

The passenger

BY BRIANNA BOUCHER
Franklin Central School, Grade 6

Sitting, waiting on a smelly old bus. That's when my brother told me we had just passed a sign that said "Now Leaving Kansas." So I went up and tried to explain to the driver that our stop was back in Kansas, but he wouldn't stop. He just kept going faster and faster until the bus came to a screeching halt.

A man all dressed in black got on the bus and sat right next to me. In some way I thought I knew him, so I just smiled. He wouldn't smile back so I figured I was thinking of the wrong guy. Then I realized we hadn't gone that far so we could get off at the next stop and just walk home.

At the next stop, me and my brother got off and so did this strange man. I figured he was just going the same way as us. But then, when we turned down our old, bumpy dirt road and he did too, I panicked somewhat and started to walk faster. Suddenly, I looked back and he was gone. This kind of scared me but I also felt safer now that he was gone.

A few days later I was sitting at home watching television and a broadcast came on about some guy getting killed who was last seen on Hardwood Road. Then it occurred to me that that was the road I had been walking on the other day when the guy disappeared. So, I went and told my mother, who was talking to my brother, that I was going for a walk. Really I was going to go look for the guy. I walked for almost a mile and a half when I came to a little stream and looked down it a little ways and screamed. Ahhhhhhhhhhh.....

Missed the bus

BY LINDSAY CARY
BFA Fairfax, Grade 8

(Excerpt: Full story at youngwritersproject.org)

I walk out to the bus stop and look up to see a huge flock of geese flying over my head. The sweet smell of freshly cut grass filters through the wind. The trees are changing. They sway in the wind and shimmer when the sun shines. It's cold but sunny. Fall is here. I run quickly only to see the bus drive by. I miss the bus.

I look at the forest around me one more time before I walk up the driveway. When I get to the top, my mom yells, "Hurry or you will miss the bus." I interrupt and tell her I already missed it. My mom seems mad. I ask her to bring me to school. She tells me to get into the car. We arrive at school and I thank her and get out of the car.

To the office I go. I get my late slip and head for my locker but, Oh no, I can't seem to open it. I quietly walk into social studies trying not to draw attention to myself. ...

The bus

BY CAM MCCUSKER
Cardigan Mt. School, Grade 9

Kids pile on
Cool kids first
For the runt of the school
The bus is the worst.
Chocolate milk
Is poured onto hair
By the school bully
Or just on a dare.
The bus driver turns
And yells out his lungs
Too late for him
Chaos has begun.
Windows fly open
Words are now yelled
Fingers get flipped
And trash gets propelled.



YOUNG WRITERS PROJECT

building a generation of better writers

Welcome to the fifth 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 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.

TODAY: Response to the prompts: "The Bus," "Defining Object" and "General."

CHECK, MATE



DONNA GORDON, Essex High School
Donna writes about her photo: "My photos represent pairs and relationships. It's very important to have good relationships and pairs are very important."

"We found safety"

BY KATY TURNER | BFA St. Albans, Grade 11

Humans are all frauds. We choke out contradictory, nonsensical ramblings that sound pretty because we crafted them for hours in our minds, foundation after foundation of letter and noise that maybe we mean, maybe we do not, maybe we think that is what the person seated next to us wants to hear. Maybe that is all that matters. This is no less significant than the pretension we pseudo-revel in, humming *That shooting star just changed my life*, and *The forest is unbelievably peaceful*, out of obligation, out of habit. Lack of fascination with the handsome things strewn on the earth is just as sinful as the artificial enthrallment we sloppily spread finger-painted on our faces. You are not Thoreau. You are not as enlightened, not as noteworthy as you would like to believe. It's best you hear it now.

To whatever extent the previous paragraph has enraged or distressed you, I apologize. Really though, I once wrote that I wish to stand in front of an ocean and feel empowered. What does that even mean? What is its purpose? I am one person, that is all I will ever be, that is all you will ever be: one person on this one planet. One among many others whose voices are as loud as yours, whose dreams are as lofty as yours. You are not allowed to define anything for anyone except for your own heart — neither can denotation, neither can dictionaries or

teachers with neatly pleated suits.

I could explain this better if I wasn't so cynical, if everything wasn't so cyclical. But the world still spins on its axis, blind to me and to you and to us, to the moments when you sat on your hardwood floor and you cried and cried and you said, *The stars look like diamonds; I'm moving to New York*, but you didn't realize the lights are too bright for the sky's jewelry and charms to shine through. The city holds the fake stars up by the top of its buildings, like marionettes.

Now don't get me wrong, some things are very real. These are mostly the ones you have to look out for, though. But that is the function of peripheral vision, hindsight and obsessive compulsive disorders. We rely on so much else to get us through each and every day. Not just pills and sleep, no, but also unanswered questions whose could-be responses we act out, uncertain and radiant lyrics that we become angry at ourselves for not writing, for not thinking of this bright idea first and spitting it out onto the public. I imagine we are all addicts, all a secret, silent mosaic of humans and liars and hypocrites, synonyms we have yet to learn, stories we have yet to tell. The words will parade in disguise and flood out, overwhelming, unprecedented, only after you find them. And that is probably the misfortune of many.

Grandma's jewelry

BY KALIE MARIE SWEET
Franklin Central School, Grade 6

Feathers and Indian symbols. They show how Grandma loves unique jewelry. She likes how no one else wears them, how they point out how much she adores all cultures.

Feathers hang from her earrings. When I look at her I see a proud and majestic eagle and people dancing around a fire. I observe how my grandmother expresses herself, how she doesn't mind what people say. A word to explain my grandmother is....beautiful. No matter what she wears or how she dresses, she will always shine in my eyes.

A peace of me

BY ERICA DUNPHY
Franklin Central School, Grade 6

The peace sign defines me as myself — its crazy, spunky feeling and atmosphere opens my imagination. It sparks my creativity and its peacefulness makes me want to scream and yell for greatness and goodness.

Bananas

BY MICHAEL AYER AND MOLLY DOUGLAS
North Hero, Grade 4

The jungle was alive with the sounds of monkeys hungry for bananas. As they picked bananas with their feet, they were startled by an interesting noise. The bananas seemed to be talking. The monkeys were surprised, nervous and frightened.

One reason the monkeys were surprised was because all the bananas were talking and normally bananas don't talk. I mean, seriously, a talking banana? Get real. If I was a monkey and I found a talking banana I would be surprised — also a little interested.

The monkeys were also nervous because there were a lot of talking bananas. They thought the bananas were under a curse. They were so nervous that one of the monkeys fell out of the tree.

The last reason the monkeys were frightened was because the bananas were talking about the monkeys. Then the monkeys ate all the talking bananas. "Hey, if you let us out we will be nice," said the bananas.

"Nah," said the monkeys.

The monkeys were frightened, nervous and surprised. Then they ate the bananas and that solved the problem.

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:

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. **Due Friday.**

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
at our Web site:

youngwritersproject.org