

# Avoidance

BY ANDREW CLARK  
Dummerston Middle School, Grade 8

One day during the winter I was sitting in math class and had my eyes glued to the clock wondering if the torture would ever end. It isn't that I don't like math or the teacher or any of that stuff. I was just looking forward to getting home as quickly as I could to play the new video game I had gotten over the weekend.

Just watching the clock... tick, tock, tick, tock, sitting there while it was ticking and tocking my life into existence. Wondering if time could go any slower, or if the hands were broken. It was making noise but the hands weren't moving, not even the tiniest amount. Then... everything went black, I was alone, no... wait... I was... AWAKE! I couldn't believe I had just fallen asleep in class. I guess the clock was moving because the next time I looked, it was time to go.

The rest of the day went pretty much the same as math. Finally I got back to my house and spent the rest of the night playing video games and telling my mom that I didn't have any homework. At first my mom didn't believe me so I pretended to call one of my friends and ask if I had any. I would go to very big measures to avoid my homework. I assumed that I did have homework but I didn't want to do any so I lied. I kept getting further and further in the game and I kept saying to myself, *after this level I'm going to stop and do my homework*. But still, an hour later, I was playing my game like there was no tomorrow. Finally after hours of playing and pausing the game to go do my business, I had finally beaten the game for good.

The next day I still wanted to go home and play my video game but I was a little bit more attentive. So I actually acknowledged that we had to do work in school. Soon we came to math class. We started off with a check of what we had learned yesterday. You can guess I didn't get too good of a grade on that. Then we had to get out our homework. Wait... my homework? I didn't even know we had homework! I was sleeping when she told us! OK, keep it together; I must have something that I can pass off as last night's homework. Something I did lately, something that at least has the right kind of problems on it. Wait... what's this? It's a free homework pass! My day is saved!

# Flip side of my echo

BY KYLE CHAMPNEY  
Brattleboro Union High School, Grade 9

The screeching echo of my footsteps walking on the flip side of the moon  
Leaving craters on my unharmed surface  
impressions scarred deep inside  
that you will never find.



## THIS WEEK: General writing

Each week Young Writers Project selects best work from Vermont students in response to a prompt or as general work. This week, students shared their general writing. A team of students helps select work for publication in this and eight other newspapers. For more: [youngwritersproject.org](http://youngwritersproject.org), a civil community of young writers.

## ABOUT THE PROJECT

YWP is an independent nonprofit that engages students to write, helps them improve and connects them with authentic audiences.

YWP runs [youngwritersproject.org](http://youngwritersproject.org) and **The Schools Project**, a comprehensive online classroom and training solution for teachers to integrate digital technology into their curriculum. **Teachers interested in signing up or renewing**, go to [ywpschools.net](http://ywpschools.net) or contact YWP at 802-324-9537.

## YWP NEWS

Sign-up underway for **2010/2011 Schools Project writing program**: Digital training, classroom Web site, ongoing mentoring, lesson plans. Spaces limited. Contact Geoffrey Gevalt, 324-9537.

**Summer Master's Course**: YWP and National Writing Project offering a digital writing course in late June.

**YWP Master's Practicum**: Yearlong Digital Learning course (St. Michael's credits).

See [digitalteachers.net](http://digitalteachers.net) for both.

# Taking the dive

BY CHRISTINE REILLY | Twin Valley Middle School, Grade 8

Julie stared down at the glistening water lapping against the side of the pool. She wondered what it would be like to swim through the clear water, immersing herself in the waves. She quickly shook the thought from her mind, as if it were the water itself and she an animal trying to get dry. She couldn't. In her mind the water before her was the scariest thing. Forget about spiders, the dark and snakes — the phobias everyone normally had. She was perfectly fine with all those things actually. Her phobia was water: hydrophobia.

*I have to get over this stupid fear!* she shouted at herself, as if words alone could convince her to take the dive. Yeah right!

She took a deep breath and kicked her flip flops off. She hung her towel on the ladder's rung and slowly climbed to the top. *Here goes nothing*, she thought and looked up at the skylight in her school's ceiling, then down at the patch of water where the sun lay down a platform for her, made of golden sun and sparkling, blue water. She stepped on the prickly, white diving board, bouncing up and down on the unstable plank. She took a breath and jumped...

... She chickened out, only jumping in place, not off the edge, but that wasn't something to be ashamed of. In her mind she saw herself five years ago, in her bathing suit at her old school's pool, in the water. But something was wrong, her eyes were closed, and at the bottom, just lying at the bottom. She couldn't feel herself breathing. Then a boy dove into the water — a fellow swim team member — pulled her up to the surface and pushed her onto the side of the pool.

Her vision of her current location came back. She no longer saw herself being rescued from the water that she used to love, used to compete in. She was the swim team's star swimmer at her last school until that had happened.

She took another breath and jumped again, this time off the board, falling through the empty air with eyes closed. She fell into the water, plunging down. Julie's eyes fluttered open, the chemicals in the water stung them a little, but she felt none of it over the sense of her pride. She watched the bubbles escape her mouth and nose in amazement. Finally, she felt the sting in her lungs and swam to the top. She had done it! She had finally overcome her phobia!

# Summer

BY BRITTANY COUTERMARSH | Benson Village School, Grade 8

Warm outside  
Cool inside  
Go swimming  
Have fun fishing  
Boat rides  
Ride four-wheelers

After the hay gets cut  
Camp out in a tent  
In the field or backyard  
Just keep busy  
Or just hang around

# Dear Readers,

We hope you've enjoyed reading of students' hopes, fears and opinions on this space during the school year. Today marks the end of this year's Young Writers Project Newspaper Series in which we published the work of 1,000 students whose work was selected from a total of 7,500 submissions.

Thanks to the published students; their effort added to our lives. We know how much it meant; as one teacher wrote us:

*"My student is more than thrilled to have her piece published in a newspaper. This was a goal she set back in September of this school year and how great to have her dream come true! ... This is a powerful way to invest in students in our state."*

Thanks to students who weren't published but kept trying. Success never comes easy; strong writing skills will help you gain confidence, learn and succeed.

Thanks to this newspaper and the other eight papers that recognize the importance of giving voice to young people by publishing student work each week.

Thanks to those who generously supported YWP's work: We are a small nonprofit that depends on individuals, corporations and foundations. (To donate go to [youngwritersproject.org](http://youngwritersproject.org) and click "Support" for more info.)

Special thanks to major donors including: Fair-Point Communications, Physician's Computer Company, Northfield Savings Bank, KeyBank, TagNewMedia, Chittenden Bank, Darkside Snowboards; foundations that include A.D. Henderson, Bay and Paul, Metz Family, Admiral Nelson and Vermont Humanities Council; and individuals such as John Canning, Stephen Kieran, Dave Demers, Susan Cross, Chris Bohjalian and many others.

YWP is indebted to students at Castleton State College and UVM who provided feedback to many young writers.

Thanks to the teachers; each community school has many dedicated, talented teachers who do so much for students.

Thanks to our partners in The Schools Project, a comprehensive writing program that mentors teachers and provides private online classrooms to be used as part of the regular curriculum. This program is having a tremendous impact.

Over the summer, check out YWP's main Web sites: [youngwritersproject.org](http://youngwritersproject.org), [ywpschools.net](http://ywpschools.net) and [digitalteachers.net](http://digitalteachers.net) to learn more about our work and to see more student writing. Thanks again, readers, for being the audience that so validates these kids' ideas.

Sincerely,

**Geoffrey Gevalt**, YWP founder and director

**Lee McIsaac**, YWP Newspaper Series coordinator

**MORE GREAT STUDENT WRITING AT**

**YOUNGWRITERSPROJECT.ORG**