

The twin switch

By CARMELINE CUNNINGHAM
Swanton Elementary School, Grade 6

One colorful, sunny fall day, the identical twins, Barbara and Nancy, were super excited. They had fairly short brown hair and a devilish twinkle in their bright blue eyes! Both wore blue and white checked dresses, the same patent leather shoes and white socks.

Sitting very close together on the bus, the twins discussed their plan to switch classrooms for the day. Why? Because the other day they had gotten permission from Barbara's 4th grade teacher, Mr. Callers, to switch names and classes for the day. Nobody knew about the twins' plan except for Mr. Callers. Not even Nancy's teacher, Miss Maliue, knew.

The bell rang. Riiiiinnng-a-Dinnnnngggg!!! Kids screamed and ran to the door to get into the school. Of course the twins were at the door first because they were so excited about their plan that they wanted to be in their "new" classrooms first!

The girls did their usual school work like reading, writing and math. When it was time for "Barbara" (really Nancy) to get the ice cream at lunch some of the kids said, "I'll have what I had yesterday," "Get me my usual," or, "You know what I want for ice cream." But Nancy didn't know any of those things, so she was TOTALLY confused! So the class started to guess which twin was in their class.

While Nancy was going through her difficulty, "Nancy" (really Barbara) was in Chemistry, which she was very bad at. Miss Maliue asked Barbara what was going on with her! Barbara had to explain everything. While Barbara was telling her story, Nancy was also telling about the sisters' plan. Both 4th grade classes had a SUPER GREAT LAUGH, including the teachers. So that was one of the adventures of the identical twins, Barbara and Nancy!

Author's Note: This story was told to me by a wonderful educator here at Swanton Elementary school about a time that really stood out in her mind when she was a young student about the same age as I am. I want to thank her for taking the time to sit down with me, tell me her childhood story and promise to tell me more at a later date in the school year! Thank you!

UPCOMING PROMPTS

**Franklin and Grand Isle county students:
Send us your best writing!**

Here are the next prompts:

Stress. What stresses you out? How do you deal with stress? Write about a time when you have felt stressed out, or create a story in which the characters have to deal with a stressful situation.

Alternate: My story. Pick a memorable moment from your life. Something that happened, something you did or something you witnessed. Tell a story about it that will tell us about you. 400 words, no real names, please. Focus on something very specific, give us detail. **Due Friday.**

Faking it. Admit it, you've had to pull the wool over someone's eyes when trapped at an unexpected moment. Write about it. **Alternate: Four.** Write about the number four. Could be the time on the clock, the number of people or anything.... Use the number story, poem or play. **Deadline: Jan 29.**

Submit work at:

youngwritersproject.org



YOUNG WRITERS PROJECT

building a generation of better writers

Welcome to the fourteenth weekly installment of great writing by area students as part of a partnership between the *St. Albans Messenger*, the Young Writers Project, area schools and the many talented young writers in our communities. Each week the *Messenger* features work from students in Franklin and Grand Isle counties.

Young Writers Project is a Vermont nonprofit dedicated to helping students improve their writing. Students submit work each week — responses to YWP prompts or general writing — and YWP selects the best for publication. YWP maintains a safe, civil Web site for students at youngwritersproject.org (where all work is submitted). And it creates Digital Writing Classrooms for schools to use as part of their curriculum. Thanks to support from **FairPoint Communications**, Digital Writing Classrooms are operating at Milton High School, Enosburg Falls Middle School, St. Albans Town Educational Center and Grand Isle School. Swanton School and St. Albans City Schools are also participating.

TODAY: Students write in response to the prompts: "Elder's Story" and "The Big Win."

CROSSING ROADS



Kyler Remillar, Mount Mansfield Union High School

The pig win

By SASHA DUCHAC
The Renaissance School, Grade 5

"You, the boy in the red shirt." I look around for the boy in the red shirt. My parents push me forward. Oh, I'm wearing a red shirt.

The announcer asks, "What is your name?" "Sasha," I mutter.

"Speak up," my mother chides.

"Sasha," I say louder.

"How old are you?" the announcer asks. I hold up three fingers.

"Well, welcome Sasha, age three. You represent Pig Red. Three other kids represent pigs Yellow, Green, and Blue. Hope you enjoy the race."

Four piglets run out of a trailer and onto the starting block. At the end of the track I see a pile of Oreo cookies. The gate opens and the pigs disappear from view. A moment later the announcer cries that Pig Red wins!

I feel hands pushing me forward. The announcer hands me a ticket saying, "This is my gift to you," while pointing to a big tent.

My parents lead me to the tent. A big banner hangs over the entrance. I pull my mom and dad forward. A man by the door takes my ticket but holds my parents back saying, "No ticket, no entry."

I enter a walkway that has canvas on one side and plywood on the other. I reach the end and turn. "Maybe it's a new bike!" I come to the end of the next hallway and turn again. "Maybe it is my very own cotton candy maker!" I turn again and am hit by a stench. It smells like animals. Maybe it's a puppy. I turn the last corner. This thing doesn't have wheels. It isn't a machine. It doesn't have fuzzy fur. It isn't mine. I won a chance to see a gigantic pig?

Marshmallows

By AUGUST STEVENS
Crossett Brook Middle School, Grade 8

(Excerpt: Full story at youngwritersproject.org)

Every summer my mother went down to our summer house on the lake with her 12 cousins and siblings. They had a little schedule: wake up, eat breakfast, head down to lake with aunt, play in water, eat lunch, play more in water and then come home for dinner, which her mom made. But one summer it rained for 17 days in a row. They were bored out of their minds and they were getting sick of each other. All they could do was either read or play cards. ...

One day, I think on the 11th day of rain, most of them were gathered in the sitting room. My mom was playing Gin with three of her cousins. Suddenly something white flew across her field of vision and hit the far wall: BAM! And then another: BAM! Her cousin Danny yelled, "Aunt Peggy went crazy!" because there my grandmother was, standing in the doorway with a bag of marshmallows in her hand, throwing them at anybody who moved. Being children, they obviously started throwing them back. Soon, it was an all-out war: those 13 kids against my grandmother.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS:

Vermont Writes Day 2010

Tuesday, February 9

A day for schools, teachers, students, administrators to **STOP** what they are doing and write for SEVEN minutes. For more: youngwritersproject.org

A new horizon

By RYAN MILLER
Fairfield Center School, Grade 8

For my grandmother, Ruth Gellis, a Holocaust survivor

The voyage took seventeen days, and the seas were often rough. The cabins were small, with two sets of bunk beds. She slept on top, while her mother rested below. Even the boat's steady rocking could not comfort the overwhelming emotions that flooded her. Sadness and anxiety, as well as excitement and uncertainty — her life was much like the boat itself. A boat taken off course, but once it got through the rough waters the possibility of a friendlier life lay ahead.

As a child of 10, the absence of her father had initially gone unnoticed. It was 1936, and months earlier plans had been made to leave their home and relatives in the German city of Essen, leaving their familiar world and preparing to embark to an entirely new one. They left from the neutral country of Holland, saying goodbye to the Jewish community and their heritage on the continent that was increasingly succumbing to Nazi persecution. They boarded the ship, the "Warwick Castle," and prepared to begin a new life.

Her first sight of the country she would soon call home was the massive Table Mountain. This landmark stood out with its enormous flat top and was a symbolic gateway into South Africa. The enormous scale of the geologic formation increased as the boat made its way into the harbor of Cape Town.

Seeing the dense crowd of people off the side of the boat, she knew that her father would be somewhere among those hundreds of people. She and her mother collected their luggage and slowly progressed to the exit point and down the gangplank.

After a short while, she saw her father. Both of them hurriedly pushed through the crowd to where he was standing. Overwhelmed with joy and happiness after six months apart, she studied him, taking comfort in the familiar gentle curves and lines of his face. Although they were in a completely foreign world, away from their homeland and families, they had not been harmed and they were together. That was what mattered most.

Reflecting on this part of her life she says that after surviving under difficult conditions in foreign countries, "it was important for me to learn to forgive, but not to forget, as well as to focus living each day for the moment and to its fullest."

My relay

By JACKSON VISCOMI
Edmunds Middle School, Grade 8

Here it is, the Last Race of the Season. Everything that the coach has taught me, every hard practice has led me to this moment. We are seated second; the other team has a two-second gap between their best time and ours. This is going to be a good race.

Our starter steps on to the block. The crowd goes silent as the official starts the race. "Take your mark..... *BEEP*"

The race takes off as the crowd roars. Adrenaline flows through my body. The race is neck-and-neck.

It is my turn to go. Everything slows down. I time my dive perfectly; my foot just takes off as the swimmer finishes, a false start, but the official doesn't notice. We are neck and neck. We flip over and head to the end. We both touch the wall.

But on the timer board is something different. My name is in last.

We lose. Maybe next season.