

FARMING

Each year Young Writers Project asks students to write about farming and selects the very best among their submissions for cash prizes. Here are some of the entries we received from Enosburg students last spring. Those marked with an asterisk (*) won a cash prize, courtesy of *St. Albans Cooperative and Cabot Cheese*. These are excerpts; for full stories, go to: youngwritersproject.org

A part of me

By BRANDON PERRY

Cold Hollow Career Center, Grade 9

I have a friend named Rosalie who got me to try farming for the first time. I liked it because she made it fun. I helped her lay bedding down and fed hay to the cattle. ...

My friend and I would help Rosalie hay for about four hours. While Rosalie was mowing the hay in the field we were in the barn helping to lay bedding for the cattle. When she was done we waited for the hay in the field to dry, then went out on a tractor with her. While she drove around the field we sat on the hay bales. When she got to us we had to throw the bales on the wagon and another helper would stack them. Finally we got back to the barn's loft to stack the bales. The belt broke on the conveyor belt a couple of times but we got it fixed. The belt broke again and we couldn't get it fixed, so we had to drive the tractor around and finish throwing the bales in through the door.

I am so glad Rosalie got me into farming. I know I am part of this place. ... Now farming is a part of me. I hope that I can help her again, and I hope farming stays a part of who I am.

*Caring for cows

By Derek Jettie

Cold Hollow Career Center, Grade 10

I work on an organic farm in Fairfield. We milk 50-55 cows each day from 5:30 - 7:00 a.m. and 4 - 5:30 p.m. We feed them hay, grain, cornmeal and kelp made from ground up seaweed.

In the summer we hay. To get the hay you first have to mow the field, then ted the hay a few times to help dry it. We rake the hay into rows for square baling. The baler kicks each bale of hay into a hay wagon. When the wagon is full we pull it up to the barn to unload it on the conveyor, which brings it up to the top of the barn. Then we stack the hay. ... After each cut we spread manure. First we agitate the pit, then pump it into a spreader and then bring it to the field and spread it out to fertilize the land.

During milking chores we have to clean the cows teats off with wipes. We then put the milker on each teat. We wait until there is no more milk going into the milking machine and then take it off. We have to repeat these steps for each cow. At the end of milking I have to go in the back of the barn to scrape under the calves and feed them hay. We have to scrape down the tie-stall barn and put down sawdust to keep the cows clean and keep them from slipping when they come back in the morning.

Farming is hard work. You have to enjoy it to do it. I like that at the end of the day I get to see what I have done.

Generating power

By GREG PERROTTE

Cold Hollow Career Center, Grade 9

... One impact of the farm is that it produces electricity, which is sold to the local power company. The way they produce electricity is through a methane digester that was installed recently. The digester is very expensive, but it is a good investment. The manure is run through the digester which produces electricity. Once it has been put through, it can still be spread on fields as fertilizer. Some of the dry byproduct can also be used as bedding for the cows, which will save a lot of money. ...



YOUNG WRITERS PROJECT

building a generation of better writers

Welcome to the fourth 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* will feature 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 the curriculum. Thanks to support from FairPoint Communications, digital classrooms are operating at Enosburg Falls Middle School, St. Albans Town Educational Center and Grand Isle School.

Today's entries: Submissions in response to the prompts: "Ghosts," "Farming" and "Through the window."

GHOSTLY SHADOWS



Jordan Palker, Essex High School

STUDENTS: Send us your photos. We're looking for photos relating to our prompts on youngwritersproject.org or just great shots you've taken. For more info about submitting, go to youngwritersproject.org

The barking madman

By MOLLY DOUGLAS

North Hero Elementary School, Grade 4

I was reading one night. It was a normal night — nothing was really happening. Then suddenly I heard a bark and more after that. It was odd because Lilly, my dog, was sleeping next to me. The bark sounded too far away to be her and it could not have been Toby, our other dog, because he was at the vet. I was very frightened so I hid. I have heard barking like that before, and then afterward I heard screaming, like someone was being murdered. That was why I was scared.

All of the sudden Lilly woke up and started barking. I heard a crash, then I heard broken glass fall to the floor. I heard something loud storming up the stairs. I tried to scream but nothing came out. I got more frightened by the second, then I heard something drop to the floor. I

saw the door open and a shadow appeared. Something jumped onto my bed. Lilly started to lick it. It climbed to the top of the bed and licked me. I started to laugh. It was Toby. He had come back. The loud stomping was my dad. The breaking glass was Toby. He was so excited he went through it. The screaming was my neighbor's TV. They were watching a scary show and had the volume on full blast.

My way to the bus

By SARA ANNE CLARK

Franklin Central School, Grade 6

One day I was just about to get on the bus when I saw a ghost right behind me. I started to scream and then every person was turning into ghosts. It just creeped me out.

I said, "Are you people?"

Statues

By REBECCA VALLEY

Bellows Free Academy St. Albans, Grade 10

Statues of men,
curved and cold and solid,
how I wish for you to breathe again your breath,
though lingered with dust and chalk it shall be.
Could you tell us with your all-knowing eyes
the crimes we have committed?
Unknowingly we changed the world.
The human form remains,
though the human mind suffers;
Men of marble, preach to us your wisdom
and with our ears we shall intercept.
Allow us the chance to save the earth
from our numerous mistakes.
The past is present and the present has passed.

Through the window

By ZOE DUBILIER

Enosburg Middle School, Grade 7

Note: This poem was submitted last year, when Zoe was in 7th grade.

Through the window
the air rushes by.
Gusts shake the leaves
from their previous homes.
Through the window
snow blankets the ground.
Silencing the world
outside.
Through the window
rain pounds the stones.
Fiercely they sit,
not succumbing to the onslaught.
Through the window
children's laughter floats.
The sun beats down
on everything in sight.
Through the window
the seasons change,
the weather varies,
and the view is always
there.

UPCOMING PROMPTS

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

We are looking for more great general writing or responses to YWP prompts. Here are the next two prompts:

General. Submit your best non-prompt general writing. This call for general entries is repeated each month and you can use the same "General" term when submitting each time. **Alternate: Hunting.** Share your favorite hunting stories, or tell us how you feel about hunting. **Deadline: Friday.**

Sibling rivalry. Write a story about how you compete with a brother or sister. If you don't have a sibling, write about what it's like to be the lone child. **Alternate: Anger.** Rant about something that really ticks you off. **Deadline: Nov. 6**

Winter Tales. Tell a story about winter; it can focus on the season or the holidays — the weather, the outdoors, or the emotions. A dozen selections will be given dramatic presentations by Vermont Stage Company in early December. **Deadline: Nov. 13**

Submit work
by going to our Web site:

youngwritersproject.org