

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 layered 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 EYES OF ...

YWP writers jump into The Lake Champlain Chamber Music Festival

From time to time, YWP corrals a few good young writers and invites them to immerse themselves — and write about — events. In late August, more than a dozen students attended rehearsals, talks, meals and performances at the first Lake Champlain Chamber Music Festival, led by the brilliant violinist Soovin Kim.

Read more student reflections of the festival at youngwritersproject.org.

Dance of the violin

By SHOSHANA SILVERSTEIN

Homeschooled, Grade 11
(Inspired by the playing of Soovin Kim)

The umber angel
slips gracefully onto
his shoulder
while he tilts
his ear, listening
for its song to begin.
One does not play
the other, but rather
they bow together
and begin a dance
halfway between
tango and tarantella.
His fingers treading
the bow sweeping
across the strings.
I close my eyes
and listen
to the dance of the violin.

Perfection

By ALIZA SILVERSTEIN

Homeschooled, Grade 8
She sat alone
On the stage,
Listening
Intently
To the clicks
And chattering
Of the metronome,
Playing
Notes in
Counterpoint,
Shaking
Her head,
Changing
The setting:
Not quite
Perfect.

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 last year. Those marked with an asterisk (*) won a cash prize, courtesy of St. Albans Cooperative and Cabot Cheese. Read all the winning entries at youngwritersproject.org.

Showing

By BECCA WESTCOM

Cold Hollow Career Center, Grade 9

(Excerpt: Full story at youngwritersproject.org)

Have you ever shown a cow before? I've shown cows a lot. I spend the whole summer showing and hanging with friends. It's my favorite part of the year. I get to win money, ribbons and trophies. While I prepare for shows I learn important lessons, such as responsibility and being able to talk to anyone.

There are many steps to follow to get ready for shows. You need to pick out the best calf and teach it to lead. You have to lead it a lot so it gets used to being led. You walk it backwards or sideways in the ring. You need to walk clockwise. That's how you win in the ring.

Showing has taught me many skills. One is responsibility. I find I take care of things a lot better, especially when caring for animals and people. It takes a lot of patience and skill to show a cow and still have fun while doing it. Showing has also given me a lot of people skills. I need to be able to talk to strangers and little kids. Now I can talk to anybody. Showing has also taught me to not care if I win or lose. The first years I showed all I wanted to do was to win. Thankfully, I got over that! I realized winning isn't everything. It is good to lose sometimes -- it only makes you stronger. ...

I hope we can last

By DEVIN PARENT

Cold Hollow Career Center, Grade 9

(Excerpt: Full story at youngwritersproject.org)

Everything I know about farming I have learned from my grandpa. I have learned how to drive a tractor, milk cows and a lot of different things and I will keep learning for a long time. My grandpa has to keep on his maintenance on his farm and a lot of money goes into the farm, especially for diesel tractors and the grain bill that costs a lot of money. We go through lots of diesel even though we have a smaller farm than other people. A lot of people are going out of business. I hope my grandpa is not one of them. ... I hope we can last through the year with \$11 milk.

Living next to a farm

By ALYSSA COUTURE

Cold Hollow Career Center, Grade 12

(Excerpt: Full story at youngwritersproject.org)

My favorite part of living next to a farm is the summertime, when you can have your windows open. The smell of fresh-cut hay blows in and you hear cows mooing. I mean, who needs to count sheep when you can just listen to mooing cows? When we are outside swimming or doing laundry and the neighbors go by in the tractors we know that a wave of hello is coming. ...

One of my favorite memories was when we were building our new house. One night my oldest brother and I were in the living room when we heard mooing that sounded really close. We looked outside and saw cows in our unfinished house. The only thing the house had then was a foundation, plywood floor and the frame of the walls. The cows were walking in and out of rooms. All you could see were black and white spotted figures.

I also live near a horse farm. My favorite part of living near this farm is in the winter-time after Christmas when we go for sleigh rides in its pasture. Living in the area of farmers always gives this nice feeling of peace and happiness. It is always nice to see tractors going by on the road and waving to the farmers who are always smiling. I guess that is really my favorite part because you always know who is waving to you. It is always nice to see how kind people are. Living in this community always shows you how close people can be. By the kindness of these people you know that if you ever need help building something or wiring your barn you will have people around to help you and they will do it with a smile. ...

A part of me

By BRANDON PERRY

Cold Hollow Career Center, Grade 9

(Excerpt: Full story at youngwritersproject.org)

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 4 hours. While Rosalie was mowing the hay in the field we were in the barn helping to lay bedding down 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.

Farming*

By CONNER ST. PIERRE

Cold Hollow Career Center, Grade 9

I live on a farm in Enosburg. We own about 550 acres and about 250 of it is tillable. We milk about 110 cows in a tie-stall barn. Because this is not like a parlor it is a lot more manual work. We also raise about 120 heifers. We sell some of them and milk the rest. We start milking at 4:30 a.m. and at 4:00 p.m.

It usually takes between 2 and 3 hours to milk. It takes a little longer at night because we have to feed the cows, which we only do at night. We raise all of our own animals.

In the summer we crop all of our own land. My job in summer is to haul feed. We spread our manure after every cut of hay. We usually get between 3 and 4 cuts.

In the winter we work in the sugarbush and cut wood. We usually cut about 50 or 60 cords per year. We hire a logger to pull the wood out into a pile and we cut and split it to sell. In the sugar woods we walk the lines to look for downed trees. We cut off the trees that are on the lines.

In the future I would like to own the farm. I like working on the farm and prefer working outside doing manual work like sugaring or driving a tractor. I also like working with cows and being my own boss.

Ready, set, WRITE!

Welcome to the Young Writers Project, an independent nonprofit dedicated to encouraging student writing. Each week YWP and this newspaper will feature some of the best student writing in the state. Support the newspaper; and be sure to give the students feedback — it means a lot to them.

Today we release the first few suggested prompts for the year; for a complete list, visit youngwritersproject.org.

Young Writers Project reaches as many students as possible, engages them to write, helps them get better at it and finds audiences for their best work.

YWP runs a safe Web community at youngwritersproject.org where students share writing, post audio and images, exchange feedback and receive critique from top students at University of Vermont and Castleton State College.

YWP creates Digital Writing Classrooms for teachers to integrate into their curriculum. This year, YWP will maintain over 30 such sites. Go to ywp-schools.net for more.

YWP received its founding support from the Vermont Business Roundtable. Major contributors now include FairPoint Communications; A.D. Henderson Foundation; Amy E. Tarrant Foundation; Bay and Paul Foundations; Northfield Savings Bank; Oakland Foundation; Physician's Computer Company; Queen City Printers; Small Dog Electronics; Vermont Humanities Council; Windham Foundation; and Metz Family Foundation.

This year's prompts came from hundreds of ideas suggested by teachers and students. They are posted on youngwritersproject.org and include a special partnership with the Vermont Stage Company. More partnerships will be announced during the year.

Submit work at youngwritersproject.org by each Friday afternoon.

— Geoffrey Gevalt
Young Writers Project Director

2009-2010 prompts

Each week YWP offers students ideas to write about. Here are a few of the upcoming prompts. For the full list, go to youngwritersproject.org



2. Photo Prompt: Write a story about this photo, taken by Dorothea Lange in California, March 1937, "Toward Los Angeles."

(See full photo at youngwritersproject.org.)
Alternate: **Back.** "Oh gosh, they're back..."
Write a story based on or using that phrase.
Deadline: Sept. 18.

3. Headline. Write an attention-grabbing news headline and then create a story about it. Alternate: **Listening in.** Take a moment to listen to conversations at school, home or in a public place such as the hallways, cafeteria, playing field, a restaurant or store. Take some of that dialogue and write a story or poem. Fill in the gaps. **Deadline:** Sept. 25.

4. General Submit best non-prompt general writing you have created. This call for general entries is repeated each month and you can use the same "general" term when submitting each time. **Deadline:** Oct. 2.