this for as long as she could remember. She guessed all she could do now was wish him luck.

The next morning arrived without much notice. Danielle had over slept, and almost missed saying goodbye. She sprinted out her bedroom door, darted downstairs and met her brother at the front door. She squeezed him so tightly; she could hear him struggling

for air. With one last goodbye, he was in the car driving away. Danielle stood by her parents, claspng onto her mother's arm. Her mom was crying.

Weeks passed, with only a few short letters from him telling them how great he had been and how wonderful the army was treating him. He told them he had the time of his life. The house seemed sort of empty and lifeless with out him around. Danielle and her family tried so hard to keep their normal lives together, but nothing was the same.

One night, just about a year later, Danielle and her father had been watching the news. There had been a horrible bombing! Reporters were interviewing victims and searching the site. Danielle immediately felt a wave of worry come over her. She had trouble sleeping that night; thoughts of worry crept into Danielle's head while she tried to fall asleep. Thoughts like her brother had died, lost a limb, or head injured. The next morning, Danielle found her mother crying and her father trying to comfort her. Danielle knew right away what had happened. Her throat suddenly became dry, she found it hard to swallow. Her brother Chris had died in the bombing! Danielle didn't go to school that day. She stayed home and cried in her bed.

Danielle went into her brother's room. She could see images of the bloody battle in her mind. It sickened her. She suddenly felt a strong hatred for her country.

After a few weeks, his body arrived but the family never got to see it. Danielle longed for the odors of his sweaty socks; he'd throw them down the stairs which would drive her crazy. She'd never be able to experience that feeling again. His room remained the same; the only remembrance she had of her brother.

At the funeral, all the aunts and uncles that were once so happy at his going away party, seemed so sad. They all loved him so much! His funeral was attended by members of the Army; she wondered if they really even wanted to be there. As they lowered the casket into the ground, she felt a sudden feeling that she wanted to go and jump onto the casket, open it up, and hug him just one more time. Everyone around her was in tears. She could feel the hot burning tears start to swell up in her eyes. She already missed him so much! It made Danielle wonder what the purpose of war really is...

—Monica Wedell, 12, New York.

## El Mar de mi Memoria

Hace cuanto no siento el agua salada y la arena en mis pies? Hace cuanto no miro la luna reflejarse en el mar? Hace cuanto el sol de un verano no acaricia mi piel? Hace cuanto no siento el roce de la brisa?

Deseo volver al mar para escribir en la arena, mis sentimientos, un te amo para el amor que no tengo y dibujar con las estrellas recuerdos que guardo en mi memoria bajo la luna y la playa en frente.

Ansío ver el mar azul, reflejarse en mis ojos. Me encantaría saber los secretos que esconden las olas que vienen y van.

Mi corazón se quedó en Puerto Vallarta y en sus playas. Los recuerdos, el susurro del viento y las olas del mar Son el regalo más grato de una playa que tanto recuerdo, pero que ahora quedarán por siempre en mi memoria como un gran recuerdo que nunca olvidaré.

*Escrito por Mayra Ramirez, Washington.*

## \* The Sea of my Memory

*How long has it been since I felt the salt water and the sand in my feet? How long has it been since I watched the moon reflect in the sea? How long has it been since the summer sun touched my skin? How long has it been since I felt the touch of the breeze?*

*I wish to return to the seashore to write my feelings in the sand and an "I love you" to the lover I don't have and draw my memories with the stars, under the moon and the beach in front of me.*

*I want to see the blue sea reflected in my eyes. I'd love to know the secrets that hide in the waves that come and go.*

*My heart stayed in Puerto Vallarta on the warm beaches. My memories, the whisper of the wind and the waves of the sea are the most pleasing gifts of that beach, that will forever remain in my memory, and that I'll never forget.*

*Translated by Chelsea Brown, high school, Washington.*

*Chelsea and Mayra work as a pair at their school.*

## If I had Magic Powers

**I**f I had magic powers, I would bring you back to us. That would bring back your sweet smile. Moreover, the sound of your voice. We miss you every day. We need your strength to guide us and show us the light. We miss your presence with us, your great advice that got us through our problems and our most difficult obstacles, and your knowledge that educated us all. If I had magic powers, I would look up in the sky and tell God just how much we miss you. Then I would bring you home again. I would bring back your heart filled with love and your kindness that you shared with everyone. Oh, if it were possible, if I had the power, the magic, the gift, I would bring you right back home to all of us. We would all continue our life as we did while you were here. We know you see our grief down here on earth. We know that you will try to help us get through this painful time in our lives. You are here in spirit with us, but we all know that is not the same. We cannot hug you or talk to you face to face. Our tears are vast like the Atlantic Ocean.

Sure, in time we will not cry, the tears will drip away. There will be some laughs here and there, but even that is not the same! The hole in our hearts is always there. It may get smaller, but it will never fully close. We know that your pain is over, and we hope you made it home to heaven. Why would we doubt it? Oh, how much joy God had to see you come and walk you through the golden gates. But it was way too soon to see you go. There never would be a perfect time to say goodbye to you. Who are we to question God's work? We have faith, sure, and we try to stay strong by remembering that we will see you again. We will all be reunited, and the tears we once had will have been our last. We will hug and kiss you and catch up on lost time as we all talk and live forever together at last without pain or grief, in God's land. You will be forever in our hearts!

*—Vincent Clementi, grade 7, Italian American, Colorado. He wrote this after his grandmother passed away last October.*



# Float Like A Butterfly



“Ah, Mom! I don’t wanna baby-sit Gramps. It’s not fair.”

“You know we can’t leave him alone, Jonathan. I won’t be long.”

“Why’d he have to come and live with us anyway?” Jonathan muttered. “He’ll probably spazz out on me or something.”

“Grandpa hasn’t had an asthma attack in a long time. Besides, maybe he can help with your project.”

“As if!” Jonathan scoffed.

“You’d better hope you don’t end up with Alzheimer’s and an unappreciative 14 year old grandson.”

Jonathan pulled back just out of reach as she leaned in to kiss him. After a few minutes of indecision outside Gramps’ bedroom door, Jonathan stuck his head in. The TV was blaring. Gramps was hard of hearing on top of everything.

“Jonathan!” Gramps face lit up. “How’s my boy? Come in! Boxing’s on. Not the old greats mind you, but not a bad match up.”

Jonathan cringed. Watching TV from Gramps’ bed was definitely not on his list of things to do Saturday afternoon.

“Maybe some other time, Gramps.”

He felt a twinge of guilt as the flicker of disappointment crossed Gramps’ face.

“Sure, son. Some other time then.”

Outside Gramps’ room, Jonathan fell into the living room couch and called his best bud Jake.

“Hey, how’s it going?” Jake said.

“Lousy. I’m stuck here sitting Gramps.”

“Bummer.”

“Big time.” I sighed.

“Finished your history project yet?” He sounded genuinely excited.

“I haven’t even started. An influential African-American? No idea.”

“I did Martin Luther King—a pretty cool guy.”

Suddenly there was a loud thump from Grandpa’s room.

*“What if Gramps fell while he was shadow boxing like a fool? I shouldn’t have left him alone like that, Jonathan thought.”*

“Aw man! Gramps just fell outta bed or something. I gotta go.”

Jonathan rushed into his grandfather’s room and looked unbelievably at the scene before him.

“Float like a butterfly, Jonathan!” Gramps shouted, jumping in the middle of the bed and punching the air. “Ali’s your man.”

His grandfather had clearly lost his marbles.

“I’m outta here,” Jonathan fumed. He stomped out of the room, then slammed the front door of the house. “This sucks!”

He kicked the ground in frustration. What happened to his Grandpa? Gramps used to have all the answers. He could throw a mean curve ball and never missed one of Jonathan’s ball games.

Half way around the block, his anger gave way to concern. What if Gramps fell while he was shadow boxing like a fool? I shouldn’t have left him alone like that, Jonathan thought. He broke into a jog back to the house and burst through the front door.

“Gramps?”

No answer. The TV was off and no sign of Gramps in his room. He felt the beginnings of panic as he rushed from room to room, finding himself alone.

On his second frantic trip through the house he noticed the attic access ajar. They’d stored Gramps’ stuff up there when he moved in. Jonathan pulled the hidden ladder down and started to climb. Near the top he heard a strange strangled sound. A wave of fear gripped him.

“Gramps?” he croaked tentatively, scanning the dim and dusty room.

He didn’t see Gramps, but the sound was louder. It scared him. It didn’t seem human.

Just as he was about to back down the stairs, something sticking out between a row of boxes caught his eye. Grandpa’s unmistakable tartan slippers.

“Please no!” Jonathan barely breathed.

“Gramps!” He was yelling now, as he scrambled up the last rungs and threw himself into the attic.

Gramps lay against a pile of boxes, clutching a



***“Please don’t let him die, please don’t let him die, ran through his head like a mantra.”***

brown envelope. Jonathan realized with a start that the horrible sound he’d heard was Gramps wheezing for air. Gramps’ lips were blue, eyes glassy and unfocussed.

“Jesus!” cried Jonathan, all his anger of the afternoon gone. “Stay with me, Gramps!”

“Float like a butterfly... sting like a bee,” Grandpa whispered, barely audibly above the wheezing. He closed his eyes and winced with the exertion of uttering those few words.

“Yeah, Gramps. That’s a song right? Great song. I’m going to find your inhaler. Please, just don’t.... don’t die.” Jonathan’s voice caught on the word as he turned and tore down the stairs.

Think! He admonished himself. Focus. Where the heck are his inhalers? Mind racing, he fought to hold the panic at bay.

“Asthma. Inhalers. Medication. Medicine,” he chanted aloud, trying to quickly process. “That’s it! Medicine cabinet!”

He raced to the cabinet, grabbed the inhaler, and peeled back to the attic faster than any base he’d ever stolen. Please don’t let him die, please don’t let him die, ran through his head like a mantra. Grandpa was fading—every breath a ragged rasp. Jonathan held the inhaler to Gramps’ lips.

“On the count of three Gramps—I need you to breathe in deep okay? Ready? One, two, three.”

He squeezed and watched his grandfather struggle to suck it in.

“Hold it in, Gramps. As long as you can!” He waited and watched, hoping for a miracle. “Now again Gramps. On the count of three.”

Slowly Gramps’ colour returned. He was breathing now at least, that haunting wheeze disappearing.

All vestiges of coolness gone, Jonathan threw his arms around Gramps. “Oh Gramps, I thought I lost you.”

“Cassius Clay—that’s who you’re looking for,” Grandpa said.

“Cash what?” Jonathan asked, confused.

“Not cash! Cassius. Greatest boxer of all time. Don’t they teach you anything these days?” Grandpa smiled weakly, pulling an old autographed photo out

of the envelope. “That’s before he changed his name to Mohammed Ali. A powerful man. Make for a great history paper. Influential Black American.”

“African-American,” Jonathan corrected. “How’d you know...”

He stopped mid-sentence and cringed, embarrassed that Gramps had overheard his conversation with Jake.

“Gramps. I’m so sorry...” he stammered.

“Ah, don’t give me that!” Gramps said. “I wouldn’t want to have to look after my old Gramps either.”

“What the heck are you two doing up here?” Mom suddenly asked, poking her head through the access. “Sorry I’m late. You can head out now Jonathan.”

“No thanks, Mom. I think I’ll pick Gramps’ mind a bit more. For an old guy, he sure knows some stuff!”

Gramps feigned a right jab and Jonathan ducked under it and planted a kiss on his cheek.

“Well, wonders never cease!” His mother smiled and backed down the ladder.

— Cindy Watson, lawyer, Ontario, Canada.



### **Baba Amte, Que Viva!**



Baba Amte, whose dedication helped tens of thousands of leprosy patients and brought him the Templeton Prize along with many other prestigious awards, died on Feb. 9 at Anandwan, a village of 3,000 founded by him for leprosy patients in Maharashtra, India. He was 93.

Amte touched countless lives, including mine. I first met Baba in 1991 when I interviewed him on the banks of Narmada River in central India, where he was leading a protest against the World Bank-sponsored superdam, Sardar Sarovar. Since his youth, he rebelled against injustices and discriminations. Whenever I visited him, I joined him on his morning or evening walks. In 1985-86, he led Knit India Bicycle Marches across India.

Baba dedicated his long life to building communities and protecting the environment. A lover of arts and humanities, he authored several books. He was a human being of highest values, and led an exemplary life, like Mahatma Gandhi. We will miss him very much.

—ANT

Congratulations to Krystle, our **Twenty Is A Charm Contest** Winner for this issue!

### Genius

She never  
got in line  
when they were  
passing out  
good looks  
or talents  
but she made sure  
to get in line  
twice  
when they were  
passing out  
Brains.



—Krystle Fred, 14, Florida.  
*Krystle sent us twenty poems!*

### A Weeping Angel

The skies open  
releasing rain  
to quench the thirst  
of ever waiting plants  
and drown the strength  
of the everburning fire  
who ruled during the time  
that was the time of  
the drought.  
The peace  
of the first rain  
is  
short lived.  
Plants go  
from satisfied  
to drowned  
and where fires  
once overran  
raging rivers  
ran through  
for they rule during the time  
that is the time of  
the flood.  
How could  
the world change  
from one chaos  
to another  
just because of  
a weeping angel.

### I Want . . .

One chance  
to  
shine yet still  
be  
who I am inside.  
I want  
more  
People to  
love me, other  
than  
my family.  
I  
want  
to be liked  
for who I  
am.  
Not what I  
look like.

### Writers Block

Pulsating veins ready to burst  
Words with no meaning don't fit into verse  
Frustration so high  
You'd much rather die  
Crumbled ideas fill every surface  
You feel your existence has no purpose  
A challenge to be faced by all those who write  
Don't let writers block get you without puttin' up a fight.

### Appreciation

You appreciate life  
When you are given death.  
You appreciate warmth  
When you are given cold.  
You appreciate love  
When you are given hate.  
You appreciate acceptance  
When you are given rejection.  
You appreciate approval  
When you are given denial.  
You appreciate everything  
When you are given nothing.  
Yet, you appreciate nothing  
When you are given everything.

### Sunny Side Up

Don't let anyone use you.  
Ever! Friend or foe.  
For the hand that takes  
The cow's milk  
Is the hand that chops  
Her babies into hamburgers.  
And the hand that feeds  
The chickens  
Is the one that lets their  
Babies be served. . .  
Sunny side up.  
Don't let anyone use you.  
Ever! Friend or foe.



## Escape

To live and to be  
free  
To escape is where we  
all want to be  
But there is no  
escape from here  
No matter how you  
hold those that are dear  
This road does not  
sympathize  
Although some say it  
may discreetly in disguise  
But once you're on it  
there's no turning back  
This is clearly just  
another of life's tracks  
But before the road  
up ahead sails away  
You still have time  
to live for today  
Don't let the track  
you know is destined to end  
Die without having a  
good and long bend  
Even if it allows you  
time for more sorrow  
Because we all know  
there may not be a tomorrow  
So here's my end for  
you and me  
This is my good-bye plea  
I love you

—Clara Hyland, 15, Connecticut. Clara adds: "I have an uncle who is very sick and does not have much time left. This is the family crisis I have been going through and I decided to write a poem about what I felt."

*"Amid the swirling, confusing, unfocused energies of the modern world, there is a light, a calm and a healing in the center of all things."*

~Yogi Bhajan



## I Saw a Book Lying in a Mountain Range

I saw, in my deserted mountain range a book  
At the very moment it caught my eye  
reminding me of a person  
Me, myself  
The cold dry pages of the book reminded me of  
my cold dry soul

As the wind blew  
the dry musty pages flipped to new pages  
new desires  
new worlds  
on every page

Quite a bit ago  
a book was lying in the warm deserted fields  
but as time left its place  
warm comforting hands took it  
and it was ready once again

—Petra Karmina Rudisill, 9, California

### Skipping Stones is Turning 20!

**Twenty is a charm!** To celebrate our 20th year, we'll honor 20 students for their multicultural or nature writing and artwork in our Vol. 20 issues. The students will also get a set of 20 back issues, an award certificate and complimentary copy of the issue featuring their work!

**Rules:** Include a cover letter, parental permission, e-mail and the mailing address with entries. Send your best creations by 20 June 2008!

**Art/Photos:** 20 cm x 20 cm or 20" x 20"

**Nonfiction/Opinion:** 20 sentences

**Short Stories:** 20 words or 20 sentences

**Poems:** 20 words or 20 lines.

Send entries to PO Box 3939, Eugene, OR 97403

Or e-mail: [editor@SkippingStones.org](mailto:editor@SkippingStones.org)

## Take Me With You

The sky is dark, ominous, and the wind brushes its water-laden fingers against the people walking down the streets. Water drops splatter on wet cement as car tires kick up mist, splashing dirty water into the air. The boundary between earth and sky is compromised as Samantha watches from atop a wooden chest next to her bedroom window. She places her hands on the cold glass and peers down onto the street, down on the sea of people's heads and black umbrellas.

Without warning, Samantha's bedroom door opens, admitting Head Mistress Caroline, the orphanage's caretaker, who smells of wood and fake lavender. Samantha turns to see who has entered her world, it is silent and still for a single heartbeat. She crosses her legs and looks back out the window, into the strands of water pouring from the swollen sky.

Caroline clears her throat. "Someone would like to meet you. Brush your hair." Her voice is wispy and cold, like evaporating fog. She leaves quietly, the rain drowning out the groans of an old floor.

The rain speeds up, small rivers sliding down Samantha's window. She watches as it bounces off umbrellas, like falling marbles. The water holds her thoughts captive. She does not want to think of adoption, to think of leaving the only world she has ever known.

Time passes, measured by the drumming of rainfall on the shingled roof.

Crystal-like raindrops dance down the pane of glass, formulating intricate patterns. Samantha leans closer and breathes out, fogging the window. Carefully, she writes in the white: Are you here?

She holds her breath, hoping, watching. The water pouring down the window takes slight detours, curving in and out. The word 'yes' gently flows upon the glass, before melting away down the side of the building. Samantha's breathing quickens with excitement, expectation, fear. She blows on the window again, leaving only ghosts of the past script. She writes: Take me with you.

She waits. The condensation slowly clears, revealing a water-written word: No.

Despair clutches at her insides, tightening her stomach muscles. Tears start in the corners of her eyes. Who will truly love her, if not the rain? She forgets to breathe as she writes: Why?

The rain hesitates. You do not need me today.

Samantha's forgotten lungs fill themselves, only to blow on the window again. Please: I do!

The rain lightens, misting soft moisture onto the glass. The clouds roll away over the city, giving way to light, and the sea of black disappears as umbrellas are shaken and closed. Sun pours through Samantha's window, the golden rain catching small ice crystals. I am not leaving you.

Samantha watches as the words melt, weaving down the glass in a fabric of rain. She wipes the tears from her face and leans her back against the warming window. The pale door opens. Samantha uncrosses her legs and hangs them off the side of the wooden chest, alert. Caroline takes a step into the room, followed by a young woman whose clothes slowly drip water to the floor, as if the wetness is holding on. She smiles at Samantha, her eyes bright.

Caroline gestures towards the woman with her thin, wrinkled hand. "Samantha, this is Tamara."

Samantha looks at the floor, her insides in turmoil. She does not want to leave her cold sanctuary for the unknown. Caroline's eyes flick between Samantha and Tamara, breaking the fragile stillness. "Samantha, say hello."

Samantha swallows and says quietly, almost whispering, "Why don't you have an umbrella?"

Tamara smiles as she drips. "I love the rain."

—Emily Mangan,  
14, homeschooler, Oregon.





## A Woman for President!



Geena Davis is an actress who played the President of the United States on a television show called, "Commander in Chief." Even though the United States has never had a female president, did you know there are countries around the world that currently have women presidents, prime ministers and chancellors?

Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf is the president of Liberia. *She climbed her way to the top of the political ladder via her education in international finance.* She studied accounting and economics at the University of Colorado and Madison Business College in Wisconsin, then went on to Harvard to receive her Master's degree in public administration. Even though Ellen was well-educated, working toward an election was not a simple task. While working as Assistant Minister of Finance of Liberia, President William Tolbert was killed, his administration overthrown and Johnson-Sirleaf had to go into exile. While running for Senate in 1985, she was arrested and sentenced to ten years in prison for speaking out against the regime's military activities. After being released she moved to Washington, D.C. She returned to Liberia in 1997 as an economist, and to lead the Unity Party.

Johnson-Sirleaf has a determined, fighting spirit that keeps her moving toward her goal of a peaceful and prosperous Liberia. Despite all obstacles, in 2006 she won the election for Liberian president.

Also in 2006, a similar event was taking place in Chile, on the western coast of South America. *In a country known for its strict Roman Catholic values, a single mother with a background in science and medicine was enthusiastically elected the president.*

Michelle Bachelet has held the office in Chile since March 11, 2006. She is a pediatrician, an academic, and a personable and humble leader. She is known for her strides to close the gap between the rich and the poor in her country. Even more appealing to her constituents (*those she represents in office*) is her strength of character and ability to set a moral standard.

Like the President of Liberia, Michelle Bachelet was also a political prisoner. The Pinochet Regime not only held her and her family in jail, they tortured them as well. *After she and her family were released, Ms. Bachelet publically forgave her captors.*

Far from South America, another female scholar of science leads the European country of Germany. She holds a doctorate in physics, and before entering public service she worked as a quantum chemist. *Angela Merkel, elected in 2005, is the youngest German Chancellor since World War II.* She has been criticized for supporting the United States on the Iraq war as well as for voting against the induction of Turkey into the European Union.

Other female leaders of countries around the world include the current President of Finland, Tarja Halonen, and Mrs. Patil of India, as well as former Heads of State Margaret Thatcher of Great Britain, Corey Aquino of the Philippines, Benazir Bhutto of Pakistan, Mrs. Bhandarnayake of Sri Lanka, and Indira Gandhi of India. *These women leaders came from diverse backgrounds of family, culture and education. They are great role models for women and girls around the globe.*

So what about the United States of America? It seems we're getting closer. Some women have already served in elected, politically powerful positions as their state governors, senators or members of Congress. Can you guess who the current Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives is? A woman named Nancy Pelosi of California!

In November 2008 we will elect our next president. The senator from New York and former First Lady, Hillary Clinton, is running for the Democratic Party's nomination for the president. She is facing an uphill battle against Sen. Obama.

The combination of a qualified woman candidate, an eager and interested voting population, and strong female role models across the world, may be just the mixture needed to finally give the United States the first woman president.

—April Scarlett, mother of two young kids, Michigan.

## The German Democracy: *More Accommodating of Alternative Parties*

With the American presidential elections just around the corner, I believe the time has come not only to take a closer look at the American election system, but also at foreign election systems that (I hope you are not surprised to hear) can take quite a different form.

As a German, and also because I regard Germany as one of the world's most influential and important countries, my goal is to share with you my country's electoral system. I also hope to encourage you to think about your own election system more critically and decide for yourself if it is a true embodiment of democracy. Maybe you will come to the conclusion that although they are different, they are at least equally good.

The German legislative branch, like that of America, is divided into two bodies; the *Bundesrat* (similar to the American Senate) and the *Bundestag* (the House of Representatives). The Bundesrat consists of delegates from the sixteen German *Bundesländer* (states). The Bundestag on the other hand is elected directly by the populace every four years. The way in which the 600 members of the Bundestag are elected, however, differs substantially from that of the American election system.

While the U.S. has a *simple majority election system*, the elections for the *Bundestag* are divided. Every voter has two votes. With your first vote you elect a particular candidate from a particular party—in Germany that usually would mean from one of the four major political parties; Christian Democrats (CDU), Social Democrats (SPD), Free Democrats (FDP), and *die Grünen*, (the Greens or environmentalist). In each of the 300 electoral districts the candidate with the majority of votes is automatically in the *Bundestag*. This means our smaller parties have virtually no chance of getting enough candidates into the *Bundestag* to make a difference.

With your second vote, you vote for one of the parties. This is where proportional representation comes into play. Each party gets the same percentage of seats in the *Bundestag* as the percentage of second votes they receive. Supposing the CDU gets 150 seats in the direct election and 33% (200 seats) in the second, proportional, vote. This would mean that out of the 200 seats the CDU receives, the first 150 are filled with the candidates elected by the first vote and the remaining 50

seats go to people the party itself (not the population) chooses. Sometimes, the party will get more direct candidates than their percentage in the second vote. Then there are simply more than 600 seats in the Bundestag. These additional seats are called "*Überhangmandate*" (over the cut-off mandates). All parties that get over 5% of the vote receive their respective proportions of the 600 seats in the Bundestag. This threshold, called the 5% *Hürde* (hurdle), was made so that there are not too many small parties, because if this were the case, it would be much harder for decisions to be made and coalitions to be formed.

Although this system may seem complicated at first sight, it really is not. The Germans chose it for good reason. If the delegates were elected only by the majority system, then all the smaller parties—in Germany the FDP, *die Grünen*, and more recently *die Linke*, the German leftist party, and various others—would never get any seats in the *Bundestag*. If, on the other hand, the delegates were elected only by proportional representation, the parties would be free to put whomever they liked into the *Bundestag* without the people being able to vote for the exact person they want to represent them. Creating an electoral system that combines the two brings forth the best of both.

The *Bundestag's* four major responsibilities are to elect the *Bundeskanzler*—currently Chancellor Angela Merkel of the CDU—to head the government, to legislate with the *Bundesrat*, and to represent the populace and its interests.

No matter what your stance on democracy or election systems, it is undeniable that the system in Germany is more accommodating of alternative parties, whereas in the United States, political parties other than the Republicans and Democrats have virtually no chance of ever getting into Congress.

This does not make one of the two ways wrong and the other right. They are simply different. After all, isn't diversity one of democracy's trademarks?

— *Katie Grosser, 17, Germany.*



## The Political Smokescreen

The 2008 presidential election is still months away, but the excitement surrounding the candidates and their campaigns is at an all time high. This may be a mark of discontent with the current administration and the desire for a change in leadership, or it may be a showcase of the monopolization of politics and power positions within it.

The upcoming election will be the first time that I will be able to vote. As a teenager developing my future and entering into the world as an independent citizen needing to find ways to support myself, choosing the right candidate who represents my beliefs and concerns is of the utmost importance. The decisions that the next president of the United States makes will have a profound effect on my life as I work to secure a future and establish myself. From health care to taxes, I need a candidate that I know cares about the real issues that concern the real people. I need a candidate that can fulfill campaign promises. Candidates can say anything s/he wants, but when it comes to actually executing what they promise and solving problems, they often encounter a brick wall because of the complications that come in real-life situations. This is why I see campaigning so early as a problem. So many things can change in a year. To me, the rallies and speeches that the presidential candidates on both sides are holding mean very little. Until I know where the country is going to be at, how can I make a decision?

Despite the issues I have with the current campaign for presidency, I still can lean towards the candidates I might vote for. Unfortunately the exact stance of each candidate on issues is sometimes very confusing, such as health care or the Iraq War. The media present each potential candidate as either for or against and never really gives the fine details. They create a smokescreen that only give a vague representation of the policies and problems that each candidate is willing to take on and the way in which s/he will do so.

Never before has there been a female presidential candidate or an African American presidential candidate running in the same election. In the past there have been female and African American candidates, but this time around it seems like a realistic possibility that one might actually become the president of the United States of America. You may know a candidate with less-

*“Being able to vote is very exciting and important to me. Therefore, I feel that I need to take everything presented to me with a grain of salt.”*

er media coverage has some phenomenal ideas about how to run the country, but the lack of media coverage denies access to those ideas for the masses, who become jaded by the information that they are bombarded with about the most interesting candidates. They may be the most interesting and different, but that doesn't necessarily mean that they will be the best leader for our country.

Lack of media coverage or not, it seems like the overall message of the candidate should surpass the hype given by TV and newspapers. I think a big contributing factor to this problem is the moneymaking juggernauts that campaigns have become. Huge sums of cash flow to the candidates to support their causes. There's no denying that campaigns need money to stay afloat, but the exorbitant amount that goes into a select few of them has successfully managed to drown out the voices of candidates that aren't as financially endowed. Candidacy can be significantly undermined by lack of campaign money when these candidates are put back-to-back with their cash-showered counterparts. Surprisingly though, money does not always guarantee a top spot in the presidential race. With so much money going into these select few campaigns, I have to ask: *Where is all of this money going?* Too often candidates stray away from promoting their solutions to issues and shift towards relentlessly bashing each other for how they are spending their money, which distracts from the issues that actually matter. I think that a lot more could be accomplished and our decisions on who to vote for could be made much easier if there were no emphasis on money.

Being able to vote is very exciting and important to me. Therefore, I feel that I need to take everything presented to me with a grain of salt. Naiveté is something that has never figured very heavily into my character, but it's oftentimes easy to be blinded by the media, money, and unnecessary issues that surround every candidate. When it finally does come time to vote, make sure you have the real facts about whom you are voting for. Go beyond the sound bites and blurbs that are thrown at you by the media. Start at the root and work from there. Don't be swayed by what seems to be the immediate and obvious choice in a candidate just because of the money or the attention he or she gets.

*—Sam Gerhke, 18, high school senior, Oregon.*



## ***Australia Apologizes to the Indigenous People***

"Today we honour the Indigenous peoples of this land, the oldest continuing cultures in human history.

We reflect on their past mistreatment.

We reflect in particular on the mistreatment of those who were Stolen Generations—this blemished chapter in our nation's history.

The time has now come for the nation to turn a new page in Australia's history by righting the wrongs of the past and so moving forward with confidence to the future.

We apologise for the laws and policies of successive Parliaments and governments that have inflicted profound grief, suffering and loss on these our fellow Australians.

We apologise especially for the removal of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children from their families, their communities and their country.

For the pain, suffering and hurt of these Stolen Generations, their descendants and for their families left behind, we say sorry.

To the mothers and the fathers, the brothers and the sisters, for the breaking up of families and communities, we say sorry.

And for the indignity and degradation thus inflicted on a proud people and a proud culture, we say sorry.

We the Parliament of Australia respectfully request that this apology be received in the spirit in which it is offered as part of the healing of the nation.

For the future we take heart; resolving that this new page in the history of our great continent can now be written.

We today take this first step by acknowledging the past and laying claim to a future that embraces all Australians.

A future where this Parliament resolves that the injustices of the past must never, never happen again.

A future where we harness the determination of all Australians, Indigenous and non-Indigenous, to close the gap that lies between us in life expectancy, educational achievement and economic opportunity.

A future where we embrace the possibility of new solutions to enduring problems where old approaches have failed.

A future based on mutual respect, mutual resolve and mutual responsibility.

A future where all Australians, whatever their origins, are truly equal partners, with equal opportunities and with an equal stake in shaping the next chapter in the history of this great country, Australia."

*Apology read by Australian Prime Minister Kevin Rudd.*

## ***Listening to the Prime Minister Rudd Speak***

I sat on the sofa with my two children on Wednesday, the 13th of February, so we could watch this much anticipated speech together. This was the first full sitting day of the new Parliament following our general elections in November and it was the long-awaited apology.

I cried through much of the subsequent three quarters of an hour. I cried for the little children who had been forcibly removed from their parents, for the mothers and fathers, for the sisters and brothers torn from each other and their cultures. My 6-year-old son sat on one side of me with tears trickling down his beautiful young face, occasionally wiping my eyes with his small hands. His grief was for those children who never got to see their parents again and for the frightening reality those kids must have gone through—helplessly watching their families slip away from them.

He sought assurance from me that such a fate would never happen to him and his sister, unable to comprehend the barbarity of the so called 'rationale' of this most shameful chapter of Australian history.

I and many others I have spoken to, have applauded the words from Mr. Rudd that day. Here at last was a breath of fresh air, a chance at a better future for our nation and a much, much needed apology enabling us to finally move on towards reconciliation with our Indigenous peoples.

*—Diane Carpenter, mother of two, Australia.*

## ***Beijing Olympics and Tibetan Autonomy***

Have you been keeping up with recent events surrounding the 2008 Olympic Torch journey around the world? To express outcry over the continued oppression of Tibetans in the People's Republic of China, tens of thousands took to the streets in London, Paris, San Francisco and other cities. They are protesting human rights violations by the Chinese government in Lhasa, the capital of Tibet, where Buddhist monks have been beaten up, imprisoned, or gunned down by the Chinese police. The Chinese, claiming Tibet to be an integral part of the nation, have occupied Tibet for more than 50 years. The plight of the Tibetan Buddhists can be compared to that of the indigenous people in the U.S. and Australia in the past. Tibetan leader, Dalai Lama asks not for independence but for a meaningful autonomy.

Among all of my teachers from kindergarten through post-graduate work, Mr. Roy Gromme stands out for only he addressed his students with a title—Mr. Jones or Miss Smith. Sure, in college, professors often came down to the students' level and allowed—or even encouraged—us to call them by their first names, as they did to us. But Mr. Gromme did better. He raised us up to his level. By the mere use of two words, he let us know we were worthy of respect.

By addressing us as adults, Mr. Gromme subtly told us that we were expected to conduct ourselves as adults. And we did. To have acted out would have been at odds with both his expectations of us and our own sense of self that we felt under his tutelage.

Treating us as adults put us on par with him. He was our high school biology teacher, and we had no illusions about who was in charge. But he made us feel grown-up—capable of reasoned analysis, able to respond calmly, willing to learn difficult concepts—in a word, *mature*.

Mr. Gromme put several forces to work for him. He held high expectations. He was consistent. He acted like an adult. And, most importantly, he was first in extending respect.

Many parents or well-meaning adults hold high expectations for children but wait for them to show respect first. The adult claims that respect is due only once it has been earned by the child.

Don't hold your breath!

Children learn best by example. They pay attention to what we do and tune out what we say. If we want respect from our children, we'll get it faster and hold it more securely if we give it first.

We can lead by setting examples. By waiting for our children to respect us first, we put them in a leadership role; we relinquish control and let them determine how we act. This situation disrupts the adult role of guide and authority and confuses everyone, especially our children.

Parents sometimes misunderstand what respect from a child means and confuse it with fearful obedience. A relationship grounded on fear for what one may do to the other may well result in obedience—for a time. But it is no more than a bully relationship where the adult who is more powerful uses his or her strength and position to intimidate the weaker child. The ability of fear to maintain deference is transitory, warps the idea of a loving relationship for the child, and ultimately gener-

ates physical ailments, emotional distress, or negative behavior in the child.

Nor does respect equate to giving in. They are polar opposites. Giving in to children's demands ignores what they are really saying (they're bored, tired, want attention, seek firm boundaries, need help, etc.) and is not respectful. Showing respect means listening to the words and underlying message and responding calmly and appropriately—just as we would to an adult speaking to us. Likewise, we do not tolerate abusive behavior. We set aside a cooling-off time and place until both parties can come together with calmness and mutual respect.

Children are naturally respectful when we create the right environment for them—one that respects them. If respect from others has not been their experience, they will need time to trust that our attitude is reliable, which means we must continue to believe they will respond appropriately even when they are not yet practicing it. Eventually they will. Respect is everyone's desire, no less so for our children.

#### *Six Steps to a Respectful Relationship with Your Child*

1. **Set the standard.** Demonstrate what you want by giving it first. Be the leader and treat your child as you want to be treated: with respect.

2. **Be consistent.** Respectful behavior toward another happens not just when the other is nice—it's all of the time. Keep your cool and show how you expect your child to behave when negative emotions come to the surface.

3. **Listen with an open mind.** This is the most powerful way to show respect. Too often we lecture—and lose our child; the body is there, but the mind is gone. Talk less and listen more.

4. **Maintain high expectations.** If you're waiting for your child to slip up, you'll not be disappointed. And the mistakes are all you'll notice while you ignore the times that s/he is acting with maturity.

5. **Know which rules are nonnegotiable.** And know why. Hold fast to the important rules and allow give-and-take on lesser ones.

6. **Be genuine.** Faking it or giving respect only to get cooperation won't work. You must truly respect your child. Remember and express the love that is behind it.

—Julie Scandora is an artist, author and editor living in Seattle. Mother of three adult children, she is an outspoken advocate for respectful treatment of children. **Rules Are Rules**, her children's picture book (Book Publishers Network) combines her artistry, writing and passionate support for children.

## Hiking in the Swiss Alps

I was huffing and puffing, pleading with my mother to go back down.

“Please mom, can’t we walk back down and then take the cableway up?”

“No, what’s the point of going up the mountain then? Why don’t you pace yourself and stay with me for a while?” So I did.

Every year my family visits our relatives in Switzerland. The Swiss love to hike and bike, so we always go on trips. This year my whole family clan had rented a house in Engleberg, an alpine village. We were hiking up a very steep mountain. It was a hot and steamy day. The path was very narrow, winding and rocky. Usually I love these trails, and my cousins and I walk way ahead of all the adults. But this mountain was too steep, and my New Jersey legs weren’t up to the task. The part that annoyed me the most was that overhead the tourists in the aerial cableway were smiling and waving down at us while we took the hard way up.

Eventually, to my surprise, I was able to catch up and keep up with my cousins by pacing myself. At the top, when we finally reached it, we were stuck in a cloud. Instead of the usual beautiful view of the scenery below, we could barely see our hands! I was really disappointed. We had a quick drink and walked on. After a while, we came to a nice sunny spot near a lake and had a picnic (*See back cover*). We were on a plateau. I could see the other mountains with their snow-capped peaks.

“Look up there! Let’s go *explore* it!” Vera, my cousin, said.

Perched on a cliff was a chapel. To get there we had to go around the cliff. The chapel was open so we went inside. It was round and our footsteps echoed. The benches formed a half circle, and there were candles behind a small table. There was no glass, except for one spot on the ceiling.

“It’s strange that a chapel was built here,” I said.

“Yes, because nobody really lives up here,” my cousin Marlen responded.



After a while we moved on.

“Psst, Mia, look at that,” Marlen pointed to a goat-like animal.

“What is it?” I whispered (*See p. 34*).

“It’s a chamois, a very rare and shy animal. It’s unusual to see it so close,” my mother whispered back.

We were able to sneak up to it and take a picture before it trotted away.

At one point, I spotted a short cut. I decided to explore it. Suddenly, I could not move my right foot. A gooey substance crept into my shoe. It took my older cousin, Angela, to pull me out of a huge muddy puddle but, “Oops!” My shoe was still stuck in it! Angela had to pull it out! We laughed for a long time. I didn’t see that one coming! A cow’s water trough had leaked, which created a mud puddle. I cleaned up and put my squishy shoe back on.

Later we came to an aerial cable car.

“Can we take the cableway down, please?” Oliver, my little cousin asked.

“Well, only half of us will fit in it,” my mother said.

“I don’t mind walking,” Uncle Max said. So our group split up. I was relieved to get a ride. We had to call up the operator at the other end to tell her that we were going to use the cable car. It smelled of cattle and was probably used for them too. The reason for the cable car was a huge cliff with a big drop down. People could either walk around it, or take the cable car over it. When we reached the bottom, we went to a restaurant and waited until the others came. After we were all fed and well rested, we were ready to move on.

“The rest of the way is asphalt,” my uncle Richard explained.

“Oh, I hate walking on asphalt!” Vera complained.

“You won’t have to, the restaurant has scooters for rent,” he said smiling. These scooters had tires as huge as a bicycle’s. It was a blast! The wind slapped my face and rippled my hair. We zipped down to the bottom where

we returned our scooters and walked back to our rented house in Endelberg. What I like about these trips is that you never know what could happen. Tourists that take the cableway up don't see all the animals and remote views. We took the long way up and got to see all the surprises and experience a bit of adventure.

—*Mia Studer, 11, Swiss American, New Jersey. Mia adds, "Switzerland is very environment-friendly. You can take public transportation to every little village. People ride their bikes to school, church and even grocery shopping. They speak French, Italian, Swiss German or Romansh, depending on where they live." More photos on back cover.*



## ***A Local African Boy at the Airport***

**It was a bright, sunny afternoon in Abidjan;** the sky was cloudless and the sun was at its hottest. Soon it'd be the rainy season. "Why am I carrying this heavy luggage? It's full of African food stuff," I thought. "We are going to Mexico. Isn't there a place to buy this?" I thought Mexico was in another part of Ivory Coast. There was a car outside, a type only rich Africans can afford. When you sat inside this car, even if the sun was raining fire, you'd still feel cool until the end of the century. I sat in front. On the way, the driver inserted a cassette. It must have been foreign music because I couldn't discern the meaning. "We are finally in Mexico in 30 minutes—pretty fast!" I tried to look for the source of the strange noise in the sky.

"Keep your head in," shouted Aisha, but I was eager to see what was disturbing the peace. There were lots of strange cars there. One was a mile long but still had four doors like the one I was riding in. One was triangular shaped, and the other V-shaped... "Mexico will be interesting," I thought to myself. Now we were in the parking lot with varieties of cars, all with weird names. I had never seen so many cars in my life until that day!

There was a huge crowd there, the kind I had seen a long time ago in another part of the Ivory Coast—Danane. Everybody was going about their business, and many carried the same kind of bags I carried. It was now clear to me that everybody must carry food to Mexico. Not very long after, there was another scary noise in the sky. I looked up and beheld a very big bird-like thing I couldn't identify. I couldn't ask because of my intense fear of Aisha. "Is this our new home?" I summoned courage from the innermost part of me, "I'm not going to die."

"You're too local," she said with the mildest voice

I'd ever heard. "This is the airport; we are boarding an airplane to Mexico from here!"

I had heard about the airplane. One day I was playing soccer in Aisha's compound and there was this strange noise in the sky. I had looked up and seen a bird-like structure. "What is that?" I had asked.

"That is an airplane," said Kayete, Aisha's house keeper.

"What is an airplane?"

"Airplanes fly in the sky. It is a means of transportation for rich people to travel."

"How can that tiny thing even accommodate a newborn baby?"

"It transports hundreds of passenger on a trip."

"That thing, like my shoe?" I didn't ask more question because Kayete had suddenly become a liar. She must be a blatant liar!

We went through many checks I couldn't understand, but finally, in a glass house with passengers, I saw a big, bird-like structure that was moving:

"What are you looking at?" Aisha asked.

"What is that moving?"

"Those are airplanes and we are going to board that one. We are going through those officers."

I was without breath for minutes... I could now understand Kayete's lies about airplanes—I figured it out that what is far from you looks very small. But it must be very far to be that small.

"Have a safe flight," said one officer, and we flew to the destination unknown to me.

—*Solomon Olatunji, 17, from Sierra Leone, Washington.*

## From Education to Preservation: *Schools in Costa Rica*

Costa Rica is a land blessed with natural beauty and ecological diversity, from volcanoes, rainforests and cloud forests to white sand beaches on the Pacific coast. As part of the isthmus between North and South America, Costa Rica serves as the land bridge for many migrating birds and animals. I traveled to Costa Rica in December 2007 for a wildlife photography safari. What I discovered is a country dedicated to preservation, while simultaneously experiencing a surge in population growth. With a steady increase in tourism and housing needs, over-development could ruin this beautiful and pristine land. So, from a young age, the children are taught the value of land conservation over the needs of a growing population.

Due to its popularity as a tourist destination, Costa Rica has a tax structure that benefits its citizens. After a bloody civil war, Costa Rica became the first country to abolish its army. With taxes on tourists and no military to support, there is more money to invest in health and education. Public education is free and guaranteed by the Constitution. The government also makes sure everyone has access to clinics and hospitals. The children's hospital in San Jose, the capital, is the best in Central America. With a 96% literacy rate and a life expectancy of 78, Costa Ricans enjoy a high standard of living.

Education is mandatory for all children up to age 15. There are public and private schools, but there isn't much difference between the two. Children start kindergarten at age 5 years old. From ages 6 to 11, they attend primary school for half a day. Some attend from 7 to 12 PM, then another group attends the school from 12:30 to 5 PM. Once they enter high school, they are in class for the entire day. The private schools are very expensive, and the classes run from 7 to 3 PM. Children in the private schools are often bilingual, learning either English or German.



Costa Rica is growing rapidly. There are more young people than middle-aged or elderly. As a rule, once a village has 100 children, they must build a new school. While in high school, the children begin to learn a vocation. Each county specializes in one particular field. Sometimes, children have to travel to a school away from their home so they can learn a special trade.

As part of their education, the kids are taken on field trips to national landmarks, such as Poas Volcano and Tortuguero National Park. There they learn about the importance of land preservation. Tortuguero, along the Caribbean coast, is a vital natural area for sea turtles. They land at night to lay their eggs. The people of Tortuguero City are now being taught not to eat the turtles or the eggs, which people had been consuming for generations. The children in primary school make little turtle figures out of coconut husks and sell them to the tourists to raise money for the schools. This way they learn the importance of protecting the animals.

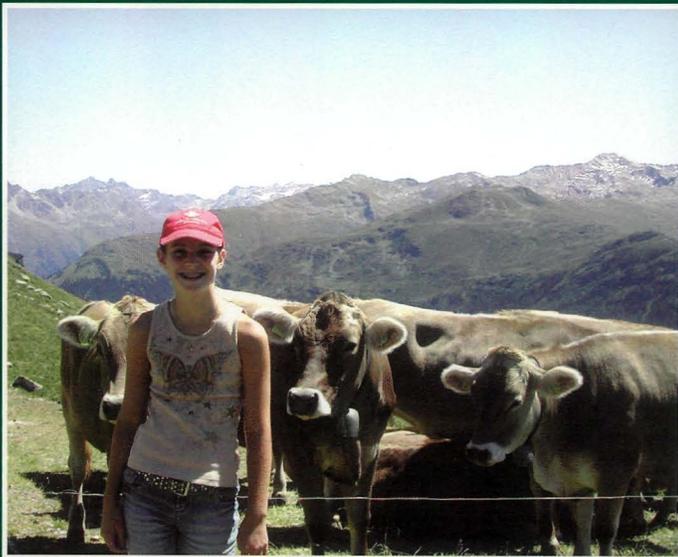
There is a threat that large industrial companies will come in and harvest the timber in the forests or build hotels and strip malls along the beaches. By experiencing the natural treasures first-hand, hopefully, a new generation of children will become adults who have learned to appreciate, love and protect the natural resources of their lush, green and fertile country.

—Roi J. Tamkin, Georgia.



# Hiking the Swiss Alps

Photos by Mia Studer, age 11  
& her family, New Jersey.  
See page 33-34 for the story.



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