

Last swim

By Willow Forbes | UNION ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, GRADE 5

Summer is almost over. The days are still muggy and humid but are slowly getting shorter. Soon the heat will be gone, replaced by the crisp cold of fall. There is still time for one more swim.

You slowly dip your toes into the luke-warm pond water, creating ripple after ripple, breaking the quiet surface. The water on your toes feels smooth and cool.

Slowly, you ease yourself from the dock into the water. The water comes up to your armpits, so you raise your arms as you edge deeper into the water.

Suddenly, you completely submerge. The cold water washes over your body. You can feel your hair float around your head.

You open your eyes underwater, gently treading water. You see the murk and mud and weeds. A small fish peeks out from behind a rock, swims in a few tight circles,

then disappears from sight.

Changing your direction, you head upward for a breath of air. You can feel the cold on the top of your head as it cuts through the surface. You gulp a deep breath of air, then sink back down into the murky depths.

Here, underwater, all your troubles are gone. You are simply a plant or a rock, with no more care than a bird. Life seems so easy underwater; you wish you could stay forever.

But, of course, you can't. Just thinking this makes you remember that you only have a few minutes to escape to this peaceful haven for the last time this year, and that your mom will be impatiently waiting.

As you sadly pull yourself out of the water, you heave a sigh.

Deep in your heart, you know this pond will wait for you and be here with open arms next year.

Changing of the guard

By Eric Hutchins | SPAULDING HIGH SCHOOL, GRADE 12

"Sir, turn off your vehicle, put the parking brake on and please show your identification."

We had just returned from hunting camp where we dropped off a truckload of bear bait. My dad did as he was asked, and I realized I didn't have my ID. My heart hit rock bottom. I thought I was done. The officer looked at the National Guard shirt that I had on and asked the question:

"You in the Guard?"

I looked at him for a minute, his expression changing from waiting for an answer to impatience.

"Yes, Sir," I slowly answered. His expression changed from impatience to suspicion.

"What's your MOS?" He said, thinking he could catch me in a lie.

"13 Bravo, cannon crew member," I

replied. His entire demeanor changed. His face brightened, and he relaxed his body, which I could tell had been tensed.

"Well you don't need an ID, you should be on the database. You know, I used to be in the same unit. Waterbury?"

"Sir? Which battery?" I asked, trying to find out if he was in my battery.

"I can't remember now, it was quite a few years ago," he said. "Then I moved up here and got out of the Guards; stupidest decision of my life. I could have retired by now."

My father was just sitting in his seat, wondering what all this army jargon was about. The border officer went on to check our identification, mine being on file, and sent us on our way. I love being in the Guard; I never know who I might encounter who is, or was, in the Guard.

The test

By Jamie Benson | CROSSETT BROOK MIDDLE SCHOOL, GRADE 7
EXCERPT: FULL PIECE AT YOUNGWRITERSPROJECT.ORG

I was nervous as I sat down at my desk for the test. I checked the clock: 1:30. Phew, I still had an hour to finish. It was a Wednesday, and I was angry. I swore that if a fly annoyed me it would be dead before it knew it. I had not been a happy camper when I learned about our pop quiz.

I got up and asked our teacher if I could use the bathroom. Reluctantly, she said yes. I sauntered down the long hallway. I opened the bathroom door and found a swarm of bees! I bet there were 20 of them! I ran down the hall screaming: "BEES!"

I got back to the classroom and explained my horrible predicament. The teacher looked in the hall to find it empty. She

laughed darkly, said "nice try," and gave me detention. I could tell she was furious. I should have stayed in the swarm of stinging bees. ...

At 4:00 sharp I was let out, screaming "Freedom!!!" When I flung open the school doors, I realized I had no ride home. Grudgingly, I trudged up the stairs and shyly asked my teacher for a ride home. She smiled, knowing how much I hated having to ask, and said in a sugar-coated voice, "Why, yes, anything for my student."

As it turned out, she was very talkative in the car, and she's not that bad a person. They say you learn a new thing each day. Well, I learned something *and* made a friend.



UPCOMING EVENTS

VERMONT WRITES DAY
TODAY
MAY 5, 2009

YWP is encouraging schools to take seven minutes out of their day to write. We have three suggested prompts:

FARMING: Why is it important to the state of Vermont? Or what one thing could be done to save farms? Or tell a story about a farm or farmer you know.

VERMONT, 2059: Imagine your town in the year 2059. Tell a story, describe what it's like to walk downtown. What do you see?

POETRY: Share a poem.

YWP has *cash prizes* for top submissions to the **Farming** and **Vermont 2059** prompts. Students (or teachers) can submit entries at: youngwritersproject.org Or, students can post work (no log in needed) at: vermontwrites.ywvpt.net However, students MUST include their first names and last initial, grade AND the name of their school to be considered.

The cash prizes for the Farming prompt are generously donated by **St. Albans Cooperative Creamery** and **Cabot Cheese**.

The regular prompt due this week is the **Farming** prompt and those submissions will also be put in the mix for the *cash awards!* Winners will be announced and published in June, National Dairy Month.

Young Writers Project is an independent nonprofit dedicated to helping students improve their writing skills.

YWP maintains a safe student Web site — youngwritersproject.org; builds and supports *online writing classrooms* used by schools and after-school programs; trains college mentors to provide feedback; and helps teachers integrate technology in their classrooms through workshops and a growing library of best practices and ideas on ywvpt.net.

Lake Champlain

By Ellie Ramsey

CROSSETT BROOK MIDDLE SCHOOL, GRADE 7

I wonder where
this passage flows
I wonder where
it goes
I think that I will
follow it
I might discover something
who really knows
I wonder if I will
become
someone
that everybody knows
it seems as if
I have found a lake
I hope I am the first
for I would love to name
this very lake
yes
for if I could
I would be so happy
I would burst
now
what to name it?
I have no clue
not one bit
wait a second
a minute
an hour
I have found a perfect name
I will name it after me
the one and only
Samuel De Champlain
for I am the one that found
this very lake
and for that
it shall be claimed
this new-found
mass of water
has a new
founding father
this new-found lake
or should it be named
the new-found lake?
Lake Champlain.

Awkward

By Lauren Mazzotta

LAKE REGION UNION HIGH SCHOOL
GRADE 12

sometimes
i am absent
in terms of emotions
devoid, you might say

it's quite an awkward predicament
falling short of simple expectations
to feel
something
anything
even a flicker
but the match must have gotten a little wet